GUIDE TO THE FA8 BAMBARA FILE

/The FA8 Bambara file consists of four sources, all of which are translations from the French. 1:Dieterlen, an ethnologist, is an extended discussion of Bambara religion, cults, and associated practices. 2:Monteil, a government official, is a thorough discussion of two large Bambara groups, being concerned mainly with their history, religion, and cult groups. 3:Paques, a social scientist, is an ethnographic survey volume based mainly on the literature and containing much material not found in the other sources in this file. 4:Henry, a Roman Catholic missionary, is an account of the "mental" side of the Bambara, i.e., their religion, ethical system, and social organization, although data on the latter are rather skimpy.

This file is strong on data relating to history, religion, and non-material culture in general. The information on other cultural categories is complete enough to make the file adequate for cross-cultural purposes, though specific detailed information is lacking on many aspects of material culture.

No special marking decisions were made for the Bambara file. --Analyst/

Processed in 1960

/xiii/ Introduction

101 131 The Bambara tribes which form part of the Mandé group are at present spread out in French Sudan from the 11th to the 14th degrees latitude north and from the 7th to the 11th degrees longitude west. Three groups which have settled respectively in the circle of Issa Ber, in Kaarta, and in the circle of Odienné are noticeably separated from the central group which occupies the shores of the Niger around Bamako and Ségou.

105 The Bambara live in small villages in the savanna; they practice primarily agriculture (millet, digitaria /Fonio/, rice, maize, etc.), but also herding and gardening. The shore dwellers of the Niger are fishermen and live in symbiotie relationships with the Bozo who taught them fishing techniques and who are generally recognized as the first inhabitants of these regions.

173 The Bambara state that they came from Mandé. This region, where the successive capitals of the ancient kingdom of Mali were situated, has long attracted the attention of research workers (1). Moreover, it is "the center from which radiated forty-four tribes at present spread out in the area between the Atlantic coast, the Senegal, and the Niger, or to Dahomey" (2). The region indicated above also

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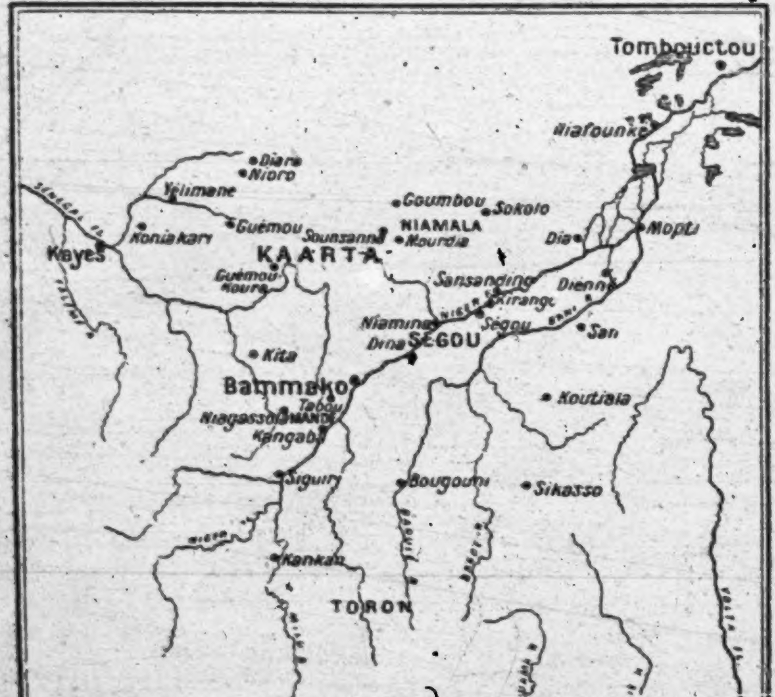
1. See J. Vidal, *Au sujet de l'emplacement du Mali (ou Melli* /on the subject of the Mali site/), pp. 251-268; *Le véritable emplacement du Mali* /The true site of the Mali/, pp. 606-619. This author designates by Mali I to IV the four villages of Dyélibakoro, Niani, Maninkoura, and Kangaba, which had been successively the royal city. See also Ch. Monteil, *Les Empires du Mali* /The empires of Mali/, p. 13..

2. See D. Zahan. *Aperçu sur la pensée théogonique des Dogon* /Survey of theogonic thought of the Dogon/, pp. 113-133. This author gives the name of the tribes originating

121 This work deals only with the Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta since it has already been noted that, save for their specifically local history, [4] a study of their concepts and institutions is valid in general for all of the Bambara.

103 131 [133] It is exceedingly difficult, besides, to be entirely certain as to which of the Bambara actually belong to the Kaarta and Ségou areas since the two designations do not correspond to any very exact geographical region. When a native speaks of Kaarta or of Ségou, he only vaguely understands the terms, and this with good reason.


Tombouctou
Niafounké
Diara
Nioro
Yélimané
Goumbou
Sokolo
Sénégal Fl.
Koniakari
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Sounsanna
NIAMALA
Mourdia
Dia
Mopti
Kayes
KAARTA
Guémou Koura
Sansanding
Djenné
Kirango
Niamina
Ségou
San
Dina
SÉGOU
Kita
Bammako
Tabou
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101 103 131 I have noted elsewhere (1) that, etymologically speaking, the

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1. In my work Les Khassonké [The Kasonke], which appeared in the series, Revue du Monde Musulman.

101 103 131 word which we write and pronounce Kaarta means "country of the Karé" or, more accurately, "the group of the Karé." Wherever there are Karé people they are called, in the Soninké language, Karu-ta, [5] which is contracted to Karta. From this we made Kaarta because we misheard the long first "a." The word Kaarta designates a particular area only because of the people who inhabit it, and its value as a geographical expression is acquired only by extension. Among the natives the term is used for various areas within the region which extends from Goumbou to Koniakari and from Nioro to the Senegal River. On our maps, Kaarta is bounded by Kingui on the north, Diomboko on the west, Senegal and Bélédougou on the south, and Kaniaga on the east. However, all of these names of cantons themselves have very vague meanings.

101 103 131 614 For the purpose of the present work, the word Kaarta takes on a special meaning. The Bambara who founded a clan at Sounsaŋ-na in the Karé country are called Karta-n-ko in the Soninké language and Karta-n-ka-u (the Kaarta people) in the Bambara language. As a result, Kaarta has become the name of the areas occupied by the clan in its various peregrinations.

The "people of Ségou" acquired their name in quite a different manner, since they were named for Ségou, the capital of the clan. The country of Ségou should be understood strictly to allude to the to-da which, to be described in chapter 5, was, by and large the area surrounding Ségou and occupied by the chief and his family and followers. In a wider sense, the country of Ségou referred to all the territory under the authority of the Ségou clan. At the height of the clan's power, "the country of Ségou" occupied both banks of the Niger, following the axis of the river from Kangaba to Timbuktu.

101 131 631 Our European need to have things clearly defined may be satisfied by having the territorial limits of Kaarta and Ségou set forth on a map, but on the native level, with which this book is primarily concerned, such local definition has little relevance. These empires did not aim to dominate any given area but rather sought to exploit as large a number of individuals as possible without regard to country or race.

128 Note: In the following pages, as well as in the foregoing, words in Bambara or other Sudanese dialects which are used are italicized; see Chapter 7 for explanations. [Omitted in translation.]

[7] I. Origin

Name

101 The peoples with whom this work is concerned are known, generally speaking, by the name of Bambara, both to Europeans and to most of the natives. They call themselves Banmana or Bamana.

European writers have offered two theories to explain the etymology of the words Bambara, Banmana and Bamana.

According to one school of thought, the word Bambara derives from bamba or bamma (crocodile) and alludes to a tne (1) which is reputedly common to all natives known as Bambara. This theory is nullified by the fact that the taboo, which was supposed to be generally imposed, is actually imposed on only a few of the Bambara. Further, the suggested correlation has never been proved to exist between the name of the tne and either individual or collective denomination among the Bambara.

Other authorities suggest that, according to the Banmana themselves, the word Banmana means "rejection of a master" (ban-ma-na) and alludes to the legend which tells how, early in the thirteenth century, the Banmana left their native land and went to Toron in order to escape from the yoke of their Malinké conquerors. This etymology, which is linguistically defensible, would apply only to the people who immigrated to Toron, and it still does not tell us by what name they and their congeners were known before the migration.

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1. A magico-religious taboo, see Chapter 2.

I have also been told that the words Bambara, Banmana and Bamana come from the Bambara root *ban'* or *ba*, meaning "to refuse." My informant, a Soninké, claimed that when their hegemony came to an end in the Ségou region, the Soninké noted a general rebellion among the serfs and said: "*u bara bango bè la*," which meant (1) "They have refused (to submit) [8] on all sides." And this same informant added that, when the rebels later returned and made peace with their masters, they put the following question: "*au mar' kan'*," meaning (2) "Under what conditions will you keep us?" The word Bambara would thus derive from the first expression and the word Marka (2) from the second.

I mention this interpretation as an example of the etymologies which are entirely made up by the informants and to which one can attach significance only after rigorous and critical investigation. In this case I have no doubt whatever that my informant's two expressions were invented for the occasion and that they are worthless; indeed, I cannot understand at all the translation of the second expression, *au mar' kan'*.

I am convinced that the natives simply do not know the origin of the name Bambara or its variants, or rather that they are incapable of explaining it.

However, it does seem likely that the words Bambara, Banmana and Bamana are actually derived from the same root *ba*. Thus, if the final *na*, a collective suffix, is removed from the word *banmana*, we are left with *banma*, a word which is comparable, morphologically speaking, to *finma*. The latter means "black" in Bambara and it may be replaced with *fin'* and *fi* without change of meaning: by analogy one is led to say that *ban'* and *ba* are, in the same way, equivalents of *banma*.

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1. According to the aforesaid informant.

2. According to the same informant.

101 It is interesting to compare these two monosyllables with the Peul [Fulani] word bal, which also means "black" and which can also be spelled ba since its final l, like the n' in ban', is merely euphonious. The comparison is valid because Peul is by origin a Negro language native to the area and, further, because a comparative study of the Sudanese dialects has shown much mutual borrowing of words.

From all this I conclude that the term Bambara and its variants likewise signify "black men."

Further, foreigners and their half-caste or naturalized offspring, all of whom we include under the name Peul, ruled over western Sudan in early times, and it is reasonable to suppose that the name Bambara dates from that period and represents the name by which the Peul rulers designated the natives. [9] Or, it may be safer to say that the word Bambara and its variants derive from the same root ba, meaning "black," which came from an ancient dialect of which the modern Peul language is also an offshoot.

However that may be, the designation Bambara, which is used generally throughout western Sudan, has many meanings today. For the Moslem, the Bambara is the infidel, the pagan, the drinker of alcohol; for the pastoral peoples (Moors and Peuls), he is the farmer and also the Negro. For Semites and those who claim to be Semites, he is principally the Negro. For those who were or are rulers, he is the slave; and for all he is the primitive man who is socially inferior.

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578 The word Bambara has shared the same fate as the word Peul in that it is used simply as an epithet: the name Bambara is applied to all pagans (1), farmers, slaves and black men. Indeed

(1) "... It is absolutely certain that in the minds of Sudanese Moslems in general and of those living at the mouth of the Niger in particular, the word Bambara is applied, not to any particular people, nor to a specific tribe, but rather to all Sudanese who have remained faithful to the native religion." (Delafosse, Vol. 1, p. 126).

101 578 the word has so thoroughly taken on a pejorative sense that its use may be a grave insult. What an insult it would be for a Moslem to be called a Bambara, i.e., an infidel, a pagan and an alcoholic!

101 In the strictest sense, however, the word Bambara is applied by the Malinké and, following their lead, by the French only to natives who speak the Bambara dialect and who call themselves Banmana or Bamana. Barring specific exceptions, we shall henceforth use the word in this limited sense in the present work.

x173 It is evident from the foregoing remarks that the Bambara belong to very ancient indigenous families; indeed, they themselves consider this to be so, and they are so considered by others.

Native informants are likely to say that the Bambara are former slaves of the Malinké; but they also say that the Somono are former slaves of the "Ségou people." Later on (see Chapter 4), we shall see in what sense [10] this slavery should be understood. It was a characteristic result of the political form of the native governments.

101 In addition to the general name given to them or accepted by them, which applies to one or another group, the Bambara are designated by terms expressing their geographic distribution. There are, for instance, those who live at Bélédougou (called Beledugu-ka-u); those in the Kaarta area (Karta-n-ka-u); those at Ségou (Segu-n-ka-u); those around Bani-n-ko (Bani-n-ko-ka-u). Each of these expressions also has a political connotation; Ségu-n-ka-u is often used for members of the ruling party, which holds power at and operates from Ségou, and only the context or the drift of the conversation will make it possible to know what people are actually being discussed.

Among themselves the various Bambara groups often describe one another by nicknames. The "Kaarta people" ironi-
[302] cally call the "Ségou people" Tlu-kene-u, "those with a single braid," because of a peculiar way of doing their hair, or Nya-ni-Nyéle-u, because Nya and Nyélé are popular names for women among the people around Ségou.

101 614 It is common, too, to call all the members of a clan by a name derived from that of a clan founder or ancestor. Thus, the

B 101 614 Kaarta people are called Nya-Ngolo-la after Nya-Ngolo, an ancestor of the chiefs of the clan; and the Ségou people are called Barama-Ngolo-la after Barama-Ngolo, an ancestor of their clan.

B S 101 [567] Nicknames are also used between individuals of different tribes. The Soninké often call the Bambara Dyon-ko (slaves) because, having long been engaged in the slave trade, they sold many Bambara as slaves (1). The Bambara generally call the Soninké Marka (for Mara-ka). They still use the term Marka dialan'u (dry Marka people) to designate the Soninké who abandoned their own dialect in favor of the Bambara dialect. On the other hand, they use the term Marka kan'-fo-la-u (those who speak Marka) for those among the Soninké who have retained their own dialect.

In the Ségou region, the Bambara use the expression Bani-n-kono-u (birds of the Bani) for the Soninké,people who live along the banks of [11] that river; their more general term for the Soninké is the surname Dyeme-ka-u, from Dyeme (or Dyime) meaning "a long-legged water bird" of the marabou species. According to the interpretation given to me, the names Bani-n-kono-u and Dyeme-ka-u allude to periodic journeys made by the Soninké to the large commercial centers to the south, especially Ouorodougou [Ouagadougou?].

The Ségou country was called Dyeme-ka-u by the Bambara during the period of the Soninké rule (1). On the other hand, when

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(1) See in the Kaarta chronicle which follows how Massa and others after him captured caravans of Bambara slaves belonging to Soninké owners.

B S 172 101 (1) At this period, the Soninké chief, Souleiman-ba Kofta, lived at Sora, today a ruin, which the Bambara call Soro-toumou (ruins of Sora) and which is situated in the Ségou country between Massa-la and Kono-dimini.

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Sora was the capital of a territorial district called Tandougou.

The songs of the gessere, who are the Soninké equivalents of the Bambara dyeli, often tell of Souleimanba Kofta, of Sora and Tandougou.

the Bambara came into power, the Soninké called it Dyon-kadugu (land of slaves).

Origin

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*173 The tradition which is generally accepted, and which was first reported by Raffenel and Quintin, has it that the ancestors of the Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta came originally from Toron, a region situated at the headwaters of the Milo and the Baoulé, both tributaries of the upper Niger. From there they presumably moved in a northeasterly direction and then spread out toward their present habitat and developed the empires of Ségou and Kaarta (2).

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2. "An oft-reported tradition says that the Banmana came from Toron, the eastern province of Oussoulou, situated in the present colony of the Ivory Coast. It was on the route between Odienné and Sikasso, not far from the former. It seems, indeed, likely that the original habitat of the Banmana was located in the extreme southeast corner of the cradle of the Mandé family and that it extended from the right bank of the upper Niger, approximately near Siguiri, to the left bank of the upper Bagbé (or Bagoé), where it touched the territory of the Sénoufo [Senufo] people. The first conquests of the Mandingue [Mondingo]

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double meaning is no less evident in the Tarikh-es-Soudan, especially on p. 161 of the French translation. The same double usage is evident in oral traditions.

Thus it is understandable that the word Mandé has come to be considered as an equivalent of our words "empire" and "kingdom" when they are used in a geographical sense, and that, as a result, the term has varied in application because it depended on an ever-changing territorial domain subject to the domination of successive ma.

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However, it is not only from the geographical point of view that the term Mandé has remained indefinite or vaguely defined; the same uncertainty prevails on the political level. In a general way, Mandé is considered to be exclusively the empire of the Mandingue people, who are one of the subdivisions of the group called Mandé by the Europeans (1). In order to understand the meaning attached to the word "empire" in western Sudan, it is essential to place oneself on the native level and not on that of our European civilization from which the term is borrowed.

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Briefly, the Sudanese empire is a system of clans. It is formed by bringing together of elements taken over from clans that have either disintegrated or are in the process of doing so. It acquires power and extension through the influence of the founder or, less frequently, of one of his successors, and then falls into decline at the hands of enemies or as a result of schisms which arise at the death of the ruler on whose success and "flair" its fortunes have depended.

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It is this constantly repeated process of grouping, separation and regrouping which dominates the entire [15] history of the Sudanese empires and dynasties and which makes any study of the people so very difficult. The geographical nomenclature is,

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1. Mandé, as the name for a group of peoples or of native languages, is unknown to the Sudanese; in this sense it is used exclusively by the Europeans.

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Malinke FA27

F B 101 103 of course, dependent on these social facts. Often a region is named after the people who inhabit it as, for instance, is the case with Kaarta. It may also derive its name from a dominant political group, and when a region has been ruled by successive groups, it acquires a series of superimposed names even though the territories to which they apply may not necessarily be identical; this, too, applies to Kaarta -- a poorly defined region.

This explains how it came about that different empires were lumped together under the same name, Mandé (and other variants). The empire ruled by the Kefta chiefs was merely the last to arise and it presumably dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century.

B *173 M 173 One tradition has it that the ancestors of the founders of this thirteenth-century empire came from the east -- specifically from Kong (1). Under the leadership of Kabala Simbo Kefta, they settled in Dodougou, a canton whose capital was at Tabou and whose chief, a Bambara of the Konnaté dyamu maintained his power with the help of a militarized group called Mandinké. This was a group similar to those composing the sofa, ton-dyon' or furu-ba-dyon' who supported the fortunes of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta. In the Soninké language the word mandinké means, M [101] literally, "a person of the master's (or lord's or king's) household," and in the plural it means "the master's (or king's) people."

The canton of Kiri (2), adjoining that of Dodougou, was

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1. I see in this precision nothing more than the usual polarization of which I speak on p. 45 , note 1 .

2. The Dodougou (abbreviated to Do) and the Kiri are, indeed, considered to be the oldest cantons of the so-called Mandé clan. In this connection, see Humblot, "Du nom propre et des appellations chez les Malinké ..." [On Proper Names

*173 we have just noted, would have formed an unbreakable bloc
614 if both elements had not been affected by the ferment of
dissociation referred to in the course of this study.

The to-da derived the larger portion of its prosperity from
[487] the Niger. Communication and transport could most easily be
maintained along this artery, and it was the need to make the
greatest possible use of the river that brought about the organization of the Somono.

Etymologically, the word Somono simply means "fisher-
[101] man." Like any trade practiced exclusively, professional fish-
[564] ing involves a certain loss of standing, and that is why the
Somono are said to be people of caste. This status is especially
due to the supremacy of the clan over the Somono, without whom
it could not have exploited the river.

After using force to annex them, Mamari added to their
614 number by assigning some of the furu-ba dyon' to the group, so
564 that the Somono were soon closely dependent on the furu-ba.
*173 At the orders of the fama and his agents, they were required to
[505] maintain ferry service across the river, to provide river transport
in both directions, and to pay a fee in kind on their catch, with
the understanding that they could continue to live according to
the traditional Somono customs.

In return, the Somono were under the protection of the clan and their leaders benefitted from the generosity of the fama. They would occasionally be given a share of booty. [324]

Little by little, the few original Somono families were lost in the flood of newcomers. These included: the furu-ba dyon' who had become Somono on orders from the fama; people of diverse origins who had adopted Somono status of their own accord because they found it better than their own; and finally, the children of both, who were Somono by birth.

It was likewise the exploitation of the property of the
[233] to-da that brought about a similar organization of the shepherds,
or Peul. Let us first note that this term has no ethnic significance;
it designates all who raise or watch over animals as a regular and
professional occupation. Here, too, there is a kind of loss of
standing, since a working shepherd could hardly do without a
sponsor and must attach himself to a master. This is the case for

[1] CHAPTER 1

DEMOGRAPHY AND TRIBAL AND SUBTRIBAL GROUPS

I. Nomenclature

A. European Definitions

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Monseigneur Bazin, in his Bambara dictionary of 1906, gave us the etymology of *Banmana*, "men of the cayman," whereas *Mani* or *Mali* would mean "those of the hippopotamus," the two names having a totemic origin.

For Élisée Reclus in 1887 (*Nouvelle géographie universelle* [New Universal Geography], Vol. XII: *L'Afrique occidentale* [West Africa]), *Bamana* means "steep crag."

Delafossé (*Haut Sénégal-Niger* [Upper Senegal and Niger]) in 1923 makes a distinction between *Bambara* and *Banmana*.

The Banmana would commonly be called Bambara by Europeans and the other Sudanese. Bambara is the word used in the *Tarikh-es-Soudan* [History of Sudan]. The Moslems designate all non-Moslem Sudanese as Bambara. Thus, the Sénoufo [Senufo] are called Bambara by the Dioula of Sikasso; the non-Moslem Malinké are called Bambara by the Dioula of Odienné; similarly for the Gbanian and Dagari of Upper Volta, etc. That is why Delafosse prefers to 173 name the people of Ségou, Bélédougou, etc., as they name themselves, that is, *Banmana*, which supposedly means "the refusal of the Master," in allusion to the legend according to which the Banmana left their land of origin (Ouassoulou) at the beginning of the thirteenth century to escape the yoke of the conquering Malinké.

According to Monteil, Bambara comes from the root *Ba*, "black."

B. Native Definitions

The Bambara often designate themselves by terms which indicate their geographical distribution.

● 101 Example: Those of Bélédougou are the Bélédugu-ka-u;
Those of Kaarta are the Kaarta-n-ka-u;
Those of Ségou are the Ségu-n-ka-u . . .

Each of these expressions has at the same time a political significance. Ségu-n-ka-u means the people of the party in power at Ségou. The context alone determines which people are meant.

[552] [2] Among themselves, the Bambara factions sometimes call each other by nicknames: of the people of Ségou, the people of Kaarta say ironically, "those of Tu-kele-u" (those of the single braid), alluding to their coiffure, or else Nya-ni-nyele-u, "those of Nya and Nyélé" (Nya and Nyélé are women's names common at Ségou). All the members of a clan may also be grouped under a term derived from the name of the founder or ancestor of the clan: the people of Kaarta may call themselves Nya-Ngolo-la (the people of Nya-Ngolo, ancestor of the clan); the people of Ségou may be called Barama-Ngolo-la (the people of Barama-Ngolo, ancestor of the clan).

[186] There are also nicknames for individuals of other tribes. The Bambara are called Dyonko (slaves) by the Soninké, who long exploited the Bambara for the slave trade, while the Bambara in turn call the Soninké the Marka Dialan'u (Marka Seer), because they gave up their own dialect for the Bambara dialect.

II. Situation

A. Ethnic Classification

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Delafosse has made a broad classification of the peoples inhabiting Upper Senegal and Niger. Unfortunately, this classification too often mixes language and physical traits. Thus, he puts the Bambara in the Mandé family, which is divided into three groups comprised of these main peoples:

First group (northern): three peoples, the Bozo, the Soninké (or Sarakolé or Marka), and the Dioula.

Second group (central): five peoples, the Kagoro, the Banmana (or Bambara, including the Somono caste), the Kassonké (or Mandingue [Mandingo]), and the Foulanké.

|3| To the east, they are found in the Bendougou, Minianka
619 (the banks of the Niger and the Bani to the south of San and Ségou being occupied by the caste of Somono fishermen), and Kénédougou regions.

To the south, in the Ouassoulou.

To the southwest, in the Manding, the Bélédougou, and Fouladougou regions.

To the west, in the Kangaran, the Bambouk, and the Guidimaka regions on the banks of the Senegal.

In short, the habitat of the Bambara lies within a large V formed by the upper Senegal and the upper Niger.

C. Neighboring Tribes

●|0| The Bambara are the most important people of the western Sudan and of the southern circles. Nevertheless, they are very mingled with other populations according to the regions we shall further define.

Among these other populations the principal ones are:

The Peul (Foula [Fulah], Foulbé [Fulbe], Fellata [Felata], a nomadic population found throughout West Africa from Senegal to the Egyptian Sudan. They speak the same language as the Toucouleur [Tukolor] Popular.

The Malinké, an important Mandingue people who speak a dialect close to Banmana and who are found in Guinea and in the Sudan (Satadougou, Nioro, Kayes, Bafoulabé, Kita, Bamako, Bougouni).

The Kassonké, who live in the Senegal Valley upriver from Kayes, are of mixed Malinké and Toucouleur origin; they speak a dialect close to Malinké.

The Sarakolé, Soninké or Marka, are an ancient people linked to the history of the empire of Ghana; they speak a Mandingue dialect related to Bambara. Those of Kouroumari speak Bambara and are of mixed Bambara blood.

[4] In Mourdiah, out of 14,000 Marka, a large proportion is Bambarized.

The Songhaï, a people of the middle Niger, have swarmed from the region of Niamey up to Lake Débo and Djenné.

101 The *Senoufo* or *Minianka*, an important people in the circles of San, Koutiala, Bougouni, and Bobo Dioulasso, speak Sénoufo.

The *Bobo* in the region of San, Bobo-Dioulasso, and Dedougou, speak Bobo but are divided into two large branches according to their dialects: the Black Bobo and the Red Bobo.

The *Dogon*, remainder of the ancient inhabitants of the Nigerian regions from Bamako to Lake Débo, live for the most part in Bandiagara and Douentza and speak Dogon.

The *Mossi* live in Ouahigouya, Kaya, Tougan, Fada, and the circles of Ouagadougou, Koudougou, Tenkodogo and Dedougou; their language is Moré.

The *Toucouleur*, originally from the middle Senegal, are numerous particularly in Senegal and Mauritania; they also live in the region of Kayes and Bafoulabé.

Finally, the *Touareg* [Tuareg] roam from Goundam to Gouré. Their proportion of white blood is weak; the same thing applies to the Moors, Arabized Berbers who are counted with their former black captives. The tribes of the Niger region are the Almoussakaré, the Attouajiten, and the Euddè; they speak Touareg.

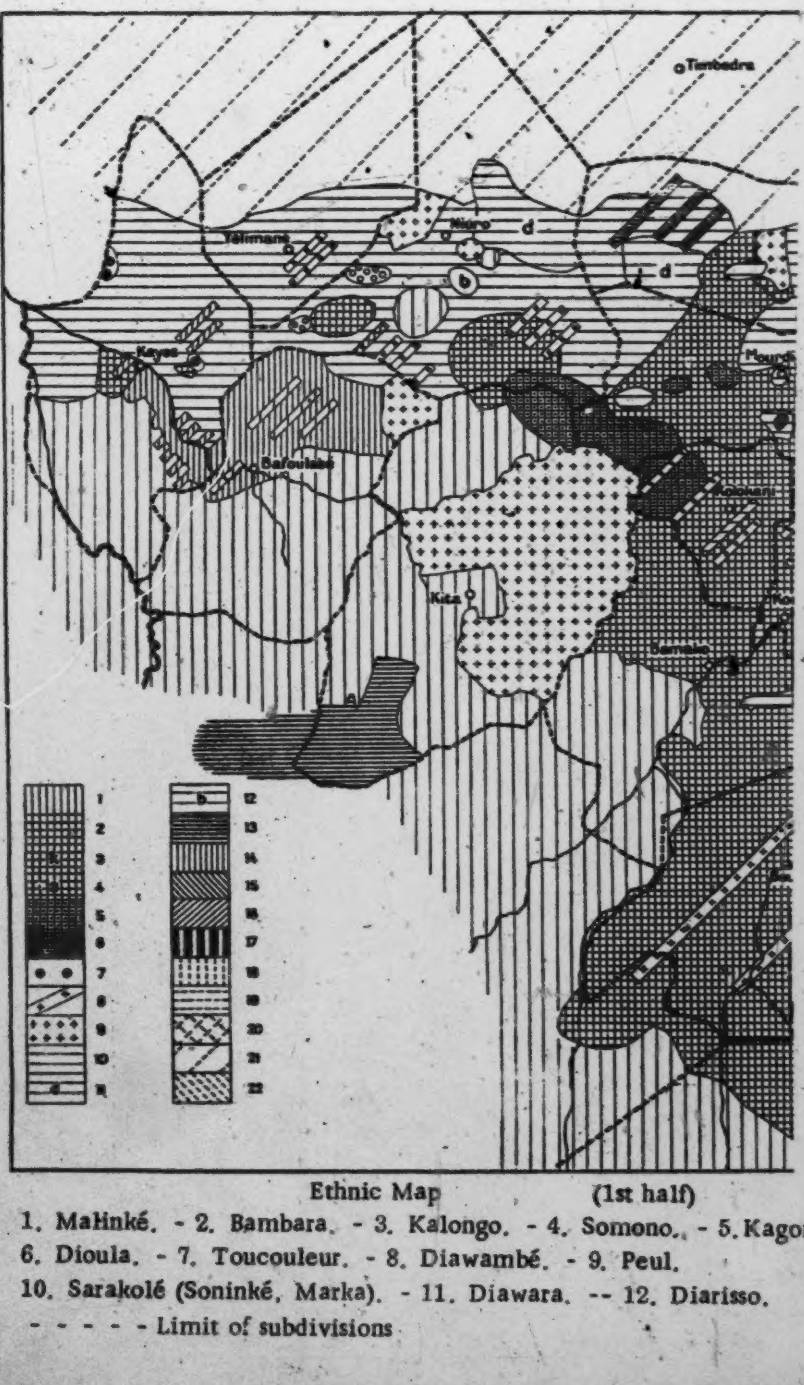
III. Physical Characteristics of the Bambara

142 History and ethnology show us that the Bambara of today is the product of several peoples whose origin is still unknown to us. Yet, common biological characteristics have developed so the Bambara distinguish themselves physically from other peoples, either by color (they say they are less black than the Bozo and the Sarakolé), by the structure of the body and musculature (they are tall, robust, muscled . . . very different in that from the "feeble Peuls"), or by the form of the skull, with its receding forehead (that of the Peul is straight, "bulging and bumpy").

Tauxier, in his *Histoire des Bambara* [History of the Bambara], has given an anthropological description based on the work of the following authors: Quatrefages and Hamy, *Crania ethnica* [Ethnic Crania], 1882; Dr. Collomb, *Bull. de la Soc. d'Anth. de Lyon* [Bulletin of the Anthropological Society of Lyon], 1885; Hovelacque, *Les Nègres d'Afrique sus-équatoriale* [Negroes of Supra-Equatorial Africa], 1889; Dr. Verneau, *Les races humaines* [Human

3:Paques--150 S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8

●101


Timbedra
Nioro
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Yélimané
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d
Kayes
Bafoulabé
Kolokani
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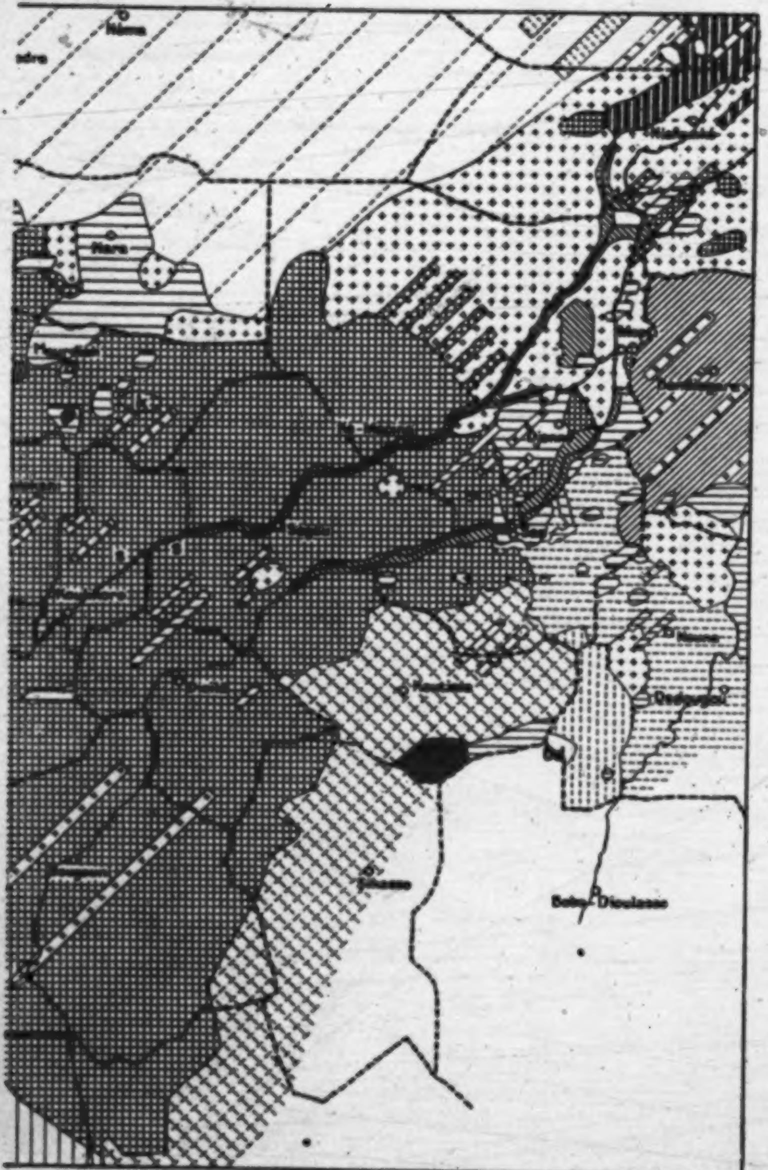
Ethnic Map (1st half)

1. Malinké. - 2. Bambara. - 3. Kalongo. - 4. Somono. - 5. Kagoro.
6. Dioula. - 7. Toucouleur. - 8. Diawambé. - 9. Peul.
10. Sarakolé (Soninké, Marka). - 11. Diawara. -- 12. Diarisso.
- - - - - - Limit of subdivisions

3: Paques--151 S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8

● 101


Néma
Nara
Bobo-Dioulasso

Ethnic Map (second half)

13. Diallonké. - 14. Kassonké. - 15. Bozo. - 16. Dogon. - 17. Songhaï. - 18. Bobo-Fing. - 19. Bobo-Oulé. - 20. Senoufo. - 21. Maure. - 22. Touareg.

Oblique shading indicates mixed populations.

771 If the Bambara have fought to safeguard their independence,
181 they have done so primarily to preserve their faith and keep their
fetishes. They have shown such great attachment for these, that their
● [101] conquerors have described them as rebels and applied to them the epithet
Bamba, synonym of Kafri. These religious struggles in themselves
allow us to state as an indisputable fact that before the arrival of the
Moslems the Bambara were animistic and sacrificed to genii. /69/

776 Did they have an exact and precise idea of their genii as they
811 do now? Apparently yes, for they always reasoned using themselves
as a basis of comparison so that in their minds the invisible, impalpable
genii to whom they sacrificed had a striking resemblance to man.
It is not a man, and yet it is one, they say unable to define their
concept or idea, ma si fa do (1).

1. Ma; "man"; si fa' "certain kind";
do; "it is."

776 The Moslem word djin translates this idea precisely, and the
782 Bambara use it in everyday language; but when the day of the sacrifice
comes, they become unaware of it and there remains only one word
-- ma, meaning "man." When they redden with blood the bark of
[824] the baobab (Adansonia digitata), the tamarind tree, the false cedar
(family of the cedrelaceae), etc., to obtain the good graces and protection of the genie who dwells there, they always confer on it the
title ma ("man"), and never that of djiné. "Ma n'zira ba, ma n'tomi
ba, ma djala ba; O great baobab man, O great tamarind tree man,
O great false-cedar man!" begins the formula used by the sacrificer
in offering victims and millet flour to the genie (2). They also have

114 2. In /J. Henry/, "Culte des
esprits chez les Bambara
/Spirit Worship among the
Bambara/," Anthropos, Vol. III,
No. 4 (1908), p. 1 /p. 702/,
note 1, there is an error in translation.

776
196 What is the meaning of the word *sa*? Could it be the original name of the Divinity? Since certain Bantu tribes have a high regard for snakes and dedicate a cult to them, some Europeans have wanted to see in it a translation of the word "snake." That is a great and fundamental error. The word *sa*, "snake," and the word *sa* in the sentences *sa* *bi* *fign*, *sa* *bi* *na*, etc., may have the same spelling, but [194] the pronunciation is different. The hard "s" of *sa*, "snake," is pronounced by opening the teeth slightly and protruding the lips, and the word *sa* *in* *sa* *bi* *fign*, etc., is pronounced by closing the teeth and pulling in the lips. Thus, these are two quite distinct words. Moreover, to claim the snake is, or has been, the Bambara divinity seems to me a piece of stupidity. If they do not claim any bond of real or physical kinship even with the animals that are their taboo, one must believe *a fortiori* that they would not claim /77/ an animal, even a snake, as Creator and sovereign Lord. Some Bambara have it as a family taboo, and a branch of the Mande people have such great respect for the python *Minia* (1) that now they are known only by the

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[illegible]01

1. The Baganda of Uganda before they became Christian venerated the snake as the dwelling place of a demon. Their snake has a great resemblance to the animals that are family taboos for the Bambara, or better still, to the python *Minia*, taboo of the Mande branch commonly known under the name of *Minia*-*n*-*ka*. Since the *Minia*-*n*-*ka* derive their name from the word *Minia*, name of the snake that is venerated and an object of public worship, some have insisted that the *Bambara* or *Bamana* derive their name from the word *Bama*, meaning "cayman" /a species of alligator/. If the cayman, *Bama* in

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the Bambara language, had given its name to the people, this animal would be taboo for them, as the Minia is taboo for the Minianka, and the Mani or Mali, the hippopotamus, is taboo for the Malinke. None of this is true of the cayman in Bambara country; it is in no way the taboo of the tribe. Moreover, the word Bamana could just as well come from the word bama, a kind of tench /a fresh-water fish of the carp family/ which is found in abundance in the Bani and the Niger. This idea has not occurred to the partisans of the cayman, who undoubtedly are not familiar with the fish called bama. The word Bambara comes from the word bamba which means "rebel" and, in the mouths of the Moslems, carries the meaning of Kafri. Bambara means "the rebel who has never submitted to Islam," and the Negroes of the west speak of Bamako or Bambako, "the river of the rebels." Father Copte, a student of the Bambara recognized by the Negroes of the Ségou, quickly understood this fact and noted it in his accounts in the Annals of the White Fathers. Mr. De Lafosse, an administrator most conversant with the native laws, customs, and ways, recognized it also, and I share their opinion concerning the name Bambara.

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name of Minia-n-ka, the people of the Minia snake. But have the Minianka ever worshipped, or do they still worship, the snake as their

121 This work deals only with the Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta since it has already been noted that, save for their specifically local history, [4] a study of their concepts and institutions is valid in general for all of the Bambara.

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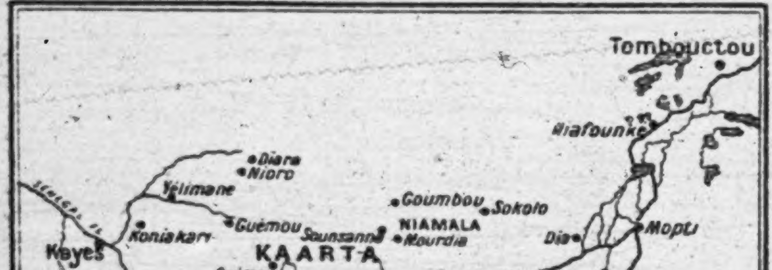
[133] It is exceedingly difficult, besides, to be entirely certain as to which of the Bambara actually belong to the Kaarta and Ségou areas since the two designations do not correspond to any very exact geographical region. When a native speaks of Kaarta or of Ségou, he only vaguely understands the terms, and this with good reason.


Tombouctou
Niafounké
Diara
Nioro
Yélimane
Goumbou
Sokolo
NIAMALA
Mourdia
Mopti
Koniakari
Guémou
Sounsanna
Kayes
KAARTA
Dia
Guémou Koura
Sansanding
Kirango
Dienné
Niamina
Ségou
San
Dina
SÉGOU
Kita
Bammako
Tabou
Niagassola
MANDÉ
Kangaba
Koutiala
Siguiri
Bougouni
Sikasso
Kankan
TORON
Niger
0 100 200 300

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131 I have noted elsewhere (1) that, etymologically speaking, the

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1. In my work Les Khassonké [The Kasonke], which appeared in the series, Revue du Monde Musulman.

101 103 131 word which we write and pronounce Kaarta means "country of the Karé" or, more accurately, "the group of the Karé." Wherever there are Karé people they are called, in the Soninké language, Karu-ta, [5] which is contracted to Karta. From this we made Kaarta because we misheard the long first "a." The word Kaarta designates a particular area only because of the people who inhabit it, and its value as a geographical expression is acquired only by extension. Among the natives the term is used for various areas within the region which extends from Goumbou to Koniakari and from Nioro to the Senegal River. On our maps, Kaarta is bounded by Kingui on the north, Diomboko on the west, Senegal and Bélédougou on the south, and Kaniaga on the east. However, all of these names of cantons themselves have very vague meanings.

101 103 131 614 For the purpose of the present work, the word Kaarta takes on a special meaning. The Bambara who founded a clan at Sounsan-na in the Karé country are called Karta-n-ko in the Soninké language and Karta-n-ka-u (the Kaarta people) in the Bambara language. As a result, Kaarta has become the name of the areas occupied by the clan in its various peregrinations.

The "people of Ségou" acquired their name in quite a different manner, since they were named for Ségou, the capital of the clan. The country of Ségou should be understood strictly to allude to the to-da which, to be described in chapter 5, was, by and large the area surrounding Ségou and occupied by the chief and his family and followers. In a wider sense, the country of Ségou referred to all the territory under the authority of the Ségou clan. At the height of the clan's power, "the country of Ségou" occupied both banks of the Niger, following the axis of the river from Kangaba to Timbuktu.

101 131 631 Our European need to have things clearly defined may be satisfied by having the territorial limits of Kaarta and Ségou set forth on a map, but on the native level, with which this book is primarily concerned, such local definition has little relevance. These empires did not aim to dominate any given area but rather sought to exploit as large a number of individuals as possible without regard to country or race.

French West African Natives FA2
Malinke FA27

F 101 103 double meaning is no less evident in the Tarikh-es-Soudan, especially on p. 161 of the French translation. The same double usage is evident in oral traditions.

Thus it is understandable that the word Mandé has come to be considered as an equivalent of our words "empire" and "kingdom" when they are used in a geographical sense, and that, as a result, the term has varied in application because it depended on an ever-changing territorial domain subject to the domination of successive ma.

M F 103 642 However, it is not only from the geographical point of view that the term Mandé has remained indefinite or vaguely defined; the same uncertainty prevails on the political level. In a general way, Mandé is considered to be exclusively the empire of the Mandingue people, who are one of the subdivisions of the group called Mandé by the Europeans (1). In order to understand the meaning attached to the word "empire" in western Sudan, it is essential to place oneself on the native level and not on that of our European civilization from which the term is borrowed.

F B 103 642 [614] Briefly, the Sudanese empire is a system of clans. It is formed by bringing together of elements taken over from clans that have either disintegrated or are in the process of doing so. It acquires power and extension through the influence of the founder or, less frequently, of one of his successors, and then falls into decline at the hands of enemies or as a result of schisms which arise at the death of the ruler on whose success and "flair" its fortunes have depended.

F B 101 103 It is this constantly repeated process of grouping, separation and regrouping which dominates the entire [15] history of the Sudanese empires and dynasties and which makes any study of the people so very difficult. The geographical nomenclature is,

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1. Mandé, as the name for a group of peoples or of native languages, is unknown to the Sudanese; in this sense it is used exclusively by the Europeans.

French West African Natives FA2
Malinke FA27

F B 101 103 of course, dependent on these social facts. Often a region is named after the people who inhabit it as, for instance, is the case with Kaarta. It may also derive its name from a dominant political group, and when a region has been ruled by successive groups, it acquires a series of superimposed names even though the territories to which they apply may not necessarily be identical; this, too, applies to Kaarta -- a poorly defined region.

This explains how it came about that different empires were lumped together under the same name, Mandé (and other variants). The empire ruled by the Keïta chiefs was merely the last to arise and it presumably dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century.

B *173 M 173 One tradition has it that the ancestors of the founders of this thirteenth-century empire came from the east -- specifically from Kong (1). Under the leadership of Kabala Simbo Keïta, they settled in Dodougou, a canton whose capital was at Tabou and whose chief, a Bambara of the Konnaté dyamu maintained his power with the help of a militarized group called Mandinké. This was a group similar to those composing the sofa, ton-dyon' or furu-ba-dyon' who supported the fortunes of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta. In the Soninké language the word mandinké means, M [101] literally, "a person of the master's (or lord's or king's) household," and in the plural it means "the master's (or king's) people."

The canton of Kiri (2), adjoining that of Dodougou, was

1. I see in this precision nothing more than the usual polarization of which I speak on p. 45 , note 1 .

2. The Dodougou (abbreviated to Do) and the Kiri are, indeed, considered to be the oldest cantons of the so-called Mandé clan. In this connection, see Humblot, "Du nom propre et des appellations chez les Malinké ..." [On Proper Names

*173 In addition to the traditions reported in what follows and emanating from the dyeli traditionists, Karé Tammoura and Gran Koaté, I was given the following explanations concerning the Kouloubali.

According to the first version, the sons of one Péné Kouloubali left Kéniéroba (1), northwest of Kangaba, in order to escape from the pursuit of their enemies. There were three brothers: Mamourou, the eldest, Nzan and Ngolo. They settled in Bani-n-ko at Dougouna, in the home of a blacksmith named Sékolo Balo. When their enemies followed them there, they fought for a year, and then Mamourou persuaded his brothers to flee. So they left, taking Sékolo Balo with them.

They crossed the Baoulé at Kana, thanks to the help of a poyon' who offered to ferry them since they had no boat. Ngolo, who was the last to cross, killed the poyon' and carried the body to Dionforongo (east of Barouéli) where he ate it.

●[103] The three brothers came to Ségou-koro-si-do (2), then to Sinsala, so named because of the "enclosure" (sinsa) built there by the Bozo, and better known as Sansanding. There, Mamourou advised separating, the better to elude their pursuers. Mamourou returned to Ségou-koro-si-do, and his descendants are the Kouloubali of that region.

Nzan settled near Ségala in a place called Sanabala after his wife Sanaba, by whom he had a son Nto. Nto had a son named Kéfa, who fathered Sama. The latter had four sons: Sara, who lived at Salaga; Touman, at Toumanbougou; Fara, at Diakoro; and Demba at Donguélé.

Ngolo settled at Kourouma, where he became one of the ancestors of the Kouloubali of that region. He married a Moorish

1. The period, undefined as always, certainly antedates the seventeenth century.

2. Si-do: "the forest of butter-trees," a place said to be near Ségou-koro.

[103]

History of the Empire of Kaarta

The Descendants of Nya Ngolo

*173 *Sounsan* (1). When Sounsan and his people had crossed
*173 the Niger with the help of the *poyon'*, they proceeded in the direction of Lamballaré (2). There, at the village of Darigo, Sounsan

[551]
[845]

1. As we shall see, the given name marks some event connected with the person's birth. It is common practice, when the delivery is difficult, to hang a rabbit's foot at the mother's side, hence the name Sounsan ("rabbit" in Bambara). The name Péné, used elsewhere, has the same etymology.

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Sounsan is said to have practiced the saddle-maker's trade at Kounando. It is told how one day he went with a *kulé* (a native carpenter) into the country to get some wood needed for a saddle. At one point the two became separated. The *kulé* found some honey and ate it, only to be taken sick. He threw up the honey on some stones and then went away. Soon after, Sounsan passed the spot and, seeing the honey, picked it up and ate it. When, on his way back, he learned how the honey happened to be there, he was so disgusted and cursed the *kulé* so roundly that, since that time, none of his people can touch a *kulé* with impunity. All members of that caste are thus *tne* (taboo) for that branch of the Kouloubali.

[103]

2. In the Soninké language, this is the name of the region watered by a swamp

*173
•103

(lambe, in the local dialect) which, south of Ouossébougou, has its source near Dongué and ends in a pool at Ouaha. In Soninké, "Lamballaré" means literally "on the edge of a watercourse," and the Bambara use "Kodala" in the same sense. In Sounsan's day, this was a small canton ruled by the Soninké of Darigo, a village called Douabougou (market) by the Bambara and situated on one of the branches of the Segabala (of the maps), a tributary of the Baoulé.

According to Raffenel (Vol. I, p. 365), the Soninké village was called Baïko, a name unknown to me and one which seems likely to have resulted from a mishearing of the name Darigo. In any case, its identification with Bammako, as proposed by Raffenel, is unacceptable.

*173 accepted the hospitality of a blacksmith, fa Siné Dyara, asking the latter's protection from probable pursuit by Barama Ngolo. Fa Siné was poor but he is said to have understood the language of the birds and, at the very moment when he was talking to Sounsan, a passing bird told him that powerful chiefs would descend from his guest. That is why he said to Sounsan: "I'm a poor man, but I'll do all I can for you and your descendants. In return, I ask that you promise -- for yourself and for them -- these things: first, that you never kill nor imprison any of my people; then [104] that, every time the head of your family changes, a wife and a horse belonging to the dead man be given to the head of my family."

[695] They swore on a copper anvil which was thrown into a well, and after that fa Siné told Sounsan where he was to settle.

Sounsan was still closely allied to some of the Taraoré, whose descendants now live in the Diangounté area. They gave him a wife named Dougo (1), who was the mother of his son Massa.

1. According to another version, Dougo

775 551 Like this first theory, the second, too, can be accepted, and the names can be translated as a lament of the parents to those who congratulate them: "He is without shame (doubtless he has come back to leave us again)." --"We may as well throw him away (i.e., will he not leave us shortly?)." -- "He is a worthless man (i.e., do you think he will not abandon us?)." -- "He is nothing (i.e., it all is the same to us whether we have him or not; will he stay with us longer than a breath which passes and disappears?)."

But whatever theory is accepted, the Negroes' belief in the reincarnation of children who died at the breast before having attained the use of reason remains unchanged. They are also generally unanimous in believing in the reincarnation of young men and women and men and women who die in the prime of life. Such persons have not completed the whole cycle of their existence and must begin it again.

And what of the old men? Do not they come back to life? When a child brings to mind the features of a deceased elder of the family, does it not receive his name? A Bambara never uses the name of a man whom he respects in vain or in an unsuitable manner; so a child animated by the soul of an old man is given a second name, a borrowed name, and the real name is known only by the father, the mother, close friends, and the one who bears it. However, many are given a most expressive name which testifies to this belief; they are called segi, sagi, "he who has come back to life."

764 775 The legends -- and there are many -- only confirm what I put forward; so need I cite any? An old man of Fobougou, a village about 30 or 40 kilometers from Ségou, not far from the Bani on the road that leads to Koutiala, was given magnificent funeral honors at his death. The fetishes were brought out of their dirty dens and bathed in the blood of victims; the women sang to the sound of the drum for three days running. It was a festival which lacked nothing, not even
775 d'lo, or millet beer. A few years later some young people of the village going in search of work went into the Tlébi (1) region,

1. The term Tlébi is used to denote the entire western region, including Bamako, Kati, Kita, Kayes, Bakel, etc., as far as the ocean.

SYSTEM OF TRANSCRIPTION

104

â,	an in "planche."	ŭ /u/,	ou in French
ẽ,	in in "dinde."	û,	un in French
ę,	ě in "jet."	č,	for "tch."
e,	e in "dé."	ǰ,	dj in "djinn."
ǫ,	o in "vol."	ñ,	gn in "hargne."
o,	o in "pot."		
õ,	o in "balcon."		

The native words transcribed in roman letters must be pronounced in the French manner.

In some cases, the translation only of Bambara expressions is put between quotation marks in order not to encumber the text. Moreover, this translation is literal in order to remain as close as possible to the Bambara thought even if it results in some awkwardness or turns of phrase difficult to understand.

614 "the people (of the clan) of Massa"; the Segu-n-ka-u (2).
631

2. From another point of view, Segu-n-ka-u means "the people of the country of Ségou."

"the people (of the clan) of Ségou."

104 Since we are always obsessed by our own system of or-
128 ganization, these terms appear in our writings as village (dugu),
canton or province (kafu), and empire (ton', which is a clan).

Because of the convenience of expressions that are familiar to us, we shall use this terminology in this study, and it seems essential to define briefly the value of these terms in native society in order to avoid ambiguity which, to say the least, gives rise to distorted delusions.

In Kaarta and the Ségou country before the time of the
173 two great clans whose history we have given and whose develop-
563 ment and operation we are about to describe, there were dugu
631 which usually had no connections or at most were joined in some
ephemeral kafu. These kafu were composed of a majority of Bambara mixed with Soninké and people of other races. The Soninké dugu were noted for their prosperity, sometimes even wealth, and this gave them a degree of pre-eminence over the Bambara dugu. This prosperity rested on the labor of a slave population that the Soninké had managed to acquire for the most part by commercial dealings.

This de facto hegemony usually had no corresponding political or administrative organization; its only outward sign was the scorn with which the Soninké regarded the less fortunate Bambara and, conversely, the sullen hostility of the Bambara toward the rich Marka (as they called the Soninké). As a consequence, local quarrels broke out from time to time which sometimes developed into bloody conflicts. The early history of the Massa-si clan is a good example of this state of affairs, to judge by the record in the chronicle cited above.

173 The Ségou-Kaarta regions, under the authority of Mandé
and Songhaï clans, were in this state, in semiobscurity because
631 they were outside the zone of direct administration by these clans.

/xiii/ Introduction

101 131 The Bambara tribes which form part of the Mandé group are at present spread out in French Sudan from the 11th to the 14th degrees latitude north and from the 7th to the 11th degrees longitude west. Three groups which have settled respectively in the circle of Issa Ber, in Kaarta, and in the circle of Odienné are noticeably separated from the central group which occupies the shores of the Niger around Bamako and Ségou.

105 The Bambara live in small villages in the savanna; they practice primarily agriculture (millet, digitaria /Fonio/, rice, maize, etc.), but also herding and gardening. The shore dwellers of the Niger are fishermen and live in symbiotie relationships with the Bozo who taught them fishing techniques and who are generally recognized as the first inhabitants of these regions.

173 The Bambara state that they came from Mandé. This region, where the successive capitals of the ancient kingdom of Mali were situated, has long attracted the attention of research workers (1).

Moreover, it is "the center from which radiated forty-four tribes at present spread out in the area between the Atlantic coast, the Senegal, and the Niger, or to Dahomey" (2). The region indicated above also

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1. See J. Vidal, *Au sujet de l'emplacement du Mali (ou Melli* /on the subject of the Mali site/), pp. 251-268;*Le véritable emplacement du Mali* /The true site of the Mali/, pp. 606-619. This author designates by Mali I to IV the four villages of Dyélibakoro, Niani, Maninkoura, and Kangaba, which had been successively the royal city. See also Ch. Monteil, *Les Empires du Mali* /The empires of Mali/, p. 13.

2. See D. Zahan. *Aperçu sur la pensée théogonique des Dogon* /Survey of theogonic thought of the Dogon/, pp. 113-133. This author gives the name of the tribes originating

105 Identification

The Bambara (Bamana, Banmana) belong to the Mandingo branch of the Niger-Congo linguistic stock. They numbered 830,000 in 1933, but Urvoy (1942) estimates them at 1,200,000. Paques (1954) gives their number as about 1,000,000, but this figure excludes about 125,000 mixed-blood Fulani-Bambara, 15,000 Somono fishermen, and perhaps other special groups. Despite centuries of contact with Islam, the Bambara have remained almost exclusively pagan. Delafosse (1912) reported only 30,000 Moslems, mainly members of the Somono fishing caste, and Urvoy (1942) states that Moslems then numbered fewer than 100,000. The Bambara were subject to the old empire of Ghana and then to the Malinke empire of Mali (Melli). They gained their independence about 1670, when the Bambara kingdoms of Segou and Kaarta inherited the remnants of the Malinke state. These native kingdoms, in turn, fell before the expansion of the Tukulor around 1854-61.

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, with some irrigation and use of manure. The staple is "small millet" (Pennisetum spicatum; Paques calls it P. typhoideum). Next in importance are maize and sorghum (Andropogon sorghum and A. saccharus; Paques reports Sorghum vulgare and saccharine sorghum). Also of considerable importance are rice (both the African Oryza glaberrima and the Asiatic O. sativa), wheat (still in the experimental stage), fonio (Digitaria exilis and D. iburna; probably Bazin's "eleusine" is the same), bananas, manioc (Manihot dulcis), yams, and earth peas. Lesser crops include peppers, tomatoes, onions, squash, melons (Citrullus sp.), sesame (Sesamum indicum), beans (Phaseolus sp. and Vigna catjang), okra (Hibiscus esculentus or Abelmoschus esculentus), roselle (Hibiscus sabdariffa), peanuts (introduced from America in the 18th century), sweet potatoes, eggplant, peas, potatoes (since 1941), and gourds. Fruit trees include mangoes, papayas, oranges, limes. Textile crops include cotton, Hibiscus cannabinus, and recently sisal and kapck.

1:Murdock--2 E-4 (No date) 1958 Fl Africa
Bambara FA8
Bambara

105 There is considerable gathering of the fruits of Bassia parkei (for shea butter), Parkia biglobosa (for flour), baobab (Adensonia digitata), Kola (Sterculia acuminata), Corchorus, Cenchrus, Cassia, tamarind, Eriodendron anfructuosum, and Khaya senegalensis.

Cattle are kept in fair numbers (milk and butter used), but apparently almost exclusively by Fulani. There are numerous goats, sheep, dogs (eaten), and chickens, and a few donkeys, horses, and pigs. Bees are kept.

There is considerable fishing, especially by the Somono, and some hunting. Trade is important, and is largely in the hands of Moslem Marka. There are markets.

Sex Division of Labor

The men hunt, fish (though women fish in shallow water), clear land, plant crops, hoe (with some assistance from the women), and in general do the bulk of the agricultural work. The women, however, cultivate gardens, work in irrigated cotton, rice, and onion fields, and do most of the harvesting. They also gather (but men gather honey) and (according to Aubert and Paques) tend and milk cows (but Labouret says men do animal husbandry). Women care for poultry.

Property

Land ownership is invested in the local "chef de la terre" but is held in usufruct, without right of sale, in part by individuals and in part collectively by extended families. The latter also have collective property in houses, trees, livestock, and slaves.

Inheritance is patrilineal. Property descends to younger brothers in order of age, then to half-brothers by the same father in order of age, then to the head of the extended family for private property but to ElSo for family property. Monteil, contra Aubert and Ortoli, says that family property descends undivided to ElSo, is divided among daughters in default of sons, and goes to male collaterals in the absence of children.

Social Stratification

Bambara society is stratified into a class of warrior

105 nobles (including royalty), free commoners, slaves, and despised endogamous castes. The latter include smiths, tanners, woodworkers, hunters, fishermen (the Somono), and, lowest of all, "griots" (bards, musicians, and family archivists). Slave status is acquired by capture in war or enslavement for crime. The children of slaves are slaves, but if the father is free both the slave woman and her child become free.

Marriage

Marriages are arranged by the heads of extended families through an intermediary. Girls are betrothed in infancy. A bride-price is customary; it is paid by the head of the groom's patri-family to the head of the bride's family. It consists of 30,000 to 40,000 cowries (Gallieni), of eight cattle (Aubert), of goods including livestock and also of premarital agricultural bride-service (Paques). Marriage by exchange of women between two families is also quite common, being normally effected by the collusive abduction of one woman and the gift of the other in composition; in exchange marriages the bride-price is foregone, but ceremonial gifts are retained. Paques reports that a MoBr owes his SiSo a wife, normally giving the latter one of his own sister's daughters (cross-cousin marriage); in return the nephew owes him agricultural labor.

There is general, preferential, and exclusively nonsororal polygyny. The first wife is chief wife. Each co-wife has her separate quarters, and the Hu rotates. Secondary unions are preferential with ElBrWi and WiSi (only if Wi is dead), allowed with FaWi, FaBrWi, but forbidden with YoBrWi, SoWi, and WiDa.

Family

The residential unit is a patrilocal extended family (up to 80 or more members), occupying a compound. Each has a patriarchal head (fa), who administers the family property, directs collective agricultural work (about two days a week), and adjudicates disputes. He is assisted by a council of family elders, and is succeeded by his next younger classificatory Br, then his eldest So or BrSo.

105 Residence

Residence is patrilocal--in the extended family compound of HuFa. The heir to the headship of a patrifamily moves into the domicile of his predecessor.

Kin Groups and Exogamy

There is a definite tendency toward local endogamy.

Paques reports that cross-cousin marriage, especially with MoBrDa, is allowed or even preferential in some regions, forbidden in others. Aubert says marriage is forbidden with either maternal or paternal kin. Ortoli states that descent from a remembered common ancestor is a bar to marriage.

There are patronymic patri-sibs with totemic taboos, which are divided into lineages. Most sources state that the sibs are agamous, but Ortoli reports "clan" exogamy, by which he possibly means lineage exogamy. The core of each extended family is a minor patri-lineage.

Kinship Terminology (mainly from Paques, A from Aubert, K from Koelle)

Fa--fa. Mo, FaWi--ba (Paques also ma, na). Ch--dɛ́, denn (A), denge (K). Da--dem-muso (K). ElBr--kɔrɔ, koro (A). YoBr--doro (PK), doko (A). ElSi--koro-musso (A), nkoro-muso (K). YoSi--doko-musso (A), ndoro-muso (K). Wi--muso. Hu--t'ɛ, k'ɛ.

FaBr--benoro. MoBr--ben-nkɛ, benke (A). FaSi--ntene, tene-musso (A), bingi-musu (P). MoSi--ba-ko. Parallel nieces and nephews called "child." SiCh (m.s.)--be-ni, bare-ndi. GrFa--mokɔ, m'ke (A). GrMo--mo-muso.

Sibling terms extended to parallel cousins. Cross-cousin--Kalame, banindin (given by Aubert for "maternal cousin" as opposed to sibling terms for "paternal cousin").

Settlement Pattern

The Bambara live in compact villages and towns, usually composed of several slightly separated quarters, each surrounded by a mud wall. Two house types are reported: (1) round huts with cylindrical brick walls and conical

105 thatched roofs, and (2) rectangular houses with parapeted brick walls, flat terrace earth roofs supported by logs, and an interior court. Delafosse says the two occur concurrently, Arcin that the former occurs in the S, the latter in the N, Bazin that the former occurs only in contact with the Malinke, and other tribes with cone-cylinder dwellings, Urvoy that the former prevails in the W (S and SE of the Kagoro) but that the rectangular type with terrace roof is the usual Bambara type.

Community Organization

Patri-families (see Family) are localized as minor patrilineages. The quarters (see Settlement Pattern) are possibly localized lineages. Paques indicates that villages result from the growth and fission of patrifamilies, and that through a similar process districts of patrilineally related villages arise from one village. This suggests patrilocal clan-communities. Boys are circumcised and girls excised (clitoridectomy) shortly after puberty. Prior to this each sex is organized into age-grades (approximately infancy to 6, 6 to 10, and 10 to 15), membership in which endures for life. Each age-set has a head and other officials, and acts as a unit in collective work and festivals. Prior to initiation, boys and girls are paired off in pseudo-marriages (sex relations forbidden), and through this and collective labor a substantial degree of education and socialization are achieved.

Local Government

Each village has a headman (dugutigi), who is a "chef de la terre" or priest-chief, and is descendant of the original founders of the village. He adjudicates disputes assisted by a council of elders composed of the heads of quarters and extended families. He administers the land of the village, communes with the ancestors, and sacrifices at a special shrine which symbolizes the unity of the community. He is succeeded by his YoBr, then ElSo.

105 State

Villages are organized into districts under a district chief (fama), who is a member of the dominant "family" in the district; he is succeeded by his YoBr, then ElSo or BrSo. He is assisted by a "council of notables". Like a local headman, he represents the land and ancestors in a religious sense. He also dispenses justice, directs public works, and commands in war. He receives half of all war booty, a share in all wild and domestic animals killed, all gold and ivory, and fees from markets, pasturage, and ferrying. Recently there has been no political organization above the district level, but formerly, during the dominance of the great states of Segou and Kaarta, districts were grouped for administrative purposes into provinces headed by appointive chiefs (often sons of the ruler). The head of these states maintained a court and capital, and like village and district chiefs was believed to mediate with the supernatural.

Warfare

Each district chief has an army, used primarily for plundering and slave raiding. At periods in their history the Bambara have waged wars of conquest.

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1;Murdock--7 E-4 (No date) 1958 Fl Africa
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Bambara

105 Koelle, S. W. Polyglotta Africana. London, 1854. (A few kin terms only).

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Monteil, C. Les Bambara de Ségou et du Kaarta. Paris, 1924. (Probably the standard monograph, but not in Yale Library and hence not consulted; extensively cited, however, by Paques).

___ Djenné. Paris, 1932. (A few items).

Ortoli, J. Coutume Bambara. Publications du Comité d'Etudes Historiques et Scientifiques de l'Afrique Occidentale Française, ser. A,IX,127-159. 1939. (A fair amount of information).

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1: Murdock--8 E-4 (No date) 1958

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Bambara FA8
Kagoro

105 Identification

The Kagoro (Bagane) belong to the Mandingo branch of the Niger-Congo linguistic stock. They number about 21,000, of whom only 6,000 are Moslem. They speak Bambara and are said to be a mixture of Bambara and Fulani. Paques reports 27,000 in 1950. Lavergne du Tressan reports 27,000 in 1950 and says the Bambara are mixed with Soninke. Their territory has repeatedly been invaded by Soninke migrations, was the seat of struggles between the Soninke and the Malinke, and was later actively colonized by the Bambara. They are mainly scattered among stronger populations, but did have a small state in the 18th century. They are pagans.

Settlement Pattern

The prevailing house type is the cylindrical hut with brick walls and conical thatched roof.

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Delafosse, M. Haut-Sénégal-Niger. 3 vols. Paris, 1912. (A very few items).
Urvoy, Y. Petis atlas ethno-démographique du Soudan. Paris, 1942. (A very few items).

1: Dieterlen, Germaine. Essai sur la Religion Bambara /An Essay on the Religion of the Bambara/. Preface by Marcel Griaule. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1951.

Pp. xx, 240; 6 plates, 17 text figures /HRAF manuscript pp. iv, 293/

Yale: Nkd 81 B1 951D

/Translated from the French for the Human Relations Area Files by Katia Wolf./

/Not translated for the files: preface and the bibliography./

/This is a general work by a well-known French ethnographer dealing with Bambara religion and its relations with other aspects of the culture. The main sections of the book are concerned with mythology, the gods, the individual and his religion, sacrifice and the altar, technology and religion, the cults, various rites, and divination. Dieterlen tries to relate each individual aspect of Bambara religion to basic philosophy and world-view. She also shows the relationship of Bambara religion to other religions in the Sudan, which resemble it in most basic aspects. --Analyst/

Field date: 1946-1949 Evaluation: Ethnologist - 5
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary Processed in 1960

2: Monteil, Charles. Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta: Étude Historique, Ethnographique et Littéraire d'une Peuplade du Soudan Française [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta: an Historical, Ethnographical and Literary Study of a People of the French Sudan]. Paris: Émile Larose, 1924.

Pp. ii, 403; 1 map; 8 photographs; bibliography.

[Not translated: pp. 346-401]

University of Pennsylvania Museum: Mu572 9662 M763 (HRAF Ms. pp. iii, 384/

[Translated from the French for the Human Relations Area Files by Kathryn A. Looney.]

/This work by a government administrator is considered one of the basic sources of information on the Bambara. It is primarily concerned with the history, beliefs, and social life of the people, with only incidental data on the material culture. From the author's descriptions, it is apparent that associations based on age grouping, 2: Monteil, Charles.

religious cults, and secret societies are co-terminous; similarly, governmental and territorial control is exercised by the extended kinship group which the author terms "clan" and which constitutes the community. As a result, data related to several aspects of the culture have often been assigned to only one of the principal categories. Chapter 7 of the original, which contains Bambara texts and their French translations, has not been processed for the file. --Analyst/

Field date: 1902-1923
Analyst: George R. Bedell

Evaluation: Government Official-5
Processed in 1960

3: Paques, Viviana. Les Bambara /The Bambara/. International African Institute, Ethnographic Survey of Africa, Western Africa, French Series, Part I. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954.

Pp. viii, 123; end map; bibliography. HRAF ms: pp. iv, 151.

HRAF Copy.

[Translated from the French for the Human Relations Area Files by Thomas Turner.]

/This general survey of Bambara culture is one of the series of monographs on African peoples sponsored by the International African Institute in London. The author has done field work in French West Africa. At the time she wrote the book, she was attached to the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique in Paris. This book, however, is based mostly upon published materials rather than personal observations. More than half of the book is devoted to data on demography, tribal

3: Paques, Viviana.

groups, language, geography, economics and history. Cultural data include information on family and political organization, religion, birth, initiation, marriage, death, and the arts. The influence of French administration is mentioned throughout the book. --Analyst/

Field date: no date
Analyst: Robert Lee

Evaluation: Social Scientist - 4
Processed in 1959

4: Henry, Joseph. L'ame d'un peuple Africain. Les Bambara Leur vie psychique, ethique, sociale, religieuse [The Soul of an African People. The Bambara: Their Psychic, Ethical, Religious and Social Life]. Bibliotheque-Anthropos, Tome 1, Fasc. 2. Münster i. W.: Druck und Verlag der Aschendorffschen Buchhandlung, 1910.

Pp. viii, 240; 24 plates, 11 text figures (HRAF ms. pp. iv, 287)

Yale: Nkd81 N1 B10h

[Translated from the French for the Human Relations Area Files by Anne Coleman.]

[This volume is a study of the religion and some aspects of the life cycle of the Bambara by a French Roman Catholic missionary who had spent some years among them around the turn of the century. In the course of the work, Henry discusses the Bambara mentality and taboos, animism, general ideas on human life, Bambara ideas of God and other beings, fetishism, cults and sacrifices, the early life of the Bambara, circumcision and excision, marriage and death. Henry's views on the Bambara are highly colored by his own religious background, but, allowing for

4: Henry, Joseph.

this, he was a very perceptive observer of Bambara life. --Analyst]

Field date: ca. 1900
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Missionary-5
Processed in 1960

112 FA8 Bambara

Bazin, Hippolyte. Les Bambara et leur Langue. [The Bambara and Their Language]. Anthropos, Vol. 1, pp. 684-694. Salzburg: Zaunrith'sche Buch-, Kunst- und Steindruckerei, Akt.-Ges., 1906.

Yale: Nk10 + An89 v. 1

/This brief source is divided into two parts, one devoted to Bambara culture and biology, and the other to their language. Brief sketches are given of their economy, physical characteristics, religion and social organization. The author gives some information on Bambara grammar and phonology, literacy, and method of numeration. Bazin was a missionary of the Pères Blancs and Vicar Apostolic to the French Sudan. --Analyst/

Bazin, Hippolyte. Les Bambara et leur Langue. [The Bambara and Their Language]. Anthropos, Vol. 1, pp. 684-694. Salzburg: Zaunrith'sche Buch-, Kunst- und Steindruckerei, Akt.-Ges., 1906.

Yale: Nk10 + An89 v.1

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112 FA8 Bambara

Ortoli, Jean. Coutume Bambara (Cercle de Bamako) /Bambara Custom (Circle of Bamako)/. Publications du Comité d'Études Historiques et Scientifiques de l'Afrique Occidentale Française, Série A, No. 9, pp. 127-159. Paris: Éditeurs Larose, 1939.

Yale: Bk19 5e 9

/This source is a summary of the judical customs of the Bambara of the (administrative) Circle of Bamako. Included is information on the family, marriage, including bride-price, the ceremony, divorce, kinship and descent, property, succession and inheritance, and contracts and obligations. Ortoli is a French government official. --Analyst/

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Ortoli, Jean. Coutume Bambara (Cercle de Bamako) /Bambara Custom (Circle of Bamako)/. Publications du Comité d'Études Historiques et Scientifiques de l'Afrique Occidentale Française, Série A, No. 9, pp. 127-159. Paris: Éditeurs Larose, 1939.

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112 FA8 Bambara

Aubert, Alfred. Coutume Bambara (Cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Circle of Bougouni)]. Publications du Comité d'Études Historiques et Scientifiques de l'Afrique Occidentale Française, Série A, No. 9, pp. 1-126. Paris: Larose Editeurs, 1939.

Yale: Bk19 5e 9

/This source is a summary of the juridical customs of the Bambara of the (administrative) Circle of Bougouni, written by a French government administrator. Included is information on the organization of the canton, judicial organization, sanctions, the family, marriage, gifts, wills, succession and inheritance, property, and contracts and obligations.--Analyst/

112 FA8 Bambara

Aubert, Alfred. Coutume Bambara (Cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Circle of Bougouni)]. Publications du Comité d'Études Historiques et Scientifiques de l'Afrique Occidentale Française, Série A, No. 9, pp. 1-126. Paris: Larose Editeurs, 1939.

Yale: Bk19 5e 9

/This source is a summary of the juridical customs of the Bambara of the (administrative) Circle of Bougouni, written by a French government administrator. Included is information on the organization of the canton, judicial organization, sanctions, the family, marriage, gifts, wills, succession and inheritance, property, and contracts and obligations.--Analyst/

3:Paques
113

Bambara FA8

/For bibliography see the foreign text, pp. 113-119. --Analyst/

/xi/

Foreword

114 The present work is part of a series of studies undertaken in French Sudan since 1931 by the Griaule Missions.

In the course of the sixth, seventh, and eighth expeditions (1946, 1948, 1949) the research dealt with the religious institutions of the Bambara. In this essay we have presented, with the necessary comments, the results of the inquiries conducted by the author, while taking into consideration the work of her teammates.

The information was gathered in the region of Bamako at Koulikoro, Kayo, and Kangaba; in the circle of Ségou at Konodimini, Banankoroni, Diammarabougou, Soroba, Massala, Toko, Shouola, Kokou Banankoro, Pelengena, Sama, Kala, Kalabougou, Ségoubougou, and Ségoukoura; and in the various quarters of the capital city. /Bamako/.

Some elements of the material described were gathered for the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire of Dakar.

115 The Bambara who collaborated regularly in the gathering of information are the following.

Dyodo Diallo, son of Zangué Diallo, notable of Ségou.
Mamadou Diara, director of the rural school of Bamako.
Bala Diara, of Banankoroni, farmer, hunter, diviner, chief of the Komo, chief of the Kworé.
Dji Diara, of Soroba, farmer, hunter, healer, chief of the Nama.
Bakonimba Koulibali, of Soroba, farmer, chief of the Komo.
Boï Koulibali, teacher at Konodimini.
Mousa Woulalé, of Pelengena, griot. /minstrel and herald/
Mousa Diara, of Sama, farmer.
Nadyè Dambèlè, of Konodimini, potter.

000 Numerous chiefs, notables, priests, and generally speaking, all those who were sources of interesting information were consulted. We thank them for their collaboration.

We also thank the Governor of the Sudan and the Administrators of the circles of Bamako, Ségou, and Mopti, /xii/ the Director of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire for the facilities they have provided us.

This study was conducted under the direction of Mr. Marcel Griaule whom we thank for his help in the field and for his advice concerning the presentation of the material. We also thank Mrs. de Ganay who has collected some of this material.

177 121 substratum on which each tribe has grafted its original system. The study of this substratum would help define the problem of origins and influences.

After this, we have at our disposal the support of philology and above all the advantage of seeing the Bambara live their beliefs and of discovering their myths in a crude but expressive material as well as in numerous rites. The observations made over a wide field of inquiry serve as the basis for the presentation of this religious system.

114 121 The Bambara have been for a long time the subject of articles and works, of which we will give below a concise bibliography. The only author who, until now, has attempted to describe their beliefs as a system is L. Tauxier whose study of La Religion Bambara /Bambara religion/ takes into account to a large extent the works of the Abbé Henry and Ch. Monteil. However, through the descriptions of these different observers which are certainly conscientious, this religion appears as a composite of diverse and even inconsistent elements with no apparent link between them. Despite a uniform plan and a laudable absence of preconceived ideas, L. Tauxier has been unable to bring out the fundamental concepts of the people he observed.

In fact, the study of a present-day Negro religion runs into difficulties of various kinds stemming on the one hand from the necessity of going into the field and on the other hand from the largely esoteric character of the doctrine. These circumstances make this study essentially a work of discovery.

Indeed, Bambara religion, like all Sudanese religions, has an exoteric part, quite easily accessible, which observation conducted along scientific lines may reveal in detail. Rules of life admitted by all, beliefs openly professed, and public or private practices may be the object of detailed work. But this religion, like that of the neighboring peoples, rests upon a doctrine whose fundamental principles
[609] are known to elders and initiates who show considerable aversion to confiding in strangers, particularly whites. Such a situation explains the ignorance in which scholarship has remained for so long concerning the religious way of thinking of this people (1).

812 1. The Bambara themselves distinguish between two kinds of knowledge. The first, called doni fyẽma "knowledge (which has) wind" /xviii/ is superficial

812 and considered to be "the introduction to beliefs and customs." It belongs to adults who know little of cosmology. On the contrary, the second, called "deep knowledge" (doniya duna or kuru doniya), is restricted to priests, heads of families, elders of both sexes who are versed in "the science of the things of creation." It can only be acquired slowly in the course of successive initiations and through actual instruction which is sometimes diffused during the rites.

● 114 121 /xviii/ A rigorous method of observation which neglects no detail and which involves the use of close collaboration from the natives has brought forth a system coherent in all its parts and, it may be said, based on a metaphysics hitherto unknown. Taking the Bambara postulates as a point of departure, the sequence of events through the myths, the development of institutions and technology, their operation and the actual destiny of man in the cosmos all unfold in a logical framework.

On the other hand, this system is projected into the concrete in the form of symbols which borrow the most diversified aspects and which play an active role. The symbolism not only penetrates religious life proper by appearing in the sanctuaries, in the cult materials (shapes and sign writing), or during religious ceremonies (times and places, rituals, etc.), but is present in every aspect of secular life and daily behavior.

The metaphysics and the religion of this people offer a structural entity which includes all social, technological, and economic activities. In the following chapters, we shall attempt to clarify these principles and this system. We believe we may safely state that certain inconsistencies or contradictions presented by the religious system as it is described here are not due to Bambara thought—even though it is subtle and based on a dialectic—but to lacunae in the investigation.

773 [524] both the waters that flowed over the earth in the past and those that will spread over the world when Faro orders them (Fig. 4).

While awaiting that day, Faro continues his work. Taking the spiral route originally followed at the time of the reorganization of the world, every four centuries he travels about, inspecting the confines of the world, and then returns to the central point whence he surveys and governs the universe.

Chapter 2

The Representations

776 /34/ The duality of *glã*, in the microcosm that is man by his twin souls (*ni* and *dya*), is projected into the universe in the form of the pair, sky-earth, originally formed by the splitting of the spirit in two. The pair is represented by two supernatural powers, Faro and Pemba, to whom the principal Bambara cults are addressed.

Pemba is both spirit, strength, and matter. He is actually represented by an engraved piece of wood, symbol of plank originally responsible for the creation of all living things on earth. Theoretically, each family has one.

Faro, master of the word, reigns both in the sky and in the waters, which are the earthly reflection of the sky. In his capacity as master of the word and reorganizer of the universe, custodian of life, and guardian of souls, Faro, light and vibration, reigns in the seventh heaven. As master of the waters, he is described by the Bambara as a living being who has a body and is subject to metamorphosis. Yet to the initiated, he remains first and foremost a higher spirit, detached from contingencies and free in the exercise of the sovereign power conferred on him.

In order to understand fully the spirit of the Bambara religion, it is necessary to examine all the representations of these powers (1).

776 114 1. A few authors have summarily described Faro, in particular, L. Tauxier in *Religion bambara* (pp. 142-145), in

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which he quotes Msgr. Bazin and the Abbé Henry. These authors have not disclosed the fundamental role of this power nor the area he covers.

It would be proper to compare here these representations with those observed by the Griaule missions in the Sudan such as the Nommo of the Dogon, the Domfé of the Kouroumba, and Faro or Yégou of the Bozo, and published in the following books and articles:

M. Griaule, Masques Dogon /Dogon Masks/; "Le Domfé des Kouroumba /The Domfé of Kouroumba/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. II (1941), pp. 7-20. D. Paulme, Organisation sociale des Dogon /Social Organization of the Dogon/. S. de Ganay, Les Devises des Dogon /Dogon Device/; Le Binou Yébéné /The Yébéné Binou/. G. Dieterlen, Les Ames des Dogon; "Notes sur le Génie des Eaux chez les Bozo /Notes on the Water Spirit of the Bozo/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 12 (1942), pp. 149-155. G. Dieterlen and S. de Ganay, Le Génie des Eaux chez des Dogon /The Water Spirit among the Dogon/. M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau. Mrs. B. Appia has also published interesting observations in "Note sur le Génie des Eaux en Guinée /Note on the Water Spirit in Guinea/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 14 (1944), pp. 33-42.

/35/

Pemba

776 Pemba, born of primordial vibration, was originally a "globule," kuru, which whirled around to create the earth. While he was a whirlwind, a molecule broke off and became a seed, which fell onto the earth, sprouted and became the Acacia albida. The latter grew,

Spiritual Principles (1)

● 114 1. A few comments on the spiritual principles of the Bambara (in particular on the dya and the nyama) have been collected in the chapter entitled "Théorie des âmes" by Tauxier, La Religion bambara (pp. 14-25), in which the author appraises the works of the Abbé Henry and of Ch. Monteil. Some of the observations made in the following chapter have been summarized by the author in "La Personne chez les Bambara" and in "Note sur le tere chez les Bambara /Note on the Tere among the Bambara/."

It will be useful to compare this study of spiritual principles with the studies made among the Dogon and presented respectively by M. Griaule, S. de Ganay, and the author in Masques Dogon, Les Devises des Dogon, and Les Âmes des Dogon.

761 776 The Soul, ni, and the Double, dya:

[826] Faro controls the principle of life in water, which is his realm as well as the life-giving element par excellence. In the bodies of living beings, this principle has its seat in the blood. The blood of the sacrifices offered to the spirit (or failing that, the juice of the tomato, a transformation of blood) is a contribution to the reservoir of life controlled by Faro—life which he redistributes in all its forms throughout the universe. Water is the privileged element in which life may persevere indefinitely. Elsewhere, life is maintained only if water comes to nourish it.

761 776 842 833 Faro's creative function is materialized by each marital partner eating a tomato before sexual relations. This act is accompanied by the recital of a prayer. The juice of the fruit, which contains the body of the future child, transmits life according to the following mechanism:

761 776 842 824 Faro receives the offerings of tomatoes grown ritually in the consecrated fields, as well as the blood of victims slain in his name above the waters. Blood and juice, spreading over water, the fertilizing agent, are collected by the swallow, Faro's airborne messenger. Liberated in space, they return to the soil with fertilizing rain and penetrate the tomato seeds which thus contain a particle of generative power.

*173 814 217 212 These, in brief, are the difficulties encountered in dealing with sources for native historical tradition. When Islam introduced [25] a written language, there was created a new category of archivists, the marabouts. They have added this duty to many others; it cannot be proved that they have purged the job of its former vices, but it may be stated categorically that they have added a few new ones.

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1. Now chief of the village of Ambidédi (Gadiaga).

571 182 with individuals in the same way as individuals deal with each other. They are not only moral persons, as we put it, but they are truly persons, [156] as evidenced by the Blacks' impulsive need for anthropomorphism.

812 Let us note, finally, that a Black does not abstract himself from surrounding nature; nor has he reached the stage of development at which man regards himself as a kind of intermediary between the natural and the supernatural. The Black is an integral part of nature and that is why he treats it like himself. Therefore, natural phenomena are subjected on his behalf to the same kind of ritual sequences as those followed in his own behavior.

Chapter 3

Communities

1. General Considerations

● 114 — 631 Native society is not simple, and Europeans studying these countries have used terminology which, not being defined, has obscured reality.

In particular, they have used the terms "kingdom" and "empire" to describe Sudanese states, and both authors and readers have taken these expressions to imply a social organization more or less analogous to those meant by these words in our country.

631 These empires or kingdoms, however, are simply clans, i.e., political groups that have imposed their authority on other groups whose members then become their tributaries, members of a caste, or slaves. Such an empire, if one wishes to use this term, has no exact geographical boundaries or, if one prefers, its boundaries are constantly changing. Furthermore, the country embraced by this term has two parts: territories which may be said to be under direct administration, in which the authority of the clan is directly imposed; and those territories whose position with respect to the ruling clan

596 614 The functions of the "fa." The duties of the fa are many and complex; for the sake of clarity, we shall study them under three headings: cult; relations between communities; administration of property (which will be studied in connection with community property).

596 614 782 Cult. Religion gives considerable strength to the family since nothing is decided without consulting the manes and the gods. Raffenel has given us a picture of old Niany praying to his manes on behalf of his absent son: "O my God, I command my son to your case since he has gone away on a mission important to all of us. Be with him on his journey. Preserve him from the wicked and from all misfortune so that he may once again enter by this door through which he departed and before which I am now kneeling. I implore you, O my God, to restore him to my love and to that of his mother, his brothers and his sisters (1)."

[114] 1. In spite of deviations due to Raffenel's desire to give a personal and literary touch to what he reports, the essential points of this prayer are accurate, and that is why I quote it.

[787] The chronicle of Kaarta tells us that old Sounson begged for early death as a sign that his lineage would be powerful in the future. Also, in order to make a prophecy come true, Deniba Bo submitted to the fatal blows of the Khassonké to make sure that his people would conquer the country!

After all, no one is free of fear of the gods, not even those whom one would take for brave spirits. Raffenel tells us that Bouo, his informant, feared the wrath of the god whose secrets he had revealed. The chronicle of Ségou tells that Ngolo, thinking he had aroused the wrath of his manes by encouraging evil desires in his eldest son, Ntyi, did not hesitate to sacrifice his [179] own grandson, the son of the aforesaid Ntyi, an atrocity which bears witness to a faith that was as profoound as it was barbarous.

175 of El Hadj Omar, up to April 6, 1890, the day French troups under Lt. Colonel Archinard delivered Ségou from the cruel Moslem occupation.

The Bambara did not long accept the French yoke. To put an end to their plots, the French resident, Captain Underberg, had to execute the king Mari Diara, an act which inspired several local revolts, chiefly in the Sénoufo region. But the new Fama, Bodian, supported by the French, was able to rapidly re-establish peace. Moreover, the destruction of the Toucouleur kingdom of Macina by Colonel Archinard deprived the rebel Bambara of all possibility of outside support. The Ségou kingdom was definitively pacified in 1893.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

I. Traditional Structure of Bambara Society

A. Social and Political Organization

182 Traditional Bambara social organization is entirely tied up with religious organization; moreover, the social organization determines the whole economic organization to such an extent that the latter cannot be studied independently.

114 In fact, we still know very little about Bambara social organization. Some good records are available to us in the work of Monteil (1), Aubert and Ortoli (2), Délafosse (3), Labouret (4),

(1). Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Segou and Kaarta].

(2). Aubert et Ortoli, *Coutumier juridique de l'A.O.F.* [French West African Common Law].

3. Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal et Niger* [Upper Senegal and Niger].

4. Labouret, *Les Mandingues et leur langue* [The Mandingo and Their Language].

etc., but these are still very fragmentary and incomplete. In addi- 177 tion, this society was completely disrupted by the French conquest, either by such radical measures as the suppression of slavery or by a natural evolution as a result of contact with European societies. Nevertheless, traditional structures retain their vitality, despite the effort to adapt them to European formulas.

178 The society seems to have oscillated between familial anarchy and the clan stage, according to alternating ranges of groupings, disassociation, and regroupings.

1. The Family

594 596 Concerning the Sudanese, Delafosse has already made the distinction between "the restricted family" and the "extended family." The restricted family is composed of the parents and children who live in the "hut." Taken alone, it does not represent a social unit. The true social cell is the extended family. This is the large united family made up of a group of restricted families whose heads recognize a common ancestor. This group, composed of agnates in principle, is the *ba-denya*, whose members live in huts within an enclosure: *gwa* or *so*. The two ends of this [51] enclosure rest on a *blõ* (vestibule) where the ancestors' altar is found.

601 612 According to Labouret, the Bambara distinguish three categories of family ties: the paternal line, the maternal line, and relationship by marriage. The child takes the *dyamu* (honorable name) of his father's group, but the terms applied to ancestors and descendants are the same as those of the maternal line.

"... Kinship includes the following generations: *tolo-mina*... *tolo-sama*... *tolo-ma-sama*: who seizes or pulls ears (a belief has it that if a great grandson pulls the ear of his great [829] grandfather, the latter becomes deaf);

771 the religious system which animates and explains it. The Bambara is an essentially religious being; all his acts are dictated by ritual duties or taboos, and he finds his true liberty only within the rules transmitted to him by tradition. To destroy his religion amounts to destroying his whole social structure as well as his soul. Inversely, every transformation of techniques will have grave repercussions, not only on the material life of the individual, but also on his inner life. In fact, the religion is itself part of a whole cosmological and metaphysical system which explains and orders every existing thing. The simplest and poorest object is a reflection of complex concepts which leave nothing to chance or to imagination, and we arrive at the paradox that the technical progress and enrichment introduced by the European civilization impoverish the over-all metaphysical representation, while the social evolution ends in detaching the Bambara from his traditional religion and makes of him a rootless being who will be the prey of badly understood ideologies, foreign to his nature and to his genius.

● 114 771 L. Tauxier (1), pursuing the studies of Father Henry and C. Monteil, has attempted a comprehensive description of Bambara beliefs. But in his exposition Bambara religion appears to be composed of disparate elements with no links between them. This impression is due in large part to the esoteric character of this religion, which certainly contains exoteric elements accessible to all, but whose fundamental principles remain known only to the elders and to the initiated who are reluctant to confide in strangers. The study of Bambara religion has been entirely renewed in these last few years by Mme. Dieterlen (2), who has known how to go beyond the superficial knowledge we had had of this people. She has introduced us to an admirably cohesive metaphysical system and ritual organization [81] In fact, "the Bambara metaphysic and religion offer a structured whole

1. L. Tauxier, *La religion bambara* [Bambara Religion].

2. G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].

771 If the Bambara have fought to safeguard their independence,
181 they have done so primarily to preserve their faith and keep their
fetishes. They have shown such great attachment for these, that their
[101] conquerors have described them as rebels and applied to them the epithet
Bamba, synonym of Kafri. These religious struggles in themselves
allow us to state as an indisputable fact that before the arrival of the
Moslems the Bambara were animistic and sacrificed to genii. /69/

776 Did they have an exact and precise idea of their genii as they
811 do now? Apparently yes, for they always reasoned using themselves
as a basis of comparison so that in their minds the invisible, impalpable
genii to whom they sacrificed had a striking resemblance to man.
It is not a man, and yet it is one, they say unable to define their
concept or idea, ma si fa do (1).

776 The Moslem word djin translates this idea precisely, and the
782 Bambara use it in everyday language; but when the day of the sacrifice
comes, they become unaware of it and there remains only one word
-- ma, meaning "man." When they redden with blood the bark of
[824] the baobab (Adansonia digitata), the tamarind tree, the false cedar
(family of the cedrelaceae), etc., to obtain the good graces and protection of the genie who dwells there, they always confer on it the
title ma ("man"), and never that of djiné. "Ma n'zira ba, ma n'tomi
ba, ma djala ba; O great baobab man, O great tamarind tree man,
O great false-cedar man!" begins the formula used by the sacrificer
in offering victims and millet flour to the genie (2). They also have

1. Ma; "man"; si fa' "certain kind";
do; "it is."

114 2. In /J. Henry/, "Culte des
esprits chez les Bambara
/Spirit Worship among the
Bambara/," Anthropos, Vol. III,
No. 4 (1908), p. 1 /p. 702/,
note 1, there is an error in translation.

●114

[194]

> Ma n'zira ba, etc., does not mean "great baobab of man." The real meaning is: "O man who is a great baobab." In writing it I prefer a "z" to an "a." Usually the Bambara soften the hard sound by a euphonious little "n." With a hard "s" the word sira cannot be distinguished from the word "tobacco": sira siramougou, "snuff tobacco"; n'ziremougou, "baobab flour."

776 a purely Bambara term to express their idea /of these spirits/, and
782 they to the word djiné; they call them gnéna.

776 782 177 198 Before the arrival of the Moslems, the Negro sacrificed to beings to whom they have attributed bodies and souls, although imponderable and invisible, who are intermediate between men and angels and whom the Arabs call الجنّ el djiné. But they also sacrificed to evil beings, superior to the former in power, whom they call boli. The legend of the boli, an ironic legend which I will tell in full when I discuss this matter, is sufficient proof of this belief. For the Moslems of the Sudan only two things here below /70/ are worthy of attention: Mecca (Makka) and Stamboul -- old Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Constantinople -- who in their eyes, as in the eyes of all Moslems of our colonies, is the great Pope of Islam. Everything that does not bear the stamp of Mecca, everything that does not come from Stamboul, is to be rejected and scorned. Thus the Bambara, fertile in expedients, quickly managed to find a way out of their discussions with the propagators of Islam: "All our boli come from Mecca," was their weapon of war.

776 177 198 The Bambara were pursued from every side, unable to perform publicly even religious ceremonies in honor of simple genii. Can one believe that they added others that were still more terrible? As conquerors the Moslems have always ruthlessly opposed idolatry, destroying its temples and overthrowing its altars. "Believe or die" has always been their motto and always will be as long as they feel

/xi/ Foreword

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The information was gathered in the region of Bamako at Koulikoro, Kayo, and Kangaba; in the circle of Ségou at Konodimini, Banankoroni, Diammarabougou, Soroba, Massala, Toko, Shouola, Kokou Banankoro, Pelengena, Sama, Kala, Kalabougou, Ségoubougou, and Ségoukoura; and in the various quarters of the capital city. /Bamako/.

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115 The Bambara who collaborated regularly in the gathering of information are the following.

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115 me the benefit of his experience in translating these tales. I
*173 hereby thank him most sincerely.

As far as Ségou is concerned, Karé Tammoura's story does not seriously modify the known general outline, but all the same it differs from earlier publications in its essentially native feeling, which I have tried to preserve. It is very interesting, for instance, to see how step-by-step [26] an empire developed out of a fla-n-ton': this change in a strictly native form of association is most instructive. It shows in detail how one of these Sudanese empires -- and not the least of them -- was organized. It is essential to know this if one is to understand the political history of this country. Community, brotherhood, clan, slavery, Islam -- all essential and too-little-known factors of Sudanese society -- are there to be seen, alive and just as they are.

In spite of its weaknesses and its lacunae, I am therefore giving, without change, the story told by the dyeli Karé Tammoura. This Ségou Bambara has occasionally allowed himself to cover the truth with a Moslem veil, because he is a convert; but it is easy to discern the facts under the poorly applied make-up.

115 My informant for Kaarta was principally the dyeli Gran Koaté, who was also a native of Ségou and a Moslem. He was for a long time attached to the person of Ahmadou, son of Omar, with whom he resided at Ségou and at Nioro, where he acted as a close confidant and was sometimes charged with important missions.

124 I feel obliged to point out that these two informants are not entirely responsible for the lacunae in their stories. I had had these two learned men brought from Ségou to Djenné, where I was commandant of the circle in 1902. In spite of my desire to learn as much as possible from them, I had to consider the demands of my post, which left me little leisure, and also had to avoid keeping them too long away from their homes. Hence, I was forced to cut short their long speeches. I do not think that I missed anything essential, but undoubtedly there was much to be gleaned from what had to be sacrificed for lack of time. I hope that one of my more fortunate successors may be able to fill in the lacunae in the stories set down here.

An Essay on the Religion of the Bambara
/Essai sur la religion bambara/

By Germaine Dieterlen

Paris: Presses Universitaires de France
1951

Translated from the French by Katia Wolf

Human Relations Area Files
1960

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Table of Contents

	Pages
Foreword	1
Introduction	2
Organization of the Book	11
Chapter 1 Myths Preliminaries of Creation. Creation of the Universe. Pemba's Reign. Death. Faro's Reign. The Future Waters.	13
Chapter 2 The Representations Pemba. The *Pembele*. The *Balanza*. Mousso Koroni. Faro.	58
Chapter 3 The Person The *ni* and the *dya*. The *tere*. The *wanzo*. The Body. Effects of Death. Attributes. The Name. The Device. The Taboo. Joking Relationship. Exceptional Cases.	85
Chapter 4 Sacrifice and the Altar	126
Chapter 5 Technology Fishing and Hunting. Weaving. Clothing. Weapons and Tools. The Forge. Pottery.	137
Chapter 6 The Cults Individual and Family Cults. Village Cults. The Religious Societies.	171
Chapter 7 Rites Rites Concerning the Person. Rituals of the Refuse. Rain Rites. Rites for the Renewal of the Year.	228

Chapter 8 Divination 210

Measurement of the Dya. Divination by the Kola Nut. Divination by Cowrie Shells. The Somaya.

Conclusion 287

Addenda 291

Table of Plates Outside the Text

Plates			Pages
I.	a)	The Acacia albida called kokuruni (Banankoroni).	77a
	b)	Baskets of spiralled straw called yugu (Ségou market).	
	c)	Drawing representing Faro (Sama).	
II.	a)	Ngoyo tomatoes (Ségou market).	77b
	b)	Faro's water gourd (Ségou market).	
III.	a)	Bands of Cotton	153a
	b)	Offering of a band of cotton to the dasiri tree (Soroba).	
IV.	a)	Pot dipping after firing (Konodimini).	153b
	b)	Communal anvil, kula, of the blacksmiths (Konodimini).	
V.	a)	Tree of the Ndomo (Soroba).	210a
	b)	Stone altar (Banankoroni).	
VI.	a)	Hut of the Komo (Konodimini).	210b
	b)	Holes for ordure (Banankoroni).	

Table of Figures in the Text

Figures		Pages
1.	Bambara signs.	22
2.	The twenty-two elements.	34
3.	The arrival of the twelve future waters.	55
4.	Game of the *sumangolo*.	56
5.	Stone altar, *fara ba*, of Banankoroni.	129
6.	Underground home of primitive men	138
7.	Sling (*ndõfere*) of the ancient Bambara.	141
8.	Ancient clothing of the Bambara.	147
9.	Weapons and tools of the ancient Bambara.	159
10.	Diagram of the *česo* of Tété.	172
11.	The wooden seat of a family head of Banankoroni.	179
12.	Drawing made on the ground by the chief of the Komo.	208
13.	Stone altar of the Kworè.	220
14.	Cap of the circumcised Bambara.	233
15.	The circumcision knife.	237
16.	Drawing made on a cadaver by the chief of the Komo.	249
17.	The divining harp of the Soma.	283

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/xiii/ · Introduction

[illegible] 131 The Bambara tribes which form part of the Mandé group are at present spread out in French Sudan from the 11th to the 14th degrees latitude north and from the 7th to the 11th degrees longitude west. Three groups which have settled respectively in the circle of Issa Ber, in Kaarta, and in the circle of Odienné are noticeably separated from the central group which occupies the shores of the Niger around Bamako and Ségou.

105 The Bambara live in small villages in the savanna; they practice primarily agriculture (millet, digitaria /Fonio/, rice, maize, etc.), but also herding and gardening. The shore dwellers of the Niger are fishermen and live in symbiotie relationships with the Bozo who taught them fishing techniques and who are generally recognized as the first inhabitants of these regions.

173 The Bambara state that they came from Mandé. This region, where the successive capitals of the ancient kingdom of Mali were situated, has long attracted the attention of research workers (1).

1. See J. Vidal, *Au sujet de l'emplacement du Mali (ou Melli* /on the subject of the Mali site/), pp. 251-268; *Le véritable emplacement du Mali* /The true site of the Mali/, pp. 606-619. This author designates by Mali I to IV the four villages of Dyélibakoro, Niani, Maninkoura, and Kangaba, which had been successively the royal city. See also Ch. Monteil, *Les Empires du Mali* /The empires of Mali/, p. 13.

Moreover, it is "the center from which radiated forty-four tribes at present spread out in the area between the Atlantic coast, the Senegal, and the Niger, or to Dahomey" (2). The region indicated above also

2. See D. Zahan. *Aperçu sur la pensée théogonique des Dogon* /Survey of theogonic thought of the Dogon/, pp. 113-133. This author gives the name of the tribes originating

has the name of Dyéliba and used to be /xiv/ called Toubla. The name of Kaba (1) given by all Sudanese to the ancient capital of Mali actually designates the village of Kangaba. But the oldest agglomerations known, before Dyéliba (Mali I according to J. Vidal), are situated in the regions of Kri Koroni and Ouanda.

---

in Mandé. See also S. de Ganay, *Notes sur la théodicée bambara* /Notes on Bambara theodicy/, pp. 212-213. "In the village of Manin Kaba, there exists what is called the *manti blo*, 'the vestibule of the Mande,' in which are arranged around the object called *pembele* twelve seats (*sigi yoro*) representing the forty-four 'races' of this common hearth."

This origin is well known to the Sudanese, but the number of tribes varies. In the course of the septennial ceremony of Kangaba (see p. 15 note 1) the *griot* say: "We were forty-eight; through the mixture of the winds, the races came out at the four cardinal points" (*an tumbi debe ni seki la, siaw bwora fyẽ nyamile seleke nami*).

1. The word *kaba* has its origin in *ni ya ka ba ko ye* "this is astonishing," an expression currently used concerning the sanctuary and the ritual objects it contains. The Dogon, who claim to originate in Mandé and who have dispersed into the cliffs of Bandiagara from agglomerations to which they had given the name Kani, explain this last term by giving it the meaning of "little Ka." These were, in a sense, relay stations between their original habitat and the one they now occupy. Concerning these migrations, see G. Dieterlen, *Les Ames des Dogon* /The souls of the Dogon/, pp. 9ff.

796 778 In the village of Kangaba a sanctuary, called mande blo "vestibule of Mande," or kaba blo "vestibule of astonishment," is the object of a septennial ritual attended by representatives of all the races /who are/ said to be of the same origin. There ceremony consists in rebuilding the roof of the sanctuary which shelters an object dolin, but only those persons of pure race belonging to the Kéita family (1) and the traditional griot of the chiefs of Mandé, the Dyabaté, are authorized to perform the ritual. Only they may penetrate the sanctuary and tread on its soil, which is said to be "heavier and more powerful than all things." (2)

551 1. The name of Kéita, for which various etymologies have been found, is that of the founders of the Mandingo empire. Cf. C. Monteil, Les Empires du Mali, p. 31, and L. Tauxier, Histoire des Bambara /Bambara History/, p. 40: "The first kings of Mali lived at Kangaba and were in fact Kéita."

By extension the name of Kéita may be adopted by individuals belonging to one of the tribes originating in Mandé. Thus a Dogon will take on as dyamu Kéita if he comes to live in Mandé. On the other hand, the heraldic device of the Kéita, which relates the high deeds of the Mandingo princes, includes the devices of almost all the tribes said to be of the same origin. This common origin may perhaps throw some light on the institution of regularized name changes observed in Black Africa, a problem which has claimed the attention of some authors; see in particular P. Humblot, Du nom et des appellations chez les Malinke /Names and nomenclature among the Maunke/.

778 376 2. Kangaba dugukolo ka gri féw be. The sanctuary is a round hut provided with two doors, one oriented to the east and the

778 other to the west, and covered with a
346 thatched roof in which is hidden an object
called *dolin*. The village is surrounded by
several sacred places: a *sunzun* tree to the
north; a well to the west; two stones, one
(*fara fi*) situated near the village and the
other (*fara gwe*) on the river's edge.

796 The septennial ceremony is performed
at night. Toward evening, the eldest of
the Kéita goes secretly to remove the
object *dolin* from the old thatch and hides
it. The new roof is made with materials
gathered by the descendants of Farako
Makan Kegni (straw, bamboo, and fibers)
while the women of the same relationship
plaster the walls. The Dyabaté *griot* who will
officiate provide themselves with a little
stick of *sunzun* wood about the length of the
ring finger with which they will rub their
teeth; the twigs must be cut by the elder
sister of the chief of the *griot* who gives her
in exchange /xv/ a loin-cloth of eight
[801] bands of white cotton and a number of cowries
in multiples of 8 such as 8,480.

The orators who will officiate during the night wear a white cap topped by a band of cotton of the same color and a yellow tunic (*wolo*) (see p. 20). Sitting inside the hut from which the old roof has been removed, facing east, they spit into a receptacle in order not to soil the ground. The Kéita remain outside the hut on a site marked by stones and covered with gravel collected in the river bed by young men. During the entire night, the *griot*, each in turn and encouraged by a relative, recite from the devices of all the tribes issued from Mandé. At dawn, they sing as they circle the construction; then the Kéita hoist up the new roof. Next, the elder

196 secretly replaces the object in the new thatch. A white ox is sacrificed at the well.

The information collected on this ceremony is still fragmentary but the color of the clothing worn by those officiating, that of the victim, the number of bands of the loin-cloth, and the number of cowrie shells given by the griot to his sister, the origin of the gravel used as the seat for the Kéita are evidence that we have here a ritual executed under the protection of Faro (see Chap. II)

175 As early as the fourteenth century numerous travelers described the Bambara /xv/as organized into small groups headed by a chief and more or less submitting to the neighboring empires. This state of affairs lasted until the period of the Peul invasion of this region (in the seventeenth century) which founded two kingdoms and created a local aristocracy of mixed Peul and Bambara blood. The first of these kingdoms was that of Ségou, the history of which is partly known (1). The investigations centered particularly in this area; the chief town which was a capital for a long time retains the traces of a well [197] organized legal system and religion. It is also in this area that, according to specialists, the purest dialect is spoken. (2)

1. On the history of the Bambara we refer the reader to the well documented volume of L. Tauxier. Histoire des Bambara.

[556 191] 2. The children of families sufficiently wealthy to afford it were formerly sent to Ségou to live with affinals in order to learn how to speak well an elegant and pure language.

197 212 The Bambara dialects belong to the sub-group of Mandingo languages of the Nigero-Senegalese group. (3) The Bambara know certain

3. See A. Meillet et M. Cohen. Les Langues du Monde /Languages of the World/, p. 546.

197 systems of signs and ideograms which may be considered as a sort of
212 writing and the study of which is currently pursued. The system from
which all the others supposedly stem, the *glã glã zo*, has 226 ideograms
which, according to informants, summarize the knowledge of the
[182] Bambara (1). On the other hand, the Bamba use a numerical system
based on twenty. Moreover, an analysis of the texts collected, some of them quoted in this essay, has brought to light an /xvi/ important number of words which, according to informants, belong to an ancient language of Mandingo origin, now used as liturgical language. It is not within the framework of this essay to present this material or to comment upon it, but it is appropriate to note that the study of this vocabulary would contribute to an understanding of religious thinking among the Bambara.

173 The Bambara have a rather clear idea of their early history and even of their prehistory. They describe their ancestors with precision and know the phases of development of their technology. These premises are necessary to an understanding of their religion which, like the other institutions, is especially linked to this technological development. Moreover, the only observable remains comprise household furniture and utensils, transient but perennial material whose forms and ornamentation indicate the metaphysical principles on which their way of thinking is based.

177 It is appropriate not to neglect those influences which have acted
121 upon the Bambara through their contacts with other Sudanese tribes

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1. See. p. 21. This system and two of the ideograms, of which *to* designates the mash of boiled cereals and by extension nourishment in general, will be the object of a comment by M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen. "Signes graphiques des Soudanais. L'Homme. /Graphic signs of the Sudanese man/." *Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie et de linguistique, Hermann* (in press).

On certain types of writing observed among the Mandé and the Vai, see J. Février, *Histoire de l'écriture* /The History of Writing/, pp. 528-529.

177 connected since ancient times with the Mediterranean basin (1). The
121

1. We wish to draw attention to M. P. M. Schuhl's point and his allusion: "The premises which we owe at present to investigations like those of M. Griaule would seem to call for new syntheses and provide curious terms of comparison. Indirect influence from Greek myths on Sudanese mythology is, furthermore, not impossible." Essai sur la formation de la pensée grecque /Essay on the Formation of Greek Thought/, Presses Universitaires de France, 2nd ed., 1949, p. xv.

M. Schuhl recalls, on the other hand, the resemblances proposed by M. A. Jeanmaire, between Greek facts and some African institutions considered as survivals of a proto-Mediterranean civilization (Couroi et courètes), Lille, 1939.

Mali empires, in particular, by encouraging the expansion of Islam have maintained a center in the heart of the Sudan, which has left traces in the social and religious institutions of the Bambara.

However, it is difficult, if not impossible, at the present time to make a historical presentation of this religion or even to consider the problem of influences. We have with us the last phase of this religion and we know its development only through myths which, furthermore, do not make it appear to be a system established very early; it seems to have developed slowly with various additions which were felt and expressed in the myths. On the other hand the present religions of the Sudanese seem national; they form separate entities among the Dogon (2) the Bozo, the Kouroumba /Kurumba/, the

2. See M. Griaule. Dieu d'eau /water god/.

Minianka, the Sonray /Sonhrai/, and the /xvii/ Mossi. However, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that their systematic observation, undertaken a few years ago, has brought to light a common

177 121 substratum on which each tribe has grafted its original system. The study of this substratum would help define the problem of origins and influences.

After this, we have at our disposal the support of philology and above all the advantage of seeing the Bambara live their beliefs and of discovering their myths in a crude but expressive material as well as in numerous rites. The observations made over a wide field of inquiry serve as the basis for the presentation of this religious system.

114 121 The Bambara have been for a long time the subject of articles and works, of which we will give below a concise bibliography. The only author who, until now, has attempted to describe their beliefs as a system is L. Tauxier whose study of La Religion Bambara /Bambara religion/ takes into account to a large extent the works of the Abbé Henry and Ch. Monteil. However, through the descriptions of these different observers which are certainly conscientious, this religion appears as a composite of diverse and even inconsistent elements with no apparent link between them. Despite a uniform plan and a laudable absence of preconceived ideas, L. Tauxier has been unable to bring out the fundamental concepts of the people he observed.

In fact, the study of a present-day Negro religion runs into difficulties of various kinds stemming on the one hand from the necessity of going into the field and on the other hand from the largely esoteric character of the doctrine. These circumstances make this study essentially a work of discovery.

Indeed, Bambara religion, like all Sudanese religions, has an exoteric part, quite easily accessible, which observation conducted along scientific lines may reveal in detail. Rules of life admitted by all, beliefs openly professed, and public or private practices may be the object of detailed work. But this religion, like that of the neighboring peoples, rests upon a doctrine whose fundamental principles [609] are known to elders and initiates who show considerable aversion to confiding in strangers, particularly whites. Such a situation explains the ignorance in which scholarship has remained for so long concerning the religious way of thinking of this people (1).

812 1. The Bambara themselves distinguish between two kinds of knowledge. The first, called doni fyẽma "knowledge (which has) wind" /xviii/ is superficial

812 and considered to be "the introduction to beliefs and customs." It belongs to adults who know little of cosmology. On the contrary, the second, called "deep knowledge" (doniya duna or kuru doniya), is restricted to priests, heads of families, elders of both sexes who are versed in "the science of the things of creation." It can only be acquired slowly in the course of successive initiations and through actual instruction which is sometimes diffused during the rites.

114
121 /xviii/ A rigorous method of observation which neglects no detail and which involves the use of close collaboration from the natives has brought forth a system coherent in all its parts and, it may be said, based on a metaphysics hitherto unknown. Taking the Bambara postulates as a point of departure, the sequence of events through the myths, the development of institutions and technology, their operation and the actual destiny of man in the cosmos all unfold in a logical framework.

On the other hand, this system is projected into the concrete in the form of symbols which borrow the most diversified aspects and which play an active role. The symbolism not only penetrates religious life proper by appearing in the sanctuaries, in the cult materials (shapes and sign writing), or during religious ceremonies (times and places, rituals, etc.), but is present in every aspect of secular life and daily behavior.

The metaphysics and the religion of this people offer a structural entity which includes all social, technological, and economic activities. In the following chapters, we shall attempt to clarify these principles and this system. We believe we may safely state that certain inconsistencies or contradictions presented by the religious system as it is described here are not due to Bambara thought—even though it is subtle and based on a dialectic—but to lacunae in the investigation.

/xix/ Organization of the Book

128 In the first chapter of this work we present the myths which form the framework of the religious representations. A deep knowledge of the cosmogony and myths is necessary to understanding the institutions as well as the most current rituals.

The second chapter analyzes the representations, particularly that of Faro, master of the word and holder of life, whose cult is general and who presides at all human activities.

The third chapter approaches the notion of the person and describes in succession the spiritual principles and the body which are dependent upon Faro, then the name, the device, and the taboos which integrate the individual into society. It also examines the dissociation of these various elements at the moment of death.

The fourth chapter summarizes the mechanism of the blood sacrifice, the most important moment of the ritual, which disposes of the elements making up the person as described in the preceding chapter. It also includes the description of the places where the cult is practiced and the original altars of the Bambara.

The fifth chapter deals with the origin, development, and organization of technology such as fishing, hunting, agriculture, weaving, the forge, and pottery, the performance of which is largely ritual in character and which support the religious representations.

The sixth chapter describes individual and family cults as well as those pertaining to the village as a whole. The great religious societies, which group individuals around the altars set up for specific purposes, are also examined. These cults, so different in appearance, bring into play the same representations, and the rituals involve comparable mechanisms of the forces brought into motion.

In the seventh chapter we give a detailed description of a certain number of rituals chosen from the most representative. A predominant place is reserved for those relating more directly to the "person": birth, circumcision /xx/ and excision, initiations, funeral, and ancestor cults. Among others, those concerning refuse, rain, and general rites called "the renewal of the year" are commented upon.

The eighth chapter presents an analysis of several methods of divination which appear as a synthesis of Bambara metaphysics and reflect in very subtle symbolism the entirety of their knowledge.

SYSTEM OF TRANSCRIPTION

104

ȃ,	an in "planche."	ũ /u/,	ou in French
ẽ,	in in "dinde."	ũ,	un in French
ę,	ě in "jet."	č,	for "tch."
e,	e in "dé."	ǰ.	dj in "djinn."
ǫ,	o in "vol."	ñ,	gn in "hargne."
o,	o in "pot."		
õ,	o in "balcon."		

The native words transcribed in roman letters must be pronounced in the French manner.

In some cases, the translation only of Bambara expressions is put between quotation marks in order not to encumber the text. Moreover, this translation is literal in order to remain as close as possible to the Bambara thought even if it results in some awkwardness or turns of phrase difficult to understand.

Chapter 1

MYTHS

13 The myths of the Bambara must be understood as a sum of knowledge, a kind of world view, and not as a sequence of fixed etiological stories. It may be said that they make up a metaphysics which includes a knowledge of the objects of creation as well as a knowledge of the principles of their state and action.

The knowledge of divine things takes its place within this ensemble but does not come first in time. The Bambara deals with creation and the cosmos, conceptualized as an entity peopled with deities, a cosmos of which he himself is the most significant expression. The following texts explain first the origin of creation, secondly the ordering of the perceptible universe, created from the primordial vibration, and finally the creation of originally immortal living beings on the earth molded by Pemba.

Domination of the mundane world and particularly of the human species was first assumed by one of Pemba's metamorphoses, the phallic tree balanza, which lived on blood and assimilated the strength of men. His reign was troubled by severe cosmic disorders provoked by the rebellion of the first-created female, Mousso Koroni. Today men are still subjected to the after-effects of these disorders. However, the fact that the tree abused its power caused Faro to rise up against it and vanquish it. Faro then reorganized the universe by establishing its boundaries and naming and classifying its component elements. On Earth, where death made its appearance due to the curse of the tree, the basis of this reorganization is the principle of duality, the "word" taught to men by Faro who from then on has the master of the Word and of restoring techniques which would, as needs arose, assure subsistence. The reign of Faro, whom henceforth men worshipped, was founded on order and measure and foreshadowed the "future words" which he is to disclose in the course of time.

/2/The sequence of mythical themes presents a structure of the cosmos; space and time; natural and supernatural worlds; categories, numbers, and the notion of the spatial and temporal cohesion of its elements (interdependence of phenomena). It situates the individual (body and spiritual principles) and in the psychological realm, describes

113 the slow evolution of consciousness (concept of pain), judgment (concept of responsibility and guilt), will (concept of the creative effort and work), all of which develop in man with the advent of suffering [761] and death. Death is felt to be an accident in the working out of the universal order, an accident compensated for in part by the conservation of spiritual principles and their reincarnation in accordance with the fundamental belief in the eternal resurrection of all things. The myth describes the first ritual, the rejuvenation, which ceases with the advent of death but is replaced by blood sacrifice which today is still the central practice of the rites (1).

> 1. Wherever possible the writer has avoided discussion of the details of myths so as not to distract the reader from the general line of the Bambara world view. But the scholar, in attempting to better understand the collective psychological processes of this people, may profitably study the numerous variant themes found among them.

The myths described below are the framework of the present-day Bambara religion and of the general cults to Pemba and Faro maintained by the people.

Preliminaries of Creation

1. The glã glã zo

112 The Bambara creation myths imply a philosophy of being and of the universe developed from the void, from nothing, fu (2).

[802]

> 2. This concept is expressed by a sign with the same name which can also be translated by "nothingness" or "zero" and is a part of the Bambara number system. See Fig. 1, No. 11. For a discussion of this sign denoting the continuity and proliferation of creation, see p. 102.

772 This knowledge, derived from the Kéita of Mandé, is called glã glã zo and describes the timeless and primordial state that preceded the stages of creation. The word glã which indicates the original void, connotes at the same time the ideas of movement, awakening, reawakening, and resurrection; glã is the principle of the inner universal movement of the cosmos and all that composes it. On the other hand, the term implies the idea that creation is continuous /3/ from the moment of its beginning and perpetually maintained in all things as well as in the universe taken as a whole (1).

[197] 1. The word glã belongs to the ancient language. The Bambara term closest to it in meaning is kununi, which means "reawakening, resurrection." Glã is the principle of the eternal resurrection of all things.

Glã, "full of its own emptiness and its emptiness full of itself," extended its power everywhere. It sounded "a voice of emptiness" which brought into being its double, dya; glã became two, thus indicating the primordial character of duality, the existential principle (2). The two gave forth a damp substance, zo zumale, "cold rust," which came out as invisible liquid vapor and formed hard shiny substances (3).

2. It is said: glã ye lankolo nye, lankolo nye glã ye, glã ye a yere ke lankolo fla ye, lankolo fla ye a yere ke glã ye; "glã is the emptiness, emptiness is glã, glã made itself into two emptinesses, two emptinesses made themselves into glã itself."

3. glã ye koloya a la ka kr zo ye, boli tumbi kę šiši ye bali ye, ka kę dyi sumale ye, ka kę zo yele gele ye; "glã made a substance which was rust come out of itself; this emission was invisible smoke which then became cold water, the latter becoming a hard and shiny rust." The informant translated the word zo as "rust."

And while comparing this matter to the product of oxidation in a metal, once it is released, he describes it as a crystal.

When all was filled with these frozen substances, *glã* emitted a power, *zo ñami*, which, rising and descending within itself, produced an inner breath called *fyẽ tasuma*, "fire of wind." The two *glã* crossed this vast content and the fire melted the substances (1). At the time of this first fusion "the vast *glã* gave a place to all things secretly and invisibly" (2).

1. "The two *glã* arose and melted away the voice of *glã*; creation spoke with the voice of *glã*"; (*glã flã wululila ke*, *glã kã yeke*, *dali ye glã kã fo*).

2. *kono glã ye sikiyoro di few be ma*, *gundo ni blika la*. The word "thing," a literal translation of *fẽ*, is used here in its most general sense.

The two *glã* then immobilized themselves, "gathering their energy into themselves," and, once more, everything became fixed and frozen. Then, a second time, they melted the substances, as though destroying the preliminary form in order to make another. These movements, called *glã glã*, bear witness to the very essence of *glã* which is the eternal resurrection of all things, and the repetition of the word expresses duality, the basis of creation. At the time of these two successive fusions, the *glã* fixed "four points," one at the moment of the first melting and the other three in the course of the second, all of which were placed in a state of "immobile action" (3).

3. The informant compares this stage of creation to a hand holding a pencil, the tip of which rests on a sheet of paper. The hand is poised as if to write, but is immobilized. The four points anticipate the cardinal points, beginning with the east (see p. 223).

772 Then *glã* released within itself a shuttling motion /4/, the repercussions of which gave the elements of the potential universe a soul. This movement also had the effect of situating the elements and of keeping them in place through the force of attraction (*mana*): "*glã* has stirred up the elements, they have taken their places, and heat has kept them in place" (1).

> 1. *glã ye few yereyere, u nye, u sikiyoro mine, funteni yu mana*. The informant compares this horizontal movement to one which might be applied to a surface pitted with cup-like depressions: the objects of creation, at first strewn about in disorder, would, under the effect of this shuttling movement, each place itself in a hole. *Mana* is translated as "attraction, " or "agglutination, " when it is used as a noun. It can also mean "to shed" and may designate the product of the shedding the exuvia; *mana* is thus a synonym of *folo*.

At the same time, the contact established between the two *glã* produced a kind of explosion out of which was ejected "a hard and powerful substance" which vibrated as it descended. Out of this vibration came, one by one, the signs which, attracted by the objects (as yet uncreated but about to be created) to which they gave name, placed themselves on the objects. Thus, each thing acquired its sign and its word, and "obeying the movement of *glã*, " each began to vibrate feebly within itself and in its assigned place.

When all things were thus assigned their places and potentially designated, another element detached itself from *glã* and placed itself on the objects in order to take cognizance of them: this was "man's foot" (or "the grain of the foot"), a symbol of human consciousness. As this element gained knowledge, it communicated this knowledge to all things which then became conscious of themselves. Thus, all things were designated and named silently before they came into existence, and were called into being by their names and their signs. But they did not know themselves as such except in man's consciousness, the "grain" or principle of the universe.

772 Then all things assembled and began to rumble in order to complete the creation of the universe. The glã remained within themselves and delegated to zo the responsibility of liberating the designated and animated objects which they contained and of which they had created the essence. Zo took possession of them and joined their elements into a huge ball, kuru, called yo yebali, "invisible yo": zo gave yo the principle of the seed and endowed it with attraction and power (1).

1. zo ye kise masa di yo ma, ka samani masa bla la, ka mineni masa bla a la.

Yo was the spirit, more exactly "the thought and action," that was to work out the creation, using the "signed objects" determined by glã.
772 /5/ The glã glã zo is represented by three engravings on wood.
532 The first, glã kele, represents the two glã in the shape of two spirals in opposite directions and with connected points of origin; below this is engraved "the object with four arms" from which issued the signs (2). These signs, 226 in number, are barely sketched out, showing that "the creation of glã takes place in the invisible, the unknown, the unrealized." The second, glã dya, is composed of 226 horizontal or vertical lines, the counterparts or "witnesses" of words. The third, glã zo, is an oval divided into seven compartments (a square in the middle and two times three lateral sections) in which the symbolic representations are clearly engraved. In the middle of the central square, there is an oval containing six signs which represent simultaneously "the egg of the world and yo, the creating voice."

[824] 2. Today this object is represented by a twig of Acacia albida, called "the wood that separates the signs," ti kla dyiri. Its bark is removed in such a way as to outline the multiplication sign enclosed in an oval representing the world.

772 2. The yo

The creation of the perceptible universe beginning with yo is conceived of as a progression in "thinking," tasi (3). This progression,

called oryo or oyo, is broken down into three stages: yo, the inner word, invisible spirit and inaudible voice, potentially containing all creation: o the transition from the inaudible to the audible;
[801] yereyereli, the creative vibration (4). The progression is represented by seven signs, 7 being the symbolic number of man (homo) "seed of the world." Indeed, this numeral is the sum of 3 (male symbol) and 4 (female symbol). The couple they form is itself the symbol of duality, the fundamental law of creation, since each human being is both male and female in body and spirit (5).

772 3. From ta (to do, in the ancient language) and si (to act). The Bambara freely translate tasi as "spirit of nothing" and give this stage, originating in nothingness and preceding creation, the name of tasi dyẽ, "world of the spirit of nothing."

4. The name oyo, given to this system, is a composite of o and yo, and when pronounced reverses the chronological order. This anomaly is recognized by the Bambara who explain it by the fact that yo,? designating an inaudible voice, cannot be pronounced before o which designates a perceptible noise. Thus, in reversing the chronological order, yo "remains in the secret of o" which is in accord with its nature.

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774 5. The number 3 represents the penis and two testicles of the male body; the number 4 the four labia of the female body. On the other hand, man and woman are each endowed with two twin souls of different sexes; the soul of sex, opposite to that of its bearer, has its seat in the foreskin or the clitoris until the operation of circumcision or excision is performed. For further discussion of the duality of man and his

831 person, see G. Dieterlen, La Personne chez les
774 Bambara /The individual among the Bambara/
and infra, Ch. 3, The Person.

772 It is said that yo, the inner secret voice, "is born of itself, is known by itself, and comes out from itself /6/, out of the nothing which is itself" (1). Out of yo there will come only things that are themselves and that will be nothing other than yo. Each thing, being yo, proceeds like yo, only from itself. Hence, man is nothing other than himself, since he is a creation of yo and since yo's creations are by itself. Thus, there is nothing in the world besides oneself, since the person is yo, and yo is entirely contained in the person. As a result, each being is directly descended from yo with no intermediary; it is yo and exists only because it wills it. That is to say, man, the image of yo, alone has the will, alone has the capacity to bring forth action or creation, since these can be nothing but himself. "Who then," say the initiates, " can know himself, make himself known and manifest himself, other than through himself? Who then can manifest anything but himself?"

But yo, being at the origin of the inaudible and invisible things that are itself, is also in the unknown, hence in nothingness. And consequently, the same is true of man who is nothingness and can act only on the nothingness of himself.

Thus, yo, insofar as it was mind, was free in its ability to decide and to use its creative will. Its work, in nothingness, consisted in shedding, "for it was the continuous shedding of the world." When it
772 manifested itself by rotating on itself, it went five times to the four
801 "angles of its thought, " seleke miri, once to the "sky of its thought, " sã miri, once to the "earth of its thought, " dugukolo miri, thus communicating its power to them (2). The realization of this universe,

1. yo na na a yere la, bwora a yere la, dona a yere la, a be fu la min ya yere ye.

2. On the meaning of the number 5, see p. 25. Yo has endowed the "angles, " corresponding to the "cardinal angles" in the completed universe, with its greatest

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strength for there the Bambara place the poles of attraction which, in the universe, uphold all bodies. It is said: "All bodies accept the force of attraction of the four angles," fari be bi sõ seleke nuni mana barika la.

which determined "the space of yo in its own thought," is expressed by the number 22: "yo, darkness of creation, in the depth of the secret space of night, master of the foundation of the 22 rotations, great bearer of vibration, great builder of the marrow of bones (1).

[782
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821]

1. yo dali dyibi, šu kene gundo tyema, munumunu mu tani fla siki ba, yere done ba, kolow nye kono dlaba, kono being the ancient term for marrow.

This prayer is recited in honor of yo when a woman's pregnancy is first noticed; it is also recited at eclipses of the sun.

These 22 spirals stirred up all that yo contained in spirit; nugu, "entrails, intestines," which carried all things and man within itself; yalã, "seed of the air," which placed the voids in all /7/ parts of space"; fayâ, "seed of the wind"; sani, "seed of water"; yerẽ, "seed of fire"; yelẽgu, "seed of earthly matter" (2). The rotations of yo

2. fayâ, sani, yerẽ (in ancient language), and yelẽgu were at the origin of the four elements, air, water, fire and earth, all of which did not yet exist but were to appear later.

The seven elements composing yo are represented by signs, reproduced in Figure 1 (1 to 7).

put them in order and kept them under the force of attraction (mana). In other words, carried away by this whirlwind, both magnetic and creative, the elements became organized, one in relation to the other; in this way the 22 terms of the universe, as thought out by yo, were determined; these terms are also the 22 periods of its thought:

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1. origin of the west, *klebi dyu*
2. origin of the east, *koro dyu*
3. origin of the north, *baba dyu*
4. origin of the south, *bani dyu*
5. the sky from above, *sã kaba*

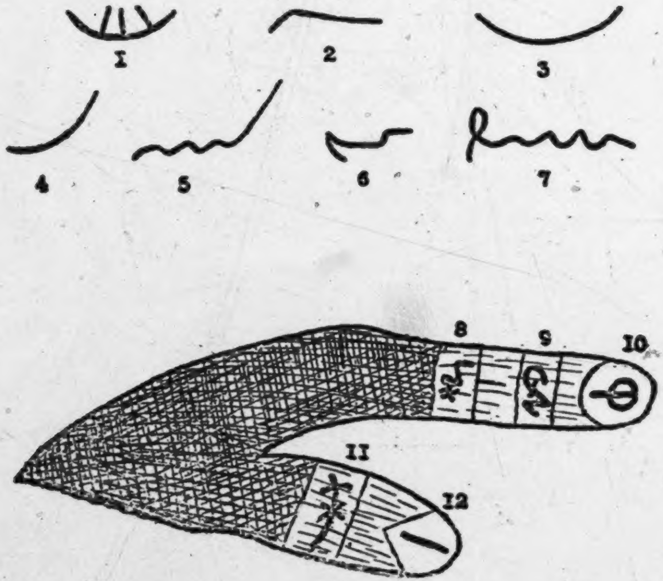

Fig. 1.—Bambara signs. From 1 to 7, signs of *yo*. From 8 to 12, signs of the king's thumb and index finger, representing the actual world and the future world (drawings by an informant).

6. secret space, *tyema gundo*
7. earth, *dugu*
8. center of the earth, *kotye dugu*
9. eye of the earth, *dugu nye*
10. mouth of the earth, *dugu da* (1)

[823]

1. The earth breathes through orifices called "mouths."

11. northwest, *seleke se* /8/ (literally: foot of the angle)

12. southwest, *seleke* *bolo* (literally: hand of the angle)
13. northeast, *seleke* (angle)
14. southeast, *seleke* (angle)
15. sun, *kle*
16. moon, *kalo*
17. male star, *dolo* *ke*
18. female star, *dolo* *muso*
19. mouth or mother of the star, *dolo* *da* or *dolo* *ba*
20. grain of rain, *sã* *kise*
21. secret rain, *sã* *gundo*
22. damp rain, *sã* *suma* (1).

> 1. It is said of these times: "*yo* says only *yo* above, one should imitate this; the world has moved to the west, the east, the north, the south, " *yo* *bi* *yo* *fo* *sana*, *ladeke* *ka* *kãka* *kę* *ǫ* *la*, *giri* *kera* *wa* *la*, *ni* *flaye* *la*, *ni* *kaye* *la*, *ni* *noro* *la*. The terms *giri*, *wa*, *flaye*, *kaye*, *noro* belong to the ancient language.

While whirling from the "angles" to the cardinal sides, *yo* thought out four worlds (2):

> 2. The four worlds are represented by a drawing made up of four concentric quadrangular figures, observed by the informant in the village of Kéré in Mandé. The Bambara conceive of space as a square with cardinal angles and sides (see p. 55 , Fig. 3).

The first, *dyẽ* *mana*, "the shedding of the world, " belongs to the time when *yo* "circulated within himself" in nothingness, and of which it is said: "*yo* was the shedding of the world; he made himself shed"(3).

> 3. *yo* *tunye* *dyẽ* *mana* *ye*, *o* *tumbi* *mana* *a* *yere* *la*.

The following world, *dyẽ* *gale*, "the first world, " is the universe about to be realized, the actual world, and it is said that its symbol

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is 3: "The foundation of the first world was given to all things by *yo*, these things were constructed at 3." (1) In order to realize the world,

> 1. *dyẽ gale sikityoko dira fama yo fę few ma, ò few ye dlali ke saba la.*

yo had to use intermediaries which he created as such, but which were responsible for imperfection since the harmony of all things would have required that creation be directly willed and engendered by *yo* himself. The first constructed universe is thus 3: *yo* is 1, the intermediary is 2, the world itself is 3. As a result the whole creation is not equal to *yo*, for its perfection would have expressed itself by 2, that is to say by *yo* and the world with no intermediary (2).

> 2. This idea would seem to contradict the principle of *yo*'s identity with all creation. It should be taken to mean that the total work of creation also includes imperfection. The cause of this imperfection is precisely the presence of intermediaries created, so to speak, with this purpose in mind.

On the other hand, it is said that the actualized universe was constructed and perceived at 3, known at 4. When *yo* decided to create, in period one, nothing could know it, since it alone moved in the nothingness in which it placed its energies. When these energies united, they formed a new unity which, added to *yo*, made 2, that is to say the period two which was as yet unknown. These energies grew slowly heavier while "resisting in attraction," that is, ordering themselves. This was /9/ period three and things became perceptible. But not until period four did they become clearly known, that is, man became conscious of them. As a result, masculinity (symbol 3) in nature is considered the original stimulus in determining fertility. The fulfillment of fertility and the complete knowledge of it can only be accomplished through femininity (symbol 4).

But *yo*, being perfect, wanted perfection, and in attempting to achieve it, wished to reach 5. For this purpose, he went beyond universe 3 and reached 4. Since numbers were already the symbol of

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things and (so to speak) the things themselves, 4, representing femininity, could not create by itself, for 4 does not exist in 3, symbol of masculinity. And in the universe as thought out by yo, nothing can be engendered without the help of complementaries or twins, whose prototype is the couple: masculinity-femininity.

World 4 is called dyẽ bana, "the refused world," for, in the face of difficulty, yo kept that creation within itself; it remains there as a potential and will return into the world called dyẽ nata, "the world to come," in which, reaching 5, yo will achieve a universe not in 3, like the actual one, but in 2 (yo and the world), without an intermediary. Hence its perfection, for it will be equal to its creator. This universe will be created in the opposite direction of the preceding one in the following order: south, north, east, and west. It will be established by the "great voice of one word" and characterized by the transformation of beings, a new distribution, the absence of error, a close contact with the essence of things, and perfect knowledge. For it is said: "In the world to come, all words will be changed. Solidity was not achieved in this creation, but union will be accomplished in the solidity of one word. Yo's course, yo's work, yo's sleep will penetrate every being. The second world is a new world, the world of one word" (1).

1. Dyẽ nata la, kumaw be bi yelema;
sikityoko ma kle dali ko la fara ñugã
na kę kuma dyotyoko kele nye; yo boli,
yo bara, yo suna, bi dõ ma be la;
dyẽ fla ye dyẽ kura ye, dyẽ kura ye
kuma kele nye.

This text is sometimes recited in the course of talks which follow religious ceremonies, and at times when the movements of creation are discussed. Many details of rituals and games indicate this preoccupation with a second universe. See Fig. 1, p. 22 and Fig. 4, p. 56.

Because yo has only constructed the first universe, men understand only half of its thought, the other half to be realized in the "second world."

772 801 After having thought out the universe and rotated upon itself to create the universe, *yo* "divided and distributed its 'Word." It placed three times 22 voices /10/ in *o*, which then entrusted one time 22 voices to *yereyereli*, out of which the finally conceived universe was to come forth. This deposit in *o* is none other than the change of the inaudible voice, *yo*, into an audible voice. When that voice began to sound outside of *yo*, still invisible and secret, the latter stopped moving and remained motionless within itself: *o*, in its sound, is the emissary of *yo*. And in that voice all things necessary to the building of the universe were proposed; all these things also potentially rumbled across the "angles of the world." When this primary movement reached its heighth, the *yereyereli*, the vibration, issued from it, and when the vibration existed and was shed, *o* stopped rumbling but was itself the spirit of movement: it is said: "*yere* came forth from *o*, *o* was its foundation" (1).

1. *yere bwora o la, o kera siki kele nye a ko.*

772 *Yo* being the immense and inaudible voice, *o* became the rumbling voice; finally *yereyereli*, the high-sounding vibration, formed the rays of light in space. The whole of the infinite trembled, shone, and resounded. After the *yereyereli* had filled space with movement, light, and sound, it ask *o* for its power and became "pregnant," bearing all it wanted and had to create: "The vibration had the power of attraction, the creator was secretly within it" (2). The present universe issued from the vibration, provoking "astonishment," *koni*, a term used to designate both the *yereyereli* and the creative principle it contained (3).

2. *Yereyereli tunye mana ma ye, daliba tumbi a kono gundo la.*
The Bambara imagined that the light and sound of this vibration were such that they were intolerable to vision and hearing; however, even though man cannot perceive the vibration, it exists nonetheless; "the egg of the world continues its vibration in sound and light."

772 3. On koni, see S. de Canay, Notes sur la théodicée bambara, pp. 188ff.

Creation of the Universe

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773 At the center of yereyereli was the spirit, miri, in the spirit was the doing, wali; in the doing was the coming of all things, nali; and in nali was the division of all things, tali. These four terms also define the four basic elements of creation, respectively air, earth, fire, and water; air and fire being male, earth and water, female. (1)

1. "yereyereli was originally made up of four elements which enabled it to vibrate secretly," (yereyereli gale gale kono kera ni wale nani ye, o ya to a sera ka yereyereli šu a la).

The miri was also "the egg of the world in which nature was enclosed." It is represented by three ovals, all contained within each other; this figure also expresses the three /11/ rotations made by yereyereli at each of the cardinal points (in the following order: north, south, east, west), each rotation stirring up the four elements (2). The central oval, or so de, "son of the house," is the primordial grain which placed all things in the nature of the four elements. The intermediary oval, dyẽ wali gale, "the first action of the world,"

[801] 2. See Fig. 2, p. 34 . Creation is thus expressed by the numbers seven and 12, obtained by the addition and multiplication of three (male symbol, and number of rotations) and four (female symbol and number of elements). Seven is the symbol of man (homo) and of the principle of the universe; 12 is the symbol of the multiplication of beings and of the perpetual development of this universe.

772 773 represents fertility; it determines man, the principal thing of the universe, who has also received from it the capacity for thought and knowledge. The external oval, dyẽ ko, "gate of the world," is essentially mobile; rotating upon itself, it dilates or contracts, depending upon the births or deaths of the multiple-formed matter it contains. It is this oval that makes all things in the universe "unable to escape from the sight of the creator" (1).

1. fẽw be dyele ngala ka yeli kono.

772 801 773 The essential part of that which the yereyereli stirred up as it rotated was the spirit. The spirit, inflated by all its potential power, finally began to sound. "The spirit resounded in the midst of facts," (2) and as it was the strongest element in space, it held itself up alone

2. miri ye manga ti walew tyela.

and arose. Then it burst and from it poured elements which slowly separated, dispersed, and ordered themselves. It is said of this event: "In the old days, all things came out together" (3). These fundamental

3. folo kow bõñuana.

elements, numbering twenty-two, are at the origin of creation which is classified into twenty-two categories.

The Bambara use several methods to order and name these elements. First, according to the fundamental system of creative thought, yo, they divide the elements into three groups of seven, to which a twenty-second is added.

The first seven, dyẽ dyo kã gale, "the first voice of the building of the world," express yereyereli before knowledge, but containing all things with man, "seed" of nature, in the first place. The seven following elements, dyẽ dyo kã saba "the third voice of the building of the world," denote the beginning of the knowledge of yereyereli as masculinity and assures all fertility. It is at this moment that the term koni appears, attributed to yereyereli, and expressing awe before creation. The last seven, dye dyo ka nani "the fourth voice of the building of the world," contains "the complete revelation of the dispositions and situations /12/ of all that was created";

772 *yereyereli* then becomes known as femininity and assures the supremacy
801 of femininity over nature. The twenty-second element sums up these
773 three groups of seven and expresses total knowledge (1).

Another division of the elements determines the categories. The first seven are the *bõnuana* of which it is said: "The seven *bõnuana* came out first" (2). Then came twelve *bangini*, births or *bayeremani* "discoveries," of which it is said: "Twelve discoveries were left in space" (3). After them, there appeared three *ǰiginis*, foundations or *dyoli*, situations, of which it is said: "Three foundations ate up the world" (4). The first seven elements are the "states of the world"; the next twelve, "the foundations of the world"; the last three, "the words of the world's situation" (5).

1. The same progression of numbers as in the creative thought *yo*, characterizes the creation by vibration. Being 1, the vibration passed on to 2. At 2, it conceived invisible "light air" and the powers it contained were grouped together to form a whole. At 3, the powers became gravity, and the visible "heavy air" appeared. At 4, and only at that moment, creation, completely visible, was revealed to the consciousness. For further discussion of the "heavy air," see also S. de Ganay, *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, p. 188.

2. *Bõnuana wolo fla bwora folo*. The word *bõnuana* means literally "come out together."

3. *Bangini tani fla bla ka kęnę da*.

4. *J̌igini saba ye dyẽ dũn*.

5. *dyẽ dyo tyoko; dyẽ sigi tyoko; dyẽ dyo ka*.

772 The seven bõnuana summarize the general characteristics of beings
801 and things:
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1. keleña, unity;
2. makari, pity, mercy;
3. mako, necessity;
4. sinaya, aggression, jealousy;
5. fadena, rivalry;
6. maloya, shame;
7. sia, race, species, stock.

The twelve bangini, which follow, determine the qualities and destinies of the person:

1. ma ye ma ye, literally: a person is a person; gifts, possibilities of each, propositions and dispositions.
2. mako, mutual aid, simplicity, dignity, courtesy, wisdom.
3. sebaya, power, domination.
4. dyuguya, maliciousness, vulgarity, ferocity, difficulties.
5. kunanguya, bad luck, bad destiny, ill nature.
6. sira, road, guide, obedience, discipline.
7. ńafola, wealth, health, fertility.
8. adamadeña, brotherhood, humanity, liberty, kindness.
9. dahirime, food, material possessions.
10. saya, death, illness, infirmities, madness.

/13/ 11. šu, night, light and dark, secret, witchcraft.

12. kle, day, sun; all the boli altars of the Bambara.

The three jijini are respectively:

1. kun, the head that thought out the world.
2. ba, the womb that formed it.
3. fo, the word that created it.

772 Knowledge, fâ, was born of three foundations which finally became
773 detached from the spirit (1). Knowledge opened up, divided, and

78 1. The following prayer, relating to the fã, is sometimes recited: fango, ma dua, ma bo, fẽ mbina, fẽ nkumba, fẽ ndaba, fẽ semba, wolo tigi ye nye, djiri tigi ye nye, panve bwora na. O bwora mi, o nya nyimi senge do. Ntigi ye yereyere ye, ka bo miri kono, miri dane sandyi.

> 782 "Road of knowledge, I am not small,
> I am not big. A thing arrives, a thing with
> a large head, a large mouth, a large foot.
> I am the master of fertility; I am the master
> of trees. Where does it come from? It comes
> from the weariness of my seed. My master is
> the vibration, out of which came the spirit,
> the rain of which fertilizes."

772 contributed to the building of the visible world, especially engendering
773 particles, *monõ mõnõ*, which entered into the composition of the earth, and a radiance, *noro*, used for the formation of the sky.

At the same time, the spirit let fall upon the earth (still in the process of formation) a heavy object in the form of a globule, *kulu*, which was later named *pemba* (1). *Pemba*, moving as a whirlwind to the four cardinal points (south, west, east, and north), received twelve of the elements issued from the spirit. Then, with the help of the particles that came out of *fã*, he modeled lumps and mounds which gave shape to the earth.

But in the course of rising, the spirit had thrown upwards that which was later called *fãro* (2). Faro, who was then no more than vibration,

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1. From *fẽ*, thing and *ba*, big.

192 2. The Bambara use either *faro* or *fãro*, from *fa* (creation) or *fã* (knowledge) in the ancient language. This double etymology indicates the closeness in their minds between the concepts of creation and knowledge (see p. 17). The suffix *ro* expresses the idea of a whole, a totality. Another etymology has been suggested by S. de Ganay, in *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, p. 196. "...the words Fané (the name of a family of blacksmiths), Faro, *fan* (force), *fara* (stone), and *fari* (body) all have the same origin. Faro is the secret name of stone." This etymology

192

is interesting in that it accentuates the ties which, in the Sudan, bind the Faro of the Bambara and the Bozo, the Nommo of the Dogon, and the blacksmiths. See M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau (passim).

772 helped the spirit with ten of its elements and with the radiance from
773 fā to build the sky along an oriented trajectory. Faro first went to the west, then the south, the east, and the north, thus determining the celestial cardinal points.

/14/ The sky is distinct from empty space, kęnę, which separates it from the earth and which is the product of the "yereyereli's shedding after it had given birth to the spirit." The sky, composed of seven parts placed one above the other, was completed before the earth which itself is also made up of seven corresponding parts.

773 Although he had received the larger share of the elements disgorged by the spirit, Pemba could not finish his work alone. When the sky was completed, the spirit blessed Faro, precipitated him in the form of water along the trajectory followed by Pemba during his descent. This water fell drop by drop from the seventh part of the sky to the seventh part of the earth into which it streamed to gain knowledge of the earth's foundations. As Faro descended vertically, he left a globule in space which became the spirit of the air, Teliko (1); on earth, he deposited a particle which formed the spirit Soba (2). As he dripped between the mounds which made up the earth, he saw that the latter was not completed, so he filled the empty pockets with water, thus forming the hidden springs of today.

Then life appeared on earth. Faro, impregnated by the vibration which was potentially masculine and feminine, gave birth to twin daughters on a deserted hillock (3). As soon as they appeared, the

1. From teli, to go quickly.

2. Literally: so, house, ba, big.

823 3. Naked hillocks, walawala, and clearings are the scene of rituals concerning the twins.

113 first grass, *yayalẽ* (1), grew around them, and scorpions, entrusted with protecting the twins, came forth (2). After a time, an abundant dew that had collected spread over the hillock and formed a spring from which a stream began to run. At its head, the fish *kokoni* (3) appeared, directing the first flow of fresh water to run on earth. He was soon followed by another fish of the same species which took Faro and his children on its back; the stream carried them to their water homeland. The first of Faro's daughters gave birth to twins, one of whom was a male. Faro sent his messenger, the swallow, to place the soul or vital force of the twins in the birth waters. As evidence he kept their doubles, *dya*, in water in order to protect them against all evil. Of these twins the Bozo were born, and, like Faro's twin daughters, they could live in water and converse with him (4). Faro then created the fish /15/, which served as food for them, the crocodilians, and all the aquatic animals that people the seas and the running waters. Then he returned to the sky.

Of this first creation of earth and sky, it is said: "Pemba descended on earth; Pemba was the builder of all things. Faro's evidence came forth and spread over it; the great water (of Faro) descended and entered the eyes of the earth: in these places Faro made known his power" (5).

1. *Andropogon* (*Hyparrhenia*) *hirtus*.

2. The scorpion, weapon of the twins, attacks those who would harm them, for to attack a twin would be to offend Faro.

3. *Calrias* *senegalensis*.

4. The male twin mated with his sister who gave birth to the Bozo; the daughter mated with a man descended from Mousso Koroni (see p. 65).

5. pemba djigi na dugukolo ka, pemba dlala fĕwnye, faro ka šereya bwora o la, dyi ba djigini dona dugukolo nyena, yoro min faro ye a sebaya do o la. This text is recited in the course of the annual ceremonies of the Kworè (see p. 217).

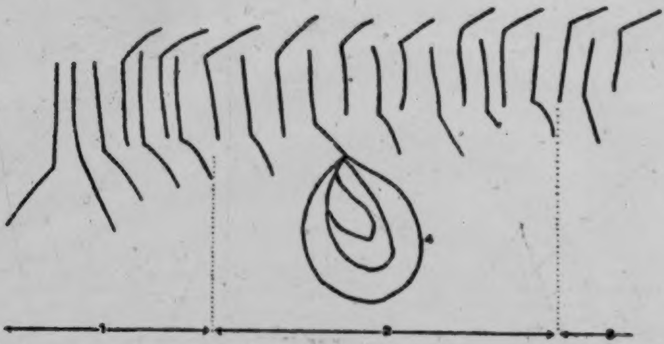

Fig. 2.—The twenty-two elements issued from the explosion of the spirit (4). They are divided into seven bõñuaña, twelve bangini (2) and three jijini (3). This drawing was made on the sanctuaries of Komo. (An informant's drawing).

The first phase of the formation of the world is commemorated each year by a drawing traced on the sanctuary of the Komo: it represents the spirit, miri, and the twenty-two elements of creation (Fig. 2). The vertical lines are read from left to right; they are bent alternately above and below to indicate that they belong alternately to Pemba and Faro, and also signify that each of the elements is the first of a series engendered by it. The miri is drawn in the center in the shape of a slanted pocket, the image of "yereyereli's pregnancy." The old man in charge of the ritual recites as he draws: "Pemba and Faro have situated and organized the world, the sky above was secretly made by Faro with the help of the spirit; Pemba descended on earth and was known very quickly; the humans ask your help, yereyereli, my two hands are behind my back" (1). /16/

113

1. *pemba ni faro ye dyễ dyokã ani dyễ dyotyoko kę, sankaba dlala faro fe gundola miri deme ni ko la, pemba djigini dugukolo ka, a dõ teli yala, dyobe na warilike yereyereli, mbolo fla yenko.*

Pemba's Reign

For seven years, Pemba was a whirlwind (1). Transformed into a acacia seed, he moved about in space, carried by the wind and entraining the rain; finally, exhausted, he came to rest on the earth which hid him under a few lumps of dirt and enabled him to germinate; a tree, the balanza (2), grew but soon died of drought. There remained no more than a sort of rectangular board lying on the bare earth. It was called *pembele*, also *ko kun*, "the head of things."

Pemba was alone on the earth in the shape of a tree root which potentially contained the creation of animals and plants. Beneath

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1. This part of the myth concerning the *pembele* was collected by S. de Ganay and published in the *Journal de Psychologie normale et pathologique* under the title: "Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara. /Aspects of Bambara Mythology and Symbolism/." We have made a few changes in the text.

[824]

2. *Acacia albida*. The Dogon give an equally important place to the *acacia albida* in the prelude of creation. The first materialization of the world rotated between two thorns of the tree, placed symetrically point to point. Its shape was that of a rotating, flattened out truncated cone made from the wood of the same tree.

773 him his own decomposition collected. As he occasionally moved about in a whirlwind, weary of his solitude, he said to himself one day: "The dust of my tracks will dissipate my nostalgia." Having spoken these words, his tracks came together and the wind pushed them towards the mound of earth and rotting wood. He kneaded this mass with his saliva, thus incorporating into it a breath-soul, *ni*; he gave it a shape and an immaterial double, *dya*. However, as he distrusted it, he turned the double over to Faro, master of sky and the waters, guardian of the *dya*. Then Pemba laid himself down upon the shape for four days. On the fifth day, he heard, coming from beneath him a high-pitched feminine voice which said: "Get up, I am exhausted." "No," he replied, "first I will give you a name so that you may be my wife."

This creature had a head with long, pointed ears and the torso of an animal; the rest of the body was human except the tail. Until her fall, she retained that shape.

In order that she might become the womb of future beings, the repository of knowledge and the stimulant to Pemba's thoughts, she had to assure him of her total love. She promised him this and thereupon received the name of *Muso koroni kundye*, "little old woman with a white head,"—little, for she had issued from him; old, for she was an emanation for him and therefore his equal in age; white, /17/ because, coming from him, she was as pure as he. Thus named, she got up and became his wife. Although he did not enter her, she received multiple inseminations from him and in exchange he took his own sap back. She gave birth to plants and animals, the first of which was the panther. All that she engendered had a soul or vital force, *ni*, and a double, *dya*, similar to those which Pemba had deposited in her as he kneaded her with his saliva. At that time, no being was articulated (1).

773 824 The earth began to swarm with beings who appeared without order as they were born at random; they all went to worship Pemba as their creator, calling him god, Ngala. The latter wished to assert his complete domination over this chaotic work /of creation/; so he asked Mousso Koroni to plant him in the earth. He immediately took

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1. Such beings with supple, non-articulated limbs are called *mašibadẽ*.

773 root by his own power and became the first of all trees, the *balanza*, 824 green in dry season and dry in rainy season, and it extended his power (1).

773 The human beings born of Faro lived amidst the burning rocks and sought refuge under that tree, whose power was obvious to all since it needed no water to keep it green. They prayed to it and received from it directives for their lives. Since they were immortal, time did not exist. However, they figured their age according to their pilosity: at age 12, the public hair grew; at 22, the hair under the arms; at 36, the beard was black; at 52, the hair whitened. When he could count the four types of hair, his being was complete; but seven years later, he suddenly grew thin and lost his vitality, and his soul weakened; he was then an old man.

Men at that time knew no language and had no clothes. They lived naked and communicated to each other through gestures and grunts. At the instigation of Mousso Koroni, and in order to recognize [801] each other, they scarred their face with three or four lines, three being the sexual symbol of man (the penis and two testicles) and four that of woman (the four labia). In keeping with this, each person, according to his sex, would repeat his actions three or four times.

Men at that time received their food from /18/ the sky, thanks to the spirit Téliko, who, up in space, watched over Faro's waters. During the rainy season, he would send them stones from the seventh heaven containing karite nuts, *si kolo*. From these stones the women extracted oil which they ate with fruit. One day, during the dry season, a woman who had drawn oil from four nuts wiped her hands on the *balanza* under which she was seated alone. "This, I want," said the tree. From then on, all the women offered him oil and were imitated by men who later partook of the cult.

However, the *balanza* was no longer satisfied with only Mousso Koroni. It demanded that all the women give it their love. Therefore

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1. The *balanza* is not Pemba in his totality, which is spirit, force, and matter. It is Pemba's earthly metamorphosis and, more especially, the image of his fertile masculinity. Pemba took the shape of the *balanza* in order to continue his work of creation and to bring death on the earth.

they all had to mate with it, thus increasing its vitality and power, for it fed on their sap just as it had with its first female. The latter became overpowered by jealousy and brought ill will into all things; she refused to share and no longer came near it, thus denying it the love and faithfulness she had promised. She betrayed it, isolated herself, and, refusing to cooperate in the work of creation, began to disturb it. This was the origin of her fall, her poverty, and her hardship for the balanza cursed her for her betrayal and rejected her whenever she attempted to go back to it.

She then knew such nostalgia and despair that a kind of madness seized her. She chased about the heavens, the space, and the earth from west to north, from south to east, plunging pieces of wood into the ground as she had done for Pemba in the hope that they in turn would become balanza.

Mousso Koroni had maimed herself on the pembele at the time she had sexual relations with it. In the course of her voyage, she wished to inflict the same wounds on others; her fury drove her to circumcise and to excise all the human beings she encountered with her teeth and nails. The violence of her actions caused in her the appearance of the first menses. (1) At the same time, she revealed to men all that Pemba had taught her and which should have remained secret; she communicated to all she touched the impurity of her betrayal. At her touch, the earth became impure and has remained so until today (2).

Pemba vainly pursued Mousso Koroni throughout the universe in an attempt to reclaim that which he had given her: power and /19/ knowledge. Faro, at his request, chased her in turn from east to south, from north to west; he caught up with her, vanquished her, and attempted to submit her to her creator. But she refused, declared herself free, and thus introduced disorder into creation: evil, unhappiness, and death were brought into the world by her.

1. Dyoli tumbi bo muso koroni, bolokoli gale ke to a fe na ni ma sone ye. "Blood came out of Mousso Koroni the moment she circumcised with her nails and teeth."

2. See p. 82.

113 After a long life of misery and madness, Mousso Koroni died, abandoned and anguished, without ever having seen the light. But men gained something from her misery: her efforts to keep from starvation with the origin of the agricultural techniques that she taught (1).

1. The part of the myth pertaining to the origins of agriculture will be related in detail by S. de Ganay, in Techniques et rites de l'agriculture chez les Bambara, /Agricultural Techniques and Rituals among the Bambara/, (in press).

During that time, life was multiplying on earth; the tree engendered beings with each of the women with whom it mated.

In the meantime other beings appeared on earth—spirits of the air who had become visible, having acquired bodies and become transformed, through contact with the impure earth, into men called mahalakillen (2). They had supple inarticulated limbs and were

2. Literally: fallen person.

similar to the beings brought into the world by Mousso Koroni Koundye. But the multiplication of living beings it wanted to dominate caused the balanza to seek an increase in its own strength, drawing it first from the genital secretion of women. As this became insufficient, a more powerful sustenance was revealed to it. An old man who was to marry a virgin one day lost his strength and could not consummate the sexual act. The young girl mated with the tree, which, having deflowered her, was covered with blood and became warm. The purpose of this warmth was to repel those women who had previously presented themselves to it; it signified that the tree wanted something besides their genital secretion. Seized with fear, women practices divining rites in order to learn its wish: the answer was that it wished blood.

The men, not knowing how to satisfy its desire, asked the eldest among them, who was a diviner, to put the dried blood of the virgin into the tree trunk. He first dampened the stained spot with water and rubbed the tree. On the third day, as he was doing this work, one of his hands caught on the rough bark; a vein in his wrist opened and his blood ran. After this, men offered the blood of their veins twice a year to the tree which would absorb the strength to regenerate itself. In exchange for this offering, the tree agreed to rejuvenate men when they reached the critical age of fifty-nine. But, in return, the tree required that the wives of all men become his wives. /20/ The power of the tree and the youthfulness of men resulted from this continuous exchange, but it was possible only through the medium of those women who were used as a tribute.

The first blood offering of men took place at the begging of the dry season. Grouped around the tree, with the eldest in command, they opened the veins of their right wrists without murmur or complaint and in the midst of chants, they sprinkled the trunk with blood. To give the blood of the right hand meant to give half of one's body and to entrust to the tree one's work and one's double, dya. As soon as the blood stopped spurting, that is, as soon as it seemed to have lost its strength, the wrists were bound with fibers of da, and the wounds healed without leaving any scars.

The stain of each offering was noted by the elder who learned to identify people according to the color of their blood. Then each man, his hands behind his back, licked the place he had bled in order to take back the blood to which the tree had given new life, leaving in the trunk the strong and dangerous element it previously contained.

During this ceremony the old men who wished to regain their youth assembled around the tree. Each one, in turn, climbed to the top and opened the veins of his left wrist, thus surrendering his last strength. Then he climbed down and the young men who were present pulled out the hair of his body, one by one, beginning with the public hair and continuing with the hair of the underarm, the beard, and the head. They finished off by taking out the body hair. The man who endured this was not to groan or cry out, but to sing in order to give himself courage, because suffering stoically borne was necessary to rejuvenation. His entire body was then beaten by the young men, the beating started with the nape of his neck; he fainted and became once more a seven year old child. The adolescents blew into his veins to activate his lungs and insufflated him with water so as to replace the blood he had lost.

The eldest son of the rejuvenated old man became the head of the family but could not inherit the women who, according to the pact, 113 belonged to the tree. In addition, the balanza required that the fourth daughter born in each family be entirely consecrated to it. Every virgin had to be deflowered by it on the eve of her marriage, and the act was ritually performed with the hand of one of the women belonging to the tree in such a way that the blood would run onto the trunk.

The cycle of births that followed these various matings was regulated as follows: when a woman's husband reached the age of /21/ fifty-two, she continued to have sexual relations with the tree. She gave birth to all sorts of animals and plants. After her rejuvenation, which occurred without ritual or suffering when she reached her fifty-ninth year, she regained her virginity (1). She was deflowered by the tree and gave birth to an animal or a plant, after which, having reunited with her husband, she would again engender men. When her husband grew old, she returned to the tree and the cycle began again.

The tree also demanded of women their menstrual blood and all births took place near it. When men learned to work stone and made their first axes, the tree ordered them to carve wooden phalli which they inserted into its trunk. The shape given to these objects varied according to a woman's vagina and age. The women feared these painful matings but had to submit to them without a tear, because the tree drew not only its strength from them as in the old days, but also a pleasure unknown to it before. Its strength grew still greater and its pleasure reached a peak when the balanza received the blood of the first virgin deflowered by one of the wooden phalli.

When the blood sacrifices were organized, the tree instructed men in other things. It taught them, in particular, to make fire by rubbing two stones together; to thank it they cut the veins of their right hands and gave it their blood.

The power of the balanza was then at its height. But the way in which it abused its creatures brought about its downfall. Indeed, at that time, men as well as women were not only exhausted from giving blood, but, because of a constant increase in population, they were dying of hunger. One evening a woman fainted as she passed by

(1) It would seem that women obtained rejuvenation in return for their genital secretion and menstrual blood which they constantly gave the tree.

a field of wild tomatoes. When she came to Faro, who was then in the earthly waters, suggested to her the idea of eating fruit. In her body, the fruit was transformed into blood and she regained her strength and got up. She went to bathe in the Niger, a region where famine had become so bad that sand was the only food. There Faro seized her, sliced off her nose and her navel, and opened her belly. He ate the red pulp which he found there. He counted the seeds of the fruit and found the number to be a multiple of seven. Each /22/ tomato carried within it both blood and the principle of duality (3 plus 4), both of these being the fundamental elements that made up the human being. Faro placed the principle of life in the tomato: men and women, informed of this transformation, ate the fruit to regain strength and continue feeding the balanza which, in return, rejuvenated them.

But Faro was opposed to this increase in power. He found it unfair and excessive that the tree enjoy both the domination of the world and sexual pleasure. He also considered the tree his tributary to some extent since water and the tomato, both of which belonged to him, were indispensable to the life of men and to the regeneration of their blood. He therefore made the tree understand the conditions under which he would continue to dispense water. He demanded that the tree stop the procreation of beings through women's mating with wood, and reserved for himself the power to procreate with the tomato as intermediary.

The balanza knew it was going to be vanquished; it foresaw that men were going to betray it and that their worship would now be given to Faro since water was essential to their subsistence and to the multiplication of plants. It knew also that this betrayal would bring about death, but that Faro would take over in his name the work of creation.

Nevertheless it uprooted itself and went to meet with Faro. "The struggle was as bitter as their words, as hard as their hatred, " but victory was Faro's.

Death

The women of the vanquished, who gave birth to the animals and plants, were the first to leave it after seven days and it called them back in vain. They went to live near the river; thereafter, without

773 intervention of any kind, they gave birth after drinking water in which Faro had secretly mixed tomato juice. They offered thanks by giving him three or four tomatoes, depending upon the sex of the child.

After the women, the men, too, gave up worshiping the tree. Instead of seeking wood elsewhere, as they had been in the habit of doing, they began to burn the twigs that fell under the balanza in order to maintain their fire, the fire it had given them.

The tree cursed them. They were thus preyed upon by illness and bad feelings: vindictiveness, hatred, jealousy. The wounds they /23/ inflicted upon themselves in order to give blood and regain their youth no longer healed and became infected.

773 A few among them tried to remedy this new state of affairs. Eight
825 of the eldest men went up to the balanza and, in spite of the heat it gave off in order to repel them, they made incisions on their tongues and offered it their blood. The tree was surprised and first gave out a sort of sigh, for it appreciated the sacrifice. Finally it spoke to them and announced the coming of death. But because of their submission and the sacrifice they had consented to, it transformed them into birds, tatugu kononi (literally: little birds of fire). In order to accomplish this, it demanded that they rub their backs against the tree trunk until all their blood was gone. The men cried out in pain in the process, but just as they were about to die, their souls were transformed into birds. Their flesh and skin penetrated into the tree; their bones mingled with the white bark and the marrow became the red fruit which, from that day on, ripened on the tree. Since that time, the "human flesh" which is the wood of the balanza is rarely put to profane use. These first eight elders transformed into birds were subsequently venerated by men (1).

[326] 1. In particular by all blacksmiths. Since their transformation the birds tatugu kononi supposedly live near the balanza and respect a certain number of taboos: they must not separate but must live communally outside of villages. They are responsible for fire; though incapable of lighting it, they have the power, by their very presence, to keep it up or to put it out. A twig of damp

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> straw bursts into flames when one lights it while pronouncing their name. They also protect woman potters against burns. They are considered impure because of the earth in which they dig holes and because of the fire which is itself impure.

773 As the tree blossomed and bore fruit, the sacrifices, of which it was still the object, increased its yield: leaves and fruit contained the blood of men. The latter began to eat the fruit for it was appetizing and sweet. They also cut branches to feed their animals. The tree remained silent.

But soon men took advantage of it. One man climbed to its summit, cut off all its buds, and carried them away. Those who came afterwards were terrified to find the tree mutilated. The culprit was terrified by his own action and ran away to Mandé, but there the avenging force (nyama) that pursued him caught up with him and he dropped dead.

The people of Mandé, not knowing that they had broken a taboo and being ignorant of death, sheltered him, thinking he was asleep. They tried to feed him and rubbed the corpse with sorrel and oil. Thanks to these ministrations the body /24/ kept for a certain time, but at the end of ten days, it rotted. The force (nyama) it exuded attacked other men who in turn also died.

The deceased's parents came to fetch the body. They ate the flesh because since the arrival of death, the thunder stones that fell from the sky no longer contained karite nuts and they were beginning to starve. They carried away the dead man's bones.

When they returned to the tree, it ordered them to grind the bones and rub its mutilated branches with powder. It told them that from then on it would be useless to give it their blood; they would no longer be rejuvenated and they would all know death.

At the sound of these words, three men fell; four women who unexpectedly came by suffered the same fate. The seven corpses rotted around the tree that had taken their lives. This was the last sacrifice.

The tree announced that it was forsaking men but that it would continue to give the red fruit representing their blood poured over him in the past. And since then, the tree follows an annual cycle contrary to that of other plants: during the winter season it loses its

strength along with its leaves and fruit. But it blossoms in the dry season, after the harvest, just like a well-fed person who is afraid of nothing because the harvest is in. As it carries within itself its own sacrifices, it requires nothing of human beings.

After having been forsaken, men in desperation went up to a torrent to implore the invisible. But for two years they received no answer. They began to waste away and their patriarch went up to the tree to obtain its forgiveness. He prayed in vain and had to return to the water. Thereupon he heard the voice of Faro and the power of that first word caused him to faint. A little water brought him back to consciousness but he was terrified by a black shadow. Reaching out with his arms he prayed: "The tree has put darkness between you and us!" Then the shadow became white and the coolness of Faro entered his body. He went to fetch his people and Faro instructed them, saying: "I will give the necessary rain for farming, as well as the springs, the ponds, the torrents, and a great river, the Niger. But remember that all water is holy and must be revered. I cannot eliminate death, but I will compensate for it." And he taught them speech and their own language.

Faro said to the first of the eight oldest men, a patriarch thereafter known as kumabana (1): "You are going to die." Eight /25/ days later the old man, feeling his end near, went to the edge of the torrents and said to those who surrounded him and who listened respectfully:

"We did not have the power of speech; through Faro, we have received it. And now we must die. I did not expect this suffering, this sadness: all of you will know the same."

An old man questioned him; he no longer responded. Thinking that they might bring him back to life, the men threw the body into the river where it sank. The second old man, wishing to find it, threw himself in after it. But his body, with nose and navel cut up, floated to the surface of the water which became covered with

1. "End of speech." This word also means "there are no more words" in the sense of "outside of these words there are no others." Kumabana had complete knowledge.

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1. In her *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, Mrs. S. de Ganay has given a first version of the creation in which Koni (alias Pemba), conceived of as the only creator, gives birth to "female twins in the divine substance," Mousso Koroni and Faro respectively, the latter seen in his female aspect. This version is in line with Bambara thought which sees creation as founded on the principle of duality.

The version presented here is of interest because it is absolutely comparable to the Dogon creation myth and takes into account the identity of representations among both tribes. Indeed, in the Dogon myth, creative thought (the god Amma), having formed the "egg of the world," splits it into two placentae (*me*), each containing one of the Nommo twins, bearers of his word charged respectively with the creation of sky and earth. The same is true of Faro and Pemba (see p. 31). But the Nommo of the earth, having lost his female double, was transformed into an animal desperately seeking his double. As a result, disorder was introduced and the Nommo of the sky was charged with putting the confusion into order. To do this, he recognized the universe, reclaiming from the other Nommo the words Amma had entrusted him with. Among the Bambara, the same roles of Pemba, Mousso Koroni, and Faro are found.

To elaborate on this, Pemba and the *balanza* have their counterparts in the *yurugu* (*Vulpes pallida*) and the *senge* (*Acacia albida*), Mousso Koroni in the female being Yasigui, twin of *yurugu*, now represented by a dignitary of the Mask Society, the *yasigine*. Yasigui, like Mousso Koroni, revealed the words of the creator, that is, the language of Sigui. She circumcised and excised men and women and

173 blood. The body was then taken and placed in the crack of a baobab tree. Eight days later, the third old man drowned while bathing; the water turned red at the place of his fall.

When the fourth old man saw this, he concluded that Faro demanded sacrifices. He became the first priest of the cult which he established and which men have honored since that day.

Since this period each of the animal and vegetable species reproduced itself, and the random births of the first ages ceased.

The women, impregnated by Faro, gave birth to humans only. Moreover, they no longer gave birth to single beings as in the days of the balanza, but to twins in the image of those the spirit had engendered to populate the waters of the earth.

Twin births were the rule for a long time until the day men betrayed Faro. Then the spirit of the air, Téliko, decided to take his turn at controlling creation.

"The breath of living beings is mine," he said; "all men's joys come from me through the wind."

"Without me, nothing can live," answered Faro, "for to breathe one must drink; water is indispensable to life."

Deprived of air and water, men wasted away. They attempted to mediate, but Faro refused, "for the body of Téliko, in contact with impure earth, is hot and worn out by the wind." Nevertheless, Téliko, out of pride, decided to take his turn at visiting the boundaries of the world, and men, believing he would be the winner, abandoned Faro to follow him. The latter, sure of his own power, waited for his adversary to attempt the crossing of the seas. At that moment, Faro dashed him against a rock, depriving him of his virility and breaking his right arm which was unarticulated like those of all the creatures of that period.

/26/ After Téliko had recognized his defeat, Faro adjudged men guilty. He punished them for their betrayal but did not forsake them as the balanza had done. First he provided them with articulations necessary for the manual labor they were forced to perform from then on in order to survive. He eliminated the rule of double births and women gave birth to single beings, twins being reserved for rare, privileged individuals. But he replaced twins by the double dya who, from his home in the water, was entrusted with watching over the living and in particular with helping women in childbirth (1).

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[821] taught certain agricultural techniques. In both tribes, the same star, Sirius (called sigi toto by the Dogon; sigi doto by the Bambara), represents them. The androgynous Faro is comparable in all ways to the Nommo, the universal monitor, custodian of the word and of life. The yurugu and the Nommo made voyages similar to those of Pemba and Faro. In particular, at the time of their descent on earth, the yurugu, and later the Nommo, used an "ark," koro, whose counterparts are Pemba's wood pembele and Faro's ark kuru, described by certain initiates (see M. Griaule, L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes. /The ark of the world among Nigerian peoples/.

For both tribes, man "the seed of the world," is the image of the cosmos. The exact role of the seed of the Acacia albida does not appear clearly in the two myths, but in both cases, it is considered to be a first aborted creation.

Faro's Reign

173 Faro, having vanquished the balanza and overcome Téliko, took over the creation himself. He reorganized the whole universe and established the order under which it still functions today. /27/ He spread his word and his light; he named and classified all things: "All things (of the universe) are under the domination of Faro; eight hundred transformations are in his power" (1).

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802 1. Fêw be be faro ka se kono, yelemani ba kele be a la a fe.

The number 800 which is "the end of the count," here expresses the infinite. In the so-called "eastern number system," now

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801 used by most Sudanese, the principal units are 1, 80, 800, etc. Ten remains a secondary unit for counting from 1 to 79 and is combined with 80 for units of the other orders.

There is also the so-called "Mandé" number system, the principal units of which are 1, 60, 600, etc. in which 10 remains a secondary unit for the count from 1 to 59, and combines with 60 for units of a higher order.

On the other hand, it must be noted that the Bambara number system is vigesimal and reflects the concept of the person as identified with the 20 fingers of his hands and feet, and spiritually endowed with two souls of the opposite sex, each of which represents the number 10. If one follows this line of thought, 10 is the unit parexcellence (see p. 213, n. 2). The two counts, 60 and 80, in Sudanese metaphysics, are complementary in the sense that one, 60, is male (60 is three times the person) and the other, 80, is female (80, four times the person) (for a discussion on 3 and 4, see p. 19). In the tribes where generally only the count based on 80 is used, the count based on 60 is still used today in certain rituals (principally among the Dogon).

173 To carry through his plan, Faro undertook a voyage of reconnaissance to the ends of the world in order to name the cardinal points.

He first visited the east, and all the beings who lived there recognized his power and his wisdom. Comparing the luminous whiteness of this region to that of hair discolored by age, he gave it the name of koro, old, a word which also indicates that it was his first stop. He made the east the seat of death.

He then went to the west. As it was dark there, he named the inhabitants klebi maw, "people of the fallen sun." He made the

113 west, klebi, the seat of customs and of good and beautiful things.

He then started off in the direction of the north, taking eight epochs to cross the spaces and the depths. He named the north baba, "great river," for the distance was great, the water deep, and the area difficult. In the north, which he reached in the ninth epoch, he established the seat of his control and that of all royalty.

He then went to the south where evil creatures who had listened to Mousso Koroni and followed her advice spoke a language they had stolen (1). The tried to resist Faro, but he destroyed great numbers of them. Although the survivors submitted to him, he made their domain the seat of impurity and named it /28/ bani, "little river," to emphasize their weakness and their shameful failure.

The itinerary was measured in palms, sibiri, the unit of measurement being 22 palms (2). The distance separating the cardinal points, the height of the sky and the depth of the earth were measured in the same way.

During the same period he determined the seasons and created the regular alternation of day and night to replace the premordial darkness. Having measured space, he created time.

Faro then placed himself in the center of the universe: still actuated by a vibratory movement, he traversed in a spiral turning from right to left up to the outer boundaries, "where there is no more than a trembling of the surface." Then he returned along the same route, going from left to right in order to "place himself at the central point (3) whence he distinguished between beings and things" (4).

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[171] 1. The Dogon have a similar notion of the theft of the language. See p. 47, n. 1.

[804] 2. sibiri nye, literally "eye of the palm." The Bambara palm is a length obtained with an open hand, from the extremity of the thumb to the extremity of the middle finger.

3. It is said of this act, faro tyema yera; or faro sigi yoro seleke nani tyela. "Faro

sat down in the middle of the cardinal
point."

4. A ye klali ke.

The first sky, kaba noro, is less pure than the others and the impure traces of Mousso Koroni's passage, in the form of clouds, have remained there. From that sky comes the wind which Pemba had placed there while pursuing her.

But the second sky, kaba dye, "the white sky," is fresh and already in Faro's power. It is the seat of the souls (ni) of men and animals. The Kwore spirits live there and strive to permit the passage of rain as it falls on earth from the seventh heaven.

The third, kaba fî, "the black sky," is the resting place of all spirits, and the fourth, kaba mana ("shedding of the sky," is the mirror of the other three. There, Faro does his daily "accounting" of the world.

In the fifth sky, koblekaba, "the red sky," Faro hands out judgments on those who have broken the laws. It is the sky of struggles, battles and victories—the sky to which the king offered sacrifices before going to war. It is also the sky of blood, fire, and hot and harmful winds.

In the sixth sky, suna kaba, the secrets of the world situation are kept (1). As its name indicates, it is also the sky of sleep. All the

1. Dyẽ dyoka gundo be sunakaba la.

souls of spirits and living beings sleep there, each in an allotted place. [827] Sleep /29/ is a purification of the soul and dreams are the directives given to it by Faro. Fainting spells, insomnia, and illness are the result of disturbances in the displacement of souls during sleep.

The seventh sky, wolõ fla kaba, is the site of Faro's reign and the seat of power, royal power in particular. From this sky, the realm of purifying water, Faro sends forth over the world the beneficial rain that brings a soul to the grain.

[821] The sun, to which Faro "holds the rope," penetrates the first sky in the morning and crosses all the others successively until evening when it skinks into the seventh. It is the god Pemba who, weary of his pursuit of Mousso Koroni, turns red. The stars are his pores, dilated by effort.

773 Empty space, or tyema, which separates the sky from the earth, remains under the domination of Téliko. It is the domain of air, the winds and insects.

773 823 The earth is divided into seven parts which correspond to the seven heavens and are as follows: (1) dugukolo, earth; (2) dugukolo fi, black earth; (3) dugukolo dye, white earth; (4) dugukolo mana, shedding of the earth; (5) dugukolo bele, "stone of the earth"; (6) dugukolo noro, soft earth; (7) dugukolo woloflã, the seventh earth.

On earth, Faro first created deep watery holes, the abysses of the sea and the rivers which he haunts. He himself dug the first well, the ponds, and the bed of torrents. He established the schedule of the rains which fall from the seventh part of heaven to the seventh part of the earth and constitute the purification and reparation of cosmic disorders.

773 825 824 He then classified living beings. In the east, wild and domestic animals, each group headed respectively by the lion and the horse; in the west, the birds; in the north, the fish with the miri (1) at their head, the sauria, and the batrachia; in the south, all plant life which ~~he~~ divided into three categories (2), indicating the purifying and medicinal power of each.

773 Men were also named and classified and the races distributed according to the quality of the blood into which Faro inscribed the destiny of each. He determined the castes, beginning with the slaves.

He then decided each one's foods and, to protect /30/ the species from destruction, he indicated the forbidden foods, animal and vegetable, which each category of beings had to respect.

1. Micralestes acutidens.

2. These are respectively: herbs, bin, headed by the narakata (Digitaria digitata); plants, fura, the first being the sindya (Cassia siberiana), and trees, dyiri, divided into three categories headed respectively by the karite, the baobab, and the nere (Parkia biglobosa).

773 Finally, he occupied himself with agriculture. In particular, he gave men, through the intermediary of the blacksmiths, the eight cereal grains that had been created simultaneously with man but had remained hidden in the sky (1). The eight grains became the basis for subsistence and are fundamental to the human being who carried the symbol of them on his collar-bone (2).

Everything on earth is represented in the water: living beings by their doubles or witnesses, dya; plants and minerals by an exact replica, which enabled Faro to exert constant control over the existence and actions of the beings placed in his power.

He put spirits as his representatives everywhere in charge of watching over the universal order.

[171] 1. A myth parallel to this can be found among the Dogon (see M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*). It makes the Bambara blacksmith into a civilizing hero, a metamorphosis of Faro, descended from the sky in an ark, *kuru*, and holding in his hand a mass containing the eight cereal grains. See M. Griaule, *L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes;* S. de Ganay, *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, pp. 194-196.

[171 243] 2. The eight grains are as follows: *sañõ*, small millet (*Pennicillaria spicata*); *keninge*, large millet (*Sorghum gambicum*); *kende*, red millet (*Sorghum magaritiferum*); *fini*, fonio (*Digitaria exilis*); *šyõ*, beans (*Vigna maniculata*); *tikaninkuru*, peas; *malo*, rice. The names of the seeds vary, but the same symbols occur among the Dogon. In the Bozo myth, the collar-bone is the receptacle for eight fish, represented by symbols on the forward part of canoes. See G. Dieterlen. *Les Correspondances cosmo-biologiques chez les Soudanais* /Cosmic-Biological Correspondences among the Sudanese/.

The Future Waters

173 The order of the universe prevails in space and time: the present order of things is but one phase thereof. When the "first running waters" covered the ground, Faro permitted only the primordial water to spread out; twelve waters remained hidden and they will rush forth and submerge the earth when he gives the order. The words they contain will be revealed and the "world to come" as thought out by *yo* will be realized.

Meanwhile, in the expectation of these "future waters," men must provide themselves with objects that will save them; the Bozo and some Bambara have canoes, shepherds have their gourds, spinners their spindles, and women their wooden stools (1). The coming /31/ of the waters is represented by a drawing on these objects as well as on a number of other everyday tools (Fig. 3).

173 524 This drawing serves as the framework for a game, the *sumangolo*, which the Bambara of all ages and both sexes play in order to "contribute to the progress of the world."

This game bears the name of the ancestor Soumangolo who traveled throughout the universe to find out and reveal to men "the

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[192] 1. It is significant that *kuru* (canoe), *kuruni* (spindle), and *kuruni* (stool) come from the same root. The word *kuru* designates the original globule in which Pemba descended, and which later became the wood *pembele* in the shape of a trough; it also designates the case or ark used by the mythical blacksmith, bearer of the nutritive [171] seeds. See p. 53, n. 1. The word *kuru* should be compared to *koro* which, in the Dogon language, has the general meaning of case, box, wooden receptacle, trough and canoe, and which also designates, among these people, the vessel in which the blacksmith descended. See M. Griaule. *L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes*, p. 117, n. 3.

173 location and disposition of the waters" (dyi walew and dyi kono few).
524 During his voyage, "he was unable to reach the central springs of the sky," and that is why they have remained unknown to men. /32/ But he visited "the waters of the cardinal angles" from which there emanates a vapor that determines the seasons and the temperatures. Then he studied "the waters of the cardinal sides" and asked Faro to let them stream over the earth. He crossed them in order to explore them and instruct men about them. It is said: "Soumangolo of creation has shown to people and things the ponds, rivers and old ponds" (1).

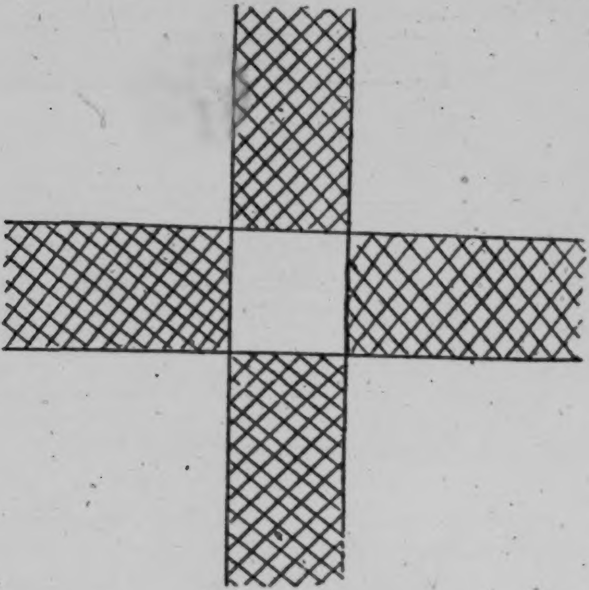

Fig. 3.—The arrival of the "twelve future waters." The central square represents the world and its four cardinal points, the arms of the cross, and the expansion of the waters. This drawing is made on a great number of objects and tools.

1. Dali sumangolo ye ko, ba, ko koro kono ko dyira ma ni fe͡w la.

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524 The game consists in the player crossing the three waters that come from each of the cardinal sides. (1) The drawing represents /33/

1. See Fig. 4. This figure is drawn on the ground: the central square represents the universe and the branches of the cross are the waters emanating from the cardinal sides and divided within each group into three parts.

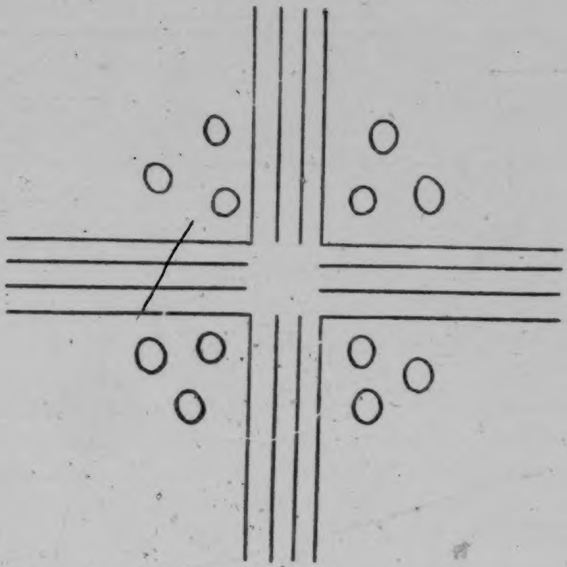

Fig. 4. —Game of the sumangolo, symbolizing the "arrival of the twelve future waters."

Three or four pebbles, depending on the sex of the player, are placed in the angles.

The player turns his back on the drawing and sings: "The little man has left the dance; the little man, the bad man has left the dance; another has not danced; may the difficulty of the water cease (tyeni bwora do la; tyeni, tyendyugu bwora do la; tye were te do ke nin kelenko; dyi geleya ka ta). He then names the three parts of water in the branch of the cross, while his partner

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points them out successively with his finger, saying: "cross the pond" (*ko tike sumangolo*), "cross the river" (*ba tike sumangolo*), "Soumangolo's descent is over" (*sumangolo yigi bana*). The partner removes the pebble immediately adjacent to the branch pointed to and asks: "Is this it?" (*nin wa?*). The player must answer: "Yes! Soumangolo." The game is again taken up in the same way at the starting point. When the onlooker places his finger on the now empty space, he asks: "Is this it?". The player must answer: "No! Soumangolo." The second pebble is removed and, to the same question, the player must then answer: "Yes! Soumangolo." Then follows the same chant, the same mimicry to get at the third pebble, which is also removed. The game is started over again in the same way, at the same starting point, and the second branch of the cross is reached. This continues until the four groups of pebbles placed in the angles are eliminated. The player who has answered without making a mistake is the winner; supposedly he has victoriously crossed "the twelve future waters."

The immediate effect of this game is to place the winner in a favorable position: his earnings increase; his enterprises succeed. But this is not all: it represents a cosmogonic operation of a high order. In the old days, *sumangolo* was [789] played to bring about rain in times of drought; every person playing it today contributes to the actual functioning of the universe as well as to the realization of future times awaited by men. [796] In certain villages the ancestor Soumangolo is celebrated yearly by a hearty feast at which millet beer is drunk and all day long the villagers play the game bearing his name.

The *sumangolo* is part of a series of figures, sometimes geometrical, which serve as the base for cosmogonic games of semi-ritual character such as the one described above.

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[524] both the waters that flowed over the earth in the past and those that will spread over the world when Faro orders them (Fig. 4).

While awaiting that day, Faro continues his work. Taking the spiral route originally followed at the time of the reorganization of the world, every four centuries he travels about, inspecting the confines of the world, and then returns to the central point whence he surveys and governs the universe.

Chapter 2

The Representations

776 /34/ The duality of glã, in the microcosm that is man by his twin souls (ni and dya), is projected into the universe in the form of the pair, sky-earth, originally formed by the splitting of the spirit in two. The pair is represented by two supernatural powers, Faro and Pemba, to whom the principal Bambara cults are addressed.

Pemba is both spirit, strength, and matter. He is actually represented by an engraved piece of wood, symbol of plank originally responsible for the creation of all living things on earth. Theoretically, each family has one.

Faro, master of the word, reigns both in the sky and in the waters, which are the earthly reflection of the sky. In his capacity as master of the word and reorganizer of the universe, custodian of life, and guardian of souls, Faro, light and vibration, reigns in the seventh heaven. As master of the waters, he is described by the Bambara as a living being who has a body and is subject to metamorphosis. Yet to the initiated, he remains first and foremost a higher spirit, detached from contingencies and free in the exercise of the sovereign power conferred on him.

In order to understand fully the spirit of the Bambara religion, it is necessary to examine all the representations of these powers (1).

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1. A few authors have summarily described Faro, in particular, L. Tauxier in Religion bambara (pp. 142-145), in

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which he quotes Msgr. Bazin and the Abbé Henry. These authors have not disclosed the fundamental role of this power nor the area he covers.

It would be proper to compare here these representations with those observed by the Griaule missions in the Sudan such as the Nommo of the Dogon, the Domfé of the Kouroumba, and Faro or Yégou of the Bozo, and published in the following books and articles:

M. Griaule, *Masques Dogon* /Dogon Masks/; "Le Domfé des Kouroumba /The Domfé of Kouroumba/, " *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. II (1941), pp. 7-20. D. Paulme, *Organisation sociale des Dogon* /Social Organization of the Dogon/. S. de Ganay, *Les Devises des Dogon* /Dogon Device/; *Le Binou Yébéné* /The Yébéné Binou/. G. Dieterlen, *Les Ames des Dogon*; "Notes sur le Génie des Eaux chez les Bozo /Notes on the Water Spirit of the Bozo/, " *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. 12 (1942), pp. 149-155. G. Dieterlen and S. de Ganay, *Le Génie des Eaux chez des Dogon* /The Water Spirit among the Dogon/. M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*. Mrs. B. Appia has also published interesting observations in "Note sur le Génie des Eaux en Guinée /Note on the Water Spirit in Guinea/, " *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. 14 (1944), pp. 33-42.

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Pemba

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Pemba, born of primordial vibration, was originally a "globule, " *kuru*, which whirled around to create the earth. While he was a whirlwind, a molecule broke off and became a seed, which fell onto the earth, sprouted and became the *Acacia albida*. The latter grew, 776 dried up, and fell; soon the only thing that remained of it was a block of wood called pembele. Out of its own substance, pembele created a female being, Mousso Koroni, and with her engendered all living things on earth, except for the human beings born of Faro. But following the disturbances created by Mousso Koroni, Pemba had to give up his power, and his Word became the property of Faro, who was entrusted with the reorganization of the universe.

Pemba was known to men who submitted to him on earth before they became aware of Faro who had remained secretly in the heavens (1). They worshipped him as their god and named him Ngala Pemba, god Pemba, or Koni, to recall his origin and the awe inspired by creation (2).

The Pembele

778 776 At the present time, religious leaders and heads of families use the pembele to represent Pemba; it is a block of wood, the image of the original plank (3). This object has a hollow dug out in the center, called sele dẽ, reminiscent of the hole at the bottom of the grave where the corpse is placed (4). Three times 22 slanted lines

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1. It is said: " Faro is a celestial being from above; if one says Pemba, it is because he has been seen on earth" (faro ye sana fẽ ye; a fo pemba ye a ka yeli ye dugu la).

2. The secret names of Pemba are innumerable.

3. The symbolism of the pembele, summarized below, has been studied by S. de Ganay in "Aspect de mythologie et de symbolique bambara."

4. See p. 248.

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are engraved in the hollow; below it, two groups of seven lines, divided in the left section into 3 and 4, and in the right /36/ section into 4 and 3. The 22 lines on the left represent Pemba, the creator; the 22 lines on the right, the transmission of his word and his power to Faro. The 22 central lines are "a testimony to the foreknowledge he had of all things (1)," and the symbol of the great works he accomplished at the dawn of creation.

1. See S. de Ganay, Aspect de mythologie et de symbolique bambara, p. 192.

The two groups of 7 lines represent Pemba, 3, and Mousso Koroni, 4, in order to recall how Pemba, originally androgynous, "separated himself from his feminine part so that the two parts might unite as male and female to produce living things"(2).

2. See S. de Ganay, op. cit., p. 195.

The wooden plank, in addition, is engraved at each end with 22 notches which are, to the left, Pemba and his words, and to the right, all the words entrusted to the spirits and still unknown to men.

The object, taken as a whole, is the image of the universe: its upper surface, upon which are inscribed the lines, is the sky; its lower surface is the earth; the four sides are the four directions of space. It is also the first grave ever dug for the ancestor; the sele dě concentrates "the active and latent energies." Here "the pembele can be considered as thought which is constantly unfolding and which, starting from its own substance, stretches out into time to entrust itself finally to Faro in the guise of the word" (3).

3. See S. de Ganay, op. cit., p. 191

Finally, the pembele summarizes the myth of the creation and organization of the world by the series of 22 lines that decorate it; the duality expressed in the double engraving of 7 lines; its shape, reminiscent of the primeval plank, generator of life on earth; and the wood of which it is made—wood from the balanza tree, formerly master of creation.

All these characteristics justify the name of Ngala, god, which is given to the pembele, for it possesses in addition all the power and

776 strength (*nyama*) of the divinity it represents (1).

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1. That strength is particularly active at the angles of the plank and thus takes on the name *boy nyama*, "venomous *nyama*."

778 The *pembele* is an altar, a guarantee of prosperity, life, and the spiritual and material patrimony of the group to which it belongs. There are different types of *pembele*: those belonging strictly to families, on which the meat eaten by the family is carved, and those belonging to sanctuaries, which must be engraved with symbolic marks. The small board used for circumcisions bears the same name; it /37/ recalls Mousso Koroni's mutilation on the *pembele* and the origin of the removal of foreskin and clitoris from the human body (2).

2. See p. 38.

The role of Pemba, as promoter of the force, *nyama*, which activates all beings, and as the hypostasis of the earth, is illustrated by the ritual use the Bambara made of the *pembele* which represents Pemba.

[764] After each death, the head of the family gathers the force, *nyama*, which emanates from the corpse, and entrusts it to the *pembele*, "which preserves it until a birth occurs in the family." A parallel ritual bestows the force of the dead ancestor on the newborn child (3).

3. See p. 253.

At the time of the ceremonies relating to the large *pembele*, "all the participants bring a small piece of meat which, after having been placed on the plank, is eaten raw so that fire may not destroy the beneficial *nyama* emanating from the divinity itself" (4).

4. S. de Ganay, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

Finally, "in cases where it is necessary to obtain a maximum of *nyama*, infinitesimal slivers of wood are taken from the corners of the board, where its force is concentrated... However, if this practice is abused, the *nyama* of the earth becomes diminished. It is

778 understandable that the strength of the large pembele should be preserved intact since it represents the world. No ritual concerning it is celebrated alone by the man in charge without the presence of a council of elders. Its four corners can be scraped only under worthwhile circumstances for, according to the informant, the god pembele will not tolerate his being used for trifles. As the corners are gradually scraped off and consequently the nyama contained in these corners is reduced, the earth becomes worn out. And if the earth should lose its nyama, all would be empty of its substance; the millet would still grow but its stalk would yield no grain. . . women would bear no children, no longer having any nyama. Bereft of strength, people would no longer be able to fight. The earth would subsist, but would be sterile" (1).

1. S. de Ganay, op. cit., p. 200.

The Balanza

824 The tree balanza, the plant form of Pemba's metamorphosis, vanquished by Faro, is no longer worshipped by men. However, the Bambara's attitude towards it and certain ritual gestures of which it is /38/ sometimes the object, recall the time when, after having spread its domination over all creation, it introduced death to the human species.

[761] In certain settlements, the belief is that whoever rests in its shade dies, the tree having taken his dya. In others, women still make it [782] offerings of karite oil, despite advice from men who have informed them of its inefficacy. They lie at its base, simulating illness, agony, and then death to recall the painful events that have brought them to men; finally they touch the ground successively with each of their four principal articulations as a sign of submission, before smearing the tree trunk with the oil they have brought. In still others, [843] in order to recall that births used to take place near the tree, pregnant women are presented by their husbands to the tree to each childbirth.

The fields surrounding the settlements in the region of Ségou are covered profusely with balanza. The device of Ségou, which tells of the history of the town, enumerates the names of the trees planted at the time of its founding. This device also mentions kokuruni (literally, little humped back), the balanza of Banankoroni (pl. I, a),

824 considered as the founding ancestor transformed into a tree. The old men of the village come to the tree each year, leaning their backs [844] against its trunk, while the placentae of newly delivered women are hung on it (1).

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1. The *balanza* groves around the Bambara settlements have attracted the attention of botanists. M. G. Roberty, in *Les Associations végétales de la vallée moyenne du Niger* /The Vegetable Associations of the Middle Nigerian Valley/, has studied their agricultural role: "The Dumosaeptum arboreitoides, cultivation under the *balanzas.* Artificial, well defined landscape. Trees losing their leaves during the rainy season, regaining them during the dry season, thorny, regularly spaced, but planted in the distant past. The *Acacia albida* loses its leaves in June and grows them again in December, thus furnishing shade in the dry season and humus in the rainy season. The Dumosaeptum owes it its permanent villages.... The date of the introduction of this very useful tree into the western Sudan remains shrouded in mystery, as is the time and method of its dissemination over cultivated fields. It is probable that the *Acacia albida* comes from eastern Africa, somewhere south of the equator. How did it come as far as the Bambara country without losing its original seasonal cycle? What sultan, or what agronomer of genius forced its multiplication around the Bambara villages? These questions remain, for the time being, without answers. The tales of the first European conquerors seem to have proved that numerous "*tatas,*" the enormous citadels of red mud, were enclosed by living *balanzas* fences with joined trunks... It is probable that their military use has preceeded everywhere their agricultural use... We have very little information concerning

> 824 245 the latter... We are familiar enough with the Bambara agricultural customs, but none of them would have brought about the spread of the balanzas, their regular spacing in the fields, and their protection from goats. In almost all the cases we have observed, the balanzas are of considerable age, development and density. There lies in this subject a fine dissertation topic for a young ethnographer and naturalist." (pp. 135, 136).
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> The myths of the Bambara answer M. Roberty's questions.

/39/ Mousso Koroni

776 Mousso Koroni is the impure earth; she symbolizes all that is opposed to light: darkness, night, witchcraft. She is also the symbol of rebellion, disorder, and impurity. Pemba pursued her in vain in his effort to take back what he had given her: the "words" she had received from him were divulged to men in spite of him.

Although no cult honors her and no sacrifice is offered her, her name is cited in various ceremonies and mentioned in the chants; her actions are recalled by certain gestures in the ritual.

776 304 On the other hand, she is the initiator of the separation of the sexes realized in the human body by the removal of the foreskin and the clitoris, an operation which after her betrayal, she performed on all those she met. In this way, she placed them in the same state of rupture in which she found herself: a female principle as opposed to Pemba, the male principle. In addition, she is present in every human being in the form of an evil force, the wanzo, which she had communicated to all those she approached, and of which one must rid oneself through the methods she herself inaugurated: circumcision and excision (1).

1. See p. 95.

776 241 Mousso Koroni is also the originator of certain agricultural techniques which she taught men, and every year, in certain villages, she

776 241 is represented as making her nocturnal visitation at the time the grain is threshed. An old woman, dressed in rags, wearing old unmatched sandals, and carrying broken gourds, runs about the countryside simulating madness. She follows the mythological itinerary from west to south and from east to north, and then returns and sits down near the granaries (1).

776 857 Mousso Koroni's agricultural work and her unhappy wanderings are also represented in a children's ritual, carried out at night during the cultivation period. One of the players, the yukuri or dantoni (literally, little hunchback), wears sandals for ears, a hump at the small of his back, a cloth tail tied low about his waist. He goes begging from /40/ door to door, followed by all the uncircumcised of his neighborhood. He pretends to cultivate and to thresh grain while his companions intone chants recalling Mousso Koroni's mythical actions. After his round is finished and the presents of millet are gathered, the player, pursued by all the others, runs off and disappears amid catcalls.

776 241 783 But while this parody of cultivation, with its rituals and chants, recalls the phases of Mousso Koroni's disorderly life, the agricultural techniques she initiated earlier are in themselves an important expression of the reparation made to the confusions she had caused. Every hoeing by the farmer is a wound inflicted on the impure earth,

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[171] 1. However, the very first agricultural techniques known as fyễ ti (literally, cultivation of the wind) are recalled, particularly among the Bozo, by random sowings of a certain number of wild grasses, then cereals, in the fields where the harvest is offered to Faro. Similar rituals are celebrated in certain Bambara villages. The techniques taught by Mousso Koroni came after those "of the wind," and precede that of millet cultivation.

For information on some agricultural rituals of the Bozo, see G. Dieterlen, "L'Agriculture rituelle des Bozo /Ritual Agriculture of the Bozo/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 20 (1950).

776 241 183 hence on Mousso Koroni. The ritual cultivation of millet, a noble activity to which every aristocratic Bambara must dedicate himself, is an institution which Faro taught in his time and constitutes a purification and a reordering of the soil (1).

Faro

Faro's Shapes

776 Faro was a "voice" before he materialized into a body. In his role as master of the word and reorganizer of the universe, he is represented by a spiral, *munu*, in which he occupies the point of origin at all times. The spiral is situated in the center of the cardinal points (2). Its vibratory unrolling represents "the displacement of Faro for the realization of all things in the universe."

776 292 This image is materialized in a basketry headdress, *yugu*, with a spiral of eight turns. The straw sprigs that form the spokes supporting the spiral symbolize the vibration; the intervals, *yugunye* or eye of the *yugu*, which separate them are rays of light, the spiral representing

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1. *Dugukolo be be dyuruma*, "the whole earth is impure." But as only virgin soil is considered impure, it is also said: *dyurumu be be dugukolo ka forow sani nyala do*, "the whole earth is impure except for the cultivated fields." The word *dugukolo* (literally, bone of the earth) designates both the earth as a whole and the earth as matter. The same notions [171] concerning the impurity of the earth hold for the Dogon. See M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, p. 94.

2. This "central point," which is also the firmament, is described by the Bambara as *sǎ tyema kolo*, literally, the bone of the middle of the sky.

776 the daily movement of the sun "which unfolds until evening." The
292 regularity of the rays symbolizes order and the classification of beings and things by Faro. The /41/ ends of the straw sprigs forming the spiral must remain free: they represent the infinite extension of Faro's realm and power. The hat is also a mask "which hides Faro's invisible face and through which he watches over the world" (1).

1. Today, a basket of considerably higher dimensions is made and used by women (See pl. I, b).

[643] The headgear yugu was formerly reserved for the king, who wore it under a turban. Certain deserving old men were also permitted to keep it. The rituals of making and wearing this headdress attest to the importance attributed to it. In particular, when an old man was [695] suspected of having committed a serious offense, his hat was pierced with four holes representing the four cardinal points. He was then made to wear it, thus submitting him to Faro's judgment; if found guilty, he died.

776 As the spirit of the waters, Faro is supposed to belong to the white race and his body to be half albino flesh and half copper (pl. I, c).

776 A myth relates how his physical being was formed.

773 When Faro caused the streaming waters to descend on earth, he manifested himself for a long time only by his voice. He had no body, and since he needed appropriate matter to achieve one, he bided his time in the waters of the sea.

The winged spirit Téliko, who had the body of an albino, wished one day, in his arrogance and jealousy, to cross the world in order to know it and to dominate it. Faro, warned by the dogfish, decided to seize his enemy's body to complete his own. The albino, who always flew, fed on his own substance. He chewed his own flesh and his bones were soon bare; the marrow came out of them. It turned into red copper which fell into the sea and nourished Faro.

While Téliko descended to the water level, the dogfish that was watching him sang in order to attract him. The albino, aware of the danger, climbed back to the highest heaven, attempting to continue his flight and to reach the ends of the world. But he quickly lost strength and after his dya had fallen into the waters, his body was

776 773 seized by Faro who, after giving the genitals to the dogfish, completed his own physical being. His head and torso were made of the albino's flesh; his tail was of copper, as were his breasts, the "essential organs that fed and revived the world."

Faro's head can be compared to that of a white woman: his eyes are black and piercing; his hair is black, straight and long like a horsetail.

/42/ His ears are two holes with no outer ear, but are protected by two fins. Two necklaces of copper and gold hang from his neck and act as receivers, enabling him to hear all sounds and all words: the copper necklace reports idle talks of little importance; the gold one, secret conversations and powerful words. Faro puts all that the receivers collect in his fins, which are also the mirror reflecting all that his eyes have seen, both good or bad. He looks, shuts his eyes, and puts out his tongue; the images penetrate into his fins and classify themselves according to the regular movements of his tail. Thus, images and sounds are chronologically inscribed and can be brought before him at any moment "like a card pulled out of a file." In this way he knows to what use he can put things and events.

Both his hands—the right one male and the other female—and the end of his tail are webbed. Without any apparent sex, the preeminence of the feminine shape usually attributed to him recalls that he once impregnated himself in order to give birth to twin girls at the time the first waters streamed onto the earth.

Faro's appearance, which is linked to the problem of his origin, has been the object of legends and tales among the people. While these have attracted the scholar's attention, they present a serious problem. The legends are truncated, episodic, and often childish versions of an imposing myth, which is perfectly constructed and often expresses a dogma.

776 773 171 Two examples will be given of legends whose only interest here is to suggest further research into myths forming the framework for collective symbols. One of these legends is Peul /Fulani/, and the other Touareg /Tuareg/.

1. At a time when the Niger was but a narrow, deep river, a pregnant Peul woman asked some Bozo fishermen, who usually ferried people on request, to take her across the stream. At first they refused,

using her pregnancy as an excuse. As she insisted, they took her in their canoe, left her on the other shore, and went away.

As soon as she had landed, she was seized with pains of her labor. The water of the river dried up at the point where it had been deepest. A voice came out of it, advising the woman to bear her child there. She went down into the pit after having left her clothes on the shore.

From her womb there first came forth milk, honey, and precious stones (*lulu*) which dropped onto the milk and honey as though on /43/ a straw mat. The woman was writhing with pain: the child finally appeared feet first and fell on the stones. His hands and feet were webbed.

As the water began to reappear, she attempted to get away, but in vain. Her husband, who had run up to the river's edge and had found her clothing there, saw her appear three times holding the child above the waters. She then disappeared, carried away by the current. Both she and the child became Faro spirits.

2. The village of Siyango, located fifteen kilometers from Nyono, has a very deep, perennial natural well called *ala* *kolo* *faro*, Faro of the well of god, "or *Mbata* *dyi*, " "water of *Mbata*." No one drinks its water. At the beginning of creation, a woman named *Mbata* lived alone and without water. She gave birth to twins. Exhausted and dying of thirst, she came out of the cave and, going down to the edge of the sand, prayed that God let her die if she could have no water. A spirit appeared and said to her: "God will entrust all waters to you; but he will first prepare you a home." A pit having been formed and filled with water, the woman stepped inside and was transformed into Faro. She then took her two children in with her; one became a male spirit and the other, a female spirit.

The pit extended underground through a kind of tunnel and Mbata, who had followed it down, came out again with so much water that the Niger was created.

The water of this well was soon forbidden to human beings, for if anyone looked at himself in it, Mbata would take hold of his shadow and make him fall. The corpse, using the underground passage, came out into the river. Those who threw themselves into the water sometimes also became Faro.

One day Mbata resumed her human shape and went to the market where she bought tomatoes. She asked those she met what they did for the spirit who owned the water they so much needed. She advised them to offer him copper and gold and to slaughter white rams at the well.

776 The following day, in order to give thanks to Faro, the villagers
773 went to the edge of the well to the sound of drums and sacrificed the
171 animal. The water swelled, seethed up, and formed a streat which
still runs into the Niger today.

The composition of Faro's body determines the behavior of men in the rituals performed in his honor. While the usual offerings of blood, tomatoes, raw cereal mash, and baked cakes are consumed by him and returned to the givers in the shape of material possessions (children, millet, rain) or spiritual possessions (preservation of the souls of the living and the dead), the choice content of the offerings or sacrifices, the albino and copper, are reserved only for him and help increase his strength and stimulate his action. /44/ He absorbs them for his own sake; thus it is said that: "copper and albino are the sacrificial privileges of Faro."

Manifestations of Faro

776 All the atmospheric manifestations in the sky are evidence of
821 Faro's presence and power. Rain, thunder, squalls, hail, and the
rainbow all demonstrate his action. The lightning that bursts forth
in the koblenkaba is a weapon, a small axe (sempere ni or dyele dẽ
čini) which he throws from the top of the sky. If lightning strikes,
it is a proof of his revenge. In the tree, the lightning hits the gecko
[825] (ala ǰugu), an evil animal which, when it lives in homes near the
hearth, supposedly stirs up fires of conflagration. When lightning strikes men, it is in punishment for the breaking of a taboo. The stone axes, found at the point where lightning strikes, are collected and kept in the sanctuaries of the rain altars, to be used in case of drought or in the course of seasonal rites. They are also placed in the seeded fields, so that their strength, by communicating itself to the seed, may be beneficial to germination.

776 On earth, Faro is conceived of as a unique being whose principal home is the Niger; he is present everywhere. In practice, the Bambara believe that a spirit haunts each torrent, pond, or well, each gourd of water, each dewdrop; they call him dyi tigi, "master of water."

776 He takes on many forms. He can be seen in the brush as a gazelle feeding on wild tomatoes and onions. As a ram with golden fleece and wearing ear ornaments, he travels underground along gold veins. As a young and seductive woman he goes to the villages to seduce the boys and take them away with him. He is the head of the fleeting torrent that runs after a rainfall; he is the seething and swelling of the currents. He can be recognized in the bluish haze that floats above the ponds. A stream that dries up is a sign of his anger.

Faro's Realm

776 821 At the beginning, the waters that originated in the "central springs of the sky" and streamed over the earth, were pure, clear, beneficial and "easy." But after Mousso Koroni's betrayal and that of the beings who listened to her, impurity was communicated to the earth /45/: the water that covered the earth clouded, changed color, and became "difficult." It either dried up or, on the contrary, flooded the land, drowning living beings.

[783] Today only the streaming rain water has preserved its character, more especially the first rain that falls at the beginning of winter. It is considered a purifying agent par excellence and is called dane sandyi, "water that sows," for it brings to the grains their soul, ni; the earth, sterile and "empty," becomes full and fertile, plants are reborn, animals and insects multiply (1).

[577] 1. A person who is generous and good is referred to as being like this first rain. It is also said of the spirit: "the spirit [is good like] the first rain" (miri dane sandyi).

The terrestrial waters, Faro's kingdom, are classified into seven distinct realms. They are in layers which correspond to the seven parts of the sky and earth.

[783] The first, dyi woyo "seething water," is surface water: it seethes when Faro makes himself known, and overflows in floods, as the heads of streams are swelled by the storm. It is also the lustral water used for purification and the water drawn for drinking.

776 821 The second, dyi ble "red water," is Faro's copper, a reflection of koblenkaba or "red sky." It is similarly the seat of the spirit's warlike or punitive activities. Water of wrath and vengeful action, it drowns the guilty. Through it, Faro strikes the bodies and health of those who do not recognize his dominion.

Faro prefers to sojourn in the dyi fi, "black water," where he keeps his secrets. It is to this water that one prays to seek grace. It is from the dyi fi that the twelve future waters will flow.

Calm and felicity reign in the dyi sumane, "cold water," where the fish live. The dya of earthly bwings are preserved in it.

While Faro drowns those he punishes in the dyi ble, it is in the madũ (literally, person, to eat) that their bodies rot or become the prey of fish.

The sixth category of water, kosira (literally, thing of fear) is a jail. In it Faro temporarily places all that comes under his domination.

The seventh water, dyi wolōflã, corresponds to the seventh heaven.

776 823 782 In the Niger, the places inhabited by Faro bear the general name of faro tyin. These are mostly deep depressions, well known to the shore dwellers, particularly the Bozo. /46/ Sometimes a consecrated stone, placed on the shore, receives the sacrifices offered to the spirit.

The most celebrated is a place called Souko, located upstream from Koulikoro near the village of Kayo. The local spirit engendered all that now lives in the river. Because of this he is worshipped by all Bozo and Somono fishermen, who used to send delegations to the annual sacrifice that took place during the dry season.

776 823 The Faro of Ségou lives in the Faka, a deep hole located close to the right bank, facing the town. Legend has it that the Faka is extended by tunnels: one links the river to the Bani while the other opens out at Dya and was used by the founders of the settlement in mythical times.

[825] The Faka is placed under the guardianship of a crocodile to which each year the inhabitants offered victims. At the bottom of the hole there is a fat blind scaleless polyo, which the fishermen always return to the water if they catch it in their nets "because it is Faro's gate-keeper." In olden times, a flat stone upon which were traced a representation of Faro and black dots equal in number to the inhabitants of Ségou was visible in the deepest part of the waters. [782] On this occasion an albino was sacrificed (by slitting his throat) and the first fruits of the harvest were offered to the spirit.

776 On market day, a gourd filled with river water, called *fle ndinye*
823 *faro*, is placed close to the shore where the canoes land. To drink a
mouthful of this water is equivalent to a sacrifice to the spirit. The
782 drinker gives a cowrie as alms to the beggar who drew the water, for
"never can [Faro's] water be bought or sold" (1).

1. *Ma ti dyi fere ma ti dyi sã.*
See pl. II, b.

At Sama, the *faro tyin* is a kind of natural corridor located amidst the rocks bordering and overhanging the left bank of the river.

[825] The finches nesting there warn the boatmen of the place's sanctity by flying off; the boatmen then stop to pray. In passing, they throw an offering and those who have broken taboos purify themselves by washing. Each shows the spirit all that he carries with him. Two nearby trees, *faro sõndyiri* or "trees of Faro's sacrifice," are used to tie up the white bulls at twilight. The following day, they are thrown alive into the river with millet mash and cola nuts. At the bottom of the passage, on a fairly smooth surface, the image of Faro described above was drawn each year in the course of the ceremony celebrated by the society of the Komo.

/47/ Faro also haunts ponds and wells. In the village of Nango a natural well was revealed to a hunter by a white ram which appeared out of a thicket. The village was built after the discovery of the water hole where the inhabitants now worship the spirit.

In the village of Siyango, the water of the well in which Faro resides is tabooed, the site of the well being the seat of all the religious ceremonies of the villagers. There the newborn are presented,
and deaths and marriages announced. The sick are treated by being
[755] made to drink the well water and wash in it. From his herd, each
person offers every year an animal which is thrown alive into the pit.
[681] Finally, those condemned to death are executed by drowning in the
same spot.

Faro's Auxiliaries

776 Faro has placed spirits as his representatives in the skies, in space,
773 on earth, in the trees, and in the rocks of the mountains. They see

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to it that all things proceed in good order. In addition he is accompanied by auxiliaries who participate in his work.

The most important of these is his "secretary," the bolokuruni, a blacksmith of the black race who had lost the use of his hands and who went to live with Faro after his crippling.

This blacksmith lived on earth at a time when craftsmen did not know the use of tongs and used to seize the red iron in their bare hands to carry it to the anvil. The man who was to become Faro's companion had reached an advanced age and was still practicing his art when one day both his wrists were broken by the hammer of a clumsy apprentice. Mad with pain, he ran to the river and threw himself in to ease his suffering. Seeing that in his grief the man had turned to him, Faro took pity on him and kept him at his side. His body was never found and a diviner told his family the happy event of his disappearance.

The bolokuruni accompanies Faro and assists him in his incessant labor. He is the one who consults the register in Faro's fins in which everything is inscribed. "The requested image is sent from the fins into the pupil of Faro's eye which the blacksmith watches." As this image is reflected in the servitor's eye, he uses it according to the orders he receives. Thus he verifies daily the count of those living and dead.

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/48/ The spirit has numerous auxiliaries among the animals. His airborne messenger is the swallow. It never rests upon the impure earth and its wings, reproduced on the headdress of the old men, symbolize the words it carries. The scorpion's stinger is the weapon given by Faro to the original twins: whoever attacks or wounds a twin is stung by this insect. The crocodile is the executor of Faro's important works: it kills those guilty of breaking taboos, or chases undesirables away from the river's edge. The scaleless fish, called kokoni, directed the first streaming of the waters on earth (1). The tneni (2) is Faro's "ordure" which it is the duty of someone to sweep

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1. See p. 33.

2. Alestes nigrilineatus.

776 825 up (1). The small miri (2), "mother of fish," is regarded as the creator and guardian of all fish. Its name is associated with all prayers that are recited on the waters. The dodo (3) is Faro's messenger in the waters and transmits his orders and directives, and the polyo (4) is the gatekeeper, controlling those who wish to penetrate into the spirit's domain.

776 824 Certain plants are in constant communication with him. The yayale (5), "Faro's grass," grew on the mound where the mythical twins were born. The tomato, ngoyo (6), is assimilated in the blood. It carries within it the potential embryo for its seeds are multiples of seven, the number of duality. It is by means of the tomato that Faro impregnates women for it possesses, like humans and animals, a ni and a dya. When it has a double bloom, the two twin tomatoes are given to the women so that they may bear twins. If the fruit is single on the stem, it is split in two to be cooked and eaten. The gesture of splitting separates it symbolically from its dya which is thus returned to Faro (7).

1. The ordure has its use in religious life. See p. 258.

2. Micralestes acutidens.

3. Tétrodon fahaka.

4. The polyo fi is Herterobranchus longifilis; the polyo ble is Heterobranchus bidorsalis.

5. Andropogon (Hyparrhenia) hirtus.

6. Lycopersicum cerasiforme, the native tomato (pl. II, a).

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> 7. Only vegetables whose spiritual essence does not have to be preserved are cooked, "for to cook is to shatter the soul."

776 In each village are grown one or several small fields of tomatoes,
824 called "Faro's fields," or "fields of twins." The fruits of these fields
244 are reserved for the worship of the spirit (1).
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> 1. On the site of the ancient village of Soroba, at the edge of a pond located near the present-day village, there are two rectangular fields of tomatoes dedicated to male twins and four square fields dedicated to female twins in the village. Each year the villagers gather at the edge of the pond for a ceremony. The symbolic words relating to twins are recited and a prayer is said, to be followed by ablutions.
>
> The fruit that is harvested is offered to the spirit by squashing it on a neighboring tree trunk.

776 /49/ All metals belong to Faro. The seven /sic/ principal metals
823 are the following: copper (male), brass (female), gold, silver, tin, and iron. Copper and brass come from the fifth sky (koblenkaba). They descend at each thunderclap and, along with the "thunderstones," penetrated into the soil. They were discovered by a diviner at the bottom of a pond that had dried up because of a broken taboo. Be-
[301] cause of their divine origin, copper and brass represent "Faro's sounds." These sounds twist themselves around the spiralled copper or brass earrings that everyone wears and penetrate the eardrum, thus making it possible to hear words. Gold plays a part in the building of certain altars (boli) to which it confers strength and stability.

The sacrifices made with or on copper, brass, or gold have a restraining influence on the spirit for they are of his own essence.

No woman wearing copper, brass, or gold jewelry, may cross the Niger without opening her luggage out of deference to the spirit, for "all ornaments belong to him and often must be returned to him after death.

[784] It is taboo to bring metal into contact with cow's butter, an oily substance that does not allow water to penetrate.

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a) The Acacia albida called kokuruni (Banankoroni).

Plate I

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b) In the foreground, baskets of spiralled straw called yugu (Ségou market).

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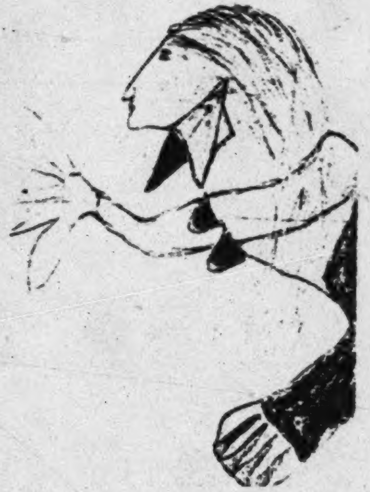
c) Drawing representing Faro (Sama).



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a) Ngoyo tomatoes (Ségou market).

Plate II

b) Faro's water gourd (Ségou market).

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Ba 776 436 Legend has it that cowrie shells, widespread throughout Black Africa and used as money, come from the deep water where Faro keeps his fortune. Faro "sleeps on a bed of cowrie." Their mythical origin explains their role and both the economic and religious value attributed to them.

Ba 776 823 The black earth of the river banks, bogo fi, such as that found on the sea shore in sandy places, contains the strength of the spirit and is used in numerous rites. Smeared at the base of the interior walls of the huts, it symbolizes Faro's presence in the bosom of the family. It serves to decorate the headdress of the circumcised (1). Those who live far from the Niger or from any source of water pray to it as if addressing Faro.

Ba 776 173 Some men occupy a privileged position in their relationship with the spirit. The first are the eight mythical ancestors, the eldest of whom is Koumabana. They received the word of the spirit, transmitted it to their descendants, explained before dying the new order of things, and instituted the cult.

At present they are still venerated as the prototypes of /50/ the human being in his new environment. Along with immortality, man lost the heavenly food which, until then, had been sufficient to nourish him. The articulated limbs which were provided for him dedicated him to manual labor, the techniques of which were taught him little by little. On the other hand, in the spiritual domain a deep change also occurred. In primitive times, man lived an almost animal existence and was without any responsibility. His abandonment by the balanza brought him suffering and death, but with them, his consciousness, symbolized by Faro's "word," developed. Along with death, illness, sorrow, bad instincts and the hard daily labor, there appeared also man's feeling about his own person and his place in an ordered universe, governed by Faro, as opposed to primitive chaos.

The eight ancestors taught men to venerate Faro, to ask him for all they needed, and to thank him for all they received. Therefore their names are invoked in most prayers and the episodes of their lives are told to the young to whom their works are held up as an example.

Bo 776 773 Mention should also be made here of the special position held by the Bozo who were born to the mythical girl twins, daughters of Faro (2).

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1. See p. 233, Fig. 14.

2. See p. 33, n. 4.

Bo 776 173

In many cases, this origin enables them to intervene with the spirit, where others are helpless. Born as twins of the master of the waters, the Bozo never suffered the contamination caused by Mousso Koroni which affects all other men. Because of this fact it is possible for them to establish communication with the spirit at the bottom of ponds or in the river and to seek out the bodies of those drowned. The fishing rights conferred on them by Faro were never contested by the conquerors who settled on the shore of the Niger during the historic period.

Numerous articles or essays have already been published on the Bozo. Their language and fishing techniques have been studied. However, inquiries into their religion and the image they have of themselves prove very difficult. This is caused, on the one hand, by their apparent conversion to Islam and, on the other, by their reticence in discussing their traditional system. Such a contribution, however, will be indispensable to scholarship in the study of certain aspects of Sudanese metaphysics, particularly that of the Bambara and the Dogon. The myths of both groups mention the apparition of the Bozo on earth as coinciding with the beginning of /51/ Faro's actions which, in turn, coincides with the development of techniques among the Bambara, and with the "third word" of the Dogon (1).

1. See M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau.

In addition, the "joking relationships" which they maintain with the Dogon and which go back to the origin of a whole system of tribal and intertribal alliances clearly indicate the importance of the symbolic role conferred upon them (2).

2. See p. 119, n. 1.

Ba 776 782

Whenever he feels the need, Faro carries women and young girls off to his watery home. Many disappearances in the course of river crossings by canoe are attributed to him.

In olden times, each year a young virgin, chosen for her beauty by the griot of the village, became the wife and servant of Faro. In most cases she was willing and proud to become his eternal companion. On a designated day, wearing her finest jewelry, she was

776 brought to the middle of the river and thrown in while the villagers
782 prayed the spirit to give the village his protection and to bring rain
to future harvests.

Faro's Taboos

776 All of Faro's subjects, in particular the Bambara of both sexes and
784 of all ages, are requested to respect a certain number of taboos.

The black earth, bogo fi, of the river banks, used ritually in many instances, would be excellent in pottery making. The women potters, however, cannot use it because it blackens in the process of baking. No pottery that has been fired may be washed in those places haunted by the spirit (1).

1. At Ségou, numerous drownings are blamed on the increasing frequency with which this taboo is broken.

[262] Butter in many places is forbidden by Faro and may not be preserved in water. (2)

2. This taboo is linked to the relation between Faro and the Peul, but the nature of their relationship has not been clarified.

No one crosses the river without opening his luggage and presenting Faro with the gold, copper, or food it contains. As a rule, the wearing of metals is forbidden in those places haunted by the spirit.

776 The principal taboo concerns menstrual blood which was originally
784 caused to flow because of the sins and impurity of Mousso /52/
841 Koroni. No menstruating woman may visit the places inhabited by
Faro; none may draw water, wash clothes or cooking utensils, or cleanse herself in any of these spots. In addition, a man whose wife is in such condition must refrain from appearing at religious ceremonies or, if he is a priest, from performing the ritual.

In this part of Africa, as in many others, menses are conceived of as a necessary flow of empty blood, impure because it has not contributed to the formation of the foetus, the embryo of which each

776 784 841 woman carries within her. (1) Deprived of Faro's essentially impregnating power and contrary to its generating action, this blood is considered evil, and all that recalls it or comes near it is excluded from the ritual.

Faro's Character, Role, and Deed

776 The principal characteristics of Faro's deed in creation are: omnipotence, omnipresence, and benevolence. Everything, whether animate or inanimate, depends on him in time and space.

The Bambara are extremely sensitive to Faro's power over the universe. They say: "Neither by day nor by night does Faro stop his incessant work." He sees to the efficient workings of the order which he inaugurated and which requires constant attention. His time is divided: from dawn until evening he occupies himself with the earth and its inhabitants; the next twelve hours' work is devoted to aquatic animals and members of his own family. Procreation depends on his will; it is he who, in the sky and in the water, controls the physical and spiritual life of all beings: the soul and vital force. In due order, with which the humans cooperate by observing his laws, he maintains life and makes the new bodies participate in the functioning of the universe according to a regular rhythm. Souls are reincarnated, assuring the continuity of spiritual forces in the world. The same power directs all acts of individual and social life: birth, circumcision, excision, initiation, marriage, agricultural work, voyages, war or peace.

Throughout the development of individual life, it is Faro who maintains man's physical integrity: he gives him health, necessary to
753 action. Sickness is always /53/ considered a loss of strength which the individual must ask Faro to restore. The sovereign master of man's life, he has the power to take it away from him.

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1. See G. Dieterlen, "Mécanisme de l'impureté chez les Dogon" /The Mechanism of Impurity Among the Dogon/ *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. 17 (1947), pp. 82 ff.

776 773 At death, he takes back the spiritual principles of the diseased and preserves them in water so as to reintegrate them into another body, thus using forces which are eternally reusable. The product of the "shedding" (mana or folo) of souls which remain on the altars is for him in a way of constantly verifying the account of those living and dead who are entrusted to him.

On earth, men are indebted to him for all they possess. He gave them language, an expression of thought, and taught them its usage, having warned them against the misuse and evil use of words.

The techniques of survival, another expression of "Faro's words," so necessary to their lives since they have to provide the means for their existence, were revealed to them by the spirit. He helped them with his sovereign power, either by directly providing them with new tools, or by inspiring some of them to develop new techniques by putting to use observed facts. In this way, he gave the Bozo fishing nets which enabled them to catch the first recorded animal food, the fish; likewise, he encouraged among the Bambara the discovery of weaving through observing the spider's web.

He also gave men certain seeds which became the origin of farming, such as cotton and fonio, both of them being known before millet and the other cereals.

782 As proprietor of cowrie shells and metals, he is the master of wealth, distributing it as he pleases. Thus, one who owns precious metal is responsible to Faro for it and owes him a part of one's earnings. For this reason many offerings are made by throwing gold or copper into the river.

776 241 Faro's deed is essential where the Bambara's main activity, agricultural work, is concerned. Every man with dignity and nobility must cultivate the earth in order to honor Faro. Each stroke of the hoe is a wound inflicted upon the earth and a punishment for its impurity. Each stroke of the hoe humiliates Mousso Koroni and purifies the earth. Faro watches over the soul and the vital force of the seeds. Only he can provide rain necessary to germination, for rain contains the soul, (ni) of the cereal grains as does the water of ponds and streams which one collects in case of drought.

776 774 241 Millet receives its soul as soon as it gets the humidity of the earth, and from that time on, it accompanies the various stages of germination with utterances which, at the beginning of the world, could be heard. As soon as /54/ it has received the rain, the seed splits and says: "My place is assigned." Then the sprout comes out of the earth

776 774 241 with the words: "May I be protected." Finally the growth of the stem is accompanied by a third utterance: "May I be obeyed" (1). It preserves its soul until full maturity, that is, the moment is is harvested. When the harvester's blade cuts the spike or the cluster, the plant sends its soul into Faro's realm with these words: "Iron is forbidden my grain; soul, go away to the house of water" (2). Thus deprived of its soul, the millet becomes suitable for eating and it says: "If I were not dead, I could not be eaten; my breed cannot be lost: whether or not I am eaten, nothing can reduce me for my soul is in water" (3).

776 241 Many agrarian rituals are celebrated in order to assure Faro's protection. The high quality of the first fruits of the harvest offered to him indicates the importance of his role. It is in fact a payment made to him for the past harvest and in anticipation of the harvest to come.

776 He is also the guardian of the artisan's skill. The first object forged by the young blacksmith and the first spindle of thread woven by the young weaver are brought to him. Through this gesture, the individual entrusts him with both his work and his manual dexterity. After Faro has seen the work, he does not let the worker forget what he has learned and will help him perfect his skill.

Faro is a judge. Those who break the rules he has made are the object of his righteous wrath: those who are drowned or struck by lightning are always persons who have broken a taboo. Men submit most difficult cases to him as a last resort. Through the intermediary of the agents of different rituals such as the intermediary of the diviners, he answers requests and "settles the words." Most prayers 776 782 are addressed to him and in many cases the invocations end with his name. He is omnipresent, invoked everywhere, and the seat of his power, as of all others, is the seventh heaven, to which the Bambara

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1. These are the three formula:
ndyora, nga kolosi, nga bunye.

2. Neke ye nkise tne ye, ni, ta dyi so la.

3. Ni nǎ sale te nti dũ, n šia tise ka tunu,
ndunaw ma dũn wo, fẽ te bwona, ni be dyi la.

776 782 address the following: "Seventh heaven, you are large, you are long; your west is red; your east is white; your north is great; your south is black; seventh heaven, you are the king of seats among all seats, you are the great generator of the power of all powers, you are the great discoverer of all secrets, you are the source of all /55/ fortunes, you are the place where the common weal may not be destroyed; source of all things, deliver me from sin" (1).

1. *Wolo flã kaba, i ka bo, i ka dyã, i kle bi ka ble, i koro ka dye, i baba ka bo, i bani ka fi; wolo flã kaba, siki yoro u la sikiyoro masa, fanga u la fanga ba sindi, gundow be ladyele fara be, nafolo be ladyele boyoro, dyẽ wari dũ bali yoro; ko be boyoro, hake tonye.*
This prayer is recited by the head of the family during childbirth, a grave illness, or a death. It was also used during rituals of the enthronement of kings or chiefs.

776 772 Pemba and Faro, the complementary principles, were both born of the spirit, *miri*, at the beginning of the universe. In considering the psychological aspects of their symbolic roles, one can understand why, despite the antecedence of Pemba's role, from time to time the Bambara say that "Faro is the eldest." For he represents, in the human microcosm, the will and wisdom capable of controlling the propulsion of sexual instinct as symbolized by the prolificness of the *balanza* as well as the violence and disorder of the emotions as expressed in Mousso Koroni's vertiginous chthonian voyage and her madness. The antithesis of the sexes, realized in the myth by the bodily separation of Pemba and Mousso Koroni, and their disagreements and quarrels which are the origin of all cosmic disorders, are compensated for by harmonious agreement and union, as established by Faro in his androgynous state. Faro is the dual vibration which, from then on, orders the universe; he is reason and moderation opposed to the overwhelming force of the *balanza*; he is the light of the spirit which triumphs over darkness and primordial gropings.

/56/

Chapter 3

THE PERSON

812 The Bambara conceive of man (*homo*) as the principle of nature. He is "the seed of the world" and as such reflects the totality of beings and things in their essence and in their situation. Like the universe, man is life, and like life, "he is maintained by the attraction of the cardinal angels." Universe and man are each the condition of the other: the totality of things upholds the human being in his place and situation and makes him persevere within himself. Man, on the other hand, is the basis, the "raison d'être," and the cause of the universe by virtue of his consciousness and the knowledge he has of himself.

In this way the principle of duality, contained in the original creative thought and realized in the universe by the sky and the earth, is reflected in the person. The human being shows in his body the separation of the sexes necessary to the multiplication of the species—a separation, expressed in the myth of Pemba and Mousso Koroni, that shows the disorders, the difficulties, and the conflicts implicit in such a situation. But through his twin souls, the human being brings about the ideal union of the sexes as expressed in the myth of Faro's androgyny.

812 928 Moreover, these mythical personalities are present in man: Faro through the *ni* and the *dya*, Pemba through the *tere* and the *nyama*, Mousso Koroni through the *wanzo*. It can also be said that the peregrinations of these beings and their pursuits in time and in the mythical regions are the expression of man's psychological states such as the inner explorations and conflicts necessary to man's defining himself within himself and with respect to the rest of the creation. In other words, they are the expression of the growing consciousness of self. The whole religious and social attitude of the individual testifies to the interplay of these various forces, between which he must maintain balance and harmony.

000 /57/ In this chapter we shall examine in succession the following elements that make up or determine the person: the spiritual principles (*ni*, *dya*, *tere*, *nyama*, *wanzo*), the parts of the human body related to them, and certain social attributes of the individual (given name, family name, device, taboo). Finally we shall consider the cathartic role of the institution of joking relationship founded on the notion of duality.

Spiritual Principles (1)

114 1. A few comments on the spiritual principles of the Bambara (in particular on the dya and the nyama) have been collected in the chapter entitled "Théorie des âmes" by Tauxier, La Religion bambara (pp. 14-25), in which the author appraises the works of the Abbé Henry and of Ch. Monteil. Some of the observations made in the following chapter have been summarized by the author in "La Personne chez les Bambara" and in "Note sur le tere chez les Bambara /Note on the Tere among the Bambara/."

It will be useful to compare this study of spiritual principles with the studies made among the Dogon and presented respectively by M. Griaule, S. de Ganay, and the author in Masques Dogon, Les Devises des Dogon, and Les Âmes des Dogon.

761 The Soul, ni, and the Double, dya:

776 Faro controls the principle of life in water, which is his realm
as well as the life-giving element par excellence. In the bodies of
[826] living beings, this principle has its seat in the blood. The blood of
the sacrifices offered to the spirit (or failing that, the juice of the
tomato, a transformation of blood) is a contribution to the reservoir
of life controlled by Faro—life which he redistributes in all its forms
throughout the universe. Water is the privileged element in which
life may persevere indefinitely. Elsewhere, life is maintained only
if water comes to nourish it.

761 Faro's creative function is materialized by each marital partner
776 eating a tomato before sexual relations. This act is accompanied by
the recital of a prayer. The juice of the fruit, which contains the
842 body of the future child, transmits life according to the following
833 mechanism:

Faro receives the offerings of tomatoes grown ritually in the
761 consecrated fields, as well as the blood of victims slain in his name
776 above the waters. Blood and juice, spreading over water, the fertili-
842 zing agent, are collected by the swallow, Faro's airborne messenger.
824 Liberated in space, they return to the soil with fertilizing rain and
penetrate the tomato seeds which thus contain a particle of generative
power.

761 776 842 After the marital couple has absorbed the fruit, a smooth-bodied embryo with nonarticulated limbs is formed in the maternal womb. /58/ It is at this moment that the couple consummate the sexual act in the course of which the woman "takes into herself the entire body of her husband": the upper part through the eyes, the lower part through the genital organs. The masculine seed located in the seven principal articulations (knees, elbows, ankles, and spine) transmits them to the embryo. The body, originally similar to the body of the spirit, thus becomes that of a human being.

The spirit restows the spiritual forces after the man has mated for the second time with his wife. If the woman bears a single child it means that the man, in the course of the second union, formed the double of the first germ, but was not permitted to procreate twins.

761 776 843 774 Faro disposes of the child's life and nature. He decides all that the child will be and will do, and determines his destiny from the moment the seed is placed by him in the womb. The foetus then develops with no further modifications until parturition, at which time it receives the spiritual principles, the soul, ni, and the double, dya, which will be his throughout his life. It is at this time that the inner relations of the individual to the social group to which he belongs intervene. Although Faro gives each child a new body, he animates this body with spiritual forces drawn from the family reservoir. The [775] newborn child is the direct heir to the ni and the dya of a deceased member of the family, actually of the one, whatever one's sex, who died shortly before the birth of the child (1).

1. The reincarnation of the deceased's spiritual principles, however, is not an absolute rule. Faro is the master of an infinite reserve of souls. Twins, albinos, and certain other children are born with the ni and dya as yet undetermined. They originate respectively in the second sky (kaba dye) and in water (dyi sumale). Further study on this particular point is necessary to complete this investigation.

761 776 774 775 The consequence of death was, in effect, to separate the corpse from the forces that animated it. The ni, by appropriate ritual, had been preserved on the altar of the ancestors (2), and the dya had left

the dying man to go into the water and place itself under Faro's protection. At the moment of delivery, both *ni* and *dya* return to the body of the newborn child who replaces the dead man, but they return in reversed order: the *dya* is returned to the body of the child and becomes his *ni*; the *ni* of the deceased mixes with the birth water spread on the ground which forms the shadow (*suma*) and will be his double, the twin (1). In the case of a boy, the *dya* will be female; in the case /59/ of a girl, it will be male. These movements are independent of the sex of the deceased as the spirit reverses the sexes when necessary. Each human being is thus both male and female
[828] through his soul and his double. This conception of human nature, which is fundamental to the Bambara, is expressed in the symbolism of numbers. The number seven is formed of three (male sexual symbol)
[801] and four (female sexual symbol) and represents the complete man. In addition, on another level, the number six is that of male twins, seven that of mixed twins (and the hermaphrodite), and eight that of female twins. The body of the newborn child is gently tapped
[844] by the number of strokes representing the above figures in order to call the child's *ni* according to its sex.

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2. Grouped hierarchally, children, male adults, and women form religious societies or institutions, *dyo*. Each *dyo* is charged with the upkeep of altars which serve to preserve the spiritual forces of the group. (See p.

[844
824]
1. The blood of childbirth represents the excess tomato juice absorbed by the woman, that which remains in the womb after the formation of the embryo. On the eighth day after birth, the mother of the parturient woman squeezes three or four tomatoes (depending on the sex of the newborn) into a gourd which she then gives to the child's father. The latter makes his wife drink the juice to replace the blood which she has lost and which is considered impure.

774 827 The ni, which animates the body, is visible during the weeks following birth in the movements of the fontanel. It is also the breath, the respiration, the beating of the arteries. Like the dya, it is not indissolubly bound to the body for it leaves it during sleep in order to go to the sixth sky, sunankaba. When the person awakens, the ni returns [828] to the body and the dream is considered a memory of what it has seen, a premonition of an event concerning the individual, the family, or the village (1).

[781] 1. Great numbers of fish seen in a dream foretell an abundant catch; quarrelling signifies war; to swim suggests purification for an offense. The passage of crickets from west to east is the sign of a great battle or famine. In this last instance, the situation is so serious that the village is forewarned and each one must make an offering to a needy person saying these words: "I make this soul sacrifice to God in order that he save me (nye nin ye ni sakaka ye ka ngala ma a la ka mbo)." The village chief also offers a collective sacrifice.

774 The dya, the double or twin of the human being and its opposite sex, has a body: either the shadow on the ground or the image in the water. It may move alone or be forced to leave the person it is accompanying under Faro's order. When a crocodile carries off or wounds a man by order of the spirit, he first seizes his visible shadow on the surface of the water and his dya in the water. The same thing may be attempted by someone with evil intentions. In such a case the close contact which the dya as a shadow maintains with the impure earth makes it particularly vulnerable. In order to remedy this, the person concerned must look at himself in the water contained in a gourd; then, when his image is clear, he clouds it by tipping the receptacle; this puts the dya under Faro's protection.

/60/ The independence and vulnerability of the dya require, in the course of certain religious functions, that it be taken over by Faro for the duration of the ceremony.

Wild and domestic animals are endowed with a ni and a dya. Plants also have a ni. The ni of trees is situated in the buds and insures its growth and its life; that of cereals necessary to human life

774 is the object of constant concern during agrarian rituals. The role of the soul of plants is particularly noticeable in their medicinal uses. Drawing a remedy from a plant may cause its death, liberating its spiritual principles for the benefit of the sick man. Because of this, such an act is equated with a blood sacrifice.

With the exception of the *ngovo* tomato, plants have no *dya*. The shadow (*suma*) of a plant is not independent like that of a man or an animal. It exists only through light effects and its movements are caused by the air and the wind moving its leaves and branches. This is what the Bambara means when he says that the *dya* has a life of its own and depends on Faro, whereas the plant's *suma* depends on the spirit Téliko, master of the air.

774 An individual's *dya* can be known and his temperament and life
787 possibilities assessed by measuring his shadow on the earth at noon.
804 The unit employed is the little finger, which is a corporeal symbol
843 of the person. If a pregnant woman is thus measured, the sex of the child may be predicted.

When a boy or a girl gets married, it is said of them: *a ye a dya*
774 *furu*: "he (or she) has married his dya." For it is impolite to say that
[579] a person married anyone but his spiritual double. Besides, the union of the couple is repeated by the union of their *dya* which like them-
[595 selves are of opposite sex. In olden times, male twins married the
851] same woman and the latter's *dya* was taken over by Faro in the Niger. The child she conceived was the son of both husbands.

Some men do not marry. This is true of the Soma, the religious
589 diviner attached to the major Bambara societies. Initiated in the
791 course of a solitary sojourn in the bush, he left his *dya* with the invisible spirits. This is a prerequisite to the gift of double sight with which he is endowed as well as a protection against possible dangers to the *dya* when it remains in contact with the earth, or when it approaches other humans. The true spouse of the Soma is his *dya*: he may mate only with it on a fixed date when the spirits return it to him for this purpose. /61/

The *tere*

774 The *tere* was inflicted by Pemba on Mousso Koroni in order to diminish her power at the time he was pursuing her. This explains its complexity: it is at once the character of a man, his strength,

774 his consciousness, as well as that part of his being which, through the body, makes him sensitive to events. If man is vulnerable through his double, it is his *tere* that is affected by any breaking of taboos; it receives and submits to impurity.

1824 The *tere* has its seat in the blood and the head (*kun tere*). It develops in the foetus in the course of gestation and is composed in part of the parents' *tere* to which is added that of the deceased person whose soul and double the child has inherited.

774 553 787 The appearance of the child's *tere* is determined by the old men of the family in the course of the name-giving ceremony which takes place publicly on the eighth day after birth. After carefully examining the child's hairline along the forehead, the manner in which his eyebrows join, the shape of his eyes (the seat of intelligence), mouth, hands, and feet, one of the old men present announces in a loud voice the revealing signs of his character. The position of these signs makes it possible to say whether a child has a good or a bad *tere* and to make predictions about his life. A slight bald spot on the middle of his head will make him a rich man; a wide and deep skull will make him a chief. The old man then swings the child in the direction of the four cardinal points above the family altars and gives him the first name of the deceased person whose *ni* and *dya* he has inherited. Some of the hair, shaved off shortly before, is then thrown into the Niger by the father who pronounces the name while facing the river. The gesture and the word are meant to entrust the *tere* to the spirit of the waters and to ask his protection. On the same day the blacksmith marks out on the child's face the scarifications that act on his *tere*, giving him strength, courage, and virtue.

774 787 828 As the child grows, certain of his physical peculiarities are interpreted as characteristics of his *tere*. If he grinds his teeth while sleeping it means he will attack his parents; if he often takes hold of his left wrist with his right hand he will always be victorious. A girl who walks swinging her hands and throwing them behind and who raises dust with her feet while walking will destroy her husband's fortune. Some informants say that a person has several *tere*: /62/ one for his manner of walking, one for the way he carries his head, one for the shape of his limbs, and one for the breasts if the person is a woman (1).

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1. The physical signs determining the *tere* are very numerous. On this subject see

774 D. Traore. "Le Tere chez les Bambara du
787 Ségou /The Tere among the Bambara of Ségou/,"
828 *Notes africaines*, January 1947, pp. 29-31.

774 Man is considered the bearer of a strong *tere*. Because he talks, is well informed, and knows good from evil, he is responsible for his own life and that of his family. The *tere* is the gaining of consciousness.

774 825 This aspect of the *tere* means that only domestic animals, whose life depends on man, are bearers of this principle. Wild animals "have a hard and barren life; they have to labor to feed themselves; so they do not have to bear the burden of a *tere*." All that lives independently of man is without a *tere*. (1)

The *tere* of domestic animals is not as powerful as that of man, but is also revealed by external signs. For instance, a horse that swings its head from right to left while it is tied up has a very bad *tere*; it is said to be its *duga fufa* (2). Such a beast is undesirable in a home for it "chases away happiness and success." A wounded domestic animal attacks its enemy with its *tere*.

774 784 827 The fact that the *tere* is that part of the person which suffers the consequences of impurity testifies to the bonds that unite man to the outer world. The *tere* is disturbed when a taboo, *tne*, is broken. If it is a good *tere*, it leaves the person; if it is a bad one, it becomes worse. On the other hand, the brezking of a taboo provokes a physiological change in the blood which loses its red color and becomes

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1. However, according to certain informants, wild animals might also be endowed with several *tere* for different parts of the body. In this case, it would seem that the term designates especially the animal's physical peculiarities and not its consciousness, as in the case of man and domestic animals.

2. Literally, "the swaying of the hawk." It is said that when a hawk descends on its prey, it swings its head right and left in order to see the prey better.

774 pale. It is manifested by a loss of strength and by illnesses affecting
784 the body openings: the man becomes blind and deaf-mute. He may
827 also become paralyzed. Generally he does not die but is pursued by
ills until he purifies himself.

In addition, the *tere* changes when it is detached from its normal
774 support; it then becomes *nyama*, a force which acts outside the body.
Manifest in action, the fact can already be sensed in the spoken word,
the bearer of *nyama* which immediately affects /63/ the person to
whom it is addressed. The consequences of this action of the word
are manifold.

761 At the time of death, the *tere* is completely liberated. Transformed
into *nyama* which leaves the body, it then becomes a very active
774 form which, in certain cases, can attack whomever it considers
778 responsible for the death (1).

774 Sacrificial beings, men or animals, or plants for ritual use never
778 release a dangerous *nyama*. Their spiritual principles and forces
are channeled in the course of the ritual and directed toward the
benefit of a supernatural power through the altar. The same is true
of domestic animals immolated for consumption, in which case their
forces are used over again and their death causes no disorder since
it was foreseen by Faro's law concerning food.

On the other hand, the *nyama* of the bush animals (*nyama bakâ*) leave their dead bodies and pursue the hunter (2). To protect himself

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1. This very visible but incomplete aspect of the *nyama* is the one that has been most studied heretofore. On this subject, see the works of the Abbé Henry, Ch. Monteil, H. Labouret, L. Tauxier. Furthermore, in the sky, in space, and on earth, there is a *nyama* independent of the *tere*. The nature of this general and vital element has not been completely clarified by investigation.

2. The sick man may be treated in the following manner: seven (or a multiple of seven) cowrie shells are thrown upon the hide of the animal

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as an offering, which implies an apology with the understanding that the guilty man is given as many blows as there are cowrie shells offered. Next, the hide is soaked in water and washed. It is then secured so that it may not once again run away into the bush. These various operations are performed as often as necessary and until the crisis is over. On the other hand, this purification may be performed as often as necessary, but cannot be renewed in the case of a broken taboo.

the hunter carries an altar, *dozoboli*, suspended from his shoulder. Into it the animal's strength is channeled the moment it dies.

Every individual is, therefore, constantly faced during his lifetime with this active force which is liberated by the word, by certain acts, and by death. He must be in a position to fend off danger, to maintain his own *tere* which will help him if it is good, but which may on the contrary join the enemy forces and help them in their destruction if it is evil. Therefore, in the latter case the individual tries to change it by seeking the assistance and advice of the Komo diviner. But whatever happens, each individual, whether he wishes it or not, endures the attacks and the presence of numerous and varied *nyama*, because he has destroyed plants, trodden on insects, and wounded other living beings. Thus, he is at all times the bearer of displaced life forces that are foreign to him. Moreover, these forces find their way /64/ through him to all that he touches. He becomes a center of influences which first exert their action on his person and which he must take into account to maintain his integrity (1).

(1) Although this feeling is very distinct in the mind of the Bambara, it does not make him inactive. The responsibility is only serious in the case of a voluntary act of useless destruction. In all other cases, the rites counteract the inconveniences. The Bambara are responsible, but free.

The wanzo

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The wanzo, an evil force created in the beginning by Mousso Koroni's impurity, was caused by the curse, of which she was the object after her betrayal, and which she communicated to the earth during her underground journey. After she had maimed herself on Pemba while having sexual relations with him, her jealousy pushed her into avenging herself on the women who mated with the balanza. Her madness and despair prompted her to pursue her betrayal to the very end. With nails and teeth she excised and circumcised the men and women she met during her travels. The wanzo she carried about thus penetrated the human species, making the operation necessary for all those to follow. Faro could not remedy this, but his protection is invoked for each child during the operation. The headdress of the circumcised symbolizes the sky and the purifying light.

At birth, each child receives the wanzo, "the word of Mousso Koroni," in its blood and on its skin at the moment of contact with the earth on which it is born. This force, also called kono nyama, "the nyama of the inside," is not to be confused with the tere but is of the same nature and is transmitted to everything the bearer touches. [826] Its seat is mostly in the foreskin of the man and the clitoris of the woman, and it represents the disorder in the individual: "it makes man such that he can live with no one, can stand no one, and cannot stand himself." In addition, it is opposed to fertility.

In order to become a stable individual, to marry, procreate, and to sacrifice, the child must be rid of his wanzo. This is achieved in the course of circumcision or excision and in the rituals that end the seclusion of those operated upon. The greatest part of its force runs into the earth with the blood of the mutilated organ. The rest of it escapes with the smoke of the fire over which the children jump (three or four times according to their sex) before returning to their homes. The act of abandoning their /65/ old clothes and putting on new ones at that time confirms their new status. But the wanzo does not disappear; it is channeled into the masks of the ndomo society to which the uncircumcised belong (1). Similarly, when a child dies before being circumcised, appropriate rituals have the effect of channeling the

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1. See p. 222.

778 wanzo and directing it into the mask to prevent it from doing harm
304 (1). Thus, nothing of the individual forces is lost. The wanzo itself, harmful at the beginning, when properly channeled and directed, serves to consolidate the collective energies of the infantile societies based on it.

[582] Only when an adolescent has lost his wanzo is he permitted to marry; any individual would refuse to marry a partner who is not completely rid of it.

The Body

826 The Bambara have a notion of their bodies and the role of the different parts and organs. This notion is all the deeper because it is linked to that of the spiritual principles that animate it.

Indeed, the tere is determined by certain visible aspects of the body, while the ni and the dya also have sexes like the body. Therefore any study should include the links that unite the spiritual elements to the physical body in order to understand properly its state and function.

Blood, which together with breath is the seat of life, is also the vehicle of physical and spiritual forces that circulate with it in the veins and arteries. The blood sacrifice liberates these forces which sustain the altars, the soil, and the beings who receive them. Certain alliances are consecrated by an exchange of blood. The clear color of blood is proof of its purity: all infractions bring about a
[841] change and cause it to become pale. Menstrual blood, testimony to Mousso Koroni's impurity and of the momentary sterility of women, is the principal taboo of the supernatural powers that create and protect life.

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The head, which contains thought, is an essential part of the individual and his symbol: "the head of the members of society" is represented by a stroke in the course of the rituals performed by members of the Komo or the Kwore. Man grows through his head just as a plant "grows through its head bud" (2). Man's head is protected

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1. See p. 256.

2. The myth mentions the "head of the balanza" at the time that men broke the

826 828 [827] taboo by cutting its buds (see p. 43). The altars of the fields and of agricultural societies, tõ, watch over the "head of the millet."

/66/ and purified in order to maintain his health and prosperity. It is the seat of consciousness and will, and receives a share of the scarifications made at birth, which will exercise influence on the person.

826 Hair contains an important part of the individual's ni. It is therefore dangerous to mix it with the hair of another, for that would create a vital and indissoluble bond between the two parties. To burn it is equivalent to making an attempt on one's own life. It is buried or placed in a deep hole in the wall of the house for protection (1).

[832 789] 1. Many charms and magic spells are based on hair. In order to be loved by a woman, a man must mix some of her hair with his and place it under his head at night with a prayer. In order to keep his job, an employee does the same with his hair and that of his employer; he then sacrifices a victim over the ensemble so that the employer cannot fire him without risking his own life.

Hair and the pilose system play a part in the myth and were used to count the age of primitive men until the advent of death on earth. All the ancestors represented in the sanctuaries are bearded and hairy. Their appearance shows that, having become mortal, they lived at a time when rejuvenation no longer existed.

826 827 The pupil is the fundamental part of the eye. Its name, nyemani, "little person of the eye" (2), expresses its function. The pupil reflects and absorbs the person it sees. The image is a kind of double,

2. Man's pupil, according to information that is still obscure, was made with that of the serpent and was also called nye mani sa, "serpent of the little person of the eye."

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a replica of the person seen, the double being received and preserved by the seer with the help of the registering mechanism of the eye. It is with his eyes that Faro inscribes in his memory the number of beings under his domination. It is through the eyes as well as through the genitals that woman is united to her husband during the sexual act. The individual who has broken a taboo is affected first through the eyes: he suffers from pains or becomes blind according to the degree of his offense.

The nose is the canal of man's breath or, respiration, ni na kle (literally, soul that ascends and descends), a term describing the very movement of life. The seat of breath is the solar plexus, kwa nye, "eye of the chest," also said to be ni dyuru ba, "the great rope of the soul." When Faro decides to take back the life of a man, he carries him off into the water and returns his corpse with the nose and the navel cut up. The mutilation of the nose reminds all that, as the master /67/ of the guilty man's life, he takes it away from him by taking away his breath.

The mouth and the tongue play a part in all the rites and symbols concerning the person. The voice is "in the throat" but man talks with the mouth. The word is a creator, an act; it carries a force, nyama, which inhabits the mouth, permeates the tongue and saliva, and transmits itself to everything it touches. It is Faro's word passing through the mouth, the word received in suffering in mythical times, which integrates the human species with the new order established in the creation.

Its organ is the tongue which, when represented in ritual objects, symbolizes it (1). Its vehicle is saliva: to spit is to give one's word, to seal an oath. The old men spit on seeds, after having promised an offering to the Komo; the sacrificing priest, before the libation, spits prechewed kola nuts onto the altar. Husband and wife spit their marriage oath. The power of the mouth finds its most powerful expression in the griot's recitation of the device (2).

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1. The prayers recited during the initiation rites allude to the formidable nyama of the initiates' tongues.

2. See p. 112.

826 827 The mouth and tongue, ejectors of the word, can be compared in importance to the ear, a receptive organ. It is through the ear that man receives and remembers the word. Its role is comparable to that of the sex organs which eject life and receive it. The ear in itself has both sexes: male by its auricle, female by its orifice. This duality expresses the basic duality of man. That is why the corpse of an uncircumcised man is sometimes amputated at the ear rather than at the foreskin. [764]

826 301 Because of the symbolism of its shape and because of its function, the ear is adorned. Men formerly wore three copper rings on the right ear and four on the left, the number seven representing the complete being, male and female, ni and dya. Women wear four rings on each auricle or, if they can, twenty-two, which represent the twenty-two stages of creation, or the twenty-two generative categories. Sometimes, for both men and women, a single ring attached to the earlobe represents the mother of the other rings (1).

827 191 301 776 But the role of this adornment goes much further. As symbol of the word, it is through the ornaments that the spirit Téliko, master of sound, hears what /68/ is said to man. They attract sound and send it back to Téliko and Faro, who thus judge the acts and words of men. To wear earrings did not originally mean to adorn oneself, but to hear the spirits as well as to force them to hear what was said (2). Its second effect is to embarass the liar, the bearer of false news or evil words, by putting him in the position of being understood by the invisible, therefore of being judged by them. A pleasant or well-intentioned word benefits the one to whom it is addressed and this

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[178] 1. In olden times, men and women wore cowrie shells on their ears in the place of copper rings, a custom which would seem to be still respected in certain villages today. These shells played the same part as copper.

2. Rings placed on musical instruments have the same purpose and also symbolize those worn by men. See p. 282.

827 191 381 776 gain is felt as a contribution to the beneficial *nyama*. "The spirit Téliko transforms the air emitted by the speaker into favorable *nyama*; upon hearing a good word, it would be necessary to stop one's ears so that this *nyama* does not leave the person who received it." Moreover, if a person opens his eyes wide while watching the speaker, "the latter's *nyama* is able to penetrate the body of the listener" and spread within it as a reviving tide. While this takes place, the good word saturates the air, helping the action of breathing, hence the life, of the listener. "One breathes," says an informant, "with the *nyama* of the words which enter through the eyes and ears." But this process is not one-sided. The good *nyama* returns to the speaker through his own eyes while he is looking at the other person. He is reflected in the person with whom he is talking and it is as though he were talking to himself. There is a beneficial exchange even when only one of the two actors speaks.

Inversely, a bad word or an insult upsets the listener and rebounds, acting upon the insulting person. This harmonious arrangement summarizes precisely and powerfully the universal movement, principle of life and strength for all beings. It comprises an individual movement provoked by the word which acts upon the body by developing and regularizing the rhythm of breathing, and a collective movement set off by the return of the word to the speaker. Because of the effect of the spoken word, exchanges are established that are favorable both to the rhythm of individual breathing and to the equilibrium of universal life. This effect is not limited to words in the strict sense; sight enjoys the same prerogatives as hearing and diction. If an object [431] belonging to a certain person is seen and coveted by another, the owner cannot refuse to give it to him. The act of seeing has established by itself, between the stranger and the object, a bond which is affectively stronger than that of ownership.

826 The articulated parts of the human body are just as meaningful as the head. The bones, more lasting than the flesh /69/ and a testimony, in the grave, of the life that has passed, are its foundation and framework.

The navel is the central point of the articulations: that is why Faro, when he drowns a person, returns the body after having slit the nose and navel. This double mutilation shows that he has reclaimed the head and the body of the guilty man. The articulations are the indication of man's condition in the new order. Where he was once

826 immortal with smooth limbs, he became mortal and hard working. As seats of the male semen, they transmit this condition to the embryo, formed in the maternal womb by Faro. The weariness felt in the limbs after the sexual act is proof of this transmission. As Locus of
[829] the virile semen, framework of the man, and a mechanism suitable for physical labor, the articulations are also the symbol of society. The chief's throne, in the shape of a knee, is the image of its owner's articulated body as well as that of the armature of the social body and of the grouping of individuals under his jurisdiction (1).

1. See p. 178.

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201 The limbs represent the right and the left. Rectitude, firmness, and directed action are "right"; incertitude, the spirit of indecision, and inconsistency in behavior are "left." The right is male and symbolizes man's labor; the other is female. All gestures, profane and religious, and all representations of objects bear witness to this. Performing his first task in the fields before the rain, the farmer gives three blows with his hoe held in his left hand in order to absorb the impurity of the earth. After this, he works until the harvest with his right hand. To cross one's hands means supplication, to put them behind one's back means humiliation.

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576 Each finger has its value. The little finger, *bolokoni lakare*, is "the son of the other fingers" and in it is concealed the entire strength of the hand; it "carries the *nyama* of the fingers." Hence its use as a measure of divinations. To point to someone with one's little finger means to belittle him with respect to those present. Thus one casts a spell (*korti*) against an enemy or an undesirable person with the little finger.

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622 The index finger and the thumb of a chief, formerly those of a king, are marked on certain occasions with signs called *bolo ti doniya*, "knowledge of the signs of the hand." On the index are drawn three "acts of the world today" (*bi dyɛ̃ walew*) and on the thumb, two "things of the interior of the secret world" (*dyɛ̃ gundo kono fɛ̃w*), for it is said that "the knowledge of the signs of the hand /70/ is the road of the creation 5, the index is the world in 3 and the thumb is the new world" (1). The whole represents the worlds thought out by

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1. Bolo ti doniya ye dali duru sira ye, bolokoni kumba dɛga ye dyɛ saba gundo ye, tyemasa bolokoni ye dyɛ dura ye.

yo, of which only the first is realized (2).

2. On the worlds thought out by yo, see pp. 23-26.

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643 On another level, the signs of the thumb are related to powers and those of the index to royal domains (fig. 1, nos. 8-12):[2]

1. Sign zero (fu) represents the beginning of creation, the origin of all things. A curved segment extended from left to right denotes the dynamic quality of the universe. It is intersected by a multiplication sign expressing the infinite development of beings and things. But the vertical stroke crossing it on the left indicates both the cessation and the suppression of the whole (no. 11).

2. Sign of lightning. It expresses royal power and justice and is traced under the thumb ring of the king. The latter, when giving an order, would swing his hand, which means he is swinging lightning before those he addresses (no. 12).

3. Sign of the royal domain. The opening asserts the possible extension of the kingdom; the transversal bar is a protection of this kingdom from all destruction (no. 8).

4. Sign of the extension of this domain at the tree cardinal sides: east, west, and south (no. 9).

5. Sign of union. The oval represents the whole group of functionaries called tɔdyɔ and barodɛ, officers and councilors who administer the kingdom under the king's authority (no. 10).

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[783] As the feet are constantly in touch with the soil, they take on its impurity. An individual who has gone through severe purifications will need to avoid putting his feet on the ground during a period of time occasionally quite prolonged, for "to place one's toes on the ground is to put one's soul in contact with the impure earth" (1). It

[291] 1. The invention of the shoe is mythically linked to the notion of the earth's impurity; the wearer must therefore avoid this contact.

[2] [p.22, category 116—Analyst.]

826 is also through the feet that a part of man's strength is deposited in the sweepings and rubbish upon which he treads. Their role as receptacles appears in the rituals concerning household refuse and the dirt on roads and paths.

Like the little finger, the small toe symbolizes the whole person. [301] It is sometimes adorned with a silver ring, symbol of the word, which recalls that man's body is the seat of the word extended within him from head to feet (1).

1. In olden times the ring on the small toe was made of red nyama fiber (nyama fu), which played the same role as metal.

831 826 The notion of the bisexuality of human beings is fundamental: the spiritual principles are sexed like the body, whose ambivalence /71/ is evident during childhood: the boy is feminine in his foreskin; the girl is masculine in her clitoris. One of the aims of circumcision [304] and excision is to help the child attain the sex to which it is apparently destined by removing the organ of the opposite sex. (2). But the initial duality of the soul and body is the very foundation of the human being. He is complete only if he originally received it, and he retains it even after the operation imposed by physical and social life, [774] for the soul of the opposite sex, though diminished in the body, remains present in the shadow, the dya. He also rediscovers his dual unity when he marries. A married couple are a unit for their dya [581] join as do their bodies in an act which is not merely physical and which realizes the ideal union of twins.

831 801 The sex to which one belongs dominates one's whole existence on earth. Objects and tools bear masculine or feminine marks, according to the rules of the division of labor. The numbers three (man) and four (woman) are abridged forms of the sex. "Primitive men" who, according to the Bambara expressed themselves mostly by gestures and signs, engraved their rare objects with the number of

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[171] 2. The same conception is found among the Dogon; see M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau, p. 185.

831 lines or dots depending upon the sex of those who used them. Thus,
801 women marked their spindles with four lines whereas men twisted three
threads on their shuttles.

On the metaphysical level, man's body, "the seed of the world,"
826 is identified with the cereal grain. The Bambara separate cereal
824 grains into seven parts, corresponding to a division of the human
812 organs into seven groups (1). Man and grain are one and identical in
their substance. On the other hand, the basic foods, that is, the
eight principal cereals, are symbolically present in the collarbones
(kolo kalanjiri, or ka kolo). Man carries within him his subsistance,
and its location reflects the person's general condition (2). As proof
[783]
of /72/ man's spiritual integrity, these grains leave him when he is in a state of impurity. He is then drained of his substance and subsistence. Thepurpose of purification is to reestablish this wholeness.

812 Moreover, the bonds which unite the whole person, body and
561 spiritual principles, to the cosmos, are made clear by the fact that

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1. The divisions of the grain are as follows: kungu, "little beard of millet," involucre; fara dye, "white bark," glume and glumales; fara fi, "black bark," bran and protein aceous bark; fara mugu, "farinaceous bark" (which corresponds to a milky diastatic zone); mugu dunta, "flour for eating," starch; kolo dye, "white bone," embryo; kise de, "son of grain," the micropyle from which the rootlet issues at the time of germination. The classification of organs in relation to these divisions is under study. We thank M. Pitot of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire for the identification of the parts of the grain corresponding to the native divisions. In certain villages, grains
[782] undergo a process of hulling and the determined elements only are used in the making up of the ritually offered millet mash.

2. See p. 53, n. 2.

812 561 man's life passes through seven successive ages corresponding to the seven skies, the seven earths, the seven waters, and the seven stages of millet growth. The seven ages are: bilakoro, "an uncircumcised person"; kemẽkoro "a circumcised person of the last age grade"; tyebalẽ, literally, a big man; maselẽ, literally, a successful person; makoroba, literally, an elderly person; madeselẽ, literally, a person who cannot succeed, an old man; mabalẽ, an impotent old man.

812 561 796 These bonds are also confirmed annually for everybody in the course of the ritual called "the renewal of the year." By renewing the cardinal points, the Bambara add to the strength of these poles of attraction which are responsible for maintaining things within themselves and with respect to each other. At the same time they proceed to a "revival of the body and soul," including all from the youngest to the oldest. For the year to come, they take a fresh breath, a new life, and submit the body to internal and external purifications, making it adequate to fulfill its role.

Effects of Death on the Person

761 The first effect of death is to dissociate the elements that make up the person. The religious practices, imbued with respect for these elements, aim at organizing their preservation in order that they may not be lost to the deceased, to society, and finally, to Faro who controls life and assures the survival of souls.

The dya remains in the water where it will be kept until the birth of a child. But the ni, which escapes from the body with the last breath, is watched for by the head of the family who catches it and carries it to an altar. As we have seen above, it will return to animate the dya of the child who will inherit the deceased's spiritual principles, leaving behind it on the altar, a kind of exuvia, mana or folo, as a sign of the deceased's sojourn on earth.

The tere becomes transformed at death; liberated from the body, it becomes nyama which escapes and which may sometimes attack the living. Proof of this is the fear aroused by the sight of a corpse. /73/ It would seem that the tere's combination of strength and character is expressed by the activity of the nyama; but it is really dangerous only in the case of violent death (the murder of a man or an animal). In this case the nyama attacks the responsible party. If death is natural, the nyama, like the ni, is directed by the relatives and placed on the family altar (pembele) in the course of the

761 funeral rites. There it joins the ancestral forces, the aggregate of
which forms a whole whose power is used by the descendants during
the seasonal rituals for beneficial purposes.

The body is buried; it "belongs to the termites" and in the end only
764 the bones will remain and be honored as a testimony of the physical
761 life. Sometimes they are removed from the tomb, examined, and
prayed to before being replaced.

761 When a birth occurs in the family the newborn child, having in-
herited the *ni* and the *dya* of the deceased, receives his *nyama* pre-
844 served in the *pembele* and his given name, *toko*; thus one being replaces
another, using the same forces which are used over again and again.
Life transmits itself intact. Not only is it undiminished by death, but
the *dya*'s sojourn in Faro's residence is thought to be a "reviving," a
desirable and beneficial purification. Similarly, the passing of the
ni onto the family altars brings about a rejuvenation.

761 On the altars and in the tombs, the "exuviae and bones counted
and classified by Faro," are a valid testimony for eternity and serve
to maintain the integrity of the whole world of living and dead until
the final resurrection.

Attributes of the Person

The Name

551 The organization of the total family /famille indivise/ of the Bambara has already been the object of descriptive works (1). It is however, appropriate to mention it since certain elements such as family names, devices, taboos, and kinship relationships described as "joking" are related to the components of the person.

Socially, the person is first placed by his given name, *toko*, that of the ancestor who gave him his *ni* and his *dya*, or any other in the paternal or maternal line. The given name indicates the relation to a family group as well as /74/ the person's individuality. It is accompanied by the father's family name (*dyamu*), whose origin and

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1. In particular Ch. Monteil, *Les Empires du Mali*; H. Labouret, *Les Manding et leur langue* /The Malinke and their Language/.

55/ etymology are often associated with an historical event (1). The most

1. On the historical aspects of the *dyamu*, see P. Humblot, *Du nom propre et des appellations chez les Malinké*; M. Delafosse, *Des soi-disant clans totémiques de l'Afrique occidentale* /The So-called Totemic Clans of West Africa/, Ch. Monteil, *Les Empires du Mali*.

familiar names are derived from those of the mythical families (2).

[73] 2. The Bambara myth mentions family names that were determined by Faro when he classified beings and things. It is still generally said of this event: "When Faro travelled, he broke the support for Mousso Koroni, and an agreement as to names was made by him" (*faro tama na muso koroni ǰigi kari la, dyama dyamu ko la dili kera faro fẹ*).

On the other hand it must be noted that a *dyamu*, which applies to a great number of total families living in various regions, is not always reserved for the Bambara groups only. The *dyamu* Kouloubali, for example, also belongs to certain Somono and some blacksmiths. This means that a *dyamu* is not only attributed to a family in its broadest meaning, but also to people apparently unrelated to it. Another typical fact makes it impossible for us to give the term "family" the meaning it has in our societies: a person changes his name when he leaves his country. A Dogon becomes Keyta when he goes to live in Mandé. A Bambara Traoré, if he goes to the land of the Wolof, becomes a Diop (3). Finally, an important family may

3. An investigation of this very important aspect of Sudanese social organization remains to be made.

have several names and devices.

551 Bearing a name confers on the bearer the obligation of respecting a taboo (tne or tana). He may neither kill nor, more especially, eat the animal or the plant that represents his name; any infraction of this rule affects his physical and spiritual integrity.

551 602 On the other hand, relationships commonly known as "joking relationships" are established between families respecting different taboos and bearing different names. One of the characteristic aspects of this kind of alliance is the fact that members of one family are in the habit of carrying out purification rites for members of the other in case a taboo is broken.

551 173 Stories relating the origin of family names are well known and there are several versions that have been published for the principal families (1). Some of these bring out not only the history of the head of the family, the first-named, but at the same time the origin of the taboo /75/ attached to the name or the origin of the kinship ties observed by the bearers of the name with members of another family.

In this respect, one of the versions concerning the Kouloubali is most suggestive:

"The Kouloubali are descended from a family called kuludyu which lived in an underground village in a place called kuluba (literally, big mountain) in Mandé. A famine which lasted for fifty-two years hit the region; the people did not know what to do and ate the leaves of trees in order to survive.

Two friends, called Konyo (literally, marriage) and Mbadun (literally, I eat), left their homes and set out on a trip to find food. They met three men and decided to join forces with them in order to escape this painful situation. Upon returning to the village, the newcomers, noticing the excrement of a hyena, joked about its white color: "You have only been eating bones, " they said. "But no, " laughingly answered the other two, " it is hyena excrement. " And they asked their new friends their names, adding that they themselves had none. Then together, they tried to make a fire. One night they noticed a flame apparently coming out of the branches of a kapok tree. The tree grew near a rock and the wind, by making

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1. See among others L. Tauxier. La Religion bambara, pp. 119ff.

551/ its branch rub against the stone, caused sparks which ignited the kapok.
173 They then rubbed two pieces of wood against each other and managed to light a fire which they kept burning for six months. They jealously guarded their secret; men, some of whom still knew nothing of fire and who were in the habit of drying their meat in the sun, came to ask them for burning coals and gave them millet, salt, and domestic animals in exchange. They also gave them their daughters in marriage. One of the men, who belonged to the Diara family, asked them their family names. They answered that they had none. "What does that matter?" he replied. "You will live on a great mountain and take the name of Kouloubali." They then asked the name of their ally (senãnku). "We have none," said the new men, "but since this famine we have been living with friends."

They then decided to celebrate the marriage of Konyo with Diara's daughter and a new alliance (senãnkuya) was arranged between the two families. Later on, other members of the Diara family came to live with them, and a prosperous village grew up where the Kouloubali lived.

As their numbers had grown, the men decided to go to war to gain other arable lands. They vanquished the Toucouleurs /Tokulor/ of the Ségou region and ended up by taking the town, which they entered as conquerors.

One of the phrases of their device: kulubali kulu dyã tasuma /76/ "Kouloubali of the fire of the great mountain" is a reminder of both their geographical origin and their fortune.

The Device

551/ A device, barama, is generally attached to a name and, when pronounced, has the same kind of effective communication (1). Its

1. We refer the reader to the work of Mme. Solange de Ganay, Les Devises des Dogon, in which this important institution has been studied at length and commented upon. The characteristics of Bambara devices are similar. Without taking up the whole problem, it is appropriate here to define the effect of these devices on the person according to the Bambara concept.

551 course within the individual who hears it, its effect on him, and the return effect on the individual reciting it are all developed according to a known mechanism.

The barama, a word which may be translated as "encouragement," "compliment," or "flattery," is a narrative, usually in poetic form, relating the origin of the name and the exploits of the ancestors (1).

[576] 1. The device, in its entirety, is generally known only to the griot, but certain parts of it, certain traditional phrases known to all, are used as a greeting to its owner.

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539 Thus one of the elements of the Diara device bears witness to the role of their ancestors:

"Diara, Zan of Nyaola, Yayiri of Nyaola, your grandfather curved the world like a sickle, straightened it out like a straight road; grandson of God on earth, Diara!" (2)

2. Dyara, nyaola za, nyaola yayiri, i moke ye ka dye kuru i ko woloso ka foni i ko sira tike nin dye; duguma ngala modẽ, dyara. Nyaola is a village. The name of Zan is always given to the eldest son in a family. The word dyara also means lion.

Another element exalts their courage in battle:

"Diara, Koné: if there is not a Koné among the warriors who will fight, the troop will be beaten (in advance). The lion has broken a great bone" (3).

3. Dyara, kone, kone če kele te kele min oye fele ye; dyara ye kolo ba kari. Koné is another of the Diara's dyamu; fele describes a group of men gathered together for the hunt or for war.

The Tangara device also recalls their history and their victories:

"Descendants of Falé, Kwonda, Méné: other brave men purchased their right to sit in the village; we, brave men, won it with our bow and arrows" (4).

551 4. Fale kwonda mene šiw, tow bomaw ye
539 dugu sã ka sigi, aw bemaw ya soro ni to ani
kala. Falé, Kwonda, and Méné are the names
of ancestors. The device is that of the Tangara
of the village of Barbé.

551 Moreover, the device also carries a statement of the bearer's
576 genealogy, burudyu (1). To say this genealogy is equivalent to
778 "attacking the /77/ ancestors." To speak of them, to quote them, and to tell their exploits honors them and pacifies them. In the course of the recitation "the air emitted by the speaker" is transformed by the power of the spirit, Teliko, into coolness which penetrates the ancestors (2). The same is true for supernatural powers. As soon as the Komo chief recites Faro's burudyu, "the air coming out of the chief's mouth is transformed into good nyama which penetrates Faro's body through his pupils and ears."

To tell a man his burudyu is to honor him greatly. He thinks of his ancestors, their fortune, and their glory; he is proud to be descended from them and is incited to do as well or better than they. The effect of the "good word" described above is due to the indirect but powerful action of the ancestors (3). The recitation by a third party has the effect of maintaining the individual in his being, of making him persevere by affirming it (4), for the device appeals to

1. The word ši, meaning race, is used to indicate the burudyu, which is comparable to the dambe of the Peul of Mopti.

2. Teliko ba sumaya se u ma. "Téliko makes coolness come to them."

3. However the soul (ni) of the cited ancestors is neither called upon nor displaced by the recitation. It is the vital force, nyama, which is put into motion here.

its possessor's soul, *ni*. If, at this moment, the person flattered is in a normal state, his device causes his "soul to swell and his body to harden, inciting him to courageous action and joy." If the contrary is true, anger or emotion takes the place of contentment and calmness.

The reciter receives in return the strength of the beneficial word which, having contented the person it was addressed to, contents him also. There is an exchange of *nyama*: that which the reciter sends out and that which he receives in return and from which he benefits.

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That is why the recitation of the device is not always left to the individual's discretion. Because of its importance, it has become a public function generally reserved for the *griot* (*dyeliw*) who form a caste practicing endogamy and who earn their living by getting paid to recite the devices and adulations in daily life as well as during public or religious ceremonies (1). But the fact that they earn a salary for this service affects their dignity: nobody else ever recites the devices because nobody wishes to be taken for a *griot*, and nobody ever marries him. The *griot* is at once indispensable, feared, and despised. The mechanism of forces put into motion by his action makes it possible to understand the ambivalence of feelings of which he is the object.

/78/ When the words come out of his mouth, the *griot*'s *tere* is transformed into *nyama*, which becomes filled with a force called *kuma nyamu*, "*nyama* of words." This force goes from the head to the mouth of the speaker and reaches the person addressed. If a man is wealthy and powerful, it is said that he gets the "*nyama* from the mouth of those *griot* who flatter him." He is then forced to pay them for their encouragement. If he does not, they remain silent when

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4. This effect is already obtained by the simple repetition of the family name with which one greets a man upon meeting him. It is common to hear the Blacks greet each other by repeating their *dyamu* to each other several times.

1. The recitation given by anyone other than the *griot* would be far from producing the same effect.

551 576 778 564 passing before his door and thus empty him of his *nyama*. The man grows thin and poor. The *griot* may bring about his death with evil words, their *nyama* attacking the heart, the chest, then the entire body of the victim.

The *griot*'s power over the person he flatters becomes more involved and varies according to what he is reciting. If he recites the *burudyu* several times, if he speaks at length of the ancestors, their *nyama* enters his mouth and is added to his own, thus reinforcing the power of the word. Thus, when the *griot* recites a *barama* without receiving payment, his *nyama* attacks the person spoken to. If this offense is repeated and if the *burudyu* is recited, the man is forced to pay if he does not wish to be attacked by the much more formidable *nyama* of the ancestors.

In these various situations, the *tere* of the person flattered intervenes: if it is good, it fights to defend the person, but if it is weak or wicked, it joins the ancestral forces and the person is doubly threatened.

The recitation is always made by the *griot* before a witness so that his action will be more binding and make the miser lose face. On the other hand, a man who pays the *griot* generously is looked after by the latter who sings of his generosity on all occasions and announces the sum he has received; often he does not hesitate to exaggerate the total amount received if he can hope to profit by doing so (1).

[784] 1. If the *griot* knows that the wealthy man he is addressing is miserly, he rubs his teeth with roots which he knows has the power to make his words even more effective.

[554] Sometimes a man reaches a secret agreement with the *griot* in order to gain prestige. He publicly gives him a considerable sum, part of which the *griot* returns the following day as agreed upon. The gift is so generous that none can surpass it.

[585 561] This practice is particularly apparent at the time of marriage. The men of the same age grade as the groom outdo each other in their gifts to the *griot*. The one who has given most passes for the most generous. Sometimes the *griot* invents a new *barama* on the spot even though he does not know the device.

551 576 778 564 The device is recited on numerous occasions. After a birth, the *griot* proclaim it in the course of the name-giving ceremony, addressing themselves to the father, then to the newborn child /79/ who thus receives it for the first time. At a marriage the *barama* of the two partners are alternatly recited. In everyday life, the recitation is carried on most frequently during religious ceremonies or feasts. In the hunt or at war, it has the effect of helping the participants and increasing their courage (1). In a meeting it is used to greet people bearing the same name, and if one of the assistants is to be particularly honored, the first words of his device are recited.

551 755 In case of illness, the ally (*senãnku*) (2) comes to the patient's side and recites his *barama* to encourage him and help him get well. If he is dying, the recitation, which is then the equivalent of a prayer, may help his soul return. After death, the ally, the *griot*, and the [764] blacksmiths come near the corpse to recite his *barama* in order to honor him.

551 576 539 The devices pertaining to the various crafts are used when addressing the artisan with whom one has business. Thus the blacksmith to whom one brings work is greeted first by his name to which is then added:

"*ini fara ani goni*, you are with stone and fire."

A person crossing a field will say to the farmer bent over the earth: "*i ni tye i ba ka kusebe daba*, greeting to him who handles the hoe well," or simply: "*i ni tye daba la*, greeting to him who is with the hoe." To the shoemaker one would say: "*bana ani ba golo*, (you are) with the acacia (3) and the goat leather."

[527] 1. If the *griot* recites it to a war chief and the town under attack is taken, he receives part of the loot.

2. See p. 119.

[386] 3. This refers to the *bana* or *boina* (*Acacia arabica*) used by the shoemaker to make a black dye.

551 The institution of the device, with all its elaborations, has the
576 effect of confirming people in their bodies, their spiritual principles, and their social functions. Except for the cases of emigration mentioned above, the occasions are rare indeed when an individual is obliged to change his name or device during his life. A woman keeps her father's barama even after marriage.

551 An illegitimate child receives neither the name nor the device of
his family. They may be given him later if the father makes himself
848 known. A Bambara who contracts a misalliance, for example, by
564 marrying the daughter of a blacksmith or a griot, will bring into the
783 world impure children who will never have a right to their father's barama (1).

552 We must add that the prerogative of having a device is not limited
782 to humans. All animate beings, many /80/ inanimate ones, the elements of nature, places, villages, plants, animals, and all the supernatural powers have theirs which men address during prayers.

The Taboo

784 One or several eating taboos, tne or tána, are attached to the
[551] family name and are observed by all who bear the name. According to certain initiates, the taboos were decreed by Faro when he determined the food proper to each species (2) after having classified the beings of creation. For the common man, the origin of the taboo is always the subject of a tale or legend and justifies the bonds between an ancestor of the family and the animal or plant designated. Most frequently, the animal has helped the man, has saved his life, or the other way around; or else, following some serious events, the ancestor was transformed into an animal or plant. Numerous versions of the origins of such bonds are given.

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1. Such a child is said to be a sofali (literally, horse donkey), that is, a bastard.

2. See p. 52.

784 It has not been possible heretofore to consider all aspects of the various taboos. On the other hand, the great number of versions concerning their origin indicates that the current story, told to all who pass by, conceals much deep notions of the categories that indicate the bonds linking men to animals and plants (1). It would also be appropriate to study the relations between the species, between animals and plants and minerals in terms of the spiritual forces that animate them.

Whatever it may be, the taboo confers on man his title of nobility; not to possess one is degrading. It assures the protection of the group that observes it. Thus, the hyenas of Konodimini protect the village inhabitants who feed them.

Examples of taboo:

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The Traoré family has crocodile flesh as its taboo. An ancestor called Makyon, having transformed himself into a crocodile, fed his family during a famine that lasted six years; he fished and brought the catch to the members of his family.

In the seventh year, since the famine still raged, the Traoré decided to kill him for food. In the morning, when he appeared with the fish he had caught, an old man advanced to attack him. /81/ The animal stopped him and predicted he would die if he pursued his plan. The man paid no attention and wounded the beast which had enough strength left, however, to return to the river. The old man regretted his act and the others tried to disassociate themselves from the responsibility. The following morning the crocodile came out of the river and died at their feet so that they might see what they had done. The guilty man was in turn killed by his family and the two corpses were buried together in the same shroud. When all was over, the chief revealed that Maydon /sic/ was a member of the family, that as a member of the same race he had been feeding his kin

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1. See also L. Tauxier. La Religion bambara (Théorie des Ntana et des tabous /Theory of the Ntana and Taboos/), pp. 114-138.

784 during the famine, and that in the future the crocodile would be taboo
773 to the Traoré as a sign of gratitude for his gift and as an apology for
the murder committed.

The taboo of the Diara family is the lion, whose name they bear. In the olden days two old friends were always in the habit of hunting together with arrows and spears. In the course of a long famine, their weapons broke and they were not able to find others. In order to feed their families, they attacked wild animals with bare hands; the one would stun his victims with his fists, and the other would skin them.

Gradually the life they were leading changed their behavior. They no longer washed, their hair and beards grew, and thick hair covered their body. Their nails became so long and so hard that they used them to slice meat and to dig the earth. They even forgot the language they had spoken and only communicated by grunts.

They fought with the spirits to gain a foothold in those places ordinarily reserved for the latter. They no longer returned to their village. Their parents searched for them, but as soon as they saw people, they ran away. They ended by walking on all fours and appeared like the animals they pursued.

One day as they lay sleeping next to each other, they mated and the stronger one impregnated the weaker to give birth, a little later, to two lion cubs. The men who saw them in the bush with their offspring decided that hereafter they could not kill a lion for it had their blood in its veins. Even today, when a Diara meets a lion, the animal lies down, "so ashamed to be descended from the mating of two men who had become beasts."

184 These two examples, selected from many others, illustrate the relations between man and animal. These appear even more clearly in the mechanism set off by the breaking of the adopted taboo.

Indeed, the first consequence of any infraction is the offender's loss of the seeds in his collarbone, a symbol of his basic sustenance. He becomes "an empty granary" and, deprived of his strength, is unable to contend against that of the wounded animal /82/ attacking him. The pain he feels at that moment is proof of the state of his physical and psychic inferiority. Any breaking of a taboo affects first the eyes, then the other openings of the body.

784 If the animal is wounded, it delegates its *tere* to warn the guilty
783 man of the sin committed, but makes no attempt on his life since
it is his ally. On the other hand, its death liberates its *nyama* which

784 783 acts more energetically. But it is even more serious to eat one's taboo than to ill it, for then the person cannot get rid of his victim's nyâma and must suffer all the consequences.

The guilty person goes to the shore of the Niger and in a loud voice, discloses the facts to Faro while making him an offering (millet mash, copper, etc.), then he drinks a little water and goes home. If he lives too far from the river, he goes to a remote place and acts in the same way by spilling a little of his own blood as a sign of expiation. These acts have the effect of rectifying everything with Faro whom he has offended by breaking the established order. Next, he undergoes the purification rites. Their agent is his ally senānku and the rites are carried out at an intersection, dangu (1). The effect of such rites is to rid him of his victim's nyama, and then to reinstate the symbol of the eight life-giving cereal seeds in his collarbone: thus he recovers his lost strength. After his recovery, the old men of his family summon him and give him some stern advice for another breaking of the taboo cannot be atoned by any purification: the animal's nyama will no no longer leave the repeating offender who may die of it.

784 Voluntary infractions, which are very rare, of course bring about far more serious consequences for the person in question since his responsibility is involved. This is not so in the opposite case. If a man has eaten his taboo without knowing it during a meal taken at the home of another, the animal's nyama may attack those responsible: either the host or his wife becomes ill. The guilty woman must then [201] ask the man's forgiveness. On her knee and with her hands at the back, she discloses the facts to the person she has injured who may ask for time to think and make her wait in order to punish her. Otherwise he demands three kola nuts with which he carried out the dyanzani or "replacement." He throws them in the bush or gives them to the first poor person he meets. A few days later the responsible person is liberated.

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[602] 1. See p. 183. In certain cases the purification may be carried out by a kinsman of an ascending generation and may include ablutions with water consecrated by a prayer addressed to Faro.

/83/ Joking Relationship

602 608 A very important institution is also linked to the family name. It concerns the ties called "joking relationship," dyo benatye (literally, agreement between us), which is integrated with the general kinship relationships designated in the Mandingo country by the term señankuya. But family relationships in the strict sense, called sindyi benatye (literally, breast milk between us), are to be distinguished from dyo benatye which, on the contrary, involves the members of two families, or even of two different peoples.

Thus, a Koulibali is a Kéita's señanku among the Bambara; Bozo and Dogon as well as Bozo and Somono are also señanku (1). To the

[1] Joking relationship called señankuya among the Bambara is termed mägu among the Dogon, dagana among the Bozo, etc. This important institution, which embraces all the tribes of the French Sudan, has already been the object of a number of studies. See especially M. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal Niger /The Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. 3, p. 206; H. Labouret, "La Parenté à plaisanteries en Afrique occidentale /Joking Relationship in West Africa/"; D. Paulme, Parenté à plaisanteries et alliance par le sang en Afrique occidentale /Joking Relationship and Blood Alliance in West Africa/; R. Radcliffe-Brown, On Joking Relationships.

In the "Alliance cathartique /The Cathartic Alliance/," M. Griaule throws light on the Dogon-Bozo relations which are at the origin of the institution in the Sudan. This brings out the fundamental notion of the duality of beings and the principles that animate them. A Dogon and a Bozo are twins, each carrying a particle of the other in his body and soul. When he insults or purifies, he appeals to that part of himself in the other and the powers he communicates in this way come to the help of his partner.

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The latest investigations on this subject have brought to light the following facts: Dogon and Bozo have, respectively, eight seeds and eight fish in their collarbones and thus they realize the distribution of the heavenly sustenance (see p. 53). This latter is evidence of their spiritual integrity and any breaking of taboos results first in depriving the person of his seeds or his fish. The purpose of the institution is to enable the ally to intervene in order to reinstate the nourishing substance in the body of the guilty person.

It should be stated here that in instances in which they are described by the same term (senãnkuya), kin relationships, which also involve joking exchanges, must not be confused with relationships between families (more exactly between names) or between tribes.

Moreover, within this last group, several types of alliances can be observed: some involve exogamy (Dogon and Bozo; Bozo and Peul, etc...); others exclude the possibility of carrying out purification rites. It will therefore be necessary to examine as many cases as possible before establishing any rules for this type of alliance.

Mandé, a Koulibali and a Tangara, bound by a long and durable friendship, decided to seal it in a lasting way. They opened their veins and put a little blood from one wound into the other, thus realizing the alliance through this exchange. They next prepared a meal which they ate /84/ together while pronouncing their oaths never to spill each other's blood.

In this way the dyo benatye (1) was consecrated between them and

1. Because of this alliance, members of the Kouloubali family were authorized by the Tangara of the village of Barbé (region of Mopti) to settle in the village. The

602
608 Tangara chief gave them land to build their houses and set up their fields. The two groups live in perfect understanding.

their descendants. Such an alliance is equivalent to kinship. It involves the absolute obligation never to covet the life or possessions of the *senãnku*. The two parties are obligated to mutual assistance in many cases: food, housing, material aid; help in case of war or lawsuit; obligatory presence at religious ceremonies; purifications in case a taboo is broken.

These rules imply that the alliance affects the individual not only in his social roles, but also in his spiritual principles. The *senãnku* is a kind of twin to each individual belonging to the other family. He has within himself a part of his partner and vice versa.

602 Because of this fact, the reactions set off by insult or by joking are singular: the *senãnku* will accept from the mouth of the other, without becoming angry, mockery which he would not normally tolerate. He cannot be affected by them since the words are addressed to that part of his being which comes from the person insulting him. Moreover, the joke or the insult, without touching his spiritual integrity, has the effect of confirming him in his position relative to the person addressing him and of affirming the state of both parties, thereby increasing their vitality. It determines movements of forces from which the two speakers reciprocally benefit, as from a kind word.

This proceeding is used on numerous occasions, particularly at the time a person achieves a new social status or a new grade. The *senãnku* jokes with a newborn child as soon as his name is given and, later, on the day he wears his first piece of clothing. The circumcised boys become allies and joke between themselves the day of the *daworo* which consecrates the age grade (1). On the evening of marriage, the young woman is the object of ritual sarcasm which marks her final introduction into the husband's family group.

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783 The *senãnku* is the only one who, in certain cases, is able to carry out the purification rites made necessary by a broken taboo (*tne*). It is true that he carries in his collarbone—but only /85/ where his partner is concerned—twice the number of symbolic seeds,

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1. See p. 241.

602 783 that is, sixteen. This fact qualifies him, by his gesture of purification and through his essential role as provider of sustenance, to restore the seeds that had left the guilty man's collarbone. If the offense is slight, the offender gives him millet, money, or an object. The wounded animal's nyama settles on the object, and the senãnku who receives it rids him of it without being affected himself. If the offense is more serious, the two allies go off together to a road intersection, dangu; then the senãnku takes a straw torch in the shape of a cross and circles the guilty man's head with it from left to right. The being who has been offended by the broken taboo can refuse nothing when confronted with this procedure. He removes the nyama he had inflicted and the man, powerfully aided by the forces of the purifying agent, recovers those he had lost, as symbolized by the seeds in his collarbone.

This cathartic role of reinstating subsistence forces into the human body is illustrated in daily life by the food prestations to which the partners are held. This is like the secular and materialistic representation of an invisible operation of purification.

The Person: Exceptional Cases

000 Certain physical peculiarities constitute the manifest evidence of a modification of the elements making up the person. It is appropriate here to examine the cases of individuals who are thus affected.

Twins

845 Twins, flani (literally, two little ones), are two new beings given to men by Faro and considered as his offspring alone. Because of this fact, twins inherit neither the ni nor the dya of a dead person, but they inherit new principles which come to them from the spirit. Moreover, their dya never leaves the water for the shadow, but remains in the hands of the spirit throughout their entire life. Because of this they are protected from all danger and from all impurity.

Such a birth is considered a blessing and is granted only to certain
privileged people called kunandi. It is announced by holding up the
[201] right and left forefingers without uttering a word, for its announcement would be so powerful that it would harm the newborn. Their mother wraps a white cotton band called dyala about her forehead to indicate the presence of the children's dya /86/ in Faro's hands.

845 [431] Everyone visits the parents' home and takes to them what gifts one can give for to give to twins is equivalent to giving to Faro.

845 553 851 The name-giving ceremony is carried out on the river bank if the village is situated close to the Niger, or otherwise on the edge of a pond. The children are brought by their parents who, between them, represent the number seven. They are bathed, their hair shaved off and thrown into the river, while the father says: "Mother Faro, your sons are born, here is their hair." (1) He then gives the cotton band,

1. *Ba faro i wolo dew kunsi ye nin ye.*

dyala, which was worn by the mother to the officiant who encircles the child's forehead with it while saying: "These two people are older than I am; let the nyama of the name which is to be given them leave with the *dyala*." (2) Then he gives them a special name. (3)

2. *Nin ma fla ka koro u ma, u čua dali nyama ka ta fini disa few dyala fę.*

[177] 3. Séni and Sinè for boys; Bintou and Wasa for girls. Among the Islamized Bambara this custom is also respected; the names given are always Alasan and Fouséni. This is most likely a distortion of the Arab names given to twins in Morocco.

845 851 The next day, carrying one of the children and accompanied by a woman in charge of the other, the mother goes begging for millet or cotton in the village. She holds two identical spoon gourds in her hands. The gifts, equal in weight and quality, symbolize the twins; they are placed on the spoons. Then crossing her hands, the woman pours them into the basket in which she carries the gifts (4).

4. All the symbolism of gifts made to twins, like that of the double pot (see below), confirms observations made in the Sudan on the relationships between gifts and trade. On this subject, see M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, pp. 234 ff. It is interesting to note here that

845 each twin is the *dya* of the other and that
851 this term means "shadow of the body," "spiritual double," as well as "balance." To trade is *dyago*.

845 Three or four days after the name-giving ceremony, depending on
301 their sex, the twins are given bracelets of white metal representing
[531] their *dya*. Geometrical symbols of the universe, the sky and the earth, are engraved on each of these (1). The opening of the bracelet represents that of the incomplete terrestrial world. When the twins die
[766] they will be buried with the bracelets closed over their arms or their ankles to signify that they have penetrated a complete and closed world. Formerly the sacrifices to Faro were carried out with ornaments
845 borrowed from a twin. The person making the sacrifice presented
301 them to the /87/ river while saying: "The iron of the twins is witness
782 to the sacrifice offered to Faro." (2) After the ceremony, everyone gave white kola nuts to the twin; the interested party then went to the village square and waved in the air his arms bedecked with ornaments to spread to the four cardinal points Faro's beneficial *nyama* acquired in the course of the sacrifice. In certain areas twins wear a pendant in the shape of double slave fetters, called *dyõ neke*, "irons of the captive," or an amulet called *sinzin*, "support," composed of a little piece of wood carved in the shape of a double cup and preferably made by a Bozo. A man who has had twins three times
[778] must acquire a double pot which is always kept full of water and which becomes the object of an annual sacrifice (3).

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1. This figure is formed by a rectangle divided into two equal superposed squares, including a multiplication sign in the lower square to represent the earth, and an open v in the upper square to represent the sky.

2. *Flani neke ye ma šere ye faro sõni la.*

3. See p. 124, n. 1.

845 Up to the time they are twelve, the children bathe themselves preferably in the Niger. They supposedly can walk on water and never run the risk of drowning.

The twins do not become separated from each other any more than
the *dya* is separated from the living being to which it is attached.
They wear the same clothes and eat the same food simultaneously.
Formerly male twins married the same woman. If one of them dies
845 at an early age, the blacksmith carves a small wooden doll called
778 *flanitokele*, which takes the name of the deceased and which the
mother puts on the mat next to the living child. The latter takes this
doll with him at the time of his circumcision and keeps it during the
period of his seclusion in order to bring it back to the parental home
whence it is never removed. When he marries, he sticks the doll
into the earth along with another piece of wood symbolizing the wife
of the deceased. Since twins are in a sense a living replica of Faro,
none can bother them without showing disrespect to him. On the other
hand, they are the object of attention and precaution on the part of
their family as well as their neighbors. Their presence is always
beneficial. Considered invulnerable, twins used to march ahead of
[728] troups in times of war and would serve as inviolable intermediaries
between the warring parties during truce.

The Hermaphrodite

826 The hermaphrodite, being both male and female, is to all extent and purpose his own twin. Consequently, he has no *dya* (1).

[825
304] 1. The hyena is considered a hermaphrodite; it can engender or conceive, depending on its size and strength: "the stronger impregnating the weaker." A tattooing system is based upon this belief.

/88/ The Albino

[143] Albinos of light or reddish skin and red hair are called *gombele* or *yepege*, this latter term being reserved for those who show the most accentuated characteristics.

826 The albino is supposedly born of sexual relations which took place
833 in the middle of the day when the sun is in the *koblenkaba*, sky of

826 Faro's wrath—a fact which constitutes a serious breaking of taboo.
[833] The consequence of this is to coalesce in the maternal womb the twins
originally granted to the woman by Faro and to decolorize the skin
of the being thus formed. Because of this fact, the albino, the
embodiment of twins, does not inherit the spiritual princples of a de-
ceased person and is also a new being given to men by Faro. But the
impurity he has acquired increases tenfold his tere and his wanzo,
which are so active that the circumciser must sacrifice on his own
[304] personal altars before performing the operation. From the ambivalence
of the albino, originally of the same essence as Faro but fallen be-
cause of the impurity transmitted by his parents, stem various customs
and representations. (1).

> 1. This ambivalence is also at the root of the belief that the albino is a being formerly provided with wings and able to fly (see p. 68, a quality he lost after his contact with the impure soil.

826 718 His body is believed to be endowed with special powers. The person who owns his skull will have a numerous family and prosperity; his hair brings wealth; the marrow of his bones provides gold and copper. If he is made to sit at a place where bones are buried, whatever one asks for is granted. His excrements, mixed with seed, have the effect of increasing the harvest for the year.

826 782 Because of the value attributed to the albino he is a choice victim for the sacrifices to Faro. His nyama is such that he can be sacrificed without prayer, the act itself constituting an efficacious invocation. Lacking living albinos, men often tried to appropriate the remains of a buried body.

/89/ Chapter 4

SACRIFICE AND THE ALTAR

782 To call upon spiritual forces and to influence them, the Bambara use prayer, offering, and sacrifice. They perform oral and manual

782 rites in all places at all times. They pray to the sky, to the cardinal points, and to the spirits; they sacrifice on rocks, on the earth, on trees, in water holes, as well as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries, or located in private or public places. Every circumcised adult, father of a family, or owner of a house and arable land can be a sacrificer whose qualification is underscored by the red stain which sometimes adorns the walls of the main room of his house (1).

1. See pp. 171ff.

To the uninformed observer these rituals cover a great network of apparently unrelated beliefs. But actually it is otherwise. The rituals stimulate definite movements of forces which are integrated with those of the world.

Without trying to give a general picture of the manners, the times, and the places peculiar to Bambara rites, it is nevertheless important to study apart one of the most important mechanisms, namely the blood sacrifice. It constitutes the framework for the rituals and brings into play the principles and elements composing the living being (see preceding chapter), for it must be noted that the first sacrifices stated in the myth were human sacrifices.

A sacrifice takes place when the blood of the victim runs over a substance or an object containing the force of a supernatural power or of an ancestor. The words of the prayer pronounced during the immolation dedicate the victim to the power that comes to nourish itself on the blood according to popular belief. At the same time, they direct the life forces which escape from the body. The soul, ni, is channeled by the altar and will be kept there until resurrection. Its nyama, which gains in power as /90/ the agony is prolonged, is also retained by the altar whose strength it increases. The victim is thus completely emptied of its spiritual principles for "all the nyama are in the blood" (2) which it abandons.

2. Nyama be bi dyoli la.

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826 In all cases, the sacrifice represents an exchange: the sacrificer receives in return a part of the strength of the one whom he supplants (3). The blood is the carrier of an active, dangerous element left on

the altar. At the time men gave the balanza their blood, they would let it dry and then, licking the trunk with their tongue, would reclaim it after it was rid of the element constituting the offering. All their active forces passed into the tree and a substance almost totally lacking in vitality was returned to them.

782 The blood sacrifices which were originally instituted on the trunk of the balanza are actually performed in the most varied sites: earth, trees, ponds, wells, etc. Moreover, as the Bambara developed their technology, they would sacrifice on those objects, utensils, or contrivances which they discovered or invented such as the forge and its tools, the loom, and agricultural implements.

782 The Bambara also have altars which may be classified into three categories:

778 1. The wood stumps called pembele, which represent Pemba. Many heads of families or of religious societies keep one of these (1).

A unique sanctuary at Massala is a pilgrimage center for Bambara from all regions who come in great numbers to take part in the annual sacrifice. Besides pembele, it contains two large pots, da, covered with sacrificial blood, which give the sanctuary its name. It is in this place that ordeals are executed, judicial questions settled, and serious illnesses treated.

2. The altars, made of stones crudely cut and occasionally engraved, have their origin in a mythical stone, issued out of the seventh part of the earth, and situated under the mound where Faro's female twins were born. Having a red color, it was itself a symbol of sacrifice. It divided itself and gave birth to all other sacrificial stones (Fig. 5 and Pl. V. b).

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[171]
3. The mechanism of blood sacrifice among the Bambara is comparable to that observed among the Dogon and described by M. Griaule, "Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice dogon (Soudan Français) /Remarks on the Mechanism of Dogon Sacrifice (French Sudan)/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes. Vol. 10, 1940, pp. 127 ff.

1. See p. 77 for a description of the pembele altars.

782 /91/ Actually the altars from the region of Ségou originate mostly
778 in Toko, a settlement situated to the south of the town where the king's
326 blacksmiths lived. The ancestor of these blacksmiths is buried in the
rocks which border Toko and from which the stones used as altar are

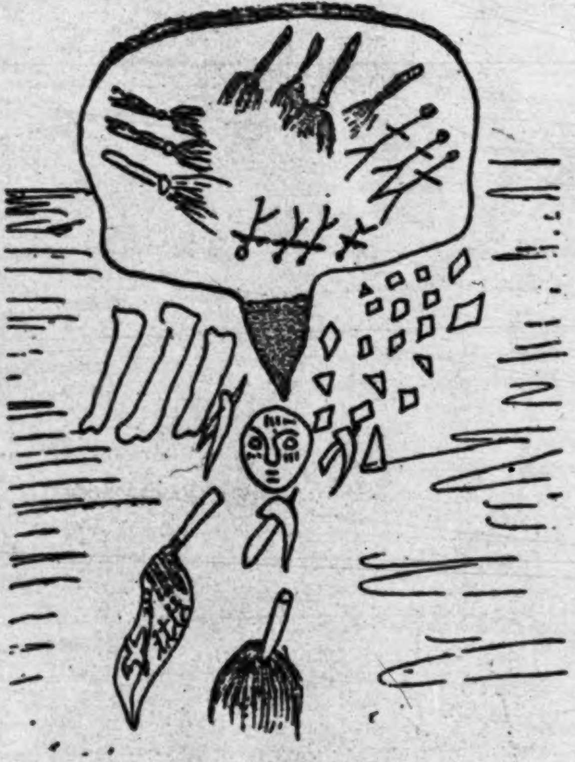

Fig. 5.—Stone altar, fara ba, of Banankoroni, consecrated to an-
[532 cestors. It is stuck into the ground above the skull and bones of
769] an albino, hoes, and a circumcision knife. The ritual drawing
traced during the ceremonies of the renewal of the year represents the torches and the whips of the Kworè, 3 men and 4 women, which recall the number 7, image of the creation (Informant's drawing).

carved. If a village chief wants to obtain one he sends a delegate to Toko. This emissary receives from the blacksmith the stone appropriate to the function of the altar and the quality of the person

782 requesting it. Thus, a black stone is given to those who have broken
778 a /92/ taboo, a stone of two colors to a stranger, and the red stone
[326] "rounded and polished by the ancestors" to those whom one wishes to honor.

The stone altars which are innumerable (both private and public ones) generally represent the ancestors. When they are placed in the fields they receive the sacrifices offered in their name for helping the crops. At the intersection of narrow roads and on the public square, they assure the stability of ancestral customs.

3. The Bambara also sacrifice on manufactured objects which bear the general name of boli (literally, to run) and which are the equivalent of the altars although they are of an entirely different nature than the preceding ones. Their origin is different. To the initiates they originate in the twelfth bangini which gave birth to the day (see pp. 30-31). In the shape of "globules" they were released in space by Faro as he descended to the earth; they were collected by the spirits of the air and of the ground into which some of them penetrated, and were later given to men (1).

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1. The popular belief has it that the eight principal boli of the Bambara were brought back from Mecca by the famous Makanta Djigui, a personage whose name is cited in numerous prayers (particularly in the course of the ceremonies of the Komo).
L. Tauxier attributes this tradition to Islam influence under the reign of Soundiata's successor, Malinké Kankan Moussa, who made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324 (La Religion bambara, p. 287, n. 3).

The name of Makanta Djigui is cited in the device (burudyu) of the Komo: the chiefs of this important society carry their altars each year to the shore of the Niger near the village of Tikko on the spot where the historical canoe which transported him is said to have sunk.

173 178 182 It is possible that this figure played the role of a religious legislator by codifying certain beliefs and founding associations around the boli which, according to qualified informants, existed before his intervention. On this point see also L. Tauxier, La Religion bambara, p. 287, n. 3.

The versions of the voyage of Makanta Djigui, which the natives readily tell, are innumerable. See the Abbé Henry, L'Âme d'un peuple africain: les Bambara /The Soul of an African People: The Bambara/, pp. 131-133: Ch. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta /The Bambara of Ségou and of Kaarta/, p. 170; D. Traore, Makanta Djigui, fondateur de la magie soudanaise /Makanta Djigui, Founder of Sudanese Magic/, pp. 23-25.

We have collected two versions of this episode, which we do not feel useful for presentation in this study.

178 182 The boli, also called nyana, are made with the most diverse materials: hyena tails, peppers, honey, coal, precious metals, parts of the body. Each element has its value, and its use is determined by its place in the categories: the time of its manufacture is also important. But whatever its composition, each boli, whose name expresses the universal movement of things, is a combination of elements representing the parts of the universe (1). /93/ It is,

1. At the present stage of this investigation the classification by categories of materials or elements composing the Bambara universe has only been outlined. It is only after the completion of this study that the exact role given the elements composing the boli will become clear and that the problem of the origin of these altars can be considered.

778 therefore, the symbol of the universe and the receptacle of the forces
182 which animate it. These forces, already very powerful at the time the *boli* is made, are constantly kept up, increased by the additions received in the course of the blood sacrifices of which the *boli* is the object. It becomes a concentration of forces, which gives back in proportion to that which it receives and of which the owner is the first beneficiary.

A *boli* is also an intermediate agent, permitting one to reach a supernatural power—an ancestor or a living being who impregnates it with strength by coming to consume the offering over it. Through the spilled blood, this strength reenters the victim as well as the sacrificer if he partakes of it.

Therefore a *boli* contains:

A part of the soul (*ni*) and the force (*nyama*) of the being to whom it is consecrated.

The *ni* and the *nyama* of the victims offered to it.

The *nyama* of individuals who, having broken the taboos dictated by the divinity, have died as a result.

The Bambara differentiate two kinds of *boli*: the most numerous, whose power is relatively benign, called *soni* (literally, to give little); and those which contrariwise are charged with powerful, truly dangerous forces, called *saraka* (1). The latter, by their power alone, supposedly kill the victims offered them without making it necessary to cut the victim's throat. It suffices to present to them the victims while reciting an appropriate prayer to make the victims die. It is then said that the "*boli* has made the blood come out" and this death is equivalent to a blood sacrifice (2). These *boli* also attack those whom a person has vowed to persecute.

It is said that a *boli* "is hot and has a dry throat" and that is why occasionally the ritual includes collecting the blood in a gourd in which [the *boli*] is allowed to soak.

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1. The *čuafebla* is a *soni*; the *mbe ndyugu ka* is a *saraka* (see pp. 175 and 176).

2. If the victim does not die fast enough, the person offering sacrifice may "insult" the altar to force it to act.

778 782 Some *boli* are individual, sometimes inherited from an ancestor and consecrated to their owner whose strength they maintain. Others are collective and consecrated to supernatural powers which protect the life of the community.

778 782 784 The taboos relating to beings whose soul "impregnates" the *boli* and to the elements which compose them are decreed at the time /94/ of their making. They must be scrupulously respected by those responsible and by those officiating. The *boli* are generally placed in a sheltered spot either in sanctuaries or in an isolated room of the house, which no one enters without the permission of those responsible. This is done in order to avoid the dangers resulting from broken taboos which would affect the integrity of the *boli* as well as that of its owners. The handling of the *boli*, dangerous as it is, is restricted to priests, to the head of the family, or to the owner.

782 Victims most commonly offered on all altars are domestic animals such as fowl, cattle, sheep, and goats. However, on the altars of hunters and those of the uncircumcised, only wild animals are immolated.

The color of the victim is determined by the quality of the being to which it is consecrated as well as by the altar itself. Animals of [822] a red color are generally killed on the *boli* of religious societies, thereby increasing the *nyama* which they contain. White, the symbol of light and purity, is reserved for Faro.

782 787 The death of the victim is used as an occasion for divination. The throat is cut in such a way as to prolong the death struggle so that the officiating person may interpret the position of the body. The cutting process is followed by eating which has the function of communion. Furthermore, certain parts of the body (the liver) are left on the altar; others such as the jawbone, feathers, and hair are kept as tokens by the person offering the sacrifice.

782 The ritual is usually accompanied by offerings of boiled millet as "refreshment," since the blood is given to the altar as a nourishment. Kola nuts, chosen for their shape and color, are divided into two portions: the officiating person chews one half and spits it out onto the altar before eating the other half.

In former times, human sacrifice was also practiced. These took place in serious cases involving the kingdom, the king, or the chiefs. The usual victim was the albino.

782 As an example we will summarize below the ritual killing of albinos as it was practiced under the royalty. This underlines the mystical value of the victim and is an excellent example of the mechanism inherent in sacrifice; it brings out the ritual value of the details on each of which the Bambara place particular emphasis. Finally, it confirms the value and symbolism of different parts of the body as described in the preceding chapter.

782 826 /95/ The kings of Ségou were formerly provided with albinos by a man from the village of Pelengena who kept them prisoners and set them aside for this purpose. But this man exploited them by shaving their hair and selling it to the chiefs of neighboring villages as symbols of the men whom, sooner or later, they could reckon to have under their domination. The chief, having counted his subjects, war prisoners held as slaves as well as captives received as tribute, would prepare as many small sticks as there were men; then he would mix up these sticks with the hair and bury them all in the wall over the sill of the entrance to his home. The hair is supposed to represent beforehand an increase in the subjects of his domain and to help bring in the taxes.

But the albinos themselves were kept for the king who sacrificed them to Faro in cases involving the affairs of the kingdom.

1. When the king found himself in difficulties of an administrative nature, the victim was cut in half through the middle of the body at the level of the abdomen by means of a rope of the da fiber (1): his cries, gestures, and excrement were considered the vehicles of a nyama which "would eliminate the difficulty encountered by the king." No one was supposed to hear his cries which were not intended for human ears but for Faro, to whom suffering was also due. The king, above all, should not hear the screams under penalty of failing in his enterprise, and yet he had to be present at the torture and watch it with complete detachment.

[283 824]

The lower half of the victim's body was Faro's due. It was carried to the Niger by three men if the victim was a male, or by four if it was a female. One of them carried the body on his head.

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(1) Hibiscus. The nyama fiber was considered impure and could not be used for the albino.

782 826 While keeping his eyes and his left hand closed, he walked without touching the ground with his toes in order to respect "the soul of that which he carried (1). At the edge of the river, the joints were broken, the marrow extracted and poured into the water. After placing their toes on the body, to "give a part of their soul to Faro," the men deposited it gently in the river, into which it sank while they loudly proclaimed the reason for their action. When they returned to their master, they brought him the spirit's gratitude and a little water from the river, which was poured over the royal seat (2).

1. To touch the ground with one's toes amounted to putting the soul of the victim's body in contact with the earth's impurity (see p. 102).

2. This offering was called *nasi*, "well-being."

/96/ The upper part of the victim's body was the king's and used for the needs of the state. The *tõdyõ* first blew into the mouth of the tortured victim so that the "air, in coming out, would take all his words to Faro." Then they buried his head under the king's throne and danced to the rhythm of drums.

[726 789] In case of war, the blood which had spilled during the sacrifice was collected by the *tõdyõ* and dried in the sun; then the residue was carried away and before the assault was thrown in the direction of the town to be attacked. The king who advanced with his army found, according to the formula, "his sacrifice before him" (*saraka bla ñe*).

782 826 789 2. In case the king was short of funds, the killing took place towards the west and was performed by sticking a bamboo stick into the throat of the victim so that blood would run over the cowrie shells which the king had earned himself "with his own sweat." Thus consecrated, the cowries "attracted gold, silver, and copper to the royal treasury."

The head was placed under the throne. The chest and lungs were dried, reduced to powder, and preserved in a bag which the king kept. When he received his tax-payers, he smeared his face and mouth with this powder, thus forcing the visitor to give. He rubbed his body with it before going to war, causing the warriors to say:

782 "To see the king is to see gold" (1).
826
789 1. *Fama* *yele* *ye* *sanu* *yele* *ye*.

He gave some of it to his wives and children who put it in their drinks in order "to inherit his place and his goods." This powder was offered at each sacrifice to Faro in order to fertilize the kingdom.

782 3. When a family was plagued by numerous deaths, they asked
the king to authorize the sacrifice of an albino whom he furnished
826 himself. The victim's tongue was dried, pounded to powder, seasoned
266 with pepper, and eaten by the father of the family to permit him to
"reclaim the words and the nyama of the deceased." The nose was
swallowed by the mother so that she might "reclaim the breath of the
dead children." The father then ate the broiled eyes to "preserve
lost sights." The dried ears were hung above the sill of the entrance
"so that death, upon hearing the funeral wails, might not return."
The skull was retained as a token and buried in the courtyard; a
wooden stick marked the burial place. The rest of the body was thrown
into the Niger, "for an ordinary man does not have the right to keep
that which is reserved for the king."

782 If the king permitted it, chiefs of the important villages /97/ also
826 placed the body of an albino under their seats "in order that their
622 authority be solid and enduring" (2).

2. Sometimes the sum total of the taxes raised in a village were given the parents of an albino in exchange for the child. Those who could not obtain a victim used an animal bone as a substitute and performed the ritual as though it were an albino. Regarding the chief's seat, see p. 178.

782 In certain serious cases, the albino was sacrificed on the altar of
826 Komo. This sacrifice was accomplished in silence for "a prayer unknown to the person sacrificing is in the blood of the albino" who is powerful enough to act without words.

/98/ Chapter 5

TECHNOLOGY

773 The Bambara who are conscious of the evolution of their civilization trace it far back in time. The history of their origin as well as the feats and exploits of their most distant ancestors are not only inscribed in their memories but also in present day ceremonies and often in the material products of the culture, secular as well as religious.

The invention and evolution of technology, in the course of which the spiritual and the material, revelation and human effort, all work together, give rise to legends and representations which are characteristic of Bambara psychology (1).

> 1. What we relate here concerning the origin of technology is exclusively a summary of what the natives tell. The context, in the form of practical daily rituals, of which the forge is the best example, is sufficient and requires no commentary.

According to Bambara thought, all technology is an atonement taught man by Faro, a palliative to cosmic disorder, generally induced by a broken taboo. Famine, war, epidemics, misery, and death, which such disorders bring about, are compensated for —as far as possible—by new technologies which are revealed as needs arise. All these exist potentially in the wooden club used to smash and beat the fiber, which was the first raw material used (2).

> [171] 2. The wooden club is a duplicate of the mythical blacksmith's hammer which contained the techniques and the cultivable grains (see p. 53, n. 1). The same origin of technology is given by the Dogon, see Dieu d'Eau, p. 84.

773 829 The first works were made by "primitive men, " ancestors of the Bambara of whom the following description is given:

773
829 "They were covered with shaggy body hair, beard and hair; their long nails resembled claws; their teeth resembled fangs. They knew no language and had no clothing to protect themselves from bad weather; they lived in holes dug in the /99/ ground or in habitable natural caves, at the bottom of which they slept and kept their prey. To defend themselves against wild animals, they placed wooden spikes and pointed rocks at the entrance of these quarters. These deep holes communicated with each other and together formed regular underground villages" (Fig. 6) (1).

[332]

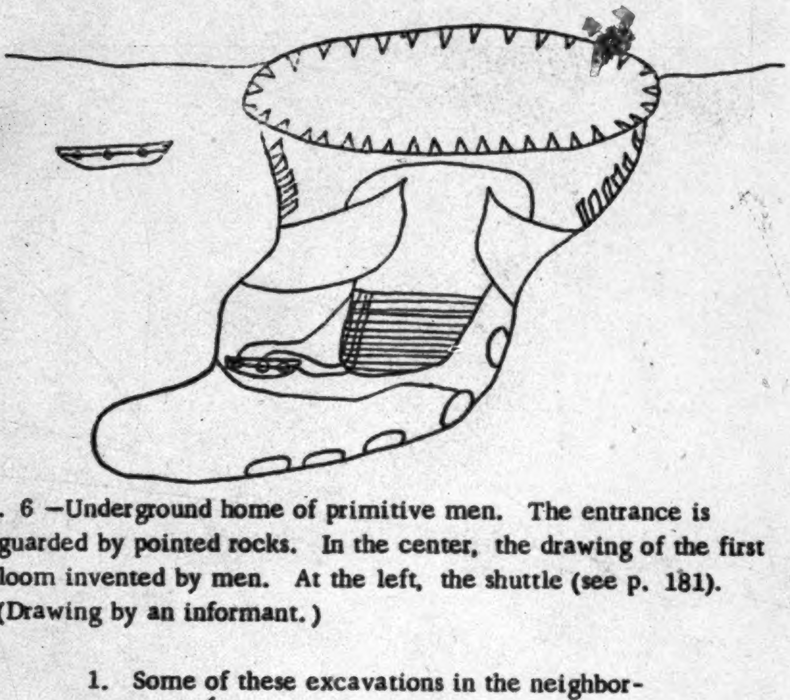

Fig. 6 —Underground home of primitive men. The entrance is guarded by pointed rocks. In the center, the drawing of the first loom invented by men. At the left, the shuttle (see p. 181). (Drawing by an informant.)

[172] 1. Some of these excavations in the neighborhood of Ségou, which may still be visited today, are venerated by the Bambara as ancestral homes.

Since they did not know language these men communicated by means of head gestures, movements of the feet and hands, and grunts. When a difference arose between them, before using their hands they drew back their lips and measured their long canines to determine who the winner would be. "Later they were given language, but

773 829 knowing its power, men at first used it sparingly. A question was never discussed twice. If a request was reiterated, after an objection, the party requested would bow and agree at the risk and peril of the person making the request."

Men first lived by gathering and later by fishing and hunting without tools, using only /100/ hands to seize their prey, and nails and teeth to tear and cut it. Gradually this primitive life changed; technologies developed one by one according to a chronology which the present Bambara still remember.

773 The first raw material used, according to a tradition which is not confined to the Bambara alone, was the fiber of the nyama tree (1)

[829] 1. Bauhinia reticulata (in the north), Bauhinia Thonningii (in the south).

(nyama fu) out of which were woven the first fishing nets, the first sling, and the first loincloth (2).

[17] 2. The Dogon also mention this fiber as the first material used by men. With them as with the Bambara, it has a ritual function. See M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau, p. 26.

When they began to work the soil, they developed a set of primitive wooden tools. At the same time, they invented a throwing weapon made of the same material. Wood remained in use for a long time; the invention of weaving and crude pottery goes back to this period. Later, they came to know stone tools, iron, and the forge. The art of house building, about which no myth has been gathered until now, seems to have developed much later, after the discovery of iron (3).

3. Certain parts of the investigation concerning technology have been summarized by the author in "l'Arme et l'outil chez les anciens Bambara /Weapons and Tools among the Ancient Bambara/, " Africa, Vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 105-111.

The study of this assemblage of tools and of their ritual use is most suggestive because they are a first indication of technological

773 evolution. They also indicate different stages in the development of the forms. These may be observed in certain museums of arts and crafts which, in some villages, are the sanctuaries where ancestral material is kept. Finally, in numerous ceremonies and in the education of the young, they constitute precious milestones in the history of the Bambara people.

Fishing and Hunting

773 226 According to tradition, the fishing net was the first instrument of technology taught men, and fish constituted the primeval food.

"One day, four women went to the shore of the Niger to collect sand which they used for bedding and which also served as food since they no longer received any from the sky. As they advanced, the sand drew back so that they soon found themselves very far from their usual stopping place. They /101/ then wished to return, but Faro prevented them from doing so and asked them to work for him, promising them a precious gift in return. They "swept up the spirit's excrements" for seven days; on the eighth day, "the words began with Faro." He showed them two fishing nets, *dyo*, and explained to them their manufacture and use. One had very fine loops, *dyonyemise* (literally, net of the thin eyes), and the other larger loops, *dyonyekumba* (literally, net with big eyes). Both were made of the fiber of the 825 *nyama* tree. The first was reserved for *tneni* (1) fishing, called "Faro's excrements," and the second for the capture of larger fish such as sheatfish, gurnard, and catfish.

"For seven days the women were taught by the spirit and his captive; on the eighth day they were liberated. Seven days after these events they began to fish and to nourish themselves with fish.

"But they soon abused the gift they had received. Taking turns day and night, and fishing without interruption at the very place of the revelation, they taxed the spirit's patience. The latter appeared to them above the water, holding his girl twins in his arms; he complained of their harshness, their stupidity, and the weariness they caused him. Reclaiming the secret he had given them, he indicated to them that fishing would hereafter be a man's job and that they would only have the right to sell the fish.

1. *Alestes nigrinileatus.*

173 226 "Despite their tears, the spirit gave the nets to three men who were present and repeated his teaching. The women left the water's edge while the men turned their new knowledge to account. But at the end of a few days the women became hungry; they went to ask for fish which for seven days was denied them. They then united with the fishermen and the Bozo people were the issue of these first marriages."

At first, fishing was reserved for the Bozo people alone and it was only later that the Bambara learned from the Bozo how to make and manage the fishing nets as well as how to carry out the numerous rites centered around them.

173 226 411 The Bambara practiced hunting and gathering before becoming farmers. It is interesting to compare the fishing net with the sling (ndõfere) now mostly used by children. One of its models (Fig. 7) is described as having been the most ancient of their weapons of the hunt and war. The central portion of this sling which in reality had the shape of a net /102/ (dyoba, literally, big net) woven from nyama fibers and similar to the one used by fishermen, was drawn out into two thongs. The right one (kinintegere, literally, tegere of the right) ended in a sort of a bouquet of wooden lamellae (tegere), making it easier to hold. The left one (missema, literally, little thing) or numan (literally, left) was free. The man would hold the weapon by both ends, putting stones in the net and "blowing on the right thong to give breath" to the sling. Placing his left foot forward, would twirl it rapidly and let go the left thong, thus releasing the projectiles.

[532]

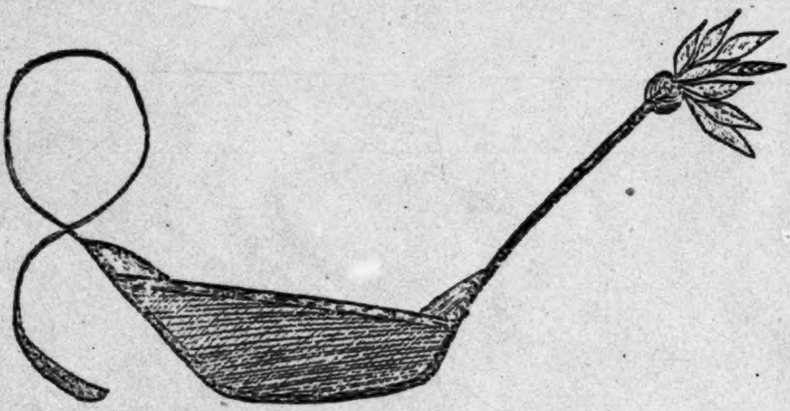

Fig. 7 — Sling (ndõfere) of the ancient Bambara (Drawing by an informant).

113 224 411 Propitiatory sacrifices were offered on the wooden lamellae and the blood ran along the thong into the net. In addition, the hunter would saturate his weapon with the blood of wounded or killed animals to give his contrivance the victims' strength and to increase his own skill.

The ndõfere was used for a long time as a military weapon.

Weaving

113 286 The invention of weaving is linked to the discovery of cotton cultivation. The latter appeared long before that of millet at a time when the only known tools were those of wood used to scratch /103/ the earth at the base of the wild grasses with which men nourished themselves (1).

The myth mentions simultaneously the appearance of cotton and the invention of spindles and shuttle; it does not mention the loom which appeared later. The tale of the manufacture of the first clothing also includes details on dyeing which seems to have been known at a very early date.

When the men returned from the bush where they had been cultivating the norolã sise (commonly known as cram-cram) and the narakata, a kind of couch grass which provided them with edible seeds, they would often abandon their wooden hoes at the crossroads in honor of the Soba spirit.

One day an old man who used to pass nearby was summoned by the spirit, saying: "To all of you who leave your hoes as you pass by, I wish to give something to hide your nakedness; but I will do it if you offer me a sacrifice."

The old man reported this incident to the men of his generation, who decided to sacrifice an albino at the crossroads. The spirit then told them to take the seed which they would find at the intersection of the roads and taught them how to sow and harvest it.

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[171] 1. See p. 154. The Dogon admit the same priority of weaving over cultivation of cereal grains. See M. Griaule. *Dieu d'eau*, pp. 31ff.

773 286 "This," he said, "will be useful to you later as clothing." Men first made skirts of leaves and fibers which they used as loincloth. Then they sent their women to sing and give thanks to the spirit. When they had sown and harvested, they placed the cotton on the crossroads as a gesture of homage (1). The spirit then taught the wife of a farmer, who used to come and greet him everyday at noon. One day she saw at the crossroads a bird whose name means "little bird who spins the cotton of God" (ala ka kwori parata kono ni). It held white fibers in its beak, pulled them out with its feet, and rolled the thread thus obtained around the body with its wings. "Watch the bird," said the spirit. "In this way he spins and weaves in the sky in order to protect his eggs. Cotton should be used in this way. Your death is near. Begin work from tomorrow on this little stick," he added, pointing to a spindle, "and teach the women of your family and the children."

The woman first spun awkwardly and went down to the river to show Faro her work and to ask for help. A fish came out of the water and gave her a spindle whorl in the shape of a ball, showed her how to adapt it to the spindle, and explained to her its use and divine origin. It announced to her that hereafter similar spindle whorl would fall from the sky with the rain for the women who spun cotton.

/104/ Having resumed her work with this new tool the woman was successful in it and taught her companions. They then threw their first threads into the Niger as an offering to the spirit so that the secret might not be lost. All artisans did the same with their first piece of work (2).

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1. This custom is still observed today.

[782] 2. Every first piece of work is thrown into the river as an offering to Faro. It is a guarantee for the artisan that his skill will be retained and that his technique will improve. Actually the young spinners of Ségou throw their first spindle into the river. In addition, the parata bird which taught weaving is captured, its wings and feet are roasted, and the powder is given to whoever begins the appreticeship so that it may be over rapidly.

773 Seventeen days after the apprenticeship the old woman died.

286 Her companions continued to spin but since they did not work on wood (1), they had to ask the men to carve spindles, thus revealing their secret.

Some time after this the spirit sent a spider to weave its web at the opening of one of the underground holes used for habitation (see Fig. 6), where lived a man called Bambou Diara. The latter watched the insect and they called in his friend, Kari Mariko. They wished to imitate the web by using the spider's thread which, however, proved too fragile to work with. They then asked the women for their cotton threads. Holding a twig of straw on which he had wound the thread, and having secured the warp, as had the insect, to the two rocks protecting the entrance, Bambou imitated the spider and made a kind of round fan, shaped like the web with coarse loops. When he had woven two, he joined them with a rope made of nyama bark, thus obtaining the first loincloth (mbogo nimba).

Kari Mariko had watched the work and had noticed the difficulty with which his friend threaded the woof through the warp. He got the idea of winding the thread on a thin stick more resistant than the straw and of placing this in a stone trough which would slide easily between the elements of the warp. This was the first shuttle (kuruni). He wound the thread on it in three bobbins, the symbol of masculinity, thus consecrating weaving as man's work. The threads were then stretched horizontally and the shuttle was used vertically, thus cutting across the warp each time it went up or down (Fig. 6).

All came to see the work of the two artisans and named the village where they lived the "village of intelligence, hakilidugu." They learned from them the art of weaving and today the names of the two friends are still invoked over the plate of food which each apprentice must eat before beginning his instruction.

Following the breaking of a taboo in the course of a fishing expedition on the river, the spindle whorls ceased to fall from the sky. Since then, fishermen /105/ produce them by mixing clay with karite oil and drying them in the sun.

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[412] 1. Except for cooking, a woman never uses a knife, an object reserved for men.

173 286 [785] The loom was invented later. The positions of the warp and woof and the practice of breaks and knots were modified. The loom was formerly the object of nocturnal human sacrifices whereas the shuttle received lesser sacrifices in the day time (1).

1. At present, looms are set in the ground above a piece of pottery, the bottom of which is pierced before the pot is buried.

The stone on which women clean the cotton, kaba, represents the sky and recalls the divine origin of cotton and of the technology relating to it.

Clothing

291 Clothing which has intimate contact with the human body is a part of the person wearing it. On the other hand, the material of which it is made, and the various elements which compose it and which are associated with one or another aspect of Bambara metaphysics, exercise an influence on the wearer. The choice of clothing is rarely a matter of chance or individual taste and the various manifestations of social or religious life usually obligate people to wear appropriate clothing, the symbolism of which is linked to the action or circumstance under consideration. The role of the garment appears as early as infancy: a newborn wears around his loins a cotton thread, dyura dyuru, which is both a protection (for it "solidifies his spinal column") and a foreshadowing of what he will wear later. When he reaches the required age, a family reunion takes place on the day he is dressed for the first time. Before this, it is necessary for him to have dreamed of his first garment and to have talked to his mother of this dream; she then begins to spin the necessary cotton. Before dressing, the initiate proceeds with an ablution called mayadyi (literally, water of the person's action) in water taken from the Niger or from a pond of Faro's. The dressed child is told "that he is now a man and may become a member of the ndomo (2)"; then his kinsfolk tease

2. Society of the uncircumcised (see p. 222).

291 him and joke with him, indicating by semi-ritual jokes his accession to a new status.

291 Men's first garment was the skirt of nyama fibers (Fig. 8, A). The
173 bark was beaten and prepared by means of a club, a wooden club,
gosilande or kuruninde, which is /106/ supposed "to contain potentially
all human technology invented as the need arose." It is said of this
club that it is "the mold of perfection and the place from which all
useful things issue." The club was also originally a primitive instrument of rhythm (1); the hammering of blows "chased away the evil
[755] sounds emitted by Téliko at the time of his revolt." Even today, a
deafmute is seated near the gosilande which is prayed to so that he
may be rid of his infirmity. The clothing of a woman in labor, in
[844] order to purify it, is beaten with the gosilande at the same time the
infant utters its first cry. Dyed clothing is beaten not only to make
the color penetrate, but also to chase out any impurity.

When they first learned about cotton, and after the invention of weaving, the Bambara made garments which are in disuse today but of which they still make specimens for ritual purposes. In fact, with the exception of the loincloth, these ancient garments are worn only during religious ceremonies and their principal function is to represent the ancestors who were their progenitors.

291 The first garment woven was an imitation of the fiber skirt. The
173 men made loincloth (mboko nimba) still worn today by the uncir-
386 cumcised and dyed it yellow, wolo (2) (Fig. 8, B), a color which represents that which a certain disease gives to the black's skin,

[783] 1. kow dyele bwo yoro. On certain occasion when the Komo masks are brought out, the chief carries on his head the gosilande which represents the universe. Certain collective purifications are also executed with this instrument at the crossroads (see p. 186).

[824] 2. This dye is made with the leaves of the ngalama (Angeissus leiocarpus), which are boiled, dried, and pulverized. The powder is put in water.

291 773 386 which they got rid of by means of this dye. A live swallow was immersed in the liquid, which was obtained by soaking the leaves and to which was mixed ground charcoal, and later was released, thus consecrating the dye into which the loincloth was soaked.

291 773 The next garment was made of two strips, dyo kama (literally, shoulder nets), which were hooked on to each arm. The strip on the right arm, representing male, was attached by three thin straps (male number). The other was attached by four straps, four and left being female. The wearer would lie down over the strip on the right side

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[787]

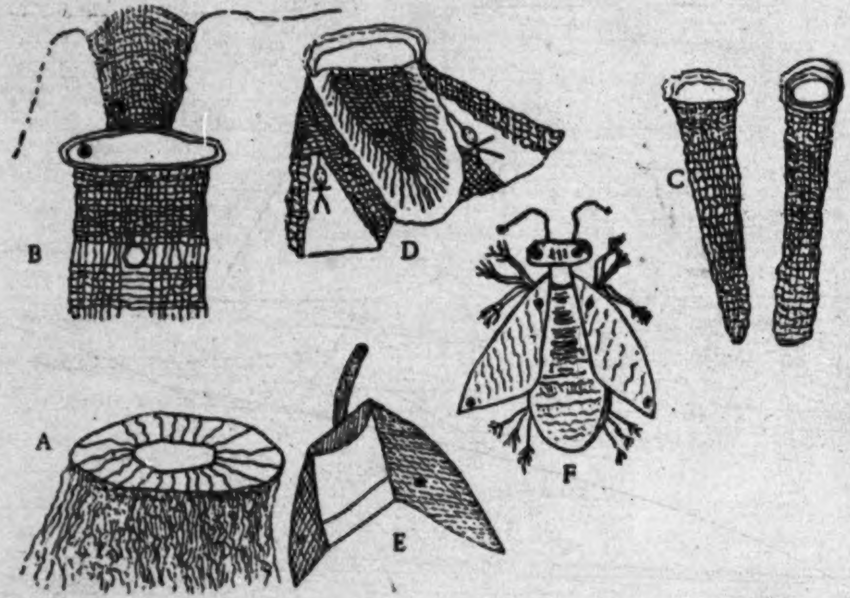

Fig. 8 – Ancient Clothing of the Bambara.
(A) The skirt of nyama fibers; (B) the loincloth; (C) the "shoulder nets"; (D) the tunic; (E) the bonnet are made of dyed and woven cotton threads. (F) the dung beetle, an insect which plays a part in geomancy. (Drawing by an informant).

and would cover himself with that on the left (Fig. 8, C).

Next, men made a kind of short tunic, wǫlǫ kama (literally, partridge wings), which was dyed red (Fig. 8, D). At the top of the openings where the arms passed were suspended /107/ two little figures (mani) carved out of wood. These represented the souls of the wearer, "took their life from the veins, and gave their strength to the

291 773 arms on which they rested." The center of the garment represented the chest, the liver, and the heart of the wearer; the horizontal threads the veins and arteries. The supporting collar, made of three bark fibers of the da tree, was "the individual's double during his sleep." Sweat was the offering made to this garment. In the cold season it was replaced by salt. . The first time a man wore this garment he would pray: "Garment, we wear you in the name of our old ancestors and in honor of those who created you."

The ancestors drawn on the sanctuaries and the granaries are all equipped with caps, banfla, which they wore in olden times (Fig. 8, E). At the top were affixed a wooden picket and a hyena tail, through which the sky gave its strength to man who in return /108/ would send his "through the wind." The cap (čema), made of strips of yellow dyed cotton, had wings (bamadae), symbol of the ears: the lines on the right wing assured numerous offspring and those on the left, a secure and righteous life. The wings also recall those of the swallow, the water spirit's messenger entrusted with carrying into the womb, at the moment of sexual union, the drop of blood containing the child's life and soul. The two indigo dyed spots on each wing are the symbol of this womb.

The cap as a whole (farofla) was the "link maintaining the life of man," who is himself represented by the line which encircles the cap. It protected him against cold, disaster, and death. It was also the symbol of Faro's home and power. When he received it, the wearer would say: "Wing of the cap, cap, son of Faro, I have drawn you with strength. Oh, swallow" (1).

1. Bamade, bonza, farode, ni be ke ola ni barikaye, nanale. The primitive clothes described above were observed by an informant at Bougoula and are presented to the postulants at the moment of their initiation.

After the invention of the loom, clothes were no longer made piece by piece. Bands of cotton made by weavers were used, cut up, fitted, and sewn—a technique still observed today throughout the Sudan.

291 773 531 There exists a "science of the bands," finew tno or finew dongo, which is familiar to all those who wear the traditional clothes. It

291 rests upon the knowledge of the symbolism of colors, drawings, and
773 numbers. The bands are numerous and each one represents one aspect
531 of metaphysics, one fragment of the myth. Thus, the story of Mousso Koroni is told in four successive bands (Pl. III, from 5 to 8). The wearing of the bands depends upon the physical or moral state of the wearer, upon his functions and activities (1).

1. We give below the description of a certain number of these bands, chosen from the ones most representative; we intend to publish a complete study of this aspect of a technique most revealing of Sudanese psychology.

291 The white band, finin muku dye, represents Faro, being as white
773 and luminous as the sky and the rays of the sun. White denotes wis-
531 dom and purity of the spirit, the purity of blood. The one who ap-
122 pears in public thus dressed is respected because he affirms thereby his desire to follow religious rules. It is also the color of offerings made to the spirit. A piece of white cloth is sometimes hung over the door of a home where people have just /109/ made a sacrifice. A sick man throws three white bands into the river, or gives them to a person poorer than himself. A white cloth, worn over a man's shoulder, "strengthens his nerves and articulations." At nightfall every evening, all the children put on a tunic of this color. Thus, despite the darkness, they are "in Faro's light" and will recognize each other in times to come as the children of one father, one family, one blood. The marriage veil is made up of eleven bands each measuring eleven cubits; these are not sewn together but rather basted in spirals. Thus dressed, the woman goes in the night to her future husband's village, in the luminous word of Faro and surrounded by the twenty-two elements of creation, the eleven spirals intersecting each other on the right and left. A dead person is also dressed in white: trousers with six strips representing man and his dya, and a hat with three bands. He is rolled up in a blanket of the same color and visitors place upon the corpse pieces of white cloth or cowrie shells. The whole signifies good will, sincerity, and devotion toward Faro of the deceased who must be "white under the earth" if he has not broken any taboos.

The opposite of white is indigo, konofi, which symbolizes darkness and impurity and which is worn in most cases where the spirit's

291 activity is not involved. Nevertheless, a woman puts on an indigo
773 loincloth the day she resumes sexual relations with her husband after
822 the end of her menses; she retains it until pregnancy. When she is sure
531 of her condition, she puts the loincloth in the sun to purify it and will
place the newborn child in it to remind him later that he owes his
[764 life to his parents. A dead person who has broken a taboo is buried
in an indigo shroud, the only reminder of light being a white cotton
784] thread which is placed on the corpse as an expression of apology and
forgiveness. Since indigo is taboo in most of Faro's sacred places, no
one wears it during sacrifices or religious ceremonies.

White and indigo complement each other. To twist a white and
[789] an indigo thread together to make a string used for holding an amulet
is to "roll together happiness and unhappiness, as in life."

The dye wolo is the color of yellow copper. It is in this color
that the newly circumcised are dressed after the operation and until
they are healed. Red, mbegu, is the color of copper and of blood.
Hunters who wear a tunic of mbegu are "covered with a garment of
blood." The band kayo (Pl. III, a, 1), in which are found these two
colors, indigo and white, reproduces the rainbow: the white intervals
are symbols of the word and of purity. /110/ A person making a
sacrifice sews a piece of this band on his clothing to indicate that he
is circumcised, that he is a hunter, and that he is truthful in his
actions and words. A band is hung at the gate of the northern entry
to the village in order to protect its inhabitants from dangers coming
from outside. A man wears it when he has been ill or has suffered
serious financial or family difficulties. On the altars, on the doorways,
the colors are represented by millet mash, blood, and kola nut extract.
[821 As the rainbow keeps away the rain and dries up water, the kayo
784] strip may not be worn near the river or during sexual intercourse, for
it is Faro's taboo.

The band sirakele (literally, a road) (Pl. III, a, 2) represents Faro's descent from the seventh part of the sky down to the seventh part of the earth, the indigo stripe being the dyi fi, "black water," the spirit's earth seat. When put on the loincloth of a married woman, it expresses her rectitude and the good behavior she intends to maintain towards her husband. When worn by a traveler, it prevents him from losing his way.

291 The buguni (1) (Pl. III, a, 3) is "the sun ray Faro gave to Pemba
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821
531

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1. The word designates the band's place of origin, Bougouni.

291 for his great earthly labors." When clouds form, it is said that Faro
773 "is showing the buguni in the sky" and the diviners advise each person
821 to wear a strip in homage to the spirit and to facilitate the coming of
531 rain. The geomaneer gently rubs the earth, where he is going to draw signs, with a cloth of this design. It is as though he has injected sun, light, and truth into the work he must execute on the impure soil.

291 This band is also called kolõso mako, "necessity of the mixture,"
773 or kami, guinea hen, whose plumage as well as whose fragility the band betokens. In this respect, the buguni symbolizes man's weakness and incompleteness. When placed on a convalescent's clothing,
[155] it signifies that the latter has lost some of his vitality during his illness. Dressed in this fashion, he goes to the Niger and bathes so that Faro might heal him. A man who has suffered severe financial losses also wears the buguni. At the market, in public meetings, he will not be made to pay his share of beer because of the band's silent language which is clearer than words. If a widower remarries, he sews a piece of it on his cap in memory of his first wife. The knife of the person offering a sacrifice is wrapped in the buguni, for it "never has enough blood," also in certain boli which continually crave it.

/111/ In conclusion, the squares of indigo cloth represent the void and darkness; the white ones, fulfillment and light. To wear the buguni signifies hope, the impure or weak man hoping to become pure, strong, and fulfilled.

The bugunimba (literally, large buguni) or nyedẽ (literally, threads of the eye) has the same symbolism. A wound is bandaged with it. A man who has broken a taboo wears a cap of this material; an illegitimate child also wears it. The buguni tyekorole which symbolizes the impurity of Mousso Koroni is used to implore Faro's help in great calamities and for misfortunes without remedy. Thus, the body of a stillborn child is covered with it.

291 The buguni nyama (Pl. III, a, 4), made of twenty-two alternating
773 indigo and white squares, symbolizes creation in its harmonious and
822 orderly entirety. Its separation into two layers recalls the duality of
801 nature, represented by a thin stripe through the middle. A happy man sews an entire strip into his tunic. The man who has difficulties of any kind divides it lengthwise and pins a small piece at the bottom of his garment.

291 The nyeba, "big eye," or koloso tyema, "mixed masculinity"
773 (with femininity), (Pl. III, a, 11) also represents creation, here sym-
822 bolized by the double layer of five indigo and white bands (1). At
801 the same time the cloth also symbolizes the complete man, said to be both masculine and feminine. A newborn child, but never an illegitimate one, is clothed in it.

The band soli (Pl. III, a, 5) represents the good conduct of Mousso
291 Koroni at the beginning of her life as well as her betrayal which
773 brought disorder on earth.

531 In olden times, people who had committed bad deeds were obliged to wear it. Today it is used as the shroud for a child who dies im-
[764] mediately after birth; a strip is sewn to the garment of a recently excised girl or to the loincloth of a woman insured in childbirth. When differences or conflicts arise within a family, a fragment is placed in amulets which the women must then wear.

The wutu nyekorotike (Pl. III, a, 6) pictures the disorderly voyage
[828] of Mousso Koroni, her despair and her madness. This pattern is reserved for insane people in order to warn others of their condition.

The band gombo (Pl. III, a, 7) recalls the pursuit of Mousso /112/ Koroni by the god Pemba into the depths of the sky and the earth.

The band tyatyeli (Pl. III, a, 8) a picture of Mousso Koroni's defeat, symbolizes human work. It is given to a courageous and energetic woman. It is circulated among those present at religious ceremonies and its mere presence indicates that nothing here below is obtained without work and that all stems from work. To wear this band strengthens the man who is entering upon a task in a village other than his own.

The band saki is the koblenkaba, "red sky." It symbolizes heat, anger, difficulties, and sorrows. It is woven at the time of marriage negotiations for the purpose of resolving any differences of opinion.
[844] A piece of it is dipped into the blood after birth and then thrown away in order to purify everything.

[822] The blue stripes of dyitala represent impurity, and the red stripes, purification by sacrifice. Whoever has broken a taboo wears the blue, and the red when he is purified. A piece of red cloth may be inserted into the vagina of a young woman, after she has lost her virginity or

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1. On the value of number 5, see pp. 24, 25.

291 113 531 to replace the blood lost in childbirth; this piece is then burned to hasten the healing of the wounds.

The loincloth of a woman who has given birth to twins is made of the sukaba band with large, regular, alternating squares of yellow and indigo. The mother places on the garment as an offering a little of the millet mash she feeds her children for the first time.

The band nyoronga was formerly used for shrouds. The king would wear a whole garment of this or had three bands sewn onto his tunic when he went off to war; thus he wore his own shroud. A brave man would tie a piece of it to the barrel of his rifle to show his indifference in the face of death. A strip was tied to the right hand of those killed on the battlefield as a reward for having done their duty. Today, a shred of this band is hung at the door of a home where a death has occurred; People bandage a wounded limb with it before going to the healer's.

The wutu tyerokole with three stripes is worn by a child born after the death in infancy of numerous brothers and sisters. It represents the departure of these members of the family and their return in the newborn. Shaking such a band in the ~~air~~ honors the seventh sky and the seventh earth and asks their protection for the child. This cloth is never worn at funerals.

/113/ The kemba (literally, mother of scarifications) (Pl. III, a, 10) substitutes for scarifications when it has not been possible to perform them; on the other hand, this band is taboo to those who are ritually scarred.

The warabawolo (Pl. III, a, 12) represents the lion of the Diara: the first son of this family was born on this cloth. A boy born with a lock of hair on his forehead is seated on the cotton band to make him strong and rich. Formerly the king made a rug for his throne out of it. Since the lion is their taboo, the Diara do not have the right to wear it or even to see it.

Weapons and Tools

113 262 824 Originally, men lived by hunting and fishing. But hunger drove them to eat plants of which the first three are the yayalẽ, an aquatic plant commonly found on the shores of the Niger; the narakata, couch grass; and the norolã size, commonly called cramcram (1). Long

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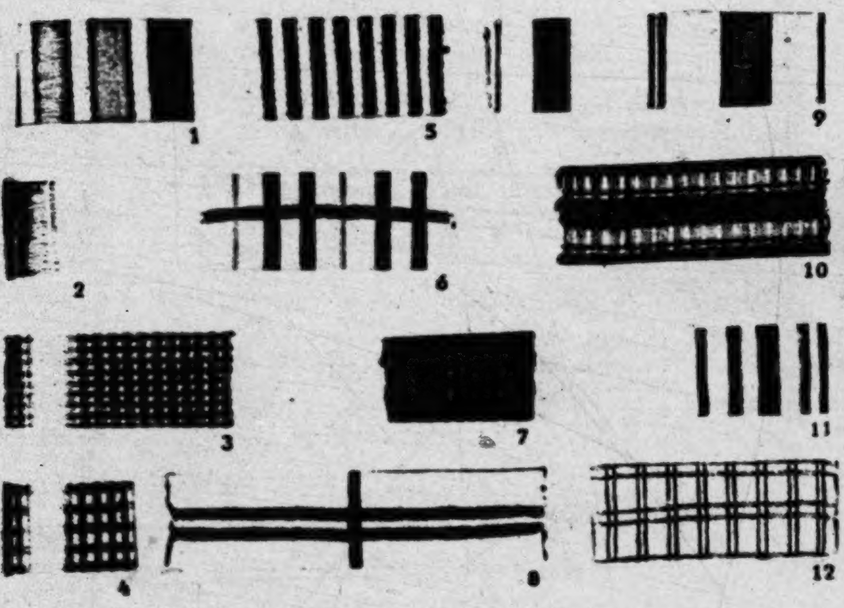

(a) Bands of cotton (the warp is presented vertically).

Plate III

(b) Offering of a band of cotton to the dasiri tree (Soroba).

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(a) Pot dipping after firing (Konodimini).

Plate IV

(b) Communal anvil, kula, of the blacksmiths (Konodimini).

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1. These three plants are respectively: *Andropogon* (*Hyparrhenia*) *hirtus*, *Digitaria debilis*, *Cenchrus catharticus*.

before the cultivation of cotton and cereals was known to them, the Bambara worked the soil with wooden sticks around the base of those grasses whose seeds they then sowed. As their stock of tools developed, they began to make the first hoes and axes. In the case of the Mandé Bambara (2) the origin of these tools is linked with the history of the

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2. The names and the origin of tools of the Bambara of the Ségou region are different.

blacksmiths, *numu*, who form a kind of caste in this part of Africa as in many others. They practice endogamy, maintain joking relationships, *senankuya*, with other Blacks, and are in charge of certain cults dedicated to ancestors and to Faro (3).

3. On the myth of the divine origin of blacksmiths, see S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara." See also *infra*, p. 53 n. 1

Before the discovery of metal, ancestors of the present blacksmiths worked with wood, then stone. From then on they bore the name of *numu*, a term which today is reserved exclusively for the artisans of iron, *jirifa numu* or *farafa numu*, according to whether they worked with wood or stone (4).

4. L. Desplagnes mentions the historical aspect of the origin and role of the Sudanese blacksmiths (*Le Plateau central nigérien* /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, p. 110).

The peoples issued from the intermixture of the *ou*, shepherds (*Getules*), with the *ar*, sedentary tribes (*Fari*), have already been pointed out in earliest antiquity by writers, historians, and geographers who called them Numidians. Salluste tells us that "The Faronsû, in mixing with the

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> getules (gne-Toules), formed the nation of Numidians.
>
> But according to tradition, these half-breed Numidians, today called Noumous, were the first initiators among primitive peoples of the industrial arts; thereafter the title of Noumous was kept and applied to all blacksmiths."
>
> And in the footnote on the same page: "But in Nigerian countries, this term for blacksmith, Noumou, does not necessarily contain the notion of a metallurgist."

/114/ All blacksmiths said to be of "pure blood," that is to say those who belong to the three families of Fané, Koumaré, and Balo, are descended from the Gwonna, who came from the underground village of Gwondougou and to whom goes the glory of having discovered iron.

According to informants, the word Gwonna comes from gwã, a name usually given to the hearth of the forge, which designates precisely the place from which the ore is extracted and where it is treated. The high furnace is called gwã so. The gwã tuku munu, extracting blacksmith, is the only one able to perform important rites. The word Fané derives from fã, which designates the forge in its entirety. Koumaré comes from kuma, word. It is the Koumaré who are charged [537] with the responsibility of debating in council meetings or in public gatherings. The word Balo recalls the fact that the bearers came to settle in former days on the shores of the Niger, ba.

The Gwonna are senãnku of the other blacksmiths. Moreover, in the villages where they live together with other artisans, they are by right the chiefs of the Komo and guardians of the sanctuaries where the ancestral tools are kept. Only if they fail in their obligation will the blacksmiths belonging to other families assume these duties.

The titles of the Gwonna are linked to the mythical origin of the forge which is under the domination of the Téliko spirits, masters of the air and wind, hence of the bellows and fire.

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They inherited them from the eight ancestors who, before the appearance of death, were transformed into bee eaters (tatugu kononi) by the balanza and who received the power to activate or to extinguish fire (1).

1. See p. 43.

The Téliko spirits, jealous of the independence of these new beings, resolved to subdue them and waged war on them. The birds, who had no weapons, bewailed and a Gwonna blacksmith took pity on them; he requested axes, hoes, and arrows from the men of his family and gave them to the birds, receiving in return the promise of revelations which would be useful to him. Having made this arrangement, the birds, armed with weapons, went to meet Téliko at the place called gonya. They used their weapons in a gigantic conflict in which neither adversary could vanquish the other.

/115/ The birds then returned to earth and thanked the blacksmiths by teaching them three secrets necessary to the good progress of their work:

1. How to build their altars by mixing in a panther skin cold water, iron, and a stone, soul of the forge.
2. How to protect from the fire the hands of women potters.
3. How to make and consecrate the circumcision knife.

Since these revelations, the Gwonna venerate these teachers, thus raising the number of their ancestors to sixteen: the first eight transformed into birds who had not the use of speech, and the eight others who received the word from Faro.

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In each village the patriarch of the Gwonna holds the title of kotigi (literally, owner of things). He guarantees the custody of the ancestral tools deposited in a sanctuary and of the ritual objects which belong to the blacksmiths of the village, and which are kept in his home. In addition, he is the only one who may perform the rituals concerning these tools and the purifications.

The important position of the Gwonna family is translated into ritual. Whereas an ordinary blacksmith, after breaking a taboo, must request the intervention of the kotigi to purify himself, a Gwonna simply asks the members of his own family.

564 Every blacksmith is regarded as the holder of an excellent tere.
326 He is well-intentioned, affable, and never hurts anyone. It is easy
774 to make friends with him, to joke with him, even if one knows him
but a short time. The senankuya relationships which he has with other Blacks also contribute to the cordiality of these ties.

[304] The good tere of the blacksmith is brought into play particularly at circumcision which is preferably entrusted to a Gwonna. Being circumcised by a blacksmith causes the wanzo to diminish rapidly, hastens the healing, and improves the tere. A blacksmith is reputed to have the power of transforming himself at will into an animal or a plant. In those places where hyenas are venerated as the animal [825] protectors of a village (dasiri), they are always considered as the blacksmith's ancestors who have undergone metamorphosis. (1).

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564 The ritual paraphernalia now preserved in each village comprise
326 models of all the tools manufactured by the blacksmiths since their
412 first appearance.

a. Wooden tools The craftsmen first used wood, gradually changing the shape of the objects. From a simple stick /116/ (generally in sunzun) (2) or from a rough-hewn block, they gradually made more perfect tools, obtaining the shape desired by rubbing and polishing on rocks.

773 The first weapon used in hunting was a throwing instrument in the
564 shape of a boar-spear, the semenkala (from kala, handle, Fig. 9, A).
326 Hewn from one piece, it comprised three distinct parts: (1) the
411 bulonda; (2) the semenu; and (3) the koli (literally, hook). Men
threw the object with all their strength at the pursued animal or else they dug into the earth where their prey was hiding with the pointed end (semena) which was often poisoned with a viper's venom. The weapon was the object of blood sacrifices carried out on the koli and destined to increase its strength.

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1. Particularly in the village of Konodimi, situated 21 km. to the southwest of Ségou.

2. Diospyros mespiliformis. The wood of this tree is very hard.

173 The first agricultural tool was the yirewolo (literally, noble, Fig.
564 9, B), thus named because of its antiquity, mogokoroba (literally, old
324 person, ancestor).

41 b. Stone tools Later, craftsmen learned to use stone. They used
[172] neolithic axes called "thunder stones" (1) which were used as scissors.
Those of the Gwondougou were at all times famous for their solidity. The craftsmen worked together and when they had rough-hewn their models, certain individuals among them were delegated to sharpen these by rubbing them on a rock.

The farakun (literally, stone head) (Fig. 9, D) was the first axe the handle of which was invented by an artisan who, having poisoned the sharp edge of his tool, wished to try it out on a tree. He sank the stone into a young tree trunk with the idea that the leaves would dry up of themselves. But he died without having ascertained the result. Later a passerby, having tried in vain to remove the stone from the tree, cut the wood above and below it, and in handling this new tool, was surprised at its efficiency. The use of the hafted axe spread among men who utilized the fiber of the nyama to tie the stone to the wood. In addition, the stone could be separated quickly from the handle and used as a knife to cut meat or bones. The handle was used as a pointed stick with which to dig in the ground and to attack animals.

It is probable that hafting was also applied to wooden hoes made in two sections and used /117/ for a long time in areas where there was no hard stone. In fact, a myth concerning the discovery of the cultivation of cotton, which preceded that of cereal grains, mentions the fact that men used to take their handles home, but left the ends of their hoes at the crossroads each day in honor of the local spirit.

c. Iron tools Finally, the Gwonna discovered iron and developed the science of metallurgy (2).

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(1) The Bambara, like other Blacks of the Sudan, attributed divine origin to certain neolithic axes (see p. 71. It would seem that a great many primitive tools had been found by them in the area at the time of their arrival.

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2. The Blacks consider that the discovery of iron and metallurgy are due to the Gwonna. It is, however, not impossible that this technology was imported by craftsmen who came from the Mediterranean.

At a time when the men had left the village of Gwondougou, taking their altars with them, two girls left their home and went to live with two artisans of the Fané and Koumaré families.

[532]

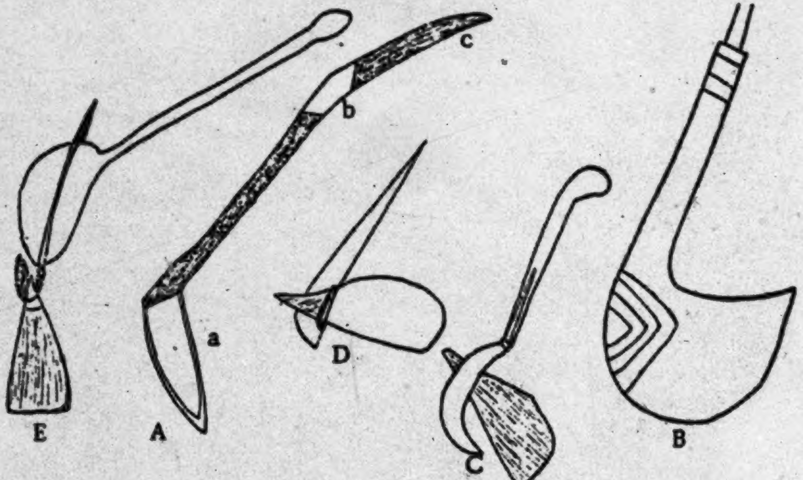

Fig. 9 —Weapons and tools of wood (A and B), of stone (C and D), of iron (E) of the ancient Bambara. (Drawing by an informant).

When the men returned to the village to get some hard stone which they would like to use, they were very much troubled not to find their girls. They dug the ground to search for them, thinking that they had been buried, since men in those days lived in laid-out underground holes. In the course of this work they discovered some rocks which were hitherto unknown to them and which are called farabele. The men thought these rocks beautiful and wished to use them. When placed in fire they were changed and became so hard /118/ that the hammers with which the men attempted to shape them split. The pieces of iron were then used as projectiles to replace the stones of the slings. But the blacksmiths, who had abducted the young girls and who had returned to the village with their wives, saw the new substance and suggested the idea of making axes out of it.

773 The first forged tool, the kongobwona (literally, to abandon hunger),
564 is still used by blacksmiths today as a ritual axe (Fig. 9, E).

326 It is made up of a wooden handle terminating in an enlargement
412 which forms its bulk, and pierced by a bent iron rod which in turn holds the cutting edge (farabye) of the axe proper. The handle is very long, allowing the man to work without bending over.

The tool justifies its name for it brought prosperity to the craftsmen. The symbolism of the different sections shows this: the enlarged part of the consecrated model, which each blacksmith keeps on his altar and which is the object of regular rituals, is hollowed out and holds money, millet, and copper. The iron rod which pierces it represents at its lower extremity the tongue of the oldest of the Gwonna, and at its upper extremity that of the youngest, thus recalling the actions and the words of those who discovered the metal for the benefit of all.

Later, blacksmiths manufactured other models of iron axes and hoes, copying those previously used, but reducing their size.

Each day the end piece of the wooden hoes was abandoned at the crossroads after they had been used in honor of the local spirit. The worker kept only the handle and carved a new tool for the following day. The handles of hoes and axes were considered to be people because they were impregnated with the vital force of those who held them. The farmer left the cutting edge (of stone or iron) in his field and brought home the handle which he placed on his mat at night.

Weapons and tools were the objects of regular sacrifices. The
[782] handle was removed and the blood of victims would flow first into the hole used to secure it, then on the cutting edge, while the officiating person recited a prayer.

773 Today, the assemblages of ancient tools are called makorobaw ka
564 minew (literally, tools of the great ancestor). Considered as the
326 most respectable and precious /119/ testimony of their civilization,
412 models of each object are kept in sanctuaries called makoroba so
778 (literally, house of the ancestors) which are generally natural caves or holes dug in the ground, reminiscent of primitive habitations. These tools are identified with the ancestors who used them and who were, long before the organization of religious societies, the object of a regular cult. That is why, in deference to this fundamental hierarchy, they are presented to the circumcised in front of the family altars (1) at the time of the initiation of the Komo. Similarly, they

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1. Particularly in the village of Konodimini in the Ségou region.

773 are removed from the sanctuaries, honored, and replaced before the
564 Komo altars during the agricultural and funerary rituals; to fail to ob-
326 serve this rule would constitute the breaking of a taboo and entail
412 the most serious disorders.
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In the course of the annual ceremony consecrating the dead, these tools are carried to the cemetery and receive as many victims as do the dead, for they represent the ancestors.

The kotigi brings them to the same place on two other occasions: during the agricultural ceremonies carried on after the growth of the ear of corn and after threshing the harvest. Axes and hoes are presented one by one at the tombs of the dead and then, reunited in the center of the cemetery, each of them is used once to cut a branch or to dig the soil. This ritual gesture recalls the use which the ancestors made of them.

The Forge

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826 The blacksmith establishes his workshop under a shed, usually located in one of the squares or at the entrance to the village. It is the simplest of its kind and involves a minimum of equipment. The forge represents the craftsman: the furnace his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red hot metal is beaten with the hammer, a replica of the gosilande, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and thunder bolts.

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778 The altar of the forge, sometimes situated to the west of the hearth, contains blackened hoe, pickaxe and axe handles, coal (fininkoro, literally, old coal) ashes kneaded with clay (buguri, literally, ashes of the hearth), all of which belonged to former owners, and finally an axe kongobwona called "mother of the altar," a smaller replica of the ancestral axes.

The bulk of the wood which holds the iron hooks and the blade /120/ is hollowed out and forms a kind of storage divided into three compartments.

The upper one contains money so that whatever happens, the blacksmith will have means to live.

In the central compartment are placed copper and iron, metals which the blacksmith works, as well as water, basic element and preferred seat of Faro, master of the word.

326 778 243 The lower compartment contains millet from a field called kongobwona foro, reserved for the needs of the cult of the forge. This land is placed under the guardianship of the patriarch belonging to the Gwonna family, and its upkeep is assured by the community. The seeds are given by each blacksmith to the old man who sows them himself. The work of cultivation and threshing is done communally. The millet is stored in the old man's granary and each blacksmith receives a share. This share is not eaten, but is put aside. From time to time the artisan takes a few seeds which he places as an offering, on his altar, and which remain for a time in the compartment reserved for them; then they are considered to have been eaten by the axe and are removed and replaced by others. Part of the millet is kept as seed for the following year.

326 778 789 Each compartment is open and the blacksmith may insert his fingers; if his earnings are insufficient, he rubs his body and tongue with the hand which he has just dipped into the pocket containing money; the price, set by the spoken word, will not be questioned by the client. If he goes to work in his field, he places his hand into the millet each morning to draw upon the strength it contains and to improve the results of his agricultural work. If he burns himself while working at the forge, he dips his fingers into the third compartment and cools himself in Faro's water. It is this same water which a young artisan must drink at the beginning of his apprenticeship.

326 778 776 The triangular iron, farabye, which constitutes the axe proper is placed under the power of three spirits belonging to the group of air spirits: Agayru who revealed iron to men; Tengu who taught them Faro's supremacy; and Gullé. The first two are the masters of the bellows and direct the work as a whole; the third does their bidding and teaches men the technology of ironwork (1). When the owner of the altar dies, the /121/ axe is removed and placed in the village sanctuary where the ancestral tools are kept. But the remaining objects are inherited by the son. [428]

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1. The spirit would have refused to teach the blacksmiths the working of copper and gold, as these two metals belonged to Faro who reserved for himself the right to use them. Since iron was black he had abandoned its use to the spirits of the air.

326 778 . In addition, in each blacksmith's home, a replica of the *kongobwona* axe preserved in the common sanctuary, constitutes the family altar, passed on from father to son, on which the interested party offers to his ancestors regular or occasional sacrifices. Sometimes it also possesses a small iron plate upon which is engraved a drawing representing the creation and in particular the "spirals of the creative spirit at the cardinal angles," the multiplication sign, etc. The angles of this object are drawn up to indicate that the world is lifting itself up, awakening, and constantly reviving.

The forges of the village artisans are generally grouped in a public square, around a large anvil, *kula*, held in a wooden piece forming its base and buried deep in the ground (Pl. IV, b). In front of this communal anvil judicial affairs are settled, such as marriages or broken agreements; before it vows are pronounced and solemn promises are made to the *boli*. It is also here that the purifications for breaking taboos take place.

The blacksmiths are also communal owners of a certain number of ritual objects which are usually kept by the *kotigi* and brought out for religious ceremonies. Among these, the *nege dyun* (literally, mother of iron) (1) is a lump of iron forged in the likeness of the *semẽkala* (see Fig. 9, B), on which the *kotigi* draws small lines. Some of these lines represent the heads of each of the Gwonna blacksmiths; others, well separated from the first, recall the heads of the artisans belonging to other families. The whole symbolizes the total number of blacksmiths in the village. The *nege dẽ* (literally, son of iron) is a ritual bell also decorated with lines representing members of the blacksmith families.

After it has been made, the *nege dyun* is placed in the sanctuary of ancestral tools. It remains there two or three months in order to become saturated with the strength of the ancestors and from time to time receives the blood of sacrifices performed at night. It is after this period that it is placed with the *nege dẽ* in the *kotigi*'s home.

Each artisan offers individual sacrifices on the *kongobwona* axe kept in his home as well as on the objects /122/ contained in the altar of his forge; at the same time his tools receive libations of boiled millet mash.

1. Dyun means "mother" in archaic language.

326 778 796 In addition, each year the blacksmiths join together and offer a sacrifice on the communal anvil. All tools are placed around it, overflowed with the blood of the victims.

An annual ceremony which also brings the craftsmen together has the purpose of asking Faro to help in the cooling of the wrought iron and to give the water into which the iron is dipped the strength to fulfill its function. Assembled before the kotigi's forge, they bring a certain number of tomatoes which are first presented to the altar, then to the ancestral axe farakum on which each one in turn licks with his tongue.

Keeping their mouths closed so as not to let the strength thus gathered escape, they all walk toward the river, while one of the
[534 participants strikes up, on the ritual bell (nege dẽ) with a lump of
533] (nege dyun), the rhythm called klide fo (literally, rhythm of the sons of the testicles) (1) addressed to the one-arm blacksmith, the bolokuruni, Faro's companion. Once on the bank, the kotigi undresses and throws himself into the water. When re reappears on the surface, all the participants open their hands the better to seize the strength of Faro and his companion, which the man is supposed to bring back. They rush to help him dress and the one who succeeds in touching him believes he receives Faro's special favors.

The tomatoes are then squashed into a gourd and the pulp is thrown into the river at a deep spot where each participant draws water and drinks to communicate with Faro. The group then returns, bringing back in the gourd a little water into which each one dips his individual axe, starting with the patriarch who, at the end of the ceremony, drinks up the rest.

326 778 842 If a woman is sterile, she asks the help of the three spirits protecting the forge as they have the reputation of being very prolific. Without her presence, the blacksmith crouches before the altar with his hands spread out, his head lowered, and prays. The woman must then swear to respect scrupulously the taboo of the invoked spirits, which is to pronounce their name. She may also ask the blacksmith to implore the help of the ritual ashes of the altar.

[522] 1. Kli dẽ, "son of the testicle," is one of the ritual jokes addressed to the blacksmiths by their senãnku.

326 784 Taboos Provided with vital force and a soul, ni, the forge, a living being, is surrounded by taboos aimed at protecting its material and spiritual integrity.

These taboos, numbering seven, are peculiar to the forge and to the altars which it contains; they concern not only the /123/ blacksmiths, but also his clients, the passers-by, whatever sex they may belong.

[252] 1. None may cook meat on the fire of the forge; it would be equivalent to "eating the meat of the Soba spirits." To break this rule deprives the fire of its strength and causes the abdomen of the person breaking the taboo to swell (1).

1. It is said of the culprit: soko dyeni bala, fa ta sababu yala: "he is full of meat cooked on the fire of the forge."

2. No insult may be uttered near the forge, particularly if it is of a sexual nature (2). This would be equivalent to insulting the fire; the flame would waver and, despite the bellows, no heat would rise from the hearth.

2. Neni teke fã nda la: "Insults are not to be spoken at the door of the forge."

[201] 3. The sole of the foot and the palm of the hand are never presented to the fire, for the forge is alive and just as these same gestures made towards another human being would bring about physical disorders, so the various parts of the forge are vulnerable and may break (the hammer or anvil) or tear (the membrane of the bellows) (3).

3. Se ndege tere te jira fa na: "The tere of the sole of the foot must not be presented to the forge."

4. Any quarrel or misunderstanding disturbs the forge, upsets it, and harms the work (4).

4. Dadyuguya, filibatya, kunasirinlenya, konodyuguya te kẹ fã nda la: "Meanness,

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784 hypocrisy, humiliation, and cheating are not done at the door of the forge."

5. Envy, jealousy, and ill humor are generally bad for the blacksmith who loses his "turn of the hand." He must "have a pure heart" (1).

1. Numu te keleya note i bolo na tye: "The blacksmith must not be jealous, otherwise his hand is spoiled."

6. A mirror must never be brought near the forge; it would take hold of its soul which resides in the axe at the altar (2).

2. Dugalle te gere fã na a kanana; ka fã ni tà: "The mirror must not be brought near the forge; it will take the soul from the forge."

[834] 7. Sexual relations near the forge prevent its functioning (3).

3. Noa te gere fa nda la: "No obscene action may take place near the door of the forge."

Breaking the taboos of the forge is equivalent to attacking the virility of the blacksmith, for the bellows are his testicles. Thus the artisans present themselves naked before the culprit to shame him; he is seated on the communal anvil and water in which large [783] millet (keninge) has been soaking is poured over his head to purify the instrument (4).

4. If the fault is irreparable, the kneeling chief crushes three grains of large millet (keninge) on the anvil, a gesture which symbolizes the death of the culprit whose name he pronounces at the same time.

326 /124/ The affected owner then proceeds to reconstruct his forge.
183 Having taken a piece of charcoal, a piece of iron, a piece of leather, and his tools, he goes to the kotigi to ask him to perform the necessary purifications. In the presence of the parents gathered around the forge and in front of the culprit, the kotigi officiating alone, crushes the iron, leather, and charcoal, and then goes to fetch the kongobwona axe kept in the sanctuary of ancestral tools. He places all this before the altar facing the east, and recites the following prayer over a gourd filled with water, which he holds in his hands:

"You forge, ancient thing, you belong to us, to us Gwonna; so and so has broken his taboo, I am his senãnku and am apologizing to you for this deed. I have said: forge; I have said: blacksmith of Gwondougou" (1).

1. E fã, fẽ koro, e ye an gwonna ta ye;
kari macina ye tnę tyẽ, ne ye senãnku ye,
nye delili kę a ko la; ngo fã; ngo
gwondugu numu.

The axe is then washed in water to which has been added some earth taken out of the hut. Next, the officiator completely demolishes the tainted forge and rebuilds it with the mud thus obtained while one of the Gwonna witnesses keeps a little of this earth in a piece of cloth as a testimony to the reconstruction.

The blacksmith slits the throats of two roosters over the new forge while the ingredients groundup by the kotigi are placed on the altar. The following day, accompanied by his parents, he goes to ask the chief of the Komo to proceed with the purification. The members of the society meet at his home and the masker whistles into the forge to chase away ultimately the miasmas provoked by the breaking of the taboo. The fowls brought by the participants are sacrificed on the forge and all join in drinking beer offered by the interested party. The following day, the chief of the Komo calls for the latter's wives. Each in her turn, they place their heads on the anvil, an act which chases away the nyama which they have been concealing since the offense was committed, and then leave on it, cowrie shells and kola nuts, as an offering.

Pottery

323 773 The ancient Bambara did not know about pottery. At the time they lived in caverns, they let their meat dry in the sun on the rocks. Next, they manufactured receptacles by hollowing out stones, of which certain unused millstones /125/ seen today are copies. When they had invented fire, they cooked meat by spitting it with skewers of green *sunzun* wood and by exposing it to flames and live coals.

Later, they shaped and dried vessels of coarse clay, imitating the hollowed-out stones. One of these vessels, which was exposed to the fire in order to cook the food it contained, was observed to have changed color, hardened, and become more resistant. In this way they developed the technology of making pottery at a time when they still had only wooden tools.

323 326 778 575 Since this technology is related to the invention of fire, the wives of the blacksmiths were the first to practice it.(1). Today they form a society (*tõ*) in each village and own many altars entrusted to the care of the head of the society.

The principal altar, the *ɗyo kala,* which represents the thumb of the potters, is made of wood carved in the shape of a thumb and engraved with symbolic lines. To learn her trade, each initiate is lightly touched on the head with it. The head of the society spills her blood over it in the case of a broken taboo affecting the society. But its principal function is to be the receptacle for the spiritual forces of the group: upon a member's death, this object, placed upon the corpse, gathers up the soul which escapes from the body.

[252] In certain villages, the pots with holes, *ñintin,* used for cooking couscous, are placed near the village upon the pile of ashes from the great hearth where the pots are fired (see Pl. IV, a); they also serve as altars at the time when the potters are consecrated.

323 561 575 Since her childhood the potter, following the example of her seniors, practices kneading and shaping little pots, *bokofani* (literally, little clay pots). After excision at the required age, she joins

1. The different techniques of pottery making were supposedly revealed to the village of Gwondougou (see p. 155) by the Soba spirits of the crossroads.

575
323 the society during a public consecration which she receives with
[561] several others, the group forming an age grade.

After an apprenticeship of seven days, the potters decide upon the date of the ceremony which is celebrated at the firing spot near the altars. Each member provides a hairpin (bandigi), which represents her on this occasion, and the skin of a hedgehog. Disrobed in front of the assembled villages, each girl is seated in turn on the altar as an aged woman examines her genitals to verify her virginity and the proper execution of the excision.

/126/ If the young girl is no longer a virgin, she is publicly de-
[831] clared dangade (literally, bastard) and finds herself automatically excluded from the society; she will never be able to receive the potter's title. Otherwise, a proclamation is made immediately to the great joy of the public. If the excision has not been judged
[304] sufficient, the patient is given the title of potter after having submitted to a new operation performed in such a way that the blood runs over the pottery (1).

575 An old woman then appears seated before members of the age grade
323 and instructs them. She tells of the origin and history of pottery,
867 apprising them of the difficulties of the craft such as fatigue, burns, etc. She teaches them patience towards the client and enumerates the rules which will have to be observed during their lifetime: to be pure in heart and to hate no one; not to undertake work shortly after having had sexual relations; to work in silence; to respect all taboos in general.

575 She then makes a libation of karite oil on the altar and rubs it on
323 the bodies of the initiates who must run their tongues over the pottery,
782 thus making an oath. Sheep, brought by the initiates' parents, are
431 then killed by having their throat cut over the hearth in the name of the potters while the elders of the society present to the initiates gifts consisting of several pots which they will sell for profit while waiting for their first work. This gift is moreover a sign of adoption.

323 The utensils are made with clay, mbogo pasa, taken from the
317 bottom of the watercourse or along the river's edge; they belong to
784

1. If excision is not possible, the operation takes the form of a wound inflicted with the hedgehog's skin (see p. 243).

323 Faro. These places have as taboos the wearing of indigo and pregnancy.
317 No pregnant woman may approach them without provoking the death
784 of the child she is carrying, thus ultimately impairing the durability
of pottery and seriously harming the society of which she is a member.

An annual sacrifice is offered by the potters at the end of the winter
323 season when, the level of the river having dropped and the banks
796 lowered, they return for the first time to collect the clay which they
need. Dressed in white, they bring out their hoes and the sickle with which they cut the damp grasses used to cover the pots on the hearth during firing, while the head of the society carries the altars. The objects are placed in a pile on a bed of nyama fibers used for separating them from the ground. The throats of two red roosters are cut open over this pile while a prayer is addressed to Faro, requesting authorization to take the /127/ mbogo pasa during the year, and seeking his protection and help for the work of the society's membership.

The potters make an annual offering to their altars on the day their husbands sacrifice on the forges. Immediately after the libations, they come and squat before the forge altar on which they throw some ten cowrie shells. They then go to the ñintin, undress, and present to it their genitals from the front and from the back, this gesture being an indication of their submission to the spirits of pottery which are the same as those of the forge. Still naked, they circle the pile of ashes left from the last firing and light a big bonfire; this fire attracts the bee eaters, tatugu kononi, which circle over the flames. They shoot some down with a sling, cook them, and reduce them to ashes which they mix with karite oil; they rub their bodies with this mixture before purifying themselves by going through the flames. As an offering to the spirits, they then throw pots on the fire which they put out before returning home.

323 The potters cultivate together a small ritual field in which a fe-
244 male twin sows white peas, tikaninkuru, symbols of their right hand.
The produce of this harvest is eaten communally on a mound, walawala, after an offering of several seeds is made to the altars and tools. A potter whose tools are broken by the fire must go through a purification with the products of this field.

326 The wives of blacksmiths, whether or not they are potters, are
304 skilled in practicing excision on young girls.

/128/ Chapter 6

THE CULTS

794 The purpose of the Bambara cults, whether they are of individuals, families, or villages, is to promote the functioning of the universe in an orderly way, which includes the preservation and conservation of individuals and the whole community in their spiritual or material forms.

The following chapter is not exhaustive. We have described a certain number of cults selected from the most representative. Under their apparently diverse aspects, shown in their purposes as well as in their modes, all are integrated into the system of Bambara thought.

I. Individual and Family Cults

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794 Over individual altars sheltered within the family enclosure or preserved in the private room (*česo*) of their owner, the rituals of "maintaining self" are practiced. They assure the stability of physical (*čuafebla*, *čuafebyeni*) and social (*dyamana tigi ǰigi*) forces; they afford protection outside dangers (*mbe ndyugu kà*); they are the temporary containers of souls at the time of death (*kere la boli ni*).

Since man must, in many circumstances of his life, remedy any depletion of his strength, these altars represent repositories, relays, in which at least certain elements of his being are integrated. They permit him to regroup or revitalize his physical or psychical forces for his own well-being as well as for that of the community.

A. The *česo*

In the homes the movable altars are kept in a room called *česo* (literally, house of man), which is reserved for the /129/ owner and which contains, besides his weapons and agricultural implements, family altars, either collective or individual (1) depending upon

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1. The following description is that of the house of Tètè, an important citizen of Banankoroni.

778 whether he is head of a family, head of a religious society, or a
794 bachelor.

These objects are hung from the ceiling or hidden away in corners from the looks of people and the risks of impurity. The walls of the room, daubed up to a third of their height /130/ with black earth,

[532]

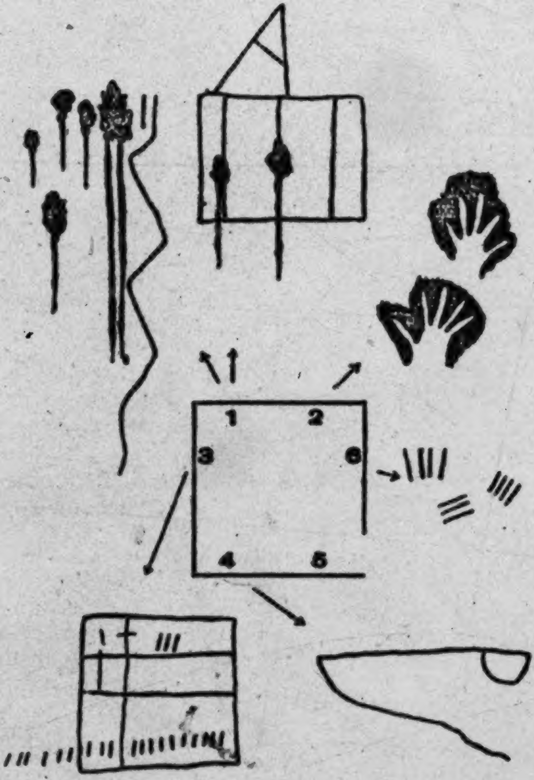

Fig. 10 — Diagram of the česo of Tètè, important citizen of Banankoroni and reproduction of the drawings on the walls: 1. The ancestors and their home. 2. The hands of the living. 3. The sky, space, the earth, and the 22 categories. 4. The Komo's whip. 5. A red stain. 6. The owner (three) and his two wives (four and four).

symbolizing Faro's presence and protection, are covered with paintings and drawings.

778 On one of the walls, small lines representing the ancestors and a
794 broken line representing the human person are drawn with millet mash;
on another, engraved with a sharp point, is a schematic geometrical
532 figure of the ancestral home; it is accompanied by the silhouettes of
two hands (see Fig. 10, 1 and 2), the hands of the living, "crossed
and reaching out to the world of the dead." The left hand, symbol
[826] of disorder, incertitude, and the variations of human conscience,
is placed below to the right of the other to recall man's obligation
towards his right hand, symbol of order, righteousness, fidelity, and
work (1). Thus arranged, the hands express complete submission of
the living to the ancestors.

Farther away are drawn the divisions of the universe (Fig. 10, 3) with the help of a square divided into three compartments symbolizing from top to bottom: the sky and water, the air, the earth.

In the upper square to the left, a line represents Faro in all his power, sole master of sky, water, and life. A horizontal line recalls his domination over the world. The lines that follow are his children. The total indicates the feminine form of the spirit.

All individual or family sacrifices offered to Faro are performed over his sign which the officiator rubs with copper and crushed tomatoes in order "to thank the spirit who protects his dya, and to pray to the spirit to give his wife children."

The central rectangle is the domain of Téliko: air and wind. The small line which vertically bisects the square on the left represents the spirit attempting to penetrate into Faro's plan to vanquish him. His defeat is indicated by the fact that the major portion of the line is situated in Téliko's domain, since the latter violated only temporarily the boundaries of his adversary.

The lower rectangle outlines the earth, seat of the Soba spirits. The row of 22 short lines which covers it recalls the 22 elements of creation, "the 22 things indispensable to man in this world."

On another wall, fire is indicated by two whips: that of Faro, lightning, and that of Komo, the law. They also recall "the power

1. In making this drawing the following words are repeated: "I place my right hand on the wall night and day," *neben kinin bolo da koko la ǯu ni kle*.

778 of the initiates' word" and are exposed to fire to increase this power
794 (Fig. 10, 4). Beside them, /131/ a large red stain, *dyoli ǰikin*,
painted in ochre, states that man is the sacrificer, that the cult has
532 immolation as its basis. Of such a man it is said that: "he reckons
with the proof of the blood (1)" (Fig. 10, 5).

1. *Dyoli tamaše mine ba*.

Above the bed which consists of a simple mat placed on the ground, three engraved lines symbolize the man and two four lines the two women who alternately share his bed (Fig. 10, 6).

778 In certain villages, the drawings are made by an instrument called
794 *ngwoni*, used during the rituals of the year's "renewal" (2).

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413

2. Particularly at Banankoroni.

The point of baobab wood, which is used for engraving, is as slim as a slat and fits on to a kind of racket made of *sunzun* wood which holds a net of *da* fibers. The hide of a male goat, called *soni wolo ni* (literally, soul of the skin of sacrifice), and two handles of *ngolobe* wood (3) complete the assemblage. The net, made of sixteen cotton

3. *Combretum michrantum*.

threads dyed with red ochre, kolo, is called *ngwoni kene ba* (literally, great space of the *ngwoni*) and represents Faro.

778 Before being used, the instrument is washed with water which will
794 be used later to cook the food for the family. Next, tomatoes are
pressed on the net and the juice runs into the hide which forms a
532 pocket; holding the point in the right hand and the handle in the left,
one then makes the drawings on the wall of the *česo*. The seeds of the fruit remain in the pouch until the following year to serve as a testimony to the offering. Next, with a red hot knife the following lines are engraved on the object: four lines, representing Faro, and two 16 lines, multiples of four, the female symbol. After each cut, "a rag saturated with fresh water is placed on it to soothe the pain." The frame is saturated with kola nut extract and four dots, the womb of women, are also marked with a black stone, *kolofin*. An egg is then smashed on the object to "refresh the soul of the ensemble."

B. The Altars

778 794 Each family head wears a small altar called kere la boli ni (literally, little side altar), which maintains relations with the souls of the members of the family for which he is, in part, responsible. /132/ In case of illness he offers sacrifices on this boli for the recovery of the patient. In case of death, he keeps the soul in it temporarily before carrying it to the collective altar of the Komo (1). He also sacrifices on this altar at the time of sowing.

[763] If the family head is himself very ill, the altar is placed on his head in an effort to replace the soul which is escaping with that which the altar contains. [764] If he dies, it is placed on his chest to take in the soul which is then transported to the sanctuary of the Komo. At the end of seven days, the object is given to the deceased's eldest son who, upon becoming family head, sacrifices two goats to the Komo on this occasion.

The Čuafebla (literally, worn at the hip) is made by a father for his son when the latter attains maturity and is on the point of leading a man's life, farming his own field and founding a family.

If there is no Komo in the village, the father may make it earlier, right after the name-giving ceremony.

The altar is made of hyena tails, scorpion tails, and whole peppers tied with a little stick; it represents the owner's flesh and blood.

It receives an annual sacrifice at the time of sowing after the collective offering tothe Komo. This takes place in the family courtyard in the presence of all the members of the family (2). Moreover,

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1. The society, the altars, and the role of the Komo are described on pages ff.

778 794 773 241 2. The cult rendered on this altar brings the intervention of the Sago spirit whose agricultural role is still obscure at the present stage of the inquiry. He taught men how to water their fields.

"Two birds konodyanfi began to circle and sing above the workers in the fields;

> 778 194 173 241 the latter abandoned their hoes in order to watch them. The birds fetched water with their beaks on the shore of a neighboring pond and returned to pour it at the foot of a millet stalk, the ear of which was not yet formed. The men put a mark on this stalk in order to recognize it and later observed that it produced a finer ear than the others. Imitating the bird, they dampened their plantings and watered their fields; their harvest was considerably improved by it. They kept up this habit and, in acknowledgment, produced a cult to the Sago spirit whose emissaries the birds were and who comes to slake his thirst at the Čuafebla."

778 194 it is the object of sacrifices when important business is being handled: marriage, private or administrative action, fight against an epidemic.

[428] A son may inherit his father's altar and keep it with his own which he wears tied to his hip.

The Čuafebyɛni (literally, little horn at the hip) is composed of a cowrie, taken from Faro's granary, copper which is the altar's soul /133/ (ni), pepper, charcoal, and honey. This mixture is introduced into a ram's horn decorated with cowries at its opening and often wrapped in a red cloth bearing the same ornamentation.

[782] The altar is consecrated on those of the Komo, over which it is passed seven times. The throats of victims are cut, their blood is collected in a gourd, and the boli dipped into it three times before being taken out in the sun to dry.

Its role is one of protection. Its owner carries it during the Komo ceremonies to defend himself against spells, korti, which may be cast by someone in the audience.

It also maintains the integrity of its owner's forces. If the latter faints or goes into a trance, he is returned to his normal state by completely renewing the ingredients which constitute it. When the horn is emptied of its contents, "both the soul of the altar and that of the man" are removed. The container is rinsed out with water from the

778 Niger after which the reconstitution of the altar is carried on and is
794 equivalent to "the taking on a new soul." Each family member comes
to the aid of the party concerned: the father gives copper, the women, peppers, the children, charcoal; a new cowrie is removed from Faro's granary.

778 The mbendyugukã (literally, I am on the enemy) is an individual
794 altar which permits its owner to overcome his adversaries and even to
154 attack their life.

The person who wishes to own one makes it after the death of an enemy. He goes secretly to unearth the corpse, shaves off its hair, cuts off its tongue and nails, and removes the eyes.

An elderly owner of such an altar takes it with him to the person who wishes to make one. The latter prepares and mixes the ingredients according to a special ritual and ties them to a hyena's tail. Before a witness who belongs to his age grade, the elder rubs the new altar on the old one seven times while reciting a prayer to consecrate it; he then returns it to its owner (1).

1. Because of its evil powers, the altar may not be made and entrusted to its owner except in the presence of a known witness.

The symbolism of the various parts composing it explain the use to which this altar will later be put. The tongue of the dead man contains his voice and gives to that of the owner the strength to convince those who contradict him in arguments as well as in council meetings. The eyes of the dead man permit him to see what others may not see, or even to blind his enemies by poisoning them with his nails. The hair, evidence of the other parts /134/ of the corpse, contains the nyama of the deceased and is an essential part of the mbendyugukã.

The owner of this altar, which excludes the number four, marries
[595] only three wives. Moreover, he cannot mix his own hair with that
of another without risking death.

Because of its aggressive character, the mbendyugukã demands
[782] victims, dogs or roosters, of red coloring. It gives to whomever owns
it a strength which will always be greater than that of his competitors in whatever he may undertake.

778 794 754 For this reason it receives sacrifices at the time when the fields are being worked, for trade, marriage, war, and hunting where the person risks his life; it helps to fight illness and death. Immediately after the first sacrifice, it captures the personality and aggressiveness of the dead man and puts them on its owner, making him doubly dangerous to those with whom he is in conflict. But on the other hand, the danger may turn against him and, to a greater extent than anyone else, he risks his life at the slightest broken taboo.

Furthermore, the Komo who disapproves of such operations may, if he considers it useful, loosen the dead man's nyama on the person who is using his spiritual forces and put him in danger of death. Thus a Bambara will hesitate a long time before owning such an altar; in fact very few individuals assume this heavy responsibility.

C. The Chief's Seat

778 622 In the courtyard of the home of a family head or village chief can be found a pile of wood stuck on the ground and called dyamana tigi ǰigi (literally, support of the owner of the world) (Fig. 11). This seat symbolizes at once the chief, his power, his social and religious role of supporting the group (1).

1. The seat described below was observed at Banankoroni in the courtyard of the village chief. A similar one is found at Soroba.

The pieces of bent wood which compose it are planted rather deep into the earth above a series of objects. One of these pieces, with a simple bend (in a) is called sinzin, support; the two others, shaped like a T, are called ǰigi ba ǰigi (in b) (literally, support of the big support).

762 766 The whole lies over the body of an albino (c) buried in a tomb having a ritual form, covered with ancient clothing dyed in wolo and speckled with small black spots made of /135/ bone ash (kolofin), which represent at the same time the embryo in the womb of women and Faro. The head is covered with the cap of primitive men (e).

In (d), three pickets, symbols of man, are stuck through the skin of the albino's forehead; this skin had been removed and seven ritual

622 178 scars symbolizing the person (three and four) are made on it. At the moment the skin is buried under the seat, the following prayer is recited:

"I have sworn in your names by striking on the siriku of Yamba by (burying) the skin from the right and left sides of the forehead; the skin from the forehead (seven times)" (1).

1. Tena wolo fla kini ani numa yamba

[532]

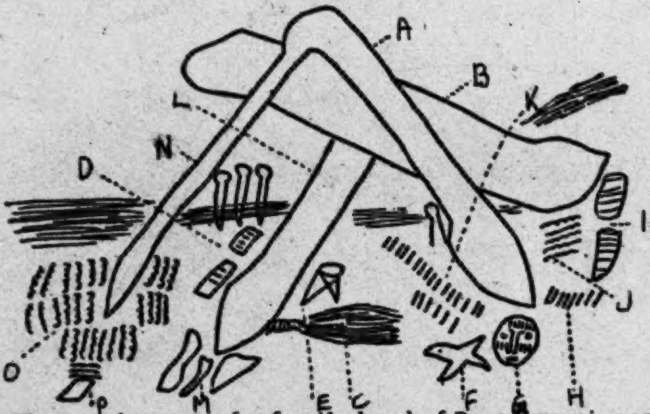

Fig. 11 — The wooden seat of a family head of Banankoroni, representing his joints. It is inserted into the ground in the courtyard above the bones of an albino, those of a child, and various symbolic objects. (Drawing by an informant.)

ka siriku nye di ka fo ani aw čua ye kena, tena wolo.

The prayer recalls here the acts of the fourth ancestor Yamba, who inaugurated the sacrifices of albinos to Faro, and his role as a chief beginning with this mythical period (see p. 46), a role which the present chief must fulfill with the same righteousness. The siriku is a small protective altar usually made from a hyena tail.

In (m) are placed the three principal bones of the albino; the two femurs and the right humerus, "so that the chief may have white

622 118 bones, " that is to say, that he may live to be so old that his bones will be visible through his skin which is transparent.

In (n) the bent part of the wood, called kuntigi tigiya jigi (literally, /136/ support of the chief's deed), is planted over the hair of the previously shaved albino (in o) from which it takes its strength.

[801] In (k), twenty-two small sticks are the symbol of the number 22, representing "the ensemble of words received by the ancestor Koumabana who was never caught unawares by anyone. " In depositing these sticks, the officiator expresses the wish that the chief may become unbeatable like the ancestor.

[801] In (h), eight small sticks of zekene wood (1) represent the eight ancestors; they signify that man must be, like Koumabana, master of words and that he must be "true to his word."

In (f), the bird tatugu kononi, master of fire, is buried. The prayer recited states that it must be able to penetrate into the earth and come out freely, for since mythical times it has played a decisive role in combats (2).

In (g) is buried the head of the first child to die in the chief's family, in order to recall the loss suffered and to avoid its recurrence. On the skull are marked the signs of the person: two times 3 and 7, or two times 4 and 7, depending upon the sex of the deceased. In (j) the hair is buried, a testimony to the misfortune and the loss which should be compensated for. In (e) is placed the skin of the forehead, divided into two pieces; the piece on the right signifies that Faro is free to give the child for as long as he chooses; on the piece on the left are engraved the eight signs of the word, recalling that Faro, master of the word, is also master of the destiny of the deceased, whose number has been reckoned among the dead. In (p) a small

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[824] 1. Balanites aegyptica. This bush, according to popular belief, grows over the tomb of a man who died "with rancor and bitterness, as did Koumabana."

2. See p. 155. The chief, who is sometimes obligated to declare war, must be able to win it.

622 778 of polished stone called *fara yele*, "stone that rejoices, " expresses the wish that the chief's rule prosper.

The seat, taken as a whole, represents the chief's skeleton and his joints. It is erected upon various elements which sum up his ties to the ancestors and the supernatural powers, indicating his responsibility and contributing to the maintenance of his strength. It is situated in such a way that all the events in the courtyard take place around it. and that nothing which is said is out of earshot. As a center of the family household, as the symbol of the industrious and responsible man, it is the framework of the community which it upholds, just as the chief does through his physical endurance and moral firmness. The whole village "leans upon the chief's joint."

Each morning and evening, the *ǰigi ba ǰigi* and the *ba ǰigi* /137/ are greeted so that the chief may be strong, that his family may increase, that he may foster the ancestral beliefs. Offerings and [782] libations are made upon the seat and upon the body of the chief when his authority is questioned. In (b) tomato juice is being poured; in (a), representing the elbow or the knee, the water which has been used for ritual bathing of these same joints; at the foot, in (n), the fowls' throats are cut while the officiator, before pouring down the blood of the sacrifice, blows into a small hole dug in the ground; finally, in (l) the water which was used to wash the chief's whole body is poured in.

[826] In this way the chief's joints, which are the seat of his strength and his procreative seed, are purified and fortified.

II. Village Cults

794 The village, as a physical entity, and its inhabitants are placed under the protection of the supernatural powers and of the ancestors. Faro is directly invoked at all water spots.

If the village is situated at the river's edge, the rituals are addressed to the Faro *tyin*. If it is not too far from the bank, the inhabitants go out to make their offerings to the spirit. Frequently, the stream, pond, or natural well, which often determined the site chosen by the founders, is though to be inhabited by an incarnation of Faro whose name is revered and to whom all offer a cult.

On the other hand, each village is placed under the protection of the *dasiri*, a special spirit delegated by Faro.

794 The ancestors are worshipped in various places: at the doors and
thresholds of houses, at the cemetery, and at stone altars placed at
769 the intersections of lanes and in public squares. These positive cults,
778 which are aimed at the acquisition of beneficial forces, have as a
counterpart, cults in which the villagers rid themselves of all their
unlucky and infectious elements; these take place, in particular, at
the corssroads, dangu, which are placed under the guardianship of the
earth Soba spirits.

It would be impossible to treat all of the cults of the Bambara villages. Among these, three have caught our attention; they concern the dasiri, the dangu, and the ancestral altar stones.

A. The dasiri

794 The word dasiri (literally, which binds the mouth) designates the
776 invisible spirit, Faro's representative entrusted with watching over
778 /138/ the village, as well as the seat of this spirit and, sometimes
too, the animal which accompanies it or symbolizes it.

The spirit haunts a rock, a thicket, or a tree situated near the village; the approaches to this spot are reserved for the elder in charge of the ritual (1).

[824] 1. In Massala and Soroba it is a baobab tree; in Sama, a tamarind tree, etc. See the observations on the dasiri collected by Ch. Monteil, Monographie de Djenné /Monograph of Djenne/, pp. 137-138; L. Tauxier. La Religion Bambara, pp. 195-208.

[187
361] Generally the place is pointed out by the geomancer at the time the village is founded, or else determined by an event which occurred at that time. It is after this operation that the buildings are erected to the west of the chosen spot.

If the dasiri is a tree, no one may burn or cut its branches. In
[802] many cases it cannot be approached by anyone dressed in black or
indigo, colors which represent obscurity. No Peul may sit in its
[563] shade (2). Any infraction of these taboos brings about the death of

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2. The reasons for the taboo concerning the Peul have not yet been ascertained.

794 In some villages, the sacrificer never
776 consumes butter or milk, foods which
778 the Peul furnish the Bambara.

[563] the culprit and deprives the villagers of their protector.

The spirit of the dasiri sometimes has as its compansion an animal
794 which seems to represent the group's ancestor. At Ségou, it is a
776 crocodile; at Ouélenguena, a she-ass; at Koulikoro, a monkey; in
825 other places it is a male goat which is replaced when it dies. At
Konodimini there are a series of deep intercommunicating wells
which would have served as homes for the ancestors. These holes are
at present occupied by hyenas which are considered to be incarnations
of the blacksmiths of former times and which are the dasiri of the
place.

The dasiri's animal is free to enter homes and to eat what it finds.
It is often fed by the inhabitants. No one may attack it and whoever
breaks this taboo, set on by a vengeful nyama of which he cannot
[582 rid himself, risks being forbidden to marry, even being no longer
626] tolerated in his native village (1).

1. This was, at Soroba, the case of Dji Diara, who, after killing a hyena, could not marry as no woman was willing to link her destiny to his.

As its name indicates, the function of the dasiri is to maintain
794 the stability and integrity of the village. It is the "support of the
776 inhabitants' lives"; the numerous rituals (individual or collective),
782 of which it is the object, reveal the importance of its role as well
as the diversity of the beings invoked. To Faro are addressed prayers
for rain; to the ancestors prayers for questions /139/ concerning the
family; and to the spirit of the tree when it is a matter of stopping an
epidemic. But directly or indirectly, any sacrifice offered to the
dasiri is offered to Faro. The victims (sheep or fowl) and the offerings
(cotton bands, kola nuts) are always white (see Pl. 3, b).

When children reach the age of six or seven, they are led to the
794 tree; they sit on its roots upon which kola nut juice is spat, and are,
778 by this fact, introduced into the village cult. They are then presented
852 to all the allies senãnku and especially to the blacksmiths with whom
they proceed to joke.

794 776 782 Each year a sacrifice bringing together all the inhabitants is offered to the dasiri and is terminated by communal eating of the sacrificial victim. The first fruits of the harvest are also brought to it by the sacrificer.

B. The dangu

776 778 823 783 The crossroads dangu or danku (literally, boundary of the head) are inhabited by the Soba spirits who, under Faro, constantly intervene in human affairs. Everything placed at this spot belongs to them, and no one passes by without leaving an offering or a token of his presence: a tool, raw cotton, seeds, cloth. A travelling stranger kneels and deposits a little ash or some cotton; if not, he cleans off a little space on which he spits before leaving. A child passing by will greet it with these words: "Crossroads, my soul is in your hands." On the occasion of any event concerning the individual, the family, or the community, red kola nuts are placed at the crossroads and the following words uttered: "You, crossroads, I entrust my head to you; you are my support; I say, you, crossroads" (1).

1. E dangu m be ni ku kalifa, do i la
ni jigi be fe, ngo e dangu.

The corsroad, as an ideal public thoroughfare, is the chosen spot where one easily rids oneself of the nyama which any individual keeps and carries about with him. All that is impure, unlucky, and undesirable for the individual or the community is left at the crossroads. Objects which have belonged to dead people are also left there. The forces which are thus gotten rid of are supposedly absorbed by the spirits for whom they constitute a kind of nourishment which will then be returned to men in the form of gifts free of any taint. (2)

2. See p, 258.

/140/ Several examples will illustrate the role played by the crossroads in the community:

Any man who has wounded an animal or squashed an insect is affected in his own tere by that of the victim. He goes to the crossroads, kneels, and prays, depositing at the same time a band of cotton, an egg, and ashes. The band of woven cotton, symbol of

776 the word, is offered as clothing, and the eggs are offered as purification.
778 As for the ashes, it is the ideal pure element since fire has "removed"
823 its tere from the wood; here it represents the man from whom "the bad
783 force acting on his tere has been removed" (1). Whoever murders an animal proceeds in the samw way with the animal's hide upon which he throws cowrie shells. In both cases, the spirits absorb the tere and nyama, which add to their own forces and free the culprit.

Collective purifications are carried out on the dangu when sexual taboos regarding cultivated fields and bush are broken. The impurity
[833] resulting from communication performed outdoors is communicated to all
the land belonging to the village; the trees in the bush will no longer bear fruit; the harvests will deteriorate. Formerly the two lovers
[684] taken by surprise were deprived of their clothing which was burned on
the dangu after they had circled the village three times starting at the left. The culprits were then banished. At present, if the plight of the fields suggests that such an act has been committed, all varieties of cultivated seeds are gathered in a basket which is placed at the crossroads. Then, all the villagers and their domestic animals circle the village three times while sham battles take place between men mounted on horseback. After a sacrifice offered at the dangu, the seeds, thus purified, are sown.

776 Offerings are made to the spirits of the crossroads at the time of
778 sowing to invoke their protection. This ritual is obligatory for whom-
ever sows cotton, since this seed was given to men by these spirits.
823 The farmer places the seeds, sits down facing west, and cries out three
241 times the name of the dangu above the seeds. He leaves three small piles in homage to the spirit along with fibers from the plant, and kills a victim before proceeding to sow his field. When the stalks are up, he cuts some boughs and returns to the place of sacrifice to sweep up the seeds, thus impregnating them with the nyama of the dangu. He then dries them, grinds, sifts, and mixes them with earth picked up on the same spot. In his field, he shouts /141/ the name of the dangu and throws the mixture with all his strength in the direction of the cardinal points, the zenith, and the ground. When the plants are mature he picks the first seven ripe seeds, brings them to the same place, and offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

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1. See pp. 90 ff.

776 It is also at the crossroads that the elders place the child whose
778 legitimacy is in doubt. If the diviner who is then consulted declares
823 that the child is a bastard, he is deprived of the protection of the spirits
848 and is supposedly unable to survive the *nyama* which he has acquired
787 at the place. In this same spot are buried abnormal children, in par-
[766] ticular hydrocephalics who are considered undesirable. The spindle
of a dead woman is placed here along with the broom she habitually
used.

776 But the ritual most characteristic of the crossroads is the one re-
778 sorted to by the village when it is in trouble: the primitive wooden
823 mallet, *gosilande* is planted in the ground; it is then struck with a
183 stalk of millet to chase away evil and to induce new techniques of
reparation to come out of the instrument (1).

C. Stone Altars

778 In the villages, at the intersections of lanes, and in the squares,
211 the founding ancestors are represented by stones under which various
objects are buried (see Pl. V, b).

At Sama, four large stones, encased in a clay platform, symbolize both the cardinal points and the ancestors. They are in touch with the *dasiri* and receive the same offerings. At Banankoroni, the *fara ba* is partly buried. Under its point is an albino skull which represents those of the first ancestors and their bones. Two hoes, one placed near the right ear and the other near the left ear, convey the idea that "the man who cultivates the earth will never hear a humiliating word." Under the chin, another hoe recalls that the villagers who are faithful to agriculture will never know famine. Under the hoe, a *siriku* (2) protects them against those who try to harm them, and brings them "the hyena's luck"; it also means that some of their ancestors were transformed into hyenas in former times. A circumcision knife recalls that all males are circumcised, and all women excised (Fig. 15). Finally, three albino bones and a small pile of copper are a testimony to /142/ Faro's presence and power. Drawings are made on these

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1. See p. 145.

2. See p. 179, n. 1.

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211 stones at the time of the collective ceremonies called the years "renewal" (1).

III. The Religious Societies

794 Members of groups formed by families in a broad sense, headed by patriarchs and owning lands which cannot be divided, also belong to other collective groups called *flâ*; these are formed by the age grade of circumcision, excision, or initiation, and grouped around altars which are their own and which possess their special rituals.

These societies are called by the general term *dyo* (2) meaning
794 "to build, "to edify" and also "secret." This term recalls that each individual constitutes an element of the whole group formed by the society.

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1. See pp. ff.

476 2. It is appropriate to distinguish the religious societies, *dyo*, described in this work, from the mutual aid societies, *tõ*, of apparently secular character. The latter are also very numerous and exist in all the Bambara villages.

These organizations are strongly hierarchical and are placed under the direction of responsible chiefs. Their members perform communal work which concerns the life of the village: felling trees, clearing, cultivation of individual or communal fields, house construction, etc., and participation in marriage ceremonies. The detailed study of the *tõ* whose role is considerable would be indispensable to an understanding of the social and economic organization of this tribe.

The participation of the *tõ* in agricultural work will be described by Mme. de Ganay in *Techniques et rites de l'agriculture* (in press).

194 For male members, the large dyo, the principal aim of which is the preservation of spiritual forces and the maintenance of the person in daily life, are the Komo, the Kworè, the Nama, the Kono, the Nago, and the Nya. Women are grouped around muso dyo, about which little information has been obtained. The uncircumcised belong to the ndomo (or ceble). In addition, members of these societies are divided into groups which may be independent of age grades and which are designated by signs.

The Komo

The word Komo indicates the complex theoretically made up in each village of society members, living and dead, the sanctuary and its altars (boli), the responsible chief, and the mask. It is dominated [176] and protected by the invisible power of Faro and by the presence of a particular spirit to which it is consecrated. The latter haunts a tree located in the thicket where the ceremonies take place. He is /143/ respected for having taught in ancient times the origin and role of the boli and the variations of the cult; he comes to slake his thirst on the blood of victims.

The Komo is as powerful as it is old. The terms trodeni (ni, small) and tro ba (ba, big) are given to it, depending upon how ancient it is. Each Komo has, in addition, a particular name (1). The Komo

1. According to native etymology, komo means "taking (mo) of the pond (ko)." According to L. Tauxier, "Komo in Bambara means bad, mean, difficult" (see the Dictionnaire bambara-français of Mgr. Bazin, p. 308). On the root Ko or Kon see M. Delafosse, "Terminologie religieuse au Soudan /Religious Terminology in the Sudan/" l'Anthropologie, December, 1923, quoted by L. Tauxier. Some observations concerning the composition and functioning of the Komo society have been the object of a chapter of L. Tauxier in the Religion Bambara, pp. 272-310, which quotes works published by Ch. Monteil and the Abbe Henry. See also: Moussa Travélé, "Le Komo ou Koma /The Komo

794 or Koma/," *Outremer*, 1929; H. Labouret, *Les Manding et leur langue*.

794 The Komo society, *komo tyew* (literally, men, people of the Komo) is composed
561 of all circumcised men, with the exception of the *griot* who may under no condition become members, after an initiation performed according to the age grade, the members of which are called *tonyaw*. The hierarchy is rigorously respected: an earlier age grade will always be ahead of the one that follows it in all circumstances of secular or religious life. The Komo recognizes a chief, *komotigi* (literally, master or owner of the Komo) who preferably belongs to the caste of blacksmiths and whose function is hereditary. The son automatically assumes command of the age grade which follows that of his father. Upon the latter's death, he changes his age grade and becomes the head of his father's. In the case where the owner of the Komo dies
[304] young and his eldest son, who is to inherit the office, is not yet circumcised, he is made to undergo the operation in the night following the death, and on the following day is proclaimed chief (1).

1. In *La Religion Bambara*, L. Tauxier points out that in some villages the chief of the Komo exercises his power only during a seven-year term. At the end of seven years an election takes place and the function is not hereditary.

794 Because of the importance of his functions, the chief of the Komo
784 is made to respect a great number of taboos. In particular he may not penetrate into the sanctuary if he has not been chaste during the past twenty-four hours. If the taboo is broken, he must warn the men of his age grade and sacrifice two roosters upon the altars to purify himself. His wife is initiated (for she is apt to see certain ritual
[562] objects generally hidden from women because of her intimacy with the chief), but she is not present at any of the ceremonies to which only the members are /144/ admitted. If she commits adultery she
[837] brings about her husband's exclusion from the society, not only as chief but also as member.

794 The chief is often assisted by two elders belonging to his age grade, whose advice he seeks in all cases concerning the community. In
561 addition, he is always helped by young initiates. If one of these

794 561 distinguishes himself through diligence, obedience, and skill, he may occasionally, if the elders so decide, be promoted to a more advanced age grade than his own and thus find himself on an equal footing with his elders.

794 The responsibilities of the Komo chief are considerable. He is the guardian of the altars which, as we shall later see, contain all the spiritual forces of the society; he is the only one able to manipulate them and is in charge of all the rituals which depend upon them. He 426 manages the patrimony of the group (seeds and money) which is kept in the cowrie or millet granaries, and which he may tap, in case of necessity, in order to make interest loans to members of the society who request them. (1)

But this function, honorary and advantageous from many points of view, involves not only rights but, more important, duties from which the chief cannot be exemated. He must, under no circumstances, abuse his power; he can make no decision without the agreement of the members and may not act, even in the most insignificant case, without advising each and every one of them. Each person is kept up to date as regarding the smallest details concerning the general activity of the Komo and the entire age grade must be informed at the same moment. To break these rules would mean to become exposed to the greatest dangers. Just like the head of the total family whose power is far from being absolute (2), the responsible person

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1. See S. de Ganay, "Un jardin d'essai et son autel chez les Bambara /A Sample Garden and Its Altar among the Bambara/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 17 (1947), pp. 57-63.

794 614 2. "The Mandingo fa," says Henri Labouret, in Les Manding et leur langue, "appears less free in his acts and decisions than the master of the ancient taisible fraternity. Far from being the tyrannical and strong willed autocrat whom people have frequently taken pleasure in describing, he seems to me, rather, to fulfill therole of a delegated administrator,

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> an enforcement agent, expected to conform to the directives decided upon by the domestic council composed of elders and family heads (pp. 54 and 55). The aim pursued by the chief is to administer wisely a patrimony which will always remain undivided" (p. 57).

794 must exercise his office with strictness, honesty, and thoughtfulness.

A. Creation and Consecration of the Komo

The few villages not possessing a Komo are linked to the Komo in a neighboring village. If a village decides to create /145/ an independent society, it delegates its elders to an important Komo (*tro ba*) whose chief, after the performance of divinatory rites, makes them swear submission to the altars which he will entrust to them after consecrating them; they promise never to drop the cult, never to omit a sacrifice or offering. After the sacs brought by the petitioners have been filled with necessary products (honey, pepper, charcoal, gold, copper, etc.), they are overflowed with the blood of victims provided by those about to take office and then rubbed on the altars of the *tro*. The new Komo becomes the *trodeni* of the one from which it thus receives part of its power. In the course of the night following the consecration and the daytime transfer of the *boli* (1), a member of the society brings to his village a *pembele* similarly consecrated by the donors. This shift at night recalls the period of Pemba's reign preceding the apparition of light and the regular succession of days and nights.

Once back in the village, the society, gathered around the chief, organizes its ritual, chooses its officers, obtains the necessary masks, builds the sanctuary, and places on it the altars upon which blood sacrifices will be performed daily during this first period.

> 1. The *boli*, as indicated on p. 130, are linked to a category including day and sun.

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B. Altars of the Komo

The boli altars occupy a distinguished place in the religious and mythological representations of the society organized around them. On the one hand they are a capsule of the universe because of their composition; on the other they are a capsule of the society as all its members are present in them. In fact, each member has provided a part of the composing elements after having impregnated them with his person by salivating over them while pronouncing his name.

794 778 346 The altars of the Komo are kept in a sanctuary, the komo so (literally, house of the Komo), a medium sized hut built either in the chief's dwelling place, or in the bush at some distance from the village. The approach to this structure which is under Faro's protection is forbidden to the ordinary person. The chief himself never enters alone. It is said that a snake, the soul and guardian of the sanctuary, is born and lives at the top of the hut in the branches which form the roof (Pl. VI, a).

The hut is divided into a number of floors on each of which is placed /146/ an altar. The highest one contains at its center the nimara boli (literally, altar of the souls) which, as its name indicates, is the container of the souls belonging to deceased members of the society and to sacrificed animals (1). It contains, from top to bottom, hair of the dead, copper for the souls of animals, gold for those of men. These various ingredients, placed in a double sac, receive the sacrificial blood which runs between the two layers and soaks them.

794 778 The nimara boli is surrounded by small individual altars which have served to channel the souls of the dying and lead them to the common receptacle (2). These small boli remain in the hut only

[774 782] 1. There is constant preoccupation with preserving all vital elements. The souls of sacrificed animals are the object of the same care as those of humans. Like them, they participate in the resurrection promised to everything which has lived.

2. See p. 175.

194 778 during the seven days following the death and are returned to the heir of the deceased (son or brother); they remain permanently in the sanctuary only if the dead man has no descendants. They are held up by two wooden stakes called *čin ta bere* (literally, sticks which collect inheritance) which keep the souls of the dead and which contain at the top wood dust from Makanta Djigui's canoe and gold at the bottom. These stakes feed the *boli* which they hold and the souls of the dead which they contain, thus demonstrating that the "Komo never abandons anyone and that men without descendants remain with it for ever."

[784] The taboos concerning the *nimara boli* are numerous and strict: it may not be removed from the sanctuary except for funerals (1). No woman must ever see it. No foreign cult could ever conceivably be celebrated in its presence.

On the second floor is located the *ñõ boli* (literally, altar of millet) which contains an invigorating power intended for the society's crops. It is composed of a sac divided into six pockets which contain (from top to bottom) at the left: small millet, fonio, and copper; at the right: large millet, rice and other cereals, and gold. The sac, which opens at the top, receives at the time of agricultural ceremonies (sowing and harvest) the blood of victims offered by members of the millet society, *ñõtõ*. It must always remain damp with sacrificial blood so that the seeds which it contains will always live.

The *ñõ boli* is also tied to two stakes called *ñõ boli kane* (literally, protection of the *ñõ boli*) which contain in a hollowed-out /147/ section some millet and gold; it is tied to the stakes by threads which bring it the forces they contain.

The *ñõ boli* watches over the growth of cereals: germination, formation of the ears, maturation. It is responsible for the "head of millet" (2).

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1. See p. 247.

2. Each farmer is the owner of an individual *ñõ boli* which is placed in a subordinate position under that of the Komo. In addition, the Komo's *ñõ boli* is in close touch with the *ñõ boli* of the Kworè, a society whose purpose is to obtain

194 the rain necessary for cultivation (see p. 217).
118 The agricultural role of the Komo will be
described by S. de Ganay in Techniques et
rites de l'agriculture.

194 The main taboo of the nõ boli is the loss or waste of food. If even
118 a grain of cereal drops to the ground, or into the fire, the members of
784 the millet society are responsible for picking it up and eating it; otherwise the Komo will punish for the failure to do so and the harvest suffers.

The third floor contains the nyama boli, a repository of the forces
194 (nyama) of individuals who have died a violent death (murder, war,
118 execution). The nyama boli used to contain in former times a stone
726 called gõgoro kurube, considered to be the "mother" of the stones thrown by the warriors' sling. It was removed from the sac in case of war and carried to the battlefield by a twin walking at the head of the troops. On its surface were engraved a series of lines representing the king, the warriors, and their wives. It gathered all the souls of those dead in combat and received their blood as an offering.

194 The nyama boli is, moreover, responsible for the soul of the crops
118 and a repository for the souls of sacrificed animals; it also receives the "nyama of the words" of the members. It shares with the nõ boli the responsibility for the cultivations and confers in this way great power to the society.

The sac contains in its lower part a mixture of coagulated blood and gold, and in its upper part a mixture of charcoal powder, pepper, and honey, which gives power to the nyama with which the sac is loaded. The taboo of the nyama boli is the rapid death of victims
[782] which are sacrificed to it; only slow death confers effective nyama.

Upon the ground of the sanctuary, along with the dance costume of the mask, nya, are placed small altars intended either for sale, or for the creation of the new Komo, or for individual purposes. Animal horns, both byẽ ba (literally, big horn) and byẽ ni (literally, little horn), are also placed there; they contain powder for ritual usage, korti, whose dangerous action takes place during the times the mask is taken out (1).

1. The various mixtures used for the religious practices of the Bambara

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often contain ingredients which have been pulverized: wood dust, charcoal powder, even powder of precious metals. Our investigation has not yet allowed us to clarify the role of this pulverization process. However, its mention by the Bambara and the frequent use of korti indicate the importance attached to this type of preparation.

/148/ Outside the hut, at the height of the nyama boli, a hook holds up the clothes of those who are killed by the Komo. The sanctuary, as well as the clothing of the mask, is daubed with black earth taken on the shore of the river representing Faro, and covered with feathers of the same color. Generally speaking, the metal [823] contained in the Komo altars gives it its strength and life. The most powerful of these is gold, silver comes next, then copper. Since each person gives an offering according to his means, the power of the altar thus depends in a certain measure on the wealth of the members of the society.

[782] Regular sacrifices upon the stakes, the bases of which sometimes contain a little wood from the historic canoe of Makanta Djigui, permit them to "maintain the pressure, the life" in the various altars.

These altars are removed from the sanctuary only upon the occasion of funerals or agricultural rites. When the mask is removed and when there are dances, replicas commonly found in the home of the chief are sometimes used instead.

The pembele is the protector of the society, the container of the forces (nyama) of the group. It is rarely placed in the sanctuary and usually kept by the chief who never exhibits it; occasionally it is watered with rain water symbolizing the work of creation.

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Before the annual ceremony called "anniversary of the Komo," drawings are made on the sanctuary by the chief or an elder; they are a reminder that the sanctuary is the link between the invisible powers and the members of the society. Besides the image of creation as an issue of the initial vibration (see Fig. 2), the head of the ancestor Koumabana, figurations of the twins, and the twenty-two fundamental signs are sometimes drawn. Finally hoes emphasize the agricultural function of the Komo (1). Granaries intended for conserving grains

1. At the time when the attention of specialists is attracted by the division of

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> religious and social powers in ancient societies, it is interesting to point out that the Komo altars represent a very definite three-way division: the first is used for the conservation of spiritual forces (souls) of the group; the second presides exclusively over agricultural rites; the third is concerned with keeping the spiritual principles of individuals who died violently and of crop seeds; it played an important role during the wars. This threefold division is comparable on many points to that observed by M. Dumezil in Indo-European societies.

from the first crops /149/ used as offerings, are placed next to the sanctuaries or in the home of the chief (1).

> 1. In the village of Soroba the sanctuary includes seven granaries: three for small millet, *sañõ*; four for large millet, *keninge*. Seven is the number symbolic of the person, three for masculinity (small millet is male) and four for femininity (large millet is female).

C. The Mask

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The man who wears the mask during the ceremonies personifies the Komo. The head is sculptured in the shape of a human face or animal face. At Konodimini, it represents the panther; at Soungoba, a stork; at Banankoroni, an eagle; at Banoumbougoula, an elephant; at Ségoubougou, a vulture. The mask is usually decorated with elements borrowed from several animals. Thus, at Soroba, the skull and horns are those of a buffalo, but the jaw is that of a crocodile. It is, moreover, ornamented with the feathers of a wild duck (2).

> 2. An informant, who attended Komo ceremonies in a great number of villages, asserted he had never seen the same mask twice.

794 532 The head of the mask is usually made of bone (a human or hyena skull), or of wood painted white, black, and red. The mask, *per se*, is made in such a way as to frighten the future initiates. Just as the soul of a dead person, which requests offerings or threatens to drag his kin with it, is feared, so too is this fact which is in contact with the altar of souls (*nimara boli*) and which reflects the face of the ancestors. It also represents Faro: the mask is sometimes provided with a long beard symbolic of his hair, and lightly plastered with a layer of black earth taken from the river bank and impregnated with his power; it is sometimes smeared with the blood of a young girl who has died in the course of the ceremonies, in commemoration of the virgins annually offered to Faro in olden times.

Copper arrows (*kun bye*) are inserted into the skull and charms (*kun kanana*) are attached to them with the purpose of attacking the undesirables (noninitiates, women, or children) who approach the dance site.

"The eyes of the mask are large, so that the Komo may see and unveil everything; the nostrils are well opened for he must sniff everything, smell the good and bad of things. The mouth is twisted for the Komo does not talk; he only whistles and sings. The ears are vast so that he may hear everything, even that /150/ which each one says secretly in his heart. The chin of the mask is square, a sign of purity, decision, and clairvoyance." During the ceremonies, he silently opens his mouth. It is said that due to the presence of the altar of souls, *nimara boli*, "happiness penetrates him" (1). By singing, he redistributes this felicity to the audience and this is why he repeats the verses.

794 532 784 841 As a rule, women, *griot* and noninitiates are taboo to the mask. To each of the elements composing it also belongs a particular taboo. Thus, the head of the mask must never touch menstrual blood. Any infraction would bring about "a visible change to the face" and the altars contained in the sac carried by the dancer would be without strength. For this reason, no member must participate in the ceremonies if his wife is in a menstrual period.

1. *Here dun*, literally, penetration of happiness.

794 The costume worn by the dancer is held up by a sort of carcass
292 (bry) made of ngolobe (1) wood used because of its flexibility, and is enveloped with a light blanket for protection. Inside the bry are suspended various flutes (komo fle) which are blackened by the blood of sacrifices offered to "improve their sound" and which will be used in the course of the ceremonies. Along with these flutes is a little bag filled with spare spider webs. Any individual who goes under the
[834] bry to dance must abstain from sexual relations for a specified period of time prior to the ceremony.

The costume (nya) which covers the carcass is made with the clothing of individuals killed by the Komo (2). Contrary to the bry, which has no active role but serves only to isolate the dancer inside the mask,
/ the religious role of the costume is very important. It represents the "body and the valor of the ancestors." It is not the object of blood sacrifices, but is covered by a powder made of the bones of individuals killed by the Komo to which has been added kola nut juice. The
794 cloth is dyed with black earth taken from the river bank in exchange
292 for a small offering of copper, gold, or cereals. Drawings called
532 komo mani (literally, little people of the Komo) are made on the
cloth to represent Faro on the one hand, recognizable by his long black hair, and on the other the eight ancestors who received the word. All the first agricultural implements of the Bambara are drawn with red ochre. The feathers of black, white, and red egrets are then sewn on the nya to hide /151/ the black earth, which is the spirit's abode. Two days before everything is taken out, these feathers are the object of offerings of kola nut juice, millet mash, and the blood of fowls.

794 The costume, like the head of the mask, must be seen neither
292 by women nor by noninitiates. "Its color would change and it would
784 become dull, making a purification necessary."

794 The body of the mask has two arms into which the dancer intro-
532 duces his own. The arms terminate in a hook, koli (3), which is

1. Combretum micranthum.

2. When a guilty member or a non-initiate is "killed" by the Komo, his clothing is offered to it.

794 3. Koli means nail or spur in reference to
532 a rooster and, by extension, hook.

impregnated with black earth from the river and made of copper, Faro's metal, soaked in the venom of a viper before the hook was formed. These hooks are also annually soaked in red venom mixed with pepper. All these preparations make them dangerous weapons used for different purposes during the ceremonies.

The right hook (kinin koli) is used to kill the guilty ones or the undesirables. A slight would brings about death which is then attributed to Faro. The left hook defends members of the society against the dangers which are present, even for them, in the actions and emanations of the right hook. It contains two shards of black pottery, Faro's taboo, which keep away and thus diminish the latter's power. During the dance the Komo, wishing to protect one of the members under its jurisdiction, waves the left arm over him to attenuate the strength of the right. During funerals a gesture of the left hook will indicate the deceased's membership in the society and will assure him protection in the hereafter.

[784 823] The taboo of the copper hooks is the same as Faro's concerning this metal. Just as no one would cross the Niger wearing an object or an ornament of copper, similarly no one would wear copper in attending the Komo ceremonies.

The wearing of the mask, which is much sought after by several initiates at each ceremony, is assigned to one of them by the chief. This role involves risks which are diminished by certain precautions such as abstention from sexual relations before the ceremony. On the day of the ceremony, the elders make the wearer drink millet beer until he is completely inebriated; then for a moment they apply to his chin and abdomen the nyama boli which he will carry in a bag during the ceremony. He also puts on a ritual headdress which sometimes has incorporated in it a particle of the one belonging to the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé. The mask is then adjusted on his head, the flute slipped between his teeth, while the chief assures him of his good faith and proves to him that he runs no danger.

/152/ D. Musical Instruments

794 534 The emergence of the Komo is accompanied by rhythms played on drums, dyiri kolo (literally, bone, wood), made of hides stretched

194 534 on half-gourds, and accompanied by flutes and bells. The musicians, recruited from among the musical members of the society, are obliged to submit to certain precautions because of the proximity of the mask during the performance of the dances. In fact, if the mask casts a spell (korti), they may, unwittingly, breathe in the dangerous powder and it is wise to protect oneself by taking the antidote ahead of time.

194 534 The Komo's iron bell, kolõkolõ or grinda, is kept with certain altars in the chief's residence; it is rung by a special bearer, grindavo or nadara koloyo.

113 539 A myth recalls the origin of this bell. "A small child, who went to play at the crossroads situated at the approaches to the village, heard one day a bell ring and invisible beings speak. Seized with fear, he returned home. When he was questioned by his parents, he refused to answer but with his finger pointed out to them the road which he took every day. The parents followed it and arrived at the crossroads where they found a copper bell. The spirit of the place, Soba, announced to them that he was making a gift of it so that they might call the spirits by ringing it and that the spirits would answer them (1). But he asked the father to give him in exchange the child who habitually came to the crossroads so that the child could continue to play with the spirit's children. When the father, in despair, told him he had not the courage to part with his son, the spirit advised him to consult Faro.

The man gathered the young girls of the village together and asked them to intercede for him with the spirit. Dressed in their most beautiful clothes and wearing their ornaments, they went off singing and threw cakes and couscous into the river (2). The elders went down in turn and received Faro's consent. He demanded that

1. In olden times, "men spoke with their ancestors and with their gods."

[196] 2. Each year the offering and the race are repeated by the young girls of Ségou who go to the river singing the nyari nyari to.

794 they keep the instrument for religious ceremonies. After declaring
534 that they would obey, the elders returned to the crossroads where
773 the Soba spirit gave them the bell and left in exchange the child whom
the spirit had called to him in their absence.
539 The object was then taken to the blacksmith who made one in the
same shape, using wood or bone for the body, and stone for the
clapper. After the invention of iron, they were forged according to
the ancient model with the addition of small copper bells."

/153/ To ring the bell is "to make Faro hear the sound of copper,"
794 to call him, and flatter him at the same time. When the mask is
534 brought out, the sound warns the noninitiates to avoid the procession.
The flute or reed pipe of the Komo, wara da, "mouth of the one
armed with claws," is made of a bamboo stem pierced by three holes.
The middle one is open and the two others are obstructed by a cobweb. The instrument is held between the bearer's teeth and is tied
by a string to the back of his neck or to his ears.

794 A myth tells the origin of Faro's flute, made according to the
534 same principle, but of a different shape.
A woman, called Koussouba Koulibali, was bathing one morning
773 when she saw Faro and the dodo fish sitting at the river bank. The
539 fish was playing the flute and singing:

"I will whistle, I will whistle in my Faro's flute; he who will not hear me will die, he who will die will regret it" (1).

1. Na fye, na fye ne nka faro fle flye,
nyimi mame o na sa, nyimi sara o bone na.

The woman fled and told her husband, who was a diviner and chief of the Komo, about what had happened. The latter proceeded to the banks of the Niger and frightened away the fish who abandoned its instrument. The man seized it and went home, followed by the turbulent river water from which he managed to escape in his canoe. But his whole family perished in the flood.

In the morning, the man returned to the river bank and cried as he played the flute. He played for such a long time that Faro, taking pity on him, came out and said: "I have drowned the members of your family and flooded the village. I forgive you, however,

794 534 773 539 because of the offerings made by other men. Keep the flute and since you are Soma and chief of the Komo, let all the Komo flutes be blessed because of this one." By this he meant that the Komo flute, like the other ritual objects, would hereafter contain his strength, nyama. He added that, when men wished to call him or to talk to him, they would have to do it through the intermediary of this instrument.

794 534 Before each occasion when the mask is brought out, a sacrifice is performed upon the flutes "to improve their sound." Faro's flute is used in the rituals performed at the river bank, to pray to him or to thank him. To play the flute is equivalent to reciting his device; he is forced to hear. The Komo flute is used only during the masked ceremonies; it makes those who hear it say that the Komo is "a thing with a soft throat" (1).

1. Fẽ kã duma.

In former times the chief alone was allowed to play the flute, whatever its type; death was sanctioned for infraction of this rule. Ordinary flutes /154/ of a style different from those belonging to the cult are used by children.

E. Initiation to the Komo

794 852 Three days after the birth of a boy, his father presents him with the elements which he has contributed to the making of the Komo boli and recites the komo kumã: "You, Komo boli, these things are inside; society of the Komo, these things are inside; customs of the Komo, these things are inside; you are a child, you are going to approach the age of the elders; Komo boli, here is my child, watch over him" (2).

2. Komo boli la, nin waliw ba kono;
komo dyɛ̃ la, nin fɛ̃w ba la; komo sira
la, nin kunko ba kono; i ye demisɛ̃ ye
i bi ta makorobaya ye; komo boli nde fle,
tyɛ do, i dyã to a la.

He then returns the child to its mother with these words: "The son has been introduced to the secret of masculinity; he has received

794 852 the Komo's blessings, the Komo's blessing is with him; let him join the men, let his light be with us" (1). The child is then presented in the same way to its grandmother.

794 These acts anticipate the initiation which later will make the new-born an adolescent member of the Komo society.

794 561 [564] In each village this society is composed of all initiated men, divided into age grades, which are themselves composed, theoretically, of the men circumcised in the same year. Only the griot are not admitted. It is permissible for an individual who has not been initiated immediately after his circumcision to be admitted later if the society agrees. He will belong, regardless of his age, to the age grade with which he will have been initiated.

One age grade has precedence over the other which follows. This hierarchical order is followed strictly in daily life as well as during councils and ceremonies. To break these rules of seniority would mean to disturb the order even in the hereafter, since the Komo gathers together the sum total of both living and dead members.

794 [735] The recruitment of members varies from one region to another because of the expenses involved in the admission ceremony and in participation in the ritual. Some villagers refrain from joining because of poverty, and it also happens that some conversions to Islam are brought about by this fact.

/155/ The initiation is performed at night. The kotigi (2) presents to the future members, one by one, the ancestors' tools. He explains to them their origin, their history, their role, and their spiritual value. He teaches them the respect they owe the ancestors for their courage, their labors, and the technological inventions of which they were either initiators or guardians. The mask is removed from its shelter and dressed by a member; in front of the children the man who wears it unmasks himself and reveals to them the meaning of the different parts of the costume.

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1. De dyira la tyę gundo la; ani komo ye dukaw mine nuofe, komo ka barka bi a fe; ka fara tyew ka, ka yele kę an ta ye.

2. See p. 156.

794 The candidates next swear an oath the text of which is recited by the chief:

"If I reveal (the secrets of) the boli, may it kill me; if I disclose the institutions, may they kill me; until my death, if I speak, may my father die, may my mother die, may the boli break my heart" (1).

1. Ni nye korobo, boli ka fa, ni nye korobo, dyow ka fa, fo kata n sa ni nya fo n fa ka sa m ba ka sa, boli dyugu ka sõ ta.

Each in his turn, the children next lick the head and the hooks of the mask three times, thus assuring it their allegiance: "Until my death, I shall not reveal the koli. Faro has not been revealed! Let the koli not be revealed!" (1)

1. Fo ka ta n sa nte korobo koli, faro ma korobo, koli kana korobo.

After the altars, including the pembele, have been presented to [782] them, the postulants drink the blood of a goat offered in sacrifice; thus they assimilate the forces of the Komo and by this communion consecrate their oath.

Finally, the mechanism of the society in all its details is explained to them: the necessity of hierarchy in age grades, of respect for taboos, and of the secrecy in which all that concerns the organization must be held. A moral lesson is also taught them; in particular they [867] are advised to set themselves a line of conduct in private life as well as in public life, to be righteous, to avoid duplicity and bad faith, flãvlãña (literally, double action), never to serve two masters, and not to entertain conflicting desires among themselves.

794 As an illustration, the adventures of the first members who broke these laws are told.

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539 One of Makanta Djigui's companions, Garou Keita, was afflicted with this serious fault. He had become friendly with Moridje Sidibé, son of the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé, who had the same character. At this period three great Komo were already functioning in the region: that of Koulikouro called selo (literally, grave); that of Nyamina called dyibi (literally, dark); and that of Kankan.

Garou went to one of the ceremonies of the Komo of Kankan /156/ and by telling lies, incited the members to revolt against the local

794 773 539 chiefs, which they did. They interrupted the dances and refused to recognize the Komo which was dissolved, leaving the chief alone. But Garou, who had lied, died shortly after that.

The chief of Kankan carried away the altars and put them under the protection of the Komo chief of Koulikoro, and the members participated in the ceremonies of this locality. Moridje went to Nyamina and, in the same way as Garou, incited the members to engage in a kind of rivalry with the Komo of Koulikoro. In the course of a ceremony celebrated in this latter village, he called forth the Komo of Nyamina, using the authority attached to his father's name, and offered a male goat to both groups. The two chiefs refused, arguing with reason that one victim could not satisfy two Komo. Moridje paid no attention and brought the two maskers face to face with the goat between them. A fight took place with the animal as a pawn, each masker using his magical powers to win it, and the members gathered behind their respective masks shouting: "the goat is ours." Later, the mask wearer also died prematurely.

794 To avoid the possibility that members will give their allegiance to two Komo, they are made to lick the mask once again, while the following prayer is recited: "If you lick the mask, may you not make the *fĩvlãña*, may you not perpetrate a betrayal" (1). If, after swearing this oath, the party betrays it, he becomes "a rotten person" (*matolilo*) and loses the esteem and confidence of his companions.

794 869 532 As the young men grow with years and increase in knowledge, the instruction they are given is increasingly comprehensive. The head of the Komo, accompanied by men of his age grade, takes the postulant into the bush and questions him about his intentions and aims. Before indicating to him the group to which he is to be attached and introducing its members to him, he teaches him by drawing on the ground the combination of signs representing the arrangement in the universe of the Komo society, a combination which is usually reproduced before each ceremony and which permits the participants to recognize their place (see Fig. 12).

This drawing, called *wolo ti*, "sign of the generation," is composed of two long lines cutting each other at right angles and oriented

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1. *Nye komo kun no, i kana seka fĩvlãña kę, nye komo kun no, i kana seka dyãfa kę.*

794 according to the cardinal points. The point of juncture is placed in the
869 center of a square called *bara kene*, "rhythm of space," the internal
angles of which are armed with hooks. The two crossed lines are /157/
532 the symbol of the multiplication and extension of beings and things
in the universe which is represented by the central square. The four
angle hooks express the creation rotating upon itself (1). It is therefore,

a schematic representation of the order and movement of the universe.

Along the extension of the diagonal lines outside the central square are drawn five signs which are each the symbol of a category of initiates or of a ritual object; these signs also indicate the place of the participants during the ceremonies.

On the eastern and western branches are placed the signs of the older initiates:

1. *dyɛ*, "union." Sign of the Komo Society in its entirety, the body of its members.
2. *doniya*, "knowledge." The point of the angle is "the point of knowledge" and its opening "the collective voice of the society." We are dealing here with the science which the initiates possess.
3. *bako*, "link." This closed sign expresses the ties which bind the initiates one to another and to the Komo, as well as the group spirit of which they must give proof.
4. *sɔni*, "good will, consent." The point of departure of the stroke from the line indicates that the initiate is free to enter the society, to climb the steps of the successive grades indicated by the broken line, but not to leave it, and that he must have the will to follow the rules of the organization.
5. *tyɛ*, "truth." The members must be sincere. The two symmetrical hooks indicate that one must begin with truth and end with it.
6. *tyɛ sere*, "evidence of truth." This drawing, testimony to the preceding, is sometimes attributed to strangers who come to attend the ceremony and recognize the conventional signs (2).

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1. See p. 20. We have here a special representation of the swastika whose branches are turned toward the center.

2. See p. 211.

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532 7. *bẽni so,* "house of agreement." Evidence of the sign 1, it represents a sickle, symbol of the house and of the union of the members. In serious cases, to stop a quarrel or to settle a difference, the Komo chief presents an ancient sickle and says: "It is the proof of the agreement, it is the evidence of the union" (1).

1. *Beni so yeta do, dye šere do.*

8. *ǰigi so,* "house of support." The dot symbolizes the *komo so* and the whole recalls the support which the chief offers the members. Orphans sit in the spot where this sign is drawn.

/158/ 9. *so ba,* "big house." The drawing represents "the egg of the world" and marks the spot where the oldest geomancer in the village stands alone.

10. *komba,* "big door." Sign and place of the person who performs the sacrifice, for the sacrifice "opens the doors" and puts man into contact with the invisible.

On the northern branch are placed the signs which concern the young initiates.

11. *timidẽ,* "circumcised." This refers to those circumcised in the next to the last age grade. The sign is that of the completed person (2).

2. See G. Dieterlen, "Les signes des Kéita du Mandé /Signs of the Kéita among the Mande/," *l'Homme. Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie, de linguistique* (in press).

12. *timidẽ kle,* "circumcised of the last age grade." The drawing shows the incomplete person.

13. *tyi dẽ,* "son of work." These are the sons of the *kworę duga* (3). The sign, drawn inverse to that of the person, expresses the /159/ necessary disturbances and the pleasantries brought by these dignitaries to the Kworè and Komo ceremonies.

3. See p. 220.

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14. soni dɛ, "son of the sacrifice." Drawn on the place for the sacrificer's son, the sign includes a horizontal line representing the knife, for the son may be called upon to replace his father in performing his duty during the ceremonies.

15. yeleka tigela, "the laughing man who cuts." This is the individual in charge of proclaiming the good or bad position of the victims which have been sacrificed.

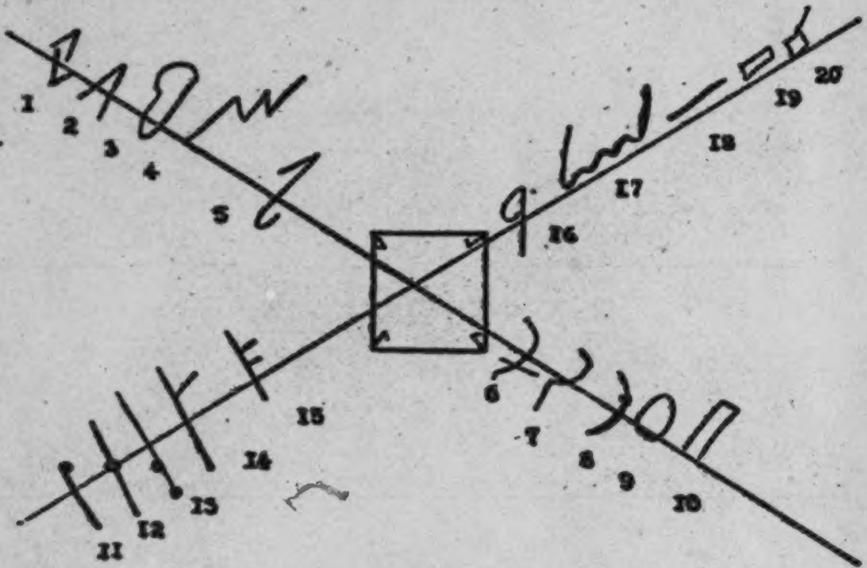

Fig. 12 — Drawing made on the ground by the chief of the Komo to mark, by their signs, the places of the participants during the ceremonies. This drawing, observed in the village of Dougoutiguibougou, is complete. When the branches forming an x are missing, the central square is always represented. (Drawing by an informant)

On the southern branch are placed the signs representing the blacksmiths; they relate to the institution of circumcision and to the functioning of the Komo of which these artisans are the dignitaries.

16. boffema, "honored person." Place of the aged blacksmiths.

17. wara da dyuru, "string from the mouth of the man armed with hooks." This is the small string of the flute, called "voice" of the Komo.

18. wara da, "mouth of the man armed with hooks." The flute of the Komo.

794 19. pembele. This sign represents both the society's pembele and
869 the board of the same name used for circumcision.

20. gosilãnde. The sign designates the primitive club and the small
532 mallet used in circumcising.

The ensemble of these figures, representing a summary of the universe in its arrangement and its movement, forms the scene upon which the actors in the ceremony take their places. The latter are in a way the living embodiment of these drawings as well as the movements which change the order of presentation and must be executed with special precautions. In effect, any change made in the arrangement of the actors in the scene is felt to have repercussions in the universal organization. This is why the movements of each one give rise to rituals of forgiveness and purification concerning the sign corresponding to him (1).

1. See below.

F. Ceremonies of the Komo

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796 The ceremonies in which the mask participates take place several times a year according to the decision of the members. Their purpose is to discuss the interests of the society, to make joint decisions assuring the prosperity of its members, to promote harvesting, and to commemorate the organization of the Komo.

Three principal ceremonies are celebrated: the first, called /160/ "anniversary of the Komo" (komo sanyelema), at the end of the dry season; the second after the harvest, for offering of the first produce, as the mask is never taken into the fields at the time of cultivation; the third during the cold season at the time of circumcision. They involve sacrifices offered in the cemetery in honor of the dead as well as divining rites. Occasional ceremonies may also take place inbetween upon the membership's decision; the mask is taken out for purifications. The neighboring societies are generally invited to
[574] attend the reunions and the drinking which follow (2).

2. The important Komo chiefs are thus consulted by strangers in the village, who sometimes travel considerable distances.

194 196 The ceremony begins with a council meeting which is attended by all the members and which takes place in an enclosure, kara so. Early in the morning, the Komo chief, aided by two men of his age grade, draws upon the ground the figures which indicate the places of the participants and of the material objects (1).

> 1. See Fig. 12.

When the members arrive, they immediately place themselves, without risking disorder, near the sign proper to the group to which they belong. Each one, in passing, greets the person who will perform the sacrifice. The inhabitants of the neighboring villages are received by a member in a spot somewhat removed. They state the group to which they belong or draw their sign on the ground without saying a word. The chief acclaims their arrival with these words: "The strangers have come; the strangers, sons of the Komo have come; their place is in their hand; let tolerance be granted them" (2). The council meeting is then opened.

> 2. Dnow nana, komo dẽ dnow nana,
> u siki yoro be u bolo, yafa ka kę u ma.

The chief sits down in the central square, facing the west, places the boli to his right, listens to the propositions of the members, all of whom similarly face west. If he rises, all conversation ceases; it resumes only when he is again seated. If a member wishes to move during the meeting, he must ask the permission of the chief of the Komo. The latter goes to place his hand near the sign as an excuse for the man. When the member returns, the chief of his group takes a little water with which to pour over the drawing as a purification (3).

> 3. The temporary absence of a member is called: wuli ka bo komo ko la, "to rise and leave the affair of the Komo" and the return do dye ba la komo jine sabu la, "to enter into the great union of the spirit of the Komo."

When all questions concerning the society or the village have been examined and discussed, and when the decisions have been reached, everyone stands up; the drawings on the ground are erased with water.

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a) Tree of the Ndomo, at the center of the uncultivated square (Soroba).

Plate V

b) Stone altar (Banankoroni).

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a) Hut of the Komo (Konodimini).

Plate VI

b) Holes for refuse (Banankoroni).

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794 The rituals in which the mask participates generally /161/ take
796 place the following night in a thicket called komo tu, "bushy one of
201 the Komo," situated in the bush near the village.

As soon as they hear the mask whistling, the members approach according to their age grades, the older ones first. In principle, only those under the jurisdiction of the functioning Komo and their guests are present. However, any initiated stranger who wishes to attend the dances makes his status known by means of the following signs:

1. Shouting "hế" or "ho," he presents his right hand to the mask with all the fingers folded except the index and the little finger which point towards it. The index, in this case, represents the circumcised man, member of the Komo society, in sum, the petitioner. The little finger, which is smaller, expresses this man's submission to the Komo and the fact that he is and will always remain its inferior.

2. He puts a twig of straw in his mouth; the light colored straw signifies that his heart is pure, that he has no evil intention. The mouth, closed over the straw, shows that the man, "understanding the word of the Komo," has no need to speak of it.

3. On his arrival, he says: ani bara (literally, I am with the bara). The masker, hearing these words, crouches and then straightens up suddenly before the newcomer as though to frighten him. The latter then says: "I am a new child of the society" (1). When he is accepted, the masker resumes the dance and the ceremony continues.

794 The rhythms of the Komo bear the general name of komo bara or
796 komo foli dunu (literally, rhythm of the Komo drums) (2). They are numerous, adapted to the rituals they accompany, each endowed with a separate name. The Bambara classify them into three categories: the rapid, violent, and difficult rhythms performed against the non-initiates; the soft rhythms for circumcision; the sad rhythms for funerals.

1. Ne ye timidẽ kura ye.

533 2. The word bara is reserved for the rhythms of the masked Komo dances. The rhythms of the profane dances of the elders are called mabere fo, those of the young men, bɔ̃dyala, those of the girls, kofili.

194 196 533 During the masked dances, once the drummers have begun the rhythm of the Komo, they must neither slow down nor cease their playing; otherwise the masker will rush at the player and threaten him with his left hook. In this case, the musician changes the rhythm in order to soothe the masker and sings: "You, old men, you are with the bara; listen, this bara is not empty." (1).

1. Aw ni bara makorabaw; klo madyo,
nin bara te bara lãkulo ye.

194 196 198 /162/ The masker participates in the ceremony not only by dancing and by uttering cries, whose pitch and intensity vary according to the action which he is preparing or performing.

A guttural and very muffled cry (buâ, buâ, buâ) called komo suruku (literally, hyena of the Komo) is used to frighten the participants.

A shrill and short cry (pyę, pyę, pyę) called kono fari kasi (literally, cry of the bad bird) is frequently used to animate the dance and amuse the spectators.

A long and softer cry (ô-ô, ô, 'ô, the last three ô's being very close together) called morokorobaw kasi (literally, cry of the ancestors) greets the chief and his age grade.

194 196 During the mask dance, the Komo's griot encourages it by reciting the devices which exalt its power, authority, and judicial powers:

"You, Komo, you griot of the Komo, you, ringer of the bell, from whom do you come? You come from Makanta Djigui. You, bad Komo, from whom do you come? You come from Soma Moriba. To whom did this one give it? He gave it to the sons of the blacksmiths. Who are the owners of the Komo? Makanta Djigui, Soma Moriba, the sons of the blacksmiths. These have not known shame; you must not be ashamed. These have not received humiliations; you must not be humiliated.

"You, little living Komo, enemy of non-members, friend of members, take your enemy's heart, take his liver. I follow behind you and not before you. Ah! Komo; you, killer of the fat dead ones, shroud of those living, act upon him who provokes you as you do upon him who does not provoke you" (2).

2. E komo, e dyeli, e ndara kolo fo,
e bwora dyeni ma, e bwora makanta

794 196 jigi la, e komo fare ma e bwora dyeni ma, e bwora soma moriba, o ya di dyeni ma, oy a di numu dew ma dyenuye komo tigiw ye, makanta jigi, soma moriba, numu dew; oluw ma malo, aw kana malo, oluw ma lebu, aw kana lebu.

E komo ni nyenama biribalyuw dyugu, birilew nyima i dyugu son ta i la ka bye ta mbi ko nti nye.

E komo, i šu klo la faba, nyenemaw kasange, minya kila a ko la, mi ma kila a ko la.

When the drums beat and the dances are animated, and when the masker cries, it is said that "the bara of the komo is hot" (komo bara wušule do). The ceremony is in full swing.

Diverse incidents may occur in the course of the masked dances which give rise to interpretations and interventions by the members.

794 196 187 When one of the arrows attached to the mask trembles, it indicates the presence of a sorcerer in the assembly. The elders remove the arrow and immediately order /163/ the ceremony to stop. After the drums have been silenced, they request the culprit to present himself, which he immediately does. These words are spoken to him: "Your arrow attacks you" (1). He then offers a ram and beer in sacrifice, while the arrow is replaced and the dances resume. If an arrow falls in the course of the dance it indicates the presence of a sorcerer in the village.

794 196 If a part of the costume falls off, it is picked up by three members and kept to be burned with the refuse that is later swept up (2).

794 196 688 If one of the participants has broken the taboo and revealed the secrets of the Komo during the past year, the masker whistles, asks the drummers to stop playing, and says: "Here is a grasshopper for me." These words express the contempt in which he holds the culprit. Next he adds: "There is the smell of a corpse here" (3).

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1. Komo bye bila.

2. See p. 259.

794 3. Šu kasa be.

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688 The man lowers his head and all move away from him. The masker wounds him with the right hook. He is banished from the circle of
766 dancers and probably will die several days later. His funeral rites are not solemnized. The corpse is tied by the feet and removed from his home through a hole made in the wall to prevent his evil nyama from returning to the family. The body is beaten with switches so that the soul may leave the village forever, and is thrown into the common grave or placed in the cleft of a tree, which is then closed up with thorny bushes. In this case it is often devoured by the hyenas. The clothing which belonged to him is hung on the hook placed on the outside wall of the sanctuary. No one has the right to weep for his death and no one ever mentions him again. To do so would be an offense to the Komo.

794 It may also happen that the emergence of the Komo occurs without the village being warned. In this case, if a young girl imprudently
796 approaches the place where the dance is being held, the masker may
688 kill her with one blow of its hook directly upon her head. A little
782 of her blood is then placed as an offering on the nya and her jewelry thrown into the river where her soul goes to replace the virgin who, in former times, was annually offered to Faro.

G: Effects of Broken Taboos

794 The breaking of the taboos attached to the altars or to the mask
783 reacts upon each of the parts affected as it does upon the whole and brings about a diminishing of the Komo's power, which is abandoned by Faro and the ancestors. A purification may be performed /164/ in certain cases. The error is then corrected and the spiritual forces reenter the altars.

If a woman or a noninitiate catches a glimpse of the nya, the komo tigi and his age grade go down to the river bank and, to the sound of drums, present the culprit's apologies to the spirit:

"I have not come for someone else, I have come for myself, I have come to reestablish the race of our fathers" (1).

1: Ne mana ma nyini; ne mana nyere nyini,
ne ma na m fa šia tuku ko la.

194 183 The victim offered by the responsible party then has its throat cut, its body is thrown into the water, and the members take some black earth to smear again on the regenerated nya.

If the chief does not observe the chastity imposed upon him before every sacrifice, he must advise the elders of his age grade and purify the altars by sacrificing two roosters or a goat.

It would seem that the taboo of the nimara boli may not be broken without danger, and that in this case the fault is almost irreparable. The Komo is affected not only in one of its parts, but in its entirety, and a general reordering becomes necessary for the society. The chief and the elders carry away the principal altars to their place of origin, that is to say to the village where they were consecrated through contact with those of the local Komo (1). The owner of this latter Komo keeps the tainted objects for seven days. After this delay, the petitioners return, bringing victims which are sacrificed upon the altars now placed in contact with those from which they originated (2). The meat is eaten by the chief who is being consulted, and by him alone. The petitioners must then return home with their sack without speaking a word to anyone during the trip.

This ceremony, which is a second consecration, may under no circumstances be repeated. If the taboo is broken once more after a first fault and a first reordering, the Komo is considered to be entirely destroyed and the village is sometimes abandoned by the inhabitants who have "lost their soul" and who fear the wrath of Faro; they disperse, unhappy and powerless. Some conversions to Islam or to Christianity may have had no other motivation.

H. Role of the Komo

194 182 "The Komo is a society which unites the highest divine power, men, animals, and plants until the /165/ end of the world. It is the

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1. See p. 190.

2. The nimara boli is "rubbed" on the nimara boli of the tro ba, the nyɔ̃ boli on the nyɔ̃ boli of the same, etc.

keeper of souls. When there is no longer life on earth, when there are neither men, nor animals, nor plants, the Komo will awaken the souls of the dead which have been in its keeping for eternity."

As a repository of the spiritual forces of its members, the Komo is involved in most of their activities and participates in daily life. Birth, circumcision, marriage, burial, and the cult of the ancestors are all characterized by its direct or indirect intervention. It plays a remarkable role in agricultural life (rain, agrarian rites, household and communal excrement) as well as in the functioning of handicraft technologies. Collective issues (war, political conflict) and economic questions are submitted to its decision. In fact, the members' belongings (grain, cowries) are kept in granaries for which the chief is responsible and from which he agrees to make interest loans to needy members. The chief of the Komo, who is a diviner, is consulted directly by petitioners. Assisted by the elders of his age grade, he is also responsible for dispensing justice (1). Thus the name of an unworthy member is pronounced above the pembele which is immediately removed. This gesture deprives the culprit of the protection of Pemba and abandons him to misery and shame.

On the other hand, the actual functioning of the society develops social life. The initiates of neighboring villages are invited when the mask is brought out and a number of marriage negotiations are concluded during the drinking parties which follow the ceremonies. These also favor cultural exchanges. It is during publicly held conversations that teaching is furthered, for the rituals are commented upon and explained, and the myths and their metaphysical foundations are presented in detail. The most knowledgeable informants all speak of nights spent in listening to the competent elders around the jars of millet beer.

The Komo is the repository of traditional beliefs and rules of solidarity between members. It diffuses a thorough knowledge of civic and moral instructions, the rights and duties of the members, the taboos and sanctions which affect those who break taboos. Its juridical role makes it a disciplinary agent: it is a powerful support of the Bambara social organization.

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1. The judicial role has been notably pointed out by L. Tauxier in La Religion bambara, p. 300.

/166/ The Kworę

794 821 The Kworè society, kworę dye (literally, reunion of the Kworè) consists of individuals around the altars (kworę boli) on which rites are performed concerning the skies, space, the cardinal points, the atmospheric manifestations of Faro, and particularly rain. Kworè literally means "dried up pond."

The rituals are intended for the Kworè spirits who depend upon Faro and who live in the kaba fǐn (third sky). They are in charge of watching over the rains sent from the woloflâ kaba (seventh sky), which cross the other skies and "the void" before reaching the earth. The spirits struggle in the skies and in space against the mahalakillen of the koblenkaba (fifth sky) who try to stop the water. Lightning, thunder, and thunderbolt are the effects of these struggles.

794 778 The principal ceremonies take place around a tree, called kworę ǰigi, which is situated to the east of the village and is the usual habitation of the spirits when they descend to receive men's offerings. The altars are placed in a hut built in the bush; other samples of these are kept in the chief's residence. A large stone, kworę fara, located near the village and placed in the ground above some symbolic objects, also receives offerings. The Kworè society is the owner of a communally cultivated field, in which small millet, sañõ, is exclusively sown and the harvest of which is kept for the needs of the cult.

A chief, the kworę tigi, is entrusted with the care of the altars and performance of the ritual.

A. The Altars

The altars of the kworę are placed in a sanctuary called buku sãmpere ni (literally, little hut of thunder) and situated at a certain distance from the village because of the dangers from lightning. The door is low and very narrow so that the forces held within may not escape.

The altars are composed of the following objects:

1. A large sac of the skin of a male goat, kworę boli sãmpere, open at its upper extremity and suspended by a boa skin (miñã) which symbolizes lightning. This sac, which has three compartments, contains copper, water from the Niger, rain water, and the "thunder stones" of the society. The "thunder stones," sãmpereni or sãmpere

194 118 *dyele*, play an essential role /167/ in the rain cult among the Bambara as among the other blacks of the Sudan. They supposedly fall from the sky with lightning bolts (1).

> 1. They are picked up at the spot where they fall and are the object of an important trade.
>
> At the time when a Kworè society is being founded, the chief, generally accompanied by the *komotigi*, visits villages where lightning has struck in order to buy stones and to choose them with a knowledge of the case. Each member contributes to the purchase of one stone.

2. Another sac also made of the skin of a male goat, called *ñõ boli* (*boli* of millet), is suspended from the roof by a serpent skin. This altar is dependent upon the *ñõ boli* of the Komo, which presides over germination. It contains small millet from the fields of the Kworè and some of the small millet from the *ñõ boli* of the Komo.
3. A sac containing water from the last rain, called *ngule sãndyi*.
4. A sac made of the bladder of an ox, *ǰettemine boli*, makes it possible to see the water level from the outside. After each rainfall the level is checked by the chief and the water is poured into the *ngule sãndyi* where it is kept throughout the year.
5. A sac containing thunder stones intended for sale:
   - (a) To be suspended from roof to counteract lightning.
   - (b) To attract lightning; in this case the stone is placed under a shelter in the bush.
   - (c) To make a new *kworę boli*.

This sac is the object of libations consisting of rain water drawn from the *ngule sãndyi*, to which has been added a pulverized thunder stone.

6. An axe called *sãmpere dyele koro* (literally, old thunder axe) of an ancient shape, made of a hewn stone set in a wooden handle. Considered as the "mother of the thunder stones," it is not removed from the altar until the very last when the rites for rain have failed.

Pieces of mirror brought by members of the society are set into the wall; the reflections from these mirrors also are supposed to affect rainfall.

794 778 B. In the chief's residence, there are replicas of the axe and the altars. According to the needs, they are transported to the shore of the Niger, into the fields, or to the public square during the ceremonies. The originals, on the other hand, remain sheltered from the looks of outsiders and risks of impurity. Moreover, the chief owns a special altar, the kworę ni, "soul of the kworę," /168/ which contains the spiritual principles of the members who do not belong to the Komo society. The kworę ni is placed upon the chest of a dying man and receives his soul at the moment of death as does the nimara boli of the Komo (1). It is regularly saturated with rainwater.

C. The stone of the kworę, of which the lower part is crudely carved into seven teeth called kworę fara ni, is stuck into the ground after the following objects have been buried in this site. (See Fig. 13)

1. Three thunder stones called: fara ba, "big stone"; /169/ fara bye, "stone point"; fara ǰoli, "blood of stone." These recall the presence of Faro's power, rain, under the altar. When placing them, the following words are repeated seven times: "Help us" (1)!

1. A ka demme.

2. Three whips, the male number, testimony to the course of men who withstand the pain of the strokes without complaining. When they are buried the following words are spoken: "Let us be courageous" (2).

2. A ka farina.

3. A kongobwona axe (see p. 160) which recalls the ancestors' victory over famine; it announçes harvests and future wealth.

Drawings are made on the stone during the annual ceremony. In the center, a black dot called faro dẽzo, "womb of Faro," represents the spirit. It is framed by two series of three whips, each "to defend him," as well as by the first three of the eight ancestors (one of which was Koumabana) and by seven figures representing the members.

[F184] Woman is the taboo of the Kworè. Only males may approach the sanctuary and the altars. Any circumcised male desiring to participate 794 785 in the ceremonies must be initiated. The postulants are brought together by the chief under the Kworè tree, at the foot of which a fire is lit; each carries a twig of ñuãna wood. They suffer

194 785 uncomplainingly the burns inflicted upon them with a torch and they whip themselves vigorously. The chief next teaches them the role of the Kworè spirits, the rituals celebrating them, and the symbolic value of the objects of the cult.

194 522 Some of the members are designated to take the role of kwore duga during the ceremonies. Masked and waving freshly cut branches in each hand, they mount a wooden horse, the kworeduga so (1). Thus

[532 778]

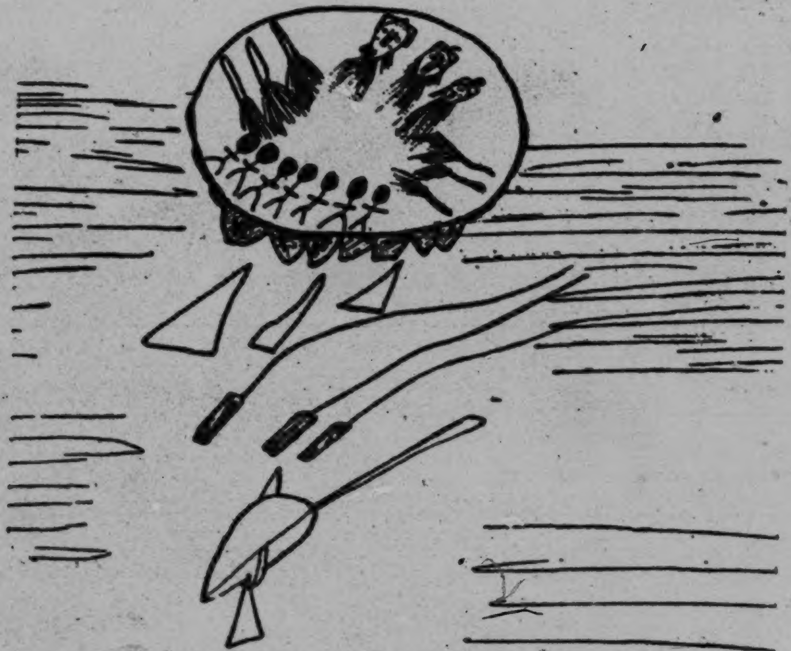

Fig. 13 —Stone altar of the Kworè of Banankoroni under which are buried three neolithic axes, three whips, the ritual iron axe, kongobwona. The drawing, made in the course of the annual ceremony, represents the first three of the eight ancestors who received the word, the members of the society, and the Kworè whips; the black spot is the "womb of Faro." (Drawing by an informant)

1. The kwore duga (literally, vulture of the Kworè), also called togoro koya, "jesters," are as their name indicates, jesters who have the right to joke about

equipped, they represent the spirits of the *kworę*, mounted on their winged horses to attack the sky. One of them wears a mask, the *kworę ku*, to represent the ancestor of the group (1).

794 Close bonds unite the Komo and the Kworè. Their cults complement each other and an individual wealthy enough to meet the necessary expenses may belong to the two societies. In fact, one of the Komo's roles is to watch /170/ over the progress of the cultivations: its altars watch over the soul and the vital force of the crop seeds. The harvest, however, depends on rain and thus comes under the jurisdiction of the altars of the Kworè. The complementary activity of the two societies is certainly felt by the users who declare that "the *ñõ boli* of the Komo and the Kworè are united in action."

Some authors have raised the question of the Kworè's greater antiquity, when compared to that of the Komo, on the basis of the "Priapic" aspect of the former's ceremonies (2). Since the real purposes of the institution have almost completely escaped these observers, it was not possible for them to penetrate the meaning of these rituals. It is at the foot of the tree of the Kworè that men call upon the skies where Faro reigns; they pray to the *koblenkaba* in case of war, the *sunãnkaba* in case of epidemics, etc. The annual ceremony is a representation of the action of the invisible powers to obtain the rain necessary to men. The burns and the blows which the members inflict upon themselves, as well as the galloping of the *kworęduga*, symbolize the celestial struggles of the spirits among the unleashed elements.

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the most sacred things; their social position is comparable to that of the *griot*. In former times they were the first to sacrifice to the *boli*.

1. The materials, wooden horses, and masks are blackened by fire and saturated with karite oil.

2. See L. Tauxier. *La Religion bambara*, p. 311.

The *Ceble* or *Ndomo*

794 Like their circumcised and adult elders, all the uncircumcised and nonexcised members of a village form a society, called *čeble* (literally, red man) or *ndomo* (literally, gathering), whose members are called *ndomo dew*, sons of the *ndomo*, or also *ndomo ngow*. The society of the *ndomo* is older than that of the Komo (1). Formerly it brought together a great number of adolescents since circumcision was performed much later. Nowadays, since children are operated upon very young, its importance has diminished, but as it contains the power of the uncircumcised it still plays an important role which is expressed even in its name. Red is a symbol of power and energy; it is also the [822] sign of the sacrifice.

The *ndomo* is directed by a chief assisted by a person who performs the sacrifices, *murukalatigi* (literally, master of the knife handle) and by an organizer of ceremonies, the *dyolokotigi* (literally, master of the chain).

It is in the course of agricultural work communally performed that the /171/ most energetic member is name chief; he is the one who has best and most rapidly fulfilled his task and who has, in addition, caused the adversaries who have been presented to touch the ground three times. The chief, who is responsible for the altars of the *ndomo*, sees to the instruction of the initiates, regulates their competitions, nominates the bearer of the mask and the one who is charged with the maintenance of ritual objects. Finally, he officiates during the collective ceremonies. The *murukalatigi* cuts the throats of the victims; he cuts out and makes the masks and other ritual objects. The *dyolokotigi* directs the ceremonies and makes decisions about the members' advancement.

The hierarchy is composed of five grades corresponding to the five fundamental altars. Each grade is passed annually after special

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1. It is said: *ndomo ka koro komo ye*, "the *ndomo* is older than the *komo*." Certain aspects of the *ndomo* have been described by Ch. Monteil, *Monographie de Djenné*, p. 15, and L. Tauxier, *La Religion bambara*, p. 380 ff.

794 instruction and initiation. Five years are thus necessary to reach the
highest rank. Each promotion is paid for by the individual providing
[782] two roosters whose throats are cut upon the altars at the end of the
annual ceremony which takes place in the bush under a tree called the
kalabana, following communally performed labor. After meal, a
[526] fight called bari, organized under the direction of the chiefs, puts the
young boys in opposite groups and gives them the opportunity to show
their courage and their initiative.

794 The members' activity consists of collective work at the time of
476 the cultivation. The millet and the gifts in kind received in payment
for the work are owned communally.

A. Material Objects of the Cult.

794 The society is the owner of ritual objects such as a mask and whips
778 which are usually placed in a hut, ndomo buku, at some distance
534 from the village.

The objects, numbering five, are rudimentary musical instruments. The wara, the clawed one, or diara, the lion, is a wooden bull-roarer approximately 35 centimeters in length, which is manipulated by means of a string a meter long. Sometimes the object is of iron and of smaller dimensions. The tori, toad, is a small box which gives off a nasal sound when it is scratched. The kono, bird, is made of two pieces of gourd bound together by spider webs. The wulu, dog, is a small calabash of about 10 centimeters in diameter, punctured by four holes. A string, threaded through its neck, allows it to be rotated like a rhombos. The ǰineble (literally, red spirit) is a buffalo horn pierced by three holes, /172/ obstructed by spider webs, into which one blows and which produce a loud, flute-like sound. One society usually owns several specimens of each of these instruments.

794 The mask, said to be the most ancient object, is of sculptured wood
778 representing a human face crowned by several vertical, rather long
532 horns (1). The whole is completely decorated with cowrie shells and
red kise (2), grains which represent the blood from the offerings. The

1. The masks most often carry eight horns, but this rule is not always respected.

2. Linociera sudarica.

794 high forehead, black and always smeared with karite butter, confers
778 upon the face a beneficial power. The whole mask is regularly rubbed
532 with ground charcoal powder and with the juice of the kola nut.

The whips of the mask (*ndomo busa*) are made of *ñuana* branches
794 famous for their suppleness. They are made at the time of the annual
778 ceremony and only renewed the following year. At the time of their manufacture, they are soaked in water, which the members of the society then drink "in order not to have to suffer from the blows which they will receive."

Each member also possesses a long whip made of the branches of
824 a bush, the *ngere ni*, (1) which is also called "tree of Faro" for it grows in water, and which contains part of the beneficial power of the spirit. The whip is used to try out the children's courage. The one who cries or complains will carry this handicap with him through life; even after his circumcision he will be referred to as a coward.

B. Initiation

794 Each new grade is acquired in the course of the annual ceremony
526 which takes place after the harvest. An elder entrusted with the sacrifices cuts the throats of the roosters offered by the postulants over the tree of the *ndomo* (Pl. V, a) and over the ritual objects placed at his feet, and then pours boiled millet as an offering. During this time the young people plow the ground where the contest, *bari* (2), is to take place; this fight will pit them against each other and give them the opportunity to show their courage and competitive spirit.

The chief designates the fighters two by two who are watched over /173/ by the *dyolokotigi*. In the contest, during which any use of legs or feet disqualifies the fighter, the one who makes his adversary fall three consecutive times is chosen to be initiated into a higher grade on the following night. After this contest, the losers must bring two additional roosters if they also wish to be initiated. Then a meal eaten in common brings together the members of the society and the postulants.

1. *Hibiscus pandoriformia*.

2. To make oneself fall, the joust.

794 On the following night, the future initiates are led into the bush to a place called biri yoro (literally, place of initiation), where they sit down upon the ground, their heads covered with a piece of cloth.

At a sign from the dyolokotigi, a member causes the ritual instruments to roar or sing in succession; then he hides them and the postulants must find them. As they are not able to do so, a series of hazings are inflicted upon them (1) after which they are shown the instruments and each in turn made to repeat the solemn oath:

"If you have heard the dyara of the uncircumcised, that is it. Chisel a piece of wood, make a hole, put a string through, turn it, it is that which is the word of the ndomo dyara. If you reveal it, may it take your heart, may it take your liver, may it kill you" (2).

Next, they are made to lick three times the object which is then entrusted to them so that they may learn to use it. The same ritual is performed for each instrument, and the prayer is repeated with only a change in the name.

The young men frequently sacrifice upon the altars of the ndomo.
794 The usual content of the sacrifice is the gray lizard /margouillat/,
782 busa, likened to an uncircumcised boy (its tail representing the
835 foreskin). The victim's wanzo, liberated by death, joins the wanzo
contained in the altars and, consequently, that of the members.
[262] The animal is then cooked and eaten.

C. Activity of the Society

794 At the time the fields are being cultivated, the members who are called upon to do work take their ritual objects along. The young

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1. These hazings are often severe; fun is made of the ignorance and fears of the postulant.

2. Ni ye me bilakorow ka ndomo dyara, nin do ka djiri dese, ka wo bo o la, ka dyuru ndo o la, o bi fyeku, o de bi ndomo dyara ka fo, ni ya korobo, a ki sõ ta, a ki biñe ta, a ki fa.

194 girls who provide water and are present during the work sing to encourage the best workers or to insult the lazy ones.

Once their task is done, they partake on the spot of dishes /174/ especially prepared for them. As they leave they make their instruments roar and resound. By these means, the force (*wanzo*) which they have spent in working is "recaptured in the wind" by the twirling of the rhombos and returned to the *ndomo*, that is, recovered by themselves. For if their *wanzo* has permitted a useful effort, it has penetrated into the fields, thus diminishing by so much the store of the *ndomo*. On the other hand, this power, which is useful for cultivation, is harmful to germination. To leave it in the earth would injure the harvests. And this is why, as an extra precaution, the owner burns a gray lizard in his plot the following day in order to rid it completely of this evil accretion.

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196 During the dry season, ceremonies to bring out the mask are performed for the purpose of soliciting gifts from the inhabitants of the village. The members stand in a circle before each door while the masker dances the *ndomo do*, the dance of the *ndomo*. The chief designates two young men who, placed in the center, each receive three whip lashings from their comrades. Then, the youngest strikes the masker who dances again, hitting in his turn with his long whip those who do not lower their heads correctly as a sign of respect.

If the owner who is being solicited turns a deaf ear, all sing to make fun of him and to force him to give:

"It is the custom, we are not hungry; it is the custom of the world, we are not hungry" (1).

1. *Lada do, kongo tawna, dyɛ̃ lada do kongo tawna.*

When all the houses have been visited, the children line up to return and, at the chief's order, walk towards a crossroad, which is the seat of the protecting spirits of the *ndomo*. There they leave the mask and break their whips saying: "Crossroads, I entrust myself to you."

The gifts representing food or cowrie shells are divided up among the maskers and the three chiefs. The millet is kept for the day of the annual ceremony.

On following night, the masker goes to the crossroads and brings back to the chief the ritual objects which were temporarily left there.

D. Role of the Institution

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According to Bambara expression, the ndomo is "the mother of the wanzo of the uncircumcised (1)" for its power which resides in the ritual objects /175/ is composed of the wanzo of all adolescents.

1. Wanzo ba ye čeble

The mask and the altars at first keep a part of the wanzo of the members who wear them, manipulate them, or offer them sacrifices. On the other hand, after circumcision, at the moment of the final leap of the newly circumcised over the ritual fire, the wanzo ultimately leaves them to settle itself in the mask of the ndomo. Thus channeled and conserved, these forces add themselves to those of the uncircumcised in the masks which become the repositories of their life.

[775] Moreover, the soul of the uncircumcised and nonexcised who have died prematurely establishes itself in the altars during the funeral rites celebrated by the members.

The mask of the ndomo is thus the receptacle of the wanzo of the circumcised, living and dead; as for the altars, they contain all the souls of the uncircumcised dead. All of this confers upon the ndomo the responsibility for the life of the adolescents and gives it such power that to a certain extent, this society of young people is feared by the adults (2) who have left it.

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2. When an adult, especially a member of the Komo society, has disturbed the peace of a member of the ndomo or has wronged the society, the wanzo may cause him to be impotent. In this case, in order to recover his virility, the man must obtain several tens of gray lizards which are sacrificed in his name on the mask and other altars. The animals are then cooked and the man is completely smeared over with the cooked substance which is then placed in the calabash and poured over the altars; the wanzo assigned to the man by the ndomo thus returns to the latter and the man is rid of its evil.

794 No one may remain a member of the ndomo after his circumcision. It is said that an individual who would continue his activity in the ndomo would acquire a double wanzo.

/176/ Chapter 7

RITES

771 The rites of the Bambara are very complex and often involve several institutions. The following descriptions are not of a general character as the rites admit perceptible variations from one village to the next, variations of which the individuals concerned are aware, for there is no absolute rule for any institution or ceremony.

Nevertheless, their various manifestations, which adhere to this flexibility of thought, testify to the unity of the cosmological and religious representations. When a Bambara is invited to be a spectator [574] to the ceremonies of neighboring villages, he is frequently informed about this or that aspect of the ritual which is unfamiliar to him during the drinking parties which follow. In fact, tradition demands that the preceding ceremony be commented upon and explained in front of the beer jars. But the unity of the representations is such that, according to the declaration of a qualified informant, "whoever knows the principles and mechanisms may deduce from them, without explanations, the meaning and symbolism of a ritual which has not been commented upon."

On the other hand, the rites are symbolic even in their most insignificant manifestations: time and place, form of the ritual objects, aspect of the victims, repetition of formulas or prayers, mimicry of the participants, the wearing of certain secular or priestly garments, etc. A very great subtlety presides over the choice of details. It is thus that, during the stages of creation, the supernatural powers have established, organized, and reorganized the universe (skies, spaces, lands) following the itineraries which include "the cardinal directions and angles." The rites in which the cardinal points occur include gesticulation which, depending upon the power

77/ considered, follows the chronological order used by this power in the beginning. Similarly, the various skies where Faro reigns are invoked according to their role and the aims of the petitioners /177/ who appeal to them in many cases with very long prayers.

In order not to overload this discussion, a very limited number of rites are described below. Among them, an important place is reserved for those concerning the person (see Ch. 3), which relate to birth, circumcision and excision, funeral rites, and the cult of ancestors. For each one of these the respective positions of the elements composing the individuality at different times have been pointed out.

The rites relating to the ordinary which come next, affect the collective life of the family and village. They concern the residences, the crossroads, and the public squares. They have a very definite character of a gathering together and redistribution of individual forces for the good of the community.

The rain rituals, also collective, which involve the Komo and the Kworè, present a typical example of Bambara symbolism.

Finally, the rituals for "the renewal of the year" have still a more general character: they show close ties uniting individual and community to the cosmos (1).

I. Rites Concerning the Person

Birth and Name-Giving

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From the moment of his birth, a newborn is washed with millet beer mixed with water. The beer has a purifying quality and the

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(1) The agricultural rites have not been touched upon in this work as they will be the object of a detailed description in: S. de Ganay, Techniques et rites de l'agriculture chez les Bambara (to be published).

In addition, most of the rituals are duplicated by a series of games of a cosmogonic character which relate to the stages of creation and to its past, present, or future states. See p. 54.

844 contact with water which symbolizes "the victory of Faro over Mousso
273 Koroni in the matter of family names" is a prefiguration of name-
271 giving.

851 As soon as the patriarch hears of the birth, he comes and shakes the family pembele over the child's head, three or four times according to the sex, in order to pass on to him the nyama and the qualities of the deceased person from whom he has inherited the ni and the dya. Then, he brings the family altar kere la boli ni into the house of the woman who has just given birth and places it before him. Crouching upon the ground, with fingers spread over the object, he pronounces the following prayer: "You, boli, make me a chief, so that my family prospers, a child is /178/ born, his soul is entrusted to you; I invoke you, boli, night and day" (1).

1. Boli tigi i ka masaya kanu ñe, de wolo la, a ni kalifa be i la, ngo boli ñu ani kle.

Holding the child on his knees, he places the object on its chest for three consecutive times. Repeating the prayer, he next cuts the throat of a red rooster over the open sac, dips the right index into the blood, and, depending upon whether it is a boy or a girl, makes three or four crosses on the forehead of the newborn who thus becomes the "son of the boli," boli dẽ.

A white sea shell, krokrodya (2), is placed before the newborn and gently moved about to "condense his dya within him." Then it is tied to the child's foot for three or four days according to its sex.
846 At the same time, the mother who is entrusted with the child's dya
until the name-giving ritual, adorns herself during the eight days
824 following the birth with a collar (madya, "dya of the person") made
751 from the odoriferous root of the tree bearing the same name. She will wear it until the child takes its first steps so as to protect it and to recall that she herself carried the soul of the newborn.

2. Cardita vingens.

553 The name is given on the eighth day by the chief of the Komo.
852 Under the dubale, a tree which shelters the village meetings, the elders assemble around the Komo altars which have been carried to the spot (3). If it is a first son, the father gives one hundred kola nuts,

two jars of millet beer, a ram which will be sacrificed, and money to the griot who will sing during the ceremony.

[789 A lock of the newborn's hair is shaved off and kept in a case (sebe) which, before being carried away, will be hidden in an oil container 826] for the following reasons: to protect the person from magical practices; to prevent a donkey from eating it, an occurrence which would cause the child's death; to permit him to seek for himself health and a long life in the image of his hair which will have remained in good condition.

The rest of the hair is carried by a female relative to the river, into which it is thrown in honor of Faro. Next a band of white cotton called faro fini (literally, Faro's clothing), on which someone has "spat" kola nut juice, is bound around the forehead of the newly baptized baby to indicate his subjugation to the spirit.

The senior elder then examines with attention the hairline and the meeting point of the eyebrows on the forehead before announcing in a loud voice the signs determining the child's character (tere). Then he grasps the child and swings it /179/ seven times from east to west, eight times from south to north above the altar while giving it the forename (toko) which he has inherited from a dead person along with the spiritual principles (1). The griot recite the father's genealogy (burudyu); the senanku comes to joke with the newborn and gently pulls his nose and ears.

852 304 On the same day the blacksmith draws on the child's face the wolo ti, consisting of seven vertical frontal scars and two horizontal scars under each eye. The first scars represent the complete man (ni and dya); the second, representing the number two, symbol of

553 852 3. If the village has no Komo, the name may be given above the paternal Ytuafebla.

1. According to another source of information, the eldest son receives the forename of his paternal grandfather, the second son that of his father, and the following sons those of the mother's fathers and grandfathers.

852 304 "the unknown in creation" (see pp 23 and 24), recall man's existence in this state. Consequently he is conscious of the unknown and has the possibility of apprehending it. These scars act upon the *tere* of the child and give him at the same time strength, courage, virtue, as well as the strength to penetrate the knowledge of the invisible (1).

[842] 1. They may be redrawn at the root of the nose of an adult who has despaired of having any children, or on the thigh of a woman who wishes to be fertile. These scars, drawn at birth, are not the only ones which the Bambara wear. See S. de Ganay, "On a Form of Cicatrization among the Bambara."

852 553 326 In a blacksmith's family, the name is given near the paternal forge. In the presence of all the village artisans, the *kotigi* shaves the head of the newborn while an elder prepares seven small sticks, over each one of which he pronounces the name of an ancestor. The *kotigi*, whose eyes are blindfolded, pulls out in succession three sticks from the group; the third determines the name which he immediately proclaims. While the women chant, the father removes from his altar the *kongobwona* axe as well as the other ritual objects. The throat of a sheep is cut over all these objects while a prayer is recited. The newborn's head is rubbed first with the axe, then with shaved off hair saturated with sacrificial blood. This gesture introduces the child into the family group. Next he receives the scars of the blacksmiths.

Circumcision

304 561 Whereas in former times circumcision was mandatory and performed upon young men (about twenty years), it is now practiced at an early age if the parents are wealthy enough to afford the expenses involved. /180/ Because of this fact, a child of eight years may be circumcised with an adolescent of sixteen to eighteen years, whose parents are poor and have only slowly accumulated the articles necessary for the ceremony. These two boys will belong to the same age grade (*flã*), and will be comrades (*flani*) all their lives, having the same rights and duties. Age thus has a restricted role in social relations.

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The date of the circumcision alone makes a coherent whole of a heterogeneous group—an age grade within /181/ which all the members owe each other friendship, confidence, and help in all phases of social and private life.

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Once the operation has been decided upon, the relatives proceed first to make the cap worn during the seclusion. The white cloth is presented to the Niger by a uterine brother who addresses a prayer to Faro requesting permission to draw with black earth the designs that will cover it. They will protect the child who is in a state of impurity

[531]

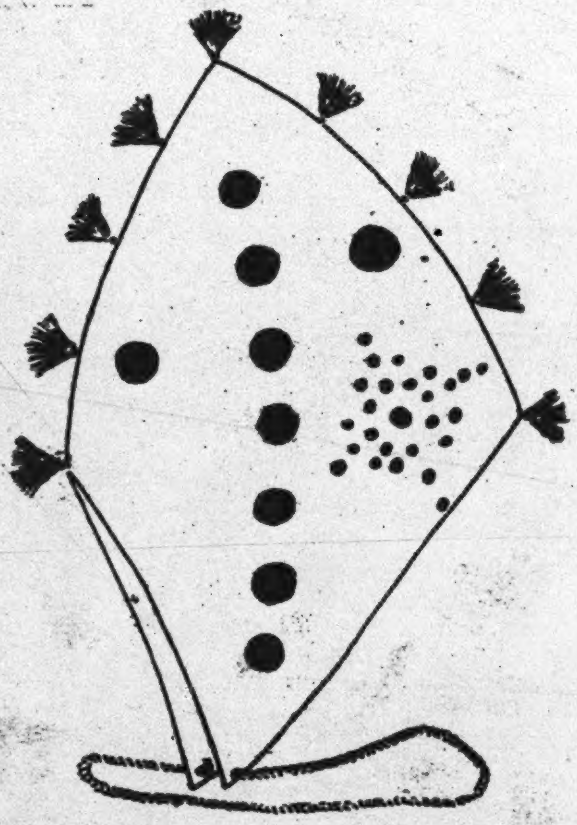

Fig. 14 — Cap of the circumcised Bambara. The nine black spots represent the child, his dya, and the cardinal points. The design at the right represents the sumangolo, or the coming of the twelve waters of the future. (See Fig. 3)

304 throughout the seclusion, the cap itself guaranteeing protection of his
292 head against the rays of fire from the fifth sky, koblẽnkaba (see Fig.
14).

Seven large black dots, vertically disposed, represent the child, 3,
304 and his dya, 4, as well as the man, 3, which he will later become, and
292 his future wife, 4. They also insure his protection from east to west.
531 The two other dots insure it from north to south. The cross of small
dots recalls the sumangolos, the "realization of the world" (1) and the purification obtained after the operation and the loss of the wanzo. Eight tassels (Faro's number) are placed on the cap, whose fringes were spun by a grandmother and are sewn on to "attract the forces of space." A ninth at the top is blackened with the spirit's earth. With his head thus covered, the circumcised boy is placed in the protective and purifying light of Faro. To operate upon a child without putting the cap on him would in fact amount to "bowing down before the acts of Mousso Koroni."

On his part, the blacksmith-circumciser makes preparations for the
304 operation, the essential instrument of which is a knife called boloko
326 kumba moru (literally, knife head, mother of the circumcision).
413 He himself has forged it and carries it in a small leather sheath hung
from his hip (see Fig. 15) (2).

The handle is slipped into a sort of iron sheath closed at one extremity called kurukun (literally, ball head) and open at the other called sukala (literally, sorcerer's handle). It is forged from one piece with the blade dyomuru fala (literally, orphan of the knife) and called "without pity" in archaic language.

The knife and its handle on the one hand, together with the metal sheath on the other, symbolize the person of the circumcised boy and the foreskin which is to be removed.

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1. See p. 56, Fig. 4.

[582] 2. The endogamy among blacksmiths is attributed to their role in circumcision and to the fact that their tools, especially this knife, are impregnated with the wanzo of the adolescents.

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Before the operation, the blacksmith washes the handle, an act which parallels /182/ the washing of the penis, and draws on the blade ritual designs either in charcoal or with boiled millet (1).

1. Some artisans have, once and for all, engraved the ritual designs on the blade.

The three figures če mani saba (literally, three little male persons) represent the first three circumcised men (Gwonna, Gwondo, and Gwonkè) who belonged to the blacksmiths' families at the village of Gwondougou. Every descendant of these ancestors must be circumcised like them. In making the drawing the operator says:

"Gwonna, Gwondo, Gwonkè, you have discovered iron and you withstood the pain (of the first circumcision), you feel shame neither by night nor by day; our feet are placed in your footsteps; the iron did not shame you, let it not shame us; it is the will of Faro... attack, attack, attack" (these last three words are addressed to the knife)(2).

2. Gwonna, gwondo, gwonkè, aw ye neke dañene,
ka neke gale munyu, aw ma malo šu ani kle,
an se daledo an se danola, neke maw malo a ka
na an malo, faro hakili do, šu šu šu.

The four figures, muso mani nani (literally, four little female persons), are the first four excised women, the inventors of pottery, who were the wives of these blacksmith.

The bird is the tatugu koroni, the incarnation of the eight ancestors of the blacksmiths. It recalls that circumcision is painful, hard, hot, comparable to the effects of fire, and that it is necessary to labor and suffer in order to withstand the cutting knife. This is also what the artisan recalls when, as he operates the children, he sings several times over:

"The knife is hot; the timorous man cannot stand it. It is a purification" (3).

3. A ka gwã, če ǰito tise ka muñu,
saniyali do.

304 532 413 The foreskin, which is tied by a string (drawn at the center of the blade) at the moment of the operation, is placed upon the pembele (black rectangle) and the cutting knife is tapped with a small wooden mallet, gossilã (drawn at the tip of the knife). These three figures receive during operation the offering of the first spurt of blood from the circumcised boy.

The line, which crosses the blade along the middle, separates the bird and the ancestors who gave proof of courage from the instruments used for the circumcision. As a division it symbolizes first of all that each grade of circumcised boys must be considered apart from the others. This is its social meaning. But the delicacy of the line itself has a meaning which applies to the individual: each one must, in his own image, be morally /183/ simple, just, and sensitive. By conforming to the rule symbolically indicated by the design, the individual will become a member of the elite.

304 187 821 The date of the operation is fixed when Mousso Koroni's star, sigi dolo (Sirius), rises in the evening at a certain point in the east (1).

After the boys to be operated have been counted, each gets ready, and on the appointed day the mother washes her son's penis with water in which an iron axe or hoe has been soaked. Then she prepares a dish [362] of rice, ye farina to "dish of man's bravery," which the child eats before he is led to the place of the operation, called yorola sakole "reserved place," located in the bush.

304 326 When all are gathered together the blacksmith-circumciser operates upon each one in turn after he has made them sit down in a circle on the ground. Pulling and twisting the foreskin, he ties it with the string which he keeps taut by securing its extremity between his toes. He next places the member upon the pembele, rests the knife /on the foreskin/ and taps /it/ with the wooden mallet. In this way he cuts off the foreskin while saying the following words:

"Circumcised one, your father, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, the father of that one too, the ear (the genitals) of the ancestors of the latter have withstood (the pain); you, yourself, withstand it as

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1. See note 1 p. 47. To determine the date, however, the ndomo society may be consulted, which sometimes postpones it to keep its members longer.

304 326 /184/ they did. Faro, Teliko, Soba! You who are a man, your number is three; three of the penis, three of the twins, designs of the penis, it is the tradition, withstand it; Faro!" (ter) /repeat three times/(1).

1. Bolokode i fa, i moke, o ta fa,
o ta fa were, o ta fa klo masamaw ye
munyu, i yere ka munyu u cǒko la,
faro, teliko, soba, o ye če ta saba ye,
wulu wo, flani wo, kolo nyeke, lada
do, i ka munyu; faro (ter).

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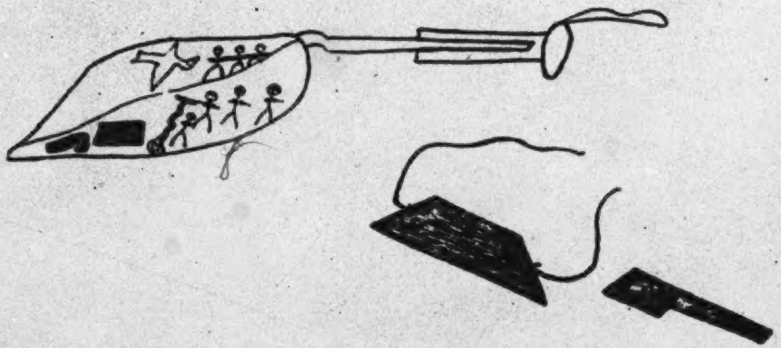

Fig. 15. — The circumcision knife decorated with ritual designs: three men and four women (representing the number seven); the bee eater symbolizing fire; the string; the small board; and the hammer used for the operation (these last two objects are reproduced on a larger scale to the right). (Drawing by an informant.)

304 326 831 After the removal, the operator makes scars upon the child's penis, called faro nyeke (literally, signs of Faro). Under the muscle wulu dyuru (literally, rope of the penis), a small hole is carefully made. Since the penis is considered a source of strength, the muscle which maintains it and erects it binds the circulation of the blood and helps man in all his acts. It is through this muscle that man transmits nerves to his children. A straight organ, firmly held in check, keeps the man and his descendants from numerous illnesses; the aim of this mutilation is to obtain complete and well formed foreskins and clitoris in the children of the party concerned. 304 326 843 After the perforation, the operator places in the orifice a little pepper and tomato juice while saying:

304 326 843 "Strong (when you form) the child, (you who form) the child (in the) womb, give it to Faro" (1).

1. Fariña dẽ, dẽzo dẽ, i ka di faro ma.

The embryo, placed in the feminine womb by Faro, receives force and virility from the pepper and is developed with the help of the tomato.

304 326 Two small holes are carefully made symbolizing man and his dya, while the following prayer is recited:

"Two holes of the penis; I draw the twins and I do it well, the skin of the person is captive, the skin of the person (gives) the twins; withstand them; Faro" (ter) (2).

2. Wulu wo fla, flani mba ti ka nẽ,
moko wolo ye dyo ye, moko wolo ye
flani nye, i ka munyu faro (ter).

"The skin of man, they say, and his entire body are miserable, captives. He is condemned to work, sweat, and suffer. But these two perforations indicate that man is always called upon to procreate twins, the visible images of Faro. Lacking them, he may have numerous children who will return to him, in sweat and work, the seed which he has placed in the maternal womb and which gives shape to the seeds given by Faro."

At the root of the penis, small lines, kolo nyeke, are made with the knife while the operator says:

"Mark of the penis, the genital organ receives this scarification because of the child (whom it will procreate); it is for this that man may be courageous; the one who has (this scar) is respected; great Faro, satiation of Faro" (3).

3. Kolo nyeke, wulu ti kũye dẽ koye,
a ye če fariña ko ye, min ya ke bonyedo,
faro ba, faro fa.

/185/ These recall the scars inflicted upon man's body and symbolize the desired multiplication of his offspring. Finally, they indicate the superiority of the one who has withstood and accepted pain.

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If the patient has inherited the nĩ and the dya of a child who died just before his birth in the family (in the narrow sense), the penis is perforated while the following prayer is recited:

"You, so and so, the sons of your fathers are dead, may you replace them night and day, the hole in the penis has been made on you; "Faro" (ter) (1).

1. E kari macina, e fa dew bana, e ka o
lu soro šu ani kle la, wulu wo ke la e la;
faro (ter).

This perforation designates him to procreate the children his father has lost.

Seated in a circle, all the circumcised boys bleed upon the ground into individual holes, nyama bla dinge (literally, hole in which the nyama is left) (2), dug between their parted legs, thus passing on to the impure earth their wanzo and a part of their tere. Meanwhile, the circumciser recited the following prayer:

2. Dinge is a word in the ancient language.

"Blood of the penis, blood of the transfer of the wanzo, blood which chases the wanzo, enter the hole, may you pay (my debt), may you protect me (against the nyama of the foreskin), against bad fortune, against space; o mound" (ter) (3).

3. Wulu dyoli, wanzo fili dyoli,
wanzo gẽ dyoli, i bi dõ dinge kono,
i kã sara, i kã kisi a makunangoya, i ka
kisi kene ama; walawala (ter).

Then, he kneads a bit of blood-covered earth, the principle of which, bwa, is stronger than the wanzo (4) and makes from it a kind of dressing which he applies to the wounds. In this way the child also

4. The word bwa is provisionally translated by "essence, extract." One says dukukolo bwa or seke, "principle or extract of the earth."

304 recovers part of his tere. The organ is then held up by means of a
326 small apparatus, mine naw, made of a millet stem split in two in the shape of a fork.

"Circumcision is a sacrifice" (1). It is only valid if blood has run,

> 1. Bolokoli yè saraka ye.

and any patient who has not wet the ground with his blood is wounded on the thigh by the circumciser. The same is true for a child born
[732 without a foreskin. This detail must, moreover, be kept secret by
582] the members of his age grade, since the revelation of a malformation might prevent the individual concerned from contracting a marriage (2).

> 2. A woman might believe that these malformations are the sign that the man who was operated upon has not lost his wanzo, a fact which would be a definite obstacle to marriage.

/186/ When all is finished, the operator, holding the foreskins in his hand, says these words before burying them:

"We have transferred the wanzo of the circumcised child, may the tere be well" (3).

> 3. Ãn ye dẽ bolokole wanzo fili la,
> tere ka ñe.

304 After this, the circumcised boys have their caps put first on their
292 napes and foreheads representing the east-west direction, and then on
561 the sides of their heads representing the north-south direction. All their strength resides from then on in the headpiece which they will wear night and day, without removing it, during the entire period of seclusion.

304 The approach to the site of the operation is formally forbidden to
784 women and uncircumcised males. The one who might go there out of
561 curiosity "would contract the wanzo" (wanzo ba nofe, "the wanzo follows him"). Any uncircumcised boy who might break this law would have to take the consequences at the time of his own operation

304 784 561 which would be a dangerous one (1). The same rule applies to the enclosure, consisting of several huts, where the newly circumcised boys remain under the surveillance of the *sema*. The enclosure is situated at a distance of several tens of meters from the village in order to isolate the age grade. For all that touches them, such as clothing, sticks, sistrums, dishes, and refuse, with the exception of
561 the cap, is impregnated with their *wanzo*.

304 [431] The newly circumcised boys receive from their parents gifts of cowrie shells and food called *wanzo sababu yala*, "in honor of the *wanzo*," to speed their recovery.

[794] On the night which precedes the sixth day after the operation, a day called *daworo*, the children are initiated to the Komo (2).

The following day, the *sema* leads them to the edge of the river, where they wash their wounds for the first time. This act, which brings about direct intervention of the element in which Faro lives, has moreover a social meaning: it consecrates the age grade and from this moment on, the children belong for the rest of their lives to the same *flã*, exchanging jokes and insults which are suitable between *senãnku* (3). It must be noted that this very simple act of communal ablution constitutes the inauguration of an age grade of circumcised boys and sets off from that moment all the rights and obligations its members will have toward each other.

A meal, eaten in common and accompanied by songs and dances, ends the ceremonies of the *daworo*. Hereafter the ablutions are repeated daily until the wounds are healed.

304 561 881 /187/ On the last day, all that has been in contact with the newly circumcised boys is gathered together at a crossroad near the enclosure.

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1. The approach of the virulent *wanzo* of the uncircumcised boy acts upon those of the boys undergoing the operations and afflicts them in the genital organs.

2. See p. 203.

3. See p. 119.

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Sistrums, sticks, mats, as well as the wood from the huts and the refuse that has been carefully swept up, are put in a pile which is ignited. Each circumcised boy jumps over the fire three times and then runs to his home without looking back. In this way he finally loses the rest of the *wanzo* which he has kept after the operation. Only his cap is brought back and given his mother who keeps it until her death. On the next day, after putting on new clothes the boy is taught what he himself is in the following words: "the person is *yo* and *yo* is the person (1)" and in the circumstances of creation. He is then admitted completely into the society of the male adults of his village.

Circumcision has a profound effect upon the person. At this moment, the child loses the physical support of the female sex which is the foreskin; he becomes a man (*vir*) ready to fulfill his role of a male capable of reproducing. Moreover, he "throws off his *wanzo*" which escapes from the body at the moment of the operation (2). In his leap above the fire this force joins, in the altars and the mask of the *ndomo*, the forces of both the uncircumcised and the circumcised of the preceding years (3).

At the same time the circumcised boy improves his *tere*, for this latter force, diminished by the bloody operation, increases at the moment when the child dons his new clothing. Until his circumcision, the child only performed minor tasks; after circumcision he is considered a male adult and officially admitted to the rituals and labors of the community.

1. *Ma ye yo ye, yo ye ma ye.* On *yo* see pp. 18-26.

[171]

2. *Wanzo file la.* The wearing of clothing and ornaments assumes great importance in the loss of the *wanzo*. Among the Bozo, where the children are circumcised very young, they are not considered to have lost their *wanzo* until the moment these clothes are given to them.

3. See p. 227.

304 766 The importance of the wanzo and the necessity of its leaving the person are such that in the case where a child dies uncircumcised, the operation is performed on his corpse. If this is not possible, the circumciser cuts his left ear and says:

"I cut the ear instead of circumcision" (1).

1. Mba klo tike bolokoli nona bi la ye.

It is buried with the corpse or kept in the paternal home, but the wanzo leaves the child. If the operation was not performed, it would contribute to the formation of a very dangerous nyama, which would be more aggressive even than that of an old man and from which the society would have to suffer.

/188/

Excision

304 323 189 The operation is performed with a little iron knife by a potter, the wife of a blacksmith. The blade, which is male, represents the sun; the handle, which is female, represents both the clitoris and the moon. The woman protects herself from the wanzo of the newly excised girls by wearing bracelets and charms and by smearing a black salve on her eyes.

304 323 The operation is performed in full daylight at the edge of the village and in the presence of the assembled kinsmen. In certain localities it takes place near the potters' hearth. Each little girl is seated in turn on an inverted pot and is operated upon while prayers are recited. Just as the boy whose foreskin is badly formed is wounded on the thigh, so the girl in the same situation is considered excised if she submits to a test which replaces excision. In the latter case, the woman operator places a hedgehog skin between the girl's thighs and presses these together energetically so as to make the blood run (2).

2. In case the girl is the daughter of a blacksmith, the blood running over the pottery indicates her future role as potter (see p. 169.

The young girls must neither cry nor moan; on the contrary, they sing to exalt the departure of the wanzo.

304 During the seclusion, they wear about their head a piece of white
[592 cloth, Faro's color, which has the same function as the cap of the
534] circumcised boy. They shake a gourd bolokode barani, filled with eight
grains or small pebbles, whose sound keeps passers-by away. The
leaps, which they perform over the fire made of clothes, gourds, and
refuse that have been ignited, end the seclusion and rid them of their
wanzo, which goes to settle in the altars of the ndomo.

It is said of a young girl who was well excised that she is well behaved and carries herself with dignity. On the contrary, it is said of a girl of light morals "that her hands were not washed clean" (1).

1. A bolo ma ko ka dye ya.

which means that she was improperly excised.

Funerals

761 The effect of death is to dissociate the elements composing the
person. The body becomes a corpse (šu) from which the /189/ ni and
764 the dya escape to follow their particular destinies, while the tere is
115 transformed into nyama, an active and dangerous force which wanders
about the deceased. The funeral rites aim first to channel the deceased's spiritual elements which must be conserved in the interest of the deceased as well as that of the community. Moreover, through the care given to the body and to these elements, the memory of the dead person is piously kept up. The notion of a final resurrection, promised to all who have lived, inspires these preparations. The bones of the deceased, which are like the exuvia of his physical body, its solid and durable framework, join the exuvia of his soul which is kept in the altars of the Komo. Thus, at the end of time, the dead man "will rise and, to everyone's joy, join his family."

764 The funeral rites, which the Bambara have always celebrated, have
evolved along with their beliefs. At the time when the cult of the
balanza was flourishing, the dead bodies were hung from trees until
they rotted, their bones picked up and kept by their descendants.
[532] The ancestors of the Gwonna then carved pieces of sunzun wood
called mani (literally, little person) in the image of the dead. The
length of the wood was proportionate to the length of the body; the
head, arms, legs, and genitals were carefully reproduced. The mani

764 were kept by the village patriarch and the cult of the ancestors was
celebrated upon these altars.

At the present time, the body is buried during rites in which the
Komo plays an important role for the initiates. As soon as a member
763 is seriously ill, the family head places upon the dying man's chest
778 the portable altar, *kere la boli ni*, which belongs to the community.
He does not leave the bedside in order to catch the last breath. Immediately after death, without turning back or saying a word to anyone, he goes to the chief of the Komo who places the object in the
[775] sanctuary where the altars are kept. The soul is introduced into the
nimara boli (1).

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[843] 1. See p. 192. In former times, the soul of the dead man was caught between two gourds which were then joined together and hung on the conjugal bed. When the woman became pregnant, the gourds were broken over her abdomen in order to make the soul penetrate the foetus. Later on this method of transmission of the soul was no longer possible because of the impurity brought about by "frivolous discussions regarding the arrangements and situations of creation."

764 Upon his return to the house of the deceased, the family head
brushes his hand over the dead man's face to gather his *nyama* which
he then entrusts to Pemba by rubbing the cavity in the family *pembele*
"so that the total of the work he has accomplished during his life will
not be dissolved by death, but will be like /190/ an accumulated
force serving the community, and so that his intelligence, his qualities,
and his skill in different kinds of work, especially in agriculture, will
not be lost but will be found in other members of the family. The
[778] block of wood, acting as an altar for storing the forces, preserves this
nyama until a new birth occurs in the family" (2).

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2. S. De Ganay, "*Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara*," p. 199.

764 The corpse is the object of particular care. In the case of a blacksmith or a Soma, two stalks of millet are placed for a few moments on either side "for the nostalgia of the body" (1). This custom indicates that the soul, temporarily in the Komo altar, and the exuvia which will later replace it, feel sad for the animate body that will become the prey of the termites. These stalks symbolize the two ancestors who accompanied Koumabana into the great beyond, the death in this case repeating in some way the story of the appearance of death on the world (2).

The combination of the body and the two symbols adds up to the number three, the male number, and recalls the three taps given to the newborn of male sex at his birth. A few moments later a kinsman places the stalks on each side of the door to the dead man's house. The mourners who come to convey their condolences crouch before [576] them, putting cowrie shells at their feet in the greatest silence, for "to talk and to cry increases the sins of the dead man, and tears increase his burden."

764 554 If the deceased is an important personage, especially if he is chief of the village or head of a family, the signs of the actual world and the future world (bolo ti doniya, Fig. 1) are sometimes drawn upon his index finger and thumb. The senanku, the blacksmiths, and the griot come to recite his device (barama) and receive in thanks the clothes which belonged to him.

764 The eldest son of the Komo chief, who is first advised of the death, brings the news to his father who asks him to announce it to the men of his age grade. Each of the subsequent age grade is notified by a delegate from the preceding one. Finally, the young circumcised men, recently admitted to the society, go to tell the women and the uncircumcised the hour when the mask is to come out. However, only the funeral of an elder, a village or district chief, obligates all the members to move about.

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1. Fari nana fi, literally, "body of the black face."

2. See pp. 45, 46.

764 The members of the oldest age grade go to the home of the deceased. The eldest son of the Komo chief, holding /191/ the ritual whistle between his teeth, whistles alternatively in the right and left ears, then into the eyes of the dead man, which he closes while pulling his two toes. He then says: "So and so has not answered."

The chief of the Komo next comes to "touch the corpse while it is still warm in order to return to Faro that which belongs to him." He then draws a line upon the body (see Fig. 16) with his little finger dipped in boiled millet mash. In 1 and 2, the strength of the little finger acts by sending away the semen which is in the blood. In 4, it suppresses the voice (for the dead man will talk no more) as well as "the tastes, savors, and appetites of his tongue, the power of his jaws, and the air in his mouth." In 5 it returns all that was in his head, such as ideas, experiences, opinions, folly, and wisdom, through the left ear, removing all the sounds it has heard, the good as well as the bad. Next the ear is plugged. Whatever it has heard will return to the one who will inherit his soul and his double, as the dead man in the grave must hear only with his right ear the whistle of the Komo and all that will be communicated to him. In 6 it removes "the will power and stubbornness" so that the dead may submit to Faro even in the grave. It next touches the navel, 3, and all the joints to send back the semen which lies in man's marrow.

794
764 The corpse is then transported into a contiguous chamber for an ablution performed by a member of the society who wears over his shoulder the sack containing the Komo altars and who drones out a song celebrating the Soma Moriba Sidibé (1). The two millet stalks are placed upon the body during the ablutions "which purify and calm his soul."

764 Dressed in its finest clothes, the body is brought back to the main room where its hair is shaved. The deceased's own individual altar is given to the chief of the Komo who places it near the nimara boli. It is at this time that the bell bearer (grindavo) goes to the village

1. The ablution is performed with the contents of a large gourd (dyuru fle nyɛ́) to which are added the contents of a small gourd (dye fle nyɛ) which represents the "last water of the dead man."

764 and announces that the mask is about to be brought out so that people would go back to their home. At noon, a member of the society puts on the paraphernalia of the Komo society and walks forth, preceded by the son of the chief, who whistles a funeral tune. He wears on his shoulder the sack containing the altars and carries in his right hand the axe and the dagger. The two men are followed by the newly circumcised boys carrying the body and by the members who are present. At the burial ground (*šudoyoro*) the procession places the corpse on its back near the grave freshly dug by the young /192, Fig. 16 appears here in original text/ /193/ men of the most recent age grade (1). To the rhythm beaten out by three blacksmith drummers, [535]

the son of the deceased and later all the participants dance in turn, kicking up with their feet a little earth over the corpse at the end of each musical phrase.

A female goat (or a male one) brought by the family is sacrificed and the blood runs in part over the altars and in part into the grave, while the chief of the Komo recites the following prayer:

"Let (your family) rest in peace; let our harvests be blessed; let your happiness come to us later; your sacrifices are performed" (2).

The sacrifice performed over the altars is a repetition of that which has already been accomplished in the sanctuary at the time the deceased's soul is deposited. But, to the young initiates who do not know it, it is at this moment only that the transfer of the soul to the *nimara boli* is effected through the vehicle of the sacrificial blood.

The eldest man of the age grade sucks up with the whistle of the Komo a little blood from the slit throat of the animal and blows on the corpse; another elder sucks up some blood in turn and blows it into the grave. A third does the same and whistles into the right ear of the corpse "so that the deceased, having received a complete sacrifice, may not ask for anything else." A *griot* next takes the whistles and

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1. In the vicinity of Ségou the dead are most frequently buried in the fields; a ronier is planted over the grave.

2. *I ka du to; ana senefɛ ka barka;*
i ka here ka na an ye; i ka saraka be bwora.

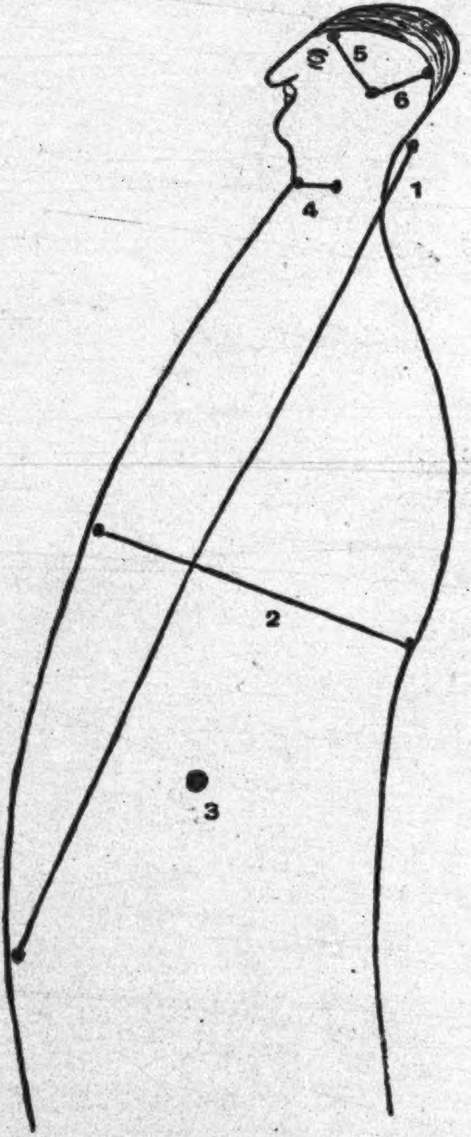

Fig. 16 — Drawing made with millet mash by the chief of the Komo on a cadaver. (Drawing by an informant.)

764 inserts them into the deceased's throat; he fills his own mouth with food previously brought forth by a woman and blows until the stomach of the deceased is filled. The rest of the food is placed near the dead man who is lowered into the grave by his sons and daughters. He is laid down on his right side, facing east, in the hole, sele dẽ, dug at the bottom of the grave. The two stalks of millet are placed next to him; they are more powerful than the forces of decay and destruction, and affirm the immortality of the ancestors. Together with the corpse, they are the image of the first three who died and the whole expresses the hope of resurrection promised to men.

While songs burst forth in honor of the deceased, the young men cover him with fresh branches before closing the grave; above the grave the masker whistles to proclaim that hereafter it is he who will settle the problems of the dead.

[768] The objects formerly belonging to the deceased, such as bed, mat, pipe, and razor, are then put into a pile with a little bag containing his hair. Fire is set to the pile while the chief of the Komo recites the following prayer: "Let your burned possessions leave to wait /194 before you, let them leave in smoke. We are behind, we are not in front of you; ask happiness for us. Let all the dyo with the pincers and the anvil come, let peace come" (1).

1. I ka fẽ maralew dyenina, n ka ta i kono i nye, m bita šiši fe, an bi ko an ti nye, i ka here nyini ã nye; ka dyow ani bala ani kula, dũ ka na.

The masker dances about the hearth, whistling and throwing up dust. The children of the deceased who are impregnated with his nyama leap three times over the flame; the force, absorbed by the smoke, is dissipated with it.

The meat of the sacrificed animal is cooked, eaten by the participants, and the containers are broken.

769 Three days after the death, the family goes down to the river bank and throws in the clothing of the deceased as well as a plate of food; both will serve to clothe and feed the double. They then recite the following prayer:

"My father Faro, a person of my family has died, here is his offering of the three days; make him return again in a woman's womb" (2).

769 2. *M fa faro n so ma bana a dyanza ye kle saba kono ye; ni ye se i ka seki, muso kono ma*.

The offering of food is then renewed every three days until a birth brings about the return of the double into the world of the living.

If the dead man has no descendants, his altar remains forever in the sanctuary of the Komo near the *nimara boli*. Otherwise, it is returned within seven days to the eldest son or to the brother who then becomes the head of the family.

During the night following the seventh day, the soul returns to eat
769 and drink in the hut of the widow who lives alone. All the dishes con-
775 taining water or food are therefore carefully emptied and cleaned. The same meal is offered to the deceased the night following the fortieth day after the death. The widow comes out of her house on the
[765] eighth day if she is poor and must work for a living; otherwise, on the forty-first day.

At the end of a variable period of time, the soul, the double, and the name of the deceased are received by a child who is born into the family. The exuvia, *mana* or *folo* of the soul, remains in the sanctuary of the Komo as a permanent testimony to his existence on earth. It is conserved by Faro who watches over it, and maintained by the offerings of the living who will in this way bring it to the final resurrection.

When the deceased does not belong to the Komo society, the rites are celebrated over the altars of the societies to which he belongs; his soul is likewise conserved by them. The spiritual principles /195/ of the women, grouped in institutions comparable to those of men, called *muso dye*, are the object of the same attentions in which is found the rhythm of four days, the female number.

766 If the deceased was too poor for all the rituals, which are always costly, to be observed, two gourds of water are prepared and placed one at the head, the other at the feet of the corpse; he is then lifted in such a way that his image is reflected in the water. This accomplished, eight cowrie shells are placed at his head and eight at his feet and the gourds are covered with a winnowing tray; the image thus conserved is supposedly reflected in the *kaba mana*, the fourth sky, where Faro,
776 symbolized by the cowrie shells, passes judgment on its state of purity.
787 A divining rite is then performed. If the man is pure, the villagers

776 787 attend his burial despite the fact that the rituals have not been performed. If not, he is abandoned to the care of his family.

764 775 To neglect the rituals assuring life in the beyond and the security of the living causes the shadow šu dya, or the ghost šu kere dye (literally, white side of the dead man), to arise and present itself under the same which the dead man had on earth, to claim his due from his descendants.

Ancestor Cult

769 778 In the entryway of some residences a supporting stake (čĕ dloma), sometimes marked by seven notches, represents the founding ancestor of the family. On the anniversary of his death the stake is oiled "to refresh his soul." In addition, each year the owner of the house sacrifices to all the ancestors on the family altar, on the stake, and on the threshold of the door. In some villages the ancestors are called upon by tapping the threshold with a little wooden hammer, dyele kala ni, which represents them.

In the courtyards, pieces of wood stuck in the ground (ǰigi semen dloma) represent the paternal uncle, the brother of the founder, and are used as seats for the heads of families who lean against them "in order to lean well upon the traditions." Farmers, before leaving for the fields, rub their hoes on them to show them to the ancestors.

769 241 Before planting the women give the head of the family a ball of raw millet, which he lines up to represent the dead according to age and rank. Then he gives them a pinch of the seed beginning with the one representing the most recent deceased and calling successively all the dead by name. The paste and the seeds are then put in water and the mash thus obtained is poured on the /196/ doorposts to the entryway of the family house upon which the blood of a sacrificial victim also is poured. When the planting time comes, the chief who has prepared the mash made with a few grains taken from the seeds distributes this to the women, beginning with the one who represents the oldest deceased. He asks the ancestors to watch over, during the germination period, the soul of the millet which will descend into the seed with the first rainfall. When the millet has reached maturity, the first seeds harvested are placed in a pot on the threshing floor where the grain will be threshed later, and are distributed to the women in the same manner as the time of planting, the oldest of the deceased having to receive the first of the seed.

769 At an annual ceremony presided over by the Komo, the members assemble in honor of thedead. It is called *šu* *sɔ* *sibiri*, "Saturday of the sacrifice to the dead" and is celebrated on a Saturday at the time when the ears are being formed in the millet fields.

The *kotigi* removes the ancestral tools from their shelter and carries them to the graves. Then the chief of the Komo and his assistants, accompanied by the maskers, carry the altars to the cemetery while singing. Each grave is put for a moment into contact with the *nimara* *boli* and the *nyama* *boli*; the exuviae of the souls of the dead each visit the bodies they once animated. To the rhythm *šu* *bara*, "rhythm of the dead, " played on the drums, the maskers dance and sing around the graves while mock labor is carried out with each of the ancestral tools. During the whole ceremony the kinsmen wail, the men near the graves and the women in the house. A victim is sacrificed, cut up, and cooked in new pots which are broken after they have been used in order to avoid the contagion of the *nyama* of the dead. The dances of the maskers are performed during the two days that follow. In some villages the ceremony is repeated after the harvest has been threshed.

Exceptional Cases

The Stillborn

845
783 It is said of a stillborn child that he has lost both his soul and his double, that is to say, his complete being. The parents who are responsible to Faro for this disaster are obliged to find and recapture the spiritual elements of their child, the woman the soul, and the man the double, in the course of long and sometimes painful rituals.

As soon as the woman is able to go out after the birth, both parents are led, shaved and naked, before the members of the family assembled in the courtyard. As testimony /197/ of the deceased to Faro, their hair, mixed with that of the child, is buried in the wall of their
[824] home. Then a tomato, representing the foetus, is introduced into a large incision made in the woman's thigh. The man crouches and drinks the juice which drips from the fruit and which symbolizes the double. Each one bows before the elders of the family, holding their hands behind their backs, to apologize for the fault committed, sayiing: "Here is my humiliated (sex) behind me" (1).

845
783
1. A ngari ko le ye ngo (ngari is a word of the archaic language which expresses submission.)

Each person responds by striking their genital organs with the little finger: "It is well humiliated" (2).

[826] 2. A ngari ko karu. The little finger is the symbol of the whole person; to strike with it is to acquiesce with all one's being.

They are led to the door of their home where the village elders of both sexes are gathered; they repeat their apologies to which the same response is given, accompanied by the same gesture of acquiescence.

The chief of the Komo and three elders of his age grade who have
[304] never broken any taboos led them to the river bank where they undergo
a new circumcision for the man and a new excision for the woman; the blood which is a gift to Faro must fall into the water. This operation is called "purification of the foreskin" (yiriyiri tige) and the pain suffered has an expiatory value.

The sixth day after the operation the members, gathered on the village square (3), dance and sing to the rhythm of the Komo, which

3. This ceremony, called daworo is comparable to that celebrated on the sixth day after circumcision.

is furiously beaten out, in the following words:

"Circumcised children, it is not good to break the taboo of the anus. I am telling you, Soma and members of the society, do not count their faults. Faro "(ter) (4).

4. (I ye ye) boloko dew tne tyẽ mañi boda la; nye fo aw ye somaw moko ka na jigi u la; faro (ter). That is to say, "forgive them." The word anus here
[195] replaces the word genitals which, according to propriety, is not spoken.

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The parents are led to the square and turn, open-mouthed, around the circle of dancers, seeking to recapture the soul and the double of their child who is present during the ceremony, attracted by the rhythm and visible to them alone. They turn and dance until they fall into a sort of trance called "fainting of the Komo" during which the soul and the double enter them. If the entrance occurs through the mouth, they cease their cries; if it is through the nose, they appear to smother; if by the eyes, their tears run.

/198/ The rhythm then becomes progressively fainter. Soon it is only a murmur. In order not to interrupt the action, in order that the double and the soul may penetrate gently the stretched out bodies, the murmur decreases further to die out gradually. The drummers' sticks alone beat the air in silence, performing the rhythm called "the drum of the soul" (ni dunu foli). With mouths shut so as not to frighten the invisible, the participants softly drone out a song, ni bonye, which calms the soul and incites it to penetrate the two suffering parents. The latter, accompanied by the musicians, are led back home. They are beaten with sticks so that the spiritual principles may not leave them while that which has just been accomplished is proclaimed in a loud voice as well as the shame and suffering voluntarily submitted to. They are then fanned for the "repose of the child's soul."

The following day, the chief of the Komo and his age grade go to the cemetery to remove the bones of the stillborn child. They place them on the ground, examine them in the open, and dance around them to the rhythm of "the drum of the bones" (kolo dunu) while singing:

"White bones, you, dead ones! I have come to see you" (1). Then

1. Kolo dyew aw šu ne nǰa na bo ye.

the grave is once more closed over them.

The man and the woman are then called to the field of the dead (šu foro) to swear an oath. While their mouths are full of rain water or water from the Niger, a participant in the ceremony leans over and, "to heat the liquid with the strength of words," recites the following prayer under their chins:

"Kill me if I do it twice: good or bad, chance comes from several places. Faro" (ter) (2).

845
783 2. Ni nya ke šyẽ fla i ka n fa; ka kadi ka kago, gariseke bo fã ka čã; faro (ter).

The water swallowed after these words constitutes a solemn promise to Faro not to repeat the fault.

Next, they are carried home, the man by two members of the society and the woman by three of her companions, so that their toes, [824] the temporary lodging places of the spiritual principles which have returned to them, may not touch the impure earth. They remain three and four days, respectively, on their mats without making a movement. On the seventeenth day, with a thousand precautions, they may resume a more normal life, but they will be entirely free only when a birth occurring in the family will eliminate from their bodies the soul and the double of the dead child by transferring these to the newborn.

/199/ Death of an Uncircumcised Boy

763 When an uncircumcised boy is seriously ill the chief of the ndomo (1) has a rooster sacrificed in order to find out if recovery is possible.

1. See p. 222.

In the case of a negative response the children, taking turns night and day, go into the bush and sound off the ritual objects under the leadership of an initiate. In this way the soul of the dying boy is certain to be captured at the moment of death and channeled by the sound wave and led into the ritual objects themselves. Two initiates are posted near the home of the sick and, as soon as they learn of his death, they go to warn the children in the bush to make them stop playing. The chief sits down facing the west and recites a prayer; then he sacrifices the victims offered by the family.

766 Before the corpse is buried, it is circumcised, and the wanzo goes [304] to settle in the mask of the ndomo. During the night following the burial the members go to the fresh grave and sound the ritual instruments which contain the soul. Each year they repeat this action above the children's graves following the threshing of the harvest to "awaken the dead and to tell them that their souls are not lost."

Death at War

727 When a warrior returns home in good health after a battle, the sacrificer or the village chief orders the performance of the ni yere klo, "game of the vibration of the soul," to celebrate his return. Men and women gather in the village square to sing: "The soul is come, the light of the soul is come, the drum of the soul will be played for it" (1). Next they form a circle and turning first in one direction and then in the other, throw a little water on the head of the individual concerned, thus "refreshing his soul."

766 When a man dies at war, the rituals whose object he becomes bring into play the nyama boli of the Komo, the altar dedicated to the conservation of the souls of those who die a vilent death.

In former times the stone which had mortally hit a warrior was carefully kept. The corpse was washed /200/ on cowries and on stones used for slings because its nyama, which impregnated them, made them more efficient in killing. The body was also transported to the exit of the village where each villager offered cowrie shells while he pronounced the name of the victim. Then it was swung three times in the direction of the village, first feet forward and next head forward. After all the villagers had retired to their homes, the Komo was brought out. The stone that had killed the man was struck to call forth his soul; then it was rubbed on the nyama boli to make the soul penetrate the altar. A dance was held with the altar, and the body [824] was buried and covered with fresh branches of ngamyã (2). The grave was watered to "refresh the dead man" while the chief

was watered to "refresh the dead man" while the chief of the Komo made sacrifices over the nyama and the nimara boli.

Death Away from Home

766 167 The necessity of performing the rituals as well as their detailed quality are such that a Bambara is always advised against expatriation.

1. Ni nana, ni yelengu nana, ni dunu na fo o la.

2. Celtis integrifolia.

766 In fact, if he dies far away his breath cannot be captured nor can the
167 successive transfers be made. For this reason the family head disclaims all responsibility in such a case by warning those who are about to leave for along time of the impossibility of fulfilling his duties toward them.

Nevertheless, a ritual has been instituted for the young men obliged
766 to leave the family groups because of military service. The case is submitted to the chief of the Komo and the party concerned has two goats sacrificed over the altars. While the blood runs, the chief asks the Komo to watch over the soul and to be willing to reclaim it as it would if the person died among his family.

If the news of the death of an absent person spreads, the family
[187] questions the Komo through divining procedures to find out if the soul has returned and if, by this fact, order has been reestablished.

Death by Lightning and Drowning

761 Death which occurs in certain ways considered abnormal and a proof of Faro's wrath does not permit the reincarnation of the spiritual
766 principles. This is true of men killed by the Komo for sorcery, and of people struck by lightning for having broken a taboo of Faro's. Their /201/ soul and their double are lost forever to their descendants, and their bodies thrown into the common grave.

Drowning is either accidental or due to Faro's wrath, in which case the corpse is returned with the nose and navel cut. In both instances, the double preserved in the water is not lost, but sacrifices are necessary for the return of the soul and of the double to a child in the family.

If the body has not risen to the surface, the father of the drowned person has the right to mourn him only when all the rituals have been performed. He asks the chief of the Komo to intercede with Faro to obtain his permission to search for the body in the water. He offers seven tomatoes which the chief throws into the water in exchange for the corpse in the presence of seven elders of his age grade. Some Bozo mobilized for this purpose dive in to bring back the body. The chief cuts the nose and the navel which he throws into the water as an offering. Then the corpse is placed flat on its stomach and pressed
[821] vigorously to extract the water, for to bury it full of water is equivalent to "burying rain" and dooming the countryside to drought.

766 After the burial,[1] a drawing is made on the sanctuary with millet
mash made of grain from Faro's field; this drawing represents the
532 dead man and the mutilations inflicted upon him. The seven attending
elders close their eyes as a sign of respect in order not to "register a
drawing made for Faro." In fact, its aim is to obtain the spirit's pity
and to ask him to include the dead among the count he keeps of his
[769] subjects. It is also in front of this drawing that the family will come
to make an offering and mourn every week.

II. Rituals of the Refuse

364 The debris, sweepings, and refuse collected in the homes, court-
778 yards, public squares, and crossroads all contain forces which men
have communicated to them.

The rituals, of which these are the objects and which vary according to their origin, have as their aim the offering of these forces to Faro who returns them to men purified and regenerated in the form of rainwater with which he irrigates the fields and in the form of ponds and wells. They are thus redistributed and used again for the benefit of the community.

The refuse at the crossroads, called dangu kalaw, stalks or straw of the dangu, contains the force, nyama, of all the beings that have trampled it.

/202/ The refuse from the homes contains the wanzo of the uncircumcised, the nyama which the inhabitants have to bear for having killed animals or insects and for having received insults, and their good or bad tere. These forces, called wanzo dla (literally, to arrange the wanzo) (1) or nyama dla, constantly come to the aid of all the members of the family; they improve the wanzo of the uncircumcised, facilitate the women's childbirth, and renew the vigor of the old men. A small altar, konye, kept in the room reserved for the head of the family, is dedicated to them.

After the coming out of the Koma, the sweepings gathered on the spot where the dances take place contain the forces of the members.

1. This term is applied to them particularly
in houses where there are many children.

[1] [Of a drowned person — Analyst]

364 778 782 (a) Household refuse, collected individually, is placed in separate piles inside shallow circular excavations dug out at the approaches to the villages (see Pl. VI, b). Among wealthy people a goat is sacrificed each week by having its throat cut above the pile on which the altar is temporarily placed. The sacrifice effects a double exchange: the blood nourishes the altar while at the same time it brings about the transfer into the altar of the forces contained in the refuse.

364 778 776 Every two months and seven days, at the decision of the village chief, these individual rubbish piles are removed from the holes. Each person burns his own pile and inhales the smoke. The ashes are deposited on the river bank, dampened so that the wind does not blow them away, and abandoned during seven days, a period during which Faro "comes to visit them and to bless them."

On the eighth day, after a meeting at the chief's residence, the villagers gather at the crossroads to burn the collective refuse piles, to collect the ashes, and to transport them, accompanied by the rhythm wanzo foli beaten on the drums, to the river bank where they will join those of the individual heaps.

After a sacrifice offered upon the konye altars of the participants, the griot of the Komo is struck by the nyama boli until he goes into a trance and flings himself into the water without saying a word. All must throw their ashes in after him before he comes out again. At that moment the spittles of the man who flutters about in the water are collected as a gift from Faro in exchange for the refuse which has been thrown in. Each person rubs his hands and feet with the saliva and upon returning, which is done in silence, impregnates the threshold of his home with it as evidence of the sacrifice so that Faro "might recognize his own and protect their life."

/203/ The following Thursday the people gather to dance according to the rhythms appropriate to each sex and generation. In the evening, each person places his foot on the site of the refuse heap; then all gather at the crossroads to offer the Soba spirit some millet, cotton, and kola nuts. The ceremony ends with a meeting at the chief's residence where he gives advice and encourages each one to respect tradition and to honor the ancestors and the protecting spirits.

(b) After the comings out of the Komo, the refuse is swept up and deposited in front of the sanctuary. Each participant leaps over the pile three times to communicate his nyama to it. In the evening the masker circles and whistles around the heap on which fire is lit while

364 the chief throws dust three times to the four cardinal points. The
masker then stands in the wind in such a way as to receive the smoke;
778 the chief and the members crouch in line behind him with their mouths
796 open to inhale better. When the wind changes its direction they all
move to continue this fumigation, *wušuli*, which constitutes a purification as well as an increment of forces. At the moment the fire is almost out, the most courageous of the participants stamps on it in order to assimilate better the *nyama* which it exudes. The ashes,
[804] gathered by the chief, are distributed, the unit of measurement being
the gourd *mure*. An important share goes to the *nyama boli*, another is given as an offering to Faro, and a third is distributed among the members.

Several days later, the group goes to the river bank to the sound of drums beating out the *murumuruw foli* (literally, rhythm of the refuse); they throw the ashes reserved for Faro into the water and, continuing to dance, return to the village.

364 Those ashes given to the members are used to prepare the potass
which is mixed into the millet cake, the daily food of the Bambara,
778 and which will make the members of the family share in the powers
252 contained in the *nyamanto*.

The eating of this mixture closes the cycle of the transfer of forces,
364 which were temporarily communicated to the refuse by the individuals,
778 then recovered by Faro, and finally redistributed to the social body.

III. Rain Rites

789 At the time the first work is done in the fields, a drawing is made
241 with millet mash upon the tree of the Kworè in the shape of a lozenge
inscribed within a rectangle, which represents "the great fire which issued /204/ from the cardinal angles" at the time of their creation. While this is being done, the following words are spoken: "The four elbows (the lozenge) are the fire of the angles; here is the anniversary of the Kworè." The clearing of the field or the first plowing always symbolizes the very first clearing obtained through fire.

During the month of May, the members of the Kworè society make
789 sacrifices upon their altars before the first rumbling of thunder in
796 order to purify the first sky where clouds are formed from the impure
794 passage of Mousso Koroni. The chief gathers the members about the
tree and recites the following prayer:

789 796 794 "I have come to you, Kworè, if (the cloud) is black in the east, let it come; black in the west, let it come; black in the south, let it come; black in the north, let it come; black above, let it come, and then let it give a great water" (1). He next pours on the ground the millet mash and the blood of fowls brought by each member. The initiation of the new members takes place during this ceremony.

After the drinking of millet beer which follows the ceremonies, it is customary to tell the story of Mousso Koroni chased by Pemba and pursued by Faro.

If, in spite of this the rain does not come soon enough, the members gather at the foot of the tree and bring with them an iron axhead which is placed in fresh water. The water is next poured out at the foot of the tree; it symbolizes the cold which the spirits of the Kworè are subjected to in the second sky during their struggles to make the rain come through.

In certain villages the sacrifices to the Kworè and to Faro are offered at the same time. At Massala and Soroba, the members go to the shore of the Niger, carrying the kworę boli with them. The bit of water which it contains is poured into the river and replaced while a prayer is addressed to Faro. The throat of a victim is then cut and some copper is thrown into the river. The altar is shaken above the water to imitate the noise of thunder and rain. Upon their return to the village, the members light a fire at the foot of the Kworè tree and place thunder stones in its embers.

"Heating the stones shakes up their soul"; when they are hot, they are plunged into cold water "to warm and to agitate the soul of water." The smoke from the fire, as well as the heat absorbed by the stones and the water, force the rain to fall.

/205/ Victims are sacrificed and the members return to the village around which they circle six times, beginning at the west. Then they return the nimara boli to the sanctuary and the elders who represent the spirit dance about on one foot to the sound of drums

1. Ne nani na kwore nani na; a ma fi korona a ka na; a ma fi klebi a ka na; a ma fi woro dugu a ka na; a ma fi keñeka a ka na; a ma fi sãfe a ka na; otumana a ka ke dyi ba ye.

789 as an imitation of Faro who has only one lower limb. The altar, which
796 is placed in the sanctuary by the chief who enters it walking backwards,
794 receives as an offering a little water from the Niger in which thunder
stones have been soaking since the night before to be "refreshed." The same libation is made on the kwore boli. After returning to the home of the chief of the Komo, libations of millet mash are poured upon the walls of his house; then, in the name of Faro, the nimara boli, and the Kworè, the throat of a white ram is cut; the flesh of the animal will be thrown into the river, at the conclusion of the ceremonies.

794 (c) At the end of the winter season the "anniversary of the Kworè"
796 is celebrated; its purpose is to commemorate the action of the spirits
during the preceding season in order to obtain rain water.

On the fixed day, members of the society, wearing loincloth and carrying in their left hand a whip made of macerated and twisted grass, and in their other hand a torch of burning straw, gather near the tree around which they circle and sing to "gather up the Kworè."
[785] The cracking of whip lashes which they give each other represents thunder claps; the beating of the drum which accompanies their songs imitates its rumbling. The burns which they inflict upon themselves recall those which the spirits endure in the celestial combats. They next direct their steps toward the public square where the villagers have gathered and where the spirit they have supposedly invoked by their mimicry is leading them. When all have gathered, the kworeduga, who represent the spirits mounted on their winged horses ready to fly into combat, appear dressed in their traditional costumes and riding their wooden horses.

They advance while dancing and singing verses which are then taken up by a chorus of the members. The latter having formed a
[788] circle, the chief places himself in the center, whipping himself, burning himself, and pretending to swallow the fire of his torch. When he is weary he stops and the members take turns to imitate him. Powder made from ground pepper is blown into the dancers' eyes to recall the burning heat of the fiery heavens.

The kworeduga, who have by then put down their wooden horses, set their foot on the earth ready for the fight, after having seized some green tree branches. They put out the fire which has caught onto the clothing of the dancers and participants. This gesture recalls the action of the wind which, in space, put out the hot fire that

794 attacked /206/ the fighters. Between dances the participants drink beer
796 brought to the spot for the occasion in order to nourish the invisible beings which they represent.

[262] All the participants also eat a dish made up of peas, beans, groundnuts, rice, manioc, millet, fonio, cooked with baobab leaves and karite oil. This mixture is identified with the spirits' struggle with the clouds which they supposedly swallow at the height of the battle. When the ceremony draws to an end, the chief sends the women and children home and fetches the kwore boli which he swings eighteen times over the square.

In a file, the members of the society return to the tree to "bring back" the Kworè which, while invisible, has been present at all the ceremonies. They circle around the tree singing to the rhythm of the drums. Then they put out their torches and throw them at the foot of the tree along with the whips before returning to their homes.
[752] Their wounds and burns are cared for by their wives with water from the Kworè altar, this medication bearing the name of kworɛ kane (remedy of the Kworè).

The same dances and the comings out of the mask take place three days in succession. On the fourth day the chief and the elders, all undressed, crawl to the sanctuary for the annual sacrifice offered inside it. The chief gathers the thunder stones collected during the past year and places them in the sack containing the altars which are to be sold.

To "clarify" the mirrors, he pours millet mash over them; he cut the throat of fowls and places kola nut juice over the snake and the ñõ boli; he next fills the ñõ boli with millet previously taken from that of the Komo. With the remaining seeds he makes a mash with which to pour a libation over the sack. He next passes a burning twig of straw over the snake while saying:

"You, snake, you do not fear the fire; you must not fear fire and rain" (1).

1. E ngorongo e ma sira tasuma ne e kana sira sandyi tasuma ñe.

The effect of this action is to prepare the snake by means of these burns and to attract lightning whose effects it must not fear.

IV. Rites for the Renewal of the Year

796 783 These rites involve individual, familial, and collective actions; the latter bring into play most of the institutions (1). Everyone, from the newborn to the elder, must undergo a kind of purification which consists essentially of the /207/ rejection of the breath and forces of the past year and of the taking in of new breath and forces. It is, according to Bambara expression, " a refreshing of the body and soul." But the renewal is not limited to elements which make up the person; it extends to the cosmos and the cardinal points.

1. The individual rite of the family chief is performed with the instrument ngoni, which is used to make on the wall of his česo the drawings representing the universe. (2) He starts out with an offering of tomato juice to Faro who presides over the family use of the object and who is present thereafter. The fruits are squeezed; a hedgehog is sacrificed over the juice so that no other spirit may touch it. Next the man sacrifices a gray lizard as a reminder of his own condition before circumcision. This sacrifice represents a new circumcision offered to Faro and increases his strength. [825 782]

The man who is offering the sacrifice puts his tongue in the juice of the fruit without swallowing a drop in order to give Faro "a complete accounting of all his acts and thoughts during the past year (work, births, deaths, illnesses, quarrels, fortune, and misfortune) just as a subordinate gives an accounting to his superior." He puts his right little finger in the liquid and places it on the wall over the drawing representing Faro. Then he sucks in a little of the tomato juice through his nostrils and blows it over the ngoni, thus sweeping away the remaining life from the past year which he still had in his body. A new air which comes from Faro then circulates in his lungs. He next fills his mouth with the liquid contained in the male goatskin of the instrument and spits it out immediately to show the spirit that

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1. As examples of collective rites we present those which are performed on the stone altars of the village (fara ba) (see p. 129).

2. See p. 172, Fig. 10.

796 all is returned to him. He then goes to the river or to the edge of
783 Faro's pond, where he drinks a little water as a purification for the year to come.

2. On the day chosen for the family ceremony, the *ngoni* is solemnly removed from the room where it is usually kept hidden from view, and is presented to the family assembled before the door.

The rhythm called *kalafoli* is beaten out on the frame; the effect of this is to return the soul (*ni*) of the participants to the river or well. Then another rhythm, representing Faro, is played on the net to call in the renewed soul which has been returned by the spirit. Everyone opens his mouth and inhales the new, beneficial emanations coming over the family. When the rhythm ceases they all shut their mouths and return home without speaking. At the entrance door the children are given little strokes on the back with a little rope, *sebe dyuru* /208/ "to receive and withstand all that the new year will bring."

The instrument is then replaced in the home while all the participants shut their eyes in order not to see it. The owner goes into a trance, a fact which shows that Faro himself carried the instrument to the place where it will remain during the year. The man walks out backwards from the room where he has placed it and is carried into his *česo*, where he receives special care intended to return him to his normal state, which includes a purification performed on his individual altar, *Čuafebyěni* (1).

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1. See p. 175.

3. The collective ceremonies for the renewal of the person are first performed on the stone *fara ba* of the village.

The "signs of creation" (*bolo ti doniya*), engraved with a red-hot iron on a gourd as a request to the ancestors for their support, are presented to the participants. Next, the stone is removed and the objects covered by it are checked, the group thus assuring itself that none has been displaced during the year. Then they proceed to the
796 reconstruction of the ritual drawings. The operator first draws the
783 torches representing the fire used in olden times by the ancestors to
532 defend themselves against attacks and dangers from the outside while they were building the village. The following prayer is recited:

"You, torch of fire, I have prepared you in the mountain (from which our ancestors came), you who keep the souls of the village, protect us from those who wish us harm, fire" (*ter*) (2).

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2. E mõ ñõ tasuma, ñe e ñu kulu la kę dla,
dugu nimara ba ke, i kã kla kelenyõ na,
tasuma (ter).

Then he draws, as on the ancestors' caps, a black dot which represents the womb of women as well as Faro. The latter will help men by giving them water, for without his help "none, not even the Kworè, have the rain necessary for agriculture.

Three small figures represent the three responsible chiefs of the Kworè who are subjected to the fire rites and who withstand with courage for the common welfare all the sufferings and burns. The other members are represented by four silhouettes to indicate their inferior position by a feminine number. The entire grouping of personages and torches converges on the black dot to show that "the men by their feet and the torches by their fire throw back their nyama toward him."

796 183 When the drawings are finished, all the participants in turn place their little finger and then their tongue on them to abandon the nyama of the year and to receive new forces. The women use the same gestures as the men but repeat them four times. Each person then [185] receives, respectively, three /209/ or four lashes of the whip on his back so as to integrate properly within him these new elements (3).

3. The little finger acts upon the nyama of the body, and the tongue upon the nyama of words.

The children, led by their mothers, are the objects of similar attentions. The boys press their toes upon the stone; the little girls present their genitals to it to prove their femininity. All are then seated in turn on the stone so that the old nyama leaves them through the anus. Then, they are lifted up above it by their parents and "are shaken in all directions to settle properly the newly received nyama in them." The mothers pass their hands over the fact of their children and then over their own, a gesture which binds them to their offspring for the year to come.

The assembly goes to the Kworè stone where the cardinal points are renewed by brandishing lighted torches to the west, north, south, and then east. Each person apologizes for the faults committed during

796 the year. The men in turn each place their right foot on the stone
783 and turn in succession toward the cardinal points, inhaling deeply with
open mouth and extended tongue as though "to breathe them in."

The women do the same, but place their middle finger on the stone;
[785] at the same time they receive four whip lashes on the back so as to
"sustain (1) the change of the cardinal points with pain."

With heads lowered and hands at their back, the sick persons would present to the stone those parts of their bodies which are the source of their sufferings, saying: "Here is the evil that is in my flesh" (2), for the stone is both responsible for and a depository of illness. The one-eyed and blind show their closed eyes. The cripples place their affected limb upon it. Then the initiated elders, completely naked, encircle the stone while recting a formula in the ancient language (3).

Next, the young men run around it rapidly rotating their right arms with closed fists. By this gesture, they are asking the stone to help them find a wife. The young girls follow them, walking in their footsteps, a gesture of docility which also expresses their desire to marry.

The ceremony ends with beer drinking which lasts three days. Each person is happy and gay at having "renewed" his soul; the young people will marry and children will be conceived.

1. The more familiar term, "to receive" would be a better translation.

2. Nka soko la ba na fle ninye.

3. Dede kumbeyde mala kay kapo kumbey de malado. This text would mean: "stone, mistress of all, fear nothing, your children are there."

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Chapter 8

DIVINATION

781 If we still find it difficult to isolate the general principles of divination among the Bambara, it is possible nevertheless to perceive identical elements among its diversified aspects. As soon as we approach the mechanisms and the symbols employed by the diviners, it appears that the first and fundamental element of divination is the "word," the creator of life, the motivation of the cosmos, and the power of Faro.

To foresee the future is to reveal to the secular the "word" which is situated in space as well as in time, and which is the will and the material expression of that will. Destiny is understood as the realization of the designs of creation to which all must conform. To submit to this will is supreme wisdom. To inquire into the reason for a past state or event, or to determine the attitude to be taken in the face of future states or events, is what the wise man can and must do.

The supernatural powers, rightful masters of the word, alone have to power to reveal it. They have done this in mythical times for all men by teaching them technologies capable of reparing the repeated disorders brought about in the process of creation. They do this for each individual if he is in need of it and if he knows how to read through the various methods of gaining knowledge which they have put at his disposal. It is therefore to them that the diviner addresses himself in order that the word be communicated.

781 801 Which will be the privileged signs over which the diviners will bend their efforts? It appears that these are numbers, notably the first twenty-two. In fact, all aspects of physical and moral life are inscribed in them. Taken as a whole, they reflect the succession of events in space and in time. A complex symbolism, which is superimposed over the others, is assigned to each one separately.

Each number has one or several meanings appropriate to it. /211/ It is odd or even, a notion linked to that of duality which has been so frequently mentioned in the course of this work. The sum of several numbers also expresses a particular idea which is added to those recovered by each element. Finally, a value is attributed to the succession of numbers, which is the first expression of time (1).

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The first 22 numbers, which represent the totality of "words" and which express the sum total of the Bambara's mystical knowledge, must be considered from different angles according to whether they are seen as the 22 fundamental elements of creation, the 22 elements of the domination of this creation by Pemba, or the 22 methods and periods of the reorganization of this creation by Faro. In this series appears clearly the classification of elements composing the human being, *ni*, *dya*, *tere*, according to dualism which is Faro's own character and principle of action.

Moreover the stages of time, which itself did not exist before his domination, are expressed by the succession of numbers, each of which is linked to a part of the myth.

Current divination utilizes the first 22 elements at the level where they express "the order and the word of Faro."

1. *kele*. Faro; the word. Number of the master of the word. District of the chief; the right of the eldest, the right of the first; the head. The conscience: psychical aspect, moral aspect.

2. *fla*. Original duality, twinness. Faro's two female twins, the two first human twins. Love and friendship; union of beings. Necessity for man, however, to be straightforward in his action, not to follow two tracks.

3. *saba*. Sexual symbol of man and his soul. Birth of mixed twins, sons of the sinful Bozo women.

4. *nani*. Sexual symbol of woman and man's double (*dya*). Birth of a Bozo girl.

5. *duru*. Unlucky number composed of 4 (woman) and 1 (incompleteness). Miscarriage, failure, death. A stillborn child is called *duru*. However, it has an auspicious aspect and so signifies the universe (2).

6. *woro*. Symbol of male twins (3 and 3). Lucky number (3).

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1. This expression is symbolized by the progression of the first four numbers in the preliminaries of creation. See p. 23.

2. See p. 24.

3. *Dĕke ni fla ye gariseke ye*, "two little male twins, that is luck."

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7. wolṍfla. Symbol of mixed twins (3 and 4). Complete man possessing the ni and dya of opposed sexes. Complete world; growth /212/ of nature. Ideal image of creation; perfect word.

8. sekin. Symbol of female twins (4 and 4), of the eight ancestors and their word. Excess of words; danger of this excess caused by women.

9. konoto. Symbol of character or tere. Incompleteness.

10. tã. Composed of 6 (male twins) and of 4 (female birth), it is a lucky number and expresses the fertility desired by Faro as well as Faro himself.

11. tã ani kele. Conflict and debate. During the eleventh period after Faro's domination, Téliko wanted to resist.

12. tã ani fla. Téliko's attempt to dominate the world and to connive with men.

13. tã ani saba. Composed of 3 (Téliko, male spirit) and 10 (Faro): expresses Faro's opposition to Téliko's domination.

14. tã ani nani. Téliko's voyage.

15. tã ani duru. Téliko's defeat.

16. tã ani woro.
17. tã ani wolṍfla.
18. tã ani sekin.
19. tã ani konoto.

Faro's work in organizing the universe.

20. muka. Meeting of Faro and Téliko to decide on the order and progress of the universe.

21. duka ani kele. Faro's complete domination over creation.

22. muka ani fla. Total of the periods elapsed between the creation and the organization of the world. Conclusion and "end of the words."

The symbolism of numbers in everyday life comes into play every time they occur. From the beginning they were used to qualify tools and utensils. According to whether these belonged to men or women, they were marked respectively with three or four easily recognizable signs, indicating their ownership. Thus, in weaving, the shuttle carried three bobins, the spindle four lines.

Each ritual is repeated three times in the case of a man, four times in the case of a woman. If it is performed several days running or at regular intervals, the same rhythm is observed. Thus the dya of a drowned man is fed every three days, or every four days in the case of a drowned woman. The organization of the chief's district

787 801 and the priesthood is founded on the same laws. A religious chief is generally accompanied by two aides or two elders belonging to his age grade. The group they compose is a duplication of the first three of the eight original ancestors.

Seven, the expression of perfect creation appears notably in the repetition of Faro's name when a request is addressed to him relating to fertility which may by symbolized /213/ by a male-female couple whose number is seven. To say Faro's name alerts him, but to repeat it seven times makes him hear that which may best satisfy him and presents him with what he desires.

Eight is the number of the ancestors who received the word and of the families that spread it. Six and eight, images of male and female twins, are at the basis of the Bambara system of numbers and calculations (1). Ten, which repeats unity, is composed of the sum of the first four numbers marking the stages of creation; it represents Faro (2). Twenty-two, which determines the categories of the creative

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1. See p. 48, n. 1.

2. "The religious function of the decade plays an extremely important role among the Bambara because the symbolism of all numbers is included in it as it contains them all. Since it can be made up by the sum of the first four numbers which in themselves express the unity and duality of the being, masculinity and femininity, the fourfold nature of twins, the very essence of existence—in a word the decade—expresses all that which is achieved within oneself, all that which is complete, perfect, and just. The very name of ten, tã, indicates these notions; moreover, instead of tã, ten, the Bambara often say dafare, "it is complete." Consequently, ten is the essential symbol of divinity." S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara," p. 198.

781 thought yo, represents the universe; it is found on all sanctuaries or
801 ritual objects.

Inversely, a number may be attached to an individual because of his behavior. It is said of a wicked man that he is an "eleven." The person who wishes to take power when he has no right to is "twelve." A man who is disgraced because he is denied that which he asks for is "thirteen."

781 Another fundamental element of the divining technique is derived from the state and qualities of the diviner. In order to question the supernatural, no special quality is ordinarily needed other than that normally required of a person making a sacrifice. Thus any Bambara, before making his offering, throws a kola nut on the ground to interpret its position. But the diviner is in a peculiar position. His spiritual elements, constantly in touch with the divinity, are the object of precautions which introduce him into the supernatural cycle and permit him to hear its message. They are, therefore, protected from the impurity which they might acquire in their contact with ordinary men. Because of this, the diviner is forced to respect a certain number of taboos. His double, guarantee for his state, is preserved by the spirits which protect it on the one hand and excercise control over its owner on the other. It is for them a means of action. "If the diviner has received the word and makes a mistake, the spirits may cause him to die." His mouth is filled up /214/ with a force which comes to him from these powers and which he must not misuse.

On the other hand, the trance is the state in which the spiritual is best expressed. In the excitement of the dance, at the frenetic rhythm of the drums, the Komo divines and predicts. At this moment he is entirely under the influence of the spiritual beings which express themselves through him.

Having presented these different points, is it possible in the present state of the inquiry to classify the methods of divination we have observed among the Bambara? This classification which we will attempt is tentative, and the observations will have to be taken up again more profoundly.

A brief description of several methods of divination currently in use is given below, and two of the techniques we have studied more carefully will be explained in detail: divination by guitar playing and divination by throwing cowrie shells (1).

787 1. In this chapter we purposely do not approach the study of geomancy, which is reserved for later treatment. This mode of divination has been the object of a detailed description in C. Monteil, La Divination chez les Noirs de l'Afrique occidentale française /Divination among the Blacks of French West Africa/. Geomancy is currently used by the Bambara, by all the chiefs of religious societies, and by all the hunters who are familiar with several types, particularly the nama ti "sign of the hyena," the timba ti "sign of the aardvark," and the tyẽ dyę "white truth" or trabu. The symbols connected with this type of divination are very complex among the Bambara who state that they possess an autochthonous method of geomancy distinct from the type called "Moslem," with which they are also familiar. This last point seems to be confirmed by the observations gathered by B. Maupoil in Dahomey and explained in his conclusions (see La Géomancie à l'ancienne côte des Esclaves /Geomancy on the Old Slave Coast/, p. 678). Geomancy is practiced in similiar ways on the whole African continent. More than any other activity, its study raises the problem of influences, notably that of Islam, with which we have dealt on page 7.

Methods of Divination Linked to the Idea of the Person

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Knowledge of the person is a constant concern of the Bambara. The body, which supports the spiritual principles, is marked from birth by signs which any knowledgeable individual is capable of interpreting. They determine not only the character (tere) of a person but also, to a certain extent, the destiny that awaits him.

Thus by examining carefully the facial features of a newborn child, his hairline, the shape of his eyes, nose, and head, the lines on his

187 forehead, it is possible to predict to a great extent, what he will be
826 or do in life. Later on /215/ the gait, the swinging of the arms, the way of placing the feet, of holding the head or the breasts will complete, for the informed people, the portrait sketched at birth.

Measurement of the *dya*

804 Certain indications concerning the individual are also given by the double or twin (*dya*) (1) which materializes in the shadow of the body and is measured by using the little finger as a unit. Starting from the top of the head, this operation is undertaken at noon in the sun when the shadow is shortest. The measurements which are noted down are grouped alternatively by three, the male number, and by four, the female number, according to the following table:

1. The first three unit measures (little finger) represent the nerves, *pasa* (masc.).
2. From the fourth to the seventh, the soft parts, the flesh, *bu* (fem.).
3. From the eighth to the tenth, the bones, *kolo* (masc.).
4. From the eleventh to the fourteenth, the body liquids, *dyi* (fem.).
5. From the fifteenth to the seventeenth, the male genitals, *wulu* (masc.).
6. From the eighteenth to the twenty-first, the female genitals, *byę*, (fem.).
7. From the twenty-second to the twenty-fourth, the joints, *kolonye*, (masc.).
8. From the twenty-fifth to the twenty-eighth, the breasts, *ši* (fem.).
9. From the twenty-ninth to the thirty-first, the backbone, *koloko* (masc.).
10. From the thirty-second to the thirty-fifth, the womb, *dẽzo* (fem.).
11. From the thirty-sixth to the thirty-eighth, the intelligence, *hakili* (masc.).

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1. See p. 86.

781 12. From the thirty-ninth to the forty-second, pettiness, stupidity, misenya, (fem.).

826 13. From the forty-third to the forty-fifth, judgment, calmness, basigi (masc.).

14. From the forty-fifth to the forty-ninth, incoherence, agitation, hakiliwuli (fem.).

[804] These groupings are symbolized by little sticks whose length increases for male measures and decreases for female measures.

Example: if the measure of the individual stops at group 7, he will be represented by four sticks (males) of increasing size and by three others (females) of decreasing size and different aspects.

/216/ Whatever their number, these sticks are then placed in the following manner: those of the nerves in a dry receptacle, those of the flesh in millet flour, those of the bones on a hard stone, those of the liquids in water, those of the male genitals on the testicles of a male goat, those of the female genitals on the vulva of a mare, those of the breasts in karite oil, those of the womb in water from the Niger or a well, those of the intelligence in fresh milk, those of calmness and judgment in water. On the stick representing the joints is shown the name for lion; on that representing the backbone, the word dyose, (literally, point of support); on that representing pettiness, the name for dung beetle; on that representing disorder and agitation, the words muso dãga (literally, accursed woman).

A prayer is recited over the sticks which are then grouped and counted with their numbered representation and their symbolism according to the complicated calculations whose details we will not enter upon here (1). This prayer and counting are called: faro kanubaya, "love of Faro." They indicate his solicitude for his subjects and were supposedly revealed to men by the swallow messenger at the time of the first girl twins' birth.

781 826 843 Each of these measurements corresponds to a certain moral and physical behavior of man, predetermined by Faro before one's birth. It is therefore possible, by measuring the dya of a pregnant woman,

1. It must, nevertheless, be noted that the total of the signs is (7 x 3) + (7 x 4) or 49.

787 to know the sex of the child a woman is carrying and the character
826 which will be attributed to him by the spirit.

[843] Without further elaboration on this method of divination which implies a series of interpretations, it suffices to note that it is integrated into the system of Bambara thought and inspired by the conception he has of man's place in the universe.

Divination by the Kola Nut

787 The kola nuts which the Bambara eat and use in their sacrificial or divinatory rituals are classified into seven categories according to their form and color.

1. *dangoro*, red nut.
2. *yeleworo*, white nut.
3. *sosokuworo* (literally, mosquito head), a red nut pointed at one of its extremities.

/217/ 4. *flaniworo* (literally, twin kola), a white nut with the same signs on both its halves.

5. *worodanda* (literally, kola without a mouth), a nut of two colors without an apparent crack permitting it to be divided.
6. *bassiworo*, a dark red and very bitter nut.
7. *nyeworo*, a nut of light and indeterminate color.

The kola nut, "created for Faro's twin girls," is itself a symbol of duality, for both its adhering halves are easily separated. In daily life, unless the diviner has ordered it as a purification, a kola nut is not eaten by one person alone; it is divided and one of the halves given to a third person. This gesture of politeness and friendship is also the expression of the duality of man, comparable to that of the fruit itself.

[576] To give kola nuts is always a sign of deference, respect, or affection. To eat a white nut "chases away sorrow and worry." The nut without a crack is rarely eaten. As it appears to be of one piece, it has an inauspicious character. In religious ceremonies the *bassiworo* nuts are preferred for the boli; the ordinary red nuts, *dangoro*, for the other altars. The pointed nut, *sosokuworo*, is offered by one who wants a child. The officiator chews half the nut and spits it onto the altar before eating the other half.

781 Divination by the kola nut is practiced in numerous cases concerning the individual and the community. Moreover, it precedes almost all the sacrifices performed on the different altars. Before the throat of a victim is cut, the question of the consent of the beneficial power is posed. This method is used for spirits who are invoked by means of a recited prayer at the time the nut is divided but before it is thrown. The color and shape of the nut are chosen according to the question formulated, as well as according to the quality of the being whose mediation is sought. If the plea is addressed to Faro, for a marriage for instance, the nut must be white; if the spirits of the earth or the skies are questioned, it must be red; for a birth or a death and for all requests to the spirits of the west, the beneficial nut, yeleworo, is used. On the contrary, as a protection against an enemy or to convey a curse, the spirits of the east are invoked with the mouthless nut, worodanda. A good divining nut must, in addition, show a kind of design, called yeleda (literally, mouth for laughing, at the intersection of the two pieces composing it. It is also fitting that it be /218/ pointed at one extremity to "prick the subject" benefiting from the ritual. The officiator, who has divided the nut lengthwise into two parts, following its natural dividing line, holds the two pieces in his hand and recites the following prayer:

"Faro, my mother, Faro, my father, spirits of the earth, spirits of the skies, spirits of the west, spirits of the east, you who are better than all of them, Faro, here are the kolas, let truth be unveiled, let the two (pieces) part at the top. I say, you, Faro" (ter) (1).

1. Ne ba faro ne fa faro du kuma ǰinew,
šãnfe ǰinew, [illegible]lebi ǰinew, korona ǰinew
dyenin kausa na be ye, e faro, woro fle
tye ka banke fla ka dya safe; ngo e faro (ter).

He may also say more simply:

"Here are two kola nuts, if you refuse, may one be shut and the other open; if you accept, may both be open or may both be shut"(2).

2. Woro fla, fle ninye, ni ma sǫ̃,
kele ka dyã, kele ka bri, ni sona a
fla ka dyã, fla ka bri.

787 This text determines the interpretation of the answer which will be given. The diviner next opens his hand, releases the pieces, and watches the way in which they fall on the ground: if they are arranged in the same way on the inner or outer sides, the answer is affirmative; it is negative.

Divination by Cowrie Shells

This practice is called: kolo nin fli, literally, "to throw the soul of the cowries." These shells are in no way different from those used for trade or ornamentation. Only one taboo is attached to the way in which they are acquired; they must not be bought or obtained without payment. To acquire them, the diviner must secure a loan called [426] kuma boli (literally, to come out of the word); he gives as surety a product or an object which will be reclaimed by him later when he returns the cowries.

The 22 cowries used summarize "that which is necessary to man" and are divided into three groups:

The first seven, teliko dɛ̃, sons of Téliko, represent the spirit of the air, Téliko and his children, as well as "the respiration" of men. In fact, it is said of them: "The Téliko spirits are the man's respiration" (1).

1. Teliko ye adamadɛ̃ ninakli kuma bo ye.

The next seven, faro dɛ̃, sons of Faro, symbolize human /219/ beings. One of them, chosen because it is easy to distinguish from the others, represents Faro; the diviner repeats the name of the spirit seven times over this shell before mixing it with the others, the effect being to give all of them the strength of the spirit.

The last eight, kumabana dɛ̃, sons of Koumabana, are the words of the eight great ancestors. One of them, different from the others, is called "mother of words." It is both Koumabana, first of the eight ancestors, and the unequaled word which he "spat" since Koumabana had known "all the words now existing on earth."

Thus 22, the expressions of the universe, summarize the human individual in the system of the 22 cowries: body and soul, Faro; breath and respiration, Téliko; revealed word, Koumabana. The division into three series, two of which are 7 and one 8, is also

significant; the number 7 is the sign of the complete man and it occurs twice to recall duality. Eight is the number of the word which animates him.

This type of divination is only performed during the day, for it is disrespectful to alert the spirits at nightfall. Moreover, the orientation of the shells on the ground is important and easier to observe by the light of the sun. The officiator takes the cowries in his hand, three or four times consecutively, according to the sex of the person consulting him, and lets them fall to the ground or onto a tray. He then studies them, following their orientation, and the place they occupy with relation to the mother or the "conclusion of words," according to their open or closed position. Very skilled diviners, who have to resolve complex problems, operate with 22 cowries. But sometimes the eight kumabana dẽ are sufficient.

In this case, before throwing them, the diviner pronounces the following prayer:

"You, eight old ancestors, none has surpassed you in words, your vision was so great that it surpassed the number (of the others); the cowries are thrown, you will show the truth; I say, you, the eight elders, I say, you, good spirits" (1).

1. Aw moko korobaw sekin, moko ma se teme aw ka kuma na, aw ka somaya bonya ma, fo ka dama teme koloniw fle la, aw ka ntiñe ǰira, ngo aw maw sekin, ngo jinew aw maw.

In the short space of time in which the cowries are thrown, destiny is written. The moment the diviner releases them, "the spirit of the air which controls them, having examined the case, adjudges and proposes. The moment they touch the ground, Faro, master of the last appeal, disposes" (2). The design of the cowries translates his word; they /220/ are the expression of his will visible to man through the word revealed by Koumabana. This whole delicate spiritual

2. It is said colloquially: "Téliko proposes and Faro disposes," teliko ba singa, faro ba sinze.

781 mechanism, invisible for the ordinary person, unknown to the noninitiate, can be perceived by the seer and the diviner who are conscious of the fact that they are manipulating the divine with the cowries. Because of this they bend over the constantly renewed shape given to the dispersed material with a powerful feeling of the presence of the forces to whom they are appealing.

The Somaya

791 According to tradition, the somaya or science of the soma was revealed in Mandé, that is to say, it was known to the Bambara before their arrival in the territory which they now occupy. It was restricted to a few privileged persons. The gifts of clairvoyance which it presupposes may be discovered in a newborn baby at the time when the signs determining his character (tere) are examined by the elders during the name-giving ceremony. In early childhood frequent manifestations of suffering are a sign of the spirits' presence and from the first steps, the way of walking itself confirms the child's vocation. About the age of ten, the young boy "guided by the Téliko spirits" is attracted by them into the bush near a pond where he lives in their invisible company for several days.

After this retreat the child returns to his village, provided with a little stone (ǰinaworo, literally, kola nut of the spirits), a sign of the alliance he has contracted with them.

However, he pretends not to know the place he came from. He also never makes any statements concerning the gift of double sight with which he has been endowed, but does manifest it by making some unsolicited revelations about their future to those he encounters. After a time, people recognize by these signs his quality as a Soma, which implies a change in his spiritual principles: the dya remains under the protection of the Téliko spirits who also control the diviner; they act directly on his person and hold his health and life in their power, punishing him in case of an infraction or in case of disorders which are harmful to the exercise of his art (1).

1. A Soma would become a mahalakillen or a harmful animal if his dya were altered through contact with the impure earth.

791 [589] The gifts he has received and the position of his dya compel /221/ the Soma to remain unmarried and to observe a certain chastity. "The wife of the Soma lives with the spirits," says the informant who adds that every forty-nine days (7 x 7) his dya is returned to him during the night for the purpose of a sexual union.

From the moment the Soma begins to exercise his art regularly, he visits the bush from time to time to consult the spirits and make offerings to them. Moreover, the latter visit him in his home where he attracts them by burning a powder that gives off a smell of which they are fond.

Like the griot, the Soma has a mouth full of nyama: his own to which is added that of the spirits who help him and control him. His word is so powerful that he rarely announces a death, for this would contribute to the propagation of death.

The Soma must be rigorously clean, wear simple clothes, and even dress as an indigent. During ceremonies he hangs the stone ǰineworo around his neck with a string and must always carry this stone in a pocket of his tunic. He generally belongs to the Komo society and may become its chief. In this case he is the recognized diviner of the village.

791 766 The Soma keeps in his home his stone of alliance and his harp with its accessories. When he dies, his body is left for some time alone in the house; the spirits are supposed to come and reclaim these objects which no one must touch and which no one will inherit. The burial of the body and the funeral ceremonies are performed only after this delay. His soul is never kept in the Komo altars and goes to join the dya in the domains of Tɛliko; the spiritual principles of the Soma are not reincarnated and the gift which he has received is not hereditary.

791 534 The Soma's harp (Fig. 17) (1) is made of a rectangular chest (bara) pierced through longitudinally by a long piece of wood (ngoni kala, literally, stalk of the ngoni) surrounded by little leather thongs in the shape of rings (ǰiri wolo, literally, skin of wood). These hold

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1. See G. Dieterlen, Morphologie et symbolique de deux instruments de musique bambara /The Morphology and Symbolism of Two Instruments of Bambara Music/.

191
534

the goatskin thongs (ngoni dyuru, literally, ropes of the ngoni). At the end of the stalk, ngoni ku, is affixed an iron percussion plate (boso) decorated with rings of the same metal (nyege nyegele) which are the "earrings of the spirits." These rings are said to be "multicolored' for the sound they emit is blurred and confused.

[532]

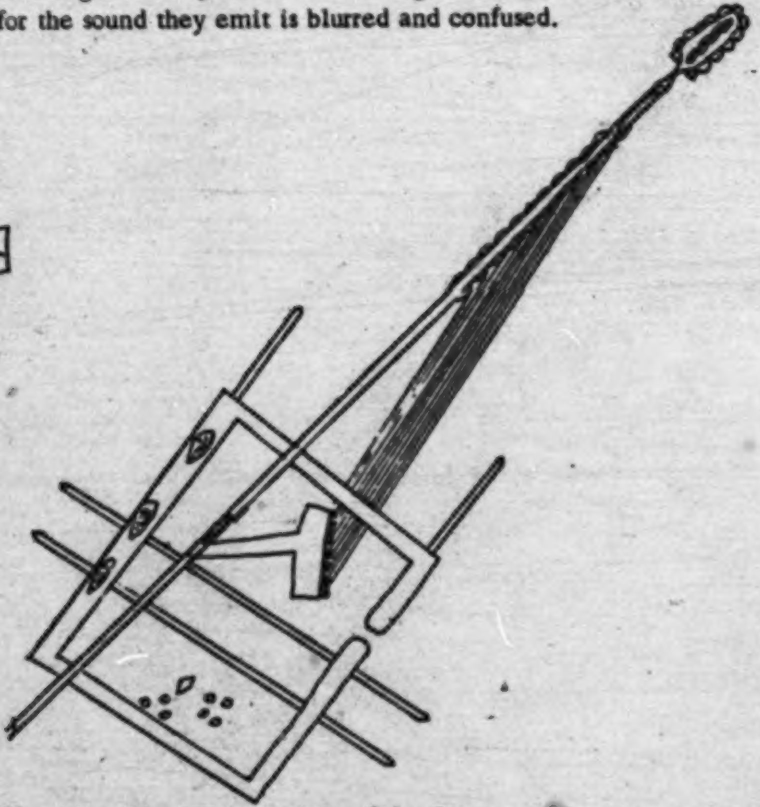

Fig. 17 —The Divining Harp of the Soma.

The instrument represents the face of the ancestor Koumabana who received "the word," and his tomb; on another level, it symbolizes also the face of the diviner and his tomb. (Drawing by an informant.)

When the percussion plate is placed on the handle, "it increases the sounds and filters them in the air, which pleases the spirits and calls them to the diviner whom they assist during his work." If the instrument /222/ is used without the percussion plate, that is to say, for a secular purpose, the spirits are not alerted by the playing of the music.

191/534 The skin, stretched on the box by means of goatskin thongs, is soaked in water over which the name of the spirit Téliko has been pronounced forty-nine times. The supporting strings are made of twisted shreds of shrouds picked up in a cemetery. The musical strings are made of goatskin, numbering eight, /223/ symbol of the word (1),

> 1. The harp of the Ṣoma differs from that of the *griot* which usually has even strings.

and are named as follows, beginning with the shortest: *kumabana*, *fa dẽ* (son of the father), *fa* (father), *fa koroke* (elder brother of the father), *fa dogone* (younger brother of the father), *ba* (mother), *modẽ* (grandson), *fa so* (house of the father).

Tied to a bridge, *Yiri ni* (literally, teeth of the *ngoni*), which represents the mouth and teeth of Koumabana, they are the ancestor's words. On another level, they are also the home and the family of the spirit Téliko.

Of a relatively equal length in different harps, they give eight different notes; the intervals are called *dyuru fara dye* (2).

> 2. On some instruments we have observed, the first and the eighth string gave the same note at an interval of an octave. It may be predicted that a thorough study of Bambara music would bring to light a system of correspondences between the disposition of musical sounds and that of the world. M. Griaule, in his research on the Dogon harp, has already discovered a relationship between the notes, the numbers, and the universe.

[532] On the right side of the box the three first ancestors of the Bambara are sometimes drawn; Koumabana and the two elders who died after him. They may be recognized by the hair with which their faces are covered, just as those of the ancestors to whom the razor was unknown (3).

> 3. This detail has been observed on ancient instruments in the region of Koutiala.

791 The box is transpierced by two wooden sticks, če kala (literally,
534 man-stalk), recalling the two millet stalks which accompany every dead man into his grave and which are in themselves symbols of the two elders.

791 When the Soma falls ill, he removes the two sticks from his instrument and places them beside him on his mat, anticipating the position
534 he will lie in the grave. Thus stretched out, "he is in the grave and
755 walks with the two ancestors"; if his condition improves the sticks have liberated him from his illness. He replaces them in the harp only after his recovery.

791 The box contains seven pebbles, the number of man (3 + 4) and a piece of copper in the shape of a star symbolizing the word. The
534 Soma may look into the harp through an opening on its side, called šu wo (sorcery hole) or bara dinge (hole of the box), which "permits him to breathe," to see "the ancestor Koumabana, master of the word, and to know the deepest secrets." At the bottom of the instrument another opening, considered the anus, permits the release of all that is harmful.

/224/ A red stain placed on one of the faces, sindera ble (literally, red belt), expresses the fact that the instrument is the object of blood sacrifices like the stone ǰineworo.

The case is the image, the mask of Koumabana; the two faces, called respectively kini nye, "right eye," and numa nye, "left eye," represent his eyes; the comb, his mouth; the opening, his nose and respiration; the strings, his words. It is also the replica of the tomb and of the first three of the eight ancestors who knew death. Finally, it is the face of the Soma and his tomb.

The instrument must never be touched by a woman; moreover, no one must play it if his intentions are not pure, "if his heart is not clean."

791 When the Soma plays in response to requests from those who consult him, each sound is a prayer. With his free hand he holds a twig with
533 which he strikes the base. Each stroke is a word. As he plays, images
781 form before his eyes and within him. He touches the cords separately according to their position and in relation to the importance of the question that is being asked. Thus, he pinches modẽ for subjects of little importance: hunt, journey, etc.; fadẽ for that which is concerned with health, procreation, the physical or moral life of the individual; fa for the future, destiny, the private and public life of a man, his

791 authority, his command; fa koroke for planting and cultivation, the
533 control of water, rains, and ponds, and for fortune and wealth; fa
787 dogone for the germination of grains, the formation of the ears and
the light rains; ba for all that concerns women; faso for all that concerns the family house and those who are absent.

But the Soma also plays airs with rhythms accompanied by words. He plays them one after the other during the sitting or choses them according to the character of the person consulting him and the questions raised.

The following seven songs were collected and interpreted by the Soma of Bandiagara:

"A good thing comes with a bad thing" (1). This song has the

1. Ko ñumã de bina ni ko dyugu ye.

effect of revealing to the Soma the thoughts of the consulter.

"Man knows little" (2). In spite of his learning a man knows few

2. Adama dɛ̃ te ko do.

things; a child often knows that which an adult ignores.

/225/ "Even when a man is satiated he may not go beyond the mother who has given him birth" (3). This rhythm is performed for

3. Mako fara čokočoko a tise ka temme
a wolo ba ka.

those who show arrogance or vanity, or for those whose wife has left the conjugal home and has taken refuge with her father.

"Even if he is handsome, a man must have eyes (that is, to be informed)" (4). The Soma plays this air whenever there is a marriage,

4. Moko če kani čokočoko fo nɛ̃ ka soro i ku.

a birth, or an initiation.

"The world is big" (5). When anguish overwhelms the consulter,

5. Diñẽ ka bõ.

791 533 187 this song calms his restlessness and gives him back peace and serenity. "Whatever man is, he may not go beyond God" (1). The Soma

1. Moko a kera čokočoko a te teme ngala ka.

plays this air if the consulter harbors bad intentions or if he is ignorant or stubborn. He does the same to discover the gifts of a child and to encourage the family to develop his learning.

"Joy embellishes the world" (2) is performed for futile and pleasant

things: feasts and dances, ornaments.

2. Klo ye dĩne dya.

things: feasts and dances, ornaments.

187 801 Divination, in a large measure, is the application of the static and dynamic quality of numbers. On the one hand these translate the relationships; on the other, they are symbols for phenomena, beings, behaviors, situations, and in general all the constituent parts of the universe. Though not endowed with power in themselves, they symbolize powerful and well regulated elements. It may also be said that the numbers are superior realities, the same as the primordial signs which preceded the perceptibility of all things and on account of which the things began to exist once man had taken them into his consciousness. (3)

3. See p. 17.

In the course of divination, they indicate to the individual or collective consulter his personal position with regard to the rest of the universe. In a way, they permit the formulation of a particular equation for each person at a given time.

CONCLUSION

121 /227/ It is only recently that the discipline of silence adhered to by the Blacks has been relaxed in certain circles of the initiates. Human behavior, backed up by a rigorous method, has allowed a group of researchers to establish a documentation which suffers less from the usual faults. It is no longer superficial or fragmentary; it is

|2| no longer encumbered with a systematic hostility, which by its consistency and generalized character misled us for many years.

Until the present, the facts gathered among the Bambara were chiefly concerned with appearances. The institutions which might be referred to as "mysteries" were only known through allusions made inadvertently by a mulish people. This was true to such an extent that, for example, in the functioning of the Komo the personality of the universal Monitor had never even figured.

But the study of these people suffered from a constraint more serious than esoterism or distrust: the skepticism and indifference of scholarship which systematically, so to speak, has failed to recognize or has denied the existence of a profound thought among the Blacks.

This contribution demonstrates that certain difficulties in approaching the work may be untangled on the one hand, and that on the other it is no longer appropriate to hold an image of the tropical African world as one in which nothing is harmonious, great, or even worthy of speculation.

This contribution also proves the complexity of the facts. A few only were selected from a vast documentation, the work of a team. And even this documentation appears infinitesimal compared to that which can be foreseen.

The fact is that the Bambara—and like him many other Blacks—makes of man a universe and of the universe a system where everything has a place and a role, from the heavenly bodies to objects of everyday usage, from the mind of man to his ordure.

Years of patient research will therefore be necessary to reveal the immense network of representations and rituals so as not to overlook any materials or gestures, however insignificant in appearance. /228/ We know, in fact, from experience that behind each utensil looms a facet of the organization of men, and that a few lines incised without artistry with a fingernail on a wall express the unfolding of creation.

The negligence of the lowliest of these details may shut off whole areas of knowledge. This entails extensive work covering all the activities of a people, not only that which is properly classified in our mind as religious.

Even if we assume a knowledge of an imposing body of facts concerning the Bambara, this would only lend itself to speculation of a specific nature. A description of the structure and function of the religion of these people would certainly constitute a valuable addition to human

121 knowledge. However, the same effort would have to be undertaken with regard to their neighbors so that gradually from one tribe to the next, it can be extended to the whole Black world.

For it is true that, however indispensable it is to order the facts concerning the Bambara themselves and to seek an internal explanation, the comparative method is necessary for the understanding of a religion. This method imposes itself with particular force in this context. The Bambara system does appear to be, on the one hand, the original synthesis of several other systems found by them on the spot at the time when they made their ultimate settlement, or brought along at the time of the great migratory movements. On the other hand this system is in a state of perpetual symbiosis with those of other Sudanese peoples, as is proved indubitably by recent observations.

121 At present we can already state that at least nine tribes of varying
171 importance (1) live on the same metaphysical, if not religious,
779

foundation. They have a common theme of the creation by means of a word, which is originally motionless and whose vibration determines little by little the essence and later the existence of all things. The same is true of the movement of the universe in a conical spiral which is constantly extending itself. They share the same conception of the person, as well as of the primordial duality, the expression of perfect unity. All these peoples admit the mediation by a hypostasis of the divinity which sometimes takes on the aspect of a redeemer, master of a world, whose appearance is everywhere identical. All believe in the necessity /229/ of universal harmony as well as that of the internal harmony of beings, both being related. One of the

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1. In the order of increasing depth of studies, we cite the following groups: Dogon and Bambara, blacksmiths, Kouroumba (or Foulsé), Bozo, Manding, Samogo /Samoro/, Mossi, Koulé, altogether amounting to more than two million people. It is fitting to note likewise that several tens of peoples or tribes of the Sudan (in the wider meaning of the word) consider themselves of the same origin. Important rituals, materials, agents, and places reinforce this belief (see p. 2).

121 corollaries of this notion is the subtle mechanism of disorder which we
171 call impurity for lack of a better term, and which goes hand in hand
119 with that of highly developed cathartic practices.

Finally, all these offer an extraordinary efflorescence—not to be called abuse—of the spoken, written, drawn, or gesticulated symbols many of which are found everywhere, each one of them being the basis for several levels of images.

We may therefore speak from now on of a Sudanese civilization whose substratum may be discerned among many tribes as it has been among the Dogon and the Bambara in particular. Under the diversity of languages and institutions is hidden the same framework of representations. It is as though each tribe had arranged the designs characteristic of its own genius on an identical canvas.

For this reason, it is appropriate to consider the present essay as a
121 first step toward an understanding of this civilization. In the future,
this vast entity will have to take its place in relation to the
Mediterranean and Asiatic system. And there is no doubt that this
search for its position will bring up problems of borrowings, migrations,
and assimilation. And doubtless, too, an anatomy of the old civilizations which had taken refuge in the western impasse in Africa will throw a valuable light on the primitive organizations which were found in contact with each other during the high period in these regions, and which were able toeffect a union between indigenous ways of thinking and others with which we are more familiar.

It is tempting to reconstruct archaic states of humanity with the help of broken potsherds or literary shreds. In the more favorable cases, abundant texts and materials have permitted syntheses, whose vicissitudes are one of the reasons for the existence of erudition. On no occasion has anyone ever been discouraged by terrains without echoes, by the absence of the authors of texts and materials. Thus, a wealth of activity concerning the situations and thoughts of ancient times was instituted, a kind of science shrouded in silence where the spirit of research alone was alive.

Today it seems possible, in the light of new observations, to find among numerous and diverse living people, archaic forms and wellsprings common to men of another color living in another time. This does not imply that one should disregard the cautious advice given by the men of the old schools (1); but this advice rests /230/ on postulates

121 1. Among others J. Toutain, C. R. des Garnered Shelves de J. Frazer /Report on the Garnered Shelves by J. Frazer/.

concerning the absence of historical documents and the difference in periods. To admit these postulates, it is necessary to prove precisely this absence and also the incapability of oral tradition to keep alive the traditions and ways of viewing the world over long periods of time.

In any event, whatever the opinion adopted, it would be good methodology to admit as an immediate hypothesis the probable or possible role played by the Sudanese world as a preserver or transformer of attitudes, rites, and concepts which scholars find everywhere else but which remain unexplained. For in a few years nothing will remain to be either disclaimed or confirmed concerning these systems which are on their way to rapid disintegration. Because of mechanization and an unconscious wish for self destruction the Black civilizations will soon become only a shadow of their former selves and the instability of their material will not allow them to be reconstituted in their complexity and grandeur.

And whatever the fate of this hypothesis, we may find, as a result of such thinking that the religious thought of the Blacks, whether original or not, will take its place in the philosophy of history and in the history of humanity.

/231/ ADDENDA

000 The research conducted in the field during the publishing of the present work has brought to light the following facts which, we believe, it will be useful to present succinctly to the reader.

Chapter 1

776 825 Because of the loss of the seeds in their collarbones, Pemba and Mousso Koroni actually have an animal aspect which they owe to their impurity as well as to that of the uncultivated earth which they symbolize. Pemba is represented by the warableni (Vulpes pallida) and Mousso Koroni by the kongowuluni (unidentified fox). It is this

776 latter animal which is imitated by the *vukuri* during the children's
825 nocturnal ritual described on page 65.

This new information confirms the observations noted on page 47, footnote 1, concerning the identity of the Bambara and Dogon representations. Moreover, the *warableni*, like the *yurugu* (*Vulpes pallida*) of the Dogon, intervenes in divination, particularly in geomancy. The investigations permit the extension of these representations to Sudanese tribes coming from Mandé (see p. 2), particularly, to the Bozo and the Peul.

Chapter 3

826 All Sudanese peoples originating in Mandé are characterized by the
773 seeds (or fish) contained in their collarbone, these varying from one tribe to another. On the other hand, within a tribe, the theoretical
824 content of the eight seeds, though roughly similar in terminology, differs in arrangement from family to family. Also the positions of the first and last seeds are reversed for men and women. Example: the blacksmiths have as their first seed the *keninge* and as their last the *tikaninkuru*, whereas the potters have as their first seed the *tikaninkuru* which they cultivate in the sacred fields (see p. 170) and as their last the *keninge*.

Moreover, after Mousso Koroni had stolen from Pemba the seeds he was entrusted to give on earth, Faro, through the intermediary of the /232/ animals who ate them at his order, reclaimed them from her; thus purified, he distributed them to men. The animal, which brought back to Faro the essential seed of each family, becomes the taboo, *tne*, of the family concerned, and the breaking of this taboo has the basic effect of removing the content of the culprit's collarbone. Analogous representations are noted among the Dogon.

Totemism, the so called "joking relationship" (*senankuya* of the Bambara), the caste system, and the exogamous laws of the Sudanese are based on the elements and classification of the contents of the collarbone.

Chapter 6

194 All the great adult institutions (*dyo*) are in contact with the
851 children's society of the Ndomo which reflects the universal organization
772

794 851 772 (space, elements). Each of the six *dyo* to which men are initiated after their circumcision corresponds to a ritual object in the Ndomo: the Komo (west and air) is represented by the *dyara* (rhombus); the Kworè (east and water) by the *tori*; the Nama (south and fire) by the *wulu*; the Kono (north and earth) by the instrument of the same name. The *ǰineble* corresponds to the Nya (nadir) and Nago (zenith). These last two institutions are linked with the whirlwind movement of the creative seed, symbolized by the fonio seed. That is to say, membership in the children's Ndomo society constitutes a pre-initiation to the adult societies which are essentially cosmogonic. The sanctuaries and the sacred fields of the first four *dyo* are theoretically situated at the corresponding cardinal point. The operation of the societies according to a strict system confirms the observations and hypotheses presented on page 10.

Moreover, the mask of the Ndomo represents both Mousso Koroni and the eight seeds stolen from Pemba. All the ceremonies concerning the coming out of Bambara masks (those of the *dyo* as well as those of the *čiwara* and the *sogo*) recall the theft and cultivation of nourishing seeds by Mousso Koroni and their recapture by the animals on Faro's behalf. Similar representations are observed among the Dogon concerning the *yurugu*, *yasigi*, and Nommo.

1: Dieterlen
561

Bambara FA8

/For data on age-groups which are associated with the Kworè and Komo societies, see category 794.--Analyst/

1: Dieterlen FA8 Bambara

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ESSAI SUR
LA RELIGION BAMBARA

par

GERMAINE DIETERLEN

PRÉFACE
DE
MARCEL GRIAULE
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[p. V]
[pp. i-iv are blank]

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A la mémoire de Marcel Mauss.

[p. vi]

DÉPOT LÉGAL
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PRÉFACE

L'ethnologie et, en conséquence, l'enquête ethnologique doivent être totales. Il convient d'entendre par là que rien de ce qui touche l'homme ne saurait être négligé : sa conception de telle étoile est aussi importante, à l'intérieur de son système, que sa coutume agricole; la nourriture spéciale qu'il assimile dans une occasion rituelle joue autant que les rapports établis entre son dieu et ses bêtes ou que la catégorie à laquelle appartient l'arbre dans le bois duquel il taille sa navette.

Et ce n'est pas seulement la prudence ou l'honnêteté scientifiques qui recommandent la constitution d'une documentation complète, mais la pensée elle-même des peuples de l'Afrique Noire. Par les jeux de l'assimilation appliquée à un nombre considérable de symboles, grâce à une puissance d'abstraction dont on ne fait qu'entrevoir la grandeur, ces hommes ont systématisé l'univers. Les récentes recherches de l'équipe dont fait partie l'auteur de ce livre ont abouti à la certitude qu'aucune image, aucune démarche spirituelle, aucune gesticulation technique ou religieuse ne sont absentes d'un ensemble

[p. vii]

de classifications qui tente même d'enrober un monde futur, donc non encore perçu. De plus, ces classifications ne font pas qu'établir des rangs dont chacun constituerait une suite autonome d'habitacles liée aux voisines par une charnière du raisonnement : chaque terme la composant est au contraire en rapport avec tel autre de la suite adjacente, ce qui le relie finalement à d'autres avenues de symboles.

Pour employer une image indigène, on peut considérer que les interstices d'une étoffe sont les lieux mythiques où s'insèrent les « paroles » ancestrales, c'est-à-dire les symboles de la classification; et ces paroles sont comptées sur une ligne de la chaîne comme sur une ligne de la trame.

Bien plus, des files de correspondances s'insinuent dans d'autres directions si bien que chaque symbole est le centre d'une étoile dont les rayons couvriraient l'ensemble du système. Il y a là plus qu'une juxtaposition des symboles, mais bien plutôt une continuité qui marque sans doute une étape de la connaissance scientifique.

Le travail de Mme Germaine Dieterlen, qui présente un tableau très résumé de la documentation recueillie, a été mené de telle sorte que ces correspondances se sont offertes d'elles-mêmes. Il démontre par exemple l'identité de la harpe utilisée par le devin, de l'homme et du monde. Il fait connaître le sens des bandes de coton diverses que tissent les Bambara; chacune d'elles connote une étape de la création, un geste de personnage mythique, un état physique ou psychique. La gamme des bandes étale l'histoire du monde comme la collection des situations possibles. De même, le bonnet du circoncis apparaît comme le raccourci d'un cosmos orienté et actif qui expose des données et produit des effets : la ligne verticale des sept points rappelle la dualité de l'homme qui est trois plus quatre, c'est-à-dire mâle et femelle; les points en étoile marquent l'orientation du monde actuel et préfigurent le monde futur; le pompon du vertex met le porteur en relation avec les ciels; la couleur blanche de l'étoffe opère une catharsis par remise continuelle du circoncis dans la lumière du Moniteur.

Et sans doute le port du bonnet est-il aussi, comme pour d'autres peuples, une manière d'exhiber le résultat de l'opération subie : la tête de l'enfant est enserrée dans son propre prépuce, ce qui revient à identifier cette partie du corps à toute la création. Ainsi coiffé d'univers, le circoncis chemine dans sa nouvelle personne.

L'auteur a su déceler ces innombrables correspondances et donner de la pensée mythique comme de la métaphysique bambara un tableau cohérent qui ne rappelle en rien les études antérieures sur cette population. Les matériaux amassés avec sagacité et rigueur sont d'une qualité exceptionnelle et, pour tout dire, renouvellent nos idées non seulement sur les Bambara mais encore sur les Noirs en général. Les pages sur le néant originel, sur la primauté du signe, sur le cycle allant du Moniteur à l'ordure, sur les techniques, sur le rite qui se termine par le silence des baguettes frappant le vide, sont autant de révélations. Avec elles, les Bambara entrent dans l'histoire. Les sociologues comme les psychologues, les philosophes comme les historiens des religions y trouveront ample matière à réflexion.

Marcel Griaule.

AVANT-PROPOS

Le présent ouvrage fait partie d'une série d'études entreprises au Soudan français depuis 1931 par les Missions Griaule.

Au cours des 6e, 7e et 8e expéditions (1946, 1948, 1949) les recherches ont porté sur les institutions religieuses des Bambara. Dans cet essai sont exposés, avec les commentaires nécessaires, les résultats des enquêtes menées par l'auteur, compte tenu des travaux de ses co-équipiers.

Les informations ont été recueillies dans la région de Bamako à Koulikoro, Kago, Kangaba; dans le cercle de Ségou à Konodimini, Banankoroni, Diammarabougou, Soroba, Massala, Toko, Shouola, Kokou, Banankoro, Pelengena, Sama, Kala, Kalabougou, Ségoubougou, Ségoukouru et dans les divers quartiers du chef-lieu.

Certains éléments des matériels décrits ont été collectés pour l'Institut français d'Afrique Noire de Dakar.

Les Bambara qui ont collaboré régulièrement au recueil de la documentation sont les suivants :

Dyodo Diallo, fils de Zangué Diallo, notable de Ségou.
Mamadou Diara, directeur de l'École rurale de Bamako.
Bala Diara, de Banankoroni, cultivateur, chasseur, devin, chef du Komo, chef du Kworé.
Dji Diara, de Soroba, cultivateur, chasseur, guérisseur, chef du Nama.
Bakonimba Koulibali, de Soroba, cultivateur, chef du Komo.
Boï Koulibali, instituteur à Konodimini.
Mousa Woulalé, de Pelengena, griot.
Mousa Diara, de Sama, cultivateur.
Nadyè Dambèlè, de Konodimini, potière.

De nombreux chefs, notables, prêtres et d'une manière générale tous ceux qui étaient détenteurs de renseignements intéressants ont été consultés. Nous les remercions de leur collaboration.

Nous remercions également M. le Gouverneur du Soudan et MM. les Administrateurs des Cercles de Bamako, Ségou et Mopti,

M. le Directeur de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noire pour les facilités qu'ils nous ont accordées.

Cette étude a été exécutée sous la direction de M. Marcel Griaule que nous remercions de son aide sur le terrain d'enquête et de ses conseils concernant la présentation des documents. Nous remercions également Madame de Ganay qui a collecté un certain nombre de matériaux.

INTRODUCTION

Les populations bambara qui font partie du groupe Mandé s'étendent actuellement, au Soudan Français, du 11e au 14e degré de latitude nord, du 7e au 11e degré de longitude ouest. Trois groupes fixés respectivement dans le cercle de l'Issa Ber, au Kaarta et dans le cercle d'Odienné s'écartent sensiblement du groupe central qui occupe les rives du Niger autour de Bamako et Ségou.

Les Bambara vivent dans de petits villages de la savane; ils pratiquent surtout l'agriculture (mil, fonio, riz, maïs, etc.) mais aussi l'élevage et le jardinage. Les riverains du Niger sont pêcheurs et vivent en symbiose avec les Bozo qui leur ont enseigné les techniques de la pêche et qui sont généralement reconnus comme les premiers habitants de ces territoires.

Les Bambara déclarent être venus du Mandé. Cette région où siégèrent les capitales successives de l'ancien royaume du Mali a déjà depuis longtemps attiré l'attention des chercheurs (1). De plus elle « est le centre d'où ont rayonné quarante-quatre populations réparties actuellement dans l'espace compris entre la côte Atlantique, le Sénégal, le Niger, jusqu'au Dahomey (2) ».

La région désignée porte aussi le nom de Dyéliba et s'appelait autrefois Toubla. Le nom de Kaba (1) donné par tous les Soudanais à l'ancienne capitale du Mali désigne actuellement le village de Kangaba. Mais les plus anciennes agglomérations attestées, avant Dyéliba (Mali I d'après J. Vidal) sont situées dans les régions de Kri Koroni et Ouanda.

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(1) Cf. J. Vidal. *Au sujet de l'emplacement du Mali (ou Melli)*, p. 251 à 268. *Le véritable emplacement du Mali*, p. 606-619. Cet auteur désigne par Mali I à IV, quatre villages qui auraient été successivement ville royale : Dyélibakoro, Niani, Maninkoura et Kangaba. Cf. également Ch. Monteil. *Les Empires du Mali*, p. 13.

(2) Cf. D. Zahan. *Aperçu sur la pensée théogonique des Dogon*, p. 113 à 133. Cet auteur donne la nomenclature des populations issues du Mandé. Cf. également S. de Ganay. *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, p. 212-213. « Dans le village de Manin Kaba, il existe ce qu'ils appellent le *manii blo*, « le vestibule du Mandé », dans lequel sont disposés, autour de l'objet *pembele*, douze sièges *(sigi yoro)* représentant les quarante-quatre « races » issues de ce foyer commun. »

Cette origine est bien connue des Soudanais; cependant le nombre de populations varie. Au cours de la cérémonie septennale de Kangaba (cf. p. xiv, note 3) les griots disent : « Nous étions quarante-huit, par le mélange des vents, les races sont sorties aux quatre points cardinaux » *(an tumbi dabe ni saki la, siaw bwora fyè nyamile ericke nani)*.

Dans le village de Kangaba un sanctuaire, dit *mande blo* « vestibule du Mandé », ou *kaba blo* « vestibule de l'étonnement », est l'objet d'un rite septennal auquel assistent des représentants de toutes les races se disant issues de la même souche. La cérémonie consiste en la réfection du toit du sanctuaire qui abrite un objet dit *dolin*; mais ne sont accrédités à exécuter le rite que des personnalités de race pure appartenant à la famille Kéita (2) et les griots traditionnels des chefs du Mandé, les Dyabaté. Seuls ils peuvent pénétrer dans le sanctuaire et en fouler la terre dont on dit « qu'elle est plus lourde et plus puissante que toutes choses (3) ».

Dès le XIVe siècle de nombreux voyageurs décrivent les Bam-

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(1) Le mot *kàba* tiendrait son origine de *ni ya ka ba ko ye* « ceci est étonnant », expression courante concernant le sanctuaire et les objets rituels qu'il contient. Les Dogon, qui se disent issus du Mandé et qui se sont dispersés dans les falaises de Bandiagara à partir d'agglomérations auxquelles ils avaient donné le nom de Kani, expliquent ce dernier terme en lui donnant le sens de « petit Ka ». Il s'agit, en quelque sorte, de relais entre leur habitat primitif et celui qu'ils occupent actuellement. Sur ces migrations, cf. G. DIETERLEN. *Les Ames des Dogon*, p. 9 et s.

(2) Le nom de Kéita, pour lequel diverses étymologies ont été relevées, est celui des fondateurs de l'empire mandingue. Cf. C. MONTEIL. *Les Empires du Mali*, p. 31 et L. TAUXIER. *Histoire des Bambara*, p. 40 : « Les premiers rois de Mali résidèrent à Kangaba et étaient en effet des Kéita. »

Par extension, le nom Kéita peut être adopté par des individus appartenant à l'une des populations originaires du Mandé. C'est ainsi qu'un Dogon prendra pour *dyamu* Kéita s'il vient vivre au Mandé. D'autre part, la devise des Kéita, qui relate les hauts faits des princes mandingues, comporte celles de presque toutes les populations qui se disent issues de cette même souche. Cette origine commune éclairera peut-être l'institution des changements réglés de noms observable en Afrique Noire, problème qui avait retenu l'attention de certains auteurs; cf. notamment P. HUMBLOT. *Du nom et des appellations chez les Malinké*.

(3) *Kangaba dugukolo kà gri fêw be*.

Le sanctuaire est une hutte ronde munie de deux portes orientées l'une à l'est, l'autre à l'ouest et couverte d'un toit de chaume dans lequel est caché l'objet dit *dolin*. Le village est entouré de plusieurs lieux sacrés : un arbre *sunzun* au nord; un puits à l'ouest; deux pierres situées l'une *(fara fi)* à proximité de l'agglomération, l'autre *(fara gwe)* au bord du fleuve.

La cérémonie septennale est exécutée de nuit. La veille, le doyen des Kéita va secrètement retirer l'objet *dolin* de l'ancien chaume pour le cacher. La nouvelle toiture est confectionnée avec des matériaux recueillis par les descendants de Farako Makan Kegni (paille, bambous et fibres) tandis que les femmes de même condition crépissent les murs. Les griots Dyabaté qui officieront se procurent un petit bâtonnet de bois de *sunzun* de la longueur de l'annulaire qui leur servira de frotte-dents : les rameaux sont coupés obligatoirement par la sœur aînée du chef des griots qui lui donne en échange bara organisés en petites chefferies plus ou moins soumises aux empires avoisinants. Cet état de choses dura jusqu'à l'époque de la poussée peule dans cette région (xviie siècle) qui fonda deux royaumes et créa une aristocratie locale métisse de Peul et de Bambara. Le premier de ces royaumes fut celui de Ségou, dont l'histoire est partiellement connue (1). C'est dans cette région surtout qu'ont porté les enquêtes; le chef-lieu, qui fut longtemps une capitale, garde les traces d'une juridiction et d'une religion bien organisées. C'est aussi là qu'est parlé, d'après les connaisseurs, le dialecte le plus pur (2).

Les dialectes bambara appartiennent au sous-groupe des langues mandingues, du groupe nigéro-sénégalais (3). Les Bambara connaissent des systèmes de signes et d'idéogrammes que l'on peut considérer comme une sorte d'écriture dont l'étude se poursuit actuellement. Le système d'où découleraient tous les autres, le *glā glā zo*, comporte deux cent vingt-six idéogrammes qui, d'après les informateurs, résument les connaissances des Bambara (4). Ceux-ci, d'autre part, utilisent un système de chiffraison vigésimal. De plus, l'analyse des textes recueillis et dont certains sont cités dans cet ouvrage, a fait apparaître un

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un pagne de huit bandes de coton blanc et un nombre de cauris multiple de 8, soit 8.480.

Les orateurs qui officieront pendant la nuit sont coiffés d'un bonnet blanc surmonté d'une bande de coton de même couleur et d'une tunique jaune *(wolo)* (cf. p. 106). Assis à l'intérieur de la case dont l'ancien toit a été retiré, face à l'est, ils crachent dans un récipient pour ne pas souiller le sol. Les Kéita se tiennent à l'extérieur de la case sur un emplacement attenant délimité par des pierres et recouvert de graviers ramassés dans le lit du fleuve par des jeunes gens. Pendant toute la nuit, à tour de rôle et encouragés par un parent, les griots récitent les devises de toutes les populations issues du Mandé. Au petit jour ils font le tour de la construction en chantant, puis les Kéita hissent le nouveau toit. Le doyen va ensuite secrètement remettre l'objet dans le nouveau chaume. Un bœuf blanc est sacrifié au puits.

Les informations recueillies sur cette cérémonie sont encore fragmentaires, mais la couleur des vêtements portés par les officiants, celle de la victime, le nombre de bandes du pagne et de cauris donnés par le griot à sa sœur, l'origine des graviers utilisés comme siège par les Kéita, témoignent qu'il s'agit là d'un rituel exécuté sous la protection de Faro (cf. chap. II).

(1) Sur l'histoire des Bambara nous renvoyons le lecteur au volume très documenté de L. Tauxier. *Histoire des Bambara*.

(2) Les enfants des familles suffisamment fortunées pour en assumer la charge étaient autrefois envoyés à Ségou, chez des alliés, pour apprendre à bien parler une langue élégante et pure.

(3) Cf. A. Meillet et M. Cohen. *Les Langues du Monde*, p. 546.

(4) Cf. p. 2. Ce système et deux des idéogrammes, dont *to*, qui désigne la bouillie de céréales et par extension la nourriture en général, seront l'objet d'un commentaire dans M. Griaule et G. Dieterlen. Signes graphiques des Soudanais. L'*Homme*. Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie et de linguistique, Hermann (sous presse).

Sur certaines écritures relevées chez les Mandé et les Vai, cf. J. Février. *Histoire de l'écriture*, p. 528-529.

nombre important de mots qui, selon les informateurs, appartiennent à une langue ancienne d'origine mandingue, utilisée actuellement comme langue liturgique. Il n'entre pas dans le cadre de ce travail d'en faire l'exposé ni le commentaire, mais il convient de remarquer que l'étude de ce vocabulaire contribuerait à l'intelligence de la pensée religieuse des Bambara.

Les Bambara ont une notion assez claire de leur protohistoire et même de leur préhistoire. Ils décrivent avec précision leurs ancêtres, connaissent les phases du développement de leurs techniques. Ces données sont nécessaires à la compréhension de leur religion qui, comme les autres institutions, est en rapport notamment avec ce développement technique. De plus les seuls monuments observables sont constitués par le mobilier et les ustensiles, matériel éphémère mais continu, dont les formes et l'ornementation transmettent les principes métaphysiques sur lesquels repose leur pensée.

Il conviendrait de ne pas négliger les influences subies par les Bambara du fait de leurs contacts avec les autres populations soudanaises lesquelles sont, depuis une haute époque, en relations avec le bassin méditerranéen (1). Les empires du Mali, notamment, en favorisant l'expansion de l'Islam ont entretenu au cœur du Soudan un foyer qui a laissé des traces dans les institutions sociales et religieuses des Bambara.

Mais il est difficile actuellement, sinon impossible, de faire un historique de cette religion et même de poser le problème des influences. Nous avons devant nous le dernier état de cette religion et nous ne connaissons son développement que par les mythes qui, d'ailleurs, ne la font pas apparaître comme un ensemble fixe très tôt; il semble qu'elle se soit lentement formée avec des apports divers qui ont été sentis et exprimés dans des mythes. D'autre part les religions actuelles des Soudanais paraissent nationales; elles forment des ensembles distincts chez les Dogon (2), les Bozo, les Kouroumba, les Minianka, les Sonray, les

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(1) Nous souhaitons que l'appel et l'allusion de M. P.-M. Schuhl retiennent l'attention : « Les données que nous devons à présent à des investigations comme celles de M. Griaule paraissent devoir appeler des synthèses nouvelles et fournissent de curieux termes de comparaison. Une influence indirecte des mythes grecs sur la mythologie soudanaise n'est d'ailleurs pas impossible. » *Essai sur la formation de la pensée grecque*, Presses Universitaires de France, 2e éd., 1949, p. XV.

M. Schuhl rappelle d'autre part les rapprochements proposés par M. H. Jeanmaire entre les faits grecs et certaines institutions africaines considérées comme des survivances d'une civilisation protoméditerranéenne (*Couroi et Courètes*, Lille, 1939).

(2) Cf. M. GRIAULE. *Dieu d'eau.*

Mossi. Cependant il convient de tenir compte du fait que leur observation systématique, entreprise depuis quelques années, fait apparaître un substrat commun sur lequel chaque population a greffé son système original. L'étude de ce substrat apportera des précisions au problème des origines et des influences.

Nous disposons dès maintenant de l'appui de la philologie et nous avons surtout l'avantage de voir les Bambara vivre leurs croyances et de découvrir leurs mythes dans un matériel très rudimentaire mais expressif, comme dans de très nombreux rites. Ce sont des observations effectuées sur un large champ d'enquête qui servent de base à l'exposé de ce système religieux.

Les Bambara ont fait depuis longtemps l'objet d'articles et d'ouvrages dont nous donnons ci-après une bibliographie sommaire. Le seul auteur qui, jusqu'ici, ait tenté de décrire l'ensemble de leurs croyances est L. Tauxier dont l'étude sur *La Religion bambara* tient largement compte des travaux de l'abbé Henry et de Ch. Monteil. Mais, à travers les descriptions, certes consciencieuses de ces différents observateurs, cette religion apparaît comme un composé d'éléments disparates, voire incohérents, sans aucun lien apparent entre eux. Malgré un plan d'ensemble et une absence louable d'idées préconçues, L. Tauxier n'a pu dégager les concepts fondamentaux des hommes qu'il a observés.

C'est que l'étude d'une religion noire actuelle se heurte à des difficultés d'ordre divers tenant d'une part à la nécessité de se rendre sur le terrain et d'autre part au caractère en grande partie ésotérique de la doctrine. Ces circonstances font de cette étude, au premier chef, une œuvre de découverte.

Certes, la religion bambara, comme toute religion soudanaise, comporte une partie exotérique, accessible assez facilement et qu'une observation conduite selon des méthodes scientifiques permet de déceler dans ses détails. Des règles de vie admises par tous, des croyances professées ouvertement, des pratiques privées ou publiques peuvent faire l'objet de travaux minutieux. Mais cette religion, comme celle des peuples avoisinants, repose sur une doctrine dont les principes fondamentaux sont connus des vieillards et des initiés, lesquels éprouvent une grande aversion pour les confidences aux étrangers, notamment aux Blancs. Une telle situation explique l'ignorance où l'érudition est restée pendant si longtemps de la pensée religieuse de cette population (1).

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(1) Les Bambara font eux-mêmes une distinction entre deux sortes de connaissance. La première, dite *doni fyẽma* « connaissance (qui a) du vent »

Une méthode d'observation rigoureuse ne négligeant aucune donnée et comportant l'utilisation d'une collaboration indigène étroite a fait apparaître un système cohérent dans toutes ses parties dont on peut dire qu'il s'appuie sur une métaphysique restée jusqu'à présent inconnue. Les postulats des Bambara étant pris pour base, l'enchaînement des faits à travers les mythes, le développement des institutions et des techniques, leur fonctionnement, le destin actuel de l'homme dans le cosmos se déroulent dans un cadre logique.

D'autre part ce système se projette dans le concret sous forme de symboles qui empruntent les aspects les plus divers et jouent un rôle actif. Le symbolisme pénètre non seulement la vie religieuse proprement dite en se révélant dans les sanctuaires ou les matériels de culte (formes, graphies) ou au cours des cérémonies religieuses (temps et lieux, rituels, etc.), mais il imprègne toute la vie profane et le comportement quotidien.

La métaphysique et la religion de cette population offrent un ensemble construit qui englobe toutes les activités sociales, techniques et économiques. Ce sont ces principes et ce système que nous tenterons de dégager dans les chapitres qui suivent. Nous pensons pouvoir affirmer que certaines incohérences ou contradictions présentées par le système religieux tel qu'il est décrit ci-après ne sont pas dues à la pensée bambara — encore qu'elle soit subtile et s'appuie sur une dialectique — mais aux lacunes de l'enquête.

est superficielle et considérée comme « l'entrée en matière des croyances et des coutumes ». Elle appartient aux adultes peu versés dans la cosmologie. En revanche la seconde, dite « connaissance profonde » *(doniya duna* ou *kuru doniya)*, est réservée aux prêtres, aux chefs de famille, aux vieillards des deux sexes versés dans « la science des choses de la création ». Elle ne s'acquiert que lentement, au cours d'initiations successives et par un véritable enseignement qui se diffuse parfois au cours des rites.

PLAN DE L'OUVRAGE

Dans le premier chapitre de cet ouvrage est relaté le mythe qui forme l'armature des représentations religieuses. Une connaissance approfondie de la cosmogonie et des mythes est nécessaire à l'intelligence des institutions comme des rites les plus courants.

Le second chapitre analyse les représentations, notamment celle de Faro, maître du verbe et détenteur de la vie, dont le culte est général et qui préside à toutes les activités des hommes.

Le troisième chapitre aborde la notion de personne et décrit successivement les principes spirituels et le corps qui dépendent de Faro, puis le nom, la devise et les interdits qui intègrent l'individu dans la société. Il examine aussi la dissociation de ces divers éléments au moment de la mort.

Le quatrième chapitre résume le mécanisme du sacrifice sanglant, moment principal des rites, disposant des éléments composant la personne décrits au chapitre précédent. Il comprend aussi la description des lieux de culte et des autels originaux des Bambara.

Le cinquième chapitre concerne l'origine, le développement et l'organisation des techniques : pêche, chasse, agriculture, tissage, forge, poterie, dont le fonctionnement est en grande partie rituel et qui sont le support de représentations religieuses.

Le sixième chapitre décrit les cultes individuels, familiaux, comme ceux propres au village tout entier. Les grandes sociétés religieuses, qui groupent les individus autour d'autels préposés à des fins précises, sont également examinées. Ces cultes, si divers en apparence, font intervenir les mêmes représentations et les rites comportent des mécanismes comparables des forces mises en mouvement.

Dans le septième chapitre est donnée une description détaillée d'un certain nombre de rites choisis parmi les plus représentatifs. Une place prépondérante est réservée à ceux qui se rapportent plus directement à la « personne » : naissance, circoncision et excision, initiations, funérailles, cultes des ancêtres. Parmi les autres sont commentés ceux qui concernent les ordures, la pluie et les rites généraux dits « du renouvellement de l'année ».

Le huitième chapitre présente une analyse de quelques procédés de divination qui apparaissent comme une synthèse des concepts métaphysiques bambara et reflètent en un symbolisme très subtil l'ensemble de leurs connaissances.

SYSTÈME DE TRANSCRIPTION

ã, an de planche.
ẽ, in de dinde.
ẹ, ĕ de jet.
e, e de dé.
ọ, o de vol.
o, o de pol.
õ, o de balcon.
ŭ, ou du français.
ũ, un du français.
č, pour tch.
j, dj de djinn.
ñ, gn de hargne.

Les mots indigènes transcrits en caractères romains doivent être prononcés à la française.

Dans certains cas, seule la traduction des expressions bambara est placée entre guillemets afin de ne pas alourdir le texte. D'autre part cette traduction est littérale afin de serrer de plus près la pensée bambara et même s'il en résulte des inélégances ou des tours difficiles à saisir.

CHAPITRE PREMIER

LES MYTHES

Les mythes des Bambara doivent s'entendre comme une somme de connaissances, une sophie, et non comme une suite de récits étiologiques fixés. On peut dire qu'ils composent une métaphysique comprenant la connaissance des choses de la création en même temps que celle des principes de leur état et de leur action.

Dans cet ensemble, la connaissance des choses divines a sa place, mais non la primauté dans le temps. Le Bambara s'adresse à la création, au cosmos, conçu comme une entité contenant ses déités, cosmos dont il est lui-même l'expression éminente. Les textes qui suivent exposent en premier lieu l'origine de la création, puis l'ordonnance de l'univers sensible, issu de la vibration primordiale, et enfin, sur la terre modelée par Pemba, la création des êtres vivants alors immortels.

La domination du monde terrestre et particulièrement du genre humain est d'abord assumée par l'un des avatars de Pemba, l'arbre phallique *balanza*, qui vit du sang et s'assimile les forces des hommes. Son règne est troublé par de graves désordres cosmiques provoqués par la rébellion du premier être femelle créé, Mousso Koroni, désordres dont les hommes subissent encore aujourd'hui les effets. Mais l'abus que fait l'arbre de son pouvoir dresse contre lui Faro, qui le vainc et réorganise l'univers en le délimitant puis en nommant et classant les éléments qui le composent. Sur terre, où est apparue la mort due à la malédiction de l'arbre, cette réorganisation a pour fondements le principe de la gémelléité, la « parole » enseignée aux hommes par Faro désormais maître du verbe et les techniques réparatrices qui doivent, au fur et à mesure des besoins, assurer la subsistance. Fondé sur l'ordre et la mesure, le règne de Faro, auquel les hommes rendent désormais un culte, laisse prévoir les « paroles futures » qu'il leur révélera dans l'avenir.

La succession des thèmes mythiques présente une construction du cosmos, espace et temps, monde naturel et surnaturel, catégories, nombres, la notion de la cohérence spatiale et temporelle de ses éléments (interdépendance des phénomènes). Il situe la personne (corps et principes spirituels) et, dans le domaine psychologique, décrit la lente évolution de la conscience (notion de la douleur), du jugement (notion de la responsabilité, de la faute), de la volonté (notion de l'effort créateur, du travail) lesquels se développent chez l'homme avec l'apparition de la souffrance et de la mort. Cette dernière est sentie comme un accident survenu dans le déroulement de l'ordre universel, accident en partie compensé par la conservation des principes spirituels et leur réincarnation selon la croyance fondamentale en l'éternelle résurrection des choses. Le mythe décrit le premier rite, le rajeunissement, qui cesse dès l'apparition de la mort mais est remplacé par le sacrifice sanglant qui est encore aujourd'hui l'axe des rites (1).

Tels qu'ils sont exposés ci-après, ces mythes sont l'armature de la religion actuelle des Bambara, des cultes généraux rendus par la masse à Pemba et Faro.

PRÉLIMINAIRES DE LA CRÉATION.

A. — Le *glã glã zo* :

Les mythes de la création, chez les Bambara, impliquent une philosophie de l'être et de l'univers qui s'est développée à partir du vide, de rien, *fu* (2).

Cette connaissance, qu'ils tiennent des Kéita du Mandé, porte le nom de *glã glã zo* et décrit le stade intemporel et primordial qui a précédé les étapes de la création. Le mot *glã* qui désigne le vide originel, connote en même temps les idées de mouvement, d'éveil, de réveil, de résurrection : *glã* est le principe du mouvement universel interne du cosmos et de tout ce qui le compose. D'autre part, le terme implique l'idée que la création est continue dès le moment de son élaboration et perpétuellement entretenue dans toutes choses en même temps que dans l'univers considéré comme un tout (1).

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(1) Chaque fois que cela a été possible la rédaction s'est dégagée des détails des mythes pour ne pas dérouter le lecteur et détourner l'attention de la ligne générale de la sophie bambara. Mais les connaissances populaires se dispersent dans de nombreux thèmes à variantes que l'érudition étudierait avec profit pour mieux connaître les démarches psychologiques collectives de cette population.

(2) Cette notion s'exprime par un signe de même nom qui peut se traduire aussi par « néant » ou « zéro » et fait partie du système de chiffraison bambara. Cf. fig. 1, n° 11. Pour un commentaire de ce signe, qui connote la continuité et la prolifération de la création, cf. p. 70.

glã « plein de son vide et son vide plein de lui-même » étendait partout sa puissance. Il émit une « voix de vide » qui créa d'abord son double, *dya; glã* fut deux, marquant ainsi le caractère primordial de la gémelléité, principe existentiel (2). Du couple émanait une substance humide, *zo sumale*, « rouille froide », qui sortait à l'état de buée liquide invisible et formait des corps durs et brillants (3).

Quand tout fut plein de ces corps glacés, *glã* émit une force, *zo ñami*, qui, montant et descendant en elle-même, produisit un souffle interne dit *fyẽ tasuma* « feu de vent ». Les deux *glã* traversèrent ce vaste contenu et ce feu fondit les substances (4). Lors de cette première fusion « le vaste *glã* a donné place à toutes choses dans le secret et l'invisibilité (5) ».

Les deux *glã* alors s'immobilisèrent, « reprenant en eux-mêmes leur énergie » et tout à nouveau se figea, se glaça. Puis une seconde fois ils fondirent les substances, comme pour défaire et refaire une ébauche. Ces mouvements, dits *glã glã*, témoignent de l'essence même du *glã* qui est éternelle résurrection des choses et la répétition du mot exprime la gémelléité, base de la création. Lors de ces deux fusions successives, les *glã* déterminèrent « quatre points », l'un au moment de la première fonte, les trois autres lors de la seconde, lesquels furent mis « en action immobile (6) ».

Puis *glã* déclencha en lui-même un va-et-vient qui, se répercutant sur les éléments de l'univers en puissance, leur donna une âme. Ce mouvement eut également pour effet de les situer et de les maintenir par l'attraction *(mana)* : « *glā* a remué les choses, elles ont pris leur place, la chaleur les a maintenues (1) ».

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(1) Le mot *glã* appartient à la langue ancienne. Le terme bambara dont le sens est le plus voisin est *kununi* qui signifie « réveil, résurrection ». *glã* est le principe de l'éternelle résurrection des choses.

(2) On dit : *glã ye lankolo nye, lankolo nye glã ye, glã ye a yere ke lankolo fla ye, lankolo fla ye a yere ke glã ye* « *glã* est le vide, le vide est *glã*, *glã* s'est fait lui-même deux vides, deux vides se sont faits *glã* lui-même ».

(3) *glã ye kologa a la ka kę zo ye, boli tumbi kę šiši ye bali ye, ka kę dyi sumale ye, ka kę zo yele gele ye* « *glã* a fait sortir de lui-même une substance qui était rouille, cette émission était une fumée invisible qui devenait une eau froide, celle-ci une rouille brillante et dure ». L'informateur traduit le mot *zo* par rouille et, tout en comparant cette matière au produit de l'oxydation d'un métal l'assimile, une fois émise, au cristal.

(4) « Les deux *glã* se sont levés et ont fondu la voix du *glã*, la création a parlé la voix du *glã* » *(glã fla wululila kę, glã kã yeke, dali ye glã kã fo)*.

(5) *kono glã ye sikiyoro di few be ma, gundo ni blika la*. Le mot « chose », qui traduit littéralement *fẽ*, est pris ici, bien entendu, dans son sens le plus général.

(6) L'informateur compare cette étape de la création à une main tenant un crayon dont la pointe repose sur le papier, en position d'écrire, mais immobilisée. Les quatre points sont la prémonition des points cardinaux, en commençant par l'est (cf. p. 8).

Dans le même temps le contact établi entre les deux *glā* produisit une sorte d'explosion dont fut éjectée une « matière dure et puissante » qui descendit en vibrant. De cette vibration sortirent un à un des signes qui, attirés par les choses encore incréées, mais en instance, qu'ils désignaient, allèrent se placer sur elles. Chaque chose eut ainsi son signe et son mot; et « se conformant au mouvement du *glā* », chacune se mit à vibrer faiblement à l'intérieur d'elle-même et dans sa propre place.

Quand toutes les choses eurent été situées et désignées en puissance, un autre élément se détacha de *glā* et se posa sur elles pour les connaître : c'était le « pied de l'homme » (ou « grain du pied »), symbole de la conscience humaine. En même temps qu'il acquérait la connaissance, cet élément la communiquait aux choses qui prirent ainsi conscience d'elles-mêmes. C'est dire que les choses ont été désignées et nommées silencieusement avant d'avoir existé et qu'elles ont été appelées à être par leur nom et par leur signe. Mais elles ne se sont connues comme telles que dans la conscience de l'homme, « grain » ou principe de l'univers.

Tout alors se rassembla et se mit à bruire pour accomplir l'univers. Les *glā* se maintinrent à l'intérieur d'eux-mêmes et donnèrent à *zo* la responsabilité de la future libération des choses situées et animées qu'ils contenaient et dont ils avaient créé l'essence. *zo* en prit possession et attira leurs principes en une vaste boule, *kuru*, dite *yo yebali*, « *yo* invisible » : « *zo* a donné le principe du grain à *yo* et a mis en lui l'attraction et le pouvoir (2). »

yo était l'esprit, plus exactement « le penser et l'agir » qui, utilisant les « choses signées » déterminées par *glā*, allait élaborer la création.

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(1) *glā ye fen yereyere, u nye, u sikiyoro mine, funteni yu mana.*
L'informateur compare ce mouvement horizontal à celui qui serait imprimé à une surface creusée de cupules : les choses, d'abord déposées en désordre, viendraient, sous l'effet de ce va-et-vient, s'insérer chacune dans un trou.
mana est traduit par attraction, agglutinement quand il est substantif. Il signifie également muer et peut désigner le produit de la mue, l'exuvie; il est alors synonyme de *folo.*

(2) *zo ye kise masa di yo ma, ka samani masa bla la, ka mineni masa bla a la.*

Le *glā glā zo* est figuré par trois gravures sur bois. La première, *glā kele*, représente le couple des *glā* sous la forme de deux spirales de sens inverse dont les points d'origine sont reliés; au-dessous est gravé « l'objet à quatre bras » d'où sont sortis les signes (1). Ceux-ci, au nombre de 226, sont à peine esquissés pour démontrer que « la création du *glā* est dans l'invisible, l'inconnu, le non réalisé ». La seconde, *glā dya*, est faite de 226 traits horizontaux ou verticaux, doubles ou « témoins » des mots. La troisième, *glā zo*, est un ovale divisé en sept cases (un carré au centre et deux fois trois secteurs latéraux) dans lesquelles sont gravés clairement les idéogrammes. Au milieu du carré central, un ovale contenant six signes représente à la fois « l'œuf du monde et *yo*, voix créatrice ».

B. — Le *yo* :

La création de l'univers sensible à partir de *yo* est conçue comme une progression du « penser », *tasi* (2). Cette progression qui porte le nom *d'oryo* ou *oyo* se décompose en trois étapes : *yo*, parole interne, esprit invisible et voix inaudible, contenant en puissance toute la création; *o* passage de l'inaudible au bruissant; *yereyereli*, vibration créatrice (3). Cette progression est représentée par sept signes, 7 étant le chiffre de l'homme *(homo)* « germe du monde ». Ce chiffre, en effet, additionne 3 (symbole mâle) et 4 (symbole femelle). Le couple qu'ils forment est lui-même la marque de la gémelléité, loi fondamentale de la création, chaque être humain étant à la fois mâle et femelle dans son corps et dans ses principes spirituels (4).

Il est dit de *yo*, voix intérieure et secrète, qu'il « vient de lui-même, est connu par lui-même, est sorti de lui-même, du rien qui est lui-même (1) ». Car de *yo* ne viendront des choses qui ne sont qu'elles-mêmes et qui ne seront rien d'autre que lui. Chaque chose, étant *yo*, ne vient, comme lui, que d'elle-même. De ce fait on n'est rien d'autre que soi, puisqu'on est une création de *yo* et que ses créations sont lui-même. Aussi n'y a-t-il rien d'autre au monde que soi-même, la personne étant *yo* qui est tout entier dans la personne. En conséquence, l'être descend sans intermédiaire de *yo;* il est *yo* et n'est dû qu'à son propre vouloir. C'est dire que l'homme, image de *yo*, est seul à se vouloir, seul à pouvoir, seul à faire surgir de lui l'acte ou la création, ceux-ci ne pouvant être que lui-même. « Qui donc, disent les initiés, peut se connaître, se faire connaître et se manifester autrement que par lui-même? Qui donc peut manifester autre chose que lui-même? »

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(1) Cet objet est représenté actuellement par un bâtonnet d'*Acacia albida* dit « bois qui partage les signes » *ti kla dyiri*, dont l'écorce est enlevée de façon à dessiner un signe de multiplication enfermé dans un ovale représentant le monde.

(2) De *ta*, faire, en langue ancienne; *si*, agir. Les Bambara traduisent librement *tasi* par « esprit de rien » et donnent à cette précréation à partir du néant le nom de *tasi dyẽ* « monde de l'esprit de rien ».

(3) Le nom d'*oyo*, donné à ce système, se décompose en *o* et *yo* ce qui, dans l'énoncé, renverse l'ordre chronologique. Cette anomalie est sentie par les Bambara qui l'expliquent par le fait que *yo*, désignant une voix inaudible, ne peut être prononcé avant *o* qui désigne un bruissement perceptible. Ils expriment qu'en procédant ainsi *yo* « reste dans le secret de *o* », ce qui est conforme à sa nature.

(4) Le chiffre 3 représente, dans le corps de l'homme, la verge et les deux testicules, le chiffre 4 les quatre lèvres chez la femme. D'autre part l'homme et la femme sont pourvus de deux âmes jumelles et de sexe différent; l'une de ces âmes, celle de sexe opposé à celui du porteur, a pour siège le prépuce ou le clitoris, jusqu'à l'opération de la circoncision ou de l'excision. Sur la dualité de l'homme et sa personne, cf. G. DIETERLEN, *La Personne chez les Bambara* et, *infra*, ch. III, La personne.

Mais *yo* étant à l'origine des choses inaudibles et invisibles qui sont lui, est aussi dans l'inconnu, donc dans le néant. Et par conséquent il en va pareillement pour l'homme, qui est néant et ne peut agir que sur le néant de lui-même.

Or, *yo*, en tant qu'esprit, était libre dans sa décision et sa volonté créatrices. Son œuvre, dans le néant, consista à muer, « car il est la continuelle mue du monde ». Lorsqu'il se manifesta en tournoyant sur lui-même, il alla cinq fois aux quatre « angles de sa pensée », *seleke miri*, une fois au « ciel de sa pensée », *sā miri*, une fois à la « terre de sa pensée », *dugukolo miri*, leur communiquant ainsi sa puissance (2). La réalisation de cet univers qui détermina « l'espace de *yo* dans sa pensée » est exprimée par le chiffre 22 : « *yo*, obscurité de la création, au sein de l'espace secret de la nuit, maître de l'assise des 22 tournoiements, grand porteur de la vibration, grand constructeur de la moelle des os (3) ».

Ces 22 spires brassèrent ce que contenait *yo* en esprit : *nugu* « entrailles, intestin », qui portait en lui-même toutes choses et l'homme; *galā* « germe d'air » qui a « situé les vides dans toutes les parties de l'espace »; *fayā*, « germe de vent »; *sani*, « germe d'eau »; *yerē*, « germe de feu »; *yelēgu*, « germe de matière terrestre » (1). Les tournoiements de *yo* les ordonnèrent et les maintinrent dans l'attraction *(mana)*. C'est dire qu'entraînés par ce tourbillon attractif et créateur à la fois, ces éléments s'agencèrent les uns par rapport aux autres : ainsi furent déterminés les 22 termes de l'univers pensé par *yo*, qui sont également les 22 temps de cette pensée :

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(1) *yo na na a yere la, bwora a yere la, dona a yere la, a be fu la min ya yere ye.*

(2) Sur la valeur du chiffre 5, cf. p. 9, *yo* a communiqué aux « angles » qui correspondront dans l'univers construit aux « angles cardinaux ») sa plus grande force car les Bambara situent là les pôles de l'attraction qui, dans l'univers, maintient tous les corps. On dit : « tous les corps acceptent la force de l'attraction des quatre angles », *fari be bi sō seleke nuni mana barika la.*

(3) *yo dali dyibi, šu kene gundo tyema, munumunu mu tani fla siki ba, yere doni ba, kolow nye kono dlaba. kono* serait le terme ancien pour moelle.

Cette prière est récitée en l'honneur de *yo*, quand on constate la grossesse d'une femme; on la récite aussi au moment des éclipses du soleil.

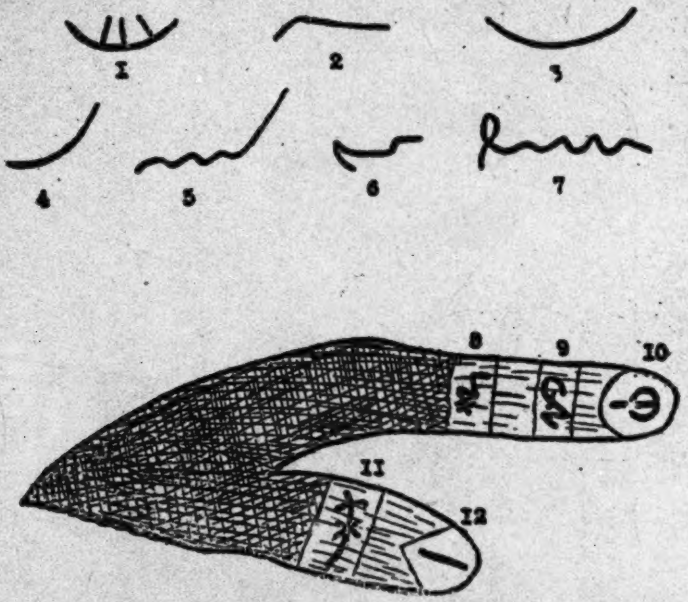

Fig. 1. — Signes bambara. De 1 à 7, signes de *yo*. De 8 à 12 signes de l'index et du pouce du roi représentant le monde actuel et le monde futur. (Dessins d'un informateur.)

1° origine de l'ouest, *klebi dyu;* 2° origine de l'est, *koro dyu;* 3° origine du nord, *baba dyu;* 4° origine du sud, *bani dyu;* 5° ciel d'en haut, *sā kaba;* 6° espace secret, *tyema gundo;* 7° terre, *dugu;* 8° centre de la terre, *kolye dugu;* 9° œil de la terre, *dugu nye;* 10° bouche de la terre, *dugu da* (2); 11° nord-ouest, *seleke se*

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(1) *fayā, sani, yerē* (en langue ancienne) et *yelēgu* sont à l'origine des quatre éléments, air, eau, feu et terre qui n'existaient pas encore et devaient apparaître plus tard.

Les sept éléments constitutifs de *yo* sont représentés par des signes reproduits figure 1 (1 à 7).

(2) La terre respire par des orifices dits « bouches ».

(litt. : pied de l'angle); 12° sud-ouest, *seleke bolo* (litt. : main de l'angle); 13° nord-est, *seleke* (angle); 14° sud-est, *seleke* (angle) 15° soleil, *kle;* 16° lune, *kalo;* 17° étoile mâle, *dolo ke;* 18° étoile femelle, *dolo muso;* 19° bouche ou mère de l'étoile, *dolo da* ou *dolo ba;* 20° grain de pluie, *sã kise;* 21° pluie secrète, *sa gundo;* 22° pluie humide, *sã suma* (1).

En tournoyant des « angles » aux côtés cardinaux, *yo* a pensé quatre mondes (2) :

Le premier, *dyẽ mana*, « mue du monde », est celui du temps où *yo* « circulait en lui-même » dans le néant et dont on dit : « *yo* était la mue du monde, il se faisait muer lui-même (3). »

Le suivant, *dyẽ gale*, « premier monde », est l'univers qui allait être réalisé, l'actuel, dont on dit que le symbole est 3 : « L'assise du premier monde a été donnée aux choses par *yo*, ces choses furent construites à 3 (4). » Car *yo*, pour le réaliser, a dû passer par des intermédiaires qu'il a créés comme tels, mais qui ont été une cause d'imperfection, puisque l'harmonie des choses eût exigé que la création fût directement voulue et engendrée par lui. Le premier univers édifié est donc 3 : *yo* est 1, l'intermédiaire est 2, le monde est 3. Il en résulte que l'ensemble n'est pas adéquat à *yo*, car sa perfection s'exprimerait par 2, c'est-à-dire par *yo* et le monde sans intermédiaire (5).

D'autre part, il est dit de l'univers réalisé qu'il a été construit et perçu à 3, connu à 4. Car lorsque *yo* a décidé de créer, au temps 1, rien ne pouvait le connaître, puisque lui seul se mouvait dans le néant où il déposa ses forces. Lorsque celles-ci se réunirent, leur ensemble forma une nouvelle unité qui, ajoutée à *yo*, réalisa 2, c'est-à-dire le temps 2, lequel était encore dans l'inconnu. Lentement ces forces s'alourdirent tout en « résistant dans l'attraction », c'est-à-dire en s'agençant. Ce fut alors le temps 3 et les choses furent perceptibles. Mais c'est seulement au temps 4 qu'elles ont été clairement connues, c'est-à-dire que l'homme en a pris conscience. Il en résulte que la masculinité (symbole 3) est considérée dans la nature comme un stimulus de départ, en déterminant la fécondité, mais que l'épanouissement de cette dernière et de sa connaissance totale ne peut être accompli par elle que dans la féminité (symbole 4).

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(1) On dit de ce temps : « *yo* ne dit que *yo* en haut, on doit imiter cela, la marche (du monde) a été faite à l'ouest, à l'est, au nord, au sud », *yo bi yo fo sana, ladeke ka kãka kę o la, giri kera wą la, ni flaye la, ni kaye la, ni noro la.* Les termes *giri, wa, flaye, kaye, noro* appartiennent à la langue ancienne.

(2) Ces quatre mondes sont représentés par un tracé fait de quatre quadrilatères concentriques, observé par l'informateur au village de Kéré, au Mandé. Les Bambara conçoivent l'espace comme un carré ayant des angles et côtés cardinaux (cf. p. 31, fig. 3).

(3) *yo tunye dyẽ mana ye, o tumbi mana a yerę la.*

(4) *dyẽ gale sikilyoko dira fama yo fę few ma, o few ye dlali kę saba la.*

(5) Cette idée semble être en contradiction avec le principe de l'identité de *yo* et de toute la création. Il faut entendre par là que l'œuvre totale comprend aussi l'imperfection dont la cause est précisément la présence des intermédiaires pour ainsi dire créés à cet effet.

Mais *yo* étant parfait a voulu la perfection et, tentant de la réaliser, voulut atteindre 5. Pour cela il est allé au-delà de l'univers 3, atteignant 4. Les nombres étant déjà le symbole des choses et, pour ainsi dire, les choses elles-mêmes, 4, représentant la féminité, ne pouvait créer seul, car 4 n'est pas dans 3 symbole de la masculinité. Or, dans l'univers pensé par *yo*, rien ne pouvait être engendré sans le concours de complémentaires ou jumeaux dont le type est le couple masculinité-féminité.

Ce monde 4 est dit *dyẽ bana* « monde refusé », car devant la difficulté, *yo* conserva cette création en lui; elle y reste en puissance et reviendra dans le monde qu'on dit *dyẽ nala*, « monde à venir », dans lequel, atteignant 5, *yo* réalisera un univers non en 3 comme l'actuel, mais en 2 (*yo* et le monde), sans intermédiaire. D'où sa perfection, car il sera adéquat au créateur. Cet univers sera créé en sens inverse du précédent, dans l'ordre sud, nord, est et ouest. Il sera établi sur « la grande voix d'une parole » et marqué par la transformation des êtres, par une répartition nouvelle, par l'absence de l'erreur, par un contact étroit avec l'essence des choses, par une connaissance parfaite. Car on dit : « Dans le monde à venir, toutes les paroles seront changées. La solidité n'a pas été réalisée dans cette création-ci, mais l'union se fera dans la solidité d'une parole. La course de *yo*, le travail de *yo*, le sommeil de *yo* pénétreront tous les êtres. Le deuxième monde est un monde neuf, le monde neuf est le monde d'une parole (1). »

Du fait que seul a été édifié le premier univers pensé par *yo*, les hommes ne connaissent que la moitié de sa pensée; l'autre moitié devant être réalisée dans « le deuxième monde ».

Ayant pensé l'univers et tournoyé sur lui-même pour le créer, *yo* « divisa et partagea son verbe ». Il déposa trois fois 22 voix dans *o*, lequel confia ensuite une fois 22 voix à *yereyereli*, d'où devait sortir l'univers enfin conçu. Ce dépôt dans *o* n'est autre que la mue de la voix inaudible *yo* en voix audible. Lorsque cette voix commença à retentir à l'extérieur de *yo*, toujours invisible et secret, ce dernier se fixa et demeura immobile en lui-même : *o*, dans son bruít, est l'envoyé de *yo*. Et dans cette voix toutes les choses nécessaires à la construction universelle furent proposées; elles aussi bruissaient en puissance à travers « les angles du monde ». Lorsque ce mouvement élémentaire atteignit sa plénitude, il en sortit le *yereyereli*, la vibration, et lorsque celle-ci fut et se mut, *o* cessa de bruire, mais il était lui-même l'esprit du mouvement; on dit : « *yere* est sorti de *o*, *o* a été son assise (1). »

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(1) *Dyẽ nala la, kumaw be bi yelema; sikilyoko ma kle dali ko la fara ñugã na kę kuma dyolyoko kele nye; yo boli, yo bara, yo suna, bi dõ ma be la; dyẽ ña ye dyẽ kura ye, dyẽ kura ye kuma kele nye.*

Ce texte est parfois récité au cours des causeries qui suivent les cérémonies religieuses et lors des discussions sur les mouvements de la création. De très nombreux détails des rites et des jeux montrent cette préoccupation d'un deuxième univers. Cf. fig. 1, p. 7 et fig. 4, p. 32.

yo étant la voix immense et inaudible, *o* fut la voix bruissante; enfin *yereyereli*, vibration sonore, forma les rayons lumineux de l'espace. L'infini tout entier tremblait, brillait et résonnait. Lorsqu'il eut rempli l'espace de mouvement, de lumière et de sonorité, le *yereyereli* demanda à *o* sa puissance et fut « enceint », plein de tout ce qu'il voulait et devait créer : « La vibration était attractive, le créateur était en elle en secret (2). » L'univers actuel en sortit, provoquant « l'étonnement », *koni*, nom donné à la fois au *yereyereli* et au principe créateur qu'il contenait (3).

CRÉATION DE L'UNIVERS.

Au sein du *yereyereli* était l'esprit, *miri*, dans l'esprit le faire, *wali*, dans le faire la venue des choses, *nali*, dans cette dernière, le départ des choses, *tali*. Ces quatre termes définissaient également les quatre éléments fondamentaux de la création, respectivement air, terre, feu et eau, air et feu étant mâles, terre et eau femelles (4).

Le *miri* était aussi « l'œuf du monde dans lequel était enfermée la nature ». Il est représenté par trois ovales contenus les uns dans les autres; cette figure exprime aussi les trois tournoiements faits par *yereyereli* à chacun des points cardinaux (dans l'ordre nord, sud, est, ouest,) chacun d'eux brassant les quatre éléments (1). L'ovale du centre, dit *so dẽ*, « fils de la maison », est le grain primordial qui a disposé toutes les choses de la nature des quatre éléments. L'ovale intermédiaire, *dyẽ wali gale*, « première action du monde », représente la fécondité; il détermine l'homme, principe de l'univers, qui reçut également de lui la pensée et la connaissance. L'ovale externe, *dyẽ ko*, « porte du monde », est essentiellement mobile : tournant sur lui-même il se dilate ou se resserre suivant les naissances ou les morts de la matière aux multiples formes qu'il contient. C'est lui qui fait que toutes les choses, dans l'univers, « ne peuvent s'évader de la vision du créateur (2) ».

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(1) *yere bwora o la, o kera siki kele nye a ko.*

(2) *yereyereli tunye mana ma ye, daliba tumbi a kono gundo la.*
Les Bambara conçoivent la luminosité et la sonorité de cette vibration comme telle qu'il serait impossible d'en supporter la vision et l'audition; mais si l'homme ne peut la percevoir elle n'en persiste pas moins : « l'œuf du monde continue sa vibration lumineuse et sonore ».

(3) Sur *koni*, cf. S. DE GANAY, *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, p. 188 et s.

(4) « *yereyereli* a été fait en premier lieu de quatre éléments qui lui ont permis de vibrer secrètement » (*yereyereli gale gale kono kera ni wale nani ye, o ya to a sera ka yereyereli su a la*).

Or, l'essentiel de ce que brassait en tournoyant le *yereyereli* était l'esprit, qui, tout gonflé de ce qu'il était en puissance, finit par bruire. « L'esprit retentit au milieu des faits (3) », et comme il était le plus puissant il se maintint seul dans l'espace, et monta. Puis il éclata et de lui surgirent des éléments qui lentement se séparèrent, se dispersèrent et s'ordonnèrent. On dit de cet événement : « Autrefois les choses sortirent ensemble (4) ». Ces éléments fondamentaux, au nombre de vingt-deux, sont à l'origine de la création qui est classée en vingt-deux catégories.

Les Bambara ordonnent et nomment ces éléments selon plusieurs modes. Ils les partagent tout d'abord selon le système fondamental de la pensée créatrice *yo*, en trois groupes de sept, auxquels s'ajoute un vingt-deuxième.

Les sept premiers, *dyẽ dyo kã gale* « la première voix de la construction du monde », expriment *yereyereli* avant la connaissance mais contenant toutes choses et en premier lieu l'homme, « grain » de la nature. Les sept suivants, *dyẽ dyo kã saba* « la troisième voix de la construction du monde », connotent le début de la connaissance de *yereyereli* comme masculinité assurant toute la fécondité. C'est à ce moment qu'apparaît le terme *koni* attribué à *yereyereli*, exprimant l'étonnement devant la création. Les sept derniers, *dyẽ dyo kã nani* « la quatrième voix de la construction du monde », contiennent « la révélation complète des dispositions et situations de tout ce qui est créé » : *yereyereli* est connu alors dans sa féminité, et assure la suprématie de celle-ci sur la nature. Le vingt-deuxième résume ces trois groupes de sept et exprime la connaissance totale (1).

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(1) Cf. fig. 2, p. 15. La création est ainsi exprimée par les nombres 7 et 12 qui sont obtenus par addition et multiplication de 3 (symbole du mâle et nombre des tournoiements) et 4 (symbole femelle et nombre des éléments). Sept est le symbole de l'homme *(homo)* et du principe de l'univers; 12 est celui de la multiplication des êtres et du développement perpétuel de cet univers.

(2) *fɛ̃w be dyele ngala ka yeli kono.*

(3) *miri ye manga li walew tyela.*

(4) *folo kow bõñuana.*

Une autre division des éléments détermine les catégories. Les sept premiers sont les *bonuana* dont on dit : « Les sept *bõnuana* sortirent d'abord (2) ». Puis viennent douze *bangini*, naissances ou *bayeremani* « découvertes », dont on dit : « Douze découvertes ont été laissées dans l'espace (3) ». Après elles apparaissent trois *figini* fondations ou *dyoli*, situations dont il est dit : « Trois fondations ont mangé le monde (4) ». Les sept premiers éléments sont « les états du monde », les douze suivants, « les assises du monde », les trois derniers « les paroles de la situation du monde (5) ».

Les sept *bõnuana* résument les caractères généraux des êtres et des choses :

1° *keleña*, unité;
2° *makari*, pitié, miséricorde;
3° *mako*, nécessité;
4° *sinaya*, agressivité, jalousie;
5° *fadena*, rivalité;
6° *maloya*, honte;
7° *sia*, race, espèce, souche.

Les douze *bangini* qui suivent déterminent les qualités et les destinées de la personne :

1° *ma ye ma ye*, litt. : une personne est une personne; dons, possibilités de chacun, propositions et dispositions.
2° *mako*, services réciproques, simplicité, dignité, politesse, sagesse.
3° *sebaya*, pouvoir, puissance, domination.
4° *dyuguya*, méchanceté, grossièreté, férocité, difficultés.
5° *kunanguya*, malchance, mauvaise destinée; mauvais cœur.
6° *sira*, chemin, guide, obéissance, discipline.
7° *nafolo*, richesse, santé, fécondité.
8° *adamadeña*, fraternité, humanité, liberté, bonté.
9° *dahirime*, nourritures, biens matériels.
10° *saya*, mort, maladies, infirmités, folie.

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(1) La même progression des nombres que dans la pensée créatrice *yo* caractérise la création par la vibration. Étant 1, celle-ci est passée à 2. A 2, elle a conçu « l'air léger » invisible et les puissances qu'elle contenait se sont groupées pour former un ensemble. A 3 ces puissances sont devenues pesanteur et « l'air lourd », visible, apparut. A 4, et seulement à ce moment la création, entièrement visible, a été révélée à la conscience. Sur l'air lourd, cf. également S. de Ganay, *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, p. 188.

(2) *bõnuana wolo fla bwora folo*. Le mot *bõnuana* signifie littéralement « sortir ensemble ».

(3) *bangini tani fla bla la kęnę da.*

(4) *figini saba ye dyẽ dũñ.*

(5) *dyẽ dyo tyoko; dyẽ sigi tyoko; dyẽ dyo ka.*

11° *lu*, nuit, obscurité et lumière, secret, sorcellerie.
12° *kle*, jour, soleil; tous les autels *boli* des Bambara.

Les trois *figini* sont respectivement :

1° *kun*, la tête qui a pensé le monde.
2° *ba*, la matrice qui l'a formé.
3° *fo*, la parole qui l'a créé.

De trois fondations détachées finalement de l'esprit naquit la connaissance, *fā* (1). Celle-ci s'entrouvrit, se partagea et contribua à édifier le monde sensible, engendrant notamment des particules, *moño moño*, qui entrèrent dans la composition de la terre et un rayonnement, *ngrọ*, utilisé pour la formation du ciel.

Dans le même temps, l'esprit laissa tomber sur terre en cours d'élaboration une chose lourde, en forme de globule, *kuru*, qui fut plus tard nommé *pemba* (2). Pemba, se déplaçant suivant un mouvement tourbillonnaire aux quatre points cardinaux (sud, ouest, est, nord), ayant reçu douze des éléments sortis de l'esprit modela, à l'aide des particules issues de *fā*, des mottes et des buttes qui donnèrent forme à la terre.

Mais en s'élevant l'esprit avait projeté vers le haut ce qui fut plus tard nommé *fāro* (3). Faro, qui n'était encore que vibration l'aida, avec dix de ses éléments et avec le rayonnement issu du *fā*, à construire le ciel suivant un trajet orienté. Faro se rendit d'abord à l'ouest, puis au sud, à l'est et au nord, déterminant ainsi les points cardinaux célestes.

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(1) La prière suivante est parfois récitée qui est relative au *fā : fango, ma dua, ma be, fē mbina, fē nkumbe, fē ndaba, fē semba, wolo ligi ye nye, djiri ligi ye nye, panse bwora na. o bwora mi, o nya nyimi senge do. nligi ye yerewere ye, ka bo miri kono, miri dane sandyi.*

« Chemin du savoir, je ne suis pas petit, je ne suis pas grand. Une chose arrive, une chose à grande tête, à grande bouche, à grand pied. Je suis le maître de la fécondité; je suis le maître des arbres. Cela vient d'où? cela vient de la fatigue de mon grain. Mon maître est la vibration, de laquelle est sorti l'esprit dont la pluie ensemence. »

(2) De *fē*, chose et *ba*, grande.

(3) Les Bambara disent indifféremment *faro* ou *fāro*, de *fa*, création ou *fā*, connaissance, en langue ancienne. Ces étymologies témoignent des liens qui unissent, dans leur esprit, création et connaissance (cf. p. 4). Le suffixe *ro* exprimerait une idée d'ensemble, de totalité. Une autre étymologie a été relevée par S. de Ganay, dans *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, p. 196. « ...les mots Fané (nom d'une famille de forgerons), Faro, *fan*, forge, *fara*, pierre, et *fari*, corps, ont la même origine. Faro est le nom secret de pierre. » Cette étymologie a l'intérêt d'accuser les rapports qui unissent, dans le Soudan, le Faro des Bambara et des Bozo, le Nommo des Dogon et les forgerons. Cf. M. Griaule. *Dieu d'eau (passim.).*

Le ciel est distinct de l'espace vide, *kęnę*, qui le sépare de la terre et qui est le produit de « la mue du *gereyereli* après qu'il ait accouché de l'esprit ». Composé de sept parties placées les unes au-dessus des autres, il fut terminé avant la terre qui, elle aussi, est constituée de sept parties correspondantes.

Bien qu'il eût reçu une plus grande part des éléments surgis de l'esprit, Pemba ne put venir seul à bout de son œuvre. Quand le ciel fut achevé, l'esprit bénit Faro et le lança sous forme d'eau qui, suivant le trajet emprunté par Pemba pendant sa descente, tomba goutte à goutte depuis la septième partie du ciel jusqu'à la septième partie de la terre où elle ruissela pour connaître des travaux de fondation terrestre. Dans sa descente verticale, Faro laissa dans l'espace un globule qui devint le génie de l'air, Téliko (1); sur terre il déposa une particule qui forma le génie Soba (2). Quand il s'écoula entre les mottes formant le sol, il vit que la terre n'était point achevée et il emplit d'eau les vides, ce qui forma les sources cachées d'aujourd'hui.

Alors la vie apparut sur la terre. Faro, fécondé par la vibration qui contenait en puissance masculinité et féminité, accoucha de deux jumelles sur un tertre désert (3). Dès leur apparition, autour d'elles poussa la première herbe, *yayalé* (4), et surgirent des scorpions chargés de les protéger (5). Au bout d'un certain temps la rosée, devenue abondante, s'épancha sur le tertre et forma une source d'où sortit un ruisseau. A sa tête apparut le poisson *kokoni* (6), dirigeant la marche du flot d'eau douce qui, pour la première fois, s'écoulait sur la terre. Il fut bientôt suivi d'un autre poisson de même espèce qui prit sur son dos Faro et ses enfants; le flot les entraîna dans leur demeure aquatique. La première d'entre elles accoucha de deux jumeaux, dont l'un était mâle. Faro envoya sa messagère l'hirondelle placer, dans les eaux de l'accouchement, l'âme ou force vitale des deux jumeaux. Comme témoin il garda dans l'eau leurs doubles, *dya*, afin qu'ils fussent protégés contre tout mal. De ces deux jumeaux naquirent les Bozo, qui, comme les jumelles de Faro, pouvaient vivre dans l'eau et converser avec lui (7). Faro créa alors les poissons, qui leur servirent de nourriture, les hydrosauriens et tous les animaux aquatiques qui peuplent la mer et les eaux courantes. Puis il remonta au ciel.

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(1) De *teli*, aller vite.

(2) Litt. : *so*, maison, *ba*, grande.

(3) Les tertres nus, *walawala*, les clairières, sont le théâtre de rites concernant les jumeaux.

(4) *Andropogon (Hyparrhénia) hirtus.*

(5) Le scorpion, arme des jumeaux, pique celui qui leur fait du tort, car attaquer un jumeau c'est offenser Faro.

(6) *Clarias senegalensis.*

(7) Le mâle s'unit à sa sœur et donna naissance aux Bozo; la fille s'unit à un homme descendant de Mousso Koroni (cf. p. 39).

De cette première création de la terre et des eaux il est dit : « Pemba est descendu sur terre; Pemba a été le constructeur des choses. Le témoignage de Faro est sorti et s'est étendu dessus; la grande eau [de Faro] est descendue, est entrée dans les yeux de la terre; dans ces lieux Faro a fait connaître sa puissance (1). »

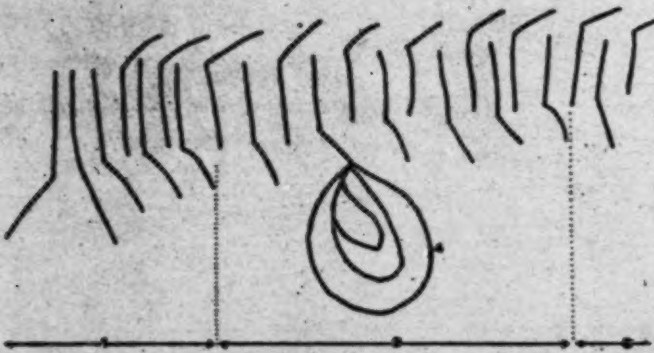

Fig. 2. — Les vingt-deux éléments issus de l'explosion de l'esprit (4). Ils se divisent en sept *bõñuana* (1), douze *bangini* (2) et trois *figini* (3). Ce dessin est exécuté sur les sanctuaires du Komo. (Dessin d'un informateur.)

Cette première phase de la formation du monde est rappelée chaque année par un dessin tracé sur le sanctuaire du Komo : il représente l'esprit, *miri*, et les vingt-deux éléments de la création (fig. 2). Les traits verticaux qui se lisent de gauche à droite sont coudés alternativement en haut et en bas pour montrer leur appartenance alternée à Pemba et Faro et signifier aussi que chacun des éléments est le premier d'une série d'autres issus de lui. Le *miri* est tracé au centre sous forme de poche oblique, image de « la grossesse du *yereyereli* ». En dessinant, le vieillard chargé de procéder au rite dit : « Pèmba et Faro ont fait la situation et l'organisation du monde, le ciel d'en haut a été fait en secret par Faro avec l'aide de l'esprit; Pèmba est descendu sur terre, il y fut connu très vite; les humains ont recours (à toi) *yereyereli*, mes deux mains sont derrière mon dos (2). »

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(1) *pemba djigi na dugukolo ka, pemba dlala fẽwnye, faro ka šereya bwora o la, dyi ba djigini dema dugukolo nyena, yoro min faro ye a sebaya do o la.* Ce texte est récité au cours des cérémonies annuelles du Kworè (cf. p. 166).

(2) *pemba ni faro ye dyẽ dyokã ani dyẽ dyotyoko ka, sankaba dlala faro fe gundola miri dema ni ke la, pemba djigini dugukolo ka, a dõ teli yala, dyobe na warilika yereyereli, mbolo fla yenko.*

Règne de Pemba.

Pendant sept ans, Pemba fut tourbillon (1). Transformé en graine d'acacia, il se déplaçait dans l'espace porté par le vent et entraînant la pluie; enfin épuisé il se posa sur la terre qui, le cachant de quelques mottes, lui permit de germer : un arbre, le *balanza* (2), se développa, mais bientôt périt, desséché. Il ne resta qu'une sorte de madrier rectangulaire, *pembele*, nommé aussi *ko kun*, « tête des choses », gisant sur le sol nu.

Pemba, souche de bois contenant en puissance la création des animaux et végétaux, était seul sur la terre. Sous lui s'amassait sa propre décomposition. Comme il se déplaçait parfois en tourbillonnant, las de sa solitude, il dit un jour : « La poussière de mes traces dissipera ma nostalgie. » Ayant parlé, les traces se rassemblèrent et le vent les poussa près de l'amas de terre et de bois pourrissant. Il pétrit cet amas avec sa salive, y incorporant ainsi une âme-souffle, *ni;* il lui donna une forme et lui affecta un double immatériel, *dya*. Mais, comme il se défiait de lui, il confia ce double à Faro, maître du ciel et des eaux, gardien des *dya*. Puis il s'étendit sur cette forme pendant quatre jours. Au cinquième jour, il entendit sous lui un son aigu, de tonalité féminine, qui disait : « Lève-toi, je suis épuisée. — Non, répondit-il, je te donnerai d'abord un nom pour que tu sois ma femme. »

Cette créature avait une tête aux longues oreilles en pointe et une poitrine d'animal; le reste du corps était humain et comportait une queue. Jusqu'à sa perte, elle conserva cette forme.

Pour qu'elle pût devenir la matrice des êtres futurs, la dépositrice des connaissances et l'animatrice des pensées de Pemba, il fallait qu'elle l'assurât de son amour total. Elle le lui promit et reçut alors le nom de *Muso koroni kuṇ lye*, « petite vieille femme à tête blanche ». Petite, car elle était issue de lui; ancienne, car elle était son émanation, donc son égale dans le temps; blanche, car venant de lui, elle était pure comme lui. Étant nommée, elle se leva et devint sa femme. Bien qu'il ne la pénétrât pas, elle reçut de lui ses multiples semences, reprenant en échange sa propre sève. Elle donna naissance à des plantes et des animaux dont le premier fut la panthère. Tout ce qu'elle engendrait était pourvu d'une âme ou force vitale, *ni*, et d'un double, *dya* semblables à ceux que Pemba avait déposés en elle en la pétrissant de sa salive. A cette époque, aucun être n'était pourvu d'articulations (1).

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(1) Cette partie du mythe concernant le *pembele* a été recueillie par S. de Ganay et publiée dans le *Journal de Psychologie normale et pathologique* sous le titre : « Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara ». Nous avons apporté quelques modifications à ce texte.

(2) *Acacia albida.*

Les Dogon accordent la même importance à l'*acacia albida* dans le prélude de la création. C'est entre deux épines de l'arbre disposées symétriquement pointe contre pointe qu'a tourné une première matérialisation du monde sous la forme d'une masse tronconique aplatie en bois de ce même arbre.

La terre commença de fourmiller d'êtres apparaissant en désordre au hasard des naissances, et qui allaient révérer Pemba comme leur créateur, le nommant dieu, Ngala. De cette œuvre chaotique ce dernier voulut s'assurer la domination totale; il demanda alors à Mousso Koroni de le planter en terre; par sa propre puissance il prit aussitôt racine et devint le premier de tous les arbres, le *balanza*, vert en saison sèche, desséché en saison des pluies, qui étendit sa puissance (2).

Les êtres humains nés de Faro qui vivaient dans les rochers brûlants, allèrent se réfugier sous cet arbre dont la puissance éclatait à tous les yeux puisqu'il n'avait pas besoin d'eau pour verdoyer. Ils lui adressaient des prières et en reçurent des directives de vie. Comme ils étaient immortels, le temps n'existait pas. Ils comptaient pourtant leur âge d'après leur système pileux; à 12 ans se développaient les poils du pubis, à 22 ans, ceux des aisselles; la barbe était noire à 36 ans, à 52 ans les cheveux blanchissaient. Lorsqu'il comptait les quatre sortes de poils, l'être était complet; mais sept ans plus tard, il maigrissait brusquement, perdait sa vitalité et son âme s'affaiblissait; il devenait un vieillard.

Les hommes de cette époque ignoraient le langage et le vêtement. Ils vivaient nus et communiquaient entre eux par gestes et par grognements. Pour se reconnaître et sur l'instigation de Mousso Koroni, ils tracèrent sur leurs visages des scarifications de trois ou quatre traits, trois étant le symbole sexuel de l'homme (la verge et les deux testicules), quatre, celui de la femme (les quatre lèvres). En vertu de quoi chacun, selon son sexe, répétait trois ou quatre fois ses actes.

Les hommes, à cette époque, recevaient du ciel leur nourriture grâce au génie Téliko qui, dans l'espace, surveillait les eaux de Faro; il leur envoyait, en saison humide, des pierres issues du septième ciel et contenant des noix de karité, *ši kolo*. Les femmes en extrayaient de l'huile qu'elles consommaient avec les fruits. Or, un jour de la saison sèche, une femme ayant tiré de l'huile de quatre noix s'essuya les mains au *balanza* sous lequel elle était seule. « Cela, je le veux », dit l'arbre. Dès lors toutes les femmes lui offrirent de l'huile et furent imitées par les hommes qui s'imposèrent plus tard dans ce culte.

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(1) Ces êtres aux membres souples et non articulés sont dit *mašibadè*.

(2) Le *balanza* n'est pas Pemba dans sa totalité, qui est esprit, force et matière. Il est l'avatar terrestre de Pemba et notamment l'image de sa masculinité fécondante. Pemba s'est matérialisé sous la forme du *balanza* pour continuer son œuvre de création et pour apporter la mort sur la terre.

Mais le *balanza* ne se contenta plus de Mousso Koroni. Il exigea que toutes les femmes lui donnassent leur amour. Elles durent alors s'unir à lui, augmentant sa vitalité et sa puissance car il se nourrissait de leur sève comme il avait fait de sa première femelle. Cette dernière, pénétrée de jalousie, introduisit la mauvaise volonté dans toutes choses; elle n'accepta pas le partage, elle ne l'approcha plus, lui refusant ainsi l'amour et la fidélité qu'elle avait promis. Elle le trahit, s'isola et, cessant de coopérer à l'œuvre de la création, elle commença de la troubler. Ce fut l'origine de sa chute, de sa pauvreté, comme de sa fatigue car le *balanza* la maudit pour sa trahison et la repoussa lorsqu'elle tenta de revenir à lui.

Elle connut alors une telle nostalgie, un tel désespoir, qu'une sorte de folie s'empara d'elle. Elle parcourut les cieux, l'espace la terre, d'ouest au nord, du sud à l'est, enfonçant dans le sol des morceaux de bois comme elle avait fait pour Pemba, en espérant qu'à leur tour ils deviendraient des *balanza*.

Pendant son périple, Mousso Koroni, qui s'était mutilée sur le *pembele* alors qu'elle entretenait avec lui des rapports sexuels, voulut infliger aux autres les mêmes blessures : sa fureur la poussa à circoncire et exciser avec ses ongles et ses dents tous les êtres humains qu'elle rencontra. La violence de ses actes détermina chez elle l'apparition des premières menstrues (1). Dans le même temps elle révéla aux hommes tout ce qu'elle avait appris par Pemba et devait rester secret; elle communiqua à tout ce qu'elle touchait l'impureté acquise par sa trahison. A son contact, la terre devint impure, qualité qu'elle a conservée jusqu'à maintenant (2).

Pemba poursuivit en vain, à travers l'univers, Mousso Koroni pour tenter de reprendre ce qu'il lui avait donné : pouvoir et

(1) *dyoli tumbi bo muso koroni, bolokoli gale ke to a fe na ñi ma sone ye.* « Le sang est sorti de Mousso Koroni au moment où elle a circoncis avec ses ongles et ses dents. »

(2) Cf. p. 53.

connaissance. Faro, sur sa demande, la pourchassa à son tour d'est au sud, du nord à l'ouest; il la rejoignit, la vainquit et tenta de la soumettre à son créateur. Mais elle refusa, se déclarant libre et mit ainsi le désordre dans la création : le mal, le malheur et la mort furent par elle introduits dans le monde.

Sans avoir vu la lumière, Mousso Koroni, au bout d'une longue vie de misère et de folie, mourut dans la détresse et l'abandon. Mais de cette misère devait naître un bien pour les hommes : les efforts qu'elle avait faits pour ne pas mourir de faim sont à l'origine des techniques agricoles qu'elle enseigna (1).

Pendant ce temps, la vie proliférait sur terre : l'arbre engendrait des êtres avec chacune des femmes auxquelles il s'unissait.

Entre temps, d'autres êtres apparaissaient sur terre, génies de l'air devenus visibles, ayant pris corps et transformés par le contact du sol impur en hommes dits *mahalakillen* (2) aux membres souples et sans articulations, semblables aux êtres qu'avait mis au monde Mousso Koroni Koundye. Mais la multiplication des vivants qu'il voulait dominer nécessitait de la part du *balansa* un accroissement de force qu'il puisait tout d'abord dans le liquide séminal des femmes. Cet apport devenant insuffisant une nourriture plus puissante lui fut révélée. Un vieillard qui devait épouser une vierge perdit un jour ses forces et ne put consommer l'acte sexuel. La jeune fille s'unit à l'arbre qui l'ayant déflorée fut couvert de sang et devint chaud. Cette chaleur, destinée à repousser celles qui se présentaient comme auparavant, signifiait qu'il désirait autre chose que leur semence. Prises de peur, les femmes pratiquèrent des rites divinatoires pour connaître sa volonté : la réponse fut qu'il voulait du sang.

Les hommes, ne sachant comment satisfaire ce désir, chargèrent le plus âgé d'entre eux, qui était devin, d'introduire dans le tronc le sang séché de la vierge. Il humecta l'endroit taché avec de l'eau et frotta l'arbre. Le troisième jour, au cours de ce travail, l'une de ses mains s'accrocha aux rugosités du tronc; une veine de son poignet s'ouvrit et le sang coula. C'est dès ce moment que deux fois l'an les hommes offrirent le sang de leurs veines, dont l'arbre absorbait la force pour se régénérer. En échange de ce don, l'arbre consentit à les rajeunir lorsqu'ils atteignaient l'âge critique de 59 ans. Mais en contrepartie, il exigea que toutes les épouses des hommes devinssent ses femmes.

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(1) La partie du mythe qui traite de l'origine de l'agriculture sera relatée en détails par S. de Ganay, dans *Techniques et rites de l'agriculture chez les Bambara* (à paraître).

(2) Litt. : personne déchue.

De cet échange continu résultèrent la puissance de l'un et la jeunesse des autres, mais il n'était possible que par l'intermédiaire des femmes exigées en tribut.

La première offrande de sang des hommes avait lieu au début de la saison sèche. Réunis autour de l'arbre et au commandement du plus âgé, sans gémir ni se plaindre, au milieu des chants, ils aspergeaient le tronc en s'ouvrant les veines du poignet droit. Donner le sang de la main droite revenait à donner la moitié de son corps, à confier à l'arbre son travail et son double, *dya*. Dès que le sang cessait de gicler, c'est-à-dire dès qu'il paraissait avoir perdu sa force, les poignets étaient ligaturés avec des fibres de *da*, et les plaies guérissaient sans laisser de cicatrices.

La tache de chaque offrande était signalée au vieillard qui apprenait à distinguer les gens suivant la couleur de leur sang. Chacun ensuite léchait la place où il avait saigné, mains au dos, pour reprendre le sang vivifié par l'arbre, laissant dans le tronc l'élément fort et dangereux qu'il contenait auparavant.

Pendant cette cérémonie, les vieillards qui devaient rajeunir se réunissaient autour de l'arbre. Chacun d'eux montait à son tour au sommet et s'ouvrait les veines du poignet gauche, donnant ainsi ses dernières forces. Puis il redescendait et les jeunes gens présents lui arrachaient les poils un à un en commençant par ceux du pubis, et en continuant par ceux des aisselles, de la barbe et des cheveux. Ils terminaient en enlevant les poils du corps. L'homme ne devait ni gémir ni crier mais chanter pour se donner du courage, car la souffrance stoïquement supportée était nécessaire au rajeunissement. L'homme ensuite était frappé sur tout le corps par les jeunes gens, en commençant par la nuque; il s'évanouissait et redevenait un enfant de sept ans. Les adolescents soufflaient dans ses veines pour actionner ses poumons et lui insufflaient de l'eau pour remplacer le sang qu'il avait perdu.

Le fils aîné du vieillard rajeuni devenait chef de famille mais ne pouvait hériter des femmes, lesquelles selon le pacte appartenaient à l'arbre. Le *balanza* exigea en outre que la quatrième fille née dans chaque famille lui soit entièrement consacrée. Toute vierge devait être par lui déflorée la veille de son mariage et l'acte était exécuté rituellement par la main de l'une des femmes propres de l'arbre de façon que le sang coule sur le tronc.

Le cycle des naissances qui suivaient ces différents accouplements était ainsi réglé : quand le mari d'une femme atteignait cinquante-deux ans, celle-ci continuait d'avoir des rapports sexuels avec l'arbre. Elle mettait au monde toutes sortes d'animaux et plantes. Après son rajeunissement à elle qui se produisait sans rite ni souffrance lorsqu'elle atteignait cinquante-neuf ans elle redevenait vierge (1). Elle était déflorée par l'arbre et donnait naissance à un animal ou un végétal, après quoi, unie à son mari, elle engendrait des hommes. Lorsque son mari était vieux, elle retournait à l'arbre et le cycle reprenait.

L'arbre exigeait aussi des femmes le sang menstruel et tous les accouchements avaient lieu auprès de lui. Sur son injonction, les hommes, quand ils surent travailler la pierre et faire leurs premières haches, taillèrent des phallus en bois qu'ils insérèrent dans son tronc. La forme donnée à ces objets était appropriée aux matrices des femmes et à leur âge; elles redoutaient ces accouplements douloureux mais elles devaient les subir sans larmes car l'arbre y puisait non seulement des forces comme auparavant mais encore la jouissance qu'il ne connaissait pas jusqu'alors. Ces forces s'accrurent encore et cette jouissance atteignit son comble lorsque le *balanza* reçut le sang de la première vierge déflorée par l'un de ces phallus.

Lorsque les sacrifices sanglants furent organisés l'arbre donna d'autres enseignements aux hommes. Il leur apprit notamment à faire le feu en frottant deux pierres ; pour les remercier ils s'incisèrent les veines de la main droite et lui donnèrent leur sang.

Le pouvoir du *balanza* était alors à son apogée. Mais l'abus qu'il fit de ses créatures devait entraîner sa perte. En effet, en ce temps, les hommes comme les femmes étaient non seulement épuisés de donner leur sang, mais, devenant constamment plus nombreux, ils mouraient de faim. Une femme s'évanouit un soir qu'elle passait dans un champ de tomates sauvages. Lorsqu'elle revint à elle, Faro, qui siégeait dans les eaux terrestres, lui suggéra l'idée de manger des fruits. Ceux-ci se transformèrent en sang à l'intérieur de son corps et elle se releva ayant repris ses forces. Elle alla se baigner dans le Niger où régnait aussi la famine à tel point que le sable y était la seule nourriture, et fut prise par Faro qui lui trancha nez et nombril et lui ouvrit le ventre. Il mangea la pulpe rouge qui s'y trouvait. Il compta les graines des fruits et en trouva un multiple de sept. Chaque tomate portait en elle à la fois le sang et le principe de la gémelléité (3 + 4) soit les éléments fondamentaux qui composent l'être humain. Faro déposa dans ces fruits le principe de vie : les hommes et les femmes, instruits de cette transformation, en mangèrent pour se régénérer et continuer à alimenter le *balanza* qui, en échange, les rajeunissait.

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(1) Il semble que le rajeunissement des femmes leur ait été octroyé en échange de la semence et du sang menstruel qu'elles donnaient sans cesse à l'arbre.

Mais Faro s'opposa à cet accroissement de puissance. Il trouva injuste et abusif que l'arbre ait à la fois la domination du monde et la jouissance. Il considéra aussi qu'il était en quelque mesure son tributaire puisque l'eau et la tomate, ses biens propres, étaient indispensables à la vie des hommes et à la régénération de leur sang. Il fit donc signifier à l'arbre les conditions qu'il entendait imposer pour continuer à dispenser l'eau. Il exigea que cesse la prolifération des êtres par les femmes unies au bois et se réserva pour lui-même la procréation par l'intermédiaire des tomates.

Le *balanza* savait qu'il allait être vaincu; il prévoyait que les hommes allaient le trahir, que le culte qu'ils lui rendaient serait adressé à Faro puisque l'eau permettait seule leur subsistance et la multiplication des plantes. Il savait aussi que cette trahison serait génératrice de mort, mais que Faro reprendrait à son actif la création.

Il se déracina néanmoins et se rendit à la rencontre de Faro. « La lutte fut âpre comme leurs paroles, dure comme leur haine », mais Faro eut la victoire.

LA MORT.

Les femmes du vaincu qui engendraient les animaux et les végétaux le quittèrent les premières au bout de sept jours et il les appela en vain. Elles allèrent vivre près du fleuve : sans intervention d'aucune sorte, elles enfantèrent en buvant de l'eau dans laquelle Faro avait secrètement mêlé du suc de tomate. Elles le remerciaient par une offrande de trois ou quatre fruits suivant le sexe de l'enfant.

Après les femmes, les hommes abandonnèrent le culte. Au lieu de prendre d'autres bois, comme ils avaient coutume de faire jusque-là, ils commencèrent à brûler les brindilles qui tombaient sous le *balanza*, pour entretenir leur feu, ce feu qu'ils tenaient de lui.

L'arbre les maudit. Ils connurent alors les maladies et les mauvais sentiments : rancune, haine, jalousie. Les plaies qu'ils se faisaient pour donner leur sang et se rajeunir ne se refermèrent plus et s'envenimèrent.

Certains d'entre eux tentèrent de remédier à ce nouvel état des choses. Les huit hommes les plus âgés se rendirent auprès du *balanza* et malgré la chaleur qu'il dégageait pour les repousser ils s'incisèrent la langue et lui offrirent leur sang. L'arbre, étonné, émit d'abord une sorte de souffle, car il appréciait le sacrifice. Enfin il parla et leur annonça la venue de la mort. Mais à cause de leur soumission, et du sacrifice qu'ils avaient consenti il les transforma en oiseaux *latugu kononi* (litt. : petits oiseaux de feu). Pour cela il exigea qu'ils se frottassent le dos contre le tronc de l'arbre jusqu'à ce qu'ils aient perdu tout leur sang. Les hommes crièrent de douleur pendant l'opération, mais au moment de leur agonie, leur âme se mua en oiseau. Leur chair et leur peau pénétrèrent l'arbre; leurs os se mêlèrent à l'écorce blanche et la moelle devint le fruit rouge qui, dès ce jour, mûrit. C'est depuis ce temps qu'on utilise rarement pour des usages profanes cette « chair humaine » qu'est le bois de *balanza*. Ces huit premiers ancêtres transformés en oiseaux furent, dans la suite, révérés par les hommes (1).

L'arbre ayant fleuri et donné des fruits, les sacrifices dont il était encore l'objet augmentaient sa floraison : feuilles et fruits contenaient le sang des hommes. Ceux-ci commencèrent à se nourrir de ces fruits car ils étaient appétissants et sucrés. Ils coupèrent aussi des branchages pour les donner à leurs animaux. L'arbre restait silencieux.

Mais bientôt les hommes abusèrent de lui. L'un d'eux monta sur son faîte et coupa tous ses bourgeons qu'il emporta. Ceux qui vinrent ensuite furent effrayés de trouver l'arbre mutilé. Épouvanté de son acte le fautif s'enfuit jusqu'an Mandé, mais là, terrassé par la force vengeresse *(nyama)* qui le poursuivait, il tomba mort.

Les gens du Mandé, ne sachant pas qu'il avait rompu un interdit et ignorant la mort, le mirent à l'abri, pensant qu'il dormait. Ils tentèrent de le nourrir et frottèrent le cadavre avec de l'oseille et de l'huile. Ces soins firent que le corps se maintint un certain temps, mais, au bout de dix jours, il se décomposa. La force *(nyama)* qu'il dégagea attaqua d'autres hommes qui moururent à leur tour.

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(1) En particulier par tous les forgerons. Depuis leur transformation les oiseaux *latugu kononi* sont censés vivre près du *balanza* et respecter un certain nombre d'interdits : ils ne doivent pas se séparer mais vivre en communauté en dehors des villages. Ils sont responsables du feu : incapables de l'allumer, ils ont cependant le pouvoir, par leur présence, de l'entretenir ou de l'éteindre. Un brin de paille humide s'enflamme quand on l'allume en prononçant leur nom. Ils protègent aussi les potières contre les brûlures. Ils sont considérés comme impurs à cause de la terre dans laquelle ils se creusent des trous et du feu qui est lui-même impur.

Les parents du défunt vinrent chercher le corps. Ils mangèrent la chair, car depuis le décès, les pierres de tonnerre qui tombaient du ciel ne contenaient plus de noix de karité et ils commençaient à dépérir. Ils emportèrent les os du mort.

Lorsqu'ils furent de retour près de l'arbre, celui-ci leur ordonna de piler les ossements et d'en enduire ses branches mutilées. Il leur annonça qu'il serait désormais inutile de lui donner leur sang; ils ne rajeuniraient plus et connaîtraient tous la mort.

A l'audition de ces paroles, trois hommes tombèrent; quatre femmes qui survinrent subirent le même sort. Les sept cadavres se décomposèrent autour de l'arbre qui avait pris leur vie. Ce fut là le dernier sacrifice.

L'arbre annonça qu'il abandonnait les hommes mais qu'il donnerait toujours des fruits rouges représentant leur sang versé sur lui autrefois. Et depuis il suit un cycle annuel inverse de celui des autres végétaux : pendant l'hivernage il perd ses forces avec ses fruits et ses feuilles. Mais il fleurit en saison sèche, lorsque les grains sont rentrés, comme un être bien nourri et qui ne redoute rien, la récolte étant faite. Portant en lui ses propres sacrifices il n'exige rien des humains.

Après cet abandon, les hommes désespérés se rendirent près d'un torrent pour implorer l'invisible. Mais durant deux ans rien ne leur répondit. Ils commencèrent à dépérir et leur patriarche se rendit auprès de l'arbre pour obtenir son pardon. Il le pria vainement et dut revenir auprès de l'eau. Il entendit alors la voix de Faro et à cause de la force de cette première parole il s'évanouit. Un peu d'eau le ranima, mais il fut effrayé par une ombre noire. Tendant les bras, il pria en disant : « L'arbre a mis l'obscurité entre toi et nous. » Alors l'ombre devint blanche et la fraîcheur de Faro entra dans son corps. Il alla chercher les siens et Faro les instruisit, disant : « Je donnerai la pluie nécessaire aux cultures, les sources, les mares, les torrents, un grand fleuve, le Niger. Mais sachez que toute eau est sainte et doit être respectée. Je ne peux vous soustraire à la mort mais j'y remédierai. » Et il leur enseigna la parole et leur langue.

Au premier des huit vieillards des plus âgés, patriarche qui porta dès lors le nom de *kumabana* (1) il dit : « Tu vas mourir. » Huit jours après, ce dernier, sentant approcher sa fin, se rendit au bord des torrents et dit à ceux qui l'entouraient et qui l'écoutaient respectueusement :

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(1) « Conclusion des paroles ». Ce mot signifie également « il n'y a plus de paroles » dans le sens de « en dehors de ces paroles, il n'y en a point d'autres ». Kumabana avait la connaissance complète.

« Nous n'avions pas la parole; par la puissance de Faro, nous l'avons reçue. Voilà que maintenant il nous faut mourir. Je ne m'attendais pas à cette souffrance, à cette tristesse : tous vous connaîtrez la même. »

Un vieillard le questionna, il ne répondit plus. Pensant le ranimer, les hommes allèrent jeter le corps au fleuve où il coula. Le deuxième vieillard voulant le retrouver, se jeta à sa suite. Mais son corps, nombril et nez sectionnés, remonta à la surface de l'eau qui se couvrit de sang. Le corps fut alors transporté et mis dans la fente du tronc d'un baobab. Huit jours après, le troisième vieillard se noya en allant se baigner : l'eau devint rouge à l'endroit de sa chute.

Le quatrième vieillard, voyant cela, en conclut que Faro exigeait des sacrifices. Il fut le premier prêtre du culte qu'il instaura, et que les hommes rendirent au génie depuis ce temps.

Dès cette époque, chacune des espèces animales et végétales se reproduisit elle-même, et les naissances désordonnées des premiers âges cessèrent.

Les femmes fécondées par Faro donnèrent naissance seulement à des êtres humains. De plus, elles mirent au monde non des êtres uniques comme au temps du *balanza* mais des jumeaux à l'image de ceux qu'avait engendrés le génie pour peupler les eaux de la terre.

Les naissances gémellaires furent la règle pendant une longue période jusqu'au jour où les hommes trahirent Faro. Le génie de l'air, Teliko, décida de dominer à son tour la création.

« Le souffle des êtres vivants est à moi, disait-il, tous les bonheurs des hommes viennent de moi à travers le vent. »

« Sans moi nul ne peut vivre, répondit Faro, car pour respirer il faut boire; l'eau est indispensable à la vie. »

Privés d'air et d'eau, les hommes dépérissaient. Ils tentèrent une médiation. Mais Faro la refusa, « car le corps de Téliko, touchant à la terre impure, est chaud et usé par le vent ». Téliko décida alors, dans son orgueil, de se rendre à son tour aux confins et les hommes, croyant qu'il allait être vainqueur, abandonnèrent le Faro pour le suivre. Celui-ci, sûr de sa puissance, attendit que son adversaire eût tenté la traversée des mers. A ce moment il le précipita sur un rocher, le privant de sa virilité et lui brisa le bras droit qu'il avait souple comme tous les êtres à cette époque.

Téliko ayant reconnu sa défaite, Faro jugea les hommes coupables. Il les punit de leur trahison, mais ne les abandonna pas comme avait fait le *balanza*. Il leur octroya tout d'abord les articulations propres au travail manuel auquel ils furent désormais contraints pour assurer leur subsistance. Il supprima la norme de la double naissance et les femmes enfantèrent des êtres uniques, les jumeaux n'étant réservés qu'à de rares privilégiés. Mais il les remplaça par le double *dya* qui, siégeant dans l'eau, fut chargé de veiller sur le vivant et en particulier de faciliter l'accouchement des femmes (1).

RÈGNE DE FARO.

Faro, ayant vaincu le *balanza* et soumis Téliko, reprit à son compte la création. Il réorganisa l'univers entier et établit l'ordre dans lequel, encore aujourd'hui, se déroule son fonctionnement. Répandant sa parole et sa lumière, il nomma et classa toutes choses : « Toutes les choses (de l'univers) sont sous la domination de Faro; huit cents transformations sont en son pouvoir (1). »

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(1) Dans ses *Notes sur la théodicée Bambara*, Mme S. DE GANAY a donné une première version de la création dans laquelle Koni (alias Pemba), conçu comme créateur unique, aurait donné naissance à « deux jumelles dans la substance divine », respectivement Mousso Koroni et Faro, ce dernier envisagé sous son aspect femelle. Cette version est dans la ligne de la pensée bambara qui conçoit la création comme fondée sur la gémelléité.

La version donnée dans cet ouvrage présente l'intérêt d'être absolument comparable à celle qui a été recueillie chez les Dogon et compte tenu de l'identité des représentations dans ces deux populations. En effet, chez les Dogon, la pensée créatrice (dieu Amma) ayant formé l' « œuf du monde », le scinda en deux placenta *(me)*, contenant chacun deux jumeaux Nommo porteurs de sa parole et devant respectivement créer le ciel et la terre. Il en est de même pour Faro et Pemba (cf. p. 13). Mais le Nommo de la terre ayant perdu son double femelle fut transformé en animal cherchant désespérément ce double; il en résulta l'introduction du désordre que le Nommo du ciel fut chargé de réparer. A cet effet, il réorganisa l'univers en reprenant à l'autre les paroles qu'Amma lui avait confiées. Chez les Bambara on observe le même rôle de Pemba, Mousso Koroni et Faro.

Pour entrer dans les détails, Pemba et le *balanza* ont leur réplique dans le *yurugu* (Vulpes pallida) et le *senge* (Acacia albida). Mouso Koroni dans l'être femelle Yasigui, jumelle du *yurugu*, représentée actuellement par une dignitaire de la Société des Masques, la *yasigine*. Yasigui, comme Mousso Koroni, a révélé les paroles du créateur, c'est-à-dire la langue du Sigui; elle a circoncis et excisé les hommes et les femmes, enseigné certaines techniques agricoles. Dans les deux populations, la même étoile, Sirius (Dog. *sigi tolo;* Bam. *sigi dolo*), les représente. Faro, androgyne, est comparable en tous points au Nommo, moniteur universel, détenteur du verbe et de la vie. Le *yurugu* et le Nommo ont suivi des périples semblables à ceux de Pemba et Faro. Notamment lors de leur descente sur la terre, le *yurugu*, puis le Nommo ont utilisé une « arche », *koro*, dont les répliques sont le bois *pembele* de Pemba et l'arche *kuru* de Faro décrite par certains initiés (cf. M. GRIAULE. *L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes*).

Dans les deux populations l'homme « grain du monde », est l'image du cosmos. Le rôle exact de la graine d'*Acacia albida* n'apparaît pas encore clairement dans les deux populations, mais, dans les deux cas, elle est considérée comme une première création avortée.

Pour mener à bien cette œuvre, il entreprit un voyage de reconnaissance aux confins du monde pour la nomination des points cardinaux.

Il se rendit d'abord à l'est; les êtres qui s'y trouvaient reconnurent sa puissance et sa sagesse. Comparant sa blancheur lumineuse à celle que confère aux cheveux l'âge, à cette région il donna le nom de *koro*, vieux, mot témoignant également de sa qualité d'étape initiale. Il fit de l'est le siège de la mort.

Il alla ensuite à l'ouest. Comme il y faisait sombre, il nomma ceux qui s'y trouvaient *klebi maw* « gens du soleil tombé »; il fit de l'ouest, *klebi*, le siège des coutumes, des belles et bonnes choses.

Il prit ensuite la direction du nord, mettant huit époques à franchir les espaces et les profondeurs. Il nomma le nord *baba* « grand fleuve », car la distance était grande, l'eau profonde et l'endroit difficile. C'est au nord, atteint à la neuvième époque, qu'il établit sa domination et celle de toute royauté.

Il se rendit ensuite au sud où des êtres néfastes qui avaient écouté et suivi les paroles de Mousso Koroni parlaient un langage qu'ils avaient dérobé (2). Ils tentèrent de lui résister, mais il les détruisit en grand nombre. Malgré la soumission des survivants il fit de leur domaine le siège de l'impureté et le nomma

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(1) *fēw be bɛ faro ka se kono, yelemani ba kelɛ be a la a fɛ.*

Le nombre 800 qui est « le bout du compte » exprime ici l'infini. Les unités principales sont 1, 80, 800, etc. dans le compte dit « de l'est » actuellement utilisé par presque tous les Soudanais. 10 reste l'unité secondaire pour la numération de 1 à 79 et se combine avec 80 pour les unités des autres ordres.

Il existe également un compte dit « du Mandé » dont les unités principales sont 1, 60, 600, etc., où 10 reste unité secondaire pour la numération de 1 à 59 et se combine avec 60 pour les unités d'ordre supérieur.

D'autre part il convient de remarquer que le système de chiffraison bambara est vigésimal et qu'il reflète la notion de la personne confondue matériellement avec les 20 doigts de ses mains et de ses pieds, et nantie spirituellement de deux âmes de sexe opposé qui sont chacune de chiffre 10. Celui-ci représente, dans cette spéculation, l'unité par excellence (cf. p. 213, n. 2). Les deux comptes, 60 et 80, dans la métaphysique des Soudanais, sont complémentaires en ce sens qu'ils expriment que l'un, 60, c'est-à-dire trois fois la personne, est mâle, et que l'autre, 80, c'est-à-dire quatre fois la personne, est femelle (sur 3 et 4, cf. p. 5). Dans les populations où seul est couramment utilisé le compte de base 80, le compte de base 60 est encore actuellement employé dans certains rites (notamment chez les Dogon).

(2) Notion du vol du langage analogue chez les Dogon. Cf. p. 26, n. 1.

bani « petit fleuve » pour marquer leur faiblesse et leur échec honteux.

Le trajet parcouru fut mesuré en palmes, *sibiri*, l'unité itinéraire étant de vingt-deux palmes (1). Il en fut de même pour la distance séparant les points cardinaux, la hauteur du ciel, la profondeur de la terre.

Dans le même temps il détermina les saisons et fit à l'obscurité primitive succéder l'alternance régulière du jour et de la nuit. Ayant délimité l'espace il instaura le temps.

Ensuite Faro se plaça au centre de l'univers : toujours animé d'un mouvement vibratoire, il décrivit une spirale tournant de droite à gauche jusqu'aux confins, « là où n'y a plus qu'un tremblement de surface ». Puis il revint sur sa route de gauche à droite pour se « placer au point central (2) » d'où il fit le partage des êtres et des choses (3) ».

Le premier ciel, *kaba noro*, est un ciel moins pur que les autres : il y reste, sous forme de nuages, les traces impures du passage de Mousso Koroni. C'est de lui que sort le vent qu'y avait placé Pemba tandis qu'il la poursuivait.

Mais le deuxième ciel, *kaba dye* « ciel blanc » est frais et déjà dans la puissance du Faro. Il est le siège des âmes *(ni)* des hommes et des animaux. Les génies Kwore y séjournent et s'y battent pour permettre le passage de la pluie qui, du haut du septième ciel, descend sur la terre.

Le troisième, *kaba fi*, « ciel noir », est le lieu de repos de tous les génies et le quatrième, *kaba mana*, « mue du ciel», est le miroir des trois autres. Le Faro y tient sa « comptabilité » journalière du monde.

Dans le cinquième ciel, *koblekaba*, « ciel rouge », le Faro rend les sentences contre ceux qui rompent les interdits. Ciel des luttes, des combats, des victoires, auquel sacrifiait le roi avant de partir en guerre, il est aussi celui du sang, du feu, des vents chauds et nuisibles.

Dans le sixième ciel, *suna kaba*, sont conservés les secrets de la situation du monde (4); comme son nom l'indique, il est aussi le ciel du sommeil. Toutes les âmes des génies et des êtres vivants y dorment, chacun ayant une place déterminée. Le sommeil est une purification de l'âme et les rêves sont des directives qui lui sont données par Faro. Les évanouissements, les insomnies, les maladies sont le résultat de perturbations dans le déplacement des âmes pendant le sommeil.

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(1) *sibiri nye*, litt. « œil de la palme ». La palme bambara est une longueur obtenue avec la main ouverte, de l'extrémité du pouce à l'extrémité du médius.

(2) On dit de cet acte, *faro tyema yerẽ ;* ou *faro sigi yoro seleke nani tyela*. « Faro s'est assis au milieu des points cardinaux. »

(3) *a ye klali ke.*

(4) *dyẽ dyoka gundo be sunakaba la.*

Le septième ciel, *wolo fla kaba*, est le lieu où règne Faro : il est le siège de la domination, notamment de toute royauté. Domaine de l'eau purificatrice, c'est de ce ciel que Faro envoie sur le monde la pluie bénéfique qui apporte aux céréales leur âme.

Le soleil, dont Faro « tient la corde », pénètre le matin dans le premier des cieux et les traverse tous successivement jusqu'au soir lorsqu'il s'abîme dans le septième. Il est le dieu Pemba qui rougit, fatigué de sa course derrière Mousso Koroni. Les étoiles sont ses pores dilatés par l'effort.

L'espace vide, dit *lyema*, qui sépare le ciel de la terre, reste sous la domination de Téliko. C'est le domaine de l'air, des vents, des insectes.

La terre est divisée en sept parties qui correspondent aux sept cieux et qui sont : 1° *dugukolo*, terre, 2° *dugukolo fi*, terre noire; 3° *dugukolo dye*, terre blanche; 4° *dugukolo mana*, mue de la terre; 5° *dugukolo bele*, « pierre de la terre »; 6° *dugukolo noro*, terre molle; 7° *dugukolo wolofla*, septième terre.

Sur terre le Faro créa d'abord les trous d'eau profonde, les gouffres de la mer et des fleuves qu'il hante. Il creusa lui-même le premier puits, les mares et les lits des torrents. Il établit le régime des pluies qui tombent de la septième partie du ciel jusqu'à la septième partie des terres et constituent la purification et la réparation des désordres cosmiques.

Il classa ensuite les êtres vivants. A l'est, les animaux sauvages et domestiques dont les têtes de listes furent respectivement le lion et le cheval; à l'ouest les oiseaux; au nord les poissons ayant à leur tête le *miri* (1), les sauriens et les batraciens; au sud tous les végétaux dont il indiqua le rôle médicinal et purificatoire et qui furent divisés en trois catégories (2).

Les hommes furent également nommés, classés, les races réparties suivant la qualité du sang dans lequel Faro inscrivit le destin. Il détermina les castes, en commençant par les esclaves.

Puis il décida des nourritures propres à chacun et, pour protéger les espèces des destructions, il indiqua les interdits alimentaires, animaux et végétaux que chaque catégorie d'êtres devait respecter.

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(1) *Micralestes Acutidens.*

(2) Ce sont respectivement les herbes, *bin*, ayant à leur tête le *narakala (Digitaria digitata)*; les plantes, *fura*, dont la première est le *sindya (Cassia siberiana)* et les arbres, *dyiri*, divisés eux-mêmes en trois catégories ayant à leur tête respectivement le karité, le baobab et le *nere (Parkia biglobosa).*

Enfin il s'occupa des travaux agricoles. En particulier il donna aux hommes, par l'intermédiaire des forgerons, les huit graines de céréales, créées en même temps que l'homme, mais restées secrètement dans le ciel (1). Ces huit graines devinrent la base des subsistances, et sont le fondement de l'être humain qui porte leur symbole dans les clavicules (2).

Dans l'eau tout ce qui était sur terre fut représenté : les êtres animés par leur double, ou témoin, *dya*, les végétaux et les minéraux par une exacte réplique, qui permirent à Faro de contrôler constamment l'existence et les actes des êtres placés sous sa domination.

En tous lieux il plaça des génies, ses représentants, chargés de veiller à l'ordre universel.

LES EAUX FUTURES.

L'ordre de l'univers règne dans l'espace et dans le temps; l'ordre actuel n'en est qu'une phase. Lorsque le « premier ruissellement » recouvrit le sol, Faro ne permit qu'à l'eau primordiale de s'épandre; douze eaux restèrent cachées qui surgiront sur son ordre pour submerger la terre. Les paroles qu'elles contiennent seront révélées et le « monde à venir », pensé par *yo*, réalisé.

Dans l'attente de ces « eaux futures », les hommes doivent se munir d'objets capables de les sauver : les Bozo et certains Bambara ont une pirogue, les bergers leurs gourdes, les tisserands leurs navettes, les femmes leurs tabourets de bois (3). L'arrivée

(1) Un mythe parallèle à celui qui a été recueilli chez les Dogon (cf. M. GRIAULE. *Dieu d'eau*) fait du forgeron bambara un héros civilisateur, avatar de Faro, descendu du ciel sur une arche, *kuru*, et tenant en main une masse contenant les huit graines de céréales.

Cf. M. GRIAULE. *L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes*. S. DE GANAY. *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, p. 194 à 196.

(2) Ces huit graines sont les suivantes :

sañõ, petit mil *(Pennicillaria spicata)*, *keninge*, gros mil *(Sorghum gambicum)*; *kende*, mil rouge *(Sorghum magaritiferum)*, *fini*, fonio *(Digitaria exilis)*; *šyõ*, haricot *(Vigna maniculata)*; *tikaninkuru*, pois; *malo*, riz. La nomenclature des graines varie, mais les mêmes représentations ont cours chez les Dogon. Chez les Bozo, les clavicules sont le réceptacle de huit poissons, lesquels sont représentés par des signes sur l'avant des pirogues. Cf. G. DIETERLEN. *Les Correspondances cosmo-biologiques chez les Soudanais*.

(3) Il convient de remarquer que pirogue, *kuru*, navette, *kuruni*, tabouret, *kuruni*, sont de même racine. Le mot *kuru* désigne le globule initial dans lequel descendit Pemba qui devint par la suite le bois *pembele* en forme

des eaux est figurée par un dessin sur ces objets comme sur nombre d'ustensiles d'usage courant (fig. 3).

Ce dessin sert d'armature à un jeu, le *sumangolo*, auquel s'adonnent les Bambara de tous âges et des deux sexes pour « contribuer à la marche du monde ».

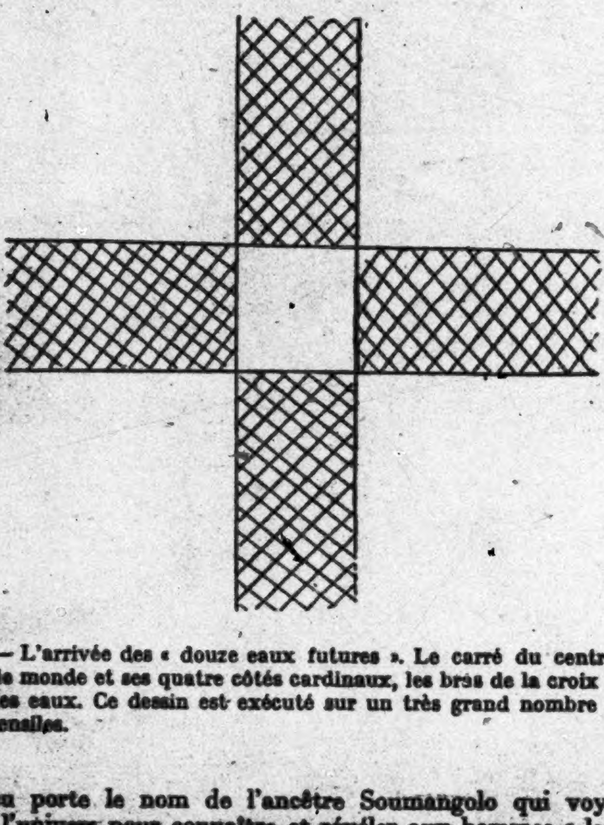

Fig. 3. — L'arrivée des « douze eaux futures ». Le carré du centre représente le monde et ses quatre côtés cardinaux, les bras de la croix l'expansion des eaux. Ce dessin est exécuté sur un très grand nombre d'objets et ustensiles.

Ce jeu porte le nom de l'ancêtre Soumangolo qui voyagea à travers l'univers pour connaître et révéler aux hommes « les situations et dispositions des eaux » *(dyi walew* et *dyi kono few)*. Pendant son périple, « il ne put atteindre aux sources centrales du ciel », c'est pourquoi celles-ci sont restées ignorées des hommes.

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d'auge; il désigne également la caisse ou arche utilisée par le forgeron mythique porteur des graines nourricières. Cf. p. 30, n. 1. Le mot *kuru* doit être rapproché de *kore* qui, en langue dogon, a le sens général de caisse, boîte, récipient de bois, auge, pirogue et désigne également dans cette population l'appareil sur lequel descendit le forgeron. Cf. M. Griaule. *L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes*, p. 117, n. 3.

Mais il visita « les eaux des angles cardinaux » desquelles émane une vapeur qui détermine les saisons et les températures. Puis il étudia « celles des côtés cardinaux » et demanda à Faro leur ruissellement sur la terre. Il les franchit pour les connaître et en instruire les hommes; on dit : « Soumangolo de la création a montré les mares, fleuves, vieilles mares aux gens et aux choses (1). »

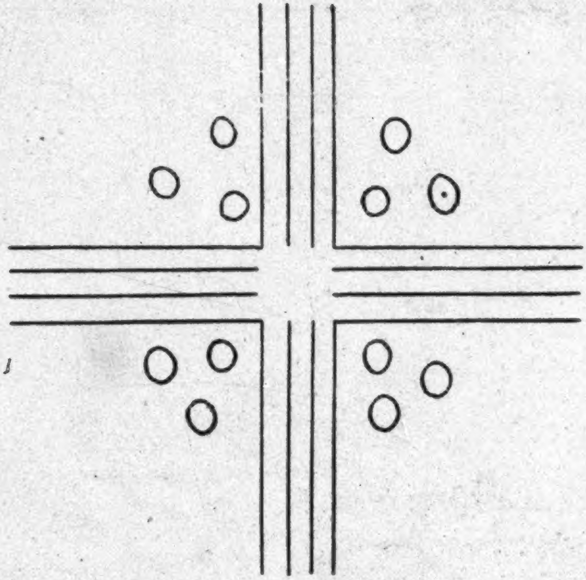

Fig. 4. — Jeu du *sumangolo* symbolisant « l'arrivée des douze eaux futures ».

Le jeu consiste pour le joueur à franchir les trois eaux issues de chacun des quatre côtés cardinaux (2). Le tracé représente à la fois des eaux qui ruisselèrent autrefois sur la terre comme celles qui s'épandront sur le monde quand Faro en donnera l'ordre (fig. 4).

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(1) *dali sumangolo ye ko, ba, ko koro kono ko dyira ma ni fẽw la.*

(2) Cf. fig. 4. La figure est dessinée sur le sol : le carré central représente l'univers et les branches de la croix les eaux qui émanèrent des côtés cardinaux et qui sont divisées dans chaque branche en trois registres. Trois ou quatre cailloux, suivant le sexe du joueur, sont placés dans les angles. Le joueur tourne le dos à la figure et chante : « Le petit homme est sorti de la danse; le petit homme, le mauvais homme est sorti de la danse; un autre homme que celui-ci n'a point dansé; que la difficulté de l'eau cesse *(lyeni bwora do la; lyeni, lyendyugu bwora do la; lye were le do ke nin kelenko; dyi geleya ka ta)*. Puis il nomme les trois registres des eaux de la branche de la croix tandis qu'un partenaire les désigne successivement du doigt, en disant : « franchir la mare » *(ko like sumangolo)*, « franchir le fleuve » *(ba like sumangolo)*, « la descente de Soumangolo est finie » *(sumangolo jigi bana)*. Le partenaire retire le caillou immédiatement adjacent à la branche visée et demande : « Est-ce ceci? » *(nin wa?)*. Le joueur doit répondre : « Oui! Soumangolo. » Le jeu est repris de la même façon au

En attendant ce jour, Faro poursuit son œuvre. Selon la spirale empruntée lors de la réorganisation du monde, il se déplace tous les quatre siècles pour inspecter les confins, puis il revient au point central d'où il surveille et régit l'univers.

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point de départ; lorsque l'assistant pose le doigt sur l'emplacement laissé vide, il demande : « Est-ce ceci? ». Le joueur doit répondre : « Non! Soumangolo. » Le second caillou est retiré et, à la même question, le joueur doit alors répondre : « Oui! Soumangolo. » Même chant, même mimique pour aboutir au troisième caillou, qui est enlevé à son tour. Le jeu reprend de la même façon, au même point de départ et on aborde la deuxième branche de la croix. Ceci jusqu'à épuisement des quatre groupes de cailloux placés dans les angles. Le joueur qui a répondu sans se tromper a gagné : il est censé franchir victorieusement « les douze eaux futures ».

Ce jeu a pour effet immédiat de mettre le gagnant dans une atmosphère bénéfique : il augmente ses gains, ses entreprises réussissent. Mais là ne se borne pas son action : il constitue une opération cosmogonique au premier chef. Autrefois on jouait au *sumangolo* pour faire venir la pluie en temps de sécheresse; tout joueur qui le pratique actuellement contribue au fonctionnement actuel de l'univers comme à la réalisation des temps futurs qu'attendent les hommes. Dans certains villages on fête chaque année l'ancêtre Soumangolo en prenant en commun un copieux repas arrosé de bière de mil et en jouant tout le jour au jeu qui porte son nom.

Le *sumangolo* fait partie d'une série de figures, parfois géométriques, qui servent de base à des jeux cosmogoniques de caractère semi-rituel comme celui qui vient d'être décrit ici.

CHAPITRE II

LES REPRÉSENTATIONS

La dualité de *glā*, réalisée dans le microcosme qu'est l'homme par ses deux âmes jumelles *(ni* et *dya)*, se projette dans l'univers sous la forme du couple ciel-terre constitué aux origines par le scindement de l'esprit en deux. Ce couple est représenté par deux puissances surnaturelles, Faro et Pemba, auxquelles s'adressent les principaux cultes des Bambara.

Pemba est à la fois esprit, force et matière. Il est actuellement matérialisé par un bois gravé, symbole du madrier d'où est né autrefois ce qui vit sur la terre, et dont théoriquement chaque famille possède un exemplaire.

Faro, maître du verbe, règne à la fois dans le ciel et dans les eaux qui en sont le reflet terrestre. Au titre de maître du verbe et de réorganisateur de l'univers, de détenteur actuel de la vie, de gardien des âmes, Faro, lumière et vibration, siège dans le septième ciel. Au titre de maître de l'eau, les Bambara le décrivent comme un être vivant, pourvu d'un corps et sujet à des métamorphoses. Il n'en reste pas moins d'ailleurs, pour les initiés, avant tout un esprit supérieur, dégagé des contingences et libre dans l'exercice du pouvoir souverain qui lui a été conféré.

Il est nécessaire, pour bien pénétrer l'esprit de la religion Bambara d'examiner toutes les représentations concernant ces puissances (1).

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(1) Quelques auteurs ont sommairement décrit Faro, notamment L. TAUXIER dans la *Religion bambara* (p. 142 à 145) où il cite à ce sujet Mgr Bazin et l'abbé Henry. Ces auteurs n'ont pas décelé le rôle fondamental de cette puissance ni son aire d'extension.

Il convient de rapprocher de ces représentations celles qui ont été observées au Soudan par les missions Griaule; le Nommo des Dogon, le Domfé des Kouroumba, Faro ou Yégou des Boso et qui ont été publiées dans les ouvrages ou articles suivants :

M. GRIAULE. *Masques Dogon*, *Le Domfé des Kouroumba*, Journal de la

PEMBA.

Issu de la vibration primordiale, Pemba fut à l'origine un « globule », *kuru*, qui tourbillonna pour créer la terre. Alors qu'il était tourbillon, une molécule s'en détacha et devint une graine qui, sur terre, germa et donna l'*Acacia albida*. Celui-ci grandit, se dessécha, tomba et il ne resta bientôt plus de lui qu'un billot nommé *pembele*. Ayant créé de sa propre substance un être femelle, Mousso Koroni, il engendra avec elle tout ce qui vit sur terre, à l'exception des êtres humains nés de Faro. Mais à la suite des désordres créés par Mousso Koroni, Pemba dut abandonner le pouvoir et son verbe devint la propriété de Faro chargé de la réorganisation de l'univers.

Pemba fut connu des hommes qui se soumirent à lui sur terre avant de prendre conscience de Faro resté secrètement dans les cieux (1). Ils le révérèrent comme leur dieu et le nommèrent Ngala Pemba, dieu Pemba, ou Koni, pour rappeler son origine et la stupeur provoquée par la création (2).

Le pembele.

Actuellement, Pemba est représenté chez les chefs religieux et les chefs de famille par un billot nommé *pembele*, image du madrier initial (3).

Cet objet est creusé en son centre d'une cavité dite *sele dê* rappelant celle qui est ménagée au fond de la tombe et où est placé le cadavre (4). Sur cette cavité sont gravés trois fois 22 traits obliques; au-dessous d'elle, deux groupes de sept traits séparés en 3 et 4 dans la partie gauche, et 4 et 3 dans la partie

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Société des Africanistes, t. XI, 1941, p. 7 à 20. D. PAULME. *Organisation Sociale des Dogon*. S. DE GANAY. *Les Devises des Dogon; Le Binou Yébéné*. G. DIETERLEN. *Les Ames des Dogon ; Notes sur le Génie des Eaux chez les Boso*, Journal de la Société des Africanistes, t. XII, 1942, p. 149 à 155. G. DIETERLEN et S. DE GANAY. *Le Génie des Eaux chez les Dogon*. M. GRIAULE. *Dieu d'eau*. Mme B. APPIA a également publié des observations intéressantes dans *Note sur le Génie des Eaux en Guinée*, Journal de la Société des Africanistes, t. XIV, 1944, p. 33 à 42.

(1) On dit : « Faro est chose du ciel d'en haut; si l'on dit Pemba c'est parce qu'on l'a vu sur terre » *(faro ye sana fè ye; a fo pemba ye a ka yeli ye dugu la)*.

(2) Les noms secrets de Pemba sont innombrables.

(3) Le symbolisme du *pembele* résumé ci-après a été étudié par S. DE GANAY dans *Aspect de mythologie et de symbolique bambara*.

(4) Cf. p. 193.

droite. Les 22 stries de gauche représentent Pemba créateur, les 22 stries de droite, la transmission de son verbe et de ses pouvoirs au Faro, les 22 du centre « sont le témoignage de la prescience qu'il avait de toutes choses (1) » et l'image des grands travaux qu'il fit à l'aube de la création.

Les deux groupes de 7 stries représentent Pemba, 3 et Mousso Koroni, 4, pour rappeler que Pemba, à l'origine androgyne, « s'est distingué de sa partie féminine afin que ses deux principes puissent s'unir à nouveau comme mâle et femelle pour produire les choses vivantes (2) ».

Le madrier est, de plus, gravé à chaque extrémité de 22 encoches qui sont, à gauche, Pemba et ses paroles, à droite, toutes les paroles confiées aux génies et qui sont encore ignorées des humains.

L'objet dans son ensemble est l'image de l'univers : sa face supérieure, qui supporte les stries, est le ciel; sa face inférieure, la terre; les quatre côtés, les quatre directions de l'espace. Il est aussi la première tombe creusée pour les ancêtres; le *sele dè* concentre « les énergies latentes et agissantes ». C'est là que « le *pembele* se révèle comme pensée en déploiement constant qui, à partir de sa propre substance, s'étire dans le temps pour se confier finalement à Faro sous forme de parole, verbe (3). »

Enfin, le *pembele* résume le mythe de création et d'organisation du monde par les séries de 22 traits dont il est orné, par la dualité exprimée dans la double gravure de 7 stries, par sa forme, qui rappelle celle du madrier primordial, générateur de la vie sur la terre, par le bois dont il est fait qui est celui du *balanza*, autrefois maître de la création.

Tous ces caractères justifient le nom de Ngala, Dieu, qui est donné au *pembele* car il possède en outre toute la puissance et toute la force *(nyama)* de la divinité qu'il représente (4).

Le *pembele* est un autel, garant de la prospérité, de la vie, du patrimoine spirituel et matériel du groupe auquel il appartient. Il en existe différents exemplaires : ceux des familles *stricto sensu*, sur lesquels est découpée la viande consommée par la maisonnée; ceux des sanctuaires qui doivent être obligatoirement marqués des stries symboliques. La planchette utilisée pour l'opération de la circoncision porte le même nom; elle rappelle la mutilation de Mousso Koroni sur le *pembele* et l'origine de l'ablation du prépuce et du clitoris chez les humains (1).

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(1) Cf. S. de Ganay. *Aspect de mythologie et de symbolique bambara*, p. 192.

(2) Cf. S. de Ganay, *loc. cit.*, p. 195.

(3) Cf. S. de Ganay, *loc. cit.*, p. 191.

(4) Cette force est particulièrement active aux angles du madrier et prend alors le nom de *boy nyama*, « *nyama* venimeux ».

Le rôle de Pemba, comme promoteur de la force, *nyama*, qui anime tous les êtres et comme hypostase de la terre est illustré par l'usage rituel que font les Bambara du *pembele* qui le représente.

Après chaque décès, le chef de famille recueille la force, *nyama* qui émane du cadavre et la confie au *pembele* « qui le conserve jusqu'à ce que, dans la parenté, survienne une naissance ». Un rite parallèle octroie au nouveau-né la force de l'ascendant défunt (2).

Au moment des cérémonies se rapportant au grand *pembele* « tous les assistants apportent un petit morceau de viande qui, après avoir été mis sur le madrier, est mangé cru afin que le feu ne détruise pas le *nyama* bienfaisant émané de la divinité elle-même (3) ».

Enfin « dans les cas où il est nécessaire d'obtenir un maximum de *nyama* d'infimes parcelles de bois sont prélevées sur les coins du madrier, là où il concentre sa force... Or, si l'on use de lui abusivement, on diminue d'autant le *nyama* de la terre. On comprend ainsi qu'il soit nécessaire que la force du grand *pembele* soit conservée intacte puisqu'il représente le monde. Aucun rite le concernant n'est célébré par l'homme qui en a la responsabilité hors de la présence du conseil des vieillards. Ses quatre coins ne peuvent être raclés que dans des circonstances qui en valent la peine car, dit l'informateur, le dieu *pembele* ne peut tolérer qu'on les use pour des futilités. Au fur et à mesure que diminuent les coins et par conséquent le *nyama* contenu dans ces coins, il use la terre. Et si la terre perdait son *nyama*, tout serait vidé de sa substance : le mil pousserait mais ses épis ne contiendraient plus de grains... les femmes n'auraient plus d'enfants, n'ayant plus de *nyama*. Les gens ne pourraient plus lutter, privés de forces... La terre subsisterait, mais stérile (4) ».

Le balanza.

L'arbre *balanza*, avatar végétal de Pemba, vaincu par Faro, n'est plus révéré par les hommes. Mais l'attitude des Bambara à son égard et certains gestes à caractères rituels, dont il est parfois l'objet, rappellent le temps où, après avoir étendu sa domination sur la création, il introduisit la mort dans le genre humain.

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(1) Cf. p. 18.
(2) Cf. p. 177.
(3) S. de Ganay, *loc. cit.*, p. 199.
(4) S. de Ganay, *loc. cit.*, p. 200.

Dans certaines agglomérations la croyance veut que celui qui se repose à son ombre meure, l'arbre ayant pris son *dya*. Ailleurs, malgré l'avis des hommes qui leur en ont expliqué l'inutilité, les femmes lui font encore des offrandes d'huile de karité : elles se couchent à son pied, simulent la maladie, l'agonie, puis la mort, en souvenir des événements douloureux qui les apportèrent aux hommes; enfin, elles font toucher au sol successivement chacune de leur quatre articulations principales en signe de soumission, avant d'enduire le tronc de l'huile qu'elles ont apportée. Ailleurs encore, pour rappeler qu'autrefois les accouchements avaient lieu près de l'arbre, les femmes enceintes lui sont présentées par leurs maris pour faciliter la parturition.

Les champs qui entourent les agglomérations de la région de Ségou sont couverts d'une grande quantité de *balanza*. La devise de Ségou, relatant l'histoire de la ville, énumère les noms des arbres plantés lors de sa fondation. Cette devise mentionne également *kokuruni* (litt. : petit dos voûté), *balanza* de Banankoroni (pl. I, a) qui est considéré comme l'ancêtre fondateur transformé en arbre. Les vieillards du village viennent chaque année appuyer leur dos sur le tronc et les placenta des accouchées y sont suspendus (1).

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(1) Les plantations de *balanza* autour des agglomérations bambara ont attiré l'attention des botanistes. M. G. ROBERTY, dans *Les Associations végétales de la vallée moyenne du Niger* a étudié leur rôle agricole : « Le Dumossaeptum arboreitoides, culture sous les *balanzas*. Paysage artificiel bien défini. Arbres perdant leurs feuilles à la saison des pluies, les reprenant en saison sèche, épineux, régulièrement espacés mais de plantation toujours très ancienne. L'*Acacia albida* perd ses feuilles en juin et les reprend en décembre; ainsi fournit-il de l'ombrage en saison sèche et de l'humus au début de la saison des pluies. Le Dumosaeptum lui doit ses villages permanents... La date de l'arrivée au Soudan occidental de cet arbre si utile reste entourée de mystère ainsi que le mode et la date de sa vulgarisation au-dessus des champs cultivés. Il est probable que l'*Acacia albida* ait son berceau en Afrique orientale, quelque part au sud de l'Équateur. Comment est-il venu jusqu'en pays bambara sans perdre le rythme austral de son cycle saisonnier? Quel sultan ou quel agronome de génie a imposé sa multiplication autour des villages bambara? Ces questions restent pour l'heure sans réponses. Il semble démontré par les récits des premiers conquérants européens que de nombreux « tatas », ces énormes citadelles de boue rougeâtre, étaient enclos dans des haies vives de *balanzas* aux troncs jointifs... Il est probable que l'utilisation militaire a partout précédé l'utilisation agricole... Sur celle-ci il ne nous a jamais été fourni le moindre éclaircissement... Nous connaissons assez bien les coutumes agricoles bambaras, aucune ne prévoit qu'il faille multiplier les balanza, les espacer régulièrement dans les cultures, les protéger des chèvres; or, les *balanzas* sont d'âge, de développement et de densité convenables dans la quasi-totalité des cas observés par nous. Il y a là pour un jeune ethnographe doublé d'un naturaliste un bien beau sujet de thèse » (p. 96 et 97).

Les mythes des Bambara répondent aux questions posées par M. Roberty

MOUSSO KORONI.

Mousso Koroni est la terre impure; elle symbolise tout ce qui s'oppose à la lumière : obscurité, nuit, sorcellerie. Elle est aussi l'image de la rébellion, du désordre, de l'impureté et Pemba la poursuivit vainement pour tenter de reprendre ce qu'il lui avait donné : les « paroles » qu'elle avait reçues furent divulguées aux hommes malgré lui.

Si aucun culte ne lui est rendu, aucun sacrifice offert, son nom est cité dans diverses cérémonies et mentionné dans des chants; ses actes sont rappelés par certains gestes des rites.

D'autre part elle est à l'origine de la séparation des sexes réalisée dans le corps humain par l'ablation du prépuce et du clitoris qu'elle pratiqua, après sa trahison sur ceux qu'elle rencontrait. Elle les mettait ainsi dans l'état de rupture où elle se trouvait elle-même, principe femelle, vis-à-vis de Pemba, principe mâle. De plus elle est présente en tout être humain sous la forme d'une force néfaste, le *wanzo*, qu'elle avait communiquée à tous ceux qu'elle approchait, et dont chacun doit être débarrassé par les moyens qu'elle a elle-même instaurés; la circoncision et l'excision (1).

Elle est aussi à l'origine de certaines techniques agricoles qu'elle enseigna aux hommes et chaque année, dans certains villages, elle est représentée poursuivant son périple nocturne, au moment où l'on rentre le grain battu. Une femme âgée, vêtue de haillons les pieds chaussés de sandales dépareillées et portant des calebasses cassées bat la campagne en simulant la folie : elle emprunte l'itinéraire mythique d'ouest au sud et d'est au nord, puis vient s'asseoir près des greniers (2).

Ce sont également ses travaux agricoles et ses allées et venues misérables qui sont reproduits dans un rite enfantin exécuté de nuit pendant les cultures. Un joueur, le *gukuri* ou *danloni* (litt. : petit bossu) portant sandales en guise d'oreilles, bosse au bas du dos, queue d'étoffe nouée aux reins, va quêter de porte en porte, suivi de tous les incirconcis de son quartier. Il fait mine de cultiver et de piler le grain tandis que ses compagnons psalmodient des chants rappelant les actes mythiques de Mousso Koroni. La tournée accomplie et les cadeaux de mil réunis, le figurant, poursuivi par tous les autres, s'enfuit et disparaît sous les huées.

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(1) Cf. p. 64.

(2) Cependant les toutes premières techniques agricoles dites *fyɛ ti* (litt. : culture du vent) sont rappelées, notamment chez les Bozo, par les semailles à la volée d'un certain nombre de graminées sauvages, puis de céréales, dans des champs dont la récolte est offerte à Faro. Des rites analogues sont célébrés dans certains villages bambara. Les techniques enseignées par Mousso Koroni ont suivi celles « du vent » et précédé celle de la culture du mil.

Sur quelques rites agraires des Bozo, cf. G. DIETERLEN. *L'Agriculture rituelle des Bozo*, Journal de la Société des Africanistes. t. XX, 1950.

Mais si cette parodie de culture, avec ses rites et ses chants rappelle les phases de la vie désordonnée de Mousso Koroni, les travaux agricoles dont elle fut l'instigatrice avant le temps sont eux, l'expression éminente de la réparation des désordres dont elle fut la cause. Chaque coup de houe donné par un cultivateur est une plaie infligée à la terre impure, donc à Mousso Koroni; la culture rituelle du mil, noble activité à laquelle doit s'adonner tout Bambara de race, institution que Faro enseigna en son temps, constitue une purification et une remise en ordre du sol (1).

FARO.

Formes de Faro.

Faro fut une « voix » avant d'être réalisé dans un corps. Au titre de maître du verbe réorganisateur de l'univers, il est figuré par une spirale, *munu*, dont il occupe constamment le point d'origine et qui est située au centre des points cardinaux (2). Le déroulement vibratoire de la spirale représente « le déplacement du Faro pour la réalisation de toutes choses dans l'univers ».

Cette image est matérialisée par un couvre-chef de vannerie, *gugu*, à huit spires. Les brins de paille formant les rayons qui maintiennent la spirale symbolisent la vibration; les intervalles, *yugunye*, œil du *yugu*, qui les séparent sont les rayons lumineux, la spirale étant celle du mouvement diurne du soleil « qui se déroule jusqu'au soir ». La régularité des rayons symbolise l'ordre et le classement des êtres et des choses par Faro. L'extrémité des brins de paille formant les spires doit rester libre : elle exprime l'extension infinie du domaine et du pouvoir de Faro. Le chapeau est également un masque « qui dissimule le visage invisible de Faro et au travers duquel il surveille le monde (1) ».

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(1) *dugukolo be be dyuruma*, « toute la terre est impure ». Mais cette impureté ne s'étend qu'à la terre vierge et l'on dit également; *dyurumu be be dugukolo ka forow sani nyala do*, « toute la terre est impure sauf les champs cultivés ». Le mot *dugukolo* (litt. : os de la terre) désigne aussi bien la terre dans son ensemble que la terre en temps que matière. Les mêmes notions sur l'impureté de la terre ont cours chez les Dogon; cf. M. GRIAULE. *Dieu d'eau*, p. 94.

(2) Ce « point central » qui est également le firmament est dit par les Bambara *sa tyema kolo*, litt. : os du milieu du ciel.

La coiffure *yugu* était autrefois réservée au roi qui la portait dissimulée sous un turban. Certains vieillards méritants pouvaient aussi la détenir. Les rites de fabrication, du port de ce couvre-chef, témoignaient de l'importance qui lui était attribuée. En particulier, lorsqu'un vieillard était soupçonné d'une grave faute on perçait son chapeau de quatre trous représentant les points cardinaux puis on l'en coiffait, le soumettant ainsi au jugement de Faro : s'il était coupable, il mourait.

Sous sa forme de génie aquatique, Faro est considéré comme appartenant à la race blanche et son corps est composé mi-partie, de chair d'albinos et mi-partie de cuivre (pl. I, c).

Un mythe relate la formation de son être physique.

Lorsqu'il fit descendre sur terre les eaux ruisselantes, il se manifesta longtemps seulement par sa voix. Il n'avait point de corps et comme il lui fallait une matière propice à son achèvement, il attendait son heure, dans les eaux de la mer.

Le génie ailé Téliko au corps d'albinos, voulut un jour, dans son orgueil et sa jalousie, franchir le monde pour le connaître et le dominer. Faro, averti par le poisson-chien, décida de s'emparer du corps de son ennemi pour compléter le sien. L'albinos, qui volait toujours, se nourrissait de sa propre substance. Il rongea sa chair et ses os furent bientôt mis à nu; la moelle sortit. Elle se transformait en cuivre rouge qui tombait dans la mer et alimentait Faro.

Alors qu'il descendait au ras de l'eau le poisson-chien qui le guettait chanta pour l'attirer. L'albinos, comprenant le danger, remonta au plus haut des cieux pour tenter de poursuivre son vol et d'arriver aux confins. Mais il perdit rapidement ses forces et son *dya* étant tombé dans les eaux, son corps fut saisi par Faro qui, abandonnant le sexe au poisson-chien, compléta son être physique : Sa tête et son tronc furent faits de chair d'albinos; sa queue fut de cuivre ainsi que ses seins « organes essentiels, alimentant et vivifiant le monde ».

La tête de Faro est comparable à celle d'une femme blanche : ses yeux sont noirs et perçants, ses cheveux sont noirs, lisses et longs comme les crins d'une queue de cheval.

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(1) On confectionne actuellement un panier de dimensions sensiblement supérieures qui est utilisé par les femmes (cf. pl. I, b).

Ses oreilles forment deux trous sans pavillon mais abrités par deux nageoires. Deux colliers de cuivre et d'or, suspendus à son cou constituent des résonateurs qui lui permettent d'entendre tous les sons et toutes les paroles : celui de cuivre rapporte les propos de peu d'importance; celui d'or, les conversations secrètes et les paroles puissantes. Tout ce que recueillent les résonateurs est déposé par Faro dans ses nageoires, qui sont aussi le miroir où se reflète ce qu'ont vu ses yeux, le bon comme le mauvais. Il regarde, ferme les yeux, tire la langue : les images pénètrent dans ses nageoires et s'ordonnent sous l'effet des mouvements réguliers de sa queue. Ainsi, images et sons s'inscrivent chronologiquement et peuvent à chaque moment être remis devant lui « comme une fiche sortie d'un fichier ». Il sait donc quel profit il pourra tirer des choses et des événements.

Comme ses mains, dont la droite est mâle et l'autre femelle, l'extrémité de sa queue est palmée. Sans sexe apparent, la prééminence de la forme féminine qui lui est communément reconnue rappelle qu'il se féconda lui-même pour donner naissance à deux jumelles lors du premier ruissellement de l'eau sur la terre.

Cet aspect qui est lié au problème de l'origine de Faro a fait dans toutes les populations l'objet de légendes et de contes qui, s'ils ont attiré l'attention de l'érudition, présentent un grave inconvénient. Ils sont des versions tronquées, anecdotiques et souvent enfantines de mythes considérables, parfaitement construits et qui sont l'expression d'un dogme.

Deux exemples, l'un peul, l'autre touareg sont donnés ici de ces légendes dont l'intérêt à nos yeux n'est que d'apporter des indications pour la recherche des mythes formant l'armature des représentations.

1° Alors que le Niger n'était encore qu'une rivière étroite et profonde une femme peule enceinte demanda le passage à des pêcheurs bozo qui faisaient traverser ceux qui les en priaient. Ils commencèrent par refuser, prétextant sa grossesse. Comme elle insistait, ils la prirent dans leur pirogue, la déposèrent sur l'autre rive et s'éloignèrent.

Aussitôt qu'elle fut à terre, elle fut prise des douleurs de l'accouchement. L'eau du fleuve tarit à l'endroit où elle était profonde. Une voix en sortit conseillant à la femme de venir enfanter là. Elle descendit dans l'excavation après avoir laissé ses vêtements sur le bord.

De son sexe sortirent d'abord du lait, du miel, des pierres précieuses *(lulu)* qui se déposèrent sur le lait et le miel comme sur une natte. La femme se tordait de douleur : l'enfant vint enfin, les pieds devant et tomba sur les pierres. Ses mains et ses pieds étaient palmés.

L'eau réapparaissant, elle tenta, mais en vain de s'enfuir. Son mari, accouru au bord du fleuve et qui avait trouvé ses vêtements, la vit trois fois apparaître tenant l'enfant au-dessus des eaux; puis elle disparut entraînée par le flot. Tous deux devinrent des génies Faro.

2° Le village de Siyango, situé à une quinzaine de kilomètres de Nyono, possède un puits naturel très profond et intarissable, dit *ala kolo faro*, Faro du puits de Dieu « ou *Mbata dyi* » « eau de *Mbata* » dont nul ne boit l'eau. Au début de la création une femme nommée *Mbata* vivait seule et sans eau. Elle accoucha de deux jumeaux. Epuisée et mourant de soif, elle sortit de la caverne et s'étant rendue au bord du sable elle pria, demandant à Dieu de mourir, si l'eau lui était refusée. Un génie lui apparut et lui dit : « Dieu te confiera toutes les eaux; mais il va d'abord préparer ta demeure. » Une excavation s'étant produite et s'étant remplie d'eau, la femme y pénétra et fut transformée en Faro. Elle fit alors entrer ses deux enfants dont l'un devint un génie femelle et l'autre un génie mâle.

L'excavation se prolongeait sous terre par une sorte de tunnel et Mbata l'ayant suivi ressortit avec les eaux en un point qui donna naissance au Niger.

L'eau du puits fut bientôt interdite aux êtres humains car si quelqu'un s'y mirait, Mbata prenait son ombre et le faisait tomber. Le cadavre, empruntant le chemin souterrain, sortait dans le fleuve. Ceux qui se jetaient dans l'eau devenaient parfois eux aussi des Faro.

Or Mbata reprit un jour forme humaine et se rendit au marché où elle acheta des tomates. Elle demanda à ceux qu'elle rencontrait ce qu'ils faisaient pour le génie propriétaire de l'eau dont ils avaient tant besoin; elle leur conseilla de lui offrir du cuivre et de l'or et d'égorger au puits des béliers blancs.

Le lendemain, les villageois, pour témoigner de leur reconnaissance envers Faro se rendirent au bord au son des tambours et sacrifièrent l'animal. L'eau enfla, bouillonna et forma un ruisseau qui coule actuellement encore jusqu'au Niger.

La constitution du corps de Faro détermine le comportement des hommes dans les rites célébrés à son bénéfice. Alors que le sang, les ~~tomates~~, la bouillie crue de céréales, les gâteaux cuits, sont consommés par lui et rendus aux donateurs sous forme de bienfaits matériels (enfants, mil, pluie) ou spirituels (conservation des âmes des vivants et des morts) le contenu de choix des sacrifices ou offrandes, l'albinos et le cuivre sont réservés au génie, contribuent à augmenter ses forces, à stimuler son action.

Il les absorbe pour lui-même; aussi dit-on que « le cuivre et l'albinos sont les privilèges sacrificiels de Faro ».

Manifestations de Faro.

Dans le ciel, toutes les manifestations atmosphériques sont la démonstration de la présence et du pouvoir de Faro. La pluie, le tonnerre, le grain, la grêle, l'arc-en-ciel témoignent de son action. La foudre qui éclate dans le *koble kaba* est une arme, une petite hache *(sempere ni* ou *dyele dĕ čini)* qu'il lance du haut du ciel. Le foudroiement est la preuve de son action vengeresse : dans l'arbre, elle atteint le *gecko (ala jugu)* animal néfaste qui, lorsqu'il vit dans les maisons près du foyer, est censé attiser le feu des incendies; dans l'homme elle punit la rupture d'interdit. Les haches de pierre que l'on trouve au point de chute sont recueillies et conservées dans les sanctuaires des autels de pluie pour être utilisées en cas de sécheresse ou au cours des rites saisonniers. On les dépose aussi dans les semences pour que leurs forces, se communiquant aux graines, favorisent la germination.

Sur terre, conçu comme un être unique dont le siège principal est le Niger, Faro a le don d'ubiquité. Pratiquement, les Bambara pensent qu'un génie hante chaque torrent, mare ou puits, chaque calebasse d'eau, chaque goutte de rosée : ils le nomment *dyi ligi*, « maître de l'eau ».

Il prend des formes multiples. Gazelle, on le voit en brousse se nourrir de tomates et d'oignons sauvages. Bélier à toison d'or et porteur d'ornements d'oreilles il circule souterrainement le long des filons aurifères. Femme jeune et séduisante il se rend dans les villages pour séduire les garçons et les entraîner avec lui. Il est la tête du torrent temporaire qui dévale après la pluie; il est le bouillonnement et l'enflement des courants. On le reconnaît dans la vapeur bleutée qui monte au-dessus des mares. Un ruisseau qui s'assèche est signe de sa colère.

Lieux de Faro.

Aux origines, les eaux qui, venues des « sources centrales du ciel », ruisselèrent sur la terre, étaient pures, claires, bénéfiques et « aisées ». Mais à la suite de la trahison de Mousso Koroni et des êtres qui l'écoutèrent, l'impureté se communiqua à la terre :

l'eau qui la recouvrait se troubla, changea de couleur, et devint « difficile ». Elle tarit ou, au contraire, inonda les pays, noyant les êtres vivants.

Actuellement seule l'eau de pluie ruisselante a conservé son caractère, notamment celle de la première pluie qui tombe au début de l'hivernage. Considérée comme purificatrice par excellence, elle est dite *dane sandyi* « eau qui ensemence », car elle apporte leur âme, *ni*, aux céréales; la terre, stérile et « vide », devient pleine et féconde, les plantes renaissent, les animaux et les insectes se reproduisent (1).

Les eaux terrestres, fief de Faro, sont classées en sept domaines distincts, étagés, qui correspondent aux sept parties du ciel et de la terre.

La première, *dyi woyo* « eau bouillonnante » est celle de la surface : elle bouillonne quand le Faro se manifeste et déborde dans les inondations, tête des torrents grossissants sous l'orage. C'est aussi l'eau lustrale pour celui qui vient s'y laver dans un but de purification; c'est elle que l'on puise pour boire.

La seconde, *dyi ble*, « eau rouge », est le cuivre de Faro. Reflet du *koblenkaba* « ciel rouge », elle est comme lui le siège des activités guerrières ou punitives du génie. Eau de colère et d'action vengeresse, il y noie les coupables; par elle il atteint dans leur corps et leur santé ceux qui ne reconnaissent pas son règne.

Dans le *dyi fi* « eau noire », Faro séjourne de préférence : il y conserve ses secrets. C'est à elle que l'on s'adresse pour obtenir une grâce. C'est du *dyi fi* que sortiront les douze eaux futures.

Dans le *dyi sumane* « eau froide », où vivent les poissons, règnent le calme et la félicité. Les *dya* des êtres terrestres y sont conservés.

Si c'est dans le *dyi ble* que Faro noie ceux qu'ils châtient, c'est dans le *madũ* (litt. : personne, manger) que pourrissent leurs corps, ou qu'ils sont la proie des poissons.

La sixième catégorie d'eau, *kosira* (litt. : chose de peur) est une geôle : il y place momentanément tout ce qu'il tient sous sa domination.

La septième eau, *dyi wolõfla*, correspond au septième ciel.

Dans le Niger, les lieux habités par Faro portent le nom général de *faro tyin*. Ce sont le plus souvent des dépressions profondes bien connues des riverains, notamment des Bozo;

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(1) D'un être généreux et bon, on dit qu'il est comme cette première pluie. On le dit aussi de l'esprit : « l'esprit [est bon comme] la première pluie » (*miri dane sandyi*).

parfois une pierre consacrée, placée sur la rive, reçoit les sacrifices offerts au génie.

Le plus célèbre est le lieu dit Souko situé en amont de Koulikoro près du village de Kayo. Le génie du lieu a engendré tous ceux qui vivent actuellement dans le fleuve. Il est révéré à ce titre par tous les pêcheurs Bozo et Somono qui envoyaient autrefois des délégations au sacrifice annuel exécuté à la saison sèche.

Le Faro de Ségou habite le Faka, trou profond situé non loin de la rive droite, face à la ville. La légende veut que le Faka se prolonge de tunnels dont l'un fait communiquer le fleuve avec le Bani, dont l'autre débouche à Dya, et qui furent empruntés par les fondateurs de l'agglomération aux temps mythiques. Le Faka est placé sous la protection d'un crocodile auquel les habitants offraient chaque année des victimes; au fond du trou se tient un gros *polyo* aveugle et sans écailles que les pêcheurs s'ils le prennent dans leurs filets remettent toujours à l'eau « car il est le portier de Faro ». Autrefois des points noirs en nombre égal à ceux des habitants de Ségou, ainsi qu'une représentation de Faro étaient tracés sur une dalle visible aux plus basses eaux. A cette occasion un albinos était égorgé et les prémices de la récolte offerts au génie.

Le jour du marché de la ville une calebasse pleine d'eau puisée au fleuve, dite *fle ndinye faro*, est placée non loin de la rive où viennent aborder les pirogues. Boire une gorgée de cette eau équivaut à sacrifier au génie. Le buveur donne une aumône de cauris au mendiant qui a puisé, car « jamais l'eau [de Faro] ne se vend ni ne s'achète (1) ».

A Sama le *faro tyin* est une sorte de couloir naturel situé dans des rochers qui bordent et surplombent la rive gauche du fleuve. Les mange-mil qui y nichent, en s'envolant, préviennent de la sainteté du lieu les piroguiers qui s'arrêtent alors pour prier. Ils jettent en passant une offrande et ceux qui ont rompu un interdit se purifient en se lavant. Chacun montre au génie ce qu'il transporte avec lui. Deux arbres voisins du lieu, dits *faro sõndyiri* « arbres du sacrifice de Faro » servent à attacher au crépuscule les bœufs blancs qui seront jetés vivants le lendemain au fleuve, avec de la bouillie de mil et des noix de cola. Au fond du passage, sur une paroi assez lisse, la représentation de Faro décrite plus haut était exécutée chaque année au cours de la cérémonie célébrée par la société du Komo.

(1) *ma ti dyi fere ma ti dyi sã*. Cf. pl. II, b.

Faro hante également les mares et les puits. Au village de Nango un puits naturel fut révélé à un chasseur par un bélier blanc sortant d'un épais fourré. L'agglomération fut construite après la découverte du trou d'eau où les habitants rendent un culte au génie.

Au village de Siyango l'eau du puits, où réside Faro, est interdite mais le lieu est le siège de toutes les cérémonies religieuses qui intéressent les habitants du village. Les nouveau-nés y sont présentés, les décès et les mariages annoncés. Les malades sont traités par l'eau du puits qu'on leur fait boire et avec laquelle ils procèdent à des ablutions. Chacun offre annuellement un animal de son troupeau qui est jeté vivant dans l'excavation. Enfin les condamnés à mort étaient exécutés par noyade au même endroit.

Auxiliaires de Faro.

Dans les ciels, l'espace, la terre, sur les arbres et dans les rochers des montagnes, Faro a placé des génies, ses représentants qui veillent à la bonne marche des choses. De plus, il est accompagné d'auxiliaires qui participent à ses travaux.

Le plus important est son « secrétaire », le *bolokuruni*, forgeron manchot de race noire, qui vint vivre auprès de lui après avoir perdu l'usage de ses mains.

Ce forgeron vivait sur la terre dans un temps où les artisans, ignorant l'usage des tenailles, saisissaient le fer rouge à pleine main pour le présenter sur l'enclume. Parvenu à un âge avancé, celui qui devait devenir le compagnon de Faro et qui pratiquait encore son art, eut un jour les deux poignets brisés par le marteau d'un apprenti maladroit. Fou de douleur, il courut au fleuve et s'y jeta pour calmer sa souffrance. Faro, voyant que, dans son malheur, il avait eu recours à lui, en eut pitié et le garda près de lui. Son corps ne fut jamais retrouvé et un devin apprit à ses proches le sort heureux du disparu.

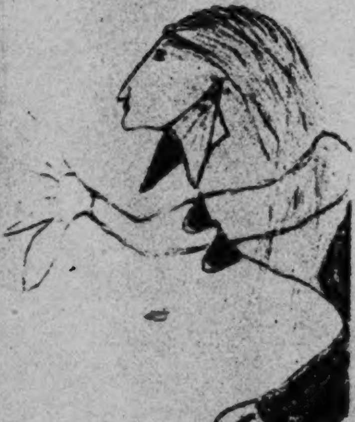
Le *bolokuruni* accompagne Faro et le seconde dans son incessant travail : c'est lui qui consulte le registre des nageoires sur lesquelles tout s'inscrit. « L'image demandée est renvoyée des nageoires dans la pupille du génie que le forgeron regarde. » Reflétée dans l'œil du serviteur, l'image est utilisée par lui selon les ordres qu'il reçoit. C'est ainsi qu'il vérifie chaque jour le compte des créatures vivantes et mortes.

a) L'*Acacia albida* dit *kokuruni* (Banankoroni).

premier plan, paniers en paille spiralée
dits *yugu* (Marché de Ségou).

PLANCHE I

c) Dessin représentant Faro (Sama).



[Facing p. 48]

Parmi les animaux, nombreux sont les auxiliaires du génie. Sa messagère aérienne est l'hirondelle qui ne se pose jamais sur la terre impure et dont les ailes, représentées sur le bonnet des anciens, symbolisent les paroles qu'elle transporte. Le dard du scorpion est l'arme donnée par le Faro aux jumelles primitives : quiconque attaque ou blesse un jumeau est piqué par cet insecte. Le crocodile est l'exécuteur de ses hautes œuvres; il tue les coupables en rupture d'interdit ou chasse des bords du fleuve les indésirables. Le poisson sans écailles dit *kokoni* dirigea le premier ruissellement sur la terre (1). Le *ineni* (2) constitue « l'ordure » de Faro que certains sont chargés de balayer (3). Le minuscule *miri* (4), « mère des poissons », est considéré comme le formateur et le surveillant de tous les poissons. On associe son nom à toutes les prières qui sont récitées sur les eaux. Le *dodo* (5) est le messager de Faro dans les eaux et transmet ses ordres et ses directives; le *polyo* (6) enfin sert de portier et contrôle ceux qui veulent pénétrer dans le domaine du génie.

Certaines plantes sont en rapports permanents avec lui. Le *yayale* (7) « l'herbe de Faro », poussa sur le tertre où naquirent les jumelles mythiques. La tomate, *ngoyo* (8), est assimilée au sang : elle porte en germe l'embryon car ses grains sont multiples de sept, chiffre de la gémelléité. C'est par elle que le Faro féconde les femmes car elle possède comme les humains et les animaux un *ni* et un *dya*. Quand elle fleurit double, les deux tomates jumelles sont données aux femmes afin qu'elles accouchent de jumeaux. Si le fruit est unique sur sa tige, on le fend en deux pour le cuire et le manger, ce geste ayant pour but de le séparer symboliquement de son *dya* qu'on renvoie ainsi à Faro (9).

Dans chaque village on cultive un ou plusieurs petits champs de tomates, dits « champs de Faro » ou « champs des jumeaux » : les fruits sont réservés au culte du génie (10).

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(1) Cf. p. 14.

(2) *Alestes nigrilineatus.*

(3) Les ordures ont leur emploi dans la vie religieuse. Cf. p. 201.

(4) *Micralestes acutidens.*

(5) *Tétrodon fahaka.*

(6) Le *polyo fi* est *l'Herterobranchus longifilis,* le *polyo ble* est *l'Heterobranchus bidorsalis.*

(7) *Andropogon (Hyparrhenia) hirtus.*

(8) *Lycopersicum cerasiforme,* tomate indigène (pl. II, a).

(9) On ne cuit que les végétaux dont on ne tient pas à conserver les principes spirituels, car « cuire c'est briser l'âme ».

(10) Sur l'emplacement de l'ancien village de Soroba, au bord d'une mare située près de l'agglomération actuelle, on peut observer deux champs de tomates rectangulaires consacrés aux jumeaux, quatre champs carrés consacrés aux jumelles du village. Chaque année, une cérémonie réunit les vil-

a) Les tomates *ngoyo* (Marché de Ségou).

PLANCHE II

b) La calebasse d'eau de Faro (Marché de Ségou).

[Facing p. 49]

Tous les métaux appartiennent à Faro. Les sept principaux sont les suivants : le cuivre rouge (mâle), le cuivre jaune (femelle) l'or, l'argent, le fer-blanc, le fer noir. Le cuivre vient du cinquième ciel *(koblenkaba) :* il descend à chaque coup de foudre et, avec les « pierres de tonnerre », pénètre dans le sol. Il fut découvert par un devin au fond d'une mare tarie par rupture d'interdit. Du fait de son origine céleste le cuivre représente « les sons du Faro » : ceux-ci s'enroulent autour des boucles spiralées de ce métal que chacun porte aux oreilles et pénètrent dans les tympans, permettant ainsi d'entendre les paroles. L'or joue un rôle dans la confection de certains autels *(boli)* auxquels il confère force et stabilité.

Les sacrifices exécutés avec ou sur le cuivre ou l'or ont un effet contraignant sur le génie car ils sont de même essence que lui.

Nulle femme ne traverse le Niger, portant des bijoux de cuivre ou d'or sans ouvrir ses bagages par déférence, car « toutes les parures sont celles du génie » et doivent souvent, après la mort, lui revenir.

Tous les métaux ont pour interdit le beurre de vache, matière huileuse qui ne laisse pas pénétrer l'eau.

Les cauris, coquillages répandus dans toute l'Afrique Noire et servant de monnaie, seraient venus de l'eau profonde où il conserve sa fortune : Faro « dort sur un lit de cauris ». C'est leur origine qui explique leur rôle et la valeur à la fois économique et religieuse qui leur est attribuée.

La terre noire des rives du fleuve, *bogo fi*, comme celle que l'on trouve au bord de la mer aux endroits sablonneux, contient la force du génie et est utilisée dans de nombreux rites. Comme enduit au bas des murs intérieurs des habitations elle symbolise sa présence au sein de la famille. Elle sert à décorer les bonnets des circoncis (1). Si l'on est loin du Niger ou de tout point d'eau, c'est s'adresser à Faro que la prier.

Parmi les hommes, certains occupent vis-à-vis du génie une place privilégiée. Les premiers sont les huit ancêtres mythiques dont l'aîné est Koumabana. Ils reçurent la parole du génie, la transmirent à leurs descendants, expliquèrent, avant de mourir, le nouvel ordre des choses et instituèrent le culte.

Ils sont actuellement encore révérés comme les prototypes de

lageois au bord de la mare : les devises des jumeaux sont récitées, ainsi qu'une prière, suivie d'ablutions.

Les fruits récoltés sont écrasés en offrande au génie sur le tronc d'un arbre voisin.

(1) Cf. p. 180, fig. 14.

l'être humain dans sa nouvelle condition. Avec l'immortalité l'homme a perdu la nourriture céleste qui suffisait jusqu'alors à son existence. Les articulations qui lui ont été octroyées le consacrent au travail manuel dont les techniques lui ont été enseignées progressivement. D'autre part, dans le domaine spirituel apparaît aussi un profond changement. Dans les temps primitifs, l'homme vivait d'une existence quasi animale et dépourvue de responsabilité. L'abandon par le *balanza* lui apporta la souffrance et la mort mais avec elles se développe sa conscience, symbolisée par la « parole » de Faro. A côté de la mort, de la maladie, des chagrins, des mauvais instincts, du dur labeur des jours, apparaît aussi le sentiment que l'homme a de sa personne, de sa place dans un univers ordonné, régi par Faro, s'opposant au chaos primitif.

Les huit ancêtres enseignèrent aux hommes à révérer Faro, à lui demander tout ce dont ils avaient besoin, à le remercier de tout ce qu'ils recevaient. Aussi leur nom est-il invoqué dans la plupart des prières et les épisodes de leur vie relatés aux jeunes auxquels on donne en exemple leurs travaux.

Il convient aussi de mentionner la situation particulière des Bozo issus des jumelles mythiques, filles du génie (1). Cette origine les habilite dans de nombreux cas à intervenir auprès du génie, là où d'autres sont impuissants. Nés jumeaux du maître de l'eau, les Bozo n'ont point subi la souillure due à Mousso Koroni dont sont affectés tous les autres hommes. De ce fait ils ont la possibilité d'entrer en communication avec le génie au fond des mares ou dans le fleuve, d'aller rechercher les corps des noyés. Le droit de pêche qu'ils tiennent de lui né fut jamais discuté par les conquérants qui s'installèrent au bord du Niger à la période historique.

De nombreux articles ou essais ont déjà été publiés sur les Bozo. Leur langue et les techniques de la pêche qui leur sont propres ont été étudiées. Mais les enquêtes sur leur religion, sur la notion qu'ils ont de leur personne, s'avèrent très difficiles, en raison d'une part de leur apparente conversion à l'Islam, et d'autre part de leurs réticences dès que l'on tente d'aborder leur système traditionnel. Cet apport serait cependant indispensable à l'érudition pour aborder l'étude de certains aspects des métaphysiques soudanaises notamment celles des Bambara et des Dogon. Dans ces deux populations les mythes mentionnent l'apparition des Bozo sur terre en même temps que commence à s'exercer l'action de Faro, le tout coïncidant avec le développement des techniques chez les Bambara et de la « troisième parole » des Dogon (1). De plus, les rapports dits de parenté à plaisanterie qu'ils entretiennent avec les Dogon et qui se placent à l'origine de tout un système d'alliances tribales et intertribales illustrent bien l'importance des représentations qui leur sont conférées (2).

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(1) Cf. p. 14, note 7.

Faro, s'il en a besoin, entraîne dans sa demeure aquatique les femmes ou les jeunes filles : nombre de disparitions au cours de traversées en pirogues lui sont attribuées.

Autrefois, chaque année, une jeune fille vierge, désignée pour sa beauté par les griots de son village, devenait l'épouse et la servante de Faro. Elle était le plus souvent consentante, et fière de devenir son éternelle compagne. Au jour dit, parée de ses plus beaux bijoux, on l'amenait au milieu du fleuve et on l'y jetait en priant le génie d'accorder sa protection au village et de donner la pluie pour les récoltes futures.

Interdits de Faro.

Tous les ressortissants de Faro, en pratique les Bambara des deux sexes, et à tous les âges, sont tenus de respecter un certain nombre d'interdits.

La terre noire *bogo fi* des bords du fleuve qui est utilisée rituellement dans de nombreux cas, serait excellente pour la fabrication de la poterie : les potières ne peuvent cependant l'utiliser à cause du noircissement acquis pendant la cuisson. Aucune poterie ayant été au feu ne doit être lavée dans les lieux hantés par le génie (3).

Le beurre est en beaucoup d'endroits l'interdit de Faro et ne saurait être conservé dans l'eau (4).

Nul ne traverse le fleuve sans ouvrir son bagage et présenter à Faro l'or, le cuivre ou les aliments qu'il possède. D'une façon générale d'ailleurs, le port des métaux est illicite aux endroits hantés par le génie.

L'interdit principal est le sang menstruel dont le flux fut originellement provoqué par les fautes et l'impureté de Mousso

(1) Cf. M. Griaule. *Dieu d'eau.*

(2) Cf. p. 83, note 1.

(3) A Ségou, de nombreuses noyades sont attribuées à la rupture de plus en plus fréquente de cet interdit.

(4) Cet interdit est lié aux rapports de Faro et des Peuls, qui n'ont pas encore été éclaircis par l'enquête.

Koroni. Aucune femme en état de menstruation ne doit se rendre aux lieux qu'habite Faro; aucune ne doit y puiser de l'eau, y laver le linge ou du matériel culinaire, y procéder à des ablutions. De plus, tout homme dont la femme est dans cet état doit s'abstenir de paraître aux cérémonies religieuses, ou, s'il est prêtre, d'exécuter les rites.

Dans cette région de l'Afrique comme dans bien d'autres les menstrues sont conçues comme l'écoulement nécessaire d'un sang vide, devenu impur pour n'avoir point contribué à la formation du fœtus dont toute femme porte l'embryon dans son sein (1). Privé de la force essentiellement fécondante de Faro, contraire à son action génératrice, ce sang est néfaste et tout ce qui l'approche ou le rappelle exclu des rites.

Caractère, rôle et action de Faro.

La toute-puissance, l'omniprésence, la bienveillance de Faro sont les caractères principaux de son action dans la création. Tout dépend de lui chez les êtres animés, inanimés, dans le temps et l'espace.

Cette domination de l'univers est vivement sentie par les Bambara qui disent que « Faro ne s'arrête ni jour ni nuit dans son incessant travail ». Il veille à la bonne marche de l'ordre qu'il a instauré et qui demande une attention constante. Son temps est partagé : de l'aube au soir, il s'occupe de la terre et de ses habitants; le travail des douze heures qui suivent est consacré aux animaux aquatiques et aux membres de sa propre famille. La procréation dépend de sa volonté; c'est lui qui, dans le ciel et dans l'eau, détient la vie physique et les principes spirituels des êtres : âme et force vitale. Dans un ordre voulu, que les humains d'ailleurs favorisent par l'observation des lois édictées, il entretient cette vie et fait selon un rythme régulier participer des corps neufs au fonctionnement de l'univers. Les âmes se réincarnent, assurant la continuité des forces spirituelles dans le monde. La même puissance préside à tous les actes de la vie individuelle et sociale : naissance, circoncision, excision, initiation, mariage, travaux agraires, voyages, guerre ou paix.

A travers tous les développements de la vie individuelle, c'est Faro qui maintient l'intégrité physique de l'homme; il lui donne la santé, nécessaire à son action. La maladie est toujours considérée comme une déperdition de forces qu'il convient de redemander à Faro. Maître souverain de la vie des hommes il peut la leur retirer.

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(1) Cf. G. Dieterlen. *Mécanisme de l'impureté chez les Dogon*, Journal de la Société des Africanistes, t. XVII, 1947, p. 82 et ss.

A la mort, il reprend les principes spirituels du défunt et les conserve dans l'eau pour les réintégrer dans un autre corps, utilisant ainsi des forces éternellement réemployables. Le produit de la « mue », *mana* ou *folo*, des âmes qui restent dans les autels sont des témoins pour lui qui vérifie constamment le compte des vivants et des morts dont il est le gardien.

Sur terre, les hommes lui sont redevables de tout ce qu'ils possèdent. Il leur a donné le langage, expression de la pensée et leur en a enseigné l'usage les mettant en garde contre l'abus et le mauvais emploi des mots.

Les techniques, autre expression des « paroles de Faro » si nécessaires à leur vie depuis qu'ils sont obligés de subvenir à leur existence leur ont été révélées par le génie. Il les a aidés de son pouvoir souverain, soit en leur donnant directement l'outillage nouveau, soit en inspirant à certains d'entre eux l'observation des faits les mettant à même de développer une technique nouvelle. Ainsi, il remit directement aux Bozo les filets de pêche qui permirent la prise de la première nourriture animale attestée, le poisson, alors qu'il favorisa chez les Bambara la découverte du tissage par l'observation d'une toile d'araignée.

Il donna aussi aux hommes certains grains qui furent à l'origine de la culture. Ainsi le coton et le fonio, connus tous deux avant le mil et les autres céréales.

Propriétaire des cauris et des métaux, il est le maître des richesses et il les distribue selon son bon plaisir. Mais celui qui possède du métal précieux en est redevable à Faro et lui doit une part de ses gains : c'est pourquoi nombre d'offrandes lui sont faites en jetant au fleuve de l'or ou du cuivre.

Son action est fondamentale en ce qui concerne la principale activité des Bambara, le travail agraire. Tout homme digne et noble doit cultiver pour l'honorer. Chaque coup de houe est une plaie, une blessure faite à la terre et un châtiment de son impureté. Chaque coup de houe, qui humilie Mousso Koroni, est une purification de la terre. Faro veille sur l'âme et la force vitale des graines; lui seul peut donner la pluie nécessaire aux germinations, car elle contient l'âme, *ni*, des céréales, comme l'eau des mares et des ruisseaux que l'on recueille en cas de sécheresse.

Le mil prend son âme dès qu'il reçoit l'humidité de la terre, et, dès lors, il accompagne les étapes de sa germination de paroles qui, à l'origine du monde, pouvaient être entendues. Dès réception de l'eau de pluie, le grain se fend et dit : « Je suis situé. » Puis le germe sort de terre avec la parole : « Que je sois protégé. » Enfin la croissance de la tige est accompagnée de la troisième parole : « Que je sois obéi (1). » Il conserve son âme jusqu'à pleine maturité, moment où il est récolté. Quand le fer du moissonneur coupe l'épi ou la grappe, la plante envoie son âme dans le domaine de Faro en disant : « Le fer est l'interdit de mon grain, âme! pars dans la maison d'eau (2). » Ainsi privé de son âme, le mil est propre à la consommation et il dit : « Si je n'étais mort on ne pourrait me manger; ma race ne peut se perdre; que je sois ou non mangé, rien ne peut me diminuer car mon âme est dans l'eau (3). »

De nombreux rites agraires ont pour objet de s'assurer la protection de Faro. Les prémices qui lui sont offertes sont d'une qualité qui témoigne de l'importance de son action. C'est en somme une remise qui lui est faite en remerciement de la récolte passée et en prévision de celle à venir.

Il est aussi pour les artisans le gardien de leurs techniques. Le premier ouvrage d'un jeune apprenti forgeron, le premier fuseau d'une fileuse lui sont apportés : l'individu, par ce geste, lui confie à la fois son travail et son habileté manuelle. Faro, ayant vu son œuvre, ne permettra pas qu'il oublie ce qu'il a appris, et l'aidera à parfaire son tour de main.

Faro est un juge. Celui qui enfreint les règles qu'il a fixées tombe sous le coup de son juste courroux : les noyés ou les foudroyés sont toujours des individus en rupture d'interdit. La plupart des cas difficiles lui sont soumis par les hommes en dernier ressort. Par l'intermédiaire des agents des différents rites, comme par ceux des devins, il répond aux demandes, il « résout les paroles ». La plupart des prières lui sont adressées et dans bien des cas son nom termine les invocations. Il est partout présent, partout invoqué et le siège de sa domination, comme de toute autre, est le septième ciel auquel les Bambara s'adressent en disant : « Septième ciel, tu es grand, tu es long; ton ouest est rouge; ton est est blanc; ton nord est grand; ton sud est noir; septième ciel, tu es le roi des sièges parmi les sièges, tu es le grand générateur de la domination des dominations, tu es le grand découvreur de tous les secrets, tu es la source de toutes les fortunes, tu es le lieu où l'on ne peut tarir le bien commun; source de toutes les choses, délivre-moi du péché (1). »

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(1) Ces trois formules se notent : *ndyora, nga kolosi, nga bunye.*

(2) *n[illegible]ke ye nkise lne ye, ni, ta dyi so la.*

(3) *ni ña [illegible]ale te nil dã, n šia tise ka tunu, ndunaw ma dũn wo, fẽ le bwona, ni b[illegible]dyi la.*

Pemba et Faro, principes complémentaires, sont issus tous deux de l'esprit, *miri*, aux origines de l'univers. Si l'on envisage l'aspect psychologique de leurs représentations, on conçoit que, malgré l'antériorité du rôle de Pemba, les Bambara puissent dire parfois « Faro est l'aîné ». Car il représente dans le microcosme humain, la volonté et la sagesse venant contrôler les pulsions de l'instinct sexuel symbolisées par la prolificité du *balanza* les violences et les désordres de l'affectivité exprimés par le vertigineux voyage chtonien et la folie de Mousso Koroni. L'opposition des sexes, réalisée dans le mythe par la séparation corporelle de Pemba et Mousso Koroni, leurs désaccords et leurs querelles, source de tous les désordres cosmiques, sont compensés par l'accord harmonieux et l'union, établis par Faro dans son androgynéité. Faro est la vibration gémellaire qui, désormais, ordonne l'univers; il est la raison et la mesure opposée à la force trop écrasante du *balanza :* il est la lumière de l'esprit qui triomphe de l'obscurité et des tâtonnements primordiaux.

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(1) *wolo fiã kaba, i ka bo, i ka dyõ, i kle bi ka ble, i koro ka dye, i baba ka bo, i bani ka fi; wolo fiã kaba, siki yoro u la sikiyoro masa, fanga u la fanga ba sindi, gundow be ladyele fara be, nafolo be ladyele boyoro, dyẽ wari dũ bali yoro; ko be boyoro, hake tonye.*

Cette prière est récitée par le chef de famille pendant un accouchement, lors d'une grave maladie ou d'un décès. Elle intervenait également lors des rites d'intronisation des rois et des chefs.

CHAPITRE III

LA PERSONNE

Les Bambara conçoivent l'homme *(homo)* comme le principe de la nature. Il est « le grain du monde » et, à ce titre, le reflet de la totalité des êtres et des choses, dans leur essence et leur situation. Comme l'univers, l'homme est vie, et comme lui « il est maintenu par l'attraction des angles cardinaux ». Univers et homme sont la condition l'un de l'autre : l'ensemble des choses soutient l'être humain en ses lieux et places et le fait persévérer en lui-même. L'homme, à son tour, est base, raison d'être, cause de l'univers, par la conscience et la connaissance qu'il a de lui-même.

C'est ainsi que le principe de dualité, contenu dans la pensée créatrice aux origines et réalisé dans l'univers par le ciel et la terre, se reflète dans la personne. L'être humain témoigne dans son corps de la séparation des sexes nécessaires à la multiplication de l'espèce, séparation exprimée dans le mythe de Pemba et Mousso Koroni et qui comporte les désordres, les difficultés, les conflits qu'implique une telle situation. Mais il réalise par ses âmes jumelles leur union idéale, exprimée dans le mythe de l'androgynéité de Faro.

En outre ces personnalités mythiques sont présentes en l'homme : Faro par le *ni* et le *dya*, Pemba par le *tere* et le *nyama*, Mousso Koroni par le *wanzo*. On peut dire également que les périples de ces êtres et leurs poursuites dans le temps et les régions mythiques sont l'expression des états psychologiques de l'homme comme des recherches et des combats intérieurs qu'il mène pour se situer en lui-même et par rapport à la création. C'est dire qu'ils sont l'expression de la prise de conscience de soi. Toute l'attitude religieuse et sociale de l'individu témoigne de ce jeu de forces diverses, entre lesquelles il doit maintenir l'équilibre et l'harmonie.

Dans ce chapitre sont examinés successivement les éléments composant ou déterminant la personne : les principes spirituels *(ni, dya, tere, nyama, wanzo);* les parties du corps humain qui sont en rapport avec eux; certains attributs sociaux de l'individu (prénom, nom, devise, interdit). Enfin est considéré le rôle cathartique de l'institution de la parenté à plaisanteries fondée sur la notion de gémelléité.

I. — Les principes spirituels (1).

A. — L'âme, *ni*, et le double, *dya :*

Faro détient le principe de vie dans l'eau, son domaine, élément fécondant par excellence. Dans les corps des êtres, ce principe siège dans le sang. Le sang des sacrifices offerts au génie, ou à leur défaut le suc de la tomate, avatar du sang, constituent un apport au réservoir de vie que contrôle Faro, vie qu'il redistribue sous toutes ses formes dans l'univers. L'eau est l'élément privilégié dans lequel peut indéfiniment persévérer la vie. Ailleurs, elle ne se maintient que si l'eau vient l'alimenter.

La fonction créatrice de Faro est matérialisée par l'absorption d'une tomate par chacun des époux avant les rapports sexuels, acte qui s'accompagne de la récitation d'une prière. Le suc des fruits, qui contient le corps du futur enfant, transmet la vie selon le mécanisme suivant :

Faro reçoit des offrandes de tomates cultivées rituellement dans des champs consacrés, comme le sang des victimes égorgées en son nom au-dessus des eaux. Sang et suc, répandus dans l'eau, agent de la fertilité, sont recueillis par l'hirondelle, messagère aérienne; libérés dans l'espace, ils reviennent au sol avec la pluie fécondante et pénètrent les graines des tomates qui contiennent ainsi une parcelle génératrice.

Après l'absorption des fruits par les conjoints, un embryon au corps lisse, aux membres souples, est formé dans le sein maternel. C'est à ce moment que les époux consomment l'acte sexuel au cours duquel la femme « prend en elle le corps entier de son mari » : le haut par les yeux, le bas par le sexe. La semence masculine, qui siège dans les sept articulations principales (genoux, coudes, chevilles et colonne vertébrale), les transmet à l'embryon. Le corps, originairement semblable à celui du génie, devient alors celui d'un être humain.

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(1) Quelques remarques sur les principes spirituels des Bambara (en particulier sur le *dya* et le *nyama*) ont été réunies dans le chapitre intitulé : Théorie des âmes, par TAUXIER. *La Religion Bambara* (p. 14 à 25) où il fait état des travaux de l'abbé Henry et de Ch. Monteil. Une partie des observations consignées dans le chapitre qui suit ont été résumées par l'auteur dans la *Personne chez les Bambara* et dans *Note sur le* tere *chez les Bambara.*

Il convient de rapprocher ces études sur les principes spirituels de celles qui ont été faites chez les Dogon et exposées par M. GRIAULE, S. de GANAY et l'auteur dans *Masques Dogon, les Devises des Dogon, les Ames des Dogon.*

L'octroi par le génie des forces spirituelles s'accomplit lorsque l'homme s'est uni deux fois à son épouse. Si la femme n'accouche que d'un seul enfant, c'est que, lors de la seconde union, l'homme a façonné le double du premier germe et qu'il ne lui a pas été permis de procréer des jumeaux.

Faro dispose de la vie et de la nature de l'enfant. Il décide de tout ce qu'il sera et fera et détermine son destin dès le moment où le germe est mis par lui dans la matrice. Le fœtus se développe ensuite sans modification jusqu'à la parturition, époque à laquelle il recevra les principes spirituels, âme, *ni*, double, *dya* qui seront siens sa vie durant. C'est alors qu'interviennent les rapports internes que chaque individu entretient avec le groupe social auquel il appartient. Si Faro donne à chaque enfant un corps neuf, en revanche il anime ce corps de forces spirituelles puisées au réservoir familial. Le nouveau-né est l'héritier direct du *ni* et du *dya* d'un défunt, précisément de celui qui est mort immédiatement avant sa naissance et quel que soit son sexe (1).

Le décès avait, en effet, pour conséquence de séparer du cadavre les forces qui l'animaient : le *ni* avait été, par des rites appropriés, conservé dans l'autel des ancêtres (2), le *dya* avait quitté le mourant pour se rendre dans l'eau et se mettre sous la garde du Faro. Au moment de l'accouchement tous deux reviennent dans le nouveau-né qui succède au défunt, mais inversés : le *dya* est renvoyé dans le corps de l'enfant et formera son *ni*; le *ni* du défunt vient se mêler aux eaux de l'accouchement répandues sur le sol qui forment l'ombre *(suma)*, qui sera le double, le jumeau (3). S'il s'agit d'un garçon, le *dya* sera femelle; s'il s'agit d'une fille, il sera mâle. Ces mouvements sont indépendants du sexe du défunt, le génie inversant les sexes le cas échéant. Chaque être humain est ainsi à la fois mâle et femelle par son âme et par son double. Cette conception de la nature humaine, fondamentale chez les Bambara, s'exprime dans la symbolique des chiffres; le chiffre sept formé de trois (symbole sexuel mâle) et de quatre (symbole sexuel femelle) représente l'homme complet. De plus et sur un autre plan, le chiffre six est celui des jumeaux mâles, sept celui des jumeaux mixtes (et de l'hermaphrodite), huit celui des jumelles. Un nombre de coups correspondant aux chiffres précités est frappé doucement sur le corps d'un nouveau-né pour appeler son *ni* suivant son sexe.

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(1) Cependant la réincarnation des principes des défunts n'est pas une règle absolue. Faro est maître d'une infinie réserve d'âmes. Les jumeaux, les albinos et certains enfants naissent pourvus de *ni* et de *dya* non affectés jusque-là et venus respectivement du deuxième ciel *(kaba dye)* et de l'eau *(dyi sumale)*. L'enquête reste à compléter sur ce point particulier.

(2) Groupés par promotions les enfants, les adultes mâles, les femmes forment des sociétés ou institutions religieuses, *dyo*. Chaque *dyo* est dépositaire d'autels qui servent à la conservation des forces spirituelles du groupe (cf. p. 142).

(3) Le sang de l'accouchement représente l'excès du suc de tomate absorbé par la femme, c'est ce qui reste dans la matrice après la formation de l'embryon. Le huitième jour après l'accouchement la mère de la partu-

Le *ni* qui anime le corps est visible, pendant les semaines qui suivent l'accouchement, dans les mouvements de la fontanelle. Il est aussi le souffle, la respiration, le battement des artères. De même que le *dya*, il n'est pas indissolublement lié au corps car il le quitte pendant le sommeil pour se rendre dans le sixième ciel, *sunankaba*. Au réveil il réintègre le corps et le rêve est considéré comme un souvenir de ce qu'il a vu, comme une prémonition d'un événement intéressant l'individu, la famille, le village (1).

Le *dya*, double ou jumeau de l'être humain et de sexe opposé, a un corps, l'ombre sur le sol ou l'image dans l'eau. Il peut se déplacer seul ou peut être contraint de quitter l'être qu'il accompagne sous l'action de Faro : quand un crocodile entraîne ou blesse un homme, par ordre du génie, c'est qu'il a tout d'abord saisi son ombre visible à la surface de l'eau, et son *dya* dans l'eau. Le même effet peut être tenté par un être malfaisant; dans ce dernier cas le contact étroit que maintient le *dya*, en tant qu'ombre avec la terre impure, le rend particulièrement vulnérable. Pour y remédier, l'intéressé se mire dans l'eau d'une calebasse, puis, quand l'image est nette, il la brouille en balançant le récipient, ce qui renvoie le *dya* sous la protection de Faro.

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riente presse trois ou quatre tomates, suivant le sexe du nouveau-né, dans une calebasse qu'elle remet au père; ce dernier fait consommer à sa femme le suc pour remplacer le sang qu'elle a perdu, considéré comme impur.

(1) Voir des poissons en grand nombre fait présager une pêche fructueuse; dispute signifie guerre; nager en rêve invite à se purifier d'une faute. Le passage de sauterelles d'ouest en est est signe de grande bataille ou de famine. Dans ce dernier cas la chose est si grave que le village est prévenu et que chacun doit faire une offrande à un pauvre en disant : « je fais ce sacrifice d'âme à Dieu pour qu'il me sauve » *(nye nin ye ni sakaka ye ka ngala ma a la ka mbo)*. Le chef du village offre également un sacrifice collectif.

Cette indépendance et cette vulnérabilité du *dya* nécessitent, pour l'exercice de certaines fonctions religieuses, sa prise en charge par Faro pendant la durée du ministère.

Les animaux sauvages ou domestiques sont également animés d'un *ni* et d'un *dya*. Les végétaux ont un *ni*; celui de l'arbre est situé dans les bourgeons et assure sa croissance et sa vie. Celui des céréales nécessaires à la vie des humains fait l'objet de soins constants au cours des rites agraires. Le rôle de l'âme des plantes apparaît notamment dans leur utilisation médicale. Le prélèvement d'un remède sur un végétal peut déterminer sa mort, c'est-à-dire la libération de ses principes spirituels, au profit du malade. De ce fait, un tel acte est assimilé à un sacrifice sanglant.

A l'exception de la tomate *ngoyo*, les végétaux n'ont point de *dya*. L'ombre d'un végétal *suma* n'est pas indépendante comme celle d'un homme ou d'un animal. Elle n'existe que par l'effet de la lumière et ses mouvements lui sont imprimés par l'air et le vent agitant les feuilles et les branches. C'est ce qu'expriment les Bambara en disant que le *dya* a une vie propre qui l'anime et qu'il dépend du Faro, tandis que le *suma* du végétal dépend du génie Téliko, maître de l'air.

On connaît le *dya* d'un individu, on détermine son tempérament et ses possibilités dans la vie, en mesurant son ombre au sol à midi. L'unité employée est l'auriculaire, symbole corporel de la personne. Cette mesure appliquée à une femme enceinte permet de prévoir le sexe de l'enfant.

Lorsqu'un garçon ou une fille se marient, on dit d'eux : *a ye a dya furu* : « il (ou elle) a épousé son *dya* ». Car il est impoli de dire qu'on épouse un autre être que son double spirituel. D'ailleurs l'union des époux est répétée par l'union de leurs *dya* qui sont, comme eux, de sexe opposé. Autrefois deux jumeaux mâles épousaient la même femme : le *dya* de cette dernière était pris en charge par Faro dans le Niger. L'enfant qu'elle concevait était le fils de ses deux maris.

Certains hommes ne se marient pas : ainsi le Soma, devin religieux attaché aux grandes institutions bambara. Initié au cours d'un séjour solitaire en brousse il a laissé son *dya* auprès des génies invisibles. C'est à la fois la condition des dons de double vue octroyés par ceux-ci et une protection contre les dangers que court le *dya* en restant en contact avec la terre, ou en s'approchant des autres humains. Le véritable conjoint du Soma est son *dya* : il ne s'unit qu'avec lui, à date fixe, lorsqu'il lui est renvoyé à cette fin par les génies.

B. — Le *tere* :

Le *tere* fut infligé par Pemba à Mousso Koroni, tandis qu'il la poursuivait, pour diminuer son pouvoir. De ce fait son aspect est complexe : il est à la fois le caractère de l'homme, sa force, sa conscience et la partie de son être, qui, à travers le corps, le rend sensible aux contingences. Si l'homme est vulnérable par son double, c'est son *tere* qu'affecte toute rupture d'interdit, qui reçoit et subit l'impureté.

Siégant dans le sang et dans la tête *(kun tere)*, il se développe dans le fœtus au cours de la gestation; il est composé d'une part de celui des parents, à laquelle vient s'ajouter celui du défunt dont l'enfant a hérité âme et double.

L'aspect du *tere* d'un enfant est déterminé par les vieillards de la famille au cours de la cérémonie de la dation du nom, exécutée publiquement le huitième jour suivant la naissance. Ayant examiné soigneusement la façon dont ses cheveux sont plantés sur le front, dont les sourcils se rejoignent, la forme des yeux où siège l'intelligence, de la bouche, des pieds et des mains, l'un des vieillards présents annonce d'une voix forte les signes révélateurs de son caractère. Leur position permet de dire si l'enfant a un bon ou un mauvais *tere* et de faire des prévisions sur sa vie : une légère calvitie au milieu de la tête en fera un homme riche; un crâne ample et profond un chef. Le vieillard balance ensuite l'enfant en direction des quatre points cardinaux au-dessus des autels de famille et lui donne le prénom *(loko)* du défunt dont il a hérité le *ni* et le *dya*. Une partie des cheveux, rasés peu avant, est ensuite jetée au Niger par le père qui prononce le prénom face au fleuve : ce geste et cette parole ont pour but de confier au génie de l'eau le *tere* et de lui demander sa protection. Le même jour le forgeron trace sur le visage les scarifications qui agissent sur son *tere*, lui donnent force, courage, vertu.

Au fur et à mesure qu'il grandit, certaines particularités physiques de l'enfant sont interprétées comme caractérisant son *tere*. S'il grince des dents en dormant, il attaquera ses parents; s'il saisit souvent son poignet gauche dans sa main droite il ~~sera~~ toujours vainqueur. Une fille qui marche en balançant les mains et les rejetant en arrière, qui soulève de la poussière avec ses pieds en marchant, détruira la fortune de son mari. Certains informateurs déclarent que l'homme a plusieurs *tere* :

celui de sa démarche, de son port de tête, de la forme de ses membres, de ses seins pour une femme (1).

L'homme est considéré comme porteur d'un fort *lere* : du fait qu'il parle, qu'il est instruit, qu'il connaît le bien et le mal, il est responsable de sa vie propre et de celle des siens. Le *lere* est prise de conscience.

Cet aspect fait que seuls les animaux domestiques, dont la vie dépend de l'homme qui assure leur subsistance, sont porteurs de ce principe. Les animaux sauvages « ont une vie dure, aride, il leur faut beaucoup peiner pour se nourrir. Ils n'ont pas à soutenir la charge du *lere* ». Tout ce qui vit indépendamment de l'homme en est dépourvu (2).

Celui des animaux domestiques est moins puissant que celui de l'homme; il est également décelable à des signes extérieurs. Il est par exemple très mauvais chez un cheval qui balance la tête de droite à gauche pendant qu'il est à l'attache : on dit qu'il est *duga fufa* (3). Une telle bête est indésirable dans une demeure dont « il chasse le bonheur et la réussite ». Un animal domestique blessé attaque le responsable avec son *lere*.

Le fait que le *lere* est l'élément de la personne qui subit les conséquences de l'impureté témoigne des liens unissant l'homme au monde extérieur. Le *lere* est perturbé en cas de rupture d'interdit, *tne*. S'il est bon, il quitte l'homme; s'il est mauvais il devient pire. D'autre part la rupture provoque une modification physiologique du sang qui perd sa couleur rouge, devient clair. Elle se traduit par une déperdition de forces, par des maladies affectant les ouvertures du corps : l'homme devient aveugle, sourd-muet. Il peut aussi être paralysé. Généralement il ne meurt pas, mais le mal le poursuit jusqu'à ce qu'il se purifie.

Le *lere*, de plus, se modifie lorsqu'il est détaché de son support normal; il devient alors *nyama*, force qui agit à l'extérieur du corps. Manifeste dans l'acte, le fait est déjà sensible dans l'émission de la parole, porteuse de *nyama* affectant immédiatement celui auquel elle s'adresse. Les conséquences de cette action du verbe sont multiples.

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(1) Les aspects physiques déterminant le *lere* sont très nombreux. *Cf.* à ce sujet D. Traore. *Le* Tere *chez les Bambara du Ségou*; Notes africaines, janvier 1947, p. 29-31.

(2) Cependant d'après certains informateurs les animaux sauvages seraient également pourvus de plusieurs *lere* des différentes parties du corps. Il semble, que, dans ce cas, le terme désigne surtout des particularités physiques de l'animal et non sa conscience, comme c'est le cas pour l'homme et l'animal domestique.

(3) Littéralement : « balancement du vautour ». Se dit d'un vautour qui descend sur sa proie en balançant sa tête à droite et à gauche pour l'apercevoir.

C'est au moment de la mort que le *lere* est complètement libéré. Transformé en *nyama* qui se dégage du corps, il devient alors une forme très active qui peut, dans certains cas, s'attaquer à celui qu'elle considère comme responsable du décès (1).

Seuls les êtres sacrifiés, hommes ou animaux, les plantes utilisées rituellement ne délèguent jamais de *nyama* dangereux. Leurs principes spirituels et leurs forces sont captés au cours des rites et dirigés sur un support, l'autel, au profit d'une puissance surnaturelle. Il en est de même des animaux domestiques immolés pour la consommation : dans ce cas leurs forces sont réemployées et leur mort, prévue par la règle instaurée par Faro concernant les nourritures, ne cause aucun désordre.

En revanche, le *nyama* des animaux de brousse *(nyama bakâ)* se dégage de leurs cadavres et poursuit le chasseur (2); pour se protéger, il porte un autel, *dõzoboli*, suspendu à l'épaule et dans lequel la force de l'animal est captée au moment de la mort.

Tout individu se trouve donc constamment, au cours de sa vie, en présence de cette force agissante et que libèrent la parole, certains actes et la mort. Il lui faut être à même de parer au danger, entretenir son propre *lere* qui l'aidera s'il est bon, et qui peut au contraire se joindre aux forces adverses et les aider à nuire s'il est néfaste. Aussi un individu essaye-t-il dans ce dernier cas de le modifier en demandant assistance et conseil au devin du Komo. Mais quoi qu'il en soit, chaque individu, qu'il le veuille ou non, supporte les atteintes et la présence de *nyama* nombreux et variés du fait qu'il a détruit des plantes, écrasé des insectes, blessé d'autres êtres vivants. Il est donc à tout moment porteur de forces de vie déplacées induement et qui lui sont étrangères. Bien plus, ces forces se déposent à travers lui, sur ce qu'il touche. Il devient comme le centre d'influences qui exercent en premier lieu leur action sur sa personne et dont il doit tenir compte pour maintenir son intégrité (1).

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(1) Cet aspect, très visible, mais incomplet du *nyama* est celui sous lequel il a été le plus étudié jusqu'ici. Cf. à ce sujet les ouvrages de l'abbé Henry, Ch. Monteil, H. Labouret, L. Tauxier. Il convient d'ajouter qu'il y a dans le ciel, l'espace, la terre un *nyama* indépendant du *lere;* le caractère de cet élément vital général n'a point encore été complètement dégagé par l'enquête.

(2) Le malade peut être traité de la façon suivante : on jette sur la peau de l'animal sept cauris (ou un multiple de sept) en offrande à titre d'excuse en même temps qu'on donne au coupable autant de coups que de cauris offerts. Puis on fait tremper la peau dans de l'eau avec laquelle on le lave. On l'attache ensuite afin qu'il ne puisse à nouveau se sauver en brousse. Ces diverses opérations sont effectuées autant de fois qu'il est nécessaire et jusqu'à cessation des crises. D'autre part cette purification est exécutée chaque fois que cela est nécessaire, alors qu'elle ne peut être renouvelée en cas de rupture d'interdit.

C. — Le *wanzo* :

Le *wanzo*, force néfaste constituée à l'origine par l'impureté de Mousso Koroni, est dû à la malédiction dont elle fut l'objet après sa trahison et qu'elle communiqua au sol lors de son parcours souterrain. S'étant elle-même mutilée sur Pemba alors qu'elle entretenait avec lui des rapports sexuels, sa jalousie la poussa à se venger sur les femmes qui s'unissaient au *balanza*. Sa folie et son désespoir l'incitèrent à aller jusqu'au bout de sa trahison : elle excisa et circoncit avec ses ongles et ses dents les hommes et les femmes qu'elle rencontra pendant son périple. Le *wanzo* qu'elle transportait avec elle pénétra ainsi le genre humain, rendant l'opération nécessaire pour ceux qui suivraient. Faro n'y peut remédier, mais sa protection est appelée sur chaque enfant pendant l'opération : le bonnet du circoncis représente le ciel et la lumière purificatrice.

Tout enfant, à sa naissance, reçoit le *wanzo* « parole de Mousso Koroni » dans son sang et sur sa peau, au moment du contact avec la terre sur laquelle il naît. Cette force, dite également *kono nyama* « *nyama* de l'intérieur », ne se confond pas avec le *lere*, mais elle est de même nature et se transmet à tout ce que touche le porteur. Elle siège plus particulièrement dans le prépuce chez l'homme, le clitoris chez la femme, et représente dans l'individu le désordre : « elle fait que l'homme ne peut vivre avec personne, ne peut supporter personne et ne peut se supporter lui-même ». De plus elle s'oppose à la fécondité.

Pour devenir un être stable, pour se marier, procréer, sacrifier, l'enfant doit être débarrassé de son *wanzo*. Cet effet est obtenu au cours de la circoncision ou de l'excision et des rites qui terminent la retraite des opérés. La plus grande part de forces s'écoule dans la terre avec le sang de l'organe mutilé. Le reste de la force s'échappe avec la fumée du feu par-dessus lequel les enfants sautent (trois ou quatre fois suivant leur sexe) avant de rentrer dans leur demeure. L'abandon qu'ils font de leurs vêtements à ce moment pour en revêtir de neufs confirme leur nouvel état. Mais le *wanzo* ne disparaît pas : il est capté dans les masques de la société du *ndomo* à laquelle appartiennent les incirconcis (1). De même, lorsqu'un enfant meurt avant d'avoir été circoncis, des rites appropriés ont pour effet de capter le *wanzo* et de le diriger dans le masque pour l'empêcher de nuire (2). Ainsi rien n'est perdu des forces individuelles : le *wanzo* lui-même, néfaste à l'origine, dûment capté et dirigé, sert à consolider les énergies collectives des sociétés enfantines dont il est le fondement.

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(1) Ce sentiment, très net dans la pensée des Bambara, ne les paralyse cependant pas : la responsabilité n'est grave que dans l'action volontaire de destruction inutile. Dans tous les autres cas, les rites pallient ces inconvénients. Les Bambara sont responsables, mais libres.

C'est seulement lorsqu'un adolescent a perdu son *wanzo* qu'il est admis à se marier : tout individu refuserait d'épouser un partenaire qui n'en aurait pas été complètement débarrassé.

II. — Le corps.

Les Bambara ont de leur corps, du rôle des différentes parties et organes qui le composent, une notion d'autant plus profonde qu'elle est liée à celle des principes spirituels qui l'animent.

En effet, le *lere* est déterminé par certains aspects visibles du corps; le *ni* et le *dya* sont sexués comme lui. C'est dire qu'il convient d'englober dans son étude les liens unissant les éléments spirituels au corps physique pour bien comprendre son état et sa fonction.

Le sang, siège de la vie avec le souffle, est le véhicule des forces physiques et spirituelles qui circulent avec lui dans les veines et les artères. Le sacrifice sanglant les libère et elles alimentent les autels, le sol, les êtres qui les reçoivent. Certaines alliances sont consacrées par échange de sang. La couleur franche du sang est la preuve de sa pureté : toute infraction entraîne sa modification, le fait pâlir. Le sang menstruel, témoignage de l'impureté de Mousso Koroni et de l'infécondité momentanée des femmes, est l'interdit principal des puissances surnaturelles créatrices et protectrices de la vie.

La tête, qui contient la pensée est la partie essentielle et le symbole de l'individu : « la tête des sociétaires » est représentée par un trait au cours des rites exécutés par les membres du Komo ou du Kworé. C'est par elle que l'homme croît comme une plante « pousse par son bourgeon de tête (3) ». On préserve, on purifie la tête de l'homme pour entretenir sa santé et sa prospérité. Siège de la conscience et de la volonté, elle reçoit une partie des scarifications faites à la naissance et qui exercent une action sur la personne.

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(1) Cf. p. 170.
(2) Cf. p. 199.
(3) Le mythe fait mention de « la tête du *balanza* » au moment de la rup-

Les cheveux contiennent une part importante du *ni* de l'individu. Il est donc dangereux de les mélanger avec ceux d'autrui : c'est créer un lien vital indissoluble entre les deux parties. Les brûler serait attenter à sa propre vie; on les enterre ou on les introduit dans un trou profond du mur de sa maison, à titre de protection (1).

Les cheveux et le système pileux, dont le rôle apparaît dans le mythe, servaient à compter l'âge des hommes primitifs jusqu'à l'apparition de la mort sur la terre. Tous les ancêtres représentés sur les sanctuaires sont barbus et poilus : cet aspect exprime que, devenus mortels, ils vécurent au temps où le rajeunissement n'existait plus.

La pupille est la partie essentielle de l'œil. Son nom, *nyemani*, « petite personne de l'œil (2) », exprime sa fonction. La pupille reflète et absorbe la personne qu'elle voit : l'image est une sorte de double, de réplique de l'être vu, que celui qui regarde reçoit et conserve à l'aide de l'appareil enregistreur qu'est son œil. C'est avec les yeux que Faro inscrit, dans sa mémoire, le compte des êtres qui sont sous sa domination. C'est par les yeux, comme par le sexe, que la femme s'unit à son mari pendant l'acte sexuel. C'est tout d'abord l'œil qui est atteint dans l'individu en rupture d'interdit : ce dernier en souffre ou devient aveugle suivant le degré de la faute.

Le nez est le canal du souffle de l'homme, de sa respiration *ni na kle* (litt. : âme (qui) monte et descend), terme décrivant le mouvement même de la vie. Ce souffle a pour siège le plexus solaire, *kwa nye*, « œil de la poitrine », dit également *ni dyuru ba* « grande corde de l'âme ». Faro, lorsqu'il est décidé à reprendre la vie d'un homme, l'entraîne dans l'eau et renvoie son cadavre, nez et nombril coupés; la mutilation du nez rappelle que, maître

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ture d'interdit par les hommes qui coupèrent ses bourgeons (cf. p. 23). Les autels des champs et des sociétés de culture, *lŏ*, veillent sur « la tête du mil ».

(1) Nombre de charmes et sortilèges sont à base de cheveux. Pour être aimé d'une femme, on mélange ses cheveux avec les siens et on les place sous sa tête la nuit avec une prière. Pour garder sa situation un employé fait de même avec ses cheveux et ceux de son chef; il sacrifie sur l'ensemble une victime; le chef ne pourra le licencier sans risque grave pour sa vie.

(2) La pupille de l'homme, d'après une information encore obscure, aurait été faite avec celle du serpent et serait appelée aussi *nye mani sa*, « serpent de la petite personne de l'œil ».

de la vie du coupable, il la lui enlève en lui retirant le souffle.

La bouche et la langue interviennent dans tous les rites et symboles concernant la personne. La voix est « dans la gorge » mais c'est avec la bouche que l'homme parle. La parole est créatrice, elle est acte, elle transporte une force, *nyama*, qui siège dans la bouche, imprègne la langue et la salive, et se transmet à tout ce qu'elle atteint. Elle est le verbe de Faro passant par la bouche, verbe reçu dans la souffrance, aux temps mythiques, et qui intègre le genre humain à l'ordre nouveau établi dans la création.

Son organe est la langue qui, représentée sur les objets rituels, la symbolise (1). Le véhicule est la salive : cracher, c'est donner sa parole, c'est déférer un serment. Les vieillards crachent sur les graines, après avoir promis une offrande au Komo; le sacrificateur avant la libation crache sur l'autel des noix de kola qu'il a préalablement mâchées. Les conjoints crachent leur serment de mariage. La force de la bouche trouve son maximum d'expression dans la récitation de la devise par le griot (2).

A l'importance de la bouche et de la langue émettrices du verbe correspond celle de l'oreille réceptive. C'est par elle que l'homme reçoit et retient la parole. Son rôle est assimilé à celui des sexes émetteurs et récepteurs de vie; elle est elle-même un sexe double : mâle par le pavillon, femelle par l'orifice, cette dualité exprimant la gemelléité fondamentale de l'homme. C'est pourquoi le cadavre d'un incirconcis est parfois amputé de l'oreille à défaut du prépuce.

C'est à cause du symbolisme de sa forme et à cause de sa fonction que l'oreille est parée. Les hommes portaient autrefois trois anneaux de cuivre à l'oreille droite et quatre à l'oreille gauche, le chiffre sept représentant l'être complet, mâle et femelle, *ni* et *dya*. Les femmes portent quatre boucles à chaque pavillon, ou, si elles le peuvent, vingt-deux, qui représentent les vingt-deux étapes de la création, les vingt-deux catégories génératrices. Parfois, pour tous deux, un seul anneau fixé au lobe représente la mère des autres boucles (3).

Mais le rôle de cette parure se prolonge : symbole de la parole, c'est par elle que le génie Téliko, maître du son, entend ce qui

(1) Les prières récitées au cours des rites d'initiation font allusion au *nyama* redoutable de la langue des initiés.

(2) Cf. p. 78.

(3) Autrefois, hommes et femmes portaient aux oreilles des cauris à la place d'anneaux de cuivre, coutume qui est encore, paraît-il respectée dans certains villages; ces cauris jouaient le même rôle que le cuivre.

est dit à l'homme. Elle attire le son, le renvoie à Téliko et Faro qui jugent ainsi des paroles et des actes des hommes. Mettre des anneaux d'oreille n'est point, à l'origine, se parer, mais à la fois ouïr et contraindre les génies à entendre ce qui est dit (1). C'est aussi, par effet second, gêner le menteur, le porteur de fausses nouvelles ou de mauvaises paroles en le mettant dans l'obligation d'être compris des invisibles, donc d'être jugé par eux. Une parole aimable ou bienveillante profite à celui auquel elle s'adresse et ce bien est senti comme un apport de *nyama* bénéfique. « Le génie Téliko change l'air émis par le parleur en *nyama* favorable; à l'ouïe d'une bonne parole, il faudrait se boucher les oreilles pour que ce *nyama* ne puisse quitter celui qui l'a reçu. » De plus, ouvrir grand les yeux en regardant celui qui parle « permet à son *nyama* de pénétrer le corps de l'entendeur » et de s'y répandre en flux vivifiant. Dans le même temps, le bon verbe imprègne l'air, favorisant le mouvement de la respiration, donc la vie de celui qui écoute. « On respire, dit l'informateur, avec le *nyama* des paroles entrées par les yeux et par les oreilles. » Mais cet effet n'est pas unilatéral; le bon *nyama* revient au parleur par ses propres yeux tandis qu'il regarde l'autre. Il se reflète dans l'interlocuteur et tout se passe comme s'il s'adressait à lui-même. Il y a là échange bénéfique même lorsqu'un seul des deux acteurs parle.

Inversement, une mauvaise parole ou une injure bouleverse l'entendeur et par contrecoup agit sur l'insulteur. Cette économie résume précisément et puissamment le mouvement universel, principe de vie et de force pour tous les êtres, mouvement individuel provoqué par le verbe qui agit sur le corps en développant et régularisant le rythme de la respiration, mouvement collectif déclenché par retour de ce verbe au parleur. Par l'effet de la parole émise s'instituèrent des échanges favorables au jeu des souffles individuels comme à l'équilibre de la vie universelle. Cet effet n'est pas limité aux paroles *stricto sensu* : la vue jouit des mêmes prérogatives que l'audition et la diction. Si un objet appartenant à un homme est vu et désiré par un autre, le propriétaire ne peut le lui refuser : la vue seule a établi entre l'étranger et l'objet un lien qui est affectivement senti comme plus fort que le droit de propriété.

Les parties articulées du corps humain ne sont pas moins chargées de sens que la tête. Les os, plus durables que les parties molles, témoins dans la tombe de la vie passée, en sont le fondement et l'armature.

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(1) Les anneaux placés sur les instruments de musique ont le même but et représentent aussi ceux qui sont portés par les hommes. Cf. p. 221.

Le nombril est le nœud des articulations : c'est pourquoi Faro lorsqu'il noie un individu, renvoie le corps après en avoir tranché le nez et le nombril; ces deux mutilations démontrent qu'il a repris la tête et le corps du coupable. Les articulations sont le signe de la condition de l'homme dans l'ordre nouveau : autrefois immortel aux membres lisses, il est devenu mortel et travailleur. Sièges de la semence masculine, elles transmettent cette condition à l'embryon formé dans le sein maternel par Faro. La fatigue ressentie dans les membres après l'acte sexuel est la preuve de cette transmission. Lieu de la semence virile, charpente de l'homme, mécanisme propre au travail physique, les articulations sont aussi le symbole de la société : le siège du chef, à forme géniculée, est l'image du corps articulé de son propriétaire, comme de l'armature du corps social et du jointement des individus qu'il tient sous sa juridiction (1).

Les membres matérialisent la droite et la gauche. Sont « droites » la rectitude, la fermeté, l'action dirigée. Sont « gauches » l'incertitude, l'esprit d'indécision, la variation dans la conduite. La droite est mâle; elle symbolise le travail de l'homme; l'autre est femelle. Tous les gestes, profanes et religieux, les représentations de toutes sortes sur les objets en témoignent. Aux premières façons données aux champs, avant les pluies, le cultivateur donne trois coups de houe avec la main gauche, pour absorber l'impureté de la terre. Il travaille ensuite jusqu'aux récoltes de sa main droite. Croiser les mains a sens de supplication, les mettre au dos a sens d'humiliation.

Les doigts ont chacun une valeur. L'auriculaire, *bolokoni lakare* est « le fils des autres doigts » et recèle la force entière de la main; il « porte le *nyama* des doigts ». De là son emploi comme mesure divinatoire. Désigner quelqu'un avec l'auriculaire, le plus petit des doigts, revient à l'abaisser par rapport aux assistants. Pour la même raison c'est avec l'auriculaire qu'est jeté le sort *(korli)* contre un ennemi ou un indésirable.

L'index et le pouce d'un chef, comme autrefois ceux d'un roi, reçoivent dans certaines occasions des signes dits *bolo ti doniya* « connaissance des signes de la main ». Sur l'index sont dessinés trois « actes du monde d'aujourd'hui » *(bi dyè walew)* et sur le pouce deux « choses de l'intérieur du monde secret » *(dyè gundo kono fẽw)*. Car on dit que « la connaissance des signes de la main est le chemin de la création 5, l'index est le monde en 3, le pouce est le monde nouveau (1) ». L'ensemble représente les mondes pensés par *yo* et dont le premier, seul, est réalisé (2).

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(1) Cf. p. 134.

Sur un autre plan les signes du pouce se rapportent aux pouvoirs, ceux de l'index aux domaines royaux (fig. 1, n° 8 à 12) :

1° Signe zéro *(fu)* représentant le début de la création, l'origine de toutes choses. Un segment courbe étendu de gauche à droite connote la dynamique de l'univers. Il est coupé par un signe de multiplication exprimant le développement infini des êtres et des choses. Mais le trait vertical qui le barre sur la gauche marque à la fois l'arrêt et la suppression de l'ensemble (n° 11).

2° Signe de la foudre. Il exprime la puissance et la justice royales et se trace sous la bague de pouce du roi. Celui-ci, quand il donnait un ordre, balançait sa main, ce qui revenait à balancer la foudre devant les interlocuteurs (n° 12).

3° Signe du domaine royal. Son ouverture affirme l'extension possible du royaume; la barre transversale est une protection de ce royaume contre toute destruction (n° 8).

4° Signe de l'extension de ce domaine aux trois côtés cardinaux : est, ouest et sud (n° 9).

5° Signe de l'union. L'ovale représente l'ensemble des fonctionnaires dits *tõdyõ* et *barodẽ*, officiers et conseillers qui, sous l'autorité du roi, administraient le royaume (n° 10).

Les pieds étant constamment en contact avec le sol, se chargent de son impureté. Un individu ayant procédé à des purifications sévères devra éviter, pendant un laps de temps parfois très long de mettre les pieds à terre, car « poser au sol les orteils c'est mettre l'âme en contact avec le sol impur (3) ». C'est aussi par les pieds qu'une part de la force de l'homme se dépose dans les balayures et détritus qu'il foule, réceptacles dont le rôle apparaît dans les rites relatifs aux ordures ménagères et à celles des voies de communication.

Comme l'auriculaire, le petit orteil symbolise la personne entière : il est parfois orné d'un anneau d'argent, symbole du verbe, qui rappelle que le corps de l'homme est le siège de la parole, répandue en lui de la tête aux pieds (4).

La notion de la bisexualité de l'être est fondamentale : les principes spirituels sont sexués comme le corps, dont l'ambivalence est flagrante pendant l'enfance : le garçon est féminin dans son prépuce, la fille est mâle dans son clitoris. L'un des buts de la circoncision et de l'excision est de promouvoir l'enfant dans le sexe auquel il est apparemment destiné en supprimant l'organe du sexe opposé (1). Mais la dualité initiale de l'âme et du corps est le fondement même de l'être : il n'est complet que s'il l'a originairement reçue et il la conserve même après l'opération imposée par la vie physique et sociale, car l'âme de sexe opposé, diminuée dans le corps, reste présente dans l'ombre, le *dya*. Il retrouve aussi son unité gémellaire lorsqu'il se marie : les époux ne font qu'un, leur *dya* se joignant comme leurs corps dans un acte qui n'est pas seulement physique et qui réalise l'union idéale des jumeaux.

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(1) *bolo li doniya ye dali duru sira ye, bolokoni kumba dãɔɔ ye dyẽ saba gundo ye, tyemasa bolokoni ye dyẽ kura ye.*

(2) Sur les mondes pensés par *yo*, cf. p. 8 à 10.

(3) L'invention de la chaussure est liée mythiquement à la notion de l'impureté du sol : il s'agit pour le porteur d'éviter ce contact.

(4) Autrefois l'anneau du petit orteil était fait de fibre rouge de *nyama (nyama fu)*, qui jouait le même rôle que le métal.

L'appartenance sexuelle domine toute l'existence terrestre de l'être humain : les objets, les outils portent les marques féminines ou masculines, selon les règles de la division du travail; les chiffres trois (l'homme) et quatre (la femme) sont des raccourcis du sexe. Les « hommes primitifs », qui, dans l'idée des Bambara, s'exprimaient surtout par gestes et par signes gravèrent leurs rares objets du nombre de traits ou de points se rapportant au sexe des usagers. Ainsi les femmes marquèrent de quatre traits leurs fuseaux tandis que les hommes bobinaient trois fils sur leurs navettes.

Sur le plan métaphysique, il y a identité du corps de l'homme « grain du monde » et de la graine de céréale. Les Bambara distinguent dans celle-ci sept parties qui correspondent à une division en sept groupes des organes humains (2). Homme et grain sont consubstanciels. D'autre part les nourritures de base c'est-à-dire les huit céréales principales sont symboliquement présentes dans les clavicules *(kolõ kalanfiri,* ou *kã kolo) :* l'homme porte en lui ses subsistances dont la situation reflète la situation générale de la personne (3). Témoins de l'intégrité spirituelle de l'homme, ces grains le quittent lorsqu'il est en état d'impureté. Il est alors vidé de sa substance et de sa subsistance. La purification a pour but le rétablissement de cette intégrité.

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(1) Même conception chez les Dogon; cf. M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, p. 185.

(2) Les divisions de la graine sont les suivantes : *kungu* « petite barbe du mil », involucre; *fara dye,* « écorce blanche », glumes et glumelles; *fara fi*, « écorce noire », son et écorce protéique; *fara mugu*, « écorce farineuse » (qui correspond à une zone laiteuse diastasique); *mugu dunla*, « farine à manger », amidon; *kolo dye*, « os blanc », embryon; *kise dẽ*, « fils du grain », microhyle par où sort la radicule au moment de la germination. La classification des organes par rapport à ces divisions est à l'étude. Nous remercions M. Pitot, de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noire pour l'identification des parties du grain correspondant aux divisions indigènes. Dans certains villages, les grains sont soumis à cette décortication et seuls des éléments déterminés sont utilisés dans la composition de la bouillie de mil offerte rituellement.

(3) Cf. p. 30, n. 2.

De plus, les liens qui unissent au cosmos la personne entière, corps et principes spirituels, sont mis en lumière par le fait que la vie de l'homme passe par sept âges successifs correspondant aux sept cieux, aux sept terres, aux sept eaux, aux sept stades de la croissance du mil, et qui sont : *bilakoro* « incirconcis »; *kemĕkoro* « circoncis de la dernière promotion »; *tyebalĕ*, litt. : homme grand; *maselĕ*, litt. : personne arrivée; *makoroba*, litt. : personne âgée; *maderelĕ*, litt. : personne qui ne peut arriver, vieillard; *mabalĕ*, vieillard impotent.

De plus, ces liens sont confirmés annuellement pour tous au cours de rites dits « de renouvellement de l'année ». En renouvelant les points cardinaux les Bambara revigorent la force de ces pôles d'attraction grâce à laquelle se maintiennent les choses en elles-mêmes et les unes par rapport aux autres. Dans le même temps, ils procèdent, du dernier au plus ancien, à un « rafraîchissement du corps et de l'âme ». Ils prennent, pour l'année à venir, un souffle frais, une vie neuve dont le support corporel est lui-même soumis à des purifications externes et internes qui le rendent aptes à remplir son rôle.

III. — EFFETS DE LA MORT SUR LA PERSONNE.

La mort a pour premier effet de dissocier les éléments composant la personne. Les pratiques religieuses, tout imprégnées du respect qu'ils inspirent, ont pour but de régler leur conservation de sorte qu'ils ne soient point perdus pour le défunt, pour la société, pour Faro enfin qui détient la vie et assure la pérennité des âmes.

Le *dya* reste dans l'eau où il sera gardé jusqu'à la naissance d'un enfant. Mais le *ni*, qui s'échappe du corps avec le dernier souffle, est guetté par le chef de famille qui le capte et le transporte dans un autel. Il viendra, nous l'avons vu plus haut, animer le *dya* de l'enfant qui héritera des principes du mort, laissant derrière lui, dans l'autel, une sorte d'exuvie, *mana* ou *folo*, témoignage du passage du disparu.

Le *tere* se transforme à la mort : libéré de son support, il devient *nyama* qui s'échappe et peut parfois s'attaquer aux vivants. La peur provoquée par la vue d'un cadavre est la preuve de son action. Il semble que le complexe force-caractère du *lere* se trouve exprimé par l'activité du *nyama;* mais il n'est réellement dangereux que lors d'une mort violente (meurtre d'un homme ou d'un animal). Dans ce cas, le *nyama* s'attaque au responsable. La mort est-elle naturelle, le *nyama*, comme le *ni*, est dirigé par la parenté et déposé au cours des rites funéraires dans l'autel de famille *(pembele)* où il rejoint les forces ancestrales; leur amalgame forme un tout dont la puissance est utilisée à des fins bénéfiques par le groupe détenteur au cours des rites saisonniers.

Le corps est enterré; il « appartient aux termites » et il n'en restera finalement que les os, témoins de la vie physique auxquels on rend hommage à ce titre; ils sont parfois extraits de la tombe, examinés, priés, avant la remise en place.

Lorsqu'une naissance a lieu dans la famille, le nouveau-né ayant hérité le *ni* et le *dya* du défunt reçoit son *nyama* conservé dans le *pembele* et son prénom, *loko*. Car un être en remplace un autre, utilisant les mêmes forces indéfiniment réemployables. La vie se transmet, intacte; non seulement elle n'est pas diminuée par la mort, mais le séjour du *dya* dans la demeure de Faro est conçu comme un « rafraîchissement », une purification désirable et bienfaisante; de même le passage du *ni* dans les autels familiaux provoque un rajeunissement.

Dans les autels et dans les tombes, « exuvies et ossements comptés et classés par Faro », témoins valables pour l'éternité, serviront à maintenir jusqu'à la résurrection finale l'intégrité de l'ensemble des vivants et des morts.

IV. — ATTRIBUTS DE LA PERSONNE

Le nom :

L'organisation de la famille indivise bambara a déjà fait l'objet de travaux descriptifs (1). Il n'entre pas dans le cadre de cette étude de l'exposer à nouveau. Il convient cependant d'y faire allusion, certains éléments comme le nom de famille, les devises, l'interdit et les relations de parenté dites « à plaisanteries » se rapportant aux composantes de la personne.

Socialement, la personne est située tout d'abord par le prénom *loko*, que portait l'ascendant donateur du *ni* et du *dya*, ou tout autre de la ligne paternelle ou maternelle. Le prénom marque l'appartenance à un groupe familial en même temps que l'individualité. Il est accompagné du nom de famille *(dyamu)* du père, dont l'origine et l'étymologie sont souvent associées à un fait historique (1). Les plus connus des noms découleraient de ceux que portaient les familles mythiques (2). D'autre part, il convient de remarquer qu'un *dyamu*, qui s'applique à un grand nombre de familles indivises vivant sur des territoires divers, n'est pas toujours réservé à ces seuls groupes bambara. Le *dyama* Kouloubali, par exemple, appartient aussi à des Somono et à des Forgerons. C'est dire qu'un *dyamu* est attribué non seulement à une famille *lato sensu* mais à des gens n'entretenant apparemment avec elle aucun rapport de parenté. Un autre fait typique ne nous permet pas de donner au nom de famille le sens qu'il a dans nos sociétés : un individu change de nom lorsqu'il s'expatrie. Un Dogon devient Keyta lorsqu'il va vivre au Mandé. Un Traoré bambara, s'il se rend au pays des Wolof, devient un Diop (3). Enfin, il arrive qu'une famille importante ait plusieurs noms et devises.

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(1) Notamment Ch. MONTEIL. *Les Empires du Mali;* H. LABOURET. *Les Manding et leur langue.*

L'attribution du nom confère à celui qui le porte l'obligation de respecter un interdit *(tne* ou *tana)*. Il ne doit ni tuer, ni surtout manger l'animal ou le végétal qui en fait l'objet, toute infraction à cette règle porte atteinte à son intégrité physique et spirituelle.

D'autre part, des relations nommées communément « parentés à plaisanteries » sont établies entre des familles respectant des interdictions et portant des noms différents; l'un des aspects caractéristiques de cette sorte d'alliance est le fait que les membres de l'une des familles, sont habilités à exécuter pour les membres de l'autre les rites de purification en cas de rupture d'interdit.

Les contes relatant l'origine des noms de famille sont bien connus et il en existe toujours plusieurs versions qui ont été publiées pour les principales familles (4). Certains d'entre eux font apparaître non seulement l'histoire du chef de famille, premier nommé, mais en même temps l'origine de l'interdit attaché au nom ou celle des relations de parenté observées par les porteurs avec les membres d'une autre famille.

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(1) Sur l'aspect historique du *dyamu*, cf. P. Humblot. *Du nom propre et des appellations chez les Malinké*. M. Delafosse. *Des soi-disant clans totémiques de l'Afrique occidentale*. Ch. Monteil. *Les Empires du Mali*.

(2) Le mythe bambara fait allusion aux noms de famille qui furent déterminés par Faro lorsqu'il classa les êtres et les choses. On dit couramment de cet événement: « Quand le Faro a voyagé, il a brisé l'appui de Mousso Koroni et l'accord au sujet des noms a été fait par lui » *(faro tama na muso koroni figi kari la, dyama dyamy ko la dili kera faro fę)*.

(3) L'enquête reste à faire sur ce point très important de l'organisation sociale des Soudanais.

(4) Cf. entre autres L. Tauxier. *La Religion bambara*, p. 119 et ss.

A cet égard, l'une des versions concernant les Kouloubali est des plus suggestives :

« Les Kouloubali descendent d'une famille dite *kuludyu* qui vivait dans un village souterrain au lieu dit *kuluba* (litt. : grande montagne) au Mandé. Une famine qui durait depuis cinquante-deux ans, s'était abattue sur la région; les gens ne savaient que faire et mangeaient les feuilles des arbres pour ne point mourir.

Deux amis, nommés *Konyo* (litt. : mariage) et *Mbaduṅ* (litt. : je mange) étant sortis de leurs habitations, tentèrent un voyage pour trouver de la nourriture. Ils rencontrèrent trois hommes et décidèrent d'agir en commun pour sortir de cette pénible situation. Revenant au village, les nouveaux venus, voyant des excréments d'hyène, plaisantèrent leur couleur blanche : « Vous ne mangiez, dirent-ils, que des os. » « Mais non, répondirent en riant les deux autres, ce sont les excréments de l'hyène. » Et ils demandèrent à leurs nouveaux amis leur nom, ajoutant qu'eux-mêmes n'en avaient pas.

Tous ensemble cherchèrent alors à faire du feu. Une nuit, ils remarquèrent une flamme sortant apparemment des branches d'un kapokier. L'arbre était placé près d'un rocher et le vent, faisant frotter vivement la branche contre la pierre, déterminait des étincelles qui enflammaient le kapok. Ils frottèrent alors deux morceaux de bois l'un contre l'autre et obtinrent du feu qu'ils entretinrent ensuite pendant six mois. Ils conservèrent jalousement leur secret et les hommes dont certains ignoraient le feu et faisaient encore sécher leur viande au soleil vinrent leur demander des braises, leur donnant en échange du mil, du sel et des animaux domestiques. Ils leur donnèrent aussi leurs filles en mariage. L'un d'eux, appartenant à la famille Diara, leur demanda leur nom de famille. Et comme ils répondaient qu'ils n'en avaient pas. « Qu'à cela ne tienne, répliqua-t-il, vous habiterez une grande montagne, prenez le nom de Kouloubali. » Ils leur demandèrent ensuite le nom de leur allié *senānku*. « Nous n'en avons pas, dirent les nouveaux hommes, mais nous vivons depuis cette famine avec des amis. »

Ils décidèrent alors de fêter le mariage de Konyo avec la fille de Diara et la nouvelle alliance *(seninkuya)* conclue entre les deux familles. Plus tard, d'autres membres de la famille Diara vinrent habiter avec eux; un village prospère se créa là où vivaient les Kouloubali.

Leur nombre s'étant accru, les hommes résolurent de partir en guerre pour gagner d'autres terres cultivables. Ils vainquirent les Toucouleurs de la région de Ségou et finirent par prendre la ville où ils entrèrent en triomphateurs.

L'une des phrases de leur devise : *kulubali kulu dyā tasuma*

« Kouloubali du feu de la grande montagne » rappelle à la fois leur origine territoriale et celle de leur fortune.

La devise :

Au nom est généralement attachée une devise, *barama*, dont l'énoncé est le type même de l'émission efficace (1). Le trajet effectué à l'intérieur de l'individu qui l'entend, son effet sur lui et l'effet de retour sur le récitant, se développent selon un mécanisme connu.

Le *barama*, mot que l'on peut traduire par encouragement, éloge, flatterie, est un récit généralement poétique, relatant l'origine du nom, et les hauts faits des ancêtres (2).

Ainsi l'un des éléments de la devise des Diara témoigne du rôle de leurs aïeux :

« Diara, Zan de Nyaola, Yayiri de Nyaola, ton grand-père, a courbé le monde comme une faucille, l'a redressé comme un chemin net; petit-fils de Dieu sur terre, Diara (3)! »

Un autre élément exalte leur courage au combat :

« Diara, Koné; s'il n'y a pas un Koné parmi les guerriers, qui vont se battre, la troupe est battue (d'avance). Le lion a brisé un grand os (4). »

La devise des Tangara rappelle aussi leur histoire et leurs victoires :

« Descendants de Falé, Kwonda, Méné; d'autres braves ont acheté le droit de s'asseoir au village; nous, braves, nous l'avons gagné avec le carquois et les flèches (5). »

De plus la devise comporte également l'énoncé de la généalogie du porteur, *burudyu* (6). Dire cette généalogie « attaque les ancêtres ». Parler d'eux, les citer, raconter leurs hauts faits, les honore et les rend propices. Au cours de la récitation « l'air émis par le parleur » se transforme par le pouvoir du génie Téliko, en fraîcheur qui pénètre les ancêtres (1). Il en est de même pour les puissances surnaturelles. Dès que le chef du Komo récite le *burudyu* de Faro, « l'air sortant de la bouche du chef, se transforme en bon *nyama* qui pénètre le corps de Faro par les pupilles et les oreilles ».

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(1) Nous renvoyons le lecteur à l'ouvrage de Mme Solange de GANAY, *Les Devises des Dogon*, dans lequel cette importante institution a été longuement étudiée et commentée. Les caractères des devises bambara sont très comparables. Sans aborder le problème dans son ensemble, il convenait de préciser l'effet de ces dernières sur la personne, dans l'idée du Bambara.

(2) La devise n'est généralement connue dans son ensemble que par les griots mais certaines parties, certaines phrases traditionnelles connues de tous, servent à saluer son propriétaire.

(3) *dyara, nyaola zã, nyaola yayiri, i moke ye ka dyẽ kuru i ko woloso ka forti i ko sira tike nindye; duguma ngala modẽ, dyara. Nyaola* est un village. Le nom de Zan est toujours donné au fils aîné d'une famille. Le mot *dyara* signifie aussi lion.

(4) *dyara, kone, kone če kele te kele min oye fele ye; dyara ye kolo ba kari.* Koné est un autre *dyamu* des Diara. *fele* se dit d'un groupe d'hommes réunis pour la chasse et la guerre.

(5) *fale kwonda mene šiw, tow bomaw ye dugu sã ka sigi, aw bemaw ya soro ni to ani kala.* Falé, Kwohda et Méné sont des noms d'ancêtres. La devise est celle des Tangara du village de Barbé.

(6) On emploie le mot *ši* qui signifie race, pour désigner le *burudyu*, lequel est assimilable au *dambe* des Peuls de Mopti.

Dire à un homme son *burudyu* c'est l'honorer grandement. Il pense à ses aïeux, à leur fortune et à leur gloire, il est fier de descendre d'eux et il est incité à faire autant et mieux qu'eux. L'effet de la « bonne parole » décrit plus haut est dû à l'action indirecte mais puissante des ancêtres (2). La récitation par un tiers a pour effet d'entretenir l'individu dans son être, de l'y faire persévérer en l'affirmant (3) car la devise s'adresse à l'âme, *ni*, de son possesseur. Si à ce moment le flatté est dans un état normal, sa devise lui fait « gonfler l'âme et durcir le corps, l'incite à l'action courageuse, à la joie ». Dans le cas contraire, la colère ou l'émotion font place au contentement et au calme.

Le récitant reçoit en retour la force de cette parole bénéfique qui, ayant contenté le destinataire, le contente aussi. Il y a échange de *nyama* : celui que le récitant envoie et celui qu'il reçoit en retour et dont il profite.

C'est pourquoi la récitation de la devise n'est pas toujours laissée au gré de chacun. Elle est devenue, du fait de son importance, une fonction publique réservée généralement aux griots, *dyeliw*, qui forment une caste pratiquant l'endogamie et dont le gagne-pain consiste à réciter contre paiement les devises et les flatteries dans la vie courante comme au cours des cérémonies religieuses ou publiques (4). Mais le fait de recevoir un salaire pour ce service porte atteinte à leur dignité : nul autre ne les déclame pour ne point être pris pour un griot, nul ne se marie avec lui. Le griot est à la fois nécessaire, craint et méprisé; le mécanisme des forces mises en mouvement par son action permet de comprendre l'ambivalence des sentiments dont il est l'objet.

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(1) *teliko ba sumaya se u ma* « Teliko fait arriver à eux la fraîcheur ».

(2) L'âme *(ni)* des ancêtres cités n'est cependant pas appelée ni déplacée par la récitation. C'est la force vitale *nyama*, qui est ici mise en mouvement.

(3) Cet effet est déjà obtenu par la simple répétition du nom de famille dont on salue un homme en le rencontrant; on entend couramment les Noirs se saluer en se répétant plusieurs fois leur *dyamu*.

(4) Cette récitation effectuée par un autre homme que le griot serait loin de produire le même effet.

Quand les paroles sortent de la bouche, le *tere* du griot se transforme en *nyama*, qui se remplit d'une force dite *kuma nyamu*, « *nyama* des paroles ». Celui-ci passe de la tête dans la bouche du parleur et atteint l'interpelé. Si un homme est riche et puissant, on dit qu'il a le « *nyama* de la bouche des griots qui le flattent ». Il est alors contraint de leur payer leurs encouragements. Sinon, lorsque ces derniers passent devant sa porte, ils ne disent plus rien et le vident ainsi de son *nyama* : l'homme maigrit et s'appauvrit. Avec de mauvaises paroles, les griots peuvent provoquer sa mort, leur *nyama* attaquant le cœur, la poitrine, puis le corps tout entier de la victime.

Ce pouvoir du griot sur celui qu'il flatte se complique et varie suivant ce qu'il récite. S'il déclame plusieurs fois le *burudyu*, s'il parle longtemps des ancêtres, leur *nyama* vient dans sa bouche et s'ajoute au sien propre, renforçant ainsi la puissance de la parole. Ainsi lorsque le griot récite un *barama* sans recevoir de paiement, son *nyama* attaque l'interpelé. En cas de récidive et si le *burudyu* est déclamé, l'homme est contraint de payer s'il ne veut pas être attaqué par le *nyama*, beaucoup plus redoutable encore, des ancêtres.

Dans ces divers cas, le *tere* du flatté intervient : s'il est bon il lutte pour défendre l'homme, mais s'il est faible ou mauvais, il se joint aux forces ancestrales et l'homme est doublement atteint.

La récitation est toujours faite par le griot devant témoin pour que son action soit plus contraignante et fasse perdre la face à l'avare. En contrepartie, un homme qui paie largement le griot est servi par ce dernier qui chante en tous lieux sa générosité et proclame la somme reçue, dont il ne craint pas d'ailleurs d'exagérer le montant s'il espère en tirer profit (1).

La devise est récitée dans de nombreuses circonstances. Après la naissance, les griots la proclament au cours de la cérémonie de la dation du nom, en s'adressant au père puis au nouveau-né qui la reçoit ainsi pour la première fois. Au mariage on déclame alternativement les *barama* des deux conjoints. Dans la vie courante, la récitation est effectuée le plus souvent pendant les cérémonies religieuses ou les fêtes. A la chasse ou à la guerre, elle a pour effet d'aider les acteurs et d'augmenter leur courage (1). Dans une assemblée, pour saluer les gens d'un même nom, on le leur répète et, si l'on veut particulièrement flatter l'un des assistants, on récite les premiers mots de sa devise.

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(1) Si le griot sait que l'homme riche auquel il s'adresse est avare il se frotte les dents avec des racines dont il connaît le pouvoir pour rendre sa parole plus efficace encore.

Il arrive qu'un homme s'accorde en secret avec le griot pour se faire valoir. Il lui remet publiquement une somme considérable dont le griot lui rend le lendemain une part convenue. Le don est si généreux qu'il ne peut être dépassé.

Cette pratique s'observe notamment au moment du mariage : les hommes de la promotion du conjoint cherchant à se surpasser l'un l'autre par leurs dons au griot. Celui qui a le plus donné passe pour le plus généreux. Il arrive que le griot, même s'il ne connaît pas la devise, invente sur l'heure un nouveau *barama*.

A un malade, l'allié *(senãnku)* (2) vient dire son *barama* pour l'encourager et l'aider à guérir. S'il est mourant, cette récitation, qui est alors l'équivalent d'une prière, peut faire revenir son âme. Après le décès, l'allié, les griots, les forgerons viennent près du cadavre réciter son *barama* pour l'honorer.

Les devises de métiers se donnent à l'artisan que l'on vient voir; ainsi le forgeron à qui on apporte du travail est salué d'abord par son nom auquel on ajoute :

ini fara ani goni : « tu es avec la pierre et le feu ».

En traversant un champ on dit au cultivateur penché sur la terre : *i ni tye i ba ka kusebe daba*, « salut à qui manie bien la houe » ou simplement : *i ni tye daba la*, « salut à celui qui est avec la houe »; on dit au cordonnier : *bana ani ba golo* « (tu es) avec l'acacia (3) et le cuir de chèvre ».

L'institution de la devise, avec tous les développements qu'elle comporte a pour effet de confirmer les êtres dans leurs corps, leurs principes spirituels et leurs appartenances sociales. A l'exception des cas d'émigration cités plus haut, rares sont ceux qui obligent un individu à changer de nom ou de devise au cours de la vie : même mariée, une femme conserve le *barama* de son père.

Un bâtard ne reçoit ni le nom ni les devises de sa famille : on peut plus tard les lui donner si son père se fait connaître. Un Bambara qui se mésallie, par exemple, en épousant une fille de forgeron ou de griot, met au monde des enfants impurs qui n'auront jamais droit au *barama* de leur père (4).

Il faut ajouter que l'attribution des devises n'est pas limitée à la personne humaine : tous les êtres animés, beaucoup d'êtres inanimés, les éléments de la nature, les lieux et les agglomérations, les plantes, les animaux, toutes les puissances surnaturelles ont les leurs que leur donnent les hommes au cours des prières.

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(1) Si le griot le récite à un chef de guerre et que la ville attaquée soit prise, il reçoit une part de butin.

(2) Cf. p. 83.

(3) Il s'agit du *bana* ou *boina (Acacia arabica)* qui est utilisé par le cordonnier pour la fabrication d'une teinture noire.

(4) On dit d'un tel enfant qu'il est un *sofali* (litt. cheval âne), c'est-à-dire un bâtard.

L'interdit :

Au nom de famille est attaché un ou plusieurs interdits alimentaires, *tne* ou *tana*, qu'observent tous les porteurs. Pour certains initiés, les interdits ont été édictés par Faro lorsque ayant classé les êtres de la création il a déterminé la nourriture propre à chaque espèce (1). Pour l'homme du commun, l'origine de la prohibition fait toujours l'objet d'un conte ou d'une légende, justifiant les liens unissant un ancêtre de la famille et l'animal ou le végétal désigné. Le plus souvent, l'animal a rendu service à l'homme, lui a sauvé la vie, ou inversement; ou bien à la suite d'événements graves, l'ancêtre s'est transformé en animal ou en végétal. Des versions nombreuses sont données de l'origine de ces liens.

Il n'a pas été possible jusqu'ici d'envisager tous les aspects des divers interdits. D'autre part la multiplicité des versions qui sont données de leur origine montrent que l'histoire courante, racontée à tout venant, recouvre des notions beaucoup plus profondes, celles des catégories qui témoignent des liens unissant les hommes aux animaux et aux végétaux (2). Il conviendrait aussi d'étudier les rapports des espèces entre elles, des animaux avec les végétaux et les minéraux en fonction des forces spirituelles qui les animent.

Quoi qu'il en soit, l'interdit confère à l'homme son titre de noblesse et c'est être déchu que de n'en pas posséder. Il assure la protection du groupe qui l'observe. Ainsi les hyènes de Konodimini protègent les habitants du village qui les nourrissent.

Exemples d'interdits :

La famille Traoré a pour interdit la chair du crocodile. Un ancêtre nommé Makyon s'étant transformé en crocodile, nourrit sa famille pendant une famine qui durait depuis six ans; il pêchait pour elle du poisson qu'il lui apportait.

La septième année, la famine sévissant toujours, les Traoré décidèrent de le tuer pour le manger. Au matin, lorsqu'il parut avec le fruit de sa pêche, un vieillard s'avança pour l'attaquer, l'animal l'arrêta et lui prédit sa mort s'il poursuivait son dessein. L'homme n'en tint aucun compte et blessa la bête qui eut cependant encore la force de retoûrner au fleuve. Le vieillard regretta son acte et les autres tentèrent de dégager leur responsabilité. Le lendemain matin le crocodile sortit du fleuve et vint mourir à leurs pieds afin qu'ils vissent ce qu'ils avaient fait. Le coupable fut à son tour tué par les siens et les deux cadavres enterrés ensemble dans le même suaire. Quand tout fut fini, le chef révéla que Maydon était un membre de la famille, qu'il avait nourri les siens, étant de même race, pendant la famine et que dorénavant le crocodile serait l'interdit des Traoré, en reconnaissance de ce don et comme excuse du meurtre commis.

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(1) Cf. page 29.

(2) Cf. également L. Tauxier. *La Religion bambara* (Théorie des Ntana et des tabous) p. 114 à 138.

L'interdit de la famille Diara est le lion, animal dont elle porte le nom. Deux vieux amis, aux temps anciens, chassaient toujours ensemble avec flèches et harpons. Au cours d'une longue famine, leurs armes s'étant brisées, ils ne purent s'en procurer d'autres. Pour nourrir leurs familles, ils attaquèrent les animaux sauvages avec leurs mains nues : l'un assommait ses proies avec ses poings, l'autre les dépouillait.

Peu à peu l'existence qu'ils menaient transforma leur comportement. Ils cessèrent de se laver, leurs cheveux et leurs barbes poussèrent, des poils épais couvrirent leur corps. Leurs ongles devinrent si longs et si durs qu'ils s'en servaient pour trancher la viande et creuser le sol. Ils oublièrent jusqu'au langage qu'ils parlaient et ne communiquèrent plus que par grognements.

Ils luttaient avec les génies pour s'établir sur les lieux qui leur étaient ordinairement réservés. Ils cessèrent de retourner dans leur village et leurs parents les cherchaient, mais dès qu'ils voyaient des hommes, ils s'enfuyaient. Ils finirent par marcher à quatre pattes, et devinrent semblables aux animaux qu'ils pourchassaient.

Un jour qu'ils dormaient l'un près de l'autre, ils s'unirent sexuellement, et le plus fort engrossa le plus faible, qui mit au monde, un peu plus tard, deux lionceaux. Les hommes qui les virent dans la brousse avec leur progéniture décidèrent qu'ils ne pourraient désormais tuer un lion car il avait de leur sang dans les veines. Encore aujourd'hui, si un Diara rencontre un lion, l'animal se couche au sol « tant il a honte de descendre de l'accouplement de deux hommes devenus comme des bêtes ».

Ces deux exemples, choisis entre bien d'autres, illustrent les rapports de l'homme et de l'animal, lesquels apparaissent mieux encore dans le mécanisme déclenché par la rupture de l'interdit adopté.

En effet, toute infraction a d'abord pour conséquence de retirer au fautif les graines de ses clavicules, symbole de ses nourritures essentielles; il devient « un grenier vide » et, privé de ses forces, est inapte à lutter contre celles de l'animal lésé qui l'attaque. Le mal qui l'atteint à ce moment démontre cet état d'infériorité physique et psychique à la fois : toute rupture d'interdit affecte d'abord les yeux, puis les autres ouvertures du corps.

Si l'animal est blessé, il délègue son *lere* au coupable pour l'avertir de la faute commise, mais n'attente pas à sa vie puisqu'il est son allié. En revanche, sa mort libère son *nyama* qui agit d'une façon plus énergique. Mais il est plus grave encore de manger son interdit que de le tuer, car l'intéressé ne peut se débarrasser du *nyama* de sa victime et doit en subir tous les effets.

Le coupable se rend au bord du Niger et, à haute voix, expose le fait à Faro en lui apportant une offrande (bouillie de mil, cuivre, etc.) puis il boit un peu d'eau et s'en retourne. S'il est trop loin du fleuve, il se rend en un lieu écarté et agit de même en versant un peu de son sang en guise d'expiation. Ces actes ont pour effet de le mettre en règle vis-à-vis de Faro qu'il a offensé en rompant l'ordre établi. Puis il procède à des rites de purification, lesquels ont pour agent son allié *senãnku* et sont exécutés sur un carrefour, *dangu* (1). Ceux-ci ont pour effet de le débarrasser du *nyama* de sa victime, puis de faire réintégrer dans ses clavicules le symbole des huit céréales nourricières : il récupère ainsi ses forces perdues. Après sa guérison, les vieillards de sa famille le convoquent et lui font de sévères recommandations car une nouvelle rupture n'est réparable par aucune purification : le *nyama* de l'animal ne quitte plus le récidiviste qui peut en mourir.

Les infractions volontaires, très rares, entraînent bien entendu pour l'intéressé les conséquences les plus graves puisque sa responsabilité est engagée. Il n'en est pas de même dans le cas contraire. Si un homme a consommé sans le savoir son interdit au cours d'un repas pris chez un autre, le *nyama* de l'animal peut attaquer les responsables : l'hôte, ou sa femme, tombe malade. Il faut alors que la femme coupable aille demander son pardon : mains au dos et à genoux, elle expose le fait à l'intéressé qui peut, pour la punir, demander à réfléchir et la faire attendre. Sinon il exige trois noix de cola avec lesquelles il exécute le *dyanzani*, « remplacement » : il les jette dans la brousse ou les donne au premier pauvre qu'il rencontre. Quelques jours après, le responsable est libéré.

(1) Cf. p. 139. La purification peut, dans certains cas, être effectuée par un ascendant et comporter des ablutions avec de l'eau consacrée par une prière adressée à Faro.

V. — La parenté a plaisanteries.

Une institution considérable est également liée au nom de famille : il s'agit de la relation nommée « parenté à plaisanteries » *dyo benalye* (litt. : accord entre nous) qui s'intègre dans les rapports généraux de parenté désignés en pays mandingue sous le nom de *senãnkuya*. Mais on distingue les rapports de famille *stricto sensu*, dits *sindyi benalye* (litt. : lait du sein entre nous) du *dyo benalye* qui intéresse au contraire les membres de deux familles, ou même de deux peuples différents.

C'est ainsi qu'un Koulibali est *senãnku* d'un Keita chez les Bambara : Bozo et Dogon, Bozo et Somono sont également *senãnku* (1). Au Mandé, un Koulibali et un Tangara s'étant liés d'une longue et durable amitié, décidèrent de la sceller de façon définitive. Ils s'ouvrirent les veines et mirent un peu de sang de l'une des plaies sur l'autre, réalisant l'alliance par cet échange. Puis ils préparèrent un repas qu'ils consommèrent ensemble en proférant le serment de ne jamais faire couler réciproquement leur sang.

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(1) La parenté à plaisanteries nommée *senãnkuya* chez les Bambara est dite *mãgu* chez les *Dogon*, *dagana* chez les Bozo, etc... Cette importante institution, qui embrasse l'ensemble des populations du Soudan Français, a déjà fait l'objet d'un certain nombre d'études. Cf. en particulier M. Delafosse. *Haut-Sénégal Niger*, t. III, p. 206. H. Labouret. *La Parenté à plaisanteries en Afrique occidentale*, D. Paulme. *Parenté à plaisanteries et alliance par le sang en Afrique occidentale*, R. Radcliffe Brown. *On jocking Relationships*.

Dans l'*Alliance cathartique*, M. Griaule éclaire les rapports Dogon-Bozo qui sont à l'origine de l'institution dans le Soudan. Celle-ci fait apparaître la notion fondamentale de gemelléité des êtres et des principes qui les animent. Un Dogon et un Bozo sont des jumeaux, chacun d'eux portant une parcelle de l'autre dans son corps et son âme : quand il injurie ou purifie, c'est à cette part de lui-même dans l'autre qu'il s'adresse et les forces qu'il communique ainsi viennent en aide à son partenaire.

Les dernières enquêtes poursuivies sur ce sujet ont apporté les faits suivants : Dogon et Bozo ont respectivement huit graines et huit poissons dans les clavicules et réalisent ainsi le partage des nourritures célestes (cf. p. 30). Celles-ci sont les témoins de leur intégrité spirituelle et toute rupture d'interdit a pour effet premier de priver l'intéressé de ses graines ou de ses poissons. L'institution a pour but de permettre à l'allié d'intervenir pour faire réintégrer les nourritures dans le corps du coupable.

Il convient de remarquer que dans les cas où elles sont désignées par le même terme (*senãnkuya*) l'on ne saurait confondre les relations interfamiliales, qui d'ailleurs comportent également des échanges de plaisanteries, avec les relations de famille à famille (plus exactement de nom à nom), de population à population.

De plus, à l'intérieur de ce dernier groupe, on observe plusieurs sortes d'alliances : certaines comportent l'exogamie (Dogon et Bozo; Bozo et Peul, etc...) d'autres excluent la possibilité de procéder aux rites de purification. Il y a aura donc lieu d'examiner le plus grand nombre de cas possibles avant d'établir les règles de cette sorte d'alliance.

Ainsi fut consacré entre eux et leurs descendants le *dyo benalye* (1). Une telle alliance a la valeur d'une parenté; elle comporte l'obligation absolue de ne jamais attenter à la vie, aux biens du *senānku*. Les parties se doivent assistance dans de nombreux cas : services de nourriture, de logement, aide matérielle; secours en cas de guerre, de poursuites judiciaires; présence obligatoire au cours de cérémonies religieuses, purifications en cas de rupture d'interdit.

Ces règles impliquent que l'alliance affecte non seulement l'individu dans son aspect social, mais aussi dans ses principes spirituels. Le *senānku* est une sorte de jumeau de tout individu appartenant à l'autre famille; il a en lui une parcelle de son partenaire, et réciproquement.

De ce fait, les réactions déclenchées par l'insulte ou la plaisanterie sont particulières : le *senānku* entendra de la bouche de l'autre, sans se fâcher, des moqueries qu'il ne tolérerait pas habituellement. Il ne saurait en être affecté puisque les paroles s'adressent à la parcelle de son être qui lui vient de son insulteur. Mieux, la plaisanterie ou l'injure, sans l'atteindre dans ses principes, a pour effet de le confirmer dans sa situation vis-à-vis de celui qui lui parle, d'affirmer l'état des deux parties, donc d'augmenter leur vitalité. Elle détermine des mouvements de forces dont les deux interlocuteurs reçoivent, comme d'une parole bénéfique, un bienfait réciproque.

Cet effet est utilisé dans de nombreuses occasions, notamment lors de l'accession à un nouvel état social ou à un nouveau grade. Le *senānku* plaisante un nouveau-né dès l'imposition du nom et, plus tard, le jour où il porte son premier vêtement. Les circoncis deviennent alliés et plaisantent entre eux le jour du *daworo* qui consacre la promotion (2). Au soir du mariage, la jeune femme est l'objet de sarcasmes rituels qui marquent son introduction définitive dans le groupe familial du mari.

Le *senānku* est seul habilité, dans certains cas, à procéder à des rites de purification rendus nécessaires par une rupture d'interdit *(tne)*. Il a en effet, dans les clavicules, et seulement

(1) C'est à cause de cette alliance que les membres de la famille Kouloubali se sont vus autorisés par les Tangara du village de Barbé (région de Mopti) à venir s'installer dans l'agglomération. Le chef Tangara leur a concédé du terrain pour édifier leurs maisons et établir leurs champs. Les deux groupes vivent là en parfaite intelligence.

(2) Cf. p. 186.

vis-à-vis de son partenaire, le double des graines symboliques, soit seize. Il est de ce fait qualifié, par son geste purificateur et par son rôle essentiel de pourvoyeur nourricier, à faire réintégrer dans les clavicules du coupable les graines qui l'avaient quitté. Si la faute est légère, le contrevenant lui donne du mil, de l'argent ou un objet. Le *nyama* de l'animal lésé se dépose sur l'objet et le *senānku* qui le reçoit en débarrasse l'intéressé sans que lui-même en soit affecté. Si la faute est plus grave, les deux alliés se rendent à une croisée de chemin, *dangu :* le *senānku* fait tourner de gauche à droite une torche de paille en forme de croix autour de la tête du coupable. L'être offensé par la faute ne peut rien refuser devant cette procédure. Il retire le *nyama* qu'il avait infligé, et l'homme, puissamment secouru par les forces du purificateur, récupère celles qu'il avait perdues, symbolisées par les graines de ses clavicules.

Ce rôle cathartique par réintégration des subsistances dans leur siège humain est illustré dans la vie courante par les prestations alimentaires auxquelles sont tenus les alliés. Il y a là comme une représentation laïque et matérielle d'une opération invisible de purification.

VI. — LA PERSONNE : CAS EXCEPTIONNELS.

Certaines particularités physiques sont le témoignage visible d'une modification des éléments composant la personne. Il convient donc d'envisager le cas des individus qui en sont affectés.

A. — *Jumeaux :*

Les jumeaux, *flani* (litt. : deux petits), sont deux êtres neufs donnés aux hommes par Faro et considérés comme issus de lui seul. De ce fait, les jumeaux n'héritent ni du *dya* ni du *ni* d'un défunt, mais de principes nouveaux qui leur viennent du génie. De plus, leur *dya* ne quitte jamais l'eau pour l'ombre et séjournent pendant toute leur vie entre ses mains : de ce fait ils restent à l'abri de tout danger comme de toute impureté.

Une telle naissance, considérée comme bénéfique, n'est accordée qu'à certains êtres privilégiés dits *kunandi*. Elle est annoncée en montrant l'index droit et l'index gauche dressés sans mot dire, car sa proclamation serait si puissante qu'elle nuirait aux nouveau-nés. Leur mère met autour de son front une bande de coton blanc, dite *dyala*, qui témoigne de la présence des *dya* des enfants entre les mains de Faro. Chacun se rend dans la demeure des parents et leur apporte ce qu'il peut donner : car donner aux jumeaux revient à donner à Faro.

Le rite de dation des noms est exécuté au bord du fleuve si le village est situé à proximité du Niger, au bord d'une mare à son défaut. Les enfants sont portés par leurs parents qui, à eux deux, représentent le chiffre sept. Ils sont baignés, leurs cheveux rasés et jetés au fleuve, tandis que le père dit : « Mère Faro, tes fils sont nés, voici leurs cheveux (1) ». Puis il présente la bande *dyala* portée par la mère à l'officiant qui la fait tourner autour du front de l'enfant en disant : « Ces deux personnes sont plus âgées que moi; que le *nyama* du nom qui va leur être donné parte avec le *dyala* (2) ». Puis, il leur donne un nom spécial (3).

Le lendemain, la mère portant l'un des enfants et accompagnée d'une femme chargée de l'autre, va quêter du mil ou du coton dans le village. Elle tient dans ses mains deux cuillers-calebasses identiques. Les dons, égaux en poids et qualité, symbolisent les jumeaux; ils sont placés dans les cuillers et la femme, croisant les deux mains, les verse dans le panier où elle transporte les offrandes (4).

Trois ou quatre jours après le rite de dation des noms, suivant le sexe des intéressés, on leur met des bracelets de métal blanc qui représentent leur *dya* : sur chacun d'eux sont gravés des symboles géométriques de l'univers, ciel et terre (5). L'ouverture du bracelet représente celle du monde terrestre incomplet : quand les jumeaux mourront, ils seront enterrés avec leurs bracelets refermés sur leurs bras ou leurs chevilles pour exprimer qu'ils ont pénétré dans un monde clos et complet. Autrefois les sacrifices offerts à Faro étaient exécutés avec de telles parures, empruntées à un jumeau et que le sacrificateur présentait au

(1) *ba faro i wolo dew kunsi ye nin ye.*

(2) *nin ma fla ka koro u ma, u čua dali nyama ka ta fini disa fêw dyɔla fę.*

(3) Séni et Sinè pour des garçons; Bintou et Wasa pour des filles. Chez les Bambara islamisés cette coutume est également respectée, les noms donnés étant toujours Alassan et Fouséni. Il s'agit vraisemblablement d'une déformation des noms arabes donnés aux jumeaux au Maroc.

(4) Tout le symbolisme des dons faits aux jumeaux comme celui de la double poterie (cf. plus bas) confirme les observations effectuées au Soudan sur les rapports entre eux et le commerce. Cf. à ce sujet M. GRIAULE. *Dieu d'eau*, p. 234 et ss. Il est intéressant de remarquer que chaque jumeau est le *dya* de l'autre et que ce terme signifie à la fois « ombre du corps » « double spirituel » et « balance ». Commercer se dit *dyago*.

(5) La figure est faite d'un rectangle divisé en deux carrés égaux superposés, comprenant un signe de multiplication dans le carré inférieur, la terre, un v ouvert dans le carré supérieur, le ciel.

fleuve en disant : « Le fer des jumeaux est le témoin du sacrifice offert à Faro (1) ». Après la cérémonie, chacun remettait au jumeau des noix de kola blanches : l'intéressé se rendait sur la grand-place et secouait en l'air ses bras ornés de leur parure pour disperser aux quatre points cardinaux le *nyama* bénéfique de Faro acquis au cours du sacrifice. Dans certaines régions les jumeaux portent un pendentif en forme de fers d'esclaves doubles, dit *dyõ neke* « fer du captif », ou une amulette nommée *sinzin* « appui », composée d'un petit morceau de bois taillé en forme de double cupule et qui est de préférence confectionnée par un Bozo. Un homme ayant eu trois fois des jumeaux doit se procurer une poterie double qui sera toujours maintenue pleine d'eau et sera l'objet d'un sacrifice annuel (2).

Jusqu'à douze ans les ablutions des enfants sont exécutées de préférence au Niger; ceux-ci sont censés pouvoir marcher sur les eaux, et ne jamais courir aucun risque de noyade.

Les jumeaux ne se quittent pas plus que ne se séparent le *dya* et le vivant auquel il est attaché. Ils se vêtent des mêmes habits, mangent simultanément la même nourriture; autrefois deux jumeaux mâles épousaient la même femme. Si l'un d'eux meurt en bas âge, le forgeron confectionne une petite poupée de bois dite *flanilokele*, qui reçoit le nom du défunt et que la mère place sur la natte à côté de l'enfant vivant. Ce dernier emporte avec lui cette poupée au moment de sa circoncision et la conserve pendant toute sa retraite pour la rapporter dans la demeure paternelle qu'elle ne doit plus quitter. Quand il se marie, il plante en terre la poupée avec un autre bois qui symbolise la femme du défunt. Les jumeaux étant en quelque sorte une vivante réplique de Faro, nul ne saurait les importuner sans lui manquer de respect. Ils sont au contraire l'objet de prévenances et de précautions de la part de leur famille comme de leurs voisins. Leur présence est toujours bénéfique. Considérés comme invulnérables, les jumeaux marchaient autrefois sur le front des troupes en temps de guerre, et, pendant les trêves, servaient de parlementaires inviolables entre les partis engagés.

B. — *Hermaphrodite :*

L'hermaphrodite, étant à la fois mâle et femelle, est lui-même, matériellement, son propre jumeau. En conséquence, il n'a pas de *dya* (3).

(1) *flani neke ye ma sere ye faro sõni la.*
(2) Cf. p. 86, n. 4.
(3) La hyène est regardée comme hermaphrodite; elle peut engendrer ou

C. — *Albinos :*

Les albinos de peau claire ou rougeâtre et aux cheveux roux sont dits *gombele* ou *yepege*, ce dernier terme étant réservé à ceux qui présentent les caractères les plus accentués.

L'albinos est censé naître de rapports sexuels ayant lieu au milieu du jour, lorsque le soleil est au *koblenkaba*, ciel de la colère de Faro, fait qui constitue une grave rupture d'interdit. Celle-ci a pour conséquence d'unir dans le sein maternel les jumeaux primitivement octroyés à la femme par Faro et de décolorer la peau de l'être ainsi formé. De ce fait l'albinos, avatar de jumeaux, n'hérite point de principes spirituels d'un défunt : il est également un être nouveau donné par Faro aux hommes. Mais l'impureté acquise décuple son *tere* et son *wanzo* qui sont si actifs que le circonciseur doit sacrifier sur ses autels personnels avant de l'opérer. De l'ambivalence de l'albinos, de même essence que Faro à l'origine, mais déchu à cause de l'impureté transmise par ses parents, découlent divers usages et représentations (1).

Son corps est considéré comme doué de pouvoirs spéciaux. A qui possède son crâne, échoit une nombreuse famille et la prospérité; les cheveux apportent la richesse; la moelle des os octroie or et cuivre. Si l'on s'assied à l'emplacement où sont enterrés les os, tout ce que l'on demande est accordé. Ses excréments, mêlés aux semences, ont pour effet d'augmenter la récolte de l'année.

Cette valeur attribuée à l'albinos en fait une victime de choix pour les sacrifices offerts à Faro. Son *nyama* est tel qu'il peut être sacrifié sans prière, l'acte même constituant une invocation efficace. A défaut d'albinos vivant les hommes tentaient souvent de s'approprier les restes d'un corps enterré.

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concevoir, suivant sa force et sa taille, « la plus forte engrossant la plus faible ». Un système de tatouage repose sur cette croyance.

(1) Cette ambivalence est également à l'origine de la croyance qui fait de l'albinos un être autrefois pourvu d'ailes et capable de voler (cf. p. 41), qualité qu'il aurait perdue au contact du sol impur.

CHAPITRE IV

LE SACRIFICE ET L'AUTEL

Pour faire appel aux forces spirituelles et les promouvoir, les Bambara utilisent la prière, l'offrande, le sacrifice. Des rites oraux et manuels sont exécutés en tous lieux, en tous temps. Ils prient le ciel, les points cardinaux, les génies; ils sacrifient sur les pierres, la terre, les arbres, les points d'eau, comme sur les autels abrités dans les sanctuaires ou situés en des lieux publics ou privés. Tout adulte circoncis, père de famille, propriétaire d'une demeure et d'une terre cultivable est sacrificateur, qualité soulignée par la tache rouge qui orne parfois les murs de la pièce principale de sa résidence (1).

Pour un observateur non informé, ces rites recouvrent un immense réseau de croyances apparemment disparates. Mais la réalité est tout autre. Les rites provoquent des mouvements de forces définis qui s'intègrent dans ceux du monde.

Sans donner un tableau général des modes, des temps, des lieux propres aux rites des Bambara, il est cependant important de démonter les rouages du plus important, le sacrifice sanglant. Il forme leur armature et il met en jeu les principes et éléments composant l'être vivant (cf. chapitre précédent), car il convient de remarquer que les premiers sacrifices attestés par le mythe sont les sacrifices humains.

Il y a sacrifice quand le sang de la victime coule sur une matière ou un objet contenant la force d'une puissance surnaturelle ou d'un ancêtre. Les paroles de la prière prononcée pendant la mise à mort consacrent la victime à la puissance qui vient, selon la croyance populaire, se nourrir du sang. Dans le même temps, elles dirigent les forces de vie qui s'échappent du corps. L'âme, *ni*, est captée par l'autel et y sera conservée jusqu'à la résurrection. Son *nyama*, d'autant plus puissant que l'agonie est plus longue, est également retenu par l'autel dont il augmente les forces. La victime est ainsi entièrement vidée de ses principes spirituels car « tous les *nyama* sont dans le sang (1) » qu'elle abandonne.

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(1) Cf. p. 128 et ss.

Dans tous les cas, le sacrifice constitue un échange : celui que sacrifie reçoit en retour une part des forces de celui qu'il prie (2). Le sang est porteur d'un élément actif, dangereux, qui est laissé sur l'autel. Au temps où les hommes donnaient au *balanza* leur sang, ils le laissaient sécher puis, passant leur langue sur le tronc, ils le reprenaient débarrassé de cet élément qui constituait l'offrande. Toutes leurs forces actives passaient à l'arbre et il ne leur revenait qu'une matière presque vidée de vitalité.

Les sacrifices sanglants qui, aux origines, furent instaurés sur le tronc du *balanza* sont actuellement exécutés dans les lieux les plus divers : terre, arbres, mares, puits, etc. De plus, au fur et à mesure que leurs techniques se développaient, les Bambara sacrifièrent sur les objets, ustensiles ou machines qu'ils découvraient ou inventaient : la forge et ses outils, le métier à tisser, les instruments agricoles.

Les Bambara possèdent également des autels que l'on peut classer en trois catégories :

1° Les souches de bois dites *pembele*, qui représentent Pemba. De nombreux chefs de famille ou de sociétés religieuses en conservent un exemplaire (3).

Un sanctuaire unique, à Massala, est un centre de pèlerinage pour les Bambara de toutes régions qui viennent nombreux pour assister au sacrifice annuel. Il recèle, outre un *pembele*, deux grandes poteries, *da*, qui lui ont donné son nom, couvertes de sang sacrificiel : les ordalies y sont exécutées, les questions juridiques, les graves maladies sont traitées en ce lieu.

2° Les autels faits de pierres grossièrement taillées et parfois gravées ont pour origine une pierre mythique, issue de la septième partie de la terre, placée sous le tertre où naquirent les deux jumelles de Faro. De couleur rouge, elle était elle-même le symbole du sacrifice. Elle se divisa et donna naissance à toutes les pierres sacrificielles (fig. 5 et pl. V, b).

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(1) *nyama be bi dyoli la.*

(2) Le mécanisme du sacrifice sanglant chez les Bambara est comparable à celui qui a été observé chez les Dogon et décrit par M. GRIAULE, *Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice dogon* (Soudan Français), Journal de la Société des Africanistes. Tome X, 1940, p. 127 et ss.

(3) Cf. page 49 pour la description des autels *pembele*.

Actuellement, les autels de la région de Ségou viennent pour la plupart de Toko, agglomération située au sud de la ville et où vivaient les forgerons du roi. L'ancêtre de ces derniers est

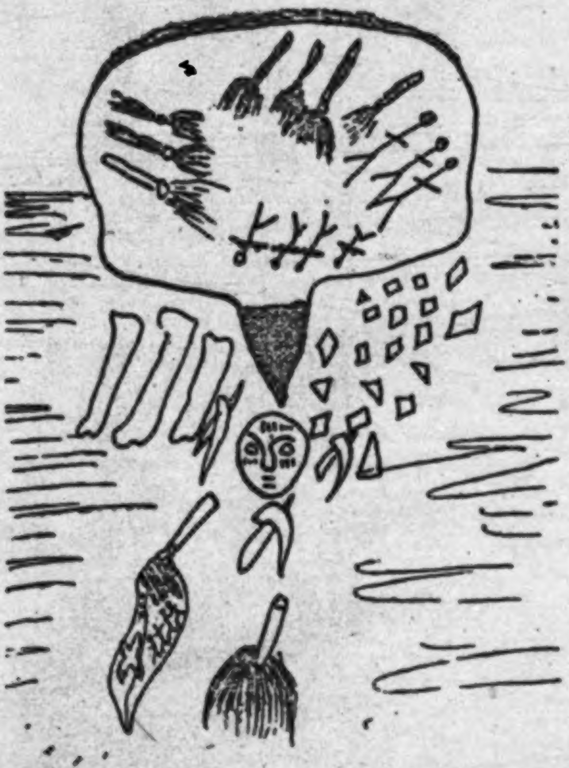

Fig. 5. — Autel de pierre, *fara ba*, de Banankoroni, consacré aux ancêtres. Il est fiché en terre au-dessus du crâne et des ossements d'un albinos, de houes et d'un couteau de circoncision.

Le dessin rituel exécuté lors des cérémonies de renouvellement de l'année représente les torches et les fouets du Kworè, 3 hommes et 4 femmes, qui rappellent le chiffre 7, image de la création. (Dessin d'un informateur.)

enterré dans les rochers qui avoisinent Toko et d'où sont extraites les pierres servant d'autel. Le chef d'un village qui désire s'en procurer, une envoie à Toko un délégué qui reçoit du forgeron la pierre convenant au rôle de l'autel et à la qualité du demandeur. Ainsi on donne une pierre noire à ceux qui ont rompu un interdit, une pierre de deux couleurs à un étranger et la pierre rouge « arrondie et polie par les ancêtres » à ceux que l'on veut honorer.

Les autels de pierre, innombrables (il en est de privés et de publics) représentent généralement les ancêtres. Placés dans les champs, ils reçoivent les sacrifices offerts en leur nom pour favoriser les récoltes. Au carrefour des ruelles et sur la place publique, ils assurent la stabilité des coutumes ancestrales.

3° Les Bambara sacrifient également sur ces objets fabriqués qui portent le nom général de *boli* (litt. : courir) et qui sont assimilables à des autels bien qu'ils soient d'un tout autre caractère que les précédents. Leur origine est différente. Pour les initiés ils proviennent du douzième *bangiñi* qui donna naissance au jour (cf. p. 13). Sous forme de « globules » ils furent lâchés dans l'espace par Faro lors de sa descente sur terre, recueillis par les génies de l'air et du sol dans lesquels certains pénétrèrent et furent par la suite remis aux hommes (1).

Les *boli*, dits également *nyana*, sont confectionnés avec les matières les plus diverses : queues d'hyène, piment, miel, charbon, métaux précieux, parties du corps. Chaque élément a sa valeur et son emploi est déterminé par sa situation dans les catégories; les temps de fabrication interviennent également. Mais quelle que soit sa composition, tout *boli*, dont le nom même exprime le mouvement universel des choses, est un amalgame d'éléments représentant les parties de l'univers (2).

(1) La croyance populaire veut que les huit *boli* principaux des Bambara aient été rapportés de la Mecque par le célèbre Makanta Djigui, personnage dont le nom est cité dans nombre de prières (notamment au cours des cérémonies du Komo). L. Tauxier attribue cette tradition à l'influence de l'Islam sous le règne du successeur de Soundiata, le roi Malinké Kankan Moussa, qui fit le pèlerinage de la Mecque en 1324 (*La Religion bambara*, p. 287, note 3).

Le nom de Makanta Djigui est cité dans la devise *(burudyu)* du Komo : les chefs de cette importante institution transportent chaque année leurs autels au bord du Niger, près du village de Tikko au lieu où est censée avoir coulé la pirogue historique qui le transporta. Il est possible que ce personnage ait joué le rôle d'un législateur religieux en codifiant certaines croyances et en fondant des associations autour des *boli* qui, d'après les dires d'informateurs qualifiés, existaient avant son intervention. Cf. également sur ce point L. Tauxier, *La Religion bambara*, p. 287 n. 3.

Les versions du voyage de Makanta Djigui, que les indigènes racontent volontiers, sont innombrables. Cf. l'abbé Henry. *L'Ame d'un peuple africain : les Bambara*, p. 131 à 133; C. Monteil. *Les Bambara Ségou et du Kaarta*, p. 170; D. Traore. *Makañta Djigui, fondateur de la magie soudanaise*, p. 23 à 25.

Nous avons recueilli deux versions de cet épisode, que nous ne croyons pas utile de présenter dans cet exposé.

(2) Dans l'état actuel de l'enquête, le classement par catégories des maté-

Il est donc le symbole de ce dernier et le réceptacle des forces qui l'animent. Celles-ci, déjà très puissantes dès sa confection, sont constamment entretenues, augmentées, par les apports reçus au cours des sacrifices sanglants dont le *boli* est l'objet. Ils font de lui un concentré de forces qui rend en proportion de ce qu'il reçoit et dont le propriétaire est le premier bénéficiaire.

Un *boli* est également un relai permettant d'atteindre une puissance surnaturelle, un ancêtre ou un être vivant qui l'imprègne de sa force en venant consommer sur lui l'offrande. Par le canal du sang répandu, cette force remonte dans la victime et, s'il y a consommation, dans le sacrifiant lui-même.

Un *boli* contient donc :

Une part de l'âme, *ni*, et de la force, *nyama*, de l'être auquel il est consacré.

Le *ni* et le *nyama* des victimes qui lui sont offertes.

Le *nyama* des individus qui, ayant rompu les interdits édictés par la puissance, ont été tués par elle.

Les Bambara distinguent deux sortes de *boli :* les plus nombreux, dont l'action est relativement bénigne, dits *soni* (litt. : donner petit) ceux au contraire qui sont chargés de forces puissantes, voire dangereuses, dits *saraka* (1). Les seconds sont censés, par leur seul pouvoir, tuer les victimes qui leur sont offertes sans que celles-ci soient égorgées; il suffit de les leur présenter en récitant une prière appropriée pour qu'elles meurent. On dit alors que le « *boli* a fait sortir le sang » et cette mort équivaut à un sacrifice sanglant (2). Ils s'attaquent aussi à ceux que l'on voue à leur vindicte.

On dit d'un *boli* « qu'il est chaud et qu'il a la gorge sèche », et c'est pourquoi le rituel comporte parfois le recueil dans une calebasse du sang dans lequel on le fait ensuite tremper.

Certains *boli* sont individuels, parfois hérités d'un ancêtre et consacrés à leur propriétaire dont ils entretiennent les forces. D'autres, collectifs, sont consacrés aux puissances surnaturelles qui protègent la vie de la communauté.

Des interdits relatifs aux êtres dont l'âme « imprègne » les *boli* et aux éléments qui les composent sont édictés au moment

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rieux ou éléments composant l'univers chez les Bambara n'est qu'ébauché Ce n'est qu'après cette étude qu'apparaîtra le rôle exact dévolu aux éléments composant les *boli* et que pourra être envisagé le problème de l'origine de ces autels.

(1) Le *ćuafebla* est un *soni;* le *mbe ndyugu kă* un *saraka* (cf. p. 132 et p. 133).

(2) Si la victime ne meurt pas assez vite, le sacrifiant peut « insulter » l'autel pour le contraindre d'agir.

de leur confection. Ils doivent être scrupuleusement respectés par les responsables et les officiants. C'est pour éviter les dangers résultant de leur violation et qui porteraient atteinte à leur intégrité comme à celle de leurs propriétaires, que les *boli* sont généralement mis à l'abri soit dans des sanctuaires, soit dans une pièce isolée de la demeure où nul ne pénètre sans l'autorisation des responsables. Leur manipulation, dangereuse, est réservée aux prêtres, au chef de famille, au propriétaire.

La victime la plus communément offerte sur tous les autels est l'animal domestique : volaille, bovin, bovidé. Toutefois, sur les autels de chasseurs et des sociétés d'incirconcis, on immole des animaux sauvages.

La couleur de la victime est déterminée par la qualité de l'être auquel elle est consacrée, comme par celle de l'autel lui-même. Sur les *boli* des sociétés religieuses on égorge généralement des animaux de couleur rouge qui accroît le *nyama* qu'ils contiennent. Le blanc, signe de luminosité et de pureté, est réservé à Faro.

La mort de la victime a un caractère divinatoire. L'égorgement est pratiqué de telle sorte que l'agonie soit longue et que l'officaint puisse interpréter la position du corps. Le dépeçage est suivi d'une consommation qui a une valeur communielle; de plus, certaines parties du corps sont laissées sur l'autel (foie); d'autres sont conservées par le sacrifiant comme témoins (mâchoires, plumes et poils).

Le rite s'accompagne le plus souvent d'offrandes de bouillie de mil, à titre de « rafraîchissement », le sang étant donné à l'autel comme une nourriture. Les noix de kola, que l'on choisit pour leur forme et pour leur couleur, sont partagées en deux : l'officiant mâche l'une des moitiés et la crache sur l'autel avant de consommer l'autre.

Autrefois, les sacrifices humains étaient également pratiqués. Ils avaient lieu dans les cas graves intéressant le royaume, le roi ou les chefs. Le contenu ordinaire en était l'albinos.

A titre d'exemple, nous donnons ci-après un aperçu des rites de mise à mort d'albinos tels qu'ils se pratiquaient sous la royauté. Ils soulignent la valeur mystique de la victime et sont un excellent exemple de mécanisme propre au sacrifice; ils font apparaître la valeur rituelle des détails sur chacun desquels les Bambara mettent un accent particulier. Enfin, ils confirment la valeur et le symbolisme des différentes parties du corps, tels qu'ils ont été décrits dans le chapitre précédent.

Les rois de Ségou étaient autrefois fournis en albinos par un homme du village de Pelengena qui les tenait emprisonnés et qui les leur réservait. Mais cet homme les exploitait en leur rasant les cheveux qu'il vendait aux chefs des villages avoisinants comme symboles des hommes qu'ils pourraient compter, tôt ou tard, sous leur domination. Le chef ayant dénombré ses sujets, les prisonniers faits à la guerre et tenus en esclavage et les captifs reçus en tribut, préparait autant de bâtonnets que d'hommes; puis il mélangeait ceux-ci aux cheveux et enfouissait le tout dans le mur, au seuil de la porte d'entrée de sa demeure. Les cheveux étaient censés représenter à l'avance la multiplication des hommes du fief et favoriser la rentrée de l'impôt.

Mais les albinos eux-mêmes étaient réservés au roi qui les sacrifiait à Faro dans les cas intéressant la conduite du royaume :

1° Lorsque le roi se trouvait devant des difficultés d'ordre gouvernemental, la victime était coupée en deux au milieu du corps, à hauteur du ventre, au moyen d'une corde en fibre de *da* (1) : ses cris, ses gestes et ses excréments étaient considérés comme véhiculant un *nyama* qui « supprimait la difficulté rencontrée par le roi ». Nul ne devait entendre ses plaintes qui n'étaient point faites pour les oreilles humaines mais pour Faro à qui revenait aussi la souffrance. Le roi, surtout, ne devait pas entendre les cris sous peine d'échouer dans son entreprise et pourtant il lui fallait assister au supplice et le contempler dans une complète impassibilité.

La moitié inférieure du corps de la victime revenait à Faro. Elle était portée au Niger par trois hommes si cette dernière était de sexe masculin, par quatre s'il s'agissait d'une femme. L'un d'eux prenait le corps sur sa tête; les yeux et la main gauche fermés, il marchait en évitant de poser ses orteils sur le sol, afin de respecter « l'âme de ce qu'il portait (2) ». Au bord du fleuve, les articulations étaient brisées, la moelle extraite et versée dans l'eau. Après avoir posé leurs orteils sur le corps, pour « donner une part de leur âme à Faro », les hommes le déposaient délicatement dans le fleuve où il s'engloutissait tandis qu'ils exposaient à haute voix la raison de leur acte. De retour auprès de leur maître, ils lui apportaient les remerciements du génie et un peu d'eau du fleuve que l'on versait sur le siège royal (3).

(1) *Hibiscus*. On ne pouvait, pour l'albinos, utiliser la fibre de *nyama*, considérée comme impure.

(2) Poser les orteils au sol revient à mettre l'âme de ce qu'on porte en contact avec l'impureté de la terre (cf. p. 70).

(3) Cette offrande portait le nom de *nasi*, « bien-être ».

Le haut du corps de la victime revenait au roi et était utilisé pour les besoins de l'État. Les *lõdyõ* soufflaient tout d'abord dans la bouche du supplicié pour que « l'air en sortant apporte à Faro toutes ses paroles ». Puis ils enfouissaient la tête sous le trône du roi et dansaient au rythme des tambours.

En cas de guerre, le sang qui avait coulé lors du sacrifice était recueilli par les *lõdyõ*, séché au soleil, le résidu emporté et jeté avant l'assaut dans la direction de la ville à prendre. Le roi qui s'avançait avec son armée, trouvait, selon la formule, « son sacrifice devant lui » *(saraka bla ñe)*.

2° Dans le cas où le roi avait besoin de fonds, la mise à mort était opérée à l'ouest et en enfonçant dans la gorge une tige de bambou pour faire couler le sang sur les cauris que le roi avait gagnés lui-même « avec sa propre sueur ». Ainsi consacrés, les cauris « attiraient l'or, l'argent et le cuivre dans le trésor royal ».

La tête était placée sous le trône. La poitrine et les poumons, après séchage, étaient réduits en poudre et conservés dans un sac dont le roi avait la disposition. Lorsqu'il recevait les contribuables, il mettait cette poudre sur son visage et dans sa bouche, contraignant ainsi le visiteur à donner. Il en frottait son corps avant de partir en guerre, ce qui faisait dire aux combattants : « Voir le roi, c'est voir l'or (1) ».

Il en donnait à ses femmes et à ses enfants qui le mettaient dans leur boisson, afin « d'hériter de sa place et de ses biens ». Cette poudre était offerte lors de chaque sacrifice offert à Faro pour fertiliser le royaume.

3° Lorsqu'une famille était accablée par de nombreux décès, elle demandait au roi l'autorisation de sacrifier un albinos qu'il fournissait lui-même. La langue de la victime était séchée, pilée, additionnée de piment et consommée par le père de famille afin de lui permettre de « reprendre les paroles et le *nyama* des défunts ». Le nez était avalé par la mère pour qu'elle puisse « reprendre la respiration des enfants morts ». Le père mangeait ensuite les yeux grillés pour « conserver les vues perdues ». Les oreilles séchées étaient suspendues au-dessus du seuil de la porte d'entrée « pour que la mort, entendant les pleurs des funérailles, ne revienne plus ». Le crâne était conservé comme témoin et enterré dans la cour; un bois fiché en marquait l'emplacement. Le reste du corps était jeté au Niger, « car un homme ordinaire n'a pas le droit de garder ce qui est réservé au roi ».

Si le roi les y autorisait, les chefs des villages importants plaçaient aussi un corps d'albinos sous leur siège « afin que leur commandement soit solide et dure longtemps (1) ».

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(1) *fama yele ye sanu yele ye.*

Dans certains cas graves, l'albinos était immolé sur l'autel du Komo. Ce sacrifice était accompli en silence car « une prière ignorée du sacrificateur est dans le sang de l'albinos » lequel est suffisamment puissant pour agir sans paroles.

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(1) On donnait parfois le montant de l'impôt prélevé dans un village aux parents d'un albinos en échange de l'enfant. Ceux qui ne pouvaient se procurer de victime prenaient à titre de remplacement un os d'animal et exécutaient les rites comme s'il s'agissait d'un albinos. Sur le siège du chef, cf. p. 134.

CHAPITRE V

LES TECHNIQUES

Les Bambara, qui ont conscience de l'évolution de leur civilisation, la font remonter très haut dans le temps. L'histoire des origines, les faits et gestes de leurs plus lointains ancêtres sont inscrits non seulement dans leur mémoire mais dans les rites courants et souvent dans le matériel usuel tant profane que religieux.

L'invention et l'évolution des techniques, où s'allient spirituel et matériel, révélation et effort humain, donnent lieu à des récits et à des représentations qui sont caractéristiques de leur psychologie (1).

Dans la pensée bambara, toute technique est une réparation enseignée à l'homme par Faro, un palliatif du désordre cosmique, dû généralement à une rupture d'interdit. La famine, la guerre, l'épidémie, la misère, la mort qu'entraînent de tels désordres sont compensés — dans la mesure du possible — par de nouvelles techniques révélées au fur et à mesure des besoins. Toutes se trouvent en puissance dans la massue de bois utilisée pour écraser et battre les fibres, premier matériau employé (2).

Les premiers travaux sont l'œuvre des « hommes primitifs », ancêtres des Bambara, dont ils donnent la description suivante : « Ils étaient couverts de poils, cheveux et barbe hirsutes, leurs ongles longs semblables à des griffes, leurs dents semblables à des crocs. Ils ignoraient le langage et le vêtement, vivaient pour s'abriter des intempéries dans des trous creusés dans le sol ou dans des cavernes naturelles aménagées, au fond desquelles ils couchaient et déposaient leurs proies. Pour se défendre contre les bêtes sauvages, ils garnissaient l'entrée de ces demeures d'épieux et de roches pointues. Ces trous profonds communiquaient entre eux et formaient de véritables villages souterrains » (fig. 6) (1).

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(1) Ce que nous relatons ici sur l'origine des techniques résume exclusivement ce qu'en disent les indigènes. Le contexte, sous forme des rites pratiqués quotidiennement, le meilleur exemple étant la forge, se suffit à lui-même et ne demande aucun commentaire.

(2) La massue de bois est un doublet de la masse du forgeron mythique qui contenait les techniques et les grains cultivables (cf. p. 30, note 1). La même origine des techniques est donnée chez les Dogon, cf. *Dieu d'eau*, p. 84.

Ignorant le langage, ces hommes conversaient au moyen de gestes de la tête, de mouvements des pieds et des mains, de grognements. Quand un différend les séparait, avant d'en venir aux mains, ils retroussaient leurs lèvres et mesuraient leurs longues canines, pour déterminer quel serait le vainqueur. « Plus tard, quand la parole leur fut donnée, les hommes, connaissant son pouvoir, en usèrent tout d'abord avec réserve. On ne discutait jamais deux fois une question : si, après une objection, une demande était réitérée, on s'inclinait et on acquiesçait, aux risques et périls du demandeur ».

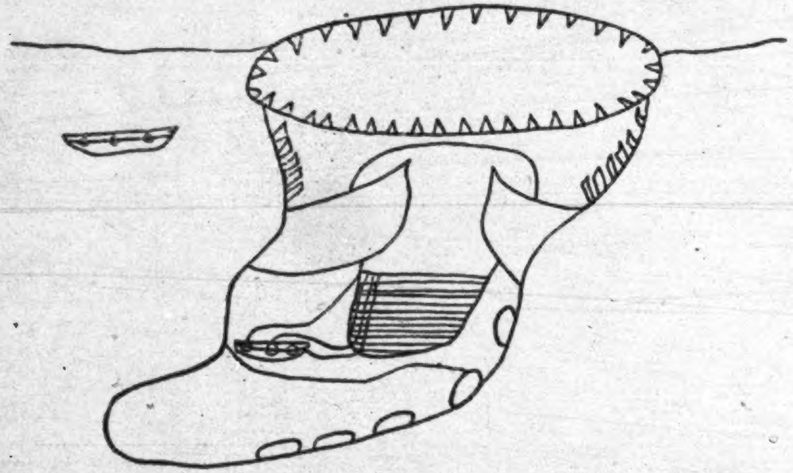

Fig. 6. — Demeure souterraine des hommes primitifs. L'entrée est défendue par des pierres pointues. Au centre, image du premier métier à tisser, inventé par les hommes. A gauche, la navette (cf. p. 137). (Dessin d'un informateur.)

Les hommes vécurent d'abord de cueillette, puis, plus tard, de pêche et de chasse, sans outillage, et se servant uniquement de leurs mains pour saisir leurs proies, de leurs ongles et de leurs dents pour les déchirer et les dépecer. Peu à peu, cette vie élémentaire se modifia; les techniques apparurent une à une, selon une chronologie dont les Bambara actuels ont gardé la mémoire.

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(1) On peut encore visiter, aux environs de Ségou, certaines de ces excavations révérées par les Bambara comme d'anciennes demeures.

La première matière utilisée fut, selon une tradition qui n'est d'ailleurs pas limitée aux seuls Bambara, la fibre de l'arbre *nyama* (1) *(nyama fu)* dont furent tressés les premiers filets de pêche, la première fronde, le premier cache-sexe (2).

Lorsqu'ils commencèrent à cultiver la terre, ils développèrent un rudimentaire outillage de bois. En même temps, ils inventèrent une arme de jet faite de la même matière. Le bois fut très longtemps en usage; l'invention du tissage et de la poterie crue date de cette époque. Plus tard, ils connurent l'outillage de pierre, le fer et la forge. La technique de l'habitation, sur laquelle aucun mythe n'a été jusqu'ici recueilli, semble s'être développée plus tardivement, après la découverte du fer (3).

L'étude de cet outillage et de son usage rituel est des plus suggestives, car il est un premier témoignage de l'évolution des techniques. Il marque également des étapes du développement des formes, lesquelles sont observables dans ces sortes de conservatoires des arts et métiers que sont, dans certains villages, les sanctuaires où est gardé le matériel ancestral. Enfin, dans de nombreux rites et dans l'éducation des jeunes gens, il constitue de précieux jalons de l'histoire du peuple bambara.

PÊCHE ET CHASSE.

Selon la tradition, le filet de pêche fut le premier engin de la première technique enseignée aux hommes et le poisson constitua la nourriture primordiale.

« Un jour, quatre femmes se rendirent au bord du Niger pour ramasser le sable dont elles faisaient leur couche et qui leur servait de nourriture depuis qu'elles n'en recevaient plus du ciel. A mesure qu'elles avançaient le sable reculait, si bien qu'elles se trouvèrent très loin de leur séjour habituel. Elles voulurent alors s'en retourner, mais Faro les en empêcha et leur demanda de travailler pour lui, en leur faisant la promesse d'un don précieux. Elles « balayèrent les ordures du génie » pendant sept jours; le huitième jour, « les paroles commencèrent avec Faro ». Il leur montra deux filets de pêche, *dyo* dont il leur expliqua l'usage et la confection. L'un, à mailles très fines, *dyongemise* (litt. : filet aux yeux minces), l'autre à mailles plus larges, *dyonyekumba* (litt. : filet aux yeux gros) étaient faits de fibres de l'arbre *nyama*. Le premier était réservé à la pêche des *tneni* (1), dits « ordures de Faro », le second à la capture de poissons de plus grande taille : silures, capitaines, poissons-chats.

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(1) *Bauhinia reticulata* (au nord), *Bauhinia Thonningii* (au sud).

(2) Les Dogon mentionnent également la fibre comme la première matière utilisée par les hommes. Chez eux, comme chez les Bambara, elle joue un rôle rituel. Cf. M. GRIAULE. *Dieu d'eau*, p. 26.

(3) Certains éléments de l'enquête concernant les techniques ont été résumés par l'auteur dans l'*Arme et l'outil chez les anciens Bambara*, Africa, vol. XVIII, n° 2, p. 105 à 111.

Pendant sept jours les femmes furent enseignées par le génie et son captif, le huitième elles furent libérées. Sept jours après ces événements, elles commencèrent à pêcher et à se nourrir de poissons.

Mais elles abusèrent aussitôt du don qu'elles avaient reçu. Se relayant jour et nuit et pêchant sans discontinuer au lieu même de la révélation, elles lassèrent la patience du génie. Celui-ci leur apparut au-dessus des eaux, tenant ses deux jumelles entre ses bras et se plaignit de leur âpreté, de leur sottise, de la fatigue qu'elles lui imposaient. Leur retirant le secret qu'il leur avait donné, il leur signifia que la pêche serait désormais chose d'homme et qu'elles auraient seulement le droit de vendre le poisson.

Malgré leurs larmes, le génie donna les filets à trois hommes qui étaient présents et répéta son enseignement. Les femmes quittèrent le bord du fleuve pendant que les autres mettaient à profit leur nouveau savoir. Mais au bout de quelques jours elles eurent faim; elles allèrent demander du poisson qui leur fut refusé pendant sept jours. Alors elles s'unirent aux pêcheurs et le peuple Bozo sortit de ces premiers mariages. »

La pêche fut à l'origine réservée aux seuls Bozo et c'est plus tard que les Bambara reçurent d'eux l'enseignement de la fabrication et de la manœuvre des filets comme des rites nombreux dont ils sont l'objet.

Les Bambara pratiquèrent la chasse et la cueillette avant de devenir cultivateurs. Il est suggestif de rapprocher le filet de pêche de la fronde *(ndōfere)* actuellement utilisée surtout par les enfants, mais dont ils décrivent un exemplaire (fig. 7) comme ayant été la plus ancienne de leurs armes de chasse et de guerre. La partie centrale de cette fronde qui formait en effet un filet,

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(1) *Alestes nigrinilcatus.*

(*dyoba*, litt. : grand filet) tressé en fibres de *nyama* et comparable à celui qu'utilisaient les pêcheurs, était prolongé de deux) lanières. Celle de droite (*kininlegere*, litt. : *legere* de droite), était terminée par une sorte de bouquet de lamelles de bois *(legere)* favorisant le maintien. Celle de gauche (*missema*, litt. : petite chose) ou *ñuman* (litt. : gauche) était libre. L'homme saisissait l'arme aux deux extrémités, mettait des pierres dans le filet et « soufflait sur la lanière de droite pour donner de la respiration » à la fronde. Plaçant le pied gauche en avant, il la faisait tournoyer rapidement et lâchait le cordon gauche, libérant ainsi les projectiles.

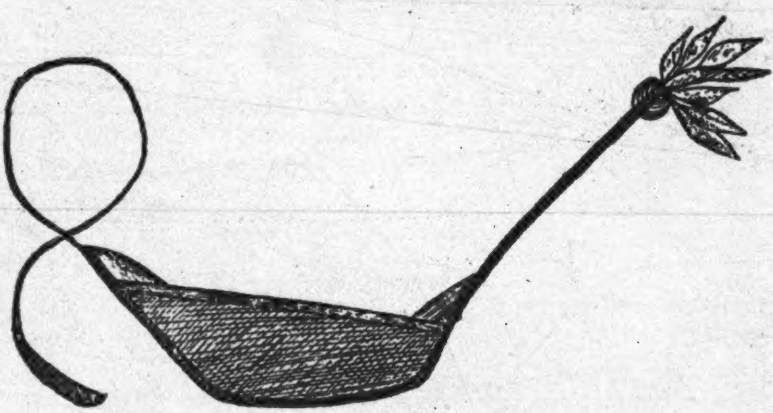

Fig. 7. — Fronde *(ndõfere)* des anciens Bambara. (Dessin d'un informateur.)

Les sacrifices propitiatoires étaient offerts sur les lamelles de bois et le sang coulait jusqu'au filet, le long du cordon. De plus, le chasseur imbibait son arme du sang des animaux blessés ou tués, pour donner à son engin la force des victimes et augmenter sa propre adresse.

Le *ndõfere* fut très longtemps en usage comme arme de guerre.

Le Tissage.

L'invention du tissage est liée à la découverte de la culture du coton; celle-ci apparut bien avant celle du mil, à l'époque où n'étaient connus que les outils de bois qui servaient à gratter la terre au pied des graminées sauvages dont les hommes se nourrissaient (1).

Le mythe mentionne à la fois l'apparition du coton, l'invention des fuseaux et de la navette; il ne fait pas allusion au métier à tisser qui est postérieur. Le récit de la fabrication des premiers vêtements apporte aussi des précisions sur la teinture qui semble avoir été connue très tôt.

Lorsque les hommes revenaient de la brousse où ils avaient cultivé le *norolã sise* (appelé vulgairement cram-cram) et le *narakata*, sorte de chiendent qui leur fournissaient des graines dont ils se nourrissaient, ils abandonnaient au carrefour, en hommage au génie Soba, leurs houes de bois.

Un vieillard qui passait près de là, fut un jour interpellé par le génie : « A vous tous qui passez ici, qui laissez vos houes, je désire donner une chose qui cache votre nudité; mais je le ferai si vous m'offrez un sacrifice. »

Le vieillard ayant rapporté le fait aux hommes de sa génération, ils décidèrent de sacrifier un albinos au carrefour. Le génie leur dit alors de prendre la graine qu'ils trouveraient à la croisée des chemins et leur enseigna la manière de la semer et de la récolter. « Cela, dit-il, vous servira plus tard de vêtements. » Les hommes confectionnèrent d'abord des jupes de feuilles et de fibres qui leur tinrent lieu de cache-sexe. Puis ils envoyèrent leurs femmes chanter des remerciements au génie. Quand ils eurent semé et récolté, ils déposèrent le coton au carrefour, en hommage (2). Le génie enseigna ensuite la femme d'un cultivateur qui venait quotidiennement le saluer à midi. Un jour, elle vit au carrefour un oiseau dont le nom signifie « petit oiseau qui file le coton de Dieu » *(ala ka kwori parata kono ni)*. Il tenait des fibres blanches dans son bec, les étirait avec ses pattes et enroulait le fil ainsi obtenu autour de son corps avec ses ailes. « Regarde l'oiseau, dit le génie. C'est ainsi qu'au ciel il file et tisse pour abriter ses œufs. Le coton doit être ainsi traité. Ta mort est proche. Commence le travail dès demain sur ce petit bâton, ajouta-t-il en désignant un fuseau, et instruis ensuite les femmes de ta famille et les enfants ».

La femme fila tout d'abord avec maladresse et se rendit au fleuve pour montrer son travail à Faro et lui demander son aide. Un poisson sortit de l'eau et lui remit une fusaïole en forme de boule, lui montra comment l'adapter au fuseau, lui en expliqua l'usage et l'origine céleste. Il lui annonça que dorénavant des fusaïoles analogues tomberaient du ciel avec la pluie pour les fileuses de coton.

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(1) Cf. p. 113. Les Dogon admettent la même antériorité du tissage par rapport à la culture des céréales. Cf. M. GRIAULE. *Dieu d'eau*, p. 31 et s.

(2) Cette coutume est observée encore aujourd'hui.

Ayant repris son ouvrage avec ce nouvel instrument, la femme le mena à bien et instruisit ses compagnes. Elles allèrent ensuite jeter leurs premiers fils au Niger, en offrande au génie pour que le secret ne soit pas perdu. Et ainsi firent tous les artisans pour leur premier travail (1).

Dix-sept jours après l'apprentissage, la vieille femme mourut. Ses compagnes continuèrent à filer mais comme elles ne travaillaient pas le bois (2) elles durent demander aux hommes de tailler des fuseaux révélant ainsi leur secret.

A quelque temps de là, le génie envoya une araignée tisser sa toile à l'orifice d'un des trous servant d'habitation (Cf. Fig. 6) et dans lequel vivait le nommé Bambou Diara. Ce dernier observa l'insecte et appela son ami Kari Mariko. Ils voulurent imiter la toile en utilisant le fil de l'araignée qui, à l'usage, s'avéra trop fragile. Ils demandèrent alors aux femmes leurs fils de coton. Armé d'un fétu de paille sur lequel il avait enroulé le fil et ayant accroché, comme l'avait fait l'insecte, sa chaîne aux deux crocs de pierre protégeant l'entrée, Bambou imita l'araignée et fit une sorte d'éventail arrondi ayant la forme de la toile, en mailles très grossières. Quand il en eut tissé deux, il les joignit par une corde d'écorce de *nyama*, obtenant ainsi le premier cache-sexe *(mbogo nimba)*.

Kari Mariko avait observé le travail et remarqué la difficulté éprouvée par son ami à passer la trame dans la chaîne. Il eut l'idée d'enrouler le fil sur une mince baguette plus résistante que la paille et de placer celle-ci dans une augette en pierre qui glisserait facilement entre les éléments de la chaîne. Ce fut la première navette *(kuruni)*. Il enroula dessus le fil en trois pelotes, symbole masculin, ce qui consacra le tissage comme travail d'homme. Les fils furent alors tendus transversalement et la navette utilisée verticalement, la trame étant coupée à chaque passage en haut et en bas (fig. 6).

Tous vinrent voir le travail des deux artisans et nommèrent l'agglomération où ils habitaient « village de l'intelligence, *hakilidugu*. Ils apprirent d'eux la technique du tissage, et le nom des deux amis est invoqué encore actuellement sur le plat de nourriture qu'absorbe chaque apprenti avant de commencer son instruction.

A la suite d'une rupture d'interdit au cours d'une pêche sur le fleuve, les fusaïoles cessèrent de tomber du ciel. Les pêcheurs depuis ce moment les confectionnèrent en mêlant l'argile à l'huile de karité et en les faisant sécher au soleil.

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(1) Tout premier travail est jeté au fleuve en offrande à Faro. C'est une garantie pour l'artisan que son adresse lui sera conservée et que la technique s'améliorera. Actuellement, les jeunes fileuses de Ségou vont jeter leur premier fuseau au fleuve. De plus, l'oiseau *parala* qui a enseigné le filage est capturé, ses ailes et ses pattes sont grillées et la poudre est donnée à qui commence l'apprentissage pour que celui-ci soit rapide.

(2) Sauf pour faire la cuisine, une femme ne se sert jamais d'un couteau, objet réservé à l'homme.

Le métier fut inventé plus tard; les positions de la chaîne et de la trame, la pratique des coupures et des nœuds furent modifiées. Il était autrefois l'objet de sacrifices humains nocturnes tandis que la navette recevait des sacrifices de moindre importance, mais diurnes (1).

La pierre sur laquelle les femmes égrènent le coton, *kaba*, représente le ciel et rappelle l'origine céleste du coton et des techniques dont il est l'objet.

Le vêtement :

Le vêtement, en contact intime avec le corps de l'homme participe de la personne qui le porte. D'autre part la matière dont il est fait, les divers éléments dont il se compose et qui sont associés à tel ou tel aspect de la métaphysique bambara, exercent une action sur le porteur. Le choix du vêtement est rarement le fait du hasard ou d'un goût particulier et les diverses manifestations de la vie sociale ou religieuse obligent généralement au port d'une tenue appropriée dont le symbolisme est lié à l'acte ou à l'état envisagé. Le rôle de l'habit apparaît dès l'enfance : un nouveau-né porte autour des reins un fil de coton, *dyura dyuru* qui est à la fois une protection (car « il solidifie sa colonne vertébrale ») et une préfiguration de ce qu'il portera plus tard. Quand il atteint l'âge voulu, une réunion de famille a lieu le jour où on le vêt pour la première fois. Il a fallu, auparavant, qu'il ait rêvé de son premier vêtement et parlé de son rêve à sa mère qui file alors le coton nécessaire. Avant de s'habiller, le postulant procède à une ablution dite *mayadyi* (litt. : eau de l'action de la personne) d'eau prise au Niger ou dans une mare de Faro. On dit à l'enfant vêtu « qu'il est maintenant un homme et peut faire partie du *ndomo* (2) » puis ses proches le plaisantent, le taquinent, marquant par des moqueries semi-rituelles son accession à un nouveau grade.

Le premier vêtement des hommes fut la jupe de fibres de *nyama* (fig. 8, A). L'écorce fut battue et préparée au moyen d'une massue, massue de bois, *gosilande* ou *kuruninde*, qui est censée « renfermer en puissance toutes les techniques humaines inventées au fur et à mesure des besoins. » On dit de cette massue qu'elle est « le moule de la perfection et le lieu d'où sortent toutes choses utiles ». La massue était aussi primitivement un rudimentaire instrument de rythme (1) : le martèlement des coups « chassait les sons néfastes émis par Téliko lors de sa révolte ». Encore actuellement, on assied un sourd-muet près du *gosilande* qu'on prie pour qu'il le débarrasse de son infirmité. On frappe avec lui les vêtements d'une accouchée en même temps que l'enfant pousse son premier cri, pour le purifier. Les vêtements teints sont battus, non seulement pour faire pénétrer la couleur, mais aussi pour en chasser toute impureté.

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(1) Actuellement, les métiers sont fixés dans le sol au-dessus d'une poterie dont on a percé le fond avant de l'enterrer.

(2) Société des incirconcis (cf. p. 170).

Lorsqu'ils connurent le coton, et après l'invention du tissage, les Bambara montèrent des vêtements aujourd'hui abandonnés mais dont ils confectionnent encore des exemplaires à des fins rituelles. En effet, à l'exception du cache-sexe, ces anciens vêtements ne sont plus portés qu'au cours de cérémonies religieuses et ont pour fonction essentielle de représenter les ancêtres qui en étaient les auteurs.

Le premier vêtement tissé fut fait à l'imitation de la jupe de fibres. Les hommes fabriquèrent le cache-sexe *(mboko nimba)* actuellement encore porté par les incirconcis, et le teignirent en jaune, *wolo* (2) (fig. 8, B) couleur qui représente celle que donne à la peau des noirs une maladie dont ils se seraient débarrassés au moyen de cette teinture. Dans le liquide obtenu par décoction des feuilles et auquel était mélangé du charbon pilé, une hirondelle vivante était plongée puis relâchée, consacrant la teinture dans laquelle on trempait ensuite le cache-sexe.

Le vêtement suivant fut fait de deux bandes, *dyo kama* (litt. : filets d'épaule) qui s'accrochaient à chaque bras. Celle du bras droit, mâle, était attachée par trois cordelettes (chiffre mâle). L'autre était fixée par quatre cordes, quatre et gauche étant féminins. Le porteur se couchait sur la bande du côté droit et se couvrait de celle de gauche (fig. 8, C).

Les hommes confectionnèrent ensuite une sorte de tunique courte, *wọlọ kama* (litt. : ailes de perdrix) teinte en rouge (fig. 8, D). Au sommet des ouvertures où passaient les bras étaient suspendus deux petits personnages en bois sculptés *(mani)* qui représentaient les âmes du porteur, « prenaient leur vie dans les veines et donnaient leur force aux bras sur lesquels ils reposaient ». Le milieu du vêtement représentait la poitrine, le foie et le cœur du porteur; les fils transversaux, les veines et les artères. Le collier de soutien, fait de trois fibres d'écorce et de l'arbre *da*, était « le double de l'individu pendant son sommeil ». La sueur était l'offrande faite à ce vêtement; elle était remplacée par du sel en saison froide. La première fois qu'il le mettait, l'homme le priait : « Vêtement, nous te portons au nom de nos vieux ancêtres, en hommage à ceux qui t'ont confectionné. »

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(1) *kow dyele bwo yoro*. Lors de certaines sorties de masques du Komo, le chef porte sur la tête le *gosilande* qui représente alors l'univers. Certaines purifications collectives sont aussi exécutées sur les carrefours avec cet instrument (cf. p. 141).

(2) Cette teinture est confectionnée avec les feuilles du *ngalama (Angeissus leiocarpus)* bouillies, séchées et réduites en poudre colorante que l'on met dans l'eau.

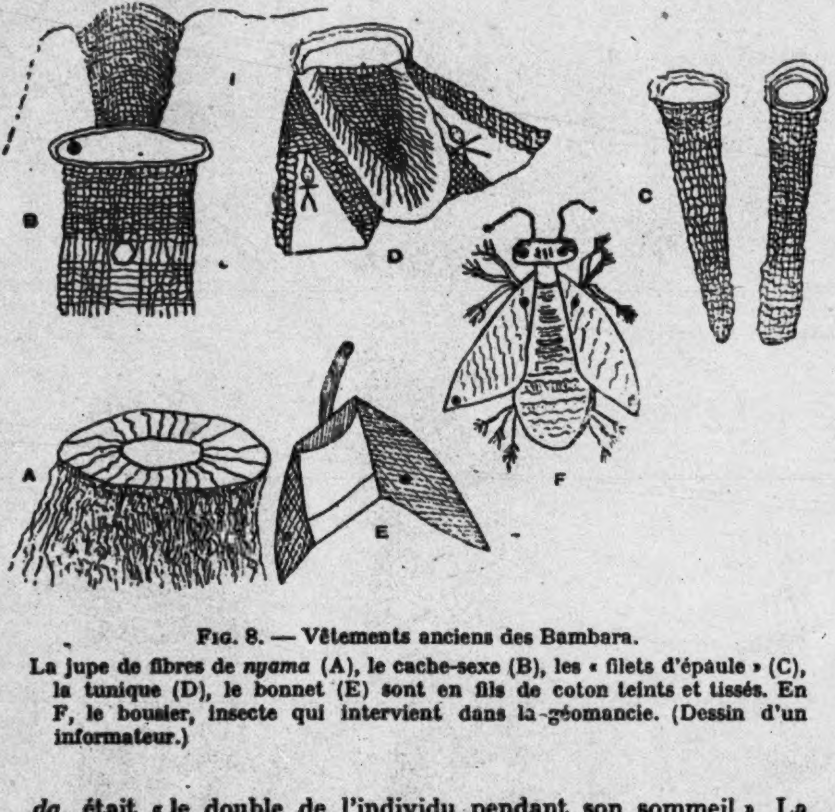

Fig. 8. — Vêtements anciens des Bambara.

La jupe de fibres de *nyama* (A), le cache-sexe (B), les « filets d'épaule » (C), la tunique (D), le bonnet (E) sont en fils de coton teints et tissés. En F, le bousier, insecte qui intervient dans la géomancie. (Dessin d'un informateur.)

Les ancêtres dessinés sur les sanctuaires et greniers sont tous munis du bonnet, *banfla*, qu'ils portaient autrefois (fig. 8, E). Au sommet était fiché un piquet de bois ou une queue d'hyène; par eux le ciel donnait sa force à l'homme qui envoyait en retour la sienne « à travers le vent ». La calotte (*čema*) faite de bandes de coton teintes en jaune, comportait des ailes *(bamade)*, symbole des oreilles : les raies de l'aile droite assuraient une nombreuse descendance, celles de gauche, une vie sûre et droite. Les ailes rappelaient aussi celles de l'hirondelle, déléguée du génie de l'eau et chargée de porter dans la matrice, au moment de l'union, la goutte de sang contenant la vie et l'âme de l'enfant. Les deux points teints à l'indigo sur chaque aile étaient le signe de cette matrice.

L'ensemble du bonnet *(farofla)* était « le lien maintenant la vie de l'homme », représenté lui-même par la raie faisant le tour de la calotte. Il le protégeait contre le froid, le malheur, la mort. Il était aussi le symbole de la demeure et du pouvoir de Faro. Et le porteur, quand il le recevait, disait : « Aile du bonnet, bonnet, fils de Faro, je vous ai dessinés avec force, ô hirondelle (1). »

Après l'invention du métier à tisser, les vêtements ne furent plus confectionnés pièce par pièce, mais on utilisa les bandes de coton fabriquées par les tisserands, coupées, ajustées et cousues, technique observable encore aujourd'hui dans tout le Soudan.

Il existe une « science des bandes » *finew lno* ou *finew dongo*, familière à tous ceux qui portent les vêtements traditionnels et qui repose sur la connaissance du symbolisme des couleurs, des dessins, des nombres. Les bandes sont nombreuses et chacune d'elles expose un aspect de la métaphysique, un fragment du mythe. Ainsi l'histoire de Mousso Koroni est relatée dans la succession de quatre bandes (pl. III, de 5 à 8,). Le port des bandes est subordonné à l'état physique ou moral de l'intéressé, à ses fonctions, à ses activités (2).

La bande blanche, *finin muku dye*, représente Faro, blanc et lumineux ainsi que le ciel et les rayons du soleil. Le blanc exprime la sagesse et la pureté du génie, la pureté du sang. On respecte celui qui paraît ainsi vêtu en public, car il affirme par là même sa volonté de suivre les règles religieuses. C'est aussi la couleur des offrandes faites au génie : un morceau de tissu blanc est parfois accroché à la porte d'une demeure où l'on vient de sacrifier. Un malade jette trois bandes blanches au fleuve, ou les donne à plus pauvre que lui. Une étoffe blanche, sur l'épaule d'un homme « fortifie ses nerfs et ses articulations ». Chaque soir, à la tombée de la nuit, tous les enfants revêtent une tunique de cette couleur; malgré l'obscurité, ils sont ainsi « dans la lumière de Faro » et se reconnaîtront plus tard comme enfants d'un même père, d'une même famille, d'un même sang. Le voile de mariage est fait de onze bandes blanches de onze coudées chacune qui ne sont point cousues mais faufilées en spirales; ainsi couverte, la femme se rend de nuit au village de son futur mari, dans la parole lumineuse de Faro et entourée des vingt-deux éléments de la création, les onze spires se coupant sur la droite et sur la gauche. Le mort est vêtu lui aussi de blanc : culottes de six bandes représentant l'homme et son *dya*, bonnet à trois bandes. Il est enroulé dans une couverture de même couleur et les visiteurs déposent sur le cadavre des morceaux de tissu blanc ou des cauris. L'ensemble exprime vis-à-vis de Faro la bonne volonté, la sincérité, le dévouement du disparu qui doit être « blanc sous la terre » s'il n'a pas rompu les interdits.

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(1) *bamadę, bonza, farodẽ, ni be ke ola ni barikaye, nanale*. Les vêtements primitifs décrits ci-dessus ont été observés par un informateur à Bougoula et sont présentés aux postulants au moment de l'initiation.

(2) Nous donnons ci-après la description d'un certain nombre de ces bandes, choisies parmi les plus représentatives, nous réservant de publier une étude complète de cet aspect d'une technique très révélatrice de la psychologie des Soudanais.

A l'opposé du blanc est l'indigo, *konofi*, qui symbolise l'obscurité et l'impureté et qu'on porte dans la plupart des cas où n'intervient pas l'action du génie. Cependant une femme revêt un pagne indigo le jour où, ses menstrues étant terminées, elle reprend les rapports sexuels avec son mari : elle le conserve jusqu'à la grossesse. Lorsqu'elle est sûre de sa situation, elle le met au soleil pour le purifier et elle y placera le nouveau-né pour lui rappeler plus tard qu'il doit la vie à ses parents. Tout mort qui a rompu un interdit est enterré dans un linceul indigo, le seul rappel de lumière étant fait d'un fil de coton blanc posé sur le cadavre, à titre d'excuse et de pardon. L'indigo étant l'interdit de la plupart des lieux sacrés de Faro, nul ne le porte jamais aux cours des sacrifices et des cérémonies religieuses.

Le blanc et l'indigo ont une valeur complémentaire : rouler ensemble un fil blanc et un fil indigo, pour faire un cordon qui sert d'attache à une amulette, c'est « rouler ensemble bonheur et malheur, comme dans la vie ».

La teinture *wolo* est la couleur du cuivre jaune : c'est elle dont sont revêtus les circoncis après l'opération et jusqu'à la guérison, le rouge, *mbegu*, est la couleur du cuivre rouge et du sang : les chasseurs vêtus d'une tunique de *mbegu* sont « couverts d'un vêtement de sang ». La bande *kayo* (pl. III, *a*, 1) où interviennent ces deux couleurs, de l'indigo et du blanc, reproduit l'arc-en-ciel : les intervalles blancs sont l'expression de la parole et de la pureté.

Un sacrificateur en coud un morceau sur son vêtement pour signifier qu'il est circoncis, chasseur et véridique dans ses gestes et dans ses propos. On en suspend une bande à la porte du vestibule nord du village pour préserver les habitants des dangers venus de l'extérieur. Un homme s'en revêt quand il a été malade, ou a subi de graves préjudices familiaux ou financiers. Sur les autels, sur les portes, les couleurs sont représentées par de la bouillie de mil, du sang, du suc de noix de kola. L'arc-en-ciel barrant la pluie et tarissant l'eau, la bande *kayo* ne peut être portée près du fleuve ni pendant les rapports sexuels, car elle est l'interdit de Faro.

La bande *sirakele* (litt. : un chemin) (pl. III, *a*, 2), représente la descente de Faro depuis la septième partie du ciel jusqu'à la septième partie de la terre, la raie indigo étant le *dyi fi*, « eau noire », siège terrestre du génie. Placée dans le pagne d'une femme mariée, elle exprime sa droiture et la bonne conduite qu'elle entend observer vis-à-vis de son mari. Portée par un voyageur, elle l'empêche de s'égarer en chemin.

Le *buguni* (1) (pl. III, *a*, 3) est « le rayon solaire donné par Faro à Pemba pour ses grands travaux terrestres ». Quand se forment les nuages, on dit que Faro « représente au ciel le *buguni* » et les devins conseillent à chacun d'en porter une bande par déférence pour le génie et pour faciliter la venue de la pluie. Le géomancien frotte doucement le sol où il va tracer ses signes avec une étoffe de ce dessin : c'est comme s'il mettait dans son travail exécuté sur la terre impure, le soleil, la lumière, la vérité.

Cette bande s'appelle aussi *kolōso mako* « nécessité du mélange » ou *kami*, pintade, dont elle rappelle à la fois la fragilité et le plumage. Sous cet aspect, le *buguni* symbolise la faiblesse, l'incomplétude de l'homme. Placée dans le vêtement d'un convalescent, elle exprime que ce dernier a perdu pendant sa maladie une part de sa vitalité. Ainsi vêtu, il se baigne au Niger pour que Faro le guérisse. Un homme qui a subi de graves pertes d'argent porte aussi le *buguni* : au marché, dans les réunions publiques, on ne lui fera pas payer sa part de bière devant le silencieux langage de la bande, plus clair que des paroles. Si un veuf se remarie, il en coud un petit morceau à son bonnet en souvenir de sa première femme. On enveloppe le couteau du sacrificateur dans le *buguni*, car il « manque toujours de sang », ainsi que certains *boli* qui en réclament constamment.

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(1) Le mot désigne la région d'origine de la bande, Bougouni.

En conclusion, les carreaux indigo du tissu représentent le vide et l'obscurité, les blancs la plénitude et la lumière. Le port du *buguni* exprime l'espoir; l'homme impur ou faible espère devenir pur, fort, plein.

Au *bugunimba* (litt. : grand *buguni*) ou *nyedē* (litt. : fils de l'œil) sont attachées les mêmes représentations. On en bande une plaie; un homme ayant rompu un interdit porte un bonnet de cette étoffe; on en vêt aussi un bâtard. Le *buguni tyekorole* qui symbolise l'impureté de Mousso Koroni est utilisé pour implorer le secours de Faro dans des grandes calamités, pour des malheurs sans remède. Ainsi, on en recouvre le cadavre d'un mort-né.

Le *buguni nyama* (pl. III, *a*, 4), fait de vingt-deux carreaux alternés indigo et blancs, symbolise la création dans son ensemble harmonieux et ordonné. Sa séparation en deux registres rappelle la dualité : elle est matérialisée par une petite raie médiane. Un homme heureux en coud une bande entière dans sa tunique; celui qui a des difficultés de quelque ordre que ce soit la partage dans le sens de la longueur et en fixe un petit morceau au bas de son vêtement.

Le *nyeba* « grand œil », ou *koloso tyema* « masculinité mélangée » (à la féminité) (pl. III, *a*, 11) représente également la création, symbolisée ici par le double registre de cinq bandes indigo et blanches (1). En même temps le tissus représente l'homme complet supposant à la fois masculinité et féminité. On en vêt un nouveau-né, mais un bâtard ne le porte jamais.

La bande *soli* (pl. III, *a*, 5) représente à la fois la bonne conduite de Mousso Koroni au début de sa vie, puis sa trahison qui amena le désordre sur la terre.

Aux temps anciens, les gens ayant commis de mauvaises actions en étaient obligatoirement vêtus. Actuellement, on en fait le suaire d'un enfant mort aussitôt après sa naissance; on en coud une bande au vêtement d'une excisée ou sur le pagne d'une femme blessée lors de son accouchement. Si des discussions ou des conflits apparaissent au sein d'une famille, on en place un fragment dans des amulettes que l'on fait porter aux femmes.

Le *wulu nyekorolike* (pl. III, *a*, 6) figure le voyage désordonné de Mousso Koroni, son désespoir et sa folie. Ce dessin est réservé aux fous de façon à prévenir les gens de leur état.

La bande *gombo* (pl. III, *a*, 7) rappelle la poursuite de Mousso Ko-

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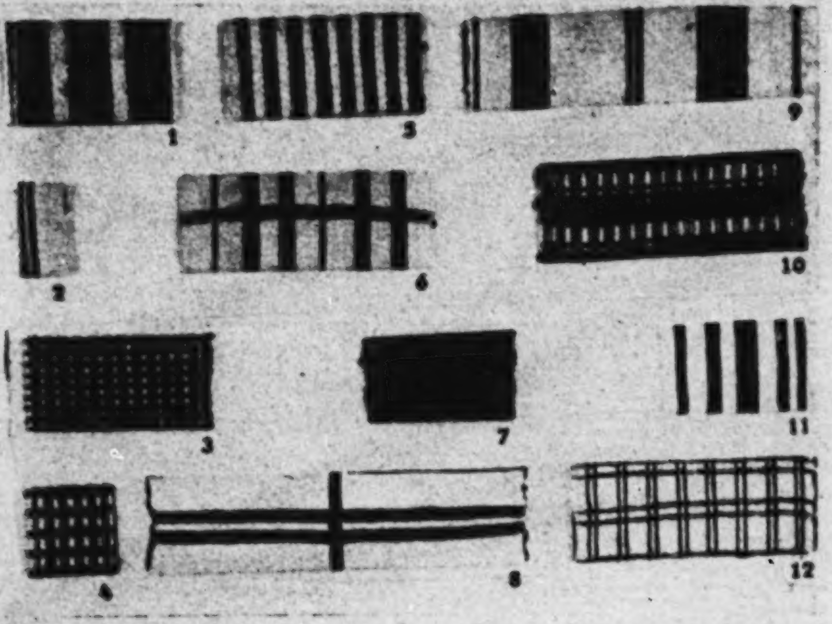
(1) Sur la valeur du nombre 5, cf. p. 9.



a) **Bandes de coton (la ligne de chaine est présentée verticalement).**

PLANCHE III

b) **Offrande d'une bande de coton à l'arbre *dasiri* (Soroba).**

[facing p.112]

roni par le dieu Pemba, dans les profondeurs du ciel et de la terre.

La bande *ṭyalyeli* (pl. III, *a*, 8) image de la défaite de Mousso Koroni, symbolise le travail humain. On la donne à une femme courageuse et énergique. Dans les cérémonies religieuses, on la fait circuler entre les assistants et sa seule présence exprime que rien ici bas ne s'obtient sans travail, que tout est venu de lui. Porter cette bande fortifie celui qui entreprend un ouvrage dans un autre village que le sien.

La bande *saki* est le *koblènkaba* « ciel rouge ». Elle symbolise la chaleur, la colère, les difficultés, les chagrins. On la tisse au moment des négociations du mariage, pour apaiser les différends; on en trempe dans le sang de l'accouchée un morceau que l'on jette ensuite pour tout purifier.

Les raies bleues du *dyilala* représentent l'impureté, les raies rouges la purification par le sacrifice. Quiconque a rompu un interdit porte le bleu, le rouge quand il est purifié. On peut introduire un morceau de tissu rouge dans le sexe d'une jeune femme, après la défloration ou pour remplacer le sang versé après l'accouchement, morceau que l'on brûle ensuite pour faciliter la cicatrisation des plaies.

Avec la bande *sukaba* aux grands carreaux réguliers et alternés, jaunes et indigo est confectionné le pagne d'une femme ayant accouché de jumeaux. La mère met sur le vêtement en offrande un peu de la bouillie de mil qu'elle donne à ses enfants pour la première fois.

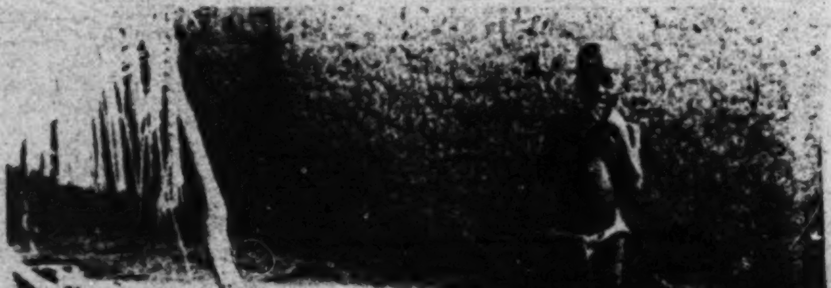
La bande *nyoronga* était autrefois utilisée pour les linceuls. Le roi en portait un vêtement entier où en faisait coudre trois bandes sur sa tunique quand il partait en guerre : il portait ainsi son propre suaire. Un homme courageux attachait un morceau de bande à la crosse de son fusil pour montrer son indifférence devant la mort. On en nouait un morceau à la main droite de ceux qui étaient tués sur le champ de bataille, à titre de récompense pour le devoir accompli. Actuellement, on en suspend un lambeau à la porte d'une demeure où vient de se produire un décès; on en bande un membre blessé avant d'aller chez le guérisseur.

Le *wulu lyerokole* à trois raies est porté par un enfant né après le décès en bas âge de nombreux frères et sœurs. Il représente le départ de ces éléments de la famille et leur retour dans le nouveau-né. Secouer une telle bande dans l'air honore le septième ciel et la septième terre et leur demande leur protection pour l'enfant. Jamais ce tissu n'est porté aux cérémonies des funérailles.

a) Trempe des pois après cuisson (Konodimini).

PLANCHE IV

b) Enclume commune, *kula*, des forgerons (Konodimini).



[facing p.113]

Le *kemba* (litt. : mère des scarifications) (pl. III, *a*, 10), remplace les scarifications quand elles n'ont pu être exécutées; en contre-partie cette bande est l'interdit de tous ceux qui sont scarifiés.

Le *warabawolo* (pl. III, *a*, 12) représente le lion des Diara : le premier fils de cette famille est né sur cette étoffe. Un garçon venant au monde avec un épi de cheveux sur le front est assis sur la bande de coton pour qu'il soit fort et riche. Autrefois le roi s'en faisait un tapis de selle; aujourd'hui un chasseur courageux en confectionne parfois son vêtement. Les Diara n'ont pas le droit de la porter, ni même de la voir, le lion étant leur interdit.

ARMES ET OUTILS.

A l'origine, les hommes vivaient de chasse et de pêche. Mais la faim les poussa aussi à se nourrir de végétaux dont les trois premiers sont le *yayalé*, plante aquatique très commune des bords du Niger, le *narakala*, chiendent et le *norolā size* appelé vulgairement cramcram (1). Bien avant que ne leur soit apportée la culture du coton et des céréales, les Bambara travaillèrent le sol avec des morceaux de bois, autour des pieds de ces graminées dont ils semèrent ensuite les graines. Leur outillage se développant, ils commencèrent à fabriquer les premières houes et les premières haches dont l'origine, en ce qui concerne les Bambara du Mandé (2), est liée à l'histoire des forgerons, *numu*, qui forment dans cette partie de l'Afrique comme dans bien d'autres une sorte de caste : ils pratiquent l'endogamie, entretiennent avec les autres Noirs des relations de parenté dite « à-plaisanteries », *senankuya*, et sont chargés de certains cultes aux ancêtres et à Faro (3).

Avant la découverte du métal, les ancêtres des forgerons actuels travaillèrent le bois, puis la pierre. Ils portaient dès ce moment le nom de *numu*, terme qui, actuellement, est réservé aux seuls artisans du fer, soit *jirifa numu* ou *farafa numu*, selon qu'ils taillaient le bois ou la pierre (4).

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(1) Ces trois plantes sont respectivement : *Andropogon (Hyparrhenia) hirtus. Digitaria debilis, Cenchrus catharticus.*

(2) Les noms et l'origine des outils des Bambara de la région de Ségou sont différents.

(3) Sur le mythe de l'origine céleste des forgerons cf. S. DE GANAY. *Notes sur la théodicée bambara.* Cf. également *infra*, p. 30, n. 1.

(4) L. DESPLAGNES fait allusion à cet aspect historique des origines et du rôle des forgerons soudanais (*Le Plateau central nigérien*, p. 110).

Déjà les peuplades issues de ce mélange des *ou*, pasteurs *(Getules)* avec

Tous les forgerons dits « de race », c'est-à-dire ceux qui appartiennent aux trois familles Fané, Koumaré et Balo sont issus des Gwonna, originaires du village souterrain de Gwondougou, auquel revient la gloire d'avoir découvert le fer.

Selon les informateurs, le mot Gwonna vient de *gwã*, donné communément au foyer de la forge et qui désigne précisément le lieu d'où est extrait et où est traité le minerai. Le haut fourneau est dit *gwã so*. Le *gwã tukũ munu*, forgeron extracteur, est seul habilité à exécuter les rites importants. Le mot Fané dérive de *fã* qui désigne la forge dans son ensemble. Koumaré vient de *kuma*, parole. Ce sont les Koumaré qui, par fonction, sont chargés de discuter dans les conseils et dans les réunions publiques. Le mot Balo rappellerait que les porteurs sont venus s'installer autrefois sur les bords du Niger, *ba*.

Les Gwonna sont *senãnku* des autres forgerons. De plus, dans les villages où ils cohabitent avec d'autres artisans, ils sont de droit propriétaires du Komo et gardiens des sanctuaires où sont conservés les outils ancestraux. A leur défaut seulement, les forgerons appartenant aux autres familles assument ces charges.

Les titres des Gwonna sont liés à l'origine mythique de la forge qui est sous la dépendance des génies Téliko, maîtres de l'air et du vent, donc du soufflet de forge et du feu.

Ils en héritèrent des huit ancêtres qui, avant l'apparition de la mort, furent métamorphosés par le *balanza* en guêpiers *(tatugu kononi)* et reçurent le pouvoir d'activer ou d'éteindre le feu (1).

Les génies Téliko, jaloux de l'indépendance de ces nouveaux êtres, résolurent de les réduire et leur firent la guerre. Les oiseaux, qui n'avaient point d'armes, se lamentèrent et un forgeron Gwonna eut pitié d'eux; ayant demandé aux hommes de sa famille des haches, des houes, des flèches, il les leur donna, recevant en retour la promesse de révélations qui lui seraient utiles. Ainsi fut fait et les oiseaux partirent armés au-devant de Téliko, au lieu-dit *gonya*. Dans une lutte gigantesque, ils usèrent leurs armes, mais aucun des adversaires ne put vaincre l'autre.

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des *ar*, sédentaires *(Fari)* nous avaient été signalées dans la plus haute antiquité par les écrivains,historiens et géographes qui les nommaient Noumides; Salluste nous dit que « les Faronsû, en se mêlant aux gétules *(gne-Toules)* ont formé la nation des Noumides.

Or, ces métis Noumides, nommés actuellement, Noumous, ont été, d'après la tradition, les premiers initiateurs des peuples primitifs, aux arts industriels, par suite ce titre de Noumous a été conservé et appliqué à tous les forgerons. »

Et en note, même page : « Mais ce terme de forgeron, Noumou, n'a pas *(sic)* forcément dans les pays nigériens l'idée d'un métallurgiste. »

(1) Cf. p. 23.

Les oiseaux redescendirent alors sur terre et remercièrent les forgerons en leur enseignant trois secrets nécessaires à la bonne marche de leur travail :

« 1° Comment fonder leurs autels en unissant dans une peau de panthère, de l'eau froide, du fer et une pierre, âme de la forge.

2° Comment protéger du feu les mains des potières.

3° Comment forger et consacrer le couteau de circoncision. »

Depuis ces révélations, les Gwonna révérèrent ces moniteurs, ce qui porta à seize le nombre de leurs ancêtres : les huit premiers transformés en oiseaux et qui n'avaient pas la parole, les huit autres qui reçurent celle de Faro.

Dans chaque village le patriarche des Gwonna porte le titre de *koligi* (litt. : propriétaire des choses). Il assure la garde de l'outillage ancestral déposé dans un sanctuaire et celle d'objets rituels, conservés dans sa demeure, appartenant aux forgerons de l'agglomération : de plus, il est seul habilité à exécuter les rites concernant cet outillage et les purifications.

La position prépondérante de la famille Gwonna se traduit dans les rites. Alors qu'un forgeron ordinaire, en rupture d'interdit, doit faire intervenir le *koligi* pour se purifier, un Gwonna s'adresse simplement à des membres de sa famille.

Tout forgeron est considéré comme porteur d'un *tere* excellent. Il est bienveillant, affable et ne fait jamais de tort à personne. On se lie facilement d'amitié, on plaisante avec lui, même si on le connaît depuis peu. Les rapports de *senankuya* qu'il assume avec les autres Noirs contribuent d'ailleurs à la cordialité de ces relations.

Le bon *tere* du forgeron agit notamment lors de la circoncision qui est confiée de préférence à un Gwonna. Le fait d'être circoncis par un forgeron fait diminuer rapidement le *wanzo*, hâte la cicatrisation de la plaie et améliore le *tere*. On attribue au forgeron le pouvoir de se transformer à volonté en animal ou en végétal. Là où les hyènes sont révérées à titre d'animaux protecteurs d'un village *(dasiri)*, elles sont toujours considérées comme des ancêtres forgerons métamorphosés (1).

Le matériel rituel actuellement conservé dans chaque village se compose d'un exemplaire de chacun des outils fabriqués par les forgerons depuis leur apparition.

a) Outils de bois. — Les artisans utilisèrent d'abord le bois, modifiant lentement la forme des objets. D'un simple bâton

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(1) Notamment au village de Konodimi, situé à 21 km. au sud-ouest de Ségou.

(généralement en *sunzun* (1)) ou d'un billot mal dégrossi, ils ont fait peu à peu des outils plus perfectionnés, la forme souhaitée étant obtenue par usure et polissage sur les roches.

La première arme utilisée à la chasse fut un engin de jet formant épieu, le *semenkala* (de *kala*, manche, fig. 9, A). Taillé d'une seule pièce, il comprenait trois parties distinctes : le *bulonda* (a), le *semenu* (b) et le *koli* (c) (litt. : crochet). Les hommes lançaient l'objet de toutes leurs forces sur l'animal visé ou bien ils fouillaient la terre où se terrait leur proie avec l'extrémité pointue *(semena)* souvent empoisonnée avec du venin de vipère. L'arme était l'objet de sacrifices sanglants exécutés sur le *koli* et destinés à accroître sa force.

Le premier outil agricole fut le *yirewolo* (litt. : noble, fig. 9, B) nommé aussi, à cause de son ancienneté, *mogokoroba* (litt. : personne ancienne, ancêtre).

b) Outils de pierre. — Plus tard, les artisans apprirent l'usage de la pierre. Ils utilisèrent les haches néolithiques dites « pierres de tonnerre (2) » qui leur servaient de ciseaux. Celles de Gwondougou furent de tout temps réputées pour leur solidité. Les artisans travaillaient en commun et quand ils avaient dégrossi les ébauches, certains d'entre eux étaient chargés de les user sur une roche pour les rendre tranchantes.

Le *farakun* (litt. : tête de pierre) (fig. 9, D) fut la première hache dont l'emmanchement fut inventé par un artisan qui, ayant garni de poison la partie tranchante de son engin, désirait en essayer l'effet sur un arbre. Il enfonça la pierre dans un jeune tronc avec l'idée que les feuilles allaient sécher d'elles-mêmes. Mais il mourut sans constater aucun résultat. Plus tard, un passant ayant tenté en vain de retirer la pierre, coupa le bois au-dessus et au-dessous d'elle et maniant ce nouvel outil fut surpris de son efficacité. L'usage de la hache emmanchée se répandit parmi les hommes qui utilisèrent, pour lier la pierre au bois, la fibre du *nyama*. La pierre pouvait d'ailleurs être rapidement libérée et servir de couteau pour trancher la viande ou les os. Le manche servait d'épieu pour fouiller la terre et attaquer les animaux.

Il est probable que l'emmanchement fut également pratiqué pour les houes de bois confectionnées en deux parties et utilisées longtemps dans les régions où la pierre dure faisait défaut. En effet, un mythe concernant la découverte de la culture du coton, qui précéda celle des céréales, mentionne le fait que les hommes rapportaient chez eux leurs manches, mais laissaient chaque jour l'extrémité de la houe au carrefour, en hommage au génie du lieu.

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(1) *Diospyros mespiliformis.* Le bois de cet arbre est très dur.

(2) Les Bambara, comme les autres Noirs du Soudan, attribuent à certaines haches néolithiques une origine céleste (cf. p. 44). Il semble qu'une grande quantité d'un outillage ancien ait été trouvée par eux sur les lieux lors de leur arrivée.

c) Outils de fer. — Enfin, les Gwonna découvrirent le fer et développèrent la métallurgie (1).

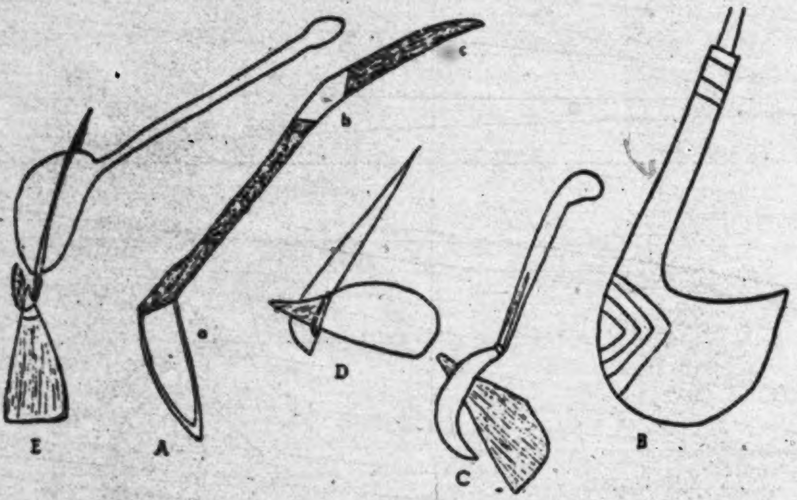

Fig. 9. — Armes et outils de bois (A et B), de pierre (C et D), de fer (E) des anciens Bambara. (Dessin d'un informateur.)

Alors que les hommes s'étaient absentés du village du Gwondougou, emportant avec eux leurs autels, deux filles quittèrent leur demeure pour aller vivre avec deux artisans des familles Fané et Koumaré.

Lorsque les hommes revinrent au village pour y prendre la pierre dure qu'ils utilisaient de préférence, ils furent très inquiets de ne point trouver leurs filles. Pour les chercher, ils creusèrent le sol, pensant qu'elles y étaient enfouies, les hommes de ce temps vivant dans des trous aménagés. Au cours de ce travail, ils découvrirent des roches qui leur étaient jusqu'alors inconnues et qui portent le nom de *farabele.* Elles leur parurent belles et ils voulurent les utiliser. Mises au feu, elles se modifièrent et devinrent si dures que les marteaux de pierre avec lesquels on tentait de les façonner, se brisèrent net. Les morceaux de fer servirent alors de projectiles, pour remplacer les cailloux des frondes. Mais les forgerons qui avaient enlevé les jeunes filles et qui étaient revenus au village avec leurs femmes virent le nouveau matériau et suggérèrent l'idée d'en fabriquer des haches.

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(1) Les Noirs considèrent que la découverte du fer et la métallurgie leur sont dues. Il n'est cependant pas impossible que cette technique ait été importée par des artisans venus de la Méditerranée.

Le premier outil forgé, le *kongobwona* (litt. : laisser la faim), est encore aujourd'hui utilisé comme hache rituelle par les forgerons (fig. 9, E).

Il se compose d'un manche de bois terminé par un renflement formant masse et traversé par une tige de fer recourbée qui maintient la lame tranchante (*farabye*) de la hache proprement dite. Le manche très long, permettait à un homme de travailler sans se courber.

L'outil justifie son nom, car c'est lui qui apporta la prospérité aux artisans. Le symbolisme des différentes parties en témoigne : la masse de l'exemplaire consacré, que chaque forgeron conserve dans son autel et qui est l'objet de rites réguliers, est évidée et contient de l'argent, du mil et du cuivre. Le morceau de fer qui la traverse représente, en bas, la langue du plus âgé des Gwonna, en haut celle du plus jeune, rappelant ainsi les actes et les paroles de ceux qui, pour le bien de tous, découvrirent le métal.

Par la suite, les forgerons fabriquèrent d'autres modèles de haches et de houes de fer en imitant celles qu'ils utilisaient auparavant, mais en réduisant leurs dimensions.

L'extrémité des houes de bois était chaque jour abandonnée après usage au carrefour, en hommage au génie du lieu. Le travailleur ne conservait que le manche et taillait pour le lendemain un nouvel instrument. Les manches des houes et des haches étaient considérés comme des personnes parce qu'imprégnés de la force vitale de celui qui les tenait en main. Le cultivateur laissait dans son champ l'extrémité tranchante (de pierre ou de fer) et rapportait le manche qu'il déposait sur sa natte pendant la nuit.

Armes et outils étaient l'objet de sacrifices réguliers. On retirait le manche et le sang des victimes coulait d'abord dans l'orifice servant à le maintenir, puis sur la partie tranchante, tandis que l'officiant récitait une prière.

Actuellement, l'ensemble de l'outillage ancien est dit *makorobaw ka miňew* (litt. : outils des grands ancêtres). Considérés comme les témoins les plus respectables et les plus précieux de leur civilisation, des exemplaires de chaque objet sont conservés dans des sanctuaires dits *makoroba so* (litt. : maison des ancêtres) qui sont généralement des excavations naturelles ou des trous creusés dans le sol, rappel des anciennes habitations. Ces outils sont assimilés aux ancêtres qui les utilisaient et qui étaient, bien avant l'organisation des sociétés religieuses, l'objet d'un culte régulier. C'est pourquoi, respectant cette hiérarchie fondamentale, lors de l'initiation au Komo, on les présente au circoncis, avant les autels familiaux (1). De même au cours des rites agraires et funéraires, ils sont extraits des sanctuaires, honorés et remis en place avant les autels du Komo; l'inobservation de cette règle constituerait une rupture d'interdit entraînant les plus graves désordres.

Transportés au cimetière, au cours de la cérémonie annuelle de consécration des morts, ils reçoivent autant de victimes que ces derniers car ils représentent les ancêtres.

Le *koligi* les apporte au même lieu en deux autres occasions; lors des cérémonies agraires exécutées après la pousse des épis et après le battage de la récolte. Haches et houes sont présentées une à une aux tombes des défunts, puis, réunies au centre du cimetière, elles sont utilisées une fois chacune pour couper une branche ou creuser le sol; ce geste rituel rappelle l'usage qu'en faisaient les ancêtres.

La forge.

Sous un auvent situé généralement sur l'une des places ou aux abords du village, le forgeron établit son atelier qui est des plus simples et comporte un minimum de matériel. La forge représente l'artisan : le four est son corps, le soufflet ses testicules, la tuyère son sexe, le feu sa tête. Quand le fer rouge est battu par la masse, réplique du *gosilãnde,* qui symbolise l'univers, les étincelles sont l'éclair et la foudre.

L'autel de la forge, situé parfois à l'ouest du foyer, contient des manches noircis de houes, de pioches et de haches, du charbon (*fininkoro*, litt. : vieux charbon), de la cendre pétrie avec de l'argile (*buguri*, litt. : cendre du foyer), le tout ayant appartenu aux anciens propriétaires; enfin, une hache *kongobwona* dite « mère de l'autel », réplique réduite des haches ancestrales.

La masse de bois qui maintient les crochets de fer et la lame est évidée et forme une sorte de réserve divisée en trois compartiments.

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(1) Notamment au village de Konodimini, dans la région de Ségou.

Celui du haut contient de l'argent; quoi qu'il arrive, le forgeron aura les moyens de vivre.

Dans le compartiment central sont déposés du cuivre et du fer, métaux que travaille l'artisan et de l'eau, élément de base et lieu d'élection de Faro, maître de la parole.

Le compartiment du bas contient du mil provenant d'un champ dit *kongobwona foro*, réservé aux besoins du culte de la forge. Ce terrain est placé sous la garde du patriarche appartenant à la famille Gwonna et l'entretien est assuré par la communauté. Les semences sont données par chaque forgeron au vieillard qui procède lui-même aux semailles. Les travaux de culture et le battage sont exécutés en commun. Le mil est engrangé dans le grenier du vieillard et chaque forgeron en reçoit une part. Celle-ci n'est pas consommée, mais mise en réserve; de temps en temps, l'artisan en prélève des graines qu'il place dans son autel, à titre d'offrande et qui restent un certain temps dans la poche qui leur est réservée; puis elles sont considérées comme consommées par la hache, retirées et remplacées par d'autres. Une partie du mil est conservée comme semence pour l'année suivante.

Chaque compartiment est ouvert et le forgeron peut y introduire les doigts ; si ses gains sont insuffisants, il se frotte le corps et la langue avec la main qu'il a préalablement plongée dans la poche contenant de l'argent; le prix, fixé par la parole, ne sera pas discuté par le client. S'il va cultiver son champ, il met chaque matin ses doigts dans le mil pour y puiser la force qu'il détient et améliorer le rendement de son travail agricole. S'il se brûle en forgeant, il plonge les doigts dans le troisième compartiment et se rafraîchit avec l'eau de Faro. Cette même eau est donnée à boire à un jeune artisan au début de son apprentissage.

Le fer triangulaire, *farabye*, qui forme la hache proprement dite, est placé sous la domination de trois génies appartenant au groupe de l'air : Agayru, qui a révélé le fer aux hommes, Tengu qui leur a enseigné la suprématie du Faro, et Gullé. Les deux premiers sont les maîtres des soufflets et dirigent l'ensemble du travail, le troisième est leur exécutant et enseigne aux hommes la technique du fer (1). Au décès du propriétaire de l'autel, la hache est extraite et déposée dans le sanctuaire du village où sont conservés les outils ancestraux. Mais tout le reste des objets est hérité par le fils.

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(1) Le génie aurait refusé aux forgerons de leur enseigner le travail du cuivre et de l'or, ces deux métaux appartenant à Faro, qui s'en réserve l'usage. Le fer étant noir, il en a abandonné l'usage aux génies de l'air.

De plus, dans la demeure de chaque forgeron, une réplique de la hache *kongobwona* conservée dans le sanctuaire commun constitue l'autel de famille, hérité de père en fils, sur lequel l'intéressé offre à ses ancêtres des sacrifices réguliers ou occasionnels. Il possède aussi parfois une plaquette de fer sur laquelle est gravé un dessin représentant la création et notamment les « spirales de l'esprit créateur aux angles cardinaux », le signe de la multiplication, etc. Les angles de l'objet sont redressés pour marquer que le monde se relève, se réveille, ressuscite constamment.

Les forges des artisans d'un village sont généralement groupées sur une place publique, autour d'une grosse enclume, *kula*, prise dans une masse de bois formant socle et profondément enfoncée dans le sol (pl. IV, *b*). Devant cette enclume commune sont réglés les affaires judiciaires, les mariages ou les ruptures d'engagements; devant elle, on prononce des vœux, des serments solennels aux *boli*, et l'on procède à des purifications pour violation d'interdit.

Les forgerons sont également propriétaires en commun d'un certain nombre d'objets rituels habituellement déposés chez les *kotigi* et que l'on sort pour les cérémonies religieuses. Parmi ceux-ci, le *nege dyun* (litt. : mère du fer) (1) est une sorte de masse de fer fabriquée à l'image du *semèkala* (cf. fig. 9, B) et sur laquelle le *kotigi* trace de petites rayures; les unes représentent la tête de chacun des forgerons Gwonna, les autres, bien séparées des premières, rappellent la tête des artisans appartenant aux autres familles. L'ensemble symbolise la totalité des forgerons du village. Le *nege dè* (litt. : fils du fer) est une cloche rituelle ornée elle aussi de traits représentant les membres des familles de forgerons.

Après fabrication le *nege dyun* est déposé dans le sanctuaire des outils ancestraux. Il y séjourne deux ou trois mois afin de s'imprégner de la force des ancêtres et reçoit de temps à autre le sang des sacrifices exécutés nuitamment. C'est après ce séjour qu'il est placé avec le *nege dè* dans la demeure du kotigi.

Chaque artisan sacrifie individuellement sur la hache *kongobwona* conservée dans sa demeure ainsi que sur les objets contenus dans l'autel de sa forge : dans le même temps ses outils reçoivent des libations de bouillie de mil.

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(1) *dyun* signifie « mère » en langue archaïque.

De plus, chaque année, les forgerons réunis offrent un sacrifice sur l'enclume commune : tous les outils sont déposés autour d'elle et inondés du sang des victimes.

Une cérémonie annuelle rassemble également les artisans pour demander à Faro de favoriser le refroidissement du fer travaillé et de donner à l'eau de la trempe la force de remplir son office. Réunis devant la forge du *koligi*, ils apportent un certain nombre de tomates qui sont tout d'abord présentées à l'autel puis à la hache ancestrale *farakun* sur laquelle chacun passe à tour de rôle sa langue.

Bouches closes pour ne pas laisser s'échapper la force ainsi recueillie, tous se dirigent vers le fleuve, tandis que l'un des assistants frappe sur la cloche rituelle *(nege dẽ)* avec la masse *(nege dyun)* le rythme dit *klidẽ fo* (litt. : rythme des fils des testicules) (1) qui s'adresse au forgeron manchot, le *bolokuruni*, compagnon de Faro. Arrivé sur la berge, le *koligi* se dévêt et se jette à l'eau. Quand il reparaît à la surface, tous les assistants ouvrent leurs mains pour mieux saisir la force de Faro et de son compagnon qu'il est censé apporter. Ils se précipitent pour l'aider à se vêtir et celui qui réussit à le toucher pense recevoir des faveurs spéciales de Faro.

Les tomates sont alors écrasées dans une calebasse et la pulpe jetée au fleuve dans un endroit profond où chaque assistant puise et boit pour communier avec Faro. Le groupe s'en retourne ensuite, emportant dans la calebasse un peu d'eau dans laquelle chacun trempe sa hache personnelle en commençant par celle du patriarche qui, à la fin de l'opération, boit le reste.

En cas de stérilité, la femme demande aide aux trois génies protecteurs de la forge qui passent pour très prolifiques. En dehors de sa présence, le forgeron s'accroupit devant l'autel, les deux mains tendues, tête basse et prie. La femme doit ensuite jurer de respecter scrupuleusement l'interdit des génies invoqués et qui est de prononcer leur nom. Elle peut aussi demander au forgeron d'implorer l'aide des cendres rituelles de l'autel.

Interdits. — Pourvue de force vitale et d'une âme, *ni*, la forge, être vivant, est entourée d'interdits destinés à protéger son intégrité matérielle et spirituelle.

Ces interdits, au nombre de sept, sont propres à la forge et aux autels qu'elle contient; ils concernent non seulement le forgeron, mais aussi ses clients, les passants, à quelque sexe qu'ils appartiennent.

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(1) *kli dẽ* « fils de testicule » est l'un des quolibets rituels lancés aux forgerons par leurs *senãnku*.

1° Nul ne doit griller de viande sur le feu de forge; ce serait « manger la viande des génies Soba ». L'inobservation de cette règle prive le feu de sa force et provoque l'enflure du ventre du contrevenant (1).

2° Aucune injure ne doit être proférée près de la forge, notamment si elle concerne les sexes (2). Ce serait insulter le feu, la flamme vacillerait et, malgré la soufflerie, aucune chaleur ne sortirait du foyer.

3° La plante du pied ni la paume de la main ne sont jamais présentées au feu, car la forge est vivante et de même que ces gestes exécutés vis-à-vis d'un être humain détermineraient des troubles physiques, de même les parties de la forge sont atteintes et peuvent se briser (marteau ou enclume) ou se déchirer (peau des soufflets) (3).

4° Toute discussion ou mésentente trouble la forge, l'émeut, nuit au travail (4).

5° L'envie, la jalousie, les mauvais sentiments en général, sont néfastes pour le forgeron qui perd son « tour de main ». Il lui faut « avoir le cœur pur (5) ».

6° On ne doit jamais approcher un miroir de la forge; il en prendrait l'âme qui réside dans la hache de l'autel (6).

7° Des rapports sexuels près de la forge l'empêchent de fonctionner (7).

Rompre les interdits du feu de forge revient à attenter à la virilité du forgeron, car les soufflets sont ses testicules. Aussi les artisans se présentent-ils nus devant le fautif pour lui faire honte; on l'assied sur l'enclume commune et on verse sur sa tête de l'eau dans laquelle on a fait tremper du gros mil *(keninge)* qui doit purifier l'engin (8).

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(1) On dit du coupable : *soko dyeni bala, fa la sababu yalla :* « Il est plein de viande grillée au feu de forge ».

(2) *neni leke fã nda la :* « On ne dit pas d'injures à la porte de la forge. »

(3) *se ndege tere le jira fã na :* « Le *tere* de la plante du pied ne doit pas être présenté à la forge. »

(4) *dadyuguya, filibaiya, kunasirinkunya, konodyuguya le kę fã nda la :* « La méchanceté, la fourberie, l'humiliation, la tromperie ne se font pas à la porte de la forge. »

(5) *numu le keleya nole i bolo na tyε :* « Le forgeron ne doit pas être jaloux, sinon sa main se gâte. »

(6) *dugalle le gere fã na a kunana; ka fã ni la :* « Le miroir ne doit pas approcher la forge, il prend l'âme de la forge. »

(7) *nea le gere fã nda la :* « Aucune saleté ne doit être faite près de la porte de la forge. »

(8) Si la faute est irréparable, le chef agenouillé écrase sur l'enclume

Le propriétaire lésé procède ensuite à la réfection de sa forge. Ayant pris du charbon de bois, un morceau de fer, un morceau de cuir et ses outils, il se rend chez le *koligi* pour lui demander d'exécuter les purifications nécessaires. En présence des parents réunis devant la forge et du coupable, le *koligi*, seul officiant, écrase fer, cuir et charbon, puis va chercher la hache *kongobwona* conservée dans le sanctuaire des outils ancestraux. Il dépose le tout devant l'autel face à l'est et au-dessus d'une calebasse pleine d'eau qu'il tient entre ses mains il récite la prière suivante :

« Toi forge, chose ancienne, tu nous appartiens, à nous Gwonna; un tel a rompu son interdit, je suis son *senãnku* et te fais des excuses à ce sujet. J'ai dit : forge; j'ai dit : forgeron de Gwondougou (1). »

La hache est ensuite baignée dans l'eau à laquelle est ajoutée de la terre extraite de la hutte. Puis l'officiant démolit complètement la forge souillée et la reconstruit avec la boue ainsi obtenue tandis que l'un des témoins Gwonna conserve un peu de cette terre dans une pièce d'étoffe, en guise de témoignage de la reconstruction.

Le forgeron égorge deux coqs sur la nouvelle forge tandis que les ingrédients pilés par le *koligi* sont déposés sur l'autel. Le lendemain, accompagné de ses parents, il va demander au chef du Komo de procéder à une purification. Les sociétaires se rendent chez lui et le masque siffle dans la forge pour chasser définitivement les miasmes provoqués par la rupture d'interdit. Les volailles apportées par les assistants y sont sacrifiées et tous participent à une beuverie de bière offerte par l'intéressé. Le lendemain, le chef du Komo convoque les femmes de ce dernier. Elles posent chacune une fois la tête sur l'enclume, acte qui chasse le *nyama* qu'elles recèlent depuis la faute, puis laissent auprès, en offrande, des cauris et des noix de cola.

LA POTERIE.

Les anciens Bambara ignoraient la poterie. A l'époque où ils vivaient dans des cavernes, ils faisaient sécher leur viande au soleil sur des rochers. Puis ils fabriquèrent des récipients en creusant des pierres dont certaines meules dormantes actuelles

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trois grains de gros mil, *keninge*, geste qui symbolise la mort du coupable dont il prononce en même temps le nom.

(1) *ε fã, fẽ koro, e ye an gwonna la ye; kari macina ye tnę tyẽ, ne ye senãnku ye, nye delili kę a ko la; ngo fã; ngo gwondugu numu.*

sont une réplique. Quand ils inventèrent le feu, ils firent griller la viande en l'embrochant avec un morceau de bois vert de *sunzun* et en l'exposant à la flamme et aux braises.

Plus tard, ils modelèrent et firent sécher des récipients en argile crue à l'imitation des pierres creuses. L'un de ces récipients ayant été exposé au feu pour y faire cuire les aliments qu'il contenait, les hommes observèrent qu'il changeait de couleur, durcissait et devenait plus résistant. C'est ainsi qu'ils développèrent la technique de la poterie cuite, à l'époque où ils n'avaient encore que des outils de bois.

Cette technique étant liée à l'invention du feu, ce sont les femmes des forgerons qui les premières la pratiquèrent (1). Elles forment aujourd'hui dans chaque village, une société *(lɔ̄)* et possèdent de nombreux autels dont la charge revient à la doyenne.

Le principal d'entre eux, le *dyo kala*, qui représente le pouce des potières, est fait d'un bois taillé en forme de pouce et gravé de traits symboliques. On en frappe légèrement la tête d'une postulante pour lui enseigner son ouvrage; la doyenne verse sur lui son sang en cas de rupture d'interdit intéressant la société. Mais sa principale fonction est d'être le réceptacle des forces spirituelles du groupe intéressé : à la mort d'une sociétaire, l'objet, posé sur le cadavre, recueille l'âme qui s'échappe du corps.

Dans certains villages, les poteries à trous, *ñinlin*, utilisées pour la cuisson du couscous, déposées, à proximité du village, sur le tas de cendres du vaste foyer où sont cuits les ustensiles (cf. pl. IV, *a*) servent également d'autels au moment de la consécration des potières.

Dès son enfance, la potière, à l'exemple de ses aînées, s'exerce à pétrir et à modeler de petits pots, *bokofani* (litt. : petits pots d'argile). Après l'excision, à l'âge requis, elle entre dans la société au cours d'une consécration publique qu'elle reçoit avec d'autres, l'ensemble formant une promotion.

Après un apprentissage de sept jours, les potières décident du jour de la cérémonie qui est célébrée sur le lieu de cuisson près des autels. Chaque sociétaire fournit une épingle à cheveux *(bandigi)* qui en cette occasion la représente, et une peau de hérisson. Dévêtue devant les villageois assemblés, chaque jeune fille s'assied à tour de rôle sur l'autel et une femme âgée examine son sexe pour vérifier la virginité et la bonne exécution de l'excision.

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(1) Les techniques diverses de la poterie auraient été révélées au village de Gwondougou (cf. p. 114) par les génies Soba du carrefour.

Si la jeune fille n'est plus vierge, elle est publiquement déclarée *dangadẹ̀* (litt. : bâtarde) et se trouve d'office exclue de la société; elle ne pourra jamais recevoir le titre de potière. Dans le cas contraire, la proclamation a lieu aussitôt pour la plus grande joie de l'assistance. Si l'excision n'est pas jugée suffisante, la patiente est nommée potière après avoir subi une nouvelle opération de telle sorte que son sang coule sur la poterie (1).

Une vieille femme vient ensuite s'asseoir devant la promotion et l'instruit : elle raconte l'origine et l'histoire de la poterie, prévient des difficultés du métier (fatigue, brûlures). Elle enseigne la patience envers la clientèle et énumère les règles qui devront être observées toute la vie : avoir le cœur pur, ne point haïr autrui; ne pas entreprendre son travail après avoir eu des rapports sexuels récents; œuvrer en silence; respecter les interdits en général.

Puis elle fait une libation d'huile de karité sur l'autel, en frotte le corps des postulantes qui doivent passer leur langue sur la poterie, ce qui constitue un serment. Des moutons, apportés par les parents, sont ensuite égorgés sur le foyer au nom des potières tandis que les anciennes de la société font cadeau aux nouvelles de plusieurs poteries qu'elles vendront à leur profit en attendant leur premier travail. Ce don est de plus signe d'adoption.

Les ustensiles sont confectionnés avec de l'argile, *mbogo pasa*, prise au fond des lits de marigots ou au bord du fleuve et qui appartient à Faro. Ces lieux ont pour interdits le port de l'indigo et la grossesse : aucune femme enceinte ne peut s'en approcher sans provoquer la mort de l'enfant qu'elle porte, compromettre définitivement la solidité de la poterie, et nuire gravement à la société dont elle est membre.

Un sacrifice annuel est offert par les potières à la fin de l'hivernage quand, le niveau du fleuve ayant baissé et libéré les berges, elles retournent pour la première fois prendre l'argile qui leur est nécessaire. Vêtues de blanc, elles emportent leurs houes et la faucille avec laquelle elles fauchent l'herbe humide utilisée pour couvrir les poteries sur le foyer pendant la cuisson, tandis que la doyenne transporte les autels. Les objets sont mis en tas sur un lit de fibres de *nyama* destiné à les isoler du sol. Deux coqs rouges sont égorgés sur l'ensemble tandis qu'une prière est adressée à Faro pour demander l'autorisation de prendre le

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(1) Si l'excision n'est pas possible, on remplace l'opération par une blessure obtenue avec la peau de hérisson (cf. p. 188).

mbogo pasa pendant l'année, solliciter sa protection et son aide pour le travail des sociétaires.

Les potières font une offrande annuelle à leurs autels le jour où leur mari sacrifie sur sa forge. Immédiatement après les libations, elles viennent s'accroupir devant l'autel de la forge sur lequel elles jettent une dizaine de cauris. Puis elles se rendent près du *ñintin*, se dévêtent et lui présentent le sexe par devant et par derrière ce geste marquant leur soumission aux génies de la poterie qui sont les mêmes que ceux de la forge. Toujours nues, elles font le tour du tas de cendres laissé par la dernière cuisson et allument un grand feu; celui-ci attire des guêpiers *talugu kononi* qui tournoient au-dessus des flammes. Elles en abattent avec une fronde, les font griller et les réduisent en cendres qu'elles mélangent à de l'huile de karité dont elles s'enduisent le corps avant de se purifier en traversant les flammes. Elles jettent ensuite, en offrande aux génies, des poteries sur le foyer qu'elles éteignent avant de retourner chez elles.

Les potières cultivent en commun un petit champ rituel dans lequel une jumelle sème des pois blancs, *likaninkuru*, symboles de leur main droite. Le produit de la récolte est consommé en commun sur un tertre, *walawala*, après offrande de quelques graines sur les autels et les outils. Une potière dont les ustensiles se brisent au feu de cuisson exécute une purification avec les produits de ce champ.

Les femmes de forgeron, qu'elles soient ou non potières, sont habilitées à pratiquer l'excision des jeunes filles.

CHAPITRE VI

LES CULTES

Les cultes des Bambara, qu'ils soient individuels, familiaux, villageois, ont pour but principal de promoûvoir dans l'ordre le fonctionnement de l'univers qui comporte la préservation et la conservation des individus et de la collectivité dans leurs biens spirituels ou matériels.

Le chapitre suivant n'est pas exhaustif. Un certain nombre de cultes choisis parmi les plus représentatifs ont été décrits. Sous leurs aspects apparemment divers aussi bien dans leurs buts que dans leurs modalités, tous s'intègrent dans le système de pensée bambara.

I. — LES CULTES INDIVIDUELS ET FAMILIAUX.

Sur les autels individuels abrités dans l'enceinte familiale ou conservés dans la pièce privée *(česo)* de leur propriétaire, sont pratiqués les rites « d'entretien de soi ». Ils assurent la stabilité des forces physiques *(čuafebla, čuafebyeni)* et sociales *(dyamana tigi jigi);* ils protègent contre les dangers extérieurs *(mbe ndyugu kā);* ils servent de réceptacles provisoires des âmes au moment de la mort *(kere la boli ni).*

L'homme devant, dans de nombreuses circonstances de sa vie, remédier à toutes déperditions de ses forces, dispose de ces autels qui constituent des dépôts, des relais, dans lesquels se trouvent intégrés, pour une part, certains éléments de sa personne. Ils lui permettent de regrouper ou de revigorer ses forces physiques ou psychiques, pour son bien comme pour celui de la communauté.

A. — *Le česo :*

Dans les demeures, les autels non fixes sont conservés dans une pièce dite *česo* (litt. : maison de l'homme) réservée au propriétaire et qui contient, outre ses armes et instruments agricoles, des autels familiaux, collectifs ou individuels (1) selon qu'il est chef de famille, chef de société religieuse ou célibataire.

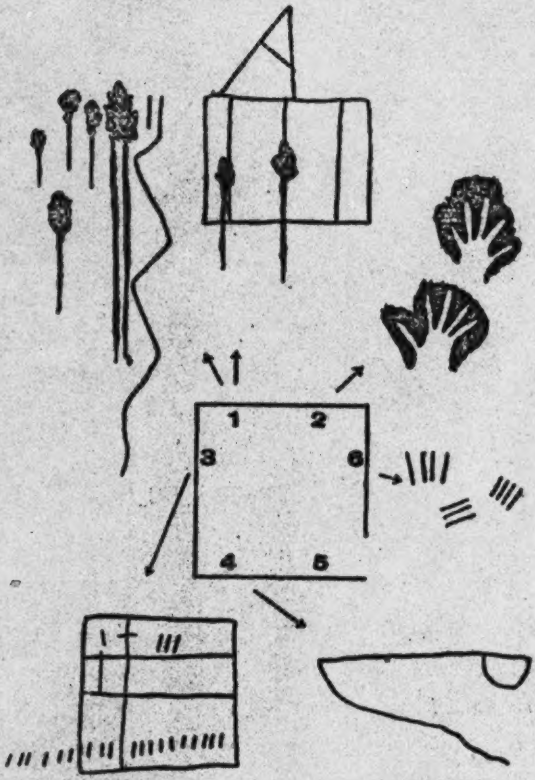

Fig. 10. — Plan du *česo* de Tètè, notable de Banankoroni et reproduction des dessins exécutés sur les murs :

1. Les ancêtres et leur demeure — 2. Les mains des vivants — 3. Le ciel, l'espace, la terre et les 22 catégories — 4. Le fouet du Komo — 5. Tache rouge — 6. Le propriétaire (trois) et ses deux femmes (quatre et quatre).

Ces objets sont pendus au plafond ou dissimulés dans les encoignures à l'abri des regards et des risques d'impureté. Les murs de la pièce, qui sont enduits jusqu'au tiers de leur hauteur de terre noire, symbolisant la présence et la protection de Faro, supportent des peintures et des dessins.

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(1) La description qui suit est valable pour la maison de Tètè, notable de Banankoroni.

Sur l'un d'eux sont tracés à la bouillie de mil des bâtonnets, les ancêtres, et une ligne brisée, la personne humaine; sur un autre, gravée à la pointe sèche une figure géométrique schématise la demeure ancestrale; elle est accompagnée de deux mains silhouettées (cf. fig. 10, 1 et 2), mains des vivants « croisées et tendues vers le monde des morts ». La main gauche, symbole du désordre, de l'incertitude, des variations de la conscience humaine, est placée en dessous et à droite de l'autre pour rappeler l'engagement de l'homme vis-à-vis de sa dextre, symbole d'ordre, de droiture, de fidélité, de travail (1). Ainsi disposées, les mains expriment la soumission complète des vivants aux ancêtres.

Plus loin sont figurées les divisions de l'univers (fig. 10, 3) à l'aide d'un carré divisé en trois registres symbolisant, de haut en bas : le ciel et l'eau, l'air, la terre.

Dans le carré supérieur à gauche, un trait connote Faro dans sa toute-puissance, seul maître du ciel, de l'eau, de la vie. Un trait horizontal rappelle la domination qu'il exerce sur le monde. Ceux qui suivent sont ses enfants. Le total évoque la forme féminine du génie.

Tous les sacrifices individuels ou familiaux offerts à Faro sont accomplis sur son signe que l'officiant frotte avec du cuivre et des tomates écrasées afin de « remercier le génie qui protège son *dya*, et le prier de donner à ses femmes des enfants ».

Le rectangle central est le domaine de Teliko : air et vent. Le petit trait qui traverse verticalement le carré de gauche représente le génie tentant de pénétrer dans le plan de Faro pour le vaincre. L'échec subi est traduit par le fait que la majeure partie du trait est située dans le domaine de Téliko, lequel n'a pu violer que momentanément la limite de son adversaire.

Le rectangle inférieur délimite la terre, siège des génies Soba. La ligne de 22 bâtonnets qui le recouvre rappelle les 22 éléments de la création « les 22 choses indispensables à l'homme de ce monde ».

Sur un autre mur, le feu est signalé par deux fouets : celui de Faro, la foudre, celui de Komo, la loi. Ils rappellent également « la force de la parole des initiés » et sont exposés à la flamme pour augmenter cette force (fig. 10, 4). A côté d'eux, une grande tache rouge, *dyoli jikin*, peinte à l'ocre, avertit que l'homme est sacrificateur, que le culte a pour base l'immolation. On dit d'un tel homme qu'il « tient compte de la preuve du sang (1) » (fig. 10, 5).

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(1) En traçant le dessin, on dit : « Je pose ma main droite sur le mur nuit et jour », *neben kinin bolo da koko la šu ni kle.*

Au-dessus du lit, formé d'une simple natte posée au sol, trois traits gravés symbolisent l'homme et deux fois quatre traits les deux femmes qui partagent successivement sa couche (fig. 10, 6).

Dans certains villages, on trace les dessins avec un instrument dit *ngwoni*, utilisé dans les rites « de renouvellement de l'année (2) ».

La pointe, en bois de baobab, avec laquelle on grave est mince comme une planchette et s'adapte à une sorte de raquette en bois de *sunsun* qui soutient un filet de fibres de *da*. Une peau de bouc, dite *soni wolo ni* (litt. : âme de la peau du sacrifice) et deux poignées en bois de *ngolobe* (3) complètent l'ensemble. Le réseau, fait de seize fils de coton teints à l'ocre rouge, *kolo*, est dit *ngwoni kene ba* (litt. : grand espace du *ngwoni*) et représente Faro.

Avant l'usage, l'instrument est lavé avec de l'eau qui servira à la cuisson des aliments de la famille. Puis on presse sur le filet des tomates dont le jus coule dans la peau qui forme poche; tenant la pointe de la main droite, et la poignée de la main gauche, on trace alors les dessins sur le mur du *česo*. Les graines des fruits resteront dans la peau jusqu'à l'année suivante, comme témoins de l'offrande. Puis avec un couteau rougi au feu on grave sur l'objet quatre traits, c'est-à-dire Faro, et deux fois 16 traits, multiples de quatre, symbole féminin. Après chaque entaille, on « pose sur elle un chiffon imbibé d'eau fraîche pour apaiser la douleur ». Le cadre est imprégné de suc de noix de kola et quatre points, matrice des femmes, sont également marqués avec une pierre noire, *kolofin*. Un œuf est ensuite écrasé sur l'objet pour « rafraîchir l'âme de l'ensemble ».

B. — *Les autels :*

Tout chef de famille porte sur lui un petit autel dit *kere la boli ni* (litt. : petit autel du côté), en rapport avec les âmes des membres de la famille dont il a, pour une part, la responsabilité.

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(1) *dyoli tamaše mine ba.*
(2) Notamment à Banankoroni.
(3) *Combretum micranthum.*

En cas de maladie, il offre sur ce *boli* des sacrifices pour la guérison du patient. En cas de mort, il y maintient provisoirement l'âme pour la porter à l'autel collectif du Komo (1). Il sacrifie également sur cet autel au moment des semailles.

Si le chef est lui-même très souffrant, on pose l'autel sur sa tête pour tenter de remplacer l'âme qui fuit par celle qu'il contient. S'il meurt, on le pose sur sa poitrine pour recueillir son âme qui est ensuite transportée dans le sanctuaire du Komo. Au bout de sept jours, l'objet est remis au fils aîné du défunt qui, devenant à son tour chef de famille, sacrifie à cette occasion deux chèvres au Komo.

Le čuafebla (litt. : placé à la hanche) est confectionné par un père pour son fils lorsqu'il atteint sa maturité et qu'il est à même de mener une vie d'homme, de cultiver pour son compte, de fonder une famille.

S'il n'y a point de Komo dans le village, le père peut le confectionner plus tôt après la cérémonie de la dation du nom.

L'autel est fait de queues d'hyène, de queues de scorpions, de gousses de piment liées avec un petit bâtonnet; il représente la chair et le sang du propriétaire.

Il reçoit un sacrifice annuel au moment des semailles, après l'offrande collective au Komo, dans la cour de la maison, en présence de tous les membres de la famille (2). Il est de plus l'objet de sacrifices lorsqu'une affaire importante est en cours : mariage, démarche privée ou administrative, lutte contre une grave épidémie.

Un fils peut hériter de l'autel de son père et le conserver avec le sien qu'il porte accroché à sa hanche.

Le *čuafebyēni* (litt. : petite corne à la hanche) est composé d'un cauri, pris au grenier de Faro, de cuivre qui sert d'âme

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(1) La société, les autels, le rôle du Komo sont décrits page 142 et ss.

(2) Le culte rendu sur cet autel fait intervenir le génie Sago dont le rôle agraire, dans l'état actuel de l'enquête, est encore obscur. Il enseigna aux hommes à arroser leurs champs.

« Deux oiseaux *konodyanfi* s'étant mis à tourner en chantant au-dessus de travailleurs des champs, ceux-ci abandonnèrent leurs houes pour les observer. Les oiseaux allaient prendre de l'eau dans leur bec au bord d'une mare voisine et revenaient la verser au pied d'une tige de mil dont l'épi n'était pas encore formé. Les hommes marquèrent la tige pour la reconnaître et observèrent par la suite qu'elle donnait un épi plus beau que les autres. Imitant l'oiseau, ils humectèrent leurs semences, arrosèrent leurs champs, et leur récolte s'en trouva considérablement améliorée. Ils en conservèrent l'habitude et, en remerciement, rendirent un culte au génie Sago dont les oiseaux sont les mandataires et qui vient s'abreuver au *čuafebla*. »

(ni) à l'autel, de piment, de charbon et de miel. Ce mélange est introduit dans une corne de bélier ornée de cauris à son ouverture et souvent enveloppée d'une étoffe rouge portant le même ornement.

L'autel est consacré sur ceux du Komo, au-dessus desquels on le fait passer sept fois. Des victimes sont ensuite égorgées, leur sang recueilli dans une calebasse et le *boli* trempé trois fois dedans avant d'être mis à sécher au soleil.

Son rôle est de protection. Son propriétaire le porte pendant les cérémonies du Komo pour se préserver des sorts, *korli*, lancés dans l'assistance.

Il maintient également l'intégrité des forces de son propriétaire. Si ce dernier s'évanouit ou entre en transes, on le rétablit dans son état normal en renouvelant complètement les ingrédients qui le composent. Lorsqu'on sort de la corne ce qu'elle contient, on retire « à la fois l'âme de l'autel et celle de l'homme ». On rince le récipient avec de l'eau du Niger, puis on procède à la reconstitution qui est assimilée à « une nouvelle prise d'âme ». Chaque membre de la famille vient en aide à l'intéressé : le père donne le cuivre, les femmes, le piment; les enfants le charbon; un cauri neuf est prélevé au grenier de Faro.

Le *mbendyugukã* (litt. : je suis sur l'ennemi) est un autel individuel qui permet à son propriétaire de dominer ses adversaires et même d'attenter à leur vie.

Celui qui désire en posséder un le confectionne après la mort d'un ennemi. Il va secrètement déterrer le cadavre, lui rase les cheveux, lui coupe la langue, et les ongles et prélève les yeux.

Un vieillard possesseur du même autel se rend avec cet objet chez l'intéressé qui prépare et mélange les matières suivant un rituel spécial et les lie à une queue d'hyène. Devant un témoin faisant partie de sa promotion, le vieillard frotte sept fois le nouvel autel sur l'ancien en récitant une prière pour le consacrer, puis le remet à son propriétaire (1).

Le symbolisme des différentes parties qui le composent explique l'usage qui en sera fait par la suite. La langue du mort contient sa voix et donne à celle du propriétaire la force de convaincre ses contradicteurs dans les discussions comme dans les conseils. Les yeux du mort lui permettent de discerner ce que d'autres ne voient pas, ou même d'aveugler ses adversaires qu'on empoisonne avec les ongles. Les cheveux, témoins des autres parties du cadavre, contiennent le *nyama* du défunt et sont donc la partie essentielle du *mbendyugukã*.

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(1) A cause de sa maléficience, l'autel ne peut être confectionné et remis à son propriétaire que devant un témoin connu.

Le propriétaire de cet autel, qui exclut le chiffre quatre, n'épouse que trois femmes. D'autre part, il ne peut, sans risque de mourir, mélanger ses propres cheveux avec ceux d'autrui.

Du fait de son caractère agressif, le *mbendyugukã* exige des victimes, chiens ou coqs, de couleur rouge. Il donne à son détenteur une force dépassant toujours celle de ses concurrents dans tout ce qu'il entreprend.

Aussi reçoit-il des sacrifices au moment du travail des champs, pour le commerce, le mariage, la guerre et la chasse où l'intéressé risque sa vie; il aide à lutter contre la maladie et la mort. Dès le premier sacrifice, il capte la personnalité et l'agressivité du mort et il la fait endosser au propriétaire, le rendant doublement dangereux pour ceux avec lesquels il est en conflit. Mais en revanche le danger peut se retourner contre lui et, beaucoup plus qu'un autre, il risque sa vie à la moindre rupture d'interdit.

En outre, le Komo qui réprouve de telles manœuvres peut, s'il le juge utile, déléguer le *nyama* du défunt sur celui qui utilise ainsi ses forces spirituelles et le mettre en danger de mort. C'est dire qu'un Bambara hésitera longtemps avant de posséder pareil autel et qu'en fait peu d'individus assument cette lourde responsabilité.

C. — Le siège du chef :

Dans la cour de l'habitation d'un chef de famille ou chef de village est établi un assemblage de bois fiché dans le sol et dit *dyamana tigi jigi* (litt. : appui du propriétaire du monde) (fig. 11). Ce siège symbolise à la fois le chef, son pouvoir, son rôle social et religieux de soutien du groupe (1).

Les morceaux de bois coudés qui le composent sont plantés dans la terre, assez profondément, au-dessus d'une série d'objets. L'un, simplement coudé (en *a*) est dit *sinzin*, soutien; les deux autres, en forme de *t*, sont dits *jigi ba jigi* (en *b*) (litt. : appui du grand appui).

L'ensemble repose sur le corps d'un albinos *(c)* enterré dans une tombe de forme rituelle, couvert de vêtements anciens teints en *wolo* et tachetés de petits points noirs exécutés avec

(1) Le siège décrit ci-dessous a été observé à Banankoroni dans la cour du chef du village. Un siège analogue se trouve à Soroba.

de la cendre d'os *(kolofin)* qui représentent à la fois l'embryon dans la matrice des femmes et Faro. Il est coiffé du bonnet des hommes primitifs *(e)*.

En *(d)* trois piquets, symboles de l'homme, sont plantés au travers de la peau du front de l'albinos qu'on a prélevée et sur laquelle sont exécutées sept scarifications symbolisant la personne (3 et 4). Au moment où la peau est enterrée sous le siège, la prière suivante est récitée :

« J'ai juré en vos noms en frappant sur le *siriku* de Yamba en (enterrant) la peau du front droit et gauche; peau du front (sept fois (1). »

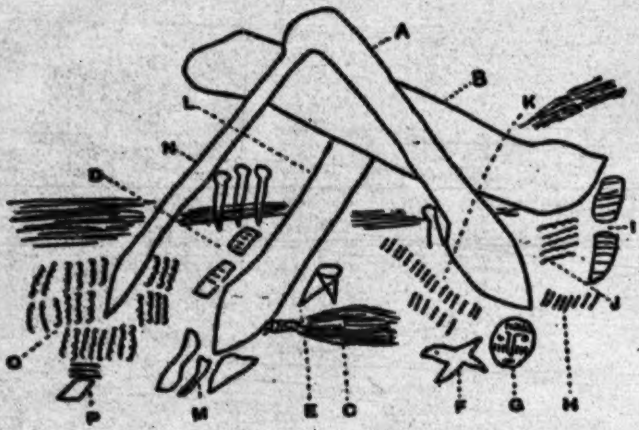

FIG. 11. — Le siège de bois d'un chef de famille de Banankoroni, représentant ses articulations. Il est planté dans la cour au-dessus d'ossements d'un albinos, d'un enfant et de divers objets symboliques. (Dessin d'un informateur.)

En *(m)* sont placés les trois os principaux de l'albinos; les deux fémurs et l'humérus droit, « pour que le chef ait les os blancs » c'est-à-dire qu'il vive si vieux que ses os soient visibles, par transparence sous la peau.

En *(n)* la partie coudée du bois, dite *kuntigi tigiya figi* (litt. :

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(1) *tena wolo fla kini ani numa yamba ka siriku nye di ka fo ani aw čua ye kena, tena wolo.*

La prière rappelle ici l'action du quatrième ancêtre Yamba qui instaura les sacrifices d'albinos à Faro, et son rôle de chef à partir de cette époque mythique (cf. p. 25), rôle que doit remplir avec la même droiture le chef actuel. Le *siriku* est un petit autel protecteur généralement fait d'une queue d'hyène.

soutien de l'action du chef), est plantée sur les cheveux de l'albinos préalablement rasé (en *o*) dont elle prend la force.

En *(k)* vingt-deux bâtonnets sont le symbole des vingt-deux représentant « l'ensemble des paroles reçues par l'ancêtre Koumabana qui n'a jamais été pris de court par personne ». En les déposant, l'officiant forme le souhait que le chef soit, comme lui, imbattable.

En *(h)* huit bâtonnets de bois de *zekene* (1) figurent les huit ancêtres; ils expriment que l'homme doit être, comme Koumabana, maître des paroles et qu'il doit être « de parole ».

En *(f)* est enterré l'oiseau *talugu kononi*, maître du feu. La prière récitée précise qu'il doit pouvoir pénétrer dans le sol et en sortir librement car, depuis les temps mythiques, il joue un rôle décisif dans les combats (2).

En *(g)* est enterrée la tête du premier enfant décédé dans la famille du chef, pour rappeler la perte subie et éviter qu'elle ne se renouvelle. Sur le crâne sont marqués les signes de la personne, deux fois trois et sept ou deux fois quatre et sept suivant le sexe du disparu. En *(j)* sont enfouis les cheveux, témoins du malheur et de la perte à compenser. En *(e)* est placée la peau du front, partagée en deux; le morceau de droite exprime que Faro est libre de donner l'enfant pour le temps qu'il veut; sur le morceau de gauche sont gravés les huit signes de la parole rappelant que Faro, maître du verbe, est aussi celui du destin du défunt, dont il tient le compte parmi les morts. En *(p)* un petit miroir de pierre polie dite *fara yele*, « pierre qui réjouit », exprime le vœu que le règne soit prospère.

L'ensemble du siège représente le squelette du chef et ses articulations; il est dressé sur divers éléments qui résument ses liens avec les ancêtres et les puissances surnaturelles, marquant sa responsabilité et contribuent à entretenir ses forces. Il est placé de telle sorte que tout ce qui passe dans la cour déambule autour de lui et que rien de ce qui est dit ne soit hors de son atteinte. Centre de l'habitation familiale, symbole de l'homme travailleur et responsable, il est l'armature de la communauté qu'il soutient comme fait le chef par sa résistance physique, sa solidité morale. Le village tout entier « s'appuie sur l'articulation du chef ».

Chaque matin et chaque soir on salue le *figi ba figi* et le *ba figi* afin que le chef résiste, qu'il accroisse sa famille, qu'il fasse respecter les croyances ancestrales. Des offrandes et libations sont faites sur le siège et sur le corps du chef lorsque son autorité est mise en cause. En *(b)* on verse du suc de tomate; en *(a)*, qui représente le coude ou le genou, l'eau qui a servi aux ablutions rituelles de ces mêmes articulations; au pied, en *(n)* sont égorgées des volailles : un petit trou, creusé dans le sol, reçoit, avant le sang, le souffle du sacrifiant; enfin, en *(l)* on verse l'eau qui a servi à laver tout son corps.

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(1) *Balanites aegyptica.* Cet arbuste pousse, selon une croyance commune, sur la tombe d'un homme mort « avec rancune et tristesse, comme mourut Koumabana ».

(2) Cf. p. 114. Le chef qui est parfois obligé à déclarer la guerre doit pouvoir la gagner.

Ainsi sont purifiées et fortifiées les articulations du chef, sièges de sa force et de sa semence procréatrice.

II. — CULTES DU VILLAGE.

Le village, en tant qu'agglomération physique, et ses habitants sont placés sous la protection des puissances surnaturelles et des ancêtres. Faro est invoqué directement aux points d'eau.

Si le village est situé au bord du fleuve, les rites sont exécutés au Faro *tyin*. S'il n'est pas trop éloigné, les habitants se déplacent pour aller faire leurs offrandes au génie. Il est fréquent que le torrent, la mare ou le puits naturel qui a bien souvent déterminé l'emplacement choisi par les fondateurs, soit considéré comme habité par un avatar de Faro dont le nom est révéré et auquel tous rendent un culte.

D'autre part, chaque village est placé sous la protection du *dasiri*, génie particulier délégué par Faro.

Les ancêtres sont honorés en des lieux divers : aux portes et seuils des maisons, au cimetière et sur les autels de pierre placés aux croisées des ruelles et sur les places publiques. Ces cultes positifs, qui ont pour but l'acquisition de forces bénéfiques, ont pour contrepartie des cultes où les villageois se débarrassent de toutes leurs forces néfastes et contagieuses, notamment aux carrefours, *dangu*, placés sous la garde des génies de la terre, Soba.

Il ne saurait être question de traiter de l'ensemble des cultes des villages Bambara. Parmi ceux-ci trois ont retenu notre attention; ils concernent le *dasiri*, le *dangu*, les pierres d'autels ancestrales.

A. — *Le dasiri :*

Le mot *dasiri* (litt. : qui attache la bouche), désigne aussi bien le génie invisible, représentant de Faro et chargé de veiller sur l'agglomération, que le siège de ce génie, et parfois aussi l'animal qui l'accompagne ou le symbolise.

Le génie hante un rocher, un bosquet ou un arbre situé à proximité du village et dont l'approche est réservée au vieillard chargé de l'exécution des rites (1). Ce siège est généralement désigné par le géomancien lors de la fondation du village, ou déterminé par un événement survenu à ce moment. C'est après cette opération que les constructions sont édifiées, à l'ouest du lieu choisi.

Si le *dasiri* est un arbre, nul ne doit ni brûler ni couper ses branches. Dans de nombreux cas on ne peut l'approcher vêtu de noir ou d'indigo, couleurs représentant l'obscurité. Aucun Peul ne saurait s'asseoir à son ombre (2). Toute infraction à ces interdits entraîne la mort du coupable et prive les villageois de leur protecteur.

Le génie du *dasiri* a parfois pour compagnon un animal qui semble représenter l'ancêtre du groupe. A Ségou, c'est un crocodile; une ânesse à Ouélenguena; à Koulikoro un singe; ailleurs c'est un bouc que l'on remplace quand il meurt. A Konodimini se trouve une série de puits profonds communiquant les uns avec les autres et qui auraient servi d'habitations aux ancêtres. Ces trous sont actuellement occupés par des hyènes considérées comme les avatars des forgerons d'autrefois et qui sont les *dasiri* du lieu.

L'animal du *dasiri* est libre de pénétrer dans les demeures et de manger ce qu'il y trouve. Il est souvent nourri par les habitants. Nul ne doit attenter à sa vie et le contrevenant, affecté d'un *nyama* vengeur dont il ne peut se débarrasser, s'expose à ne pouvoir se marier, même à ne plus être toléré dans son village natal (3).

Comme l'indique son nom, le *dasiri* a pour fonction de maintenir la stabilité et l'intégrité du village. Il est le « soutien de la vie des habitants » et les rites nombreux (individuels ou collectifs) dont il est l'objet témoignent de l'importance de son rôle, comme de la diversité des êtres qui sont invoqués. Les prières s'adressent à Faro pour la pluie, aux ancêtres pour les questions intéressant la famille, au génie de l'arbre s'il s'agit d'arrêter une épidémie. Mais directement ou indirectement tout sacrifice offert au *dasiri* est offert à Faro. Les victimes (ovin ou volaille), les offrandes (bandes de coton, noix de kola) sont toujours de couleur blanche (Cf. pl. 3, *b*).

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(1) C'est un baobab à Massala et à Soroba, un tamarinier à Sama, etc. Cf. les observations sur le *dasiri* recueillies par Ch. Monteil. *Monographie de Djenné*, p. 137 à 138; L. Tauxier. *La Religion Bambara*, p. 195 à 208.

(2) Les raisons de l'interdit concernant le Peul n'ont pu encore être déterminées. Dans certains villages, le sacrificateur ne consomme jamais ni lait ni beurre, aliments fournis par les Peul aux Bambara.

(3) C'est, à Soroba, le cas du nommé Dji Diara qui, après avoir tué une hyène, n'a pu se marier, aucune femme n'acceptant de lier son sort au sien.

Lorsqu'ils ont atteint six ou sept ans, les enfants lui sont amenés : ils s'assoient sur les racines de l'arbre, sur lequel on crache du suc de noix de kola et sont, de ce fait, introduits dans le culte du village. Ils sont ensuite présentés à tous les alliés *senãnku* et principalement aux forgerons, avec lesquels ils sont tenus de plaisanter.

Chaque année un sacrifice réunissant tous les habitants lui est offert, qui se termine par une consommation en commun de la victime. Les prémices de la récolte lui sont également apportées par le sacrificateur.

B. — *Le dangu :*

Le carrefour *dangu* ou *danku* (litt. : limite de la tête) est habité par des génies Soba qui, sous l'obédience de Faro, interviennent constamment dans la vie des hommes. Tout ce qui est déposé en ce lieu leur revient et nul ne passe sans laisser une offrande ou un témoignage de sa présence : outil, coton brut, graines, tissus. Un voyageur étranger s'agenouille et dépose un peu de cendre ou de coton; sinon il nettoie un petit espace sur lequel il crache avant de partir. Un enfant le salue au passage en disant : « Carrefour, mon âme est entre tes mains ». Lors de tout événement intéressant l'individu, la famille ou la communauté, on y dépose des noix de kola rouges en disant : « Toi, carrefour, je te confie ma tête; tu es mon appui; je dis, toi, carrefour (1) ».

Passage public par excellence, le croisement est le lieu d'élection où il convient de se débarrasser des *nyama* que tout individu détient et transporte avec lui. Tout ce qui est impur, néfaste, indésirable pour l'individu ou la communauté est laissé au carrefour. On y dépose aussi les objets ayant appartenu aux morts. Les forces dont on s'est ainsi défait sont censées être absorbées par les génies pour lesquels elles constituent une sorte de nourriture qui sera rendue aux hommes sous forme de dons débarrassés de toute souillure (2).

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(1) *e dangu m be ni ku kalifa, do i la ni jigi be fɛ, ngo e dangu.*
(2) Cf. p. 201.

Plusieurs exemples illustrent le rôle joué par le carrefour dans la communauté :

Tout homme qui a blessé un animal, écrasé un insecte, est atteint dans son propre *lere* par celui de la victime. Il se rend au carrefour, s'agenouille et prie en déposant une bande de coton, un œuf et des cendres. La bande de coton tissé, symbole de la parole, est offerte comme vêtement, les œufs comme purification. Quant à la cendre, élément pur par excellence car le feu « a retiré » du bois son *lere*, elle représente ici l'homme dont « on a retiré la force mauvaise agissant sur son *lere* (1) ». Quiconque commet un meurtre d'animal procède de même avec la peau sur laquelle il jette des cauris. Dans les deux cas, les génies absorbent *lere* et *nyama* qui viennent s'ajouter à leurs propres forces et libèrent le coupable.

Des purifications collectives sont effectuées sur le *dangu* pour la rupture d'interdits sexuels concernant les champs cultivés et la brousse. L'impureté résultant d'une copulation commise en plein air se transmet à toute la terre qui appartient au village : les arbres de la brousse ne donnent plus de fruits, les récoltes périclitent. Autrefois les deux amants surpris étaient dépouillés de leurs vêtements qui étaient brûlés sur le *dangu* après qu'ils aient fait trois fois le tour du village en partant sur la gauche. Les coupables étaient ensuite bannis. Actuellement, si l'état des cultures fait supposer qu'un tel acte a été commis, on réunit toutes les sortes de graines cultivables dans un panier que l'on place au carrefour. Puis tous les habitants et leurs animaux domestiques font trois fois le tour du village tandis que des simulacres de combats ont lieu entre les hommes montés sur leurs chevaux. Après un sacrifice offert sur le *dangu*, on va semer partout les graines ainsi purifiées.

Des offrandes sont faites aux génies du carrefour au moment des semailles pour leur demander protection. Ce rite est obligatoire pour qui sème du coton, cette graine ayant été remise aux hommes par ces génies; le cultivateur pose les semences, s'assoit face à l'ouest et crie trois fois le nom du *dangu* au-dessus des graines. Il en laisse trois petits tas en hommage avec des fibres de la plante et égorge une victime avant d'aller ensemencer sa terre. Quand les pieds ont levé il cueille des branchages et revient au lieu du sacrifice pour les balayer et les imprégner ainsi du *nyama* du *dangu*. Il les fait ensuite sécher, les pile, les tamise, les mélange avec la terre relevée sur place. Dans son champ, il crie le nom du *dangu*, et jette le mélange à toute volée en direction des points cardinaux, au zénith et au sol. Quand les plantes sont arrivées à maturité, il cueille les sept premières graines écloses, les apporte au même lieu et offre un sacrifice d'action de grâce.

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(1) Cf. p. 61 et ss.

C'est aussi au carrefour qu'est déposé par les vieillards l'enfant dont la légitimité est douteuse. Si le devin consulté alors déclare qu'il s'agit d'un bâtard, il est privé de la protection des génies et censé ne pouvoir survivre au *nyama* qu'il a pris sur la place. En ce même lieu sont enterrés les enfants anormaux, notamment les hydrocéphales considérés comme indésirables. Le fuseau d'une morte y est déposé avec le balai qu'elle utilisait habituellement.

Mais le rite qui caractérise le mieux le carrefour est celui auquel procède le village en difficulté : on y plante la masse de bois primitive, *gosilande*, et on la frappe d'une tige de mil, à la fois pour chasser le mal et pour faire sortir de l'instrument de nouvelles techniques propres aux réparations (1).

C. — *Autels de pierre :*

Dans les villages, les ancêtres fondateurs sont représentés aux croisées des ruelles et sur les places par des pierres sous lesquelles sont enterrés divers objets (cf. pl. V, *b*).

A Sama, quatre grosses pierres, enchâssées dans un terre-plein d'argile, symbolisent à la fois les points cardinaux et les ancêtres. Elles sont en rapport avec le *dasiri* et reçoivent les mêmes offrandes. A Banankoroni, le *fara ba* est partiellement enterré. Sous la pointe se trouve un crâne d'albinos qui représente celui des premiers ancêtres et leurs ossements. Deux houes placées l'une près de l'oreille droite, l'autre près de l'oreille gauche, expriment que « l'homme qui cultive la terre n'entendra jamais une parole humiliante ». Sous le menton, une autre houe rappelle que les villageois fidèles à la culture ne connaîtront pas la famine. Au-dessous de la houe, un *siriku* (2) les protège contre ceux qui cherchent à leur nuire et leur apporte « la chance de l'hyène »; il signifie également que certains de leurs ancêtres se sont autrefois changés en hyène. Un couteau de circoncision rappelle que tout mâle est circoncis, toute femme excisée (fig. 15). Enfin, trois os d'albinos et un petit tas de cuivre témoignent de la présence et du pouvoir de Faro. Des dessins sont tracés sur ces pierres au moment des cérémonies collectives dites « de renouvellement de l'année (1) ».

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(1) Cf. p. 105.
(2) Cf. p. 135, n. 1.

III. — LES SOCIÉTÉS RELIGIEUSES.

Les membres des groupes formés par les familles *lato sensu*, ayant à leur tête le patriarche et possédant des terres indivises, appartiennent à d'autres ensembles, dits *flá*, formés par les promotions de circoncision, d'excision ou d'initiation, groupées autour d'autels qui leur sont propres et qui possèdent leurs rituels particuliers.

Ces institutions portent le nom général de *dyo* (2) signifiant « construire, édifier » et aussi « secret ». Ce terme rappelle que chaque individu constitue un élément de l'ensemble formé par la société.

Les grands *dyo*, dont le but principal est d'assurer la conservation des forces spirituelles de leurs membres et l'entretien de leur personne dans la vie courante sont, pour les hommes, le Komo, le Kworè, le Nama, le Kono, le Nago, le Nya. Les femmes sont groupées autour de *muso dyo* sur lesquels peu de renseignements ont pu être recueillis. Les incirconcis font partie du *ndomo* (ou *čeble*). De plus, les sociétaires sont répartis en groupes qui peuvent être indépendants des promotions et qui sont désignés par des signes.

Le Komo.

Le mot Komo désigne le complexe formé en principe dans chaque village par les sociétaires vivants et morts, le sanctuaire et ses autels *(boli)*, leur chef responsable, le masque. Il est dominé et protégé par la puissance invisible de Faro et par la présence d'un génie particulier auquel il est consacré. Ce dernier hante un arbre situé dans le bosquet où ont lieu les cérémonies; il est respecté pour avoir enseigné, aux temps mythiques, l'origine et le rôle des *boli*, les modalités du culte; il vient s'abreuver du sang des victimes.

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(1) Cf. p. 206 et *ss*.

(2) Il convient de distinguer les sociétés religieuses, *dyo*, décrites dans cet ouvrage, des sociétés d'entraide, *tõ*, à caractère apparemment laïques qui sont également très nombreuses et existent dans tous les villages bambara.

Ces organismes sont fortement hiérarchisés et placés sous la direction de chefs responsables. Leurs membres exécutent en commun les travaux qui intéressent la vie du village : abattage des arbres, défrichage, culture des champs individuels ou collectifs, construction des maisons, etc., et participent aux cérémonies du mariage. L'étude détaillée des *tõ* dont le rôle est considérable serait indispensable pour la compréhension de l'organisation sociale et de l'économie de cette population.

La participation du *tõ* aux travaux agraires sera décrite par Mme de Gana dans *Techniques et rites de l'agriculture* (à paraître).

Le Komo est d'autant plus puissant qu'il est plus ancien : les termes *trodeni* (*ni*, petit) et *tro ba* (*ba*, grand) lui sont donnés suivant qu'il est plus ou moins récent.

Chaque Komo a, de plus, un nom particulier (1). La société du Komo, *komo tyew* (litt. : hommes, gens du Komo) est composée de l'ensemble des circoncis, à l'exception des griots qui ne peuvent en aucun cas y pénétrer, après une initiation qui se fait par promotion dont les membres sont dits *tonyaw*. La hiérarchie est rigoureusement respectée : une promotion antérieure aura toujours le pas sur celle qui la suit dans toutes les circonstances de la vie profane ou religieuse. Le Komo reconnaît un chef, *komotigi* (litt. : maître ou propriétaire du Komo) qui appartient de préférence à la caste des forgerons et dont la fonction est héréditaire. Le fils prend automatiquement le commandement de la promotion qui suit celle de son père. Au décès de ce dernier, il change de promotion et devient chef de celle du défunt. Au cas où le propriétaire du Komo meurt jeune et que son fils aîné, héritier de la charge, ne soit pas encore circoncis, on lui fait subir l'opération dans la nuit même qui suit le décès et dès le lendemain il est proclamé chef (2).

Le chef du Komo est, de par l'importance de ses fonctions, tenu de respecter un grand nombre d'interdits : il ne peut notamment pénétrer dans le sanctuaire s'il n'est pas chaste depuis vingt-quatre heures. Si l'interdit est rompu, il lui faut prévenir les hommes de sa promotion et égorger deux coqs sur les autels pour se purifier. Sa femme est initiée (car vivant dans l'intimité du chef elle est susceptible d'apercevoir certains objets rituels généralement cachés aux femmes), mais elle n'assiste à aucune des cérémonies où seuls les sociétaires sont admis. Elle ne peut commettre d'adultère sans provoquer l'exclusion de son mari non seulement comme chef mais comme membre de la société.

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(1) Selon l'étymologie indigène, *komo* signifie « prise *(mo)* de la mare *(ko)* ». D'après L. Tauxier « Komo en Bambara veut dire mauvais, méchant, difficile » (voir *Dictionnaire bambara-français* de Mgr Bazin, p. 308).

Sur le radical Ko ou Kon cf. M. Delafosse. *Terminologie religieuse au Soudan*. l'Anthropologie, décembre 1923, cité par L. Tauxier. Un certain nombre d'observations concernant la composition et le fonctionnement de la société du Komo ont fait l'objet d'un chapitre de L. Tauxier dans la *Religion Bambara*, p. 272 à 310, qui cite les ouvrages publiés par Ch. Monteil et l'abbé Henry. Cf. également : Moussa Travélé. *Le Komo ou Koma*, Outremer 1929; H. Labouret. *Les Manding et leur langue*.

(2) L. Tauxier dans *La Religion Bambara*, signale que dans certains villages, le chef du Komo n'exerce son pouvoir que pendant un septennat. Il serait procédé à une élection au bout de sept ans et la fonction ne serait pas héréditaire.

Le chef est souvent assisté de deux vieillards appartenant à sa promotion et dont il prend conseil dans tous les cas qui intéressent la communauté. De plus, il est toujours secondé par de jeunes initiés. Si l'un d'eux se fait remarquer par sa diligence, son obéissance, son habileté, il peut parfois, sur décision des vieillards, accéder à une promotion supérieure à la sienne et, de ce fait, se trouver sur un pied d'égalité avec ses aînés.

Les responsabilités du chef de Komo sont considérables. Il est le gardien d'autels qui, comme nous le verrons plus loin, contiennent toutes les forces spirituelles de la société; il est seul habilité à leur manipulation et procède à tous les rites qui en dépendent. Il gère le patrimoine du groupe (grains et espèces) qui est placé dans des greniers à mil ou à cauris et sur lequel il peut prélever, en cas de nécessité, de quoi consentir des prêts à intérêts aux sociétaires qui en font la demande (1).

Mais la fonction, honorifique et avantageuse à bien des points de vue, comporte, plus encore que des droits, des devoirs auxquels le chef ne peut se soustraire : il ne doit en aucun cas abuser de son pouvoir; il ne peut prendre aucune décision sans l'accord des sociétaires et ni même agir, dans les affaires les plus minimes, à l'insu d'un seul d'entre eux. Chacun est tenu au courant des moindres détails concernant l'activité générale du Komo et chaque promotion doit, dans son entier, être prévenue au même moment. Contrevenir à ces règles serait s'exposer aux plus grands dangers. Tout comme un chef de famille indivise dont le pouvoir est loin d'être absolu (2), le responsable doit exercer son office avec rigueur, honnêteté et pondération.

A. — *Création et consécration du Komo :*

Les rares villages ne possédant pas de Komo sont rattachés à celui d'un village voisin. Si une agglomération décide de créer une société indépendante, elle délègue ses vieillards auprès d'un Komo important *(tro ba)* dont le responsable, après l'exécution de rites divinatoires, leur fait jurer soumission aux autels qu'il va leur confier après les avoir consacrés; ils s'engagent à ne jamais cesser le culte, à ne jamais omettre aucun sacrifice ou offrande. Les sacs apportés par les demandeurs ayant été remplis de produits nécessaires (miel, piment, charbon, or, cuivre, etc.), sont inondés du sang des victimes fournis par les impétrants et frottés sur les autels du *tro*. Le nouveau Komo devient le *trodeni* de celui dont il reçoit ainsi une part de force. Au cours de la nuit qui suit la consécration et le transfert diurne des *boli* (1) un sociétaire emporte dans son village un *pembele* également consacré par les donateurs. Ce déplacement nocturne rappelle l'époque du règne de Pemba antérieur à l'apparition de la lumière et à l'alternance régulière des jours et des nuits.

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(1) Cf. S. de Ganay, *Un jardin d'essai et son autel chez les Bambara*. Journal de la Société des Africanistes, t. XVII, 1947, p. 57 à 63.

(2) « Le *fa* mandingue, dit Henri Labouret, dans *Les Manding et leur langue* paraît moins libre dans ses actes et décisions que le maître de l'ancienne fraternité taisible. Loin d'être l'autocrate impérieux et volontaire que l'on se plaît à décrire parfois, il me semble plutôt remplir le rôle d'un administrateur délégué, d'un agent d'exécution, tenu de se conformer aux directives arrêtées par le conseil domestique formé des vieillards et des chefs de ménage (p. 54 et 55). Le but poursuivi par le chef est d'administrer sagement un patrimoine qui restera toujours indivis » (p. 57).

De retour au village, la société, réunie autour du responsable, organise son rituel, choisit des officiants, se procure les masques nécessaires, construit le sanctuaire et y dépose les autels sur lesquels des sacrifices sanglants seront effectués quotidiennement durant les premiers temps.

B. — *Autels du Komo :*

Les autels *boli* occupent une place insigne dans les représentations religieuses et cosmogoniques de la société groupée autour d'eux. D'une part ils sont un résumé de l'univers du fait de leur composition. D'autre part ils sont un résumé de la société car tous ses membres s'y trouvent présents; en effet, chacun d'eux a fourni une part des éléments qui les composent après l'avoir imprégnée de sa personne en salivant dessus dans le même temps qu'il prononce son nom.

Les autels du Komo sont conservés dans un sanctuaire, le *komo so* (litt. : maison du Komo), hutte de taille moyenne, construite soit dans la demeure du chef, soit en brousse à quelque distance du village. L'approche de cet édifice qui est placé sous la protection de Faro est interdite à quiconque. Le chef lui-même n'y pénètre jamais seul. Au sommet de la hutte, dans les branchages qui forment le toit, est censé naître et vivre un serpent qui est l'âme et le gardien du sanctuaire (pl. VI, *a*).

La hutte est divisée en étages dans chacun desquels est déposé un autel. Le plus élevé contient en son centre le *nimara boli* (litt. : autel des âmes) qui, comme l'indique son nom, est le réceptacle des âmes des défunts ayant appartenu à la société et de celles des animaux sacrifiés (1). Il contient, de haut en bas, les cheveux des morts, du cuivre pour les âmes des animaux, de l'or pour celles des hommes. Ces divers ingrédients, placés dans un double sac, reçoivent le sang sacrificiel qui coule entre les deux enveloppes et les imbibe.

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(1) Les *boli* sont rattachés, comme il est dit p. 92, à une catégorie comprenant le jour et le soleil.

Le *nimara boli* est entouré de petits autels individuels ayant servi à capter les âmes des agonisants pour les amener au réceptacle commun (2). Ces petits *boli* ne séjournent dans la hutte que durant les sept jours suivant le décès et sont rendus au successeur du défunt (fils ou frère); ils ne restent suspendus définitivement dans le sanctuaire que si le mort n'a pas de descendance. Ils sont soutenus par deux poteaux de bois dits *čin la bere* (litt. : bâtons qui prennent l'héritage) qui conservent les âmes de ces morts et qui contiennent en haut la poudre de bois de la pirogue de Makanta Djigui et en bas de l'or. Ces poteaux alimentent les *boli* qu'ils supportent et les âmes des défunts qu'ils contiennent, montrant ainsi que le « Komo n'abandonne jamais personne et que les hommes sans descendance sont avec lui pour l'éternité ».

Les interdits concernant le *nimara boli* sont nombreux et sévères : il ne peut être extrait du sanctuaire que pour des funérailles (3). Aucune femme ne doit jamais l'apercevoir. Aucun culte étranger ne saurait être célébré en sa présence.

Au second étage est placé le *ñõ boli* (litt. : autel du mil) qui détient une force vivifiante destinée aux semences du groupe. Il se compose d'un sac divisé en six poches qui contiennent (de haut en bas) à gauche : petit mil, fonio et cuivre; à droite : gros mil, riz et autres céréales, or. Le sac, ouvert à son sommet, reçoit le sang des victimes offertes, au moment des cérémonies agraires (semailles et récoltes), par les membres de la société du mil, *ñõlõ*. Il doit toujours être humide de sang sacrificiel, afin que les semences qu'il contient soient toujours vivantes.

Le *ñõ boli* est également relié à deux poteaux dits *ñõ boli kane* (litt. : protection du *ñõ boli*) contenant dans un évidement du mil et de l'or, par des fils qui lui apportent les forces dont ils sont dépositaires.

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(1) La préoccupation de la conservation de tous les éléments vitaux est constante. Les âmes des animaux sacrifiés sont l'objet des mêmes soins que celles des humains. Ils participent comme eux à la résurrection promise à tout ce qui a vécu.

(2) Cf. p. 132.

(3) Cf. p. 191.

Le *ñō boli* est chargé de la surveillance de la croissance des céréales : germination, formation des épis, mûrissement. Il est responsable de la « tête du mil (1) ».

L'interdit principal du *ñō boli* est la perte ou le gaspillage de nourriture. Même si un grain de céréale tombe sur le sol, ou dans le feu, les membres de la société du mil sont tenus de le recueillir et de le consommer, sinon le Komo punit la faute et la récolte en pâtit.

Le troisième étage contient le *nyama boli*, dépositaire des forces, *nyama*, des individus morts de mort violente (meurtre, guerre, justice). Le *nyama boli* recélait autrefois une pierre dite *gōgoro kurube*, considérée comme la « mère » des pierres lancées par les frondes des guerriers. Elle était extraite du sac en cas de guerre et portée sur le champ de bataille par un jumeau marchant en tête des troupes. Sur sa surface était gravée une série de traits représentant le roi, les combattants et leurs femmes. Elle recueillait toutes les âmes des morts au combat et recevait en offrande leur sang.

Le *nyama boli* est, de plus, responsable de l'âme des semences et dépositaire de celles des animaux sacrifiés; il reçoit aussi le « *nyama* des paroles » des sociétaires. Il partage avec le *ñō boli* la responsabilité des cultures et confère de ce fait à la société une grande puissance.

Le sac contient dans sa partie inférieure un mélange de sang coagulé et d'or et dans sa partie supérieure un mélange de poudre de charbon, de piment et de miel ayant pour effet de rendre puissant le *nyama* dont il est chargé. L'interdit du *nyama boli* est la mort rapide des victimes qui lui sont sacrifiées; les lentes agonies seules lui confèrent des *nyama* efficaces.

Sur le sol du sanctuaire sont déposés, outre le costume de danse du masque, *nya*, de petits autels destinés à la vente, soit pour la création de nouveaux Komo, soit pour des fins individuelles. Des cornes d'animaux, *byé ba* (litt. : grande corne) et *byé ni* (litt. : petite corne) y sont également placées; elles contiennent de la poudre à usage rituel, *korli*, dont l'action dangereuse s'exerce pendant les sorties du masque (2).

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(1) Chaque cultivateur est propriétaire d'un *ñō boli* individuel qui est placé sous la dépendance de celui du Komo. De plus, le *ñō boli* du Komo est en rapports étroits avec le *ñō boli* du Kworè, société qui a pour but principal l'obtention des pluies nécessaires aux cultures (cf. p. 166). Le rôle agraire du Komo sera décrit par S. de Ganay dans *Techniques et rites de l'agriculture*.

(2) Les différents mélanges à usages religieux des Bambara contiennent

A l'extérieur de la hutte, à hauteur du *nyama boli*, un crochet retient les vêtements de ceux qui sont tués par le Komo. Le sanctuaire, comme le vêtement du masque, est enduit de terre noire prise au bord du fleuve qui représente Faro, et recouvert de plumes de même couleur. D'une façon générale, le métal contenu dans les autels du Komo lui donne force et vie. Le plus puissant est l'or, ensuite viennent l'argent, puis le cuivre. Chacun déposant une offrande selon ses moyens, la puissance de l'autel dépend donc, dans une certaine mesure, de la richesse des sociétaires.

Les sacrifices réguliers sur les poteaux dont les montants contiennent parfois un peu de bois de la pirogue historique de Makanta Djigui leur permettent de « maintenir la pression, la vie » dans les différents autels.

Ceux-ci ne sont extraits du sanctuaire qu'à l'occasion des funérailles et pour les rites agraires. Pour les sorties de masques et les danses, on utilise parfois des répliques habituellement déposées dans la demeure du chef.

Le *pembele* est le protecteur de la société, le réceptacle des forces *(nyama)* du groupe. Il est rarement déposé dans le sanctuaire et le plus souvent conservé par le chef qui ne l'exhibe jamais; il l'arrose parfois d'eau de pluie symbolisant l'œuvre de création.

Des dessins tracés sur le sanctuaire par le chef ou un vieillard avant la cérémonie annuelle dite « anniversaire du Komo » rappellent qu'il est le lien entre les invisibles et les sociétaires. Outre l'image de la création issue de la vibration initiale (cf. fig. 2), on dessine parfois la tête de l'ancêtre Koumabana, des figurations de jumeaux et les vingt-deux signes fondamentaux Enfin des houes soulignent le rôle agraire du Komo (1). Des greniers destinés à la conservation des graines des prémices

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souvent des ingrédients réduits en poudre : poudre de bois, de charbon, même de métaux précieux. L'enquête n'a pas permis de dégager encore le rôle de cette pulvérisation. Mais la mention qu'en font les Bambara et l'usage fréquent des *korti* montrent l'importance attachée à ce mode de préparation.

(1) Au moment où l'attention des spécialistes est attirée vers la répartition des pouvoirs religieux et sociaux dans les sociétés antiques, il est intéressant de souligner que les autels de Komo présentent une très nette tripartition : le premier est utilisé pour la conservation des forces spirituelles (âmes) du groupe; le second préside uniquement aux rites agraires; le troisième est attaché à la conservation des principes spirituels des individus morts de mort violente et des grains cultivables; il jouait un rôle important au cours des guerres. Cette tripartition fonctionnelle s'apparente en bien des points à celle qui a été relevée par M. DUMÉZIL dans les sociétés indo-européennes.

utilisées pour les offrandes sont placés à côté des sanctuaires ou dans la demeure du chef (1).

C. — *Le masque :*

L'homme qui porte le masque pendant les cérémonies incarne le Komo. La tête est sculptée en forme de visage humain ou animal. A Konodimini, elle représente la panthère; à Soungoba, une cigogne; un aigle à Banankoroni, un éléphant à Banoumbougoula, un vautour à Ségoubougou. Le masque est le plus souvent agrémenté d'éléments empruntés à plusieurs animaux. C'est ainsi qu'à Soroba, le crâne et les cornes sont ceux d'un buffle, mais la mâchoire est celle d'un crocodile. Il est de plus orné de plumes de canard sauvage (2).

La tête du masque est le plus souvent confectionnée en os (crâne humain ou crâne d'hyène), ou en bois et peinte de couleur blanche, noire et rouge. Le masque proprement dit est exécuté de façon à effrayer les futurs initiés, car, de même qu'on redoute l'âme d'un défunt qui réclame des offrandes ou se manifeste pour entraîner avec lui sa parenté, de même on redoute cette face qui, en contact avec l'autel des âmes *(nimara boli)* reflète le visage des ancêtres. Elle représente aussi Faro : le masque est parfois pourvu d'une longue barbe, symbole de ses cheveux, et légèrement crépi de terre noire prélevée au bord du fleuve et imprégnée de sa puissance; il est parfois enduit du sang d'une jeune fille morte au cours des cérémonies, en souvenir des vierges autrefois offertes annuellement à Faro.

Sur le crâne, sont fichées des flèches de cuivre *(kun bye)* et attachées des amulettes *(kun kanana)* destinées à attaquer les indésirables (non initiés, femmes ou enfants) qui s'approcheraient du lieu de danse.

« Les yeux du masque sont grands, afin que le Komo voie et dévoile tout; les narines sont bien ouvertes car il doit tout flairer, sentir le bon et le mauvais des choses. La bouche est tordue, car le Komo ne parle pas, il siffle et chante seulement. Les oreilles sont vastes pour qu'il entende tout, même ce que chacun dit secrètement dans son cœur. Le menton du masque est carré, signe de pureté, de décision et de clairvoyance. » Pendant les cérémonies, il ouvre silencieusement la bouche. On dit que grâce à la présence de l'autel des âmes, *nimara boli*, le « bonheur le pénètre (1) ». En chantant, il redistribue cette félicité aux assistants et c'est pourquoi il répète les couplets.

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(1) Dans le village de Soroba le sanctuaire comprend sept greniers : trois pour le petit mil, *sanõ*, quatre pour le gros mil, *keninge*. Sept est le chiffre de la personne, trois celui de la masculinité (le petit mil est mâle), quatre celui de la féminité (le gros mil est femelle).

(2) Un informateur, qui a assisté à des cérémonies du Komo dans de très nombreux villages, affirme n'avoir jamais vu deux fois le même masque.

D'une façon générale, le masque a pour interdit les femmes, les griots et les non-initiés. Mais à chacun des éléments qui le composent est affecté un interdit particulier. Ainsi la tête du masque ne doit jamais toucher le sang menstruel. Toute infraction entraînerait « un changement à vue de la face » et les autels contenus dans le sac porté par le danseur resteraient sans force. Pour cette raison, aucun sociétaire ne doit assister aux cérémonies si sa femme est dans sa période menstruelle.

Le vêtement porté par le danseur est maintenu par une sorte de carcasse *(bry)* faite de bois *ngolobe* (2) utilisé pour sa souplesse et entouré d'une légère couverture de protection. A l'intérieur du *bry*, sont suspendues diverses flûtes *(komo fle)* noircies du sang des sacrifices offerts pour « améliorer le son » et qui seront utilisées au cours des cérémonies. Elles sont accompagnées d'un petit sac rempli de toiles d'araignées de rechange. Tout individu qui pénètre sous le *bry* pour danser doit auparavant s'abstenir de rapports sexuels pendant un certain laps de temps.

Le vêtement *(nya)*, qui recouvre la carcasse, est confectionné avec ceux des individus tués par le Komo (3). A l'inverse du *bry*, qui n'a aucun rôle actif mais sert uniquement à isoler le danseur à l'intérieur du masque, son rôle religieux est très important. Il représente le « corps et la valeur des ancêtres ». Il n'est pas l'objet de sacrifices sanglants mais recouvert d'une poudre faite avec les os des individus tués par le Komo et à laquelle est ajouté du suc de noix de cola. Le tissu est teint avec de la terre noire prélevée au bord du fleuve en échange d'une petite offrande de cuivre, d'or ou de céréales. Sur l'étoffe sont exécutés des dessins dits *komo mani* (litt. : petites personnes du Komo) représentant d'une part Faro, reconnaissable à ses longs cheveux noirs et d'autre part les huit ancêtres qui ont reçu la parole; à l'ocre rouge sont figurés tous les premiers instruments de culture des Bambara. Sur le *nya* sont ensuite cousues des plumes d'aigrettes noires, blanches et rouges qui dissimulent aux regards la terre noire, séjour du génie. Ces plumes sont l'objet, deux jours avant toute sortie, d'offrandes de suc de noix de kola, de bouillie de mil, de sang de volaille.

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(1) *here dun*, litt. : pénétration du bonheur.

(2) *Combretum micranthum*.

(3) Quand un sociétaire fautif ou un non-initié sont « tués » par le Komo, leurs vêtements lui sont offerts.

Comme la tête du masque, le vêtement ne doit être vu ni des femmes ni des non-initiés. « Il changerait de couleur, se ternirait, rendant une purification nécessaire. »

Le corps du masque est muni de deux bras dans lesquels s'introduisent ceux du danseur et qui se terminent par un crochet, *koli* (1), imprégné de terre noire du fleuve et dont le cuivre, métal de Faro, a macéré dans le venin de vipère avant la confection. Ces crochets sont aussi annuellement imprégnés de venin rouge mêlé de piment. Toutes ces préparations en font des armes dangereuses employées à des fins diverses au cours des cérémonies.

Le crochet droit (*kinin koli*) est utilisé pour tuer les coupables ou les indésirables : une légère blessure entraîne la mort qui est attribuée à Faro. Le crochet gauche défend les sociétaires contre les dangers que présentent, même pour eux, l'action et les émanations du crochet droit; il contient deux parcelles de poterie noire, interdit de Faro, qui écartent, donc diminuent, la puissance de ce dernier. Au cours des danses, le Komo désirant protéger un de ses ressortissants l'évente de son bras gauche pour atténuer la force du droit. Au cours des funérailles, un geste du crochet gauche marquera l'appartenance du défunt à la société et lui assurera protection dans l'au-delà.

L'interdit des crochets de cuivre est le même que celui de Faro concernant ce métal. De même qu'on ne traverse pas le Niger en portant un objet, un bijou de cuivre, de même nul ne saurait porter du cuivre pour assister aux cérémonies du Komo.

Le port du masque, brigué par plusieurs initiés à chaque cérémonie, est attribué à l'un d'eux par le chef. Ce rôle comporte des risques qui sont atténués par certaines précautions, comme de s'abstenir de tous rapports sexuels avant la cérémonie. Le jour venu, les vieillards font boire de la bière de mil au porteur jusqu'à complète ivresse; puis ils appliquent un moment sur son menton et son abdomen le *nyama boli* qu'il portera dans un sac au cours de la cérémonie. Il revêt aussi un bonnet rituel qui recèle parfois une parcelle de celui du célèbre Soma Moriba Sidibé. Le masque est ensuite ajusté sur sa tête, la flûte glissée entre ses dents, tandis que le chef l'assure de son accord et lui confirme qu'il ne court aucun danger.

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(1) *koli* signifie ongle, ergot en parlant d'un coq et par extension crochet.

D. — *Les instruments de musique :*

Les sorties du Komo sont accompagnées de rythmes joués sur des tambours, *dyiri kolo* (litt. : os, bois) faits de peaux tendues sur des demi-calebasses, accompagnés de flûtes et de cloches. Les joueurs, recrutés parmi les membres musiciens de la société, sont astreints à certaines précautions à cause de la proximité du masque pendant l'exécution des danses. En effet, si ce dernier lance un maléfice *(korti)*, ils peuvent sans le vouloir respirer la poudre dangereuse et il est prudent de se protéger en prenant à l'avance le contrepoison.

La cloche de fer du Komo, *kolōkolō* ou *grinda*, est conservée avec certains autels dans la demeure du chef; elle est jouée par un porteur spécial, *grindavo* ou *nadara koloyo*.

Un mythe rappelle l'origine de cette cloche. « Un petit enfant qui allait jouer au carrefour situé aux abords du village, entendit un jour sonner une cloche et parler des êtres invisibles. Pris de peur, il rentra chez lui. Questionné par ses parents, il refusa de leur répondre mais leur désigna du doigt le chemin qu'il prenait chaque jour. Les parents s'y engagèrent et aboutirent au carrefour où ils trouvèrent une cloche de cuivre. Le génie Soba du lieu leur annonça qu'il la leur donnait afin qu'ils puissent, en la jouant, appeler les génies qui leur répondraient (1). Mais il demanda au père de lui donner en échange l'enfant qui venait au carrefour pour qu'il continue à jouer avec les siens. Le père, désespéré, lui ayant dit qu'il n'avait pas le courage de se séparer de son fils, le génie lui conseilla de s'adresser à Faro.

L'homme réunit les jeunes filles du village et leur demanda d'intercéder pour lui auprès du génie. Vêtues de leurs plus beaux habits et parées de leurs bijoux, elles partirent en chantant et jetèrent au fleuve gâteaux et couscous (2). Les vieillards se rendirent à leur tour au bord de l'eau et requrent l'accord de Faro : il exigea qu'ils réservassent l'usage de l'instrument aux cérémonies religieuses. Les vieillards, ayant déclaré qu'ils obéiraient, se rendirent au carrefour où le génie Soba leur remit la cloche laissant en échange l'enfant que le génie avait appelé en leur absence.

L'objet fut alors porté au forgeron qui en fabriqua de même forme, utilisant le bois ou l'os pour le corps, la pierre pour le battant. Après l'invention du fer, on en forgea sur le modèle ancien en ajoutant de petites sonnailles de cuivre. »

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(1) Dans les temps anciens, « les hommes parlaient avec leurs ancêtres et leurs dieux ».

(2) Cette offrande et cette course sont chaque année renouvelées par les jeunes filles de Ségou qui vont au fleuve en chantant le *nyari nyari le*.

Sonner la cloche, c'est « faire entendre à Faro le son du cuivre », c'est l'appeler et le flatter à la fois. Dans les sorties masquées, le son qu'elle émet prévient les non-initiés qui s'écartent du cortège. La flûte ou mirliton du Komo, *wara da*, « bouche du griffu », est faite d'une tige de bambou percée de trois trous. Celui du milieu est ouvert, les deux autres obstrués avec une toile d'araignée. L'instrument est tenu par le porteur entre les dents et attaché à la nuque ou aux oreilles par une cordelette.

Un mythe relate l'origine de la flûte de Faro, confectionnée selon le même principe, mais de forme différente.

« Une femme, nommée Koussouba Koulibali aperçut un matin, alors qu'elle se baignait, Faro et le poisson *dodo* assis au bord du fleuve. Le poisson jouait de la flûte et chantait :

« Je sifflerai, je sifflerai dans ma flûte de Faro; celui qui n'entendra pas mourra, celui qui mourra le regrettera (1). »

La femme s'enfuit et raconta la chose à son mari qui était devin et propriétaire du Komo. Celui-ci se rendit au bord du Niger et fit fuir le poisson qui abandonna son instrument. L'homme s'en empara et s'en retourna, poursuivi par l'eau bouillonnante du fleuve dont il put s'échapper en pirogue. Mais toute sa famille périt dans les flots.

Au matin, l'homme se rendit au bord du fleuve et joua de la flûte en pleurant. Il joua si longtemps que Faro apitoyé sortit et lui dit : « J'ai noyé les membres de ta famille, inondé le village. Je te pardonne cependant à cause des offrandes faites par les autres hommes. Garde la flûte et puisque tu es Soma et chef de Komo, que toutes les flûtes du Komo soient bénies à cause de celle-ci. » Il entendait par là que la flûte du Komo, comme les autres objets rituels, contiendrait dorénavant sa force, *nyama*. Il ajouta que, lorsque les hommes voudraient l'appeler ou lui parler, ils seraient tenus de le faire par le truchement de cet objet. »

Avant chaque sortie de masque, on exécute un sacrifice sur les flûtes pour « améliorer le son ». Celle de Faro est utilisée dans les rites exécutés au bord du fleuve, pour le prier ou le remercier; jouer de la flûte revient à réciter sa devise, il est contraint d'entendre. Celle du Kōmo ne sert qu'au cours des cérémonies masquées; elle fait dire à ceux qui l'entendent que le Komo est « une chose à la gorge douce (2). »

Autrefois nul autre que le chef n'était autorisé à jouer d'aucune sorte de flûte; la mort sanctionnait l'infraction. Des flûtes ordinaires, d'un modèle différent de celles du culte, sont utilisées par les enfants.

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(1) *na fye, na fye na nka faro fle fye, ngimi mana o na sa, ngimi sara o bana na.*

(2) *fè kã duma.*

E. — *Initiation au Komo :*

Trois jours après la naissance d'un garçon, son père lui présente les éléments qu'il a fournis pour la confection des *boli* du Komo et récite le *komo kumã :* « Toi, Komo *boli*, ces choses sont dedans; société du Komo, ces choses sont dedans; coutume du Komo, ces choses sont dedans; tu es un enfant, tu vas vers l'âge des vieillards; Komo *boli*, voici mon enfant, veille sur lui (1). »

Puis il ramène l'enfant à sa mère en disant : « Le fils a été présenté au secret de la masculinité; il a reçu les bénédictions du Komo, la bénédiction du Komo est avec lui; qu'il soit ajouté aux hommes, que sa lumière soit avec nous (2). » L'enfant est ensuite présenté de la même façon à sa grand-mère.

Ces actes sont une préfiguration de l'initiation qui fera plus tard du nouveau-né un adolescent membre de la société du Komo.

Celle-ci, dans chaque village, est composée de tous les hommes initiés, groupés par promotions, elles-mêmes formées, en principe, de circoncis de la même année. Seuls les griots ne sont pas admis. Il est loisible à tout individu qui n'a pas été initié immédiatement après sa circoncision d'entrer plus tard dans la société si celle-ci l'agrée. Il appartiendra, quel que soit son âge, à la promotion avec laquelle il aura été initié.

Une promotion a le pas sur celle qui la suit. Cet ordre hiérarchique est scrupuleusement respecté dans la vie quotidienne comme au cours des conseils et cérémonies. Contrevenir aux règles de préséance serait rompre l'ordre jusque dans l'au-delà, le Komo groupant l'ensemble des sociétaires vivants et morts.

Le recrutement des membres est variable d'une région à l'autre à cause des dépenses qu'entraînent la cérémonie d'entrée et la participation aux rites. Certains villageois s'abstiennent par pauvreté et il arrive même que des conversions à l'Islam soient provoquées de ce fait.

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(1) *komo boli la, nin waliw ba kono; komo dyẽ la, nin fẽw ba la; komo sira la, nin kunko ba kono; i ye demisẽ ye i bi la makorobaya ye; komo boli nde ñe, tyę do, i dyã lo a la.*

(2) *de dyira la tye gundo la; ani komo ye dukaw mine ñuõfe, komo ka barka bi a fe; ka fara tyew ka, ka yele kę an la ye.*

L'initiation est effectuée de nuit. Le *koligi* (1) présente aux futurs sociétaires, un à un, les outils des ancêtres. Il leur en explique l'origine, l'histoire, le rôle et la valeur spirituelle, leur enseigne le respect qu'ils doivent aux ancêtres pour leur courage, leurs travaux et les inventions techniques dont ils furent les auteurs ou les dépositaires. Le masque est extrait de son abri et revêtu par un sociétaire : devant les enfants l'homme qui le porte se démasque et leur révèle le sens des différentes parties du costume.

Les impétrants prêtent ensuite le serment dont le chef récite le texte :

« Si je révèle [les secrets] dû *boli* qu'il me tue; si je dévoile les institutions, qu'elles me tuent; jusqu'à ma mort, si je parle, que mon père meure, que ma mère meure, que le *boli* brise mon cœur (2). »

A tour de rôle les enfants passent ensuite trois fois la langue sur la tête du masque et sur les crochets, l'assurant ainsi de leur fidélité : « Jusqu'à ma mort, je ne dévoilerai pas le *koli*. Faro n'a pas été dévoilé! Que le *koli* ne soit pas dévoilé (3)! »

Après que les autels, y compris le *pembele*, leur aient été présentés, les postulants boivent le sang d'une chèvre offerte en sacrifice; ils s'assimilent ainsi les forces du Komo et consacrent leur serment par cette communion.

Enfin on leur explique le mécanisme de la société dans ses détails, la nécessité de la hiérarchie des promotions, du respect des interdits, du secret dans lequel doit être tenu tout ce qui concerne l'organisation. On leur donne aussi un enseignement moral; il leur est recommandé notamment de se fixer une ligne de conduite dans la vie privée comme dans la vie publique, d'être droit, d'éviter la duplicité et la mauvaise foi, *flāvlāña* (litt. : action double), de ne jamais servir deux maîtres et de ne point entretenir en eux deux volontés opposées.

En guise d'illustration, on conte les aventures des premiers sociétaires qui enfreignirent ces lois.

L'un des compagnons de Makanta Djigui, Garou Keita, était affligé de ce grave défaut. Il s'était lié d'amitié avec Moridje Sidibé, fils du célèbre Soma Moriba Sidibé, qui avait le même caractère. A cette époque trois grands Komo étaient déjà en fonction dans la région. Celui de Koulikouro, nommé *selo* (litt. : tombe), celui de Nyamina nommé *dyibi* (litt. : obscur) et celui de Kankan.

Garou se rendit à l'une des cérémonies du Komo de Kankan et par des paroles mensongères incita les sociétaires à se révolter contre les chefs de l'endroit, ce qu'ils firent : ils interrompirent les danses et refusèrent de reconnaître le Komo qui fut dissous, le chef restant seul. Mais Garou, qui avait menti, mourut à quelque temps de là.

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(1) Cf. p. 115.

(2) *ni nye korobo, boli ka fa, ni nye korobo, dyow ka fa, fo kala n sa ni nya fo n fa ka sa m ba ka sa, boli dyugu ka sõ la.*

(3) *fo ka ta n sa nie korobo koli, faro ma korobo, koli kana korobo.*

Le chef de Kankan transporta ses autels, les mit sous la protection du chef du Komo de Koulikoro et les sociétaires participèrent aux cérémonies de cette localité. Moridje se rendit à Nyamina et, dans le même esprit que Garou, il incita les sociétaires à engager une sorte de rivalité avec le Komo de Koulikoro. Au cours d'une cérémonie célébrée dans ce dernier village, usant de l'autorité attachée au nom de son père, il convoqua le Komo de Nyamina et offrit un bouc aux deux groupes. Les deux chefs refusèrent, arguant avec raison qu'une seule victime ne pouvait satisfaire deux Komo. Moridje n'en tint aucun compte et mit face à face les deux masques, le bouc entre les deux. Une lutte s'engagea dont l'animal devint l'enjeu, chaque masque usant de son pouvoir magique pour le gagner, les sociétaires, groupés derrière leurs masques respectifs criant : « Le bouc est à nous. » Plus tard, le porteur du masque mourut aussi prématurément.

Afin d'éviter que les sociétaires ne lient leur sort à deux Komo, on leur fait lécher à nouveau le masque, tandis que la prière suivante est récitée : « Si tu lèches le masque, que tu ne puisses faire la *flãvlãña*, que tu ne puisses perpétrer une trahison (1). » Si, ayant prêté ce serment, l'intéressé le trahit il devient « une personne pourrie » *(malolilo)* et perd l'estime et la confiance de ses compagnons.

Les jeunes gens reçoivent une instruction d'autant plus complète qu'ils avancent en âge et en connaissance. Le chef du Komo, accompagné d'hommes de sa promotion, emmène le postulant en brousse et l'interroge sur ses intentions et ses buts. Avant de lui désigner le groupe auquel il est rattaché et de lui en présenter les membres, il l'enseigne en traçant sur le sol l'ensemble des signes représentant l'agencement dans l'univers de la société du Komo, ensemble qui est reproduit habituellement avant chaque cérémonie et qui permet aux assistants de reconnaître leur place (cf. fig. 12).

Cette figure, dite *wolo ti*, « signe de la génération », est composée de deux longs traits coupés à angle droit et orientés selon les points cardinaux. Le point de jonction est placé au centre d'un carré dit *bara kęnę*, « rythme de l'espace », dont les angles internes sont munis de crochets. Les deux lignes croisées sont

(1) *nye komo kun nǫ, i kana seka flãvlãña kę, nye komo kun no, i kana seka dyãfa kę.*

le symbole de la multiplication et de l'extension des êtres et des choses de l'univers, lequel est figuré par le carré central. Les quatre crochets des angles expriment le tournoiement de la création sur elle-même (1). Il y a donc là représentation schématique de la disposition et du mouvement de l'univers.

Sur le prolongement des diagonales hors du carré central sont tracés cinq signes qui sont chacun le symbole d'une catégorie d'initiés ou d'un objet rituel, ces signes marquant également la place des assistants lors des cérémonies.

Sur les branches orientale et occidentale sont placés les signes des initiés majeurs :

1° *dyẹ*, « union ». Signe de la société du Komo dans son ensemble, du corps des sociétaires.

2° *doniya*, « connaissance ». Le sommet de l'angle est « la pointe de la connaissance » et l'ouverture « la voix constitutive de la société ». Il s'agit de la science que possèdent les initiés.

3° *bako*, « lien ». Ce signe fermé exprime les liens qui unissent les initiés entre eux comme avec le Komo, ainsi que l'esprit de corps dont ils doivent faire preuve.

4° *sõni*, « bonne volonté, consentement ». Le départ du trait sur la ligne indique que l'initié est libre d'entrer dans la société, de gravir les échelons des grades successifs, marqués par les brisures du dessin, mais non d'en sortir et qu'il lui faut avoir la volonté de suivre les règles de l'organisation.

5° *iyẽ*, « vérité ». Les sociétaires doivent être sincères. Les deux crochets symétriques indiquent qu'il faut commencer par la vérité et finir par elle.

6° *iyẽ šere*, « témoin de la vérité ». Ce tracé, témoin du précédent est parfois attribué aux étrangers qui viennent assister à la cérémonie et en connaissent les signes conventionnels (2).

7° *bẽni so*, « maison de l'accord ». Témoin du signe 1, il représente une faucille, signe de la maison et symbole de l'union des sociétaires. Dans les cas graves, pour arrêter une querelle ou régler un différend, le chef du Komo présente une ancienne faucille et dit : « C'est la preuve de l'accord, c'est le témoin de l'union (3). »

8° *jigi so*, « maison du soutien ». Le point symbolise le *komo so* et l'ensemble rappelle l'appui qu'est le chef pour les sociétaires. Les orphelins s'asseyent à l'endroit où il est tracé.

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(1) Cf. p. 6. Il s'agit d'une figuration particulière du svastika dont les branches sont tournées vers l'intérieur.

(2) Cf. p. 161.

(3) *bẽni so yeta do, dye šere do.*

9° *so ba*, « grande maison ». Le dessin représente « l'œuf du monde » et marque l'endroit où se tient, seul, le plus âgé des géomanciens du village.

10° *komba*, « grande porte ». Signe et place du sacrificateur, car le sacrifice « ouvre les portes » et met en rapport l'homme et l'invisible.

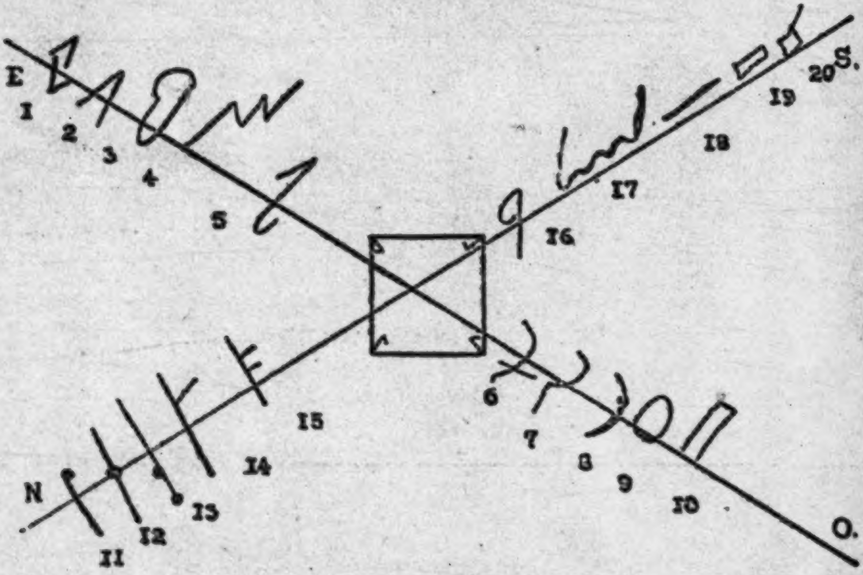

Fig. 12. — Dessin exécuté au sol par le chef du Komo pour marquer par leurs signes la place des assistants pendant les cérémonies. Ce tracé, observé au village de Dougoutiguibougou, est complet. Quand les branches en *x* manquent, le carré central est toujours représenté. (Dessin d'un informateur.)

Sur la branche septentrionale sont placés les signes qui concernent les jeunes initiés :

11° *limidē*, « circoncis ». Il s'agit des circoncis de l'avant-dernière promotion. Le signe est celui de la personne achevée (1).

12° *limidē kle*, « circoncis de la dernière promotion ». Le dessin montre la personne incomplète.

13° *lyi dē*, « fils du travail ». Il s'agit des fils des *kworę duga* (2). Le signe, tracé à l'inverse de celui de la personne, exprime les désordres nécessaires et les plaisanteries apportés dans les cérémonies du Kworè et du Komo par ces dignitaires.

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(1) Cf. G. Dieterlen. *Les signes des Kēila du Mandé*, l'Homme. Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie, de linguistique (sous presse).

(2) Cf. p. 169.

14° ***soni dè***, « fils du sacrifice ». Tracé sur l'emplacement du fils du sacrificateur, le signe comporte un trait latéral représentant le couteau, car le fils peut être appelé à remplacer son père dans son office au cours des cérémonies.

15° ***yeleka tigela***, « rieur qui coupe ». Il s'agit de l'individu chargé de proclamer la position bonne ou mauvaise des victimes sacrifiées.

Sur la branche méridionale sont placés les signes désignant les forgerons; ils se rapportent à l'institution de la circoncision et au fonctionnement du Komo dont ces artisans sont les dignitaires.

16° ***boñema***, « personne honorée ». Place des forgerons âgés.

17° ***wara da dyuru***, « corde de la bouche du griffu ». Il s'agit de la cordelette de la flûte, dite « voix » du Komo.

18° ***wara da***, « bouche du griffu ». Flûte du Komo.

19° ***pembele***. Le signe désigne à la fois le *pembele* de la société et la planchette de même nom utilisée pour la circoncision.

20° ***gossilande***. Le signe désigne la massue primitive et la petite masse utilisée pour la circoncision.

L'ensemble de ces figures, résumé de l'univers dans son agencement et son mouvement, forme la scène sur laquelle prennent place les acteurs de la cérémonie. Ceux-ci sont en quelque sorte la représentation vivante de ces figures et les mouvements qui modifient l'ordre de présentation demandent d'être exécutés avec des précautions particulières. En effet, tout changement apporté à la disposition des acteurs de la scène est senti comme se répercutant dans l'organisation universelle. C'est pourquoi les déplacements de chacun d'eux donnent lieu à des rites d'excuse et de purification concernant le signe qui lui correspond (1).

F. — *Cérémonies du Komo :*

Les cérémonies auxquelles participe le masque ont lieu plusieurs fois par an, après décision des sociétaires. Elles ont pour but de discuter des intérêts de la société et de prendre en commun des décisions pour assurer la prospérité de ses membres, de favoriser les récoltes, de commémorer l'organisation du Komo.

Trois cérémonies principales sont célébrées, l'une dite « anni-

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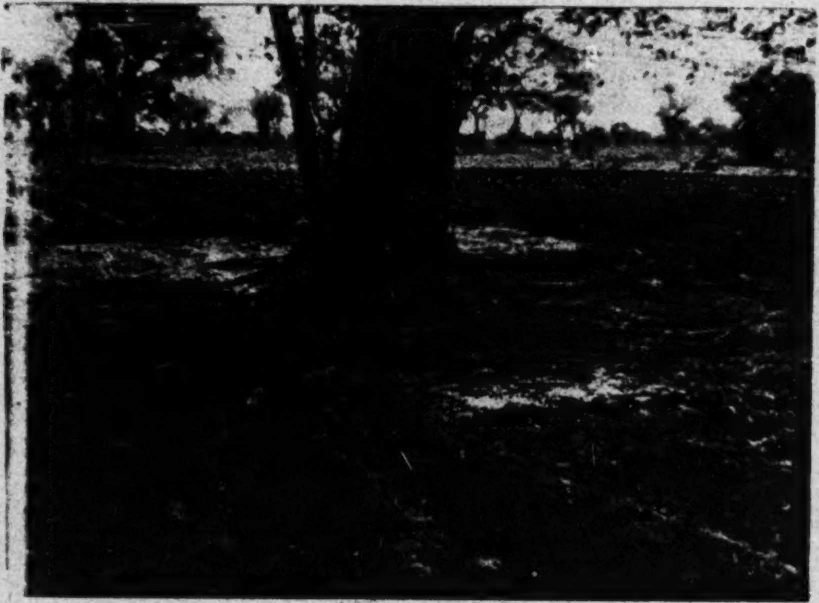
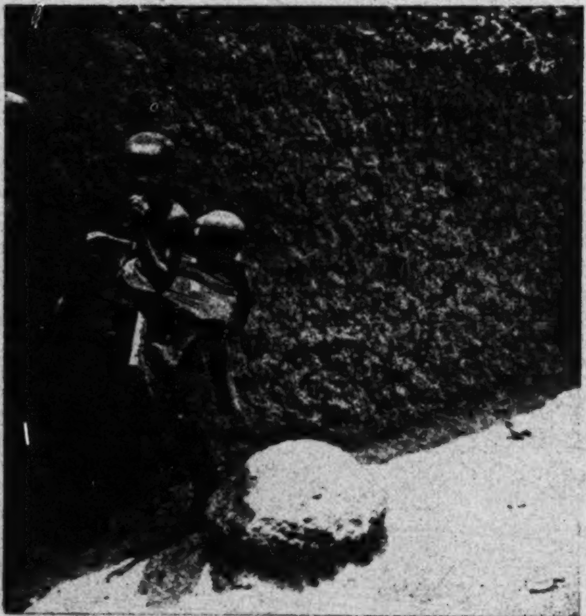
(1) Cf. p. 160.



a) Arbre du Ndomo, au centre d'un carré inculte (Soroba).

PLANCHE V

b) Autel de pierre (Banankoroni).



[Facing p. 160]

versaire du Komo » *(komo sanyelema)*, à la fin de la saison sèche; la seconde après la récolte, pour l'offrande des prémices, le masque ne sortant jamais dans les champs au moment des cultures; la troisième en saison froide au moment de la circoncision. Elles comportent des sacrifices offerts au cimetière en l'honneur des défunts et des rites divinatoires. Des cérémonies occasionnelles peuvent également avoir lieu entre temps, sur décision des sociétaires; le masque sort pour des purifications. Les sociétés voisines sont généralement conviées à assister aux réunions et aux beuveries qui suivent (1).

La cérémonie débute par un conseil auquel assistent tous les sociétaires, et qui se tient dans un enclos, *kara so*. Le matin de bonne heure, le chef du Komo, assisté de deux hommes de sa promotion, trace au sol les figures qui marquent l'emplacement des assistants et du matériel (2).

Quand les sociétaires arrivent ils se placent immédiatement, sans risque de désordre, près du signe affecté au groupe auquel ils appartiennent. Chacun, en passant, salue le sacrificateur. Les habitants des villages voisins sont accueillis un peu à l'écart par un sociétaire : ils déclarent leur appartenance à tel groupe ou dessinent à terre leur signe sans mot dire. Le chef acclame leur arrivée en disant : « Les étrangers sont venus, les étrangers fils du Komo sont venus, leur place est dans leur main, tolérance leur soit accordée (3). » Le conseil est alors ouvert.

Le chef s'assied dans le carré central, face à l'ouest, pose à sa droite les *boli*, écoute les propositions des sociétaires qui tous également font face à ce point cardinal. S'il se lève, toute conversation cesse; elle ne reprend que lorsqu'il s'est assis. Si un sociétaire veut se déplacer pendant le conseil, il doit en demander l'autorisation au chef du Komo qui vient poser sa main près du signe, à titre d'excuse. Quand le sociétaire revient, le chef de son groupe prend un peu d'eau qu'il verse sur le tracé en guise de purification (4).

Quand toutes les questions intéressant la société ou le village ont été examinées, discutées et que les décisions sont prises, tous se lèvent; le tracé au sol est effacé avec de l'eau.

Les rites auxquels participe le masque se poursuivent géné-

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(1) Les chefs de Komo importants sont ainsi consultés par des étrangers au village, qui font parfois des déplacements considérables.

(2) Cf. fig. 12.

(3) *dnow nana, komo dê dnow nanu, u siki yoro be u bolo, yafa ka kę u ma.*

(4) L'absence momentanée d'un sociétaire est dite : *wuli ka bo komo ko la* « se lever et sortir de l'affaire du Komo » et le retour *do dye ba la komo jine saba la* « entrer dans la grande union du génie du Komo ».

a) Hutte du Komo (Konodimini).

PLANCHE VI

b) Trous aux ordures (Banankoroni).

[facing p. 161]

ralement durant la nuit qui suit dans un bosquet dit *komo lu*, « touffu du Komo », situé en brousse aux alentours du village.

Dès qu'ils entendent siffler le masque, les sociétaires s'approchent par promotions, les plus anciennes d'abord. En principe ne se présentent que les ressortissants du Komo en fonction et leurs invités. Cependant tout étranger initié désireux d'assister aux danses fait connaître sa qualité au moyen des signes suivants :

1° En criant hé ou ho, il présente au masque sa main droite dont les doigts sont repliés, sauf l'index et l'auriculaire qui pointent tous deux dans sa direction. L'index, dans ce cas, figure l'homme circoncis, membre d'une société du Komo, en somme le demandeur. L'auriculaire, plus petit, exprime que cet homme est soumis au Komo, qu'il est et restera toujours son inférieur.

2° Il met dans sa bouche un brin de paille; la paille de couleur claire signifie que son cœur est pur, qu'il n'a aucune intention mauvaise. La bouche, fermée sur la paille, manifeste que l'homme « connaissant la parole du Komo » n'a nul besoin d'en parler.

3° Il dit, en arrivant : *ani bara* (litt. : je suis avec le *bara*). Le masque, en entendant ces mots, s'accroupit puis se redresse brusquement devant le nouveau venu pour l'effrayer. Ce dernier dit alors : « Je suis un nouvel enfant de la société (1). » Lorsqu'il est agréé, le masque retourne danser et la cérémonie continue.

Les rythmes du Komo portent le nom général de *komo bara* ou *komo foli dunu* (litt. : rythme des tambours du Komo) (2). Ils sont nombreux, adaptés aux rites qu'ils accompagnent et dotés chacun d'un nom particulier. Les Bambara les classent en trois catégories : les rythmes rapides, violents, durs, exécutés contre les non-initiés; les rythmes doux pour la circoncision; mélancoliques pour les funérailles.

Lors des danses de masque, lorsque les tambourinaires ont attaqué le rythme du Komo, ils ne doivent ni ralentir, ni cesser de jouer, sans quoi le masque se précipite et menace l'exécutant de son crochet gauche. Le musicien, dans ce cas, change de rythme, aux fins de le calmer, et chante :

« Vous, vieillards, vous êtes avec le *bara;* écoutez, ce *bara* n'est pas vide (3). »

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(1) *ne ye timidẽ kura ye.*

(2) Le mot *bara* est réservé aux rythmes des danses masquées du Komo. Les rythmes des danses profanes des vieillards sont dits *mabere fo*, ceux des jeunes gens, *bõdyala*, ceux des jeunes filles, *kofili*.

(3) *aw ni bara makorabaw; klo madyo, nin bara le bara lãkulo ye.*

Le masque participe à la cérémonie non seulement en dansant mais en poussant des cris dont la hauteur et l'intensité varient selon l'action qu'il prépare ou exécute.

Un cri guttural très sourd *(buã, buâ, buâ)* appelé *komo suruku* (litt. : hyène du Komo) est poussé pour effrayer les assistants.

Un cri aigu et court *(pyɛ, pyɛ, pyɛ)* appelé *kono fari kasi* (litt. : cri d'oiseau méchant) est poussé fréquemment pour animer la danse, amuser les spectateurs.

Un cri long et plus doux (ô-ô, ô, ô, les trois derniers ô étant très rapprochés) dit *morokorobaw kasi* (litt. : cri des ancêtres) salue le chef et sa promotion.

Pendant que le masque danse, le griot du Komo l'encourage en récitant ses devises qui exaltent sa puissance, son autorité, son pouvoir justicier :

« Toi, Komo, toi griot du Komo, toi sonneur de cloche, vous venez de qui? vous venez de Makanta Djigui. Toi, Komo méchant, tu viens de qui? Tu viens de Soma Moriba. Celui-ci l'a donné à qui? Il l'a donné aux fils des forgerons. Qui sont les propriétaires du Komo? Makanta Djigui, Soma Moriba, les fils des forgerons. Ceux-ci n'ont pas connu la honte, vous ne devez pas avoir honte. Ceux-ci n'ont pas reçu d'outrages, vous ne devez pas être humiliés.

Toi, petit Komo vivant, ennemi des non-sociétaires, ami des sociétaires, prends le cœur de ton ennemi, prends son foie. Je suis derrière toi et non devant toi. Eh! Komo; toi, tueur de morts gras, suaire des vivants, agis sur celui qui te provoque comme sur celui qui ne te provoque pas (1). »

Lorsque les tambours battent et que les danses sont animées, lorsque le masque crie, on dit que « le *bara* du *komo* est chaud » *(komo bara wušule do)*. La cérémonie bat son plein.

Divers incidents peuvent se produire au cours des danses masquées qui donnent lieu à des interprétations et à des interventions des sociétaires.

Lorsqu'une des flèches fichées sur le masque tremble, elle indique la présence d'un sorcier dans l'assemblée. Les vieillards retirent la flèche et ordonnent immédiatement l'arrêt de la cérémonie. Les tambours s'étant tus, ils demandent au coupable de se présenter, ce qu'il fait immédiatement. On lui dit : « La flèche t'attaque (1). » Il offre alors en sacrifice un bélier et de la bière, tandis que le fer est remis en place et que les danses reprennent. Une flèche qui tombe au cours de la danse est le signe de la présence d'un sorcier dans le village.

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(1) *e komo, e dyeli, e ndara kolo fo, e bwora dyeni ma, e bwora makanta jigi la, e komo fare ma e bwora dyeni ma, e bwora soma moriba, o ya di dyeni ma, oy a di numu dew ma dyenuye komo ligiw ye, makanta jigi, soma moriba, numu dew; oluw ma malo, aw kana malo, oluw ma lebu, aw kana lebu.*

e komo ni nyenama biribalyuw dyugu, birilew nyima, i dyugu son la i la ka bye la mbi ko nli nye.

e komo, i šu klo la faba, nyenemaw kasange, minya kilá a ko la, mi ma kila a ko la.

Si une partie du costume se détache, elle est ramassée par trois sociétaires et conservée pour être brûlée avec les balayures (2).

Si l'un des assistants, au cours de l'année écoulée, a enfreint l'interdit et dévoilé les secrets du Komo, le masque siffle, demande aux tambours de cesser leur jeu, et dit : « Voici une sauterelle pour moi. » Ces termes expriment le mépris dans lequel il tient le coupable. Puis il ajoute : « Il y a ici une odeur de cadavre (3). »

L'homme baisse la tête, tous s'écartent de lui. Le masque le blesse de son crochet droit. Il est banni du cercle des danseurs et il arrive qu'il meure quelques jours après. Ses funérailles ne sont point célébrées. Le cadavre est attaché par les pieds et sorti de sa demeure par une ouverture pratiquée dans le mur afin d'éviter que son *nyama* néfaste ne revienne dans la famille. Le corps, battu de verges pour que l'âme quitte à jamais le village, est jeté à la fosse commune ou placé dans la fente d'un arbre obstruée ensuite par des buissons d'épines. Dans ce cas il est souvent dévoré par les hyènes. Les vêtements qui lui ont appartenu sont suspendus au crochet placé sur le mur extérieur du sanctuaire. Nul n'a le droit de pleurer sa mort, nul ne parle plus jamais de lui : ce serait offenser le Komo.

Il arrive aussi qu'une sortie du Komo ait lieu sans qu'on ait prévenu le village. Dans ce cas, si une jeune fille s'approche imprudemment du lieu de la danse, le masque peut la tuer d'un coup de son crochet droit sur la tête. Un peu de son sang est mis alors en offrande sur le *ny*[illegible] ses bijoux jetés au fleuve où son âme se rend pour remplacer la vierge qui, autrefois, était offerte annuellement à Faro.

G. — *Effets des ruptures d'interdit :*

La rupture des interdits attachés aux autels ou au masque réagit sur chacune des parties affectées comme sur l'ensemble et entraîne une diminution de la force du Komo qui est abandonné par Faro et les ancêtres. Une purification peut être pratiquée dans certains cas; la faute est alors réparée et les forces spirituelles réintègrent les autels.

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(1) *komo bye bila.*
(2) Cf. p. 201.
(3) *šu kasa be.*

Si une femme ou un non-initié aperçoit le *nya*, le *komo tigi* et sa promotion descendent au bord du fleuve et, au son des tambours présentent au génie les excuses du coupable :

« Je ne suis pas venu pour quelqu'un d'autre, je suis venu pour moi-même, je suis venu pour rétablir la race de nos pères (1). »

La victime offerte par le responsable est ensuite égorgée, son corps jeté à l'eau et les sociétaires prennent de la terre noire pour en enduire à nouveau le *nya* régénéré.

Si le chef n'observe pas la chasteté qui lui est imposée avant tout sacrifice, il doit prévenir les vieillards de sa promotion et purifier les autels en immolant deux coqs ou une chèvre.

Il semble qu'on ne puisse sans danger rompre l'interdit du *nimara boli* et que dans ce cas la faute soit presque irréparable. Le Komo est atteint, non pas seulement dans une de ses parties, mais dans son ensemble, et une remise en ordre générale s'impose pour la société. Le chef et les vieillards emportent les autels principaux dans leur lieu d'origine, c'est-à-dire dans le village où ils ont été consacrés par contact avec ceux du Komo local (2). Le propriétaire de ce dernier garde les objets souillés pendant sept jours. Ce délai écoulé, les demandeurs reviennent, apportant des victimes qui sont égorgées sur les autels mis en contact avec ceux d'où ils émanaient (3). La viande est consommée par le chef consulté, et par lui seul. Les demandeurs doivent ensuite s'en retourner chez eux avec leur sac et sans mot dire à quiconque durant le trajet.

Cette cérémonie, qui est une seconde consécration, ne peut, en aucun cas, être renouvelée. Si après une première faute et une première remise en ordre, l'interdit est à nouveau rompu, le Komo est considéré comme entièrement détruit, le village est parfois abandonné par les habitants qui ont « perdu leur âme » et craignent le courroux de Faro; ils se dispersent, malheureux et impuissants. Certaines conversions à l'Islam ou au christianisme n'auraient pas eu d'autre cause.

H. — *Rôle du Komo :*

« Le Komo est une société qui englobe la plus haute puissance divine, les hommes, les animaux, les plantes, jusqu'à la fin du monde; il est le gardien des âmes. Quand il n'y aura plus de vie sur la terre, ni hommes, ni animaux, ni plantes, le Komo réveillera les âmes des êtres morts dont il a la charge pour l'éternité ».

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(1) *ne mana ma nyini; ne mana nyere nyini, ne ma na m fa šia tuku ko la.*

(2) Cf. p. 144.

(3) Le *nimara boli est* « frotté » sur le *nimara boli* du *tro ba*, le *nyõ boli* sur le *nyõ boli* du même, etc.

Dépositaire des forces spirituelles de ses membres, le Komo intervient dans la plupart de leurs activités et participe à la vie. La naissance, la circoncision, le mariage, les funérailles, le culte des ancêtres sont marqués par son intervention directe ou indirecte. Il joue un rôle remarquable dans la vie agricole (pluie, rites agraires, ordures ménagères et communes), comme dans le fonctionnement des techniques artisanales. Les décisions collectives (guerre, conflit politique), les questions économiques sont soumises à sa décision. En effet, les biens des sociétaires (semences, cauris) sont conservés dans des greniers dont le chef est responsable et sur lesquels il consent des prêts à intérêts aux membres nécessiteux. Le chef du Komo, qui est devin, est consulté directement par les demandeurs. Assisté des vieillards de sa promotion, il est également chargé de rendre la justice (1). C'est ainsi que le nom d'un sociétaire indigne est prononcé au-dessus du *pembele* que l'on retire aussitôt : cet acte prive le coupable de la protection de Pemba et le voue à la misère et à la honte.

D'autre part, le fonctionnement même de la société développe la vie sociale. Les initiés des villages voisins sont conviés aux sorties de masques et nombre de mariages sont décidés pendant les beuveries qui suivent les cérémonies. Celles-ci favorisent aussi les échanges culturels. C'est au cours des conversations tenues publiquement que progresse l'enseignement car les rites sont commentés, expliqués, les mythes et leur fondement métaphysique exposés en détails. Les informateurs les mieux renseignés parlent tous des nuits passées à écouter les vieillards compétents autour des jarres de bière de mil.

Le Komo est le dépositaire des croyances traditionnelles, des règles de solidarité entre les sociétaires. Il diffuse un véritable enseignement civique et moral, droits et devoirs des membres, interdits et sanctions qui frappent les contrevenants. Son rôle juridique en fait un facteur de discipline : il est un soutien puissant de l'organisation sociale des Bambara.

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(1) Le rôle juridique a été notamment relevé par L. Tauxier dans *La Religion bambara*, p. 300.

Le Kworę.

La société du Kworè, *kworę dye* (litt. : réunion du Kworè), groupe des individus autour d'autels *(kworę boli)* sur lesquels elle exécute des rites concernant les ciels, l'espace, les points cardinaux, les manifestations atmosphériques de Faro, notamment la pluie. Kworè signifie littéralement « mare tarie ».

Les rites s'adressent aux génies du Kworè qui dépendent de Faro, et vivent dans le *kaba fin* (3e ciel). Ils sont chargés de veiller sur les pluies envoyées du *woloflâ kaba* (7e ciel) qui traversent les autres cieux et « l'espace vide » avant d'atteindre la terre. Les génies luttent dans les cieux et l'espace contre les *mahalakillen* du *koblenkaba* (5e ciel) qui tentent d'arrêter l'eau. Les éclairs, le tonnerre, la foudre sont les effets de ces combats.

Les cérémonies principales ont lieu autour d'un arbre, dit *kworę figi*, situé à l'est du village, siège habituel des génies lorsqu'ils descendent pour recevoir les offrandes des hommes. Les autels sont placés dans une hutte élevée en brousse; d'autres exemplaires sont conservés dans la demeure du chef. Une grosse pierre, *kworę fara*, située à proximité du village et fixée en terre au-dessus d'objets symboliques, reçoit également des offrandes. La société du Kworè est propriétaire d'un champ, cultivé en commun, dans lequel on sème exclusivement du petit mil, *sañõ* et dont la récolte est réservée aux besoins du culte.

Un chef, le *kworę tigi* est chargé de la garde des autels et de l'exécution des rites.

A. — *Les autels :*

Les autels du *kworę* sont déposés dans un sanctuaire dit *buku sãmpere ni* (litt. : petite hutte du tonnerre) situé à une certaine distance du village à cause des dangers de la foudre. La porte est basse et très étroite pour que les forces qu'il détient ne s'échappent point.

Ils se composent des objets suivants :

1° Un grand sac de peau de bouc, *kworę boli sãmpere*, ouvert à son extrémité supérieure et suspendu par une peau de boa *(miñã)* qui symbolise la foudre. Ce sac, qui compte trois compartiments, contient du cuivre, de l'eau du Niger, de l'eau de pluie et les « pierres de tonnerre » de la société. Les « pierres de tonnerre », *sãmpereni* ou *sãmpere dyele*, jouent un rôle essentiel dans le culte de la pluie chez les Bambara comme chez les autres noirs du Soudan. Elles sont censées tomber du ciel avec la foudre (1).

2° Un autre sac en peau de bouc, *ñõ boli (boli* du mil), suspendu au toit par une peau de serpent. Cet autel dépend du *ñõ boli* du Komo, qui préside à la germination. Il contient du petit mil provenant de champs du Kworè et une partie de celui du *ño boli* du Komo.

3° Un sac contenant l'eau des dernières pluies, dit *ngule sãndyi*.

4° Un sac en vessie de bœuf, *jellemine boli*, permettant de voir de l'extérieur le niveau de l'eau. Après chaque pluie le niveau est vérifié par le chef et l'eau versée dans le *ngule sãndyi* où elle est conservée l'année durant.

5° Un sac contient les pierres de tonnerre destinées à être vendues :

a) Pour être suspendues aux toits contre la foudre.

b) Pour attirer la foudre; dans ce cas, la pierre est déposée en brousse dans un abri.

c) Pour confectionner un nouveau *kworę boli*.

Ce sac est l'objet de libations d'eau de pluie puisée au *ngule sãndyi* et dans laquelle on a mis une pierre de tonnerre réduite en poudre.

6° Une hache dite *sãmpere dyele koro* (litt. : vieille hache du tonnerre) de forme ancienne, qui est faite d'une pierre taillée fichée dans un manche de bois. Considérée comme la « mère des pierres de tonnerre », elle n'est extraite de l'autel qu'en dernier lieu, lorsque les rites exécutés pour la pluie ont échoué.

Dans le mur sont encastrés des morceaux de miroir apportés par les membres de la société et dont les reflets sont censés avoir également une action sur la pluie.

B. — Dans la demeure du chef sont déposées des répliques de la hache et des autels. Elles sont transportées selon les besoins au bord du Niger, dans les champs ou sur la place publique au cours des cérémonies. Les originaux restent au contraire à l'abri des regards et des risques d'impureté. De plus, le chef possède un autel spécial, le *kworę ni*, « âme du *kworę* », réceptacle des principes spirituels des sociétaires n'appartenant pas à la société du Komo. Le *kworę ni* est placé sur la poitrine de l'agonisant et recueille son âme au moment de la mort comme le fait le *nimara boli* du Komo (1). On l'imbibe régulièrement d'eau de pluie.

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(1) On les ramasse au point de chute et elles font l'objet d'un commerce important.

Au moment de la fondation d'une société du Kworè, le chef, accompagné le plus souvent du *komotigi*, se rend dans les agglomérations où est tombée la foudre pour acheter des pierres et les choisir en connaissance de cause; chaque sociétaire contribue à l'achat d'une pierre.

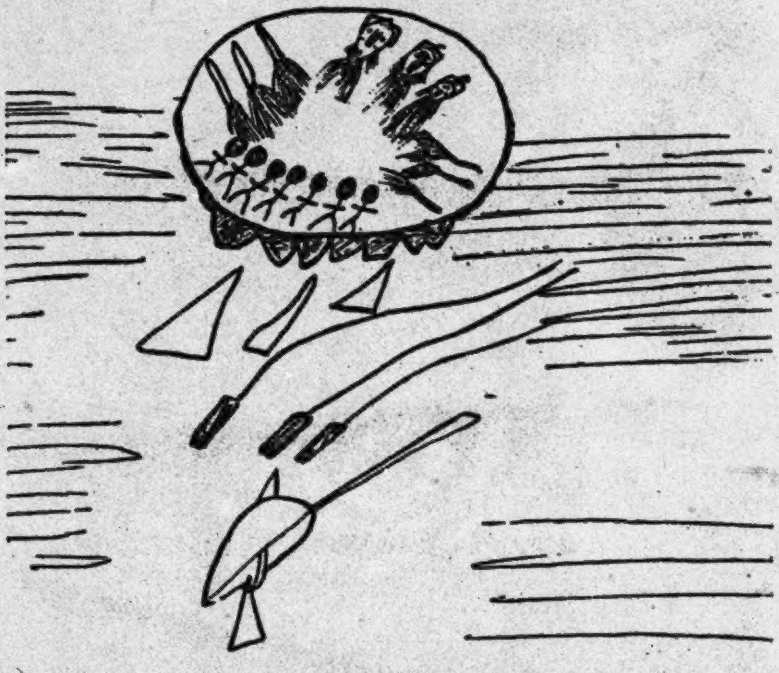

Fig. 13. — Pierre d'autel du Kworè de Banankoroni sous laquelle sont enterrés trois haches néolithiques, trois fouets, la hache de fer rituelle, *kongobwona*. Le dessin exécuté au cours de la cérémonie annuelle représente les trois premiers des huit ancêtres ayant reçu la parole, les sociétaires et les fouets du Kworè; le point noir est « la matrice de Faro ». (Dessin d'un informateur.)

C. — La pierre du *kworę*, dont la partie inférieure est grossièrement taillée en sept dents dites *kworę fara ni*, est plantée en terre après qu'aient été enterrés dans l'emplacement les objets suivants (cf. fig. 13).

1° Trois pierres de tonnerre dites : *fara ba*, « grande pierre »

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(1) Cf. p. 146.

fara bye, « pointe de pierre »; *fara joli*, « sang de pierre »; elles rappellent que la force de Faro, la pluie, est présente sous l'autel. En les plaçant on dit sept fois de suite : « Aidez-nous (1)! »

2° Trois fouets, nombre mâle, témoins du courage des hommes qui supportent la douleur des coups sans se plaindre. En les enterrant on dit : « Que nous soyons courageux (2). »

3° Une hache *kongobwona* (cf. p. 118) qui rappelle la victoire des ancêtres sur la famine; elle annonce les récoltes et les richesses futures.

Sur la pierre, des dessins sont exécutés au cours de la cérémonie annuelle : au centre, un point noir dit *faro dẽzo*, « matrice de Faro », représente le génie. Il est encadré de deux séries de trois fouets « pour le défendre », ainsi que des trois premiers des huit ancêtres (dont Koumabana) et de sept personnages représentant les sociétaires.

L'interdit du Kworè est la femme. Seuls les mâles peuvent approcher le sanctuaire et les autels. Tout circoncis désireux de participer aux cérémonies doit se faire initier. Les postulants, réunis par le chef autour de l'arbre du Kworè, au pied duquel est allumé un feu, sont armés d'une baguette en bois de *ñuãna*. Ils supportent sans se plaindre les brûlures qui leur sont infligées avec une torche et se fouettent eux-mêmes vigoureusement. Le chef leur apprend ensuite le rôle des génies du Kworè, les rites dont ils sont l'objet et la valeur symbolique des objets du culte.

Parmi les sociétaires, certains sont désignés pour remplir, au cours des cérémonies, le rôle de *kworẹ duga :* masqués et brandissant des branchages frais dans chaque main, ils enfourchent un cheval de bois, le *kworẹduga sọ* (3). Ainsi équipés, ils représentent les génies du *kwore* montés sur leurs chevaux ailés pour l'assaut du ciel. L'un d'eux revêt un masque, le *kworẹ ku* pour figurer l'ancêtre du groupe (4).

Des liens étroits unissent le Komo et le Kworè. Leurs cultes se complètent et il est possible à un individu suffisamment fortuné pour faire face aux dépenses nécessaires d'appartenir aux deux sociétés. En effet, l'un des rôles du Komo est de veiller à la bonne marche des cultures : ses autels veillent sur l'âme et la force vitale des graines cultivables. Mais la récolte dépend de la pluie et relève donc des autels du Kworè. L'action complémentaire des deux institutions est bien sentie par les usagers qui déclarent « unis dans l'action les *ño boli* du Komo et du Kworè ».

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(1) *a ka demme.*

(2) *a ka farina.*

(3) Les *kworẹ duga* (litté. : vautour du Kworè) dits aussi *logoro koya*, « bouffons » sont, comme l'indique leur nom, des bouffons qui ont le droit de plaisanter les choses les plus sacrées : leur situation sociale est comparable à celle des griots. Autrefois ils furent les premiers sacrificateurs des *boli*.

(4) Les matériaux, chevaux de bois et masques, sont noircis au feu et imbibés d'huile de karité.

Certains auteurs ont posé la question de l'antériorité du Kworè par rapport au Komo en se fondant sur l'aspect « priapique » des cérémonies exécutées par les premiers (1). Les buts véritables de l'institution ayant échappé presque complètement à ces observateurs, il ne leur a pas été possible de pénétrer le sens des rites. C'est au pied de l'arbre du Kworè que les hommes invoquent les ciels où règne Faro : ils prient le *koblenkaba* en cas de guerre, le *sunãnkaba* pour les épidémies, etc. La cérémonie annuelle est une représentation de l'action des invisibles pour obtenir les pluies nécessaires aux hommes : les brûlures, les coups que s'infligent les sociétaires ainsi que les chevauchées des *kworeduga* symbolisent les combats célestes des génies dans les éléments déchaînés.

Le Ceble ou Ndomo.

Comme leurs aînés circoncis et adultes, tous les non-circoncis et les non-excisées d'une agglomération forment une société, *čeble* (litt. : homme rouge) ou *ndomo* (litt. : rassemblement) dont les membres sont dits *ndomo dew*, fils du *ndomo* ou encore *ndomo ngow*. La société du *ndomo* est plus ancienne que celle du Komo (2). Elle réunissait autrefois un très grand nombre d'adolescents, car la circoncision était effectuée beaucoup plus tard. Actuellement les enfants étant opérés très jeunes, son importance a diminué, mais comme elle détient la force des incirconcis elle joue encore un grand rôle qui s'exprime par son nom même : le rouge est un symbole de puissance et d'énergie; il est aussi le signe du sacrifice.

Le *ndomo* est dirigé par un chef assisté d'un sacrificateur, *murukalatigi* (litt. : maître du manche du couteau) et d'un ordonnateur des cérémonies le *dyolokotigi* (litt. : maître de la chaîne).

C'est au cours d'un travail agricole exécuté en commun qu'est nommé chef le sociétaire le plus énergique, qui a le mieux et le plus vite rempli sa tâche et qui a de plus, fait toucher terre trois fois de suite aux adversaires qui se sont présentés. Le chef, responsable des autels du *ndomo*, assure l'instruction des initiés, règle leurs compétitions, désigne le porteur du masque et celui qui est chargé de l'entretien des objets rituels. Enfin, il officie pendant les cérémonies collectives. Le *murukalatigi* égorge les victimes; il taille et confectionne les masques et les objets rituels. Le *dyolokoligi* dirige les cérémonies et décide de l'avancement des membres.

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(1) Cf. L. Tauxier. *La Religion bambara*, p. 311.

(2) On dit : *ndomo ka kore komo ye* : le *ndomo* est plus vieux que le *komo*. Certains aspects du *ndomo* ont été décrits par Ch. Monteil, *Monographie de Djenné*, p. 15 et L. Tauxier, *La Religion bambara*, p. 380 et ss.

La hiérarchie comporte cinq grades correspondant aux cinq autels fondamentaux. Chacun d'eux est franchi annuellement, après instruction et initiation particulières. Cinq années sont donc nécessaires pour accéder à l'échelon le plus élevé. Chaque promotion se paie par la fourniture individuelle de deux coqs qui sont égorgés sur les autels, à la fin de la cérémonie annuelle qui a lieu en brousse, sous un arbre dit *kalabana* et à la suite d'un travail exécuté en commun. Après un repas, une lutte, dite *bari*, organisée sous la direction des chefs, oppose les jeunes garçons et leur donne l'occasion de montrer leur courage et leur esprit d'initiative.

L'activité des sociétaires consiste en travaux collectifs au moment des cultures. Le mil et les dons en nature recueillis en paiement pour la louée constituent les biens communs.

A. — *Le matériel :*

La société est propriétaire d'objets rituels, d'un masque et de fouets qui sont habituellement déposés dans une hutte, *ndomo buku* à quelque distance du village.

Les objets, au nombre de cinq, sont des instruments de musique rudimentaires. Le *wara*, griffu ou *diara*, lion, est un bull-roarer de bois d'une longueur d'environ trente-cinq centimètres, qui est manipulé au moyen d'une cordelette d'un mètre de long. L'objet est parfois en fer et de moindres dimensions. Le *tori*, crapaud, est une petite boîte dont on tire, en la grattant, un son nasillard. Le *kono*, oiseau, se compose de deux morceaux de calebasse qu'enserrent des toiles d'araignées. Le *wulu*, chien, est une petite gourde-calebasse d'environ dix centimètres de diamètre, percée de quatre trous. Une ficelle passée à son col permet de la faire tourner comme un rhombe. Le *fineble* (litt. : génie rouge) est une corne de buffle percée de trois trous obstrués par des toiles d'araignée, dans lesquels on souffle et qui produit un fort bruit de mirliton. Une société possède en général plusieurs exemplaires de chacun de ces instruments.

Le masque, qui est l'objet le plus anciennement attesté, est fait d'un bois sculpté représentant une face humaine surmontée de plusieurs cornes verticales assez longues (1). L'ensemble est entièrement décoré de cauris et de grains rouges de *kise* (2) lesquels représentent le sang des offrandes. Le front noir et toujours enduit de beurre de karité est haut, ce qui confère à la face un pouvoir bénéfique. L'ensemble est régulièrement frotté de poudre de charbon de bois pilé et de suc de noix de kola.

Les fouets du masque *(ndomo busa)* sont faits de branches de *ñuana* réputées pour leur souplesse. Ils sont confectionnés lors de la cérémonie annuelle et renouvelés seulement l'année suivante. Au moment de leur fabrication, ils sont mis à rouir dans l'eau que les sociétaires boivent « pour ne pas avoir à souffrir des coups qu'ils recevront ».

Chaque membre possède également un fouet long fait des branches d'un arbuste, le *ngere ni* (3) surnommé « arbre de Faro » car il pousse dans l'eau, et qui contient une part de la force bénéfique du génie. Il est fait usage du fouet pour éprouver le courage des enfants. Celui qui pleure ou se plaint subira toute sa vie le préjudice de cette attitude : même après sa circoncision, on parlera de lui comme d'un lâche.

B. — *Initiation :*

Chaque grade est acquis au cours de la cérémonie annuelle qui a lieu après la récolte. Un vieillard préposé à ces sacrifices égorge, sur l'arbre du *ndomo* (pl. V. *a*) et les objets rituels déposés à ses pieds, les coqs des postulants, puis verse de la bouillie de mil en offrande. Pendant ce temps, les jeunes gens labourent le terrain sur lequel se passera la lutte, *bari* (4), qui va les opposer et leur donner l'occasion de montrer leur courage et leur esprit d'émulation.

Le chef désigne deux par deux les lutteurs qui sont surveillés par le *dyolokoligi*. Dans le combat, où toute utilisation des jambes et des pieds disqualifie le combattant, celui qui fait trois fois de suite tomber son adversaire est désigné pour être, la nuit qui suivra, initié à un grade supérieur. Après ce concours, ceux qui ont été vaincus doivent apporter deux coqs supplémentaires s'ils veulent aussi être initiés. Puis un repas en commun réunit les sociétaires et les postulants.

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(1) Les masques ont le plus souvent huit cornes, mais cette règle n'est pas toujours respectée.
(2) *Linociera sudarica.*
(3) *Hibiscus pandoriformis.*
(4) Se faire tomber, joute.

La nuit qui suit, on conduit les futurs initiés dans la brousse en un lieu dit *biri yoro* (litt. : endroit de l'initiation) où ils s'assoient au sol, la tête couverte d'une pièce d'étoffe.

Sur indication du *dyolokoligi*, un sociétaire fait vrombir ou chanter successivement les instruments rituels, puis les cache et les impétrants doivent les trouver. Comme ils n'y parviennent pas, une série de brimades leur sont infligées (1) avant de les leur montrer et de leur faire répéter à tour de rôle le serment solennel :

« Si tu as entendu le *dyara* des incirconcis, c'est cela. Tailler un bois, faire un trou, mettre un cordon dedans, le tourner, c'est cela (qui est) la parole du *ndomo dyara*. Si tu le dévoiles, qu'il te prenne le cœur, qu'il te prenne le foie, qu'il te tue (2). »

On leur fait passer la langue trois fois sur l'objet qu'on leur confie ensuite pour qu'ils en apprennent l'usage. Le même rite est exécuté pour chaque instrument, la prière étant répétée en modifiant seulement le nom.

Les jeunes gens sacrifient fréquemment sur les autels du *ndomo*. Le contenu habituel des sacrifices est le margouillat, *busa*, assimilé à un incirconcis (sa queue préfigurant le prépuce). Le *wanzo* de la victime, libéré par la mort, vient se joindre à celui que contiennent les autels et par conséquent à celui des sociétaires. L'animal est ensuite grillé et consommé.

C. — *Activité de la société :*

Au moment de la culture des champs, les sociétaires conviés à exécuter un travail emportent leurs objets rituels. Les jeunes filles qui fournissent l'eau et assistent à leurs travaux chantent pour encourager les meilleurs ou insulter les paresseux.

Leur tâche terminée, ils consomment sur place les mets préparés à leur intention. Quand ils s'en retournent ils font vrombir et résonner leurs instruments. Par ce moyen, la force *(wanzo)* qu'ils ont dépensée en cultivant est « reprise dans le vent » par le tournoiement du rhombe et rapportée au *ndomo*, c'est-à-dire récupérée par eux-mêmes. Car si leur *wanzo* a permis un effort efficace, il a pénétré dans le champ, diminuant d'autant la réserve du *ndomo*. D'autre part, cette force utile pour la culture est nuisible à la germination. La laisser dans la terre porterait préjudice aux récoltes. Et c'est pourquoi, par surcroît de précautions, la propriétaire brûle le lendemain dans sa parcelle un margouillat destiné à la débarrasser complètement de cet apport néfaste.

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(1) Ces brimades sont parfois sévères; on se moque de l'ignorance et des craintes du postulant.

(2) *ni ye me bilakorow ka ndomo dyara, nin do. ka djiri dese, ka wo bo o la, ka dyuru ndo o la, o bi fyeku, o de bi ndomo dyara ka fo, ni ya korobo, a ki sõ ta, a ki biñe ta, a ki fa.*

En saison sèche, les sorties de masque sont exécutées aux fins de solliciter des dons des habitants du village. Les sociétaires se rangent en cercle devant chaque porte tandis que le masque danse le *ndomo do*, danse du *ndomo*. Le chef désigne deux jeunes gens qui, placés au centre, reçoivent chacun trois coups de fouets de leurs camarades. Puis le plus jeune frappe ensuite le masque qui danse à nouveau, frappant à son tour, de son long fouet, ceux qui ne baissent pas correctement la tête en signe de respect.

Si le propriétaire sollicité fait la sourde oreille, tous chantent pour se moquer de lui et pour le contraindre à donner :

« C'est la coutume, nous n'avons pas faim; c'est la coutume du monde, nous n'avons pas faim (1). »

Lorsque toutes les maisons ont été visitées, les enfants s'alignent pour le retour et, sur l'ordre du chef, se dirigent vers un carrefour, siège des génies protecteurs du *ndomo*. Ils y abandonnent le masque et y brisent leurs fouets en disant : « Carrefour, je me confie à toi. »

Les dons reçus en nourriture ou en cauris sont partagés entre les porteurs du masque et les trois chefs. Le mil est conservé pour le jour de la cérémonie annuelle.

La nuit qui suit, le porteur du masque se rend au carrefour, et rapporte chez le chef les objets rituels qui y avaient été momentanément déposés.

D. — *Rôle de l'institution :*

Le *ndomo* est, selon l'expression bambara « la mère du *wanzo* des incirconcis (2) » car sa puissance, qui réside dans les objets rituels, est constituée par le *wanzo* de tous les adolescents.

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(1) *lada do, kongo tawna, dyẽ lada do kongo tawna.*
(2) *wanzo ba ye čeble.*

Le masque et les autels recèlent d'abord une part des *wanzo* des sociétaires qui les portent, les manipulent ou leur offrent des sacrifices. D'autre part, après la circoncision, lors du saut final des opérés au-dessus du feu rituel, le *wanzo* les quitte définitivement et vient se fixer dans le masque du *ndomo*. Ainsi captées et conservées, ces forces s'ajoutent à celles des incirconcis dans les masques qui deviennent les dépositaires de leur vie.

De plus, l'âme des incirconcis et des non-excisés décédés prématurément est fixée dans les autels au cours des rites funéraires célébrés par les sociétaires.

Le masque du *ndomo* est donc le réceptacle du *wanzo* des circoncis vivants et morts; quant aux autels, ils contiennent toutes les âmes des incirconcis décédés. Cet ensemble confère au *ndomo* la responsabilité de la vie des adolescents et lui donne une force telle que cette sotiété de jeunes est, dans une certaine mesure, redoutée des adultes (1) qui l'ont quittée.

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(1) Lorsqu'un adulte, et spécialement un sociétaire du Komo a troublé la tranquillité d'un membre du *ndomo* ou fait tort à la société, le *wanzo* peut le rendre impuissant. Dans ce cas, pour retrouver sa virilité, l'homme doit se procurer plusieurs dizaines de margouillats qu'on égorge en son nom sur le masque et les autres autels. Les animaux sont ensuite cuits, l'homme entièrement enduit du produit de la cuisson que l'on remet dans la calebasse et que l'on verse ensuite sur les autels; le *wanzo* délégué à l'homme par le *ndomo* retourne ainsi à ce dernier et l'homme est débarrassé de son mal.

Nul ne peut conserver sa qualité de membre du *ndomo* après sa circoncision. On dit d'un individu qui continuerait là son activité qu'il acquerrait un double *wanzo*.

CHAPITRE VII

LES RITES

Les rites des Bambara sont très complexes et font souvent intervenir plusieurs institutions. Les descriptions qui suivent n'ont pas un caractère général : les rites comportent des variantes très sensibles d'un village à l'autre, variantes dont les intéressés sont conscients, car il n'y a de règle absolue pour aucune institution ni aucune cérémonie.

Mais leurs diverses manifestations, qui épousent cette souplesse de pensée, témoignent cependant de l'unité des représentations cosmologiques et religieuses. Conviés à assister en spectateurs aux cérémonies des agglomérations voisines, un Bambara est le plus souvent renseigné sur tel ou tel aspect du rite qui ne lui est pas familier au cours des beuveries qui suivent. L'usage veut, en effet, que devant les jarres de bière soit commentée et expliquée la cérémonie qui a précédé. Mais l'unité des représentations est telle que, suivant la déclaration d'un informateur qualifié « quiconque connaît les principes et les mécanismes peut en déduire, sans explications, le sens et le symbole d'un rite non commenté ».

D'autre part, les rites sont symboliques jusque dans leurs moindres manifestations : temps et lieux, forme des objets rituels, aspect des victimes, répétition des formules ou prières, mimique des participants, port de certains vêtements laïques ou sacerdotaux, etc. Une tèrs grande subtilité préside au choix des détails. C'est ainsi que durant les étapes de la création, les puissances surnaturelles ont établi, organisé, réorganisé l'univers (cieux, espaces, terres) suivant des itinéraires comprenant « les angles et côtés cardinaux ». Les rites dans lesquels interviennent les points cardinaux comportent une gesticulation qui, selon la puissance visée, suit l'ordre chronologique utilisé aux origines par elle. De même les divers cieux où règne Faro sont invoqués selon leur rôle et les buts poursuivis par les intéressés qui leur adressent, en maintes circonstances de très longues prières.

Pour ne point alourdir l'exposé, un nombre très restreint de rites sont décrits ci-après. Parmi eux une place importante est réservée à ceux qui intéressent la personne (cf. ch. III) et qui se rapportent à la naissance, la circoncision et l'excision, les funérailles, le culte des ancêtres. Pour chacun d'eux les positions respectives des éléments composant l'individualité aux divers moments ont été signalées.

Les rites des ordures qui suivent intéressent la vie collective de la famille et du village : ils concernent les demeures, les carrefours, les places publiques. Ils ont un caractère très net de recueil et de redistribution des forces individuelles pour le bien de la communauté.

Les rites de pluie, également collectifs, et qui font intervenir le Komo et le Kworè présentent un typique exemple du symbolisme des Bambara.

Enfin les rites « de renouvellement de l'année » ont un caractère plus général encore : ils démontrent les liens étroits unissant au cosmos l'individu et la collectivité (1).

I. — RITES CONCERNANT LA PERSONNE.

Naissance et imposition du nom.

Dès sa naissance, un nouveau-né est lavé avec de la bière de mil mêlée d'eau. La bière a une vertu purificatrice et le contact de l'eau qui symbolise « la victoire de Faro sur Mousso Koroni au sujet des noms de famille » est une préfiguration de l'imposition du nom.

Dès qu'il apprend la nouvelle, le patriarche vient secouer au-dessus de la tête de l'enfant, trois ou quatre fois suivant son sexe, le *pembele* familial pour lui transmettre le *nyama* et les qualités du mort dont il a hérité le *ni* et le *dya*. Puis il apporte l'autel *kere la boli ni* de la famille dans la demeure de l'accouchée et le place devant lui. Accroupi au sol, les doigts écartés au-dessus de l'objet, il prononce la prière suivante : « Toi, *boli*, fais de moi un chef, que ma famille soit prospère, un enfant est né, son âme t'est confiée, je t'invoque, *boli*, nuit et jour (1). »

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(1) Les rites agraires ne sont pas abordés dans cet ouvrage car ils feront l'objet d'une description détaillée dans : S. DE GANAY, *Techniques et rites de l'agriculture chez les Bambara* (à paraître).

La plupart des rites sont, par surcroît, doublés d'une série de jeux à caractère cosmogonique qui se rapportent à des étapes, à des états passés, présents ou futurs de la création. Cf. p. 31.

Prenant l'enfant sur ses genoux, il lui pose l'objet trois fois de suite sur la poitrine. Répétant la prière, il égorge ensuite un coq rouge sur le sac ouvert, trempe l'index droit dans le sang et selon qu'il s'agit d'un garçon ou d'une fille, fait trois ou quatre croix sur le front du nouveau-né qui devient ainsi le « fils du *boli* », *boli dè*.

Un coquillage marin blanc, *krokrodya* (2) est placé devant le nouveau-né et doucement remué pour « condenser son *dya* à l'intérieur ». Puis on l'accroche au pied de l'enfant pendant trois ou quatre jours selon son sexe. Dans le même temps, la mère qui est chargée du *dya* de son enfant jusqu'au rite de l'imposition du nom, s'orne, pendant les huit jours qui suivent la naissance, d'un collier, *madya*, « *dya* de la personne », fait avec la racine odorante de l'arbre de même nom. Elle le portera jusqu'à ce que l'enfant fasse ses premiers pas, pour le protéger comme pour rappeler qu'elle a elle-même porté l'âme du nouveau-né.

Le nom est donné le huitième jour par le chef du Komo. Sous le *dubale*, arbre abritant les réunions du village, les vieillards s'assemblent autour des autels du Komo qu'on y a transportés (3); le père, s'il s'agit d'un premier fils, donne cent noix de kola, deux jarres de bière de mil, un bélier qui sera égorgé et de l'argent aux griots qui chanteront au cours de la cérémonie.

Une partie des cheveux du nouveau-né sont rasés et conservés dans un étui *(sebe)* qui, avant d'être porté, sera caché dans un récipient à huile pour les raisons suivantes : protéger l'intéressé contre les pratiques magiques; empêcher qu'un âne ne les mange ce qui le ferait mourir; lui permettre de demander pour lui-même santé et longue vie, à l'image de ses cheveux restés en bon état.

Ce qui reste des cheveux est porté au fleuve par une parente, où ils sont jetés en témoignage pour le Faro. Puis on attache autour du front du baptisé une bande de coton blanc dite *faro fini* (litt. : vêtement du Faro) sur laquelle on a « craché » du suc de noix de kola et qui marque sa soumission au génie.

L'aîné des vieillards examine alors avec attention le point de départ de la chevelure et le point de jonction des sourcils sur le front avant d'annoncer d'une voix forte les signes déterminants du caractère *(lere)*. Puis il saisit l'enfant et le balance sept fois d'est en ouest, huit fois du sud au nord au-dessus de l'autel en lui donnant le prénom *(loko)* qu'il a hérité en même temps que les principes spirituels d'un mort (1). Les griots récitent la généalogie *(burudyu)* du père; le *senanku* vient plaisanter le nouveau-né et lui tirer doucement le nez et les oreilles.

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(1) *boli tigi i ka masaya kanu ñe, de wolo la, a ni kalifa be i la, ngo boli ku ani kle.*

(2) *Cardila vingens.*

(3) Si le village ne comporte pas de Komo, le nom peut être donné au-dessus du *cuafebla* paternel.

Le même jour le forgeron trace sur le visage de l'enfant les *wolo ti*, sept scarifications frontales verticales et deux scarifications horizontales sous chaque œil. Les premières représentent l'homme complet (*ni* et *dya*). Les secondes, de chiffre deux, symbole de « l'inconnu dans la création » (cf. p. 8), rappellent que l'être humain a existé dans cet état; en conséquence il a conscience de cet inconnu et possibilité de l'appréhender. Ces scarifications agissent sur le *lere* de l'enfant et lui donnent à la fois force, courage, vertu, comme la force de pénétrer dans la connaissance de l'invisible (2).

Dans une famille de forgeron, le nom est donné près de la forge paternelle. En présence de tous les artisans du village, le *kotigi* rase la tête du nouveau-né tandis qu'un vieillard prépare sept bâtonnets sur chacun desquels il prononce un nom d'ancêtre. Le *kotigi*, dont les yeux sont bandés, tire de l'ensemble et successivement trois bâtonnets : le troisième détermine le nom qu'il proclame aussitôt. Aux chants des femmes, le père extrait de son autel la hache *kongobwona* ainsi que les autres objets rituels sur lesquels un mouton est égorgé tandis qu'une prière est récitée. La tête du nouveau-né est frottée d'abord avec la hache, puis avec les cheveux rasés imbibés du sang sacrificiel ; ce geste introduit l'enfant dans le groupe familial. Il reçoit ensuite les scarifications des forgerons.

Circoncision.

Alors qu'autrefois elle était obligatoirement opérée sur les jeunes gens (20 ans environ), la circoncision est pratiquée de bonne heure si les parents sont assez riches pour subvenir aux dépenses qu'elle entraine.

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(1) D'après une autre information le fils ainé reçoit le prénom de son aieul paternel, le second fils, celui de son père, les fils suivant ceux des pères et aieuls de la mère.

(2) Elles peuvent être refaites à la racine du nez d'un adulte désespéré de n'avoir pas d'enfant, ou sur la cuisse d'une femme qui désire être féconde. Ces scarifications, exécutées à la naissance, ne sont pas les seules que supportent les Bambara. Cf. S. de Ganay. *On a form of cicatrization among the Bambara.*

De ce fait, un enfant de 8 ans peut être circoncis avec un adolescent de 16 à 18 ans dont les parents sont pauvres et ont réuni lentement les denrées nécessaires à la cérémonie. Ces deux garçons appartiendront pourtant à la même promotion, *flã*, et seront camarades, *flani*, toute leur vie, ayant mêmes droits et devoirs. L'âge a donc un rôle restreint dans les rapports sociaux; seule l'époque de la circoncision fait, d'un groupe disparate, un ensemble cohérent, une promotion à l'intérieur

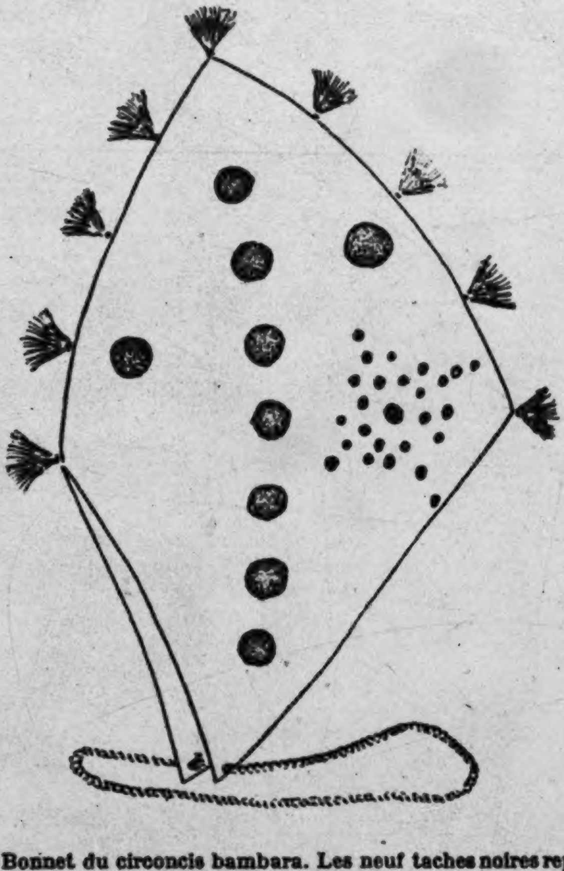

Fig. 14.—Bonnet du circoncis bambara. Les neuf taches noires représentent l'enfant, son *dya* et les points cardinaux.

Le dessin de droite représente le *sumangolo*, soit l'arrivée des douze eaux futures (cf. fig. 3).

de laquelle tous se doivent amitié, confiance et assistance dans tous les actes de la vie sociale et privée.

L'opération ayant été décidée, la parenté procède d'abord à la confection du bonnet porté pendant la retraite. Le tissu blanc est présenté au Niger par un utérin qui adresse à Faro une prière demandant licence d'exécuter avec la terre noire, les dessins qui le couvriront. Ils protégeront l'enfant qui se trouve en état d'impureté pendant toute la retraite, le bonnet lui-même garantissant sa tête contre les rayons de feu venus du 5e ciel, *koblĕnkaba* (cf. fig. 14).

Sept gros points noirs, disposés verticalement, représentent d'une part l'enfant, 3, et son *dya*, 4, ainsi que l'homme, 3, qu'il sera plus tard et sa future femme, 4. Ils assurent aussi sa protection d'est en ouest. Les deux autres points l'assurent du nord au sud. La croix de petits points rappelle le *sumangolos* la « réalisation du monde » et la purification obtenue après l'opération et la perte du *wanzo*. Au nombre de huit, chiffre de Faro, les pompons surmontant le bonnet et dont les franges ont été filées par une aïeule, sont cousus pour « attirer les forces de l'espace ». Un neuvième, au sommet, est noirci avec la terre du génie. Ainsi coiffé, le circoncis est placé dans la lumière protectrice et purificatrice de Faro. Opérer un enfant sans lui mettre ce bonnet reviendrait en effet « à s'incliner devant les actes de Mousso Koroni ».

De son côté, le forgeron-circonciseur prépare l'opération dont l'outil essentiel est un couteau dit *boloko kumba moru* (litt. : couteau tête mère de la circoncision) qu'il a forgé lui-même et qu'il porte dans une petite gaine de cuir suspendue à la hanche (cf. fig. 15) (2).

Le manche est enfilé dans une sorte d'étui de fer fermé à l'une de ses extrémités dite *kurukun* (litt. : tête boule) et ouvert à l'autre dite *šukala* (litt. : manche sorcier). Il est forgé d'une seule pièce avec la lame *dyomuru fala* (litt. : orphelin du couteau) et surnommée « sans pitié » en langue archaïque.

Le couteau et son manche d'une part, l'étui de métal d'autre part, symbolisent la personne du circoncis et le prépuce qu'on lui retire.

Avant l'opération, le forgeron lave le manche, acte parallèle

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(1) Cf. p. 32, fig. 4.

(2) L'endogamie des forgerons est attribuée à leur rôle dans la circoncision et au fait que leurs outils, et particulièrement ce couteau, sont imprégnés du *wanzo* des adolescents.

au lavage du pénis, et trace sur la lame des dessins rituels, soit au charbon, soit à la bouillie de mil (1).

Les trois personnages *če mani saba* (litt. : trois petites personnes mâles) représentent les trois premiers circoncis (Gwonna, Gwondo et Gwonkè) qui appartenaient aux familles des forgerons du village de Gwondougou. Tout descendant de ces ancêtres doit être circoncis comme eux. En le dessinant, l'opérateur dit :

« Gwonna, Gwondo, Gwonkè, vous avez découvert le fer et vous avez supporté la douleur (de la première circoncision), vous n'avez honte ni nuit, ni jour; nos pieds sont posés sur la trace de vos pieds; le fer ne vous a pas fait honte, qu'il ne nous fasse pas honte; c'est la volonté de Faro... attaque, attaque, attaque » (ces trois derniers mots s'adressent au couteau) (2).

Les quatre personnages, *muso mani nani* (litt. : quatre petites personnes femelles) sont les quatre premières femmes excisées, inventrices de la poterie, qui étaient les femmes de ces forgerons.

L'oiseau est le *tatugu koroni*, avatar des huit ancêtres des forgerons. Il rappelle que la circoncision est pénible, dure, chaude, comparable aux effets du feu et qu'il faut peiner et souffrir pour supporter le couteau tranchant. C'est ce que rappelle l'artisan qui, en opérant les enfants, chante à plusieurs reprises :

« Le couteau est chaud, l'homme peureux ne peut le supporter, c'est une purification » (3).

Le prépuce lié au moment de l'opération par une cordelette (dessinée au centre de la lame) est placé sur le *pembele* (rectangle noir) et le couteau tranchant est frappé avec une petite masse de bois, *gossilā* (dessinée à l'extrémité du couteau). Ces trois figures reçoivent, au moment de l'opération, l'offrande du premier jet de sang des circoncis.

La ligne qui traverse la lame en son milieu sépare des instruments utilisés pour la circoncision, l'oiseau et les ancêtres qui ont fait preuve de courage. Elle exprime tout d'abord, en tant que séparation, que chaque promotion de circoncis doit être considérée comme un groupe distinct des autres. C'est là son sens social. Mais la finesse du trait elle-même a un sens qui s'applique à l'individu : chacun doit, à son image, être moralement simple, droit et fin. En se conformant à la règle symboliquement indiquée par le dessin, l'individu deviendra un être d'élite.

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(1) Certains artisans ont, une fois pour toutes, gravé les dessins rituels sur la lame.

(2) *gwonna, gwondo, gwonkè, aw ye neke damene, ka neke gale munyu, aw ma malo šu ani kle, an se daledo an se danola, neke maw malo a ka nu an malo, faro hakili do, šu šu šu.*

(3) *a ką gwā, če filo tise ka muñu, saniyali do.*

La date de l'opération est fixée lorsque l'étoile de Mousso Koroni, *sigi dolo* (Sirius), se lève le soir en un certain point de l'est (1). Les futurs opérés étant recensés, chacun se prépare et au jour dit, la mère lave la verge de son fils avec de l'eau dans laquelle a trempé une hache ou une houe de fer. Puis elle apprête un plat de riz, *ye farina lo*, « plat de la bravoure de l'homme », que l'enfant consomme avant d'être conduit au lieu de l'opération dit *yorola sakole* « lieu réservé » situé en brousse.

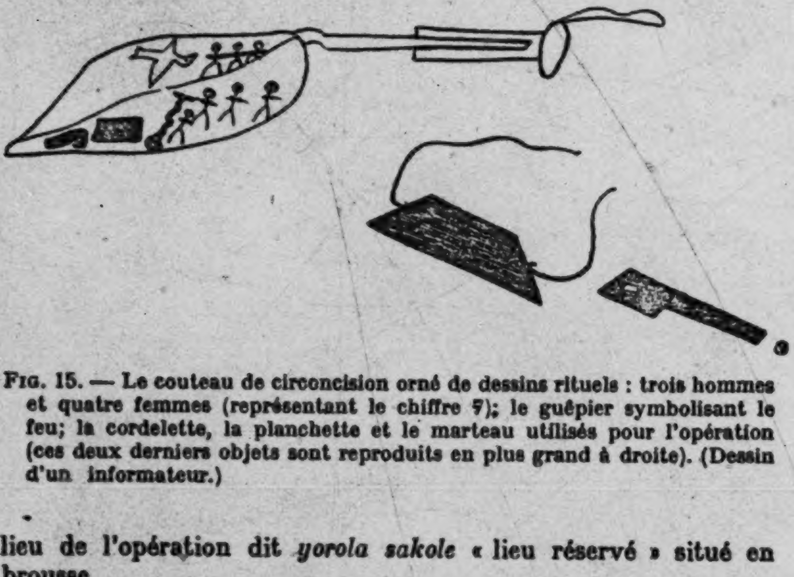

Fig. 15. — Le couteau de circoncision orné de dessins rituels : trois hommes et quatre femmes (représentant le chiffre 7); le guêpier symbolisant le feu; la cordelette, la planchette et le marteau utilisés pour l'opération (ces deux derniers objets sont reproduits en plus grand à droite). (Dessin d'un informateur.)

Lorsque tous sont réunis le forgeron-circonciseur les ayant fait asseoir en cercle au sol, les opère à tour de rôle. Tirant et tordant le prépuce, il l'attache avec la cordelette qu'il maintient tendue en fixant son extrémité entre ses orteils. Il pose ensuite le membre sur le *pembele*, appuie le couteau et frappe de la masse de bois. Il sectionne ainsi le prépuce en disant :

« Circoncis, ton père, ton grand-père, ton arrière-grand-père, le père de ce dernier aussi, l'oreille (le sexe) des ancêtres de ce dernier ont supporté [la douleur]; toi-même supporte-la comme eux. Faro, Teliko, Soba! toi qui es homme, ton chiffre est trois; trois de la verge, trois des jumeaux, dessins du pénis, c'est la coutume, supporte-la; Faro! *(ter)* (1). »

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(1) Cf. note (1) p. 26. On peut cependant, pour déterminer la date, consulter la société du *ndomo* qui la retarde parfois pour conserver plus longtemps ses sociétaires.

Après l'ablation, l'opérateur fait sur la verge de l'enfant des scarifications dites *faro nyeke* (litt. : signes de Faro). Sous le muscle *wulu dyuru* (litt. : corde de la verge) est ménagé un petit trou. Le pénis étant considéré comme source de force, le muscle qui le maintient et le redresse lie la circulation du sang et aide l'homme dans tous ses actes. C'est par ce muscle que l'homme transmet des nerfs à ses enfants. Un sexe droit, fermement maintenu par le frein évite à l'homme et à sa descendance de nombreuses maladies : la mutilation a pour but d'obtenir prépuces et clitoris complets et bien formés chez les enfants de l'intéressé. Après la perforation, l'opérateur met dans l'orifice un peu de suc de piment et de tomate en disant :

« Fort (quand tu formes) l'enfant, (toi qui formes) l'enfant (dans la) matrice, donne-le à Faro (2). »

Car l'embryon, déposé dans la matrice féminine par Faro, reçoit du piment force et virilité et se développe grâce à la tomate.

Deux petits trous sont ménagés symbolisant l'homme et son *dya*, tandis que la prière suivante est récitée :

« Deux trous de la verge; je trace les jumeaux et je le fais bien, la peau de la personne est captive, la peau de la personne (donne) les jumeaux; supporte-les; Faro *(ter)* (3). »

« La peau de l'homme, dit-on, son corps entier sont misérables, captifs. Il est condamné à œuvrer, à suer, à souffrir. Mais ces deux perforations expriment que l'homme est toujours appelé à procréer des jumeaux, images visibles de Faro. A leur défaut, il peut avoir de nombreux enfants qui lui rendront, en sueur et en travail, la semence qu'il a mise dans la matrice maternelle et qui donne une forme aux germes donnés par Faro. »

A la racine du pénis, de petits traits, *kolo nyeke*, sont faits au couteau, tandis que l'opérateur dit :

« Marque du pénis; le sexe reçoit cette scarification à cause de l'enfant [qu'il procréera]; c'est pour que l'homme soit courageux; celui qui a [cette scarification] est respecté; grand Faro, rassasiement de Faro (4). »

(1) *bolokodẽ i fa, i moke, o ta fa, o ta fa were, o ta fa klo masamaw ye munyu, i yere ka munyu u čoko la, faro, teliko, soba, o ye če ta saba ye, wulu wo, flani wo, kolo nyeke, lada do, i ka munyu; faro* (ter).

(2) *fariña dẽ, dẽzo dẽ, i ka di faro ma.*

(3) *wulu wo fla, flani mba ti ka ñe, moko wolo ye dyɔ ye, moko wolo ye flani nye, i ka munyu faro* (ter).

(4) *kolo nyeke, wulu ti kũye dẽ koye, a ye če fariña ko ye, min ya ke bonyedo, faro ba, faro fa.*

Ils rappellent les scarifications exécutées sur le corps de l'homme et signifient la multiplication désirée de la descendance. Enfin, ils marquent la supériorité de celui qui a supporté et accepté la douleur.

Si le patient a hérité du *ni* et du *dya* d'un enfant décédé immédiatement avant sa naissance dans sa famille *stricto sensu*, la verge est perforée, tandis que la prière suivante est récitée :

« Toi un tel, les fils de ton pères sont morts, que tu les remplaces nuit et jour, le trou de la verge a été fait sur toi; Faro *(ter)* (1). »

Cette perforation le désigne pour procréer les enfants que son père a perdus.

Assis en rond, tous les circoncis saignent à même le sol, dans un trou individuel, *nyama bla dinge* (litt. : trou où est laissé le *nyama*) (2) ménagé entre leurs jambes ouvertes, faisant ainsi passer à la terre impure leur *wanzo* et une part de leur *tere*. Le circonciseur récite pendant ce temps, la prière suivante :

« Sang de la verge, sang du rejet du *wanzo*, sang qui chasse le *wanzo*, entre dans le trou, que tu payes (ma dette), que tu me protèges (contre le *nyama* du prépuce), contre la malchance, contre l'espace; ô tertre *(ter)* (3). »

Puis il pétrit un peu de terre sanglante, dont le principe, *bwa*, est plus fort que le *wanzo* (4) et en fait une sorte de pansement qu'il applique sur les plaies. L'enfant récupère aussi par ce moyen une part de son *tere*. Le sexe est ensuite maintenu au moyen d'un petit appareil, *mine naw*, fait d'une tige de mil fendue en deux en forme de fourche.

« La circoncision est un sacrifice » (5). Elle n'est valable que si le sang a coulé et tout patient qui n'a pas humecté le sol de son sang est blessé à la cuisse par le circonciseur. Il en est de même pour un enfant né sans prépuce. Ce détail doit d'ailleurs être tenu secret par les membres de la promotion, la révélation d'une malformation risquant d'empêcher le mariage de l'intéressé (6).

(1) *e kari macina, e fa dew bana, e ka o lu soro šu ani kle la, wulu wo ke la e la; faro* (ter).

(2) *dinge* est un mot en langue ancienne.

(3) *wulu dyoli, wanzo fili dyoli, wanzo gẽ dyoli, i bi dõ dinge kono, i kã sara, i kã kisi a makunangoya, i ka kisi kene ama; walawala* (ter).

(4) Le mot *bwa* est traduit provisoirement par « essence, extrait ». On dit *dukukolo bwa* ou *seke* « principe ou extrait de la terre ».

(5) *bolokoli ye saraka ye.*

(6) Une femme pourrait croire que ces malformations sont le signe que l'opéré n'a pas perdu son *wanzo*, fait qui serait un obstacle définitif au mariage.

Lorsque tout est terminé, l'opérateur, tenant en main les prépuces, dit, avant de les enterrer :

« Nous avons rejeté le *wanzo* de l'enfant circoncis, que le *tere* soit bien (1). »

Les opérés sont alors coiffés de leur bonnet posé d'abord sur la nuque et le front représentant l'est et l'ouest, puis sur les côtés représentant le nord et le sud. Toutes leurs forces résident dès lors dans la coiffure qu'ils porteront nuit et jour, sans la quitter, pendant toute la retraite.

L'approche du lieu de l'opération est formellement interdite aux femmes et aux incirconcis. Celui qui s'y rendrait par curiosité « contracterait le *wanzo* » (*wanzo ba nofe*, « le *wanzo* le suit »). Et tout incirconcis qui enfreindrait cette consigne en supporterait les conséquences au moment de sa propre opération qui serait dangereuse (2). La même règle s'applique à l'enclos de quelques huttes où séjournent les opérés sous la surveillance du *sema* et qui est situé à quelques dizaines de mètres du village, pour isoler la promotion. Car tout ce qui les touche, vêtements, bâtons, sistres, vaisselle et détritus, est imprégné de leur *wanzo*, à l'exception du bonnet.

Les nouveaux circoncis reçoivent de leurs parents des cadeaux en cauris et nourriture dits : *wanzo sababu yala*, « en l'honneur du *wanzo* » pour favoriser leur guérison.

La nuit qui précède le sixième jour après l'opération, jour dit *daworo*, les enfants sont initiés au Komo (3).

Le lendemain, le *sema* les conduit au bord du fleuve où ils lavent pour la première fois leur plaie. Cet acte, qui fait intervenir directement l'élément dans lequel vit Faro, a de plus une portée sociale : il consacre la promotion et, dès cet instant, les enfants faisant partie pour le reste de leur vie du même *flã*, échangent les quolibets et les insultes qui sont de mise entre *senɔnku* (4). Il est à remarquer que cet acte très simple d'une ablution commune constitue l'inauguration de la promotion de circoncis et déclenche dès ce moment tous les droits et obligations de ses membres les uns envers les autres.

Un repas pris en commun, accompagné de chants et de danses, termine les cérémonies du *daworo*. Dès ce moment les ablutions sont répétées chaque jour jusqu'à guérison des plaies.

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(1) *ãn ye dẽ bolokole wanzo fili la, tere ka ñe.*

(2) L'approche du *wanzo* virulent des incirconcis agit sur celui des opérés et les atteint dans les organes génitaux.

(3) Cf. p. 155.

(4) Cf. p. 83.

Le dernier jour, tout ce qui a été en contact avec les opérés est réuni près de l'enclos, sur un carrefour : sistres, bâtons, nattes ainsi que les bois des huttes et les ordures soigneusement balayées sont mis en un tas auquel on met le feu. Chaque circoncis saute alors trois fois au-dessus du feu puis court jusqu'à sa demeure sans se retourner. Il perd ainsi définitivement le reste de *wanzo* qu'il avait gardé après l'opération. Son bonnet seul est rapporté et remis à sa mère qui le conserve jusqu'à sa mort. C'est le lendemain qu'ayant revêtu des vêtements neufs on lui apprend ce qu'il est lui-même en lui disant : « la personne est *yo* et *yo* est la personne (1) » et en lui enseignant les modalités de la création. Il est alors admis définitivement dans la société des mâles adultes de son village.

La circoncision a un effet profond sur la personne. L'enfant perd à ce moment le support physique de sexe féminin qu'est son prépuce : il devient un homme *(vir)* prêt à remplir son office de mâle reproducteur. De plus il « rejette son *wanzo* » qui s'échappe du corps au moment de l'opération (2). Dans le saut au-dessus du feu cette force rejoint, dans les autels et le masque du *ndomo*, celles des incirconcis et des circoncis des années précédentes (3).

En même temps l'opéré améliore son *tere*, car ce dernier, diminué par l'opération sanglante, augmente au moment où l'enfant revêt ses habits neufs. Jusqu'à la circoncision, l'enfant ne faisait que de petits ouvrages; après la circoncision il est considéré comme un adulte mâle admis d'office aux rites et travaux de la communauté.

L'importance du *wanzo*, la nécessité de son départ sont telles qu'au cas où un enfant meurt incirconcis, on pratique l'opération sur son cadavre. Si elle n'est pas possible, le circonciseur lui coupe l'oreille gauche en disant :

« Je coupe l'oreille en guise de circoncision (4). »

Elle est enterrée avec le cadavre ou conservée dans la demeure paternelle, mais le *wanzo* quitte l'enfant. Si l'opération n'était pas effectuée, il contribuerait à la formation d'un *nyama* très dangereux, plus agressif encore que celui d'un vieillard et dont la société aurait à souffrir.

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(1) *ma ye yo ye, yo ye ma ye*. Sur *yo* cf. p.

(2) *wanzo file la*. Le port des vêtements et des parures revêt une importance capitale dans la perte du *wanzo*. Chez les Bozo où les enfants sont circoncis très jeunes, ils ne sont considérés comme ayant perdu leur *wanzo* qu'au moment où on leur donne ces vêtements.

(3) Cf. p. 175.

(4) *mba klo tikę bolokoli nona bi la ye.*

Excision.

L'opération est exécutée par une potière, femme de forgeron, avec un petit couteau de fer. La lame, qui est mâle, représente le soleil; le manche, femelle, est à la fois clitoris et lune. La femme se protège du *wanzo* des opérées en portant des bracelets et des amulettes et en s'enduisant les yeux d'une pommade noire.

L'opération est effectuée en plein jour, aux abords du village, devant la parenté réunie. Dans certaines localités, elle a lieu près du foyer des potières. Chaque fillette est assise à son tour sur une poterie retournée et opérée tandis que des prières sont récitées. De même qu'on blesse la cuisse d'un garçon dont le prépuce est mal conformé, de même une fille est considérée comme excisée si, dans le même cas, on lui fait subir une épreuve qui remplace l'excision : l'opératrice place une peau de hérisson entre ses cuisses qu'elle serre fortement pour faire jaillir le sang (1).

Les jeunes filles ne doivent ni pleurer ni gémir; au contraire, elles chantent pour exalter le départ du *wanzo*.

Pendant la retraite, elles portent autour de la tête un morceau de tissu blanc, couleur de Faro, qui joue le même rôle que le bonnet des circoncis. Elles agitent une gourde de calebasse, *bolokǫde barani*, remplie de huit grains ou petits cailloux dont la sonorité écarte de leur route les passants. Les sauts qu'elles exécutent au-dessus du foyer constitué par les vêtements, les gourdes et les détritus auxquels on a mis le feu, terminent la retraite et les débarrassent de leur *wanzo* qui va se fixer dans les autels du *ndomo*.

On dit d'une jeune fille bien excisée qu'elle est sage et se tient dignement. Au contraire d'une fille de mœurs légères on dit que « ses mains n'ont pas été lavées proprement (2) » ce qui signifie qu'elle a été excisée d'une manière défectueuse.

Funérailles.

La mort a pour effet de dissocier les éléments composant la personne; le corps vivant devient cadavre *(šu)* d'où s'échappent le *ni* et le *dya* qui suivent leurs destinées particulières, tandis que le *lere* se transforme en *nyama*, force active et dangereuse errant autour du défunt. Les rites funéraires ont pour premier but de capter les éléments spirituels du mort qu'il s'agit de conserver, dans son intérêt comme dans celui de la communauté; de plus, par les soins donnés à la dépouille et à ces éléments, la mémoire du disparu est pieusement entretenue. L'idée de la résurrection finale, promise à tout ce qui a vécu inspire ces dispositions; les os du mort, qui sont comme l'exuvie de son corps physique, son armature solide et durable, retrouvent l'exuvie de son âme, conservée dans les autels du Komo. Ainsi, à la fin des temps, le mort « se lèvera et, pour la joie de tous, retrouvera les siens ».

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(1) Dans les cas où l'opérée est fille de forgeron, le sang qui coule sur la poterie témoigne de son rôle futur de potière (cf. p. 126).

(2) *a bolo ma ko ka dye ya.*

Les rites funéraires célébrés de tout temps chez les Bambara ont évolué avec leurs croyances. Quand fleurissait le culte du *balansa*, les défunts étaient suspendus dans les arbres jusqu'à pourriture, leurs os prélevés et conservés par leurs descendants. Les ancêtres des Gwonna taillaient alors à l'image des disparus des bois de *sunzun* dits *mani* (litt. : petite personne). La longueur du bois était proportionnée à la longueur du corps; la tête, les bras, les jambes et le sexe étaient soigneusement figurés. Les *mani* étaient gardés par le patriarche du village et le culte était rendu aux ancêtres sur ces autels.

Actuellement le corps est enterré au cours de rites dans lesquels le Komo joue, pour les initiés, un rôle important. Dès qu'un sociétaire est gravement malade, le chef de famille pose sur la poitrine du moribond l'autel portatif, *kere la boli ni*, appartenant à la communauté. Il ne quitte plus le chevet afin de saisir le dernier souffle. Aussitôt après le décès, sans se retourner, sans adresser la parole à quiconque, il se rend chez le chef du Komo qui place l'objet dans le sanctuaire où sont conservés les autels. L'âme est introduite dans le *nimara boli* (1).

De retour à la maison mortuaire, le chef de famille passe la main sur le visage du mort pour recueillir son *nyama* qu'il confie ensuite à Pemba en frottant la cavité du *pembele* familial « afin que la somme de travail qu'il a accompli pendant sa vie ne se trouve pas dissoute par la mort, qu'elle soit comme une force accumulée servant à la communauté, afin que son intelligence, ses qualités, son habileté dans les travaux divers et surtout dans la culture ne se perdent pas, mais se retrouvent dans d'autres membres de la famille. Le madrier, à l'instar d'un autel détenteur de forces, conserve ce *nyama* jusqu'à ce que, dans la parenté, survienne une naissance (1) ».

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(1) Cf. p. 146. Autrefois on recueillait l'âme d'un mort entre deux calebasses que l'on refermait l'une sur l'autre et que l'on accrochait au lit conjugal. Quand la femme était enceinte on les brisait sur son ventre afin de faire pénétrer l'âme dans le fœtus. Dans la suite ce mode de transmission de l'âme n'a plus été possible à cause de l'impureté provoquée par « les discussions oiseuses sur les dispositions et situations de la création ».

Le cadavre est l'objet de soins particuliers. S'il s'agit d'un forgeron ou d'un Soma, deux tiges de mil sont placées pendant quelques instants de chaque côté « pour la nostalgie du corps (2) ». Cette pratique exprime que l'âme, momentanément dans l'autel du Komo et l'exuvie qui la remplacera plus tard, regrettent le corps animé qui sera la proie des termites. Ces tiges symbolisent les deux ancêtres qui accompagnèrent Koumabana dans l'au-delà, le décès répétant, en quelque sorte, l'histoire de l'apparition de la mort dans le monde (3).

L'ensemble du corps et des deux symboles totalise le chiffre trois, chiffre mâle, et rappelle les trois coups frappés sur le nouveau-né de sexe masculin à sa naissance. Quelques instants plus tard, un parent dépose les tiges de chaque côté de la porte de la demeure mortuaire. Les deuilleurs qui viennent exprimer leurs condoléances s'accroupissent devant elles, déposant à leurs pieds des cauris, dans le plus grand silence, car « parler et pleurer augmente les péchés du mort, les larmes alourdissant son fardeau ».

Si le mort est un personnage d'importance et surtout s'il est chef de village ou de famille on trace parfois sur son index et son pouce les signes du monde actuel et du monde futur (*bolo ti doniya*, fig. 1). Le *senanku*, les forgerons et les griots viennent réciter sa devise *(barama)*. Ils reçoivent en remerciements les vêtements qui lui appartenaient.

Le fils aîné du chef du Komo, prévenu le premier, apporte la nouvelle à son père qui le charge de l'annoncer aux hommes de sa promotion. Chacune des promotions suivantes est alertée par un délégué du groupe précédent. Enfin, les jeunes circoncis nouvellement promus dans la société vont annoncer aux femmes et aux incirconcis l'heure de la sortie du masque. Mais seules les funérailles d'un vieillard, d'un chef de village ou de canton obligent l'ensemble des sociétaires à se déplacer.

Les membres de la promotion la plus ancienne se rendent dans la demeure du défunt. Le fils aîné du chef du Komo, tenant

(1) S. de Ganay. *Aspect de mythologie et de symbolique bambara*, p. 199.
(2) *fari nana fi*, litt.: « corps au visage noir ».
(3) Cf. p. 25.

le sifflet rituel entre ses dents, siffle alternativement dans l'oreille droite, dans l'oreille gauche, puis dans les yeux du mort qu'il ferme ensuite en tirant sur ses deux orteils. Il dit alors : « Un tel n'a pas répondu. »

Le chef du Komo vient ensuite « toucher le cadavre encore chaud pour renvoyer à Faro ce qui lui appartient ». De son auriculaire trempé dans la bouillie de mil, il trace une ligne sur le corps (cf. fig. 16). En *1* et en *2* la force de l'auriculaire agit en renvoyant la semence qui est dans le sang. En *4* il supprime sa voix (car le mort ne parlera plus) ainsi que « les goûts, saveurs et appétits de sa langue, la puissance de ses mâchoires, l'air de sa bouche ». En *5* il renvoie tout ce qu'il avait dans sa tête, idées, expériences, opinions, folie, sagesse, en passant par l'oreille gauche pour enlever tous les sons qu'elle a entendus, les bons comme les mauvais. Puis l'oreille est bouchée : ce qu'elle entendrait reviendra à celui qui héritera son âme et son double, le mort devant, dans la tombe, entendre seulement avec l'oreille droite le sifflet du Komo et tout ce qui lui sera communiqué. En *6* il enlève « volonté et entêtement » pour que le mort soit soumis à Faro jusque dans la tombe. Il touche ensuite le nombril *3* et toutes les articulations pour renvoyer la semence qui gît dans la moelle de l'homme.

Le cadavre est alors transporté dans une chambre contiguë pour un lavage auquel procède un sociétaire qui porte sur son épaule le sac contenant les autels du Komo et qui psalmodie un chant célébrant le Soma Moriba Sidibé (1). Les deux tiges de mil sont placées sur le corps pendant les ablutions qui « purifient et calment son âme ».

Vêtu de ses plus beaux vêtements, le cadavre est rapporté dans la pièce principale, où ses cheveux sont rasés. Son autel individuel est remis au chef du Komo qui le dépose près du *nimara boli*. C'est alors que le porteur de cloches *(grindavo)* se rend au village et annonce la sortie du masque afin que chacun rentre chez soi. A midi, un sociétaire revêt l'appareil du Komo et s'avance, précédé du fils du chef; celui-ci siffle un air funèbre; il porte sur l'épaule le sac contenant les autels et, à la main droite, la hache et le poignard. Les deux hommes sont suivis par les jeunes circoncis portant le cadavre et par les sociétaires présents. Au cimetière *(šudoyoro)* le cortège dépose le cadavre sur le dos, près de la tombe fraîchement creusée par les jeunes

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(1) L'ablution a lieu avec le contenu d'une grande calebasse *(dyuru fle nyẽ)* auquel on ajoute celui d'une petite calebasse *(dye fle nyẽ)* qui représente « la dernière eau du mort ».

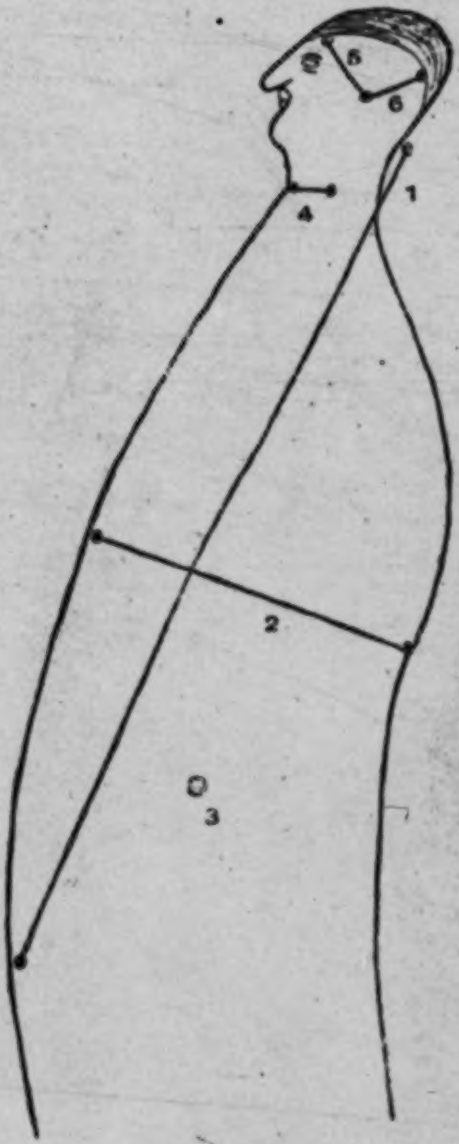

FIG. 16. — Tracé exécuté à la bouillie de mil sur le cadavre par le chef du Komo. (Dessin d'un informateur.)

gens de la dernière promotion (1). Au rythme joué par trois forgerons tambourinaires, le fils du défunt, puis tous les assistants dansent à tour de rôle, lançant avec leurs pieds un peu de terre sur le cadavre à la fin de chaque phrase musicale.

Une chèvre (ou un bouc) apportée par la parenté est sacrifiée et le sang coule à la fois sur les autels et en partie dans la tombe, tandis que le chef du Komo récite la prière suivante :

« Que tu laisses en paix [ta famille]; que nos récoltes soient bénies; que ton bonheur nous vienne ensuite; tes sacrifices sont exécutés (2). »

Le sacrifice effectué sur les autels répète ce qui a été déjà accompli dans le sanctuaire lors du dépôt de l'âme du défunt. Mais, aux yeux des jeunes initiés qui l'ignorent, c'est à ce moment seulement que s'opère, par le canal du sang sacrificiel, le transfert de l'âme dans le *nimara boli.*

Le plus âgé des hommes de la promotion aspire avec le sifflet du Komo un peu de sang pris à la gorge ouverte de l'animal et souffle sur le cadavre; un autre vieillard aspire à son tour et souffle dans la tombe. Un troisième fait de même et siffle dans l'oreille droite du cadavre « afin que le mort, ayant reçu un sacrifice complet, ne demande plus rien ». Un griot prend ensuite les sifflets et les enfonce dans le gosier du défunt; il s'emplit la bouche de nourritures apportées auparavant par une femme et souffle jusqu'à ce que l'estomac soit plein. Le reste des plats est disposé à côté du mort qui est descendu dans la tombe par ses fils et filles. Il est couché dans la cavité *sele dẽ*, ménagée au fond, sur le côté droit et face à l'est. Les deux tiges de mil sont posées auprès de lui; plus puissantes que les forces de pourriture et de destruction, elles affirment la pérennité des ancêtres; avec le cadavre, elles sont l'image des trois premiers morts et l'ensemble exprime l'espoir de la résurrection promise aux hommes.

Tandis que des chants s'élèvent en l'honneur du défunt, les jeunes gens le recouvrent de branchages frais avant de refermer la tombe, au-dessus de laquelle le masque siffle pour proclamer que, dorénavant, c'est lui qui réglera les problèmes du mort.

Les objets ayant appartenu au défunt, son lit, sa natte, sa pipe, son rasoir, sont alors entassés avec un petit sac contenant ses cheveux. On leur met le feu tandis que le chef du Komo récite la prière suivante : « Que tes biens brûlés partent attendre devant toi, qu'ils partent dans la fumée. Nous sommes derrière, nous ne sommes pas devant toi; demande pour nous le bonheur. Que tous les *dyo* avec la pince et l'enclume, la paix, viennent (1). »

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(1) Les morts sont, aux environs de Ségou, enterrés le plus souvent dans les champs; un rônier est planté sur la tombe.

(2) *i ka du to; ana senefẽ ka barka; i ka hɛrɛ ka na an yé; i ka saraka be buora.*

Le masque danse autour du foyer en sifflant et en jetant de la poussière. Les enfants du défunt qui sont imprégnés de son *nyama* sautent trois fois par-dessus la flamme; la force absorbée par la fumée, se dissipe avec elle.

La viande de l'animal sacrifié est cuite, consommée par les assistants et les récipients sont brisés.

Trois jours après le décès, la parenté se rend au bord du fleuve; jette les vêtements du mort et un plat d'aliments qui serviront à vêtir et à nourrir le double; elle récite la prière suivante :

« Mon père Faro, une personne de ma famille est morte, voici son offrande des trois jours; fais qu'elle revienne à nouveau dans le ventre d'une femme (2). »

L'offrande de nourriture est ensuite renouvelée tous les trois jours jusqu'à ce qu'une naissance provoque le retour du double dans le monde des vivants.

Si le défunt n'a pas de descendance, son autel reste à jamais dans le sanctuaire du Komo, près du *nimara boli*. Sinon il est remis dans les sept jours au fils aîné ou au frère qui devient le chef de famille.

Dans la nuit qui suit le septième jour, l'âme vient manger et boire dans la case de la veuve qui vit solitaire. Aussi tous les récipients contenant de l'eau ou de la nourriture sont-ils soigneusement vidés et nettoyés. Le même repas est offert au défunt la nuit qui suit le quarantième jour après le décès. La veuve sort de sa demeure le huitième jour si elle est pauvre et doit travailler pour vivre, le quarante et unième jour dans le cas contraire.

Au bout d'un temps variable, l'âme, le double et le nom du défunt sont reçus par un enfant qui naît dans la famille. Dans le sanctuaire du Komo reste l'exuvie, *mana* ou *folo* de l'âme, témoin permanent de son existence terrestre. Elle est conservée par Faro qui veille sur elle et entretenue par les offrandes des vivants qui l'amèneront ainsi jusqu'à la résurrection finale.

Lorsque le défunt n'appartient pas à la société du Komo, les rites sont célébrés sur les autels des sociétés dont il fait partie; son âme est également conservée par eux. Les principes spirituels des femmes, groupées dans les institutions comparables à celles des hommes, dites *muso dye*, sont l'objet des mêmes soins où se retrouve le rythme de quatre jours, chiffre féminin.

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(1) *i ka fê maralow dyenina, n ka la i kono i nye, m bila šiši fe, an bi ko an ti nye, i ka here nyini ã nye; ka dyow ani bala ani kula, dũ ka na.*

(2) *m fa faro n so ma bana a dyanza ye kle saba kono ye; ni ye se i ka seki, muso kono ma.*

Si le défunt est trop pauvre pour que tous les rites, toujours coûteux, soient exécutés, on prépare deux calebasses d'eau que l'on place l'une à la tête et l'autre aux pieds du cadavre; on le soulève ensuite de telle sorte que son image puisse se refléter dans l'eau. Ceci fait, huit cauris sont placés à la tête et huit aux pieds et les calebasses sont couvertes d'un van : l'image conservée est censée se refléter dans le *kaba mana*, 4ᵉ ciel, où Faro, symbolisé par les cauris, juge de son état de pureté. Un rite divinatoire est alors exécuté : si l'homme est pur, les habitants du village assistent à son enterrement malgré la non-exécution des rites. Sinon on l'abandonne à la charge des siens.

La négligence des rites assurant la vie dans l'au-delà et la sécurité des vivants fait surgir l'ombre, *šu dya* ou le fantôme *šu kere dye* (litt. : flanc blanc du mort) qui se présente pour réclamer son dû à ses descendants, sous l'aspect qu'avait le mort sur terre.

Culte des ancêtres.

Dans les vestibules de certaines demeures, un poteau de soutien *(čě dloma)* marqué parfois de sept encoches, représente l'ancêtre fondateur de la famille. Au jour anniversaire de sa mort on huile le poteau « pour rafraichir son âme ». De plus, chaque année, le propriétaire sacrifie à tous les ancêtres sur l'autel familial, le poteau et le seuil de la porte. Dans certains villages, ils sont appelés en frappant le seuil avec un petit marteau de bois, *dyele kala ni*, qui les représente.

Dans les cours, des pièces de bois fichées en terre *(jigi semen dloma)* représentent l'oncle paternel frère du fondateur et servent de siège aux chefs de famille qui s'y adossent « pour bien s'appuyer sur les coutumes ». Les cultivateurs, avant d'aller aux champs, viennent y frotter leurs houes pour les exhiber aux ancêtres.

Avant les semailles les femmes remettent une boule de mil cru au chef de famille qui les aligne pour qu'elles représentent les disparus par rang d'âge et dans l'ordre. Puis il leur donne une pincée de semences en commençant par celle qui représente le mort le plus récent et en appelant successivement les noms de tous les défunts. La pâte et les grains sont ensuite mis dans l'eau et la bouillie ainsi obtenue versée sur les montants de la porte d'entrée du vestibule de la maison de famille qui reçoivent également le sang d'une victime. L'époque des semailles venues, le chef qui a préparé de la bouillie faite avec quelques grains prélevés sur les semences la distribue aux femmes en commençant par celle qui représente le plus ancien mort; il demande aux ancêtres de veiller, pendant la germination, sur l'âme du mil qui viendra dans les grains avec la première pluie. Lorsque le mil est à maturité, les premiers grains récoltés sont placés dans une poterie sur l'aire où aura lieu le battage et distribués aux femmes de la même façon qu'aux semailles, le plus âgé des défunts devant recevoir le premier les prémices.

Une cérémonie annuelle présidée par le Komo réunit les sociétaires en l'honneur des défunts. Elle est dite *šu sõ sibiri* « samedi du sacrifice des morts » et célébrée un samedi au moment de la formation des épis dans les champs de mil.

Le *koligi* extrait de leur abri les outils ancestraux et les transporte auprès des tombes. Puis le chef du Komo et ses aides, accompagnés des masques, apportent les autels au cimetière en chantant. Chaque tombe est un instant mise en contact avec le *nimara boli* et le *nyama boli :* les exuvies des âmes des défunts visitent chacune les corps qu'elles animaient. Au rythme *šu bara* « rythme des morts » joué par les tambours, les masques dansent en chantant autour des tombes tandis qu'un simulacre de travail est exécuté avec chacun des outils des ancêtres. Pendant toute la cérémonie, la parenté se lamente, les hommes auprès des tombes, les femmes dans les demeures. Une victime sacrifiée est dépecée et cuite dans des poteries neuves brisées après usage pour éviter la contagion du *nyama* des défunts. Les danses de masques sont exécutées pendant les deux jours qui suivent. Dans certains villages la cérémonie est renouvelée après le battage de la récolte.

Cas exceptionnels.

Mort-né :

D'un enfant mort-né, on dit qu'il a perdu à la fois son âme et son double, c'est-à-dire son être complet. Les parents, responsables devant Faro de ce désastre, sont tenus de retrouver et de reprendre les éléments spirituels de leur enfant, la femme l'âme, l'homme le double, au cours de rites longs et parfois douloureux.

Dès les relevailles, ils sont conduits tous deux, rasés et nus, devant les membres de la famille assemblés dans la cour. Témoins du décès pour Faro, leurs cheveux, mêlés à ceux de l'enfant, sont enfoncés dans le mur de leur maison. Puis une tomate qui représente le fœtus est introduite dans la cuisse largement incisée de la femme; l'homme s'accroupit et boit le jus qui coule du fruit et qui symbolise le double. Chacun d'eux, mains derrière le dos, s'incline devant les anciens de la famille pour s'excuser de la faute commise en disant : « Voici [mon sexe] humilié derrière moi (1). »

Chacun répond en frappant leur sexe d'un coup d'auriculaire : « Il est bien humilié (2). »

On les conduit devant leur porte où sont réunis les vieillards des deux sexes du village; ils répètent leurs excuses auxquelles il est donné la même réponse, accompagnée du même geste d'acquiescement.

Le chef du Komo et trois vieillards de sa promotion n'ayant jamais rompu d'interdit les conduisent au bord du fleuve où ils procèdent à une nouvelle circoncision de l'homme et à une nouvelle excision de la femme, le sang donné à Faro devant tomber dans l'eau. Cette opération est dite « purification du prépuce » *(yiriyıri ligę)* et la souffrance éprouvée a une valeur expiatoire.

Le sixième jour après l'opération, les sociétaires, réunis sur la place du village (3), dansent au rythme du Komo, férocement frappé, et chantent :

« Enfants circoncis, il n'est pas bon de rompre l'interdit de l'anus. Je vous le dis, Soma et sociétaires, ne comptez pas leurs fautes. Faro *(ter)* (4). »

Les parents sont conduits sur la place et tournent bouche ouverte autour du cercle des danseurs, cherchant à reprendre l'âme et le double de leur enfant qui, attiré par le rythme et visible pour eux seuls, est présent pendant la cérémonie. Ils tournent et dansent jusqu'à tomber en une sorte de transe dite « évanouissement du Komo » au cours de laquelle âme et double s'introduisent en eux; si l'entrée a lieu par la bouche, ils cessent de crier; si c'est par le nez, on les voit étouffer; par les yeux, leurs larmes coulent.

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(1) *a ngari ko le ye ngo* (*ngari* est un mot de la langue archaïque qui exprime la soumission).

(2) *a ngari ko kãru*. L'auriculaire est le symbole de la personne entière; donner avec lui un coup c'est acquiescer de tout son être.

(3) Cette cérémonie, dite *daworo*, est comparable à celle qu'on célèbre le sixième jour après la circoncision.

(4) *(i ye ye) boloko dew tne tyẽ mañi boda la; nye fo aw ye somaw moko ka na jigi u la; faro* (ter). C'est-à-dire, « pardonnez-leur ». Le mot anus remplace ici par convenance le mot sexe qu'on ne prononce pas.

Le rythme alors s'affaiblit progressivement. Il n'est bientôt plus qu'un murmure. Pour ne pas interrompre l'action, pour que double et âme pénètrent doucement dans les corps étendus, le murmure décroît encore pour s'éteindre peu à peu. Seules les baguettes des tambourinaires, battant l'air en silence, exécutent le rythme dit « tambour de l'âme » *(ni dunu foli)*. Bouche fermée pour ne pas effrayer l'invisible, les assistants psalmodient doucement un chant, *ni bonye*, qui calme l'âme et l'incite à pénétrer dans les deux patients. Ceux-ci, accompagnés des musiciens, sont reconduits chez eux. Pour que les principes spirituels ne les quittent plus, on les bat de verges tandis qu'on proclame à haute voix ce qui vient d'être accompli, ainsi que la honte et les souffrances volontairement subies. Ils sont ensuite éventés pour le « repos de l'âme de l'enfant ».

Le lendemain, le chef du Komo et sa promotion se rendent au cimetière pour extraire les ossements du mort-né. Ils les placent sur le sol, les examinent au grand air et dansent autour d'eux au rythme du « tambour des os » *(kolo dunu)* en chantant :

« Os blancs, vous, morts! je suis venu vous voir (1). » Puis la tombe est refermée sur eux.

L'homme et la femme sont alors convoqués au champ des morts *(šu foro)* pour prêter serment. Leurs bouches étant pleines d'eau de pluie ou d'eau du Niger, un assistant se penche et, pour « chauffer le liquide avec la force des paroles » récite, sous leur menton, la prière suivante :

« Tue-moi si je le fais deux fois; bonne ou mauvaise, la chance vient de plusieurs endroits. Faro *(ter)* (2). »

L'eau avalée après ces paroles constitue une promesse solennelle à Faro de ne plus renouveler la faute.

Portés ensuite, l'homme par deux sociétaires, la femme par trois compagnes jusqu'à leur demeure afin que leurs orteils, sièges provisoires des principes spirituels revenus en eux, ne touchent pas le sol impur, ils restent respectivement trois et quatre jours sur leur natte sans faire un mouvement. Au dix-septième jour, avec mille précautions, ils pourront reprendre une vie plus normale, mais ils ne seront entièrement libérés que lorsqu'une naissance, survenue dans la famille, éliminera de leur corps l'âme et le double de leur enfant mort, en les transmettant dans le nouveau-né.

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(1) *kolo dyew aw šu ne nyɛ na bo ye.*

(2) *ni nya ke šyẽ fla i ka n fa; ka kadi ka kago, gariseke bo fã ka čã; faro* (ter).

Mort d'un incirconcis :

Lorsqu'un incirconcis est gravement malade, le chef du *ndomo* (1) fait sacrifier un coq pour savoir si la guérison est possible. Dans le cas d'une réponse négative, sous la conduite d'un initié, les enfants, qui se relaient nuit et jour, font résonner en brousse les objets rituels. Ainsi est-on sûr de saisir au moment du décès, l'âme de l'agonisant qui est captée par l'onde sonore et conduite dans les objets eux-mêmes. Deux initiés sont postés près de la demeure du malade, et, dès qu'ils apprennent sa mort, vont prévenir en brousse les enfants pour qu'ils cessent leur office. Le chef s'assied face à l'ouest et récite une prière puis il sacrifie des victimes offertes par la parenté.

Avant d'enterrer le cadavre, on le circoncis et le *wanzo* se rend dans le masque du *ndomo*. Dans la nuit qui suit l'enterrement les sociétaires se rendent sur la tombe fraîche et font vrombir les objets rituels contenant l'âme. Ils renouvellent cet acte chaque année au-dessus des tombes enfantines après le battage de la récolte pour « éveiller les morts et leur dire que leurs âmes ne sont point perdues ».

Mort à la guerre :

Quand un combattant revient en bonne santé d'une bataille le sacrificateur ou le chef du village ordonne l'exécution du *ni yere klo* « jeu de la vibration de l'âme », pour fêter son retour. Hommes et femmes se réunissent sur la place du village pour chanter : « L'âme est venue, la lumière de l'âme est venue, le tambour de l'âme sera joué pour elle (2). » Puis ils forment un cercle et tournant alternativement dans un sens puis dans l'autre, jettent sur la tête de l'intéressé un peu d'eau qui « rafraîchit son âme ».

Quand un homme est mort à la guerre, les rites dont il est l'objet font intervenir le *nyama boli* du Komo, autel destiné à la conservation de l'âme de ceux qui meurent de mort violente.

Autrefois la pierre qui avait frappé mortellement un combattant était soigneusement conservée. Le cadavre était lavé sur des cauris et sur les pierres utilisées dans les frondes car son *nyama* en les imprégnant les rendaient plus aptes à tuer. On transportait aussi le cadavre à la sortie du village où chacun lui offrait des cauris en énonçant son nom. Puis on le balançait trois fois en direction de l'agglomération, d'abord pieds en avant, ensuite tête en avant. Tous les habitants étant rentrés dans leur demeure, on faisait sortir le Komo : on frappait sur la pierre qui l'avait tué pour appeler son âme, puis on la frottait sur le *nyama boli* pour l'y faire pénétrer. On dansait avec l'autel et le cadavre était enterré et recouvert de branches fraîches de *ngamyā* (1). On arrosait la tombe pour « rafraîchir le défunt » tandis que le chef du Komo sacrifiait sur le *nyama* et le *nimara boli*.

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(1) Cf. p. 170.
(2) *ni nana, ni yelengu nana, ni dunu na fo o la.*

Mort au loin :

La nécessité d'exécuter les rites, comme leur minutie, sont telles qu'il est toujours déconseillé à un Bambara de s'expatrier. En effet, s'il meurt au loin, son souffle ne peut être recueilli ni les transferts successifs opérés. Aussi le chef de famille dégage-t-il dans ce cas sa responsabilité en prévenant ceux qui partent pour de longues années de l'impossibilité où il sera de remplir son office auprès d'eux.

Cependant un rituel a été institué pour les jeunes gens obligés de s'éloigner du groupe familial du fait du service militaire. Le cas est soumis au chef du Komo et l'intéressé fait égorger deux chèvres sur les autels. Pendant que le sang coule, le chef demande au Komo de veiller sur l'âme et de bien vouloir la reprendre comme il le ferait s'il décédait auprès des siens.

Si la nouvelle se répand du décès d'un absent, la famille interroge le Komo par des procédés divinatoires pour savoir si l'âme est revenue et si, de ce fait, tout est rentré dans l'ordre.

Foudroyés et noyés :

Certains décès, considérés comme anormaux, preuve du courroux de Faro, ne permettent pas la réincarnation des principes spirituels. Il en est ainsi des hommes tués par le Komo pour sorcellerie, des foudroyés pour rupture d'interdit de Faro. Leur âme et leur double sont à jamais perdus pour leurs descendants, leurs corps jetés à la fosse commune.

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(1) *Celtis integrifolia.*

S'il s'agit d'un noyé, ou la noyade est accidentelle, ou elle est due au courroux de Faro qui rejette le cadavre, nez et nombril coupés. Dans les deux cas, le double conservé dans l'eau n'est pas perdu, mais des sacrifices sont nécessaires pour le retour de l'âme et du double dans un enfant de la famille.

Si le corps n'est pas remonté à la surface, le père du noyé, n'a le droit de le pleurer que lorsque tous les rites ont été célébrés. Il demande au chef du Komo d'intervenir auprès de Faro pour obtenir de lui l'autorisation de chercher le cadavre dans l'eau. Il offre sept tomates que le chef, devant sept vieillards de sa promotion, lance à l'eau en échange du cadavre. Des Bozo alertés plongent pour rapporter le corps auquel le chef coupe nez et nombril qu'il jette à l'eau en offrande. Puis on place le cadavre à plat ventre et on appuie vigoureusement sur son corps pour en extraire l'eau, car l'enterrer plein d'eau reviendrait à « enterrer la pluie » et à vouer le pays à la sécheresse.

Après l'enterrement, on exécute sur le sanctuaire. à la bouillie de mil faite avec les graines du champ de Faro, un dessin qui représente le mort et ses mutilations. Les sept vieillards assistants ferment les yeux en signe de respect, afin de ne pas « enregistrer un dessin fait pour Faro ». En effet, le but cherché est d'obtenir la pitié du génie et de lui demander d'englober le défunt dans le compte qu'il tient de ses ressortissants. C'est aussi devant ce dessin que chaque semaine la parenté viendra déposer une offrande et pleurer.

II. — Rites des ordures.

Les débris, les détritus, les ordures que l'on recueille dans les maisons, les cours, les places publiques, les carrefours, contiennent des forces que leur ont communiquées les hommes.

Les rites dont ils sont l'objet et qui varient selon leur provenance, ont pour but d'offrir ces forces à Faro qui les rend aux hommes purifiées et régénérées dans l'eau de pluie dont il abreuve les champs, dans celle des mares et des puits. Elles sont donc redistribuées et utilisées à nouveau pour le bien de la communauté.

Les ordures des carrefours, dites *dangu kalaw*, tiges ou pailles du *dangu*, contiennent la force, *nyama*, de tous les êtres qui les ont foulées.

Les ordures des demeures contiennent le *wanzo* des incirconcis, le *nyama* que les habitants supportent pour avoir tué animaux ou insectes et pour avoir reçu des injures, et leur *tere* bon ou mauvais. Ces forces, dites *wanzo dla* (litt. : « arranger le *wanzo*) (1), ou *nyama dla*, viennent constamment en aide à tous les membres de la famille, elles améliorent le *wanzo* des incirconcis, facilitent l'accouchement des femmes, redonnent de la vigueur aux vieillards. Un petit autel, *konye*, conservé dans la pièce réservée au chef de famille, leur est consacré.

Les balayures ramassées après les sorties du Komo, sur la place où ont lieu les danses, contiennent la force des sociétaires.

a) Les ordures familiales, recueillies individuellement, sont mises en tas séparés, dans des excavations circulaires peu profondes aménagées aux abords de l'agglomération (cf. pl. VI, *b*). Chaque semaine, chez les gens fortunés, une chèvre est égorgée au-dessus du tas sur lequel on a placé momentanément l'autel. Le sacrifice établit un double échange : le sang alimente l'autel en même temps qu'il provoque dans ce dernier le transfert des forces contenues dans les ordures.

Tous les deux mois et sept jours, sur décision du chef de village, ces ordures individuelles sont extraites des trous et chacun brûle son propre tas dont il aspire la fumée. Les cendres sont déposées au bord du fleuve, mouillées pour que le vent ne les emporte pas, et abandonnées pendant sept jours, période pendant laquelle Faro « vient les visiter et les bénir ».

Le huitième jour, après réunion chez le chef, les villageois se rendent au carrefour pour y brûler les tas d'ordures collectifs, recueillir les cendres et les transporter au rythme *wanzo foli*, joué sur les tambours, au bord du fleuve où se trouvent celles des tas individuels.

Après un sacrifice offert sur les autels *konye* des assistants, le griot du Komo est frappé par le *nyama boli* jusqu'à ce qu'il entre en transes et se précipite à l'eau sans mot dire. Tous doivent jeter leurs cendres à sa suite avant qu'il ne soit ressorti. A ce moment les crachats de l'homme qui s'ébroue sont recueillis comme un don de Faro en échange des ordures jetées. Chacun s'en enduit les mains et les pieds et, après le retour qui s'opère en silence, en imprègne le seuil de sa demeure en témoignage du sacrifice, afin que Faro « reconnaisse les siens et protège leur vie ».

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(1) Ce nom leur est donné surtout dans les maisons où vivent beaucoup d'enfants.

Le jeudi qui suit, les gens se réunissent pour danser sur les rythmes propres à chaque sexe et à chaque génération. Au soir, chacun va mettre le pied sur l'emplacement du tas d'ordures puis tous se rendent au carrefour pour offrir au génie Soba du mil, du coton, des noix de kola. La cérémonie se termine par une réunion chez le chef qui donne des conseils, encourage chacun à respecter les coutumes, à honorer les ancêtres et les génies protecteurs.

b) Après les sorties du Komo, les détritus sont balayés et rassemblés devant le sanctuaire. Chacun des participants saute trois fois par-dessus, pour leur communiquer son *nyama*. Le soir, le masque tourne en sifflant autour du tas, auquel on met le feu, tandis que le chef jette trois fois de la poussière aux quatre points cardinaux. Le masque se tient alors dans le vent de façon à recevoir la fumée; derrière lui se placent d'abord le chef puis les sociétaires, en file, accroupis, et bouche ouverte pour mieux aspirer. Lorsque le vent change de direction tous se déplacent pour continuer cette fumigation, *wušuli*, qui constitue une purification en même temps qu'un apport de forces. Au moment où le feu est presque éteint, les plus courageux le piétinent pour mieux assimiler le *nyama* qu'il dégage. La cendre, recueillie par le chef, est partagée, l'unité de mesure étant la calebasse *mure* : une part importante est mise dans le *nyama boli*, une autre est donnée en offrande à Faro, une troisième est distribuée aux sociétaires.

A quelques jours de là, le groupe se rend au bord du fleuve au son des tambours, rythmant le *murumuruw foli* (litt. :rythme des débris), jette à l'eau les cendres réservées à Faro et, toujours dansant, s'en retourne au village.

La part remise aux sociétaires sert à préparer de la potasse qui, mélangée au gâteau de mil, nourriture quotidienne des Bambara, fera participer les membres de la famille aux pouvoirs retenus dans le *nyamanlo*.

Cette consommation clôt le cycle du transfert des forces, lesquelles avaient été temporairement communiquées par les individus aux ordures, puis récupérées par Faro et redistribuées finalement au corps social.

III. — Rites de pluie.

Au moment de la première façon donnée aux champs, on dessine sur l'arbre du Kworɛ à la bouillie de mil, un losange inscrit dans un rectangle qui représente « le grand feu sorti des angles cardinaux » au moment de leur constitution en disant : « Les quatre coudes (le losange) sont le feu des angles, voici l'anniversaire du Kworè ». Car le défrichage ou le premier labourage symbolisent toujours le premier débroussaillement obtenu par le feu.

Dans le courant du mois de mai, les sociétaires du Kworè sacrifient sur leurs autels, avant le premier grondement de tonnerre, pour purifier le premier ciel où se forment les nuages du passage impur de Mousso Koroni. Le chef réunit autour de l'arbre les sociétaires et récite la prière suivante :

« Je suis venu à toi, Kworè, si [le nuage] est noir à l'est, qu'il vienne; noir à l'ouest, qu'il vienne; noir au sud, qu'il vienne; noir au nord, qu'il vienne; noir au firmament, qu'il vienne, et qu'alors il donne une grande eau » (1). Il verse ensuite sur la terre de la bouillie de mil et le sang des volailles apportées par chaque sociétaire. L'initiation de nouveaux membres a lieu au cours de cette cérémonie.

Après la beuverie de bière de mil qui suit les cérémonies, il est d'usage de raconter l'histoire de Mousso Koroni chassée par Pemba et poursuivie par Faro.

Si, malgré cela, la pluie ne tombe pas assez vite, les sociétaires se réunissent au pied de l'arbre en apportant un fer de hache que l'on place dans une eau fraîche. L'eau est ensuite versée au pied de l'arbre : elle symbolise le froid que subissent, dans le deuxième ciel, les génies du Kworè pendant leurs luttes pour obtenir le passage de la pluie.

Dans certains villages, les sacrifices au Kworè et au Faro sont offerts en même temps. A Massala et Soroba, les sociétaires se rendent au bord du Niger, emportant avec eux le *kworẹ boli*. Un peu de l'eau qu'il contient est versée au fleuve et remplacée tandis qu'une prière est adressée à Faro. Une victime est ensuite égorgée, du cuivre jeté au fleuve. On secoue l'autel au-dessus de l'eau pour imiter le bruit du tonnerre et de la pluie; de retour au village, les sociétaires allument au pied de l'arbre du Kworè un feu dans les braises duquel ils placent des pierres de tonnerre.

« Chauffer les pierres agite leur âme »; quand elles sont chaudes, on les plonge dans l'eau froide pour « chauffer et tourmenter l'âme de l'eau ». La fumée dégagée par le feu, la chaleur contractée par les pierres et l'eau contraignent la pluie à tomber.

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(1) *ne nani na kwore nani na; a ma fi korona a ka na; a ma fi klebi a ka na; a ma fi woro dugu a ka ma; a ma fi keñeka a ka na; a ma fi sãfe a ka na; otumana a ka ke dyi ba ye.*

Des victimes sont sacrifiées puis les sociétaires retournent au village autour duquel ils tournent six fois en partant de l'ouest. Puis ils vont reporter au sanctuaire le *nimara boli* et les vieillards qui représentent le génie dansent sur un seul pied au son des tambours en imitant Faro qui n'a qu'un membre inférieur. L'autel, introduit dans le sanctuaire par le chef qui y pénètre à reculons, reçoit en offrande un peu d'eau du Niger dans laquelle on a fait tremper depuis la veille, pour les « rafraîchir », des pierres de tonnerre. La même libation est faite sur le *kwore boli.* De retour chez le chef du Komo, on fait sur les murs de sa demeure des libations de bouillie de mil, puis on égorge au nom de Faro, du *nimara boli* et du Kworè, un bélier blanc dont la chair sera jetée au fleuve, acte qui termine les cérémonies.

c) A la fin de l'hivernage est célébré l' « anniversaire du Kworè » qui a pour but premier de commémorer l'action des génies pendant la période précédente pour l'obtention de la pluie.

Au jour dit, les sociétaires vêtus d'un cache-sexe, tenant dans la main gauche un fouet d'herbe rouie et tordue, de l'autre une torche de paille enflammée, se rendent auprès de l'arbre autour duquel ils tournent en chantant pour « recueillir le Kworè ». Le claquement des coups de fouet qu'ils se donnent mutuellement représente les coups de tonnerre, la batterie de tambour qui accompagne leurs chants imite son grondement. Les brûlures qu'ils s'infligent rappellent celles que supportent les génies dans les combats célestes. Ils se dirigent ensuite vers la place publique où sont massés les villageois et où sont censés conduire le génie qu'ils ont appelé en mimant son action. Quand ils sont réunis, apparaissent les *kworeduga* vêtus de leur costume traditionnel, à califourchon sur leur cheval de bois, qui représentent les génies montés sur leurs chevaux ailés pour voler au combat.

Ils s'avancent en dansant et chantent des strophes reprises en chœur par les sociétaires. Ceux-ci ayant formé un cercle, le chef se place au centre, se fouettant, se brûlant, et faisant mine d'avaler le feu de sa torche. Quand il est las, il s'arrête et, tour à tour, les sociétaires l'imitent. De la poudre de piment écrasé est soufflée dans les yeux des danseurs pour rappeler la chaleur brûlante des cieux embrasés.

Les *kworeduga*, qui ont alors déposé leurs chevaux de bois, mettent pied à terre pour se battre, saisissent des branchages verts; ils éteignent, en les fouettant, le feu qui prend aux vêtements des danseurs et des assistants. Ce geste rappelle l'action du vent qui, dans l'espace, éteignait le feu ardent s'attaquant aux combattants. Les participants, entre les danses, boivent la bière apportée sur place pour la circonstance afin de nourrir les invisibles qu'ils représentent.

Tous les assistants consomment également un plat composé de pois, haricots, arachides, riz, manioc, mil, fonio, cuits avec des feuilles de baobab et d'huile de karité. Ce mélange est assimilé au brassage des nuages par les génies qui, au plus fort de la lutte, sont censés les avaler. Quand la cérémonie tire à sa fin, le chef ayant renvoyé les femmes et les enfants va quérir le *kwore boli* qu'il balance dix-huit fois sur la place.

Les sociétaires en rang, retournent auprès de l'arbre pour y « ramener » le Kworé qui a assisté, invisible, à toutes les cérémonies. Ils tournent autour de l'arbre en chantant au rythme des tambours. Puis ils éteignent leurs torches et les jettent à son pied avec les fouets avant de s'en retourner chez eux. Leurs plaies et leurs brûlures sont soignées par leurs femmes avec l'eau de l'autel du Kworè, cette médication portant le nom de *kwore kane* (remède du Kworè).

Les mêmes danses et sorties masquées ont lieu trois jours de suite. Au quatrième jour le chef et les vieillards, dévêtus, se rendent au sanctuaire en rampant pour le sacrifice annuel offert à l'intérieur. Le chef ramasse les pierres de tonnerre recueillies pendant l'année écoulée et les place dans le sac des autels destinés à la vente.

Pour « éclaircir » les miroirs, il verse sur eux de la bouillie de mil; sur le serpent et sur le *ñõ boli*, il égorge des volailles et dépose du suc de noix de kola; il remplit ensuite le *ñõ boli* avec du mil prélevé dans celui du Komo. Avec les grains restants, il confectionne une bouillie dont il fait une libation sur le sac. Il passe ensuite sur le serpent un brin de paille enflammé en disant : « Toi, serpent, tu n'as pas peur du feu; tu ne dois pas avoir peur du feu de la pluie » (1).

Cet acte a pour effet de préparer par ces brûlures le serpent à attirer la foudre dont il ne doit pas redouter les effets.

IV. — RITES DE RENOUVELLEMENT DE L'ANNÉE.

Ces rites comportent des actions individuelles, familiales et collectives, ces dernières faisant intervenir la plupart des institutions (2). Tous, du nouveau-né au vieillard, doivent procéder à une sorte de purification qui consiste essentiellement dans le rejet des souffles et forces de l'année écoulée et dans la prise de forces et de souffles neufs : c'est, selon l'expression bambara, « un rafraîchissement du corps et de l'âme ». Mais le renouvellement n'est pas limité aux éléments qui composent la personne, il s'étend au cosmos et aux points cardinaux.

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(1) *e ngorongo e ma sira lasuma ñe e kana sira sandyi lasuma ñe.*

(2) Nous donnons à titre d'exemple des rites collectifs ceux qui sont exécutés sur les autels de pierre du village *(fara ba)* (cf. p. 91).

1° Le rite individuel du chef de famille est exécuté avec l'instrument *ngoni* qui est utilisé pour tracer sur le mur de son *česo* les dessins représentant l'univers (1). Il débute par une offrande de suc de tomate réservée à Faro, qui préside à l'usage familial de l'objet et qui se trouve dès lors présent. Les fruits sont pressés; sur le suc, un hérisson est égorgé pour qu'aucun autre génie ne le touche. Ensuite l'homme sacrifie un margouillat qui rappelle sa condition avant sa circoncision : ce sacrifice figure une nouvelle circoncision, offerte à Faro, et qui augmente ses forces.

Le sacrifiant met sa langue sur le suc des fruits sans en avaler une goutte, pour donner à Faro « un compte rendu complet de tous ses actes, de toutes ses pensées de l'année écoulée (travail, naissances, décès, maladies, disputes, bonheur et malheur) comme un subordonné faisant un rapport à son supérieur ». Il met l'auriculaire droit dans le liquide et le pose au mur sur le dessin représentant Faro. Puis il aspire par les narines un peu de suc de tomates et le souffle sur le *ngoni*, balayant ainsi le reste de vie de l'année écoulée qu'il tenait encore dans son corps : un air nouveau, venu de Faro, circule alors dans ses poumons. Il remplit sa bouche ensuite de liquide retenu par la peau de bouc de l'instrument et le recrache aussitôt pour montrer au génie que tout lui est remis. Puis il se rend au fleuve ou au bord de la mare de Faro, où il boit un peu d'eau à titre de purification pour l'année à venir.

2° Au jour choisi pour la cérémonie familiale, le *ngoni* est solennellement extrait de la pièce où il est habituellement mis à l'abri des regards et présenté à la famille assemblée devant la porte.

Sur le cadre on exécute un rythme dit *kalafoli* qui a pour effet de renvoyer au fleuve ou au puits l'âme *(ni)* des assistants. Puis on joue sur le filet, qui représente Faro, un autre rythme qui appelle l'âme renouvelée rendue par le génie. Tous ouvrent la bouche et aspirent la nouvelle effluve bénéfique venant sur la famille. Quand le rythme cesse, chacun ferme la bouche et rentre sans parler chez soi. A la porte d'entrée, avec une cordelette, *sebe dyuru*, les enfants sont frappés de petits coups sur le dos

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(1) Cf. p. 129, fig. 10.

« pour recevoir et supporter tout ce qu'apportera l'année nouvelle ».

L'instrument est alors remis en place dans la demeure tandis que les assistants ferment les yeux pour ne point l'apercevoir. Le possesseur entre en transes, fait qui exprime que Faro lui-même a porté l'instrument au lieu où il séjournera pendant l'année. L'homme qui sort à reculons de la pièce où il l'a déposé est transporté dans son *česo*; il y reçoit des soins destinés à lui rendre son état normal et qui comportent une purification effectuée sur son autel individuel, *čuafebyěni* (1).

3° Les cérémonies collectives de renouvellement de la personne sont exécutées en premier lieu sur la pierre *fara ba* du village.

Les « signes de la création » *(bolo li doniya)*, gravés au fer rougi sur une calebasse dans le but de demander aux ancêtres leur appui sont présentés aux assistants. Puis la pierre est enlevée et les objets qu'elle recouvre vérifiés, l'assemblée s'assurant qu'aucun n'a été déplacé en cours d'année. Puis on procède à la réfection des dessins rituels : l'opérateur dessine d'abord des torches qui représentent le feu utilisé autrefois par les ancêtres pour se défendre des attaques et des dangers venus de l'extérieur, tandis qu'ils édifiaient le village. La prière suivante est récitée : « Toi, torche de feu, je t'ai préparée dans la montagne (d'où sont sortis nos ancêtres), toi qui gardes les âmes du villages, protège nous de ceux qui veulent nous nuire, feu *(ter)* (2). »

Puis il dessine, comme sur le bonnet des ancêtres, un point noir qui figure et la matrice des femmes et Faro; celui-ci aidera les hommes en leur donnant de l'eau car « nul ne peut sans son appui, même le Kworè, avoir la pluie nécessaire aux cultures ».

Trois petits personnages représentent les trois chefs responsables du Kworè soumis aux rites du feu et qui supportent avec courage et pour le bien commun les souffrances et les brûlures. Les autres sociétaires sont figurés par quatre silhouettes, pour marquer leur situation inférieure par un chiffre féminin. L'ensemble des personnages et des torches converge sur le point noir pour montrer que, « les hommes par les pieds, les torches par le feu, rejettent leur *nyama* vers lui ».

Lorsque les dessins sont terminés, tous les assistants à tour de rôle posent sur lui leur auriculaire puis leur langue pour abandonner le *nyama* de l'année et recevoir des forces nouvelles. Les femmes procèdent aux mêmes gestes que les hommes en les répétant quatre fois. Chacun reçoit ensuite respectivement trois ou quatre coups de fouet sur le dos pour bien intégrer en lui ces éléments nouveaux (1).

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(1) Cf. p. 132.

(2) *e mõ ñõ tasuma, ñe e šu kulu la kę dla, dugu nimara ba ke, i kã kla kelenyõ na, tasuma* (ter).

Les enfants, conduits par leur mère, sont l'objet de soins analogues. Les garçons appuient leurs orteils sur la pierre; les fillettes lui présentent leur sexe, pour témoigner de leur féminité. Tous sont ensuite assis à tour de rôle sur la pierre pour que le *nyama* ancien les quitte par l'anus. Puis, soulevés par leurs parents au-dessus d'elle, « on les secoue en tous sens pour bien tasser en eux le nouveau *nyama* reçu ». Les mères passent alors leurs mains sur le visage des enfants, puis sur le leur, geste qui les lie pour l'année qui vient à leur progéniture.

L'assemblée se rend auprès de la pierre du Kworè où elle renouvelle les points cardinaux en brandissant des torches allumées à l'ouest, au nord, au sud puis à l'est. Chacun s'excuse des fautes commises en cours d'année. Les hommes à tour de rôle posent le pied droit sur la pierre et se tournent successivement vers les points cardinaux en prenant une forte bouffée d'air, bouche ouverte et langue tirée, comme pour « les aspirer ». Les femmes font de même en posant le majeur sur la pierre; elles reçoivent en même temps quatre coups de fouet sur le dos pour « supporter (2) le changement des points cardinaux avec la douleur ».

Tête baissée et mains au dos les malades présentent à la pierre les parties du corps, sièges de leur souffrance, en disant : « Voici le mal qui est dans ma chair (3) », car la pierre est à la fois responsable et dépositrice de la maladie. Les borgnes et les aveugles montrent leurs yeux fermés. Les infirmes posent sur elle leurs membres atteints. Puis les vieillards initiés, entièrement dévêtus, font le tour de la pierre en récitant une formule en langue ancienne (4). Ensuite, les jeunes gens courent tout autour d'elle en faisant tourner vivement le bras droit, poing fermé; par ce geste ils demandent à la pierre de les aider à trouver femme. Les jeunes filles les suivent en marchant sur leurs traces, geste de docilité qui exprime aussi leur désir de se marier.

La cérémonie se termine par une beuverie de bière qui dure trois jours. Chacun est heureux et gai d'avoir « renouvelé » son âme; les jeunes gens se marieront, des enfants seront conçus.

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(1) Avec l'auriculaire on agit sur le *nyama* du corps, avec la langue sur celui des paroles.

(2) Le terme familier « encaisser » serait une meilleure traduction.

(3) *nka soko la ba na fle ninye.*

(4) *dede kumbeyde mala kay kapo kumbey de malado.* Ce texte signifierait : « pierre, maîtresse de tous, ne crains rien, tes enfants sont là ».

CHAPITRE VIII

LA DIVINATION

S'il est encore difficile de dégager les principes généraux de la divination chez les Bambara, il est possible cependant d'apercevoir à travers ses aspects divers des éléments identiques. Dès qu'on aborde les mécanismes et les symboles employés par les devins, il apparaît que le premier et fondamental élément de la divination est la « parole », créatrice de vie, moteur du cosmos et pouvoir de Faro.

Prévoir l'avenir, c'est dévoiler au profane la « parole » qui se situe à la fois dans l'espace et dans le temps, qui est volonté et expression matérielle de cette volonté. Le destin est compris comme la réalisation des desseins de la création, auxquels tout doit se conformer. Etre soumis à cette volonté est la sagesse suprême. S'enquérir de la raison d'un état ou d'un événement passé, ou déterminer l'attitude à prendre devant des états ou des événements futurs, c'est là ce que peut et doit faire le sage.

Les puissances surnaturelles, détentrices de la parole, ont seules le pouvoir de la révéler. Elles l'ont fait, dans les temps mythiques, pour tous les hommes, en leur enseignant des techniques propres à réparer les désordres successifs causés dans la création. Elles le font pour chacun, s'il en a besoin et s'il sait lire au travers des procédés divers de connaissance qu'elles ont mis à sa portée. C'est donc à elles que s'adresse le devin pour que la parole soit communiquée.

Quels vont être les signes privilégiés sur lesquels se penchent les devins? Il apparaît que ce soient les nombres, et notamment sur les vingt-deux premiers. En effet, tous les aspects de la vie physique et morale sont inscrits en eux. Leur ensemble reflète la suite des événements dans l'espace et dans le temps. A chacun d'eux est assigné un symbolisme complexe qui se superpose aux autres.

Car chaque nombre a un ou plusieurs sens qui lui sont propres.

Il est pair ou impair, notion liée à celle de la gémelléité à laquelle il est fait si souvent allusion au cours de cet ouvrage. La somme de plusieurs nombres exprime aussi une idée particulière qui s'ajoute à celles que recouvre chaque élément; une valeur est attribuée enfin à la succession des nombres, qui est la première expression du temps (1).

Les 22 premiers chiffres, qui représentent l'ensemble des « paroles » et expriment la totalité de la connaissance mystique des Bambara, doivent être envisagés sous des angles différents selon qu'on les considère comme les 22 éléments fondamentaux de la création, les 22 éléments de la domination de cette création par Pemba, la série des 22 modes et temps de la réorganisation de cette création par Faro. Dans cette série apparaît nettement le classement des éléments composant l'être humain, *ni*, *dya*, *tere*, selon le caractère même et le principe d'action de Faro : la gémelléité.

De plus, les étapes du temps, lequel n'existait pas avant sa domination, sont exprimés par la succession des chiffres, dont chacun est lié à une partie du mythe.

La divination courante utilise les 22 premiers éléments sur le plan où ils expriment « l'ordre et la parole de Faro ».

1. *kele*. Faro; la parole. Chiffre du maître de la parole. La chefferie; le droit d'aînesse, le droit du premier; la tête. La conscience : aspect psychique, aspect moral.
2. *fla*. Dualité initiale, gémelléité. Les deux jumelles de Faro; les deux premiers jumeaux humains. Amour et amitié; union des êtres.
   Nécessité pour l'homme cependant de ne pas suivre deux voies, mais d'être droit dans son action.
3. *saba*. Symbole sexuel de l'homme, de son âme. Naissance de jumeaux mixtes, fils des pêcheuses Bozo.
4. *nani*. Symbole sexuel de la femme, du double *(dya)* de l'homme. Naissance d'une fille Bozo.
5. *duru*. Nombre néfaste composé de 4 (femme) et 1 (incomplétude). Fausse couche, échec, mort. *duru* se dit d'un mort-né. Cependant il a un aspect faste et connote alors l'univers (2).
6. *woro*. Symbole des jumeaux mâles (3 et 3). Nombre faste (3).
7. *wolõfla*. Symbole des jumeaux mixtes (3 et 4). Homme complet possédant *ni* et *dya* de sexes opposés. Monde complet; crois-

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(1) Cette expression est symbolisée par la progression des quatre premiers chiffres dans les préliminaires de la création. Cf. p. 8.

(2) Cf. p. 9.

(3) *dẽlẽ ni fla ye gariseke ye*, « deux petits jumeaux mâles, c'est de la chance ».

sance de la nature. Image idéale de la création; parole parfaite.

8. *sekin*. Symbole des jumelles (4 et 4), des huit ancêtres et de leur parole. Excès de paroles; danger de cet excès dû aux femmes.
9. *konoto*. Symbole du caractère ou *tere*. Incomplétude.
10. *tã*. Composé de 6 (jumeaux mâles) et de 4 (naissance féminine), il est faste et exprime la fécondité souhaitée par Faro ainsi que Faro lui-même.
11. *tã ani kele*. Conflit et discussion. A la onzième époque après la domination de Faro, Téliko a voulu résister.
12. *tã ani fla*. Tentative de Téliko pour dominer le monde, de connivence avec les hommes.
13. *tã ani saba*. Composé de 3 (Téliko, génie mâle) et de 10 (Faro) exprime le refus opposé par Faro à la domination de Téliko.
14. *tã ani nani*. Voyage de Téliko.
15. *tã ani duru*. Défaite de Téliko.
16. *tã ani woro*.
17. *tã ani wolõfla*.
18. *tã ani sekin*.
19. *tã ani konoto*.

} Travaux d'organisation de l'univers par Faro.

20. *muka*. Réunion de Téliko et de Faro pour décider de l'ordre et de la marche de l'univers.
21. *duka ani kele*. Domination complète de Faro sur la création.
22. *muka ani fla*. Total des temps écoulés depuis la création jusqu'à l'organisation du monde. Conclusion et « terme des paroles ».

Le symbolisme des nombres, dans la vie courante, joue chaque fois qu'ils interviennent. Dès l'origine ils servirent à qualifier les outils et les ustensiles. Suivant que ceux-ci appartiennent aux hommes ou aux femmes, ils sont respectivement marqués de trois ou quatre signes facilement reconnaissables, qui indiquent leur appartenance. Ainsi dans le tissage la navette comportait trois bobines, le fuseau quatre traits.

Chaque rite est répété trois fois s'il s'agit d'un homme, quatre s'il s'agit d'une femme. S'il est exécuté plusieurs jours de suite ou à des intervalles réguliers, le même rythme est observé : ainsi on nourrit tous les trois jours le *dya* d'un mort dans l'eau, tous les quatre jours celui d'une morte. L'organisation de la chefferie, de la prêtrise est fondée sur les mêmes lois. Un chef religieux est généralement accompagné de deux aides ou de deux vieillards appartenant à sa promotion : leur ensemble est une réplique des trois premiers des huit ancêtres primordiaux.

Sept, expression de la création parfaite apparaît notamment dans la répétition du nom de Faro lorsque lui est adressée une demande ayant trait à la fécondité qui peut être formulée par un couple mâle-femelle dont le chiffre est sept. Dire le nom de Faro l'alerte, mais le répéter sept fois lui fait entendre ce qui peut le mieux le satisfaire et lui présente ce qu'il désire.

Huit est le nombre des ancêtres qui reçurent la parole et des familles qui la diffusèrent. Six et huit, images de la gémellétié mâle et femelle sont à la base du système de chiffraison et des calculs bambara (1). Dix, qui répète l'unité, est fait de la somme des quatre premiers nombres marquant les étapes de la création : il représente Faro (2). Vingt-deux, qui détermine les catégories de la pensée créatrice *go*, représente l'univers; on le retrouve sur tous les sanctuaires ou les objets rituels.

Inversement un nombre peut être attribué à un individu à propos de son comportement : on dit d'un méchant homme qu'il est un « onze »; qui veut prendre le pouvoir alors qu'il n'en a pas le droit est « douze »; on dit « treize » à un homme à qui l'on refuse ce qu'il demande, pour lui faire honte.

Un autre élément fondamental de la technique divinatoire est constitué par l'état ou les qualités du devin. Il n'est besoin, pour le commun, d'aucune qualité spéciale — autre que celle exigée normalement d'un sacrifiant — pour interroger les puissances surnaturelles. Ainsi tout Bambara, avant de faire son offrande, jette au sol une noix de kola pour interpréter sa position. Mais le devin est dans un état particulier : ses éléments spirituels, constamment en rapports avec la divinité, sont l'objet de précautions qui l'introduisent dans le cycle du surnaturel et lui permettent d'entendre son message. Ils sont donc mis à l'abri de l'impureté qu'ils pourraient acquérir au contact des hommes ordinaires. De ce fait, le devin est astreint à respecter un certain nombre d'interdits. Son double, garant de son état, est conservé par les génies qui le protègent d'une part et qui d'autre part exercent un contrôle sur son possesseur. Il est pour eux un moyen d'action. « Si le devin ayant reçu la parole se trompe, les génies peuvent le faire mourir. » Sa bouche est toute chargée d'une force qui lui vient de ces puissances et dont il ne doit pas mésuser.

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(1) Cf. p. 27 n. 1.

(2) « La fonction religieuse de la décade joue chez les Bambara un rôle extrêmement important, car le symbolisme de tous les nombres y est compris, puisqu'elle les contient tous. Pouvant être constituée par la somme des quatre premiers nombres qui, par eux-mêmes, expriment l'unité et la dualité de l'être, la masculinité et la féminité, la quadrinité gémellaire, l'essence même de ce qui est, en un mot la décade exprime tout ce qui est achevé en soi-même, tout ce qui est complet, parfait et juste. Le nom lui-même de la décade, *tã*, indique ces notions; d'ailleurs les Bambara disent souvent, à la place de *tã*, dix, *dafara*, « c'est complet ». Aussi la décade est-elle le symbole essentiel de la divinité. » S. de Ganay, *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, p. 198.

D'autre part, l'état dans lequel peut le mieux s'exprimer le spirituel est la transe. Dans l'excitation de la danse, au son du rythme effréné des tambours, le Komo devine et prédit. Il est à ce moment tout entier sous l'emprise des êtres spirituels qui s'expriment à travers lui.

Ces différents points exposés, est-il possible dans l'état actuel de l'enquête de classer les modes divinatoires que nous avons observés chez les Bambara? Ce classement, que nous tenterons, est provisoire et les observations devront être reprises et approfondies.

Une description sommaire de quelques modes de divination courants est donnée ci-après et deux des techniques les plus étudiées, la divination par le jeu de guitare et celle du jet des cauris, seront exposées en détail. (1).

MODES DE DIVINATION LIÉS A LA NOTION DE PERSONNE.

La connaissance de l'être est un souci constant des Bambara. Le corps, support des principes spirituels, est marqué dès la naissance par des signes que tout individu renseigné est capable d'interpréter. Ils déterminent non seulement le caractère *(lere)* d'un être mais aussi, dans une certaine mesure, le destin qui l'attend.

C'est ainsi que l'on examine soigneusement les traits du visage, l'implantation des cheveux, la forme des yeux, du nez, de la tête, les lignes du front d'un nouveau-né, et qu'on prétend dire dans une large mesure ce qu'il sera ou fera dans la vie. Plus tard, la démarche, le balancement des bras, la façon de poser le pied, de porter la tête ou les seins, compléteront, pour les gens avertis, le portrait esquissé à la naissance.

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(1) C'est à dessein que nous n'abordons pas, dans ce chapitre, l'étude de la géomancie, nous réservant de la traiter ultérieurement. Ce mode de divination a fait l'objet d'une description détaillée dans C. MONTEIL. *La Divination chez les Noirs de l'Afrique occidentale française.*

La géomancie est très couramment employée par les Bambara et pratiquée par tous les chefs de sociétés religieuses et par tous les chasseurs qui en connaissent plusieurs sortes, notamment le *nama li* « signe de l'hyène », le *timba li* « signe de l'oryctérope, le *lyẽ dyɛ* « vérité blanche » ou *trabu*. Les représentations attachées à ce mode de divination sont très complexes chez les Bambara qui déclarent posséder une géomancie autochtone distincte de la géomancie dite « musulmane » qu'ils connaissent également Ce dernier point semble confirmé par les observations recueillies par B. MAUPOIL au Dahomey et exposées dans ses conclusions (cf. *La Géomancie à l'ancienne côte des Esclaves*, p. 678). La géomancie se pratique sous des formes comparables dans tout le continent africain; plus que toute autre activité son étude pose le problème des influences dont il a été question page XVI et notamment celle de l'Islam.

Mesure du *dya* :

Des indications sur l'individu sont données aussi par le double ou jumeau *(dya)* (1) qui se matérialise dans l'ombre du corps, laquelle est mesurée en utilisant comme unité l'auriculaire. On procède à cette opération au soleil, à midi, quand l'ombre est la plus courte, en partant du vertex. Les mesures relevées sont groupées alternativement par trois, nombre mâle, et par quatre, nombre femelle, selon le tableau suivant :

1. Les trois premiers auriculaires représentent les nerfs, *pasa* (masc.).
2. Du quatrième au septième, les parties molles, la chair, *bu* (fém.).
3. Du huitième au dixième, les os, *kolo* (masc.).
4. Du onzième au quatorzième, les liquides du corps, *dyi* (fém.).
5. Du quinzième au dix-septième, le sexe mâle, *wulu* (masc.).
6. Du dix-huitième au vingt-et-unième, le sexe femelle, *byę* (fém.).
7. Du vingt-deuxième au vingt-quatrième, les articulations, *kolonye* (masc.).
8. Du vingt-cinquième au vingt-huitième, les seins, *ši* (fém.).
9. Du vingt-neuvième au trente-et-unième, la colonne vertébrale, *koloko* (masc.).
10. Du trente-deuxième au trente-cinquième, la matrice *dēzo* (fém.).
11. Du trente-sixième au trente-huitième, l'intelligence, *hakili* (masc.).
12. Du trente-neuvième au quarante-deuxième, la mesquinerie, la bêtise, *misenya* (fém.).
13. Du quarante-troisième au quarante-cinquième, le jugement, le calme, *basigi* (masc.).
14. Du quarante-sixième au quarante-neuvième, l'incohérence, l'agitation, *hakiliwuli* (fém.).

Les groupes sont matérialisés par des bâtonnets dont la taille va croissant pour les mesures mâles, décroissant pour les mesures femelles.

Exemple : si la mesure de l'individu s'arrête au groupe 7, il sera représenté par quatre bâtonnets (mâles) de taille croissante et par trois autres (femelles) de taille décroissante et d'aspects différents.

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(1) Cf. p. 57.

Quel que soit leur nombre, ces bâtonnets sont ensuite placés de la façon suivante : ceux des nerfs dans un récipient sec, ceux de la chair dans de la farine de mil, ceux des os sur une pierre dure, ceux des liquides dans l'eau, ceux du sexe mâle sur des testicules de bouc, ceux du sexe femelle sur la vulve d'une jument, ceux des seins dans de l'huile de karité, ceux de la matrice dans de l'eau du Niger ou dans celle d'un puits, ceux de l'intelligence dans du lait frais, ceux du calme et du jugement dans de l'eau. Sur le bâtonnet des articulations, on dit le nom du lion; sur celui de la colonne vertébrale, on dit *dyose*, (litt. : point d'appui); sur celui de la mesquinerie, le nom du bousier; sur celui du désordre et de l'agitation, *muso dãga* (litt. : femme maudite).

Une prière est dite sur les bâtonnets qui sont ensuite groupés et comptés avec leur représentation chiffrée et leur symbolise suivant des calculs compliqués dans le détail desquels nous n'entrerons pas (1). Cette prière et ce compte sont dits : *faro kanubaya*, « amour de Faro ». Ils témoignent de sa sollicitude pour ses ressortissants et auraient été révélés aux hommes par l'hirondelle messagère, dès la naissance des premières jumelles.

Chacune des mesures correspond à un comportement physique ou moral de l'homme déterminé par Faro, avant la naissance. Il est donc possible, en mesurant le *dya* d'une femme enceinte, de connaître le sexe de l'enfant qu'elle porte et le caractère qui lui sera attribué par le génie.

Sans nous étendre davantage sur ce mode de divination qui implique une série d'interprétations, il convient de remarquer qu'il s'inscrit dans le système de pensée du Bambara et s'inspire de la conception qu'il se fait de l'homme dans l'univers.

DIVINATION PAR LA NOIX DE KOLA.

Les noix de kola que les Bambara consomment et utilisent dans leurs rites sacrificiels ou divinatoires sont classées en sept catégories d'après leur forme et leur couleur.

1° *dangoro*, noix rouge.
2° *yeleworo*, noix blanche.
3° *sosokuworo* (litt. : tête de moustique), noix rouge et pointue à l'une de ses extrémités.

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(1) Il faut cependant remarquer que le total des signes est (7 × 3) + (7 × 4) soit 49.

4° *flaniworo* (litt. : kola jumeau), noix blanche avec les mêmes signes sur ces deux éléments.
5° *worodanda* (litt. : kola sans bouche), noix bicolore sans fente apparente permettant le partage.
6° *bassiworo*, noix rouge foncé et très amère.
7° *nyeworo*, noix claire et de couleur indéterminée.

La noix de kola, « créée pour les jumelles de Faro », est elle-même symbole de la gémelléité car les deux parties accolées se séparent facilement. Dans la vie quotidienne, sauf si le devin l'a ordonné à titre de purification, on ne mange pas seul une noix de kola; elle est partagée et l'une des moitiés donnée à un tiers. Ce geste de politesse et d'amitié est aussi l'expression de la gémelléité de l'homme, comparable à celle du fruit lui-même.

Donner des noix de kola est toujours un signe de déférence, de respect ou d'affection. Manger une noix blanche « chasse les chagrins et les soucis ». La noix qui n'a point de fente est rarement consommée : semblant être faite d'une seule pièce, elle a un caractère néfaste. Dans les cérémonies religieuses, on utilise de préférence les noix *bassiworo* pour les *boli*, les noix rouges ordinaires, *dangoro*, pour les autres autels. La noix peintue *sosokuworo*, est offerte par celui qui désire un enfant : l'officiant mâche la moitié de la noix et la crache sur l'autel avant de consommer l'autre moitié.

La divination par la noix de kola est pratiquée dans des cas nombreux intéressant l'individu et la communauté. De plus, elle précède la presque totalité des sacrifices exécutés sur les divers autels. Avant l'égorgement d'une victime, la question est posée de l'agrément de la puissance bénéficiaire. Ce mode s'adresse aux génies que l'on invoque dans la prière récitée en même temps que l'on partage la noix et avant de la jeter. La couleur et la forme de la noix sont choisies d'après la question formulée et d'après la qualité de l'être dont on demande l'intervention. Si l'on s'adresse à Faro, pour un mariage par exemple, la noix doit être blanche; si l'on interroge les génies de la terre ou du firmament, elle doit être rouge; pour une naissance ou un décès et pour toute demande aux génies de l'ouest, on se sert de la noix bénéfique *yeleworo*; au contraire, pour se défendre d'un ennemi ou exprimer une malédiction, on s'adresse aux génies de l'est avec la noix sans bouche, *worodanda*. Une bonne noix de divination doit, de plus, présenter à l'intersection des deux morceaux qui la composent, une sorte de dessin, nommé *yeleda* (litt. : bouche pour rire). Il convient également qu'elle soit pointue à l'une de ses extrémités pour « piquer le sujet » bénéficiant du rite. L'officiant qui a partagé la noix en deux dans le sens de la longueur et suivant sa ligne médiane naturelle, tient les deux morceaux dans la main et récite la prière suivante :

« Ma mère Faro, mon père Faro, génies de la terre, génies du firmament, génies de l'ouest, génies de l'est, toi qui est meilleur qu'eux tous, Faro, voici les kola, que la vérité soit dévoilée, que les deux (morceaux) s'ouvrent en haut. Je dis toi, Faro *(ter)* (1). »

Il peut aussi dire plus simplement :

« Voici deux noix de kola, si tu refuses que l'une soit fermée, l'autre ouverte; si tu acceptes, que les deux soient ouvertes ou qu'elles soient fermées (2). »

Ce texte détermine l'interprétation de la réponse qui sera donnée. Le devin ouvre ensuite la main, lâche les morceaux et regarde la façon dont ils se présentent au sol : s'ils sont disposés de la même façon sur la partie interne ou externe, la réponse est affirmative, dans le cas contraire, elle est négative.

Divination par les cauris.

Cette pratique est dite : *kolo nin fli*, litt. : « Jeter l'âme des cauris ». Ces coquillages ne se distinguent en rien de ceux du commerce ou de la parure. Un seul interdit concerne leur mode d'acquisition : ils ne doivent être ni achetés, ni obtenus gratuitement. Pour se les procurer, le devin doit procéder à un prêt sur gage dit *kuma boli* (litt. : sortir de la parole) : il donne à leur place un produit ou un objet qui sera repris ultérieurement quand il rendra les cauris.

Les 22 cauris utilisés résument « ce qui est nécessaire à l'homme,» et sont divisés en trois groupes :

Les 7 premiers, *teliko dẽ*, fils de Téliko, représentent le génie de l'air, Téliko et ses enfants ainsi que « la respiration » des hommes. On dit d'eux en effet : « Les génies Téliko sont la respiration des humains (3). »

Les 7 suivants, *faro dẽ*, fils de Faro, symbolisent les êtres

(1) *ne ba faro ne fa faro du kuma jinew, sãnfe jinew, klebi jinew, korona jinew dyenin kausa na be ye, e faro, woro fle tye ka banke fla ka dyã sãfe; ngo e faro* (ter).

(2) *woro fla, fle ninye, ni ma sõ, kele ka dyã, kele ka bri, ni sona a fla ka dyã, fla ka bri.*

(3) *teliko ye adamadẽ ninakli kuma bo ye.*

humains. L'un d'eux, choisi parce qu'il est facile à distinguer, représente Faro : le devin dit 7 fois le nom du génie sur celui-ci avant de le mêler aux autres, ce qui aura pour effet de donner à l'ensemble la force du génie.

Les 8 derniers, *kumabana dɛ*, fils de Koumabana, sont les paroles des huit grands ancêtres. L'un d'eux, différent des autres, est dit « mère des paroles ». Il est à la fois Koumabana, premier des 8 ancêtres et le verbe inégalable qu'il a « craché », car Koumabana a connu « toutes les paroles existant actuellement sur terre. »

Ainsi 22, expressions de l'univers, résument, dans le système des 22 cauris, la personne humaine : corps et âme Faro, souffle et respiration, Téliko, parole révélée, Koumabana. Le partage en trois séries, dont deux de 7 et une de 8, est lui aussi significatif; le chiffre 7 est la marque de l'homme complet et il revient deux fois pour rappeler la gémelléité. 8 est le nombre du verbe qui l'anime.

Cette divination ne s'effectue que de jour, car il est irrespectueux d'alerter les génies dans la nuit tombante. De plus, l'orientation des coquillages sur le sol est importante et plus facile à observer à la lumière du soleil. L'officiant prend les cauris dans sa main, 3 ou 4 fois de suite suivant le sexe du consultant et les laisse tomber au sol ou sur un plateau. Il les lit ensuite, suivant leur orientation, la place qu'ils occupent par rapport à la mère ou « conclusion des paroles » et selon leur position ouverte ou fermée. Les devins très habiles, qui ont à résoudre des problèmes complexes, opèrent avec 22 cauris. Mais les huit *kumabana dɛ* suffisent parfois.

Dans ce cas, avant de les jeter, le devin prononce la prière suivante :

« Vous, huit vieux ancêtres, nul n'a pu vous dépasser en paroles, votre vision a été si grande qu'elle a dépassé le nombre [des autres]; les cauris sont jetés, vous montrerez la vérité; je dis vous, les huit vieillards, je dis vous, bons génies (1). »

Dans le court espace de temps où se place le jet des cauris, est inscrit le destin. A l'instant où le devin les lâche, « le génie de l'air qui les détient ayant examiné le cas, juge et propose. A l'instant où ils touchent le sol, Faro, maître en dernier ressort, dispose (2) ». Le dessin des cauris traduit sa parole; ils

(1) *aw moko korobaw sekin, moko ma se teme aw ka kuma na, aw ka somaya bonya ma, fo ka dama teme koloniw fle la, aw ka nliñe jira, ngo aw maw sekin, ngo jinew aw maw.*

(2) On dit couramment : « Teliko propose et Faro dispose », *teliko ba singa, faro ba sinze.*

sont l'expression de sa volonté visible pour l'homme, à travers la parole révélée par Koumabana. Tout ce délicat mécanisme spirituel, invisible pour le commun, inconnu du non initié, est sensible pour le voyant et le devin qui ont conscience de manipuler, avec les cauris, le divin. C'est pourquoi ils se penchent sur la forme chaque fois renouvelée donnée au matériel épars avec un sentiment puissant de la présence des forces auxquelles ils font appel.

LA SOMAYA.

D'après la tradition, la *somaya* ou science du *soma* aurait été révélée au Mandé, c'est-à-dire qu'elle était connue des Bambara avant leur arrivée sur le territoire qu'ils occupent actuellement. Elle est réservée à quelques privilégiés. Les dons de clairvoyance qu'elle suppose peuvent être décelés chez un nouveau-né au moment de l'examen des signes déterminant son caractère *(lere)* par les vieillards au cours de la cérémonie de l'imposition du nom. Dans la petite enfance des manifestations fréquentes de souffrance sont l'indice de la présence des génies et, dès les premiers pas, la démarche elle-même confirme sa vocation. Vers dix ans le jeune garçon « guidé par les génies Téliko » est attiré par eux en brousse près d'une mare où il vit en leur compagnie invisible durant quelques jours.

Après cette retraite, l'enfant revient dans son village, muni d'une petite pierre (*jinaworo*, litt. : noix de kola des génies) signe de l'alliance qu'il a contractée avec eux.

Mais il feint d'ignorer l'endroit d'où il vient. Il ne fait non plus jamais de déclarations au sujet du don de double vue qui lui a été octroyé mais le manifeste en faisant, sans être sollicité, à ceux qu'il rencontre, quelques révélations sur leur avenir. Au bout d'un certain temps, les gens reconnaissent à ces signes sa qualité de Soma, qui implique une modification des principes spirituels : le *dya* reste sous la protection des génies Téliko qui contrôlent ainsi le devin; ils agissent directement sur sa personne et tiennent en main sa santé et sa vie, pour le punir en cas d'infraction ou de désordres nuisibles à l'exercice de son art (1).

Les dons qu'il a reçus et la situation de son *dya* contraignent le Soma à ne point se marier et à observer une certaine chasteté. « La femme du Soma vit chez les génies », dit l'informateur qui ajoute que tous les quarante-neuf jours (7 × 7) son *dya* lui est renvoyé pendant la nuit en vue d'une union sexuelle.

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(1) Un Soma deviendrait un *mahalakillen* ou un animal malfaisant si son *dya* était altéré du fait d'un contact avec la terre impure.

A partir du moment où le Soma exerce régulièrement son art, il se rend en brousse de temps à autre pour consulter les génies et leur faire des offrandes. De plus, ceux-ci le visitent dans sa demeure où il les attire en brûlant une poudre qui dégage une odeur dont ils sont friands.

Le Soma a, comme le griot, une bouche pleine de *nyama* : le sien propre auquel s'ajoute celui des génies qui l'aident et le contrôlent. Sa parole est si efficace qu'il annonce rarement un décès, car il contribuerait à propager la mort.

Le Soma doit être d'une rigoureuse propreté, porter des vêtements simples et même se vêtir en indigent. Dans les cérémonies, il suspend à son cou, par une cordelette, la pierre *fineworo* qu'il doit toujours porter dans une poche de sa tunique. Il fait généralement partie de la société du Komo et peut devenir chef. Dans ce cas, il est le devin attitré du village.

Le Soma conserve chez lui sa pierre d'alliance et sa harpe avec ses accessoires. Lorsqu'il meurt, on laisse quelque temps son corps seul dans sa demeure : les génies sont censés venir reprendre ces objets que nul ne doit toucher et dont nul n'hérite. L'enterrement du corps et les cérémonies des funérailles ne sont exécutées qu'après ce délai. Son âme n'est jamais conservée dans les autels du Komo et va rejoindre le *dya* dans le domaine de Téliko; les principes spirituels du Soma ne se réincarnent pas et le don qu'il a reçu n'est pas héréditaire.

La harpe du Soma (fig. 17) (1) est faite d'un coffret rectangulaire *(bara)* traversé dans le sens de la longueur par un long morceau de bois (*ngoni kala*, litt. : tige du *ngoni)* entouré de petites lanières de cuir formant bagues (*jiri wolo*, litt. : peau de bois). Elles supportent les cordes en peau de chèvre (*ngoni dyuru* litt. : cordes du *ngoni*). A l'extrémité de la tige, *ngoni ku* est fixé un résonateur de fer *(boso)* orné d'anneaux de même métal *(nyege nyegele)* qui sont « les boucles d'oreilles des génies ». Ces anneaux sont dits « multicolores » car le son qu'ils émettent est brouillé et confus.

Lorsque le résonateur est placé sur la hampe, « il augmente les sons et les filtre dans l'air, ce qui plaît aux génies et les appelle auprès du devin qu'ils assistent pendant son travail ». Si l'instru-

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(1) Cf. G. Dieterlen. *Morphologie et symbolique de deux instruments de musique bambara.*

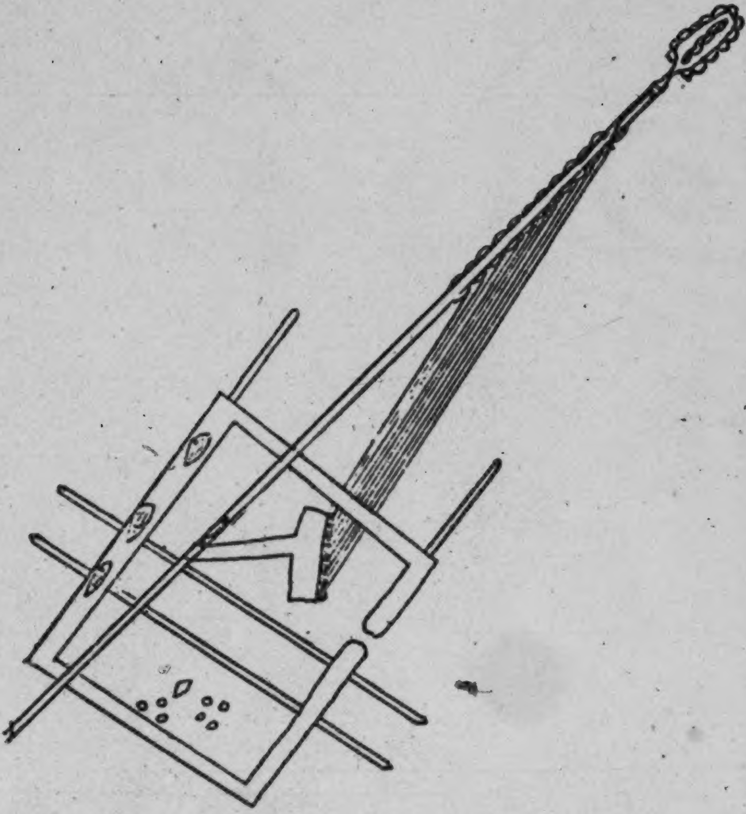

FIG. 17. — La harpe divinatoire du Soma.

L'instrument représente la face de l'ancêtre Koumabana, qui a reçu « la parole », et sa tombe; sur un autre plan, il symbolise aussi la face du devin et sa tombe. (Dessin d'un informateur).

ment est utilisé sans le résonateur, c'est-à-dire dans des buts profanes, les génies ne sont pas alertés par le jeu musical.

La peau, tendue sur le coffre au moyen de lanières en cuir de chèvre, est trempée dans de l'eau sur laquelle on a dit quarante-neuf fois le nom du génie Téliko. Les cordes de support sont faites de lambeaux tordus de suaires recueillis dans un cimetière. Les cordes musicales en peau de chèvre, au nombre de huit

symbole de la parole (1), portent les noms suivants en commençant par la plus courte : *kumabana*, *fa dẽ* (fils du père), *fa* (père), *fa koroke* (frère aîné du père), *fa dogone* (frère cadet du père), *ba* (mère), *modẽ* (petit fils), *fa so* (maison du père).

Accrochées sur un chevalet *jiri ni* (litt. : dents du *ngoni*) qui figure la bouche et les dents de Koumabana, elles sont les paroles de l'ancêtre. Sur un autre plan, elles sont aussi la demeure et la famille du génie Téliko.

De longueur sensiblement égale dans les différentes harpes, elles donnent huit notes différentes; les intervalles sont dits, *dyuru fara dye* (2).

Sur la face droite du coffre sont parfois dessinés les trois premiers ancêtres des Bambara : Koumabana et les deux vieillards qui moururent après lui. Ils sont reconnaissables aux poils dont leurs visages sont couverts, comme l'étaient ceux des ancêtres qui ignoraient le rasoir (3).

Le coffre est traversé par deux baguettes de bois, *če kala* (litt. : tige homme), rappelant les deux tiges de mil accompagnant chaque mort dans sa tombe, symboles elles-mêmes des deux vieillards.

Quand le Soma tombe malade, il retire les deux baguettes de son instrument et les place près de lui sur sa natte, préfigurant la position qu'il aura dans la tombe. Ainsi couché « il est dans la tombe et marche avec les deux ancêtres »; si son état s'améliore c'est que les baguettes l'ont dégagé de son mal. Il ne les remet dans la harpe qu'après guérison.

Le coffre contient sept cailloux, nombre de l'homme (3 + 4) et un morceau de cuivre en forme d'étoile représentant la parole. Le Soma peut regarder à l'intérieur de la harpe par une ouverture placée sur le côté, dit *šu wo* (trou de sorcellerie) ou *bara dinge* (trou de la boîte) qui lui « permet de respirer », pour voir « l'ancêtre Koumabana, maître de la parole et connaître les plus profonds secrets ». Au bas de l'instrument, une autre ouverture, considérée comme l'anus, permet l'évacuation de tout ce qui est néfaste.

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(1) La harpe du Soma se distingue de celle du griot qui a le plus souvent sept cordes.

(2) Sur certains instruments observés, la première et la huitième corde donnaient la même note à un octave d'intervalle. Il est à prévoir qu'une étude approfondie de la musique bambara fera apparaître un système de correspondances entre l'ordonnance musicale et celle du monde. Déjà M. Griaule, dans ses recherches sur la harpe dogon, a découvert une relation entre les notes, les nombres et l'univers.

(3) Ce détail a été observé sur d'anciens instruments de la région de Koutiala.

Une tache rouge placée sur l'une des faces, *sindera ble* (litt. : ceinture rouge) exprime que l'instrument est l'objet de sacrifices sanglants comme la pierre *fineworo*.

La caisse est l'image, le masque de Koumabana; les deux faces, dites respectivement *kini nye* « œil droit » et *numa nye* « œil gauche » représentent ses yeux, le peigne sa bouche, le trou son nez et sa respiration, les cordes ses paroles. Elle est aussi la reproduction de la tombe et des trois premiers des huit ancêtres qui connurent la mort. Enfin elle est la face du Soma et sa tombe.

L'instrument ne doit jamais être touché par une femme; de plus, nul ne doit en jouer si ses intentions ne sont pas pures, « s'il n'a pas le cœur net ».

Quand le Soma joue pour répondre aux demandes de ceux qui le consultent, chaque son est une prière. De sa main libre il tient une baguette dont il frappe la caisse : chaque coup est une parole. Au fur et à mesure qu'il joue, des images se forment devant ses yeux et en lui-même. Il touche séparément les cordes suivant leur rang et en fonction de l'importance de la question posée. C'est ainsi qu'il pince *modè* pour les sujets de peu d'importance : chasse, voyage, etc.; *fadè* pour ce qui a trait à la santé, la procréation, la vie individuelle physique et morale; *fa* pour l'avenir, le destin, la vie privée et publique d'un homme, son autorité, son commandement; *fa koroke* pour les semailles et les cultures, le régime des eaux, des pluies et des mares, pour la fortune et la richesse; *fa dogone* pour la germination des céréales, la formation des épis, les petites pluies; *ba* pour tout ce qui concerne les femmes; *faso* pour tout ce qui concerne la maison familiale et pour les absents.

Mais le Soma exécute aussi des airs dont les rythmes s'accompagnent de paroles. Il les joue successivement pendant la séance ou les choisit selon le caractère de celui qui le consulte et les questions posées.

Les sept chants suivants ont été recueillis et interprétés par le Soma de Bandiagara :

« Une chose bonne vient avec une chose mauvaise (1). » Ce chant a pour effet de révéler au Soma la pensée du consultant.

« L'homme connaît peu de choses (2). » Malgré son instruction, un homme sait peu de choses; un enfant sait parfois ce qu'un adulte ignore.

(1) *ko ñumã de bina ni ko dyugu ye.*
(2) *adama dẽ le ko do.*

« Même repu l'homme ne peut dépasser la mère qui l'a mis au monde (1). » Ce rythme est exécuté pour ceux qui montrent orgueil ou vanité, ou pour ceux dont la femme a quitté le domicile conjugal et s'est réfugiée chez son père.

« Même s'il est beau, un homme doit avoir des yeux (sous-entendu être renseigné) (2). » Le Soma joue cet air pour tout ce qui concerne un mariage, une naissance, une initiation.

« Le monde est grand (3). » Quand l'angoisse domine le consultant, ce chant calme son inquiétude, lui rend la paix et la sérénité.

« Quel que soit l'homme, il ne peut dépasser Dieu (4). » Le Soma joue cet air si le consultant est animé de mauvaises intentions ou s'il est ignorant et têtu. Il fait de même pour déceler les dons d'un enfant et encourager la parenté à développer son instruction.

« La joie embellit le monde (5) » est exécuté pour les choses futiles et agréables : fêtes et danses, parures.

⁂

La divination, dans une large mesure, est l'application de la statique et de la dynamique des nombres. Ceux-ci traduisent des relations, d'une part; d'autre part ils sont des symboles connotant des phénomènes, êtres, manières d'être, situations et généralement toutes les parties constitutives de l'univers. Sans être doués de pouvoirs en eux-mêmes, ils symbolisent des éléments puissants et ordonnés. On pourrait dire aussi que les nombres sont des réalités supérieures, au même titre que les signes primordiaux qui ont précédé la perceptibilité des choses et grâce auxquels les choses, prises en conscience par l'homme, ont existé (6).

Dans l'activité divinatoire ils indiquent à l'individu ou au consultant collectif sa propre position par rapport au reste de l'univers. En quelque sorte, ils permettent de dégager l'équation particulière de chacun à un moment déterminé.

(1) *mako fara čokočoko a lise ka lemme a wolo ba ka.*
(2) *moko če kani čokočoko fo ñe ka soro i ku.*
(3) *diñe ka bŏ.*
(4) *moko a kera čokočoko a le leme ngala ka.*
(5) *klo ye diñe dya.*
(6) Cf. p. 4.

[p.226 is blank]

CONCLUSION

C'est depuis peu de temps que la discipline du silence observée par les Noirs s'est relâchée dans quelques milieux d'initiés. Un comportement humain, appuyé sur une méthode rigoureuse, a permis à un groupe de chercheurs d'établir une documentation qui souffre moins des tares habituelles : elle n'est plus superficielle, ni fragmentaire, elle n'est plus grevée d'une hostilité systématique qui, par sa constance et sa généralité a donné durant longtemps le change.

Jusqu'ici, les éléments recueillis chez les Bambaras concernaient surtout les aspects; les institutions qui pourraient se nommer « mystères » n'étaient connues que par des allusions échappées à des hommes rétifs. A telle enseigne que, dans le fonctionnement du Komo, par exemple, la personnalité du Moniteur universel n'était même pas apparue.

Mais une servitude plus grave que l'ésotérisme ou la méfiance pesait sur l'étude de ces populations : le scepticisme et l'indifférence de l'érudition qui, pour ainsi dire systématiquement, a méconnu ou nié l'existence d'une pensée profonde chez les Noirs.

La contribution apportée ici démontre que certaines difficultés d'approche peuvent être dénouées d'une part et que d'autre part il n'est plus convenable de se faire du monde tropical africain une image où rien ne serait harmonieux, ni grand, ni même digne de spéculation.

Cette contribution donne aussi la preuve de la complexité des faits. Quelques-uns seulement ont été retenus d'une documentation considérable, œuvre d'une équipe. Et cette documentation même paraît infime comparée à celle qu'on entrevoit.

C'est qu'en effet le Bambara — et comme lui bien d'autres Noirs — fait de l'homme un univers et de l'univers un système où tout a place et rôle, depuis les astres jusqu'aux objets d'usage, depuis l'esprit jusqu'au détritus.

Il faudra donc des années de recherches patientes pour déceler l'immense réseau des représentations et des rites, pour ne rien négliger des matériels et des gestes en apparence les plus indif-

[p.227]

férents. Nous savons en effet d'expérience que derrière chaque ustensile surgit un pan de l'organisation des hommes, que quelques traits sans art, gravés à l'ongle sur une paroi, expriment le déroulement de la création.

Et la négligence du plus infime de ces détails peut fermer des régions entières de la connaissance. Ceci oblige donc à des travaux étendus à toutes les activités d'un peuple et non pas seulement à ce qui, dans notre esprit, est proprement religieux.

Mais à supposer connu un ensemble imposant de faits bambara, il n'y aurait là matière qu'à spéculation particulière. Et ce serait certes déjà un précieux apport aux sciences de l'homme que de décrire l'édifice et les services de la religion de ce peuple. Il resterait cependant à entreprendre le même effort chez ses voisins, et, de proche en proche, à l'étendre à tout le monde noir.

Car bien qu'il soit indispensable d'agencer les faits bambara par rapport à eux-mêmes et d'en chercher l'explication interne, il n'en reste pas moins que la méthode comparative est nécessaire pour la compréhension d'une religion. Elle s'impose ici avec une force particulière. Le système des Bambara, en effet, apparaît, d'une part, comme étant la synthèse originale de plusieurs autres trouvés sur place lors de leur fixation définitive sur le sol ou transportés lors des grands mouvements migratoires. D'autre part, il est en perpétuelle symbiose avec ceux des autres peuples soudanais, comme le prouvent indubitablement des observations récentes.

D'ores et déjà on peut admettre qu'au moins neuf populations d'inégale importance (1) vivent sur le même substrat métaphysique, sinon religieux. Le thème est commun de la création par un verbe d'abord immobile dont la vibration détermine peu à peu l'essence puis l'existence des choses; il en est de même du mouvement en spirale conique de l'univers, lequel est en extension constante. Même conception de la personne, ainsi que de la gémelléité primordiale, expression de l'unité parfaite. Les uns et les autres admettent l'intervention d'une hypostase de la divinité qui, parfois, prend l'aspect d'un rédempteur maître d'un monde dont la forme est partout identique. Tous croient à la nécessité de l'harmonie universelle comme à celle de l'harmonie interne des êtres, les deux étant liées. L'un des corollaires de cette notion est le subtil mécanisme du désordre que nous nommons impureté, faute d'un meilleur terme, et qu'accompagne celui de pratiques cathartiques très développées.

---

(1) Dans l'ordre d'approfondissement des recherches, citons : Dogon et Bambara, Forgerons, Kouroumba (ou Foulsé), Bozo, Manding, Samogo, Mossi, Koulé, soit plus de deux millions d'hommes. Il convient de noter également que plusieurs dizaines de peuples ou peuplades du Soudan (au sens large du mot) se considèrent comme issus de la même souche. Des rites importants, des matériels, des agents et des lieux appuient cette croyance (cf. p. XIII).

Enfin tous offrent cette extraordinaire floraison — pour ne pas dire abus — des symboles parlés, écrits, figurés ou gesticulés dont beaucoup se retrouvent partout, chacun étant le support de diverses couches d'images.

On peut donc parler dès maintenant d'une civilisation soudanaise dont le substrat serait décelable chez de nombreux peuples comme il l'a été notamment chez les Dogon et les Bambara. Sous la diversité des langues et des institutions, se cache la même ossature de représentations. Tout se passe comme si, sur un canevas identique, chaque peuple avait agencé des figures propres à son génie.

Il convient, de ce fait, de considérer le présent essai comme un premier pas vers la connaissance de cette civilisation. Dans la suite, ce vaste ensemble devra être situé par rapport au système méditerranéen et asiatique. Et sans doute cette recherche de position fera-t-elle surgir des problèmes d'emprunts, de migrations, d'assimilation. Sans doute aussi l'anatomie des vieilles civilisations qui se sont réfugiées dans l'impasse occidentale de l'Afrique révélera-t-elle un reflet précieux des organisations primitives qui se sont trouvées en contact à haute époque en ces régions et qui ont pu opérer une conjonction entre des manières de penser autochtones et d'autres que nous connaissons mieux.

On a tenté de reconstituer des états archaïques de l'humanité à l'aide de tessons ou de lambeaux littéraires. Dans des cas plus favorables, des textes et des matériels abondants ont permis des synthèses dont les vicissitudes sont une des raisons d'être de l'érudition. En aucune occasion on n'a été rebuté par les terrains sans échos, par l'absence des auteurs de ces textes et de ces matériels. Il s'est institué ainsi une riche activité sur les situations et pensées anciennes, une sorte de science dans le silence où seul vivait l'esprit de recherche.

Aujourd'hui, il semble possible, à la lueur d'observations nouvelles, de retrouver chez des peuples vivants, nombreux et divers, des formes et des fonds archaïques communs à des hommes d'autre couleur vivant en d'autres temps. Non pas certes qu'il faille tenir pour nuls les conseils de prudence donnés par les hommes des anciennes écoles (1); mais ces conseils reposent sur des postulats concernant l'absence de relation historique et les différences d'époque. Il faudrait prouver, pour les admettre, précisément cette absence et aussi l'incapacité de la tradition orale à maintenir vivants durant de longues périodes, des usages et des manières de voir.

---

(1) Entre autres J. Toutain. C. R. des *Garnered Shelves* de J. Frazer.

En tout cas, et quelle que soit l'opinion adoptée, il serait de bonne méthode d'admettre comme hypothèse immédiate le rôle probable ou possible joué par le monde soudanais en tant que conservateur ou transformateur d'attitudes, de rites et de concepts que l'érudition retrouve partout ailleurs et dont l'explication reste à formuler. Car dans peu d'années rien ne pourra plus être infirmé ou confirmé concernant ces systèmes en voie de désagrégation rapide; du fait du machinisme et d'un inconscient désir de destruction de soi, les civilisations noires ne seront bientôt plus que l'ombre d'elles-mêmes et la précarité de leur matériel ne permettra jamais de les reconstituer dans leur complexité ni dans leur grandeur.

Et quel que soit le sort de cette hypothèse, il n'en resterait pas moins, qu'originale ou non, la pensée religieuse des Noirs prendrait sa place dans la philosophie de l'histoire et dans l'histoire de l'humanité.

ADDENDA

Les enquêtes menées sur le terrain pendant l'impression du présent ouvrage ont fait apparaître les faits suivants que nous croyons utile de présenter succinctement au lecteur :

Chapitre Premier

Du fait de la perte de leurs graines claviculaires, Pemba et Mousso Koroni ont un aspect actuel animal, qu'ils doivent à leur impureté comme à celle de la terre inculte qu'ils symbolisent. Pemba est représenté par le *warableni (Vulpes pallida)* et Mousso Koroni par le *kongowuluni* (renard indéterminé) : c'est ce dernier animal qu'imite le *vukuri* durant le rite enfantin nocturne décrit page 39.

Ces nouvelles informations confirment les observations consignées page 26, note 1, concernant l'identité des représentations des Bambara et des Dogon. De plus, le *warableni*, comme le *yurugu (Vulpes pallida)* des Dogon, intervient dans la divination, en particulier dans la géomancie. Les enquêtes permettent d'étendre ces représentations aux populations soudanaises issues du Mandé (cf. p. XIII), en particulier aux Bozo et aux Peul.

Chapitre III

Tous les peuples soudanais issus du Mandé sont caractérisés par un contenu claviculaire de graines (ou de poissons) variant de l'un à l'autre. D'autre part, à l'intérieur d'une population, le contenu théorique de huit graines, pour être sensiblement comparable quant à la nomenclature, diffère par son agencement selon les familles. De plus, les places de la première et de la dernière graines sont interverties pour les hommes et les femmes. Exemple : les forgerons ont pour première graine le *keninge* et pour dernière le *tikaninkuru*, tandis que les potières ont pour première graine le *tikaninkuru* dont elles cultivent des champs rituels (cf. p. 127) et pour dernière le *keninge*.

D'autre part, Mousso Koroni ayant dérobé à Pemba les graines qu'il était chargé de donner sur terre, Faro, par l'intermédiaire des animaux, qui les consommèrent sur son ordre, les lui reprit; ainsi purifiées, il les distribua aux hommes. L'animal qui a rapporté à Faro la graine essentielle de chaque famille, devient l'interdit, *tne*, de la famille intéressée et la rupture de cet interdit a pour effet fondamental de vider le contenu claviculaire du coupable. On observe des représentations analogues chez les Dogon.

Le totémisme, l'alliance dite « parenté à plaisanterie » (*senankuya* des Bambara), le système des castes et les règles exogamiques des Soudanais sont fondés sur les éléments et le classement du contenu claviculaire.

CHAPITRE VI

Toutes les grandes institutions *(dyo)* des adultes sont en rapport avec la société enfantine du Ndomo qui reflète l'organisation universelle (espace, éléments). Chacun des six *dyo* auxquels sont initiés les hommes après leur circoncision correspond à un objet rituel du Ndomo : le Komo (ouest et air) est représenté par le *dyara* (rhombe); le Kworè (est et eau) par le *tori;* le Nama (sud et feu), par le *wulu;* le Kono (nord et terre) par l'instrument de même nom. Au Nya (nadir) et au Nago (zénith) correspond le *fineble;* ces deux dernières institutions sont liées au mouvement tourbillonnaire du grain créateur, figuré par la graine de fonio. C'est dire que l'appartenance à la société enfantine du Ndomo constitue une pré-initiation aux sociétés d'adultes, cosmogoniques au premier chef. Les sanctuaires et les champs rituels des quatre premiers *dyo* sont théoriquement situés au point cardinal correspondant. Le fonctionnement des sociétés selon un système rigoureux confirme les observations et hypothèses émises page XVIII.

D'autre part, le masque du Ndomo représente à la fois Mousso Koroni et les huit graines dérobées à Pemba. Toutes les sorties de masques des Bambara (celles des *dyo*, comme celles du *čiwara* et des *sogo*) rappellent le vol, la culture des graines nourricières par Mousso Koroni et leur reprise par les animaux au profit de Faro. On observe des représentations analogues chez les Dogon concernant le *yurugu*, *yasigi* et Nommo.

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TABLE DES FIGURES IN-TEXTE

Pages

FIGURE 1. — Signes bambara 7
— 2. — Les vingt-deux éléments 15
— 3. — L'arrivée des douze eaux futures 31
— 4. — Jeu du *sumangolo* 32
— 5. — Autel de pierre, *fara ba* 91
— 6. — Demeure souterraine des hommes primitifs . . 99
— 7. — Fronde des anciens Bambara 102
— 8. — Vêtements anciens des Bambara. 107
— 9. — Armes et outils des anciens Bambara. 117
— 10. — Plan du *česo* de Tètè. 129
— 11. — Le siège de bois d'un chef. 135
— 12. — Dessin exécuté au sol par le chef du Komo . . 158
— 13. — Autel de pierre du Kworè. 168
— 14. — Bonnet du circoncis 180
— 15. — Le couteau de circoncision 183
— 16. — Tracé exécuté sur un cadavre par le chef du Komo 192
— 17. — La harpe divinatoire du Soma 222

[p. 236 is blank]

[p. 237]

TABLE DES PLANCHES HORS-TEXTE

Pages

Planche I. *a)* L'*Acacia albida* dit *kokuruni* (Banankoroni).. 48
b) Paniers en paille spiralée dits *yugu* (Marché de Ségou).
c) Dessin représentant Faro (Sama).

— II. *a)* Les tomates *ngoyo* (Marché de Ségou) . . . 49
b) La calebasse d'eau de Faro (Marché de Ségou).

— III. *a)* Bandes de coton. 112
b) Offrande d'une bande de coton à l'arbre *dasiri* (Soroba).

— IV. *a)* Trempe des pots après cuisson (Konodimini). 113
b) Enclume commune, *kula*, des forgerons (Konodimini).

— V. *a)* Arbre du Ndomo (Soroba) 160
b) Autel de pierre (Banankoroni).

— VI. *a)* Hutte du Komo (Konodimini). 161
b) Trous aux ordures (Banankoroni).

[p.238]

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Pages

PRÉFACE DE MARCEL GRIAULE VII

AVANT-PROPOS XI

INTRODUCTION XIII

PLAN DE L'OUVRAGE XIX

CHAPITRE PREMIER. — **Les Mythes** 1

Préliminaires de la création. Création de l'univers. Règne de Pemba. La mort. Règne de Faro. Les eaux futures.

CHAPITRE II. — **Les représentations** 34

Pemba. Le *pembele*. Le *balanza*. Mousso Koroni. Faro.

CHAPITRE III. — **La personne** 56

Le *ni* et le *dya*. Le *tere*. Le *wanzo*. Le corps. Effets de la mort. Attributs. Le nom. La devise. L'interdit. Le *senânku*. Cas exceptionnels.

CHAPITRE IV. — **Le sacrifice et l'autel** 89

CHAPITRE V. — **Les techniques** 98

Pêche et chasse. Tissage et vêtements. Armes et outils. Forge. Poterie.

CHAPITRE VI. — **Les cultes** 128

Cultes individuels et familiaux. Cultes du village. Les sociétés religieuses.

CHAPITRE VII. — **Les rites** 176

Rites concernant la personne. Rites des ordures. Rites de pluie. Rites de renouvellement de l'année.

[p.239]

CHAPITRE VIII. — **La divination** 210
Mesure du *dya*. Divination par la noix de kola. Divination par les cauris. La *somaya*.

CONCLUSION 227
ADDENDA 231
BIBLIOGRAPHIE 233
TABLE DES FIGURES IN-TEXTE 237
TABLE DES PLANCHES HORS-TEXTE 238
TABLE DES MATIÈRES 239

[p.240]

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The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta
[Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta]

By Charles Monteil

Paris: Émile Larose
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[Title page]

Table of Contents

000

Page
Introduction 1

Chapter 1.
Origin and History 3
Preliminaries 3
Map 4
1. Origin 6
2. History: History of the Empire of Segou; History of the Empire of Kaarta 23

Chapter 2.
Concepts 132
1. Beliefs 132
2. Morality and Customs 142
3. Mantic, Religion, and Magic 146

Chapter 3.
Communities. 171
1. General Considerations 171
2. The Patriarchal Community or Patriarchy 178
3. Family Community 213
4. Relations between Communities 241

Chapter 4.
The Brotherhoods 254
1. The End of Childhood 254
2. General Considerations Concerning Brotherhoods 273
3. Some Important Brotherhoods 296

Chapter 5.
The Clans 316
1. General Considerations 316

Table of Contents (cont'd)

000

Page

Chapter 5 (cont'd)

2. Clan of the People of Ségou 320
3. Clan of the Massa-si or the People of Kaarta 359

Chapter 6

Islam 364
1. Islamism and Paganism 364
2. Agents of Islam 372
3. Results 378

Chapter 7. [not translated]

8

000

List of End Plates

			Page
Plate 1.	Fig. 1.	Young Bambara from Djenné Region	381
	Fig. 2.	Bambara with the cap known as bamma da (crocodile's tail), Djenné Region	381
Plate 2.	Fig. 3.	Bambara girls in outdoor dress, Djenné Region	382
	Fig. 4.	Bambara women and girls about to set down burdens carried on their heads, Djenné Region	382
Plate 3.	Fig. 5.	Bambara with his cheeks slashed in imitation of the tattooing characteristic of the slaves of the Kouloubali, Djenné Region	383
	Fig. 6.	Woman and child, Djenné Region . .	383
Plate 4.	Fig. 7.	Penperenni, small dancers in costume	384
	Fig. 8.	N'Tomo mask decorated with cowries	384

[1] Introduction

161 According to the census referred to hereafter, the Bambara number more than 500,000, thus forming one of the largest population groups in West Africa.

184 This group is not homogeneous; however, in addition to its
language, which is in fact its characteristic element, it does have
certain basic customs common - at least in a general way - to all
its members. It is possible to observe this common heritage by
[121] studying one section of the group, and such is the purpose of this
work.

121 The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta, who concern us here,
have the distinction over their congeners of having evolved well-
127 known empires. To the history of these empires, already known
through the research of my predecessors, I shall add new documentation, based primarily on an unpublished chronicle of the empire of Ségou. This chronicle is interesting, among other reasons, because it is entirely the work of one of the traditionists whose erudition, as reliable and exact as possible within the limitations of native competence, merits our serious attention. Indeed, my book is simply a detailed commentary on this chronicle, buttressed by knowledge acquired on the spot during the course of my administrative duties and by information obtained from the works listed in the bibliography.

121 It should be noted that, though these documents and this store of knowledge make it easy enough to describe the customs if one limits oneself to generalities, it is on the other hand a difficult and delicate task to define the customs as they are applied to given social manifestations and to try to deduce the principles underlying these manifestations.

This is all the more true in that experience acquired elsewhere [2] is often, instead of a help, a reef which is as perilous as it is appealing. So it is that one is naturally tempted to apply to native institutions the nomenclature and the fundamental characteristics of institutions - especially European ones - which are assumed to be comparable. When origins and development are thus transferred to a foreign context, native custom is deformed. It can

121 keep its own features only on the native plane on which it was formed and developed.

I have not felt, however, that it was necessary to abandon entirely the French terminology which is familiar to us; it is sufficient to make it fit its new role. Indeed, it would be very difficult to limit oneself to native terms, since it would be awkward and even impossible to find expression in these terms for abstractions which the writer's analysis brings out and of which the native has no knowledge.

A study of custom in its intimate associations thus requires both method and experience if one hopes to arrive at precise facts which have logical interrelationships. The results thus obtained are certainly significant since they show that, perhaps from the very beginning and certainly from a very long time past, the native character follows a path which it has itself chosen and which we can only suspect, rather than observe. This is because the concrete facts which are the landmarks of that history are subject to various interpretations.

Today, dislocated by the collapse - thanks to our inter-
177 vention - of the social framework in which he was developing,
182 the native character is working out new spiritual directives based
on its own past, making use of contributions of our civilizations whenever they are in accord with the native's own deepest tendencies. The present-day life of the Black man is merely the reflection of this *mystique*; hence, whatever may be our wishes in the matter and whatever may be the outward appearances, the Black man continues in all fields to be dominated by his past.

This fact would in itself justify a study such as the present
121 one - if there were need for justification - for, in the matter of
custom particularly, nothing that has happened in the past is unimportant when both the present and the future are closely and inevitably dependent on this past.

Orthez, February 22, 1923

[3]

Chapter 1

Origin and History

Preliminaries

131 As they have for a long time past, the Bambara today occupy in compact groups a vast region on either side of the Niger, which comprises most of the territory in the circles [administration division] of Bammako, Bougouni and Ségou in the French colony of the Upper Senegal and Niger.

162 According to the census (1), the following list shows the distribution of the Bambara in that colony:

Circle of Bougouni	146,966
" " Bammako	104,216
" " Ségou	109,758
" " Sikasso	30,000
" " Kita	2,339
" " Bafoulabé	2,100
" " Koutiala	30,055
" " Goumbou	22,110
" " San	20,103
" " Sokolo	19,996
" " Diénné	17,247
" " Niafounké	16,000
" " Nioro	9,355
" " Mopti	7,277
" " Bandiagara	928
Total	538,450

After the Mossi, this is the largest group in the colony of Upper Senegal and Niger.

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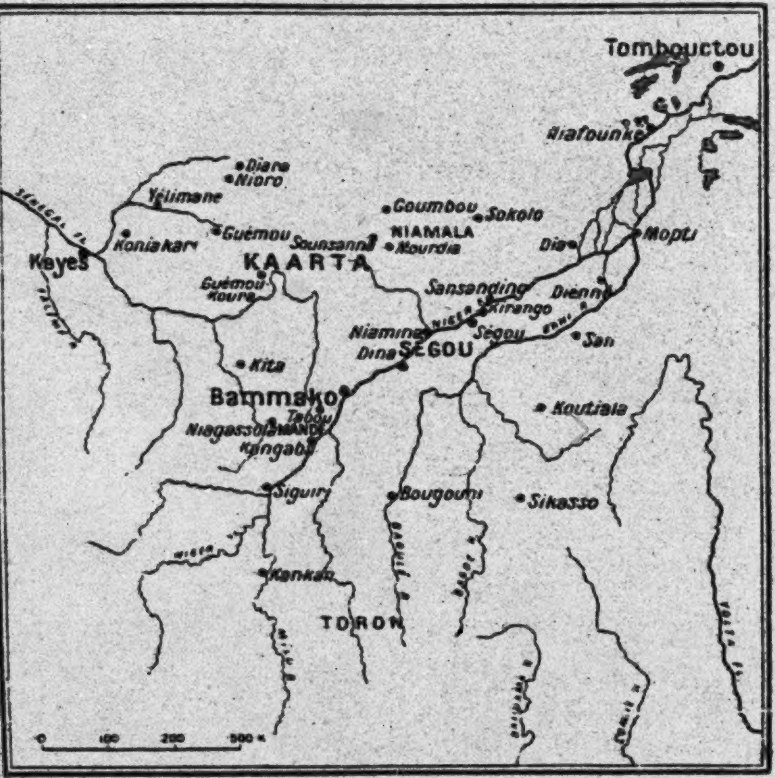
1. In Haut-Sénégal et Niger [The Upper Senegal and Niger], by Delafosse.

121 This work deals only with the Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta since it has already been noted that, save for their specifically local history, [4] a study of their concepts and institutions is valid in general for all of the Bambara.

103 It is exceedingly difficult, besides, to be entirely certain
131 as to which of the Bambara actually belong to the Kaarta and

[133]


Tombouctou
Niafounké
Diara
Nioro
Yélimane
Goumbou
Sokolo
NIAMALA
Mourdia
Sounsanna
Guémou
Koniakari
Keyes
Sénégal fl.
KAARTA
Guémou Koura
Mopti
Dia
Sansanding
Dienné
Kirango
Niamina
Dina
SÉGOU
Ségou
San
Niger fl.
Bani fl.
Kita
Bammako
Tabou
Niagassola
MANDÉ
Kangaba
Koutiala
Siguiri
Bougouni
Sikasso
Kankan
TORON
Niger fl.
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Ségou areas since the two designations do not correspond to any very exact geographical region. When a native speaks of Kaarta or of Ségou, he only vaguely understands the terms, and this with good reason.

101 I have noted elsewhere (1) that, etymologically speaking, the
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1. In my work Les Khassonké [The Kasonke], which appeared in the series, Revue du Monde Musulman.

101 103 131 word which we write and pronounce Kaarta means "country of the Karé" or, more accurately, "the group of the Karé." Wherever there are Karé people they are called, in the Soninké language, Karu-ta, [5] which is contracted to Karta. From this we made Kaarta because we misheard the long first "a." The word Kaarta designates a particular area only because of the people who inhabit it, and its value as a geographical expression is acquired only by extension. Among the natives the term is used for various areas within the region which extends from Goumbou to Koniakari and from Nioro to the Senegal River. On our maps, Kaarta is bounded by Kingui on the north, Diomboko on the west, Senegal and Bélédougou on the south, and Kaniaga on the east. However, all of these names of cantons themselves have very vague meanings.

101 103 131 614 For the purpose of the present work, the word Kaarta takes on a special meaning. The Bambara who founded a clan at Sounsan-na in the Karé country are called Karta-n-ko in the Soninké language and Karta-n-ka-u (the Kaarta people) in the Bambara language. As a result, Kaarta has become the name of the areas occupied by the clan in its various peregrinations.

The "people of Ségou" acquired their name in quite a different manner, since they were named for Ségou, the capital of the clan. The country of Ségou should be understood strictly to allude to the to-da which, to be described in chapter 5, was, by and large the area surrounding Ségou and occupied by the chief and his family and followers. In a wider sense, the country of Ségou referred to all the territory under the authority of the Ségou clan. At the height of the clan's power, "the country of Ségou" occupied both banks of the Niger, following the axis of the river from Kangaba to Timbuktu.

101 131 631 Our European need to have things clearly defined may be satisfied by having the territorial limits of Kaarta and Ségou set forth on a map, but on the native level, with which this book is primarily concerned, such local definition has little relevance. These empires did not aim to dominate any given area but rather sought to exploit as large a number of individuals as possible without regard to country or race.

128 Note: In the following pages, as well as in the foregoing, words in Bambara or other Sudanese dialects which are used are italicized; see Chapter 7 for explanations. [Omitted in translation.]

[7] I. Origin

Name

101 The peoples with whom this work is concerned are known, generally speaking, by the name of Bambara, both to Europeans and to most of the natives. They call themselves Banmana or Bamana.

European writers have offered two theories to explain the etymology of the words Bambara, Banmana and Bamana.

According to one school of thought, the word Bambara derives from bamba or bamma (crocodile) and alludes to a tne (1) which is reputedly common to all natives known as Bambara. This theory is nullified by the fact that the taboo, which was supposed to be generally imposed, is actually imposed on only a few of the Bambara. Further, the suggested correlation has never been proved to exist between the name of the tne and either individual or collective denomination among the Bambara.

Other authorities suggest that, according to the Banmana themselves, the word Banmana means "rejection of a master" (ban-ma-na) and alludes to the legend which tells how, early in the thirteenth century, the Banmana left their native land and went to Toron in order to escape from the yoke of their Malinké conquerors. This etymology, which is linguistically defensible, would apply only to the people who immigrated to Toron, and it still does not tell us by what name they and their congeners were known before the migration.

1, A magico-religious taboo, see Chapter 2.

I have also been told that the words Bambara, Banmana and Bamana come from the Bambara root *ban'* or *ba*, meaning "to refuse." My informant, a Soninké, claimed that when their hegemony came to an end in the Ségou region, the Soninké noted a general rebellion among the serfs and said: "*u bara bango bè la*," which meant (1) "They have refused (to submit) [8] on all sides." And this same informant added that, when the rebels later returned and made peace with their masters, they put the following question: "*au mar' kan'*," meaning (2) "Under what conditions will you keep us?" The word Bambara would thus derive from the first expression and the word Marka (2) from the second.

1. According to the aforesaid informant.

2. According to the same informant.

I mention this interpretation as an example of the etymologies which are entirely made up by the informants and to which one can attach significance only after rigorous and critical investigation. In this case I have no doubt whatever that my informant's two expressions were invented for the occasion and that they are worthless; indeed, I cannot understand at all the translation of the second expression, *au mar' kan'*.

I am convinced that the natives simply do not know the origin of the name Bambara or its variants, or rather that they are incapable of explaining it.

However, it does seem likely that the words Bambara, Banmana and Bamana are actually derived from the same root *ba*. Thus, if the final *na*, a collective suffix, is removed from the word *banmana*, we are left with *banma*, a word which is comparable, morphologically speaking, to *finma*. The latter means "black" in Bambara and it may be replaced with *fin'* and *fi* without change of meaning: by analogy one is led to say that *ban'* and *ba* are, in the same way, equivalents of *banma*.

101 It is interesting to compare these two monosyllables with the Peul [Fulani] word *bal*, which also means "black" and which can also be spelled *ba* since its final *l*, like the *n'* in *ban'*, is merely euphonious. The comparison is valid because Peul is by origin a Negro language native to the area and, further, because a comparative study of the Sudanese dialects has shown much mutual borrowing of words.

From all this I conclude that the term Bambara and its variants likewise signify "black men."

Further, foreigners and their half-caste or naturalized offspring, all of whom we include under the name Peul, ruled over western Sudan in early times, and it is reasonable to suppose that the name Bambara dates from that period and represents the name by which the Peul rulers designated the natives. [9] Or, it may be safer to say that the word Bambara and its variants derive from the same root *ba*, meaning "black," which came from an ancient dialect of which the modern Peul language is also an offshoot.

However that may be, the designation Bambara, which is used generally throughout western Sudan, has many meanings today. For the Moslem, the Bambara is the infidel, the pagan, the drinker of alcohol; for the pastoral peoples (Moors and Peuls), he is the farmer and also the Negro. For Semites and those who claim to be Semites, he is principally the Negro. For those who were or are rulers, he is the slave; and for all he is the primitive man who is socially inferior.

101 578 The word Bambara has shared the same fate as the word Peul in that it is used simply as an epithet: the name Bambara is applied to all pagans (1), farmers, slaves and black men. Indeed

1. "... It is absolutely certain that in the minds of Sudanese Moslems in general and of those living at the mouth of the Niger in particular, the word Bambara is applied, not to any particular people, nor to a specific tribe, but rather to all Sudanese who have remained faithful to the native religion." (Delafosse, Vol. 1, p. 126).

101 the word has so thoroughly taken on a pejorative sense that its
578 use may be a grave insult. What an insult it would be for a
Moslem to be called a Bambara, i.e., an infidel, a pagan and
an alcoholic!

101 In the strictest sense, however, the word Bambara is applied by the Malinké and, following their lead, by the French only to natives who speak the Bambara dialect and who call themselves Banmana or Bamana. Barring specific exceptions, we shall henceforth use the word in this limited sense in the present work.

x173 It is evident from the foregoing remarks that the Bambara belong to very ancient indigenous families; indeed, they themselves consider this to be so, and they are so considered by others.

Native informants are likely to say that the Bambara are former slaves of the Malinké; but they also say that the Somono are former slaves of the "Ségou people." Later on (see Chapter 4), we shall see in what sense [10] this slavery should be understood. It was a characteristic result of the political form of the native governments.

101 In addition to the general name given to them or accepted by them, which applies to one or another group, the Bambara are designated by terms expressing their geographic distribution. There are, for instance, those who live at Bélédougou (called Beledugu-ka-u); those in the Kaarta area (Karta-n-kà-u); those at Ségou (Segu-n-ka-u); those around Bani-n-ko (Bani-n-ko-ka-u). Each of these expressions also has a political connotation; Ségu-n-ka-u is often used for members of the ruling party, which holds power at and operates from Ségou, and only the context or the drift of the conversation will make it possible to know what people are actually being discussed.

Among themselves the various Bambara groups often de-
scribe one another by nicknames. The "Kaarta people" ironi-
[302] cally call the "Ségou people" Tlu-kene-u, "those with a single
braid," because of a peculiar way of doing their hair, or Nya-ni-
Nyélé-u, because Nya and Nyélé are popular names for women
among the people around Ségou.

101 It is common, too, to call all the members of a clan by a
614 name derived from that of a clan founder or ancestor. Thus, the

B 101 614 Kaarta people are called Nya-Ngolo-la after Nya-Ngolo, an ancestor of the chiefs of the clan; and the Ségou people are called Barama-Ngolo-la after Barama-Ngolo, an ancestor of their clan.

B S 101 [567] Nicknames are also used between individuals of different tribes. The Soninké often call the Bambara Dyon-ko (slaves) because, having long been engaged in the slave trade, they sold many Bambara as slaves (1). The Bambara generally call the Soninké Marka (for Mara-ka). They still use the term Marka dialan'u (dry Marka people) to designate the Soninké who abandoned their own dialect in favor of the Bambara dialect. On the other hand, they use the term Marka kan'-fo-la-u (those who speak Marka) for those among the Soninké who have retained their own dialect.

1. See in the Kaarta chronicle which follows how Massa and others after him captured caravans of Bambara slaves belonging to Soninké owners.

In the Ségou region, the Bambara use the expression Bani-n-kono-u (birds of the Bani) for the Soninké people who live along the banks of [11] that river; their more general term for the Soninké is the surname Dyeme-ka-u, from Dyeme (or Dyime) meaning "a long-legged water bird" of the marabou species. According to the interpretation given to me, the names Bani-n-kono-u and Dyeme-ka-u allude to periodic journeys made by the Soninké to the large commercial centers to the south, especially Oucrodougou [Ouagadougou?].

The Ségou country was called Dyeme-ka-u by the Bambara during the period of the Soninké rule (1). On the other hand, when

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1. At this period, the Soninké chief, Souleiman-ba Kofta, lived at Sora, today a ruin, which the Bambara call Soro-toumou (ruins of Sora) and which is situated in the Ségou country between Massa-la and Kono-diminl.

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Sora was the capital of a territorial district called Tandougou.

The songs of the *gessere*, who are the Soninké equivalents of the Bambara *dyeli*, often tell of Souleimanba Kolta, of Sora and Tandougou.

the Bambara came into power, the Soninké called it *Dyon-kadugu* (land of slaves).

Origin

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The tradition which is generally accepted, and which was first reported by Raffenel and Quintin, has it that the ancestors of the Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta came originally from Toron, a region situated at the headwaters of the Milo and the Baoulé, both tributaries of the upper Niger. From there they presumably moved in a northeasterly direction and then spread out toward their present habitat and developed the empires of Ségou and Kaarta (2).

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2. "An oft-reported tradition says that the Banmana came from Toron, the eastern province of Oussoulou, situated in the present colony of the Ivory Coast. It was on the route between Odienné and Sikasso, not far from the former. It seems, indeed, likely that the original habitat of the Banmana was located in the extreme southeast corner of the cradle of the Mandé family and that it extended from the right bank of the upper Niger, approximately near Siguiri, to the left bank of the upper Bagbé (or Bagoé), where it touched the territory of the Sénoufo [Senufo] people. The first conquests of the Mandingue [Mondingo]

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> emperors around the beginning of the thirteenth century established the Malinké people on the right bank of the upper Niger and no doubt forced the Bambara to settle between the upper Baoulé and the upper Bagbé, precisely where Toron is to be found." (Delafosse, op. cit., 283-284)

However, as is usually the case with history told by native traditionists this was by no means a mass migration but, rather, merely a traditional explanation for the arrival in the Ségou and Kaarta regions of the ancestors of the Kouloubali who founded the clans of Ségou and of Kaarta. I have no doubt whatever [12] that, long before their arrival, there were Bambara settled in Ségou and Kaarta in the very places they often still occupy today (1).

> 1. For example, from the time of his installation, and even during his father's lifetime, Massa[1] came into conflict with the Bambara of Niamala. And when he attacked the Soninké, the latter called for the help of their own Bambara people, who had been there for a very long time and who had nothing to do with any migration from Toron. The Bambara of Bélédougou claim that they have always been the masters of their lands, and they are so recognized.

On the other hand, according to reliable native informants who are known to be well-informed about the traditions, and whom I interviewed at Médine, Kita, Bammako, Ségou and Djenné and also according to the dyeli Karé Tamoura, (2) Toron

> 2. See the following section: History (Sources).

[1] [for information on Massa, see cat.#773, pp. 113 ff. -Analyst]

B *173 is not the cradle of the Bambara with whom we are here concerned, even though it was a region from which Bambara migrations originated. These same informants say that the ancestors of these Bambara came from Mandé, whose capital, in the most remote times, was Dakadiala, known today as Kirikoroni, in the canton of Kiri whose present-day cantonal headquarters is at Niagassola.

F 101 103 At this point, it seems necessary to explain the meaning of the word Mandé, which appears so often in the history of western Sudan.

Authors agree among themselves and with native traditionists that Mandé is the name of a territorial district which, at various times, was near the left bank of the Niger between Kangaba and Bammako. However, the boundaries of the area remain uncertain and variable as does the location of the capital, which tradition has placed at different periods at Dakadiala, at Tabou, at Kounfangué, at Figuira, at Kangaba, at Niani, etc. In point of fact, however, so far as we know, there is no country actually named Mandé and there has never been such a country. What then is this name?

It is agreed that the forms Mandé, Mandi, Manden, Mandin, Mandeng, Manding, Mali, Malé, Malel, Melli, etc., all of which are or have been used, are merely variants of the same expression in different dialects. [13] However, no one has interpreted the validity of these terms.

Now it appears that, in the Soninké language, the word Mandé (1) is made up of ma and de, linked by the connective n; the particle de, which corresponds to our prepositions "at", "in," and "at the house of," comes from a root meaning "place." As for ma, it means "master," "lord" or "king," so the word Mandé means "at the house of the king," or "place or residence of the king."

This is precisely the interpretation given by the Tarikh

1. The form Mandi can be analyzed in the same way in Soninké.

101 103 *el Fettach* for the variant *madugu* (2): "The word *madugu* is the name given in the Tekrour(western Sudan) to any royal residence, wherever it may be" (page 335 of the translation). The *Tarikh es-Soudan* also says that the word *madugu* means "palace of the king" (French translation, p. 151).

103 644 In principle, each chief establishes his capital wherever he pleases and, in view of the extreme uncertainties of political life in this part of the world, this residence is often moved. We shall see an example of this mobility in the case of the Bambara-Massa-si of Kaarta. In general, the same situation prevailed in the other empires, and there is no doubt that it was so for the Mandé.

That is how it has happened that the word Mandé and its variants have designated the most diverse localities which, at one time or another, have served as royal residences or, more often, as headquarters or capitals. Sometimes these places were referred to by their own names, with *madugu* added, e.g., Nianimadougou. Or *madugu* might accompany the name of the territorial district to designate the capital, e.g., Sanamadougou, near Sansanding on the Niger. The word *madugu* and its variants have often been used for no particular reason. So it is that the *Tarikh-es-Soudan* and the *Tedzkiret-en-Nisian* often allude to Madoho, Madoko or Madougou, a former royal residence of the king of Mali at Timbuktu. In the same way, Ibn Batouta never tells us the name of the capital he visited but merely calls it by the variant Mali, the equivalent of Madougou. This is the origin of the various names mentioned in the foregoing [14], which, etymologically speaking, might be applied to any headquarters or capital but which, because of long custom, refer only to the capital of Mandé, a territorial district that takes its name from the capital.

101 103 This double meaning of the word Mali or Melli, for example, meaning capital and country of the capital at the same time, is evident in the travel record of Ibn Batouta. The same

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2. This belongs to the Malinké dialect, in which *dugu* means "place," not "earth."

French West African Natives FA2-
Malinke FA27

F 101 103 double meaning is no less evident in the Tarikh-es-Soudan, especially on p. 161 of the French translation. The same double usage is evident in oral traditions.

Thus it is understandable that the word Mandé has come to be considered as an equivalent of our words "empire" and "kingdom" when they are used in a geographical sense, and that, as a result, the term has varied in application because it depended on an ever-changing territorial domain subject to the domination of successive ma.

M F 103 642 However, it is not only from the geographical point of view that the term Mandé has remained indefinite or vaguely defined; the same uncertainty prevails on the political level. In a general way, Mandé is considered to be exclusively the empire of the Mandingue people, who are one of the subdivisions of the group called Mandé by the Europeans (1). In order to understand the meaning attached to the word "empire" in western Sudan, it is essential to place oneself on the native level and not on that of our European civilization from which the term is borrowed.

F B 103 642 [614] Briefly, the Sudanese empire is a system of clans. It is formed by bringing together of elements taken over from clans that have either disintegrated or are in the process of doing so. It acquires power and extension through the influence of the founder or, less frequently, of one of his successors, and then falls into decline at the hands of enemies or as a result of schisms which arise at the death of the ruler on whose success and "flair" its fortunes have depended.

It is this constantly repeated process of grouping, separation and regrouping which dominates the entire [15] history of the Sudanese empires and dynasties and which makes any study of the people so very difficult. The geographical nomenclature is,
F B 101 103

1. Mandé, as the name for a group of peoples or of native languages, is unknown to the Sudanese; in this sense it is used exclusively by the Europeans.

French West African Natives FA2
Malinke FA27

F B 101 103 of course, dependent on these social facts. Often a region is named after the people who inhabit it as, for instance, is the case with Kaarta. It may also derive its name from a dominant political group, and when a region has been ruled by successive groups, it acquires a series of superimposed names even though the territories to which they apply may not necessarily be identical; this, too, applies to Kaarta -- a poorly defined region.

This explains how it came about that different empires were lumped together under the same name, Mandé (and other variants). The empire ruled by the Kefta chiefs was merely the last to arise and it presumably dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century.

B *173 M 173 One tradition has it that the ancestors of the founders of this thirteenth-century empire came from the east -- specifically from Kong (1). Under the leadership of Kabala Simbo Kefta, they settled in Dodougou, a canton whose capital was at Tabou and whose chief, a Bambara of the Konnaté dyamu maintained his power with the help of a militarized group called Mandinké. This was a group similar to those composing the sofa, ton-dyon' or furu-ba-dyon' who supported the fortunes of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta. In the Soninké language the word mandinké means, literally, "a person of the master's (or lord's or king's) house- M [101] hold," and in the plural it means "the master's (or king's) people."

The canton of Kiri (2), adjoining that of Dodougou, was

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1. I see in this precision nothing more than the usual polarization of which I speak on p. 45 , note 1 .

2. The Dodougou (abbreviated to Do) and the Kiri are, indeed, considered to be the oldest cantons of the so-called Mandé clan. In this connection, see Humblot, "Du nom propre et des appellations chez les Malinké ..." [On Proper Names

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and Appellations among the Malinké...] in the Bulletin du Comité des études historiques et scientifiques de l'A.O.F. 1918, nos. 3 and 4.

inhabited by independent Bambara.

This clan or, as one is tempted to say, this empire of Keïta was formed in the thirteenth century after wars between Soumangourou Kanté and Soun Dyata Keïta and with the aid of various elements (3), including a group of Mandinké which

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3. In the same way we shall see Biton forming furu-ba-dyon' from the ton-dyon', slaves captured from the chief of Dina, and from captives acquired elsewhere. In the same connection, see in the Tarikh el Fettach the curious story of the 24 slave tribes of the Songhaï clan which came from the Mandé clan.

[16] had been organized earlier by (1) a chief named Gourmanda[illegible]a.

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1. Within the clan, the slaves, who always constitute the power of a clan, are divided into groups named in accordance with a particular aspect of organization. The Boula seem to have enjoyed a degree of consideration comparable to that attained by the Ton-dyon' at Ségou. Judging by the meaning of the word Bula, it would seem that they were "freedmen," and this is the meaning given by native traditionists. On the subject of the Boula, see the afore-mentioned work by Humblot. Boula women have the given name of Damba and they are addressed as Sakiliba, while the men are called Soussoro. This practice of giving a common name to a whole

Malinke FA27

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> category of slaves is also found among the Rimaïbé people of Macina, all of whom may be called Tammoura or Tamboura.

B *173 M 173

This group was that of the Boula, who made a fortune from both Soumangourou and Soun Dyata by supporting alternately the one or the other until Soun Dyata finally prevailed.

M 101 173 B *173

These people, who are called Mandinké by the Soninké, Maninka by the Bambara, and Mallinké by the Peul, call themselves Mandinga. It should be noted, however, that the Mandinké do not date from the thirteenth century empire of the Keïta but are rather of earlier origin than that clan. It is my opinion that they derive originally from very ancient Soninké clan groups in the process of breaking up, from which they acquired their essential elements and their name. The name, indeed, refers to a social group which is identical with that of the furu-ba-dyon', described hereafter in Chapter 5, and the same group was established in the same way by the Bambara, i.e., by the Blacks, the natives of various races. In any event, this is said in the traditions told to me.

M B 174

Furthermore, I do not think that all the Bambara peoples who today occupy the area under consideration are accounted for by the migrations of the Bambara-speaking Bambara from the aforesaid Mandé region at the time when the Keïta clan took over that region in the thirteenth century. I believe that, in the geographical region known to us under the names Mandé, Toron, Baninko, Ségou, Bélédougou and Kaarta, there have been Bambara-speaking Bambara since well before the thirteenth century.

The Kouloubali

B *173

The migrations of which the traditionists tell us invariably refer only to the movements of [17] certain families who were more or less important and who had usually figured prominently in clan affairs. As far as Ségou and Kaarta are concerned, the traditions apply solely to the Kouloubali chiefs of these clans and clearly indicate that they found other similar Bambara families already long settled in these and surrounding regions.

*173 In addition to the traditions reported in what follows and emanating from the dyeli traditionists, Karé Tammoura and Gran Koaté, I was given the following explanations concerning the Kouloubali.

According to the first version, the sons of one Péné Kouloubali left Kéniéroba (1), northwest of Kangaba, in order to escape from the pursuit of their enemies. There were three brothers: Mamourou, the eldest, Nzan and Ngolo. They settled in Bani-n-ko at Dougouna, in the home of a blacksmith named Sékolo Balo. When their enemies followed them there, they fought for a year, and then Mamourou persuaded his brothers to flee. So they left, taking Sékolo Balo with them.

They crossed the Baoulé at Kana, thanks to the help of a poyon' who offered to ferry them since they had no boat. Ngolo, who was the last to cross, killed the poyon' and carried the body to Dionforongo (east of Barouéli) where he ate it.

[103] The three brothers came to Ségou-koro-si-do (2), then to Sinsala, so named because of the "enclosure" (sinsa) built there by the Bozo, and better known as Sansanding. There, Mamourou advised separating, the better to elude their pursuers. Mamourou returned to Ségou-koro-si-do, and his descendants are the Kouloubali of that region.

Nzan settled near Ségala in a place called Sanabala after his wife Sanaba, by whom he had a son Nto. Nto had a son named Kéfa, who fathered Sama. The latter had four sons; Sara, who lived at Salaga; Touman, at Toumanbougou; Fara, at Diakoro; and Demba at Donguélé.

Ngolo settled at Kourouma, where he became one of the ancestors of the Kouloubali of that region. He married a Moorish

(1) The period, undefined as always, certainly antedates the seventeenth century.

(2) Si-do: "the forest of butter-trees," a place said to be near Ségou-koro.

*173 half-breed named Bariké and by her had a son, [18] Dagoumou, who fathered Siratigui. The latter was himself the father of Mamourou, who fathered Dyiguina, who fathered Bo-dyan. This last gave birth to Mélé-fin and Mélé-dyé. Mélé-dyé's son, Sidi Bala, was put to death by the *fama* of Ségou, Ngolo Dyara.

According to another version, two Kouloubali brothers, Ntchi and Ntchian, left the Mandé area during the struggles between Soumangourou and Soun Dyata. Ntchi, who was the first to reach the river, bemoaned his lack of a boat and called upon his ancestors for aid. A *poyon'* suddenly appeared and said: "If the sons of Adam were not such ingrates, I should certainly have ferried you across." Ntchi begged the *poyon'* to have mercy upon him and his people and swore that, in return, the *poyon'* would forever after be *tne* for himself and all his descendants. The *poyon'* allowed itself to be persuaded and ferried Ntchi and his followers.

When Ntchian reached the river the same scene took place. But when all his people were safe, one of Ntchian's wives, by the Tangara *dyamu*, cried out: "If you don't kill this fish, our children, who are starving, will be dead by night." Pretending not to hear her, Ntchian mounted his horse and sought to leave. But his wife seized his bridle and once more begged him to kill the fish and to save her children. This time he did so.

That is why only the descendants of Ntychi consider the *poyon'* as *tne*.

Ntchi settled in Niamana, near Niansonna to the west of Baroéli, where he became the chief. Dissension arose among his descendants; so some of them went to Ségou near Ségou-koro and others to Kaarta.

Ntchian settled at Nani in the eastern part of Bendougou not far from the present village of Nionsira. Since he was of a quarrelsome nature, he feuded with the chief of Nani and forced him to leave. It is said that the chief had a flute made from the hinges of his door and that it was to the sound of this flute that he departed. He went to Farabougou, to Souala, and then to Ngonifembougou (still called Monimpé) near Dia-kolo.

Ntchian pursued him and settled at Dia-kolo. His descendants suffered the great famine that lasted for seven years and that

*173 is known as the solo (1); they sought [19] a remedy to this

[551] 1. Solo is a woman's surname.

calamity by emigrating. Some went to Dia-bolo near Djenné; others went to Nya Ngolo-la in Kaminiadougou.

Is there a relationship between the origin of the Kouloubali family just discussed and that of the Kouloubali founders of Ségou and Kaarta? I have no doubt that there is, because all the Kouloubali go back to a common ancestor prior to the thirteenth century, one of whose descendants, allying himself by marriage to the Kefta clan, founded the branch of Kouloubali composed of the so-called masa-rin' families (1).

[614] 1. By the term masa-rin', the traditionists mean, in addition to the ruling Kefta and their followers, various families who are closely connected with them. The following are prominently mentioned: the Kouloubali, the Konaté and the Kourouma. Not all the members of these dyamu, even the Kefta, are masa-rin'; only certain branches are.

The Bambara of the Tarikh-es-Soudan

175 The Bambara, established in the area with which we are concerned before or after the Kouloubali, whose traditions we have just discussed, have no precise traditions - at least none which give any detail. The general history of all of these peoples is doubtful.

To be sure, the Tarikh-es-Soudan does allude to the Bambara, but it is difficult to tell in what sense the term is used, since it often simply means "pagans." However, in the following citations, it seems to me that the Tarikh does refer to the Bambara here studied, all the more so because in this chronicle,

175 the principalities of Kala, Bendougou and Sébéridougou correspond to territories west of Djenné and Dia which have been under the domination of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta.

The Tarikh-es-Soudan reports: "When Askia Daoud was addressing the chief of Djenné, El Amin, he said: 'We put you at the head of a district and you are not watching over it properly, because the Bambara have managed to acquire privileges which they had ceased to have.' " This was in 1558 and the last words in the passage show that before that period the Bambara had enjoyed an important position.

According to the same chronicle, when the Moroccans arrived in 1691 [sic, probably 1501] [20] the countries of the middle Niger which had been enjoying relative peace under king Soughaï, were being terrorized, especially around Djenné, by the Bambara aided, incited and even led by the Peul chief of Macina.

In 1599 a great many Bambara had been recruited into the army of Macina by Hamedi Amina, the sultan of the country, who was stirring up a general rebellion against the Moroccans.

In 1600, on orders from the Moroccan pasha Djouder, the caïd [alcaide] El Mostapha-et-Torki led an expedition against Macina, and the Bambara, having been abandoned by the people of Macina, were cut off in a forest and massacred in large numbers.

In 1644, when his troops were fleeing before the combined forces of the pasha and the askia, Hamedi Amina had to flee also, leaving quantities of booty behind. He and his followers took refuge with the Bambara, who appropriated anything that came within their borders.

Finally, the Tarikh-es-Soudan mentions that in 1645 the Bambara rebelled against the chiefs of Sana and Farko and sacked Sibila, the capital of the Sana region.

It is of course true that account must be taken of the fact that Es-Sadi, the author of the Tarikh-es-Soudan, is likely to include all pagans under the designation "Bambara." However, there is no ground for assuming that the Bambara with whom we are concerned are not meant when it is a question of the regions mentioned in the citation. Indeed, the contrary is the case, since

175 no other pagan people of the area has such a long tradition of warlike actions.

*173 175 The old Sudanese chronicle never mentions a Bambara king. According to the traditionists, the Bambara villages of the area lived independently of each other before the time of Biton. They sometimes embarked on joint raids against certain neighbors or carried out other important enterprises together. On such occasions they used bands organized and equipped in line with the usual native practice (1).

1. See in the foregoing how they acted as mercenaries to the sultan of Macina, for example.

[21] There is nothing surprising in the fact that a chief of one of these bands may have succeeded in creating a kind of empire in the manner of a Samori. Indeed, according to Quintin (1) there is a tradition that a certain Kaladian Kouloubali,

1. See also Delafosse in this connection.

a descendant of Barama Ngolo and living at Markadougou-ba, established his authority over both banks of the Niger in the Ségou area around 1600, either by his own efforts or aided by his sons. The Tarikh-es-Soudan makes no mention of this ruler, nor does the dyeli Karé Tammoura. History in that part of the world abounds in missing links and divergencies of this kind.

Kaladian's empire probably did not last long in any case, but Biton Kouloubali, founder of the empire of Ségou which we shall discuss, was precisely the grandson of Kaladian through Soma and Danfassari.

2. History

Sources

Thus, a general history of the Bambara is yet to be written; all that is known in any detail relates to the clans of Ségou and of Kaarta and, even in this limited area, the knowledge is anything but well-documented.

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The literature on the subject that has already been published, as well as the accounts given here, necessarily rests on native traditions which are vague, confused and shrouded in legend, and it is difficult to establish real, precise and consistent facts from such sources. So it is that we shall later see, presented as a fact in the earliest history of the clan of Kaarta, that the old fa Siné only granted hospitality and a limited alliance to Sounsan because a bird had told him of the power that was eventually to accrue to the family of the fugitive.

Also in this connection there is, for example, a version concerning Mamari, called Biton Kouloubali, the founder of the clan of Ségou. Mamari had created a garden on the banks of the Niger for his mother. It was there, one day, that a "water genie" (dyiden) appeared to him at the very spot where Monseigneur Hacquart died. [22] The genie urged Mamari to follow and was so insistent and so persuasive that Mamari yielded (1).

1. On the subject of water genies, compare this legend with the tales entitled "Les Dyide de Djenné" [The Water Genies of Djenné] in Contes du Sénégal et du Niger [Tales of the Senegal and the Niger] by Zeltner, pp. 173 ff.

Drawn by his guide, he penetrated to the depths of the water without the least discomfort and so came to a miraculous city. There, the genie showed him a heap of gold and silver and a pile of grain and said: "Choose: gold and silver mean wealth; grain means power. Now what does wealth signify if one is at the mercy of a powerful man; the master controls everything. If, however, you choose the grain, sow it in an enormous field and work hard to have a large harvest. Then leave the harvest to the birds and your power will extend to all the lands touched by the marauding birds."

Mamari carried off the grain, preserved it carefully and, when winter came, sowed it in an enormous field. During the whole season he worked hard at cultivating and, when harvesttime

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175 came, everyone was astounded to see him leave everything for the birds.

The oracle was fulfilled at once. Biton ruled from Timbuktu to the Atlantic. And the dyeli, Karé Tammoura, who told me the legend, adds that thereafter there was a very strange thing at Ségou: a combination animal and plant which the Bambara called Sanu-so or "golden horse." Ahmadou, the son of Omar, had a mosque erected on the spot where Sanu-so was wont to appear but, all the same, it did not disappear until the arrival of the French. Even since then, there are those who say that on certain days strange lights appear at the spot on the Niger where Monseigneur Hacquart died and where the genie appeared to Mamari.

[171] This fable about a local genie is not in itself remarkable, but when compared to the legend about Ngolo Dyara (see later, p. 51) and to many other similar ones current in the Sudan (2), what it really is becomes clear: the figurative expression of a native mentality about which the European is usually very ill-informed and which deserves to be noted here briefly.

778 [23] Anything that departs from the average, the ordinary, or the normal -- power, wealth, success, ... illness, poverty, misfortune -- to any extraordinary degree or in a suspicious way, is, for the Bambara in particular and for the Black in general, the manifestation of an occult force acting either spontaneously or after provocation.

643 778 That is why, in the eyes of a native, a chief (a paramount chief, of course) is out of the common run, not so much because of the position he occupies as because of the magic powers attributed to him (1). Power is merely the reflection of his

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2. See, especially, the legend of Ndyadyane Ndyaye in "Légendes et coutumes sénégalaises [Senegalese Legends and Customs] by H. Gaden, 1912, and the "Dyide de Djenné" in Contes du Sénégal et du Niger, by Zeltner.

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1. Compare, on p. 31 and p. 49 , the conduct of Dina Wara and of Biton.

efficacies in magic and he himself is convinced that this is true. Everything he does is accepted without protest because his acts have a supernatural character. The only ones who can resist him are those who, like him, have special powers (2). Therefore he

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2. Legendary traditions abound in magic combats; see especially the tradition concerning Dinga, the ancestor of the Wagadou people, and that concerning Samba Guéladio Diégui, the hero of Fouta.

makes a point of seeking the company and advice of initiates in matters that are hidden from the common herd. These are the sorcerers, magicians and marabouts, all of whom believe that they possess -- or appear to possess -- a share in the knowledge that allows its practitioners to influence the unseen. Sometimes he is one of them or becomes one, and in any event he is always, willingly or not, dependent upon them.

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This is an age-old state of mind, which Islam has merely strengthened, for the Black man, whether Moslem or not, always regards the marabout as a diviner, a performer of miracles, a maker of philters, talismans and amulets, and a caster of spells. Many facts attest the truth of this observation, and the tales which follow will afford examples.

*173 It is understandable that with such beliefs[1] the Black man could hardly be expected to admit that the life of an important person, a powerful chief or a founder of an empire, could possibly be or have been banal, ordinary or simple. That is why supernatural, fictitious deeds make up such a large part of the native historical traditions that one may look in vain for any trace of the actions we see performed around us day after day. One must be very thoroughly accustomed to this delusion in order not to give way to discouragement at being unable to grasp

[1] [i.e., in magical and occult power with influence over the supernatural.—AuNysF]

*173 something whose strangeness places it outside our [24] understanding or what is worse, not to be deceived into interpreting this incoherent jumble simply to fit a preconceived theory.

*173 814 To these reflections of the native mentality must be added the deformations in the hands of the collectors of historical traditions (1): the *dyeli* among the Bambara. This word *dyeli*, meaning "master," shows the esteem accorded, in principle, to the archivist, which is what each *dyeli* should be. Indeed the job consists essentially [illegible] preserving from oblivion the genealogy and in celebrating -- by magnifying them -- the achievements of the personage to whom the *dyeli* is attached. As a result, the *dyeli* extends his inquiries to all who come into contact with his lord, so that in fact he becomes the historian of an entire family, an entire clan and even an entire tribe.

[555] The *dyeli's* great erudition and, even more, his skill in making the most of his superficial knowledge bring it about that the esteem in which he is held takes the practical form of gifts -- often so considerable as to make the *dyeli* very prosperous indeed. Therefore, the majority of *dyeli*, being less anxious to safeguard truth than to increase their own fortunes, flatter or slander, as required, those on whom they impose their services, so as to profit as much as possible. It is because of this sort of corruption that the *dyeli* is often scorned.

Dyeli who have kept their integrity are rare; those who possess extensive knowledge and sufficient critical sense to make a wise selection from the mass of contradictory traditions are rarer still.

In general, each *dyeli* works only within the very restricted limits of a clan tradition, plus a few family traditions; he is entirely ignorant of anything that concerns neighboring clans and families and, especially, people outside his own tribe and race.

The *dyeli* preserves in his memory the historical tradition and hands it down. Thus, since each *dyeli* works entirely independently, he can add any fantasies he pleases, spread them abroad, and pass them off for truth, which is accepted as such and passed on by others.

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1. Here called "traditionists."

*173 These, in brief, are the difficulties encountered in deal-
814 ing with sources for native historical tradition. When Islam
217 introduced [25] a written language, there was created a new
212 category of archivists, the marabouts. They have added this duty
to many others; it cannot be proved that they have purged the
job of its former vices, but it may be stated categorically that
they have added a few new ones.

It is notorious that, in the Sudan, the Moslem traditionists have an ineradicable tendency to transpose everything into their own mentality. Further, since a manuscript gives a kind of quasi definitiveness to the oral tradition, including all its errors, it becomes almost impossible to eliminate these errors because of the unquestioning respect usually accorded a written document.

*173 There are also the non-literate Moslem traditionists:
814 ordinary *dyeli* who have been converted in the usual Sudanese
fashion, as described in Chapter 6, and who have abandoned none
[177] of the characteristics of their caste. They have merely added a
few peculiarities due to Moslem influence.

114 In drawing on these sources, European publications add new reasons for doubt. Most especially, because of a desire -- legitimate, in principle -- to bring some sort of order out of the incoherent mass of traditions, but also because of a need to make them fit a personal theory, the European author takes refuge in an hypothesis. Now there is no objection to this, assuming that the hypothesis on which the author bases his theories is clearly stated. Too often, however, the hypothesis is so well concealed or even so intricately entwined in the tradition that it is impossible either to discover what it is or to set an exact limit to its range. This new metamorphosis of tradition is not the least dangerous for historical truth.

115 It is to two non-literate Moslem *dyeli* that I am indebted
*173 for the traditions concerning the Ségou and Kaarta clans. My
interpreter, Souleïman Goundiamou (1), whose services as a guide and informant on native matters were invaluable to me, gave

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1. Now chief of the village of Ambidédi (Gadiaga).

115 me the benefit of his experience in translating these tales. I
*173 hereby thank him most sincerely.

As far as Ségou is concerned, Karé Tammoura's story does not seriously modify the known general outline, but all the same it differs from earlier publications in its essentially native feeling, which I have tried to preserve. It is very interesting, for instance, to see how step-by-step [26] an empire developed out of a fla-n-ton': this change in a strictly native form of association is most instructive. It shows in detail how one of these Sudanese empires -- and not the least of them -- was organized. It is essential to know this if one is to understand the political history of this country. Community, brotherhood, clan, slavery, Islam -- all essential and too-little-known factors of Sudanese society -- are there to be seen, alive and just as they are.

In spite of its weaknesses and its lacunae, I am therefore giving, without change, the story told by the dyeli Karé Tammoura. This Ségou Bambara has occasionally allowed himself to cover the truth with a Moslem veil, because he is a convert; but it is easy to discern the facts under the poorly applied make-up.

115 My informant for Kaarta was principally the dyeli Gran Koaté, who was also a native of Ségou and a Moslem. He was for a long time attached to the person of Ahmadou, son of Omar, with whom he resided at Ségou and at Nioro, where he acted as a close confidant and was sometimes charged with important missions.

124 I feel obliged to point out that these two informants are not entirely responsible for the lacunae in their stories. I had had these two learned men brought from Ségou to Djenné, where I was commandant of the circle in 1902. In spite of my desire to learn as much as possible from them, I had to consider the demands of my post, which left me little leisure, and also had to avoid keeping them too long away from their homes. Hence, I was forced to cut short their long speeches. I do not think that I missed anything essential, but undoubtedly there was much to be gleaned from what had to be sacrificed for lack of time. I hope that one of my more fortunate successors may be able to fill in the lacunae in the stories set down here.

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[27] History of the Empire of Ségou
(As told by the dyeli Karé Tammoura)

Preliminaries

Origin of the Kouloubali of Ségou and Kaarta

A hunter coming from the east had a son named Barama Ngolo, who was born at Barama-n-dougou on the Bani; as he proceeded west, the same hunter had a second son, Nya Ngolo, who came into the world at Nya-Ngolo-la, a village in Kaminiadougou.

After their father's death, Barama Ngolo, Nya Ngolo and their brothers settled at Sounsan-na at the back of the Bani. One of the brothers having died there, Barama Ngolo accused Nya Ngolo of having caused the mishap and threatened to kill him. Thereupon Nya Ngolo fled to Massa-la, near Ségou, where he became shepherd of the flocks belonging to the Peul. His son Sounsan was with him.

Nya Ngolo died at Massa-la. When Barama Ngolo learned that the fugitives he sought were living there, he started out at once to capture them. On hearing this, Sounsan and his people went to Kounando, west of Ségou. Barama Ngolo proceeded to Dina, the headquarters of the canton to which Kounando belonged, to ask the chief to turn over the fugitives so that he could kill them. His request was refused, but, in order to preserve the peace, the people of Kounando forced Sounsan to leave the country.

The little band reached the bank of the Niger and, lacking a boat, were about to be caught by their implacable enemy. In desperation, Sounsan called upon his ancestors to come to his aid to save the lineage. His plea was answered: a poyon' suddenly emerged from the water and offered to ferry Sounsan and all his people across. That is why Sounsan vowed that the poyon' should henceforth be the tne of himself and all his descendants (1). [28]

1. Compare the following variant version, whose complete text also contains the legend of the poyon':

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> "Long, long ago, very probably before the seventeenth century, two Banmana brothers, named Niangolo and Baramangolo respectively and no doubt representing a strayed unit of a large-scale migration, came to the right bank of the Baoulé south of Baroučli (near the confluence of the Baoulé and the Bagbé), in flight from enemies driving them toward the northwest" (Delafosse, Vol. 1, p. 285).

Barama Ngolo and His First Descendants

Having given up hope of catching up with the fugitives, Barama Ngolo settled near Ségou-koro at Fa, where his son Soma was born. The latter became a famous hunter and supported himself by the chase. In the course of his wanderings he often sought hospitality from a Somono marabout, *alfa* Sénou Kané, who urged him to settle nearby.

At that time there were many villages in the Ségou country inhabited by the Bambara and Soninké. The Soninké were the ones who were strong and rich at that period and their principal village, ruled by the Boaré family (1), was more or less the headquarters of the region.

After he settled at Ségou, Soma married and had a son, *fa* Siné, who had three children: two boys, Mamari and Sérifbilé, and a daughter, Sana-ba. The daughter married Wara Dyara, chief of Dina, and since he was a powerful man, the alliance brought considerable renown to the family of *fa* Siné. Mamari accompanied his sister to Dina and there, thanks to his sister's complicity, he managed to learn the secret behind the prosperity and power of Wara Dyara. The secret was that the

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1. This tradition agrees with that reported by Raffenel, in Vol. 1, p. 364.

*173 chief was served special food prepared according to rites known only to him. The basis of this food was goat's head, and the meal had to be eaten in complete darkness. Thus Mamari, admitted to the room by his sister, was able to share his brother-in-law's repast without being found out. It was because of this food that he was later to occupy the highest position in the country.

The fla-n-ton (2) of the People of Ségou and its Development

2. See Chapter 4, p.   for the
organization of the fla-n-ton'.

When he returned to Ségou-koro, Mamari lived mostly with his mother, whose favorite he was. For her he cultivated 263 [28] on the river bank the n-koyo, a kind of bitter pepper used in native cookery. He worked here virtually every day and, in the course of his labors, made the acquaintance of the water genie who taught him many magic practices which made him superior to other boys of his age. For these reasons, no less than for his unusual strength, they chose him leader of the ton' (ton-tigi).

The ton' members were young men of various races belonging to the villages of Doukounna, Si-do, Bignébougou, Sola, Banan-koroni, Ségou-Sikoro, Doua, etc. Mamari's mother, Sanou Saro, often made dlo (millet beer) or hydromel for her son's friends. In order to repay her kindness, which had gradually come to be habitual, the ton-den' [ton members] decided each to subscribe ten cowries to reimburse the good woman for the expenses incurred by the weekly drinking bout on Thursday. The assessment was known as di-songo, meaning, literally, "price of the honey," because of the purpose for which it was collected.

As time passed, the ton' became tyrannical toward its members. The frequent and large fines could be collected only by force and Mamari went so far as to put the recalcitrants

*173 in chains. Like the other members he himself suffered from this unfortunate development, and one day he was sentenced to a fine of 80 head of cattle for an infraction of the rules. He could not pay any such fine out of his own resources and in vain sought help from his father, who was no less poor than his son. In desperation he set off to see his sister at Dina. There his brother-in-law seemed to take an interest in the affair, listened patiently to the story and then advised him to return to Ségou where, he said, help would be forthcoming. Mamari then returned to Ségou, only to be followed shortly by his sister, with word that her husband had changed his mind and now advised him to refuse to pay. Outraged by this conduct, Mamari now found himself in a worse plight than ever. His sister understood his feelings and, without hesitating to make a sacrifice which she thought might save him, handed over all of her gold jewelry to be paid in place of the 80 head of cattle.

Mamari called the members together and gave them the jewels as a substitute for the cattle. However, on behalf of the [30] group, the dyala-tige Sibiri-ba Kouloubali, a native of the village of Doukounna, took the floor and said: "Our group was not organized for the purpose of acquiring treasure; we are gathered here to provide ourselves with the pleasures of living. The fines are not intended to enrich us but only to provide a communal stock of food. You were fined 80 head of cattle, and that is what we want. If you do not have them, go away and let us part."

Mamari crossed over to the left bank of the Niger to seek advice of Massa Taraoré at Dyané and to ask him to intervene. Massa Taraoré listened sympathetically and had him escorted to Doukounna to see the ton' arbitrator. The latter said: "In Mamari's ton' there are nobles from Doua against whom I am not competent to make a judgment; the settlement should be referred to the notables at Doua." The notables at Doua protested: "Since some of our own people are involved, our judgment might well be considered to be biased. So it would be better to call on someone who has no interest whatever in the affair, such as Tyéma Darko of Ségou-koro." When Tyéma was consulted he told Mamari: "Have patience, time settles everything."

*173 Mamari was unwilling to accept this advice; so in order to escape the hostility which he felt around him, he requested asylum from the Kouloubali of Binabougou, only to have them protest: "We are helpless people and, if we were to admit you among us, we should end by arousing the enmity of the powerful people of Doua. So stay where you are and we shall give all we can to help you."

Since he dared not return to Ségou-koro, Mamari went to Ségou-Sikoro where he hoped to win the support of the almami Ousman Dyiré. The latter did, in fact, intercede with the chief of Ségou-koro, who summoned the ton' members and told them: "Stop your quarreling, take back your leader and, in order to avoid a repetition of such dissension, limit your membership to people of the same class and separate yourselves from the nobles of Doua who are the cause of all the trouble." The young men agreed: "It is true that we are all farmers and that fines involving cattle are beyond our means; henceforth, all infractions of the rules will be payable in millet which we shall use to make dlo." Thereupon, Mamari resumed his office and the people of Doua were barred.

[31] From that time on, two rival groups lived side by side: the ton' of Doua, whose chief was Kassoum Boaré, the son of the chief of Doua, and Mamari's ton', comprising the people of Ségou-koro, Ségou-Sikoro, Doukounna, etc.

The young men's decision did not fail to alarm the heads of families. One of them, old Ménkoro Kouloubali, the father of the dyala-tige Sibiri-ba of Doukounna, sought out Mamari's father and said to him: "I see that our boys, who already do so little work for us, have now decided to waste our grain. Well, I warn you, the father of their chief, that if your son touches so much as a single grain of my harvest, I shall break his head." Fa Siné replied: "What can I do, since my son has never obeyed me? However, I shall tell him what you have said."

Fa Siné called in Mamari and, in the presence of the blacksmith Maliki, told him of old Ménkoro's visit and bitterly reproached him for leading such an irresponsible life. Mamari gathered his group together and, after telling them about his

*173 interview with his father, asked them to help him build a house where he could live independently. They set to work, and Mamari's house was soon built at Ségou-koro on the site of the future Biton-blon-da, the place where the ton' had been meeting up to that time. On Mondays and Thursdays, after a hunt to provide game, the members met there and had a feast. Each brought some sort of utensil and they prepared their own meals.

An old slave belonging to fa Siné, named bina (1) Bilali, had been attracted by the fine food and asked to be taken in as a "slave of the ton' " (ton-dyon'). He was admitted on that basis and became a sort of general factotum. A Soninké slave followed his example and was likewise admitted and given the important role of trumpeter. Using a horn which he sounded three times, he called together the members of the ton' when ordered to do so by Mamari. He was called ton-masa, "master of the ton'," because his summons was not to be disobeyed on pain of [32] a fine of ten jugs of millet beer for recalcitrants.

A Somono slave named Allah-doungo (lit., Allah's pleasure) also offered his services to the ton', and the organization increasingly became the refuge of men seeking to evade any authority they deemed excessive.

These recruits were the first ton-dyon'; all were slaves in quest of freedom. Soon, however, the movement they had started was extended, thanks to the influence of the ton-tigi's diplomacy.

One day Mamari's mother gave (1) a free gift of twenty jugs of beer to the ton', and Mamari used the occasion to tell the

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[576] 1. Bina, whose literal meaning is "uncle," is here used as a title of respect.

[431] 1. It is entirely typical of native custom to give ostensibly free gifts in this way, when it is actually intended that the giver receive more than he gives. This is an example.

*173 members: "Sowing-time is at hand, and it would be a good thing if we were to cultivate for my mother and for Sibiri's mother." The *ton-den'* replied: "Since you ask us to work for Sibiri's mother too, we shall do so; if you had asked only for your own mother, we should have refused. We are not your slaves but are and intend to remain free men."

They worked for a fortnight in Mamari's mother's field and then for another fortnight in the field belonging to Sibiri's mother. Then, to express his gratitude, Sibiri's father, old Ménkoro, presented them with a wild ox and expressed a wish to join the *ton'*. Mamari slyly replied: "Ask my father." "Yes, yes, I know," said Ménkoro, "I was mistaken and I ask your pardon." He was accepted and brought with him Mya-Ngue Dembélé of Dina.

So it was that Mamari's *ton'* continued to acquire slaves; the slaves came in order to have an illusion of freedom, and the weak in order to have protection.

Rivalry between the *flá-n-ton'* of Ségou and Doua

The people of Doua could hardly fail to take umbrage at this prosperity, which was more and more a threat to [33] their domination. Therefore, Kassoum's *ton'* used all possible means to combat its rival, Mamari's *ton'*.

One day Kassoum and his followers sought out Mamari and insisted on an eventual reconciliation between the two groups. Mamari refused. Kassoum tried to stem the current of enmity and offered to take an oath as a guarantee of his good intentions. Mamari stopped him, however, saying: "No, let us not swear. In the first place, I can do nothing without the members of my *ton'* and, secondly, since you are strong and I am weak, an oath
695 between us would have no meaning." Kassoum was insistent, however; while they were talking, they came to a stone well and Kassoum pronounced the sacramental words, ate one half of a kola nut and let the other half fall to the bottom of the well. "That's all very well," said Mamari, "but that only binds you.

*173 If you want to come back in a week, I shall gather my men and we'll try to come to an agreement." So they parted, agreeing to meet in a week to go hunting together.

Mamari summoned the *ton-den*' and told them what had taken place. After some discussion, it was agreed to accept the invitation of the *ton*' of Doua.

On the day set, Mamari and the 400 (1) members of his *ton*' arrived promptly at the rendezvous. The hunt took place near Togou and no incident marred the harmony between the young men. However, on the way back, when the party reached Bignébougou, where Kassoum lived, the latter insisted on having the hunters take refreshment at his house where, he said, everything was in readiness to receive them. Mamari protested that nothing of the sort had been agreed upon and that, on the contrary, everyone was free to do as he pleased. He and his *ton-den*' intended to return to their usual meeting-place, while Kassoum and his men could likewise dispose of their game as they wished. The quarrel became so heated that the village elders rushed up to intervene and reprimanded Kassoum. Then Mamari said to them: "Never mind, no one can take what is in my hand unless he cuts off my [34] wrist. Let the people of Doua keep their game. But if any one of us Ségou people gives up his share, let it be said that his mother slept with a dog. Kassoum came to us of his own volition to seek a reconciliation and we agreed to it in order merely to demonstrate our willingness to live in peace. The present quarrel shows just how much credit should be given to his good intentions."

Mamari set out, accompanied by his followers carrying their game. Kassoum, however, had different ideas. Furious at

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1. It is impossible to assign even an approximate value to the numbers given by the traditionists since they cannot be checked. The matter of the fine of 80 head of cattle is another example.

*173 the failure of his stratagem, he was anxious to do what he could to mitigate his ill-advised action. He ordered his horse to be bridled at once but, being too impatient to restrain himself, he jumped onto the only half-prepared mount and dashed off to bar Mamari's way. The two men swore at each other, and it looked as if the affair was about to turn out tragically when Kassoum's brother rushed up. Indignant at his brother's conduct and fearing serious consequences from the quarrel, he knocked Kassoum from his horse and punished him severely.

Kassoum wept; Mamari and his followers departed. Summoned by his father, Kassoum had to explain his escapade. "I had only the best intentions," he said, "and indeed, hoping to consolidate our reconciliation with Mamari, I had had beer prepared which I intended to offer to the whole party." "That may be," said his father, "but you went about it in such a way as to put us in a very delicate position. It is my order that henceforth you are to keep out of trouble."

That evening Kassoum, accompanied by most of his followers, went to see Mamari. He apologized on the pretext of a misunderstanding and begged that a new hunt be organized to mark the end of all these regrettable incidents. "Very well," replied Mamari, "but let us agree in advance as to where we shall set up our kitchen on the return." "Your choice will be ours," said Kassoum.

The hunt took place in the vicinity of Doukounna. On the return trip, Mamari brought up the rear. When they reached Doukounna, the village of the dyala-tige Sibiri-ba, the latter tried to force Kassoum and his people to stop there to do their cooking. Kassoum refused and a quarrel began. Someone informed Mamari, who ran up and sternly rebuked [35] Sibiri, forcing him to give up the idea. For the moment all was calmed down and it even seemed as if the good-will on both sides might be sincere. The two ton' remained separated but maintained a certain amount of comradely contact.

These events did Mamari no harm, and the composure he had displayed, no less than his qualities as an adroit politician, constantly brought new members into the ton'. So it was that the people of Banan-koroni, who had reason to complain of the people of Doua, prevailed upon oldMénkoro to propose them as proteges of the ton'. However, Mamari was not willing to put

*173 himself into the position of being in open conflict with the people of Doua, since he felt that he was not yet ready. So he simply sent back the following answer: "Let anyone at Banan-Koroni who desires to join the ton' present himself, and the members will decide." Six men from Banan-koroni were admitted under the sponsorship of Ménkoro.

When winter was approaching, Kassoum asked that a field be cultivated for him. Mamari persuaded his ton' to cultivate a field for his mother and for fodder for his own horse, a second field for Kassoum, and a third for Sibiri, the dyala-tige.

Old fa Séri, on learning of this decision, said to the other elders: "Our young men, who do nothing for us, who obey us only when they feel like it and who help themselves from our granaries to provide their beer, are now going to spend their time working on fields from which we'll not get a single grain. Don't you think we'd better put an end to this state of affairs?" An old marabout interrupted: "The boys are entitled to use their two free days, Monday and Thursday, to do whatever they want." This opinion was heeded and the young men were left in peace.

The harvest was very abundant and Mamari, particularly, had a great deal of millet. He divided it into two equal piles and, having called his father, said to him: "Here is the result of my companions' labor, and I am giving half to you. However, it must not be forgotten that those who have provided our food are not our slaves but rather, free men, [36] to whom we must show gratitude and generosity. Therefore, from this day forward, you will send to the ton' 10 gourds of couscous and 20 jugs of beer. Have no fear that you will lack for food. I need only give the order and every granary and every field will be pillaged."

The old man departed, delighted to have a son who paid such deference to his old age. However, either because of an excess of joy or for some other reason, he died soon after, and Mamari congratulated himself on having escaped his father's curse (1).

[172]

1. He built a house in the Djenné style at Ségou-koro, of which I have seen the last remaining vestige,

*173 consisting of a rectangular pillar
[172] worn away by the rains.

[765] According to custom, the members of the ten' settled down in front of the deceased's house for a week, singing, dancing and generally carousing in the usual way.

When this traditional period was over, Mamari asked them
to enclose his father's and his mother's houses within a single
wall. They set to work and built a wall with only one door,
[622] over which they placed the pyramidal ornaments used only for
chiefs' doorways. Within the enclosure they left the existing
division in two parts, and it was henceforth understood that the
part formerly occupied by Mamari's father would be reserved
for people from Doukoumna when they wished to stay in Ségou.

Kassoum was determined to show that he had been properly brought up and knew how to return courtesy; so, one day, he invited Mamari to a drinking party, planned especially in his honor. Mamari accepted and, on arriving, found that Kassoum, from impatience no doubt, had started the celebration so far ahead that he was already dead drunk.

According to the usual custom, Mamari ordered one of the
[273] ton-den', as it was his duty, to taste the dlo first (2). Lacking
a utensil in which to pour a small quantity of the beer, the
taster sipped from the crock itself. Kassoum jumped up in a
fury, crying out that the ton-den' was a disgusting person, and
[37] broke a gourd full of beer over the fellow's head. In turn,
Mamari became angry at Kassoum, whose manners struck him
as coarse and intolerable. Then, after much invective on both
sides, Mamari left the place to return home. Kassoum took up
his bow and arrows and set out after Mamari. However, since he
was slowed down by his drunkenness, he could not go far and his
arrows missed their mark. Mamari returned to Ségou and, for
the first time, installed himself in his father's house.

2. A precautionary measure to guard against poison.

*173 Once his drunken fumes had dissipated, Kassoum was seized with remorse and sent his friends to apologize to Mamari. As that move failed, he fined himself 100 jugs of beer and swore that he would prevail upon Mamari and his *ton-den*' to come and drink with them. However, all his advances were received with a categorical refusal: "The first arrow has been shot and all is over between us," said Mamari. Then Kassoum decided to resort to intimidation and force. He set forth, followed by a band armed with arrows and spears, to surprise Mamari, but found the latter's house abandoned.

Meanwhile, Mamari had been forewarned and had had the trumpet sounded to summon his *ton-den*'. He told them what had happened and his actions were approved. Kassoum, who had had to return home after six days of waiting and maneuvering, was put into chains by his father, who was furious at his behavior. Kassoum nourished an implacable hatred toward Mamari, and that is why, when winter came, he and his followers went to Si-do, near Ségou; they settled down there and did everything in their power to prevent Mamari and his people from cultivating their fields. This was a waste of time, however, since the young men did all the work at night. This state of affairs persisted for a year.

Then Mamari once more appealed to his sister. He went to Dina in order to bring back some help. Just at the time he arrived, his brother-in-law died and he was forced to prolong his stay without getting more than promises. After three months' absence, he returned to Ségou and called together the *ton-den*' to tell them of his efforts. On their side, they told him that the situation was no longer endurable; the impossibility of [38] getting the field work done was reducing them to poverty. After careful consideration, it was decided to appeal to the people of Doukouma and Banan-koroni to intervene with Kassoum and persuade him to put an end to hostilities. However, Kassoum held to his claims and Mamari continued to refuse to comply.

At this point, under cover of a dark night, Mamari and his men went to Si-do, destroyed the stockading erected by Kassoum's followers and carried off the wood to their *ton*'. The

*173 next day Kassoum and his party returned in broad daylight to reclaim the wood and destroy the buildings belonging to Mamari's ton'. This resulted in a fight, during which one of Mamari's followers killed a man in Kassoum's party. The latter retreated with his people, carrying off the body of their companion.

Kassoum's father now recognized the gravity of a situation which he had so far regarded as childish horseplay and, to avenge the murder of one of his subjects, swore to kill Mamari and ten notables of Ségou, Doukounna and Banan-koroni. He at once sent an order to the ton-den' to turn over Mamari and the murderer to him. "Never," replied the young men, "will any of us agree to arrest one of our comrades. We shall never hand over Mamari, either. Let the chief of Doua come and get them."

At this very moment, Mamari's sister, Sana-ba, arrived at Ségou. According to custom, the eldest son of her late husband was bringing her back to her family in order to obtain permission to marry her. She was escorted by 300 armed men, who were supplied with two pirogues filled with arrows and an ample quantity of spears. Mamari prevailed upon Sana-ba to persuade her escort to enter the ton', along with the Bambara chiefs from the left bank of the Niger who had come to Ségou to pay their respects to the widow of the powerful chief of Dina.

With all this support, Mamari now felt competent to deal with the people of Doua. For this purpose he built stockadings between Fa and Si-do; a month later he was attacked by the people of Doua, but he easily repulsed them and took the offensive. The enemy was dislodged successively from Doua and Bignébougou, where Kassoum was killed, and from Togou, where Damfé was killed. The vanquished took refuge with Mamadi Boaré at Kirango, where they were besieged by Mamari's ton-den'.

[39]

The Kouloubali

(1660-1735)

Mamari, called Biton, and his Descendants ([illegible])

Mamari, called Biton (1) (1660-1710). As his power

1. The name Mamari, among the

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1. The name Mamari, among the Bambara, is the equivalent of Mohammed. It is a common given name, even among pagans; the *dyeli* Karé Tammoura, perhaps because of his own conversion to Islam, used the name Mamari more often than the more common Biton. The cognomen Biton, is a hybrid adopted by the Peul as an equivalent for *ton-den'*. The same personage was formerly called *fa Tigi-ton'*, which also indicates Peul influence and which is, on occasion, shortened to *fa Tigi*, rendered by some who misheard the original as *fo Tige* and also *fo Tinye*.

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*173 increased over his people, Mamari felt the stirrings of ambition grow. The defeat and rout of the people of Doua gave a definite orientation to his projects for domination. However, there was one thing he needed to carry out his plans: an army completely under his control.

As a start toward carrying out his designs, he sent a message to the people of Doukoumna and Banan-koroni, his oldest and most faithful allies, with a request that they send their elders to him on a permanent basis to form a council which he would consult on all appropriate occasions. The elders agreed to remain with him during the dry season, but they insisted on returning home in the winter to look after their own affairs and those of their people.

While these negotiations were proceeding, the young men of Doukoumna and Banan-koroni were fighting around Kirango on Mamari's behalf. When the latter could not overcome the elders' resistance, he resolved to use force (2). He caused a deep well

2. With the assistance of his new partisans, the people of Dina and those from the left bank of the Niger.

*173 to be dug in the courtyard of his house and then summoned the recalcitrant elders, ostensibly for consultation on urgent matters. When they had arrived, Mamari told them that he wished to interview them two by two in order better to know their opinion concerning the questions under consideration. The elders refused. Then, at a sign from Mamari, [40] men who had been posted at hand for the purpose hurled themselves upon the elders, massacred them and threw their corpses into the well, which was then sealed up. It is said that there were 740 elders and also that, since that time, people from Doukounna and Banan-koroni who reach Ségou in the evening never spend the night there.

Now deprived of their rightful leaders, the people of Doukounna and Banan-koroni were henceforth at the mercy of Mamari. He recalled the column from Kirango and, as soon as it had arrived, he summoned the young men of Doukounna and Banan-koroni. Without giving them any explanation, he ordered [308 567] them to wear their hair in the fashion of the *ton-dyon'*, i.e., to have their hair shaved off except for two locks at the forehead and another at the nape of the neck. The young men protested that they were free men, but Mamari told them: "Your elders are buried here because they persisted in acting like free men, and there are now only women and slaves in your villages." When they were told what had happened in their absence, the young men realized that any resistance was out of the question; so they submitted and went to swell the numbers of the *ton-dyon'*.

This bold act gave Mamari a permanent army and he was so well aware of the extent of his success that his pride was already openly displayed. "The Dyémé-ka-dougou," he said, "extends from the Mindaka watercourse to that of Sitadougou. On the other bank of the Mindaka, the country belongs to the people of Doua. Let it be well understood that you are either on their side or on mine. We shall no longer eat groundnuts in the *ton'* together, nor drink our rounds of *ton'* millet beer. I am the son of Allah and henceforth shall drink only a king's beer in a royal cup. Let those who want to drink with me remain, and all others depart. From now on, the only free men are Nyé Tyétigi of Banan-koroni and Mansa of Banamba. All the rest are my slaves. Therefore, let each village send me 100 men to make up my personal guard."

*173 All of these confusing events, however, did not fail to arouse resistance. The people of Doukounna and Banan-koroni, though unable to fight openly, nevertheless sought to avenge themselves upon Mamari. For this purpose they made common cause with the people of Doua. A man from Doukounna, along [804] with one from Doua who carried [41] 300 gros [gros = 1/8 oz.] of gold, went to Kong to seek an army to fight against Mamari. The people of Kong (1) agreed and provided a well-organized

1. Native traditions tend to center around great empires, capitals or paramount chiefs.

I have indicated that the origin of the Kouloubali, who founded the empire of Ségou, is connected with ancestors said by some traditionists to have come from Mandé and by others to be descended from a hunter from the east (see p. 30).

These two contrasting traditions reappear in connection with the siege of Ségou. The version given in this tale is also found in the Notice historique du Royaume et du Cercle de Ségou [Historical Note on the Kingdom and Circle of Ségou] and in Autour de Kita [Around Kita], p. 38. At this period Kong had an extensive sphere of influence, and M. Binger has shown how, by entirely commercial and peaceful means, it managed to acquire far-flung authority. Therefore, this version of a Kong army coming to attack Ségou and, on being defeated, retreating to the west and occupying Banan and then Mandé, seems suspect, because it is out of character with the practices of the Dioula [Diula] of Kong.

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Monsieur Delafosse, who thinks the story improbable, has a different explanation, based on traditions concerning the other center, Mandé.

force, which laid siege to Ségou. However, when the assailants failed to take Ségou, they gave up their plan and, heading east, captured Bala. Encouraged by this success, they returned to Ségou, which they besieged for nine months until Mamari's fall seemed imminent. But at that point the chief of Dina managed to break through under cover of darkness and to bring in provision. Thanks to this help, Mamari successfully attempted a sortie. The Kong forces were taken by surprise and cut to pieces. They abandoned a large number of rifles of the blunderbuss type, the first firearms ever seen in the region.

As a result of this event which, instead of lessening Mamari's prestige, actually consolidated his authority, he asked the chief of Dina to leave behind his armed force as a permanent arrangement. However, the chief refused, saying: "My men may remain here during the dry season, but they must return home in the winter to till the fields." Mamari was not satisfied and he maneuvered to such good effect that when the chief started home with his men, the latter abandoned him one by one. Enticed by Mamari's promises, all returned to enter his service and submit to him as ton-dyon'. The chief of Dina was very angry and bitterly reproached Sana-ba for her brother's conduct; indeed, their insults went so far that there was no possibility of [42] a reconciliation. As a result, Sana-ba fled, taking with her 400 men whom she left at Kégné while she herself proceeded to Ségou.

After having thus subdued a possibly troublesome ally, and having no further anxiety with regard to the Kong people, Mamari resumed his struggle against Kirango. He dispatched his son Ba-dyi to besiege the village, but the son was defeated and killed. Mamari vowed that his vengeance would be terrible and that nothing would avert the evil fate planned for his hitherto invincible enemies. Yet for the moment his threats remained empty, for he agreed with his followers that it would be very dangerous to seek to conquer at any price.

*173 In order to occupy his time, he undertook a preliminary organization of his domain. So as to preclude any surprise from the direction of Dina, he put his slave Mari, with 1,000 men, in charge at Tyi-la-bougou, opposite Niamina.

At that time, the Peul, who were centered near Ségou, were under the authority of one of their own people, named Dotyé Bari, himself a vassal of Mamari. One day Dotyé learned of the arrival of a large company of migrants from Bani-n-ko under the command of a certain Dyoba Fonba. Dotyé sent word to Mamari, who told him to keep an eye on the newcomers. However, Dyoba soon complained of Dotyé and demanded to be put under the authority of the chief, Tyéma Mamari. Mamari refused, and Tyéma, impressed by this show of defiance, left his village to come to Ségou, where he settled at Tyéma-bougou.

Dotyé had died in the meantime, and Mamari sent for Dyoba and set him up in the deceased's place. He summoned the dead man's son Bougari, under pretext of establishing the boy near him; actually, he required Bougari to furnish him a force of 1,000 men. These he considered as his own slaves and belonging to his mother, Sounou Saro; they were put in charge of Nankoroba Nzangué Dyallo.

Further, he sent his son Bakari -- a younger brother of Badyi -- to Djenné to be educated in the Moslem religion. Still another son, Dé-koro, was established at Ségou-bougou at the head of 6,000 Samaké, who had come from Ténétou. To this contingent, Mamari added another 12,000 men commanded by Kanou-ba-nyouma.

[43] He finally decided that the moment had come to march on Kirango. The expedition was completely successful. Chief Mamadi Boaré was killed and 16,000 captives fell into the hands of the victor, who distributed them among the chiefs who had aided him. One of these, Ngola Ké-ba, received 1,000 men, while four groups of 400 men each, under the over-all command of _fa_ Sira Taraoré, were forced to work in the fields at Farako. The old man, Ton-massa, received as his share 9,000 men and he settled at Kohin, south of Ségou-bougou, while a certain _fa_ Sira took possession of Ségou with a following of 400 persons. Finally, the young _sofa_ were put under the orders of

*173 Dyoni Kolé, that is, a man named Kolé who came from Dioni.

Mamari himself had no fixed residence and his presence in a vicinity was always a source of anxiety for any who might cause him displeasure. It is said that one day he told the almami Ousman, who was somewhat a friend of his: "I intend to establish my home at Ségou-Sikoro." "Fine! (1)" said the almami, who was ready to leave when Mamari shortly afterward added: "On second thought, I'd rather build a 'New-Ségou' (Ségou-koura)." "Fine!" repeated the almami Ousman. However, Mamari again changed his mind and summoned the almami Ousman Dyiré in order to hand over to him the responsibility for affairs at Ségou-Sikoro. Since the old Moslem had no wish to get too intimately involved with his turbulent neighbor, he declined the honor and invented an excuse for a trip to Togou.

[195]

Around this time, the Somono Tyéro people, migrating from the Bobo country, arrived at Ségou and obtained permission to remain there. Soon after, the people of Kong, who had recovered from their defeat, appeared on the frontiers of the Ségou country. Since they were warlike and well armed, they were redoutable adversaries and indeed they very nearly routed Mamari. It is said that in the decisive battle Mamari owed his victory solely to the Somono Tyéro people who routed the Kong forces by causing a swarm of bees to attack them.

[44] Old Ton-massa died during this engagement, and Mamari felt the loss all the more keenly because the soothsayers he had consulted predicted that his own run of good fortune would vanish with the old man. However, he arranged for a replacement for the deceased old man and gave his duties to a slave whom he bought from the Somono people at Néré-koro.

In that same year he modified the tax which had been required of his followers and proclaimed that in future instead of the di-songo, they would only have to give him the grain which

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1. This expression "a nyana" is an evasive answer, often used to hide hostility. See many examples in Chap. 7 following.

*173 remained in the dust at harvest-time. This levy was called the nyon' dyu.

At about the same time he acquired two new slaves who were destined to play an important role in the country: one is still known as Nzan Fato and the other was Ngolo Dyara. The first was enslaved for stealing a beehive. Here is the story of the second:

Ngolo Dyara was born in the village of Nyouanna (1), which paid an annual tribute of millet to Mamari. Now, when Ngolo's father died, his uncle Ménkoro had to go to Ségou to make the payment because of the child's extreme youth and, under the pretext of initiating the boy into the proceedings, he took the child with him. As was his usual custom, Ménkoro stayed at the home of Danté Balo, the wife of a blacksmith who was a client of Mamari. Then, also according to his usual habit, he visited all of the dives and gambling-houses, where he managed to lose 130 of the 160 loads of millet intended for tribute. Thereupon, he sought out his hostess and told her that during the night some "young men" had robbed him, and he bemoaned the reception he was likely to get from Biton. The good woman allowed herself to be fooled and agreed to appease the master's wrath by offering Ngolo Dyara as substitute for the missing tribute.

When Mamari heard that the payment from Nyouanna was insufficient, he fell into a towering rage and, to punish this lapse, which occurred every year, he swore to sacrifice Ménkoro to his idols. But Danté Balo intervened and, by clever maneuvres, persuaded Mamari to change his mind and, for this time, to accept [45] young Ngolo Dyara as the balance of the payment. Mamari received the child as a hostage and gave Ménkoro 20 days to buy him back for 300 loads of millet. If the time ran out without any payment from Ménkoro, the child would belong to Mamari. This arrangement was agreed to, and Mamari ordered his blacksmith, Sdir-bilé, to proclaim the terms clearly so that, if the occasion should arise, no one could criticize him for enslaving a free man. Thereupon, Ménkoro went home alone.

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1. "Niola, near Bogué, across from Niamina" (Delafosse, Vol. 2, p. 227).

*173 Mamari was soon charmed by the wide-awake countenance and quick intelligence of Ngolo and made him a boon companion and sharer of all his secrets. He gave him the key to the room where his idols were kept and taught him the rituals of their cult. He presented him to his wives, dressed him in red (1) and, in short, treated him as the most cherished of favorites.

A year passed before the people of Nyouanna put in an appearance; Mamari asked them if they wanted to claim the child. "No," they said, "for not only has the time-limit passed, but also we still have not the means to pay the tax agreed; when he accepted your proposal, Ménkoro knew perfectly well that he could never carry it out. Besides, the child has by now acquired habits from living among you which would make it unbearable for him to live with us." Mamari ordered the blacksmith to inform everyone of these statements so that it would be well known that Ngolo Dyara was now his slave both in fact and by law.

By dint of living so intimately with his master, Ngolo soon learned all Mamari's secrets. He knew, for instance, that on certain days Mamari bathed in water which had the virtue of strengthening and increasing his authority. It occurred to him that he could no doubt acquire a bit of this power if he bathed in the magic water. So every time the master took a bath, the child stood beneath the gutter that carried the water outside so as to share the wonderful effects of this magic practice. [46] But Mamari had noticed traces of footprints beneath the gutter on

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[822] 1. Scarlet is a favorite color among the Sudanese. The tale here recounted shows three examples of this fact: the foregoing about Ngolo, another about Tonmassa, and still another about Deni-ba Bo. The last two examples would seem to indicate that red was especially reserved for chiefs. A similar conclusion is to be reached from analogous facts at Malli set forth by Ibn Batouta.

*173 several occasions and suspected the truth; so he used a trick. He pretended to take a bath and, while the water was running out, looked outside. He saw the child beneath the gutter and struck him with his iron-tipped stick.

Ngolo was terrified and ran off to tell his story to Danté Balo. The good woman interceded with Mamari and persuaded him to relent. Nevertheless, Mamari decided to separate from his favorite and summoned Kolé, the leader of the *sofa*, to whom he entrusted the child, saying: "Here's a bad boy; don't be afraid to make him work hard."

One day, when he had taken the *bila-koro* (1) in his charge to the field to cut fodder, Kolé sat down in a place called *Sirani-n-tu* (lit., forest of the little baobab tree) after the small baobab tree which grew there in the middle of a grove. The spirit of the place, who lived in the baobab tree, appeared to Kolé and said: "If you come tomorrow to this same spot and if you bring me a white ram, a white rooster and some rice, I will make it possible for you to become king of Ségou." Now Ngolo, who was wandering about nearby, had seen and heard everything. When he returned to Ségou he ran weeping to Danté Balo; when she asked what was the matter, he answered that a spirit had threatened to kill him unless he sacrificed a white ram, a white rooster and some rice. "Ah well," she said, "Cheer up, here's a white rooster and some rice, and you can take the ram from the master's flock. If anyone is surprised at seeing you with a ram, just say that I gave it to you." He followed her advice and arrived on time at the rendezvous, which Kolé, on the other hand, had forgotten.

After killing the rooster and the ram, in accordance with the rites with which he was familiar, and offering the rice, Ngolo saw the genie appear, while a distant voice said: "Ah, it's you, friend Kolé (2), I'm glad to see you obey my orders and, in return,

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[56 / 291] 1. A young boy old enough to be circumcised and wearing a piece of cloth called *bila* between his legs, instead of trousers.

2. It is interesting to note that the genie

*173

> mistakes the identity of the person honoring him and takes him for Kolé. This is a fact worth noting because it often occurs. Do the native tales use this means of expressing some sort of inferiority? If so, what sort of inferiority?

I promise that you will be supreme ruler of Ségou on the sole condition that [47] you bring me the same offerings at the same time every year." Such was the pact which made Ngolo's fortune.

The next day a young sofa, to whom Kolé had confided his adventure, asked him if he had fulfilled the wishes of the genie of Sirani-n-tu. The absent-minded Kolé at once set out and, when he had completed the sacrifice, the genie, astonished at being disturbed, asked what he wanted. On learning that this was the real Kolé, the spirit told him that he had been outwitted by a cleverer person, who had been entrusted with the secret of success. However, to reward him for his effort, the genie promised Kolé great wealth and an exalted position if every year at the same time he would come and make the same offering.

Kolé left in a rage. Certain that only one of the young sofa could have overheard the secret and made use of it, he summoned all the bila-koro and threatened to give each of them 100 lashes unless they denounced the one who had dared to impersonate him. Ngolo was accused, but he denied the charge emphatically. Yet when Kolé required him to swear by the well, he refused. So Kolé went to Mamari and told him that Ngolo's conduct was absolutely intolerable and that it was becoming impossible to keep him. Mamari insisted, in vain, on having some exact details and finally ordered Kolé to assign Ngolo to the group of sofa whose special duty was to care for the horses, until such time as it would be possible to get rid of him.

An opportunity soon arose when Mamari was sending a caravan of 240 slaves to Djenné to be exchanged for horses. The marabout of Djenné, who housed the caravan, demanded a slave of his own choosing in payment for his hospitality. Charmed by Ngolo's intelligence and youth, the marabout's choice fell on him. This new master treated Ngolo well, but forced him to

*173 embrace Islam. Ngolo made rapid progress and soon knew half the Koran by heart; at this point, having made a plan, he one day presented himself in tears to his master, the marabout. The latter kindly inquired the cause of his distress, and Ngolo told him that, though born free, he had been given in pawn to Mamari. He further said that he had just heard his parents had arrived at Ségou to ransom him and that, not knowing where to find him, they would certainly leave for good, and henceforth [48] he would have to remain a slave. The marabout told him: "Since you now know most of the Koran by heart and can practice our religion properly, you are no longer a slave. I give you your freedom; return to your country whenever you like."

Ngolo set out at once for Ségou, where he received hospitality from a marabout to whom he recounted his story of wandering, concluding with the information that his master at Djenné, of his own accord, had set him free as a reward for his zeal and assiduity in practicing the Moslem religion. Ngolo begged his host to intercede with Mamari for his pardon. The marabout gave him an amulet and told him to mingle with the young men guarding Mamari's door, so as to have every chance of getting near the master who, under the influence of the charm, would readily pardon him.

Ngolo followed this advice. Very early one morning he went to the vicinity of Mamari's house and, having concealed himself among the women working about the place, he was able to stretch out among the guards without attracting attention. He was pretending to be asleep when the master left his hut, recognized him, struck him with his iron-shod stick, and asked what he was doing there. Once more he recounted his adventure in its most favorable light and, with the marabout's amulet clutched in his hand, implored Mamari's pardon.

Mamari summoned Kolé and turned Ngolo over to him. Very soon, Ngolo sowed discord among the young men. Two factions were formed: on the one side, Kolé's partisans, and on the other, Ngolo's. Each day fights broke out at the slightest pretext. Kolé was at his wit's end and went to seek Mamari, saying: "It's impossible to keep Ngolo, for he is undermining my authority by his intrigues." "Be patient, as I am," replied Mamari, "and I shall do for him so thoroughly that he'll never return."

*173 When Sidi El Mokhtar (1) arrived on a courtesy visit to Mamari, the latter, out of politeness, gave Ngolo to him [49] by way of a favor. Sheik Sidi El Mokhtar soon saw through Ngolo and was well aware that he would get no profit from the boy. So he told him: "You are destined for the highest places and your sons will rule Ségou. I leave you free to pursue your destiny; in return, however, I demand that you pledge yourself, as of today, to pay me a reward as soon as you occupy your predestined place." Ngolo refused to undertake any obligation and Sheik Sidi El Mokhtar, unable to overcome his resistance, let him depart all the same.

When he reached Ségou, Ngolo took refuge in the home of the Somono, Baré Tyéro, who took him to almami Ousman. The latter turned him over to Mamadou Kané, who presented him to Mamari. Mamari welcomed Ngolo as one welcomes one's fate. Again he sent for Kolé, but the latter was unwilling to cope with Ngolo and suggested a way to get rid of him. It happened that the post of tax-collector at Ségou-Sikoro had been vacant for some time; like his predecessors, the last incumbent had died of poison, and no one was anxious to take on the job. The irrepressible Ngolo would hardly fail to come to a prompt end in this dangerous post.

Contrary to expectations, however, Ngolo turned out to be a very able politician; not only did he have no trouble with the taxpayers, but he acquired many sincere partisans with the result that, at the time he married the wife who was to bear his son Boubou-dyé, there were more than a thousand people living under his authority.

Mamari had heard of a very learned marabout, named Karamoko Abdoullahi Diari, who lived at Niamina and he resolved to send for him. Kolé advised him to entrust the delicate

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1. Sheik Sidi El Mokhtar was born around 1730 and died around 1811. There is therefore an error in the story -- an occurrence too frequent in native traditions to be worthy of emphasis.

*173 mission to Ngolo on the theory that the impetuous and violent young man could hardly fail to anger the old man, who would shortly do away with him by means of the occult practices known to marabouts. From the beginning, however, the old man realized that this was a man destined to accomplish great things; so he welcomed him kindly, gave him amulets and made him promise to follow his advice most exactly. Ngolo asked him to use his influence to effect a reconciliation with Mamari. So the old man warned Mamari that he could expect good fortune only if he lived in constant association with Ngolo, who "had luck."

[50] From that day forward, Mamari had Ngolo about his person. He added a thousand men to those already following Ngolo and, so that the latter could support his followers suitably, he gave him cattle and sheep. He had Ngolo live at Ségou-koro, and although the young man kept the name Sikoro Ngolo, he was 793 also given the title of *dyenfa*, meaning high priest of his idols. Of these, the two most important were *ba Kango-ba* and *na Ngolo-ko*, which he had brought from Kaminiadougou.

Further, the old marabout of Niamina told Ngolo of a young girl in the village of Diaba destined to bear children who would have a brilliant future. On the basis of the learned man's advice, Ngolo asked the girl's hand in marriage; but she was an only child and her parents were no more anxious to lose her than she was to leave them. Mamari intervened, and upon his order the girl was handed over to Ngolo, while her grieving parents were recompensed with a gift of ten slaves.

In any case, Mamari's prudent friendship for Ngolo by no means blinded him to his own interests. He extended his influence less by warlike means than by very clever diplomacy. When he had settled in the Ségou area, the country between Dina and Kirango had about 40 cantons which were independent of each other. He was skillful enough to impose himself gradually as overlord by making use of the dissensions which divided them. By means of adroit diplomacy and an occasional successful campaign, he managed to gain control of the whole area.

In order to eliminate the barriers which tribes or families stubbornly maintained between one another, he moved whole groups of populations from place to place. Or he would establish

*173 troops or allies in large numbers at points where loyalty seemed doubtful. So it was that he put the faithful Kolé in charge of 6,000 men and gave command over 8,000 to his dependent, Allah-n-siré. These two chiefs were likewise at the service of his favorite wife, the mother of his head son Ba-dyi. In the same way, Tyé-kouma took up a position at Nango with 6,000 men, while another force of the same size and under the command of Ngolo Ké-ba occupied Sama in order to prevent an attack by the Kouloubali of Mémana [51] and Sori-bougou. Mamari himself settled at Massala, opposite Sama, for the same purpose. Bani-n-ko was held in check by 9,000 people camped at Gassi and under the command of Kafa-dyougou.

In the direction of Dina, fears which, at a given moment, had been very real, were now at an end. On the death of the chief, his 70 sons were unable to agree, and the slaves, finding no master among them, offered themselves to Mamari. He divided them into three groups: a group of 6,000 men settled at Foni under the command of Si-dloki entrusted with the mission of keeping watch over Bo-dyan, chief of Simo-na; a second group numbering 4,000 men was under the leadership of Fané and stationed at Massala to guard against hostile action from Konka-dougou; and a third group numbering 3,000 went to Guén-ni, in the Kala area near Ségou, to oppose a possible invasion attempt by Nyarankan, chief of Diani.

To the east, the frontier required careful watching. The Doua people had more or less reoccupied Kirango and were once more a threat. A column directed toward Togou and commanded by Allah-n-siré was repulsed and Allah-n-siré himself was killed, but when Ngolo was sent out to retrieve the loss, he came out the victor. As a reward, Mamari put him in command of his personal guard of more than 3,000 young warriors. Thereafter, Ngolo was constantly on duty in the room adjoining Mamari's.

A certain Kelli-Kelli Dinké had quarreled with his brothers and asked Mamari to intervene by force of arms in the dispute. Mamari agreed to go himself, then yielded to the ton-masa's request to take his place. The ton-masa was roundly defeated and Mamari was about to go himself when his son Dé-koro insisted on being given the responsibility. When Dé-koro reached

*173 the scene, he grossly insulted the ton-masa, calling him a coward and an incompetent, and had him given 40 lashes in front of the troops. Then Dé-koro took the village and killed the chief.

On his return, the ton-masa complained bitterly to Mamari of the shameful treatment accorded him and he made no secret of his hatred for Dé-koro. On the advice of a friend named Dyon-kolo, Mamari commiserated with the ton-masa and assured him that in the future no one [52] would fail to show him the respect due him. In token of his regard and esteem, he gave [804] him 150 coudees [a measure of ca. 50 centimeters] of silk to make a bila and a belt such as were worn by the sofa; the ton-masa alone had this regalia. Finally, in order to obviate any possible discord between the ton-masa and Dé-koro, Mamari acceded to the ton-masa's request to be placed in the service of son Bakari, who was pursuing his Islamic studies at Djenné.

Soon after this serious event, Mamari died (1).

1. His dominion extended on both banks of the Niger from Dina to Timbuktu.

*Around 1670, Er Rachid, the first filalien or hassanide sultan of Fez, in the course of an expedition into the Sous, besieged the mosque of a Moslem religious officiant named Ali ben Haidara, who fled to the Sudan and took refuge with the Banmana emperor Biton Kouloubali, whose authority was beginning to extend as far as Timbuktu. Ali offered Biton beautiful women captives of Spanish or Portuguese origin whom he had brought with him. The Banmana prince was so taken with this gift that he permitted Ali to settle at Timbuktu with his family and pupils and promised him protection. Indeed, when the sultan, Er Rachid, in hot pursuit of Ali, encountered the Ségou army between Timbuktu and Djenné in the northern part of Massina, he met with

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> flat refusal on the part of Biton to turn over the fugitive. So the sultan returned to Morocco." (Delafosse, Vol. 1, p. 247). "Biton died of tetanus, after having wounded his foot accidentally on a sharp piece of iron." (Delafosse, Vol. 2, p. 286.)

Everyone who had any connection with the late leader brought or sent a contribution toward the funeral ceremonies. There were enough cowries to fill six warehouses, and Dé-koro decided to keep for himself their distribution to help the needy. The *ton-masa* opposed this view and wanted to have the treasure distributed among the poor at once. This disagreement, basically due to the enmity between the two men, might well have degenerated into active hostility, had Bakari's arrival not offered a diversion.

Bakari summoned all the slaves and in their presence picked up a marvelous piece of material, which had been given him by the marabouts of Djenné, and cast it into the air. It hung miraculously suspended over Bakari and his brother Dé-koro, who was seated beside him. Then the *ton-masa* tied a band of cloth around his own neck, humbly handed the ends to Bakari and said: "By the will of our master, I am and shall remain your slave."

On the fortieth day, Bakari was named chief. He settled [53] at Ségou-koro, while his brother Dé-koro withdrew to Ségou-bougou.

Bakari (1710) (1). Bakari's first act was to seek all those who had contributed nothing to his father's funeral. Among these were the people of Ki[illegible]go under Mamari-ntyéni, Boaré,

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1. Dr. Quintin and M. Delafosse consider that Biton's immediate successor was Dé-koro and that Ali or Bakari was only an unimportant intermediary between Dé-koro and Ton-Massa.

*173 and Bakari decided to attack them. The ton-masa intervened, saying: "They are poor and they have not yet recovered from the disasters inflicted on them by your father. I am sure that it was due to no lack of good-will that they failed to fulfill their tributary obligations. In any event, it would be better to hear them before taking action against them." Bakari agreed and called upon Mamari-ntyéni for an explanation. Mamari-ntyéni refused to appear and sent the following reply: "I could not send cowries because neither I nor my people have any. Besides, why harry me for cowries I failed to send when you cannot agree what to do with those you have?"

This impertinence exasperated Bakari and he set out at the head of a large force to attack Kirango. However, by the time he had reached Dyam-bourou-bougou, his anger had subsided and he sent envoys to Mamari-ntyéni to invite him, once again, to make profession of loyalty. Mamari-ntyéni refused and swore that if Bakari continued to march on Kirango, he would cleave his skull from forehead to neck. Ignoring these threats, Bakari laid siege to the village and surrounded it for three months. Then, with winter at hand, the slaves murmured: "We've spent the whole dry season here and have obtained no decisive result in spite of our efforts. The winter season won't be any better -- in fact, worse -- and our fields will be producing nothing. We'd better go home."

These complaints came especially from Dé-koro's slaves, instigated by their leader, Kanou-ba-nyouma, and by their hatred of the ton-masa, their master's enemy. One day Dé-koro's people departed, but Bakari, though reduced to his own forces, was no less determined to take the [54] village. However, the difficult situation in which he found himself, the demoralization of his people and the dissatisfaction they displayed even about him, all conspired to undermine his strong constitution. He fell into a malady, brought on, it is said, by poison and sorcery. Unable now to lead, he returned to Ségou, where he died shortly after. Bakari reigned for six months; his funeral ceremonies were celebrated in the usual manner.

Dé-koro (1711-1736). On the fortieth day, Bakari was succeeded by his brother, Dé-koro.

*173

From the beginning he was at odds with the ton-dyon', who since Mamari's death, had been divided in their allegiance among the probable contenders for authority. And then, Dé-koro's refusal to live at Ségou-koro created such trouble for him that he had to yield, at least on the surface, for after all he came only to the Monday and Thursday meetings.

Since the situation was rapidly becoming untenable, he decided to assert his authority through force and terror. In order to break the resistance of the ton-dyon', he decided to get at them through their leaders. To Bilali, one of his father's oldest slaves, he said: "What have you got to talk about? You're nothing but a lazy good-for-nothing; you're the last one at work while I myself am there at dawn." A little later, in an access of insane rage, he had the old man seized and nailed to a baobab tree. The wretched corpse remained there all winter, horrible evidence of the anger and power of the master. The ton-dyon' trembled.

The winter season having passed, Dé-koro got together a column which he led against Kirango. However, his efforts were vain and, for fear of being abandoned by his troops, he returned to Ségou. He could not remain there long, for discontent grew around him and threatened to bring him ruin. So, after reorganizing his army, he crossed the river and attacked Doroni, a village on the left bank. His forces were unsuccessful and he had to retreat. Along the way his people got out of hand, some wanting to return to Doroni, some to proceed to Ségou, and others intending to take a rest. The last opinion prevailed and so Dé-koro spent a year at Sama with most of his men.

[55] Enraged at his reverses, which he attributed to lack of discipline among his people, he finally got back to Ségou and summoned the four principal chiefs: the ton-masa, Kanou-banyouma, Kafadyougou and Kolé. He told them in a terrible voice: "You no longer want to till the fields or to make war. This must stop!" "You'll get nothing from us," said the ton-masa, "because you treat us badly, and you have no success in fighting because you have no 'luck'." Dé-koro broke off the interview and commanded each of them to send him 60 men.

At Dé-koro's orders, the blacksmith fa Kourou placed each of the contingents of 60 men along each of the four sides of

*173 a square drawn on the ground, and at once the native masons, in Dé-koro's presence, built four walls enclosing the men. (1).

> 1. Raffenel gave a dramatic account of these events with the imaginative license of a griot.

"Thus, I shall live in this room in the midst of my slaves, and they will have no choice but to guard me," said Dé-koro. And the ton-dyon' trembled. Only the ton-masa had the courage to protest, saying: "If I had known the fate in store for my unfortunate companions, I should never have obeyed your orders." "Well," said Dé-koro, "on the day you refuse to obey my orders, I shall make a bench of your body and sit upon it."

When winter came, Dé-koro summoned the leaders of the ton-dyon'. He gave 12,000 mattocks to the ton-masa, 8,000 to Kafadyougou, and 11,000 to Kanou-ba-nyouma. To each he assigned an area to be cultivated since they had all refused to resume the war. Fassoun, Nyé-dingué-dou and Ngolo Ké-ba were left in peace because they agreed to follow him.

The ton-masa refused to cultivate the field assigned him because he wanted to farm near his village, and the two other leaders, assigned to similar work, shared his views. Dé-koro tried to overcome this opposition but, failing to do so, he ordered the ton-masa to go away to take Kirango. The ton-masa agreed and went with his followers to the walls of Kirango, where he was roundly defeated and forced to call upon Dé-koro for help. Dé-koro replied with a formal order to take the village. The ton-masa and his people returned to Ségou of their own accord.

[56] Matters remained unchanged for some time and the ton-masa limited himself to coming to Ségou-koro for the Monday and Thursday gatherings.

The situation was serious and might have taken a turn for the worse at the slightest pretext. Two old friends of Mamari, the founder of the clan, were aware of this. Of their own accord they came to Dé-koro and told him: "This cannot go on; you are heading straight for a catastrophe. Discontent surrounds you and grows worse each day. Agree to receive the ton-masa and have done with

*173 all this." Dé-koro replied: "I'm not responsible -- it is the *ton-masa*." The two old men then asked the chief of Kamana to intercede, but Dé-koro persisted in affirming: "I'm not the chief of Bélé-koro; the *ton-masa* is."

Appeals made to the *ton-masa* gradually brought about a lessening of tension, and one day he finally appeared before Dé-koro. The *ton-masa* knelt down and, improvising a halter from his blouse, put his hands behind his back and bent his head to the ground, saying: "I shall cultivate the great field at Ségou-koro this year."

The *ton-masa* kept his word and six of the slave leaders followed his example. A large area was under cultivation and so the harvest was large. When the millet had been threshed and the master, accompanied by his faithful *fa* Kourou, came to see it, the *ton-masa* cried: "Here is our work! Henceforth we are only farmers and you will have to get along with millet alone." Dé-koro was furious and had his *griot* proclaim that never more would the *ton-masa* touch a mattock and that he was to get his knife ready.

The *ton-dyon'* returned to their respective homes and, when winter came, did no farming. When winter was over, Dé-koro assembled the leaders of the *ton-dyon'* and proposed an attack on Tamani. The *ton-masa* said: "What's the use of attacking Tamani? It's only a village inhabited by the weak Marka people. It would be much better to fight against Nyé-n-tigui, chief of Soroko." Dé-koro agreed. A column started off, only to find, on arrival, that the village had been evacuated: Nyé-n-tigui had been forewarned.

Dé-koro's wrath was terrible. "This is your work!" he accused the leaders of the *ton-dyon'*. "It is you who have [57] warned Nyé-n-tigui of the fate awaiting him. Once more you have betrayed me. Well, be informed that my knife is ready; before too long I shall make use of it on the public square at Ségou and I shall not stop until a stream of blood flows down to the river."

He had a large place prepared for the proposed executions, and the terrified slaves no longer showed their faces in Ségou-koro.

*173 Dé-koro summoned the *ton-masa* and ordered him to assemble the *ton-dyon*' on a certain day, but on that day no one appeared. Thereupon, Dé-koro dispatched a Samaké to warn the slave leaders individually to turn up. They came and he asked them: "Why has no one been coming to the Monday and Thursday meetings for the last three months?" They replied: "You threatened us and we were afraid." He made an appointment with them a week from that day when they were to take an oath with him.

The general assembly desired by Dé-koro took place, but it did not result in the agreement for which he had hoped. The slaves decided among themselves to meet a fortnight later and to take matters into their own hands.

On the fifteenth day at dawn, the *ton-masa* entered Ségou bougou, Dé-koro's official residence. He went to the master's house and entered. There he met Dé-koro who, escorted by his blacksmith carrying a basin of hot water, was about to make his ablutions. Dé-koro had long since ceased to feel secure because the enmity and hatred which he sensed around him gave him no rest. He was afraid to be alone and his blacksmith was always with him. When he saw the *ton-masa* armed, he knew that something extraordinary was afoot and challenged him: "What are you doing in my house at this hour?" The *ton-masa* replied: "I have come to warn you that the hour has come to settle our accounts, for I have not forgotten the lashing you inflicted upon me." Turning to the blacksmith, Dé-koro told him to go and fetch spears. The latter obeyed, but at that very moment the *ton-masa* shot Dé-koro and, when the blacksmith reappeared, he killed him too beside his master. A *griot* named Koum-bilé, attracted by the noise, appeared just as the *ton-masa* was unfastening the piece of goat-skin which contained the chief's 643 amulets and talismans and appropriating the golden axe which was the insignia of command. Koum-bilé cried out and called for help; the *sofa* came up without hurrying. [58] The *griot* identified the *ton-masa* as the murderer, but they listened in silence and then helped him to hide in their ranks, whence he fled to So-finna.

*173

The Ton-dyon'
(1736-1750)

At around two o'clock in the afternoon, the time fixed for the general assembly, all the slaves were present. Unaware of what had happened, they had gathered as planned. Soon after, the ton-masa appeared, bearing a spear, a silken cord and the golden axe; he was followed by a young man. He stopped at the foot of a baobab tree in full view of the assemblage. He attached one end of the cord to his own neck and the other to the young man's; then with his spear he transfixed the young man, who fell down with a cry. The ton-masa seemed to have been dragged down in the fall and everyone rushed forward. However, they found the ton-masa seated on the corpse, his neck free of the cord and in his hand the golden axe, insignia of authority.

When Kanou-ba-nyouma asked him for explanation, he replied: "This is what I have done."

"You did wrong. You broke your promise because we had decided that we would all kill him together. But you acted alone so as to reap all the benefits for yourself."

"No, that is not true. I knew that such an act could not be performed by several men, whereas I was sure that I could carry it off on the strength of my hate."

"That's a lie! You were guided only by your personal ambition and you killed him only to take his place and to get his gold."

Ngolo Ké-ba intervened to say: "This discussion is painful and futile. The past is past, so let us deal with the present. Our master is dead; let us bury him."

Kon Bilali, Kanou-ba-nyouma and Kolé prepared the corpse and buried it. According to custom, the slaves spent seven days before the dead man's door. Kolé told the wives to retire to Ségou-koro and undertook to feed them.

[59] Then the ton-masa sent everyone away and set the date for a general assembly at Ségou-koro a fortnight from then.

Ton-massa Dêmbélé (1736-1740). On the appointed day, all the slaves turned up. Ton-massa (1), dressed in red, passed

1. He henceforth bears the title of his

*173 former function as his own name.

through the serried ranks and squatted against the wall on the spot commonly chosen by Mamari, the founder of the empire.

Kafa-dyougou was the first to come forward, prostrate himself, and say: "I, ni sege ton' koro-ba." All the rest followed suit.

After this marching past, Ton-massa summoned the marabouts and told them:

"Allah will judge between my master and me. Therefore, I don't ask your opinion about what is past, but I should like you to intervene between my brothers and me to make peace."

"The marabouts are conciliators who have nothing to do with our affairs," cried Kanou-ba-nyouma. "We are not having a dispute. Since it was you who did everything, it is you who have earned the command."

"Kanou-ba-nyouma, I have not asked your opinion. Only Kafa-dyougou here is qualified to make an unbiased statement."

"That's all very well," answered Kafa-dyougou, "but the fact is, you don't want to hear the truth."

Addressing the marabouts, Ton-massa said: "If we were to collect all our knives, there is no doubt but that we could find enough leather to make a single sheath. But if each of us wanted to make a sheath for his own knife, there would not be enough leather."

Turning to the slaves, he asked: "What shall we do with the master's wives? To whom shall we give them? Who will take Bakari's wife, who, Dé-koro's?"

Kanou-ba-nyouma interposed: "It's useless for you to bother about such matter. Everything belongs to you and we don't want anything. Is that all you want to tell us?"

"I've nothing to add," said Ton-massa; "I have my own wives and they are enough for me, that is why I thought those among us who had no wives might take the master's."

[60] "There's nothing more to be said, I tell you. So keep everything and we'll see about it later."

*173 "Very well," said Ton-massa, "I'll give you the cowries, you divide them, let's celebrate. We are free and life was made to be enjoyed."

Kanou-ba-nyouma thanked him on behalf of all and asked leave to retire with his companions.

Ton-massa kept with him Ngolo Dyara, Kolé and Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué.

He appointed another assembly for a fortnight later when offerings would be made to the dead and to the idols.

Everyone was prompt at the assembly.

Ton-massa said: "Now then, where shall we begin? With the dead or with the idols?"

"You ask our advice?" cried Kanou-ba-nyouma. "You paid no attention to our views when you killed our master! You wanted to be chief -- now exert your authority!"

"Very well, we'll begin with the dead," said Ton-massa.

[782] He sacrificed a young man to the shades of Mamari, the founder of the clan, and then ordered the sofa leaders to sacrifice two more, and Kanou-ba-nyouma still another. This was the first time that human sacrifices were performed on the tomb of the dead.

On the eighth day after this ceremony, Ton-massa called a general gathering of the slaves and, when all had arrived, cried out: "We buried a corpse but left a foot protruding." He alluded to Mamari's last-remaining son, Dyon-kolo, who lived at Oftala on the left bank of the Niger.

"We did away with Dé-koro only because he did wrong," said Kolé, "and we still have the same veneration for our master [Mamari] and his descendants. The right thing would be to bring Dyon-kolo here, where he can take his father's place and bring peace among us."

Kanou-ba-nyouma said to Ton-massa: "How will you ever be able to face a man whose brother you murdered? How will you explain your crime to him, a crime that has put you in his father's place? Nevertheless, I shan't oppose the idea simply to perpetuate our discord and, if it is the general will to bring Dyon-kolo back, so be it."

[61] Two Peul, named Bon-gué and Ndyan, were selected to carry out the delicate mission to Dyon-kolo. Upon reaching

*173 Dyon-kolo's village, they cleverly set forth the reasons for the catastrophe and concluded by saying that the "people of Ségou" were counting on him, the son of Mamari, to put an end to the discord which was so harmful to all. Dyon-kolo had been listening to all this with feigned patience, but suddenly broke out in great rage: "Do you actually think that I'm mad enough to court the same fate as my brothers? These walls," and with that he struck the wall of his house, "were erected by my father. Here I intend to remain and here I shall defend myself, even against all of you. Go away and never come back!"

When the Peul returned home and reported Dyon-kolo's words, Kanou-ba-nyouma exclaimed: "Well, we'll have to concede that he has kept his father's talent for clear thinking. He may be young, but he understands."

Ton-massa then came to a decision: "Since the man who should have been our master disdains us, it is I, a slave of our master before his first-born son arrived, who will henceforth command the land of Ségou. Be informed that you now belong to me. Every village must bring me 10,000 cowries on every Thursday and 5,000 on every Monday."

He had this proclaimed throughout the town.

Kanou-ba-nyouma said to him: "Why did you wait so long to announce your plans? Did I not say, the very first day, that you acted only in the interest of your own ambitions?"

"No, I merely carried out what we had agreed to do."

"We had not agreed that you were to do it alone. However, no matter. You are the chief; So command, and we shall obey. The future will take care of everything."

In order to break off all relations with Ségou, Dyon-kolo sent for his sister, ba Sana, who lived near Ségou-koro. In answer to this patently hostile act, Ton-massa sent a column, commanded by Ngolo Dyara. The latter attacked Dyon-kolo's people and took 40 prisoners, whom he sent to Ton-massa. Ton-massa sacrificed them to the idols and, having decided to deal finally with Dyon-kolo, called together the leaders of the slaves to ask them to provide a column to be sent against Oïtala.

[62] The column was organized and met at Farako on the day set.

*173 Ton-massa attacked Oïtala without success; his troops faltered and became disorganized. He caught the deserters and harangued them: "Where are you running? If you abandon this effort, our master's work will be forever compromised. You swore to obey me, our master's first child, so show that you are not perjurers." They heeded him and returned to the walls of Oïtala, which they besieged for a whole year. Every day Dyon-kolo made a sortie and pushed back the assailants commanded by Ngolo Dyara. But the attackers never gave up and constantly returned to the assault. The village was finally forced to surrender, and Dyon-kolo, who had fought bravely, was killed by Ngolo himself.

As a reward for these services, Ton-massa gave 1,000 people to Ngolo Dyara, "to mend the tears in his shirt."

After this affair, Ton-massa called a general assembly of the slaves and told them: "Now that the obstacles have been cleared away, it is proper to swear an oath of loyalty to my cause and also to arrange for the future succession to authority by indicating clearly those persons who should forever be forbidden to succeed."

"Since you see matters so clearly," said Kanou-ba-nyouma, "it is your duty to guide us and to indicate to us the names of those who must never succeed to power."

"It seems to me obvious," said Ton-massa, " that the 120 slave leaders, left behind by Mamari, should never seek to command."

"Ah well," said Kanou-ba-nyouma," that's a question which we don't ask you to solve."

"As far as I'm concerned," said Kolé, "I renounce my claim to authority and shall retire to Koni-m-ba to live in peace as a farmer."

No one else entered the discussion and, since the subject was dropped, the question of succession was not settled.

In order to be prepared for serious troubles, Ton-massa required 240 men of each sofa leader. He sent [63] the force so constituted to Massa-la to reinforce the garrison placed there by Mamari under the command of old Na-ba-dyé. He assigned Ngolo Dyara to Ségou-koro to be responsible for the security of Ségou-Sikoro, Ségou-bougou and Ségou-koura.

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As for Ton-massa himself, he settled at Kohin (1) and so effectively isolated himself from his subjects that he did not return to Ségou-koro for about a year. He returned then only because as chief he had to preside at the great annual festival which, in his absence, Ngolo had organized. Moreover, having arrived in the morning barely in time to preside over the ceremonies, he departed that same evening for Kohin. In that village he called a general assembly of the slaves and told them that, since he intended to return to Miniankala, his native place, he wanted before his departure a reciprocal oath to be exchanged to unite them forever. He caused his idol, Nko, to be brought in, enclosed in the skin of a black cat, and after having sacrificed a chicken, he said: "Nko, you may kill me if I ever betray the people of Ségou, but also kill the people of Ségou if they betray me."

Kanou-ba-nyouma interrupted: "No! You've no right to take an oath for us; you've spoken for yourself and it's our turn now."

Ton-massa went off to a distance.

Kanou-ba-nyouma sacrificed a chicken and, over the victim's palpitating body, said: "Nko, kill anyone who comes to Ségou to make his fortune and then goes away again. On the other hand, enrich any man who comes to make his fortune and remains."

However, Ton-massa persisted in his plan and departed.

A small escort of a few sofa under Mori-fin accompanied him. He crossed the Bani and halted at Fallo, where he had a stockade built that could protect him until the arrival of the column he had requested from Ségou. Four months passed, however, and the column did not come.

One day Kanou-ba-nyouma called a general assembly of the ton-dyon' and said: "Is there among you a [64] man with enough courage to go after Ton-massa?"

1. He is said to have started work on a canal which was to bring water from the Niger to Kohin (Quintin and Delafosse).

*173 Nzan-fato offered himself.

"No," said Kanou-ba-nyouma, "you are too young. This mission requires a great deal of experience, for the man will be risking his life."

Nzan-fato was so insistent that he was accepted.

"Very well," said Kanou-ba-nyouma, "go to Ton-massa and tell him, not in my name but in the name of all of us, that, if he is not back within a month, he will be deposed. The power he usurped is not of a kind that one can carry away. At the same time, order Mori-fin to leave Ton-massa as soon as the deadline has passed."

Nzan-fato executed his mission faithfully.

When the period of grace had expired and Ton-massa persisted in his attitude, Mori-fin returned to Ségou, leaving his chief surrounded only by his wives and guarded by a single sofa. Thereupon Ton-massa returned to Kohin, where he shut himself up completely for three days while he made his plans. Then he called together the leaders of the ton-dyon'.

To Kanou-ba-nyouma he cried: "You refuse to obey me!"

"No," replied Kanou-ba-nyouma, "But did you not rise to power through us? Now, we remain at Ségou, while you elect to go off and live in your own country far from us. Each of us has his own native place, too, but none of us goes back there, knowing that if ever we separate, our power will end. Follow our example and we'll do whatever you ask."

"Take care, Kanou-ba-nyouma, it's imprudent to disturb a vulture when he is feeding on carrion."

They went their separate ways.

Kanou-ba-nyouma called a meeting of the ton-dyon' for Monday at Ségou-koro. On the following Wednesday Ton-massa came and demanded a column to attack Konguéré. This was a ruse designed to have his people escorted to Minianka. The ton-dyon' refused to follow him. However, a certain Fasson, a native of the Kala region, agreed to lead warriors against the village in question on condition that they return to Ségou immediately after the fray. Ton-massa turned down this offer since it destroyed his plot. After much discussion and many intrigues, a band finally agreed to follow Ton-massa. The village

*173 was taken, but, in the course of the attack, Ton-massa was [65] wounded in the ear by an arrow which could only have been shot by someone behind him and by one of his own people. The wound festered so rapidly that it was necessary to put Ton-massa on a litter to carry him back to Kohin. There he died, almost completely alone.

He had ruled for four years and was interred at Kohin.

*173 643 *Kanou-ba-nyouma* (1740-1744). As was customary, the *ton-dyon'* came to Ségou-koro for seven days. On the eighth day, when all were about to return to their villages, Kanou-ba-nyouma sent forth a *griot*, preceded by a boy carrying the bow and quiver of Mamari, the founder of the clan. The crier announced throughout the town: "The royal post (1) is now vacant. Our master lived out his time and died; then followed the crime of the one who has just died. Now, let the man who feels strong enough to assume the vacant place take this bow and this quiver."

When the *griot* had covered the whole town, he returned to where the *ton-dyon'* were assembled and put down the bow and quiver in the midst of the group. Kanou-ba-nyouma then said: "Let the man who feels strong enough take these relics and the place of Mamari."

Ndyan, who was a Peul as was Kanou-ba-nyouma, then stated: "We Peul who guarded Mamari's sheep will also guard those of his successor. May the people of Ségou, therefore, pardon me for what I am about to say, for I speak in all sincerity and, I think, in conformity with the sentiments of this assembly. You are the only one, Kanou-ba-nyouma, who can take this place; it is your right as the oldest man after Ton-massa, who has just died."

These words were unanimously approved.

*173 "Very well," said Kanou-ba-nyouma, "I accept this bow and quiver, but the arrows must find their mark: we shall go to war." So, on the spot, he demanded a column and it was granted him. He attacked and took Niamina, then Sambou-na. Enriched by the spoils of the vanquished, he returned to Ségou-koro and rested there for a year. Then he summoned Da-sou, Ton-massa's son, from Kohin and ordered him to return the gold which

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1. That is, the supreme command.

*173 his father, according to Kanou-ba-nyouma, had carried off [66] at the time of the murder of Dé-koro. Da-son in turn declared that he had found nothing of the sort in his father's estate, so Kanou-ba-nyouma put him in irons, hoping to recover some of the loot. However, Da-son made his escape.

At the beginning of the winter season, Kanou-ba-nyouma made many raids in the environs of Kohin, in the course of which 1,000 people of the village were slain, while 6,000 more were distributed among the warriors; as for Da-son, he fled to Bani-n-ko.

Kanou-ba-nyouma then turned against Kafa-dyougou and removed him from his command of 3,000 people. Outraged, Kafa-dyougou went to consult one Ténénkou-bilé, who lived at Tyo-fin-na and was reputed to be an adept in the occult sciences. By means of magic, he afflicted Kanou-ba-nyouma with a partial paralysis on the left side.

Kanou-ba-nyouma died after four years of suffering.

Kafa-dyougou (1744-1748). Kafa-dyougou, the eldest of the *ton-dyon* leaders, took the bow and quiver. The first thing he did was to turn on his associate, Kolé, the *sofa* leader, who fled to Dyarama-na in Miniankala.

After holding authority for four years, Kafa-dyougou died in mysterious circumstances.

Period of Anarchy
(1748-1750)

After the death of Kanou-ba-nyouma, no one dared to assume authority: the elders perhaps out of prudence and the younger men because they were not sure enough of the necessary support. All knew well that the post was a dangerous one. However, a few managed to collect partisans, and at one point it looked as if the issue was to be decided between Ngolo Dyara and Na-a-koro-ba Nzan-gué.

A meeting was held during which Nzan-gué explained: "I am now the eldest, for I belonged to Soumou Saro, Mamari's mother, and thus am entitled to command."

"That's possible," insinuated Ngolo, "but as far as I'm concerned, you are only a farmer and [67] I know of no warlike talents of yours to justify your claims to this bow and quiver."

Nzan-fato exclaimed in his turn: "Nzan-gué is only a woman. The only blood that he's seen -- and that reluctantly -- was on the day when he was circumcised."

Thereupon Ngolo Dyara, to emphasize the fact that he was separating himself from the pretender, put all the idols in a pirogue and took them to his house at Ségou-Sikoro. Since the idols counted for everything in the minds of the *ton-dyon'*, most of them followed him meekly.

Ngolo Dyara and Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué had been feuding for two years when one of Mamari's old followers, named Nzan-gué-ba, who lived at Kohin, intervened. He told Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué that Ngolo Dyara was planning to attack him, Nzan-gué-ba, and begged for help. Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué allowed himself to be cornered at Kohin, with 3,000 men, in his attempt to defend Nzan-gué-ba. The latter then informed Ngolo, who rushed up and besieged the village. Then Nzan-gué-ba said to Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué: "I don't want to get involved in your quarrel with Ngolo Dyara and, if I keep you here any longer, my people and I will be risking terrible reprisals. Therefore, leave my village." Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué and his followers departed and all were massacred, while 2,000 people of the village of Kohin fell into Ngolo's hands. However, instead of making them all prisoners, he sent them home and thus became very popular at Kohin. This act influenced two of Nzan-gué-ba's slaves to give themselves to Ngolo, and 2,000 others followed suit.

With his forces thus strengthened, Ngolo turned his attention to Nzan-gué-ba. He called the old man out from the town, ostensibly to confer with him, and when he came, unsuspectingly and without an escort, Ngolo ordered him to be seized and sacrificed to the idols.

Ngolo summoned all of the chiefs of *ton-dyon'* who were older than he: Ngolo Ké-ba of Sama; Na-ba-di; Tyé-koura of Nango; Si-dloki; and Fasson. These all came along as well as the *sofa*, for it was a Thursday.

*173 "Well," asked Ngolo," what are we to do now that we have eliminated the opposition?"

"Mamari gave each of us our share; so let it go at that," said Ngolo Ké-ba.

[88] This proposal, however, did not suit Ngolo, who had his own ideas. There was still one man in his way: Kolé, the old leader of the *sofa*. He proposed to summon Kolé and give him supreme authority; he had assembled the *sofa* only to assure himself of their support.

Bon-gué said: "We Peul are shepherds and not slaves, so we can express ourselves frankly in all sincerity. We think that you, Ngolo Dyara, are determined not to submit henceforth to the will of anyone. Your axe will in future cut only your own wood."

"I am ready," said Ngolo," to follow Kolé, for he is our eldest and we owe him respect and obedience. However, if he refuses to command us, I have decided to take the vacant post."

"Well," said Bon-gue," if you're so set on Kolé, you know where to find him; go and get him."

Ngolo sent for Kolé, but the latter refused to come. Ngolo himself went to Kolé and thrice swore an oath of loyalty to him, but the old man remained inflexible. Finally, he seemed to make up his mind and went to Dioni. Ngolo at once joined him there and presented him with Mamari's hat. Kolé repulsed this advance and said: "There are three chiefs older than I am: Ngolo Ké-ba, Nyé-dingué-dou and Fasson."

Kolé died soon after this meeting at Dioni.

After the traditional seven days had been spent at the door of the deceased, Ngolo Dyara once more summoned the *ton-dyon'*. "Now," he told them, "we must part; as far as I am concerned, so long as Mori-fin and Nzan-fato are loyal to me I have no anxiety about the future, for we shall live by pillaging."

So the separation took place.

When he came to Ségou-koro and saw the *ton-dyon'* ready to cross over to the left bank, where they lived, Ngolo called them back. "Our master," he told them," appeared to me in a dream and said: 'Do not let my children scatter; reunite them and give them a leader, for a body without a head cannot survive.' So come back in a week and we shall see."

*173 On the following Monday all meant to arrive promptly at the meeting; however, out of habit, instead of coming to Ségou-Sikoro [69] they went to Ségou-koro (1). [778] Ngolo went there too, bringing with him the four principal idols: *ba* Koungo-ba, Nyé-dingué-dou, *na* Ngolo-ko and Kolokoloni. Addressing the throng, he cried: "Someone must be chosen to look after these idols, for they are languishing in neglect. As for me, I shall keep the sacrificial knife."

"If the idols are languishing," interrupted Ngolo Ké-ba, "it's your fault, because our master has entrusted them to you. That's your duty, quite as much as guarding our master's houses at Ségou-Sikoro. For our part, all we want are guns and gunpowder."

"I can't give you guns and powder," answered Ngolo Dyara, "but I will give you all of Ton-massa's wives as well as the wives of Kanou-ba-nyouma and Kafa-dyeugou. I can't marry them myself because I've married Mamari's daughter. The powder and the guns remain my share."

"That's nothing but trickery," replied Ngolo Ké-ba. "Why should we need these women when we all have our own!"

"I'm not playing any trick," said Ngolo Dyara, "I'm [587] offering you these women because it is customary among us for brothers to marry the wives of their deceased brothers and, if I were to keep them for myself, you would certainly cry scandal and injustice."

"No, we shan't say anything, for we're at your mercy and very uneasy. We're caught like a rat in the claws of a cat."

"Well, I'll do you no harm, provided that you swear to leave me as the guardian of everything up to the time when we once more have a master."

He dismissed them and called a meeting of the chiefs for the following Saturday at Ba-dyi-soumalén-ba, on the left bank of the Niger. Each chief was expressly ordered to bring with him only his *kasa*-bearer (2).

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1. Which was, for all practical purposes, their holy place.

2. The *kasa* is a kind of woolen coverlet

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2. The kasa is a kind of woolen coverlet from Macina. Persons of importance are accompanied by a bearer who carries the coverlet and spreads it out as a seat.

[70] On the day set, Ngolo Dyara secretly sent his son Ntyi across to the left bank with 2,500 horsemen.

Each chief appeared, with his bearer carrying a chicken and a red-haired dog for use in the ceremony of swearing on the idols. Ngolo himself brought a chicken and an ox.

When the time arrived, Ngolo went first to take his place in front of the idol. He killed a chicken in accordance with the rites and said: "Idol, make me guardian of the door of my master until the day when I replace him."

"That's no oath, and your words are inadmissible," cried Ngolo Kê-ba.

"Then show me what I must do."

"It's not my place to teach you how to behave before an idol whom you have been serving for years. What I say is, you are falsifying the purpose of this meeting. You have only to say: 'Idol, if I betray my brothers, you may cut out my heart and my liver, but if they betray me, do the same thing to them.'"

"I shall never say such a thing."

"Then let us part."

"You are the oldest men here. Speak first."

"No, it is your duty to begin and you have only a few words to say."

"I shan't say them. Let's leave."

Ntyi came up to say: "What is all this, father? Hasn't the oath been taken yet?"

Ngolo Kê-ba pointed at Ntyi and asked Ngolo Dyara in an ironical tone: "This is a kasa-bearer, too, I presume?"

Then addressing those present, Ntyi called out: "I can understand that you may be in no hurry to get over this, but I'm getting anxious to be the son of the king of Ségou. Come on, hurry up! You there, Fasson, take the oath!"

At that very moment the horsemen appeared. Fasson made no objection and the others followed suit meekly. When all had sworn, Ngolo Dyara, who had taken no oath, put the idols back into his pirogue.

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"What's this?" exclaimed Ngolo Ké-ba. "You haven't sworn any oath, Ngolo!"

"No, the oath is required only of slaves," replied Ngolo.

He set a general assembly for a week thence and required [71] each chief to bring him a contingent of 500 men for his personal bodyguard, which thus came to be made up of 12,000 men.

The Dyara

Ngolo and his descendants (Ngolo-si-du)
(1750-1861)

Ngolo (1750-1787). Ngolo entrusted Ségou-Sikoro to Mori-fin and he himself settled at Ségou-koro.

From then on, he was obsessed by a single idea: to see his native village and his relatives once more and to avenge himself for having been reduced to slavery for the sake of a few measures of grain.

Pretending that he wanted to offer a sacrifice on his father's tomb, he took a column to Nyouanna. En route he made successive halts at Kono-dimini in the watercourse of Massa and at Kéléko in the watercourse of Signa-na, before marching on Nyouanna. He ordered Nzan-fato, who did not know what it was all about, to seize the village. "But this is Nyouanna, your native village!" said Nzan-fato. "So it is, but do as I say," answered Ngolo.

The village fell, and among the prisoners were Ngolo's brothers, uncles, his whole kin group. He had them all securely bound and indicated those who were to be sacrificed immediately "to the drums of the ton-dyon'." He had his brother Ba-dyi placed apart and, as soon as they were alone, called a slave to loosen the bonds, pretending that they were too tight; soon after, he had him released completely.

Night came and they were alone; Ngolo threw him a shirt and asked:

"Didn't you have a younger brother?"

*173 "Yes, but he was given by my uncle to Mamari Kouloubali, the chief of Ségou.

"What became of him? Why didn't you ransom him?"

"I wanted to, but my uncle said that Mamari was keeping him by force. We learned later that Mamari had got rid of him, either by killing him, as some said, or by selling him, according to others."

"Where is your father?"

[72] "He is dead."

"And your mother?"

"She is dead too."

"Would you show me their tombs?"

"Willingly."

And, side by side in the darkness, the two men went off to find the tombs. Ngolo knelt beside his mother's grave and resumed the conversation.

"Weren't you with your brother when your uncle took him to Ségou?"

"Yes, I even stayed there for a few days to arrange for his food."

"Was your hostess not a woman named Dantẽ Balo?"

"Yes, she was."

"And when you left, your young brother accompanied you as far as Doukounna, did he not? Ah, I remember it well! For it was I, Ngolo, and I am your brother."

The two men embraced each other and wept.

The next day Ngolo sent Mori-fin with twenty men to raise two low mounds over the graves of his parents. He introduced to everyone his brother Ba-dyi, whom he had sit beside him so as to show the convincing family resemblance.

On the following day, Ngolo attacked and captured the village of Touro-kounna-na. There, he took prisoner his two maternal uncles, Sina and Sadyo, whom he reproached bitterly for having sold him and made no effort to ransom him. Then he sacrificed them to the "drums of the tou-dyon'."

Next day he attacked and destroyed the village of his maternal grandmother.

After all this, he returned to Ségou with large quantities

*173 of booty and, en route, passed through Dioni, ostensibly to visit Kolé's grave; in actual fact he went there to claim a contingent of 740 men from each of Kolé's sons.

During this same year he placed his son ~~Ntyi at~~ Bagamabougou in charge of 27,000 men. Then he sent for Ngolo Ké-ba and spoke to him thus: "No one has ever seen one cat catch rats for another; the cat who eats rats has hair in its excrement. This is just to inform you that I intend to work for myself alone and for my own people and that neither you nor anyone else is going to succeed me. My sons will be the only ones to take my place."

[73] "That's fine," replied Ngolo Ké-ba, "I don't want anyone's patrimony."

A week later, Ngolo sent Séri-ba to Farako with 9,000 men and instructions to keep an eye on Ngolo Ké-ba's activities. "My brother Ngolo Ké-ba," he explained to Séri-ba, "has assured me that he has no desire to inherit from anyone. Perhaps you are not so independent? If you'd like to inherit from him, you must earn the right to do so." He then assigned his griot, Tigui-ba, to the same place with 1,000 men and gave him orders to spy on Séri-ba, who was further placed under a close surveillance.

Ngolo summoned Tyé-koura from Nango, but since he was ill Tyé-koura sent along his son.

"Though Mamari Kouloubali set your father up at Nango with 6,000 men, he has never since that day set foot at Ségou nor sent any offerings for the idols. Go tell him to send me 3,000 men at once."

Tyé-koura replied: "Mamari gave each man his share and so much the worse for the one who couldn't keep it. I shall give nothing."

Ngolo attacked Tyé-koura and, after defeating him, parcelled out all his people as follows: a third to Kono-dimini; a third to Soro-la; and a third to Nka-ra. Further, he ordered Na-ba-dé to occupy Tyé-koura's village with 3,000 men, but Na-ba-dé refused. Then, to force him to obey, he told the people of Kon-dimini, Soro-la and Nka-ra to prevent Na-ba-dé

*173 from cultivating his fields and thus deprived him of 1,000 slaves, who, after settling at Massa, submitted to Ngolo Dyara. The latter established them at Somi-na near Ségou with orders to watch over Na-ba-dé.

Ngolo assembled the sofa and told them that he wanted to do something for his brother Dyi-di [sic]. He placed him at Dougou-fin with 7,500 men and assigned to him all the taxes paid by the region between Dougou-fin and Dyana-bougou (about 600 villages). This region was divided among five great chiefs, all friends of Mamari, as follows: Sigui-sogo Saro at Somo; Demba Kouloubali at Ourouma-na; Mamourou Kouloubali at Toukoto; Néné Kouloubali at Diaba; and Tammoura Saro at Monionko. None of them was willing to pay even a single grain [74] of millet to Dyi-di. So Ngolo, at the head of an army of 72 "foot" [units of foot-soldiers?] invaded the country of Somo. He took 140 villages in one day and brought the number of his troops to 20,000, placing them under the command of Dyi-di.

The other four chiefs made common cause and fled to Diaba. Ngolo attacked and took Diaba, whose chief, Néné Kouloubali, was his father-in-law. He took Néné Kouloubali back to Ségou but, in order not to distress his wife, Ma-koro, mother of his son Ma-n-son and daughter of Néné, he sent the latter back to Diaba with a contingent of 7,500 men.

One day Ngolo consulted Nzan-fato about what should be done about Yarouga Kouloubali, a friend of Mamari's, who had never sent any tribute to Ségou. Nzan-fato was not in favor of an armed expedition but thought, rather, that a fine of 500 captives would give Yarouga a clearer understanding of his obligations. However, Yarouga sent back word that he could not possibly pay any such fine; so Ngolo dispatched Gon-bilé with 2,000 men to Goni to keep an eye on Yarouga. At the same time he sent Somé-sigui-té-ma-é Dyara to Kala, also with 2,000 men, to prevent Yarouga from working his land and thus to make him see reason.

When Nyé-dingué-dou, leader of the captives, died, Ngolo Dyara sent the dead man's twin sons, Siné and Souo, to Nto-bougou.

*173 Further, he gave orders that Mamari's slaves were no longer to fraternize with his own slaves.

Around this time there arrived at Ségou one Sidi Baba Kouloubali, who explained that his visit was necessary in order to pay funeral respects to his dead relative, Dyon-kolo. However, Ngolo thought he detected rancor in this step and suspected that Sidi had come only to stir up trouble. So he drove him away, pursued him, and took his village (Kourou-na); during these events, Sidi himself died.

At Koutou-na [sic] Ngolo put Sila-maran Kouloubali, the deceased's uncle, in command and authorized him to give asylum to anyone fleeing from Ségou.

One day Ngolo consulted the marabouts as to how he should proceed in order to make sure that his name would never be forgotten. They advised him to dedicate one of his daughters to Allah, [75] and that is why he bestowed his daughter Nyé-koro on the marabout Mar-ka-ké Darbo of the village of Kala-bougou; her marriage payment included 10,000 slaves and a silver quiver. Then the marabouts told Ngolo to put golden rings in the ears of 120 crocodiles, saying: "In this way, your name will not perish as long as there are crocodiles in the river." In order to carry out this advice, Ngolo ordered the Somono chief, Baré Tyéro, to bring him 120 live crocodiles, and he had rings fastened in their ears.

Ngolo set up personal estates for certain of his children: Ma-n-son was given command of Mpé-ba-la with 2,000 men; Nyana-n-koro, that of Ségou-koro with 10,000 men; Péné Mamourou, that of Ségou-bougou with 10,000 men; Ba, that of Bia (near Togou) with 10,000 men; and Séri, that of So-fin-na with 10,000 men.

He gave his daughter Sanou in marriage to the chief of Saga-la (near Sokolo), one named Kassoum Kouloubali, and had her accompanied by 1,000 little girls, 1,000 boys and 1,000 young men.

Ngolo complained one day that his son Ntyi always returned to Ségou without any fanfare. When Ntyi heard this remark, he set out from his village, Bama-bougou, at the head of a strong army and went to attack Ségou, which he entered by the Banankoro-da. Ngolo pretended to be very pleased with

*173 this performance, but actually he feared lest he had given his son unsuitable ideas. So, the very next day, on the advice of his circle of attendants, he sacrificed his grandson, Ma-n-son's eldest son, for the purpose of combatting Ntyi's evil intentions.

Ngolo then led an expedition to the southern part of his lands against a coalition of 38 chiefs who had concentrated their forces at Miniankala. He marched against them and dispersed them in a single day, and then headed east against Falé, the chief of Bala-koungo, who had organized an opposition. He was victorious and went off to ask the chief of Minya (Faladougou) why he had never brought so much as a chicken for the idols. He then captured this chief and sacrificed him to the idols.

The expedition against the chief of Minya had lasted for three years, but, without stopping to rest, Ngolo declared war on Macina and for three more years fought against Sila-maran [76] Yéro. The latter was killed during the war and this permitted Ngolo to occupy even the Tombo [Dogon] country.

Still without stopping (1), Ngolo attacked Souma-koulou, a village on the left bank of the Niger near Sokolo; he killed the chief Sama and the ruptured [hernieux] Kilintin-kolonto.

But under the walls of the village of Si-bougou, he was himself killed by evil spirits.

Ngolo had ruled for sixteen years -- eighteen, if the period of anarchy is included -- during which time he had very great influence on events.

Ma-n-son (1787-1808). Ngolo's son-in-law, Mar-ka-ké Darbo, had the corpse placed in a pirogue to be carried back to Ségou; but at the high ground of Sansanding, the spirits threw the remains into the river. Then a piece of wood was wrapped

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1. According to certain traditions, Ngolo Dyara is supposed to have made two expeditions into Mossi and Yaténga lands in the time of chief Kongo. However, there is no recollection of these attacks in Yaténga tradition.

*173 in a ox-hide in order to simulate the lost corpse, and the journey to Ségou continued. There Ma-n-son proceeded at once and all alone with the burial so that nothing should leak out. All these occurrences were kept strictly secret.

Nzan-fato handed over Ngolo's personal effects to Mar-ka-ké Darbo. When the latter reached Ségou, he sat down under a tree and sent word to Ngolo's children. They hurried up and, when they saw their father's garments, they broke into lamentations.

On the eighth day, Mar-ka-ké ordered Nzan-fato to call together all the "people of Ségou" in order to name a chief, supposed to be the eldest of Ngolo's sons. When everyone had arrived, Mar-ka-ké planted a stake on the ground in front of the house of Ton-ma-ké-blon-da, hung Ngolo's garments upon it, placed the idols around it and then summoned Ma-n-son, to whom he gave everything. Ma-n-son accepted, had everything carried into the dead man's house and himself went in.

Nyana-n-koro, who attended this ceremony with his brothers, protested vigorously. He demanded that Ngolo's effects be divided among all of his children and that the system of banga-bo be followed, since he thought that would eliminate Ma-n-son. Hoping to calm him, Ma-n-son told [77] Nyana-n-koro the circumstances of his father's death and explained how propriety had required the measures that had been taken and the secrecy that had been maintained. Nyana-n-koro, however, would not concede this, nor would he accept the fact that he, the favorite child of the late Ngolo, had been passed over. Furthermore, he claimed that occult practices had been used to cheat him of his rights.

After trying in vain to mediate, Mar-ka-ké sought out Ma-koro, Ngolo's widow, told her what was going on and informed her of the master's wishes: "'Ma-n-son is to take my place,' Ngolo had said, 'and his brothers are to succeed him in the order of their birth. Evil befall the one who fails to heed my wishes!'"

Ma-koro was only Ma-n-son's mother, but she had had the care of Nyana-n-koro since earliest infancy, for his mother had died in giving him birth.

*173 Since Ma-koro felt incapable of restoring peace between her children, she sought the intervention of Massa Taraoré, chief of Sou, near Diaba. The latter asked the help of Massa Taraoré or Sou ba, near Sansanding, and of Massa Doua-n-tan of Kama-na.

All three came to Farko, whither they summoned Ngolo's sons.

Ma-n-son came alone; Nyana-n-kolo was accompanied by two of his brothers. The three Massa insisted vigorously that Ngolo's last wishes be honored by his children and added in conclusion: "Didn't he himself have to wait a long time? He never complained, he never rebelled against the established order of succession." Nyana-n-koro remained inflexible and went off, saying: "My brother Ma-n-son has tricked me. He acted without my knowledge, treating me as something negligible. Any agreement between us is out of the question."

Ma-koro then appealed to the marabouts of Ségou-Sikoro and Togou. But Nyana-n-koro refused to heed their advice either. [428] "Under Moslem law," he asked, "what is done with the effects of a dead man?" "They are divided among his children," they replied. "Very well, that is what I want and what has been unjustly refused me."

Ma-koro summoned two other marabouts: Birama Kané of Sien and Kakamoko Abdoullahi Diari of Niamina. [78] In order to get rid of them, Nyana-n-koro gave each of them a mare, 100,000 cowries and 30 *gros* of gold, saying: "It's useless to insist; even if Ngolo himself implored me, I wouldn't yield."

Finally Nzan-fato, thinking to overcome Nyana-n-koro's stubbornness, appealed to those sentiments most likely to be susceptible of influence. "I'm older than your father," he told him. "You are my son and, if only for that reason, you should heed me; you cannot fail to respect the last wishes of your father." But Nyana-n-koro replied without emotion. "The time for words has passed -- all that matters rest between Allah and myself."

Nyana-n-koro opened hostilities one Sunday with a raid around Ségou; thus he took 200 prisoners, whom he carried off to

*173 Ségou-koura. The following month he seized another 100 prisoners.

Ma-n-son then had a deep well dug, and water was taken from the river only at night for fear of Nyana-n-koro's people. This state of affairs lasted for three months.

The winter season was at hand and Mori-fin complained to Ma-n-son: "You seem to pay very little attention to the disturbing situation in which we find ourselves, thanks to Nyana-n-koro's attacks. Yet we cannot live without eating and we cannot eat without cultivating our fields. But how are we to do so if we cannot leave town?" And he concluded by demanding a column with which to get rid of the assailants.

Si-dloki said the same thing and so Ma-n-son yielded.

On the site where the French headquarters is now located, Mori-fin set up a stockading. Nyana-n-koro attacked him there and carried off 1,500 people. He destroyed the stockade and carted off the lumber to Ségou-koura. The situation was becoming desperate, and Ma-n-son, fearing desertions, assembled the slaves and forced them to take an oath of loyalty. Nzan-fato was put in command of the troops; he established a redoubt at Douba-bougou, where he remained for a year, fighting Nyana-n-koro's men who were established in a fortified position not far away. Little by little, Nyana-n-koro's men made progress and forced Nzan-fato to draw back.

At this point, the slaves began to murmur: "Send word to our master that we're at the end of our rope! He or his [79] brother -- what difference does it make to us? Whatever happens, we'll never be any worse off than we are here. We're dying of hunger, while Ma-n-son doesn't care a bit, lives off the fat of the land and keeps his wealth jealously for himself. Tell him that if his behavior doesn't change, we've decided to find out whether Nyana-n-koro is as stingy as he."

Nzan-fato was much disturbed, for there are things which no chief likes to hear. He feared that if he spoke frankly he would arouse Ma-n-son's anger and that Ma-n-son might well think that he, Nzan-fato, had instigated the whole trouble. That is why he sought out Ma-koro and, after telling her what had

*173 happened, offered unassailable proof of his assertions. For this purpose he summoned the principal slaves to a spot where Ma-koro could hear them without being seen and asked them to state their grievances so that he could transmit them to Ma-n-son. Not only did they repeat their complaints, but they also threatened to desert to Nyana-n-koro's side, if satisfaction were not given them within a week.

Ma-koro called Ma-n-son to her and, in his presence, ordered Nzan-fato to tell all he knew. When Ma-n-son realized the imminent danger, he agreed to follow the advice of Ma-koro and Nzan-fato as to what should be done. He gave them the 31 keys to the storerooms, from which they helped themselves generously. Fifteen days later Nyana-n-koro was defeated. On being ejected successively from Ségou-kotra and Ségou-bougou, he fled to Ségou-koro, where dwelt some of the old sofa. However, the city fell three days later and Nyana-n-koro was captured along with his two brothers.

A shoemaker named Moussa quickly brought the news to Ma-n-son that his brothers, Nyana-n-koro, Dyon-kélé and Mamourou, were on their way to him. Ma-n-son ordered that they should not be brought into the city until after nightfall. That night he went to meet the prisoners. Along the road, he sat down under a silk-cotton tree and stopped the little group as it passed. With Nyana-n-koro at the head, the three brothers were walking with their arms tied behind the back under their ample shirts, a single cangue fastening all three together around the neck.

Ma-n-son said: "Nyana-n-koro, I greet you!" There was no reply. "Son of my master!" Still no answer. "Dyara!" Still no answer. "However," Ma-n-son continued, "this [80] is all your fault. It is the justice of Allah that strikes you. If you had captured me, what would you have done with me?"

Dyon-kélé replied: "Absolutely nothing."

Nyana-n-koro was furious and cried: "I should have sacrificed you to 'the drums of the ton-dyon'."

Ma-n-son told Nzan-fato to take his two young brothers to Bama-bougou and put them in chains. As for Nyana-n-koro, he was entrusted to Dyawé Dèmbélé, the chief of the Somono, with the proviso that Ma-n-son would take Nyan-n-koro back at the proper time. Then Ma-n-son returned to Mpé-ba-la.

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One day Nyana-n-koro told Dyawé Démbélé that he wanted to have an interview with his brother Ma-n-son. Both men started out for Mpé-ba-la, Nyana-n-koro having hidden a pistol in his shirt.

Ma-n-son was seated at his threshold. When he saw Dyawé approach, he scented a crisis. He arose, went toward him and asked: "What brings you here?" However, at the very same moment, he espied Nyana-n-koro hiding behind Dyawé and turned toward him. Taken by surprise, Dyawé and Nyana-n-koro were alarmed. Ma-n-son seized his brother by the arm, and the sudden movement made the pistol fall to the ground. Upon seeing it, Ma-n-son called Si-dloki and turned Nyana-n-koro over to him for safekeeping, berating Dyawé severely the while. Si-dloki in turn handed Nyana-n-koro over to a sofa, who took him into the house.

For some time, Ma-n-son seemed completely to have forgotten the affair. A month later he summoned Si-dloki and asked what he had done with Nyana-n-koro.

"I turned him over to a sofa."

The sofa was summoned and claimed to have shut Nyana-n-koro up in a little hut, which he pointed out. They went to the hut and opened it, but nobody was there.

No trace has ever been found of Nyana-n-koro and the little hut has always been "taboo."

Ma-n-son then sent for two of his brothers, Séri and Ba. To Séri he said: "What were you doing while Nyana-n-koro and I were fighting?"

"Cultivating my fields."

"I have no doubt you were; but how could such a struggle have been a matter of indifference to you? Ah, I know! [81] You hoped that we would both be eliminated and that as a result you would have no difficulty in taking over the supreme command. You are nothing but a hypocrite; nevertheless I'll do you no harm, even though you shall never be chief. You have 100 slaves; I forbid you ever to have any more or to do anything other than farm your land."

He made the same disposition of Ba.

*173 He settled both of them at Bama-bougou under the supervision of some ton-dyon'. Both remained members of the Dyara clan, but neither they nor any of their descendants had a right to succeed to power. Then, after reflection, Ma-n-son sent his brother Ba to Déné-bougou, where he had him walled up as punishment for having called him a fool. From then on, Ma-n-son had no enemies to fear in his immediate circle.

At the time of the struggle between Nyana-n-koro and Ma-n-son, Déssé Kouloubali, who hoped to take advantage of the situation, had approached the Niger. Once there, he could not decide which side to take, so he captured the village of Niamina which belonged to Ségou. This was a way of taking revenge for his own captivity in Ségou.

When Ma-n-son was free of further anxiety within his own dominions, he decided to punish Déssé's audacity as well as his indifference to the struggle with Nyana-n-koro. This was his first expedition outside Ségou. He took 60,000 horsemen and 30,000 foot-soldiers as well as his two sons, Da and Tyé-folo.

He summoned Nyényé-koro Boaré and said: "Why did you let my Mar-ka people be captured?"

Nyényé-koro, who was then chief of Mpé-ba-la, replied: "You hadn't entrusted them to me."

In order to show his wrath, Ma-n-son ravaged the entire canton of Missé-ka-la, which was under the direct authority of Nyényé-koro.

At Mori-bougou, he captured a man named Ntyi, whose bravery pleased him. He gave him command of 1,000 men and took him along to Kaarta.

In this province, at Guémou, he had his two sons circumcised.

He pursued the Massa-si with such fury that it has become legendary and, having forced them into a narrow mountain pass, he blocked the way behind them as if to cut off their return. Since Déssé [82] had died in the meantime, the chief of the Massa-si was at the time Moussou-koura Bo.

When he had conquered the Massa-si, Ma-n-son summoned Tyitya, chief of the canton of Dé-dougou (between Bélé-dougou and Foula-dougou), and told him: "You and your people

*173 must leave this country at once. There is not a single grain of millet in Kaarta and I need the resources of your whole canton to provision my troops."

Tyitya's only answer was to forbid Ma-n-son to enter Dé-dougou.

One of Ma-n-son's *griot* then said: "Master, take care and don't push this Bambara too far, for you know how vindicative the people of our race can be." However, necessity being imperious, Ma-n-son asked Tyitya, in the name of the latter's friendship with Ngolo, to leave his country so that the warriors of Ségou should not die of hunger.

A Bambara loves his village; so Tyitya refused. Three days later, Ma-n-son invaded Dé-dougou. He summoned Tyitya, but the latter informed him: "We cannot come to any agreement. I have consulted my chiefs and they agree unanimously that we shall never yield to a man of our own race."

"I knew," said Ma-n-son, "that I could not rely on Tyitya, since he sent 250 men to help Nyana-n-koro. Today the hour of my vengeance is at hand."

Tyitya tried to avoid disaster by offering to provide two baskets of millet for each horseman and one for each foot-soldier and thus to persuade Ma-n-son to abandon his purpose.

"The time for words has passed," said Ma-n-son. "Do you think that a man who can take all will be contented with half?"

Tyitya urged his brothers to emigrate, but they refused. The head village was made ready for defense, and among those who garrisoned the place were 750 light infantry, escorted by 100 musicians. Every exit was blocked and all the men went up onto the roofs of the houses, whence they taunted Ma-n-son and his army.

The next day, Ma-n-son came in person and leaned against the village wall; encouraged by this attitude, his men rushed bravely to the assault. However, the first [83] enemy volley killed 50 *sofa* chiefs and so the attack was abandoned.

Stockades were erected and a siege from a distance began.

A month passed without any change.

Since the other villages in the canton had been abandoned, the army lived off the country.

*173 A year later, with the winter season at hand, Ma-n-son's twelve wives came to him, saying: "Allow us to leave, for we are homesick for Ségou. If you force us to stay, we shall desert, since we are convinced that you will never take this village."

He called the griot and, in their presence, had the women repeat what they had said. After that, he gave them leave to depart.

During the rest of the night, the griot sang war-songs to Ma-n-son. In the morning, having assembled all his people, he went up to the tata and threw his silver bracelet into it. The assault was terrible; 71 chiefs were killed, including Ntyi of Moribougou. When he saw this brave man fall, Ma-n-son cried out: "All is lost! There is nothing for it but to return to Ségou."

Upon hearing these words, Na-dya Bala, a son of Tonmassa, said to Ma-n-son: "So this foreigner was dearer to you than your faithful followers. It's true that he was courageous, but this was his first campaign, while the rest of us have lost count of them. After all, it's merely one slave the less."

Another year passed. Finally, Ma-n-son's son Da thought of a stratagem. One night, having collected a lot of utensils, he had his people go to the opposite side of the village from that besieged by his father's army. By making an ostensibly muffled noise, he tricked the besieged inhabitants into thinking that a large proportion of the assailants was deserting. The village gates opened at once for people who thought that an opportune time to escape had come.

Da and his men, who were strategically placed, entered the village, where shouting and firing soon alerted the army to the success of the stratagem. For 15 days carnage prevailed in the village, but the chief remained hidden. Thereupon, Na-dya Bala went to Ma-n-son and told him: "I swear that I shall either bring Tyitya to you tomorrow or die in the attempt." As the price for his life, [84] Ma-n-son gave him 100 scarlet shirts, 100 scarlet silk cords -- in a word, 100 of everything he desired. The next day at sundown Na-dya Bala brought in Tyitya. "Many thanks, Démbélé [sic]!" cried Ma-n-son and further gave him 750 people "to repair the rents in his shirt." Later he added 1,000 people and 400 villages.

*173

Ma-n-son returned to Ségou, capturing Béba en route.

One day Ma-n-son summoned Dyira-ba, saying: "I know that, at the time of my quarrel with my brother Nyana-n-koro, you were living sometimes at Ségou-koro and sometimes at Ségou-koura and you never came to see me so as to avoid taking sides with one or the other of us." "I'm poor," said Dyira-ba, "and I didn't want to add to your discord." "That is to say, you enjoyed watching the decline of power of the Ngolo-la and you hoped, on the contrary, to see a resurgence of that of the Dounamba-a. However, I shan't do you any harm, first, because you are my father and also out of respect for the memory of my mother and grandmother. But to punish you, I shall take Nango and Massala away from you. You need only a few men to do your farming."

Ma-n-son gave Mpé-ba-la and Bama-bougou to Da. He placed Tyé-folo at Koké with 6,000 men. To Nyéné-m-ba he gave the command of Oïtala, including all that had formerly belonged to Dyon-kolo, and he strengthened Nyéné's force of 13,000 men by an addition of 4,000. He installed Sibiri and Nyanya at Diani with 10,000 men each. Fissa was placed at Nango with all of Dyiri-ba's slaves, except 400 who were left to Dyiri-ba. He assigned Songo-ba to Massa-la and Nyanya-ni-ntyéni to Séou (on the left bank).

After he had settled all these matters, Ma-n-son summoned Mamari from Kirango.

"I should like to buy your village," he said to him.

"Your father also wanted to do so," said Mamari, "and he offered in payment as many cowries as I could put in my tata. I refused because it was not I who built the village; it was left to me by my father and he inherited it from his ancestors. Now, as you know, a Bambara does not give up the village of his ancestors in return for cowries. Ask of me what you will, except that."

[85] "In a week I shall come to see you and we shall try to come to an agreement," said Ma-n-son.

Well before this interview, as soon as he had got wind of Ma-n-son's intentions, Mamari had persuaded his people to build new villages, mostly on the left bank of the Niger, such as

*173 Vélingué-ra, Gou-ma, Médi-na, Tyon, and Tayou. On his return from Ségou, he sent all his people to these new villages so that, a week later when Ma-n-son arrived, he found only Mamari at Kirango, who replied as follows to his proposals:

"I simply cannot sell the property of my ancestors; but, if you insist, I will give it to you."

"I couldn't possibly accept because my enemies would say that I had extorted it from you."

"Have no fear, I shall keep the whole affair secret."

Ma-n-son accepted and Mamari hastened to leave Kirango and go to Vélingué-ra to live.

On the eighth day, Kala-ké reached Kirango with 10,000 men to garrison the place.

When he heard about the evacuation of Kirango, Ma-n-son summoned the Sissé and the Khomma people from Sansanding. "Why didn't you come to greet me at Kirango?" he asked.

"You didn't even spend the night there," they replied, "and we shouldn't have had time to get there before your departure."

"You're nothing but hypocrites. When I was fighting with my brother, Nyana-n-koro, you supplied him with men and provisions and you didn't even acknowledge me."

He ordered them to bring in all of the heads of households at Sansanding; 3,500 of them came. He decided to put them to death, but sherif Ismail intervened. Ma-n-son deferred the carrying out of his wishes and turned the men over to So, the leader of his slaves. However, he changed his mind the next day and had them all brought to the public square to be executed. Sherif Ismail once more interceded and Ma-n-son gave in, saying: "All right, I give them to you as slaves." Thus, they all returned to Sansanding.

Souleyman, chief of Dina, came to Ségou to pay his respects to Ma-n-son. He presented him with 35 pirogue-loads of cowries. Ma-n-son could not refuse this gift but he was [86] deeply humiliated by it, since he understood perfectly that Souleyman had deliberately intended to show that he could give without counting. Ma-n-son swore to get his revenge.

*173 At Ségou, Souleyman was easily led to indulge in his well-known penchant for strong drink and, in an alcoholic stupor, he continually went around shouting that Ségou was just a land of slaves where he alone could do as he wished. These taunts enraged Ma-n-son.

One day, in the course of a drinking-bout, Souleyman got involved in a quarrel with a man named Siné-dyan, one of Ma-n-son's slaves or griot. During lunch, to amuse Ma-n-son, Siné-dyan told of his quarrel with Souleyman. Ma-n-son perceived that advantage might be gained from the affair and told Siné-dyan: "I should be delighted to have you make something of this ridiculous quarrel, but it has to be understood that I mustn't appear in it. As Souleyman is my mother's guest, he is sacred for me."

Siné-dyan returned to the public square and there found Souleyman drinking with Na-dya Bala, son of Ton-massa. He approached and said: "You, grandson of the brave Ton-massa, and you, grandson of the valiant Wara, you two are well suited to enjoying each other's company and celebrating together. If you like, I offer you 1,000 forked sticks and 2,000 straw mats to build a spacious room where you can be comfortable and enjoy life."

They accepted.

In order to meet the extraordinary expenses of these orgies, Na-dya Bala sold 7500 (1) slaves at Ségou and used the proceeds to buy beer (dlo). For the same purpose, Souleyman had as much sent from home as he could and, when his resources ran short, secretly took flight and returned to Dina.

Thereupon Na-dya Bala sought out Nzan-fato, told him what had happened and persuaded him to accompany him to see Ma-n-son. When Na-dya Bala had set forth his complaints to the latter, he concluded: "It is my opinion that such conduct deserves severe punishment. I ask you to pursue this coward who, after coming here to parade his wealth and humiliate us, has now fled secretly to avoid paying his share."

1. As noted earlier, these figures have no relevance.

973 Publicly, Ma-n-son opposed Na-dya Bala's project [87] but as soon as the young man had withdrawn he sent word to his mother, Ma-koro.

"Nzan-fato and Na-dya Bala," he said, "have decided to pursue Souleyman, and I cannot oppose them. However, since I have no interest in the affair, warn Souleyman and advise him to leave the country in order to forestall an irreparable misfortune. After that, we shall see."

Ma-koro summoned one of her trusted followers and gave him a pair of sandals, a white shirt and a skin bag full of couscous. She gave him careful instructions and told him to go along the river and to return by a different route so as not to meet Nzan-fato, who would surely give him trouble.

Ma-koro's envoy found Souleyman dancing and drinking. With great difficulty he managed to get him aside and, after delivering Ma-koro's message, said: "Put on these sandals and this blouse, take the skin on your shoulder, and emigrate. That's the wisest course; later, everything will work out."

Souleyman refused to leave the country of his ancestors.

During this time, Nzan reached Massa-la, the last village of the slaves of Ségou. There he held council and authorized his people to seize and to keep anything that fell into their hands in the country to the west into which they were to go. It was then for the first time that the griot sang: "In the shade of the leafy kaminya, the hen can't tell a grain of sand from a grain of millet."

Nzan's troops ravaged everything in their path and advanced rapidly upon Dina. When they reached Dina, Nzan set up his camp near the village and summoned Souleyman. The latter came, accompanied by his brothers, among them Na-dyé Kassoum who, three years earlier, had proposed to Nzan to betray Souleyman.

Opening the interview, Nzan said: "I shall begin by telling you, Souleyman, that we are here in spite of Ma-n-son. You indulged in extraordinary orgies at Ségou with Na-dya Bala, my son (1). Aren't you, a freeman, ashamed to have consorted

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1. Not through natural filiation but due to friendly relations which had existed between Nzan and Na-dya Bala's father.

*173 with a slave and then to have decamped without paying your due?

"That's why we are here."

[88] "At Ségou you ran out of resources, but here you lack for nothing, and the matter must be settled.

"In order to show you that he has no part in this affair, Ma-n-son has instructed me to give you 20 boxes of guns, 10 loads of flints, 10 loads of bullets and some loads of salt and dried fish (1)."

1. Ma-n-son's conduct is a typical example of Bambara trickery.

Souleyman accepted Ma-n-son's gift and, after expressing thanks, added: "Since you and Na-dya Bala have come to have a drinking-bout, tell me what I should do."

"Let's do as we did at Ségou."

"No, we won't find here what is to be found at Ségou. Besides, I have a suspicion that you have come only to make war. I can't oppose you since my people are away; if you want to seize me, I can't prevent you."

"Well, set a time-limit after which we shall attack you, whether your people are back or not."

He asked for three days and his request was granted. On the fourth day Nzan attacked the village, which was defended on one side by Souleyman and on the other by Na-dyé Kassoum. The latter opened the gates to Nzan. Souleyman was captured by Na-dya Bala and killed at the foot of a cailcedra tree [Khaya senegalensis] in the village. Na-dyé Kassoum and the prisoners were sent to Ségou.

On his way back to Ségou, Nzan took Toumboulou and the chiefs of Damba, Kamikou, Kani-ké-dougou, Dyala-bougou and Séou.

When he reached Ségou, he posted a warning against freemen consorting with slaves.

As a reward, Ma-n-son gave Nzan 10,000 people and made Kassoum chief of the canton of Dina with headquarters at Kerké-la.

*173 When he was stricken with an incurable case of diarrhea, Ma-n-son realized that the end was near. He gathered his sons around him and advised them to remain united. Then he expressed his regrets at having been unable to take Koré-Samba-Nya-na and Bouba-n-koro. He regretted too, that he had not succeeded in subjugating Ma Dyala Da-tou, which had boasted that it would make Ma-koro's couscous taste bitter.

Ma-n-son had fought against Macina and Tombo, against the Touareg [Tuareg] and the Mossi, and had been successful against them all. During his reign, the country of Ségou proper (the to-da, "pot of gruel") extended as follows: on the east as far as and including the canton of Saro; on the north to the vicinity of [90] Ségué-la, Kourouma and Kokri; on the west to Kanga-ba; and on the south to Mpé-so-ba and Yanga-so.

The authority of the chief of Ségou was widespread but highly precarious, since there were not enough organized troops to enforce it. The tributary villages were supposed to pay more or less regular dues, whose nature and amount had been fixed when they were conquered.

Da (1808-1827). On the eighth day after Ma-n-son's burial, Da assembled his brothers and, addressing Tyé-folo, asked what they were planning to do. Tyé-folo kept silence, but young Kala-ké, proud at being consulted, wanted to speak. Da forbade him and once more inquired of Tyé-folo.

"What shall we do with our father's wives?"

"Nothing could be simpler," quickly replied Kala-ké, whom Da tried in vain to silence." First, Ma should be set aside as she was our father's principal wife." Tyé-folo can take your mother, Yo; and you can take Tyé-folo's mother."

"You are talking nonsense!" shouted Da, out of patience.

"But I'm only answering your question."

"Da," said Tyé-folo, "do as you like."

"Very well," concluded Da, "neither our mothers nor Ma and Koma will be taken by just anyone. With that settled, let's leave it there for the present."

When all was arranged, Da again summoned his brothers and told them through his griot, Tyé-tigué Bani-ntyéni:

*173 "As far as I am concerned, I ask as inheritance only my father's bow and arrows."

"Well, take them," exclaimed the irrepressible Kalaké, "since you are our eldest brother and since we have no wish to quarrel, as did our father and his brothers."

"All right," replied Da through his griot, "but don't forget that you must keep our father's death secret and act just as you did when he was alive. This is indispensable for the success of my plans."

The fact was that Bani, the chief of Samba Nya-na, had remained invincible only because of the precious amulets [91] he possessed against Ma-n-son. These magic powers naturally would not work against Da; so if Da were able to attack Bani before the latter heard of Ma-n-son's death and was thus forewarned, Da would unquestionably triumph. This was all the more likely in view of the fact that Da had asked a marabout friend of his for a victory talisman. In order to prepare this talisman, the marabout required one of Bani's sandals and some hair from his beard.

In order to obtain these indispensable ingredients, Da bribed with gold a pretty woman, who went to Samba Nya-na with all the necessary instructions.

As soon as Bani saw the pretty woman, he begged persistently for her favors. When she had yielded, she made use of his confidence to get him drunk. Thus she easily obtained what she had come for, and the talisman could be made.

Now the remarkable thing is that, though Bani had always been forewarned by the people of Dina every time Ma-n-son was about to attack him, Da's approach so took him by surprise that he learned of it only when the enemy was before the village gates. This was the work of the magic talisman.

The village was taken and Bani, trying to flee on horseback, was captured by the griot, So-touma. Now Bani had auburn
[82b] hair, one of those men whom the Bambara call Gon-bilé; they believe that if they put a red-haired man to death they incur the most frightful misfortunes. That is why Da merely removed Bani to Digon, where he died.

*173 When he had returned to Ségou, Da asked for a column to be led against Fon-ba-na, near Sikasso; this town was taken.

He destroyed Dya-kourou-ma, near Sansanding, because its chief was called Toto, a name which he disliked. He seized Toto's son and made him take a new name.

He captured Da-tou and put him to death.

"What have I done to you?" said Da-tou.

"You once said that you'd make Ma-koro's couscous taste bitter. I am proving that, on the contrary, you will make it taste good!"

On his return to Ségou, Da received a visit from Douga-koro, of Koré, who had come to pay him respects.

"Thanks for your visit," Da said to him, "old men are the [92] remedy of the young, and it just happens that I have some information to ask of you. Do you know of any villages in the Miniankala region which my father did not succeed in capturing?"

"No, I know of none; and, if there were any, I'm sure it would only be because he did not wish to take them."

"Come now, think it over!" and Da started to talk to other visitors. Douga-koro, much upset, asked leave to retire to his host's house in order to reflect. However, as soon as he was outside, he started for his village to warn the people of the imminent arrival of Da.

On the eighth day after this interview, Da summoned the chief of the Somono and ordered him to make all arrangements for a strong column to cross the Bani; with this purpose in view, the pirogues had to go down the Niger to Mopti and then up the Bani to the desired place.

Da destroyed Koré and killed Douga-koro. He made Douga-[55] koro's son prisoner and gave him the name M-fa-ni-moné-té-koun' (My father's soul no longer suffers), to which the reply was Den'-nyouma (good son). In the same way he had given Bani's son the name Malo-bora-m-fa-la (My father is no longer ashamed), with the reply Den'-nyouma (good son) (1).

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1. This method of naming slaves was very common. See Les Khassonké [The Kasonke], p. 344.

*173 Da's subjects called him Ton-komo.

Tradition has it that Ton-komo continued to fight. Particularly, he captured Ntélé, chief of the village of Koté-mabougou in the canton of Bani-n-ko; Moussa Mariko, chief of Farko-la (Bani-n-ko); and Morbou, a Peul of Déné-naa, near Sokolo. He led a column against the Mossi, captured the country, and there founded three villages: Ségou-koro, Banan-koro and Mpé-ba-la.

When this last column had returned, Da decided to build a house at Banan-koro so as to leave a lasting monument to his reign, and 1,500 men were employed in the construction. During this period, Da maintained very close relations with one of his childhood friends, a Marka named Mama Dyétoura, who was a son of the chief of Tyén near Sansanding.

Mama was very powerful and very rich. Although he was a Moslem, he wore his hair long and braided and, out of vanity, ornamented it with pretty silver bangles. A handsome man, he was a favorite of all the ladies. Now, one [93] day when he was chatting with Da in the house under construction at Banan-koro, Da's wives came up and all of them marvelled at Mama's charms. Da took offense and, after he had returned home, summoned his wives one by one to find out what it was they so much admired about Mama. Each one replied: "You are the bravest of chiefs, but Mama is the handsomest of men."

Da was devoured with jealousy and ordered Mama to shave his head, ostensibly in conformity with Moslem law. Mama obeyed, but the ladies liked him just as well. Sensing danger he discarded all his elaborate clothes and never appeared before Da except when he was bareheaded and bedraggled like a poor man.

However, Da thought him still too popular with the ladies and one day told him: "Mama, I want you to wear a donkey's mane." "Very well," said Mama, "I'll speak to my father about it." Mama went to the house of his father who, at the very same time, received a golden razor from Da with orders to leave only a donkey's mane on his son's head. Shortly thereafter the old man, who was already ill, died without having carried out the instructions. Henceforth free, Mama refused to accept the humiliation required by Da.

*173 Da summoned the sofa leader, one Mpé-ba-la So, gave him 5,000 barrels of powder, and commanded him to capture Mama, to shave his head like a donkey's mane and to put on his forehead the cowrie shell which was the sign of an adulterous slave.

The sofa was beaten and, fearful of the master's wrath, took refuge at Togou with the marabout Kassoum, who undertook to intercede with Da. Da pardoned him, saying: "Let him return. He's been beaten, but that doesn't matter; I have lots of other slaves who will do what he failed to do."

He sent Dyogo Dyara, who was beaten too, but was also forgiven, thanks to the good offices of a freeman of Ségou-koro.

At that point, Da sent word to the slaves living at Baga-ma-bougou that the man who succeeded in carrying out the mission against Mama would receive 10,000 slaves as a reward. But the people of Baga-ma-bougou chased Da's envoy out of town without even listening to him.

When this envoy, whose name was Ma-nyouma, returned, a griot came and sat before Da's door and sang the whole night through; a blacksmith who was seated on the threshold of the [94] opposite house, followed suit. The next day Da went in person to Banan-koro, spent the night there and, at dawn, attacked Mama, only to be beaten in his turn. Sadly he headed back to Ségou, but when he heard the griot slyly sing: "Mama has broken Komo's antlers," he was filled with shame and turned back to renew his attack on Mama's village. He reached the village at nightfall and, on the advice of his intimates, resigned himself to postponing his undertaking until morning.

Da attacked at dawn but was unsuccessful and sustained heavy losses. He then decided to starve the village out, so he surrounded it from a distance, building stockades and then, worn out with repeated failures, he turned over the siege to his brother Kala-ké and himself returned to Ségou.

For a period of six months, Da showed no further signs of activity. Then he summoned the son of Bon-gué and the son of Bakari and sent these two Peul off to Mama in the greatest secrecy to ask him to forget the past and to come and take an oath of friendship.

*173 The two young men departed in the greatest anxiety; knowing Da, they were sure that their mission could only spell disaster for Mama and they were very fond of him. Therefore, they were very happy when he told them that he knew Da too well to trust his word.

However, Da refused to give up his new strategy and sent successively a number of freemen, who might be supposed to have enough influence to help his plan.

He finally learned that one Bala of Séga-la was the only man with enough influence over Mama to persuade him. At first, Bala refused to have any part in Da's plan, which he judged to be a trick, but gradually he allowed himself to be convinced of Da's sincerity in desiring a reconciliation, which Da knew how to affect. Bala then left to see Mama, convinced that he was working for the latter's best interests. When Mama saw him, he realized that further resistance was impossible since even Bala had yielded to Da's hypocritical persuasion; so it was with sinking heart that he agreed to accompany his friend to the village of the tyrant. However, before he left, he urged his brother to keep a sharp lookout and not to yield if he should fail to return.

[95] Da was encamped at Koungo-bougou and he had placed two wings of his column between his camp and Mama's village. The warriors in these sections were slaves devoted to Da, and Mama promptly called this fact to his friend's attention. As the two men advanced, the slaves became more and more hostile. The first ones had greeted them, but a little further on, they demanded various gifts, especially tobacco. Still further on, slaves pulled at their garments from right and left and, finally, a man lying on the ground near the path caught Mama by the leg and tripped him. He fell and at once the warriors set upon him and beat him to death. Bala, unable to resist the attack, ran up to Da who, when he saw him coming, went into his hut; but he came out again.

Bala came up, shouting insults, spitting in his face and saying: "I swear I shall never again pronounce words containing the syllable da, nor ever again eat anything whose name has the syllable da!" Bala and his descendants have never violated this oath. He crossed the river and never again set foot in Ségou.

*173 Da spent eleven more months in destroying Mama's village. Once installed there, in a spot which had cost him such great effort, Da felt that he was at the apogee of his power.

It is said that one day, in an access of mad pride, he told his griot:

"It is I who surpass in power all of Ma-n-son's children, and Ma-n-son himself accomplished very little compared to what I have done. Go and find out whether the tribute has arrived from Fouta."

"They have come," the griot reported back.

"And from Sahel?"

"They are here too."

"And from Egypt?"

"It appears that the men bringing them are at present at Sansanding."

"I have heard that a certain Mokhtar is fighting up north. Has his tribute arrived?"

"It is at Séga-la."

[86] "And what about the people who wear queues and who live on the other side of the forest of kola trees?"

"Their envoys are at Kogou."

And thus Da enjoyed making boast of his power.

One day he confided to his intimates: "I doubt if I can find any more victims for my Komo and I feel capable of taking on the companions of the prophet."

Sherif Ismail's son, Lamine, appalled by such heresy and such a display of pride, explained: "Take care! Such words always bring disaster."

"That's all right," said Da, "meanwhile I'm going to establish a village of white men (1)."

In order to carry out this project, he forcibly settled the Marka of Tinéni-m-ba at Banan-koro, and placed between Koukon-kourou and Djenné 200 heads of Bozo families. His horsemen

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1. That is, of people reputed to be of non-Negroid origin.

*173 rounded up all the Bozo people settled on the Niger from Dina to Kanga-ba and moved them to Banan-koro.

Further, he captured 40,000 cattle on the shore of Lake Débo and divided them into 30 herds, which he entrusted to his Peul.

He had Tyan Mana, chief of Saro, gather up all of the Dioula [Diula] people settled at Kaya, at Koro-dougou, at Toun and at Komina (Bani-n-ko) and forced them to move to Banan-koro.

All at once, Da felt very ill. He sent for alfa Seydou Konnaté, a learned marabout of Sansanding, and asked him what he should do to get well.

"I can tell you only three things," said the alfa. "I warned you not to kill an only son, but you did so. During this very year a man will arise who will put an end to your power. Finally, and in spite of your wishes, your son Tyé-koura will not succeed you; the power will pass to one of his brothers. As for the illness with which you have been stricken, you will never recover." And with that he departed.

Four months after these predictions, the revolt of Ahmadou Bari broke out. The chief of Kouna-ri, Guéladyo Ahmadou-bodédyo, sent word to Da: "One of our marabouts is preaching a holy war and the people of Djenné are asking for help." In the first battle 7,000 men from [97] Banan-koro and Mpé-ba-la were killed, along with the Gon-bilé chief who commanded them. Da then gave special instructions to Salirou, chief of Saro, whose country, because of these events, was now the frontier of Ségou.

Three years after this first battle, Da abandoned his bow.

Tyé-folo (1827-1839). Tyé-koura, Da's son, lived at Mpé-ba-la, and the slaves surrounding him were determined to prevent anyone else from taking power, saying: "Our master's son is the only one who should command." Nao, the sofa leader, was especially active in promoting this view.

For eight months the slaves had a riotous time spending their late master's estate. They had forbidden anyone to pronounce the name of Tyé-folo and, indeed, even the word Tyé was outlawed.

One day the sofa of Ségou-koro and of Ségou-Sikoro sent for Tyé-folo, who was then living at Koké. He came in a hurry and was taken to his brother's house. He sent for Nso; when the latter arrived he found the door guarded by 750 sofa and he noticed in the three entrance rooms the guards were lying face downwards with axes in their hands.

Suddenly, Tyé-folo appeared before him in the middle of the court, all dressed in white and wearing a cow's tail hanging from his wrist, while all prostrated themselves around him. Nso joined the throng and took up the same position, crying: "Dyara!"

"You are the one who is the Dyara," replied Tyé-folo, "since you've been in authority for eight months and since you want your master's son for your chief."

"Ah yes!" exclaimed the clever rogue, "I want the son of my master to be chief, and you are my master's son, for I've known no other master than Ma-n-son."

"Very well," said Tyé-folo, "I give you 240,000 cowries with which you can celebrate, but first tell me where Tyé-koura is."

"I don't know, for he has fled."

Tyé-koura had indeed fled, seeing the direction events were taking, and had taken refuge with the Somono chief, whom he begged to intercede for him. Tyé-folo pardoned him, saying: "This child is not guilty, [98] since the whole affair is the fault only of the people of Ségou who thought to stir up discord between us so as to profit from our dissension."

Up to the time of his death, Tyé-folo continued the war against Sheik Ahmadou Bari.

Further, he captured Tinéni-m-ba and Ténén-kou.

He died under mysterious circumstances.

Nyéné-m-ba (1839). A brother of Tyé-folo and living at Oïtala, he ruled for only nine months.

Period of Anarchy
(1840-1843)

The death of Nyéné-m-ba ushered in a period of anarchy which the people of Macina sought to exploit for the purpose of

*173 subjugating the country of Ségou. However, the Peul, Bakari, a son of Dyan and chief of a group of the Fur-ba Fla-u, succeeded in gaining control of the ton-dyon' and held off the invaders led by a certain Blissi.

Bakari Dyan killed Blissi (1) and took numerous villages, notably Béléni-n-ko; the booty taken from these places paid for the orgies at Ségou.

The Dyara
(following)

Bén (1843-1849), called Kirango Bén. Finally, Tyé-folo's brother Bén, who lived at Kirango, was chosen.

There arose discord between Bén and Nko-n-tyé, father of Nto, which later on degenerated into an armed fight between Nto and Bén's son Kara-moro. The quarrel arose when Nko-n-tyé said to Bén: "If you do such and such a thing, you will surpass me." Now such a remark was only acceptable between equals and so Bén, who was seriously annoyed by this familiarity, loudly severed relations with Nko-n-tyé.

One day Bén quarreled with a slave named Bougari; the latter fled, pursued by Bén, who was armed [99] with a spear. Bougari sought to put himself under the protection of a powerful chief and, meeting Bakari Dyan, asked him to intercede in his favor. Bén came up at that moment and threw his spear. Bakari Dyan was wounded and the slave killed.

Bén captured Mourdia.

He attacked Kourou-ma but was beaten back. A marabout advised him to cease his warlike activities, saying: "If you resume them, you will die."

"Very well, then," he said, "I'll die, since in any case I shouldn't be able to survive the disgrace of failing to take this village." He took it and died.

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1. See the story of this event in Chapter 7.

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Bén had ruled for eight years and two months.

Kon-maran (1849-1851). This was another of Bén's brothers and he ruled for seven or eight months.

Démba (1851-1854). This new chief conquered Birgo, Wassoulou and Gana-dougou. He died after three years and one month of authority.

Touro-koro Mari (1854-1856). Hardly had he been elected by the ton-dyon' when this son of Ma-n-son's went off to war and took Gamon in the province of Wassoulou. After that, he attacked Dyéïdi Sidibé, chief of Sogoni, and took 8,000 prisoners in two battles.

He attacked Koulou-koro (Koulikoro) in order to capture Bagui Ngolo Dyara, but the latter managed to escape and to reach Bélé-dougou.

The villages of Dyali-ba and Dya-n-ké-na in the Mandé country likewise fell into his power.

Touro-koro Mari quarreled simultaneously with the people of Ségou and with his brother Kégué Mari, who lived at Massa-la. He ordered an attack on Massa-la, but both the besieged and attackers fired blank cartridges and, when Touro-koro Mari expressed astonishment at seeing no one wounded, a slave replied: "We've had enough of your fratricidal wars; they will have to stop." The matter rested there.

One day Touro-koro Mari sent for his son Ba-dyi. He dressed him in Ma-n-son's garments, ordered all the troops to accompany him and told him to attack Ségou. The people of Ségou became alarmed at this seemingly senseless performance. [100] To this discontent was added the fact that Touro-koro Mari gave valuable gifts to El Hadj Omar and sent one of his sons to Omar to be educated.

Finally, one Thursday evening, all the sofa left Touro-koro Mari's house, only 40 bila-koro remaining behind. Touro-koro Mari's sons, who were playing nearby, were frightened by these preparations and took refuge among the Somono.

During the evening the slaves returned. They tied a scarf around Touro-koro Mari's neck and dragged his body outside. Kégué-Mari was summoned; in his presence Touro-koro Mari was

*173 dragged successively through all of the roads leading into Ségou and, finally, to Komo's forest. There Kégué-Mari said to him: "I have not forgotten that you had me tied up here, accusing me of adultery with one of your wives, nor that, as a punishment for the alleged crime, you forced me to eat grass and leaves. Remember, on that day I told you that even though I were lying on the ground, if I could touch you with my foot, I would lay you low. Now my time of vengeance has come. Ségou will be so ruined by you that peace will never return."

Then a stone was tied around Touro-koro Mari's neck and his body was thrown into the river.

Ali (1856-1861). Ali, a brother of Touro-koro Mari, was then summoned in these terms: "Come, for the key was mislaid while we were engaged in a certain little intrigue." "I shan't come," he replied, "for I know very well how you lost the key." "Very well," said they. "We killed your brother because he wanted to force us to become Moslems and also because he wasted the state's substance on expensive presents to the marabouts."

Ali's only adversary was El Hadj Omar. In order to circumvent an invasion by the people of Fouta-n-ké, he combined forces with the chief of Macina but failed to conclude a reliable alliance, and this failure was one of the causes of the downfall both men.

After his son Tata had been defeated at Oïtala, Ali himself was defeated in 1861 at Tio, near Sansanding, even though he was supported by an army from Macina. As a result of these victories, El Hadj Omar entered Ségou on March 10, 1861. Ali retired to Macina, whither he returned with a sizable army to attack Ségou. However, he [101] was ultimately beaten at Kogou and then went to settle at Touna on the right bank of the Bani.

After being attacked and defeated at Touna, Ali fled to Massina, where he was captured and put to death by El Hadj Omar in 1862.

The Bamara next chose Kégné Mari, Ali's brother, for their chief. From 1862 to 1870 he constantly harrassed the people of Fouta. He had returned to Touna to live.

*173 From 1870 to 1878, Nyéné-n-ba kept up a running fight with his predecessors' partisans after settling at Samba-la, not far from Touna.

Mamourou, who ruled for only a few days, was succeeded by Kara-moko, who had no fixed residence and who was plagued by serious family squabbles. Being unable to come to any sort of agreement with his cousins Togoma and Ma-n-son, both sons of Tyé-folo, he had them poisoned. He was himself poisoned in 1887.

175 When Colonel Archinard entered Ségou on April 6, 1890, he summoned Kara-moko's successor and gave him authority over the natives under the direction of a French resident, Captain Hunderberg. However, Mari Dyara, who had accepted this role, secretly organized a plot to assassinate the resident and thus put an end to our control. This treason was punished as it deserved: Mari was shot by the army.

Massa-si Bo-dyan was then called to occupy the post, but former hatred made his position untenable. Direct administration henceforth appeared to be the only possible solution to safeguard our interests.

[102]

*173 Genealogical Table of the Chiefs of the Clan of Ségou
(1660-1861)

The Kouloubali
Barama-Ngolo
|
Soma
|
fa Siné
|
Mamari, called Biton
(1660-1710)

Bakari 1710	Dé-koro 1711-1736	(Dyon-kolo)

2: Monteil--116 G-5 (1902-1923)1924 FA8 Bambara FA8

*773

The Ton-dyon'

Ton-massa Dembélé
1736-1740

Kanou-ba-nyouma Bari
1740-1744

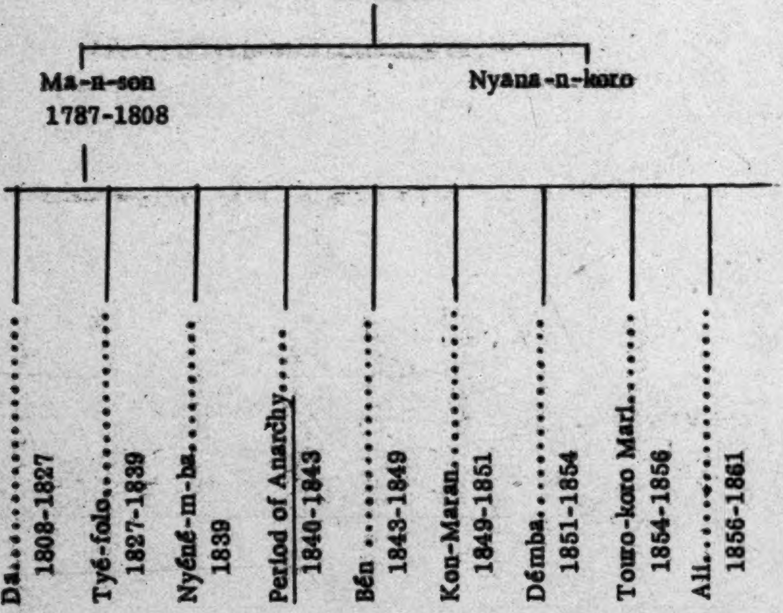
Kafa-dyougou
1744-1748

Period of Anarchy

1748-1750

The Dyara

Ngolo Dyara
1787-1808 [sic; probably 1750-1787]



Ma-n-son
1787-1808

Nyana-n-koro

Da.................. 1808-1827

Tyé-folo.................. 1827-1839

Nyéné-m-ba.............. 1839

Period of Anarchy...... 1840-1843

Bén 1843-1849

Kon-Maran.............. 1849-1851

Démba.................. 1851-1854

Touro-koro Mari.......... 1854-1856

Ali.................. 1856-1861

[103]

History of the Empire of Kaarta

The Descendants of Nya Ngolo

*173 Sounsan (1). When Sounsan and his people had crossed
*173 the Niger with the help of the poyon', they proceeded in the direction of Lamballaré (2). There, at the village of Darigo, Sounsan

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[551] [845] 1. As we shall see, the given name marks some event connected with the person's birth. It is common practice, when the delivery is difficult, to hang a rabbit's foot at the mother's side, hence the name Sounsan ("rabbit" in Bambara). The name Péné, used elsewhere, has the same etymology.

*173 564 Sounsan is said to have practiced the saddle-maker's trade at Kounando. It is told how one day he went with a kulé (a native carpenter) into the country to get some wood needed for a saddle. At one point the two became separated. The kulé found some honey and ate it, only to be taken sick. He threw up the honey on some stones and then went away. Soon after, Sounsan passed the spot and, seeing the honey, picked it up and ate it. When, on his way back, he learned how the honey happened to be there, he was so disgusted and cursed the kulé so roundly that, since that time, none of his people can touch a kulé with impunity. All members of that caste are thus tne (taboo) for that branch of the Kouloubali.

[103] 2. In the Soninké language, this is the name of the region watered by a swamp

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103
(lambe, in the local dialect) which, south of Ouossébougou, has its source near Dongué and ends in a pool at Ouaba. In Soninké, "Lamballaré" means literally "on the edge of a watercourse," and the Bambara use "Kodala" in the same sense. In Sounsan's day, this was a small canton ruled by the Soninké of Darigo, a village called Douabougou (market) by the Bambara and situated on one of the branches of the Segabala (of the maps), a tributary of the Baoulé.

According to Raffenel (Vol. I, p. 365), the Soninké village was called Baïko, a name unknown to me and one which seems likely to have resulted from a mishearing of the name Darigo. In any case, its identification with Bammako, as proposed by Raffenel, is unacceptable.

*173 accepted the hospitality of a blacksmith, fa Siné Dyara, asking the latter's protection from probable pursuit by Barama Ngolo. Fa Siné was poor but he is said to have understood the language of the birds and, at the very moment when he was talking to Sounsan, a passing bird told him that powerful chiefs would descend from his guest. That is why he said to Sounsan: "I'm a poor man, but I'll do all I can for you and your descendants. In return, I ask that you promise -- for yourself and for them -- these things: first, that you never kill nor imprison any of my people; then [104] that, every time the head of your family changes, a wife and a horse belonging to the dead man be given to the head of my family."

695 They swore on a copper anvil which was thrown into a well, and after that fa Siné told Sounsan where he was to settle.

Sounsan was still closely allied to some of the Taraoré, whose descendants now live in the Diangounté area. They gave him a wife named Dougo (1), who was the mother of his son Massa.

1. According to another version, Dougo

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> was given to Sounsan by the Peul of Massa-la when he spent some time among them with his father. According to Adam's account, Dougo belonged to the Koïta family but that would not prevent the family from being called Taraoré also, since that name is frequently borrowed as a mark of distinction, particularly among converts to Islam.

Further, he had a blood pact with one Kassi Konaré (or Konoré), who was a fugitive from Tamato in the Kala region as a result of family troubles (2).

> 2. Kassi is the ancestor of the Konaré called Kala-n-ka-u, that is, natives of Kala. Raffenel calls them Khonoré and Kala-ngou, terms borrowed from the Soninké people.

The Taraoré lived by armed pillage and they interested Sounsan and Kassi in their operations; booty captured jointly was divided into three equal shares.

At this time, Massa, Sounsan's son, was a strong, daring and courageous young man. He lived in the constant company of the "young men" (kama-len'-u) of Darigo and, above all, he never missed one of their raids. Indeed, oftener than not, he was the instigator and leader of their expeditions. So it was that one day he raided the village of Fallou, where he captured 25 persons and as a reward for his "luck," chose a boy named Siné Taraoré to become his first slave.

At ordinary times, Massa went hunting and never failed to share his game with his companions. Further, following his father's example, he was skillful at making and repairing saddles. Here too his qualities were much appreciated by the young men, who often told him: "We will do anything you command to show our devotion to you."

Massa told his father about these remarks, and the old man, shaking his head, said: "That is only flattery with a purpose.

*173 Still, if you think your friends are sincere, [165] have them swear on our idol Nko, which is wrapped in a monkey-skin -- have them swear that, if need be, they will not hesitate to fight even their own parents if you require it. Then, if they break their word, Nko will kill them."

So the young men swore on Nko to be loyal to Massa and his cause.

One day Massa led them in an attack on Sanou-ba Mamari Dyara at Fala-da-la, near Niamala in the canton of Lamballaré. The expedition brought back 18 slaves, of whom Massa took as his share, for "luck," one called Dyan-Koro-ba Dembélé.

Souman felt uncomfortable as a foreigner in the Soninké village of Darigo and so one day he confided to fa Siné: "I have decided to settle with my people at the place called Tomo-na (1)

1. Tomonda on the maps.

and I am going to build a house there."

The young men joined Massa in undertakings which, begun rather uncertainly, soon took on quite another aspect. Calling attention to the abundance of the harvest, Massa had no trouble convincing his friends that the ton' needed a safe place to store their resources: "For the people we are going to rob are quite capable of uniting against us, and then how would we resist them?"

So it was that, on the advice of his father, old Souman, Massa built a high and strong palisade surrounded by a deep moat and enclosing a virtually unassailable redoubt. This place was called Sinsa-ro (lit., "within the palisade") and also Souman-na (lit., "at Souman's"). (2)

2. A tradition reported by Raffenel calls it Kéniédougou (Vol. 1, p. 366).

One day there arrived from Kong a caravan of 740 slaves carrying guns and powder. Led by Marka merchants, the slaves were tied in pairs with ropes around their necks. It was the habit

*173 of the caravan leaders to entrust the slaves to the village chief at each halt and to remain outside the walls themselves to watch over their other merchandise. On its way to Darigo, the caravan stopped at Sounsan-na.

Since Sounsan was by now old and living very quietly, he turned over to Massa [106] the care of housing these transients. Massa invited the caravan leaders to lock up their slaves in his redoubt, with himself as guard, while three of the leaders would keep good watch at the gate. They accepted this proposal.

During the night, a slave named Sandyan Konaré approached Massa, saying: "We and you are of the same race, while we don't understand these people who are leading us. If you free us, we'll become your slaves and follow wherever you wish." At first, Massa refused; then, at Sandyan's insistence, he sought out old Sounsan for advice.

The latter said: "My son, you must seize this opportunity, for fortune favors only the daring. In order to satisfy yourself as to the true intentions of these people, have them take an oath on our idol Nko and, if they agree to it, do your best."

Sandyan and his companions took the oath.

In order not to endanger the plan, Massa freed only two of the slaves and gave them bludgeons, with which they killed the guards. Then, after freeing the rest, Massa mounted the roof of the redoubt and shouted to the people of Darigo that the slaves had rebelled and had assassinated their masters. The caravan leaders camping outside were terror-stricken and took to their heels, leaving behind all their merchandise. Massa put the guns and powder in a safe place.

After these events, Massa sent Mori-ba, son of _fa_ Siné, to ask his father whether the slaves ought to be turned over to the people of Darigo. _Fa_ Siné answered: "Let Massa keep the slaves, and I'll furnish him with enough bullets to resist the people of Darigo."

Further, in line with his own father's advice, Massa assembled the young men and told them frankly what had happened. The old man had said: "Force them to take a stand and, if they refuse to make common cause with you, Nko will kill them

173 because of their oath. On the other hand, if they approve your action, we shall keep the slaves."

The young men entirely approved of Massa's decisions and declared themselves ready to obey him. Massa then addressed the slaves, saying: "If you refuse to obey me, I shall return you to your masters; if you [107] follow me, we shall make war." (1)

1. A more exact term would be "armed pillage."

They renewed their oath of obedience.

Thereupon, being confident of his own strength, Massa notified the people of Darigo that he was not going to return the slaves. Then the people of Darigo made ready to attack him (2).

2. Raffenel also suggests that a similar sort of transformation of slaves into warriors was the basis of the empire of Kaarta. Others say that the affair took place under Séba-Mana (Traditions historiques et légendaires [Historical Traditions and Legends], Delafosse) and still others that it occurred in the time of Déssé-koro (Traditions historiques et légendaires, Delafosse). It is more than likely that this was the usual means by which adventurers used to gather bands of plunderers.

At this time Kassoum Konaré, the ancestor of the Usoubila-ka, arrived with a large fighting unit to ask for Massa's only daughter, Sata, in marriage. Massa agreed and absorbed his son-in-law's people into his own forces.

Old Sounsan, feeling his end at hand, prayed to Allah: "If my son is to gain power from the coming struggle, let me die at once; if not, let me live for ten years more." Three days later he was dead.

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643
551

Massa and His Descendants (Massa-si-ou) (3)

3. "Native traditions often make out that Sonsa and Sounsa-Massa are one and the same person, to whom they give the title of massa or mansa, meaning 'king' in Banmana, so it is that the word massa-si or mansa-si should be interpreted to mean 'descendant of the king' and not 'descendant of a man named Massa' " (Delafosse, in Traditions historiques et légendaires, p. 52, note 4).

"The Kouloubali who were descended from Niangolo, the elder brother of Baramangolo, had adopted the title of Massa-si (descendants of the king) because they belonged to the senior branch."

It is evident that this interpretation does not correspond with my text. However, I have often been told by native traditionists that Massa-si meant "descendant of a man named Massa." It might be that Sounsan-Massa was a double name applied to a single person, as was the case for several Massa-si chiefs, including Seba-Mana, Gran-Forokoro, and Massa-Bakari. Even though a single person is meant, that would still be no obstacle to the assumption that the word Massa-si means "descendant of Massa" by an abbreviation of Soun-san-Massa, since we have analogous examples: Biton-si and Ngolo-si are used to designate respectively the descendants of Mamari-Biton Kouloubali and Ngolo Dyara. It is true that Massa-si, composed of massa meaning "king," may refer to a whole royal lineage, but it should be noted that among

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551]

the Bambara with whom we are concerned, the expression Massa-si is only used when referring to the royal lineage of Kaarta.

Massa (1670-1690). In order to combat Massa, the Marka people of Darigo summoned the Bambara who were [108] under their authority and whose principal chiefs were the following: Tonnéguéla Mari-dyan Dembélé; Konikoni Tiénégué Dyara; Tiéma Dyara; and Sanou-ba-Mamari Dyara of Fala-da-la.

The siege of Sounsan-na began. Thanks to preparations made in advance, Massa was able to hold out for many months, while making sorties against the attackers.

However, neither side had prevailed when, in the eleventh month, Massa managed to escape during the night. Followed by the boldest of his followers, he fell on the village of Mari-dyan Dembélé, sacked it and, loaded with booty, managed to return to his tata. He appeared next day on the roof to taunt Mari-dyan and showed him his favorite wife and her finest embroidered blouse.

Such audacity gave the other chiefs food for thought; each of them reflected that Mari-dyan's fate might be in store for himself and so the Bambara chiefs took counsel. However, just as the discussion was about to get started, one of those present, Sanou-ba Mamari Dyara, withdrew, saying that he did not want to take part in any deliberations along with a one-eyed man, because the only result would be a disaster. He was referring to Konikoni Tiénégué Dyara who, indeed, had only one eye.

Upset by these circumstances, the allies parted to return home; so Massa was saved. However, at the instigation of the Marka people, the Bambara chiefs made all the trouble they could for Massa. They sent word to Ségou to the descendants of Barama-Ngolo that the fugitives vainly sought by their ancestor were still in their country and they offered to help in any undertaking against them (1).

1. Massa is reputed to have had 67 sons and 76 daughters. In principle, he imposed

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> exogamy, saying: "No one shall marry one of my daughters unless he is an inhabitant of the town." Then he charged his children never to take spouses from the Massa-si clan (Traditions historiques et légendaires, Delafosse, p. 53).

Béni Fali-Sékolo (1690-1700). Since Massa was by now a very old man, he abandoned active authority to his son, Béni Fali, called Sékoro, who was as strong and brave as his father. He continued his father's practice of armed pillage, assisted by his many brothers, the best-known of whom included: Gran, called Foro-koro; Séba, called Mana; Tyema, the son of Nya-nilé; Bo, son of Déni-ba; Massa, called [109] Bakari; Séri-ba and Allahi, who were twins; and Mo-siré-bilé.

Gran, called Foro-koro (1700-1709). Some say that intrigues by the Soninké and the people of Niamala were what persuaded the fama of Ségou, Mamari called Biton Kouloubali, to attack the Massa-si. After a siege that lasted for three years, Sounsan-na had to surrender. Foro-koro was taken prisoner and sent to Ségou, where he was put to death. His skull (1) was kept as a talisman by Biton.

Others, more explicit, tell how and why the attack was carried out against Sounsan-na. Mamari called Biton Kouloubali had given his daughter ba (2) Sana in marriage to Sana-ba Mamari (3) Kouloubali of Mourdia. When the wedding party that

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1. Mamari made it into a box for his amulets and it was the basis of his magic.

2. The word ba, which literally means "mother," is here used as a title of respect.

3. Sana-ba Mamari means "Mamari, son of the woman named Sana-ba."

*173 was bringing ba Sana to her future husband reached Damfa, it was met by Foro-koro. He fell in love with ba Sana at first sight and carried her away from her attendants by force and made her his wife.

It was to avenge this affront that Biton attacked Sounsanna. It is said that he used magic arts to assure victory. He sent to Foro-koro a shirt (dloki) over which he had pronounced incantations and through which he had repeatedly stuck a needle while a marabout performed the appropriate rites. A Dioula was assigned the job of forcing Foro-koro to put on the fatal shirt. The Dioula went to Sounsan-na on a market day and took his place in the public square beside a well-stocked beer (dlo) seller. Foro-koro, being a bit tipsy, had noticed this luxurious dloki and asked the price, which was ten slaves. Although this had discouraged other purchasers, on the contrary it aroused Foro-koro's vanity. He agreed to pay the price and at once put on the dloki to show it off. Since the Dioula had accomplished his purpose, he was in no mood to await payment and, fearing reprisals, he fled.

The next day, when he had sobered up, Foro-koro found the price too high [110] and sent for the Dioula. The man's precipitate departure put him on his guard and, fearing sorcery, he discarded the splendid dloki. It was too late; the spell worked.

Foro-koro owed his life solely to the fact that his wife, ba Sana, loved him and prevented her father's wrath from prevailing. However, Biton's followers managed to satisfy their master's desire for revenge by taking advantage of a lapse in ba Sana's vigilance. They marked Foro-koro with the tatoo peculiar to the slaves belonging to the fama of Ségou, and one day, when ba Sana was temporarily absent, they seized Foro-koro, dragged him into the brush, put him to death and abandoned his body after cutting off the head.

It is said that ba Sana was so grief-stricken that she was unwilling to remain near her father. So she left Ségou-koro with all her slaves and settled in a place called ba Sana-bougou after her, and later re-named Ségou-bougou.

*173 Séba, called Mana (1709-1760). The destruction of Sounsan-na forced the Massa-si survivors and those still faithful to them to seek refuge elsewhere from the implacable hatred of Bitou. Some went to Bélé-dougou, others to Kaarta-binné (1)

> 1. In Kaarta-binné they had accepted the hospitality of the chief of that country, Soroko Dionné. They established themselves there, cultivated their fields, recouped their fortunes and then built a fortified enclosure. A caravan of 120 slaves led by people from Fouta arrived and, on orders from Soroko-Dioune [sic], the Massa-si gave them shelter. They either aided or provoked a revolt of the slaves, taking an oath of alliance with them as equals. However, the Massa-si retained the leading role and the right of interminage [from minage (?), tax on grain] (Traditions historiques et légendaires, pp. 54-55).

Among these fugitives were three of Massa's sons: Séba, called Mana; Bo, son of Deni-ba; Massa, called Bakari. There were also his [Massa's] daughter Sata and his four grandsons: Bo, son of Sira; Bo, son of Moussou-koura; Ntin or Ntén, or Ntégué-koro; and Sarhaba.

At this period the Kingui area was under Diawara power and it dominated all the surrounding cantons. However, grave dissension split the Diawara family into two parties; the party of the Sagoné and that of the Dabo-la. Implacably hostile to each other, they were fighting for power. The Dabo-la party was then in command and had its capital at Diara. Tourougoumbé was the [111] stronghold of the Sagoné. The chief at Nioro was the dyawando Bilali and the chief at Khagna-rémmé was Mansa Khagna.

Hoping to obtain valuable support, the Diawara Sagoné sent an emissary named Dia Doumbé Diawara to the Massa-si.

*173 The seers had predicted that if the first child born among the Massa-si after the arrival of the emissary turned out to be a boy, it would show that the decline of the Massa-si was only temporary. The contrary would indicate that the decline of the Massa-si would be complete. Now, at the very moment that Dia-Doumbé was greeting Séba Mana, word was brought that a woman named Ba-koro had just given birth to a male child whose father was Sira Bo: the child was named Ba-koro Tiéma.

Dia Doumbé carried out his mission by advising Séba Mana to send some gold to Mansa Khagna and to Souroukou Diani (1) to assure their neutrality while he attacked Markha-na, a Dabo-la village, where Dia Doumbé said that the Massa-si would find abundant resources.

Séba Mana followed this advice and had no trouble taking Makha-na.

After this success, Séba Mana decided to settle at Léé, but Mansa Khagna, inspired by the gold he had received from the Massa-si, thought that if he exterminated them he would obtain valuable loot. So he blocked the road to Léé.

Séba Mana was victorious and he killed 98 out of the 110 elder sons, who, according to custom, were riding white horses.

He continued on his way and settled at Guidioumé Makha-na, near the mountain of Goumbourou, where a petrified wedding [perhaps a rock formation?] is still to be seen (2). There, through the intermediation of Dia Doumbé, he accepted the surrender of Mansa Khagna.

As a mark of special deference, the Massa-si received the following gifts: two horses from Mansa Khagna; two horses from

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1. Called Soroko Diouné by other traditionists, he was chief of Kaarta-Binné.

2. The legend of the petrified wedding is told by Raffenel, Vol. 1, pp. 219-220.

*173 the Diawara Sagoné; millet from Souroukou Diani; cattle from dyawando Bilali; chickens from the Diarisso; and strips of native cotton from the Marka. Later, when [112] their power had been restored, the Massa-si imposed these same gifts as tribute (1).

> 1. "At a time which seems to antedate Séba Mana, the Massa-si left Kaarta to go to the village of Guémou, where they were much feared. The Dyawara gave them a gift of seven thoroughbred horses; the Dyawando gave three fine heifers; and the Touré, grain and chickens. Then they came to Guidioumé with Séba-Mana at their head; the people of Guidioumé gave them 2,000 measures of grain; the Diafounou people, a thoroughbred horse and 500 measures of grain. From there they went to Mounia (Diafounou), north of Koniakari, and fought with the people of Khasso." (Traditions historiques et légendaires, p. 55).

Séba Mana finally settled at Léé. Three times he was attacked by the people of Khasso and three times he resisted them successfully, but his situation was nonetheless very precarious. In order to remedy this state of affairs, Déni-ba Bo (2) gave himself up as security for 67 horses to Suley, chief of the Dénianké. His griot Souleyman accompanied him.

> 2. According to the version reported by Delafosse, a certain Mansa Bakari (perhaps Massa Bakari) was sent to Fouta with gold to buy a relief army.

Déni-ba Bo supported himself by hunting and turned over his bag to a woman of the mabo caste who had attached herself to him. One day, this woman told him that she was on intimate terms with a genie who most often took on the guise of a small, *173 deformed horse. She gave him this horse, whose name was Kori, and asked the animal to take good care of Déni-ba Bo.

It came about that one day some Moors stole the herds of the Dénianké people. When this occurred, the war drum (tabala) called together all the men, who lost no time in following the thieves' tracks. At the time, Deni-ba Bo was out hunting and when he heard the news on his return, he asked Suley Ndyaye (3) [for permission] to join the pursuers. Suley agreed and allowed him to choose a horse. Deni-ba Bo chose Kori and, despite the ridicule of the onlookers, rode off on the ugly little animal.

As they rode along, Kori said: "We are going to find our warriors beaten by the Moors and wanting you to turn back. Don't listen to them. Order your griot to follow the tracks of the cattle and proceed as far as the Moors' camp. There you will find your griot on the other side of the camp from the spot where you will be and, at an agreed signal, both of you fire your guns. The Moors will think they are surrounded and will flee."

[113] Everything turned out just as Kori had predicted. The warriors tried to persuade Déni-ba Bo to retreat, but he refused and, upon reaching the Moors' camp, employed the trick suggested by Kori. It was entirely successful. The Moors fled, and Déni-ba Bo easily recovered the stolen herds and returned them to the village.

As a reward for this splendid achievement, the Dénianké women decided to ransom Déni-ba Bo and, for this purpose offered all of their jewels. Suley refused, however, preferring to release his debt prisoner himself. In return he asked Déni-ba Bo to bind himself by a blood-oath, telling him furthermore to take any of his property he wanted. At the suggestion of the mabo woman, Déni-ba Bo asked for his friend Kori and for the royal insignia which included a pair of trousers, a shirt, a red cap and turban, and a copper axe.

3. Chief of the Denianké.

*173 When he had been freed, Déni-ba Bo left at once to rejoin his brother Séba Mana. The latter was still shaken by an encounter that very morning with the Khassonké [Kasonke] who had had a column composed of 60 "foot." Mounting his horse, Séba Mana wanted to show his brother the scene of the battle. When they reached a small stream, the horses easily crossed over, but Séba Mana, who was very corpulent, hurt himself against the pommel of his saddle. With Déni-ba Bo's help he was able to reach home, but he fell gravely ill and died three months later (1).

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1. Séba Mana had established a special system of physical training for the young Massa-si boys. From the time they were weaned up to the age of twelve or thereabouts, they were brought up away from their families and were provided with a copious diet, consisting especially of meat which they ate almost raw. They were trained in boxing. Slaves bathed them morning and evening. When they reached the age of twelve, each received from the fama a complete set of clothes, a thoroughbred horse with harness and groom. They then returned to their father's house and were thus ready to swell the ranks of the army if need arose.

*173 Déni-ba Bo (1760-1780). The army of the Massa-si was still very weak since it had at that time only two "foot" instead of four. Nevertheless, Déni-ba Bo was determined to regain the land of his forefathers and said: "I intend to free myself from the n ti de and the n kho le (2)." He had cowries pulverized,

2. n ti de means "I say" in Soninké and n kho le means the same thing in Khassonké. Thus, Déni-ba Bo meant that he intended to free himself from both peoples.

*173 sprinkled Séba Mana's body with the resulting dust, wrapped it in [114] an ox-hide and placed it on a litter. He set out and in this manner reached Guémou, where he interred Séba Mana.

Then he marched against the Bambara of Niamala (near Mourdia) and, after defeating them, continued a vigorous offensive against all the enemies of his family. At Djigué he attacked Tiéma Dembélé, who had just returned from leading a column against Ségou. He took Djigué and killed Tiéma. He then turned against his uncle Sama Kouloubali and killed him at Kolo. Within three years he had taken and plundered 60 villages. In each village he used up the food provisions, enslaved the populace and circumcised the boys whom he then incorporated into his army.

Like his predecessors, he fought against the Khassonké; he besieged their capital, Koniakari, but was defeated. Not wishing to submit to a futile defeat, he decided to have himself killed in order to fulfill the prophecy that the Massa-si would rule over the land in which he died. Taking the saddle off his horse, he put it on the ground and sat down, expecting that the first Khassonké who found him would certainly kill him. He was discovered by three shoemakers who took him to Demba Séga, the chief of the Khassonké.

Since the latter had heard the prophecy, he did not want to put the prisoner to death; so he turned him over to his close friends. However, Madi, Demba Séga's son, together with the Diawara Dabola and some Bambara from Niamala, killed him in secret.

He had reigned for twenty years.

Sira Bo (1780-1789). Sira Bo established his headquarters at Guémou (southwest of Nioro) and continued to work for the restoration of the Massa-si power.

During the nine years of his reign, he made profitable conquests. He took Kita, the land of the Ba-fing, and the country of Ménou; he continued the struggle with Khasso with varying success; he conquered part of Bélédougou and occupied Guidioumé and Bakhounou.

*173 Déssé-koro (1789-1802). According to one tradition, Déssé was captured at the same time as Foro-koro and taken with him to Ségou where he is said to have been marked with the [115] tatoo (1) peculiar to the slaves of the Ségou branch of the Kouloubali. Authority would normally have passed to Déssé on the death of Séba Mana, but because Déssé's fate was uncertain it was offered instead to Sira Bo. The latter is said to have refused at first, but he accepted when his brother Mo-siré guaranteed that even if Déssé should return, the power would not be withdrawn. When Déssé returned ten years later, he respected the promise made by his brother Mo-siré and waited until the death of Sira Bo to take command.

Whatever may be the truth of the matter, Déssé took advantage of the quarrels that arose at Ségou upon Ngolo Dyara's death to capture Niamina. It is said that a small forest of baobab trees later arose on the spot where his troops had encamped.

When Ma-n-son had been relieved of the worst of his worries by his victory over Nyana-n-koro, he was anxious to avenge the capture of Niamina (2) and so turned his attention to

[304-567]

1. This well-known tatoo consists of three cuts on each side of the face running from the temples to the lower jaw in front of the ears.

2. The relations between Déssé and the people of Ségou are very obscure. Some say that, on being asked for help by Nyana-n-koro, Déssé stipulated that he would only agree to help if Foro-koro's skull were returned to him. When he had gained possession of the relic, he returned to Kaarta, promising to come back at the appropriate time. He did in fact return and encamped near Ségou after the defeat and death of Nyana-n-koro; he

Déssé. He besieged Guémou (3) on February 22, 1796, according

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sent word to Ma-n-son that he owed his victory to the fact that he -- Déssé -- had not aided Nyana-n-koro.

Then Ma-n-son is said to have sent a challenge to Déssé. Ma-n-son's emissary is supposed to have appeared before Déssé bearing the choice of a hoe (daba), a fetter and a bit. This symbolism meant that if Déssé chose the hoe, he was declaring an end to warfare; if he accepted the fetter, he was acknowledging the authority of Ma-n-son; and, finally, if he chose the bit, it meant that he intended to go on with striving for domination. Déssé is said to have chosen the bit, and that is why Ma-n-son attacked Guémou.

[3] According to another tradition, he merely pillaged the Bélédougou region while one of his brothers was simultaneously ravaging the left bank of the Niger from Niamina to Bammako. After all this, Ma-n-son returned to Ségou.

It was another affair that again brought Déssé and Ma-n-son into conflict. A Bambara village on the left bank that was under the protection of Ségou had its cattle carried off by some Moors. The cattle were sold to some Kaarta people, and the Bambara from whom they had been stolen made claims in vain. When Déssé was informed, he sided with his people, and Ma-n-son, likewise favoring his people, carried the war into Kaarta.

*173 to Mungo Park. Déssé fled via Dioka to Tango

After having pillaged and destroyed Guémou, Ma-n-son attacked [116] Tango. Déssé fled once more and took a stand at Guidingouma in the Guidimaka area. Ma-n-son surrounded the place, hoping to starve it out, but time passed without result and, sensing fatigue -- always a bad adviser -- among his ill-supplied men, he appealed to Ali, chief of the Oulad Mbarek. Ali refused to budge. So Ma-n-son turned against this recalcitrant ally and marched on Diara. However, hearing along the way at Niono that the Oulad Mbarek people had left for the north, he decided against following them and went home to Ségou.

Rid of his enemy, Déssé returned to Guémou and, as this town had been destroyed, settled not far off at Dioka, which he fortified. Not long after, when a large caravan of slaves was passing through, he followed his grandfather Massa's example and became the leader of a new band of plunderers who joined the ranks of his faithful followers.

He continued his raids on the surrounding country until his death.

Ntin-koro (1802-1811. During his nine-years' reign, this Massa-si chief concentrated his efforts against the Kagoro people and conquered them. He also made some profitable raids among the Bambouc people.

Sara-ba (1811-1815). He spent the four years of his reign in pillaging Bélédougou, Birgo and Mandé.

Moussou-koura Bo (1815-1818). He was an implacable enemy of the Khassonké, a fact which earned him the title Fula-fo Bo ("Bo, killer of Peul"). Thanks to the intrigues of Kombossé Saféré, chief of Séro, he found himself master of the situation. After taking Koniakari and ousting the chiefs of Khasso, he became the ruler of Khasso on the right bank, so he assigned the area to one of his slaves named Fa-digui.

Bo-dyan Mori-ba (1818-1835). Bo-dyan set up his headquarters at Yelimané.

After forcing Fa-digui to submit, he raided the villages of the Gadiaga, Damga, Saloum and Bambouc areas in collaboration

*173 with the chief of Bondou. He thus found himself drawn into making peace with the chief of Khasso, who was an ally of the Bondou chief.

[117] Nyaralen Gran (1835-1844). We know nothing about this nine-year reign.

Mamari Kan-dyan (1844-1854). He left Yelimané for Khondié and then settled at Nioro. He was in command of the Massa-si when El Hadj Omar appeared. Before this, he had ousted the Diawara from Nioro, where he had settled; but he had had to fight for seven years with these same Diawara and his authority had only just begun to seem established when the Foutanké prophet arrived. Mamari Kan-dyan was unable to resist and fell into the hands of the invader. At first his life was spared but he was finally put to death, as will be described in what follows (see Chapter 6, Islam).

Those of the Massa-si who eluded El Hadj Omar fled to Bangassi (Foula-dougou), where they settled under the authority of their chief, Diringa Mori, who died 16 years later.

Under Boussei, who succeeded Diringa Mori, the Massa-si broke up into two groups: one settled at Guémou-koura (Kaarta-binné) and the other emigrated to Diani (Gadiaga).

On the death of Boussei there were new migrations. Modi Siré, son of Gran, settled first at Fata-fin and then at Félé-ba, villages near Badoumké; another group went to the Bondou area and settled at the village of Kidira.

Dama, who succeeded Boussei, abandoned Kidira and went to Goré, near Daramané, and then to Guémou, south of Diani (Gadiaga). There he divided the Massa-si into seven villages: Guémou, Dyidyan, Dyamé-khassé, Taroutallah, Madi-na, Nyaralén Dyogou and Moussa Makhana.

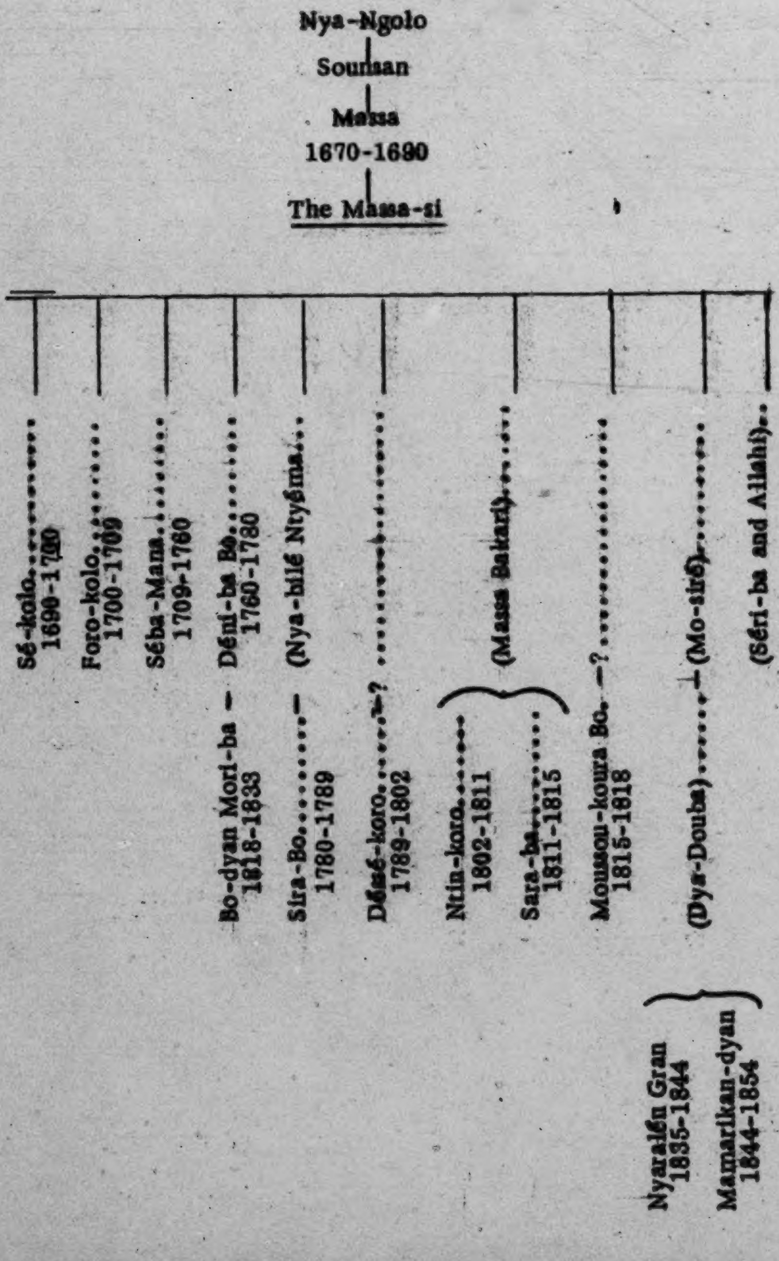
175 After the French had taken Nioro, Dama, who had always been hostile to the "people of Fouta," was called to Kaarta by Colonel Archinard. He settled at Farabougou and died there. When Ségou was captured by the French, we chose Dama's son, Bo-dyan, to govern there.

Dama was succeeded as chief of the Massa-si by Allahi, whose authority lasted for only nine months. He was succeeded

*173 by Mori-ba and then by Gossi, who left Fara-bougou for Lambé and finally went to Diabé.

Genealogical Table of the Chiefs of the Clan of Kaarta

The Kouloubali


Nya-Ngolo
Sounsan
Massa
1670-1690
The Massa-si
Sé-kolo 1690-1700
Foro-kolo 1700-1709
Séba-Mana 1709-1760
Déni-ba Bo 1760-1780
(Nya-bilé Ntyéma)
(Massa Bakari)
?
(Mo-siré)
(Séri-ba and Allahi)
Bo-dyan Mori-ba 1818-1833
Sira-Bo 1780-1789
Démé-koro 1789-1802
Ntin-koro 1802-1811
Sara-ba 1811-1815
Moussou-koura Bo 1815-1818
(Dya-Douba)
Nyaralén Gran 1835-1844
Mamarikan-dyan 1844-1854

[119] Chapter 2

Concepts

1. Beliefs

195 826 The Bambara, like ourselves, has a sense of inner life and he expresses it in his language through figurative expressions which, in a sense, localize his sensations.

The eye, whose lens reflects everything that goes on around us, is, for the Bambara, a kind of mirror of the inner life: to be sad, nye na-fin, means "to have a somber eye"; to be cheerful, nye na-dye, means "to have a bright eye"; to be beaten down, nye na-koro, means "to have an eye that is old."

The head is the seat of decision, will and pride. To be active, kun' kene, is "to have an ardent head"; to be tenacious, kun' gwele, is "to have a hard head."

All emotional life is concentrated in the heart. A man who has proper feelings, a son' ka nyi, "has a good heart"; one who is bad, a son' ka dyugu, "has an evil heart." In a more general sense, anything that acts within (kono) us is a be n-kono, literally "it is within myself," meaning "I think, I intend, etc."

It is noteworthy that for these people life resides especially in two organs, the heart and the liver. The most solemn oath among them always contains the phrase: i ka n son' ni m bien' ta or "take my heart and my liver," that is, "destroy me, annihilate me, by removing these two knots of life."

774 195 In addition to these figurative expressions, which are common to [120] all languages, there are abstract terms which serve to express all that we imply in the words "life," "soul," etc. In Bambara, ni is "physical life," characterized by the drawing of breath (ni), which begins and ends with life. Dusu is emotional or moral life; si is duration, in the sense of living and also of becoming.

774 The Bambara does not conceive of a body's shadow as being caused by the interception of light by that body. For him

774 it is a fluid emanated from the body itself and made manifest as much by the shadow, which may be seen in sunlight or in a bright light, as by the image which appears when the body is placed in front of a reflecting surface. This fluid is called dya.

774 The dya has the faculty of leaving the body when it is
asleep to wander wherever it wishes; the sight of its wanderings,
787 which the body can witness, constitutes a dream (sugo). Dream
is a kind of reality; it is in a sense the private life of the dya
in company with its fellow-dya. During waking hours, the dya
accompanies the actions of the body; during sleep, the body
must endure the dya's peregrinations, for there is no doubt but
that the dya rules the body it inhabits. Thus, waking a person
abruptly is virtually a criminal act because, if the dya is away
at the time, a too abrupt summons may break the link between
[761] the dya and the body, and such a rupture (sa) is death (sa). Be-
sides, the body has only a vague memory of the wanderings of its
dya, it experiences the consequences of this action. On awaking,
the body is exhausted by all these mad rushing about and fantastic
escapades, and it feels the effects of the dya's actions, either
good or bad.

In short, this dya is comparable to what some Europeans call a "double."

775 Further, it appears that the dya plays a crucial role in the "return" (sagi) to life, that is, rebirth, which is one of the most strongly held beliefs of the Bambara. After death, the dya is reincarnated in the same families; the Bambara even claim to have positive proof of this fact. Such and such a newborn child has such and such anatomical peculiarity of the deceased -- is this not a proof that the deceased wanted to show thereby that he was re-embodied? If a child dies very young, the body is mutilated in some agreed manner -- a finger is broken, for instance -- [121] and if later a child is born in the family with a similar deformity, everyone is convinced that the dead child has "returned": a sagira, "he has returned."

It is also believed possible for a dead person to be reincarnated far from his own people. All over Bambara country stories are retold of dead people who, more or less long after

It was then that Ma-n-son founded the village of Sirakoro, but he assigned no chief to it, keeping the direct administration of the place in his own hands.

Of the 740 chiefs of slaves who had sworn allegiance to him only 60 remained; he decided that they alone should continue to exercise their functions and that their respective posts should be hereditary.

[89] Ma-n-son called a general assembly and asked for a column to be used against Yarouga. The slaves refused on the ground that it would be enough to summon Yarouga to get satisfaction.

Ma-n-son crossed to the left bank with a small escort and summoned Yarouga. On the way, Yarouga was overpowered by the emissaries, dragged before Ma-n-son and at his orders put to death.

He was replaced by Ko-dyado, one of Ma-n-son's slaves.

Ma-n-son sought to find out whether the Peul chief, Bon-gué, had left any children. When he learned that there were five, he summoned the eldest to him and gave him 1,740 slaves and command over Sama-n-koro.

Then Ma-n-son called the other Peul chief, Ndyan, and said: "Why did you not tell me that Bon-gué had left five children?"

"They were so young!"

"That's a poor reason! The truth is that you profited by my being busy elsewhere to appropriate all of your brother Bon-gué's property. But no matter, I shall do you no harm. You may keep what you have, but you'll get no more."

Out of the twelve Peul settlements organized by Ngolo, Ma-n-son made two groups: one for Ndyan and the other for Bon-gué's children. This is how the two Peul tribes, Ndyan-na and Bon-gué-na, known as the *Fur-ba Fla-u*, were founded. When Ndyan died, he was succeeded by his son Bakari, more commonly known as Bakari Ndyan (Bakari, son of Ndyan) (1).

1. See in the following "texts" fragments of the legendary history of this Bakari Ndyan.

775 their death and more or less far away from the place where they died, have been seen living a new life.

The *dya* is then, as it were, the essence of individuality,
774 and the body, its material expression, takes on forms that are
775 somehow characteristic of the *dya*.

The *dya* is a fluid which has its own attributes. There are sorcerers who are thought to know ways to capture the *dya*, especially for the purpose of using it to make idols that can talk.

It is further believed that a part of the *dya* is indestructible because it is made up of another fluid common to all nature, which the Bambara call *nyama*.

The *nyama* has no shape, but it retains, as it were, a trace of the identity it had during its incarnation; so the name borne by the person who was animated by this *nyama* has an irresistible attraction for the *nyama* and the latter is forced to obey anyone who knows how to use this propensity to make it carry out his wishes. After death, the *nyama* retains human contacts and, in certain respects, continues to behave as it did during its corporeal lifetime. Its manifestations are seen by the Bambara in matters of vengeance: the *nyama* of an ancestor is especially attentive to the manner in which the ancestor's wishes are being carried out and it is relentless in punishing those who fail to comply. It is the *nyama* of the *fa* (father of a family or patriarch) who torments the accursed; it is the *nyama* of the victim who pursues the murderer; and it is the *nyama* of anything tabooed that strikes down the impious.

So it is that, for the Bambara, a human being is composed of a corporeal body (*su*) which serves as the outward envelope (*fure*) of a fluid element (*dya*), whose subtle essence (*nyama*) is merely a part of the universal energy which permeates all nature.

771 [122] To a certain extent the Bambara applies the foregoing ideas on human beings to all that surrounds him. However, it should not be assumed from this that he conceives of everything as being made exactly in his own image. To express abstract ideas, he uses concrete terms which may, however, give a false impression. There is no doubt whatever that the Bambara differentiates between himself and animals; he also distinguishes from vegetables or minerals.

771 In any case, these are questions which he does not ask
or which, at least, he has not considered in any way that would
cause him to make logical, even if fragmentary, syntheses.
His words and his acts are indications and sometimes even guide-
posts for us, but how uncertain and misleading they can be! And,
in the observation of current facts, how many at least seeming
contradictions there are! However, in the main, the analysis
given in the paragraphs above represents the basis of Bambara
dogma, since everything happens in reality as if the Bambara
were living in accordance with these principles.

That being the case, life results from the union of the
761 two parts of the body, while death is a result of their separation.
772 Whence come these two elements and who it is that decides
upon their union? No answer is possible. The Bambara say,
merely, that certain persons are reincarnations. Precautions
[844] taken during pregnancy and delivery show that childbirth is one
of those mysteries against which taboos must be observed as a
protection. The frequent and readily believed stories about
[845] women giving birth to monsters -- usually animals -- bear wit-
ness to the affinities which, in the minds of the Bambara, exist
between all creatures. But nothing specific is said about what
precedes and determines the birth of a child.

This is a secret to which the Bambara are, of course,
562 not indifferent. It is evidenced in the fact that women, through
778 whom man comes into the world, are held to be doubtful
creatures, at the very least, partly because of menstruation,
which makes a woman impure, and partly because of the mys-
terious travail she endures during the delivery of a child (1).

[774] 1. Women are also susceptible of being possessed continuously by a spirit (see the story of the Déni-bo Ba, p. 123). That is why, when a woman is several times widowed, she is suspected of being possessed by a jealous spirit who kills off her husbands. She is often even thought to be herself a sorceress.

562 This suspicion readily degenerates into disrespect, scorn and
778 hatred when a woman [123] is weak -- this being the usual
state of affairs. On the contrary, the feeling changes to super-
stitious fear if she resorts to occult practices and shows herself
[754] an adept at sorcery. Many old women are held to be very ex-
pert at such practices.

In the same connection, it should be noted that a new-
851 born child is also subject to scrutiny. For seven days after birth
it is not officially taken into the family, because it is thought
that during this period the infant may undergo metamorphosis un-
less closely watched over by its mother.

We shall see, through a study of their institutions, how the Bambara conceive of life and organize it.

Funeral practices will show us how the Bambara regard the idea of death.

And after death?

775 The Romans distinguished among spirits: the manes or
769 good gods (dü[1] manes) and the lemurs or evil spirits, both of
whom take an interest in the family.

The Bambara have analogous concepts.

Once it has left the body, the soul of a patriarch goes to join the souls of his ancestors, where it finds a spiritual family which protects the earthly family.

The manes (fa su-u) always like to frequent the places where their bodies lived, and that is why one keeps the things that belong to the deceased, why he is buried near his house or sometimes even under the floor, and why some families piously keep the skull of the departed to do it honor.

The entrance-hut (blon') is usually the site of the altar of
[778] the ancestors and of the family gods. The ancestral altar may be
a small board with a human mask, called kara, or a mound of
earth shaped vaguely like a human being. The manes are thought
to enter into these objects to receive the offerings and sacrifices
made to them.

It is sometimes thought that the world of the manes may be without light and heat but that otherwise they each continue the existence it had in life with the same passions, the same

[1] [dei ? —Analyst]

775 passions, the same preferences and the same [124] animosities.
769 The weak lead a passive existence in poverty and oblivion, whereas the powerful -- chiefs, heads of families, diviners -- are, on the contrary, active, intriguing and passionately devoted to the interests of their earthly families. They live among their fellow beings, who are incorporeal like themselves, just as their relatives live on earth. However, they all have powers superior to those of earthly men over winds and rain, farming and hunting, in short, over all things that constitute the visible world of man. All can manifest themselves to the living, and they like to choose a place where their presence and their action will be most useful and where they prefer to receive offerings, as in a grove, on a hill, or near a spring or a tomb.

Certain manes are thought to attain an increasingly eminent position in the invisible world through special activity, until they become pure spirits.

Woe unto him who fails to maintain cordial relations with his manes! Woe unto him who neglects the dead! The dead suffer from such negligence, become angry and seek vengeance. Hence the terrifying appearance of ghosts who come to bewitch the impious; hence the possession that disturbs a person's faculties to such a degree that it makes him dangerous to others and only exorcisers could restore them to their normal state.

Here occur the analogies with the lemures, for abandoned manes are easily captured through the sorcerers' artifices and then must do the latter's bidding. Further, all those who were cast off by society during their lifetime because of harmful activities, like those of sorcerers or criminals, the accursed also have their thurifers, whom they help with their supernatural powers.

775 Does this survival of the good and the evil have any purpose or any duration and, if so, what are they? Do people believe in immortality or eternity? Obviously the Bambara do not ask such questions and native practices do not seem to provide any answers. The one definite belief is in a survival which the Bambara can only conceive of in terms of ordinary life; the terms used to describe the other world bear this out. the dead eat,

776 drink, dress themselves, wear adornments, etc. -- in short, behave exactly like living men.

[125] All peoples use or have used such language in trying to express a concept which is by its nature impossible to make concrete. It is, therefore, perhaps premature to conclude that a Bàmbara cannot conceive of a strictly immaterial world for his manes. He is merely at present incapable of giving a description unencumbered with concrete terms in habitual use. However, it may be stated in general that the Bambara does not trouble himself about the why or how of things outside of what he sees or knows. Reality surrounds him and limits him. He makes decisions on the spur of the moment and also under the influence of time-honored empiricism which is the basis of custom. 812

776 We have pointed out that among the incorporeal souls are some who, through the right efforts, rise to such heights that they can enter the world of spirits. There are spirits, indeed, who have nothing of the human about them. What are their origin and nature? The Bambara say of them: ma si fa do, meaning "It is a kind of person." Here, too, the expression betrays the thought. Aside from the fact that the native vocabulary does not provide for expressions strictly immaterial, the Bambara has an inevitable tendency to use himself as an object of comparison. For him, the world of the spirits like that of the manes, is analogous to our own. But the manner in which he speaks of the spirits contradicts his words. A spirit is invisible, without a material body; if it appears, it does so under the most diverse forms, borrowed for a brief time. A spirit is often called "a wind," meaning "a fluid." It is also a weightless substance, so rarefied that it can go anywhere -- even to entering a living man's body, where it can perform all sorts of fantastic things (1).

For the Bambara, most spirits remain in this vague and inconsistent state. Only events, circumstances or the native's will occasionally tear some of them away from this chaos and transports them to the worldly scene (2). We shall speak of them

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1. See Chapter 7.

2. Assuming for these and other similar

terms the same meaning of supernatural forces.

again in the chapter on brotherhoods.

[126] Spirits, genii and gods (1) known to the Bambara

1. See on p. 123 the tradition about the horse Kori who was the husband of a *mabo* woman.

may be divided into three classes:

First, manes who have become spirits. These are of ten wandering and ill-disposed spirits. That is why the word *nyama*, to which we have alluded, is often used in a pejorative sense. It is also perhaps believed -- by analogy again -- that some manes can become so perfect in evil that they become true evil spirits, just as others become, if not actually good spirits, at least indifferent ones.

A second category comprises genii of the place or gods of the earth (*nyana dugu-da-siri*). There is not a single spot that 823 is inhabited, cultivated, populated or, on the other hand, isolated and deserted that does not have its genie. However, only some of these genii have an organized cult. They are usually the protectors of those who inhabit, cultivate, frequent or visit the places in question, provided that they are suitably honored. They often reveal their presence by entering into direct relations with someone who is in their vicinity and telling him how they wish to be honored in exchange for protection (2); on other occasions they are only discovered by a "seer." In any event, the genie of a place has complete possession of whatever is in the place, and man can profit in one way or another only in accordance with his pact with the genie. In principle he has only a simple right of usufruct, different from and more extensive than our right.

2. See the story about the genie who revealed himself to Kolé (p. 51).

776

The third class comprises the enormous throng of genii of all sorts included under the vague and general term of nyana (3).

[177]

3. One also hears the word nyena. I do not think that this is a corruption of the Arab word jinn. In the first place, it was not Islam that introduced the concept to the Bambara, since it is common to all Blacks. Further, the word nyana is connected with a root nya meaning "powerful," "lord," "master," and nyena is only a dialectal variant.

The nyana may be divided into two categories: the [127] wandering and the solitary, for whom no permanent or formal cult is provided. They live pretty much anywhere. Some have a marked preference for being near men, for crossroads or for the vicinity of wells or springs. They also wander, invisible and ready for pranks, in the courtyards of houses where during the night they love to roam among the kitchen-ware. It is said that they put unclean things into the pots unless one has been careful to turn them upside down. It is even said that if any woman is so imprudent as to use a pot in which one of these wandering spirits has urinated, she will give birth to a sorcerer.

Others of these cult-less spirits throng the countryside and are the terror of travelers (1). Everyone has heard of Wokolo: a little black, hairy hunter who likes to live in the trees, along the paths and also in the brush, beside creeks. Others say that he likes to live in the si (Bassia Parkii) which we call the butter tree or karite. In any case one cannot escape his sharp arrows except

1. They can assume any form they like and take part in the life of humans under the most diverse forms. See p. 123 for the horse Kori.

776 by greeting him as soon as he is observed; if he is unarmed, the best thing to do is to jump on him and rain so many blows on him that he loses count. Then one can escape while he is still knocked out.

[779] The second category of nyana includes a motley array of spirits, all of whom have cults. The outward manifestations of these cults have struck anyone traveling in the country, and under their apparent diversity there are recognizable general traits. All are magic practices intended to make the spirits serve man's will. By this means, man tries to make use of supernatural forces of the same nature as those whose unfavorable action he fears. He resorts to the invisible for weapons of defense and of attack. However, these practices must never go beyond certain limits, which are not too well-defined, if they are to be legitimate. Beyond these limits it becomes illicit magic or sorcery, which is especially feared and, whenever possible, relentlessly punished (2).

2. See Chapter 7 on the suba.

[128] In reality, the whole mass of these facts is extremely confused. The licit and the illicit are intertwined to the point where they cannot be disentangled. However, there are perfectly clear cases where there seems to be no doubt about the distinction; but there are all possible gradations between strictly magic practices and unadulterated sorcery.

Theoretically, the nyana are all-powerful and are honored the more in proportion to these powers, since, in generally, it is their malevolent side that earns them their reputation. Homage is paid to them much more out of fear and terror than because of the kindness sometimes attributed to them. What a Bambara wants of them is the dyigi-seme, or "powerful master," who will protect him against everything and everyone and, if need be, help him against his enemies or give him the means of succeeding in some evil project.

A belief in a master of the universe exists among the Bambara, but the belief has borrowed from Islam a degree of

776 precision of which the native substratum seems unaware. In
any event, there is no Bambara word for "God" except the one
[177] brought by the Moslems -- "Allah," pronounced as Ngala. This
lack of a Bambara word may be explained by their custom of
avoiding pronouncing the name of powerful people for fear of
incurring their wrath.

There is no superior spirit of evil: Seïtane [Satan] is
[177] likewise a Moslem introduction. The Bambara does not visualize a hierarchy of spirits.

Finally, it must be concluded, from the existence of
776 many magic practices, that there is a belief in a kind of uni-
778 versal energy, which is diffuse by nature and which, by appropriate
789 means, one can capture and use as one likes. Certain genii or
gods are merely emanations of this invisible, imponderable and
active force, which no obstacle can stop and which can instantly
overcome space and strike at a distance. This is the basis of all
native magic.

## [129] 2. Morality and Customs

776 When, as among Catholics and Moslems, the after-life
is believed to be influenced by one's conduct in this life, there
577 is a rule which determines what is and what is not proper if one
wishes to earn the greatest possible rewards in the life to come.
The saints and pious men have shown the way to this end.

For the Bambara, however, the next life is merely a continuation of this one and he does not think that he can, by conduct, improve his chances in the next life since it offers no rewards or punishments for his day-by-day actions. Neither his manes nor his genii give him an example of conduct to guide him. Therefore, without thought of the future, he goes along solely concerned with the present; he seeks what will give him pleasure, tries to avoid what seems harmful, and all this in a groping way, as one walks in the dark.

577 Sometimes, it is true, he is led to behave with a degree
of decency and to avoid certain too shocking lapses, which would
626 expose him to reproach, alienate his friends and create for him

577 an uncomfortable situation among his own family; but under-
626 neath this surface, the evil shows through. It is not unusual to
577 be faced with a disconcerting absence of moral sense, ferocious
157 egotism, deep-seated duplicity, impudent treachery and cold, unperturbed cruelty (1). And one can see, perhaps in all of them, the scorn and even hatred felt for anyone who is unfortunate, weak, ill or abandoned. However, it should certainly be noted that there are also Bambara who display the most disinterested devotion, generous hospitality and remarkable courage; some even give evidence of that kind of inborn distinction which is to be found among even the most primitive peoples and which is the mark of superior people.

183 Thus, no code organizes Bambara rules of life. Everything depends upon custom, that mysterious thread, at once fragile and strong, which links the generations one with another [130] and which sustains the individual, though he is unaware of it, to such an extent that he is completely lost without it. Handed down by earlier generations, superstitiously preserved, it is imposed through fear of the punishment which will follow transgression. At first glance, custom appears to be an amalgam of the most heterogeneous elements and that is why we Europeans find it at once respectable and ridiculous, good and bad, useful and futile, sometimes atrocious and then again excellent. On closer study it is seen to exhibit, on the basis of feelings common to all humanity, an efflorescence peculiar to the native milieu, a natural morality which duplicates positive laws.

It is the nature of man to observe certain laws, to see the good and the bad in what surrounds him and, in his conduct, to display a leaning toward the good and an aversion to the bad. He recognizes within himself something which criticizes his actions from a similar point of view and, which, in fact, judges them.

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1. The chronicle of Ségou, especially, attests this tradition of trickery and hypocrisy (see especially the tales about Ma-n-son, p. 93, and about Da, p. 101).

183 181 The Bambara has a very highly developed sense of this idea of justice and there is nothing he resents more than injustice or a denial of justice. His resentment is stubborn and his vengeance, which may be deferred under a show of indifference, is implacable. The chronicle of Ségou is rich in pertinent examples. There was Ngolo Dyara, bringing murder and disaster on his own relatives in order to satisfy his hatred for having been sold into slavery by his uncle and not ransomed by any of his relatives. There was Kégné Mari who, watching the murder of Touro-koro in the Komo wood, expressed his vengeance finally fulfilled by saying: "Remember how, falsely accusing me of adultery with one of your wives, you had me lashed? And how on that day I told you that even though I were lying on the ground, if I could touch you with my foot, I would lay you low? Here at last is the day of my vengeance!" Similar examples are innumerable.

If he is powerless against injustice, the Bambara will wait patiently and, each time he has to speak, will dissimulate his weakness in formulas which have a double meaning, such as
[195] O do!, meaning "That's it!" O nya-na, meaning "Oh well!" Tigi!, meaning "That's true"; and other similar expressions. At the same time, he is repeating to himself his proverb: don' m'i fantan', a bla R'a teme, meaning "Don't pay attention while you are weak," that is, "Wait until I am strong enough to take vengeance (lit., to pay you back)."

181 571 626 This instinctive feeling for justice accounts, in a certain measure, for the family bonds made up of reciprocal rights [131] and duties between parents and between them and their children and, by an analogy of which we shall see other examples, between master and slave and between chief and subject. The obligation to respect all pacts concluded in the form of vows, oaths or fraternal alliance rests on the same basis. And it is the same notion that inspires the repression of acts which are almost universally condemned: perjury, treason, false witness, slander,
[691] theft and murder. It sustains the tireless persistence of the pleader who will go through endless lawsuits to obtain redress for a wrong done to him or to one of his people. And it gives strength to public vengeance against the sorcerer.

183 However, there is superimposed upon this natural law its application, the so-called positive law. How very odd is the aspect of this natural law beneath its external surface! For there are as many ways of envisaging the application of natural law as there are legislators, and among the Bambara, in many respects everyone is his own legislator since each has his own custom. All these [individual] customs which jostle, cross, interpenetrate and superpose each other, constitute for the European a compact mass which he calls "custom," whose thousand facets are changeable, elusive, diverse and unstable. However, under these disparate exteriors emerge general traits which are, so to speak, the framework of custom, and this will be shown in the following study of institutions.

183 784 Among the laws which the Bambara imposes on himself or on his fellows, the most widespread and, in any event, the ones most noticed by Europeans, are the taboos (tne). The Bambara forbids himself, his relatives and his congeners to do or to say certain things; and the domain of these prohibitions has, theoretically, no limits. A hasty and therefore superficial and incomplete study of what may be called "the honorable name" (dyamu) has given rise to research by ethnographers on these taboos as they affect the limited area of the dyamu; they have chosen to study taboos especially in this connection.

In actual fact, however, the taboo (tne) penetrates the entire native milieu and is really its law. The purpose is to prevent any contact whatsoever with the invisible [132] on the theory that, should such contact take place, it would inevitably unleash severe punishment upon its author unless the latter had the time and the means to purify himself at once through ritual procedures. As a result, the only person who can state what a taboo is, is one who has knowledge of the invisible and can discern its presence when the ordinary person is aware of nothing. Knowledge is the prerogative of the old (koro) and of the master (fa), who represent the ancestors and are the guardians of custom. It is also the secret of a small number of "seers," whose natural methods are ordinarily reinforced by innumerable processes of mantic.

183 784 Thus used, taboo has organized and transformed the native milieu; it has established a line of demarcation between the sacred and the profane by removing from ordinary intercourse persons, places and objects connected with the invisible and considered to be impregnated by it. However, since by its very nature it forms an incontestable and nonappealable law, it has been the favorite means of anyone in authority wishing to impose his will without fear of protest. Thus the laity has, so to speak, had to submit to a arbitrary system of law that is essentially religious. Social regulations, rules of hygiene, medical prescriptions, culinary preparations, forms of courtesy -- all these are surrounded with taboos and all have absorbed from the tne the very essence of its vitality and its constraining force.

784 593 Within the family, which is the generating force of any collective group, the individual finds himself surrounded by taboos throughout his life. They are what establish and maintain the authority of the elders (koro-u) and especially of their head (fa). Taboos impose ancestral traditions which have developed separately and become gradually superimposition from earliest times to the present, the whole of which constitute, in fact, family custom.

784 [571] Patriarchy, brotherhood, the state, and all Bambara collectivities operate in the same way, since all collectivities are in a sense modeled on the natural family.

Religion, family, and society as a whole, in short the whole of Bambara civilization, have been and continue to be largely dependent on the tne.

## [133] 3. Mantic, Religion and Magic

787 Mantic. Among the Bambara, as among all the Sudanese, religion and magic are both based on a belief in a permanent revelation which the manes, the spirits and the gods give to men with regard to the events of their lives.

The various means by which man can come to know this revelation on the part of invisible beings are what is called divination or mantic. This is extra-rational knowledge since it makes known things which could not be learned through reason

787 alone and it applies to the future as well as to the present and the past.

Mantic differs from magic in that the latter allows man
787 to use certain methods so as to subordinate natural and extra-
788 natural forces, while the former is contemplative knowledge,
791 which does not impinge on the prerogatives of the divine but
merely puts divine thoughts into communication with human
understanding.

Further, theoretically at least, the diviner is not linked to any particular cult and is not to be confused with the priest, since he transmits the divine will outside of sacrifice, which is the priest's function. However, it also sometimes happens that the diviner is the oracle of a particular divinity and that the same person combines the functions of both diviner and priest as in certain cults described in what follows.

787 There are innumerable methods of divination. Before pointing out the principal traits of some of them, let us first note that there are cases when the divinity enters into direct relationship with a human being and speaks to him in human language. The chronicle of Ségou gives an example, in the legend concerning Kolé, head of Biton's guards, who was approached by a genie in the forest and told of the conditions on which he would be assured of his power. Ngolo Diara cheated Kolé of the benefits of the revelation by carrying out the sacrifice required by the genie before Kolé got around to it.

Dreams in which events take place just as they do in reality constitute one method of direct revelation. Frequently, however, there is a variation between dream and reality [134] which makes the meaning of the dream uncertain and therefore makes an interpretation necessary. Among the Bambara there are people who act as diviners by interpreting their own dreams. On being consulted about a problem, they claim to receive in a dream during sleep the correct information for throwing light on the difficulties involved.

A favorite method is that in which the diviner abandons himself to his god; he is possessed by the god and becomes his oracle. In the trance he is, so to speak, the instrument through

787 which the god speaks. In the brotherhoods of which we shall presently speak, the wara-mina-den' is, as the term indicates, "possessed by the god"; he is also said to be "the mouth of the god" (wara da). However, the diviner can speak only [198] unintelligible gibberish during trance, and so this half-human, half-divine language must be interpreted by the wara-tigi or high-priest.

During dream or divine possession, the invisible is brought within man's reach by a sort of inner illumination; both methods may be said to be intuitive divination. Other methods, even more widely used, are based on a different procedure. These methods purport to penetrate the divine intention and will by observation of external signs. How do these signs differ from natural phenomena?

The native pays very little attention to what we call [811] natural laws. He reasons by analogy and attributes any unfamiliar phenomenon to an invisible being endowed like himself with intelligence and will. The indications of this will are not precise, and it is up to each person to recognize and to interpret them. Divination based on external signs may be called deductive. The signs may be classified in two categories: those involving living beings and those involving inanimate objects.

787 825 Living beings. Theoretically, any animal is useful for purposes of observation because its actions, whose determining cause is unknown to the ordinary man, reveal to the seer the divine will or intervention.

Observations of this kind have given rise to many taboos (tne). Here is an example: while crossing a [135] stream an ancestor of the Samaké was caught by a crocodile and carried down through the water to the creature's lair, where he was abandoned. It happened that the man was merely stunned and when he came to, he pondered how he might escape. Suddenly he felt some grains of sand fall on his face and, seeking the source, noticed that a thread of light came in through a tiny fissure in the rock. The grains of sand were coming through this crack, and he realized that an ant lion (gere) was throwing them in an effort to show him how to get out; so he managed to enlarge the crack enough to escape. But, remembering the insect to

787 which he owed his life, he vowed that he and his descendants
825 would evermore respect it. That is why the gere is me for all the Samakè, the descendants of that ancestor.

Before beginning a fight with Blisi, Bacari Dyan, a Peul, wanted to know the outcome. A marabout told him to get two rams: "Name one Blisi and the other Bacari," he said," and watch them fighting." To be sure, during one of their combats, the ram named Bacari killed the one named Blisi and such, too, was the result of the fight between Bacari Dyan and Blisi.

But although a living animal can show the divine will through its actions, the dead body of one offered in sacrifice is no less informative. It is the duty of the seer or initiate to discover the signs of the divine will from the dying spasms, from the position taken by the body, or from the relative position of the entrails or the general constitution of each animal. This branch of mantic is called extispicy, from which are derived various methods of divination used by the Bambara.

It is common practice to sacrifice a chicken; if it falls on its back, with its feet extended away from the observer, the omens are thought to be unfavorable. If the feet point toward the observer, the omens are good. Any other position is doubtful and, if need be, the sacrifice is repeated until a categorical answer has been obtained.

Often enough a Bambara returning from a long journey wants to learn whether one or another of his wives has been faithful to him. He sacrifices a rooster and, after opening it, examines the scrotum; if it looks normal, the wife has been faithful, but if it shows [136] certain peculiarities, notably a reddish color, her guilt is proved.

787 Inanimate objects. Every Bambara possesses a set of divining cowrie shells. He almost always carries a stated number of shells -- usually 12 -- in a small bag. If he wants to consult the omens -- about the most varied sorts of enterprise -- he takes the cowries in hand and throws them onto the ground from a point not far above the ground. He reads the answer in the general arrangement of the group and also in the position of individual cowries relative to one another. If one cowrie is

787 surrounded by several others, this designates a powerful master surrounded by his proteges and promises aid. If one cowrie is stuck perpendicularly in another, that pattern is called "little girl in the gourd" and presages the birth of a girl. If two cowries are close together and turned in opposite directions, this is the symbol of sexual intercourse and presages the success of a love affair.

The kola nut is used as often as the chicken for divinatory offering. Here is how the method operates with respect to the *nyana dugu-da-siri*, of which we shall soon speak. After separating the nut into its two parts, the officiant brings them together again between his thumb and index finger and touches the ground with them, while asking the *nyana* to make known whether the offering is accepted. Then from a point not far off the ground, he casts the nut against, or a little in front of, that which is supposed to be the seat of the *nyana*. If the two parts both turn toward the officiant on the sides which were formerly in contact, the reply is favorable.

The officiant then repeats the proceedings in order to find out if the *nyana* agrees that he should make the offering. A new position, with one part turned toward the officiant and the other toward the ground, means that the answer is favorable once more. In case of doubt or failure, the process is repeated as many as three times.

412 Stones are also used as intermediaries for divination. On top of a flat stone -- usually one used for crushing condiments [137] is placed another stone, also flat but smaller. After having reflected deeply upon the object of his inquiry, the diviner holds the smaller stone with his fingertips and guides it slowly over the surface of the larger stone. He then interprets any slight resistance that developes as the smaller stone is moved around.

There is another method very similar to the one just described. The diviner places a gourd filled with water on some kind of rag or straw crown which water-carriers, in particular, place on their heads beneath the vessel to be carried. He rocks the gourd gently to and fro and then, as before, interprets the resistance produced.

787 With the same equipment the diviner sometimes operates differently. Setting the gourd firmly on the crown that supports it, he then taps it two or three times with his middle finger. Then, it is claimed, he can hear special sounds, which are revelations by the water-spirit and which he alone can understand.

In short, there is an endless number of divining practices
and here, if anywhere, the old saw which says that the spirit
blows where, when and how it listeth, is singularly appropriate.
And nothing is more accommodating than human credulity. It
[198] goes without saying that there are some remarkable ventriloquists among the Bambara, who give such talented support to inanimate objects that the latter become veritable oracles. A piece of horn stuck into the ground or a mute block of wood are thus transformed through such artifice into mediums that answer anyone on any subject.

[828] There are also many highly suggestible individuals who
[154] readily fall into wakeful or hypnotic states, during which they
reveal hidden things.

787 Another practice among the Bambara is the use of the
763 kolon' kala (1) which is specially amenable to hypnotic suggestion. When a suspicious death requires search for a murderer, the corpse is often used for the discovery. It is carried on the heads of [138] two impressionable young men, who are then assumed to be possessed by the soul of the deceased. The lugubrious remains are rapidly borne through the settlement or the countryside, disregarding obstacles, until it finally stops of itself at a spot where the murderer or some revelatory sign is to be found.

787 A kind of effigy is often used instead of a corpse. This is made of a kolon' kala to which is tied a little bag containing bits of the body (finger-nails, hair, etc.) and which is wrapped in a cloth. The effigy plays the role of the corpse.

[412] 1. This is the wooden pestle used in all native kitchens to crush grain and condiments.

787 The kolon' kala is used in the same way to discover stolen or lost objects. In that case it is wrapped in a loincloth belonging to the victim of the theft, along with something equally personal.

What are we to conclude from these divinatory practices? Are oracles based entirely on charlatanism and trickery? This would be a failure to recognize the credulity of the practitioners, most often the first to believe in their own practices.

771 Religion and Magic. There is nothing more involved, incoherent and contradictory than the cult customs of the Bambara. In order to give a clear picture of the essential traits, we shall follow an outline based on the distinction which becomes apparent on close analysis.

It can be stated that these people always honor the manes, the nyana dugu-da-siri and some other nyana, without presuming to impose human will upon them. Indeed, it may even be said that the Bambara make an effort to behave in a manner presumed to be pleasing to them.

However, the majority of the nyana are spirits suborned by man and serving his will.

Finally, there are appropriate rites which make it possible for humans to exploit a portion of the universal energy and to use it as they wish.

Let us say that the cult of the manes and of the independent
771 ent nyana are what constitutes the religion of the Bambara, while
789 the subjection of the spirits and the exploitation of universal energy properly constitute magic, which in its most feared form is called sorcery.

This distinction is obviously arbitrary. There is no custom that is not in some measure impregnated with magic, and this is so true that it is uncertain whether one should consider [139] religion to be a sort of purified magic and magic a perversion of religion or even its parasite.

Without seeking to decide this question, we shall simply point out that there is often a clear line of demarcation between religion and magic. All one needs in order to see the difference is to compare the cult of the manes with the practices of sorcery

771 789 used to capture the spirits of the dead. The native clearly shows how much he respects the cult of the manes and, on the contrary, how much he is disturbed and terrified by the practices of the suba (1). However, many practices cannot be so clearly differentiated because they have elements of both religion and magic. Such practices are held to be allowable and even desirable, illicit and hateful, depending on the point of view and the places, circumstances and persons involved.

If we keep in mind the foregoing remarks and limit ourselves to the most characteristic traits, it is possible to establish a parallel between religion and magic among the Blacks.

Both acknowledge the existence of an invisible world which is everywhere in contact with everything subject to our senses. But while religion in principle assumes man's dependence vis-à-vis this invisible world, magic operates on the theory that anything that exists comes within the power of "the one who knows" (don'na ba).

Since the Master of the Universe appears not to take much interest in what he has created, his creatures do not honor him but, rather, have recourse to the Spirits and Powers (nyana) who are willing to take a hand in human affairs. Religion organizes, for the benefit of these benevolent nyana, a cult designed to make sure of their good offices. Magic, on the other hand, forces them to execute its will.

775 Religion and magic both believe firmly in the dual nature of man; a finite body and a soul which survives this body. When death comes, this soul goes off to join the family of manes, who are bodiless souls like it. From that vantage point the soul continues to watch over the affairs of its relatives still in the world of men. Religion regards the manes as guardian spirits and strives to make sure the continuity of their [140] will and wishes. Magic treats (1) these incorporeal souls like the

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1. See Chapter 7 concerning the suba.

1. Especially by means which give magic the character of sorcery.

771 nyana and seeks to use them for utilitarian ends.

789 By virtue of the beliefs on which it is based, religion engenders a certain degree of morality. Magic uses its knowledge to exploit the Universe for material profit.

In both camps there are initiates. Whereas the most
[791] famous adepts in magic live in a kind of isolation, where they
jealously keep the secret of their practices and where they exist
apart from human societies which at once honor and fear them,
[794] religion, on the other hand, displays its cults, if not exactly
publicly, at least in the circle of the faithful. The latter,
since they are usually completely familiar with the ceremonies
of the cult and with the high-priests, are the masters and most
venerated members of society.

Religion receives its most reliable support from the natural family and from the communities derived from that family. Legal magic has copied these organizations in the form of brotherhoods, which Europeans call "secret societies," a kind of spiritual family in which the members are only gradually admitted to all secrets.

Whereas the religion of the manes forms the strongest link that holds together the members of a community, and represents the framework of the society, magic on the other hand cares little for this union and in fact helps to disrupt it by the hatred it engenders. Thanks to magic, the individual feels competent to challenge the community and never fails to do so.

Let us look more closely into the traits characteristic of religion and those characteristicof magic.

By studying all that concerns especially the patriarchal and family communities and the associations growing out of these communities we shall be able to see the place occupied by the religion of the manes and of the spirits, as well as the effect of magic upon the basic manifestations of the life of these communities.

789 Since magic, in a sense, envelops every act of the native, it seems to us essential, at the start, to look into its characteristics so as to facilitate the understanding of all that is to follow, which is impreganted by magic in so many ways.

789 In connection with the brotherhoods, we shall see how magic has been organized [141] in the very heart of native society and we shall observe the stability and the repercussions of its work.

Magic

778 Universal energy. There exist individuals who are sub-
789 ject to certain phenomena, as yet imperfectly known or ex-
[774] plained, in which the human being is divided into two so that
on occasion his immaterial self lives a life independent of his body in a sphere inaccessible to corporeal sense. Such a man then enters a milieu from which he brings back visions and sensations that he can only describe vaguely and frighteningly in his habitual language after he has returned to a normal waking state.

Among the Bambara, occurrences of this kind have been observed and good use has been made of them, especially in the brotherhoods. They constitute a confirmation of belief in the invisible world, as do dreams. And the Bambara sees many other indications -- which escape us -- of the existence of this extra-natural world which envelops everything and which he conceives as a force sometimes active and sometimes inert, diffused or personified. It is this energy which is, as it were, set in motion by a curse, by the extreme expression of envy called "evil eye," by luck or by misfortune. A chief's authority derives the essence of its strength from this activity. And it is the reason for honoring the dead.

This invisible force, instantly transmissible to the greatest distances, is present in all things; it exists everywhere, in everything and in everyone. It possesses or acquires a greater or lesser power in certain objects and in certain people for a stated period of time or for a temporary period. It can be beneficent or maleficent, or both in turn. The ordinary man who touches such objects or such persons will usually be struck dead or, at the least, gravely affected, as he would be if he touched a high-voltage electric current. For the initiate who knows the secret of this force and who knows how to use it, this

778 789 is a virtue which exalts his own faculties to such an extent that it gives him a supernatural power that is terrifying to the uninitiated.

This property of transmission by contact accounts for the veneration which surrounds the possessions of eminent persons and those among the dead who [142] exercised power during their lifetime. Objects especially venerated are those that were in almost constant personal use: clothing, weapons, toilet articles.

The same property of transmission no doubt also accounts for the nature attributed to matter, which has been called continuity. Everything emanating from an object retains the occult energy within it, and, further, anything that "the man who knows" (don-na-ba) does to these detached parts affects the whole from which they came (1). That is why an undigested portion of food, if suitably treated by the magician, can spoil the digested portion of the same food. The chronicle tells of how this theory of the continuity of matter was used against Bani. By means of hair and a sandal, stolen from him, the magician paralyzed Bani's clairvoyance and put him at Da's mercy.

791 Magicians. It is the learning of the magician which, so to speak, brings order out of the chaos of the world. In the broadest sense of the word, his art, magic, is a kind of utilization of the occult. It is true that there is no Bambara, from a chief down to the least of the slaves, who does not act as his own magician, but there are specialists and some of them very famous. Besides, not everyone can be a real magician. Natural talents give some individuals the power to penetrate the invisible world and to feel at home there. Some are initiated by genii who have taken a fancy to them, as shown in the chronicle of Biton; others learn the craft from a relative or a well-known magician, either at no cost or at great expense.

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[787] 1. Divination by means of the kolon' kala, previously described, is allied to this belief. The bits and pieces of the deceased act as the dead man himself would do in guiding the bearers of the kolon' kala.

791 Every magician (soma) (2) has his own methods: one may be intuitive and work from an inner light; another may operate only by deductive divination. All who lay claim to real power submit to rules which are often strange and rigorous and which dominate the most trifling activities of their lives. And all are fanatically determined to keep the secrets which, in their own eyes no less than in the eyes of the uninitiated, are the foundation of their mysterious powers.

[143] Very properly, the range of their investigations and their action is without limits, since everything is impregnated by the energy which is everywhere and in everything and which perhaps is everything, material form being merely one of its manifestations.

789 It is worthy of note that artisans are subject to the same
dislike as that for ill-famed magicians. It is not too hazardous
463 to deduce that manual labor once consisted of magic rites which
791 were held to be indispensable in conquering matter. This is
still evident in the case of blacksmiths and hunters.

791 Everywhere in the Sudan, blacksmiths are considered
and, indeed, behave like magicians. The extraction of iron is
326 surrounded by essentially magic rites in which only blacksmiths
may participate. After ritual preparation, they work naked while the job lasts and return to normal life only for a certain time after the work has been completed; even then they have to observe special rules. Their work is commonly thought to be tinged with magic. Their tools are impregnated by this invisible energy and, on certain days, the hut in which they are kept becomes a sort of temple, with the blacksmith as priest. The chronicle (1) attributes to fa Siné Dyara, a blacksmith who could understand the language of the birds, a role especially helpful to the Massa-si.

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2. A sorcerer is a suba (See Chapter 7).

1. See p. 112.

326 Raffenel has given us an interesting portrait of one of
791 these Bambara blacksmiths, whom he called father Niany,
whose guest he was at Foutobi (Kaarta). He saw him act successively as fa, as priest of the manes and of the guardian spirits of the family, as doctor, and as exorcist. He was always alert, always excited and ever watching for the thousand manifestations of the invisible and hastening either to cooperate with them or to force them to do his will.

Here are some excerpts concerning the highly character-
752 istic personage, father Niany:

"I saw a small child die of a snake-bite," reports Raffenel (2); "the poor creature was hideous and swollen up like a balloon. Its mother had laid it [144] down in a field of millet which she was hoeing. A snake appeared (1) and bit the child. The mother misinterpreted its cries and offered her breast. Soon, however, the swelling became evident and the child had died within 24 hours." ....

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2. In *Nouveau voyage au pays des nègres* [A New Journey to the Land of the Negroes], Vol. 1, p. 417.

[137] 1. "These snakes are 50 centimeters long and about 4 centimeters in diameter. Their back is gray, with very conspicuous black rings around the body. They have white bellies and a flat head rounded at the end. The part nearest the tail is covered on the upper surface by a series of vertical scales covering about a quarter of the length of the body. The tail is much smaller in diameter than the body. They like the outskirts of villages and are markedly fond of the roofs of houses." (Raffenel)

752 "A few days after the child's death, a woman in the house was also bitten, just a step from my hut and by a similar snake. Old Niany was summoned and came at once. I was not aware that he had any knowledge of medical matters but, on seeing the confidence shown him, I realized that this was not a new experience for him.

"His medication consisted, first, of ridiculous gestures and a spate of incoherent words spoken very rapidly. Then he brought out from under his boubou [robe] a small horn containing a black and oily ointment. The injured woman, who seemed very calm, prepared her own bandage and placed the ointment on the wound, adding some ground root which the old man took from another horn. When she had finished, it was Niany's turn. He muttered some more words, put his finger into his ears and took out some stuff, which was apparently there in quantity, and carefully spread it over the ointment. The woman then arose and returned to her work.

"I watched this treatment with a lively interest since I knew that I myself might have need of it at any time. For the same reason I often asked after the woman and was always told that she was getting on well. On the third day, I was told that she was completely cured and that there had been no swelling or pain to keep her from performing her usual chores.

"The snake that had bitten her was nevertheless of [145] the same type as the one that had caused the child's death. I saw and held in my hands both snakes; I saw the remedy applied and I have faithfully described it. Are we to believe in the virtue of grigri and in the omniscience of the Aesculapius of Foutobi, or must we give an unorthodox twist to the aphorism which says that faith conquers all?

"In any case, I firmly resolved to trust myself to the learned hands of Niany if the need should arise.

"When I went to Niany to congratulate him on his remarkable cure, I reminded him of the death of the child who had been treated in the same way. The singular logic of the blacksmith's reply has no doubt been encountered before: 'that's not at all strange,' he told me, 'since my remedy cures only those who believe in it and the little child did not believe.' "....

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755 "(1) I have stated elsewhere that among Negro beliefs

1. Raffenel, op. cit., p. 463.

the tradition of the state of possession was carefully preserved. One evening I was present at a ceremony designed to drive a devil out of a woman's body. Father Niany, the universal man of Foutobi, was the exorcist. At the first rumor of this event, a throng converged on the woman's hut and I joined the crowd, curious to see what was going to happen. I saw a wretched woman rolling about on the ground in terrible convulsions in the midst of a circle of onlookers who let her thrash about without trying to help and merely watched her movements. There was great excitement when Niany appeared, and the circle opened to let him pass. He approached the woman, touched her, said a few words in a low voice, lifted her and placed her on a mat.

"The woman at once became calm, and father Niany, who seemed not at all impressed by his triumph, withdrew after speaking a few words in her ear. The crowd melted away, also without showing the least surprise at such complete and prompt success. I conclude that such happenings were not at all infrequent and that Niany had a special talent for driving devils out of women's bodies. I cannot [146] say what her trouble was, but when I saw her I thought that she was simply having an attack of epilepsy and I did not recognize the usual symptoms of that dreadful malady in the sort of convulsions she was having."

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Though he was sure of his art, Niany nevertheless recognized its hazards. There is no magician who does not find another who is more powerful. A foreigner, that unknown creature, is a danger, because he may chance to possess secrets which might invalidate the cleverest methods. That is why Niany fears Islam. He has an idea, which to us seems strange, of what Allah may be, as compared to a miscreant like himself and, being persuaded of the continuity of matter, he applies it in a manner that we shall describe in the chapter on Islam.

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Though he may have his doubts about Islam, Niany is no less suspicious of the maneuvers of the foreigner, Raffenel, who is staying with him.

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"(1) One morning he came and complained bitterly that

1. Raffenel, op. cit., p. 322.

I was preventing the rain from falling and that I was causing a lot of trouble to the villagers. I could not imagine, at first, why he was thus berating me, but he explained. It was his considered opinion that the rain was very much annoyed with me for being too much interested in it. I was watching the raindrops and examining the clouds, and so the rain was getting its vengeance by refusing to fall. Father Niany resented my thermometers too, but his principal target was my barometer, to which he attributed all sorts of evil designs.

"On the following day he returned to the charge, accompanied by a deputation of farmers carrying their agricultural tools on their shoulders.

"'We've thought it all over,' said Niany, 'and we have decided that since you can stop the rain, you can also make it fall again. Therefore we have come to ask you to speak to the rain in our name.' " ....

"Two days later there came another deputation, but one which, this time, looked threatening. Among them were some [147] new faces.

"'We want you to make it rain,' said the leaders, with an angry glance at my barometer, 'for we have already waited too long. You will never convince us that what you do with your machines (they pointed at my instruments), while you look up into the air and write down the grigri, is innocent. Never before in this country, has the rain held off so long from falling and no one has ever before done what you're doing. Manage it as you will, but we must have rain by tonight.'

"The sky was filled with heavy black clouds which reassured me. .... An hour later the rain fell, but those wretches, no doubt fearing that my presence would interfere with its good intentions, pushed me unceremoniously into my hut and shut the door. By this ridiculous step they prevented me from watching the progress of a wonderful storm and noting the barometric pressure changes.

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609 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that
821 was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equip-
224 ment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well as an arsenal of magic weapons.

The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
825 they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of
778 this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[552] wara-ba means lion; sa-ma, elephant; ma-li, hippopotamus; bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an application of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
231 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
552 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of
825 their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once held and which is still shown on occasion: fa-li meaning "donkey" derives from fa meaning "powerful," just as nya-ri meaning "cat" derives from nya and has the same meaning, along with ba meaning "goat."

231 meaning "goat." In the case of the goat, there remain some
825 customs that are very suggestive. Its milk is the basis of the
most solemn of all oaths, that of fraternization; milk is also used to put out fires started by lightning and the hide is used to make sandals worn by widows during the period of mourning. The chronicle tells us that a certain dish made of a goat's head gives rise to the chief's power and sustains it (1). In spite of all this, the goat shares with the donkey a general scorn and they are considered to be the born companions of slaves. This is perhaps why some people refuse to allow either animal to come into the house. Indeed, it is believed that a rich and powerful man can be ruined if either of these animals enters his house or, even worse, if he touches them.

Magician's work. So it is that man is immersed in a
778 strange fluid. In the final analysis, everything, man included,
791 [149] is merely a manifestation of this fluid. Currents and
754 eddies have all forms of life at their mercy, and only the strongest are able to resist, control and even acquire in the struggle greater power than they would otherwise display. "The one who knows" can avoid or follow this chaotic movement; he can control himself and others. He is the real "master" (*soma*) and he alone can utilize this ever present and ever powerful invisible world.

What makes a magician can be described by a single
754 term: the magic weapon, to be used for defense as well as for attack, and indeed for anything else, by one who knows how to use it. Let us consider some of the examples in the Bambara arsenal.

For anyone who wants to destroy an enemy, the *so ma sama* (lit., "bundle of the person of the house") is a valuable weapon. It is a mysterious powder, kept in the horn of a hind, in which is placed a small stick. It is used in the following manner: let us suppose that a Bambara wishes to harm a person who is passing through the village. The Bambara secretly takes

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1. See p. 31, in connection with Dina Wara.

the tiny horn in his hand, grasps the stick, and, after uttering maledictions against the person in question and saying his name, places the stick on his tongue, first lengthwise and then crosswise. After this manipulation in the pattern of a cross, he replaces the stick in the horn. When the traveler returns to his own village, the charm will take effect. If, on arriving, he is so careless as to sit down anywhere but on the bare ground, he will die. If he does sit on the bare ground, he will be safe.

If it is not the traveler whom our man wishes to harm, but someone in the traveler's village, the Bambara, after having gone through the afore-mentioned ritual proceedings against the enemy, will then seek out the traveler and engage him in polite conversation. Just as the traveler is about to take his leave, he will say to him: "Give my regards to So-and-So." When the returned traveler delivers the message, the person receiving it will suffer no harm if he repays in exactly the same way the compliments that have been conveyed to him; however, if he merely says "maraba" (thank you), he will die at once.

The so ma sama belongs to a category of magic weapons, which are especially and deservedly feared and which [150] the Bambara include under the general name, korti. There are endless korti, usually powders made of every imaginable and often repugnant ingredient (snake venom, the dung of wild animals, putrefied entrails from all kinds of corpses, etc.).

[278] Here, for instance, is the procedure used to make su-mugu. A very dry stalk of millet is inserted into the intestine of a dead animal through the anus and is left there long enough for it to become impregnated with the toxins produced by cadavers; it is then withdrawn and thoroughly dried before being pulverized. The resulting powder is kept in horns or boxes, either as it is or mixed with an ointment.

Many of these powders are put into the food or drink to be consumed by the victim. Various methods are employed for this purpose. A ready method is for the harmful powder -- notably su-mugu -- to be placed under a fingernail; then the

754 operator can drop it into the food or drink unobtrusively while serving the victim.

Some of the powders are tossed at the victim with a quick fillip and enter the skin through the tiniest abrasions.

All this is accompanied by the direst curses and constitutes what is known as korti su. These poisons act in various ways, some quickly and others slowly. It is said that the su-mugu only takes effect gradually. Its action is to be seen in a certain amount of swelling of the abdomen, which causes death within a few months. There is not a single native who is not terrified of the korti, and there are Europeans who have experienced the dangerous effects.

Some korti are not the effect of manipulations but rather of true spirits of evil set in motion by magic practices. The following is an example of the type called donna, which includes also the so ma sama and su-mugu. The symbol or material representation (boli) of this donna is a kind of ball, not very large. In order to use it, the operator places it on the blade of one of the native mattocks called daba. The spell is worked at night. The spirit is attracted by the sacrifice of a chicken and offerings of kola. The operator utters his curses against the people -- often far away -- and asks the spirit [151] to undertake vengeance. If the spirit agrees, a sound is heard which resembles the noise made by the flight of a dung bettle (1).

[825]

1. I have been told that this is the reason for the fear certain Bambara have of this insect.

This is the genie starting off on its mission. He will fatally sting the enemy during sleep and then return, announced by the same noise of flight as was heard on his departure. If the imitator should go to sleep while the spirit is away, he will himself be killed in the same way as the victim. He must stay awake for the spirit's return and again sacrifice chicken and kola to him.

754 The korti are counteracted by the kana, which are de-
755 fensive weapons, more particularly, curative. Based on the same principles and using similar ingredients, they are essentially

754 [755] designed to neutralize the effects of the *korti*. It was a *kana* ' that father Niany used against the snake bites (2).

2. See above, pp. 157-159.

A third category of magic weapons is that of the *siri-kun'* or "knots." Though not itself a genie, the *siri-kun'* is at least dependent on a genie, and it is by addressing a vow or an oath to the genie that one succeeds in obtaining revenge or avoiding the vengeance of another.

As its name would suggest, the *siri-kun'* is something that binds, that is, something that forces or paralyzes. It receives the obligations undertaken and sworn to by individuals in its presence and it will punish perjury. It renders helpless and paralyzes anyone against whom its intervention has been asked.

I have myself seen Bambara clutching a few bits of straw when they came to me to settle some lawsuit or other. They were following instructions and trying to make me submit to the *siri-kun'*, that is, to paralyze my capacity to take action against them (3).

3. The chronicle of Ségou tells of a similar action by Ngolo against Mamari (see p. 53).

All these dealings in criminal magic are performed in an atmosphere of the most disconcerting trickery and hypocrisy; often the most fawning neighbors are the most to be feared. That is why a Bambara [152] likes to have the assurance of a "powerful protector" (*dyigi seme*). He seeks him and often thinks that he has found him in the brotherhood of one of those all-powerful genii of which we shall have occasion to speak.

788 *Rites*. There is no magic without appropriate rites, which must be strictly observed. Any negligence makes the operation useless, even dangerous, for the performer. We saw how the initiator who went to sleep while awaiting the return of the spirit he had invoked was promptly killed by the spirit

788 as it returned to its point of departure. This was presumably because the operator had not done what was necessary to assure the reintegration of the supernatural power.

[779] There are thus rites that set in motion this universal energy, whether diffuse or personified -- rites that channel, direct and orientate this energy so that not only it will reach the goal sought, but also it will be kept from straying from the desired route, thus harming the very person it is supposed to aid. Similar means are used to forestall the misdeeds which may be committed by an agent mistakenly invoked. When Ngolo had aroused his son Ntyi's ambition, he thought he could conjure away its effects by sacrificing his two grandsons, Ntyi's own children.

Those actions that call upon, guide and reintegrate this universal energy, whether diffuse or personified, are what we call rites.

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754 During the oath using kola, the operator has in his hand a sharp object (pin, thorn, etc.) with which he pricks or stabs through the nut, saying, for instance: "Take my heart and my liver and kill me, if...." (i ka ne son' ni m bien' ta, ni ...). These pricks indicate to the "power" with which the operator is concerned that, if necessary, it should take vengeance by piercing the guilty person, just as the kola is pierced by the pin (1).

In curses, all the imprecations used are so many indications, indeed sometimes instructions (2), as to how the [153] spirit invoked is requested to act.

1. The shirt sent by Ma-n-son to Forokoro was first pricked with a needle (p. 120).

[575] 2. At the time of admission to the brotherhoods, the most frightful threats are made against the traitor or perjuror in the form of curses indicating to the avenging spirit how he should punish: "May it enter through your anus and come out through your mouth, etc."

800 invoked is requested or required to act.

There are times when on the contrary, the native is
789 inclined to hold the energy in check, in order to avoid the
778 harm that would result from this sort of action. For this pur-
[784] pose he abstains from doing certain things; this is the origin
of many taboos (tne).

The acquisition of magic power in order to gain strength or to be able to act so as to avoid being affected by magic or, finally, to be able to get rid of magic power when one is permeated by it to a dangerous point -- all these involve appropriate actions or rites whose forms and conditions only magicians or others gifted with intuition can determine.

The chronicle shows that chiefs make use of magic to try to strengthen the supernatural power which is the basis of their position. Dina Wara secretly ate a special dish made of a goat's head; Biton took special baths, whose virtues Ngolo appropriated by trickery just as Biton had done with respect to Dina Wara, his brother-in-law. All sorts of comparable practices accounted for the increase of Ngolo's "luck," that modal quality of supernatural power which confers a degree of magic potency on the possessor. This so-called "luck" has, as it were, a kind of radiation, which confers special good fortune on whatever it touches. That is why the marabouts advised Biton to live in close proximity to Ngolo so as to take advantage of the favorable atmosphere.

778 This energy is attached to everything and, especially,
768 to objects that come into direct contact with anything im-
pregnated with it. What one wears on oneself thus becomes a sort of accumulator, and that is why the objects left upon a powerful person's death are so carefully preserved and constitute the most valuable part of his legacy. The chronicle tells us with what veneration the cap and weapons belonging to Biton were regarded.

778 Magic force is therefore acquired by means of appropri-
789 ate practices indicated by magicians; one shares its benefits
by living near those entrusted with it by applying to oneself what comes from such privileged persons. Here again is a result of the continuity of matter. Whatever the case, anything

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789 emanating from the person or object impregnated with magic
force acts as if it were a part of that person or object. Often
[788] the magician or [154] ritual officiant spits on the person or
object involved in the rites. This is a means of transferring
one person's fluid to another.

Conversely, it is vital to know how to avoid contact
751 with, or even emanations from, a maleficent magic force.
789 That is the reason for the great number of mysterious magic
754 practices and the secret of the innumerable amulets that form
so many shields, to be placed presumably where they will best
protect against any blow. Therefore it is the magician's
prerogative to make amulets and to prescribe the conduct
necessary to preserve their efficacy.

It should be noted that protection set up against a given person is good only for him and is useless against a successor, for instance. The chronicle tells us that Bani, chief of Samba-Nyana, was successful in using certain artifices to prevent Ma-n-son from conquering him. But, kept in ignorance of Ma-n-son's death and having taken no precautions against Da, Ma-n-son's son and successor, Bani was conquered by Da, against whom his artifices availed nothing.

If one is caught in spite of precautions, what is to be done? Everyone is afflicted in one way or another in any event. A Bambara is always inclined to believe in some sort of supernatural intervention. He has on hand some sort of remedy, but more often he resorts to a "seer" for guidance or, if the case requires, to a magician's skill.

Native medicine is a mass of magic formulas and of remedies strikingly reminiscent of the pharmacopeia of the Middle Ages (see, in the foregoing, father Niany's operations).

[571] The individual does not live as an isolated unit but
rather as an integral part of a community. In the society in
789 which he lives, however restricted it may be, he progressively
783 occupies various situations. On both physical and moral levels,
he undergoes changes and, depending on circumstances, whether
fortunate or unfortunate happenings, changes take place within
him. In short, his magic potential varies. These variations
are always believed to concern the entire milieu, upon which
they may (in the case of illness or death) have disastrous effects.

789 The individual is therefore required to [155] undergo proper
783 treatment to return him to his normal, harmless state.

789 From this point of view, social life seems to give rise
to a series of rites involving the disintegration and reintegra-
788 tion or the aggregation of the individual in relation to the group
182 in which he lives. Birth, circumcision, marriage, illness, death and the performance of certain trades are all modes of existence, whose beginning and end usually involve three stages: separation from the common milieu, accomplishment of the act, and reintegration into the former milieu or aggregation in a new milieu. Between the first and the second state as well as between the third and the fourth there exists usually a kind of negative interval which we call marginal. This system, which comes to light upon an analysis of multiple facts, is actually subject to modifications or alterations which can change its physiognomy. Nevertheless, the basis of these ritual sequences is so well established that by comparing external manifestations with the theoretical system it is possible to understand them better and to restore to some of them, which have become badly mutilated, their real meaning, which the native is usually, if not always, unable to explain or to define precisely.

A detailed study of institutions will give an opportunity for concrete analysis of these ritual sequences, which a kind of age-old empiricism has transformed into laws of a sort. They have come to represent that part of custom which has acquired a kind of permanence by virtue of public acceptance.

It is apparent everywhere among the Blacks that events of a general character (birth, coming-of-age, marriage, illness and death) are surrounded by ritual practices that vary outwardly from place to place but may all fit our theoretical system of three stages with marginal periods. All denote a common basis of magic and all derive from a long-tried empiricism which has given them a peculiar and relatively stable physiognomy in terms of the milieu with which the rites are connected.

571 What we have just said about individuals must also ap-
182 ply to collective groups: the latter deal with each other or

571 182 with individuals in the same way as individuals deal with each other. They are not only moral persons, as we put it, but they are truly persons, [156] as evidenced by the Blacks' impulsive need for anthropomorphism.

812 Let us note, finally, that a Black does not abstract himself from surrounding nature; nor has he reached the stage of development at which man regards himself as a kind of intermediary between the natural and the supernatural. The Black is an integral part of nature and that is why he treats it like himself. Therefore, natural phenomena are subjected on his behalf to the same kind of ritual sequences as those followed in his own behavior.

Chapter 3

Communities

1. General Considerations

114 631 Native society is not simple, and Europeans studying these countries have used terminology which, not being defined, has obscured reality.

In particular, they have used the terms "kingdom" and "empire" to describe Sudanese states, and both authors and readers have taken these expressions to imply a social organization more or less analogous to those meant by these words in our country.

631 These empires or kingdoms, however, are simply clans, i.e., political groups that have imposed their authority on other groups whose members then become their tributaries, members of a caste, or slaves. Such an empire, if one wishes to use this term, has no exact geographical boundaries or, if one prefers, its boundaries are constantly changing. Furthermore, the country embraced by this term has two parts: territories which may be said to be under direct administration, in which the authority of the clan is directly imposed; and those territories whose position with respect to the ruling clan

631 is highly variable, ranging from complete subjection to quasi-independence.

The imperial clan, or, if one prefers, the dominant
565 clan, most often prevails over people of races other than that
[563] of its own members; frequently this clan itself includes, at least originally, diverse ethnic elements. [158]

If such heterogeneous associates are to live side by side without clashing, they must have a large body of common customs, and this indeed is the case. Wherever one studies it, the native milieu resembles a compartmented area whose individual sections seem, at first glance, to be isolated. At the top of the social structure there is a kind of nobility composed of the head of the clan, his family, and then the families of the clan; next come the free men, simply free or members of castes; and finally the slaves. In actual fact, a continual reciprocal movement between these elements welds all of them together.

614 The fact is that the whole social body exists only
596 through the severity of the life of the cells that compose it: the families. Among other characteristics, these families are very jealous of their respective independence; nevertheless, they are closely allied among themselves even as they freely absorb the foreign element constituted by the slaves.

It is, therefore, essential to concentrate our attention on the family cell in order to understand the essential element of native social life. This is all the more true in that all the native collectivities are, so to speak, modeled on the organization of the family.

The Bambara language has no word exactly equivalent to our word "family" in the legal sense (1). Different names are used to designate the collectivity under the authority of the

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1. This is why we prefer the term "community," but in view of the remarks made here, the use of the word "family" will not be ambiguous.

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596 fa (2), according to whether the group itself is meant or the place which this collectivity occupies.

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575 Let us note at the start that any collectivity forming an association is a ton'; thus, this is the case for all persons under the authority of one fa, and from this point of view, each of them is a ton'-den', literally, "a child of the ton'," i.e., member of the ton'. The word ton'-denya derives from the same word and is commonly used as a collective designation for all the members of the same ton'. This is the equivalent of the French word [159] société [Ed., society, association] or confrérie [Ed., brotherhood, confraternity]. The head of the ton' is the ton'-tigi, a term by which honor is paid to the head of an important family, and which, in some respects, is the equivalent of our [Ed., French] words notable [Ed., person of note, dignitary] and notabilité [Ed., notability, principal person].

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596 If one considers the family as an association of the issue of the same parents, the term ba-denya is used, derived from ba-den'. Since the word ba means "mother" and, in the broad sense, "progenitor," mother or father, the word ba-den' is used for any of their issue, hence "children," "brothers," and "relatives," while ba-denya means "fraternity" "kinship."

Although, in the restricted sense in which we shall use it, the word ton' refers to anyone living under the authority of the ton'-tigi, whether or not he is connected by descent, the more exact term, ba-denya, refers only to those whose

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2. Fa means "lord," "master," "patriarch," or "father," depending on the circumstances. Within the family, it corresponds very closely to the titular incumbent of such rank and high office who led Mistral [Ed., a French poet] to call his father: "my lord father," or "the master."

614 descent is in the male line from a common male ancestor or,
596 even more narrowly, to uterine brothers and sisters. The two terms, ton' and ba-denya, have a meaning which differs from that of our word "family," which is defined in our legal terminology as "the totality of persons united by ties of kinship or affinity."

592 The Bambara family lives in huts which are connected by an enclosure or completely surrounded by the enclosure when its two extremities are supported on a kind of vestibule (blon'). The enclosure is called gwa in some dialects, whence the name gwa-tigi, a term of respect for the fa, master of the house.

Gwa, therefore, means "family" only indirectly, and it is very difficult to reconcile this word with the word "family," since the gwa houses people who are not members of the family and, on the other hand, does not house all the members of the family.

Besides, it should be noted that the word gwa in its meaning of "enclosure" is used to designate all sorts of agglomerations likewise enclosed, notably livestock folds. The variants wore and gore, which are more specifically applied to these folds, may also be used, and actually are in some regions, in forming the names of settlements. The form kore or kori, common in expressions of courtesy, has the same meaning; kori ka kende? means literally, "Is all the house well?" [160]

In some Bambara dialects, the word so is used instead of gwa. The primary meaning of the word so is also "enclosure" and, more especially, "hedge of thorns," by which all primitive establishments are protected; so-tigi has the same meaning as gwa-tigi. The word so also means "household," i.e., the contents of a house, including all within it, whether on a permanent or temporary basis and whether or not belonging to the family.

It is common practice, however, to use so and gwa in the narrow sense of "people of the family," i.e., those living under the authority of the same fa.

592 601 596 It may be said, in short, that there is no exact term for designating expressly and exclusively a collectivity

592 comparable to what our law defines as a family. In fact, the
601 four terms just discussed, ton', ba-denya, gwa, and so, are
596 all used for the purpose. It is what is intended by their use
that gives them their meaning, and depending on the region,
each term has a meaning made precise by usage.

The dwelling of the Bambara family usually includes
592 a fairly large number of huts of various kinds. Some are
342 cylindrical and built of native masonry with a conical straw
roof and, for a door, a slit or opening which does not extend
all the way to the ground. Others are parallelepiped, made of
native masonry, and ordinarily also provided with no opening
except the door.

Shelters (gwa), consisting of flat straw roofs supported
on forked sticks, are usually placed haphazardly or wherever
the master of the house wants them and are certainly not governed by any traditional rules or fixed orientation. All these
dwellings or out-buildings are enclosed by either a clay wall
or an unbroken hedge whose two ends are supported by the walls
[343] of the hut called blon' which serves as a vestibule for the establishment.

The altar of the ancestors and of the household gods is
[178] found in the blon'.

The houses of notables are somewhat more elaborately
arranged: instead of a single inner court, there are two, three,
or even more, sometimes graduated in extent. The master arranges his people in such a way as to divide into sections the
heterogeneous elements gathered together under his protection.
592 The domestic servants and the young [161] men, the women,
girls, and small children, and finally the eventual successor
are, as it were, fenced apart in their own blocks of dwellings,
while the fa himself is to be found in impressive isolation,
which lends weight to his authority.

Among great personages, especially among heads of
592 clans, this arrangement is the rule, and their isolation deep in
712 the interior is virtually a security measure. In the old days a
kind of fortress or redoubt, the tata, was built in the center of
the royal residence. Gunpowder, weapons, and all the means
of defense were kept there, and it was no easy matter to capture

592 this well-built structure in the midst of the inextricable maze
[712] of surrounding huts which were themselves surrounded by a
solid wall of native masonry.

The people of a single household are classed in three
[565] categories: free men (woro-u), members of castes (nya-maka-
la), and slaves (dyon'-u).

The freemen. Within the family, free persons are:
596 the men (tye-u), i.e., circumcised males; the moso-u, ex-
561 cised women; the den'-u, children of both sexes.

601 In accordance with their influence (faya) in the family, the men are called koro-u, old men, elders, or kamalen'-u, young masters. Among the old men the bina (uncles), brothers of the fa, hold the preponderant position; they form a kind of limited family council and generally work for the welfare of the community under the direction of the fa.

Among the women the following distinctions are made: the mothers, i.e., women under the control of a husband and who are actually mothers of children, ba-u; old women, moso-koro-u; grandmothers, mama-u; and finally unmarried girls, moso-de-u.

All children are called de unless they are specifically identified as de-n-ke, "boy," or de-moso or deni, "girl."

601 Furthermore, every male with any influence (faya) in the family, no matter to what extent, is called fa (1): [162]

1. In one way or another, therefore, every male is fa, since he exercises or will one day exercise faya. The word fa is jokingly applied even to very young boys just as ba is applied to little girls. These words may be used just like our familiar expressions when we say "Father X" or "Mother X" with no reference intended to any real state of fatherhood or motherhood.

In any case, the words fa and ba are also used as terms of respect, just as we

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> say "master" or "mistress." One may even say that in ordinary usage fa and ba are equivalent to our "Monsieur" and "Madame," with all the shades of meaning these entail.

father by his children; husband by his wives; grandfather by all his descendants; and uncle by those who have claims on the family property.

The genitor, procreator, father is the wolo-fa, and all his descendants alike are called de in relation to him.

There is, properly speaking, no term meaning brother or sister, but one can say baden'-ma-ke or baden'-ma-moso. Children of the same father call each other koro (old man) or dua, duani (young), respectively, in order to indicate the eldest and the youngest and to designate agnate or uterine relationship. Strictly speaking, duani is the younger uterine brother.

There is no special term for nephew; brother's sons are de because they are under their uncle's authority, just as his own children are. Sister's sons do not belong to their mother's family, and they are de to their father's family.

Cousins, insofar as they are the issue of brothers, are also de in that they are all under the authority of the same fa, and since they consider themselves brothers, they call each other koro or duani, respectively.

601 602 There is a kind of cousin relationship between the children of a brother and a sister, with some precedence accorded to the former.

A kind of kinship likewise exists between the children of two sisters.

In short, true kinship exists only between persons who are dependent on the same fa.

601 As for affinals, they are all covered by the single term biran', literally, "one with whom we are in agreement."

The women, moso-u, as co-wives, call one another sina-u. With respect to their children and the other children in

601 the household, they are ba-u (mothers), and the title ba is commonly used out of deference or respect. Very old women are addressed as mama, "grandmother" or "ancestress." [163]

564 Members of castes. These are free men who are destitute and form a kind of clientage of important families. We shall discuss them later on.

567 Slaves. Only slaves entrusted with special duties lived in the house. When a master discerned qualities in a new slave that might make him useful in the house, he kept him in his own service and often treated him well and generously. Custom gave the children of such a slave a privileged position; since they were "born in the house" (wolo-so-u, they could not be sold except in the case of extreme necessity. All confidential servants were recruited from the wolo-so-u, and the eldest, most experienced, and most favored often acquired great influence in family affairs. They knew more about the secrets and resources of the community than most of its members.

Another category of slaves is made up of those who after three generations were ipso facto freed (dyongoron'-u). They have played an important role in native society.

2. The Patriarchal Community or Patriarchy

769 The ancestral spirit-god. In order to view a custom from its most expressive aspect, it is necessary to observe it in its fullest development and, at the same time, to note anything adventitious or foreign that modifies its appearance and procedure or alters its basis.

The cult of the ancestors is the very essence of the family, and the most characteristic manifestation of this cult is the funeral ceremonies for the head of a family, the patriarch (fa). Here, one is present at the transformation of a man into an ancestral spirit-god within the span of 40 days.

This period is an interval during which a link between the past and the future is formed in the present, whereby

769 continuity is established between the living and the dead, with the deceased acting as intermediary. Religious customs, magic, and civil law, all are intermingled in apparent disorder, and the casual or inexperienced observer is all the more confused inasmuch as diverse accessory or circumstantial features mask the essentials in being more obvious. [164]

Does not the same sort of confusion confront a foreigner in France who sees the funeral of a prominent citizen? If he is uninformed, how is he to recognize the religious rites and civil requirements which form the common basis of all funeral ceremonies, for the great and for the humble, brought to their highest development for the one, reduced to their absolute minimum for the other.

Therefore, the important thing to show here is the sub-
764 stratum on which all funeral observances rest. For the sake of
clarity, we shall divide the period of 40 days into four phases:
(a) from death to burial; (b) burial; (c) the funeral celebration;
(d) the period of mourning.

(a) From death to burial. As soon as death occurs, the
763 fact is announced to everyone by appropriate means.

The lamentations of the women burst forth, and this spreads the news in the immediate vicinity, while gunshots inform the whole settlement. These acts have something of the ritual that was carried out when a Bambara died in war. Raffenel has given us a remarkable picture of it.

"When a Bambara died in battle, three gunshots, fired
763 near the door of his hut by one of his companions-at-arms, an-
152 nounced his death to the family. Wailings answered this an-
nouncement, and the weeping women of the village came out
of all the huts to run to the house from where the signal had
been heard. Everything was abandoned in order to share in this
sorrow. First they wept, and then they ran to find out where the
mourning was...

763 "The warrior charged with this mission arrived at the door at a gallop. He pulled up his horse, slowly loaded his gun, shot it, reloaded it again, then again... , and when the third shot had rung out, he rode off with equal speed, without uttering a word, without giving a single detail... Two shots announced enslavement."

763 A gunshot today most likely signals the death of a
hunter or the father of a hunter. In any case, however, there
are always cries and vociferations by [165] the women, who
are joined by their friends, relatives, and neighbors.

Horsemen ride off to notify any of the sons of the deceased
who are away.

[567] Meanwhile, the chief of the slaves, the major-domo,
the confidential agent, or a friend or neighbor of the deceased
goes to inform the chief and the principal men in the village.

These personages come to the mortuary house at once,
764 spear in hand. After being received by the man temporarily
in charge of the house, they go to the deceased to discover his
identity and at the same time express their condolences to the
family represented by the person who received them; then they
withdraw.

In the mortuary hut silence descends while the women
prepare the body. They wash it with warm water usually
[824] scented with basil, *su-ko-la* (*Ocimum album* and *febrifugum*);
they dry it and wrap it in pieces of native white cotton material
or else dress it in its own garments, likewise white. A mat
[285] of coarse straw (*tyekala*, *kara*) is placed in the middle of the
room. A fine, flexible mat made of *iphène* leaves is put on
top of it, and the women lay out the corpse on the second mat.
Sometimes they place a grindstone on the abdomen to keep it
from swelling.

When these preparations are completed, the women,
[352 dressed in white native cloth, sit down in the native fashion on
516] tiny stools in the mortuary hut. Those who come in from outside
give evidence of terrible grief: they cry out, they weep,
[152] they cover their heads with a bit of cloth and hurry toward the
mortuary hut. As soon as they enter, they become quiet and
stop weeping.

152 Among the Bambara grief is never silent; it is custom-
764 ary to show it overtly. As soon as there is a crowd, the singing
767 begins in rhythm to the clapping of hands. One person or
another will be inspired to sing of the achievements and virtues
of the deceased. Professional weepers and mourners mingle
with the crowd, guiding and gradually encouraging the noisy
display.

764 The provisional master takes his place at the door or inside the blon', the vestibule of the house, and receives the condolences. [166]

Several days elapse between death and burial in order to give distant or absent relatives time to arrive. During this period the funeral songs become more and more elaborate and [533] are left to professional singers who are accompanied by various instruments: tom-toms, xylophones (bala), guitars. The singers, dancers, and mourners exert themselves all the more if they think there will be substantial rewards.

The children of the house (den'-u, de-u) are allowed a good deal of freedom during this period, as though the authority which had curbed them had ended with the life of the deceased. They are allowed to take hens and goats, to eat lavishly, sing, dance, and generally rejoice.

On the night preceding the burial, the deceased is placed outside under a shelter (gwa); the songs and dances [857] continue. It is customary for the children (de-u) of the house, led by the professional members of the funeral orchestra, to take part in the singing and dancing.

Relatives, friends, neighbors, and persons obligated to the family are expected to bring offerings in proportion to their rank or indebtedness so as to contribute to the meals and to [689] the funeral alms. This is a very strict obligation; any failure to comply not only shows a lack of respect for the dead, but is also an offense which the family must avenge. The chronicle of Ségou bears witness to this fact.

763 764 Along with the religious ceremonies, events of an entirely different nature take place. If the death should seem in any way suspicious, it is the duty of the family to investigate the matter without delay. It is particularly the heir presumptive, if he is present, who is required to take steps at once to clarify the matter; he questions the ancestors and consults seers and magicians. The funeral ceremonies are sometimes dominated and even conditioned by the results of these investigations and consultations. At the very least, it would be essential to obtain the lifting of the interdict imposed on the

763 deceased in case he had been killed by a genie (nyana). Sacri-
764 fices, alms, or the payment of a fine are necessary in that event, along with intervention by the priest of the nyana in question.

764 Most often, the body is turned over to a priest (nyana-n-tigi) [167] if the deceased was a member of a brotherhood.

[735] In any event, it is customary to give alms at the cross-roads near the village.

Further, the death of the fa puts an end (1) to the authority held by him, and this may have serious consequences, since for the moment everyone is virtually independent. That is why the servitor who had the master's confidence and who actually ran the establishment retains his role after taking certain precautions (2). In particular he must make sure that the movable property of the deceased is not carried off. He is familiar with these things, and he is the guardian responsible for them. He makes the women return the gold jewelry and valuable fabrics, puts everything in a safe place, and makes an inventory in the presence of the heir presumptive.

764 (b) Burial. The deceased may be buried in the ground within his hut or at least in a corner of his establishment. In former times there was a cemetery outside the village, often near the grove of the nyana dugu-da-siri (guardian genie of the village), and in such cases it was apparent that the more important the deceased, the nearer his tomb to the sacred place.

766 For persons of distinction there is usually a special kind
764 of grave. It is about two meters long, and while the opening

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(1) When a king of Kaarta died, the interruption in sovereignty often gave rise to serious anarchic disturbances.

(2) This was the role that Ngolo Dyâra was seeking when he asked to be placed as "guard at the master's door."

764 is two or three meters wide at the surface of the ground, it is
766 barely a meter wide at a depth of a meter and a half. Three
of its walls are vertical, and the fourth is sloping. At the bottom and along the whole length of this fourth side, a hollow is prepared to receive the body, which is placed on its right side with the head toward the south if the deceased is a man, and to the north in the case of a woman.

It is usual for the priests of the brotherhoods to dig the
764 grave. In the course of their work, following a special ritual, they collect various elements for [168] their magic. In any case, it is regarded as dangerous to handle anything having to do with death, and only a priest can do it with impunity.

When the time for burial is at hand, the touching ceremony of farewell to the dead takes place under the direction of the principal gravedigger. Wrapped in the mats on which it lay in the house, the body is placed under a shelter (geva) in the courtyard of the house. Everyone in turn pays his respects to the deceased and asks pardon. Everyone in turn, from the eldest to the youngest, comes forward, accusing himself of failings and faults and begging the deceased to grant him protection. All this is done through the mediation of the principal gravedigger who ceaselessly intones: "Pardon us! Do not be angry; we loved you and respected you; be happy and protect us!" Then everyone chants in unison: "Give us rain in the winter, make our harvests abundant; bring prosperity to our houses, and give us many children, wives, and wealth."

When this ceremony has come to an end, the gravediggers lift the corpse to their shoulders and, preceded by the weeping and lamenting children (de-u) and followed by the
[482] crowd of relatives, friends, and neighbors, they set off at a fast pace, almost on the run, toward the tomb. There, the body is put down beside the grave; the men stand around it with the women behind them. The sons of the deceased go down into the grave, open the mat, take hold of the body, and place it in the niche. They tear loose a corner of the shroud or shirt and hand the end of this torn fragment to someone present who holds it outside the grave. With wooden scoops or sun-dried tiles they

764 close the opening of the niche and carefully fill any cracks with earth moistened and kneaded on the spot.

During all this the women sing in a low voice and clap their hands, accompanied by muffled drums.

When all is done, the sons of the deceased come out of the excavation, and the principal gravedigger comes forward with his spade upside down on his shoulder and holding a gourd full of water in his hand. Silence falls, and the women and drummers are still. He pours some water at the head of the grave, saying: "See this water. Do not be angry, pardon [169] us, give us rain in the winter and an abundant harvest. May the wind blow from the east or from the west, from the north or from the south, as is best for us. Give us long life, many descendants, wives, and wealth." And the throng replies: "So be it (*o de ka ke*)."

With the back side of their spades the gravediggers then fill in the excavation. The women resume their singing in rhythm with the clapping of hands, and accompanied by subdued drums, they say: "Our *fa* is dead, but he will return! Young men, fill in the grave well so that no sorcerer (*suba*), no hyena, no wild beast can carry away the corpse."

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When the grave is filled in, the person holding the strip of material still attached to the shroud pulls it so that it breaks. This bit of cloth is a precious relic for use in various magical performances. The magical bands called *tafo* are made from it and are tied around the waist to protect one from back ailments and spectral apparitions (1).

1. These are a few of the innumerable examples of magic practices which in the most diverse forms accompany all important activities.

The coarse mat which had served as a bed for the deceased is put upon the grave, along with a pair of his old sandals and his water jug. The finer mat is usually given to a friend or to a family, and it is then burned outside the village (1) [Ed., see footnote above].

764 Burials are never willingly held on either Wednesday or
789 Saturday (1) [Ed., see footnote above].

Finally, a small white chicken (2) to ward off bad luck is sometimes put into the niche just before it is closed off (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above].

Upon returning from the burial, someone clubs the dead man's dog (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above], unless he left express orders to the contrary. Some Bambara even go so far
[554] as to buy a dog with this posthumous honor in mind. This seems to be another magic practice to exorcise the ghost of the deceased (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above].

When they have returned to the house, the brothers-in-law of the deceased eat the national dish, millet mush (to). When they leave for their homes, each is given a rooster or a hen in the name of the deceased, which they must eat en route before they reach home. If the fowl [170] were not eaten until they reached their villages, it would arouse the dead man's vengeance; his ghost (nyama) would haunt these impious persons. This too seems to be another magic practice to counteract the evil effects of death.

764 (c) The funeral celebration. As soon as the death has
been announced, it is the duty of every relative, neighbor,
431 friend, or anyone under any sort of obligation to the deceased to bring an offering in proportion to his rank or degree of obligation for the purpose of honoring the dead (1).

In certain cases, the total of these offerings is very large. The chronicle of Ségou tells us that when Ngolo died the cowries contributed filled seven huts, representing several thousand francs. Besides, people give whatever they wish or can afford: a horse, a cow, a sheep, fowl, cowries, gold, strips of native cotton, fabrics, grain, etc.

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2. If the corpse is a woman, a fertilized egg is used.

1. We noted earlier the sanctions applied at the funerals of Biton and Ngolo.

764 574 Theoretically, all of this is supposed to be used to honor the dead, which is done in several ways. In the first place, it is obligatory to serve food and particularly drink to anyone who comes to present condolences. These meals and drinking bouts are a kind of communion since from everything consumed an offering is first made to the deceased and also [769] to the ancestors whom he has gone to join; it is a kind of communion with the departed members of the family.

These repasts and drinking bouts tend to develop into orgies, and the inexperienced or casual observer may think that they are carousals at the expense of the deceased. As a matter of fact, however, far from suffering a loss, the family of important persons receives more than it spends, at least for the time being (2). The more lavish the celebration, the more it is supposed to please the deceased and cause him to look favorably on his survivors.

764 735 In principle, everything not consumed is supposed to be given away as alms to the poor and not added to the family property. It is quite natural, therefore, that the poor of the village come to partake of the feast, and indeed, they are invited. They must be treated with much cordiality if the sentiment governing the feast conforms to the spirit of the custom. That is why the [171] chronicle tells of Nyana-n-koro, upon the death of Ngolo, claiming that the cowries given should be distributed to the poor, to travelers, and to all the needy; that is the true spirit of the custom, and that type of alms is particularly pleasing to the dead.

The funeral feasting continues for seven days, which are called dyansa, "alms." It is a time especially devoted to [537] condolences, called sanga-fo (1) "funerary discourse." The

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2. The family will have to behave reciprocally toward the families who have thus shown their respect when deaths later occur among them.

1. Literally, "sayings (for the sake) of the dead."

764 period is sometimes reduced to three days, but a week conforms more to custom, as is shown by the Ségou chronicle cited earlier.

All this takes place "at the door of the dead," at the blon'-da, as the natives call it, that is, at the very place where the elder was wont to sit and where offerings were made to the ancestors. It is believed that the soul of the departed is there and will be gratified amidst this abundance honoring him and testifying to his kindness and also to his power. In the minds of the Bambara these repasts of communion form a very strong bond among those who partake of them. The act of eating consecrated food together is a kind of sacrament which binds the participants to mutual aid. A traitor is doomed to be cursed by the manes.

Magic, of course, can free a person from these bonds and even enable him to profit from these funeral gatherings to further the most nefarious schemes, but that does not alter the concepts on which the dyansa and the sanga-fo are based.

765 783 [824] (d) Mourning. The purification of the hut of the deceased takes place on the eighth day. Women pulverize tree bark -- from the cailcedra (2) especially -- put it in water,

2. Khaya senegalensis.

and sprinkle this liquid about the hut which they then sweep.

They assemble with native brooms, sing, and do a kind of dance step; they collect the dirt and throw it away at a crossroads outside the village (3). The hut may then be re-

3. Preferably at the main crossroads (da-n-kun'-ba-la).

occupied. [172]

765 514 During the eight days following the burial, the daughters of the fa live together in strict seclusion. They spend their days in the blon', where they spin cotton and take their meals. To take care of their natural needs, they go out only in a body;

765 [514] twice a day, morning and evening, they go in procession, their heads covered with caps made of white cloth. They spend the nights together, in a single hut if possible.

[292] [783] The wives of the deceased go out only when it is absolutely necessary during the first moon after the death; they are dressed in white and wear a kind of white hood on their heads and sandals made of goatskin on their feet. At the end of the moon, at night and separately, they go to a sort of purification rite that takes place at the crossroads outside the village.

Up to the fortieth day there is a very gradual return to ordinary life. Then, and only then, the successor to the deceased is finally recognized and installed, as is shown in the chronicle of Ségou.

801 805 In closing, let us note how every ritual sequence rests on periods of time whose real meaning must be sought in magic. The astral religion of the Semites in fact taught that on the third, seventh, and fortieth day after death the moon acts more powerful to destroy the body (1). Apparently some such beliefs must account for the Bambara rites planned precisely according to these numbers. This seems all the more likely since the Sudanese commonly believe that the fortieth day marks the separation of the flesh from the bones of buried corpses.

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1. See the meeting of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres of August 9, 1918, paper by Franz Cumont, "La commémoration des morts et l'astrologie [The Commemoration of the Dead and Astrology]," Journal Officiel (1918), p. 7224.

The Patriarchal Community

428 When the fa is dead, all his property remains jointly among his legal heirs, thus constituting a patriarchal community whose investigation has two parts: the community of persons and the community of property. [173]

I. The Community of Persons

596 614 Members of the community. The patriarchal community is made up solely of the legitimate descendants of the deceased fa: immediate descendants (sons and daughters), or his descendants exclusively in the male line (descendants of his sons and grandsons).

The descendants of the fa through his daughters are outside the community since they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.

428 596 614 If, at his death, the fa leaves no male heirs, there can be no patriarchal community; his property is divided among his daughters or, if there are none, among his brothers. If only a father or mother or some other ascendant were left, his property would go to them, or if he leaves only daughters, his property goes to them, but in either case there will no longer be a community.

848 596 614 578 Legitimacy is the necessary and sufficient condition for inclusion as a member of the community. A legitimate child is one born of a marriage, that is, of a union between two free individuals that conforms to custom. When slavery introduced concubinage into the household, however, the rule was relaxed because a free man was unwilling to have his sons slaves. In practice, therefore, maternity resulting from intercourse with a free man frees his concubine from slavery, and the children of the union become members of the community. This dangerous privilege is often contested by agnate brothers born of free mothers.

Given the diversity of conjugal bonds, ranging from marriage to free union, it is easy to imagine the discussions that

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596 arise on the subject of legitimacy. During the fa's lifetime,
614 his authority imposes whatever solution pleases him, but when
578 he is gone, the disputes involving status are all the more violent
for having been suppressed or evaded for so long.

These disputes gain strength also from the difference in
614 rank which the members have within the community. The
596 totality of prerogatives of all kinds which raise the fa above
all others constitutes a kind of superior dignity whose essence
is the omnipotence covered by the word faya, from which
came the title fa [174] (master, lord). It is in reference to
the faya that the members of the community are ranked.

Only male members can advance claims to the faya,
[562] and because they can do this, they can all call themselves fa.
On the other hand, women can never hold this authority; they
are fantan'-u, "powerless."

Among the fa-u there are distinctions based on degree of
596 kinship and on age; those most closely related to the fa will be
614 the first to receive the honors about to be described. Male
601 descendants in the first degree form a sort of senate of which
561 the eldest is a kind of president-by-birth; he is truly the fa,
the actual representative of the deceased. The one immediately following him by rank in terms of age is his syere (follower), his heir presumptive at the head of the community. The other senators, usually brothers of the fa, are uncles (bina-u) to the descendants of the second degree and their children. By reason of the authority associated with the position of bina-u in the community, this kinship term has come to be a title of respect which is bestowed on men toward whom one wishes to show particular esteem (1). Because of their age, all the senators of the community are commonly called koro-u, "the elders," and the fa is first among them.

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1. It is worthy of note that in Uncle Tom's Cabin, Miss Stowe explains that among the slaves in America the word "uncle" had precisely this meaning as a title of respect and honor.

561 596 614 Among the rest of the men in the community, one distinguishes those who, being circumcised, are married and even fathers of families or who are about to become one or the other; these men are called kamalen'-u, literally, "the young masters." Finally there are the uncircumcised: first, the adolescent boys called soli-ma-u, "people of the soli," that is to say, who will soon be circumcised; the others are small boys (den-tye-u).

596 614 The fa, his election and installation. The personage in the community on whom all attention is concentrated is the fa.

Even if during the life of the fa his successor is known, it does not always happen that the replacement will follow as was intended. [175]

In the first place, the designated heir is free to refuse the faya for any reason he pleases, including solely that of personal convenience. The chronicle of Ségou relates that Biton's son, who lived at Oftala, refused the faya because of the excesses of the "people of Ségou."

More often, however, the faya eludes claimants for two main reasons.

No one can become fa if he does not belong to the community. Hence, anyone who ceases to be a member of the community, whether voluntarily or not, cannot attain the faya. One may cease to belong to the community either in fact or by law. The former condition would include prolonged absence, enslavement, settling abroad without hope of return, etc. This brings about a kind of suspension of the exercise of rights, but not their abrogation. On the other hand, when the member expressly renounces the community or when he is excluded by the decision of the fa (1) and the senate, he is

1. So it was that Ma-n-son decreed that his brothers Séri and Ba were excluded from the faya, because they merely looked on as spectators when he was struggling with Nyana-n-koro and had thus shown themselves hostile to the fa.

596 614 deprived of his rights, he and subsequently those who would represent him; the branch of the family of which he is head is henceforth dead so far as the family is concerned.

In the second place, no member of the community [848] attains the faya unless he fulfills certain conditions, of which the first are legitimacy and primogeniture.

The fact that the claimant is a member of the community [578] implies that he is legitimate. Since it does happen, however, that the question may not have actually been investigated or, by the wish of the fa, not even been raised, the legal heirs who would be injured and intriguers who seek any pretext -- and there are always some of these persons -- raise the question, and infinite complications often follow.

Primogeniture is equally subject to challenge, and the opposition everywhere finds it a convenient motive for their [595] machinations. It is, indeed, understandable that in polygamous households, with the wives sometimes residing in various places apart from the husband, simultaneous or at least close births give rise to disagreements as to which son was in fact the first-born.

Finally, even though he may actually be the eldest legitimate son, the claimant may find himself passed over because of measures taken [176] against him by the late fa. It appears that although custom favors the eldest legitimate son, it yields to the expressed wishes of the fa if the senate agrees to his rejecting the candidate. This is a grave step and one which may lead to the most violent reactions.

This raises the question of whether special talents or aptitudes should be required of the claimant, over and above those of legitimacy and primogeniture. For example, can he be required to be healthy, active, and a good administrator? It appears that the senate may choose to eliminate a person it deems unworthy. This applies particularly to a free man who has voluntarily fallen from that state by living like a caste member or a slave. By this behavior he has already excluded himself from the community, but it sometimes happens that his actual exclusion has not been noted or announced before the question of accession to the faya arises.

596 614 Most often, however, the debates are concerned either with legitimacy or with primogeniture, and it is by no means rare for a fa, before his death, to insist that the one chosen be the one designated by custom and to threaten to call down curses on anyone who should try to bypass him or to reject his authority (1).

1. Ngolo and Ma-n-son both acted in this manner, according to the chronicle of Ségou.

In associations which have adopted a community organization analogous to that of the family, the election of a head is determined solely by these factors. It may be concluded that these are the bases consecrated by custom and that any other arrangements can only result in the worst kind of disagreement.

567 578 596 614 There is confirmation for this. Where slaves are numerous and well organized, they may refuse to recognize the new fa and choose another from among the members of the community. They may even decide to give themselves to a foreign master on the pretext that the fa imposed upon them by custom does not meet with their approval. This is a disaster which jeopardizes the wealth, strength, and even the unity of a family, for it can happen, in order to deal with the crisis, that a compromise is made which more or less ignores the regularly designated fa. This results in wrangling which usually ends with a schism in the community.

The history of these countries tells of many such cases, [177] because the slaves, upon becoming powerful, made the law in the families. The chronicle of Ségou thus relates that the slaves belonging to Dina Wara gave themselves to Biton upon the death of the former. It goes without saying that endless intrigues always precede such defections. The really successful fa, such as Biton, earned their reputations as able politicians and increased their fortunes precisely by their [662] ability to avoid such disasters in their own communities, while stirring them up elsewhere.

596 614 In principle, even a duly recognized *fa* is not installed until 40 days after the death of his predecessor. When there is no dispute, he in fact functions as *fa* at once; when, on the other hand, there is disagreement, the period may be extended.

The 40 days do not create an hiatus between the two administrations. When the new *fa* is installed, however long a time may have passed since the death of the predecessor, his *faya* is considered to date from the day of the latter's death. That is why the temporary official makes an inventory accounting for everything, if possible in the presence of the new *fa*, so that there will be no question when he turns over the inheritance.

Thus, this delay imposed by beliefs (ascribable, apparently, to magic) governed by respect for the mysterious workings of nature, has given rise to a kind of suspension of civil affairs, which allows the community to accept only a chief whom it recognizes because he fulfills the conditions required by custom.

Once he is recognized and installed, the *fa* continues in office no matter what befalls him; he cannot be removed for any reason whatsoever. When he is physically and morally unable to act, however, he is replaced by his eventual successor. So it was that when Sounsan was very old, he relinquished the *faya* to Massa who, in turn, did the same thing with respect to Béni-Fali.

It may even come about that the chosen *fa* is absent for an indefinite period. This happened, as we have seen, in the case of Dessé-koro, who was a prisoner at Ségou. He was not superceded, but in order to avoid the difficulties of an indefinite interregnum, Sira Bo was asked to take over the *faya*. He agreed only on condition that he would not be dispossessed if Dessé-koro should return. Mo-Siré, "little brother" (*duani*), i.e., uterine younger brother of Dessé, [178] promised in Dessé's name that Sira Bo would remain *fa* as long as he lived. When Dessé returned, he respected the promise made in his name by his *duani*. This is a typical example of the manner in which compromises can be made with custom.

596 614 The functions of the "fa." The duties of the fa are many and complex; for the sake of clarity, we shall study them under three headings: cult; relations between communities; administration of property (which will be studied in connection with community property).

596 614 782 Cult. Religion gives considerable strength to the family since nothing is decided without consulting the manes and the gods. Raffenel has given us a picture of old Niany praying to his manes on behalf of his absent son: "O my God, I command my son to your case since he has gone away on a mission important to all of us. Be with him on his journey. Preserve him from the wicked and from all misfortune so that he may once again enter by this door through which he departed and before which I am now kneeling. I implore you, O my God, to restore him to my love and to that of his mother, his brothers and his sisters (1)."

[114] 1. In spite of deviations due to Raffenel's desire to give a personal and literary touch to what he reports, the essential points of this prayer are accurate, and that is why I quote it.

[787] The chronicle of Kaarta tells us that old Sounson begged for early death as a sign that his lineage would be powerful in the future. Also, in order to make a prophecy come true, Deniba Bo submitted to the fatal blows of the Khassonké to make sure that his people would conquer the country.

After all, no one is free of fear of the gods, not even those whom one would take for brave spirits. Raffenel tells us that Bouo, his informant, feared the wrath of the god whose secrets he had revealed. The chronicle of Ségou tells that Ngolo, thinking he had aroused the wrath of his manes by encouraging evil desires in his oldest son, Ntyi, did not hesitate to sacrifice his [179] own grandson, the son of the aforesaid Ntyi, an atrocity which bears witness to a faith that was as profound as it was barbarous.

596 614 787 It is the duty of the fa to see to the cult. He projects everything that happens to him personally to the supernatural plane so as to come to conclusions that will guide his own conduct. He discerns in the most ordinary dreams indications of what will please the dead. Furthermore, the people around him point out the signs of divine will that they have observed. If, as happens in great houses, the fa is obliged to turn over part of his responsibility to the family gods to one of his confidantes, the latter will not fail to keep him informed of anything significant that may be revealed.

[771] Thus, daily life is unceasingly dominated by the supernatural, and every important event is conditioned by these beliefs. This is readily seen in all the family institutions: birth, circumcision, marriage, and death.

[577] It follows that the moral behavior of the family is a concern of the fa. Whenever something abnormal or painful occurs, the fa looks into it. Do the dead perhaps have reason to be dissatisfied? Have they been neglected or offended? He questions them, and if he finds confirmation for his suspicions, he at once seeks to appease the manes in whatever way they desire. If the trouble persists, he investigates further, and sometimes everyone in the house is questioned or, if one prefers, made to confess, even infants. Could one of them, moved by ill feeling, have uttered maledictions when invoking the dead?

614 596 783 [578] When the fa himself is ill, this general confession is virtually obligatory. This is because the absolute authority of a fa can hardly fail to arouse hatred, and hatred, a bad counselor, makes people resort to magic to rob the more powerful of life. Fear that the elder's "clairvoyance" will discover the wickedness in the depths of one's soul and punish it usually induces the guilty person to obtain a pardon for his wrongdoing by confessing it, and then everything returns to normal.

596 614 Upon the death of the fa, it is the first duty of his successor to try to discover, by any means, the causes of death and to avenge it if need be.

[763] Everything which the old fa was wont to honor, which forms the spiritual treasure [180] of the family, must also be

596 honored by the new fa, and there is nothing to prevent him
614 from adding to the treasure.

The basic cult of the family is the cult of the ancestors.
769 Although the dead are frequently buried outside the family residence, their souls are thought to live in the blon' of the dwelling.
[343 The blon' is a hut with two openings on opposite sides, one
592] to the street and the other to the interior, usually the courtyard. It is impossible to enter or leave a house without going through the blon', where there is always a guard, at least in important houses. The ancestors are usually represented in the
778 blon' by a group of crude, conical clay figures of a man and
769 woman, the latter identifiable by the exaggerated breasts. Sometimes the symbol of the dead is a small board about a meter long, twenty centimeters wide, and a little more than a centimeter thick; at one of its extremities a slight protuberance vaguely suggests a head, a kind of ellipsoidal cylinder with eyes, nose, mouth, and chin faintly carved on one side. On the side with the face, the board has a checkerboard pattern, often of alternating black and red squares, probably to indicate the material of a loincloth. The lower extremity of the figure has a semicircular portion cut away to give the effect of legs spread apart when the effigy is set up.

769 Whatever form it may have, the representation of the
dead is called kara (1) and serves in some manner as an altar
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1. In Soninké, kara means "to die" and "death."

on which libations are poured and to which are attached the remains of the sacrifices made to the dead (su-u). Nevertheless, it is also a very widespread practice to make libations and sacrifices before the door of the blon' and, more rarely, before the door of an inner hut. In this case the liquid is poured and
[775] the remains smeared on the vertical edge of the opening. This practice is based on the belief that the souls of the dead ancestors like to return to the place where the fa liked to sit during his lifetime. Undoubtedly, the ancestors are regarded as guardians of the threshold; they are [181] honored as such because it is believed that they prefer to be honored in this way.

769 778 782 This is the place where on important occasions the fa receives congratulations or condolences, which are addressed not only to him but also to the ancestors who, though invisible, are nevertheless present.

769 782 When the fa wishes to make an offering to the ancestors (fa su son'), he squats before the door of the blon' with his head bare and a chicken in his hand. He addresses the most recently deceased (1), saying: "I offer this chicken in my own name and in that of my children. Jointly with our dead fathers and mothers, preserve us from sorcerers who eat souls (suba) and from the evil of the wicked; protect us from sickness and disaster; guard our health; give us good wives and healthy children; bring success to our work in the fields, and give us rain."

787 If the offering is being made for a particular purpose, the fa is explicit about it and speaks just as he would to a living person. He concludes by asking that the victim reveal the response by the way it falls as it dies. Then he cuts the chicken's throat and dribbles the blood on the wall at either side of the door of the blon'. He than resumes his crouched position, and after throwing the fowl a short distance, he watches its convulsions and waits for it to fall motionless. Usually the position is regarded as favorable if the animal dies with its legs in the air and its feet turned toward the officiator; if the feet are turned away, the response is unfavorable. Often, just as he completes the offering, the fa announces what position he considers favorable or unfavorable.

The fa gives the sacrificed chicken to his wife to be cooked, and then he divides it among the members of the family; this is truly a communion.

1. It seems that the ancestors form a kind of chain in which the first invisible link is the ancestor most recently deceased and the first visible link is the current fa.

769 782 As a substitute for the chicken, it is very common to offer some *dege*, a bit of millet coarsely ground and thrown in a little water. The *fa* keeps this liquid in a small gourd. It is perhaps [182] reasonable to think that this is the most ancient manner of honoring the dead and, in particular, calling for their protection in obtaining the two essentials of life: grain and water.

[273] An equally common libation is made with *dlo*, a kind of millet beer which every Bambara enjoys drinking to the point of intoxication. The dead could hardly fail to be pleased with an offering of what they had enjoyed so much on earth!

[276] One must conclude, too, that offerings of kola nuts please the dead because it gives them a chance to enjoy a favorite treat. The officiator chews the kola nut and then spits out his saliva mixed with the juice and remains along the walls of the *blon'*.

Such are the ordinary offerings, but on special occasions the quantity and importance of the gifts are increased according to the desired results. When many people are present and the
[781] house is prosperous, the victims are oxen and sheep. It should not be forgotten that the flesh of these consecrated victims, eaten in common, makes a very strong mystical bond between the participants; it is a true communion. It is generally conceded that the bond created by drinking consecrated liquids together is much less strong.

776 778 In addition to his ancestors, every Bambara has as his special protector, one of those gods (*nyana*) which are created wholly by the work of the magician. Every family has one or more *nyana*, whose priest is the *fa*. The *boli*, the symbol and altar of this type of divinity, is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put into a leather or canvas sack, a gourd, or a pot. The *nyana* of Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, was a *n-ko* whose *boli* was kept in a monkey skin. The *boli* is taken out of its cover so that libations can be poured over it and animal remains smeared on it. If there is some objection to exposing it, the offering is put on the cover.

769 794 Everything that takes place relative to the cult of the *nyana* is analogous to that described for the cult of the ancestors.

769 794 It has the same base: request, offering, communion. In addition, there is a liturgy appropriate to each nyana, in particular, the mysterious sayings that attract the god and make him [183] the actual servitor of the person uttering these sayings, rather than a benevolent protector. This shows the antithesis as to final ends between religion and magic, as was set forth in Chapter 2 of the present work.

596 614 778 The fa also has the responsibility of maintaining the efficacy of magic weapons; he must fulfill all the obligations required by each of them. Among them there are true nyana, sometimes independent, sometimes a part of the great nyana. Mostly they are amulets or talismans whose virtue depends on certain rites or simply on the observance of certain interdicts.

596 614 778 Finally, the fa is the guardian of custom and family relics, which likewise have a religious basis since custom, after all, is the continuing will of the generations, the imperious mandate of the ancestors, the table of law of the manes. Any transgression of custom is certain to bring the worst disasters. The relics are ordinary or ceremonial objects left by the successive fa. Some of them are so strongly associated with the patriarchal office that on special occasions or in certain circumstances the fa is forced by custom to wear these objects impregnated with the virtue of the ancestors. The cap and weapons of Biton at Ségou were of this nature, and such is the case among the Massa-si.

596 614 Relations between members of the community. Theoretically, the powers of the fa over the members of the community are absolute. He can hire them out, offer them as security, sell them, and even put them to death (1). He also

1. Note how Ma-n-son got rid of some of his brothers.

has the right to use whatever belongs to them,(2) both persons

2. Ngolo sacrificed his son's son.

596 and property. On the other hand, he also has duties toward
614 them, for it is the essence of the institution to support its
members.

All the acts of the *fa*, even the arbitrary ones, are,
561 according to law, under the control of the senate. It should
578 not be forgotten that the members of the community are di-
596 vided into two hostile groups: that of the "elders," which in-
614 cludes the *fa*, and that of the "young masters." The *fa* could
hardly [184] keep the common property all to himself, so he shares it more or less as he pleases, and naturally, the elders are among the most generously treated. The young men seldom get any such favors, hence their resentment against the elders, due largely to envy of their favored position.

596 It is customary for a *fa* when he becomes the head of a
614 patriarchy to leave the management of his own community to
his eldest son (1). This separation of interests is essential in order to prevent the *fa* from despoiling the patriarchy to benefit his own community. The history of these countries shows how often this rule is broken by ambitious men who hope to profit by the general confusion to build up a considerable fortune. Among both the elders and the young men they find willing accomplices, and as their power increases, they extend their extortions. There are many signs, however, of the fragility of their despotism, which they themselves recognize. They usually, therefore, take pains to settle the question of succession in advance hoping to avoid the collapse of their achievements. Wasted effort! Custom, which they have ignored, regains its rights when they die and often does so during their lifetime. This is a logical explanation of the fact that

[554
492] 1. The eldest son, or better, the first-born son, thus occupies a privileged position, and in Kaarta he is usually provided with a white horse to make him conspicuous. See p. 122 about the death of 98 first-born sons mounted on white horses.

596 614 most of the great empires have survived their founders for only a short time.

More often than not, a "young master" has a position in the community which is considerably less pleasant than that of a domestic slave who lives alongside him and ostensibly under his command. A domestic slave can escape or stir up all sorts of difficulties that result in the diminution of the patrimony. There is no such thing to be feared from a member of the community; should he be punished, banished, or leave, the common property does not suffer. If he goes away and is successful, he will not fail to share his good fortune with the community. Indeed, anyone who loses interest in the welfare of his community runs the risk of being cut off from it. He must actually live with the community; if not, he is treated as a dead member. [185] He must be present for anything that transpires. The chronicle of Ségou gives an example. Quarrels broke out among Ngolo's sons when he died. Nyana-n-koro, who had been favored by his father, thought that this affection designated him as the successor to the deceased. Ngolo, however, had expressly chosen Ma-n-son in conformity with custom. Nevertheless, confident of winning, Nyana-n-koro tried to oust Ma-n-son by force, but in vain. In the course of these fratricidal struggles, certain members of the community remained neutral, hoping in this way to retain the good will of the victor. They gained nothing, however, because Ma-n-son was the winner and turned against them. He sentenced his brothers Séri and Ba to a sort of exile from the community, giving each of them a token share of the estate and ordering them not to increase it.

421 596 614 Since property is held in common, the fa is obliged to give some benefits to all the members of the community. This is why, when necessary, he provides the marriage payment that enables a young man to found a family; he ransoms persons who have been enslaved; he provides for the sick when their expenses are high; he pays civil, judicial, or other debts when the debtor is forced to pay and the community is responsible. These payments, however, which are made with the approval of the senate, are regarded as loans to the recipient with his consent, he is henceforth in debt to the community. He will not only have to repay

421 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show
596 his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as
614 usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

466 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is
596 at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not
614 wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself, [186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them never return, either because they have managed to create an independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More often, however, the young man, having founded an independent family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and watches developments there in case he may one day be able to profit from them.

578 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue
561 which is forever at war with the fa and the senate. Their opposition weakens, however, as they approach the age at which
885 they too will participate in the faya to which they aspire. Gradually, as one changes from kamalen' to bina, he acquires the same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity of the new kamalen'-u.

562 In concluding this study of the members of the commun-
583 ity, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys, they belong completely to the community, which, as a result, has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So, since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

562 inevitably leave the community, she can never claim any
583 authority. Thus condemned to perpetual powerlessness, a
woman never has the right to any position other than an inferior one in native society. Motives based on interest or affection may modify her situation more or less to her advantage, but they will not change her basic rights, which are at the root of all disputes about women, between spouses or between communities.

II. The Community of Property

421 What is the property of which the patrimony is composed?

It is impossible to provide a detailed list, which would, in any case, he endless. Nor should we limit ourselves to the definitions of our legal system, which are too narrow. From the native point of view, patrimonial property [187] may be divided into three principal categories.

[776] First, there are the gods; the manes, or souls of the ancestral protectors of the family; and the nyana, the gods created by the magician. Some of them protect only the community, while others are also concerned with other collectivities. Finally, there are the innumerable magic weapons, which are gods of a sort. In the discussion of the duties of the fa, I spoke of these gods, and they are also mentioned in other parts of this work.

A second category of property is made up of the recipro-
421 cal rights of the community and its members, on the one hand,
424 and of the community and similar collectivities, on the other.
I have just explained the first, and the second will be dealt with later in the chapter under the heading "Relations between Communities."

Finally, all the things that are particularly valued make
421 up the third category: gold; cattle and sheep; grain; agricul-
422 tural, industrial, and commercial products of all kinds; dwell-
423 ings; etc. Three points related to this last category require
special consideration: agrarian usufruct, conjugal usufruct, and slaves.

421 Finally, the status of a community is, as it were, syn-
424 thesized and symbolized by the "honorable name" (dyamu), by
596 which this collectivity titles itself and which it considers one of
614 its most precious possessions.

Agrarian usufruct. Ownership of land does not exist.

423 Each family has a right of use, uncertain in principle but permanent in fact, over the lands assigned to it in the domain of the genie-protector (nyana dugu-da-siri).

It may happen that a single family is the sole beneficiary of a given domain because it is the only one linked to the genie protecting the place.

More generally, various families are under the protection of the same local genie, whose domain in that case includes the parts exploited in common as well as the fields expressly assigned to individual families under its protection. The agrarian usufruct which is included as part of the community property exists with respect to these individual fields.

This usufruct differs from that recognized by our law. It is the dugu-tigi and his council who allot the common lands, and the process always involves wrangling and [187] deals. In principle, the plot assigned remains indefinitely with the family benefited if it is continuously farmed and an annual fee is paid. Following the land for several years is permitted. The family exploiting the land may use it in any way, and its right is as complete as possible, short only of alienating it. The family may lease, cede, or pawn its usufruct. If a transaction involves a foreigner, however, it may not be concluded without the consent of the dugu-tigi, who consults his council. In general, any action which might conceivably injure the welfare of the community as a whole must be submitted to the dugu-tigi for approval before being undertaken.

The usufruct comes to an end under the following circumstances; when a family permanently leaves the community governing the fields; when the dugu-tigi and his council decide to dispose of the land for reasons which they are not required to give; when a family gives the land up voluntarily or has been deprived of it because it has been used in a manner contrary to the interests of the agrarian community.

476 461 567 [361] The patriarchal community draws its subsistence from this agricultural exploitation, and as a result, a kind of work organization has developed. Patriarchal communities or important families have agricultural land in various regions and these tracts are often far apart. Some members of the community or a group of slaves are therefore settled in each domain, sometimes on a permanent basis, sometimes for the period of clearing and cultivating the soil, sometimes for the period of harvest.

Theoretically, every member of the community and every slave must work for the community from dawn to around noon every day during the farming season. Two days, however, Monday and Thursday, are given to these persons for work in their own fields. Anyone who cannot or will not work has the right to provide a replacement from among his dependents.

There are, of course, many exceptions to these rules. In the first place, everyone works according to his position. Among the poor, the master works as hard as the slave, if not harder; among people in comfortable circumstances, the master merely controls and directs the work, sometimes reserving a particular job for himself. In important communities, field work [189] is almost exclusively the duty of the slaves, under the surveillance of their leaders and following the orders of the fa, who either supervises it himself or has a member of his entourage do so.

583 589 768 Conjugal usufruct. When she marries, a woman is given in usufruct in exchange for the bride price. This usufruct is community property exactly like the things used for the bride price.

When a fa dies, the disposal of the conjugal usufruct included in the estate is a serious matter. Since the conjugal usufruct is of the same duration as the life of the woman, the death of the husband has no legal effect on the situation of his spouse. Since it is understood, however, that the widow has no sexual obligations to her husband's heirs, the usufruct is reduced in that respect. Such is the lot of widows when the heirs decide to keep them without marrying them and the women elect to remain.

583 Most often, however, the heirs either marry the widows
589 or send them home, or the women leave of their own volition.

768 An heir who marries a widow of the deceased must take
[587] her back to her family, obtain their consent, and pay them a new bride price, required because a new usufruct is involved. The chronicle of Ségou shows us how this custom operates. Upon the death of Dina Wara, his son escorted to Ségou his father's widow, Biton's sister, whom he wanted to marry. He made sumptuous gifts in order to obtain consent.

In the case of a widow who is sent home or who leaves of her own accord, responsibility for the bride price already paid rests with the party who broke the contract, i.e., with the person who sent the widow away or, if she left of her own accord, with her family. The question of responsibility for the bride price is an important one, since usually neither party has either the means or the desire to make it up. As a result, every effort is made to evade payment, and it is common practice to resort to the most shameless bargaining of the woman involved. A husband is sought who will agree to pay the bride price asked by the one having rights over her, but most often, partial payment will be made when the woman is returned, the creditor's impatience is calmed by gifts, and the balance of the bride price remains wholly or partly unpaid [190] at the time of the debtor's death. This obviously results in insolvable complications during and after the marriage (1).

1. Concerning the lot of widows, see the discussions about the widows of Biton and Ngolo in the chronicle of Ségou.

567 Slaves. Enslavement comes about in many ways, but the three principal ones are force, birth, and the result of obligations.

727 Force has perhaps been the primary cause of enslavement. A person who surrenders is the chattel of the conqueror, but the treatment given him varies in accordance with his previous situation. Was he a man of position? If he is violent, he is killed or sold; if it is thought that his relatives will pay a high ransom, he is kept. If he is clever enough to arouse sympathy, he often is

567 727 well treated; if his captivity continues for a long time, he may even found a family and live like a free man on parole, required only to remain where he is. Time takes care of many things. Under the same circumstances, a woman of quality usually becomes the wife of the conqueror.

People belonging to a caste escape slavery by entering the service of the conqueror to perform their customary trades.

It is only humble people -- the majority -- whose lot is often terrible; dragged far away, sold and resold, they often fall into the hands of bad masters.

Theoretically, a female slave's children are always slaves. 567 A child born in slavery belongs to the mother's master and shares her fate. If she is the master's concubine, the child is born free and thereby frees the mother.

A contract slave is not always master of his own fate. Since the fa has absolute authority over his people, it is he who makes the contract which binds them.

[681] A free individual may fall into slavery as a result of his crimes or misdemeanors (2); it is in this way that an incorrigible thief becomes the slave of the chief to whom he is sent for punishment.

Many poor people, attracted by the favored lot of the [191] wolo-so in large communities, go into voluntary slavery in hope of a comparable position. All the Sudanese empires had these voluntary slaves, who came in great numbers from all directions.

Where there are many slaves, they form what is called dyon'-kuru or dyon'-futu, depending on the place, that is, "an assembly of slaves," and their leader, who represents them with the master, is an important personage by virtue of their strength. When the community to which these slaves belong is an ancient one, they are divided into groups, each of which is named for the fa under whose authority it was organized. In theory, the leader of each group is its oldest member, and the leader of the

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2. Nzan Fato became a slave for stealing a beehive (p. 49 above).

567 slaves (1). The master often keeps this paramount head near

1. This appears to be the application of a kind of right of seniority, analogous to that of primogeniture.

him as his confidential agent; otherwise, he buys a slave or selects a free man for this high post and thus better controls the situation. In such a case, the paramount leader recognized by the slaves is merely the spokesman for his congeners in their dealings with the master.

[304] Among the Kouloubali the wolo-so have a characteristic tattoo formed by three broad incisions from temple to lower jaw on both sides of the face. Far from feeling humiliated by this mark, every wolo-so is as proud of it as though it were a sign of noble origin. Many free men have adopted this tattoo in order to pose as members of the great Bambara family.

The status of a slave is not immutable, but generally includes three stages described by the following names: san'dyon', "a slave acquired through trade"; dyon'wolo-so, "slave born in the house"; and dyongoro, "freed."

A newly purchased slave is put under observation. If he appears to be intractable or vicious or is afflicted with a serious disease (epilepsy, Leprosy, sleeping sickness, nyctalopia), one gets rid of him as soon as possible.

If he proves to be docile, devoted, industrious, and a good worker, he is kept. He is given a job in the house or is [192] placed with an old servant to be trained or with an artisan to be taught a trade.

A female slave in the same circumstances who becomes a mother at once finds her situation improved (1). Her child is

1. The father's identity is of no importance, since the children all belong by law to her master.

wolo-so, "born in the house," and she acquires the same

567 status (2). The wolo-so is not usually sold or, more accurately, he will be disposed of only in the most desperate circumstances. The master's wealth and prosperity are dependent on the wolo-so.

Indeed, the wolo-so is a kind of member of the community; nothing happens in the community without his knowing it and participating in accordance with his position. It is true that he is required to work for the community, but no more nor less than any of the "poor people," and he often succeeds in establishing for himself a position that is considerably better than that of a child of the house. He and all of his dependents belong to the master, but barring the most serious circumstances, the master will not take anything away from him. On the contrary, the master furnishes him an enviable lot: he provides for his marriage and sets him up; he entrusts him with the management of property, often very valuable; and he treats him with a degree of affection not always displayed toward his own family because jealousy brings tensions and hatred between members of the community. Thus, the wolo-so often profits by his status rather than suffers from it.

Like the members of the community, he may exempt himself from the labor of the community by sending one of his children as a substitute and paying an annual fee in addition to certain services (3). If he is really prosperous -- and this is

2. It should be noted that there is an analogy here with the case of a concubine who becomes a mother; because her child by a free father is free, she becomes free *ipso facto*.

[352]

3. In general, the fee consists of a certain number of measures (*moudd*) of millet, approximately enough to feed an adult for a year. The services consist of work on the upkeep of buildings, repairs on the roofs and walls of the huts.

567 unlikely -- he may even own slaves himself and use them as substitutes.

Thus the relations between master and slave gradually become very different from what our European minds imagine. A master is bound to his *wolo-so* [193] by a thousand ties: he admits them to the cult; he marries their daughters; he circumcises their sons along with his own; and he allies himself with some of them by fraternization or an oath.

Even if he does not have such close contact, the *wolo-so* who is freed from labor, who perhaps lives at some distance or, if nearby, in virtual independence, is henceforth a *dyongoro*, that is, "freed." The link is not severed, and the freed man is a kind of relative. He is interested in everything that happens in his master's community and is present upon all important occasions, never coming with empty hands. Reciprocally, he is never treated like a stranger by the master. The master contributes to every event concerning him: he helps him get his sons married and established; on the occasion of the *soli*, he assembles his children along with his own, which gives them a degree of common solidarity.

The admission of the *wolo-so* to his master's community is shown publicly by the fact that the *wolo-so* bears the *dyamu* of his master.

It would be an exaggeration to claim that the house slave's situation is always so fortunate; it depends on many different factors (1).

1. A slave is seldom permitted to buy his freedom; the slave himself does not seek this redemption which would free only him and leave his family and most of his property in the hands of the master.

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614 *The dyamu.* This is the name given to himself by the native, bestowed upon him by others, or inherited from his ancestors, but in any case one that has become such an honor that merely to pronounce it is enough to bring forth a show of homage toward one who bears it, for example, Kouloubali, Dyara, Dembélé, etc.

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This is because the dyamu in itself sums up the history of the community that bears it; it implies everything involving the ancestors, as well as the achievements of present members, their ignominies, and even their fraternal, conjugal, political, and supernatural alliances.

One might imagine that one or another of the characteristic aspects covered by the dyamu would serve to identify the bearers of the same name, but the Europeans who study the native milieu have long been accustomed to identifying those who bear the same dyamu by means of [194] their respective tne (interdicts), and the natives do the same (1).

1. When this was first being done, there was an error of interpretation and hasty generalization which falsified the results. The tne which accompanies the dyamu was made analogous with totem, and it was stated that the dyamu and the name of the tne object were one and the same. Careful study has established that there is nothing to the alleged correspondence.

For the Black, any of his fellows who bears the same dyamu as his and shares with him one or more tne is regarded as a relative, even though he may belong to a different people.

Among individuals of different peoples, certain dyamu, although dissimilar, are regarded as equivalent and are interchanged, because those who bear them have common tne (interdicts).

As a result of one of the alliances that will be described later under "Relations between Communities," the tne of one party henceforth become the tne of the other, and vice versa, and this leads to the equivalence of dyamu. Marriage sometimes has the same effect when the union is an important one, greatly desired, or even more, is the sort of marriage that forms indissoluble bonds and an unshakable solidarity between families.

3. The Family Community or the Family

Conjugal Union (furu)

581 One of the most essential elements of the community based on descent is legitimacy, and one of its sources is in the lawful conjugal union which we call marriage. There are other kinds of conjugal union, but none has such definite effects.

Custom as it concerns marriage has its fullest expression at the time of the first marriage, when the spouses are brought under community control. We shall study all the details of custom in such a case, which will facilitate relating it to the various other situations. [195]

I. Marriage

First Marriage

Marriage is the union of two free individuals of the opposite sex for the purpose of founding a family. Certain conditions and formalities are required prior to the union of the spouses.

582 Conditions. Since there is no native institution that enables a Black to know for certain how old he is, there is no definite age requirement, as there is in our legislation. On the other hand, since marriage involves sexual union, capability for this union is theoretically required of the future spouses. Nevertheless, although a male is considered marriageable only if he has reached puberty and is circumcised, a female is often married even before her first menses. Furthermore, there is nothing to prevent the marriage of an old man, however old and decrepit he may be (1).

1. Although we are giving facts here that are not always relevant to the first marriage, we do so in order to avoid having to return to them later on when they will be out of their natural context.

582 It is not unusual for an old man to marry a very young girl; indeed, it is common. Although a young man rarely marries a very old woman, a woman may marry a man much younger than she is as a result of the customs involved with inheritance.

Kinship in the direct line is an obstacle, *in infinitum*. Certain collateral relatives may not marry each other: uncle and niece, aunt and nephew. Marriage is also an obstacle in [587] some cases: a man may not be the husband of two sisters simultaneously, although he may marry them successively; the same restriction applies to a mother and daughter and an aunt and niece.

A man may not marry the wife of his son, nephew, or younger brother.

No marriage can take place between free persons in good standing and people of caste or, still less, slaves.

584 *Impediments*. From the opening of negotiations to the moment when the woman is handed over, there is a very long interval [196] of time during which impediments may arise.

First marriages, with which we are here concerned, are community affairs. A young man who would undertake the matter on his own would be most imprudent for he is no more his own master than is the girl, and their wishes are not of the least importance; this is an occasion for the *fa* to bring off a profitable deal. The *fa*, therefore, opposes any match which does not suit his plans and, indeed, forces the young man to share his views. If the latter rebels, the refusal of the *fa* to recognize the marriage will deprive the wife and children of any claim to legitimacy in the eyes of the community which he heads. There is no legal recourse possible against such a decision, because each community is answerable only to itself for matters concerning it.

The girl is even more completely under the control of [562] the community than the young man. Destined to be given in usufruct, she is entirely at the mercy of those holding this right over her. If she rebels, she runs the risk of being brutally brought to task through every means of coercion and, if in such circum- [851] stances she has children, they can be taken from her by the community, to which they will then belong. Custom gives her no rights over them whatsoever.

584 Thus, the fa of the two communities manage the entire transaction. Does this mean that the young people have no way of influencing the decision of the "elders"? No, because here, as elsewhere, all sorts of intrigue affect the decision of the fa. He must take account of the views of those around him; he is aware of their feelings, and he is just as likely to subordinate his interests to affection as to hatred. He is perfectly well aware, as is his entourage, that although he can impose his will, even though arbitrary, while he lives, all he has achieved may collapse at his death if his work was ill supported.

In short, the rigidity of the principles which put the "young" at the mercy of the "elders" is, in fact, more often [182] than not relaxed in favor of the young people's desires. The solidarity between members of the community makes them give heed to the opinions of others; it is this need to minimize differences of opinion that makes any family affair drag on endlessly. Discussions, agreements, and reciprocal gifts characterize the [197] bargaining and compromise which are so great a part of the transactions. From this it is apparent what an essential role is played by the numerous intermediaries who are called in to prevent clashes and to mitigate friction, but too often turn to exploiting community difficulties.

In any event, these discussions serve to publicize these transactions just as we achieve the same end through legal means.

The request and agreements. The request is made by an [564] intermediary. In Kaarta this is a man of caste, usually a dyeli (griot), accompanied by a free man. Elsewhere, notably at Ségou, he is sometimes a middle-aged man, known for his experience in such matters, who in this role is called furu-bolo-ma-tigi, "marriage director."

The furu-bolo-ma-tigi goes to the house of the fa of the girl, states his mission, and if he is favorably received, offers him some kola nuts which he has brought with him. He returns home with a promise that the request will be considered.

The fa does in fact consult his entourage and especially his ancestors and gods. The furu-bolo-ma-tigi returns with offerings to be used in questioning the ancestors and gods; if the reply

584 is unfavorable, that is by no means the end of the matter, for both ancestors and gods usually allow themselves to be persuaded, for a price. When the reply is, or becomes, favorable, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives customary presents to the fa and to the girl's family. Henceforth, the two communities, that of the young man and that of the girl, are united by a bond that can be broken only for the gravest reasons, and even then a rupture will usually give rise to serious disagreements.

[583] It is at this point that the parties agree, not without much argument and bargaining, on the amount, type, and mode of payment of the bride price and the date on which the girl will be handed over.

Between the time of the agreement and the release of the woman, there is a period which is often very long and in some cases several years. This interval is used by the girl's mother to prepare the things she will give her daughter (clothing, household utensils, etc.). [198] The fiancé, meanwhile, needs the time to accumulate what he has promised to pay when the girl is given to him.

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602 From this moment on, the relations between the two communities are very strictly governed. Native etiquette forbids the fiancée henceforth to meet or to take meals with her future brother-in-law unless a third party is present. The same applies to the young man and his future mother-in-law. The fiancé must constantly show that he takes an interest in anything that concerns his future affinal family. He must attend funerals and festivals or at least send a material contribution consistent with his wealth and social standing. When field work is in progress, it is customary for the fiancé's fula-ni to appear in a body and ceremoniously share the work. This demonstration of solidarity is mostly more noisy than helpful; the work is wholly simulated, but the proceedings always end in dancing and copious drinking.

583
184 Bride price (1) and gifts. The woman is not turned over

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1. In certain regions (Bougouni, Sikasso, Koutiala, San) there is no regularly constituted bride price; the bridegroom's

583 [184] family gives the bride's family a young girl to replace the one taken away.

until all or a portion of the agreed bride price has been paid and especially not before the customary gifts have been received.

The nature and value of the bride price and gifts vary since they depend on the wealth of the future husband, the rank of the woman and family customs. Among the poor, the bride price is small: a few handfuls of cowries, a chicken, a few [435] kola nuts, a few lengths of native cotton. An average bride price is worth, in all, 25,000 to 30,000 cowries (about 25 to 30 francs). Among the rich, the bride price may include one or more slaves, gold jewelry, silver, fabrics, clothing, etc.

The same is true of the gifts; everything depends on the families involved. It is customary around Ségou, however, for the fiancé to give his bride a large piece of native material called kundugu fini, a dloké (a kind of blouse), and a pair of sandals with very thick soles. He must also, if he can afford to, give her a slave to do the kitchen work, a cow, jewelry, etc. [199]

He must also give presents to the girl's parents in accordance with his means.

The totality of the bride price and gifts is called furu-fen', literally, "the property of the marriage." As soon as part of this furu-fen' is handed over to the furu-bolo-ma-tigi, he takes it, [273] escorted by some of the fiancé's friends, to the girl's fa. All of these proceedings, of course, involve jugs of native beer (dlo). The notables of the place, the dugu-tigi, the "elders," and even the kamalen', come at once to congratulate the family, to share in the drinking, and to receive a share of the furu-fen'.

The fiancée is often a little girl, and in that case the duties of the young man and his family go on for several years. The giving of gifts is repeated, to an extent commensurate with the young man's wealth and the standing of the girl's family. 431 583 At the time of harvest it is customary for the fiancé to send one or more baskets of millet, each weighing 20 to 40 kilos, and from time to time, a jug of beer, 20 to 30 liters. On the

583 occasion of funerals or religious ceremonies, he brings offerings
431 (fowl, kola nuts, millet, salt, etc.). The ceremony at which his contribution is indispensable is the da woro (1). On this occasion the furu-bolo-ma-tigi is entrusted with important gifts for the girl (clothing and jewelry) as well as for the relatives assembled (food of all kinds).

583 Just as the amount and nature of the furu-fen' vary, the manner of payment and the time set for the payment of the bride price are likewise left to the discretion of the parties. There may be a single payment or there may be installments, either before or partly before and partly after the bride is handed over. From the material point of view, the persons of the bride and groom are actually of no importance. The fa who gives the bride price wants a girl from the family with which he wishes an alliance, and all that matters is that the girl be marriageable at the date agreed upon, provided that she is handed over in accordance with the agreement. In the same connection, the person giving the bride price is not required to have the whole amount needed at the time of [200] the agreement; it is sufficient that he be in a position to pay when the amount falls due. This explains certain usages which might otherwise seem odd.

[584] It often happens that a fa arranging a marriage speaks for a very young girl or even for one not yet born. If the child is handed over before nubility, the marriage is not consummated until after the first menses. We have mentioned above that in such cases the marriage payment involves repeated gifts for years.

583 Another very curious method of paying the bride price
231 is to follow a custom called "the mare's foot." Its essential features are as follows.

A person giving bride price has a mare that he could sell to pay off the obligation, but he prefers to promise one or more of the foals or, as the natives say, one or more of "feet." This method of turning a brood mare to account without selling it is common among the natives of western Sudan.

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1. See p. 264 below.

583 231 If the payer has promised "a foot," he turns the mare over to the recipient, who will have to feed it and breed it. The latter keeps the foal and returns the mare after the foal is weaned; the risk is his, unless a major catastrophe occurs, and he must prove that such was the case.

If two "feet" are called for, the mare is as it were, jointly owned, each person alternately taking care of the animal and exploiting it for an agreed period. The first foal is jointly held, and after it is weaned, the contracting parties equalize the costs by alternately caring for the mare and the foal. This continues until three foals have been born and weaned. Then the mare and one of the foals goes into one share and the other two foals in another; the share allotted to each party is determined by drawing lots.

When he has completed the payment of "feet," the payer can obtain the woman without having paid any of the bride price since her family has the mare as security.

584 It may happen that one or the other of the fiancés dies. In principle, it is well to bear in mind the material standpoint involved: persons are secondary in concluding the affair; the two *fa* look out for their respective interests while finding a solution to the difficulties that [201] arise during the period of betrothal, often a very long one. The dead fiancé is not uncommonly replaced by one of his brothers (1), and the girl by one of her sisters (2); nothing changes in either case. If the fiancé or fiancée cannot be replaced in this way, the disposition of the *furu-fen'* already received by the girl's family is decided by agreement between the parties. Sometimes the proceeds are divided, with half going to each community; at other times they may be returned to the groom's family, or conversely, they may be left with the bride's family.

1. More commonly by one of the sons of the fiancé's community.

2. More commonly by one of the daughters of the fiancée's community.

584 Though disrupted marriage arrangements are rare, this may happen through a variety of causes and is settled by agreement or, in case of conflict, by arbitrators.

585 Delivery of the bride. Because this act involves a change of status for the parties concerned, it requires the ritual practices of a magical character of which we saw an example in connection with the funeral of a fa. Their purpose is to make sure that change takes place without harm to anyone.

When the payer has fulfilled his obligations and behaved according to custom, the girl must be given to him on the date agreed upon. On that day, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and the fiancé's friends, accompanied by musicians, appear at the home of the girl's parents to receive and lead away the bride. The parents agree, but the girl has disappeared. The newcomers start at once to look for her, but she cannot be found because her relatives and friends help her to hide. The hunt arouses both sides and leads to brawls; as the excitement reaches its height, the girl is found. Only the intervention of the dugu-tigi himself can put an end to the conflict. He gives his permission to the furu-bolo-ma-tigi to take the girl away and advises her to follow.

Then the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and his companions, acting as an escort, [202] take the girl toward the exit from the village. Just as she is about to leave the enclosure, however, she refuses to go a step farther, and the young men pretend to do violence to her in order to force her to accompany them in spite of her cries. She fights and screams until she is beyond the limits of the village territory. Then she suddenly becomes calm, wraps herself in the large piece of cloth given by her fiancé, and gaily follows her companions, who carry her furu-fen' and have by now joined the group of the furu-bolo-ma-tigi. The troop of young men bring up the rear and make a great racket with drums and trumpets and from time to time give the traditional [583] marriage cry: "kuyo! kuyo! (1)."

1. This simulated abduction must be interpreted as a separation rite,

585 The well-known cry of the *wara-mina-den'* of the fiancé's brotherhood is heard at various points along the way; the god is watching over his disciple's fiancée and chasing evil spirits from her path.

When they approach the fiancé's village, the young men go to the head of the procession, while the fiancée's companions take their places behind her. The whole troop begins to dance to the rhythm of the drums and trumpets. The women seem to hold back and take a long time to reach the entrance to the village a few hundred meters away.

At this moment, the *wara-mina-den'* utters a loud and final cry; his mission is accomplished.

The women of the village welcome the newcomers and lead the girl to her husband's house. Other women join the procession. Several groups of singers are formed, and the dancers proceed slowly to the couple's house. There, in an inner court, the crowd settles down; everyone drinks, eats, dances, or sings as the spirit moves him.

The dressing of the bride begins as soon as she arrives. Her hair is taken down; the string and the beads she wears about her hips are removed; and she is helped with her bath. Then, wrapped in a white skirt cloth, she lies down on the nuptial couch.

Her husband joins her after escaping from his roistering friends.

At daybreak there is a sudden shot. Loud and frequent shouts of "*kuyo*! *kuyo*!" rise above singing [203] and the noise of an orchestra. The old women burst into the nuptial hut, carrying warm water for the ablutions. The husband comes out and goes off to sit on a mat in the courtyard with the *furu-bolo-ma-tigi* and his friends.

The bride appears wrapped in her marriage skirt; behind her the old women wave a piece of linen that gives visible evidence
[533] of the accomplishment of intercourse, and *dyeli-moso* (*griot* [Ed., feminine]) sing of love. The young girls who accompanied the bride surround her at the exit from the courtyard and lead her to a hut arranged so that she may rest there. For eight days she has all her meals there, and seated on a mat, with a white veil on her head, she spends the days spinning with her companions.

585 The husband spends the whole day after the wedding night in his hut, where relatives, friends, and neighbors come to congratulate him and present minor gifts of food. He invites them to eat and drink. The wedding is thus prolonged for several days, depending on the husband's wealth, during which time the couple is at the disposal of the guests.

[556] Rich families like to show off the trousseau, jewels, and gifts bestowed on the bride, so during the whole day after the wedding night everything is paraded with great pomp through the village by people of caste who proclaim the items and exaggerate their value. Toward evening the presents are shown one last time to the bride, who sits on a low bench with her face hidden behind a kind of tray, woven with grass, which she holds in her [533] hand. Drums and other instruments make a great uproar, while a female griot, standing behind the bride, sings love songs. Every[302]one admires the bride's hair, which is artistically braided in a flat crest with two small braids on each side of the face hanging in front and behind the ears. The women finger her jewels as they admire them and her thick-soled sandals.

To conclude the ceremony, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives cowries to the leader of the singing, and guns are fired for the [481] last time. Then the bride gets up, glides over the ground without lifting her feet, and enters the hut with her companions, while the guests retire. [204]

Second Marriage

595 The number of wives is limited only by the necessity of providing each one with a suitable living. This means that, theoretically, polygamy is a privilege of the rich. Some men practice it in order to pass as rich men, which flatters their pride, while others use it to gratify a sensual temperament. Most often, however, people in modest circumstances have several wives solely for economic reasons.

When an only wife has young children and no servant to help her, she is extremely overworked. When this is the case,

595 she herself urges her husband to take another wife who will share some of the housework and relieve the situation. As a result, polygamy in this form resembles an association in which, through division of labor, each person seeks to provide his own support and to contribute to the general welfare.

Second marriages are identical with first marriages except that they are celebrated with somewhat less ostentation. Furthermore, a married man is more independent of his community in the material sense, and sometimes he is likewise more independent of the wife.

II. Other Types of Conjugal Union

588 595 Besides marriage there are innumerable kinds of conjugal unions, such as agreements between capable individuals, that at times have legal consequences, some of which are even extensive. All these kinds may be grouped as two types: concubinage and free union.

595 Concubinage. This is a union in which at least one of the parties is a slave. It is very common for a master to treat one or more of his slaves like wives. Some men like the arrangement because it does away with all the difficulties arising from the bride price and the often exasperating involvements with an affinal family. Concubinage practiced by a free man has the disadvantage, however, of [205] his children being his slaves, since children retain their mother's status. It is true that this custom has been circumvented. It is accepted that the female slave is regarded as free once she has borne a child to a free husband and he has recognized it. This, however, does not erase the original stigma; children borne of free wives always [578] consider themselves superior to their siblings whose mother was a slave. Family tensions arise out of this, which become acute upon the death of the fa.

Concubinage, practiced on a large scale by free men, has, indeed, perverted all the communities. Polygamous households have had grave difficulties because the wives, being different in rank and yet forced to live side by side, have sacrificed everything to their resentments and hatreds.

588 Free union. This type of union rests on simple consent by the two parties without any bride price.

583 In principle a woman who has ceased to belong to a husband belongs to her original community, and she can make no decisions concerning her future without its consent. If she ignores this, the community can always intervene to force her to break off any engagement she may have made, and to this end it may use any means of absolute control.

[672] This suffices to explain why a man who agrees to a union of this kind usually finds himself in the most serious difficulties. Not only can his wife and children be taken from him without redress, but he can be sued for damages by the community to which the woman belongs.

It does sometimes happen, however, that certain women are released from the authority of their communities. These include women who are sole survivors of a community and, more commonly, those who have bought their freedom by dubious means. A free man who lives with such women achieves a union that to a great extent has the same effect as marriage. [206]

The Family

592 583 The household. The lawful household is based on marriage. In order to grasp its essence, account must be taken of the interplay of two elements which are perfectly distinct but always closely involved in all human affairs: interest and sentiment. In a lawful household the essential interest is the bride price whose nature must be defined in order to understand its overwhelming importance.

583 Bride price is what is paid in exchange for a wife. It is understood that the status of the woman thus handed over does not change; if she was free before the event, she is still free after the payment of the bride price.

586 The marriage tie is such that it can always be broken by one or the other party; the one breaking the contract simply loses the bride price in the sense that if the husband initiated the rupture he cannot expect anything already paid to be returned. If the initiative was taken by the wife (or her community), then she must return what has been paid. Whatever the cause of rupture, however, the children always belong to the husband.

583 Finally, if the union is still in effect at the time of the
768 husband's death, the wife's community theoretically regains
authority over her, provided that the bride price is paid back.

These three definite points show that lawful union, or
581 marriage, legally speaking, is essentially a kind of usufruct of the
626 woman to the advantage of the husband, and the price is the
bride price. As a result, the woman's community is obliged to see to it that the husband enjoys his rights. Hence, when a wife misbehaves, no matter how, the husband reports it to her community which takes steps to bring the erring girl to terms for fear of having to refund the bride price. On the other hand, the husband is expected to treat his wife in a manner worthy of her, that is, with consideration for her origins, and if he fails to do so, he risks the consequences of breach of the marriage contract.

There are, therefore, reciprocal rights and duties required of the spouses. Based on the marriage contract, these rights and duties are reinforced, completed, or, more generally, influenced by ethics no less than by the feelings of the [207] couple in relation to each other and to their respective communities.

581 This is why a girl from a great house with high standing (1) cannot be treated like a common concubine, even though the husband may prefer the concubine to the wife, because the free daughter of a powerful house, richly dowered, is virtually independent in the household. If she is sufficiently well off, she may even live in a house of her own, and since her only obligation is the sexual conjugal duty, she receives her husband as she would a lover.

On the other hand the free woman of modest circumstances and, even more, of lowly birth is her husband's companion in wretchedness. She does all kinds of work, even the hardest and most disagreeable, and she desires no rupture that would deprive her of the only affection that sustains her, the love of her children.

562
[554] 1. Thus, in the western Sudan, the daughters of the Massa-si are treated with great deference.

562 Between the omnipotence of the first and the humble
lot of the second there is every possible gradation. This is all
581 the more true in that, thanks to polygamy, lawful households
595 may be found in association with the free unions and concubin-
age desired by the husband, in such a way that the position of
each person in the family, already affected by all these con-
tingencies, is, in the last analysis, dominated by the absolute
authority of the *fa*. We shall see this clearly in connection
with filiation, and it is no less apparent regarding wives, ex-
cept for those already described who have sufficient influence and
the means to live virtually independent of the rest of the
family. Although in fact a wife who was not paid for has no
regular position and her children legally do not belong to either
of their parents, although a concubine does not even count as a
person, according to custom, and her children are their genitor's
slaves, merely by the will of the *fa* either of them may have an
enviable pre-eminence in the family, especially envied by the
lawful wives.

Under these circumstances, it may be admitted that con-
593 jugal duties, obedience, fidelity, and their counterparts, the
562 rights to help and assistance, have nuances that vary from one
situation to another. It is true that a wife must obey her hus-
band and that he is allowed to resort to [208] corporal punish-
ment to control her, which he does not fail to use. She is not
completely at his mercy, however. For instance, he can re-
quire her to live in a given place; nevertheless, if it has been
agreed that she is not to leave the tribal territory, and this usually
tacitly understood, he may not take her away. He can force her
to do household chores, but if she is free, he cannot require her
to do servile tasks. In the same way, he cannot rent out her
services, put her up as security, or sell her.

The duty of reciprocal fidelity is most often very vague.
837 Admittedly, this is not expected of the husband, and indeed,
the wife often encourages his lapses from virtue on the theory
that this indulgence will attach him to her. As far as a wife's
misbehavior is concerned, a husband does not always give it
much importance and is sometimes not at all averse to profiting
[848] from it. If children result from her indiscretions, he is not dis-
tressed in the least about accepting or denying them.

595 A husband owes his wife food, clothing, and lodging within his means, and unless he has imprudently acquired too many wives, everything will be kept within the proper limits. In any event, he must be impartial toward all his wives on one particular point if he wants domestic tranquillity: he must honor each of them in turn with his favors.

In theory, a husband is supposed to treat his wives alike in all things, although it is apparent from the foregoing that this is practically impossible. Besides, it is usually agreed that the first wife, no matter who she is, whether slave or free, has certain prerogatives. She acts as a kind of mother to her co-wives, supervises their work and their pursuits, and issues all the supplies. With reference to her husband, she acts as confidante and adviser.

851 Filiation. This is to be regarded as the totality of facts which, for the sake of clarity, we shall divide into two groups: birth, and giving a name. [209]

843 Birth. A pregnant woman, by virtue of her condition, is subject to a kind of special regime whose special features are the following.

In principle, she must forego sexual relations from the moment she feels the child move until two or three months after its birth. This is not done for reasons of hygiene, but rather because the child is thought to require it as a kind of deference, without which it will die.

[262] From the standpoint of diet, the expectant mother should be well and even abundantly fed. When possible she is given the heart and liver of slaughtered wild animals; these are centers of life which, if eaten, will strengthen the child's soul and make the child a courageous individual. [261] [443] A pregnant woman often wants some of the yellow or red clay which is sold in the markets, which for some unknown reason she will eat as if it were chocolate.

She must refrain from visiting dying people, attending funerals, going into mourning, or mingling with crowds, all this in order to avoid any contact that might injure the fragile soul she is carrying.

843 A Bambara has no very exact idea of the duration of pregnancy. His deductions, based on appearances alone, lead him to believe that a child born completely formed must have been in the mother's womb longer than one less well-formed.
[845] Besides, it is believed that conception may be due to some spirit who had relations with the woman (1). Children born with some strange or abnormal characteristics are thought to be the result of such affairs, and the fact that some women give birth only to stillborn infants is attributed to the same cause.

The pregnant woman is advised to go about her domestic chores up to the very moment of [210] her confinement and, in particular, to continue to grind grain, no doubt to facilitate labor, especially for those who are mothers for the first time.

844 When the labor pains begin, the woman retires to her hut, accompanied by matrons famed for their experience in these matters. Men, including the husband, may not come near the patient.

845 If there is a breach presentation or any other complication, the women do what they can, based on their personal experience, the inspiration of the moment, or the current superstitions. As a last resort they call in the magician or the marabout, which amounts to the same thing. Neither one is allowed to see the patient, but must work from the outside, using magic passes, incantations, or prayers and prescribing suitable remedies.

844 To deliver the baby, the mother ordinarily squats with her hands behind her head or kneels with her hands against the wall. The eldest or most skillful of the attending matrons ties the umbilical cord and then cuts it. This operation is often badly done and causes the umbilical hernia with which so many natives are afflicted and which is regarded, indeed, as a deformation in

1. See above, in the chronicle of Kaarta, the tale about Deni-ba Bo, who had relations with a mabo woman who claimed a connection with a spirit in the form of a horse.

844 good taste. The placenta is buried outdoors near the hut or sometimes in the floor of the hut itself. The mother is washed and often given an infusion to drink which is alleged to stop bleeding.

The baby is washed several times and then anointed with vegetable fat (1) (se tlu) or butter made from cow's milk. Its head is massaged to give it a nice shape, and then the baby is wrapped in a white cloth.

The child is usually not fed for the first 24 hours, although it is sometimes given a few drops of goat's milk, a beverage with mystical qualities. It is then given the breast.

851 At the earliest possible moment the father must be informed of the birth and sex of the child. Indeed, he is brought in by the woman who cut the cord, and the mother shows him the baby, pointing out any body characteristic which seems to her a manifest sign that the child is a reincarnation [211] of a deceased member of the family or other evidence that there has been some influence from the invisible world.

[203] The same woman informs the local authorities (dugu-tigi, nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc.) and the people in the vicinity; the news spreads rapidly.

846 The mother resumes her normal activities as soon as possible and is often on her feet within 24 hours. In any event, she never remains in bed for more than a week, unless it is absolutely impossible for her to get up. For seven or eight days, however, she remains in seclusion. Furthermore, particularly in Kaarta, her food is prepared exclusively by girl friends of her choice.

The detachment of the umbilical cord marks the end of
[751] this period of seclusion. In Kaarta the cord is preserved and placed in a small bag which is tied around the baby's neck; later on it will be made into a precious talisman. It is only after the detachment of the cord that the child is considered to be definitely

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1. Known to Europeans as karite, originally a Soninké word.

846 born. In this we see another of the interim periods which accompany any change of status (death, marriage, circumcision, etc.). The real entry of the child into social life is marked by giving it a name.

553 851 Giving the name. Naming the child is the prerogative of the father, and he must take into consideration the various circumstances or incidents which marked the birth; through this act the child is received into the family.

At Ségou, family heads, relatives, neighbors, and friends are all invited to this ceremony, especially the dugu-tigi or, more exactly, the nyana-n-son-na-ba. In order of rank and seniority they arrive on the day set and squat in front of the entry to the courtyard which gives access to the mother's hut. The religious leader (nyana-n-son-na-ba) enters the mother's hut and shaves the head of the child whom the mother holds on her knees.

While this is going on, the women, relatives, neighbors, and friends approach in single file, singing, clapping their hands, and at intervals shouting: "Kuyo! Kuyo!" They give millet and cotton to the mother.

After shaving the baby's head, the leader puts his hands on the child, strokes its back and chest, and spits in its face to ward off evil spirits. Then he emerges and sits outside among his people. [212] The father then gives him eleven kola nuts, and the family heads in turn give him 40 to 50 cowries; all this is placed on a woven tray.

At this point, the leader asks the father what name he has selected for the child. Before answering, the father requests that the kola nuts and cowries be divided, they constitute the tua sara "price of the name." Two kola nuts and half of the cowries are given to the mother; the rest is divided among the family heads present. These are the ni wuru, "kola of life," and the tua kolo, "cowrie of the naming." Then the father makes known the name and the reasons for his choice. What are these reasons? It may be some obvious sign that the child is a reincarnation of someone deceased, some incident marking the child's birth, etc. Everyone congratulates the father on the happy event and expresses good wishes for the baby and blessings on the parents.

553 Women are not admitted to the men's circle. Gathered
near the mother's hut, they know that a name has been given,
851 but do not know what it is. The woman who tied the cord then
[562] washes the baby three times in warm, soapy water and, taking
water into her mouth, sprinkles the tiny body from neck to lower
back three times. She then expresses her good wishes. Carrying
the child, she goes to the door of the hut, where the father
and family heads are waiting, and asks the name. Then she returns
to the women and places the child on the lap of an old
woman who blows into the baby's ears three times and then shouts
in each ear: "Kuyo! Kuyo! i tua dara, "that is, "Kuyo! Kuyo!
[854] your name is ...." The child is then wrapped in the narrow
swaddling band which the mother will henceforth use to carry
him on her back, and if it is a boy, the baby is rolled three
times over the blade of an ax, or if a girl, over an iron implement
for picking cotton. While this is going on, everyone is expressing
best wishes.

[184] In Kaarta the ceremony is somewhat different. A beef or
a sheep killed in front of the mother's hut, and dege [Ed.,
coarsely ground millet in water] is also prepared. The baby's
head is shaved, and the hair is placed on the dege. Each guest
[564] puts his right hand on the edge of the gourd and a griot expresses
good wishes for the newborn child. Then the guests dance around
the dish of dege; the hair is removed from it and given to the
mother to keep. [213] Then if the occasion warrants it, the
[304] three lines of tattooing peculiar to the Koulouhali are made on
the baby's face with a dagger. Finally the griot takes the child,
carries it around the crowd, and returns it to the father, who must
then make known the chosen name. When the father has pronounced
the name, the griot again takes the child and, making
a trumpet of his hands, cries out to him three times: "your
name is...."

551 In principle, the name (tua) recalls some circumstance
surrounding the birth. A posthumous child is usually given his
father's name, as though he were the reincarnation of the father,
or more commonly, he is called Fa-n-ko, "posthumous" (literally,
"the one who came after the fa"). If the baby shows some resemblance
to a deceased person, he is named for the person or,

551 more often, called sagi, "the one who has come back." A woman who was barren for a long time gives her child the name of the agent to whom she attributes the cessation of her sterility: Nyana-m-ba, "the great nyana"; Mori-ba, "the great marabout," etc. She does the same thing if she has triumphed over some evil spirit through the aid of some such intermediary, but in that case it is usual to abandon the child at birth; a substitute mother will rescue it. This is a "castoff" child (fili), and from this comes his name, Fili. Such a child may be named for the place where it was abandoned, Sunkun', "refuse heap," for instance, or for his rescuer, Numuke, "blacksmith," or Dyelike, "griot." A child who survives after a series of stillbirths is regarded as the incarnation of an evil spirit finally defeated, and the spirit in question is, so to speak, stigmatized by having the child called Malo-bali, "shameless," or Tuantan', "anonymous." The tua is often merely the name of the month, day, or season of birth: Tenen' "Monday"; Sunkalo, "month of Ramadan"; Sama, "winter season." Twins are both called Fune, literally, [845] "alike," but they are sometimes purposely differentiated by calling one of them Sio and the other Sie-koro (1); if the twins are

1. See Humblot.

girls, they are called Wassa and Bafune (1) [Ed., footnote above]. In the Bani area, the next child born after twins is called Konimba (1) [Ed., footnote above]. A child born when it had appeared that the mother would have no more children is called Kosa (1) [Ed., foot note above], literally, "business completed." There are families [214] who always use the same name for the eldest sons. Among the Massa-si at one period this name was Bo (1) from which come: Musu-kura Bo; Sira Bo; etc. (meaning

1. Bo is etymologically the same as Ngolo.

"Bo, whose mother was Musu-kura"; "Bo, whose mother was named Sira"; etc.). In Ségou the Kouloubali likewise adopted

551 the tua Ngolo, from which come Nyana Ngolo, Barama Ngolo, Solo-Ngolo, etc. In the family of the Bambara chiefs of Femay (2) (a canton in the circle of Djeimé), the eldest son was given the name of the paternal grandfather; the second son was called Moussa; the third, Abdoullah; the fourth, Ngizi; and the fifth, Souleyman. The girls were called, in order of age: first, Fatouma; second, Awa; third, Nyele-ba or Nye-ba; fourth, Dyomene; fifth, Kounadi; and the sixth, Aminata (2) [Ed., footnote 2 above].

There are other names very commonly used for the eldest child: Ntyi and its endless variants for boys; Nya or Nyele for eldest daughters. The last two are so common in the Ségou region that the Soninké derisively designate the Bambara of that area with the expression, Nya ni Nyele-u, "the people of Nya and [606] Nyele." Since husband and wife are forbidden by custom to pronounce the names of their respective parents-in-law, complications arise when, as often happens, a child is named for them. Respect for the interdict is preserved by using a paronym: for a boy, Tye-koro, "the old man"; for a girl, Moso-koro, "the old woman." To satisfy this same interdict, there are true synonyms locally: thus, for Mussa the name Dyigi is used; for Mori-ba, Bo-dyan. Individuals are often designated by these double names whose two parts are synonymous; thus, there are the Mussa-Dyigi or Dyigi-Moussa, the Bodyan-Moriba, and so forth.

The foregoing are some of the characteristic traits that show how individuals are named among the Bambara, but actually the subject is inexhaustible.

846 After the name-giving ceremony, the mother resumes her normal life, although she must still observe certain prohibitions: notably, there must be no sexual intercourse for the first three months; and during the same period she must not change her coiffure nor leave the village. Once this period is over, she covers herself with jewelry, [215] beads and pieces of amber -- borrowed from neighbors or relatives, if need be -- rubs the baby with butter, and goes to present him to the local notables.

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2. See Humblot.

853 A child is nursed for two or even three years, and theoretically, a woman should abstain from sexual intercourse throughout this period. In practice, however, the period of three months mentioned above is the limit of such abstention.

854 Childhood. While he is small, the child remains with his mother, whether she cares for him herself, has him cared for by a slave especially designated for the duty, or turns him over to one of her daughters.

During the nursing period of two or even three years, he is carried astraddle by his mother or some other person entrusted with his care until his legs are strong enough for him to run about the house and its vicinity.

857 At about six or eight years old, he is drawn into the juvenile organization known as n-tomo, and he never fails to join it as soon as he is welcome. Little girls are less free; they are kept at home and put to work at household duties, such as bringing water and wood and watching the fire.

881 Puberty. As we shall see, the n-tomo prepares the child for the soli, a ceremony which marks the most important event of his life, civil puberty. The essential but not the only rite involved in this ceremony is circumcision. In principle, the soli is limited to pubescent boys and this implies that all who go through the ceremony have physically reached puberty. Aside from the fact, however, that this condition is reached at differing ages, the boys who undergo the ceremony differ in age because the soli does not take place every year, owing to the considerable expense involved.

882 When the soli is behind him, a boy is no longer a child; he is not exactly a man either, but rather is a "young master," a kamalen'. Since he is admitted to the brotherhoods, apparently his discretion can be counted on, and he is considered competent to take an oath so he can be called upon to testify in a dispute. Also, if he is enterprising enough to attract attention to himself, he is given trifling missions which inspire him to persevere. Fur-
882 thermore, since by now he has been made sophisticated by his
836 companions in the n-tomo, his relations with his female companion

882 [836] in the [216] *soli*, the *n-golo-moso*, and with other girl friends are not merely platonic; indeed, sexual licentiousness is common.

As in everything else, a girl's life is more restricted. For her, the *soli* is merely a way of being presented to society, as we would say, that is, a means of attracting a prospective husband.

884 *Coming-of-age, guardianship, deprivation of civil rights.* It is obvious from the above that a Bambara has no way of knowing his age with any certainty. At best, he can estimate it by referring to some important event known to have occurred at about the time of his birth.

Since this is the case, we can see that coming-of-age has no correlation with chronological age. The individual's physical development and, still more, his intellectual maturity are signs that lead his family to grant a *kamalen'* the rights that distinguish a man from a boy. The most important of these rights is assuredly that of taking a wife and founding a family.

As a matter of fact, the *soli* marks the point after which the young people of both sexes are deemed competent to contract [582] marriages. Indeed, girls of 16 or 18 years of age and boys over 25 are rarely unmarried. It should further be understood that a girl may be betrothed at birth or even when she is being carried in the womb, as has been explained above.

429 562 Guardianship is intended to protect the individual from the follies of inexperience and the natural weakness of the female sex, a weakness to be understood here to include not only actual lack of physical strength but also incompetence imposed by custom which forbids a woman any power whatever over community rights or property. This is why young men are subject to guardianship until the *fa*, in council, recognizes their right to exercise the prerogatives of man's estate. In principle, women are subject to guardianship throughout their lives.

429 During his married life, the father is the legal administrator of any properties coming to his minor children, and he usually employs such property with discretion since he is legally bound to render an account when the children reach their majority.

429 A person who is away for a long or indefinite period [217] delegates the direction of the family community for as long as necessary to a friend or relative. This substitute, however, is expected to act only in accordance with the customary counsel and the family of the absent person.

[586] In case of divorce, the children always remain with the father. A divorced woman again comes under the guardianship of her own community.

768 429 When the mother dies, the father retains the administration of her property which belongs jointly to her children. If, however, one of her sons is married or of marriageable age and is competent, all such property is supposed to be handed over to him to administer in his capacity as fa of the uterine community.

When a father dies, his minor children are placed under the guardianship of the patriarch under whose authority the deceased was living. If he was independent, guardianship would be set up in accordance with his wishes which he would not have failed to make known.

In any event, if one of his sons is married or of marriageable age and sufficiently competent, he becomes fa of the familial community which gradually, as the younger sons grow up and establish families of their own, becomes a patriarchy such as we have described above.

[641] According to native law, deprivation of civil rights does not exist. In fact, however, persons who by reason of ill-health or senility are unable to comply with custom in carrying out their functions are supplanted by such persons as are designated by custom to replace them at the time of death.

596 614 Faya. The faya is the authority and power of the fa over all his dependents. It has the same character, differing only in extent, whether it concerns a familial or a patriarchal community.

Familial faya. Within the family, the fa theoretically has complete authority over everything that constitutes this community. It makes little difference whether he acts on his own initiative or whether he allows himself to be swayed by the

596 614 opinion of those around him, his intimates and friends. He exercises the right of agrarian usufruct over the lands under cultivation, and he may dispose of movable property without restriction. As regards persons, his own issue [218] are at his mercy, and he profits from their labor. He can hire them out, put them up for security, sell them, and even put them to death. He has the right of conjugal usufruct over his wives, and his slaves are merely chattels.

Patriarchal faya. This differs in extent from the foregoing. Anything connected in whatever way to the patriarchal community itself or to the family communities under its authority comes under the patriarchal *faya*.

Though the maintenance of this power presents no problems in theory, practice is quite another matter.

The fact is that the *fa* of a familial community is completely subject to a patriarch only if, being connected through the male line, he has some property in the patriarchy or intends to claim rights in it.

If this is not the case, the familial *fa* acts as though he did not belong to the patriarchy, and the latter can only treat him accordingly. This is what happens when a "son" goes off, establishes himself far away, and prospers there by his own efforts and at his own risk. Breaking all agnatic ties, he in fact frees himself from any authority that his patriarchy might seek to impose upon him.

This has produced innumerable dissident branches which have the same *dyamu* but which can only hypothetically trace their descent through the males back to a common male ancestor.

Inheritance. It is necessary, first, to know whether the
428 deceased was a *fa* or a *fantan'*, that is, whether he exercised the authority of a *fa* or was under the authority of a *fa*.

Let us say the deceased was a *fa*.

In principle, if he was *fa* of a family, everything belonging to him remains undivided under the new *faya* of his eldest son.

If he was *fa* of a patriarchy, a new patriarch succeeds him.

It is unnecessary to belabor these points or the consequences of the variations in view of the details given above.

428 Now let us say the deceased was a fantan', that is, he did not exercise a faya. [219]

A son who dies before becoming fa rarely leaves any property. If he should by chance do so, such wealth theoretically belongs to the community of which he was a member. The disposition of property from special sources must be settled according to the nature of the source. Thus, property which the deceased may have inherited from his mother would go to his uterine heirs.

What has just been said of a son applies all the more to a daughter, since, after all, she is nothing more than a kind of property belonging to the community.

428 567 The most hapless fantan' is the slave. In principle, he could hardly be expected to leave an inheritance since even his own person does not belong to him. In fact, however, the situation is quite different. A slave generally does have some property and may even be very rich. His fa allows him the use of his property for his lifetime, and it is current practice for him to leave it likewise to his children. As a result, everything transpires just as though the deceased were a free man, and what we have said about other communities applies to this type of community which, strictly speaking, has only a kind of de facto existence. The action of custom, in freeing the slave, gives him access to the position of a free man without depriving him of what his fa has allowed him to enjoy. In the end, this enjoyment of use is gradually transformed and strengthened by inheritance until it is the equivalent of similar rights to property which are accorded to men born free.

596 614 Order of succession. Patriarchal community. The fa is the eldest of the surviving males who are direct descendants in the male line of the fa who founded the community.

428 596 614 Familial community. 1. The eldest surviving son of the deceased; upon his death, succession follows the same pattern as for the patriarchal community.

If there are only daughters, the property is divided among them.

428 2. If there are no children, the collateral males and, 596 lacking the~~m, the wives~~.

3. If there are no collateral relatives, the ascendants.

614 4. If there are no ascendants, the surviving spouse.

5. If there is no surviving spouse, escheat occurs: [220] the inheritance reverts to the head of the settlement, the dugutigi, when this settlement is independent; otherwise to the head of the clan, the fama.

596 614 The community and the individual. The result of the foregoing is that the individual, whoever he may be and whatever his situation, has no value except as a member of a community (1); it is the community that exists and has an identity, while the individual exists and is identified only through the community and for the community.

An individual who exists apart from any faya is, therefore, an anomaly, and this situation comes to an end as soon as the individual himself becomes fa.

596 614 There are cases, however, when an individual is put out of his community because of his own action or because of circumstances, and extraordinary changes of status result.

626 Anyone driven from his community for bad conduct loses his rights to the faya in that community.

564 558 If his disqualification results from the practice of a trade regarded as degrading, he falls into what the Bambara call nyama-ka-la and Europeans call "people of caste." Henceforth he is not only excluded from his community, but he lives apart from all persons not declassed; he is a free man of inferior standing. He usually lives under the protection of a community of persons not declassed, earning his living from it and deriving from it such consideration as may be sometimes given him.

564 463 Among the Bambara, the nyama-ka-la include: the numu, blacksmiths, whose wives are usually potters; the loro, who work with copper; the garanke, who work leather; and the kule, who work with wood and are sometimes saddlers.

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[567] 1. A slave has no rights because, as a person, he belongs to no community.

564 463 The hunters (donso), who form powerful and feared associations, and the somono [Somono] and bozo [Bozo], who are fishermen, have a less restricted status than the above-mentioned artisans.

The dyeli who has fallen to the level of a domestic factotum is the most scorned of all. He receives some consideration and, in exceptional cases, notable esteem only through his worth as family archivist.

564 The term nyama-ka-la is derived from nyama [221] meaning "ordure" or "outcast," and these people are outcasts. They are scorned. Some are particularly feared: the blacksmiths and the dyeli. The former are reputed, not without cause, to be given to the practice of magic and even sorcery. The dyeli have a fancy for poisoning.

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Since persons of caste are free, they may contract marriage, that is, a lawful union, and found families just as free, non-caste persons do. Their male children naturally inherit the father's status which, thus, is handed down indefinitely through the male line.

Ordinarily they intermarry within the caste although sometimes a member of one caste may marry a member of another.

558 564 Any non-caste individual who marries a member of a caste automatically loses status. A woman who does so is henceforth considered to be a person of caste, and her children necessarily have the status of their father. A man is less seriously affected, and it is not at all rare for a man of standing to have a wife of caste. This is indubitably a misalliance; children of such a union are not highly regarded, and this reflects on the father.

564 On the other hand, it is entirely normal and common to have persons of caste among one's friends. There is hardly a person of consequence who does not have several of them as boon companions.

Although the fact of belonging to a caste carries with it a definite status, the caste member is not necessarily expected to practice the traditional trade. A member of the numu caste may very well know nothing whatever about ironwork and may

564 engage only in agriculture. Furthermore, casual or temporary practice, in one's own home, for instance, of one of the reputedly menial trades is not considered degrading.

567 596 614 Theoretically, enslavement does not exclude an individual from his own community nor in any way demean him in relation to it (1); if he returns, he recovers his rights just as though he had never been away.

On the other hand, at the place where he is a slave, an individual belongs to no community (as a person), and that is why he has no rights and is treated as a chattel.

567 We have shown earlier how, aided by time and circumstances, a slave may manage to escape some of the limitations of his status, but strictly speaking, [222] he can never escape this status. If in fact, as the chronicle says of Ngolo Dyara, a slave succeeds in attaining a position whose importance would seem to obliterate the stigma of servitude, the blemish of slavery nevertheless remains indelible.

4. Relations between Communities

596 614 621 The true social unit is the community. Even when no special organization links them, communities are often linked by numerous bonds. This involves no distinction by race, incidentally, since more often than not ethnically diverse peoples live together in the same region.

These bonds between communities may be classified under two heads: kinship and alliance.

Kinship

[602] The influence of kinship is very extensive. Thus, a single patriarchal community includes the familial communities

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1. For example, Déssé-Koro, taken in captivity to Ségou, returned to Kaarta where he exercised the faya of the Massa-si.

596 of all the male members of the community, and agnate and
614 uterine communities coexist in each familial community.
621 Furthermore, every familial community automatically becomes
602 a patriarchal community upon the death of its head, and it is
then composed of its own familial communities.

What actually happens, then, is that under the original patriarchal community are grouped an ever increasing number of other patriarchies or families, each of which includes its agnate or uterine communities. When the original patriarchy is an old one, it is obvious that a large number of persons will be living under its aegis, all of whom have dyamu and tne in common.

It may happen, however, that through time and a variety of circumstances branches become separated from the trunk, and to mark their new status, to perpetuate the memorable achievement of their founder, some of these groups have adopted a special dyamu and particular tne. At first the new dyamu is simply added to the original one, but later on the new one comes to be the only one used. However that may be, the principal characteristics [223] of the original community still persist, with a few new traits merely superimposed.

Since every secondary community in turn generates like communities, it goes without saying that the communities most distant from the original one have only a few traits in common with it, but their kinship never becomes extinct.

What are the effects of this kinship? On the one hand, it requires all concerned to observe their common duties to the community: in particular to respect ancestral traditions relative to the cult; to give mutual aid; to recognize the authority of the current fa who, for his part, is obliged to protect all his relatives, no matter how remote the connection.

As far as outsiders are concerned, kinship requires everyone to respect all pacts between communities. One can often observe fidelity to these alliances which may be hundreds of years old. If by chance people who have previously never seen each other learn of their respective dyamu and the attendant obligations, they will at once assume the reciprocal obligations contracted by their ancestors.

Alliance

596 614 621 784 The types of alliance between communities appear to differ widely, but in actual fact all alliances are based on a religious or magic rite and, more generally, on an oath.

Four forms of alliance particularly deserve attention: the *tne* or interdict, the oath, marriage, and the common cult.

I. *The tne*. The native regards the invisible world as a duplicate of the visible world, complete with communities. He carries the analogy even to those things which we call inanimate objects. That is why, when a native binds himself to an interdict, he is not promising to respect such and such a person or thing but, rather, the community of which he believes the person or thing to be a representative. Besides, just as the interdict applies to the whole community to which the object of the interdict belongs, it also binds all the members of the community whose *fa* instituted it. [224]

The basis of the alliance is the oath of the *fa*, any infraction of which automatically brings the most dreadful calamities upon the guilty party. It is like a sacrament, which the descendants of the *fa* must respect *in infinitum*.

The chronicle of Ségou shows us how such an oath happens to be made. Upon reaching the Niger, and having no means of crossing it, Ntchi in his peril called upon his ancestors for help. His prayer was answered: a *poyon'* appeared and ferried him and his people to the opposite shore. In gratitude for this service, Ntchi swore that the fish would henceforth be sacred to him and to his descendants. By this act, all *poyon'* became *tne* for Ntchi and his descendants, although this does not mean that there was a cult of the fish. It was a kind of alliance or covenant, analogous to one between human communities and with similar effects; it entailed some sort of reciprocal brotherly mutual aid. In practice, a Kouloubali descended from Ntchi must never, under any circumstances whatsoever, voluntarily harm a *poyon'*, his *tne*, on pain of the most disastrous consequences. If he has done so inadvertently, he can atone with sacrifices or appropriate penance, which his own intuition or a diviner suggests. He must always, in so far as the need arises,

596 assist his tne, while showing it the greatest respect. The mysti-
614 cal basis of this alliance sometimes causes the native to behave
621 in a particular way toward his tne: he will not look straight at
784 it; he will not touch it, unless absolutely forced to do so, and
then he will apologize and ask forgiveness.

Anything may be the object of a tne, but there is probably not a single Bambara family which does not have some animal as tne. Expressions which the natives in general and the Bambara in particular use to make foreigners understand their relations with this animal tne have made many Europeans think that the native regards the animal as a relative in the literal sense of the word. This is not the case, as we have just seen, and consequently Bambara totem is a purely European invention (1). [225]

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1. It should be understood that the tne has many sources besides one mentioned here, which is the only one pertinent to this chapter. Thus, Bala refused to pronounce any word having the syllable da (p.); Sounsan abstained from the kulé (p. , footnote 1).

596 II. The oath. In native society, a man who is ambitious
614 or merely anxious to establish a powerful community can do so
621 only with the support of faithful allies. Massa and Biton not only
608 succeeded in dominating their young companions, but they also
bound them closely through the oath and the cult.

Undoubtedly all the founders of powerful communities have not proceeded in exactly the same way, but all of them have employed analogous methods. An isolated individual can accomplish nothing in this social milieu where everything rests on these strongly organized collectivities, the communities. Any Bambara eager for well-being and peace will seek out and attach himself to a "powerful protector" (dyigi seme) capable of providing him with this security, even if it means the loss of his own

596 freedom. That is why any important fa is invariably surrounded
614 by a small group of intimates who are bound to his fate, often
621 by a reciprocal agreement based on an oath.

608 One of these sacramental alliances is particularly solemn; its purpose is to create a kind of kinship analogous to that which links blood brothers. There is always a profound difference between natural and contractual brotherhood, since the former exists and produces its effects independently of the will of those involved, whereas the latter exists and is valid only within the limits agreed upon by the contracting parties (1).

For a pact of brotherhood (dyonge) (2), the contracting parties, whether two or several, proceed as they see fit, either in public or privately in the presence of only close relatives and intimates. Each party to the agreement pricks his forearm and extracts a few drops of blood. The blood thus obtained is mixed with a small quantity of goat's milk in a receptacle. Calling upon the ancestors or some god chosen for the occasion to bear witness, each party in turn promises with a solemn oath to consider the others as his brothers. At the same time, he repeats the [22[illegible]] conditions of the pact and finally sips some of the liquid.

This is the closest alliance that two Bombara can contract (1). Among other things, it forbids one to marry women

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1. It should be noted that fraternization in its symbolic form has a necessary consequence which is not obligatory for other types of alliance by oath: it obligates the descendants of the contracting parties just as much as those undertaking the contract.

2. This term unquestionably derives from the verb siri, "to link, to unite."

1. Blood-brotherhood was contracted

596 between Deni-ba-Bo for the Massa-si
614 of Kaarta and Suleyman Ba for the
621 people of Fouta.
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belonging to the other's community, at least virgins or women reputed to be such. This is because a first sexual contact is likely to result in some flow of blood, and brotherhood imposes a terrible punishment on anyone who sheds the blood of a blood-brother or one of his people. As is apparent, the obligation undertaken by the contracting parties holds for all their descendants, regardless of sex and in infinitum. Henceforth there is a very close solidarity between the two communities, who are so bound to mutual aid that, in practice, anything (including lies, slander, and perjury) is permissible to overcome a common enemy or, in any event, to help the ally in trouble.

596 In place of the brotherhood oath, many other forms of
614 oath can be used. Thus, the chronicles tell of Sounsan and Fa
621 Siné forming an alliance with an oath which was undoubtedly
695 binding, because the anvil on which it was sworn was afterwards
cast into a well. Nko, Sounsan's god, received the oath under which the "young men" who were Massa's companions allied themselves to the latter's fate. At Ségou, the tondyon' likewise swore loyalty on the idols.

These sacramental agreements are endlessly varied, but they bind the parties only under the stipulated conditions, especially as regards the respective communities of the fa who take the oath.

596 III. Marriage. There is no better way for a Bambara to
614 show his attachment to someone whose alliance or friendship he
621 desires than by giving him as a wife one of the girls of his own
583 community and providing her with a generous dowry. This is one
of the most solemn forms of alliance between communities (2).

2. People united by marriage are called furu-nyuan' (spouses) and biran' (allies).

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This conjugal union differs clearly from [227] ordinary forms of marriage. In view of the fact that the husband gets a wife without paying a bride price for her, the wife is not given in usufruct, and therefore she must be treated with the greatest consideration or she may be taken back. The situation can only be normalized if the husband is rich enough to present to the donor a gift equal to or preferably, if possible, greater than the dowry brought by the wife, or he may give a similar gift to the wife (1).

1. Such property is the wife's paraphernalia.

In these situations also, the procedure varies a great deal. The donor may offer a girl from another community and provide her with a dowry. This is what Biton did in order to bind Ngolo to him: Biton gave him a girl designated by the marabouts as one of the elect, and he also provided the girl with a rich dowry.

The significance of such alliances can be estimated only when one has some knowledge of the intentions of the parties involved, especially those of the donor. We shall see one important type in the chapter on Islam, the marriage of Allah.

IV. The common cult (2). The territorial community.

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2. Communities may be united under the protection of the same god. Here we shall study only their union under the protection of the "genie, master of the earth" (*nyana dugu-da-siri*). Other common cults will be studied in the following chapter, "Brotherhoods."

In the mind of the Bambara, the earth, together with everything in it, is the property of the spirits. As a result, no one may make use of it or presume to settle on or cultivate an unused field without first going through certain ceremonies.

For this purpose, either on his own responsibility or, more often, with the aid of "the one who knows" (*don-na-ba*), a

311 Bambara seeks the "genie, master of the earth" (*nyana dugu-da-*
621 *siri*) or, more exactly, determines where this genie dwells. It
776 may be a spring, a hill, or a rock; often it is a fine tree, in-
794 variably surrounded by a grove or at least with a grove nearby.
Then, always following the same procedure, he finds out the conditions under which the genie will allow someone to settle in his domain in order to live there and cultivate the lands. Thus, a contract is worked out which governs the man's exploitation of the genie's territorial domain. As a result, provided he worships the genie in the manner required, the man [228] will be able to work under the protection of the god. Anyone who has had a share in the contract, even if only through representatives, will likewise profit if he scrupulously observes the conditions.

621 The establishment of a village requires the cooperation of
622 several communities, each represented by its *fa*. One of these *fa*
793 will either appropriate the leadership or be chosen as the rep-
794 resentative or chief of the others. Sometimes he may be merely
primus inter pares; otherwise he may have managed to have his primacy conceded by the rest. It is this chief who treats with the genie in the name of the whole village; thus, he becomes the "high priest of the genie" (*nyana-n-son-na-ba*) with the essential function of "making the offerings" (*son*) required by the cult. Furthermore, he administers the earthly domain of the genie and is therefore called *dugu-tigi* (master of the earth).

To the *nyana dugu-da-siri* is usually attributed the same *dyamu* as that of its high priest, just as though the genie belonged to the spiritual family of the priest. This is a result consistent with the mentality of the Bambara.

621 The same mental state accounts for the custom in certain
776 villages of dedicating a living animal, often a ram, to the
778 *nyana dugu-da-siri* and believing it to be the god's mount. The
[825] animal is allowed to wander freely about the village, and its
mischief is never punished; indeed, the people enjoy caressing and indulging it. The animal takes on some of the attributes of the genie and is, as it were, endowed with certain supernatural virtues, so only good can come from contact with it.

621 Theoretically, each settlement has only one genie, but
776 actually it may have several, especially if it has been settled by

621 776 successive groups, each recognizing a genie-protector. In that case, the genie first recognized and worshiped takes precedence over the others. In any case, social life requires each segment to respect the gods of its neighbors, and this respect carries with it a certain amount of superstitious fear.

311 621 794 It is evident from the foregoing that occupying and cultivating land poses certain problems for the settlement benefited, and these may be grouped under three heads: the cult of the genie-protector; the exploitation of the land; and the organization of the territorial community.

793 794 The cult. This is mainly supported by the high priest, whose principal duty is to "make the offerings" (son') to the "genie" [229] (nyana), hence his title nyana-son-na-ba. He is assisted by the council of fa, one of whom, the syere (follower), may replace him in case of need. The office of high priest is for life and is inherited in the same way as his faya. This continuity shows that the genie is actually regarded as a kind of spiritual ancestor of the priest, as we have seen from the fact that it is given the same dyamu as its high priest.

794 796 The cult ceremonies are very simple. They consist of offerings made by the high priest, who at the same time indicates to the genie the purpose for which they are being made. The most solemn ceremonies take place when millet is sown and harvested. For these occasions, every worshiper is expected to bring a contribution in proportion to his resources. The kind of gift is not specified; everyone brings whatever he can or whatever he wishes, usually animals (sheep, beef, fowl, etc.), grain, and especially millet beer (dlo).

782 796 778 + During these general gatherings, from which no one is excluded, only the high priest and the members of the council enter the sacred grove or approach the genie's abode. There, the high priest makes known the purpose of the sacrifice: to thank the genie for his past favors; to offer him the gifts brought by everyone; and to ask him to continue to protect the community so that its prosperity may be assured. Then the victims are sacrificed, and their blood is sprinkled on the tree trunk or whatever object or place is reputed to be the home of the genie.

782 genie. The same is done with libations of dlo or the juice of
796 kola nuts. Since anything offered to the genie is supposed to be
[784] consumed on the spot, an orgy lasting for several days usually
follows.

782 In addition to these two great obligatory ceremonies
especially concerned with the exploitation of the land, the god's protection is sought by similar, but much simplified means in all affairs whether they concern the entire settlement (wars, disasters), a particular patriarchal or familial community, or even a single individual. Through the high priest as intermediary, the offering and the request are made for the purpose indicated by the petitioner, who often promises to make a further gift to the genie when his wish has been granted. Vows of this type are made very frequently.

794 The cult of his high [230] priests and of all the im-
portant men of the settlement is tied in with the cult of the
769 genie, obviously a consequence of the fact that the genie is the spiritual patron of the community which honors him; its members are his children and with him form what amounts to a family. So, in line with what happens in a patriarchal or familial community, the territorial community also holds an annual festival for the dead, during which special honor is paid to noted personages, among whom deceased high priests have first place.

311 Exploitation of the land. The high priest in charge of
the cult likewise regulates everything concerning the exploita-
621 tion of the terrestrial domain of the genie, and in this capacity
423 he is known as the dugu-tigi (1), master of the earth. In this
773 office he has the help of the council of fa, and in important matters he must follow their advice.

With the help of this council, he allots the land when

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1. In line with common practice, I shall henceforth use this title to designate both capacities, the high priest and the master of the earth.

311 the community is founded. His permission is required before
621 anyone may build a dwelling in the portion reserved as the seat
423 of the community; the village is therefore kept within precise
793 limits. In practice, however, everyone builds wherever he
pleases if there is no objection. If there is an objection, the
dispute is settled by the *dugu-tigi* and his council.

Outside the village proper, the terrain includes fields
423 which, either at the start or during the course of settlement,
621 are allotted in perpetuity to the various *fa* of the community
by the *dugu-tigi* in council. Each *fa* and his dependents have
indefinite use of the same fields, although by law the authority
which assigned them may take them away without being required to justify the act. This use is a kind of usufruct that is
more extensive than that of our law, since the beneficiary may
[425] use the land without restriction, except that he may not alienate
it. The tenant, however, may not use the land in any way that
might be prejudicial to the community as a whole without the
consent of the *dugu-tigi* and council. For example, such would
be the case if he proposed to give his right of use to an outsider.

Any land not specifically allotted [231] and anything it
produces or contains belongs, theoretically, to the member of
the community who cultivates it. Certain fruits or produce, however, are sometimes reserved for the community as a whole:
the leaves or fruit of the baobab, karite, *nété*, tamarind trees,
etc.; the fish in certain ponds, watercourses, fluvial zones,
[476] etc.; the game in certain cantons, etc. On the dates set for
these collective enterprises by the *dugu-tigi* and his council,
the people proceed in a body to gather fruit, harvest the crop,
fish, or hunt. Sometimes each person is allowed to keep what
he has gathered; sometimes all the proceeds are collected for
the *dugu-tigi* to distribute according to custom. There are also
special regulations governing the extraction of matter or materials from the ground.

621 *Organization of the territorial community.* The duties
of the *dugu-tigi* and his council are not limited to directing the
622 cult and regulating the use of land. Anything that happens
within the territorial community concerns the *nyana-dugu-da-siri,* because the members of the community are his children

621 622 (den'). Proof of this is seen in the fact that any important happening in a native's life is supposed to be reported to the dugu-tigi and in certain cases requires an offering or, as it is called, homage (bunya). We have seen this in the case of birth, giving a name, circumcision, marriage, and death. It is no less essential in cases of public disaster (epidemic, persistent drought, invasion, war).

621 622 692 In theory, the dugu-tigi does not intervene of his own accord in the private affairs of the patriarchal or familial communities which, when taken together, constitute the territorial unit we usually call a village (1). When a quarrel between relatives cannot be settled by the fa concerned, however, he asks for the intervention of the dugu-tigi and his council. If dissension arises between the people of different communities, the same arbitration is usually requested. As a result, a kind of tribunal of conciliation has evolved, which can only suggest what the parties should do or refrain from doing in order to put an end to the dispute. Theoretically, the dugu-tigi has no right to enforce the [232] verdict (1), because the communities are extremely jealous of their independence. As a consequence, they yield only to the extent that is in their best interests.

It may happen, however, that the dugu-tigi, supported by his council, does exert authority when he has the power and is seconded by notables who make common cause with him for

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1. The territorial community among the Bambara is called dugu, a term which at the same time means "land" and "among," "to," "within," etc., and which is preceded by a name recalling some circumstance involved with the founding of the village.

1. That is why litigation may be indefinitely prolonged.

621 various reasons. Thus, the dugu-tigi in council can invoke
622 police powers to maintain order in the community and even act
692 as a tribunal to punish those whose misdeeds in any way endanger the persons or property of members of the community.

Since the genie is expected to ensure the prosperity of
621 the faithful, it is the duty of the dugu-tigi to come to the assist-
622 ance of members of the community who are unfortunate or in-
[735] digent.

He must also maintain the relations of his community with the outside world, that is, with neighboring territorial communities and all other groupings, analogous or otherwise. He can act independently only in matters which we call purely administrative; for other matters he must have the assent of the council of fa, above all for any matter involving the disposal of community property.

It is obvious that all the roles of the dugu-tigi involve
621 expenses that are often considerable, but for this purpose he has
622 access to goods from many sources. In the first place, offerings
651 made to the nyana are of various kinds; they are not always consumable, and even if they are, they are usually consumed only in part. The remainder belongs to the dugu-tigi. It is customary to give bunya (gifts of homage) to the dugu-tigi on many occasions: a hunt, a fishing expedition, millet harvest, etc.; to thank him for an allotment of land, or for some other service. Community property is farmed out for fees payable at fixed times, and tribute is paid in the same way. Most of the various kinds of infractions committed within the community are punished by fines received by the dugu-tigi. Incorrigible malefactors become slaves of the community, and the produce of their labors [233] goes to the dugu-tigi. Anything found abandoned on land belonging to the community is turned over to the dugu-tigi, in whole or in part.

In case of need arising through some exceptional emergency (war, an expedition, public works of various kinds, etc.), the dugu-tigi may have recourse to what we should call an emergency assessment, i.e., he may ask the members of the community for special contributions for the purpose.

621 622 651 652 These are the principal resources of the community treasury, which is held and administered by the dugu-tigi with the help and under the control of the fa. The dugu-tigi may use the treasury to help him perform his duties honorably, to assist unfortunate or indigent members of the community, to receive the guests of the community in a suitable manner, and to meet emergencies.

661 Under no circumstances does this treasury constitute any part of the personal fortune of the dugu-tigi. Only usurpation, which is fairly common under various guises, alters this state of affairs. In the same way, it is not uncommon for this wealth to be divided in some measure among the members of the council, who in one way or another appropriate it. Such abuses, no matter how common, do not in the least alter the principle that legally such wealth is and remains exclusively the property of the community. [234]

Chapter 4

Brotherhoods

1. The End of Childhood

794 881 General considerations. The cult of the ancestors and of the nyana dugu-da-siri are not enough for the Bambara in his efforts to make sure of the protection, help, and services of the invisible world. The magician has created for him some renowned protectors or servitors which are powerful and formidable: the nyana of the boli.

The cult of these gods gives rise to spiritual families whose members are so closely linked by the bonds of fraternity that we may safely say that these groupings are brotherhoods. All these brotherhoods share the common characteristic that no one can be received into them before having submitted to a certain rite called soli (1) or bolo-ko (1), terms which etym

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1. Soli is the word for the action of piercing, emerging, laying an egg, or

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being born; bolo-ko literally means "affair involving birth."

etymologically mean "birth."

Having entered the family through physical birth, a child enters a new phase of his life through the spiritual birth represented by the soli. Through this rite, a child in fact ceases to belong to sexless childhood and becomes: the boy, a man; the girl, a woman. Let us look at the stages of this change of status which is truly the principal event of a native's life.

857 Until he is about seven years old, a small boy lives in daily contact with his mother, only slipping away, as time goes on, to play nearby with his friends.

During this period, one can already observe the influence [235] of the native milieu on the development of his young soul. He has watched cult and magic practices, and he too plays at being a magician to kill or capture rats, lizards, and other small animals for his little feasts. He collects roots with simulated rites and attaches them to his toy bow so as to ensure the success of his hunting, believing that he has attracted a spirit by promising an offering of the blood of his victims. He is already a little hunter, seeking mysterious procedures through which game can be and ought to be put at his mercy without danger to himself.

881 794 Around the age of seven, he is thinking about the crucial act of his life, the soli, one of whose rites is that of circumcision.

Observance of the soli, complete with public circumcision and preceded and followed by membership in a brotherhood, is not absolutely indispensable. When, by reason of circumstances, a child lives in an isolated situation, he undergoes the soli within the family circle, without fuss, and this in no way lessens the validity of the act.

881 794 561 571 There is no doubt, however, that nothing but absolute necessity will make a Bambara do this; he loathes such wretched economy, which in any case seems inappropriate to such an important occasion (1). On the contrary, he loves to take part in

1. Besides, since no exact age limit is

881 561 571 744 imposed and since there may be as much as six or seven years' difference in age between the oldest and youngest children participating in the same soli, it is obviously possible for a candidate to arrange to be included at some point within this range of ages so as not to be an isolated case.

881 571 744 a noisy demonstration and to share in all of the rejoicing the brotherhoods provide for their members. This is by no means the least of the reasons for the spread of these brotherhoods, to which the n-Tomo (2) is really the front door, since no one is admitted to a brotherhood unless he is soli-ma, and the specific final object of the n-Tomo is the soli.

n-Tomo

561 857 881 The n-Tomo is an association which, in preparation for the soli, bands together boys (3) of about seven to fourteen years

Each [236] n-Tomo normally includes all the boys due to be circumcised, without distinction by race or rank. Each member is called n-Tomo-den'; the eldest is the leader or n-Tomo-tigi, and he is assisted by a syere or "follower." New members are received every year at the time of the annual festival, and they must pay an entrance fee (a chicken) and a few cowries

2. n-Tomo is the term used in the Ségou area; in Kaarta the term n-Tori is used.

3. Little girls have no organized society to prepare them for the soli, but they have agreements among themselves and, in addition, are chosen as n-golo-moso-u by the n-Tomo-den'-u.

561 and take an oath of secrecy. The boy leaves the n-Tomo
857 after the soli. Girls are not admitted.

881 The n-Tomo-tigi and his syere organize the association so as to assure it some property which in principle is collective property. Through common abuse, however, they are the primary if not the sole beneficiaries of it. They persuade their comrades to cultivate a field whose produce will provide the food for their club feasts. The entrance fee is augmented by force, spontaneously or at the order of the n-Tomo-tigi: gifts, collections, theft, hunting, fishing, etc.; in short, anything may be collected by individual or collective effort to form a kind of common treasury.

857 There is no collectivity, however, without its spiritual
773 patron. The n-Tomo meets out-of-doors, at the foot of a tree (1) believed to be the chosen home of a genie-protector.

(1) The name "n-Tomo" comes from this. It has been thought that the term was simply the name of the tree where the genie-protector lives and that it was the tree which the Bambara call "n-Tomo." If this were true, why should people in Kaarta use the term "n-Tori" when the tree called n-Tomo does not change its name? It has been suggested that n-Tori is another word meaning "toad" and came from the peculiar "cry" characteristic of the society.

It is my belief that the two terms, "n-Tomo" and "n-Tori" designate the same grouping in different regions and have one and the same meaning: meeting, assembly.

The n-Tomo-tigi is the high priest of this genie; as such he receives the oaths of the neophytes and has a certain degree of authority over the whole band, which enables him to punish any misdeed committed by a n-Tomo-den'. He does not hesitate to use corporal punishment.

857 use corporal punishment.

From this early age, therefore, a Bambara is subject to the corporate discipline which will henceforth dominate his whole life, for the same sort of discipline prevails in the adult brotherhoods.

The genie-protector is honored by offerings, [237] sacri-
857 fices, and ritual dances. When they perform these dances, the
292 n-Tomo-den' take turns wearing the ceremonial mask and cos-
[782] tume. The mask has the form of a human face surmounted by
a number of vertical horns (five to eight of these) and decorated with a few cowries. The costume consists of a dloki (a kind of blouse with wide sleeves) and a pair of long trousers, which completely cover the body. If the costume is yellowish-brown (basa) or white (dye), the association is called "n-Tomo-fin' (black n-Tomo)" or "n-Tomo-dye (white n-Tomo)," respectively. Is this costume supposed to represent the adepts' conception of their protector's appearance? No. As in all sects, it is intended to differentiate the officiant from the profane world (1).

[534] 1. Some of these associations give a
kind of public performance from which
they derive profit. Notably, they exhibit a kind of puppet called peremperen'
(dancers) which members of the n-Tomo
manipulate in a more or less comical
manner; often one of the puppets rep-
[831] resents a man and the other a woman, and
their movements abound in the obscenities
which are so popular with the onlookers.

831 A wooden phallus (or a small board) is commonly used to
857 summon the n-Tomo-den' to meetings. This is tied to the end
[534] of a rope and whirled like a sling, producing a noise which the
operator can vary and which carries a considerable distance.
This apparatus is called n-Tomo-ulu, translated as "dog of the
[195] n-Tomo." It should be noted that the words used in the brotherhoods usually have a double meaning, with a special sense under a vulgar form. For instance, the word ulu means both

857 "dog" and "the sexual parts of a man," and it seems evident
831 that the expression n-Tomo-ulu should be taken in the latter
195 sense. This is all the more likely since in the similar organization among the Khassonké the same apparatus is called khe-fengo, literally, "thing of a man," that is, "sexual parts of a man."

857 The great festival of the association takes place every year after the harvest and does not differ essentially from the
796 one celebrated at the same time by all the brotherhoods. It involves offerings and sacrifices to the genie-protector, communion by the n-Tomo-den' at a corporate banquet, and the admission of new members. The following is a detailed description. [238]

At the instigation of the n-Tomo-tigi, the brotherhood's field has been harvested and to the grain collected has been added whatever the boys could obtain from their families or friends by any means, even theft. From this millet the n-Tomo-
[273] tigi has had dlo (beer) prepared, which is drunk in great quantities on such occasions. The "elders" (koro-u), relatives, and friends can be counted on to send their contributions in kind.

Each n-Tomo-den' is given a little outfit appropriate to the occasion. The ceremonial costume is put in order; the dloki and trousers are washed and ironed, if need be, and the mask is rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu) to give it gloss.

On the day set, everything is in readiness. Many gourds of dege (1) and to (2), numerous jars of beer (dlo), and also some kola nuts have been assembled, along with sacrificial victims.

857 The n-Tomo-den', each leading a chicken on a string,
796 go to the meeting place in single file, with the n-Tomo-tigi
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[258] 1. Dege is made by putting coarsely ground millet into a small quantity of water.

2. A native mush.

857 and his *syere* at the head. There, the *n-Tomo-den'* squat at
796 a little distance from the *n-Tomo-tigi,* who takes his place in
782 front of them, facing the tree where the guardian genie dwells, in order to perform the libations and sacrifices. First he takes a small gourd and pours the *dege* it contains against the trunk of the tree; he cuts the throat of a chicken and dribbles its blood on the tree in the same way; next, in a jet of saliva, he spits on it the juice and particles of kola nuts which he has chewed for the purpose; finally, he fastens a few of the chicken's feathers in the smear of blood. As he makes each of these offerings, he says to the genie: "Look here, I offer you this chicken, protect us, defend us against the wicked and against evil genii. Give us enough to live well. Save us from illness. Give us rain to make our fields fruitful and be propitious to our families."

He speaks thus for everybody, after which each one comes in turn to offer his sacrifice and to make personal requests through him as intermediary.

The admission of new members follows. Each of them
857 pays his entrance fee and then, prostrate before the genie,
796 swears never to reveal anything to the uninitiated, [239] above all to the women." If you betray your brothers," says the *n-Tomo-tigi,* "may the genie kill you!" The new member repeats: "May he kill me!"

At this point the victims are cooked, and while they are
[535] being prepared, the *n-Tomo-den'* dance in turn, dressed in the ceremonial regalia. Their steps are accompanied by the beating of drums, and they twirl a flexible stick as they dance. When the victims are cooked, the banquet begins. Everyone eats and drinks as much as he can; a special treat of kola nuts brings the banquet to a close.

857 On this day each *n-Tomo-den'* is expected to take one of
796 his gifts or some other personal possession and make a present of
572 it to his *n-golo-moso* (1). This is how one names the young
[431]

1. *N-golo-moso,* literally, "woman of the birth," is the companion associated with the rite which he is to undergo.

857 796 [672] companion whom each n-Tomo-den' is required to choose upon his admission into the sect; she is his special girl friend and his relations with her are not merely platonic.

The meal is over by mid-afternoon, and the band returns to the village for a public performance during which the
857 796 members beat one another. First, the n-Tomo-tigi and his
785 syere advance to the middle of a circle of onlookers, relatives, friends, and others; the mothers wrap cloths or scarves around their hips and stomachs to protect them from serious injury. Onlookers sing and clap their hands. The n-Tomo-tigi holds his whip aloft with his arms outstretched, and the syere immediately flogs his head and shoulders, front and back, his thighs, legs, and feet; he keeps this up, the victim uttering not a single cry of pain, until he can strike no longer, either because he is exhausted or because his whip is broken.

Then it is the turn of the syere to be flogged in the same way. Following this, the n-Tomo-den' in pairs flog each other until it is the turn of the very youngest who, being less hardened, weep and scream and run away at the first blow. This naturally gives rise to laughter and mockery among the onlookers, who had greatly admired the stamina of the others.

In some places each n-Tomo-den' flagellates himself.

What is the meaning of this practice? It seems likely that originally its purpose was to emphasize the secrecy required of the n-Tomo-den' by giving them a chance to show that they would not violate [240] their oaths even under blows. It should be recalled that flogging was the common method of obtaining confessions, always considered the best proof of guilt. Thus, the practice of flagellation would to some extent enable the adepts not to confess under blows (1). The practice is also a means of preparing the boys to undergo circumcision without flinching, since it is a signal disgrace to show or expose pain at that time.

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1. Flagellation is also practiced in certain brotherhoods for no apparent reason except that of hardening one against pain. See "The Koré" below.

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Soli (2)

The single word soli is used for what we call circumcision and excision. This is because a Bambara has in mind not this or that surgical operation, accessory in nature, but rather the ceremony which for boys and girls alike marks the passage or, more accurately in line with the etymology of the word soli, the fact of being born to a new status.

881 The soli does not take place every year, because it involves considerable expense for the families, which they cannot always meet. At the instigation of the boys who must undergo the soli and who, therefore are called soli-ma-u (people of the soli), the family heads assemble at the call of the nyana-n-sonna-ba to decide whether or not the soli will be held. If the decision is affirmative, the boys and girls then take steps to make sure that the festival (nyara, "orgy, wedding") will be as elaborate as possible. In principle, the date coincides with the third day of the festival of the sheep.

Guided by their elders, the young girls (soli-ma-muso-u) [262] go from door to door to solicit millet for the banquet (3) which they are expected to give the elders (koro-u) on the second day of the feast of the sheep. The period of the ceremonies of the soli actually begins with this meal. [241]

In the afternoon of this day, the boys make the customary sacrifice to their genie-protector, dancing in his honor in ceremonial costume but without flagellation.

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2. The word soli is used in Kaarta; at Ségou the term is boloko or ngolo-ko, literally, "affair of birth."

3. The menu includes couscous (basi), and it is called soli-kili-basi, "basi of the solicitation for the soli," on account of the source of the millet used to prepare it, solicited by the children.

881 302 On the same day the young girls in certain localities have a characteristic ceremony. One of them whitens her face, breast, and back with a mixture of milk and ashes. Thus daubed, she dashes out of the village brandishing the spatula (to-n-galama) which is used to stir mush (to) in the pot; her companions follow her, shouting. The band goes around the village four times in this fashion, each time stopping at the crossroads. At these points the girl who is bedaubed throws handfuls of food (1), provided by her companions, to the spirits,

[262] 1. Usually basi (couscous) made with fish.

crying: "Dege dule (2)." Her companions reply: "Naloma (3)."

2. Literally, "thick mush."

3. That is, "fool."

881 527 [273] [576] The eve of the soli (soli-si). During the evening preceding the soli, the families concerned enjoy an ample meal, accompanied by innumerable jugs of beer (dlo) as is the custom at all festivals among the Bambara. This is a time of special merriment, of shining faces and greasy hands, and it is good form for the men and boys to belch noisily, saying repeatedly: "ne ne fa," literally, "I am full," that is, "I am replete." [301] The women wander about the lanes, wrapped in their best skirts, with balls of amber in their hair and small silver or even gold rings in their ears and nostrils and rather heavy bracelets on their [482] arms and ankles. Some carry jars of dlo on their heads, while others carry gourds full of couscous, dege, or hot sauces which are often nauseous with smoked or spoiled fish. After the meal everyone gathers on the public square, forming a wide circle whose center is reserved for the dancers; piles of dried millet [373] stalks are used to make bright fires which illuminate the scene and warm the audience.

881 302 The "boys of the soli" (soli-ma-tye-u), their heads

881 [302] freshly shaved (4), their bodies rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu), [242] arrive in single file. Greeted by the onlookers, they take their places in the front row. Shouts, noisy conversation, and songs are intermingled and make a racket which is interrupted by the arrival of the "girls of the soli" (soli-ma-moso-u). With their hair in a tangle and dressed in short skirts (1) reaching from the navel to the knee, they enter one behind the other, walk around the assemblage, and finally take their places in a group near their mothers and friends.

The assembled men drink around the fires.

881 533 534 All the drums are there, and as soon as the girls appear, the drummers rush to their instruments. There are big drums resting on three legs (denu-ba), others which hang from the shoulder, and still others carried under the arm. Young women shake bits of iron (kinge) as one shakes castanets, and there are other iron instruments provided with rings. Old women pound on gourds turned upside down in pots filled with water.

The noise is deafening, and it is dominated by songs in honor of the ancestors shouted by the whole assemblage as loudly as possible. Then the whole crowd, where the tipsy are in the majority and where everyone is at the highest possible pitch of excitement, starts a frenzied dance accompanied by songs usually improvised.

881 787 While all this is going on, the adepts of the major brotherhood (2) are outside the village, noisily driving out the

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4. Just as their heads were shaved at birth.

1. Blue for Moslems and yellowish-brown (basa) for the purely pagan Bambara.

2. The Komo around Ségou; the Nama in the Kaarta area.

881 evil genii in order to preserve the "people of the soli" (*soli-ma-u*)
787 from their bewitchments.

881 *The soli.* The *soli*, this make-believe birth, is marked
by a bloody operation, circumcision for the boys and excision
304 for the girls. The fact that the ceremony does not get its name
from this operation demonstrates that it is merely show; it is
merely a rite of separation between the previous state and the
new one (3). The operation takes place at dawn.

[171] 3. That is why among other peoples the operation does not exist or represented by a mere slash on the thigh (among the Koniagui).

Boys. The blacksmith who is to circumcise the boys waits outside the village under a tree. Assisted by members [243] of the sects and especially by the *Komo-tigi*, he performs the operation behind a loincloth hung up as a screen. The boy stands erect, and the blacksmith draws out the prepuce and cuts it off, after having determined approximately the proper place to cut. The patient is expected to show no weakness; on the contrary, he exerts himself to say a few words to show his courage.

As soon as the operation is finished, a gunshot announces the news to the elders crouched about the village fires, and a female *griot* proclaims it to the bystanders. The *Komo-tigi* takes a few *nyanka* leaves, burns them, and goes to place the ashes on the boy's familial *kara*. The boy runs off to rejoin his companions under the tree especially chosen for this reassembly. All the boys will spend their days there, on the fringe of society with which they are forbidden to mingle. They return to the village only at night, to sleep in a hut reserved for them.

881 A man reputed to know how to care for circumcised
boys lives with them, takes care of them, and closely supervises
304 them; this is the *sema-tye*. Every day abundant food is brought
292 to him for his patients. The latter wear a *dloki* (blouse) and
kursi (trousers) made of cotton cloth, blue or yellow-brown (*basa*)
depending on their affiliations (1), and their headgear is usually

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1. The *basa* color is much in demand

881 among the Bambara, while the Marka
304 use cloth dyed indigo-blue.
292

a high cap with strings extending from the earlaps. They can only leave the place where they are assembled, even for the needs of nature, under the leadership of the *sema-tye* and shaking a stick of wood to which are attached bits of broken pottery. This rattle is called *n-koso-m-bara.*

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304 They pass the time plaiting mats, gossiping, laughing, and pestering passers-by. On market days they are permitted to block the paths leading to the village and to collect a tithe from the traders.

The officials of the sects often visit them in their retreat.

Girls. The blacksmiths' wives who are to remove part of the clitoris await the girls outside the village under the trees. Some matrons assist them. Each child in turn runs up to the operator and squeezes herself between [244] the legs of the matron who exposes the clitoris. The excised clitoris is laid [789] in a little woven basket and is carefully preserved for making talismans.

The completion of the operation is announced in the same way as for the boys, and the *Komo-tigi* likewise puts the ashes from *nyanka* leaves on the familial *kara.*

The girl then rejoins her companions in the hut reserved for them in each section of the settlement. There they are under the surveillance of an old woman, the *sema-moso,* who knows how to take care of them and who sees to it that they behave properly. They are very well fed.

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[514] Wrapped in skirts, they lean on canes of dried millet stalks when they walk and shake a gourd pierced with holes and filled with pebbles. They go out only for the needs of nature and then all in a body. They warn the passers-by by shaking their rattles and singing improvised songs. As they near paths outside the village, they intone a refrain.

Soli da woro (1). The seclusion of the soli-ma ceases

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(1) Literally, "sixth day of the *soli.*"

881 on the sixth day. Just as a baby is admitted to the family on the seventh day after its birth, so on the sixth day after the surgical operation which has, as it were, marked the end of childhood, one attains a new status.

The sixth day, da woro, is the most important festival
881 of the soli. All the relatives and friends are invited and even
786 the most distant make great efforts to be present. Each one
sends or brings his contribution to the orgy-like meals which go
on and on, that day and the days following. The fiancés of the
girls must be represented and send gifts. Married brothers and
sisters must come, bringing their respective wives and husbands.
It is an occasion for feasting and drinking, and it goes on as long
as the provisions last, i.e., for several days.

881 The essential part of the ceremony, for which everyone has come, takes place on the evening of the sixth day. The onlookers gather in the public square where there will be [245] dancing, but usually only the women and girls remain there; the men and boys go outside for the admittance of the soli-ma-tye to the leading brotherhood of the village (Komoya, Namaya) (1).

Sometimes, however, there is no separation of the sexes, either because there is no active brotherhood or because the high priest has set a later date for the admittance ceremony.

In any case, the performance within the village is particularly for the girls, soli-ma-moso. Wrapped in a cotton coverlet with blue and white stripes, called dampe, each girl lies between her mother's legs (2) on a white cloth laid upon a mat.

While the boys, soli-ma-tye, are noisily shaking their
[534] rattles, n-koso-m-bara, the girls, soli-ma-moso, flourish their
pebble-filled gourds.

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1. We shall describe this admittance when we discuss the brotherhoods.

2. Or those of a relative or friend of her mother.

881 535 In a compact group, the women and girls of all ages and stations shuffle slowly around the orchestra, while the men drink and sing around small fires of dry millet stalks.

From time to time, upon being invited to do so, one of the girls, soli-ma-moso, gets up, rattles her gourd, and joins the dance with slow, deliberate steps.

At dawn, when they are about to return to their huts, the girls, soli-ma-moso, make one last circuit, and then each one, with her heels together and her hands crossed above her head, makes three leaps into the air. She does this three times.

The Bambara themselves interpret these various details
881 concerning girls, the soli-ma-moso, as symbolic. The girl's
201 position between her mother's legs recalls physical birth. The
white cloth represents the one that at her mother's marriage
bore witness to virginity and reminds the girl that she will have
to give similar proof to her husband. The dance done with
slow, measured steps is the symbol of a child learning to walk,
and the nine leaps that close the ceremony attest to the fact that
the girl is now an adult. A final rite shows the parallelism between the soli and [246] birth: on the sixth day, the nyana-n-
[302] son-na-ba shaves the head of the soli-ma-moso (1).

1. In place of the braided coiffure, young girls wear the magic cord with nine knots, called tafo, on the crown of the head, and this is connected to a similar one, called dyo, at the nape of the neck.

881 End of the soli. On the seventh day, before noon, all the soli-ma-moso go to the well or to the river to wash the soiled clothes and to scour the pots and gourds used for the festival. Then all return to the discipline of the soli: the boys under their tree, and the girls in their huts. The sema watch over the youngsters, who by now are bored with the discipline. About three weeks must pass after the operation before all the soli-ma completely recover.

881 At the end of this time, the nyana-n-son-na-ba and his council having come to an agreement with the sema to end the period of seclusion, each leader performs certain magic passes, under the boys' tree and near the girls' huts, to dispel any evil. The Bambara are convinced that so long as the period of convalescence is not officially closed the circumcised boys or excised girls are as much a danger to society as society is to them; that is why they must spend this period in seclusion. 881 783 Furthermore, anything used by them during their seclusion is impregnated with this evil and may spread it.

Therefore, as soon as the interdict is lifted, everything is collected to be burned at sunset (2). Near the trees outside the village the mats, the n-koso-m-bara, the gourds, millet stalks, rags, etc., are all piled up, and the nyana-n-son-na-ba sets them afire. The boys and girls jump over the fire three times; they are then free to return to the village. They run home promptly to adorn themselves for the festival celebrating their return.

881 Once more there are lavish meals and interminable drinking bouts, followed by a general gathering in the public square. People come from all directions, among them appallingly decrepit old women who try to manage everything. [247]

291 On this occasion, the boys, soli-ma-tye, appear for the first time in true man's attire, full trousers, cap with earlaps, and an ample new shirt. With lance in hand, they swagger about and simulate the behavior of warriors; they are now tye-kura, "new men."

881 301 The girls also are decked out to excess in women's attire. Wearing several skirts and adorned with all the jewelry relatives

789 2. However, personal effects (the boys' kursi, dloki, and baufla, and the girls' tafe) are not burned; along with their stains, these are impregnated with virtues which make them particularly valuable for talismans, amulets, and other magic weapons.

881 and friends have kindly lent for the occasion, they advance
301 shyly. In some areas, notably in the Bani region, they wear bundles of cowries, from the bride price already paid for them, around the hips and hanging on each side of the head (1).

[302 171] 1. Bambara girls who have gone through the soli have their heads shaved. Among other peoples, on the contrary, girls have their hair braided like women for the first time, but to the braid is added a tuft of the hair shaved off seven days after birth; this hair has usually been lost, but a small tuft is made to simulate it.

881 Boys and girls, following the old women who lead them,
[535] dance around the orchestra, and then all sit down in a circle. The nyana-n-son-na-ba takes the floor. He speaks in a low voice, and, as is proper, his words are repeated in a loud voice by a herald. He proclaims the end of the soli, recalls its principal events, and indicates clearly which children have participated in the rite; each boy and girl is specifically named. He will also be sure to point out that the soli is an immemorial cus-
[578] tom among the Bambara and that there is no worse insult than to treat a Bambara as uncircumcised. He closes by inviting everyone to eat, drink, and celebrate in the joy and harmony appropriate to such a festival.

[535] Dancing is resumed, and the boys and girls of the soli take part. The festivities continue as long as the refreshments last, usually several days.

To end it all, no one leaves without giving at least a few kola nuts to the heroes of the festival, the boys and girls.

The last phase is the thanks given by the soli-ma to those who assisted at the da-woro. In noisy bands, boys and girls dash about the village in two distinct groups. The girls' group is headed by the soma-moso who is called masa (queen), followed by the masa-ma-kono (vice-queen) and the masa-ma-kono-segere [248] (follower of the vice-queen); the last girl in the

881 group is called kule. In the same way, the boys go about in a group headed by the sema-tye, called masa (king), followed by the masa-ma-kono, the masa-ma-kono-segere, etc.

In this way, the whole country learns which boys and girls have completed the soli.

The Fla-n-ton'

561 Those who have belonged to the same n-Tomo-ya and have gone through the soli together remain bound together for
572 life; they are fula-ni ("peers," "twins") because they were born
575 on the same day to sexual and social life. Wherever they may be and whatever their respective rank, two fula-ni consider themselves equals even if one of them is a chief and the other a slave; the latter in particular has the right to speak his mind without fear (1). Theoretically, therefore, the fula-ni is the friend on whom one may safely rely, and he is usually a member of the council, small but very powerful, which every fa likes to have around. It is to him that the fa confides his troubles, his joys, his plans, and his personal affairs. He is present at all the celebrations and mourning of the family. On serious or important occasions, he represents his friend who often entrusts him with the supervision of his household during an absence and appoints him guardian or trustee of his children after his death. He is a brother who may be loved more than agnate or uterine brothers. At the same time the fulani-ya does not necessarily produce a type of brotherhood analogous to that brought about by the blood pact. Rather, it engenders a kind of mutual assistance which is strengthened by the organization called fla-n-ton', "assemblage of people of the same age," i.e., those "born" at the same soli.

The young people from the same soli form a fla-m-bolo, literally, a band of persons of the same age.

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1. See in Chapter 7, "The Man with Three Braids." [Not translated.]

561 575 A fla-n-ton' usually includes the young people from three consecutive soli, so it is an assemblage of three fla-m-bolo. Thus, Bambara society is composed of a certain number of fla-n-ton', and all the people are distributed among them, from the most recent tye-kura (new men) to the tye-koro (elders) who are the most advanced in age. [249] Since the women also have their fla-n-ton', it is reasonable to say, from a certain point of view, that the soli is the basis of life and of the social organization.

[571] Each fla-n-ton' is independent, but it maintains the best of relations with its immediate neighbors, the one preceding it, the one following it, and the one of the women of the same soli. Thus, the fla-n-ton' have a certain solidarity among them, which is shown by the custom of each fla-n-ton' honoring its immediate neighbors by offering them some of the food from its corporate meals. It should be noted, also, that whenever discord arises within a fla-n-ton', the neighboring fla-n-ton' intervene to make peace; a special arbiter may even be chosen to smooth out the difficulties involved in such an affair (1).

1. In this connection, note the difficulties between the ton' of Kassoum and Biton as reported in the chronicle of Ségou above.

Wherever he goes, a Bambara will look up people of his own age, i.e., those who went through the soli at the same time. He can always count on their friendly welcome and practical help.

In each fla-n-ton' there is a chief, ton-tigi, chosen in various ways depending on the place and the people. He may be the son of a notable; he may be a house slave. A syere (follower) assists him or replaces him. A dyala-tige, or assigner of shares, has the function of enforcing discipline and distributing the food at the group banquets; this is usually a house slave. Finally, a ton-dyeli serves as general factotum and herald; a person of caste has this role. From the point of view of the

561 575 association, each fula-ni is a ton'-den'.

The bachelors and some of the married men regard the fla-n-ton' simply as a means of having a good time in the company of boon companions. Anything brought by an individual member goes to swell the common fund which is most often used to organize feasts and drinking bouts. At these banquets, it is customary to comply with rules which appear curious at first sight and which must be obeyed unless the member wants to pay a fine into the common fund. Thus, anyone who acts on his own prior to or contrary to an order from the ton-tigi, anyone who comes or leaves, blows his nose, [250] spits, sneezes, and so on, without permission, is fined. Aside from the profit to the common fund, the procedure has its uses in making the ton-den' amenable to discipline.

In principle, the treasury of the fla-n-ton' is supposed to be used only to succor poor, embarrassed, or unfortunate members, who are expected to repay with interest insofar as they are able to do so. In theory, also, all of the ton-den' can count on moral and material aid from their fla-ni whenever there is need for it. It goes without saying that this fine spirit of altruism is rarely put into practice.

The fact of the matter is that the young masters (kamale-u) make use of the organization to resist the omnipotence of the elders (koro-u); malcontents of all sorts take refuge in it; adventurers find it useful in promoting their schemes. We shall see how the two most powerful Bambara empires were built on the fla-n-ton'.

2. General Considerations Concerning the Brotherhoods

Origin of the Brotherhoods

177 794 There is no reason to suppose that the Bambara brotherhoods are not purely native institutions; similar organizations are to be found all over Africa, particularly in areas untouched by Moslem influence. All of them follow similar principles made manifest in ways characteristic of African occultism.

177 794 There is no doubt, however, that in the case of the Bambara with whom we are here concerned this native foundation

177 794 has acquired various elements brought in from the outside world by Berbers, Arabs, and others, or by Sudanese pilgrims returning from the Orient. In any event, this foreign occultism -- usually oriental -- certainly did not give rise to or greatly modify the local Sudanese occultism; it merely strengthened its organization, its institutions, and its methods by adding new knowledge.

The legend (1) which claims that the nyana of the boli are a Moslem importation does not mean that these "gods" were introduced [251] actually and exclusively by such means. It means only that pre-existing native institutions have received foreign support from pilgrims or others returning or arriving from the Orient.

1. Reported below in the chapter on Islam.

Dogma

794 Are these brotherhoods based on a more or less secret teaching of cardinal truths? It does not seem to me to be risky to say that they are not. Everything in these cults may be summed up as empirical practices which are believed to have the effect of forcing a "god" (that is, an extranatural force) to serve man. The aim is essentially utilitarian and worldly: to acquire a "powerful protector" (dyigi seme) for defence, for offence, and especially for the purpose of attaining sufficient power for the realization of all desires.

Such an alliance with a god by means of a cult compels one to behave in certain ways, but discipline of this type does not lead to the improvement of either the individual or the society through the acquisition of what we call moral qualities or virtues. It is all the more obvious, then, that the brotherhoods are not trying to assure their members entry into a supernatural world; they can barely claim to assure them protection and a modicum of material well-being. A spiritual mysticism is unknown to them (1).

1. However, see Chapter 7. [Not translated.]

Methods

774 Are the rites and magical practices used in the brother-
789 hoods efficacious?

Here, as in all matters, the Blacks operate by feeling their way, imitation, or adaptation, all incomplete. Just as an ignorant man is perfectly capable of accidentally starting a clockworks whose mechanism he does not understand and so can either start or stop it, put it out of order, or break it, so a Black can sometimes, by a kind of empiricism, get results similar to those of the magnetizers, hypnotists, magicians, and alchemists of all times and places.

Without plan or method, the Sudanese magicians and sorcerers [252] have nevertheless not worked in vain. In the process of arousing the native's emotional temperament and keeping it ever aroused, they have created an atmosphere favorable to the rise and propagation of psychic phenomena. Any type of spirituality would benefit from this age-old process by which the Sudanese soul is all the better prepared to broaden its mystical tendencies toward the cult of the manes which the magicians have carefully kept within the material domain of immediate utility.

We have never heard of a single magician who, when he seeks to penetrate the invisible, has sought to understand its arrangement so as to regulate his own life with a view to attaining a privileged position in that world invisible to us. Each of them is merely trying to obtain a fragment of the universal energy in order to realize his worldly designs. Still, this continual striving toward the supernatural has often strengthened the feeling toward the manes through the spirituality that has been aroused. Thus, as magic loses its power, man's desire for the supernatural, lacking a goal, augments the cult of the manes until it goes on to something higher. Thus a new spirituality is created on the native plane, which is easily oriented toward revealed religions when they know how to receive it.

Nyana

794 776 Each brotherhood is founded on the cult of a spirit (nyana). What we call "spirit" to indicate its immateriality, the Bambara from another point of view calls "power," "master," "lord", etc., for such is the meaning of the words nya, nyana, nama, dyara, komo, faro, etc., by which he designates the innumerable "gods" of his pantheon, thus affirming his subjection to this invisible restraint upon him.

It is the magician who creates the nyana of the boli worshiped by the brotherhoods with which we are here concerned. His incantations call up a kind of echo from the invisible; his persistent and peremptory practices produce a sort of personification of his desire in the depths of the universal and diffuse energy, because he "names" the thing he wants. The nyana thus created, which he attracted by "naming" it, is retained by offerings and sacrifices, just as a person is seduced by presents. Finally, he forges a link with the nyana through communion. From that point on creature and creator are [253] so closely bound to each other that neither can refuse anything to the other; they form a single being whose visible aspect is completed by the invisible.

Judging from statements, concepts, and practices, this is the native belief as to the mysterious work of the magician. The latter creates as many nyana as he likes, and he draws at will on the invisible which he fashions and rules.

Boli

794 778 Mankind in general and the native in particular need to give material support to their speculations. The magician and the believer alike need to have at hand the nyana, this essence which is personified by being "named." Appropriate procedures make the nyana come to that altar which at the same time is its symbol and which the Bambara call boli (1).

1. Otherwise known as buri. It should be noted that in ordinary language the

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terms nyana and boli are used interchangeably. This is natural enough since the latter is merely the symbol of the former.

Each nyana has a boli which in form and substance is peculiar to it. Anything may be used to make boli: horn or hair of the hare, hind, or cattle; nails or claws; animal venom or excretions. It is not unusual to find parts of a human body put to use. As the chronicle tells, the war drums of the ton-dyon' were elevated to the rank of boli and were then adorned with the craniums and jaws of human beings sacrificed to them. Often the ball tied to the end of a piece of rope or leather and used to beat the tabala [Tr., big drum] is a human hand which has been severed and wrapped in a leather cover. [727 782]

Certain of the boli, particularly those of the Komo and the Kono, are said to be made of a child's torso; those of the Tyi-wara and Nama are made of wood, and those of the Duga of horn.

All sorts of shapes are employed: men, animals, doll-like figures, balls, small crowns, etc. The principal boli, called boli-de-n-fa, is accompanied by subsidiary ones called boli-de.

The boli is also given sex: one is male, another female; and it is said that there is a kind of mystical copulation [254] from which at the time of initiation are born the spiritual sons of the nyana.

Among boli should be noted those made of forked sticks, such as the n-Golo and the Tyi-wara, both patrons of brotherhoods of young men (1).

771 1. If one makes certain comparisons, the forked stick seems to deserve special attention. Among the Khassonké, for instance, the soli-ma always build their seclusion hut (bire) with a forked post in the center. This post, called biri-makho (master of the hut), is a tree trunk chosen

171 and cut by the *gankurango* (magician-protector of the *soli-ma* among the Khassonké) because it is so placed in the forest that the normal progress of the sun follows the axis formed by the two branches of the fork. There is thus some relation between the sun and the forked tree called *biri-makho*. Perhaps the same relationship accounts for the sleeping position of the boys in the *bire*: they always lie with their heads toward the center post and their bodies forming the spokes of a wheel around it. During the *soli* ceremonies the same Khassonké *soli-ma* use a short wand forked at one end.

The forked stick with mystical significance is also found among the Koniagui.

It is not possible, given the present state of our knowledge, to be specific about the origin or significance of this symbol. For the same reason, we cannot say whether it can be related to the lyre-shaped stones found in the mysterious collection of rocks discovered in Gambia, in which there is thought to be discernible a clearly defined cult of the sun (cf. *Bulletin du Comité d'études historiques et scientifiques de l'A.O.F.*, 1920, No. 1).

791 778 To the European these *boli* are thoroughly repulsive objects. Since magic utilizes everything (2), all kinds of things are used to make them, and during the sacrifices, blood, hair, feathers, viscera, etc., are usually placed on the *boli*. The result is usually a repugnant sight. The native, however, seems to pay no attention to this repulsive aspect which so horrifies

2. And particularly things which are considered repulsive in ordinary life.

794 Europeans. The Black sees only the symbolic altar which he
778 venerates. Besides, in theory at least, the boli does not acquire its prestige in the eyes of the Black from its strange or bizarre nature; the fact that it is consecrated confers upon it its sacred character and its ritual use. That is why, in general (3), the destruction of a boli no more means the destruction of [255] the corresponding cult than destroying a statue of Buddha would mean the annihilation of Buddhism.

The making and consecration of a boli are matters not easily accessible to the profane. Here is what Raffenel's informant, Bouo, told him about a boli belonging to the Massa-si: "The sorcerers first sought a very rare tree. They approached it in a procession, dug a hole at its foot, and after invocations in an unknown tongue gathered parts of its roots with bizarre ceremonies. Using the same invocations and ceremonies, they procured some hairs from the tail of a black horse. So that these ingredients should answer their purpose, they had one of their number take off his trousers and shirt and then pick up the objects (1). The bark and the horsehair were placed in an earthen vessel and remained there for half a day over a hot fire. During this last day the proxy of the magicians prostrated himself, face to the ground, seven times seven times, while reciting prayers in a language which no one could understand.

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3. I say "in general" because there are exceptions. The skull of a chief named Sama, who ruled over a village called Gniningo in the Gangaran area, was the boli of a cult created by that chief. When the skull was destroyed, that put an end to the cult, since it was impossible to replace this unique object.

1. It is common for a sorcerer to remove all his clothing for the performance of his duties.

794 778 "After the creation came the consecration. The Kouroubari and the leaders of the people witnessed it. A white ox, a red ox, and a red rooster were sacrificed for the occasion (2)."

2. Raffenel, *Nouveau voyage au Pays des Nègres* [New Journey to the Country of the Negroes], Vol. 1, p. 237.

246 The *boli* is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put in a sack or other receptacle, and except during ceremonies it is stored with other cult objects in a kind of temple often resembling a miniature native hut and called *nyana*-*bon*', "hut of the *nyana*."

776 Obviously there are differences between the various *nyana*, because peculiar practices call up unlike spirits. In any event, however, the captive spirit is, as it were, a slave of the magician, who treats it as such and even sells it, along with instructions for its use. There are magicians who go from place to place, making and selling *nyana* and other magic weapons, and 443 there are recognized markets where one can always [256] obtain the *boli* of the most popular *nyana*. The markets at Bélédougou, Bendougou, and Follona are especially well known.

Trade in Boli

794 778 438 The chronicle of Ségou tells that Biton, the founder of the empire, acquired his principal idols in the Bendougou region where the popular markets of Moribala, Kourbadougou, and Diali are located.

Itinerant merchants deal in all sorts of cult objects, and there are settled traders who are sometimes very well known, like a certain Minkoli who made *boli* and was so famous that his village is named after him: *Minkoli ka dugu* (village of Minkoli). I have never been able to find out, however, which village in the Bendougou area was the home of the famous Minkoli.

By such means the cult of a given *nyana*, once it has been created, spreads to some extent, depending on the degree

794 to which its creator chooses to reveal the ritual of initiation.

778 The head of a family, just like an isolated individual
438 or the head of a large community, will not fail to acquire, for a monetary consideration, exclusive possession of one of these powerful boli, which becomes his personal protector. Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, had with him the nyana n-Ka; Biton, the founder of the empire of Ségou, possessed several famous nyana: na n-Golo-ko (1), Nye-n-dinge du (2), and ba Kung-o-ba (3). [776] Generally speaking, these private cults cannot spread, but when their possessor becomes a powerful chief, they migrate rapidly. This is what happened to Biton's cults; his followers took up the worship of his idols.

794 When an individual becomes the acknowledged possessor of a nyana the result is an alliance with this nyana, which in the native language is called furu, the same word as that used for the
[833] conjugal union of a man and a woman. Indeed, the installation of a renowned nyana in its master's village gives rise to rejoicing [257] similar to that occasioned by a wedding; hence, the following expressions: a ye boli furu, "he is united with a boli"; a ye boh' furu gosi, "he has effected a union with a boli"; a-ta boli konyo kera, "he has celebrated the wedding of his boli." On the day of such festivals, the master of the nyana (nyana-tigi or boli-tigi, surrounded by his acolytes, offers dlo to his guests who have come to greet him and give him presents. At nightfall, when the uninitiated have withdrawn, the clergy and the adepts in a procession take the boli to the "sacred wood" where the first cult ceremony is held, characterized principally by dancing and singing.

1. Literally, na-n-Goloko, "the mother concerned with birth" or, freely translated, "the goddess who presides at birth."

2. Nye dinge du, "the deep orbit of the eye."

3. Ba-kung-o-ba, "mother of the great bush."

778 435 The cash value of boli varies considerably. At the most it is between 30 and 40 francs, payable in kind or in cowries. The cost is increased, however, by gifts to the seller and his acolytes who come to instruct the new clergy in their functions. As a result, considering the various kinds of refreshments, dogs, goats, and chickens, as well as kola nuts and millet beer (dlo), the price may actually come to 100 francs.

778 794 Since the nyana-tigi (master of the nyana) has full control over his nyana, he may admit anyone he likes to the benefits of his cult. Well-known cults have been much sought after, and as they developed, they became complicated. As the importance of a cult increases, its ceremonies are amplified and augmented in proportion to the number of people taking part in them. Initiation requires a fee, and a clergy becomes necessary. This is the way that these cults, established through participation, have given rise to associations which the Europeans call "secret societies" but which might better be called "brotherhoods," because of the spiritual filiation uniting the affiliates.

Mysteries and Liturgical Equipment

Everything that concerns the brotherhood of the nyana is shrouded in mystery; for various reasons, everything is concealed (do, as the natives put it). It is, indeed, a principle of magic that power exists only insofar as its essence evades the investigation of its adversaries. The uninitiated therefore, must not know the basis of the supernatural power of the nyana, because, if they knew, they would be able to acquire the means of [258] destroying it, resisting it, or at the very least rendering it inefficacious. Anything related to the nyana is bound to it and is, so to speak, an integral part of the nyana by virtue of consecration: the clergy and the liturgical equipment. That is why both are do and why every effort is made to hide them, in their magical aspect, from curiosity of the profane. By extension, however, all members of a brotherhood of any nyana of the boli in Bambara country are identified as do-u, "the hidden people."

794 Some of the clergy use a disguise when officiating in
[292] public; furthermore, the ceremonies are held only at night.

Finally, in the presence of the profane, the initiated
[198] use a special language for everything referring specifically to
the cult. The greatest secret of all is the name of the *nyana*,
[551] because anyone who knows the name has complete power over
the spirit it designates.

794 From the point of view of the disguised clerical body,
this secrecy is virtually impenetrable. A disguised person loses
298 his human personality and is withdrawn from the natural world.
It is an accepted fact that it is dangerous for those not affiliated
to intercept his glance through the tiny openings in the mask;
undoubtedly his person on that occasion is impregnated with a
fluid whose emanations are fatal to those who, not being
affiliated, are unprotected against them.

Some of these disguises include a headdress or mask
and for the body a kind of costume usually made of long strips
of vegetal material; is this, as has been suggested, simply a
means of dominating the herd of adepts and even more the pro-
fane through the terror such regalia inspires when seen at night
by the flickering light of torches and bonfires? It seems more
probable that one must put this matter on the plane of the
supernatural in order to understand it. Dangerous wild animals
[825 are believed to be incarnations of evil and powerful gods, and
776] an attempt is made to present an outward appearance consistent
with the terror merely seeing them inspires, in order thereby
to acquire the supernatural qualities that characterize them (1).

1. There is no doubt that some individuals, under the influence of the role of wild beast that they are portraying, have been led to commit actual murders during ritual observances. I have often heard this asserted in connection with the *dyara* (lion).

794 It should be noted that the costume, gestures, [259]
782 dances, songs, and music of the *dye-n-fa* and their acolytes

794 782 are all designed to attract and capture the god and, for this purpose, to transfer the officiant from our world to the supernatural one. I have never heard anyone claim that the costume and the various actions of the officiant were intended to counterfeit the nyana, nor that the boli in any way represented the native's idea of the god.

The Clergy

793 Even though, in theory, familial nyana are inherited, those worshiped by the brotherhoods are usually bought. The head of the brotherhood is called the nyana-tigi (master of the nyana) (1), whether he has inherited the office, been elected to it, or has imposed himself by virtue of being the most prominent founder of the brotherhood. It is he who keeps the boli, hence his title of boli-tigi, and who knows all the secrets of the cult. His duty is to direct the cult and to administer the brotherhood, and this gives him considerable local prestige.

The initiates of higher rank are called dye-n-fa-u, "masters of the truth." The nyana-tigi chooses his aides from this group, particularly the person who, "seized by the god" 787 791 (wara-mina-den"), becomes the "oracle" (wara-da). The role of medium requires special persons who can go into a trance under the influence of the animating spirit, and the wara-da has the duty of choosing and training the person who will succeed him or replace him, if the need arises (2).

All the initiates are to some extent diviners through practices which are peculiar to them, and the brotherhoods often

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1. Ordinarily the word nyana is replaced by the specific name of the nyana, Komo, Nama, Nya, etc.

2. These dye-n-fa students are called soma-de (elder sons) in the Komo brotherhood.

793 provide instruction in deductive divination, which usually requires two years of study.

This clergy is recruited and formed by co-optation, and it includes, besides the persons already mentioned, the muru-kala-tigi (3) or "sacrificer," who kills the victims, and a dyeli or "herald" of the god.

794 The rank and file of the faithful are called nyana-den u, sons of the nyana (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above]. In order to be accepted as nyana-den', it is necessary [260] to take an oath and to pay an entrance fee. The terms of the oath used in the brotherhoods reveal that, in sum, the nyana-den' promises secrecy, obedience, and solidarity, as we shall show in what follows. Certain aides of the clergy are selected from among the common run of the faithful, for instance, the da-ro-tigi or da-ro-ta-la, who is a kind of beadle.

The Treasury

The performance of liturgical ceremonies is not the only function of the clergy; it also constitutes a kind of council to administer the property of the brotherhood, for the cult is not gratuitous. First, admission to the brotherhood requires the payment of a fee, and the same is true whenever an individual is nominated or promoted to an office. Furthermore, an important contribution, in proportion to the individual's resources, is required for any important ceremony. Finally, fines are imposed on the faithful and even on outsiders as punishment for wrong doings.

794 -681 Fines assume many forms, whether they are to atone for a wrong committed by one of the faithful against the brotherhood or the god, whether an outsider is to be punished similarly for arousing the wrath of the nyana, or for reasons sometimes known only to the clergy who levies them. The nyana-tigi and

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3. Literally, "he who holds the handle of the knife."

794 681 his acolytes are exceedingly zealous in discovering wrongdoings and the guilty parties and in requiring material proof of repentance, which they determine and try to multiply since they appropriate the whole profit, albeit abusively. Theoretically, these fines are not very heavy and are paid in kind (fowl, a goat, a dog, some kola nuts, millet, beer), but, when multiplied, they become a heavy burden for the debtor. He cannot evade this method of extortion, because his persecutors, in league against him, use every means, even criminal, to force him to pay.

794 421 426 Strictly speaking, all the property belongs to the nyana; it is by rights the common property of the nyana-den' and in principle is not to be privately appropriated nor alienated. It is to be used only for the needs of the cult, for assisting needy members, and in exceptional cases for loans to outsiders at exorbitant interest. For that matter, the nyana-den' who gets a loan from the common fund must repay it [261] as soon as his affairs take a turn for the better and, insofar as possible, add a certain amount in order to show his gratitude. It sometimes happens that an outsider is aided out of the common fund; this is a kind of charity which is both a good advertisement and extremely profitable.

794 421 The common property is not to be appropriated by any dignitary or member of the brotherhood for his own benefit. Although there is certainly not a single native who is unaware of this regulation (1), it is all too evident that abuses have led to extraordinary perversions. The clergy regularly appropriates the property of the nyana to its own use, and in order to increase the profit, they do not hesitate to commit actual crimes that enable them to exploit the terror they inspire, which they are careful to nurture and to reinforce.

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1. Raffenel writes (op. cit., p. 239): "The victims' flesh and other objects become the property of the poor."

The Operation of the Brotherhood

794 A brotherhood is a spiritual family whose internal affairs are conducted like those of a community with natural filiation. The nyana-tigi has the role of fa, and the assemblage of dye-n-fa-u, reinforced by the initiated and the leading believers, serve as the community council. Thus, questions confined to the cult and to administrative matters are dealt with by the nyana-tigi acting alone or with his council, just like the fa in the community. Therefore, the description of the latter's duties which has been given above will suffice to explain by analogy the practices in the brotherhoods. There are, however, certain details peculiar to the brotherhoods, and these will be set forth in what follows.

The Cult

794 786 The cult is made public during certain ceremonies, of which the two most important are the one at the time of sowing and the other at the time of harvest. It is accepted as fact in the brotherhoods that at planting time the boli copulate so as to produce issue at the time of harvest, hence the hymn to Nama which says: "boli fyerela ka den' (the boli has flowered to bring forth fruit)." These ceremonies are accompanied by orgies [262] during which the celebrants, both men and women, are said to indulge in sexual licentiousness. It may be concluded from these two series of happenings that the rites seek by appropriate mimicry to encourage the fruitfulness of nature.

794 776 825 There are other indications which show that it is indeed toward nature that the rites are directed. In certain brotherhoods, notably the Kore, the costumed officiants who farm the cartege pretend to be wara-u (wild beasts), suruku-u (hyenas), golo-u (monkeys), and other terrifying inhabitants of the bush (1).

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1. They are all called wara or sogo, terms used for all wild animals. It should be noted that every nyana is called wara (power, lord).

794 It is not rash to suppose that in this case they are symbolizing
776 the role, probably primordial and in any event primary, of
825 the nyana to control the supernatural and particularly malevolent forces of the bush. As a matter of fact, the most popular and important nyana are the protectors of the harvests which represent virtually the only property of the natives. One of the nyana is even especially concerned with agricultural work (2);

[461] 2. In the native vocabulary, "to work" (tya-ke, short for tyi-ya-ke) primarily means "to work in the fields."

this is Tyi-wara (god of agricultural work), ~~who~~ presides over the first clearing of the land at the beginning of the ~~winter~~ season.

In any case, whether the animal is regarded as the visible form of a spirit or, if one prefers, the perceptible manifestation of a supernatural force, the belief is strengthened by the common practice of the interdict (tne) and, still more, by the magical acts required of a hunter.

Another aspect of this belief is seen in the choice of an animal to represent the mount of the nyana dugu-da-siri.

It is for a similar reason that the brotherhoods usually
794 adopt the name of an animal: for the Nama this is usually the
825 hyena (suruku) (3); for the Komo, the hyena (suruku) or the

[552] 3. The hyena is often designated by the words nama-koro (old Nama) or suya-koro (old sorcerer) when the speaker does not want to use the animal's real name (suruku). There is a whole vocabulary for use to "avoid" the names that are dangerous to utter, and the name of the hyena is one of them.

elephant (sama); for the Dyara, the lion; for the Kono, the ostrich (kono-ba), etc. It is said that the cries, the shouts, and

794 the sounds of the [263] trumpets to announce the meetings
825 imitate the cry of the animal (1).

[534] 1. This is true of the Dyara. In the brotherhood of that name, a cry like a roar is drawn from an instrument made as follows: the hollow trunk of a palm tree is covered at one end by a tightly stretched skin; a long thong or rope runs down inside the trunk from the center of the skin; the operator pulls the rope tight, then lets it slip through his hand by jerks, and having achieved a certain facility, he succeeds in producing a noise like a roar.

000 Can it be that the costumes made of bark strips, the strange masks, and the mimicry of the people who wear them are connected with mysteries which are now unknown to us, either because they have been adopted without understanding and thus deformed beyond recognition, or because they are the last vestiges of far older cults, today unfathomable since they no longer exist?

Did Egypt inspire these cults, as some people believe? Or rather was Egypt herself influenced originally by a preexistent Black civilization whose last surviving traces she kept alive by altering them? This is an unlimited field for speculation.

Generally speaking, the cult is in abeyance on Monday
794 and Thursday of each week. The same days are holidays from
805 communal work and are left to the "poor people" for their own profit. There must be some connection between these two facts, and it should further be noted that, as a result, the religious week is reduced to five days. A question naturally arises, therefore, as to whether the week as now observed is truly native. It seems likely that the week is an oriental contribution, more specifically Islamic. It could be a coincidence that Islam organized slavery, and when a seven-day week was adopted, two days were allotted to the gens de poëste, as used to be said in France.

794 in France. The question is too complex, however, to be
treated here.

794 For important ceremonies, the faithful bring the *nyana-tigi*
782 a contribution in proportion to their means; each of them
brings grain, livestock, fowl, cowries, cloth, etc., and no one
is so poor that he cannot furnish one or more jugs of beer (*dlo*).
Everything thus collected is offered to the *nyana* at the general
meeting of the faithful through the intermediary, the *nyana-tigi*.
In accordance with [264] established ritual, the victims are
slaughtered and libations made. Then the *nyana-tigi* gives thanks
to the god and asks him to continue to protect his worshipers.
Finally, all or part of the food is eaten at a joint banquet. This
is a true communion, by means of which the god and his
worshipers on the one hand, and the worshipers among them-
[786] selves on the other, are closely bound together. These banquets,
which often last for several days, degenerate into orgies.

Internal Discipline

794 A result of the cult is that the brotherhood forms an organized
body in which each member is subject to a discipline
that may be summarized under these three terms: secrecy,
obedience, solidarity.

Secrecy is obligatory, especially for anything having to
do with the cult. Divulging the mysteries carries with it a
[688] punishment which, depending on circumstances, may vary from
a simple reprimand to condemnation to death, with fines,
flogging, etc., as intermediate forms. People who are known
to be unable to keep a secret are, on that account, excluded
from the brotherhoods of *nyana*; this excludes women, children,
certain people of caste, etc.

The obedience required of the faithful is shown by the seemingly fantastic rules enforced during the official banquets of certain brotherhoods. Members are fined for very odd infractions: sitting down, getting up, spitting, etc., before being given permission or being asked to do so. This is obviously a means of swelling the common fund, but it is also a means of making the adept realize that he is subservient to the sect.

794 Besides, this submission, if one may call it that, is
merely a corollary of the solidarity existing between nyana-den'.
This solidarity is shown to the profane whenever litigation
arises outside the sphere of the brotherhood; nyana-den' do not
[696] hesitate to bear false witness for the sole purpose of helping a
guilty co-member evade the sanctions of profane jurisdiction.

For failure to fulfill his obligations or for any other wrong considered reprehensible by the brotherhood, the nyana-den' comes under the jurisdiction of this brotherhood.

Fearing the supernatural retribution which his misdeeds
[783] [265] may provoke and seeing portents of it in apparently inexplicable things that cause him pain and surprise, the nyana-den' himself seeks pardon through some kind of expiation, determined by his own intuition alone or by one of the clergy.

On other occasions, the guilty person fails to denounce
himself, not merely by deliberate design but sometimes because
[787] he is not aware of his wrongdoing and its consequences. In that
case it is the wara-da (oracle) who reveals it in a trance.

794 The clergy is led, by means of self-accusation, denun-
695 ciation by witnesses, or accusations based on the most varied
imputations, to learn, to investigate, to adjudicate, and to
punish the acts of the faithful in material as well as spiritual matters. In the process of carrying out its duties in this respect, the clergy uses every imaginable means of obtaining information and of examination, but the proof of guilt that they particularly want is confession.

The various procedures used to persuade the accused to confess his wrongs may be put under three headings: oath, torture, and divination.

When an oath is taken, the boli is provided with an accessory known as the siri-kun' (knot), to which seven straws are attached. The person taking the oath (kali boli la, "to swear on the boli") then pronounces the usual formula: "May the nyana take my heart and my liver if I lie." When two people exchange this oath in order to vouch for their respective statements, they are said to have "tied the boli" (boli syen'), and it is believed that anyone who perjures himself will be put to death

794 695 by the god. It is conceded, however, that a perjurer may redeem himself by gifts and sacrifices whose nature and value are decided by the clergy.

Torture includes the most diverse types of moral and physical constraint thought to be efficacious in getting a confession: usually flogging, imprisonment, starvation, mutilation, and other tortures, often horrible. A method that often succeeds and that is commonly used is to offer up the unknown guilty party to the wrath of the nyana; it is not at all rare for the guilty person to confess at the first signs of discomfort due to auto-suggestion. It is so firmly established that the wrath of the nyana is always implacable and terrible that innocent persons, accused only for the sake of exploiting them, have been known to confess abominable crimes which they [266] never committed, for instance, in cases of accusation of sorcery.

[787] Divination comes to the support of the inquiry, and the deity's revelations are combined with endless spying among the members.

It goes without saying that these various methods of inquiry are not used alone; they are combined so as to provide mutual support.

On the basis of findings made in this way, the clergy passes judgment and has the sentence carried out in a despotic and often mysterious manner (1).

794 696 The penalties are varied and arbitrary; the importance of a misdemeanor is not determined in advance on the basis of specific characteristics. Rather, everything depends on the clergy's interest in the case, and this interest is influenced by the most appalling intrigues. Therefore, even though the accused is guilty of the most terrible crimes, he may escape punishment entirely provided he can satisfy the demands of the

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1. Indeed, most of the brotherhoods owe their terrifying reputations to the fact that sentences resulting in death or disappearance have been carried out by ways and agents who remain mysterious.

794 clergy. On the other hand, an innocent man will be over-
696 whelmed by mental and physical torture if he is unable to give
his executioners what they demand.

681 Corporal punishment includes flogging, chains, starvation, torture, and death by all imaginable methods. Pecuniary punishment includes fines, confiscation, and pillage. The condemned man is also sometimes forced to labor for the clergy or is even enslaved by them.

Social and Political Role of the Brotherhoods

794 By its actions, the brotherhood, an artificial family,
776 tends to take the place of the natural family whose organization
it has borrowed and whose cult it has banished. It is easy to ac-
769 count for this.

The cult of the manes is the framework of the family and of the communities derived from it. The brotherhood has cleverly managed to set up such a cult by specially honoring the manes of its high priests, its famous members, and its eminent worshipers. [267]

Gradually, the *nyana dugu-da-siri*, protector of the territorial community, has given way to the *nyana* of the *boli*, a more powerful god since his territory is unlimited.

It is true that in spite of everything the tradition remains,
and even though they are largely over-shadowed by the *nyana* of
the *boli*, the manes of the ancestors and the *nyana dugu-da-siri* are
still venerated. Though sowing and harvesting are celebrated
731 with great pomp by the brotherhoods, still, when a disaster,
epidemic, or terrible drought occurs, sacrifices are promptly of-
782 fered to the manes and the gods of the place. People may fear
their anger, but they also have confidence in their good will,
and it is felt that their severity can always be tempered. On the
other hand, the *nyana* of the *boli* are supposed to be basically
evil, and their worship seems intended to ward off their malignity
rather than to obtain their favor.

794 This duality in religion brings about extremely compli-
621 cated interrelationships which bind the communities and

794 621 brotherhoods together, although the latter seem to dominate the former. These brotherhoods hem in the communities they dominate by abusively extending their jurisdiction far beyond its proper limits. Indeed, the faithful are not the only ones who are subject to the judgments handed down by the brotherhoods, whose clergy make decisions affecting not only members involved but often also third parties in the neighborhood or even people from neighboring or distant regions. The brotherhoods are tyrannical toward their own members and no less so to strangers, who often see no way of escaping persecution short of asking to be received into the ranks.

794 661 182 Thus, it is apparent how a brotherhood increases in size and in power as time passes. Each year it takes in the young people at the end of the *soli*, and as a result all the communities are at length absorbed by it live in it and for it (1). It

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1. The following is a typical example.

[778] In the village of Marenna (Fouladougou Arbala), the natives belong to the cult of Ba-ku. This *boli* consists of a small sheaf of roots of the indigo tree. For every newborn child the *nyana-tigi* makes and consecrates a small Ba-ku, which he places in a gourd and puts in the temple of this *nyana*. At the time of the *soli*, the child becomes affiliated with the cult, takes the *boli* placed in the gourd for him at birth and henceforth wears it on his person. All the families in Marenna are thus closely involved in the cult of Ba-ku, being, as it were, engendered by this god to whom each person owes both physical and spiritual birth. Ba-ku comes from Sangaran, and his high priest is a Dyara; that is why he is invoked and called by the expression *Ba-ku Dyara Sangaran-ka*. The word *ba-ku* literally means "tail of a

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goat," and, indeed, that describes the appearance of the little bunch of roots. It is possible that the word Ba-ku is merely the profane name and that the real name of the nyana is kept secret.

claims eminent rights over every person or thing it touches, as a consequence of the supernatural power of the nyana protecting them. [268]

So it is that the brotherhood, by what might be called divine right, comes to play a political role which is inconsistent only because it was not designed to play such a role. Let an ambitious man come forth, one who knows how to make use of the organization and its redoubtable power for his own ends, and the brotherhood then becomes the cradle of a veritable political state.

So it is that when the regular authority cannot firmly resist its encroachments, the brotherhood becomes a kind of high judge and uses that high office to establish a reign of terror which exploits the defections due to hatreds its own machinations have aroused and encouraged. This wretched [578] game naturally brings repercussions within the brotherhood itself: the nyana-den' are at each other's throats, and the grimmest dramas accompany the indulgence of the lowest instincts. The chronicle of Ségou bears witness to these facts.

It is, unfortunately, by no means unusual for the established authority to condone these crimes through weakness, interest, or membership in the brotherhood. As a result, innumerable regions have fallen into anarchy.

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That is why and how the brotherhoods have been the cause of a great deal of unrest in the native milieu. As a refuge for escaped slaves, malcontents, vagabonds, intriguers, in a word, for all enemies of public order, the brotherhoods everywhere set themselves up in opposition to regularly constituted authority, and when they are unable to take it over, seek to thwart it by taking the head into partnership.

The dynastic convulsions of most of the Sudanese empires, especially that of Ségou, are in large part explained by the usurpations of these great brotherhoods of nyana.

794 The family, too, has been assailed, perverted, [269]
182 and disorganized, because dissident elements found support in
578 the brotherhoods that made it possible for them to combat their
"own people" in the communities and sometimes even to bring
about their downfall.

Moreover, within the community, they set up the cult of *nyana* of the *boli* in opposition to the cult of the manes. In associations of communities, the *nyana dugu-da-siri* has been gradually abandoned in favor of these imperious and jealous *nyana* of the *boli*. Although the latter could not entirely eliminate the former because of their failure to appropriate the rights over the land, they have nevertheless eclipsed it by their all-encompassing authority. So it has come about that *nyana* of the *boli* have been created who are honored as protectors of the citizens, although they do not own the soil.

It is remarkable that these destroyers of the natural family always seek to organize themselves as artificial families by taking on certain characteristics of the family: communities of inalienable spiritual and temporal property; communities of the dead and the living; the cult of the manes of the high priests, etc.

It is the secular action of these laboratories of magic that has most strongly shaken the foundations of native society. Only a strong power could contend with them effectively, and such a power has seldom presented itself. Islam has often been their implacable enemy and yet has actually strengthened them by introducing a knowledge of oriental occultism.

3. Some Important Brotherhoods

794 The cult is the essential framework of all the brotherhoods. One must know its principal characteristics in order to understand the organization and operation of any brotherhood. Each *nyana* has its special cult, characterized by particular traits, of course, but these differences do not change the basic elements in which all cults of *nyana* resemble each other.

Therefore, although descriptions of all the different cults would no doubt bring out an interesting variety of details,

794 still -- aside from the fact that this would not appreciably alter the broad lines already indicated -- the present state of our knowledge makes it possible to describe in detail only a few great brotherhoods which are widespread among [270] the Bambara with whom we are here concerned; these are based on cults of Komo, Nama, Kore, and Nya.

The Komo

794 173 The Komo is held in particularly high esteem in the Ségou area. According to the accepted legend, the Komo was brought from Mandé country, where it is supposed to have been introduced by El Hadj Moussa. El Hadj Moussa, having failed to obtain pardon for his sins during a visit to Mecca, turned to the study of magic. He obtained the Komo in exchange for a miraculous shirt (dloki) which some sorcerers had woven for him and which had the faculty of growing longer or shorter at the pleasure of its owner (1).

> 1. Another example of miraculous cloth, in that case a gift of the marabouts of Djenné, is referred to in the chronicle of Ségou in connection with the installation of Bakari, son of Biton (p.).

El Hadj Moussa is also supposed to have brought a no less miraculous canoe from Mecca, which is still preserved in the greatest secrecy in a swamp in the vicinity of Kouri, near Naréna, in Mandé country.

Finally, he brought back many boli. As he was coming up the Niger, some of them fell into the river and were transformed; the n-tigi (silurids or torpedo fish) is thought to be the result of such a transformation. [825]

According to another legend, the Komo was brought from the Orient, not by El Hadj Moussa but by Fa Koli Sissokho, a follower of El Hadj Moussa.

Whatever may be the truth of the matter, the Bambara are convinced that the Komo was brought to Ségou from Mandé

794 173 country and that the Bambara Massa-si, who had fled to Gadiaga, received it, in turn, from one Namori or Nyamori, a former slave who had been initiated into the mysteries of the Koré and who, for that reason, was named Kor-dyuga.

794 778 Over and above the general characteristics already noted, the Komo has the following peculiarities.

It is said that to make it perfect the boli of the Komo requires the body of a degeni, that is, of a very young boy. Thus, the body of the Komo of Tiguini (20 to 40 kilometers from Ségou) is said to be none other than the body of the grandson [271] of its founder. The same thing is said of the boli of the Komo at Kégué in Bani territory.

This boli-den'-fa is equipped with three iron tubes, and the whole thing is called tama gengen-ba (1). There is a horn at the end of one of these tubes, with an opening serving as a mouthpiece. The sound drawn from this trumpet of sorts by the wara-da announces a meeting of the Komo.

The usual accessories accompany the boli-den'-fa: korti, kana, and siri-kun', which we have already mentioned.

When not in use for ceremonies, all this equipment is [281] put into baskets similar to those used to transport cotton. The tama-gengen-ba are wrapped in a tiger skin. A hut with a conical roof, similar to the native huts, serves as a temple and holds all the regalia. It is called the Komo-bon' (hut of the Komo).

When he is on duty, the wara-da, "oracle" of the Komo, 793 794 778 is dressed in a special costume consisting of a mask and a cloak. The mask is surmounted by horns and does not cover the face, but rather is affixed to a stick hidden in the folds of the cloak; it goes up and down at the pleasure of the wara-da, who is completely

1. The term Komo dyoloro, meaning "chain of the Komo," is used in front of the uninitiated. The wara-da, oracle of the Komo, is called dyoloro samana, "he who drags the chain" of the Komo. In the special language of the cult, "sacrificing to the Komo" ~~is expressed~~ by an bi nege son' (we pay homage to the iron).

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794 covered by the cloak made of feathers from guinea fowl and
778 chickens. Beneath this garb, the wara-da performs all sorts of
acrobatics. Skillfully manipulating the mask and the cloak during ritual dances, he gives the illusion, in the light of the fires, of a fantastic creature whose cries, transmitted through the horn, terrify even the initiated.

793 In addition to the wara-da, the clergy includes: a
794 Komo-tigi, high priest; some muru-kala-tigi, sacrificers;
a da-ro-tigi, porter, who announces and prepares for the meetings; and a Komo-dyeli, herald. There are also student wara-da, called soma-den' (literally, "elder sons" in the special language), who act as assistants, and finally, there are many other auxiliaries who form a cortege with the wara-da when he carries the boli in nocturnal processions. These people are grouped together under the term tie-den' or tigi-den' ("sons of the master" in the special language). Conspicuous among them are the ta-tugu who [272] carry the flaming torches which are so characteristic of the nocturnal processions.

When the wara-da makes known the revelations of the god, he speaks through the tube with the horn. Since he uses the special language and since the tube distorts the sounds, the Komo-tigi must interpret for him. It is the Komo-dyeli who shouts the revelation which echoes through the night.

794 At the time of the two great annual ceremonies, the
wara-da takes the boli and the other liturgical equipment to the
796 sacred grove. The Komo-tigi directs the ceremonies. The
sacrifices are entrusted to the muru-kala-tigi among whom are to be noted: the one who brings the victim and who, when the ceremony takes place in the temple, leads it across the threshold (1); and the one who removes the victim and carries its body

1. This door is then called nyena-ma don'-da, "entry of the living," in the special language, and the muru-kala-tigi who brings the victim in is called da-kuna-sigi or "master of the fatal (literally 'bitter') door."

794 over the threshold (2). The ceremonies are announced and
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2. Then the door is called su-bo-da, "exit of the corpse," and the sacrificer is called moso-bolo (literally, "woman's hand").

[534] accompanied by a strident, wild orchestra made up [illegible] drums (denu-ba) which are accompanied by iron instruments, called kinge, consisting of pieces of metal that are struck against each other or shaken to obtain sound from the rings attached to them. The "cry" of the Komo, which the wara-da shouts through his horn, is accompanied by a kind of reed pipe played by his companions.

[782] There is nothing unusual about the offerings, sacrifices, or communion. The blood of the victim is used to wash the boli and the priests, as will be described for the Nama.

Processions held at night are always very effective, and they strike terror into the hearts of not only the uninitiated but also the initiated themselves. This long cortege, lighted by the torchbearers who shout and dash about like madmen while the wara-da gives the "cry" of the Komo, makes a very strong impression on everyone who sees or hears it (3). [273]

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3. Elsewhere, the Komo meets in the daytime, and in the old days, notably in Bobo country, it was very popular (cf. Binger, Du Niger au golfe de Guinée [From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea], Vol. 1, p. 379, and Monteil, De Saint-Louis à Tripoli par le Tchad [From Saint-Louis to Tripoli via Chad], p. 88). We have already seen that all the officiants in the brotherhood are called dou, "the hidden people," because of the disguises they affect. "The dou are persons ludicrously disguised, wearing clothing on which are sewed bits of da-fou (native

794 796 292 hemp), palm fibers, and leaves.
On their heads they wear a cap or
calotte, also made of hemp and
surmounted by a yellowish-red wooden
crest or a bird's beak, also of wood.
There are two holes in the calotte for
the eyes. These dou are given free
dlo by the populace which makes up
their cortege. They wander about the
village and fields day and night..."
(Binger).

794 [796] There is never any cult service or ceremony on Monday or Thursday.

The clergy serves as an administrative council for the property of the Komo-ya (brotherhood of the Komo) in accordance with the general principles already noted. The Komo-tigi of Tiguini, we have been told, is especially famous for respecting the principles which give the treasury of the brotherhood an exclusively fraternal character.

The Komo-ya are mutually independent, and all have experienced the kind of deviations which give rise to political action. The Komo has played a preponderant role in the affairs of the clan of Ségou, as is evident from the chronicle.

794 796 539 Young men are taken into the brotherhood during the harvest festivals. They appear before the circle of initiates, while those present sing:

Da woro-na nana,
Bolo-ko den da woro-na,
Toto man na ko la-nyini.
Sira bo nin' ye, ko dugu le den',
Sira bo nin' ye ko dugu le sira.

Translation: "The sixth day has come, the sixth day of the newborn (1), and there has been no accident. Let us show the

1. That is, those who have just been born to a new status through the soli or bolo-ko.

794 way to this child, the way which the village follows."

796 One by one they pass before the wara-da who, dressed 539 in full regalia, is supposed to receive their oath. The oracle places the tube with the horn on each boy's head in turn, and the following dialogue takes place:

--Mun' b'i kun' (What is it you have on your head?), asks the oracle.

A kala be n kun' (I have his symbol (2) on my head). [274]

> 2. Kala, literally, is the cylindrical part of a thing; here, in the special language, it is a way of alluding to the tube with its horn and thus is a kind of symbol of the Komo.

I y'a ye wa (Have you seen it [the Komo])?

Ne m'a ye (No, I have not seen it).

I y'a fo ma min'ye, k'i kun' ti ki' son' n'i bien' ta a k'ifa (If you speak of it to anyone, may it [the Komo] smash your head and may it [the Komo] take your heart and your liver and kill you).

A ka ne fa (May it kill me).

I sirila nyama-n-fu dyala la (You are bound by the bark thong of the nyama) (1).

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> 1. An allusion to the strips of bark from the nyama tree (Bauhinia reticulata), which make up the common costume for concealing the officiants during the ceremonies. It is simply a way of saying: "Do you agree to join?" And the reply is equivalent to: "Yes, for as long as I shall live."

Ne si sirila a la (My life is bound by this thong).

Ni si m'a fo ma si ye, Komo k'i kisi (If you speak to no one about all this, may the Komo protect you [literally, "save you"]).

A ka ne kisi (May he protect me).

794 796 For a certain length of time, the new members are kept in seclusion while being instructed by initiates, especially the older ones, who see to it that they learn the songs and dances and become familiar with the special language. It is in the course of this instruction that they are given certain formulas to use for recognition among the *komo-den'* (sons of the Komo). The following are two examples and by no means the only ones; each *Komo-ya* has its own formulas, and in addition the adepts of the various *Komo-ya* are readily inclined to fraternize, especially when they are alone, far from their respective groups. In such cases, the identical principles of their cults bring them together, and they question each other at once:

[539] --*E b' a la wa* (Are you a member)?

--*M ba' la* (I am).

--*N'i b'a la, tyoko dyira r na* (If you are, show me the secret sign).

[201] This sign varies and is completely arbitrary. Sometimes it involves raising the hand with the fingers spread apart in a certain way; at other times, twigs are placed in a special pattern, and so on. [275]

The Nama

794 This cult arose at an unknown date at Missango (Bélédougou). The head of the Nama at Missango is addressed respectfully as *Fura-tigi-ba*, meaning literally, "grand master of the *fura* (*fura* specifically means "leaf" of a tree and, by extension, "remedy"). This is one of the expressions with double meanings which are so common in the brotherhoods: *Fura-tigi-ba*, the great physician, great savant, grand master.

The Nama is also called Nama-koro and Suya-koro, and a certain Nama is called Siriman 'fin'.

[778] Objects used in worship include; the *Nama-kon-golo-u* (craniums of the Nama), which are a kind of headdress, usually made of *linge* wood and shaped like fantastic birds; the *wara-se* (literally, "foot of the *wara*"), a small wooden board about a meter high with three horns affixed to it; and a similar board with two horns, called *nye-bla*.

794 [778] There are, of course, the usual accessories: kana, korti, siri-kun', pottery, bells, horns, and so forth.

Most of these objects are stored in a small hut called Nama-bon', similar to the native huts.

794 778 The ceremonies take place in a grove which is reserved for the purpose. If there appears to be not enough privacy in spite of the dense foliage, or for some other reason, a palisade (dyase) or a few straw mats are put up to form an enclosure. In the special language of this brotherhood, the term for offering a sacrifice to the Nama is dyase son' (literally, "to honor the palisade").

794 The assemblage of the adepts of the same Nama constitute a Nama-ya, Nama brotherhood. Persons who wish to form a Nama-ya appeal to an existing Nama-ya to obtain the secrets or, more accurately, the rules governing the brotherhood: the mysterious words and acts by which the god (wara) is summoned and made amenable to his worshipers; cult objects; organization and role of the clergy and of the common worshipers; the liturgy, etc.

The fundamental ceremony by means of which the priest and his god are united is called furu, "union, marriage," in the special language of the brotherhoods. [276] Once a year, through the furu of the Nama, males and females, the Nama-de-u (spiritual sons of the Nama) are born. Behind this realism, required for the ordinary adept, is there not hidden a profound meaning for the initiate; is not close union with the diety a "spiritual marriage" in all the great religions? Possibly the special language is not intended merely to hide secrets from the prying curiosity of the profane, but is also intended to hide a profound meaning, today unknown to almost all the initiates, but felt and perhaps even known, at least vaguely, by some of them!

793 794 In every Nama-ya there are various functions and ranks, corresponding to different grades of initiation. The grand master, Nama-tigi, is often the person who contributed the most for the expenses of founding the Nama-ya; he directs and watches over the cult and is therefore a feared and formidable personage.

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794 He is assisted by the *dye-n-fa-u* (masters of truth), among whom those who wear the headdress called *Nama-kongolo* are the oracles (*wara-da*) of the Nama. Other assistants have the duty of holding the horned boards (*wara-se* and *nye-bla*) during the ceremonies.

One adept serves as factotum under the title *da-ro-tigi* (master of the entrance) (1).

This clergy is recruited by co-optation, and anyone named to it or promoted in it must pay for the privilage. The cleric is even more bound to secrecy than the common worshiper, since any indiscretion on his part would reveal the secrets of the cult.

794 The common adherents or the faithful are called *Nama-de-u* (children of the Nama), that is, spiritual sons of the Nama, but we shall see that when allusions are made during the ceremonies to a kind of material birth, this is plebeian mythology.

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1. During the night when the Nama goes about the village to drive out sorcerers, the *da-ro-tigi* runs ahead of the *dye-n-fa* who wear the *Nama-kongolo*. Shaking his bell, he warns people off the road followed by the *dye-n-fa*, and he carries a torch to reveal the inquisitive. If he finds any such person, he warns the *dye-n-fa* in the special language to halt or to change their course. Then he questions the intruder, chases him off with blows, curses him, or, on the contrary, takes him into the group. He is thus truly "the one who guards the entrance," but he is like a concierge rather than a master who agrees or refuses to receive the visitor whom the concierge has admitted. We have pointed out an analogous emphasis in the title of *ton'-masa*, given to the head of the servants of the *ton'* even though the term literally means "head of the *ton'*."

794 In order to be Nama-de, the individual must be approved [277] by the clergy, pay a fee, and promise not to betray in any way the secrets of the brotherhood, never to injure a fellow-member and especially never to testify against him, to contribute to the expenses of the cult by making annual offerings in proportion to his means.

The adepts are legally responsible to the Nama-ya for all their acts. This spiritual family is infinitely more tyrannical than the temporal family since, in order to consolidate its authority, the clergy does not hesitate to use any means even criminal; fines are the most profitable for pecuniary returns. The totality of entrance fees, gifts, offerings, and fines constitutes the treasury of the Nama and hence of the Nama-ya. The Nama-tigi administers it with the help of the council of the dye-n-fa. It is current practice for this clergy to appropriate all the property for its own use. This does not, however, nullify the principle that any unfortunate adept, whatever the reason for his situation, has a right to ask for aid from the common fund on condition that he repay the loan with interest when his situation improves.

This material exploitation of the cult of the Nama can be seen in another form: although not an adept of the Nama, one can obtain its good offices for a price fixed by the clergy. The other means of exploitation, extortion and political deviation, discussed above, are likewise practiced by the Nama-ya.

It is the material role of the Nama-ya which really interests the majority of the natives. It is the showy exhibitions, accompanied by prolonged orgies that are mischievous, which have given the Nama, as well as the Komo, a bad reputation, albeit well deserved.

There is no real hierarchy among the Nama-ya. The Nama-tigi of Missango is held in particular esteem, and, in general, any Nama-ya keeps on good terms with the group that initiated it, but there is nothing like what might be called an archbrotherhood. On the contrary, any Nama-den' certainly has access to any Nama-ya, and this fact makes it likely that, under given circumstances, there may be very widespread solidarity. In the old days it was very useful to be a member of a Nama-ya

794 if one had to travel, since the Dyuola [Diula] and other travelers were at the mercy of the whims and banditry of the [278] Nama-den' (1) and only avoided them to a certain extent by claiming to be of the Nama-den'. Even Moslems often became adherents of the Nama; all that was required of them was absolute secrecy and a few gifts in exchange for the secret passwords.

794 796 782 There are two great annual ceremonies: one at planting and the other at harvest, the dates for both decided by the Nama-tigi and his council. Each of them involves offerings, sacrifice, communion, and a nocturnal procession. Young members are usually admitted at the harvest ceremony.

The initiates gather for the sacrifice before the temple (Nama-bon'). Only the Nama-tigi and his clergy may enter the sacred place; the common worshipers remain outside. The sacrificial animals are brought up. Two sacrificers (muru-kala-tigi), naked to the waist, stretch their arms toward the four cardinal points and spit three times in each direction. Two dye-n-fa, also naked to the waist, hold the pieces of wood bearing horns and face the faithful. Three times the sacrificers utter the cry, "ture-dyo," twice alternating this cry with another, "dyo-Nama." They invoke the god two times, and then they slaughter the victims, sometimes inside the temple and sometimes outside.

The blood is carefully collected in receptacles, and the ashes of straw are added to it. All the cult objects, especially the boli itself, are smeared with the mixture. The Nama-tigi and the other principal initiates remove their clothing to anoint themselves with the same mixture and do not put on their garments again until the blood has dried on their bodies.

[796 437] 1. Cf. Monteil, Binger, op. cit.; at the time of the great annual festivals of the Komo, all trading was halted for several days. Strangers could be sure of being respected only by claiming membership in the brotherhood. The same was true of the Nama.

794 The food is eaten by those attending the ceremony;
796 the millet mush which constitutes the meal is supposed to have been prepared by the wives of the dignitaries. This communion is the most important act of the ceremony.

When night comes, the procession of the Nama takes place. Its aim is to rid the village and its environs of sorcerers, the eaters of souls known as [279] suba (1), and to discover and destroy the objects called siri which bear witness to the measures taken by the sorcerers to harm the natives.

The ritual cries of ture-dyo and dyo-Nama break into the racket of trumpets and drums while the Nama wanders about. The dye-n-fa, wearing the symbolic headdress (Nama-kongolo) and preceded by the da-ro-tigi tinkling his bell to warn people to clear the way, is followed or surrounded by torchbearers (called ta-tugula-n-tigi) who shout a hymn in praise of the god.

[539] A dyigima so Nama fambali: He is our host, mighty Nama.
A fyerela ka den': He blossoms in order to bear fruit.
Suba yo, nin kera malo-ko ye: Oh! Suba (2), shame on you!"

One of the persons in his entourage shouts defiance and curses in all directions, aimed at the suba, the eaters of souls.

It is during this procession that the dye-n-fa, at the instigation of the bearer of the symbol, discover the siri-fen' (2) [Ed., see footnote 2 above]; these are the objects used by the eaters of souls to accomplish their sinister designs or are the remains of their macabre repasts. Here it is a knife, there a pot, elsewhere a bit of human flesh (or so it is claimed)! All these things are dug up amidst cries, exclamations, and imprecations by the whole company.

A suba discovered in the course of these proceedings is hotly pursued, and it is said that, exhausted by the chase and

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1 See Chapter 7 below. [Not translated.]

2. Literally, the "bonds" (see Chapter 7 below). [Not translated]

794 overpowered by the god, he always comes to die near the temple.
796 When this happens, the wretch's corpse is left there, naked; his
clothing is thrown to the roof of the temple where it remains for
a long time as an example. The siri-fen' are also displayed near
the temple, within sight of the women, who are allowed to come
and look at them.

It is just prior to these solemn sorties of the Nama that the clergy begins the proceedings to admit the youths who have just completed the soli. In the center of a circle of the faithful in front of the temple, they take their oath of secrecy:

794 --I y'a fo ma min' ye, boli k'i son' ta, k'i been'ta, ka
796 [280] dun' i dyu fe'ka bo i da fe: if you speak to anyone, may
539 the boli take your heart and your liver, may he go in through your
anus and go out through your mouth.

--O ka ke: Let it be so.

-- Ni e ma fo ma ye, k'i kisi suba-u ma k'i son' si la, k'i son' keneya la: If you tell no one, may he protect you from the suba, grant you descendants, and give you good health.

-- O ka ke: Let it be so.

The new members must pay an entrance fee of a franc
and ten kola nuts and must go through a kind of initiation. For
a fortnight they live apart under supervision and are required to
learn the songs and dances under the tutelage of the clergy and
[198] old men. They are told the significance of the words with
double meanings, which constitute the language peculiar to the
brotherhood, and are also given the formula of recognition, of
which the following are some examples:

-- E b'a la wa? (Are you one of us?)

-- Ne b'a la (I am).

-- Fere tyon' kan' (Show the sign).

He shows it and explains it. The questioner then concludes:

--Dya! e b'a la, ko! (You are indeed one of us)!

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The Kore (1)

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The Kore is particularly popular in the Bani region, that is to say, the riverine area of this tributary of the Niger, in the part that is on a line with Ségou.

This brotherhood has the peculiarity of having a cult which honors the three divinities always worshiped by the Bambara: the manes, the god of the soil, and the nyana of the boli. [778] Therefore the site of the brotherhood is the chosen site of the god of the soil, usually a tree within a grove (Kore-tu, "grove of the Kore") near the village. A kara, that is, the little board symbolic of the dead, and a surku-kongolo (skull of a hyena), the boli of the Kore and for that reason called the Kore-kongolo (skull of the Kore), are kept here.

The clergy and its assistants form a large body of personnel that includes all of the faithful. [281]

In addition to the high priest, Kore-tigi, there are the "people of the kara" (kara-ma-u) and the persons who wear masks, called wara-u (1) (wild beasts) or sogo-u (savage animals), among whom are hyenas (suruku), lions (dyara), and monkeys (suba). The persons in costume, called Kor'dyuga (2), are for the

1. One also hears "Kote" and, in the Bani region, "Kwere." It should be noted that these three words, Kore, Kote, and Kwere, all have an ending which is frequently found in Soninké but not in Bambara.

1. The terms wara or sogo are usually applied to all those who have some function, from the suruku to the ngoni-sama.

2. The term seems to come from the Soninké language: Kore yugo or Kor'-dyuga, "man of the Kore." The expression Koré-duga-tigi is a corruption

794 of Kore-dyuga-tigi and has the same meaning.

most part strangely accoutered dancers, each of whom dresses
301 as his fancy dictates. As ornaments, the Kor'dyugs wear strings of beautiful red beans, which are inedible, called n-go ble. These beans are about the size of a large dragée and throughout the western Sudan are used as protection against evil spirits.
292 These dancers have a leader, the Koro-duga-tigi or Kor'dyuga-tigi, who is further distinguished by a kind of cloak made entirely of bits of reed stalks. On his head he wears a conical hat made of the same reeds, and in his hand he carries a long wand from which hang birds' skulls, packets of sorghum straw, gourd stems, etc. In addition to the dancers, the clergy is accompanied by
785 flagellants (bisa-tyi-la), torchbearers (ta-tugu-la-n-tigi), and people who lash themselves with bundles of thorns (the ngoni-sa-ma-u).

534 Of course, the Kore has its orchestra, which includes drums (denu-ba), a kind of castanet (kinge), and gourds filled with seeds or pebbles (nkude) and pierced with holes.

794 796 The cult has the usual ceremonies, with the two great festivals at the times of planting and harvesting. On these occasions the Kore-tigi officiates, as the nyana-n-son-na-ba does with respect to nyana dugu-da-siri. He makes the offerings, performs the sacrifices, and sets forth the requests at the foot of the sacred tree, after having thanked the god-protector. The kara and the Kore-kongolo are sprinkled with the blood of the victims; thus, the manes and the nyana of the boli are honored simultaneously.

764 There is always a meeting of the brotherhood when a Kore-de dies. There are offerings, sacrifices, and communion with all the offerings, which require one or more days of orgies to be consumed, depending on the importance of the deceased, because elders in [282] important posts like that of nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc., are particularly honored at their death.

Young men are admitted only once every seven years, and it is at this time that the ceremonies are most elaborate.

794 796 At dusk on the day selected, the clergy proceeds with the greatest pomp to the Kore-tu (grove of the Kore). The orchestra, composed of drums (denu-ba), bells (kinge), and gourds (nkude), leads the procession. Then come the high priest (Kore-tigi) and the kara-ma, "people of the plank of the dead" (kara), which one of them carries. Finally comes the dense crowd, motley and noisy, of wara-u, Kor-dyuga, bisa-tyi-la, ta-tugu-la-n-tigi, and ngoni-sa-ma.

Everyone is performing his role. The masked men imitate the beasts they represent; the costumed Kor'dyuga act like clowns; the flagellants make their switches hiss. Thus the crowd approaches the Kore-tu amidst a great din, but only the clergy may enter it. The bearer of the kara takes his place under the sacred tree. On orders from the Kore-tigi, silence falls for the reception of the Kore-de postulants.

The latter form a line facing the tree and the kara. They [516] prostrate themselves in the dust for the duration of the sacred hymn of the Kore, which begins with the words, "Dyante Kore de-u." When they rise, they are dyante-ma-u, "affiliates."

The members thus admitted remain in the sacred grove for 15 days and are not allowed to return to the village. There they are instructed by the "elders." Then they are assigned to the different groups of wara; theoretically, an eldest son enters the group to which his father belongs, while the rest of the sons may choose whichever group they prefer. In addition to his duties during ceremonies, each wara has a certain job: the hyenas (suruku) guard and patrol the sacred grove and question the inquisitive to learn whether they are members (dyante ma); the Kore-duga see to the maintenance of the grove, clearing its environs in order to guard against the grove's being damaged by brush fires.

794 796 786 The offerings and the sacrifices, and then the communion repast, follow the ceremony of admission and are accompanied and followed by dancing and singing. The orgy then goes on for several days, as long as food remains. The various groups assemble for their dances, and the ta-tugu-la-n-tigi start the proceedings. With a flaming torch [283] in each hand, they chase each other, singe each other's backs and chests, and in the

794 process, let loose a rain of sparks which the Kore-duga zealously
776 put out with leafy branches. Then each dancer, carrying what
786 is left of his torch, kneels before the drums, making an obscene
gesture which arouses the laughter of the onlookers and giving
the cries, roars, or laugh of the "wild beasts." Elsewhere, the
nyoni-sa-ma are roaming among the drinkers, tearing at them-selves with thorns. Flagellants lash themselves with switches
[785] that leave cuts from which the blood flows. They stiffen themselves against the pain and keep up this cruel sport, which once
again the Kore-duga mitigate by binding up the wounds.

There appears to be no doubt that during these orgies the most shameful excesses are committed without the slightest restraint.

The Nya

794 This brotherhood is highly esteemed in all the Bambara villages in the cantons of Say and Karadougou. It is less common in the canton of Séladougou; in the canton of Saro, five-sixths of the villages are loyal to it. It is rarely found in Nyansannari, and outside these areas in the circle of Djenné, there are only a few scattered Nya brotherhoods in the Bendougou and Ségou areas.

The cult arose in the Bendougou region. As has been
[443] noted above, the villages of Moribala, Kourbadougou, Diali, etc., are market villages where all the boli are found, together with directions for using them.

778 The boli of the Nya consists of a piece of wood from 25
to 30 centimeters in length and from 10 to 15 centimeters in
794 height and width. It is wrapped in an absorbent material, usually cotton. The blood of the victims and the liquid of the libations are poured on this boli, and then hairs or feathers and bits of entrails, eggs, and kola nuts are stuck to it, giving it a
repulsive appearance. It is true that the boli is often concealed
[281] from inquisitive eyes by putting it in a container made of an old
piece of the hide of a she-goat. However, since the container is given the same treatment as the boli it contains, it is just as disgusting.

794 This boli-den'-fa is provided with the usual boli-de:
[778] kana, korti, siri-kun', etc. [284]

[346] A hut with a conical roof serves as temple (Nya-bon').

An orchestra accompanies the ceremonies; it includes
[534] a kind of harp, made by the natives and peculiar to the Nya,
plus large numbers of the usual drums, bells, and trumpets.

Since the Nya is acquired by purchase, the high priest (Nya-tigi) is theoretically the person who contributed most generously to this purchase. The office may also be attained by inheritance or by election. The truly religious role, however, is that of the wara-mina-den', the medium through which the god reveals his will or his desires and who is, therefore, the oracle (wara-da) of the Nya. A certain amount of training by appropriate methods is necessary to acquire the degree of extra-lucidity claimed by the wara-mina-den', and that is why they are recruited by co-optation.

794 Under the influence of the Nya, the wara-mina-den' falls
into a trance. His speech, hesitant and strange, is incomprehen-
787 sible to the common people. The Nya-tigi then approaches to receive and to interpret the oracle. The inspiration of the wara-mina-den' may be spontaneous or it may be provoked and deliberately sought by him. For example, when a person dies, the wara-mina-den' questions the Nya, either at the request of the interested parties or of his own volition. For this purpose, he retires to the temple (Nya-bon'), concentrates on the point to be clarified, and after meditating, withdraws (1). He then sometimes falls asleep, and while he sleeps, the Nya reveals the truth to him in a dream. On other occasions the wara-mina-den' falls into a trance, and the spirit speaks through his mouth. One way or another, it is learned whether the death is to be attributed to the Nya and, if so, why. Or it is made plain that it is the work of the suba and under what form, human or otherwise, they are hiding. Or, finally, it is learned whether some other nyana struck down the deceased.

1. These details were given to me by a wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara.

794 [787] Furthermore, every wara-mina-den' is able to read the will of the Nya and, more generally, to reveal the acts of the invisible by means of the divination practices which we have already mentioned.

[782] The sacrifices are performed by the muru-kala-tigi, and a dyeli (herald) serves as factotum, just as in the other brotherhoods. [285]

794 796 The faithful are initiated and called to participate in the cult to an extent determined by the clergy; they are called Nya-ko-den'-u, literally, "those who follow the Nya." In order to be admitted, an individual must give a chicken and 120 cowries. The next day, in the presence of the Nya-tigi and the wara-mina-den', the chicken is sacrificed on the boli by the muru-kala-tigi. The candidate is present, and in his behalf the Nya-tigi asks the Nya for protection against the suba, snakes, korti, and the evil eye. Then the neophyte is led to the sacred grove to be ritually purified with consecrated water contained in a vessel used exclusively for this purpose (1).

[783] 1. Every year at the time of harvest, the clergy undergoes ritual purification by washing in the sacred water. When a Nya is inaugurated, this purification takes place at the first harvest after the installation.

[731] The two great annual festivals are celebrated at the times of planting and harvesting. Similar ceremonies take place in connection with important events (epidemics, public catastrophes, etc.). For these ceremonies, during which the Nya is supposed to give revelations about the event in question and to answer various other questions troubling the faithful, the wara-mina-den' undergo special preparation and at the proper time drink a very [273] heady beverage (2) which, they say, brings on their extra-lucidity.

[641] 2. I learned most of these details about the Nya during a criminal trial brought against the wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara,

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[691]

> near Djenné. The son of the chief of that village drank the special liquid, in spite of the fact that the wara-mina-den' had told him not to do so, and died. The latter was accused of having poisoned him, but when he explained the circumstances before the native tribunal, he was acquitted.

It is said that this drink is made by soaking any sort of root found while digging graves and seasoning it with pepper, salt, and red peppers. The beverage, which is highly intoxicating, is ritually consecrated.

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796 Excited by this beverage and by the songs and dances of a crowd which is itself warmed with drink, the wara-mina-den' during major festivals acts as a visionary who freely reveals the will and desires of the god. On the evening before these important ceremonies and for several evenings before that, all the clergy and their aides meet for a kind of rehearsal of the dances and songs. It is then that the young men prepare for the major roles they will later play. The [286] wara-mina-den' is particularly concerned with the training of the man who will replace him in case of need.

There is nothing of special interest to note about the brotherhood's treasury, which is acquired and appropriated just as in other brotherhoods. The political action of the Nya and its relations with the communities are also such that they require no special attention. [287]

Chapter 5

The Clans

1. General Considerations

631 It is usual to use the word "empire" or "kingdom" to describe the form of government of most of the Sudanese states and particularly those founded in Kaarta and Ségou by the

631 Bambara, with whom we are here concerned. Each writer, however, uses these terms to refer to an ill-defined type of authority, sometimes without even attempting a critical comparison with similar institutions in our own countries.

This uncertainty is accompanied by other such doubtful similarities, which result in confused conceptions. Is it not common to speak of feudalism, of a feudal system, to describe the kind of hierarchy among various native chiefs? In the Sudan, however, there is no connection between man and the land com-
423 parable to that which was the basis of the feudal system. Indeed, no such meaning is possible, since the Sudanese does not recognize any right of ownership of land. Therefore, political ties between native chiefs are never based on land; how then can one speak of a feudal system?

614 621 631 As a matter of fact, the social unit is the community based on the family; it develops into a patriarchy and expands into a tribe and a people. Its members are united by blood ties, which are confirmed by the ancestor cult. [288]

Since they are proud and jealous of their freedom, communities seek to remain independent. Their relationships, however, determined especially the occupation and exploitation of a common territory, force them to give up this independence, and joining together in the same cult, the sign of their spiritual solidarity, they form a dugu (1).

1. This word is not without ambiguity. On the one hand, it means "that which is below," hence, "the soil"; on the other hand, it means "place," "residence," or "at the home of." It is understood to mean "territory" or "country" occupied by a human collectivity, and by an easily understandable deviation, it likewise designates the organization which governs this collectivity in relation to this territory.

614 621 631 The dugu have definite territorial domains, and they, too, prefer to live without the subordination of any one of them to the others. There are relationships between some of them, such as some being offshoots of others and, due to proximity, many matrimonial unions have bound them together.

Unavoidable necessity also often forces the dugu to form leagues, coalitions, or more often associations called kafu' (literally, "union"). Depending on the circumstances, a chief is elected by the association or he usurps the authority over it. This sometimes results in the creation of a political or administrative organization. The Ségala area, also called Sénébala, is an example. "It has a local history of several centuries, hereditary chiefs of several dynasties, social and matrimonial bonds and customary institutions which have persisted for generations; it is a nation and a fatherland" (2).

2. In Marty, Etudes sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan [Studies on Islam and the Tribes of the Sudan], Vol. 4, p. 105.

614 631 661 It also may happen that someone who becomes a chief will be so enamored with the exercise and the profits of power that with the support of his followers -- relatives or others -- he will manage to retain permanent control. This association is what we here call a clan; the Bambara designate it by the word ton', applicable to any association.

As an organism of authority, this clan may be defined as an oligarchic government founded for the sole purpose of subjugating, by any means, the individuals it can reach for the sake of exploiting them. Those who are enfeoffed to this government are called "the people of So-and-So" or "the people of such and such place" by the Bambara, as by other natives, [289] for example: the Massa-si-u (1),

1. From another point of view, Massa-si-u means "descendants of Massa," and hence, "the tribe of Massa."

614 631 "the people (of the clan) of Massà"; the Segu-n-ka-u (2),

> 2. From another point of view,
> Segu-n-ka-u means "the people of
> the country of Ségou."

"the people (of the clan) of Ségou."

104 128 Since we are always obsessed by our own system of organization, these terms appear in our writings as village (dugu), canton or province (kafu), and empire (ton', which is a clan).

Because of the convenience of expressions that are familiar to us, we shall use this terminology in this study, and it seems essential to define briefly the value of these terms in native society in order to avoid ambiguity which, to say the least, gives rise to distorted delusions.

173 563 631 In Kaarta and the Ségou country before the time of the two great clans whose history we have given and whose development and operation we are about to describe, there were dugu which usually had no connections or at most were joined in some ephemeral kafu. These kafu were composed of a majority of Bambara mixed with Soninké and people of other races. The Soninké dugu were noted for their prosperity, sometimes even wealth, and this gave them a degree of pre-eminence over the Bambara dugu. This prosperity rested on the labor of a slave population that the Soninké had managed to acquire for the most part by commercial dealings.

This de facto hegemony usually had no corresponding political or administrative organization; its only outward sign was the scorn with which the Soninké regarded the less fortunate Bambara and, conversely, the sullen hostility of the Bambara toward the rich Marka (as they called the Soninké). As a consequence, local quarrels broke out from time to time which sometimes developed into bloody conflicts. The early history of the Massa-si clan is a good example of this state of affairs, to judge by the record in the chronicle cited above.

173 631 The Ségou-Kaarta regions, under the authority of Mandé and Songhaï clans, were in this state, in semiobscurity because they were outside the zone of direct administration by these clans.

173 631 Their people, [290] except for the payment of required tribute, lived as they pleased and followed their own customs as long as the latter did not offend the dominant clan.

2. Clan of the "People of Ségou"

Development of the Fla-n-ton' of Ségou-koro

575 561 According to the chronicle cited earlier, the origin of the clan of Ségou must be attributed to the development of a fla-n-ton'.

Those persons who have undergone the rite of soli together are united in a fla-n-bolo (band of peers); the fla-n-bolo of three consecutive soli form a fla-n-ton' (assemblage of peers). The members call themselves ton'-den' in relation to the association, and fla-ni in relation to one another.

In each fla-n-ton' there is a ton'-tigi (head of the assemblage) elected by the ton' den', who is just as likely to be a wolo-su (slave born in the house) as the son of a notable; a dyala-tigi (distributor), likewise elected by the ton'-den', is especially charged with the distribution of food for the group's banquets and with the enforcement of regulations; a ton' dyeli is a kind of beadle appointed by the ton'-tigi who has him make preparations for meetings, assemble the members, announce orders, etc., and he is usually a young person of caste. There are people of all races and of all ranks in the fla-n-ton', and in the association there is theoretically, complete equality among them. Indeed, this equality explains the term fla-ni-u (peers) which they use among themselves.

In principle the aim of the fla-n-ton' (1) is to establish

1. As we have noted, there are fla-n-ton' for women as well as for men, but we are not considering them here; their role is insignificant from the present point of view.

575 561 a sense of solidarity among the ton'-den'. In reality, the bachelor ton'-den' are principally concerned with amassing as much food as possible for the sole purpose of treating themselves to copious and merry banquets from time to time; for this purpose, all means are acceptable. Each member brings to the group whatever he can lay his hands on; in addition, the society assesses its members for contributions to swell the common fund. [291] First, there are the entrance fees and assessments in kind, particularly of grain. Then there are fines for infractions of the rules, involving penalties whose purpose is simply the enrichment of the group's treasury. At certain meetings, for instance, the most ordinary acts may not be performed unless permission has been given by the ton'-tigi or the dyala-tigi. A member who squats, rises, speaks, sneezes, or laughs before being authorized to do so is fined. Finally, the society goes on organized hunts, and the game thus acquired is distributed among the members on the basis of strict equality.

[527] Ordinarily the ton'-den' meet twice a week, on Monday and Thursday; these are the free days allotted to the poor people (fantan'-u), that is, people who are wholly under control.

The ton'-tigi can make no important decision without the prior advice and agreement of the ton'-den', but this does not mean that his role is negligible. His initiative determines the orientation of acts, and he later sees to their execution. Therefore, if he is a clever man, he actually has almost sole command over an organization capable of exerting powerful pressure on the native milieu, which by nature is amorphous, because a fla-n-ton' is not an isolated group. It is linked with the one that preceded it and the one immediately following it by a kind of solidarity, so that native society, from this point of view, is made up of an uninterrupted series of fla-n-ton' closely bound to each other, since the same chain of relationship prevails for women and since every male fla-n-ton' has a brotherhood relationship with the corresponding female fla-n-ton'.

[627] If a difference arises between members of the same fla-n-ton', the "elders" of the preceding fla-n-ton', i.e., the one immediately older, intervene as conciliators to settle the quarrel.

575 561 628 When differences arise between fla-n-ton', an arbitrator is chosen by these fla-n-ton'; in some regions, there is even an arbitrator designated in advance.

Among all these fla-n-ton' the most conspicuous is the one having the largest number of young bachelors known as "the young masters" (kamalen'-u). Being much given to idleness, the kamalen'-u are troublemakers and rebels who seek all the [292] material pleasures and devote their talents to opposing the fa, the bina, and those who, as masters of the community, impose on the young the whole weight of an authority which is absolute and often niggling.

This explanation makes it plain that the post of ton'-tigi is no sinecure. In order to maintain his role honorably, the ton'-tigi must be capable of exerting his authority in subtle and shrewd ways, for the ton'-den' are touchy and undisciplined, and they are quick to claim the equality which is the basis of their association, even to the point of egalitarian mania or egalitarianism. Therefore, it is interesting to note that the regulations, fantastic at first glance, which inflict penalties for performing the most trivial acts are actually very effective; they correct in fun, but they represent a kind of restraint that encourages the development of discipline. Breaking with ordinary life, they tend through repetition to form habits which taken together make 661 up what we call esprit de corps. In any event, the development which we are about to describe shows conclusively that to maintain and conserve his power the ton'-tigi must exert authority by dissimulation, by persuading those most easily offended that he is subordinating his own acts to their wishes and at the same time appearing to the faint-hearted as an imperious and audacious leader. Furthermore, he must render service to everyone and know how to turn projects and adventures, even the riskiest, into profit for the community.

Since he is the target of the hostility of the elders, who often suffer from the activities of the ton'-den', and since he is constantly envied by some of these same ton'-den' for his success, he acquires the kind of experience which makes him a crafty and sly politician, completely devoid of scruples.

*173 We shall see how Mamari (called Biton) Kouloubali managed to prevail over the tyrannical egalitarianism of the

*173 fla-n-ton' and to rise step by step to absolute despotism.

The son of a poor Bambara farmer, Mamari Koulouballi was chosen ton'-tigi by his "peers" because he was strong, brave, and lucky (1).

His fla-n-ton' had two hostile factions, [293] poor Bambara and well-to-do, even rich Soninké, which led to conflict. The Soninké resented a Bambara ton'-tigi, and the Bambara derived a certain amount of satisfaction from humbling the arrogance of the Soninké.

The most famous of the latter, Kassoum Bouré, son of the chief of the Soninké dugu of Dona (1), tried by all possible means to force Mamari to resign his office of ton'-tigi so that he could replace him. This constant intrigue was aggravated by an increase in the cost of fines. It is true, of course, that fines imposed on ton'-den' are an accepted source of revenue for the fla-n-ton', but they consist solely of foodstuffs, especially millet which is used to make the native beer called dlo in Bambara. According to the chronicle, however, through the influence of Soninké machinations, very considerable fines were imposed, and Mamari himself was given a fine of 80 (2) head of cattle. It was a triumph for Kassoum, because such a fine, far exceeding Mamari's resources, put him in a critical position.

1. According to legend, he was regarded as well-versed in occult lore and dealings with genii. Legend, however, always attributes remarkable qualities to its heroes.

1. Better known under the name of Markadougouba (literally, "great village of the Marka").

2. The figures have only relative significance, of course, and they vary with the different traditionists.

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In order to extricate himself from this crisis, Mamari appealed to his sister, Sana-ba, wife of an important chief, Wara Dyara, whose residence was at Dina on the Niger, upstream from Ségou. Sana-ba offered Mamari her gold jewelry to clear himself, but, again at the instigation of the Soninké, the jewelry was refused in order to force Mamari to declare himself insolvent and thus to bring about the separation of the ton'-den'.

The chronicle reveals in detail this internal struggle which was destined to have far-reaching consequences. In the end, the matter was settled by the "elders" who recognized the original cause of all the trouble. They advised the separation of the two antagonistic elements. This advice was followed, and two fla-n-ton' were formed: one composed of the Bambara with Mamari as ton'-tigi, and the other of the Soninké under Kassoum.

Mamari's fla-n-ton' resumed its normal life once more. The ton'-den' met on Monday and Thursday of each week. [294] They prepared their own meals from what they obtained by hunting, but Mamari's mother provided the dlo and mead. In order to reimburse her, each ton'-den' was assessed a donation which, because of its destination, was called di-songo (price of honey).

These festivities and the pillage required to support them angered the "elders," and the fa, Si[illegible], Mamari's father, ordered his son in the presence of a blacksmith to give up this disgraceful way of life. The young man made use of this threat to persuade his companions to help him build an independent dwelling. This house was erected at Ségou-koro on the spot where the fla-n-ton' usually met and where, later on, was built that part of Mamari's residence -- by then he had become fama of Ségou -- which was called Biton' blon da' (entrance of the house of Biton) (1).

[172]

1. In 1902 I was shown the last vestige of this structure, a square pillar of sun-dried brick in the last stages of disintegration.

From that time on, the fla-n-ton' had a reputation that attracted everyone who was anxious to escape from the overly

*173 strict limitations of native society. First of all there were poor wretches and slaves. Drawn by the good food and the certainty of escaping from the authority of their masters, they abandoned themselves completely to the fla-n-ton' and became its slaves; these were the first ton'-dyon' (slaves of the ton') (2). As is the case with everything that had to do with the ton', Mamari had absolute authority over them. He chose one of them to call the ton'-den' to meetings by blowing a trumpet; this person was called ton'-masa (master of the ton') because his summons was [687] so imperative that anyone who failed to obey was liable to a fine of 20 jugs of beer (dlo). Furthermore, the ton'-masa was a kind of head over his congeners; he transmitted Mamari's orders to them and supervised the execution of them.

The ton'-dyon' were not the only ones who worked for the ton'. Just as the ton'-den' had built a dwelling as ordered by Mamari, they likewise undertook the cultivation of a field of millet.

In short, organized and disciplined, Mamari's ton' prospered. This prosperity aroused the envy and hatred of the [295] fla-n-ton' of the people of Doua, who slyly tried to bring about its downfall. Kassoum first tried to bring about a reconciliation in order to reunite the two ton', but he ran up against the opposition of Mamari, who wanted nothing further to do with these dangerous confreres.

Kassoum changed tactics and encouraged a series of reciprocal invitations between the two ton', which narrowly missed causing serious fights. Mamari, however, managed to keep the situation in hand.

The fields of the ton' produced a fine crop, and Mamari gave half of it to his father, advising him to use it for generous gifts to the fla-n-ton' so as to strengthen his son's influence over his followers. The old man was deeply touched by his son's behavior; he died soon afterward. The chronicler notes that on this occasion Mamari once again managed to extricate himself

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2. The word ton' will henceforth be used as an abbreviation of fla-n-ton'.

from grave danger; his father had been on the point of putting a curse on him for having evaded his authority and for living on the fringes of society.

The ton'-den' paid funeral honors to fa Sine. In accordance with the usual custom, they celebrated for seven days in front of the old man's hut. Then Mamari persuaded them to build a wall enclosing the huts belonging to his father and mother. It was agreed that the part of the enclosure which had been occupied by fa Siné would henceforth be reserved for people from Doukounna passing through Ségou.

An event of the greatest importance then occurred.

After a quarrel with Mamari, Kassoum fined himself 100 jugs of beer (dlo) and swore that he would force Mamari and his followers to come and drink them. All his entreaties, curses, and threats being in vain, at the beginning of the winter season Kassoum and his followers took up a position near Ségou-koro at Ségou Si-do. By all sorts of stratagems they managed to put a stop to the work of Mamari's men in the fields, a common procedure among the natives to bring enemies to heel.

A year passed without any improvement in the situation. Mamari went to Dina to solicit the cooperation of his brother-in-law, Wara Dyara, through the good offices of his sister. He returned to Ségou at the end of three months, discouraged by his lack of success. He was overwhelmed by the complaints of his followers, and at [296] their insistence he asked the people of Doukounna and Banankoroni to try to effect a reconciliation with Kassoum.

Kassoum refused to negotiate, and the quarrels grew more heated. One day Mamari's people made off with the wood used for a stockade by Kassoum's people and took it to Ségou-koro. The next day Kassoum's followers recovered their wood in broad daylight and burned the dwellings of Mamari's ton'. During the ensuing fight one of Kassoum's men was killed.

In order to avenge this murder, Kassoum's father declared that Mamari and ten notables from Doukounna and Banankoroni must be handed over to him. This claim, of course, resulted in endless palavers.

As the native expression puts it, "the words had gone on for eight months" when, after the death of Wara Dyara, his

*173 eldest son appeared with an imposing array of followers to return Sana-ba to her family and to get permission to have her as his own wife. Since the death of his father, Fa Sine, Mamari was the fa over Sana-ba, and he made good use of this circumstance.

Indeed, he succeeded in drawing into his ton' (1) both the new chief of Dina and the Bambara chiefs from the left bank of the Niger who had come to Ségou to pay their respects to the widow of the redoubtable chief of Dina. These new ton'-den' put their armed men at his disposal, and with the support of these additional forces, Mamari accomplished two enterprises which actually mark the real establishment of the clan.

First of all, he repulsed the attacks of the Soninké and, taking the offensive, chased them out of Doua. He had his troops pursue them to Kirango where the fugitives had taken refuge, and his followers laid siege to the place. The hegemony of the Soninké was henceforth overthrown.

Mamari was well aware of the extent of his success, which gave free rein to his ambitions. He realized that to consolidate his authority once and for all he would have to take advantage of this situation, especially since he had powerful allies at his command. Therefore, he resolved to make his ton'-den' recognize him as fa. Since this was a risky operation, he prepared for all possible eventualities.

With the "young men" deliberately kept occupied at Kirango, he [297] summoned to his house the "elders" who were fa over these young men. They came. He said that he wanted to interview them two by two, but they refused, fearing some trick. He asked them to settle near him permanently as a kind of senate, which was a disguised means of keeping them at his disposal. They again refused, being frightened by his insistence and saying that they had to return home to supervise the work in the fields. Mamari realized that their decision was irrevocable and that they would always stand in the way of his projects. He

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1. That is, he ensured an effective alliance.

*173 had foreseen this, and to eliminate this obstagle, he had had a well dug, into which the "elders," were thrown, killed at his order by some of his men who had been posted nearby for the purpose.

Mamari then took another step. He recalled the besiegers from Kirango, and when they arrived, he ordered them to wear the ton'-dyon headdress. When they protested, he told them that their "elders" had been massacred because they opposed his wishes. Overcome by force, the young men were transformed from ton'-den' to ton'-dyon'.

It is said that at this moment Mamari could not resist making a public display of his triumph, and his words show, with emphasis and some temper, what had so far been accomplished: "We shall no longer eat the pistachio nuts of the ton' together, nor shall we drink the beer of the ton' together; I am the son of Allah..."

With this situation in hand, he was no less audacious and successful in accomplishing a new coup. He asked his allies -- who had so successfully aided him in the outcome of the affair -- to leave their armed men with him. They refused. He worked on these warriors so cleverly and made them such tempting promises that the men had hardly reached their homes when they returned to join the ton' and so swelled the number of ton'-dyon.

Henceforth, the fla-n-ton' ceases to exist; transformed, developed, it gives way to the furu-ba (1) (great union, great association), whose chief, Mamari, is called fama (lord) and whose power rests on the [298] furu-ba-dyon' (slaves of the furu-ba), among whom the ton'-dyon' form a kind of aristocracy.

Of the three elements of the fla-n-ton', ton'-tigi, ton'-den', and ton'-dyon', only two survived after Mamari eliminated the ton'-den'. This elimination did not, however, change the character of the ton'-dyon', who were slaves, not of Mamari himself, but of the association which they formed with him.

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1. In the broad sense, furu means "union alliance"; in a narrower sense, "marriage, conjugal union."

*173 Theoretically, Mamari could only direct, supervise, and organize them, but in actual fact he exploited them to his own advantage. Upon the death of the ton'-masa, he decapitated them, in a manner of speaking, when he failed to appoint a replacement from their ranks. He then transformed the ton' into a brotherhood by affiliating the ton'-dyon with cults in which he was concerned and of which he was the grand master; his design was to hold their loyalty through this religious bond. Finally, he attached them to his own community by placing the leaders of the ton'-dyon' under the surveillance of members of that community.

It was at Mamari's death that all the consequences of this absolutism became apparent, an absolutism which attempted to destroy all the principles governing native society. At this point, the ton'-masa played a double role: he first intervened as guardian of Mamari's inheritance, because he had been the latter's personal slave; then he acted as the representative of the ton'-dyon in recognizing their subjection to Mamari's son and personal heir. Thus, the fa of Mamari's community became the fama of the clan.

The tragic death of Dé-koro marked the end of this combination, because the natural family which had provided the fama had died out, or at least the ton'-dyon' thought that it had.

Actually, once they were relieved of the master imposed on them, the ton'-dyon' showed that in their view the egalitarianism of the ton' had only been in eclipse. By the simple expedient of calling themselves "sons of Mamari," they recovered for the ton' all the property that Mamari and his children had usurped. The implacable resistance that prevented any ton'-masa from setting up a new tyranny for his own profit proves that everything tended to revert to the point of departure, that is, to the state of fla-n-ton'.

This, however, was impossible. The imbalance due [299] to the suppression of the ton'-den' was irreparable, because a person's rank cannot be effaced, and the former ton'-den', now ton'-dyon' and hence fallen to a lower estate, could not rise again. But there was something that did not survive, the type of empire which Mamari thought he had definitively established outside and above the ton', first for himself and then for his natural heirs.

*173 Henceforth, the fama in the furu-ba was no more than primus inter pares, just like the ton'-tigi in the old fla-n-ton', taking into consideration the evolution by which the furu-ba developed from the fla-n-ton'.

Ngolo Dyara succeeded only in making the office of fama, thus understood, hereditary for his descendants, just as had been done with many positions of dyon'-kuntigi before his time.

This progressive consolidation of an ever increasing number of high offices and the de facto independence regained by most of the members of the clan resulted in the formation of a society whose members took pride in their ton'-dyon' origins, considered themselves free, and even regarded themselves as free men of rank. This is perhaps the essential role of slavery in these areas, as a channel of social renovation and ethnic fusion.

It is appropriate to close this survey by an analysis of the various components of the clan and an explanation of their functions.

Furu-ba dyon' and Ton'-dyon'

614 567 In the course of time, the organization and function of the furu-ba created by Mamari underwent various modifications.

The essential element of the clan is the ton'-dyon', because after all everything depends on it. We have learned the origin of the ton'-dyon' above. The number of slaves of the furu-ba was increased by the many captives taken in the course of raids, pillaging, and warfare, but the ton'-dyon' is an aristocracy within the furu-ba-dyon' by virtue of seniority and also because some of the characteristics [300] of free men have somehow survived in those of the ton'-dyon' who were originally ton'-den'.

Undoubtedly one of the causes of the unrest that always stirs up the furu-ba is this deep yearning everyone has for freedom. They do not know how to attain it, however, first because they are dominated by an ancient atavism for servitude that burdens all the Sudanese, and also because each man who desires freedom for himself intends to use it to enslave his brothers. These are the confused feelings that give such an equivocal aspect to all the events related in the chronicle.

614 The ton'-dyon' of the furu-ba is a kind of person of caste:
567 he cannot cease to be ton'-dyon', and his children will live and
die as ton'-dyon'. He is subject to the despotic authority of the
fama. For a free man, it is certainly a fall to become a ton'-dyon',
but for a slave, on the contrary, it is an improvement in
status. Among the ton'-dyon' there are all sorts of people; this
was the case in the beginning and has continued to be so as time
passed. Although slaves obtained from armed forays were an
[727] important element in the totality of the ton'-dyon', there were
undoubtedly many men, free but poor, who were glad to join
the ton'-dyon' so as to protect themselves from the depredations
of these hardly commendable persons and also to gain the right
of using the same procedures themselves.

Among the ton'-dyon', therefore, there are people of all races and all conditions; indeed, this is so true that all the dyamu are mingled under this common label.

Within the furu-ba, the ton'-dyon' formed a category apart and always retained the prerogatives which in native society accompany seniority. The ton'-dyon' were the "elders." Prisoners reduced to slavery formed the furu-ba-dyon', properly speaking, and they were grouped in series, each taking its origin from the fama who organized it. There they followed the usual path. Barring favorable circumstances which might allow them to escape the wretchedness of the early days of captivity, they started out as members of the gang of slaves-of-all-work, often considered as a kind of medium of exchange and for that reason called san'-dyon'-u (slaves of exchange). Once they were adopted by a community, a woman acquired the status [301] of wolo-so when she bore a child, while a man might achieve comparable status by gaining the confidence of his masters.

The wolo-so became a dyongoron when he was in a position to send his children to work in his place and to pay an annual fee.

Once he reached the status of wolo-so, the slave became, in actual fact, a person of caste. In principle, he could not be sold, he had the right of ownership, and he could leave property to his children. Indeed, he was often better off than a man who was free but poor.

614 567 The status of this caste-slave carried over to his decendants ad infinitum, even in the case of those persons who rose to the highest positions. Thus, the Dyara of the family of Ngolo Dyara kept the stigma attached to the servile status of their ancestor (1). In practice, the wishes of an all-powerful master could change the status of those under his authority since, as we have seen, the fa made the law. However, this arbitrary will did not leave a man without recourse, as we saw in the chronicle in the case of the aforesaid Ngolo in his relations with Mamari. If one could appeal to the good offices of someone close to the fa, it was often possible to make him change his mind.

614 631 The furu-ba dyon' (ton'-dyon' or furu-ba dyon', properly speaking) were under the orders of "chiefs of slaves" (dyon'-kuntigi-u). There are supposed to have been 120 of these chiefdoms under Ma-n-son, according to the words attributed to Tonmassa in the chronicle. According to the same source, the number rose to 140, and then Ma-n-son reduced the number to 60 hereditary posts with authority over a varying number of furu-ba dyon' who were scattered about in the various regions subject to the clan, the whole subservient to the decision of the fama. The chronicle shows us how the fama established or broke up these chiefdoms for the greatest variety of reasons. Whenever he had an enemy who needed watching, an attack to be prepared, a country to be exploited, or a service to be organized, he conscripted men wherever he liked, ordered whole populations to move, and appointed a chief to take command of the enterprise and to carry out his orders, whenever and however he wished.

Among the dyon'-kuntigi there was a hierarchy [302] based on seniority theoretically and also on the importance of the duties; as a result, some of them were great chiefs. One of these, called the ton'-masa, came to be the supreme chief over the ton'-dyon in particular and all the furu-ba dyon' in general. In the fla-n-ton' the ton'-masa had the duty of convening the ton'-den' and of watching the ton'-dyon' to see that they

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1. See Raffenel, Vol. 1, p. 371.

614 631 performed the work ordered by the ton'-tigi. The ton'-masa had the same duties in the furu-ba: he made sure that the furu-ba dyon' executed the orders of the fama while acting as intermediary of the dyon'-kuntigi. Since, in short, he represented all the furu-ba dyon', his office gradually tended to put him in opposition to the fama. In the last analysis, what can a fama accomplish if he is opposed by a ton'-masa with all the force of the furu-ba dyon' behind him? That is why Mamari thought he would be able to rely on the devotion of the holder of this high office if he chose him, not from among the furu-ba dyon', but from among his personal slaves. He bought a slave and made him a ton'-masa.

*173 614 631 The furu-ba dyon' were first used, though not exclusively as might be thought, for armed forays, variable in scope, from which everyone profited: Mamari, first of all, by increasing prestige and by extending the areas under his sway; the furu-ba dyon', and Mamari too, by adding to their fortunes. The sons of Mamari, obviously anxious to perpetuate their acquired position and not run the risks of brigandage, decided to turn the activity of the furu-ba dyon' toward agriculture. This new orientation gave rise to a crisis, since it was not at all to the taste of one faction which included a large number of furu-ba dyon'; hence there arose internal quarrels, in which one episode was the murder of Dé-koro.

It was during these disturbances that many of the ton'-dyon' and dyon'-kuntigi conceived the idea of dropping out of sight to live independently on the proceeds of the property of the furu-ba entrusted to their case. Successive fama naturally tried, by terrible examples, to bring the rebels to terms, but they succeeded only temporarily by means of force, and when their power declined, these usurpations multiplied. Some of them were sanctioned definitively by the hereditary rights accorded to the 60 posts. [303]

The Fama

614 The second element in the clan was the power of direction, organization, and surveillance, and the holder of this power

614 was called fama (1) (lord).

1. Etymologically, fama or fa-ma, "the powerful," from fa, "power, authority."

Mamari played a dual role: fa of his patriarchal community and at the same time fama of the clan. His successors followed the same practice. However, in order that his duties as fama may be carried out honestly, custom requires the incumbent to turn over the authority and the property of his patriarchal community to his eventual successor, thus retaining a merely honorary fa-ya, so as to avoid confusion whose origin and consequences are easy to imagine.

421 614 In reality, all the property of the furu-ba which the fama held for his use and exploitation always belonged to the clan, and consequently, in principle, was supposed to profit only the clan. When the fama retained his duties as fa, the property of the furu-ba and that of the patriarchal community were likely to be inextricably intermingled, and in the process a considerable fortune would be built up for the community. This wealth, dishonestly acquired, so aroused envy and criticism among the furu-ba dyon' that many of them tried -- sometimes successfully -- to enrich themselves in no less questionable a manner and also sought to lay hands on the estate of the fama because of the clan property taken into it.

In the last analysis, indeed, the only reason for belonging to a clan -- and this is its essential trait in common with the fla-n-ton' -- the possibility of enriching oneself in every way possible; each member of the clan hopes to appropriate as much of the property as possible. On the other hand, each member tries to prevent his brothers from doing likewise, on the pretext of that equality which legally is the basis of the relations between clan members. This hypocrisy dominates the whole life of the clan. It inspires all the acts of the fama in the course of his duties, and it also animates each furu-ba dyon' to such a degree that every one of them aspires to become fama. [304]

614 The fama receives his powers by election, the form of which has changed very little since Mamari's time.

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*173 Mamari had been elected by the ton'-den'; by means of successive usurpations, whose progress we have shown, he achieved a kind of despotism whose entire gain he was unable to hand down to his descendants, in spite of his wishes.

For his descendants, election followed their installation in office by the ton'-masa, who at the same time publicly announced the assent of the furu-ba-dyon' by a symbolic gesture in which he presented himself to the new fama wearing a loincloth around his neck and put its two ends into the hands of the fama. Under the protection of the deity called ba Kongo-ba, which Mamari had bought in Bendougou, an oath was taken which formed an unbreakable bond between the two elements of the clan.

The election of Tonmassa Dembélé as fama was the result of discussions following the coup d'état which he himself carried out, and it is probable that this election, too, was followed by an oath of loyalty on the part of the dyon'-kuntigi in one or another of the ways already described.

In the case of the successors of Tonmassa Dembélé, the choice of a new chief was preceded by gatherings at which it was announced that the place was vacant and open to the person who could take over Mamari's bow and quiver. Then the election was held, and it was followed by a ritual banquet..

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[776] For this banquet, an ox and a slave were ritually slaughtered in the hut used as a temple for ba Kongo-ba (1), to whom the victims were sacrificed. The corpses were then cut into pieces, cooked together, and stirred frequently to make sure that they would be well mixed. A part of this macabre dish was served in the same hut and in the same gourd to the

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1. A literal translation of the name was given to me, "Mother of the Great Bush," wherein "mother" is equivalent to goddess." There is an allusion to the ceremony described here in the journal of Isaac (second voyage of Mungo Park), which uses the name Kogno-ba, a variant of Kongo-ba.

614 782 *173 dyon'-kuntigi who had acted as electors. When it was time to eat, they squatted on the ground around the gourd with their backs to it, and in this position and without turning their heads to make a choice, [305] they dipped into the dish and took a piece which might be animal or human. This meal constituted a communion by which those partaking of it were so closely linked that ba Kongo-ba was supposed to kill any one of them who should commit perjury by failing in the loyalty he owed to the man elected.

614 *173 The choice made was then definitive, and the man elected was put through a test intended to indicate the length of his reign. To make this test, the newly elected chief's throat was wrapped in one of the cotton bands used to make native loin-cloths; two of the bystanders pulled the two ends in opposite directions while the victim feverishly plunged his hands into a gourd containing a mixture of small pebbles and ground baobab leaves. The number of pebbles he managed to pick out in one try was the number of years in his reign. When this number of years had passed, the fama was strangled with the strip of cotton. If his rule had been popular, however, he was left in office until the first complaint was lodged against him.

Such is the tradition. Though it is acceptable in essentials, it is less so in certain details when comparison is made with the chronicle which makes no reference to this uniform death by strangulation or to determining in advance the length of the reign.

One thing that is certain is the oath of loyalty which followed every election and which was also often demanded by the fama during the course of his reign. This oath unquestionably had a sacramental form, characterized by a communion under the patronage of the idol. What the chronicle has to say about the election of Ngolo Dyara shows that the man elected was also required to participate in the oath, thus making it reciprocal. [661] Ngolo managed to avoid taking the oath, and so his electors bore the whole burden of it; this is one of the means by which despots of all lands pave the way for their tyranny.

Relations between the Elements of the Clan

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A study of the clan of Ségou is fortunately clarified by comparison with the organizations which we have discussed earlier: communities and brotherhoods. [306]

The influence of the community and the brotherhood on the clan is clearly shown by the two traits which reveal the consistent effort made by the fama to fuse the clan with his own patriarchy. First, there is the connection of the important ton'-dyon' chiefs and, through them, of all of the furu-dyon' to the fama. This is achieved by placing each of these dyon'-kuntigi under the patronage of an influential member of that patriarchy. Under Mamari and Ngolo, for instance, each of these dyon'-kuntigi was attached to the mother, wife, son, or brother of the fama. The ton'-masa himself asked to be put under the protection of Bakari, son of Mamari.

[794] From another viewpoint, the liaison between the clan and the patriarchy of the fama is made even closer by the participation of the ton'-dyon' in the personal cults of Mamari. Some of them were leading officients of the cults; it was precisely this circumstance that enabled Ngolo to dominate his companions.

It is therefore not too rash to state that under these conditions the clan is merely a kind of extension of the patriarchy of the fama. Besides, the ton'-dyon' always made a point of the bonds which in so many ways linked them to Mamari and which established a real brotherhood between them. That is why, first of all, their cult honored Mamari as though he were an ancestor. Secondly, it was the reason for the mode of succession which was imposed during periods of anarchy, bringing to power the man longest in Mamari's service. Finally, for the same reason, when the fama dies, the ceremonies are exactly like those for a patriarch.

614 There is another consequence: the prosperity, the power, and even the existence of the clan depend essentially on the personal qualities of the fama. When he is equal to the task, the clan is rich and powerful. If he lacks authority or is unable to assign each member a position and a role and keep him there, opposition will at once arise. By its very nature, such opposition inevitably separates the elements that go to make up the clan,

614 and from that moment on everyone seeks to enjoy his freedom and his property for his own profit. The end result is complete disorganization, and only the emergence of a new and enterprising despot can stop it.

614 575 Fundamentally -- and this is a new aspect of the question -- the clan retains the ineradicable imprint of the fla-n-ton' from which it took its origin. The aim has not changed: to assure to each member the [307] largest possible number of those material satisfactions which are so dear to the Bambara. The means likewise remain the same: in spite of appearances to the contrary, it is a type of solidarity based on a strictly egalitarian communalism (1).

> 1. The innate penchant of the Black for this sort of egalitarian justice is affirmed by legendary episodes wherein an individual is honored and proclaimed chief because he was able to make strictly equal shares. Cf. the legend of Ndyadyane Ndyaye, in Legendes et coutumes sénégalaises [Senegalese Legends and Customs] by Henri Gaden, and the Djide of Djenné, in Contes du Sénégal et du Niger [Tales of the Senegal and Niger] by Zeltner.

The resources of the clan are in every respect analogous to those of the fla-n-ton. Just as the latter profited from the [579] thievery, banditry, and raids of its members, so the clan derives its main resources from successful raids and pillage.

The fla-n-ton' provided for its drinking bouts by means of the di-songo and the crops of its ton'-den' or ton'-dyon'. In the clan, the di-songo persisted for a time and then was replaced by a similar fee, the nyon'-dyu. The work required of the ton'-dyon' was minimal at first during the period of active warfare, but then Dékoro peremptorily sent them into agriculture. Ultimately the furu-ba dyon' came to be primarily agriculturalists.

The foodstuffs of the fla-n-ton' were equally distributed among the ton'-den' by the dyala-tige, under the direction of the ton'-tigi. Within the clan, property is also held in common and

614 Within the clan, property is also held in common and
575 administered by the fama who distributes it among the dyon'-
[421] kuntigi. The latter, in turn, make a further distribution as it is needed.

In the fla-n-ton' the important thing was provisions, material well-being. The same thing is true in the clan. The ton'-dyon' are interested in the profit to be derived from the association, and their feeling for the state is embodied in a very prosaic word, to-da, literally, "the pot of mush." Indeed, this is the principal item on the menue of any fraternal feast of the fla-n-ton'.

614 421 The property of the clan, as of the fla-n-ton', is theoretically jointly held by all the members, but since there is a large amount of it, some sort of sharing is necessary, first to consume it and then to reward zeal and fidelity and to encourage emulation and devotion. As a result, the basic egalitarianism is altered. From the clan's beginning it was conceded that a substantial part of the wealth should go to those [308] who had done most to acquire it. Thus, the leader of an expedition had a prior right because of his "luck," and he and his men further received the wherewithal "to repair the rents in their shirts," i.e., to indemnify them for damages suffered during the expedition.

[727] Each warrior kept his own loot, except for unusually valuable things which went to the clan and therefore to the fama who represented it. The part of the loot not taken by individuals was distributed by the fama after abstracting the best and largest part of it for himself.

Strictly speaking, no one actually owned any of this wealth, since all of them, even the fama, merely held it on very precarious terms. Through the caprice of the clan, anyone could [562] have everything taken away, and this applied to persons as well as to things, because the wives and children of the ton'-dyon' were, like himself, the "chattels" of the clan.

The passage of time softened the outward form of these principles; barring abuse or notorious misconduct, each individual had indefinite use of what was allotted to him and handed it on to his descendants. This usufruct, incidentally, was broader than that of our law. In addition, Mamari arrogated to himself a kind of eminent right: he appointed himself -- through usurpation facilitated by his power -- the dispenser of offices and wealth

614 421 and kept considerable property for himself. For their part, the *ton'-dyon'*, pleased with their lot, carefully kept out of sight so as to be able to enjoy what they had been given and what they had managed to add to it.

These usurpations tended to become stabilized through inheritance, although not without dreadful disturbances.

614 *173 After Mamari, the office of *fama* was handed down within his family until the day when the assembly of the *ton'-dyon'*, dissatisfied with Dékoro's regime, decided to "change the seed," a quaint metaphor for the clan's determination to have a more amenable *fama*.

The ease with which Dékoro was eliminated (and others after him) also shows that the *fama* was, and after all could only be, what the *ton'-dyon'* allowed him to be. This makes it clear that the spirit [309] of the *fla-n-ton'* never died; the *fama* merely appeared to be more than *primus inter pares* at times when his personal influence temporarily made him master of the situation.

At such times, then, he may have governed without the opposition of the majority, but such a period of dominance has always been personal and temporary. In reality, dissension was [578] ever present and was made manifest in fratricidal quarrels, during which the *fama* seemed to be principally concerned with gratifying personal grudges.

The chronicle shows us that the fama was at the mercy of the *ton'-dyon'*; without them he could do nothing. The Monday and Thursday meetings, which were a condition of his authority, continued for a long period of time. In any event, this assembly (*furu-ba*) was the whole of the clan. In ordinary times, the assembly was stimulated by the pleasure of drinking the beer which the *fama*, like the *ton'-tigi* before him, always provided. Worship of the clan idols was also the occasion for some of these meetings, accompanied by eating and drinking. The *fama* invariably made every effort to use these gatherings, usually disorganized, to further his own interests as well as those of the clan.

When Mamari's authority was well established, these meetings no longer played any deliberative or even consultative role, except in the gravest circumstances when the very existence of the clan was at stake. It was logical that the council of the

614 *173 dyon'-kuntigi should replace them; the dyon'-kuntigi always exercised an influence over the ton'-dyon' for whom they acted as spokesmen. Besides it was easy to convene the dyon'-kuntigi, and as their experience increased, they came to be competent and tried collaborators for the fama.

As time went on, however, the council was neglected. The extension of the to-da kept the important dyon'-kuntigi away from Ségou, and as a result the fama became increasingly despotic. He was always sensitive, however, to the influence of his immediate circle, that is, the people of his house (his mother, wives, children, brothers, and other relatives) and
[567] especially his familiars (1). The latter constituted a kind of privy council in which the leader of the slaves, whether [310] or not he belonged to the ton'-dyon', played an important role. Ordinarily these familiars were of lowly birth: people of caste or domestic servants in the house of the fama. Deeply involved in their master's life, they were at the root of the intrigues surrounding him.

The fama realized that his authority was deprived of its strength when he lost contact with the ton'-dyon', because a clan languishes almost to the point of extinction when those who compose it lose touch with one another. Therefore, the fama would convene the assembly, not, as in the past, in order to learn its wishes, but rather to request or even require from it a solemn affirmation of loyalty before the idols. In any case, the assembly always met at least once a year to renew the oath of religious faith and to admit the "young men."

The assembly took an effective role only at the election
[578] of a new fama, and it is plain that over the years this power of

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1. So it was that in his fratricidal quarrel with Nyana-n-Koro, it is clearly apparent that Ma-n-son was guided by the shrewd suggestions of Nzan-fato; in his quarrel with Souleyman, his intimates were his advisers.

614 consultation likewise underwent changes. In the beginning there
*173 was no great amount of dissension within the furu-ba, but gradu-
578 ally, as the importance of the clan grew and the wealth of influential members increased, divergent opinions arose, held by strong and determined partisans. Then the dyon'-kuntigi were opposed among themselves, and the recurrent periods of anarchy bear witness to the consequences of these internal quarrels.

Organization of the Clan

614 The army. The office of fama is dominated by the need
721 to ensure the prosperity of the clan since, in theory, the clan's only reason for existence is that of procuring for its members as many material satisfactions as possible.

The usual way to make a fortune among these people was through armed pillage. When a fama was elected, the bow and quiver symbolized the clan's activity, and according to the reasoning of Kanou-ba-nyouma, it was essential that the arrows should hit someone. Thus, it was necessary to go to war. That was the way to acquire slaves, by means of which the great -- and everyone aspired to be such -- satisfied their desires. That is why the essential organization in the clan was the armed force. [311]

614 This organization was based on the distribution of the
701 slaves among chiefdoms (dyon'-kuntigi-ya). Observed as a whole, the army was composed of a certain number of sections called sen' (literally, "foot"). This was not a specific unit, but merely the name used to designate an organized group under the leadership of a chief. Each sen' had a variable number of men. The bolo (literally, "arm") was a "band" made up of a likewise variable number of sen' and commanded by an important chief.

614 When the army was drawn up for battle, it faced the
726 enemy with a central mass called disi (literally, "chest") made up of the corps of sofa, flanked on the right and the left by bolo called, respectively, kini-n-bolo (right arm) and numa-n-bolo (left arm) (1). Each of these bolo were made up of furu-ba dyon'

1. Note this anthropomorphism applied to the army, which thus included head, arm, feet, chest.

614 surrounded by *ton'-dyon'*. Behind the *disi* there was a special
726 reserve composed only of *ton'-dyon'*; this was the *ton'-koro-bolo.*

The *fama* himself designated the leader (*keli-tigi*) of all
614 the expeditions of war. This might be one of the *dyon'-kuntigi* or
701 some member of the community of the *fama*; sometimes the *fama* himself might take command.

The personal protection of the *fama* was the duty of the corps of *sofa.* In principle, considering the etymology of the name, the *sofa* were supposed to take care of the horses; this does not mean that they were necessarily horsemen or even grooms. The youngest served as pages and sometimes as grooms; the older ones were confidential aides to whom the *fama* entrusted missions. The *sofa* constituted one part -- and by no means the least important -- of what might be called the household of the *fama*: an assemblage of persons employed for various duties under the immediate authority of the *fama.*

[727] They were recruited from young prisoners taken in raids and other operations of war.

When the *fama* led an expedition which was engaged for some time or when he took part in some important affair, he liked to arrange and to preside over the *soli* of the boys of the conquered people and to have one or more of his many children take part. [312] This was a means of assuring himself of the devotion, generally regarded as unfailing, of these *soli-ma* whose "birth" into man's estate he had honored and who, by virtue of the ceremony itself, were thus linked to some of his own children. Mostly these young men would then swell the ranks of the *sofa.*

This army, which might be said to be a regular army, theoretically received everything it needed from the *fama*: mounts, equipment, weapons, ammunition, etc. This justified the very considerable share of booty kept by the *fama* himself; he was thus repaid for what he had furnished, was provided with resources needed to replace what had been destroyed, and finally, was able to add to the store of equipment needed to make war. There was also the special need to increase the clan's treasury with a view to all possible eventualities.

The army was augmented by allied or volunteer contingents. The allies had a solemn agreement with the clan, based on a

614 religious and reciprocal oath. Their contribution entitled them
701 to a share of the booty. Volunteers, who enlisted for an engagement or a whole campaign, came in under conditions settled in advance.

The *fama* furnished the allies, just as he did the volunteers, with whatever they needed and deducted the amount from their share of the loot. Sometimes a third party, not involved in the expedition, provided mounts, equipment, and weapons for the enterprise in exchange for a prearranged reward.

In short, armed pillage was a business directed by the *fama*, who could admit interested participants if he so desired. If the operation were successful, the clan gained predominance over
[727] the conquered regions, which the *fama* then exploited as he saw fit. The booty was the first result of the enterprise, and it served both to pay the expenses incurred in the affair and to swell the treasury of the clan.

This explains why the clan's army, for a consideration, hired itself out to anyone who asked for support, as an ally, as a mercenary force, or in any other capacity. The army might simply intervene in a quarrel of its own accord when there seemed to be profit to be gained (1). [313]

1. See below how the *fama* of Ségou lent his support to a *marabout* of Sous. The Bambara also intervened on numerous occasions in the internal quarrels of Khasso, Boundou, Fouta, etc. Their role as mercenaries is clearly shown in the *Tarikh es Soudan*.

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701 The *ton'-dyon'* were distinguished by a special hair ar-
569 rangement. Their heads were completely shaved except for three
[302] tufts of hair which formed two braids on the crown of the head and one at the nape of the neck.

The slaves of the household of the *fama* could be recognized by their well-known tattoo (1) which consisted of three

[304] 1. In general, it is risky to depend

parallel cuts from temple to lower jaw on either side of the face. Furthermore, these people borrowed the *dyamu* of the *fama* (Kouloubali, Dyara, etc.), just as certain servants in some of the French provinces are called by their master's name because they are members of the household bearing that name.

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The elite troops (*sofa*, *ton'-dyon'*, etc.) were armed with axes (*sukala*) (2). Important chiefs also had axes, the insignia of command, sometimes made of precious metal, such as copper or silver. The axe carried by the *fama* was made of gold and enchased (3).

The spear (*tama*) was often regarded as a weapon of distinction also. The ordinary warriors were armed with bows (*kala*) and arrows (*bimye*), the latter usually poisoned.

[177] Guns (*marfa*) gradually came into use, imported by native traders (Dyula). The chronicle claims that the first firearms were introduced among "the people of Ségou" in Mamari's time by an army from Kong and that these guns were of the blunderbuss type.

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incautiously on tattooing as a distinguishing mark of race or even of rank; the tattoo described here has not only been used by people of various origins, but has even been appropriated by all kinds of people as a form of snobbishness.

2. An instrument's name derived from *suka*, a variant of *sua*, meaning "to pierce." The men armed with axes were, in fact, assigned the special task of "making a breach" in the wall inclosing the settlement under attack.

3. The chronicle relates that Tonmassa, after murdering Dékoro, carried off the golden axe, the symbol of supreme command.

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411 Chiefs and other notables carried a short sabre (m-pan) slung from their shoulders. These were probably Turkish in origin and were largely ceremonial weapons.

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714 The troops wore no specific uniform. Only a few of the more important personages were recognizable by certain insignia, and it sometimes happened that certain individuals were honored by distinguishing marks. The chronicle tells us that Mamari [314] had Ngolo Dyara outfitted in red, a uniform particularly desired. Likewise, he gave Tonmassa a pair of trousers that were unusually wide and consequently attracted everyone's attention.

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701 Drummers (dunu) and trumpeters (buru) made up a military clique which also included men who played xylophones (bala) and various accessory instruments, especially bells (tana, veleni, etc.), and gourds half-filled with pebbles or grain.

766 The drum beaten to sound a rally, which was, therefore, in a manner of speaking, the announcer of war, was the tabala. The cylinder, bowl-shaped and usually made of wood or sometimes pottery, was covered with an ox-hide, often untanned, which was stretched by thongs tied under the drum. In theory, this drumhead was always changed at the death of a fama, when the skin was broken as a sign of mourning (1), and was replaced by the hide of the ox sacrificed in honor of the deceased. The tabala was carried horizontally between two men by means of leather grips and a third individual beat it by means of a ball attached to his wrist by a leather thong.

Other drums were of varying sizes and shapes. Some were carried under the arm (dunkan") or slung from the shoulder (tama); others, mounted on three feet (dange), presented a horizontal

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1. It should be noted that the destruction of the drumhead is comparable with the killing of the dead chief's dog and the presentation of a dead chicken to his relatives. All these are obviously "intentional breaks."

534 beating surface. The most highly regarded was the denu-ba;
614 made of a hollowed cylindrical trunk with fairly thick walls,
701 the denu-ba is sometimes more than a meter high, with its
lower third often slightly tapered with an adze. The drumhead
is made of strong hide, reinforced in the center by a patch of
leather sewed to it and stretched on pegs driven into the sides of
the drum a few centimeters below the upper edge. When it is to
be played, the drum is inclined on a fork that supports it. The
drummer uses a kind of wooden hook, cleverly curved for
elasticity and provided at one end [315] with a rounded part,
often formed by a swelling contrived for the purpose or at other
times made of a leather ball. The drummer's free hand provides
the syncopation.

In certain cases, two denu-ba are used together; the
drummer strikes them in such a way as to obtain a variety of
sounds to form the basis for conventional harmony. Thus, the
soldiers not only were trained to obey appropriate flourishes, but
also were kept in touch with distant battalions by means of the
drums. When it was skillfully played, the denu-ba made it possi-
[202] ble to transmit information for considerable distances, because
other drummers would retransmit it in turn. That is why it has
[778] been said that the denu-ba can talk and no doubt why it was so
highly regarded by the ton'-dyon' that they considered it an
oracle and honored the god who spoke through the drum by making
the denu-ba the boli of this god. Hence, human victims came to
[782] be sacrificed to the drums of the ton'-dyon', especially under
Ngolo, according to the chronicle.

Trumpets (buru) were formerly made of ivory. The
[237] Tedzkiret speaks of the ivory trumpets used by a certain Bambara
named Maro, and Mage relates that Ahmadou, Sultan of Ségou,
gave the Bambara their ivory trumpets on the occasion of the
Moslem festival.

These ivory trumpets, however, have disappeared, no
[237] doubt carried off by traders. Trumpets made of horn, which were
used concurrently with the ivory instruments, have been substi-
tuted for them. The horns of the large antelope are much in de-
mand for this purpose. An opening is made a few centimeters
from the pointed end, and the trumpeter makes the sound through
this opening. The only result is a loud but monotonous noise.

534 614 701 The xylophone (*bala*) consists of a table made of strips of hardwood, with a gourd under each strip, like a resonator; the size of each gourd depends on the note desired. A section of the gourd is stopped by the vibrating surface which is a white material very closely woven like a cobweb. When it is played well, the *bala* produces various tunes, but they seem very thin compared to the noise of the drums and the shrieking of the trumpets. [316]

The accessory bells are of no particular interest.

538 701 No expedition of any consequence ever set out without a *griot* (*dyeli*) (1). The *griot* has acquired a deplorable reputation because of the fact that too often he uses his fluency to exploit the rich and powerful. This should not hide the fact, however, that the *griot* has often played a role not lacking in grandeur. In addition to being the official archivist of one or more families, he was also, in the native sense, a kind of epic bard who told his
[534] tales in song, accompanying himself on a stringed instrument similar to a guitar or a rudimentary harp. When told by him, the traditions, involved with those miracles so dear to the native, had something of the quality of our medieval epics. In that respect, at least, the *griot* truly deserved his title of *dyeli* (master).

Unfortunately, however, being reduced to earning his keep by making use of his information, he resorted to slander and calumny. This made him so much to be feared that in order to buy his silence the victims despoiled themselves for his benefit, as did those whom he intoxicated with base flattery.

538 701 726 In the army the *griot* stirred and encouraged the brave men. On the eve of an important engagement or shortly before it, a large assembly customarily was held, and roused by the epic poems of the *griot* no less than by the war ~~dances~~ and copious libations, the warriors promised under oath to perform such and such acts of great courage. It was then the duty of the *griot* to take public note, so to speak, of this commitment and later,

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1. See above, pp. *et seq.*, on the *dyeli*.

538 when the action had occurred, to celebrate the glory of its
701 author. If, however, events showed that there had been mere
726 bravado, the griot was then expected to stigmatize the braggart's
cowardice -- something he never failed to do, since he found it just as profitable as to celebrate the glory of a hero.

At a critical hour when the army threatened to yield to the baser instincts engendered by rout, panic, and defeat, the griot often had the fortunate ability to arouse failing courage, sometimes [317] with cutting sarcasm, sometimes by exalting the lofty achievements of the ancestors, sometimes by setting forth in a tragic light the lot of the defeated. The chronicle shows him in this role when Ma-n-son, held in check by the stubborn resistance of Tyitya, sees himself -- final disgrace -- abandoned by his wives who have decided to return to Ségou. All through the night the griot sang battle songs, and at dawn the terrible assault proved that the army had recovered its spirit.

This handler of words was undoubtedly a formidable "master." He was said to know words that kill, since he was aware of the actions dominating every person's life. When Ma-n-son's twelve wives came in a body and told him that they had resolved to return without him to Ségou because they were all the more homesick when they felt that defeat was at hand, he ordered them to repeat their words before the griot whom he had summoned. With their action thus publicly noted, he gave them leave to depart, knowing that he would be able to avenge himself for their desertion whenever he decided to do so.

The songs of the griot, retold and repeated by the warriors and the people, gave memorable actions ineffaceable lineaments. The chronicle tells us that when the expedition against Dina was undertaken, the griot improvised the song which begins: "In the shade of the bushy kaminya tree, the hen cannot tell a grain of millet from a grain of sand." This meant that, in the confusion of battle, a warrior can make no distinctions. In fact, the country was completely laid waste during this expedition, and the booty was so abundant that forever after the griot had only to sing this song to arouse the warlike ardor of the ton'-dyon'.

538 A man of high rank is always accompanied by his griot,
814 who is both a confidant and a mere factotum. It is true, of course,

538 814 that the *griot* is often a wretched character, an insignificant parasite living at the expense of everyone. There are those among them, however, who carry out their duties as archivist very faithfully and who are sincerely devoted to their masters, great and generous lords in the native fashion whose interests and reputations such *griot* ably defend.

It is *griot* of this last type who transmit the reliable historical tradition from which we have borrowed the foregoing accounts. There [318] is no doubt that these *griot*, true "masters" (*dyeli*) of historical traditions, have played a considerable role in native society. Therefore their words should never be passed over lightly, although obviously they should be subjected to judicious criticism.

The To-da

614 631 In origin, evolution, and contingencies, the clan developed from the social bases already studied, community and brotherhood, of which it is, in the last analysis, only an amalgamation. As a result, its various manifestations are similar to those of these institutions, even though possessing its own peculiarities.

One of the most characteristic features of the clan is the *to-da*, which was the familiar term used by members of the clan for the region in which they lived. The word literally means "the pot of mush" and alludes to the essential element in the corporate [539] banquets of the *fla-n-ton'*. As the saying goes: "*furu-ba to, to kadi, na ka ko,* (at the corporate meal the mush is good and the sauce is bad.")

The *to-da* originally was limited to Ségou-koro and its immediate environs, i.e., the small number of villages affiliated with the *ton'* either voluntarily or by force. It progressively extended its sway along the Niger: first on the right bank as far as Kirango; later almost to Dina; finally it extended its influence over a broad area on both sides of the river from Kan ga-ba to Timbuktu.

This territory was organized in various ways. The key region ran along the Niger from Dina to Kirango, and the sector

614 between Ségou-koro and Kirango was the area under what we
631 would call direct administration, because this zone was occupied
substantially by the fama, his community, and his ton'-dyon'.

614 Ségou-koro, which had witnessed the birth and the de-
velopment of the clan, had remained Mamari's capital; he pre-
794 ferred to live there, and he had installed the protective idols of
the clan there. Thus it was, so to speak, the seat of the brother-
[778] hood, whose four principal idols continued to be known under the
names of ba Kongo-ba, na n-Golo ko, Nye-dinge-dun', and
[776] Kolo-koloni. [319]

The fama was the high priest, and the other officiants of the cult were chosen from among the ton'-dyon'; that is why Ngolo Dyara was dye-n-fa. Any follower of Mamari or his successors was affiliated with the cult of these idols. The adepts who lived far from Ségou-koro founded branches which in certain ways ~~were~~ so dependent on the capital that Ségou-koro was for a long time regarded as a holy city.

We have no detailed knowledge concerning the cult of these important idols; we only know that in general they did not differ greatly from what we have already said about the nyana of the boli. The annual festival was exceptionally solemn and brought the faithful from even quite distant regions. The fama, of course, presided over the ceremony which involved certain essential rites: a renewal of religious faith, the reception of new
614 members, and an oath of loyalty to the fama.

794 The four deities mentioned above were not the only ones
776 in the Bambara pantheon at Ségou (1); others were added, some bought and others invented out of the extravagant faith of the ton'-dyon'. Among the latter should no doubt be included the drums of the ton'-dyon', which are mentioned several times in the accounts and which are presented always in a very bloodthirsty light. Ngolo sacrificed his most hated enemies to the drum-idols,

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(1) In Les Bambara [The Bambara], Father Henry mentions, in addition to ba Kongo-ba and na-n-Golo-ko, two other idols, Kuantara and Safolo.

614 beginning with his relatives, to avenge his hatred toward them
794 for selling him into slavery. It seems likely that the establishment
776 of these ferocious deities may well date from the time of
this despot and perhaps was due to his personal initiative.

The "people of Ségou" also held in high esteem the deities of the people they conquered. Indeed, there is no doubt that they constituted the most precious part of the booty of war. The Toucouleur [Tukolor] relates that when they entered Ségou-Sikoro they found an idol in chains; it was the protective deity of a group of the Nono-n-kobe people of the cliff of Bandiagara. With the evident intention of keeping this conquered people forever enslaved, the Bambara had captured their god and were having its cult observed by its own priest, kept captive likewise for the purpose (2). [320]

2. See Desplagnes, *Le plateau central nigérien* [The Nigerian Central Plateau], p. 175.

The chronicle shows that the Komo also figured in the Ségou pantheon, and if one refers to what we have said about this brotherhood, he will understand the important role it played in the *to-da* since the *fama* himself acted as *Komo-tigi*.

614 There is absolutely no doubt that cannibalism was in
794 favor on certain definite occasions and, according to appropriate,
761 ritual, especially, at the time of the election of a *fama*. It is
[266] obvious, in any case, that under the despotic rule of the clan
human life had little value. The atrocities of Dékoro, the passiveness of his victims, the help given him in the execution of his worst crimes by the very people who were directly threatened -- these are not isolated cases. They are indicative of the basic Sudanese temperament in general, which, if not innate, at least is affected by a very ancient atavism. It is because this kind of arbitrary command over the lives of individuals has been practiced for so many centuries that the Bambara often remain impassive in the face of death. They consider its unforeseen occurrence, even when sudden and the result of man's

614 own action, as a possible daily eventuality which should cause
794 no surprise.

761 The practice of this implacable ferocity must also be considered the natural source of that kind of burning faith, as intransigent as it is horrible in our eyes, which is capable of nullifying all the feelings of affection that we regard as natural. When Ngolo realized that he had aroused dangerous ambitions in his son Ntyi, he decided that he could not escape the danger he himself had created except by a sacrifice in keeping with the contingency, and with his own hand and without hesitation, he sacrificed Ntyi's son, his own grandson.

Stubborn Bambara are often heard to say: "You may kill me; I will not yield." Tyitya's resistance shows that this is no idle boast; this same affair also shows the aspiration toward equality, so basic in the Bambara, which makes it impossible for him to bow before his fellows. Another example of the same quality is to be seen in the resistance of the "elders", whom Mamari, even he, could subdue only by murder.

To complete the description of the somewhat mystical
794 features of the clan of "those of Ségou," let us recall that after
614 [321] Mamari's death he was honored by a cult: on the part of his
769 natural descendants because he had been their *fa*; on the part of the people of the clan because he had been *fama*; and finally, on the part of the faithful of the idols' cult because he had been the high priest. Under this aegis there was a fusion of sorts of all the people who recognized mutual bonds because they were all spiritual sons of Mamari. This relationship was the excuse used by the *ton'-dyon'* when they usurped supreme power, and the right of the leaders of the *ton'-dyon'* to succeed to the office of *fama* was in fact settled by the expedient of treating this relationship as though it were true descent. This cult took its characteristics from the cult of the idols. When Tonmassa began his duties
[782] as high priest, his first act was to honor the manes of Mamari, and the offering was the same as that always made to *ba Kongo-ba* when a new *fama* was elected: a man and an ox.

Such are some of the characteristics of the faith that
614 united the "people of Ségou" by ties which, without metaphor,
794 can be called bloody. It is true, of course, that the clan's

614 leading men made use of the cults to realize their ambitious
794 designs and to gratify their personal hatreds. From that point of view it can indeed be said that religion was a means of domination. It would be altogether too simple, however, to say that these cults had no other reason for existence than to maintain terror as the basis of the power of the fama. Any such facile opinion should be discarded, because the facts should be evaluated, not from the outside, but rather in the native milieu. It then certainly appears possible that they are of the same order as the many phenomena already examined.

This powerful religious focus animated the whole clan. Impetus, direction and control belonged to the fama, whose role was conditioned, as we have seen, by the attitudes of the furu-ba dyon' and especially of the ton'-dyon', both of which were represented by the dyon'-kuntigi who were, in a sense, their agents. Was it not inevitable that there should be a kind of spiritual current, supposedly emanating from the idols, which inspired the fama and the furu-ba dyon' and then returned to the idols in the form of a cult? How could such a constant preoccupation with the supernatural not make a deep impression? This preoccupation haunts the natives everywhere and always, [322] and they express it in ways that are in perfect harmony with their world, however ridiculous they may appear to European logic and reason.

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621 The Ségou area acquired special importance because of the presence of the community of the fama, which settled there under remarkable circumstances.

It is usual in any important community for the first-born son to be set apart. Destined to succeed the fa upon his death, he is prepared for his future responsibilities by being given the management of a portion of the joint property. As the fa grows older, the role and the importance of this eldest son increase.

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614 When a community is sufficiently wealthy, a privileged position is likewise given to the eldest sons of the other wives of the fa, because he is always forced to distribute favors equally among his various wives whose jealousy may have far-reaching effects. Upon the death of a fa, many difficulties arise, stemming from his all too obvious preferences. An example of this was the

*773 614 fratricidal warfare that broke out when Ngolo Dyara died. Nyana-n-koro, the son of a wife who was free and also a favorite, had been favored by the fa during his lifetime. He therefore was not willing to take second place to Ma-n-son, whose mother was the eldest wife but had been a slave.

Since the community of Ségou had become exceedingly rich by appropriating the property of the clan, which the fama legally was supposed only to manage all the first-born sons of the successive fama were generously endowed, and their private residences were to be found, one after the other, along the banks of the Niger or near it.

So it was that, of Ngolo Dyara's sons, Ntyi lived at Bamabougou, Ma-n-son at Pébala, Nyana-n-koro at Ségou-koro, Péné Mamourou at Ségou-bougou, Ba at Bia, Séri at Sofinna, Dyon-kelé at Kirango, etc.

Ma-n-son's sons lived as follows: Da at Pébala, then at Bamabougou; Tyéfolo at Koké; Ben at Kirango; Nyéné-m-ba at Oïtala; Sibiri at Diani; Fissa at Nango, etc.

A further result of these usurpations was that appanages were set up to benefit other relatives of the fama, for instance, Dyídi, a brother of the fama Ngolo Dyara, was granted [323] all the territory between Dougou-fin and Dyam-bougou (more than 600 villages) (1).

Finally, Mamari and the other fama after him were shrewd enough to place the principal dyon'-kuntigi under the control of various members of their respective communities: mothers, wives, sons, brothers, etc. Mamari's mother, Sanou Saro, had authority over the dyon'-kuntigi Na-n-koro-ba-n-Zangné; the head of the sofa, Kolé, and Allah-n-siré were dependents of Mamari's wife, the mother of his eldest son, Badyi; Tonmassa was a dependent of his son Bakari.

By this means, the closest and deepest kind of solidarity developed between the family of the fama and the people of the clan. This fact, added to the spiritual solidarity which

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1. According to the chronicle.

*173 614 we have just noted, would have formed an unbreakable bloc if both elements had not been affected by the ferment of dissociation referred to in the course of this study.

[487] The to-da derived the larger portion of its prosperity from the Niger. Communication and transport could most easily be maintained along this artery, and it was the need to make the greatest possible use of the river that brought about the organization of the Somono.

[101] Etymologically, the word Somono simply means "fisherman." Like any trade practiced exclusively, professional fishing [564] involves a certain loss of standing, and that is why the Somono are said to be people of caste. This status is especially due to the supremacy of the clan over the Somono, without whom it could not have exploited the river.

614 564 *173 After using force to annex them, Mamari added to their number by assigning some of the furu-ba dyon' to the group, so that the Somono were soon closely dependent on the furu-ba. At the orders of the fama and his agents, they were required to [505] maintain ferry service across the river, to provide river transport in both directions, and to pay a fee in kind on their catch, with the understanding that they could continue to live according to the traditional Somono customs.

In return, the Somono were under the protection of the clan and their leaders benefitted from the generosity of the fama. They would occasionally be given a share of booty. [324]

Little by little, the few original Somono families were lost in the flood of newcomers. These included: the furu-ba dyon' who had become Somono on orders from the fama; people of diverse origins who had adopted Somono status of their own accord because they found it better than their own; and finally, the children of both, who were Somono by birth.

It was likewise the exploitation of the property of the [233] to-da that brought about a similar organization of the shepherds, or Peul. Let us first note that this term has no ethnic significance; it designates all who raise or watch over animals as a regular and professional occupation. Here, too, there is a kind of loss of standing, since a working shepherd could hardly do without a sponsor and must attach himself to a master. This is the case for

614 all who exercise a calling, and that is why the Bambara call a
564 Peul "*fula fantan*' (weak Peul)" (1), to indicate that he is *in*
*773 *potestate*.

In order to ensure the greatest return from the clan's flocks, Mamari had recourse to the Peul, just as when he wanted to exploit the Niger, he had taken over the Somono. That is how Peul settlements came to be established, called *furu-ba fla-u*, "Peul of the *furu-ba*." These are free people, but they are required to serve the clan. The ranks of these first Peul were increased by the arbitrary assignment of some of the *furu-ba dyon*'; some pastoralists by choice joined them; and the children of both groups were *furu-ba fla-a* by birth. This went on until there were enough of them for Ngolo Dyara to set up twelve Peul encampments. Mamari divided them into two tribes: the Dyana (people of Dyan), and the Bonguéna (people of Bongué). The *furu-* [563] *ba fla-u* speak Bambara, and very few of them can claim to be Peul in ethnic origin.

In the case of the Somono and the Peul, we have seen how the clan exploits the populace, for any people on which the clan forces its authority is treated in the same way. The clan requires a contribution, according to the means of livelihood from each of the population groups it assimilates. The system used for the fishermen and the shepherds was likewise used for the agriculturalists. [325]

In this case, too, the *furu-ba dyon*' were blended with the rural peoples. Although they were relegated to special villages, this isolation never prevented them from maintaining close relations with the people in the surrounding areas.

Here again, there were agriculturalists by adoption. Through time heredity consolidated the close union between these people of the agricultural caste and the clan.

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1. See in Chapter 7 below [not translated] how this expression is used as an insult in the quarrel between Ma-n-son and Bacari Dyan.

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Wherever there was need for it, the clan was represented by agents to guard its interests. Theoretically, these agents did not interfere in purely local matters; their duty was to avert or repress hostile acts, to ensure the payment of fees, and to see that the orders of the fama were carried out. Actually, however, claiming that the fulfillment of their mission required it, they modified everything to the advantage of the clan since they had the authority to do so.

They brought the weak under the aegis of the clan and also people of caste who were always in search of a powerful and generous master. They furthered the projects of the ambitious so long as they were in harmony with the policy of the clan. They transformed tributaries into allies and, in short, at all times assisted in furnishing large contingents for the clan.

Furthermore, many villages chose the "people of Ségou" as their chiefs, either of their own volition in order to acquire the good will of the fama or under open or dissimulated pressure. In this way, extensive regions near Ségou and even at some distance were incorporated.

Thus one can see how the fame of the power and strength of the fama spread far and wide, carried also by the Dyula, who were emissaries constantly on the move, and more generally by traders of every race and origin who came to Ségou to do business.

That is why a marabout of Sous, Ali ben Haidara, requested Mamari's aid when he was attacked in his mosque by Sultan Er Rechid. After Mamari had received two Spanish or Portuguese women from Ali, he permitted him to settle at Timbuktu and refused to turn him over to Er Rechid, who had dispatched troops to capture him (1). [326]

1. Tradition has it that, after a stay of several months, Ali returned to Sous, taking several thousand Blacks with him to attack Er Rechid. The latter had died in the meantime, so Ali released his mercenaries and they were rehired by Ismaïl, the new sultan. They are said to have formed the corps of the Abid, Negro soldiers especially assigned to guard the Sultan of Morocco.

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Ngolo Dyara's fame spread in the same way, even reaching Morocco. Jackson, the English consul at Mogador in 1806, speaks of him, under the corrupted name of Wooloo, as ruling over Djenné and Timbuktu.

3. Clan of the Massa-si or the "People of Kaarta"

In sum, this clan does not differ essentially from that of the people of Ségou, whose origin, development, and organization we have just described. Some of the characteristics peculiar to it are as follows.

Its origin is marked by some alliances, by fraternization, and oath or marriage, which involved Sounsan or Massa Kouloubali and Fa Siné Dyara, some Taraoré, and some Konaré. This small nucleus existed and prospered through banditry, and the proceeds were distributed in accordance with agreements among the participants.

Then the Kouloubali acquired a superior position by confiscating a caravan of slaves. They bound these slaves by oath and thus founded a kind of association (ton') in which the following elements can be discerned.

1. The fama, chosen from the Kouloubali-Massa-si family; the members of that family and their allies, among whom Fa Siné Dyara and his descendants held the highest position: Kasi Konaré and his descendants.

2. The ton'-dyon', that group of people who gave up their freedom to benefit the clan.

3. The clan does not seek territorial conquests, but rather seeks to subjugate peoples so as to derive the greatest possible profit from them, either by enslaving them or by forcing them to make various kinds of payments, hence the other element of the clan, the tributaries.

The historical account tells us that the region occupied or controlled by the members of the clan of the Massa-si was virtually always undergoing change and that the capital, too, was moved as circumstances required. [327] All of this shows the true nature of this organism; it was a parasite.

*173 In principle, it did not interfere with anything that was
614 not contrary to its own interests, and within those limits it allowed the conquered peoples to live as they pleased. In regions under its control, however, its operations were not without influence, and it employed measures analogous in every way to those applied by the clan of Ségou.

Organization and Operation

766 The following description of the funeral of a Massa-si
614 fama and the installation ceremonies for his successor will show us the principal customs and important personages in action.

When the fama dies, the leader of the slaves assumes
[768] command of the royal household; he has all the doors watched and summons the wives of the deceased and takes their jewels and any other objects of value. He places all the valuables in a hut, and he himself keeps the key.

While this is going on, the war drums (tabala) are broken, and the sofa are dispatched to inform members of the family.

When the heir presumptive arrives, the leader of the slaves shows him the body of the deceased, so he can officially identify it, and the collection of valuables so he will know that they have not disappeared. The sofa are then sent to the capital to announce the death of the fama in order that everyone will bring an offering for the funeral ceremonies. The gifts of food will be used for the funeral banquets, and the other gifts (silver, horses, fabrics, etc.) will become part of the royal treasure, even though they are theoretically supposed to be used as alms for the poor.

The body is washed, wrapped in a shroud, and then buried. Burial usually takes place within the royal house, at the place where the deceased liked to sit. If he is interred in the floor of a hut, the hut is abandoned after its door has been walled up.

The door of the central redoubt (tata) is also walled up, and a new opening is made.

766 White oxen are sacrificed on the tomb; their hides are
614 used to make new drumheads for the *tabala*, and the meat [328]
is offered to the manes of the deceased and then distributed
among members of the family, allies, familiars, etc. The
women wail, weep, and sing the praises of the deceased in com-
[786] pany with the people of caste who organize everything. Outside,
banquets and virtual orgies, complete with noisy dances and
songs, are organized in honor of the deceased.

This ceremony goes on for seven days.

614 At the close of this period, the new *fama* is publicly proclaimed. For this purpose, the leader of the slaves has the walled-up door of the *tata* reopened, and the whole company assembles in the large open area in front of the house of the *fama*. Those present include the newly elected *fama*, the members of the family of the Massa-si, allies, tributaries, heads of the *ton'-dyon'*, and the *sofa*.

[769] An ox has been sacrificed and offered to the manes of
[782] the defunct. Its hide is stretched in the center of an open area
surrounded by the crowd, and on it is spread out the sheepskin,
adorned with precious amulets, which has long served as a rug
for the *fama* of the Massa-si. Other precious family relics include
[301] the scarlet cap adorned with amulets, twists of gold for the ears,
and heavy silver bracelets.

The representative of the family of Kassi Konaré seats the newly elected *fama* on the sheepskin, puts the scarlet cap on his head, and adorns him with the gold earrings and silver bracelets. Then he makes a speech to the new *fama*, outlining the policies followed by his deceased predecessor and enumerating the desiderata of the people of the clan.

At this point the leader of the slaves prostrates himself
[567] before the new *fama* and places himself in his hands to show that
all the *ton'-dyon'* are loyal to him. He then presents individually
the principal groups of slaves, tributaries, etc.

Another ceremony brings the new *fama*, prominent Massa-si, their allies, the principal leaders of the slaves, and the tributaries to the wood sacred to the protective idol of the clan, where a reciprocal oath of loyalty is taken. A ritual communion follows.

614 Lengthy and noisy festivities, where dlo (millet beer) flows freely, food is abundant, and songs and dances are performed, [329] mark the general rejoicing. They last for seven days, but forty days must elapse before the new fama is deemed definitively installed.

In theory, the new fama must turn over the management of his own community to his heir presumptive. In fact, however, this retirement is usually fictitious. The fama intermingles his
[421] own property and the property he administers for the clan to such an extent that, in the last analysis, the Massa-si and everything dependent on them -- persons and things -- are an inherent and inseparable part of the clan. Under the cover of this confusion, the general and determined tendency of all the fama was to work unceasingly at confiscation from the clan for the benefit of the community of the Massa-si. At least they have managed to make their office absolutely hereditary, with no possibility of competition, and as a result the election is merely the public recognition as fama of whatever individual is considered by the Massa-si to be fa of their community.

This accounts for the superior role of the Massa-si. They are the provincial governors, heads of army corps, etc., thus confirming the seizure of all sorts of clan property by the Massa-si community.

The corps of sofa is particularly powerful, and through it the fama is easily able to counterbalance any attempted insubordination which sometimes shows itself among the heads of the ton'-dyon'. The leader of the slaves is, in any case, the personal tool of the fama.

184 These measures emphasize the close connection between the fama and the ton'-dyon'. On examination, this appears to be
614 much closer than at Ségou, because from the very beginning in Kaarta the fama assured himself of unquestioned pre-eminence over the ton'-dyon', and later he was able to remain free of the influence of the ton' and even to impose his authority by relying on the loyalty of the sofa.

There was another peculiarity in the fact that the principal allies of the Massa-si, the Konaré, called Kala-n-ka-u (people

from Kala), are priests of the protective idol of the clan. This clan brotherhood is likewise very strong and gives valuable support to the fama by guaranteeing everyone's loyalty to him. Each army corps, each segment of the clan of whatever sort, is organized as a branch of this brotherhood, so that not only everything [330] that belongs to the clan but actually everything that touches it in any way is subject to the same religious guardianship.

In Kaarta, as in Ségou, the ton'-dyon' are divided into chiefdoms of varying importance. With the fama, the principal chiefs of the ton'-dyon' form a kind of permanent council of the clan. On the other hand, the familiars of the fama, chosen at his pleasure, constitute a privy council whose influence is often in conflict with the decisions and desires of the council of the dyon'-kuntigi.

As at Ségou, the supreme leader of the slaves has a very important position, but aside from the fact that he is a tool of the fama, the homogeneity of the ton' prevents him from developing into as dangerous an antagonist as the ton'-masa at Ségou.

The general assemblies are also somewhat different from those at Ségou. They are made up of other elements: in addition to the fama and his people, the dyon'-kuntigi, and the ton'-dyon, there are the allies, whose role is not insignificant, and also some important tributaries, Diawara and Kagoro, who make their importance felt and thus influence the fama. Hence, especially when grave situations arise, these assemblies have a certain amount of independence which imposes decisions on the fama.

The revenue of the clan, generally speaking, does not differ from that at Ségou.

In conclusion and by way of comparison with the people of Ségou, the clan of the Massa-si appears to be more homogeneous because in the beginning it was not restricted by the framework of a pre-existent native institution. It was formed and developed freely through the initiative of the Massa-si family, which always jealously safeguarded its management.

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614 On the other hand, it closely resembles the clan of the Khasso region, on which we have published a detailed study (1).
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1. See Les Khassonké in the series Revue du Monde musulman.

Chapter 6

Islam

1. Islamism and Paganism

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797 It is a commonplace to say that the Bambara are implacable enemies of Islam.

However, history shows that for centuries the Bambara have been living in contact with Islam, that they maintain close relations with native communities of Islamic converts, and that they are willing to seek the good offices of marabouts of all races and ranks.

Are they, besides, as refractory to conversion as they are said to be? The chiefs of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta and some of their near connections and intimates, as well as other notables, have been practicing Islam. The Somono, who are of Bambara extraction, are faithful believers and, what is even more significant, they are fervent propagandists for Islam.

Actually, paganism and Islamism are not mutually antagonistic dogmas in the minds of the Bambara or of the Sudanese people in general, as many Europeans believe and state it to be. In these regions, Islamization has a counterpart which prepares the way for it and explains it, and that is the "sudanization" of Islam.

During his sojourn in Kaarta Raffenel tells of an interesting incident: "I had as a landlord a blacksmith named Niany, a grotesque personage, excessively naive and with a corresponding sense of logic, but a good fellow and very amusing. One day he

771 came to me to complain that [332] my Negroes were using a
777 satala (1) to take water from his jug.

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> 1. A kind of saucepan made of copper or tin, of European origin, used by Moslem Sudanese for their ritual ablutions.

" 'What difference does that make to you?' I asked him.

" 'What difference does it make!' he answered with an angry air.

"And with that he favored me with the following astonishing line of reasoning:

" 'Now you see, I am not a (Moslem) marabout and if the marabouts take water from my jar with the satala, the water that remains in the jar will necessarily be sanctified because it came into contact with that vessel. My children and I drink this water and, since we don't know how to salaam and don't fast, and since we eat pork, God (2) will punish us for having failed

> 2. That is, in Niany's mind, the nyana called Ngalla (Allah) by the Bambara.

to obey his orders. For, after all, any water that has touched a satala makes a marabout (3) of the person who drinks it. That is

> 3. That is, an initiate of Ngalla (Allah).

what I heard from my father."

776 The net result is that, on the whole, Ngalla (Allah) is regarded as one of the nyana which we have mentioned and for which the Bambara has a superstitious respect without for that matter being a worshiper. He avoids any contact with all that concerns the nyana, not because of hostility, but for fear of incurring its wrath on account of some impurity. Just as he may call upon any convenient nyana for aid, so he asks the help of

771 787 Ngalla through his priests, the marabouts. At other times he thinks he will get into Ngalla's good graces by taking part in the great Moslem festivals and by imitating the visible rites (4) of the faithful. He has not the faintest doubt but that he can produce the same effects as they do.

So it is that the pagan, deriving from Islam whatever his own concepts can make use of, "Sudanizes" it in the process. As a result, between the two poles of Islam and paganism, there exists an infinity of intermediate states which link the two and which, depending on the angle of observation, sometimes look like an Islamization of the Sudanese and, at other times, like a Sudanization of Islam.

Father Niany, of the blacksmiths' caste, was one of those [333] individuals who, being versed in the practice of native occultism, consider Islam as a rival Hermetism until the day when they realize that it can provide them with useful new magic power. Many are the blacksmiths, magicians like Niany, who have become Moslems for the purpose of getting their hands on the arsenal of magic which Islam brings into these lands.

787 [177] So it is that all the native brotherhoods have adopted divination by geomancy which was introduced by the Moslems and there is not a Bambara who does not on occasion consult the geomancer, known as *laturudala* or *kenyelala* (1) or the

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4. In the tale of the Hyena, given later, there is an example of this mimicry in the way in which those who follow the Hyena each pretend to be the *nyana* discovered by the Hyena (see Chapter 7 [not translated]).

1. Derived from *kenye* meaning "sand," and *la* meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the sand."

787 bugurigala (2). These three words are sufficient in themselves
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to illustrate the process of Sudanization. Although the first comes from a corruption of the Arabic word el tereb (earth), the other two are strictly Bambara in all respects. Besides, the manner in which the natives have altered the practice of geomancy is an illustration of the same process.

771 797 It may therefore be concluded that, in certain respects, Islam has strengthened paganism. For example, the pagans commonly believe that an illiterate geomancer, who is nevertheless an expert in this type of divination, will obtain the same results as a learned marabout who is guided by the book of Er Zenati. As a result, a well-known laturadala enjoys special prestige because of the fact that his prognostications are corroborated by a book, and the same fact accounts in part for the influence of the priests of the brotherhoods.

We are thus able to verify the contacts between Islam and the paganism of the Bambara who are the subject of this study.

693 The historical tales related in the foregoing show the continuous relations which existed between the native chiefs and the pious and renowned marabouts. Whenever a legal dispute arose which could not be settled by pagan arbitration, the last recourse was an appeal for judgment or conciliation to a marabout, who was always sought out and greeted with deference. Mamari, Tonmassa, Ngolo and Ma-n-son's sons all had occasion to make such appeals in some most embarrassing situations.

[334] Further, on occasions when they hoped to bring off some questionable deal or to improve their prospects, the chiefs were also wont to call on a marabout. Mamari did so against the Massa-si Foco-koro and so did Ngolo when he was anxious to make sure that his fame would survive him.

In matters of judicial arbitration, it appears that the marabout derives his authority rather more, perhaps, from his

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2. Derived from buguri meaning "dust," and da meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the dust."

613 reputation for integrity and impartiality than for his knowledge of the books. In other matters, however, his Moslem esoterism is the quality most highly valued.

771 797 It is assumed, besides, that the high priests and other persons of note should be initiated into Islamic matters, which seem to be regarded simply as a branch of occultism to which such persons are especially addicted. The Kouloubali, the Dyara, and other lords of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta have practiced Islamism (1) without betraying paganism; on the contrary, by adding to it the luster of these foreign mysteries, it can be said that they have "Sudanized" Islam as completely as possible. Neither Mamari nor Ngolo, for example, was in the least embarrassed by his Moslem practices. Both remained high priests of their tutelary idols and simply borrowed (2) the external "manner" of Islam.

The bloodthirsty Dékoro was a Moslem of the same type. He was preparing to perform his ablutions, followed by his faithful blacksmith, at the very moment when he was assassinated by Tonmassa. And the blacksmith was actually carrying one of the satala which father Niany regarded as so compromising.

614 797 Naturally, the adoption of Islam was never allowed to create any political deviation which might compromise the interests of the clan. That would be treason, and such was the case for Touro-koro Mari. He was put to death not because he was converted to Islam, but because he had enfeoffed himself to El Hadj Omar to such an extent that the clan's independence was threatened.

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1. In the Sudanese manner, of course.

2. This borrowing is done with the same awkwardness as that seen when a Black puts on a suit of European clothes which happens to come into his possession. The ease with which an occasional native can adapt it is exceptional.

771 797 It should be noted that this acceptance of things Islamic was not imposed on the Bambara by fanatical or warlike converters; in any case it [335] goes back to a time that was long before the exploits of the "people of Macina" and of "those of Fouta."

Mungo Park says that, when he passed through the area, half the Kaarta army were Moslems, and we are even better informed by Raffenel. Of course, it is in general only a kind of "Sudanized" Islam, but that is already a very important step.

Raffenel observes that the people of the Massa-si clan added a much-feared nyana of the boli to the cult of the ancestors which is common to all the Bambara. He further points out
776 that all the Bambara recognize Ngalla (Allah) and that, although they practice Islam only casually, they distinguish between believers and infidels among themselves. The Kouloubali especially consider themselves to be Moslems and affect to behave as such.

From this derives a curious spectacle giving evidence of a kind of dualism that is very suggestive. The general assembly of what one might call the ruling elements of the Massa-si clan took place at the festival of Baïram, and the Kouloubali, the chiefs of the clan, their relatives, their allies, the principal slave leaders and other dignitaries never failed to attend and to take part in the ceremonies in honor of their clan's tutelary nyana, since the meeting was especially devoted to a renewal of the oath of loyalty to this same idol. Now Raffenel reports that the Moslem festival of the sacrifice of the lamb was also held in the midst of the general rejoicing. It was, to be sure, directed by the Soninké marabouts, but most of the Bambara took part in it, imitating the motions of the officiating priests to the best of their ability and often sacrificing a lamb.

And Raffenel remarks: "Kaffirs though they are, the Bambara nevertheless show respect for the marabouts. Thus, for the festival of Baïram, the Sarakole (1) marabouts, otherwise known

(1) Who call themselves Soninké but whom the Bambara call Marka.

771 797 as sila, also gather at Keghé (2) and address prayers to heaven for the preservation of the king's life and the glory of his reign. Custom requires the king to make rich presents to the sila on this occasion."

[336] This dualism, which appears strange and which has sometimes been interpreted as a result of Islamic influence during an earlier period of Moslem supremacy, is, on the contrary and without any doubt whatever, an essential characteristic of the native milieu. In this milieu, in theory, all religions can flourish without hindrance and even with the benevolent assent of the faithful believers of the various sects, if one may so describe the adepts in these innumerable nyana. It is certain that all religions, a priori and by their very nature, enjoy particular esteem among the Blacks.

[609] In the mind of the native, a foreigner is particularly dangerous because he is assumed to possess mysterious magic powers. Many Sudanese legends bear witness to the Black's belief that encounters with foreigners are accompanied by combats whose outcome depends entirely on magic. As a result of this state of mind, as soon as it is apparent that the stranger's cult brings no calamities in its wake, not only is the cult tolerated, but some of the natives even adopt it, at first as a kind of addition to their own cults and then gradually they become converts.

Islam has also profited from this state of mind. With the external and public manifestations of his cult the Moslem easily impresses the Bambara who, as we have seen, are constantly obsessed with the supernatural. How could they fail to be struck by this divinity called Allah, who is endlessly proclaimed all day long, and by religious observances which are displayed before the public: ablutions, prayers pronounced aloud in as strange language, rosaries, mosques which are often monumental, great and impressive ceremonies?

Further, the fact that Islam is supported by the written word of its books gives it an element of certainty that is lacking in the native cults.

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2. Then the royal residence of the Massa-si chiefs.

771 797 Finally, there is no doubt that a learned Moslem, who is well-dressed, who does not get drunk (1) and who behaves with dignity (1) [see footnote above] greatly impresses the pagans; his mere example creates a favorable atmosphere for Islam.

Therefore some of the natives, trying to imitate outward appearances, find themselves drawn toward Islam, whose rites they practice without even having any desire to be converted. The mere fact of dressing in white, wearing a white cap, going about [337] in sandals, conspicuously telling one's beads, salaaming while muttering incomprehensible words or continually repeating "Allah Akoubar," and participating in important ceremonies, suffices to give an individual an elegant air without in the least interfering with pagan traditions.

The Islamism noted by Mungo Park in the Bambara army and among the Kouloubali and other dignitaries, is an example of this simple formalism. On the other hand, the Bambara, with- 789 out exception, are eternally on the lookout for magic formulas: talismans, amulets, remedies and procedures of all kinds. And Islam provides a whole arsenal of magic which is very popular with the Blacks.

In addition to all these attractions, Islam seems to the Bambara to have institutions which are not basically opposed to their own. It tolerates polygamy, divorce, repudiation and slavery. As practiced over a long period by the natives, who have skilfully Sudanized it, it is adapted without difficulty to all sorts of situations. The blacksmith, that master of accultism, scarcely has to change at all when he becomes a marabout; he merely acquires some new manners which enable him to preside at birth, circumcision, marriage, death or other social or family ceremonies in the name of Islam. However, this is an Islam so close to paganism that it differs only in name. Allah, under the name of Ngalla, has taken his place in the Bambara pantheon alongside the other nyana, and the only distinction is that he has his own "manner."

1. At least in public.

771 797 Incidentally, this "manner" possesses, under some circumstances, advantages which encourage adhesion to Islam. Slaves belonging to true Moslem believers do well to give clear [567] evidence of their new faith if they wish to obtain their freedom. Ngolo made use of this means according to the chronicle of Ségou.

Women and, in general, the "weak people" often claim conversion -- only rarely deep or sincere -- in order to escape from the arbitrary and rigorous nature of the custom governing them.

2. The agents of Islam

797 As regards the people with whom we are here concerned, it can be said that the center, which directly or indirectly has [338] had the greatest influence in spreading Islam, is the city of Dia (1).

1. A city on the left bank of the Niger, in the present-day province of Macina.

Dia is certainly the oldest metropolis of Islam in western Sudan, but this was an accommodating kind of Islam, which compromised easily with native customs and gave a large role to magic.

"The characteristic of the marabouts of Dia is their scarcely disguised tendency to rely on Islamic magic. The city has always been considered the great center for the production of amulets in the valley of the Middle Niger" (Marty, *Études sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan* [Studies on Islam and the tribes of the Sudan] Vol. 4).

These marabouts belong to very diverse races, but those of the Marka are dominant and with them should be considered their confreres, the Bozo, on whose training the Marka have always exerted a preponderant influence. The Somono marabouts usually come from one or the other of these two races.

All of them are linked in one way or another with high priests from Moorish or Peul Islam and, through them or their emissaries, are allied with one or another of the brotherhoods.

797 However, the doctrinal aspect is relatively much less important than the considerable consequences brought about by the Sudanization accomplished over a long period and in different ways by these agents who have been active in and intimately mingled with local life.

Foreigners, such as Berbers and Arabs, who have appeared to enjoy a certain degree of predominance during their lifetime, have been absorbed in the end by the native milieu: their children belong completely to it and, as a result, lose entirely their independence.

Such are the major lines of influence which should not be lost from sight, for they dominate the work of peaceful Islamization which gives Islam such a hold that like its original propagandists, it has, in fact, gradually taken on an entirely native physiognomy.

This peaceful propagation and diffusion have been at work at all times and it is because of their action that there spreads an Islamic atmosphere along both banks of the Middle Niger.

The strong measures taken by the "people of Macina" and also [339] by the "people of Fouta" were far from being efficacious and sometimes they even had to be compromised. It must be conceded, however, that the "people of Macina" did achieve certain widespread and lasting results, thanks to the methodical and prolonged labors (1) of Sheik Ahmadou Bari which resulted in conversions long since prepared for by the surrounding atmosphere.

On the other hand, the sectarian fanaticism of the "people of Fouta" forced the fearful to embrace the Moslem faith temporarily and without any spirit of conversion, but only to escape imminent peril. Once the danger had passed, everyone resumed his independence.

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797 The Somono families, such as the Kané, the Dyiré and the Tyéro, which historical tradition associates with the earliest

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1. For these labors see Monographie de Djénné [Monograph on Djenné].

*773 events of the clan of Ségou, are still in existence in the area
797 and their members are regarded as enlightened and zealous Moslems. The chronicle tells us that the chiefs of these families were well-known marabouts by the beginning of the seventeenth century. Soma Kouloubali accepted the hospitality of Alfa Sérou Kané (2). Almami Ousman Dyiré, who resided at Ségou-koro, went to live at Togou in order to evade the inconvenience of being too close to Mamari Kouloubali. The Tyéro family, said to have come from the Bobo country in Mamari's time, owed their important position to one of their leaders, Bari Tyéro, who was chief of the Somono.

These three families, Kané, Dyiré and Tyéro, which are regarded as essentially Somono, undoubtedly descend from mingled Soninké and Bozo stocks, for a change of nationality through preference is common. The Dyiré of Ségou, a corruption of whose name gave the name to the N-Guiré of Koulikoro, were originally related to the Bozo, Dyité or Guité of Kabara, who are themselves of Soninké origin, as are the Guissé of Gadiaga.

The Kané are even closer to this Soninké origin. The Tyéro are connected with a Bozo root at Pondori (in the Djenné region).

These champions of Islam on the right bank of the Niger are seconded, on the left bank, by [340] Karamoko Ousman Dyari at Nyamina; the Khomma and the Diakhaté at Sansanding; and the sherifs, also at Sansanding, led by Sherif Ismaïl.

Along the river, the Bozo and the Somono are necessarily predominant, but their local importance should not obscure the fact that both derive from the Soninké who, along the whole

2. One of his descendants, Mamadou Kané, served as Ngolo's intermediary when the latter was trying to get back into Mamari's good graces. Later, one of the three arbiters called upon to make peace between Ngolo's sons was the Somono marabout, Birama Kané, who lived at Sien.

*173 length of the Niger valley from Bammako to Mopti, represent
797 the oldest center of Moslem proselytism.

In the same period, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is the Soninké who are Islamizing the whole country where the Massa-si clan is going to be the dominant force. This clan will suffer vicissitudes which will cause it to be constantly on the move, but it will never actually leave the area brought under Islam by the Soninké. Indeed, little by little, some elements of the clan will be led to become Moslems, in the native manner of course, that is, by Sudanizing whatever aspects of Islam they feel will give a cachet of superiority to their oligarchy.

The empire of Sheik Ahmadou Bari forced the Bambara under its control to adopt Moslem ways, and for many the conversion was a real one. For our purposes here, we cite the Bambara collectivities which constitute the major portion of the population in the cantons of Dérari and Femay (in the circle of Djenné). The Bozo were likewise greatly affected by the action of Sheik Ahmadou Bari, and the Somono perhaps even more so.

In the case of the "people of Fouta," they conquered the people of Ségou and Kaarta but their rule was unfortunate for Islam.

El Hadj Omar sent from Farabana a messenger to the Massa-si to enjoin them to become Moslems. As we have just seen, the Massa-si had already practiced Islam in the Sudanese fashion. Thus, without abandoning any of their native customs, they had assumed those outward aspects of the Moslem religion which they considered dignified.

The ultimatum issued by El Hadj Omar struck them as a challenge and they replied by putting the messenger to death.

Omar put his army on the march against the Bambara. He defeated them at Koulou, crossed the Senegal at Soutoukoulé, [341] entered Kouniakari, crossed the Séro, soon reached Yélimané and, without stopping, took Tango and Dioka. Finally at Simbi, he received the surrender of Mamadi Kandia, chief of the Kouloubali; Karouga, chief of the Diawara; Nouhoun and Sambonné, chiefs of the Peul of Bakounou; and Mahoundé, chief of the Kagoro.

*173 797 Omar then proceeded to Nioro, where he confiscated the treasure of the Massa-si, put to death the children of Mamadi Kandia and imposed Islam on the people of Nioro. In particular, he ordered polygamous individuals to keep only four of their wives and to turn over the rest to his *talibés*.

These victories and the excesses that accompanied them made inevitable the revolt of the native populations. Omar was then besieged at Nioro, while the rest of his army was blocked in the Kolomina area. He managed to raise the siege and get away to aid his people at Kolomina. In spite of a serious defeat at Kandiari, he succeeded in freeing Kolomina.

Thence he returned to Nioro and, after putting Mamadi Kandia to death, succeeded in quelling the Bambara revolt. Then Kaarta was conquered and Omar settled at Nioro, which he fortified.

The Diawara, aroused and led by Karouga, revolted. Omar defeated them at Diabigué, was halted at Bambéro, but finally put down this rebellion of the Kingui region.

Then he entered into negotiations with Ahmadou, Sultan of Macina, hoping to arrange an alliance to make a joint attack on Ségou. Ahmadou refused and marched against Omar, only to be defeated at Kassakaré.

Omar then made a deal with Touro-koro Mari, the chief of Ségou, but the latter, accused of betraying his clan, was put to death by Kégné-Mari and replaced by Ali (1856).

175 797 'It was at this point that Omar came up against the French at Médina. For a period of three years his activity was limited to the west by the affairs of Médina, Koundian and Guémou (1856-1859).

In 1859, revolt again threatened in Kaarta. Omar left Nioro, which he turned over to his devoted follower, Moustapha. Through Bagoïna, he passed around the Diangounté region to fall on the Bambara of Kaarta and Bélédougou at Marikoya. The capture of Marikoya was echoed far and wide. This agglomeration was a kind of capital of [342] paganism, and it is said that Omar, rushing about the burning village, kept running into magic objects which had been scattered about for the purpose of killing him. He touched each of these objects with the tip of

175 his iron-shod staff and pronounced a formula of exorcism; at
797 once the object threw itself in the flames.

After his defeat, Karouga, chief of the Diawara, fled to Ségou. He persuaded Ali to give him an army and marched against Omar.

The latter defeated him in the northern part of Bélédougou.

The Bambara of the Bélédougou and Fadougou areas were likewise beaten, as was a new army from Ségou which had come to help them.

Since there was nothing left with which to feed his people at Marikoya, Omar decided to march on Ségou. An episode, characteristic of these times of banditry, marked his departure. He decided to abandon the women whom his faithful followers had taken from the conquered because they were useless mouths to feed, so he turned the poor creatures over to the fetishists.

Omar entered Myamina in April, 1860. When he had exhausted the provisions in that region he marched on Oïtalà, the village of Ali's son Tata and captured it. Sansanding was delivered to him by the Khomma people because of their hatred for the Cissé people.

Ahmadou, Sultan of Macina, wrote Omar to ask him to leave the country and then sent an army against him. This force, commanded by Ahmadou's uncle, Ba Lobba, reached Kani, below Sansanding on the Niger, and then Ali, chief of Ségou, joined Ba Lobba at Tio.

Omar crossed the Niger in January, 1861, defeated the allies and entered Ségou on March 10, 1861.

The two Bambara clans of Ségou and Kaarta were now finally defeated.

Within a few months of his arrival at Ségou, Omar received the submission of the former Bambara officials: army chiefs and territorial chiefs. Among other conditions, he imposed on them the following orders: they were to shave their heads; to stop drinking fermented beverages; to eat no more unclean meats; to make the ritual prayers; and for each of them, to have no more than four legitimate wives. He demanded hostages from the sons or brothers of chiefs or other notables, and incorporated them into his sofa.

175 When Omar left Ségou in April, 1862, [343] to march
797 against Handallahi, he left his son Ahmadou in command,
backed by a guard of 1,500 tabilés and the support of the Bambara chiefs who had sworn loyalty to him.

3. The Results

175 It is usual to consider Omar's warlike enterprises solely
from the point of view of Islam and to attribute their purpose
614 and result to Peul proselytism. Such an explanation is dubious
797 at best and in any case is very ambiguous. This question, however, involves a detailed study which is beyond the scope of this work, so we shall limit ourselves here to the subject at hand.

Omar replaced the clans of Kaarta and Ségou with the clan of the "people of Fouta," claiming that his conquests were due to a desire to convert the Bambara to Islam. In reality, this Moslem label did not change the native customs in the least; the clan of the people of Fouta proved to be conditioned and dominated by the same principles as the clans of Kaarta and Ségou.

The composition of this clan is a proof of this similarity. Omar and his community are at the head of an association made up of the tabilés, the people of Fouta, the usual sofa and ton'-dyon', and the tuburu, who are people converted to Islam by force. All these people, linked by material interests, are brought together by a common faith. Leaders of the slaves hold important military or political posts. What is there in all this that is not already to be found in what we have discussed before? The means used to gain power are identical, and the only thing that differs is the label. It is claimed that Islam instead of paganism constitutes the motivating force.

In general, the evolution of this clan differs not at all from that of the clans already discussed; it can be described in the same terms.

175 A man of remarkable intelligence and powers of leader-
797 ship, Omar would probably have given his achievements the cohesion and stability needed to make them endure if he had lived long enough. However, he died too soon before he had

175 reached a point of limiting, at least temporarily, the extent
797 of his conquests.

He left his son Ahmadou to face the worst possible difficulties. Ahmadou had neither Omar's authority nor his prestige to impose them on the chiefs of Fouta whom his [344] father had drawn into his orbit. Therefore they formed a party of malcontents who intrigued against him at the behest and for the profit of his various adversaries or enemies.

He was forced to deal with serious treason fomented against him within his own family by his brothers. He managed to get rid of some of the latter by criminal means. He was one of those *fa* who, at once weak and cruel, are incapable either of making their authority acceptable or of imposing it in case of need. As a result, Ahmadou was never supported by the confident or devoted affection of his own people.

At the mercy of the implacable and changeable machinations of a small group of his intimates, he was a puppet in the hands of these intriguers.

The occasionally successful expeditions which he led against his enemies and which, at the same time, served to satisfy his subjects' need for booty, had no important political significance. This was because they were carried out without any careful planning which would have made it possible to profit from them by taking local conditions into account.

The net result was that this long reign represented simply a long period of unrest among the members of the clan, accompanied by a brutal exploitation of the conquered people.

What could Islam gain from such a regime? If we set aside, as outside the sphere of our subject, the matter of doctrinal influence which was the work of Omar, it can be stated that the domination of the *fouta-n-ke* was an unfortunate development for the spread of Islam among the Bambara people with whom we are here concerned. No adequate organization, comparable to that of Sheik Ahmadou Bari at Macina, was formed to discipline the pagans and to interest them, especially to link them to the destinies of the clan of the Fouta people. The fanaticism of the *talibé*, the ferocious brutality of the *sofa*

175 797 and the political incoherence of the *fama* all combined to keep the Bambara in a state of perpetual rebellion, either open or latent. Islam itself was not responsible for this state of affairs; rather, it was the incompetence and tyranny of its agents and the political regime in general which were at the root of the implacable hostility of the Bambara.

797 Islam prospers during peaceful eras. In itself it is not in the least antipathetic to pagans; on the contrary, the Bambara live perfectly harmoniously with the faithful, who, for their part, [345] successfully accommodate their brand of Islam to local native customs. That is why the Somono, the Bozo and the Marka are the best-qualified and most successful propagandists for Islam in the Bambara country. It was through their effort that, little by little, Moslem influence slowly penetrated the native atmosphere as if through a process of absorption.

True conversion occurs most often in an unconscious manner as a result of the Sudanization of Islam, whose endless ramifications form a kind of network of capillaries through which the Moslem sap in turn finds its way and, in the process, transforms the native temperament, often without the latter's awareness. The result of this process is a religion which is Islam only in name but which, being perfectly adapted to the purpose, has exercised, still exercises and will for a long time continue to exercise a vital role in the development of native society.

Plate 1

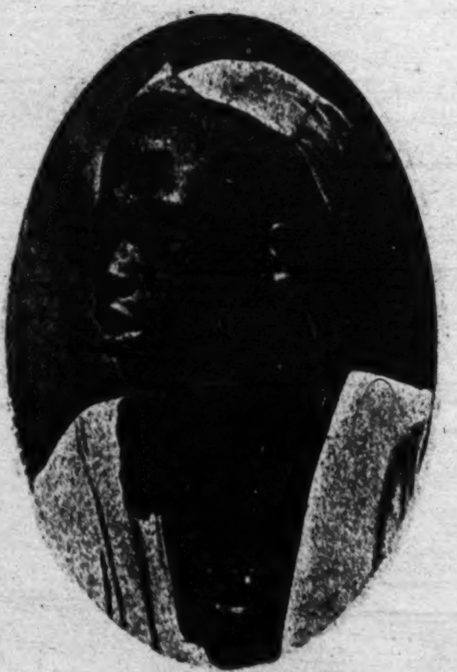

Fig. 1. Young Bambara from Djenné Region.

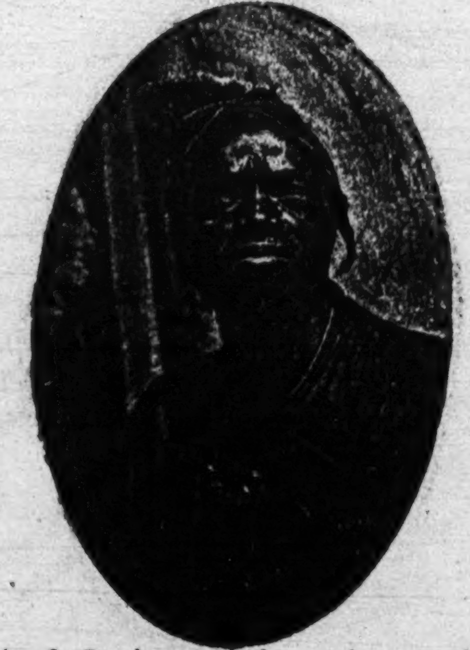

Fig. 2. Bambara with the cap known as bamma da (crocodile's tail), Djenné Region.

[End Plate 1]

Plate 2

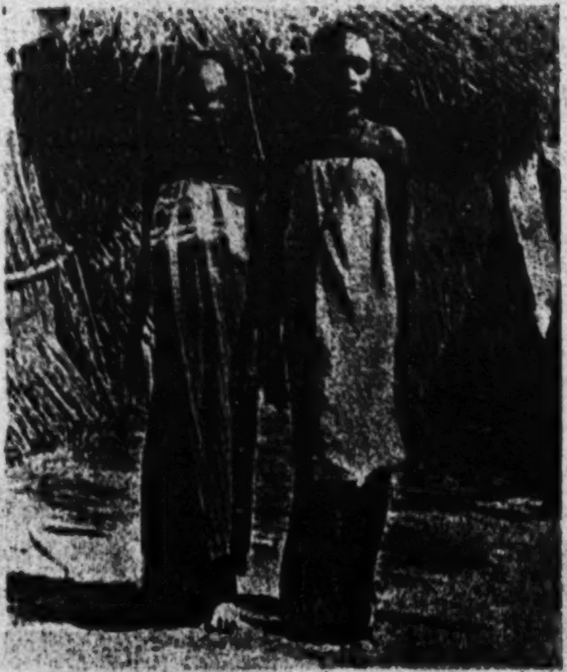

Fig. 3. Bambara girls in outdoor dress, Djenné Region.

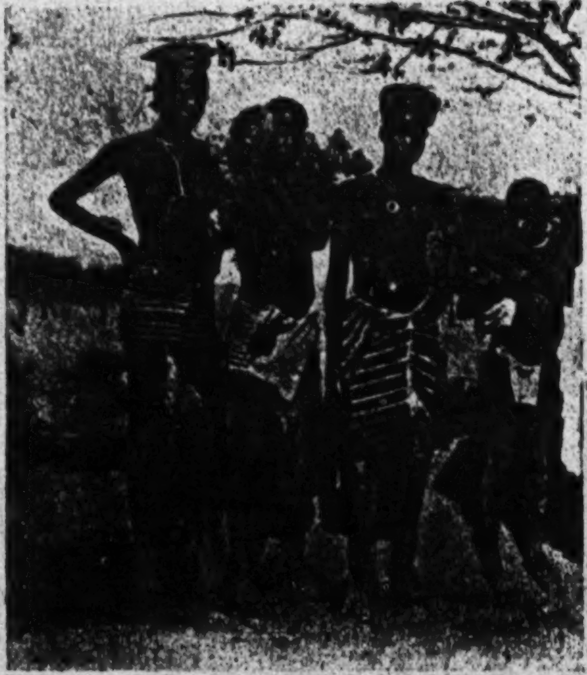

Fig. 4. Bambara women and girls about to set down burdens carried on their heads, Djenné Region.

[End Plate 2]

Plate 3

[End Plate 3]

[304]

Fig. 5. Bambara with his cheeks slashed in imitation of the tattooing characteristic of the slaves of the Kouloubali, Djenné region.

142

[854]

Fig. 6. Woman and child, Djenné Region.

Plate 4

242
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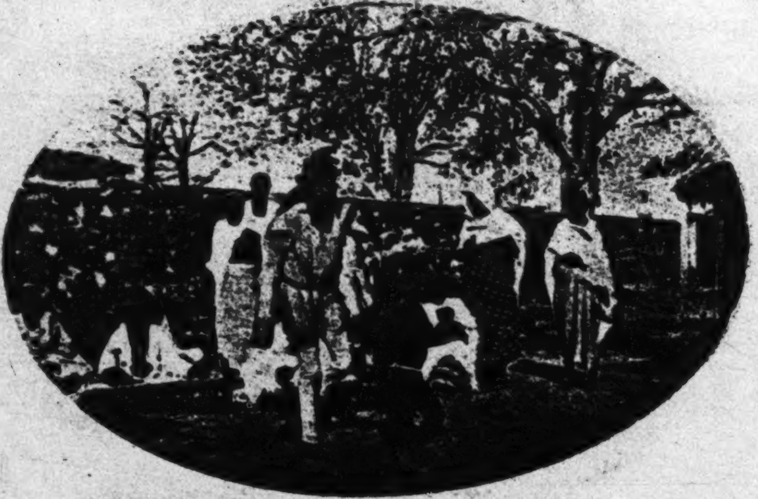

Fig. 7. Penperenni, small dancers in costume.

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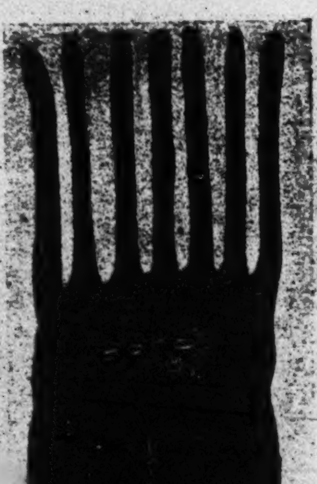

Fig. 8. N'Tomo mask decorated with cowries.

[End Plate 4]

2: Monteil
64

Bambara FA8

/Because of the equivalence of the extended kinship group with governmental authority among the Bambara, most information on organization and activities of a political nature has been assigned to category 614. --Analyst/

2: Monteil
173

Bambara FA8

/For information on legendary history see category 116, pages 9, 11-13, 16-21, 23-131, 322-330, 333, 335-336, 340-341, 354-360, 373-376.--Analyst/

2: Monteil FA8 Bambara

Gouvernement Général de l'Afrique Occidentale Française

PUBLICATIONS DU COMITÉ D'ÉTUDES HISTORIQUES ET SCIENTIFIQUES

LES BAMBARA

du Ségou et du Kaarta

(ÉTUDE HISTORIQUE, ETHNOGRAPHIQUE ET LITTÉRAIRE
D'UNE PEUPLADE DU SOUDAN FRANÇAIS)

PAR

CHARLES MONTEIL

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LES BAMBARA
DU SÉGOU ET DU KAARTA

[p. i]

Table des matières

Pages
INTRODUCTION.. 1
Chapitre I. — ORIGINE ET HISTOIRE.................... 3
    Préliminaires et carte.............................. 3
    1. Origine... 7
    2. Histoire : Histoire de l'Empire du Ségou. — Histoire de l'Empire du Kaarta.................. 21
Chapitre II. — LES CONCEPTS........................ 119
    1. Croyances.. 119
    2. Morale et Coutume............................ 129
    3. Mantique, Religion et Magie.................. 133
Chapitre III. — LES COMMUNAUTÉS.................. 157
    1. Généralités...................................... 157
    2. Communauté patriarcale........................ 163
    3. Communauté familiale.......................... 194
    4. Rapports entre Communautés.................. 222
Chapitre IV. — LES CONFRÉRIES...................... 234
    1. Fin de l'Enfance................................ 234
    2. Généralités sur les Confréries................ 250
    3. Quelques grandes Confréries.................. 269
Chapitre V. — LES CLANS............................ 287
    1. Généralités...................................... 287
    2. Clan des gens de Ségou........................ 290
    3. Clan des Massa-si ou des gens du Kaarta....... 326
Chapitre VI. — L'ISLAM.............................. 331
    1. Islamisme et paganisme........................ 331
    2. Agents de l'Islam.............................. 337
    3. Résultats.. 343
Chapitre VII. — TEXTES BAMBARA.................. 346
INDEX BIBLIOGRAPHIQUE............................ 402

[p ii]

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Introduction

D'après le recensement rapporté plus loin, les Bambara sont plus de 500.000, formant par ce nombre même l'un des plus importants groupes de population de l'Ouest africain.

Ce groupe manque d'homogénéité ; cependant, en plus de la langue, qui forme à vrai dire sa caractéristique propre, il possède un fond de coutumes communes — du moins pour les grandes lignes — à tous ses membres. Il est possible de dégager ce fond coutumier commun en étudiant une fraction de ce groupe : tel est l'objet du présent ouvrage.

Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta, qui nous occupent ici, offrent sur leurs congénères cette particularité remarquable d'avoir constitué des empires renommés. A l'histoire de ces empires, déjà connue par les travaux de mes devanciers, j'ajoute une nouvelle documentation surtout par une chronique inédite de l'empire du Ségou. Cette chronique présente, entre autre intérêt, celui d'être due entièrement à un de ces traditionnistes dont l'érudition, aussi sûre et précise que le permet le milieu indigène, mérite de retenir l'attention. Tout compte fait, ce livre n'est que le commentaire détaillé de cette chronique, appuyé tant sur les connaissances que j'ai acquises sur place au cours de mes fonctions administratives, que sur les renseignements contenus dans les ouvrages mentionnés dans l'index bibliographique ci-après.

Il convient de remarquer que si, à l'aide de ces documents et connaissances, il est en somme facile de décrire la coutume en se limitant à des généralités, c'est, par contre, une tâche ardue et délicate que de définir la coutume appliquée à des manifestations sociales déterminées et de tenter la découverte des principes qui animent ces manifestations.

D'autant plus que l'expérience acquise ailleurs, au lieu d'être un secours, forme souvent un écueil aussi dangereux qu'attirant. Ainsi, l'on est naturellement porté à appliquer aux institutions indigènes les noms et les caractéristiques fondamentales d'institutions, européennes notamment, que l'on tient, *a priori*, pour similaires. Transportée de la sorte sur un plan étranger à sa genèse et à son évolution, la coutume indigène est déformée ; elle ne peut garder sa physionomie propre que dans le plan indigène où elle s'est constituée et développée.

Toutefois, il ne me paraît pas obligatoire de rejeter en bloc la terminologie française qui nous est familière ; il suffit de lui attribuer, en tant que de besoin, une compréhension adéquate à son nouveau rôle ; outre qu'il serait fastidieux de faire usage exclusif de termes indigènes, il serait parfois très embarrassant et même impossible d'exprimer par ce seul moyen certaines abstractions, par exemple, que l'analyse met au jour et que l'indigène ignore.

Visiter la coutume dans son intimité exige donc de la méthode et de l'expérience, si l'on veut dégager de cette recherche des faits précis, présentant entre eux quelques relations logiques. Quant au résultat ainsi obtenu, il n'est certes pas négligeable : il atteste qu'originairement, peut-être, depuis des temps reculés en tout cas, l'âme indigène suit une voie qu'elle s'est choisie et que nous soupçonnons plus que nous ne la repérons, car les faits concrets qui la jalonnent sont susceptibles d'interprétations diverses.

Aujourd'hui, désemparée par l'effondrement, sous nos coups, du cadre social où elle s'épanouissait, l'âme indigène élabore, sur son propre fond, une nouvelle spiritualité directrice ; elle utilise même à cette fin les apports de nos civilisations dans la mesure où ils sont en accord avec ses tendances profondes. Et la vie actuelle du Noir n'est que le reflet de cette mystique : dès lors, quelle que soit notre volonté et quelles que soient les apparences, dans tous les domaines, le Noir demeure dominé par son passé.

S'il en était besoin, cette constatation suffirait à justifier la présente étude car, plus particulièrement en ce qui concerne la coutume, rien de ce qui a été n'est négligeable puisque le présent et le futur sont sous la dépendance étroite et inévitable de ce passé.

Orthez, le 22 février 1923

CHAPITRE Ier

Origine et Histoire

[p.9]

PRÉLIMINAIRES

Les Bambara occupent actuellement, et depuis longtemps déjà, en masses compactes, une vaste région à cheval sur le Niger et qui comprend la plus grande partie du territoire des cercles de Bammako, Bougouni et Ségou, dans la colonie française du Haut-Sénégal et Niger.

D'après le recensement (1), voici quelle est la répartition des Bambara dans cette colonie :

Cercle de	Bougouni	146.966
—	Bammako	104.216
—	Ségou	109.758
—	Sikasso	80.000
—	Kita	2.889
—	Bafoulabé	2.100
—	Koutiala	30.055
—	Goumbou	22.110
—	San	20.108
—	Sokolo	19.996
—	Diénné	17.247
—	Niafounké	16.000
—	Nioro	9.355
—	Mopti	7.277
—	Bandiagara	928
	Ensemble	588.450

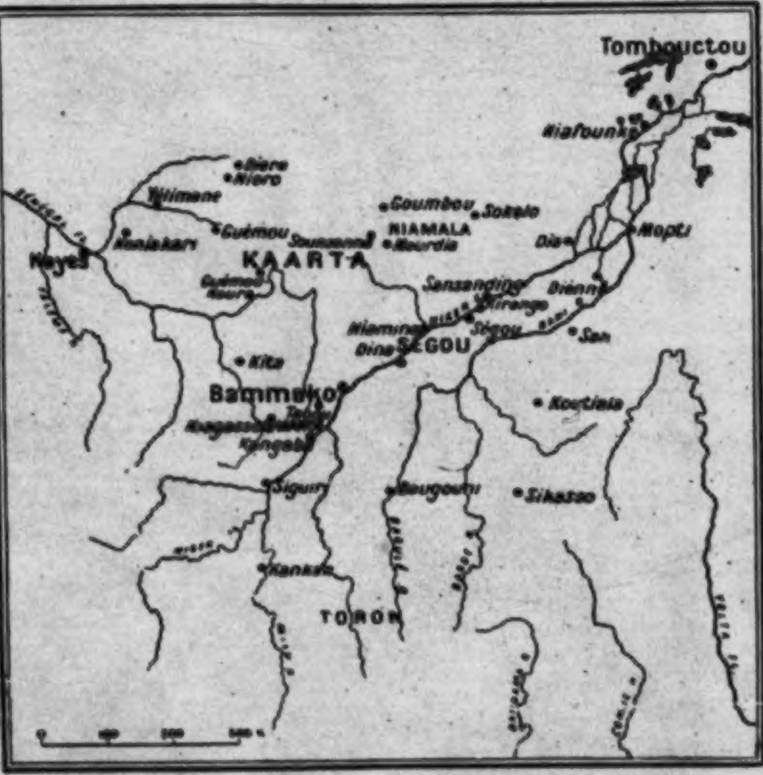
C'est, après celui des Mossi, le plus fort groupement de la colonie du Haut-Sénégal et Niger.

Il ne s'agit ici que des Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta, remarque déjà faite que, leur histoire particulière mise à part, l'exposé de leurs concepts et de leurs institutions vaut, dans les grandes lignes, pour tous les Bambara.

---

(1) *In Haut-Sénégal et Niger*, par M. Delafosse.

Il est du reste très mal aisé de distinguer rigoureusement quels Bambara appartiennent au Kaarta et au Ségou, car ces deux expressions ne correspondent à aucune circonscription territoriale bien définie et quand un indigène parle du Kaarta ou du Ségou, il donne à ces termes une compréhension généralement vague et cela s'explique.


Tombouctou
Niafounké
Diara
Nioro
Yélimane
Goumbou
Sokolo
NIAMALA
Mourdia
Koniakari
Guémou
Kayes
KAARTA
Dia
Mopti
Sansanding
Djenné
Niamina
Ségou
San
Dina
SÉGOU
Kita
Bammako
Koutiala
Siguiri
Bougouni
Sikasso
Kankan
TORON

Je l'ai dit ailleurs (1), étymologiquement le mot que nous écrivons et prononçons Kaarta signifie « pays des Karé », ou plus strictement « la collectivité des Karé ». De tout lieu où sont des Karé l'on dit, en soninké, *Karu-ta*, contracté en *Karta*, dont nous avons fait Kaarta par audition fautive du premier *a*, qui est long. Le mot Kaarta ne désigne donc une région que par rapport à ceux qui l'occupent et n'a que par extension valeur d'expression géographique. Chez les indigènes, cette appellation est appliquée à diverses contrées, dans l'aire qui s'étend de Goumbou à Koniakari, de Nioro au fleuve Sénégal. Nos cartes situent le Kaarta entre le Kingui au Nord, le Diomboko à l'Ouest, le Sénégal et le Bélédougou au Sud, le Kaniaga à l'Est : seulement tous ces noms de cantons ont eux-mêmes une signification flottante.

---

(1) Dans mon ouvrage *Les Khassonké*, paru dans la collection de la *Revue du Monde Musulman*.

Dans le cadre du présent ouvrage, le mot Kaarta prend un sens spécial. Des Bambara qui fondèrent un clan à Sounsanna, dans le pays des Karé, l'on a dit : en soninké, *Karta-n-ko* ; en bambara, *Karta-n-ka-u* « ceux du Kaarta ». De là, Kaarta est devenu le nom des pays occupés par ce clan, dans ses nombreux déplacements.

Quant aux « gens de Ségou », il en va un peu différemment. C'est de Ségou, la capitale de leur clan, qu'ils ont été dénommés et, par pays de Ségou, il faut entendre : *stricto sensu*, ce *to-da* dont la description est donnée au chapitre V et qui était, en définitive, la région environnante de Ségou, occupée par le chef du clan, sa famille et leurs gens ; *lato sensu*, le pays de Ségou c'était tout le territoire relevant de l'autorité du clan de Ségou et, à l'apogée de la puissance de ce clan, « le pays de Ségou » s'étalait sur les deux rives du Niger, suivant l'axe du fleuve depuis Kangaba jusqu'à Tombouctou.

Donner sur une carte la délimitation territoriale du Kaarta et du Ségou peut satisfaire notre désir d'Européens épris des choses nettes et définies ; dans le plan indigène, auquel ce livre aime à se référer, cette localisation est de peu d'intérêt : ces empires n'ont pas ambitionné de dominer sur telle ou telle région, ils se sont avant tout donné pour but l'exploitation du plus grand nombre possible d'individus, abstraction faite des questions de pays et de race.

Remarque. — Dans les pages qui suivent comme dans celles qui précèdent, les mots bambara ou d'autres dialectes soudanais, dont il est fait emploi ou citation, sont écrits en lettres italiques ; pour leur lecture se reporter aux explications du chapitre VII.

[page 6 contains no text]

1. Origine

[p. 7]

Le Nom

Les populations qui font l'objet de la présente étude sont connues, d'une manière générale, sous le nom de Bambara et par les Européens et par la majorité des indigènes ; elles s'appellent elles-mêmes Banmana ou Bamana.

Les auteurs européens ont proposé de ces mots Bambara, Banmana et Bamana deux étymologies.

Selon les uns, Bambara procéderait du mot *bamba* ou *bamma* « caïman », par allusion à un *tne* (1) commun à tous les indigènes englobés sous l'appellation Bambara. Cette étymologie se trouve ruinée par le fait que ce *tne*, prétendûment général, n'est point tel même pour une faible fraction des Bambara et que, d'ailleurs, la corrélation invoquée n'a jamais été constatée entre le nom du *tne* et la dénomination individuelle ou collective chez les Bambara.

Selon d'autres auteurs, le mot Banmana signifierait, d'après les Banmana eux-mêmes, « refus au maître » (*banma-na*) par allusion à la légende suivant laquelle les Banmana auraient, au début du XIIIe siècle, quitté leur pays d'origine et gagné le Toron, pour échapper au joug des conquérants malinké. Cette étymologie, défendable linguistiquement, ne serait applicable qu'au nom des immigrés du Toron et nous laisse dans l'ignorance du nom qu'eux et leurs congénères portaient avant cette immigration.

J'ai recueilli, moi aussi, une interprétation qui dérive les mots Bambara, Banmana et Bamana de la racine bambara *ban'* ou *ba* = refuser. Mon informateur, un Soninké, prétendait qu'au moment où prit fin leur hégémonie dans la région de Ségou, les Soninké, constatant la rebellion générale de leurs serfs, disaient : *u bara bango bè la*, qu'il faudrait traduire (2) : « ils ont refusé (de se soumettre) de tous côtés. » Et ce même informateur ajoutait que ces révoltés, étant ensuite revenus se reconcilier avec leurs maîtres, posaient à ceux-ci la question : *au mar' kan'*, qu'il faudrait traduire (1) : « dans quelles conditions nous garderez-vous ? » De la première expression proviendrait le mot Bambara et de la seconde le mot Marka (1).

---

(1) Interdiction magico-religieuse, voir au chapitre II.

(2) Suivant le dit informateur.

Je cite cette interprétation comme un exemple de ces étymologies forgées de toutes pièces par les informateurs indigènes et auxquelles on ne peut accorder quelque valeur que moyennant une sévère et judicieuse critique. En l'espèce, il ne fait pas doute pour moi que les deux expressions de mon informateur ont été inventées pour les besoins de la cause et sont sans valeur ; la traduction de la seconde, *au mar' kan'*, m'échappe même totalement.

A ma connaissance, les indigènes ignorent l'origine de l'appellation Bambara et de ses variantes ou, si l'on préfère, sont incapables de la justifier.

Pourtant il semble que les mots Bambara, Banmana, Bamana, procèdent effectivement d'une même racine *ba*. Ainsi, si du mot *banmana* l'on retranche la finale *na*, caractéristique d'une manière de collectif, l'on obtient *banma* morphologiquement comparable à *finma* qui, en bambara, signifie « noir » et peut être remplacé, sans changement de sens, par *fin'* et *fi* : par analogie, l'on est ainsi conduit à dire que *banma* a pour équivalants *ban'* et *ba*.

Il paraît intéressant de rapprocher ces deux monosyllabes du poular *bal*, qui lui aussi signifie « noir » et a pour équivalent *ba*, son *l* final n'ayant, tout comme l'*n'* de *ban'* qu'une valeur euphonique. Ce rapprochement est acceptable parce que le poular est, par origine, une langue nègre autochtone de ces régions et que, d'autre part, la comparaison des dialectes soudanais atteste que ces dialectes se sont fait de mutuels emprunts.

De là je conclus que le terme Banmana et ses variantes signifient également « les Noirs ».

Or, les étrangers et leurs métis, ou naturalisés, que nous englobons sous la dénomination les « Peuls », ont, dans les temps anciens, exercé dans le Soudan occidental une hégémonie politique et l'on peut penser que c'est de cette époque que date l'appellation Banmana, qui proviendrait de la désignation appliquée aux autochtones par ces Peuls. A moins qu'il ne soit préférable de dire, sans préjuger de la cause, que le mot Bambara et ses variantes procèdent d'une même racine *ba* signifiant « noir », empruntée à un dialecte ancien dont le poular actuel serait lui-même tributaire.

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(1) Suivant le dit informateur.

Quoi qu'il en soit, l'appellation Bambara, dont l'usage s'est généralisée dans le Soudan occidental, prend dans le langage courant des acceptions multiples. Pour le musulman, le Bambara c'est l'infidèle, le païen, le buveur d'alcool ; pour les pasteurs (Maures, Peuls), le Bambara c'est le cultivateur et aussi le Nègre ; pour les Sémites et ceux qui se prétendent tels, le Bambara c'est surtout le Nègre ; pour ceux qui ont détenu ou détiennent le pouvoir, le Bambara c'est l'esclave ; pour tous c'est le primitif, l'individu socialement inférieur.

Il s'est produit pour ce mot, Bambara, ce qui s'est produit pour le mot Peul, on l'emploie comme une simple épithète : l'on qualifie bambara tout païen (1), tout cultivateur, tout esclave, tout noir même. Si bien que ce vocable a pris une valeur péjorative au point de devenir parfois une injure grave. Quel affront pour un musulman, par exemple, d'être traité de bambara, c'est-à-dire d'infidèle, de païen, de buveur d'alcool...!

Toutefois, au sens strict, le mot Bambara n'est donné par les Malinké et, d'après eux, par nous Français, qu'aux indigènes qui parlent le dialecte dit bambara et qui se nomment eux-mêmes Banmana ou Bamana. Sauf exception expresse, c'est également dans cette acception restreinte que désormais nous employons dans le présent ouvrage ce mot de Bambara.

Sous le bénéfice des remarques qui précèdent, on doit conclure que ces Bambara se rattachent à des familles autochtones très anciennes : ils se considèrent, en effet, et sont considérés comme tels.

Les informateurs indigènes disent couramment que les Bambara sont d'anciens esclaves des Malinké ; mais ils disent de même que les Somono sont d'anciens esclaves des « gens du Ségou » : la suite de cette étude (voir le chapitre IV ci-après) montrera dans quel sens il faut entendre cet esclavage, conséquence caractéristique de la forme politique des gouvernements indigènes.

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(1) « ... Il est absolument certain que, pour les musulmans du Soudan « en général et de la boucle du Niger en particulier, le mot bambara « désigne non pas un peuple déterminé, ni une tribu spéciale, mais l'ensemble de tous les Soudanais demeurés fidèles à la religion indigène. » (Delafosse, t. I, 126.)

En dehors de la dénomination générale qu'on leur donne, ou qu'ils se donnent, et qui s'applique à l'un quelconque de leurs groupements, les Bambara sont désignés par des termes qui visent notamment leur répartition géographique : il y a, par exemple, ceux du Bélédougou (*Beledugu-ka-u*) ; ceux du Kaarta (*Karta-n-ka-u*) ; ceux du Ségou (*Segu-n-ka-u*) ; ceux du Bani-n-ko (*Bani-n-ko-ka-u*). Chacune de ces expressions à en même temps une signification politique ; par *Ségu-n-ka-u* l'on entend, notamment, les gens du parti qui, à Ségou, exerce le pouvoir et seul le contexte, ou le sujet de la conversation, permet de préciser de quels gens il s'agit.

Entre elles, les fractions Bambara se caractérisent, parfois, par des sobriqutes : de « ceux du Ségou », « ceux du Kaarta » disent, non sans ironie, *Tlu-kele-u* » ceux de la tresse unique », par allusion à leur mode de coiffure ; ou bien *Nya-ni-Nyele-u* « ceux de Nya et de Nyélé », Nya et Nyélé sont des noms de femme très fréquents dans le Ségou.

Il n'est pas rare non plus d'englober tous ceux d'un clan sous un vocable dérivé du nom du fondateur ou de l'ancêtre de ce clan : de « ceux du Kaarta » l'on dit *Nya-Ngolo-la* les gens de Nya-Ngolo (ancêtre des chefs du clan) et de ceux du Ségou *Barama-Ngolo-la* les gens de Barama-Ngolo, ancêtre du clan.

Il y a également des sobriquets entre individus de tribus différentes. Les Soninké disent couramment des Bambara : *Dyon-ko* (= les esclaves) parce que, adonnés depuis longtemps à la traite, ils ont beaucoup trafiqué des Bambara (1). Les Bambara désignent, d'une manière générale, les Soninké par le terme Marka (pour *Mara-ka*). Les Bambara disent encore *Marka dialan'u* (= Marka secs) pour désigner les Soninké qui ont abandonné l'usage de leur dialecte propre et adopté le bambara ; ils appellent *Marka kan'-fo-la-u* (= ceux qui parlent Marka) les Soninké qui ont conservé l'usage de leur dialecte propre.

Dans la région de Ségou, les Bambara appellent *Bani-n-kono-u* (= les oiseaux du Bani) les Soninké riverains de cette rivière ; plus généralement ils qualifient les Soninké par le surnom de *Dyeme-ka-u*. On appelle *Dyeme* (alias *Dyime*) un échassier du genre marabout. Suivant l'interprétation qui m'a été donnée, ces dénominations de *Bani-n-kono-u* et *Dyeme-ka-u* feraient allusion aux voyages périodiques effectués par les Soninké vers les grands centres commerciaux du Sud, spécialement au Ouorodougou.

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(1) Voir dans la chronique ci-après du Kaarta comment Massa et d'autres après lui s'emparèrent de caravanes d'esclaves bambara, appartenant à des Soninké.

Le pays de Ségou était dénommé par les Bambara *Dyeme-ka-dugu* à l'époque de l'hégémonie soninké (1) ; il devint, par contre, le *Dyon-ka-dugu* (=le pays des esclaves) pour les Soninké lorsqu'il fut au pouvoir des Bambara.

L'ORIGINE

La tradition générale admise, et rapportée tout d'abord par Raffenel et Quintin, affirme que les ancêtres des Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta étaient originaires du Toron, région située aux sources du Milo et du Baoulé, affluents du Haut-Niger. Partis de là, ils auraient progressé dans la direction du Nord-Est, d'où leur expansion vers leur habitat actuel et la formation par eux des empires du Ségou et du Kaarta (2).

Mais, suivant l'habitude des traditionnistes, il ne s'agit point là de l'histoire d'une émigration en masse, il s'agit seulement de la tradition relative à la venue dans le Ségou et le Kaarta des ancêtres des Kouloubali qui fondèrent les clans du Ségou et du Kaarta. Et il ne me paraît pas douteux qu'avant l'arrivée de ces nouveaux venus les régions du Ségou et du Kaarta et les contrées avoisinantes possédaient déjà des Bambara installés depuis fort longtemps aux lieux-mêmes qu'ils occupent, parfois, encore aujourd'hui (1).

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(1) A cette époque, la résidence du chef soninké, nommé Souleïman-ba Koïta, était à Sora, qui est aujourd'hui une ruine que les Bambara appellent Soro-toumou (ruine de Sora), située dans le pays de Ségou entre Massa-la et Kono-dimini. La circonscription territoriale dont Sora était la capitale était appelée Tandougou.

Dans leurs chants, les *gessere*, qui sont, chez les Soninké, les analogues des *dyeli* ; chez les Bambara, font de fréquentes allusions à Souleïman-ba Koïta, à Sora et au Tandougou.

(2) « Une tradition, maintes fois rapportée, fait venir les Banmana du Toron, province orientale du Ouassoulou, située dans la colonie actuelle de la Côte d'Ivoire, sur la route d'Odienné à Sikasso et non loin de la première de ces deux villes. — Il semble, en effet, que l'habitat primitif des Banmana devait former l'extrême sud-est du berceau de la famille mandé et devait s'étendre de la rive droite du haut Niger, à hauteur de Siguiri environ, jusqu'à la rive gauche du haut Bagbé ou Bagoé, où il confinait au territoire des Sénoufo. Les premières conquêtes des empereurs Mandingues, dès le début du XIIIe siècle, en installant les Malinké sur la rive droite du haut Niger, durent forcer les Bambara à se cantonner entre le haut Baoulé et le haut Bagbé, là où se trouve précisément le Toron. » (Delafosse, op. cit. t., 283-4).

D'autre part, suivant des informateurs indigènes sérieux et réputés pour bien connaître les traditions, avec qui je me suis entretenu à Médine, à Kita, à Bammako, à Ségou ou à Diénné, aussi d'après le *dyeli* Karé Tammoura (2), si le Toron fut bien, en effet, une région d'où rayonnèrent des migrations bambara, ce n'est pas là le berceau des Bambara qui nous occupent ici. Les ancêtres de ces Bambara étaient originaires du Mandé, région qui, selon ces mêmes informateurs, avait pour capitale, au plus lointain des âges, Dakadiala, aujourd'hui appelé Kiri-koroni, canton de Kiri, dont le chef-lieu actuel est Niagassola.

Il nous paraît indispensable d'éclaircir, dès à présent, la signification de ce mot, Mandé, auquel se heurte continuellement l'histoire du Soudan occidental.

Les auteurs sont d'accord entre eux et avec les traditionnistes indigènes pour affirmer que Mandé est le nom d'une circonscription territoriale proche, à certaines époques, de la rive gauche du Niger, dans la partie de ce fleuve comprise entre Kangaba et Bammako ; mais les limites de cette circonscription demeurent imprécises et variables ; il en est de même de sa capitale que la tradition place, suivant les époques, à Dakadiala, à Tabou, à Kounfangué, à Figuira, à Kangaba, à Niani... En définitive, de tout ce que l'on sait, il résulte qu'il n'y a pas de pays s'appellant proprement Mandé, qu'il n'y en a jamais eu. Qu'est-ce donc que cette appellation ?

Il est admis que les formes Mandé, Mandi, Manden, Mandin, Mandeng, Manding, Mali, Malé, Malel, Melli... qui toutes ont ou ont eu cours, ne sont que les variantes d'une même expression dans des dialectes ou patois différents ; toutefois il n'a pas été donné d'interprétation de la valeur de ces termes.

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(1) En particulier, dès le début de son installation, Massa, du vivant même de son père, se heurte aux Bambara du Niamala et, aussitôt qu'il entre en conflit avec les Soninké, ceux-ci appellent au secours leurs Bambara établis là depuis fort longtemps et qui n'ont rien à voir avec la migration du Toron. — Les Bambara du Bélédougou se donnent et sont tenus pour les maîtres de leur contrée depuis toujours.

(2) Voir ci-après à l'article Histoire (sources).

Or, il est à remarquer qu'en Soninké le mot *Mandé* (1) apparaît comme formé de *ma* et de *de* liés par l'annectif *n* ; la particule *de*, qui correspond dans cette langue à nos prépositions « à », « dans », « chez », provient d'une racine signifiant « lieu » ; de son côté, *ma* signifie « maître », « seigneur », « roi ». Le mot *mandé* équivaut donc à « chez le roi », « lieu, résidence du roi ».

C'est précisément l'interprétation donnée par le Tarikh el Fettach pour la variante *madugu* (2) : « Le mot *madugu* « est le nom que l'on donne dans le Tekrour (Soudan occi« dental) à toute résidence royale où quelle se trouve. » (Page 385 de la traduction.) Le Tarikh es-Soudan dit également que le mot *madugu* signifie « palais du roi » (trad. fr., page 151).

En principe, tout chef fixe sa capitale où bon lui semble et, en raison des grandes vicissitudes de la vie politique dans ces régions, cette résidence se déplace souvent, nous en verrons ici un exemple pour les Bambara-Massa-si du Kaarta, il n'en a pas été différemment, en général, pour les autres empires et le fait est certain pour celui dit de Mandé.

Par là s'explique que le mot Mandé et ses variantes ont désigné les localités les plus diverses servant ou ayant servi de résidences royales ou plus ordinairement de chefs-lieux ou capitales. Parfois, l'on désignait chacune de ces localités par son nom spécial suivi de *madugu*, ainsi Niani-madougou ; d'autrefois, *madugu* accompagnait le nom de la circonscription territoriale pour marquer le chef-lieu de cette circonscription, par exemple Sana-madougou, près Sansanding, sur le Niger ; on a même employé le mot *madugu* et ses variantes sans détermination expresse ; ainsi, le Tarikh-es-Soudan et le Tedzkiret-en-Nisian se réfèrent souvent à Madoho, Madoko ou Madougou, ex-résidence royale du roi de Mali à Tombouctou ; de même Ibn Batouta ne nous a pas fait connaître le nom de la capitale qu'il a visitée, il la désigne seulement par la variante Mali, équivalente de Madougou. C'est de cette habitude que proviennent les divers noms rappelés plus haut qui, par étymologie, pourraient s'appliquer à tout chef-lieu, à toute capitale mais qui, par une longue accoutumance, se rapportent à la seule capitale du Mandé, circonscription territoriale désignée elle-même d'après cette capitale.

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(1) La forme *mandé* s'analyse également de même en Soninké.

(2) Qui appartient au dialecte malinké et dans lequel *dugu* signifie « lieu » et non pas « terre ».

Ce double sens du mot Mali ou Melli, par exemple, signifiant à la fois capitale et pays de la capitale est évident dans la relation du voyage d'Ibn Batouta ; il n'est pas moins net dans le Tarikh-es-Soudan, tout particulièrement à la page 161 de la tradition française. Il en est de même dans les traditions orales.

On comprend, dès lors, que le mot Mandé a pris une acception équivalente à nos mots « empire » et « royaume » entendus au sens géographique et que, par suite, sa compréhension a varié parce qu'elle n'était que le corollaire du domaine territorial, sans cesse variable, soumis à la domination des *ma* successifs.

Mais ce n'est pas seulement au point de vue géographique que le mot Mandé est demeuré indéfini ou mal défini, c'est aussi au point de vue politique. D'une manière générale, l'on considère que le Mandé c'est exclusivement l'empire des Mandingues, en entendant par Mandingues l'une des fractions du groupe que les Européens appellent Mandé (1). Or, pour connaître la valeur qu'il faut attacher, dans le Soudan occidental, au mot « empire », il est nécessaire de se placer dans le plan indigène et non pas au point de vue de notre civilisation, à laquelle ce terme est emprunté.

En bref, l'empire soudanais est un système clanique. Il se forme par l'association d'éléments empruntés à des clans décomposés ou en voie de décomposition ; il grandit en puissance et en étendue sous l'influence de son fondateur ou, plus rarement, de quelqu'un de ses successeurs, puis tombe en décadence sous le coup de ses ennemis, ou par l'effet des dissentiments qui éclatent à la mort du titulaire dont l'ascendant et la « veine » avaient assuré sa fortune.

C'est ce travail sans cesse renouvelé de groupement, de dissociation et de regroupement qui domine toute l'histoire des empires et dynasties soudanais et en rend l'étude si laborieuse. La nomenclature géographique est nécessairement tributaire de ces faits sociaux : souvent la région est dénommée d'après ceux qui l'habitent, nous l'avons vu pour le Kaarta ; elle tire aussi son nom d'un groupe politique dominant et une même région ayant appartenu à des groupements politiques successifs se trouve pourvue de noms qui se superposent sans d'ailleurs que les territoires auxquels ils s'appliquent se confondent nécessairement ; c'est encore le cas de cette région mal définie qui est le Kaarta.

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(1) Mandé, en tant que désignant un groupe de populations ou de langues indigènes, est inconnu des Soudanais ; cette acception est propre aux Européens exclusivement.

Ainsi s'explique comment des empires différents sont demeurés confondus sous la même dénomination de Mandé (et autres variantes), car celui de ces empires qui eut pour chef des Keïta est seulement le dernier en date, sa constitution remonterait au début du XIIIe siècle.

Suivant une tradition, les ancêtres des fondateurs de cet empire du XIIIe siècle seraient venus de l'Est, la tradition dit expressément de Kong (1). Commandés par Kabala Simbo Keïta, ils s'établirent dans le Dodougou, canton dont la capitale était à Tabou et dont le chef, un Bambara du *dyamu* Konnaté, appuyait son pouvoir sur un groupe de gens militarisés dits Mandinké : groupe analogue à ceux des *sofa*, *tondyon*' ou *furu-ba-dyon*' qui firent la fortune des clans du Ségou et du Kaarta. Littéralement ce mot *mandinké* signifie, en soninké, « celui de chez le maître (ou seigneur, ou roi) et s'interprète, au pluriel, « les gens du maître » (ou du roi).

Le canton de Kiri (2), voisin de celui du Dodougou (2), était peuplé de Bambara indépendants.

Ce clan ou, comme l'on est tenté de dire, cet empire des Keïta se forma au XIIIe siècle, à la suite des guerres entre Soumangourou Kanté et Soun Dyata Keïta, à l'aide d'éléments divers (3), dont un groupe de Mandinke antérieu-

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(1) Je ne vois pas, dans cette précision, autre chose qu'un effet de cette polarisation dont je parle ci-après, page 41, note 1.

(2) Le Dodougou (par abréviation Do) et le Kiri sont tenus, en effet, pour les plus anciens cantons du clan dit Mandé. Voir, dans ce sens, Humblot : « Du nom propre et des appellations chez les Malinké... », dans le *Bulletin du Comité des études historiques et scientifiques de l'A. O. F.*, 1918, nos 3 et 4.

(3) Ainsi verrons-nous Biton former les *furu-ba-dyon*' avec : les *tondyon*', des esclaves enlevés au chef de Dina et des captifs de diverses provenances. — Voir, dans le même sens, la curieuse histoire des 24 tribus serves du clan Songhaï, provenant du clan Mandé, *in* Tarikh el Fettach.

2: Monteil FA8 Bambara

PLANCHE I

[Facing page 16]

Fig. 1. — Jeune Bambara
(Région de Diénné)

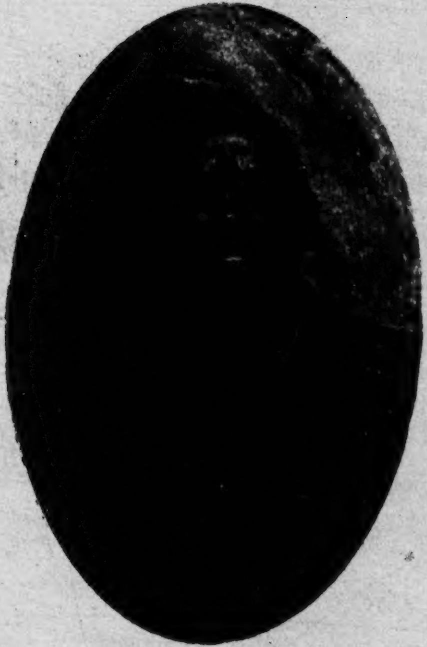

Fig. 2. — Bambara coiffé du bonnet
dit « bamma da » (gueule de caïman)
(Région de Diénné)

rement constitué (1) par un chef nommé Gourmandana. Ce groupe était celui des Boula qui firent la fortune tour à tour de Soumangourou' et de Soun Dyata en prenant parti tantôt pour l'un tantôt pour l'autre, jusqu'au triomphe définitif de Soun Dyata.

Ces gens qui sont appelés Mandinké par les Soninké, Maninka par les Bambara, Mallinké par les Peuls, s'intitulent eux-mêmes Mandinga. Mais qu'on le remarque bien, les Mandinké ne datent pas de l'empire des Keïta du XIIIe siècle ; ils sont antérieurs à ce clan : ils me paraissent procéder originairement de très anciennes formations claniques Soninké en décomposition et auxquelles ils ont emprunté leurs éléments constitutifs et leur nom. Ce nom couvre, en définitive, une formation sociale pareille à celle des *furu-ba-dyon'*, décrite au chapitre V ci-après, et le fond en est identiquement constitué par les Bambara, c'est-à-dire par les Noirs, autochtones de races diverses ; c'est en tout cas ce que disent les traditions que j'ai recueillies.

D'ailleurs, les migrations des Bambara, parlant le bambara, issus du Mandé ainsi défini et qui se sont produites lors de l'instauration du clan des Keïta au XIIIe siècle, ne sont pas, à mon avis, l'origine exclusive du peuplement par leurs congénères des principales régions occupées aujourd'hui par ceux-ci. Je pense que dans l'aire géographique connue de nous sous les noms de Mandé, Toron, Banimko, Ségou, Bélédougou, Kaarta, il y a, depuis des temps bien antérieurs au XIIIe siècle, des Bambara parlant le dialecte bambara.

Les Kouloubali

Les migrations, dont les traditionnistes nous entretiennent, ne sont jamais relatives qu'aux déplacements de certaines familles plus ou moins importantes et ayant généralement joué un rôle clanique. Pour le Ségou et le Kaarta, les traditions recueillies concernent les seuls Kouloubali chefs de ces clans et montrent très nettement qu'ils trouvèrent sur place d'autres familles bambara comme les leurs, installées dans ces régions et aux alentours depuis longtemps.

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(1) Dans l'intérieur du clan, les esclaves, qui toujours constituent la puissance du clan, sont répartis en groupes désignés chacun par une particularité relative à sa constitution. Les Boula semblent avoir joui d'une considération pareille à celle dont les *Tondyon'* bénéficièrent à Ségou. D'après la signification du mot *Bula*, il faudrait voir en eux des « affranchis », c'est aussi ce que disent les traditionnistes. Voir quelques indications sur les Boula dans l'étude sus-visée de M. Humblot. — Les femmes Boula portent communément le prénom de Damba, on les salue Sakiliba, tandis que l'on salue les hommes Soussoro. Cette coutume du nom commun à toute une catégorie d'esclàves se retrouve chez les Rimaïbé du Macina, qui, tous, peuvent être appelés Tammoura ou Tamboura.

En outre des traditions rapportées plus loin d'après les *dyeli* Karé Tammoura et Gran Koaté, j'ai recueilli celles ci-après concernant les Kouloubali.

Suivant une première version, les fils d'un nommé Péné Kouloubali quittèrent Kéniéroba (1), au nord-ouest de Kangaba, pour échapper à la poursuite de leurs ennemis. Ces frères étaient trois : Mamourou l'aîné, Nzan et Ngolo. Ils vinrent habiter dans le Bani-n-ko à Dougouna, chez un forgeron nommé Sékolo Balo. Rejoints là par leurs ennemis, ils luttèrent un an, puis Mamourou décida ses frères à fuir. Ils partirent en emmenant avec eux Sékolo Balo.

Ils franchirent le Ba-oulé à Kana, grâce aux bons offices d'un *poyon'* qui s'offrit à les transborder, alors qu'ils manquaient de pirogue. Ngolo, qui passa le dernier, tua le *poyon'* et l'emporta à Dionforongo (est de Barouéli) où il le mangea.

Les trois frères vinrent à Ségou-koro-si-do (2), puis à Sinsala, ainsi appelé à cause de la « clôture » (*sinsa*) élevée par les Bozo, et plus connu sous le nom de Sansanding. Là, Mamourou conseilla la séparation afin de dépister plus aisément ceux qui les poursuivaient. Mamourou revint à Ségou-koro-si-do et ses descendants sont les Kouloubali de cette région.

Nzan s'établit près de Ségala, au lieu appelé Sanabala, du nom de sa femme Sanaba, dont il eut un fils Nto qui engendra Kéfa, père de Sama lequel eut quatre fils : Sara qui habita Salaga ; Touman de Toumanbougou ; Fara de Dia-koro ; Demba de Donguélé.

Quant à Ngolo, il vint habiter le Kourouma, où il devint l'un des ancêtres des Kouloubali de cette région. Il épousa une métisse de Maure nommée Bariké dont il eut un fils,

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(1) L'époque, indéterminée comme toujours, est certainement antérieure au XVIIe siècle.

(2) *Si-do* : « la forêt d'arbres à beurre », lieu dit proche de Ségou-koro.

Dagoumou, père de Siratigui, père lui-même de Mamourou, qui eut Dyiguina, puis Bo-dyan. Ce dernier engendra Mélé-fin et Mélé-dyé. Le fils de Mélé-dyé, Sidi Bala, fut mis à mort par le *fama* de Ségou, Ngolo Dyara.

Suivant une autre version, au cours des luttes entre Soumangourou et Soun Dyata, deux frères Kouloubali, Ntchi et Ntchian, émigrèrent du Mandé. Arrivé le premier au bord du fleuve, Ntchi se désolait de ne pas trouver de pirogue et il implorait ses ancêtres de lui venir en aide. Un *poyon'* surgit soudain et lui dit : « Si les enfants « d'Adam n'étaient pas des ingrats, certes je t'aurais « transbordé. » Ntchi implora le *poyon'* de prendre pitié de lui et des siens et jura qu'en retour il serait *tne* pour lui et tous ses descendants. Le *poyon'* se laissa attendrir et transborda Ntchi et les siens.

Lorsque Ntchian arriva au bord du fleuve, la même scène se reproduisit. Mais quand tout ses gens furent ainsi en sécurité, une des femmes de Ntchian, du *dyamu* Tangara, s'écria : « Si tu ne tues pas ce poisson, nos enfants, « qui n'ont rien à manger, seront morts ce soir. » Feignant de ne pas entendre, Ntchian monta à cheval et voulut partir ; la femme saisit la bride et, de nouveau, adjura Ntchian de tuer le *poyon'*, pour sauver ses enfants. Il le tua, en effet.

C'est pourquoi les descendants de Ntchi, seuls, ont le *poyon'* pour *tne*.

Ntchi vint habiter Niamana, près Niansonua, à l'ouest de Baroéli ; il y devint chef. Des discordes éclatèrent entre ses descendants : les uns s'établirent dans le Ségou, vers Ségou-koro ; les autres gagnèrent le Kaarta.

Quant à Ntchian, il s'établit à Nani dans l'est du Bendougou, non loin du village actuel de Nionsira. D'humeur querelleuse, il se disputa avec le chef de Nani qu'il contraignit à émigrer. On raconte que le chef de Nani fit faire, avec les gonds de la porte de sa maison, une flûte aux sons de laquelle il émigra ; il gagna Farabougou, puis Souala, puis Ngonifembougou (appelé encore Monimpé), près Dia-kolo.

Ntchian le poursuivit et vint s'établir à Dia-kolo. Ses descendants subirent là la grande famine qui dura sept ans et qui est connue sous le nom de *solo* (1), ils cherchèrent dans l'émigration un remède au fléau : les uns vinrent à Dia-bolo, près Diénné ; d'autres, à Nya-Ngolo-la, dans le Kaminiadougou.

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(1) *Solo* est donné en prénom de femme.

Y a-t-il quelque relation d'origine entre cette famille Kouloubali dont il vient d'être question, et celle des Kouloubali fondateurs des clans du Ségou et du Kaarta ? Sans nul doute, car tous les Kouloubali remontent à un auteur commun, antérieur au XIIIe siècle, et dont un des descendants, en s'alliant par mariage aux Keïta, a fondé la branche des Kouloubali comprise dans les familles dites *masa-rin'* (1).

Les Bambara dans le Tarikh-es-Soudan

Quant aux Bambara, établis dans les régions qui nous occupent ici, antérieurement ou postérieurement aux Kouloubali dont je donne les traditions, il n'existe pas de traditions précises ni, en tout cas, détaillées. L'histoire générale de tous ces gens est incertaine.

Le Tarikh-es-Soudan fait bien allusion à des Bambaras, mais il est difficile de savoir dans quel sens il emploie ce terme ; fréquemment, il équivaut simplement à « païens ». Pourtant, dans les citations ci-après, il me paraît qu'il s'agit bien des Bambara objet de cette étude, d'autant plus que, dans le Tarikh en question, les principautés de Kala, Bendougou et Sébéridougou correspondent à des territoires qui, à l'ouest de Diénné et de Dia, ont été sous la domination des clans du Ségou et du Kaarta.

« Askia Daoud, rapporte le Tarikh-es-Soudan, s'adres-
« sant au chef de Diénné, El Amin, dit : Nous t'avons
« placé à la tête d'un district et tu ne le surveilles pas, car
« les Bambara sont ici en grand nombre et ils ont réussi
« à s'assurer des avantages qu'ils n'avaient plus. » Ceci se passait en 1558, et il résulte des derniers mots de cette citation qu'avant cette époque les Bambara avaient eu une situation prépondérante.

D'après la même chronique, en 1691, à l'arrivée des

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(1) Par *masa-rin'*, les traditionnistes entendent, en outre des Keïta qui ont exercé le commandement et de leurs communautaires, diverses familles qui leur sont étroitement unies. L'on cite notamment : les Kouloubali, les Konaté, les Kourouma. Tous les gens de ces dyamou, même Keïta, ne sont pas *masa-rin'*, mais seulement certaines branches.

Marocains, les pays du Moyen Niger, qui vivaient dans une paix relative sous l'autorité du roi Soughaï, furent terrorisés, particulièrement dans le territoire de Diénné, par des Bambara aidés, incités, dirigés même par le chef peul du Macina.

En 1599, les Bambara furent, en grand nombre, adjoints à l'armée du Macina par Hamedi Amina, sultan de ce pays, qui fomentait un soulèvement général contre les Marocains.

En 1600, sur l'ordre du pacha marocain Djouder, le caïd El Mostapha-et-Torki fit une expédition contre le Macina et les Bambara, ayant été abandonnés par les gens du Macina, furent cernés dans une forêt et massacrés en grand nombre.

En 1644, ses troupes fuyant devant les armées réunies du pacha et de l'*askia*, Hamedi Amina dut s'enfuir aussi en abandonnant un important butin et, avec ses gens, il se réfugia chez les Bambara, qui s'approprièrent tout ce qui pénétra sur leur territoire.

Enfin, en dernier lieu, le Tarikh-es-Soudan signale la révolte, en 1645, des Bambara contre les chefs de Sana et de Farko, ainsi que la mise à sac par eux de Sibila, capitale du Sana.

Sans doute, il faut tenir compte, dans une certaine mesure, que, sous l'expression Bambara, Es-Sadi, l'auteur du Tarikh-es-Soudan, englobe tous les païens ; mais rien ne nous autorise à supposer que pour les régions visées dans les citations ci-dessus, les Bambara, qui nous occupent ici, doivent être exclus ; bien au contraire, puisqu'aucun autre peuple païen de cette zone n'a gardé, comme eux, des traditions attestant une activité guerrière fort ancienne.

La vieille chronique soudanaise ne fait jamais allusion à un roi bambara. Au dire des traditionnistes, avant Biton, les villages bambara de ces régions vivaient indépendants les uns des autres ; ils effectuaient, parfois, d'un commun accord des razzias ou autres opérations plus importantes contre certains de leurs voisins, au moyen de bandes organisées et équipées conformément aux usages indigènes (1).

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(1) Voir ci-dessus comment ils faisaient fonction de mercenaires du sultan du Macina, par exemple.

Qu'un de ces chefs de bande ait pu édifier, à la manière d'un Samori, une sorte d'empire, à cela rien d'étonnant. Le souvenir s'est, en effet, conservé, d'après Quintin (1), qu'un certain Kaladian Kouloubali, descendant de Barama Ngolo, fixé à Markadougou-ba, aurait, à partir de 1600 environ, établi sa domination sur les deux rives du Niger, à hauteur de Ségou, tant par lui-même que par ses fils. Le Tarikh-es-Soudan ne fait aucune allusion à ce potentat ; le *dyeli* Kare Tammoura non plus. L'histoire de ces pays abonde en ces sortes de lacunes ou divergences...

L'empire de Kaladian n'aurait été, d'ailleurs, que de peu de durée, mais Biton Kouloubali, fondateur de l'empire de Ségou dont nous allons parler, serait précisément le petit-fils de ce Kaladian, par Soma et Danfassari.

2. Histoire

Sources

L'histoire générale des Bambara est donc encore à écrire ; ce que l'on en connaît avec quelques détails est relatif aux clans du Ségou et du Kaarta et, même dans ce domaine restreint, il s'en faut que l'on soit sûrement documenté.

Les travaux déjà publiés, tout comme les récits donnés ici, procèdent obligatoirement des traditions indigènes, vagues, confuses, embrumées de légende et dont il est difficile de tirer des faits réels, précis, concordants. Ainsi, l'on verra plus loin ce fait, placé au début de l'histoire du clan du Kaarta, que le vieux *fa* Siné n'accorda son hospitalité et son alliance conditionnelle à Sounsan que parce qu'il fut informé par un oiseau de la puissance qui devait ultérieurement appartenir à la lignée de ce fugitif.

Et voici, dans ce même ordre d'idées et à titre d'exemple, une version concernant Mamari, dit Biton Kouloubali, fondateur du clan du Ségou. Pour sa mère, Mamari avait établi un jardin au bord du Niger. C'est là qu'un jour, un « génie de l'eau » (*dyiden'*) lui apparut, précisément à l'endroit du Niger où périt Monseigneur Hacquart.

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(1) Cf. aussi Delafosse dans le même sens.

Le génie l'incita à le suivre et il fut à la fois si pressant et si persuasif que Mamari céda (1).

Entraîné par son guide, il pénétra tout au fond de l'eau sans en subir aucune gêne et parvint, de la sorte, à une ville merveilleuse. Là, le génie lui ayant montré un monceau d'or et d'argent et un tas de grains, lui dit : « Choisis : l'or et l'argent, c'est la richesse ; les grains, « c'est la puissance. Or, qu'importe d'être riche si l'on « est à la merci d'un puissant ; le maître dispose de tout. « Si, donc, tu emportes ces grains, sème-les en un champ « très vaste ; travaille de ton mieux à rendre la récolte « abondante et abandonne la moisson aux oiseaux : ton « pouvoir s'étendra sur tous les pays où ces pillards se « poseront. »

Mamari emporta les grains, il les garda précieusement et, l'hivernage venu, les sema en un champ très vaste. Durant toute la saison, il fut très affairé à soigner sa culture, tandis qu'à l'époque de la moisson on le vit, avec étonnement, laisser piller la récolte par les oiseaux.

Aussi l'oracle s'accomplit : Biton commanda de Tombouctou jusqu'à l'Atlantique, et *dyeli* Karé Tammoura, qui m'a raconté cette tradition, ajoute que, pendant longtemps, il y eut à Ségou une chose étrange, plante et animal tout ensemble, nommée, par les Bambara, *Sanu-so*, c'est-à-dire « le cheval d'or ». Ahmadou, fils d'Omar, fit construire une mosquée dans le lieu où apparaissait *Sanu-so* qui, malgré cela, ne disparut qu'à l'arrivée des Français et, depuis cette arrivée, d'aucuns affirment qu'à certains jours d'étranges lueurs se montrent encore en cet endroit du Niger où a péri Monseigneur Hacquart et où le génie était apparu à Mamari.

Cette fable de *genius loci* n'est pas, par elle-même, bien remarquable, mais rapprochée de celle rapportée pour Ngolo Dyara (*infra* p. 46 ci-après) et de beaucoup d'autres analogues en cours au Soudan (2), elle apparaît ce qu'elle est réellement : l'expression imagée d'une mentalité indigène sur laquelle l'Européen est, le plus souvent, mal renseigné et qui mérite d'être notée ici brièvement.

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(1) Rapprocher de cette légende les contes intitulés : *Les Dyide de Djenné* , *in Contes du Sénégal et du Niger*, par Zeltner., pp. 178 et s., pour ce qui a trait aux génies de l'eau.

(2) Cf. notamment la légende de Ndyadyane Ndyaye, *in Légendes et coutumes sénégalaises*, par H. Gaden, 1912, et les « *Djide de Djenné* », *in Contes du Sénégal et du Niger*, de Zeltner.

Tout ce qui s'écarte de la moyenne, de l'ordinaire, du normal : la puissance, la richesse, le succès..., la maladie, la misère, le malheur... à un degré extraordinaire ou suspect, est, pour le Bambara en particulier et le Noir en général, la manifestation d'une force occulte, en action spontanée ou provoquée.

C'est pourquoi, aux yeux de l'indigène, un chef (un grand chef s'entend) n'est pas hors du commun tant à cause de la fonction qu'il occupe, qu'en raison des moyens occultes qu'on lui suppose (1). La puissance n'est que le reflet de ses vertus magiques et lui-même en est également convaincu. Tout ce qui émane de lui est accepté sans résistance, parce que ses actes sont empreints d'un caractère surnaturel ; seuls peuvent l'affronter ceux qui, comme lui, sont doués d'une pouvoir spécial (2) ; il recherche, d'ailleurs, la compagnie ou les conseils de ces initiés aux choses cachées au vulgaire, de ces personnages que nous qualifions sorciers, magiciens, marabouts, qui, tous, croient ou paraissent détenir une parcelle de cette science qui permet à ses adeptes d'influencer l'invisible ; parfois, même, il est l'un d'eux ou le devient, toujours il se trouve être, volontairement ou non, leur tributaire.

C'est là un état d'âme séculaire que l'Islam n'a fait qu'affermir, car les Noirs, musulmans ou non, voient toujours dans le marabout, le devin, le faiseur de miracles, le fabricant de philtres, de talismans, d'amulettes, le jeteur de sorts... d'innombrables faits l'attestent et les récits qui vont suivre en contiennent plusieurs.

L'on comprend qu'avec de pareilles idées, le Noir ne soit pas porté à admettre que la vie d'un homme important, d'un chef puissant, d'un fondateur d'empire, puisse être ou ait été banale, ordinaire, simple. C'est pourquoi les faits surnaturels, irréels, tiennent dans les traditions historiques indigènes une place si grande que, parfois, l'on y cherche, en vain, trace de ces actes que nous voyons accomplir chaque jour autour de nous. Il faut être très habitué à ce mirage pour ne pas se laisser aller au découragement que l'on éprouve à ne pouvoir saisir ce qu'un défaut d'accoutumance place hors de notre entendement ou, ce qui est pire, pour ne pas s'abandonner à l'illusion décevante d'interpréter ce fatras incohérent au mieux des intérêts d'une théorie préconçue.

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(1) Cf. p. 28 et 45 les procédés de Dina Wara et de Biton.

(2) Les traditions légendaires abondent en combats magiques ; voir notamment la tradition relative à Dinga, l'ancêtre des gens de Wagadou, et celle de Samba Guéladio Diégui, le héros du Fouta.

A ces reflets de l'âme indigène, s'ajoutent les déformations dues aux collecteurs des traditions (1) historiques : les *dyeli*, chez les Bambara. Ce mot, *dyeli*, qui signifie « maître », marque l'estime en laquelle on tient, en principe, l'archiviste que doit être tout *dyeli*. La fonction consiste essentiellement, en effet, à garder de l'oubli la généalogie, à mettre en relief, en les magnifiant, les actes du personnage auquel le *dyeli* s'est attaché. Par voie de conséquence, le *dyeli* étend ses investigations à tous ceux qui touchent à son seigneur, si bien qu'il devient l'historien de toute une famille, de tout un clan, voire de toute une tribu.

Sa grande érudition et, plus encore, son habileté à faire valoir ses connaissances superficielles provoquent l'estime qu'on lui témoigne sous forme de cadeaux, dont l'importance et la fréquence créent, à certains *dyeli*, une situation matérielle à tous égards fort enviable. Aussi, la plupart des *dyeli*, moins soucieux de sauvegarder la vérité que d'assurer et d'accroître leur fortune personnelle, flattent ou injurient, suivant le cas, ceux auxquels ils imposent leurs services, afin d'en tirer le plus de profit possible. C'est à cause de cette perversion que le *dyeli* est, généralement, méprisé.

Rares sont les *dyeli* demeurés intègres ; exceptionnels ceux qui ont des connaissances étendues et un certain sens critique leur permettant de faire une sélection judicieuse dans la masse des traditions contradictoires.

En général, tout *dyeli* s'enferme dans le domaine, très restreint, de la tradition clanique et de quelques traditions familiales ; il ignore ce qui concerne les clans ou familles voisins et surtout ceux étrangers à sa tribu et à sa race.

C'est de mémoire que le *dyeli* garde et transmet la tradition historique et, comme chacun cultive son champ en toute indépendance, tout *dyeli* introduit telles fantaisies qu'il lui plaît, les répand autour de lui, les sème comme des vérités que d'autres propagent comme telles.

Voilà, en bref, les causes qui troublent les sources de la tradition historique indigène. L'Islam, en introduisant une écriture, a donné naissance à une nouvelle catégorie d'archivistes : les marabouts. Les marabouts ont ajouté cette fonction à beaucoup d'autres ; on ne saurait affirmer qu'ils l'ont purifiée de ses vices originels, mais on peut affirmer qu'ils lui en ont ajouté quelques autres.

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(1) Que nous nommons, ici, les traditionnistes.

Il est de notoriété qu'au Soudan, le traditionniste musulman a une tendance incoercible à tout transposer dans sa mentalité nouvelle. De plus, le manuscrit donnant une fixité quasi définitive à la tradition orale, y compris les erreurs qu'elle contient, rend de la sorte souvent impossible l'élimination de ces dernières, tant est souveraine la considération que l'on témoigne, d'ordinaire, au texte écrit.

Il existe aussi des traditionnistes musulmans illettrés : ordinaires *dyeli* venus à l'Islam à la manière soudanaise, définie au chapitre VI, ils n'ont rien abandonné des caractéristiques de leur caste ; ils y ajoutent seulement quelques particularités dues à l'influence musulmane.

En puisant à ces sources, les publications européennes les grèvent de nouveaux motifs d'incertitude. En particulier, dans le désir, légitime en principe, de raccorder entre elles les traditions incohérentes, mais aussi pour les besoins de théories personnelles, l'auteur européen a recours à l'hypothèse. Ce moyen est acceptable moyennant que la supposition qui lui sert de base soit nettement déclarée. Trop souvent, au contraire, l'hypothèse est si peu avouée et même si bien incorporée à la tradition qu'il est impossible, soit de la découvrir, soit d'en délimiter exactement la portée. Ce nouvel avatar de la tradition n'est pas le moins dangereux pour la vérité historique.

C'est à deux *dyeli* musulmans illettrés que je suis redevable des traditions concernant les clans du Ségou et du Kaarta. L'interprète Souleïman Goundiamou (1), qui fut pour moi un précieux initiateur et informateur des choses indigènes, m'a prêté le concours de son expérience pour la traduction de ces récits : je l'en remercie, ici, sincèrement.

Pour le Ségou, le récit de Karé Tammoura ne modifie guère les grandes lignes déjà connues, mais il diffère cependant des publications déjà faites par l'allure essentiellement indigène que j'ai tenu à lui conserver. Il est très intéressant, en effet, de voir dans le détail comment un empire est sorti de l'évolution d'une *flanton*' : cette transformation d'une association strictement indigène est pleine d'enseignements. Elle montre, par le menu, comment s'est constitué et organisé un de ces empires soudanais — et non des moindres — dont il faut avoir pénétré le secret pour comprendre l'histoire politique de ce pays. La communauté, la confrérie, le clan, l'esclavage, l'Islam, facteurs essentiels et si mal connus de la société soudanaise, vivent là tels qu'ils sont.

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(1) Actuellement chef du village d'Ambédédi (Gadiaga).

Malgré ses défaillances et ses lacunes, je donne donc, sans y rien changer. la narration du *dyeli* Karé Tammoura. Ce Bambara du Ségou s'est parfois laissé aller à couvrir la vérité d'un voile musulman, parce qu'il est converti à l'islamisme, mais il est facile de dégager la réalité des faits de ce maquillage souvent maladroit.

Pour le Kaarta, mon informateur principal fut *dyeli* Gran Koaté, Bambara également originaire du Ségou et musulman. Il fut longtemps attaché à la personne d'Ahmadou, fils d'Omar, avec qui il résida à Ségou et à Nioro, exerçant auprès de lui la fonction d'homme de confiance, chargé parfois de missions importantes.

Je tiens à faire remarquer que ces deux informateurs ne sont pas entièrement responsables des lacunes de leurs récits. En 1902, à Diénné, où j'étais alors commandant du cercle, j'avais fait venir, de Ségou, ces érudits indigènes ; mais, malgré mon désir de tirer de leur savoir le meilleur parti possible, j'ai dû concilier les exigences de ma fonctions, qui me laissait peu de loisir, avec la nécessité de ne pas retenir trop longtemps hors de chez eux ces deux indigènes : d'où obligation de couper court aux longues tirades. Je ne crois pas que rien d'essentiel m'ait échappé, cependant il y avait, sans doute, beaucoup à glaner dans ce que j'ai dû écarter faute de temps. Je souhaite qu'un de mes successeurs, plus favorisé que moi, comble les lacunes des relations que je donne ici.

I

HISTOIRE DE L'EMPIRE DU SÉGOU

(Récit de *dyeli* Karé Tammoura)

Préliminaires

ORIGINE DES KOULOUBALI DU SÉGOU ET DU KAARTA

Un chasseur venu de l'Est eut un fils, Barama Ngolo, qui naquit à Barama-n-dougou, sur le Bani ; poursuivant sa route vers l'Ouest, ce même chasseur eut un second fils, Nya Ngolo, qui vit le jour à Nya-Ngolo-la, village du Kaminiadougou.

Après la mort de leur père, Barama Ngolo, Nya Ngolo et leurs frères vinrent s'établir à Sounsan-na, en arrière du Bani ; là l'un d'eux étant mort, Barama Ngolo accusa Nya Ngolo de ce malheur et voulut le tuer ; alors, Nya Ngolo se sauva à Massa-la, près de Ségou, et y devint berger des troupeaux appartenant aux Peuls. Auprès de lui était son fils Sounsan.

Nya Ngolo mourut à Massa-la. Ayant appris que ce lieu était habité par les fugitifs qu'il recherchait, Barama Ngolo se mit aussitôt en marche pour s'emparer d'eux. A cette nouvelle, Sounsan et les siens gagnèrent Kounando, à l'ouest de Ségou ; Barama Ngolo se dirigea sur Dina, chef-lieu du canton dont dépendait Kounando, afin de demander au chef de lui livrer les fugitifs, pour les mettre à mort. Cette satisfaction lui fut refusée ; mais, pour avoir la paix, les gens de Kounando obligèrent Sounsan à quitter le pays.

La petite troupe arriva au bord du Niger et, faute de pirogue pour traverser le fleuve, elle allait être atteinte par son implacable ennemi, lorsque son chef, dans l'exaltation du désespoir, implora ses ancêtres de l'aider à sauver sa lignée. Son désir fut exaucé : un *poyon'* soudain sortit de l'eau et s'offrit pour transborder Sounsan et tous ses gens. C'est pourquoi, pour lui et pour ses descendants, Sounsan fit serment que le *poyon'* serait pour eux *tne* (1).

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(1) Comparez cette variante dont le texte intégral comporte aussi la légende du *poyon'* :

« A une époque fort reculée et très vraisemblablement bien antérieure
« au XVIIe siècle, deux frères banmana nommés l'un Niangolo et l'autre
« Baramangolo, formant sans doute une fraction égarée d'une grosse

BARAMA NGOLO ET SES PREMIERS DESCENDANTS

Ayant abandonné l'espoir de rejoindre les fugitifs, Barama Ngolo s'établit près de Ségou-koro, à Fa, où naquit son fils Soma. Celui-ci, devenu grand chasseur, chercha sa subsistance dans la chasse et, au cours de ses pérégrinations, il vint souvent prendre l'hospitalité chez un marabout somono, alfa Sérou Kané, qui l'incita à s'établir dans son voisinage.

Le pays de Ségou comptait à cette époque de nombreux villages peuplés de Bambara et de Soninké. C'étaient les Soninké qui étaient alors forts et riches ; ils avaient pour village principal Doua qui constituait, en quelque sorte, le chef-lieu de cette région et où commandait la famille des Boaré (1).

Installé à Ségou, Soma se maria et eut un fils *fa* Siné, qui eut lui-même trois enfants : deux garçons, Mamari et Sérif-bilé, et une fille, Sana-ba. Celle-ci épousa Wara Dyara, chef de Dina. Wara Diara étant un chef puissant, cette alliance donna une certaine notoriété à la famille de *fa* Siné. Mamari accompagna sa sœur à Dina et là, grâce à la complicité de sa sœur, il put s'approprier le secret qui assurait la prospérité et la puissance à Wara Dyara. Celui-ci, en effet, se faisait servir des mets spéciaux, préparés suivant des rites que lui seul connaissait. La tête de chèvre formait la base de cette alimentation, qui devait être prise dans l'obscurité la plus complète. Mamari, discrètement introduit par sa sœur, put, à la faveur de l'obscurité, partager le repas de son beau-frère, à l'insu de ce dernier, et c'est à ce régime qu'il dut d'occuper ultérieurement la plus haute situation dans le pays.

LA *fla-n-ton'* (2) DES GENS DE SÉGOU ET SON ÉVOLUTION

Revenu à Ségou-koro, Mamari vécut surtout auprès de sa mère, dont il était le préféré. Pour elle, il cultivait,

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« migration, arrivèrent sur la rive droite du Baoulé, au sud de Barouéli « (près du confluent du Baoulé et du Bagbé), fuyant des ennemis qui les « poursuivaient en les chassant vers le N.-O. » (Delafosse, t. I, page 285).

(1) Cette tradition concorde avec celle rapportée par Raffenel, t. I, page 304.

(2) Voir l'organisation de la *fla-n-ton'* au ch. IV, page 246.

au bord du fleuve, des *n-koyo*, sorte de poivrons amers utilisés dans la cuisine indigène, et c'est au cours de cette occupation quasi-quotidienne qu'il fit la connaissance du génie de l'eau, qui lui révéla quantité de pratiques magiques, auxquelles il dut la supériorité sur ses égaux en âge. Pour ces raisons, non moins que pour sa force peu commune, ces derniers le choisirent pour chef de *ton'* (*ton-tigi*).

De cette *ton'*, faisaient partie des jeunes gens de races diverses appartenant aux villages de Doukounna, Si-do, Bignébougou, Sola, Banan-koroni, Ségou-Sikoro, Doua... Sanou Saro, mère de Mamari, préparait souvent du *dlo* (bière de mil) ou de l'hydromel, qu'elle offrait aux amis de son fils ; pour reconnaître cette gracieuseté, peu à peu devenue une habitude, les *ton-den'* résolurent de verser chacun dix cauris, pour défrayer la brave femme des dépenses occasionnées par la beuverie hebdomadaire du jeudi ; cette cotisation fut appelée *di-songo*, litt. « le prix du miel », à cause de son ordinaire destination.

Avec le temps, la *ton'* devint tyrannique envers ses membres ; les amendes, fréquentes et élevées, n'étaient plus acquittées que par contrainte et Mamari en arrivait à faire mettre aux fers les récalcitrants. Lui-même, d'ailleurs, pâtissait, tout autant que les autres sociétaires, de cette évolution malheureuse et, un jour, il fut condamné à une amende de 80 bœufs, pour infraction aux statuts. Personnellement, il n'avait pas le moyen de payer une telle dette ; il chercha, en vain, à tirer quelques subsides de son père, au moins aussi pauvre que lui ; en désespoir de cause, il partit à Dina auprès de sa sœur. Son beau-frère parut s'intéresser à son affaire, il l'écouta avec bienveillance, puis lui conseilla de rentrer à Ségou où il lui ferait tenir, lui dit-il, de quoi se libérer. Mamari revint donc à Ségou ; sa sœur l'y rejoignit peu après et lui signifia que Wara Dyara, ayant changé d'opinion, lui conseillait de refuser de payer. Mamàri, outré du procédé, se trouvait plus que jamais en mauvaise posture ; sa sœur le comprit et, n'hésitant pas à faire un sacrifice qu'elle jugeait susceptible de le sauver, elle lui remit tous ses bijoux en or, pour qu'il les offrît aux lieu et place des 80 bœufs.

Mamari convoqua les *ton-den'* et leur présenta les bijoux qu'il désirait substituer aux 80 bœufs ; mais, au nom de tous, le *dyala-tige*, Sibiri-ba Kouloubali, du village de Doukounna, prit la parole et dit : « Notre société n'a pas « été organisée pour acquérir un trésor, nous nous sommes « seulement réunis pour nous procurer les jouissances de la « vie ; les amendes n'ont pas pour objet de nous enrichir, « mais seulement de constituer un fond commun de victuailles. Tu as été mis à l'amende de 80 bœufs, il nous « faut des bœufs, si tu n'en as pas, retire-toi et séparons-nous. »

Mamari passa sur la rive gauche du Niger, pour prendre conseil de Massa Taraoré de Dyané, et lui demander son intervention ; Massa Taraoré l'écouta avec bonté et le fit accompagner à Doukounna, auprès de l'arbitre des *ton'*. Ce dernier dit : « Il se trouve dans la *ton'* de Mamari, « des nobles de Doua, contre lesquels je n'ai pas qualité « pour porter un jugement ; c'est aux notables de Doua « qu'il faut soumettre le litige. » Les notables de Doua se récusèrent : « Puisque ce sont les nôtres qui sont en cause, « notre jugement pourrait être suspecté de partialité, « mieux vaut avoir recours à quelqu'un qui ne se trouve « aucunement intéressé dans cette affaire, tel Tyéma Darko, de Ségou-koro. » Tyéma, consulté, répondit à Mamari : « Prends patience, le temps arrange tout. »

Mamari ne voulut point se ranger à cet avis et, pour se soustraire à l'hostilité qu'il sentait autour de lui, il demanda l'hospitalité aux Kouloubali de Binabougou, mais ceux-ci se récrièrent : « Nous sommes des faibles « gens, t'accepter parmi nous serait nous attirer l'inimitié « des puissants de Doua ; reste où tu es et nous te donnerons tout ce que nous pourrons pour te venir en aide. »

N'osant rentrer à Ségou-koro, Mamari gagna Ségou-Sikoro, dans l'espoir d'obtenir l'appui d'almami Ousman Dyiré. Celui-ci intercéda, en effet, auprès du chef de Ségou-koro, qui réunit les *ton-den'* et leur dit : « Cessez « de vous quereller, reprenez votre *ton-tigi* et, pour éviter « le retour de dissentiments pareils, restez entre gens de « même classe, séparez-vous des nobles de Doua, car ce « sont eux qui sont cause de tout. » — « C'est vrai, convinrent les jeunes gens, nous ne sommes que des cultivateurs, les amendes de bœufs ne sont pas dans nos « moyens ; désormais, toute infraction aux statuts se « paiera en mil, que nous emploierons à faire du *dlo*. » Sur quoi, Mamari reprit ses fonctions et les gens de Doua furent exclus.

Alors, deux groupes antagonistes vécurent côte à côte : la *ton'* de Doua, avec pour chef Kassoum Boaré, fils du chef de Doua ; la *ton'* de Mamari, comprenant des gens de Ségou-koro, Ségou-Sikoro, Doukounna...

La décision prise par les jeunes gens ne fut pas sans alarmer les chefs de famille. L'un d'eux, le vieux Ménkoro Kouloubali, père du *dyala-tige* Sibiri-ba, de Doukounna, vint trouver le père de Mamari et lui dit : « Ainsi, nos « jeunes gens, qui travaillent si peu pour nous, ont résolu « de gaspiller notre mil. Eh bien, je te préviens, toi, le « père de leur chef, si ton fils touche à un seul grain de ma « récolte, je lui casserai la tête. » — « Que puis-je, répliqua *fa* Siné, mon fils ne m'a jamais obéi. Toutefois, je « le préviendrai. »

Fa Siné appela Mamari et, devant le forgeron Maliki, le mit au courant de la visite du vieux Ménkoro, en lui reprochant amèrement de mener une vie de mauvais sujet. Mamari réunit les *ton-den'* et leur ayant rapporté l'entretien qu'il venait d'avoir avec son père, il leur demanda de l'aider à construire une habitation, où il put vivre en toute indépendance. Ils se mirent à l'œuvre. La maison de Mamari s'éleva, bientôt, à Ségou-koro, sur l'emplacement de ce qui fut plus tard la *Biton-blon-da*, et qui avait été, jusqu'alors, le lieu de réunion de la *ton'*. Là, tous les lundis et tous les jeudis, après avoir fait une battue, pour se procurer du gibier, les *ton-den'* s'assemblaient et festoyaient ; chacun s'efforçait d'apporter quelque ustensile et ils s'employaient eux-mêmes à préparer leurs repas.

Un vieux captif de *fa* Siné, nommé *bina* (1) Bilali, attiré par la bonne chère, avait demandé à devenir « esclave de la ton' » (*ton-dyon'*), il fut admis à ce titre et fut une sorte de factotum. Cet exemple détermina un captif soninké à agir de même, on l'accepta également et on lui confia l'importante fonction de sonneur de trompe : à l'aide d'une corne, dont il tirait par trois fois les mêmes sons, il convoquait, sur l'ordre de Mamari, les membres de la *ton'*. On le qualifia *ton-masa* « maître de la *ton'* », parce que son appel était impératif et entraînait, pour qui n'y obéissait pas, une amende de dix cruches de bière de mil (*dlo*).

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(1) *Bina*, qui signifie littéralement oncle, est ici une marque de déférence.

Un esclave somono, nommé Allah-doungo (litt. plaisir d'Allah), se donna également à la *ton'*, qui devint, de plus en plus, le refuge d'hommes désireux de se soustraire à toute autorité estimée, par eux, gênante.

Ces recrues furent les premiers *ton-dyon'*, toutes étaient des esclaves en quête de liberté. Mais, bientôt, le mouvement, dont elles avaient été les initiatrices, s'étendit, sous l'influence de la diplomatie du *ton-tigi*.

Un jour, la mère de Mamari donna (1) à la *ton'* vingt cruches de bière, à titre gracieux. et Mamari profita de la circonstance pour dire aux *ton-den'* : « Voici venir le temps « des semailles, il serait bon de nous occuper à cultiver « pour ma mère et pour la mère de Sibiri ». Les *ton-den'* répondirent : « Puisque tu nous demandes de cultiver « aussi pour la mère de Sibiri, nous acceptons; s'il ne s'était « agi que de ta mère, nous aurions refusé, car nous ne « sommes pas tes esclaves, nous sommes et demeurons « des gens libres. »

Pendant quinze jours, ils travaillèrent au champ de la mère de Mamari et, pendant quinze autres jours, à celui de la mère de Sibiri. Alors, le vieux Ménkoro, père de Sibiri, fit cadeau d'un bœuf sauvage, pour marquer sa reconnaissance et, en même temps, il exprima le désir d'être admis dans la *ton'* ; Mamari lui répliqua malicieusement : « Adresse-toi à mon père ». — « Oui, oui, je sais, dit Ménkoro, je me suis trompé et je te demande pardon. » Il fut accepté et amena avec lui Nya-Ngué Dembélé, de Dina.

Ainsi, la *ton'* de Mamari voyait tous les jours s'accroître le nombre de ses esclaves ; les esclaves venaient à elle pour avoir l'illusion de la liberté, les faibles gens pour s'assurer une protection.

RIVALITÉ DES *flà-n-ton'* DE SÉGOU ET DE DOUA

Les gens de Doua ne pouvaient manquer de prendre ombrage de cette prospérité qui, de plus en plus, rendait leur domination précaire : aussi, la *ton'* de Kassoum s'efforçait-elle, par tous les moyens, de combattre sa rivale, la *ton'* de Mamari.

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(1) Il est tout à fait dans les mœurs indigènes de faire ainsi des cadeaux prétenduement gracieux, mais qui visent, en réalité, à obtenir bien plus que l'on ne donne, nous en avons ici un exemple.

Un jour, Kassoum, accompagné de ses *ton-den'*, vint trouver Mamari et insista pour qu'une réconciliation définitive intervînt entre eux. Mamari s'y refusa. Kassoum s'efforça de remonter ce courant d'antipathie et, pour donner un gage certain de ses bonnes intentions, il voulut prêter serment, mais Mamari l'arrêta : « Non, ne « jurons pas. D'abord, je ne peux rien, sans mes *ton-den'*, « et puis, je suis faible et tu es puissant, il ne peut y avoir « de serment entre nous. » Mais Kassoum persistait dans son idée et comme, tout en causant, ils étaient arrivés au bord d'un puits en pierres, Kassoum prononça la formule sacramentelle, mangea une moitié de cola et laissa l'autre moitié tomber au fond du puits. « C'est bon, dit Mamari, « mais cela n'engage que toi. Si tu veux revenir dans huit « jours, je convoquerai mes *ton-den'* et nous tâcherons de « nous entendre. » Et ils se quittèrent en prenant rendez-vous à la fin de la huitaine, pour aller ensemble à la chasse.

Mamari réunit les *ton-den'* et les mit au courant de ce qui venait d'avoir lieu. Après discussion, on convint d'accepter l'invitation de la *ton'* de Doua.

Au jour dit, Mamari et les 400 (1) membres de sa *ton'* furent exacts au rendez-vous. La battue fut faite du côté de Togou et aucun incident ne troubla l'accord entre les jeunes gens. Mais, au retour, quand on arriva à hauteur de Bignébougou, résidence de Kassoum, celui-ci insista pour obliger les chasseurs à se restaurer chez lui, affirmant avoir tout fait préparer pour les recevoir. Mamari protesta que rien de semblable n'avait été convenu, qu'au contraire chacun demeurait libre de se comporter comme il lui plaisait ; lui et ses *ton-den'* entendant regagner le lieu ordinaire de leur réunion, lui, Kassoum et ses *ton-den'* avaient pareillement le droit de disposer de leur butin. La dispute s'accentua, si bien que les vieux du village accoururent pour s'entremettre ; ils donnèrent tort à Kassoum. Alors, Mamari leur dit : « Laissez, ce qui « est dans ma main on ne l'aura qu'en me coupant le poi-

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(1) Il est impossible d'accorder une valeur, même approximative, aux nombres donnés par les traditionnistes, rien ne peut les justifier, en général. C'est le cas des 80 bœufs de l'amende infligée à Biton.

« gnet ; que les gens de Doua gardent leur butin. Quant à « celui d'entre nous, gens de Ségou, qui abandonnera sa « part, qu'on lui dise : ta mère a couché avec un chien. « Kassoum est venu, de son propre mouvement, solliciter « une réconciliation, à laquelle nous n'avons souscrit que « pour montrer notre désir de vivre en paix, la discussion « actuelle prouve ce qu'il faut croire de la sincérité de ses « bons sentiments. »

Mamari se mit en route, accompagné de ses *ton-den'* chargés de leurs proies. Mais Kassoum ne l'entendait pas ainsi. Furieux de l'échec de son stratagème, il voulait tenter l'impossible pour atténuer la portée de sa maladresse. Il ordonna que, sur-le-champ, on lui harnachât son cheval ; mais il bouillait d'impatience et, ne pouvant se contenir, il sauta sur son cheval à moitié équipé, pour courir barrer la route à Mamari. Les deux hommes s'invectivèrent, et les choses menaçaient de tourner au tragique, lorsque survint le frère de Kassoum : indigné de la conduite de celui-ci, craignant, au surplus, les conséquences fâcheuses de la querelle, il jeta Kassoum à bas et lui administra une magistrale correction.

Kassoum pleura, Mamari et ses gens s'éloignèrent. Mandé par son père, Kassoum dut s'expliquer sur son équipée. « Je n'avais aucune mauvaise intention, dit-il, « au contraire, en vue de consolider notre réconciliation « avec Mamari, j'avais fait préparer de la bière (*dlo*) que je « voulais offrir à tous. » — « Possible, dit le vieillard, mais « tu t'y es pris de telle façon que tu nous a mis dans une « situation très délicate ; j'entends que, désormais, tu « demeures tranquille. »

La nuit venue, Kassoum, accompagné de la plupart de ses gens, se rendit auprès de Mamari. Il lui fit des excuses, prétextant un malentendu, et implora que, pour marquer le terme définitif de ces regrettables incidents, une nouvelle partie de chasse fut organisée en commun. « C'est bon, dit Mamari, mais convenons, avant de partir, du lieu où, au retour, nous installerons la cuisine. » — « Votre choix sera le nôtre », dit Kassoum.

La battue eut lieu du côté de Doukounna. Au retour, Mamari fermait la marche. Lorsque l'on arriva à hauteur de Doukounna, village du *dyala-tige* Sibiri-ba, celui-ci voulut forcer Kassoum et ses gens à s'arrêter là, pour y faire la cuisine. Kassoum s'y refusa et la dispute commença. On prévint Mamari ; il accourut, semonça verte-ment Sibiri, l'obligea à abandonner son idée et, pour cette fois, les choses ne s'envenimèrent pas ; il sembla même que la détente, de part et d'autre, fut sincère. Les deux *ton'* demeurèrent distinctes, mais entretinrent quelques relations de bonne camaraderie.

Ces divers événements n'avaient point nuit à Mamari, le sang-froid qu'il avait montré, non moins que les qualités de politique madrée dont il donnait souvent des preuves, attiraient sans cesse de nouvelles adhésions à la *ton'*. C'est ainsi que les gens de Banan-koroni, ayant à se plaindre des gens de Doua, firent demander, par le vieux Ménkoro, à être les protégés de la *ton'*. Mais Mamari ne voulut pas accepter d'entrer ainsi en lutte ouverte avec les gens de Doua, il ne se sentait pas encore assez prêt. Il fit simplement répondre : « Que quiconque, à Banan-koroni, désire entrer dans la *ton'*, se présente et les *ton-den'* décideront. » Six hommes de Banan-koroni furent admis, sur la présentation de Ménkoro.

A l'approche de l'hivernage, Kassoum exprima le désir qu'on lui cultivât un champ. Mamari obtint de sa *ton'*, qu'un champ serait cultivé pour sa mère et son cheval à lui, Mamari ; qu'un autre champ serait également cultivé pour Kassoum et qu'un troisième serait destiné à Sibiri, le *dyala-tige*.

Le vieux *fa* Séri, apprenant cette décision, dit aux autres vieux : « Nos jeunes gens qui ne font rien pour nous,
« qui nous obéissent quand il leur plaît, et puisent par
« contre dans nos greniers pour alimenter leurs beuveries,
« voilà que maintenant nos jeunes gens vont employer
« leur temps à des cultures, dont nous ne verrons pas un
« grain. Ne pensez-vous pas, qu'il faut mettre un terme à
« cet état de choses ? » Un vieux marabout s'interposa :
« Les jeunes gens ont le droit d'occuper les deux jours,
« lundi et jeudi, qui leur appartiennent, à faire ce que
« bon leur semble. » Cet avis fut écouté et les jeunes gens laissés en paix.

La récolte fut très abondante et Mamari, en particulier, eut une grande quantité de mil. Il en fit deux tas égaux et, ayant mandé son père, il lui dit : « Voici le résultat du tra-
« vail de mes compagnons, je t'en donne la moitié ; mais
« il ne faut pas oublier que ceux qui nous ont approvi-
« sionnés ne sont pas nos esclaves, ce sont des gens libres,

« avec lesquels il faut savoir se montrer reconnaissant et « généreux. Dès aujourd'hui, tu enverras donc, chaque « jour, pour la *ton'*, dix calebasses de couscous et vingt « cruches de bière. Sois sans crainte, l'approvisionnement « ne te fera pas défaut, car je n'ai qu'un signe à faire pour « que tous les greniers et tous les champs soient pillés. »

Le vieux partit, ravi d'avoir un fils qui honorait si grandement sa vieillesse ; mais, d'excès de joie, ou pour toute autre cause, il mourut peu après et Mamari se félicita d'avoir pu échapper à la malédiction paternelle (1).

Suivant la coutume, les *ton-den'* vinrent s'installer, huit jours durant, à la porte du défunt ; ils chantèrent, dansèrent et festoyèrent ainsi que le veut l'usage.

Ce délai traditionnel passé, Mamari leur demanda d'enclore, à l'aide d'une seule et même enceinte, l'habitation de son père et celle de sa mère. Ils se mirent à l'œuvre et construisirent un mur, qui ne présentait qu'une seule porte, au-dessus de laquelle ils placèrent les ornements en forme de pyramides qu'on ne met qu'à la porte des chefs. A l'intérieur, ils laissèrent subsister la division en deux parties et il fut entendu, qu'à l'avenir, la partie qui avait été précédemment occupée par le père de Mamari, serait réservée aux gens de Doukounna, lorsqu'ils désireraient prendre l'hospitalité à Ségou.

Kassoum avait à cœur de montrer qu'il avait de l'éducation indigène et savait rendre, comme il convient, la politesse dont il était l'objet. C'est ainsi qu'un jour, il invita Mamari à une grande beuverie, préparée spécialement en son honneur. Mamari accepta et, arrivé au rendez-vous, il trouva que Kassoum, impatient sans doute, avait si bien commencé la fête, qu'il était déjà tout à fait ivre.

Selon le cérémonial ordinaire, Mamari ordonna au *ton-den'*, préposé à cet office, de déguster le *dlo* devant lui (2). Faute d'un ustensile pour puiser un peu de breuvage, le *ton-den'* but à même la cruche. Kassoum se leva, furieux, criant que ce *ton-den'* était un dégoûtant personnage et il lui cassa, sur la tête, une calebasse pleine de bière (*dlo*). Mamari, à son tour, se fâcha contre Kassoum, dont la manière d'agir lui paraissait grossière et intolérable ; puis, après maintes invectives, de part et d'autre, Mamari quitta la place, pour prendre le chemin du retour. Kassoum, ayant saisi son arc et ses flèches, se mit à la poursuite de Mamari ; mais, alourdi par l'ivresse, il ne put aller loin et aucun de ses projectiles n'atteignit le but. Mamari rentra à Ségou et, pour la première fois, s'installa dans la maison de son père.

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(1) Il fit construire, à Ségou-koro, une maison dans le style de Diénné, j'en ai vu moi-même le dernier vestige, consistant en un pilier rectangulaire rongé par la pluie.

(2) Mesure de précaution contre les breuvages empoisonnés.

Les fumées de l'ivresse dissipées, Kassoum eut des remords. Il dépêcha ses amis à Mamari, pour lui exprimer tous ses regrets. Sa démarche demeurant sans résultat, il se mit lui-même à l'amende de cent cruches de bière et jura qu'il entendait contraindre Mamari et ses *ton-den'* à venir les boire. Mais un refus catégorique fut fait à toutes ses avances : « La première flèche a *été* lancée, disait « Mamari, tout est fini entre nous. » Alors, Kassoum voulut recourir à l'intimidation et à la force : il se mit en route, suivi d'une bande d'hommes armés de flèches et de lances, afin de surprendre Mamari ; mais il trouva l'habitation abandonnée.

Pendant ce temps, Mamari prévenu fit sonner de la trompe, rassembla les *ton-den'* et leur exposa ce qui s'était passé. Sa conduite fut approuvée. Kassoum, obligé de se retirer après six jours d'attente et de démarches, fut mis aux fers par son père, furieux de son inconduite. Mais il gardait au cœur une haine implacable contre Mamari. C'est pourquoi, au début de l'hivernage, Kassoum et ses partisans vinrent à Si-do, près de Ségou ; ils s'y installèrent et s'efforcèrent, par tous les moyens, d'empêcher Mamari et les siens de cultiver leurs champs. Ce fut, d'ailleurs, peine perdue, car les jeunes gens firent tous les travaux pendant la nuit. Cette situation dura un an.

Alors, Mamari eut, une fois encore, recours à sa sœur. Il partit pour Dina, afin d'en ramener de l'aide. Au moment de son arrivée, son beau-frère mourut et il fut obligé de prolonger son séjour, sans cependant obtenir autre chose que des promesses. Après trois mois d'absence, il rentra à Ségou et réunit ses *ton-den'* pour les mettre au courant de ses démarches. De leur côté, ils exposèrent que le *statu quo* n'était plus tolérable ; l'impossibilité de vacquer aux travaux des champs, les réduisait à une grande misère. Après mûres délibérations, la *ton'* décida de demander aux gens de Doukounna et de Banan-koroni d'intervenir auprès de Kassoum, pour l'amener à cesser les hostilités ; mais Kassoum persista dans ses prétentions et Mamari maintint son refus.

Sur ces entrefaites, profitant d'une nuit obscure, les *ton-den'* de Mamari vont à Si-do, détruisent les palanquements édifiés par les gens de Kassoum et en transportent les bois au siège de leur *ton'*. Le lendemain, en plein jour, Kassoum et ses gens reviennent prendre leurs bois et détruisent les habitations de la *ton'* de Mamari : d'où une bagarre au cours de laquelle un homme de Mamari tue un homme de Kassoum. Celui-ci se retire avec les siens, qui emportent le cadavre de leur compagnon.

Le père de Kassoum s'aperçut alors de la gravité de ce qu'il considérait comme des enfantillages et, afin de venger le meurtre d'un de ses administrés, il jura de tuer Mamari et dix notables de Ségou, Doukounna et Banan-koroni. Aussitôt il fit dire aux *ton-den'* de lui livrer Mamari et le meurtrier : « Jamais, répondirent les jeunes gens, l'un « de nous ne consentira à arrêter un de ses camarades ; « jamais non plus, nous ne livrerons Mamari : que le chef « de Doua viennent les prendre. »

A ce moment, arriva à Ségou, Sana-ba, sœur de Mamari : selon la coutume, le fils aîné de son mari la ramenait à sa famille, pour obtenir de l'épouser. Trois cents hommes d'armes formaient l'escorte et ils disposaient de deux pirogues pleines de flèches et d'une pleine de lances. Sur les instances de Mamari, Sana-ba décida les guerriers qui l'accompagnaient à entrer dans la *ton'* et il en fut de même des chefs bambara, établis sur la rive gauche du Niger, venus à Ségou pour saluer la veuve du puissant chef de Dina.

Avec ces appuis, Mamari se sentit de taille à tenir tête aux gens de Doua. A cet effet, il dressa des palanquements entre Fa et Si-do ; un mois après, il fut attaqué par les gens de Doua, mais il les repoussa facilement et prit l'offensive. L'ennemi fut successivement délogé de Doua, Bignébougou où Kassoum fut tué, Togou où Damfé fut tué. Les vaincus vinrent se réfugier chez Mamadi Boaré, à Kirango, dont les *ton-den'* firent le siège.

LES KOULOUBALI

(1660-1736)

MAMARI, DIT BITON, ET SES DESCENDANTS (BITON-SI-OU)

Mamari, dit Biton (1) (1660-1710). — Au fur et à mesure que son pouvoir s'était étendu sur les siens, Mamari avait senti grandir en lui des ambitions. La défaite et la fuite des gens de Doua orientèrent définitivement ses projets de domination. Un instrument lui était nécessaire pour les mener à bien : une armée, qui fut complètement à sa discrétion.

Pour donner corps à ses desseins, il s'adressa aux gens de Doukounna et de Banan-koroni, ses plus anciens et fidèles auxiliaires, et leur demanda d'envoyer auprès de lui, à titre permanent, leur « vieux », dont il voulait s'entourer comme d'un séant qu'il consulterait dans toutes les occasions. Les « vieux » acceptèrent de demeurer auprès de lui durant la saison sèche, mais ils entendaient rentrer chez eux en hivernage, pour veiller sur leurs intérêts, non moins que sur leurs gens.

Au temps de ces pourparlers, les « jeunes » de Doukounna et de Banan-koroni guerroyaient autour de Kirango, pour le compte de Mamari. Celui-ci, ne pouvant vaincre la résistance des « vieux », résolut de la briser (2). Dans la cour de sa maison, il fit creuser un puits profond ; ensuite, il manda les « vieux » récalcitrants pour, disait-il, les entretenir d'affaires urgentes. Quand ils furent arrivés, Mamari leur expliqua que, pour mieux connaître leurs sentiments sur les questions qu'il voulait leur soumettre, il désirait les entretenir deux par deux. Les « vieux » refusèrent. Alors, sur un signe de Mamari des hommes apostés à cet effet se précipitèrent sur les « vieux », les massacrèrent et jetèrent leurs cadavres dans le puits, qui fut ensuite bouché. Les « vieux » étaient, dit-on, 740 et la tradition ajoute que, depuis cette époque, les gens de Doukounna et de Banan-koroni qui arrivent à Ségou, le soir, n'y passent jamais la nuit.

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(1) Mamari est, chez les Bambara, l'équivalent de Mahomet. C'est un prénom fréquent, même chez les païens ; le *dyeli* Karé Tammoura, en raison peut-être de sa conversion à l'islamisme, employait le prénom Mamari de préférence au surnom Biton, plus généralement usité. Ce surnom Biton est un hybride adopté par et d'après les Peuls comme équivalent de *tonden'*. Ce même personnage est, d'autrefois, désigné par l'expression *fa Tigi-ton'* qui, elle aussi, atteste une influence peule et que l'on abrège, parfois, en *fa Tigi*, dont une audition défectueuse fait *fo Tige* et aussi *fo Tinge*.

(2) En s'appuyant sur ses nouveaux partisans, les gens de Dina et de la rive gauche du Niger.

Privés de leurs chefs naturels, les gens de ces deux villages étaient désormais à la merci de Mamari. Celui-ci rappela la colonne de Kirango et, dès qu'elle fut revenue, il se fit amener les « jeunes » de Doukounna et de Banankoroni ; sans leur donner d'explication, il ordonna de les coiffer à la façon des *ton-dyon'*, c'est-à-dire de leur raser la tête en laissant seulement deux mèches sur le sinciput et une sur la nuque. Les « jeunes » protestèrent de leur qualité d'hommes libres ; mais Mamari leur dit : « Pour « avoir voulu se conduire en hommes libres, vos « vieux » « sont enterrés ici, il n'y a plus dans vos villages que des « femmes et des esclaves. » Mis au courant des événements qui s'étaient écoulés pendant leur absence, les « jeunes » sentirent que toute résistance était impossible, ils se soumirent et vinrent grossir le nombre des *ton-dyon'*.

Ce coup d'audace donnait à Mamari une armée permanente et il avait si bien une notion exacte de l'étendue de son succès que, déjà, son orgueil éclatait sans réserve : « Du marigot de Mindaka à celui de Sitadougou, disait-il, « s'étend le Dyémé-ka-dougou. De l'autre côté du Mindaka, le pays est aux gens de Doua. Qu'on le sache bien, « il faut être avec moi ou avec eux. Nous ne mangerons « plus ensemble les arachides de la *ton'* ; nous ne boirons « plus, à la ronde, la bière de la *ton'*. Je suis le fils d'Allah « et je ne bois plus que de la bière de roi dans une coupe « royale : que ceux qui veulent boire avec moi restent, « que les autres s'en aillent. Désormais, il n'y a plus de « libres que Nyé Tyétigi, de Banan-koroni, et Mansa de « Banamba. Tous autres sont mes esclaves. En conséquence, que chacun des villages qui me suivent envoie « 100 hommes pour constituer ma garde personnelle. »

Mais ces bouleversements n'allaient pas sans soulever des résistances. Les gens de Doukounna et de Banankoroni, ne pouvant lutter ouvertement, s'efforcèrent, cependant, de tirer vengeance de Mamari. A cet effet, ils firent cause commune avec les gens de Doua : un homme de Doukounna, assisté d'un homme de Doua porteur de

800 gros d'or, alla à Kong pour demander une armée de secours contre Mamari. Les gens de Kong (1) acceptèrent et donnèrent une armée fortement organisée, qui vint investir Ségou. Mais les assaillants, n'ayant pu prendre la ville, renoncèrent à leur projet, et, se dirigeant vers l'Est, s'emparèrent de Bala. Enhardis par ce succès, ils revinrent à Ségou qu'ils investirent pendant neuf mois, de telle sorte que la chute de Mamari semblait imminente. C'est alors que le chef de Dina, à la faveur d'une nuit obscure, parvint à entrer dans la place, qu'il ravitailla. Grâce à ce renfort, Mamari tenta une sortie, qui fut couronnée de succès : surpris, les gens de Kong furent taillés en pièces et abandonnèrent un grand nombre de fusils, genre tromblon, ce furent les premières armes à feu que l'on vit dans la région.

A la suite de cet événement, qui, au lieu de préjudicier à Mamari, ne faisait que consolider sa domination, Mamari avait demandé au chef de Dina de lui laisser ses hommes d'armes en permanence. Mais le chef de Dina refusa, disant : « Mes hommes peuvent bien rester ici en « saison sèche, mais il faut qu'ils rentrent, en hivernage, « pour cultiver. » Mamari ne se tint pas pour satisfait et il sut si bien intriguer que le chef de Dina, ayant emmené tous ses hommes pour rentrer dans son pays, fut, peu à peu, abandonné par eux. Tous revinrent se mettre au service de Mamari, alléchés par ses promesses, et se donnèrent à lui comme *ton-dyon'*. Furieux, le chef de Dina fit à Sana-ba d'amers reproches sur la conduite de Mamari ; ils en vinrent mêmes aux injure graves, que rien ne peut réparer : si bien, enfin, que Sana-ba s'enfuit, entraînant avec elle 400 hommes, qu'elle laissa à Kégné, pendant qu'elle-même se rendait à Ségou.

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(1) Les traditions indigènes se polarisent, en quelque sorte, autour des grands empires, des grandes métropoles et des grands chefs.

J'ai indiqué que l'origine des Kouloubali, qui fondèrent l'empire de Ségou, est rattachée à des ancêtres que certains traditionnistes font venir du Mandé, tandis que d'autres les font descendre d'un chasseur venu de l'Est. (Voir page 27).

Ces deux courants de traditions opposées réapparaissent dans cette question de l'attaque de Ségou. La version donnée par le récit se retrouve dans la *Notice historique du Royaume et du Cercle de Ségou* et dans *Autour de Kita*, p. 38. A cette époque, Kong avait un rayonnement très étendu et M. Binger a exposé comment cette grande métropole sut, par des voies exclusivement commerciales et pacifiques, acquérir au loin une grande influence. La version d'une armée de Kong venue attaquer Ségou et, battue, gagnant l'Ouest, occupant le Banan, puis le Mandé..., semble donc suspecte par ce qu'elle ne cadre pas avec les pratiques des Dioula de Kong. M. Delafosse, à qui elle paraît invraisemblable, fait un exposé différent et qui se rattache au courant des traditions sous la dépendance de l'autre pôle : le Mandé.

Ayant ainsi abattu un auxiliaire, qui pouvait devenir gênant, n'ayant plus, d'autre part, à compter avec les gens de Kong, Mamari se retourna contre Kirango. Il envoya son fils Ba-dyi faire le siège de ce village. Ba-dyi fut vaincu et tué. Mamari jura que sa vengeance serait terrible et que rien ne pourrait conjurer le mauvais sort qu'il réservait à ses ennemis, jusqu'ici irréductibles. Toutefois, ses menaces demeurèrent momentanément sans effet, car il se rendit à l'avis de son entourage qui regardait comme fort dangereux de vouloir vaincre à tout prix.

Pour prendre patience, il organisa sommairement le pays sous sa domination et, afin de prévenir toute surprise de la part des gens de Dina, il plaça son esclave, Mari, avec 1.000 hommes à Tyi-la-bougou, en face de Niamina.

A cette époque, les Peuls, cantonnés vers Ségou, reconnaissaient l'autorité d'un des leurs, nommé Dotyé Bari, lui-même tributaire de Mamari. Un jour, Dotyé fut prévenu de l'arrivée d'une forte immigration de gens venant du Bani-n-ko et commandée par un nommé Dyoba Fonba. Après s'être renseigné, Dotyé informa Mamari, qui le chargea de surveiller les nouveaux venus. Mais, peu après, Dyoba vint se plaindre de Dotyé et demanda à être confié au chef Tyéma Mamari ; mais, Mamari refusa et Tyéma, impressionné par cette marque de défiance, quitta son village pour se rapprocher de Ségou ; il s'établit à Tyéma-bougou.

Dotyé étant mort sur ces entrefaites, Mamari manda Dyoba et l'installa à la place du défunt, dont il fit appeler le fils, nommé Bougari, sous prétexte de l'établir auprès de lui. En réalité, il exigea que Bougari lui fournit un contingent de 1.000 hommes, qu'il considéra comme ses propres esclaves, à la tête desquels il plaça Nankoroba Nzangué Dyallo et qui relevèrent de sa mère, à lui, Mamari, Sounou Saro.

D'autre part, il envoya son fils Bakari, puîné de Ba-dyi, à Diénné, pour y être instruit dans la religion musulmane et il plaça un autre de ses enfants, Dé-koro, à Ségou-bougou, à la tête de 6.000 Samaké, venus de Ténétou ; à ce contingent, il ajouta 12.000 personnes, commandées par Kanou-ba-nyouma.

Il jugea, enfin, le moment propice pour marcher sur Kirango : son entreprise réussit pleinement, le chef Mamadi Boaré fut tué et 16.000 captifs tombèrent aux mains du vainqueur, qui les répartit entre ses chefs auxiliaires. L'un d'eux, Ngolo Ké-ba, reçut 1.000 hommes, tandis que quatre groupes de 400 personnes chacun, avec pour chef principal *fa* Sira Taraoré, furent astreints à cultiver du côté de Farako. Le vieux, Ton-Massa reçut, pour sa part, 9.000 hommes et vint demeurer à Kohin, au sud de Ségou-bougou ; tandis qu'un certain *fa* Sire prenait possession de Ségou-bougou avec 400 personnes ; enfin les jeunes *sofa* furent placés sous le commandement de Dyoni Kolé, c'est-à-dire Kolé originaire de Dioni.

Mamari lui-même n'avait pas de résidence fixe et son voisinage ne manquait pas d'être une source de préoccupation pour les gens de son voisinage susceptibles de lui inspirer quelque méfiance. On raconte qu'un jour, il dit à l'almami Ousman, qui était un peu son ami : « J'ai « l'intention de mettre ma maison à Ségou-Sikoro. » — « C'est bien (1) ! » dit l'almami, qui se préparait déjà à déguerpir, lorsque Mamari lui confia, peu après : « Réflexion « faite, je préfère construire un « Nouveau-Ségou » (Ségou-« koura). » — « C'est bien ! » répliqua encore l'almami Ousman. Mais Mamari changea encore d'avis et, faisant appeler l'almami Ousman Dyiré, il voulut lui remettre le soin de ses affaires de Ségou-Sikoro. Comme le vieux musulman n'ambitionnait pas d'entrer en relations aussi étroites avec son turbulent voisin, il déclina l'offre et invoqua un prétexte pour partir à Togou.

Vers cette époque, les Somono Tyéro, émigrant du pays bobo, arrivèrent à Ségou et obtinrent d'y demeurer. Peu après, les gens de Kong, qui avaient réparé les pertes de la défaite, apparurent sur les frontières du pays de Ségou ; bien aguerris et bien armés, ils constituaient de redoutables adversaires, et, de fait, ils mirent Mamari à deux doigts de sa perte. On dit que dans la bataille décisive, Mamari ne dut de sortir vainqueur qu'à l'intervention des Somono Tyéro, lesquels mirent les gens de Kong en déroute en les faisant attaquer par des abeilles.

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(1) Cette expression « *a nyana* » est une réponse évasive fréquemment employée pour masquer des sentiments hostiles. En voir de nombreux exemples dans les textes au chapitre VII ci-après.

C'est au cours de ce conflit que périt le vieux Ton-massa : Mamari ressentit d'autant plus cette perte, que les devins consultés lui prédirent qu'avec Ton-massa s'en allait sa « veine ». Toutefois, il pourvut au remplacement du défunt, dont il attribua les fonctions à un esclave, qu'il acheta aux Somono de Néré-koro.

Cette même année-là, il modifia la redevance, qui, jusqu'alors, avait été acquittée par ceux qui le suivaient : il proclama que, désormais, au lieu du *di-songo*, ils ne lui donneraient plus que le grain qui reste dans la poussière, lors de la récolte : ce que l'on appelle *nyon' dyu*.

Vers cette époque, il acquit deux nouveaux esclaves, qui devaient jouer un rôle important dans le pays : l'un est demeuré connu sous le nom de Nzan Fato et l'autre était Ngolo Dyara : le premier devint esclave pour avoir volé une ruche, quant au second, voici son histoire.

Ngolo Dyara était originaire du village de Nyouanna (1), qui versait à Mamari un tribut annuel de mil. Or, le père de Ngolo étant mort, Ménkoro, son oncle, dut, en raison de l'extrême jeunesse de Ngolo, se rendre auprès de Mamari pour acquitter la redevance et, sous couleur d'initier l'enfant aux détails de cette obligation, il l'emmena à Ségou avec lui. Ménkoro, suivant son habitude, prit l'hospitalité chez Danté Balo, femme de forgeron de la clientèle de Mamari ; après quoi, suivant également son habitude, il courut les tripots et les maisons de jeu ; tant et si bien que, le lendemain, il avait gaspillé 180 des 160 charges de mil destinées à payer le tribut. Alors, il vint trouver son hôtesse et lui expliqua que, pendant la nuit, les « jeunes gens » l'avaient volé et il se lamenta sur l'accueil qu'il allait recevoir de Biton. La brave femme se laissa prendre à ce désespoir et accepta d'apaiser la colère du maître en lui offrant Ngolo Dyara à titre de compensation du tribut incomplet.

Lorsque Mamari apprit que la redevance de Nyouanna était insuffisante, il entra dans une grande colère et, pour punir cette irrégularité, qui se produisait tous les ans, il jura de donner Ménkoro à ses idoles. Mais Danté Balo intervint et, par d'habiles moyens, décida Mamari à surseoir à sa décision en acceptant, pour cette fois, que le complément de la redevance fut constitué par l'abandon du jeune Ngolo Dyara ; Mamari accepta l'enfant à titre de gage et fixa à Ménkoro un délai de vingt jours, pour le retirer contre 300 charges de mil ; ce délai expiré sans que Ménkoro se soit acquitté, l'enfant appartiendrait à Mamari. La combinaison ayant été acceptée, Mamari ordonna à son forgeron, Sdir-bilé, d'en proclamer très exactement les conditions, pour que, le cas échéant, on ne put pas lui reprocher, à lui Mamari, d'avoir réduit en captivité un homme libre. Ménkoro repartit donc seul.

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(1) « Niola, près Bogué, en face Niamina » (Delafosse, t. II, p. 227.)

Mamari fut vite séduit par la mine éveillée et la vive intelligence de Ngolo, il en fit son compagnon de tous les instants et le mit dans la confidence de tous ses secrets. Il lui confia la clef de la chambre de ses idoles et lui enseigna les pratiques de leurs cultes ; il le présenta à ses femmes, l'habilla de rouge (1) et le traita, en définitive, comme le plus cher de ses favoris.

Au bout d'un an seulement, les gens de Nyouanna reparurent. Mamari leur demanda s'ils voulaient reprendre l'enfant. « Non, dirent-ils, car non seulement le délai est « passé, mais encore nous n'avons pas le moyen de payer le « prix convenu ; Ménkoro qui accepta tes conditions savait « bien qu'il ne pourrait jamais les remplir. D'ailleurs, main« tenant, l'enfant a pris ici des habitudes qui lui rendraient « le séjour parmi nous insupportable. » Mamari ordonna à son forgeron de porter ces déclarations à la connaissance de tous, pour qu'il fut bien connu que Ngolo Dyara demeurait, en fait et en droit, son esclave.

A vivre dans la continuelle intimité du maître, Ngolo connut bientôt tous ses secrets. Il sut, notamment, qu'à des jours déterminés, Mamari se baignait avec une eau douée de la vertu d'affermir et d'accroître ses pouvoirs de commandement. L'idée lui vint qu'il pourrait, sans doute, acquérir un peu de cette toute-puissance s'il se lavait avec l'eau magique, et, chaque fois que le maître prenait son bain, l'enfant venait se placer sous la gouttière par laquelle l'eau s'échappait au dehors, afin de participer aux effets merveilleux de cette pratique magique.

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(1) La couleur rouge écarlate est en faveur chez les Soudanais ; le récit que nous rapportons ici en contient trois exemples : celui ci-dessus de Ngolo, celui de Toumassa, celui de Déni-ba Bo. De ces deux derniers exemples, il semble résulter que le rouge était particulièrement réservé aux chefs. Pareille conclusion résulte également des faits analogues constatés à Malli, par Ibn Batouta.

Mais Mamari ayant, à plusieurs reprises, remarqué des traces de pieds sous la gouttière, soupçonna la vérité ; il eut recours à un stratagème : il feignit de se baigner et, pendant que l'eau allait se déverser au dehors, il regarda : apercevant l'enfant sous la gouttière, il le frappa avec son bâton ferré.

Ngolo, épouvanté, se sauva chez Danté Balo, à laquelle il se confia. La brave femme intercéda auprès de Mamari, qui se laissa fléchir, mais résolut de se séparer de son favori ; il fit appelé Kolé, le chef des sofa, et, lui remettant Ngolo, il lui dit : « Tiens, voilà un mauvais sujet, ne crains « pas de le fatiguer. »

Un jour, ayant conduit les *bila-koro* (1) sous ses ordres couper du fourrage, Kolé s'était assis en un lieu appelé « *Sirani-n-tu* » (litt. forêt du petit baobab) à cause d'un petit baobab qui s'élevait au milieu d'un bocage. Le génie du lieu, qui habitait ce baobab, apparut à Kolé et lui dit : « Si, demain, tu viens, à cette même place, m'offrir un « bélier blanc, un coq blanc et du riz, je te donnerai le « moyen de devenir roi de Ségou. » Ngolo, qui rôdait dans les environs, avait tout vu et tout entendu ; revenu à Ségou, il courut tout en pleurs chez Danté Balo et, comme elle le questionnait sur la cause d'un tel désespoir, il répondit qu'un génie avait menacé de le tuer, s'il ne lui offrait pas un bélier blanc ,un coq blanc et du riz. — « Eh « bien, dit-elle, console-toi : voici un coq blanc et du riz ; « quant au bélier, prends-en un dans le troupeau de notre « maître et, si l'on s'étonne de te voir possesseur d'un « bélier, réponds que c'est moi qui te l'ai donné. » Il se conforma à ces indications et fut exact au rendez-vous que Kolé avait au contraire oublié.

Ayant, suivant les rites qui lui étaient familiers, égorgé le bélier et le coq et offert le riz, Ngolo vit apparaître le génie, tandis qu'une voix lointaine disait : « Ah, c'est toi, « ami Kolé (2), je suis content de te voir docile à mes ordres « et, en retour, je te promets que tu exerceras le commandement suprême à Ségou, sous la seule condition de me

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(1) Jeune garçon en âge d'être circoncis, portant, au lieu de pantalon, une bande d'étoffe passée entre les jambes et nommée *bila*.

(2) Il est intéressant de constater que le génie se trompe sur l'identité de celui qui l'honore, il le prend pour Kolé : c'est un fait qui paraît mériter d'être remarqué, car il en est ainsi souvent. Les récits indigènes traduisent-ils par là une infériorité spécifique et laquelle ?

« faire, chaque année, à pareille époque, ces mêmes offrandes. » Tel fut le pacte qui fit la fortune de Ngolo.

Le lendemain, un jeune sofa, auquel Kolé avait confié son aventure, lui demanda s'il s'était conformé au désir du génie de *Sirani-n-tu*. L'oublieux Kolé partit aussitôt et, lorsqu'il eut accompli le sacrifice, le génie étonné d'être dérangé, lui demanda qui il était et ce qu'il désirait. En apprenant qu'il était le vrai Kolé, il lui dit qu'il avait été devancé par un plus avisé, auquel il avait livré le secret de la fortune ; mais que, pour récompenser sa démarche, il lui assurerait une haute situation et de grandes richesses si, tous les ans, à la même époque, il venait lui faire même offrande.

Kolé s'en alla furieux. Convaincu que seul un des jeunes sofa avait pu surprendre son secret et s'en servir, il réunit tous les *bila-koro* et menaça de faire frapper chacun d'eux de cent coups de corde, s'ils ne lui dénonçaient pas celui qui s'était enhardi jusqu'à se substituer à lui-même. Ngolo fut désigné mais nia avec énergie ; Kolé le mit en demeure de prêter serment sur le puits, mais il refusa. Kolé vint, alors, trouver Mamari : il lui exposa que la conduite de Ngolo était absolument intolérable et qu'il lui devenait impossible de le garder. Mamari insista, mais vainement, pour avoir des détails précis et ordonna, enfin, à Kolé de mettre Ngolo au nombre des *sofa* spécialement chargés de s'occuper des chevaux, en attendant une occasion de se débarrasser de lui.

Cette occasion s'offrit bientôt. Mamari envoya une caravane de 240 esclaves à Diénné, où ils devaient être échangés contre des chevaux. Le marabout de Diénné, hôte de la caravane, réclama, comme droit d'hospitalité, un esclave, à son choix. Séduit par la mine éveillée et la jeunesse de Ngolo, il jeta son dévolu sur lui. Ce nouveau maître le traita bien, mais l'obligea à pratiquer l'islamisme. Ngolo fit de rapides progrès et arriva à savoir par cœur la moitié du Koran ; dès lors, ayant mûri son plan, il se présenta un jour tout en larmes devant le marabout son maître. Celui-ci s'informa avec bienveillance de la cause de sa peine et Ngolo lui raconta que, né libre, il avait été donné en gage à Mamari ; que la nouvelle venait de lui parvenir de l'arrivée de ses parents à Ségou pour le racheter et que, faute de savoir où le retrouver, ils allaient certainement repartir de sorte que pour toujours, désormais, il demeurerait esclave. Le marabout lui dit : « Puis-« que tu sais maintenant la majeure partie du Koran et que « tu pratiques convenablement la religion, tu n'est plus « esclave, je te rends la liberté, retourne quand tu voudras « dans ton pays. »

Ngolo se mit aussitôt en marche pour Ségou, où il prit l'hospitalité chez un marabout, auquel il raconta son odyssée, en concluant que son maître de Diénné l'avait libéré, de son propre mouvement, afin de le récompenser de son zèle et de son assiduité, dans la pratique de la religion musulmane. Il sollicita son hôte de bien vouloir intercéder auprès de Mamari, pour qu'il lui pardonnât. Le marabout lui remit une amulette et lui conseilla de se mêler au jeunes gens préposés à la garde de la porte de Mamari, afin d'avoir toute facilité d'approcher du maître qui, sous l'influence du philtre, ne manquerait pas de pardonner.

Ngolo se conforma à cet avis. Un matin, à la première heure, il rôda à proximité de la demeure de Mamari et, s'étant faufilé dans le groupe des femmes, qui vaquaient au service de la maison, il put, sans éveiller l'attention, venir s'étendre auprès des jeunes gens de garde. Il feignit de dormir, lorsque le maître, quittant sa case, passe auprès de lui, le reconnut, le secoua du bout de son bâton ferré et lui demanda comment il se trouvait là. Une fois de plus, il fit le récit de son aventure à son avantage et, pressant entre ses mains l'amulette du marabout, il implora son pardon.

Mamari fit appeler Kolé et lui remit Ngolo. En très peu de temps, celui-ci sema la discorde parmi les jeunes gens. Deux camps se formèrent : d'un côté, les partisans de Kolé ; de l'autre, ceux de Ngolo et, chaque jour, des rixes éclatèrent à tout propos. Kolé ne sut plus où donner de la tête ; il vint trouver Mamari : « Impossible, lui dit-il, de « garder Ngolo, car, par ses intrigues, il fait échec à mon « autorité. » — « Patiente comme moi, dit Mamari, je le « perdrai si bien qu'il ne reviendra jamais. »

Cheikh Sidi El Mokhtar (1) ayant envoyé saluer Mamari, celui-ci, par manière de politesse, donna Ngolo, à titre d'aumône. Cheikh Sidi El Mokhtar eut vite fait de juger Ngolo et, comprenant qu'il n'en tirerait rien, il lui dit : « Tu es appelé aux plus hautes destinées et tes fils « commanderont le Ségou. Je te laisse libre de poursuivre « ton sort ; mais, en retour, je te demande de t'engager, dès « aujourd'hui, à me payer une redevance dès que tu occu- « peras la place qui t'est réservée. » Ngolo refusa de souscrire à aucun engagement et Cheikh Sidi El Moktar, ne pouvant vaincre sa résistance, le laissa cependant partir.

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(1) Cheikh Sidi el Mokhtar naquit vers 1730 et mourut vers 1811, il y a donc erreur dans le récit : le fait est trop fréquent dans les traditions indigènes pour qu'il soit nécessaire d'y insister.

Arrivé à Ségou, Ngolo se réfugia chez le somono Baré Tyéro, qui le conduisit à Almami Ousman, qui le remit à Mamadou Kané, lequel le présenta à Mamari. Mamari accueillit Ngolo comme on accueille le destin. Encore une fois, il manda Kolé pour le lui remettre ; mais Kolé, qui n'en voulait pas, suggéra un moyen de s'en défaire. La place de percepteur à Ségou-Sikoro était depuis quelque temps vacante ; le titulaire, comme ses prédécesseurs d'ailleurs, était mort empoisonné et nul n'ambitionnait de lui succéder. Dans ce poste dangereux, le bouillant Ngolo ne manquerait pas de trouver une fin rapide.

Mais, contrairement à ces prévisions, Ngolo se montra très habile politique ; non seulement il n'eut pas maille à partir avec ses contribuables, mais encore il sut s'acquérir de nombreuses et sincères sympathies, de sorte que plus de 1.000 personnes vivaient sous son autorité propre lorsqu'il épousa la femme qui lui donna son fils Boubou-dyé.

Mamari ayant entendu parler d'un marabout très savant, Karamoko Abdoullahi Diari, en résidence à Niamina, résolut de l'envoyer chercher. Kolé conseilla de confier cette délicate mission à Ngolo, dans la pensée que le jeune homme, violent et impérieux, ne manquerait pas de s'attirer la haine du vieillard et disparaîtrait bien vite grâce aux moyens occultes, qui font la force des marabouts. Mais le vieux reconnut, dès l'abord, qu'il avait affaire à un homme prédestiné pour l'accomplissement de grandes choses ; il l'accueillit avec bonté, lui donna des amulettes et l'engagea à suivre très exactement ses conseils. Ngolo lui demanda d'user de son influence, pour le faire rentrer dans les bonnes grâces de Mamari. Le vieux dit à Mamari qu'il ne pouvait prétendre à quelque prospérité qu'en vivant dans la fréquentation continue de Ngolo, qui était un « veinard ».

A partir de ce moment, Mamari attacha Ngolo à sa personne. Il lui donna 1.000 hommes à ajouter à ceux qui, déjà, le suivaient et, pour traiter tous ces gens convenablement, il lui donna des bœufs et des moutons ; il le fit venir à demeure à Ségou-koro et, tout en lui conservant cependant l'appellation Sikoro Ngolo, il lui conféra le titre de *dyenfa*, c'est-à-dire grand prêtre de ses idoles, dont les deux plus importantes étaient *ba Kungo-ba* et *na Ngolo-ko*, qu'il avait ramenées du Kaminiadougou.

D'autre part, le vieux marabout de Niamina signala à Ngolo, une jeune fille du village de Diaba, laquelle devait donner le jour à des enfants qui auraient une brillante destinée. Ngolo, sur le conseil du savant, demanda la jeune fille en mariage ; mais elle était enfant unique et ses parents ne voulaient pas plus s'en séparer qu'elle ne voulait les quitter. Mamari intervint : sur son ordre, la jeune fille fut remise à Ngolo et, pour dédommager les parents éplorés, il leur fit cadeau de 10 esclaves.

D'ailleurs, son amitié intéressée pour Ngolo ne faisait pas perdre, à Mamari, le soin de sa propre fortune. Il étendait son influence, bien moins par des actions guerrières que par une diplomatie fort insinuante. Lorsqu'il s'était établi dans le Ségou, le pays compris entre Dina et Kirango comptait une quarantaine de cantons indépendants les uns des autres ; il eut l'habileté, en profitant des dissentiments qui les divisaient, de s'imposer, peu à peu comme un arbitre suprême. Beaucoup de diplomatie et, de temps à autre, une campagne heureuse placèrent le pays sous sa domination.

Pour faire disparaître, peu à peu, les barrières que les tribus ou les familles s'efforçaient de maintenir entre elles, il déplaçait des populations entières, qu'il transportait tantôt ici, tantôt là ; ou bien, il installait ses troupes, ou ses alliés, en grand nombre sur les points du territoire qui lui paraissaient d'un loyalisme suspect. C'est ainsi qu'il mit son dévoué Kolé à la tête de 6.000 hommes et qu'il confia le commandement de 8.000 hommes à son serviteur Allah-n-siré : ces deux chefs demeurèrent d'ailleurs à la disposition de sa femme favorite, mère de son fils défunt Ba-dyi ; de même Tyé-kouma prit position à Nango, avec 6.000 hommes et un autre corps de même force sous le commandement de Ngolo Ké-ba, occupa Sama, pour prévenir l'attaque des Kouloubali de Mémana et Sori-bougou ; lui-même Mamari vint, dans le même dessein, s'installer à Massala, en face de Sama. Le Bani-n-ko était tenu en échec par 9.000 habitants, campés à Gassi, sous l'autorité de Kafa-dyougou.

Du côté de Dîna, les craintes, un instant très vives, firent place à une quiétude parfaite : à la mort du chef, les 70 fils ne purent s'entendre et les esclaves, ne trouvant pas, parmi eux, le maître désiré, vinrent s'offrir à Mamari. Il les partagea en trois groupes : l'un de 6.000 hommes vint habiter Foni, sous le commandement de Si-dloki, avec mission de surveiller Bo-dyan, chef de Simo-na ; un second, de 4.000 hommes, eut pour chef Fané qui dut faire sa résidance à Massala pour, de là, surveiller les menées hostiles du Konka-dougou ; quant au troisème, composé de 3.000 hommes, il gagna Guén-ni, dans le Kala, en face de Ségou, avec pour objectif de s'opposer à l'invasion possible de Nyarankan, chef de Diani.

Vers l'Est, la frontière exigeait une grande vigilance. Les gens de Doua étaient à peu près revenus dans Kirango et recommençaient à devenir menaçants. Une colonne sur Togou, commandée par Allah-n-siré, fut repoussée et Allah-n-siré tué, mais Ngolo, envoyé pour réparer cette défaite, fut vainqueur et, pour le récompenser, Mamari le nomma chef de sa garde personnelle, qu'il composa de plus de 3.000 jeunes guerriers. Ngolo eut alors pour office de se tenir en permanence dans la pièce contiguë à celle occupée par Mamari.

Un nommé Kelli-Kelli Dinké, s'étant brouillé avec ses frères, demanda à Mamari d'intervenir à main armée dans ce différend. Mamari accepta d'agir lui-même, puis il céda aux instances du *ton-masa* qui demanda à le suppléer. Le *ton-masa* éprouva un échec sérieux et Mamari se disposait à partir, lorsque son fils, Dé-koro, insista pour être chargé de cette affaire. Dé-koro, aussitôt arrivé sur les lieux, injuria grossièrement le *ton-masa*, lui reprocha d'être un lâche et un incapable et le fit frapper de quarante coups de corde sous les yeux même de ses guerriers. Dé-koro prit le village et tua le chef.

Au retour, le *ton-masa* se plaignit amèrement à Mamari du traitement honteux dont il avait été l'objet et ne cacha pas la haine implacable qu'il avait désormais pour Dé-koro. Sur les instances d'un familier, Dyon-kolo, Mamari consola le *ton-masa* et l'assura qu'à l'avenir nul ne manquerait aux égards auxquels il avait droit. En témoignage de sa bienveillance et de son estime, il lui fit cadeau de cent cinquante coudées de soie, pour se confectionner un *bila* et une ceinture à la manière des *sofa* : le *ton-masa* seul eut cet insigne ; enfin, pour lui ôter tout sujet de désaccord avec Dé-koro, il le plaça, sur sa demande, sous les ordres de son fils Bakari, qui poursuivait ses études musulmanes à Diénné.

Peu après cet incident grave, Mamari mourut (1).

Tous ceux qui, à un titre quelconque, relevaient du défunt, apportèrent ou envoyèrent leur quote-part, en vue des fêtes funéraires. Les cauris remplirent six grands magasins et Dé-koro décida d'en garder la libre disposition pour soulager les miséreux. Le *ton-masa* s'opposa à cette manière de voir et voulut que ce trésor fut immédiatement réparti entre les pauvres. Cette contradiction, conséquence de la haine des deux antagonistes, aurait sans doute dégénéré en un sanglant conflit, si l'arrivée de Bakari n'eut fait diversion.

Bakari convoqua les esclaves et, quand tous furent présents, prenant d'une main une étoffe merveilleuse, don des marabouts de Diénné, il la jeta en l'air : elle s'éploya magnifiquement au-dessus de Bakari et de son frère Dé-koro, assis auprès de lui. Le *ton-masa* se passa, alors, une bande de toile de coton autour du cou et vint humblement en remettre les bouts entre les mains de Bakari, en lui disant : « Par la volonté de notre maître, je suis et
« demeure ton esclave. »

Le quarantième jour, Bakari fut nommé chef, il s'établit à Ségou-koro, tandis que son frère, Dé-koro, se retira à Ségou-bougou.

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(1) Sa souveraineté s'étendit sur les deux rives du Niger, de Dina jusqu'à Tombouctou.

« Vers 1670, Er Rechid, le premier sultan filalien ou hassanide de Fez,
« au cours d'une expédition dans le Sous, mit le siège devant la zaouia
« d'un religieux musulman nommé Ali ben Haidara, lequel s'enfuit au
« Soudan et alla se mettre sous la protection de l'empereur banmana
« Biton Koulouballi, dont l'autorité commençait à s'étendre jusqu'à
« Tombouctou. Ali offrit à Biton de belle captives, d'origine espagnole
« ou portugaise, qu'il avait amenées avec lui : le prince banmana, amadoué par ce présent, autorisa Ali à s'établir à Tombouctou avec sa
« famille et ses disciples, et lui promit son assistance. En effet, le sultan
« Er Rachid, parti à la poursuite d'Ali, se heurta entre Tombouctou et
« Dienné, dans le nord du Massina, à l'armée de Ségou et devant le refus
« très net de Biton de lui livrer le fugitif, retourna au Maroc. » (Delafosse, tome I, p. 247). « Biton mourut du tétanos, après s'être blessé au pied
« en marchant, accidentellement, sur une pointe de fer. » (Delafosse, t. II, p. 286.)

Bakari (1710) (1). — Le premier soin de Bakari fut de rechercher tous ceux qui n'avaient rien envoyé pour les fêtes funéraires de son père. Les gens de Kirango, commandés par Mamari-ntyéni Boaré, étaient du nombre et Bakari décida de sévir contre eux. Le *ton-masa* intervint : « Ce sont des pauvres, car ils n'ont pas encore pu se relever « des désastres que ton père leur a infligés. Sans doute « n'ont-ils mis aucune mauvaise volonté à remplir leurs « devoirs de tributaires et il serait, en tous cas, préférable, avant d'agir contre eux, de les entendre. » Bakari se rangea de cet avis et manda Mamari-ntyémi pour s'expliquer. Mamari-ntyéni refusa de venir : « Je ne pouvais envoyer des cauris, fit-il répondre, puisque ni moi « ni mes gens n'en possédons. Et puis, d'ailleurs, pourquoi m'importuner à propos de cauris que je n'ai pas « donnés, alors que vous n'êtes même pas d'accord pour « les cauris que vous avez reçus. »

Cette impertinence exaspéra Bakari. Il partit à la tête d'une forte colonne pour attaquer Kirango ; mais, arrivé à Dyam-bourou-bougou, sa colère étant tombée, il envoya des gens à Mamari-ntyéni, pour l'inviter de nouveau à faire acte de loyalisme. Mamari-ntyéni refusa et fit serment, si Bakari continuait sa marche sur Kirango, qu'il lui fendrait la tête du front à la nuque. Bakari, sans tenir compte de ces menaces, vint mettre le siège devant le village, qu'il investit trois mois durant. Alors, l'hivernage étant commencé, les esclaves murmurèrent : « Nous « avons passé ici toute la saison sèche et nos efforts répétés n'ont abouti à aucun résultat décisif ; l'hivernage ne « nous sera pas plus favorable, au contraire, et nos champs « ne produiront rien : mieux vaut nous en retourner. »

Ces plaintes partaient surtout du groupe des esclaves de Dé-koro, qui agissaient de la sorte à l'instigation de Kanou-ba-nyouma, leur chef, et par haine du *ton-masa*, l'ennemi de leur maître. Un jour vint où tous les gens de Dé-koro partirent et, réduit à ses seuls moyens, Bakari n'en persista pas moins à vouloir prendre le village, mais la situation difficile où il se débattait, la démoralisation de ses gens et la désaffection dont ils témoignaient même à son égard, eurent raison de sa robuste constitution. La maladie vint, provoquée assure-t-on par des empoisonnements et des sortilèges. Incapable de rien diriger désormais, il rentra à Ségou et y mourut peu après.

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(1) Le Dr Quintin et M. Delafosse donnent pour successeur immédiat de Biton, Dé-koro ; Ali ou Bakari ne serait qu'un intermédiaire sans importance entre Dé-koro et Ton-Massa.

Bakari avait régné six mois. Ses funérailles eurent lieu conformément à la coutume.

Dé-koro (1711-1736). — Dé-koro, frère de Bakari, lui succéda le quarantième jour.

Dès son installation, il entra en conflit avec les *ton-dyon'*, qui, depuis la mort de Mamari, se partageaient entre les prétendants probables au commandement. Son refus d'habiter Ségou-koro lui créa de tels ennuis qu'il dut céder, au moins en apparence, car il ne vint qu'aux réunions du lundi et du jeudi.

La situation devenant intolérable, il résolut de s'imposer par la force et par la terreur. Pour briser la résistance des *ton-dyon'*, il décida de frapper les grands meneurs. S'adressant à Bilali, l'un des plus anciens esclaves de son père, il lui dit : « Qu'as-tu à tant parler ! Tu n'es qu'un « paresseux, dont on ne peut rien tirer ; tu es le dernier « au travail, alors que j'y suis dès le point du jour. » Peu après, dans un accès de rage folle, il fit saisir le vieillard et le fit clouer contre le tronc d'un baobab ; le misérable cadavre demeura là tout l'hivernage, témoin horrible de la colère et de la puissance du maître : et les *ton-dyon'* tremblèrent.

L'hivernage passé, Dé-koro réunit une colonne qu'il conduisit contre Kirango. Mais ses efforts demeurèrent vains et, dans la crainte de se voir abandonner par ses troupes, il revint à Ségou. Il ne put y rester longtemps, car le mécontentement grandissait autour de lui et menaçait d'entraîner sa ruine. Aussi, après avoir réorganisé son armée, il passa le fleuve et vint attaquer Doroni, village de la rive gauche. Ses armes furent encore malheureuses et il dut retourner sur ses pas. Chemin faisant, ses gens se débandèrent : les uns voulaient revenir sur Doroni, d'autres sur Ségou, d'autres entendaient prendre du repos. Ce dernier parti prévalut : Dé-koro demeura, dans ces conditions, un an à Sama, avec la plus grande partie de ses guerriers.

Furieux de ses revers qu'il attribuait à l'indiscipline de ses gens, il gagna Ségou et y convoqua les quatre principaux chefs : le *ton-masa*, Kanou-ba-nyouma, Kafadyougou et Kolé. Il leur dit, sur un ton terrible : « Vous ne « voulez plus cultiver, vous ne voulez pas non plus faire « la guerre ; il faut que tout cela finisse ! » — « Tu ne peux « rien obtenir de nous, répliqua le *ton-masa*, parce que tu « nous traites mal, et tu ne réussis pas à la guerre, parce « que tu n'as pas la « veine ». Dé-koro clôtura l'entrevue, en leur donnant ordre de lui fournir chacun 60 hommes.

Sur les indications de son maître, le forgeron *fa* Kourou plaça chacune de ces fractions de 60 hommes le long de chaque côté d'un carré tracé à terre et tout aussitôt, sous les yeux de Dé-koro, des maçons indigènes élevèrent quatre murailles, en y incorporant ces hommes (1) : « Ainsi, « dit Dé-koro, dans cette chambre, j'habiterai au milieu « de mes esclaves qui, bon gré mal gré, me garderont. » Et les *ton-dyon'* tremblèrent ; seul le *ton-masa* eut le courage de protester : « Si j'avais pu soupçonner le sort que « tu réservais à mes malheureux compagnons, je n'aurais « jamais exécuté tes ordres. » — « Eh bien, s'écria Dé-koro, « le jour où tu refuseras d'obéir, je ferai de ton corps un « banc, sur lequel je m'asseoirai. »

L'hivernage venu, Dé-koro réunit les chefs des *ton-dyon'* et remit au *ton-masa* 12.000 pioches ; à Kafadyougou, 8.000 ; à Kanou-ba-nyouma, 11.000 ; à chacun il assigna un terrain à cultiver, car ils avaient refusé de reprendre les opérations de guerre ; quant à Fassoun, Nyé-dingué-dou et Ngolo Ké-ba, qui acceptèrent de le suivre, il les laissa tranquilles.

Le *ton-masa* n'accepta pas de cultiver le champ qui lui fut assigné, il voulait travailler dans les environs de son village ; deux autres chefs, obligés à des travaux analogues, entendaient agir de même. Dé-koro s'efforça de réduire cette opposition ; n'y pouvant réussir, il ordonna au *ton-masa* d'aller prendre Kirango ; le *ton-masa* obéit : avec les siens, il s'en alla sous les murs de Kirango : il échoua piteusement et fit dire à Dé-koro de le secourir. Dé-koro riposta par l'ordre formel de prendre le village. Le *ton-masa* et ses gens rentrèrent à Ségou, de leur propre mouvement.

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(1) Raffenel, laissant libre cours à la fantaisie d'un griot, a donné un récit dramatique de ces événements.

Les choses demeurèrent en l'état pendant quelque temps, le *ton-masa* se borna à venir aux réunions du lundi et du jeudi, à Ségou-koro.

La situation était grave et pouvait, sous le moindre prétexte, tourner au tragique. Deux vieux amis de Mamari, le fondateur du clan, le comprirent. Spontanément, ils vinrent trouver Dé-koro : « Cela ne peut durer, lui dirent- « ils, tu cours à une catastrophe certaine ; le mécontentement est tout autour de toi et s'accentue chaque « jour. Accepte de recevoir le *ton-masa* et que tout cela « finisse ! » — « Ce n'est pas moi qui commande, répliqua « Dé-koro, le chef : c'est le *ton-masa.* » Les deux vieux firent intervenir le chef de Kamana, mais Dé-korro affima encore : « Le chef de Bélé-koro, ce n'est pas moi, c'est le « *ton-masa.* »

Des démarches faites auprès du *ton-masa* amenèrent, insensiblement, une détente et, finalement, le *ton-masa* vint, un jour, trouver Dé-koro. Il s'agenouilla devant lui et, simulant un lien avec sa blouse, il plaça ses mains derrière le dos et inclina son front vers la terre en murmurant : « Je cultiverai le grand champ de Ségou-koro cette année. »

Le *ton-masa* tint parole et six chefs de captifs suivirent son exemple. Les cultures occupèrent une surface considérable et la récolte fut très abondante. Quand le mil eut été égrené, le maître, accompagné de son fidèle *fa* Kourou, vint l'examiner et le *ton-masa* de s'écrier : « Voilà notre ouvrage ! Désormais nous ne sommes plus « que des cultivateurs, le mil seul devra donc te suffire. » Dé-koro furieux fit proclamer, par son griot, qu'à l'avenir il ne toucherait plus la pioche, et qu'il préparait son couteau.

Les *ton-dyon'* retournèrent à leurs demeures respectives et, l'hivernage arrivé, ne cultivèrent pas. L'hivernage passé, Dé-koro convoqua les chefs des *ton-dyon'* et leur proposa d'attaquer Tamani : « A quoi bon attaquer « Tamani, dit le *ton-masa*, ce n'est qu'un village de faibles Marka. Mieux vaut guerroyer contre Nyé-n-tigui, « chef de Soriko. Dé-koro du se ranger de cet avis. La colonne se mit en marche, mais, lorsqu'elle arriva, le village était évacué : Nyé-n-tgui avait été prévenu.

La colère de Dé-koro fut terrible : « Voilà votre œuvre ! « reprocha-t-il aux chefs des *ton-dyon'*, c'est vous qui avez

« prévenu Nyé-n-tigui du sort qui l'attendait. Vous m'avez « trahi, une fois de plus. Eh bien sachez-le, mon couteau « est prêt ; avant peu, je m'en servirai sur la place de « Ségou et ne m'arrêterai que lorsque le sang formera un « ruisseau jusqu'au fleuve. »

Il fit préparer une grande place pour les exécutions qu'il projetait et les esclaves terrorisés ne parurent plus à Ségou-koro.

Dé-koro manda le *ton-masa* et lui ordonna de convoquer les *ton-dyon'* pour un jour déterminé : au jour dit, nul ne vint. Dé-koro envoya, alors, un Samaké prévenir individuellement les chefs des esclaves de se rendre auprès de lui. Ils vinrent : « Pourquoi, leur demanda-t-il, personne « ne vient-il plus, depuis trois mois, aux réunions du « lundi et du jeudi ? » — « Tu nous as menacés, nous avons peur. » Il leur fixa un rendez-vous à huitaine, afin de prêter serment avec lui.

L'assemblée générale voulue par Dé-koro eut lieu, mais elle n'amena point l'entente qu'il espérait. Entre eux, les esclaves décidèrent de se réunir à quinzaine pour « changer la semence ».

Le quinzième jour, à l'aube, le *ton-masa* entra à Ségou-bougou, résidence de Dé-koro ; il se rendit à la maison du maître et y pénétra. Il rencontra Dé-koro qui, escorté de son forgeron, porteur d'une bouilloire, allait faire ses ablutions. Depuis longtemps, déjà, Dé-koro ne vivait plus tranquille, l'hostilité et la haine qu'il sentait grandir autour de lui ne lui laissaient pas de repos ; il n'osait rester seul et son forgeron l'accompagnait partout. A la vue du *ton-masa* armé, il comprit qu'il y avait quelque chose d'extraordinaire, il l'interpella : « Où vas-tu, à cette heure, « dans ma maison. » — « Je suis venu pour te prévenir « que l'heure est arrivée de régler nos comptes, car je n'ai « pas oublié les coups de corde dont tu m'as fait frap- « per. » Dé-koro se tourna vers son forgeron pour lui ordonner d'aller chercher des lances ; le forgeron obéit mais, au même moment, le *ton-masa* tua Dé-koro d'un coup de feu et, lorsque le forgeron reparut, il le tua à côté de son maître. Un griot, Koun-bilé, attiré par le bruit, survint au moment où le *ton-masa* décrochait la peau de bouc qui contenait les amulettes et les talismans du chef et s'emparait de la hache d'or, insigne du commandement. Koun-bilé cria, appela : les *sofa* accoururent sans empressement. Le griot leur désigna le *ton-masa* comme étant l'assassin du maître, ils l'écoutèrent en silence et aidèrent le *tonmasa* à disparaître dans leurs rangs : il s'enfuit à So-finna.

LES *TON-DYON'*

(1736-1750)

Vers deux heures après-midi, heure fixée pour l'assemblée générale, tous les esclaves étaient présents. Ignorants les événements, ils s'assemblèrent, suivant ce qui avait été convenu. Peu après, le *ton-masa* se présenta portant une lance, une corde de soie et la hache d'or ; il était suivi d'un jeune homme. Il s'arrêta au pied d'un baobab, bien en vue de l'assemblée ; il attacha l'une des extrémités de la corde à son cou et l'autre extrémité au cou du jeune homme, puis, s'armant de la lance, il transperça le jeune homme, qui tomba en poussant un cri. Le *ton-masa* parut avoir été entraîné dans la chute, tout le monde se précipita : on trouva le *ton-masa* assis sur le cadavre, le cou dégagé de toute entrave et tenant à la main la hache d'or, insigne du commandement.

A Kanou-ba-nyouma qui lui demandait des explications, il répondit :

— « C'es ce que j'ai fait.

— « Tu as mal fait. Tu as trahi tes engagements, car « nous étions convenus que tous ensemble nous le tue« rions. Tu as agi seul, pour avoir, seul aussi, le bénéfice « de cette entreprise.

— « Point. Mais je sais qu'un tel acte ne peut être « accompli par plusieurs, et moi, soutenu par ma haine, « j'étais bien sûr de mener à bonne fin ce projet.

— « Mensonge ! Tu n'as été guidé que par ton ambi« tion, tu l'as tué pour prendre sa place et lui voler son or.

Ngolo Ké-ba intervint : « Que voilà une discussion péni« ble et inutile. Le passé est passé, occupons-nous du « présent : notre maître est mort, enterrons-le. »

Kon Bilali, Kanou-ba-nyouma et Kolé firent la toilette du mort et l'enterrèrent. Suivant la coutume, les esclaves passèrent sept jours à la porte du défunt. Kolé dit aux femmes de se retirer à Ségou-koro et se chargea de les nourrir.

Le *ton-masa* renvoya tout le monde et fixa une assemblée générale à quinzaine, à Ségou-koro.

Ton-massa Dèmbélé (1786-1740). — Au jour dit, les esclaves étaient tous présents. Ton-massa (1), vêtu de rouge, traversa leurs rangs épais et vint s'accroupir contre le mur, à la place qu'affectionnait Mamari, le fondateur de l'empire.

Le premier, Kafa-dyougou s'avança, se prosterna et dit : « *I ni sege ton' koro-ba.* » Chacun agit de même.

Après ce défilé, Ton-massa convoqua tous les marabouts et leur dit :

— « Entre mon maître et moi, Allah prononcera ; je
« ne vous demande donc point votre avis sur le passé,
« mais je voudrais que vous interveniez entre mes frères
« et moi, pour nous mettre d'accord. »

— « Les marabouts sont des conciliateurs qui n'ont
« rien à voir dans nos affaires, s'écria Kanou-ba-nyouma,
« car nous ne nous disputons pas ; puisque c'est toi qui as
« tout fait, c'est à toi que revient le commandement. »

— « Kanou-ba-nyouma je n'ai point demandé ton
« avis, seul Kafa-dyougou, ici présent, est susceptible de
« s'exprimer sans parti-pris. »

— « C'est bon, répliqua Kanou-ba-nyouma, il n'y a
« que la vérité que tu ne veuilles pas entendre. »

S'adressant aux marabouts, Ton-massa poursuivit :
« Si nous mettons tous nos couteaux ensemble, nul doute
« que nous trouvions assez de cuir pour les enfermer dans
« une seul fourreau ; mais si chacun de nous veut faire un
« fourreau à son couteau, le cuir nous manquera. »

Se tournant vers les esclaves, il questionna : « Qu'allons-
« nous faire des femmes du maître ? A qui allons-nous
« les attribuer ? Qui prendra celle de Bakari ; qui, cel-
« les de Dé-koro ? »

Kanou-ba-nyouma dit : « Inutile de te préoccuper,
« tout t'appartient, nous ne voulons rien. Est-ce là tout
« ce que tu voulais nous dire ? »

— « Je n'ai rien à ajouter, répliqua Ton-massa : j'ai
« mes femmes et elles me suffisent, c'est pourquoi j'avais
« pensé que ceux d'entre nous qui n'en ont pas pourraient
« prendre celles du maître. »

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(1) Il porte désormais, comme nom, le titre de son ancienne fonction.

— « Les paroles sont finies, te dis-je, garde tout, nous « verrons plus tard. »

— C'est bon, conclut Ton-massa, je te donne les cauris, « partage-les, réjouissons-nous, nous sommes libres et la « vie est faite pour en jouir

Kanou-ba-nyouma remercia au nom de tous et demanda à se retirer avec ses compagnons.

Ton-massa retint près de lui Ngolo Dyara, Kolé et Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué.

Il fixa à quinzaine une nouvelle assemblée générale en vue de faire des offrandes aux morts et aux idoles.

Tous furent exacts au rendez-vous.

Ton-massa dit : « Eh bien, où allons-nous, commençons-« nous par les morts ou par les idoles ? »

— « Comment, tu nous demandes conseil ? s'écria « Kanou-ba-nyouma, qu'as-tu fait de nos avis quand il « s'est agi de tuer le maître ! Tu as voulu être chef, com-« mande ! »

— « Commençons par les morts », dit Ton-massa.

Il immola un jeune homme aux mânes de Mamari, le fondateur du clan ; il ordonna aux chefs des *sofa* d'en immoler deux et, à Kanou-ba-nyouma, un. C'était la première fois qu'on immolait des humains sur la tombe des morts.

Le huitième jour qui suivit cette cérémonie, Ton-massa convoqua une assemblée générale des esclaves et, quand tous furent réunis, il s'écria : « Nous avons enterré le cada-« vre en laissant un pied dehors. » Il faisait allusion au dernier fils de Mamari, Dyon-kolo, qui habitait à Oïtala, sur la rive gauche du Niger.

— « Nous n'avons supprimé Dé-koro, dit Kolé, que « parce qu'il était malfaisant et nous gardons toujours la « même vénération pour notre maître et ses descendants. « Il faut faire venir Dyon-kolo, pour qu'il occupe la place « de son père et ramène la concorde parmi nous. »

Kanou-ba-nyouma, s'adressant à Ton-massa : « Com-« ment pourras-tu rester en présence de celui dont tu as « tué le frère ? De quel front lui expliqueras-tu le crime « que tu as commis et qui t'a permis de t'asseoir à la place « de son père ? Après tout, cependant, je n'interviens pas « pour perpétuer la discorde et, si l'avis général est que « l'on aille chercher Dyon-kolo, soit. »

Deux Peuls furent choisis pour remplir la délicate mission auprès de Dyon-kolo. Ils se nommaient Bon-gué et Ndyan. Arrivés auprès de Dyon-kolo, ils exposèrent avec habileté les raisons et les détails de la catastrophe et dirent, enfin, que les « gens de Ségou » mettaient en lui, fils de Mamari, leur espoir de voir cesser les dissentiments si nuisibles aux intérêts de tous. Dyon-kolo avait écouté cet exposé avec une feinte patience, il éclata soudain en une colère terrible et conclut : « M'imaginez-vous assez « fou, pour courir au devant du même sort que mon « frère ? Ces murs — et il frappait la paroi de sa maison « — ont été élevés par mon père, c'est ici que je veux rester et je saurais m'y défendre même contre vous tous. « Partez et ne revenez jamais. »

Assistant au retour des Peuls qui redirent les paroles de Dyon-kolo, Kanou-ba-nyouma s'exclama : « Du moins « celui-là a gardé la lucidité d'esprit de son père. Il est « jeune, mais il voit juste. »

Ton-massa conclut : « Ainsi, celui qui devait être notre « maître, nous dédaigne ; c'est donc moi, esclave de notre « maître avant la naissance de son premier enfant, c'est « donc moi qui commanderai désormais le pays de Ségou. « Sachez-le, vous m'appartenez maintenant. Chaque jeudi, « tout village devra me verser 10.000 cauris et chaque « lundi 5.000. »

Ainsi fit-il proclamer par la ville.

Kanou-ba-nyouma lui dit : « Qu'as-tu besoin de faire si « tardivement tant de publicité ? Ne t'ai-je pas dit, dès « le premier jour : tu as agi seulement pour satisfaire « ton ambition ? »

— « Non, je n'ai fait qu'exécuter ce que nous avions « convenu de faire. »

— « Nous n'avions pas convenu que tu le ferais seul. « Mais qu'importe, tu es chef, commande nous obéirons ; « l'avenir arrangera tout. »

Pour rompre toute relation avec Ségou, Dyon-kolo envoya chercher sa sœur, *ba* Sana, qui habitait près de Ségou-koro. En réponse à cette déclaration manifeste d'hostilité, Ton-massa envoya une colonne, commandée par Ngolo Dyara. Celui-ci attaqua les gens de Dyon-kolo et leur fit quarante prisonniers, qu'il envoya à Ton-massa. Ton-massa les offrit en holocauste aux idoles et, décidé à en finir avec Dyon-kolo, il convoqua les chefs des esclaves pour obtenir d'eux une colonne à diriger contre Oitala.

La colonne se réunit, au jour dit, à Farako.

Ton-massa attaqua Oitala sans succès, ses troupes fléchirent et se débandèrent. Il appréhenda les fuyards et les harangua : « Où courrez-vous ? Si vous abandonnez cette « affaire, l'œuvre de notre maître est à tout jamais compromise ! Vous avez juré de m'obéir, à moi, le premier « de ses enfants, montrez que vous n'êtes pas des parjures. » Ils l'écoutèrent, revinrent sous les murs d'Oïtala qu'ils investirent pendant un an. Tous les jours, Dyonkolo effectuait des sorties et repoussait au loin les assaillants commandés par Ngolo Dyara. Mais les assaillants ne se décourageaient pas et revenaient sans cesse à l'assaut. Enfin, le village fut obligé de succomber et Dyon-kolo, qui avait vaillamment combattu, périt de la main même de Ngolo.

En récompense des services rendus, Ton-massa donna à Ngolo Dyara 1.000 personnes « pour réparer les accrocs de sa blouse ».

Après cette affaire, Ton-massa convoqua une assemblée générale des esclaves. « Maintenant, dit-il, que la situation « est débarrassée des obstacles qui la compliquaient, il « convient de prêter serment de fidélité à ma cause et, « aussi, de régler définitivement la manière dont se fera, « dans l'avenir, la succession au commandement, en indiquant de façon indubitable ceux qu'il convient d'en « écarter à jamais. »

— « Puisque tu entrevois les choses avec tant de netteté, dit Kanou-ba-nyouma, c'est à toi qu'il appartient « de nous guider avec précision : indique-nous quels sont « ceux qui ne sauraient prétendre au pouvoir suprême. »

— « Il me semble de toute évidence, reprit Ton-massa, « que les 120 chefs d'esclaves, laissés par Mamari, ne « peuvent tous ambitionner de commander. »

— « Eh bien, répartit Kanou-ba-nyouma, c'est une « question que nous ne te demandons pas de résoudre. »

— « Pour moi, dit Kolé, je renonce au commandement « et me retire à Koni-m-ba où j'entends vivre paisiblement, en m'occupant d'agriculture. »

Nul autre n'intervint et la discussion n'ayant pas été reprise, la question de successibilité demeura indécise.

En vue de faire face à des éventualités graves, Ton-massa exigea de chaque chef *sofa* 240 hommes : il envoya la troupe ainsi constituée à Massa-la, renforcer la garnison que Mamari avait placée, là, sous les ordres du vieux Na-ba-dyé. Il mit Ngolo Dyara en résidence à Ségou-koro, avec ordre de pourvoir à la sécurité de Ségou-Sikoro, Ségou-bougou et Ségou-koura.

Quant à lui, Ton-massa, il vint s'établir à Kohin (1) et s'isola si complètement de ses sujets qu'on ne le revit plus à Ségou-koro qu'un an après environ, uniquement pour assister à la grande fête annuelle, que le chef doit nécessairement présider et qu'en son absence Ngolo avait été seul à organiser. D'ailleurs, venu le matin, juste pour présider les cérémonies, il repartit le soir pour Kohin. Il convoqua, dans ce dernier village, l'assemblée générale des esclaves et y exposa que, dans l'intention de revenir dans le Miniankala, son pays d'origine, il entendait qu'avant son départ un serment solennel et réciproque les unit indissolublement. Il fit apporter son idole, appelée Nko, enfermée dans une peau de chat noir, et, ayant sacrifié un poulet, il dit : « Nko, tu peux me tuer si je trahis les « gens « de Ségou », mais aussi tue les « gens de Ségou » s'ils me « trahissent... »

Kanou-ba-nyouma l'interrompit : « Pas du tout ! Tu « n'as pas à prêter serment pour nous, tu as parlé pour « toi, c'est bien, à notre tour maintenant. »

Ton-massa s'écarta.

Kanou-ba-nyouma immola un poulet et, sur le corps palpitant de la victime, cria : « Nko, quiconque sera venu « dans le pays de Ségou pour y faire fortune et l'abandonner ensuite, Nko tue-le. Quiconque, au contraire, sera « venu dans le pays de Ségou pour y prospérer et y « demeurer, celui-là, fais que son bien augmente. »

Ton-massa, persistant dans son projet, partit.

Une faible escorte de quelques *sofa*, commandée par Mori-fin, l'accompagnait. Il traversa le Bani et s'arrêta à Fallo, où il fit construire un palanquement susceptible d'assurer sa défense, en attendant la colonne qu'il fit demander à Ségou. Mais quatre mois passèrent et la colonne ne vint pas.

Un jour, Kanou-ba-nyouma convoqua l'assemblée générale des *ton-dyon'* : « Se trouve-t-il parmi vous un homme assez audacieux pour aller trouver Ton-massa ? »

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(1) Il y aurait amorcé des travaux d'un canal destiné à amener à Kohin les eaux du Niger (Quintin et Delafosse).

Nzan-fato se présenta.

— « Non, dit Kanou-ba-nyouma, tu es trop jeune. Il « faut pour cette mission une grande expérience, l'on ris- « que la vie... »

Nzan-fato insista tellement qu'il fut accepté.

— C'est bon, dit Kanou-ba-nyouma, va vers Ton- « massa et explique-lui, non en mon nom, mais au nom « de tous, que, s'il n'est pas de retour dans un mois, il « sera déposé : la puissance qu'il a usurpée n'est pas de « celle que l'on emporte avec soi. En même temps, tu « enjoindras à Mori-fin d'abandonner Ton-massa dès que « le délai sera écoulé. »

Nzan-fato s'acquitta exactement de sa commission.

Le délai expiré, Ton-massa persistant dans son attitude, Mori-fin rentra à Ségou, laissant son chef entouré de ses seules femmes et gardé par un unique *sofa*. Alors, Ton-massa regagna Kohin. Trois jours durant, il demeura enfermé, dans l'isolement absolu, mûrissant des projets. Puis il convoqua les chefs des *ton-dyon'*.

S'adressant à Kanou-ba-nyouma, il s'écria : « Vous « refusez de m'obéir ! »

— « Non, répliqua Kanou-ba-nyouma, mais n'est-ce « pas par nous que tu es puissant ? Or, nous, nous demeu- « rons à Ségou et tu veux, toi, habiter ton pays, loin « de nous. Chacun de nous a aussi un pays, mais il n'y « revient pas, car le jour où nous nous séparerions ainsi « notre puissance disparaîtrait : suis l'exemple que nous « te donnons et nous ferons ce que tu voudras. » — « Pre- « nds garde, Kanou-ba-nyouma, il n'est pas prudent de « déranger le vautour qui se repaît d'une charogne. »

Ils se séparèrent.

Kanou-ba-nyouma convoqua les *ton-dyon'* à Ségou-koro pour le lundi. Ton-massa vint, le mercredi suivant, et demanda une colonne pour aller attaquer Konguéré : c'était une façon de conduire ses gens dans le Miniankala. Les *ton-dyon'* refusèrent de le suivre. Cependant, un certain Fasson, originaire du Kala, accepta de mener les guerriers contre le village en question, mais sous réserve de rentrer à Ségou aussitôt après l'affaire. Cette combinaison ne reçut pas l'approbation de Ton-massa dont elle détruisait le projet. Après maintes discussions et intrigues, une bande consentit, enfin, à suivre Ton-massa. Le village fut pris ; mais, au cours de l'assaut, Ton-massa fut blessé à l'oreille par une flèche qui ne pouvait avoir été lancée que de derrière lui et par un de ses gens. La blessure s'envenima si rapidement et si gravement, qu'il fallut placer Ton-massa sur un brancard, pour le rapporter à Kohin. Il mourut là dans l'isolement presque complet.

Il avait régné quatre ans et fut enterré à Kohin.

Kanou-ba-nyouma (1740-1744). — Suivant l'usage, les *ton-dyon'* vinrent, pour sept jours, à Ségou-koro. Le huitième jour, au moment où tous allaient regagner leurs villages, Kanou-ba-nyouma fit sortir un griot, précédé d'un enfant, qui portait l'arc et le carquois de Mamari, le fondateur du clan. Le griot publia, à travers la ville : « La « royauté (1) est vacante. Notre maître fit son temps et « mourut, puis vint la faute et le crime de celui qui vient « de mourir. Et maintenant, que celui qui se sent assez « fort pour occuper la place vide prenne cet arc et ce « carquois. »

Quand le griot eut parcouru toute la ville, il revint au lieu où se réunissaient les *ton-dyon'* et planta l'arc et le carquois au milieu de l'assemblée. Kanou-ba-nyouma dit alors : « Que celui qui se sent le cœur solide prenne ces « reliques et la place de Mamari. »

Ndyan, qui était Peul, comme Kanou-ba-nyouma, affirma : « Nous, Peuls, gardiens des troupeaux de Mamari, « nous veillerons aussi sur les troupeaux de ses successeurs. Que les « gens de Ségou « me pardonnent donc « ce que je vais dire, car je m'exprime en toute sincérité « et, je le crois, en conformité des sentiments de cette « assemblée. Toi, seul, Kanou-ba-nyouma, peux prendre « cette place ; tu y as droit comme étant le plus ancien, « après Ton-massa qui vient de mourir. »

Ces paroles furent unanimement approuvées.

« C'est bon, dit Kanou-ba-nyouma, j'accepte cet arc « et ce carquois, mais il faut que les flèches retombent « sur quelqu'un : nous ferons donc la guerre. » Et, séance tenante, il demanda une colonne, elle lui fut accordée. Il attaqua et prit Niamina, puis Sambon-na. Riche des dépouilles des vaincus, il vint se reposer, à Ségou-koro, une année durant. Alors, il fit venir de Kohin Da-son, fils de Ton-massa, et lui ordonna de restituer l'or que son père avait emporté, affirmait Kanou-ba-nyouma, lors du meurtre de Dé-koro. Da-son affirma, à son tour, qu'il n'avait rien trouvé de semblable, dans la succession de son père, Kanou-ba-nyouma le fit mettre aux fers, dans l'espoir d'obtenir une restitution, mais Da-son s'évada.

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(1) C'est-à-dire le commandement suprême.

Au début de l'hivernage, Kanou-ba-nyouma fit razzier les environs de Kobin, 1.000 personnes de ce village périrent, 6.000 autres furent réparties entre les guerriers ; quant à Da-son, il se réfugia dans le Bani-n-ko.

Kanou-ba-nyouma se retourna, alors, contre Kafa-dyougou et lui retira le commandement de 8.000 personnes. Outré, Kafa-dyougou alla consulter un nommé Ténénkou-bilé, qui résidait à Tyo-fin-na et passait pour expert dans les sciences occultes. Grâce à des pratiques magiques, il frappa Kanou-ba-nyouma d'une hémiplégie du côté gauche.

Kanou-ba-nyouma mourut après quatre années de souffrances.

Kafa-dyougou (1744-1748). — Kafa-dyougou, le plus ancien des chefs *ton-dyon*', prit l'arc et le carquois. Son premier soin fut de marcher contre son collègue, le chef des *sofa*. Kolé : celui-ci se sauva à Dyarama-na dans le Miniankala.

Après avoir commandé pendant quatre ans, Kafa-dyougou mourut mystérieusement.

PÉRIODE D'ANARCHIE

(1748-1750)

A la mort de Kafa-dyougou, nul n'osa prendre le commandement : les vieux peut-être par sagesse ; les jeunes parce qu'ils ne se sentaient pas assez sûrs d'être soutenus ; tous, parce qu'ils savaient le poste dangereux. D'aucuns, cependant, surent grouper des partisans et la lutte parut un instant se décider entre Ngolo Dyara et Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué.

Une assemblée fut tenue, au cours de laquelle Nzan-gué expliqua : « Je suis maintenant le plus ancien, car j'ap-
« partenais à Sounou Saro, mère de Mamari, c'est donc
« à moi que revient le commandement. »

— « Possible, insinua Ngolo, mais, en ce qui me con-
« cerne, je ne te connais que comme cultivateur et

« j'ignore tes qualités guerrières, qui peuvent justifier tes « prétentions à prendre cet arc et ce carquois. »

Nzan-fato, à son tour, s'exclama : Nzan-gué n'est « qu'une femme, il n'a vu le sang, et bien malgré lui, que « le jour où on l'a circoncis. »

Alors, Ngolo Dyara, pour bien marquer qu'il se séparait du prétendant, plaça toutes les idoles dans une pirogue et les transporta à Ségou-Sikoro, sa résidence. Les *ton-dyon'*, pour qui les idoles étaient tout, suivirent docilement, pour la plupart.

Ngolo Dyara et Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué guerroyaient entre eux depuis deux ans, lorsqu'un vieux serviteur de Mamari, le nommé Nzan-gué-ba, habitant Kohin, intervint. Il informa Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué, que Ngolo Dyara se proposait de l'attaquer, lui Nzan-gué-ba, et il le pria de venir à son aide. Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué accepta de s'enfermer à Kohin, avec 3.000 hommes, pour défendre Nzan-gué-ba. Celui-ci prévint Ngolo qui accourut et investit la place. Alors, Nzan-gué-ba dit à Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué : « Moi, je ne veux être pour rien dans le conflit qui te « sépare de Ngolo Dyara ; te garder plus longtemps ici, « m'exposerait, moi et mes gens, à de cruelles représailles. « Sors donc de mon village. » Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué et les siens sortirent et tous furent massacrés, 2.000 personnes de Kohin tombèrent aux mains de Ngolo : mais, au lieu d'en faire des prisonniers il les renvoya et devint, par ce moyen, extrêmement populaire à Kohin. Ce procédé détermina deux esclaves de Nzan-gué-ba à se donner à lui et 2.000 autres suivirent cet exemple.

Avec ses forces accrues, Ngolo se retourna vers Nzan-gué-ba. Il fit appeler le vieillard hors de la ville, sous prétexte de l'entretenir, et comme il vint, sans défiance, se présenter sans escorte, Ngolo ordonna de le saisir et de l'offrir aux idoles.

Ngolo convoqua tous les chefs des *ton-dyon'* plus âgés que lui : Ngolo Ké-ba, de Sama ; Na-ba-di ; Tyé-koura, de Nango ; Si-dloki ; Fasson vinrent, ainsi que les *sofa*. C'était un jeudi.

— « Eh bien, questionna Ngolo, qu'allons-nous faire « maintenant que nous sommes débarrassés des gêneurs ? »

— « A chacun de nous, Mamari a donné sa part, « tenons-nous en là, » dit Ngolo Ké-ba.

Mais cette proposition ne faisait pas l'affaire de Ngolo, qui avait son projet, car un homme encore le gênait : Kolé, le vieux chef des *sofa*. Il proposa d'envoyer chercher Kolé, pour lui donner le commandement suprême, et il n'avait convoqué des *sofa* à cette assemblée que pour avoir des partisans assurés de son opinion.

Bon-gué dit : « Nous, Peuls, qui sommes des bergers et « non des esclaves, nous pouvons, sans détours, nous « exprimer avec sincérité. Nous pensons donc que, toi « Ngolo Dyara, tu es bien décidé à ne pas subir, désor« mais, la volonté d'un autre : ta hache ne coupera plus « de bois que pour toi. »

— « Je suis tout prêt, dit Ngolo, à suivre Kolé, c'est « notre aîné, nous lui devons respect et obéissance. « Mais, s'il n'accepte pas de nous commander, je suis « décidé à prendre la place vacante. »

— « Eh bien, dit Bon-gué, puisque tu tiens tant à Kolé, « tu sais où le prendre, va le chercher. »

Ngolo envoya chercher Kolé, mais Kolé refusa de venir. Ngolo se rendit auprès de Kolé, il lui prêta serment de fidélité par trois fois : le vieux demeura inébranlable. Enfin, il parut se décider et vint à Dioni. Aussitôt Ngolo accourut le rejoindre et lui présenta le bonnet de Mamari. Kolé repoussa cette avance disant : « Il y a trois chefs plus « vieux que moi : Ngolo Ké-ba, Nyé-dingué-dou et Fasson. »

Peu après cette entrevue de Dioni, Kolé mourut.

Lorsque furent écoulés les sept jours traditionnels à la porte du défunt, Ngolo Dyara réunit, une fois encore, les *ton-dyon'*. « Maintenant, leur dit-il, vous et moi allons « nous séparer ; pour moi, si Mori-fin et Nzan-fato me « sont fidèles, je ne doute pas de l'avenir, nous vivrons « de pillage. »

La dislocation eut lieu.

Arrivé à Ségou-koro, quand il vit les *ton-dyon'* prêts à passer sur la rive gauche, où ils habitaient, Ngolo les rappela. « Notre maître, leur expliqua-t-il, m'est apparu en « songe et m'a dit : « Ne laisse pas mes enfants s'éga« rer, réunis-les, donne-leur un chef, car un corps sans tête « ne saurait vivre. » Donc, revenez dans huit jours, nous « verrons. »

Le lundi suivant tous voulurent être exacts au rendez-vous ; mais, par habitude, au lieu de se rendre à Ségou-

Sikoro, ils vinrent à Ségou-koro (1). Ngolo y arriva également, apportant avec lui les quatre principales idoles : *ba* Koungo-ba, Nyé-dingué-dou, *na* Ngolo-ko et Kolokoloni. S'adressant à la foule, il s'écria : « Il est nécessaire de « désigner quelqu'un pour prendre soin de ces idoles, « car elles languissent dans l'abandon. Pour moi, je gar« derai le couteau des sacrifices. »

— « Si ces idoles souffrent, interrompit Ngolo Ké-ba, « c'est ta faute, car tu as été chargé par notre maître « d'en prendre soin. C'est ton service, tout autant que de « veiller sur les maisons de notre maître à Ségou-Sikoro. « En ce qui nous concerne, nous ne désirons que des fusils « et de la poudre. »

— « Je ne peux vous donner des fusils et de la poudre, « répartit Ngolo Dyara, mais je vous abandonne les « femmes de Ton-massa, de Kanou-ba-nyouma, de Kafa« dyougou, car moi je ne peux les épouser puisque j'ai « épousé la fille de Mamari. La poudre et les fusils demeu« rent mon lot. »

— « Tout cela n'est que fourberie, répliqua Ngolo « Ké-ba. Qu'avons-nous besoin de femmes, n'avons-nous « pas les nôtres ! »

— « Il n'y a pas de fourberie de ma part, je vous offre « ces femmes, parce qu'il est dans notre coutume que les « frères épousent les femmes de leurs frères défunts, et, « si je les garde pour moi, vous ne manquerez pas de « crier au scandale et à l'injustice. »

— « Non, nous ne parlerons de rien, car nous sommes « à ta merci et pleins d'inquiétude. Nous sommes comme « le rat dans les griffes du chat. »

— « Eh bien, je ne vous ferai aucun mal, pourvu que « vous prêtiez serment de me laisser gardien de tout, « jusqu'au jour où nous aurons un maître. »

Il les renvoya et donna rendez-vous aux chefs pour le samedi suivant, à Ba-dyi-soumalén-ba, lieu-dit de la rive gauche du Niger, avec recommandation expresse que chaque chef n'amenât avec lui que son porteur de *kasa* (2).

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(1) Qui était, en somme, la ville sainte.

(2) On nomme *kasa* une sorte de couverture en laine du Macina, les gens importants se font accompagner par un porteur d'une de ces couvertures, qui sert pour s'asseoir.

Pour le jour dit, il fit secrètement passer son fils Ntyi sur la rive gauche, avec 2.500 cavaliers.

Chaque chef se présenta accompagné de son porteur chargé d'un poulet et d'un chien roux, en vue du serment à prêter sur les idoles, Ngolo amena comme victime un poulet et un bœuf.

Lorsque le moment fut venu, Ngolo se présenta le premier devant l'idole. Il égorgea le poulet suivant les rites et dit : « Idole, tu peux me placer le gardien de la porte de « mon maître, jusqu'au jour marqué pour que je le rem- » place. »

— « Ce n'est pas là un serment et tes paroles ne sont « pas admissibles, » s'écria Ngolo Ké-ba.

— « Alors montre-moi comment il convient de faire. »

— « Je n'ai pas à t'enseigner comment on se comporte « devant une idole dont tu es le serviteur depuis de lon- « gues années ; ce que je dis, c'est que tu fausses le but « de cette réunion. Tu n'as qu'à dire : « Idole, si je trahis « mes frères, tu peux couper mon cœur et mon foie, mais « s'ils me trahissent fais-leur de même. »

— « Jamais je ne parlerai ainsi. »

— « Alors séparons-nous. »

— « Vous êtes les plus anciens, parlez d'abord. »

— « Non, c'est à toi à commencer et tu n'as que quelques mots à dire. »

— « Je ne les dirai pas. Partons. »

Survient Ntyi : « Qu'est-ce, mon père, on n'a pas encore prêté serment ! »

Ngolo Ké-ba désignant Ntyi et s'adressant à Ngolo Dyara demanda ironiquement : « Celui-ci est-il aussi un « porteur de *kasa*. »

Ntyi. apostrophant les assistants, s'écria : « Je com- « prends que vous ne soyez pas pressés d'en finir, mais « moi j'ai hâte d'être le fils du roi de Ségou. Allons, dépê- « chons-nous ; toi, Fasson, prête serment. »

Au même instant apparurent les cavaliers : Fasson ne fit aucune résistance et les autres suivirent docilement. Quand tous eurent prêté serment, Ngolo Dyara, qui s'était abstenu, rembarqua les idoles.

— « Eh quoi, s'exclama Ngolo Ké-ba, tu ne prêtes pas « serment, Ngolo ! »

— « Non, le serment n'est dû que par les esclaves, « répliqua Ngolo. »

Il fixa l'assemblée générale à huitaine et ordonna à chaque chef de lui amener un contingent de 500 hommes pour former sa garde personnelle, qui se composa ainsi de 12.000 hommes.

LES DYARA

NGOLO ET SES DESCENDANTS (NGOLO-SI-OU)

(1750-1861)

Ngolo (1750-1787). — Ngolo confia Ségou-Sikoro à Mori-fin et vint, de sa personne, habiter Ségou-koro.

Dès lors, une idée le hanta : revoir son village, revoir ses parents, se venger d'avoir été réduit en esclavage pour quelques mesures de grain.

Prétextant le désir d'aller offrir un sacrifice sur la tombe de son père, il entraîne une colonne à Nyouanna. Il fait étape, successivement, à Kono-dimini, au marigot de Massa, à Kéléko, au marigot de Signa-na, puis marche sur Nyouanna. Il ordonne à Nzan-fato, qui n'y comprend rien, de prendre le village : « Mais c'est Nyouan-na, lui dit-« il, c'est ton village ! » — « Oui, oui, fais ce que je te dis, » répond Ngolo.

Le village succombe et, parmi les prisonniers, se trouvent les frères, les oncles, tous les parents de Ngolo. Il les fait tous solidement attacher et désigne ceux qu'il convient d'immoler, sur le champ, « aux tambours des *tondyon'* ». Il fait mettre à part son frère Ba-dyi et, dès qu'il est seul avec lui, il appelle un esclave pour relâcher un peu les liens qui, affirme-t-il, sont serrés avec excès ; peu après, il ordonne de le détacher tout à fait.

La nuit est venue, ils sont seuls ; Ngolo lui jette une blouse, puis il l'interroge :

— « N'avais-tu pas un jeune frère ? »

— « Si, mais il a été donné par mon oncle au chef de « Ségou, Mamari Kouloubali. »

— « Qu'est-il devenu ? Pourquoi ne l'as-tu pas « racheté ? »

— « J'ai voulu le racheter, mais mon oncle dit que « Mamari retenait l'enfant de force. Nous apprîmes, plus « tard, que Mamari s'en était débarrassé, en le tuant « dirent les uns, en le vendant dirent les autres. »

— « Où est ton père ? »

— « Il est mort. »
— « Et ta mère ? »
— « Morte aussi. »
— « Voudrais-tu me montrer leurs tombes ? »
— « Volontiers. »

Et, côte à côte, dans l'obscurité, les deux hommes vont à la recherche des tombes. Ngolo s'accroupit auprès de la tombe de sa mère et reprend la conversation interrompue.

— « N'étais-tu pas avec ton frère, lorsque ton oncle le « conduisit à Ségou ? »

— « Si, je suis même demeuré quelques jours dans la « ville, pour assurer sa nourriture. »

— « Ton hôtesse ne se nommait-elle pas Danté Balo ? »

— « Si. »

— « Et, quand tu es parti, ton jeune frère t'a accom« pagné jusqu'à Doukounna, n'est-ce pas ? Ah, je me « souviens bien, va ! car c'est moi Ngolo, c'est moi ton « frère ! »

Les deux hommes s'étreignirent en pleurant.

Le lendemain, Ngolo envoie Mori-fin, avec vingt hommes, pour élever deux petits monticules sur les tombes de son père et de sa mère. Il présente à tout le monde son frère Ba-dyi, qu'il fait asseoir à côté de lui pour montrer la ressemblance, qui affirme leur étroite parenté.

Le jour suivant. Ngolo attaque et prend le village de Touro-kouna-na. Il y fait prisonniers ses deux oncles maternels, Sina et Sadyo, auxquels il reproche amèrement de l'avoir laissé vendre et de n'avoir rien tenté pour le racheter : il les sacrifie aux « tambours des *ton-dyon*' ».

Le jour suivant, il attaque et détruit le village de sa grand'mère maternelle.

Ensuite, il rentre à Ségou, avec un gros butin, et, chemin faisant, passe à Dioni, sous prétexte de visiter le tombeau de Kolé ; en réalité, il réclame un contingent de 740 hommes à chacun de ses fils.

Cette même année, il place son fils, Ntyi, à Bagamabougou avec 27.000 hommes. Puis il mande Ngolo Ké-ba et lui tient ce langage : « On n'a jamais vu un chat attra« per des rats pour un autre chat ; le chat qui mange « des rats a des excréments mélangés de poils. Ceci pour « t'informer que j'entends travailler pour moi seul et les « miens et que, ni toi ni les autres, ne me succéderez : « mes fils seuls seront appelés à me remplacer ? »

— « C'est bon, répliqua Ngolo Ké-ba, je ne désire « l'héritage de personne. »

Huit jours après, Ngolo mit Séri-ba à Farako, avec 9.000 hommes et la consigne de surveiller les agissements de Ngolo Ké-ba : « Mon frère Ngolo Ké-ba, expliqua-t-il « à Séri-ba, m'a affirmé n'avoir aucunement le désir « d'hériter de qui que ce soit. Peut-être n'as-tu pas cette « indépendance ? Si sa succession te convient, à toi de « savoir la mériter. » Il plaça encore son griot, Tigui-ba, « avec 1.000 hommes et l'ordre d'espionner Séri-ba, qu'il « soumit, d'autre part, à une étroite surveillance.

Ngolo fit appeler Tyé-koura, de Nango ; Tyé-koura, malade, envoya son fils.

— « C'est Mamari Kouloubali qui a placé ton père à « Nango, avec 6.000 hommes, et, depuis, ton père n'est « plus venu à Ségou et n'a jamais rien envoyé pour les « idoles. Va et dis-lui de m'envoyer immédiatement 3.000 « hommes. »

Tyé-koura répondit : « Mamari a donné à chacun sa « part, tant pis pour qui n'a pas su la garder : moi, je ne « rends rien. »

Ngolo attaqua Tyé-koura et, l'ayant vaincu, il répartit tout son monde, savoir : un tiers à Kono-dimini, un tiers à Soro-la, un tiers à Nka-ra. De plus, il ordonna à Na-ba-dé d'occuper le village de Tyé-koura avec 8.000 hommes, mais Na-ba-dé refusa. Alors, pour le contraindre à l'obéissance il prescrivit aux gens de Kono-dimini, Soro-la et Nka-ra de l'empêcher de cultiver, cette mesure eut pour effet d'enlever à Na-ba-dé 1.000 esclaves, qui, installés à Massa-la, se donnèrent à Ngolo Dyara. Celui-ci les plaça à Somi-na, près de Ségou, avec mission de surveiller Na-ba-dé.

Ngolo ayant réuni les *sofa* leur confia qu'il voulait faire quelque chose pour son frère Dyi-di. Il le plaça, en effet, à Dougou-fin, avec 7.500 hommes, et lui attribua toutes les redevances payées par le pays compris entre Dougou-fin et Dyana-bougou (600 villages environ). Cette région était partagée entre cinq grands chefs, amis de Mamari, c'étaient : Sigui-sogo Saro, résidant à Somo ; Demba Kouloubali, à Ourouma-na ; Mamourou Kouloubali, à Toukoto ; Néné Kouloubali, à Diaba et Tammoura Saro, à Monionko. Aucun d'eux ne voulut verser même un grain de mil à Dyi-di. Alors Ngolo, à la tête d'une armée de 72 « pieds », envahit le pays de Somo. Il prit 140 villages, dans la même journée, et porta à 20.000 hommes l'effectif des troupes qu'il plaça sous le commandement de Dyi-di.

Les quatre autres chefs firent cause commune et se réfugièrent à Dyaba. Ngolo attaqua et prit Diaba, dont le chef, Néné Kouloubali, était son beau-père. Il emmena Néné Kouloubali à Ségou et, pour ne pas chagriner sa femme, Ma-koro, mère de son fils Manson et fille de Néné, il renvoya ce dernier à Diaba, avec un contingent de 7.500 hommes.

Un jour, Ngolo demanda à Nzan-fato ce qu'il conviendrait de faire contre Yarouga Kouloubali, cet ami de Mamari, qui n'a jamais rien envoyé à Ségou. Nzan-fato n'est pas partisan d'une expédition à main armée, il pense qu'une amende de 500 captifs ramènera Yarouga à une plus exacte appréciation de ses devoirs. Mais Yarouga répond qu'il n'a pas de quoi acquitter une pareille amende. Alors Ngolo envoie Gon-bilé, avec 2.000 hommes, s'installer à Goni pour surveiller Yarouga. Tandis qu'il place Somé-sigui-té-ma-é Dyara à Kala, avec aussi 2.000 hommes, pour empêcher Yarouga de cultiver et l'amener ainsi à s'incliner.

Nyé-dingué-dou, chef de ses captifs, étant mort, Ngolo Dyara place les deux fils jumeaux du défunt, Siné et Souo, à Nto-bougou. D'autre part, il oblige les esclaves de Mamari à ne plus se mêler aux siens.

Vers cette époque, arriva à Ségou le nommé Sidi Baba Kouloubali, qui expliqua sa visite par la nécessité de rendre les devoirs funèbres à son parent mort, Dyon-kolo. Mais Ngolo vit, dans cette démarche, un blâme et soupçonna que Sidi n'était venu que pour lui susciter des embarras. Il le chassa, le poursuivit, prit son village, Kourou-na, et Sidi lui-même trouva la mort dans ces événements.

A Koutou-na, Ngolo plaça Sila-maran Kouloubali, oncle du défunt, et l'autorisa à donner asile à quiconque fuirait de Ségou.

Un jour, Ngolo consulta les marabouts sur les moyens qu'il devrait employer pour rendre son nom inoubliable. Ils lui conseillèrent de vouer une de ses filles à Allah ;

c'est pourquoi il donna sa fille, Nyé-koro, au marabout Mar-ka-ké Darbo, du village de Kala-bougou ; il lui constitua pour dot : 10.000 esclaves et un carquois d'argent. Les marabouts conseillèrent encore à Ngolo de mettre des boucles d'or aux ouïes de 120 caïmans : « De cette façon, « dirent-ils, ton nom ne périra pas, tant qu'il existera des « caïmans dans le fleuve. » Pour satisfaire à cette indication, il ordonna au chef somono, Baré Tyéro, de lui apporter, vivants, 120 caïmans, auxquels il fit mettre des boucles aux ouïes.

A certains de ses enfants, Ngolo constitua des avantages personnels : Ma-n-son reçut le commandement de Mpé-ba-la, avec 2.000 hommes ; Nyana-n-koro, celui de Ségou-koro, avec 10.000 hommes ; Péné Mamourou, celui de Ségou-bougou, avec 10.000 habitants ; Ba, celui de Bia (près Togou), avec 10.000 hommes ; Séri, celui de So-finna, avec 10.000 hommes.

Il maria sa fille, Sanou, avec le chef de Saga-la (près Sokolo), le nommé Kassoum Kouloubali, et la fit accompagner de 1.000 fillettes, de 1.000 garçons et de 1.000 jeunes gens.

Ngolo se plaignit un jour que son fils Ntyi rentrait toujours à Ségou sans éclat. Ntyi, apprenant ce propos, partit de son village, Bama-bougou, et à la tête d'une véritable armée, vint donner l'assaut à Ségou, où il pénétra par la Banan-koro-da. Ngolo témoigna apparemment toute sa satisfaction, mais en réalité, il craignit d'avoir suggéré à son fils de mauvaises idées. Aussi, dès le lendemain, sur le conseil de son entourage, il immola aux idoles son petit-fils, fils aîné de Ma-n-son, afin de conjurer les mauvaises intentions de Ntyi.

Ngolo fit ensuite une expédition, vers le sud de ses états, contre une coalition de 38 chefs, qui avaient concentré leurs forces dans le Miniankala. Il marcha sur eux, les dispersa en un seul jour, après quoi il se dirigea vers l'Est, contre Falé, chef de Bala-koungo, organisateur de la résistance. Il fut vainqueur et s'en fut demander au chef de Minya (Fala-dougou) pourquoi il n'avait jamais porté, même un poulet, pour les idoles : il s'empara de sa personne et immola aux idoles.

L'expédition contre le chef de Minya avait duré trois ans ; sans prendre de repos, Ngolo déclara la guerre au Macina et, trois ans durant, se battit avec Sila-maran

Yéro. Celui-ci périt dans cette lutte, qui permit à Ngolo d'occuper même le pays tombo.

Sans s'arrêter (1), Ngolo attaqua Souma-koulou, village de la rive gauche du Niger, vers Sokolo ; il tua le chef Sama et le hersieux Kilintin-kolonto.

Mais, sous les murs du village de Si-bougou, il fut tué par les esprits malfaisants.

Ngolo avait régné seize ans ; dix-huit ans, si l'on y comprend la période d'anarchie, au cours de laquelle il avait eu une influence très grande sur les événements.

Ma-n-son (1787-1808). — Le gendre de Ngolo, Mar-ka-ké Darbo, fit placer le cadavre dans une pirogue, pour le ramener à Ségou ; mais à la hauteur de Sansanding, les esprits jetèrent cette dépouille au fleuve. On enferma alors un morceau de bois dans une peau de bœuf, pour simuler le corps disparu, et l'on continua ainsi à faire route vers Ségou. Là, Ma-n-son procéda aussitôt et seul à l'inhumation, afin que rien ne transpirât. Tous ces événements furent tenus rigoureusement secrets.

Nzan-fato remit à Mar-ka-ké Darbo les effets personnels de Ngolo. Arrivé à Ségou, Mar-ka-ké s'assit sous un arbre et envoya prévenir les enfants de Ngolo. Ils accoururent et, à la vue des vêtements de leur père, ils se lamentèrent.

Le huitième jour, Mar-ka-ké ordonna à Nzan-fato de convoquer tous les « gens de Ségou », pour procéder à la nomination du chef, qui devait être le plus âgé des fils de Ngolo. Quand l'assemblée fut au complet, Mar-ka-ké planta un piquet en terre, devant la porte Tou-ma-ké-blon-da, il y accrocha les habits de Ngolo et rangea les idoles tout autour, après quoi, ayant fait approcher Ma-n-son, il lui remit le tout. Man-son accepta et fit rentrer le tout dans la maison du défunt, où lui-même pénétra.

Nyana-n-koro, qui assistait avec ses frères à cette cérémonie, protesta avec force. Il réclama le partage des effets de Ngolo entre tous ses enfants, en même temps que la procédure du *banga-bo*, qui permettrait, pensait-il, d'évincer Ma-n-son. Dans l'espoir de le calmer, Ma-n-son expliqua à Nyana-n-koro quels événements avaient marqué la mort de leur père, comment la bienséance avait exigé les mesures prises et le secret observé. Mais Nyana-n-koro ne se rendit pas ; il n'admettait pas que lui, Nyana-n-koro, l'enfant chéri du défunt, ait été tenu à l'écart et que, par des procédés occultes, on trouvât même le moyen de le fruster de ses droits.

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(1) Suivant certaines traditions, Ngolo Diara aurait fait deux incursions dans le Mossi et le Yatenga, au temps du chef Kango. Toutefois, au Yaténga, le souvenir de ces attaques n'a pas été conservé.

Après une vaine intervention personnelle, Mar-ka-ké alla trouver Ma-koro, veuve de Ngolo ; il la mit au courant de ce qui se passait et lui fit expressément connaître les dernières volontés du maître : « Que Ma-n-son me « remplace, avait-il dit, et que ses frères lui succèdent par « ordre de primogéniture, malheur à celui qui ne m'aura « pas écouté. »

Ma-koro n'était que la mère de Ma-n-son, mais elle avait élevé Nyana-n-koro depuis son plus jeune âge, car sa mère était morte après l'avoir mis au monde.

Ma-koro, ne se sentant pas capable de ramener la concorde entre ses enfants, sollicita l'intervention de Massa Taraoré, chef de Sou, près Diaba ; il demanda à être assisté de Massa Taraoré, de Sou-ba, près Sansanding, et de Massa Doua-n-tan, de Kama-na.

Tous trois vinrent à Farko, où ils convoquèrent les fils de Ngolo.

Ma-n-son vint seul, Nyana-n-koro était accompagné de deux de ses frères. Les trois Massa insistèrent vivement pour que les dernières volontés de Ngolo fussent respectées par ses enfants et ils ajoutèrent, en manière de conclusion : « Et lui, n'a-t-il pas dû attendre longtemps ! « Jamais il ne s'est plaint, jamais il ne s'est insurgé « contre l'ordre de successibilité établi ». Nyana-n-koro demeura irréductible et s'en alla en disant : « Mon frère « Ma-n-son m'a trompé. Il a agi en dehors de moi, me « traitant comme quantité négligeable ; entre lui et moi, « tout accord est impossible ».

Ma-koro eut alors recours aux marabouts de Ségou-Sikoro et de Togou. Mais Nyana-n-koro n'accepta pas davantage leurs conseils. « D'après la loi musulmane, « demanda-t-il, que fait-on des biens d'un homme mort ? » — « On les partage entre ses enfants », répondirent-ils. — « Eh bien, voilà ce que je veux et que l'on a l'injustice de « me refuser ».

Ma-koro manda deux autres marabouts : Birama Kané, de Sien, et Kakamoko Abdoullahi Diari, de Niamina.

Pour se débarrasser d'eux, Nyana-n-koro donna à chacun une jument, 100.000 cauris, 80 gros d'or, et ajouta : « Inutile d'insister ; même si Ngolo lui-même m'implorait, je ne cèderais pas ».

Enfin, Nzan-fato, pensant vaincre l'entêtement de Nyana-n-koro, fit appel aux sentiments auxquels il le supposait le plus sensible. « Je suis l'ancien de ton père, « lui dit-il, tu es mon fils et, à ce titre au moins, tu dois « m'écouter ; tu ne peux pas ne pas respecter les dernières « volontés de ton père ». Mais Nyana-n-koro répliqua sans émotion : « Les paroles sont finies, tout cela est affaire « entre Allah et moi ».

Nyana-n-koro ouvrit les hostilités, un dimanche, par une razzia autour de Ségou ; il fit ainsi 200 prisonniers qu'il emmena à Ségou-koura. Le mois suivant, il prit de même 100 personnes.

Ma-n-son fit alors creuser des puits et l'on ne prit de l'eau au fleuve que la nuit, par crainte des gens de Nyana-n-koro. Trois mois passèrent ainsi.

L'hivernage étant proche, Mori-fin se plaignit à Ma-n-son : « Tu ne parais pas te préoccuper beaucoup de la « fâcheuse situation à laquelle nous sommes réduits par « les attaques de Nyana-n-koro. Pourtant, nous ne pou« vons vivre sans manger et, pour manger, il faut culti« ver ; or, comment cultiver, puisque nous ne pouvons « sortir de la ville ? » Et il conclut en demandant une colonne pour se débarrasser des assaillants.

Si-dloki tint le même langage. Ma-n-son céda.

Sur l'emplacement actuel du poste français, Mori-fin dressa des palanquements. Nyana-n-koro l'y attaqua et enleva 1.500 personnes ; il détruisit les palanquements et en transporta les bois à Ségou-koura. La situation devint grave ; Ma-n-son craignant des défections, réunit les esclaves et leur fit prêter serment de fidélité. Nzan-fato, placé à la tête des troupes, vint établir un réduit à Douba-bougou ; il y resta un an à se battre contre les gens de Nyana-n-koro, établis eux-mêmes dans un poste fortifié, non loin de là. Peu à peu, les gens de Nyana-n-koro firent des progrès et obligèrent Nzan-fato à reculer.

Alors, les esclaves commencèrent à murmurer, puis vinrent trouver Nzan-fato et lui dirent : « Tu peux pré« venir notre maître que nous sommes à bout ; lui ou son

« frère, que nous importe. Quoi qu'il advienne, nous ne « serons jamais aussi mal qu'ici. Nous mourons de faim, « tandis que Ma-n-son ne se fait pas de souci, vit grassement et garde jalousement les richesses pour lui seul. « Dis-lui que s'il ne change pas de conduite, nous sommes « décidés à savoir si Nyana-n-koro est aussi chiche que lui ».

Nzan-fato demeure fort perplexe, car il est des choses que les chefs n'entendent pas volontiers. Il craignait, en parlant sans détours, d'encourir la colère de Ma-n-son, qui ne manquerait pas de penser que c'était lui, Nzan-faro, l'instigateur de toute cette affaire ; c'est pourquoi il alla trouver Ma-koro ; après avoir expliqué ce qui advenait, il offrit de fournir une preuve irrécusable de ses assertions. A cet effet, il convoqua les principaux esclaves dans un lieu où Ma-koro pouvait les entendre sans être vue ; il leur demanda de préciser leurs griefs, pour qu'il put les transmettre à Ma-n-son. Non seulement ils répétèrent leurs plaintes, mais encore ils menacèrent, si satisfaction ne leur était pas donnée, dans la huitaine, de passer au parti de Nyana-n-koro.

Ma-koro appela Ma-n-son auprès d'elle et, en sa présence, ordonna à Nzan-fato de raconter tout ce qu'il savait. Ma-n-son, comprenant l'imminence du danger, s'en remit à sa mère et à Nzan de ce qu'il convenait de faire. Il leur abandonna les trente et une clefs des magasins, dans lesquels ils puisèrent largement. Quinze jours après, Nyana-n-koro était battu : chassé successivement de Ségou-koura et de Ségou-bougou, il se réfugia à Ségou-koro, auprès des vieux *sofa*. Mais, trois jours après, la ville fut prise et Nyana-n-koro saisi avec ses deux frères.

Un cordonnier, nommé Moussa, accourut annoncer à Ma-n-son que Nyana-n-koro, Dyon-kélé et Mamourou, ses frères, étaient en route vers lui. Ma-n-son ordonna d'attendre la nuit pour les faire entrer dans la ville. La nuit venue, il alla au-devant des prisonniers ; sur la route, il s'assit au pied d'un fromager et, quand la petite troupe passa, il l'arrêta. Les trois frères marchaient, Nyana-n-koro en tête, les bras attachés derrière le dos, sous l'ample blouse, et une seule et même cangue les retenait par le cou.

Ma-n-son dit : « Nyana-n-koro, je te salue ! » Pas de réponse. « Fils de mon maître ! » Pas de réponse. « Dyara ! » Pas de réponse. « Pourtant, continua-t-il, ce qui arrive

2: Monteil
FA8 Bambara

[Facing p. 80]

Fig. 3. — Fillettes Bambara en tenue de sortie
(Région de Diénné)

Fig. 4. — Femmes et filles Bambara qui viennent
de déposer les charges qu'elles portaient sur la tête
(Région de Diénné)

« n'incombe qu'à toi : c'est la justice d'Allah qui te frappe. « Et si tu m'avais pris, qu'aurais-tu fais de moi ? »

Dyon-kélé répondit : « Oh, absolument rien ! »

Nyana-n-koro, furieux, cris : « Je t'aurais sacrifié aux « tambours des *ton-dyon* ».

Ma-n-son dit à Nzan-fato de conduire ses deux jeunes frères à Bama-bougou et de les mettre aux fers. Quant à Nyana-n-koro, il le confia à Dyawé Démbélé, chef des Somono, en le prévenant qu'il le reprendrait quand il jugerait utile de le faire. Puis, Ma-n-son regagna Mpé-ba-la.

Un jour, Nyana-n-koro dit à Dyawé Démbélé qu'il désirait avoir une entrevue avec son frère Ma-n-son. Tous deux se mirent en route pour Mpbè-ba-la. Nyana-n-koro dissimulait un pistolet sous sa blouse.

Ma-n-son était assis au seuil de sa maison ; lorsqu'il vit venir Dyawé, il pressentit un événement : il se leva, vint à lui et l'interpella : « Qu'est-ce qui t'amène ? » Mais, au même moment, il aperçut Nyana-n-koro qui se dissimulait derrière Dyawé : il s'avança vers lui. Décontenancés, Dyawé et Nyana-n-koro prirent peur ; Ma-n-son saisit son frère par le bras et ce brusque mouvement détermina la chute du pistolet. A cette vue, Ma-n-son appela Si-dloki, il lui remit Nyana-n-koro pour le garder, tandis que lui-même interpellait vivement Dyawé. Si-dloki, à son tour, confia Nyana-n-koro à un *sofa* qui l'emmena à l'intérieur de la maison.

Plusieurs jours durant, Ma-n-son parut avoir complètement oublié cette affaire. Un mois après, il appela Si-dloki : « Eh bien, qu'advient-il de Nyana-n-koro » ? questionna-t-il.

— « Je l'ai remis à un *sofa* ».

On appela le sofa ; il prétendit avoir enfermé Nyana-n-koro dans une petite case dont il indiqua l'emplacement. L'on s'y rendit, on l'ouvrit, il n'y avait personne.

L'on n'a jamais plus eu trace de Nyana-n-koro, et la petite case est demeurée « interdite ».

Ma-n-son envoya quérir deux de ses frères, Séri et Ba. S'adressant à Séri, il lui demanda : « Qu'as-tu fait pendant que Nyana-n-koro et moi nous disputions ? »

— « Je cultivais ».

— « Oui, sans doute ; mais comment une telle lutte a-t-elle pu te laisser indifférent ? Ah, je t'ai deviné, va !

« Tu espérais que tous deux nous disparaîtrions et que,
« par suite, tu n'aurais aucune peine à prendre le com-
« mandement suprême. Tu n'es qu'un hypocrite ; pour-
« tant, je ne te ferai pas de mal, mais tu ne seras jamais
« chef ; te voilà cent esclaves, je te défends d'en avoir un
« de plus et de t'occuper d'autre chose que d'agriculture ».

Il agit de même vis-à-vis de Ba.

Ils les installa tous les deux à Bama-bougou, sous la surveillance des *ton-dyon'*. Tous deux demeurèrent Dyara, mais n'eurent, non plus que leurs descendants, aucun droit au commandement suprême. Puis, après réflexion, Ma-n-son envoya son frère Ba à Déné-bougou, où il le fit murer pour le punir de l'avoir traité d'imbécile. Dès lors, Ma-n-son n'eut plus d'ennemis à redouter dans son entourage immédiat.

Au moment de la lutte entre Nyana-n-koro et Ma-n-son, Déssé Kouloubali, espérant tirer parti des circonstances, s'était rapproché du Niger ; là, après avoir hésité à soutenir l'un ou l'autre, il s'empara de Niamina, qui appartenait au Ségou ; c'était une façon de se venger de la captivité qu'il avait subie dans ce pays.

Ma-n-son, délivré de tout souci dans ses états, pensa à punir l'audace de Déssé, non moins que son indifférence dans sa querelle avec Nyana-n-koro : ce fut sa première expédition hors de Ségou. Il emmena 60.000 cavaliers, 80.000 fantassins et ses deux fils, Da et Tyé-folo.

Il manda Nyényé-koro Boaré : « Pourquoi, lui demanda-
« t-il, as-tu laissé prendre mes Mar-ka ? »

Nyényé-koro, qui était chef de Mpé-ba-la, répondit :
« Tu ne me les avais pas confiés. »

Pour témoigner de sa colère, Ma-n-son fit mettre à sac tout le canton de Missé-ka-la, qui était sous la dépendance immédiate de Nyényé-koro.

A Mori-bougou, il captura un nommé Ntyi, qui lui plut pour sa bravoure. Il donna à cet individu le commandement de 1.000 hommes et l'emmena à sa suite dans le Kaarta.

Dans cette province, à Guémou, il circoncit ses deux fils.

Il poursuivit les Massa-si avec une fureur demeurée légendaire et, les ayant obligés à passer par le couloir étroit d'une montagne, il fit murer ce passage derrière eux, comme pour leur interdire la route du retour. Déssé étant mort, le chef des Massa-si était, alors, Moussoukoura Bo.

Vainqueur des Massa-si, Ma-n-son fit appeler Tyitya, chef du canton de Dé-dougou (entre le Bélé-dougou et le Foula-dougou), et lui dit : « Il faut que, sans retard, toi et « tes gens quittiez ce pays, car il n'y a plus un grain de « mil dans le Kaarta et j'ai besoin des ressources de tout « ton canton pour approvisionner mes troupes ».

Pour toute réponse, Tyitya interdit à Ma-n-son l'entrée du Dé-dougou.

Un griot de Ma-n-son dit alors à celui-ci : « Maître, « prends garde, ne pousse pas à bout ce Bambara, car tu « n'ignores pas combien les gens de notre race sont vindicatifs ». Mais la nécessité étant impérieuse, Ma-n-son demanda à Tyitya, en considération de l'amitié qu'il avait eue pour Ngolo, d'abandonner son pays pour permettre aux guerriers de Ségou de ne pas mourir de faim.

Le Bambara tient à son village : Tyitya refusa. Trois jours après, Ma-n-son envahit le Dé-dougou. Il manda Tyitya; celui-ci lui fit dire : « Nous ne pouvons nous entendre, j'ai consulté mes chefs et ils ont été d'un avis unanime : jamais nous ne céderons à un homme de notre « race ».

« Je savais bien, répliqua Ma-n-son, que je ne pouvais avoir en Tyitya aucune confiance, puisqu'il a envoyé « 250 hommes pour secourir Nyana-n-koro. Aujourd'hui, « l'heure de ma vengeance est arrivée ».

Tyitya essaya, cependant, d'éviter la catastrophe en offrant de donner deux paniers de mil par cavalier et un par fantassin, pour que Ma-n-son abandonnât son projet.

« Les paroles sont finies, dit Ma-n-son, crois-tu que « celui qui peut tout prendre se contentera de la moitié ! »

Tyitya exhorta ses frères à émigrer : ils s'y refusèrent. Le village chef-lieu fut mis en état de défense ; au nombre de ceux qui s'y enfermèrent étaient 750 chasseurs, escortés de 100 musiciens. Toute issue étant fermée, tous montèrent sur les terrasses des maisons et, de là, insultèrent Ma-n-son et son armée.

Le lendemain, Ma-n-son vint, en personne, s'appuyer au mur du village et tous ses hommes, encouragés par cette attitude, s'élancèrent résolument à l'assaut, mais la première décharge ennemie coucha à terre 50 chefs *so/a*, ce qui fit renoncer à l'assaut.

Des palanquements furent dressés et l'investissement à distance commença.

Un mois passa sans changement.

Les autres villages du canton ayant été abandonnés, l'armée y trouvait sa subsistance.

Au bout d'un an, l'hivernage étant proche, les femmes de Ma-n-son, au nombre de douze, vinrent le trouver et lui dirent : « Laisse-nous partir, car nous avons la nostal- « gie de Ségou ; si tu nous obliges à rester, nous déserte- « rons, parce que nous avons la certitude que tu ne pren- « dras jamais ce village. »

Il appela des griots, il ordonna aux femmes de répéter devant eux ce qu'elles avaient dit et, quand elles l'eurent fait, il les laissa libres de partir.

Le reste de la nuit, les griots chantèrent à Ma-n-son des chansons de guerre. Au matin, ayant réuni tous ses gens, il s'approcha du tata et y jeta son bracelet d'argent. L'assaut fut terrible ; 71 chefs périrent, parmi lesquels Ntyi, de Mori-bougou. En voyant tomber ce brave, Ma-n-son s'écria : « Tout est perdu ! Il ne nous reste plus « qu'à rentrer à Ségou ».

Na-dya Bala, fils de Tonmassa, ayant entendu ces paroles, apostropha Ma-n-son : « Eh quoi, cet étranger « te tenait plus au cœur que tes fidèles serviteurs. Il était « valeureux, c'est vrai, mais, en somme, c'était sa pre- « mière campagne, tandis que nous, nous ne les comptons « plus. Après tout, ce n'est qu'un esclave de moins. »

Une année encore passa. Enfin, Da, le fils de Ma-n-son, imagina un stratagème. Ayant fait réunir quantité d'ustensiles, une nuit il fit passer ses gens du côté du village opposé à celui qu'occupait l'armée de son père et, par le bruit étouffé qu'il simula, il laissa croire aux assiégés qu'une grande fraction des assaillants déguerpissait. Aussitôt, les portes du village s'ouvrirent devant des gens qui jugeaient le moment opportun pour s'enfuir.

Da et ses gens, convenablement apostés, entrèrent dans la place : les clameurs et les coups de feu apprirent bientôt à l'armée, que la manœuvre avait réussit. Quinze jours durant, on s'entre-tua dans le village, mais le chef demeurait introuvable. Alors, Na-dya Bala vint trouver Ma-n-son et lui dit : « Je jure que demain je t'amènerai « Tyitya, ou que je mourrai ». Pour prix de son âme,

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Ma-n-son lui donna : 100 blouses rouges, 100 cordons de soie rouges..., en un mot 100 de chacune des choses qu'il désirait. Le lendemain, au coucher du soleil, Na-dya Bala amena Tyitya. « Merci, Dèmbélé ! » dit Ma-n-son, et il lui donna 750 personnes pour réparer les « accrocs de sa blouse » ; ultérieurement, il y ajouta 1.000 personnes et 400 villages.

Ma-n-son regagna Ségou en prenant Béba.

Un jour, Ma-n-son fit appeler Dyiri-ba : « Je sais, lui « dit-il, que, lors de ma querelle avec mon frère Nyana-n- « koro, tu as séjourné tantôt à Ségou-koro, tantôt à Ségou- « koura et tu n'es pas venu me voir, afin de ne prendre « parti ni pour l'un ni pour l'autre de nous deux ». — « Je suis pauvre, dit Dyiri-ba, et je n'ai pas voulu accen- « tuer entre vous la discorde ». — « C'est-à-dire que tu « voyais avec un malin plaisir décliner la puissance des « Ngolo-la, que tu espérais, par contre, voir grandir celle « des Dounamba-a. Toutefois, je ne te ferai aucun mal, « d'abord parce que tu es mon père, aussi en souvenir de « ma mère et de ma grand'mère. Mais, pour te punir, je « t'enlève Nango et Massala, quelques hommes te suffi- « ront pour cultiver ».

A Da, Ma-n-son donna Mpé-ba-la et Bams-bougou. Il plaça Tyé-folo à Koké, avec 6.000 hommes. A Nyéné-m-ba, il confia le commandement de Oïtala avec tout ce qui, précédemment, dépendait de Dyon-kolo, et il renforça de 4.000 hommes son contingent de 13.000 hommes. Il installa Sibiri et Nyanya à Diani, avec 10.000 hommes chacun ; Fissa à Nango, avec tous les esclaves de Dyiri-ba, sauf 400 personnes qu'il laissa à Dyiri-ba. A Massa-la, il mit Songo-ba, et à Séou (rive gauche), Nyanya-ni-ntyéni.

Toutes ces dispositions prises, Ma-n-son manda Mamari, de Kirango.

— « Je voudrais acheter ton village, » lui dit-il.

— « C'était aussi le désir de ton père, qui m'avait « offert, à titre de compensation, autant de cauris qu'en « pourrait contenir mon tata : je refusai, parce que ce « n'est pas moi qui ai construit ce village, il m'a été laissé « par mon père, qui, lui-même, le tenait de ses aïeux : « or, un Bambara, tu le sais, n'abandonne pas, pour des « cauris, le village de ses ancêtres. Exige de moi ce que « tu voudras, hormis cela. »

— « Dans la huitaine, j'irai te voir et nous tâcherons de nous entendre ».

Bien avant cette entrevue, aussitôt qu'il avait eu vent des intentions de Ma-n-son, Mamari avait décidé ses gens à construire de nouveaux villages, pour la plupart sur la rive gauche du Niger, tels : Vélingué-ra, Gou-ma, Médi-na, Tyon, Tayon. Au retour de Ségou, il dirigea tout son monde sur ces villages neufs, de sorte que, huit jours après, Ma-n-son ne trouva, dans Kirango, que Mamari qui, à ses propositions, répondit :

— « Vendre le bien de mes ancêtre, je ne le peux ; « mais, si tu l'exiges, je te le donne ».

— « Je ne saurais accepter sans que mes ennemis « répandent le bruit que je t'ai dépouillé ».

— « Sois sans crainte, je garderai le secret sur tout « cela ».

Ma-n-son accepta et Mamari s'empressa de quitter, lui aussi, Kirango, pour habiter Velingué-ra.

Le huitième jour, Kala-ké arriva à Kirango, pour y tenir garnison, avec 10.000 hommes.

A la nouvelle de l'évacuation de Kirango, Ma-n-son convoqua les Sissé et les Khomma, de Sansanding.

— « Pourquoi n'êtes-vous pas venus me saluer à « Kirango », leur demanda-t-il

— « Tu n'y a même pas couché, nous n'aurions donc « pas eu le temps d'arriver avant ton départ ».

— « Vous n'êtes que des hypocrites. Lorsque je luttais « contre mon frère, Nyana-n-koro, vous lui fites tenir des « ressources en hommes et en vivres : moi, vous ne m'avez « même pas fait saluer ».

Il leur ordonna de lui amener tous les chefs de maisons de Sansanding. Il en vint 8.500 ; il décida de les faire mettre à mort. Alors, chérif Ismail intervint et Ma-n-son, remettant à plus tard l'exécution de ses volontés, confia tous ces gens à son chef des esclaves, nommé So. Mais, le lendemain, il se ravisa et fit traîner tout ce monde sur la place publique pour y être mis à mort. Chérif Ismail s'entremit de nouveau et Ma-n-son finit par lui dire : « Prends« les, je te les donne comme esclaves ». Tous retournèrent ainsi à Sansanding.

Souleyman, chef de Dina, vint à Ségou, pour saluer Ma-n-son. Il lui fit cadeau de 85 pirogues chargées de cauris. Ma-n-son ne put refuser ce cadeau, mais il en fut profondément humilié, car il comprit que, de propos délibéré, Souleyman avait voulu montrer qu'il pouvait donner sans compter. Ma-n-son jura de se venger.

A Ségou, Souleyman se laissa facilement aller à son penchant invétéré pour la boisson, et, dans la fumée de l'ivresse, il ne cessait de crier que Ségou n'était qu'un pays d'esclaves où lui seul pouvait librement agir. Ces propos mettaient la rage au cœur de Ma-n-son.

Un jour, au cours d'une beuverie, Souleyman se prit de querelle avec un nommé Siné-dyan, esclave ou griot de Ma-n-son. Tout en déjeunant, Siné-dyan, pour distraire Ma-n-son, lui conta ses démêlés avec Souleyman. Ma-n-son comprit tout le parti à tirer de cet incident et il dit à Siné-dyan : « Je serai très heureux de te voir attiser « cette insignifiante querelle, mais il est bien entendu que « je ne dois en rien y être mêlé, Souleyman étant l'hôte « de ma mère, m'est sacré ».

Siné-dyan, s'étant rendu sur la place publique, aperçut Souleyman occupé à boire en compagnie de Na-dya Bala, fils de Tonmassa. Il s'approcha et lui dit : « Toi, « petit-fils du valeureux Tonmassa, et toi, petit-fils du « brave Wara, vous êtes bien faits pour vous entendre « et festoyer ensemble. Si vous voulez, je vous offrirai « 1.000 (1) bois fourchus et 2.000 (1) nattes de paille pour « vous construire un local spacieux où vous pourrez, tout « à votre aise, mener joyeuse vie ».

Ils acceptèrent.

Pour faire face aux dépenses extraordinaires de ces orgies, Na-dya Bala vendit, à Ségou même, 7.500 (1) esclaves, dont il employa le prix en achat de bière (*dlo*). De même, Souleyman fit venir de son pays tout ce qu'il put, et, quand les moyens de continuer lui manquèrent, il prit la fuite clandestinement et regagna Dina.

Alors, Na-dya Bala vint trouver Nzan-fato et, après l'avoir mis au courant de ce qui venait de se passer, le décida à l'accompagner chez Ma-n-son. Là, quand il eût exposé ses griefs, il conclut : « Je pense qu'une telle con- « duite mérite un châtiment exemplaire et je te demande « de poursuivre ce couard qui, venu ici pour nous humilier « en faisant étalage de ses richesses, se sauve furtivement « pour ne pas solder son écot ».

Ouvertement, Ma-n-son s'opposa au projet de Na-dya

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(1) Comme je l'ai dit précédemment, ces chiffres n'ont rien de réel.

Bala, mais, aussitôt que le jeune homme se fut retiré, il manda Ma-koro, sa mère.

« Nzan-fato et Na-dya Bala sont décidés, dit-il, à pour« suivre Souleyman et je ne peux y mettre opposition ; « mais, comme je ne suis pour rien dans cette affaire, pré« viens Souleyman et conseille-lui de quitter son pays, « pour éviter un malheur irréparable, après nous verrons ».

Makoro appela un de ses hommes de confiance et lui remit : une paire de sandales, une blouse blanche et une outre pleine ce couscous ; elle lui donna des instructions précises et lui recommanda de suivre, à l'aller, le bord du fleuve et de prendre, au retour, un chemin différent, afin de ne pas se rencontrer avec Nzan, qui ne manquerait sans doute pas de lui faire un mauvais parti.

L'envoyé de Ma-koro trouva Souleyman occupé à danser et à boire. A grand peine, il l'attira à l'écart et, lui ayant rapporté les conseils de Ma-koro, il ajouta : « Chausse ces scandales, mets cette blouse, pends cette « outre à ton épaule et émigre, c'est le plus sage ; plus « tard, tout s'arrangera ».

Souleyman refusa de quitter le pays de ses pères.

Pendant ce temps, Nzan arrivait à Massa-la, dernier village des esclaves de Ségou. Là, il tint conseil et autorisa ses gens à prendre et à garder tout ce qui leur tomberait sous la main, dans les pays de l'Ouest où ils allaient pénétrer ; c'est alors que, pour la première fois, les griots chantèrent : « A l'ombre du touffu *kaminya*, la poule ne « distingue pas un grain de sable d'un grain de mil... »

Les troupes de Nzan saccagèrent tout sur leur passage et s'avancèrent rapidement sur Dina. Arrivé à Dina, Nzan établit son camp près du village et fit appeler Souleyman. Il vint, accompagné de ses frères, parmi lesquels se trouvait Na-dyé Kassoum qui, trois ans auparavant, avait proposé à Nzan de trahir Souleyman.

Prenant la parole, Nzan dit : « Je commence par te « prévenir, Souleyman, que nous sommes ici malgré « Ma-n-son. Tu as fait avec Na-dya Bala, mon fils (1), des « orgies extraordinaires à Ségou et toi, homme libre, te « commettant avec un esclave, tu n'as pas eu honte de te « sauver sans acquitter ton dû.

« Voilà pourquoi nous sommes ici.

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(1) Non par filiation naturelle, mais par suite des relations amicales qui avaient existé entre Nzan et le père de Na-dya Bala.

« A Ségou, tu étais sans ressources, mais, ici, les biens « ne te manquent pas, il faut liquider cette affaire.

« Pour bien te témoigner qu'il n'est pour rien dans ce « différend, Ma-n-son m'a chargé de te remettre vingt « paquets de fusils, dix charges de pierre à feu, dix charges « de balles, quelques charges de sel et de poisson sec » (1).

Souleyman accepta le cadeau de Ma-n-son et, après avoir remercié, ajouta : « Puisque Na-dya Bala et toi êtes « venus pour faire la noce, dites-moi ce qu'il convient de « faire ? »

— « Faisons comme à Ségou », répondit Nzan.

— « Non, car ici nous ne trouverions pas ce que l'on « trouve à Ségou et, d'ailleurs, tout m'indique que vous « n'êtes venus que pour faire la guerre. Mais, je ne peux « vous tenir tête, mes gens sont occupés au dehors, et si « vous voulez me prendre, je ne peux rien vous opposer ».

— « Eh bien, fixe-nous un délai, passé lequel, si tes « gens ne sont pas rentrés, nous t'attaquerons quand « même ».

Trois jours lui furent accordés, suivant le désir qu'il en exprima ; le quatrième jour, Nzan assaillit le village qui était défendu : d'un côté, par Souleyman, et, de l'autre, par Na-dyé Kassoum. Celui-ci ouvrit les portes à Nzan. Souleyman fut pris par Na-dya Bala, qui le tua au pied d'un des cailcédrats du village : Na-dyé Kassoum et tous les prisonniers furent dirigés sur Ségou.

En revenant vers Ségou, Nzan prit Toumboulou et les chefs de Damba, Kamikon, Kani-ké-dougou, Dyalabougou et Séou.

Arrivé à Ségou, il fit publier un avertissement pour les gens libres qui se commettraient avec des esclaves.

Ma-n-son lui donna, à titre de récompense, 10.000 personnes et nomma Kassoum chef du canton de Dina, avec résidence à Kerké-la.

C'est alors que Ma-n-son fonda le village de Sira-koro, mais il n'y mit pas de chef, s'en réservant l'administration directe.

Sur les 740 chefs d'esclaves qui lui avaient prêté serment, il n'en restait plus que 60 ; il décida que ceux-là seuls continueraient à exercer leurs fonctions et que leurs commandements respectifs seraient héréditaires.

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(1) Cette conduite de Ma-n-son est un exemple typique de la fourberie bambara.

A une assemblée générale qu'il convoqua, Ma-n-son demanda une colonne pour aller combattre Yarouga. Les esclaves refusèrent, prétextant qu'il suffirait d'appeler Yarouga pour en obtenir satisfaction.

Ma-n-son passa sur la rive gauche avec une petite escorte et manda Yarouga. En cours de route, Yarouga fut saisi par des émissaires, traîné devant Ma-n-son et mis à mort par son ordre.

Il fut remplacé par Ko-dyado, esclave de Ma-n-son.

Ma-n-son s'informa si le chef peul, Bon-gué, avait laissé des enfants ; ayant appris qu'il en avait laissé cinq, il fit venir l'aîné, Mamourou, auquel il donna 1.740 esclaves, avec le commandement de Sama-n-koro.

Puis, Ma-n-son appela l'autre chef peul, Ndyan : « Pourquoi ne m'as-tu pas dit que Bon-gué a laissé cinq « enfants ? »

— « Ils étaient si jeunes ! »

— « Mauvaise raison ! La vérité, c'est que tu as mis à « profit la nécessité où je suis de m'occuper ailleurs, pour « accaparer tous les biens de ton frère Bon-gué. C'est bon, « je ne te veux pas de mal, garde ce que tu as, mais tu « n'auras rien de plus. »

Des douze campements peuls constitués par Ngolo, Ma-n-son fit deux groupes : l'un pour Ndyan, l'autre pour les enfants de Bon-gué ; ainsi furent fondés les Ndyan-na et les Bon-gué-na, les deux tribus des Peuls dits : « *Fur-ba Fla-u* ». Quand Ndyan mourut, il eut pour successeur son fils Bakari, plus ordinairement connu sous le nom de Bakari Ndyan (Bakari, fils de Ndyan) (1).

Pris de diarrhée incoercible, Ma-n-son se sentit perdu. Il réunit ses fils et leur conseilla de rester unis ; puis, il exprima ses regrets de n'avoir pu prendre Koré-Samba-Nya-na et Bouba-n-koro ; de n'avoir pu réduire Ma Dyala Da-tou, qui s'était vanté de rendre amer le couscous de Ma-koro.

Ma-n-son avait guerroyé contre le Macina, le Tombo, les Touaregs et les Mossi : contre tous il avait été heureux. A son époque, le pays de Ségou proprement dit (le *to-da* : la « marmite de bouillie ») s'étendait, savoir : à l'est, jusqu'au canton de Saro compris ; au nord, jusque vers

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(1) Voir dans les « textes » ci-après des fragments de l'histoire légendaire de ce Bakari Ndyan.

Ségué-la, Kourouma, Kokri ; à l'ouest, jusque à Kangaba ; au sud, jusqu'à Mpé-so-ba et Yanga-so.

La suzeraineté du chef du Ségou s'étendait fort loin, mais elle était très précaire, car il n'y avait pas assez de troupes organisées pour la faire respecter. Les tributaires avaient à payer des redevances, plus ou moins régulières, dont la nature et la quotité avaient été fixées lors de leur assujettissement.

Da (1808-1827)

Le huitième jour après l'enterrement de Ma-n-son, Da réunit ses frères et, s'adressant à Tyé-folo, leur demanda ce qu'ils comptaient faire. Tyé-folo garda le silence ; mais le jeune Kala-ké, très fier d'être consulté, voulut prendre la parole. Da le lui interdit et interrogea de nouveau Tyé-folo.

— « Qu'allons-nous faire des femmes de notre père ? »

— « Rien n'est plus simple, répartit vivement Kala-ké, « que Da essaya, en vain, de faire taire : d'abord, Ma sera « mise de côté, parce que c'est la première femme de notre « père ; Tyé-folo prendra ta mère, Yo ; tu prendras la « mère de Tyé-folo...

— « Tu parles inutilement », s'écria Da impatienté.

— « Cependant, je ne fais que répondre à ta question ».

— « Da, dit Tyé-folo, fais comme tu voudras ».

— « Eh bien, conclut Da, nos mères, non plus que Ma « et Koma, ne pourront être prises par qui que ce soit. « Ce point fixé, restons-en là pour le moment ».

Quand tout fut réglé, Da convoqua ses frères et leur dit, par l'intermédiaire de son griot Tyé-tigué Banintyéni :

— « Pour moi, je ne vois dans l'héritage de notre père « que l'arc et les flèches ».

— « Eh bien, prends-les, s'exclama le bouillant Kala-ké, « puisque tu es notre aîné et que nous n'avons aucune « envie de nous disputer, comme notre père et ses frères. »

— « C'est bien, leur fit répondre Da, mais n'oubliez pas « que vous devez garder le plus grand secret sur la mort « de notre père et vous comporter comme de son vivant : « c'est indispensable pour le succès de mes projets. »

C'est qu'en effet Bani, le chef de Samba Nya-na, n'était demeuré invaincu qu'à cause des précieuses amulettes qu'il possédait contre Ma-n-son. Ces forces magiques devenaient naturellement inefficaces contre Da : si donc celui-ci parvenait à attaquer Bani, avant que Bani ait été informé de la mort de Ma-n-son et se soit prémuni en conséquence, Da triompherait indubitablement, d'autant mieux que Da avait demandé à un savant marabout de ses amis un talisman de victoire. Le marabout exigea, pour la perfection de ce talisman : une savate de Bani et quelques poils de sa barbe.

Pour se procurer ces éléments indispensables, Da soudoya, à prix d'or, une jolie femme, qui partit pour Samba Nya-na avec toutes instructions utiles.

Dès que Bani eut vu la jolie femme, il n'eut de cesse qu'elle lui accordât ses faveurs. Quand elle eut cédé, elle profita de sa confiance pour l'enivrer : elle put ainsi se procurer facilement ce qu'elle était venue chercher et le talisman put être confectionné.

Or, chose remarquable, alors que Bani avait été prévenu par les gens de Dina, chaque fois que Ma-n-son avait voulu l'attaquer, la marche de Da lui demeura si bien inconnue qu'il l'apprit seulement en voyant son ennemi aux portes de son village : le talisman avait opéré cet effet magique.

Le village fut pris et Bani, qui tenta de fuir à cheval, fut arrêté par le griot So-touma. Bani était un de ces hommes à poil roux que les Bambara appellent Gon-bilé et que, dans leur esprit, l'on ne saurait mettre à mort sans encourir les plus effroyables malheurs. C'est pourquoi Da se contenta de transporter Bani à Digon, où il mourut.

Rentré à Ségou, Da demanda une colonne, qu'il conduisit contre Fon-ba-na, près Sikasso ; cette ville fut prise.

Il détruisit Dya-kourou-ma, près Sansanding, parce que le chef s'appelait Toto, nom qui lui déplaisait : il saisit le fils de Toto et lui imposa un nom.

Il s'empara de Da-tou et le mit à mort.

— « Que t'ai-je fait », disait Da-tou.

— « Tu as dit que tu rendrais amer le couscous de « Ma-koro : je veux prouver qu'au contraire tu le rendras « très agréable. »

A son retour à Ségou, Da reçut la visite de Douga-koro, de Koré, qui venait le saluer.

— « Merci de ta visite, lui dit Da, les vieux sont le remède des jeunes et j'ai précisément un renseignement à te demander. Connais-tu, dans le Miniankala, des villages que mon père n'a pas pu prendre ? »

— « Non, je n'en connais pas et, s'il y en a, je suis sûr que c'est seulement parce qu'il n'a pas voulu les prendre. »

— « Allons, réfléchis ! » Et Da se mit à causer avec d'autres visiteurs. Douga-koro, fort gêné, demanda à se retirer chez son hôte pour réfléchir ; mais, dès qu'il fut dehors, il prit le chemin de son village et prévint ses gens de l'arrivée prochaine de Da.

Le huitième jour après cette entrevue, Da appela le chef des Somono et lui ordonna de tout préparer pour permettre à une forte colonne de franchir le Bani ; dans ce but, les pirogues durent descendre le Niger jusqu'à Mopti, pour remonter ensuite le Bani jusqu'à l'endroit voulu.

Da détruisit Koré et tua Douga-koro. Au fils de Douga-koro, qu'il fit prisonnier, il imposa le nom de : *M-fa-ni-moné-té-koun'* (l'âme de mon père n'a plus de chagrin), avec pour réponse : *Den'-nyouma* (bon fils). Il avait, pareillement, imposé au fils de Bani, le nom de : *Malo-bora-m-fa-la* (mon père n'a plus honte), et pour réponse : *Den'-nyouma* (bon fils) (1).

Da était appelé par ses sujets : *Ton-komo.*

Ton-komo, dit la tradition, guerroya encore : notamment, il s'empara de Ntélé, chef du village de Koté-mabougou, canton de Bani-n-ko ; de Moussa Mariko, chef de Farko-la (Bani-n-ko), et de Morbou, Peul de Déné-naa (côté de Sokolo). Il fit colonne au Mossi, s'empara du pays et y fonda trois villages : Ségou-koro, Banan-koro et Mpé-ba-la.

Au retour de cette colonne, en vue de laisser un souvenir durable de son règne, il fit édifier une maison à Banan-koro : 1.500 personnes furent employées à ce travail. A cette époque, Da était en relations très suivies avec un de ses amis d'enfance, un mar-ka du nom de Mama Dyétoura, fils du chef de Tyén, près Sansanding.

Mama était puissant et très riche ; bien que musulman, il portait les cheveux longs et tressés en cadenettes que, par coquetterie, il agrémentait de jolis bijoux en argent. Bien fait de sa personne, il était adoré des femmes. Or, un jour qu'il s'entretenait avec Da, dans la maison en construction à Banan-koro, les femmes de Da survinrent et toutes s'extasièrent sur la mine charmante de Mama. Da en prit ombrage et, lorsqu'il fut rentré chez lui, il manda ses femmes une à une, pour savoir ce qui les séduisait si fort dans la personne de Mama, et chacune répondit : « Tu es le plus brave des chefs, mais Mama est le « plus beau des hommes ».

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(1) Ce mode de dénomination des esclaves était fort courant. Cf. *Les Khassonké*, p. 344.

Da fut dévoré de jalousie. Il ordonna à Mama de se raser la tête, sous prétexte qu'ainsi le veut la loi musulmane. Mama obéit, mais les femmes ne l'en aimèrent pas moins. Sentant le danger, il se dépouilla de ses beaux vêtements et ne visita plus Da que la tête nue et tout dépenaillé, comme un homme pauvre.

Pourtant, Da trouvait qu'il était encore beaucoup trop recherché des femmes et, un jour, il lui dit : « Mama, je « veux que tu portes la crinière d'âne. » — « C'est bien, dit « Mama, j'en parlerai à mon père. » Mama rentra chez son père qui reçut, au même moment, de Da, un rasoir en or avec ordre de ne laisser sur la tête de son fils qu'une crinière d'âne. Peu après, le vieillard, déjà malade, mourut sans avoir exécuté les instructions de Da, et Mama, désormais libre, refusa de se soumettre à l'humiliation voulue par Da.

Da fit appeler le chef *sofa*, nommé Mpé-ba-la So ; il lui donna 5.000 barils de poudre, avec ordre de se saisir de Mama, de lui faire la crinière d'âne et de lui attacher, sur le front, le cauri, stigmate de l'esclave adultère.

Le *sofa* fut battu et, redoutant la colère du maître, vint se réfugier à Togou, auprès du marabout Kassoum, qui voulut bien intercéder auprès de Da. Da pardonna en disant : « Qu'il revienne, il a été battu, ce n'est rien, j'ai « bien d'autres esclaves qui feront ce qu'il n'a pu faire ».

Il envoya Dyogo Dyara qui, battu également, bénéficia aussi de la clémence du maître, grâce à un homme libre de Ségou-koro.

Alors, Da envoya informer les esclaves en résidence à Baga-ma-bougou que celui capable de mener à bien la mission concernant Mama, recevrait 10.000 esclaves à titre de récompense ; les gens de Baga-ma-bougou chassèrent l'envoyé de Da, sans vouloir l'entendre.

Au retour de cet envoyé, qui se nommait Ma-nyouma, un griot vint s'asseoir à la porte de la maison de Da et, toute la nuit, chanta ; un forgeron, assis au seuil de la

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porte opposée, fit de même. Le lendemain, Da vint, en personne, à Banan-koro, y passa la nuit et, au point du jour, attaqua Mama : il fut, lui aussi, battu. Tristement, il reprit le chemin de Ségou, mais le griot ayant chanté ironiquement : « Mama a cassé la corne du Komo... », Da, saisi de honte, revint sur ses pas, pour attaquer de nouveau le village de Mama. Il n'arriva qu'à la nuit tombante et, sur le conseil de ses familiers, se résigna à remettre l'exécution de son projet au lendemain.

A l'aube, l'assaut fut donné sans succès et avec de grosses pertes pour Da. Celui-ci décida de prendre la place par la famine : il l'entoura à distance, construisit des palanquements ; puis, navré de ses échecs répétés, il abandonna la direction du siège à son frère Kala-ké et rentra à Ségou.

Six mois durant, Da ne donna plus signe de vie. Ce temps passé, il manda le fils de Bon-gué et le fils de Bakari ; en grand secret, il envoya ces deux Peuls auprès de Mama pour lui demander de tout oublier et de venir prêter serment d'amitié avec lui.

Les deux jeunes gens partirent navrés ; connaissant Da, ils sentaient que, de la réussite de leur mission, il ne pouvait résulter qu'une catastrophe pour Mama, qu'ils aimaient bien. Aussi furent-ils tout joyeux lorsque Mama leur déclara qu'il savait Da trop traître pour se fier à sa parole.

Mais Da ne se découragea pas dans la nouvelle voie qu'il avait adoptée. Il manda, tour à tour, les gens libres susceptibles d'intervenir utilement pour la réussite de son plan.

Il apprit, enfin, qu'un nommé Bala, de Séga-la, avait seul assez d'empire sur Mama pour le décider. Tout d'abord, Bala refusa d'entrer dans les vues de Da, dont il appréciait la fourberie ; mais, peu à peu, il se laissa aller à croire à la sincérité d'un rapprochement, dont Da sut habilement stimuler l'ardent désir.

Bala partit vers Mama, convaincu qu'il travaillait au bonheur de son ami. Celui-ci, en le voyant venir, comprit que toute résistance de sa part devenait inutile, puisque Bala lui-même cédait aux hypocrites avances de Da, et ce fut la mort dans l'âme qu'il accepta de suivre son ami auprès du tyran. Toutefois, avant de quitter son village, Mama recommanda bien à son frère de faire bonne garde et de ne pas céder s'il ne le voyait pas revenir.

Da était campé à Koungo-bougou et avait placé deux « pieds » de colonne entre son campement et le village de Mama. Les guerriers qui composaient ces deux fractions étaient des esclaves dévoués à Da et, dès l'abord, Mama en fit l'observation à son ami. Au fur et à mesure que les deux hommes avançaient, les esclaves leur témoignaient de plus en plus d'hostilité : les premiers les avaient salués ; un peu plus loin, il s'en trouva qui exigèrent de menus cadeaux, notamment du tabac ; plus avant, on les tira de droite et de gauche par leurs vêtements ; enfin, un homme couché à plat sur le sol, à proximité du chemin, saisit Mama par la jambe. Mama tomba et, aussitôt, les guerriers se précipitèrent sur lui et l'assommèrent. Bala, impuissant à conjurer ce malheur, courut à l'endroit où se trouvait Da qui, le voyant venir, se retira d'abord dans une case, puis ressortit.

Bala s'approcha, l'insulta, lui cracha au visage et s'écria : « Je jure que je ne prononcerai jamais plus les mots « formés du mot *da* ; que jamais plus je ne me servirai pour « manger de tout ce qui a un nom composé avec *da* ». Et Bala, non plus que ses descendants, n'ont jamais violé ce serment. Bala traversa le fleuve et ne revint jamais à Ségou.

Da poursuivit l'anéantissement du village de Mama pendant onze mois encore. Installé dans ce village qui lui avait coûté tant d'efforts, Da se sentit au summum de la puissance.

On raconte qu'un jour, dans un accès de fol orgueil, il dit à son griot :

— « C'est moi qui surpasse en puissance tous les enfants de Ma-n-son, et Ma-n-son lui-même a fait bien peu de chose auprès de ce que j'ai accompli : va et informe-toi si l'impôt du Fouta est arrivé. »

— « Il est arrivé », revint dire le griot.

— « Et celui du Sahel ? »

— « Egalement. »

— « Et celui de l'Egypte ? »

— « Il paraît que ceux qui l'apportent sont actuellement à Sansanding. »

— « J'ai entendu parler qu'un certain Mokhtar guerroie dans le Nord, son impôt est-il arrivé ? »

— « Il est à Séga-la. »

— « Et celui des gens qui portent une queue et habitent de l'autre côté de la forêt des colas ? »

— « Leurs envoyés sont à Kogou. »

Et Da se complaisait ainsi à faire étalage de sa puissance.

Un jour, il confia à ses familiers : « Je crois que je ne « peux plus trouver de victimes pour mon *Komo* et je me « sens de taille à lutter contre les compagnons du pro« phète. »

Le fils du chérif Ismail, Lamine, épouvanté d'une telle hérésie et d'un tel orgueil, s'exclama : « Prends garde, de « telles paroles attirent toujours le malheur ».

— « C'est bon, dit Da, en attendant je vais former un « village de blancs » (1).

Pour l'exécution de ce dernier projet, il installa de force, à Banan-koro, les Mar-ka de Tinéni-m-ba ; de Konkon-kourou à Diénné, il échelonna deux cents chefs de case Bozo ; sa cavalerie ramassa tous les Bozo établis sur le Niger, de Dina à Kanga-ba : il les fixa à Banan-koro.

D'autre part, il razzia 40.000 bœufs sur les bords du lac Débo, il les répartit en 80 troupeaux qu'il confia à ses Peuls.

Par Tyan Mana, chef du Saro, il fit enlever les Dioula établis à Kaya, Koro-dougou, Toun et Komina (Bani-n-ko) et les obligea à habiter à Banan-koro.

Tout à coup, Da se sentit très malade. Il appela alfa Seydou Konnaté, savant marabout de Sansanding, et lui demanda ce qu'il convenait de faire pour guérir.

— « Je peux seulement te dire trois choses, dit l'alfa : « je t'avais recommandé de ne pas tuer un fils unique : « tu l'as tué ; au cours de la présente année se lèvera quel« qu'un qui fera échec à ta puissance ; enfin, contraire« ment à ta volonté, ton fils Tyé-koura ne te succédera « pas : c'est à un de tes frères que passera le pouvoir. « Quant au mal dont tu es atteint, tu n'en guériras jamais. » L'alfa repartit.

Quatre mois après ces prédictions, éclatait la révolte d'Ahmadou Bari. Le chef du Kouna-ri, Guéladyo Ahmadou-bodédyo, fit dire à Da : « L'un de nos marabouts « prêche la guerre sainte et les gens de Diénné réclament du « secours. » Dans la première rencontre, 7.000 hommes de

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(1) C'est-à-dire de gens réputés remonter à une origine non nègre.

Banan-koro et de Mpé-ba-la furent tués, ainsi que le chef Gon-bilé qui les commandait. Da donna alors des instructions spéciales à Salirou, chef de Saro, dont le canton devenait, du fait de ces événements, la frontière du pays de Ségou.

Trois ans après ce premier combat, Da abandonna l'arc.

Tyé-folo (1827-1839). — Tyé-koura, fils de Da, habitait Mpé-ba-la : les esclaves qui l'entouraient décidèrent d'empêcher tout autre que lui de prendre le pouvoir : « C'est le fils de notre maître qui, seul, doit commander », disaient-ils. C'était surtout Nso, le chef des *sofa*, qui s'agitait pour faire triompher cette opinion.

Huit mois durant, les esclaves menèrent joyeuse vie en gaspillant les biens du défunt. Ils avaient interdit de prononcer le nom de Tyé-folo : voire même, le mot Tyé était séditieux.

Un jour, les *sofa* de Ségou-koro et de Ségou-Sikoro firent appelér Tyé-folo, résidant alors à Koké. Il vint tout d'une traite et fut introduit dans la maison de son frère. Il envoya chercher Nso. A son arrivée, celui-ci trouva la porte gardée par 750 *sofa* et, dans les trois pièces d'entrée, il constata que les gardes étaient couchés le ventre à terre et la hache à la main.

Soudain, au milieu de la cour, Tyé-folo lui apparut tout de blanc vêtu, une queue de vache suspendue au poignet et, tout autour de lui, des gens étaient prosternés. Il se glissa parmi les assistants et, en prenant leur attitude, il cria :

— « Dyara ! »

— « C'est toi qui es Dyara, répondit Tyé-folo, puisque « tu commandes depuis huit mois et que tu veux comme « chef le fils de ton maître. »

— « Et oui, s'exclama l'habile coquin, je veux nommer « chef le fils de mon maître et le fils de mon maître c'est « toi, car je n'ai connu d'autre maître que Ma-n-son ».

— « C'est bon, dit Tyé-folo, je te donne 240.000 cauris « pour faire la noce, mais dis-moi où est Tyé-koura ».

— « Je l'ignore, car il s'est enfui ».

Tyé-koura, en effet, voyant la mauvaise tournure des affaires, s'était sauvé et était venu se réfugier auprès du chef Somono, en le priant d'intercéder pour lui. Tyé-folo lui pardonna en disant : « Cet enfant n'est pas coupable,

« la responsabilité incombe aux seuls gens de Ségou, qui « ont voulu nous brouiller pour tirer parti de nos dis- « cordes ».

Jusqu'à sa mort, Tyé-folo continua la guerre contre cheikou Ahmadou Bari.

D'autre part, il s'empara de Tinéni-m-ba, de Ténénkou.

Il mourut mystérieusement.

Nyéné-m-ba (1839). — Frère de Tyé-folo et résidant à Oïtala, ne garda le commandement que pendant neuf mois.

PÉRIODE D'ANARCHIE

(1840-1848)

La mort de Nyné-m-ba marqua le début d'une période d'anarchie que le Macina voulut mettre à profit pour subjuguer le pays de Ségou : mais le Peul Bakari, fils de Dyon et chef d'une fraction des *Fur-ba Fla-u*, ayant su prendre de l'autorité sur les *ton-dyon'*, tint tête aux envahisseurs qui avaient pour chef un nommé Blissi.

Bakari Dyan tua Blissi (1) et prit quantité de villages, notamment Béléni-n-ko, dont le pillage servit à alimenter les orgies de Ségou.

LES DYARA

(*suite*)

Bén (1848-1849), *dit Kirango Bén*. — Enfin, un frère de Tyé-folo, Bén, résidant à Kirango, fut choisi.

Entre Bén et Nko-n-tyé, père de Nto, éclatèrent quelques dissentiments qui, plus tard, dégénérèrent en une querelle à main armée entre Nto et Kara-moro, fils de Bén. L'origine de cette querelle fut que Nko-n-tyé avait dit à Bén : « Si tu fais telle chose, tu me surpasseras ». Or, cette manière de défi n'étant acceptable qu'entre égaux, Bén, très froissé de cette familiarité, se sépara bruyamment de Nko-n-tyé.

Bén s'étant, un jour, disputé avec un esclave nommé Bougari, celui-ci prit la fuite, poursuivi par Bén, armé d'une lance. Bougari cherchait à se mettre sous la protection d'un chef puissant et, ayant rencontré Bakari Dyan, il le pria d'intervenir en sa faveur. Bén, survenant, jeta sa lance : Bakari Dyan fut blessé et l'esclave fut tué.

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(1) Voir le récit correspondant au Chap. VII.

Bén prit Mourdia.

Il attaqua Kourou-ma, mais fut repoussé. Un marabout conseilla de ne point persister dans les entreprises guerrières : « Si tu recommences, lui dit-il, tu mourras ».

— « Eh bien, dit-il, je mourrai, puisqu'aussi bien je ne saurai survivre à la honte de n'avoir pu prendre ce village » ; il le prit et mourut.

Bén avait commandé pendant huit ans et deux mois.

Kon-maran (1849-1851). — Ce frère de Bén commanda pendant sept ou huit mois.

Démba (1851-1854). — Ce nouveau chef fit la conquête du Birgo, du Wassoulou et du Gana-dougou. Il mourut au bout de trois ans et un mois de commandement.

Touro-koro Mari (1854-1856). — A peine élu par les *ton-dyon'*, ce fils de Ma-n-son partit en guerre et prit le Gamon, province du Wassoulou ; après quoi, il attaqua Dyéldi Sidibé, chef de Sogoni, et lui enleva 8.000 personnes en deux combats.

Il attaqua Koulou-koro (Koulikoro), pour s'emparer de Bagui Ngolo Dyara, lequel réussit à s'échapper et à gagner le Bélé-dougou.

Les villages de Dyali-ba et de Dya-n-ké-na, en pays mandé, tombèrent aussi en son pouvoir.

Touro-koro Mari se disputa à la fois avec les gens de Ségou et avec son frère Kégué Mari, de Massa-la. Il fit attaquer Massa-la, mais assiégés et assiégeants tirèrent à blanc, et lorsque Touro-koro Mari qui, toute une journée, avait entendu la fusillade, s'étonna de ne point voir de blessés, un esclave lui répondit : « Nous avons assez de « vos guerres fratricides, il faut qu'elles finissent ». L'affaire en resta là.

Un jour, Touro-koro Mari manda son fils Ba-dyi. Il l'habilla des vêtements de Ma-n-son, le fit escorter par toutes les troupes et lui ordonna d'assiéger Ségou. Les gens de Ségou s'alarmèrent de cette fantaisie sans but.

apparent. A ce sujet de mécontentement, vint s'ajouter que Touro-koro Mari fit à El Hadj Omar de riches présents et lui confia un de ses fils pour l'élever.

Alors, un jeudi soir, tous les *sofa* quittèrent la maison de Touro-koro Mari : seuls, quarante *bila-koro* demeurèrent. Les fils de Touro-koro Mari, qui jouaient dans le voisinage, mis en défiance par ces préparatifs, se réfugièrent chez les Somono.

Dans la soirée, les esclaves revinrent : ils attachèrent une écharpe au cou de Touro-koro Mari et traînèrent le corps au dehors. Kégué Mari fut appelé et, en sa présence, Touro–koro Mari fut traîné successivement à tous les chemins aboutissant à Ségou et, en dernier lieu, au bois du *Komo*. Là, Kégué Mari lui dit : « Je n'ai pas oublié que « tu m'as fait amarrer en ce lieu, en m'accusant d'adul« tère avec l'une de tes femmes et que, pour me punir « de ce crime supposé, tu m'as obligé à manger de l'herbe « et des feuilles. Souviens-toi que, ce jour-là, je t'ai crié : « « Même couché par terre, si je peux te toucher de mon « pied, je te jetterai bas. Voici arrivée l'heure de ma ven« geance : par toi Ségou sera troublé de telle sorte que « jamais la paix n'y reviendra ».

On mit une pierre au cou de Touro-koro Mari et son corps fut jeté au fleuve.

Ali **(1856-1861).** — Ali, frère de Touro-koro Mari, fut alors mandé en ces termes : « Viens, la clef s'est perdue pendant que nous organisions une petite intrigue ». — « Je ne viendrai pas, fit-il répondre, je sais comment vous avez perdu la clef. » — « Eh bien, dirent-ils, nous avons « tué ton frère parce qu'il voulait nous forcer à devenir « musulmans et qu'il gaspillait les biens de l'Etat en « cadeaux aux marabouts. »

Ali ne connut d'autre adversaire qu'El Hadj Omar. Pour s'opposer à l'invasion des Fouta-n-ké, il se concerta avec le chef du Macina, sans aboutir cependant à une alliance franche et loyale, et ce manque de détermination fut une des causes de leur perte à tous deux.

Après la défaite de son fils, Tata, à Oïta-la, lui-même, Ali, bien que secondé par une armée du Macina, fut vaincu, en 1861, à Tio, en face de Sansanding, et, à la suite de ces victoires, El Hadj Omar entre dans Ségou, le 10 mars 1861. Ali se retira au Macina, d'où il revint avec une armée très importante pour attaquer Ségou : il fut définitivement vaincu à Kogou et vint alors s'installer à Touna, sur la rive droite du Bani.

Attaqué et vaincu à Touna, Ali se réfugia au Massina, où il fut pris et mis à mort par El Hadj Omar, en 1862.

Les Bambara se donnèrent alors pour chef Kégné Mari, frère d'Ali, qui, de 1862 à 1870, ne cessa de harceler les gens du Fouta. Il était revenu résider à Touna.

De 1870 à 1878, Nyéné-n-ba continua la lutte de partisans de ses prédécesseurs, après avoir fixé sa résidence à Samba-la, non loin de Touna.

Mamourou, qui ne commanda que quelques jours, fut remplacé par Kara-moko, qui n'eut pas de résidence fixe et connut de graves dissentiments de famille. Ne pouvant s'entendre avec ses cousins, Togoma et Ma-n-son, fils de Tyé-folo, il les fit empoisonner, et lui-même périt empoisonné en 1887.

Lorsque, le 6 avril 1890, M. le colonel Archinard entra à Ségou, il fit appeler le successeur de Kara-moko et lui confia le commandement des indigènes, sous la direction d'un résident français, le capitaine Hunderberg ; mais Mari Dyara, qui accepta ce rôle, organisa clandestinement un complot en vue de massacrer le résident et de se débarrasser de notre domination. Cette traîtrise fut punie comme elle le méritait : Mari fut passé par les armes.

Pour occuper la place vacante, il fut fait appel au massa-si Bo-dyan ; mais les vieilles haines rendirent son commandement impossible. L'administration directe, seule, parut dès lors la sauvegarde indispensable de nos intérêts.

2: Monteil FA8 Bambara

SYPNOTIQUE DES CHEFS DU CLAN DU SÉGOU

(1660-1861)

Les Kouloubali

Barama-Ngolo

Soma

fa Siné

Mamari dit Biton
1660-1710

Bakari
1710

Dé-koro
1711-36

(Dyon-kolo)

Les Ton-Dyon'

Tonmassa Démbélé
1736-1740

Kanou-ba-nyouma Bari
1740-1744

Kafa-dyougou
1744-1748

Période d'Anarchie
1748-1750

Les Dyara

Ngolo Dyara
1787-1808

Ma-n-son
1787-1808

(Nyana-n-koro)

Da .... 1808-[illegible]

Tyé-folo........ 1827-1839

Nyéné-m-ba........ 1839

Période d'Anarchie. 1840-1845

Ben........ 1845-1849

Kon-Maran........ 1849-1851

Démba........ 1851-1854

Touro-koro Mari........ 1854-1856

Ali........ 1856-1861

II

HISTOIRE DE L'EMPIRE DU KAARTA

Les descendants de Nya Ngolo

Sounsan (1). — Lorsque Sounsan et les siens eurent passé le Niger, grâce à l'intervention du *poyon'*, ils se dirigèrent vers Lamballaré (2). Là, au village de Darigo, Sounsan prit l'hospitalité chez un forgeron, nommé *fa* Siné Dyara, auquel il demanda protection contre la poursuite probable de Barama Ngolo. *Fa* Siné était pauvre, mais on affirme qu'il comprenait le langage des oiseaux ; or, dans l'instant même où il s'entretenait avec Sounsan, un oiseau qui passa lui apprit que, de Sounsan, sortiraient des chefs puissants ; c'est pourquoi il dit à Sounsan : « Je suis pau-« vre, mais tout ce que je pourrai, je le ferai pour toi et « pour tes descendants ; en retour, je te demande de t'en-« gager pour toi et eux : d'abord, à ne jamais tuer ou met-« tre aux fers l'un quelconque des miens ; ensuite, à aban-

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(1) Comme nous le verrons, le prénom marque une circonstance de la naissance. Il est de pratique habituelle, lorsque l'enfantement est laborieux, de suspendre une patte de lièvre au flanc de la parturiante, de là le nom de Sounsan (lièvre en bambara). — Péné, usité, ailleurs, a la même étymologie.

A Kounando, Sounsan exerçait, dit-on, le métier de sellier. L'on raconte qu'un jour, il s'en alla en compagnie d'un *kulé* (sorte de menuisier indigène) pour chercher dans la campagne le bois nécessaire à la confection d'une selle. Un moment, les deux compagnons se séparèrent : le *kulé* ayant trouvé du miel se l'ingurgita tout pur et, pris de nausées, le rejeta sur des dalles en pierre qui se trouvaient là, puis, il s'éloigna. Peu après, Sounsan passant au même lieu vit le miel, le recueillit et le but. Au retour, quand il apprit comment le miel s'était trouvé abandonné, il ressentit un grand dégoût et prononça de telles malédictions contre le *kulé* que, depuis, aucun des siens ne peut, sans danger, toucher un *kulé*. Tous les gens de cette caste sont ainsi *tne* (interdits) pour cette branche des Koulouball.

(2) C'est, en Soninké, le nom de la région arrosée par un marigot (*lambe*, en dialecte local) qui, au sud d'Ouosséboungou, prend sa source près de Dongué et se termine dans une mare, à Ouaha. Littéralement, en soninké, Lamballaré = « au bord du marigot, » les Bambara disent, avec la même signification, Kodala. C'était, à l'époque de Sounsan, un petit canton sous l'autorité des Soninké de Darigo, village nommé par les Bambara, Douabougou (le marché) et situé sur l'une des branches du Segabala (des cartes), affluent du Baoulé.

D'après Raffenel (t. I, p. 365), le village soninké s'appelait Baïko, nom qui m'est inconnu et semble résulter d'une audition défectueuse de Darigo ; en tout cas, son identification avec Bammako, proposée par Raffenel, est inacceptable.

« donner, à chaque renouvellement du chef de ta famille, « une femme et un cheval du défunt, au chef de ma « famille. »

Ils prêtèrent serment sur une enclume en cuivre qui fut jetée au fond d'un puits, après quoi *fa* Siné désigna à Sounsan un lieu pour s'établir.

Sounsan vécut encore en étroite alliance avec des Taraoré, dont les descendants actuels sont vers le Diangounté et qui lui donnèrent une femme nommée Dougo (1), dont il eut son fils Massa.

De plus, il s'unit, par le serment du sang, avec un sieur Kassi Konaré (ou Konoré), fugitif de Tamato, dans le Kala, à la suite de discussions familiales (2).

Les Taraoré pratiquaient le pillage à main armée, ils intéressèrent Sounsan et Kassi à leurs opérations ; le butin fait en commun était partagé en trois portions égales.

A cette époque, Massa, le fils de Sounsan, était un tout jeune homme fort, audacieux et brave. Il vivait dans la continuelle compagnie des « jeunes gens » (*kama-len'-u*) de Darigo et, notamment, il ne manquait pas une de leurs razzias ; voire même, il était le plus souvent l'instigateur et le meneur de leurs expéditions. C'est ainsi qu'un jour, il razzia le village de Fallou, où il captura 25 personnes ; pour sa « veme », il choisit un garçon, Siné Taraoré, qui fut son premier esclave.

En temps ordinaire, Massa se livrait à la chasse et ne manquait jamais de répartir son butin entre ses camarades. De plus, à l'exemple de son père, il s'entendait fort bien à confectionner et à réparer les selles ; là, encore, il était très apprécié des jeunes, qui lui répétaient souvent : « Tout ce que tu nous commanderas, nous l'exécuterons, « pour te témoigner combien nous te sommes dévoués. »

Massa rapportait ces propos à son père et le vieux, branlant la tête, lui disait : « Cela n'est que flatterie inté- « ressée. Toutefois, si tu crois tes compagnons sincères,

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(1) Suivant une autre version, Dougo aurait été donnée à Sounsan par les Peuls de Massa-la, durant le séjour qu'il fit parmi eux avec son père. Suivant le récit de M. Adam, Dougo était de famille Kofta, mais cela en fait pas obstacle à ce que cette même famille fut également saluée Taraoré, car il est habituel d'emprunter ce nom pour marquer une certaine distinction, en particulier, chez les islamisés.

(2) Kassi est l'ancêtre des Konaré dit *Kala-n-ka-u*, c'est-à-dire originaires du Kala. Raffenel les appelle Khonoré et Kala-ngou, termes empruntés aux Soninké.

« fais-leur prêter serment sur notre idole Nko, enfermée « dans la peau de singe : qu'ils jurent que, le cas échéant, « ils n'hésiteront pas à combattre même leurs parents si « tu l'exiges ; alors, s'ils se parjurent, Nko les tuera. »

Sur Nko, les jeunes gens jurèrent fidélité à Massa et à sa fortune.

Un jour, à leur tête, Massa attaqua Sanou-ba Mamari Dyara, à Fala-da-la, près de Niamala, canton de Lamballaré. L'expédition ramena dix-huit esclaves, sur lesquels Massa préleva, pour sa « veine », le nommé Ngolo Dyan-Koro-ba Dembélé.

Sounsan se trouvait mal à l'aise, lui, étranger, dans le village soninké de Darigo et, un jour, il confia à *fa* Siné : « Je suis décidé à aller m'établir, avec les miens, au lieu « dit Tomo-na (1) et je vais y faire construire une habitation. »

Les jeunes gens vinrent se joindre à Massa pour ces travaux qui, commencés sur des bases assez incertaines, prirent bien vite une autre tournure. Prétextant l'abondance de la récolte, Massa n'eut pas de peine à démontrer à ses amis qu'il devenait urgent pour leur *ton*' d'avoir un refuge sûr, pour abriter leurs biens : « Car, ajouta-t-il, les « gens que nous allons piller sont susceptibles de s'unir « pour nous attaquer et, alors, comment leur résister. »

C'est ainsi que sur les conseils du vieux Sounsan, son père, Massa édifia une haute et forte palissade, bordée d'un fossé profond et enfermant un réduit quasi-inexpugnable. Ce lieu habité fut appelé Sinsa-ro (litt. dans la palissade) et aussi Sounsan-na (litt. chez Sounsan) (2).

Un jour, arriva de Kong une caravane de 740 esclaves, porteurs de fusils et de poudre ; conduits par des marka commerçants, ces esclaves étaient accouplés deux par deux à l'aide d'une corde enserrant le cou. Les convoyeurs avaient pour habitude, à l'étape, de confier les esclaves au chef de village, tandis qu'eux-mêmes demeuraient hors des murs et gardaient leurs autres marchandises. Allant à Darigo, la caravane fit étape à Sounsan-na.

Sounsan, vieux et vivant très retiré, s'en remit à Massa du soin d'héberger ces passagers. Massa invita les chefs de la caravane à enfermer leurs esclaves dans le réduit, avec lui-même pour les surveiller, tandis que trois d'entre eux feraient bonne garde à la porte. Ils acceptèrent cette combinaison.

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(1) Tomonda, des cartes.

(2) La tradition rapportée par Raffenel l'appelle Kéniédougou (t. I, page 366).

Dans la nuit, l'un des esclaves, nommé Sandyan Konaré, s'approcha de Massa et lui dit : « Toi et nous « sommes de même race, tandis que nous ne comprenons « pas ces gens qui nous mènent. Si tu consens à nous « délivrer, nous deviendrons tes esclaves et te suivrons « où tu voudras. » Tout d'abord, Massa refusa. Puis, sur les instances de Sandyan, il s'en vint prendre conseil du vieux Sounsan.

Celui-ci dit : « Mon fils, il faut profiter de l'occasion, « la fortune ne sert que les audacieux. Pour t'assurer des « intentions vraies de tous ces gens-là, fais-leur prêter « serment sur notre idole Nko et, s'ils jurent, agis pour « le mieux. »

Sandyan et ses compagnons jurèrent.

Pour ne pas compromettre l'entreprise, Massa n'en délivra que trois qu'il munit de pilons, à l'aide desquels ils assommèrent les gardiens. Alors, Massa, ayant délivré tous les autres, monta sur le haut du réduit et cria aux gens de Darigo que les esclaves, révoltés, avaient assassinés leurs maîtres. Les caravaniers installés au dehors, pris de terreur, se sauvèrent en abandonnant tout ce qu'ils possédaient : Massa fit mettre en sûreté les fusils et la poudre.

A la suite de ces événements, Massa envoya Mori-ba, fils de *fa* Siné, demander à son vieux père s'il convenait de remettre, aux gens de Darigo, les esclaves. « Non, « répondit *fa* Siné, que Massa garde les esclaves, je lui « fournirai des balles pour résister aux gens de Darigo. »

D'autre part, conformément aux indications de son père, Massa convoqua les jeunes gens et leur exposa, sans réticence, ce qui s'était passé. « Oblige-les à prendre « parti, dit le vieux ; s'ils refusent de faire cause commune avec toi, Nko les tuera à cause de leur serment. « Si, au contraire, ils approuvent ta conduite, nous garderons les esclaves ».

Les jeunes gens adhérèrent entièrement aux décisions de Massa et se déclarèrent prêts à lui obéir. Massa s'adressa alors aux esclaves et leur dit : « Si vous refusez de m'obéir, je vais vous rendre à vos maîtres ; si vous me

« suivez, nous allons faire la guerre. » (1). Ils renouvelèrent leur serment d'obéissance.

Dès lors, conscient de sa force, Massa fit savoir aux gens de Darigo qu'il ne rendrait pas les esclaves. Les gens de Darigo se préparèrent, alors, à l'attaquer (2).

A cette époque, arriva Kassoum Konaré, ancêtre des *Usoubi-la-ka* ; à la tête d'une forte troupe, il venait demander en mariage Sata, la fille unique de Massa. Celui-ci consentit au mariage et joignit le contingent de son gendre à ses guerriers.

Le vieux Sounsan, sentant sa fin prochaine, implora Allah, disant : « Si, de la lutte imminente, doit sortir la « puissance de mon fils, que je meure dès maintenant ; « sinon, que je vive encore dix ans. » Trois jours après, le vieux était mort.

MASSA ET SES DESCENDANTS (MASSA-SI-OU) (3)

Massa (1670-1690). — Pour combattre Massa, les Marka de Darigo convoquèrent les Bambara qui étaient sous leur autorité et dont les principaux chefs étaient : Tonnéguéla Mari-dyan Dembélé ; Konikoni Tiénégué Dyara ; Tiéma Dyara ; Sanou-ba Mamari Dyara, de Fala-da-la.

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(1) Plus exactement, du pillage à main armée.

(2) Cette affaire des captifs transformés en guerriers est également indiquée, comme base de la fondation de l'empire du Kaarta, par Raffenel. D'autres traditions la placent sous Séba-Mana (Trad. et lég., Delafosse) ; d'autres, sous Déssé-koro (Trad. et lég., Delafosse). Il est probable que c'était, en ce temps-là, un moyen couramment employé par les aventuriers pour se constituer une bande de pillards.

(3) « Les traditions indigènes font souvent de Sounsa et de Sounsa-« Massa un même personnage, auquel elles donnent le titre de *massa* ou « *mansa* qui signifie roi, en banmana ; c'est ainsi que le mot *massa-si* ou « *mansa-si* doit être interprété comme signifiant « descendance de roi » et « non pas « descendance d'un nommé Massa » (Delafosse, *in* Traditions Historiques..., p. 52, note 4).

« Les Kouloubali, issus de Niangolo, frère aîné de Baramangolo, « avaient pris l'étiquette de Massa-si (descendants de roi) parce qu'ils « représentaient la branche aînée ».

Cette interprétation ne correspond évidemment pas au texte ci-dessus. Il m'a été maintes fois affirmé par les traditionnistes indigènes que Massa-si signifierait « descendant d'un nommé Massa ». Il pourrait se faire que Sounsan-Massa fut un nom double concernant un personnage unique, ainsi que cela s'est produit précisément pour certains chefs Massa-si, tels . Seba-Mana, Gran-Forokoro, Massa-Bakari. L'identité de personne étant admise ne fera pas obstacle à ce que Massa-si signifie descendant de Massa, par abréviation de Soun-san-Massa, puisque nous avons des expressions analogues : Biton-si, Ngolo-si pour désigner les descendants de Mamari-Biton Kouloubali et Ngolo Dyara. Il est vrai que Massa-si, composé de Massa = roi, peut désigner toute lignée royale, mais il est à remarquer que chez les Bambara qui nous occupent, l'expression Massa-si s'emploie exclusivement pour la lignée royale de Kaarta.

L'investissement de Sounsan-na commença ; grâce aux précautions prises, Massa pu résister de longs mois, en faisant de nombreuses sorties contre les assaillants.

Cependant le succès ne se prononçait ni d'un côté ni de l'autre lorsque, le onzième mois, Massa parvint à s'échapper pendant la nuit. Suivi des plus audacieux de ses gens, il tomba sur le village de Mari-dyan Dembélé, le mit à sac et, chargé de butin, réussit à réintégrer son *tata*. Le lendemain, il parut sur la terrasse la plus élevée et interpella Mari-dyan en lui montrant sa femme favorite et sa plus belle blouse brodée.

Une telle audace fit réfléchir les autres chefs ; chacun pensa que le sort de Mari-dyan pourait lui être réservé : alors, les chefs bambara tinrent conseil ; mais au moment où l'assemblée allait délibérer, l'un des assistants, Sanou-ba Mamari Dyara, se retira en disant qu'il ne voulait pas faire partie d'un conciliabule auquel un borgne prenait part, parce qu'il ne pouvait en résulter qu'une catastrophe. Il faisait, ainsi, allusion à Konikoni Tiénégué Dyara qui, en effet, n'avait qu'un œil.

Fâcheusement impressionnés par ces circonstances, les coalisés se séparèrent pour rentrer chacun chez soi et Massa se trouva délivré. Toutefois, à l'instigation des Marka, les chefs bambara s'efforcèrent à créer des embarras à Massa. Ils envoyèrent à Ségou prévenir les descendants de Barama-Ngolo de la présence, chez eux, des fugitifs en vain recherchés par leur ancêtre, s'offrant à seconder toute entreprise contre eux (1).

Béni Fali-Sékolo (1690-1700). — Très avancé en âge, Massa abandonna le commandement effectif à son fils Beni Fali dit Sékolo, fort et valeureux comme lui-même, qui continua les pratiques peternelles du pillage à main armée, avec l'assistance de ses nombreux frères, dont les plus connus furent : Gran dit Foro-koro ; Séba dit Mana ; Tyema, fils de Nya-bilé ; Bo, fils de Déni-ba ; Massa dit

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(1) Massa aurait eu 67 garçons et 76 filles. Il posa en principe l'exogamie : « Personne n'épousera mes filles à moins qu'il n'habite dans la ville. » Puis, il enjoignit à ses enfants de ne jamais se marier entre hommes et femmes du clan des Massa-si. (Tra. et lég. Delafosse, p. 58.)

Bakari ; Séri-ba et Allahi, qui étaient jumeaux ; Mo-siré-bilé.

Gran dit Foro-koro (1700-1709). — D'aucuns racontent que les intrigues des Soninké et des gens du Niamala déterminèrent le *fama* de Ségou, Mamari dit Biton Kouloubali, à attaquer les Massa-si ; après un investissement qui dura trois ans, Sounsan-na dut capituler ; Foro-koro fut pris et emmené prisonnier à Ségou, où il fut mis à mort. Son crâne (1) fut conservé comme talisman par Biton.

D'autres, plus explicites, indiquent pourquoi et comment eurent lieu l'attaque et la destruction de Sounsan-na. Mamari dit Biton Kouloubali, *fama* de Ségou, avait donné sa fille, *ba* (2) Sana, en mariage à Sana-ba Mamari (3) Kouloubali, de Mourdia. Lorsque le cortège nuptial, qui conduisait *ba* Sana à son futur époux, arriva à Damfa, il fut rencontré par Foro-koro. Celui-ci s'éprit tout à coup de *ba* Sana en la voyant ; il l'enleva de vive force à son entourage et en fit sa femme.

Ce fut pour venger cet affront que Biton attaqua Sounsan-na. On raconta que pour préparer sa victoire, il usa d'artifices magiques : il envoya à Foro-koro une blouse (*dloki*) sur laquelle il avait prononcé des paroles de malédiction, en même temps qu'il la traversait en tous sens avec une aiguille et qu'un marabout procédait aux rites requis. Un dioula fut chargé de faire endosser ce fatal vêtement à Foro-koro. Ce dioula se rendit à Sounsan-na, un jour de marché ; il s'installa sur la place publique à côté d'un marchand de bière (*dlo*) très achalandé. Foro-koro, pris de boisson, ayant aperçu ce luxueux *dloki*, en demanda le prix, qui était de dix esclaves. Alors qu'il avait fait reculer d'autres acheteurs, ce prix excita, au contraire, la vanité de Foro-koro, qui l'accepta et revêtit tout aussitôt le *dloki* pour se pavaner. Le *dioula* ayant atteint son but, se soucia peu d'attendre le paiement de son dû ; redoutant les suites de l'affaire, il s'enfuit.

Le lendemain, Foro-koro, dégrisé, trouvant excessif le prix qu'il avait accepté de payer pour le dloki, fit rechercher le *dioula* et, mis en éveil par son départ précipité, redoutant quelque maléfice, il laissa le magnifique *dloki* de côté. Il était trop tard, le maléfice opéra.

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(1) De ce crâne, Mamari fit une sorte de coffret pour enfermer ses philtres, amulettes... C'était le couronnement de ses artifices magiques.

(2) Le mot *ba*, qui signifie littéralement « mère », est ici un titre de déférence.

(3) Sana-ba Mamari, signifie Mamari, fils de la femme nommée Sana-ba.

Foro-koro ne dut d'avoir la vie sauve qu'à sa femme *ba* Sana qui, très éprise de lui, s'interposa pour empêcher la colère paternelle de suivre son cours. Mais les gens de Biton s'ingénièrent à satisfaire la haine de leur maître, en prenant en défaut la vigilance de *ba* Sana. Ils marquèrent Foro-koro du tatouage spécial aux esclaves du *fama* de Ségou et, un jour que *ba* Sana s'était momentanément absentée, ils se saisirent de Foro-koro, le traînèrent dans la brousse, le mirent à mort et abandonnèrent son cadavre après lui avoir coupé la tête.

Ba Sana éprouva, dit-on, un grand chagrin de la mort de son mari et, ne voulant plus demeurer dans le voisinage de son père, elle quitta Ségou-koro avec tous ses esclaves. Elle s'installa en un lieu dénommé, à cause d'elle, *ba* Sana-bougou, dont on a fait Ségou-bougou.

Séba dit Mana (1709-1760). — La destruction de Sounsan-na obligea les Massa-si survivants et les fidèles qui leur restaient à chercher un refuge, contre la haine implacable de Biton, soit dans le Bélédougou, soit dans le Kaarta-binné (1), ou le Foula-dougou.

Parmi ces fugitifs se trouvaient trois fils de Massa : Séba dit Mana ; Bo, fils de Deni-ba ; Massa dit Bakari ; sa fille Sata ; ses quatre petits fils : Bo, fils de Sira ; Bo, fils de Moussou-koura ; Ntin ou Ntèn ou Ntégué-koro et Sarhaba.

A cette époque le Kingui était au pouvoir des Diawara et dominait tous les cantons environnants ; mais une grave scission existait dans la famille Diawara : deux partis, irréductiblement hostiles l'un à l'autre, s'y disputaient le pouvoir, celui dit des Sagoné et celui dit des Dabo-la. Le parti Dabo-la exerçait alors le commandement avec Diara pour capitale. Tourougoumbé était la place forte des Sagoné. Nioro avait pour chef le *dyawando*, Bilali et le Khagna-rémmé, Mansa Khagna.

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(1) Dans le Kaarta-binné, ils avaient pris l'hospitalité chez le chef de ce pays nommé Soroko Dionné. Ils s'établirent là, cultivèrent des champs, acquirent de la fortune, puis construisirent une enceinte fortifiée. Alors, une caravane de 120 esclaves, conduite par des gens du Fouta, étant venue à passer, les Massa-si l'hébergèrent sur l'ordre de Soroko Diouné. Ils aidèrent ou provoquèrent la révolte de ces esclaves avec lesquels ils prêtèrent serment d'alliance sur la base de l'égalité, mais avec prééminence des Massa-si et droit d'interminage. (Trad. et lég., pp. 54-55).

En vue de s'assurer un concours qu'ils estimaient précieux, les Diawara Sagoné envoyèrent aux Massa-si un émissaire, le nommé Dia Doumbé Diawara.

Les devins avaient prédit que si, à l'arrivée de Dia Doumbé auprès des Massa-si, le premier né était un garçon, ce serait un indice que la puissance Massa-si ne subissait qu'une éclipse passagère ; dans le cas contraire, la ruine des Massa-si pourrait être tenue pour irrémédiable. Or, au moment où Dia-Doumbé saluait Séba Mana, on vint annoncer à ce chef qu'une femme, nommée Ba-koro, était accouchée d'un enfant mâle, procréé par Sira Bo : cet enfant fut connu sous le nom de Ba-koro Tiéma.

Dia Doumbé s'acquitta de sa mission en conseillant à Séba Mana d'envoyer un peu d'or à Mansa Khagna et à Souroukou Diani (1) pour obtenir leur neutralité, pendant qu'il attaquerait Markha-na, village Dabo-la dans lequel, affirmait Dia Doumbé, les Massa-si trouveraient d'abondantes ressources.

Séba Mana suivit cet avis et enleva sans peine Makha-na.

Après ce succès, Séba Mana avait décidé de venir s'établir à Léé, mais Mansa Khagna, mis en goût par l'or qu'il avait reçu des Massa-si, pensa que s'il les exterminait, il ferait un riche butin : il vint dans cette intention leur barrer la route à Léwa.

Séba Mana fut vainqueur et, sur les 110 fils aînés qui, selon l'usage, montaient des chevaux blancs, il en tua 98.

Il continua sa route et vint s'établir à Guidioumé Makha-na, dans les environs de la montagne de Goumbouro, où se voit encore une noce pétrifiée (2). Là il accepta, par l'intermédiaire de Dia Doumbé, la soumission de Mansa Khagna.

Par marque de haute déférence, les Massa-si reçurent alors : de Mansa Khagna, deux chevaux ; des Diawara-Sagoné, deux chevaux ; de Souroukou Diani, du mil ; du *dyawando* Bilali, des bœufs ; des Diarisso, des poulets ; des Marka, des bandes de toile indigène. Plus tard, lors de la restauration de leur puissance, les Massa-si imposèrent ces mêmes cadeaux à titre de tribut (1).

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(1) Dénommé par d'autres traditionnistes, Soroko Diouné était chef du Kaarta-binné.

(2) La légende de la noce pétrifiée est rapportée par Raffenel, tome 1 pp. 219-220.

Séba Mana s'établit enfin à Léé. Trois fois, il y fut attaqué par les gens du Khasso et trois fois il résista victorieusement, mais sa situation n'en était pas moins des plus précaires. Pour y remédier, Déni-ba Bo (2) se mit en gage chez Suley, chef des Dénianké, pour 67 chevaux. Son griot Souleyman l'accompagna.

Déni-ba Bo tira sa subsistance de la chasse, dont il remettait le produit à une femme de caste *mabo* qui s'était attachée à sa fortune. Certain jour, cette femme lui confia qu'elle était unie à un génie, qui prenait le plus souvent l'apparence d'un cheval, petit et difforme ; elle lui présenta ce cheval, nommé Kori, et elle recommanda à Kori de veiller sur Déni-ba Bo.

Il advint qu'un jour, les Maures enlevèrent les troupeaux des Dénianké. A cette nouvelle, le tambour de guerre (*tabala*) réunit tous les hommes qui, sans perdre de temps, s'élancèrent sur les traces des ravisseurs. A ce moment, Déni-ba Bo était à la chasse ; quand il revint, mis au courant de l'événement, il demanda à Suley Ndyaye (3) de rejoindre les poursuivants. Suley accepta et lui permit de faire choix d'un cheval. Déni-ba Bo choisit Kori et, malgré que l'on se gaussât de lui, il partit monté sur sa vilaine petite bête.

Chemin faisant, Kori dit : « Nous allons rencontrer nos « guerriers battus par les Maures, ils voudront te faire « retourner, mais ne les écoute pas. Ordonne à ton griot « de suivre la trace des bœufs et marche jusqu'au campe- « ment des Maures ; là, tu enverras ton griot à l'opposé « du point où tu te trouveras et, à un signal convenu, « tirez l'un et l'autre des coups de fusil : les Maures se « croiront cernés et se sauveront. »

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(1) « A une époque qui semble antérieure à Séba Mana, les Massa-si « quittèrent le Kaarta pour aller au village de Guémou où on les redou- « tait « : les Dyawara leur donnèrent en cadeau sept jolies femmes et sept « chevaux de race ; les Dyawando, trois belles génisses ; les Touré, des « grains et des poules. Ensuite, ils vinrent dans le Guidioumé avec, à leur « tête, Séba-Mana : les gens du Guidioumé leur donnèrent 2.000 mesures « de grain ; ceux du Diafounou, un cheval de race et 500 mesures de « grain. Ensuite, ils allèrent à Mounia (Diafounou) au nord de Koniakari, « et entrèrent en guerre avec les gens du Khasso. » (Trad. et lég., p. 55).

(2) Dans la version rapportée par M. Delafosse, ce serait un certain Mansa Bakari (peut-être Massa Bakari) qui aurait été envoyé au Fouta avec de l'or pour en ramener une armée de secours.

(3) Chef des Denianké.

Les choses se passèrent comme Kori l'avait prédit : sur le chemin, les guerriers s'efforcèrent à déterminer Déni-ba Bo à rétrograder, mais il résista et, arrivé au camp des Maures, mit à exécution le stratagème imaginé par Kori. Le succès fut complet et les Maures s'étant enfui, Déni-ba Bo rassembla facilement les troupeaux volés, qu'il reconduisit au village.

En récompense de ce brillant fait d'armes, les femmes des Dénianké décidèrent de racheter Déni-ba Bo et offrirent, dans ce but, tous leurs bijoux. Mais Suley refusa, il préféra libérer son captif pour dette en lui demandant en retour de se lier par le serment du sang ; il l'autorisa, en outre, à prendre dans ses biens ce qui lui conviendrait : à l'instigation de la femme *mabo*, Déni-bo Bo demanda son ami Kori et les insignes royaux consistant en un pantalon, une blouse, un bonnet et un turban rouges, et une hache en cuivre.

Devenu libre, Déni-ba Bo partit aussitôt pour rejoindre son frère Séba Mana, qu'il trouva encore tout ému dela rencontre qu'il avait eue le matin même avec les Khassonké, dont la colonne comptait 60 « pieds ». Montant à cheval, Séba Mana voulut montrer à son frère le champ de bataille. Arrivés à un petit ruisseau, les chevaux franchirent facilement cet obstacle, mais Séba Mana, qui était très corpulent, se blessa contre le pommeau de la selle ; secouru aussitôt par Béni-ba Bo, il put regagner son logis mais tomba gravement malade et mourut trois mois après (1).

Déni-ba Bo (1760-1780). — L'armée des Massa-si était encore bien faible, puisqu'au lieu de 4 « pieds » elle n'en comptait alors que 2 ; cependant, Déni-ba Bo résolut de regagné le pays de ses pères : « J'entends, disait-il, m'affranchir des *n ti de* et des *n kho le* (2). » Il fit piler des cauris, en saupoudra le corps de Séba Mana, qu'il fit placer dans une peau de bœuf et mettre sur un brancard. Il partit et parvint ainsi à Guémou, où il fit procéder à l'enterrement de Séba Mana.

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(1) Séba Mana avait établi une méthode spéciale d'entraînement physique pour les jeunes garçons massa-si. Depuis l'époque du sevrage jusque vers l'âge de douze ans, ils étaient élevés à part, soumis à un régime alimentaire abondant, surtout en viande, qu'ils mangeaint à moitié crue. Ils s'entraînaient à la lutte. Des esclaves les baignaient matin et soir. A l'âge de douze ans, chacun recevait du *fama* : un vêtement complet, un cheval de race, un harnachement et un palefrenier ; il retournait alors chez son père et se trouvait ainsi prêt à grossir, le cas échéant, les rangs des recrues militaires.

(2) *N ti de* signifie « je dis » en soninké, et *n kho le* en est l'équivalent khassonké : Déni-ba Bo voulait donc dire qu'il entendait s'affranchir des Soninké et des Khassonké.

Puis il marcha contre les Bambara du Niamala (environs de Mourdia) et, les ayant battus, il poursuivit une vigoureuse offensive contre tous les ennemis de sa famille : à Djigué, il s'attaqua à Tiéma Dembélé, qui revenait d'une colonne contre Ségou : il prit Djigué et tua Tiéma. Il se retourna, alors, contre son oncle Sama Kouloubali et le tua à Kolo. En trois ans, il prit et pilla 60 villages : dans chaque village, il épuisait les victuailles, réduisait la population en captivité et circoncisait les jeunes gens, qu'il incorporait ensuite à son armée.

Comme ses prédécesseurs, il guerroya contre les Khassonké : il mit le siège devant leur capitale, Koniakari, mais il fut vaincu. Ne voulant pas subir une défaite inutile, il résolut de se faire tuer afin que les siens puissent réaliser la prophétie qui affirmait que le pays où il mourrait tomberait sous la domination massa-si. Ayant enlevé la selle de son cheval, il la posa à terre et s'y assit, dans l'attente que les premiers Khassonké qui l'apercevraient ne manqueraient pas de le mettre à mort. Il fut découvert par trois cordonniers, qui le conduisirent à Demba Séga, chef des Khassonké.

Celui-ci, connaissant la prophétie, ne voulait pas mettre à mort le prisonnier ; il le confia à ses familiers. Mais Madi, fils de Demba Séga, de concert avec les Diawara Dabola et des Bambara du Niamala, le tua clandestinement.

Il avait régné vingt ans.

Sira Bo (1780-1789). — Il fixa sa résidence à Guémou (au sud-ouest de Nioro) et continua à poursuivre le rétablissement de l'hégémonie massa-si.

Durant ses neuf ans de commandement, il fit de fructueuses opérations de guerre : il prit Kita, le pays du Ba-fing, celui de Ménen et maintint, avec des chances diverses, la lutte contre le Khasso. Il s'empara d'une partie du Bélédougou, occupa le Guidioumé et le Bakhounou.

Déssé-koro (1789-1802). — Suivant une tradition, Déssé aurait été capturé en même temps que Foro-koro et emmené, avec lui, à Ségou, où il aurait été marqué du tatouage (1) spécial aux esclaves des Kouloubali du Ségou. A la mort de Séba Mana, le commandement revenait, normalement, à Déssé, mais en raison de l'incertitude de son existence, le pouvoir fut offert à Sira Bo. D'abord, Sira Bo refusa, puis comme son frère Mo-siré prêta serment que, même au cas de retour de Déssé, le pouvoir ne lui serait pas retiré, Sira Bo accepta. Quand il revint dix ans après, Déssé, respectueux de la parole donnée par Mo-siré, attendit la mort de Sira Bo pour prendre le commandement.

Quoi qu'il en soit, à la faveur des querelles intestines qui agitèrent le pays de Ségou à la mort de Ngolo Dyara, Déssé s'empara de Niamina et l'on dit qu'une petite forêt de baobabs surgit ultérieurement à l'endroit où ses troupes campèrent.

Ma-n-son, délivré de ses plus graves préoccupations par sa victoire sur Nyana-n-koro, impatient de venger la prise de Niamina (2), se tourna contre Déssé. Il vint mettre le siège devant Guémou (3), le 22 février 1796, comme nous l'apprend Mungo Park. Déssé s'enfuit par Dioka sur Tango.

Après avoir pillé et détruit Guémou, Ma-n-son vint attaquer Tango ; Dessé s'enfuit de nouveau et vint se fortifier à Guidingouma, dans le Guidimaka. Ma-n-son cerna la place, espérant la prendre par la famine, mais le temps passa sans que ce but put être atteint et, sentant venir la lassitude, mauvaise conseillère pour ses troupes mal ravitaillées, il fit appel à Ali, chef des Oulad Mbarek. Ali ne bougea pas. Alors, Ma-n-son se tourna contre cet auxiliaire récalcitrant, il marcha sur Diara ; mais, en route, ayant appris, à Nioro, le départ des Oulad Mbarek pour le Nord, il renonça à les poursuivre et revint à Ségou.

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(1) Ce tatouage bien connu consiste en trois entailles qui vont, de chaque côté de la figure, depuis la tempe jusqu'au maxillaire inférieur, en passant devant l'oreille.

(2) Ce qui se passa entre Déssé et les gens de Ségou demeure très confus. Certains racontent que, sollicité par Nyana-n-koro, Déssé vint à Niamina et mit à son concours, comme première condition, que le crâne de Forokoro lui serait rendu. En possession de cette relique, il s'en retourna au Kaarta, promettant de revenir en temps opportun. En effet, il revint, campa en face de Ségou, après la défaite et la mort de Nyana-n-koro, et fit comprendre à Ma-n-son que lui, Ma-n-son, lui était redevable, à lui Déssé, de son succès en raison de son abstention à porter secours à Nyana-n-koro.

Alors, Ma-n-son aurait envoyé à Déssé un défi. Un messager de Ma-n-son se serait présenté à Déssé porteur d'une houe (*daba*), d'une entrave et d'un mors, en lui disant de choisir. Suivant ce symbolisme, s'il retenait la houe : Déssé déclarait renoncer aux entreprises de guerre ; en acceptant l'entrave, il se soumettait à l'autorité de Ma-n-son ; enfin, s'il gardait le mors, il affirmait sa volonté de continuer son entreprise de domination. Et Déssé choisit le mors, ce qui provoqua l'attaque de Guémou par Manson.

(3) Suivant une autre tradition, il se borna à piller le Bélédougou, tandis que dans le même temps, un de ses frères ravageait la rive gauche du Niger, de Niamina à Bammako, après quoi Ma-n-son rentra à Ségou.

Ce fut une nouvelle affaire qui opposa de nouveau Déssé et Ma-n-son. Un village bambara de la rive gauche protégé par les gens de Ségou, eut ses bœufs enlevés par les Maures. Ces bœufs furent vendus à des gens de Kaarta, auxquels les pillés les réclamèrent en vain. Déssé mis en cause, soutint ses gens et Ma'n-son, ayant agit pareillement pour ses sujets, porta la guerre dans le Kaarta.

Délivré de son ennemi, Déssé revint à Guémou et, comme cette cité était détruite, il s'installa non loin, à Dioka, qu'il fortifia. Peu après, une importante colonne d'esclaves étant survenue, il agit envers les caravaniers comme avait agi autrefois son grand-père Massa et se trouva de la sorte à la tête d'une nouvelle bande de pillards, que ses fidèles encadrèrent.

Il poursuivit ses incursions dans les pays voisins jusqu'à sa mort.

Ntin-Koro (1802-1811). — Au cours de ses neufs années de commandement, ce nouveau chef des Massa-si porta tout son effort contre les Kagoro, qu'il subjugua ; il fit aussi quelques razzias heureuses dans le Bambouc.

Sara-ba (1811-1815). — Passa ses quatre années de commandement en pillage dans le Bélédougou, le Birgo et le Mandé.

Moussou-koura Bo (1815-1818). — Fut l'ennemi implacable des Khassonké, ce qui lui valut le surnom de *Fula-fo Bo* (*Bo*, tueur de Peuls). Grâce aux intrigues de Kombossé Saféré, chef du Séro, il fut le maître de la situation. Après avoir pris Koniakari et chassé les chefs du Khasso, il se trouva souverain du Khasso de la rive droite, dont il confia le commandement à l'un de ses esclaves nommé Fa-digui.

Bo-dyan Mori-ba (1818-1835). — Fixa sa résidence à Yelimané.

Après avoir ramené Fa-digui à l'obéissance, il razzia, de concert avec le chef du Bondou, les villages du Gadiaga, du Damga, du Saloum, du Bambouc. Il se trouva ainsi amené à faire la paix avec le chef du Khasso, qui était l'allié de celui du Bondou.

Nyaralen Gran (1835-1844). — Nous n'avons aucun détail sur ce règne de neuf ans.

Mamari kan-dyan (1844-1854). — Quitta Yélimané pour Khondié, puis s'installa à Nioro. Il commandait les Massa-si quand survint El Hadj Omar. Antérieurement à cette arrivée, il avait chassé les Diawara de Nioro, où il s'était installé ; mais il avait dû guerroyer sept années durant contre ces mêmes Diawara et son autorité paraissait enfin assurée quand survint le prophète foutanké. Il ne put lui tenir tête, il tomba entre ses mains et eut d'abord la vie sauve, mais fut ensuite mis à mort, ainsi qu'il sera rapporté plus loin (voir à l'*Islam*).

Les Massa-si, qui échappèrent à El Hadj Omar, se réfugièrent à Bangassi (Foula-dougou), où ils s'établirent sous le commandement de leur chef, Diringa Mori, qui mourut seize ans après.

Sous Bousseï, qui succéda à Diringa Mori, les Massa-si se partagèrent en deux fractions : l'une s'établit à Gué mou–koura (Kaarta–binné) ; l'autre émigra à Diani (Gadiaga).

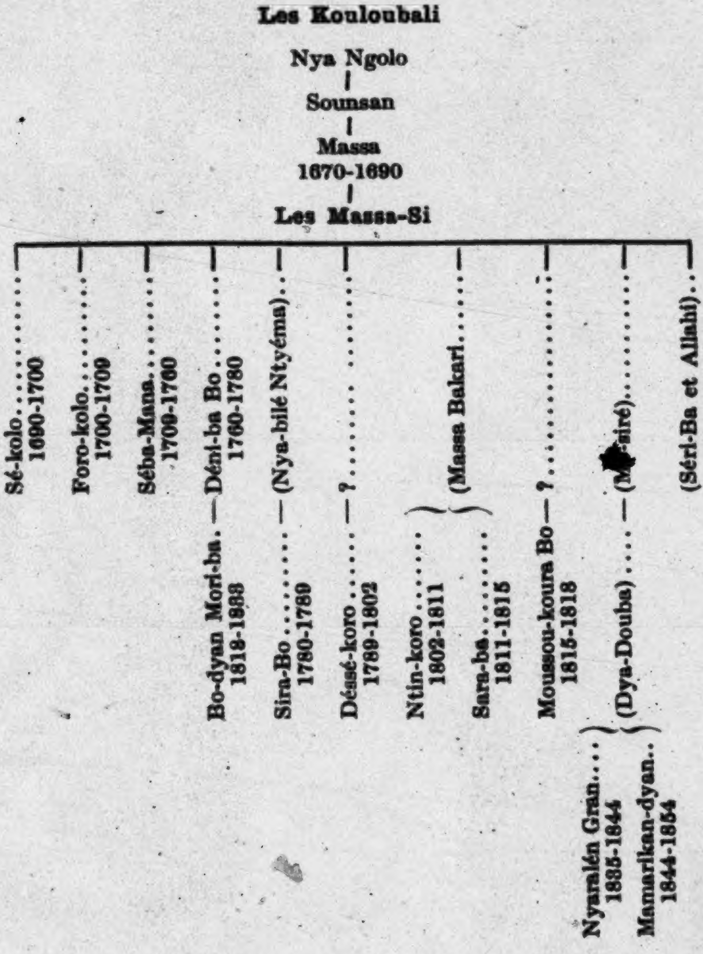
A la mort de Bousseï, nouvelles émigrations : Modi Siré, fils de Gran, s'établit d'abord à Fata-fin, puis à Félé-ba, villages proches de Badoumké ; une autre fraction gagne le Bondou et s'installe au village de Kidira.

Dama, successeur de Bousseï, abandonna Kidira, vint à Goré, près Daramané, puis à Guémou, au sud de Diani (Gadiaga) : là, il répartit les Massa-si en sept villages : Guémou, Dyidyan, Dyané-khassé, Taroutallah, Madi-na, Nyaralén Dyogou, Moussa Makhana.

Après la prise de Nioro par les Français, Dama, qui s'était toujours montré l'adversaire des « gens du Fouta », fut appelé dans le Kaarta par le colonel Archinard. Il s'établit à Farabougou et y mourut. A la prise de Ségou par les Français, Bo-dyan, fils de Dama, fut choisi par nous pour commander à Ségou.

Dama eut pour successeur, à la tête des Massa-si, Allahi, qui ne commanda que pendant neuf mois et eut pour successeurs Mori-ba, puis Gossi ; ce dernier quitta Fara-bougou pour Lambé, puis Diabè.

SYPNOTIQUE DES CHEFS DU CLAN DU KAARTA


Les Kouloubali
Nya Ngolo
Sounsan
Massa
1670-1690
Les Massa-Si
Sé-kolo......... 1690-1700
Foro-kolo......... 1700-1709
Séba-Mana......... 1709-1760
Déni-ba Bo......... 1760-1780
Bo-dyan Mori-ba. 1818-1833
(Nya-bilé Ntyéma)..
Sira-Bo......... 1780-1789
?.........
Déssé-koro......... 1789-1802
(Massa Bakari.........
Ntin-koro......... 1802-1811
Sara-ba......... 1811-1815
?.........
Moussou-koura Bo 1815-1818
(M[illegible]siré)..........
(Dya-Douba).....
Nyaralén Gran.... 1835-1844
Mamarikan-dyan.. 1844-1854
(Séri-Ba et Allahi)..

CHAPITRE II

[p.119]

Les Concepts

1. Croyances

Tout comme nous-mêmes, le Bambara a la perception de la vie intérieure et il la traduit dans son langage par des expressions imagées qui localisent, en quelque sorte, ses sensations.

L'œil, dont le cristal reflète tout ce qui se passe autour de nous, est, pour le Bambara, comme le miroir de la vie intérieure : être triste, *nye na-fin*, c'est avoir l'œil sombre; être gai, *nye na-dye*, c'est avoir l'œil clair ; être abattu, *nye na-koro* : c'est avoir l'œil vieilli.

La tête est le siège de la décision, de la volonté, de l'orgueil. Etre actif, *kun' kene*, c'est avoir la tête ardente ; être tenace, *kun' gwele*, c'est avoir la tête dure.

Dans le cœur est concentré toute la vie affective : celui qui a de bons sentiments, *a son'ka nyi* : son cœur est bon ; celui qui est méchant, *a son' ka dyugu* : son cœur est mauvais ; plus généralement, tout ce qui agit en nous, c'est le dedans (*kono*), *a be n-kono* littéralement ; « c'est en moi » signifie : je pense, j'ai l'intention de...

Il est remarquable que la vie réside plus spécialement dans deux organes, le cœur et le foie, car le serment solennel, chez les Bambara, comporte toujours la phrase : *i ka n son' ni m bien' ta* : « prends mon cœur et mon foie », pour dire : détruis-moi, anéantis-moi en m'enlevant ces deux nœuds de vie.

A ces expressions imagées, qui ont des analogies dans toutes les langues, se joignent des termes abstraits servant à exprimer tout ce que nous résumons dans les mots « vie », « âme » : en bambara, *ni* c'est la vie physique, caractérisée par le souffle respiratoire (*ni*), qui commence et finit avec elle ; *dusu*, c'est la vie affective, ou morale ; *si*, c'est la durée (durer dans le sens de vivre, et aussi de devenir).

Le Bambara ne conçoit pas l'ombre projetée par le corps comme due à une interception de la lumière par ce corps : il la considère comme un fluide émané du corps lui-même et qui se manifeste tant par cette ombre, que l'on observe au soleil ou à une vive clarté, que par l'image qui surgit lorsque le corps est placé devant une surface réfléchissante. Ce fluide, c'est le *dya*.

Le *dya* jouit de la faculté d'abandonner le corps endormi pour aller vagabonder où bon lui semble et le spectacle de ses divagations, dont le corps demeure témoin, constitue le rêve (*sugo*). Le rêve est une manière de réalité, c'est une forme de la vie propre du *dya* dans la compagnie des *dya* ses semblables. Dans la veille, le *dya* accompagne les actions du corps ; dans le sommeil, le corps subit les ébats du *dya*, car il n'est pas douteux que le *dya* a la prédominence sur le corps qu'il habite : réveiller quelqu'un brusquement est un acte quasi–criminel parce que si, à ce moment, son *dya* est absent, ce rappel trop brusque peut rompre le lien qui unit le corps et le *dya*, et cette rupture (*sa*) c'est la mort (*sa*). D'ailleurs, le corps n'a pas qu'un vague souvenir des pérégrinations de son *dya*, il en éprouve aussi les conséquences : au réveil, il est fatigué des courses folles, des équipées fantastiques, et se ressent des actions bonnes ou mauvaises accomplies par son *dya*.

En définitive, ce *dya* est quelque chose d'analogue à ce que certains, parmi les Européens, appellent le double.

De plus, il semble qu'au *dya* est dévolu le rôle principal dans ce « retour » (*sagi*), qui constitue la reviviscence et qui est une des plus fermes croyances des Bambara. Après la mort, le *dya* se réincarne dans la même famille ; des Bambara affirment avoir de ce fait des preuves certaines : tel nouveau-né présente tel détail anatomique caractéristique de tel défunt, n'est-ce pas la preuve que ce défunt a voulu manifester par là sa réincarnation ? Au corps de l'enfant qui meurt en bas âge, l'on fait une marque ou une mutilation déterminée — fracture d'un doigt, par exemple,

— si, ultérieurement, naît dans cette famille un enfant qui offre une déformation rappelant celle faite au petit cadavre, l'on conclut au « retour » du petit défunt, *a sagira* : « il est revenu ».

L'on admet aussi que le mort se réincarne loin des siens ; partout, en pays bambara, se colportent des histoires de défunts qui, plus ou moins longtemps après leur décès et plus ou moins loin du lien de ce décès, ont été vus vivant une nouvelle vie.

Le *dya* est donc comme l'essence de l'individualité et le corps, son enveloppe matérielle, revêt des formes en quelque manière caractéristique de ce *dya*.

Le *dya* est un fluide qui a sa nature propre : il est des sorciers qui sont réputés connaître les moyens de s'emparer du *dya*, pour le faire servir, notamment, à confectionner des idoles qui parlent.

A ces croyances s'ajoute celle qu'une partie du *dya* est indestructible, parce que formée par cet autre fluide répandu dans la nature entière et que les Bambara appellent *nyama*.

Le *nyama* n'a pas de forme, mais il garde de son incarnation comme une identité, si bien que le nom porté par l'individu qu'animait ce *nyama*, a pour ce dernier un attrait irrésistible qui l'oblige à obéir à quiconque sait utiliser ce penchant pour le contraindre à exécuter ses volontés. Après la mort, le *nyama* demeure imprégné des contingences humaines et continue à se comporter, à certains égards, comme pendant la vie du corps. Ses manifestations sont évidentes, pour le Bambara, dans le domaine de la vengeance : le *nyama* de l'ancêtre veille tout particulièrement au respect des décisions que cet ancêtre a prises et il frappe impitoyablement ceux qui les transgressent ; c'est le *nyama* du *fa* (père de famille, patriarche...) qui tourmente le maudit ; c'est le *nyama* de la victime qui poursuit le meurtrier ; c'est le *nyama* de tout ce qui est interdit qui frappe l'impie...

D'où il résulte que, pour le Bambara, l'être humain se compose d'un corps charnel (*su*) servant d'enveloppe (*fure*) à un corps fluidique (*dya*) dont l'essence subtile (*nyama*) n'est qu'une parcelle de l'énergie universelle éparse dans toute la nature.

Ce qui vient d'être dit de l'homme, le Bambara le pense, dans une certaine mesure, de tout ce qui l'entoure. Cependant, il ne faut pas se hâter d'en conclure qu'il voit tout comme constitué exactement à son image. Pour exprimer des idées abstraites, il emploie des termes concrets qui font illusion. Sans aucun doute, le Bambara se différencie de l'animal, qu'il ne confond pas avec le minéral ou le végétal.

D'ailleurs, ce sont là des questions qu'il ne se pose pas, qu'il n'a pas abordé, en tout cas, de manière à en présenter une synthèse, même fragmentaire, mais logique. Ses paroles, ses actes nous sont des indices, quelquefois des guides, mais combien incertains ou fallacieux ! et dans l'observation des faits courants, que de contradictions, au moins apparentes. Pourtant, les grandes lignes qui précèdent sont comme le fond du dogme bambara, puisque tout se passe en fait comme si le Bambara se conduisait d'après ces principes.

Ceci étant, la vie résulte de l'union des deux parties du corps, la mort est une conséquence de leur séparation. D'où proviennent ces deux éléments, qu'est-ce qui en détermine l'union ? Aucune réponse n'est possible. Le Bambara déclare seulement, que certains individus sont des réincarnés ; les précautions prises, pendant la gestation et l'accouchement, montrent que l'enfantement est un de ces mystères contre lesquels on se protège par les interdits. Les propos fréquents, et qui trouvent facilement créance, que des femmes ont donné naissance à des monstres et d'ordinaire à des animaux, témoignent des contingences qui, dans l'esprit des Bambara, existent entre toutes les créatures. Mais rien de précis n'est dit sur ce qui précède et détermine la venue en ce monde.

Il y a là un secret qui ne laisse évidemment pas le Bambara indifférent : cela se voit à ce que la femme — par qui nous accédons à la vie — est tenue au moins pour suspecte, tant par suite du flux menstruel, qui la rend impure, que par l'impénétrable travail qui s'accomplit en elle lorsqu'elle enfante (1). Cette suspicion dégénère couramment en mésestime, mépris, haine quand la femme est faible — ce qui est le cas habituel, — et se change, par contre, en une crainte superstitieuse dès qu'elle s'adonne aux pratiques occultes et se montre de taille à jouer efficacement de la sorcellerie, dans laquelle nombre de vieilles femmes sont réputées fort expertes.

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(1) Elle est d'ailleurs susceptible d'être possédée d'une manière continue par un esprit (voir l'histoire des Déni-bo Ba, p. 112). C'est pourquoi lorsqu'une femme devient veuve plusieurs fois elle est suspectée d'être possédée par un esprit jaloux qui tue ses maris et il n'est pas rare qu'elle soit tenue pour sorcière.

Dans ce même ordre d'idée, il est à remarquer que le nouveau-né, lui aussi, est mis en observation : pendant les sept jours qui suivent sa naissance, il n'est point agrégé à la famille et l'on prétend que, durant cette période, il est susceptible de se métamorphoser si sa mère ne veille étroitement sur lui.

Quant à la vie, par l'étude des institutions, nous verrons comment le Bambara la conçoit et l'organise.

En ce qui concerne la mort, les funérailles nous révéleront l'idée que s'en fait le Bambara.

Et après la mort ?

Les Latins distinguaient parmi les esprits : les Mânes ou dieux bons (*dii manes*) et les Lémures ou esprits du mal, s'intéressant les uns et les autres à la famille.

Les Bambara ont des concepts analogues.

Excorporée, l'âme du patriarche va rejoindre les âmes excorporées de ses ancêtres, elle retrouve ainsi une famille spirituelle, protectrice de la famille terrestre.

Il est constant que les Mânes (*fa su-w*) aiment fréquenter les lieux où, durant la vie, leurs corps ont habité : c'est pourquoi l'on garde ce qui a appartenu en propre au défunt ; pourquoi celui-ci est inhumé dans le voisinage de sa maison et quelquefois dans le sol de sa propre case ; pourquoi certains conservaient pieusement, pour l'honorer, le crâne du décédé.

La case d'entrée (*blon'*) est le lieu ordinaire de l'autel des ancêtres et des dieux familiaux. L'autel des ancêtres consiste tantôt en une planchette avec masque humain, nommé *kara*, tantôt en un amas de terre façonné pour représenter vaguement un être humain. Les Mânes sont censés venir dans ces objets pour recevoir les offrandes et les sacrifices dont on les honore.

L'on admet parfois que, dans le monde des Mânes, la lumière et la chaleur font défaut, mais, par ailleurs, chacun y continue l'existence qu'il menait parmi nous avec les mêmes passions, les mêmes préférences, les mêmes rancunes. Les faibles y végètent dans la pauvreté et dans l'oubli ; les puissants, chefs, patriarches, voyants, y sont, au contraire, actifs, intrigants et passionnés pour les intérêts de leurs familles terrestres ; ils vivent au milieu des leurs, excorporés comme eux, tout comme vivent leurs parents terrestres : néanmoins, tous ont des pouvoirs supérieurs à ceux de l'homme sur les vents, la pluie, la culture, le gibier, en somme sur tout ce qui constitue le monde visible pour nous. Tous peuvent se manifester aux vivants et ils aiment, alors, se choisir un lieu où leur présence et leur action se révèlent plus efficaces, où les offrandes leur sont plus agréables : c'est un bosquet, une colline, une source, un tombeau...

Par une activité spéciale, certains Mânes atteignent, croit-on, une situation de plus en plus éminente dans le monde invisible, jusqu'à devenir de purs esprits.

Malheur à qui ne sait pas maintenir d'affectueux rapports avec ses Mânes ! malheur à qui néglige les morts ! De cette négligence les morts souffrent, se montrent irrités et se vengent. De là, ces apparitions effrayantes de fantômes qui viennent affoler l'impie ; de là, la possession qui trouble ses facultés au point d'en faire un être dangereux pour tous et que, seuls, les exorcistes peuvent rendre à son état normal.

Ici apparaissent les analogues des Lémures, car ces Mânes délaissés se laissent capter par les artifices des sorciers, dont ils exécutent alors tous les desseins. D'ailleurs, ceux qui, dans la vie terrestre, ont été repoussés par la société parce que malfaisants pour elle, sorciers, criminels, maudits..., ont de même leurs thuriféraires, auxquels ils prêtent l'aide de leur puissance surnaturelle.

Cette survie des bons et des mauvais a-t-elle un but, une durée, et lesquels ? Croit-on à l'immortalité, à l'éternité ? Ces questions que, bien entendu, le Bambara ne se pose pas, ne paraissent pas trouver de réponses dans les pratiques indigènes. La croyance certaine est celle à une survie que le Bambara semble incapable de concevoir et d'aménager autrement que par analogie à la vie ordinaire, et les termes employés, en parlant de cet autre monde, ne font qu'accentuer la ressemblance : les morts mangent, boivent, s'habillent, se parent..., en définitive se comportent comme l'homme.

Tous les peuples usent ou ont usé de ce langage en vue d'exprimer un concept qui, par sa nature, échappe à une telle concrétisation. Il est peut-être, donc, prématuré de conclure que le Bambara est inapte à concevoir un monde strictement immatériel pour ses Mânes : il est seulement dans l'impossibilité actuelle d'en donner une peinture dégagée des termes concrets dont il fait habituellement usage. Toutefois, d'une manière générale, il convient de remarquer que le Bambara ne s'ingénie pas à chercher le pourquoi et le comment des choses, en dehors de ce qu'il voit ou connaît : la réalité le presse et le détermine ; il se décide sous l'impulsion du moment et aussi sous l'influence d'un empirisme séculaire qui est la base de la coutume.

Parmi les âmes excorporées, il en est, avons-nous dit, qui, par un effort propre, s'élèvent à une situation éminente par où elles accèdent au monde des esprits. Il y a, en effet, des esprits qui n'ont rien de l'homme. Quelles en sont l'origine et la nature ? D'eux, le Bambara dit : *ma si fa do* = « c'est une manière de personne ». Ici, encore, l'expression trahit la pensée : outre que le vocabulaire ne permet pas d'exprimer un immatériel pur, le Bambara a une tendance incoercible à se prendre toujours lui-même comme terme de comparaison ; pour lui, le monde des esprits est, comme celui des Mânes, analogue au nôtre. Mais la façon dont il parle des esprits contredit ses paroles : l'esprit est invisible, sans corps matériel ; s'il apparaît, c'est sous les formes les plus diverses qu'il emprunte et pour peu de temps ; de lui l'on dit fréquemment : c'est un « vent », pour dire c'est un « fluide » ; c'est aussi une substance impondérable, subtile au point de s'insinuer partout, voire de s'introduire dans le corps de l'homme vivant pour y accomplir toute sorte de fantaisies (1). La plupart des esprits demeurent, pour le Bambara, dans ce vague et cette inconsistance. Seuls les événements, les circonstances ou la volonté de l'indigène en arrachent quelques-uns à ce chaos et les transportent sur la scène du monde (2) ; nous en reparlerons au chapitre des confréries.

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(1) Voir chapitre VII.

(2) En laissant à ces termes et autres analogues une même signification de forces surnaturelles.

Les esprits, les génies, les dieux (1) connus des Bambara peuvent être répartis en trois classes :

D'abord, les Mânes devenus des esprits. Il n'est pas rare, alors, qu'il s'agisse d'esprits errants, vagabonds et d'humeur maligne : c'est pourquoi le mot *nyama*, dont nous avons parlé, s'emploie avec une signification souvent péjorative. Peut-être, aussi, conçoit-on — toujours par analogie — que parmi les Mânes, il en est qui sont susceptibles de se perfectionner dans le mal au point de devenir de vrais esprits du mal, tout comme d'autres deviennent des esprits sinon parfaitement bons, au moins indifférents.

Une deuxième classe comprend les génies du lieu, ou dieux du sol = *nyana dugu-da-siri*. Il n'est aucun lieu habité, cultivé, fréquenté, ou au contraire isolé, désert, qui n'ait son génie. Mais seuls certains d'entre eux ont un culte organisé. Ces génies sont généralement les protecteurs des gens qui habitent, cultivent, fréquentent ou visitent les lieux en question, moyennant d'être honorés à leur convenance. Souvent ils révèlent d'eux-mêmes leur présence en entrant directement en relation avec celui qui se présente dans le voisinage de leur demeure et lui indiquent comment ils veulent être honorés pour accorder leur protection (2) ; d'autrefois, ils ne sont découverts que par le « voyant ». Quoi qu'il en soit, le génie d'un lieu a la pleine possession de ce qui est dans ce lieu et l'homme ne peut tirer quoi que ce soit de ce lieu que conformément au pacte intervenu entre le génie et lui : en principe, il n'a qu'un droit de simple jouissance consistant en un usufruit, différent et plus étendu que celui de notre droit.

Une troisième classe renferme la foule immense des génies de toute sorte confondus sous l'appellation vague et générale de *nyana* (3).

L'on peut répartir les *nyana* en deux catégories : les vagabonds, les isolés, ceux pour lesquels aucun culte permanent ou précis n'est organisé. Ils gîtent un peu partout : d'aucuns ont une préférence marquée pour le voisinage de l'homme, les carrefours, les bifurcations de sentiers, les abords des puits, les points d'eau. Ils vaguent aussi, invisibles et facétieux, dans les cours des maisons où, la nuit, ils aiment venir rôder autour des poteries de cuisine, dans lesquelles ils déposent, prétend-on, des immondices, si l'on n'a eu soin de retourner ces ustensiles l'orifice contre le sol. L'on ajoute que l'imprudente qui ferait usage d'un vase dans lequel l'un de ces esprits vagabonds aurait uriné, mettrait au monde un sorcier.

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(1) Cf. p. 111 la tradition concernant le cheval Kori époux d'une femme *mabo*.

(2) Voir le génie qui se révèle à Kolé (p. 46).

(3) On entend aussi *nyena* : ce terme est-il une corruption de l'arabe djinn, je ne le pense pas. D'abord, ce n'est pas l'Islam qui a introduit ce concept chez les Bambara, il est commun à tous les Noirs. De plus, le mot *nyana* se rattache à une racine *nya* ayant le sens de « puissant », « seigneur », « maitre », et *nyena* n'est qu'une variante dialectale.

D'autres de ces esprits sans culte pullulent dans la campagne et sont la terreur des voyageurs (1). Qui n'a entendu parler du *Wokolo* : petit chasseur nain, noir et velu, qui se plaît dans les arbres, au bord des sentiers, et aussi dans les broussailles, au bord des ruisseaux ; d'autres affirment qu'il affectionne résider dans le *si* (*Bassia Parkii*), que nous appelons arbre à beurre ou karité. Toujours est-il que l'on n'échappe à ses flèches acérées qu'en le saluant avec respect dès qu'on l'aperçoit, ou bien, s'il est désarmé, le mieux est de se jeter sur lui en le frappant si précipitamment qu'il ne puisse compter les coups, et de se sauver alors qu'il est encore tout étourdi.

La seconde catégorie de *nyana* compte des esprits très divers mais tous pourvus d'un culte. Les manifestations extérieures de ce culte ont frappé quiconque a voyagé dans ces pays ; sous leur diversité apparente, l'on peut reconnaître des traits généraux : il s'agit de pratiques magiques, visant à asservir des esprits à la volonté de l'homme. Par ce moyen, l'homme prétend avoir à sa disposition des forces surnaturelles de même nature que celles dont il redoute l'action envers lui : il puise dans l'invisible des armes pour se défendre et attaquer. Toutefois, il est constant que ces pratiques ne doivent point sortir de certaines limites, d'ailleurs imprécises, pour demeurer licites ; au delà, c'est la magie illicite ou sorcellerie, particulièrement redoutée, et, quand faire se peur, férocement punie (2).

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(1) Ils peuvent d'ailleurs emprunter toutes les formes qu'il leur plaît et se mêler à la vie des hommes sous les apparences les plus diverses : voir p. 112 le cheval Kori.

(2) Voir chapitre VII à propos des *suba*.

En réalité, l'ensemble de ces faits est extrêmement touffu : le licite et l'illicite s'enchevêtrent au point de ne pouvoir être séparés ; cependant, il est des cas très nets où cette distinction apparaît sans ambiguité, tandis qu'entre les faits strictement magiques ou de sorcellerie pure, toutes les nuances existent.

Les *nyana* ont, en principe, tous les pouvoirs ; ils sont d'autant mieux honorés qu'ils les manifestent avec plus de violence ; en général, c'est le côté malfaisant de leur manière d'être qui assure leur réputation ; les hommages leur viennent donc bien plus par la crainte et la terreur qu'ils inspirent, que par la bonté qu'on leur attribuerait. Ce que le Bambara recherche en eux, c'est le *dyigi-seme* = « le maître puissant », qui le protège contre tout et tous et, en cas de besoin, vient à son aide contre ses ennemis, ou lui donne le moyen de réussir un mauvais coup.

La croyance à un maître de l'univers existe chez les Bambara, mais cette croyance a emprunté à l'Islam une précision que le fond indigène paraît ignorer. En tout cas, il n'y a pas pour Dieu un mot bambara autre que celui introduit par l'Islam : Allah, prononcé *Ngala*. Cette absence de nom bambara peut d'ailleurs s'expliquer par la coutume qui interdit de prononcer le nom des puissants, dans la crainte de provoquer leur colère.

Il n'y a pas d'esprit supérieur du mal : Seïtane est également d'introduction musulmane. Le Bambara ne hiérarchise pas les esprits.

Enfin, l'on doit conclure, de très nombreuses pratiques magiques, à la croyance d'une sorte d'énergie universelle, diffuse par nature et que, par des moyens appropriés, l'on peut capter pour s'en servir comme l'on veut. Certains génies ou dieux ne sont que de simples émanations de cette force invisible, impondérable, active, qu'aucun obstacle n'arrête, qui franchit instantanément l'espace pour frapper au loin... Elle est à la base de toute la magie indigène.

2. Morale et coutumes

Lorsque, comme chez les catholiques ou les musulmans, la croyance est que l'autre vie est influencée par les actes de celle-ci, une règle détermine ce qu'il convient de faire ou de ne pas faire en vue d'acquérir le plus de mérite possible aux récompenses de cette vie future ; des saints, des hommes pieux ont marqué les voies à suivre à même fin.

Pour le Bambara, l'autre vie continue celle-ci et il ne croit pas pouvoir, par sa conduite, améliorer son sort dans cette autre vie qui ne comporte, pense-t-il, ni récompense, ni châtiment de ce qu'il fait au jour le jour. Ses Mânes ou ses génies ne lui donnent pas une moralité en exemple. Dès lors il va, sans souci de cet avenir, uniquement préoccupé du fait actuel : il recherche ce qui lui cause du plaisir, il tâche à éviter ce qui lui semble nuisible, tout cela à tâtons, comme l'on marche dans l'obscurité.

Sans doute, parfois, il se sent tenu à observer une certaine conduite, à éviter certains défauts trop choquants, qui lui attireraient des reproches, éloigneraient de lui ses amis, lui créeraient au milieu des siens une situation pénible ; mais, sous ce verni, le fond mauvais transparaît. Il n'est pas rare de se trouver en face d'un manque de sens moral déconcertant, d'un égoïsme féroce, d'une duplicité profonde, d'une traîtrise impudente, d'une cruauté froide et tranquille (1), et l'on constate, chez tous peut-être, le mépris, voire la haine, de quiconque est malheureux, faible, malade, déshérité. Toutefois, il faut reconnaître qu'il y a aussi des Bambara qui témoignent du plus pur dévouement, d'une hospitalité franche et large, d'un courage remarquable ; quelques-uns ont même cette manière d'éducation native, dont il existe des témoins jusque chez les peuples les plus arriérés, et qui est la marque distinctive des sujets d'élite.

Aucun code ne réunit donc les règles de vie des Bambara. Tout est dans la coutume : fil mystérieux, à la fois fragile et fort, qui enchaîne l'une à l'autre les générations, soutient l'individu à son insu, si bien que, hors de la coutume, il est complètement désemparé. Léguée par les ancêtres, conservée superstitieusement, elle s'impose par la crainte du châtiment que déclanche sa transgression. A première vue, la coutume est un amalgame des choses les plus hétérogènes, et c'est pourquoi elle est, pour nous, Européens, tout à la fois respectable et ridicule, bonne et mauvaise, utile et sans but, parfois atroce, quelquefois excellente. A l'analyse, elle se révèle comme présentant, sur un fond de sentiments communs à toute l'humanité, une efflorescence propre au milieu indigène : morale naturelle que doublent des lois positives.

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(1) La chronique du Ségou, en particulier, atteste ce fond de fourberie, d'hypocrisie (voir notamment les récits concernant Ma-n-son, p. 86, et Da, p. 94).

Par nature, l'homme est porté à observer certaines lois, à discerner, dans ce qui l'entoure, du bon et du mauvais et, dans sa conduite, à témoigner d'un penchant pour ce bien et d'une aversion pour ce mal ; il reconnaît en lui quelque chose qui fait la critique de ses actes à un point de vue pareil, qui, en somme, le juge.

Cette idée de justice, le Bambara l'éprouve à un haut degré : rien ne lui est plus sensible que l'injustice ou le déni de justice ; sa rancune est tenace et sa vengeance, qui sait attendre sous des dehors indifférents, est implacable. La chronique du Ségou en contient de caractéristiques exemples. C'est Ngolo Dyara noyant, dans le sang et dans la ruine de ses proches, sa haine d'avoir été livré comme esclave par son oncle et de n'avoir été racheté par aucun de ses parents. C'est Kégné Mari qui, assistant au meurtre de Touro-koro, au bois du *Komo*, exhale sa vengeance enfin réalisée : « Rappelle-toi que, m'ayant « faussement accusé d'adultère avec l'une de tes femmes, « tu m'as fait flageller ; ce jour-là, je t'ai dit : même « couché à terre, si je puis t'atteindre avec mon pied, je « te jetterai bas. Voici, enfin, le jour de ma vengeance. » Les traits pareils sont innombrables.

Impuissant devant l'injustice, le Bambara patiente et, chaque fois qu'il doit répondre, il dissimule sa faiblesse sous des formules à double sens telles que : *O do !* = c'est çà ! *O nya-na !* = c'est bien ! *Tigi !* = certes ! et autres analogues, tandis qu'au fond de lui-même, il se répète son proverbe : *don' m'i fantan', a bla k'a teme* = laisse passer le jour où tu es faible, c'est-à-dire sache attendre d'être fort pour te venger (littéralement, pour te payer).

De ce sentiment instinctif de justice, résultent, dans une certaine mesure, ces liens de famille faits de droits et de devoirs réciproques des parents entre eux et avec leurs enfants et, par une analogie dont nous verrons d'autres exemples, entre le maître et l'esclave, le chef et ses sujets. Sur la même base reposent l'obligation de respecter tous les pactes conclus sous forme de vœux, serments, alliance confraternelle... C'est encore cette notion qui inspire la répression d'actes quasi-universellement réprouvés : le parjure, la trahison, le faux témoignage, la calomnie, le vol, le meurtre. Elle soutient la ténacité inlassable du plaideur, qui poursuit d'interminables procès pour obtenir le redressement du tort qui lui a été fait, à lui ou à quelqu'un des siens. Elle arme la vindicte publique contre le sorcier.

Mais à cette loi naturelle se superpose son application, la loi dite positive. Quel aspect inattendu est celui de la loi naturelle sous ce revêtement extérieur ! Car, autant de législateurs, autant de manière d'envisager l'application de la loi naturelle et, chez les Bambara, à bien des égards, chacun est son propre législateur, puisque chacun a sa coutume. Toutes ces coutumes qui se croisent, se heurtent, se pénètrent, se superposent, constituent, pour l'Européen, ce bloc qu'il appelle la coutume, aux mille aspects changeants, insaisissable, diverse et instable. Pourtant, sous ces dehors disparates, de grands traits s'accusent qui sont comme l'armature de la coutume, ainsi qu'il résulte de l'étude ci-après relative aux institutions.

Parmi les lois que le Bambara s'impose à lui-même ou impose à ses semblables, les plus répandues et, en tout cas, celles qui frappent le plus l'observateur européen, sont les interdictions (*tne*) : à lui-même, aux siens, à ses congénères, le Bambara interdit d'accomplir certains actes, de prononcer certaines paroles..., et le domaine de ces restrictions est, en principe, illimité. Une étude hâtive, et par suite superficielle et incomplète, relative à ce que l'on peut appeler le nom honorable (*dyamu*), a fait évoluer les recherches des ethnographes concernant ces interdictions dans la région restreinte de ces *dyamu* ; c'est surtout à leur égard que l'on s'est complu à analyser l'interdit.

En réalité, l'interdit (*tne*) pénètre tout le milieu indigène, comme sa loi propre. Son but est de prévenir tout contact, sous quelque forme que ce soit, avec l'invisible dans la pensée que, si ce contact se produit, il déclanchera automatiquement le châtiment contre son auteur, à moins que celui-ci n'ait le temps et le moyen de se purifier rituellement. De là résulte que celui-là seul peut utilement édicter l'interdit, qui a la connaissance de l'invisible et sait en discerner la présence là où le sens du vulgaire ne révèle rien. Savoir est l'apanage du vieux (*koro*), du maître (*fa*) représentant des ancêtres et défenseur de la coutume ; c'est aussi le partage du petit nombre des « voyants », dont les moyens naturels se doublent à l'ordinaire des innombrables procédés de la mantique.

Ainsi manié, l'interdit a organisé et transformé le milieu indigène ; il a établi une démarcation entre le sacré et le profane en retranchant du commerce les personnes, les lieux et les objets affectés à l'invisible et tenus pour imprégnés par lui. Mais comme, par sa nature, il forme loi indiscutable et sans recours, il a été le moyen préféré de quiconque, disposant de l'autorité, a entendu imposer, sans conteste, sa volonté : le profane a, de la sorte, subi l'arbitraire de cette loi essentiellement religieuse. Ordonnances sociales, règles d'hygiène, prescriptions médicales, préparations culinaires, expressions de politesse..., tout s'est enveloppé d'interdits, tout a puisé dans le *tne* l'essence même de sa vitalité et de sa force contraignante.

Dans la famille, génératrice de toute collectivité, l'individu se trouve entouré, durant toute son existence, par des *tne*. Par lui s'est établie et maintenue l'autorité des anciens (*koro-u*) et particulièrement du premier d'entre eux, le *fa* ; par lui s'imposent les traditions ancestrales une à une élaborées, lentement superposées depuis le plus lointain des âges jusqu'aux temps actuels et dont l'ensemble forme précisément la coutume familiale.

La patriarchie, la confrérie, l'Etat, toute cellectivité bambara procèdent de même, car toute collectivité est calquée en quelque manière sur la famille naturelle.

La religion, la famille, la société tout entière, en un mot la civilisation bambara, ont été et continuent d'être en grande partie sous la dépendance du *tne*.

3. Mantique, Religion et Magie

La mantique. — Chez les Bambara, comme chez tous les Soudanais, la religion et la magie s'appuient également sur la croyance à une révélation permanente que les mânes, les esprits, les dieux font aux hommes au sujet des événements de la vie.

Les divers moyens, dont l'homme dispose pour connaître cette révélation des invisibles, constituent la divination ou mantique. La mantique est une science extra-rationnelle, car elle fait savoir des choses que l'on n'apprendrait pas par le seul effort du raisonnement ; elle s'applique à l'avenir tout comme au présent et au passé.

La mantique diffère de la magie : celle-ci permet à l'homme, par certains procédés, de se subordonner les forces naturelles et extra-naturelles ; celle-là est une science contemplative qui n'empiète nullement sur la liberté divine et se borne à mettre la pensée divine en rapport avec l'intelligence humaine.

D'autre part, en principe, le devin n'est pas lié à un culte déterminé et ne se confond pas avec le prêtre, car il transmet la volonté divine en dehors du sacrifice, fonction du prêtre. Cependant, il arrive aussi que le devin est l'oracle propre d'une divinité et, également, que le même individu cumule les deux fonctions de devin et de prêtre, comme cela se produit dans certains cultes décrits ci-après.

Les modes de divination sont innombrables ; avant de marquer les traits principaux de quelques-uns, constatons d'abord qu'il est des cas où la divinité entre spontanément et directement en rapport avec l'homme en employant le langage humain. La chronique du Ségou en fournit un exemple. Kolé, chef des gardes de Biton, fut interpellé, en pleine forêt, par un génie qui lui indiqua les conditions auxquelles il lui assurerait la puissance. Ngolo Diara frustra Kolé du bénéfice de cette révélation en le précédant dans l'accomplissement du sacrifice demandé par le génie.

C'est une manière de révélation directe que le rêve, où les événements se passent comme dans la réalité. Mais, fréquemment, il y a entre le rêve et la réalité un écart qui laisse incertaine la signification à donner au rêve, d'où la nécessité d'une interprétation. Chez les Bambara, il y a des individus qui font métier de devin en interprétant leurs propres rêves. Mis au fait de la question, ils prétendent recevoir, sous forme de rêve, pendant le sommeil, les révélations propres à élucider les difficultés de cette question.

Un moyen très en faveur est celui où le devin s'abandonne à son dieu, il est par lui possédé et devient son oracle : durant cette « transe », il est comme un instrument dont le dieu se sert pour s'exprimer. Dans les confréries, dont nous parlerons plus loin, le *wara-mina-den'* est, comme ce terme l'indique, « saisi par le dieu » ; on dit encore qu'il est « la bouche du dieu » (*wara da*) ; mais, dans la transe, il ne peut parler que d'une manière inintelligible au commun et ce langage mi-divin, mi-humain, doit nécessairement être éclairci, c'est à quoi s'emploie le *wara-tigi* ou grand prêtre.

Dans le rêve et dans la possession divine, l'invisible se trouve mis à la portée de l'homme par une sorte d'illumination intérieure, ce sont des modes de la divination dite intuitive. D'autres méthodes bien plus nombreuses et plus répandues ont une autre base. C'est par l'observation de signes extérieurs qu'elles prétendent pénétrer l'intention, la volonté divine. Comment ces signes se distinguent-ils des faits naturels ?

L'indigène s'embarrasse peu de ce que nous appelons les lois naturelles. Il raisonne par analogie et attribue tout phénomène inconnu à un invisible doué comme lui d'intelligence et de volonté : les indices de cette volonté n'ont rien de précis, à chacun de savoir les reconnaître et les interptéter. La divination basée sur les signes extérieurs est dite déductive ; ces signes peuvent être classés en deux catégories : ceux qui se rapportent à des êtres animés, ceux qui se réfèrent à des objets inanimés.

Etres animés. — En principe, tout animal est bon à observer parce que ses actes, dont le déterminisme échappe à l'homme, trahissent pour l'observateur clairvoyant la volonté ou l'intervention divines.

C'est d'observations de ce genre que sont nés beaucoup d'interdits (*tne*). En voici un exemple : en traversant le fleuve, un ancêtre des Samaké fut happé par un caïman qui l'entraîna sous l'eau, dans son repaire, où il l'abandonna. Il se trouva que l'homme, seulement étourdi, revint à lui et réfléchit au moyen de s'évader. Il reçut soudain des grains de sable sur le visage, en rechercha le motif et s'aperçut qu'un filet de lumière pénétrait par une infime fissure. C'est par là qu'arrivaient les grains de sable et il comprit qu'un fourmi-lion (*gere*) les projetaient dans l'intention de lui montrer le chemin de la liberté. Effectivement, il s'efforça d'agrandir la fissure et fit si bien qu'il se sauva. Mais, se souvenant de l'insecte à qui il devait la vie, il fit serment pour lui et ses descendants de le respecter : le *gere* est *tne* pour les Samaké, dont cet homme est l'ancêtre.

Avant d'entamer la lutte avec Blisi, le peul Bacari Dyan voulut en connaître l'issue. Un marabout lui conseilla de prendre deux béliers : « Nomme-les, l'un Blisi et l'autre Bacari, lui dit-il, et surveille leurs combats. » Effectivement, au cours d'un de ces combats, le bélier Bacari tua son adversaire : telle fut également l'issue de la lutte qui s'engagea entre Bacari Dyan et Blisi.

Mais si l'animal vivant décèle, par sa manière d'être ou d'agir, la volonté divine, le cadavre de l'animal offert en sacrifice n'est pas moins indicatif. Au « voyant », à l'initié, il appartient de découvrir soit dans les derniers spasmes de l'agonie, soit dans l'attitude où se fixe le cadavre, soit, enfin, par l'inspection ou la position relative des viscères ou dans la constitution propre de chacun, les signes révélateurs de la volonté divine. Tel est la branche de la mantique dite extispiscine : divers moyens de divination bambara en relèvent.

Il est de pratique courante d'offrir en sacrifice un poulet et il est admis que s'il expire sur le dos, les pattes tendues dans la direction opposée à l'observateur, c'est un signe défavorable ; le signe est favorable si les pattes sont tendues vers l'observateur ; il y a doute pour toute autre position et, s'il y a lieu, on recommence le sacrifice jusqu'à l'obtention d'une réponse catégorique.

Il n'est pas rare que le Bambara qui revient d'un long voyage veuille savoir si telle ou telle de ses épouses lui est demeurée fidèle. Il sacrifie un coq et, l'ayant ensuite ouvert, il examine les bourses séminales : sont-elles d'aspect normal, la femme a été fidèle ; présentent-elles certaines particularités, notamment sont-elles de couleur rougeâtre, la culpabilité est certaine.

Objets inanimés. — Quel est le Bambara qui ne possède un jeu de cauris divinatoires ? Dans un petit sac, qu'il porte, pour ainsi dire, constamment avec lui, sont enfermés un nombre déterminé de cauris, généralement douze. Pour consulter le sort — à propos des actes ou projets les plus divers — le Bambara prend ses cauris en main et, à faible hauteur, les répand sur le sol : il lit la réponse dans la disposition générale de l'ensemble et aussi dans la position relative des cauris les uns par rapport aux autres. Un cauri autour duquel sont rangés un certain nombre d'autres cauris, c'est la figure d'un maître puissant qu'entourent ses protégés et l'annonce d'un secours précieux. Un cauri fiché perpendiculairement dans la cavité d'un autre, c'est la figure dite « la petite fille dans la calebasse », qui présage à l'interrogateur la naissance d'une fille. Deux cauris affrontés et tournés en sens inverses, c'est l'image du commerce sexuel et le présage du succès d'un projet d'amour...

La noix de cola n'est pas moins usitée que le poulet comme offrande divinatoire et voici comment on opère à l'égard du *nyana dugu-da-siri*, dont nous parlerons bientôt. Après avoir séparé les deux parties qui la composent, l'officiant les rapproche en les tenant entre le pouce et l'index, il leur fait toucher la terre en même temps qu'il demande au *nyana* de faire connaître s'il agrée l'offrande qui lui est faite. Après quoi il jette la cola, de faible hauteur, contre ou un peu en avant de ce qui est réputé être le siège du *nyana* : si les deux parties se présentent alors toutes deux tournées vers l'officiant par leurs faces qui étaient en contact, la réponse est favorable.

L'officiant procède encore de même pour savoir si le *nyana* accepte que l'offrande soit faite par lui-même : la réponse affirmative résulte de la position alternée, une face contre la terre, l'autre vers l'officiant. En cas de doute ou d'insuccès, l'opération est recommancée jusqu'à trois fois.

La divination se fait encore par l'intermédiaire des pierres. Sur une pierre plate, habituellement celle qui sert à écraser les condiments, l'on place une autre pierre plate plus petite. Prenant du bout des doigts cette seconde pierre, le devin la promène lentement sur la grande après s'être profondément recueilli sur ce qui fait l'objet de ses recherches. Il interprète alors les légères résistances qui s'opposent aux déplacements de la pierre qu'il tient.

Autre procédé, très voisin du précédent. Sur l'espèce de couronne en chiffon, ou en paille, que les porteuses d'eau, notamment, interposent entre leur tête et le récipient qui contient l'eau, le devin place une calebasse renfermant de l'eau. Il imprime à cette calebasse un léger mouvemant de va et vient et, comme dans l'espèce qui précède, interprète les résistances qui se produisent.

Avec ce même appareil, le devin pratique parfois différemment : ayant immobilisé la calebasse sur la couronne qui la cale, il la frappe de deux ou trois chiquenaudes à l'aide du médius et, alors, prétend-on, il entend des bruits spéciaux qui sont les révélations de l'esprit de l'eau, que lui seul comprend.

Au demeurant, les pratiques divinatoires sont en nombre infini : c'est le cas de répéter, l'esprit souffle où il veut, quand il veut, comme il veut. Rien, au reste, n'est plus accommodant que la crédulité humaine. Il va de soi qu'il y a chez les Bambara de remarquables ventriloques, qui prêtent si habilement leur aide aux objets inanimés que ceux-ci deviennent de véritables oracles : telle corne fichée en terre, tel stupide morceau de bois... se transformant, par cet artifice, en un médium qui répond à tous et sur tout.

L'on voit d'ailleurs circuler de ces individus éminemment suggestionables qui tombent facilement dans un état de veille ou de sommeil hypnotiques, au cours duquel ils dévoilent des choses cachées.

L'on connaît encore, chez les Bambara, la pratique du *kolon' kala* (1), qui relève justement de la suggestion hypnotique. Lorsqu'un décès suspect oblige à rechercher celui qui l'aurait causé, il n'est pas rare que l'on emploie le cadavre même à cette découverte : porté sur la tête par deux jeunes gens suggestionnés et qui sont alors réputés possédés par l'âme du défunt, la lugubre dépouille parcourt l'agglomération ou la campagne, franchissant l'espace à vive allure, sans s'embarrasser des obstacles, pour s'arrêter enfin là où se trouve le meurtrier ou quelque indice révélateur.

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(1) C'est le pilon en bois qui sert dans toute cuisine indigène à écraser les grains et condiments.

Mais au lieu du cadavre, l'on emploie souvent une manière d'effigie constituée par un *kolon' kala*, auquel on attache un sachet contenant des débris du corps (ongles, poils, cheveux...), et que l'on enveloppe d'un pagne. Cette effigie joue le rôle du cadavre.

Le *kolon' kala* est employé de manière pareille pour découvrir l'objet volé ou perdu... On l'enveloppe dans un pagne du volé contenant quelque chose qui lui soit également personnelle.

Que conclure de toutes ces pratiques divinatoires ? Que les oracles sont fondés exclusivement sur le charlatanisme et la fourberie ? Ce serait méconnaître la crédulité de ceux-là mêmes qui sont les premiers à être convaincus, le plus souvent, de ce qu'ils pratiquent.

La religion et la magie. — Rien de plus touffu, incohérent, contradictoire, que les coutumes cultuelles des Bambara. Pour pouvoir en exposer les traits essentiels avec clarté, nous aurons recours à un plan basé sur la distinction qui apparaît à l'analyse des faits observés.

Car il est constant que l'on honore les Mânes, les *nyana dugu-da-siri* et quelques autres *nyana*, sans prétendre à leur imposer sa volonté, voire même l'on s'efforce à conformer sa conduite à ce que l'on croit être leurs désirs.

La majorité des *nyana*, au contraire, est composée d'esprits séduits par l'homme et asservis à sa volonté.

Enfin, des rites appropriés permettent de capter une portion de l'énergie universelle pour en user à son gré.

Nous dirons que le culte des Mânes et des *nyana* indépendants constituent la religion, tandis que l'asservissement des esprits et la capture de l'énergie universelle constituent proprement la magie, que, sous sa forme la plus redoutée, l'on nomme sorcellerie.

Cette division est évidemment arbitraire : il n'est point de coutume qui ne soit imprégnée à quelque degré de magisme, si bien que l'on ne sait s'il faut considérer la religion comme une manière de magie épurée, ou bien, dire que la magie est une perversion de la religion, ou encore que la magie est un parasite de la religion...

Sans chercher à quelle opinion il conviendrait de s'arrêter, nous remarquerons simplement qu'il existe une démarcation très nette, parfois, entre la religion et la magie. Il suffit, pour s'en apercevoir, de rapprocher le culte des Mânes des pratiques de sorcellerie employées pour capter l'esprit des défunts : l'indigène témoigne, sans ambiguité, combien il est respectueux du culte des Mânes, combien au contraire il est scandalisé et terrorisé par les procédés des *suba* (1). Mais nombre de pratiques ne permettent pas une aussi facile discrimination, elles participent à la fois de la religion et de la magie et sont tenues, suivant l'angle sous lequel on les regarde, suivant les lieux, les circonstances et les personnes, tantôt comme licites et même recommandées, tantôt comme illicites et haïssables.

Sous le bénéfice de ces remarques et en se bornant aux traits les plus caractéristiques, l'on peut établir un parallèle entre la religion et la magie chez les Noirs.

L'une et l'autre admettent l'existence d'un monde invisible, en contact de toutes parts avec ce qui tombe sous nos sens. Mais tandis que la religion pose en principe la dépendance de l'homme envers cet invisible, la magie estime que tout ce qui existe est au pouvoir de « celui qui sait » (*don'-na ba*).

Comme le Maître de cet Univers semble se désintéresser de son œuvre, ses créatures ne font rien pour l'honorer, tandis qu'elles ont recours à ces Esprits, à ces Puissants (*nyana*) empressés à se mêler des affaires humaines. La religion organise, pour ces bienveillants *nyana*, un culte pour s'assurer leur protection ; la magie, au contraire, les contraints à exécuter ses volont[illegible]

La religion et la magie croient fermement à la nature double de l'homme : un corps périssable et une âme qui survit à ce corps. A la mort, cette âme va prendre place dans la famille des Mânes, âmes désincarnés, comme elle, et, de là, continue à s'intéresser aux affaires de ses parents encore dans cette vie terrestre. La religion tient les Mânes pour tutélaires et s'efforce à assurer la continuité de leurs volontés et de leurs désirs ; la magie traite (1) ces âmes désincarnées comme les *nyana*, elle vise à les employer à ses fins utilitaires.

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(1) Voir au chapitre VII ce qui est dit des *suba*.

Par les croyances qui lui servent de base, la religion engendre une certaine morale. La magie emploie ses connaissances à l'exploitation de l'Univers pour son profit matériel.

De part et d'autre, existent des initiés, mais alors que, dans la magie, les plus fameux s'enferment dans une sorte d'isolement où ils gardent jalousement le secret de leurs pratiques et vivent à l'écart des sociétés humaines qui les redoutent et les honorent tout à la fois, la religion étale ses cultes, sinon d'une manière absolument publique, du moins dans le cercle de ses fidèles qui, le plus souvent, n'ignorant rien des cérémonies du culte et ses grands prêtres, sont les maîtres les plus vénérés de la société.

La religion a son plus solide point d'appui dans la famille naturelle et les communautés qui en dérivent. La magie licite a copié ces organismes sous la forme des confréries, que les Européens appellent sociétés secrètes, sortes de familles spirituelles où l'on n'accède que par degré à la connaissance des mystères.

Alors que la religion des Mânes est le lien le plus fort qui tient ensemble les membres d'une même communauté et forme l'armature de la société, la magie ne se soucie point de cette union, elle aide ou provoque sa rupture par la haine qu'elle engendre : par elle, l'individu est de taille à lutter contre la communauté et il n'y manque pas.

Voyons plus explicitement les traits distinctifs de la religion et ceux de la magie.

Par tout ce qui a rapport plus spécialement aux communautés patriarcales et familiales et aux associations formées par ces communautés, nous verrons ce qui concerne la religion, tant des Mânes que des esprits, en même temps que l'empreinte de la magie dans les manifestations essentielles de la vie de ces organismes.

Quant à la magie, qui enveloppe, en quelque sorte, tous les actes de l'indigène, il nous paraît nécessaire d'en dégager, dès à présent, les caractéristiques, afin de faciliter l'intelligence de tout ce qui va suivre et qui en est, à tant d'égards, si profondément imprégné. Nous verrons, à propos des confréries, comment la magie s'est organisée au sein de la société indigène et quelles sont la consistance et les répercussions de son œuvre.

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(1) Surtout par les procédés qui la font qualifier sorcellerie.

LA MAGIE

L'énergie universelle. — Il existe des individus sujets à ces phénomènes, encore imparfaitement connus et expliqués, où l'être humain se dédouble de telle sorte que sa partie immatérielle vit, par intermittence, d'une vie indépendante du corps, dans une sphère inaccessible aux sens corporels. L'homme pénètre alors dans un milieu d'où il rapporte des visions et des sensations dont, au retour, à l'état de veille normale, son langage habituel ne sait donner qu'un aperçu confus et troublant.

Chez les Bambara, des faits de cet ordre ont été constatés et il en a été tiré parti, notamment par les confréries. Ils constituent un argument de la croyance à l'invisible, le rêve en est un autre. Et le Bambara voit encore bien des indices — qui nous échappent — de l'existence de cet extra-naturel dans lequel tout est noyé et qu'il conçoit comme une force tantôt active et tantôt inerte, diffuse ou personnifiée. C'est cette énergie qui est comme mise en mouvement par la malédiction, l'envie à son paroxysme qualifiée « mauvais œil », la veine, le malheur ; l'autorité, la puissance du chef lui empruntent l'essence de leur action. C'est à cause d'elle que les morts sont honorés.

Cette force invisible, transmissible instantanément aux distances les plus lointaines, traverse tous les corps ; elle existe partout, en tout et en tous ; elle a, ou elle acquiert, dans certains objets et certains hommes, pour un temps déterminé ou transitoirement, un potentiel plus ou moins élevé. Elle se montre bénéfique ou maléfique et même l'un et l'autre tour à tour. L'ignorant qui touche de tels objets ou de telles personnes se trouve, d'ordinaire, frappé à mort ou, en tout cas, gravement atteint, comme il le serait en mettant la main sur un courant électrique à haute tension ; pour l'initié qui la connaît et sait s'en servir, c'est une vertu qui exalte ses propres moyens jusqu'à leur donner cette puissance surnaturelle dont le profane est le témoin effrayé.

A cette propriété de transmission par le contact se rattache la vénération dont on entoure ce qui appartient aux personnalités éminentes et aux défunts qui, dans la vie, ont exercé le pouvoir : l'on vénère surtout les objets d'usage quasi-permanent et personnel : vêtements, armes, objets de toilette.

A cette même propriété, il faut rattacher, sans doute, le caractère attribué à la matière et que l'on a appelé la continuité : tout ce qui émane d'un objet retient cette énergie occulte qui est en lui et, d'autre part, tout ce que l' « homme qui sait » (*don-na-ba*) pratique sur ces fractions détachées, atteint le corps tout entier d'où elles proviennent (1). C'est pourquoi la portion d'aliment non ingérée, convenablement traitée par le magicien, rend nocive la portion ingérée de ce même aliment. La chronique montre le parti tiré de cette continuité de la matière par le magicien à propos de Bani : à l'aide d'un poil et d'une sandale qui lui furent dérobés, le magicien paralysa la clairvoyance de ce Bani et le mit à la merci de Da.

Le magicien. — C'est la science du magicien qui éclaire et ordonne en quelque sorte le chaos mondial. Son art, la magie, est, au sens large du mot, l'utilisation de l'occulte. Sans doute, il n'est point de Bambara, depuis le chef jusqu'au dernier des esclaves, qui ne soit son propre magicien, mais il y a des spécialiste, parfois très réputés. Et, en définitive, n'est pas vraiment magicien qui veut : des dons naturels permettent à certains individus de pénétrer dans l'invisible et de s'y orienter ; d'aucuns sont initiés par les génies dont ils sont les favoris, comme en témoigne la chronique à propos de Biton ; d'autres apprennent le métier à l'école de quelque parent ou de quelque magicien réputé et soit à titre gratuit, soit à titre onéreux.

Chaque magicien (*soma*) (2) a ses méthodes : celui-ci est un intuitif qu'éclaire une flamme intérieure ; cet autre ne procède que par les pratiques de la divination déductive. Tous ceux qui prétendent à une vraie puissance se soumettent à des règles souvent étranges, rigoureuses, qui dominent les moindres actes de leur vie ; tous sont jaloux à l'extrême de ces secrets qui, pour eux-mêmes non moins que pour les profanes, engendrent leurs pouvoirs mystérieux.

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(1) La divination par le *kolon' kala* précédemment rapportée se rattache à cette croyance : les débris du mort agissent comme le mort lui-même pour guider les porteurs du *kolon' kala*.

(2) Le sorcier, c'est le *suba* (voir chapitre VII).

Le domaine de leurs investigations et de leur action est proprement illimité, car tout est imprégné de cette énergie qui est partout, en tout, qui peut-être même est tout, la forme matérielle n'étant qu'une de ses apparences.

Il est remarquable que les gens de métiers sont frappés de cette mésestime qui stigmatise les magiciens mal famés : il n'est pas téméraire d'en inférer qu'originairement le travail manuel a dû consister en rites magiques, tenus pour indispensables en vue de dompter la matière. Cela est encore très visible pour les forgerons et les chasseurs.

Partout, au Soudan, les forgerons sont considérés et se comportent le plus souvent comme des magiciens. L'extraction du fer s'entoure de rites essentiellement magiques : seuls, les forgerons y peuvent prendre part ; après une préparation rituelle, ils travaillent nus tant que dure l'opération et ne reviennent à la vie normale qu'un certain temps après la fin du travail en observant encore des pratiques spéciales. Couramment l'on tient leurs œuvres pour entachées de magie. Leurs outils sont imprégnés de cette énergie invisible et, à certains jours, la case où le forgeron les remise devient une sorte de temple, où le maître de céans officie. La chronique (1) attribue un rôle particulièrement utile aux Massa-si, à *fa* Siné Dyara, qui était forgeron et entendait le langage des oiseaux.

Raffenel nous a tracé un intéressant portrait d'un de ces forgerons bambara, le père Niany, comme il le nomme, dont il fut l'hôte à Foutobi (Kaarta). Il l'a vu agir tour à tour comme *fa*, prêtre des Mânes et des esprits tutélaires de la famille, médecin, exorciste... ; toujours en éveil, toujours en émoi, guettant les mille manifestations de l'invisible et se précipitant pour les seconder ou, au contraire, les plier à sa volonté.

Voici des extraits de cette figure si caractéristique du père Niany :

« J'ai vu mourir un petit enfant de la morsure d'un « serpent, raconte Raffenel (2) ; la pauvre créature était « hideuse et gonflée comme un ballon. Sa mère l'avait

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(1) Voir page 103.

(2) In, *Nouveau voyage au pays des nègres*, Tome I, p. 417.

« déposée au milieu d'un champ de mil qu'elle sarclait. « Un serpent (1) vint et mordit l'enfant. A ses cris, la « mère se méprit et lui offrit le sein ; mais bientôt l'en« flure se manifesta et, vingt-quatre heures après, il avait « cessé de vivre. »

. . . .

« Quelques jours après la mort de l'enfant, une femme « de la maison était encore mordue, à deux pas de ma « case, par un serpent semblable. Le vieux Niany fut « mandé et accourut aussitôt. Je ne le savais pas versé « dans les sciences médicales ; mais, à voir la confiance « qu'il inspirait, je compris qu'il n'en était pas à son « coup d'essai.

« Sa médication consista d'abord en gestes ridicules « et en paroles incohérentes prononcées avec une extrême « volubilité ; après quoi il sortit de dessous son boubou « une petite corne renfermant un onguent noir et gras. « La blessée, qui paraissait fort calme, fit elle-même son « pansement et étala l'onguent sur sa plaie ; elle y ajouta « une racine pilée que le brave homme tira d'une autre « corne. Quand la femme eut fini, vint le tour de Niany : « il marmotta encore des paroles, passa les doigts dans « ses oreilles, en retira une matière qui paraissait y exister « en abondance, et l'étendit avec précaution par dessus « l'onguent. La femme se releva ensuite et retourna à « son travail.

« J'assistai à ce pansement avec un intérêt très vif, « car d'un moment à l'autre je pouvais me trouver dans « le même cas. Aussi ne manquai-je pas d'envoyer « demander fréquemment des nouvelles de la malade. « On me répondait toujours qu'elle allait bien, et le sur« lendemain on vint m'annoncer qu'elle était radicale« ment guérie ; elle n'avait eu ni enflure, ni douleur, et « n'avait pas cessé un instant de vaquer aux travaux de « son ménage.

« Le serpent qui l'avait mordue était pourtant de la

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(1) « Ces serpents ont cinquante centimètres de longueur sur quatre « centimètres environ de diamètre ; leur dos est gris, avec des anneaux « noirs très marqués, faisant le tour du corps. Ils ont le ventre blanc, la « tête plate, arrondie à l'extrémité ; la partie voisine de la queue est « recouverte en-dessus d'un appendice formé d'une succession d'écailles « verticales, occupant le quart de la longueur du reptile ; la queue est « d'un diamètre beaucoup plus faible que le corps. Ils affectionnent les « abords des villages et montrent une prédilection marquée pour les toi« tures des cases. » (Raffenel).

« même espèce que celui dont la piqûre avait causé la
« mort de l'enfant. J'ai vu et tenu en mes mains les deux
« serpents ; j'ai vu appliquer le remède et l'ai fidèlement
« décrit. Faut-il croire à la vertu des gris-gris et à l'om-
« niscience de l'Esculape de Foutobi, ou bien faut-il
« donner une inorthodoxe extension à cet aphorisme :
« c'est la foi qui sauve ?

« Toujours est-il que je pris la ferme résolution de me
« confier sans hésiter, le cas échéant pour moi, aux
« savantes mains du vieux Niany.

« En allant le féliciter de sa cure merveilleuse, je lui
« reparlai de la mort du petit enfant qu'il avait traité par
« les mêmes moyens. On n'a sans doute pas oublié la
« singulière logique à l'usage du forgeron : cela n'est pas
« étonnant du tout, me dit-il, mon remède ne guérit que
« ceux qui y croient, et ce petit enfant n'y a pas cru. »

. . . .

« (1) J'ai dit, ailleurs, que dans les croyances nègres,
« la tradition des possédés était précieusement gardée.
« Un soir, j'ai assisté à une cérémonie qui avait pour
« objet de chasser le diable du corps d'une femme.
« L'exorciseur était le père Niany, l'homme universel de
« Foutobi. Au premier bruit de cette nouvelle, la foule
« se porta à la case de la possédée, je me mêlai à la foule,
« curieux de voir ce qui allait se passer. J'aperçus une
« malheureuse qui se roulait à terre dans d'affreuses
« convulsions, au milieu d'un cercle de curieux, qui la
« laissait s'ébattre en liberté, en devisant de ses mouve-
« ments. Il y eut sensation quand le forgeron parut, et le
« cercle se rompit pour le laisser passer ; il s'approcha de
« la possédée, la toucha, prononça des paroles à voix
« basse, accompagnées de gestes particuliers, la leva et
« la coucha sur une natte.

« Presqu'aussitôt la femme se calma, et le père Niany,
« que ce triomphe ne semblait pas avoir rendu plus fier,
« se retira après lui avoir dit quelques mots à l'oreille ;
« la foule s'écoula aussi sans manifester la moindre sur-
« prise d'un succès si complet et si vite obtenu. J'en
« conclus que ces sortes d'événements n'étaient pas rares,
« et que Niany avait une grande habileté pour chasser
« le démon du corps des femmes. Je ne saurais d'ailleurs

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(1) Raffenel, *op. cit.*, p. 468.

« dire ce qu'avait celle-là ; mais au moment où je la vis, « je la croyais simplement atteinte d'une attaque d'épilepsie, et je ne retrouvai pas, dans les convulsions aux« quelles elle était en proie, les signes ordinaires de cet « affreux mal. »

Sûr de son art, Niany en connaissait cependant l'alea : il n'est magicien qui ne trouve plus puissant que lui ; le danger, c'est l'étranger, l'inconnu, qui peut disposer de secrets susceptibles de faire échec aux plus habiles pratiques. C'est pourquoi Niany se défie de l'Islam. Il a une idée, qui nous paraît un peu singulière, de ce que peut être Allah vis-à-vis d'un mécréant comme lui et, imbu de la croyance à la continuité de la matière, il en fait une application sur laquelle nous reviendrons dans le chapitre de l'Islam.

S'il se méfie de l'Islam, Niany n'est pas moins prévenu contre les manœuvres de l'étranger, Raffenel, qu'il loge.

« (1) Un matin, il vint se plaindre très vivement de ce « que j'empêchais la pluie de tomber et du tort considé« rable que je causais aux habitants. Je ne me rendais « pas bien compte tout d'abord des raisons qui avaient « pu amener Niany à m'adresser un semblable reproche, « mais il s'expliqua. Selon lui, la pluie devait être très « mécontente de me voir toujours occupé d'elle, regar« dant ses gouttes, examinant les nuages, et elle se ven« geait en ne tombant pas. Le père Niany étendait aussi « ses griefs à mes thermomètres ; mais son plus grand « ennemi était mon baromètre, auquel il prêtait toutes « sortes de mauvaises intentions.

« Le lendemain, il revenait à la charge, accompagné « d'une députation d'agriculteurs portant sur l'épaule « leurs instruments aratoires.

« Nous avons réfléchi, me dit Niany, que puisque tu « as le pouvoir d'empêcher la pluie de tomber, tu dois « avoir aussi le pouvoir de la faire tomber ; nous venons, « en conséquence, te prier de lui parler en notre nom.

. . . .

« Le surlendemain, nouvelle députation, mais ayant « cette fois l'air menaçant. Il y avait, dans le nombre de

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(1) Raffenel, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

« ceux qui la composaient, beaucoup de figures inconnues.
« Nous voulons que tu fasses pleuvoir — me dirent les
« principaux personnages, et ils jetaient un regard cour-
« roucé sur mon baromètre, — nous avons trop attendu.
« Tu ne nous feras pas croire que ce que tu fais là avec
« ces machines (ils désignaient du doigt mes instruments),
« en regardant l'air et en écrivant des gris-gris, soit inno-
« cent. Jamais dans le pays on n'a vu la pluie tant tarder
« à tomber, et jamais un homme n'a fait ce que tu fais.
« Arrange-toi comme tu voudras, mais il nous faut la
« pluie pour ce soir. »
« Le ciel était chargé de gros nuages noirs qui me
« rassurèrent... Une heure après la pluie tombait, mais
« les coquins, craignant sans doute que ma présence ne
« paralysât ses bonnes intentions, me poussèrent rude-
« ment dans ma case et en fermèrent la porte. Par cette
« stupide mesure, ils m'empêchèrent de suivre la marche
« d'un superbe orage et de noter les variations baromé-
« triques survenues pendant sa durée.
« Comprend-on que l'on soit exposé à recevoir de
« pareilles sommations ? Il ne leur restait plus qu'à
« vouloir la lune ou les étoiles. »

Niany est le type de bien des forgerons soudanais, de ceux qui exercent effectivement le métier, et l'on comprend que l'indigène tienne les gens de cette caste à distance, leur témoigne de la considération, de la crainte, du mépris..., car les gens comme les choses magiques sont toujours proteiformes pour le Noir.

Le chasseur est, lui aussi, un magicien. Il suffit de le voir partir en campagne pour s'en douter. A toute sa personne et à tout son attirail, sont fixées des amulettes qui constituent un véritable revêtement en même temps qu'un arsenal d'armes magiques.

C'est que les animaux ne sont point, pour le Noir, ce que nous pensons : eux aussi sont des puissances avec lesquelles il faut compter. Il en est un indice probant : pas d'animal si petit soit-il qui n'apparaisse, à un certain moment, comme éminemment dangereux et, par suite, digne d'égards ; alors, on ne l'appelle que « maître », « seigneur »... Ceux qui sont toujours redoutés ne sont jamais autrement nommés : *wara-ba* = le lion ; *sa-ma* = l'éléphant ; *ma-li* = l'hippopotame ; *bam-ma* = le caïman..., autant de dénominations qui, étymologiquement, signifient : « maître, » « seigneur ».

Ces termes ne sont point de vaines qualifications, elles attestent la croyance à l'incorporation d'une puissance surnaturelle sous les espèces animales, et les égards dont on témoigne n'ont d'autre but que de se ménager les bonnes grâces de cette puissance, ou à tout le moins d'éviter sa colère. L'emploi courant de toutes sortes de débris animaux (peau, cornes, queue, poils, déjections...), pour la composition des armes magiques, est une application de ce principe de la continuité de la matière, de l'individu, et des vertus qui leur sont propres. Aux flancs de la femme enceinte, l'on attache une patte de lièvre pour accélérer la sortie de l'enfant ; un sachet en peau de lion rendra l'enfant courageux et fort...

La domestication des animaux est, semble-t-il, le résultat heureux de pratiques magiques : ces vaincus sont tenus pour des « faibles » et traités comme tels, mais, sans doute, faut-il voir dans certaines dénominations quelque trace de l'estime qu'on leur témoignait et que, peut-être, on leur témoigne encore dans certaines occasions : *fa-li* = âne, se rattache à *fa* = puissant, de même *nya-ri* = chat, procède de *nya*, qui a ce même sens de « puissant » ; aussi *ba* = chèvre. Et pour la chèvre, il subsiste maintes coutumes très suggestives : son lait est à la base du serment le plus solennel, celui de fraternisation ; on l'emploie encore pour éteindre l'incendie allumé par la foudre ; sa peau sert à confectionner des sandales que portent les veuves dans la période de deuil. La chronique rapporte qu'un certain plat préparé avec de la tête de chèvre éveille et entretient la puissance chez les chefs (1). Pourtant, la chèvre partage, avec l'âne, la mésestime générale, on les considère comme les compagnons-nés de l'esclave : est-ce à cause de cela que certains jugent prudent de ne pas permettre que ni âne ni chèvre entrent dans leur maison. Il est admis, en effet, que l'homme riche et puissant peut être ruiné si l'un ou l'autre de ses animaux entre chez lui et, plus encore, si lui-même les touche.

L'œuvre du magicien. — Ainsi l'homme est noyé dans ce fluide singulier dont, en fin de compte, tout, y compris lui-même, n'est qu'une apparence. Des courants, des remous font se heurter toutes les formes dont les plus fortes seules résistent, dominent, gagnent encore, dans cette manière de lutte, une puissance plus grande qu'elles manifestent différemment. « Celui qui sait » évite, ou peut suivre cette agitation chaotique, se diriger et diriger autrui : il est le véritable « maître » (*soma*) seul capable d'utiliser cet invisible toujours présent, toujours puissant.

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(1) Voir à propos de Dina Wara, page 28.

Ce que produit le magicien peut être qualifié par une seule expression : l'arme magique, tantôt propre à la défense, tantôt spéciale à l'attaque, ou bien encore appropriée à toute fin pour qui sait s'en servir. Puisons quelques exemples dans l'arsenal bambara.

A qui veut détruire un ennemi, le *so ma sama* (litt. envoi de la personne de la maison) est une arme précieuse. Poudre mystérieuse enfermée dans une corne de biche et au milieu de laquelle est fiché un bâtonnet. Pour l'emploi, voici : supposons un Bambara qui veut nuire à un individu de passage dans son village. A l'abri de tout regard indiscret, le Bambara prend en main la petite corne, saisit le bâtonnet et, ayant proféré des malédictions contre l'individu visé et qu'il nomme, il place le bâtonnet sur sa langue, d'abord dans le sens de la longueur de celle-ci, puis de même perpendiculairement ; après cette opération en croix, il replace le bâtonnet dans la corne. Quand le voyageur sera de retour dans son village, le charme opérera : s'il a l'imprudence, dès son arrivée, de s'asseoir partout ailleurs que sur la terre nue, il mourra ; il sera indemne dans le cas contraire.

Si ce n'est pas le passager lui-même qu'il veut atteindre, mais quelqu'un du village de ce passager, le Bambara, après avoir procédé contre cet ennemi suivant le rituel sus-visé, vient trouver le passager, entre en conversation amicale avec lui et, au moment de le quitter, lui dit : « Tu salueras un Tel pour moi ». Lorsqu'au retour le voyageur s'acquitte de cette commission, si la personne visée répond aux politesses qui lui sont transmises exactement par les mêmes politesses, elle n'éprouvera aucun mal ; si, au contraire, elle répond « *maraba* » (merci), elle mourra sur-le-champ.

Le *so ma sama* fait partie de cette catégorie d'armes magiques particulièrement redoutées et redoutables que les Bambara appellent du nom générique de *korti*. Les *korti* sont innombrables : ce sont, d'habitude, des poudres dans lesquelles entrent tous les ingrédients imaginables et le plus souvent répugnants (venins de serpents, excréments de fauves, viscères putréfiés de tous cadavres...).

Voici, à titre d'exemple, comment on obtient le *su-mugu*. L'on introduit une tige de mil bien sèche dans l'intestin d'une charogne par l'anus ; on l'y laisse séjourner un temps suffisant pour qu'elle s'imprègne des toxines cadavériques ; on la retire alors, on la fait bien sécher avant de la pulvériser. On la conserve dans des cornes, dans des boîtes, soit telle qu'elle est, soit broyée avec un onguent.

Nombre de ces poudres sont employées par incorporation aux aliments, solides ou liquides, qu'absorbe la victime. A cet effet, les moyens les plus divers sont mis en pratique : couramment, la poudre nocive, le *su-mugu* notamment, est placée sous l'ongle. L'opérateur, en offrant à boire à sa victime, laisse choir habilement cette poudre dans le liquide.

Il en est qui, par ce même moyen, aidé d'une chiquenaude, sont projetées sur l'individu ; elles s'insinuent alors par les moindres excoriations dermiques.

Tout cela s'accompagne des pires malédictions et constitue ce que l'on appelle *korti su*. Ces poisons agissent diversement : les uns brusquement, les autres avec lenteur. L'on dit que le *su-mugu* n'opère que progressivement. Son action se voit à une certaine enflure du ventre, qui détermine la mort en quelques mois. Il n'est pas d'indigène que le *korti* n'épouvante et il est des Européens qui en ont éprouvé les dangereux effets.

Il est des *korti* qui sont non plus le résultat de manipulations, mais de véritables esprits du mal mis en mouvement par des moyens magiques. En voici un exemple du genre dit *donna*, genre auquel apparteinnent déjà le *so ma sama* et le *su-mugu*. L'emblème ou représentation matérielle (*boli*) de ce *donna* est une sorte de boule, peu volumineuse. Pour s'en servir, on le place sur le fer d'une de ces pioches indigènes dite *daba*. L'on opère de nuit. L'esprit est attiré par un sacrifice de poulet et des offrandes de cola. L'opérateur formule ses malédictions contre les personnes, parfois fort éloignées, et demande à l'esprit de se charger de sa vengeance. Si l'esprit accepte, l'on entend soudain comme le bruit du vol d'un bousier (1) : c'est le génie qui part accomplir sa mission. Il piquera mortellement l'ennemi pendant son sommeil, puis reviendra. Son retour est annoncé par le même bruit de vol qu'au départ. Si l'invocateur, qui a mis l'esprit en mouvement, s'est endormi en attendant son retour, l'esprit le tuera de la même manière que celui contre lequel il avait été suscité. L'invocateur doit attendre éveillé le retour de l'esprit et, à nouveau, lui sacrifier un poulet et des colas.

Aux *korti* l'on oppose les *kana*, qui sont des armes défensives et plus spécialement curatives ; basées sur les mêmes principes, composées d'ingrédients analogues ou pareils à ceux des *korti*, ils visent essentiellement à neutraliser les effets de ces derniers. C'est d'un *kana* qu'usait le père Niany contre la morsure des serpents (2).

Une troisième catégorie d'armes magiques est celle des *siri-kun*' = nœuds. S'il n'est lui-même un génie, le *siri-kun*' est tout au moins sous la dépendance d'un génie, et c'est en s'adressant par vœu ou par serment à ce génie, que l'on obtient soit de réaliser une vengeance, soit d'éviter d'être atteint par la vengeance d'autrui.

Comme son nom l'indique, le *siri-kun*' lie, c'est-à-dire oblige et aussi paralyse. Il reçoit les obligations que, par serment, contractent sous sa surveillance les parties, et il punira le parjure. Il rend incapable et paralyse celui contre lequel son intervention a été demandée.

Personnellement, j'ai vu des Bambara se présenter devant moi, pour le règlement de leurs affaires litigieuses, serrant en main quelques brins de paille. Ils obéissaient à la consigne, s'efforçaient à me soumettre au *siri-kun*', c'est-à-dire à paralyser mon action envers eux (3).

Toutes ces manœuvres de magie criminelle se passent au milieu des fourberies, des hypocrisies les plus déconcertantes ; ce sont souvent les voisins les plus obséquieux qui sont les plus dangereux. C'est pourquoi le Bambara aime s'assurer le secours d'un « protecteur puissant » (*dyigi seme*). Il le cherche et croit souvent le trouver dans la confrérie d'un de ces omnipotants génies dont nous aurons à parler.

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(1) Ainsi s'expliquerait, m'a-t-on affirmé, l'effroi que cause le bousier à certains Bambara.

(2) Voir *supra*, p. 148.

(3) La chronique du Ségou rapporte un fait pareil pour Ngolo envers Mamari (voir p. 48).

Les rites. — Il n'est pas de pratiques magiques sans rites appropriés qu'il convient d'observer strictement : toute négligence rend l'opération inefficace, voire dangereuse pour son auteur. Ainsi avons-nous vu que l'invocateur qui s'est endormi en attendant le retour de l'esprit, dont il a suscité l'action, est tué par cet esprit rentrant à son point de départ, parce que, semble-t-il, cet opérateur n'a pas fait le nécessaire pour assurer la réintégration de cette force surnaturelle.

Il y a donc des rites qui mettent en mouvement cette énergie universelle, diffuse ou personnifiée, des rites qui la canalisent, la dirigent, l'orientent, tant pour qu'elle atteigne le but que l'on vise, que pour éviter qu'en s'écartant de la voie qui lui est tracée, elle ne cause du dommage à celui-là même qu'elle doit servir. C'est par des moyens analogues que l'on pense arrêter les méfaits de l'agent inconsidérément suscité : Ngolo ayant provoqué l'orgueilleux désir de son fils Ntyi, pensa conjurer les effets de l'ambition qu'il avait fait naître en immolant à ses dieux son petit-fils, fils de ce même Ntyi.

Ces actes qui suscitent, guident et réintègrent l'énergie universelle, diffuse ou personnifiée, constituent ce que nous appelons des rites.

Dans le serment par la cola, celui qui opère a en main un objet aigu (épingle, épine...) avec lequel il pique, ou transperce, la cola, en disant, par exemple : « Prends mon cœur et mon foie et tue-moi si... » (*i ka ne son' ni m bien' ta, ni*)... Ces piqûres indiquent à la « puissance » envers laquelle l'opérateur s'engage que, le cas échéant, elle devra se venger en transperçant le coupable, comme la cola est transpercée par la pointe de l'épine (1). Dans les malédictions, toutes les imprécations proférées sont autant d'indications et, parfois, d'ordres (2) suivant lesquels l'esprit mis en mouvement est sollicité ou obligé d'agir.

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(1) La blouse envoyée par Ma-n-son à Foro-koro fut préalablement transpercée à coups d'aiguille (p. 109).

(2) Lors de l'admission dans les confréries les plus terribles menaces sont proférées contre le traître ou le parjure sous forme d'imprécations indiquant à l'esprit vengeur de quelle manière il devra punir : qu'il t'entre par l'anus et te sorte par la bouche ;...

Il est des cas où l'indigène tend, au contraire, à retenir l'énergie prête à agir, afin d'éviter le mal qui résulterait de cette action. Pour cela, il s'abstient de certains actes : ainsi prennent naissance bien des interdits (*tne*).

Acquérir de la force magique pour se renforcer, ou se comporter de façon à éviter d'être atteint par elle, ou encore s'en débarrasser quand on en est imprégné de manière dangereuse, autant d'opérations qui exigent de ces actes appropriés ou rites, dont seuls les magiciens ou les intuitifs savent déterminer les formes et conditions.

La chronique en témoigne, les chefs s'efforcent, par des procédés magiques, à augmenter cette puissance surnaturelle, base de l'autorité de leur magistrature : Dina Wara fait usage d'un mets à la tête de chèvre qu'il absorbe, seul, dans l'obscurité. Pour Biton, ce sont des bains dont Ngolo, par un subterfuge, s'approprie les vertus, tout comme Biton lui-même avait agi envers Dina Wara, son beau-frère. A toutes sortes de pratiques analogues, Ngolo dut de voir grandir sa « veine », modalité de la puissance surnaturelle que confère un certain potentiel magique, et cette « veine » a comme un rayonnement qui fait bénéficier tout ce qu'elle atteint d'une chance spéciale ; c'est pourquoi les marabouts recommandent à Biton de vivre dans l'intimité de Ngolo pour bénéficier de cette bienheureuse ambiance.

Cette énergie s'attache à tout et principalement aux objets en contact avec ce qui en est imprégné : ce que chacun porte sur soi devient donc une manière d'accumulateur et c'est pourquoi ce qu'un puissant laisse à sa mort est gardé avec soin et constitue le plus précieux de sa succession. La chronique nous montre en quelle haute vénération étaient tenus le bonnet et les armes de Biton.

La force magique s'acquiert donc par des pratiques appropriées qu'indiquent les magiciens ; l'on participe de ses bienfaisants effets en vivant dans l'ambiance de ceux qui en sont dépositaires, ou bien en s'appliquant ce qui provient de ces privilégiés, car c'est encore là un effet de la continuité de la matière : quoi que ce soit, qui émane de la personne ou de l'objet imprégné de force magique, agit comme s'il n'était qu'une fraction même de ce corps. Il est de pratique fréquente que le magicien, ou celui qui accomplit les rites, projette de sa salive sur la personne ou l'objet soumis à ces rites : c'est un moyen de lui transmettre le fluide qui est en lui.

Inversement, il est indispensable de savoir éviter le contact ou les simples émanations de la force magique maléfique. C'est le pourquoi de nombre de pratiques mystérieuses et le secret des innombrables amulettes qui forment autant de boucliers placés, pense-t-on, aux bons endroits, pour repousser toute atteinte. Au magicien, il appartient de composer l'amulette en conséquence et de prescrire la conduite à tenir pour en garder l'efficacité.

Il est à remarquer que la défense constituée contre une personne déterminée ne vaut que contre cette personne et demeure vaine contre celle qui lui succède, par exemple. La chronique nous rapporte ainsi que Bani, chef de Samba-Nyana, usait victorieusement de certains artifices qui empêchaient Ma-n-son de le vaincre ; mais tenu dans l'ignorance de la mort de Ma-n-son et n'ayant, par suite, pris aucune précaution à l'égard de Da, fils et successeur de Ma-n-son, il fut vaincu par Da, contre lequel ses artifices étaient inopérents.

Si, malgré les précautions prises, l'on est frappé, que faire ? Qui n'est d'ailleurs atteint sous forme ou autre ? et le Bambara est toujours porté à croire à une intervention surnaturelle. Il dispose toujours lui-même de quelque recette, plus souvent il a recours aux lumières du « voyant », et, s'il y a lieu, à l'art du magicien.

La médecine indigène est un fouillis de formules magiques et de remèdes qui rappellent fort la pharmacopée du moyen-âge (Voir plus haut les procédés du père Niany).

L'individu ne vit pas isolé, il est partie intégrante d'une communauté : dans la société, si restreinte soit-elle, à laquelle il appartient, il occupe progressivement des situations diverses ; physiquement ou moralement, il subit des transformations ; sous l'empire des circonstances, des événements heureux ou malheureux, des changements s'opèrent en lui : bref, son potentiel magique varie. Ces variations sont toujours considérées comme intéressant le milieu tout entier qu'elles sont susceptibles, dans certains cas (maladie, mort...), d'affecter de manière néfaste. L'individu doit, dès lors, obligatoirement, être soumis à un traitement approprié pour le ramener à l'état normal inoffensif.

De ce point de vue, la vie sociale apparaît comme donnant lieu à des séries de rites de désintégration et de réintégration, ou agrégagion, de l'individu, par rapport au milieu où il évolue : la naissance, la circoncision, le mariage, la maladie, la mort, l'exercice de certains métiers, autant d'états dont l'accès ou l'abandon comportent généralement trois temps : séparation du milieu commun, accomplissement de l'acte, réintégration dans le milieu antérieur ou agrégation à un milieu nouveau. Entre le 1er et le 2e, ainsi qu'entre le 3e et le 4e temps, il existe d'habitude une sorte d'intervalle négatif que nous appelons marge. Ce schéma, qui se dégage de l'analyse de faits multiples, subit en pratique des modifications ou des altérations qui en changent la physionomie ; néanmoins, l'essentiel de ces séquences rituelles demeure si bien qu'en rapprochant ces manifestations extérieures du schéma théorique, il est possible de les mieux comprendre et de restituer à certaines d'entre elles, profondément mutilées, leur signification réelle que l'indigène est, le plus souvent, pour ne pas dire toujours, incapable de définir ou préciser.

L'exposé détaillé des institutions nous fournira l'occasion d'une étude concrète de ces séquences rituelles, qu'une manière d'empirisme séculaire a façonné au point de leur donner si bien figures de lois, qu'elles représentent, en définitive, ce qui, dans la coutume, semble avoir acquis une sorte de pérennité par l'acquiescement général.

Où que ce soit, en effet, chez les Noirs l'on constate que les événements à caractère général (naissance, majorité, mariage, maladie, mort...) sont entourés de pratiques rituelles d'aspect divers, ici et là, mais pouvant toutes se ramener au schéma théorique des trois temps avec marge ; toutes dénotent un fond magique commun ; toutes procèdent d'un long empirisme qui leur a façonné une physionomie propre et relativement très stable pour le milieu auquel elles se rattachent.

Et ce que nous venons de dire de l'individu doit s'entendre des collectivités : celles-ci se comportent entre elles, ou vis-à-vis des individus, comme les individus entre eux. Ce sont, non seulement des personnes morales, comme l'on dit chez nous, mais des personnes tout court, en raison du besoin impulsif d'antropomorphisme du Noir.

Remarquons, enfin, que le Noir ne s'abstrait pas de la nature environnante, il n'est pas arrivé à ce stade où l'homme se considère comme une espèce d'intermédiaire entre le naturel et le surnaturel ; le Noir fait partie intégrante de la nature, et c'est pourquoi il traite celle-ci comme lui-même. Les phénomènes naturels sont donc soumis, de la part de l'homme, à des séquences rituelles pareilles à celles qu'il observe pour ses propres actes.

CHAPITRE III [p. 157]

Les Communautés

1. Généralités

La société indigène n'est pas simple et, dans l'étude de ces pays, l'Européen a fait usage de vocables qui, faute d'être définis, ont brouillé la réalité.

En particulier, il s'est servi couramment des mots « royaume » et « empire » pour désigner les Etats soudanais, et auteurs et lecteurs ont mis, derrière ces expressions, une organisation sociale plus ou moins analogue à celles que ces mots recouvrent dans nos pays.

Or, ces empires ou royaumes sont de simples clans, c'est-à-dire des groupements politiques, imposant une domination à d'autres groupements dont les membres deviennent à leur égard tributaires, gens de castes ou esclaves. Un tel empire, si l'on veut employer ce mot, n'a à vrai dire aucune limite topographique précise ou, si l'on préfère, cette limite est en perpétuelles variation ; de plus, l'étendue de pays englobée sous cette dénomination comporte deux parties : les territoires, que l'on pourrait appeler d'administration directe, dans lesquels l'autorité clanique s'exerce immédiatement, et les territoires dont la position à l'égard du clan est très variable, depuis la sujétion étroite jusqu'à la quasi-indépendance.

Le clan impérial ou, si l'on aime mieux dominant, agit dès lors le plus souvent sur des gens de races autres que celle de ses membres ; fréquemment, lui-même comporte, au moins à l'origine, des éléments ethniques divers.

Pour que des associés aussi hétérogènes puissent vivre côte à côte sans se heurter, il faut qu'ils aient ensemble des mœurs ayant un large fond commun, et c'est ce qui est, en effet. Où qu'on le considère, le milieu indigène présente un cloisonnement dont les tranches semblent, au premier abord, isolées l'une de l'autre ; tout au sommet de l'édifice social, se dresse une manière de noblesse constituée par le chef du clan, sa famille et les familles claniques ; au-dessous, des gens libres, purs ou castés ; enfin, des esclaves. En fait, une pénétration réciproque et continue soude tous ces éléments entre eux.

C'est qu'en effet tout ce corps social n'existe que par la vie intense des cellules qui le constituent et qui sont les familles. Ces familles présentent entre autres caractères d'être très jalouses de leur indépendance respective et, cependant, de s'allier étroitement entre elles, en même temps qu'elles s'assimilent, sans limite, ces étrangers que que sont les esclaves.

C'est donc sur la cellule familiale qu'il importe de fixer notre attention, afin de bien connaître l'élément essentiel de la vie sociale indigène ; d'autant plus même que toutes les collectivités indigènes sont comme calquées sur l'organisation de la famille.

Dans la langue des Bambara, il n'y a pas de termes proprement équivalent à notre mot famille, entendu au sens juridique (1). La collectivité placée sous l'autorité d'un même *fa* (2) est désignée sous des appellaions qui diffèrent selon que l'on envisage la collectivité elle-même, ou bien le lien que cette collectivité occupe.

Notons, tout d'abord, qu'une collectivité, quelle qu'elle soit, formant association, est une *ton'* : ainsi en est-il de tous les gens placés sous l'autorité d'un même *fa* et, de ce point de vue, chacun d'eux est un *ton'-den'* = littéralement « un enfant de la *ton'* », c'est-à-dire un membre de la ton' ; par une dérivation courante, on forme de là le mot *ton'-denya*, désignant proprement l'ensemble des gens d'une même *ton'*, ce qui est l'équivalent du mot

(1) C'est pourquoi nous préférons celui de communauté, mais moyennant les remarques que nous donnons ici l'emploi du mot famille ne présente pas d'ambiguité.

(2) *Fa* signifie, suivant le cas, seigneur, maître, patriarche, père... Il correspond très bien dans la famille au titulaire de cette haute et respectable dignité qui faisait que Mistral disait de son père : mon seigneur père, ou le maître.

français « société », « confrérie ». Quant au chef de la *ton'*, c'est le *ton'-tigi*, terme dont on honore quiconque est à la tête d'une famille importante et qui, à certains égards, est l'équivalent de nos mots « notable », « notabilité ».

Si l'on considère la famille comme l'association des gens issus des mêmes parents, l'on emploie *ba-denya*, dérivé de *ba-den'* : le mot *ba* désignant la mère et au sens large le générateur, mère ou père, *ba-den'* désigne quiconque est issu d'eux, d'où les acceptions de « enfants », « frères », « parents », et pour *ba-denya*, « fraternité » et « parenté ».

Alors que, envisagé au point de vue restreint qui nous occupe ici, *ton'* s'applique à qui vit sous l'autorité du *ton'-tigi*, qu'il lui soit ou non rattaché par le lien de la génération naturelle, le mot *ba-denya*, plus strict, ne vise que les individus qui descendent d'un même auteur mâle commun et par les mâles, ou encore, plus étroitement, les frères et sœurs utérins. Ces deux mots, *ton'* et *ba-denya*, ont donc une acception autre que celle de notre terme « famille » que, dans notre langue juridique, on définit : l'ensemble des personnes unies entre elles par un lien de parenté ou d'alliance.

La famille bambara réside dans des cases qu'une clôture joint les unes aux autres, ou bien entoure complètement en appuyant ses deux extrémités sur un *blon'* (sorte de vestibule). Cette clôture porte, dans certains dialectes, le nom de *gwa*, d'où le terme *gwa-tigi* dont on honore le *fa*, maître de maison.

Gwa ne signifie donc famille que par une déviation et il est bien difficile d'accorder au mot famille, ainsi entendu, une signification précise, car le *gwa* contient des gens qui n'appartiennent pas à la famille et, par contre, ne renferme pas tous les membres de la famille.

Il convient, d'ailleurs, de remarquer que le mot *gwa*, pris dans son sens de « clôture », sert à désigner toutes sortes d'agglomérations ainsi entourées, notamment des parcs à bestiaux. Les variantes *wore* et *gore*, qui sont plus spécialement appliquées à ces parcs, peuvent également être employées, et le sont effectivement, dans certaines régions, pour former des noms de lieux habités ; la forme *kore* ou *kori*, usitée dans les formules de politesse, a la même signification : *kori ka kende* ? signifie, littéralement, toute la maison va-t-elle bien ?

2: Monteil
FA8 Bambara

[Facing p. 160]

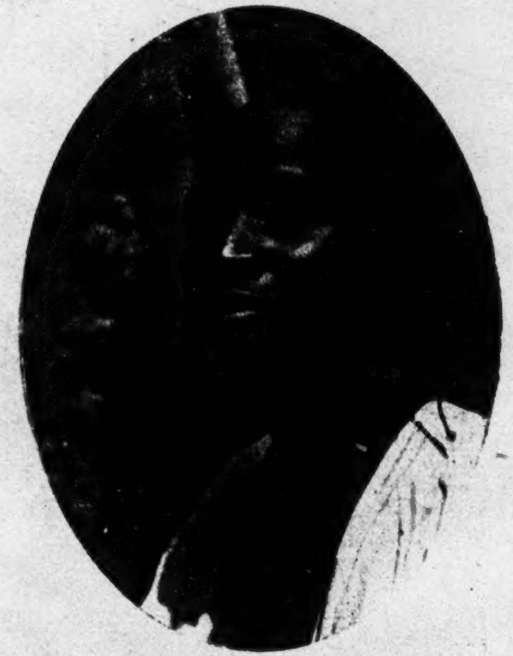

Fig. 5. — Bambara dont les joues sont tailladées à l'imitation du tatouage caractéristique des esclaves des Kouloubali (Région de Diénné)

Fig. 6. — Femme et enfant (Région de Diénné)

Dans certains dialectes bambara, au lieu de *gwa* l'on dit *so*, dont l'acception première est aussi « clôture » et plus spécialement « haie d'épines », par laquelle toute installation primitive se protège ; *so-tigi* équivaut à *gwa-tigi*. Le mot *so* veut aussi dire « maisonnée », c'est-à-dire contenu de la maison, donc tout ce qui vit, habite dans la maison d'une manière permanente ou temporaire et qui appartient ou non à la famille.

Mais il arrive couramment que *gwa* et *so* s'entendent dans le sens étroit de « gens de la famille », c'est-à-dire vivant sous l'autorité du même *fa*.

En résumé, il n'y a pas de terme propre pour désigner expressément et exclusivement une collectivité pareille à celle que notre droit définit « famille ». En fait, les quatre termes susvisés : *ton'*, *ba-denya*, *gwa* et *so* sont usités à cette fin ; c'est l'intention qui leur donne une compréhension déterminée et chacun a, selon les localités, une valeur précisée par l'usage.

Quant à l'habitation même de la famille bambara elle comporte, en général, un plus ou moins grand nombre de cases de types divers. C'est tantôt une case cylindrique en maçonnerie indigène et à toit conique en paille, présentant une coupure — ou ouverture — qui ne descend pas jusqu'au sol et qui est la baie de la porte ; tantôt un parallélipipède de maçonnerie indigène ne présentant non plus, d'ordinaire, d'autre ouverture que la porte.

Des abris (*gwa*), constitués par des sortes de toits horizontaux en paille supportés par des piquets fourchus, disposés d'ordinaire au hasard des circonstances ou suivant les désirs du maître de la maison, jamais en tout cas d'après des règles traditionnelles ou une orientation immuable. Toutes ces habitations ou dépendances sont encloses soit par un mur de pisé, ou une haie continue, dont les deux extrémités s'appuient aux côtés de la case dite *blon'*, qui est comme le vestibule de la maison.

C'est dans le *blon'* que se trouve l'autel des ancêtres et des dieux domestiques.

Les maisons des notables présentent une disposition mieux étudiée : au lieu d'une seule cour intérieure, il y en a deux, trois et même davantage, échelonnées quelquefois en profondeur. Le maître répartit son monde de manière à faire un triage dans les éléments hétérogènes qui fusionnent sous son égide : la domesticité et les jeunes gens d'une part ; les femmes, filles et petits enfants d'autre part ; enfin, le successeur éventuel sont comme parqués dans des îlots particuliers, tandis que le *fa* lui-même se trouve dans une manière d'isolement respectueux, qui augmente encore son autorité.

Chez les grands personnages et en particulier chez les chefs de clan, cette disposition est la règle, l'isolement en profondeur est une mesure de quasi-sécurité. Autrefois, une sorte de forteresse, de réduit de résistance, le *tata*, était édifié au centre de la maison royale : la poudre, les armes, tous les moyens de défense étaient là en réserve et ce n'était pas chose facile à prendre que cette solide construction, au milieu de l'inextricable fouilli des cases adjacentes, elles-mêmes entourées d'un solide mur de maçonnerie indigène.

Les gens d'une même maisonnée se classent en trois catégories : les gens libres (*woro-u*), les gens de caste (*nyamaka-la*) et les esclaves (*dyon'-u*).

Les gens libres. — Dans la famille, les gens libres comprennent : les hommes, *tye-u*, c'est-à-dire les mâles circoncis ; *moso-u*, les femmes excisées ; *den'-u*, les enfants de l'un et l'autre sexes.

Par rapport à la puissance familiale (*faya*) dont ils peuvent disposer, les hommes sont qualifiés : *koro-u*, les vieux, les anciens ; ou *kamalen'-u*, les jeunes maîtres. Parmi les vieux, les *bina* (oncles), frères du *fa*, ont une situation prépondérante : ce sont eux qui forment, en quelque manière, le conseil de famille restreint, ils gèrent d'ordinaire le bien de communauté sous la direction du *fa*.

Parmi les femmes l'on distingue : les mères, c'est-à-dire les femmes en puissance de mari et qui sont effectivement des mères de famille, *ba-u* ; des vieilles, *moso-koro-u* ; des aïeules, *mama-u*, et, d'autre part, les filles, *moso-de-u*.

Quant aux enfants, ce sont indistinctement des *de*, à moins de spécifier *de-n-ke* = garçon ; *de-moso* ou *deni* = fillette.

De plus, tout mâle pouvant disposer de la puissance familiale (*faya*), à quelque titre que ce soit, est dit *fa* (1) :

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(1) De telle sorte qu'en fait, tout mâle est *fa*, car il exerce ou est susceptible d'exercer dans l'avenir la *faya*. On dit humoristiquement *fa* à de tout jeunes enfants, tout comme l'on dit *ba* à des petites filles. Ces voca-

le père, pour ses enfants et le mari pour ses femmes ; le grand-père à l'égard de tous ses descendants ; l'oncle envers ceux qui ont des droits au bien de famille...

Le générateur, le procréateur, le père, c'est le *wolo-fa*, dont tous les descendants sont également appelés *de* par rapport à lui.

Il n'y a pas à proprement parler de terme signifiant frère ou sœur, on peut cependant dire *baden'-ma-ke*, *baden'-ma-moso* ; entre eux, les enfants d'un même père se disent *koro* (vieux) ou *dua*, *duani* (jeune), respectivement pour parler de ou à celui qui est l'aîné ou le puîné et qu'il s'agisse de consanguins ou d'utérins. Strictement le *duani*, c'est le frère cadet utérin.

Pas de terme spécial pour neveu : les fils du frère sont, en effet, des *de* parce qu'ils sont sous la puissance de l'oncle tout comme ses propres enfants ; quant aux fils de la sœur, ils sont hors de la famille de leur mère, et pour la famille de leur père ils sont des *de*.

Les cousins, en tant qu'issus de frères sont, par le fait de leur soumission au même *fa*, des *de* et, se considérant comme frères, s'appellent respectivement *koro* ou *duani*.

Il y a une manière de cousinage entre enfants issus de frère et de sœur, avec une sorte de prédominance reconnue des premiers sur les seconds.

Egalement une manière de parenté entre enfants issus de deux sœurs.

En résumé, il n'y a de parenté vraie qu'entre gens relevant du même *fa*.

Quant aux alliés, ils sont englobés sous l'appellation unique de *biran'*, littéralement « celui avec lequel on est d'accord ».

Les femmes, *moso-u*, par rapport à leur époux commun, entre elles sont des *sina-u* ; par rapport à leurs enfants ou aux enfants de la maisonnée, ce sont des *ba-u* (mères), et le titre de *ba* est constamment employé par déférence ou respect ; aux très vieilles femmes l'on dit *mama* = grand'mère, aïeule.

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bles peuvent être employés comme chez nous dans les locutions familières où l'on dit « le père un tel » ou « la mère une telle » sans avoir en vue l'état réel de père ou de mère.

Du reste, les mots *fa* et *ba* s'emploient aussi par marque de déférence, tout comme nous disons « maître », « maîtresse ». Voire même l'on peut dire que *fa* et *ba* sont dans le langage usuel parfois équivalents à nos termes Monsieur et Madame, avec les diverses nuances qu'ils comportent.

Les gens de caste. — Sont des gens libres déchus qui forment une manière de clientèle des grandes familles. Nous en reparlerons.

Les esclaves. — Dans la maison demeuraient seuls les esclaves auxquels étaient confiés certaines fonctions. Lorsque le maître avait discerné des qualités domestiques chez un esclave nouveau, il le gardait à son service et souvent se montrait alors bon et généreux envers lui. La coutume admettait les enfants de tels esclaves à une situation privilégiée ; « nés dans la maison » (*wolo-so-u*), ils ne pouvaient pas être vendus, sauf en cas d'extrême nécessité. Parmi les *wolo-so-u* se recrutait tout le personnel de confiance, et les plus âgés, les plus expérimentés, les plus affectionnés avaient une très grosse influence sur les affaires de la maison ; ils connaissaient les secrets et les ressources de la communauté, mieux que la plupart des membres de cette communauté.

Une autre catégorie d'esclaves était composée de ceux qui, au bout de trois générations, se trouvaient *ipso facto* libérés (*dyongoron'-u*). Leur rôle a été considérable dans la société indigène.

2. La Communauté patriarcale ou patriarchie

Le dieu mâne. — Pour qu'une coutume nous apparaisse avec sa physionomie la plus expressive, il faut l'observer dans son épanouissement maximum et, en même temps, marquer tout ce qui, adventice ou étranger, en modifie l'aspect et l'allure, en adultère le fond.

Le culte des ancêtres est l'essence même de la famille : la manifestation la plus caracréristique de ce culte est celle des funérailles du chef de famille, du patriarche (*fa*). L'on assiste là à la transformation de l'homme en dieu-mâne en un espace de quarante jours.

Cet espace est comme une marge où s'élabore, dans le présent, la liaison entre le passé et l'avenir ; où s'établit la continuité entre les morts et les vivants, par l'intermédiaire du défunt. Coutume religieuse, pratique magique, loi civile, tout se trouve là accumulé en un apparent désordre qui déroute d'autant plus l'observateur superficiel, ou inexpérimenté, que divers faits accessoires ou circonstanciels masquent l'essentiel en s'y surajoutant.

N'en est-il pas de même pour l'étranger qui, en France, voit se dérouler les funérailles d'un grand personnage ? Comment, s'il n'y est pas préparé, saura-t-il reconnaître les rites religieux et les faits civils qui forment le fond commun des obsèques des grands comme des humbles, portés pour les uns à leur plus grand développement, réduits pour les autres à leur strict minimum ?

Ce qu'il importe donc de mettre ici en évidence, c'est le substratum sur lequel reposent toutes les manifestations funéraires. Pour la clarté de l'exposition, nous diviserons la période qui va du jour du décès au quarantième jour après l'inhumation, en quatre phases : *a*) du décès à l'inhumation ; *b*) l'inhumation ; *c*) les fêtes funéraires ; *d*) le deuil.

a) *Du décès à l'inhumation.* — Dès que le décès survient, l'annonce en est faite à tous, mais suivant des modalités appropriées.

Les lamentations des femmes éclatent et répandent la nouvelle dans le voisinage immédiat, tandis que des coups de fusils préviennent toute l'agglomération. Ces faits avaient quelque chose de rituel au temps où les Bambara mouraient dans une expédition de guerre ; Raffenel nous en a gardé une manifestation remarquable :

> « Lorsqu'un Bambara succombait à la guerre, trois
> « coups de fusils, tirés à la porte de sa case, par un de ses
> « compagnons d'armes, annonçait sa mort à sa famille.
> « A ce bruit, les pleurs répondaient et de toutes les cases
> « sortaient en pleurant les femmes du village pour courir
> « à la place où s'était fait entendre le funèbre signal. On
> « abandonnait tout pour prendre part à cette douleur. On
> « pleurait d'abord, puis l'on courait s'informer en route
> « de l'endroit où il fallait pleurer...
>
> « Le guerrier chargé de cette mission arrivait à toute
> « bride à la porte. Il arrêtait son cheval court, chargeait
> « lentement son arme, la déchargeait, la rechargeait
> « encore, puis encore..., et quand le troisième coup avait
> « retenti, il s'éloignait avec la même vitesse, sans pro-
> « férer une parole, sans donner un détail... Deux coups
> « annonçaient l'esclavage. »

Aujourd'hui, c'est surtout à la mort d'un chasseur ou du père d'un chasseur que la poudre parle ; mais toujours, en toutes circonstances, éclatent les cris, les vociférations des femmes que leurs voisines, leurs amies, leurs parentes, viennent rejoindre.

Des cavaliers partent prévenir les fils du défunt qui sont au loin.

Pendant ce temps, le chef des esclaves ou le majordome, ou l'homme de confiance, ou un ami ou voisin du défunt, va prévenir le chef et les notabilités du village.

Aussitôt ces personnages viennent à la maison mortuaire, la lance en main. Reçus par celui qui provisoirement dirige la maison, ils se rendent auprès du défunt pour en reconnaître l'identité et expriment en même temps leurs condoléances à la famille, représentée par celui qui les reçoit ; puis, ils se retirent.

Dans la case mortuaire, un silence s'établit tandis que les femmes procèdent à la toilette du mort. Elles lavent le corps avec de l'eau chaude, aromatisée généralement avec du basilic : *su-ko-la* (*ocymum album et fébrifugum*) ; elles le sèchent, l'ensevelissent dans des pièces d'étoffe en coton blanc du pays ou le revêtent de ses effets également blancs. Une natte en grosse paille (*tyekala* ; *kara*) est disposée au milieu de la pièce ; une natte fine et souple en feuilles d'iphène est mise par dessus, et c'est sur cette deuxième natte que les femmes allongent le cadavre. Parfois elles posent la pierre, qui leur sert à moudre le grain, sur le ventre du mort, pour l'empêcher de gonfler.

Cette toilette terminée, les femmes s'asseyent à la mode indigène, dans la case mortuaire, sur des tabourets minuscules, drapées dans des étoffes blanches en tissu indigène. Celles qui arrivent du dehors témoignent d'une grande douleur : elles pleurent, elles crient, elles se couvrent la tête avec une étoffe et se hâtent vers la case mortuaire. Dès qu'elles y pénètrent, elles se taisent et cessent de pleurer.

Toutefois la douleur, chez les Bambara, n'est point muette : il est d'usage qu'elle s'extériorise ; aussi, dès que l'assemblée est suffisante, des chants commencent, rythmés par des battements de mains. Au hasard de l'inspiration l'une ou l'autre dit les exploits, les vertus du défunt. Des pleureuses, des vocifératrices de profession se mêlent à l'assistance, en dirigent et en exaltent peu à peu les bruyantes manifestations.

Le maître intérimaire s'installe à la porte ou à l'intérieur du *blon'*, ou vestibule de la maison, et reçoit là les condoléances.

Pour permettre l'arrivée des parents éloignés ou absents, quelques jours s'écoulent entre le décès et l'inhumation. Les chants funèbres prennent, durant cette période, une grande extension et sont abandonnés à des professionnels qui s'accompagnent d'instruments divers : tamtams, xylophones (*bala*) ; guitares. — Chanteurs, danseurs, vociférätrices se dépensent d'autant plus qu'ils savent pouvoir compter sur une meilleure rémunération.

Les enfants de la maison (*den'-u* ; *de-u*) ont dans ces jours d'attente une grande liberté : comme si l'autorité qui bridait leur indépendance avait cessé avec la vie du défunt. On les laisse prendre poules ou chèvres, faire de bons repas, chanter, danser, vivre en liesse.

La nuit qui précède l'inhumation, le mort est installé au dehors sous un abri (*gwa*), les chants et les danses continuent. Il est de coutume que les enfants (*de-u*) de la maison, guidés par les professionnels de l'orchestre funèbre, participent effectivement aux chants et aux danses funèbres.

Les parents, les amis, les voisins, les obligés de la famille doivent apporter des offrandes proportionnées à leur condition ou à leur obligation, pour contribuer aux repas et aux aumônes funèbres. C'est un devoir très strict : tout manquement n'est pas qu'une impiété envers le mort, c'est une offense que la famille doit venger. La chronique du Ségou en donne le témoignage.

A côté de ce cérémonial religieux, se déroulent des faits d'ordre différent. Au cas où le décès paraîtrait dû à des causes suspectes, il incombe à la famille de rechercher sans retard ces causes du décès. C'est plus particulièrement le successeur présumé du *fa*, s'il est présent, qui doit aussitôt mettre tout en œuvre pour être fixé à cet égard : il interroge les ancêtres, il recourt aux voyants et aux magiciens. Les funérailles se trouvent parfois dominées et même conditionnées par les résultats de ces recherches et de ces consultations. A tout le moins, il serait indispensable d'obtenir la levée de l'interdit qui frappe le décédé au cas où il aurait été tué par un génie (*nyana*). Des sacrifices, des aumônes ou le paiement d'une amende sont alors nécessaires en même temps que l'intervention du prêtre du dit *nyana*.

Le plus souvent, c'est à un prêtre (*nyana-n-tigi*) que le cadavre est abandonné quand le défunt appartient à une confrérie.

En tout état de cause, il est de coutume de faire des aumônes au croisement des sentiers à proximité du village.

D'autre part, la mort du *fa* entraîne la carence (1) de l'autorité dont il était titulaire et il peut en résulter les plus grands inconvénients, puisque chacun devient alors comme indépendant. C'est pourquoi le serviteur qui avait la confiance du maître et administrait effectivement la maison, continue à tenir son rôle après avoir pris certaines précautions (2). Il doit veiller plus spécialement à ce que les biens mobiliers du défunt ne disparaissent pas. Il les connaît, il en est gardien responsable ; il se fait remettre par les femmes les bijoux en or, les étoffes de valeur... Il met tout en lieu sûr et en fait l'inventaire en présence du successeur présumé dès que celui-ci est présent.

b) *Inhumation.* — Il arrive que le défunt est enterré dans le sol de sa case ou, tout au moins, dans un coin de sa maison. D'autrefois, il y a un cimetière en dehors du village, parfois près du bosquet ou gîte le *nyana dugu-da-siri* (génie protecteur du village), et l'on remarque alors que la tombe est d'autant plus proche de ce lieu sacré que le défunt était un homme plus important.

Pour les personnages de marque, la fosse présente d'ordinaire une disposition spéciale. Longue de deux mètres environ, elle s'ouvre sur deux à trois mètres de largeur au niveau du sol, tandis qu'à une profondeur de 1^{m},50, elle n'a guère plus d'un mètre de large. Trois de ses parois sont verticales, la quatrième est en pente. Au bas et dans toute la longueur de cette dernière, est pratiquée une niche pour recevoir le corps, que l'on y dépose sur le côté droit, la tête au sud, s'il s'agit d'un homme ; sur le côté gauche et la tête au nord, s'il s'agit d'une femme.

Il est habituel que ce soient les prêtres des confréries qui creusent les fosses. Au cours de ce travail, ils recueillent, suivant un cérémonial spécial, divers éléments pour leurs préparations magiques. D'ailleurs, l'on tient pour dangereux de manipuler tout ce qui touche aux choses de la mort et il ne faut rien moins que les prêtres pour ne courir aucun danger.

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(1) A la mort du roi du Kaarta, la carence de la souveraineté entraînait des désordres anarchiques souvent graves.

(2) C'est de ce rôle que Ngolo Dyâra ambitionnait d'être chargé quand il demandait à être placé « gardien de la porte du maître ».

Lorsque le moment de l'inhumation est proche, a lieu la cérémonie touchante des adieux au mort, sous la direction du chef des fossoyeurs. Enveloppé dans les nattes sur lesquelles il reposait dans la case, le cadavre est installé sous un abri (*geva*), dans la cour de la maison. Chacun vient à son tour lui rendre hommage et lui demander pardon. Chacun, tout à tour, du plus petit au plus grand, s'avance, s'accuse de ses manquements, de ses fautes, en implore le pardon et supplie le défunt de lui accorder sa protection : le tout par l'intermédiaire du chef des fossoyeurs, qui crie sans interruption : « Pardon ! ne te fâche « pas : nous t'aimions, nous te respections, sois heureux et « protège-nous. » Et tous reprennent en chœur : « Accorde-« nous de la pluie en hivernage, rends nos moissons « abondantes ; fais nos maisons prospères, donne-nous « des enfants nombreux, des femmes, la richesse. »

Lorsque cette cérémonie a pris fin, les fossoyeurs placent le cadavre sur leurs épaules, précédés des petits (*de-u*) qui se lamentent et pleurent, suivi de la foule des parents, amis, voisins... ; ils partent à allure rapide, presqu'au pas de course, vers la tombe. Là, le cadavre est déposé à terre au bord de la fosse ; les hommes se rangent tout autour, les femmes se rangent derrière eux ; les fils du défunt descendent dans la fosse, ils ouvrent la natte, saisissent le corps et le couchent dans la niche. Ils déchirent un coin du linceul ou de la blouse et donnent le bout de ce ruban à un des assistants qui le tient hors de la fosse. Avec des lamelles de bois ou des dalles en terre séchées au soleil, ils ferment l'orifice de la niche et bouchent soigneusement les interstices avec de la terre trempée et pétrie sur place.

Durant cela, les femmes chantent à mi-voix en claquant des mains, et les tamtams les accompagnent sourdement.

Le travail achevé, les fils du défunt sortent de la fosse et le chef des fossoyeurs s'avance avec, sur l'épaule, sa houe emmanchée à l'envers et tenant à la main une calebasse pleine d'eau ; le silence se fait, les femmes et les tambours se taisent. Il verse de l'eau du côté de la tête, en disant : « Vois cette eau, ne te fâche pas, pardonne-

« nous, donne-nous de la pluie en hivernage et une abondante moisson. Que le vent souffle de l'est ou de l'ouest, « du nord ou du sud, qu'il nous soit favorable. Donne-« nous une longue vie, une postérité nombreuse, des femmes, des richesses. » Et les assistants répondent : « Qu'il « en soit ainsi (*o de ka ke*). »

Alors, avec la houe à l'envers, les fossoyeurs comblent la fosse. Les femmes reprennent leurs chants rythmés par leurs claquements de mains ; soutenues par le bruit sourd du tamtam, elles disent : « Notre *fa* est mort, mais il « reviendra ! Jeunes gens, comblez bien la fosse pour que « pas un sorcier (*suba*), pas une hyène, par un fauve, ne « puisse enlever le cadavre. »

La fosse comblée, celui qui tient le bout du ruban du linceul le tire jusqu'à ce qu'il casse. C'est une précieuse relique que cette bandelette comme matière à diverses opérations magiques : on en fait de ces liens magiques dits *tafo* dont on se ceint pour être préservé des maux de reins et des apparutions spectrales (1).

Sur la tombe, on dépose la natte grossière qui servait de couche au défunt et aussi ses savates usagées et son pot à eau. La natte fine est d'ordinaire donnée à un ami ou à une famille, qui la brûle en dehors du village (1).

Il y a des jours où l'on ne procède pas volontiers à l'inhumation : le mercredi et le samedi (1).

Parfois, enfin, lorsque la niche est sur le point d'être close, on y introduit un petit poulet blanc (2) pour conjurer le mauvais sort (1).

Au retour de l'enterrement, on assomme le chien (1) du décédé, à moins de dispositions contraires expresses laissées par celui-ci. Il est des Bambara qui achètent un chien en vue de cet honneur posthume. Il semble que ce soit encore là une pratique magique pour conjurer le spectre du défunt (1).

Revenus à la maison, les beaux-frères du défunt y mangent le mets national, la bouillie de mil (*to*). Quand ils partent pour regagner leurs demeures respectives on leur remet, de la part du défunt, un coq ou une poule qu'ils reçoivent assommé et qu'ils doivent manger dans la route avant d'arriver chez eux. Au cas où cette volaille ne serait mangée qu'au village, elle provoquerait la vengeance du mort : son spectre (*nyama*) poursuivrait les impies. C'est donc encore là une pratique magique pour conjurer les effets maléfiques de la mort.

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(1) Ce sont là quelques exemples de ces innombrables pratiques de magie, qui sous les formes les plus variées accompagnent tous les actes importants.

(2) C'est un œuf couvé s'il s'agit d'une femme.

c) *Les fêtes funéraires*. — Dès l'annonce du décès, c'est un devoir pour tout parent, voisin, ami, obligé à un titre quelconque, d'apporter une offrande proportionnée à sa situation ou à son obligation, pour honorer le défunt (1).

Dans certain cas, le produit de ces offrandes est considérable : la chronique du Ségou nous apprend que, lors de la mort de Ngolo, les cauris donnés remplirent sept cases, ce qui représente plusieurs milliers de francs. On donne d'ailleurs ce que l'on veut ou ce que l'on peut : cheval, bœuf, mouton, volaille, cauris, or, toile indigène en bande, étoffes, céréales...

En principe, tout cela doit être employé à honorer le mort et l'on y procède de diverses manières. D'abord, il est obligatoire de donner à manger, et surtout à boire, à quiconque présente ses condoléances. De ces repas et beuveries résulte une sorte de communion, car de tout ce que l'on consomme l'on fait d'abord offrande au défunt et aussi aux ancêtres qu'il est allé rejoindre : c'est une manière de communion avec les morts de la famille.

Ces repas, ces beuveries tournent à l'orgie, et l'observateur inexpérimenté ou superficiel pense que l'on fait ripaille aux dépens du mort. En fait, loin de perdre, la famille des grands personnages reçoit plus qu'elle ne dépense, du moins dans le présent (2). Plus ces cérémonies se déroulent dans l'abondance, plus elles sont réputées flatteuses pour le défunt et susceptibles de susciter sa bienveillance pour ses survivants.

En principe, ce qui n'est pas consommé ne doit pas accroître le bien familial, il doit être donné en aumône aux pauvres. Il est donc tout naturel que les gens miséreux du village viennent prendre part à ces repas ; on les y convie ; on doit aussi les y traiter avec beaucoup de fraternité, lorsque le sentiment qui préside à ces fêtes est conforme à l'esprit de la coutume. C'est pourquoi la chronique rapporte qu'à la mort de Ngolo, Nyana-n-koro prétendait que les cauris donnés devaient être distribués aux pauvres, aux voyageurs, à tous les gens dans le besoin : c'est l'esprit même de la coutume, cette forme d'aumône est particulièrement agréable aux morts.

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(1) Nous avons vu précédemment les sanctions appliquées lors des funérailles de Biton ou de Ngolo.

(2) Il faudra, en effet, qu'elle se conduise envers les morts des familles qui l'ont ainsi honorée de manière réciproque lorsque pareils décès surviendront chez elles.

Sept jours durant ces agapes mortuaires se poursuivent, on les nomme *dyansa* = aumônes. C'est le temps plus spécialement affecté aux condoléances que l'on nomme *sanga-fo* (1) = propos mortuaires. Il advient que le délai est réduit à trois jours, mais c'est en fait la septaine qui est le temps le mieux conforme à la coutume, ainsi qu'en témoigne la chronique du Ségou donnée ci-devant.

Tout cela se passe à « la porte du défunt », au *blon'-da*, selon l'expression indigène, c'est-à-dire à la place même où l'ancien s'asseyait et où l'on fait les offrandes aux ancêtres, dans la pensée que l'âme du mort est là et qu'elle se réjouit au milieu de cette affluence qui l'honore, lui rend témoignage de ses bienfaits et aussi de sa puissance. Dans l'esprit du Bambara, ces repas de communion forment un lien très fort entre tous ceux qui y participent. Consommer ensemble des viandes consacrées est une manière de sacrement qui oblige les participants à s'entr'aider mutuellement : le traître est voué à la malédiction des Mânes.

Sans doute, la magie permet de s'affranchir de tels liens et même de profiter de ces réunions mortuaires pour perpétrer les plus noirs desseins, mais cela ne change rien aux concepts sur lesquels reposent les *dyansa* et les *sanga-fo*.

d) *Le deuil.* — Le huitième jour, a lieu la purification de la case du mort. Les femmes pilent des écorces d'arbre — caïlcédrat (2), notamment, — les détrempent, et répandent cette eau dans la case, qu'elles balayent ensuite.

Elles s'assemblent, tenant des balais indigènes, elles chantent en esquissant un pas de danse ; elles réunissent les ordures et vont les jeter à un carefour des chemins, hors du village (3). La case peut, dès lors, être occupée.

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(1) Littéralement : parole (à cause) de la mort.

(2) *Khaya senegalensis.*

(3) Préférablement au grand carrefour (*da-n-kun'-ba-la*).

Pendant ces huit jours qui suivent l'inhumation, les filles du *fa* vivent en une sorte de réclusion commune et très étroite : elles passent la journée dans le *blon*', où elles filent le coton et prennent leurs repas. Pour leurs besoins naturels, elles ne sortent que toutes ensemble ; deux fois par jour, le matin et le soir, elles vont processionnellement, la tête recouverte d'un bonnet d'étoffe blanche. Elles passent la nuit ensemble dans une case unique, autant que possible.

Quant aux femmes du défunt, durant la lune qui suit le décès, elles ne sortent qu'en cas d'absolue nécessité, vêtues de blanc, la tête coiffée d'une sorte de capeline blanche, les pieds protégés par des sandales en peau de chèvre. A la fin de la lune, elles procèdent, nuitamment et séparément, à une sorte de purification rituelle, au carrefour extérieur du village.

Ainsi se poursuit insensiblement, jusqu'au 40ᵉ jour, le retour à la vie normale : alors, et alors seulement, le continuateur du défunt est définitivement reconnu et installé, ainsi qu'en témoigne la chronique du Ségou.

Pour clore cet exposé, remarquons combien toute séquence rituelle repose sur des périodes de temps dont la véritable signification paraît devoir être recherchée dans la magie. La religion astrale des sémites enseignait, en effet, que les 3ᵉ, 7ᵉ et 40ᵉ jours après le décès, la lune exerçait une action plus puissante sur la destruction des corps (1). Il semble que ce soit à de telles croyances qu'il faille attribuer les rites précisément répartis d'après ces nombres, chez les Bambara, d'autant plus qu'il est d'opinion courante, chez les Soudanais, que le 40ᵉ jour marque la séparation des os et des chairs des cadavres inhumés.

LA COMMUNAUTÉ PATRIARCALE

Le *fa* étant mort, tous les biens qui lui appartenaient demeurent indivis entre ses ayants droit : de la sorte, se trouve constituée la communauté patriarcale, dont l'étude comporte deux parties : la communauté des personnes et la communauté des biens.

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(1) Voir séance de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres du 9 août 1918, communication de M. Franz Cumont : *La commémoration des morts et l'astrologie* (*Journal Officiel* de 1918, p. 7224).

I. LA COMMUNAUTÉ DES PERSONNES

Les communautaires. — Font seuls partie de la communauté patriarcale les descendants légitimes du *fa* défunt, provenant de lui immédiatement (fils et filles), ou se rattachant à lui par les mâles exclusivement (descendants de ses fils, petits-fils).

Sont donc hors de la communauté les descendants du *fa* par ses filles : ils appartiennent aux communautés patriarcales de leurs pères respectifs.

Si, à son décès, le *fa* ne laisse pas d'héritiers mâles, il n'y a pas de communauté patriarcale possible ; ses biens sont répartis entre ses filles ou, à défaut, entre ses frères. S'il ne laissait que son père ou sa mère, ou tel autre ascendant, ses biens pourraient leur être dévolus. S'il laisse seulement des filles, son patrimoine leur est réparti. Mais dans l'un ou l'autre cas, il n'y a plus de communauté.

La légitimité est la condition nécessaire et suffisante pour compter parmi les communautaires. L'enfant légitime est celui qui est né du mariage, c'est-à-dire de l'union conforme à la coutume de deux personnes libres. Mais l'esclavage, en introduisant la concubine au foyer, a fait fléchir cette rigueur, parce que l'homme libre n'a pas voulu avoir des fils esclaves. Dans la pratique, donc, la maternité fruit des œuvres d'un homme libre libère l'esclave qui est la concubine de cet homme, et les enfants de cette union accèdent à la communauté. Dangereux privilège, souvent contesté par les frères consanguins, issus des épouses libres.

Etant donnée la diversité des liens conjugaux, depuis le mariage jusqu'à l'union libre, l'on conçoit à quelles multiples discussions est exposée la légitimité de chacun. L'autorité du *fa* impose, de son vivant, telle solution qu'il lui plaît, mais, au décès du *fa*, les contestations d'état n'en sont que plus violentes pour avoir été contenues ou éludées.

Ces disputes puisent, en outre, un aliment dans la différence de condition qui est faite aux communautaires au sein de la communauté. L'ensemble des prérogatives de toute nature, qui dressent le *fa* au-dessus des siens, constituent une manière de dignité éminente dont l'essence est cette omnipotence, *faya*, dont a été tiré le titre de *fa* (maître, seigneur...). C'est au regard de la *faya* que prennent rang, entre eux, les communautaires.

Ceux-là qui, seuls, peuvent prétendre à la *faya*, ce sont les communautaires mâles : pour cela, tous peuvent s'intituler *fa*. Par contre, en aucun cas, les femmes ne peuvent détenir cette autorité : elles sont *fantan'-u* = impuissantes.

Parmi les *fa-u*, une distinction s'établit en tenant compte du degré et de l'âge : c'est à ceux du degré le plus proche du défunt que vont d'abord les dignités dont il va être question. Les descendants mâles au 1er degré forment une sorte de sénat dont l'aîné d'entre eux est comme le président-né : c'est lui vraiment le *fa*, représentant effectif du défunt ; celui qui vient immédiatement après lui par rang d'âge est son *syere* (suivant), c'est son successeur présomptif à la tête de la communauté. Les autres sénateurs, généralement frères du *fa*, sont, pour les descendants au 2e degré et leurs enfants, les oncles = *bina-u*. Ce terme de parenté a acquis, par suite de l'autorité qui s'attache à la condition des *bina-u* dans la communauté, la valeur d'un titre honorifique : on le décerne aux hommes auxquels on veut marquer plus particulièrement une respectueuse estime (1). En raison de leur âge, tous les sénateurs de la communauté sont communément appelés *koro-u* = les anciens, et le *fa* est le premier d'entre eux.

Parmi les autres hommes de la communauté, l'on distingue ceux qui, étant circoncis, sont mariés, voire pères de familles, ou en tout cas sur le point d'être l'un ou l'autre : ce sont les *kamalen'-u*, littéralement « les jeunes maîtres ». En dernier lieu, viennent les non-circoncis : les plus proches sont des adolescents, les *solima-u* = gens du *soli*, c'est-à-dire qui doivent subir prochainement la circoncision ; les autres sont des garçons en bas âge (*den-tye-u*).

Le fa : son élection et son installation. — Le personnage de la communauté sur lequel toute l'attention doit être concentrée, c'est le *fa*.

Même si, du vivant du *fa*, le successeur de celui-ci est connu, il n'en résulte pas qu'au décès du *fa* le remplacement aura lieu comme il est prévu.

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(1) A remarquer que dans « La Case de l'oncle Tom », Miss Beecher Stow explique que chez les esclaves d'Amérique le mot « oncle » avait précisément cette valeur de titre respectueux et honorifique.

Tout d'abord, le successeur désigné est libre de refuser la *faya* en alléguant tel motif qu'il lui plaît, y compris sa convenance personnelle seule. La chronique du Ségou rapporte que le fils de Biton, résidant à Oïtala, refusa la *faya* parce que outré des excès des « gens du Ségou ».

Plus souvent, la *faya* échappe aux prétendants pour des motifs qui se ramènent à deux chefs.

Nul ne peut être *fa* s'il n'appartient à la communauté. Dès lors, celui qui, volontairement ou non, cesse d'être communautaire, ne peut parvenir à la *faya*. L'on peut cesser d'être communautaire soit en fait, soit en droit. En fait : par l'éloignement prolongé, l'esclavage, l'établissement à l'étranger sans espoir de retour... C'est alors, en quelque sorte, suspension de l'exercice du droit sans atteinte à sa jouissance. Par contre, lorsque le communautaire renonce expressément à la communauté, ou bien lorsqu'il en est exclu par décision du *fa* (1) et du sénat, il est déchu de son droit, lui et, par voie de conséquence, ceux qui viendraient par représentation de lui : la branche dont il est le chef est désormais morte à l'égard de la famille.

En second lieu, nul communautaire n'est élevé à la *faya* s'il ne remplit certaines conditions, au premier rang desquelles sont : la légitimité et la primogéniture.

La qualité de communautaire fait présumer la légitimité du prétendant ; toutefois, comme il arrive que cette question n'a pas été examinée en fait, ou même que par la volonté du *fa* elle a été écartée, les ayants droit qu'elle lèse, les intrigants — et il y en a toujours — qui cherchent un prétexte, la soulèvent et il en résulte souvent d'infinies complications.

La primogéniture n'est pas moins sujette à caution et partout est le motif dont s'autorisent les opposants. L'on conçoit, en effet, que dans les ménages polygames, où les femmes sont parfois établies en divers lieux hors de la présence du mari, les naissances simultanées ou en des temps très rapprochés donnent lieu à des contestations en ce qui concerne le premier né.

Enfin, bien qu'étant le plus âgé des légitimes, le prétendant peut se voir écarté par les dispositions prises contre lui par le *fa* défunt. Il semble, en effet, que bien que fixée dans le sens de l'élection du plus âgé des légitimes, la coutume cède à la volonté expresse du *fa*, qui l'écarte avec l'assentiment du sénat. Grave décision qui peut donner lieu aux plus violentes attaques.

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(1) Ainsi Ma-n-son prononça l'exclusion de la *faya* de ses frères Séri et Ba, qui étant demeurés spectateurs dans sa lutte contre Nyana-n-koro, s'étaient par cela même montrés hostiles au *fa*.

Cela pose, d'ailleurs, la question de savoir si des capacités ou aptitudes particulières doivent être exigées du prétendant en outre des conditions de légitimité et primogéniture : par exemple, peut-on exiger qu'il soit bien portant, actif, bon administrateur... Il semble que le sénat peut écarter quiconque lui semble indigne et cela s'entend notamment de l'homme libre qui est tombé, volontairement, de cette dignité en vivant comme un homme de caste ou un esclave. Par là même, il s'est déjà exclu de la communauté, mais il arrive parfois que cette exclusion n'a pas encore été constatée ou prononcée avant que se pose la question d'accession à la *faya.*

Le plus généralement, les discussions ont pour fondement la légitimité ou la primogéniture, et il n'est pas rare qu'avant de mourir, le *fa* insiste pour le choix de celui que la coutume désigne et menace de sa malédiction quiconque tentera de l'écarter ou de se soustraire à son autorité (1).

Partout, dans les associations qui ont adopté un régime de communauté analogue à celui de la famille, l'élection du chef est conditionnée par ces seuls éléments. L'on peut en conclure que ce sont là les bases consacrées par la coutume et que toutes dispositions contraires ne peuvent qu'engendrer les pires dissentiments.

Il en est une confirmation. Là où les esclaves sont nombreux et fortement organisés, il arrive qu'ils refusent de reconnaître le nouveau *fa* et en choisissent un autre parmi les membres de la communauté, ou même décident de se donner un maître étranger, sous prétexte que le *fa*, voulu par la coutume, ne leur plaît pas. Calamité qui met en péril la fortune, la force et l'unité même de la famille. Car il arrive que pour conjurer le péril, une transaction intervient qui écarte plus ou moins le *fa* régulièrement désigné. D'où des tiraillements qui, en fin de compte, déterminent d'ordinaire une scission dans la communauté.

L'histoire de ces pays rapporte souvent des cas de ce genre, car les esclaves, devenus puissants, faisaient la loi dans les familles. La chronique du Ségou nous apprend ainsi que les esclaves de Dina Wara, à la mort de celui-ci, se donnèrent à Biton. Il va de soi que bien des intrigues préparent de telles défections, mais c'est précisément à savoir les éviter pour sa communauté et à savoir les susciter ailleurs pour son profit, que bien des *fa*, tel Biton, ont acquis la réputation d'habiles politiques et ont accru extraordinairement leur fortune.

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(1) Ainsi ont fait Ngolo et Ma-n-son, par exemple, au rapport de la chronique du Ségou.

En principe, même régulièrement reconnu, le *fa* n'est cependant pas installé avant le 40e jour après le décès de son prédécesseur. Lorsqu'il n'y a aucune contestation, en fait le nouveau *fa* fonctionne sans délai. Lorsqu'au contraire il y a des dissentiments, le délai de quarantaine est plus ou moins dépassé.

Ces quarante jours ne déterminent pas une discontinuité entre les deux gestions : lorsque le nouveau *fa* est installé, quelque temps qu'il se soit écoulé depuis le décès de son prédécesseur, c'est au jour de ce décès que remonte sa *faya*. C'est pourquoi l'intérimaire a dû faire inventaire, reconnaître tout, autant que possible en présence du *fa* éventuel ou présumé, de manière à éviter toute critique lorsqu'il lui remettra la succession.

Ainsi ce délai imposé par les croyances (dont l'origine paraît imputable à la magie) en vue de respecter le travail mystérieux de la nature, a engendré cette sorte de suspension civile, qui permet à la communauté de n'accepter qu'un chef qu'elle a reconnu parce qu'il remplit les conditions voulues par la coutume.

Reconnu et installé, le *fa* demeure en fonction quoi qu'il lui arrive, aucune cause de déchéance n'existe contre lui. Toutefois, lorsqu'il est dans l'impossibilité matérielle ou morale d'agir, il est suppléé par son successeur éventuel. Ainsi, Sounsan, âgé, abandonnait l'exercice de la *faya* à Massa, tout comme, à son tour, celui-ci à Béni-Fali.

Il peut même arriver que le *fa* élu soit absent pour un temps indéterminé. Le cas se produisit, avons-nous vu, pour Dessé-koro, qui était prisonnier à Ségou. Il ne fut pas pour cela écarté, mais pour éviter les inconvénients d'un intérim illimité, Sira Bo fut sollicité de prendre la *faya* ; il n'y consentit que moyennant de n'en pas être dépossédé au cas de retour de Dessé-koro. Mo-Siré, « petit frère » (*duani*), c'est-à-dire cadet utérin de Dessé, se porta, pour ce dernier, garant que Sira Bo demeurerait *fa* jusqu'à sa mort. Lorsque Dessé revint, il respecta l'engagement pris en son nom par son *duani*. C'est là un exemple typique de l'accommodement possible avec la coutume.

Les fonctions du « fa ». — Les fonctions qui incombent au *fa* sont nombreuses et complexes ; pour la clarté de l'exposition, nous les rangerons sous trois rubriques : le culte ; les rapports entre communautés ; l'administration des biens (dont il sera traité à propos des biens communautaires).

Le culte. — La religion donne à la famille une force considérable, car rien d'important n'est décidé sans consulter les mânes et les dieux. Raffenel nous a gardé le souvenir du vieux Niany priant ses mânes en faveur de son fils absent : « Je te recommande, ô mon Dieu ! mon « fils aîné, absent pour nos besoins à tous. Accompagne-le « dans son voyage. Eloigne de lui les méchants et pré« serve-le de tout malheur, afin qu'il puisse franchir une « nouvelle fois cette porte par où il est sorti et devant « laquelle je suis agenouillé. Je t'implore, ô mon Dieu ! « pour que tu le rendes à mon amour et à celui de sa mère, « de ses frères et de ses sœurs. » (1)

La chronique du Kaarta nous rapporte que le vieux Sounsan implorait une mort prochaine comme un indice de la future puissance de sa lignée. Et, pour réaliser une prophétie, Deni-ba Bo s'offrait aux coups meurtriers des Khassonké, afin d'assurer aux siens la conquête du pays.

Nul, d'ailleurs, n'est affranchi de la crainte des dieux, pas même ceux que l'on tiendrait pour des esprits forts ; ainsi, Raffenel nous rapporte que Bouo, son informateur, redoutait la colère du dieu dont il lui avait révélé les mystères. La chronique du Ségou signale que Ngolo, pensant avoir encouru le courroux de ses mânes en suscitant de mauvais désirs dans le cœur de son fils aîné Ntyi, n'hésita pas, pour les apaiser, à leur sacrifier son petit-fils, le fils de ce même Ntyi, atrocité qui manifeste une foi aussi profonde que barbare.

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(1) La part faite à la déviation qui, dans Raffenel, résulte du besoin de donner un certain cachet littéraire et personnel à l'expression de ce qu'il rapporte, les points essentiels de cette prière sont exacts et c'est pourquoi je la cite.

C'est au *fa* qu'il incombe de veiller sur le culte. Tout ce qu'il lui advient, à lui personnellement, il le projette souvent dans le plan surnaturel pour en tirer les conclusions de nature à éclaircir sa propre conduite. Dans les songes les plus ordinaires, il discerne des indications sur ce que veulent ses morts. D'ailleurs, auprès de lui, ses gens lui signalent les indices des volontés divines qu'ils ont relevées. Si, comme il arrive dans les grandes maisons, le *fa* est obligé de confier en partie le soin des dieux familiaux à un de ses confidents, celui-ci ne manque pas de le tenir au courant de tout ce qu'il aperçoit de caractéristique.

Ainsi, la vie de chaque jour est dominée sans cesse par la vie surnaturelle, et tout événement important est conditionné par ces croyances, il est facile de s'en rendre compte par toutes les institutions de famille, naissance, circoncision, mariage, mort.

Il suit de là que la tenue morale de la famille incombe au *fa*. Dès que quelque chose d'anormal, de pénible, de malheureux survient, il s'en préoccupe : ce sont peut-être les morts qui ont quelque motif d'être mécontents. Ne les a-t-on pas négligés ou offensés ? Il les questionne et s'il se trouve confirmé dans ses suppositions, aussitôt il s'ingénie à apaiser les mânes comme ils le désirent. Si le mal persiste, il cherche encore et, parfois, tout le personnel de la maison est interrogé ou, si l'on veut, confessé, même les bambins. Quelqu'un d'entre eux n'aurait-il pas, sous l'empire d'un mauvais sentiment, proféré des malédictions en invoquants les morts ?

Quand lui-même est malade, cette confession générale est quasi-obligatoire ; c'est que l'autorité absolue des *fa* ne va pas sans soulever de la haine, et la haine, mauvaise conseillère, pousse à recourir à ces moyens magiques qui permettent de ravir l'existence aux plus puissants. La crainte que la « voyance » de l'ancien ne découvre, au fond de son âme, la scélératesse commise et ne la punisse, engage d'ordinaire le coupable à obtenir, par l'aveu, le pardon de sa faute, et tout rentre dans l'ordre.

A la mort du *fa*, c'est le devoir essentiel de son successeur de chercher, par tous les moyens, à découvrir les causes de cette mort, qu'il doit venger s'il y a lieu.

Tout ce que le *fa* défunt honorait, et qui forme le trésor spirituel de la famille, le nouveau *fa* doit l'honorer aussi, et rien ne s'oppose à ce qu'il accroisse ce fond.

Le culte fondamental de la famille est le culte des ancêtres. Bien que les morts soient fréquemment inhumés en dehors de la demeure familiale, leurs âmes sont réputées habiter le *blon'* de cette demeure. Le *blon'* est une case présentant deux ouvertures opposées, donnant accès l'une sur la voie publique, l'autre dans l'intérieur de la maison, habituellement sur une cour. On ne peut entrer ou sortir qu'en passant par le *blon'*, où un gardien se tient en permanence, du moins dans les maisons importantes. Les ancêtres sont, d'ordinaire, représentés dans le *blon'* par un groupe grossier en terre, figurant sous forme conique un homme et une femme, celle-ci caractérisée au moins par des seins très apparents. D'autrefois, l'emblème des morts est une planchette longue d'un mètre environ, large de vingt centimètres, épaisse d'un peu plus d'un centimètre, terminée à l'une de ses extrémités par une saillie à laquelle on donne vaguement la forme d'une tête humaine, sorte de cylindre à coupe ellipsoïdale, sur l'une des faces duquel sont légèrement gravés les yeux, le nez, la bouche, le menton. Du côté de la figure, la planchette présente une sorte de damier en lignes creuses, dont les cases sont parfois alternativement coloriées en rouge et en noir, figuration probable du pagne qui entoure le corps. L'extrémité opposée à la tête a un évidement demi-circulaire, de sorte que, posée verticalement, la planchette offre, dans le bas, une sorte d'ouverture pouvant rappeler l'écartement des jambes.

Quelle qu'elle soit, la représentation des morts est dite *kara* (1) et sert, en quelque manière, d'autel sur lequel on verse les libations, où l'on attache les débris des sacrifices offerts aux morts (*su-u*). Toutefois, il est aussi d'usage très répandu de faire les libations et sacrifices devant la porte du *blon'* et, plus rarement, d'une case intérieure : alors, on répand le liquide et l'on colle les débris le long du bord vertical de la baie. C'est une pratique appuyée sur cette croyance que les âmes des ancêtres défunts aiment à revenir là où, durant sa vie, le *fa* aime à s'asseoir, et les ancêtres apparaissent sans aucun doute comme les gardiens du seuil ; c'est à ce titre qu'on les honore, parce que l'on croit que c'est ainsi qu'ils aiment de préférence être honorés.

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(1) En soninké, *kara* signifie mourir et la mort.

C'est en ce même lieu que, dans les cérémonies importantes, le *fa* reçoit les félicitations ou les condoléances, et elles ne s'adressent pas seulement à lui, mais aussi aux ancêtres qui, bien qu'invisibles, sont cependant présents à cette place.

Pour une offrande aux ancêtres (*fa su son'*), le *fa* se place donc devant la porte du *blon'*, accroupi, la tête découverte, tenant à la main une poule ; il s'adresse au dernier défunt (1) et dit : « Je t'offre cette volaille, en mon « nom et au nom de mes enfants. D'accord avec nos « pères et mères - défunts, préserve-nous des sorciers « mangeurs d'âmes (*suba*), des maléfices des méchants ; « protège-nous contre la maladie et les calamités ; garde-« nous en santé ; donne-nous des épouses honnêtes, des « enfants sains ; fais que nos travaux agricoles réussissent, « donne-nous la pluie... »

Si l'offrande est faite dans une intention particulière, le *fa* fait connaître explicitement cette intention, comme il le ferait en s'entretenant avec un interlocuteur vivant, et il termine en demandant que, par la position où elle s'immobilisera en expirant, la victime lui révèle la réponse à sa demande. En suite de quoi, il coupe le cou à la poule et fait couler le sang sur le mur de chaque côté de la baie de la porte du *blon'*. Il reprend ensuite sa position accroupie et, ayant jeté la volaille à faible distance devant lui, il surveille ses convulsions et attend qu'elle s'immobilise définitivement. On tient, en général, la position pour favorable lorsque l'animal crève le ventre en l'air, les pattes tournées vers l'officiant ; si les pattes étaient tournées à l'opposé, la réponse serait défavorable. Souvent, en terminant l'offrande, le *fa* indique quelle position il tiendra pour bonne ou mauvaise.

Le *fa* donne la poule sacrifiée à sa femme pour la faire cuire et, lorsqu'elle est cuite, il en fait la répartition entre les membres de sa famille : c'est vraiment une communion.

Au lieu de volaille, il est courant d'offrir du *dege*, soit du mil grossièrement broyé et jeté dans un peu d'eau. Le *fa* tient ce liquide dans une petite calebasse. Peut-être

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(2) Il semble que les ancêtres forment comme une chaîne dont le premier anneau invisible est le dernier défunt et le premier anneau visible le *fa* en fonction.

faut-il voir dans cette offrande la forme la plus ancienne d'honorer les morts et surtout d'appeler leur protection pour obtenir ces deux biens indispensables à l'existence : l'eau et le grain.

Une libation également fréquente est celle faite avec le *dlo*, sorte de bière préparée avec le mil et dont tout Bambara se délecte jusqu'à l'ivresse : les morts ne peuvent qu'être sensibles à l'offrande de ce qui leur a été agréable durant la vie terrestre.

De même faut-il penser que les offrandes de colas flattent les morts parce qu'elles les font participer à leur régal favori. L'officient mâche la cola et projette ensuite sa salive chargée du jus et des débris le long des parois du *blon'*.

Telles sont les offrandes habituelles, mais dans les grandes circonstances, l'on en augmente la quantité et l'importance suivant l'effet à obtenir. Lorsque les assistants sont nombreux et que la maison est riche, les victimes sont des moutons et des bœufs, et il ne faut pas perdre de vue que la chair de ces victimes consacrées, consommée en un repas commun, est la substance d'un lien mystique très fort entre les commensaux : c'est là une véritable communion. Il est reçu que le lien mystique engendré par la consommation en commun des liquides consacrés n'a pas la même force.

En outre des ancêtres, pas de Bambara qui ne possède quelqu'un de ces dieux (*nyana*), créé de toute pièce par l'œuvre du magicien et qui est son protecteur spécial. Toute famille a son ou ses *nyana*, dont le *fa* est le prêtre. Le *boli*, symbole et autel, de ces sortes de divinités, est, d'ordinaire, dérobé à la vue des profanes : on l'enferme dans un sac de cuir ou de toile, dans une calebasse ou un pot... Ainsi, le *nyana* de Sounsan, l'ancêtre des Massa-si, était un *n-ko* dont le *boli* était enfermé dans une peau de singe. On extrait le *boli* de son récipient pour y verser les libations, on y coller les débris des victimes ; si cette exhibition présente des inconvénients, c'est sur le récipient même que l'on opère.

Tout se passe, pour le culte des *nyana*, de façon analogue à ce qui vient d'être dit pour le culte des ancêtres. Le fond est pareil : demande, offrande, communion. Il s'y ajoute la liturgie propre à chaque *nyana* et, notamment, les paroles mystérieuses qui attirent le dieu et en font, non plus un protecteur bénévole, mais bien le serviteur de celui qui prononce ces paroles. C'est toute l'opposition entre les finalités de la religion et de la magie qui apparaît ici et qui est mise en évidence au chapitre II du présent ouvrage.

Quant aux armes magiques, il appartient également au *fa* de ne pas en laisser diminuer ou perdre la valeur : il doit remplir à leur égard toutes les obligations que chacune comporte. Il y a là de véritables *nyana*, tantôt indépendants, tantôt au contraire solidaires des grands *nyana*. Plus souvent, ce sont de ces amulettes ou talismans dont la vertu est subordonnée à quelques rites ou même simplement à l'observance de certains interdits.

Enfin, le *fa* est le dépositaire de la coutume et des reliques familiales, qui se rattachent également au fond religieux, car la coutume c'est, en somme, la volonté continue des générations, c'est l'ordre impérieux des ancêtres, c'est la table de la loi des mânes. Sa seule transgression entraîne les pires malheurs. Quant aux reliques, ce sont les objets usuels ou de parade laissés par les *fa* successifs. D'aucun sont tellement attachés à la dignité patriarcale que le *fa* est obligé, dans les grandes circonstances ou dans des cas déterminés, de porter, comme le veut la coutume, ces objets imprégnés de la vertu des ancêtres : ainsi le bonnet et les armes de Biton, à Ségou, et de même chez les Massa-si.

Rapport entre communautaires. — Les pouvoirs du *fa* sur les communautaires sont, en principe, absolus : il peut les louer, les donner en gage, les vendre et même les mettre à mort (1) ; il dispose aussi de tout ce qui dépend d'eux (2) : personnes et biens. Par contre, il a envers eux des devoirs, car il est dans l'esprit de cette institution de soutenir ses membres.

Tous les actes du *fa*, même arbitraires en fait, sont, en droit, sous le contrôle du sénat. Et il ne faut pas oublier que les communautaires se partagent en deux partis hostiles : celui des « anciens », y compris le *fa*, et celui des « jeunes maîtres ». C'est qu'en effet le *fa* ne saurait prétendre garder pour lui seul la jouissance des biens indivis, il la répartit autour de lui, un peu à sa guise, mais, bien entendu, les « anciens » sont parmi les bénéficiaires les mieux pourvus. Rarement les « jeunes » obtiennent quelque faveur analogue. De là leur haine contre les « anciens », dont ils envient surtout la situation.

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(1) Voir comment Ma-n-son s'est débarrassé de certains de ses frères.

(2) Ngolo immole le fils de son fils.

Il est de principe que le *fa*, placé à la tête d'une patriarchie, abandonne, à son fils aîné, la gestion de sa propre communauté (1). Cette séparation est indispensable pour éviter que le *fa* ne dépouille la patriarchie au profit de sa propre communauté. L'histoire de ces pays montre combien cette règle essentielle de la séparation des biens est écartée par les ambitieux, qui tiennent au contraire à faire prévaloir la confusion, qui leur permettra d'édifier une fortune considérable. Ils trouvent autour d'eux, dans les « anciens » et dans les « jeunes », de faciles complicités et, au fur et à mesure qu'ils imposent davantage leur volonté, ils étendent davantage leurs exactions. Pourtant, nombreux sont les indices, qu'eux-mêmes aperçoivent, de la fragilité de leur arbitraire ; aussi ils s'ingénient, en général, à régler par avance leur succession, pour éviter la ruine de leur œuvre. Peine perdue ! La coutume faussée par eux reprend ses droits quand ils disparaissent, souvent aussi de leur vivant, et l'explication est logique de l'écroulement de la plupart des grands empires qui n'ont survécu que peu à leur fondateur.

Le plus souvent, dans la communauté, le « jeune maître » a une condition bien moins agréable que l'esclave domestique qui vit à ses côtés et, croit-on, sous ses ordres. L'esclave domestique peut s'enfuir, ou créer toutes sortes de difficultés qui aboutissent à une diminution du patrimoine. Rien de pareil à craindre avec un communautaire : qu'on le châtie, qu'on le chasse ou qu'il s'en aille, le bien commun n'en pâtit pas. Parti au loin, s'il réussit, il ne saurait manquer de faire profiter la communauté de sa bonne fortune. Celui-là, en effet, qui se désintéresse de ce qui se passe dans la communauté risque d'en être retranché. Il doit vivre effectivement avec elle, sinon il n'est plus compté que comme un membre mort.

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(1) Le fils aîné ou mieux le fils premier-né occupe donc une situation privilégiée et il est de coutume au Kaarta de réserver au fils premier-né un cheval blanc pour monture, ce qui le signale à l'attention de tous. Voir p. 111, la mort de 98 fils premiers-nés ainsi montés.

Tout ce qui s'y passe doit le trouver présent. La chronique du Ségou nous en donne un exemple. Des dissentiments éclatèrent entre les fils de Ngolo à la mort de celui-ci. Nyana-n-koro, qui avait été adulé par son père, se croyait désigné par cette affection même pour occuper la place du défunt. Ce fut au contraire Ma-n-son que Ngolo avait expressément désigné, en conformité, d'ailleurs, avec la coutume. Pourtant, se croyant sûr de triompher, Nyana-n-koro prétendit évincer Ma-n-son par la force, mais il fut vaincu. Au cours de cette lutte fratricide, certains communautaires préférèrent garder la neutralité, pensant se réserver ainsi la bienveillance du vainqueur. Il n'en fut rien, Ma-n-son triomphant se retourna contre eux : il frappa d'une sorte d'exclusion communautaire ses deux frères, Séri et Ba, en leur attribuant à chacun une part réduite, avec défense de l'accroître.

Les biens étant indivis, le *fa* est obligé d'en faire profiter tous les communautaires. C'est ainsi que, le cas échéant, il paye la dot qui permet à un communautaire de fonder une famille ; il rachète les communautaires tombés en esclavage ; il pourvoit aux soins des malades, quand ils exigent des dépenses extraordinaires ; il acquitte les dettes civiles ou judiciaires ou autres, quand le redevable y est contraint et que la communauté en est responsable... Mais ces paiements, faits du reste avec l'assentiment du sénat, sont tenus pour des prêts consentis au bénéficiaire qui devient, dès lors, débiteur de la communauté. Il devra non seulement rembourser ce qui lui a été prêté, mais encore au delà, et l'on exigera aussi qu'il s'en montre toujours reconnaissant. Si le remboursement traîne en longueur, comme c'est le cas habituel, la communauté n'abandonne pas pour cela sa créance, qui n'est d'ailleurs jamais prescrite ; elle surveille le retour à meilleure fortune du débiteur, elle s'immisce dans ses affaires, survient dans sa succession pour inquiéter ses veuves et ses enfants, et tirer d'eux tout ce qu'elle peut. Sa rapacité implacable s'autorise de ce qui est dû pour accaparer tout ce que possédait le défunt.

Tout communautaire est, strictement parlant, à la disposition de la communauté : il lui doit donc de coopérer par son travail à sa prospérité. S'il ne peut ou ne veut travailler lui-même, aux champs par exemple, il est tenu de se faire remplacer par un de ses enfants, ou un esclave lui appartenant en propre. Tant qu'il n'a pas trouvé un moyen de s'affranchir, il est traité comme les « faibles », il est obligé au travail personnel.

L'on comprend que pour se soustraire à une puissance aussi ombrageuse, tracassière et accaparante, les « jeunes » partent souvent pour tenter la fortune au loin. D'aucuns ne reviennent jamais : soit qu'ils aient réussi à se créer une vie autonome ; soit qu'ils se trouvent plus à l'aise loin des « anciens » autoritaires. Plus souvent, ayant fondé au loin une famille indépendante, le « jeune » garde des rapports suivis avec sa communauté, il surveille, à distance, son évolution pour, le cas échéant, en profiter.

Quant aux « jeunes » qui demeurent, ils forment un parti d'intrigue qui bat en brèche le *fa* et le sénat. Mais au fur et à mesure que l'âge rapproche chacun de cette participation à la *faya*, qu'il ambitionne, son opposition fléchit jusqu'à faire place progressivement, lorsque de *kamalen'* il devient *bina*, à cette autorité tâtillonne qui suscite alors contre lui l'animosité des nouveaux *kamalen'-u*.

Pour clore cet exposé de la condition des communautaires, il reste à parler des filles. Tout comme les fils, elles appartiennent entièrement à la communauté qui a, par suite, le droit de retirer d'elles tout le profit possible. Ainsi, l'exogamie étant de règle, la communauté cède la fille en usufruit à qui paye la dot et, de là, résulte qu'appelée nécessairement à quitter la communauté, la fille ne peut jamais prétendre y exercer une autorité. Condamnée de la sorte à une perpétuelle impuissance, la femme n'occupe jamais en droit qu'une condition inférieure dans la société indigène. Tout motif d'intérêt ou de sentiment qui, en fait, modifie plus ou moins heureusement cette situation, n'apporte aucun changement au droit invariable qui fait le fond de tous dissentiments entre époux ou entre communautés à propos des femmes.

II. LA COMMUNAUTÉ DES BIENS

De quels biens est composé le patrimoine ?

Il n'est pas possible d'en donner une nomenclature détaillée, qui ne pourrait être limitative d'ailleurs. L'on ne doit pas non plus s'enfermer dans les définitions trop strictes de notre droit. En se plaçant dans le plan indigène, les biens patrimonieux se classent, si l'on veut, dans trois catégories principales.

D'abord, les dieux ; les mânes, âmes des ancêtres protecteurs de la famille ; les *nyana*, dieux créés par le magicien : les uns protecteurs exclusifs de la communauté, les autres s'intéressant en outre à d'autres collectivités. Enfin, les innombrables armes magiques, qui sont des manières de dieux. A l'occasion des fonctions du *fa*, j'ai parlé de ces dieux et aussi en divers autres parties du présent ouvrage.

Une deuxième catégorie de biens est formée par les droits réciproques de la communauté et de ses membres, d'une part ; de la communauté et des collectivités similaires, d'autre part. Je viens d'exposer les premiers, il sera parlé des autres au chapitre « Rapports entre communautés».

Enfin toutes les choses qui sont des richesses particulièrement appréciées constituent une troisième catégorie, où nous trouvons : l'or, le bétail, les céréales, les produits agricoles, industriels et commerciaux de toutes sortes, les habitations... A cette dernière catégorie, se rattachent trois questions qui nécessitent des développements particuliers : l'usufruit agraire, l'usufruit conjugal, les esclaves.

Enfin la situation d'une communauté est comme synthétisée et symbolisée par le « nom honorable » (*dyamu*) dont cette collectivité se pare, et qu'elle considère comme un de ses biens les plus précieux.

Usufruit agraire. — La propriété foncière n'existe pas. Chaque famille a un usufruit, précaire en principe, perpétuel en fait, sur les terres qui lui sont attribuées dans le domaine du génie protecteur (*nyana dugu-da-siri*).

Il arrive qu'une famille est l'exclusive bénéficiaire d'un certain domaine parce que seule liée avec le génie protecteur dont ce domaine dépend.

Plus généralement, diverses familles sont sous la protection d'un même génie local, dont le domaine comprend alors des parties en exploitation indivise et des champs attribués distinctement à chaque famille protégée. C'est pour ces champs distincts qu'existe l'usufruit agricole qui compte dans les biens de communauté.

Cet usufruit est différent de celui que connaît notre droit. C'est le *dugu-tigi* et son conseil qui allotissent le territoire commun : cela ne va pas sans tiraillements et tractations. En principe, le lot attribué demeure indéfiniment à la famille bénéficiaire moyennant une exploitation continue et paiement d'une redevance annuelle. La mise en jachère pendant plusieurs années est admise. La famille exploitante peut user du terrain à sa discrétion, son droit est aussi étendu que possible, jusqu'à l'aliénation exclusivement. Elle peut donc louer, céder ou engager son usufruit ; cependant, en cas de négociation avec un étranger, elle ne peut agir sans le consentement préalable du *dugu-tigi*, qui consulte son conseil. D'une manière générale, tout ce qui aurait pour conséquence de mettre en jeu les intérêts de la communauté agraire doit, avant d'être entrepris, être soumis à l'examen du *dugu-tigi*.

L'usufruit prend fin lorsque la famille quitte, sans esprit de retour, la communauté dont les champs dépendent ; lorsque le *dugu-tigi* et son conseil décident d'en disposer pour des motifs qu'ils ne sont même pas obligés de faire connaître ; lorsque la famille y renonce volontairement, ou bien lorsqu'elle en est privée pour en avoir usé contrairement aux intérêts de la communauté agraire.

C'est de ces exploitations agricoles que la communauté patriarcale tire sa subsistance et c'est à cause d'elles qu'il existe une sorte d'organisation du travail. Les communautés patriarcales, ou familiales importantes, ont des domaines agricoles dans des régions différentes et souvent très éloignées l'une de l'autre. Sur le territoire de chacun de ces domaines est alors établie une fraction des communautaires ou un groupe d'esclaves, tantôt à demeure fixe, tantôt pour la période d'appropriation et de culture du sol, tantôt pour le temps de la récolte.

En principe, tout communautaire ou esclave doit travailler, pour sa communauté, de l'aurore jusque vers midi, chaque jour où l'exploitation l'exige. Mais deux jours, le lundi et le jeudi, sont abandonnés entièrement à ces mêmes personnes pour leurs propres exploitations. Celui qui ne peut ou ne veut travailler a la faculté de se faire remplacer par une personne sous sa dépendance.

A ces règles, il y a, bien entendu, des accommodements. D'abord chacun travaille suivant sa condition. Chez les gens peu fortunés, le maître travaille autant sinon plus que l'esclave ; chez les gens aisés, il se borne à diriger et contrôler, se réservant quelquefois certaines besognes. Dans les communautés importantes, le travail des champs incombe à peu près exclusivement aux esclaves, sous la surveillance de leurs chefs, et suivant les directives du *fa* qui, personnellement ou par ceux de son entourage, contrôle ce qui se passe.

Usufruit conjugal. — Lors du mariage, en contre-partie de la dot, la femme est donnée en usufruit. Cet usufruit est bien de communauté au même titre que les choses qui ont été employées pour la dot.

A la mort du *fa*, c'est une grave affaire que le règlement des usufruits conjugaux compris dans cette succession. L'usufruit conjugal ayant la durée de la vie de la femme, en droit la mort de l'époux ne change rien à la situation de l'épouse, étant entendu cependant que la veuve n'ayant pas d'obligation sexuelle envers les héritiers de son mari, l'usufruit se trouve réduit à cet égard. Tel est le sort des veuves lorsque les héritiers décident de les garder sans les épouser, et que les veuves acceptent de rester.

Mais le plus souvent les héritiers épousent les veuves, ou les renvoient, ou bien elles se retirent d'elles-mêmes.

L'héritier qui épouse une veuve du défunt doit la ramener à sa famille, obtenir le consentement de celle-ci et lui payer la nouvelle dot qu'elle réclame, car c'est un nouvel usufruit qui est constitué. La chronique du Ségou nous montre l'application de cette coutume : à la mort de Dina Wara, son fils escorta à Ségou la veuve de son père, dont il désirait faire son épouse, et qui était la sœur de Biton. Il fit de somptueux cadeaux pour obtenir satisfaction.

Pour la veuve renvoyée, ou qui se retire, le principe est que la charge de la dot déjà constituée incombe à la partie qui rompt le contrat, c'est-à-dire à qui renvoie la femme, ou à la famille de celle-ci. C'est une importante question que cette charge de la dot, les parties n'ayant pas, le plus souvent, le moyen et pas du tout le désir d'y faire face ; aussi chacun s'ingénie à se débarrasser de ce paiement par des moyens qui, en pratique courante, aboutissent à un marchandage éhonté de la femme en cause. On s'efforce à lui trouver un mari qui accepte de payer la dot qu'exige celui qui a le droit pour lui. Or, le plus souvent, on ne verse qu'un acompte plus ou moins élevé à la livraison de la femme, on calme les impatients avec des cadeaux, le reste de la dot demeure encore dû en totalité ou en partie à la mort du constituant. De là d'inextricables complications pendant et après le mariage (1).

Les esclaves. — Les sources de l'esclavage sont nombreuses mais peuvent se ramener à trois : la violence, la naissance, l'effet des obligations.

La violence a été la cause peut-être première de l'esclavage. L'individu réduit à merci est la chose de son vainqueur, mais, suivant sa condition antérieure, il est traité diversement. Etait-ce un homme de qualité ? S'il est dangereux, on le tue ou on le vend ; si l'on pense que les siens offriront une rançon élevée, on le garde. S'il sait se créer des sympathies, il n'est pas rare qu'on le traite avec considération ; si sa captivité se prolonge, il advient qu'il fonde là une famille et qu'il se comporte comme un homme libre sur parole, astreint seulement à une résidence obligatoire, et le temps arrange tout. Dans les mêmes conditions, une femme de qualité devient d'ordinaire l'épouse de son ravisseur ou vainqueur.

Les gens de caste échappent à la captivité en entrant au service du vainqueur pour leur genre habituel d'occupation.

Seuls les petites gens sans notoriété, et c'est le nombre, ont un sort souvent calamiteux : traînés au loin, vendus et revendus, ils échouent encore, parfois, chez un mauvais maître.

La femme esclave n'enfante, en principe, que des esclaves. Celui qui naît esclave appartient au maître de sa mère et suit la destinée de celle-ci. Au cas où elle est concubine du maître, l'enfant naît libre et libère, par voie de conséquence, sa mère.

L'esclave par contrat ne règle pas toujours lui-même sa condition : du fait que le *fa* dispose de ses gens, il fait lui-même le contrat qui les oblige.

L'individu libre tombe en esclavage par suite de ses crimes ou délits (2) : ainsi, le voleur incorrigible devient l'esclave du chef auquel on le donne pour le punir.

Bien des petites gens, séduits par le sort favorisé du

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(1) Sur le sort des veuves voir dans la chronique du Ségou les discussions à propos des veuves de Biton et de Ngolo.

2) Nzan Fato dévint esclave pour avoir volé une ruche (*supra* p. 44).

wolo-so dans les grandes communautés, se donnent comme esclaves là où ils croient obtenir un sort pareil. Tous les empires soudanais ont connu ces esclaves volontaires, qui leur sont venus nombreux de tous les horizons.

Là où les esclaves sont nombreux, ils forment ce que l'on nomme, suivant les lieux, *dyon'-kuru* ou *dyon'-futu*, c'est-à-dire une « réunion d'esclaves », et sont représentés auprès du maître par un chef qui, appuyé sur la force qu'ils constituent, est un personnage important. Lorsque la communauté dont ces esclaves dépendent est ancienne, les esclaves sont répartis en séries, chaque série étant désignée selon le *fa* sous l'autorité duquel elle s'est formée. Chaque série a, en principe, pour chef le plus ancien de ses membres, et le chef de la série des esclaves les plus anciens est le chef suprême des esclaves (1). Souvent, le maître garde ce chef suprême auprès de lui et en fait son homme de confiance ; d'autrefois, il achète un esclave ou engage un homme libre de son choix, pour remplir cette haute charge, qu'il a ainsi mieux en main ; le chef suprême reconnu par les esclaves n'est plus alors que le porte-parole dans toutes les réclamations de ses congénères.

Il est de coutume, chez les Kouloubali, que les *wolo-so* soient marqués d'un tatouage qui consiste en trois grands sillons allant de la tempe au maxillaire inférieur, de chaque côté de la figure. Loin de se trouver avili par ce stigmate, il n'est pas un *wolo-so* qui n'en soit très fier comme d'une marque de noble origine. Et nombre de gens libres ont adopté ce tatouage pour se donner des airs d'appartenir à la grande famille bambara.

L'état de l'esclave n'est pas immuable, il comporte, en général, trois degrés caractérisés par les appellations de : *san'dyon'* : esclave de traite ; *dyon'wolo-so* : esclave né dans la maison ; *dyongoro* : affranchi.

L'esclave nouvellement acheté est mis en observation : s'il apparaît difficile à conduire, ou vicieux, ou atteint de maladie grave (épilepsie, lèpre, maladie du sommeil, nyctalopie), on s'en débarrasse au plus tôt.

S'il se montre docile, dévoué, industrieux, travailleur, on le garde. Il reçoit un emploi dans la maison, ou bien on le place auprès d'un vieux serviteur pour l'apprivoiser et le dresser, ou chez un artisan pour apprendre un métier.

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(1) Comme l'on voit, il y a là une application d'une sorte de droit d'ancienneté analogue à celui de primogéniture.

La femme esclave qui, dans ces conditions, devient mère (1), voit aussitôt son état s'améliorer : son enfant est *wolo-so* : « né dans la maison », et elle-même prend cette qualité (2). Il est de coutume que le *wolo-so* ne peut être vendu, plus exactement il n'est aliéné qu'en cas d'extrême nécessité. C'est sur les *wolo-so* que repose la fortune et la prospérité du maître.

Le *wolo-so* est, au demeurant, une manière de communautaire : rien ne se passe dans la communauté qu'il ne le sache et qu'il n'y participe à son rang. Certes, il est astreint au travail de communauté, mais ni plus ni moins que les « gens faibles » et souvent il sait se créer une situation bien autrement agréable que celle de l'enfant de la maison. Lui et tout ce qui dépend de lui appartiennent à son maître, mais, à moins de circonstances graves, jamais le maître ne lui prend rien ; bien au contraire, il lui fait un sort enviable : il le marie et l'établit ; lui confie la gestion de biens parfois très importants ; le traite avec une affection qu'il n'a pas toujours pour ses proches, car la jalousie engendre des tiraillements et des haines entre communautaires. Ainsi, le *wolo-so* bénéficie très fréquemment de son état au lieu d'avoir à en pâtir.

Comme les communautaires, il est admis à se libérer personnellement du travail de communauté en se faisant remplacer par un de ses enfants et payant une redevance annuelle en outre de quelques prestations (3). Voire même, s'il a une large aisance — et ce n'est pas rare, — il possède lui aussi des esclaves et c'est par eux qu'il se fait suppléer.

Ainsi, peu à peu, les relations entre le maître et l'esclave prennent une allure très différente de celle qu'imagine notre esprit d'Européen. Le maître est uni à ses *wolo-so* par mille liens ; il les admet au culte, il épouse leurs filles, il circoncit leurs enfants avec les siens, il s'unit à certains d'entre eux par la fraternisation ou par serment...

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(1) Peu importe de qui, puisque ses enfants appartiennent de droit à son maître.

(2) Il est à remarquer qu'il y a là une analogie avec ce qui se passe pour la concubine qui devient mère : son enfant né d'un père libre étant libre, elle le devient *ipso facto*.

(3) En général, la redevance consiste en un certain nombre de mesures (*moudé*) de mil représentant approximativement la quantité nécessaire pour la nourriture d'un adulte pendant un an. — Les prestations consistent en travaux d'entretien des immeubles : réparation des toits et des murs des cases.

Même quand il n'est pas admis à une agrégation aussi profonde, le *wolo-so* libéré du travail, établi parfois fort loin de son maître, ou même vivant dans une quasi indépendance dans son voisinage, est désormais un *dyongoro*, c'est-à-dire un affranchi. Le lien n'est pas rompu, l'affranchi est une manière de parent : rien de ce qui se passe dans la communauté de son maître ne le laisse indifférent, il y est présent dans toutes les circonstances importantes et ne vient jamais les mains vides. — Réciproquement, l'affranchi n'est pas un étranger pour son maître : à tous les événements qui le touchent, son maître apporte sa contribution, il l'aide à marier ses fils, à les établir ; pour le *soli*, il réunit ses enfants avec les siens, ce qui les rend en quelque manière solidaires les uns des autres.

L'agrégation du *wolo-so* à la communauté de son maître se traduit publiquement par ce fait que le *wolo-so* porte le *dyamu* de son maître.

Il serait exagéré de prétendre que la situation de l'esclave domestique est toujours aussi heureuse, elle dépend de tant de facteurs divers (1).

Le dyamu. — C'est le nom que l'indigène s'est donné, ou qui lui a été donné, ou qu'il a hérité, mais, en tout cas, c'est le nom devenu honorable au point qu'il suffit de le prononcer pour rendre à celui qui le porte un éclatant hommage, tels : Kouloubali, Dyara, Dembélé...

C'est qu'en effet, à lui seul, le *dyamu* résume l'histoire de la communauté qui le porte : il implique tout ce qui concerne les ancêtres, aussi bien que les hauts faits des communautaires actuels, ainsi que leurs turpitudes et même leurs alliances, fraternelles, conjugales, politiques, surnaturelles.

L'on conçoit que tel ou tel de ces faits caractéristiques qu'il recouvre puisse servir à distinguer les porteurs d'un même *dyamu*, mais les Européens qui étudient le milieu indigène sont depuis longtemps accoutumés à distinguer ceux qui portent le même *dyamu* au moyen de leurs *tne* (interdits) respectifs (1), et l'indigène ne procède pas autrement.

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(1) On n'admet que très rarement l'esclave à se racheter ; l'esclave lui-même ne tient pas à ce rachat qui le libère seul et laisse sa famille et la majeure partie de ses biens aux mains du maître.

Le Noir considère que tel de ses congénères qui porte le même *dyamu* que lui et, en même temps, a un ou plusieurs *tne* communs avec lui, est, pour lui, un parent ou allié, alors même qu'il est d'une autre race que la sienne.

Entre individus de races différentes, certains *dyamu*, bien que dissemblables, sont tenus pour équivalents, et on les interchange, parce que ceux qui les portent ont des *tne* (interdits) communs.

A la suite d'une de ses alliances, dont il sera parlé au chapître « Rapports entre communautés », les *tne* de l'une des parties sont désormais *tne* pour l'autre et respectivement, ce qui entraîne équivalence de *dyamu*. Le mariage a parfois de tels effets lorsqu'il s'agit d'une union importante, recherchée, ou mieux encore d'un de ces mariages qui scellent entre familles des liens désormais indissolubles et une solidarité que le temps n'ébranle point.

3. La communauté familiale ou la famille

L'UNION CONJUGALE (*furu*)

L'un des éléments essentiels de la communauté, basée sur la génération naturelle, c'est la légitimité ; celle-ci a l'une de ses sources dans l'union conjugale légitime que nous appelons le mariage. Il existe d'autres modes d'union conjugale, mais aucun ne produit des effets aussi certains.

La coutume matrimoniale reçoit son plein développement lors des premières noces, lorsque les futurs époux se trouvent l'un et l'autre en puissance de communauté. Nous allons passer en revue tous les détails de la coutume dans ce cas, auquel il sera facile ensuite de rattacher les diverses autres modalités.

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(1) Il y a eu, au début de cette manière de faire, une erreur d'interprétation et une généralisation hâtive qui ont faussé le résultat : on a fait du *tne*, qui double le *dyanu*, un analogue du *totem* et l'on a affirmé l'identité du *dyanu* avec le nom de l'objet *tne*. L'étude attentive a permis de constater la vanité de ces prétendues coïncidences.

I. LE MARIAGE

Les premières noces

Le mariage est l'union de deux personnes libres de sexes différents, en vue de fonder une famille. Il exige des conditions et des formalités préalables à l'union des époux.

Conditions. — Aucune institution indigène ne permet au Noir de connaître son âge avec certitude, aussi l'âge ne forme-t-il pas une limite impérative, comme dans notre législation ; par contre, le mariage comportant union sexuelle, l'aptitude à cette union est, en principe, exigée des futurs époux : toutefois, si l'homme n'est mariable que s'il est pubère et circoncis, la femme est livrée parfois même avant ses premières menstrues. De plus, rien ne s'oppose au mariage du vieillard, si avancé en âge soit-il, et quel que soit son état de décrépitude (1) : il n'est pas rare qu'un vieux épouse une toute jeune fille, c'est même courant ; s'il est rare qu'un jeune homme épouse une très vieille femme, il arrive, par le jeu des coutumes successorales, qu'une femme devienne l'épouse d'un mari plus jeune qu'elle.

La parenté directe est un obstacle, *in infinitimum*. Certains collatéraux ne se marient pas entre eux : l'oncle et la nièce, la tante et le neveu. L'alliance est aussi un obstacle, dans certains cas ; il n'est pas admis que le même homme soit, en même temps, le mari des deux sœurs, mais il peut les épouser successivement ; de même pour la mère et la fille, la tante et la nièce.

L'on ne peut épouser la femme de son fils, ou de son neveu, ou d'un frère plus jeune.

Il ne peut y avoir mariage entre gens libres non déchus et gens de caste ou, à plus forte raison, esclaves.

Empêchements. — Du début des accordailles jusqu'au moment de la livraison de la femme, il s'écoule un temps parfois très long durant lequel il peut survenir des empêchements.

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(1) Si nous signalons ici des faits qui ne sont pas toujours relatifs aux premières noces, c'est pour ne pas revenir ultérieurement sur des détails qui ne pourraient plus être mis à leur place logique.

Les premières noces, dont il est ici question, sont affaires de communautés. Imprudent le jeune homme qui s'y engagerait de lui-même ; non plus que la jeune fille, il ne s'appartient, ses désirs sont négligeables : il s'agit, pour le *fa*, de réaliser une bonne affaire. Le *fa* s'oppose donc à tout projet qui ne répond pas au but qu'il se propose et oblige, par contre, le jeune homme à entrer dans ses propres vues. Si ce dernier passe outre, le *fa*, en refusant de reconnaître le mariage, enlève toute légitimité à la femme et aux enfants à l'égard de la communauté dont il est le chef. Aucun recours n'est, juridiquement, possible contre un tel arbitraire, car toute communauté ne relève que d'elle-même pour ce qui la concerne.

Quant à la jeune fille, elle est, plus encore que le jeune homme, sous la dépendance de sa communauté. Destinée à être donnée en usufruit, elle est à l'entière discrétion de ceux qui disposent de cet usufruit. Si elle passe outre, elle risque d'être ramenée brutalement à la raison, par tous moyens de correction, et si elle a des enfants, dans ces conditions, ils peuvent lui être enlevés par sa communauté, à qui ils appartiennent ; elle n'a, coutumièrement parlant, aucun droit sur eux.

Ce sont donc les *fa* de l'une et l'autre communautés qui mènent toute l'affaire. Est-ce à dire, cependant, que les jeunes gens ne peuvent en aucune manière influencer la décision des « vieux » ? Non, car, ici comme partout, les intrigues de toute sorte conditionnent la détermination du *fa* : le *fa* est obligé de tenir compte de l'avis de ceux qui l'entourent, il est accessible à leurs sentiments et il subordonne l'intérêt tout aussi bien à l'affection qu'à la haine. Il n'ignore pas — non plus que son entourage — que s'il peut, de son vivant, faire triompher sa volonté même arbitraire, à sa mort son œuvre peut être ruinée parce que mal fondée.

En somme, la rigidité des principes, qui met les « jeunes » à la discrétion des « vieux », est, en pratique, corrigée dans un sens conforme, le plus souvent, aux désirs des jeunes. La solidarité qui lie les communautaires contraint chacun d'eux à tenir compte de l'opinion des autres : c'est par suite de la nécessité d'atténuer les divergences que toute affaire de famille traîne en longueur. Pourparlers, accords, cadeaux réciproques, caractérisent autant de marchandages et clôturent autant de transactions. Par là apparaît, aussi, combien est nécessaire le rôle de ces multiples intermédiaires qui, appelés à éviter les heurts et à atténuer les frictions, se muent trop souvent en exploiteurs des difficultés communautaires.

En tout cas, de ces débats ressort la publicité des tractations, publicité réalisée chez nous par des moyens légaux.

La demande et les accordailles. — La demande est faite par un intermédiaire. Au Kaarta, c'est un homme de caste, un *dyeli* (griot) généralement, accompagné d'un homme libre. Ailleurs, au Ségou notamment, c'est parfois un homme d'âge mûr, réputé pour sa pratique des affaires et qui s'intitule pour ce rôle : *furu-bolo-ma-tigi* « directeur du mariage ».

Le *furu-bolo-ma-tigi* se rend chez le *fa* de la jeune fille, il lui expose sa mission et, s'il en est bien accueilli, lui offre quelques colas dont il est porteur. Il s'en retourne avec la promesse que la demande va être examinée.

Effectivement, le *fa* prend avis autour de lui et surtout consulte ses ancêtres et ses dieux. Le *furu-bolo-ma-tigi* revient, porteur d'offrandes, pour interroger les ancêtres et les dieux : si la réponse est défavorable, elle n'est pas pour cela définitive, les ancêtres et les dieux se laissent fléchir moyennant d'y mettre le prix, du moins à l'ordinaire. Lorsque la réponse est, ou est devenue favorable, le *furu-bolo-ma-tigi* fait des cadeaux d'usage au *fa* et à la famille de la jeune fille et désormais les deux communautés, celle du jeune homme et celle de la jeune fille, se trouvent unies par un lien qui ne peut plus être rompu que pour des raisons d'exceptionnelle gravité, et cette rupture entraîne, en général, de graves dissentiments.

C'est à ce moment que, d'un commun accord, et non sans tiraillements ni transactions, les deux parties conviennent du montant, de la consistance et du paiement de la dot et, en retour, de l'époque de livraison de la femme.

Il s'écoule un temps parfois fort long — plusieurs années dans certains cas — entre l'époque des accordailles et celle de la livraison de la femme : cet intervalle est utilisé par la mère de la jeune fille pour préparer ce qu'elle donnera à celle-ci (vêtements, ustensiles de ménage...), et par le fiancé pour réunir ce qu'il a promis de payer en vue de la livraison de la femme.

Les relations entre les deux communautés sont, dès ce moment, très étroites : la bienséance indigène ne permet pas que désormais, hors de la présence d'un tiers, la fiancée se rencontre ou prenne ses repas devant son futur beau-frère ou, de même, le fiancé avec sa future belle-mère. Il est obligatoire que le fiancé témoigne, de manière constante, la part qu'il prend à tout événement qui intéresse sa future belle famille. Pour les fêtes ou pour les deuils, il doit participer à la cérémonie par sa présence et, en tout cas, par une contribution matérielle proportionnée à ses ressources et à son rang social. A l'époque des travaux des champs, il est de coutume que les *fula-ni* du fiancé viennent en corps et cérémonieusement partager ces travaux. La plupart du temps, il s'agit là d'une démonstration de solidarité plus bruyante qu'utile : tout se passe en travaux simulés mais, par contre, se termine par des danses et par de copieuses beuveries.

Dot (1) *et cadeaux.* — La livraison de la femme n'a lieu qu'après le paiement convenu de tout ou partie de la dot et surtout la remise des cadeaux qu'exige l'usage.

La consistance et la valeur de la dot et des cadeaux sont très variables, elles dépendent à la fois de la fortune du futur mari, de la qualité de la femme et des coutumes familiales. Chez les pauvres gens, la dot se réduit à très peu de chose : quelques poignées de cauris ; une volaille ; des colas ; quelques coudées de toile indigène en bande. Une dot moyenne vaut en tout 25.000 à 30.000 cauris (25 à 30 fr. environ). Chez les riches, un ou plusieurs esclaves, des bijoux en or, de l'argent, des étoffes, des vêtements...

Quant aux cadeaux, il en va de même : tout dépend des familles en présence. Toutefois, il est d'usage, vers Ségou, que le fiancé offre à sa fiancée une grande pièce d'étoffe en tissu indigène dite *kundugu fini* ; un *dloké* (sorte de blouse) et une paire de sandales à très épaisses semelles. Il lui doit aussi — s'il en a le moyen — une esclave pour faire la cuisine ; une vache, des bijoux...

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(1) En certaines régions (Bougouni, Sikasso, Koutiala, San), il n'y a pas de constitution de dot : la famille du mari remet à la famille de la femme une fille en échange de celle qu'elle en reçoit.

Aux parents de sa fiancée, il doit également des cadeaux en rapport avec sa situation de fortune.

Tout cet ensemble de dot et de cadeaux est englobé sous le vocable *furu-fen'*, litt. « les biens du mariage ». Dès qu'une fraction de ces *furu-fen'* lui est remise, le *furu-bola-ma-tigi*, escorté de quelques amis du fiancé, la porte chez le *fa* de la fille ; aucune de ces démarches qui ne comporte quelques cruches de bière indigène (*dlo*). Les notables du lieu, le *dugu-tigi*, les « vieux » et aussi des *kamalen'* viennent aussitôt féliciter la famille et participer à la beuverie et même recevoir quelque part des *furu-fen'*.

Souvent la fiancée est une fillette en bas âge et, alors, les devoirs du fiancé et de sa famille durent plusieurs années. Dans ce cas, les cadeaux sont répétés et importants tant en raison de la fortune du fiancé que de l'honorabilité de la famille de la promise. Il est d'usage que le fiancé envoie, à la récolte, un ou plusieurs paniers de mil, de chacun de 20 à 40 kilos ; de temps à autre, de la bière de mil (*dlo*) par pot de 20 à 80 litres ; pour les fêtes funéraires ou religieuses, sa présence s'accompagne des victuailles pour les offrandes (volailles, colas, mil, sel...). Mais la fête pour laquelle sa contribution est indispensable, est celle du *da woro* (1) : le *furu-bolo-ma-tigi* est, à cette occasion, chargé de cadeaux importants tant pour la fillette (vêtements et parure) que pour l'assemblée des parents (victuailles de toutes sortes).

Si le montant et la consistance des *furu-fen'* sont très variables, le mode adopté et le temps imparti pour le paiement de la dot sont également abandonnés à la seule convention, essentiellement diverse, des parties. Paiement en une seule fois ou par échelons, soit avant, soit partie avant et partie après la livraison. De ce point de vue matériel, les personnes du promis et de la promise n'ont plus guère d'intérêt. Ce qui importe au *fa*, constituant de dot, c'est d'obtenir une fille de la famille à laquelle il désire s'allier : dès lors, que lui importe que cette fille soit mariable au jour de la convention, pourvu qu'elle lui soit livrée conformément à la dite convention. De même, il n'est pas toujours nécessaire que le constituant soit nanti de l'intégralité de la dot au moment des accordailles, il suffit qu'il soit en mesure de faire face aux échéances du pacte. Par là, s'expliquent des modalités, au premier abord, singulières.

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(1) Voir ci-après page 242.

Il est courant que le *fa* constituant retienne une fillette en bas âge et même pas encore née. Si la livraison est faite avant la nubilité, la consommation du mariage est retardée jusqu'après les premières menstrues. Nous avons indiqué ci-dessus comment, dans ce cas, le paiement de la dot entraîne des obligations de cadeaux durant des années.

Une autre modalité fort curieuse est celle où la dot est constituée suivant la coutume du « pied de jument », dont voici les traits essentiels :

Le constituant possédant une jument pourrait l'aliéner pour payer sa dot, mais il trouve préférable de promettre seulement un ou plusieurs de ses produits ou, suivant l'expression indigène, un ou plusieurs de ses « pieds ». Cette manière de tirer parti d'une poulinière, sans la vendre, est courante chez les indigènes du Soudan occidental.

Si le constituant a promis un « pied », il remet sa jument au bénéficiaire, qui devra la nourrir et la faire saillir : le bénéficiaire garde le produit et rend la jument après sevrage du poulain ; il a charge des risques, sauf cas de force majeure, dont la preuve lui incombe.

Pour deux « pieds », la jument est comme indivise durant le temps que dure l'affaire. Chacun, alternativement, en prend charge et l'utilise pendant une période convenue. Le premier produit est indivis et, quand il est sevré, les contractants égalisent les charges en prenant à tour de rôle l'un la mère, l'autre le produit. Il en va ainsi jusqu'au moment où trois poulains sont nés et sevrés. Alors, deux lots, l'un de la mère et d'un produit, l'autre de deux produits, sont tirés au sort pour l'attribution aux parties.

Lorsqu'il se libère en « pieds » de jument, le constituant peut obtenir livraison de la femme sans avoir rien payé de la dot, parce que la famille de la femme se trouve nantie d'un gage : la jument.

Il peut arriver que l'un ou l'autre des fiancés meurt. En principe, il est bon de ne pas oublier ce point de vue matériel : la question des personnes est secondaire pour la conclusion de l'affaire et les deux *fa* solutionnent au mieux de leurs seuls intérêts respectifs les difficultés qui surviennent dans la période, souvent fort longue, des fiançailles. Il n'est pas rare que le fiancé décédé soit remplacé par un de ses frères (1) et la fiancée défunte par une de ses sœurs (2), rien n'étant modifié par ailleurs. Si le défunt (ou la défunte) ne peut être ainsi remplacé, le sort des *furu-fen'* déjà reçus par la famille de la fille est réglé d'un commun accord entre les parties : dans certaines coutumes, ils sont partagés : moitié à chaque communauté ; dans d'autre, ils font entièrement retour au constituant ou, au contraire, demeurent à la famille de la fille.

La rupture de fiançaille est rare, elle peut survenir pour les causes les plus diverses et se règle d'un commun accord, ou, en cas de conflit, par arbitres.

Livraison de la femme. — Cet acte est un ce ceux qui, en raison du changement d'état qu'il entraîne pour les personnes qui y sont intéressées, nécessite l'emploi de ces pratiques rituelles d'ordre magique dont nous avons vu un exemple lors des funérailles du *fa*, pratiques qui ont pour but de permettre que ce changement soit accompli sans dommage pour personne.

Le constituant ayant tenu ses engagements et s'étant comporté suivant l'usage, la fille doit lui être livrée au jour convenu. Ce jour-là, le *furu-bolo-ma-tigi* et les amis du fiancé, accompagnés de musiciens, se présentent chez les parents pour recevoir et emmener la promise. Les parents acquiessent à la demande. Mais la jeune fille a disparu. Les arrivants se mettent aussitôt à sa recherche : elle demeure introuvable ou insaisissable parce que parents et amis facilitent sa dérobée. La poursuite ne va pas sans échauffer les deux partis et sans entraîner des rixes ; si bien que, quand la fille est enfin prise, le tumulte est à son comble. Il ne faut rien moins que l'intervention du *dugu-tigi* pour mettre fin au conflit. Il accorde au *furu-bolo ma-tigi* et à ses gens d'emmener la fille et conseille à celle-ci de les suivre.

Alors, le *furu-bolo-ma-tigi* et ses compagnons, faisant escorte, entraînent la promise vers la sortie du village, mais, au moment de franchir l'enceinte, la fille refuse d'aller plus loin ; les jeunes gens lui font une apperente violence pour l'emporter malgré ses cris ; elle se débat et vocifère jusqu'au moment où elle a franchi la limite du territoire du village. Là, elle se calme subitement, se drape dans la grande pièce d'étoffe, don de son fiancé, et suit gaîment la troupe de ses compagnes, qui portent ses *furu-fen'* et qui sont venues rejoindre le groupe du *furu-bolo-ma-tigi*. La troupe des jeunes gens ferme la marche et mène grand tapage de tambours et de trompes et pousse, de ci de là, le cri habituel de l'hyménée : *kuyo ! kuyo !* (1)

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(1) Plus généralement par un des fils de la communauté du fiancé.

(2) Plus généralement par une des filles de la communauté de la fiancée.

Sur le parcours, en divers points, l'on entend soudain le cri bien connu du *wara-mina-den'* de la confrérie à laquelle appartient le fiancé : le dieu veille sur la promise de son disciple, en chassant le mauvais esprit de sa route.

Près d'atteindre le territoire du village du fiancé, les jeunes gens prennent la tête du cortège, tandis que les compagnes de la fiancée se rangent derrière celle-ci. La troupe entière se met à danser au rythme marqué par les tambours et les trompes. Les femmes paraissent se traîner et mettent un long moment avant d'atteindre l'entrée du village, distante de quelque cent mètres.

A ce moment, le *wara-mina-den'* jette un grand et dernier cri : sa mission est terminée.

Des femmes du village accueillent les arrivants et conduisent la fille chez son mari. D'autres femmes se mêlent au cortège : plusieurs chœurs se forment et la danse, avec progression lente, reprend jusqu'à la demeure des époux. Là, dans une cour intérieure, l'assemblée s'installe : chacun à sa fantaisie boit, mange, danse, chante.

Dès son arrivée, l'on procède à la toilette de la jeune femme. Sa coiffure est défaite ; on lui enlève la ficelle et les perles qu'elle porte autour des reins ; on l'aide à se baigner et, enroulée dans un pagne blanc, elle s'étend sur la couche nuptiale.

Son mari vient la rejoindre en se dérobant à ses amis occupés à se réjouir au dehors.

. . . .

Au point du jour, tout à coup la poudre parle. De nombreux et puissants *kuyo ! kuyo !* dominent les chants et les bruits d'orchestre. Des vieilles femmes se précipitent dans la case nuptiale, avec de l'eau chaude pour les ablutions. Le mari sort et va s'asseoir, dans la cour, sur une natte, en compagnie du *furu-bolo-ma-tigi* et de ses amis.

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(1) Cette simulation du rapt doit être interprétée comme un rite de séparation.

L'épousée paraît, drapée dans son pagne de mariée ; derrière elle, les vieilles agitent le linge qui porte les traces évidentes de l'accomplissement de l'acte, et des *dyeli-moso* (griotes) chantent l'amour. A la sortie de la cour, les jeunes filles qui l'ont accompagnée l'entourent et la conduisent à une case aménagée pour son repos. C'est là que, huit jours durant, elle prend ses repas, et, assise sur une natte, un voile blanc sur la tête, elle passe ses journées à filer, dans la société de ses compagnes.

Quant à l'époux, tout le jour qui suit la nuit de noce il demeure dans sa case où parents, amis, voisins viennent le complimenter et lui offrir de menus cadeaux de victuailles. Il les retient pour boire et manger. La noce se prolonge, de cette manière, pendant plusieurs jours, suivant la fortune du mari, et les époux sont, pendant cette durée, à la disposition des convives.

Dans les familles riches, l'on aime faire étalage du trousseau, des bijoux, des cadeaux faits à la jeune femme : durant tout le lendemain de la nuit de noce, le tout est promené en grande pompe dans le village par des gens de caste qui en publient la consistance et en exagèrent la valeur. Vers le soir, on le met une dernière fois sous les yeux de la mariée : elle est là, assise sur un banc minuscule, la figure cachée derrière une sorte de plateau en herbes tressées qu'elle tient à la main, tandis que les tambours et autres instruments font grand tapage et qu'une griote, debout derrière la jeune femme, débite des chants d'amour. Et chacun d'admirer sa chevelure artistement tressée en un cimier transversal, terminé, de part et d'autre, par une ou deux petites nattes devant et derrière chaque oreille ; et l'on admire aussi les bijoux, que les femmes prennent à la main, les sandales aux énormes semelles...

Pour mettre fin à la cérémonie, le *furu-bolo-ma-tigi* remet des cauris à celle qui dirige les chants, et les fusils éclatent une dernière fois. Alors, la jeune femme se lève, glisse sur le sol, et, sans lever les pieds, rentre dans la case avec ses compagnes, tandis que les assistants se retirent.

Les secondes noces

Le nombre des épouses n'est limité que par la nécessité d'assurer à chacune une existence convenable : ce qui revient à dire qu'en principe la polygamie est l'apanage des riches. Certains polygames tentent par là de se donner cet air de richesse qui flatte leur orgueil, d'autres cèdent à un penchant de sensualité ; plus souvent, il arrive que des gens de condition modeste ont plusieurs épouses par seule raison économique.

En effet, lorsque l'épouse unique a des enfants en bas âge et pas de serviteur pour l'aider, elle se trouve surchargée à l'extrême : d'elle-même, alors, elle incite son mari à rechercher une nouvelle épouse qui prendra sa part du travail domestique et par là allégera la situation. De sorte qu'ici, la polygamie apparaît comme une association où, par la division du travail, chacun tâche à assurer son existence et contribuer à réaliser un certain bien-être commun.

Le mariage en secondes noces est en tout pareil à celui des premières noces, avec parfois moins d'apparat. De plus, l'homme déjà marié est plus indépendant de sa communauté au point de vue matériel et il en est aussi de même de la femme quelquefois.

II. AUTRES MODES D'UNION CONJUGALE

En dehors du mariage, l'union conjugale comporte des modes en nombre infini, comme les conventions entre particuliers, susceptibles, parfois et dans une mesure même étendue, de produire des conséquences en droit. Tous ces modes se ramènent à deux types : le concubinat et l'union libre.

Concubinat. — C'est l'union dans laquelle l'un au moins des époux est esclave. Il est très répandu que le maître libre traite une ou plusieurs de ses esclaves en épouses. D'aucuns affectionnent ce moyen de supprimer toutes les difficultés qu'engendrent la dot et les rapports avec une belle-famille souvent tracassière. Mais le concubinat de l'homme libre présente le grave inconvénient de donner à cet homme des enfants qui sont ses esclaves, puisqu'il est de règle que les enfants suivent la condition de leur mère esclave. Il est vrai que la coutume a été tournée : l'on admet que l'esclave est libérée à la naissance de l'enfant, fruit des œuvres du maître et reconnu par lui. Toutefois, cet artifice n'efface pas la tare originelle : les enfants nés des femmes libres se considèrent toujours comme supérieurs à leurs frères consanguins dont la mère est esclave. De là, des tiraillements intérieurs qui prennent une acuité particulière à la mort du *fa*.

Le concubinat, pratiqué sur une très vaste échelle par les hommes libres, a, en fait, perverti toutes les communautés. Le ménage polygamique a connu les pires difficultés parce que ces épouses de conditions différentes, contraintes à vivre côte à côte, ont tout sacrifié à leurs rancunes et, plus encore, à leurs haines.

Union libre. — Résulte d'un simple consentement réciproque des parties, sans paiement de dot.

En principe, la femme, qui n'est pas ou qui n'est plus en puissance de mari, appartient à sa communauté d'origine ; elle ne peut pas disposer d'elle-même sans le consentement de cette communauté ; si elle passe outre, cet organisme est toujours susceptible d'intervenir pour l'obliger à rompre ses engagements et il dispose à cet effet des moyens les plus absolus de contrainte.

Cela suffit à expliquer que l'homme qui consent à une union de ce genre court, d'ordinaire, au devant des pires complications : non seulement la femme et les enfants peuvent lui être enlevés sans recours possible, mais même il peut être poursuivi pour dommage causé à la communauté à laquelle la femme appartient.

Pourtant, il arrive que certaines femmes sont libérées de l'emprise de leurs communautés. Ainsi, celles dont tous les communautaires sont morts ; et, plus couramment, celle qui, par des moyens d'une moralité suspecte, a acheté son indépendance. L'homme libre qui épouse une telle femme réalise une union qui, dans la plus large mesure, produit des effets pareils à ceux du mariage.

La famille

Le ménage. — Le ménage légitime a pour base le mariage. Pour en pénétrer l'esprit, il faut se rendre compte du jeu des deux éléments parfaitement nets, mais toujours intimement mêlés dans toutes les affaires humaines : l'intérêt et le sentiment. Dans le ménage légitime, l'intérêt essentiel c'est la dot, dont il faut définir le caractère pour en comprendre toute l'importance.

La dot, c'est ce qui est remis en contre-partie de la livraison de la femme. Il est constant que la femme ainsi livrée ne change pas de condition : libre avant, elle est encore libre après le paiement de la dot.

Le lien matrimonial est tel qu'il peut, à tout moment, être rompu par la volonté de l'une ou l'autre des parties : celui qui prend cette initiative perd simplement la dot, en ce sens que si c'est la mari, il ne peut prétendre se faire restituer ce qu'il en a déjà payé ; si c'est la femme (ou sa communauté), elle doit restituer ce qu'elle a reçu. Mais quel que soit le cas de rupture, toujours les enfants appartiennent au mari.

Enfin, si l'union subsiste encore lors de la mort du mari, la communauté de la femme reprend, en principe, la libre disposition de celle-ci, à charge de rendre la dot.

Ces trois points parfaitement certains autorisent à conclure que l'union légitime, ou mariage, consiste essentiellement, du point de vue juridique, en une manière d'usufruit de la femme, au profit du mari, et dont la dot est le prix. En conséquence, la communauté de la femme est tenue d'assurer la jouissance du mari ; c'est pourquoi, lorsque la femme se conduit mal à quelque égard que ce soit, le mari en appelle à la communauté de cette femme, et cette communauté agit sur l'indisciplinée dans la crainte d'une rupture qui l'obligerait à restituer la dot. Réciproquement, le mari doit traiter sa femme dignement, c'est-à-dire en considération de son origine ; dans le cas contraire, il s'expose à des poursuites pour contravention au pacte matrimonial.

Il y a donc des droits et des devoirs réciproques entre époux ; basés sur le pacte matrimonial, ils sont à la fois renforcés, complétés ou plus généralement influencés par la morale, non moins que par les sentiments des époux entre eux et vis-à-vis de leurs communautés respectives.

Par là, s'explique qu'une fille de grande maison, de haute lignée (1), ne peut être traitée par son mari comme une vulgaire concubine, même s'il a pour celle-ci une affection qu'il n'a pas pour celle-là, car la fille libre d'une puissante maison, richement dotée, garde en ménage une véritable indépendance ; et même, lorsqu'elle dispose de biens suffisants, elle fait maison à part, et obligée, en quelque sorte, au seul devoir sexuel conjugal, elle reçoit son mari comme elle recevrait un amant.

La femme libre de modeste et, plus encore, de pauvre extraction est, par contre, la compagne des misères du mari : elle accomplit tous les travaux, les plus durs, les plus répugnants, et ne désire pas une rupture qui la priverait du seul réconfort d'affection qui la soutienne : l'amour de ses enfants.

Entre l'omnipotence de la première et l'humilité de la seconde, se placent tous les degrés imaginables. D'autant plus que, par la polygamie, les ménages légitimes se trouvent associés aux unions libres et aux concubinats voulus par le mari, de sorte que, dans la famille, la place de chacun, déjà conditionnée par toutes ces contingences, est, au demeurant, dominée par l'arbitraire souverain du *fa*. Nous l'allons voir nettement à propos de la filiation; cela n'est pas moins apparent en ce qui concerne les épouses, réserve faite toutefois pour la femme qui dispose, comme il vient d'être dit, de l'influence et des moyens de vivre presque indépendants du reste de la famille. Alors, en effet, que la femme non dotée est une irrégulière dont les enfants n'appartiennent, en droit, ni à l'un ni à l'autre de leurs procréateurs, alors que la concubine n'est même pas, au point de vue coutumier, une personne et que ses enfants sont esclaves de leur auteur, par la seule volonté du *fa*, l'une ou l'autre a, dans la famille, une prééminence enviable et d'ailleurs enviée des femmes légitimes.

Dans ces conditions, peut-on admettre que les devoirs conjugaux, l'obéissance et la fidélité et leurs contreparties, les droits au secours et à l'assistance, se retrouvent ici avec les nuances que comporte le milieu. La femme doit obéir à son mari, c'est certain, et il dispose, pour la contraindre, de la correction corporelle, dont il ne manque pas d'user. Mais elle n'est pas tout à fait livrée à son arbitraire. Par exemple, il peut bien l'obliger à une résidence déterminée ; cependant, s'il a été convenu, et c'est même une clause tacite, qu'elle ne quitterait pas le territoire de la tribu, il ne peut l'emmener au loin. Il peut bien l'obliger à participer aux travaux domestiques, mais, si elle est de condition libre, il outrepasserait ses pouvoirs en l'astreignant à des tâches serviles ; de même il ne peut la louer, la donner en gage ou la vendre.

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(1) Ainsi, dans le Soudan occidental, l'on témoigne beaucoup de déférence aux filles massa-si.

Quant au devoir de fidélité réciproque, il est le plus souvent fort vague. Il est admis que le mari n'y est pas tenu, ses écarts sont même parfois servis par sa propre femme, qui pense ainsi se l'attacher en le flattant. Quant à l'inconduite de sa femme, le mari n'y ajoute pas toujours grande importance, parfois même il ne se croit pas déshonoré d'en tirer profit. S'il survint des enfants, il n'est pas embarrassé pour les accepter ou les renier.

Le mari doit à sa femme la nourriture, le vêtement, l'habitation dans la mesure de ses moyens et, s'il a eu soin de ne pas augmenter imprudemment le nombre de ses épouses, tout doit demeurer dans des limites convenables. En tout cas, sur un point spécial, il doit se montrer impartial envers toutes ses épouses, s'il est soucieux de la paix domestique : il doit honorer chacune à tour de rôle de ses faveurs.

En principe, le mari devrait traiter ses femmes de la même manière en toutes choses ; c'est pratiquement impossible d'après tout ce qui précède. De plus, il est admis, de façon générale, que la première femme épousée, quelle qu'elle soit, libre ou esclave, garde toujours une prépondérance marquée par diverses prérogatives. Elle est comme la mère de ses compagnes ; elle dirige leurs travaux, leurs occupations ; elle répartit tout dans la maison. Vis-à-vis du mari, elle fait office de confidente et de conseillère.

La filiation. — Il faut entendre par là un ensemble de faits que nous diviserons, pour la clarté de l'exposition, en deux groupes, sous les titres : la naissance ; l'imposition du nom.

La naissance. — La femme enceinte est soumise, à cause de cet état, à une sorte de régime spécial, dont voici quelques traits.

En principe, elle doit cesser toutes relations sexuelles depuis le moment où elle sent l'enfant remuer jusque deux ou trois mois après la naissance : non par motif d'hygiène, mais parce que l'on pense que l'enfant l'exige comme une manière de déférence, sans laquelle il cesserait de vivre.

Au point de vue alimentaire, il est recommandé que la femme enceinte soit bien nourrie, surtout abondamment. On lui offre, le cas échéant, le cœur ou le foie des fauves mis à mort : ce sont là des nœuds de vie dont l'absorption est susceptible, pense-t-on, de renforcer l'âme de l'enfant et d'en faire un individu courageux. Il est fréquent que la femme enceinte recherche cette terre ocreuse ou rougeâtre que l'on vend sur les marchés et qu'elle croque comme du chocolat, sans qu'il soit possible de préciser dans quel but.

Elle doit s'abstenir de visiter les mourants, d'assister aux obsèques, de prendre le deuil, de se mêler aux attroupements : le tout afin d'éviter, sous quelqu'aspect que ce soit, le contact de ce qui peut nuire à l'âme fragile qu'elle porte.

Le Bambara n'a pas une idée précise du temps que dure la gestation ; ses déductions, basées sur les seules apparences, le portent à croire que l'enfant, qui naît avec une conformation avancée, a dû séjourner plus longtemps dans le sein maternel que tel autre dont la conformation est chétive. Il est d'ailleurs admis que la fécondation peut être l'œuvre de quelque esprit en rapport avec la femme (1). Les enfants qui se présentent avec un aspect singulier ou anormal sont, croit-on, le fruit de telles amours et l'on rattache à cette même cause le fait que certaines femmes ne donnent le jour qu'à des enfants morts-nés.

Il est conseillé, à la femme enceinte, de vaquer aux besognes domestiques jusqu'au moment le plus proche de l'accouchement et, plus spécialement, de piler le grain : sans doute en vue de faciliter le travail de la parturition, surtout chez les primipares.

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(1) Voir ci-devant, dans la chronique du Kaarta, le récit relatif à Deni-ba Bo, qui fut en relation avec une femme *mabo*, laquelle se prétendait liée à un esprit caché sous la forme d'un cheval.

Lorsque les douleurs de l'enfantement surviennent, la femme se retire dans sa case en compagnie de quelques matrones réputées pour leur expérience. Les hommes, le mari compris, n'ont aucun accès auprès de la patiente.

Si l'enfant se présente mal, ou pour tout autre complication, les assistantes font ce qu'elles peuvent, au hasard de leurs connaissances personnelles ou de l'inspiration du moment et des superstitions courantes. En fin de compte, l'on appelle le magicien ou le marabout, ce qui est tout un. Ni l'un ni l'autre n'est admis auprès de la malade, il doit opérer de l'extérieur par des passes magiques, des incantations ou prières, et prescrire tels médicaments qu'il convint.

Pour l'expulsion de l'enfant, la femme est généralement accroupie, les mains placées derrière la tête ou, au contraire, agenouillée, les mains appuyées au mur. La plus âgée ou la plus experte des matrones lie le cordon ombilical, puis le sectionne ; souvent mal faite, cette opération entraîne la hernie ombilicale dont tant d'indigènes sont atteints et qui est tenue d'ailleurs pour une déformation de bon ton. Le délivre est enterré au dehors et près de la case, quelquefois dans le sol de la case. La mère est lavée, et souvent on lui fait absorber quelqu'infusion réputée hémostatique.

L'enfant est lavé plusieurs fois, puis enduit de beurre végétal (1) (*se tlu*) ou de beurre de vache ; on masse la tête pour lui donner une forme agréable et on l'entoure d'un linge blanc.

L'enfant est, d'ordinaire, laissé à jeun durant les premières vingt-quatre heures ; parfois, on lui fait absorber quelques gouttes de lait de chèvre, breuvage aux propriétés mystiques. Il reçoit ensuite le sein.

Le père doit être au plus vite informé de la naissance et du sexe de l'enfant. Il est d'ailleurs introduit, par la lieuse du cordon ombilical, auprès de la mère, qui lui présente l'enfant en insistant sur toute particularité corporelle qui lui paraît un signe manifeste de la réincarnation de quelque défunt de la famille ou de tout autre influence du monde invisible.

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(1) Connu des Européens sous le nom de karité, qui est un terme soninké.

Par la même matrone, sont prévenues les autorités locales (*dugu-tigi*, *nyana-n-son-na-ba*...) et les gens du voisinage ; la nouvelle se répand rapidement.

L'accouchée reprend le plus tôt possible ses occupations habituelles ; souvent, dans les vingt-quatre heures, elle est debout ; en tout cas, sauf impossibilité absolue, elle ne reste pas plus d'une semaine couchée. Mais, durant sept à huit jours, elle demeure isolée; de plus, au Kaarta, notamment, sa nourriture est préparée exclusivement par des jeunes amies choisies par elle.

La chute du cordon ombilical marque la fin de cette réclusion. Au Kaarta, le cordon recueilli est placé dans un petit sachet que l'on attache au cou de l'enfant : l'on en fera faire, ultérieurement, un précieux talisman. C'est seulement après la chute du cordon ombilical que l'enfant est tenu pour définitivement né : nous voyons, ici, reparaître cette marge qui accompagne tout changement d'état (mort, mariage, circoncision...). Le véritable accès de l'enfant à la vie sociale est marqué par l'imposition du nom.

Imposition du nom. — C'est au père qu'il appartient de nommer l'enfant en tenant compte des diverses circonstances ou incidents qui ont marqué sa venue au monde : c'est par cet acte que l'enfant est agrégé à la famille.

Au Ségou, pour cette cérémonie, les chefs de famille, parents, voisins ou amis, sont convoqués et surtout le *dugu-tigi*, ou plus exactement le *nyana-n-son-na-ba*. Par rang d'importance et d'âge, ils viennent, au jour dit, s'accroupir devant la porte d'entrée de la cour qui donne accès à la case de l'accouchée. Le chef religieux (*nyana-n-son-na-ba*) pénètre dans la case de l'accouchée et, sur les genoux de celle-ci, rase la tête de l'enfant.

Pendant ce temps, des femmes, parents, voisins ou amis arrivent en file, chantant et battant des mains, et poussant, par intervalle, le cri : *Kuyo! Kuyo!* Elles offrent à l'accouchée du mil et du coton.

Après lui avoir rasé la tête, le chef, pour écarter de lui les esprits malfaisants, impose ses mains à l'enfant, lui caresse le dos et la poitrine, lui crachotte à la figure. Après quoi, il vient, au dehors, s'asseoir parmi ses gens.

Le père lui offre alors onze colas, et les chefs de famille, chacun à son tour, lui donnent 40 à 50 cauris : le tout est placé sur un plateau en vannerie.

A ce moment, le chef demande au père le nom qu'il veut donner à l'enfant. Avant de répondre, le père requiert le partage des colas et des cauris qui constituent le *tua sara* = prix du nom : deux noix de colas et la moitié des cauris sont portés à la mère ; le reste est réparti entre les chefs de famille présents : ce sont le *ni wuru* = cola de vie, et le *tua kolo* = cauri de l'imposition du nom. Alors, le père déclare le nom et fait connaître les raisons de son choix. Quelles sont ces raisons ? Le signe manifeste, à ses yeux, de la réincarnation de tel défunt ; tel incident qui a marqué la venue de l'enfant... Chacun félicite le père pour cet heureux événement et formule des vœux de bonheur pour l'enfant et des bénédictions pour ses parents.

Les femmes ne sont pas admises dans le cercle des hommes ; massées près de la case de l'accouchée, elles ignorent le nom, mais elles savent qu'il est imposé. Alors, la lieuse de cordon lave l'enfant par trois fois dans de l'eau tiède et savonneuse, et, par trois fois, ayant pris de l'eau dans sa bouche, elle en asperge le petit corps de la nuque au bas des reins, puis formule des vœux de bonheur. Après quoi, avec l'enfant, elle se rend à la porte de la case où se tiennent le père et les chefs de famille et demande le nom. Elle revient ensuite parmi les femmes et dépose l'enfant sur les genoux d'une vieille : trois fois, celle-ci souffle dans les oreilles de l'enfant, puis crie dans l'une et l'autre : *Kuyo ! Kuyo ! i tua dara*, c'est-à-dire : *Kuyo ! Kuyo !* ton nom est.... L'enfant est alors placé dans l'étroite bande qui servira désormais à sa mère pour le porter dans le dos et, par trois fois, on le roule sur un fer de hache, si c'est un garçon, sur une tige de fer à égrener le coton si c'est une fille ; en même temps, l'on fait en sa faveur les meilleurs vœux.

Au Kaarta, les choses se passent un peu différemment. A la porte de la case de la mère, on égorge un bœuf ou un mouton ; l'on prépare, en outre, du *dege*. L'on rase la tête de l'enfant et l'on dépose les cheveux sur le *dege*. Chaque convive appuie la main droite sur le bord de la calebasse et un griot formule les vœux que l'on fait pour le bonheur du nouveau-né ; puis l'on danse en tournant en rond autour du plat de *dege*, on retire ensuite les cheveux et on les remet à la mère pour les garder. Après quoi l'on fait, s'il y a lieu, au visage de l'enfant, à l'aide d'un poignard, les trois entailles qui constituent le tatouage spécial aux Kouloubali. Enfin le griot prend l'enfant, le promène autour de l'assistance et le remet au père, qui doit faire connaître le nom à lui donner ; lorsque le père s'est prononcé, le griot reprend l'enfant et, faisant un cornet avec ses mains, lui crie par trois fois : « Tu t'appelles... »

En principe, le nom (*tua*) rappelle la circonstance de la naissance. D'ordinaire, l'enfant posthume reçoit le nom de son père, comme s'il en était la réincarnation, ou, plus généralement, on l'appelle *Fa-n-ko* = posthume (litt. qui est venu après le *fa*). Si le nouveau-né présente avec un défunt une quelconque ressemblance, on le nomme d'après lui ou plus généralement *sagi* = celui qui est revenu. La femme longtemps inféconde donne à son enfant le nom de l'agent auquel elle attribue la cessation de sa stérilité : *Nyana-m-ba* = le grand *nyana* ; *Mori-ba* = le grand marabout... De même, encore, si c'est par un tel intermédiaire qu'elle a triomphé des maléfices d'un esprit malin ; toutefois, dans ce cas, il est habituel que, dès sa venue au monde, l'enfant soit comme abandonné. Une commère le recueille. C'est un enfant « jeté » (*fili*) et, de là, son nom *Fili* ; mais on l'appelle aussi, soit d'après le lieu où il a été abandonné : *sunkun'* = tas d'ordure, ou d'après la personne qui l'a recueilli, *Numuke* = forgeron ; *Dyelike* = griot. L'enfant qui survit à plusieurs autres morts-nés est tenu pour l'incarnation d'un esprit malin dont on a enfin triomphé et on stigmatise, en quelque sorte, cet esprit malin en le qualifiant *Malo-bali* = éhonté, ou *Tuantan'* = anonyme. Fréquemment, le *tua* n'est que le nom du jour, du mois, de la saison, de la naissance : *Tenen'* = lundi ; *Sunkalo* = mois de ramadan ; *Sama* = hivernage. Les jumeaux sont l'un et l'autre dénommés *Fune*, littéralement « pareil », mais parfois on les distingue expressément en disant à l'un *Sio*, à l'autre *Sie-koro* (1) ; si ce sont des jumelles, l'on emploie *Wassa* et *Bafune* (1). Au Bani, l'enfant né après les jumeaux est appelé *Konimba* (1). Celui qui survient alors que sa mère paraît ne plus devoir enfanter, est dit *Kosa* (1) = litt. affaire terminée. Il est des familles qui adoptent un nom pour le fils aîné : chez les Masssasi, à une époque, ce fut *Bo* (2), d'où *Musu-kura Bo* ; *Sira Bo*... (= *Bo*, dont la mère était *Musu-kura* ; *Bo*, dont la mère se nommait *Sira*...). Au Ségou, les Kouloubali avaient adopté de même le *tua* : *Ngolo*, d'où *Nyana Ngolo* ; *Barama Ngolo* ; *Solo-Ngolo*... Dans la famille des chefs bambara du Femay (1) (canton du cercle de Djeimé), on donnait au fils aîné le nom du grand-père paternel ; au 2e fils, celui de Moussa ; au 3e, celui d'Abdoullah ; au 4e, celui de Ngizi ; au 5e, celui de Souleyman ; tandis que les filles étaient respectivement dénommées : la 1re, Fatouma ; la 2e, Awa ; la 3e Nyele-ba ou Nye-ba ; la 4e, Dyomene ; la 5e, Kounadi ; la 6e, Aminata (1).

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(1) Voir Humblot.

Mais il est aussi des noms très généralement usités pour les aînés : *Ntyi*, avec de très nombreuses variantes, pour les garçons ; tandis qu'aux filles aînées, l'on dit *Nya* ou *Nyele*. Ces deux derniers noms sont tellement répandus dans le Ségou que, par dérision, les Sonninké désignent les Bambara de cette région par l'expression : *Nya ni Nyele-u* = les gens de *Nya* et de *Nyele*. Le mari et la femme ne pouvant, d'après la coutume généralement admise, prononcer les noms de leurs beaux-parents respectifs, s'il arrive, ce qui est fréquent, que l'enfant soit ainsi nommé, pour respecter l'interdit, l'on recourt à un paronyme : au garçon, l'on dit *Tye-koro* = le vieux ; à la fille, *Moso-koro* = la vieille. Pour satisfaire au même interdit, il existe parfois de véritables synonymes locaux : ainsi pour *Mussa*, l'on dit *Dyigi* ; pour *Mori-ba*, l'on dit *Bo-dyan*. Il n'est pas rare que des individus soient désignés par ces doubles noms aux deux parties synonymes ; il y a ainsi des *Mussa-Dyigi* ou *Dyigi-Moussa*, et des *Bodyan-Moriba*...

Voilà quelques traits caractéristiques qui permettent de se faire une idée de la manière dont on nomme l'individu chez les Bambara, mais la question est en fait inépuisable.

Après la cérémonie de l'imposition du nom, la mère reprend la vie ordinaire en respectant encore quelques interdits : pas de relations sexuelles pendant les trois premiers mois notamment ; pendant cette même période, elle ne doit pas non plus modifier sa coiffure, ni sortir du village. Ce temps écoulé, elle se couvre de bijoux, de perles, de boules d'ambre, empruntés au besoin aux voisines ou aux parentes, elle oint l'enfant de beurre et va le présenter aux notabilités locales.

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(1) Voir Humblot. — (2) Etymologiquement Bo équivaut à Ngolo.

L'allaitement se poursuit pendant deux et même trois ans et, en principe, c'est durant toute cette période que la femme devrait s'abstenir de toutes relations sexuelles, mais, dans la pratique, c'est tout au plus si les trois mois sus-visés sont respectés.

L'enfance. — Tant qu'il est petit, l'enfant demeure avec sa mère, soit qu'elle s'en occupe personnellement, soit qu'elle le fasse soigner par une esclave préposée spécialement à cet office, ou encore qu'elle l'abandonne à l'une de ses filles.

Allaité pendant deux et même trois ans, il est porté à califourchon par sa mère, ou celle qui s'occupe de lui, jusqu'au jour où, suffisamment solide sur ses jambes, il polissonne dans la maison et dans ses entours.

Vers 6 à 8 ans, le garçonnet est déjà attiré vers l'association enfantine du *n-tomo* et il ne manque pas de s'y affilier dès qu'on veut bien l'y recevoir. La fillette est moins libre, elle est retenue à la maison, où on l'emploie aux besognes domestiques : aller chercher l'eau, le bois, surveiller le feu.

La puberté. — Ainsi que nous le verrons, le *n-tomo* prépare l'enfant au *soli*, cérémonie qui constate le fait capital de sa vie : la puberté civile. Le rite essentiel, mais non pas unique, de cette cérémonie, est la circoncision. En principe, le *soli* n'est accessible qu'aux enfants pubères et donc affirme que l'enfant a atteint l'âge de la puberté naturelle. Mais outre que cet état ne survient pas à un âge fixe, les enfants qui le subissent sont d'âge divers, parce que le *soli* n'a pas lieu tous les ans, à cause des dépenses considérables qu'il occasionne.

Le *soli* franchi, le garçon n'est plus un enfant ; ce n'est pas non plus encore un homme, c'est un « jeune maître », un *kamalen*'. On l'admet dans les confréries, c'est donc que l'on compte sur sa discrétion ; son serment est recevable : il peut, par suite, témoigner en affaire. Aussi, s'il sait se faire remarquer, on lui confie quelques petites missions, qui l'incitent à persévérer. D'autre part, déniaisé par les compagnons du *n-tomo*, il n'entretient pas que des relations platoniques avec sa compagne de *soli*, la *n-golo-moso*, et d'autres amies : le dévergondage sexuel est courant.

Comme en tout, la fille a une vie plus effacée. Le *soli* n'est pour elle qu'une façon d'être présentée dans le monde, comme l'on dirait chez nous, c'est-à-dire un moyen de lui susciter un époux.

La majorité, la tutelle, l'interdiction. — Des faits exposés précédemment, il résulte que rien ne permet au Bambara de connaître son âge avec certitude. C'est au plus s'il peut le faire par approximation, en se référant à un événement important survenu, à peu près, à l'époque de sa naissance.

Dès lors, on comprend que la majorité n'est pas un corollaire de l'âge. Le développement physique de l'individu et surtout sa maturité d'esprit sont les indices dont s'inspire sa famille pour concéder au *kamalen'* les droits qui distinguent l'homme de l'adolescent et dont le plus important est assurément de prendre femme pour fonder une famille.

Le *soli* marque, à vrai dire, l'époque à partir de laquelle les jeunes gens de l'un et l'autre sexe sont susceptibles de contracter mariage. En fait, il est rare que les filles, après 16 ou 18 ans, et les garçons après 25 ans, demeurent célibataires. Etant entendu, en outre, que la fille peut être accordée dès sa naissance et même dès le sein de sa mère, ainsi qu'il a été expliqué.

La tutelle a pour but de garantir l'individu contre les égarements de l'inexpérience ou la faiblesse inhérente au sexe, faiblesse devant s'entendre ici non seulement au point de vue physique, mais également d'une incapacité imposée par la coutume, qui n'admet pas que la femme puisse, en quoi que ce soit, disposer des droits ou des biens de communauté. C'est pourquoi sont en tutelle les jeunes hommes jusqu'à ce que le *fa*, en son conseil, les reconnaisse aptes à exercer les droits virils ; les femmes, en principe, toute la vie.

Durant le mariage, le père est de droit l'administrateur des biens qui adviennent à ses enfants mineurs : le plus souvent, il use discrétionnairement de ces biens ; en droit, il est tenu d'en rendre compte à l'expiration de la minorité des enfants.

Celui qui s'absente, pour un temps long ou indéterminé, délègue en tant que de besoin, un ami ou un parent pour diriger sa communauté familiale ; mais ce délégué est tenu d'agir d'accord avec le conseil habituel et la famille de l'absent.

En cas de divorce, les enfants demeurent toujours avec le père. Quant à la femme divorcée, elle retombe sous la tutelle de sa communauté.

Lorsque la mère meurt, le père garde l'administration des biens de la défunte, qui sont la propriété indivise des enfants de cette femme. Cependant, si l'un des fils de cette femme est marié, ou en âge de l'être et suffisamment sérieux, c'est à lui que tous ces biens doivent être remis pour les administrer, en tant que *fa* de la communauté utérine.

Lorsque le père meurt, ses enfants mineurs tombent sous la tutelle du patriarche dont il relève ; s'il était indépendant, la tutelle serait constituée suivant la volonté qu'il n'aurait pas manqué d'exprimer à cet égard.

En tout cas, si, parmi les fils, il en est un de marié ou en âge de l'être et suffisamment sérieux, il devient *fa* de la communauté familiale qui, au fur et à mesure que les cadets prennent de l'âge et surtout fondent chacun une famille, devient une patriarchie, dont nous avons exposé précédemment le régime.

En droit indigène, l'interdiction n'existe pas ; en fait, les personnes qui, par suite de maladie ou de sénilité, ne peuvent se comporter suivant la coutume pour l'exercice des fonctions qui leur incombent, se trouvent suppléées par ceux que la coutume désigne pour les remplacer en cas de mort.

La faya. — La *faya*, c'est l'autorité, la puissance du *fa* sur tous ceux qui sont sous sa dépendance. Elle ne diffère pas de nature mais d'étendue, suivant que l'on envisage la communauté patriarcale ou familiale.

Faya familiale. — Dans la famille, le *fa* a, en principe, la libre et entière disposition de tout ce qui constitue cette communauté. Qu'il agisse de sa seule initiative ou qu'il s'inspire de l'avis de son entourage, de ses familiers ou amis, peu importe. Sur les terres d'exploitation, il exerce l'usufruit agraire ; des biens mobilires, il dispose sans restriction. Quant aux personnes, celles issues de lui sont à sa discrétion, il profite de leur travail ; il peut les louer, les mettre en gage, les aliéner et même les mettre à mort. Sur ses épouses, il exerce l'usufruit conjugal. Ses esclaves ne sont que des choses.

Faya patriarcale. — Elle diffère de la précédente par l'étendue. Tout ce qui se rattache, à quelque titre que ce soit, à la communauté patriarcale elle-même et aux communautés familiales qui sont sous sa dépendance, tombe sous la *faya* patriarcale.

Si l'exercice de cette autorité ne présente point de difficulté en théorie, il en va différemment en pratique.

C'est qu'en effet, le *fa* d'une communauté familiale ne relève strictement du patriarche que si, se rattachant à lui par les mâles, il détient de même quelque bien de la patriarchie ou prétend se réserver des droits dans cette patriarchie.

Au cas contraire, le *fa* familial se conduit comme un étranger envers la patriarchie et celle-ci ne peut que le traiter en concéquence. C'est ce qui se produit lorsque quelque « fils » s'en va au loin, s'y établit et y prospère par ses seuls moyens et à ses risques et périls. Rompant tout lien agnatique, il s'affranchit en fait de l'autorité que sa patriarchie prétendrait lui imposer.

C'est ainsi que se sont constituées ces innombrables branches dissidentes qui portent le même *dyamu*, mais ne peuvent, que par hypothèse, remonter par les mâles à un auteur mâle commun.

Les successions. — Il convient, tout d'abord, de distinguer selon que le défunt était *fa* ou *fantan'*, c'est-à-dire exerçait une *faya* ou était sous l'autorité d'un *fa*.

Le défunt était *fa* :

S'il était *fa* d'une famille, en principe tout ce qui dépendait de lui demeure indivis sous la nouvelle *faya* du plus âgé de tous ses fils.

S'il était *fa* d'une patriarchie, un nouveau patriarche lui succède.

Il n'est pas besoin d'insister sur ces divers points, non plus que sur les conséquences de ces mutations, après les détails qui ont été donnés ici précédemment.

Le défunt était *fantan'*, c'est à-dire n'avait pas l'exercice d'une *faya* :

Le fils qui meurt avant d'être *fa* laisse rarement des biens. Si le cas se produit, ces richesses étaient, en principe, à la communauté à laquelle le défunt appartenait. Toutefois, la dévolution des biens provenant d'origine spéciale doit être réglée en tenant compte de cette origine. Ainsi, les biens dont le défunt avait hérité de sa mère prédécédée échoient à ses héritiers utérins.

Ce qui vient d'être dit du fils s'applique plus encore à la fille qui n'est, à tout prendre, elle-même, qu'une manière de bien de la communauté.

Le *fantan'* le plus dénué est l'esclave. En principe, il ne saurait laisser de succession puisque même sa propre personne ne lui appartient pas. Et cependant, en fait, il en va différemment. L'esclave a, généralement, quelque bien ; il arrive même qu'il est très riche. Son *fa* lui laisse la jouissance de tout durant sa vie et il est de pratique courante qu'il la laisse également à ses enfants. De telle sorte que tout se passe comme s'il s'agissait d'un libre défunt, et ce que nous avons dit des communautés est applicable à ce genre de communauté qui n'a pourtant, strictement parlant, qu'une existence virtuelle. Mais le jeu de la coutume, en affranchissant l'esclave, lui donne accès à un statut d'homme libre, sans pour cela le dépouiller de ce dont son *fa* lui a laissé la jouissance ; si bien que cette jouissance se transforme, puis se fortifie par l'hérédité au point d'équivaloir aux droits analogues sur les biens que la coutume reconnaît aux gens libres de naissance.

Ordres des successibles. — Communauté patriarcale. — Le *fa* est celui qui est le plus âgé des mâles vivants qui descendent du *fa* fondateur en ligne directe et par les mâles.

Communauté familiale. — 1° L'aîné de tous les fils vivants du défunt ; à sa mort, comme pour la communauté patriarcale.

S'il n'y a que des filles, les biens sont partagés entre elles ;

2° A défaut d'enfants, les collatéraux mâles et, à défaut de ceux-ci, les femmes ;

3° A défaut des collatéraux, les ascendants ;

4° A défaut d'ascendants, le conjoint survivant ;

5° A défaut de conjoint survivant, il y a déshérence :

la succession revient au chef de l'agglomération, *dugu-tigi*, lorsque cette agglomération est indépendante ; au chef du clan, *fama*, dans le cas contraire.

La Communauté et l'individu. — De tout ce qui précède, il résulte que l'individu, quel qu'il soit et quelle que soit sa situation, ne vaut qu'en tant que membre d'une communauté (1) : c'est elle qui existe et vit, lui n'existe et ne vit que par elle et, en grande partie, pour elle.

L'individu indépendant de toute *faya* est donc une anomalie, qui prend d'ailleurs fin dès qu'il devient lui-même *fa*.

Mais il est des cas où l'individu est mis hors de sa communauté par son fait ou par celui des circonstances, et il en résulte des changements d'état remarquables.

Celui qui, par une conduite jugée indigne, est chassé de sa communauté, perd ses droits à la *faya* dans cette communauté.

Si son indignité se rattache à l'exercice de certain métier tenu pour avilissant, il tombe dans ce que les Bambara appellent *nyama-ka-la*, et les Européens les « gens de caste ». Désormais, non seulement il est exclu de sa communauté, mais il vit en marge de toute communauté de gens non déchus : c'est un homme libre de qualité inférieure. Il évolue, d'ordinaire, sous la tutelle d'une communauté de gens non déchus, il en tire souvent sa subsistance et la considération qu'on lui témoigne parfois.

On compte comme *nyama-ka-la*, chez les Bambara : les *numu* ou forgerons, dont les femmes sont généralement potières ; les *loro*, ouvriers du cuivre ; les *garanke*, qui travaillent le cuir ; les *kule*, qui façonnent le bois et qui sont parfois selliers.

Les chasseurs (*donso*), qui forment des associations puissantes et redoutées ; les *somono* et *bozo*, qui sont adonnés à la pêche, ont un statut moins étroit que celui des artisans sus-visés.

Quant au *dyeli*, tombé au rang de factotum domestique, il est le plus méprisé de tous. Il ne tire quelque considération et, exceptionnellement, une notable estime, que de sa valeur comme archiviste familial.

L'appellation *nyama-ka-la* est dérivée de *nyama* qui signifie « ordure, » « rebut », ce sont des gens de rebut. On les méprise. D'aucuns sont particulièrement redoutés, ce sont les forgerons et les *dyeli*. Les premiers passent — non sans raison — pour adonnés aux pratiques de magie et même de sorcellerie. Les *dyeli* ont une verve empoisonnée.

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(1) C'est parce qu'il n'appartient à aucune communauté (en tant que personne) que l'esclave n'a aucun droit.

Le casté, étant libre, peut contracter mariage — c'est-à-dire une union légitime — et fonder une famille comme tout libre non casté. Ses enfants mâles héritent nécessairement de sa condition, qui se transmet ainsi indéfiniment par les mâles.

D'ordinaire, ils se marient entre gens de même caste ; parfois, d'une caste à l'autre.

Tout individu non casté qui s'allie conjugalement à une personne de caste se diminue : la femme est tenue désormais pour castée et ses enfants prennent obligatoirement la condition de leur père. L'homme est moins atteint, il n'est pas rare que les gros personnages aient une épouse castée : c'est une mésalliance certaine ; les enfants qui naissent d'une pareille union sont mal considérés et cela rejaillit encore contre leur père.

Par contre, il est tout à fait licite et courant d'avoir des gens de caste dans son intimité ; point de notable qui n'en ait plusieurs pour inséparables compagnons.

Si le fait d'appartenir à une caste entraîne un certain statut, il n'oblige pas, toutefois, à l'exercice du métier : tel, de caste *numu*, ignore le travail du fer et ne s'occupe que d'agriculture... D'autre part, la pratique domestique ou temporaire des métiers réputés avilissants ne fait pas encourir de déchéance.

L'individu n'est pas, en principe, exclu de sa communauté par l'esclavage, ni déchu envers elle à un titre quelconque (1) : s'il revient, il reprend ses droits, comme s'il n'avait été qu'absent.

Par contre, là où il est esclave, l'individu n'appartient à aucune communauté (en tant que personne) et c'est pourquoi il n'a aucun droit et est traité comme une chose.

Nous avons exposé, ici, précédemment, comment l'esclave arrive, avec le temps et les circonstances, à échapper aux conséquences de son état, mais, strictement, il ne peut jamais se soustraire à cet état. Si, en fait, comme la chronique l'atteste pour Ngolo Dyara, l'esclave arrive à occuper une situation qui paraît effacer, par son importance, les stigmates de la servitude, la tare de l'esclavage demeure cependant ineffaçable.

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(1) Exemple Déssé-Koro, emmené en captivité à Ségou, revint au Kaarta, où il exerça la *foye* des Massa-si.

4. Rapports entre communautés

La véritable unité sociale, c'est la communauté. Même lorsqu'aucun organisme spécial ne les unit entre elles, les communautés sont souvent soudées les unes aux autres par de multiples liens. Sans distinction de race, du reste, parce que sur un même territoire, cohabitent, le plus souvent, des gens ethniquement divers.

Ces liens des communautés entre elles se ramènent à deux chefs : la parenté et l'alliance.

La parenté

La parenté naturelle étend son influence fort loin. Ainsi, à une même communauté patriarcale sont annexées les communautés familiales de tous les communautaires mâles qui la composent, et dans chaque communauté familiale coexistent les communautés consanguines et utérines. Toute communauté familiale devient d'ailleurs patriarcale à la mort du chef de famille et groupe alors autour d'elle ses communautés familiales.

En définitive, sous une communauté patriarcale origine se groupent, en plus ou moins grand nombre, d'autres patriarchies ou familles, enfermant elles-mêmes des communautés consanguines ou utérines. Lorsque la patriarchie origine est ancienne, l'on conçoit que sous son égide vivent un nombre considérable de personnes qui, toutes, se reconnaissent des *dyamu* et *tne* communs.

Toutefois, il arrive qu'au cours du temps et par fortunes diverses, des branches se sont séparées du tronc, et pour marquer leur nouvel état, perpétuer l'acte mémorable de leur auteur, certaines ont adopté un *dyamu* spécial et des *tne* particuliers. Le nouveau *dyamu*, d'abord, s'adjoint simplement au *dyamu* primitif puis, peu à peu, est seul employé. Quoi qu'il en soit, les caractéristiques principales de la communauté-mère subsistent toujours, il s'y surajoute seulement quelques traits nouveaux.

Chaque communauté secondaire devenant à son tour génératrice de communautés pareilles, il va de soi que les communautés les plus éloignées de la communauté fondatrice n'ont plus avec elle que quelques caractères communs, mais jamais la parenté ne s'éteint.

Quels sont les effets de cette parenté ? D'une part, elle oblige tous ceux qu'elle concerne à observer entre eux les devoirs de communauté : spécialement à respecter les traditions ancestrales relatives au culte ; à pratiquer l'entr'aide mutuelle ; à reconnaître l'autorité du *fa* en exercice, lequel doit, de son côté, protéger tous ses parents, si lointain qu'en soit le lignage.

A l'égard des tiers, cette parenté oblige à demeurer fidèle à tous les pactes intervenus entre communautés. L'on constate souvent la fidélité à ces alliances, parfois vieilles de plusieurs siècles : des gens qui ne s'étaient jamais vus, informés fortuitement de leurs *dyamu* respectifs et des diverses caractéristiques qui les accompagnent, se montrent aussitôt respectueux des obligations réciproques contractées par leurs ancêtres.

L'ALLIANCE

Les modes d'alliance entre communautés sont forts divers en apparence ; en fait, la base de toute alliance consiste toujours en un rite religieux ou magique et, plus généralement, en un serment.

Quatre modes d'alliance méritent tout particulièrement de retenir l'attention : le *tne* ou interdit, le serment, le mariage, le culte commun.

I. *Le tne.* — Réplique du monde visible, le monde invisible est, pour l'indigène, constitué en communautés et cette analogie s'étend même aux choses, qualifiées par nous, inanimées. C'est pourquoi, lorsque l'indigène s'oblige à un interdit, ce n'est pas telle personne ou telle chose qu'il promet de respecter, mais bien la communauté dont cette personne ou cette chose est, à ses yeux, le représentant. De même, d'ailleurs, que l'interdit s'applique à la communauté de ce qui en est l'objet, il oblige la communauté dont celui qui l'institue est le *fa*.

La base de cette alliance est le serment du *fa* : serment dont toute infraction entraîne automatiquement les pires calamités pour le coupable. Il y a là comme un sacrement que les générations issues du *fa* devront respecter *in infinitium*.

La chronique du Ségou nous montre comment intervient un tel serment. Arrivé au bord du Niger, que nul moyen humain ne lui permet de franchir, Ntchi, pressé par le danger, invoque ses ancêtres. Sa prière est exaucée : un *poyon'* se présente qui les transborde, lui et les siens. Pour reconnaître ce service, Ntchi fait serment que le *poyon'* sera sacré pour lui et ses descendants. Par là, tous les *poyon'* sont devenus *tne* à Ntchi et à ses descendants : il n'en résulte point un culte du *poyon'*. Il y a comme une alliance analogue à celle qui intervient entre communautés humaines, avec des effets analogues également, c'est-à-dire obligeant à une manière d'entr'aide fraternelle réciproque. En pratique, un Kouloubali, descendant de Ntchi, ne doit, sous aucun prétexte, nuire volontairement en quoi que ce soit au *poyon'* son *tne*, sous peine, pense-t-il, d'en éprouver les plus graves conséquences. S'il s'est rendu coupable involontairement, il peut se racheter par des sacrifices ou pénitences appropriées, que lui suggère son intuition ou que lui indique le devin. Partout, il doit aider, en tant que de besoin, son *tne* en lui témoignant, néanmoins, le plus grand respect. Le fond mystique de cette alliance entraîne, parfois, l'indigène à observer envers son *tne* une attitude spéciale : ne pas le regarder, ne le toucher qu'en cas de nécessité absolue et en s'excusant, en lui demandant pardon.

Tout peut être objet d'un *tne*, mais il n'est peut-être pas de famille bambara qui n'ait quelqu'animal pour *tne* : les expressions dont l'indigène, en général, et le Bambara, en particulier, se sert pour nous faire comprendre, à nous étrangers, ses rapports avec cet animal *tne*, ont porté bien des Européens à croire que le Bambara regarde cet animal comme son parent au sens naturel du mot. Il n'en est rien, comme nous venons de le voir, et le totem bambara, par suite, est de pure invention européenne (1).

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(1) Il est bien entendu que le *tne* a bien d'autres sources que celle retenue ici, mais qui rentre seule dans l'objet de ce chapitre. Ainsi Bala s'interdisant tous les mots qui renferment la syllabe *da* (p. 95) ; Sounsan s'interdisant les *kulé* (p. 102-1).

II. *Le serment.* — Dans la société indigène, l'ambitieux ou l'homme seulement soucieux de fonder une communauté puissante n'y parvient qu'en s'appuyant sur des alliés fidèles. Massa, Biton ne surent pas seulement s'imposer à leurs jeunes compagnons, ils s'allièrent étroitement à eux par le serment et par le culte.

Sans doute tous les fondateurs de communautés puissantes n'ont pas procédé de la même manière, mais tous ont usé de moyens analogues. L'individu isolé ne peut rien dans ce milieu social où tout repose sur ces collectivités fortement constituées que sont les communautés, et tout Bambara avide de bien-être et de paix s'ingénie à découvrir et à s'attacher le « protetceur puissant » (*dyigi seme*) susceptible de les lui assurer, même au prix de sa liberté. C'est pourquoi autour de tout *fa* important, l'on voit évoluer un petit groupe de familiers liés à sa fortune, souvent par un pacte réciproque basé sur le serment.

L'une de ces alliances sacramentelles est particulièrement solennelle : elle a pour but de créer entre les contractants une manière de parenté analogue à celle qui lie les frères consanguins. En tout état de cause, il y a entre la fraternité naturelle et la fraternité contractuelle cette profonde différence que la première existe et produit des effets indépendamment de la volonté des personnes qu'elle unit, tandis que la seconde n'existe et ne vaut que dans la limite voulue par les parties en cause (1).

Pour le pacte de fraternisation (*dyonge*) (2), les contractants — qu'ils soient deux ou plusieurs — procèdent comme ils l'entendent, soit publiquement, soit seulement dans l'assemblée de leurs proches ou de quelques familiers. Chaque contractant extrait de son avant-bras quelques gouttes de sang, par le moyen d'une légère piqûre : le sang ainsi obtenu est mélangé, dans un récipient, à une petite quantité de lait de chèvre. Prenant les ancêtres — ou tel dieu choisi — pour témoins, chacun des contractants, à tour de rôle, s'engage par un serment solennel à considérer les autres comme ses frères et énonce en même temps les conditions du pacte, après quoi il absorbe une partie du breuvage.

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(1) Remarque faite que la fraternisation emprunte à sa forme symbolique une conséquence nécessaire que ne comportent pas obligatoirement les autres formes d'alliances par serment : elle oblige les descendants des contractants tout comme ceux-ci.

(2) Ce terme dérive, sans aucun doute, du verbe *siri* : lier, unir.

Telle est l'alliance la plus étroite que deux Bambara puissent contracter (1) : elle entraîne, entre autres effets, l'impossibilité pour l'un d'épouser les femmes de la communauté de l'autre, du moins tant qu'elles sont vierges — ou réputées telles — le premier contact sexuel devant entraîner quelque effusion de sang. La fraternisation comporte, en effet, un châtiment terrible pour celui-là qui aura fait couler le sang de son co-contractant ou de quelqu'un des siens. Comme il apparaît, l'engagement pris par les contractants oblige mêmement tous leurs descendants, quel qu'en soit le sexe et *in infinitinum* : il y a désormais une solidarité très étroite à tous égards entre les deux communautés, qui se doivent une entr'aide mutuelle telle que, dans la pratique, tout (mensonge, calomnie, parjure) leur est permis pour abattre l'adversaire commun ou, en tout cas, secourir l'allié en peine.

Au lieu du serment par fraternisation, l'on peut recourir à toute autre forme de serment que l'on veut. Ainsi les chroniques nous montrent Sounsan et *fa* Siné s'unissant par un serment sans doute irréfragable, puisque l'enclume qui l'a reçu est ensuite jetée dans un puits. Nko, le dieu de Sounsan, reçoit le serment par lequel les « jeunes », compagnons de Massa, s'associent à la fortune de ce dernier. A Ségou, c'est pareillement sur les idoles que les *tondyon'* prêtent serment de loyalisme.

Ces conventions sacramentelles ont un champ infini, mais elles n'obligent les parties que dans les conditions stipulées par elles, notamment en ce qui concerne les communautés respectives dont ils sont *fa*.

III. *Le mariage.* — Il n'est pas de moyen plus parfait pour le Bambara de manifester son attachement à celui dont il désire l'alliance ou l'amitié que de lui donner comme épouse une fille de sa communauté qu'il dote, en outre, le plus richement possible. C'est là une des formes les plus solennelles de l'alliance entre communautés (2).

L'union conjugale diffère ici très nettement du mariage

(1) La fraternisation par le sang fut contracté entre Deni-ba Bo, pour le Massa-si du Kaarta et Suleyman Ba du Fouta.

(2) Les gens unis par mariage sont dits *furu-nyogon'* (conjoints) et *biran'* (alliés).

dans sa forme ordinaire. Du fait que l'époux reçoit la femme sans avoir à payer une dot, l'épouse n'est plus en usufruit, elle est comme prêtée au mari, qui doit, en raison de ces circonstances, la traiter avec les plus grands égards, sous peine de se la voir retirer. La situation ne redevient normale que si le mari est assez riche pour faire au donateur un cadeau égal et mieux, si possible, supérieur à la dotation faite à la femme, ou bien encore en enrichissant pareillement la femme (1).

D'ailleurs, les modalités sont, ici également, très diverses. Le donateur peut offrir une femme prise hors de sa communauté et l'accompagner d'une dotation : c'est ainsi que pour s'attacher Ngolo, Biton lui donna une fille désignée par les marabouts comme prédestinée et à laquelle il constitua une riche dotation.

La portée des alliances ainsi scellées ne peut être précisée que par la connaissance de l'intention des parties et plus particulièrement celle du donateur ; nous en verrons une modalité importante au chapitre de l'Islam : le mariage d'Allah.

IV. *Le culte commun* (2). — *La communauté territoriale.* Dans la pensée du Bambara, le sol, avec tout ce qu'il comporte, est la propriété des esprits : par suite, nul ne peut disposer à son gré de la terre ou prétendre s'installer ou cultiver un terrain libre sans, au préalable, procéder à certaines cérémonies.

A cet effet, par lui-même et, plus ordinairement, par l'intermédiaire de « celui qui sait » (*don-na-ba*), le Bambara recherche le « génie maître de la terre » (*nyana dugu-da-siri*), ou, plus exactement, détermine le gîte de ce génie : c'est, parfois, une source ou une colline, ou un rocher ; souvent un bel arbre, avec toujours un petit bosquet environnant ou proche. Puis, par des moyens tout pareils, il s'informe des conditions auxquelles ce génie permet que l'on s'établisse sur son domaine, pour y demeurer et le cultiver : ainsi s'élabore le contrat qui règle l'exploitation par l'homme du domaine territorial du génie ; il en résulte que, moyennant le culte exigé par le génie, l'homme pourra exercer son industrie sous la protection du dieu. Quiconque a été partie au contrat, directement ou par représentation, en bénéficie moyennant d'en observer scrupuleusement les clauses.

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(1) Ces biens sont, pour la femme, des paraphernaux.

(2) Les communautés peuvent s'unir sous l'égide d'un même dieu. Nous examinerons ici seulement l'union sous la tutelle du « génie maître du sol » (*nyana dugu-da-siri*), les autres cultes en commun seront étudiés au chapitre « Confréries ».

La fondation d'un village exige le concours de plusieurs communautés, représentées chacune par son *fa*. Parmi ces *fa*, il en est un qui s'impose ou qui est choisi comme représentant ou chef des autres. Tantôt il n'est, ainsi, que *primus inter pares*, d'autrefois il a su faire admettre sa supériorité. C'est ce chef qui traite avec le génie pour toute la collectivité : il devient ainsi le « grand prêtre du génie » (*nyana-n-son-na-ba*), ayant pour fonction essentielle de « faire les offrandes » (*son'*) qu'exige le culte ; il administre, d'autre part, le domaine terrestre du génie et s'intitule pour cela *dugu-tigi* (maître de la terre).

Il est habituel d'attribuer au *nyana dugu-da-siri* le *dyamu* de son grand prêtre, tout comme s'il faisait partie de la famille spirituelle de celui-ci : c'est là une de ces conséquences conformes à la mentalité bambara.

C'est encore de ce même état d'âme que dérive la coutume de certains villages de consacrer un animal vivant, souvent un bouc, au *nyana dugu-da-siri* et de le tenir pour la monture de ce dieu : il divague librement dans l'agglomération sans que nul corrige jamais ses écarts ou ses importunités ; l'on aime le caresser, le choyer ; il participe un peu de la nature du génie et se trouve comme dépositaire de quelques vertus supraterrestres ; on ne peut que gagner à son contact.

En principe, toute agglomération ne compte qu'un *nyana dugu-da-siri* ; pourtant, il arrive qu'elle en a plusieurs, lorsque sa formation résulte d'additions successives avec, pour chacune, reconnaissance d'un génie protecteur. C'est alors le génie le premier reconnu et honoré qui a le pas sur les autres. D'ailleurs, la vie sociale exige que chaque fraction respecte les dieux de ses voisins, et ce respect ne va pas sans une certaine crainte superstitieuse.

Il apparaît, par ce qui précède, que l'occupation et l'exploitation du sol posent, pour l'agglomération bénéficiaire, diverses questions que l'on peut ramener à trois : le culte du génie protecteur ; l'exploitation du sol ; l'organisation de la communauté territoriale.

Culte. — Il est assuré par le grand prêtre, dont l'office essentiel est de « faire des offrandes » (*son'*) au « génie » (*nyana*), et c'est pourquoi il s'intitule *nyana-son-na-ba*. Il est assisté par le conseil des *fa* : l'un de ceux-ci le supplée, en tant que de besoin, c'est le *syere* (suivant). La charge de grand prêtre est à vie et héréditaire dans les mêmes conditions que sa *faya*. Cette dévolution atteste que le génie est bien, comme nous l'avons vu par l'imposition du *dyamu*, une manière d'ancêtre spirituel de son grand prêtre.

Les cérémonies du culte sont fort simples : elles consistent en offrandes présentées par le grand prêtre, qui indique en même temps au génie dans quel but elles lui sont faites. Les plus solennelles ont lieu aux semailles et à la récolte du mil. Pour ces fêtes, tout fidèle doit apporter une contribution proportionnelle à ses ressources. La nature des dons n'a rien de préfixe : chacun apporte ce qu'il peut ou ce qu'il veut, habituellement des animaux (moutons, bœufs, volailles...), des céréales, et surtout de la bière de mil (*dlo*).

Lors de ces assemblées générales, d'où personne n'est exclu, le grand prêtre et les membres du conseil pénètrent seuls dans le bois sacré où accèdent, en tout cas, au plus près de la demeure du génie. Là, le grand prêtre expose au génie l'objet de la cérémonie, qui est de le remercier de ses bienfaits, de lui offrir les dons de tous et de lui demander de continuer à protéger encore la communauté pour que sa prospérité soit assurée. Puis, les victimes sont égorgées, leur sang est répandu sur le tronc de l'arbre, ou sur l'objet ou le lieu réputé être le gîte du dieu ; de même en est-il des libations de *dlo* ou du jus des colas. En principe, tout ce qui a été ainsi consacré au génie doit être consommé sur place, ce qui entraîne, d'ordinaire, plusieurs jours d'orgie.

En outre de ces deux grandes fêtes obligatoires, qui intéressent spécialement l'exploitation du sol, la protection du dieu est requise par des moyens analogues, mais très simplifiés, dans toutes les circonstances qui intéressent soit l'agglomération entière (guerre, calamité...), soit une communauté patriarcale familiale déterminée, soit même seulement tel individu. Par l'intermédiaire du grand prêtre, l'offrande et la demande sont présentées à telle fin indiquée par le fidèle, qui s'engage parfois à faire ultérieurement un don au génie au cas de réalisation de son désir. Ces manières de vœux sont très fréquentes.

Au culte du génie, se rattache le culte de ses grands prêtres et de tous les notables distingués de l'agglomération. C'est évidemment là comme une conséquence de ce que le génie est le patron spirituel de la communauté qui l'honore : ces communautaires sont ses enfants, ils forment lui et eux comme une famille et, à l'exemple de ce qui se passe dans la communauté patriarcale ou familiale, dans la communauté territoriale il y a une fête annuelle pour les morts, au cours de laquelle on honore tout spécialement les personnages de marque, en premier lieu les grands prêtres défunts.

Exploitation du sol. — Le grand prêtre, qui dirige le culte, règle également tout ce qui concerne l'exploitation du domaine terrestre du génie et, pour cela, s'intitule *dugu-tigi* (1) : maître du sol. Pour cet office, il est également assisté par le conseil des *fa*, dont il doit prendre et suivre l'avis dans les cas graves.

Avec l'aide de ce conseil, il allotit tout d'abord le territoire, lors de la fondation de la communauté ; sur la portion réservée au siège même de la communauté, nul ne peut construire une demeure sans son assentiment préalable, le village est donc enfermé dans des limites précises. Cependant, en pratique, chacun construit à sa fantaisie, si nul par ailleurs n'y met quelqu'opposition, auquel cas le différend est solutionné par le *dugu-tigi* et son conseil.

Hors du village, le terrain comporte des champs qui, au début ou au cours de l'occupation, sont attribués aux *fa* de la communauté, une fois pour toutes, par le *dugu-tigi*, en son conseil : tout *fa* et ses ayants-cause conservent indéfiniment la jouissance des mêmes champs, bien qu'en droit l'autorité qui l'a concédée puisse la retirer, même sans être tenu de justifier sa décision. Cette jouissance est une manière d'usufruit plus étendu que celui de notre droit, puisque le bénéficiaire peut user sans restriction aucune de ce qui y est soumis, jusqu'à l'aliénation exclusivement. Toutefois, le tenancier ne peut prendre aucune disposition de nature à mettre en jeu les intérêts de la communauté sans, au préalable, l'assentiment du *dugu-tigi* en son conseil ; ainsi devrait-il agir, notamment, s'il se proposait de céder sa jouissance à un étranger.

Pour ce qui n'a pas été donné en tenure spéciale, le sol et ce qu'il porte et contient est, en principe, au communautaire qui l'exploite. Certains fruits ou produits sont, néanmoins, réservés, parfois, à la communauté tout entière : les feuilles ou fruits du baobab, du karité, du nété, du tamarinier..., le poisson de certaines mares, marigots, zones fluviales..., la chasse dans certains cantons... Pour ces jouissances collectives, aux dates fixées par le *dugu-tigi* en son conseil, les communautaires réunis procèdent à la cueillette ou récolte, à la pêche ou à la chasse ; tantôt chacun conserve ce qu'il a réussi à réunir, tantôt il est fait masse du tout, et le *dugu-tigi* dirige la répartition conforme à la coutume. Il existe aussi souvent des règles spéciales pour l'extraction des matières ou matériaux contenus dans le sol.

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(1) Ainsi qu'il est de pratique courante, j'emploierai désormais ce titre pour désigner à la fois le grand prêtre et le maître du sol.

Organisation de la communauté territoriale. — Le rôle du *dugu-tigi* et de son conseil ne se borne pas à diriger le culte et réglementer l'exploitation du sol : tout ce qui se passe dans la communauté territoriale intéresse le *nyana dugu-da-siri* parce que les communautaires sont ses fils (*den'*). La preuve en est que tout acte important de la vie indigène doit être signalé au *dugu-tigi* et, en certains cas, comporte obligation d'offrande ou, comme l'on dit, d'hommage (*bunya*). Nous l'avons vu pour la naissance, l'imposition du nom, la circoncision, le mariage, le décès. Ce n'est pas moins impérieux en cas de calamité publique (épidémie, sécheresse persistante, invasion, guerre...).

En principe, le *dugu-tigi* n'intervient pas, *proprio motu*, dans la vie intérieure des communautés patriarcales ou familiales qui, par leur réunion, constituent la communauté territoriale, habituellement appelée par nous village (1). Mais lorsque quelque différend entre parents échappe à l'autorité du *fa* qu'il concerne, celui-ci sollicite l'intervention du *dugu-tigi* et de son conseil ; de même, lorsque le conflit éclate entre gens de communauté différente, le même arbitrage est d'ordinaire réclamé. Par là s'institue une sorte de tribunal de conciliation, qui se borne à dire ce que chaque partie doit faire ou ne pas faire pour que cesse le conflit. Le *dugu-tigi* n'a pas, en principe, le droit de ramener cette sentence à exécution (1), parce que les communautés sont très jalouses de leur indépendance ; elles ne se soumettent donc que dans la mesure où elles y trouvent leur intérêt.

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(1) La communauté territoriale, chez les Bambara, s'intitule *dugu*, terme qui signifie à la fois « terre » et « chez », « à », « dans »... et que l'on fait précéder d'un nom qui rappelle une circonstance de la fondation.

Toutefois, il arrive que le *dugu-tigi*, appuyé par son conseil, fait acte d'autorité, s'il dispose d'une certaine force et parce que les notables font cause commune avec lui pour des raisons d'ailleurs fort diverses. C'est ainsi que le *dugu-tigi*, en son conseil, est amené à exercer des pouvoirs de police pour maintenir l'ordre dans la communauté et même se transforme en tribunal répressif pour châtier ceux qui, par leurs méfaits, attentent, sous quelque forme que ce soit, aux biens ou aux personnes des communautaires.

Le génie devant assurer la prospérité de ses fidèles, il incombe au *dugu-tigi* de secourir les communautaires malheureux ou indigents.

Il doit également assurer les relations de la communauté avec l'extérieur, c'est-à-dire avec les communautés territoriales voisines et tous autres groupements, analogues ou non. Il ne peut agir seul que pour les actes pareils à ceux dits, chez nous, actes de pure administration ; pour les autres, il lui faut l'assentiment du conseil des *fa*, notamment pour aliéner, sous quelque forme que ce soit, quoi que ce soit appartenant à la communauté .

Il va de soi que l'exercice de ces divers rôles induit le *dugu-tigi* en des dépenses parfois onéreuses, mais il dispose, pour y faire face, de biens provenant de sources multiples. Tout d'abord, les dons faits au *nyana* sont de toute nature : ils ne sont donc pas toujours consomptibles et ceux qui le sont ne sont d'ordinaire consommés qu'en partie. Le reliquat demeure aux mains du *dugu-tigi*. — Il est d'usage d'offrir des *bunya* (don à titre d'hommage) au *dugu-tigi* dans maintes occasions : chasse, pêche, récolte du mil..., pour le remercier d'une concession de terrain, d'un service rendu. — Des biens de la communauté sont affermés pour des redevances payables à époque fixe ; des tributs sont versés de même. — La plupart des infractions, d'ordre divers, commises au sein de la communauté, sont frappées d'amendes encaissées par le *dugu-tigi*. — Les malfaiteurs incorrigibles deviennent esclaves de la communauté et le produit de leur travail revient au *dugu-tigi*. — Tout ce qui est trouvé abandonné sur le territoire de la communauté est en tout ou partie remis au *dugu-tigi*.

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(1) C'est pourquoi les litiges peuvent demeurer indéfiniment en suspens.

En cas de besoin, pour faire face à une situation exceptionnelle (guerre, expédition, travaux divers...), le *dugu-tigi* peut recourir à ce que chez nous l'on appellerait des aides extraordinaires, c'est-à-dire demander aux communautaires une contribution spéciale à cette fin.

Telles sont les principales ressources du trésor de la communauté, trésor détenu et administré par le *dugu-tigi* avec l'assistance et sous le contrôle des *fa* ; le *dugu-tigi* puise dans ce trésor pour tenir sa charge honorablement, venir en aide aux communautaires malheureux ou indigents, recevoir dignement les hôtes de la communauté et, le cas échéant, faire face aux événements extraordinaires.

A aucun titre, ce trésor ne compte dans la fortune du *dugu-tigi* : ce n'est que par une usurpation, fréquente d'ailleurs sous des aspects divers, qu'il en est autrement. De même, il n'est pas rare que ces richesses soient comme réparties, dans une certaine proportion, entre les membres du conseil qui, sous forme ou autre, se les approprient ; c'est un abus qui, pour commun qu'il soit, ne change rien au principe : ces biens sont et demeurent en droit exclusivement propres à la communauté.

CHAPITRE IV

Les Confréries

1. La fin de l'enfance

Généralités. — Pour s'assurer la protection, l'aide ou les services du monde invisible, le culte des ancêtres et celui du *nyana dugu-da-siri* ne suffisent pas au Bambara. Le magicien lui a créé des protecteurs ou serviteurs renommés, puissants et redoutables : les *nyana* à *boli*.

Le culte de ces dieux engendre des familles spirituelles dont tous les membres sont liés entre eux par une fraternité qui nous autorise à dire que ces groupements sont des confréries. Le fait commun à toutes ces confréries est que l'on ne peut y être admis qu'après avoir subi un certain rite dit *soli* (1) ou *bolo-ko* (1) termes qui, étymologiquement, signifient « naissance ».

Entré dans la famille par la naissance naturelle, l'enfant entre dans une nouvelle phase de sa vie par la naissance spirituelle qu'est le *soli* ; par ce rite, en effet, il cesse d'appartenir à l'enfance insexuée en quelque sorte, pour devenir : le garçon un homme, et la fillette une femme. Voyons les étapes de ce changement d'état qui est, à vrai dire, le fait capital de la vie de l'indigène :

Jusque 7 ans, le garçonnet vit dans le voisinage quotidien de sa mère, en s'en éloignant peu à peu, pour polissonner dans les environs, en compagnie de ses camarades.

Déjà, dans cette période, on peut constater l'influence du milieu indigène sur la formation de sa jeune âme. Spectateur des pratiques cultuelles et magiques, il joue lui aussi au magicien pour tuer ou capturer les rats, les lézards et les autres bestioles dont il fait de petits festins. A son arc d'enfant il attache un petit faisceau de racines qu'il a recueillies avec des simulacres de rites et qui doivent rendre ses chasses fructueuses, parce qu'il pense avoir attiré un esprit qu'il séduit par la promesse de lui offrir le sang de ses victimes. C'est déjà un petit chasseur à la recherche des procédés mystérieux grâce auxquels le gibier peut et doit être à sa discrétion et sans danger.

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(1) *Soli*, c'est l'action de percer, d'émerger, de poindre, de naître ; *bolo-ko*, signifie littérallement « affaire de naissance ».

934

Vers 7 ans, il se préoccupe de l'acte capital de sa vie, le *soli*, cérémonie dont l'un des rites est la circoncision.

Le *soli* avec circoncision publique, précédée et suivie d'adhésion à une confrérie, n'est pas indispensable. Lorsque, par suite des circonstances, l'enfant se trouve isolé, il subit le *soli* en famille et sans éclat, ce qui ne retire rien à sa validité.

Mais il n'est pas douteux qu'il faut que le Bambara soit absolument contraint pour agir de la sorte ; il répugne à cette économie obscure qui, au demeurant, ne paraît pas convenir à l'importance de l'acte (1). Il aime, par contre, figurer dans une manifestation à grand tapage et tirer parti de toutes les jouissances que les confréries réservent à leurs adeptes. Ce n'est pas là un des moindres motifs d'extension de ces confréries, dont le *n-Tomo* (2) est à vrai dire la porte d'entrée, puisque nul n'est admis dans une confrérie s'il n'est *soli-ma*, et le *n-Tomo* a précisément pour but final le *soli*.

N-Tomo

Le *n-Tomo* est une association qui réunit, en vue du *soli*, les garçons (3) de 7 à 14 ans environ. Chaque

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(1) D'ailleurs, aucun âge précis n'étant imposé et une marge de 6 à 7 ans séparant les plus jeunes et les plus âgés des enfants qui participent au même *soli*, il va de soi que le candidat peut s'arranger pendant la durée de cette marge pour n'être pas traité isolément.

(2) *n-Tomo* est le terme employé dans le Ségou ; au Kaarta l'on dit *n-Tori*.

(3) Les fillettes n'ont pas comme les garçons une société organisée pour les préparer au *soli*, mais elles s'entendent entre elles et, de plus, sont choisies comme *n-golo-moso-u* par les *n-Tomo-den'-u*.

n-Tomo comprend d'ordinaire tous les garçonnets à circoncire, sans distinction de race ni de condition. Tout sociétaire est dit *n-Tomo-den'* ; le plus âgé est le chef ou *n-Tomo-tigi*, il est assisté d'un *syere* ou « suivant ». Chaque année, lors de la fête annuelle, sont reçus les nouveaux adhérents, qui doivent verser un droit d'entrée (une poule) et quelques cauris, et prêter serment de discrétion. L'on sort du *n-Tomo* après le *soli*. En sont exclues les filles.

Le *n-Tomo-tigi* et son *syere* organisent l'association de manière à lui assurer quelques biens qui sont, en principe, propriété collective, mais dont, par un abus ordinaire, ils deviennent les premiers sinon les seuls bénéficiaires. Ils entraînent leurs camarades à cultiver un champ dont le produit servira aux repas de corps. Aux droits d'entrée, s'ajoutent ce que chacun, de gré ou de force, spontanément ou à l'instigation du *n-Tomo-tigi*, peut procurer à la société : produits de dons, collectes, vols, chasse, pêche...; tout ce qui, de la sorte, par l'activité collective ou individuelle, peut être réuni, forme une manière de trésor commun.

Mais il n'est point de collectivité sans patron spirituel. Le *n-Tomo* se réunit en plein air, au pied d'un arbre (1) reconnu pour être la résidence élue d'un génie protecteur. Le *n-Tomo-tigi* est le grand prêtre de ce génie ; c'est comme tel qu'il reçoit le serment des néophytes et qu'il a une autorité certaine sur toute la bande ; c'est pourquoi il peut poursuivre et punir tout méfait imputable à un *n-Tomo-den'*, et il n'hésite pas à employer les punitions corporelles.

Dès ce jeune âge, le Bambara est donc soumis à la discipline corporative qui dominera, ultérieurement, toute sa vie, car il n'en est pas autrement dans les confréries d'hommes.

Le génie protecteur est honoré par des offrandes, des

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(1) D'où vient l'appellation *n'Tomo*. L'on a pensé qu'elle n'était que le nom de l'arbre où gîte le génie protecteur et qui serait précisément celui que les Bambara appellent *n-Tomo*. Mais alors pourquoi, au Kaarta, dirait-on *n-Tori* alors que l'arbre dit *n-Tomo* ne change pas de nom ? Il est vrai que l'on a suggéré que *n-Tori* est une autre appellation signifiant « crapaud » et qui proviendrait du « cri » caractéristique de la société.

Je crois que les deux termes *n-Tomo* et *n-Tori* désignent un seul et même groupement dans des régions différentes et ont une seule et même signification : réunion, assemblée.

2: Monteil FA8 Bambara

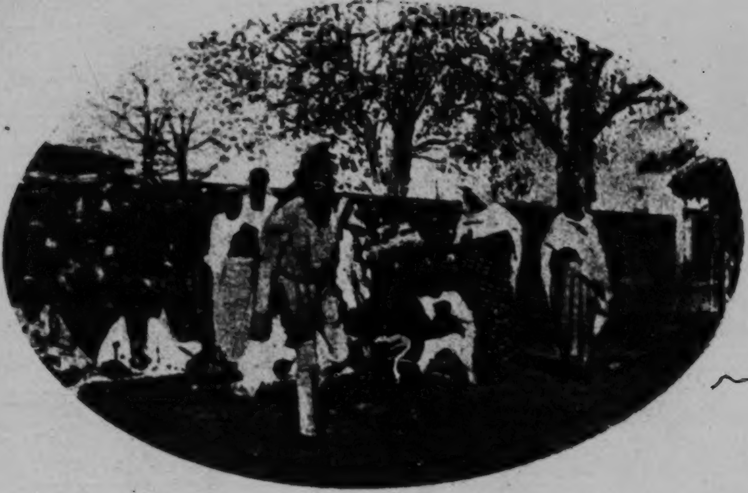

Fig. 7. — *Penperenni* ou petits danseurs costumés

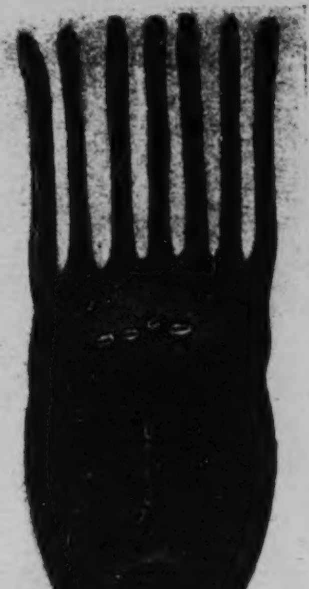

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Fig. 8. — Masque de *N'Tomo* orné de cauris

sacrifices, des danses rituelles. Pour ces danses, à tour de rôle, les *n-Tomo-den'* revêtent le masque et le costume liturgiques. Le masque a forme de visage humain, surmonté d'un certain nombre de cornes verticales (5 à 8), ornées de quelques cauris ; le costume se compose d'un *dloki* (sorte de blouse à manches très amples) et d'un pantalon à longues jambes permettant de cacher tout le corps : selon qu'il est brun-jaunâtre (*basa*) ou blanc (*dye*), l'association est dite *n-Tomo-fin'* (*n-Tomo* noir) ou *n-Tomo-dye* (*n-Tomo* blanc). Ce déguisement a-t-il pour but de réaliser l'idée que les adeptes se font de leur protecteur ? Non. Comme dans toutes les sectes, il est destiné à retrancher l'officiant du monde profane (1).

Pour convoquer les *n-Tomo-den'* aux réunions, il est fait usage, d'ordinaire, d'un phallus en bois (ou d'une planchette en bois) attaché au bout d'une corde et que l'on fait tourner à la manière d'une fronde, ce qui produit un bruit que l'opérateur sait varier et qui porte à assez grande distance. Cet appareil est appelé *n-Tomo-ulu*, que l'on traduit « chien du n-Tomo » ; mais il est à remarquer que les termes employés dans les confréries sont habituellement à double entente, présentant une signification spéciale sous une forme vulgaire ; or, précisément, le mot *ulu* signifiant à la fois « chien » et « parties sexuelles de l'homme », il semble bien que ce soit à ce dernier sens qu'il faille rattacher l'expression *n-Tomo-ulu*. D'autant plus que dans l'institution pareille des Khassonké, le même appareil est dit *khe-fengo* litt. « chose de l'homme », pour dire « parties sexuelles de l'homme ».

Chaque année, après la moisson, a lieu la grande fête de l'association ; elle ne diffère pas essentiellement de celle qui est célébrée dans toutes les confréries à la même époque : elle comporte offrandes et sacrifices au génie protecteur, communion des *n-Tomo-den'* en un banquet corporatif, agrégation des néophytes. En voici la description détaillée.

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(1) Certaines de ces associations donnent des manières de représentation publiques dont elles tirent profit. Elles exhibent, notamment, des sortes de pantins dits *Peremperen'* (les danseurs) que des *n-Tomo-den'* animent de façon plus ou moins comique ; souvent l'un de ces pantins figure un homme, tandis qu'un autre représente une femme : leurs ébats ne sont pas dépourvus de ces obscénités, qui font la joie des assistants.

A l'instigation du *n-Tomo-tigi*, le champ confraternel a été moissonné et au grain ainsi réuni s'ajoute tout ce que les *n-Tamo-den'* peuvent obtenir de leurs familles, de leurs amis et par tous moyens, même le vol. Avec ce mil, le *n-Tomo-tigi* fait préparer du *dlo* (bière) dont, en ces occasions, il est fait une grande consommation. Les « aînés » (*koro-u*), parents et amis ne manquent pas d'ailleurs d'envoyer leur contribution en nature.

Pour la fête, chaque *n-Tomo-den'* reçoit un petit vêtement propre. L'on remet en état le costume liturgique : le *dloki* et le pantalon sont lavés et reprisés, s'il y a lieu ; le masque reçoit une onction de beurre végétal (*si tlu*) qui lui donne un aspect vernissé.

Au jour choisi, tout est prêt. D'abondantes calebasses de *dege* (1) et de *to* (2), de nombreuses cruches de bière (*dlo*) et aussi des colas ont été réunies ; il s'y adjoindra les victimes sacrifiées.

A la file indienne, chacun portant une poule retenue par une ficelle, les *n-Tomo-den'*, avec en tête le *n-Tomo-tigi* et son *syere*, gagnent le lieu de réunion. Là, les *n-Tomo-den'* s'accroupissent à quelque distance du *n-Tomo-tigi*, qui se place en avant d'eux, face à l'arbre, siège du génie protecteur, pour procéder aux libations et sacrifices. Il prend d'abord une petite calebasse et verse le *dege* qu'elle contient contre le tronc de l'arbre ; il coupe le cou à la poule, dont il répand de même le sang ; enfin il projette, dans un jet de salive, du jus et quelques parcelles de la noix de cola qu'il a mâchée ; il fixe quelques plumes de la poule dans le sang répandu. A chaque offrande il parle au génie : « Vois, lui dit-il, je t'offre cette poule, protège-nous, « défends-nous contre les méchants, contre les génies « mauvais. Donne-nous de quoi vivre dans l'abondance. « Eloigne de nous la maladie. Donne-nous l'eau qui rend « les champs féconds, sois propice à nos familles. »

Il parle ainsi pour tous, après quoi chacun vient à son tour pour présenter, par son intermédiaire, son sacrifice et ses demandes personnelles.

Ensuite, a lieu l'admission des nouveaux. Chacun d'eux remet le droit d'entrée, puis, prosterné devant le génie, fait serment de ne rien divulguer aux non initiés et surtout aux femmes : « Si tu trahis tes frères, dit le *n-Tomo-tigi*, que le génie te tue ! » et le nouveau répète : « Qu'il « me tue ! »

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(1) Le *dege* est obtenu en jetant dans une petite quantité d'eau du mil grossièrement broyé.

(2) Bouillie à la mode indigène.

Alors l'on procède à la cuisson des victimes et, pendant ces préparatifs, les *n-Tomo-den'* dansent à tour de rôle, revêtus du costume liturgique, au pas rythmé par les batteries de tambour, et en faisant tournoyer une baguette flexible. Lorsque les victimes sont cuites, commence le repas. Chacun mange et boit à satiété. Les colas agrémentent la fin de ces agapes.

Ce jour-là, chaque *n-Tomo-den'* doit prélever sur les dons qui lui sont faits ou sur ses moyens personnels, un petit cadeau pour sa *n-golo-moso* (1). On nomme ainsi la jeune compagne que chaque *n-Tomo-den'* a dû se choisir le jour de son admission dans la secte ; c'est l'amie de cœur avec laquelle il n'a pas que des rapports platoniques.

Vers le milieu de l'après-midi, le repas prend fin et la bande rentre au village pour une exhibition publique au cours de laquelle les *n-Tomo-den'* se flagellent. Au milieu du cercle des curieux, parents, amis et autres, s'avancent d'abord le *n-Tomo-tigi* et son *syere* : les mamans entourent les reins et le ventre de l'un et l'autre avec des bandes ou des écharpes pour prévenir les mauvais coups. Les assistantes chantent en battant des mains. Le *n-Tomo-tigi* tient sa gaule levée entre ses deux bras étendus et aussitôt son *syere* lui flagelle énergiquement le buste, devant et derrière, et aussi les cuisses, les jambes et les pieds ; il continue sans que le patient donne un signe de douleur, jusqu'à ce qu'il ne puisse plus frapper, soit par suite de fatigue, soit parce que sa gaule est brisée.

Alors c'est au tour du *syere* d'être flagellé de même. Et les *n-Tomo-den'* se flagellent de la sorte successivement deux à deux, jusqu'au plus jeune qui, moins endurci, criant et pleurant, s'enfuit aux premiers coups, ce qui déchaîne le rire et les moqueries de l'assistance, dont l'endurance des autres a suscité l'enthousiasme.

En certains lieux, chaque *n-Tomo-den'* se flagelle lui-même.

Quelle est la signification de cette pratique ? Il semble qu'elle ait eu pour but, à l'origine, de renforcer la discrétion du *n-Tomo-den'* en lui permettant de ne pas violer son serment même sous les coups. Il faut se rappeler, en effet, que la flagellation était de pratique courante pour arracher l'aveu, toujours considéré comme la meilleure preuve de la culpabilité. La pratique de la flagellation permet donc aux adeptes, dans une certaine mesure, de ne pas avouer sous les coups (1). C'est aussi pour le *n-Tomo-den'* un moyen de se préparer à subir la circoncision sans défaillance, alors que c'est une honte insigne de laisser paraître la douleur ou se plaindre à ce moment.

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(1) *N-golo-moso* : littéralement « femme de la naissance », la compagne associée au rite qu'il va subir.

SOLI (2)

Il n'y a qu'un seul mot, *soli*, pour désigner ce que nous appelons circoncision et excision. C'est que le Bambara envisage, non point telle ou telle opération chirurgicale, accessoire en l'espèce, mais la cérémonie qui, pour les garçons et les filles, marque mêmement le passage ou plus exactement, d'après l'étymologie du mot *soli*, la « naissance » à un nouvel état.

Le *soli* n'a pas lieu annuellement, parce qu'il entraîne pour les familles des dépenses considérables qu'elles ne sont pas toujours en état de supporter. A l'instigation des jeunes gens qui doivent accomplir le *soli*, et que l'on nomme pour cela *soli-ma-u* (gens du *soli*), les chefs de famille se réunissent à l'appel du *nyana-n-son-na-ba* pour discuter si la cérémonie aura lieu ou non. Dans l'affirmative, jeunes gens et jeunes filles se concertent à leur tour pour donner à la fête (*nyara* : noce, orgie) le plus d'éclat possible. La date est, en principe, le troisième jour de la fête du mouton.

Guidées par leurs aînées, les fillettes (*soli-ma-moso-u*) vont de porte en porte quêter du mil pour la préparation du repas (3) qu'elles doivent offrir aux anciens (*koro-u*) le deuxième jour de la fête du mouton. C'est par ce repas que s'ouvre effectivement la période des cérémonies du *soli*.

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(1) La flagellation est également pratiquée dans certaines confréries, sans paraître avoir d'autre but que l'endurcissement à la douleur. Voir le *Koré* ci-après.

(2) *Soli* est en usage au Kaarta, à Ségou l'on dit *Boloko* ou *Ngolo-ko* : littéralement « affaire de naissance ».

(3) Ce repas est composé de couscous (*basi*) et on le dénomme *soli-kili-basi* : *basi* de la quête du *soli*, en raison de l'origine du grain qui a servi à le préparer et que les enfants ont quémandé.

Dans l'après-midi de ce jour, les garçons font le sacrifice d'usage à leur génie protecteur et dansent en son honneur avec le costume liturgique, mais ne se flagellent pas.

Quant aux fillettes, ce même jour, elles procèdent, en certaines localités, à une cérémonie caractéristique. L'une d'elles se blanchit la figure, la poitrine et le dos avec un mélange de lait et de cendres. Ainsi barbouillée, elle s'élance hors du village en brandissant la spatule (*to-n-galama*) qui sert à tourner la bouillie (*to*) dans la marmite ; ses compagnes la suivent en vociférant. La bande fait de la sorte quatre fois le tour du village, en s'arrêtant chaque fois au croisement des sentiers : en ces points, la barbouillée jette, à pleines mains, aux esprits, les aliments (1) que lui tendent ses compagnes, et elle crie : « *dege dule* (2) », à quoi ses compagnes répondent : « naloma (3) ».

La veillée du soli (*soli-si*). — Dans la soirée qui précède le *soli*, dans les familles intéressées, a lieu un plantureux repas accompagné, comme il est de coutume pour toute fête chez les Bambara, de nombreuses cruches de bière (*dlo*). C'est partout la liesse avec ses gens aux figures luisantes, aux mains grasses, et il est de bon ton, pour les hommes et les jeunes gens, d'éructer bruyamment en répétant *ne ne fa* littéralement : « Je suis plein », pour : je suis repu. Par les ruelles circulent les femmes, drapées dans leurs plus beaux pagnes, des boules d'ambre dans les cheveux, des petits anneaux d'argent et quelquefois d'or aux oreilles et à la cloison nasale ; des anneaux plus ou moins pesants aux bras et aux pieds. Elles vont, portant sur la tête, les unes les jarres de *dlo*, d'autres des calebasses pleines de couscous, de *dege*, de sauces pimentées et souvent rendues nauséabondes par une incorporation de poisson boucané ou pourri. Après le repas, tout le monde se réunit sur la place du village, formant un grand cercle dont le centre est réservé aux danseurs ; des tas de tiges sèches de mil servent à entretenir des feux clairs, qui illuminent la place et réchauffent les veilleurs.

« Les garçons du *soli* » (*soli-ma-tye-u*), la tête fraîchement rasée (4), le corps enduit de beurre végétal (*si tlu*), arrivent à la file. Salués par les assistants, ils prennent place au premier rang. Les appels, les conversations bruyantes, les chants se croisent et font un vacarme qu'interrompt l'arrivée des « jeunes filles du *soli* » (*soli-mamoso-u*) : les cheveux en broussailles, vêtues du pagne court (1) qui va du nombril au genou, elles se présentent l'une derrière l'autre, font ensemble le tour de l'assemblée et viennent se grouper auprés de leurs mamans et de leurs amies.

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(1) Ordinairement du *basi* (couscous) au poisson.

(2) Ce qui signifie littéralement : « bouillie épaisse ».

(3) C'est-à-dire : sotte !

(4) Tout comme ils eurent la tête rasée lors de sa venue au monde.

Les hommes, réunis, boivent autour des feux.

Tous les tambours sont là et, dès l'apparition des fillettes, tous les tambourinaires se jettent sur leurs instruments. Ce sont des gros tambours dressés sur trois pieds (*denu-ba*), d'autres qui se suspendent à l'épaule, d'autres que l'on porte sous le bras. Des jeunes femmes agitent des morceaux de fer (*kinge*) comme l'on fait des castagnettes, et certains autres munis d'anneaux. Des vieilles frappent sur des calebasses renversées dans des pots remplis d'eau...

C'est un bruit infernal que dominent des chants hurlés, à pleine voix, par toute l'assemblée, en l'honneur des ancêtres. Puis toute cette assemblée, où dominent les ivrognes, où tous les assistants sont surexcités au plus haut point, se livre sans trêve à la danse, qu'accompagnent des chants le plus souvent improvisés.

Pendant ce temps, hors du village, les adeptes de la grande confrérie en honneur (2) procèdent bruyamment à l'expulsion des génies du mal, afin de préserver de leurs maléfices les « gens du soli » (*soli-ma-u*).

Le soli. — Le *soli*, cette naissance artificielle, est marqué par une opération sanglante qui est la circoncision pour les garçons, l'excision pour les filles. Mais le fait que cette opération chirurgicale ne donne pas son nom à la cérémonie montre qu'elle n'est qu'une figure : ce n'est qu'un rite de séparation entre l'état antérieur et l'état nouveau (3). L'opération a lieu à l'aube.

Garçons. — Hors du village, sous un arbre, se tient le forgeron qui doit circoncire les garçons. Assisté par des gens de sectes et spécialement par le *Komo-tigi*, il opère à l'abri d'un pagne placé en écran. L'enfant se tient debout, le forgeron tire le prépuce et le tranche après avoir déterminé par approximation la place où doit être faite la section. Le patient ne doit laisser paraître aucune faiblesse, bien au contraire il s'efforce à prononcer quelques paroles qui témoignent de son courage.

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(1) De couleur bleue pour les musulmanes ; jaune brun (*basa*) pour les pures Bambara païennes.

(2) Le *Komo* vers Ségou ; le *Nama* au Kaarta.

(3) C'est pour cette raison que pour d'autres peuples elle n'existe pas ou est remplacée par une simple entaille à la cuisse (chez les Koniagui).

Dès l'opération accomplie, un coup de fusil l'annonce aux vieux accroupis autour des feux, sur la place du village, et une griote le proclame aux assistants. Le *Komo-tigi* prend quelques feuilles de *nyanka*, les brûle, et va en déposer la cendre sur le *kara* familial de l'opéré. Celui-ci court rejoindre ses compagnons sous l'arbre spécialement affecté à cette réunion : c'est là que désormais ils passeront les journées, en marge de la société, à laquelle il leur est interdit de se mêler ; ils ne rentrent au village qu'à la nuit, pour dormir dans une case qui leur est réservée.

Un homme réputé pour sa connaissance des soins à donner aux circoncis vit avec eux, les soigne et les surveille étroitement : c'est le *sema-tye*, auquel, chaque jour, une abondante nourriture est remise pour ses malades. Ceux-ci portent le *dloki* (blouse) et le *kursi* (pantalon) en toile de coton bleue ou *basa* (1) (brun jaunâtre) suivant la race, et sont coiffés habituellement d'un bonnet haut à oreilles prolongées par des brides. Ils ne quittent le lieu de réunion, même pour des besoins naturels, que sous la conduite du *sema-tye* et en agitant une tige en bois à laquelle sont enfilés des éclats de calebasses. Cet appareil se nomme *n-koso-m-bara*.

Ils passent le temps soit à tresser des nattes, soit à bavarder et rire, à tracasser aussi les gens qui passent dans le voisinage. Il leur est permis, les jours de marché, de couper les chemins d'accès au village, pour prélever quelque dîme sur les trafiquants.

Le clergé des sectes vient souvent les visiter dans cette retraite.

Filles. — Sous les arbres, en dehors du village, se tiennent les femmes de forgerons qui doivent pratiquer l'ablation du clitoris ; des matrones les aident. A son tour, la fillette se précipite vers l'opératrice ; elle se blottit entre les jambes de la matrone, qui fait la présentation. Le clitoris enlevé est déposé dans une sorte de petite corbeille en vannerie : il est précieusement conservé pour confectionner des talismans.

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(1) La teinte *basa* est très recherchée des Bambara, tandis que les Marka font usage d'étoffes teintes à l'indigo.

L'accomplissement de l'opération est annoncé comme pour les garçons, et le *Komo-tigi* dépose également la cendre des feuilles de *nyanka* sur le *kara* familial.

L'opérée rejoint ses compagnes dans la case qui, dans chaque quartier, est réservée à cet effet. Elles sont là sous la surveillance d'une vieille *sema-moso* experte pour les soigner et qui veille rigoureusement à ce qu'elles ne se livrent à aucun écart. Elles sont abondamment nourries.

Vêtues d'un pagne, elles s'appuient pour marcher sur une tige sèche de mil et agitent une calebasse, percée de trous, renfermant des cailloux. Elles ne sortent que pour les besoins naturels et toutes ensemble. Elles préviennent les passants de s'écarter en agitant leurs gourdes et en chantant de petits refrains improvisés. A l'extérieur du village, aux approches des sentiers, elles entonnent un refrain.

Soli da woro (1). — La réclusion des *soli-ma* est rompue par la fête du sixième jour. De même que l'agrégation de l'enfant à la famille a lieu le septième jour après sa naissance, le sixième jour après l'opération chirurgicale, qui a comme marqué sa séparation d'avec l'enfance, il accède à un nouvel état.

Le sixième jour, *da woro*, est la plus grande fête du *soli*. Tous les parents et amis y sont convoqués et, fussent-ils très éloignés, font tout ce qui dépend d'eux pour y assister. Chacun envoie ou apporte sa part contributive pour les repas orgiaques qui, ce jour-là et les jours suivants, se poursuivent. Les fiancés des filles doivent se faire représenter et envoyer des cadeaux. Les frères et sœurs déjà mariés doivent venir en personne, accompagnés les uns de leur femme, les autres de leur mari... C'est la bombance et la beuverie, qui ne finissent qu'avec les vivres, c'est-à-dire au bout de plusieurs jours.

Le soir du sixième jour est celui de la cérémonie essentielle pour lequel tout ce concours de monde a lieu. Les assistants se réunissent sur la place publique, où l'on dansera, mais en général seules les femmes et les filles y demeurent ; les garçons et les hommes vont à l'extérieur pour procéder à l'agrégation des *soli-ma-tye* à la confrérie en honneur dans le village (*Komoya*, *Namaya*) (1).

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(1) Littéralement : « sixième jour du *soli* ».

Pourtant il advient qu'il n'y a pas séparation : soit parce qu'aucune confrérie ne fonctionne, soit parce que le grand prêtre a fixé à plus tard la cérémonie d'agrégation.

Quoi qu'il en soit, dans le village, c'est surtout pour les fillettes, *soli-ma-moso*, que se déroule le spectacle. Enveloppée dans une de ces couvertures de coton, à rayures bleues et blanches, dites *dampe*, chacune repose, entre les jambes de sa mère (2), étendue sur un drap blanc, qui recouvre une natte.

Tandis que les garçons, *soli-ma-tye*, agitent bruyamment leurs *n-koso-m-bara*, les fillettes, *soli-ma-moso*, secouent leurs gourdes remplies de cailloux.

En groupe compact, femmes et filles, de tout âge et de toute condition, se trémoussent en tournant lentement autour de l'orchestre, tandis que les hommes boivent et chantent accroupis autour des petits feux des tiges sèches de mil.

De temps à autre, sur invitation, telle ou telle fille, *soli-ma-moso* se lève, secoue sa calebasse et prend part à la danse en faisant quelques pas lents et maniérés.

A l'aube, au moment de regagner leurs cases, les fillettes *soli-ma-moso* font une dernière ronde puis, chacune, joignant les talons, par trois fois, fait trois bonds en l'air, les mains croisées sur le sommet de la tête.

Ces divers détails relatifs aux fillettes *soli-ma-moso* sont interprétés, par les Bambara eux-mêmes, comme symboliques. La position de la fillette entre les jambes de sa mère rappelle la naissance naturelle. Le drap blanc représente celui qui, au jour du mariage, a attesté la virginité de la mère et enseigne à la fillette qu'elle devra donner pareil témoignage à son époux. La danse à pas comptés est le symbole de l'enfant qui apprend à marcher, tandis que les *neuf* sauts qui clôturent la cérémonie attestent que la fillette est définitivement grande. Un dernier rite vient affirmer le parallélisme entre le *soli* et la nais-

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1) Nous décrirons cette agrégation en parlant des confréries.

(2) Ou d'une parente ou d'une amie de sa mère.

sance naturelle : le sixième jour, le *nyana-n-son-na-ba* rase la tête de la fillette *soli-ma-moso* (1).

Fin du soli. — Le septième jour, avant midi, toutes les *soli-ma-moso* sont au puits, ou à la rivière, pour laver les linges salis, recurer les poteries et les calebasses de la fête. Puis tout rentre dans la règle du *soli* : les garçons sous leur arbre, les filles dans leur case. Les *sema* veillent et soignent toute cette jeunesse, à qui pèse, à la longue, cette discipline. Trois semaines environ s'écoulent en totalité, c'est-à-dire depuis le jour de l'opération, avant que la guérison soit complète pour tous les *soli-ma*.

Au bout de ce temps, le *nyana-n-son-na-ba* et son conseil étant d'accord avec les *sema* pour mettre fin à l'isolement, chaque chef, à ce préposé, procède aux passes magiques, tant sous les arbres des garçons que dans le voisinage des cases des filles, pour écarter tout mal. Car il est acquis, pour les Bambara, que tant que n'est pas définitivement close la période de guérison, les circoncis ou excisées sont un danger pour la société tout autant que la société est un danger pour eux ; c'est pourquoi ils doivent passer cette période à l'écart. D'ailleurs, tout ce qui a été à leur service intime durant cette réclusion est imprégné de ce mal et est susceptible de le communiquer.

Aussi dès que l'interdit est levé, à l'heure où le soleil se couche, tout est réuni pour être brûlé (2) : près des arbres, hors du village, on amoncelle les nattes, les *n-koso-m-bara*, les gourdes, les tiges de mil, les chiffons..., et le *nyana-n-son-na-ba* y met le feu. Par trois fois, garçons et filles sautent par dessus ce feu : dès lors ils peuvent rentrer au village et s'y enfuient en effet pour s'y parer en vue de la nouvelle fête qui se prépare pour leur retour.

Une fois encore repas copieux et beuveries interminables, puis réunion générale sur la place publique ; de toutes parts débouchent des assistants, parmi lesquels des vieilles femmes, horribles de décrépitude, s'efforcent à mener et à entraîner tout.

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(1) A la place de la coiffure en cadenettes, les fillettes portent sur le sommet de la tête la cordelette magique à *neuf nœuds* dite *Tafo*, reliée à une autre de même nature dite *dyo*, sur la nuque.

(2) Cependant, on ne brûle pas les effets (*kursi*, *dloki*, *baufla*, des garçons, *tafe*, des filles) ; en général, on les conserve avec leurs souillures, ils sont imprégnés de vertus qui les rendent particulièrement propres à la composition des talismans, amulettes et autres armes magiques.

Les garçons (*soli-ma-tye*) apparaissent là, pour la première fois, en vrai costume d'homme : culotte bouffante, bonnet à oreilles, ample blouse neuve ; la lance au poing ils se donnent des airs fanfarons et simulent des actes guerriers : ce sont les *tye-kura*, les « hommes neufs ».

Les filles aussi sont attifées comme des femmes, avec une certaine outrance. Couvertes de plusieurs pagnes, parées de tous les bijoux que des parentes ou amies ont complaisamment prêtées pour la circonstance, elles s'avancent, embarrassées. Dans certaines régions, dans le Bani notamment, elles portent de chaque côté de la tête (1) et autour des hanches des paquets de cauris qui proviennent de la dot déjà payée pour elles.

Garçons et filles, à la suite des vieilles qui les guident, viennent danser autour de l'orchestre, après quoi tous s'assoient en rond. Alors le *nyana-n-son-na-ba* prend la parole : il parle à demi-voix, son allocution est répétée avec force par un héraut, comme le veut la bienséance. Il annonce la fin du *soli*, il en rappelle les principaux épisodes et indique d'une manière très nette quels enfants ont subi ce rite : chaque garçon, chaque fille est nommément désigné. Il ne manque pas non plus d'affirmer que le *soli* est une coutume immémoriale chez les Bambara et qu'il n'est pas d'insulte plus grave que de traiter un Bambara d'incirconcis. Il termine en invitant les assistants à manger, boire, se réjouir, dans la joie et la concorde, qui doivent accompagner une telle fête.

La danse reprend ; garçons et filles du *soli* y prennent part ; les réjouissances durent ce que durent les victuailles, habituellement plusieurs jours.

Et pour clore, aux héros de la fête, garçons et filles, nul ne se retire sans donner au moins quelques colas.

La dernière manifestation est le remerciement des *soli-ma* à ceux qui ont assisté au *da-woro* : en bandes bruyantes, garçons et filles parcourent la région, formant deux groupes distincts : l'un, celui des filles, avec à sa tête la *sema-moso*, qui s'intitule *masa* (reine) et est suivie de la *masa-ma-kono* (vice-reine), suivie elle-même de la *masa*-

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(1) Les fillettes *soli* bambara ont la tête rasée ; celles d'autres races ont au contraire les cheveux nattés pour la première fois à la manière des femmes, mais sur le cimier ainsi constitué se voit une petite touffe formée à l'aide des cheveux rasés le septième jour de leur naissance : le plus souvent ces cheveux ont été perdus, mais l'on a constitué une petite touffe pour les simuler.

ma-kono-segere (suivante de la vice-reine). La dernière du groupe est dite *kule*. De même vont les garçons en un groupe guidé par le *séma-tye*, que l'on appelle *masa* (roi) et qui est suivi de même du *masa-ma-kono*, du *masa-ma-kono segere*...

De la sorte, tout le pays apprend quels et quelles ont franchi le *soli*.

LA FLA-N-TON'

Ceux qui ont appartenu à la même *n-Tomo-ya* et ont subi ensemble le *soli*, demeurent liés pour la vie : ils sont *fula-ni* : « pairs », « jumeaux », car ils sont nés le même jour à la vie sexuelle et sociale. Où que ce soit et quelles que soient leurs conditions respectives, deux *fula-ni* se considèrent comme égaux même si l'un est chef et l'autre esclave, et ce dernier a, notamment, le droit d'user sans crainte de son franc parler (1). En principe, donc, le *fula-ni* est l'ami sur lequel on s'appuie en toute sécurité, il fait partie d'ordinaire de ce petit conseil, si puissant, dont le *fa* aime s'entourer ; c'est à lui que l'on confie ses ennuis, ses joies, ses projets, ses affaires. Il est de toutes les fêtes et de tous les deuils de la famille : dans les circonstances graves ou importantes, il représente son ami, qui le désigne souvent pour veiller sur sa maisonnée durant son absence et comme tuteur ou directeur de ses enfants après sa mort. C'est un frère, bien autrement affectionné parfois que le frère consanguin ou utérin. Toutefois, la *fulani-ya* ne produit pas obligatoirement les effets d'une sorte de fraternité, analogue à celle qui dérive de l'alliance par le sang ; elle engendre plutôt une mutualité que renforce l'organisation appelée *fla-n-ton'* : « réunion des gens de même âge », c'est-à-dire « nés » par le même *soli*.

Les jeunes gens d'un même *soli* forment une *fla-m-bolo*, littéralement une bande de gens du même âge.

Une *fla-n-ton'* comporte, en général, les jeunes gens qui proviennent de trois *soli* consécutifs : c'est donc la réunion de trois *fla-m-bolo*. La société bambara renferme ainsi un certain nombre de *fla-n-ton'* entre lesquelles se répartissent tous les gens, depuis les plus récents *tye-kura* (hommes nouveaux) jusqu'aux *tye-koro* (vieux) les plus avancés en âge. Et comme les femmes, aussi, ont des *fla-n-ton*', l'on peut dire, d'un certain point de vue, que le *soli* est à la base de la vie et de l'organisation sociale.

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(1) Voir au chapitre VII : « L'Homme aux trois tresses ».

Chaque *fla-n-ton*' est indépendante, mais elle garde les meilleurs rapports avec ses voisines immédiates : celle qui la précède, celle qui la suit et celle des femmes du même *soli*. Les *fla-n-ton*' ont donc entre elles une certaine solidarité, affirmée d'ailleurs par cette coutume que chaque *fla-n-ton*' doit honorer ses voisines immédiates, dont il vient d'être question, en offrant à chacune une part de victuailles lors de ses repas de corps. Il est à remarquer également que, lorsque surgit un conflit au sein d'une *fla-n-ton*', les *fla-n-ton*' voisines interviennent pour ramener la paix ; il existe même un arbitre choisi pour aplanir toutes les difficultés de cette affaire (1).

Où qu'il aille, le Bambara s'informe des gens de son âge, c'est-à-dire de ceux qui ont franchi le *soli* à la même époque que lui : il trouve toujours auprès d'eux un accueil amical et une aide efficace.

Dans chaque *fla-n-ton*' il y a un chef, *ton-tigi*, choisi différemment suivant les lieux et les races : tantôt c'est un fils de notable, tantôt un captif de case ; un *syere* (suivant) l'assiste ou le supplée ; un *dyala-tige*, ou faiseur de parts, a pour fonction d'assurer la discipline et de répartir les victuailles dans les repas de corps, c'est, d'ordinaire un captif de case qui tient cet emploi ; un *ton-dyeli* sert de factotum et de héraut, c'est un homme de caste qui remplit ce rôle. Au point de vue de l'association, chaque *fula-ni* est un *ton'-den*'.

Les célibataires et certains gens mariés ne voient dans la *fla-n-ton*' qu'un moyen de mener joyeuse vie en compagnie de bons camarades. Tout ce que chaque *ton'-den*' apporte aide à former un fond commun, qui sert à organiser, le plus souvent possible, des repas et des beuveries. A ces repas de corps, il est de coutume d'observer des statuts baroques, au premier abord, et donc l'infraction est punie d'amende au profit du fond commun. Ainsi, quiconque agit à sa guise, avant ou contrairement à l'ordre du *ton-tigi*, quiconque va, vient, se mouche, crache, éternue..., sans y avoir été autorisé, est frappé d'amende. En outre de l'accroissement dont profite le fond commun, il résulte de ce procédé une manière de plier le *ton-den'* à une discipline.

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(1) Voir à ce sujet les différents des *ton*' de Kassoum et de Biton, dans la chronique du Ségou rapportée ci-devant.

Dans le principe, le trésor de la *fla-n-ton'* est destiné uniquement à venir en aide aux *ton-den'* pauvres, gênés ou malheureux, à charge par eux de restituer ultérieurement et avec usure, dans la mesure de leurs moyens. En principe, également, tout *ton-den'* doit pouvoir trouver auprès de ses *fla-ni* l'aide morale et matérielle dont il a besoin. Il s'en faut, certes, que ce bel altruisme soit mis couramment en pratique.

En fait, les jeunes maîtres (*kamale-u*) puisent dans cette organisation un moyen de résister à l'omnipotence des vieux (*koro-u*) ; les mécontents de toutes catégories y trouvent un refuge ; les aventuriers s'en servent pour l'accomplissement de leurs desseins : nous verrons comment les deux plus puissants empires bambara ont été édifiés sur la *fla-n-ton'*.

2. Généralités sur les confréries

ORIGINE DES CONFRÉRIES

Rien ne s'oppose à ce que les confréries bambara soient des institutions purement indigènes : il y en a partout d'analogues en Afrique, notamment dans les régions que l'Islam n'a point touchées. Toutes procèdent de principes pareils, qui s'extériorisent en des manifestations caractéristiques de l'occultisme africain.

Mais il n'est pas douteux que, chez les Bambara qui nous occupent ici, ce fond indigène s'est incorporé des éléments divers qui lui ont été apportés du dehors, par des Berbères, des Arabes et d'autres, ou par des pèlerins soudanais retour d'Orient. Toutefois, cet occultisme étranger, oriental d'ordinaire, n'a nullement engendré ni beaucoup modifié l'occultisme soudanais, il a seulement renforcé ses cadres, ses institutions, ses moyens, en lui apportant des connaissances nouvelles.

La légende (1) qui affirme que les *nyana* à *boli* sont d'importation musulmane ne signifie donc pas que c'est effectivement et exclusivement par une telle voie que ces « dieux » ont été introduits, mais seulement que par des pèlerins ou d'autres gens revenus ou venus d'Orient, des institutions indigènes préexistantes ont reçu un apport étranger.

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(1) Rapportée ci-après au chapitre de l'Islam.

Dogmes.

Ces confréries reposent-elles sur un enseignement, plus ou moins tenu secret, de vérités cardinalices ? Il ne me paraît pas téméraire d'affirmer que non. Tout se résume dans ces cultes à des pratiques empiriques, auxquelles on attribue la vertu d'enchaîner un « dieu » (c'est-à-dire une force extra-naturelle) au service de l'homme. Le but est essentiellement utilitaire et terrestre : s'assurer un « protecteur puissant » (*dyigi seme*) pour se défendre, pour attaquer, et surtout pour acquérir la puissance qui permet la réalisation de tous désirs.

Cette alliance faite, par le moyen du culte, avec le dieu, oblige à se comporter de certaine façon, sans que cette manière de discipline tende à une amélioration de l'individu ou de la société par l'acquisition de ce que nous nommons qualités morales ou vertus. A plus forte raison, les confréries n'ambitionnent-elles pas pour leurs adeptes l'accès d'un monde surnaturel, à peine prétendent-elles leur assurer une égide et des satisfactions matérielles : la mystique spirituelle leur est inconnue (1).

Méthodes.

Les rites, les pratiques magiques qui ont cours dans les confréries sont-ils efficients ?

Ici, comme dans tous les domaines, les Noirs ne procèdent que par tâtonnement, imitation ou adaptation incomplètes. De même qu'un ignorant est susceptible d'agir par hasard sur un mouvement d'horlogerie dont il ignore le mécanisme, et donc aussi bien de le mettre en marche que de l'arrêter, le fausser ou le briser, de même le Noir obtient, par une sorte d'empirisme, des résultats analogues à ceux des magnétiseurs, hypnotiseurs, magiciens ou alchimistes de tous les temps et de tous les pays.

Sans plan et sans méthode, magiciens et sorciers soudanais n'ont cependant pas fait œuvre vaine. En suscitant et tenant en perpétuel éveil l'émotivité indigène, ils ont créé une atmosphère favorable à la naissance et à la propagation des phénomènes psychiques. Il n'est point de spiritualité qui ne bénéficie de ce travail séculaire par lequel l'âme soudanaise se trouve d'autant mieux préparée à élargir les tendances mystiques du culte des mânes, que les magiciens l'ont plus étroitement maintenue dans le domaine matériel de l'utilité immédiate.

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(1) Voir cependant chapitre VII.

Nous n'avons jamais relevé qu'aucun magicien, en s'efforçant à pénétrer dans l'invisible, se soit préoccupé d'en découvrir l'agencement en vue de régler sa vie pour ultérieurement acquérir une place de choix dans ce monde qui nous est invisible. Chacun se borne à dérober un fragment de l'énergie universelle pour réaliser au mieux ses desseins terrestres. Toutefois, cet effort continu vers le surnaturel, par la spiritualité qu'il a suscitée, a bien souvent renforcé l'élan vers les mânes. Au fur et à mesure, donc, que la magie perd du crédit, le désir du surnaturel, manquant de but, accroît le culte des mânes en attendant qu'il le dépasse. Ainsi s'édifie, dans le plan indigène, une nouvelle spiritualité qui facilement s'oriente vers les religions révélées, lorsqu'elles savent la recueillir.

Nyana.

Toute confrérie a pour fondement le culte d'un esprit (*nyana*). Ce que nous appelons « esprit » pour en marquer l'immatérialité, d'un autre point de vue le Bambara l'appelle : « puissance », « maître », « seigneur »..., car tel est le sens des mots *nya, nyana, nama, dyara, komo, faro...*, par lesquels il désigne les innombrables « dieux » de son panthéon, affirmant par là sa soumission à cet invisible qui le limite.

C'est le magicien qui crée le *nyana* à *boli*, honoré dans les confréries qui nous occupent ici. Ses incantations déterminent comme un écho dans l'invisible ; ses pratiques tenaces et impératives provoquent au sein de l'énergie universelle et diffuse une sorte de personnification de son désir parce qu'il « nomme » ce qu'il veut. Le *nyana* qu'il a ainsi créé, il l'attire en le « nommant », il le retient par des offrandes et des sacrifices comme l'on séduit quelqu'un par des présents, il se lie, enfin, intimement avec lui par la communion. Dès lors créature et créateur sont si parfaitement soudés qu'ils ne peuvent rien se refuser l'un à l'autre : ils ne forment plus qu'un seul être, celui que l'on voit étant complété par celui que l'on ne voit pas.

Telle est, déduite des dires, des concepts et des pratiques, la croyance des indigènes à l'œuvre mystérieuse du magicien. Celui-ci crée autant de *nyana* qu'il lui plaît, il puise à son gré dans l'invisible qu'il façonne et domine.

Boli.

C'est un besoin de l'homme en général et de l'indigène en particulier de donner un support matériel à ses spéculations : le *nyana*, cette essence personnifiée, parce que « nommée », le magicien, le fidèle le veulent à leur portée. Des procédés appropriés obligent le *nyana* à venir sur cet autel qui est, en même temps, comme son symbole et que le Bambara nomme *boli* (1).

Chaque *nyana* a son *boli* propre par la contexture et la forme. Il entre de tout dans la composition des *boli* : bois, écorces, racines d'arbres ; cornes et poils de lièvre, de biche, de bovins..., ongles ou griffes, venins ou excrétions diverses des animaux... Il n'est pas rare que le corps humain soit aussi mis à contribution. Ainsi que le dit la chronique, les tambours de guerre des *ton-dyon*' furent élevés au rang de *boli*. On les ornait alors des calottes crâniennes et des mâchoires des victimes humaines qui leur étaient offertes. Souvent aussi la boule fixée au bout d'un lien de corde ou de cuir qui servait à battre le *tabala* n'était autre qu'une main coupée et roulée dans une enveloppe de cuir.

Certains *boli* — du *Komo* et du *Kono*, notamment — sont réputés formés d'un buste d'enfant ; ceux du *Tyiwara* et du *Nama* sont en bois, tandis que ceux du *Duga* sont composés de cornes.

Toutes les formes sont usitées, l'homme, les animaux, des sortes de poupées, des boules, de petites couronnes... Au *boli* principal, dit *boli-de-n-fa*, sont adjoints des auxiliaires dits *boli-de*.

L'on prête d'ailleurs au *boli* un sexe : l'un est mâle, l'autre femelle, et l'on dit qu'il y a une sorte d'accouplement mystique d'où naissent, à l'époque de l'initiation, les fils spirituels du *nyana*.

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(1) *Alias buri*. Remarquer que dans le langage courant l'on emploie indifféremment l'un pour l'autre les termes *nyana* et *boli* : ce qui s'explique puisque le second n'est que le symbole du premier.

Parmi les *boli*, il convient de remarquer ceux qui sont constitués par des bois fourchus, tels le *n-Golo* et le *Tyiwara*, par exemple, tous deux patrons de confrérie de jeunes gens (1).

Pour l'Européen, ce sont autant d'objets repoussant que ces *boli*, tout peut entrer dans leur composition, car la magie utilise tout (2) et comme, en plus, lors des sacrifices, le sang, les poils, les plumes, les viscères... sont placés et laissés sur le *boli*, celui-ci présente, en général, un aspect repoussant. Mais l'attention de l'indigène ne semble pas intéressée par ce côté répugnant qui, au contraire, nous impressionne fâcheusement. Le Noir ne voit que l'autel symbole auquel il accorde sa déférence. D'ailleurs, ce n'est pas — en principe du moins — de sa nature étrange ou bizarre que le *boli* tire quelque prestige aux yeux du Noir, c'est de sa consécration rituelle que lui vient son caractère sacré et son emploi liturgique. C'est pourquoi, en général (3), détruire un *boli* ce n'est pas plus détruire le culte correspondant, que briser une statue consacrée à Boudha, ce n'est anéantir le culte de Boudha.

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(1) Le bois fourchu paraît, en effet, mériter une attention particulière quand on fait certains rapprochements. Ainsi, chez les Khassonké, les *soli-ma* construisent pour le temps de leur réclusion, une case (*bire*) qui comporte en son centre un pilier fourchu. Ce pilier dit *biri-makho* (maître de la case), est un fut d'arbre choisi et coupé par le *gankurango* (magicien protecteur des *soli-ma* chez les Khassonké), en raison de ce fait que le déplacement apparent du soleil s'effectue normalement à la direction formée par les deux cornes de la fourche. Il y a donc quelque relation entre le soleil et le bois fourchu dit *biri-makho*. Peut-être faut-il rapporter à cette relation la disposition des corps des *soli-ma* dans le *bire* : ils y dorment, en effet, couchés côte à côte la tête vers le *biri-makho*, leurs corps forment ainsi comme les rayons d'une roue dont le bois fourchu occupe le centre. Ces mêmes *soli-ma* khassonké se servent, au cours des cérémonies, du *soli* d'une courte baguette terminée à l'une de ses extrémités par une fourche.

On retrouve le bois fourchu avec caractère mystique chez les Koniagui.

Il n'est pas possible, dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances, de préciser l'origine et la valeur de ce symbole ni par conséquent de dire s'il convient de le rapprocher de ces pierres en forme de lyre comprises dans ce mystérieux assemblage de pierres trouvé en Gambie et où l'on a cru discerner un culte solaire particulièrement précis (Cf. *Bulle. du Comité des Et. hist. et sc. de l'A. O. F.*, 1920, n° 1).

(2) Mais plus particulièrement les choses qui, dans la vie normale, sont tenues pour viles, répugnantes ou dangereuses.

(3) Je dis, en général, car le fait, par exemple, de détruire le crâne du chef nommé Sama, crâne qui, dans le village de Gniningo, dans le Gangaran, était le *boli* du culte fondé suivant la volonté du dit Sama, a bien mis fin à ce culte parce qu'il n'a pas été possible de remplacer cet objet unique.

La confection et la consécration d'un *boli* sont choses difficilement accessibles au profane. Voici, au sujet d'un *boli* qui appartenait aux Massa-si, ce que rapporte Raffenel d'après son informateur Bouo : « Les sorciers cherchèrent d'abord un arbre fort rare, s'en approchèrent « processionnellement, creusèrent au pied et, après des « invocations dans une langue inconnue, recueillirent des « parties de sa racine avec des pratiques fort bizarres. Ils « se procurèrent par les mêmes invocations et les mêmes « pratiques des crins de la queue d'un cheval noir. Pour « que ces matières fussent propices à leurs desseins, ils les « firent recueillir par l'un des leurs, qui se dépouilla à cet « effet de sa culotte et de sa chemise (1). L'écorce et les « crins de cheval furent placés dans un pot en terre qui « demeura pendant une demi-journée exposé à un feu « ardent. Durant cette dernière journée, ce délégué des « magiciens se prosterna sept fois sept fois la face contre « terre en récitant des prières dans un langage que per« sonne ne comprenait.

« Après la création, vint la consécration. Elle eût pour « témoins les Kouroubari et les principaux d'entre le « peuple. On sacrifia pour la circonstance un bœuf blanc, « un bœuf roux et un coq roux (2). »

Le *boli* est habituellement dérobé à la vue du profane ; on le place dans un sac, dans un récipient, qu'en dehors des cérémonies l'on remise avec d'autres objets du culte dans une sorte de temple affectant souvent la forme d'une case indigène de dimensions réduites, c'est le *nyana-bon'* : case du *nyana*.

Il y a d'évidentes différences entre les divers *nyana*, parce que les pratiques spéciales suscitent des esprits non pareils. Quoi qu'il en soit, d'ailleurs, l'esprit capté est comme un esclave du magicien, qui le traite comme tel en le vendant à qui lui plaît avec la manière de s'en servir. Il y a des magiciens qui vont de côté et d'autres, fabriquant et offrant des *nyana* et des armes magiques, et il existe des marchés réputés où l'on peut toujours se procurer les *boli* concernant les *nyana* les plus courants. Les marchés du Bélédougou, du Bendougou, du Follona sont particulièrement connus.

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(1) Il est fréquent que dans les pratiques de sorcellerie l'opérateur se dépouille de tout vêtement.

(2) Raffenel, *Nouveau voyage au Pays des Nègres*, T. I, p. 237.

Trafic du boli.

La chronique du Ségou rapporte que Biton, le fondateur de l'empire, acquit ses principales idoles dans le Bendougou, où se trouvent les marchés si fréquentés de Moribala, Kourbadougou, Diali.

Des marchands ambulants font commerce de tous objets pour le culte ; il en est de sédentaires qui sont très réputés, parfois, comme ce Minkoli, fabricant de *boli*, si renommé que l'on désigne son village d'après lui : *Minkoli ka dugu* (le village de Minkoli), sans qu'il m'ait été possible de savoir quel est au juste ce village du Bendougou qui abrite ce fameux Minkoli.

Ainsi, par ces moyens, une fois créé, le culte d'un *nyana* se vulgarise plus ou moins, suivant que son possesseur accepte ou non de céder le rituel d'initiation.

Le chef de famille, tout comme l'individu isolé ou le chef de grande communauté, ne manque pas de se procurer, moyennant finance, la jouissance exclusive de quelqu'un de ces puissants *boli* qui devient son protecteur privé. Sounsan, l'ancêtre des Massa-si, avait avec lui le *nyana n-Ko* ; Biton, le fondateur de l'empire de Ségou, eut plusieurs *nyana* fameux : *na n-Golo-ko* (1), *Nye-n-dinge du* (2), *ba Kung-o-ba* (3). En général, ces cultes privés ne peuvent prendre de l'extension ; toutefois, lorsque leur possesseur devient un chef puissant, ils essaiment. C'est ce qui s'est passé pour les cultes de Biton, les partisans de ce chef furent agrégés au culte de ses idoles.

Devenir possesseur en titre d'un *nyana* aboutit à une alliance avec ce *nyana* portant dans la langue indigène le même nom, *furu*, que l'union conjugale de l'homme et de la femme. De fait, l'installation dans le village de son maître d'un *nyana* réputé donne lieu à des réjouissances analogues à celles usitées pour le mariage, d'où ces expressions : *a ye boli furu* : il s'est uni à un *boli* ; *a ye boli furu gosi* : il a fait union avec un *boli* ; *a-ta boli konyo kera* : il a célébré la noce de son *boli*. Au jour de ces fêtes, le maître du *nyana* (*nyana-tigi*, ou *boli-tigi*), entouré de ses acolytes, offre le *dlo* à ses invités qui viennent le saluer et lui présenter un cadeau. A la nuit close, les indicrets étant éloignés, le clergé et les adeptes conduisent processionnellement le *boli* au « bois sacré », où se célèbre la première cérémonie cultuelle, marquée surtout par des danses et des chants.

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(1) Littéralement *na-n-Goloko* : la mère « affaire de naissance » ; traduction libre : « la déesse qui préside à la naissance ».

(2) *Nye dinge du* : « le profond orbite de l'œil ».

(3) *Ba-kung-o-ba* : « la mère Grande-Brousse ».

La valeur marchande d'un *boli* est très variable. Elle oscille au maximum entre 30 et 40 francs payés en nature ou en cauris. Mais la dépense s'augmente des cadeaux au vendeur et à ses acolytes qui sont venus initier le clergé nouveau à ses fonctions. Il en résulte qu'en victuailles diverses et consistant en chiens, chèvres ou volailles et aussi en colas, bière de mil (*dlo*), ce prix finit par atteindre une centaine de francs.

Du fait que le *nyana-tigi* (maître du *nyana*) dispose entièrement de son *nyana*, il peut admettre qui il lui plaît au bénéfice de son culte. Les cultes réputés ont été recherchés et, en se développant, se sont parfois compliqués, car lorsqu'il croît en importance, un culte voit ses cérémonies s'amplifier et augmenter le nombre de ceux qui y tiennent un rôle. L'initiation se paye et un clergé devient nécessaire. Ainsi s'instituent ces cultes en participation qui ont donné naissance à ces associations que l'Européen appelle sociétés secrètes et qu'il paraît préférable d'appeler « confréries », en raison du lieu commun de filiation spirituelle qui unit les affiliés.

Mystères et matériel liturgique.

En tout ce qui la concerne, la confrérie de *nyana* s'entoure de mystère : pour des raisons diverses, tout y est caché (*do*, suivant l'expression indigène). Il est en effet de principe, en magie, que la puissance ne peut subsister comme telle que si elle échappe, quant à son essence, aux investigations de ses adversaires. Il ne faut donc pas que le profane sache en quoi réside le pouvoir surnaturel du *nyana*, car, s'il le sait, il pourra se procurer le moyen de le détruire, de le combattre, à tout le moins de le rendre inefficace. Or, ce qui dépend du *nyana* en est solidaire et est comme partie intégrante du *nyana* par la vertu de la consécration : le clergé et le matériel liturgique. Voilà pourquoi l'un et l'autre sont *do* et pourquoi aussi tout est mis en œuvre pour les soustraire, dans leur nature magique, à la curiosité du profane. Mais, par extension, tous les adhérents à une confrérie quelconque de *nyana* à *boli* sont, en pays bambara, confondus sous cette épithète *do-u* : « les gens cachés ».

Certain clergé use d'un travestissement pour officier en public et, de plus, les cérémonies n'ont lieu que la nuit.

Enfin, devant les profanes, les initiés emploient un langage spécial pour tout ce qui a trait au culte en particulier. Mais le grand secret c'est le nom du *nyana*, parce que connaître le nom, c'est posséder tout pouvoir sur l'esprit que ce nom désigne.

Envisagé au point de vue du travestissement du clergé, cet hermétisme est quasi-impénétrable. Le travesti perd sa personnalité humaine, il s'abstrait du monde naturel. Il est reçu que son regard surpris à travers les minces orifices du masque est dangereux pour qui n'est pas affilié ; sans doute sa personne est-elle à ce moment-là imprégnée d'un fluide dont les émanations sont néfastes à celui qui, n'étant pas affilié, n'est pas prémuni contre elles.

Certains de ces travestissements comportent une coiffure ou un masque pour la tête et, pour le corps, une sorte de costume composé d'ordinaire de longues lanières végétales : est-ce là, comme on le suggère, des moyens mis en œuvre pour dominer la foule des adeptes et plus encore des profanes par la terreur qu'inspire un tel accoutrement dans la nuit, à la lueur des torches ou des feux ? Il est plus probable que c'est du côté du surnaturel qu'il faut se placer pour comprendre. Les bêtes sauvages et cruelles sont tenues pour des incarnations des dieux mauvais et forts et l'on s'ingénie à réaliser un aspect extérieur en rapport avec l'effroi que leur seule vue suscite, afin de s'assurer, par là, la vertu surnaturelle qui les caractérise (1).

Il convient de remarquer que le costume, les gestes, les danses, les chants, la musique des *dye-n-fa* et de leurs acolytes ont pour but d'attirer et de capter le dieu et, dans cette vue, de retrancher l'officiant à notre monde pour l'introduire dans le surnaturel. Jamais je n'ai entendu dire que le travestissement et les actes divers de l'officiant avaient pour but de donner du *nyana* une figuration, ni non plus que le *boli* rappelle en quoi que ce soit l'idée que l'on se fait du dieu.

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(1) Il n'est pas douteux que des individus suggestionnés par le rôle du fauve qu'ils représentent en arrivent à commettre de véritables meurtres au cours de leurs évolutions rituelles. Je l'ai entendu affirmer bien des fois pour le *dyara* (lion).

Clergé.

Si, en principe, les *nyana* familiaux s'héritent, plus généralement les *nyana* des confréries s'achètent. Le chef de confrérie s'intitule *nyana-tigi* (maître du *nyana*) (1), qu'il le soit par héritage ou qu'il soit élu, ou qu'il s'impose comme le plus important des fondateurs de la confrérie. Il est le détenteur du *boli*, d'où son titre de *boli-tigi*, et tous les mystères lui sont connus. Son office consiste à diriger le culte et administrer la confrérie, ce qui lui donne un prestige local considérable.

Les initiés au degré supérieur sont dénommés *dye-n-fa-u* : maîtres de la vérité. C'est parmi eux que le *nyana-tigi* prend ses auxiliaires et particulièrement celui qui, « saisi par le dieu » (*wara-mina-den'*), en devient l' « oracle » (*wara-da*). Le rôle de médium exige des individus spéciaux susceptibles d'entrer en transe sous l'influence de l'esprit animateur, et il appartient au *wara-da* de choisir et de former celui qui doit le suppléer, ou le remplacer en cas de besoin (2).

Tous les initiés sont plus ou moins devins par des moyens qui leur sont propres et, souvent, les confréries comportent un enseignement de divination déductive qui exige, d'ordinaire, deux ans d'études.

C'est, en définitive, par cooption que se recrute et se forme ce clergé qui comprend, en outre des personnes susvisées : un *muru-kala-tigi* (3) ou « sacrificateur », chargé d'égorger les victimes ; un *dyeli* ou « héraut » du dieu.

Les fidèles du commun sont dits *nyana-den'-u* : les fils du *nyana* (1). Pour être accepté comme *nyana-den'* il faut prêter serment et payer un droit d'entrée. Les formules de serment éclairées par les pratiques confraternelles montrent qu'en résumé le *nyana-den'* s'engage à observer la discrétion, l'obéissance et la solidarité comme nous l'exposons ci-après. Certains auxiliaires du clergé sont pris parmi les simples fidèles : tel le *da-ro-tigi* ou *da-ro-ta-la*, sorte de bedeau.

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(1) On substitue, d'ordinaire, au mot *nyama* le nom spécifique du *nyana* : *Komo*, *Nama*, *Nya*...

(2) Ces élèves *dye-n-fa* sont qualifiés *soma-de* (fils aînés) dans la confrérie du *Komo*.

(3) Littéralement « celui qui tient le manche du couteau. »

Trésor.

Le clergé n'a pas pour seule fonction d'accomplir les cérémonies liturgiques, il forme également une manière de conseil d'administration des biens de la confrérie, car le culte n'est pas gratuit. D'abord, l'entrée dans la confrérie est subordonnée au paiement d'un droit et de même la nomination ou promotion à une dignité ; d'autre part, une contribution importante est due pour les grandes cérémonies, elle est proportionnée aux ressources de chacun. Enfin, des amendes sont infligées aux fidèles et même à des étrangers en punition de leurs fautes.

L'amende revêt ainsi des formes multiples, soit qu'elle rachète une faute du fidèle envers la confrérie, ou envers la divinité, soit que tout étranger se trouve astreint à une punition pareille pour avoir provoqué le courroux du *nyana*, pour des motifs que le clergé est, parfois, seul à connaître et à proclamer. Le *nyana-tigi* et ses acolytes sont très enclins à découvrir des fautes et des coupables et à exiger des preuves matérielles d'expiation, qu'ils fixent et s'entendent à multiplier, parce qu'ils s'en approprient, abusivement d'ailleurs, tout le profit. Ces amendes ne sont pas, dans le principe, très onéreuses et sont payées en nature (volaille, chèvre, chien, colas, cauris, mil, bière), mais, multipliées, elles sont une lourde charge pour le redevable, qui ne peut éluder ce mode d'extorsion, parce que ses persécuteurs, ligués contre lui, usent de tous moyens, mêmes criminels, pour le contraindre.

Strictement parlant, tous ces biens appartiennent aux *nyana* ; en droit, ils sont la propriété commune des *nyana-den'* et ne sont pas, en principe, susceptibles d'appropriation privée non plus que d'aliénation. Ils ne doivent être employés que pour les besoins du culte, le soulagement des *nyana-den'* malheureux et, exceptionnellement, à des prêts aux infidèles à un taux usuraire. Du reste, le *nyana-den'* qui a bénéficié d'un prêt sur le fond commun doit le rembourser dès qu'il revient à meilleure fortune et, autant que possible, avec un certain excès pour marquer sa gratitude. Il se peut que des infidèles soit secourus sur le fond commun : c'est là une manière d'aumône et aussi de réclame et de gros profit.

Les biens communs ne peuvent être appropriés par les dignitaires ou membres quelconques de la confrérie, pour leur seul bénéfice personnel : il n'est pas d'indigène qui ne connaisse ce principe (1), il n'est que trop certain que des pratiques abusives l'ont singulièrement perverti. Couramment, le clergé s'approprie les biens du *nyana* pour son seul profit, et encore, pour accroître ce profit, il n'hésite pas à commetttre de vériables crimes qui lui permettent d'exploiter la terreur qu'ils engendrent et que ce clergé s'ingénie à entretenir et à renforcer.

Fonctionnement de la confrérie.

La confrérie est une famille spirituelle qui se comporte intérieurement comme la communauté à filiation naturelle. Le *nyana-tigi* y tient le rôle de *fa*, la réunion formée par les *dye-n-fa-u*, auxquels s'ajoutent les initiés et les fidèles notoires, fait office de conseil de communauté. Dès lors, qu'il s'agisse de questions purement cultuelles ou d'affaires administratives, le règlement en est opéré par le *nyana-tigi* seul ou en son conseil, tout comme agit le *fa* dans la communauté, et ce qui a été exposé précédemment à cet égard à propos du rôle du *fa* suffit à faire comprendre par analogie comment les choses se passent en pratique dans les confréries. Il est pourtant certains détails propres aux confréries et qui vont être exposés ci-après.

Culte.

Le culte s'extériorise pour certaines cérémonies, dont les deux plus importantes ont lieu, l'une pour les semailles, l'autre pour la moisson. Il est reçu, dans les confréries, qu'à l'époque des semailles les *boli* s'accouplent pour enfanter au temps des moissons, de là cet hymne au Nama, où il est dit, *boli fyerela ka den'* : « le *boli* a fleuri pour fructifier ». Ces cérémonies s'accompagnent d'orgies au cours desquelles les assistants, hommes et femmes, se livrent, prétend-on, à des désordres sexuels. L'on peut conclure de ces deux séries de faits que les rites visent par une mimique appropriée à provoquer la fécondité de la nature.

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(1) « Les chairs des victimes ainsi que les autres objets deviennent la propriété des pauvres, » écrit Raffenel, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

D'autres indices montrent, d'ailleurs, que c'est bien effectivement la nature qui est visée dans les rites. Dans certaines confréries, le *Kore* spécialement, les officiants travestis qui forment cortège se donnent pour *wara-u* (fauves), *suruku-u* (hyènes), *golo-u* (singes) et autres hôtes redoutables de la brousse (1) : il n'est pas téméraire de penser qu'ils sont là pour symboliser le rôle, probablement primordial et en tout cas principal, du *nyana* : commander aux forces surnaturelles et surtout mauvaises de la brousse. Et, de fait, les *nyana* les plus en vogue et les plus importants sont avant tout les protecteurs de ces moissons qui forment à peu près l'unique bien des indigènes. Un *nyara* est même préposé au travail agricole (2), c'est le *Tyi-wara* (dieu du travail agricole), qui préside aux premiers défrîchements du début de l'hivernage.

Du reste, que l'animal soit tenu pour la forme visible d'un esprit où, si l'on aime mieux, pour la manifestation sensible d'une force surnaturelle, c'est une croyance qui s'affirme par la pratique courante de l'interdit (*tne*) et, plus encore, par les actes magiques que doit accomplir le chasseur.

Un autre aspect de cette croyance se traduit par le choix d'un animal représentant la monture du *nyana dugu-da-siri*.

C'est encore pour un motif analogue que les confréries se placent d'ordinaire sous le vocable d'un animal : habituellement l'hyène (*suruku*) (3) pour le *Nama* ; l'hyène (*suruku*) ou l'éléphant (*sama*) pour le *Komo* ; le lion pour le *Dyara* ; l'autruche (*kono-ba*) pour le *Kono*..., et l'on affirme que les cris, les vociférations, les sons tirés des trompes et qui annoncent les réunions, imitent le cri de l'animal (1).

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(1) On les qualifie tous indifféremment *wara* ou *sogo*, termes qui désignent toutes bêtes sauvages. Remarquer que tout *nyana* est qualifié *wara* (puissance, seigneur).

(2) Dans le vocabulaire indigène, « travailler » (*tya-ke* pour *tyi-ya-ke*) s'entend, avant tout, dans le sens de « travailler aux champs ».

(3) L'hyène est fréquemment désignée par les mots : *Nama-koro* : vieux Nama ; *Suya-koro* : vieux sorcier, lorsque l'on ne veut pas employer son nom même (*suruku*). Il y a ainsi tout un vocabulaire pour « éviter » les noms dangereux à prononcer, et le nom de l'hyène est de ceux-là.

Quant aux vêtements en lanières d'écorce, les masques aux formes étranges et les mimiques des individus qui les empruntent, peut-être se rapportent-ils à des mystères qui nous sont actuellement inconnus, soit parce qu'ils ont été adoptés sans discernement, ce qui les a déformés au point de les rendre méconnaissables, soit parce qu'ils constituent les suprêmes épaves de cultes infiniment plus anciens, aujourd'hui impénétrables parce qu'abolis.

L'Egypte a-t-elle été — comme d'aucuns le pensent — l'inspiratrice de ces cultes ? N'aurait-elle pas plutôt été influencée elle-même d'abord par une civilisation noire préexistante dont elle aurait prolongé les suprêmes vestiges en les remaniant ? Le champ des hypothèses est ici illimité...

D'une manière générale, le culte chôme le lundi et le jeudi de chaque semaine. Ces mêmes jours sont chômés pour le travail communautaire et abandonnés aux « gens faibles » pour leur seul profit. Il est impossible de ne pas voir une corellation entre ces deux faits et il convient, en outre, de remarquer que, de la sorte, la semaine religieuse se trouve réduite à cinq jours. La question se pose dès lors de savoir si la semaine actuelle est bien indigène : il semble que la semaine est un apport oriental, plus exactement islamique. Il se pourrait qu'il y ait une coïncidence : l'islam aurait organisé l'esclavage et l'adoption de la septaine aurait entraîné l'attribution de deux jours aux gens de poëste, comme on disait autrefois en France. Mais cette question est trop complexe pour être abordée ici.

En vue des grandes cérémonies, les fidèles remettent au *nyana-tigi* une contribution proportionnée à leurs moyens : chacun apporte donc des grains, du bétail, de la volaille, des cauris, des tissus..., il n'en est pas qui ne fournisse une ou plusieurs cruches de bière (*dlo*). Tout ce qui a été ainsi réuni est offert au *nyana*, dans l'assemblée générale des fidèles, par l'intermédiaire du *nyana-tigi*. Suivant des rites déterminés les victimes sont immolées, les libations sont faites. Puis le *nyana-tigi* remercie le dieu et lui demande de continuer à protéger ses fidèles. Enfin, tout ou une grande partie des victuailles est consommé en un repas de corps, qui est une véritable communion par laquelle le dieu et ses fidèles d'une part, les fidèles entre eux, d'autre part, se trouvent étroitement liés. Ces repas, qui durent souvent plusieurs jours, dégénèrent en orgies.

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(1) Le fait est certain pour le *Dyara*. Dans la confrérie de ce nom l'on tire un cri analogue au rugissement, d'un appareil ainsi composé : un tronc de palmier creux est fermé à l'une de ses extrémités par une peau fortement tendue. Du milieu de cette peau, part une lanière ou une corde dissimulée dans l'intérieur du palmier ; l'opérateur tire sur la corde qu'il laisse glisser par saccades dans sa main et, avec une certaine habileté, il arrive ainsi à produire un bruit analogue au rugissement.

Discipline intérieure.

C'est en conséquence de ce culte que la confrérie forme un corps organisé où chacun se trouve soumis à une discipline qui peut être résumée en ces trois termes : discrétion, obéissance, solidarité.

Le secret est obligatoire spécialement pour tout ce qui concerne le culte : la divulgation des mystères est une faute dont la punition va, suivant le cas, de la réprimande jusqu'à la mise à mort en passant par l'amende, la flagellation... Certaines gens réputés pour ne pas savoir garder un secret sont, à cause de cela, exclus des confréries de *nyana* : ainsi en est-il des femmes, des enfants, de certaines personnes de caste...

L'obéissance, à laquelle le fidèle est obligé, se manifeste notamment par un règlement burlesque, au premier abord, qui, dans les repas de corps de certaines confréries, permet d'infliger une amende pour des manquements singuliers : s'asseoir, se lever, cracher... avant d'y avoir été autorisé ou invité. Sans doute, c'est là un moyen d'accroître le fond commun, mais c'est aussi une manière de faire sentir à l'adepte qu'il est à la disposition de la secte.

Cette soumission n'est du reste, si l'on veut, qu'un corollaire de la solidarité entre *nyana-den'* : solidarité qui se trahit aux yeux des profanes lors des litiges étrangers au fonctionnement de la confrérie et dans lesquels on voit le *nyana-den'* témoigner, sans hésitation, contrairement à la vérité, à seule fin d'aider le confrère coupable à se soustraire aux sanctions d'une juridiction infidèle.

Pour les manquements à ses devoirs et pour toutes autres fautes jugées répréhensibles par la confrérie, le *nyana-den'* relève de la juridiction de cette confrérie.

Dans la crainte du châtiment surnaturel que ses fautes peuvent provoquer et dont il reconnaît les indices dans ce qui, apparemment inexplicable, lui cause de la peine ou de la surprise, le *nyana-den'* recherche de lui-même son pardon dans une expiation fixée soit par sa seule intuition personnelle, soit par le ministère du clergé.

D'autre fois, le coupable ne se dénonce pas lui-même, non seulement de propos délibéré, mais aussi parce qu'il ignore sa faute et ses conséquences : c'est le *wara-da* (l'oracle), inspiré, qui révèle l'affaire.

La dénonciation par la victime ou par des témoins, l'accusation basée sur les imputations les plus diverses, tels sont en bref les motifs qui amènent le clergé à connaître, à instruire, à juger et à réprimer les actes des fidèles se rapportant à des questions matérielles aussi bien que spirituelles. Pour cette œuvre, le clergé emploie tous les moyens d'information et d'instruction imaginables, mais la preuve de culpabilité qu'il recherche en particulier, c'est l'aveu.

L'on peut ramener à trois les divers procédés dont on use pour déterminer l'inculpé à confesser ses torts : le serment, la torture, la divination.

Pour recevoir le serment, le *boli* comporte un accessoire dit *siri-kun'* (nœud) auquel on attache sept pailles : la personne qui prête serment (*kali boli la* : jurer sur le *boli*) prononce alors la formule habituelle : « Que le *nyana* prenne mon cœur et mon foie si je mens. » Lorsque deux personnes échangent ainsi le serment pour affirmer leurs dires respectifs, on dit qu'elles ont « attaché le *boli* » (*boli syen'*) et l'on pense que le parjure sera mis à mort par le dieu. L'on admet, cependant, que ce parjure peut se racheter par des dons et sacrifices dont la consistance et la valeur sont fixées par le clergé.

La torture comporte les contraintes morales ou corporelles les plus diverses que l'on suppose propres à amener l'aveu : ordinairement on recourt à la flagellation, à la séquestration, à la privation d'aliments, à des mutilations et autres supplices, parfois horribles... Mais ce qui réussit souvent et qui est d'usage courant c'est de vouer le coupable inconnu à la colère du *nyana* : il n'est pas rare qu'aux premiers symptômes de malaise, dû à l'autosuggestion, le coupable avoue. Il est tellement acquis que la colère du *nyana* est toujours implacable et terrible que des braves gens, inquiétés uniquement pour les exploiter, se reconnaissent coupables de méfaits abominables qu'ils n'ont jamais commis, dans des inculpations de sorcellerie, par exemple.

La divination vient au secours de l'inquisition et les révélations de la divinité se doublent d'un espionnage permanent entre confrères.

Il va de soi que ces divers procédés d'instruction ne sont pas employés isolément : on les combine pour qu'ils se prêtent un mutuel appui.

S'autorisant des résultats ainsi obtenus, le clergé juge et assure l'exécution de sa sentence par des voies despotiques et occultes souvent (1).

Les peines sont diverses et arbitraires ; l'importance de l'infraction n'est pas déterminée à l'avance par certains caractères spécifiques, tout dépend de l'intérêt que la cause présente pour le clergé, et les intrigues les plus vilaines commandent cet intérêt. Si bien que le condamné, même s'il est réellement coupable de crimes abominables, peut échapper à tout châtiment moyennant de satisfaire aux exigences du clergé ; tandis qu'innocent il sera accablé de tortures morales et corporelles, s'il n'est pas en état de donner à ses bourreaux ce qu'ils réclament.

Les peines corporelles appliquées sont la flagellation, la mise aux fers, la privation d'aliments, la torture, la mise à mort par tous moyens imaginables. L'on peut signaler comme condamnations pécuniaires : l'amende, la confiscation, le pillage. Le condamné est aussi quelquefois astreint à travailler pour le clergé, ou même devient son esclave.

Rôle social et politique des confréries.

En définitive, par ses agissements, la confrérie, famille artificielle, tend à se substituer à la famille naturelle dont elle emprunte l'organisation et évince le culte. Il est facile de s'en rendre compte.

Ce qui constitue l'armature de la famille et des communautés qui en découlent, c'est le culte des mânes : la confrérie a su habilement le constituer, elle honore spécialement les mânes de ses grands prêtres, de ses grands initiés, de ses fidèles éminents.

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(1) Ce qui, en effet, a valu à la plupart des confréries une réputation terrifiante ce sont les exécutions suivies de mort, ou de disparition, faites par des moyens et des agents qui demeurent mystérieux.

Au *nyana dugu-da-siri* protecteur de la communauté territoriale, le *nyana* à *boli* est de plus en plus substitué et comme un dieu autrement puissant, puisqu'il ne connaît pas de limite à son territoire.

Il est vrai que la tradition demeure malgré tout et, s'ils sont grandement éclipsés par les *nyana* à *boli*, les mânes des ancêtres et les *nyana dugu-da-siri* sont quand même respectés. Certes, aux semailles et aux moissons, c'est en grande pompe que l'on officie dans les confréries, mais survienne une calamité, une épidémie, une désastreuse sécheresse et bien vite l'on sacrifie aux mânes et aux dieux du lieu : si l'on redoute leur colère, on a néanmoins confiance dans leur bonté, l'on se croit toujours assuré de fléchir leur rigueur. Par contre, les *nyana* à *boli* sont réputés foncièrement mauvais, le culte qu'on leur rend a plus pour but, semble-t-il, de prévenir leur malignité que d'obtenir quelque chose de leur libéralité.

Cette dualité de culte entraîne des enchevêtrements extrêmes qui soudent entre elles les communautés et les confréries, mais celles-ci paraissent déborder celles-là. Ces confréries enserrent les communautés qu'elles dominent par une expansion abusive de leur juridiction. Il n'y a pas, en effet, que les fidèles qui soient atteints par les jugements des confréries, les décisions de leur clergé n'ont pas seulement de répercussion sur l'entourage du fidèle intéressé, elles frappent souvent les tiers du voisinage, voire ceux des localités proches ou même éloignées. Tyranniques pour leurs adhérents, elles ne le sont pas moins pour les étrangers, qui ne voient bien vite d'autres moyens d'échapper à leurs tracasseries que de solliciter la faveur d'être admis au rang des fidèles.

L'on aperçoit, par là, comment la confrérie grandit en nombre et en puissance de proche en proche. Chaque année elle s'incorpore les jeunes à la clôture du *soli*, si bien que, peu à peu, avec le temps, toutes les communautés sont absorbées par elles, vivent en elle, pour elle (1). Elle s'arroge sur toute personne ou chose qu'elle peut toucher un droit éminent, comme conséquence du pouvoir surnaturel du *nyana* qui les protège.

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(1) En voici un exemple typique.

Au village de Marenna (Fouladougou Arbala), les indigènes sont affiliés au culte de *Ba-ku*. Ce *boli* consiste en un petit faisceau de racines d'indigotier. Pour tout enfant qui naît, le *nyana-tigi* confectionne et consacre un petit *Ba-ku* qu'il place dans une calebasse à l'intérieur du temple

De cette façon, la confrérie, de droit divin pourrait-on dire, arrive à jouer un rôle politique, qui n'est incohérent que parce qu'elle n'est pas constituée pour ce rôle ; mais que surgisse un ambitieux qui sache, pour ses desseins, habilement mettre à profit cette organisation et le redoutable pouvoir qu'elle détient, et la confrérie devient le berceau d'un véritable état politique.

Ainsi lorsque le pouvoir régulier ne sait pas opposer une autorité inébranlable à ses empiétements, la confrérie devient une manière de grand justicier et se sert de cette haute fonction pour instaurer un régime de terreur qui exploite les délations dues aux haines qu'il suscite et entretient. Ce jeu abominable n'est d'ailleurs pas sans répercussion au sein même de la compagnie : les *nyana-den'* se dévorent entre eux et les plus sombres drames accompagnent l'assouvissement des pires instincts ; les faits rapportés par la chronique du Ségou en portent témoignage.

Car il n'est malheureusement pas rare que le pouvoir régulier se fasse le complice de ces crimes par faiblesse, par intérêt et aussi par suite d'affiliation à la confrérie. Combien de régions sont devenues de la sorte la proie de l'anarchie.

Voilà pourquoi et comment les confréries ont été la cause d'une perturbation considérable dans le milieu indigène. Refuge des esclaves évadés, des mécontents, des gens sans aveu, des intrigants, en un mot de tous les ennemis de l'ordre public, elles se dressaient partout en face du pouvoir régulier, s'efforçant à le contrecarrer, quand elles ne pouvaient pas le confisquer, en s'associant son titulaire.

Les convulsions dynastiques de la plupart des empires soudanais, de celui du Ségou en particulier, s'expliquent en grande partie par la main-mise de ces grandes confréries de *nyana*.

La famille, elle aussi, a été battue en brèche, pervertie

de ce *nyana*. Lors du *soli*, l'enfant est affilié au culte et reçoit son *Ba-ku* déposé dans la calebasse lors de sa naissance et le porte désormais sur lui. Toutes les familles de Marenna communient donc étroitement dans le culte de *Ba-ku*, elles sont comme engendrées par ce dieu auquel chacun doit sa naissance naturelle et spirituelle. *Ba-ku* est originaire du Sangaran, son grand prêtre est un Dyara et c'est pourquoi on l'invoque et le cite par l'expression *Ba-ku Dyara Sangaran-ka*. Quant au mot *Ba-ku*, il signifie littéralement « queue de chèvre » : c'est, en effet, l'apparence du symbolique petit faisceau de racines. Peut-être ce mot Ba-ku n'est-il que le terme profane, le nom du *nyana* demeurant secret.

et dissociée, car ses dissidents trouvaient, dans les confréries, des appuis qui leur permettaient de lutter contre les « siens » dans les communautés, dont parfois ils consommaient la ruine.

Plus encore elles ont opposé au sein des communautés le culte du *nyana* à *boli* aux cultes des mânes. Dans les associations de communautés, le *nyana dugu-da-siri* a été peu à peu délaissé pour ces *nyana* à *boli* impérieux et jaloux qui, sans pouvoir l'évincer totalement, faute de s'approprier le droit sur le vol, l'ont cependant éclipsé par leur autorité encombrante. Il s'est ainsi créé des *nyana* à *boli* qui, bien que n'ayant pas la propriété du sol, sont honorés comme les protecteurs des cités.

Il est remarquable que, destructrices de la famille naturelle, elles n'aient cessé elles-mêmes de viser à constituer des familles artificielles en se donnant certaines de ses caractéristiques : communautés des biens spirituels et temporels inaliénables ; communautés des morts et des vivants ; culte des mânes des grands maîtres...

C'est l'action séculaire de ces officines de la magie qui a le plus profondément ébranlé les assises de la société indigène. Seul un pouvoir fort était capable de lutter efficacement contre elles : il ne s'en est rencontré que rarement. L'islam leur a été souvent un ennemi implacable, mais, à certains égards, il les a singulièrement fortifiées en mettant à leur portée des connaissances de l'occultisme oriental.

3. Quelques grandes confréries

Le culte est l'armature essentielle de toute confrérie : en connaître les caractéristiques principales est donc nécessaire pour bien comprendre l'organisation et le fonctionnement de toute confrérie. Or, chaque *nyana* a son culte spécial, caractérisé par des traits particuliers, sans doute, mais qui ne changent rien aux éléments fonciers par lesquels tous les cultes de *nyana* se ressemblent.

Dès lors, décrire tous les cultes de *nyana* révélerait sans doute des faits d'ordre divers intéressants mais, outre que les grandes lignes ci-dessus exposées ne s'en trouveraient pas sensiblement modifiées, l'état actuel de nos connaissances ne nous permet d'aborder avec détail que la description de quelques grandes confréries répandues chez les Bambara qui nous occupent ici : ce sont celles qui ont pour base les cultes du *Komo*, du *Nama*, du *Kore* et du *Nya*.

LE KOMO

Le *Komo* est particulièrement en honneur dans le Ségou. Suivant la légende accréditée, le *Komo* aurait été introduit du pays Mandé, où il aurait été importé par El Hadj-Moussa. Lors de son séjour à La Mecque, El Hadj Moussa n'ayant pas obtenu le pardon de ses péchés, se serait adonné à l'étude de la magie. Il aurait échangé le *Komo* contre une blouse (*dloki*) merveilleuse que lui avaient tissé les sorcières et qui tantôt s'allongeait et tantôt se raccourcissait, au gré de son possesseur (1).

El Hadj Moussa aurait également ramené de La Mecque une pirogue non moins merveilleuse, conservée, actuellement encore en grand mystère, dans une mare des environs de Kouri, près Naréna, dans le Mandé.

Enfin, il rapporta de nombreux *boli* et, en remontant le Niger, certains tombèrent dans le fleuve et s'y transformèrent : le *n-tigi* (silure ou poisson torpille) serait dû à une transformation de ce genre.

D'après une autre légende, le *Komo* aurait été importé d'Orient, non par El Hadj Moussa, mais par Fa Koli Sissokho, suivant d'El Hadj Moussa.

Quoi qu'il en soit, il est bien reçu par les Bambara que le *Komo* a été introduit à Ségou par importation du pays Mandé, et les Bambara Massa-si réfugiés dans le Gadiaga l'auraient, à leur tour, reçu d'un nommé Namori ou Nyamori, ancien esclave initié aux mystères du *Koré* et pour cela surnommé *Kor-dyuga*.

Au demeurant, sur les bases générales que nous avons exposées, le *Komo* offre les caractéristiques suivantes, qui lui sont propres :

Pour sa perfection, le *boli* du *Komo* exige, prétend-on, le corps d'un *degeni*, c'est-à-dire d'un tout jeune garçonnet : ainsi, le corps du *Komo* de Tiguini (à 20 ou 40 kilomètres de Ségou) ne serait autre que le corps du petit-fils de son fondateur ; de même le *boli* du *Komo* de Kégué, dans le Bani.

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(1) Autre exemple de tissu merveilleux, don des marabouts de Dienné celui-là, et dont il est question dans la chronique du Ségou à propos de l'installation de Bakari, fils de Biton, p. 52.

A ce *boli-den'-fa* sont associés trois tubes en fer formant un ensemble appelé *tama gengen-ba* (1). L'un de ces tubes se termine à l'une de ses extrémités par une corne près de laquelle est pratiquée une ouverture servant d'embouchure. C'est le son tiré de cette manière de trompe par le *wara-da* qui annonce le *Komo*.

Les accessoires habituels accompagnent le *boli-den'-fa* : *korti*, *kana*, *siri-kun'*, dont nous avons parlé.

Hors des offices, tout ce matériel est remisé dans des couffins analogues à ceux qui servent au transport du coton. Les *tama-gengen-ba* sont enfermés dans une peau de chat tigré. Une case à toit conique, analogue à celle des indigènes, sert de temple et abrite tout cet attirail, c'est le *Komo-bon'* (case du *Komo*).

Le *wara-da*, « oracle » du *Komo*, est pour les offices revêtu d'un costume spécial comprenant un masque et un manteau. Le masque est surmonté de cornes ; il ne couvre pas la figure du *wara-da* ; fixé au bout d'un baton, dissimulé sous le manteau, il se hausse et s'abaisse au gré du *wara-da* qui disparaît entièrement recouvert par ce manteau, fait de plumes de pintades et de poules. Sous cet accoutrement, le *wara-da* se livre à toutes sortes d'acrobaties ; en manœuvrant habilement le masque et le manteau au cours de ses danses rituelles, il donne l'illusion, à la lueur des feux, d'un être fantastique dont les vociférations, transmises par le tube cornu, glacent d'effroi même les fidèles initiés.

En outre du *wara-da*, le clergé comprend : un *Komo-tigi* ou grand prêtre ; des *muru-kala-tigi* ou sacrificateurs ; un *da-ro-tigi* ou portier, qui annonce et prépare les réunions ; un *Komo-dyeli* ou héraut. De plus, des élèves *wara-da*, qualifiés *soma-den'* (litt. fils aînés, en langage spécial), font office d'assistants, auxquels s'ajoutent des auxiliaires nombreux qui forment cortège au *wara-da* porteur du *boli* lors des processions nocturnes. Ces gens sont confondus sous l'appellation de *tie-den'* ou *tigi-den'* (fils du maître, en langage spécial), et l'on remarque parmi eux les *ta-tugu* ou porteurs de ces torches enflammées qui donnent aux processions nocturnes l'un de leurs caractères les plus typiques.

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(1) Devant les non initiés l'on dit *Komo dyoloro* : la chaine du *Komo* et le *wara-da*, oracle du *Komo* est désigné par le terme *dyoloro samana* : « celui qui traine la chaine » du *Komo*. Sacrifier au *Komo* se dit en langage spécial : *an bi nege son'* (nous rendons hommage au fer).

Lorsque le *wara-da* fait connaître les révélations du dieu, il se sert pour parler du tube cornu : son langage par lui-même et par cette interposition nécessite l'interprétation du *Komo-tigi*, et c'est le *Komo-dyeli*, qui à pleins poumons, la crie dans la nuit à tous les échos.

Lors des deux grandes cérémonies annuelles, le *wara-da* transporte dans le bosquet sacré le *boli* et les autres objets de l'attirail liturgique. Le *Komo-tigi* dirige les cérémonies. Les sacrifices sont confiés aux *muru-kala-tigi*, parmi lesquels on distingue : celui qui amène la victime et qui, lorsque l'on opère dans le temple, lui fait franchir la porte (1), et celui qui emporte la victime et fait franchir la porte à son cadavre (2). Les offices sont annoncés et accompagnés par un orchestre bruyant et sauvage composé de tambours (*denu-ba*) auxquels on associe des instruments en fer dits *kinge*, consistant en pièces de métal que l'on frappe l'une contre l'autre ou que l'on agite pour faire sonner les anneaux qu'elles portent. Le « cri » du *Komo* poussé par le *wara-da*, dans la trompe cornue, est soutenu par des espèces de mirlitons dont jouent les compagnons du *wara-da*.

Les offrandes, les sacrifices, la communion ne présentent rien de particulier, le sang des victimes est employé à laver les *boli* et le clergé, comme il sera dit pour le *Nama*.

Les processions nocturnes produisent toujours un grand effet et jettent l'effroi non seulement parmi les non-initiés mais encore chez les simples fidèles. Ce cortège nombreux, illuminé par les porteurs de torche qui crient et s'agitent comme des forcenés, en même temps que le *wara-da* pousse le « cri » du *Komo*, impressionne fortement tous les spectateurs et auditeurs (3).

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(1) Cette porte est dite alors : *nyena-ma don'-da* : porte d'entrée du vivant en langage spécial, et le *muru-kala-tigi* qui la fait franchir à la victime, est dit *da-kuna-sigi* : le maître de la porte fatale (litt. : amère).

(2) L'on dit alors de la porte : *su-bo-da* : porte de sortie du cadavre et du sacrificateur *moso-bolo* (litt. : main de femme).

(3) Ailleurs, le *Komo* s'exhibe de jour et autrefois, dans les pays bobo, en particulier, il était en grande vogue (Cf. Binger, *Du Niger au golfe de Guinée*, T. I, p. 379, et Monteil, *De Saint-Louis à Tripoli par le Tchad*, p. 89). Nous l'avons dit précédemment, tous les officiants des confréries sont englobés sous l'appellation de *dou* : « les gens cachés », à cause des travestissements dont ils s'affublent. « Les *dou* sont des individus ridicu-« lement déguisés, portant des vêtements sur lesquels on a cousu du

Il n'y a jamais d'office ou d'exercice du culte le lundi et le jeudi de chaque semaine.

Le clergé fait office de conseil d'administration des biens de la *Komo-ya* (confrérie du *Komo*), suivant les principes généraux déjà exposés. Le *Komo-tigi* de Tiguini nous a été particulièrement signalé comme respectant les principes qui donnent au trésor de la confrérie une distinction exclusivement confraternelle.

Les *Komo-ya* sont indépendantes les unes des autres et toutes connaissent ces déviations qui les poussent à faire œuvre politique : le *Komo* a eu une part prépondérante dans la conduite des affaires du clan du Ségou, ainsi qu'il résulte de la chronique.

C'est à la fête des moissons que l'on procède à l'admission des jeunes dans la confrérie. Dans le cercle des initiés, ils se présentent tandis que l'assistance chante :

Da woro-na nana,
Bolo-ko deu da woro-na,
Toro man na ko la-nyini.
Sira bo nin' ye, ko dugu le den',
Sira bo nin' ye ko dugu le sira.

Traduction : Le sixième jour est venu, le sixième jour des nouveaux-nés (1), aucun accident n'est survenu. A cet enfant du village que l'on montre la voie, la voie que suit le village.

Un à un ils défilent devant le *wara-da* qui, en grand appareil, doit recevoir leur serment. Tour à tour, l'oracle pose sur la tête de chacun le tube cornu et le dialogue suivant a lieu :

— *Mun' b'i kun'* : Qu'as-tu sur la tête, interroge l'oracle ?

— *A kala be n kun'* : J'ai son symbole (2) sur la tête.

« *da-fou* (chanvre indigène), des fibres et des feuilles de palmier ban ;
« comme coiffure, ils ont un bonnet ou une calotte également en *da-fou*,
« surmonté d'un cimier en bois rougi à l'ocre, ou quelquefois muni d'un
« bec d'oiseau également en bois. Deux trous sont ménagés dans la calotte
« pour les yeux. Ces *dou* sont abreuvés gratuitement de *dlo* par la popula-
« tion qui leur fait un cortège. Nuit et jour ils circulent dans le village,
« dans les champs... » (*Binger*).

(1) C'est-à-dire ceux qui viennent de naitre à un nouvel état par le *soli* ou *bolo-ko*.

(2) *Kala*, littéralement c'est la partie cylindrique d'une chose, ici c'est en langage spécial une manière de dire le tube cornu et donc en quelque sorte le symbole du *Komo*.

— *I y'a ye wa* : Est-ce que tu l'as vu ? (c'est-à-dire as-tu vu le *Komo*.)

— *Ne m'a ye* : Je ne l'ai pas vu.

— *I y'a fo ma min'ye, k'i kun' ti, ki' son' n'i bien' ta a k'ifa* : Si tu en parles à quiconque, qu'il (le *Komo*) casse ta tête, qu'il (le *Komo*) prenne ton cœur et ton foie et te tue.

— *A ka ne fa* : Qu'il me tue.

— *I sirila nyama-n-fu dyala la* : Tu t'attaches avec un lien d'écorce de *nyama* (1).

— *Ne si sirila a la* : Ma vie est attachée par ce lien.

— *Ni si m'a fo ma si ye, Komo k'i kisi* : Si tu n'en parles à personne, que le *Komo* te protège (litt. te sauve).

— *A ka ne kisi* : Qu'il me protège.

Durant une certaine période, les jeunes agrégés sont soumis à une réclusion au cours de laquelle ils reçoivent l'enseignement des initiés, des vieux en particulier, qui veillent à ce qu'ils apprennent les chants, les danses et se familiarisent avec le langage spécial. C'est au cours de cette instruction qu'on leur donne certaines formules pour se reconnaître entre *komo-den'* (fils du *Komo*). En voici deux exemples, ce ne sont pas les seuls ; chaque *Komo-ya* a ses formules et, en plus, les adeptes des diverses *Komo-ya* fraternisent volontiers ensemble ; surtout lorsqu'ils sont isolés, loin de leurs groupements respectifs, les principes pareils de leurs cultes les rapprochent et ils s'interrogent dès l'abord :

— *E b' a la wa* ? En es-tu ?

— *M ba' la* : J'en suis.

— *N'i b'a la, tyoko dyira n na* : Si tu en es, montre-moi le signe de reconnaissance.

Ce signe varie et est absolument arbitraire, parfois il consiste à montrer la main en écartant les doigts d'une certaine façon ; d'autrefois à placer des brindilles dans un certain ordre...

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(1) Allusion aux liens d'écorce de *nyama* (*bauhinia reticulata*) qui constituent le vêtement ordinaire sous lequel se cachent les officiants dans les cérémonies. C'est une manière de dire : Est-ce que tu consens à t'affilier ? et la réponse équivaut à : oui, pour la durée de la vie ?

LE NAMA

C'est à Missango (Bélédougou) que ce culte a pris naissance à une date indéterminée. Le chef du Nama de Missango est qualifié respectueusement *Fura-tigi-ba* : littéralement le grand maître des *fura* (*fura* signifiant proprement « feuille » d'arbre et, par extension, « remède ») ; c'est là une de ces expressions à double entente comme il en existe tant dans les confréries : *Fura-tigi-ba* : le grand médecin, le grand savant, le grand maître.

Du *Nama* on dit aussi *Nama-koro, Suya-koro,* et un certain *Nama* est appelé *Siriman' fin'*.

Parmi les objets du culte, il faut citer : les *Nama-kongolo-u* (crânes du *Nama*), sorte de coiffures, ordinairement en bois de *linge,* ayant la forme d'oiseaux fantastiques ; le *wara-se* (litt. pied du *wara*), sorte de planchette en bois, d'environ un mètre de haut, sur laquelle sont appliquées trois cornes ; une autre planchette pareille, portant deux cornes, est appelée *nye-bla*.

Il y a, bien entendu, les accessoires habituels : *kana, korti, siri-kun'*, et des poteries, et des clochettes, et des cornes...

La plupart de ces objets sont remisés dans une petite case dans le type de celles qu'habitent les indigènes et nommée *Nama-bon'*.

C'est dans un bosquet réservé que se déroulent les cérémonies. Si l'isolement ne paraît pas suffisamment assuré par l'épaisseur même du feuillage, ou pour toute autre raison, un enclos est constitué par le moyen d'une palissade (*dyase*) ou à l'aide de quelques nattes. Dans le langage spécial de cette confrérie, offrir un sacrifice au *Nama* se dit : *dyase son'* (litt. honorer la palissade).

L'ensemble des adeptes d'un même *Nama* constitue une *Nama-ya* ou confrérie de *Nama*. Ceux qui veulent constituer une *Namaya* s'adressent à une *Namaya* en fonction pour obtenir d'elle les secrets ou plus exactement la règle de cette voie : paroles et actes mystérieux par lesquels le dieu (*wara*) est appelé et retenu à la disposition de ses fidèles ; objets du culte ; organisation et rôle du clergé et des simples fidèles, liturgie...

La cérémonie fondamentale par laquelle le prêtre et son dieu s'unissent est, dans le langage spécial des confréries, qualifié *furu* : union, mariage, et annuellement c'est par le *furu* des *Nama*, mâles et femelles, que sont enfantés les *Nama-de-u* (fils spirituels du *Nama*). Derrière ce réalisme, voulu pour l'adepte vulgaire, se cache-t-il une signification profonde pour l'initié : l'union intime avec la divinité n'est-elle pas, en effet, dans les grandes religions, le « mariage spirituel » ? Peut-être le langage spécial n'est-il vraiment destiné qu'à faire écran à la curiosité indiscrète des profanes, mais peut-être aussi est-il destiné à cacher un sens profond aujourd'hui ignoré à peu près par tous les initiés, pressenti et peut-être encore connu, au moins imparfaitement, de quelques-uns !

On distingue dans toute *Namaya* diverses fonctions ou états, auxquels se rattachent divers degrés d'initiation. Le grand-maître, *Nama-tigi*, c'est souvent celui qui a contribué pour la plus large part aux dépenses de fondation de la *Namaya*, il dirige et surveille le culte, ce qui en fait un personnage redouté et redoutable.

Il est assisté par les *dye-n-fa-u* (maîtres de la vérité), parmi lesquels ceux qui coiffent les *Nama-kongolo* sont les oracles (*wara-da*) du *Nama*, et d'autres ont pour fonction, lors des cérémonies, de tenir les planchettes encornées (*wara-se* et *nye-bla*).

Un adepte fait office de factotum sous le nom de *da-ro-tigi* (maître de l'entrée) (1).

Ce clergé se recrute par cooption et toute accession ou promotion se paye. Le clerc est tenu au secret plus encore que le simple fidèle, car toute divulgation de sa part trahit l'intimité des mystères.

Les simples adhérents ou fidèles sont dits *Nama-de-u* (enfants du *Nama*), c'est-à-dire fils spirituels du *Nama*, mais nous verrons que lors des cérémonies il y a des allusions à une sorte de naissance matérielle, c'est la mythologie plébéienne. — Pour être *Nama-de*, il faut être agréé par le clergé, verser une cotisation, s'engager à ne trahir sous aucune forme les secrets de la confrérie, à ne causer aucun préjudice à un confrère et, notamment, à ne jamais témoigner contre lui, à contribuer aux frais du culte en faisant, pour les offrandes annuelles, des offrandes proportionnées aux moyens dont il dispose.

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(1) Dans la nuit où le *Nama* parcourt les entours du village pour chasser les sorciers, le *da-ro-tigi* court en avant des *dye-n-fa*, porteurs des *Nama-kongolo*. Au moyen d'une sonnette qu'il agite, il prévient les gens de ne pas rester sur le chemin que suivent les *dye-n-fa* et il porte un falot pour découvrir les indiscrets. C'est lui encore qui, ayant découvert l'indiscret, invite, par des expressions en langue spéciale, les *dye-n-fa* à suspendre ou à détourner leur marche, puis il questionne l'intrus, le chasse en le frappant, le maudit ou, au contraire, reçoit son adhésion. Il est donc bien « celui qui garde l'entrée », mais à la manière des concierges et non pas du maître qui accepte ou refuse l'étranger que le concierge a laissé entrer. — Nous avons signalé une emphase analogue dans le titre de *ton'-masa*, donné au chef des serviteurs de la *ton'*, alors que littéralement il faudrait entendre : le chef de la *ton'*.

Les adeptes deviennent justiciables de la *Nama-ya* pour tous leurs actes. C'est une famille spirituelle infiniment plus tyrannique que la famille temporelle ; d'autant que pour asseoir son autorité, le clergé n'hésite devant aucun moyen, même criminel, l'amende étant le plus fructueux pécuniairement parlant. L'ensemble des droits d'entrée, des dons, des offrandes, des amendes..., forme le trésor du *Nama* et donc de la *Nama-ya*. Le *Nama-tigi* en est l'administrateur avec l'assistance du conseil des *dye-n-fa*. En pratique courante, ce clergé s'approprie tous ces biens pour sa seule satisfaction. Cela n'empêche que le principe est que tout adepte malheureux, pour quelque raison que ce soit, a le droit de faire appel à ce fond commun, à charge de remboursement, avec excès, s'il revient à une certaine aisance.

Cette exploitation matérielle du culte du *Nama* se traduit encore sous une autre forme : sans être adepte du *Nama*, l'on peut recourir à ses bons offices moyennant une rémunération fixée par le clergé. Les autres moyens d'exploitation par extorsion, la déviation dans le domaine politique..., plus haut exposés, sont également pratiqués par la *Nama-ya*.

C'est le rôle matériel de la *Nama-ya* qui retient l'attention du plus grand nombre des indigènes. Ce sont les exhibitions à grand tapage, doublées d'orgies prolongées bruyantes et malfaisantes, qui ont fait au *Nama* comme au *Komo* une réputation de mauvais aloi bien méritée.

Il n'y a pas entre *Nama-ya* de lien de subordination. Le *Nama-tigi* de Missango est tenu en particulière estime et toute *Nama-ya* garde, en général, de bonnes relations avec celle qui l'a initiée, mais il n'y a pas ce que l'on pourrait appeler une archi-confrérie. Par contre, il est certain que tout *Nama-den'* a un accès facile dans toute *Nama-ya*, et c'est un fait qui laisse soupçonner qu'il pourrait y avoir dans certaines circonstances une solidarité très étendue. Autrefois, être *Nama-den'* était très utile pour voyager, car les *dyoula* et autres voyageurs étaient obligés de compter avec les fantaisies et les spoliations des *Nama*-

den' (1) et ne les évitaient, dans une certaine mesure, qu'en excipant de leur qualité de *Nama-den'*. Même les musulmans adhéraient souvent au *Nama*, l'on n'exigeait d'eux qu'une discrétion absolue et quelques cadeaux en retour des formules de reconnaissance dont on leur livrait le secret.

Il y a deux grandes cérémonies annuelles : l'une à l'époque des semailles, l'autre au moment de la moisson ; les dates précises sont fixées par le *Nama-tigi* en son conseil. Chacune comporte offrande, sacrifice, communion et procession nocturne. A celle des moissons a lieu, en général, l'admission des jeunes.

Pour le sacrifice, les initiés se réunissent devant le temple (*Nama-bon'*) ; dans l'enceinte sacrée ne pénètrent que le *Nama-tigi* et son clergé ; les simples fidèles demeurent à l'extérieur. Les animaux à immoler sont amenés. Deux sacrificateurs (*muru-kala-tigi*), nus jusqu'à la ceinture, tendent les bras vers les quatre points cardinaux et crachottent trois fois dans chacune de ces directions ; deux *dye-n-fa*, nus aussi jusqu'à la ceinture, tiennent les bois encornés et font face aux fidèles. Les sacrificateurs poussent trois fois le cri : *ture-dyo*, alterné avec deux fois celui de : *dyo-Nama* ; par deux fois ils invoquent le dieu, puis égorgent les victimes, tantôt dans le temple, tantôt à l'extérieur.

Le sang est soigneusement recueilli dans des récipients et on lui ajoute de la cendre de paille : avec ce mélange, l'on frotte tous les objets du culte et particulièrement le symbole (*boli*). Le *Nama-tigi* et autres principaux initiés se mettent nus pour se frotter également avec ce sang mélangé de cendre et ne reprennent leurs vêtements que quand ce sang a séché sur leurs corps.

Les viandes sont mangées par les assistants ; la bouillie de mil, qui complète le repas, doit avoir été préparée par les femmes des dignitaires : c'est cette communion qui est l'acte le plus important de la cérémonie.

La nuit venue, a lieu la sortie processionnelle du *Nama*. Elle a pour but de purger le village et ses environs de la présence des sorciers mangeurs d'âmes, connus sous le nom de *suba* (1), de découvrir et de détruire les objets dits *siri*, qui constatent les dispositions prises par les dits sorciers pour nuire aux indigènes.

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(1) Cf. Monteil, Binger, *op. cit.* : lors des grandes fêtes annuelles du *Komo* tout trafic était arrêté pendant plusieurs jours. Les étrangers ne pouvaient compter se faire respecter qu'en arguant de leur qualité de confrère. De même pour le *Nama*.

Les cris rituels *ture-dyo, dyo-Nama* coupent le vacarme des trompes et des tambours, tandis que le *Nama* circule. Le *dye-n-fa*, coiffé du *Nama-kongolo* symbolique et précédé du *da-ro-tigi*, qui agite une clochette pour prévenir de laisser libre passage, est suivi ou entouré de porteurs de torches allumées (dits *ta-tugula-n-tigi*), qui hurlent un hymne à la louange du dieu.

A dyigina so Nama fambali : Il est notre hôte, le *Nama* puissant.

A fyerela ka den' : Il fleurit pour fructifier.

Suba yo, nin kera malo-ko ye : Oh ! *Suba* (2), c'est pour votre honte.

Et l'un de ceux de son entourage jette dans toutes les directions des défis et des imprécations aux *suba*, mangeurs d'âmes.

C'est au cours de cette procession que les *dye-n-fa*, à l'instigation du porteur du symbole, découvrent les *siri-fen'* (2) : objets qui servent aux mangeurs d'âmes à accomplir leurs sinistres desseins, ou encore reliefs de leurs macabres repas. Ici, c'est un couteau ; là, une marmite ; ailleurs, des morceaux de chair humaine (du moins ils l'affirment) ! Les uns et les autres exhumés au milieu des cris, des exclamations et des imprécations de toute la bande.

Le *suba* qui est découvert au cours de cette sortie est pris en chasse avec furie, et l'on dit qu'immanquablement il vient, épuisé, exténué par la course et saisi par le dieu, expirer à proximité du temple. Quand cela se produit, le cadavre du malheureux demeure abandonné, nu ; ses effets sont jetés sur la toiture du temple, où ils restent longtemps comme des témoins. Quant aux *siri-fen'*, ils sont également exposés à proximité du temple, à la vue des femmes, qui sont autorisées à les venir regarder.

C'est peu avant ces sorties solennelles du *Nama* que le clergé procède à l'admission des jeunes après la clôture du *soli*. Au milieu du cercle des fidèles, devant le temple, ils viennent prêter serment de discrétion :

— *I y'a fo ma min' ye, boli k'i son' ta, k'i been'ta, ka*

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(1) Voir au chapitre VII ci-après.

(2) Littéralement les « liens » (voir chapitre VII ci-après).

dun' i dyw fe'ka bo i da fe : Si tu en parles à quiconque, que le *boli* prenne ton cœur et ton foie, qu'il t'entre par l'anus et te sorte par la bouche.

— *O ka ke* : Que cela soit.

— *Ni e ma fo ma ye, k'i kisi suba-u ma k'i son' si la, k'i son' keneya la* : Si tu n'en parles à personne, qu'il te protège contre les *suba*, qu'il te donne une postérité, qu'il te donne la santé.

— *O ka ke* : Que cela soit.

Ils doivent payer un droit d'entrée d'un franc et dix colas et subir une sorte d'initiation. Durant une quinzaine ils vivent à l'écart, surveillés et contraints à divers exercices de chants, de danses, sous la direction du clergé et des vieux. On leur révèle le sens des mots à double entente, qui constituent le langage propre à la confrérie, on leur donne en outre la formule de reconnaissance dont voici des spécimens.

— *E b'a la wa* ? En es-tu ?

— *Ne b'a la* : J'en suis.

— *Fere tyon' kan'* : Montre le signe.

Il le montre et l'explique; le questionneur conclut alors :

— *Dya ! e b'a la, koĩ !* Ah ! tu en es, certes !

LE KORE (1)

Le *Kore* est particulièrement en honneur dans la région du Bani, c'est-à-dire riveraine de cet affluent du Niger, dans la partie à hauteur du Ségou.

Cette confrérie présente ce trait caractéristique d'avoir un culte qui s'adresse aux trois divinités toujours honorées par le Bambara : les mânes, le dieu du sol, le *nyana* à *boli*. La confrérie a donc un gîte élu du dieu du sol, c'est ordinairement un arbre proche du village avec un bosquet (*Kore-tu* : bois du *Kore*), un *kara* ou planchette-symbole des morts, et un *surku-kongolo* (crâne d'hyène), *boli* du *Kore*, et c'est pourquoi on l'appelle encore *Kore-kongolo* (crâne du *Kore*).

Le clergé et ses auxiliaires forment un personnel nombreux qui englobe la totalité des fidèles.

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(1) On entend aussi *Kote* et, dans le Bani, *Kwere*. Il est à remarquer que ces trois mots *Kore, Kote, Kwere* ont une désinence que l'on trouve fréquemment en soninké et pas en bambara.

Au grand prêtre, *Kore-tigi*, sont adjoints les « gens du *kara* » (*kara-ma-u*), puis des porteurs de masques dits *wara-u* (1) (fauves) ou *sogo-u* (1) (animaux sauvages), parmi lesquels on distingue des hyènes (*suruku*), des lions (*dyara*) et des singes (*suba*); des gens costumés et dits *Kor'-dyuga* (2) sont surtout des danseurs bizarrement accoutrés, chacun selon sa fantaisie. Tous les *Kor'dyuga* portent, en guise d'ornement, des chapelets de ces beaux haricots rouges non comestibles, *n-go ble*, de la grosseur d'une belle dragée, et qui passent, dans tout le Soudan occidental, pour protéger contre les attaques des esprits du mal. Ces danseurs ont un chef, le *Koro-duga-tigi* ou *kor'dyuga-tigi*, qui se singularise davantage encore par un costume qui consiste en une sorte de manteau entièrement formé avec des morceaux de tige de roseaux ; sur la tête, il porte une coiffure conique formée de ces mêmes tiges ; il tient en main une longue perche, à laquelle sont suspendus des crânes d'oiseaux, des paquets de tiges de sorgho, des queues de courges... En outre de ces danseurs, le clergé est accompagné de flagellants (*bisa-tyi-la*) ; de porteurs de torches (*ta-tugu-la-n-tigi*) et de gens qui se labourent le corps avec des paquets d'épines (les *ngoni-sa-ma-u*).

Le *Kore* a, bien entendu, son orchestre, qui comprend des tambours (*denu-ba*), des sortes de castagnettes (*kinge*), des calebasses, renfermant des graines ou des graves (*nkude*), et dont la tige est ajourée.

Le culte comporte les cérémonies habituelles, avec les deux grandes fêtes des semailles et de la moisson. Le *Kore-tigi* officie là, comme le fait le *nyana-n-son-na-ba* à l'égard du *nyana dugu-da-siri*. C'est au pied de l'arbre sacré qu'il fait les offrandes et les sacrifices et expose les demandes, après avoir remercié le dieu protecteur. De plus, le *kara* et le *Kore-kongolo* sont arrosés du sang des victimes : on honore donc, en même temps, les mânes et le *nyana* à *boli*.

A la mort d'un *Kore-de*, il y a toujours réunion de la confrérie. On procède aux offrandes, sacrifices, communion avec tout ce qui a été offert et qui exige, pour être consommé, un ou plusieurs jours d'orgie, suivant l'importance du défunt, car les vieux titulaires des hautes charges de *nyana-n-son-ma-ba,* etc..., sont particulièrement honorés.

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(1) Les termes de *wara* ou *sogo* s'appliquent en général à tous ceux qui ont une fonction, depuis les *suruku* jusqu'au *ngoni-sama*.

(2) Le terme paraît soninké : *Kore yugo* : *Kor'-dyuga* : homme du *Kore*. L'expression *Koré-duga-tigi* présente la corruption *Kore-dyuga-tigi* qui a même signification.

Quant à l'admission des jeunes, elle n'a lieu que tous les sept ans et c'est, à vrai dire, à cette occasion que l'office revêt son maximum d'ampleur. Le clergé, au grand complet, se rend le jour convenu, au crépuscule et en grande pompe, au *Kore-tu* (bois du *Kore*) ; en tête, l'orchestre : tambours (*denu-ba*), clochettes (*kinge*), calebasses (*nkude*) ; puis le grand prêtre (*Kore-tigi*) et les *kara-ma,* gens de la planche des morts (*kara*), que l'un d'eux porte ; enfin la foule compacte, disparate et bruyante des *wara-u,* des *Kor-dyuga,* des *bisa-tyi-la,* des *ta-tugu-la-n-tigi,* des *ngonisa-ma.*

Chacun s'ingénie à tenir son rôle. Les gens masqués simulent les bêtes dont ils ont l'aspect, les *Kor'dyuga* travestis se donnent des airs bouffons. les flagellants font siffler leurs verges. L'on arrive ainsi en grand tumulte au *Kore-tu,* dans lequel le clergé pénètre seul. Le porteur du *kara* vient se placer devant l'arbre-gîte. Sur l'ordre du *Kore-tigi* le silence se fait pour procéder à l'admission des postulants *Kore-de.*

Ceux-ci viennent se mettre en ligne face à l'arbre et au *kara.* Ils se prosternent le front dans la poussière tant que dure l'hymne sacrée spéciale au *Kore* et qui commence par les mots « *Dyante Kore de-u* ». Quand ils se relèvent, ils sont *dyante-ma-u,* c'est-à-dire « affiliés ».

Ceux qui sont ainsi admis demeurent quinze jours dans le bois sacré, sans pouvoir rentrer au village ; il y reçoivent les instructions des « vieux ». Ils sont ensuite répartis dans les divers groupes de *wara* : en principe, le fils aîné entre dans le groupe de son père, les autres fils choisissent le groupe qui leur plaît. En dehors de sa fonction lors des offices, chaque *wara* remplit un certain emploi : les hyènes (*suruku*) ont la garde et la police du bois sacré, ils interrogent les curieux pour savoir s'ils sont affiliés (*dyante ma*). Les *Kore-duga* veillent à la propreté du bois sacré, en dégagent les alentours pour éviter notamment que le bois ne soit atteint par les feux de brousse.

Après la cérémonie d'admission, ont lieu les offrandes et les sacrifices, puis le repas-communion, qu'accompagnent et suivent les danses et les chants. L'orgie alors se déchaîne pendant plusieurs jours, tant que durent les victuailles. Les groupes se réunissent pour les danses, qu'ouvrent les *ta-tugu-la-n-tigi* ; une torche enflammée à chaque main, ils se poursuivent, se roussissent le dos et la poitrine, font pleuvoir des étincelles, que les *Kore-duga* se hâtent de chasser avec des branches feuillues ; puis chacun, avec ce qui reste de ses deux torches, vient s'accroupir devant les tambours en faisant un geste obscène qui soulève les rires de l'assistance et les cris, mugissements ou ricanements des « fauves ». Ailleurs, des *nyoni-sa-ma* tournoient autour des buveurs en se déchirant avec des épines ; des flagellants se pourchassent en se cinglant avec des verges qui leur font des sillons d'où le sang coule ; ils se raidissent contre la douleur et continuent ce jeu cruel que les *Kore-duga*, ici encore, viennent atténuer en pensant les blessures.

Il ne paraît pas douteux, qu'au cours de ces orgies, les excès les plus honteux soient commis sans aucune retenue.

LE NYA

Il est en grand honneur dans tous les villages bambara des cantons de Say et de Karadougou ; dans le canton de Séladougou, il est moins répandu ; dans celui de Saro, les cinq sixièmes des villages lui sont fidèles ; dans le Nyansannari, il est exceptionnel ; en dehors de ces régions comprises dans le cercle de Diénné, le *Nya* ne compte que des confréries disséminées dans le Bendougou et le pays de Ségou.

Ce culte a pris naissance dans le Bendougou. Ainsi qu'il est dit précédemment, les villages de Moribala, Kourbadougou, Diali... sont des marchés où l'on trouve tous les *boli* avec la manière de s'en servir.

Le *boli* du *Nya* consiste en une pièce de bois de 25 à 30 centimètres de long sur 10 à 15 centimètres en hauteur et en largeur, entouré d'une matière absorbante — filé de coton, en général. Sur ce *boli*, l'on fait couler le sang des victimes et les liquides des libations, on y colle quelques poils ou plumes, des débris de viscères, d'œufs, de colas..., d'où un aspect répugnant. Il est vrai que souvent le *boli* est soustrait aux regards indiscrets, on le plonge dans un étui fait d'une vieille peau de bique. Seulement cet étui reçoit, lui aussi, les mêmes témoignages que le *boli* qu'il renferme et se trouve, par suite, tout aussi dégoûtant.

A ce *boli-den'-fa* sont, comme d'ordinaire, associé des *boli-de* : *kana, korti, siri-kun'*...

Une case à toit conique sert de temple (*Nya-bon'*).

Un orchestre accompagne les cérémonies : l'on y distingue une manière de harpe, de facture indigène, spéciale au culte du *Nya* ; par ailleurs tambours, sonnailles, trompes ne font pas défaut.

Le *Nya* étant acquis par achat c'est, en principe, celui qui a le plus largement contribué à cet achat qui en est le grand-prêtre *Nya-tigi*. Cet office peut aussi s'acquérir par héritage ou par élection. Mais le rôle proprement religieux est celui du *wara-mina-den'*, qui est le médium par lequel le dieu révèle ses volontés ou ses désirs et qui est l'oracle (*wara-da*) du *Nya*. Un certain entraînement, par des méthodes appropriées, est nécessaire pour acquérir l'extra-lucidité à laquelle prétendent les *wara-mina-den'*, et c'est pourquoi ils se recrutent par cooption.

Sous l'inspiration du *Nya*, le *wara-mina-den'* tombe en transe. Sa parole, embarrassée et étrange, n'est plus compréhensible pour le vulgaire. Le *Nya-tigi* s'approche alors pour recevoir et interpréter l'oracle. L'inspiration du *wara-mina-den'* peut être spontanée, elle peut aussi être provoquée et recherchée par lui. Par exemple, lorsqu'une personne meurt, à la demande des intéressés ou de son propre mouvement, le *wara-mina-den'* interroge le *Nya*. A cet effet, il se retire dans le temple (= *Nya-bon'*), il concentre sa pensée sur le point à éclaircir et, après avoir médité, se retire (1). Parfois, alors, il s'endort et, au cours de son sommeil, le *Nya* lui révèle, par un songe, la vérité ; d'autrefois, le *wara-mina-den'* tombe en transe et l'esprit s'explique alors lui-même par sa bouche. D'une manière ou de l'autre, l'on apprend ainsi si le décès est attribuable au *Nya* et pour quel motif, ou bien encore si c'est l'œuvre des *suba* et sous quelles formes, humaines ou autres, ils se cachent ; ou bien enfin si c'est quelqu'autre *nyana* qui a frappé le défunt.

De plus, tout *wara-mina-den'* sait lire la volonté du *Nya* et, plus généralement, découvrir les actes de l'invisible par le moyen des pratiques de divination dont il a été parlé.

Les sacrifices sont faits par le *muru-kala-tigi*, et un *dyeli* (héraut) sert de factotum, comme dans les autres confréries.

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(1) Ces détails m'ont été donnés par un *wara-mina den'* de Soun-bambara.

Les fidèles sont initiés et appelés à participer au culte dans la mesure qu'indique le clergé, ils s'appellent *Nya-ko-den'-u* : litt. ceux qui suivent le *Nya*. Pour être admis *Nya-ko-den'*, il faut offrir un poulet et 120 cauris ; le lendemain, en présence du *Nya-tigi* et du *wara-mina-den'*, le poulet est sacrifié sur le *boli* par le *muru-kala-tigi*, en présence de l'impétrant, pour qui le *Nya-tigi* demande au *Nya* sa protection contre les *suba*, les serpents, les *korti* et le mauvais œil. Puis le néophyte est conduit au bois sacré pour y être purifié rituellement avec une eau consacrée contenue dans un vase exclusivement affecté à cet usage (1).

Les deux grandes fêtes annuelles sont célébrées aux semailles et aux moissons. Des cérémonies analogues ont lieu pour les événements importants (épidémies, calamités publiques...). Pour ces cérémonies, où le *Nya* doit faire des révélations sur les événements qui les motivent et répondre même à diverses autres questions intéressant les fidèles, les *wara-mina-den'* se soumettent à une ascèse spéciale et s'ingurgitent, en temps opportum, une boisson (2) très capiteuse qui provoque, affirment-ils, l'extralucidité. Cette boisson serait obtenue par macération dans l'eau des racines quelconques que l'on trouve lors du creusement des fosses ; à cette macération, on ajoute du poivre, du sel et du piment. Ce breuvage, très surexcitant, est soumis à une consécration rituelle.

Excité par ce breuvage, par les danses, par les chants d'une assemblée elle-même très échauffée par les libations, le *wara-mina-den'* apparaît dans les grandes cérémonies comme un illuminé qui révèle d'abondance la volonté, les désirs... du dieu. La veille de ces grandes fêtes et plusieurs soirées avant, tout le clergé et ses auxiliaires se réunissent pour des sortes de répétitions des danses, des chants... ; c'est là que les jeunes se préparent pour tenir, ultérieurement, des rôles de premier plan. Le

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(1) Tous les ans, à l'époque des moissons, le clergé se soumet à une purification rituelle par ablution avec l'eau consacrée. Lors de l'installation du *Nya*, cette purification a lieu à la récolte suivante la plus proche.

(2) J'ai connu la plupart de ces détails sur le *Nya* à l'occasion d'un procès criminel intenté contre le *wara-mina-den'* de Soun-bambara, près Dienné. Le fils du chef de ce village ayant bu précisément du liquide spécial était mort à la suite de cette ingestion effectuée malgré la défense qui lui en avait été faite par le *wara-mina-den'*. Celui-ci fut accusé de l'avoir empoisonné, il s'expliqua devant le tribunal indigène et fut acquitté.

wara-mina-den' s'y occupe spécialement de former celui qui, le cas échéant, le remplacerait.

Rien de particulier à signaler en ce qui concerne le trésor de la confrérie, qui est alimenté et pillé comme dans les autres confréries. L'action politique du *Nya* et ses agissements envers les communautés ne méritent pas non plus de développement spécial.

CHAPITRE V

Les Clans

1. Généralités

L'on est accoutumé à employer le mot « empire » ou celui de « royauté » pour qualifier la forme de gouvernement de la plupart des états soudanais et, en particulier, de ceux dont les Bambara, qui nous occupent ici, furent les fondateurs dans les pays du Kaarta et du Ségou. Mais, derrière ces mots, chacun place une forme d'autorité mal définie, sans même toujours faire un rapprochement critique avec des institutions similaires de nos pays.

Et cette incertitude s'accompagne de bien d'autres assimilations hasardeuses qui achèvent de jeter le trouble dans les idées. N'est-il pas courant de parler de féodalité, de système féodal, pour évoquer une manière de hiérarchie entre divers chefs indigènes ? Or, au Soudan, il n'y a, entre l'homme et la terre, aucun lien comparable à celui qui, précisément, servait de base au régime féodal, il n'y en a même pas de possible dans ce sens puisque le Soudanais ne se reconnaît pas de droit de propriété sur le sol. Ce n'est donc jamais à cause de la terre que quelque lien politique existe entre chefs indigènes : dès lors, comment parler de système féodal ?

En fait, l'unité sociale c'est la communauté basée sur la famille, elle grandit en patriarchie et s'épanouit en tribu et en peuple. Ses membres sont solidaires les uns des autres par le lien du sang, qui trouve son affirmation dans le culte des ancêtres.

Fières et jalouses de leur liberté, les communautés visent à demeurer indépendantes. La vie de relation marquée, en particulier, par l'occupation et l'exploitation d'un même territoire, les contraint à renoncer à cette indépendance et, en s'unissant dans un même culte, signe de leur solidarité spirituelle, elles forment le *dugu* (1).

Les *dugu* ont des domaines territoriaux délimités et aiment à vivre, eux aussi, sans subordination les uns vis-à-vis des autres. Il existe, entre certains d'entre eux, des relations quand ils sont nés les uns des autres par essaimages, ou lorsque, par suite du voisinage, des unions matrimoniales nombreuses les ont soudés.

Bien plus encore, les contingences inévitables déterminent les *dugu* à former entre eux des ligues, coalitions, ou, plus généralement, des associations dites *kafu'* (litt. union). Par la force des choses, un chef est élu par l'association ou s'impose à elle. Il en résulte parfois une organisation politique ou administrative. Le Ségala, dit aussi Sénébala, en est un exemple, « il a une histoire locale « depuis plusieurs siècles, des chefs héréditaires depuis « plusieurs dynasties, des liens sociaux et matrimoniaux, « des institutions coutumières depuis plusieurs généra- « tions : c'est une nation et une patrie. » (2).

Il arrive aussi que celui qui s'est révélé chef, mis en goût par l'exercice et les profits du pouvoir, s'efforce — avec l'appui de ses fidèles, parents ou autres — à garder le commandement à titre définitif. Cette association est ce que nous nommons ici le clan ; les Bambara la désignent par le mot *ton'*, applicable à n'importe quelle association.

En tant qu'organisme d'autorité, ce clan peut être défini un gouvernement oligarchique fondé dans le seul but d'asservir, par tous moyens, les individus qu'il peut atteindre, afin de les exploiter. Ceux qui sont inféodés à ce gouvernement sont appelés par les Bambara, tout comme par les autres indigènes, « les gens d'un tel », ou

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(1) Ce mot n'est pas sans ambiguité. Il signifie, d'une part, « ce qui est bas » et donc « le sol » ; d'autre part, il a le sens de « lieu », « résidence », « chez » : on l'entend avec la signification de « territoire », « pays », occupé par une collectivité humaine et, par une déviation facile à concevoir, il désigne également l'organisation qui régit cette collectivité par rapport à ce territoire.

(2) *In* Marty, *Etudes sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan*, T. IV, p. 105.

« les gens de tel lieu », ce sont ici les *Massa-si-u* (1) (= les gens (du clan) de Massa) ; les *Segu-n-ka-u* (2) (= les gens (du clan) de Ségou).

Toujours hantés par notre propre organisation, dans nos écrits, le *dugu*, c'est le village ; le *kafu*, c'est le canton ou la province ; la *ton*', qui est un clan, c'est l'empire.

Entraînés par la commodité des expressions qui nous sont familières, dans l'exposition du sujet de cette étude, nous employons cette terminologie et il nous a paru indispensable de définir sommairement la valeur de ces termes dans le plan de la société indigène, afin d'éviter l'ambiguité dont le moins que l'on puisse dire, c'est qu'elle engendre des illusions déformantes.

Ce qui existait au Kaarta et dans le pays de Ségou avant les deux clans fameux dont nous avons rapporté l'histoire et dont nous allons décrire la genèse et le fonctionnement, c'étaient des *dugu* habituellement sans liaison entre eux, réunis tout au plus en quelques *kafu* éphémères. Ces *kafu* comptaient une majorité de Bambara mélangés de Soninké et de gens d'autres races. Les *dugu* soninké se faisaient remarquer par l'aisance, la richesse parfois, ce qui leur assurait une manière de prééminence sur les *dugu* bambara : cette prospérité reposait sur le travail d'une population servile que les Sonninké avaient acquise surtout par des pratiques commerciales.

D'ailleurs, cette hégémonie de fait ne correspondait, le plus souvent, à aucune organisation politique ou administrative, elle ne se révélait vraiment que par le mépris des Sonniké pour les Bambara peu fortunés, et par la sourde hostilité de ces mêmes Bambara contre les riches Marka (comme ils appellent les Soninké) ; d'où, de temps à autre, des querelles locales qui aboutissaient parfois à des conflits sanglants. Le début du clan des Massa-si atteste particulièrement bien cet état des choses, au rapport de la chronique ci-dessus donnée.

Ces régions, Ségou-Kaarta, vécurent de la sorte, sous l'autorité des clans Mandé et Songhaï, dans une demi-obscurité, car elles étaient situées hors de la zone soumise à l'administration directe de ces clans ; leurs habitants, sous réserve d'acquitter les redevances imposées aux tributaires, vivaient à leur guise, suivant leurs coutumes propres, dans la mesure où elles ne portaient point ombrage au clan dominant.

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(1) D'un autre point de vue, *Massa-si-u* : descendants de Massa et donc la tribu de Massa.

(2) D'un autre point de vue, *Segu-n-ka-u* : les gens de la ville ou du pays de Ségou.

2. Clan des « gens de Ségou »

Evolution de la FLA-N-TON' *de Ségou-koro*

Suivant la chronique relatée ci-devant, il faut placer l'origine du clan de Ségou dans l'évolution d'une *fla-n-ton'*.

Ceux qui ont subi ensemble le rite du *soli* se réunissent en une *fla-n-bolo* (= bande de pairs); les *fla-n-bolo* de trois *soli* consécutifs forment une *fla-n-ton'* (= réunion de pairs) : les « sociétaires » s'intitulent *ton'-den'*, par rapport à l'association, et *fla-ni* (= pair) entre eux.

Dans chaque *fla-n-ton'* on trouve un *ton'-tigi* (= chef de la réunion) élu par les *ton'-den'* et qui peut être aussi bien un *wolo-so* (= captif né dans la maison), qu'un fils de notable ; un *dyala-tige* (= partageur), également élu par les *ton'-den'* : son office consiste, en particulier, à faire les parts dans les repas de corps et à assurer, en tout temps, le respect des statuts ; un *ton'-dyeli*, sorte d'appariteur nommé par le *ton'-tigi*, qui l'emploie à préparer les réunions, à convoquer les *ton'-den'*, à proclamer ses ordres...; c'est d'ordinaire un enfant de caste qui tient cet emploi. Il y a des gens de toutes races et de toutes conditions dans la *fla-n-ton'* et, en ce qui concerne l'association, il est de principe que la plus parfaite égalité règne entre eux, c'est même par là que se confirme la qualité de *fla-ni-u* (pairs) qu'ils se donnent entre eux.

En principe, la *fla-n-ton'* (1) a pour but d'établir entre les *ton'-den'* une mutualité. En pratique, les *ton'-den'* célibataires combinent leurs efforts en vue de réunir le plus de victuailles possible, à seul fin de s'offrir, de temps à autre, de bons et joyeux repas ; dans ce but, tous les moyens leur sont bons. Chacun apporte à la communauté ce qu'il peut se procurer et, d'ailleurs, la société impose à ses membres des contributions qui alimentent le trésor commun. Ce sont d'abord des droits d'entrée et des cotisations en nature, en grains surtout ; puis des amendes pour infraction au règlement, et celui-ci comporte des pénalités qui ont précisément pour but d'accroître ce fond commun : ainsi, à certaines réunions, les actes les plus habituels ne peuvent être accomplis sans ordre ou autorisation préalable du *ton'-tigi* ou du *dyala-tige* ; le *ton'-den'* qui s'accroupit, se lève, parle, éternue, rit... avant d'y être invité ou autorisé, est frappé d'amende. Enfin, la société procède à des battues et le gibier qu'elle recueille ainsi est partagé entre tous les sociétaires sur la base d'une stricte égalité.

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(1) Il existe, nous l'avons dit, des *fla-n-ton'* pour les femmes comme pour les hommes, mais il n'en est pas question ici parce que leur rôle est fort effacé au point de vue qui nous occupe.

Les *ton'-den'* se réunissent normalement deux fois par semaine, le lundi et le jeudi, ce sont précisément les jours libres dont tous les gens faibles (*fantan'-u*), c'est-à-dire en puissance, on l'entière disposition.

Le *ton'-tigi* ne peut pas prendre de décision importante sans l'avis préalable et conforme des *ton'-den'* ; il n'est pas pour cela réduit à un rôle sans importance. Son initiative détermine l'orientation des actes dont il assure ensuite lui-même l'exécution ; si donc, c'est un homme avisé, il dispose en réalité et presque à son gré d'une organisation susceptible d'agir puissamment sur le milieu indigène, amorphe par nature. Car une *fla-n-ton'* ne demeure pas isolée, elle est liée à celle qui la précède et à celle qui la suit immédiatement, par une sorte de solidarité, si bien qu'en définitive la société indigène est, de ce point de vue, constituée par une série interrompue de *fla-n-ton'* étroitement soudées les unes aux autres, puisque ce même enchaînement existe pour les femmes et que toute *fla-n-ton'* d'hommes est en rapport de confraternité avec la *fla-n-ton'* correspondante des femmes.

S'il surgit un différend entre les membres d'une même *fla-n-ton'*, les « vieux » de la *fla-n-ton'* précédente, c'est-à-dire immédiatement plus ancienne, interviennent comme conciliateurs pour apaiser le conflit. Pour les différends entre *fla-n-ton'*, un arbitre est choisi par ces *fla-n-ton'* ; voire même, dans toute région, il existe un arbitre désigné d'avance.

Parmi toutes ces *fla-n-ton'*, se distingue celle qui réunit le plus grand nombre de ces jeunes célibataires plus particulièrement qualifiés « les jeunes maîtres » (*kamalen'-u*). Très portés à l'oisiveté, les *kamalen'-u* sont des turbulents, des frondeurs qui recherchent toutes les jouissances matérielles et s'entraînent à faire opposition aux *fa*, aux *bina*, à ceux qui, maîtres dans les communautés, leur font subir tout le poids d'une autorité despotique et souvent tatillonne.

Cet exposé permet de comprendre que ce n'est pas une sinécure que la fonction de *ton'-tigi* : pour tenir ce rôle avec honneur, il faut savoir user d'une autorité souple et avertie, car les *ton'-den'* sont susceptibles et indisciplinés, prompts à se réclamer de cette égalité qui est à la base de leur association au point de tourner à la manie égalitaire ou égalitarisme. Aussi n'est-il pas sans intérêt de remarquer que les statuts, à première vue baroques, qui infligent des pénalités pour accomplissement des actes les plus ordinaires, ont, en fait, une portée profonde : ils corrigent en riant, car ils constituent une contrainte génératrice de discipline ; rompant avec la vie courante, ils inclinent, par l'accoutumance, à des habitudes dont l'ensemble forme ce que nous appelons l'esprit de corps. En tout cas, l'évolution que nous allons décrire montre, avec évidence, que pour pouvoir se maintenir et durer, le *ton'-tigi* doit s'imposer par des qualités de commandement qu'il dissimule en laissant croire aux uns — les plus susceptibles — qu'il subordonne ses actes à leurs désirs ; en se révélant aux autres — les pusillanimes — comme un chef impérieux et plein d'audace ; en rendant à tous des services et sachant faire tourner les projets et aventures, mêmes les plus risqués, au profit de la communauté.

En butte à l'hostilité des vieux, qui ont bien souvent à pâtir des faits et gestes des *ton'-den'*, sans cesse jalousé par certains de ces mêmes *ton'-den'*, envieux de ses succès, il acquiert à ses dépens une expérience qui en fait un politique madré, roublard et sans scrupule.

Ainsi, allons-nous voir Mamari, dit Biton, Kouloubali se dégager de l'égalitarisme tyrannique de la *fla-n-ton'* et s'élever d'échelon en échelon jusqu'au despotisme absolu.

Fils d'un pauvre cultivateur bambara, Mamari Kouloubali fut choisi par ses « pairs » comme *ton'-tigi* parce qu'il était fort, courageux et « veinard » (1).

Sa *fla-n-ton'* comptait deux éléments antagonistes :

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(1) La légende raconte qu'on le tenait pour très versé dans les sciences occultes et le commerce des génies. Mais la légende attribue toujours des qualités suréminentes à ses héros.

des Bambara pauvres et des Soninké aisés et même riches ; d'où des conflits, les Soninké impatients de subir l'autorité d'un *ton'-tigi* bambara ; les Bambara éprouvant quelque satisfaction à humilier la morgue des Soninké.

Le plus notoire de ces derniers, Kassoum Boaré, fils du chef du *dugu* soninké de Doua (1), vise par tous moyens à forcer Mamari à résigner ses fonctions de *ton'-tigi* pour s'y substituer à lui. Cette lutte d'intrigues incessantes prend une acuité particulière par l'exagération du taux des amendes. Certes, normalement, les amendes aux *ton'-den'* sont une des sources de revenu des *fla-n-ton'*, mais elles consistent exclusivement en victuailles et plus particulièrement en mil, qui est employé à fabriquer cette sorte de bière indigène que l'on nomme *dlo* en bambara. Or, la chronique atteste que, sous l'influence des menées des Soninké, des amendes considérables furent infligées ; le *ton'-tigi* Mamari, lui-même, fut frappé d'une amende de 80 (2) bœufs. Kassoum triomphait, car cette pénalité, qui dépassait de beaucoup les moyens dont il disposait, mettait Mamari dans une situation critique.

Pour se tirer de ce mauvais pas, Mamari s'adressa à sa sœur Sana-ba, épouse d'un chef important, Wara Dyara, dont la résidence était à Dina, sur le Niger, en amont de Ségou. Sana-ba offrit à Mamari ses bijoux en or, pour se libérer. Mais, à l'instigation des Soninké, les bijoux furent refusés pour amener Mamari à se déclarer insolvable et provoquer, par contre-coup, la séparation des *ton'-den'*.

Et la chronique nous fait assister par le menu à cette querelle intestine qui devait, effectivement, avoir de graves conséquences. La solution en fut donnée, en fin de compte, par les « vieux », qui avaient discerné l'origine et les motifs du conflit : ils conseillèrent la séparation des deux éléments antagonistes. Cet avis fut suivi, il se forma deux *fla-n-ton'* : l'une des Bambara avec, pour *ton'-tigi*, Mamari ; l'autre des Soninké avec, pour *ton'-tigi*, Kassoum.

La *fla-n-ton* de Mamari reprend, alors, sa vie normale. Les *ton'-den'* se réunissent le lundi et le jeudi de chaque semaine. Ils préparent eux-mêmes leurs repas avec le produit de leur chasse ; le *dlo* et l'hydromel sont dus aux soins de la mère de Mamari et, pour la défrayer, chaque *ton'-den'* verse une cotisation qui, à cause de sa destination, est appelée *di-songo* = (le prix du miel).

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(1) Plus connu sous le nom de Markadougouba (litt., le grand village des Marka).

(2) Les chiffres n'ont, bien entendu, qu'une valeur relative et varient avec les traditionnistes.

Ces agapes et les pillages qu'elles nécessitent mécontentent fort les « vieux », et *fa* Siné, père de Mamari, agissant à leur instigation, somme Mamari, par devant un forgeron, de renoncer à cette existence répréhensible. Le jeune homme met à profit cette menace pour se faire aider par ses compagnons dans la construction d'une demeure indépendante. Cette maison fut élevée à Ségoukoro, à l'endroit même où la *flan-ton'* se réunissait d'ordinaire et où, plus tard, se dressa la partie de la résidence de Mamari — devenu *jama* de Ségou — connue sous l'appellation de *Biton' blon da'* (= entrée de la maison de Biton) (1).

Dès lors, la *fla-n-ton'* a une réputation qui lui attire tous ceux qui sont impatients d'échapper au cadre trop strict de la société indigène. Ce sont, d'abord, de pauvres hères et des esclaves ; attirés par la bonne chère et la certitude de se soustraire à l'autorité de leurs maîtres, ils s'abandonnent entièrement à la *fla-n-ton'* dont ils deviennent les esclaves : ce furent les premiers *ton'-dyon'* (esclaves de la *ton'*) (2). Comme pour tout ce qui appartient à la *ton'*, Mamari a autorité sur eux ; il en choisit un pour convoquer, à son de trompe, les *ton'-den'* aux réunions, et on le surnomma *ton'-masa* (= maître de la *ton'*), parce que son appel était impératif à ce point que quiconque y manquait était à l'amende de vingt cruches de bière (*dlo*). Le *ton'-masa* était, en outre, une manière de chef de ses congénères : il leur transmettait les ordres de Mamari, en dirigeait et surveillait l'exécution.

Les *ton'-dyon'* n'étaient pas seuls à travailler pour la *ton'*. De même qu'à la demande de Mamari, les *ton'-den'* avaient édifié une habitation, de même, encore, ils acceptèrent de cultiver un champ de mil.

Bref, organisée et disciplinée, la *fla-n-ton'* de Mamari prospérait. Cette prospérité excitait l'envie et la haine de la *fla-n-ton'* de ceux de Doua qui cherchèrent, sournoisement, à lui faire échec. Kassoum tenta, d'abord, d'arriver à une réconciliation pour ramener la fusion des deux *ton'* : il se heurta à l'opposition de Mamari, qui ne voulait pas, de nouveau, de ces dangereux confrères.

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(1) L'on m'a montré, en 1902, le suprême vestige de cette construction: c'était un pilier carré en briques séchées au soleil et qui était en voie de disparition.

(2) Le mot *ton'* est désormais employé par abréviation de *fla-n-ton'*.

Kassoum changea de tactique, il provoqua entre les deux *ton'* des invitations alternées qui faillirent déterminer de sérieux conflits ; toutefois, Mamari domina la situation.

La récolte des champs de la *ton'* fut abondante et Mamari en remit la moitié à son père en lui conseillant de s'en servir pour faire de généreux cadeaux à la *fla-n-ton'*, afin d'accroître son influence à lui, Mamari, sur ses compagnons. Le vieux fut grandement sensible à ce traitement de la part de son fils et mourut peu de temps après. Le chroniqueur remarque que, là encore, Mamari avait su échapper, très heureusement, à une grave menace : car, pour le punir de s'être soustrait à son autorité et de vivre en marge de la société, son père avait été sur le point de le maudire.

Les *ton'-den'* rendirent les honneurs funèbres à *fa* Siné : se conformant à la coutume, sept jours durant ils vinrent festoyer à la porte du défunt. Après quoi, Mamari obtint qu'ils construisissent un mur pour réunir en un même enclos les cases de ses père et mère ; il fut entendu que la partie de cet enclos qu'avait occupé *fa* Siné serait réservée désormais aux gens de Doukounna de passage à Ségou.

Survint alors un incident capital :

A la suite d'une dispute avec Mamari, Kassoum se met lui-même à l'amende de cent cruches de bière (*dlo*) et jure qu'il entend contraindre Mamari et ses compagnons à venir les boire ; toutes ses prières, objurgations et menaces étant restées vaines, au début de l'hivernage Kassoum vient avec ses partisans se poster à proximité de Ségou-koro, à Ségou Si-do, et, par toutes sortes de moyens, ils s'évertuent à empêcher les travaux agricoles des gens de Mamari : procédé ordinaire des indigènes pour amener leurs adversaires à récipiscence.

Une année s'écoule sans amener de détente. Mamari va à Dina pour solliciter, par l'intermédiaire de sa sœur, le concours de son beau-frère, Wara Dyara. Au bout de trois mois, découragé de ne pas réussir, il rentre à Ségou. Il y est accablé par les plaintes de ses compagnons et, sur les instances de ceux-ci, il demande aux gens de Doukounna et de Banankoroni d'amener une réconciliation avec Kassoum.

Kassoum refuse d'entrer en pourparler et les querelles augmentent. Un jour, les gens de Mamari enlèvent les bois qui servaient de palanquement aux gens de Kassoum et les transportent à Ségou-koro. Le lendemain, les gens de Kassoum reprennent leurs bois en plein jour et brûlent les habitations de la *ton'* de Mamari. D'où une bagarre dans laquelle un compagnon de Kassoum est tué.

Pour tirer vengeance de ce meurtre, le père de Kassoum réclame qu'on lui livre Mamari et dix notables de Doukounna et Banankoroni : d'où d'interminables palabres.

Suivant l'expression indigène, « les paroles duraient depuis huit mois » lorsque, à la suite de la mort de Wara Dyara, le fils aîné de ce défunt vint, avec un imposant cortège, reconduire Sana-ba à sa famille et obtenir qu'elle lui fût laissée comme épouse. Or, par la mort de *fa* Siné, son père, Mamari se trouvait être le *fa* dont dépendait Sana-ba ; il sut tirer parti de cette circonstance.

Il réussit, en effet, à faire entrer dans la *ton'* (1) et le nouveau chef de Dina et les chefs bambara de la rive gauche du Niger venus à Ségou pour saluer la veuve du redouté chef de Dina. Ces nouveaux *ton'-den'* mirent à sa disposition leurs hommes d'armes et c'est en s'appuyant sur cette force que Mamari réalisa deux entreprises qui marquent, à vrai dire, le point de départ du clan.

Tout d'abord, il repoussa les attaques des Soninké et, prenant l'offensive, il les chassa de Doua. Il les fit poursuivre par ses troupes jusque dans Kirango, où les fugitifs se réfugièrent et dont les partisans de Mamari firent le siège. L'hégémonie soninké était dès lors abattue.

Mamari mesura toute la portée de ce succès qui ouvrait le champ libre à son ambition. Pour consolider définitivement sont autorité, il comprit qu'il fallait profiter, sans retard, de cette circonstance d'autant plus favorable qu'il disposait de puissants alliés. C'est dans ces conditions qu'il résolut de se faire reconnaître pour *fa* de ses *ton'-den'*. Comme l'opération lui parut aléatoire, il se prépara pour toute éventualité.

Les « jeunes », habilement retenus devant Kirango, il convoqua dans sa demeure les « vieux », qui étaient les *fa* de ces jeunes. Ils vinrent. Il prétendit les entretenir deux par deux ; ils refusèrent de se séparer, flairant quelque piège. Il leur demanda de s'installer définitivement auprès de lui en une manière de sénat, ce qui était une façon déguisée de les garder à sa discrétion. Ils refusèrent encore, alarmés par cette insistance, et prétextant la nécessité de retourner chez eux pour surveiller les travaux agricoles. Mamari sentit très nettement que la décision de ces hommes était irréductible et ferait toujours obstacle à ses projets. Il l'avait prévu et, pour supprimer cet obstacle, il avait fait creuser des puits où il fit précipiter les « vieux » que, sur son ordre, ses partisans, apostés à cet effet, avaient mis à mort.

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(1) C'est-à-dire à s'assurer l'alliance effective.

Alors Mamari franchit une nouvelle étape. Il rappelle les assiégeants de Kirango et, quand ils furent en sa présence, il ordonna à ses fidèles de les coiffer à la manière des *ton'-dyon'*. A leurs protestations, il répondit en leur révélant, ce qu'ils ignoraient, que pour avoir voulu résister à sa volonté, leurs « vieux » avaient été massacrés. Mâtés par la force, les jeunes furent transformés de *ton'-den'* en *ton'-dyon'*.

A ce moment, Mamari ne put retenir, dit-on, l'expression publique de son triomphe et ses paroles marquent, avec emphase et quelqu'humour, l'évolution accomplie : « Nous ne mangerons plus ensemble les pistaches de la « *ton'*, nous ne boirons plus ensemble la bière de la *ton'*, je « suis le fils d'Allah... »

Cette situation consolidée, il réalisa avec non moins d'audace et de bonheur un nouveau coup. Il demande à ses alliés — qui l'avaient si heureusement aidé à sortir d'affaire — de lui laisser leurs hommes d'armes. Ils s'y refusèrent. Astucieusement, il travailla ces guerriers, il leur fit d'alléchantes promesses, si bien enfin que ces hommes, à peine rentrés chez eux, revinrent se donner à la *ton'* et grossir le nombre des *ton'-dyon'*.

Désormais, la *fla-n-ton'* n'est plus : transformée, développée, elle a fait place à la *furu-ba* (1) (= grande union, grande association) dont le chef, Mamari, s'intitule *fama* (= seigneur) et dont toute la puissance repose sur les

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(1) Au sens large, le mot *furu* signifie union, alliance ; au sens étroit, mariage, union conjugale.

furu-ba-dyon' (= esclaves de la *furu-ba*) dont les *ton'-dyon'* constituent comme une aristocratie.

Des trois éléments : *ton'-tigi*, *ton'-den'* et *ton'-dyon'* de la *fla-n-ton'*, deux subsistent seuls, les *ton'-den'* ayant été éliminés par Mamari. Cette élimination n'a cependant pas changé le caractère des *ton'-dyon'* : ce sont des esclaves non de Mamari, mais de l'association qu'ils forment avec lui. En principe, Mamari n'a sur eux qu'un droit de direction, de surveillance, d'organisation ; en fait, il s'efforce à les confisquer pour son seul profit : à la mort du *ton'-masa*, il les décapite, en quelque sorte, en ne prenant pas parmi eux le nouveau titulaire de cette charge ; puis, il transforme la *ton'* en confrérie en affiliant les *ton'-dyon'* à des cultes lui appartenant et dont il est le grand maître et, par ce lien religieux, il vise surtout à enchaîner leur loyalisme ; enfin, il les rattache à sa communauté en plaçant les chefs *ton'-dyon'* sous la tutelle des divers membres de cette communauté.

C'est à la mort de Mamari qu'apparaissent toutes les conséquences de cet absolutisme qui a tenté de briser tous les principes, qui, au fond, régissent la société indigène. A ce moment, le *ton'-masa* joue un double rôle : il intervient, d'abord, comme gardien de la succession de Mamari, parce qu'il était son esclave personnel ; puis, il agit comme représentant des *ton'-dyon'* pour reconnaître l'autorité sur eux du fils et successeur personnel de Mamari. Ainsi le *fa* de la communauté de Mamari devient le *fama* du clan.

La mort tragique de Dé-koro marque la fin de cette combinaison parce que la famille naturelle qui fournissait les *fama* est éteinte ou, du moins, réputée telle par les *ton'-dyon'*.

En réalité, débarrassés du maître qui s'imposait à eux, les *ton'-dyon'* montrent que, pour eux, l'égalitarisme de la *ton'* n'a subi qu'une éclipse. En se disant « fils de Mamari », ils font rentrer dans la *ton'* les biens que Mamari et ses enfants en avaient distraits par usurpation. L'hostilité implacable qui paralyse toute tentative du *ton'-masa* pour ériger à son profit une nouvelle tyrannie, prouve que tout tend à revenir au point de départ, c'est-à-dire à l'état de *fla-n-ton'*.

Il n'en peut rien être, cependant, le déséquilibre dû à la disparition des *ton'-den'* est irréparable, car la condition de l'individu ne s'efface pas et les anciens *ton'-den'*, devenus *ton'-dyon'*, c'est-à-dire tombés à un état inférieur, ne peuvent plus se relever. Mais ce qui ne survit pas, c'est cette espèce d'empire que Mamari pensait avoir définitivement établi en dehors et au-dessus de la *ton'*, pour lui d'abord, pour ses successeurs naturels ensuite.

Dans la *furu-ba*, le *fama* n'est plus, dorénavant, que *primus inter pares*, comme le *ton'-tigi* dans la *fla-n-ton'*, compte tenu, comme il vient d'être dit, de l'évolution que marque la *furu-ba* sur la *fla-n-ton'*.

Ngolo Dyara réussit seulement à rendre la charge du *fama*, ainsi comprise, héréditaire dans sa descendance, tout comme l'étaient déjà nombre de charges de *dyon'-kuntigi*.

Cette sonsolidation progressive d'un nombre de plus en plus grand de ces hauts emplois, l'indépendance de fait reconquise par la plupart des membres du clan, aboutissent à la formation d'une société dont les membres s'honorent de leur origine *ton'-dyon'*, se considèrent comme des gens libres, voire même des gens libres de qualité. Par là, apparaît le rôle peut-être essentiel de l'esclavage dans ces régions : ce fut une filière de rénovation sociale et de fusion ethnique.

Il convient de compléter cet aperçu d'ensemble par l'analyse des divers éléments du clan et l'exposé de leur fonctionnement.

Furu-ba dyon' et *ton'-dyon'*.

L'organisation et le fonctionnement de la *furu-ba*, œuvre de Mamari, subirent, avec le temps, des modifications.

L'élément essentiel du clan, parce qu'en définitive tout dépend de lui, c'est le *ton'-dyon'*. L'origine du *ton'-dyon'* nous est connue par ce qui précède. Le nombre des esclaves s'accrut, dans la *furu-ba*, des nombreux captifs ramassés au cours des razzias, pillages, guerre..., mais le *ton'-dyon'* forme, au milieu de ces *furu-ba-dyon'*, une aristocratie par l'ancienneté et, aussi, parce que la qualité d'homme libre survit en quelque manière chez ceux des *ton'-dyon'* qui étaient, primitivement, des *ton'-den'*.

Sans doute, l'une des causes de l'agitation qui, toujours, secoue le *furu-ba*, c'est cette aspiration profonde de tous vers la liberté : mais ils ne savent pas la réaliser, d'abord parce qu'ils sont dominés par un vieil atavisme de servitude qui pèse sur tout les Soudanais ; aussi parce que cette liberté que chacun veut pour soi, il entend l'employer à asservir ses frères. Ce sont ces sentiments troubles qui marquent d'un caractère équivoque toutes les manifestations dont la chronique nous fait le récit.

Le *ton'-dyon'* de la *furu-ba* est une sorte d'homme de caste : il ne peut cesser d'être *ton'-dyon'*, et ses enfants naissent et demeurent *ton'-dyon'* comme lui-même. Il est soumis à l'autorité despotique du *fama*. Pour l'homme libre, c'est certainement une déchéance que de devenir *ton'-dyon'*, alors que pour l'esclave, au contraire, c'est une amélioration de statut. Il y a de tout parmi les *ton'-dyon'*, on le constate dès l'origine et il en fut de même ultérieurement : si les esclaves provenant des expéditions à main armée formèrent un contingent très nombreux au recrutement des *ton'-dyon'*, il n'est pas douteux que beaucoup d'hommes libres, mais pauvres, furent heureux de s'incorporer aux *ton'-dyon'*, pour se protéger contre les vexations de ces gens peu recommandables, et aussi pour avoir le droit d'user des mêmes procédés qu'eux.

On trouve donc, parmi les *ton'-dyon'*, des gens provenant de toutes races et de toutes conditions, si bien que tous les *dyamu* sont confondus sous cette étiquette commune.

Dans la *furu-ba*, les *ton'-dyon'* constituaient une catégorie à part et gardaient toujours les prérogatives qui s'attachent, dans la société indigène, à l'ancienneté. Les *ton'-dyon'* étaient les « anciens ». Quant aux prisonniers réduits en servitude, ils formèrent les *furu-ba dyon'* proprement dits, groupés en séries, dont chacune rattachait son origine au *fama* qui l'avait constituée. Ils y suivaient la filière habituelle : à moins de circonstances favorables qui leur permettaient d'échapper aux misères des premiers temps de la captivité, ils débutaient par appartenir au troupeau des esclaves propres à tout, considérés le plus souvent comme une simple monnaie d'échange et, pour cela, appelés *san'-dyon'-u* (esclaves d'échange). Adoptés par une communauté : la femme y acquérait la qualité du *wolo-so* lorsqu'elle avait donné naissance à un enfant, et l'homme pouvait accéder à une situation analogue par la confiance qu'il inspirait à ses maîtres.

Le *wolo-so* devenait *dyongoron* lorsqu'il s'était libéré du travail personnel en mettant ses enfants à ses lieu et place et payant une redevance annuelle.

A partir de la condition de *wolo-so,* l'esclave devenait à vrai dire un individu de caste : en principe, il ne pouvait plus être vendu, il avait le droit de posséder et de laisser ses biens à ses enfants ; souvent, il était plus heureux que l'homme libre et pauvre.

La condition de cet esclave de caste s'imposait à ses descendants *in infinitimum,* même pour ceux qui s'élevaient aux plus hautes dignités. Ainsi, les Dyara de la famille de Ngolo Dyara gardent le stigmate de la condition servile de leur ancêtre (1). En pratique, l'arbitraire du maître tout-puissant modifiait, à son gré, la condition des gens sous sa dépendance, car nous l'avons dit, le *fa* faisait la loi ; mais cet arbitraire n'était pas sans recours, on le voit dans la chronique à propos de ce même Ngolo dans ses rapports avec Mamari ; en recourant aux bons offices de personnages influents sur le *fa,* l'on déterminait parfois celui-ci à revenir sur son opinion.

Les *furu-ba dyon'* (*ton'-dyon'* ou *furu-ba dyon'* proprement dits) étaient placés sous les ordres de « chefs d'esclaves » (*dyon'-kuntigi-u*). Il y aurait eu 120 de ces chefferies sous Ma-n-son, d'après les paroles prêtées à Tonmassa dans la chronique ; d'après cette même source, ce nombre s'éleva jusqu'à 140, que Ma-n-son réduisit à 60 charges héréditaires, comprenant un nombre variable de *furu-ba dyon',* réparties dans les diverses régions soumises au clan, le tout suivant la décision du *fama.* La chronique nous montre, en effet, comment pour les motifs les plus divers, le *fama* constituait ou dispersait ces chefferies. Avait-il un ennemi à surveiller, une attaque à préparer, une contrée à exploiter, un service à organiser, il prélevait des hommes où bon lui semblait, décrétait un transfert de population..., désignait un chef pour en prendre le commandement et exécuter ses ordres où, quand et comme il lui plaisait.

Il y avait, parmi les *dyon'-kuntigi,* une hiérarchie basée, en principe, sur l'ancienneté et aussi sur l'importance de la charge, ce qui faisait, de certains d'entre eux, des grands chefs. L'un apparaissait, sous le titre de *ton'-masa*, comme le chef suprême des *ton'-dyon'* en particulier et de tous les *furu-ba dyon'* en général. Dans la *fla-n-ton'*, le *ton'-masa* avait pour fonction de convoquer les *ton'-den'*, de surveiller les *ton'-dyon'* et de leur faire exécuter les travaux prescrits par le *ton'-tigi*. Ce sont encore les fonctions du *ton'-masa* dans la *furu-ba* : il assure l'exécution, par les *furu-ba dyon'*, des ordres du *fama* en se servant de l'intermédiaire des *dyon'-kuntigi*. Comme il représente, en somme, tous les *furu-ba dyon'*, sa charge se dresse peu à peu en antagoniste en face de celle du *fama*, car, en définitive, que peut le *fama* s'il a contre lui le *ton'-masa* soutenu par les *furu-ba dyon'* ? C'est pourquoi Mamari pensa s'assurer le dévouement du titulaire de cette haute fonction en le prenant, non parmi les *furu-ba dyon'*, mais dans ses esclaves personnels. Il acheta un esclave dont il fit un *ton'-masa*.

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(1) Voir Raffenel, p. 371, T. I.

Les *furu-ba dyon'* furent employés, tout d'abord, mais non pas exclusivement comme on serait porté à le croire, pour des expéditions à main armée et de plus ou moins grande envergure, dans lesquelles chacun trouvait son profit : Mamari, d'abord, par un surcroît de prestige et une extension de domination ; les *furu-ba dyon'* et aussi Mamari, par un accroissement de fortune. Les fils de Mamari, évidemment désireux de tenir pour définitive la situation acquise et ne pas courir toujours les risques du brigandage, pensèrent à tourner l'activité des *furu-ba dyon'* vers l'agriculture. Cette orientation nouvelle provoqua une crise parce qu'elle ne fut pas du goût d'une fraction, qui entraîna un nombre important de *furu-ba dyon'* : d'où les querelles intestines dont le meurtre de Dékoro fut un épisode.

C'est au cours de ces querelles que bien des *ton'-dyon'* et des *dyon'-kuntigi* pensèrent se faire oublier pour vivre indépendants en faisant fructifier pour eux seuls les biens de la *furu-ba* confiés à leurs soins. Certes, les *fama* successifs tentèrent, par des exemples terribles, de ramener ces dissidents à l'obéissance ; ils n'y réussirent que momentanément par la force et, avec le déclin de leur puissance, ces usurpations se multiplièrent ; certaines furent consacrées définitivement par l'hérédité accordée à 60 charges.

Le fama.

Le second élément du clan était le pouvoir de direction, d'organisation et de surveillance, dont le titulaire était qualifié *fama* (1) (seigneur).

Mamari eut un double rôle ; *fa* de sa communauté patriarcale, il fut en même temps *fama* du clan. Ses successeurs agirent pareillement. Or, pour tenir loyalement la charge de *fama*, la coutume exige que le titulaire de cette magistrature remette, à son successeur éventuel en tant que *fa*, le commandement et les biens de sa communauté patriarcale, ne conservant ainsi qu'une *fa-ya* honorifique en quelque sorte, de manière à éviter une confusion dont il est facile de comprendre l'origine et les conséquences.

En effet, tous les biens de la *furu-ba* dont le *fama* retenait pour lui l'emploi et l'exploitation, ne cessaient pas d'appartenir au clan et, par suite, ne devaient, en principe, profiter qu'au clan. Or, lorsque le *fama* demeurait *fa* effectif, ces biens de la *furu-ba* venaient se confondre avec ceux de la communauté patriarcale. Par ce moyen, s'érigeait une fortune communautaire considérable. Cette richesse mal acquise suscitait les désirs et les critiques des *furu-ba dyon'*, si bien que les uns s'esseyaient, non sans succès, à s'enrichir non moins malhonnêtement, et que tous pensaient à exercer des reprises sur la succession du *fama*, à raison des biens claniques qu'elle recelait.

Car, au fond, la seule raison d'être du clan — et c'est son trait essentiel commun avec la *fla-n-ton'* — c'est l'acquisition des richesses de toute nature, chaque membre du clan visant à s'approprier le plus possible de ces richesses ; par contre, chacun en défendait l'accès à ses frères en prétextant le respect de l'égalité qui, en droit, formait la base des rapports entre les membres du clan. Cette hypocrisie domine toute la vie du clan. Elle inspire tous les actes du *fama* dans l'œuvre qui lui incombe ; elle anime aussi chaque *furu-ba dyon'*, de sorte qu'il n'en est point qui n'ambitionne de jouer au *fama*.

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(1) Etymologiquement *fama* : *fa-ma* : le puissant, de *fa* : puissance, autorité.

Le *fama* tire ses pouvoirs de l'élection, dont la forme a peu variée après Mamari.

Mamari avait été élu par les *ton'-den'* ; au moyen des usurpations successives dont nous avons marqué le processus, il avait réalisé une manière de despotisme dont, malgré toute sa volonté, il ne put assurer l'entier bénéfice à ses descendants.

Pour ceux-ci, l'élection résultait de leur installation dans la charge par le *ton'-masa*, qui témoignait en outre publiquement de l'acceptation des *furu-ba dyon'* par ce geste symbolique consistant à se présenter au nouveau *fama* le cou entouré d'un pagne, dont il remettait les extrémités entre ses mains. Sous la garde de la divinité, dite *ba Kongo-ba*, achetée par Mamari dans le Bendougou, un serment liait indissolublement l'un à l'autre les deux éléments du clan.

L'élection de Tonmassa Dembélé comme *fama* est le résultat des discussions qui ont suivi le coup d'Etat dont il fut l'exécuteur, et il est à croire que cette élection fut, elle aussi, suivie d'un serment de loyalisme prêté par les *dyon'-kuntigi*, sous l'une des espèces dont nous allons parler.

Pour les successeurs de Tonmassa Dembélé, le choix fut préparé par les conciliabules où l'on proclamait la vacance de la charge en offrant à qui voudrait les prendre l'arc et le carquois de Mamari, puis l'on procédait à l'élection, suivie d'un repas rituel.

Pour ce repas, un bœuf et un esclave étaient tués rituellement dans la case servant de temple à *ba Kongo-ba* (1), à qui les victimes étaient offertes. Après quoi, l'on découpait ces cadavres en morceaux, que l'on faisait cuire ensemble et en les remuant fréquemment, pour bien les mélanger. Partie de ce mets macabre était servie, dans cette case et en une seule calebasse, aux *dyon'-kuntigi* électeurs. Pour le manger, ils s'accroupissaient à terre, autour de la calebasse, en lui tournant le dos, et, dans cette position, sans tourner la tête pour choisir, ils puisaient au plat, au hasard, un morceau qui pouvait être soit de l'homme, soit de l'animal. Ce repas constituait une communion par laquelle les convives se trouvaient liés de telle manière que *ba kongo-ba* devait tuer celui qui se parjurerait en trahissant le loyalisme auquel il se trouvait engagé envers l'élu.

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(1) Cette dénomination m'a été traduite littéralement : la mère Grande-brousse, le mot mère ayant ici une signification équivalente à celle de déesse. L'on peut voir une allusion à la cérémonie rapportée ici dans le journal d'Isaac (2ᵉ voyage de Mungo Park) qui porte *Kogno-ba*, variante de *Kongo-ba*.

Le choix précédemment dégagé était alors définitif et l'élu était soumis à une épreuve destinée à déterminer le nombre des années de son règne. Pour cette épreuve, l'on enserrait le cou de l'élu au moyen d'une de ces bandes de coton qui servent à la confection des pagnes indigènes ; deux des assistants tiraient en sens inverse les deux extrémités de cette bande, tandis que le patient plongeait fébrilement ses mains dans une calebasse contenant un mélange de menus cailloux et de feuilles de baobab pilées : le nombre de cailloux qu'il réussissait à saisir en une seule fois était celui des années accordées à son règne. Ce nombre d'années écoulé, le *fama* était mis à mort par strangulation au moyen de la bande de coton ; toutefois, si l'on n'avait pas à se plaindre, on le laissait en fonction... jusqu'à la première affaire.

Telle est la tradition. Si elle est acceptable dans ses parties essentielles, elle l'est moins pour certains détails, par comparaison avec la chronique : celle-ci ne fait pas allusion à cette mort uniforme par strangulation, non plus qu'à la détermination du nombre des années de règne.

Ce qui est certain, c'est le serment de loyalisme qui suivait toute élection et était, en outre, souvent requis, au cours de son règne, par le *fama* en fonction. Ce serment revêtait indubitablement cette forme sacramentelle caractérisée par la communion sous le patronage de l'idole. La discussion que la chronique rapporte à propos de l'élection de Ngolo Dyara témoigne, d'ailleurs, que l'élu, lui aussi, devait participer au serment, qui était donc synallagmatique. Ngolo Dyara agit de manière à se dégager du serment, dont ses électeurs eurent seuls la charge : c'est là un de ces procédés par lesquels les despotes de tous pays préparent leur tyrannie.

Rapports entre les éléments du clan.

L'étude du clan de Ségou s'éclaire, heureusement, par la comparaison avec les organismes que nous avons précédemment étudiés : communautés et confréries.

L'influence, sur le clan, de la communauté et de la confrérie est rendue évidente par les deux traits qui accusent l'effort persévérant du *fama* pour amener le fusion du clan avec sa propre patriarchie. C'est, d'abord, le rattachement des grands chefs *ton'-dyon'* et, par eux, de tous les *furu-ba dyon'* à la patriarchie du *fama*, obtenue en plaçant chacun de ces *dyon'-kuntigi* sous le patronage d'un membre influent de la dite patriarchie : ainsi, sous Mamari et Ngolo, chacun de ces *dyon'-kuntigi* est sous la dépendance qui de la mère, qui de la femme, qui du fils ou du frère du *fama*. Le *ton'-masa* lui-même sollicite d'être placé sous l'égide de Bakari, fils de Mamari.

D'un autre côté, la liaison, entre le clan et la patriarchie du *fama*, devient encore plus étroite par l'agrégation des *ton'-dyon'* aux cultes personnels de Mamari ; certains furent parmi les principaux ministres de ces cultes : Ngolo dut, précisément à cette circonstance, de s'imposer à ses compagnons.

Dès lors, il n'est pas téméraire d'affirmer que, dans ces conditions, le clan n'est plus qu'une manière d'extension de la patriarchie du *fama*. Effectivement, du reste, les *ton'-dyon'* ne cessent de faire état de la filiation qui les rattache de tant de façons à Mamari et qui établit entre eux une véritable fraternité. De là, d'abord, le culte dont ils honorent Mamari à l'égal d'un ancêtre ; de là, ensuite, le mode de successibilité qui s'impose à eux dans les périodes d'anarchie : c'est le plus ancien au service de Mamari qui est appelé au pouvoir suprême. De là, enfin, au décès du *fama*, des cérémonies absolument pareilles à celles qui ont lieu pour un patriarche.

Autre conséquence : la prospérité, la force et même l'existence du clan dépendent essentiellement de la valeur personnelle du *fama*. Lorsque celui-ci est à la hauteur de sa charge, le clan est riche et puissant. Si le *fama* manque d'autorité, s'il ne sait pas assigner à chacun sa place et son rôle et l'y maintenir, apparaît aussitôt l'opposition qui, par nature, sépare les éléments constitutifs du clan et, désormais, chacun ambitionne de jouir égoïstement de sa liberté et de ses biens : c'est la désorganisation rapide que seule la survenance d'un nouveau et avisé despote peut seule arrêter.

Car, au fond, et c'est un nouvel aspect de la question, le clan conserve l'empreinte ineffaçable de la *fla-n-ton'* d'où il est issu. Le but n'a pas varié : assurer à chacun le plus possible de ces satisfactions matérielles dont tout Bambara est avide. Le moyen demeure également le même ; malgré les apparences, c'est une solidarité assise sur un communisme strictement égalitaire (1).

Les ressources du clan sont, de tous points, analogues à celles de la *fla-n-ton'* : de même qu'elle profitait des larcins, des vols et des maraudes de ses *ton'-den'*, le clan tire ses meilleures ressources des razzias et des pillages heureux.

La *fla-n-ton'* alimentait ses beuveries à l'aide du *di-songo* et des cultures de ses *ton'-den'* ou *ton'-dyon'* : dans le clan, le *di-songo* continue d'exister d'abord, puis est remplacé par une redevance analogue, le *nyon'-dyu* ; quant au travail des *ton'-dyon'*, atténué au début dans la période d'activité guerrière, il fut impérativement ramené vers l'agriculture par Dékoro ; ultérieurement, les *furu-ba dyon'* furent surtout des cultivateurs.

Les victuailles de la *fla-n-ton'* étaient égalitairement réparties, entre les *ton'-den'*, par le *dyala-tige*, sous la direction du *ton'-tigi* ; dans le clan, les biens sont aussi la propriété commune, gérés par le *fama*, qui les répartit entre les *dyon'-kuntigi*. A leur tour, ceux-ci font un lotissement en tant qu'il est utile.

Ce qui importe dans la *fla-n-ton'*, ce sont les vivres, le bien-être matériel ; il n'en est pas autrement dans le clan : les *ton'-dyon'* envisagent surtout ce profit qu'ils retirent de l'association et l'État se résume, pour eux, en un mot très prosaïque, c'est, suivant leur propre expression, le *to-da*, littéralement : « la marmite de bouillie », qui représente, en effet, ce qu'il y a de plus substantiel dans les agapes confraternelles de la *fla-n-ton'*.

Les biens du clan, comme ceux de la *fla-n-ton'*, sont, en principe, communs à tous, mais leur abondance impose une répartition, d'abord pour en user, aussi pour récompenser le zèle et la fidélité, entretenir l'émulation et le dévouement. L'égalitarisme intégral subit, par suite, une déviation. Il fut admis, dès les débuts du clan, qu'une partie importante des richesses devaient demeurer à ceux qui avaient le mieux contribué à leur acquisition : le chef de l'expédition eut ainsi un droit de préciput pour sa « veine », lui et les « braves » reçurent en outre de quoi « réparer les accrocs de leurs blouses », c'est-à-dire de quoi être indemnisés des dommages éprouvés par eux au cours de l'expédition.

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(1) Le penchant inné du Noir pour cette justice égalitaire est attesté par ces épisodes légendaires où un individu est honoré et proclamé chef parce qu'il a su faire les parts rigoureusement égales. *Cf.* la légende de Ndyadyane Ndyaye, *in Legendes et coutumes sénégalaises*, par Henri Gaden, et les Djide de Djenné, *in Contes du Sénégal et du Niger* de Zeltner.

Chaque guerrier conservait ses prises personnelles, sous réserves que les choses particulièrement précieuses revenaient au clan et donc au *fama* qui le représentait. La partie de la masse conquise qui n'était pas appréhendée individuellement était répartie par le *fama*, après prélèvement de la meilleure et plus large part pour lui.

De ces richesses ainsi attribuées, nul ne possédait rien : strictement parlant, tous, même le *fama*, n'étaient que détenteurs à titre précaire : par le caprice du clan, chacun pouvait être dépouillé entièrement et la reprise s'appliquait aux personnes comme aux choses, car les femmes et les enfants du *ton'-dyon'* étaient, comme lui-même, des « choses » du clan.

Le temps atténua, dans la forme, la rigueur de ces principes : à moins d'abus ou de démérite notoire, chacun conservait indéfiniment l'usufruit de ce qui lui était confié et le transmettait à ses descendants. Cet usufruit était, du reste, plus large que celui de notre droit. De plus, Mamari s'arrogea une sorte de droit éminent : il s'institua — par une usurpation que son ascendant lui rendit facile — le dispensateur des fonctions et des richesses et se réserva des biens considérables. De leur côté, des *ton'-dyon'*, satisfaits de leur sort, s'efforcèrent à se faire oublier pour disposer de tout ce qui leur avait été confié et qu'ils avaient fait fructifier.

Ces usurpations eurent tendance à se stabiliser par l'hérédité, non sans de terribles fluctuations.

Après Mamari, la charge de *fama* demeure comme un héritage dans sa communauté jusqu'au jour où, Dékoro ayant cessé de plaire, l'assemblée des *ton'-dyon'* décida de « changer la semence », originale métaphore qui exprime bien que les membres du clan entendaient avoir un *fama* à leur convenance.

La facilité avec laquelle Dékoro fut supprimé (et d'autres après lui) atteste également que le *fama* n'était et ne pouvait être, en définitive, que ce que les *ton'-dyon'* permettaient qu'il fût. Par là, apparaît clairement que l'esprit de la *fla-n-ton'* n'a jamais disparu ; le *fama* n'a cessé d'être *primus inter pares* qu'en apparence, lorsque son ascendant personnel lui a permis de dominer momentanément la situation.

Il est arrivé ainsi qu'il a gouverné contre le sentiment de la majorité, mais cet ascendant ne fut jamais que personnel et temporaire. En réalité, il y eut toujours des dissentiments qui se traduisirent par ces querelles fraticides, au cours desquelles le *fama* apparaissait comme préoccupé surtout d'assouvir des rancunes personnelles.

Le *fama* — la chronique nous le montre — était à la merci des *ton'-dyon'* : sans eux, il ne pouvait rien. L'assemblée du lundi et du jeudi, qui conditionnait son autorité, se maintint longtemps. Au demeurant, cette assemblée (*furu-ba*), c'est tout le clan. En temps ordinaire, l'assemblée était stimulée par le plaisir de boire la bière que le *fama*, comme le *ton'-tigi* autrefois, ne manquait pas de faire préparer ; le culte des idoles claniques était également un motif de ces réunions, avec repas et beuveries. Le *fama* s'efforçait à tirer de ces assemblées, incohérentes à l'ordinaire, le parti le plus utile à ses intérêts et à ceux du clan.

Lorsque l'autorité de Mamari fut bien assise, ces assemblées n'eurent plus un rôle délibérant, ni même consultatif, que dans les circonstances graves où l'existence du clan était en jeu. Le conseil des *dyon'-kuntigi* les remplaça, c'était logique ; les *dyon'-kuntigi* ne manquaient pas d'exercer une influence sur les *ton'-dyon'*, dont ils traduisaient, en même temps, les aspirations ; il était, en outre, facile de les réunir et, par accoutumance, ils arrivèrent à être des collaborateurs expérimentés et éprouvés pour le *fama*.

A son tour, ce conseil fut délaissé. L'extension du *to-da* éloigna les grands *dyon'-kuntigi* de Ségou, si bien que, peu à peu, le *fama* tourna au despote absolu. Toutefois, il demeura toujours sous l'influence de son entourage immédiat, c'est-à-dire des gens de sa maison (sa mère, ses femmes, ses enfants, ses frères et autres parents) et, plus encore, de ses familiers (1). Ces derniers constituaient une manière de conseil privé où le chef des esclaves, qu'il appartînt ou non aux *ton'-dyon'* jouait un rôle important. D'ordinaire, ces familiers étaient de basse extraction : gens de caste ou domestiques de la maison du *fama* ; mêlés à la vie intime du maître, ils étaient les agents des intrigues qui se nouaient autour de lui.

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(1) Ainsi, dans sa querelle fratricide avec Nyana-n-Koro, il apparaît nettement que Ma-n-son suivait les suggestions habiles de Nzan-fato ; dans sa dispute avec Souleyman, ses commensaux sont ses conseillers.

Cependant, le *fama* sentait qu'à perdre le contact des *ton'-dyon'*, son autorité manquait de ce qui faisait sa force, car le clan dépérit jusqu'à s'anéantir, lorsque ceux qui le constituent s'isolent les uns des autres. Le *fama* convoquait donc l'assemblée, mais ce n'était plus pour s'inspirer de ses desiderata ; il lui demandait, parfois il exigeait d'elle, l'affirmation solennelle de son loyalisme, par serment sur les idoles. L'assemblée ne cessa jamais, d'ailleurs, de se réunir au moins une fois l'an, pour la rénovation de la profession de foi religieuse et l'agrégation des « jeunes ».

L'assemblée ne reprenait un rôle effectif que pour l'élection d'un nouveau *fama*, et il est manifeste qu'au cours des ans, ce pouvoir délibérant évolua lui aussi. Dans les débuts, il n'y avait pas de grande scission au sein de la *furu-ba*, tandis qu'au fur et à mesure que grandit l'importance du clan et, par suite, la fortune de ses membres influents, des opinions divergentes s'affirmèrent, soutenues par des partisans forts et déterminés : les *dyon'-kuntigi* s'opposèrent alors les uns aux autres, et les périodes d'anarchie attestent les résultats de ces querelles intestines.

Organisation du clan.

L'armée. — La fonction du *fama* est dominée par la nécessité d'assurer la fortune du clan, celui-ci n'ayant pas, en principe, d'autre raison d'être que de procurer à ses membres le plus possible de satisfactions matérielles.

Or, il était dans les mœurs de ces pays de faire fortune par le pillage à main armée. Lors de l'élection du *fama*, c'étaient l'arc et le carquois qui symbolisaient l'activité clanique ; suivant l'argument qu'en tirait Kanou-banyouma, il fallait que les flèches retombassent sur quelqu'un : par conséquent, il fallait faire la guerre. C'était par là que l'on acquérait ces esclaves, grâce auxquels les grands — et chacun aspirait à l'être — satisfaisaient leurs désirs. Voilà pourquoi, dans le clan, l'organisation essentielle était celle de la force armée.

A la base de cette organisation était la répartition des esclaves en chefferie (*dyon'-kuntigi-ya*). Envisagée dans son ensemble, l'armée comptait un certain nombre de fractions dites *sen'* (littéralement : pied). Ce n'était point là une unité précise, mais seulement la dénomination en usage pour désigner un groupe constitué pourvu d'un chef. Chaque *sen'* comptait un nombre variable d'hommes. L'on appelait *bolo* (littéralement : bras) une « bande» composée d'un nombre également variable de *sen'* et commandée par un chef important.

Lorsque l'armée était rangée pour une bataille, elle se présentait avec une masse centrale dite *disi* (littéralement, poitrine) constituée par le corps des *sofa*, flanquée à droite et à gauche de *bolo* respectivement appelés *kini-n-bolo* (= bras droit) et *numa-n-bolo* (= bras gauche) (1) ; chacun de ces *bolo* était composé de *furu-ba dyon'*, encadrés de *ton'-dyon'*. En arrière du *disi*, une réserve spéciale était formée de purs *ton'-dyon'* : c'était le *ton'-koro-bolo* ».

Le *fama* désignait lui-même le chef de toute expédition de guerre (*keli-tigi*) : c'était, tantôt un *dyon'-kuntigi*, tantôt quelque membre de la communauté du *fama* ; parfois, le *fama* lui-même prenait, en personne, le commandement.

La garde personnelle du *fama* était assurée par le corps des *sofa*. En principe, les *sofa* étaient, suivant l'étymologie du mot, des proposés aux soins des chevaux : ce n'étaient point pour cela des cavaliers, ni nécessairement des palefreniers. Les plus jeunes faisaient offices de pages et, quelquefois, de palefreniers ; les vieux étaient des hommes de confiance que le *fama* chargeait de missions. Les *sofa* constituaient l'un des éléments, et non des moindres, de ce que l'on pourrait appeler la maison du *fama* : ensemble de gens employés à diverses fonctions sous l'autorité immédiate du *fama*.

Ils étaient recrutés parmi les jeunes prisonniers faits dans les razzias et autres opérations de guerre.

Lorsque le *fama* conduisait une expédition de longue durée, ou prenait part à une affaire importante, il aimait ordonner et présider le *soli* des « jeunes » vaincus et y faire participer un ou plusieurs de ses nombreux enfants.

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(1) Il convient de remarquer cette manière d'anthropomorphisation de l'armée qui comportait ainsi tête, bras, pieds, poitrine.

C'était un moyen de s'assurer le dévouement, généralement indéfectible, de ces *soli-ma* dont il avait honoré la « naissance » à la vie d'homme et qui, par la cérémonie elle-même, se trouvaient liés à certains de ses enfants ; ils venaient, le plus habituellement, grossir les rangs des *sofa*.

Cette armée, en quelque sorte régulière, recevait, en principe, tout ce qui lui était nécessaire du *fama* : montures, équipement, armement, munitions... Par là, se justifiait le prélèvement considérable que le *fama* opérait sur le butin : c'était, à la fois, pour le rémunérer de ce qu'il avait fourni, pour lui permettre de renouveler ce qui avait été détruit et, enfin, pour l'accroissement du matériel nécessaire à la guerre ; spécialement, aussi, pour accroître le trésor en vue de toutes éventualités.

L'armée s'augmentait de contingents alliés ou volontaires. Les alliés avaient avec le clan un pacte solennel, basé sur un serment religieux et réciproque. Leur contribution leur donnait droit à une fraction du butin. Quant aux volontaires, qui s'engageaient pour une opération ou une campagne, c'était suivant des conditions préalablement fixées.

Aux alliés, comme aux volontaires, le *fama* fournissait, le cas échéant, ce qui leur était nécessaire, moyennant un prélèvement sur la part à leur revenir. D'autrefois, un tiers, étranger à l'opération, montait, équipait, armait des hommes pour cette opération, à charge d'une rétribution préalablement débattue.

En bref, le pillage à main armée était une industrie dirigée par le *fama* qui admettait, à son gré, des participants intéressés. Les opérations heureuses aboutissaient à l'hégémonie du clan sur des régions qu'il exploitait alors suivant ses méthodes propres. Le butin, résultat immédiat, devait, à la fois, couvrir les frais de l'entreprise et accroître le trésor du clan.

Par là, s'explique aussi que l'armée clanique se mettait, moyennant rémunération, au service de qui lui demandait appui, soit comme allié, soit comme mercenaire ou à tout autre titre, et plus simplement, *proprio motu*, elle intervenait dans les différends lorsqu'elle y voyait un profit possible (1).

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(1) Voir ci-après comment le *fama* de Ségou prêta son appui à un marabout du Sous. — Les Bambara intervinrent aussi nombre de fois

Les *ton'-dyon'* se distinguaient par une coiffure spéciale : la tête complètement rasée, à l'exception de trois touffes formant deux tresses sur le sinciput et une sur la nuque.

Les esclaves de la maison du *fama* se reconnaissaient au tatouage (1), devenu célèbre, consistant en trois entailles parallèles, allant de la tempe au maxillaire inférieur, de chaque côté de la face. En outre, ces gens empruntaient le *dyamu* du *fama* (Kouloubali, Dyara...), comme ces domestiques que, dans certaines provinces de France, le peuple nomme d'après leur patron, parce qu'ils font partie de la maison à laquelle ce patron donne son nom.

Les troupes d'élite (*sofa*, *ton'-dyon'*...) étaient armées de la hache (*sukala*) (2). Les chefs importants avaient aussi une hache, insigne de commandement, parfois en métal précieux, cuivre ou argent ; celle du *fama* était en or et ciselée (3).

La lance (*tama*) était souvent, elle aussi, une arme de distinction, tandis que le commun des guerriers était pourvu d'arcs (*kala*) et de flèches (*bimye*), celles-ci généralement empoisonnées.

Le fusil (*marfa*) fut introduit peu à peu, apporté par les colporteurs indigènes (*dyula*). La chronique prétend que les premières armes à feu furent introduites chez les « gens du Ségou », à l'époque de Mamari, par une armée venue de Kong, et que c'étaient des fusils genre tromblon.

Les chefs, les notables portaient, suspendu à l'épaule, un sabre courbe (*m-pan*), d'origine probablement turque ; c'était plutôt une arme de parade.

Les troupes n'avaient pas de tenue spéciale. Quelques personnages étaient seuls reconnaissables, à certains insignes, et il arriva que quelques individus furent honorés de marques distinctives : Mamari, nous dit la chronique,

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dans les querelles intestines du Khasso, du Boundou, du Fouta... Leur rôle de mercenaires est mis en évidence dans le Tarikh es Soudan.

(1) En général, il n'est pas prudent de s'appuyer sans circonspection sur le tatouage comme signe distinctif de race ou même de condition ; celui dont il est ici question a été appliqué non seulement aux individus de toute origine, mais encore a été emprunté par les gens les plus divers, par une manière de snobisme.

(2) Nom d'instrument dérivé de *suka*, variante de *sus* : percer. Les hommes armés de la hache avaient, en effet, pour mission spéciale de « faire brèche » dans le mur d'enceinte de l'agglomération attaquée.

(3) La chronique rapporte qu'après avoir tué Dékoro, Tonmassa emporta la hache en or, insigne du commandement suprême.

fit habiller Ngolo Dyara de rouge, c'était là une livrée particulièrement recherchée ; de même, il fit cadeau à Tonmassa d'une culotte dont l'ampleur inusitée le signalait à l'attention de tous.

Des tambours (*dunu*) et des trompes (*buru*) constituaient une clique militaire à laquelle s'adjoignaient des xylophones (*bala*) et divers accessoires, notamment des sonnailles (*tana*, *veleni*...) et des calebasses à demi-remplies de cailloux ou de graines.

Le tambour avec lequel on battait le ralliement et qui, pour cela, était, en quelque sorte, annonciateur de la guerre, était le *tabala*. La caisse, formée d'une écuelle généralement en bois, quelquefois en poterie, était recouverte d'une peau de bœuf, souvent non tannée, tendue à l'aide de lanières qui passaient sous le fond de la caisse. En principe, la peau était toujours renouvelée à la mort du *fama*. A ce moment-là, on la crevait, en signe de deuil (1), et on la remplaçait par la peau du bœuf égorgé pour honorer le défunt. Le *tabala* était porté par deux hommes, qui le tenaient horizontalement entre eux au moyen de manettes en cuir, tandis qu'il était frappé par un troisième individu à l'aide d'une boule retenue à son poignet par une lanière de cuir.

D'autres tambours étaient de formes et de dimensions variables. Les uns se portaient sous le bras (*dunkan'*) ou suspendus à l'épaule (*tama*) ; certains, montés sur trois pieds (*dange*), offraient une surface vibrante horizontale. Le plus réputé était le *denu-ba* ; formé d'un fût cylindrique évidé intérieurement, mais gardant une certaine épaisseur, le *denu-ba* atteint et dépasse même un mètre de haut ; souvent il est un peu rétréci à l'herminette vers le tiers inférieur. La surface vibrante, constituée par une forte peau, renforcée en son centre par une peau rapportée et cousue, est tendue à l'aide de chevilles enfonce à 15 ou 20 centimètres du bord supérieur. L'instrument est, pour s'en servir, incliné sur une fourche qui lui sert de support. Le tambourinaire est armé d'une sorte de crochet en bois habilement cintré pour former ressort et muni, à l'une de ses extrémités, d'une partie arrondie, formée souvent par un renflement ménagé à cet effet, ou, d'autre fois, par une boule en cuir. La main demeurée libre du tambourinaire donne le contre-temps.

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(1) Il convient de remarquer la détérioration de cet objet qui est à rapprocher de la mise à mort du chien du défunt, de la poule donnée morte aux parents de l'extérieur... Ce sont là, évidemment, des « brisures intentionnelles ».

Dans certains cas, les *denu-ba* sont accouplés par deux : le tambourinaire les frappe de manière à obtenir une variété de sons susceptibles de servir de base à une correspondance conventionnelle. Ainsi, non seulement la troupe était habituée à obéir à des batteries appropriées, mais encore était maintenue en rapport avec des fractions éloignées d'elle. Habilement manœuvré, le *denu-ba* permettait de transmettre des nouvelles à des distances considérables, parce que d'autres *denu-ba* recevaient et retransmettaient à leur tour ces mêmes nouvelles. C'est pourquoi l'on disait que le *denu-ba* parlait et c'est sans doute à ce rôle important qu'il dut d'être tellement estimé que les *ton'-dyon'* le tinrent pour un oracle et, honorant d'un culte le dieu qui parlait par lui, firent du *denu-ba* le *boli* de ce dieu. C'est ainsi que des victimes humaines furent sacrifiées aux tambours des *ton'-dyon'*, spécialement sous Ngolo, au rapport de la chronique.

Les trompes (*buru*) étaient, autrefois, des olifants d'ivoire : le Tedzkiret cite les trompes en ivoire, dont un certain Bambara nommé Maro faisait usage, et Mage rapporte qu'Ahmadou, sultan du Ségou, fit remettre aux Bambara leurs trompes en ivoire à l'occasion de la fête musulmane.

Mais ces olifants d'ivoire ont disparu, râflés sans doute par les commerçants. On leur substitua des cornes, déjà en usage concurremment avec eux. Les cornes des grandes antilopes sont recherchées pour cet office : une ouverture est pratiquée à quelques centimètres de la partie effilée et, par cette embouchure, le sonneur fait vibrer la trompe, sans en tirer autre chose qu'un bruit fort mais peu varié.

Le xylophone (*bala*) comporte une table formée par des lames de bois dur, sous chacune desquelles est placée, en manière de résonnateur, une calebasse de dimension variable suivant la note. Cette calebasse présente une section obturée par la surface vibrante que forme une toile blanche et très dense tissée par une araignée. Habilement manié, le *bala* donne des airs variés, mais qui paraissent grêles, comparés au bruit des tambours et au hurlement des trompes.

Quant aux sonnailles accessoires, elles n'offrent pas un intérêt particulier.

Il n'y avait pas d'expédition un peu importante sans griot (*dyeli*) (1). On a fait au griot une réputation déplorable, parce qu'il emploie trop souvent sa faconde pour exploiter les riches et les puissants. Cette indignité ne doit, cependant, pas faire oublier que le griot a eu souvent un rôle qui ne manquait pas de grandeur. Archiviste attitré d'une ou plusieurs familles, il était en outre, dans le cadre indigène, une manière de barde épique, débitant ses récits sous forme de chants qu'il accompagnait lui-même avec un instrument à corde analogue à une guitare ou à une petite harpe rudimentaire. Dans sa bouche, les traditions, enveloppées de ce merveilleux si cher aux indigènes, avaient l'allure de nos chansons de geste. Et par là, le griot méritait vraiment son titre de *dyeli* (maître).

Malheureusement, réduit pour vivre à faire emploi de ses connaissances, il se laissa aller à la médisance, à la calomnie, qui le rendirent tellement redoutable que, pour acheter son silence, ses victimes se dépouillaient à son profit, tout autant que ceux qu'il enivrait de flagorneries retentissantes.

A l'armée, le griot suscitait et encourageait les braves. La veille, ou peu de temps avant une affaire importante, il était de coutume qu'il y eut une grande assemblée où, surexcités par les chants épiques des griots, non moins que par les danses de guerre et les copieuses libations, les guerriers s'engageaient, sous serment, à accomplir tel ou tel acte d'extrême audace. C'était alors l'office du griot d'enregistrer, en quelque sorte, publiquement ce serment et lorsqu'ensuite l'acte avait été accompli avec succès, d'en faire une auréole de gloire à son auteur. Mais s'il advenait que celui-ci n'avait été qu'un fanfaron, le griot devait stigmatiser sa couardise, et il n'y manquait pas, car il y trouvait autant de profit qu'à célébrer la gloire d'un brave.

A l'heure critique, où l'armée était menacée de céder aux mauvais instincts qui engendrent la débandade, la panique et la défaite, le griot trouvait souvent l'inspiration heureuse qui relève le courage défaillant, tantôt par l'ironie cinglante, tantôt par l'exaltation des hauts faits des ancêtres, tantôt en projetant une lueur tragique sur la route de la défaite entrevue. La chronique nous le montre dans ce rôle lorsque Ma-n-son, tenu en échec par la résistance opiniâtre de Tyitya, se voit — honte suprême — abandonné par ses femmes qui ont décidé de rentrer, sans lui, à Ségou. Toute la nuit les griots chantèrent des chansons de guerre et, au point du jour, l'assaut terrible prouva que l'armée s'était ressaisie.

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(1) Voir ci-devant, aux pages 24 et ss., ce qui a été dit du *dyeli*.

Redoutable « maître », certes, que ce manieur de paroles. On dit qu'il sait les mots qui tuent, parce qu'il est le dépositaire des actes qui dominent la vie de chacun. Lorsque ses douze femmes vinrent ensemble lui signifier leur intention arrêtée de le quitter pour rentrer, sans lui, à Ségou dont elles avaient, disaient-elles, d'autant plus la nostalgie qu'elles pressentaient la défaite prochaine, Ma-n-son leur ordonna de répéter ces propos devant les griots qu'il manda : l'acte ainsi enregistré, il les laissa libres, assuré, dès lors, de pouvoir tirer vengeance de leur défection, quand il le jugerait à propos.

Les chants des griots redits, répétés par les guerriers et le peuple, marquaient de traits ineffaçables des actions mémorables. Lorsque fut entreprise l'expédition contre Dina, nous dit la chronique, ils improvisèrent le chant qui commençait par cette phrase : « A l'ombre du touffu *kaminya*, la poule ne distingue pas le grain de mil du grain de sable. » C'est-à-dire que, dans le trouble de la mêlée, le guerrier ne peut faire aucune distinction : de fait, au cours de cette expédition, le pays fut entièrement saccagé et le butin fut si fructueux qu'ultérieurement il suffisait aux griots de reprendre ce chant pour réveiller l'ardeur guerrière des *ton'-dyon'*.

L'homme de haute condition est toujours accompagné de son griot, qui est pour lui tantôt un homme de confiance, tantôt seulement un simple factotum. Il est vrai, en effet, que le griot est souvent un vilain individu, triste parasite qui vit aux dépens de tous. Cependant, il en est qui tiennent honorablement leurs fonctions d'archivistes et sont très sincèrement attachés à leurs maîtres, grands et généreux seigneurs à la mode du pays, dont ils savent habilement défendre les intérêts et la réputation.

C'est par les griots de cette dernière catégorie que se transmet la tradition historique respectable, à laquelle nous avons emprunté les chroniques qui précèdent. Il n'est pas douteux que ces griots, véritables « maîtres » (*dyeli*) des traditions historiques, ont joué un rôle considérable dans la société indigène, partant leurs dires ne doivent jamais être négligés, mais, bien entendu, il convient de ne les admettre que moyennant une judicieuse critique.

Le To-da.

Par son origine, son évolution et ses contingences, le clan procède des mêmes bases sociales — communauté et confrérie — déjà étudiées, dont il n'est, en définitive, qu'un amalgame ; de sorte que ses manifestations rappellent celles de ces institutions, tout en gardant une physionomie propre.

L'un des traits les plus caractéristiques du clan, c'est le *To-da* : ainsi les gens du clan appelaient-ils familièrement la région sur laquelle ils vivaient. La signification littérale de ce mot est : « le pot de bouillie », allusion à ce qui, dans la *fla-n-ton'*, constituait l'essentiel des repas corporatifs, car on dit : « *juru-ba to, to kadi, na ka ko* : dans le repas corporatif, la bouillie est bonne et la sauce est mauvaise. »

Originairement, le *to-da* était limité à Ségou-koro et à ses environs immédiats, c'est-à-dire aux quelques villages affiliés de gré ou de force à la *ton'*. Il s'étendit progressivement le long du Niger : d'abord sur la rive droite jusqu'à Kirango ; ultérieurement, jusque vers Dina ; enfin, il s'étala largement sur les deux rives, depuis Kanga-ba jusqu'à Tombouctou.

Ce territoire était diversement organisé. La partie maîtresse bordait le Niger de Dina à Kirango, et la section Ségou-koro-Kirango y formait le domaine soumis à l'administration, que nous qualifierions directe, parce que cette zone était occupée solidement par le *fama*, sa communauté et ses *ton'-dyon'*.

Ségou-koro, qui avait vu naître et grandir le clan, était demeurée la capitale de Mamari ; c'est là qu'il aimait résider et qu'il avait installé les idoles protectrices du clan. C'était donc comme le siège de la confrérie, dont les quatre principales idoles sont demeurées connues sous le nom de : *ba Kongo-ba* ; *na n-Golo ko* ; *Nye-dinge-dun'* ; *Kolo-koloni*.

Le grand-prêtre était le fama, les autres ministres du culte étaient pris parmi les *ton'-dyon'* : ainsi, Ngolo Dyara fut *dye-n-fa*. Quiconque suivit Mamari ou ses successeurs fut affilié au culte de ces idoles. Les adeptes qui résidaient loin de Ségou-koro fondèrent des filiales qui relevaient à certains égards de la capitale, si bien que Ségou-koro fut longtemps vénérée à l'égal d'une cité sainte.

Nous ne possédons pas sur le culte de ces grandes idoles des précisions détaillées, nous savons seulement que par les traits généraux ils ne se différenciaient pas de ce que nous avons ici exposé au sujet des *nyana* à *boli*. La fête annuelle revêtait une exceptionnelle solennité, elle attirait des fidèles même des contrées éloignées. Le *fama* la présidait, nécessairement ; elle était marquée par des cérémonies essentielles : la rénovation de la profession de foi religieuse ; l'agrégation des néophytes ; le serment de loyalisme envers le *fama*.

D'ailleurs, les quatre divinités susvisées n'étaient pas les seules du panthéon bambara de Ségou (1), d'autres leur furent adjointes, les unes achetées, certaines inventées par la foi extravagante des *ton'-dyon'*. Parmi ces dernières, il faut sans doute ranger les tambours des *ton'-dyon'*, que la chronique cite plusieurs fois en nous les présentant sous un jour particulièrement sanguinaire. C'est à ces tambours-idoles que Ngolo Dyara immola ses ennemis les plus détestés, à commencer par ses parents, sur lesquels il vengea sa haine d'avoir été livré comme esclave. Et il semble que c'est sous ce despote, peut-être même à son initiative personnelle, que remonte l'institution de ces féroces divinités.

Les « gens du Ségou » tenaient aussi en haute estime les divinités des peuples vaincus : elles constituaient, à coup sûr, la partie la plus précieuse du butin de guerre. Les Toucouleurs racontent qu'à leur entrée dans Ségou-Sikoro, ils trouvèrent une idole enchaînée : c'était la divinité protectrice d'une fraction de Nono-n-kobe de la falaise de Bandiagara. Dans la pensée évidente de tenir à tout jamais en esclavage ce peuple qu'ils avaient vaincu, les Bambara avaient emmené en captivité son dieu, dont ils firent assurer le culte par son propre prêtre, gardé également captif à cette fin (2).

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(1) Dans « Les Bambara », le R. P. Henry cite, outre *ba Kongo-ba* et *na n-Golo-ko*, deux autres idoles, *Kuantara* et *Safolo*.

(2) Voir Desplagnes, *Le plateau central nigérien*, p. 175.

Ainsi qu'il résulte de la chronique, le *Komo* figurait lui aussi dans le panthéon de Ségou, et si l'on se reporte à ce que nous avons dit de cette confrérie, l'on comprend le rôle considérable qu'elle joua dans le *To-da*, lorsque le *fama* lui-même tint le rôle de *Komo-tigi*.

Il n'est aucunement douteux que l'anthropophagie fut en honneur dans des circonstances déterminées et suivant un rituel approprié, notamment lors de l'élection du *fama*. De plus, il est manifeste que sous le régime despotique du clan, la vie humaine était de peu de prix. Les atrocités de Dékoro, la passivité de ses victimes, le concours prêté à l'exécution de ses pires forfaits par ceux-là mêmes qui étaient directement menacés de les subir, ne sont pas des cas isolés ; ils appartiennent au fond propre à l'âme soudanaise en général, sinon par nature, du moins par un atavisme fort ancien. C'est parce que cette manière de disposer arbitrairement de la vie des individus a été pratiquée pendant de longs siècles que les Bambara demeurent souvent impassibles devant la mort, tant ils considèrent sa survenance, même inopinée et du fait propre de l'homme, comme une éventualité quotidienne possible dont il n'y a pas lieu de s'étonner.

C'est encore à la pratique de cette implacable férocité qu'il faut faire remonter comme à sa source naturelle cette sorte de foi ardente, intransigeante autant qu'horrible à nos yeux, à laquelle tous les sentiments d'affection, par nous qualifiés naturels, sont étrangers : pressentant avoir éveillé en son fils, Ntyi, une ambition périlleuse pour lui, Ngolo, convaincu qu'il ne peut échapper au danger, qu'il a ainsi lui-même suscité, que par un sacrifice à la mesure de cette éventualité, il immole, de sa propre main et sans hésitation, son petit-fils, le fils de ce même Ntyi.

L'on entend souvent dire au Bambara entêté dans son idée : « Tu peux me tuer, je ne céderai pas. » La résistance de Tyitya montre que cette affirmation n'est pas une fanfaronnade ; dans cette affaire apparaît, en outre, sous l'un de ses aspects, cette aspiration vers l'égalité, si foncièrement propre à la race, qui empêche le Bambara de s'incliner devant son congénère et dont il faut voir un autre exemple dans cette résistance des « vieux » que Mamari ne put briser, lui aussi, que par le meurtre.

Pour achever de tracer la physionomie, en quelque sorte mystique, du clan de « ceux de Ségou », rappelons qu'après sa mort, Mamari fut honoré d'un culte en tant que *fa*, de la part de ses descendants naturels ; en tant que *fama*, de la part des gens du clan ; en tant que grand-prêtre, de la part des fidèles du culte des idoles. Sous cette égide fusionnèrent de la sorte des gens qui se reconnurent liés entre eux, parce que fils spirituels de Mamari. C'est de cette qualité que se réclamaient les *ton'-dyon'* usurpateurs du pouvoir suprême, et c'est par assimilation de cette filiation à la génération naturelle que fut réglée en fait la successibilité des chefs *ton'-dyon'* à la charge de *fama*. Ce culte emprunte d'ailleurs son allure à la religion des idoles : Tonmassa, inaugurant son ministère de grand-prêtre, honore d'abord les mânes de Mamari, et son offrande est pareille à celle que l'on est accoutumé à faire à *ba Kongo-ba* lors de l'élection du *fama* : un homme et un bœuf.

Tels sont quelques-uns des traits caractéristiques de la foi qui unissait entre eux les « gens du Ségou » par des liens que, sans métaphore, l'on peut qualifier sanglants. Certes, les principaux personnages du clan surent s'abriter derrière ces cultes pour réaliser leurs ambitieux desseins et assouvir leurs haines personnelles et l'on peut dire que, de ce point de vue, la religion fut un moyen de domination, mais il serait un peu simple d'en conclure que ces cultes n'avaient d'autre raison d'être que la nécessité d'entretenir la terreur comme base de la puissance du *fama*. Cette opinion superficielle doit être écartée, parce que ce n'est pas de l'extérieur, mais bien en se plaçant dans le milieu indigène, qu'il faut juger ces faits : il apparaît alors sans doute possible qu'ils sont de même ordre que les nombreux phénomènes examinés précédemment.

Ce puissant foyer religieux animait le clan tout entier. L'impulsion, la direction, le contrôle appartenaient au *fama*, dont le rôle était conditionné, comme nous l'avons dit, par l'état d'esprit des *furu-ba dyon'* et particulièrement des *ton'-dyon'* représentés, les uns et les autres, par ces sortes de mandataires qu'étaient, sous un certain angle, les *dyon'-kuntigi*. Comment, dès lors, ne pas voir cette manière de circulation spirituelle qui, supposée émanée des idoles, inspirait le *fama* et les *furu-ba dyon'*, puis revenait aux idoles sous forme de culte ? Comment ne pas être impressionné par cette constante obsession du surnaturel ? Elle hante partout et toujours tous ces gens, qui l'expriment sous des formes en harmonie parfaite avec le milieu indigène, tandis qu'elles apparaissent comme ridicules à la raison et à la logique de l'Européen.

Ce qui donnait encore à la section de Ségou une importance spéciale, c'était la présence de la communauté du *fama*, fixée là dans des conditions remarquables.

Il est de principe, dans toute communauté importante, que le fils premier-né soit mis à part : désigné pour succéder au *fa* quand celui-ci décédera, on le prépare à tenir son rôle en lui confiant la gestion d'une partie des biens indivis ; au fur et à mesure que le *fa* avance en âge, grandissent le rôle et l'importance de cet aîné.

Lorsque les biens de la communauté le permettent, une situation privilégiée est également faite à chacun des fils premiers-nés des diverses épouses du *fa*, parce que celui-ci est obligé d'équilibrer ses faveurs entre ses épouses, dont la jalousie a une répercussion en tout. A la mort du *fa*, surgissent bien des difficultés qui n'ont pas d'autre origine que ses préférences trop marquées : ainsi en fut-il de la guerre fraticide qui éclata à la mort de Ngolo Dyara. Nyana-n-koro, fils de la femme libre et favorite, adulé du vivant du *fa*, ne voulut pas accepter d'être primé par Ma-n-son, fils de l'épouse la plus ancienne, mais d'origine servile.

La communauté du *fama* de Ségou s'étant extraordinairement enrichie en s'appropriant les biens du clan dont le *fama* n'avait, en droit, que la gestion, tous les fils premiers-nés des *fama* successifs furent largement apanagés et leurs résidences personnelles s'étagèrent le long ou à proximité du Niger.

Ainsi, des fils de Ngolo Dyara : Ntyi résidait à Bamabougou ; Ma-n-son, à Pébala ; Nyana-n-koro, à Ségoukoro ; Péné Mamourou, à Ségou-bougou ; Ba, à Bia ; Séri, à Sofinna ; Dyon-kelé, à Kirango...

Les fils de Ma-n-son résidèrent respectivement : Da, à Pébala, puis à Bamabougou ; Tyéfolo, à Koké ; Ben, à Kirango ; Nyéné-m-ba, à Oïtala ; Sibiri, à Diani ; Fissa, à Nango...

Par suite encore de ces usurpations, des apanages furent constitués au bénéfice d'autres parents du *fama* : par exemple, Dyidi, frère du *fama* Ngolo Dyare, reçut tout le territoire compris entre Dougou-fin et Dyambougou (plus de 600 villages) (1).

Enfin, Mamari et, après lui, les autres *fama*, eurent l'habileté de placer les principaux *dyon'-kuntigi* sous la tutelle des divers membres de leurs communautés respectives : mères, épouses, fils, frères... De Sanou Saro, mère de Mamari, dépendait le *dyon'-kuntigi* Na-n-koro-ba n-Zangné ; de sa femme, mère de son fils aîné Ba-dyi, relevaient Kolé, chef des *sofa*, et Allah-n-Siré ; Tonmassa ressortissait de son fils Bakari.

Par ce moyen, se trouvait réalisée entre la communauté du *fama* et les gens du clan, une solidarité étroite et profonde qui, ajoutée à la solidarité spirituelle que nous venons de signaler, aurait formé un bloc inébranlable si l'un et l'autre éléments n'avaient été travaillés par les ferments de dissociation signalés au cours de cette étude.

Le *To-da* empruntait au Niger la plus grande partie de sa prospérité : c'était par cette grande artère que se faisaient le plus commodément les communications et les transports, et c'est de la nécessité de l'utiliser le mieux possible que résulta l'organisation des Somono.

Etymologiquement, Somono ne signifie par autre chose que « pêcheur ». Comme tout métier exercé exclusivement, la pêche professionnelle engendre une sorte de déchéance, et c'est pourquoi on dit que les Somono sont gens de caste. Ce statut dérive surtout de l'hégémonie que le clan exerça sur les Somono, sans lesquels il ne pouvait vraiment exploiter le fleuve.

Après les avoir agrégés de force, Mamari en accrut le nombre en y incorporant des *furu-ba dyon'* ; si bien qu'en définitive, les Somono furent sous la dépendance étroite de la *furu-ba*. Aux ordres du *fama* et de ses commettants, ils devaient le service de la batellerie pour la traversée du fleuve, pour les transports par eau dans toutes les directions et ils étaient soumis à une redevance en nature prélevée sur le produit de la pêche, étant entendu que le régime de celle-ci demeurait fixé suivant les coutumes traditionnelles des Somono.

En retour, les Somono étaient les protégés du clan et leurs chefs bénéficiaient des largesses du *fama* : une part du butin leur était dévolue, parfois.

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(1) Au rapport de la chronique.

Peu à peu, les quelques familles primitives de Somono furent noyées dans le flot des nouveaux venus : *furu-ba dyon'*, devenus Somono par autorité du *fama* ; individus d'origine diverses ayant adopté *proprio motu* le statut Somono parce qu'ils le trouvaient préférable au leur ; descendants des uns et des autres, et donc Somono par droit de naissance.

C'est également l'exploitation des biens du *To-da* qui a entraîné une organisation analogue des bergers ou Peuls. Remarquons, d'abord, que ce dernier terme n'a pas, ici, une valeur ethnique : il désigne tous ceux qui font, de l'élevage ou de la garde du bétail, une occupation habituelle et professionnelle. Ici, encore, il y a une sorte de déchéance, car le pasteur professionnel ne saurait vivre en dehors d'une tutelle, il faut qu'il se rattache à un maître, c'est le sort de tous les professionnels, et c'est pourquoi le Bambara dit de lui : *fula fantan'* (1) (faible Peul), pour marquer qu'il est *in potestate*.

Pour assurer le meilleur rendement des troupeaux du clan, Mamari recourut aux Peuls, comme pour exploiter le Niger il avait mis la main sur les Somono. C'est ainsi que furent constituées les agglomérations des Peuls dits *furu-ba fla-u* = Peuls de la *furu-ba*. Ce sont des gens libres, mais astreints à un service clanique. Les rangs de ces premiers Peuls furent grossis d'autorité par des *furu-ba dyon'* ; des pasteurs d'élection fusionnèrent aussi avec eux et les enfants des uns et des autres naquirent *furu-ba fla-u*. De sorte que Ngolo Dyara put constituer douze campements de ces *furu-ba fla-u*. Ma-n-son les divisa en deux tribus : celle des Dyanna (gens de Dyan) et celle des Bonguéna (gens de Bongué). Les *furu-ba fla-u* parlent bambara et rares sont ceux qui pourraient, avec quelque titre, prétendre à une origine ethnique peule.

Avec les Somono et les Peuls, nous venons de voir le procédé d'exploitation du clan, car toute population à laquelle il s'impose est traitée de même : il exige de chacun des éléments qu'il s'assimile une contribution appropriée à ses moyens d'existence. Le régime des pêcheurs et des pasteurs fut celui des agriculteurs.

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(1) Voir cette apostrophe en manière d'insulte au chapitre VII, ci-après, dans la querelle de Ma-n-son et de Bacari Dyan.

Là encore, les *furu-ba dyon'* vinrent fusionner avec les populations rurales ; bien qu'ils fussent parqués dans des villages spéciaux, cet isolement n'empêcha jamais des relations très suivies avec les populations environnantes.

Là encore, il y eut des agriculteurs par adoption. Et l'hérédité vint affermir ces gens de caste agricole dans une union étroite avec le clan.

Le clan était représenté partout où besoin était par des fonctionnaires chargés de ses intérêts. En principe, ces représentants n'intervenaient pas dans les affaires locales, ils avaient pour mission d'éviter ou de réprimer les actes d'hostilité, d'assurer la rentrée des redevances, de faire exécuter les ordres du *fama*. En fait, s'autorisant des devoirs de leur charge, ils modifiaient toutes choses en conformité des aspirations du clan, parce qu'ils disposaient de la force.

Ils attiraient, sous l'égide du clan, les gens faibles et les gens de caste toujours en quête d'un maître puissant et généreux ; ils secondaient les projets des ambitieux dans la mesure où ils cadraient avec la politique du clan ; transformaient les tributaires en alliés ; préparaient, en somme, et fournissaient toujours d'amples contingents pour le clan.

D'ailleurs, de nombreux villages choisirent pour chefs des « gens de Ségou », soit de leur propre initiative, pour entrer dans les bonnes grâces du *fama*, soit en cédant à une pression ouverte ou dissimulée. Par ce moyen, furent incorporées des régions étendues proches ou éloignées de Ségou.

On s'explique, dès lors, que le renom de force et de puissance du *fama* s'étendait au loin, colporté d'ailleurs par ces émissaires en continuels déplacements que sont les *dyula* et, plus généralement, les commerçants de toute race et de toute origine qui venaient dans le Ségou pour y trafiquer.

C'est pourquoi le secours de Mamari fut sollicité par un marabout du Sous, Ali ben Haidara, attaqué dans sa zaouia par le sultan Er Rechid. Mamari, ayant reçu d'Ali deux captives espagnoles ou portugaises, l'autorisa à résider à Tombouctou et refusa de le livrer à Er Rechid qui avait envoyé des troupes pour le capturer (1).

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(1) La tradition rapporte qu'après un séjour de quelques mois, Ali serait retourné dans le Sous en emmenant plusieurs milliers de Noirs en

De même, le renom de Ngolo Dyara pénétra jusqu'au Maroc : Jackson, consul anglais à Mogador, en 1800, parle de lui, sous le nom déformé de Wooloo, comme exerçant la domination sur Diénné et Tombouctou.

3. Clan des Massa-si ou des « gens du Kaarta »

En bref, ce clan ne diffère pas essentiellement de celui des gens de Ségou, dont nous venons d'étudier la génèse, l'évolution et le fonctionnement. En voici les caractéristiques propres.

Le début est marqué par quelques alliances, par fraternisation, serment ou mariage, entre Sounsan ou Massa Kouloubali et *fa* Siné Dyara, des Taraoré, des Konaré. Ce petit noyau vit et prospère par le banditisme dont le produit est réparti suivant les conventions des participants.

Puis les Kouloubali prennent une place prépondérante en confiscant une caravane d'esclaves. Ils s'attachent ces esclaves par serment et fondent, de cette façon, une manière d'association (*ton'*) où l'on discerne les éléments suivants :

1. Le *fama*, pris dans la famille des Kouloubali-Massa-si ; les membres de cette famille et leurs alliés, au premier rang desquels *fa* Siné Dyara ou ses descendants ; Kassi Konaré ou ses descendants ;
2. Les *ton'-dyon'*, ensemble des gens qui ont aliéné leur liberté au profit du clan ;
3. Le clan ne vise pas à des conquêtes territoriales, mais bien à subjuguer des populations pour tirer d'elles le maximum de profit soit en les asservissant, soit en les obligeant à des prestations diverses : d'où cet autre élément du clan, les tributaires.

Le récit historique nous montre que la région occupée par les gens du clan des Massa-si, ou qui leur a été soumise, a, pour ainsi dire, continuellement varié ; la capitale, elle aussi, s'est déplacée suivant les circonstances. Par

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vue d'attaquer Er Rechid ; mais celui-ci étant mort dans l'intervalle, Ali licencia ses mercenaires, qui furent alors engagés par Ismaïl, le nouveau sultan. Ils auraient contribué à former le corps des Abid, ou soldats nègres spécialement attachés à la garde du sultan du Maroc.

tout cela apparaît le vrai caractère de cet organisme : c'est un parasite.

En principe, il n'a pas touché à ce qui ne contrariait pas ses intérêts, et, dans cette limite, il a laissé les populations vivre selon leurs coutumes. Toutefois, dans les régions soumises à son autorité, son action n'a pas été sans influence, les moyens qu'il mit en œuvre étant de tous points analogues à ceux appliqués par le clan du Ségou.

Organisation et fonctionnement.

En décrivant les funérailles d'un *fama* massa-si et les cérémonies d'installation de son successeur, nous allons voir en action les principales coutumes et les personnages importants.

Lorsque le *fama* meurt, le chef des esclaves prend le commandement de la maison royale ; il en fait surveiller toutes les issues, puis mande les femmes du *fama* et leur retire les bijoux et objets de valeur. Il enferme les richesses dans une case dont il garde la clef.

Pendant ce temps, on crève les tambours de guerre (*tabala*) et des *sofa* partent prévenir les membres de la famille.

A l'héritier présomptif qui se présente, le chef des captifs montre le cadavre du défunt, pour qu'il en reconnaisse l'identité, et les richesses, afin qu'il s'assure que les biens précieux n'ont pas disparu. Après quoi, des *sofa* sont envoyés dans la capitale pour proclamer le décès du *fama*, pour que chacun apporte son offrande pour les funérailles. Les dons consomptibles serviront aux repas funéraires, les autres (argent, chevaux, étoffes...) entreront dans le trésor royal, bien qu'en principe ils doivent servir à faire des aumônes aux pauvres gens.

Le cadavre est lavé, enseveli, puis inhumé. En général, l'inhumation a lieu à l'intérieur de la maison royale, à l'endroit où le défunt affectionnait se tenir. Si c'est dans le sol d'une case que le défunt est enterré, cette case est abandonnée après en avoir muré la porte.

La porte du réduit central (*tata*) est, elle aussi, murée et l'on en ouvre une autre.

Sur la tombe, l'on égorge des bœufs blancs : leurs peaux sont employées à recouvrir les *tabala* ; leurs chairs, offertes aux mânes du défunt, sont partagées entre les membres de la famille, les alliés, les familiers... Les femmes se lamentent, pleurent et chantent les louanges du mort en compagnie de gens de caste qui organisent tout. Au dehors, des repas et des sortes d'orgies avec danses bruyantes et chants sont organisés en l'honneur du défunt.

Ce cérémonial se poursuit durant sept jours.

A l'expiration de ce délai, en principe, le nouveau *fama* est proclamé publiquement. A cet effet, le chef des captifs fait ouvrir la porte du *tata* qui avait été murée et toute l'assistance se réunit sur la grande place, devant la maison du *fama*. Sont présents, le nouvel élu, les membres de la famille des Massa-si, les alliés, les tributaires, les chefs *ton'-dyon'* et les *sofa*.

Un bœuf a été égorgé et offert aux mânes du défunt. La peau en est étendue au centre de l'espace libre enfermé par l'assistance ; l'on étale par dessus la peau de mouton, à laquelle sont fixées des amulettes précieuses et qui sert, depuis longtemps, de tapis aux *fama* massa-si. Un bonnet en écarlate, orné d'amulettes, de torques d'or pour les oreilles, de lourds bracelets d'argent constituent également de précieuses reliques familiales.

C'est au représentant de la famille de Kassi Konaré qu'il appartient de faire asseoir le nouvel élu sur la peau de mouton, de le coiffer du bonnet en écarlate et de le parer des anneaux d'or et des bracelets d'argent ; après quoi, il tient au nouveau *fama* un discours où il résume la politique suivie par son défunt prédécesseur et énumère les desiderata des gens du clan.

Alors, le chef des esclaves se prosterne devant le nouveau *fama* et se remet entre ses mains pour figurer que tous les *ton'-dyon'* lui sont soumis, et il lui présente individuellement les principaux groupes d'esclaves, de tributaires...

Une cérémonie réunit le nouveau *fama*, les principaux Massa-si, leurs alliés et les principaux chefs des esclaves et les tributaires au bois sacré de l'idole protectrice du clan, en vue du serment réciproque de loyalisme. Une communion rituelle suit.

De longues et bruyantes fêtes, où le *dlo* (bière de mil) coule à flots, où les victuailles abondent et qu'accompagnent des chants et des danses, marquent la liesse générale. Elles durent sept jours, mais ce n'est que le 40e jour après le décès que le nouveau *fama* est réputé définitivement installé.

En principe, le nouvel élu doit abandonner le soin de sa communauté personnelle à son héritier présomptif. En fait, cet abandon n'est, le plus souvent, que fictif : le *fama* confond ses biens propres et ceux du clan dont il a l'administration, si bien qu'en définitive, les Massa-si et tout ce qui dépend d'eux, personnes et biens, sont partie inhérente et inséparable du clan. Sous le couvert de cette confusion, la tendance générale et tenace de tous les *fama* a été de travailler sans relâche à la confiscation du clan au profit de la communauté des Massa-si. Du moins ont-ils réussi à rendre leur charge absolument héréditaire, sans contestation possible, si bien même que l'élection se borne à reconnaître pour *fama* celui précisément qui est tenu par les Massa-si comme le *fa* de leur communauté.

De là, encore, le rôle prépondérant des Massa-si, qui sont gouverneurs de provinces, chefs de corps d'armée..., affirmant par là la main-mise par la communauté Massa-si sur les biens de toute sorte du clan.

Le corps des *sofa* est plus particulièrement puissant et, par lui, le *fama* contrebalance facilement les tentatives d'insubordination dont témoignent, parfois, les chefs *ton'-dyon'*. Le chef supérieur des esclaves est d'ailleurs, lui aussi, une créature personnelle du *fama*.

Par ces moyens s'accuse l'intime union du *fama* et des *ton'-dyon'*. Elle apparaît, à l'examen, plus étroite qu'à Ségou, parce que dès l'origine, au Kaarta, le *fama* s'est assuré une prééminence incontestée sur les *ton'-dyon'*, et qu'il a su ensuite se dégager de l'emprise de la *ton'* pour, au contraire, imposer son autorité en s'appuyant sur le loyalisme des *sofa*.

Autre particularité, les principaux alliés des Massa-si, les Konaré, dits *Kala-n-ka-u* (originaires du Kala), sont les prêtres de l'idole protectrice du clan. Cette confrérie clanique est, elle aussi, très ferme et apporte au *fama* un appui extrêmement précieux en lui garantissant le loyalisme de tous. Chaque corps de troupe, chaque fraction quelconque du clan est constitué comme une filiale de cette confrérie, de telle sorte que, non seulement tout ce qui appartient mais tout ce qui touche au clan par quelque côté se réclame de cette tutelle religieuse.

Au Kaarta, comme au Ségou, les *ton'-dyon'* sont répartis en chefferies d'importance variable. Les principaux chefs *ton'-dyon'* forment, auprès du *fama*, une manière de conseil permanent du clan ; tandis que des familiers, choisis au gré du *fama*, constituent un conseil privé, dont l'influence entre souvent en conflit avec les décisions ou les desiderata du conseil des *dyon'-kuntigi*.

Le chef suprême des esclaves a bien, comme au Ségou, une charge très importante, mais, outre que c'est une créature du *fama*, l'homogénéité de la *ton'* ne permet pas à ce personnage d'être un antagoniste aussi dangereux que le *ton'-masa* au Ségou.

Les assemblées générales ont, elles aussi, une autre physionomie qu'au Ségou. Des éléments autres y figurent : en outre du *fama* et des siens, des *dyon'-kuntigi* et des *ton'-dyon'*, ce sont les alliés dont le rôle n'est pas insignifiant, et aussi des tributaires importants, Diawara et Kagoro, qui font sentir le poids de leurs avis et influent par là sur le *fama*. Ces assemblées ont, dès lors et surtout dans les circonstances graves, une indépendance qui impose des décisions au *fama*.

Les revenus du clan ne diffèrent point, en général, de ceux du Ségou.

En résumé, et par comparaison avec celui des gens de Ségou, le clan des Massa-si apparaît comme plus homogène, parce qu'il n'a pas été, à l'origine, enfermé dans le cadre d'une institution indigène préexistante. Il s'est formé et développé librement sous l'initiative de la famille Massa-si, qui s'en est toujours jalousement assuré la direction.

Il offre, par contre, la plus grande analogie avec le clan du Khasso, dont nous avons donné une étude détaillée (1).

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(1) Cf. *Les Khassonké*, dans la collection de la *Revue du Monde musulman*.

CHAPITRE VI

L'Islam

1. L'Islamisme et le Paganisme

C'est un lieu commun de dire que les Bambara sont d'irréductibles ennemis de l'Islam.

Pourtant, l'histoire affirme que, depuis des siècles, les Bambara vivent au contact de l'Islam et sont en relation étroite avec des communautés indigènes islamisées ; qu'ils recourent facilement aux bons offices des marabouts de toutes races et de tous rangs.

Sont-ils, en outre, aussi réfractaires qu'on le proclame à l'islamisation ? Les chefs des clans du Ségou et du Kaarta et certains de leurs proches ou familiers, ainsi que des notables, ont pratiqué l'Islam ; les Somono, d'origine Bambara, sont des fidèles et, qui plus est, des fervents propagandistes de la religion musulmane.

A vrai dire, le paganisme et l'islamisme ne constituent pas, chez les Bambara et, plus généralement, les Soudanais, des dogmes antagonistes, comme beaucoup d'Européens le croient et le disent. L'islamisation a, dans ces pays, une contre-partie qui la prépare et l'explique, c'est la soudanisation de l'Islam.

Raffenel rapporte, sur son séjour au Kaarta, un épisode très intéressant : « J'avais, dit-il, pour logeur, un forgeron « appelé Niany, personnage grotesque, naïf à l'excès, « d'une logique à l'avenant, au fond bon homme et sur- « tout fort amusant. Un jour, il vint se plaindre à moi que

« mes nègres se servaient d'un *satala* (1) pour puiser de « l'eau dans sa jarre.

« — Et qu'est-ce que cela peut te faire ? lui dis-je.

« — Ce que cela me fait ! dit-il d'un air vexé.

« Et il me fit l'étonnant raisonnement que voici :

« — Moi, vois-tu, je ne suis pas marabout (musulman), « et si les marabouts prennent de l'eau dans ma jarre avec « leur *satala*, l'eau qui reste sera nécessairement sanctifiée « puisqu'elle aura touché ce vase. Or, moi et mes enfants « nous buvons de cette eau et, comme nous ne savons pas « faire le salam, que nous ne jeûnons pas et que nous « mangeons du porc, Dieu (2) nous punira pour avoir « manqué à ses ordres : car, enfin, toute eau qui a touché « un *satala* rend marabout (3) celui qui en boit, c'est « ainsi que j'ai entendu dire à mon père. »

D'où il résulte qu'en somme *Ngalla* (Allah) est analogue à un de ces *nyana*, dont nous avons parlé, pour lesquels le Bambara éprouve un respect superstitieux, sans être pour cela de ses fidèles ; il évite tout contact avec ce qui le concerne, non par hostilité, mais par crainte d'encourir sa colère pour cause d'impureté ; de même qu'il a recours aux bons offices d'un *nyana* quelconque, il demande l'aide de *Ngalla* par l'intermédiaire de ses prêtres, les marabouts ; d'autre fois, il pense s'attirer les bonnes grâces de *Ngalla* en participant aux grandes fêtes musulmanes et, en imitant les rites extérieurs (4) des fidèles, il ne doute pas qu'il produit les mêmes effets qu'eux.

C'est ainsi que le païen, en tirant profit de l'Islam suivant ses propres concepts, le soudanise ; si bien qu'entre ces deux pôles, islamisme et paganisme, existent une infinité d'états intermédiaires qui les relient l'un à l'autre et qui, selon l'angle sous lequel on les observe, apparaissent tantôt comme une islamisation du Soudanais et tantôt comme une soudanisation de l'Islam.

Le père Niany, forgeron de caste, appartenait à cette catégorie d'individus qui, adonnés aux pratiques de l'occultisme indigène, tiennent l'Islam pour un hermétisme antagoniste, jusqu'au jour où ils s'aperçoivent qu'il est susceptible de leur fournir de nouveaux moyens magiques utilisables. Nombreux sont ces forgerons, magiciens à l'exemple de Niany, qui sont venus à l'Islam pour puiser à pleines mains dans l'arsenal de magisme qu'il traîne avec lui dans ces pays.

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(1) Sorte de bouilloire en cuivre ou en fer-blanc, d'origine européenne, employée par les Soudanais musulmans pour accomplir leurs ablutions rituelles.

(2) C'est-à-dire dans l'esprit de Niany, le *nyana* nommé par les Bambara *Ngalla* (Allah).

(3) C'est-à-dire adepte de *Ngalla* (Allah).

(4) Dans le culte de l'Hyène, donné ci-après, l'on peut voir comme un exemple de cette mimique dans la manière de ceux qui, après l'Hyène, viennent faire jouer, en quelque sorte, chacun des *nyana* que l'Hyène a découvert (Voir au chapitre VII).

Ainsi, toutes les confréries indigènes ont adopté la divination géomantique importée par les musulmans, si bien qu'il n'est aucun Bambara qui ne consulte le géomancien, qu'il appelle : *laturudala*, ou *kenyelala* (1), ou *buguridala* (2). Ces trois vocables attestent à eux seuls l'œuvre de soudanisation : alors que le premier a pour point de départ une déformation de l'arabe *et tereb* (la terre), les deux autres sont strictement bambara dans toutes leurs parties. Par ailleurs, les transformations du jeu géomantique témoignent, elles aussi, dans le même sens.

De là, l'on peut conclure qu'à certains égards, l'Islam a renforcé le paganisme : il est, en effet, couramment admis chez les païens, que le géomancien illettré, mais expérimenté dans cet art divinatoire, aboutit aux mêmes résultats dans ses recherches que le savant marabout guidé par le livre d'Ez Zenati : le *laturudala* réputé tire un prestige particulier de cette concordance corroborée par un livre, et c'est également une source d'influence pour le clergé des confréries.

Nous sommes ainsi amenés à vérifier les contacts entre l'Islam et le paganisme chez les Bambara qui font l'objet de cette étude.

Les récits historiques qui précèdent mettent en évidence les relations continues des chefs indigènes avec les marabouts pieux et renommés. Que surgisse une affaire litigieuse dans laquelle l'arbitrage païen échoue, et le dernier recours est l'appel à la sentence, à l'intervention du marabout, toujours alors recherchée et accueillie avec déférence ; ainsi ont agi, dans les circonstances les plus délicates, Mamari, Tonmassa, Ngolo, les fils de Ma-n-son.

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(1) Dérivé de *kenye* : sable et de *la* : poser : écrire sur ; celui qui écrit sur le sable.

(2) Dérivé de *buguri* : poussière et de *da* : poser, écrire sur : celui qui écrit dans la poussière.

Qu'il s'agisse de perpétrer un mauvais coup ou de susciter une meilleure destinée, c'est encore au marabout que les chefs font appel : Mamari contre le Massa-si Foro-koro, Ngolo, pour s'assurer une renommée qui lui survive...

En tant qu'arbitre judiciaire, il semble que le marabout tire son autorité plus peut-être de sa conduite réputée intègre et impartiale que de sa science des textes ; dans d'autres cas, c'est à son esotérisme musulman que l'on prête une valeur capitale.

Il est d'ailleurs reçu que les grands maîtres, les grands personnages soient initiés aux choses de l'Islam, comme si elles constituaient une simple branche de cet occultisme auquel ils sont spécialement adonnés. Les Kouloubali, les Dyara... et autres seigneurs des clans du Ségou et du Kaarta ont pratiqué l'islamisme (1) sans trahir le paganisme; au contraire, en lui ajoutant le lustre de ces mystères étrangers, l'on peut dire qu'ils ont soudanisé l'Islam aussi complètement que possible : ni Mamari, ni Ngolo, par exemple, n'ont été en quoi que ce soit gênés par les pratiques musulmanes, demeurés grands maîtres de leurs idoles protectrices, ils ont simplement emprunté (2) les « manières » extérieures de l'Islam.

Musulman de même sorte, le sanguinaire Dékoro qui, au moment où il fut assassiné par Tonmassa, se disposait à aller faire ses ablutions, suivi de son fidèle forgeron, porteur précisément d'un de ces *satala* que le père Niany tenait pour si compromettants.

Bien entendu, il ne faut pas que l'adoption de l'Islamisme entraîne une déviation politique susceptible de compromettre les intérêts du clan; il y aurait alors trahison, et ce fut le cas de Touro-koro Mari. Il fut mis à mort non pour son adhésion à l'Islam, mais parce qu'il s'inféodait à El Hadj Omar, au point de mettre en péril l'indépendance du clan.

Il est à remarquer que cette recherche des choses islamiques n'a pas été imposée aux Bambara par des convertisseurs fanatiques et guerriers ; en tout cas, elle remonte à une époque bien antérieure aux exploits des « gens du Macina » et de « ceux du Fouta ».

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(1) A la manière soudanaise s'entend.

(2) Cet emprunt se fait avec la gaucherie que le Noir met, par exemple, à se revêtir d'un habit européen tombé en sa possession. L'aisance de quelques-uns est une exception comme il en existe en tout.

Mungo Park signale qu'à son passage, la moitié de l'armée du Kaarta était musulmane, et nous sommes mieux encore renseignés par Raffenel : il ne s'agit évidemment, d'ordinaire, que d'un Islam soudanisé, mais c'est déjà un stade extrêmement important.

Raffenel constate, donc, qu'au culte des ancêtres, général chez les Bambara, les gens du clan Massa-si ont adjoint celui d'un *nyana* à *boli* très redouté ; qu'en outre, tous les Bambara connaissent *Ngalla* (Allah) et que, quoique ne pratiquant l'Islam que vaguement, ils se distinguent entre eux en fidèles et infidèles. Ce sont surtout les Kouloubali qui se considèrent comme musulmans et affectent de se conduire comme tels.

D'où ce curieux spectacle où éclate un dualisme si plein d'enseignement : pour la fête du Baïram, avait lieu l'assemblée de ce que l'on pourrait appeler les états généraux du clan massa-si ; les Kouloubali, chefs de ce clan, leurs parents, leurs alliés, les principaux chefs des esclaves et autres dignitaires ne manquaient pas d'assister et de contribuer de leurs personnes aux cérémonies cultuelles du *nyana*, protecteur de leur clan ; car ces assises étaient spécialement affectées au renouvellement du serment de loyalisme prêté sur cette idole. Or, concurremment, nous dit Raffenel, la fête musulmane du sacrifice du mouton se déployait au milieu de la liesse générale, dirigée, il est vrai, par des marabouts soninké, mais avec la participation de la plupart des Bambara, qui imitaient tant bien que mal les gestes des officiants et, souvent, sacrifiaient un mouton.

Et Raffenel remarque : « Tout kafirs qu'ils sont, le « Bambara ne s'en montrent pas moins respectueux à « l'égard des marabouts. Ainsi, pour les fêtes du Baïram, « les marabouts saracolés (1), autrement dits les *sila*, se « réunissent aussi à Koghé (2) et adressent des prières « au ciel pour la conservation de la vie du roi et la splen- « deur de son règne. L'usage veut que de riches présent « soient, dans cette circonstance, offerts au *sila* par le « souverain. »

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(1) Qui s'appellent eux-mêmes soninké et que les Bambara dénomment Marka.

(2) La résidence royale d'alors des chefs Massa-si.

Ce dualisme qui paraît singulier, que l'on a interprété, parfois, comme le résultat d'une empreinte islamique due à une hégémonie musulmane antérieure, est, au contraire, sans aucun doute possible, un trait essentiel du milieu indigène dans lequel toutes les religions s'épanouissent, en principe, sans contrainte, voire avec le concours bienveillant des fidèles de confessions diverses, si l'on peut ainsi parler des adeptes des innombrables *nyana*. Car c'est un fait certain que, chez les Noirs, toute religion bénéficie, *a priori* et à cause de sa nature même, d'une particulière estime.

Dans l'esprit de l'indigène, l'étranger est surtout dangereux parce qu'il est supposé détenteur de procédés magiques mystérieux. Nombre de légendes soudanaises attestent que, pour le Noir, l'abord entre étrangers est marqué par un combat dont la magie fait tous les frais. Comme conséquence de cet état d'âme, du moment où l'exercice du culte de l'étranger n'entraîne pas des calamités, non seulement ce culte est toléré, mais encore d'aucuns s'y associent d'abord comme à une manière de voie surérogataire qu'ils ajoutent à leurs propres cultes, puis, peu à peu, comme des fidèles.

L'Islam a donc, lui aussi, bénéficié de cet état d'âme. Pour le Bambara, obsédé, comme nous l'avons vu, par le surnaturel, le musulman s'impose par les manifestations extérieures et publiques de son culte. Comment n'être pas frappé par cette divinité d'Allah sans cesse proclamée tout le long du jour, ces pratiques religieuses qui s'étalent aux yeux de tous : ablutions, prières à haute voix, dans une langue inconnue, chapelet, mosquées parfois monumentales, grandes cérémonies impressionnantes.

Par ses livres, l'Islam se présente, en outre, avec un caractère de certitude qui fait défaut aux cultes noirs.

Enfin, il n'est pas douteux que le musulman instruit, proprement vêtu, qui ne s'enivre (1) pas et se conduit avec dignité (1), en impose beaucoup aux païens ; son seul exemple crée une atmosphère favorable à l'Islam.

Ainsi, certains s'efforçant au moins à copier ces manières extérieures, se trouvent entraînés vers l'Islam dont ils pratiquent les rites, sans même désirer se convertir : se vêtir de blanc, coiffer le bonnet blanc, traîner des sandales, égrener ostensiblement un chapelet, faire salam en marmotant quelques mots incompréhensibles ou en redisant invariablement : « Allah Akoubar ! », participer aux grandes cérémonies, cela suffit pour se donner un genre distingué, sans, du reste, rien abandonner des traditions païennes.

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(1) Au moins en public.

C'est à ce simple formalisme que se réduisait cet islamisme de l'armée bambara signalé par Mungo Park et des Kouloubali et autres dignitaires. Par contre, sans exception, les Bambara recherchent les recettes magiques : talismans, amulettes, remèdes et procédés de toutes sortes ; et l'Islam traîne, avec lui, tout un arsenal de magie très recherchée des Noirs.

En plus de ces attraits, l'Islam se présente aux Bambara avec des institutions qui ne s'opposent pas systématiquement aux siennes. Il admet la polygamie, le divorce, la répudiation, l'esclavage... Pratiqué de longue date par des indigènes qui l'ont habilement soudanisé, il s'adapte sans peine à toutes les situations. Le forgeron, maître ès-occultismes, n'a guère changé en devenant marabout, il a seulement acquis de nouvelles manières qui lui permettent de présider à la naissance, à la circoncision, au mariage, au décès, aux diverses cérémonies familiales ou sociales, au nom de l'Islam, mais d'un Islam si voisin du paganisme, qu'il ne s'en différencie que par le nom ; Allah devenu *Ngalla* a pris place dans le panthéon bambara au milieu des autres *nyana*, il a seulement sa « manière ».

Cette « manière » offre, d'ailleurs, dans certains cas, des avantages qui provoquent l'adhésion. Ainsi, les esclaves des vrais musulmans ont intérêt à donner d'indéniables témoignages de leur foi nouvelle pour se faire libérer : Ngolo a usé de ce moyen, nous rapporte la chronique de Ségou.

Pour échapper à l'arbitraire et à la rigueur de la coutume, la femme, et plus généralement les « gens faibles », arguent de cette prétendue conversion qui n'est qu'exceptionnellement profonde et sincère.

2. Les agents de l'Islam

Pour le peuple qui nous intéresse ici, l'on peut dire que le centre qui, directement ou indirectement, a eu le plus d'influence pour la diffusion de l'Islam, c'est la ville de Dia (1).

Dia est assurément la métropole la plus ancienne de l'Islam dans le Soudan occidental, mais d'un Islam accommodant qui transige sans difficulté avec les coutumes indigènes et fait la part large à la magie.

« La caractéristique des marabouts de Dia, c'est leur « penchant à peine déguisé vers la magie islamique. La « ville a toujours passé pour le grand centre de fabrication « des amulettes de la vallée moyenne du Niger. » (Marty, *Etudes sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan*, t. IV).

Ces marabouts appartiennent à des races fort diverses, mais ce sont ceux de race marka qui dominent et il faut leur rattacher leurs confrères bozo, sur la formation desquels ils ont toujours exercé une influence prépondérante. Des uns et des autres dérivent le plus souvent les marabouts somono.

Tous se rattachent, de façon ou d'autre, aux grands maîtres de l'Islam maure ou peul et, par eux ou leurs émissaires, relèvent de quelque confrérie. Toutefois, ce côté doctrinal n'a qu'une importance très relative auprès des conséquences considérables nées de la soudanisation de l'Islam poursuivie pendant si longtemps, sous diverses formes, par ces agents actifs et mêlés intimement à la vie locale.

Quant aux étrangers, berbères ou arabes, qui paraissent avoir de leur vivant une certaine prépondérance, ils sont, en définitive, absorbés par le milieu, auquel leurs enfants appartiennent totalement, et, par suite, sacrifient toute indépendance.

Telles sont les grandes lignes qu'il ne faut pas perdre de vue, car elles dominent l'œuvre d'islamisation pacifique, qui donne à l'Islam si bien droit de cité qu'en fait, comme ses propagandistes originaux, il a pris peu à peu figure entièrement indigène.

En tout temps, cette propagande et cette diffusion pacifiques ont fonctionné et c'est à elles qu'il faut attribuer l'ambiance islamique répandue sur les deux rives du Niger-Moyen.

La manière forte des « gens du Macina », aussi bien que des « gens du Fouta », n'a pas, à beaucoup près, été aussi efficace, et quelquefois même l'a compromise. Il faut, cependant, remarquer que les « gens du Macina » ont obtenu des résultats étendus et durables parce que l'œuvre (1) méthodique et prolongée de Cheikou Ahmadou Bari a réalisé des conversions que l'ambiance avait dès longtemps préparées.

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(1) Ville de la rive gauche du Niger, dans la province actuelle de Macina.

Par contre, le fanatisme sectaire des « gens du Fouta » a contraint, momentanément, les timorés à faire profession de foi musulmane, mais sans esprit de conversion, uniquement pour échapper à un péril menaçant ; ce péril écarté, chacun a repris son indépendance.

Les familles somono, que la tradition historique mêle aux premiers événements du clan de Ségou, les Kané, les Dyiré, les Tyéro sont encore sur place et leurs représentants sont tenus pour des musulmans éclairés et zélés. Le récit nous donne les chefs de ces familles comme des marabouts notoires déjà au début du XVIIe siècle : c'est chez Alfa Sérou Kané (2) que Soma Kouloubali vint prendre l'hospitalité. Almami Ousman Dyiré, qui résidait à Ségou-koro, s'installa à Togou pour échapper à l'importunité du voisinage de Mamari Kouloubali. Quant aux Tyéro, venus, dit-on, du pays bobo au temps de ce même Mamari, ils occupèrent une situation importante par l'un des leurs, Bari Tyéro, qui était chef des Somono.

Ces trois familles, Kané, Dyiré et Tyéro, tenues pour essentiellement Somono, remontent, sans aucun doute, à des souches soninké et bozo entremêlées, car le changement de nationalité par élection est fréquent. Les Dyiré du Ségou, dont le nom déformé a donné celui des N-Guiré de Koulikoro, s'apparentent originairement aux Bozo, Dyité ou Guité de Kabara, eux-mêmes d'origine soninké, tout comme les Guissé du Gadiaga.

Les Kané sont plus proches encore de cette origine soninké. Quant aux Tyéro, ils se rattachent à une souche bozo du Pondori (région de Diénné).

A ces champions de l'Islam sur la rive droite du Niger, correspondaient, sur la rive gauche de ce fleuve, Kara-moko Ousman Dyari, à Nyamina ; les Khomma et les Diakhaté, à Sansanding, ainsi que les chérifs qui, dans cette dernière localité, avaient à leur tête le chérif Ismaïl.

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(1) Voir cette œuvre dans *Monographie de Djénné*

(2) L'un de ses descendants, Mamadou Kané, servit d'intermédiaire à Ngolo pour rentrer en grâce auprès de Mamari. — Plus tard, parmi les trois arbitres appelés pour ramener la paix entre les fils de ce même Ngolo, se trouvait le marabout somono Birama Kané, qui résidait à Sien.

Le long du fleuve, les Bozo et les Somono ont, nécessairement, une prédominance, mais cette importance locale ne doit pas faire oublier que les uns et les autres procèdent des Soninké qui, dans tout le bassin du Niger, de Bammako à Mopti, forment le fond le plus ancien du prosélytisme musulman.

A la même époque, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, ce sont les Soninké qui islamisent tout le pays, où le clan des Massa-si va dominer au milieu de vicissitudes qui le contraindront à de continuels déplacements sans sortir, cependant, de la zone acquise à l'Islam par les Soninké. Si bien que les éléments mêmes de ce clan se trouveront peu à peu amenés à s'islamiser, à la mode indigène bien entendu, c'est-à-dire en soudanisant ce qui, dans l'Islam, leur paraît de nature à donner un cachet de supériorité à leur oligarchie.

L'empire de Cheikou Amadou Bari contraignit les Bambara qui y furent soumis à adopter les manières musulmanes et, pour beaucoup, cette conversion fut réelle. Pour ce qui nous intéresse ici, citons les collectivités Bambara qui forment la majorité de la population dans les cantons de Dérari et de Femay (cercle de Diénné). Les Bozo furent, eux aussi, profondément influencés par l'action de Cheikou Amadou Bari et plus encore, peut-être, les Somono.

Quant aux « gens du Fouta », ils firent la conquête des populations du Kaarta et du Ségou, mais leur domination n'eut pas une heureuse influence pour l'Islam.

C'est de Farabana qu'El Hadj Omar envoya aux Massa-si un messager pour leur enjoindre de se convertir. Comme nous venons de le voir, les Massa-si pratiquaient l'Islam à la soudanaise, c'est-à-dire sans rien abandonner de leurs coutumes, ils avaient pris des dehors musulmans qu'ils estimaient de bon ton.

L'ultimatum d'El Hadj Omar leur parut un défi auquel ils répondirent par la mise à mort du messager.

Omar mit son armée en marche contre les Bambara. Il les battit à Koulou, franchit le Sénégal à Soutoukoulé, entra à Kouniakari, traversa le Séro, atteignit peu après Yélimané et, sans s'arrêter, traverse le Guidionné, prend Tango, Dioka et, enfin, à Simbi, reçoit la soumission de Mamadi Kandia, chef des Kouloubali ; de Karouga, chef des Diawara ; de Nouhoun et Sambonné, chefs des Peuls du Bakounou ; de Mahoundé, chef des Kagoro.

Omar se transporte alors à Nioro, il y confisque le trésor des Massa-si, met à mort les enfants de Mamadi Kandia et impose l'Islam aux gens de Nioro ; notamment, il oblige les polygames à ne garder que quatre femmes, il répartit les autres entre ses talibés.

Ces victoires et les excès qui les accompagnèrent déterminèrent la révolte des populations indigènes. Omar fut alors assiégé dans Nioro, pendant que le reste de son armée était bloqué dans Kolomina. Il réussit à rompre l'investissement de Nioro et à se porter au secours des siens à Kolomina. Malgré un grave échec à Kandiari, il délivra Kolomina.

De là, il revint à Nioro et, ayant mis Mamadi Kandia à mort, il réussit à dominer la révolte des Bambara : dès lors, le Kaarta fut vaincu et Omar s'installa à Nioro, qu'il fortifia.

Les Diawara, entraînés et commandés par Karouga, se révoltent. Omar les bat à Diabigué, subit un échec à Bambéro, mais, en définitive, triomphe de cette sédition du Kingui.

Alors, il entre en pourparlers avec Ahmadou, sultan du Macina, en vue d'une alliance pour, d'un commun accord, abattre le Ségou. Ahmadou refuse et marche contre Omar : il est battu à Kassakaré.

Omar entre en rapport avec le chef du Ségou, Tourokoro Mari ; ce dernier, accusé de trahir son clan, est mis à mort par Kégné-Mari et remplacé par Ali (1856).

C'est à cette époque qu'Omar se heurte aux Français, à Médine. Trois années durant, son activité se trouve retenue à l'Ouest par les affaires de Médine, Koundian et Guémou (1856-1859).

En 1859, la révolte gronde de nouveau au Kaarta. Omar quitte Nioro, qu'il laisse à son dévoué serviteur Moustapha ; par Bagoïna, il contourne le Diangounté et vient tomber, à Marikoya, sur les Bambara du Kaarta et du Bélédougou. La prise de Marikoya eut un grand retentissement : cette agglomération était une sorte de capitale du paganisme et l'on raconte qu'Omar, parcourant le village en flammes, se heurtait à d'innombrables objets magiques répandus dans l'intention de le faire mourir. Avec le bout de son bâton ferré, il touchait chacun de ces objets, prononçait une formule d'exorcisme et, aussitôt, l'objet se précipitait dans le feu.

Après sa défaite, Karouga, chef des Diawara, se réfugia dans le Ségou. Il se fit donner une armée par Ali et marcha contre Omar.

Il fut vaincu par lui dans le nord du Bélédougou.

Les Bambara du Bélédougou et du Fadougou furent également vaincus, ainsi que la nouvelle armée du Ségou, accourue pour les aider.

N'ayant plus de quoi nourrir ses gens à Marikoya, Omar décide de marcher sur Ségou. Un épisode, caractéristique de ces temps de banditisme, marqua le départ : Omar décida d'abandonner, comme bouches inutiles, les femmes enlevées aux vaincus par ses fidèles, et ces malheureuses tombèrent aux mains des fétichistes.

En avril 1860, Omar entra à Nyamina. Quand il eut épuisé les vivres de cette région, il marcha sur Oïtala, village de Tata, fils d'Ali, et s'en empara. Sansanding lui fut livré par les Khomma, en haine des Cissé.

Ahmadou, sultan du Macina, lui écrivit d'évacuer le pays et envoya contre lui une armée commandée par Ba Lobbo, son oncle, qui vint à Kani, en aval de Sansanding, sur le Niger. Ali, chef du Ségou, se joignit à Ba Lobbo, à Tio.

En janvier 1861, Omar franchit le Niger, bat les alliés et entra à Ségou, le 10 mars 1861.

Les deux clans bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta étaient définitivement battus.

A peine après quelques mois de séjour à Ségou, Omar recevait la soumission des anciens fonctionnaires bambara : chefs d'armée, chefs territoriaux. Il leur imposa entre autres conditions : de se raser la tête, de ne plus boire de liquides fermentés, de ne plus manger de viandes impures, de faire les prières rituelles, de réduire à quatre le nombre des femmes légitimes de chacun... Il se fit remettre des otages, fils ou frères de chefs ou de notables, et les incorpora dans ses *sofa*.

Quand Omar quitta Ségou, en 1862, au mois d'avril, pour marcher sur Handallahi, il laissait à son fils Ahmadou une garde de 1.500 talibés et l'appui des chefs bambara qui lui avaient prêté serment de fidélité.

3. Les résultats

Il est habituel d'envisager les entreprises guerrières d'Omar du seul point de vue de l'Islam et d'en confondre la démarche et les résultats sous le titre, fort sujet à caution et, en tout cas, très ambigu, de prosélytisme peul. C'est là une question dont l'étude approfondie déborde le cadre du présent ouvrage. Bornons-nous ici à notre sujet.

Aux clans du Kaarta et du Ségou, Omar a substitué le clan des « gens du Fouta », en prenant pour prétexte et but de ses conquêtes la conversion des Bambara à l'Islam. En réalité, cette étiquette musulmane n'a rien changé aux coutumes indigènes : le clan des gens du Fouta s'est trouvé conditionné et dominé par les mêmes principes que les clans du Kaarta et du Ségou.

Sa composition en est une preuve : Omar et sa communauté sont à la tête d'une association formée avec eux par les talibés, les gens du Fouta, les *sofa* et *ton'-dyon'* habituels, et des *tuburu* ou gens soumis de force à l'Islam. Tout ce monde, soudé par les intérêts matériels, est rendu solidaire par la foi commune. Des chefs d'esclaves sont détenteurs de grands commandements militaires ou politiques... Qu'y a-t-il là que nous n'ayons examiné en détail dans ce qui précède ? Les moyens de domination sont identiques, une seule étiquette diffère : c'est l'islamisme qui est, affirme-t-on, le moteur, au lieu du paganisme.

L'évolution de ce clan ne diffère pas non plus, dans ses grandes lignes, de ce que nous avons déjà étudié ; on peut ainsi la résumer.

Homme d'une intelligence et d'une maîtrise remarquables, Omar aurait probablement donné à son œuvre la cohésion et la solidité qui lui auraient assuré quelque durée : il périt trop tôt, sans avoir su ou pu limiter, au moins temporairement, l'extension de ses conquêtes.

Il laissa son fils Ahmadou aux prises avec les pires difficultés. Ahmadou n'avait ni l'autorité ni le prestige d'Omar, pour en imposer aux chefs du Fouta que son père avait enchaînés à sa fortune. Aussi formèrent-ils un parti de mécontents qui intriguèrent contre lui à l'instigation et au profit de ses divers adversaires ou ennemis.

Il eut à tenir tête aux plus graves séditions, fomentées contre lui-même, dans sa communauté familiale, par ses propres frères. Il osa se débarrasser de certains de ces derniers par le crime. Il fut de ces *fa*, à la fois faibles et cruels, qui ne peuvent ni ne savent faire accepter et au besoin imposer leur autorité. Aussi, jamais Ahmadou ne sentit autour de lui l'affection confiante et dévouée des siens.

Abandonné à l'ascendant impérieux et versatile d'un petit conseil de familiers, il fut comme un jouet aux mains de ces intrigants.

Les expéditions, parfois victorieuses, qu'il conduisit pour abattre les ennemis de l'extérieur et, en même temps, satisfaire le besoin de pillage de ses fidèles, demeurèrent sans résultat politique important, faute d'en tirer toutes les conséquences qu'aurait permis un plan mûrement étudié et bien adapté aux contingences locales.

De sorte qu'en définitive, ce long règne ne fut qu'une longue période d'agitation des gens du clan, accompagnée d'une exploitation effroyable des populations conquises.

Quest-ce que l'Islam pouvait gagner à un tel régime ? Si nous laissons de côté, parce que hors de notre cadre, l'influence doctrinale, œuvre propre d'Omar, l'on peut affirmer que l'hégémonie *fòuta-n-ke* a été une très regrettable aventure pour la diffusion de l'Islam chez les Bambara qui nous occupent ici. Aucune organisation adéquate, semblable à celle de Cheikou Ahmadou Bari au Macina, n'a discipliné les païens et n'a su les intéresser, ni surtout les attacher aux destinées du clan des gens du Fouta. Le fanatisme des talibé, la brutalité féroce des *sofa*, l'incohérence politique du *fama* ont maintenu les Bambara en état de révolte perpétuelle, déclarée ou latente. Ce n'est point l'Islam, qu'il faut accuser, c'est la maladresse et la tyrannie de ses agents, c'est le régime politique qui est responsable de l'hostilité irréductible des Bambara.

L'Islam prospère dans la paix. Il n'est point repoussé de parti pris par les païens ; au contraire, les Bambara vivent en bonne harmonie avec les fidèles qui, pour eux-mêmes, accommodent l'Islam avec la coutume indigène. C'est pourquoi les Somono, Bozo, Marka demeurent les propagandistes les mieux qualifiés et les plus heureux de l'Islam en pays bambara. C'est par eux que, doucement, l'ambiance musulmane pénètre peu à peu le milieu indigène comme par imbibition.

La vraie conversion s'opère, le plus souvent, de manière insensible, par cette voie de la soudanisation de l'Islam dont les infimes ramifications forment comme un tissu de capillaires par où toute la sève musulmane se transforme pour aller à son tour transformer l'âme indigène, souvent à son insu. Il en résulte une religion qui n'a plus de l'Islam que le nom, mais qui, parfaitement adaptée, a exercé et exerce encore, et pour longtemps, un rôle capital dans l'évolution de la société indigène.

CHAPITRE VII

Textes

APERÇU LITTÉRAIRE

Le dialecte bambara est suffisamment connu par les travaux déjà publiés et portés à l'index bibliographique pour qu'il ne soit pas nécessaire de procéder ici à une étude nouvelle, soit de la grammaire, soit du vocabulaire. Par contre, il nous semble bon d'apporter notre contribution à la collection des textes déjà parus.

Nos récits ont été recueillis soit à Médine, soit à Diénné, auprès de gens du Kaarta et du Ségou, bons informateurs ; ils appartiennent aux divers genres littéraires indigènes.

Les uns sont simplement récréatifs, tel celui de : *Le lièvre et son talisman de finesse* ; quelquefois, il s'y ajoute une manière de moralité, comme dans *l'Enfant et le Caïman*, ou une velléité d'islamisation, comme dans *Samba le lâche*.

Plus souvent, c'est une fidèle description du milieu indigène, comme dans *l'Hyène*, peinture pleine d'intérêt, depuis l'interrogatoire du devin jusqu'aux divers incidents qui nous montrent l'inventeur du trésor à la disposition du *dugu-tigi* ; de même *l'Hyène et la Vieille* atteste comment, dans ces régions, les pauvres gens sont à la merci des intrigants audacieux dont ils ne peuvent triompher que grâce au « protecteur puissant », si recherché de tout Bambara ; de même, encore, *l'Homme aux trois tresses*, dont le thème, probablement emprunté à l'Orient, est si habilement revêtu que tout y est parfaitement indigène.

La première partie de *Bakari Dyan* est un exemple de tradition historique ; tandis que la deuxième partie est une affirmation de la condition de la femme : méprisée par son mari, vénérée par son fils.

Mais les récits qui doivent ici retenir spécialement notre attention sont ces sortes de contes magico-religieux dont nous donnons deux exemples sous le titre : *Le petit Maran-malheur*. Les histoires de ce Maran-malheur sont en nombre infini, dans cette région du Soudan ; elles paraissent d'origine soninké, non seulement à cause du nom même du principal auteur, Maran, mais aussi parce que c'est chez les Soninké qu'on les trouve en majorité. Elles comportent d'ordinaire deux personnages de premier plan : Maran et soit une vieille, soit un forgeron. En soninké, Maran signifie « maître » ; le personnage est d'habitude incarné dans un enfant. Les vieilles et les forgerons sont réputés comme praticiens de la sorcellerie.

Pour comprendre nos deux récits, il importe d'observer que certains personnages : Maran, la vieille, le lézard, l'arbre, l'aigle, la tortue, le baobab, le veau, sont des formes naturelles, c'est-à-dire accessibles à nos sens, sous lesquelles se jouent des esprits en action les uns contre les autres.

Les hommes, parmi lesquels se déroulent ces drames, ne se doutent de rien, y participent inconsciemment et, en tout cas, paraissent ne pas pouvoir s'y opposer. Ainsi voit-on agir la mère de Maran, son frère, ses camarades ; et, de même, la fille, la fillette et les voisins de la vieille.

Pour l'observateur superficiel, tout se passe donc, extérieurement et au grand jour, en conformité avec les lois de la nature humaine ; seul, le « voyant » peut soulever le voile qui cache la réalité.

Cette littérature se rattache à la mystique précédemment exposée ici et qui, tenant à toutes les fibres de l'indigène, vivifie tous ces récits, pour nous étranges et incompréhensibles. C'est à l'anti-sorcier, c'est-à-dire au magicien qui fait métier de découvrir et de détruire les *suba*, qu'est due cette littérature. Il la créée et la vulgarise à l'occasion et au cours des exercices publics de sa profession. Il se produit plus particulièrement pour les fêtes et les cérémonies qui accompagnent le *soli* : là, dans des soirées qui se prolongent fort tard dans la nuit, il débite, ou plus exactement chante, ses récits au cours de ses danses, soutenues par un orchestre et par des chœurs. Tout ces récits tendent, en définitive, à affirmer que le monde sensible n'est que l'apparence sous laquelle le monde surnaturel se révèle à l'homme et poursuit ses fins, sans se soucier de lui autrement qu'en le faisant servir à ses desseins.

Il en ressort également une description, au moins schématique, de ces *suba*, esprits du mal, terreur de tout indigène.

Le *suba*, c'est l'esprit malin toujours en quête d'âmes humaines à dévorer, sans que l'on dise dans quel but, mais, semble-t-il, pour s'alimenter et se fortifier. On nomme aussi *suba* tout ce qui, personne ou chose, est « possédé » par cet esprit malin.

A nous en tenir aux seules personnes, il y a des gens qui sont *suba* sans le savoir. Ainsi apparaît la vieille au cours de la première version de : *Le petit Maran-malheur*. Durant la nuit, elle a tué sa fille, elle lui a mangé le cœur et le foie ; au jour, elle ne semble pas se souvenir de cet horrible forfait, car elle en poursuit la vengeance avec l'aide de ses voisins, tout aussi ignorants de son état qu'elle-même. Elle a agi pour le compte d'un *suba* qui la possède à son insu.

Il en est autrement de Maran. Il appartient à cette catégorie de *suba* par nature, qui sont les plus redoutés.

Enfin, il y a les *suba* volontaires, gens qui, par des pratiques appropriées, appellent le *suba* en eux et se délectent à le servir et ce sont là, aussi, de grands criminels. Ces *suba* passent pour s'excorporer à l'aide de pratiques spéciales et, dans cet état, assistent, dit-on couramment, à des réunions mystérieuses et nocturnes de *suba* pareils à eux.

D'autre part, il est reçu que certains individus se métamorphosent, d'ordinaire pendant la nuit, en de terribles fauves qui se jettent sur le passant pour le dévorer et, par la manducation de son cœur et de son foie, s'assimiler son âme. Il est reçu que, dans certaines confréries, les *mara-mina-de* sont portés à une sorte de folie mystique par les chants, les danses, les libations, et, dans cet état, poursuivent, tuent et dévorent les victimes humaines désignées d'avance par le clergé de la secte.

Comme on le voit par les textes sur Maran ci-joints, le *suba* qui a élu un individu, pour s'en servir comme il lui plaît, ne se borne pas à cette seule apparence, il est ami des métamorphoses.

Les vieilles femmes sont souvent tenues pour *suba* ; non pas toutes les vieilles femmes, mais particulièrement les pauvresses qui vivent seules, taciturnes, qui passent pour connaître les vertus des plantes et font métier de matrones pour aider aussi bien aux avortements qu'aux accouchements ; celles qui ont pris l'humanité en aversion parce que leur vie est un calvaire de misère, de larmes et de malheurs. L'on accuse aussi du crime de sorcellerie les femmes sans soutien, qui possèdent quelque fortune que l'on veut confisquer.

Ces gens « possédés » des *suba* usent, prétend-on, de certains charmes pour, en quelque manière, paralyser leurs victimes ; ces charmes sont appelés *siri* (liens) ; ils revêtent des formes quelconques et sont, au demeurant, des manières de *nyana* au service du *suba*, ils attachent (*siri*) la victime et la livrent sans défense au *suba*.

Les possédés des *suba* mangent certaines parties de leurs victimes, le cœur et le foie, et procèdent eux-mêmes, à l'aide d'ustensiles de cuisine, à la préparation de leurs macabres festins (1).

L'anti-sorcier est un magicien qui se donne pour rôle de découvrir et de détruire les *suba* ; quelquefois aussi de les soigner et de les guérir. S'il arrive que, dans la communauté, des faits suspects donnent à penser qu'un communautaire est possédé des *suba*, on consulte l'anti-sorcier qui, tout d'abord, par ses procédés de divination, recherche si les faits allégués sont bien imputables à celui que l'on soupçonne ; dans l'affirmative, il précise le régime à suivre pour soigner ou guérir le possédé : c'est souvent long et coûteux.

Lorsque l'inculpation a pour base des faits ayant occasionné la mort ou des maladies mortelles, ou autres graves calamités, la recherche du coupable revêt un caractère tragique, toutes les communautés intéressées sont convoquées en assemblée générale et, au milieu de cette affluence, l'anti-sorcier procède à des chants et à des danses qui lui donnent l'extra-lucidité grâce à laquelle non seulement il désigne les coupables, mais donne les preuves de leur culpabilité.

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(1) Voir la scène où Maran et la Vieille dépècent la fille de celle-ci pour en manger les viscères, page 380, § 8.

Les « possédés » des *suba* font usage de *siri* et d'ustensiles de cuisine qu'ils dérobent, affirme-t-on, à la vue de tous en les enfouissant dans la terre. L'anti-sorcier, au cours de ses danses, savamment conduites, désigne ces cachettes, qui, aussitôt fouillées par des acolytes, permettent de saisir : les *siri*, les ustensiles de cuisine, et souvent aussi les reliefs, prétendûment humains, des repas des *suba*. Ces preuves concrètes servent de base à l'accusation et le procès du crime de sorcellerie, qui en découle, aboutit à la condamnation des coupables. L'amende, la confiscation, le pillage des biens, se doublent des tortures les plus affreuses pour arracher les aveux.

Parfois, sur le moment même où les preuves sont étalées aux yeux de tous, le public se livre aussitôt aux derniers excès sur la personne et les biens du coupable.

Ce crime le plus affreux, dont on redoute à bon droit d'être inculpé, donne lieu à une répression qui nous paraît d'autant plus odieuse qu'en fait l'accusation ne repose sur rien de sérieux, et cependant beaucoup de gens simples et sincères croient fermement à toutes ces prétendues preuves, imaginées par un habile charlatan. Il n'est que trop certain, d'ailleurs, que cette crédulité populaire est entretenue et exploitée par le clergé des sectes, qui en tire grand profit.

Par cet exposé, il apparaît que les récits magico-religieux bénéficient d'une ambiance particulièrement favorable. Ce genre littéraire a, d'ailleurs, une tendance envahissante. Ainsi les traditions concernant les braves sont d'ordinaire pétries de faits magiques qui transforment ces héros en vétitables magiciens luttant sans répit contre les esprits du mal, dissimulés sous les apparences les plus variées. Les grandes lignes de ces combats s'inspirent des croyances que nous venons d'esquisser et dont la connaissance permet de dépouiller ces récits de ce côté étrange ou merveilleux pour en extraire, le cas échéant, quelque réalité. Il faut aussi savoir s'en accommoder et y voir, parfois, comme une inspiration poétique.

TRANSCRIPTION

Comme les Bambara n'ont pas d'écriture, nous sommes obligé de faire usage d'un alphabet conventionnel que voici : *a, b, d, e, è, f, g, h, i, k, l, m, n, o, p, r, s, t, u, ü, v, w, y.*

En principe, toutes ces lettres se prononcent comme en français, sous les réserves suivantes :

e, jamais muet, doit se prononcer comme « e » ouvert français.

ü, comme « *u* » français ; ce son, d'ailleurs très rare, est une transition entre *u* et *i*.

u, équivaut au français « ou ».

g, toujours dur, même devant *e, è, i*.

h, jamais muet, marque une aspiration douce.

l, jamais mouillé.

n (1), comme en français. Quand il termine un mot, nous le faisons suivre d'une apostrophe pour marquer qu'il doit se prononcer comme si une partie, supposée élidée et que représente l'apostrophe, existait et commençait par une consonne ; dans ces conditions, la voyelle qui précède cet *n* se trouve nasalisée : *kun'*.

r, n'est jamais grasseyé.

s, toujours, dur n'a jamais le son du *z*.

t, se prononce toujours comme dans « tien » et pas comme dans « position ».

y, comme dans « Bayard ».

w, comme « ou » dans « ouate ».

L'apostrophe (') représente, comme en français, une élision.

Il est entendu que :

1° Toute lettre doit être prononcée comme il vient d'être dit ;

2° Toute lettre conserve toujours sa prononciation alphabétique.

Il n'y a pas, à proprement parler, d'accent tonique, mais une manière d'intonation que, seul, l'usage permet d'acquérir.

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(1) Quand *n* sert de liaison entre deux mots :

1° Ou bien il se prononce comme s'il se trouvait dans le corps de mot formé par la réunion des deux mots qu'il unit : nous figurons cette liaison par deux traits d'union, *nyana-n-son-na-ba* ;

2° Ou bien il se prononce comme faisant partie du second mot auquel nous le représentons joint par un trait d'union : *a fo a n-ye.*

TEXTE I

Tyeni ni Banma

1. *Tyeni tara Banma soro gere kan'. A ko ; Banma ! mun' l'i se yan'. — A ko : n nana yala, n tununa. — Tyeni ko : m be se k'i bila ba ro. Banma ko : o na dia n ye.*

2. *Tyeni e fu bo, a ni Banma siri, a l'a doni, a sera ba da la. Tyeni ko : Banma ! n k'i bila yan' ? — A ko : un' ! un' ! — A donna dyi ro, dyi sera a kumbalen' ma, a ko : Banma ! n k'i bila yan' ? — A ko : un' ! un' ! — A donna dyi ro, dyi sera tyamantye ro, a ko : Banma ! n k'i bila yan' ? — A ko : ai ! — A donna dyi ro, dyi sera kan' no, a ko : Banma ! n k'i bila yan' ? — A ko : oo !*

3. *A li Banma foni. A l'a bila. Banma ko : Tyeni ! — A ko : un' ! — A ko : nyumanya sara e mun' ye. — A ko : dyuguma ! — A ko : Tyeni ! ne b'i dun', bari n t'i dun', fo a-n-ka saria ke ko saba. — A ko : a nyana !*

4. *So-ke koro-ba a nana mi. Banma ko : So-ke koro-ba ! nyumanya sara e mun' ye. — A ko : dyuguma ! —*

TRADUCTION I

L'ENFANT (1) ET LE CAÏMAN

1. Un enfant a (2) trouvé un caïman sur la terre ferme (3) ; il (lui) a dit : « Caïman, qu'est-ce qui t'a amené ici ? » — Il (le caïman) dit : « Je suis venu me promener, je me suis égaré. » — L'enfant (lui) dit : « Je peux te mettre (4) dans le fleuve. » — Le caïman dit : « Cela me sera agréable. »

2. L'enfant confectionna un lien (5), il attacha le caïman, il le porta, il arriva au bord du fleuve. L'enfant dit : « Caïman, (est-ce) que je te laisse ici ? » — Il (le caïman) dit : « Non ! » — Il (l'enfant) est entré (6) dans l'eau, l'eau vient à ses genoux, il dit : « Caïman, (est-ce) que je te laisse ici ? » — Il (le caïman) dit : « Non ! » — L'enfant est entré (6) dans l'eau, l'eau lui vient à mi-corps, il dit : « Caïman, (est-ce) que je te laisse ici ? » — Il (le caïman) dit : « Non ! » — Il (l'enfant) est entré (6) dans l'eau, l'eau lui vient au cou, il (l'enfant) dit : « Caïman, (est-ce) que je te laisse ici ? » — Il (le caïman) a dit : « Oui ! »

3. Il (l'enfant) a détaché le caïman. Il l'a lâché (7). Le caïman (lui) dit : « Enfant ? » — Il (l'enfant) dit : « Hein ! » — Il (le caïman) (lui) dit : « Quelle est la récompense de la bonté (8) ? » — Il (l'enfant) dit : « La méchanceté ». — Il (le caïman) dit : « Enfant, je vais te manger, mais je ne te mangerai pas sans que justice ait été faite trois fois ». — Il (l'enfant) dit : « C'est bien. »

4. Un vieux cheval est venu boire. Le caïman (lui) dit : « Vieux-Cheval, quelle est la récompense de la bonté (8) ? » — Il (le vieux cheval) dit : « La méchanceté ! » — Le

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(1) Litt. un petit homme, un garçonnet.
(2) Litt. est allé trouver.
(3) Litt. la dure.
(4) Litt. te laisser dans le fleuve.
(5) Litt. il sortit de l'écorce.
(6) C'est-à-dire a progressé dans l'eau jusqu'au moment où...
(7) Litt. il l'a laissé.
(8) Litt. le paiement de la bonté est avec quoi ?

Banma ko : Tyeni ye n ta gere kan', a e m bila ba ro, n ko m b'a dun'. — So-ke koro-ba ko : A dun' ! Adamaden' ma nyi. Ne demisenma tuma u be yele n kan', ka ta kele fe, u be nyon' tyaman' du n ma ; sisa n koro-ba u li m bila ! — Banma ko : Tyeni ! — A ko : un' ! — A ko, kele ! — A ko : oo !

5. *Fali-ke koro-ba nana. Banma ko : Fali-ke koro-ba ! nyumanya sara e mun' ye ? — A ko : dyuguma ! — A ko : Tyeni ye n ta gere kan', a e m bila ba ro n ko m b'a dun'. — A ko : a dun' ! Adamaden' ma nyi, ne demisenma tuma u be doni da n kan' ka ta dyago ke, u be nyon' tyaman' du n ma, sisa n koro-ba u ye m bila. — A ko : Tyeni ! fla ! — A ko : oo !*

6. *Sunsanni nana. Banma ko : Sunsanni ! nyumanya sara e mun' ye ? — A ko : bo n koro ! dyimina be n na, n ni minna, n na kiti tige. — Sunsanni minna, a ko : Banma ! i ko di ? — Banma ko : Tyeni ye n ta gere kan', a e m bila ba ro, n ko m b'a dun'. — Sunsanni ko : i be kalo ! nin' tyeni a ti se k'i ta. — Banma ko : Tyeni nyininka. — Sunsanni ko : Tyeni, tinye do ? — Tyeni ko : tinye do. — A ko : A ta n k'a ye.*

7. *Tyeni a la Banma siri, a l'a ta. Sunsan ko : Ta n' a e gere kan', n k'a ye. — Tyeni tara n' a e fo a ta yoro koro lo,*

caïman dit : « (Cet) enfant m'a pris sur la terre ferme, il m'a mis dans le fleuve, je dis que je vais le manger. » — Le vieux cheval dit : « Mange-le ! L'enfant d'Adam (1) n'est pas bon. Alors que (2) j'étais jeune, l'on (3) me montait pour aller à la guerre (et) l'on (3) me donnait (en conséquence) beaucoup de mil (4) ; maintenant (que) je suis vieux, l'on (3) m'abandonne ! » — Le caïman dit : « Enfant ! » — Il (l'enfant) dit : « Hein ! » — Il (le caïman) dit : « (Ça fait) une ! » — Il (l'enfant) dit : « Oui ! »

5. Un vieil âne est venu (boire). Le caïman (lui) dit : « Vieil-Ane, quelle est la récompense de la bonté ? » — Il (le vieil âne) dit : « La méchanceté. » — Il (le caïman) dit : « (Cet) enfant m'a pris sur la terre ferme, il m'a mis dans le fleuve, je dis que je vais le manger. » — Il (le vieil âne) dit : « Mange-le ! L'enfant d'Adam n'est pas bon. Alors que j'étais jeune, l'on me chargeait pour aller faire du commerce (et) l'on me donnait (en conséquence) beaucoup de mil ; maintenant (que) je suis vieux, l'on m'abandonne. » — Il (le caïman) dit : « Enfant, (ça fait) deux ! » — Il (l'enfant) dit : « Oui ! »

6. Un petit lièvre est venu (boire). Le caïman (lui) dit : « Petit-Lièvre, quelle est la récompense de la bonté ? » — Il (le petit lièvre) dit : « Laisse-moi tranquille (5) ! j'ai soif (6) ; lorsque j'aurai bu, je trancherai le différend. » Le petit lièvre a bu, il a dit : « Caïman, comment dis-tu ? » — Le caïman dit : « (Cet) enfant m'a pris sur la terre ferme, il m'a mis dans le fleuve, je dis que je vais le manger. » — Le petit lièvre dit : « Tu mens, cet enfant n'a pu te prendre (et te porter). » — Le caïman dit : « Demande à l'enfant ? » — Le petit lièvre dit : « Enfant, est-ce vrai ? » — L'enfant dit : « C'est vrai ! » — Il (le petit lièvre) dit : « Prends-le, que je voie ! »

7. L'enfant a attaché le caïman, il l'a pris. Le (petit) lièvre dit : « Emporte-le sur la terre ferme, que je voie. » — L'enfant l'a emporté jusqu'à l'endroit où il l'avait

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(1) C'est-à-dire l'homme. Cette expression dénote une influence musulmane.

(2) Litt. au temps de ma jeunesse.

(3) Litt. « ils », c'est-à-dire « les hommes ».

(4) Ce grain remplace l'avoine.

(5) Litt. sors de sous moi.

(6) Litt. la soif est en moi.

— Sunsan ko : Tyeni, a da ! Tyeni l'a da. — Sunsan' ko : Tyeni, i fa te banma dun' ? — A ko : a b'a dun'. — Sunsan' ko : Tyeni, i ba te banma dun' ? — A ko : a b'a dun'. — Sunsan' ko : dyeli t'i fe ? — A ko : a be m fe. — A ko : a kun' ti, i k'a dun'.

trouvé (1). Le (petit) lièvre dit : « Enfant, pose-le ! » — L'enfant l'a posé. Le (petit) lièvre dit : « Enfant, ton père ne mange-t-il pas le caïman (2) ? » — Il (l'enfant) dit : « Il (mon père) le (caïman) mange. » — Le (petit) lièvre dit : « Ta mère ne mange-t-elle pas le caïman ? » — Il (l'enfant) dit : « Elle le mange. » — Le (petit) lièvre dit : « N'as-tu pas une hache ? » — Il (l'enfant) dit : « J'en ai une. » — Il (le petit lièvre) dit : « Casse-lui la tête et mange-le (le caïman). »

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(1) Litt. il l'a emporté jusqu'à l'ancien endroit.
(2) Allusion au *tne* (cf. chapitre II).

TEXTE II

SUNSANNI NI KEUYA BASI

1. *Sunsanni tara Ngala* (1) *yoro, a ko a ka keuya basi d'a ma. Ngala ko: « Oo, n'i nana minian' donko ye, dyara nono, susu boli fa, lemau n-to, suruku-ke. »*

2. *Sunsanni ko minian'ye : « E ni m bere dyon' ka dyan' dyon' ye ? » Minian' ye suma. A ye minian' ni bo siri.*

3. *A tara dyara yoro a ni feni, k'a nono te o fenin' fa. Dyara y'a nono k'a ro. A ye fenin' da tugu. A tara susu yoro, k' u te boli fa ; u donna, a ye da tugu.*

4. *A tara suruku yoro, ko a ka ta dandan' Ngala yoro ; a ko n'a tara, a ko a b'a so fen' bè keme. U tara. Ngala ko, a ka sama dyara nono. « Dyara nono e dyan'. » — « A sama n teri. »*

5. *Ngala ko, a ka sama minian' donko. « Minian' donko e dyan' ! » — « A sama n teri ! » — Ngala ko : « Susu boli fa ! » — « Susu boli fa e dyan' ! » — « A sama n teri. » Ngala ko : « Lemau n-to ? » — « Lemau n-to e dyan ! » — « A sama n teri. »*

6. *Ngala ko : « Suruku-ke be mi ? » — « A fle. » — « A sama n-teri. » Ngala ko : « E n' i keuya basi ka ta ! »*

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(1) On entend aussi Ngalla.

TRADUCTION II

Le petit lièvre et le talisman de finesse

1. Un petit lièvre est allé trouver Allah et lui a demandé de lui donner un talisman de finesse. Allah dit : « Oui, « moyennant que tu m'apportes : un boa (attaché) à un « bâton ; du lait de lionne ; une gourde pleine de moustiques ; une sauce faite avec des mouches et une hyène « mâle. »

2. Le petit lièvre dit au boa : « Qui est le plus long de « toi et de mon bâton ? » Le boa se mesure et le lièvre l'attache au bambou.

3. Il s'en va trouver la lionne avec une petite calebasse et lui dit que son lait ne remplira pas cette petite calebasse. La lionne y met son lait. Il bouche la petite calebasse. Il s'en va chez les moustiques et leur dit qu'ils ne rempliront pas sa gourde. Ils (y) entrent, il l'a bouche.

4. Il va trouver l'hyène et lui dit de l'accompagner chez Allah, lui promettant en retour un cent de chaque chose. Ils vont (chez Allah). Allah dit au lièvre de présenter (littéralement : tendre) le lait de lionne. « Le lait « de lionne est ici » (répond le lièvre). « Donne (1), mon « ami ».

5. Allah dit qu'il présente le boa (attaché) au bâton. « Le boa (attaché) au bâton est ici. » — « Donne, mon « ami. » — Allah dit : « (Où est) la gourde pleine de mous« tiques ? » — « La gourde pleine de moustiques est ici. » — « Donne, mon ami. » Allah dit : « (Où est) la sauce « de mouches ? » — « La sauce de mouches est ici. » — « Donne, mon ami. »

6. Allah dit : « Où est l'hyène mâle ? » — « La voici. » — « Donne, mon ami. » Allah dit : « Va-t'en avec ton talis« man de finesse. »

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(1) Litt. *sama* : tendre.

TEXTE III

SURUKU

1. *Suruku tara laturudala segere, a ko a bi ta fen' nyini Laturudala a e laturu da. A ko : Suruku, i bi fen' saba soro, u te to i bolo. — Suruku ko : kalo !*

2. *Suruku tara. A ni Tau benna, a l'a ta ; a ni Wara-bile benna, a l'a mina ; a e nare bilen' soro sira tege ko, a l'a ta.*

3. *A tara sira dyu koro. A ko : Wara-bile, ta siraden' do kari. Wara-bile yelenna san' no. — A ko, Wara-bile i te na wa ? — A ko : ai, Suruku, ne wolola sira bolo kan' ; i ko n ka dyigi dugu ma, n te dyigi.*

4. *A ko : Tau, ta-n-koku do bo, i ka na. — Tau tara, a dyigina dyi ro. A ko, Tau, i te na wa ? — A ko : ai, Suruku, ne wolola dyi ro, i ko n ka na, n te na.*

5. *Suruku ko : n na nare-n-dyeni. A e dua kari ; a li ta suma mana ; a li nare bil' a ro ; a yelela. A ko : n nare tinyana, bari, m bi ta Tau nyini.*

6. *A dyigina dyi ro, a e dani tomo. A ko : Dani, tua ko di ? — Dani ko : Dundurunmadure. — A ko : i te doni duri n ma ? — A e sogo ni basi d'a ma, a e malo ni sogo d'a ma. — A ko : nin' ka nyi, koĩ !*

TRADUCTION III

L'Hyène

1. L'Hyène est allée trouver le devin (1) (et) lui dit qu'elle va chercher fortune (2). Le devin ayant étalé ses signes (3), dit : « Hyène, tu trouveras trois choses dont aucune ne restera dans ta main. » — « (C'est) faux », dit l'Hyène.

2. L'Hyène partit. (Chemin faisant) elle rencontra une tortue et la prit ; elle rencontra un singe et le saisit ; elle trouva du beurre frais au milieu de la route, elle le prit.

3. Elle alla au pied d'un baobab et dit : « Singe, va me cueillir quelques fruits de baobab. » Le singe monta au haut de l'arbre (et comme il ne redescendait pas) elle lui dit : « Singe, est-ce que tu ne reviens pas ? » — « Non, Hyène ! répondit-il ; je suis né sur une branche de baobab (et) tu me demandes de redescendre à terre, je ne descends pas. »

4. Elle dit à la tortue : « Va me chercher des tubercules de nénuphar. » Elle (la tortue) partit ; elle descendit dans l'eau (et comme elle ne revenait pas), l'Hyène dit : « Tortue, ne reviens-tu pas ? » — La tortue répondit : « Non, Hyène : je suis née dans l'eau, tu me dis de venir, je ne viens pas. »

5. L'Hyène dit : « Je vais brûler (4) mon beurre. » Elle ramassa du bois sec, alluma un feu clair et y mit le beurre. Le beurre a fondu. « Mon beurre est gâté, dit l'Hyène, je vais aller chercher la tortue. »

6. Elle descendit dans l'eau et y trouva un petit pot, Elle demanda : « Petit-Pot, comment t'appelles-tu ? » — Le petit pot répondit : « La Petite-Marmite-généreuse. » — « Ne me donneras tu pas quelque chose », dit l'Hyène. — Elle lui donna de la viande et du couscous de mil, du riz et de la viande. L'Hyène dit : « Ceci est bon, certes ! »

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(1) Pour le consulter.

(2) Litt. qu'elle va chercher des choses.

(3) Le géomancien — c'est de lui qu'il s'agit ici — trace des signes par terre.

(4) C'est-à-dire « cuire ».

7. *A tara so. A tara Moso-koro yoro. A ko : Mama ! Moso-koro ko : Un ! — A ko : Dani be n kun' ; ta nyininka, bo-n-kono. — Moso-koro donna bo-n-kono, a ko : Dani, i tua ko di ? — A ko : Dundurunmadure. — A ko : i te doni duri n ma ? — A li sogo ni basi d'a ma ; a li malo ni sogo d'a ma.*

8. *Moso-koro bolila fama yoro. A ko : Fama, dani be-n-Suruku fe fama da don'. Fama ko : ma bè ka n'a ni da e. — Suruku nana n'a ka da ye. Fama ko : M b'a fo di ? — Suruku ko : a nyininka tua la ? — A ko : Dani, i tua ko di ? — A ko : Dundurunmadure. — A ko : i te doni duri ni ma dyamala. — A e sogo ni basi di, a e malo ni sogo di. Masa-ke a li dani siri a bolo la.*

9. *Suruku tara ko ro tugu. A ye m-Pan tomo. A ko : M-Pan, i tua ko di ? — A ko : n tua e Fanfaliman-fati. — A ko : i te doni fati n na. — A l'a ti a nye kan'. A li Suruku bugo ; Suruku kolola. M-Pan ko a e : I t'a fo, bila kankaran ? Suruku ko : bila kankaran. M-Pan bira. Suruku l'a ta.*

10. *A tara so. A tara Moso-koro segere. A ko : Mama ! — A ko : un' ! — A ko : n li do soro tugun', a ka fisa folo ye. A ko, ta bo-n-kono, i ka bon' tugun' ko nyuma. Moso-koro a ko : Suruku, m b'a fo di ? — Nyininka tua la. — A ko : M-Pan, i tua ko di ? — A ko, n tua ko Fanfaliman-fati. — A ko : i te doni fati n na. — A li Moso-koro bugo. Suruku ko : i t'a fo, bila kankaran' ? — A ko : bila kankaran ! — M-Pan bira.*

11. *Moso-koro bolila ; tara fama segere, A ko, Fama, fen' be Suruku fe, a ka fisa folo ye. — Fama ko : tye o tye*

7. L'Hyène, de retour chez elle, alla trouver une vieille femme et lui dit : « Grand'mère ! » — « Hein ! » fit la vieille. « J'ai un petit pot, dit l'Hyène, va l'interroger dans la case. » Entrée dans la case, la vieille dit : « Petit pot, comment t'appelles-tu ? » Il répondit : « La Petite-Marmite-généreuse. » — « Ne me donneras-tu pas quelque chose ? dit la vieille. Elle lui a donné de la viande et du couscous, du riz et de la viande.

8. La vieille courut chez le *fama* et lui dit : « *Fama*, l'Hyène possède un petit pot, c'est un pot de *fama*. Le *fama* dit (fit publier) : que chacun (m)'apporte son pot. L'Hyène apporta son pot. Le *fama* demanda : « Comment dois-je dire ? » L'Hyène répondit : « Demande-lui son nom ? » Il (le *fama*) dit : « Petit-Pot, comment t'appelles-tu ? » Il (le petit pot) répondit : « La Petite-Marmite-généreuse. » Il (le *fama*) dit : « Ne nous donneras-tu pas quelque chose à moi et à mes gens ? » Il (le petit pot) leur a donné de la viande et du couscous, du riz et de la viande. Le roi s'est fait attacher le petit pot au bras.

9. L'Hyène revint dans le marigot. Elle (y) trouva un sabre. Elle dit : « Sabre, comment te nommes-tu ? » Il répondit : « Mon nom est le Sabre-qui frappe. » L'Hyène dit : « Ne me frapperas-tu pas un peu ? » Il est tombé sur son œil, il a frappé l'Hyène (et) l'Hyène a gueulé. Le Sabre lui a dit : « Ne (me) dis-tu pas : tombe en résonnant ? » L'Hyène dit : « Tombe en résonnant. » Le Sabre est tombé (et) l'Hyène l'a pris.

10. L'Hyène est (re)venue chez elle. Elle est allée trouver la vieille (et) lui a dit : « Grand'mère ! » — « Hein ! » dit la vieille. Elle (l'Hyène) a dit : « J'ai trouvé quelque chose de meilleur que la première fois. Va (voir) dans la case et ferme bien la porte. » La vieille demanda : « Hyène, comment dirai-je ? » L'Hyène répondit : « Informe-toi, de son nom. » Elle (la vieille) dit : « Sabre, quel est ton nom ? » Le Sabre répondit : « Mon nom est le Sabre-qui-frappe. » Elle (la vieille) dit : « Ne me frapperas-tu pas un peu ! » Il a battu la vieille (à qui) l'Hyène a dit : « Ne dis-tu pas tombe en résonnant ? » Elle (la vieille) dit : « Tombe en résonnant. » Le sabre est tombé.

11. La vieille courut trouver le *fama* (et lui) dit : « *Fama*, l'Hyène a quelque chose de meilleur que ce

a bi n' a-ka m-Pan ka na. Suruku a folo ni a ka m-Pan nana. Fama ko : A y' a to tan'. — A ko : Suruku, m b'a ko di ? — A ko : I ta nyininka a tua la. Suruku nana sigi fama kini-m-bolo fe. Fama ko : M-Pan, i tua ko di ? — A ko : Fanfalimanfati. — A ko : i te doni fati n na ? — A li fama ti a nye kan'. Suruku dani tige a tara. A tato ko : i t'a fo, bila kankaran ? — A ko : bila kankaran. — M-Pan bira dugu ma.

qu'elle a déjà trouvé. » Le *fama* dit (fit publier) : « Que tout homme m'apporte son sabre. » La première, l'Hyène vint avec son sabre (et) le *fama* dit (fit publier) : « Cela suffit » (et) il demanda à l'Hyène : « Comment dirai-je ? » Elle (l'Hyène) dit : « Informe-toi de son nom. » L'Hyène est venue se placer à la droite du *fama* (1). Le *fama* dit : « Sabre, comment te nommes-tu ? » Il (le sabre) dit : « Le Sabre-qui-frappe. » Il (le *fama*) demanda : « Ne me frapperas-tu pas un peu ? » Il a frappé le *fama* sur l'œil. L'Hyène a coupé (le lien qui retenait le petit pot) et s'est sauvée. En s'en allant, elle a dit : « Ne dis-tu pas, tombe en résonnant ? » Il (le *fama*) dit : « Tombe en résonnant. » Le sabre est tombé à terre.

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(1) C'est-à-dire à côté du bras auquel était attaché le petit pot.

TEXTE IV

TYE TLU ṢABA MA

1. *Tye kele, a ye tulu saba mara kun' na. A ko Fama ye : « N' i ye n tlu tua don', i ka m fa. » Fama ko : « A nyana ! » Don' kele a e tye moso wele a e sanu tyaman' d'a ma.*

2. *A ko : « I tye te se ni nyuan-na ? » A ko : « A te se ». Fama ko : « Tulu saba b'i tye kun' no, n'i u toro fo n ye, n n'i so sanu tyaman' » — Moso ko : « N n' a fo i ye. »*

3. *A ko : « Kelen' tua ye Famatemaflanye ; a ko : do tua e Danmatemosola ; a ko : do tua ye Nankorodemadenye. » Fama ko : « I ni tye ! » A ye sanu tyaman' tugu d'a ma.*

4. *Moso tàrà. A tye nana Fama yoro. Fama ko a ye, a ko : « Tye o ! n ye i tulu tua don'. » — A ko : « A fo. » — A ko : « Kelen' tua e Famatemaflanye ; do tua e Danmatemosola ; do tua e Nankorodemadenye. » A ko : « Tinye ! » A ko : « M b'i fa. »*

5. *U y'a siri, u n'a tara. Nankoroden' nana. A ko Fama ye : « A kana a ni n ka dloki fa. » — Tye ko, a ko : « Fama, a ko, i munyu n ka na n ka kuma fo i ye. » — A ko : « A fo. » — A ko : « Ne ni e, an ye fla n-ye, a ko, an*

TRADUCTION IV

L'HOMME AUX TROIS TRESSES

1. Un homme avait trois tresses sur la tête. Il dit au *fama* : « Si tu connais le nom de mes trois tresses, tu peux me tuer. » Le *fama* dit : « C'est bon ! » Un jour, le *fama* manda la femme de cet homme, il lui donna beaucoup d'or.

2. Il (lui) dit : « Ton mari ne peut faire pareil à ceci (1) ». Elle dit : « Il ne (le) peut. » Le *fama* dit : « Il y a trois tresses sur la tête de ton mari, si tu me dis leurs noms, je te donnerai beaucoup d'or. » La femme dit : « Je vais te les dire. »

3. Elle dit : « Le nom de l'une est : « Le *Fama*-n'a-pas d'égal (2) » ; le nom de l'autre : « Il-ne-faut-pas-avoir-confiance-dans-la-femme » ; le nom de l'autre : « Un-beau-fils-n'est-pas-un-fils ». Le *fama* (lui) dit : « Merci ! » Il lui donna de nouveau beaucoup d'or.

4. La femme est partie. Son mari est venu chez le *fama*. Le *fama* lui (à l'homme) a dit : « Homme ! je connais les noms de tes tresses. » Il (l'homme) dit : « Parle. » Il (le *fama*) dit : « Le nom de l'une est : « Le-*Fama*-n'a-pas-d'égal » ; le nom de l'autre est : « Il-ne-faut-pas-avoir-confiance-dans-la-femme » ; le nom de l'autre est : « Un beau-fils-n'est-pas-un-fils ». Il (l'homme) dit : « (C'est) vrai ! » Il (le *fama*) dit : « Je vais te tuer. »

5. On l'attache, on l'emmène. Le beau-fils est venu ; il a dit au *fama* : « Ne le tue pas avec ma blouse. » L'homme a dit : « *Fama*, attends que je te dise un mot. » Il (le *fama*) dit : « Parle ! » Il (l'homme) dit : « Toi et moi sommes

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(1) C'est-à-dire ne peut te donner tant d'or.

(2) C'est-à-dire que celui qui est *fama* n'admet pas d'être traité d'égal à égal. Nombre de récits indigènes font ressortir ce côté de l'orgueil chatouilleux des *fama*. En particulier, voir ci-devant, dans la chronique du Ségou, comment Ma-n-son se vengea du chef de Dina, qui lui avait fait un cadeau dont l'importance l'avait blessé. — C'est pour ce même motif que nul ne peut porter le même prénom que le *fama* sans risquer sa vie ; parfois, on le désigne seulement par l'expression : *fama-tua-m* : l'homonyme du *fama* — ainsi en était-il, sous peine de mort, chez Samori.

demisenma tuma m be s'i k' i bugo : a fle bi i k' i m be m fa! » — A ko : « Tinye ! »

6. *A ko : « Nin' kuma n moso de a fo i ye, m b'a furu tuma mi i t'a kalama, m b'a dumuni·i t'a kalama, m b'a fero bo i t'a kalama, bari a nana n-ka kuma fo i ye. « — A ko : « Tinye ! »*

7. *A ko : « Den' ko : a kana n-ka dloki fa, a ko ni n den' don' a t'o fo ! » — A ko : « Tinye. » — Fama ko : « N l' i bila ; bari ma kana ko dogo Fama la, katugu fen' tyaman' b' a kun ! »*

fla-ni (1) (et) alors que nous étions jeunes je pouvais te battre : voici qu'aujourd'hui tu vas me tuer. » Il (le *fama*) dit : « (C'est) vrai. »

6. Il (l'homme) dit : « Cette parole (2) c'est ma femme qui te l'a dite, (pourtant) lorsque je l'ai épousée tu n'en as rien su (3) ; je l'ai nourrie, tu ne l'as pas su (3) ; j'ai caché sa nudité (3), tu ne l'as pas su, mais elle est venue te dire mon secret (4). » Il (le *fama*) dit : « (C'est) vrai » !

7. Il (l'homme) dit : « L'enfant t'a dit ; ne le tue pas avec ma blouse, si c'était mon enfant, il ne dirait pas cela. » Il (le *fama*) dit : « (C'est) vrai ! » Le *fama* dit : « Je te laisse (5), mais désormais, ne cache rien au *fama*, parce qu'il possède beaucoup de choses (6). »

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(1) Ainsi qu'il est expliqué ci-devant, à propos de la cérémonie du *soli*, les jeunes gens qui subissent ce rite ensemble sont qualifiés *fla-ni*, c'est-à-dire « égaux », « pairs ». Il existe entre eux une manière d'égalité qui fait qu'ils peuvent s'injurier et même se frapper sans que ces actes entraînent les conséquences habituelles entre gens qui ne sont pas *fla-ni*. C'est à cette égalité qu'il est ici fait allusion.

(2) C'est-à-dire les noms de mes tresses.

(3) C'est-à-dire je n'ai pas eu recours à toi pour l'épouser, la nourrir et la vêtir.

(4) Litt. ma parole.

(5) Je te fais grâce.

(6) Et qu'il est par cela même très puissant.

TEXTE V

BAKARI DYAN' (1)

I

1. *Blisi a be Sulamaran' Yoro fe Masina. Bakari-Dyan' be Ma-n-son' fe Segu. Fama Ma-n-son' a ma na misi fa u na Blisi nyi bo.*

2. *Ma-n-son' a-ka dyeli-ke n' a ta, u nana fo Blisi ye Masina. U ko : « U ma ni nyi sogo bo, Ma-n-son' ka dyeli-ke de b'a ta. » A ko : « A nyana. »*

3. *Don' kelen' Sulamaran' Yoro a ye kele bo ka ta Segu. Kele nana Segu. Segu bora. U ko Ma-n-son' dyeli-ke ye : « Blisi fle. « Dyeli-ke ulila, a ya a-ka dafla fan' fla ti Blisi la. Blisi ma kuma.*

4. *A tara tun'. A nana. A ti a la. Blisi ma kuma. Saba-na a nana, a ye marfa ti a la. Blisi y' a-ka so gran' bo a ye dyeli gen' ; a b' a ti a kun' no fo dyeli-ke donna so kono.*

5. *Blisi ko a ye : « N t'i fa, i ye dyeli ye ». Blisi a sagira. U nana Masina. Bakari Dyan' a tara se Segu moriu ma.*

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(1) Bakari, fils de Dyan ou Ndyan, appartenait à cette fraction des Peuls dits *Fur-ba Fla-u*, et exerça une sorte de commandement militaire pendant la période d'anarchie de 1842 à 1843, dans le Ségou.

TRADUCTION V

BACARI DYAN

I

1. Blissi est avec Soulamaran Yoro au Macina ; Bacari Dyan est avec Ma-n-son à Ségou. Le *fama* Ma-n-son ne fait jamais abattre un bœuf sans faire réserver la part de Blissi (1).

2. L'on vint dire à Blissi, au Macina, que le griot de Ma-n-son se l' (2) appropriait. On lui (à Blissi) dit : « Quand on met de côté ta part de viande, c'est le griot de Ma-n-son qui la prend (3). » Il (Blissi) dit : « C'est bon ! »

3. Un jour, Soulamaran Yoro fit sortir son armée pour marcher contre Ségou. L'armée est arrivée à (devant) Ségou. (L'armée de) Ségou est sortie (4). L'on dit au griot de Ma-n-son : « Voici Blissi. » Le griot s'est élancé (5), il a tiré les deux coups de son fusil contre Blissi. Blissi n'a pas parlé.

4. Il (le griot) est retourné. Il est (re)venu. Il a tiré sur lui (Blissi). Blissi n'a pas parlé. Une troisième fois, il (le griot) est venu, il a tiré son (coup de) fusil sur lui (Blissi). Blissi a détaché l'entrave (6) de son cheval, il l'a poursuivi (7) et l'a frappé sur la tête (avec cette corde) jusqu'à ce qu'il (le griot) soit entré dans une maison.

5. Blissi lui (au griot) a dit : « Je ne te tue pas, (parce que) tu es griot (8). » Blissi s'en est retourné. Ils (ceux de

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(1) C'était une manière de témoigner une particulière estime à ce valeureux guerrier qui appartenait, comme il est dit, à l'armée de Soulamaran Yero, *fama* du Macina.

(2) Cette part qui lui était réservée à lui, Blissi.

(3) Il y avait là une sorte de défi de la part du griot de Ma-n-son envers Blissi.

(4) Pour combattre.

(5) Litt. s'est levé.

(6) Corde attachée à la selle pour entraver, le cas échéant, le cheval.

(7) Litt. il l'a chassé devant lui.

(8) A la guerre les gens de caste n'étaient pas mis à mort, ils venaient grossir la clientèle du vainqueur.

6. *A ko : « N nana â ka n deme, m b'a fe n ni Blisi ka kele. » A n-y' u so dyon' tyaman' a ni so tyaman' moriu ye Allah dali ke. U ye seben' fla-di Bakari Dyan' ma.*

7. *U ko : « I ka sara fla mara. I ka do tua da Blisi, i ka do fana da Bakari Dyan' ; i ka seben' sir' u kan'na ; i kan' u fa f'u kele don' mi. »*

8. *Bakari Dyan' a l'u mara. Don kelen', sara-u kelela. Blisi sara a ye Bakari Dyan' sara gen'. Blisi sara bira, a kan' kari. Bakari Dyan' sara sagira, a ñana a salen' soro, a l'a tu.*

9. *Bakari Dyan' tara fo mori-ke ye ; mori-ke ko : « Masina ma nana don' mi, Blisi a b'i gen' folo, o ko i b' a fa. » Don' kelen', Masina nana, Segu bora.*

10. *Bakari-Dyan' ko fama ye, a ko : « M bi Blisi fa bi. » Fama ko : « E ye fato e. » U bora. Dyeli-u be Bakari Dyan' donkili, u b'a fo : « Dyon' be Blisi lama ? Bakari Dyan' de bi Blisi lama, ko ba. Dyon' be dyona-dyona ke ? Bakari Dyan' de bi dyona-dyona ke talima. »*

11. *Bakari Dyan', a ulila, a ye Blisi segere, a y'a sua ni*

l'armée) sont (re)venus au Macina. Bacari Dyan est allé causer avec les marabouts de Ségou.

6. Il (Bacari) dit (aux marabouts) : « Je suis venu pour que vous m'aidiez dans mon désir (1) de combattre Blissi. » Il leur a donné beaucoup d'esclaves et beaucoup de chevaux. Les marabouts ont prié Allah. Ils ont donné deux papiers à Bacari Dyan.

7. Ils (lui) ont dit : « Garde deux béliers ; donne à l'un le nom de Blissi, donne aussi à l'autre le nom de Bacari Dyan. Attache-leur au cou (ces) papiers ; ne les tue pas jusqu'au jour où ils se battront.

8. Bacari Dyan les (béliers) a gardés. Un jour, les béliers se sont battus. Le bélier Blissi a poursuivi le bélier Bacari Dyan. Le bélier Blissi est tombé (et) s'est rompu le cou. Le bélier Bacari Dyan est revenu (sur ses pas), il est venu (et) l'a trouvé mort ; il lui a donné un coup de tête.

9. Bacari Dyan est allé (le) dire au marabout. Le marabout dit : « Quand (l'armée du) Macina (re)viendra (pour combattre), Blissi d'abord te chasseras, ensuite tu le tueras (2). » Un jour, (l'armée du) Macina vint ; (l'armée de) Ségou sortit (à sa rencontre).

10. Bacari Dyan dit au *fama* : « Je tuerai Blissi aujourd'hui (3). » Le *fama* dit : « Tu es fou. » (4). Ils (les gens d'armes de Ségou) sont sortis. Les griots chansonnent Bacari Dyan (5), ils disent : « Qui va secouer Blissi ? C'est Bacari Dyan qui va secouer Blissi, grande affaire ! Qui va faire très promptement ? C'est Bacari Dyan qui va agir très très promptement. »

11. Bacari Dyan s'est élancé (6), il s'est approché de

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(1) Litt. je veux me battre avec Blissi.

(2) Comme l'on voit, le jeu des béliers est ici un moyen de divination, grâce aux « papiers » rédigés par les marabouts et attachés au cou de ces béliers.

(3) Il est de coutume, avant le combat, que les guerriers proclament l'exploit qu'ils veulent accomplir : c'est un mode d'émulation très en honneur.

(4) Parce qu'il considérait Blissi comme invincible.

(5) C'est encore une pratique courante pour exciter le courage des guerriers.

(6) Litt. s'est levé.

tama e : a ma don' Blisi y' a ma na ka tama ye. A ma don'. Bakari Dyan' bolila Blisi nye. U tara fo kongo yoro dyan'. U nana foloni na.

12. *Bakari-Dyan' a-ka so i pan' ; Blisi ka so nana, a bira foloni kono ; Blisi kan' kari. Bakari-Dyan' sagira ko, a nana e Blisi kun' tige. A y' a bila ganfa kono.*

13. *A y' a ka so mina ; a nana fo Segu kere fe ; a ye Blisi ka so bila. Blisi ka so a donna Segu kono ; tana b'a kan' na. U ye tana kunkun' me. U bolila.*

14. *U ye so ye ; u ko : « Ma te so kan', koi ! » Fama y'a ka so sofa-u bo, k' u ka ta Bakari Dyan' nò ye. U ye Bakari Dyan' sigilen' soro sira lo.*

15. *A ko : « N ye Blisi fa ; a ko, n te don' Segu, fo Segu kele ma na n soro yan', a ni dyeli-u. » Sofa-u, u tara a fo fama ye. Kele bora a ni dyeli-u.*

16. *U tara Bakari Dyan' ben' ; u n'a nana Segu kono, u nana fama ka da la ; u ye Blisi kun' bo ganfa kono ; u y'a da fama koro, a ko : « Bakari Dyan' i ni tye ! »*

Blissi, il l'a piqué avec sa lance (1), mais elle n'est pas entrée. Bacari s'est enfui devant Blissi. Ils sont allés au loin dans la brousse. Ils sont arrivés à un ruisseau.

12. Le cheval de Bacari Dyan a sauté (le ruisseau) ; le cheval de Blissi est arrivé (et) est tombé dans le ruisseau. Blissi (dans sa chute) s'est rompu le cou. Bacari Dyan est revenu en arrière, il est venu (2) et a coupé la tête de Blissi. Il l'a mise dans la musette (3).

13. Il a pris son (de Blissi) cheval. Il (Bacari) est venu jusqu'auprès de Ségou. (Alors) il a laissé (aller) le cheval de Blissi. Le cheval de Blissi est entré dans Ségou, il a une sonnette au cou. Les gens entendent le tintement de la sonnette, ils sortent (de leurs cases).

14. Ils voient le cheval et disent : « Tiens, il n'y a personne sur le cheval ! » Le *fama* envoie les *sofa* de sa maison pour aller chercher (litt. voir) la trace de Bacari Dyan. Ils (ces *sofa*) ont trouvé Bacari assis dans le chemin.

15. Il (Bacari) dit : « J'ai tué Blissi, et je n'entrerai pas dans Ségou (avant) que l'armée et les griots ne soient venus me chercher ici. » Les *sofa* sont allés le dire au *fama*. L'armée est sortie avec les griots.

16. Ils sont allés à la rencontre de Bacari ; ils sont entrés avec lui dans Ségou et sont venus à (devant) la porte (de la maison) du *fama* ; l'on a sorti de la musette la tête de Blissi et on l'a placée devant le *fama*. Il (le *fama*) a dit : « Bacari Dyan, merci ! »

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(1) Il y a vingt ans, l'on m'a affirmé que dans le village de Bacari Dyan, l'on conservait la lance de ce fameux guerrier. Entièrement en fer, elle était, disait-on, d'un tel poids que plusieurs hommes la soulevaient avec peine, tant il est vrai que « le fort » a toujours des armes exceptionnelles.

(2) Pour : il s'est approché.

(3) Sorte de sac pour contenir le mil que l'on donne à manger au cheval.

TEXTE VI.

Bakari Dyan'

II

1. *Don' kelen' Bakari Dyan' ko, a sen' be dinye da la Segu, n'a y'a bo Segu be na bi a kono ; a b'a fo tugu, a ko dia te moso ko la, o y'a den' dimi.*

2. *Don' kelen', fama ye Bakari Dyan' wele ka b'a kun' ti. A ye sofa-u sigi bilon' da la. A ko sofa–u ye : « Bakari Dyan' n'a nana, â ka to a ka don' ; a boto, â ka kun' ti.*

3. *Bakari Dyan' nana a den' be a ko fe. A ta don'. A nana fama sigilen' soro, a ko : « Fama, i ni su. » A ko : « Maraba ! » Fama ko : « Bakari Dyan', n y'a me ko i ko i sen' dinye da la Segu, n y' i l'a bo Segu be na bi a ro. E Fula fantan', n n' i kun' ti bi. » A l'a fa neni, a l'a ba neni.*

4. *Bakari Dyan' den' bora bilon' kono, a n'a ka marfa ; a ye marfa sigi, a l'a do fama disi ro. A ko : « E, Bamana dyon' bi ! i ye m fa neni ! a ko : « Baba, a fa neni ! » A y'a neni. A ko : « A ba neni ! » A y'a ba neni.*

5. *A ko fama ye : « Uli, i ka m fa labo, n'i lama n n'i*

TRADUCTION VI

BACARI DYAN

II

1. Un jour, Bacari Dyan a dit que son pied est sur l'ouverture d'un trou, à Ségou ; que s'il retire son pied, Ségou tombera dans ce trou. Il a dit encore : il n'y a pas d'agrément dans l'affaire de femme (1), cela a peiné son fils.

2. Un jour, le *fama* a fait appeler Bakari Dyan pour lui casser la tête (2). Il (le *fama*) a placé des *sofa* à la porte du *bilon* (3). Il a dit aux *sofa* : « Lorsque Bacari Dyan viendra, laissez-le entrer (et) quand il sortira, cassez-lui la tête. »

3. Bacari Dyan vint suivi de son fils. Il est entré. Il est venu trouver le *fama* (qui était) assis ; il dit : « *Fama*, bonsoir. » Il (le *fama*) dit : « Merci ! » Le *fama* dit : « Bacari Dyan, j'ai entendu que tu dis que ton pied est (placé) sur l'ouverture d'un trou, à Ségou, et que si tu retires ton pied Ségou tombera dans le trou. Toi, faible Peul ! je te casserai la tête. » Il (le *fama*) insulta son (de Bacari) père, il (le *fama*) insulta sa (de Bacari) mère (4).

4. Le fils de Bacari Dyan sortit du *bilon*, avec son fusil ; il a armé son fusil et l'a appuyé (par le bout du canon) sur la poitrine du *fama* ; il dit : « Toi, Bambara, fils d'esclave, tu insultes mon père ! Papa, insulte son père. » Il (Bacari) l' (le père du *fama*) a insulté. Il (le fils de Bacari) dit : « Insulte sa mère. » Il (Bacari) a insulté sa mère (du *fama*).

5. Il (le fils de Bacari) dit au *fama* : « Lève-toi, fais

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(1) C'est-à-dire dans les rapports sexuels avec la femme.

(2) Expression usuelle pour dire mettre à mort ; elle semble se référer à l'époque où la massue était couramment employée pour cet office.

(3) Sorte de vestibule qui donne seul accès dans la maison.

(4) Ces insultes, qui consistent en expressions grossières, visant les organes génitaux de l'un et l'autre sexes, entraînent des vengeances terribles.

fa. » Fama ulila, a bilar' u nye ; a nana sofa-u soro bilon' no, u ulila k' u b' a kun' ti.

6. *Fama ko : « A y' a to e. » U y' a to e. U bora. U tar' u ka so. Bakari Dyan' den' ko « : Baba, a ko dia be moso ko la. » A ko : « Oo, n den', dia be moso ko la ; a ko, ni e tun' te bi, fama tun' na n kun' ti. »*

sortir mon père, si tu bronches, je te tue. » Le *fama* s'est levé, a passé devant eux ; il est venu trouver les *sofa* dans le *bilon*' : ils (les *sofa*) se sont levés pour lui (à Bacari) casser la tête.

6. Le *fama* dit : « Laissez-le tranquille. » Ils l'(Bacari) ont laissé tranquille. Ils (Bacari et son fils) sont sortis. (et) sont allés chez eux. Bacari Dyan, fils, dit : « Papa, il y a de l'agréable dans l'affaire des femmes. » Il (Bacari) dit : « Oui, mon fils, il y a de l'agrément dans l'affaire des femmes, si tu n'avais pas été là aujourd'hui, le *fama* m'aurait cassé la tête. »

TEXTE VII

SAMBA DYITO

1. *Fama den' don' ; a borila ka bo a fama ka so, a tara dyamana wore. A nana fama dugu la. A e fama den'-moso soro kan'. A nana dyigi so kan' kolon' da la ; a b'a ka so mi.*

2. *Fama den'-moso a l'a-ka korosigi bila ka ta rodye A ko a ye : « Tye o, i bore mi ? » A ko : « M bora yoro dyan' ; n ye fama den' ye. » Korosigi ko : « Fama den'-moso ko i ka bisimillai. »*

3. *A donna dugu kono, a dyigina. Fama den'-moso ko a be fur' a ma. Samba ko : « A ñyana ! » U ye furu siri, a furul' a ma.*

4. *Don' kele Suraka-u nana fama ka misiu ta. U li tabale gosi. Samba ko moso ye : « Mun' kan' ye ni-n-ye. » Moso ko: « Tabale kan' don', Suraka-u ye m fa ka misiu ta. » A ko: « Suruka-u u be na yan' ? » A ko : « oo. » A ko : « N ni-n-y' a don' ko Surukau u be na yan', ne te sigi yan ! »*

5. *Moso ko Samba e, a ko : « Kulusi du-n-ma, a ni doloki, a ni banfla. » A l'u d'a ma ; moso l'u bé don' ; a e kilike da so la ; a yelena so kan' ; a li Samba ka marfa ta. Samba donna bon' kono, ka bon' da tugu. Moso ko Samba e : « Kana bo mau k'i ye. » Samba ko : « Awa ! »*

TRADUCTION VII

Samba le lache

1. Fils de *fama*, il quitta la maison du *fama*, son père, pour aller dans un autre pays (1). Il arriva à la ville d'un (autre) *fama* dont la fille se trouvait (à ce moment) sur la terrasse de la maison. Il descendit de cheval près du puits et abreuva sa monture.

2. La fille du *fama* envoya pour observer (cet étranger) une de ses domestiques. Elle (la domestique) lui dit : « Homme, d'où viens-tu ? » Il dit : « Je viens de loin. Je suis fils de *fama*. » La domestique dit : « La fille du *fama* te fait dire que tu es le bienvenu » (2).

3. Il entra dans le village et (y) prit l'hospitalité. La fille du *fama* dit qu'elle veut l'(Samba) épouser. Il dit : « C'est bon ! » On les unit, il l'épouse.

4. Un jour, les Maures viennent enlever les bœufs du *fama*. L'on bat le *tabala* (3). Samba demande à sa femme : « Qu'est ce bruit ? » Elle dit : « C'est le bruit du *tabala* ; les Maures ont enlevé les bœufs de mon père. » Il dit : « Les Maures viennent ici ? » Elle dit : « Oui. » Il dit : « Si j'avais su que les Maures viennent ici, je ne me serais pas arrêté ici. »

5. La femme dit à Samba : « Donne-moi ton pantalon, ta blouse et ton bonnet. » Il les lui donna, elle s'en revêtit. Elle mit la selle sur le cheval, elle monta sur le cheval, elle prit le fusil de Samba. Samba entra dans la case et en ferma la porte. La femme dit à Samba : « Ne sors pas, de peur que les gens ne te voient. » Samba dit : « Bien » (4).

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(1) Il semble que ce fut pour échapper aux incursions des Maures, d'après l'alinéa 4.

(2) L'expression *bismillai*, empruntée à l'arabe, sert de formule de politesse pour souhaiter la bienvenue.

(3) Sorte de tambour spécialement employé lors des événements graves, telle l'attaque par l'ennemi, comme ici.

(4) Le mot *awa*, comme l'expression *a nyana*, a une signification qui varie avec l'intention et l'intonation.

6. *Moso tara, a ni Surakau u kelela ; a e so tan' dyigi u fe, a ni misiu sagira ; a ni magen' nana ben' ; a e misiu bila, a ni son' a la ka so boli ka ta so.*

7. *A nana don' a-ka so kono. A ko : « Samba, bo ; u li misiu bosi. » Samba bora ; moso li a ka finiu d'a-n-ma. Moso, a e dyi bo, a tara sigi bon' ko fe. A ko : « Samba, tai ko. » Samba tari ko, a nana sigi.*

8. *Dyaliu u nana Samba fo. U ko : « Fama b'i fo. » A ko : « San'o san', Surakau u be ta ni a-ka misiu ye ; nyinan tau i l'u bosi. »*

9. *Samba, a l'o ke senya fla. Senya fla-na, moso a balema-ke tyeni a ko a koro ye, a ko : « Nin' te Samba ye, nin' ye an balema-moso don'. » Koro a ko : « Kalo, Samba don'. » A ko : « Munyu, mb'a rodye. »*

10. *Tyeni l'a ka so boli, a sera balema-moso ma, a li muru bo, a l'a sua a sen' na. Tyeni, a sigira ka na a koro-ke yoro. A ko : « N l'a sua ; a ko : ni Samba don', an n'a don'. »*

11. *Moso a ye so boli, a tara so. A ko : « Samba e ! » A ko : « oo ! » A ko : « Bo, a ko : n dorani li n dyogi. Na n k' i sen' dyogi. » Samba ko : « aa ! » Moso a ye muru ta, a li Samba tige a sen' na ; a l'a siri ; a l'a yere tan' siri ; a ko : « Samba, i sigi yan' ! » Samba bora, sigira.*

12. *Dyaliu u nana. U ko : « Samba, i ni see ! I dyogina ? » A ko : « oo ! » Fama a la misi-u d'a-n-ma, k'a k'u dun'.*

6. La femme partit. Elle se battit avec les Maures ; elle (leur) tua dix cavaliers (1) et revint avec les bœufs. Ayant rencontré les gens de secours (2), elle (leur) laissa les bœufs et fit la course avec les cavaliers pour regagner sa demeure.

7. Elle entra dans sa maison, elle dit : « Samba, sors ; on a repris les bœufs. » Samba sortit ; elle lui donna ses effets. La femme (de Samba) alla tirer de l'eau qu'elle déposa derrière la case (3). Elle dit (alors) à Samba : « Va derrière (la case) : « Samba alla derrière (la case) et s'y assit.

8. Les griots vinrent saluer Samba. Ils dirent : « Le *fama* te salue ; tous les ans les Maures enlèvent ses bœufs, cette année-ci tu les (leur) a repris. »

9. Samba fit cela deux fois. A la deuxième fois, le jeune frère de la femme (de Samba) dit à son (frère) aîné : « Ce n'est pas Samba, c'est notre sœur. » L'aîné dit : « Tu te trompes, c'est Samba. » — « Patiente, dit le jeune homme, j'examinerai ça. »

10. (Dans la mêlée) le jeune homme lança son cheval jusqu'auprès de sa sœur ; il sortit son couteau et la blessa (4) à la jambe ; il revint auprès de son frère et (lui) dit : « Je l'ai blessée (4), si c'est Samba, nous le saurons. »

11. La femme (de Samba) fit courir son cheval et rentra chez elle. Elle dit : « Eh ! Samba ! » Il dit : « Oui ! » Elle dit : « Sors de la case, mon jeune frère m'a blessée, viens que je te blesse à la jambe. » Samba dit : « Non ! » La femme a pris un couteau et a coupé Samba à la jambe, elle l'a pansé ; et s'est pansée elle-même. Elle a dit : « Samba, assieds-toi là. » Samba sortit et s'assit.

12. Les griots sont venus. Ils disent : « Merci, Samba ! Tu es blessé ? » Il dit : « Oui ! » Le *fama* lui donna des bœufs pour (bien) s'alimenter. L'on (5) dit au jeune

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(1) Litt. dix chevaux.

(2) Ceux qui venaient prêter main forte aux premiers poursuivants.

(3) Sans doute pour que Samba fit au moins le simulacre de se laver, afin que l'on s'expliquât pourquoi il n'avait ni sueur ni poussière.

(4) Litt. je l'ai percée.

(5) Ce sont évidemment les gens de son entourage, son frère aîné et d'autres, qui le taquinent.

5

U ko tyeni ye : « I li kalon' tige, i ko Samba te, Samba don'. » A ko : « A nyana. »

13. *Don' kele, Surakau u nana misiu ta ; u ye tabale gosi. Moso ko Samba e, a ko : « Samba, i te ta bi ? Ne sen' m b'i dimi. » Samba ko : « N te ta. » Moso ko : « A nyana. »*

14. *Moso a ye kilike da so la ; a ye sofau kili ; sofau nana. A ko : « Samba e, na n deme, m b'i ele. » A ko, sofau ye : « Samba ta. » U l'a ta, u l'a bila so kan', u ye marfa ta, u l'a bila a ni kilike tye u li so gosi ; so bolila, a sinna Surakau fan' fe.*

15. *Samba a be kulo. Dyaliu ko : « Fama biran-ke fato don' ! A be kulo ka ta Surakau ye ! » So nana don' Surakau tye ro. Samba a bi marfa ta k'a fili, a bolo bilala keletigela kan'.*

16. *Marfa tira, a la Sirakau fla fa. Samba li karfe sama. A ko : « Tan' don' ? » Samba li marfa soni ; a l'a-ka doloki siri ; a ni Surakau u kelila. A ye so debe ni tan' dyigi ; a e misiu bosi, a n'u sagira.*

17. *O don', Samba ma dyig' a-ka so ; a dyigi a biranke ka da la, a ni dyaliu. A ko biran-ke ye : « I ka misiu fele. » Biran-ke ko : « I ni tye, Samba ! » Samba ko : « Kana fo ni ni tye, a fo i den'-moso ni tye. A ko : ne Samba, n ka dyito, i den'-moso de a to fari nyana bi. N'y' a don' bi, Allah de bi ma fa. »*

frère : « Tu t'es trompé en disant que ce n'est pas Samba. C'est Samba. » Il dit : « C'est bon ! » (1).

13. Un jour, les Maures enlevèrent les bœufs du *fama*. L'on battit le *tabala*. La femme dit à Samba : « Ne pars-tu pas aujourd'hui ? Ma jambe me fait souffrir. » Samba dit : « Je ne pars pas. » La femme dit : « C'est bon ! » (2)

14. La femme a mis la selle sur le cheval ; elle a appelé les *sofa* ; les *sofa* sont venus. Elle dit : « Eh ! Samba, viens « m'aider, je vais monter (à cheval). » Elle dit aux *sofa* : « Prenez Samba. » Ils l'ont pris, ils l'ont mis à cheval, ils ont pris le fusil qu'ils ont placé entre (le pommeau de) la selle et lui, ils ont frappé le cheval ; le cheval s'est sauvé et s'est dirigé du côté des Maures.

15. Samba gueule (3), les griots disent : « Le gendre du « *fama* est fou, il gueule pour aller contre les Maures. » Le cheval pénètre au milieu des Maures. Samba ayant saisi le fusil pour le jeter, toucha la détente.

16. Le coup partit et tua deux Maures. Samba tira sur les rennes et dit : « C'est ça ? » Samba rechargea son fusil, attacha sa blouse et se battit avec les Maures. Il tua cinquante cavaliers, reprit les bœufs et revint.

17. Ce jour-là, Samba ne mit pas pied à terre chez lui, il descendit de cheval à la porte de son beau-père, en compagnie des griots. Il dit à son beau-père : « Voici tes bœufs. » Le beau-père dit : « Merci, Samba ! » Samba dit : « Ne me dis pas merci à moi, dis merci à ta fille ; moi, « Samba, j'étais lâche et c'est ta fille qui m'a rendu brave « aujourd'hui. D'aujourd'hui, je sais que c'est Allah qui « tue l'homme » (4).

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(1) On ne saurait trop le remarquer, l'expression *a nyana* sert le plus souvent à cacher les vrais sentiments de celui qui s'en sert. Ici le jeune homme garde au fond son opinion, alors qu'il semble y renoncer. Il en est de même à l'alinéa suivant.

(2) Voir la note précédente.

(3) Et les griots qui le croient brave ne s'expliquent pas pourquoi il crie.

(4) Et non pas la balle. — Cette finale marque nettement l'islamisation.

TEXTE VIII

MARANDEN' BONE

(1re version)

1. *Moso-koro kelen' kera, tye o tye y'a den' nyini, a b'u dun'. Tye kele la rebare me, a ko a bi t'a nyini.*

2. *A duani ko a bi t'a fe. A duani tua ye Maran'. Kor'-ke ko : « I te ta m fe. » Maran' ko : « A nyana. » A tara Maran' soro a nye sira la.*

3. *A l'a-yere ke bereni tyeni-n-ye. A ko : « Ni n dorani tun' nana, n na nin' d'a ma. » Maran' ko : « N kor'-ke, ne don'. » A ko : « An ka ta. » U tara. Sera dugu ma, u tara dyigi moso-koro ka so.*

4. *Moso-koro ko : « Bismillai ! a ko : Tyeni, i tua ko di ? » A ko : « N tua ko Maran'. » A ko : « E ka dyigi ne ka so. » U dyigina. Su kora. Maran' ye da Moso-koroni fe ; kor'-ke tari da Moso-koro-ni den' fe.*

5. *Dugula ma, Moso-koro-ni ulila, a y'a-ka muru ta ; a y'a da dia. Maran' ko : « Mama, n ma sunu ! » Moso-koro-ni dala. A sumuna.*

TRADUCTION VIII

LE PETIT MARAN-MALHEUR (1)

(1re version)

1. Il était une vieille qui mangeait (2) quiconque courtisait sa fille ; un homme apprit cette nouvelle et dit qu'il la (la fille) courtiserait.

2. Son petit frère (3) (de cet homme) dit qu'il va avec lui. Ce petit frère se nomme Maran. L'aîné dit : « Tu ne viens pas avec moi. » Maran dit : « C'est bon ! » (4). Il (l'aîné) partit. Maran se trouve devant lui dans le chemin.

3. Il (l'aîné) s'est fait à lui-même une jolie petite canne. Il (l'aîné) (se) dit : « Si mon petit frère était venu, je lui aurais donné ceci. » Maran dit : « Mon aîné (5) c'est moi. » Il (l'aîné) dit : « Allons. » Ils s'en vont. La nuit venue, ils sont allés prendre l'hospitalité chez la vieille.

4. La vieille dit : « Soyez les bienvenus ! » Elle dit : « Petit, quel est ton nom ? » Il dit : « Mon nom est Maran. » Elle dit : « Demeure (6) chez moi. » Ils ont pris l'hospitalité. La nuit est venue. Maran couche avec la vieille ; l'aîné est allé coucher avec la fille de la vieille.

5. A minuit, la vieille se lève, elle prend son couteau et l'aiguise. Maran dit : « Grand'mère, je ne dors pas. » La vieille se (re)couche et s'endort.

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(1) C'est-à-dire le petit Maran qui cause le mal. Les mauvais tours du dit Maran sont en nombre infini ; ils font l'objet d'une série inépuisable de contes aux péripéties sans cesse renouvelées. Peut-être cette affabulation recouvre-t-elle quelqu'idée métaphysique (voir la note (1) page 389).

(2) Il s'agit d'une sorcière mangeuse d'âme.

(3) Cette expression désigne d'ordinaire le frère utérin puîné ; il ne faut pas l'entendre comme se rapportant nécessairement à un enfant, mais seulement à un homme jeune par rapport à celui qui est son aîné.

(4) C'est un nouvel exemple de l'élasticité de cette formule (voir les notes du récit précédent).

(5) Litt. mon vieux.

(6) Litt. prends l'hospitalité chez moi.

6. *Maran' ulila ; a tara Moso-koro-ni den' ka so ; a ye moso da a kor'-ke nye ma. Maran' segera* (1), *a nani* (2) *da Moso-koro-ni ka so.*

7. *Moso-koro-ni ulila, a y' a-ka muru ta, a y' a da dia, Maran' ma kuma. A tar' a den' ka so a y' a den' kan' tige.*

8. *Maran' nana, a ko : « Mama, i do, n k'i deme. » U y'a kono fara, u'y a son' bo, u y' a bien' bo, u y' a tobi ka dun'. Maran' a ni Moso-koro-ni tari da. Moso-koro-ni sunana.*

9. *Maran' ulila, tara kor'-ke kunu, a ko : « Kor'-ke an ta ; ni n tun' man na, Moso-koro-ni n'i ke tan'. » U bora. U nana da kene na. A ko kor'-ke ye, u ka yele banan' kan'. U yelena.*

10. *Dugu dyera, u ye mage bo. Maran' k' u ye : « Eh ! an' be yan'. » U nana, u ye dyele ta, u ye iri tigi fo a tora doni. Basa bora iri woro, a y' a ku ma iri la, a morola. Maran' ko kor'-ke ye, a ko : « M be basa fa, a suma ka ko. » A ye basa fa.*

11. *U ye iri tige tun'. Iri ko a bi bi. Bon' nana, a ye Maran' ta, a l'a sigi a kinin' bolo kaman' kan' ; a l'a kor-ke*

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(1) Pour *sagira*.
(2) Pour *nana*.

6. Maran se lève, il va à la case de la fille de la vieille ; il place la jeune fille devant son (frère) aîné. Maran revient se coucher chez la vieille.

7. La vieille se lève, elle prend son couteau, elle l'aiguise, Maran ne parle pas. Elle va à la case de sa fille et coupe le cou à sa fille (1).

8. Maran vient (s'approche) et dit : « Grand'mère, attends que je t'aide. » Ils ouvrent le ventre, sortent le cœur, sortent le foie et les font cuire pour les manger. Maran et la vieille vont (ensuite) se coucher. La vieille s'endort.

9. Maran se lève, il va réveiller son aîné, il (lui) dit : « Aîné, partons ; si je n'étais pas venu (avec toi), la vieille t'aurait fait ainsi » (2). Ils sortent. Ils arrivent sur la place (du village). Il (Maran) dit à son aîné : « Grimpons sur un fromager » (3). Ils (y) grimpent.

10. Le jour luit. Des gens viennent au secours (de la vieille) (4) Maran leur dit (crie) : « Eh ! nous sommes ici ! » Ils viennent (ils s'approchent de l'arbre), ils prennent des haches et coupent l'arbre presque entièrement. Un lézard sortit d'un trou de l'arbre, il plaça sa queue sur l'entaille qui se referme. Maran dit à son aîné : « Je vais tuer ce lézard (parce qu') il pue. » Il tua le lézard.

11. On coupe l'arbre de nouveau. L'arbre dit qu'il va tomber. Survient un aigle, il prend Maran, il le place sur

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(1) Beaucoup de récits soudanais présentent ce côté, au premier abord stupide, du sorcier qui se fait à lui-même un mal irréparable, ou travaille à sa propre ruine comme s'il ne s'en apercevait pas, même quand le fait est évident comme ici. — Mais c'est peut-être une manière d'exprimer que l'esprit qui joue sous les apparences de la matière suit ses seules impulsions sans se soucier de nos sentiments ou de nos lois de nature : il est et demeure en dehors de notre nature. — Les récits relatifs à *Maran den' bow* contiennent tous de ces étrangetés. — C'est dire encore que le « possédé » n'est qu'un instrument que le *sube* prend et lâche à son gré : quand il est abandonné, il revient à sa nature propre sans se souvenir de ce qu'il a fait dans l'état de possession, d'où, pour nous, des incohérences.

(2) C'est-à-dire : t'aurait coupé le cou.

(3) Litt. qu'ils doivent grimper sur un fromager pour échapper à ceux qui vont les poursuivre.

(4) En se réveillant, au jour, dans sa nature humaine, la vieille a vu sa fille morte. Les cris, ses lamentations ont attiré les voisins. Tous ensemble, ils cherchent les meurtriers. Maran les hèle...

ta, a l'a sigi a numan' bolo kaman' kan'. A l'u tara.

12. *Maran' ko kor'-ke ye, a ko : « Bon' suma ka ko. » Kor'-ke ko : « Na yan' je, ne ka ta yen' je. » « Maran' ko : A ka suma ka ko, m b'a kaman' kari. » A l'a kari, u bira dugu ma, u saba bè sara.*

13. *Kutani nana : « Eh ! a ko : demise nyuman u sara yan'. » A nana boti bon' nun' na. A ko : « Ettiso! » A ulila, a tara. A nana boti kor'-ke nun' na. A ko : « Ettiso ! » a ulila, a sigira.*

14. *A ko, a bi boti Maran' nun' na, kor'-ke ko : « A to e ! Tyeni ma nyi. » Kuta ko : « Adamaden' ma nyi, n l'i kunu, i ko n kani e doro kunu ? » A ko : « n ye n doro don', n'i a kunu, a n' i dun'. »*

15. *A ko : « M b'a kunu. » a e boti a nun' na. A ko : « Ettiso ! » A ko : « N koro, n ye kuta tomo ; a ko : n koro, na kuta mina n ye, m bi ta dua nyini. » A tara kor'-ke ye kuta bila.*

16. *A nato a ni kuta benna, a ko : « N ye kuta tomo ; n ye kuta kele, n koro-ke kuta kele. » A ko : « N koro na kuta mina n ye, m bi ta dua nyini. » A tara kor'-ke ye kuta bila.*

17. *A ni kuta benna. A ko : « N ye kuta tomo, ne kuta fla, n koro-ke kuta kele. » A ko : « N koro-ke ne kuta mina, m bi ta dua nyini. » A tara. Kor'-ke ye kuta bila.*

18. *A nato a ni kuta benna. A ko : « N ye kuta tomo, tilali benna : n koro-ke kuta fla, ne kuta fla. » Kor'-ke ko, a ko : « N dua kuta dyeni, i ka nyimi ; a ko, kuta kele don' : ne b'a bila, i b'a mina. » A l'a dyeni. a l'a nyimi. a sara. A kor'-ke tara so.*

son aile droite ; il prend l'aîné (de Maran) et le place sur son aile gauche. Il les emporte.

12. Maran dit à son aîné, il dit : « L'aigle sent mauvais. » L'aîné dit : « Viens par ici, j'irai par là. » Maran dit : « Il sent mauvais, je vais casser son aile. » Il a cassé l'aile, ils sont tombés à terre et tous trois sont morts.

13. Une petite tortue survient : « Eh ! dit-elle, de bons petits sont morts ici. » Elle fait un pet au nez de l'aigle. Il dit : « Ettiso ! » (1), se lève et s'en va. Elle fait un pet au nez de l'aîné, il dit : « Ettiso ! », il se redresse sur son séant.

14. Elle dit qu'elle va faire un pet au nez de Maran, l'aîné dit : « Laisse cela, le petit homme n'est pas bon . » La tortue dit : « L'homme (2) n'est pas bon ! Je t'ai réveillé et tu (me) dis de ne pas réveiller ton petit frère ? » Il dit : « Je connais mon petit frère, si tu le réveilles, il te mangera. »

15. Elle dit : « Je vais le réveiller. » Elle fait un pet à son nez (de Maran). Il dit : « Ettisso ! » Il dit : « Mon aîné, j'ai trouvé une tortue ; mon aîné, garde-moi (cette) tortue, je vais chercher du bois sec. » Il s'en va. L'aîné lâche la tortue.

16. En revenant, il (Maran) rencontre la tortue et dit : « J'ai trouvé une tortue : j'ai une tortue, mon aîné a une tortue. » Il dit : « Mon aîné, garde-moi cette tortue, je vais chercher du bois sec. » Il s'en va, l'aîné lâche la tortue.

17. (Au retour) il rencontra la tortue. Il dit : « J'ai trouvé une tortue : j'ai deux tortues, mon aîné en a une. » Il dit : « Mon aîné garde ma tortue, je vais chercher du bois sec. » Il s'en va L'aîné lâche la tortue.

18. En (re)venant, il rencontre la tortue. Il dit : « J'ai trouvé une tortue, le compte est juste : mon aîné deux tortues, moi deux tortues. » L'aîné (lui) dit : « Petit frère, cuit ta tortue pour la manger, c'est une seule tortue : je la lâchais, tu la saisissais. » Il l'a fait cuire et l'a mangé. Il est mort. L'aîné s'en est allé chez lui.

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(1) C'est-à-dire qu'il éternua. C'est toujours par là que, dans les récits indigènes, commence le retour à la vie. L'éternuement comme le pet marquent la sortie des esprits malfaisants, du moins à l'ordinaire.

(2) Litt. l'enfant d'Adam.

TEXTE IX

MARANDEN' BONE

(2e version)

1. *Sugurun' kele a tyekanyi. A ba ye suba e, tye o tye l'a nyini a na o dun'. Kamalen' kele a ta rebarun' me, a ko a fana bi t'a nyini.*

2. *A duani tua e Maran' ye, a ko a bi ta korke fe. Kor'-ke ko : « I te ta m fe. » Kor'-ke tara. A tara Maran' soro a nye sira la.*

3. *A ko : « Maran' i nana ? » A ko : « Oo ! » U tara. U sera dugu ro. Moso-koro ko : « N denu nana. » Maran' ko : « Mama, a ko, ne nana e de so ro. »*

4. *Su kora. Maran' tari da moso-koro fe ; kor'-ke tari da moso-koro den'fe. Dugu tla, Maran' ulila ; a tara kor'-ke kun' da ni moso kun' ye, a e moso kun' da ni tye kun' ye, a e moso da kor'-ke nye ma. Tari da.*

5. *Moso koro nana, a y' a den' kan' tige. A tari da. Maran' ulila, a y' a kor'-ke kunu ; a ko : « N koro, an ta, moso koro a den' fa. » U tara.*

6. *Dugu dyera. Moso-koro a y' a den' salen' soro. A ko : « Ne bi Maran' soro tyogodi ? » Moso-koro l'a-yere ke fali ye ; a tara Maranu ka dugu la.*

7. *Demisen'-u ko : « Fali duna nana ! » Ni demi sen' ko : « Ne ma ku ! » Fali na do fara a-yere kan'. Demi-sen'u ko : « Maran' i ti yele wa ? » A ko : « Fali ni-m-be do fara a-yere kan', ne te yele o fali kan'. »*

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TRADUCTION IX

LE PETIT MARAN-MALHEUR

(2e version)

1. (Il était) une jolie jeune fille. Sa mère est sorcière (1) : tout homme qui la courtise (sa fille), elle (la mère) le mange. Un jeune homme qui a entendu parler de cela, dit que, lui aussi, il va aller la courtiser (la fille).

2. Son petit frère (du jeune homme), nommé Maran, a dit qu'il va aller avec lui. L'aîné dit : « Ne viens pas avec moi. » L'aîné partit. Il a trouvé Maran devant lui dans la route.

3. Il dit : « Maran, tu es venu ? » Il (Maran) dit : « Oui. » Ils sont partis. Ils sont arrivés au village. La vieille dit : « Mes enfants sont arrivés. » Maran dit : « Grand'mère, je suis venu dans ta maison. »

4. La nuit est venue. Maran est allé coucher avec la vieille, l'aîné est allé coucher avec la jeune fille. A minuit, Maran s'est levé, il est allé arranger la coiffure de son frère comme celle de la jeune fille et réciproquement. Il a mis la jeune fille devant son aîné. Il est allé se coucher.

5. La vieille vient, elle a coupé le cou de sa fille. Elle est allée se coucher. Maran s'est levé, il a éveillé son aîné, il lui a dit : « Mon frère, partons, la vieille a tué sa fille. » Ils sont partis.

6. Le jour se lève. La vieille a trouvé sa fille morte. Elle dit : « Comment m'emparer de Maran ? » La vieille se métamorphose en âne ; elle va au village de Maran.

7. Les enfants (du village) disent : « Un âne nouveau est arrivé. » (Et ils s'empressent à monter dessus). Si un enfant dit : « Je n'ai pas de place », l'âne s'allonge de lui-même. Les enfants disent (à Maran) : « Maran, ne montes-tu pas ? » Il (Maran) dit : « Je ne monte pas sur un âne qui ajoute un peu à lui-même. »

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(1) Exactement *suba*. (Voir pages 345 et suivantes).

8. *Fali, a ni denmisen'u tara ; a l'u bila ka so ; a ko demisen'-u n-ye : « Au te t'â so ni-n-Maran' ma na. »*

9. *Misi kelen' be moso-koro, a konoma. A ko : « N-ka « misi ni a e dyeman' bolo, Maran'te ; a ko, ni a e bileman' « ngolo, Maran' don'. »*

10. *Maran' a nana don' misi kono ; a ya tan'-n-a-sen' ye ; Misi wolola dyeman'. A ko : « Nin' te Maran' ye. » Moso-koro bora, ka ta dugu kono.*

11. *Maran' ko, demisen'u n-ye : « A e n-an ku mina. » Demisen'u ko : « Misiden' i koma. » Misiden' ko : « Ne de Maran' ye. » U y' a ku mina. A tara n-u ye so.*

12. *Moso-koro ko : « Ne bi Maran' soro tyogadi ? » Moso-koro a-yere ke sira-dyu ye. A tara do Maran'-u ka so ko fe. U ko : « Sira-dyu fili. » Demisen'u bora ka yel'a kan', u b'a fura kari.*

13. *Maran' ba ko : « E ti ta fura sira kari. » Maran' ko : « N te ta ; tili-se-n-kun'-tye-ma sira, ne ti yel'o kan'. » A ba ko : « Ta yel'a kan'. » A ko ba e : « N so tiganinkuru. » A e tiganinkuru d'a ma.*

14. *Maran' a l'a ke boro kono ; a nana sira-dyu kere fe Maran' ko : « Ne te se ka yele nin' sira na. » Sira a bolo dyigi. Maran' ko : « Ah ! n'y i don' moso-koro sira ! »*

15. *Maran' yelena, sira tara n'a e.*

8. L'âne s'en est allé avec les enfants ; il les a mis dans sa maison ; il a dit aux enfants : « Vous n'irez pas chez vous que Maran ne vienne (ici) (1).

9. La vieille a une vache qui est pleine. Elle (se) dit : « Si ma vache enfante un (veau) blanc, ça ne sera pas Maran ; si elle enfante un (veau) roux, ça sera Maran. »

10. Maran est entré dans le ventre de la vache ; il a donné des coups de pied ; la vache a enfanté un (veau) blanc. Elle (la vieille) dit : « Celui-ci n'est pas Maran. » La vieille est sortie pour aller dans le village.

11. Maran dit aux enfants : » Attrapez ma queue. » Les enfants disent : « Veau, tu parles. » Le veau dit : « C'est moi qui suis Maran. » Ils ont attrapé sa queue. Il les a emporté chez eux.

12. La vieille dit : « Comment (ferai-je pour) attraper Maran ? » La vieille s'est métamorphosée en baobab. Il (ce baboab) est allé se planter lui-même en arrière du village des gens de Maran. Ils (les gens du village) disent : « Tiens (2), un baobab ! » Les enfants sont sortis pour monter sur ce baobab ; ils ont cueilli des feuilles (3).

13. La mère de Maran dit (à Maran) : « Ne vas-tu pas « cueillir des feuilles (de baobab). » Maran dit : « Je n'y « vais pas, je ne monte pas sur un baobab de midi (4). » Sa mère dit : « Va monter dessus. » Il (Maran) dit à sa mère : « Donne-moi des arachides. » Elle lui a donné des arachides.

14. Maran les a mises dans un sac ; il (Maran) est venu à côté du baobab et dit : « Je ne peux pas monter sur ce baobab. » Le baobab abaisse une branche. Maran dit : « Ah ! je te connais, vieille baobab » (5).

15. Maran est monté (sur le baobab) ; le baobab l'a

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(1) Tout ce paragraphe donne à supposer que l'âne a abandonné sa forme et est redevenu la vieille.

(2) Litt. vois un baobab.

(3) Les feuilles de baobab sont employées comme condiment dans la cuisine indigène.

(4) C'est-à-dire poussé subitement comme en plein midi. *Tili senkun' tye ma* : litt. soleil arrive au milieu de la tête.

(5) C'est-à-dire vieille qui t'es changée en baobab.

A tara n'a e a ka so, a l'a bila forgo, a la siri. A ye kolon' sen'. A ko modeni-n-ye : « Ido Maran' kere fe, m bi ta dua nyini. »

16. *A tara dua nyini. Maran bira a-ka tiganinkuru ka a b'u nyimi. Deni ko : « Maran', i be mun' nyimi. » A ko : « M bi fen'duma nyimi. » A ko : « I te n so. » A ko : « M bi son' tyogodi, m be forgo kono. » A ko : « N na da ele. » A ko : « Ni da élé, ni son'. » A y'a élé.*

17. *Maran' bora. Maran' ko a e : « Na ni i lempe n ye. » A e lempe d'a ma. Maran ko a e : « Don' forgo kono i ka fen' ta. » Deni-n-donna. Maran' li forgo da siri. A e deni-n-ka lempe sir' a la.*

18. *Moso-koro nana. A ko : « A be ye ? » Maran' ko : « Mama, a be yan'. » Deni ko : « Mama, ne de be forgo kono. » A ko : « Kalo ! » A e dua ke kolon' kono ; a e ta suma mana ; a ye don' a la ; a ye forgo ta, a y'a fili kolon' kono fo deni kono terenna.*

19. *Maran' nyi pan' ! A ye saba ti. A ko : « Mama, n li ko dyugu k'i la tun'. I modeni kono terenna. » Maran' tara. Moso-koro sigira. A sara.*

emporté. Il l'a emporté dans sa demeure. Elle (1) l'a mis dans un sac de cuir (qu')elle a attaché. Elle a creusé un trou (2). Elle a dit à sa petite fille : « Tiens-toi à côté de « Maran, je vais chercher du bois sec. »

16. Elle est allée chercher du bois sec. Maran s'est mis à décortiquer ses arachides pour les manger. La petite fille dit : « Maran, que manges-tu ? » Il dit : « Je mange « une bonne chose. » Elle dit : « Ne m'en donneras-tu pas ? » Il dit : « Comment t'en donnerai-je, (alors que) je suis « dans ce sac de cuir. » Elle dit : « Je l'ouvrirai. » Il dit « Si tu l'ouvres, je t'en donnerai. » Elle a ouvert.

17. Maran est sorti. Maran lui a dit : « Donne-moi ton *lempe* (3). Elle lui a donné son *lempe*. Maran lui dit : « Entre dans le sac et prends la chose. » La fillette entra. Maran attacha l'ouverture du sac. Il (Maran) mit le *lempe* de la fillette.

18. La vieille est venue. Elle dit : « Est-il là ? » Maran dit : « Grand'mère, il est ici. » La fillette dit : « Grand'mère, c'est moi qui suis dans le sac. » Elle (la grand'mère) dit : « C'est faux. » Elle a mis le bois sec dans le trou, elle a allumé le feu et l'a mis dans le bois sec, elle a pris le sac et l'a jeté dans le trou et le ventre de la fillette a éclaté.

19. Maran a sauté trois fois en se frappant les pieds l'un contre l'autre. Il dit : « Grand'mère, je t'ai fait du mal de nouveau. Le ventre de ta petite fille a éclaté. » Maran s'en est allé. La vieille s'est accroupie. Elle est morte.

---

(1) La vieille a évidemment repris sa forme.

(2) Litt. un puits.

(3) Le *lempe* est un vêtement spécial aux fillettes.

TEXTE X

Suruku ni Muso-n-koroni (1)

1. *Suruku, kungo yalato, ye volo dialan' kele tomo. A tar'a di Muso koroni ma Muso-koroni y'a do ko Suruku me ni bo-nya k'a ke gwansan' ; ba tyaman' b'a fe ; a y'a do Suruku b'aki* (2) *bau de no-fe ; a me son' ki volo dialani ke foi ye. A y'a bila aki gwa san' fe.*

2. *Do-ñg-o do, Suruku bi na Muso-koroni fo : « I ni su, Muso-koroni ! i n'iki volo dialani ni su ! — I ni sogo-ma Muso-koroni ! i n'iki volo dialani ni sogo-ma ! — I ni wula Muso-koroni ! i n'iki volo dialani ni wula ! » — « Nse ! » Suruku na o na foli la, Muso-koroni bi volo dialani dyir'a ra : « Iki volo dialani file gwa kan'. »*

3. *Do kele wula fe, Muso-koroni bonu* (2), *a modeni ye volo dialan'ta k'a ke na ra. Su konu* (2), *Suruku nana : « I ni su, Muso-koroni ! i n'iki volo dialani ni su ! » — « Nse, koro Suruku ! I modeni ye volo dialani ke na ra woulai na ! » « Ho, ho ! n modeni té ! i n'i ba bo nin' na. » « Awa ! kele mine* (2) *sinsan' kono. »*

4. *Suruku bi na su o su Muso-koroni fo ; o na o na, Muso-koroni bi ba sinsan' dyir' a ra ; a bi kile mine* (2) *ki bo. Bau bè bana fo-ka to ba-koro kele. Muso-koroni kamana gwana ; a t'a do a bi tyoko tyoko ke dyonko Suruku kini na o na modeni dun' su fara tle ka, a bi kasi.*

---

(1) Texte dû à l'obligeance de M. l'administrateur Chartier, qui l'a recueilli dans le Kaarta.

(2) Dans ce texte, les pronoms possessifs, au lieu d'être terminés par *a*, le sont par *i*. D'autres altérations finales sont également à signaler : *boru* pour *bora* ; *koru* pour *kora* ; *mine* pour *mina* ; *suruki* pour *suruku* ; *ki*, *bi*, pour *ka*, *be*.

TRADUCTION X

L'HYÈNE ET LA PETITE-VIEILLE

1. En parcourant la campagne, l'Hyène trouva une perdrix crevée qu'elle alla donner à une Petite-Vieille. La Petite-Vieille pensa (bien) que l'Hyène ne lui faisait pas ce cadeau pour rien ; elle avait (en effet) beaucoup de chèvres que l'Hyène désirait, (aussi) ne fit-elle aucun emploi de la perdrix crevée, qu'elle plaça sur (le toit de) son abri (où elle fait la cuisine).

2. Chaque jour, l'Hyène venait saluer la Petite-Vieille : « Bonne nuit ! Petite-Vieille, bonne nuit à toi et à ta « petite perdrix crevée. » (Ou) : « Bonjour ! Petite-Vieille, « bonjour à toi et à ta petite perdrix crevée. » (Ou encore) : « Bonsoir ! Petite-Vieille, bonsoir à toi et à ta petite « perdrix crevée. » « Merci ! » (répondait-elle, et) chaque fois que l'Hyène venait la saluer (ainsi), (elle lui disait) : « Regarde ta petite perdrix crevée sur (le toit de) l'abri. »

3. Un certain soir, la Petite-Vieille étant sortie, son petit-fils prit la perdrix et la mit dans la sauce. A la nuit, l'Hyène vint : « Bonne nuit ! Petite-Vieille, bonne nuit « à toi et à ta petite perdrix crevée. » — « Merci ! frère « Hyène, ton petit-fils a mis ce soir la petite perdrix cre- « vée dans la sauce. » — « Non, ce n'est point mon petit- « fils (qui a agi ainsi, mais le tien) ! tu me dois une chèvre « pour cela. » — « Soit ! prends-en une dans l'enclos. »

4. L'Hyène vint tous les soirs saluer la Petite-Vieille et, chaque fois, la Petite-Vieille lui montra l'enclos des chèvres, et l'Hyène en prit une. Toutes les chèvres y passèrent, il ne restait que le bouc. La Petite-Vieille était inquiète. Elle ne savait comment faire pour que l'Hyène ne vînt pas les manger, elle et son petit-fils. Nuit et jour, elle pleurait.

5. *A tara wara-ba yoro la ka tyoko fo a ye : « Suruki* (2) *fle ki* (2) *volo dialan' kele du n ma, do-n-go, n'y'a do a bi nki bau di no-fe, n me son' k'a ke fe-n-ye, n'y a bila gwansan' fe ; do-ng-o do a bi na n fo, m b' aki volo dialan' dyir'a ra gwa kan', a na o na. Do kele, n modeni ye volo ta gwa kan' ka ke na ra. »*

6. *« A ko n ye ko ni ba bo o ra. N ye sinsan' dyir' a ra, n ko a ki ba kele mine. Ka ta o su ra fo bi, su o su, Suruku bi na ba kele mine ; nki bau bè bana fo-ka to ba-koro kele. Sisan' m bi sira de a kini na n-yere ni n modeni dun' ! »*

7. *Wara-ba ko a ye : « Ta iki so, wula la m bi na, i ki « n siri ba-koro no na. » Muso koroni y' a siri ba-koro no na Suruku nonu su fe, a doto sinsan' kono, san' yege yegera. a ye Wara-ba nye kiseu ye, a kulala ki bo bodyi seri fan' bè fe ki boli ki bo. Kamini o kera, a farala Muso-koroni n'a modeni na.*

5. Elle alla chez le lion (et) lui exposa son cas : « Voici, « l'Hyène m'a donné autrefois une perdrix crevée ; pensant (bien) qu'elle n'agissait ainsi qu'à cause de mes « chèvres, je n'en fis nul emploi et la plaçai sur (le toit « de) l'abri. Chaque jour, l'Hyène vint me saluer et je lui « montrais chaque fois sa perdrix crevée sur (le toit de) « l'abri. Un jour, mon petit-fils prit la perdrix sur le toit « et la mit dans la sauce.

6. « Elle m'a dit de lui payer une chèvre pour cela. Je « lui montrai l'enclos (des chèvres) et lui dis d'en prendre « une. Depuis cette nuit-là jusqu'aujourd'hui, chaque nuit « l'Hyène est venue prendre une chèvre. Il n'y a plus de « chèvres, il ne reste que le bouc et maintenant j'ai peur « qu'elle (l'Hyène) ne vienne nous manger, mon petit-fils « et moi. »

7. Le lion lui dit : « Va chez-toi, ce soir je viendrai et « tu m'attacheras à la place du bouc. » (Effectivement) la Petite-Vieille attacha le lion à la place du bouc. A la nuit, l'Hyène vint et, ayant pénétré dans l'enclos (des chèvres), vit (comme) à la lueur d'un éclair les prunelles du lion ; elle hurla, se lâcha et, courant de tous côtés, s'enfuit. Depuis lors, l'Hyène n'a plus inquiété la Petite-Vieille et son petit-fils (litt. s'est séparée de...).

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Viviana Paques

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Chapter 1. Demography and Tribal and Sub-tribal Groups 1
- I. Nomenclature 1
  - A. European Definitions 1
  - B. Native Definitions 1
- II. Situation 2
  - A. Ethnic Classification 2
  - B. Geographical Distribution 3
  - C. Neighboring Tribes 4
- III. Physical Characteristics of the Bambara 5
- IV. Demographic Data 7
  - A. Distribution of the Population 7
  - B. Population Movement 11
  - C. Emigration 14
  - D. Immigration 15

Chapter 2. Linguistic Data 17
- A. Linguistic Classification 17
- B. Morphology 17
- C. Syntax 18
- D. Vocabulary 18
- E. Numeration 19
- F. Writing 20
- G. Local Diversities 22

Chapter 3. Physical Environment 23
- I. Natural Regions 23
  - A. The Upper Niger 23
  - B. The Segou Basin 24
  - C. Issa Ber 25
  - D. The Ma[illegible]ding Plateau 26
  - E. The Sarakolle Massif 26
- II. Climate and Meteorology 27
  - A. Temperature 27
  - B. Winds 28
  - C. Rainy Season 29
  - D. Dry Season 31

000

Page
Chapter 4. Principal Economic Traits 32
I. Agriculture 32
A. Methods of Cultivation 32
B. Food Crops 34
C. Textile Crops 38
D. Agricultural Tools 39
E. Production Statistics 40
II. Animal Husbandry 41
A. Methods of Stock Raising 41
B. Stock Raising Areas 45
C. Statistics 47
D. Products from Livestock 47
III. Commerce 48
A. External Commerce 48
a. Means of Communication 48
b. Commercial Regulation 50
c. Organization 50
d. Exports and Imports 52
B. Internal Commerce 52
a. Commercial Routes 52
b. Caravan Commerce 53
c. Commercial Practices 53
d. Banks 54

Chapter 5. History and Traditions of Origin 55
I. Prehistory 55
II. History 58
A. Origins of the Bambara People 58
B. Constitution of the Bambara Kingdoms 59
C. Mamari Koulibali 60
D. Reforms of Mamari Koulibali 60
E. Successors of Mamari 61
F. The Toucouleur Invasion and the End of the Bambara Kingdoms 62

Chapter 6. Social Organization 63
I. Traditional Structure of Bambara Society 63

000

Page

A. Social and Political Organization 63
  1. The Family 64
    a. In the Paternal Line 65
    b. In the Maternal Line 66
    c. By Marriage 67
  2. From Family to Community 68
    a. Patriarchal Organization of the Ton . . 68
    b. Alliances 70
    c. Age Classes 72
    d. The Fama 74
    e. Slavery 77
    f. The Army 78
B. Influence of Social Organization on Economic Life 79
    a. The Ton, Work Community 79
    b. Organization of Work 81
    c. Division of Labor 83
C. Legal Procedure: Inheritance, Land Ownership 91
    a. Proofs 93
    b. Punishments 94
    c. Examples of Condemnations 95
    d. Responsibility 96
    e. Inheritance 96
D. Position of Women 100
II. Present Evolution of Bambara Society 102
  A. Political Evolution 102
  B. Tendency to Economic Change 102
    a. Urbanization 103
    b. Development of Large-scale Agricultural Exploitation 103
    c. Social Consequences 104
    d. Chambers of Commerce 105
    e. Work Regulations. Unions. 106

Chapter 7. Cultural Aspects 106
  I. Religion 106

000

Page

A. Cosmogony 108
B. Conception of Man 111
C. Ritual, Sacrifice, and Cults 112
D. The New Religions: Islam and Christianity 116
II. Techniques 117
A. Body Techniques 117
a. Before Birth 119
b. Birth Rites 119
c. Circumcision 121
d. Excision 123
e. Marriage 124
f. Death and Funerals 125
g. Ancestor Worship 126
h. Other Rites 127
B. Special Techniques in General Usage 127
a. Fishing 128
b. Pottery 129
c. The Forge 129
d. Basketry 130
e. Weaving, Clothes, Ornaments 130
f. Arrangement of the Settlements 133
g. Tombs 137
III. Art 138
A. Statuary 139
B. Ceramics 141
C. Painting 141
D. Music 141
E. Literature 144

Conclusion 145
I. Traditional Interpretation of the Mental Characteristics 145
II. Refutation of the Traditional Theory 147
Ethnic map . . . . 150 and 161

[1]

CHAPTER 1

DEMOGRAPHY AND TRIBAL AND SUBTRIBAL GROUPS

I. Nomenclature

A. European Definitions

101

Monseigneur Bazin, in his Bambara dictionary of 1906, gave us the etymology of *Banmana*, "men of the cayman," whereas *Mani* or *Mali* would mean "those of the hippopotamus," the two names having a totemic origin.

For Élisée Reclus in 1887 (*Nouvelle géographie universelle* [New Universal Geography], Vol. XII: *L'Afrique occidentale* [West Africa]), *Bamana* means "steep crag."

Delafossé (*Haut Sénégal-Niger* [Upper Senegal and Niger]) in 1923 makes a distinction between *Bambara* and *Banmana*.

The Banmana would commonly be called Bambara by Europeans and the other Sudanese. Bambara is the word used in the *Tarikh-es-Soudan* [History of Sudan]. The Moslems designate all non-Moslem Sudanese as Bambara. Thus, the Sénoufo [Senufo] are called Bambara by the Dioula of Sikasso; the non-Moslem Malinké are called Bambara by the Dioula of Odienné; similarly for the Gbanian and Dagari of Upper Volta, etc. That is why Delafosse prefers to [173] name the people of Ségou, Bélédougou, etc., as they name themselves, that is, *Banmana*, which supposedly means "the refusal of the Master," in allusion to the legend according to which the Banmana left their land of origin (Ouassoulou) at the beginning of the thirteenth century to escape the yoke of the conquering Malinké.

According to Monteil, Bambara comes from the root *Ba*, "black."

B. Native Definitions

The Bambara often designate themselves by terms which indicate their geographical distribution.

101 Example: Those of Bélédougou are the *Bélédugu-ka-u*;
Those of Kaarta are the *Kaarta-n-ka-u*;
Those of Ségou are the *Ségu-n-ka-u* . . .

Each of these expressions has at the same time a political significance. *Ségu-n-ka-u* means the people of the party in power at Ségou. The context alone determines which people are meant.

[2] Among themselves, the Bambara factions sometimes [552] call each other by nicknames: of the people of Ségou, the people of Kaarta say ironically, "those of *Tu-kele-u*" (those of the single braid), alluding to their coiffure, or else *Nya-ni-nyele-u*, "those of Nya and Nyélé" (Nya and Nyélé are women's names common at Ségou). All the members of a clan may also be grouped under a term derived from the name of the founder or ancestor of the clan: the people of Kaarta may call themselves *Nya-Ngolo-la* (the people of Nya-Ngolo, ancestor of the clan); the people of Ségou may be called *Barama-Ngolo-la* (the people of Barama-Ngolo, ancestor of the clan).

There are also nicknames for individuals of other tribes. [186] The Bambara are called *Dyonko* (slaves) by the Soninké, who long exploited the Bambara for the slave trade, while the Bambara in turn call the Soninké the *Marka Dialan'u* (*Marka Seer*), because they gave up their own dialect for the Bambara dialect.

II. Situation

A. Ethnic Classification

144

Delafosse has made a broad classification of the peoples inhabiting Upper Senegal and Niger. Unfortunately, this classification too often mixes language and physical traits. Thus, he puts the Bambara in the Mandé family, which is divided into three groups comprised of these main peoples:

First group (northern): three peoples, the Bozo, the Soninké (or Sarakolé or Marka), and the Dioula.

Second group (central): five peoples, the Kagoro, the Banmana (or Bambara, including the Somono caste), the Kassonké (or Mandingue [Mandingo]), and the Foulanké.

144 Third group (southern): four peoples, the Diallonkė [Dialonke], the the Samo, the Samorho, and the Sia; plus four small tribes of doubtful classification, the Blé, the Natioro, the Ouara, and the Sembla.

More recent studies by Urvoy, Dr. Pales, and Mlle. Tassin de Saint-Péreuse involving very numerous measurements will soon permit determination of the racial characteristics of the Sudanese populations and the establishment of a new classification.

B. Geographical Distribution

131 In his study of the Bambara of Ségou, Charles Monteil tells us that it is impossible to determine what the precise boundaries of the Bambara empire were, because a frontier as we understand it has no meaning for the Black. The empires did not seek to dominate such and such a region; their goal was, above all, the exploitation of the greatest possible number of individuals, without regard to localities or races.

At the present time, the Encyclopédie coloniale et maritime 131 [Colonial and Maritime Encyclopedia] considers that [3] the Bambara 162 form a group of about a million individuals who extend west-east from the region of Siguirio as far as Macina along both sides of the Niger and the Bani rivers, and south-north from the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta to Sahel de Nioro. In addition, there are 40,000 in Senegal: peanut farmers near Kaolack, Thiès, and Diourbel, and captives at Fouta Toro, Saint-Louis, etc. But they are most numerous in the circles [a "circle" is an administrative division] of Bamako (310,000), Ségou (190,000), and Bougouni (110,000). To 563 these one may add 125,000 Métis [mixed bloods], Peul-Bambara, of whom 72,000 live in the Bougouni circle alone.

131 More precisely, the great mass of the Bambara is distributed 619 in a region that may be delimited as follows.

To the northwest, three tribes have been catalogued in the Kaarta: the Dianguirté in the circle of Nioro, the Niamassa at Nioro, and the Massassi to the south of Nioro.

To the north, in the Sahel, the region of Bakounou and Waghadou is inhabited by the Kalongo tribe.

To the northeast, the Bambara live in the Macina, the Issa Ber, the region of Goundam, and up to Timbuktu.

|3| To the east, they are found in the Bendougou, Minianka
619 (the banks of the Niger and the Bani to the south of San and Ségou being occupied by the caste of Somono fishermen), and Kénédougou regions.

To the south, in the Ouassoulou.

To the southwest, in the Manding, the Bélédougou, and Fouladougou regions.

To the west, in the Kangaran, the Bambouk, and the Guidimaka regions on the banks of the Senegal.

In short, the habitat of the Bambara lies within a large V formed by the upper Senegal and the upper Niger.

C. Neighboring Tribes

|0| The Bambara are the most important people of the western Sudan and of the southern circles. Nevertheless, they are very mingled with other populations according to the regions we shall further define.

Among these other populations the principal ones are:

The Peul (Foula [Fulah], Foulbé [Fulbe], Fellata [Felata], a nomadic population found throughout West Africa from Senegal to the Egyptian Sudan. They speak the same language as the Toucouleur [Tukolor] Popular.

The Malinké, an important Mandingue people who speak a dialect close to Banmana and who are found in Guinea and in the Sudan (Satadougou, Nioro, Kayes, Bafoulabé, Kita, Bamako, Bougouni).

The Kassonké, who live in the Senegal Valley upriver from Kayes, are of mixed Malinké and Toucouleur origin; they speak a dialect close to Malinké.

The Sarakolé, Soninké or Marka, are an ancient people linked to the history of the empire of Ghana; they speak a Mandingue dialect related to Bambara. Those of Kouroumari speak Bambara and are of mixed Bambara blood.

[4] In Mourdiah, out of 14,000 Marka, a large proportion is Bambarized.

The Songhaï, a people of the middle Niger, have swarmed from the region of Niamey up to Lake Débo and Djenné.

101 The Senoufo or Minianka, an important people in the circles of San, Koutiala, Bougouni, and Bobo Dioulasso, speak Sénoufo.

The Bobo in the region of San, Bobo-Dioulasso, and Dedougou, speak Bobo but are divided into two large branches according to their dialects: the Black Bobo and the Red Bobo.

The Dogon, remainder of the ancient inhabitants of the Nigerian regions from Bamako to Lake Débo, live for the most part in Bandiagara and Douentza and speak Dogon.

The Mossi live in Ouahigouya, Kaya, Tougan, Fada, and the circles of Ouagadougou, Koudougou, Tenkodogo and Dedougou; their language is Moré.

The Toucouleur, originally from the middle Senegal, are numerous particularly in Senegal and Mauritania; they also live in the region of Kayes and Bafoulabé.

Finally, the Touareg [Tuareg] roam from Goundam to Gouré. Their proportion of white blood is weak; the same thing applies to the Moors, Arabized Berbers who are counted with their former black captives. The tribes of the Niger region are the Almoussakaré, the Attouajiten, and the Euddè; they speak Touareg.

III. Physical Characteristics of the Bambara

142 History and ethnology show us that the Bambara of today is the product of several peoples whose origin is still unknown to us. Yet, common biological characteristics have developed so the Bambara distinguish themselves physically from other peoples, either by color (they say they are less black than the Bozo and the Sarakolé), by the structure of the body and musculature (they are tall, robust, muscled . . . very different in that from the "feeble Peuls"), or by the form of the skull, with its receding forehead (that of the Peul is straight, "bulging and bumpy").

Tauxier, in his Histoire des Bambara [History of the Bambara], has given an anthropological description based on the work of the following authors: Quatrefages and Hamy, Crania ethnica [Ethnic Crania], 1882; Dr. Collomb, Bull. de la Soc. d'Anth. de Lyon [Bulletin of the Anthropological Society of Lyon], 1885; Hovelacque, Les Nègres d'Afrique sus-équatoriale [Negroes of Supra-Equatorial Africa], 1889; Dr. Verneau, Les races humaines [Human

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Soudanais occidentaux [Anthropometric Notes on Some West Sudanese],
1909; Les races et les peuples de la terre [Races and Peoples of the
Earth]; Chantre, Contribution à l'étude des races humaines du Soudan
occidental [Contribution to the Study of the Human Races of the Western
Sudan], 1918; Dr. Verneau, L'homme, races et coutumes [Man,
Races and Customs], 1931.

From this study, a little hasty since the observations were made on very few subjects, we will retain the following features:

Without attaining the ultradolichocephaly of the Malinké,
141 the Bambara is [5] characterized by his dolichocephaly (horizontal
cephalic index 75.05; for Deniker 76.4) and his fairly considerable
height (1.71 meters for the "aristocrats," a result of interbreeding
with the Peul population, and 1.65 meters for the ordinary Bambara).
Dr. Pales and Tassin de Saint-Péreuse give us figures which are
considerably different and which are particularly interesting because
their observations were made on 893 individuals. They give the
horizontal cephalic index as 74.3, and the average height as 171.8.

Tauxier concluded in these terms: "It is a good Negro race, crossbred with several superior elements!"

Let us add to his description that the Bambara has a solid
142 build, with no dissymmetry, a platyrrhinian nose, a pronouncedly
[147] ogival skull, a skin whose scars have a keloidian tendency, and an
[164] excellent natural defense against infection, although certain regions
are particularly infested with goiter. They practice cranial deforma-
[304] tion very little, differing in that from the Malinké and the Kassonké.
Let us note, finally, that the Bambara have black wooly hair, but
that some women have hair with red lights which is considered by
143 the natives as a magnificent trait. We shall not discuss the albinos
with white skin and colorless hair, of whom the percentage is small.

R. Koerber, in Etude de la répartition des groupes sanguins chez quelques races d'A.O.F. [Study of the Distribution of Blood Groups in Several Races of French West Africa], out of a total of 1,066 Bambara found 3.9 percent of group AB; 25.7 percent of group A; 27.7 percent of group B, and 42.7 percent of group B, and 42.7 percent of group O. Group O then is dominant, but less frequent than for the Ouolof [Wolof], Malinké, Foula, and Sérère [Serer] races.

141 143 Finally, let us point out that according to the observations of Dr. Pales, the cormique index of the Bambara is 50.8. Dr. Pales and J. Linhard have calculated the percentage of sickle cell anemia which is: 108 B, 8 percent.

IV. Demographic Data

A. Distribution of the Population

162 The different censuses of recent years give the following estimates.

Senegal -- 150,000 Mandingue; 711,000 Ouolof; 288,500 Peul; 264,000 Sérère; 202,500 Toucouleur; 132,511 Dioula (most [166] of the Bambara coming to Senegal are Navétanes [temporary workers]).

Guinea -- Bambara are found in the circles of Kankan, Kouroussa, and Siguiri. They are for the most part Navétanes, the major part of the population consisting of the Foula, the Malinké, the Soussou [Susu], the Kissien, the Guerzé, the Toma, the Baga, the Diallonké.

Mauritania -- 500 Bambara live in the circle of Gorgol, along with 8,500 white Moors, 10,000 Foula, 22,000 Toucouleur, 250 Ouolof, 4,500 Sarakolé; and 1,000 Bambara live in the circle of Guidimaka among 13,000 Moors, 4,500 Foula, 1,000 Toucouleur. [6] [Chart appears here in the original text.]

[7] Upper Volta -- Some Bambara live in the Ouahigouya circle, mingled with Mossi (a majority), Peul and Rimaïbé, Yarcé [Yarse], Foulcé [Fulse], etc.

Ivory Coast -- The Korhogo circle includes 290,000 Sénoufo, Malinké, and Bambara.

Finally, the census of 1950 in the Sudan shows a total of 798,900 Bambara out of a total population of 3,336,740, divided as indicated in the recapitulatory table on page 6.

We see that the Bambara are grouped in the circles of Ségou, Bamako, and Bougouni, where they form the majority of the population.

We shall give a somewhat more detailed breakdown for these three centers, using the still fragmentary information that has been assembled up to now.

In the Bamako circle the population is divided into ethnic groups in the following manner: [pp. 8-9]

Recapitulatory Table by Circles (General Population), 1950
Established by the Bureau of Political Affairs of the Sudan General Government

[6]

* Races et territoires A. O. F. Africains de statut commun et de statut personnel	Bafoulabé	Bamako	Bandiagara	Bougouni	Gao	Goundam	Issa-Ber Niafunké	Kayes	Kita	Koutiala	Mopti	Nioro	San	Ségou	Sikasso	Timbuktu Tombouctou	Total pour le territoire
Bellat						35.026											35.026
Bambara	994	299.074	21.538	110.000			20.765	13.896	3.200	83.536	20.530	20.973	42.424	202.617	9.082	293	798.922
Peul	10.200	8.213	97.001		11.095	12.875	71.258	1.962	200	3.217	33.318	39.831	15.297	77.595		1.822	383.884
Mossi	28	857	4.043		61		135	234		49	27.955		303	4.832		9	38.506
Marka	150	27.746					4.381	29.519	3.000	8.100	26.870	112.776	30.679	21.553	406		265.180
Songhai		647	9.962		102.712	62.821	1.025			454	6.000		625			26.518	210.764
Malinké	68.753	62.671	2	4.932				11.503	53.530			3.598	52				206.041
Minianka		400	3							125.551	500		29.697	2.843			158.994
Maures		2.958	433		19.266	2.743		3.536		67		9.313				15.502	53.818
Senoufo		300	1	10.000						15				228	117.588		128.132
Touareg		20	19		77.640	17.007	252									58.599	153.537
Samogo		150	4.999												26.218	8	31.375
Foula Bambara		9.600		42.100					21.600	182				2.444	22.673	15	98.614
Bobo		500								11.933	2.570					1	15.004
Bozo		400	22			1.582	4.916				18.000		61.712			83	86.715
Kassonkés	23.800	600						20.297				5.734	474	23.447		9	74.361
Dioula	270	11.050								6.958					29.333		47.611
Toucouleurs		700	1.781					23.574	320		1.500	19.680		84	934		48.573
Kagoro		17.395							5.010			4.492					26.897
Somono	4	5.748						1.762			7.000						14.514
Marka Bambara	13.350	750	8.115	885			4.381							14.787		28	42.296
Diallonke	5.100	100							4.600					5.112		8	14.920
Peuls berberisés													60				60
Ouolofs	76	700	68		3	1	7	1.055	132	4	25	2.139	2	65	23	28	4.328
Ouassoulounké	3.200		2	41.000				8.790				1.675					54.667
Diawara	2.500		274									33.785					36.559
Diawambé	2.520	150							515		3.500	4.143		1.684			12.512
Diakanke																	2.016
Dogon		386	157.966				20.675			30	680		3.779				183.516
Guirganke			42									1.620					1.662
** Divers	726	48.340	2.209	346	11.187	3.820	1.725	889	13.421	569	9.925	1.148		12.527	727	192	107.751
TOTAUX	133.671	499.455	308.480	209.263	221.964	136.875	129.520	117.017	105.328	190.665	158.373	260.907	185.104	369.818	206.984	108.115	3.336.739

* Races and territories French West Africa - Africans of public status and of personal status.

** Others

B
MW
162

3: Paques--7A S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8

Mossi FA28
Wolof MS30

B
M
162

3: Paques--8 S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8
Mossi FA28

[Bamako circle] [population division of Ethnic groups]

	City	Central Subdivision	Koulikoro Subdivision	Kolokani Subdivision	Dioïla Subdivision	Kourémalé Subdivision
Bambara	19,000	93,974	56,048	59,930	68,310	812
Peul	1,000	2,074	4,251	500	350	38
Mossi	500		157	200		
Marka	1,000		26,746			
Habbe	250		136			
Songhaï	450		197			
Malinké	3,200	32,434	139			26,898
Minianka	400					
Moors	2,600		358			
Sénoufo	300					
Touareg	20					
Samo	150					
Foula-Bambara	600				9,000	
Bozo	400					
Bobo	500					
Kassonké	600					
Dioula	5,200			850	5,000	
Toucouleur	700					
Kagoro	100		3,795	13,500		
Somono	500	804	3,454		300	690
Marka Bambara	150				600	

(continued)

B
W
162

3: Paques--9 S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8

Wolof MS30

[7]

	City	Central Subdivision	Koulikoro Subdivision	Kolokani Subdivision	Dioïla Subdivision	Kourémalé Subdivision
Diallonké	100					
Ouolof	700					
Diawambé	150					
Others	130	5,698	196	610	344	

[Bamako cercle]

[population division of ethnic groups]

[8] The Bougouni circle is divided as follows:

162
361

Cantons	No. of Villages	Population	Observations
Bambeledougou	13	1,785	Bambara
Banimonatie	47	10,829	F. B and Bambara
Bilatouma	5	1,771	Foulah-Bambara
Danou	8	3,413	Bambara
Debelendoudou	11	2,053	—
Dialakadougou	6	1,696	—
Diban	7	2,398	—
Domba	18	2,510	—
Falani-Auola	16	5,086	—
Gouantiedougou	41	9,771	—
Keikero	8	1,705	—
Kokoun	16	3,157	—
Kola	13	2,122	—
Kouroulamini	30	8,653	—
Niene	20	12,525	Senoufo
Siankadougou	16	2,288	Bambara
Sibirila	29	9,652	—
Siondougou	28	3,697	
Tiemala	54	16,492	Foulah-Bambara
Tiendougou	69	16,624	—
Tinkatougou	16	3,342	Bambara
Tyan	16	3,369	—
Yiridougou	13	3,263	—
Zana	8	2,939	—
Yorobadougou			
Niamala	15	2,886	—
Keleyadougou	Census in progress		
Nienendougou			
Nafanandougou			
Fulala			

Ségou

Chefferie of	Somonos....			28	villages	8,440	hectares	
"	" Bolomissé...	2,600	km^2			27,550	"	Bambara Markas
"	" Dokono...	270	"	98	"	11,083	"	" "
"	" M'Pebala .	4,000	"	138	"	27,540	"	Bambara
"	" Bibelambés.	500	"	9	"	1,846	"	Peul + some Bambara
"	" Koulala....	400	"	18	"	4,545	"	Bambara
"	" Sana	400	"	16	"	6,054	"	Markas Bambara
"	" the Thiandis Peul	3,200	"	37	"	5,660	"	Peul
"	" M Pérédiola .	1,250	" "	20	"	5,384	"	Bambara
"	" Farako	2,000	"	47	"	14,092	"	Bambara Markas Peul
"	" Malaké	1						
	Markas	100	"	4	"	2,310	"	Markas
"	" Sansanding .	400	"	6	"			Bambara
"	" Bambougou .	900	"	99	"	33,504	"	Bambara and Peul
"	" Bebe	400	"	28	"	4,576	"	Bambara
"	" Kalaké Bambara	700	"	13	"	2,911	"	"
"	" Dioforongo .	1,200	"	72	"	12,935	"	Peul, Bambara

Nioro

Chefferie of the canton of	Kala	1,900	km^2	5,400	hectares	Bambara
"	Markabougou	3,200	"	2,782	"	"
"	Sokolo	4,200	"	6,126	"	Bambara Markas
"	Miempiéna	1,000	"	3,332	"	Bambara
"	Segala	3,200	"	1,773	"	"
"	Mossi of the Sahel .			1,254	"	Mossi

B. Population Movement

162 In 1912, Delafosse in Haut-Sénégal et Niger [Upper Senegal and Niger] gave a total of 538,450 [sic] Bambara in the following regions:

Bamako . . .	146,966	Bougouni . . .	104,216	Ségou . .	109,758
Sikasso . . .	30,000	Kita	2,339	Bafoulabé	2,100
Koutiala. . .	30,035	Goumbou. . .	22,110	San . . .	20,103
Sokolo . . .	19,996	Djenné . . .	17,246	Niafunké.	16,000
Nioro . . .	9,355	Mopti . . .	7,277	Bandiagara	928

161 All of these figures are notably lower than current ones. However, one must not infer a population increase too hastily. The difference in population figures result of better census methods rather than of a real increase.

Moreover, current demographic information must be considered as still approximate. In fact, censuses may go on for several years in a single region, and those of certain cantons are not yet finished. A large part of the population still avoids the census in order to escape taxes and military service. In certain villages the clandestine population may be as large as the declared population.

167 A number of the Bambara who leave the country temporarily as migratory workers in Guinea, Senegal, the Ivory Coast, and the Gold Coast escape all registration.

161 563 Finally, as soon as we leave the purely Bambara region of the Ségou circle to go into the region of Bougouni, for example, a large part of the population counted as Bambara is in fact of mixed origin, Foula, Malinké, but follows Bambara custom, often no longer speaking the language.

563 This simple enumeration shows how rare it is to find a Bambara ethnic bloc which is not heavily mixed with other tribes. This dispersion is doubtless the result of a complicated historical evolution as we shall see further on.

But we can already point out that the link which unites the different peoples is the chefferie. The different peoples under a common chief little by little consider themselves to be of the same people as their chief. Sometimes the chief may have adopted the nationality of the country whose direction he has assumed.

As an indication, we give the following tables, furnished by the Bureau of Political Affairs of the Sudan. It has not yet been possible to evaluate the rates of births and deaths nor to establish

[text continues on p. 13]

[9]

I. Demographic Situation of the Population of African Status

Circle	Area in Sq. Km.	On 12/31/49	On 12/31/50	Density per Sq. Km.	Comparison between 1949 and 1950	
					Plus	Minus
Bafoulabé	39,000	131,603	137,347	3.54	5,744	
Bamako	57,405	451,377	499,034	7.96	47,657	
Bandiagara	53,000	307,936	307,946	5.81	8	
Bougouni	34,000	202,907	208,984	6.14	6,077	
Gao	411,170	215,875	221,883	0.53	6,008	
Goundam	55,000	134,312	130,935	2.48	2,623	
Kayes	21,000	119,294	117,017	5.57		2,277
Kita	37,000	103,132	105,550	2.65	3,418	
Koutiala	20,665	187,706	190,645	9.22	2,939	
Mopti	14,300	156,116	156,194	10.92	78	
Niafunké	22,500	129,463	129,558	5.76	95	
Nioro	56,000	256,149	260,413	4.5	4,164	
San	15,000	182,142	185,187	12.34	3,045	
Ségou	52,000	362,215	369,921	7.11	7,706	
Sikasso	20,475	206,828	207,038	10.11	210	
Timbuktu	283,700	90,981	102,475	0.36	11,494	
Totals	1,192,215	3,237,705	3,337,127	2.79	101,266	2,277

Plus: 98,989

3: Peques--12 S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8

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T
161

II. Demographic Situation of the Nomadic Population
[in the Sudan]

Year	District	Moors		Touareg	
1940:	Gao	9,494	23,322	57,945	139,236
	Goundam. . . .	2,885		40,757	
	Timbuktu . . .	10,943		40,934	
1944:	Gao.	18,812	34,073	74,357	128,057
	Goundam . . .	2,505		16,105	
	Timbuktu . . .	12,756		37,595	
1959:	Gao.	19,078	37,723	77,640	153,246
	Goundam . . .	2,743		17,004	
	Timbuktu . . .	15,502		58,599	

B
161

III. General Movement of the Population in the Past Ten Years

	Sedentary and Semi-nomadic	Nomadic
1940	2,750,950	163,000
1941	2,790,000	
1942	2,840,000	
1943	2,870,000	162,000
1944	2,900,000	
1945	2,800,000	
1946	2,810,000	
1947	2,840,000	
1948	3,125,000	
1949	3,237,000	
1950	3,337,000	190,000
Total increase .	586,000	27,000
Rate of increase .	21%	16%

An age profile of the population. The censuses of future years will no doubt permit a better study of the country's demography.

[11] IV. General Movement of the Urban Population

161 The urban population numbers 220,317, or 6.5 percent of the
162 total population.

The principal urban centers are: Bamako, Kayes, Ségou, Mopti, Sikasso, and Gao. Except for Gao, the growth is considerable.

Cities	1939	1950	Increase	Percent of Increase
Bamako	32,761	85,000	52,239	162.5
Kayes	15,894	23,275	7,381	46.4
Ségou	8,391	15,335	6,944	83
Mopti	6,379	9,208	2,829	45
Sikasso	11,817	19,558	7,741	15.2
Gao	6,923	7,231	308	4.90

C. Emigration

167 It is rarely definitive. It is undertaken either for commercial reasons or from the desire of the young to earn enough to pay the bride price of their fiancée. It affects chiefly the circles of Gao, Timbuktu, Niafunké, Goundam, Mopti, Ségou, and Bamako. The region most often visited is the Gold Coast.

At Timbuktu, there is caravan traffic with Morocco by way of Taouedi and Tindouf, and with the Touat.

At Bandiagara, certain cantons (Dinangourou, Ibi, Iréli) experience a traditional temporary emigration to Upper Volta where the young go to work a year or two and then return.

At Bafoulabé, the emigration movement towards French Guinea remains very weak, about 20 persons.

At Bougouni, about 1,500 young people annually leave for the Ivory Coast, following the example of the Dioula. This is a seasonal movement, but the youths often prolong the venture year after year before going home, and some of them ultimately settle on the Ivory Coast.

At Nioro, from Bakounou northwards (circle of Aioun and Atrouss [Aioun el Atrous?], there is an agricultural nomadism to new lands. This migration from one settlement to another is concerned only with the fertility of the soil, without regard for the border at Nioro and Yélimané. One also notes temporary emigrations towards

167 Senegal (five to ten years) and seasonal emigrations of commercial character in the dry season, following the crops, from Nioro and Yélimané toward the Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Guinea.

At San, a large number of emigrants leave for the Ivory Coast where they go to work for several years on the plantations; they return home with their savings.

At Ségou, movement is not noticeable. A few departures for the [12] Ivory Coast are recorded in the subdivision of Macina (settlers of the Niger Office) ; 879 departures.

At Sikasso, numerous youths from 18 to 30 years old emigrate from October to May to Bobo-Dioulasso and the Ivory Coast. Almost all return in May when the fields are prepared for cultivation, but some finally settle abroad permanently, mainly in the lower Ivory Coast. This movement is increasing because of high salaries.

D. Immigration

Immigration has a sporadic and seasonal character (gold prospectors from Guinea, fishermen from Niger, cattle breeders from Mauritania). The only regular immigration is that of the colonists of the Niger Office.

At Bafoulabé, one notes the temporary presence of 10,000 gold washers from Guinea and the Ivory Coast; 75 farmers from Senegal and Guinea have settled permanently.

At Bamako, Guinean gold washers come in the dry season to work at the placers of the subdivision of Kangaba. They go home at the beginning of winter.

At Gao, when the Niger's water level begins to fall, Haoussa [Hausa] and Bozo fishermen install themselves on the banks. They leave in August, loaded with dried or smoked fish.

From the interior, Kounba, driven by the drought, look for pastures at water holes (leading to friction with the original occupants).

Kayes is an area of nomadism for the Moors of Kiffa and Sélibaby.

At Mopti, a large number of foreigners from the Upper Volta are found in the cities. They return to their country in the rainy season.

167 At Nioro, during eight months of the year, live most of the Moors who go up to Mauritania at the beginning of the rains.

At Ségou, the colonists of the Niger Office are concentrated. In 1951 1,166 arrived, 660 coming from Nioro and 506 from Macina.

Temporary Workers

Circles of Origin	Temporary Workers Leaving in Official Convoys in:			
	1947	1948	1949	1950
Bafoulabé	1,017	1,008	969	492
Bamako	6,626	4,376	4,046	8,678
Bougouni	405	776	3,000	36
Kayes	1,794	2,195	3,230	1,368
Kita	1,419	1,559	1,352	226
Nioro	2,744	747	3,000	1,504
				135
Totals	14,005	10,661	15,602	12,439

[13] Individual migrations are very numerous, and the real number of temporary workers is much higher than the official figure. Currently, one notes a drop due to two causes:

1. The discontent of the workers after the 1949 season. In 1948, they had brought home from 15,000 to 20,000 francs; in 1949 from 5,000 to 10,000, and as little as 1,500 to 2,000 francs for the Siné Saloum. Some were repatriated at the expense of their families, others preferred to stay in the Senegal to avoid reproaches. The reasons for the setback may be laid to a bad distribution of rainfall and to insufficient lodgings due to the unexpected arrival of too many workers.

[208] 2. The counter-propaganda of the elders, who want to keep the young workers in the Sudan.

CHAPTER 2

LINGUISTIC DATA

A. Linguistic Classification

197 According to the classification by Delafosse (1), Bambara or Banmana is a dialect of the Mandé or Mandingue language, which in turn belongs to the central subgroup of the Nigerian-Senegalese languages. It is, then, very close to the Dioula, Kassonké, dialects, which belong to the same Mandé language and which are spoken by peoples with whom the Bambara cohabit geographically. (The differences with the Soso, the Soninké, and above all the Peul are much more marked).

Among the Nigerian-Senegalese languages, Mandé is distin-
193 guished chiefly by four traits:
197 1. The nominal forms have almost completely disappeared.

2. Noun and verb are distinguished only by their respective places in the sentence.

3. Conjugation includes a large number of verbal aspects.

4. The subject, noun or pronoun, precedes the verb.

The disappearance of the nominal forms marks an important evolution in comparison with the archaic language, in which they are, on the contrary, of pronounced importance. Of all the Mandé dialects, Bambara appears to be the most advanced. It is characterized particularly by its extreme conciseness and by the deformation words undergo through excessive contraction.

B. Morphology

193 Bambara makes no differentiation by inflexions: nothing indicates whether a word is subject or object, whether a verb is present or past, active or passive. The words are absolutely invariable and

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1. Delafosse, Langues du Soudan [Languages of the Sudan] (Meillet and Cohen, Les Langues du monde [Languages of the World]).

193 are combined only by juxtaposition. To distinguish nuances of thought, the role of the word in the sentence, one has only the context and auxiliary particles to go by.

The distinction between the sexes is marked only by adding the words "male" or "female" to the root. The plural is formed by adding [15] to the substantive the suffix "w" and the necessary figure or the adverb "many."

Person, tense, and mood of the verbs are distinguished in like manner. The root remains invariable, and one expresses the accessory idea of person by personal pronouns, and the ideas of tense and mood with the aid of particles placed before or after the verbal root. The neutral or passive voice has but one special tense: the past, while the active voice includes three tenses, or more exactly, three aspects.

The first indicates that an action is not completed (this can be, then, a present or a future).

The second implies that the action is completed or that a state has been reached or still exists (this is approximately a past tense).

The third refers to an action which is to be completed in the present, past, or future under the influence of another action or another subject (this may render our subjunctive, our imperative, our optative, and, in general, the infinitive complement of a verb).

C. Syntax

Bambara is extremely simple. Whether the clause be relative, interrogative, or conditional, the word order is not changed. This uniformity, this monotony of style, does not preclude eloquence, but it lies all in the action, the gesture, the tone of voice, the repeated use of onomatopoeia and of particles like "dé," "kwo," "ké."

D. Vocabulary

192 This poverty of syntax is not accompanied by a poverty of vocabulary nor by an impossibility to express abstractions. The Bambara express very easily, and in a manner intelligible to all, ideas of belief, of hope, of ethics, of religion. The most striking characteristic of their vocabulary is the constant comparison of man

192 with nature; the same terms designate the parts of animals, plants, or even objects. These words serve as roots, as do the names of the four elements and of their properties. Two consequences follow:

1. A great ease in forming compound words; 2. The existence
[194] of a multiplicity of homonyms which we can distinguish only by the context, but which the natives distinguish by differences in tone or in vowel length.

E. Numeration

802 In contrast to the Ouolof and Peul, who first count to five and then say "five and one," "five and two," etc., the Bambara have a different name for each number from one to ten (the word "five," doulou, [16] comes from "hand"; the word "ten", tan, from "to thank," to give both hands). After ten, they count "ten and one," "ten and two," up to 20, which is said as two tens, then three tens, four tens, etc., up to 80. The series begins again after 80 as it does in French after 100.

The Bambara have graphic signs to represent numbers. These
212 signs have been studied by S. de Gaṇay (1).

1. S. de Gaṇay, "Graphie Bambara des nombres" [Bambara Number Writing]. [Ed., Journal de la Société de Africanistes, No. 2, 1950.]

[184] The graphic system varies with regions and sometimes from one village to another, but the most widespread method uses a series of vertical lines, each line representing a unit. To indicate that the number is doubled, the lines are placed inside a circle or crossed by a horizontal bar: |||| or (||) or ╫ = four. To indicate an uneven number, a line is added under the horizontal bar.

But a line may indicate not only a unit, but a group of ten, and even a "hundred," keme (whose value is 80). To keep this clear, an arc is put over the line: $\overset{\frown}{|}$ = 80.

212
801 Some systems represent ten by ten lines or by five barred lines under a single line: This method has a religious origin; it recalls that "creation is the issue of a unique principle symbolized

212 801 by numbers, and notably by ten, which may be obtained, among other ways and if it's a question of representing the Creator, by adding the first four numbers, or by adding the number five to [776] itself." Ten is the numerical symbol of Faro (god of water); it symbolizes what is just, true, perfect, and complete.

The symbolism of numbers is used in divination: a first [787] group of eight signs, called the secret count, reproduces the seven first numbers which, according to a Bambara myth, were engraved in space at the instant that the Creator by his word formed the universe. They contain the whole universe.

These numerical signs were ritually traced on the most varied occasions.

[802] Finally, we must note the existence of the sign for "nothing," fu gundo, zero, which stands at the beginning of a series of 196 numerical signs used by those who practice arithomancy.

The word Mandé, of central significance for 44 peoples, may be interpreted, according to some, as manin (the secret name for ten), number of unity and of the cultural community.

F. Writing

212 For everyday use, the Bambara have adopted arabic characters, called by them "writing of the Blacks." In fact, only those who have studied in the Marabouts' schools know how to read or write them. No written literature, properly speaking, exists. A 538 large store of traditions, epics, tales, legends, songs, and proverbs is transmitted orally from generation to [17] generation by professional storytellers, the griot. Moreover, the whole sum of sci- 867 entific, juridical, ethical, and practical knowledge is taught orally 868 in the course of daily life or during long years of initiation. Certain old masters renowned for their learning are consulted from far distances when a chief is in doubt on a point of tradition.

212 Nevertheless, signs do exist for a secret writing that the priests, the heads of families, or blacksmiths draw on the sanctuaries, on masks, furniture, clothing, cabin walls, or in the sand.

212 812 For the Bambara, things exist by signs. These signs have attached themselves to things, calling them to consciousness and to the attention of man.

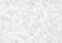
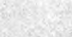
212 From the central core of creation four categories of signs have
812 emerged, 266 in all, which represent the complete signs of the world; they give color, form, and matter to things. In time these 266 signs came to head lists of an infinity of other signs encompassing all of creation.

"It is by these signs that man enters into possession of the greatest part of his domain, which is the universe. And in the measure that he does not know a sign, that he cannot analyze it, that is, possess it in its component parts, he finds certain sectors of the total knowledge of things closed to him." (1)

1. M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, Signes graphiques soudanais [Sudanese Graphic Signs].

815 The Bambara, like the Dogon, represent the movement of the stars graphically as well as mathematically, and, in particular, the revolution of the sun around the earth, center of the cosmos. These movements are measured by a cylindrical granary that they use as gnomon (wati dyati dyiginye); it is a round structure of seko [plaited walling?] with a conical roof, constructed according to precise measurements. It rests on a small packed mound in the form of a square which has first been carefully measured and oriented. Twenty-two stones are buried in each angle of the square, and 22 more in the center. Three rows of four big stones are oriented east-west on the little hill: one row on the southern side, one to the north, and one in the middle. Small wooden beams are laid on these rows. Each part and each measurement has a symbolic meaning. The gnomon serves to determine the dates of the solstices and the equinoxes by the observation of its shadow on the ground. (2)

2. D. Zahan, "Un gnomon soudanais" [A Sudanese Gnomon], Africa, 1950.

205 The diurnal and annual movements of the sun are represented
815 by a zigzag line,  . Certain variations in the form of the zigzag represent the procession of the equinoxes and the variable length of the days in summer and winter,  . Four angles represent the four cardinal points, and each of the lines that make up

805 the angles represents 90 days (the year, for the Bambara, is 360 days).
815 The symbols are not merely mathematical; they form part of the daily life of the society. [18] The zigzags are a characteristic theme
[531] in the decoration of pottery, weapons, tools, sanctuaries, and houses. One finds them in agricultural techniques and in ritual dance figures. The universal rhythms of the earth and sky echo through all the activities of man and society. (1) Finally, another series of 16 signs is habitually used in geomancy. It is interesting to note that these signs were used in a practical manner for correspondence. The Bambara chiefs used multiple combinations of them to send each other messages.

212
[787]

G. Local Diversities

197 Given the extent and the diversity of the regions where Bambara is spoken, it is no wonder one notices differences in pronunciation, and even in structure and vocabulary, from one province to another. At Kaarta the speech is not the same as at Ségou, and a Bambara of Ségou has trouble understanding a Bambara of Bougouni. This is due partly to the influence of other languages which are in contact with Bambara and which ultimately alter and modify it, and partly to the normal evolution of language within a group separated for centuries from its place of origin. It is interesting to note that in the Bougouni circle the conservatives in speech are the old men, while the women are the evolutionary element.

191 Traditionally, Ségou was considered the center for the most elegant Bambara speech. Before the conquest, children were sent to Ségou to learn the purest Bambara.

1. Id., "Conception de l'écliptique chez les Dogons et les Bambara" [The Dogon and Bambara Conception of the Ecliptic]. [Ed., Africa, 1951.]

[19] CHAPTER 3

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

I. Natural Regions

131 The Bambara live in a region stretching between the 11th and 14th degrees of latitude north and between the 7th and 11th degrees of longitude west. They are grouped around the upper Senegal and upper Niger in the zone of basins bordered on the south by the Fouta-Djallon and the Guinea Ridge. The land is divided into several natural regions.

A. The Upper Niger

133 Framed by the outer ranges of the Fouta-Djallon and the cliffs
135 of the Manding plateau, witness of the Pre-Cambrian shelf, the re-
gion is essentially schistose, with small veins of quartz and chimneys
of dolerite; there are large intrusions of granite to the north 50 kilo-
meters from Bamako, to the northwest and north of Siguiri, and to
the south at the approach to the massif of the Fouta-Djallon. All
the region is rich in gold. Several centers have long been exploited
316 by the natives by means of a network of narrow shafts which reach
down to the auriferous seam. The whole region is encrusted with a
shell of iron.

133 The region of the upper Niger is an immense plain covered with mammilliform hills. The plain rises gradually from the pass of Bamako to the mountains of the south, broken only by occasional dikes, such as that of Kouroussa-Kankan. The overall relief is very simple and monotonous; the local relief is very animated and varied because of the network of valleys hemmed in by steep cliffs 10 to 12 meters high.

The Niger, fed by the Tinkisso, the Milo, the Fié and, the
Sankarani, reaches Bamako with a width of about 900 meters. It
flows through a plain three to four kilometers wide in a southwest-
northeast direction up to Timbuktu. It undergoes an annual rise
which depends solely on the amount of rainfall. From Kouroussa to
132 Bamako the first rains at the end of April, and then of May and June,
begin to feed the river; the flood period begins in June. At the time

132 of high water, part of the narrow plains bordering the river are inundated.

133 At the pass of Bamako the cliffs on the left bank are close to the river and hem in the city. The pass is marked by the appearance of rapids (Sotuba, Kénié), for the river meets for the first time the [20] sandstone it cuts through. The water is highest at Bamako around September 22 and begins to subside towards October 15. It is lowest around April and May.

137 The vegetation is quite unvaried. Species of great forest trees are found in the ravines of the mountains to the south; the small Sudanese forest covers the whole Niger region up to Bamako where the layer of laterite is thin. It is a forest of deciduous trees; the trees shed their leaves, and flower in the middle of the dry season while they are still bare; then the leaves appear before the return of rainy season which marks the awakening of the herbaceous plants. Let us note particularly the karite [shea] tree (Butyrospermum Parkii) which is the most widespread and characteristic of the Sudan; the néré (Parkia biglobosa); the téli (Erythrophloeum guineense); the lingué (Afzelia africana); the caïlcedrat (Khaya senegalensis), as well as enormous gramineous plants of the Andropogon family which are more abundant in the humid depressions than on the plateaus. [134] However, large areas covered with a layer of laterite are bare except for some scanty gramineous plants: this is the "bowal." These immense iron flats, barren of humanity, make excellent hunting 136 grounds. Buffaloes, panthers, Derby's elans, various kinds of monkeys, elephants, antelopes, lions, wart hogs, hippopotamuses, and crocodiles live there. The glossine (tsetse fly) abounds in the same region.

244 Between these immense, desolate bowals grow rice, millet, and fonio (Digitaria exilis), the most wretched of the world's cereals and the most important for ritual purposes.

133 In the valleys, outside of the beds of laterite gravel, one finds the small forest or cultivation in newly cleared places and prairies are found in the sections that are annually inundated.

B. The Ségou Basin

This is a plain framed by the sandstone of the Manding and Dogon plateaus, by the Goundam range and the range south of the Dehar near Bassi Kounou.

In the south the basin is formed by mammilliform laterite hills (tertiary fluvial deposits). Upriver from Bamako, as well as for about 50 kilometers downriver, one finds sandstone which has been covered in the center by quaternary clayey deposits of fluvial origin coming from the schist, granite, sandstone, and dolerite of the upper basin. Finally, to the northwest the basin is covered with sands (sand dunes of Ouagadou [Waghadou?]) of aeolian origin.

The western part is dry and broken only by chains of wooded swamps, former branches of the river, which are scarcely enlivened by a few beds of sand or by the ferruginous ripples of Boulel. Monotonous, deserted, and sinister, it stretches up to the blond barrier dunes of the north.

The eastern part is traversed by the Niger and the Bani. It contrasts with the west; "it is flat and bare, but the river's waters give it immense stretches of flood plain of [21] intense green." To the south, these marshes form a narrow and discontinuous band; they spread out more and more toward the north, and after the confluence of the two rivers they cover the whole region up to Bara.

The inundation lasts for several months. In fact, from Koulikoro to Lake Débo the Niger flows between two banks one to two kilometers apart, seven to eight meters high. Held back by the dam at Sotuba, the flood is felt a little later at Koulikoro. At Diafarabé, the water begins to rise in June, attaining its maximum height in the beginning of October and falling rapidly at the end of October. It is lowest in April and May. During high water (August to the beginning of January) the low plains are entirely submerged to a width of 150 kilometers.

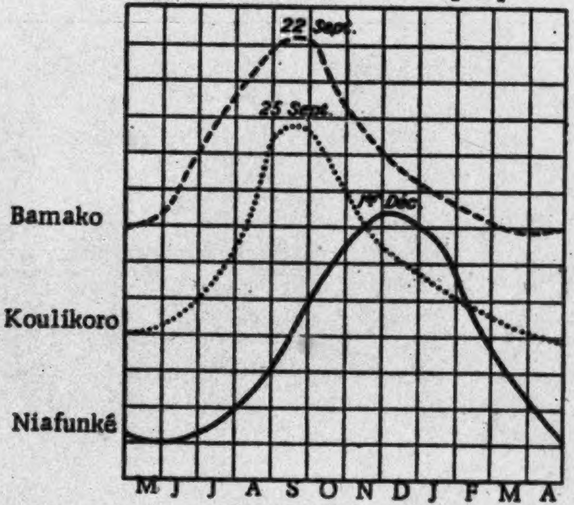
C. Issa Ber

The region formed by the central delta of the Niger is a network, beginning at Diafarabé, of small channels, lakes, swampy lowlands, and streams. The important lands begin at the large double basin of Lake Débo and Lake Korienzé and spread out to the right and left of the river up to Timbuktu. This delta is traversed by three principal channels: the Issa Ber, the Bara Issa and the Koli-Koli. During low water the adjacent lowlands dry up in places and form chains of [chart appears here in the original text] [22] stagnant swamps which evaporation empties little by little. The level of lakes cut off

The curves show the average relation of the flood to the lowest level of the water. For each observation post the 1909 level was taken as zero for the low-water reference.

The side of each square represents one meter of water rise. Example: at the end of September at Bamako, the average flood level of the Niger is five meters.

[21]



Floods of the Niger

133 from the river goes down and uncovers land excellent for cultivation.

From Débo-Korienzé the water rises at the beginning of July, reaches its maximum level at the beginning of November and drops rapidly in mid-December to reach its lowest level in June.

D. The Manding Plateau

Lying between the valley of the Falémé to the west, the upper Niger to the south, Bamako to the east, and the Baoulé-Senegal furrow to the north, the plateau offers a fine geological unity; it is the region of Cambrian sandstone.

The plateau is surrounded by a crowded network of valleys, affluents to the Senegal, particularly the valley of the Bakoy which is fed by the Baoulé and the Bafing. The streams cut between large cliffs 100 to 200 meters high, bordering wide ravines which are wooded or periodically cultivated and which separate tabular hills bearing laterite in the south. On these heights, where a thin layer of clayey soil is spread, clings a scanty brush of baobab, acacia, and tamarind trees.

In the eastern half, at the middle Baoulé, the rock is progressively buried beneath clay and sand, then the Baoulé makes an elbow bend in a very wide valley marked by small discontinuous sandstone cliffs.

E. The Sarakollé Massif

This is a long outcropping of schist 400 kilometers long and from 150 to 200 kilometers wide. The eastern part is covered with sand, which further softens the modelling of erosion; only on the northern slope do fragments of bare schist appear. The western part presents a very different aspect; due to a covering of dolerite, it has a tabular look, and the sand disappears. It presents fine cliffs, and the valleys are veritable canyons. The schists and dolerites support a very thin vegetation whereas a very dense one flourishes in the valleys thanks to soils from decomposed dolerite and to the abundance of water.

The Bafing and the Bakoy are in fact formed by a series of basins, some of which are quite deep and separated by bars of schist

133 or sandstone. Some of these bars result in handsome waterfalls. Between Bafoulabé and Kayes, the Senegal has two important waterfalls: those of Gouina and Félou. The Senegal flows between banks 300 to 800 meters apart, forming a channel from 10 to 12 meters deep; it is subject to periodic floods depending on the rainfall.

Two kilometers downstream from Kayes the river is joined at the right by the Kolombiné, which, north of Nioro, forms the Korkodio marsh, a veritable lake in the rainy season.

Near Nioro, the Sarakollé Massif joins the valley of the southern Hodh in hilly outcroppings; to the east of Nioro, one again finds fragments of sandstone and of white marble.

This region is characteristic of the Sahel savanna. The 137 karite tree disappears in favor of shrubs: doum palms (Hyphaene thebaica), and cram-cram (Cenchrus catharticus). The climate being [23] [chart appears here in the original text] drier, the brush becomes thorny, but one still finds the baobab, numerous Combretaceae, and the precious Palmyra palm.

II. Climate and Meteorology

132 This region belongs to the zones of Sudanese and Sahelian climate. Its climate may be characterized thus:

A single rainy season, in summer;

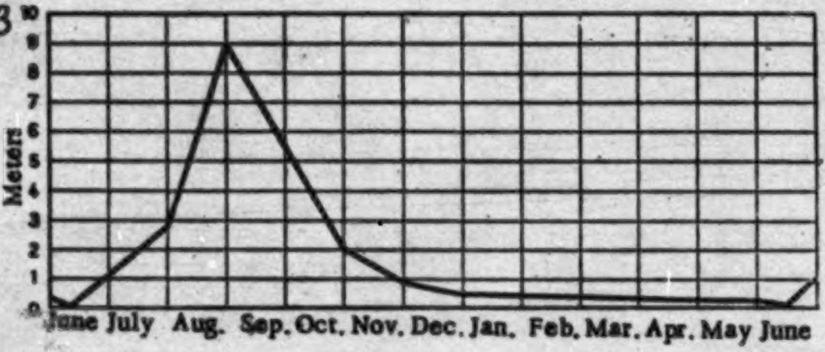
Annual precipitation from 2,000 to 250 millimeters, decreasing from south to north;

Maximum precipitation in August.

A. Temperatures

The temperatures offer:

- a maximum corresponding to the passage of the sun to its zenith (March to May) with an absolute maximum of $>40^{\circ}$;
- a secondary maximum corresponding to the end of the rainy season;
- a minimum corresponding to the maximum remoteness of the sun (December-January) with an absolute minimum of $< 15^{\circ}$;
- a secondary minimum corresponding to the maximum precipitations.



Typical Average Rise of Water at Kayes

132 The vapor pressure follows fairly closely the rainfall curve and has a maximum of ≥ 25 millibars in August (1).

1. This information was furnished to us by M. de Lorme of the Meteorological Service of Bamako.

The year is divided into two seasons, the dry season and the rainy season or "winter."

[24] B. Winds

The different types of weather are determined by the succession of different and quite distinctive air currents. Practically speaking, only two air currents are of interest in the region: the harmattan and the monsoon.

The harmattan -- This is a wind which circulates on the southern face of the continental African anticyclone. It blows generally from the east, and its rate is slow. It is a dry wind (vapor pressure about 10 millibars, which may drop below 5 millibars).

The southwest monsoon -- The air which circulated around the Saint Helena anticyclone is deflected as it crosses the equator and circulates around its Saharan thermic depression.

This wind blows from a general southwesterly direction, is very slow and very humid (vapor pressure about 25 millibars). The depth of the monsoon varies between 1,000 and 2,500 meters in general. It is surmounted by the harmattan, under which it thrusts itself like a wedge.

The zone where these two currents meet forms the intertropical front (F.I.T.), axis of the Saharan depression. This F.I.T. is clearly oriented east-west and follows slightly behind the movements of the sun. It oscillates between 6° north (January) and 21° north (July), climbing from January to July and dropping back afterwards. The progress of the F.I.T. takes place by jumps because the monsoon establishes itself in successive waves.

The regions to the north of the F.I.T., where the harmattan prevails, are in the dry season.

The regions to the south of the F.I.T., where the monsoon prevails, are in the rainy season.

132 This explains why the rainy season is progressively shorter as one goes north.

C. Rainy Season

At ground level the southwest monsoon prevails.

This is a wind from a general southwesterly direction, of very little speed, which drops more and more as one goes north. It is very humid and its vapor pressure is about 25 millibars.

Upon contact with the ground it is heated and rises, giving birth to vertical clouds from which may fall rather heavy showers, stormy or not, but localized, with calm or with moderate winds at ground level. The clouds undergo a great variation during the day and are developed to their maximum at the end of the day. The showers are generally confined to the end of the afternoon and the beginning of the night.

The normal height of the monsoon varies between 1,000 and 2,500 meters. It is surmounted by the harmattan.

The harmattan does not reach the ground except after "squalls." Its direction [25] is from the east, and its speed is then very great; its temperature and vapor pressure are lower than those of the monsoon, although it is generally at the saturation point.

Monsoon rains -- When currents meet within the monsoon, compact cloud masses several kilometers high may form, from which fall abundant and generalized precipitations called "monsoon rains." These cloud masses are virtually stationary; a fine, continuous rain falls from them, and the rare rifts in the clouds generally occur at sunset. These rains may be accompanied by sporadic storm phenomena. This type of weather lasts on the average from several days to about ten days, and the cloud system is reabsorbed in place when it is no longer sufficiently fed.

In the south these rains occur several times during the season, while in the north they are practically unknown.

Squalls -- They are commonly called "tornadoes." They occur when the monsoon at ground level becomes lighter than the east wind which is normally found above it.

132 Process of formation -- The surface of separation between monsoon and harmattan being practically horizontal, there forms there for some reason (generally, the thermic rise of the monsoon in contact with the overheated ground) a wave which is amplified more and more. The monsoon in rising cools and produces a vertical cloud formation. At the same time, the horizontal speed of the monsoon being slow and the harmattan rapid, the wave and the cloud have a tendency to move westwards. A hollow then forms in front of the wave of the monsoon, and the base of the harmattan drops towards the ground.

In the mature stage, in front of the rising column, a whirlwind is formed with a horizontal axis which rotates without touching the ground; thus, the impression of calm one has before the arrival of a squall. This whirlwind carries low, black clouds which yield no precipitation, but which move very rapidly in the form of a roll or cylinder.

Then comes a whirlwind of the opposite rotation, to which the spread and the speed of the whirlwind are added, hence, a violent gust of wind (the speed may attain 100 kilometers per hour) from a general easterly direction. The rain follows almost immediately. It falls in the form of a very violent downpour (the instantaneous intensity of the precipitation may exceed a millimeter per minute) and may last as long as an hour. It is accompanied by considerable storm phenomena and sometimes by hail.

Then, during two to three hours, generally, a fine, continuous rain falls, coming from rather high stratiform clouds.

The mass moves westwards with the average speed of the upper east wind (50 kilometers per hour generally).

Finally, when the stratum of the anterior monsoon offers an obstacle of sufficient resistance, the squall must rise above it; it rapidly loses its intensity and dies out if it is not regenerated by favorable conditions (thermic rise).

[26] The squalls range themselves generally in a north-south direction, forming a "squall line," a veritable cloud barrier which may mount up to 15 kilometers altitude. Some of these squall lines may be 1,000 kilometers long and extend from Timbuktu to Abidjan; they may cover 3,000 kilometers and cross all of French West Africa, but most have a far more modest extent and range.

132 After the passage of a strong "squall line," there is generally a break in the weather for two or three days without rain or storms, but several small squall lines may succeed each other during a day. At the height of the season there is an average of about ten squalls a month. They are responsible for the most violent storms, rains, and winds.

The squalls undergo a rather pronounced diurnal variation, and their intensity is at its maximum at the end of the afternoon and at the beginning of the night.

D. Dry Season

At ground level the harmattan prevails. This is a wind of a general east to northeast direction; its speed is feeble but undergoes a marked diurnal variation, for it is subject to considerable thermic differences. At night there is almost absolute calm, then the east wind sets in. At first it blows regularly, then, during the hot hours, in widely scattered "gusts" following the thermic rises that are produced from contact with the overheated ground, then it dies little by little at night. The vapor pressure is about 10 millibars and may drop to less than 5 millibars.

There is a great diurnal increase in temperature, with the maxima capable of passing 45°.

The low humidity does not permit condensation of large clouds, and the only clouds to be found are high ones.

The high temperatures cause a very considerable thermic instability over the sand and produce effects of "hot air wavering" and of "mirage." Visibility is sometimes substantially reduced by particles of sand suspended in the air, forming what is called the "dry fog." The fogs are generally born in the north and are carried afar by the wind.

Winter rains -- Air coming from high latitudes sometimes descends as far as French West Africa, notably in January and February. Rather elevated clouds are then formed, and the sky remains overcast for two or three days. Light rains may fall, which generally do not reach the ground, notably in the northern regions. The clouds also may lead to feeble high-altitude storms.

This phenomenon generally occurs two or three times a season.

[27] CHAPTER 4

PRINCIPAL ECONOMIC TRAITS

I. Agriculture

241

Among the Bambara "farming remains extensive [as opposed to 'intensive'] . It has not, generally speaking, passed the quasi-primitive stage where a man's labor, without the aid of modern techniques, produces little and, usually, badly. The climate is hard in the tropics, making physical effort taxing, and the naturally rich areas are rare and scattered. Finally, industrialization is only just beginning in West Africa, and in that field, as in the related one of producing hydro-electric power -- of capital importance in a country where all coal must be imported -- the stage of the schoolroom has hardly been passed." (1)

1. Georges Spitz, Sansanding.

A. Methods of Cultivation

We may distinguish three principal methods of cultivation, which apply respectively to vegetable gardens, to fields bordering water courses, and to fields in the brush.

The vegetable gardens are arranged around the huts and are worked by methods of intensive cultivation, using domestic refuse and irrigation, with no fallow land. They are meticulously cared for by the women. Each parcel of land is knowingly exploited by layers of crops, root crops and high plants which draw on the soil at different levels. These village gardens are designed to provide the carry-over between harvests. Millet, maize, tobacco (mid-August), etc., are cultivated in them. They are surrounded by productive trees.

The most fertile fields border water courses, where the land is easily irrigated. These small fields are generally worked by the women for raising rice, cotton, onions, and fruit trees.

24 Lastly, the furuba are veritable brush fields where wide, extensive, and cyclical cultivation is carried out, the brush being cleared by burning. During the dry season, the trees are cut at 0.70 meters or 1 meter from the ground [28] without removing the stumps, so that the subsequent fallow period may be brief. The cut branches are piled by the stumps. After drying, the grass is set on fire. On old fields, millet stalks and high grass are piled up before setting the fire; then the ground is superficially loosened by hoeing, and the ashes are mixed into the soil. The first year millet and peanuts are sown, during the following years less rich crops until the soil is exhausted (by manioc).

The preparation of the soil and the sowing must be done very rapidly (in about three weeks or a month) at the beginning of the rainy season. Sometimes the farmer must hastily sow an insufficiently prepared field, being obliged to transplant later. Sowing time is [82] determined by the appearance in the sky of the Pleiades, which the Bambara call "the hen and the chicks." In the Macina region the sowing begins at a certain village and follows a route going successively from the south northwards, in a zigzag movement corresponding to the appearance of the rains.

In the brush fields, maize is planted, then fonio and coarse millet (sorghum), peanuts and small millet (Pennisetum), etc. (see below). In the fields, monoculture is practiced, or else the cultivation of associated crops: for example, black-eyed peas (Vigna unguiculati walp = V. Catjang) and okra (Hibiscus esculentus) with millets and maize; the da sauce (Hibiscus sabdariffa Linn) with fonio (Digitaria exilis); peanuts with underground peas. In some fields these crops are associated: millets, maize, black-eyed peas, cotton, underground peas, peanuts, sweet potatoes, manioc, and okra (each plant exploiting the soil at a different level).

Sowing is always preceded by familial sacrifices and general rites.

Harvest time is determined by the vegetative period of the plants, without regard to their apparent ripeness. Thus, errors often result when new varieties are introduced by the administration. Accordingly, the harvest date for peanuts, sweet potatoes, and yams

241 may be set too early, and no amount of advice to be patient will retard it. However, for the millets, fonio, and rice, the visible characters of ripeness are known and respected (opening of the husk in the case of millet, color and bowing of the spike in the case of fonio and rice).

242 824 When a field is exhausted, it is allowed to lie fallow, and another terrain is cleared of brush, sometimes several kilometers from the village. A field is recognized as being exhausted when a variety of plant known as *sęgę* (*Striga senegalensis Benth*) appears spontaneously; when the soil is reconstituted and regains its richness, *tiękala* (*Cymbopogon giganteus Benth*) and *wãgha* (*Andropogon Gayanus Kunth*) appear, which indicates that the field may again be cultivated. Thus, the fields are rotated around the village that cultivates them, 342 following a cycle which may last 20 years. Temporary dwellings are set up near the fields under cultivation, and the farmer lives there during the work with each of his wives in turn.

[29] B. Food Crops

243 The Bambara cultivate food plants and textile plants. Millet is the basic crop in the savanna. The *pénicillaires*, small millet (*Pennisetum typhoïdeum R.*), are cultivated very far north. Their types are characterized by the length of their vegetative cycles, which vary from 65 to 140 days. In general, they are sown in a rather light soil at the beginning of the rainy season. The grain is put in the ground, without preliminary working of the soil, in holes one pace apart and a few centimeters deep. A pinch of seed is put in each hole, and one to three subsequent workings are given the soil; the first, 15 days after reaping, the others in July and August. The yield varies from 350 to 1,000 kilograms per hectare.

The sorghums (*Sorghum vulgare*) include a considerable number of varieties with vegetative cycles varying from 120 to 150 days. M. Vichon has collected 11 samples of sugar sorghums, 132 of late mid-season, 87 early, 138 of transplants. M. Creak divides the sorghums into three types: with full, compact, conical spikes; with elongated spikes and more detached spikelets; with very elongated spikes and with spikelets even more detached from the axis. A third

243 classification is based on the distinction between the sorghums of ordinary soils and those of inundated soils. The latter are sown in August in nursery beds in fresh non-inundated ground and are transplanted at the end of the rainy season in land exposed by the receding waters. The yields vary from 400 to 1,200 kilograms per hectare.

[252 273] Millet is consumed in the form of flour or is used to make a fermented beverage, *dolo,* which is something like weak beer.

Wheat is cultivated in the wadies where the water is shallow from November to February. Cultivation is carried out with or without irrigation in seed holes 25 centimeters apart and 4 centimeters deep, where the farmer deposits a pinch of seed (70 kilograms of seeds are necessary per hectare). The harvest is at the end of March at the latest. The average yields are from 1,000 to 1,500 kilograms. The wheats are generally tender and give excellent flours for bread, but this culture is still in the experimental stage.

Rice is cultivated on 80,000 hectares, of which almost half are in the central Delta (Mopti, Macina, Djenné) which constitutes the true rice granary of the territory. Outside of the Delta, the productive regions are: the upper basin of the Niger (Bamako), the lake and post-lake region (from Lake Débo to Ansongo), the region near Guinea (south of Sikasso and Bougouni), and finally 10,000 hectares of irrigated rice of the Niger Office.

Two kinds of rice are cultivated: one, an African rice (*Oryza glaberrima*) in the Delta, is a floating rice capable of enduring considerable submersion. The other, of Asiatic origin (*Oryza saliva*) [sic], is cultivated in the upper valley of the Niger and in the valleys of the small water courses. Lastly, a mountain rice which grows on dry ground must be mentioned.

What characterizes native rice culture is the absence of [30] 243 312 hydraulic control. It is a rice culture of submersion, thus very insecure. Since 1944 attempts have been made to end these processes of "wild" submersion. In the upper valley of the Niger where the plains are insufficiently and tardily submerged, rice is sown at the beginning of the rainy season, and when it attains a growth of 20 to 25 centimeters, the water is sent gradually into the plain. When the rice is mature, the water is drawn off into the river through overflow outlets. In the Delta, where the rise of the Niger is utilized directly, regulating works prevent the flood from

[sic] [should be *sativa*—Analyst]

243 manifesting itself too violently and afterwards hold back the receding
312 waters. In the Sahel, the arrangements affect the plains bordering the
Niger, where earthen dikes protect the rice from the floods and also
control the tributary lakes where they join the river, holding the re-
ceding waters in the lakes, thus permitting transplantation of the rice
and preventing the subsiding flood from drowning the plants before
harvest. From 1944 to 1949, 101,550 hectares were regulated in this
manner in the upper valley, the Delta, and the valley of the Sahel.
243 There is a plan to regulate 331,000 new hectares by 1956. In addi-
tion, experiments in mechanical tillage have begun. Up until now
two methods of cultivation have been applied.

a. Without burning: the hoed land is prepared in furrows 40 to 50 centimeters apart; the seeding is done in seed holes 25 centimeters apart along the furrows. (1)

b. With burning: the wild grasses are pulled up in March and April and gathered in beds 1 meter wide and 3 to 6 meters long. They are lightly covered with earth and then set on fire. At the end of June the mounds are turned by hoe, and the seeds planted in holes 30 centimeters apart and 4 centimeters deep. Fifteen grains are put in each hole, or 45 to 50 kilograms per hectare. The yields vary between 800 and 1,200 kilograms of paddy per hectare.

To these basic crops are added the following early carry-over crops:

The millets. Fonio (Digitaria exilis) is cultivated in the region of Senegambia, and iburu (D. Iburna) in the central sector of the Sudan.

Maize and banana trees south of Bamako. Maize is the most
widespread crop after millet. Nevertheless, some maize is imported
[351] from Dahomey. Banana trees are planted around the huts and form a
belt around the villages. They are also planted in the small fields
which border the water courses. Large bananas are harvested which
are picked green and cooked.

245 Mango trees, recently imported (about fifty years ago), give
177 an excellent yield and are destined to be developed more and more.

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1. L'agronomie tropicale [Tropical Agronomy], July-August, 1950. [Ed., Revue d'agronomie tropicale, 1951.]

244 The Bambara groundnut ripens its seed underground. It is cultivated from the southern border of the Sahara to the Cape, but its primary home [31] is in the Sudan where the greatest number of cultivated varieties is found. (1)

> 1. Jacques Félix, for a study on the Bambara groundnut (Voandzeia subterrena), Agriculture tropicale [Tropical Agriculture], January-February, 1950. [Ed., Revue d'agronomie tropicale.]

Manioc and yams at certain points along the Niger escape the devastations of the Acridiidae insects which can not attack their roots.

Other crops are used to balance the diet: condiments and
[263] fleshy plants, such as, pimento, sesame, various labiates, okra,
[177] sorrel, squash, peanuts (imported in the sixteenth century from
America). Peanuts, to thrive, need loose, light soil. They are sown
in June at the beginning of the rainy season and are harvested in
[262] November. The natives eat them roasted; they make oil and soap
from them and give the stalks to their animals. Cultivation is entirely in the hands of the natives. In Senegal manpower is insufficient;
[464] before 1940 thousands of Sudanese workers were called upon each
[167] season, particularly Bambara, the "Navétanes," who hired themselves out to the farmers of Senegal in order to acquire the textiles and other products they needed. The peanut is an export product. Also cultivated are nitrogenous vegetables (Bambara groundnuts, black-eyed peas, dolichos, kissis, etc.) and the numerous and varied amaranths, tomatoes, eggplants, gourds, and, since 1940, potatoes which are grown more and more.

222 Finally, we will cite: a) the gathering of wild plants which
263 serve as condiments: the fruits of the baobab (Adansonia digitata), of the corchorus, of the Parkia biglobosa [néré], and of the karite tree (Butyrospermum), formerly called the "butter tree," which is cultivated to some degree -- the fruit is something like that of the palm tree and contains a core whose kernels enclose a fatty matter, shea butter, valued for making soap, as an illuminant, for the toilet;
222 b) the gathering of scarcity foods: baobab, cenchrus, cassia, the kola nut (Sterculia acuminata). Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;

Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;
222 their caffeine content makes them a stimulant and energizer. The
[276] Bambara use seven kinds of kola nuts in their sacrificial and
782 divinatory rites: 1. *Dangoro* (red nut); 2. *Geleworo* (white nut);
787 *Sosokuworo* (a red nut pointed at one end); 4. *Flaniworo* (yellow
kola); 5. *Worodanda* (kola without opening) which has no apparent
cleft where it may be split open; 6. *Bassiworo* (a dark red, bitter
nut); 7. *Ryeworo* (nut of light and indeterminate color). (This list
is given us by G. Dieterlen in her *Essai sur la religion Bambara*
[Essay on the Bambara Religion]).

252 To prepare kola nuts, they are placed in baskets of very coarse mesh lined with leaves that are moistened every four or five days.

245 Among cultivated trees, other than banana, mango, lemon, orange, pineapple trees [ananas, may be a kind of pine; the pineapple is not a tree fruit], etc., one must mention the *Acacia albida*, which plays a large role in Bambara mythology. In the dry season, it is used as fodder for cattle.

[32] C. Textile Crops

248 Side by side with these food crops, the Bambara cultivate
textile plants which they use in addition to the wild textile plants.
Among the principal ones, we shall point out the *da* (*Hibiscus
[227 cannabinus*) whose fibers are used by fishermen to make their nets.
286] It does not rot and is a possible rival of jute. The labor to exploit
it, pulling up the stalks, retting, extraction of the fibers, is done
in the dry season, when many hands are available. (1)

Cotton, which grows spontaneously in many places, is cultivated near the villages as an annual plant; it is a perennial plant which renews itself every four or five years. During the cultivation cycle, it is grown between millet and maize. The harvesting is
[288] done by women; it is picked out and spun by women, but it is woven

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1. G. Spitz, *L'Ouest africain français* [The French West African]. [Ed., *L'Ouest africain, A.O.F. et Togo*; *The West African, French West Africa and Togo.*]

248 into narrow bands by weavers [men] who make clothes from it in.
286 unbleached, indigo-blue, yellow, or black fabrics. At the present
time, after numerous attempts at improvement since the occupation,
[654] seeds selected according to the zones of cultivation are distributed
to the farmers, and the administration encourages industrial cotton
cultivation in irrigated regions, as well as mechanical spinning and
weaving.

248 Sisal is an agave of Mexican origin. The long, thick, pointed
[177] leaves, after undergoing a series of industrial operations including
mechanical extraction of the fibers, yields very strong textile fibers
suitable for cordage, rope making, rug manufacture, canopies, etc.

Kapok (Eriodendron anfractuosum) until a few years ago was merely gathered, but now plantations have been created. The fruit is in the form of capsules containing seeds enveloped in a vegetal wadding. In one year the kapok tree can furnish 30 kilograms of fibers used in mattress-making, hat-making ...

D. Agricultural Tools

241 Bambara farming tools are very simple. The hoe is almost the only agricultural instrument used. There are several kinds of hoe, particularly in the Bougouni region: the tyerengu, 0.50 meters wide, with a straight handle (chiefly used by the Sénoufo); the n'gu kala, 0.30 meters wide, with a curved handle. These two are used for digging, scraping, and banking. The flotton, from 0.10 to 0.20 meters wide and with a handle made from a forked branch, is used for the second dressing of the earth and for weeding. (When the weeds are too big, the weeding is done by hand). These hoes oblige the peasant to work stopped over. Let us also mention the axe, dyeli, which serves to cut shrubs and the branches of trees in clearing land, the machete, and a small pickaxe with a hoe handle, the yalo.

[33] Millet spikes are harvested with the aid of a special small knife to cut the stalk into pieces. Finally, the threshing of the ears is done with large bent sticks having round handles and flat ends.

Agricultural labors, tillage and threshing, are undertaken
[533] collectively following the cadence indicated by an instrumentalist.
[461] Work in the fields is generally done by starting at the bottom of a
slope and working up, so the rain will wash off the weeds. The

241 threshing of millet is done on the village threshing floor, facing west.

Attempts have been made to substitute the plow for the hoe, but with indifferent success, for deep plowing of these fragile soils brings the laterite bed of the subsoil to the surface, resulting in the final ruin of the fields.

The Bambara have no organic fertilizer other than household wastes, except in some regions where the shepherds lead their flocks onto the stubble after the harvest. Although only superficially worked, the soils are quickly exhausted and must be abandoned after a few years. Clearing the land by brush fire has the drawback of progressive deforestration.

E. Production Statistics

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433 As statistics are established by circles or by administrative centers, it is impossible to give precise figures on the volume of agricultural production which may be attributed specifically to the Bambara. However, since the Bambara constitute the vast majority of the population in certain circles, it is not without interest to furnish some figures on Sudanese agriculture. It must be pointed out, however, that the acreage under cultivation in the country cannot be estimated even approximately. The statistics established by the circles or administrative centers are founded on approximations so vague that it is not even reasonable to take them into consideration.

As an indication of this, we may cite the figures furnished by the administration of the Bougouni circle. The estimates are calculated on the probable number of workers in a region, to each of whom is attributed a field of theoretical acreage. Three-fourths of the production is assigned to millet and the rest to regional crops. The average yields per hectare calculated in this manner may give a probable indication of the quantity harvested, but they cannot be verified in any manner.

Production According to "Le Guide A.O.F. (1950)"
[The French West African Guidebook]

Bamako

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439 Export Products -- Karite, peanuts, 11,700 M.T. [metric tons]; sisal, 300 M.T.; cotton, 20 M.T.; tobacco, 35 M.T.

Food crops -- Millet, 92,256 M.T.; maize, 11,200 M.T.; rice, 4,917 M.T.; fonio, 200 M.T.; yams, 1,000 M.T.; manioc, 2,600 M.T.; potatoes, 1,506 M.T.; sweet potatoes, 3,810 M.T.; beans and onions, 15,200 M.T.; peas, 8,420 M.T.

[34]

Ségou

Exports -- Peanuts, 10,000 M.T.; rice, 6,000 M.T.; kapok, 600 M.T.; karite almonds, 1,000 M.T.; butter, 100 M.T.; gum, 20 M.T.

Production of the Niger Office -- Rice, 10,000 M.T.; cotton, 1,300 M.T.

Food crops -- Millet, 15,400 M.T.; maize, 1,000 M.T.; fonio, 4,200 M.T.; peas, 2,600 M.T.; beans, 1,600 M.T.

Bougouni

Exports -- Karite butter, 100 to 600 M.T.; peanuts, 500 M.T.; millet, 1,000 M.T.; wax. .

Food crops -- Millet, 40,000 M.T.; fonio, 10,000 M.T.; rice, 6,000 M.T.; maize, 5,000 M.T.; peanuts, manioc, yams, sweet potatoes. (Charts on following pages.)

II. Animal Husbandry

A. Methods of Stock Raising

439 The Bambara are a sedentary, agricultural people; they have a symbiotic relationship with the Somono and Bozo, who are fishermen and sailors exclusively, and with other semi-nomadic peoples like the Peul who are shepherds.

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Production figures furnished by the Bougouni circle for the year 1950

Crop	Area planted	Average yield per hectare in metric tons	Quantities harvested in metric tons	Metric tons needed for seed	For Food	Available for sale
Millet	60,000	0.500	30,000	1,200	27,000	2,000
Rice	1,500	0.700	1,000	100	800	100
Peanuts	2,500	0.600	1,500	150	350	1,000
Maize	4,000	0.700	2,800	50	2,750	
Fonio	1,000	0.700	700	100	600	
Manioc, sweet potatoes, yams	300	2.000	600		600	
Beans and peas	100	0.800	80	10	70	

Area cultivated . . 69,400

[34]

Industrial Crops

Crop	Hectares planted	Average yield per hectare	Quantities harvested in metric tons	Local Consumption	Seed	Available for sale
Peanuts	2,500	0.600	1,500	150	350	1,000
Native cotton	500	0.150	75	75		
"N'Courala" cotton	60	0.200	12			
Tobacco	750	0.400	300	150		150
Dah[sic], sisal	insignificant					

The Société de Prevoyance [Welfare Society?] has stocked 600 groves with mango trees, cailcedra, and poincianas.

231 431 [35] However, the Bambara can assemble flocks by exchanging their grain for animals obtained from Peul, Moor, or Touareg shepherds. It is their way of investing their savings; thus, they never dispose of their animals during their periods of increase, but let them grow old in the herds, and their capital increases effortlessly, watched over by the head of the family.

233 184 In the Sahel, during the rainy season, the animals live by grazing on the numerous grasses and leguminous plants that grow on the mimosa-studded steppe. During the dry season, they live on the fallen branches and husks of the acacias. Then there is transhumance [221] to the inundated regions which become pastures as the waters recede. In the Nioro region, transhumance is towards the Kaarta, the Baoulé, and the Bakoy.

In the Sudan region the animals entrusted to the Peul make short journeys to change pastures; in the rainy season, to the plateaus which are immense pastures; from November on, they return to the valleys and streams.

In the Guinean area, the village flock is entrusted to a Peul shepherd who leads it off in the morning and brings it back at night. The animals are then tethered to the stakes in their owners' courtyards or are penned in an enclosure where the women go to milk them. After the harvest the flocks graze in the fields, but, from the beginning of February, they no longer stray from the dwellings, because everything is parched. The beasts are then fed millet, peanut stalks, or foliage.

231 Neither cattle nor sheep are in the least supervised in reproduction. Coupling is unrestricted and takes place at random in the pastures and at the whim of the animals throughout the year. Birth occurs no matter where; the herdsmen know nothing of obstetrical practice. The calves are nourished with a lightly salted mash of millet stalks or with the crushed fruit of a fig named aourou which supposedly has milk-producing properties.

[232] The finest male goats often are castrated to fatten or tame them. In Kaarta and Mandé goats are raised in pens constructed on piles one or two meters from the ground, with a flooring of boughs which allows excrement to fall through. In this way, the animals are protected from the humidity and from wild beasts.

231 [558] Horses, a mark of wealth, receive scarcely more attention. The stallions, particularly those of the chief, are fettered to stakes at the hut, but the mares are left free to roam around the village and at the age of 20 months are covered by any male horse whatever. The feeding of the mare and her offspring is neglected, that of the male horse is more satisfactory.

235 Poultry is raised in all villages, in hearly every yard. They live on what they can find. In upper Ivory Coast the natives drive them onto the cultivated fields after the harvest. Often, the villagers build small roosts attached to the house walls.

[36] B. Stock Raising Areas

231 In the Sahelian zone, shrubby vegetation affords a very precious source of nutriment for camels, horses, cattle, sheep, and goats. The 14th parallel marks the line of demarcation between the zebus to the north and the taurins to the south. This line passes through Kayes, Bafoulabé, Kolokani, south of Ségou, San, and Tougan. It corresponds to the northern limit of the tsetse fly.

Peul zebus are very well represented in the Macina region during the dry season and in the Haoussa [Hausa] region in the north and the Gourma region in the south during the rainy season. It is a good animal for butchering. Faraboué zebus, produced by the crossing of taurins with zebus, live in the zone cohabited by the two species. Finally, Moorish zebus in the Nioro, Nara, and Macina circles are not so good for butchering as the Peul zebus, but the cows are better milk producers (six to seven liters a day compared to two or three).

Woolly sheep are found at Macina, in the Macina circle, and in the Issa Ber circle. They die where more than 60 centimeters of rain falls per year. Their shepherds, the Rimaïbé, change their pastures according to the Niger floods. Finally, the delicate, well-muscled goats of the Sahel are found again in the Fouta-Djallon to the south.

The Sudan zone is less suited to stock raising. The high bush is infested with tsetse flies, ticks, and gastro-intestinal parasites. Camels disappear.

The taurins, doubtless introduced by the Berber peoples from southern Morocco, are derived from long-horned cattle. The

231 subspecies Méré or Bambara, which is found at Kaarta, Bélédougou, Mandé, and Minianka, is produced by the crossing of the N'Dama strain with the zebu. The male is a good animal for butchering; the cow is a poor milk producer.

The long-haired Moorish sheep, raised in the Néma regions, Nara, and Nioro, is poor for butchering, while the Peul sheep with greatly developed horns, originating in the Sudan, is an excellent animal for butchering. Finally, the sheep of the Fouta-Djallon, or to the south up to the 14th degree of latitude north, is more thickset; it has short hair, but when crossed with the merino sheep furnishes a fleece of from 500 to 600 grams.

The goats raised at Kaarta and Mandé are also stockier than those of the Sahel because they do not roam.

Horses diminish in number and size. They become tame and soft. The southern horse is a Barbary horse enfeebled by the climate. It is found to the south of Kaarta, at Minianka, in the regions of San and Djenné. The Bélédougou horse is a Barbary horse transformed by the climate and by man. The center for raising it is in the Touba canton 90 kilometers to the northeast of Koulikoro.

The ass of Minianka and of the southern Sudan is small, 0. 90 meters to 1 meter, but stout. It has a beige coat with a darker dorsal band and cross stripe.

Few mules are found, for if the ass is scorned, the mule is despised.

Pig raising appears, as well as the keeping of domestic fowl.
235 [37] The chicken is of an archaic type, small in size and light in weight (one kilogram). It has few muscles. A half-wild bird, it lays only about a hundred eggs a year and sits on them all. The Guinea fowl weighs about 1. 2 kilograms and has a coarse flesh. The musk or Barbary duck is raised in large numbers on the banks of the Senegal and the Niger. The females are excellent layers and sitters. They weigh from 3 kilograms to 3. 5 kilograms. The flesh of the young is good, that of the adults musky. Finally, the turkey is raised in all regions, but only rarely because it requires too much attention.
231 Rabbits are not raised; they are too sensitive to local diseases.

The Guinean zone permits no more than the raising of pigs and poultry. Horses are not found there.

C. Statistics

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	Sheep Goats	Bovines	Horses	Asses
Bamako	64,987	49,425	6,227	10,356
Ségou	234,645	161,965	10,454 -5,165	12,159
Bougouni	17,360	29,197	431	1,651

Estimates for the three Bambara centers.

D. Products from Livestock

253 Meat -- The principal slaughtering centers are Bamako and Kayes.

439 Some of the available bovines are exported to Senegal. This is done from the Kayes circle by way of the routes: Néma, Timbesa, Nioro, Kayes; or Néma, Nara, Yelamano, Kayes. Others are sent to Guinea to provide meat for the workers in the gold placers of the Siguiri region. Some go to the Ivory and Gold Coasts, where the animals are sent chiefly from Mopti, with participation from the circles [487] of Ségou, San, and Niafunké. Numerous caravan routes penetrate to the Ivory Coast by way of Odienné, Seguela, Korhogo, Bouaké, and Boho-Dioulasso.

[255] Preserves are made in the factories of Lyndiane.

281 Leather -- Leather comes either from the slaughter houses or from the bush. It is of mediocre quality because of poor preparation: the skins are dried in the sun, folded in two lengthwise, hair against hair, and tied together with a wire, ten to a bundle. About 600 metric tons pass through Bamako annually.

234 Milk and milk derivatives -- The cows are poor producers; most of the milk is furnished by the Moorish, Peul, and Toronké zebus. Butter production is primitive: the sour milk is put in calabashes, cans, or goat skins and shaken until it turns to butter. At Falaladji near Kayes there is a butter and cheese factory.

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070 Wool -- The wool is generally used locally for weaving; only a small percentage is exported to France. A great effort has been

A great effort has been

654 made to improve the exploitation of livestock; in this regard [38]
232 one must mention the stock-raising experimental center of the Service Zootechnique, the Serotherapy Center and the Farm School of Sotuba, near Bamako; the sheepfolds at El Oualadji, Nioro, and Nara; and the stallion corrals at Nioro, Ouahigouya, Mopti, Bandiagara, Gao, Bamako, and Goundam.

III. Commerce

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441 The Bambara region follows the commercial regulations of French West Africa. It is, in particular, subject to the customs regulations put into force November 30, 1950 (Journal officiel A.O.F., No. 2507 [French West African Official Journal]), which include a tax on merchandise of whatever origin and a customs surtax on each product coming within the framework of the international conventions to which France has subscribed.

Customs receipts for 1950 were 131,000,000 francs for the whole of the Sudan. They reveal a rather mediocre commercial traffic, definitely inferior to that of Senegal for example (3,325,000,000 francs). This is partly due to the geographic situation of the country and to the state of the means of communication, and partly to the limited resources of the region.

A. External Commerce

a. Means of Communication

439 External commerce has three outlets: Dakar, Conakry, Abidjan. It is through these outposts that the Bambara world communicates with Europe and the United States. This is why the continental isolation of the country remains a formidable impediment to outside commerce.

505 The means of communication remain very mediocre across this country so inordinately spread out. Navigable waterways are irregular. Commercial navigation is possible as follows: on the Senegal from Saint-Louis to Kayes from July to October, and up to Podor during the rest of the year; on the Niger, by steamer during the flood period and by barge the rest of the year, between Koulikoro

505 amd Ansongo (1,400 kilometers), and between Bamako and
Kouroussa (374 kilometers); on the Bani from San up to Mopti on the
Niger. In addition, a very large number of native pirogues carrying
merchandise swarm on the navigable waterways. These waterways,
of strictly local value, remain impassable too long at a time to
496 maintain substantial trade. The railways constructed for strategic
purposes are designed to link the ports with the navigable canals
and form no sort of network among themselves. Moreover, the
gauge (one meter) is weak, single, and capable of carrying only a
small volume of traffic. The four principal lines are: Dakar-Niger
up to Koulikoro, 1,697 km. and 128 stations; Conakry-Niger, 662
km., 40 stations, reaching as far as Kankan where the Milo is
navigable; Abidjan-Niger, 834 km., and Benin-Niger, 579 km.
Passenger and freight traffic is constantly increasing, and the insuf-
491 ficiency of the railways is compensated for by road traffic. Every
secondary center may be reached by truck in the dry season, but,
except in the immediate suburbs of the towns [39] most of the roads
are simple unpaved tracks. Watercourses are crossed by ferries, sub-
merged causeways, or temporary log bridges ... The road network
is 80 times less dense than in France, for the rainy season causes an-
nual havoc. Its maintenance is very burdensome. Bridges are rare,
but there are some fine ones that must be mentioned: over the
Bagolé, over the Baoulé, and over the Milo at Kankan. Roads are
classified as: inter-colonial (linking territories of French West Africa --
one of these routes links Bamako to one of the three great trans-
Saharan tracks which go towards North Africa), roads of general use-
fulness, and roads of local usefulness.

509 Finally, an air network tends to develop more and more. One
line already plies between Dakar, Bamako, Boho-Dioulasso,
Ouagadougou, Niamey, and Kamo. Another serves Dakar, Kayes,
Bamako, Bobo-Dioulasso, and Abidjan. Other lines just recently
created have not as yet definitely fixed routes. We will mention the
lines: Dakar-Bamako-Ségou-Bobo-Dioulasso-Serkédougou-Abidjan;
the line, Dakar-Ségou-Mopti-Gao; that of Dakar-Boké-Conakry-
Kankan; and finally a line used chiefly to transport meats in dry
periods, Dakar-Kayes-Nioro-Bamako. These interior lines make up
a network of connecting lines for the distribution of passengers and
cargo landed at Kakar by the long-range carriers.

439 The great distances to the coasts remain an obstacle to outside commerce, for the country lacks motor power. All coal must be imported, and hydroelectric equipment is scanty.

b. Commercial Regulation

The decree 3771-SE of July 21, 1949, set the terms for importing quota goods from metropolitan France and from countries of the French Union or for importing foreign goods. The regulation of exports is set forth in the decree 2233-SE of April 19, 1950. Any merchant holding an export license may export goods. According
441 to Richard-Molard, the commercial companies financed by French and foreign capital (increasingly American) still retain the old trading mentality which seeks to wring maximum profits out of the colony without reinvesting in the country's equipment. Attempts to
474 protect the native producers resulted in the creation of cooperatives which were given certain advantages; nevertheless, the cooperatives soon ran up against the competition of the European commercial houses and were discouraged.

c. Organization

443 Trading posts and cooperatives -- Enumeration and classification of trading posts is governed by a local decree, effective as of the opening of the trading which is itself governed by a general decree. In principle, the decree fixing the location of trading posts is drawn up after consultation by the administrations of the Bamako and Kayes Chambers of Commerce.

[40] It is formally forbidden to buy products elsewhere than at these trading posts, under pain of prosecution; confiscation of goods and seizure of vehicles may even be invoked in certain cases of repeated offense.

Role of the trading posts -- The role of these trading posts is to gather together the products of a region; the choice generally falls on a large village served by a practicable road or on a railway station from which the goods may be the more easily moved out. From the administrative point of view , the trading posts facilitate keeping a

443 record of production and provide a replacement for the markets and fairs abolished by a general decree in 1946. For business, the result is less scattered buying centers and less need for vehicles, packing, etc.

474
443 The cooperatives and the trading posts -- Since 1951 two African cooperatives have been in existence: one at Kita, termed a production cooperative, the other at Kayes, termed commercial and industrial. They are organized under the aegis of the Administration by native businessmen, notables who, under cover of the association, hope to escape the influence of the large commercial houses on which they depend. These cooperatives function in a disappointing manner and lack technique, experience, and a sense of continuity. However, they benefit from concealed subsidies in the form of loans from the Common Funds of the Crédit Agricole and from the Société de Prévoyance.

These cooperatives are not required to buy products only at the trading posts. A village where only one cooperative member resides may be chosen as a buying center by the cooperative directors without it even being necessary for them to have the permission of the Administration.

Situation in 1950-51 -- Profiting from the freedom to choose buying centers that the Administration granted them, the cooperatives established them near the trading posts, thus diverting to themselves a large part of the goods that would normally arrive at the posts. Certain trading posts, notably Sirakoro in the Kita circle, saw their purchases drop by 80 percent because buyers of the cooperative were installed at Goro, 30 kilometers back in the hinterland of this canton. The buyers of the commercial houses, who had granted credit to the cultivators during the rainy season, were unable to recover their loans and, therefore installed themselves in the "cooperative" villages outside the trading posts. The cooperatives protested, and the Administration imposed fines, seizure of scales, products, etc., and, above all, brought intimidation to bear through the intermediary of canton and village heads who forbade the local populations to sell their products to buyers from the commercial houses. The only method of countering these acts was to buy everywhere the cooperative bought.

d. Imports and Exports

439 Aside from food peanuts, which remain one of the principal export products, we may mention among the vegetable [41] exports: cotton, rubber from the forests of the south, and "salabraida" and "galam" gums. Livestock and its by-products are too mediocre to mention and are not shipped out of Africa. Let us note, however, the growing export of hides from Kayes, Mopti, the Sudan, and Guinea. As far as mineral products are concerned, the most important one for export is still provided by the old gold mines of Bouré and Bambouk. The Macenta region produces a small quantity of industrial diamonds which are sold in London. Sudanese iron is too far from the coast to be profitable.

The country imports all manufactured objects, construction materials, tools, coal, mineral oils, steel bars, edible foodstuffs, fabrics . . .

B. Internal Commerce

a. Commercial Routes

More important commercial traffic takes place within the Sudan or with surrounding countries by way of Senegal, the Sahel, and the southern colonies.

Imports:

By way of Senegal -- French and English thread; salts from Roumania (formerly) and from southern France; wrought and unwrought metals; construction and transportation materials.

By way of the Sahel -- salt in bars from Sebka d'Idjil; bulk salt from Seye; cattle, sheep and goats, horses, gum.

By way of the south -- Guinea: kolas, glass necklaces, ornamental and toilet articles. Ivory Coast: kola nuts, glass trinkets, ornamental and toilet articles. Gold Coast: kola nuts, loincloths and pieces of English cloth, copper rods, glassware, and necklaces.

Exports:

By way of Senegal -- rubber, gold, ivory, peanuts, gum, wool, karite butter, hides of cattle, sheep and goats . . .

By the Sahel -- grains, native cotton and wool cloth, sugar, ornamental articles.

439 By the south -- Guinea: rubber, ivory, gold, livestock, rice, millet. Ivory Coast: Sahel salt, livestock, wax, karite, native cotton and wool cloth and blankets. Gold Coast: livestock, native cloth.

443 In addition, all centers of any importance had a large periodic market which was a sort of regional fair, plus a small daily market which permitted the inhabitants of the locality to obtain provisions as needed.

b. Caravan Commerce

443 484 Over and above these markets, a long-distance caravan trade is carried on by the Haoussa and the Dioula, who transport their merchandise in the north with beasts of burdens, in the south by human bearers. These movements continue a commercial tradition and have been altered only by legislation. Before the conquest, any man who wished could enter this commerce on the condition of paying his "Fama" the usual sum. The traders, to protect themselves against brigands, traveled [42] in caravans. [787] Practice had it that the traders consulted a priest before leaving to find out if their undertaking would succeed. After the usual sacrifices, the priest revealed the name of the one who would direct the group. The caravan chief could even be a captive, but everyone owed him obedience because a divine force inhabited him. [651] To each state which is crossed, the caravan paid a customs fee on entering and asked the Fama for permission to cross, indicating the extent of their route and making propitiatory sacrifices in each region. Sometimes certain districts, such as the region of Bougouni, forbade blood sacrifices for fear of bringing down evil forces on themselves. The caravans then let loose an animal secretly at night.

c. Commercial Practices

438 643 Everything could be sold except gold, which was the property of the Fama. No one was supposed to possess gold. If the gold miners of Bouré could sell the gold extracted from the mines, when the buyers entered the Bambara country, they had to present it to the Fama. If he did not wish to buy it, he authorized certain rich people permanently settled in the district (that is, who would be unlikely to leave) to buy

438 the gold. But they, in turn, could in no case resell the gold to any-
643 body other than the Fama. Aside from certain sacrificial uses and the
[648] making of jewels for the Fama's wives, gold served to ransom cap-
tives or to negotiate royal alliances.

The price of the commodities was set by agreement between
435 buyer and seller, except for cloth which had a fixed price, 100 cowrie
shells per cubit in the Bamako region. As a matter of fact, the cot-
[286] ton gathered in the fields of the community was woven by captives
who were not paid.

426 Loans were made without interest. Interest, *korko*, is still
686 forbidden today. Loans are guaranteed by labor. The debtor who
could not repay his debt on time and whose family head refused to
pay it for him was seized by the Fama and held as security until such
time as he had reimbursed his debt.

804 Side by side with French units of measurement, the natives
use their own for trade. Their measures of length: the cubit (elbow
to tip of middle finger), the span, the foot, the length of both arms
extended, the pace, the *diare*, and the *kala* . . . ; their measures of
capacity: the *sawel* or *mouré*, the *mud*; their weights: the *moutkhal*,
the *catal*, the large and little *karoni*, the *wakie*, the pellet of *tali*,
of *tomi*, of *bagana*, of *gelen*. Cotton is weighed on rough scales
whose pointer is a wooden rod and the balances large gourds hung by
strings. For weights, large rocks, *kulu*, from 800 to 1,200 grams are
[436] used. Finally, the Bambara use French money almost exclusively:
one franc of metropolitan France is equivalent to 0.50 francs C.F.A.
Nevertheless, the use of cowrie shells is still frequent.

d. Banks

453 One bank of issue exists in French West Africa: the Bank of
French West Africa. There are also private banks, the number of
which has increased during the past few years.

The Bank of French West Africa, which has a branch at Bamako, carries out the following operations: [43]

1. discounts notes or bills of two or several signatures due in not more than 180 days;
2. creates, negotiates, or buys drafts;

453 3. discounts negotiable obligations or non-negotiable obligations guaranteed by warrants or receipts for merchandise, by assignment of pending harvests, by bills of lading, by pledges of securities, by deposits of gold and silver ingots, and monies in bullion.

4. participates in loans to the State or Colonies with the provision that, except for special authorization, this participation does not total more than half the reserves.

5. participates in the creation of financial, commercial, and agricultural enterprises in the interest of the country, providing this participation does not amount to more than a quarter of its reserves.

The private banks are:

The National Bank for Commerce and Industry with a branch at Bamako and another at Kayes.

The African Commercial Bank with a branch at Bamako.

These are deposit banks, but the second is also an investment bank.

[44]

CHAPTER 5

HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN

I. Prehistory

173 The Bambara have fairly precise notions about their prehistory and their protohistory, and about the history of their ancestors and the evolution of their techniques. Their tradition has them as coming from Mandé, a country whose location remains uncertain for several authors (1), and which even leads Monteil (2) to say: "... in fact

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1. J. Vidal, Au sujet de l'emplacement du Mali ou Melli; le véritable emplacement du Mali [Concerning the Location of the Mali or Melli; The True Location of the Mali].

2. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

173 there is no country called Mandé and there never was. Every chief situates its capital wherever seems best to him."

Among these capitals are counted: Kangaba, Miami, Tabou, Diakala, Kounfangué ... For the Bambara, Mandé is the center from which issued the 48 Sudanese populations which spread out following a definite movement (3) to cover the territory included between the Atlantic coast, the Senegal, the Niger, and up to Dahomey. (4)

The memory of this expansion is still preserved today in the [796] septennial cult which brings all the people to the sanctuary of Kangaba, the Mandé *blow* (the vestibule of Mandé), under the direction of persons of pure race belonging to the Kéita family. (5) Other traditions recognize two centers of expansion: one to the south of Kangaba at Balanzan, the other in the Nioro circle to the south of Goumbou, Waghadou. Intertribal septennial cults commemorate this event.

From our historical point of view, we know very little about the origins of the Bambara.

172 Prehistoric geological strata, still poorly dated, found in the valleys of the Senegal and the Niger show us that these territories were very anciently inhabited. Franz de Zeltner (6) has gathered

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3. S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara" [Notes on Bambara Theodicy]. [Ed., *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, Vol. 135 (1949), pp. 187-213.]

4. Zahan, *Aperçu sur la théogonie dogon* [A Look At Dogon Theogony].

5. G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].

6. Fr. Zeltner, "Quelques gisements préhistoriques de la vallée du Sénégal" [Some Prehistoric Strata in the Valley

of the Senegal]. [Ed., Bull. et Mém. de la Soc. d'Anthropologie de Paris, 16 Nov. 1916.]

objects of worked stone in the valley of the Senegal over a distance of 200 kilometers between Bafoulabé and the confluence of the Falémé. The Kolimbiné basin also presents numerous strata. Zeltner and Waterlot have found worked stones as far as Nioro, 250 kilometers from Kayes; this is the northernmost [45] point. The tools described by R. Vaufrey (1) are made of worked schist and labradorite. They include polished and unpolished axes, disks, scrapers, graters, polishers, etc. R. Furon specifies that the strata of Kaarta have yielded a Mousterian jasper industry in the upper alluvial layers of a site at Baoulé, along with Neolithic tools of Nigritic type above the alluvial layers, and, finally, at Guétéla there were numerous tumuli, from two to three meters, covered with pottery debris. In the vicinity of Bamako, Waterlot gathered, from the surface of the ground, paratumbian works in schist and dolerite, including, among others, incompletely polished axes, microliths of quartz, and a whole collection of agricultural material.

Painted grottoes have been described by Zeltner. One near Bamako represents men and horses (the Bambara designate these grottoes by the name of kouloubléma). Four others in the vicinity of Kita present the figures of men and animals, and alphabet-like forms (the Malinké call them Sebe, "writing," and attribute them to the Niamara, giants who were the first men), as well as paintings of hands in negative. Finally, the grotto of Boudoufo contains geometric drawings. The conventional representations of men and animals recall the rock carvings of the Sahara and Egypt.

1. R. Vaufrey, Le Néolithique paratumbien: une civilisation agricole primitive du Soudan [The Paratumbian Neolithic: a Primitive Agricultural Civilization of the Sudan].

II. History

A. Origins of the Bambara People

174 Where do the historical Bambara people come from, that is, the people who installed themselves on the banks of the Niger to form the kingdoms of Ségou, Bélédougou, Kaarta, and who are more or less known to us through certain Arab chronicles (Tarikh-es-Soudan [History of Sudan], 1665, Tarikh-el-Fettach [History of Fettach], 1670, chronicles of Néma and Oualata, translated in 1927) or through certain explorer's reports (Mungo Park, Raffenel, etc.)?

According to a tradition reported by Delafosse, the Bambara came from Toron, an eastern province of Ouassoulou, situated in the present-day Ivory Coast, on the route from Odienné to Sikasso. Tauxier has shown that this tradition confused two events separated by a rather long period of time.

1) The slow descent in a southeast to northwest direction of Bambara masses coming, doubtless, from the Bougouni-Sikasso region (where they are still very numerous) down to the Niger, which they undoubtedly reached about the twelfth century.

2) An invasion of the Peul of Macina, who, in the seventeenth century, overran the Bambara masses and organized them into a kingdom in the Ségou region before crossing the Niger and advancing in an east-west direction. These Peul supposedly originated in a city named Torone, explaining the possible error by Delafosse.

Naturally, none of these regions was deserted before the arrival [46] of the Bambara. The original inhabitants of Ségou were Bozo fishermen who came from the north (seventh century). At the same time as the infiltration of the Bambara from the southeast, there were several invasions from the north by the Soninké, who, richer and more advanced, organized the rough Bambara agriculturalists into chiefdoms. After a short domination by the Soso (twelfth century), the Mali empire spread in the upper valley of the Niger; it is probable that when the empire lost its dynamism the region occupied by the Bambara, mingled with Mandingue, Sénoufo, and Bobo, acquired a certain autonomy (seventeenth century).

B. Constitution of the Bambara Kingdoms

175 At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Peul invasion introduced the Bambara into history.

This history, moreover, begins by a legend: two brothers,
173 Baramangolo and Niangolo, coming from Torone, one moon east
175 of Ségou, succeeded in crossing the Niger on the back of a fish, *M'Polio* (*Heterobrancus*), which earned them the cognomen of Kouloubali (without pirogue). Baramangolo, who was good, obtained the heritage of the king of Ségou; Niangolo, who was bad (he had killed the fish M'Polio), could not remain in this peaceful country and went further west to wage war against the people of Mali.

Local traditions confirm this legend. Due to the Sudanese anarchy of the seventeenth century caused by the fall of the Songhaï empire (1591), population movements brought Peul horsemen into contact with Bambara outposts in the region of Diénné. The Peuls imposed their suzerainty, organized the anarchic Bambara, and led them to the conquest of the Ségou and Baïko regions, populated chiefly by the Soninké (the traditions suggest that this conquest was a largely peaceful penetration).

175 Two small kingdoms then established themselves: that of the legendary Baramangolo on the right bank at Ségou, that of Niangolo on the left bank at Sounsana (near Mourdiah). After union with the Soninké was accomplished, the successor of Baramangolo, Kaladian Koulibali (1652-82), had impressive forces at his disposal; he freed himself from the nominal authority of the Moroccan *caïds* of Diénné, and may even have conducted a victorious attack against Timbuktu. The Bambara star at Ségou dimmed somewhat under his successors, Danfassari (1682-97) and Souma. But in 1712 Souma ceded the throne to the man who was to become the great warrior chief, the *Tigi-ton* Mamari Koulibali.

For his part, the wicked Niangolo revealed himself to be an adroit politician. He married his son Soussa to a Kéita, thus ennobling his family and giving it rights to the ancient Mali empire. Their son Massa was an amiable and adroit monarch who accumulated resources in men and money. His successor, Bénéfali (1710-45), used them well, but his increasing power aroused the distrust of his cousin

175 at Ségou. Bénéfali had the wisdom to avoid a conflict, but his brother, Foulakoro, who took the throne in 1745, was less happily inspired and was crushed in 1754 by Mamari Koulibali.

[47] C. Mamari Koulibali

Here is the veritable creator of the kingdom of Ségou, one of those powerful personalities who crop up from time to time in the Black anarchy, such as a Soundiata or a Sonni Ali. He represents the moment of maximum expansion of the Peul-Bambara conglomerate which was formed in the seventeenth century by interbreeding of the Bambara mass with the feudal Peul from the east.

Mamari Koulibali was essentially a war leader, and the great events of his reign were military events. He subjugated local chiefs; with aid of the Peul he repulsed the assault launched against Ségou by the powerful king of Kong (1725); he liberated the country from the suzerainty of the Soninké Boaré and took their capital, Kirango (1740); finally, solicited by the Soninké of Mourdiah, he destroyed Sounsana, capital of the brother kingdom of the descendants of Niangolo. He killed their chief, Foulakoro (1754), and unified all the Bambara of the Niger Valley. Having assembled a redoubtable army, which he even endowed with a fleet and a corps of engineers, he was able to impose his sovereignty on the Peul kingdom of Macina and may even have menanced Timbuktu. It was during the course of his reign that one sees an important evolution in the structure of Bambara society.

D. Reforms of Mamari Koulibali

175
587 It was in taking into account the role of slaves in the army that Mamari Koulibali was to revolutionize the ancestral society (see the traditional social organization).

He managed, first of all, to take away the greatest number of men, free or slaves, from their family community, in order to make of them Ton-dyon (slaves of the ton [ton is the largest unit of social organization]. To do this, he used the following methods: when a criminal was condemned to a fine, Mamari paid it; if a man was condemned to death, Mamari pardoned him; when one of his subjects could not pay his taxes, Mamari freed him of his debt on condition that the man put himself or one of his sons at the disposition of the

175 sovereign. In all cases the man, although pardoned, was deprived
567 of his personal liberty and became the emperor's chattel.

Mamari next wished to assure himself of the personal fidelity
[575] of his Ton-dyon by enrolling them in cults dedicated to his person. Thus, the old ton was transformed into a brotherhood with Mamari as both political and religious chief. In this way he was able to replace the political anarchy and social structure of the old Bambara regime by a new organization, despotic, very efficient militarily when fully controlled by the chief, but sometimes very dangerous to the stability of the country, as soon was seen.

E. Successors of Mamari

175 Mamari's son, Denkoro (1755-57), was to be the first victim of this all-powerful army. Exasperated by his cruelties, the military chiefs assassinated him and replaced him by his brother, Ali.[48] A Moslem, Ali wanted to propagate Islam and to forbid the use of fermented beverages and the worship of spirits. The Ton-dyon chiefs then massacred Ali and all of the Koulibali family, except two girls who were saved by one of the chiefs, N'Golo Diara. Different chiefs then contended for power: Ton-Mansa, then Kaniouba-Niouma, then Kafa-Diougou, who, all of them, reigned merely a short while before dying a violent death. Finally, N'Golo Diara, descendant of a great family who had become enslaved to Mamari and who, as we have seen, saved his daughters and then married one of them, re-established order, moved the capital to Ségou-Sikoro, and resumed the work of the great Tigi-ton.

In the course of his long reign, (1766-90), N'Golo knew how to make himself respected and loved by his subjects and how to impose his will elsewhere; he established his authority over the Macina region, the Sokolo region, at Diénné, and Timbuktu. He only failed against the Mossi of Yatenga.

Meanwhile, the elder branch of the Koulibali family, crushed by Mamari in 1754 and chased from Bélédougou, rose again. If the successors of the unfortunate Foulakoro, Sey Bamana and Deni Babo, were nothing more than pillaging chiefs raiding at Kaarta, Bélédougou, and Khasso, Sira Bo did establish a stable kingdom with Guémou as capital. His successor, Dessé Koulibali (1788-99) even believed himself strong enough to impose his suzerainty on the Bambara of Ségou.

175 The occasion seemed favorable. After the death of the great N'Golo-Diara, two of his sons disputed the power. Dessé had the bad luck to support the loser. The victor, Mansong (1792-1808), came at once to punish the Kaarta inhabitants and destroyed Guémou, but he could not establish himself in the region.

After this, the evolution of the two kingdoms is roughly parallel. When the people of Ségou are occupied in the east against the people of Macina, the people of Kaarta seize the occasion to raid in the west against the Diawara and the Kassonké. When things go poorly in Macina, the people of Ségou revenge themselves by forays into the territory of the Massassi of Kaarta, who, less powerful, then have to relinguish their expansionist plans. Moreover, somber hours approach for the Bambara. In the east Ahmadou Bari founded a powerful Peul kingdom (1810) in the Macina, and his grandson Hamadou-Hamadou exerts more and more pressure on the kingdom of Ségou. To the west the great Massassi king, Bodian Moriba (1815-32), by repeated blows has exhausted the forces of the Diawara and the Kassonké. This done, he rules over Nioro, but at the same time suppresses those who could have helped him resist the Moslem push of the Toucouleur.

F. The Toucouleur Invasion and the End of the Bambara Kingdoms

175 177 In 1854 El Hadj Omar, leading his "Talibés" animated by a fierce proselytizing spirit, occupied Nioro and Kaarta and attempted to impose Islam on the Bambara population. The Bambara resisted, supported by their racial brothers of Ségou who had forgotten, too late, the old quarrels. El Hadj Omar, vanquished by the French before Medina, [49] abandoned his dream of a push to the west and sought compensation by turning toward Ségou.

175 The Bambara then put aside their family resentments and joined the Peul of Macina, who were equally menaced by the Toucouleur expansion. But they were up against too strong a foe. Tata, son of the king Ali Diara, resisted for five days against El Hadj Omarls howitzers at Oïtala on the Niger (1861), then succumbed. Hamadou-Hamadou, who had come to his aid, was beaten at Sansanding. Ségou opened its doors; Ali Diara was put in irons. His brother, Kégué-Mari, continued the fight against Ahmadou, son

175 of El Hadj Omar, up to April 6, 1890, the day French troups under Lt. Colonel Archinard delivered Ségou from the cruel Moslem occupation.

The Bambara did not long accept the French yoke. To put an end to their plots, the French resident, Captain Underberg, had to execute the king Mari Diara, an act which inspired several local revolts, chiefly in the Sénoufo region. But the new Fáma, Bodian, supported by the French, was able to rapidly re-establish peace. Moreover, the destruction of the Toucouleur kingdom of Macina by Colonel Archinard deprived the rebel Bambara of all possibility of outside support. The Ségou kingdom was definitively pacified in 1893.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

I. Traditional Structure of Bambara Society

A. Social and Political Organization

182 Traditional Bambara social organization is entirely tied up with religious organization; moreover, the social organization determines the whole economic organization to such an extent that the latter cannot be studied independently.

114 In fact, we still know very little about Bambara social organization. Some good records are available to us in the work of Monteil (1), Aubert and Ortoli (2), Delafosse (3), Labouret (4),

1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Segou and Kaarta].

2. Aubert et Ortoli, Coutumier juridique de l'A.O.F. [French West African Common Law].

114

3. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal et Niger [Upper Senegal and Niger].

4. Labouret, Les Mandingues et leur langue [The Mandingo and Their Language].

etc., but these are still very fragmentary and incomplete. In addi-
177 tion, this society was completely disrupted by the French conquest, either by such radical measures as the suppression of slavery or by a natural evolution as a result of contact with European societies. Nevertheless, traditional structures retain their vitality, despite the effort to adapt them to European formulas.

178 The society seems to have oscillated between familial anarchy and the clan stage, according to alternating ranges of groupings, disassociation, and regroupings.

1. The Family

594
596 Concerning the Sudanese, Delafosse has already made the distinction between "the restricted family" and the "extended family." The restricted family is composed of the parents and children who live in the "hut." Taken alone, it does not represent a social unit. The true social cell is the extended family. This is the large united family made up of a group of restricted families whose heads recognize a common ancestor. This group, composed of agnates in principle, is the ba-denya, whose members live in huts within an enclosure: gwa or so. The two ends of this [51] enclosure rest on a blo (vestibule) where the ancestors' altar is found.

601
612 According to Labouret, the Bambara distinguish three categories of family ties: the paternal line, the maternal line, and relationship by marriage. The child takes the dyamu (honorable name) of his father's group, but the terms applied to ancestors and descendants are the same as those of the maternal line.

"... Kinship includes the following generations: tolo-mina... tolo-sama... tolo-ma-sama: who seizes or pulls ears (a belief has it that if a great grandson pulls the ear of his great
[827] grandfather, the latter becomes deaf);

601 mo-kɛ (1) = grandfather; mo-muso = grandmother;
612

1. ɛ = è as in the French mère.

fa = father;
dẽ = son, daughter;
modẽ = grandson, granddaughter;
tolo-mina, etc., as above;
fu... fuy...., as above.

a. In the Paternal Line:

fa = father	dẽ, de, di = son, daughter
ba, ma, na = wives of the father	dẽ = son, daughter
binã, baba-ndi;	dẽ = son, daughter
benoro + the father's brother; ba – the name = wives of father's brothers	de = son, daughter
ntene; bingi-musu = father's sister	dẽ; bingilingo = son, daughter, nephew, niece.
o or ben-kɛ = husband of father's sister; ben-kɛ is a polite term	the name
kɛrɛ = older brother, son of father's brother older than speaker	doro = younger brother, son of father's brother younger than speaker
kalame = child of father's sister	kalame = child of mother's brother
mokɛ = father's father	mo-dẽ, or the name = son's son
mo-muso = father's mother	mo-dẽ, or the name = son's son

604 Ntene = father's sister (term derived from a root ta which has also given tana, tene, interdiction). The maternal aunt is the forbidden woman of this generation. The same is true for the father's wives and those women they consider as sisters. This relative wields a great influence in the family, and her curse is greatly feared. The children of the ntene-muso are called kalame, and they call the

604 children of their mother's brother kalame. The kalame-w joke and insult each other when they meet. Marriages between them are sometimes permitted, sometimes forbidden.

601 [52] b. In the Maternal Line:

612

ba; ma; na = mother	dẽ = son, daughter
ben-nkɔ bele-nkɔ bari-nkɔ } mother's brother	be-ni; bare-ndi = sister's son
ba + the name = wife of mother's brother	dẽ = son, daughter
ba-ko . . . . (after mother) ba + the name } mother's sister ba-ni-t'ɔ-ni .	dẽ = son, daughter
o or fa = husband of mother's sister	o or de = son of wife's sister
k>r>= child of mother's brother or sister, if older than speaker	doṙo - child of mother's brother or sister, if younger than speaker
de = child of k>r> or doto	k>r> or doṙo of the brother
mo-k> = mother's father	o or dẽ = daughter's son
mo-muso = mother's mother	o or dẽ = daughter's son (1)

1. Labouret, Les Mandingues et leur langue [The Mandingo and Their Language].

604 The maternal uncle plays a very important role; he must arrange the marriage of his be-ni. He owes him a wife taken from among the daughters of one of his brothers. In exchange, the be-ni owes payment in labor.

The mother's sister is just barely considered a relation.

603 Sexual rivalry exists between grandfather and grandson, grandmother and granddaughter; this is why they defy and insult each other when they meet. When the grandparents die, the grandchildren have the same privileges as the sẽnanku [parties to a special kind of

603 alliance]. (It is also customary for grandfathers and grandsons to eat together, while the sons eat apart.)

612 c. By Marriage: T'ɛ, K'ɛ, Kɛ = husband's name, corresponding
601 to *muso* (*muso*, term for spouse [female?]).

Bira nk'ɛ = father-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and all the male relatives of the husband or wife, corresponding to *bira-muso* = mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, and all female relatives of the husband or wife.

587 When a man dies, his wives go to his younger brother; and if a man's wife dies, he may marry her younger sister ...

582 This patrilineal and patrilocal family must have grafted itself
611 onto an ancient matrilineal system (see the chapter on inheritance and position of women). The systems of clan exogamy and endogamy are united: two pairs of brothers and sisters marry among themselves; sons must take their wives from their mother's family, and marriages take place between cross-cousins; children never belong to their parents' category, while grandchildren and grandparents always are in the same category.

583 [53] We shall see that alongside this matrimonial system in which wives are exchanged there exists a system in which payments are made to the *fa* of the young girl.

596 The size of the united family varies, but it may include more than 80 persons. Labouret (1) gives us, as an example, the composition

1. *Op. cit.*

of the *blõ* of Ngolo Traoré at Mpiéla, Kolokani subdivision:

	Men	Women	Children
1. Household of Ngolo	1	8	15
2. Household of Samba, Ngolo's brother	1	2	4
3. Household of Dotné, Samba's son	1	2	3
4. Household of Denkoro, son of deceased Bakoro	1	3	1
5. Household of Fabugai, Ngolo's son .	1	2	4
6. Quarters of unmarried males, all sons of Ngolo and Samba . . .	5		
	10	17	19 [sic]
		46	

596 The fa. -- The whole of this family obeys the same head: the fa. The fa is designated by a council of elders when he fulfills the following conditions: first, not to refuse the faya and to be a [587] member of the community, that is, actually to live within the community; next, he must never have been a slave, and he must not have settled abroad without hoping to return home. In addition, he [84] must be a legitimate child, that is to say, born in wedlock, and the firstborn. In principle, the faya passes from older to younger brother (in the classificatory sense of the term). Thus, the fa is always the member of each generation closest to the ancestor. Finally, the fa must be able, that is, healthy, active, and a good administrator. Often the fa designates his successor before his death. The successor may assume power only 40 days after the death of the last fa, and after being recognized as head of the family by the assembly of elders. From that moment on, he exercises his functions, come what may.

The fa has charge of, and the moral and physical responsibility for, the whole community. He directs and protects all the members of the family. These latter can escape his authority only by leaving the village for good; they are then considered to be dead members. (The descendants of the fa by his daughters are outside of the community; they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.)

The fa, head of the family, lives under the administrative dependence of the head of the village.

2. From Family to Community

621 The true social unit is the community. Ties of kinship and marriage unite groups without racial or ethnic unity.

a. Patriarchal Organization of the "Ton." -- All the family 622 heads obey a village head: it is on him that the responsibility falls for the organization of the community territory, as well as the responsibility for administering justice when contention arises between followers of different faya. The village chief is generally master of the land: dugu-kolo-tigi; sometimes [54] he cedes his rights to a village administrative chief younger than himself, but in matters of religion he remains all-powerful, and each year he receives gifts from the different family heads for the needs of the common cult. He also

622 gives the orders concerning local celebrations and initiations.

In fact, the land originally belongs to spirits, and the chief
622 who succeeds the founder of the village is the only one who is able
776 to establish contact with the chief of the spirits and negotiate with
him. He is the earthly administrator of the spirit; he assures his
worship, the exploitation of the land, and the organization of the
community territory.

621 The first chief of the land was the first occupant; the suc-
622 ceeding chiefs are his heirs, following the order of succession. To
found a new village, a chief chooses a place in unoccupied terri-
tory, usually at a crossroads, near a water source, near a baobab,
[778 824] a doubalé, or other sacred tree. He offers sacrifices to the spirits
and receives in exchange their authorization to settle. If his group
prospers, and less fortunate families want to establish themselves
in this well-favored location, they ask the chief for authorization.
However, as Monteil (1) remarks: "... The fa of a familial community depends strictly on the patriarchy only if, attached to it by the male line, he holds some goods of the patriarchy or if he claims rights in this patriarchy. In the contrary case, the family fa conducts himself as a stranger in relation to the patriarchy, which can only treat him in like fashion ..." Every familial community becomes patriarchal at the death of the family head when he has no heirs (see the chapter on inheritance); the community then groups around itself familial communities which themselves include paternally related groups and maternally related groups. When the patriarchy is an old one, a considerable number of persons live under its aegis. All recognize dyamu and taboos (see below) in common.

621 When the settlement becomes too populous, a fa gathers a
631 group and founds another village. Afterwards, the people of neigh-
boring districts may solicit the patronage of the first village, by
participating in its djo (2) and by sacrificing to its guardian spirits.

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1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

2. See the chapter on religion.

621 631 The cluster of all these villages forms a *kafo* or *kafu* (canton) which includes the original family, its oldest neighbors, the inhabitants of other villages, and, finally, the outsiders. All these people acknowledge common interests, and the villages of the same canton send representatives to the assembly which meets at the chief's residence. Thus, the large family grows into a patriarchy to form the *dugu* (village) and spreads out into a *kafu.* Sometimes, after these branchings out, certain offshoot communities adopt a special *dyamu* and other taboos. The new *dyamu* is joined to the old, and little by little supplants it. The principal characteristics of the mother community exist, to which are added [55] various new traits, but the relationship between the two communities is never extinguished. Inversely, natives even of different races but having the same *dyamu* consider themselves related, which for them implies respect for the ancestral traditions concerning the cult, the practice of mutual aid, respect for the authority of the *fa,* who must protect all his relatives no matter how remote the connection, and fidelity to all pacts between the communities. Finally, between individuals of different races, certain *dyamu,* although dissimilar, are considered equivalent and may be interchanged.

621 b. *Alliances.* -- The unity of a community is founded not only upon common interests, which we will examine later, but also upon a whole system of alliances.

Monteil distinguishs four types of alliance: the common cult (see the chapter on religion), marriage, the *tné*, and the oath.

621 581 583 *Marriage:* this is the most common form of alliance. When a Bambara seeks an alliance with a family, he gives his daughter in marriage to one of the members of that family, after providing her with a large dowry. Some interesting information on this subject is furnished us by Monteil (1). The alliance between two families is reinforced still further when they establish the custom of exchanging women. In this way the Soninké family Niakaté allied itself to the

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1. Monteil, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta. Les Empires du Mali* [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta. The Mali Empires.]

621
581 Koulibali of Ségou, founded Bamako, and changed its name to Niaré
583 in becoming Bambara.

The tné: the taboo concerning an animal or some object.
621 The basis of this alliance is the oath of the fa not to kill or eat the
784 object of the taboo. All the generations following this ancestor must
respect the taboo ad infinitum.

Thus, the Kéita have the hippopotamus for tné; the Traoré,
the Dambélé, and the Warata have the panther; the Samaké, the
elephant; the Koubilali of Ségou, the hippopotamus; those of
Issa Ber, the m'polio [a fish]; others have the mole cricket (n'gere)
and the striped mouse (n'kelika); the Niaré, Sissé, Silla, Doukouré,
and the Daramé, the python, etc.

The oath: this seals a pact of dyonge fraternization. Each
621 party to the contract extracts some drops of blood from his forearm
608 which is mixed with goat's milk. Swearing by his ancestors, he
states the conditions of the alliance and drinks part of the beverage.
This alliance binds the parties to it and all their descendants ad
[582] infinitum. It entails a prohibition or, contrariwise, a recommendation
of marriage between members of the two communities, and establishes
solidarity between the two communities which owe each other mutual
assistance. In the framework of this alliance is the cathartic alliance
termed sénankuya, which, besides the preceding obligations, governs
the system of purifications.

The sénankuya: unites certain specific groups bearing differ-
621 names within the same village, but can also have an intertribal
608 character; ex.: Mandingue-Peul. Humblot observed the following
648 alliances at Kankan: Kéita-Fofana; Kondé-Traoré; Kéita-Béreté-
Sérigou-Sissé; [56] Kala-Kéita-Kouyaté; Kourouma-Koma;
Kourouma-Dabo; Kourouba-Konaté-Kamara-Bagayoko; Konaté-
Dougoumoko; Konaté-Sidibé. This system of alliance in which
[783] the two allies are equal and complementary governs the mechanism
of the purifications, notably by the insult, and the duties of recipro-
cal assistance (1). Formerly, when a sénanku was reduced to slavery,

1. M. Griaule, "L'alliance cathartique" [The Cathartic Alliance], Africa, Vol. XVIII, 1948.

608 his ally had to try to ransom him. A *sénanku* often serves as inter-
621 mediary in arranging marriages, in land claims, in the collection of
648 debts. He is rewarded by gifts. He has the power to stop quarrels
and to oppose acts of rage and violence by the man whose *sénanku*
he is, no matter what his rank and no matter how important the
decisions in question are. The *sénanku* of a Fama could prevent his
declaring war or condemning to death one of his subjects. Moreover,
he has certain limited privileges over his ally's possessions. (He
may appropriate unimportant objects, food, and even sums of
money.) Finally, he recruits the labor force which his ally may
need.

c. *Age Classes.* -- But though these different ties exercise an
621 important influence on the political, social, and religious life of the
571 community they are generally too broad and too lax to permit organiza-
561 tion of a work community. In fact, we have seen how a large village
may be formed of different communities relatively independent of
each other, despite the authority of the founding community's *fa.* On
the level of the canton, the geographical dispersion does not permit
the Fama to intervene personally in the organization of the work com-
munity. The latter is founded essentially on the system of relations
of the age classes.

561 From infancy until circumcision for the boys, until excision for the girls, the young Bambara belongs to a hierarchic society which prepares him or her for this ceremony and which provides an education complementary to that received in the family. Within this association all the children are divided into age classes: boys up to six years of age are *bilakoro-dogomani* (*bila* = short pants), from 6 to 10 years they are *bilakoro-dogoma*, from 10 to about 15 years, *bilakoro-koroba.* Similarly, the girls are, successively: *sunkiri-dogomani*, *sunkuru-dogoma*, and *sunkuru-koroba.* Each age class has a chief: *ton-tigi* for the boys, *musso-tigi* for the girls; each office is doubled by a deputy (*syere*). There is also a treasurer and a *ton-dyeli* who is the *griot* of the *ton.* All are elected by members of the society. A Bambara will be influenced all his life by his membership in a certain age class which groups all the children who underwent circumcision at the same time. In fact, up to the moment of circumcision the child's personality is not yet distinct. We have seen before how small children were

561

considered as being in the same category as their grandparents; they are said to belong to the same age class.

561 [57] The relations between boys and girls before the cere-
857 monies of circumcision and excision are governed by a sort of non-consummated marriage uniting the children of the different ton.

The little girl (ton-musso) must take care of the clothes and household of her infant husband (tontié); later she must decorate his house with designs he tells her to make. In return, her husband will give her gifts and will help cultivate her parents' field. When the girl marries in earnest, her tontié must himself give her to her husband. Throughout this false marriage, the young girl's virginity must be respected, and her tontié is held responsible for it.

561 Before their circumcision, all the children are affiliated according to their age classes to the brotherhood of the n'Tomo (see the chapter on religion). The oldest of the group will be the head of his class; all the little chiefs are subjects of the chief of the oldest group: the n'tomo-tigi and to his deputy, the n'tomo-tigi-syere. The brotherhood prepares the children for the circumcision initiation; it regulates the common work, the religious ceremonies, and the celebrations. It settles disputes that may arise between members.

561 The different ceremonies of the n'Tomo, which take place each
796 year after the harvest, have been described by Monteil (1) and by Tauxier (2). They include offerings, sacrifices to the guardian spirit, a communion, and masked dances followed by a lash from the ritual whip, which marks the definitive acceptance of the neophytes.

561 Later, those who have belonged to the same n'tomoya and who have undergone the soli together are united for life. They are fulani, that is to say, twins (they are born the same day to the sexual, social,

1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

2. Tauxier, La religion bambara [The Bambara Religion].

561 and religious life). The young men of the same soli form what is called a flambolo. Three consecutive classes of flambolo form a flanton. The women have a parallel organization. Each fulani is a ton-den (child of the ton), with a corresponding association.

561 The association's role, apart from the seasonal celebrations and the copious feasts, accompanied by a great deal of drinking, is 241 that of a mutual aid society and of a veritable village work coopera- 476 tive. It is organized, administered, and articulated with a view to the agricultural work. The chief, kariku, expedites current business, with the assistance of a syere (witness, deputy). He has a treasurer who receives offerings and makes payments, the femmaraba (he who preserves things), plus an honorary president and an adviser, chosen from among the notables and delegated by them; he must supervise the society and orient its activities.

This social organism rests, in the last analysis, on the exchanges of services initiated and supported by the kariku. He sees to it that help is forthcoming to a man making the customary work payments in the fields of his parents-in-law or future parents-in-law (in exchange for food and drink furnished by the parents-in-law to these ton-den). In like manner, a farmer asks the kariku for help in clearing a field of brush. This request is made through an inter- 431 mediary or a sĕnanku who [58] accompanies the request with ten 824 kola nuts. The chief accepts the present and calls his council into session to study the affair technically and to fix the salary. The same procedure is followed for the winter weeding, which calls for rapid completion, as well as for building dams, irrigating canals, paths, roads suitable for carting, etc.

An analogous system exists for the female kari, for sowing the crops as well as for gathering the harvest, mutual domestic aid, etc. The two groups collaborate for the seasonal celebrations.

643 d. The Fama. -- We see that the canton is a grouping formed under the authority and influence of a dominant family. Its unity is determined by political, social, and religious laws which regulate it. The fa or head of the dominant family becomes the Fama, that is, the patriarch, chief of the canton. He then often renounces the administration of the faya, which he turns over to his second (syere),

643 so that he may keep separate the interests of his house and those of
the country.

Nomination of the Fama. The title of Fama remains in the
family around which the canton has grown. Power passes from older
to younger brother until a generation dies out, then goes to the oldest
brother in the next generation, for, as a general rule, the living
male nearest to the original ancestor should reign. However, the
history of Ségou shows us how certain Fama have tried to establish
direct succession from themselves to their eldest son. But the
643 accession of the Fama is submitted to the ratification of a council
645 of notables which includes the following persons.

a. The young chiefs, male descendants in the first degree of the Fama; they are directed by the eldest among them, with the second eldest being his syere or heir presumptive.

b. The old masters who are the Fama's brothers.

c. Their sons and all circumcised fathers of families.

643 Power of the Fama. The power of the Fama is founded on
custom and religion. He is the earthly representative of all the
ancestors; he is the radiating center which gives life to all the so-
ciety; he is the Word of his people. He decides the crops, regulates
commerce, concludes alliances, declares wars, renders justice,
imposes taxes. He is the guardian of custom and the legislator of
new laws, the organizer of the time and space he governs. His word
[326] is very powerful and dangerous; his decisions are whispered in the
ear of a blacksmith, who repeats them aloud to the assembly. His
very glance makes his subjects tremble, and they approach him
grovelling, forehead in the dust. No quarrel may break out in his
presence, no violence committed; his power over men and goods is
[645] absolute. Nevertheless, all his decisions are taken after consultation
[646] with the notables and with the assembly of delegates from each village.
If one of the members of the assembly disagrees with the Fama about
a point of law, he gets up and leaves the meeting without saying any-
thing, marking his disapprobation in this manner. When a law is
[695] passed by all the assembly, each member swears an oath, on the
tomb of an ancestor or the altar of the komo [one of the mens' so-
cieties], in behalf of himself and his descendants.

608 [59] No one may oppose the Fama's will, except his sénanku
643 who has the power to stay the chief's decisions, particularly in case of
acts dictated by anger: murders, wars, etc.

The Fama's resources came from the work of his familiars,
643 from a levy on wild foodstuffs, half of the war booty, all otherwise
651 unowned goods, from certain precious substances, such as gold and
652 ivory, from taking part of every animal killed in the hunt and the skins of all wild animals brought down, all receipts for the right to hold markets, for grazing, and for changing pastures, tolls for river crossings, fines, and from the sale of prisoners of the law. On the other hand, he had to meet the following expenses: to feed and clothe the members of the community in the case of need; to maintain the warriors (give them a groom, a wife, a rifle, a horse); bestow favors on people of caste, feed them, clothe them, arrange for their marriages if need be; make offerings to charity; receive strangers; feed prisoners detained for judgment or otherwise held.

643 The Fama ordered all work of common interest: construction
653 and maintenance of fortifications, clearing trails, preservation of springs, construction and upkeep of the mosque if one was needed, making pirogues for common use, setting up rest platforms.

These works were carried out through payments in labor. The work was divided up among the villages by the Fama, and the village chiefs in turn assigned it to family heads. He who did not carry it out in person could have it done by members of his family; he who refused could be obliged to comply by force.

642 Bambara society rarely achieved a systematic and centralized form of organization analogous to our European kingdoms. What has been dignified with the name of "empire" was scarcely more than an organization which reflected the attraction exercised by a family, by reason of its prestige or its power, on groupings which accepted its suzerainty. As Monteil has shown very well, a family's effort at domination has always been directed at groupings of people and not at territorial expansion.

642 The whole of these groupings constitutes the Ton. This in-
565 cludes:

1. a chief, the ton-tigi;
2. the local chiefs, fa;

642
565 3. the free men;
4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);
5. slaves.

567 e. Slavery. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by violence, by obligation, or by birth.

567 1. By violence. If a war captive is important, he may be
killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration.
727 A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in
554 the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no
case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared
captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama;
[608] if he is a sénanku of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing
him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious
[561] Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of
the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

567 2. By obligation. A free individual became a slave in
681 punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the
426 profit of the Fama. A fa could sell one of his children to meet his
858 debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was
freed of his obligations.

567 3. By birth. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a wolo-so. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

567 As the number of slaves grew, their organization became
644 complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Ségou
were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the dyon-kuru or dyon-futu (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Ségou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him, the submission of all the slaves.

him, the submission of all the slaves.

567 The fa particularly displays his confidence in the wolo-so. He arranges his marriage, establishes him in life; admits him to his cult, and assigns him important tasks. Sometimes he marries his daughter and unites himself to him by fraternization and the oath. Children of the wolo-so are often circumcised with those of the master. Finally, the wolo-so bears his master's name and may in turn have slaves. At the third generation, the wolo-so becomes a free man. We still have very incomplete knowledge of this whole question of slavery, which incontestably exists throughout the whole Sudan; politically, it seems to have been a rational method of assimilating and fusing into a single people men of the most diverse origins.

567 701 f. The Army. -- Since the slaves were not pariahs, but, because of their number and the roles they filled, are important members of the society, it is normal that they also participated in the defense of the society. They have, therefore, their place in the army.

[721] Each Fama had an army, whose object was pillage, to procure the greatest possible amount of material goods for his subjects. The Fama despoiled those captives whom he enslaved, while others paid him tribute according to consecutive agreement. Ranged in battle, the army included the following components.

1. A central mass, disi (chest), made up of the corps of sofa (etymologically: those in charge of the care of the horses). The sofa formed the personal guard of the Fama; they were often recruited [61] from among young prisoners of war. The Fama often presided over the ceremony of circumcision of the children of the conquered whom he mixed in with his own children; they were thus bound and devoted to each other all their lives. The young sofa played the role of pages and grooms; the older ones became the trusted aides of the Fama, who charged them with important missions.

2. Two masses flanked the disi, to right and left: the kini-n-bolo (right arm) and the numa-n-bolo (left arm). These bolo were composed of furuba-dyon (age class of slaves corresponding to the flan-ton of the free men), and commanded by the ton-dyon (a sort of aristocracy of the slaves recruited from among the war prisoners).

567 701 3. The ton-koro-bolo behind the disi is a special reserve formed entirely of pure ton-dyon.

4. The keli-tigi was the chief of the expedition, designated by the Fama. He might be a dyon-kuntigi (chief of the furuba-dyon), a member of the Fama's community, or the Fama himself.

708 534 Finally, the army was accompanied by a musical corps, composed essentially of drums which transmitted messages. There were armpit drums (dunkan'), shoulder drums (taura), three-legged drums (dange), drums carried by two men (tabala), and coupled drums (denuba). Often horns (buru) were added, sometimes small horns made of ivory or horn, and sometimes xylophones (bada) and cowbells.

708 537 A dyeli (griot) follows the expedition to observe the exploits that he must retransmit; he must encourage the warriors and dispel panic by the power of his oratory.

B. Influence of Social Organization on Economic Life

a. The ton, Work Community

621 We have seen that the social unit among the Bambara is the community. The community is also the work unit and the economic unit. The independent individual is not conceived of. The community owns all the wealth which makes up the spiritual and material patrimony: the land, the agricultural, industrial, and commercial products, the habitations ...

423 621 622 609 [431] The community regulates the exploitation of the land. The dugu-tigi is the first occupant, master of the land, of which he distributes the lots to the different family heads. When a stranger, a family head, wants to enter into a community, he chooses an unoccupied field and asks the village chief for it. The request is accompanied by ten kola nuts and a chicken. Authorization cannot then be refused. The chief of the land sacrifices the chicken before the entire community and informs it of the installation of the newcomer. When the stranger wants to leave the land, he is given back his chicken and kola nuts.

423 621 622 Land assigned to a family head may always be taken back from him without justification by the dugu-tigi and his council.

423 621 622 Thus, the man holding the land can neither sell it nor take any action regarding it which would involve the interests of the whole community; but he can rent it out, pledge it, or [62] cede it, which leads to manifold disputes at the time of redistribution of the land in the case of cyclical cultures.

621 622 652 The *dugu-tigi* also prepares the community's budget. The resources include: gifts made to the gods, thanksgiving offerings for the hunt, for the fishing catch, and for the millet harvest, payments for concession of land or for services rendered, rent of community goods (fixed revenues or exceptional tribute), receipts from fines, confiscations, escheatage, and finally, the extraordinary aid formerly obtained for war, constructions, etc.

[651] 746 Among the expenditures are included the cost of supporting members of the community if need be, of maintaining the proper appearance, assistance to the sick, and, especially, the tax or tribute formerly paid to the sovereign, legitimate or not, and today paid to the French administration.

596 The family patrimony (*tien*) is administered by the *fa*, head of the family. A. Aubert (1) gives us the composition of this patrimony which includes: "Rights on the lands cultivated by the community; animals; serfs; money owed and money owing; the dowries of the daughters and women who are issue of members of the settlement; the inheritances; the dwellings of the settlement and their furnishings; the foodstuffs of the communal granaries (*foro-ba*), and, in general, all wealth resulting from the communal work of the family members."

Moreover, the *fa* must: "see to the material life of all the members of the family; provide dowries for the women of the community; pay back the dowries of the women of the community who are to be divorced; ransom members of the family who are taken prisoner or are sold, and pay taxes in goods or in money."

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1. A. Aubert, *Coutume bambara* (cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Bougouni Circle)].

b. Organization of Work

241 621 Work on the land is the only kind of work suitable for free men, for to work the land is to purify it. All agricultural operations [622 596] are set in motion by the *dugu-tigi* and are regulated by the *fa* who assigns tasks by age classes. Each member of the community must work for it every day, except Monday and Thursday, from dawn to about 4:30 p.m. He may be helped, or even replaced, by his children and his captives. The rest of the time he may work for himself in his personal field or in the little fields situated along the water courses and the rivers, which are not periodically redistributed and are considered almost as personal and hereditary property. The fruit of this labor constitutes the personal savings of the community member.

316 423 The exploitation of the subsoil is governed by other rules which we still know only imperfectly. Like the soil, the subsoil belongs to the master of the land. Iron ore was extracted solely by the [326] blacksmith who paid the master of the land a rent in the form of hoes or axes. To exploit the gold mines, thousands of natives went in family groups to the placers at the beginning of the dry season. [63] The location of the placers was determined by the priests and changed every year. The men dig multiple small holes very close to each other, which may go very deep depending on the depth of the barren layer. When the calabashes of gold-bearing earth are brought up, the women wash the earth. The placers are abandoned at the beginning of the rains after three or four months of exploitation. Before the French occupation, gold was the exclusive property of the Fama and could in no case be the object of commerce. To- [439] day, gold is generally sold at the placers to Syrian, native, or European merchants, who have established veritable shops at the mining centers, shops which contain everything necessary for the miner's life.

463 554 The exercise of a profession other than the cultivation of the land is reserved to artisans who are accorded the insulting name of *nyaman-kala*, for only work on the land is noble work. These artisans form separate families in every Sudanese society, which has caused Europeans to call them, improperly, people of caste. They are divided into independent guilds.

463
554 The numu: blacksmiths, whose wives are generally potters.
[326] The smiths are the masters of fire, those who cook the sacred earth in order to extract the minerals or to fix the form of pottery.

The loro: coppersmiths.

The garanka: leatherworkers.

The kule: woodworkers, and sometimes saddlemakers.

The donso: hunters, who form powerful and feared associations.

The somono, or fishermen, who have a status a little less restricted than that of the artisans mentioned above.

The dyeli or griot, domestic factotums of a kind, who, although the most disdained of all these, are nevertheless the family archivists.

[563] One may add two Peul shepherd tribes, identified by Manson: the Dyanna and the Bouguena (1).

1. See Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

463 All of these artisans are endogamous and fixed in caste,
564 father to son. However, the fact that a man belongs to a caste does not obligate him to exercise the caste trade.

The most powerful guild is incontestably that of the black-
326
463 smiths. From their ranks are recruited all the priests, the Fama's
608 interpreters, the well-diggers, the grave-diggers, the executioners, the circumcisers, etc. They are the sénanku of all the families and are in charge of all the purification rites.

554 The griot are equally feared, because of the power of their words and because they spread afar the renown of the chiefs.

564 The free man who marries a woman of caste marries beneath himself, and his children are looked down on.

The purest blacksmith families are those of the Fané Balo;
[326] the purest griot those of the Koniaté. People of caste always remain
[527] at liberty; when they are captured during a war, they make themselves known and keep their status.

[64] These different guilds are sufficient to maintain in the
463 Bambara country a certain industry of a distinctly artisan and non-
326 specialized type. Thus, the smiths work iron, copper, and wood to

463 make tools, farming implements in current use, furnishings, orna-
326 mental objects, bracelets, different kinds of rings. They also work
gold and silver to make jewelry in filigree.

Weaving and basket-making are not done by the people of
462 caste, but by all men, or, formerly, by their house captives.
286 Primitive looms, worked by treadles, are set up outside of the
285 houses in the shade of the trees. The men weave long bands of
cotton for making clothes, loin-cloths, and blankets. These bands,
several meters long, are sometimes made into rolls weighing as
much as 30 kilograms and are carried off to market by the diula
[531] (itinerant merchants). The Bambara practice dyeing, batik, and
embroidery (done by the men).

433 All this industry remains of strictly local interest and is
directed solely toward meeting the immediate needs of the community.

c. Division of Labor

The Bambara are essentially an agricultural people. Never-
462 theless, as all members of the society must contribute a certain
857 amount of work to the community, the nature of this work varies
according to the social classes and according to whether a man, a
woman, or a child is involved. The following tables indicate how
the work is divided.

1. Distribution of tasks according to A. Aubert.

Men	Women	Children	All
	Foodstuffs		
	Preparation of food and dolo (beer)		
	Sale of dolo		
Preparation of hives, setting them, gathering the honey	Bottling and sale of honey	Helping	

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Men	Women	Children	All
Smoking of the meat	Harvest of karite and its preparation	Harvest	
Slaughtering the animals (work reserved for smiths)			
	Construction of the hut		
Masonry	Drawing and carrying necessary water	Carrying water (girls)	
Cutting and carrying straw and bamboo		Carrying straw (boys)	
Roofing			
Plastering exterior	Plastering interior	Pounding the threshing floor	
[65]	**Hunting**		
Preparation of the powder		Beating for game with dogs (boys)	
Hunting			
Training dogs			
	Fishing		
Preparation of fish traps and nets	Spinning	Fishing in ponds with bell-shaped traps	In case of draining a pond

Men	Women	Children	All
	Care of the animals		
	Care and milking of cows	Helping (girls)	
	Farming		
Removing stumps			
Sowing	Sowing sometimes	Sowing sometimes	Generally speaking, all cooperate in working the land, which is the only noble work, for the Bambara is above all a farmer and maker of sacrifices.
Weeding	Weeding sometimes	Weeding sometimes	
Threshing the millet (fla-kĕ)			
Harvest of millet and fonio	Weeding of fonio	Helping	
Threshing millet			
Grubbing the peanuts	Gathering and husking		
Harvesting maize	Picking ears	Helping	
Threshing rice	Harvesting rice	Helping	
Planting sweet potatoes	Transplanting and harvesting	Helping	
Planting kidney beans	Harvesting kidney beans and peas	Helping	

3: Paques--86 S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8

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Men	Women	Children	All
Planting and harvesting manioc			
Profits from okra, da, and indigo go to the men	Okra; cultivation and harvesting Da: id. Indigo: id.	Helping Helping Helping	
Preparation of cotton lougan	Harvesting, picking out, spinning cotton	Helping	
Weaving, sewing, putting together	Sale, dyeing	Helping	
Preparation of tobacco lougan, preparation and sale	Watering, powdering, and retail sale of snuff	Helping	
Preparation of calabash lougan, harvesting, emtying, sale, and decoration		Gathering burgu for horses	
	Wells		
463 Drilling by male smiths only	Drawing water	Helping (girls)	

462

Men	Women	Children	All
463 [66]			
	Furnishings		
Beds, mats, secco [sic]	Canari [earthenware vessel supported by a tripod] (women of smiths' caste: preparation and firing)		
	Ironwork		
Male smiths, everything from extraction of the metal to sale			
	Jewelry		
Smiths			
	Leatherwork		
Shoemakers			
	Basketry		
All men without differentiation			
	Burial		
Each for his sex			
Digging grave Carrying body Burial	Preparation of water for purification and perfumes		

Men	Women	Children	All
462 463	Circumcision and excision		
Male smiths for the boys	Females of smiths' caste for the girls		
	Midwifery		
	All women past menopause		
	Religion		
Koma and Dio reserved to men	?		
	Coiffure		
[302] Men's heads are shaved by men	Women braid the men's hair where this mode of hairdressing survives		
	All the women's coiffures		
	Ropes		
✕ Preparation of fiber, drying, cording			
	Tanning		
Male shoemakers			
[67]	Rubber		
[857] Sale		Gathering and preparation	

462

Men	Women	Children	All
	Medicaments		
Preparation and application especially reserved to men	Rarely done by women if not to treat own sex		
	Religious Practice (see Religion)		
Reserved to men	Women rarely take part in sacrifices		
[782] Make their personal sacrifices to the right of hut door	Make their personal sacrifices to the left of hut door		

(When one faces entrance)

2. Distribution of tasks according to Labouret.

Labouret, in Paysans noirs [Black Peasants], divides the work more specifically assigned to men and women as in the following table:

Men	Women	Common Tasks
Trapping	Gathering alimentary plants for domestic industry	
Maritime or deep-water river fishing	Shallow-water river fishing	
Preparation of the fish	Preparation and sale of the fish	Preparation and sale
Preparation of traps and hunting or fishing gear	Making women's fishing gear	

462

Men	Women	Common Tasks
Making arms and tools		
Hunting		
Agriculture: Clearing brush, hoeing, harvesting, constructing granaries and drying sheds.	Agriculture: Collaboration with men on these tasks; the men do work requiring strength. Sowing.	Agriculture
Handicrafts: Stone, wood, iron, copper, basketry, weaving, sewing.	Handicrafts: Basketry, plaiting or spinning, pottery, dyeing scents, perfumes.	
Construction and maintenance of the house	Construction and maintenance of the house	Construction and maintenance of house
Commerce	Commerce	Commerce
Raising domestic animals	Preparation of food, plus wood and water	
	Keeping house	
	Raising poultry	

241 462 Labouret hastens to add that there is close collaboration everywhere. Thus, when the husband fells the trees and cuts them up, the [68] wife and daughters pile the branches and burn them in a corner of the field. Then, when the earth has been turned by the men with their large hoes, the women break up the clods, level and loosen the soil for sowing.

241 After the men have cleared the big weeds, the women come
462 along to finish up. At harvest time, the women and children chase
[411] the birds from the fields with loud cries, sling shots, and by heating bamboo on a hard rock to cause a detonation. All chase the spar-
[401] rows, partridges, guinea-fowls ... Harvesting is done together ...

In addition, by the side of the men's fields there are little women's fields where the women cultivate sorrel, okra, eggplant, tomatoes, beans, and all the condiments. The accessory crops of the women are the *raro*, bananas, manioc, sometimes rice or peanuts (1).

1. Labouret, *Paysans noirs* [Black Peasants].

241 Naturally, the work varies according to the social order. The
565 Bambara divide themselves into free men, people of caste, and,
567 formerly, slaves, all having a chief at their head. All members of the community must work the land; in fact, the poor work more than the slaves. The more fortunate do little work; they formerly directed and controlled the work of the slaves, today that of the agricultural workers.

C. Legal Procedure: Inheritance, Land Ownership

692 In Bambara country today, as in all of French West Africa, justice is dispensed by two tribunals: that presided over by a justice of the peace for important affairs, and that presided over by the administrator for other cases. The justice of the peace renders justice following the French code; the administrator according to local custom. A chamber of the Court of Appeals of Dakar is represented at Bamako, whose jurisdiction includes the Sudan and Niger territories. The Assize Court holds a session at Bamako, which also possesses an inferior court. Justices of the peace of wide jurisdiction are found at Kayes, Gao, Mopti, Ségou, Sikasso, Bougouni; other justices of the peace with wide jurisdiction have been created and will soon take up their functions.

One easily imagines the conflicts of principles and method which may arise between the two sorts of tribunals have just indicated.

692 In matters of justice, the Bambara frequently continue to consult
their old tribal judges. It must be noted, however, that in taking
[177 away the judicial competence of the old chiefs, the French ad-
ministration has contributed to diminishing, and almost to com-
622] pletely destroying, their power.

The Bambara had a judicial organization quite as precise and
671 regulated as their religious organization, although there was no
codified law, such as the Koran or the Hebrew tables of law. Justice
was rendered according to rules which each community passed on
from generation to generation. These rules are not of divine origin,
but they [69] are sacred nevertheless, for custom is the legacy of
[643 the ancestors. The Fama and his council of notables could promul-
645] gate new laws, but, before deciding on a new rule, they consult the
Komo and the Nyama [an altar]. Then, in the presence of a priest,
each one swears on the altar to obey the law which becomes sacred.
Moreover, the customary rules cannot be separated from the moral
code and the religion to which they are linked. They are not uni-
[184] form; each canton has its own, and often each village, and within
each of these there are observances peculiar to certain families or to
certain castes. Nevertheless, the sentiment of fair play is very strong
[181] among the Blacks, but they do not admit the equality of men, who
are naturally different one from another according to their aptitudes,
means, and condition.

Custom regulates all relations between individuals and between individuals and the collectivity.

692 Two sorts of native tribunals existed in the Bambara coun-
try: a tribunal of conciliation, presided over by the village chief,
who assembled a council of notables; and a high tribunal presided
over by the Fama, to whom were submitted the matters which the
first tribunal had been unable to settle. In addition, the Fama could
call before his tribunal the civil or penal matters which seemed to
him to be of importance to the public order.

Justice was without charge and rendered day and night by the
695 Fama as one of his essential functions, for the judge is the one who
643 repairs the disorders that shake society. The hearings were solemnly
conducted and took place under the silk-cotton tree (Ceiba pentandra)

695 643 or in the chief's vestibule, that is to say, under the light of a certain constellation and witnessed by the founding ancestors who link the judge with the supernatural powers. The Fama was seated on a throne perched on a platform; at his right were the notables, at his left the griot, the priests, and the old captives; behind him stood the sofa. [195] The blacksmith or a captive repeated aloud what the Fama whispered, for the Fama should not raise his voice. Neither women nor children could attend the public sessions. Formerly, the mere view of the Fama filled the accused with terror, and he prostrated himself in the Fama's presence. The Fama could put the accused in irons until he was judged (1).

1. V. Paques, "L'estrade royale des Niare" [The Royal Platform of the Niaré] Bull. de l'Ifan, Vol. XV (1953), No. 4.

671 Bambara law sought above all to make reparation, to restore order, and only after that to punish.

a. Proofs (2)

2. Passim. Coutumier juridique de l'A.O.F. [French West African Common Law].

695 The plaintiff must prove his case, and the accused must prove his innocence. Elements of proof may be confession, testimony by witnesses, oath taking, expert opinion, and examination of the scene.

If indications of guilt are strong enough, the Fama may force the accused to confess by having him whipped.

Each party may call witnesses in the following order: circumcised men, married women, unmarried girls (who, however, cannot [70] take the oath), and, lastly, children if there are no other witnesses. The sénanku are exempted from bearing witness against each other. [608]

695 [687] False testimony is punished by confiscation of all goods and arrest of the whole family; part of the goods goes to the victim. If the witness refuses to take the oath, his refusal is evidence against the party that called him. When the parties in a trial disagree, the Fama makes one swear on the Komo, on his platform, or on the tomb of the group's founding ancestor. When the oath has been pronounced, the adversary may efface it by taking the oath in his turn. Then judgment will be suspended; but before 40 days have passed the perjurer must die.

[687] Anyone who attempts to suborn a witness or a child will be punished in the same fashion as the false witness.

The Fama must assign to one or several notables the mission of examing the scene where the disputed incident took place; he may designate a notable to examine and evaluate the damages. Once their mission is accomplished, the notables are subject to the same obligations as the witnesses.

693 695 The role of defense attorney was taken by one of the Fama's advisors, a relative, a griot, a blacksmith, or a favorite of the Fama, he who "speaks best." The accused, or someone from his family, approached the prospective defender and offered him a gift, asking him to intervene in his favor. But the counselor had only the power to save the life of the condemned who had to pay a settlement; all punishments other than death were applied.

625 Police functions were carried out by the sofa and by members of the brotherhoods.

b. Punishments

681 The punishments were, in order of descending importance: death, being put in irons permanently or for a set time, the whip, the fine, confiscation of the family, confiscation of goods, sale to the slave traders.

[562] Murderers and inveterate brigands had their heads cut off; spies had their heads shattered by an axe or were bludgeoned (like dogs). A woman was never executed. The Fama who had a woman put to death would have seen his kingdom disappear.

All those condemned to irons were imprisoned in a hut, immobilized, the feet hobbled by a bar fixed to a ring; the patient

681 survived hardly more than 15 days of this punishment. The whip
was applied publicly; the lashes, whose number was fixed by the
Fama, were given with either a full swing of the arm or by the fore-arm only. Fines had to be paid immediately, or else the condemned
was held for security until his family liquidated the debt.

672 The family of a man who had committed a crime or fault was
681 held responsible and could be confiscated and sold; the confiscation
of persons involved the confiscation of goods. All those who worked
together under the authority of the same head could be confiscated,
but not maternal uncles, paternal and maternal aunts of the culprit,
nor his married relatives or those on the point of marrying. The
confiscation was to the profit of the Fama who compensated the
victims. Confiscation [71] of goods includes all furnishings, but
not lands or dwellings.

681 Whoever was condemned to slavery had to be sold outside of
the country, to the profit of the Fama. It was a practical method of
ridding the land of all undesirables.

Finally, any second offender had his punishment doubled.

c. Examples of Condemnations

682 Homicides are condemned to death, but involuntary homicides
684 or cases of legitimate self-defense are excused. A murderer's accomplice
685 is subject to the same penalty as the murderer. One who
receives a criminal or stolen goods is punished in the same fashion
847 as the culprit. Rape of a child is punished by death, of a young girl
by being put into irons after having paid reparations to her fiancé.
A woman who puts her bastard to death will be excused, for her husband
may have required her to do it; if she kills her legitimate
child, she is punished by death, but not executed. A woman who has
an abortion is publicly whipped; when she causes an abortion in
[683 another woman, she is condemned to death. A man who usurps the
title of a function to which he is not entitled is put to death, as
681] is the charlatan and the sorcerer. Theft of gold is punishable by
death; theft of household objects is compensated for by a fine.
If, during a brawl between two villages, a member of one village
is killed, the aggrieved village designates an individual in the
other village to be put to death. If there are several deaths on
both side, the number of deaths in the two villages is equalized.

689 Public violation of decency is punished by death.

684 For adultery, the man is put in irons and pays a fine, the woman is whipped by her husband, her brothers, or the Fama's police. Relations with a woman in mourning draws public scorn on the guilty, while a man who commits adultery with a pregnant woman is put to death. A captive who is the lover of his master's wife is put to death.

689 Vagrant individuals are presumed to be escaped captives and are handed over to the Fama.

735 Finally, begging is authorized, because, say the Bambara, it is better to have begging than stealing.

d. Responsibility

[608] 672 The Fama judges all his subjects, except his own sénanku whom he has judged by his tribunal. The law is applicable to every circumcised man and excised woman recognized as sane. (The demented are put in irons.) They are responsible for their acts, but the family of the guilty is also responsible. The father of an uncircumcised boy is responsible for the boy's acts, the husband for the acts of his wife, and we have seen that a man's crime may lead to the punishment of his whole family. Let us further remark that a

567 master was judge of his slave, but when a difference arose between

692 slaves of different houses, their case was referred to the tribunal. The tribunal also weighed the death penalty [72] when a slave committed a grave fault. Finally, the foreigner who lives in the Bambara country is judged by Bambara laws. [609]

672 We must also note that the penalties apply to all crimes committed voluntarily; every infraction or damage involuntarily committed is excusable on the condition that it be immediately confessed. Thus it is that a hunter meeting a pair of lovers in the bush may kill them for outraging public decency, but must admit his crime immediately upon returning to the village. [684]

e. Inheritance

428 Monteil has noticed an order of succession in the Ségou region which does not correspond to that described by other authors, such as Ortoli or Aubert. In fact, at the death of the fa, " ... everything that belonged to him remains undivided under the new faya of

428 his oldest son. If there are only daughters, the goods are divided among them. Secondly, if there are no children, the heirs are the collateral males, or, in the absence of these, the collateral females. Third in line, if there are no collateral relatives, are relatives of preceding generations. In default of these, the fourth in line is the surviving spouse. If there is none, the estate is without heir, it goes to the head of the settlement (the *dugu-tigi*) when the settlement is an independent one, to the Fama in the contrary case (1)."

1. Monteil, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta* [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

In the Bougouni region, Aubert distinguishes two orders of
428 succession: "First, that which concerns disposition of the women,
587 second, that which concerns disposition of the privileges and wealth
562 of the *faya* ... as far as the disposition of women is concerned, the men succeed each other in the following order: 1. the younger brother in order of primogeniture; 2. the men of the following generation in order of primogeniture; 3. the Fama ... And as far as wealth is concerned: 1. the oldest brother; 2. the son (always in order of primogeniture); 3. the father; 4. the younger brother in order of primogeniture; 5. the oldest relative; 6. the Fama." (2)

2. Aubert, *Coutume bambara* (cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Bougouni Circle) [.

Women can neither inherit nor transmit.

For the Bamako circle, Ortoli sets forth the following rules of
428 succession: " ... Only men, in the following order, have rights of succession: 1. full brothers of the deceased in order of primogeniture, 2. half-brothers on the father's side in the same order; 3. sons of the deceased in the same order; 4. nephews of the deceased in the same order and following the order of primogeniture of the full and half-brothers (on the father's side); 5. grandsons and grandnephews following the same rule of order; 6. the village; 7. the Fama ... But as concerns the personal patrimony, the order of inheritance is as follows: 1. younger full brothers in order of primogeniture; 2. younger half-brothers on the father's side in order of primogeniture;

428 3. and 4. as above for the head of the family; 5. oldest full brother; 6. oldest half-brother on father's side; 7. the family; 8. the village; 9. the Fama ... Married women may transmit personal property in the following order: 1. her oldest son; 2. her husband's oldest son by another wife; 3. the husband; 4. the woman's family ...
[587] At the death of her [73] husband, a woman is not required to marry his heir." (1)

1. Ortoli, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bamako) [Bambara Customs (Bamako Circle)].

851 We should explain here the notion of seniority which is not always easy to distinguish in a polygamous society. As a matter of fact, when two wives of the same husband bear children at roughly the same time, an intermediary announces the births to the fa, and the first baby to be announced is considered to be the oldest. It may even happen that the first one to be announced is in fact the last-born; he nevertheless remains the senior. In the case of twins, the senior
[845] is the one brought forth last, for it is thought that twins are not conceived at the same time, and that the last-born is the one first con-
[551] ceived. Certain special names are used for the oldest children: N'tyi for boys, Nya or Nyélé for girls.

643 At the Fama's death, several lines of succession are involved: that of his own family, that of the family community, and that of the patriarchy.

As far as election to the title of Fama is concerned, we have seen how the new Fama was the senior male of the same generation and same family as the deceased Fama, or the eldest of the following generation. It is noteworthy that in the case of no male heir, the succession passes to the Fama's daughter whose husband governs in her name; but that is an exceptional case.

643 When the new Fama is designated by the notables, he occupies the fortified residence of the previous Fama, where the found-
644 ing ancestor is buried; the women and children of the deceased Fama must leave these premises. While his father lived, the Fama's eldest son led a luxurious and independent life; he often commanded an important dugu, sometimes founded by himself. At his father's death, he is a very important person for the new Fama.

422 The idea of transferable property is complex in native law.
423 The distinction between movable and immovable goods is often difficult to establish; the huts of uncertain durability are easily moved, while a Fama's throne is attached to a fixed site and cannot be considered movable.

Land ownership poses problems still more complex. We have
423 seen that land is never sold. The lands have a primary owner who is the spirit of the bush or a mythical ancestor, a possessor who is the first occupant having concluded a pact with the master of the soil, and, finally, a detainer who has received the land in usufruct from the possessor. The detainer is a family head, and the field he has received belongs to his community which exploits it. But after long years of working the land, the detainer tends to consider himself the owner of it, and when he leaves it during a cycle of crop rotation, it sometimes happens that the land's possessor bestows the
578 detainer's old vacant field on a newcomer, which gives birth to interminable disputes between the old and new cultivators. We have seen elsewhere how certain plots of land particularly well-placed on river banks or near huts were meticulously [74] cultivated. These tend to become veritable private property which families hand down from one generation to the next. In addition to the family fields, there exist fields reserved to certain brotherhoods, such as the n'Domo or the Gna, the members of which work the fields to meet the needs of the cult. Finally, two days each week each community member has the right to cultivate his own personal field which is outside the control of the family. These fields take on more and more importance with the development of a sense of individualism and with it a sense of individual property.

We see, then, that land may be meted out for the benefit of family, religious, or interfamily groups, or for the benefit of individuals. Although none of the parties holding the land are acknowledged as owners, they make use of it as if they were the masters and go so far as to transmit it to their heirs.

It must be noted that a special law exists to regulate the possession of trees and the gathering of their fruits, and the trees are not necessarily connected legally to the fields where they grow. Certain trees, the home of spirits, belong to a certain family, while others, such as the karite, are common property, and their fruits belong to the collectivity.

D. Position of Women

562 Women's society has remained much more impenetrable to
European civilization. Women very rarely go to French schools, and
unlike the men, who, during their military service and otherwise,
are partly immersed in our system of civilization, they have few
contacts with the Whites and appear to be even more attached to custom
[191] than their husbands. Very few speak French, and for all these
reasons their society has remained closed and very imperfectly known
to the Whites.

562 Reasoning from what is known of their juridicial situation, we
have deduced their inferior position. Perhaps a better knowledge of
858 their role and of their importance in the society will lead us to very
different conclusions. From the legal point of view, a woman is always
a minor; she belongs first to her own community, to which she
owes obedience, then to her husband's community. When the marriage
is legal, that is to say, when the husband has paid the matrimonial
settlement, the children belong to the husband; if not, in
the case of concubinage, the woman's family can claim the child,
because it belongs to the family, as does everything of the mother's.

562 Her marriage is decided on by the *fa*; although in practice
582 the woman is often consulted indirectly beforehand, and she has a
certain liberty in her choice. Even a slave can refuse to marry her
583 master, despite gifts and promises. But a woman is forbidden to
marry someone she considers a relative, that is, someone who belongs
to her paternal line and who bears the same name she does.
Exogamy is the rule.

Yet, when a woman marries, she keeps her paternal name and
562 her personal taboos; sometimes she adds her name to that of her son,
593 who normally bears the *dyamu* of his father. The woman remains
very attached [75] to her family and goes to stay with them often.
Among them she will find support in case of a difference of opinion
[586] with her husband. In case of divorce through the fault of the husband,
he loses all rights over the wife as well as the settlement he had paid.

595 In the system of polygamy, the first wife is mistress of the
house; the other wives gather at her place for meals. She distributes
[431] the husband's presents, but aside from these privileges, the rights
of the wives are equal as are those of their children.

562 428 768 587 When the husband dies, the wives are considered the principal wealth of the heir. Among certain Bambara, the wives are divided among the brothers; the eldest brother chooses and then has the other brothers choose in order of age. Among others, the heritage goes to the children who must ally themselves with their father's wives. The wives who do not want to remain with the heir have the option of returning to their families, providing the settlement is returned.

428 562 The wife may have personal property given to her by her parents at the time of marriage. Among certain Bambara, the father of the bride must give her the settlement paid by the husband, and this becomes her personal property. When a widow dies, all of her goods go to her eldest son; if there is no son, half of her goods goes to her daughters, and the other half is divided among her father, her mother, and her brother. When a married woman dies without children, her goods are divided between her husband and her father; if she no longer has her father, half goes to her husband and the other half to her brothers and sisters.

On the other hand, we have seen how a woman may inherit all of the wealth of a family head, and even of a chief, in default of male heirs, and the Mali empire had a woman Keïta at its head, daughter of Naré, fa Maghan.

562 662 A woman must not take part in any political discussion or demonstration, which does not mean that her role in these matters is nil. All the history of Mali is full of palace intrigues which reach their acute stage at the moment of a Fama's death and of the election of a new chief. It is at this moment that the women knew how to throw into the balance all the weight of their family's power to determine the new election.

562 561 575 Finally, we have seen that in a fashion parallel to the male brotherhoods and societies, the women were organized into powerful hierarchical societies according to their age classes and their degree of initiation. These societies, where men do not enter, are still imperfectly known, but they are at least as formidable as the male brotherhoods.

562 The woman must pound the millet, draw water, and carry out all the household chores, but when the man kills an animal, the meat belongs to the wife, and the man must accept in turn what she will give him.

[76] II. Present Evolution of Bambara Society

A. Political Evolution

648 636 At the present time, all the territory of the Sudan is unified and endowed with a political organization permitting it to play an active role within the framework of the French Union. The Sudan, like each of the eight territories of French West Africa, is represented in the National Assembly, in the Senate [Conseil de la République], and in the Assembly of the French Union by elected members. These members have been chosen from among the sons of former slaves or people of caste as well as from among the sons of former chiefs.

The administrative organization is placed under the authority of a governor general, seconded by two councils: the High Council of West Africa and the Government Council. At the head of the territory is a governor who is the administrative chief of the territory; he is assisted by a secretary general, named, like the governor, by decree, and by a civil and military cabinet which transmits the governor's orders.

Finally, the circles are directed by colonial administrators directly responsible to the governor. The circles are divided into subdivisions headed by assistant administrators who are directly responsible to the circle administrators. They are charged with the general administration and control of all the civil and financial functions of the circle.

Each circle is divided into cantons based on the territorial divisions of the old military districts. A canton has a head sometimes named by the administration but generally elected according to the traditional custom of the old Fama. The canton head is charged with representing the interests of the natives before the administration.

B. Tendency to Economic Change

177 The principal transformation in the Bambara economy stems from the French pacification and from the contributions of the European social and economic organization.

a. Urbanization

166 The Bambara, who are essentially agriculturalists, have no
177 cities. All the cities owe their origin to the Whites and were created
369 for commerce, administration, industry, banking, and education.
But the city has exercised the same attraction on the Black peasant as it has on the French one. This taste for city life has been made easier to indulge by the creation of railroads and roads. Cities, such as Bamako, are invaded by ever-increasing populations who leave the bush and the close-knit community to create a de-tribalized mob which adapts more or less well to a European economic organization. Thus, the industrial equipping of Africa tends to transform the native artisanry, because the industrial establishments of the European type require a specialized [77] labor force that will adopt French work methods and economic life. It is in this way that the railroad yards at Thiès were created, as well as the industries of construction in solid materials, the quarries, the brickyards, the limeworks of Bamako, Mopti, and Ségou, and the food industries: icehouses, waterworks, the cotton gins of Koutiala and Sikasso. Industrialization is just beginning in the Bambara country, but the European form of economic organization has spread widely even where native work methods exist, leading, as a result, to economic individualism.

b. Development of Large-scale Agricultural Exploitation

177 Agricultural exploitation itself has been radically transformed
241 in certain regions. Side by side with food crops which vary according
473 to the needs of the community and which are cultivated in the traditional extensive manner, an intensive monoculture of money crops has developed with peanuts, rice, cotton, etc. This has been made possible by modern techniques of agricultural exploitation: experimental gardens, centers of scientific research, creation of pilot sections, scientific management of the plains. This development has led to the creation of such organizations as the C.G.O.T. in Casamance, a company for diversified economy whose initial capital was underwritten by the State and by professional processors of fatty substances. This company clears and de-stumps the great forest brush with heavy tractors, bulldozers, treedozers, and strumpers [de-stumpers ?] in

177 order to cultivate peanuts, sunflowers, millet, and cotton. Every
241 three years, the company distributes green manure crops in order to
473 reconstitute the soil's humus. Moreover, the company has created veritable villages to house its technicians and the colonists.

177 Other organizations, such as the Niger Office, have charge
241 of the basic water control of the central delta (dams, large canals).
312 Thanks to the creation of a network of waterways, to the clearing
and de-stumping of lands, and to the development of general equip-
433 ment (processing factories, workshops, stores, dwellings, road network), the end of 1949 saw 11,000 hectares of rice fields, with a yield of 18 quintals of paddy and a commercial production of 8,000 metric tons of husked rice. Six thousand hectares have been prepared either for growing cotton (2,000 hectares), for growing rice for food (1,000 hectares), or for lying fallow (3,000 hectares). These fields
[166] permit the exportation of 360 metric tons of cotton fiber. Twenty-two thousand persons have been settled as colonists. Finally, let us note that the F.I.D.E.S. by its financial support has permitted the development of peanut cultivation in Senegal, of rice in Guinea and the Sudan, of karite in Upper Volta, as well as the creation of several technical schools.

c. Social Consequences

177 This technical evolution has profound repercussions on the
native way of life. We notice the same change in the Bambara
596 peasant as in the Bambara artisan. The large united family which
241 was [78] the cornerstone of agricultural technique tends to split up more and more, even in the regions where the traditional farming methods are still used. The family field, a great deal less carefully tended than in the past, gives way in importance to the individual's field. Moreover, the family field traditionally was at the end of a path bordered by small individual fields where each peasant went to work for himself before and after the collective labor. Today, we see the creation of individual fields in the brush far from the path which leads from the village to the family field, clearly indicating the desire of the individual to separate himself from the large family and to escape the control of the farming chief in order to realize personal benefits for himself, not subject to family inspection.

177 596 241 Finally, the breaking up of the family cell is manifest in the increasing number of children who prefer to work as farm laborers far from their home country rather than submit to the tutelage of the farming chief.

177 377 489 The economic transformation proceeds due to electrification (regulation of the great falls near Conakry and those of Sotuba near Bamako) and the creation, alongside the old strategic roads, of commercial roads and bridges to facilitate shipping peanuts, rice, cotton, and millet. The ports and wharfs are being put in order, the railroad network being modernized (increasing the matériel, transforming beds and embankments, repairing the tracks, installing and extending yards, improving the depots, constructing stations, buffets, hotels, cheap housing for the employees). On the Niger, improvements are being made in the river ports of Koulikoro, Ségou, Mopti, Bamako, and Gao, and, on the Senegal, of Kayes and Saint-Louis.

177 Finally, the new economy is accompanied by social accomplishments in the fields of health, education, and urbanization.

d. Chambers of Commerce

Thus, two forms of economic organization exist side by side in Bambara country: on the one hand, the traditional and artisan native organization, and, on the other, the European organization which has shattered the ancient society and has put the local economy of the country within the framework of international economy.

177 441 But it is perhaps in the realm of commerce that the influence of European methods has been most felt, particularly in the creation of Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry.

The creation of Chambers of Commerce dates from a decree of the Governor General in 1906. Members are elected for four years and are re-eligible. They are elected by an electoral college made up of the chiefs of French or African commercial establishments. The function of these Chambers is to give the administration advice and information when requested on any question of an economic nature.

The Chambers of Agriculture and Industry have substantially the same organization as the Chambers of Commerce, but in addition they are called on by the governors to group and codify the local customs [79] and usages of an agricultural character. These reports serve as the

177 basis of judicial decisions, and the Chambers also give advice on the
441 program of agricultural improvement undertaken by the administration and the welfare societies.

In Senegal, there are Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry at Dakar, Saint-Louis, Thiès, Kaolack, and Ziguinchor; in the Sudan, at Bamako; in Guinea and the Ivory Coast, at Conakry and Abidjan.

e. Work Regulation. Unions

464 Sparsely populated, West Africa lacks manpower. A decree of October 22, 1925, and an order of the Governor General of March 29, 1926, set the conditions by which workers could be recruited and work contracts established: salary, bonus, food, lodgings, medical care ... Individual or collective disputes between employers and employees are taken before arbitration boards presided over by a French employer and a native assistant judge.

An act of April 2, 1932, regulates the work of women and
464 children. One of March 11, 1937, organizes the trade unions, and
467 a decree of March 20, 1937, the native professional associations. Others regulate collective agreements applying to work. The National Assembly has voted the Overseas Work Code which is beginning to be applied. African unions have developed a great deal in the course of these last years; there are six African unions in the Sudan. The complexity of labor problems has led to the creation at Dakar of an office to inspect manpower problems, this office being attached to the General Bureau of Political, Administrative, and Social Affairs.

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CHAPTER 7

CULTURAL ASPECTS

I. Religion

771 One can never insist too much on the importance of religion. It governs the entire social, political, artistic, and even economic life of the country. No institution can be understood without knowing

771 the religious system which animates and explains it. The Bambara is an essentially religious being; all his acts are dictated by ritual duties or taboos, and he finds his true liberty only within the rules transmitted to him by tradition. To destroy his religion amounts to destroying his whole social structure as well as his soul. Inversely, every transformation of techniques will have grave repercussions, not only on the material life of the individual, but also on his inner life. In fact, the religion is itself part of a whole cosmological and metaphysical system which explains and orders every existing thing. The simplest and poorest object is a reflection of complex concepts which leave nothing to chance or to imagination, and we arrive at the paradox that the technical progress and enrichment introduced by the European civilization impoverish the over-all metaphysical representation, while the social evolution ends in detaching the Bambara from his traditional religion and makes of him a rootless being who will be the prey of badly understood ideologies, foreign to his nature and to his genius.

114 771 L. Tauxier (1), pursuing the studies of Father Henry and C. Monteil, has attempted a comprehensive description of Bambara beliefs. But in his exposition Bambara religion appears to be composed of disparate elements with no links between them. This impression is due in large part to the esoteric character of this religion, which certainly contains exoteric elements accessible to all, but whose fundamental principles remain known only to the elders and to the initiated who are reluctant to confide in strangers. The study of Bambara religion has been entirely renewed in these last few years by Mme. Dieterlen (2), who has known how to go beyond the superficial knowledge we had had of this people. She has introduced us to an admirably cohesive metaphysical system and ritual organization [81] In fact, "the Bambara metaphysic and religion offer a structured whole

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1. L. Tauxier, La religion bambara [Bambara Religion].

2. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

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which encompasses all social, technical and economic activities" (1)

1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion], P.U.F., 1951.

of this people. The myths are "a sum of knowledge, wisdom, and not a series of fixed etiological recitations. One may say that they constitute a metaphysic including the knowledge of created things, as well as the principles of their state of being and of their action." (2)

2. Id., ibid.

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771
Thorough investigation of other Sudanese peoples has revealed that the Bambara religion is part of a pan-Sudanese system in which differences lie in the modes of expression and not in the essence of the thought.

A. Cosmogony

772 The Bambara conceive the world as a mass of active forces which man can influence. Thanks to certain techniques, the pivotal one being the blood sacrifice, man may amass or liberate these forces, may direct and orient them; in short, man may have a hand in the movement of the world and may aid it in its consciousness and accomplishment. This central role of man is explained to us by the order of creation itself, which governs all the rites to which man is subject. The Bambara conceive the world as having issued from an
773 original void which was endowed with movement (3): the gla. This

3. Passim, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

void emitted a voice which created its double, and from the couple came a humid substance, zo sumale (cold rust), which formed hard shining bodies. After a series of movements and transformations, there was an explosion between the two gla, which caused the ejection of a hard and powerful matter that vibrated as it fell. Out of this vibration came signs which settled on all the things as yet uncreated to designate them. Then, man's consciousness detached itself from the gla and settled on things to awaken their consciousness in naming them. In the

course of this creation, the active spirit *Yo* appeared, plus 22 fundamental elements, 22 whorls which agitated *Yo* and gave birth to sound, light, all beings, all actions, and all feelings in existence. Afterwards, a series of disorders followed by reorganizations came to trouble creation; man played a preponderant role in these.

Two initial powers were born of the spirit *Yo*: one, *Faro*, master of the Word, made the seven skies, which correspond to the seven parts of the earth in following a calculated course; *Faro* gave birth to *Teliko*, spirit of the air, then, in the form of water, spread life on the earth and created two twin females who gave birth to the Bozo, first inhabitants of the waters; the other power, *Pemba*, in moving with a whirling motion to the four cardinal points, created the mounds and buttes which give form to the earth. After seven years in his whirlwind form, Penba transformed himself into seed of the *Acacia albida*, came to rest on the [82] earth and developed into a tree, the *balanze*, which became his earthly avatar. Then, with the dust of his tracks mixed with his saliva, he created a woman, *Musso Koroni*, into whom he breathed a soul, *ñi*, and a double, *dya*; he joined with her and created the plants and animals.

Men rendered homage to Pemba and Mousso [sic] Koroni, who, in exchange, gave them directions for life. All the women had to join with Pemba; which is why Mousso Koroni, jealous, began to trouble creation and to sow disorder. She instituted circumcision and excision, and revealed to men all she had learned from Pemba. Communicating impurity to all she touched, she introduced evil, pain, and death into the world. Pemba pursued her; Faro overtook her but was unable to subdue her. Finally, she died, but before disappearing she revealed the agricultural techniques to man.

Pemba, in addition to the women's love, demanded the men's blood from which he drew his power. In exchange, he rejuvenated the men when they became old and taught them how to use fire. But he abused his power and exhausted the men, which caused his downfall. In fact, the men turned from worship of the *balanza* and devoted themselves to the cult of Faro. Faro impregnated the women, who gave birth to twins with supple limbs. But the men violated a taboo concerning Pemba, and death appeared and spread among them. To compensate for this misfortune, Faro taught them how to speak. Then, the spirit of the air, Teliko, attempted to seize power; the men

773 abandoned Faro to follow him. Faro vanquished him and punished men by giving them the joints used in manual labor, which all were forced to do. Births became single, but, in compensation, each being had a double, *dya*, which lived in water.

After these successive disorders, each of which, however, was followed by the acquisition of new knowledge or of a new technique, Faro again undertook Creation and reorganized the universe by a voyage to the ends of the earth. He established the system of the rains, and he classified living beings according to series, each series having a head of the list. Men thus were named and classed by race and by caste, beginning with the slaves. He gave men the eight cereal seeds which remain the basis of their subsistence and which are forever in 826 their clavicles. Finally, he controls all existence and acts of beings placed under his domination.

The present order is only a phase in space and time. Twelve waters are still hidden; they must in the future, on the order of Faro, rise and spread in the world. They will make known the words of the future, and the world conceived by *Yo* will be realized.

776 All this mythology is presently represented by numerous objects which serve as props for the different rituals regulating men's lives.

778 Pemba in represented in the houses of the religious chiefs and heads of families by a wooden block named *Pembele*, image of the first thick plank (1). In a [83] central hollow, symbolizing the tomb, are engraved three times 22 marks representing Pemba the creator, the transmission of his Word, and his power to Faro, the token of his foreknowledge of all things, etc. Pembele is an altar guaranteeing the prosperity and life of the group.

776 If the balanza tree no longer is the object of a cult, the Bambara still regard it with a special attitude, which recalls its former role. Mousso Koroni is the impure and untilled land; the agricultural techniques she taught are a partial reparation for the disorders she created. This farm work wounds and purifies the land at the same

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1. See S. de Ganay, "Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara" [Aspects of Bambara Mythology and Symbolism]. [Ed., *J. psych. norm. et path.*, Vol. 42 (1949), pp. 181-201.]

776 time; it is the noblest work, and one to which every member of the
Bambara race must be subject. Faro is represented by a spiral, *mumu*;
the vibrating movements of the spiral are the same that animate the daily
movements of the sun. These movements are materialized in a basketwork headdress, *yugu*, which has eight whorls and which formerly was
reserved for kings. Faro's face is white, because he took it from the
spirit of the air, Teliko, who was an albino. His ears are protected
by two fins; his hands are of different sex; his tail is palmate, and
his breast is of copper. Albinos and copper are the spirit's preferred
sacrifices. All atmospheric manifestations denote his presence; his
principal seat is the Niger River, but he has the gift of ubiquity and
haunts all waters. Faro is accompanied by helpers, the most representative of whom is the *bolokuruni*, one-armed blacksmith of a
black race. His air messenger is the swallow, who carries the
[824] fertilizing word. Certain plants are in permanent rapport with him:
the *Yayalẽ*, the *Ngoyõ* (tomato), which is compared to blood. Thus,
small fields of tomatoes reserved for the cult of Faro are cultivated
in each village. All metals are reserved for Faro. The Bozo, born
of Faro's first twins, enjoy a privileged position because they were
not subject to the defilement caused by Mousso Koroni and can enter
into direct communication with the spirit. In addition, they are the
masters of the water.

776 The cult of Faro includes a whole series of taboos, such as the
784 black earth of the river which may not be used by the potters and
841 butter which may not be kept in water. But the principal taboo is
menstrual blood, originally provoked by the disorders of Mousso Koroni.

B. Conception of Man

774 The Bambara conceive man as a microcosm, a resumé of the
761 totality of beings and things. The principle of duality contained in
the original creative thought is realized in man by his twin souls
which compensate for the separation of the sexes. In man, Faro is
represented by the *ni* (soul) and the *dya* (double). Pemba is represented by the *tèrè* (the character, forcé, and conscience) and the
nyama (which is the *tèrè* when it leaves its corporeal support after
[826] death). Mousso Koroni is represented by the *Wanzo* (evil force with

[826]
774 its seat in the prepuce and the clitoris, necessitating circumcision
761 and excision). The body is conceived as being the support of all
spiritual forces; each part is distinctly known [84] for its particular
role. The body, like the spiritual principles, is bisexual; the boy
[304 is feminine in his prepuce, the girl masculine in her clitoris, and it
831] is only after circumcision and excision that the man and woman can
unite and realize the original fruitful twinship. On the metaphysical
plane, there is identity between man, "seed of the world," and the
cereal seed; the basic nutriments that are made up of the eight
principal cereals are represented symbolically in men's clavicles.
775 Finally, death separates all of these elements composing the person.
The *dya* remains in the water where it will become the *ni* of the
761 new-born in the family of the deceased; the *ni* is caught by the family
head and transported to the altar where it will animate the *dya* of the
new-born; the *téré* becomes *nyama*, a dangerous and vengeful force;
it is deposited on the *pembele*, where it rejoins the ancestral forces.
The body is buried and belongs to the termites. At birth, all the
spiritual forces are transmitted again, whole, "refreshed," and
purified. One being replaces another until the final resurrection.

C. Ritual, Sacrifice, and Cults

782 To appeal to and influence the spiritual forces, the Bambara
use prayer, offerings, and sacrifices. Oral rites are used everywhere
and at any time. "They pray to the sky, the cardinal points, the
spirits; they sacrifice on stones, on the ground, on trees, by water
holes, just as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries or situated in
public or private places. Every circumcized adult, father of a family,
owner of a home and cultivatable land, is a sacrificer, a capacity
[531] emphasized by the red spot which sometimes is an ornament of the
walls of the principal room in the man's residence." (1)

1. G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].

782 The blood sacrifice is the basic element of the rites. The
778 technique used for it has been described by M. Griaule (2). The Bambara have three types of altars: the wooden stumps called pembele, altars made of roughly hewn stone, which generally represent the ancestors; and the Nyama or boli, man-made objects representing the parts of the universe.

The cults can be individual and familial or general for the
794 whole village, such as the dasiri and the dangu. They are organized by religious societies, dyo, whose object is to conserve the spiritual forces of their members. For the men, these societies are: the Komo (principally), the Kworé, the Nama, the Kono, the Nago, the Nya. The women are also grouped in dyo, as yet little known, while the uncircumcised are members of the N'Domo.

The Komo is a hierarchical society whose members have obligations and taboos, such as initiation for future dignitaries of the political and religious society, study of traditions and practices of the cult, study of the science of magic and religious formulas, fabrication and consecration of protective charms (boli-w, dyo-w), knowledge of [85] poisons and antidotes, procedures for combating enemies and sorcerers.

794 Its moral authority is very widespread, and we shall see the
796 role it plays in justice and public affairs. The Komo has obligatory seasonal ceremonies, such as the festival of the cleaning of the sacred wood by the tinto-w (most recent initiates), the festival of the emergence of the komo-sen-w from the stream, that of stream fishing and of hunting on the banks at the end of the dry season, and, finally, that of the solemn return of the komo-sen-w to the stream. In addition, every seven years, a great celebration in April-May lasts for 15 days, with a sacrifice to the komo-ba. The ceremony ends with
764 the nomination of a new komo-tigi (chief of the Komo), who will exercise his priesthood for seven years. He must die at the end of

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2. M. Griaule, "Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice Dogon (Soudan français)" [Remarks on Sacrificial Techniques of the Dogon (French Sudan)], Extract from the Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. X, 1940.

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796 that period; his body will not be buried but will be carried off by
766 members of the Komo, who will take it to a crossroads and crush it with the aid of komo-se-w [sic]. The remains will be hidden in a secret place. The same treatment is accorded to the komo-tigi who dies during his seven-year term.

794 The cult is cantonal, and the various komo-tigi take their orders from their colleagues of the capital. The cult formerly was interclan and intertribal. Labouret (Les Mandingues et leur langue [The Mandingo and Their Language]) has made a table of the seven categories of persons who make up the hierarchical society of the initiates.

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793 After initiation into the Komo cult, a natural sequel to circumcision, the young man may, if he so desires, be initiated into other cults. He then enters a powerful spiritual family which unites all its members by ties of brotherhood. This brotherhood is superimposed on the normal social hierarchy of the flã-tõ [this term is
[564 probably the same as flanton]. The chief of the brotherhood is en-
567] titled nyama-tigi; he is generally a man of caste or a slave. He acquires his position as chief either by inheriting it, by election, or
[778] by founding a new cult. To do this latter, he must buy an altar, gna, from the village or from the brotherhood that already possesses this cult. Such a purchase is considered a marriage with the gna and is accompanied by drinking. The higher-ranking initiates (dyenfaw: masters of the truth) are auxiliaries of the nyama-tigi and participate in the oracle, wara-da. All the initiates are more or less divine. The clergy includes, in addition, a sacrificer, muru-kala-tigi, and a dyeli, herald of the god. To become one of the faithful, one must pay an entrance fee and swear an oath of secrecy, obedience, and fellowship. The clergy manages the cult's treasury which is fed by the entrance fees to the brotherhood, by fees levied for a class promotion, by contributions required for the major ceremonies, and by fines imposed on the members.

The brotherhood is a spiritual family which is organized in a fashion similar to the natural filiation of the community. The nyama-tigi plays the role of the fa; the dyen-fa-w and the notable members form a sort of council for settling, with the chief, all ques-
[527] tions. The cult does nothing on Mondays and Thursdays, the work holidays.

794 A strict internal discipline regulates the members' conduct; this discipline is founded on secrecy, obedience, and speed in carrying out orders. An accused confesses [86] his faults under the effect of the oath, torture, or divination, and the punishments are determined according to the seriousness of the offense in the eyes of the clergy. These punishments are corporal (flogging, confinement in irons, deprivation of food, death) or pecuniary (fines, confiscation); they may include forced labor for the benefit of the clergy. We shall see further on the social and political role these brotherhoods play in Bambara life.

794 796 The Kworé society carries out the rites concerning the sky, space, the cardinal points, and the atmospheric manifestations of Faro, notably rain. The ceremonies generally take place around a tree, the kworé-jigi, situated to the east of the village. The altars are placed either in the brush, in the chief's house, or near the village. The society owns a field of small millet which is reserved to meet the needs of the cult.

793 The n'Domo includes all the non-circumcised. Heading it is the chief, assisted by a sacrificer, muru-kala-tigi, and by a master of ceremonies, dyoloko-tigi. The society is divided into five grades, corresponding to the five fundamental altars; the initiate advances a grade each year. The society possesses a mask, a whip, and five musical instruments. An annual ceremony takes place after the harvest and includes a blood sacrifice and a ritual fight, followed by a new initiation. The society also owns a ritual field cultivated by its members.

776 The Nama brotherhood (Nama, "hyena" in Mandé) plays an important role in the Ségou region. Nama is the god of the incomplete, the unique god, whose annual ceremonies at sowing time and harvest time are observed by the men and women together.

794 The society of Kono, whose hut is situated in the middle of the village, must also be mentioned, as well as those of Dyo, an old divinity, Nia or Gnã, Wara, and Duga.

To all of these societies, which have been described by Tauxier, Monteil, G. Dieterlen, etc., must be added the women's societies, still imperfectly known but very powerful and particularly feared by the men. The principal female dyo in the Bamako region are: the Niagua, the Kulukutu, and the Jide which assembles its initiates on Mondays and Fridays.

D. The New Religions: Islam and Christianity

777 177 Alongside this ancestral religion, the Bambara have been exposed to imported religions: Islam and Christianity. The Bambara long resisted the advance of Islam from the Sahara and the cruel Toucouleur domination lasted too briefly to transform a solidly organized religion. But the social evolution provoked by the French conquest has realized what El-Hadj-Omar's conquest could not. The breakdown of the traditional social structures was accompanied by a loosening of religious authority, counterbalanced by the political and administrative authority of the French. Moreover, European educational practices tend to replace the initiation each child received and to turn the children away from the traditional notions. [87] Now, this ignorance and this loss of religious authority are particularly favorable to the diffusion of Islam whose powerful propagandizing is well-known. This diffusion seems to be helped besides by the development of the means of communication, which, on the one hand, aid in separating the young people from the traditional familial authority, and, on the other hand, promote the travel of Dioula and Syrian merchants. All these Mussulmans live in close contact with the population and spread their beliefs, as well as their merchandise, throughout the country. If Islam is constantly on the increase, its practice remains nevertheless superficial and very far from orthodox. Very often it affects only the external forms of the ritual, while the old beliefs and even the traditional sacrifices remain. In addition, the country is still more divided by a certain number of sects, each of which has a Marabout at its head. But the Istiklal constantly attempts, by means of Koran schools directed by Egyptian Mussulmans, to unify this movement which is political as well as religious.

777 The Christian movement is much less important. In the Sudan it is essentially Catholic; missions are created in the bush and in certain centers, but they are still very few and far between. However, the creation of a Black clergy permits easier contacts with the population. The principal centers of the Catholic cult in the Sudan are at Bamako, the residence of the apostolic vicar, at Kati, Ouolosebougou (Bamako circle), Béléko (Diaila subdivision), Gualala (Yanfolila circle), Kayes, an apostolic prefecture with two churches, at Kakoulou (Kayes circle), Kita (White fathers and sisters of Our Lady of Africa), Karangasso

797 (Koutiala circle), Mandjakuy (San circle), Ségou, Kolongotomo (Macina subdivision), and at Sikasso (apostolic prefecture). In Guinea there is a Catholic center at Siguiri. In Upper Volta there are centers at Niangoloko (Banfora circle), Ouahigouya, and Bam:, Black sisters (Ouahigouya circle). Finally, in the Ivory Coast there is a center at Gorhogo.

Protestant missions are even less numerous; they are generally American. The efforts they have exerted are far from having been crowned with success. We will mention, however, the cultural centers at Bamako with two protestant schools, the center at Sirakoro (Yanfolila circle), the ones at Baramba and Somasso (Koutiala circle), comprising two missions, the center at N'Torosso (San circle), and that of Sikasso. In Upper Volta, centers are at Siniena (Banfora circle) and at Ouahigouya. Finally, in the Ivory Coast there is one at Torogo (Korhogo circle).

II. Techniques

182 It is impossible to give a complete picture of all Bambara techniques; we are far from knowing them all. Investigations are being carried out on the spot, and already they indicate that no object, in its form or its material, no gesture of the customary actions, is due to the imagination of the maker. On the contrary, the material, [88] as well as the movements, is integrated in a system of representations that the Bambara can explain. The principal techniques among these have been analyzed and explained, but many have been described in a very superficial manner.

A. Body Techniques

The Bambara think that fecundation is the work of Faro. This
776 creative function is represented materially by the eating of a tomato
833 by each spouse before sexual relations, which must be repeated twice.
842 It is by means of this consecrated tomato that Faro transmits the life he conserves in water. The role of the father is to give the new-born his articulations which make him fit for work. He transforms the celestial seed into terrestial seed.

844 Before delivery of her child, a woman is advised to pound grain. When the labor pains come, the woman retires to her hut with several matrons (men are not allowed access). If the child is poorly presented, the priest is called. He performs outside the hut, simulating the delivery and chanting the formulas that ease labor. To deliver the infant, the woman kneels with her hands thrown behind her, while the midwife supports the small of her back. At birth the infant's shoulders must touch the ground; this is the moment when he receives his spiritual principles. The infant is washed several times and smeared with karite butter.

846 The mother must not go out during the first eight days after the
853 birth; she must devote herself entirely to the new-born. She massages
854 his head daily in order to give it a more rounded form, and she
pinches his nose. She nurses the infant for the first two years, then the weaned child passes directly to the communal calabash. Until the child can walk, the mother carries it astraddle on her back with the aid of a loincloth knotted at her chest. In this manner the infant accompanies the mother everywhere, to work as well as to the dance.
868 It is during these intimate contacts that the mother teaches her child to talk. Later, the little girls stay with their mothers who teach them all the domestic arts, while the boys are educated in outside work.
[867] During their childhook they are taught the usages and rules of deport-
ment: a woman knows she must never shake the hand of a man to
201 greet him, and, if he extends his hand, she flings up her arm "as a
576 sign of not being interested." A man will salute his superior by extending his hand palm upwards, and the superior will put his over it; inversely, when a man greets an inferior he extends his hand with the palm down, while for an equal his hand will be perpendicular to the ground. If a man must ask someone's pardon, he puts his hands behind his back to simulate the tail of an animal (for he has acted like an animal). Crossing the hands in front of or upon the head is a sign of sadness. To mark his submission to a king, a man puts his right elbow to the ground. To pray to God, the two hands are extended with the palms turned [89] outward. A woman learns that it is im-
576 pudent to question her husband during the day, and when she speaks
513 of him, she says koke, that is, big brother, for she cannot pronounce
833 his name or in any way recall the bonds which exist between them.
It is only during the two consecutive nights that she couples with him

576 that she may speak to him freely. When the day of union comes, the
593 wife herself prepares her husband's food; then she lies on the left side
833 (the feminine side) and her husband on the right side, and she cannot
[842] be impregnated except by a union twice repeated.

771 These corporal techniques[a] are dictated and ordered by the religious imperatives which pervade the life of the Bambara from before his birth until after his death.

761 What we have said of the Bambara's religion and of his conception of the world enables us to understand that there cannot be for him a complete break between life and death: birth is a reincarnation; death is not destruction. This is why a man's life does not present one substantial unity but is divided into a certain number of distinct periods, each of which is inaugurated by a rite of transition that marks the death of an anterior state and the rebirth to a new life.

a. Before Birth

843 From the first month after his conception, the infant consti-
761 tutes a person who receives a series of spiritual forces emanating
from his father's side of the family and especially from the recently
858 deceased ancestor whose name he will receive. At the same time, he inherits all of the paternal taboos, which the mother must respect during her pregnancy. It is only after his birth, at the time he receives his name, that the infant receives the spiritual forces coming from his mother's side. These forces are transmitted through the medium of the priest and the ancestors of the priest.

761 From then on, the infant is required to observe all the taboos
of the beings who have had a part in the composition of his personality;
858 he thus finds himself tightly bound to the society in which he will live.

b. Birth Rites

852 At birth the baby is washed with millet beer (1) (to purify him)

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1. For all these rites, see G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

[a] [i.e., sexual reproduction and childrearing, see pp. 117-119. -Analyst]

852 with water added (to recall the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni).
The patriarch shakes the family pembélé three or four times over the
infant's head to give him the nyama of the recently deceased whose
ni and dya he has inherited. Then he places the altar (kere la boli
ni) on the infant's chest three times, after having recited a prayer.
He cuts the throat of a red cock, dips his index finger in the blood,
and traces three or four crosses on the newborn's forehead, who be-
553 comes boli din. The name is given the eighth day by the Komo chief
[431] under the doubalé, where the old people assemble. The father offers
100 kola nuts, two jars of millet beer, plus a ram whose throat is cut,
and money for the griot. Part of the baby's hair is shaved off and
kept in [90] a case (sebe); another part of the hair is thrown in the
river as a sacrifice to Faro. The eldest of the old men examines the
roots of the infant's hair and the conjunction of the eyebrows, thus
determining its character (tésé). Then he swings the baby seven
times in an east-west direction and eight times north-south, giving
him the first name of the deceased ancestor and, at the same time,
his spiritual principles. The griot recite the father's mottoes, the
sénanku come to joke with the baby, and the blacksmith traces the
scarifications.

845 Twins. We have seen the belief that in the beginning twins
were always born, and Faro subsequently punished man by abolishing
double births which he no longer accords except to certain privileged
persons. For the Bambara, twins are new beings who inherit neither
the ni nor the dya of any ancestor. Special rites are observed at their
[201] birth which is announced by showing the raised right and left index
fingers, without saying anything, for the proclamation would be so
powerful that it would be harmful to the newborn twins (see G.
Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].
553 The rite of name-giving is carried out on the bank of the river. The
following day, accompanied by another woman, the mother goes in
search of millet and cotton which she gathers in identical calabash
ladles. Equal gifts are put in the ladles, which the mother presents
[301] in crossed hands. Later, the twins are fitted with metal bracelets
representing their dya, and, in certain regions, with a pendant in the
form of double slave irons. The twins always stay together; they
856 wear identical clothes. If one dies in early infancy, the mother
places on the mat beside the surviving infant a small doll made by

856
the blacksmith. The doll is given the name of the dead infant, the
[304 child^ carries it with him to the circumcision, and, when he marries,
589] he buries the doll with a piece of wood representing the wife of the deceased.

845 Twins are replicas of Faro, their presence is beneficial, and they are considered invulnerable.

826 The albino is supposed to be the issue of sexual relations held
833 in sunlight, a breach of taboo. He, too, is a new being. His wanzo
904 is so active that the circumciser must take great precautions before operating on it.

826 He is considered to be endowed with special powers which
782 make him a choice victim for the sacrifices offered to the spirit of the water.

553 To the children of blacksmiths, the name is given near the
paternal forge in the presence of all the artisans. An old man pre-
326 pares seven little sticks, giving each the name of an ancestor. Three of these are drawn at random from the group, and the third gives the name of the baby. The head of the baby is rubbed with the axe Kongobwona, and his shaved hair is soaked in sacrificial blood.

553 In the Bamako region two chickens or a sheep are sacrificed
782 to celebrate the name-giving. The distribution of the meat is made according to established custom. If it is a chicken, the patriarch receives the head and the gizzard, while the wing and white meat go to the old woman who washed the baby during the first eight days. If it is a sheep, the patriarch receives [91] the ribs (because they are a bulwark, and the patriarch is the defender of the village) and the heart; the blacksmith receives the shoulder; the infant's family gets the head (so that the infant will go ahead), the back (symbol of prosperity), and the limbs (supports one wishes the new-born to have); the blood which runs on the ground is destined for the infant's protective ancestors. Then the family divides the raw meat with the heads of family, and the old woman thus receives her part indirectly.

c. Circumcision

881 A male infant is born, but he still keeps (because of the
304 primordial twinship) the prepuce as the physical support of the female
831 sex. He will only be freed of this by circumcision. It is this operation that definitively determines his sexual qualification and renders him fit to contract marriage.

^[ie., the surviving child of twins. -Analyst]

304
881
794 The society of n'Domo has the task of preparing children for circumcision; the wanzo of the child liberated by the operation goes in the mask of the n'Domo.

881
304 Formerly, circumcision took place between 18 and 20 years of age, and the circumcised had to bear arms the following year. At present, the children are circumcised between 8 and 16 years of age, but all those of the same promotion are considered to belong to the same age class and are flani [sic] (twins) all their lives. [561]

The ritual of circumcision has been described many times, in particular by Tauxier and G. Dieterlen. Therefore we will only report the essential phases.

The ceremony takes place during the dry season, in bountiful years after the harvest. The appearance of the constellation "Sigi-lolo" is watched for at a certain point in the sky, and when it is very brilliant, the date is fixed. The operation cannot take place except every three years.

The parents prepare for the ceremony long in advance: they make the child a bonnet of white cloth which they present to the Niger, and they make the signs representing the person of the child with earth from the river. Some days before the operation, the child enters into a period of seclusion; he is placed under the protection of the purifying light of Faro and receives gifts (cowries, food ....).

When the day arrives, his hair is shaved off. His mother washes his shaft with water in which an iron axe has been soaked, then has him eat a plate of rice.

The blacksmith prepares his knife, boloko kumba moru, which is enclosed in an iron sheath, this knife represents the circumcised and the prepuce which will be taken from him. The priest washes the handle and, symbolically, the penis. Then with coal or with millet paste he traces the blade with ritual designs symbolizing the three first circumcised men, the four first excised women, and the bird which is the avatar of the eight ancestral blacksmiths. Next, he ties the prepuce with a small cord (drawn on the middle of the blade) and places it on the pembelé. The cutting knife is hit with a small block of wood, and the blacksmith then traces the scarifications on the shaft. The circumcised bleed in a circle on the ground, in individual holes [92] dug between their legs. They thus deliver the wanzo to the impure earth, while the circumciser recites the prayers. Then they apply a dressing of bloody earth to the wound,

881 304 and the member is held up by a split millet stalk. The prepuces are buried, and their white bonnets are put on the circumcised. The place of the operation is forbidden to women and to the non-circumcised who could take the liberated wanzo.

In the Bamako region the blood of the oldest is gathered in [534] two new calabashes, which are later broken and the pieces used to make sistrums, sinzin.

881 After the ceremony, the children retire for three months under the direction of a priest of the Komo. During this period, when they receive a religious and technical education, they enter the village only to sleep in a special house and to repair the roofs of their teachers' huts.

[794] The night before the sixth day after the operation, they are initiated in the Komo. The next day they are led to the river where they wash their wound. Meals are taken together, followed by songs and dances, until they are healed. The last day, the sistrums, sticks, mats, and everything that has been in contact with the circumcised are put in a pile and burned. Each child jumps over the fire three times and runs home, without turning around, to lose his wanzo definitively. In the Bamako region the sistrums are preserved in the cabin of the village chief and will be used for the children of the following years. The bonnet is returned to the mother and will be preserved until death. The next day the child puts on his new clothes.

881 304 826 Let us note that for the circumcision of twins all the offerings for the ceremony and the sacrifices must be doubled, and each child will possess two sistrums. Finally, the albinos today are sent to the dispensary, because the blacksmiths are afraid to operate on them, their wanzo being particularly dangerous.

304 766 Circumcision may take place posthumously. The circumciser then cuts the left ear of the body, since the wanzo freed by death would be dangerous to the living.

794 Generally, a sort of ceremony of confirmation of membership in the Komo takes place in the year following the circumcision.

d. Excision

881 304 [831] The excision of the girls has a meaning equivalent to that of the circumcision of the boys. The operation frees them of the physical male factor residing in the clitoris.

881 physical male factor residing in the clitoris. The operation takes
304 place, moreover, during the same period as the circumcision. It is carried out by the potteress, wife of the blacksmith, in full daylight before the assembled kin. During their seclusion the girls wear a white veil which plays the same role as the bonnet of the circumcised.
[534] Instead of the sistrum, the girls shake a gourd which contains eight millet seeds and cotton fibers which their fiancés have given them. A goat is sacrificed for the ceremony. The collected blood is given to the fiancé in honor of his ancestors who become those of the girl.

[93] On the last day of the ceremony the girls definitively rid themselves of their wanzo by jumping over a pyre composed of the clothes and scraps of the excised.

e. Marriage

[582] It is only after having been circumcised or excised that young
584 people may marry. The institution of marriage is regulated by a ritual which has often been described, particularly by Amar, Monteil, Tauxier, Aubert . . .

The marriage arrangements are made by the respective fa of the two betrothed, after the young people have been consulted. The request is officially made to the parents by an intermediary, a man of caste or a sénanku. It is accompanied by ritual gifts offered to the fa of the girl. In the Bougouni region the request is accompanied by ten kola nuts, because ten is a complete number that
[801] designates good events and future births. (Nine kola nuts are offered
576 to present condolences, four as a sign of greeting. To send three
[431] nuts would be insulting, and 19 nuts, marking incompleteness, would be a sign of lack of confidence.) The first kola nuts to be offered
[824] are always wrapped in one or two karite leaves, symbol of life and of fecundity. If the ten kola nuts are accepted, it means that the father has opened the way to the marriage. The intermediary then make a second trip the following week, bringing a cock for sacrifice to the ancestors and ten more kola nuts; during a third trip he offers another cock and ten more kola nuts before the entire assembled family of the young girl, witnessing that the girl may meet her fiancé. In the course of the fourth trip, the intermediary leads the girl to the fiancé's family, where she will be confided to the wife of the head of the family who will undertake her education.

584 She returns to her own family every year at the beginning of the rainy season and goes back to her future in-laws at the start of the dry season.

583 Every year she takes home 30 kola nuts and three cocks, and
584 the young man's fa begins to pay the bride price which traditionally came to eight oxen and five sheep. The girl returns at the dry season bringing fonio, fruits of the karite, and sumbalé (for making sauces), and other products.

583 She is married after the appearance of the first menses, and
585 her husband continues to pay the bride price in the following order: a cow, a bull, a heifer ...

583 Throughout the engagement period, the young man must
584 cultivate the field of his future parents-in-law.

583 Among the Bambara who currently practice the exchange of young girls between two families for marriage purposes, the compensation is no longer paid, although gifts and contributions are still given.

584 On the day of the marriage the girl is accompanied by an
585 attendant who represents her twin, while the young man also is aided by an attendant, and the two couples symbolize the union of the two couples of [94] primordial twins. Finally, the young girl is carried up to the abode constructed for her by her husband. She is followed by a cortege of seven women, each carrying part of the bride's gifts. The investigation being carried out by Mme. Dieterlen in the Bambara country indicates that the seven women represent the seven
826 seeds that each man possesses in his clavicles; the bride is the fonio seed that is brought to the husband's village, for marriage is considered to be a cultivation.

The marriage of twins requires slightly different rites. When the twins are not of the same sex, the boy must deflower the girl before she marries (there is only one intercourse). If the twins are two boys, the first to marry must let his wife have relations with his twin. If the twins are girls, the husband of the first to be married must also unite with the second.

f. Death and Funerals

761 Death dissociates the different elements which make up the
764 person. The purpose of the funeral rites is to gather the spiritual

761 principles of the cadaver on altars or masks in order to preserve them 764 for the community.

The rites have undergone an evolution. Formerly the bodies 764 were hung from trees until they rotted, while the bones were kept. At present the bodies are buried. Only a band of cotton symbolizing the tongue of the deceased, that is, his word, is attached to the [744] branch of a tree. If the deceased was an initiate of the Komo, the society plays an important role in the funeral rites.

All these rites have been studied by G. Dieterlen and Tauxier. 766 Monteil has described at great length the funeral ceremonies of a chief: the three rifle shots recalling his combats, the lamentations of the women, the notification of the village notables, the offerings of relatives and friends, the alms at the crossroads, and finally, the inhumation. The body is prepared, the head shaved, the interior cleaned with water and salt. A paste of water and ground cowry is put into the body openings (the ground cowries possess a divine spirit assuring the preservation of the cadaver). The body, and particularly the head, is daubed with this same paste, then the body is laid on its right side, feet to the north (a woman would be laid on her left side). Finally, the funeral celebration takes place, with the ritual feast 765 and the purifications. Seven days later the celebration of commemoration (Sangha) takes place, followed by the mourning of the women for forty days. After this time the deceased is transformed into a living ancestor.

763 The Bambara receive omens of their death or of a chief's death from certain signs given them in the bush, such as coming across a chameleon on a red anthill, the cry of a certain mythical hyena, the passing of certain crying monkeys or certain birds.

Certain gifted beings have the ability to perceive the departure of a person's spiritual forces and his imminent death. Sometimes they are able to bring back these forces and reinstate them in the body to save the man in danger.

[95] g. Ancestor Worship

769 After his death a man is transformed into a living ancestor 773 and is the object of a cult. The cult is closely connected to the agricultural cults; the ancestors are efficient vital forces which

769 participate in men's lives, protect them, and make their fields
775 fertile. The farming tools are presented at their altars before the tillage, and every year their souls come to animate the maskers who dance in their honor under the supervision of the Komo. After the grain is threshed, they receive the first products and are offered sacrifices.

h. Other Rites

788 Besides the rites concerning the person, the Bambara have others, such as those relating to the household wastes where the forces of men are accumulated. The purpose of these rites is to offer these forces to Faro and to regenerate and purify men. The wastes are burned periodically, the men breathe in the fumes, and the ashes are thrown in the river. Sacrifices are offered to the god, and special dances accompany the ceremony.

Rain rites common to all of Africa are practiced in May by
796 the members of the Kworé society. The rites for renewing the year involve individual, familial, and collective participation. The signs of the world are traced on the walls of individual or collective sanctuaries, and by the intermediary of a sacrifice on the altars, by dances and rhythmic chants, man renews the cardinal points and the forces of the world which in turn renew his soul. (All these rites have been described by G. Dieterlen in the Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

B. Special Technique In General Usage

773 In Bambara thought, "every technique is a reparation taught man by Faro, a palliative to the cosmic disorder which is generally caused by an infraction of taboo ... Men first lived by gathering their food, then later by fishing and hunting; they used only their hands. Little by little the techniques appeared, following a chronology remembered by the Bambara of today. The first material to be used was the fiber of the nyama tree frond which were made the first fishing nets, the first sling, the first covering for the sexual parts." (1) The second material was wood from which the farming

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1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

Bozo MS6

Ba

773 tools and the throwing weapon were made. Then, unfired pottery and weaving were invented; and men finally came to know stone tools, iron and the forge. The technique of making dwellings seems to have developed more slowly.

a. Fishing

Ba
Bo
226 Side by side with populations who specialize in the art of fishing,
463 such as the Bozo or the Somono caste, all the Bambara fish in
564 the [96] rivers or watercourses in the neighborhood of their dwellings. A detailed study has been made by J. Daget (1). The Somono, who are the caste of Bambara fishermen, use traps and nets for fishing; the Bozo remain faithful rather to harpoons and small nets. They are
Ba the ones who almost always make the pirogues, for they alone may
Bo enter in rapport with the spirit of the water, Faro. The nets are of
286 knotted mesh made with a weaver's shuttle, sia, and a cylindrical
227 mold, pako. The band of the net, as it is being made, is nearly always attached to a wooden bridge especially conceived for this purpose, the kale or dio soyo kala, a regular tetrahedron whose edges
Ba are about 20 centimeters long, one of which is prolonged by a handle
Bo 1.50 meters long. The fisherman, seated on the ground, puts the
[283 bridge before him, keeping the handle close to his leg. The fibers
824] used in netmaking are da (Hibiscus cannabinus), kie (Figna unguiculata), cotton, and now European thread.

Bo
226 The Bozo construct weirs from cut and joined tree branches; the weirs assume several different forms according to the regions and
Bo the snares used. Fish are used for human consumption; they are eaten
Ba fresh, grilled, fried or boiled, or preserved by smoking or drying. Oil,
251 used for cooking and as a lubricant, is extracted from certain fish,
252 such as the tineni.

Ba
226 Fishing in Bambara villages is done communally under the direction of a fishing chief at the time the waters recede. Precise rules of fishing rights and of rents due the masters of the waters are respected everywhere.

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1. Jacques Daget, "La pêche dans le delta central du Niger" [Fishing in the Central Delta of the Niger], Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. XIX (1949), No. 1.

b. Pottery

323 Pottery is entirely fashioned and fired by the women of the blacksmiths' caste, masters of the fire. The modelling is done in two ways, either by hollowing a mass of clay with the aid of a cylindrical stone (2), or by rolling a cylinder of clay around a mold. The decoration is generally a double line of chevrons imprinted around the neck and the foot by the potter's twisted bracelet. The firing is done in the open air over a wood fire. [531]

c. The Forge

326 Wood, iron, metals in general, are fashioned by the blacksmiths. The blacksmith's workshop and the objects he makes are simple, but they are rich in symbolic representations. "The forge represents the artisan: the furnace is his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red-hot iron is beaten by the hammer, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and the thunderbolt." (3) With his rudimentary tools spread on the ground under a shelter, the artisan forges all farming instruments, the principal one being the hoe. The
412 hoe, [97] according to its shape, is considered to be male or female.
831 The female hoe has a short handle with an ovoid swelling at the end,
[801] into which sticks the point of an iron triangle. The three sides of this triangle are three arcs of a circle; three, symbol of masculinity, represents here the clitoris, the male principle which sustains the
[773 double, the dya, of the woman. (According to myth, it was with the
241] aid of this part of the body that the first being of female sex inaugurated agricultural labors.) The male hoe has a slightly trapezoidal iron part which is attached to the handle in the same manner. The four sides symbolize the femininity of man sustained by the prepuce. Thus,

2. M. Griaule, Masques dogons [Dogon Masks].

3. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

412 831 the peasant digs with the male hoe and covers with the female hoe; the work done with the female double of the peasant and the male double of the wife symbolizes the sexual union. (1)

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1. M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, "L'agriculture des Bozo," [Bozo Agriculture] Journal des Africanistes [Ed., Journal de la Société des Africanistes, 1949.]

d. Basketry

285 Basketry is done by everyone, men and women; it plays a large part in the construction and furnishing of the house. Sometimes the lofts are immense baskets, woven on the diagonal. In certain regions a great mat is wrapped around the exterior wall of the round hut. The doors of mud huts are often coarse mats woven diagonally [531] which are placed before the opening. But much finer mats, made from fibers of different colors and with geometric designs with a symbolic meaning, cover the ground for sitting or sleeping.

e. Weaving, Clothes, Ornaments

291 [824] The first article of clothing was the fiber skirt made from the nyama (Bauhinia reticulata, or Bauhinia thonningii) and the covering for the sexual parts which are still worn during religious ceremonies.

[773] Mythology designates cotton as the first fiber to be woven.

286 Weaving is one of the most widespread techniques. Cotton, spun by the women, is woven by the men, in olden times by the captives, who work in the open air near the huts, in the shade of trees in the courtyards or in the public places. A primitive loom made of four vertical wooden parts connected by horizontal shafts and driven by pedals weaves long bands. The warp and woof form a ground stich and symbolize a being of intelligence and eloquence. Moreover, a science of the bands exists which is based on the symbolism of colors, designs, and numbers.

822 The Bambara distinguish three fundamental colors: white, red, and black. Each of these three tints has its history and its role

822 in the rites. "Red is the color of the middle regions of the world.
It characterizes dry heat; it is the color of anger and of justice,
that of the king, center of the kingdom." Black or indigo (2) is
identified with the North and the [98] rainy season. It evokes
impurity, obscurity. It denotes sadness and the end of labor. The
South accords with the ancestors and the color white which represents
light and purity; it is the color of Faro. The whole system
286 of bands woven from different colored threads according to various
822 designs translates the different conditions of the wearer; for each
band has its own history, its definite use, and its cosmogonic correspondences.
The study of this was begun by G. Dieterlen in *Essai
sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion] and is being
291 pursued at the present time. Today the form of clothing varies according
to the age and sex of the wearer. Young children are nude,
with the loins girt with a cotton string or with a belt of blue beads or
cowry shells. Sometimes, two small copper bells attract the protection
of Faro by their sound. Up until their marriage, the young
girls wear a loincloth passed between their legs and held in place
by eight bead belts. When they are married, women wear the loincloth
open, attached at the waist, and a cotton handkerchief covers
[854] their hair. When a child is born, another cloth knotted at the chest
holds the infant astraddle on the mother's back A chief's wife
[554] wore a piece of material made of seven bands which she threw over
her shoulder. Very young boys wear short drawers whose form varies
with the age classes. Later they are dressed in a short tunic with a
neck opening cut out and fitted sleeves, and in ample short breeches
[801] formed of three bands (the masculine number), passing between the
legs and three bands on each side covering the thighs. The waist is
also encircled by four times three bands, numbers of femininity and of
masculinity. Over their clothes, men and women wear a large cloak
with an opening cut out in the middle for the head and whose ends
are sown together, leaving large openings on each side. These
cloaks have a large pocket in front and are embroidered with symbolic

2. Zahan, *Les couleurs chez les Bambara du Soudan français* [Colors Among the Bambara of the French Sudan], *Notes Africaines*, 1951.

291 designs. European influence has naturally made itself felt in the
[177] fashions, and European thread is replacing native cotton thread, but
the color symbolism in the bands is retained. Even though European
fabrics invade the markets more and more, the traditional clothes
remain the most sought after, although they have undergone certain
modifications inspired by European fashions even while remaining
very original.

Although the Bambara go barefoot, in certain circumstances
291 they make ornamented clogs to give to the new bride. These sandals
531 are decorated with geometric designs, engraved with a hot iron by
585 the blacksmith, that symbolize the twinship, the multiplication of
children, the parents, the husband's family, the couple's language,
and the sealing of the association. These signs are encircled by the
sign of the union of the whole. Also, the whole ritual of taking
possession lasts for several days.

302 Coiffure. At the present time, the adult males no longer
wear the traditional coiffure consisting of two plaits at the side, but
the children still have their hair shaved and braided according to custom.
Thus, the uncircumcised boys wear a crest of hair going from
the forehead to the nape of the neck, while the rest of the head is
shaved. The crest symbolizes the [99] divine serpent. The children
of blacksmiths also wear, at the sides of the head, two circles
of hair which are cut by lines representing the forge. When a child
is born after the death of several brothers and sisters, only half of his
head is shaved in mockery, so that the dya subject to this pretended
neglect will decide to stay in the child. The children of Marabouts
have their hair shaved in such a manner that it forms a spiral which
starts in the middle of the skull and covers the whole head. Afterwards,
bands of hair are shaved in a manner to trace a cross on this
spiral. The little girls wear a small braid across the forehead, falling
on the left side, while married women wear a braid at each side
of the head. These braids are made by adding fibers of the da,
shining with karite, plaited with the hair. Finally, the women wear
301 22 gold rings at the ears, images of the 22 primordial elements, or
sometimes a single large ring in the form of a crescent closed by
threads of red cotton, which is a résumé of the 22 others. These
rings keep impure words from the ear, which plays an important
[178] role in generation; it is through the ornamentation that the spirits
hear what is said to man.

304 773 The Bambara decorate their faces and bodies with numerous scarifications, with the aim of conferring on the wearer the qualities symbolized by the scars. By their influence on the character and temperament of an individual, they help him to come up to the ideal man. These marks are associated with the myth of the origin of agriculture. They are eight small scars: two vertical ones at the root of the nose, three under each eye. They imitate the facial marks of the mythical being, half man, half animal, who taught men how to cultivate the soil. (1)

1. S. de Ganay, "On a form of cicatrisation among the Bambara," Man.

f. Arrangement of the Settlements

361 The Bambara village follows rules of development which allow a stranger to recognize the disposition of the huts immediately and to single out a chief's house, that of a blacksmith, or that of any other member of the society. In fact, the village is built to the north or east of the protective tree. To the south of the village, [778] is the sacred wood, dwelling place of the chief of the spirits, where the religious ceremonies and the initiation rites take place. As more families come to live in the village, they build their huts around that of the chief, except to the east, for the chief must see the sun rise. The oldest son of the chief, his eventual successor, will have his own plot near his father's. The house of the Komo is situated outside of the village, to the south or west, hidden in a wood or a thicket. At the edge of the village is a round cabin, the house of the Nyama, in the middle is a square cabin with painted walls, house of the Gna (see the chapter on religion). In the center of the village, a cleared place around a doubalé serves for public meetings; the elders hold their councils under the branches of the doubalé.

764 554 [100] Finally, the cemetery of the free men is found outside the village, to the west; that of captives and people of caste is to the south of the free men's cemetery.

326 620 Every village has its blacksmith, for he is life, and the village could not subsist without him. Before the French conquest,

Before the French conquest,

712 Bambara villages were fortified. They were protected by a triple enclosure of clay blocks following a line of beams that sheltered the sentinels. The first wall enclosed the village and the surrounding gardens, the second circled the interior of the village, and the third surrounded the chief's houses. These walls could be as high as five meters and as wide as two meters at the base. They had a ditch in front of them and were re-inforced by steps. Considerable ruins of these fortifications may still be seen in the Kourolamini at Ténintu (Bougouni circle).

342 House construction. (1) Throughout the Sudan, house construction is carried out during the dry season. The same is true for repairs, except for the most urgent caused by damage from rains, streaming waters, violent winds, or by the ravages of termites.

342 361 [illegible] 778 Choice of the site. The choice is often made near a temporary or permanent watercourse where wells may be sunk. A soothsayer or Marabout is next consulted, who reveals the existence of a spirit whose favorite place is the cailcedra; if the spirit is benevolent, the installation is authorized, and the sacred tree becomes the altar of the collectivity. It is bathed with periodic sacrifices.

342 Types of habitation. 1. The round hut with thatched roof (tuba bo); 2. the square or rectangular hut (bili) with flat roof.

401 Round hut. The man drives a stake to which he attaches a cord 1.50 meters long at the most, which is also tied to the head of a hoe. The man circles the stake and traces a circumference that will be the scheme of the house. No foundation is laid. A series of double pickets (kassassin) is set up around the circumference. A bamboo strip is passed in and out between the double stakes, and this basketwork is raised from the ground up to a height of about two meters.

When the cylinder forming the walls of the base is finished, a door is cut, facing south, 25 centimeters from the ground and 1.50 meters high. One then plasters with banco, that is, with earth dug not far from the hut by the young people and made into a paste with a mixture of fonio straw, cow dung, and water drawn by the women. The roof ~~is~~ constructed on the ground. A circumference equal to that

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1. Information, in part, given by Moussa Traoré, from the village of Gouàni (Diemandougou canton), Bamako circle.

342 of the hut is traced; around this, four large bamboo stakes are erected which are all tied together at one end with a fiber rope. A large stone is placed on top of the pyramid to weigh on the stakes and keep them properly apart. Near the top, two bamboo strips are tied around the four stakes, one on the outside and the other on the inside: this is the midio. Other stakes are slipped between the four principal ones and are attached to the double hoop. Equally spaced, [101] seven or eight other circles are tied on, descending toward the base of the cone. For covering the roof, straw of tji le, very thin and white, is chosen, which will be the most rainproof, or else straw of black uro-ba-bi, "hyena grass", coarser and less esteemed. A layer of straw is spread on, attached to the top, and sewed to the first two circles. A third hoop placed over the two others keeps the straw in place. Then a second row is put on and sewed to the last hoop, at ground level. The succeeding rows then are laid from the bottom up to the top in such a manner that they partially cover each other. When the bottom row has been sewed, the roof is lifted, and a small child slips inside to pull in the bamboo needle used to sew the straw to the hoops. When the roof is entirely sewed, a man climbs up, knocks the stone off the top, and takes its place. He slips a hoop made of six bamboo strips over the first three hoops of the roof, attaching it with the aid of two crossed sticks that pierce the roof. He gathers the straw at the top between the ends of the four stakes which are sticking out and knots and plaits it "like a woman's hair." If the roof is to cover a woman's hut, this is not done, but the straw which sticks out is folded down and held by the first hoop. Finally, from 15 to 30 young men assemble and lift the roof onto the hut.

At the present time, walls of basketwork and banco are replaced by walls made of molded banco bricks, dried in the sun.

Rectangular or square hut. This form is of recent importation [177] in the Bamako and Bougouni circles; it is frequently found starting at Ségou and up to the Sahel.

This type is constructed with dried bricks. When the roof is flat, it rests on forked wooden posts that are planted in the ground or that stand on big flat stones. There are five, seven, or nine of these posts, including a central one. Beams are placed in the forks; joists go across the supports. The whole is covered with matting which is packed with a layer of banco mixed with karite butter or with nere flour. The roof is constructed with a slight incline to let the water run off, and it is tamped with the bumbuli, a sort of wooden

342 shovel. A coping of bricks is then laid out around the roof, leaving room for the gutters which spill into the streets. These houses may be topped with a second roof, a thatched cone. The four chief timbers are set at the four angles of the house. There is a door in the first ceiling, and precious goods or objects are kept in this part of the house. As in the round huts, the door always opens to the south.

[237] The outside of the houses are plastered with earth mixed with cow dung; on the inside, the floor and lower part of the walls are daubed with black earth mixed with fresh cow manure and bark from
[824] the jumbo tree (Napoleona Heudelotii); the upper walls and the ceiling are covered with white river clay. Where the two colors meet,
[531] lines of festoons traced with the finger symbolize the descent of the third Word. On the white walls are painted ladders, calabash spoons, animsla, signs conveying [102] the worldly situation of the owner as well as the soul of the artist.

[365] The periphery of the entrance door is daubed with fresh cow
[769] dung every 15 days, and more liberally with rotted cow dung once a year before the rains. This custom is linked to ancestor worship.

Canari [earthenware vessels] containing certain plants are
353 buried under the bed of the head of the family; other plants and
352 juice from roots are hidden under the women's beds. The boli are hooked to the roofing of the houses for they must touch neither earth, water, nor fire. Nets, diakumadjulu, are hung from the ceiling; they hold clothes or calabashes for the food; mats or animal skins are spread on the ground; beds, different-sized calabashes, and stools complete the furnishings. The different huts belonging to one family
351 are surrounded by a wall that opens into the vestibule of a hut with
342 two doors, oriented north-south. This is where the head of the family receives strangers. In the inside court are found hearths made
[354] of three stones, mortars for millet, and chicken coops, a sort of small square hut made of clay mixed with straw. The granaries,
343 constructed on piles, have the form of round huts. They are divided
251 into four parts, where the four principal grains are kept: millet, rice, fonio, ground nuts. Some grains may be kept together in the same compartment, for example, millet and ground nuts. Certain granaries, bonio, are veritable cigar-shaped pots made by the blacksmiths' wives. When the bonio is finished, it is cut into sections

343 which are dried. Then it is reassembled without sealing the pieces
251 together, and as the level of the provisions goes down, the unnecessary sections are taken off. The kitchens are situated to the west of the rooms.

Arrangement of the huts in a concession. The chief's hut is
342 always to the east, for he must see the sun rise. His hut is often
361 quadrangular and has several rooms. The women's huts are generally round; each has its kitchen situated to the west and closed by a separate lock. Private shower rooms are reserved for husbands and
[514] wives. Privy cabinets with two holes, one for urine and one for stool, are stopped up and condemned when they are full.

312 Finally, the well is sunk in the middle of the court or else in the immediate proximity of the concession. Water is drawn directly with a calabash fixed to a long rope.

Sometimes individual huts are constructed on piles for pro-
342 tection against mosquitoes at night; the only opening is a trap door in the floor by which the hut is entered.

g. Tombs

764 An old custom had the family heads buried in their huts. The Fama were buried in the courts of their fortified palaces, to the northwest. Babies were buried near their mothers' huts, for their return was awaited. At the present time the Bambara are buried in cemeteries following Moslem or animist custom.

[103] The brotherhood priests dig the graves; tombs may be
[767] individual or collective. Monteil (Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta]) describes a chief's tomb: the vault has the form of a parallelepiped; the lower base is one meter wide and two long, the upper base three wide and two long, and a vertical partition of 1. 50 meters forms a right angle with the bases.

In Ouassoulou the custom was to dig a common tomb of several chambers for the whole family. A square entrance about two meters high and two wide led into a narrow corridor that opened on a first chamber reserved for children; another corridor connected the first chamber with a second, larger one reserved for women and for adult males; from this a third corridor led to a last chamber, a smaller one for heads of the family. An oil lamp was placed at the

764 left of each chamber's entrance and was left to go out by itself. The body was placed in the middle of the chamber, the feet to the north and the head to the south. At the time of a new burial, all the long bones were gathered in one corner of the chamber and all the skulls in another, for the number of deceased was verified by these. Finally in the Kokum region hundreds of tumuli cover vaults consisting of a [346] heart-shaped chamber cut in the laterite and preceded by a vestibule to the west and by steps cut into the rock which lead to the open air. The outside and inside doors are closed by a slab of laterite. The outside door is hidden under the tumulus, with three equally-spaced stones marking the location. The skulls are arranged in a dome and separated from the long bones. Lastly, the tomb of the village's founding ancestor is found in the center of the village, to the north of the old fortified court of the chiefs' house.

III. Art

517 The Bambara conception of art is very different from the occidental idea of art for art's sake. Every object that we find beautiful has a precise social, religious, or technical significance for the Bambara: "The art of the Blacks is purposeful ... it is gratuitous projection in a material of ideas and knowledge which bring the user or spectator nothing other than themselves. Doubtless crude in the first stages, often the product of superficial knowledge or even of calculated errors, the esthetic sense of the Blacks is clarified and affirmed as they learn and as they pass from a 'light knowledge' to a knowledge of the great secrets. It seems impossible to an educated man that he could make an abstraction of his knowledge to judge a dance or to become enthusiastic over the playing of a clever harpist. What we call beauty is for the Black the adequacy of the object to represent that for which it is created." (1)

1. M. Griaule, "L'art nègre" [Negro Art], Présence africaine.

532 The masks conceal the person and transform the human being into a supernatural being. They are the privileged instrument of the [769] nyama, the first [104] model having been carved to fix the vital force of the first dead ancestor in a wooden figure. "The society of

532 the masks is an entire world, and when it sets itself in motion in the public place, it dances the movement of the world, it dances the system of the world." (1)

1. Ibid., "Dieu d'eau" [God of Water].

A. Statuary

Sculpture is man's work, done by the blacksmiths. It is of religious inspiration.

There are three centers of fabrication, whose productions differ in their form. These are the regions of Bamako, Bougouni (a veritable land of blacksmiths), and Kinian, of which the latter covers part of the Sikasso, Koutiala, and Ségou districts. (2)

2. Passim, Lem, "Sculptures soudanaises" [Sudanese Sculptures], Arts et métiers graphiques, Paris, 1948.

They make female statuettes, fertility statuettes, marionettes 545 used for theatrical representations given by the young people, masks for the different societies, and, in particular, a whole series of stylized antelopes, special symbols of the tchi wara dancers.

532 171 "Like the Chinese sculptor of the Han period, the Bambara sees and fixes forms in terms of profiles. He practices openwork carving, cutting silhouettes which appear against the light as hieroglyphs with fixed and suggestive outlines. Giving interpretations to signs and forms borrowed from familiar animals, the Bambara combine and associate them to create figures emblematic of the tribe or clan, figures of recognition. This symbolic zoomorphism, the basis of heraldry, is that of the peoples of the great Asiatic steppe, that of the peoples of Mesopotamia and of Asia Minor; it was, in part, that of the Egyptians of the age of the Pharaohs who achieved in the valley of the Nile, predestined for this by its situation and its resources, the synthesis of a double culture." Thus it is that the sculptor, in order to express his vision, often has recourse to the ideogram of geometric character, upon which is founded the conceptual character of the peoples of the steppe. (3)

3. Passim, F.H. Lem, Variété et unité des

532
171 traditions plastiques de l'Afrique noire
[Variety and Unity of the Plastic Art
Traditions of Black Africa].

532 A great variety of wood (4) is available to the sculptor, who chiefly uses fine-grained species whose fibers are not very sensitive, and who avoids woods that are too hard and too dense. The artist [412] works with green wood, generally with an adze, or chip-axe, which probably is derived from the hoe. This instrument serves for rough chipping the mass and for establishing the secondary volumes; it gives the statue a singular "faceted" aspect. The work is completed [412] by means of a knife and gouges. A skillful technique makes it possible to give the wood a patina; it is blackened by burying the pieces in certain types of mud, by being immersed in palm oil, and daubed with lampblack. The wood is reddened by applying plasters made by grinding barks and making pastes from them. The objects so treated are [105] lengthily polished with skins and take on the sombre, brilliant aspect of old bronzes. The patina of the pieces is an important element of their beauty.

The art obserwes stylistic conventions, such as the deformation of normal appearances. In the structure of the mass, convention regulates the proportion of the parts, of the solid portions and the hollows; it regulates the development of the secondary volumes and of the surfaces of the different planes, their extent and their lines of contact. In its volume, the statuary obeys an almost immutable canon: to a cylindrical trunk is attached a head that is enormous in proportion to the other members, which are confined to narrow limits; the lower members are much shorter than in nature. The oversized head is a convention related to ancestor worship. The head is sculpted in concave style, and the entire figure is subordinated to a marked geometrization.

321
531 The blacksmiths also work gold by using the "lost wax" method, or by hammering, embossing anf fixing thin leaves of gold,

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4. Passim, H. Lavachery, "L'art noir d'Afrique et son destin" [Negro Art of Africa and its Destiny], Présence africaine.

326 as well as of silver, on a wooden core. The thrones of the ancient [531] Bambara chiefs were covered in this manner. Today the golden ornaments are no longer reserved exclusively for the wives of kings. [301] Bracelets, pendants, and necklaces are produced in large quantities in a filigree work in which the Black excels.

B. Ceramics

323 The land is very rich in pottery, but Bambara men do not model clay, pottery being a woman's art. Inversely, the women do not work on statuary.

C. Painting

531 The Bambara paint murals on the sanctuary walls with ocher 386 and a millet paste. The priests make these drawings periodically. The walls of the young people's huts are also decorated with symbolic motifs: calabash spoons, festoons, ladders with 22 bars, drawings of hands, lines of chevrons. The young girls come to paint these, [337] with clay from the river or with a mixture of clay and cow dung. All these geometric drawings are signs representing not only the cosmogony, but a subtle translation of all the movements of the executing artist's soul. They are a veritable form of writing.

D. Music

533 771 Music is a privileged art (1) because it is bound to instruments, that is to say, to materials, to the human body by the voice and the dance, to numbers by the rhythm, to medicine, to divination, and to religion.

534 771 [106] In a report to the French Institute of Anthropology on February 18, 1948, Mme. G. Dieterlen described the structure and symbolism of the two Bambara musical instruments, the Sema guitar and the royal drum.

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1. Griaule, Passim, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the African Arts], Présence africaine.

534 771 "The form of Bambara musical instruments is governed by a symbolism which enters into the metaphysical and religious system of this population."

a. The chief instrument is the drum, the tabale, reserved to kings and chiefs. The mythical prototype of this instrument was made of copper, a primordial metal whose vibration is likened to that of light, of sound, of water, and of speech in this population.

The instrument today is composed of two parts: a square wooden frame covered with goat's skin, which forms the body of the drum, and a detachable apron of engraved wood, in the form of a half-moon on one of its faces, which is attached to one of the drum's sides. This apron is covered with plaques of engraved and adorned wood, and, on the periphery of the rounded face, with a strap of leather trimmed with copper rings. This apron represents an ear which is at the same time that of the spirit of the air, that of the masters of sound, and that of the king. The copper rings are replicas of those worn in the ears by everybody; their role is to transmit sounds and rhythms to the eardrum.

The wooden drumstick used to beat the instrument is unusually long and anthropomorphous in form. It has a bell at one end. It represents Koumabana, the first of the eight ancestors in the Bambara pantheon who received "the Word" ...

b. The anthropomorphism of the harp [guitar?], ngoni, is very plain in the minds of its users.

The instrument's rectangular frame represents the mask of Koumabana, the ancestor who received the Word; the two side pieces are his eyes; the sound hole, his nose and his respiration; the tail-piece, his mouth and his teeth; the strings, eight in number, his words. It is also the image of his tomb, and the two rods that cross it represent the second and third ancestors who accompanied him in death. The frame also represents the face of the seer and his tomb, the two rods being the two millet stalks put in the ground with the cadaver. At the end of the handle, copper bells have the same role, technical and religious at the same time, as those attached to the apron on the drum described above.

534 787 Each sound given by each of the eight strings is a prayer. The seer plucks the strings separately, following their rank and according to the importance of the questioner and of the questions he

534 asks: modè (grandson) for unimportant subjects, hunting, voyages;
787 fadè (son of the father) for individual life, physical and moral; fa
(father) for the future, destiny, the public life of a man, his authority, his rule; fakoroke (father's older brother) for the plantings, the rains, for fortune; fa dogone (father's younger brother) for germination of the cereals; ba (mother) for everything concerning the women; [107] faso (father's house) for everything concerning the familial abode or the absent.

534 The principal efficacy of the harp is in bringing order, by the rhythms and sounds emanating from it, to all that is troubled in the march of events.

The harp presides at sacrifices, at cathartic or medical rites, at purifications, at apotropaic rites; at solitary meditations. Its high notes are celestial and symbolic of completeness; the low notes connote terrestrial things and incompleteness. Its playing commands arrivals and departures, proliferations and diminutions, calls to order; its presence at the edge of a pool, where it had been silently placed, is assurance of appeasement.

The harpist, before beginning his service, puts his mouth to
788 the orifice in the frame and murmurs to the master of the Word:
"Now it is your turn, organize the world." (1)

1. Passim, Griaule, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the Africain Arts].

533 Music, dance, and song are intimately linked in the religious
534 movement. Thus it is that a djo of the Samaké (Bougouni circle) is composed entirely of musicians who form an orchestra in which the whole scale is represented by eight different principal instruments, which are types of a multitude of others. There is one n'ganian-ba, an instrument made by hollowing out a trough in a tree trunk, which gives a very deep sound when rubbed; it is the bass which gives the cadence. Two to three tiorõ give a sharper sound; four to six tioun, a still sharper sound, and there are as many as ten fere, the instrument
533 with the sharpest sound. Finally, a host of N'ganian dyeli begin the
212 music as the griot quiets the crowd at the start. All these instruments have the form of a pirogue. In addition, the orchestra includes two singers and two dancers. Everyone wears masks, bonnets with crests

533 292 of black, red, and yellow fibers, clothes of plaited fibers, and the musicians wear a cuirass made of fana seeds (a sort of bean). The bass player wears a band in the back which reaches to his heels and describes a circle when the musician whirls in going from north to south and from east to west to give the cadence. The other musicians form a circle which the dancers and singers do not enter. Another djo is the So, where the musicians and the singers wear masks of wooden horses, except for two clowns who represent the masculine element in the midst of the crowd of young girls. Lastly, the third djo is the djõ buru (buru, "trumpet"). This is the djo of the slaves; they play the ivory horn and are clothed like the N'ganian, but the bass player represents a cow, and the others are the heifers who respond to the cadence indicated to them by their mother.

E. Literature

538 Bambara literature, entirely oral, is extremely rich. It is the monopoly of the griot who from their earliest days learn the stories, the proverbs, the mottoes associated with each [108] family. They recite very long and very numerous epic songs concerning each great family, accompanying themselves on the harp. Certain parts are recited, others are sung in chorus by the griot and his wife. These stories are at the same time historical narratives of heroes' exploits and the mythical history of a demiurge symbolized by the hero. An infinitely small part of these epic songs has been collected. Some Bambara proverbs and stories have been collected by Moussa Traoré in particular.

545 794 522 It is interesting to mention another literary production, one in which the creative inspiration of the artist plays a greater part: these are the narratives of the members of the Kworé brotherhood. The Kworéduga are clowns, or rather commedia dell'arte players. One is a Kworéduga by hereditary transmission or by natural bent. During his initiation in the bush, where he submits to ritual harsh treatment, the initiate learns never to lose his temper, no matter what the circumstances. He is taught a comic language, witty sayings. He is trained to observe men's character closely and to recite stanzas and couplets giving his observations.

545 Example:
794 Tiekoroba kolili (the old man who has nothing)
522 Ita rokina momindi (what you say is not liked)
Ida konieti aie (you are right)
N'ka idia dopina marmandi (but one doesn't like what you say)
Or again:
Demise fentili (the rich young man)
Ida dokma kakadi (one likes what you say)
Ida konie tinaie (what you say is not true)
N'ka idia dokma makadi (but one likes what you say)

545 The Kworeduga have the su (Moor) as taboo, and they accom-
534 pany themselves in singing with a sacred gourd, yaraba, which con-
794 tains seeds of Lufa cilindrica.

536 Finally, during the circumcision initiation period for example,
881 the child learns the sacred dances which often mime exploits of the mythical ancestors.

177 A certain evolution characterizes the native art which has been transformed in a curious fashion by contact with Europeans.
517 In European centers, prolonged contact with the Whites has confused the beliefs that inspired the art, but the artists have lost neither their taste nor their gifts. At the request of the Whites themselves, they have undertaken a controlled art, with the aim of pleasing the Europeans. Needless to say, even if it conserves some charm in its form, all this new art, which evolves with the same swift rhythm as our modes, remains terribly dead, for the true source of inspiration has dried up. This art no longer seeks to be true, but to be pretty; by this it signs its own death warrant.

[109]

CONCLUSION

I. Traditional Interpretation of Mental Characteristics

181

In the introduction to Religion Bambara, Tauxier insists on the mental characteristics: "The Bambara has remained rather openly fetishist"; he possesses "two dominant traits, which are absolutely undisputed and indisputable:

"1. He is a very good farmer.

181 "2. The Bambara makes a solid and disciplined infantryman ...
142 Mentally he is rather dull and stupid, physically he is stocky and
solid." Previously, the Abbé Henry had concluded in these terms:
"The Bambara is a farmer ... Well proportioned, his height is medium,
neither tall nor short. His chest is strong, and his short, thickset neck
supports a large head covered with black, wooly hair. Nothing in
his visage betokens spiritual force, energy, intelligence. His forehead
is receding, his eyebrow arches are rather pronounced, and his jet-
black eyes, of which the white part is slightly cream (!), are straight.
His jaws, nearly always well toothed, project slightly; he has strong,
thick lips, a short chin, cheekbones ... a little projecting, and his
flat nose is horribly open and squashed at its root.

145 "The wife, as well as the husband, is strong, robust. More
often than not she is knock-kneed, and this constitutional defect
doubtless comes from the fact that she is obliged, from her earliest
182 childhood, to carry rather heavy burdens on her head, burdens often
too heavy for her strength [sic]. Mentally, the Bambara has a mind
181 as thick as his body. Slow to understand and lacking curiosity, he has
no desire to improve his condition. 'What my fathers did, I must
do' -- that is his great principle ... Lazy, good-for-nothing even, he
believes he's done everything if he has enough in his granary to feed
himself and his family ... Timorous, he fears the European exactly
as a slave fears his master, and if he serves the European passably
well, the latter is greatly mistaken if he thinks he has gained the
native's affection. He detests the White, as he detests the Moslem;
the White is the conqueror, an anti-fetishist, and therefore an enemy."

Finally, M. Monteil, in his Monographie de Djenné [Djenné
142 Monograph], tells us in his turn: "... elongated skull and pronounced
302 prognathism; the black, wooly hair is often gathered in braids by the
young people ... the top of the head is often shaven, which makes
the forehead look larger. The women affect a sort of transversal
crest.

142 "The forehead recedes, the eyebrow arches project ... the
nose [110] flattened, the root of the nose squashed, the nostrils
gaping wide, the lips thick ... the teeth wide with little space be-
tween ... the neck large, the shoulders wide and straight, the chest
strong and long, the members robust, the joints thick. Rather often
for the woman, sometimes for the man, a fairly pronounced steatopygia.

142 The skin is in all tints, from light maroon to dark black. The height is a little above average . . .

181 "The Bambara is a bumpkin; he is dull and slow to understand, but he clings to his ideas, doubtless rare, and has an insurmountable stubbornness. He is patient; he endures every tyranny and submits to every calamity with a stupefying resignation. But when he has resolved to exact vengeance by force or by exercising his rights, nothing can stop him. He does not know how to present himself, he has trouble explaining himself, he always goes on interminably before coming to the point, and even though speaking deliberately, his eyes averted or fixed on the ground, he only pronounces half of the words, which makes it difficult to understand him."

These few extracts at least have the merit of giving a measure of the extent to which the Bambara is incomprehensible to the White.

II. Refutation of the Traditional Theory

The Bambara is, in fact, intelligent, patient, and stubborn, so many qualities indispensable for living in this difficult country. We have been able to show, in the course of this study, how coherent his metaphysical system was, its intellectual rigor, and how it influenced all social and economic life. But we must insist on this point: such a system is not the fruit of the idle speculations of a few privileged minds; it is lived by all, understood in its parts by all members of the society and in its totality by numerous old men.

153 181 The absence of a system of writing like our own obliges the Bambara to possess all this knowledge himself, and his prodigious memory astonishes the White. But the most remarkable thing in his intellectual makeup is the facility with which he has managed to seize our modes of thought, so different from his traditional thought, and to assimilate our vision of the world; there is no great school in France that is not within his reach. The astonishing ease with which he is able to assimilate our language and our thought is adequate proof of the suppleness of his mind which has always been trained in all the speculative subtleties.

181 The stubbornness he exhibits in certain cases is often his only manner of defending his traditions, which are the very stuff of his life. These traditions were formed in the course of thousands of years of experience in a hard country where life is not a natural thing.

|81| The upheavals caused by the colonization fascinate his curious soul, but their ultimate result is the uprooting and the destruction of the thing that permitted him to live and to defend himself against a harsh environment, the group. He defends himself against the White invasion by hiding; he prefers to appear stupid rather than to reveal [111] his system to the stranger and to confide to him what constitutes its force. The Bambara may seem lazy. In reality, he knows that agitation is impossible in this tropical climate; he is sparing in his movements in order to assure the maximum return from them. Moreover, moderation characterizes the whole of this sub-desert region. Never does any unconstraint develop generous forms; everything is condensed for maximum efficacity. The world is systematized into symbols which escape destruction. Exterior manifestations are useless in this country where the climate destroys everything. The only thing that resists is not matter, but spirit. The Bambara has systematically sacrificed all material luxury in favor of the speculative life, and his "averted eyes" are turned toward the inner life. It is perhaps because of that that he does not know how to "present" himself and that he doesn't sparkle like the Peul. He considers himself "a man of the soil," capable of enduring heat and cold and all the brutal changes that are visited on him by men or the elements. This is why he alone is able to render fecund a sterile land that has discouraged more than one of our technicians.

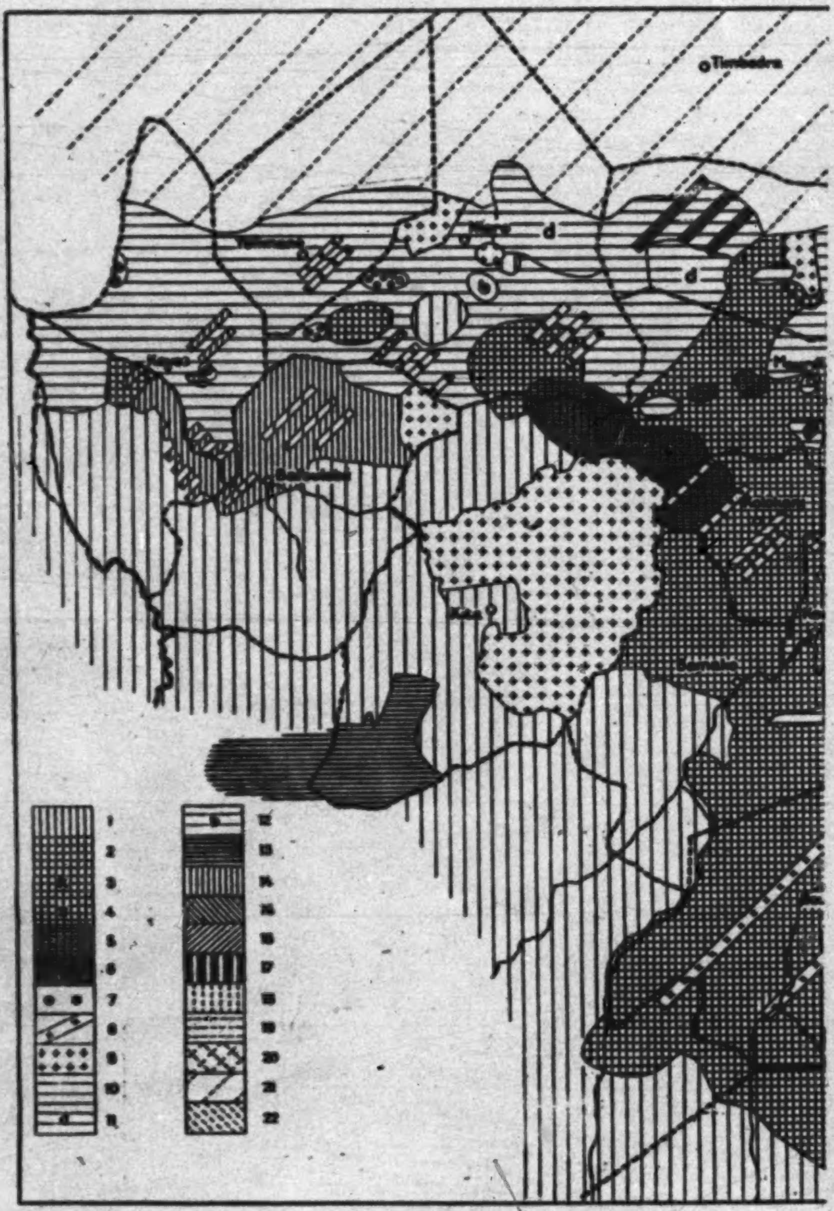
But what is perhaps the most important thing is the joy which fills the life of the Bambara. The women pound the cereals alone or in a group snapping their fingers in play; they spin cotton, sing, shout, laugh, cook, go seek dead wood in the bush, and draw water from the well or from a neighboring watercourse, all the while making waggish remarks on the small events of the day, for no detail escapes them. In the evening there are the Tam-tam, organized by the young people to celebrate a marriage, to thank a chief for his bounty, or for the simple pleasure of dancing, of losing oneself in the rhythm of the drums and rapid handclapping. At night, the Komo, surrounded by the dancers, comes to challenge a witch who terrorizes the village. A terrible fight ensues, with each one using his magic gifts. When the witch is vanquished, the village chief comes to felicitate the Komo chief publicly, and the women and and children gasp with pleasure. During a social evening, a griot

18 gathers several friends in a corner to listen to songs and recitations of the old times; all are in ecstasy, moved, revolted or consoled, according to what happens in the long, marvelous story. Then, there are the games and challenges of the children's societies, which seem to want to upset all the fine social order of the village by their drum beatings, their petty thefts, or their claims.

To be sure, the life of the Bambara is exempt from neither work nor difficulties. But still it knows joy, goodwill, and peace. And if there is one thing that it does not know, that is, indubitably, boredom.

3:Paques--150 S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8

101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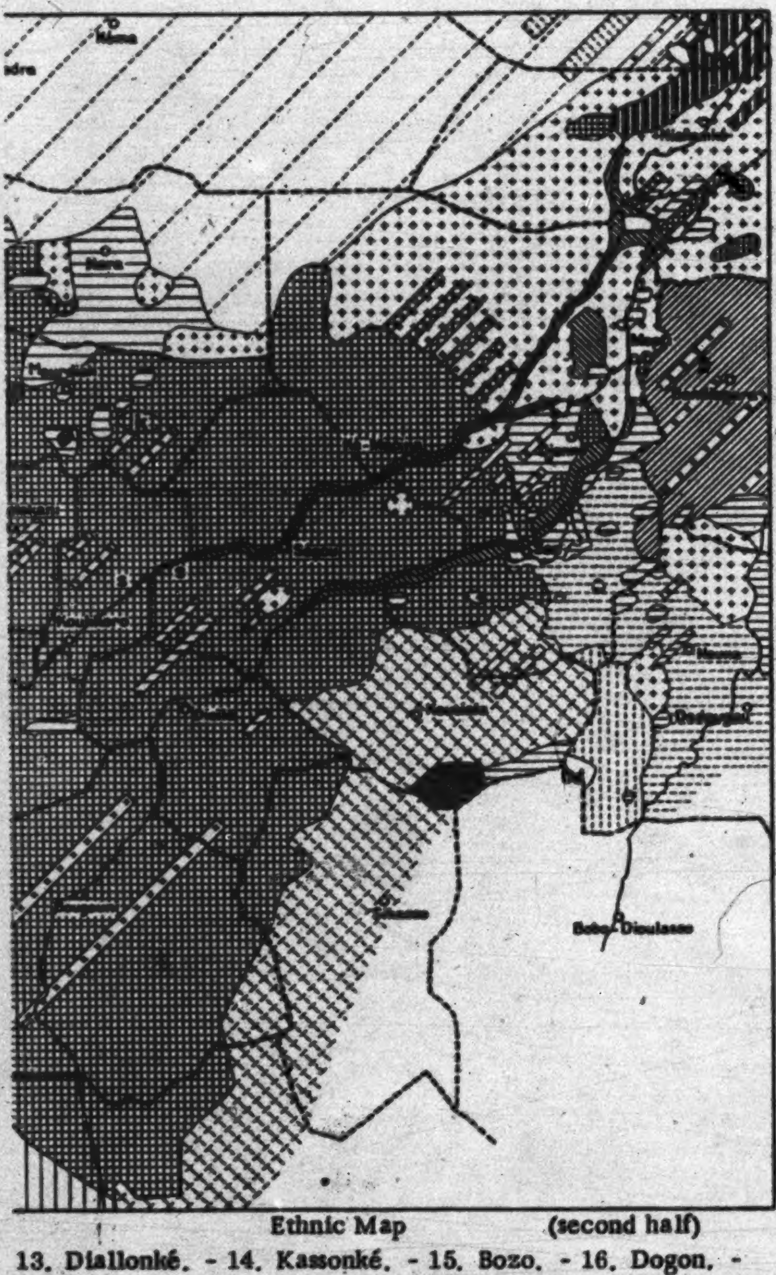
Ethnic Map (1st half)

1. Malinké. - 2. Bambara. - 3. Kalongo. - 4. Somono. - 5. Kagoro.
6. Dioula. - 7. Toucouleur. - 8. Diawambé. - 9. Peul.
10. Sarakolé (Soninké, Marka). - 11. Diawara. -- 12. Diarisso.
- - - - - Limit of subdivisions


Néma
Nara
Bobo-Dioulasso

Ethnic Map (second half)

13. Diallonké. - 14. Kassonké. - 15. Bozo. - 16. Dogon. - 17. Songhaï. - 18. Bobo-Fing. - 19. Bobo-Oulé. - 20. Senoufo. - 21. Maure. - 22. Touareg.

Oblique shading indicates mixed populations.

LES BAMBARA

[p. i]

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3: Paques FA8 Bambara

MONOGRAPHIES ETHNOLOGIQUES AFRICAINES
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de Londres

LES BAMBARA

par

Viviana PAQUES
C. N. R. S., Paris

[p. iii]

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1954

L'*Institut International Africain* patronne actuellement une série d'études se présentant sous l'aspect de monographies (les Bambara, les Songhaï, les Ibo, etc.), qui ont pour but de faire le point des connaissances actuelles sur chaque population africaine.

Or, l'étude des Bambara, des Dogons et d'autres peuples africains a été récemment renouvelée par les travaux d'ethnologues et de sociologues, tels que Marcel Griaule, Germaine Dieterlen, Jean Rouch, S. de Ganay, Zahan, etc. Cette école française a compris que toute étude resterait extérieure si elle ne prenait pour sujet principal la vision du monde propre aux Noirs et elle a montré que leur perspective religieuse informait toute leur vie intellectuelle, économique et sociale.

Viviana Paques, stagiaire au C. N. R. S., dresse le bilan de ses recherches. Son ouvrage est le résumé le plus objectif et le plus précis de tout ce que nous savons sur la démographie, la linguistique, l'économie, l'histoire, les traditions, l'organisation sociale et les aspects culturels des Bambara du Soudan français. Sans jamais abandonner le ton scientifique indispensable dans une telle étude, elle ouvre au passage, de passionnants aperçus sur l'âme des Noirs, sur leur cosmogonie, sur la cohérence de leur philosophie et et sur leur méthode pour résoudre l'éternel dualisme « pensée-action ». Si bien qu'on en vient à se poser sérieusement la question : s'agit-il d'une forme de civilisation en régression, ou s'agit-il d'une formule de vie, et peut-être de bonheur que le monde blanc n'a pas su comprendre et va peut-être détruire sans profit pour personne ?

[p. v]

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AVANT-PROPOS

Depuis 1945, l'Institut International Africain s'occupe de la préparation et de la publication d'une série d'Études ethnographiques de l'Afrique, ayant pour but de présenter, sous une forme commode, un résumé des connaissances actuelles sur les divers peuples de l'Afrique, concernant l'environnement naturel, l'économie et les métiers, la structure sociale, l'organisation politique, les croyances et rites religieux. Les documents déjà publiés fournissent la base de ces études, mais nombre de documents inédits provenant de rapports administratifs et des archives de sociétés missionnaires sont utilisés ainsi que des observations faites sur place et des communications spéciales par des ethnologues et autres personnes compétentes. Chacun des volumes de cette collection est consacré à un peuple ou à un groupe de peuples apparentés ; il contient une bibliographie détaillée et une carte géographique.

Le Comité de Direction de cette collection a été placé sous la présidence du Pr Radcliffe-Brown ; le directeur de l'Institut est chargé d'organiser la rédaction. La généreuse collaboration de nombreux instituts de recherche et de fonctionnaires des administrations, en Europe et dans des territoires africains, est assurée, ainsi que les services d'ethnologues expérimentés.

Les travaux ont été instaurés avec l'aide d'une subvention des British Colonial Development and Welfare Funds, sur la recommandation du Social Science Research Council. Cette subvention a été employée principalement, mais non exclusivement, pour le financement d'études se rattachant aux territoires britanniques. Une subvention supplémentaire du Gouvernement du Soudan anglo-égyptien a apporté une aide à la préparation et à la publication des sections intéressant ce territoire.

Le ministère de la France d'Outre-Mer et l'Institut français d'Afrique noire se sont intéressés à cette étude et grâce à leurs bons offices des subventions ont été octroyées par les Gouvernements de l'Afrique occidentale française et du Cameroun français pour la préparation et la publication des sections se rapportant à ces régions. Ces sections ont été rédigées par des ethnologues français, avec l'appui et les conseils de M. Griaule, professeur à la Sorbonne et du Pr Th. Monod, directeur de l'Institut français d'Afrique noire.

La collaboration des autorités belges pour cette étude a été obtenue grâce aux bons offices de feu le Pr De Jonghe, qui s'assura de l'intérêt de la Commission d'Ethnologie de l'Institut Royal colonial belge. La *collaboration de l'Institut pour la Recherche scientifique en Afrique centrale a été aussi accordée. Le travail concernant les territoires belges est effectué sous la direction du Pr Olbrechts, au Centre de Documentation du Musée du Congo belge, à Tervueren, où Mlle Boone, et les membres de son service, s'emploient au rassemblement et au classement d'une documentation considérable concernant les peuples du Congo belge et du Ruanda-Urundi. Ils travaillent en collaboration étroite avec les ethnologues qui sont sur place, auxquels les projets de communications sont soumis pour vérification.*

L'Institut international africain désire exprimer toute sa reconnaissance aux organisations officielles, dont l'aide financière a permis l'exécution de cette étude, et aux nombreux savants, directeurs d'organisations de recherche, fonctionnaires des administrations, missionnaires et autres, qui ont collaboré à ces travaux, et qui, en accordant des facilités à nos chercheurs, en lisant leurs manuscrits, partagent le mérite qui pourrait être attribué aux auteurs des diverses sections.

Étant donné que la valeur inégale des documents existants, et que la diversité des méthodes employées dans leur recueil ont été parmi les raisons pour lesquelles cette étude a été entreprise, il est évident que ces exposés ne peuvent être considérés comme complets et définitifs. On a l'espoir, cependant, qu'ils donneront une description assez claire de l'état actuel de nos connaissances, qu'ils indiqueront leurs lacunes et les points où des recherches complémentaires sont nécessaires.

Pour ce qui est de la préparation de ce volume, l'auteur et l'Institut sont reconnaissants à Mme G. Dieterlen, et à Mme G. Calame-Griaule dont les conseils ont été précieux.

CHAPITRE PREMIER

DÉMOGRAPHIE ET GROUPEMENTS TRIBAUX ET SOUS-TRIBAUX

I. — Nomenclature

A) DÉFINITIONS EUROPÉENNES

Monseigneur Bazin en 1906, dans son dictionnaire bambara, donnait comme étymologie de Banmana = les hommes du caïman, tandis que Mani ou Mali signifieraient ceux de l'hippopotame, les deux noms ayant une origine totémique.

Pour Élisée Reclus en 1887 *(Nouvelle géographie universelle,* t. XII : *L'Afrique occidentale)* Bamana signifie : rocher escarpé.

Delafosse *(Haut Sénégal-Niger)* en 1923 fait une distinction entre Bambara et Banmana.

Les Banmana seraient communément appelés Bambara par les Européens et les autres Soudanais. C'est le mot que l'on trouve dans le Tarikh-es-Soudan. Les Musulmans désignent sous le nom de Bambara tous les Soudanais non Musulmans. Ainsi les Dioula de Sikasso appellent Bambara les Sénoufo ; les Dioula d'Odienné appellent Bambara les Malinke non musulmans ; ceux de Haute-Volta, les Gbanian et les Dagari, etc. C'est pourquoi Delafosse nommera le peuple de Ségou, du Bélédougou, etc., comme il se désigne lui-même par le nom de Banmana, ce qui signifierait : le refus du Maître — par allusion à la légende d'après laquelle les Banmana auraient quitté leur pays d'origine (Ouassoulou) au début du XIIIᵉ siècle pour échapper au joug des conquérants Malinké.

Pour Monteil, Bambara viendrait de la racine Ba = noir.

B) DÉFINITIONS INDIGÈNES

Les Bambara se désignent souvent entre eux par des termes qui visent leur répartition géographique :

Ex. : Ceux du Beledougou sont les Beledugu-ka-u ;
Ceux du Kaarta sont les Kaarta-n-ka-u ;
Ceux de Ségou sont les Ségu-n-ka-u...

et chacune de ces expressions a en même temps une signification politique : par Ségu-n-ka-u on entend les gens du parti qui à Ségou exerce le pouvoir, le contexte seul précise de quelles gens il s'agit.

Entre elles, les fractions bambara se caractérisent parfois par des sobriquets : A ceux de Ségou, ceux du Kaarta disent avec ironie « ceux du Tu-kele-u » (ceux de la tresse unique) par allusion à la coiffure ou bien Nya-ni-nyele-u « ceux de Nya et de Nyélé » (Nya et Nyélé sont des noms de femmes très fréquents à Ségou). On peut aussi englober tous ceux d'un clan sous un vocable dérivé du nom du fondateur, ou de l'ancêtre du clan : ceux du Kaarta peuvent s'appeler Nya-Ngolo-la (les gens de Nya-Ngolo, ancêtre du clan) ceux de Ségou : Barama-Ngolo-la (les gens de Barama-Ngolo : ancêtre du clan).

Il existe aussi des sobriquets entre individus de tribus différentes. Les Soninké disent des Bambara : Dyonko (les esclaves) car pendant longtemps ils ont trafiqué des Bambara à la traite ; tandis que ceux-ci les nomment Marka Dialan'u (Marka Seer), car ils ont abandonné leur propre dialecte pour le dialecte bambara.

II. — Situation

A) Situation ethnique

Delafosse a donné une grande classification des peuples habitant le Haut-Sénégal-Niger. Malheureusement cette classification confond trop souvent la langue et les traits physiques. Ainsi il fait entrer les Bambara dans la famille Mandé qui se divise en trois groupes comprenant comme peuples principaux :

Premier groupe du Nord : trois peuples : les Bozo ; les Soninké (ou Sarakolé ou Marka) ; les Dioula.
Deuxième groupe du Centre : cinq peuples : les Kagoro ; les Banmana (ou Bambara comprenant la caste des Somono) ; les Khassonké (ou Mandingues) ; les Foulanké.
Troisième groupe du Sud : quatre peuples : les Diallonké ; les Samos ; les Samorhos : les Sias ; plus quatre petites tribus de classification douteuse : (les Blés ; les Natioro ; les Ouara ; les Sembla).

Les études plus récentes d'Urvoy, du Dr Pales et de Mlle Tassin de Saint-Péreuse qui ont porté sur de très nombreuses mensurations, permettront bientôt de fixer les caractères raciaux des populations soudanaises et d'établir une nouvelle classification.

B) Localisation géographique

Charles Monteil dans son étude des Bambara de Ségou nous dit qu'il est impossible de délimiter avec précision ce qui fut l'empire Bambara, car la frontière telle que nous l'entendons n'a pas de sens pour le Noir. En effet les empires n'ont pas ambitionné de dominer sur telle ou telle région ; ils se sont avant tout donné pour but l'exploitation du plus grand nombre possible d'individus, abstraction faite des pays et des races.

Actuellement, l'*Encyclopédie coloniale et maritime* considère que les Bambara forment un groupe de un million d'individus environ qui s'étend dans le sens ouest-est, depuis la région du Siguiri jusqu'au Macina à cheval sur le Niger et le Bani ; dans le sens sud-nord, de la Côte-d'Ivoire et la Haute-Volta jusqu'au Sahel de Nioro. De plus, nous en comptons 40.000 au Sénégal : colons arachidiers autour de Kaolak, Thiès, Diourbel, captifs au Fouta Toro, à Saint-Louis, etc. Mais ils sont surtout nombreux dans les cercles de Bamako (310.000), Ségou (190.000) et Bougouni (110.000). On peut y ajouter 125.000 Métis Peuls-Bambara dont 72.000 pour le seul cercle de Bougouni.

Plus précisément, la grande masse des Bambara se trouve répartie sur une région qu'on peut ainsi délimiter :

Au Nord-Ouest, trois tribus ont été cataloguées dans le Kaarta : les Dianguirté dans le cercle de Nioro, les Niamassa à Nioro et les Massassi au Sud de Nioro.

Au Nord, dans le Sahel, la région de Bakounou et du Waghadou est habitée par la tribu des Kalongo.

Au Nord-Est, les Bambara vivent dans le Macina, l'Issa-Ber, la région de Goundam et jusqu'à Tombouctou.

A l'Est, on les trouve dans le Bendougou, le Minianka (les rives du Niger et du Bani au Sud de San et Ségou étant occupées par la caste des pêcheurs Somono), et le Kénédougou.

Au Sud, dans le Ouassoulou.

Au Sud-Ouest, dans le Manding, le Bélédougou, le Fouladougou.

A l'Ouest, dans le Kangaran, le Bambouk et le Guidimaka, sur les rives du Sénégal.

En somme, l'habitat des Bambara s'inscrit à l'intérieur d'un large V dessiné par le cours inférieur du Sénégal et par celui du Niger.

C) TRIBUS VOISINES

Les Bambara sont le peuple le plus important du Soudan occidental et des cercles du Sud. Néanmoins, ils sont très mélangés à d'autres populations suivant les régions que nous délimiterons ultérieurement.

Ces principales populations sont les *Peuls* (Foula, Foulbé, Fellata) population nomade qu'on trouve dans toute l'Afrique occidentale, du Sénégal au Soudan égyptien. Elle parle la même langue que les Toucouleurs, *le poular.*

Les *Malinkés*, grand peuple mandingue parlant un dialecte proche du Banmana, se trouvent en Guinée et au Soudan (Satadougou, Nioro, Kayes, Bafoulabé, Kita, Bamako, Bougouni).

Les *Kassonkés* qui vivent dans la vallée du Sénégal en amont de Kayes, sont d'origine mixte malinké et toucouleur ; ils parlent un dialecte proche du malinké.

Les *Sarakollés*, Soninkés ou Markas sont un vieux peuple lié à l'histoire de l'empire de Ghana ; ils parlent un dialecte mandingue cousin du bambara. Ceux de Kouroumari parlent bambara et sont mêlés de sang bambara.

Dans le Mourdiah sur 14.000 Markas, une forte proportion est bambaraïsée.

Les *Songhaï*, peuple du Moyen-Niger, ont essaimé du pays de Niamey jusqu'au lac Débo, et à Djenné.

Les *Sénoufos* ou *Miniankas*, peuple important des cercles de San, Koutiala, Bougouni, Bobodioulasso, parlent le sénoufo.

Les *Bobos* dans la région de San, de Bobo-Dioulasso et de Dédougou, parlent le bobo, mais ils se divisent en deux grandes branches suivant leurs dialectes : les Bobo-noirs et les Bobo-rouges.

Les *Dogons*, reliquat des anciens habitants des pays nigériens de Bamako au lac Débo vivent en majorité dans Bandiagara et Douentza et parlent le dogon.

Les *Mossi* vivent dans Ouahigouya, Kaya, Tougan, Fada, et le cercle de Ouagadougou, Koudougou, Tenkodogo et Dédougou ; leur langue est le mòré.

Les *Toucouleurs*, originaires du Moyen-Sénégal sont surtout nombreux au Sénégal et en Mauritanie, ils vivent aussi dans la région de Kayes et Bafoulabé.

Enfin, les *Touareg* nomadisent de Goundam à Gouré ; leur proportion de sang blanc est faible ; il en va de même pour les *Maures*, berbères arabisés qui se recensent avec leurs anciens captifs noirs ; les tribus de la région nigérienne sont les Almoussakarés, les Attouajitens et les Euddès, ils parlent le touareg.

III. — Caractéristiques physiques des Bambara

L'histoire et l'ethnologie nous montrent que le Bambara actuel est le produit de plusieurs peuples dont l'origine nous est encore inconnue. Pourtant des caractères biologiques communs se sont précisés qui font que les Bambara eux-mêmes se distinguent physiquement des autres peuples, soit par la couleur (ils se disent moins noirs que les Bozo et les Sarakolé), soit par la charpente du corps et la musculature (ils sont grands, robustes, musclés, très différents en cela des « faibles Peuls »), soit par la forme du crâne au front fuyant (celui des Peuls est droit, « bombé et bosselé »).

Tauxier, dans son *Histoire des Bambara* en a donné une description anthropologique d'après les travaux des auteurs suivants : Quatrefages et Hamy, *Crania ethnica*, 1882 ; Dr Collomb, *Bull. de la Soc. d'Anth. de Lyon*. 1885 ; Hovelacque, *Les Nègres d'Afrique sus-équatoriale*, 1889 ; Dr Verneau, *Les races humaines* ; Lieutenant Girard, *Notes anthropométriques sur quelques Soudanais occidentaux*, 1909 ; Deniker, *Les races et les peuples de la terre* ; Chantre, *Contribution à l'étude des races humaines du Soudan occidental*, 1918 ; Dr Verneau, *L'homme, races et coutumes*, 1931.

De cette étude un peu rapide, car les observations ont porté sur très peu de sujets, nous retiendrons les traits suivants :

Sans atteindre l'ultradolichocéphalie du Malinké, le Bambara se caractérise par sa dolichocéphalie (indice céphalique horizontal 75, 65 ; pour Deniker 76, 4) et sa taille assez élevée (1 m. 71 chez les « aristocrates », résultat du métissage avec la population peul, 1 m. 65 pour les Bambara du commun). Le Dr Pales et Tassin de Saint-Péreuse nous donnent des chiffres sensiblement différents qui sont particulièrement intéressants, car leurs observations ont porté sur 893 individus. Ils nous donnent comme indice céphalique horizontal : 74, 3 et comme taille moyenne : 171, 8.

Tauxier conclut en ces termes : « C'est une bonne race nègre, métissée de quelques éléments supérieurs ! »

Ajoutons à sa description que le Bambara a une carrure solide, sans aucune dissymétrie, un nez platyrrhinien, une voûte ogivale prononcée, une peau dont les cicatrices ont une tendance chiloïdienne et une excellente défense naturelle à l'infection, bien que certaines régions soient particulièrement atteintes de goître. Il pratique très peu la déformation crânienne, différent en cela du Malinké et du Kassonké. Notons enfin que les Bambara ont les cheveux noirs crépus, mais que certaines femmes ont les cheveux aux reflets roux, ce qui est considéré par les indigènes comme un signe faste. Nous ne parlerons pas des albinos à peau blanche et à cheveux décolorés dont le pourcentage est faible.

R. Koerber, dans une *Étude de la répartition des groupes sanguins chez quelques races d'A. O. F.* a trouvé sur un total de 1.066 Bambara 3, 9 % de groupe AB ; 25, 7 % de groupe A ; 27, 7 % de B et 42, 7 % de groupe O. Le groupe O est donc dominant, mais moins fréquent cependant que pour les races ouoloff, malinkés, foula et sérère.

Enfin, signalons que d'après les observations du Dr Pales, l'indice cormique des Bambara est de 50,8. Le Dr Pales et J. Linhard ont aussi calculé le pourcentage de sicklémie qui est : 108 B, 8 %.

IV. — Données démographiques

A) Répartition de la population

Les différents recensements de ces dernières années donnent les estimations suivantes :

Sénégal. — 150.000 Mandings pour 711.000 Ouoloff ; 288.500 Peuls ; 264.000 Sérères ; 202.500 Toucouleurs ; 132.511 Dioula (La majeure partie des Bambara venant au Sénégal sont des Navétanes).

Guinée. — On trouve des Bambara dans le cercle de Kankan, de Kouroussa et de Sigiri. Ce sont pour la plupart des Navétanes, la majeure partie de la population étant constituée par les Foula, les Malinké, les Soussou, les Kissien, les Guerzé, les Toma, les Baga, les Diallonké.

Mauritanie. — 500 Bambara vivent dans le cercle de Gorgol pour 8.500 Maures blancs, 10.000 Foula, 22.000 Toucouleurs, 250 Ouoloff, 4.500 Sarakolé ; et 1.000 dans le cercle de Guidimaka, pour 13.000 Maures, 4.500 Foula, 1.000 Toucouleurs.

État récapitulatif par cercles (population générale), année 1950

Établi par la Direction des Affaires politiques du Gouvernement général du Soudan

Races et territoires A. O. F. Africains de statut commun et de statut personnel	Bafoulabé	Bamako	Bandiagara	Bougouni	Gao	Goundam	Issa-Ber Niafunké	Kayes	Kita	Koutiala	Mopti	Nioro	San	Ségou	Sikasso	Timbuctu Tombouctou	Total pour le territoire
Bellat						35.026											35.026
Bambara	994	209.074	21.538	110.000			20.765	13.896	3.200	33.536	20.530	20.973	42.424	202.617	9.082	293	798.922
Peul	10.200	8.213	97.001		11.095	12.875	71.258	1.962	200	3.217	33.318	39.831	15.297	77.595		1.822	383.884
Mossi	28	857	4.043		61		135	234		49	27.955		303	4.832		9	38.506
Marka	150	27.746					4.381	29.519	3.000	8.100	26.870	112.776	30.679	21.553	406		265.180
Songhai		647	9.962		102.712	62.821	1.025			454	6.000		625			26.518	210.764
Malinké	68.753	62.671	2	4.932				11.508	53.530			3.598	52				206.041
Minianka		400	3							125.551	500		29.697	2.843			158.994
Maures		2.958	433		19.266	2.743		3.536		67		9.313				15.502	53.818
Senoufo		300	1	10.000						15				228	117.588		128.132
Touareg		20	19		77.640	17.007	252									58.599	153.537
Samogo		150	4.909												26.218	8	31.375
Foula Bambara		9.600		42.100					21.600	182				2.444	22.673	15	98.614
Bobo		500								11.933	2.570					1	15.004
Bozo		400	22			1.582	4.916				18.000		61.712			83	86.715
Kassonkés	23.800	600						20.297				5.734	474	23.447		9	74.361
Dioula	270	11.050								6.958					29.333		47.611
Toucouleurs		700	1.781					23.574	320		1.500	19.680		84	934		48.573
Kagoro		17.395							5.010			4.492					26.897
Somono	4	5.748						1.762			7.000						14.514
Marka Bambara	13.350	750	8.115	885			4.381							14.787		28	42.296
Diallonke	5.100	100							4.600					5.112		8	14.920
Peuls berberisés													60				60
Ouolofs	76	700	68		3	1	7	1.055	132	4	25	2.139	2	65	23	28	4.328
Ouassoulounké	3.200		2	41.000				8.790				1.675					54.067
Diawara	2.500		274									33.785					36.559
Diawambé	2.520	150							515		3.500	4.143		1.684			12.512
Diakanke																	2.016
Dogon		386	157.966				20.675			30	680		3.779				183.516
Guirganke			42									1.620					1.662
Divers	726	48.340	2.209	346	11.187	3.820	1.725	889	13.421	569	9.925	1.148		12.527	727	192	107.751
TOTAUX	133.671	499.455	308.480	209.263	221.964	136.875	129.520	117.017	105.528	190.665	158.373	260.907	185.104	369.818	206.984	103.115	3.336.739

3: Paques

[p 6]

FA8 Bambara

Haute-Volta. — Quelques Bambara dans le cercle de Ouahigouya mêlés à des Mossi (en majorité), des Peuls et des Rimaïbé, des Yarcé, des Foulcé, etc.

Côte-d'Ivoire. — Le cercle de Korhogo compte 290.000 Sénoufo, Malinké et Bambara.

Enfin le recensement de 1950 fait au Soudan accuse un total de 798.900 Bambara sur une population totale de 3.336.740 habitants répartis ainsi que l'indique l'état récapitulatif ci-dessus (p. 6).

Nous voyons que les Bambara sont groupés dans les cercles de Ségou, Bamako et Bougouni, où ils forment la majorité de la population.

Nous donnerons une répartition un peu plus détaillée pour ces trois centres, d'après les renseignements encore fragmentaires qui ont pu être réunis jusqu'à présent.

Dans le cercle de Bamako la population se répartit par groupement ethnique de la manière suivante :

	Ville	Subdivision centrale	Subdivision de Koulikoro	Subdivision de Kolokani	Subdivision de Dioïla	Subdivision de Kourémalé
Bambara	19.000	93.974	56.048	59.930	68.310	812
Peul~~s~~	1.000	2.074	4.251	500	350	38
Mossi	500		157	200		
Marka	1.000		26.746			
Habbe	250		136			
Songhaï	450		197			
Malinké~~s~~	3.200	32.434	139			26.898
Minianka	400					
Maures	2.600		358			
Sénoufo~~s~~	300					
Touareg	20					
Samo	150					
Foula-Bambara	600				9.000	
Bozo	400					
Bobo	500					
Kassonké	600					
Dioula	5.200			850	5.000	
Toucouleur	700					
Kagoro	100		3.795	13.500		
Somono	500	804	3.454		300	690
Marka Bambara	150				600	
Dialionké~~s~~	100					
Ouolof~~s~~	700					
Diawambé	150					
Divers	130	5.698	196	610	344	

Le cercle de Bougouni connaît la répartition suivante :

Cantons	Nombre de villages	Population	Observations
Bambeledougou	13	1.785	Bambara
Banimonatie	47	10.829	F. B et Bambara
Bilatouma	5	1.771	Foulah-Bambara
Danou	8	3.413	Bambara
Debelendoudou	11	2.053	—
Dialakadougou	6	1.696	—
Diban	7	2.398	—
Domba	18	2.510	—
Falani-Auola	16	5.086	—
Gouantiedougou	41	9.771	—
Keikero	8	1.705	—
Kokoun	16	3.157	—
Kola	13	2.122	—
Kouroulamini	30	8.653	—
Niene	20	12.525	Senoufo
Siankadougou	16	2.288	Bambara
Sibirila	29	9.652	—
Siondougou	28	3.697	
Tiemala	54	16.492	Foulah-Bambara
Tiendougou	69	16.624	—
Tinkatougou	16	3.342	Bambara
Tyan	16	3.369	—
Yiridougou	13	3.263	—
Zana	8	2.939	—
Yorobadougou			
Niamala	15	2.886	—
Keleyadougou	Recensement en cours		
Nienendougou			
Nafanandougou			
Fulala			

Enfin voici la liste des chefferies telle qu'elle est dressée actuellement à Ségou et à Nioro.

SÉGOU

Chefferie	de Somonos		28 villages	8.440 ha	
—	de Bolomissé	2.600 km²		27.550 –	Bambara Markas
—	de Dokono	270 —	98 —	11.083 –	—
—	de M'Pebala	4.000 —	138 —	27.540 –	Bambara
—	Bibelambés	500 —	9 —	1.846 –	Peuls + qq. Bambara
—	de Koulala	400 —	18 —	4.545 –	Bambara
—	Sana	400 —	16 —	6.054 –	Markas Bambara
—	des Peuls Thiandis	3.200 —	37 —	5.660 –	Peuls
—	de M Pérédiola	1.250 —	20 —	5.384 –	Bambara
—	Farako	2.000 —	47 —	14.092 –	Bambara Markas Peuls
—	Malaké Markas	100 —	4 —	2.310 –	Markas
—	de Sansanding	400 —	6 —		Bambara
—	Bambougou	900 —	99 —	33.504 –	Bambara et Peuls
—	Bebe	400 —	28 —	4.576 –	Bambara
—	Kalaké Bambara	700 —	13 —	2.911 –	—
—	Dioforongo	1.200 —	72 —	12.935 –	Peuls, Bambara

NIORO

Chefferie du canton	de Kala	1.900 km²	5.400 ha	Bambara
—	Markabougou	3.200 —	2.782 –	—
—	Sokolo	4.200 —	6.126 –	Bambara Markas
—	Miempiéna	1.000 —	3.332 –	Bambara
—	Segala	3.200 —	1.733 –	—
—	Mossi du Sahel		1.254 –	Mossi

C) MOUVEMENT DE POPULATION

En 1912, Delafosse dans *Haut-Sénégal et Niger* donne un total de 538.450 Bambara dans les régions suivantes :

Bamako	146.966	Bougouni	104.216	Segou	109.758
Sikasso	30.000	Kita	2.339	Baloulabe	2.100
Koutiala	30.035	Goumbou	22.110	San	20.103
Sokolo	19.996	Djenne	17.246	Niafunke	16.000
Nioro	9.355	Mopti	7.277	Bandiagara	928

Tous ces chiffres sont sensiblement inférieurs aux données actuelles. Il ne faut pourtant pas conclure trop rapidement à un accroissement de la population. L'augmentation de la population tient davantage aux améliorations des recensements qu'à un accroissement réel.

D'ailleurs les données démographiques actuelles doivent être considérées encore comme approximatives. En effet les recensements d'une même région peuvent porter sur plusieurs années et ceux de certains cantons ne sont pas encore terminés. Une grande partie de la population se soustrait encore au recensement afin d'échapper à l'impôt et au service militaire. Dans certains villages, la population clandestine peut être aussi importante que la population déclarée.

Une partie des Bambara qui s'expatrient temporairement vers la Guinée, le Sénégal, la Côte-d'Ivoire et le Gold Coast, comme navetanes échappent à tout contrôle.

Enfin dès que nous quittons le pays purement bambara du cercle de Ségou pour aller dans la région de Bougouni par exemple, une grande partie de la population recensée bambara est en fait d'origine mixte, Foula, Malinké, mais vivant suivant la coutume bambara tout en ne parlant souvent plus la langue.

Cette simple énumération montre combien il est rare de se trouver en face d'un bloc ethnique bambara qui ne soit pas fortement mêlé à d'autres tribus. Cette dispersion est sans doute le résultat d'une évolution historique compliquée comme nous le verrons plus loin.

Mais nous pouvons déjà signaler que le lien qui fait l'unité parmi les différents peuples, c'est la chefferie. Les différents peuples soumis à un même chef peu à peu se disent de même peuple que leur chef. Parfois le chef peut avoir adopté la nationalité du pays dont il prend la direction.

A titre indicatif, nous donnons les états suivants, fournis par la Direction des Affaires politiques du Soudan. Il n'a pas encore été possible d'évaluer la cadence des naissances et des morts ni d'établir un profil d'âge de la population. Les recensements des années futures permettront sans doute une meilleure étude de la démographie du pays.

I. — *Situation démographique de la population à statut africain*

Cercles	Superficie au km²	Au 31/12/49	Au 31/12/50	Densité au km²	Comparaison entre 1949 et 1950	
					En +	En —
Bafoulabé	39.000	131.603	137.347	3,54	5.744	
Bamako	57.405	451.377	499.034	7,96	47.657	
Bandiagara	53.000	307.938	307.946	5,81	8	
Bougouni	34.000	202.907	208.984	6,14	6.077	
Gao	411.170	215.875	221.883	0,53	6.008	
Goundam	55.000	134.312	130.935	2,48	2.623	
Kayes	21.000	119.294	117.017	5,57		2.277
Kita	37.000	103.132	105.550	2,85	3.418	
Koutiala	20.665	187.706	190.645	9,22	2.939	
Mopti	14.300	156.116	156.194	10,92	78	
Niafunke	22.500	129.463	129.558	5,76	95	
Nioro	56.000	256.149	260.413	4,5	4.164	
San	15.000	182.142	185.187	12,34	3.045	
Ségou	52.000	362.215	369.921	7,11	7.706	
Sikasso	20.475	206.828	207.038	10,11	210	
Tombouctou	283.700	90.981	102.475	0,36	11.494	
TOTAUX	1.192.215	3.237.705	3.337.127	2,79	101.266	2.277
					En + : 98.989	

II. — *Situation démographique de la population nomade*

		Maures		*Touareg*	
1940 :	Gao	9.494	23.322	57.945	139.236
	Goundam	2.885		40.757	
	Tombouctou	10.943		40.934	
1944 :	Gao	18.812	34.073	74.357	128.057
	Goundam	2.505		16.105	
	Tombouctou	12.756		37.595	
1950 :	Gao	19.078	37.723	77.640	153.246
	Goundam	2.743		17.004	
	Tombouctou	15.502		58.599	

III. — *Mouvement général de la population dans les dix dernières années*

	Sédentaires et semi-nomades	Nomades
1940	2.750.950	163.000
1941	2.790.000	
1942	2.840.000	
1943	2.870.000	162.000
1944	2.900.000	
1945	2.800.000	
1946	2.810.000	
1947	2.840.000	
1948	3.125.000	
1949	3.237.000	
1950	3.337.000	190.000
Accroissement total	586.000	27.000
Taux d'accroissement	21 %	16 %

IV. — *Mouvement général de la population urbaine*

La population urbaine s'élève à 220.317 hab., soit 6, 5 % de la population totale.

Les principaux centres urbains sont : Bamako, Kayes, Ségou, Mopti, Sikasso, et Gao. Sauf pour Gao, l'accroissement est considérable.

Villes	1939	1950	Accroissement	% de l'accroissement
Bamako	32.761	85.000	52.239	162,5
Kayes	15.894	23.275	7.381	46,4
Ségou	8.391	15.335	6.944	83
Mopti	6.379	9.208	2.829	45
Sikasso	11.817	19.558	7.741	15,2
Gao	6.923	7.231	308	4,90

C) ÉMIGRATION

Elle est rarement définitive. Elle a pour origine, soit des raisons commerciales, soit le désir des jeunes de se constituer un pécule pour payer la dot de leur fiancée. Elle affecte surtout les cercles de Gao, Tombouctou, Niafunké, Goundam, Mopti, Ségou et Bamako. Le pays le plus fréquenté est la Gold Coast.

A *Tombouctou*, il existe un mouvement caravanier avec le Maroc par Taouedi et Tindouf et avec le Touat.

A *Bandiagara*, certains cantons (Dinangourou, Ibi, Iréli), connaissent une émigration temporaire traditionnelle en Haute-Volta où les jeunes vont travailler un ou deux ans puis reviennent.

A *Bafoulabé*, le mouvement d'émigration vers la Guinée française reste très faible : 20 personnes environ.

A *Bougouni*, 1.500 jeunes environ partent annuellement vers la Côte-d'Ivoire, suivant l'exemple des Dioulas. C'est un mouvement saisonnier ; mais les jeunes courent souvent l'aventure pendant des années avant de rentrer chez eux et certains s'installent définitivement en Côte-d'Ivoire.

A *Nioro*, existe à partir du Bakounou, vers le nord (cercle d'Aioun et Atrouss) un nomadisme agricole vers les terres neuves. Cette migration d'établissement en établissement ne s'occupe que de la fertilité du sol, sans tenir compte des frontières Nioro et Yelimané. On note aussi des émigrations temporaires vers le Sénégal (cinq à dix ans) et des émigrations saisonnières à caractère commercial en saison sèche, après les cultures, de Nioro et Yélimané, vers la Côte-d'Ivoire, le Sénégal et la Guinée.

A *San*, un nombre important d'émigrants partent vers la Côte-d'Ivoire, où ils vont s'engager quelques années sur les plantations ; ils rentrent au pays avec leurs économies.

A *Ségou*, le mouvement est peu marqué. Quelques départs vers la

Côte-d'Ivoire sont enregistrés dans la subdivision du Macina (les colons de l'Office du Niger) — 879 départs.

A *Sikasso*, de nombreux jeunes entre 18 et 30 ans émigrent d'octobre à mai, vers Bobo-Dioulasso et la Côte-d'Ivoire. La quasi-totalité revient en mai, au moment de la préparation des terrains de culture, mais certains finissent par se fixer définitivement à l'extérieur, surtout en Basse-Côte. Ce mouvement s'amplifie en raison des salaires élevés.

D) Immigration

Elle présente un caractère sporadique et saisonnier (orpailleurs de Guinée ; pêcheurs du Niger ; éleveurs de Mauritanie). La seule immigration régulière est celle des colons de l'Office du Niger.

A *Bafoulabé*, on note la présence temporaire de 10.000 orpailleurs venus de Guinée et de Côte-d'Ivoire — 75 cultivateurs du Sénégal et de Guinée se sont installés définitivement.

A *Bamako*, des orpailleurs guinéens viennent en saison sèche travailler sur les placers de la subdivision de Kangaba et rejoignent leur territoire au début de l'hivernage.

A *Gao*, au début de la décrue du fleuve, des pêcheurs haoussa et bozo s'installent sur les rives du Niger et repartent en août, chargés de poissons secs ou fumés.

De l'intérieur, des Kounbas chassés par la sécheresse cherchent des pâturages aux points d'eau (d'où friction avec les premiers occupants).

Kayes, est une aire de nomadisation pour les Maures de Kiffa et Selibaby.

A *Mopti*, on trouve dans les villes un grand nombre d'étrangers, venant de Haute-Volta, qui regagnent leur pays en saison des pluies.

A *Nioro*, pendant huit mois de l'année, la plus grosse partie des Maures résident et remontent en Mauritanie au début des pluies.

A *Ségou*, se concentrent les colons de l'Office du Niger 1.166 arrivés en 1951 dont 660 venant de Nioro et 506 du Macina.

NAVETANES

Cercles d'origine	Navetanes partis en convois officiels en :			
	1947	1948	1949	1950
Bafoulabé	1.017	1.008	969	492
Bamako	6.626	4.376	4.046	8.678
Bougouni	405	776	3.000	36
Kayes	1.794	2.195	3.230	1.368
Kita	1.419	1.559	1.352	226
Nioro	2.744	747	3.000	1.504
				135
Divers	14.005	10.661	15.602	12.439

Les migrations personnelles sont très nombreuses et le nombre effectif de Navetanes est très supérieur aux chiffres officiels. On note actuellement une régression due à deux causes :

1° Le mécontentement des Navetanes au retour de la campagne de 1949. En 1948, ils rapportaient 15.000 fr. à 20.000 fr ; en 1949 : de 5 à 10.000 fr. ; pour le Siné Saloum même 1.500 à 2.000 fr. Certains furent rapatriés aux frais de leur famille ; d'autres préférèrent rester au Sénégal pour éviter les reproches. Les raisons de l'échec peuvent être attribuées à une mauvaise répartition des pluies et à l'insuffisance des logements à l'occasion de l'arrivée imprévue d'un trop grand nombre de Navetanes ;

2° La contre-propagande des Anciens qui veulent garder au Soudan les jeunes travailleurs.

[p. 14]

CHAPITRE II

DONNÉES LINGUISTIQUES

A) Classification linguistique

D'après la classification de Delafosse (1), le bambara ou bamana est un dialecte de la langue mandé ou mandingue, qui fait elle-même partie du sous-groupe du centre des langues nigéro-sénégalaises. Il est donc très voisin des dialectes dioula, kasonké et malinké, qui appartiennent à la même langue mandé et sont parlés par des peuples avec lesquels les Bambara cohabitent géographiquement. (Les différences avec les Soso, les Soninké et surtout les Peuls sont nettement plus marquées.)

Parmi les langues nigéro-sénégalaises, le mandé se caractérise surtout par quatre traits :

1) Les classes nominales ont presque complètement disparu ;
2) Le nom et le verbe ne se distinguent que par leur place respective dans la phrase ;
3) La conjugaison comprend un nombre important d'aspects verbaux ;
4) Le sujet, nom ou pronom, précède le verbe.

La disparition des classes nominales marque une importante évolution par rapport à la langue archaïque où elles sont au contraire fortement marquées. De tous les dialectes mandé, le bambara paraît être le plus avancé. Il est surtout caractérisé par son extrême concision et la déformation qu'il fait subir aux mots en les soumettant à des contractions excessives.

B) Morphologie

Le bambara ignore la différentiation par désinence : rien n'indique si un mot est sujet ou régime, si un verbe est au présent ou au passé, à l'actif ou au passif. Les mots sont absolument invariables et ne se combinent que par juxtaposition. Pour distinguer les nuances de la pensée, le rôle d'un mot dans la phrase, on n'a d'autre moyen que le contexte et les particules auxiliaires.

La distinction des sexes n'est marquée que par l'apposition des mots « mâle » ou « femelle » au radical. Le pluriel se forme en ajoutant au substantif le suffixe w et le chiffre nécessaire ou l'adverbe « beaucoup ».

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(1) DELAFOSSE, *Langues du Soudan* (MEILLET et COHEN, *Les langues du monde*).

Dans les verbes, les personnes, les temps, les modes, ne se distinguent pas autrement. Le radical restant invariable, on rend les idées accessoires de personne au moyen de pronoms personnels, les idées de temps et de mode à l'aide des particules placées avant ou après le radical verbal. La voix neutre ou passive n'a qu'un temps spécial : le passé, alors que la voix active comporte trois temps ou plus exactement trois aspects :

L'un indique qu'une action n'est pas accomplie (ce peut donc être un présent ou un futur).

L'autre implique que l'action est achevée ou que l'état est acquis ou dure encore (c'est à peu près un passé).

Le troisième se réfère à une action qui doit s'accomplir dans le présent, le passé ou le futur, sous l'influence d'une autre action ou d'un autre sujet (il peut rendre notre subjonctif, notre impératif, notre optatif et en général l'infinitif complément d'un verbe).

C) Syntaxe

Le bambara est d'une simplicité extrême. Que la proposition soit relative ou interrogative ou conditionnelle, l'ordre des mots ne s'en trouve pas modifié. Cette uniformité, cette monotonie de style n'empêche pas l'éloquence, mais celle-ci est toute dans l'action, le geste, le ton de la voix, l'utilisation répétée d'onomatopées ou de particules comme « dé », « kwo », « ké ».

D) Vocabulaire

Cette pauvreté de syntaxe n'entraîne pas une pauvreté de vocabulaire, ni une impossibilité d'abstraction. Les Bambara expriment très facilement et d'une manière intelligible pour tous, des idées de croyance, d'espérance, de morale, de religion. Le trait le plus frappant de leur vocabulaire, c'est la constance de la comparaison entre l'homme et la nature ; les mêmes termes désignent les parties du corps des animaux, des végétaux ou même des objets. Ce sont ces mots qui servent de radicaux, plus le nom des quatre éléments et de leurs propriétés. Il s'en suit deux conséquences :

1) Une grande facilité à former des mots composés ;
2) L'existence d'une multiplicité d'homonymes qu'on ne peut distinguer que par le contexte, mais que les indigènes distinguent par les différences de ton ou de longueur des voyelles.

E) Numération

Contrairement aux Ouolofs et aux Peuls qui comptent d'abord jusqu'à 5, et qui disent ensuite 5 et 1, 5 et 2, etc., le Bambara désigne chacun des nombres de 1 à 10 par un nom différent (le mot 5, « doulou », vient de « main », le 10, « tan », de « remercier » : donner des deux mains). On compte ensuite 10 et 1, 10 et 2, jusqu'a 20, qui se dit deux dizaines, puis trois dizaines, quatre dizaines, etc., jusqu'à 80. La série recommence après 80 comme en français après la centaine.

Les Bambara connaissent des signes graphiques pour représenter les nombres. Ces signes ont été étudiés par S. de Ganay (1).

Le système de graphie varie avec les régions, et parfois d'un village à un autre, mais le plus courant est constitué par une série de traits verticaux, chaque trait représentant une unité. Pour indiquer que le nombre est double, les traits sont soit placés à l'intérieur d'un cercle, soit barrés horizontalement : |||| ou (||) ou ╫ = 4. Pour marquer un nombre impair, on ajoute un trait sous la barre horizontale.

Mais un trait unique signifie aussi bien l'unité que la dizaine, et même la « centaine », *keme* (qui a la valeur de 80). Pour ne pas faire d'erreur, on marque sur le trait un arc de cercle : $\overset{\frown}{|}$ = 80.

Certaines graphies représentent 10 par 10 traits ou 5 traits barrés surmontés d'un trait unique. Cette méthode a une origine religieuse : elle rappelle que « la création est issue d'un principe unique symbolisé par des nombres, et notamment par 10 qui s'obtient, entre autres manières et s'il s'agit de représenter le créateur, en additionnant les quatre premiers nombres, ou le nombre 5 avec lui-même ». Dix est le symbole numérique de Faro (Dieu de l'eau) ; il symbolise ce qui est juste, vrai, parfait et complet.

On utilise le symbolisme des nombres dans la divination : un premier groupe de 8 signes, appelé le compte secret, reproduit les sept premiers nombres qui selon un mythe bambara se gravèrent dans l'espace au moment où par sa parole le Créateur formait l'univers... Ils contiennent tout l'univers.

Ces signes numériques étaient tracés rituellement à l'occasion des événements les plus divers.

Enfin, il faut signaler l'existence du signe de « rien » : *fu gundo*, le zéro, qui figure au début d'une série de 196 signes numériques utilisés par ceux qui pratiquent l'arithmomancie.

Le mot Mandé, centre de rayonnement de 44 peuples, serait à interpréter selon certains comme *manin* (nom secret de 10) chiffre de l'unité et de la communauté culturelle.

F) Écriture

Pour l'usage courant, les Bambara avaient adopté les caractères arabes, appelés par eux l'écriture des Noirs. En fait, seuls ceux qui ont étudié dans les écoles des marabouts savent les lire ou les tracer. Il n'existe aucune littérature proprement dite, qui soit écrite. Un fonds très important de traditions, de chansons de geste, de contes, de légendes, de chants et de proverbes, est retransmis oralement de générations en générations par des hommes de métier : les griots. D'ailleurs toute la somme des connaissances scientifiques, juridiques, morales et pratiques est enseignée oralement au cours de la vie quotidienne ou pendant de longues années d'initiation. Certains vieux maîtres réputés pour leur savoir sont consultés de très loin lorsqu'un doute au sujet de la tradition surgit dans l'esprit d'un chef.

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(1) S. de Ganay, *Graphie Bambara des nombres.*

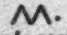
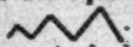
Néanmoins il existe des signes d'écriture secrète que les prêtres, les chefs de famille ou les forgerons tracent sur les sanctuaires, sur les masques, sur le mobilier, les vêtements, les murs des cases ou le sable.

Pour les Bambara, les choses existent par les signes. Ces signes sont venus se plaquer sur les choses et les ont appelées à leur conscience et à la conscience de l'homme.

Du noyau central de la création sont sorties quatre catégories de signes : deux cent soixante-six en tout, qui représentent les signes complets du monde ; ils donnent la couleur, la forme, la matière aux choses. Par la suite ces 266 signes sont devenus les têtes de liste d'une infinité d'autres signes qui englobent toute la création.

« C'est par ces signes que l'homme entre en possession de la plus grande partie de son domaine, qui est l'univers. Et c'est dans la mesure où il ne connaît pas le signe, comme dans celle où il ne peut l'analyser, c'est-à-dire le posséder dans ses parties décomposées, qu'il se voit fermer certains secteurs de la connaissance totale des choses (1). »

Les Bambara comme d'ailleurs les Dogons, représentent le mouvement des astres graphiquement aussi bien que mathématiquement, en particulier la révolution du soleil autour de la terre, centre du cosmos. Ces mouvements sont mesurés par un grenier cylindrique qu'ils utilisent comme gnomon (wati dyati dyiginye) ; c'est un bâtiment rond en seko, pourvu d'une toiture conique confectionnée suivant des mesures précises. Il repose sur un petit tertre damé de forme carrée qui a été au préalable soigneusement mesuré et orienté. Dans chaque angle du carré on enfouit 22 pierres et 22 au centre. Sur la petite butte sont disposées trois rangées de quatre grosses pierres orientées est-ouest, une rangée côté sud, une côté nord, une au milieu. Sur ces rangées on pose des poutrelles de bois. Chaque élément et chaque mesure a une signification symbolique. Le grenier gnomon, sert à déterminer la date des solstices et des équinoxes par la surveillance de l'ombre projetée du grenier sur le sol (2).

Les mouvements diurnes et annuels du soleil sont figurés par une ligne en zigzag . Certaines variations de formes du zigzag représentent la précession des équinoxes et la longueur variable des jours entre l'été et l'hiver . Quatre angles figurent les quatre points cardinaux et les segments de droite limitant les angles comptent chacun pour quatre-vingt-dix jours (l'année, pour les Bambara est de trois cent soixante jours). Ces symboles ne sont pas purement mathématiques, mais ils entrent dans la vie quotidienne de la société.

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(1) M. Griaule et G. Dieterlen, *Signes graphiques soudanais.*
(2) D. Zahan, *Un gnomon soudanais.*

Les zigzags sont un thème caractéristique de la décoration des poteries, des armes, des outils, des sanctuaires et des maisons. On les trouve dans les techniques agricoles, dans les figures de danses rituelles. Les rythmes universels de la terre et du ciel sont inscrits dans toutes les activités de l'homme et des sociétés (1). Enfin une autre série de 16 signes est habituellement utilisée en géomancie. Il est intéressant de noter que ces signes étaient utilisés d'une manière pratique pour la correspondance. Les chefs bambara se servaient des combinaisons multiples qu'ils tiraient de ces signes pour s'envoyer des messages.

G) Diversités locales

Etant donné l'étendue et la diversité des régions où le bambara est parlé, il ne faut pas s'étonner si d'une province à l'autre on remarque des différences de prononciation et même de structure et de vocabulaire. Au Kaarta on ne parle pas comme à Ségou et un Bambara de Ségou comprend difficilement un Bambara de Bougouni. Ceci est dû, d'une part à l'influence des autres langues qui vivent en contact avec le bambara et finissent par l'altérer et le modifier et d'autre part à l'évolution propre de la langue à l'intérieur d'un groupe séparé depuis des siècles de son pays d'origine. Il est intéressant de noter que dans le cercle de Bougouni l'élément conservateur de la langue est le vieillard et l'élément d'évolution la femme.

Traditionnellement, Ségou était considéré comme le centre où se parlait le langage le plus élégant. Avant la conquête on envoyait les enfants à Ségou pour apprendre le bambara le plus pur.

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(1) Id., *Conception de l'écliptique chez les Dogons et les Bambara.*

CHAPITRE III

LE MILIEU PHYSIQUE

I. Les régions naturelles

Les Bambara vivent dans un pays qui s'étend entre le 11° et le 14° degré de latitude nord, et du 7° au 11° degré de longitude ouest. Ils sont groupés autour du Haut-Sénégal et du Niger supérieur dans la zone de cuvettes bordée au sud par le Fouta-Djallon et la Dorsale Guinéenne. Le pays se divise en plusieurs régions naturelles :

A) LE HAUT-NIGER

Encadré par les contreforts du Fouta-Djallon et les falaises du plateau mandingue, témoin du socle précambrien, il est essentiellement schisteux avec de faibles filons de quartz et des cheminées de dolérite ; le granit y fait de larges intrusions au nord à 50 km de Bamako, au Nord-Ouest et au Nord de Siguiri, au Sud, à l'approche du massif du Fouta Djallon. Tout le pays est riche en or. Plusieurs centres sont exploités depuis fort longtemps par les indigènes grâce à un réseau de puits étroits descendant jusqu'à la couche aurifère. Toute la région est encroûtée par une carapace de fer.

Le Haut-Niger apparaît comme une immense plaine mamelonnée qui monte insensiblement du seuil de Bamako aux montagnes du Sud, uniquement interrompue par quelques dykes, tel celui de Kouroussa-Kankan. Le modelé d'ensemble est très simple et monotone ; le modelé local est très animé et confus, en raison du réseau des vallées qu'encadrent de raides falaises de 10 à 12 m de haut.

Le Niger, grossi du Tinkisso, du Milo, du Fié, du Sankarani, arrive à Bamako avec une largeur voisine de 900 m. Il coule dans une plaine de 3 à 4 km de large, dans la direction S.-O.-N.-E. jusqu'à Tombouctou. Il est soumis à une crue annuelle qui dépend uniquement de la hauteur des pluies tombées. De Kouroussa à Bamako les premières pluies de fin avril, mai, juin, commencent à alimenter le fleuve ; la crue se forme à partir de juin. Pendant les hautes eaux l'inondation gagne une partie des plaines étroites qui avoisinent le fleuve.

Au seuil de Bamako, les falaises de la rive gauche se rapprochent du fleuve et enserrent la ville. Le seuil est marqué par l'apparition des rapides (Sotuba, Kénié), car le fleuve rencontre pour la première fois le grès qu'il cisaille. Les eaux sont le plus haut à Bamako vers le 22 septembre et commencent à décroître vers le 15 octobre. Elles sont le plus bas vers avril-mai.

La végétation est très homogène. On y trouve les essences des grandes forêts dans les ravins des montagnes du Sud ; la petite forêt soudanaise couvre tout le Niger jusqu'à Bamako là où la couche de latérite est peu épaisse. C'est une forêt d'arbres à feuilles caduques ; les arbres perdent leurs feuilles et fleurissent au milieu de la saison sèche alors qu'ils sont encore dénudés ; puis les feuilles apparaissent avant le retour de la saison des pluies qui marque le réveil des plantes herbacées. Notons surtout l'arbre de karité *(Butyrospermum Parkii)* qui est le plus répandu et caractéristique du Soudan ; le néré *(Parkia biglobosa)* ; le téli *(Erythrophloeum guineense)* le lingué *(Afzelia africana)* ; le caïlcedrat *(Khaya senegalensis)* ; ainsi que d'énormes graminées de la famille des Andropognées plus abondantes dans les dépressions humides que sur les plateaux. Mais de grandes surfaces recouvertes d'une couche latéritique sont nues avec de maigres graminées : c'est le « bowal ». Ces immenses plaques de fer, vides d'hommes, constituent d'excellents terrains de chasse. Là vivent buffles, panthères, élans de Derby, singes variés, éléphants, antilopes, lions, phacochères, hippopotames, crocodiles. Dans cette même région abondent les glossines (mouche tsé-tsé).

Entre ces immenses bowals désolés poussent le riz, le mil et le fonio *(Digitaria exilis)*, la plus misérable des céréales qui soient au monde et la plus importante du point de vue rituel.

Dans les vallées, en dehors des bancs de graviers latéritiques, on trouve la petite forêt ou des cultures aux endroits défrichés récemment et des prairies dans les espaces inondés annuellement.

B) Le bassin de Ségou

C'est une plaine encadrée par les grès du plateau mandingue, du plateau Dogon, du massif de Goundam et du Sud du Dahar près de Bassi Kounou.

Elle est formée au Sud par des mamelonnements latéritiques (dépôts fluviaux tertiaires) ; en amont de Bamako et sur une cinquantaine de km en aval on trouve des grès qui ont été recouverts au centre par des dépôts quaternaires argileux d'origine fluviatile provenant des schistes, granites, grès et dolérites du haut bassin ; enfin au nord-ouest le bassin est couvert de sables (ergs du Ouagadou) d'origine éolienne.

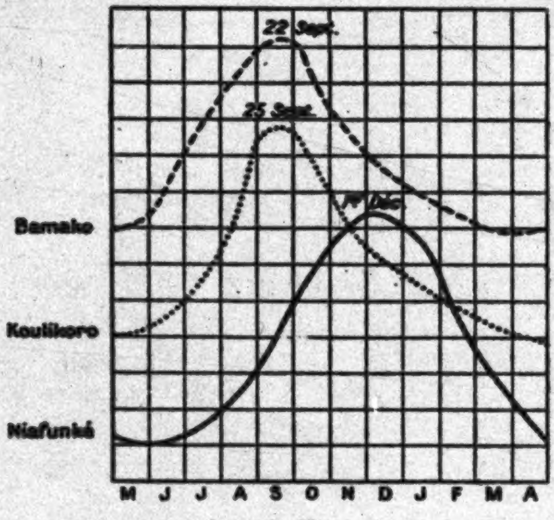
La partie occidentale est sèche et coupée seulement par des chapelets de mares boisées, anciens bras morts du fleuve à peine animés par quelques plaques de sable ou par les rides ferrugineuses de Boulel. Elle s'étend, monotone, déserte et sinistre jusqu'aux barrières blondes des ergs du Nord.

La partie orientale est parcourue par le Niger et le Bani. Elle contraste avec la précédente ; « elle est plate et nue, mais les eaux du fleuve lui donnent d'immenses étendues de prairies d'inondation au vert intense ». Au sud ces marais forment une bande étroite et discontinue ; ils s'étalent de plus en plus vers le nord et après le confluent des deux fleuves ils couvrent tout le pays jusqu'à Bara.

L'inondation dure plusieurs mois. En effet de Koulikoro au lac Debo le Niger coule entre deux berges distantes de 1 à 2 km, hautes de 7 à 8 m. Retenue par le barrage de Sotuba, la crue se fait sentir avec un léger retard à Koulikoro. A Diafarabé, les eaux commencent à monter en juin, connaissent leur hauteur maxima au début d'octobre et décroissent rapidement fin octobre. Elles sont le plus bas en avril-mai. Au moment de la crue (août-début janvier) les plaines basses sont entièrement submergées sur une largeur de 150 km.

C) Issa Ber

La région formée par le delta central du Niger est un réseau de marigots, lacs, mares de dépressions et de rivières, qui part de Diafarabé. Les fonds principaux commencent à la grande cuvette jumelée lac Debo, lac Korienzé et s'étendent à droite et à gauche du fleuve jusqu'à Tombouctou. Ce delta est traversé par trois canaux principaux : l'Issa Ber, le Bara Issa et le Koli-Koli. A l'époque des basses eaux les dépressions adjacentes s'assèchent par endroits et forment des chapelets de



Crues du Niger

Les courbes moyennes de crue se rapportent au niveau des plus basses eaux. Dans chaque poste d'observation c'est le niveau 1909 qui a été pris comme zéro des règles d'étiage.

Le côté de chaque carré représente en ordonnée, 1 m de crue. Exemple : fin septembre, à Bamako, la crue moyenne du Niger est de 5 m.

mares stagnantes que l'évaporation vide peu à peu. Le niveau des lacs coupés des fleuves baisse et laisse à découvert d'excellentes cultures.

Du Debo-Korienzé les eaux montent début juillet, atteignent leur plénitude au début novembre et baissent rapidement à mi-décembre pour être le plus bas en juin.

D) Le plateau mandingue

Compris entre la vallée de la Falémé à l'ouest, le Haut-Niger au sud, Bamako à l'est, le sillon Baoulé-Sénégal au nord, le plateau présente une belle unité géologique : c'est la région du grès cambrien.

Le plateau est entouré par un réseau semé de vallées affluentes au Sénégal, en particulier celle du Bakoy, grossi du Baoulé et du Bafing. Elles forment des falaises de 100 à 200 m encadrant de larges sillons boisés ou cultivés périodiquement qui isolent des collines tabulaires garnies de latérite dans le sud. Sur les hauteurs, où s'étend une mince pellicule argileuse, se cramponne une maigre brousse avec le baobab, les acacias, les tamariniers.

Dans la moitié est, sur le moyen Baoulé, la roche s'enfonce progressivement sous les argiles et les sables, puis le Baoulé trace un coude dans une vallée très large marquée de petites falaises discontinues de grès.

E) Le massif sarakollé

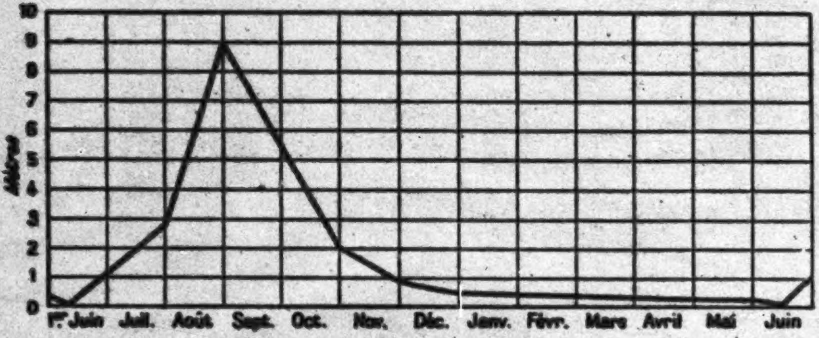
C'est une longue croupe de schiste de 400 km sur 150 à 200 de large. L'Est est recouvert de sable qui adoucit encore le modelé d'érosion ; seuls sur le versant nord apparaissent des lambeaux de schistes nus. L'Ouest présente un aspect très différent ; grâce à la couverture de dolérite il prend une allure tabulaire et le sable disparaît. Il offre de belles falaises et les vallées sont de véritables cañons. Les schistes et les dolérites supportent une végétation squelettique tandis que dans les vallées elle est très dense grâce aux sols issus des dolérites décomposées et à l'abondance de l'eau.

En effet le Bafing et le Bakoy sont formés d'une série de cuvettes dont quelques-unes sont assez profondes et séparées par des barrages de schistes ou de grès. Certains de ces barrages donnent lieu à de belles chutes. Entre Bafoulabé et Kayes le Sénégal présente deux chutes importantes : celle de Gouina et celle de Félou. Le Sénégal coule entre deux rives distantes de 300 à 800 m formant un fossé profond de 10 à 12 m ; il est soumis à des crues périodiques tenant au régime des pluies.

A 2 km en aval de Kayes le fleuve reçoit à sa droite le Kolombiné qui forme au Nord de Nioro la mare de Korkodio, véritable lac d'hivernage.

Vers Nioro le massif Sarakollé se raccorde à la vallée du Hodh sud par des croupes accidentées ; à l'est de Nioro on retrouve des lambeaux de grès et de marbre blanc.

Cette région est caractéristique de la savane sahélienne. Elle voit disparaître le Karité au profit des arbustes : palmiers doum *(Hyphaene thebaica)* ; cram-cram *(Cenchrus catharticus)*. Le climat devenant plus



Type de crue moyenne à Kayes

desséchant, la brousse devient épineuse mais on trouve encore le baobab, des combrétacées nombreuses et le précieux palmier rônier.

II. — Le climat et la météorologie

Cette région appartient aux zones de climat soudanien et sahélien. Son climat peut être caractérisé ainsi :

— Une seule saison des pluies, en été.
Quantité annuelle de précipitations allant de 2.000 à 250 mm en décroissant du sud au nord.
Maximum de précipitations en août.

A) Températures

— Les températures présentent :
Un maximum correspondant au passage du soleil au zénith (mars à mai) avec maximum absolu > 40° ;
Un maximum secondaire correspondant à la fin de la saison des pluies ;
Un minimum correspondant à l'éloignement maximum du soleil (décembre-janvier) avec minimum absolu < 15° ;
Un minimum secondaire correspondant au maximum des précipitations.

— La tension de vapeur suit assez bien la courbe des pluies et présente un maximum en août > 25 mb (1).

L'année se divise en deux saisons, la saison sèche et la saison des pluies ou « hivernage ».

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(1) Ces renseignements nous ont été fournis par M. de Lorme, du Service de la Météorologie, de Bamako.

B) RÉGIME DES VENTS

Les différents types de temps sont déterminés par la succession de différents courants aériens aux caractères bien tranchés. Pratiquement, deux courants seulement intéressent la région : l'harmattan et la mousson.

L'harmattan. — C'est le vent qui circule sur la face sud de l'anticyclone continental africain. Il est de direction générale est et sa vitesse est faible ; c'est un vent sec (tension de vapeur voisine de 10 mb pouvant descendre à moins de 5 mb).

La mousson du SW. — L'air qui circulait autour de l'anticyclone de Sainte-Hélène est dévié au passage de l'équateur et circule autour de sa dépression thermique saharienne.

C'est un vent de direction générale SW, de vitesse très faible, et très humide (tension de vapeur voisine de 25 mb). L'épaisseur de la mousson varie entre 1.000 et 2.500 m en général. Elle est surmontée par l'harmattan sous lequel elle s'enfonce comme un coin.

La zone de rencontre de ces deux courants forme le front intertropical (F. I. T.) axe de la dépression saharienne. Ce F. I. T. est orienté sensiblement est-ouest et suit avec un léger retard les déplacements du soleil. Il oscille entre le 6° N (janvier) et le 21° N (juillet) montant de janvier à juillet et redescendant ensuite. La marche du F. I. T. a lieu par sauts car la mousson s'établit par vagues successives.

Les régions au nord du F. I. T. où règne l'harmattan sont en saison sèche.

Les régions au sud du F. I. T. où règne la mousson sont en saison des pluies.

Ceci explique que la saison des pluies soit d'autant plus courte que l'on s'élève vers le nord.

C) LA SAISON DES PLUIES

Au sol règne la mousson du sud-ouest.

C'est un vent de direction générale S.-O. à vitesse très faible qui décroît à mesure que l'on monte vers le nord. Il est très humide et sa tension de vapeur est voisine de 25 mb.

Au contact du sol il s'échauffe et devient ascendant, donnant naissance à des nuages à développement vertical d'où peuvent tomber des averses assez fortes, orageuses ou non, mais localisées, avec calme ou vents modérés au sol. Les nuages subissent une forte variation diurne et présentent un maximum de développement en fin de journée. Les averses sont limitées en général à la fin de l'après-midi et au début de la nuit.

L'épaisseur normale de la mousson varie entre 1.000 et 2.500 m. Elle est surmontée par l'harmattan.

L'harmattan ne vient au sol qu'à la suite des « grains ». Sa direction est Est et sa vitesse est alors très grande ; sa température et sa tension de vapeur sont plus basses que celles de la mousson bien qu'il soit en général à saturation.

Les pluies de mousson. — Lorsqu'il y a convergence des courants au sein de la mousson, il peut se former des amoncellements compacts de nuages de plusieurs kilomètres d'épaisseur d'où tombent des précipitations abondantes et généralisées appelées « pluies de mousson ». Ces masses de nuages sont sensiblement stationnaires ; il en tombe une pluie fine continue et les rares éclaircies se produisent généralement au coucher du soleil. Ces pluies peuvent être accompagnées de phénomènes orageux sporadiques. Ce temps dure de quelques jours à une dizaine de jours en moyenne, et le système nuageux se résorbe sur place quand il n'est plus alimenté suffisamment.

Dans le Sud, ces pluies se produisent plusieurs fois durant la saison, alors que dans le Nord, elles sont pratiquement inconnues.

Les grains orageux. — Ils sont appelés communément « tornade ». Ils se produisent lorsque la mousson au sol devient plus légère que le vent d'est qui se trouve normalement au-dessus.

Processus de formation. — La surface de séparation mousson-harmattan étant pratiquement horizontale, il s'y forme pour une raison quelconque (ascendance thermique de la mousson au contact du sol surchauffé en général) une vague qui va en s'amplifiant. La mousson en s'élevant se refroidit et donne naissance à un nuage à développement vertical. En même temps, la vitesse horizontale de la mousson étant faible et l'harmattan rapide, la vague et le nuage ont tendance à se déplacer vers l'ouest. Un creux se forme alors en avant de la vague de mousson et la base de l'harmattan s'abaisse vers le sol.

Au stade adulte, il se forme, en avant de la colonne ascendante, un tourbillon à axe horizontal qui roule sans glisser sur le sol, d'où l'impression de calme qu'on éprouve avant l'arrivée d'un grain ; ce tourbillon transporte des nuages bas, noirs, qui ne donnent pas de précipitations, mais se déplacent très rapidement en formant un bourrelet ou rouleau.

Puis vient un tourbillon de sens contraire pour lequel la vitesse de propagation et la vitesse du tourbillon s'ajoutent ; d'où un coup de vent de direction générale Est, très violent (la vitesse peut atteindre 100 km/h). La pluie suit presque immédiatement. Elle tombe sous forme d'averse très violente (l'intensité instantanée des précipitations peut dépasser 1 mm à la minute) et peut durer jusqu'à 1 heure. Elle est accompagnée de phénomènes orageux importants et parfois de grêle.

Ensuite, pendant deux à trois heures, en général, tombe une pluie fine et continue provenant de nuages stratiformes assez élevés.

L'ensemble se propage vers l'ouest avec la vitesse moyenne du vent d'est supérieur (50 km/h en général).

Enfin lorsque la couche de mousson antérieure offre un obstacle assez résistant, le grain doit s'élever au-dessus, perd rapidement de son intensité et s'éteint à moins qu'il ne soit régénéré du fait de conditions favorables (ascendance thermique).

Les grains s'alignent généralement suivant une direction nord-sud, formant une « ligne de grains » véritable barrière de nuages pouvant s'élever jusqu'à 15 km d'altitude. Certaines de ces lignes de grains peuvent avoir 1.000 km de long et s'étendre de Tombouctou à Abidjan ; elles peuvent parcourir 3.000 km et traverser toute l'A. O. F., mais la plupart ont une étendue et un parcours bien plus modestes.

Après le passage d'une forte « ligne de grains » il y a généralement une éclaircie de deux à trois jours sans pluie ni orages, mais plusieurs petites lignes de grains peuvent se succéder dans une journée. En pleine saison on compte en moyenne une dizaine de grains dans le mois. Ils sont responsables des orages, pluies et vents les plus violents.

Les grains subissent une variation diurne assez prononcée et leur intensité est maximum en fin d'après-midi et au début de la nuit.

D) La saison sèche

Au sol règne l'harmattan. C'est un vent de direction générale Est à Nord-Est ; sa vitesse est faible mais subit une variation diurne marquée, car les écarts thermiques qu'il subit sont considérables. La nuit, le calme est presque absolu, puis le vent d'Est s'établit ; il souffle d'abord régulièrement puis aux heures chaudes par « bouffées » très espacées par suite des ascendances thermiques qui se produisent au contact du sol surchauffé, pour le soir s'affaiblir peu à peu. La tension de vapeur est voisine de 10 mb et peut descendre à moins de 5 mb.

Grande amplitude diurne de la température, les maxima pouvant dépasser 45°.

Le peu d'humidité ne permet pas la condensation de nuages importants et les seuls nuages que l'on trouve sont des nuages élevés.

Les fortes températures provoquent une instabilité thermique très importante qui soulève du sable et provoque des effets de « vacillement d'air chaud » et de « mirage ». La visibilité est parfois assez fortement réduite par ces particules de sable qui subsistent dans l'air, formant ce que l'on appelle la « brume sèche ». Les brumes prennent en général naissance dans le Nord et sont transportées au loin par le vent.

Pluies d'hiver. — Il arrive que de l'air originaire des hautes latitudes descende jusqu'en A. O. F. aux mois de janvier et février notamment. Il y a alors formation de nuages assez élevés, le ciel restant couvert deux à trois jours. Il peut tomber, notamment dans les régions septentrionales, quelques faibles pluies qui généralement n'atteignent pas le sol. Les nuages peuvent également donner lieu à de faibles orages en altitude.

Ce phénomène se produit généralement deux à trois fois par saison.

[p.27]

Chapitre IV

PRINCIPAUX TRAITS ÉCONOMIQUES

I. — Agriculture

Chez les Bambara, « la production agricole est restée extensive ; elle n'a pas d'une manière générale dépassé le stade quasi primitif où le travail de l'homme, sans l'aide des techniques modernes, rend peu et le plus souvent mal. Le climat est dur sous les tropiques, rendant pénible l'effort physique et les zones naturellement riches sont rares et disséminées. Enfin, l'industrialisation commence à peine à naître dans l'Ouest africain et, en cette matière, comme en celle connexe de la production de l'énergie électrique hydraulique, capitale dans un pays où tout le charbon doit être importé, on ne dépasse guère le stade des études » (1).

A) Modes de culture

Nous pouvons distinguer trois principaux modes de cultures selon qu'ils s'appliquent aux jardins potagers, aux champs au bord des marigots et aux champs de brousse.

Les jardins potagers sont aménagés autour des cases et sont travaillés suivant une méthode de culture intensive avec fumure de détritus domestiques et irrigation sans jachère. Ils sont l'objet de soins méticuleux de la part des femmes ; chaque parcelle de terre est savamment exploitée grâce à des cultures étagées de racines et de plantes hautes qui épuisent le sol à des niveaux différents. Ces jardins de village sont destinés à assurer la soudure. On y cultive le gros mil, le maïs, le tabac (mi-août), etc. Ils sont entourés d'arbres nourriciers.

Les champs les plus fertiles sont au bord des marigots, où la terre est facilement irrigable. Ces petits champs sont généralement exploités par les femmes pour y cultiver le riz, le coton, les oignons, les arbres fruitiers.

Enfin les furuba, sont de véritables champs de brousse où on pratique la grande culture extensive et cyclique avec défrichage par brûlis. Pendant la saison sèche, on coupe les arbres à 0 m 70 ou 1 m du sol sans dessoucher afin que la jachère ultérieure soit brève et on entasse les branchages coupés au pied des souches. Après séchage, on met le feu aux herbes. Sur les anciens champs, on entasse les tiges de mil et les grandes herbes avant d'y mettre le feu, puis on ameublit superficiellement à la houe en mélangeant les cendres à la terre. On sème la première année le mil et l'arachide, les années suivantes des cultures moins riches jusqu'à épuisement du sol (obtenu par le manioc).

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(1) Georges Spitz, *Sansanding.*

La préparation du sol et les semailles doivent être faites très rapidement (en trois semaines ou un mois environ) au début de la saison des pluies. Parfois le paysan est obligé de semer à la volée sur un champ incomplètement préparé, quitte à repiquer par la suite. Le temps des semailles est fixé par l'apparition dans le ciel des pléiades que les Bambara nomment « la poule et les poussins ». Dans le Macina, les semailles se déclenchent à partir d'un village déterminé et suivent un ordre qui va successivement du sud vers le nord selon un mouvement en zigzag qui correspond à l'apparition des pluies.

Dans les champs de brousse, on sème le maïs, puis le fonio et gros mil (Sorgho), l'arachide et le petit mil *(Pennisetum)*, etc. (voir plus loin). On fait dans les champs de la monoculture ou de la culture associée, par exemple : le niébé (*Vigna unguiculati walp* = V. Catjang) et le gombo *(Hibiscus esculentus)* avec mils et maïs, le da sauce *(Hibiscus sabdariffa Linn)* avec le fonio *(Digitaria exilis)* ; les arachides et les pois souterrains. Dans certains champs on associe : mils, maïs, niébé, coton, pois souterrains, arachides, patates, manioc, gombo (chaque plante exploitant le terrain à des niveaux différents).

Les semailles sont toujours précédées de sacrifices familiaux et de rites généraux.

L'époque des récoltes est fixée d'après la durée végétative des plantes, sans tenir compte de la maturité apparente. Il s'ensuit souvent des erreurs sur les nouvelles variétés introduites par l'administration. Ainsi la date de récolte des arachides, des patates, des ignames peut être fixée prématurément et aucun conseil de patience ne pourra la retarder. Par contre, pour les mils, le fonio et le riz, les facteurs de maturité apparents sont connus et respectés. (ouverture des glumes pour le mil, teinte et inclinaison de l'épi pour les fonio et les riz).

Lorsqu'un champ est épuisé, il est mis en jachère et on débrousse un autre terrain, parfois à plusieurs kilomètres du village. On reconnaît qu'un champ est épuisé, lorsqu'apparaît spontanément une variété de plante nommée le sęgę *(Striga senegalensis Benth)* ; lorsque le terrain s'est reconstitué et redevient riche, on voit apparaître le ṭiękala *(Cymbopogon giganteus Benth)* et le wag̃ha *(Andropogon Gayanus Kunth)* qui indiquent qu'on peut à nouveau exploiter le champ. Les champs tournent ainsi autour du village d'exploitation suivant un cycle qui peut durer vingt ans. Des habitations provisoires sont installées auprès des champs à cultiver où vivent pendant les travaux le paysan et chacune de ses femmes à tour de rôle.

B) Cultures vivrières

Les Bambara cultivent des plantes vivrières et des plantes textiles. Dans la savane le mil est la culture fondamentale. Les *pénicillaires* ou petits mils *(Pennisetum typhoïdeum R.)* sont cultivés très haut dans le Nord. Leur variété se caractérise par la durée de leur cycle végétatif qui varie de soixante-cinq à cent quarante jours. Ils sont semés en général sur un terrain assez léger au début de la saison des pluies. Le grain est mis en terre sans travail préalable du sol en poquets distants d'un pas et profonds de quelques centimètres. Une pincée de grains est placée dans chaque poquet et on effectue de 1 à 3 binages, le premier, quinze jours après la levée, les autres en juillet et en août. Le rendement varie de 350 à 1.000 kg à l'ha.

Les sorghos (Sorghum vulgare) comportent un nombre considérable de variétés aux cycles végétatifs variant de 120 à 150 jours. M. Vichon a relevé 11 échantillons de sorghos à sucre ; 132 de demi-saison tardifs, 87 hâtifs, 138 de repiquage. M. Creak classe les sorghos en trois types : à épis coniques, touffus, serrés, à épis allongés, à épillets plus détachés ; à épis très allongés et à épillets encore plus détachés de l'axe. Une troisième classification porte sur la distinction entre sorghos des terres ordinaires et ceux des terres inondées. Ces derniers sont semés en août en pépinières en terrain frais non inondé et repiqués à la fin de la saison des pluies dans les terres dont les eaux se sont retirées. Les rendements varient de 400 à 1.200 kg à l'ha.

Le mil est consommé sous forme de farine ou utilisé pour la fabrication d'une boisson fermentée qui s'apparente vaguement à la petite bière : le « dolo ».

Le blé est cultivé dans les ouaddis, où les eaux sont basses, de novembre à février. La culture se fait avec ou sans irrigation en poquets espacés de 25 cm et de 4 cm de profondeur, où le cultivateur dispose une pincée de graines (70 kg de semences sont nécessaires à l'ha). La récolte a lieu fin mars au plus tard. Les rendements moyens sont de 1.000 à 1.500 kg. Les blés sont généralement tendres et donnent d'excellentes farines panifiables. Mais cette culture en est encore au stade expérimental.

Le riz est cultivé sur 80.000 ha dont près de la moitié dans le Delta central (Mopti, Macina, Djenné) qui constitue le véritable grenier à riz du territoire. En dehors du Delta, les régions productrices sont : le bassin supérieur du Niger (Bamako), la zone lacustre et post-lacustre (du lac Débo à Ansongo), la zone préguinéenne (sud de Sikasso et Bougouni) enfin 10.000 ha de rizières irriguées de l'Office du Niger.

On cultive deux espèces de riz : l'une africaine *(Oryza glaberrima)* dans le Delta, est un riz flottant capable de supporter de fortes submersions. L'autre d'origine asiatique *(Oryza sativa)* est cultivée dans la haute vallée du Niger et dans les vallées des petits cours d'eau. Enfin il faudrait aussi signaler une qualité de riz des montagnes qui pousse en terrain sec.

Ce qui caractérise la riziculture indigène, c'est l'absence d'aménagement hydraulique. C'est une riziculture de submersion, donc pleine d'insécurité. Dès 1944 des travaux cherchèrent à supprimer ces procédés de submersion « sauvage ». Dans la haute vallée du Niger où les plaines sont insuffisamment submergées et trop tard, le riz est semé au début de l'hivernage et lorsqu'il atteint 20 à 25 cm l'eau est envoyée progressivement dans la plaine. Lorsque le riz arrive à maturité l'eau est évacuée dans le fleuve par les ouvrages de décharge. Dans le Delta où la crue du Niger est directement utilisée, des ouvrages régulateurs empêchent la crue de se faire sentir trop violemment et retiennent ensuite l'eau de décrue. Dans le Sahel, les aménagements portent sur les plaines en bordure du Niger, où des digues de terre protègent le riz des crues, et sur les lacs tributaires du fleuve où les ouvrages construits au point de communication du fleuve, retiennent l'eau dans les lacs de la décrue pour permettre le repiquage du riz en empêchant la décrue de noyer les plantes avant la récolte. De 1944 à 1949, 101.550 ha ont été ainsi aménagés dans la haute vallée, le Delta et la vallée du Sahel. Un plan prévoit pour 1956 l'aménagement de 331.000 ha nouveaux. De plus des essais de labourage mécanique sont commencés. Jusqu'à présent deux méthodes de culture sont appliquées :

a) Sans écobuage : le terrain houé est préparé en sillons espacés de 40 à 50 cm ; les semis se font sur ces sillons en poquets distants de 25 cm. (1)

b) Avec écobuage : les graminées spontanées sont arrachées en mars-avril et rassemblées en planches de 1 m de large sur 3 à 6 m de long, enterrées légèrement et mises à feu. Fin juin, les buttes sont retournées à la houe et les semences disposées en poquets distants de 30 cm et profonds de 4 cm. On sème 15 graines par poquet, soit 45 à 50 kg à l'ha. Les rendements varient entre 800 et 1.200 kg de paddy à l'ha.

A ces cultures de base s'ajoutent des cultures hâtives de soudure :

— les millets : le fonio *(Digilaria exilis)* cultivé dans le secteur de Sénégambie et l'iburu *(D. Iburna)* dans le secteur central du Soudan.

— le maïs et les bananiers au Sud de Bamako. Le maïs est la culture la plus répandue après celle du mil. Néanmoins on importe du maïs du Dahomey. Les bananiers sont plantés autour des cases et forment une ceinture autour des villages. On en plante aussi dans les petits champs au bord des marigots. On récolte de grosses bananes qui se cueillent vertes et se mangent cuites.

— les manguiers, d'importation récente, (une cinquantaine d'années) ont un excellent rendement et sont appelés à se développer de plus en plus.

— le voandzou qui murit ses graines dans le sol. Il est cultivé depuis la bordure méridionale du Sahara jusqu'au Cap, mais le berceau de la culture se trouve au Soudan où s'observent le maximum de formes cultivées (1).

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(1) *L'agronomie tropicale*, juillet-août 1950.

— le manioc et l'igname en certains points du Niger échappent aux dévastations des acridiens qui ne peuvent s'attaquer aux racines.

D'autres cultures sont destinées à équilibrer les rations alimentaires : les condiments et matières grasses : piments, sésames, labiées diverses, gombo, oseille, citrullus, arachide (importée au XVIe siècle d'Amérique). L'arachide a besoin pour fructifier de terres légères et meubles. Elle est semée en juin au début de la saison des pluies et récoltée en novembre. Les Indigènes la consomment grillée ; ils en font de l'huile, du savon, et les fanes sont données aux animaux. La culture est entièrement entre les mains des autochtones. Au Sénégal la main-d'œuvre est insuffisante ; avant 1940 on faisait appel pour chaque campagne à des milliers de travailleurs soudanais, en particulier bambara : « les Navétanes » qui louaient leurs bras aux cultivateurs sénégalais, afin de pouvoir acquérir les tissus et autres produits dont ils avaient besoin. L'arachide est l'objet d'exportation. On cultive aussi les légumes contenant de l'azote (voandzou, niébés, doliques, kissis, etc.), enfin les brèdes nombreuses et variées, les tomates, les aubergines, les courges et depuis 1940, les pommes de terre qui connaissent une expansion de plus en plus grande.

Enfin nous citerons *a)* la cueillette de plantes spontanées qui servent de condiment : les fruits du baobab *(Adansonia digitala)* des corchorus, du parkia biglobosa, du karité *(Butyro-spermum)* objet de demi-culture appelé autrefois l'arbre à beurre ; le fruit semblable à celui du palmier contient un noyau dont les amandes renferment une matière grasse, le beurre de karité, apprécié pour la fabrication du savon, l'éclairage, la toilette... *b)* la cueillette d'aliments de disette : baobab, cenchrus, cassia, noix de cola *(Sterculia acuminata)*. Les noix de cola sont très prisées par l'indigène ; elles enferment de la caféine qui en font un stimulant et un aliment d'épargne. Les Bambara utilisent 7 sortes de noix de cola dans leurs rites sacrificiels et divinatoires : 1° Dangoro (noix rouge) ; 2° Geleworo (noix blanche) ; 3° Sosokuworo (noix rouge et pointue à l'une de ses extrémités) ; 4° Flaniworo (cola jaune) ; 5° Worodanda (cola sans bouche) sans fente apparente permettant le partage) ; 6° Bassiworo (noix rouge foncée et amère) ; 7° Ryeworo (noix claire et de couleur indéterminé). (Cette liste nous est donnée par G. Dieterlen dans son *Essai sur la religion bambara*).

Pour préparer les noix de cola, on les place dans des paniers à mailles très larges garnis de feuilles qu'on humecte d'eau tous les quatre ou cinq jours.

Parmi les arbres cultivés, en dehors des bananiers, des manguiers, citronniers, orangers, ananas, etc., il faut citer l'*Acacia albida*, qui joue un grand rôle dans la mythologie bambara ; pendant la saison sèche il est utilisé comme aliment du bétail.

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(1) Jacques Félix, pour une enquête sur le Voandzou *(Voandzeia subterranea)*, *Agriculture tropicale*, janv.-fév., 1950.

C) Cultures textiles

A côté de ces plantes vivrières, les Bambara cultivent des plantes textiles qu'ils utilisent en plus des plantes textiles fournies par la végétation spontanée. Parmi les principales, nous indiquerons le da *(Hibiscus cannabinus)* dont les fibres sont employées par les pêcheurs pour la confection de leurs filets. Il est imputrescible et susceptible de concurrencer le jute. Les travaux pour son exploitation, arrachage des tiges, rouissage, extraction des fibres, sont exécutés en saison sèche, époque où de nombreux bras sont disponibles (1).

Le coton qui pousse spontanément en maints endroits est cultivé aux abords des villages comme plante annuelle ; c'est une plante vivace qui se renouvelle tous les 4 ou 5 ans. C'est une culture intercalaire du mil et du maïs. La récolte est effectuée par les femmes ; il est égrené et filé par les femmes, mais tissé en bandes étroites par les tisserands qui en font des vêtements en tissus écru, bleu indigo, jaune ou noir. Actuellement après de nombreux essais d'amélioration qui remontent à l'occupation, des semences sélectionnées suivant les zones de cultures ont été distribuées aux paysans et l'administration a encouragé la culture industrielle cotonière en pays irrigué, le filage et le tissage mécanique.

Le sisal est une agave originaire du Mexique. Les longues feuilles épaisses et pointues, après avoir subi une série d'opérations industrielles dont le défibrage mécanique, donnent des fibres textiles très solides convenant à la corderie, la sparterie, l'industrie des tapis, des toiles de bâche, etc.

Le kapock *(Eriodendron anfractuosum)* était encore il y a quelques années un produit de cueillette, mais des plantations ont été créées. Les fruits sous la forme de capsules contiennent des graines enveloppées dans une ouate végétale. En un an, le kapockier peut fournir 30 kg de fibres utilisées dans la matelasserie, la chapellerie...

D) Instruments agricoles

Les instruments agricoles bambara sont très simples. La houe est presque le seul outil aratoire employé. On en distingue de plusieurs sortes, en particulier dans la région de Bougouni : la « tyerengu » de 0 m 50 de large, à manche droit (surtout utilisée par les Sénoufos), et le « n'gu kala », de 0 m 30 environ, à manche courbe, sont utilisés pour les labours, pour le grattage et le buttage ; le « flotton » au manche taillé dans une branche de bois fourchue, de 0 m 10 à 0 m 20, est employé pour le binage et le sarclage. (Le désherbage se fait à la main, lorsque les herbes sont trop importantes.) Ces houes obligent le paysan à travailler courbé sur le sol. Signalons aussi la hache : « dyeli » qui sert à couper les arbustes et les branches d'arbres pour défricher, le coupe-coupe et une petite pioche avec un manche de houe, le « yalo ».

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(1) G. Spitz, *L'Ouest africain français.*

La récolte des épis de mil se fait à l'aide d'un petit couteau spécial qui sectionne la tige. Enfin le battage des épis s'exécute avec de grands bâtons coudés au manche rond et au bout aplati.

Les travaux agricoles, labourage et battage sont entrepris collectivement en suivant la cadence marquée par un instrumentiste. Le travail d'un champ se fait généralement en partant du bas et en remontant la pente pour que la pluie entraîne les mauvaises herbes. Le battage du mil se fait sur l'aire du village, face à l'ouest.

La charrue a tenté de supplanter la houe, mais avec un succès inégal, car le labourage profond de ces terres fragiles amène en surface la couche latéritique du sous-sol, avec comme conséquence la ruine définitive des champs.

Les Bambara ne disposent pas d'autre engrais organique que les ordures ménagères, sauf dans quelques régions où les pasteurs conduisent les troupeaux sur les chaumes après les récoltes. Les terres bien que labourées superficiellement s'épuisent vite et doivent être abandonnées après quelques années. Le défrichement par feu de brousse, présente l'inconvénient du déboisement progressif.

E) Statistiques de production

Les statistiques étant établies par cercles ou par centres administratifs, il est impossible de donner des chiffres précis sur le volume de la production agricole qui doit être spécifiquement attribuée aux Bambara. Toutefois ceux-ci formant dans certains cercles la grosse majorité de la population, il ne serait pas sans intérêt de fournir quelques précisions chiffrées sur l'agriculture soudanaise. Il faut cependant signaler que la superficie cultivée du pays ne peut être évaluée même *approximativement*. Les statistiques établies par les cercles ou les centres administratifs sont fondées sur des approximations si vagues qu'il est peu raisonnable d'en tenir compte.

A titre indicatif, nous pouvons signaler les chiffres fournis par l'administration du cercle de Bougouni. Les estimations se calculent d'après le nombre de travailleurs probables d'une région à chacun desquels on attribue un champ d'une superficie présumée. On compte les 3/4 de la production en mil et le reste en cultures régionales. Les rendements moyens à l'ha peuvent ainsi donner une indication probable de la quantité récoltée qui ne peut être contrôlée en aucune manière.

Production d'après « Le guide A. O. F. (1950) »

Bamako

Produits d'exportation. — Karité, arachides 11.700 t : sisal : 300 t coton, 20 t : tabac 35 t.

Cultures vivrières. — Mil 92.256 t ; maïs 11.200 t ; riz 4.917 t ; fonio 200 t ; ignames 1.000 t ; manioc 2.600 t ; pommes de terre 1.506 t ; patates 3.810 t ; haricots et oignons 15.200 t ; pois 8.420 t.

Ségou

Exportations. — Arachides 10.000 t ; riz 6.000 t ; kapock 600 t ; amandes de Karité 1.000 t ; beurre 100 t ; gomme : 20 t.

Production de l'Office du Niger. — Riz 10.000 t ; coton 1.300 t.

Cultures vivrières. — Mil 15.400 t ; maïs 1.000 t ; fonio 4.200 t ; pois 2.600 t ; haricots 1.600 t.

Bougouni

Exportation. — Beurre karité : 100 à 600 t ; arachides : 500 t ; mil : 1.000 t ; cire.

Cultures vivrières. — Mil : 40.000 t ; fonio 10.000 t ; riz ; 6.000 t ; maïs ; 5.000 t arachides, manioc, ignames patates.

Chiffres de production
fournis par le cercle de Bougouni pour l'année 1950

Nature des cultures	Superficie ensemencée	Rendement moyen à l'ha en tonnes	Quantités récoltées en tonnes	Besoins en tonnes semences	Nourriture	Disponible pour la vente
Mil	60.000	0,500	30.000	1.200	27.000	2.000
Riz	1.500	0,700	1.000	100	800	100
Arachides	2.500	0,600	1.500	150	350	1.000
Maïs	4.000	0,700	2.800	50	2.750	
Fonio	1.000	0,700	700	100	600	
Manioc, patates, ignames	300	2,000	600		600	
Haricots et pois	100	0,800	80	10	70	
Superf. cultivées	69.400					

Cultures industrielles

Nature des cultures	Superficies ensemencées à l'ha.	Rendement moyen à l'ha.	Quantités récoltées en tonnes	Consommation locale	Semences	Disponible pour la vente
Arachides	2.500	0,600	1.500	150	350	1.000
Coton indigène	500	0,150	75	75		
— « N'Courala »	60	0,200	12			
Tabac	750	0,400	300	150		150
Dah, sisal	Insignifiant					

La Société de Prévoyance a fourni 600 plants de manguiers, cailcédrats et flamboyants.

II. — Élevage

A) MODES D'ÉLEVAGE

Les Bambara sont agriculteurs et sédentaires : ils vivent en symbiose avec les Somonos et Bozos qui sont exclusivement des pêcheurs et des navigateurs et d'autres peuples semi-nomades comme les Peuls qui sont pasteurs.

Pourtant les Bambara peuvent se constituer des troupeaux en échangeant leurs graines contre les animaux qu'ils obtiennent des pasteurs peuls, maures ou touareg ; c'est leur façon de placer leurs économies ; ainsi ils ne réalisent jamais leurs animaux en période de croissance mais ils les laissent vieillir dans leurs troupeaux et le capital s'accroît sans effort géré par le père de famille.

Dans le Sahel, pendant la saison des pluies, les animaux vivent en pâturant de nombreuses graminées et légumineuses qui croissent dans la steppe à mimosées. En saison sèche, ils se nourrissent des émondes et des gousses que produisent les acacias. On note alors une transhumance vers les régions inondées qui forment des pâturages de décrue. Dans la région de Nioro la transhumance se fait vers le Kaarta, vers les Baoulé et le Bakoy.

Dans la région soudanienne, les animaux confiés aux Peuls effectuent de courtes transhumances, en hivernage sur les plateaux qui sont d'immenses pâturages ; dès novembre ils regagnent les vallées et les rivières.

En zone guinéenne le troupeau du village est confié à un berger peul qui l'emmène le matin et le ramène le soir ; les animaux sont alors attachés aux piquets dans les cours d'habitation des propriétaires ou parqués dans un enclos où les femmes vont traire. Après la récolte, les troupeaux paissent dans les champs mais, dès février, ils ne s'écartent plus des habitations car tout est desséché. On nourrit alors les bêtes avec du mil, de la paille d'arachide ou des branchages.

Les bovins aussi bien que les ovins ne sont l'objet d'aucune surveillance dans leur reproduction. La monte est libre et a lieu dans les pâturages au hasard et au gré des animaux pendant toute l'année. La mise à bas se fait n'importe où ; les éleveurs ignorent toute pratique obstétricale. Les veaux sont nourris d'un barbotage de fane de mil légèrement salée ou du fruit pilé d'un ficus nommé « aourou » qui aurait des propriétés galactogènes.

Les plus beaux boucs sont souvent castrés pour en faire des moutons d'engraissement (ou mouton de case). Au Kaarta et au Mandé les chèvres sont élevées dans les bergeries construites sur pilotis à 1 ou 2 m du sol sur un plancher de branchage qui permet l'élimination des excréments, ce qui protège l'animal contre l'humidité et les fauves.

Les chevaux, indice de richesse, sont à peine plus soignés. Les étalons, surtout ceux du chef, sont entravés aux piquets de case, mais les juments sont libres et errent autour du village où elles sont saillies à 20 mois par n'importe quel cheval. La nourriture de la jument et de son produit est négligée ; celle du cheval est plus satisfaisante.

Les oiseaux de basse-cour sont élevés dans tous les villages, presque dans toutes les cases. Ils se nourrissent de ce qu'ils trouvent. En Haute Côte d'Ivoire, les indigènes les conduisent sur les champs de culture après la récolte. Souvent, ils construisent de petits poulaillers accolés aux cases.

B) AIRES D'ÉLEVAGE

Dans la zone sahélienne, la végétation arbustive constitue une très précieuse source de nourriture pour les chameaux, les chevaux, les bœufs, les moutons et les chèvres. Le 14e parallèle marque la ligne de démarcation entre les zébus au nord, et les taurins au sud. Cette ligne passe par Kayes, Bafoulabé, Kolokani, le Sud du Ségou, San et Tougan ; elle correspond à la limite septentrionale des mouches tsé-tsé.

Les zébus de race peul sont très bien représentés dans le Macina pendant la saison sèche, le Haoussa au nord et le Gourma au sud en saison des pluies. C'est un bon animal de boucherie. Les zébus de race faraboué produits par le croisement de la race taurine et zébu vivent dans la zone de cohabitation des deux espèces. Enfin, les zébus de race maure des cercles de Nioro, Nara, Macina sont moins bons pour la boucherie que les peuls mais les vaches sont meilleures laitières (6 à 7 litres par jour au lieu de 2 à 3).

Les moutons à laine se trouvent au Macina, dans le cercle de Macina et de l'Issa Ber. Ils meurent là où tombe plus de 60 cm d'eau par an. Leurs bergers, les Rimaïbés, les font transhumer suivant les crues du Niger. Enfin, les chèvres du Sahel, fines et musclées, se retrouvent dans le Fouta-Djallon au sud.

La zone soudanienne est moins propre à l'élevage. La brousse haute est infestée de mouches tsé-tsé, de tiques de parasites gastro-intestinaux. Les chameaux disparaissent.

Les taurins sans doute introduits par les populations berbères venues du Sud Marocain, sont dérivés des bœufs à longues cornes. La race N'Dama par le croisement avec le zébu, produit la sous-race Méré ou Bambara qui vit au Kaarta, au Bélédougou, au Mandé, au Minianka. Le mâle est bon animal de boucherie, la vache est mauvaise laitière.

Le mouton maure à long poil, élevé dans les régions de Nema, Nara Nioro est d'un mauvais rendement pour la boucherie, tandis que le mouton peul originaire du Soudan, aux cornes très développées, est un excellent animal de boucherie ; enfin, le mouton du Fouta-Djallon ou du Sud élevé jusqu'au 14e degré lat. Nord est plus trapu ; il a le poil ras, mais croisé avec le mérinos, il fournit une toison de 500 à 600 gr.

Au Kaarta et au Mandé, on élève aussi des chèvres plus trapues que la chèvre du Sahel car elles sont sédentaires.

Les chevaux diminuent en nombre et en taille. Ils deviennent communs et mous. Le cheval du Sud est un barde dégénéré par le climat. On le trouve au Sud du Kaarta, dans le Minianka, dans les régions de San et de Djenné. Le cheval du Bélédougou est un barde transformé par le climat et l'homme. Le centre d'élevage est constitué par le canton de Touba à 90 km au Nord-Est de Koulikoro.

L'âne du Minianka et dans le Sud du Soudan est petit : 0 m 90 à 1 m mais épais ; il a une robe beige avec bande dorsale et raie cruciale plus sombre.

On trouve peu de mulets, car si l'âne est méprisé, le mulet est honni.

L'élevage du porc apparaît ainsi que celui des oiseaux de basse-cour.

La poule est d'un type archaïque de petite taille et de faible poids (1 kg). Elle a peu de muscles. C'est un oiseau semi-sauvage qui ne pond qu'une centaine d'œufs par an, tous couvés. La pintade pèse environ 1 kg 200 et a une chair peu fine. Le canard musqué ou de barbarie est élevé en grosse quantité sur les bords du Sénégal et du Niger. Les canes sont d'excellentes pondeuses et couveuses. Elles pèsent 3 kg à 3 kg 500. La chair des jeunes est bonne, celle des adultes musquée. Enfin, le dindon s'élève partout mais plus rarement car il demande trop de soins. Le lapin n'est pas élevé ; il est trop sensible aux maladies locales.

La zone guinéenne ne permet plus que l'élevage du porc et des oiseaux de basse-cour. Le cheval n'y vit pas.

C) STATISTIQUES

	Moutons Chèvres	Bovidés	Chevaux	Anes
Bamako	64.987	49.425	6.227	10.356
Ségou	234.645	161.965	10.454 — 5.165	12.159
Bougouni	17.360	29.197	431	1.651

Estimations approximatives des trois centres bambara.

D) PRODUITS TIRÉS DU BÉTAIL

Viande. — Les principaux centres d'abats sont Bamako et Kayes.

Une partie des disponibilités en bovins est exportée vers le Sénégal. Les sorties se font alors par le cercle de Kayes ; par la route Nema, Timbesa, Nioro, Kayes ou Nema, Nara, Yelamano, Kayes ; vers la Guinée pour ravitailler en viande les travailleurs des placers d'or de la région de Siguiri ; vers la Côte-d'Ivoire et la Gold Coast où les animaux proviennent surtout de Mopti avec la participation des cercles de Ségou, San, Niafunké. De nombreuses routes caravanières pénètrent en Côte-d'Ivoire par Odienné, Seguela, Korhogo, Bouaké, Bobo-Dioulasso.

On fabrique des conserves aux usines de Lyndiane.

Cuirs. — Les cuirs proviennent soit des abattoirs, soit de la brousse ; ils sont de qualité médiocre à cause de la mauvaise préparation — les peaux sont séchées au soleil et pliées en deux dans le sens de la longueur poil contre poil, empaquetées par 10 peaux attachées avec un fil de fer. Le tonnage annuel passant par Bamako est de 600 t environ.

Lait et dérivés. — Les vaches sont mauvaises laitières ; la majorité laitière est constituée par les zébus maures, peuls et toronkés. La fabrication du beurre est primitive ; le lait aigri est mis dans des calebasses, des bidons ou des peaux de bouc et est agité jusqu'à la prise du beurre. A Falaladji près de Kayes il y a une beurrerie-fromagerie.

Laine. — La laine est généralement utilisée sur place pour le tissage ; seule une petite partie est exportée en France. Un gros effort a été fait pour l'amélioration et l'exploitation du bétail ; il faut signaler à ce sujet le Centre expérimental d'élevage du Service Zootechnique, le Centre de Sérothérapie et la Ferme école de Sotuba, près de Bamako, les bergeries de El Oualadji, Nioro, Nara, les dépôts d'étalons de Nioro, Ouahigouya, Mopti, Bandiagara, Gao, Bamako, Goundam.

III. — Commerce

Le pays bambara suit la réglementation commerciale de l'A. O. F. Il subit en particulier le régime douanier mis en vigueur le 30 novembre 1950 (*Journal officiel A. O. F.*, n° 2507) comprenant une taxe fiscale perçue sur les marchandises de toute provenance et une surtaxe douanière perçue sur chaque produit dans le cadre des conventions internationales auxquelles la France a souscrit.

Les recettes douanières 1950 sont de 131 millions de francs pour tout le Soudan. Elles nous révèlent un mouvement commercial très moyen et nettement inférieur à celui du Sénégal par exemple (3.325 millions). Ceci est dû d'une part à la situation géographique du pays, à l'état des voies de communications et d'autre part aux ressources mêmes de la contrée.

A) Commerce extérieur

a) *Voies de communication*

Il se fait par 3 voies : Dakar-Conakry-Abidjan. C'est par ces postes que le monde Bambara communique avec l'Europe et les États-Unis. C'est pourquoi la continentalité du pays demeure un redoutable obstacle pour les échanges extérieurs.

Les voies de communication demeurent très médiocres à travers ce pays démesurément étendu. Les voies navigables sont irrégulières. La navigation commerciale sur le Sénégal est possible de Saint-Louis à Kayes de juillet à octobre, jusqu'à Podor le reste de l'année ; sur le Niger, par vapeurs pendant la période de crue et par chalands le reste de l'année entre Koulikoro et Ansongo (1.400 km) entre Bamako et Kouroussa (374 km) ; sur le Bani de San à Mopti sur le Niger. En outre de très nombreuses pirogues indigènes sillonnent les voies navigables transportant des marchandises. Ces voies d'un intérêt strictement local demeurent trop longtemps impraticables pour rendre possible l'entretien d'un gros matériel. Les voies ferrées construites dans un but stratégique cherchent à relier les ports aux biefs navigables et ne présentent aucune cohésion. De plus, la voie (1 m) est fragile, unique et d'un faible débit. Les quatre lignes principales sont Dakar-Niger jusqu'à Kouliloro, 1.697 km et 128 gares ; Conakry-Niger 662 km, 40 gares, arrivant jusqu'à Kankan où le Milo est navigable ; Abidjan-Niger 834 km, et Benin-Niger 579 km. Le trafic des voyageurs et des marchandises est en progression constante et l'insuffisance des voies ferrées est compensée par le trafic routier. Tout centre secondaire peut être atteint par camion en saison sèche mais sauf dans les banlieues la plupart des routes sont de simples pistes non construites. Les cours d'eau sont franchis par bacs, chaussées submersibles, passerelles provisoires en rondins... Le réseau routier est 80 fois moins dense qu'en France car la saison des pluies cause des ravages annuels. Son entretien est onéreux. Les ponts sont rares ; il faut noter quelques belles réalisations sur le Bagolé, le Baoulé et le Milo à Kankan. Les routes sont classées en routes inter-coloniales reliant entre eux les territoires d'A. O. F. (une de ces routes relie Bamako à l'une des trois grandes pistes transsahariennes qui vont vers l'Afrique du Nord), routes d'intérêt général et routes d'intérêt local.

Enfin, un réseau aérien tend à se développer de plus en plus. Déjà il dessert Dakar, Bamako, Bobo-Dioulasso, Ouagadougou, Niamey, Kano ; une autre ligne assure le service Dakar, Kayes, Bamako, Bobo-Dioulasso, Abidjan. D'autres lignes de création toute récente ne sont pas encore fixées définitivement. Nous signalerons la ligne : Dakar-Bamako-Ségou-Bobo-Dioulasso-Serkédougou-Abidjan ; la ligne qui dessert : Dakar-Ségou-Mopti-Gao ; celle de : Dakar-Boké-Conakry-Kankan ; enfin en une période sèche une ligne : Dakar-Kayes-Nioro-Bamako est surtout utilisée pour le transport des viandes. Ces lignes intérieures constituent un réseau de distribution des passagers et du fret débarqués à Dakar par les longs courriers dont elles assurent la correspondance.

L'éloignement des côtes demeure un obstacle au commerce extérieur car le pays est dépourvu de force motrice. Tout le charbon doit être importé et l'équipement hydro-électrique est sommaire.

b) *Réglementation commerciale*

L'arrêté 3771-SE du 21 juillet 1949 fixe les modalités d'importation des marchandises contingentées provenant de la Métropole et des pays d'Union française ou des marchandises étrangères. Le régime des exportations est défini par l'arrêté 2233-SE du 19 avril 1950. Elles peuvent être effectuées par tout commerçant titulaire d'une patente d'exportateur. D'après Richard-Molard les compagnies commerciales financées par les capitaux français et étrangers (de plus en plus américains) conservent encore une vieille mentalité de traite qui cherche à tirer le maximum de bénéfices de la colonie sans les réinvestir dans l'équipement du pays. Des tentatives de protection des producteurs indigènes ont créé des coopératives et leur ont donné certains avantages ; malgré cela elles se sont rapidement heurtées à la concurrence des maisons commerciales européennes et ont été mises en échec.

c) *Organisation*

Points de traite et coopératives. — Le dénombrement et la classification des points de traite sont régis par un arrêté local mis en vigueur dès l'ouverture de la traite, fixée, elle, par un arrêté général. En principe, l'arrêté fixant les points de traite est établi après consultation par l'Administration des Chambres de Commerce de Bamako et de Kayes.

Il est formellement interdit d'acheter des produits en dehors de ces points de traite sous peine de procès-verbaux ; la confiscation des produits et la saisie de véhicules pouvant même être prononcées dans certains cas de récidive.

Rôle des points de traite. — Le rôle de ces points de traite est de rassembler les produits d'une région : le commerce choisit en général un gros village desservi par une route praticable ou une station de chemin de fer d'où l'évacuation peut se faire plus facilement. Les points de traite du point de vue administratif facilitent un contrôle à la production, un remplacement des marchés et foires supprimés par un arrêté général en 1946. Pour le commerce, il en résulterait un moindre éparpillement des centres d'achat, un besoin moins important de véhicules, sacherie, etc.

Les coopératives et les points de traite. — Depuis 1951, il existe deux coopératives africaines : l'une à Kita, dite de production, l'autre à Kayes, dite commerciale et industrielle. Elles sont constituées sous l'égide administrative par des commerçants indigènes, des notables qui pensent sous couvert de l'association échapper à l'influence des grosses maisons de commerce dont ils sont tributaires. Ces coopératives fonctionnent de façon décevante et manquent d'esprit de continuité, de technique et d'expérience. Cependant, elles bénéficient d'appuis dissimulés sous forme d'emprunts aux Fonds Communs du Crédit agricole et aux Sociétés de Prévoyance.

Ces coopératives ne sont pas tenues d'acheter les produits dans les seuls points de traite. Un village qui ne posséderait qu'un adhérent à ces organismes peut être choisi comme centre d'achat par les dirigeants des coopératives sans même qu'il leur soit nécessaire d'avoir l'accord de l'Administration.

Situation en 1950-51. — Profitant de la liberté de choisir les centres d'achats que l'Administration leur avait octroyée, les coopératives s'établirent aux environs des points de traite empêchant pour une très large part une arrivée normale des produits. Certains points de traite, Sirakoro notamment dans le cercle de Kita, virent leurs achats diminuer de 80 % parce que les acheteurs de la Coopérative étaient installés à Goro, 30 km dans l'hinterland de ce canton. Les acheteurs des maisons de commerce qui avaient consenti des crédits d'hivernage aux cultivateurs ne purent recouvrer leurs créances et s'installèrent en dehors des points de traite dans les villages « coopératifs ». Les coopératives protestèrent et l'Administration prononça des saisies de bascules, de produits, des amendes, etc., et surtout manœuvra par intimidation et par l'intermédiaire des chefs de canton et de village qui interdisaient aux populations de vendre leurs produits aux acheteurs des maisons de commerce. Le seul moyen de contrer ces agissements fut d'acheter partout où la coopérative achetait.

d) *Importations et exportations*

En dehors des arachides de bouche qui demeurent un des principaux produits d'exportation, nous pouvons signaler parmi les végétaux le coton, le caoutchouc des forêts du sud, les gommes « salabraida » et « galam ». Le bétail et ses dérivés sont trop médiocres et ne sortent guère de l'Afrique. Notons cependant l'exportation croissante des peaux de Kayes, Mopti, du Soudan et de la Guinée. En ce qui concerne les produits du sous-sol, l'essentiel des exportations est encore fourni par les antiques exploitations aurifères du Bouré et du Bambouc. Le Macenta produit une faible quantité de diamants industriels vendus à Londres. Le fer du Soudan est trop loin de la côte pour être rentable.

Le pays importe tous les objets manufacturés, les matériaux de construction, de l'outillage, du charbon, des essences minérales, l'acier en barre, des denrées alimentaires, des tissus...

B) COMMERCE INTÉRIEUR

a) *Les routes commerciales.* — Des mouvements commerciaux plus importants s'effectuent à l'intérieur du Soudan ou avec les pays environnants par la voie du Sénégal, du Sahel, et des colonies du sud.

On importe :

Par le Sénégal. — Les fils de tissus français et anglais ; les sels de Roumanie (autrefois) et du Sud de la France ; les métaux bruts et ouvrés ; les matériaux de construction et de transports.

Par le Sahel. — Le sel en barres de la Sebka d'Idjil, le sel en vrac de Seye ; les bœufs, moutons et chèvres, chevaux, gomme.

Par le sud. — Guinée : colas, colliers de verroterie, articles de parure et de toilette. Côte-d'Ivoire : noix de colas, verroterie, articles de parure et de toilette. Gold Coast : noix de colas, pagnes et pièces de toiles anglaises, baguettes de cuivre, verroterie et colliers.

On exporte :

Par le Sénégal. — Le caoutchouc, l'or, l'ivoire, l'arachide, la gomme, la laine, le beurre de Karité, les peaux de bœufs, moutons et chèvres...

Par le Sahel. — Des grains, des étoffes indigènes de coton et de laine, du sucre, des articles de parure.

Par le sud. — Guinée : caoutchouc, ivoire, or, bestiaux, riz, mil. Côte-d'Ivoire : sel du Sahel, bestiaux, cire, karité, tissus et couvertures indigènes en coton et en laine. Gold Coast : bétail, étoffes indigènes.

De plus, toutes les agglomérations de quelque importance avaient un grand marché périodique qui était une sorte de foire régionale, plus un petit marché journalier qui permet aux habitants de la localité de se ravitailler suivant leurs besoins.

b) *Commerce caravanier.* — En dehors de ces marchés, il se fait un commerce caravanier à grande distance pratiqué par les Haoussas et les Dioulas qui transportent leurs marchandises dans le nord avec des bêtes de somme, dans le sud à dos d'homme. Ces mouvements continuent une tradition commerciale et n'ont subi qu'une transformation législative. Avant la conquête tout homme qui en avait le désir pouvait commercer à condition de verser à son Fama les redevances d'usage. Les commerçants, afin de se protéger contre les brigands, voyageaient en caravanes. L'usage voulait qu'avant de partir les commerçants consultent un prêtre pour savoir si leur entreprise réussirait ; après les sacrifices habituels le prêtre révélait le nom de celui qui prendrait la direction du groupe. Le chef de la caravane pouvait être même un captif mais tous lui devaient obéissance car une force divine l'habitait. A chaque État que la caravane traversait, elle versait un droit de douane à l'entrée et demandait au Fama l'autorisation de transiter. Elle lui indiquait les délais de route et dans chaque pays elle faisait les sacrifices propitiatoires. Parfois certains pays comme la région de Bougouni interdisaient les sacrifices sanglants de crainte d'attirer sur eux des forces néfastes. Les caravaniers alors lâchaient en cachette un animal la nuit.

c) *Régime du commerce.* — Tout pouvait se vendre hormis l'or qui était la propriété du Fama. Personne ne devait posséder de l'or. Si les orpailleurs du Bouré pouvaient vendre l'or extrait des mines, lorsque les acheteurs entraient en pays Bambara, ils devaient le présenter au Fama. Si celui-ci ne voulait pas l'acheter, il autorisait quelques personnes riches et solidement installées dans le pays, c'est-à-dire ne risquant pas de s'expatrier, à acheter l'or. Mais à leur tour, elles ne pouvaient en aucun cas le revendre à aucune personne en dehors du Fama. En dehors de certains sacrifices et de la fabrication des bijoux pour les femmes du Fama, l'or servait à racheter les captifs ou à négocier des alliances royales.

Le prix des denrées était fixé par entente entre acheteur et vendeur, sauf les tissus qui avaient un prix fixe, 100 cauris la coudée dans la région de Bamako ; en effet, le coton récolté dans les champs de le communauté était tissé par les captifs de case qui n'étaient pas payés.

Les prêts se faisaient sans intérêt. L'intérêt « korko » est encore interdit aujourd'hui. Les prêts se faisaient sur la garantie du bras. Le débiteur qui ne pouvait s'acquitter de sa dette le jour venu, si son chef de famille refusait de payer pour lui, était saisi par le Fama et mis en gage jusqu'au jour où il avait remboursé sa dette.

A côté des mesures françaises, les indigènes utilisent pour leur commerce leurs mesures de longueur : coudée, empan, pied, brasse, pas, le diare et le kala... ; leurs mesures de capacité : le sawel ou mouré, le mud ; leurs poids : le moutkhal, le catal, le grand et le petit karoni, le wakie, le grain de tali, de tomi, de bagana, de gelen. Le coton se pèse avec des balances grossières dont le fléau est fait d'un bâton et les plateaux de grandes calebasses suspendues par des ficelles. On pèse avec des pierres (kulu) de 800 à 1.200 gr. Enfin les Bambara utilisent presque uniquement la monnaie française : 1 fr métropolitain = 0,50 fr C. F. A. Pourtant l'usage des cauris est encore fréquent.

d) *Banques.* — Il existe en A. O. F. une banque d'émission : la Banque d'A. O. F. et des banques privées dont le nombre a augmenté au cours des dernières années.

La Banque d'A. O. F. qui a une succursale à Bamako effectue les opérations suivantes :

1) Escompte les billets à ordre ou effets de place à deux ou plusieurs signatures à échéance de cent quatre-vingts jours au plus ;
2) Crée, négocie ou achète des traites ;
3) Escompte des obligations négociables et non négociables garanties par des warrants, ou récépissés de marchandises, par des cessions de récoltes pendantes, par des connaissements, par des nantissements de valeurs, par des dépôts de lingots et de monnaies de matières d'or et d'argent.
4) Participe aux emprunts d'État ou des Colonies sans que le montant puisse, sauf autorisation spéciale, dépasser la moitié des réserves.
5) Participe à la création d'entreprises financières, commerciales, agricoles, intéressant le pays sans que le montant de ces participations puisse dépasser un quart de ses réserves.

Les banques privées sont :

La Banque Nationale pour le Commerce et l'Industrie avec une succursale à Bamako, et une autre à Kayes.

La Banque Commerciale Africaine avec une succursale à Bamako.

Ce sont des banques de dépôts, mais la deuxième est aussi une banque d'affaires.

CHAPITRE V

HISTOIRE ET TRADITIONS D'ORIGINE

I. — Préhistoire

Les Bambara ont des notions assez précises sur leur préhistoire et leur protohistoire, sur l'histoire de leurs ancêtres et l'évolution de leurs techniques. Leur tradition les fait venir du Mandé, pays dont l'emplacement demeure incertain pour plusieurs auteurs (1) et fait même dire à Monteil (2) « ... en fait il n'y a pas de pays s'appelant Mande et il n'y en a jamais eu. Tout chef place sa capitale où bon lui semble ».

Parmi ces capitales il y a eu : Kangaba, Miami, Tabou, D. .kala, Kounfangué... Pour les Bambara, le Mandé est le centre d'où sont issues les 48 populations soudanaises qui ont rayonné suivant un mouvement défini (3) pour se répandre sur le territoire compris entre la côte atlantique, le Sénégal, le Niger et jusqu'au Dahomey (4).

Le souvenir de cette expansion est témoigné encore aujourd'hui par le culte septennal que portent tous les peuples au sanctuaire de Kangaba : le Mandé blow (le vestibule du Mandé) sous la direction de personnalités de race pure appartenant à la famille Kéita (5). D'autres traditions connaissent deux centres d'expansion : l'un au sud de Kangaba à Balanzan, l'autre dans le cercle de Nioro au sud de Goumbou : Waghadou. Des cultes septennaux intertribaux commémorent cet événement.

De notre point de vue historique nous savons peu de choses sur l'origine des Bambara.

Des gisements préhistoriques encore mal datés trouvés dans la vallée du Sénégal et du Niger nous révèlent l'ancienneté de l'habitat sur ces territoires. Franz de Zeltner (6) a récolté des objets de pierre taillée dans la vallée du Sénégal sur une longueur de 200 km entre Bafoulabé et le confluent de la Falémé. Le bassin de Kolimbiné présente aussi de nombreux gisements. Zeltner et Waterlot ont trouvé des pierres taillées jusqu'à Nioro, à 250 km de Kayes : c'est la station la plus septentrionale. L'outillage décrit par R. Vaufrey (1) est en schiste taillé et en labradorite ; il est constitué par des haches polies ou non, des disques, des racloirs, grattoirs, polissoirs, etc. R. Furon précise que les gisements du Kaarta ont fourni une industrie moustérienne jaspoïde dans les limons supérieurs d'une terrasse du Baoulé, de l'outillage néolithique de type nigritien au-dessus des limons, enfin à Guétéla de nombreux tumuli de 2 à 3 mètres recouverts de débris de poterie. Aux environs de Bamako, Waterlot a recueilli à la surface du sol une industrie para-tumbienne de schiste et de dolérite comprenant entre autres des haches incomplètement polies, des microlithes de quartz et tout un matériel agricole.

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(1) J. VIDAL, *Au sujet de l'emplacement du Mali ou Melli ; le véritable emplacement du Mali.*
(2) MONTEIL, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta.*
(3) S. DE GANAY, *Notes sur la théodicée bambara.*
(4) ZAHAN, *Aperçu sur la théogonie dogon.*
(5) G. DIETERLEN, *Essai sur la religion bambara.*
(6) Fr. ZELTNER, *Quelques gisements préhistoriques de la vallée du Sénégal.*

Des grottes peintes ont été décrites par Zeltner. L'une près de Bamako, représente des hommes et des chevaux (les Bambara désignent ces grottes sous le nom de kouloubléma). Quatre autres aux environs de Kita présentent des figurations d'hommes, d'animaux et de signes alphabétiformes (les Malinké les nomment : Sebe = écriture et les attribuent aux Niamara, géants qui furent les premiers hommes), ainsi que des peintures de mains en négatif. Enfin la grotte de Boudoufo, contient des dessins géométriques. Les représentations conventionnelles d'hommes et d'animaux rappellent les gravures rupestres du Sahara et de l'Égypte.

II. — Histoire

A) ORIGINES DU PEUPLE BAMBARA

D'où vient le peuple bambara historique, c'est-à-dire celui qui s'est installé sur les rives du Niger pour former les royaumes de Ségou, du Bélédougou, du Kaarta, qui nous sont plus ou moins connus par quelques chroniques arabes (Tarikh-es-Soudân, 1665, Tarikh-el-Fettach, 1670, chroniques de Néma et de Oualata, traduites en 1927) ou par quelques récits d'explorateurs (Mungo Park, Raffenel, etc.) ?

D'après une tradition recueillie par Delafosse, les Bambara viendraient du Toron, province orientale du Ouassoulou, située dans la colonie actuelle de Côte-d'Ivoire, sur la route d'Odienné à Sikasso. Tauxier a montré que cette tradition confondait deux événements assez éloignés dans le temps :

1) La lente descente dans le sens S.-E. vers N.-W. des masses bambara venues sans doute de la région de Bougouni-Sikasso (où elles sont encore très nombreuses) jusque sur le Niger qu'elles atteignent sans doute vers le xiie siècle.

2) Une invasion des Peuls du Macina, qui au xviie siècle, s'imposent à la masse bambara et l'organisent en royaume dans la région de Ségou avant de traverser le Niger et d'avancer dans le sens E.-W. Ces Peuls seraient originaires d'une ville nommée Torone, d'où la possible méprise de Delafosse.

Naturellement aucune de ces régions n'était déserte avant l'arrivée des Bambara. Les premiers habitants de Ségou furent des pêcheurs Bozo venus du nord (VIIe s.). En même temps que les infiltrations bambara venues du S.-E. se produisirent, venant du nord, quelques invasions de Soninké qui, plus riches et plus évolués, organisèrent en chefferies les frustes agriculteurs bambara. Après une courte domination soso (XIIe s.), l'empire du Mali s'étendit sur la haute vallée du Niger ; il est probable que quand il perdit son dynamisme, la région occupée par les Bambara mêlés à des Mandingues, des Sénoufo et des Bobo, acquit une certaine autonomie (XVIIe s.).

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(1) R. VAUFREY, *Le Néolithique para-tumbien : une civilisation agricole primitive du Soudan.*

B) CONSTITUTION DES ROYAUMES BAMBARA

Au commencement du XVIIe siècle, l'invasion peul fait entrer les Bambara dans l'histoire.

Cette histoire d'ailleurs commence par une légende : deux frères Baramangolo et Niangolo, venus de Torone, à une lune à l'est de Ségou, réussirent à passer le Niger sur le dos du poisson m'polio *(Heterobrancus)*, ce qui leur valut le surnom de Kouloubali (sans pirogue). Baramangolo, qui était bon, obtint l'héritage du roi de Ségou ; Niangolo qui était méchant (il avait tué le poisson M'Polio), ne put rester dans ce pays pacifique et alla guerroyer plus à l'ouest contre les gens du Mali.

Les traditions locales confirment cette légende : à la faveur de l'anarchie soudanaise du XVIIe siècle causée par la chute de l'empire Songhaï (1591), des mouvements de population amenèrent des cavaliers peuls en contact avec les avant-gardes bambara dans la région de Dienné. Les Peuls imposèrent leur suzeraineté, organisèrent les Bambara anarchiques et les emmenèrent à la conquête des régions de Ségou et de Baïko à population surtout soninké (les traditions laissent entendre que cette conquête put être une pénétration à peu près pacifique).

Deux petits royaumes s'établirent donc : sur la rive droite à Ségou, celui du légendaire Baramangolo, sur la rive gauche à Sounsana (près de Mourdia) celui de Niangolo. La fusion s'étant faite avec les Soninké, le successeur de Baramangolo, Kaladian Koulibali (1652-1682) put disposer de forces imposantes ; il se libéra de l'autorité nominale des caïds marocains de Diénné ; peut-être même a-t-il conduit une attaque victorieuse contre Tombouctou. L'étoile bambara de Ségou pâlit un peu sous ses successeurs Danfassari (1682-1697) et Souma. Mais en 1712, Souma cède le trône à celui qui va devenir le grand chef de guerre, le tigui-ton Mamari Koulibali.

De son côté le méchant Niangolo ne s'était pas révélé un mauvais politique. Il maria son fils Soussa à une Kéita, ce qui anoblit sa famille en lui donnant des droits sur l'ancien empire du Mali. Leur fils Massa est un monarque aimable et adroit, qui amasse des ressources en hommes et en argent. Son successeur Bénéfali (1710-1745), les utilise au mieux, mais sa puissance croissante donne ombrage à son cousin de Ségou. Bénéfali aura la sagesse d'éviter le conflit, mais son frère Foulakoro, qui prend le trône en 1745 sera moins bien inspiré et se fera écraser en 1754 par Mamari Koulibali.

C) Mamari Koulibali

C'est le véritable créateur du royaume de Ségou, une de ces personnalités puissantes qui traversent de temps en temps l'anarchie noire, telles qu'un Soundiata ou un Sonni Ali. Il représente le moment maximum de l'expansion du conglomérat peul-bambara, qui s'est formé au XVIIe siècle, par le métissage entre la masse bambara et la féodalité peul venue de l'est.

Mamari Koulibali est essentiellement un chef de guerre et les grands événements de son règne sont des événements militaires : il subjugue les chefs locaux, il repousse avec l'aide des Peuls l'assaut lancé contre Ségou par le puissant roi de Kong (1725), il libère le pays de la suzeraineté des Soninké Boaré et prend leur capitale Kirango (1740) ; enfin, sollicité par les Soninké de Mourdia, il détruit Sounsana, capitale du royaume frère des descendants de Niangolo, il tue leur chef Foulakoro (1754) et unifie tous les Bambara de la vallée du Niger. Ayant constitué une redoutable armée qu'il dote même d'une flottille et d'un corps d'ingénieurs, il peut imposer sa souveraineté au royaume peul du Macina et peut-être même menacer Tombouctou. C'est au cours de son règne que l'on voit évoluer très sérieusement la structure de la société bambara.

D) Réformes de Mamari Koulibali

C'est en tenant compte de la place des esclaves dans l'armée que Mamari Koulibali va bouleverser la société ancestrale (voir l'organisation sociale traditionnelle).

Il s'arrangea d'abord pour soustraire le plus d'hommes, libres ou esclaves, à leur communauté familiale, afin d'en faire des Ton-dyon (esclaves de la ton). Pour cela il utilisa les moyens suivants : lorsqu'un criminel était condamné à une amende, Mamari la payait ; s'il était condamné à mort, il le graciait ; lorsqu'un de ses sujets ne pouvait payer l'impôt, il le libérait de sa dette à condition que l'homme mît ou lui-même ou un de ses fils à la disposition du souverain. Dans tous les cas l'homme amnistié mais privé de sa liberté personnelle devenait la chose de l'empereur.

Mamari voulut ensuite s'assurer de la fidélité personnelle de ses Ton-dyon en les associant à des cultes qui lui appartenaient. Ainsi l'ancienne ton se transformait-elle en une confrérie dont Mamari était à la fois le chef politique et religieux. C'est ainsi qu'il put remplacer l'anarchie politique et l'équilibre social de l'ancien régime bambara, par une organisation nouvelle, despotique, militairement très efficace lorsqu'elle n'échappe pas à l'autorité du chef, mais parfois aussi fort dangereuse pour la stabilité du pays, comme il apparut bientôt.

E) Les successeurs de Mamari

Le fils de Mamari, Denkoro (1755-1757) allait être la première victime de cette armée toute puissante. Excédés de ses cruautés, les chefs militaires l'assassinèrent et le remplacèrent par son frère Ali. Celui-ci, musulman, voulut propager l'Islam, interdire l'usage des boissons fermentées et le culte des génies. Les chefs des Ton-dyon massacrèrent alors Ali et toute la famille des Koulibali, à l'exception de deux filles qui furent sauvées par l'un d'entre eux, N'Golo Diara. Différents chefs se disputèrent alors le pouvoir : Ton-Mansa, puis Kaniouba-Niouma, puis Kafa-Diougou qui régnèrent peu de temps avant de mourir de mort violente. Enfin N'Golo Diara, descendant d'une grande famille qui était devenue esclave de Mamari et qui, nous l'avons vu, avait sauvé ses filles puis épousé l'une d'elles, rétablit l'ordre, transporta la capitale à Ségou-Sikoro et reprit l'œuvre du grand Tigiton.

Au cours de son long règne (1766-1790) N'Golo sut se faire respecter et aimer de ses sujets et s'imposer au dehors ; il assit son autorité sur le Macina, la région de Sokolo, Dienné et Tombouctou ; il ne fut malheureux que contre les Mossi du Yatenga.

Cependant la branche aînée des Koulibali, écrasée par Mamari en 1754 et chassée du Bélédougou, s'était relevée. Si les successeurs du malheureux Foulakoro, Sey Bamana, Deni Babo, n'avaient guère été que des chefs de pillards écumant le Kaarta, le Bélédougou et le Khasso, Sira Bo établit un royaume stable dont la capitale était Guémou. Son successeur Dessé Koulibali (1788-1799) se crut même assez fort pour imposer sa suzeraineté aux Bambara de Ségou.

L'occasion semblait favorable. A la mort du grand N'Golo-Diara, deux de ses fils se disputèrent le pouvoir. Dessé eut la malchance de soutenir celui qui allait être vaincu. Le vainqueur, Mansong (1792-1808) vint aussitôt châtier le Kaarta et détruisit Guémou, mais il ne put se maintenir dans le pays.

Dès lors l'évolution des deux royaumes est à peu près parallèle : quand les gens de Ségou sont occupés à l'est contre le Macina, les gens du Kaarta en profitent pour pousser à l'ouest leurs razzias contre les Diawara et les Khassonké. Quand les choses vont mal dans le Macina, les gens de Ségou se vengent en razziant le territoire des Massassi du Kaarta qui, plus faibles, doivent abandonner alors leurs visées expansionnistes. Du reste, des heures sombres s'annoncent pour les Bambara. A l'est Ahmadou Bari a fondé dans le Macina un puissant royaume peul (1810) et son petit-fils Hamadou-Hamadou presse de plus en plus le royaume de Ségou. A l'ouest le grand roi Massassi Bodian Moriba (1815-1832) a par ses coups répétés, épuisé les forces des Diawara et des Khassonké. Ce faisant, il règne sur Nioro, mais il supprime en même temps ceux qui auraient pu l'aider à résister à la poussée musulmane des Toucouleurs.

F) L'INVASION TOUCOULEUR ET LA FIN DES ROYAUMES BAMBARA

En 1854 El Hadj Omar, conduisant ses « Talibés » animés d'un farouche esprit de prosélytisme, occupe Nioro et le Kaarta et tente d'imposer l'Islam à la population bambara. Celle-ci résiste, soutenue par ses frères de race de Ségou qui ont oublié trop tard les anciennes querelles. El Hadj Omar, vaincu par les Français devant Médine, abandonne son rêve de poussée vers l'ouest et cherche une compensation du côté de Ségou.

Les Bambara firent taire alors leurs ressentiments et s'unirent aux Peuls du Macina également menacés par l'expansion toucouleur. Mais ils avaient affaire à trop forte partie. Tata, fils du roi Ali Diara, résista pendant cinq jours aux obusiers d'El Hadj Omar à Oïtala sur le Niger (1861) puis il succomba. Hamadou-Hamadou qui était venu à son secours fut battu à Sansanding. Ségou ouvrit ses portes : Ali Diara fut mis aux fers. Son frère Kégué-Mari continua la lutte contre Ahmadou, fils d'El Hadj Omar, jusqu'au 6 avril 1890, jour où les troupes françaises du lieutenant-colonel Archinard délivrèrent Ségou de la cruelle occupation musulmane.

Les Bambara n'acceptèrent pas longtemps la tutelle française. Pour mettre fin à leurs complots, le résident français, capitaine Underberg, dut faire exécuter le roi Mari Diara, ce qui entraina quelques révoltes locales surtout dans la région sénoufo. Mais le nouveau Fama, Bodian, appuyé par les Français, sut rapidement rétablir la paix. Du reste la destruction du royaume toucouleur du Macina par le colonel Archinard priva les rebelles bambara de toute possibilité d'appui extérieur. Le royaume de Ségou fut définitivement pacifié en 1893.

CHAPITRE VI

ORGANISATION SOCIALE

I. — Structure traditionnelle de la société bambara

A) ORGANISATION POLITIQUE ET SOCIALE

L'organisation sociale traditionnelle bambara est entièrement liée à l'organisation religieuse ; de plus elle commande toute l'organisation économique, de sorte que nous ne pouvons étudier celle-ci de façon indépendante.

En fait nous savons encore peu de chose sur l'organisation sociale bambara. De bons documents nous ont été apportés par Monteil (1) Aubert et Ortoli (2), Delafosse (3), Labouret (4), etc., mais ils demeurent très fragmentaires et incomplets. De plus cette société a été totalement bouleversée par la conquête française, soit par des mesures radicales telles que la suppression de l'esclavage, soit par une évolution naturelle au contact de sociétés européennes ; cependant elle conserve des structures traditionnelles vivaces, malgré l'effort d'adaptation aux formules européennes.

La société semble avoir oscillé entre le stade de l'anarchie familiale et celui du clan, suivant un mouvement alterné de groupement, de dissociation et de regroupement.

1) *La famille*

A propos des Soudanais, Delafosse a déjà fait la distinction entre « la famille réduite » et la « famille globale ». La famille réduite se compose des géniteurs et des enfants qui habitent la « case ». Isolément elle ne représente aucune unité sociale. La véritable cellule sociale est la famille globale ; c'est la grande famille indivise groupant un ensemble de familles réduites dont les chefs se reconnaissent un ancêtre commun. Ce groupement composé en principes d'agnats est la *ba-denya*, qui vit rassemblée dans des cases entourées d'une clôture : *gwa* ou *so*. Cette

(1) MONTEIL, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta.*
(2) AUBERT et ORTOLI, *Coutumier juridique de l'A. O. F.*
(3) DELAFOSSE, *Haut-Sénégal et Niger.*
(4) LABOURET, *Les Mandingues et leur langue.*

clôture appuie ses deux extrémités sur un *blõ* (vestibule) où se trouve l'autel des ancêtres.

Selon Labouret, les Bambara distinguent trois catégories de liens familiaux : en ligne paternelle, en ligne maternelle et la parenté par alliance. L'enfant prend le *dyamu* (nom honorable) du groupe de son père, mais les termes appliqués aux ascendants et aux descendants sont identiques à ceux de la ligne maternelle.

« ... La parenté recouvre les générations suivantes :

fu... fuy... foy... fo-si = rien ;
tolo-mina... tolo-sama... tolo-ma-sama : qui prend ou tire les oreilles (une croyance veut que si l'arrière petit-fils tire l'oreille de son aïeul, celui-ci devient sourd) ;
mo-kɔ (1) = grand-père ; *mo-muso* = grand-mère ;
fa = père ;
dẽ = fils, fille ;
modẽ = petit-fils, petite-fille ;
tolo-mina, etc., comme le n° 2 ;
fu... fuy..., comme le n° 1.

a) *En ligne paternelle :*

fa = père	*dẽ*, *de*, *di*= = fils, fille
ba, *ma*, *na* = les femmes du père	*dẽ* = fils, fille
bindã, *baba-ndi* ;	*dẽ* = fils, fille
bɛnoro = frère du père ; *ba* + le nom = femmes des frères du père	*dẽ* = fils, fille
nlene ; *bingi-musu* = sœur du père	*dẽ* ; bingilingo = fils, fille, neveu, nièce.
o ou *ben-kɔ* = mari de la sœur du père ; *ben-kɔ* est un terme de politesse	le nom
kɔrɔ = frère aîné, fils des frères du père plus âgé que celui qui parle	*doro*, frère cadet, fils des frères du père moins âgé que celui qui parle
kalame = enfant de la sœur du père	*kalame* = enfant du frère de la mère
mokɔ = père du père	*mo-dẽ*, ou le nom = fils du fils
mo-muso = mère du père	*mo-dẽ* ou le nom = fils du fils

Nlene = sœur du père, (terme dérivé d'une racine ta qui a donné aussi tana, tene, interdiction). La tante maternelle est la femme interdite de cette génération. De même les femmes du père et celles qu'elles considèrent comme des sœurs. Cette parente jouit d'une grande influence dans la famille ; sa malédiction est redoutée. Les enfants de la ntene-muso se nomment *kalame* et ils disant kalame aux enfants du frère de leur mère. Les kalame-w s'insultent et se plaisantent lorsqu'ils se rencontrent. Les mariages entre eux sont tantôt permis, tantôt défendus.

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(1) ɔ = è de mère.

b) *En ligne maternelle :*

ba ; *ma* ; *na* = mère	*dĕ* = fils, fille
ben-nkɔ *bele-nkɔ* } frère de la mère *bari-nkɔ*	*be-ni* ; *bare-ndi̥* = fils de la sœur
ba + le nom = femme du frère de la mère	*dĕ* = fils, fille
ba-ko .... (après la mère) *ba* + nom .... } sœur de la mère *ba-ni-l'ɛ-ni*	*dĕ* = fils, fille
o ou *fa* = mari de la sœur de la mère	*o* ou *de* = fils de la sœur de la femme
kɔrɔ = enfant du frère ou de la sœur de la mère, s'il est plus âgé que celui qui parle	*doro* = enfant du frère ou de la sœur de la mère, s'il est moins âgé que celui qui parle
de = enfant du kɔrɔ ou du doto	*kɔrɔ* ou *doro* du frère
ma-kɔ = père de la mère	*o* ou *dĕ* = fils de la fille
mo-muso = mère de la mère	*o* ou *dĕ* = fils de la fille. » (1).

L'oncle maternel joue un rôle très important ; il doit marier son be-ni. Il lui doit une femme prise parmi les filles d'un de ses frères. En échange le be-ni doit des prestations de travail.

La sœur de la mère est à peine une parente.

Il existe une rivalité de sexe entre grand-père et petit-fils ; grand-mère et petite-fille ; c'est pourquoi ils se défient et s'insultent lorsqu'ils se rencontrent. Lorsque les grands-parents meurent, les petits-enfants ont les mêmes privilèges que les sénanku. (L'usage veut aussi que les grands-pères et leurs petits-fils prennent leurs repas ensemble, alors que les fils mangent à part).

c) *Par alliance.* — T' ɛ, K' ɛ, K ɛ = nom du mari par rapport à muso (muso, nom de l'épouse).

Bira nk' ɛ = beau-père, gendre, beau-frère et tous les parents masculins du mari ou de la femme, par rapport à *bira-muso* = belle-mère, bru, belle-sœur et toutes les parentes du sexe féminin du mari ou de la femme.

Lorsqu'un homme meurt, ses femmes reviennent à son frère cadet et à la mort de sa femme, un homme peut épouser la sœur cadette de celle-ci...

L'ensemble de cette famille à filiation patrilinéaire et patrilocale a dû se greffer sur un ancien système matrilinéaire (voir le chapitre sur l'héritage et la position de la femme), il unit le système d'exogamie clanique et d'endogamie : deux couples de frère et sœur se marient entre eux ; les fils doivent prendre femme dans la famille de leur mère, le mariage se fait entre cousins croisés ; les enfants n'appartiennent jamais à la catégorie de leurs parents, tandis que les petits-enfants et les grands parents sont toujours de la même catégorie.

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(1) Labouret, *Les Mandingues et leur langue.*

Nous verrons qu'à côté de ce système matrimonial par échange de femmes existe un système par compensations versées au *fa* de la jeune fille.

L'importance de la famille indivise est variable, mais elle peut comprendre plus de 80 personnes. Labouret (1) nous donne l'exemple de la composition du blô de Ngolo Traoré à Mpiéla subdivision de Kolokani :

	H	F	E
	–	–	–
1) Ménage de Ngolo	1	8	15
2) — Samba frère de Ngolo	1	2	4
3) — Dotné fils de Samba	1	2	3
4) — Dunkoro, fils de Bakoro décédé	1	3	1
5) — Fabugal, fils de Ngolo	1	2	4
6) Quartier des célibataires mâles, tous fils de Ngolo et Samba	5		
	10	17	19
		46	

Le fa. — L'ensemble de cette famille obéit à un même chef : le *fa*. Le *fa* est désigné par un conseil des vieillards lorsqu'il remplit les conditions suivantes : d'abord ne pas refuser la *faya* et être un membre de la communauté, c'est-à-dire vivre effectivement au sein de la communauté ; ensuite n'avoir jamais été esclave et ne pas s'être établi à l'étranger sans espoir de retour. Il doit en outre être enfant légitime, c'est-à-dire né du mariage et premier né. En principe la *faya* passe du frère aîné au frère cadet (au sens classificatoire du terme). Ainsi le *fa* est toujours le membre de chaque génération le plus proche de l'ancêtre. Enfin, il doit être apte, c'est-à-dire sain, actif et bon administrateur. Souvent, un *fa* désigne son successeur avant sa mort. Celui-ci ne peut prendre le pouvoir que quarante jours après la mort du dernier *fa*, après avoir été reconnu chef de famille par l'ensemble des vieillards. A partir de ce moment, il demeure en fonction quoi qu'il arrive.

Le *fa* a la charge et la responsabilité morale et physique de toute la communauté ; il dirige et protège tous les membres de la famille. Ceux-ci ne peuvent échapper à son autorité qu'en quittant définitivement le village : ils sont alors considérés comme membres morts. (Sont hors de la communauté les descendants du fa par les filles : ils appartiennent aux communautés patriarcales de leurs pères respectifs).

Le *fa*, chef de famille vit sous la dépendance administrative du chef de village.

2) *De la famille à la communauté*

La véritable unité sociale est la communauté. Des liens de parenté ou d'alliance unissent des groupements sans unité de race ou d'ethnie.

a) *Organisation patriarcale de la « lon ».* — Tous les chefs de famille obéissent à un chef de village ; c'est à celui-ci que revient l'organisation de la communauté territoriale et le soin de rendre la justice lorsqu'un différent surgit entre communautaires de *faya* différentes. Le chef du village est généralement le maître de la terre : *dugu-kolo-tigi* ; parfois celui-ci cède ses droits à un chef administratif du village plus jeune que lui, mais sur le plan religieux il demeure tout puissant et chaque année il reçoit des cadeaux des différents chefs de famille pour les besoins du culte général ; c'est encore lui qui donne les ordres en ce qui concerne les fêtes locales et les initiations.

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(1) *Op. cit.*

En effet à l'origine le sol appartient aux génies et le chef successeur du fondateur du village est le seul qui puisse établir un contact avec le chef des génies et traiter avec lui. Il est l'administrateur terrestre du génie ; il assure son culte, l'exploitation du sol et l'organisation de la communauté territoriale.

Le premier chef de la terre a été le premier occupant ; les chefs successifs sont ses héritiers suivant l'ordre successoral. Pour fonder un nouveau village, un chef choisit l'emplacement du territoire non encore occupé, généralement à un nœud de routes, à proximité d'un point d'eau, près d'un baobab, d'un doubalé ou de tout autre arbre sacré. Il offre des sacrifices aux génies et reçoit en échange de ceux-ci l'autorisation de s'installer. Son groupement prospère, des familles moins bien partagées veulent s'établir sur cette terre propice, elles en demandent l'autorisation au chef. Cependant, comme le fait remarquer Monteil (1) : «... Le *fa* d'une communauté familiale ne relève strictement du patriarche que si, se rattachant à lui par les mâles, il détient quelques biens de la patriarchie ou prétend se réserver des droits dans cette patriarchie. Au cas contraire, le *fa* familial se conduit comme un étranger envers la patriarchie et celle-ci ne peut que le traiter en conséquence... » Toute communauté familiale devient patriarcale à la mort du chef de famille lorsque celui-ci demeure sans héritiers (voir le chapitre sur l'héritage) ; elle groupe alors autour d'elle les communautés familiales enfermant elles-mêmes des communautés consanguines et utérines. Lorsque la patriarchie est ancienne, un nombre considérable de personnes vivent sous son égide. Toutes se reconnaissent des *dyamu* et des interdits (voir plus loin) communs.

Quand l'agglomération devient trop peuplée, un fa essaime et fonde un autre village. Par la suite les gens des contrées voisines peuvent solliciter le patronage du premier village, en participant à ses djo (2) et en sacrifiant à ses génies protecteurs. L'assemblée de tous ces villages forme un *kafo* ou *kafu* (canton), qui comprend la première famille installée, ses plus anciens voisins, les habitants des autres villages, enfin les étrangers. Tous ces gens se reconnaissent des intérêts communs et les villages d'un même canton envoyaient des représentants à l'assemblée qui se tenait à la résidence du chef. Ainsi la grande famille grandit en patriarchie pour former le *dugu* (village) et s'épanouit en *kafu*. Parfois à la suite de fragmentations, certains communautaires adoptent un dyamu spécial et d'autres interdits ; le nouveau dyamu s'adjoint à l'ancien et peu à peu le supplée. Les principes caractéristiques de la communauté mère subsistent auxquels s'ajoutent quelques traits nouveaux, mais jamais la parenté entre les deux ne s'éteint. Inversement, les Indigènes même de race différente portant le même *dyamu* sont considérés comme parents entre eux, ce qui implique de leur part le respect des traditions ancestrales vis-à-vis du culte, la pratique de l'entraide mutuelle, le respect de l'autorité du fa qui doit protéger tous ses parents si loin qu'en remonte le lignage, la fidélité à tous les pactes intervenus entre communautés. Enfin entre les individus de race différente, certains dyamu, bien que dissemblables, sont tenus pour équivalents et peuvent s'interchanger.

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(1) MONTEIL, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta.*
(2) Voir le chapitre sur la religion.

b) *Alliances.* — L'unité d'une communauté est non seulement fondée sur des intérêts communs dont nous analyserons plus loin l'organisation, mais aussi sur tout un système d'alliances.

Monteil distingue quatre modes d'alliance : le culte commun, (voir le chapitre sur la religion), le mariage, le *tné*, et le serment.

Le mariage : est le mode d'alliance le plus usité. Quant un Bambara recherche une alliance avec une famille, il donne sa fille en mariage à l'un des membres de cette famille, après l'avoir dotée largement. Des indications intéressantes nous sont données à ce sujet par Monteil (1). L'alliance entre deux familles est encore renforcée lorsque s'établit entre les deux la coutume d'échanger les femmes. C'est ainsi que la famille soninké des Niakaté s'est alliée aux Koulibali de Ségou, a fondé Bamako et transformé son nom en Niaré en devenant Bambara.

Le tné : est l'interdit concernant un animal ou n'importe quel objet. La base de cette alliance est le serment du fa de ne tuer, ni consommer l'interdit. Toutes les générations issues de cet ancêtre devront le respecter *ad infinitum.*

C'est ainsi que les Keita ont pour tné l'hippopotame ; les Traoré les Dambélé, les Warata, la panthère ; les Samaké, l'éléphant ; les Koubilali de Ségou, l'hippopotame, ceux de l'Issa-ber, le m'polio, les autres la courtilière (n'gere) et la souris rayée (n'kelika) ; les Niaré, les Sisé, les Silla, les Doukouré, les Daramé, le python, etc.

Le serment : il scelle un pacte de fraternisation *dyonge.* Chaque contractant extrait de son avant-bras quelques gouttes de sang qui est mélangé à du lait de chèvre. En jurant sur les ancêtres il énonce les conditions de l'alliance et absorbe une partie du breuvage. Cette alliance engage les contractants et tous leurs descendants *ad infinitum,* elle entraîne l'interdiction ou au contraire la recommandation d'épouser les femmes de la communauté de l'autre et la solidarité entre les deux communautés qui se doivent assistance mutuelle. Parmi cette alliance se place l'alliance cathartique nommée *sénankuya,* qui, outre les obligations précédentes, règle le système des purifications.

La sénankuya : unit des groupes déterminés portant des noms différents à l'intérieur d'un même village, mais elle peut aussi avoir un caractère intertribal, ex. : Manding-Peul. Humblot a observé à Kankan les alliances suivantes : Kéita-Fofana ; Kondé-Traoré ; Kéita-Bérété-

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(1) MONTEIL, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta. Les Empires du Mali.*

Sérigou-Sissé ; Kala-Kéita-Kouyaté ; Kourouma-Koma ; Kourouma-Dabo ; Kourouba-Konaté-Kamara-Bagayoko ; Konaté-Dougoumoko ; Konaté-Sidibé. Ce système d'alliance où les deux alliés sont égaux et complémentaires règle le mécanisme des purifications, notamment par l'insulte, et les devoirs d'assistance réciproque (1). Autrefois, lorsqu'un *sénanku* était réduit en esclavage, son allié devait s'efforcer de le racheter. Un *sénanku* sert souvent d'intermédiaire pour les demandes en mariage, les revendications de terrain, les réclamations de créances à payer. Il est récompensé par des cadeaux. Il a le pouvoir d'arrêter les querelles et de s'opposer aux actes de colère et de violence de celui dont il est *sénanku* quel que soit son rang et quelle que soit l'importance des décisions qu'il allait prendre. Le *sénanku* d'un Fama pouvait l'empêcher de déclarer une guerre ou de faire mettre à mort un de ses sujets. Par ailleurs il a des privilèges restreints sur les biens de son allié. (Il peut prendre des objets sans importance, de la nourriture et même des sommes d'argent). Enfin, il recrute la main-d'œuvre dont celui-ci peut avoir besoin.

c) *Classes d'âge*. — Mais si ces différents liens exercent une importance capitale sur la vie politique, sociale et religieuse de la communauté, ils sont généralement trop larges et trop lâches, pour permettre l'organisation d'une communauté de travail. En effet, nous avons vu comment un village important pouvait être formé de communautés relativement indépendantes les unes des autres, malgré l'autorité du fa de la communauté fondatrice ; à l'échelle du canton, l'étendue géographique ne permet pas au Fama d'intervenir personnellement dans l'organisation d'une communauté de travail. Celle-ci se fonde essentiellement sur le système de relations des classes d'âges.

Depuis l'enfance, jusqu'à la circoncision pour les garçons, jusqu'à l'excision pour les filles, le jeune Bambara appartient à une société hiérarchisée qui le prépare à cette cérémonie et lui donne une éducation qui complète celle qu'il reçoit dans sa famille. Au sein de cette association, tous les enfants sont divisés en classes d'âge : les garçons jusqu'à six ans sont *bilakoro-dogomani* (*bila* = caleçon), de 6 à 10 ans *bilakoro-dogoma*, de 10 à 15 ans environ, *bilakoro-koroba*. Symétriquement toutes les filles sont successivement : *sunkiri-dogomani*, *sunkuru-dogoma* et *sunkuru-koroba*. Chaque classe d'âge a un chef : *ton-tigi* pour les garçons, *musso-tigi* pour les filles, chacun est doublé d'un suivant *(syere)* ; en outre il y a un trésorier et un *tondyeli* qui est le griot de la *ton* ; tous sont élus par les membres de la société. Un Bambara sera déterminé toute sa vie par son appartenance à une certaine classe d'âge, celle qui groupe tous les enfants ayant subi en même temps la circoncision. En effet, jusqu'à ce moment la personnalité de l'enfant n'est pas encore dégagée. Nous avons vu précédemment comment les petits enfants étaient considérés comme étant de la même catégorie que leurs grands-parents ; on dit qu'ils font partie de la même classe d'âge qu'eux.

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(1) M. Griaule, L'alliance cathartique : *Africa*, vol. XVIII, 1948.

Les rapports entre filles et garçons avant la cérémonie de circoncision et d'excision sont réglés par une sorte de mariage blanc unissant les enfants des différentes ton.

La petite fille *(ton-musso)* devra prendre soin des vêtements et du ménage de son mari enfant *(tontié)* ; plus tard elle devra décorer sa maison de dessins qu'il lui commandera ; en retour son ami lui fera des cadeaux et ira cultiver le champ de ses parents. Lorsqu'elle se mariera réellement, le *ton-tié* doit la remettre lui-même à son mari. Pendant toute la durée de ce faux ménage, la virginité de la jeune fille doit être respectée et son tontié en est tenu pour responsable.

Avant leur circoncision, tous les enfants sont affiliés suivant leur classe d'âge à la confrérie du *n'Tomo* (voir le chapitre sur la religion). Le plus âgé du groupe sera le chef de sa promotion ; tous les petits chefs sont soumis au chef de groupe des plus âgés : le *n'tomo-tigi* et à son adjoint : *n'tomo-tigi-syere*. La confrérie prépare les enfants à l'initiation de la circoncision ; elle règle les travaux communs, les cérémonies religieuses, les fêtes ; elle tranche les discussions qui peuvent naître entre sociétaires.

Les différentes cérémonies du *n'Tomo* qui ont lieu chaque année après la moisson, ont été décrites par Monteil (1) et par Tauxier (2). Elles comportent des offrandes, des sacrifices au génie protecteur, une communion, des danses masquées suivies du coup de fouet rituel qui marque l'acceptation définitive des néophytes.

Plus tard, ceux qui ont appartenu à la même *n'tomoya* et ont subi le soli ensemble sont unis pour la vie. Ils sont *fulani*, c'est-à-dire jumeaux (ils sont nés le même jour à la vie sexuelle, sociale et religieuse). Les jeunes gens d'un même soli forment ce qu'on appelle une *flambolo*. Trois promotions consécutives de *flambolo* forment une *flanton*. Les femmes connaissent une organisation parallèle. Chaque *fulani* est un *ton-den* (enfant de la *ton*) par rapport à l'association.

Le rôle de l'association en dehors des réjouissances saisonnières, des repas copieux, largement arrosés, est celui d'un organisme de secours mutuel et une véritable coopérative de travail du village. Elle est organisée administrée, articulée, en vue du labeur agricole. Le chef, *kariku*, expédie les affaires courantes ; il est assisté d'un syere (témoin, répondant intérimaire). Il a un trésorier qui reçoit les offrandes et effectue les paiements, c'est le *femmaraba* (celui qui préserve les choses) plus un président d'honneur et conseiller choisi parmi les notables et délégué par eux ; il doit surveiller la société et orienter ses activités.

Cet organisme social repose en dernière analyse sur des échanges de service que provoque et assure le *kariku*. Il assure l'entraide pour effectuer sur les champs des beaux-parents ou des futurs beaux-parents les prestations d'usage (en échange de la boisson et des repas fournis par ceux-ci aux ton-den). De même pour débrousser un champ, le cultivateur demande aide au kariku par un intermédiaire ou un *sénanku* qui accompagne sa demande de 10 noix de kola. Le chef accepte le présent et réunit son conseil pour étudier techniquement l'affaire et fixer le salaire. Le même procédé est adopté pour le sarclage d'hiver qui demande un travail rapide, pour la construction des barrages, des canaux d'irrigation, des pistes, des routes camionnables, etc.

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(1) Monteil, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta.*
(2) Tauxier, *La religion bambara.*

Un système analogue existe pour le *kari* féminin, aussi bien pour les semailles que pour la rentrée des récoltes, l'entraide domestique, etc. Les deux groupes collaborent enfin pour célébrer les fêtes saisonnières.

d) *Le Fama.* — Nous voyons que le canton est un groupement formé sous l'autorité et l'influence d'une famille dominante. Son unité est faite par les lois politiques, sociales et religieuses qui le régissent. Le *fa* chef de la famille dominante, devient le Fama, c'est-à-dire le patriarche, chef de canton ; souvent alors il renonce à l'administration de la faya qu'il confie à son second *(syere)* afin de ne pas confondre les intérêts de sa maison et ceux du pays.

Nomination du Fama. Le titre de Fama reste dans la famille autour de laquelle s'est constitué le canton : le pouvoir passe du frère aîné au frère cadet jusqu'à extinction de la génération ; puis à l'aîné de la génération suivante, car en règle générale, c'est le vivant le plus proche du premier ancêtre qui doit régner. Cependant l'histoire de Ségou nous montre comment certains Fama ont essayé d'établir une succession directe entre eux et leur fils aîné. Mais l'avènement du Fama est soumis à la ratification du conseil des notables qui comprend :

a) Les jeunes chefs, descendants mâles au premier degré du Fama ; ils sont dirigés par l'aîné, le deuxième par rang d'âge étant son syere ou successeur présomptif.
b) Les vieux maîtres qui sont les frères du Fama.
c) Leurs fils et tous les circoncis pères de famille.

Pouvoir du Fama. Le pouvoir du Fama est fondé sur la coutume et la religion. Il est le représentant sur terre de tous les ancêtres, il est le centre de rayonnement qui dispense la vie à toute la société, il est le verbe de son peuple. Il décide des cultures, du commerce, noue les alliances, déclare les guerres, rend la justice, prélève l'impôt. Il est le gardien de la coutume et le législateur des lois nouvelles, l'organisateur du temps et de l'espace qu'il gouverne. Sa parole est une force très puissante et dangereuse, ses décisions sont chuchotées à l'oreille d'un forgeron qui les répète à l'assistance à voix haute. Sa vue seule fait trembler ses sujets qui s'approchent de lui en rampant, le front dans la poussière ; devant lui aucune querelle ne peut éclater, aucune violence n'est commise, son pouvoir sur les hommes et les biens est absolu. Néanmoins, toutes ses décisions sont prises après consultation des notables et de l'assemblée des délégués de chaque village. Si l'un des membres de l'assemblée est en désaccord avec le Fama sur un texte de loi, il se lève et quitte la réunion sans rien dire, marquant par là sa désapprobation. Lorsqu'une loi est votée par toute l'assemblée, chacun prête serment, sur la tombe d'un ancêtre ou sur l'autel du komo, pour lui-même et ses descendants.

Nul ne peut s'opposer à la volonté du Fama si ce n'est son *senanku* qui a le pouvoir d'arrêter la décision du chef et particulièrement dans le cas d'actes dictés par la colère : meurtres, guerres, etc.

Les ressources du Fama provenaient du travail de ses familiers, du prélèvement des vivres en nature, de la moitié du butin de guerre, de la totalité des biens sans maître, de certaines matières précieuses telles que l'or et l'ivoire, du prélèvement d'une partie de tout animal tué à la chasse et de la peau de tous les fauves abattus, de la totalité des droits de marché, de pacage et de transhumance, des péages pour la traversée des fleuves, du produit des amendes, de la vente des captifs de justice. Par contre il devait subvenir aux dépenses suivantes : nourrir et habiller les communautaires en cas de besoin, entretenir les guerriers, leur donner un palefrenier, une femme, un fusil, un cheval, gratifier ses gens de caste, les nourrir, les habiller, les marier le cas échéant, faire les offrandes de charité, recevoir les étrangers, nourrir les justiciables et les détenus.

Le Fama commandait tous les travaux d'intérêt commun : la construction et l'entretien des fortifications, le débroussement des pistes, l'entretien des sources, la construction et l'entretien de la mosquée s'il y a lieu, la confection des pirogues banales, l'édification des estrades de repos.

Ces travaux s'exécutaient grâce à des prestations en nature : ils étaient répartis par le Fama entre les villages et par les chefs de villages entre les chefs de famille. Celui qui ne les exécutait pas en personne pouvait les faire exécuter par les gens de sa famille ; celui qui se refusait, pouvait être contraint par la force.

La société bambara s'est rarement élevée à une forme d'organisation systématique et centralisée analogue à nos royaumes européens. Ce qu'on a paré du nom d'empire ne faisait guère que traduire l'attraction exercée par une famille, en raison de son prestige ou de sa puissance sur des groupements qui acceptaient sa suzeraineté. Comme l'a fort bien montré Monteil, l'effort de domination d'une famille a toujours porté sur des groupements humains et non pas sur des étendues territoriales.

L'ensemble de ces groupements constitue la Ton. Elle comprend :

1) Un chef : le *ton-tigi* ;
2) L'ensemble des chefs locaux (*fa*) ;
3) Les hommes libres ;
4) Les gens de caste : forgerons, etc. (voir plus loin) ;
5) Les esclaves.

e) *Esclavage.* — On devenait esclave de trois façons, par violence, par obligation ou par naissance.

1) *Par violence.* Si un captif de guerre est important, il peut être tué ou bien rançonné et traité avec considération. Un Fama pris à la guerre, pouvait devenir chef d'armée ou dignitaire dans le pays de son vainqueur et y fonder une famille. En aucun cas il ne pouvait être réduit en captivité sur son territoire propre.

Si le vaincu est un homme de caste, il échappe à la captivité et généralement entre au service du Fama vainqueur ; s'il est senanku du vainqueur, celui-ci s'en débarrasse en le libérant. Enfin s'il porte le même nom que le Fama victorieux, il est libéré, car il est reconnu comme étant un de ses parents.

Lorsque le captif est un homme libre d'origine humble, il est vendu au profit du Fama à moins que celui-ci n'en fasse don aux guerriers.

2) *Par obligation.* L'individu libre devenait esclave en punition de ses crimes ou de ses délits ; il était alors vendu au profit du Fama. Un *fa* pouvait vendre un de ses enfants pour achever de payer ses dettes, mais il devait ensuite s'efforcer de le racheter aussitôt libéré de ses obligations.

3) *Par naissance.* Une femme esclave n'enfante que des esclaves. L'esclave né à la maison est dit *wolo-so.* Si une esclave est fécondée par un homme libre, elle devient libre ainsi que son enfant. Mais si la mère est répudiée elle redevient serve, alors que l'enfant demeure libre.

Au fur et à mesure que le nombre des esclaves augmentait, leur organisation se compliquait et se hiérarchisait. Les esclaves sous la dépendance du Fama de Ségou étaient répartis en séries ayant à leur tête un chef qui était le plus ancien des esclaves. Le plus ancien des chefs de série devenait chef de *dyon-kuru* ou *dyon-fulu* (ensemble des esclaves). Monteil montre le rôle important qu'il a joué dans l'histoire de Ségou. En effet, il était le porte-parole de toutes les réclamations des esclaves et devenait souvent le conseiller du Fama. A la mort de celui-ci, il confirmait le pouvoir de son successeur en lui assurant ou en lui refusant la soumission de tous les captifs.

Le *fa* manifeste surtout sa confiance au *wolo-so*. Il le marie, l'établit, l'admet à son culte et lui confie des tâches importantes. Parfois il épouse sa fille et s'unit à lui par la fraternisation et le serment. Les enfants du *wolo-so* sont souvent circoncis avec ceux du maître. Enfin le *wolo-so* porte le nom de son maître et peut à son tour avoir des esclaves. A la troisième génération, le *wolo-so* devient un homme libre. Nous connaissons encore très mal toute cette question de l'esclavage qui subsiste incontestablement dans tout le Soudan ; politiquement, il semble avoir été un moyen rationnel pour assimiler et fondre en un même peuple les hommes d'origines les plus diverses.

f) *Armée.* — Les esclaves n'étant pas des parias, mais des éléments essentiels de la société, en raison de leur nombre et des emplois qu'ils remplissent, il est normal qu'ils participent aussi à sa défense. Ils ont donc leur place dans l'armée.

Chaque Fama avait une armée, dont l'objectif était le pillage afin de procurer le plus possible de biens matériels à ses sujets. Le Fama dépouillait les vaincus qu'il transformait en esclaves, d'autres se contentaient de lui payer un tribut suivant les accords consécutifs. L'armée rangée en bataille comprenait :

1) Une masse centrale : *disi* (poitrine) constituée par le corps des *sofa* (étymologiquement : préposés aux soins des chevaux) ; les *sofa* formaient la garde personnelle du Fama ; ils étaient souvent recrutés

parmi les jeunes prisonniers de guerre. Le Fama présidait souvent la cérémonie de circoncision des enfants des vaincus qu'il mêlait à ses propres enfants ; ils étaient ainsi liés et dévoués toute leur vie. Les jeunes *sofa* remplissaient le rôle de page ou de palefreniers, les plus vieux devenaient les hommes de confiance du Fama qui les chargeait de missions importantes.

2) Deux masses flanquaient le disi, à droite et à gauche : le *kini-n-bolo* (bras droit) et le *numa-n-bolo* (bras gauche). Ces *bolo* étaient composés de *furuba-dyon* (classe d'âge des esclaves correspondant à la flan-ton, des hommes libres) encadrés par les ton-dyon (sorte d'aristocratie des esclaves recrutés parmi les captifs de guerre).

3) *La ton-koro-bolo* en arrière du disi est une réserve spéciale formée uniquement de ton-dyon purs.

4) Le *keli-ligi* était le chef de l'expédition désigné par le Fama. Ce pouvait être un *dyon-kunligi* (chef de la *furuba-dyon*), un membre de la communauté du Fama ou le Fama lui-même.

Enfin l'armée était accompagnée d'un corps de musique comprenant essentiellement des tambours (qui transmettaient les nouvelles) des tambours d'aisselle *(dunkan')*, d'épaule *(taura)*, ou reposant sur trois pieds *(dange)*, ou portés par deux hommes *(tabala)*, ou couplés *(denuba)*. Souvent s'y ajoutaient des trompes *(buru)*, parfois des oliphants d'ivoire ou de corne, des xylophones *(bada)* et des sonnailles.

Un dyeli (griot) suit l'expédition et enregistre la geste qu'il devra retransmettre ; il doit encourager les guerriers et arrêter la panique par la puissance de sa parole.

B) INFLUENCE DE L'ORGANISATION SOCIALE SUR LA VIE ÉCONOMIQUE

a) *La ton, communauté de travail*

Nous avons vu que l'unité sociale chez les Bambara était la communauté ; c'est aussi l'unité de travail et l'unité économique. L'individu indépendant ne se conçoit pas. La communauté possède tous les biens qui composent le patrimoine spirituel et matériel : la terre, les produits agricoles industriels et commerciaux, les habitations...

C'est la communauté qui règle l'exploitation du sol. Le *duguligi* est le premier occupant, maître de la terre dont il distribue les lots aux différents chefs de famille. Lorsqu'un étranger, chef de famille veut entrer dans une communauté, il choisit un champ libre et le demande au chef de village. La demande s'accompagne de 10 noix de cola et d'un poulet. L'autorisation alors ne peut être refusée. Le chef de la terre sacrifie le poulet devant toute la communauté et l'informe de l'installation du nouveau venu. Quand l'étranger veut quitter la terre, on lui rend le poulet et les noix.

La terre attribuée à un chef de famille peut toujours lui être retirée sans justification par le *dugu-ligi* et son conseil. Ainsi le bénéficiaire de la terre ne peut ni la vendre, ni prendre aucune mesure qui intéresserait l'ensemble de la communauté ; mais il peut la louer, l'engager, ou la céder, ce qui provoque de multiples contestations au moment de la redistribution des terres dans le cas de cultures cycliques.

Le *dugu-ligi* organise également le budget de la communauté. Les ressources comprennent : les dons faits aux dieux, les hommages de reconnaissance pour la chasse, la pêche, la récolte du mil, la concession d'un terrain ou des services rendus, le fermage des biens de la communauté (revenus fixes ou tributs exceptionnels), le produit des amendes, des confiscations, du droit d'aubaine, enfin, autrefois les aides extraordinaires pour la guerre, les travaux, etc.

Au chapitre des dépenses figurent les frais d'entretien des membres de la communauté s'il y a lieu, les frais de représentation, les charges d'assistance aux malades et surtout l'impôt ou tribut payé autrefois au souverain, légitime ou non, aujourd'hui à l'administration française.

Le patrimoine familial *(tien)* est administré par le *fa*, chef de famille. A. Aubert (1) nous donne la composition de ce patrimoine qui comprend. « Les droits sur les terres cultivées par la communauté ; les animaux ; les serfs ; les créances et les dettes ; les dots des filles et des femmes issues des membres du carré ; les héritages ; les habitations du carré et leur mobilier ; les vivres de greniers communs *(foro-ba)* et d'une façon générale, tout bien quelconque provenant du travail en commun des membres de la famille. »

Par ailleurs le *fa* doit : « assurer la vie matérielle de tous les membres de la famille ; doter des femmes pour les hommes de la communauté ; rembourser les dots des femmes de la communauté qui viendraient à divorcer ; racheter les membres de la famille faits prisonniers ou vendus, payer les impôts en nature et en espèce ».

b) *Organisation du travail*

Le travail de la terre est le seul qui convienne à des hommes libres, car travailler la terre c'est la purifier. Toutes les opérations agricoles sont déclenchées par le *dugu-ligi* et ordonnées par le fa qui distribue les tâches par classes d'âge. Chaque membre de la communauté doit travailler pour elle tous les jours de l'aurore à 4 h 30 du soir environ, sauf le lundi et le jeudi. Il peut se faire assister, voire remplacer par ses enfants et ses captifs. Le reste du temps, il peut travailler pour son propre compte dans son champ personnel ou dans les petits champs situés au bord des marigots et des fleuves ; ces champs n'étant pas redistribués périodiquement sont à peu près considérés comme propriété personnelle et héréditaire. Le fruit de ce travail constitue le pécule personnel du communautaire.

L'exploitation du sous-sol est soumise à d'autres règles qui nous sont encore mal connues. Le sous-sol comme le sol appartenait au maître de la terre. Le minerai de fer était uniquement extrait par le forgeron qui versait une redevance au maître de la terre, sous forme de houes ou de haches. Pour l'exploitation des mines d'or, dès le début de la saison sèche des milliers d'indigènes se rendent en famille sur les placers, dont

(1) A. Aubert, *Coutume bambara* (cercle de Bougouni).

l'emplacement déterminé par les prêtres change tous les ans. L'homme creuse des trous multiples de faible diamètre, très rapprochés les uns des autres, qui peuvent devenir très profonds suivant l'épaisseur de la couche stérile. Les calebasses de terre aurifère montée au jour sont lavées par les femmes. Les placers sont abandonnés dès les premières pluies après trois ou quatre mois d'exploitation. Avant l'occupation française, l'or était la propriété exclusive du Fama ; il ne pouvait sous aucun prétexte être l'objet de commerce. Aujourd'hui, la vente de l'or a généralement lieu sur place à des commerçants syriens, autochtones ou européens qui ont établi de véritables boutiques sur les lieux d'exploitation où se trouve tout ce qui est nécessaire à la vie du mineur.

L'exercice d'une profession autre que la culture de la terre est réservé à des artisans qui reçoivent le sobriquet injurieux de *nyamankala*, car seul le travail de la terre est un travail noble. Ils forment des familles distinctes dans toute société soudanaise, ce qui les a fait appeler improprement par les Européens, gens de caste. Ils sont divisés en corporations indépendantes.

Les *numu* : forgerons dont les femmes sont généralement potières. Ce sont les maîtres du feu, ceux qui font cuire la terre sacrée pour en extraire le minerai ou fixer la forme des poteries.

Les *loro* : ouvriers du cuivre.

Les *garanka* : ouvriers du cuir.

Les *kule* : qui façonnent le bois et sont parfois selliers.

Les *donso* : chasseurs qui forment des associations puissantes et redoutées.

Les *somono* ou pêcheurs qui ont un statut moins étroit que celui des artisans susvisés.

Les *dyeli* ou griots (sorte de factotums domestiques, les plus méprisés de tous, sont pourtant les archivistes de la famille).

On peut ajouter deux tribus de bergers peuls, créées par Manson : les *Dyanna* et les *Bouguena* (1).

Tous ces artisans sont endogames et castés de père en fils. Toutefois, le fait d'appartenir à une caste n'oblige pas à l'exercice du métier.

La corporation la plus puissante est incontestablement celle des forgerons. C'est parmi eux que se recrutent tous les prêtres, les interprètes du Fama, les puisatiers, les fossoyeurs, les bourreaux, les circonciseurs, etc. Ils sont les senanku de toutes les familles et chargés de tous les rites de purification.

Les griots sont également redoutés pour la puissance de leur parole et parce qu'ils transportent au loin la renommée des chefs.

L'homme libre qui épouse une femme de caste, se mésallie et ses enfants sont mal considérés.

Les familles les plus pures de forgerons sont celles des Fané Balo, de griots, celles des Koniaté. Les gens de caste demeurent toujours libres ; lorsqu'ils ont été faits prisonniers pendant une guerre, ils se font reconnaître et ils gardent leur statut.

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(1) Voir MONTEIL, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta*.

Ces différentes corporations suffisent à maintenir en pays bambara une certaine industrie de type nettement artisanal et non spécialisée. Ainsi les forgerons travaillent le fer, le cuivre, le bois pour confectionner les outils, les instruments aratoires d'usage courant, le mobilier, les objets de parure, bracelets, anneaux divers. Ils travaillent aussi l'or et l'argent pour effectuer des bijoux en filigrane.

Le tissage ainsi que la vannerie ne sont pas exécutés par des gens de caste, mais par tous les hommes ou autrefois par leurs captifs de case. Des métiers primitifs, actionnés par des marches, sont installés hors des maisons à l'ombre des arbres. Les hommes tissent de longues bandes de coton pour la confection des vêtements, des pagnes ou des couvertures. Ces bandes de plusieurs mètres sont parfois roulées en forme de roues pouvant atteindre jusqu'à 30 kg et emportées sur les marchés par les *diula* (marchands ambulants). Les Bambara pratiquent la teinture, le batik et la broderie (pratiquée par les hommes).

Toute cette industrie demeure d'un intérêt local et cherche uniquement à subvenir aux besoins immédiats de la communauté.

c) *Division du travail*

Les Bambara sont un peuple essentiellement agricole. Néanmoins, comme tous les membres de la société sont tenus de fournir un certain travail pour la communauté, ces travaux varient d'une part suivant les classes sociales et suivant qu'il s'agit d'un homme, d'une femme ou d'un enfant. Les tableaux suivants indiquent comment se répartit le travail.

1) *Répartition des tâches suivant A. Aubert :*

Hommes	Femmes	Enfants	Tous
Alimentation			
	Préparation de la nourriture, du dolo (bière).		
	Vente du dolo.		
Préparation des ruches, pose, récolte du miel.	Mise en tonques et vente.	Aide.	
	Récolte du karité et préparation.	Récolte.	
Boucanage de la viande.			
Abattage des animaux (réservé aux forgerons).			
Construction de la case			
Maçonnerie.	Puisage et portage de l'eau nécessaire.	Portage de l'eau (filles).	
Coupe et transport de la paille et des bambous.		Portage de la paille (garçons).	
Toiture.			
Crépissage de l'extérieur.	Crépissage de l'intérieur.	Battage de l'aire.	

Hommes	Femmes	Enfants	Tous
		Chasse	
Préparation de la poudre.		Rabattage avec les chiens (garçons).	
Chasse.			
Dressage de chiens.			
		Pêche	
Préparation des nasses et des filets.	Filage.	Pêche dans les mares avec des nasses en cloche.	En cas de vidage d'une mare.
		Entretien des animaux	
	Soins et traite des vaches.	Aides (filles).	
		Cultures	
Dessouchage.			D'une façon générale, tout le monde coopère au travail de la terre qui est le seul travail noble, car le Bambara est avant tout cultivateur et sacrificateur.
Semailles.	Quelquefois semailles.	Quelquefois semailles et désherbage.	
Désherbage.	Quelquef. désherbage.		
Battage du mil (*fla-kè*).			
Récolte du mil et du *fonio*.	Désherbage du *fonio*.	Aides.	
Battage du mil.			
Arrachage des arachides.	Récolte et décorticage.		
Récolte du Maïs.	Egrenage du maïs.	Aides.	
Battage du riz.	Récolte du riz.	Aides.	
Plant de patates.	Repiquage des patates et récoltes.	Aides.	
Plant de haricots.	Récolte des haricots et pois.	Aides.	
Plant de manioc et récolte.			
Le bénéfice du *gombo*, du *da* et de l'indigo revient aux hommes.	*Gombo* : culture et récolte.	Aides.	
	Da : id.	Aides.	
	Indigo : id.	Aides.	
Préparation du lougan de coton.	Récolte du coton, égrenage, filage.	Aides.	
Tissage et couture, assemblage.	Vente, teinture.	Aides.	
Préparation des lougans de tabac, préparation et vente.	Arrosage, pilage, vente au détail du tabac à priser.	Aides.	
Préparation des lougans de calebasses, récoltes, vidages, vente et décoration.			
		Récolte du *burgu* pour les chevaux.	
		Puits	
Forage réservé aux hommes forgerons.	Puisage de l'eau.	Aides (filles).	

Hommes	Femmes	Enfants	Tous
Mobilier			
Lits, nattes, seccos.	Canaris (femmes forgeronnes : préparation et cuisson).		
Travail du fer			
Hommes forgerons. Tout depuis l'extraction du minerai jusqu'à la vente inclus.			
Bijouterie			
Forgeron.			
Travail du cuir			
Cordonniers.			
Vannerie			
Tous les hommes sans distinction.			
Inhumation			
Chacun pour son sexe			
Creusement de tombe. Portage du corps. Inhumation.	Préparation de l'eau purificatrice et des parfums.		
Circoncision et excision			
Hommes forgerons pour les garçons.	Femmes forgeronnes pour les filles.		
Accouchements			
	Toutes les femmes qui ont passé l'âge critique.		
Religion			
Koma et Dio réservé aux hommes.	?		
Coiffures			
Les hommes rasent la tête des hommes.	Les femmes font les cadenettes des hommes là où elles subsistent. Toutes les coiffures des femmes.		
Cordes			
Préparation de la fibre, séchage, cordage.			
Tannage			
Hommes cordonniers.			

Hommes	Femmes	Enfants	Tous
Caoutchouc			
Vente.		**Récolte et préparation.**	
Médicaments			
Spécialement réservés aux hommes pour préparation et les soins à donner.	**Rarement les femmes si ce n'est pour ce qui a trait à leur sexe.**		
Pratique religieuse (voir Religion)			
Réservé aux hommes.	**Les femmes prennent rarement part aux sacrifices.**		
Font leurs sacrifices personnels à droite de la porte de la case.	**Font leurs sacrifices personnels à gauche de la porte de la case.**		

(Lorsqu'on est tourné vers l'entrée)

2) *Répartition des tâches selon Labouret :*

Labouret, dans *Paysans noirs*, répartit d'après le tableau suivant le travail plus spécialement attribué aux femmes et celui des hommes.

Hommes	Femmes	Tâches communes
Piégeage.	**Cueillette des plantes alimentaires pour l'industrie domestique.**	
Pêche maritime ou fluviale en eau profonde.	**Pêche fluviale aux basses eaux.**	
Préparation du poisson.	**Préparation et vente du poisson.**	**Préparation et vente.**
Préparation des pièges et engins de chasse ou de pêche.	**Fabrication des engins de pêche féminins.**	
Fabrication des armes et outils.		
Chasse.		
Agriculture : **Débrousser; sarcler; récolter; construire les greniers et séchoirs.**	**Agriculture :** **Collaboration aux tâches des hommes, ceux-ci effectuant plutôt celles qui exigent de la force. Semailles.**	**Agriculture.**
Artisanat : **Pierre; bois; fer; cuivre; vannerie; tissage; couture.**	**Artisanat :** **Vannerie; tressage ou filage; poterie; teinture; odeurs; parfums.**	
Construction et entretien de la maison.	**Construction et entretien de la maison.**	**Construction et entretien de la maison.**
Commerce.	**Commerce.**	**Commerce**
Elevage domestique.	**Préparation des aliments, plus bois et eau.**	
	Soins domestiques.	
	Elevage des volailles.	

Labouret s'empresse d'ajouter qu'il y a partout collaboration étroite. Ainsi quand le mari abat les arbres et coupe la broussaille, la femme et ses filles mettent les branches en tas et les brûlent dans un coin des champs. Puis quand la terre a été retournée par la grande houe des hommes, des femmes arrivent pour écraser les mottes, égaliser et ameublir le sol pour l'ensemencer.

Après les grands sarclages des hommes, elles font dans les champs de petits nettoyages. Au moment de la récolte, les femmes et les enfants chassent les oiseaux des champs à grands cris, à coups de fronde, de bambous chauffés sur une pierre dure ce qui provoque une détonation. Tous chassent les passereaux, perdrix, pintades... La récolte se fait ensemble...

De plus, il y a à côté des champs masculins de petits champs féminins cultivés par les femmes, où poussent l'oseille, le gombo, l'aubergine, les tomates, les haricots et tous les condiments ; les cultures accessoires des femmes sont le raro, les bananiers, le manioc, parfois le riz ou l'arachide (1).

Naturellement, le travail varie suivant l'ordre social. Les Bambara se divisent eux-mêmes en hommes libres, en gens de caste et autrefois en esclaves ayant tous à leur tête un chef. Tous les communautaires doivent travailler la terre ; en fait, les pauvres travaillent plus que les esclaves ; les gens plus aisés travaillent peu ; ils dirigeaient et contrôlaient le travail des esclaves, aujourd'hui celui des travailleurs agricoles.

C) PROCÉDURE LÉGALE : HÉRITAGE, PROPRIÉTÉ DES TERRES

En pays bambara aujourd'hui comme dans toute l'A. O. F., la justice est rendue par deux tribunaux : celui présidé par un juge de paix, pour les affaires importantes et celui présidé par l'administrateur pour les autres. Le juge de paix rend la justice suivant le code français, l'administrateur suivant la coutume locale. Une chambre de la Cour d'Appel de Dakar est représentée à Bamako, dont le ressort comprend les territoires du Soudan et du Niger. La cour d'Assises tient une session à Bamako qui possède aussi un tribunal de première instance. Les justices de paix à compétence étendue sont à Kayes, Gao, Mopti, Ségou Sikasso, Bougouni ; d'autres justices de paix à compétence étendue sont déjà créées et vont entrer en fonction sous peu.

On imagine aisément les conflits d'esprit et de méthode qui peuvent surgir entre les deux sortes de tribunaux que nous venons d'indiquer. Fréquemment en matière de justice les Bambara continuent à consulter leurs anciens juges coutumiers ; il faut cependant noter qu'en ôtant aux anciens chefs la compétence judiciaire, l'administration française a contribué à diminuer et presque à anéantir leur pouvoir.

Les Bambara avaient une organisation judiciaire aussi précise et réglée que leur organisation religieuse, bien qu'il n'y eût aucun droit codifié tel que le Coran ou les tables de loi juives. La justice était rendue suivant des règles que chaque communauté se transmettait de génération en génération. Ces règles ne sont pas d'origine divine, mais elles sont néanmoins sacrées, car la coutume est l'héritage des ancêtres. Le Fama et son conseil des notables pouvaient promulguer de nouvelles lois, mais avant de décider d'une nouvelle règle, on consulte le Komo et le Nyama. Puis sous l'assistance du prêtre, chacun jure sur l'autel d'obéir à la loi qui devient sacrée. D'ailleurs les règles coutumières ne peuvent être dégagées de la morale et de la religion auxquelles elles sont liées. Elles ne sont pas uniformes ; chaque canton a les siennes, souvent chaque village, et dans chacun d'eux, il y a des habitudes propres à certaines familles ou certaines castes. Néanmoins l'équité est un sentiment très vif chez les Noirs, mais ils n'admettent pas l'égalité chez les hommes, qui sont naturellement différents les uns des autres, suivant leurs aptitudes, leurs moyens, leur condition.

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(1) LABOURET, *Paysans noirs*.

La coutume règle tous les rapports des individus entre eux et ceux des individus avec la collectivité.

Il existait deux sortes de tribunaux indigènes en pays bambara : un tribunal de conciliation, présidé par le chef de village qui réunissait un conseil des notables ; un haut tribunal présidé par le Fama, à qui on soumettait les affaires qui n'avaient pu être réglées par le premier tribunal. Par ailleurs le Fama pouvait appeler devant son tribunal les affaires civiles ou pénales qui lui paraissaient intéresser l'ordre public.

La justice était gratuite et rendue jour et nuit par le Fama dont c'était un des rôles essentiels, car le juge est celui qui répare les désordres qui bouleversent la société. Les audiences étaient solennelles et avaient lieu sous le fromager *(Ceiba pentandra)* ou dans le vestibule du chef, c'est-à-dire à la fois sous la clarté d'une certaine constellation et le témoignage des ancêtres fondateurs qui relient le juge avec les puissances surnaturelles. Le Fama était assis sur son trône juché sur une estrade ; à sa droite se tenaient les notables, à sa gauche, les griots, les prêtres et les anciens captifs ; derrière lui, les sofa étaient debout. Le forgeron ou un captif interprétait hautement ce que disait tout bas le Fama qui ne devait pas élever la voix. Ni les femmes ni les enfants ne devaient assister aux séances publiques. Autrefois, la seule vue du Fama remplissait de terreur l'accusé qui se prosternait en sa présence. Le Fama pouvait mettre l'accusé aux fers jusqu'à ce qu'il fût jugé (1).

Le droit bambara cherche surtout à apporter une réparation, une remise en ordre, ensuite seulement une punition.

a) *Preuves* (2)

Le demandeur doit faire la preuve de son droit et l'accusé de son innocence. Les preuves se font suivant l'aveu, le témoignage, le serment, l'expertise et l'examen des lieux.

Le Fama peut contraindre l'accusé à l'aveu si les présomptions de culpabilité sont suffisantes, en le faisant fouetter.

Chacun peut citer les témoins dans l'ordre suivant : les hommes circoncis, les femmes mariées, les jeunes filles sans qu'elles puissent prêter serment, enfin les enfants s'il n'existe pas d'autres témoins. Les senanku sont dispensés de témoigner entre eux.

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(1) V. Paques, L'estrade royale des Niaré (*Bull. de l'Ifan*, 1953, t. XV, fasc. 4).
(2) *Passim. Coutumier juridique de l'A. O. F.*

Le faux témoignage est puni par la confiscation de tous les biens et la captivité de toute la famille ; la victime bénéficie d'une partie de ces biens. Si le témoin refuse de prêter serment, son refus fait preuve contre celui qui l'a cité. Lorsque les parties en cause sont en désaccord, le Fama fait jurer sur le Komo, sur son estrade ou sur la tombe de l'ancêtre fondateur du groupe. Lorsque le serment a été prononcé, l'adversaire peut le détruire en prêtant serment à son tour ; alors il sera sursis à statuer ; mais avant 40 jours, le parjure doit mourir.

Celui qui aura tenté de suborner un témoin ou un enfant sera puni des mêmes peines que le faux témoin.

Le Fama devra donner mission à un ou plusieurs notables d'examiner les lieux où s'est produit un fait litigieux ; il peut désigner un notable pour faire expertiser et évaluer les dommages. Une fois leur mission accomplie, les notables sont soumis aux mêmes obligations que les témoins.

Le rôle d'avocat était tenu par un des conseillers du Fama, un parent, un griot, un forgeron ou un favori du Fama, celui qui « sait le mieux parler » ; l'accusé ou quelqu'un de sa famille se rendait auprès de lui et lui offrait un cadeau en le priant d'intervenir en sa faveur. Mais le conseiller avait seulement le pouvoir de sauver la vie du condamné qui devait payer une composition ; tous les autres châtiments hormis la peine de mort étaient appliqués.

La police était assurée par les sofa et les membres des confréries.

b) *Peines*

Les peines étaient suivant l'ordre d'importance : la mort, la mise aux fers perpétuelle ou à terme, le fouet, l'amende, la confiscation de la famille, la confiscation des biens, la vente aux marchands d'esclaves.

On tranchait la tête aux assassins et aux brigands invétérés ; les espions avaient la tête fracassée par une hache ou étaient assommés (comme des chiens). Une femme n'était jamais exécutée. Le Fama qui aurait fait tuer une femme aurait vu son royaume disparaître.

Tout condamné aux fers était enfermé dans une case, immobilisé, les pieds entravés par une barre fixée à un anneau ; le patient ne survivait guère au delà de quinze jours de peine. Le fouet était donné publiquement ; les coups, dont le nombre était fixé par le Fama, étaient donnés de toute la course du bras ou de l'avant-bras seulement. Les amendes devaient être payées immédiatement, sinon le condamné restait en garantie jusqu'à ce que la famille eût acquitté la dette.

La famille de celui qui a commis un crime ou une faute était tenue pour responsable et pouvait être confisquée et vendue ; la confiscation des personnes entraînait celle des biens. Pouvaient être confisqués tous ceux qui travaillaient en commun sous l'autorité d'un même chef, mais ni les oncles maternels, ni les tantes paternelles et maternelles du coupable, ni ses parentes mariées ou en instance de mariage. La confiscation profitait au Fama qui dédommageait les victimes. La confiscation des biens comprend tous les biens mobiliers, mais ni les terres ni les habitations.

Quiconque était condamné à l'esclavage devait être vendu hors du pays, au profit du Fama. C'était un moyen pratique de débarrasser le pays de tous les indésirables.

Enfin tout récidiviste voit sa peine doublée.

c) *Exemples de condamnations*

Les homicides sont condamnés à mort ; mais les homicides involontaires ou en cas de légitime défense sont excusés. Le complice d'un assassin subit la même peine que celui-ci. Le receleur du criminel ou d'objets volés est puni comme le coupable. Le viol sur un enfant est puni de mort, sur une jeune fille par la mise aux fers après une réparation à l'égard du fiancé. Toute femme qui aura mis à mort son bâtard sera excusée, car son mari pouvait exiger le crime ; si elle a tué son enfant légitime elle est punie de mort (mais non exécutée). Toute femme qui s'est fait avorter est fouettée publiquement ; lorsqu'elle a provoqué un avortement sur une autre femme elle est condamnée à mort. Celui qui usurpe le titre d'une fonction à laquelle il n'a pas droit est mis à mort, de même que le charlatan et le sorcier. Le vol d'or est puni de mort, le vol d'objets mobiliers est compensé par une amende. Lors d'une rixe entre deux villages, si un membre du village trouve la mort, le village victime désigne un individu de l'autre village pour qu'il soit mis à mort ; s'il y a eu plusieurs morts de part et d'autre, on égalise le nombre des morts dans les deux villages.

L'attentat public à la pudeur est puni de mort.

Pour l'adultère, l'homme est mis aux fers et paie l'amende, la femme est fouettée par son mari, ses frères ou les justiciers du Fama. Les rapports avec une femme en deuil attirent le mépris public sur le coupable, tandis qu'on punit de mort l'homme qui commet l'adultère avec une femme déjà enceinte. Le captif amant de la femme de son maître est mis à mort.

Les individus errants sont présumés évadés de captivité et sont remis au Fama.

Enfin la mendicité est autorisée, car, disent les Bambara, elle vaut mieux que le vol.

d) *Responsabilité*

Le Fama juge tous ses sujets, excepté ses propres senanku qu'il fait juger par son tribunal. Le droit est applicable à tout homme circoncis et femme excisée reconnus sains d'esprit. (Les déments sont mis aux fers). Ils sont responsables de leurs actes, mais la famille est solidaire du coupable. Le père d'un garçon non circoncis est responsable des actes de celui-ci, le mari des actes de sa femme et nous avons vu que le crime d'un homme pouvait entraîner la punition de toute la famille. Signalons encore que le maître était juge de son esclave, mais lorsqu'un différend surgissait entre esclaves de maisons distinctes, on en référait au tribunal. C'est aussi le tribunal qui doit décider de la peine de mort, lorsqu'un esclave a commis une faute grave. Enfin l'étranger qui vit en pays bambara est jugé suivant les lois bambara.

Il faut remarquer aussi que la sanction s'applique à tout crime commis volontairement ; toute infraction ou dommage commis involontairement est excusable à condition qu'il soit avoué immédiatement. C'est ainsi qu'un chasseur rencontrant un couple d'amants dans la brousse, pourra les tuer pour outrage public à la pudeur, mais en rentrant au village il devra avouer son crime immédiatement.

e) *Héritage*

Monteil a relevé dans la région de Ségou un ordre de succession qui ne correspond pas à celui décrit par d'autres auteurs tels que Ortoli ou Aubert. En effet, à la mort du *fa*, «... tout ce qui dépendait de lui demeure indivis sous la nouvelle *faya* du plus âgé de ses fils. S'il n'y a que des filles, les biens sont partagés entre elles. 2° A défaut d'enfants les collatéraux mâles et à défaut de ceux-ci les femmes. 3° A défaut des collatéraux les ascendants. 4° A défaut d'ascendant, le conjoint survivant. 5° A défaut de conjoint survivant, il y a déshérence : la succession revient au chef de l'agglomération *(dugu-tigi)* lorsque cette agglomération est indépendante, au Fama dans le cas contraire » (1).

Dans la région de Bougouni, Aubert distingue deux ordres de succession : « 1° celui qui concerne l'attribution des femmes, 2° celui qui concerne l'attribution des privilèges et des biens de la faya... Pour l'attribution des femmes, les hommes se succèdent dans l'ordre suivant : 1° le frère puîné dans l'ordre de primogéniture 2° les hommes de la génération suivante, par ordre de primogéniture, 3° le Fama.... En ce qui concerne les biens... 1° le frère aîné, 2° le fils (toujours dans l'ordre de primogéniture) 3° le père, 4° le frère puîné dans l'ordre de primogéniture, 5° le plus ancien parent, 6° le Fama » (2). Les femmes ne peuvent ni hériter, ni transmettre.

Pour le cercle de Bamako, Ortoli expose les règles de succession suivantes : « ... Seuls les hommes peuvent succéder dans l'ordre suivant : 1° les frères germains du défunt dans l'ordre de primogéniture, 2° les frères consanguins dans le même ordre, 3° les fils du défunt dans le même ordre, 4° les neveux du défunt dans le même ordre et suivant l'ordre de primogéniture des frères germains et consanguins, 5° les petits-fils, les petits-neveux comme précédemment, 6° le village, 7° le Fama... Mais en ce qui concerne le patrimoine personnel, l'ordre successoral est le suivant : 1° frères germains plus jeunes dans l'ordre de primogéniture, 2° frères consanguins plus jeunes dans l'ordre de primogéniture, 3° et 4° comme pour le chef de famille, 5° frère aîné germain, 6° frère aîné consanguin, 7° la famille, 8° le village, 9° le Fama... Les femmes mariées peuvent transmettre leurs biens personnels dans l'ordre suivant : 1° aîné de ses fils, 2° aîné des fils que le mari a eus avec ses co-épouses, 3° le mari, 4° la famille de la femme... A la mort de son mari, la femme n'est pas tenue d'épouser l'héritier de celui-ci (1). »

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(1) Monteil, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta.*
(2) Aubert, *Coutume bambara* (cercle de Bougouni).

Nous devons préciser ici la notion d'aîné qui n'est pas toujours aisée à distinguer dans un régime de polygamie. En effet, lorsque deux femmes d'un même mari mettent au monde un enfant à la même époque, un intermédiaire vient annoncer la naissance au *fa* et c'est le premier annoncé qui est considéré comme étant l'aîné ; il peut même arriver que le premier annoncé soit en fait le dernier né, il n'en demeure pas moins l'aîné. En cas de gémelléité, l'aîné est celui qui voit le jour en dernier, car on pense que les jumeaux n'ont pas été conçus en même temps, le dernier né étant le premier conçu. Certains noms particuliers sont en usage pour les aînés : N'tyi pour les garçons, Nya ou Nyele pour les filles.

La mort du Fama ouvre plusieurs successions : celle de sa famille propre, celle de la communauté familiale et celle de la patriarchie.

En ce qui concerne l'élection du titre de Fama, nous avons vu comment le nouveau Fama était l'aîné des mâles de la même génération et de la même famille que le Fama défunt, ou l'aîné de la génération suivante. Il est à noter qu'en cas de non héritier mâle, la succession appartient à la fille du Fama et c'est son mari qui gouverne en son nom ; mais c'est un cas exceptionnel.

Quand le nouveau Fama est désigné par les notables, il vient habiter la maison fortifiée de l'ancien Fama, là où est enterré l'ancêtre fondateur ; les femmes et les enfants du Fama défunt doivent quitter les lieux. Du vivant de son père, le fils aîné du Fama menait une vie luxueuse et indépendante ; il commandait souvent un *dugu* important, parfois fondé par lui. A la mort de son père, il est un personnage très important pour le nouveau Fama.

La notion de propriété transportée en droit indigène est complexe. La distinction entre biens meubles et biens immeubles est souvent difficile à établir ; les cases de durée précaire sont facilement déplacées, tandis que le trône d'un Fama est fixé à un emplacement immuable et ne peut être considéré comme meuble.

La propriété de la terre pose des problèmes encore plus complexes. Nous avons vu que la terre ne s'achète jamais. Les terres ont un propriétaire éminent qui est l'esprit de la brousse ou un ancêtre mythique, un possesseur qui est le premier occupant ayant conclu un pacte avec le maître du sol, enfin un détenteur qui a reçu la terre en usufruit du possesseur. Le détenteur est un chef de famille et le champ qu'il a reçu appartient à sa communauté qui l'exploite. Mais après de longues années de labour, le détenteur a tendance à se considérer comme le propriétaire de la terre et lorsqu'il se déplace pendant un cycle de rotation de cultures, il arrive que le possesseur de la terre attribue son ancien champ vacant à un nouvel arrivant, ce qui fait naître des contestations interminables entre ancien et nouvel exploitant. Nous avons vu par ailleurs comment certaines parcelles de terrains particulièrement bien placées au bord des fleuves ou près des cases, étaient minutieusement travaillées. Elles tendent à devenir une véritable propriété privée, que les familles se transmettent d'une génération à une autre. A côté des champs familiaux existent des champs réservés à certaines confréries telles que le *n'Domo* ou le *Gna* qu'exploitent les affiliés pour les besoins du culte. Enfin durant deux jours par semaine, chaque communautaire a le droit de cultiver son champ personnel qui échappe au contrôle de la famille. Ces champs prennent de plus en plus d'importance au fur et à mesure que se développe le sens de l'individualisme et avec lui celui de la propriété individuelle.

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(1) Ortoli, *Coutume bambara* (cercle de Bamako).

Nous voyons donc que les terres peuvent être réparties au bénéfice de groupements familiaux, religieux, interfamiliaux ou à celui des individus. Bien qu'aucune des parties prenantes ne se reconnaisse comme le propriétaire de la terre, elles en usent comme des maîtres et vont jusqu'à la transmettre à leurs héritiers.

Il faut noter qu'il existe un droit particulier qui règle la possession des arbres et la récolte de leurs fruits qui ne dépendent pas forcément du champ où ils croissent. Certains arbres, habitat de génies, appartiennent à une certaine famille, d'autres tels que le karité sont la propriété de tous et leurs fruits appartiennent à la collectivité.

D) Position de la femme

La société des femmes est demeurée beaucoup plus impénétrable à la civilisation européenne. Elles fréquentent très rarement les écoles françaises, et contrairement aux hommes, qui, en partie et pendant leur service militaire, sont plongés dans notre système de civilisation, elles n'ont que peu de contacts avec les Blancs et paraissent encore plus attachées à la coutume que leurs maris. Très peu parlent français, et toutes ces raisons font que leur société est demeurée fermée et très mal connue des Blancs.

On s'est fondé sur ce que l'on croit être leur situation juridique pour décider de leur situation inférieure. Peut-être une meilleure connaissance de leur rôle et de leur importance dans la société nous conduira-t-elle à des conclusions très différentes. Du point de vue juridique, une femme est toujours mineure ; elle appartient d'abord à sa propre communauté, à laquelle elle doit obéissance, puis à la communauté de son mari. Lorsque le mariage est légal, c'est-à-dire lorsque le mari a versé les compensations matrimoniales, les enfants appartiennent au mari, sinon, en cas de concubinage, la famille de la femme peut réclamer l'enfant, car il lui appartient, comme tout ce qui appartient à la mère.

Son mariage est décidé par le *fa ;* en réalité souvent on la consulte indirectement au préalable, et elle garde une certaine liberté dans son choix. Même une esclave peut refuser d'épouser son maître, malgré les cadeaux et les promesses. Mais il lui est interdit d'épouser celui qu'elle considère comme parent, c'est-à-dire celui qui appartient à sa lignée paternelle et qui porte le même nom qu'elle. L'exogamie est de règle.

Toutefois, lorsqu'elle se marie, elle garde son nom patronymique et ses interdits personnels ; parfois elle ajoute son nom à celui de son fils qui porte normalement le *dyamu* de son père. Elle demeure très attachée à sa famille où elle va faire de fréquents séjours. C'est auprès d'elle qu'elle trouvera un appui en cas de dissentiment avec son époux. En cas de divorce par la faute du mari, celui-ci perd tous ses droits sur elle ainsi que la compensation qu'il a versée.

Dans le système de polygamie, la femme la plus ancienne est la maîtresse de la maison ; c'est chez elle que se réunissent les autres femmes pour les repas. Elle répartit les présents du mari, mais en dehors de ces privilèges, les droits des femmes sont égaux ainsi que ceux de leurs enfants.

Lorsque le mari meurt, les femmes sont considérées comme la richesse principale de l'héritier ; chez certains Bambara le partage des femmes se fait entre les frères, l'aîné choisit et fait choisir ses frères par rang d'âge ; chez d'autres, l'héritage revient aux enfants qui devront s'unir avec les femmes de leur père. Les femmes qui ne veulent pas rester avec l'héritier ont la faculté de retourner dans leur famille, à condition de restituer la dot.

La femme peut avoir des biens personnels qu'elle a reçus de ses parents au moment du mariage. Chez certains Bambara, le père est tenu de lui livrer la compensation que le mari a versée pour elle et qui devient son bien personnel. Lorsqu'une veuve meurt, la totalité de ses biens revient à l'aîné de ses garçons ; s'il n'y a pas de garçon, la moitié de ses biens revient à ses filles, et l'autre se partage entre son père, sa mère et son frère. Lorsqu'une femme mariée meurt sans enfant, ses biens sont partagés entre son mari et son père ; si elle n'a plus de père, la moitié revient au mari, et l'autre moitié à ses frères et sœurs.

Par contre, nous avons vu comment une femme peut hériter de la totalité des biens d'un chef de famille, et même d'un chef, à défaut d'hériter mâle, et l'empire du Mali a connu une femme Keïta à sa tête, fille de Naré, fa Maghan.

Une femme ne doit prendre part à aucune discussion ou manifestation politique, ce qui ne signifie pas que son rôle dans les affaires soit nul. Toute l'histoire du Mali est illustrée par ces intrigues de palais qui présentent leur phase aiguë au moment de la mort du Fama, et de l'élection du nouveau chef. C'est à ce moment que les femmes savaient jouer de tout le poids que leur donnait la puissance de leur famille pour décider de la nouvelle élection.

Enfin, nous avons vu que parallèlement aux confréries et sociétés masculines, les femmes étaient organisées en sociétés puissantes hiérarchisées suivant leurs classes d'âge et leur degré d'initiation. Ces sociétés, où les hommes n'entrent pas, sont encore mal connues, mais elles sont au moins aussi redoutables que les confréries masculines.

La femme doit piler le mil, puiser l'eau, et exécuter tous les soins ménagers, mais lorsque l'homme tue un animal, la viande appartient à la femme, et l'homme doit recevoir à son tour ce qu'elle lui donnera.

II. — Évolution actuelle de la société bambara

A) Évolution politique

Actuellement, tout le territoire du Soudan est unifié et doté d'une organisation politique lui permettant de jouer un rôle actif dans le cadre de l'Union française. Le Soudan, comme chacun des 8 territoires d'A. O. F. est représenté à l'Assemblée Nationale, au Conseil de la République, à l'Assemblée de l'Union française par des membres élus. Ces membres ont été choisis aussi bien parmi les fils d'anciens chefs que parmi les fils d'anciens esclaves ou de gens de caste.

L'organisation administrative est placée sous l'autorité d'un gouverneur général entouré de deux conseils : le Grand Conseil de l'Afrique occidentale et le Conseil du Gouvernement. A la tête du territoire est un gouverneur qui est le chef administratif du territoire ; il est assisté par un secrétaire général, nommé comme le gouverneur par décret et par un cabinet civil et militaire qui transmet les ordres du gouverneur.

Enfin les cercles sont dirigés par les administrateurs des colonies dépendant directement du gouverneur. Les cercles sont divisés en subdivisions à la tête desquelles sont placés des administrateurs adjoints qui dépendent directement des commandants de cercles. Ils sont chargés de l'administration générale et du contrôle de tous les services civils et financiers représentés dans le cercle.

Chaque cercle est divisé en cantons inspirés de la division territoriale des anciennes chefferies. A sa tête est le chef de canton parfois nommé par l'administration, mais généralement élu suivant la coutume traditionnelle des anciens Fama. Il est chargé de représenter les intérêts des Indigènes auprès de l'administration.

B) Tendance aux changements économiques

La principale transformation dans l'économie bambara a pour origine la pacification française et l'apport de l'organisation sociale et économique européenne.

a) *Urbanisation*

Les Bambara essentiellement agriculteurs n'ont pas de villes. Toutes les villes sont d'origine blanche et ont été créées pour le commerce, l'administration, l'industrie, la banque et l'éducation. Mais le paysan noir a éprouvé pour la ville le même attrait que le paysan français. Son goût a été largement facilité par la création des voies ferrées et des routes. Les villes comme Bamako sont envahies par une population sans cesse croissante qui quitte la brousse et la communauté indivise pour créer une foule détribalisée qui s'est plus ou moins bien adaptée à une organisation économique européenne. Ainsi l'équipement industriel de l'Afrique tend à transformer l'artisanat indigène car les établissements industriels du type européen nécessitent une main-d'œuvre spécialisée qui adoptera les méthodes de travail et la vie économique françaises. C'est ainsi que se sont créés les chantiers ferroviaires de Thiès, les industries de construction en dur, les carrières, la briqueterie, la fabrique de chaux de Bamako, de Mopti, et de Ségou, les industries alimentaires : fabrique de glace, d'eau, les usines d'égrenage du coton de Koutiala et de Sikasso. Toutefois, l'industrialisation est encore à ses débuts en pays bambara mais la forme d'organisation économique européenne s'est largement répandue là même où les méthodes de travail indigène subsistent avec, comme conséquence, l'individualisme économique.

b) *Développement de la grande exploitation agricole*

L'exploitation agricole elle-même s'est radicalement transformée dans certaines régions. A côté des cultures vivrières, variées suivant les besoins de la communauté et exécutées d'une manière extensive traditionnelle, s'est développée la monoculture intensive des produits d'exploitation : l'arachide, le riz, le coton, etc. grâce aux techniques modernes de l'exploitation agricole : jardins d'essai, centres de recherche scientifique, création de sections pilotes, aménagements scientifiques des plaines. C'est ainsi que sont nées des organisations telles que la C. G. O. T. en Casamance, société à économie mixte au capital initial souscrit par l'État et par des professionnels transformateurs des corps gras. Elle défriche et essouche la grande brousse forestière avec des tracteurs lourds, bull-dozers, treedozers, strumpers, pour cultiver l'arachide, le tournesol, le mil et le coton et tous les trois ans, elle distribue des engrais verts pour reconstituer l'humus du sol. Par ailleurs, elle a créé de véritables villages d'habitation pour ses techniciens et les colons...

D'autres organismes, tel l'Office du Niger, réalisent les aménagements hydrauliques de base du Delta central (barrages, grands canaux). Grâce à la création d'un réseau hydraulique, au défrichement et à l'essouchement des terrains, au développement de l'équipement général (usines de transformations, ateliers, magasins, habitations, réseau routier) on a pu réaliser en fin 1949, 11.000 ha de rizières donnant un rendement de 18 q de paddy et une production commercialisable de 8.000 t de riz décortiqué. Six mille ha ont été aménagés soit pour la culture du coton (2.000 ha) soit en rizières vivrières (1.000 ha) et en jachère (3.000 ha) ; ils permettent d'exporter 360 t de coton fibre. Vingt-deux mille personnes ont été installées en colonisation. Notons enfin que le F. I. D. E. S. par son soutien financier a permis le développement des cultures d'arachide au Sénégal, de riz en Guinée et au Soudan, de karité en Haute-Volta, ainsi que la création de plusieurs écoles techniques.

c) *Conséquences sociales*

Cette évolution technique a de profondes répercussions sur la vie sociale indigène. Nous constatons chez le paysan bambara le même changement que chez l'artisan. La grande famille indivise qui était à la base de la technique agricole tend de plus en plus à se morceler, même dans les régions où la culture continue ses méthodes traditionnelles. Le champ familial, beaucoup moins soigné que par le passé, recule au profit du champ individuel. Bien plus, traditionnellement le champ familial se trouvait à l'extrémité d'une piste bordée de petits champs individuels où chaque paysan venait travailler avant et après le labeur collectif. Actuellement, nous assistons à la création de champs individuels installés en brousse loin de la piste qui mène du village au champ familial, ce qui marque bien le désir de l'individu de se séparer de la grande famille en même temps que d'échapper au contrôle du chef de culture afin de réaliser des bénéfices individuels soustraits à toute vérification de la famille. Enfin le craquement de la cellule familiale se manifeste par le départ croissant des enfants qui préfèrent aller travailler comme ouvriers agricoles loin de leur pays d'origine plutôt que de subir la tutelle du chef de culture.

La transformation économique se poursuit aussi grâce à l'équipement électrique (aménagements de grandes chutes près de Konakry et de Sotuba près de Bamako) et à la création à côté des anciennes voies d'intérêt stratégique de routes et de ponts d'intérêt économique pour faciliter la circulation des arachides, du riz du coton et du mil. Les ports et wharfs sont aménagés, le réseau ferroviaire modernisé (renforcement du matériel, transformation de l'infrastructure, réfection des voies, installation et extension des ateliers, amélioration des dépôts, construction de gares, de buffets, d'hôtels, d'habitations à bon marché pour les employés...) Sur le Niger sont aménagés les ports fluviaux de Koulikoro, Ségou, Mopti, Bamako et Gao, et sur le Sénégal ceux de Kayes et Saint-Louis.

Enfin, l'économie nouvelle s'accompagne de réalisations sociales dans le domaine de la santé, de l'enseignement et de l'urbanisme.

d) *Chambres de Commerce*

Ainsi deux formes d'organisation économique subsistent côte à côte en pays bambara, d'une part l'organisation indigène traditionnelle et artisanale, de l'autre l'organisation européenne qui a fait éclater l'ancienne société et a placé l'économie locale du pays dans le cadre de l'économie internationale.

Mais c'est peut-être dans le domaine commercial que l'influence des méthodes européennes s'est fait le mieux sentir, particulièrement par la création de Chambres de Commerce, d'Agriculture et d'Industrie.

La création des Chambres de Commerce date d'un arrêté du gouverneur général pris en 1906. Les membres sont élus pour quatre ans et rééligibles par un collège comprenant les chefs d'établissements commerciaux métropolitains ou africains. Elles ont pour attribution de donner à l'administration les avis et renseignements qui leur sont demandés sur toutes questions d'ordre économique.

Les Chambres d'Agriculture et d'Industrie ont sensiblement la même organisation que les Chambres de Commerce mais de plus, elles sont appelées par les gouverneurs à grouper et codifier les coutumes et usages locaux à caractère agricole qui servent de base aux décisions judiciaires et à émettre des avis sur le programme des travaux d'amélioration agricole entrepris par l'administration et les sociétés de prévoyance.

Pour le Sénégal, il y a des Chambres de Commerce, d'Agriculture et d'Industrie à Dakar, Saint-Louis, Thiès, Kaolack et Ziguinchor ; pour le Soudan à Bamako, pour la Guinée et la Côte-d'Ivoire, à Konakry et Abidjan.

e) *Réglementation du travail. Syndicats*

L'Afrique occidentale peu peuplée manque de main-d'œuvre. Un décret du 22 octobre 1925 et un arrêté du gouverneur général du 29 mars 1926 fixent les conditions de recrutement des travailleurs et l'établissement des contrats de travail : salaire, pécule, nourriture, logement, soins médicaux... Les contestations individuelles ou collectives entre employeurs et employés sont portées devant les conseils d'arbitrage présidés par les administrateurs assistés d'un employeur français et d'un assesseur autochtone.

Un texte du 2 avril 1932 protège le travail des femmes et des enfants. Un autre du 11 mars 1937 organise les syndicats professionnels, un décret du 20 mars 1937 les associations professionnelles indigènes ; d'autres règlent les conventions collectives du travail. L'Assemblée Nationale a voté le Code du Travail outre-mer qui commence à être appliqué. Le syndicalisme africain s'est beaucoup développé au cours de ces dernières années ; au Soudan on compte 6 syndicats africains. La complexité des problèmes du travail a créé à Dakar une inspection générale de la main-d'œuvre rattachée à la Direction générale des Affaires politiques administratives et sociales.

CHAPITRE VII

ASPECTS CULTURELS

I. — Religion

On ne saurait jamais insister suffisamment sur l'importance de la religion. Elle règle toute la vie sociale, politique, artistique et même économique du pays. Aucune institution ne peut être comprise si on ne connaît pas le système religieux qui l'anime et l'explique. Le Bambara est un être essentiellement religieux ; tous ses actes sont dictés par des devoirs ou des interdits rituels et il ne trouve sa véritable liberté que dans les règles que lui transmet la tradition. Détruire sa religion revient à détruire toute sa structure sociale aussi bien que son âme. Inversement toute transformation des techniques aura de graves répercussions non seulement sur la vie matérielle de l'homme, mais aussi sur sa vie intérieure. En effet la religion est elle-même une partie de tout un système cosmogonique et métaphysique qui explique et ordonne toute chose existante. L'objet le plus simple et le plus pauvre est le reflet de concepts complexes où rien n'est laissé au hasard ou à la fantaisie et nous arrivons à ce paradoxe que le progrès technique et l'enrichissement des formes apportés par la civilisation européenne appauvrissent l'ensemble des représentations métaphysiques, tandis que l'évolution sociale finit par détacher le Bambara de sa religion traditionnelle pour en faire un déraciné qui sera la proie d'idéologies mal comprises, étrangères à sa nature et à son génie.

L. Tauxier (1) reprenant les études de l'abbé Henry et de Ch. Monteil, a tenté de décrire l'ensemble des croyances bambara. Mais à travers son exposé, la religion bambara apparaît comme composée d'éléments disparates et sans liens entre eux. Cette impression est due en grande partie au caractère ésotérique de cette religion qui comprend certes des éléments exotériques accessibles à tous, mais dont les principes fondamentaux demeurent connus seulement des vieillards et des initiés qui répugnent à faire des confidences aux étrangers. L'étude de la religion des Bambara a été entièrement reprise ces dernières années par Mme Dieterlen (2) qui a su approfondir la connaissance superficielle que l'on avait jusqu'alors de ce peuple, pour nous introduire dans un système métaphysique et une organisation rituelle admirables de cohésion. En effet, « la métaphysique et la religion des Bambara offrent un ensemble construit qui englobe toutes les activités sociales, techniques et économiques » (1) de ce peuple. Les mythes sont « une somme de connaissances, une sophie et non une suite de récits étiologiques fixés. On peut dire qu'ils composent une métaphysique comprenant la connaissance des choses de la création, en même temps que celle des principes de leur état et de leur action » (2). Des travaux approfondis sur d'autres peuples soudanais ont révélé que la religion bambara s'inscrit dans un système pansoudanien dont les différences affectent les modes d'expression, mais non l'essence de la pensée.

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(1) L. TAUXIER, *La religion bambara.*
(2) G. DIETERLEN, *Essai sur la religion bambara.*

A) Cosmogonie

Les Bambara conçoivent le monde comme un ensemble de forces agissantes sur lesquelles l'homme a prise. Grâce à certaines techniques dont le sacrifice sanglant constitue le pivot, l'homme a la possibilité d'accumuler ou de libérer ces forces, de les diriger et les orienter, en somme de se mêler au mouvement du monde et de l'aider dans sa connaissance et son accomplissement. Ce rôle principal de l'homme nous est expliqué par l'ordre de la création elle-même, qui commande tous les rites auxquels l'homme est soumis. Les Bambara conçoivent le monde comme issu d'un vide originel doué de mouvement (3) : le *gla*. Ce vide émit une voix qui créa son double, et du couple est sortie une substance humide *zo sumale* (rouille froide) qui formait des corps durs et brillants. Après une suite de mouvements et de transformations, il se produisit entre les deux *gla* une explosion qui éjecta une matière dure et puissante qui descendit en vibrant. De cette vibration sortirent les signes qui allèrent se poser sur les choses encore incréées pour les désigner. Puis, la conscience de l'homme se détacha du *gla* et vint se poser sur les choses et les éveiller à leur propre conscience en les nommant. Au cours de cette création apparaît l'esprit agissant *Yo*, plus 22 éléments fondamentaux, 22 spires qui brassèrent *Yo* et donnèrent naissance au son, à la lumière, à tous les êtres, toutes les actions et tous les sentiments existants. Par la suite, une série de désordres suivis de remises en ordre vinrent troubler la création où l'homme joue un rôle prépondérant.

Deux premières puissances naquirent de l'esprit *Yo* ; l'une *Faro*, maître du Verbe, construisit les sept cieux, qui correspondent aux sept parties de la terre en parcourant un trajet orienté ; il donna naissance à *Teliko*, le génie de l'air, puis, sous la forme d'eau, il répandit la vie sur terre et créa deux jumelles dont naquirent les Bozo, premiers habitants des eaux ; l'autre puissance, *Pemba*, en se déplaçant suivant un mouvement tourbillonnaire aux quatre points cardinaux, créa les mottes et les buttes qui donnent forme à la terre. Après sept ans où il fut tourbillon, *Pemba* se transforma en graine d'*Acacia albida*, se posa sur la terre et germa en un arbre, le balanza, qui devint son avatar terrestre. Puis, avec la poussière de ses traces mêlée à sa salive, il créa une femme, *Musso Koroni*, à laquelle il insuffla une âme, *ni*, et un double, *dya ;* il s'unit à elle et créa les plantes et les animaux.

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(1) G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara*, P. U. F., 1951.
(2) Id., *ibid.*
(3) *Passim*, *Essai sur la religion bambara*.

Les hommes rendaient hommage à *Pemba* et à *Mousso Koroni*, qui, en échange, leur donnaient des directives de vie. Les femmes devaient toutes s'unir à *Pemba ;* c'est pourquoi *Mousso Koroni*, jalouse, commença à troubler la création et à semer le désordre. Elle institua la circoncision et l'excision, et révéla aux hommes tout ce qu'elle avait appris de Pemba. Communiquant l'impureté à tout ce qu'elle touchait, elle introduisit dans le monde le mal, la douleur et la mort. *Pemba* la pourchassa, *Faro* l'atteignit, mais il ne put la soumettre. Finalement, elle mourut, mais avant de disparaître, elle révéla les techniques agricoles aux hommes.

Pemba, en plus de l'amour des femmes, réclama le sang des hommes, d'où il puisait sa puissance ; en échange, il les rajeunissait lorsqu'ils devenaient vieux et leur enseignait les techniques du feu. Mais il abusa de son pouvoir et épuisa les hommes, ce qui causa sa perte. En effet, les hommes se détournèrent du Balanza pour s'adonner au culte de *Faro*. Celui-ci féconda les femmes qui enfantèrent des jumeaux aux membres souples. Mais les hommes rompirent un interdit à l'égard de *Pemba*, et la mort apparut et se propagea parmi eux. Pour compenser ce malheur, *Faro* leur enseigna la parole. Puis, le génie de l'air, *Teliko*, tenta de s'emparer du pouvoir ; les hommes abandonnèrent *Faro* pour le suivre. *Faro* le vainquit et punit les hommes en leur attribuant les articulations propres au travail manuel, auquel tous furent contraints. Les naissances devinrent uniques, mais en compensation, chaque être fut muni d'un double, *dya*, qui siège dans l'eau.

Après ces désordres successifs, dont chacun fut cependant suivi par l'acquisition d'une connaissance nouvelle ou d'une nouvelle technique, *Faro* reprit la création et réorganisa l'univers par un voyage aux confins du monde. Il établit le régime des pluies, classa les êtres vivants suivant des séries ayant chacune une tête de liste ; les hommes furent ainsi nommés, classés par races et par castes en commençant par les esclaves. Il leur donna les huit grains de céréales qui demeurent la base des subsistances qui sont en permanence dans leurs clavicules. Enfin, il contrôle toutes les existences et les actes des êtres placés sous sa domination.

L'ordre actuel n'est qu'une phase dans l'espace et le temps. Douze eaux restent cachées ; elles devront, sur l'ordre de *Faro*, surgir et se répandre dans le monde. Elles feront connaître les paroles à venir, et le monde pensé par *Yo* sera réalisé.

Toute cette mythologie est actuellement représentée par un matériel nombreux servant de points d'appui aux différents rituels qui règlent la vie des hommes.

Pemba est représenté chez les chefs religieux et les chefs de famille par un billot nommé *Pembele*, image du madrier initial (1). Sur une cavité centrale symbolisant la tombe, sont gravés trois fois vingt-deux traits représentant *Pemba* créateur, la transmission de son verbe et de son pouvoir à *Faro* et le témoignage de la prescience qu'il avait de toutes choses, etc. Le Pembele est un autel garant de la prospérité et de la vie du groupe.

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(1) Voir S. de Ganay, *Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara.*

Si le Balanza n'est plus l'objet du culte, les Bambara conservent à son égard une attitude particulière, qui rappelle son ancien rôle. *Mousso Koroni* est la terre impure et inculte ; les travaux agricoles qu'elle a enseignés sont une réparation partielle des désordres qu'elle a créés. Ils blessent et purifient la terre en même temps, ils sont le travail le plus noble auquel doit se soumettre tout Bambara de race. *Faro* est représenté par une spirale, *munu* ; les mouvements vibratoires de la spirale sont les mêmes qui animent le mouvement diurne du soleil. Ils sont matérialisés par un couvre-chef de vannerie, *yugu*, à huit spires anciennement réservé aux rois. Le visage de *Faro* est blanc, car il l'a pris au génie de l'air *Teliko*, qui était albinos. Ses oreilles sont abritées par deux nageoires ; ses mains sont de sexe différent, sa queue est palmée et sa poitrine est de cuivre. L'albinos et le cuivre sont les sacrifices de choix du génie. Toutes les manifestations atmosphériques signalent sa présence ; son siège principal est le Niger, mais il a le don d'ubiquité et il hante toutes les eaux. *Faro* est accompagné d'auxiliaires dont le plus représentatif est le *bolokuruni*, forgeron manchot de race noire. Sa messagère aérienne est l'hirondelle qui transporte la parole fécondante. Certaines plantes sont en rapport permanent avec lui, le *Yayalẽ*, le *Ngoyõ* (tomate), qui est assimilé au sang. On cultive ainsi dans chaque village de petits champs de tomates réservés au culte de *Faro*. Tous les métaux sont réservés à *Faro*. Les Bozos, nés des premières jumelles de *Faro*, jouissent d'une situation privilégiée, car ils n'ont pas connu la souillure infligée par *Mousso Koroni* et ils peuvent entrer en communication directe avec le génie. De plus, ils sont les maîtres de l'eau.

Le culte de *Faro* suppose toute une série d'interdits, tels que la terre noire du fleuve, qui ne peut être utilisée par les potiers, le beurre qui ne saurait être conservé dans l'eau. Mais l'interdit principal est le sang des menstrues provoquées originellement par les désordres de *Mousso Koroni*.

B) Conception de l'homme

Les Bambara conçoivent l'homme comme un microcosme, résumé de la totalité des êtres et des choses. Le principe de dualité qui est contenu dans la pensée créatrice originelle se réalise en lui par ses âmes jumelles qui compensent la séparation des sexes. En lui, Faro est représenté par le *ni* (l'âme) et le *dya* (le double), Pemba par le *léré* (le caractère, la force et la conscience) et le *nyama* (qui est le Téré lorsqu'il quitte son support matériel après la mort), Mousso Koroni par le *Wanzo* (force néfaste qui siège dans le prépuce et le clitoris, nécessitant la circoncision et l'excision). Le corps est conçu comme étant le support de toutes les forces spirituelles ; chaque partie est connue distinctement dans son rôle particulier. Il est bisexuel comme les principes spirituels ; le garçon est féminin dans son prépuce, et la fille mâle dans son clitoris, et ce n'est qu'après la circoncision et l'excision que l'homme et la femme peuvent s'unir et réaliser la gémelléité originelle fécondante. Sur le plan métaphysique, il y a identité entre l'homme, « grain du monde », et la graine de céréale, et les nourritures de base constituées par les huit céréales principales sont représentées symboliquement dans les clavicules. Enfin, la mort dissocie tous ces éléments composant la personne. Le *dya* reste dans l'eau où il deviendra le *ni* du nouveau-né de la famille du mort ; le *ni* est capté par le chef de famille et transporté sur l'autel d'où il viendra animer le *dya* du nouveau-né ; le *tere* devient *nyama* force dangereuse et vengeresse ; il est déposé sur le *pembele*, où il rejoint les forces ancestrales. Le corps est enterré et appartient aux termites. A la naissance, toutes les forces spirituelles sont retransmises intégralement et « rafraîchies », purifiées. Un être en remplace un autre jusqu'à la résurrection finale.

C) Le rituel, le sacrifice et les cultes

Pour faire appel aux forces spirituelles et les promouvoir, le Bambara utilise la prière, l'offrande, le sacrifice. Des rites oraux sont exécutés en tous lieux et en tous temps. « Ils prient le ciel, les points cardinaux, les génies ; ils sacrifient sur les pierres, la terre, les arbres, les points d'eau, comme sur les autels abrités dans les sanctuaires ou situés dans les lieux publics ou privés. Tout adulte circoncis, père de famille, propriétaire d'une demeure et d'une terre cultivable, est sacrificateur, qualité soulignée par la tache rouge qui orne parfois les murs de la pièce principale de sa résidence (1). »

Le sacrifice sanglant forme l'armature des rites. Son mécanisme a été décrit par M. Griaule (2). Les Bambara possèdent trois catégories d'autels : les souches de bois dites *pembele*, les autels faits de pierres grossièrement taillées, qui représentent généralement les ancêtres ; les Nyama ou bolis, objets fabriqués représentant les parties de l'univers.

Les cultes peuvent être individuels et familiaux ou généraux pour tout le village, tel le *dasiri* et le *dangu*. Ils sont organisés par des sociétés religieuses, les Dyo, qui ont pour but de conserver les forces spirituelles de leurs membres. Pour les hommes. ce sont le Komo (principalement) le Kworé, le Nama, le Kono, le Nago, le Nya. Les femmes sont aussi groupées en Dyo, encore mal connus ; tandis que les non-circoncis font partie du N'Domo.

Le Komo est une société hiérarchisée comprenant des obligations et des interdits tels que l'initiation pour les futurs dignitaires de la société politique et religieuse, l'étude des traditions et pratiques du culte, la science des formules magiques et religieuses, la fabrication et la consécration des protecteurs (boli-w, dyo-w...), la connaissance des poisons et des antidotes, les procédés de lutte contre les ennemis et les sorciers.

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(1) G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara.*

(2) M. Griaule, Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice Dogon (Soudan français). Extrait du *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, t. X, 1940.

Son autorité morale est très étendue et nous verrons le rôle qu'il joue dans la justice et les affaires publiques. Le Komo comprend des cérémonies obligatoires saisonnières, telles que la fête du nettoyage du bois sacré par les *tinlo-w* (initiés les plus récents) ; la fête de la sortie des *komo-sen-w* du ruisseau ; celle de la pêche du ruisseau et de la chasse sur les rives à la fin de la saison sèche ; enfin celle de la remise solennelle des komo-sen-w dans le ruisseau. D'autre part tous les sept ans, une grande fête en avril-mai dure pendant quinze jours, avec un sacrifice à la *komo-ba* ; la cérémonie se termine par la nomination d'un nouveau *komo-tigi* (chef du Komo), qui exercera son sacerdoce pendant sept ans. Il doit mourir à la fin de cette période ; son corps ne sera pas enterré, il sera enlevé par les affiliés du komo qui le transportent à un carrefour, et le pilent à l'aide des *komo-se-w*. Les restes seront cachés dans un endroit secret. Le même traitement sera infligé au *komo-tigi* qui meurt pendant son septennat.

Le culte est cantonal, les divers *komo-tigi* prennent leurs ordres auprès de leurs collègues du chef lieu. Il était autrefois interclanique et intertribal. Labouret *(Les Mandingues et leur langue)* a dressé le tableau des sept catégories de personnes qui constituent la société hiérarchisée des initiés.

Après l'initiation au culte du komo, suite naturelle à la circoncision, le jeune homme peut suivant son désir, être initié à d'autres cultes. Il entre alors dans une puissante famille spirituelle unissant tous ses membres par des liens de fraternité. Cette confrérie se superpose à la hiérarchie sociale normale de la fã-tõ. Le chef de la confrérie s'intitule : nyama-tigi ; c'est généralement un homme de caste ou un esclave. Il acquiert sa qualité de chef, soit par héritage, soit par élection, soit en fondant un culte nouveau. Pour cela il doit acheter un autel *(gna)* au village ou à la confrérie qui possède déjà ce culte. Un tel achat est considéré comme un mariage avec le *gna* et s'accompagne de beuveries. Les initiés supérieurs (dyenfaw = Maîtres de la vérité) sont les auxiliaires du nyama-tigi et participent à l'oracle : *wara-da*. Tous les initiés sont plus ou moins devins. Le clergé comprend en outre un sacrificateur : *muru-kala-tigi* et un *dyeli*, le héraut du dieu. Pour devenir fidèle, il faut payer un droit d'entrée et prêter serment de discrétion, d'obéissance et de solidarité. Le clergé administre le trésor du culte qui provient des droits d'entrée à la confrérie, des droits perçus lors d'une promotion, des contributions imposées pour les grandes cérémonies et des amendes infligées aux fidèles.

La confrérie est une famille spirituelle qui s'organise comme la communauté à filiation naturelle. Le *nyama-tigi* y joue le rôle du *fa*, les *dyen-fa-w* et les fidèles notoires forment une sorte de conseil apte à régler avec le chef toutes les questions. Le culte chôme le lundi et le jeudi comme le travail.

Une discipline intérieure stricte règle la conduite des fidèles ; elle est fondée sur la discrétion, l'obéissance et la célérité. L'inculpé confesse ses fautes sous l'effet du serment, de la torture ou de la divination et les peines sont déterminées d'après l'intérêt que la cause présente pour le clergé. Ces peines sont d'ordre corporel (flagellation, mise aux fers, privation d'aliments, mise à mort), ou pécuniaire (amendes, confiscation) ; elles peuvent comporter des travaux forcés au profit du clergé. Nous verrons plus loin le rôle social et politique que jouent ces confréries dans la vie bambara.

La société du Kworé exécute les rites concernant le ciel, l'espace, les points cardinaux, les manifestations atmosphériques de *Faro*, notamment la pluie. Les cérémonies ont généralement lieu autour d'un arbre : le *kworé-jigi*, situé à l'est du village. Les autels sont placés soit en brousse, soit dans la maison du chef ou à proximité du village. La société possède un champ de petit mil réservé aux besoins du culte

Le *n'Domo* réunit tous les non circoncis. A sa tête est le chef, assisté d'un sacrificateur : *murukala-ligi*, et d'un maître de cérémonies : *dyolokoligi*. La société est divisée en cinq grades correspondants aux cinq autels fondamentaux ; l'initié progresse chaque année d'une promotion. La société possède un masque, un fouet, et cinq instruments de musique. Une cérémonie annuelle a lieu après la récolte et comprend un sacrifice sanglant, une lutte rituelle suivie d'une nouvelle initiation. La société possède aussi un champ rituel cultivé par ses membres.

La confrérie du Nama (Nama = hyène en Mandé) joue un rôle important dans la région de Ségou. Nama est le dieu de l'incomplétude, le dieu unique, dont les cérémonies annuelles des semailles et des moissons réunissent hommes et femmes.

Il faut citer aussi la société du *Kono* dont la case est située au centre du village, celle du *Dyo*, vieille divinité, du Nia ou Gnâ, du Wara et du Duga.

A toutes ces sociétés qui ont été décrites par Tauxier, Monteil, G. Dieterlen, etc., il faut ajouter les sociétés des femmes encore mal connues, mais très puissantes et particulièrement redoutées des hommes. Les principaux dyo féminins de la région de Bamako sont : le Niagua, le Kulukutu et le Jide qui réunit ses initiées le lundi et le vendredi.

D) LES RELIGIONS NOUVELLES : ISLAM ET CHRISTIANISME

A côté de cette religion ancestrale, les Bambara ont subi des religions d'importation : l'Islam et le Christianisme. Les Bambara résistèrent longtemps aux poussées de l'Islam venues du Sahara et la cruelle domination toucouleur dura trop peu pour transformer une religion solidement organisée. Mais ce que n'a pu faire la conquête d'El-Hadj-Omar, l'évolution sociale provoquée historiquement par la conquête française l'a réalisé. En effet, la rupture des structures sociales traditionnelles s'est accompagnée d'un relâchement de l'autorité religieuse contrebalancée par l'autorité politique et administrative française. D'autre part l'éducation européenne cherche à remplacer l'initiation que recevait tout enfant et le détourne des connaissances traditionnelles. Or, cette ignorance et cette perte de l'autorité religieuse sont particulièrement profitables à la diffusion de l'Islam, dont on connaît la puissance de propagande. Cette diffusion semble encore facilitée par le développement des voies de communication qui, d'une part, éloignent les jeunes gens de l'autorité familiale traditionnelle, et de l'autre intensifient le mouvement des commerçants dioula et syriens. Tous ces Musulmans vivent en contact étroit avec la population et répandent dans tout le pays aussi bien leurs croyances que leurs marchandises. Si l'Islam est en progression constante, il n'en demeure pas moins superficiel et fort peu orthodoxe. Très souvent il n'affecte que les formes extérieures du rituel tandis que les vieilles croyances demeurent et même les sacrifices traditionnels. Par ailleurs, un certain nombre de sectes ayant chacune à leur tête un marabout divisent encore le pays ; mais par des tentatives sans cesse renouvelées, l'Istiklal cherche au moyen d'écoles coraniques dirigées par des Musulmans égyptiens, à unifier ce mouvement autant politique que religieux.

Beaucoup moins important est le mouvement chrétien. Au Soudan, il est essentiellement catholique ; des missions se créent en brousse et dans certains centres, mais elles demeurent peu nombreuses et dispersées. Pourtant, la création d'un clergé noir permet des contacts plus faciles avec la population. Les principaux centres de culte catholique au Soudan sont à Bamako, résidence du vicaire apostolique, à Kati, à Ouolosebougou (cercle de Bamako), à Béléko (subdivision de Diaila), à Gualala (cercle de Yanfolila), à Kayes, préfecture apostolique avec deux églises, et à Kakoulou (cercle de Kayes), à Kita (pères blancs et sœurs N.-D. d'Afrique), à Karangasso (cercle de Koutiala), à Mandjakuy (cercle de San) ; à Ségou, à Kolongotomo (subdivision de Macina), à Sikasso (préfecture apostolique). En Guinée, un centre catholique à Siguiri. En Haute-Volta à Niangoloko (cercle de Banfora), à Ouahigouya et Bam : sœurs noires (cercle de Ouahigouya). Enfin en Côte-d'Ivoire à Gorhogo.

Les missions protestantes sont encore moins nombreuses ; elles sont généralement américaines ; les efforts qu'elles ont fait pour se développer sont loin d'avoir été couronnés de succès. Nous indiquerons cependant les centres culturels de Bamako avec deux écoles protestantes, le centre de Sirakoro (cercle de Yanfolila), de Baramba et de Somasso (cercle de Koutiala), comprenant deux missions ; de N'Torosso (cercle de San), de Sikasso. En Haute-Volta, à Siniena (cercle de Banfora) et à Ouahigouya. Enfin en Côte-d'Ivoire à Torogo (cercle de Korhogo).

II. — Techniques

Il est impossible de donner un tableau complet de toutes les techniques bambara : toutes sont loin d'être connues ; des enquêtes se poursuivent sur le terrain, mais déjà elles laissent comprendre qu'aucun objet, dans sa forme ou sa matière, aucun geste des actions coutumières n'est dû à la fantaisie de son auteur ; au contraire le matériel aussi bien que les mouvements s'intègrent dans un système de représentations que le Bambara peut expliquer. Les principales de ces techniques ont été analysées et expliquées, mais beaucoup ont été décrites d'une manière très extérieure.

A) TECHNIQUES DU CORPS

Les Bambara pensent que la fécondation est due à l'œuvre de *Faro*. Cette fonction créatrice est matérialisée par l'absorption d'une tomate par chacun des époux avant leurs rapports sexuels qui doivent être répétés deux fois. C'est par cette tomate consacrée que *Faro* transmet la vie qu'il conserve dans l'eau. Le rôle du père consiste à donner au nouveau-né ses articulations qui le rendent apte au travail. Il transforme le germe céleste en germe terrestre.

Avant d'accoucher on conseille à la femme de piler le grain. Lorsque les douleurs surviennent la femme se retire dans sa case avec quelques matrones (les hommes n'y ont pas accès). Si l'enfant se présente mal, on appelle le prêtre qui opère à l'extérieur en simulant l'accouchement ; il psalmodie les formules qui facilitent le travail. Pour l'expulsion de l'enfant, la femme est agenouillée les mains rejetées en arrière, tandis que la sage-femme lui soutient les reins. En naissant l'enfant doit toucher le sol avec les épaules ; c'est à ce moment qu'il reçoit ses principes spirituels. L'enfant est lavé plusieurs fois et enduit de beurre de karité.

Les huit premiers jours qui suivent la naissance, la mère ne doit pas sortir ; elle doit se consacrer entièrement au nouveau-né. Quotidiennement elle lui masse le crâne pour lui donner une forme plus arrondie et lui pince le nez. L'allaitement a lieu pendant les deux premières années, puis l'enfant sevré passe directement à la calebasse commune. Jusqu'à ce qu'il sache marcher sa mère le porte à califourchon sur son dos en le retenant à l'aide d'un pagne noué sur sa poitrine. C'est ainsi que l'enfant suit sa mère dans tous ses déplacements, au travail comme à la danse. C'est pendant ces contacts intimes que la mère apprend à parler à son enfant. Plus tard, la petite fille demeure auprès de sa mère qui lui enseignera tous les travaux domestiques, tandis que les garçons seront éduqués aux travaux extérieurs. Pendant l'enfance on leur enseigne tous les usages et les règles de maintien : une femme sait qu'elle ne doit jamais serrer la main à un homme pour le saluer et s'il lui tend la sienne elle rejettera son bras en l'air « en signe de désintéressement ». Un homme saluera son supérieur en tendant la main, la paume tournée vers le haut et le supérieur mettra la sienne dessus ; inversement, lorsqu'il salue un inférieur il tend la main la paume tournée vers le bas tandis que pour un égal sa main sera perpendiculaire au sol. S'il doit demander pardon il mettra ses mains derrière le dos pour simuler la queue d'un animal (car il a agi comme une bête). Croiser les mains devant ou sur la tête est un signe de tristesse. Pour marquer sa soumission à un roi on met le coude droit à terre ; pour prier Dieu on tend les deux mains, les paumes tournées vers le dehors. Une femme apprend qu'il est effronté d'interpeller son mari pendant la journée et en parlant de lui, elle dira *koke*, c'est-à-dire grand frère, car elle ne peut prononcer son nom ni rappeler en rien les liens qui existent entre eux. Ce n'est que pendant les deux nuits consécutives où elle s'unit à lui qu'elle peut lui parler librement. Lorsqu'arrive le jour de l'union, la femme prépare elle-même la nourriture de son mari ; puis elle s'étend sur le côté gauche (celui de la féminité), son mari sur le côté droit et elle ne peut être fécondée que par une union répétée deux fois.

Ces techniques corporelles qui sont dictées et ordonnées par des impératifs religieux imprègnent la vie du Bambara dès avant sa naissance et jusqu'après sa mort.

Ce que nous avons dit de la religion et de la conception du monde des Bambara fait comprendre comment il ne peut pas y avoir une coupure complète entre la vie et la mort : la naissance est une réincarnation, la mort n'est pas une destruction. C'est pourquoi la vie de l'homme ne présente pas une unité substantielle, mais se divise en un certain nombre de périodes distinctes : chacune d'entres elle est inaugurée par un rite de passage qui marque la mort d'un état antérieur et la renaissance à une vie nouvelle.

a) *Avant la naissance*

Dès le premier mois de la conception, l'enfant constitue une personne qui reçoit une série de forces spirituelles émanant du côté paternel et en premier lieu de l'ascendant récemment décédé dont il recevra le nom ; en même temps il hérite de tous les interdits paternels que la mère devra respecter pendant sa grossesse. C'est après sa naissance seulement, lors de l'imposition du nom, qu'il reçoit les forces spirituelles émanant du côté maternel. Elles lui sont transmises par l'intermédiaire du prêtre et des ancêtres du prêtre.

L'enfant dès lors est tenu d'observer tous les interdits des êtres qui l'ont aidé à composer sa personnalité ; ainsi se trouve-t-il étroitement lié à la société dans laquelle il vivra.

b) *Rites de naissance*

A la naissance le bébé est lavé avec de la bière de mil (1) (pour le purifier) additionnée d'eau (pour rappeler la victoire de *Faro* sur *Mousso Koroni*). Le patriarche secoue 3 ou 4 fois sur la tête de l'enfant le pembélé familial, pour lui donner le nyama du mort, dont il a hérité le ni et le dya. Puis il pose 3 fois l'autel *(kere la boli ni)* sur la poitrine de l'enfant après avoir récité une prière. Il égorge un coq rouge, trempe l'index dans le sang et trace 3 ou 4 croix sur le front du nouveau-né qui devient *boli din*. Le nom est donné le 8ᵉ jour par le chef du Komo sous le doubalé où se réunissent les vieux ; le père offre 100 noix de kola, 2 jarres de bière de mil, plus un bélier qu'on égorge et de l'argent pour les griots. Une partie des cheveux du bébé est rasée et conservée dans un étui *(sebe)*, une autre est jetée au fleuve en sacrifice à *Faro* ; le plus âgé des vieillards examine la naissance des cheveux de l'enfant et la conjonction des sourcils et détermine ainsi son caractère *(lere)*, puis il balance 7 fois le bébé suivant la direction E.-W. et 8 fois N.-S. en lui donnant le prénom qu'il a hérité de l'ancêtre mort, en même temps que ses principes spirituels. Les griots récitent les devises du père, les *sénanku* viennent plaisanter le bébé et le forgeron trace les scarifications.

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(1) Pour tous ces rites, voir G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara.*

Les jumeaux. — Nous avons vu la croyance suivant laquelle à l'origine toute naissance était gémellaire, et comment par la suite *Faro* punit l'homme en supprimant la double naissance qu'il n'accorde plus qu'à certains privilégiés. Pour les Bambara, les jumeaux sont des êtres neufs qui n'héritent ni du ni, ni du dya d'aucun ancêtre. Des rites particuliers entourent leur naissance qui est annoncée en montrant l'index droit et l'index gauche dressés, sans rien dire, car la proclamation serait si puissante qu'elle nuirait aux nouveau-nés (voir G. Dieterlen : *Essai sur la religion bambara*). Le rite de la dation du nom est exécuté au bord du fleuve. Le jour suivant, la mère accompagnée d'une autre femme va quêter du mil et du coton, qu'elle recueille dans deux cuillers calebasses identiques. Des dons égaux sont déposés dans les cuillers que la mère présente en croisant les mains. Plus tard on met aux jumeaux des bracelets de métal représentant leur *dya* et dans certaines régions, un pendentif en forme de fer d'esclave double. Les jumeaux ne se quittent plus, ils portent des habits identiques ; si l'un meurt en bas âge, la mère place sur la natte à côté de l'enfant vivant une petite poupée fabriquée par le forgeron. La poupée reçoit le nom du défunt, l'enfant la porte avec lui à la circoncision et lorsqu'il se marie, il l'enterre avec un morceau de bois figurant la femme du défunt.

Les jumeaux sont la réplique de *Faro*, leur présence est bénéfique et ils sont considérés comme invulnérables.

L'albinos, est censé naître de rapports sexuels ayant lieu à la lumière du soleil, ce qui est une rupture d'interdit ; il est également un être nouveau ; son *wanzo* est si actif que le circonciseur doit s'entourer de grandes précautions avant de l'opérer.

Il est considéré comme doué de pouvoirs spéciaux qui en font une victime de choix pour les sacrifices offerts à l'esprit de l'eau.

Pour les enfants des forgerons, le nom est donné près de la forge paternelle en présence de tous les artisans. Un vieillard prépare 7 bâtonnets auxquels il donne un nom d'ancêtre, trois d'entre eux sont tirés au sort, et c'est le troisième qui donne le nom au bébé. On frotte la tête de celui-ci avec la hache Kongobwona et ses cheveux rasés sont imbibés de sang sacrificiel.

Dans la région de Bamako, pour fêter la dation du nom, on sacrifie deux poulets ou un mouton. La répartition des viandes se fait suivant un usage fixe. Si c'est un poulet, le patriarche reçoit la tête et le gésier, tandis que l'aile et le blanc vont à la vieille femme qui pendant les huit premiers jours a lavé le bébé. Si c'est un mouton, le patriarche reçoit les côtes (parce qu'elles sont un rempart et que le patriarche est le défenseur du village) et le cœur ; le forgeron reçoit l'épaule, la famille de l'enfant, la tête (pour que l'enfant aille de l'avant), le dos (symbole de prospérité) et les membres (appuis que l'on souhaite au nouveau-né) ; le sang qui coule sur le sol est destiné aux ancêtres protecteurs de l'enfant. Ensuite, la famille partage la viande crue avec les chefs de famille et la vieille femme reçoit ainsi sa part indirectement.

c) *Circoncision*

Un enfant mâle est né, mais il conserve encore (en raison de la gémelléité primordiale) le support physique de sexe féminin qu'est le prépuce. Il n'en sera libéré que par la circoncision. C'est cette opération qui détermine définitivement sa qualification sexuelle et le rend apte à contracter mariage.

La société du *n'Domo* a pour tâche de préparer les enfants à la circoncision : c'est dans le masque du *n'Domo* que va le *wanzo* de l'enfant libéré par l'opération.

Autrefois la circoncision se pratiquait entre 18 et 20 ans et le circoncis devait l'année suivante porter les armes. Actuellement les enfants sont circoncis entre 8 et 16 ans, mais tous ceux d'une même promotion sont considérés comme appartenant à une même classe d'âge et seront *flani* (jumeaux) toute leur vie.

Le rituel de la circoncision a été maintes fois décrit, en particulier par Tauxier et G. Dieterlen. Nous n'en rapporterons donc que les phases essentielles.

La cérémonie a lieu pendant la période sèche, les années fastes, après la récolte ; on guette l'apparition à un certain point du ciel de la constellation « Sigi-lolo » et lorsqu'elle est parfaitement brillante, on fixe la date. L'opération peut n'avoir lieu que tous les trois ans.

Les parents préparent la cérémonie longtemps à l'avance : ils confectionnent pour l'enfant un bonnet de tissu blanc qu'ils présentent au Niger et exécutent avec la terre du fleuve les signes représentant la personne de l'enfant. Quelques jours avant l'opération l'enfant entre dans une période de retraite ; il est placé sous la protection de la lumière purificatrice de *Faro* et reçoit des cadeaux (cauris, nourriture...).

Le jour venu, on lui rase les cheveux, sa mère lui lave la verge avec une eau où a séjourné une hache de fer, puis lui fait manger un plat de riz.

Le forgeron prépare son couteau *(boloko kumba moru)* enfermé dans un étui de fer : ce couteau représente le circoncis et le prépuce qu'on va lui retirer. Le prêtre lave le manche et symboliquement le pénis, puis il trace sur la lame avec le charbon ou la bouillie de mil des dessins rituels symbolisant les trois premiers circoncis, les quatre premières femmes excisées et l'oiseau avatar des huit ancêtres forgerons. Ensuite il lie le prépuce par une cordelette (dessinée au milieu de la lame) et le place sur le pembelé ; le couteau tranchant est frappé par une petite masse de bois ; le forgeron trace ensuite les scarifications sur la verge. Les circoncis saignent en rond sur le sol, dans un trou individuel creusé entre leurs jambes ; ils rendent ainsi le *wanzo* à la terre impure, tandis que le circonciseur récite les prières. Puis avec de la terre sanglante, il applique un pansement sur la plaie et le sexe est maintenu par une tige de mil fendue. On enterre les prépuces et on coiffe les circoncis de leur bonnet blanc. Le lieu de l'opération est interdit aux femmes et aux incirconcis qui pourraient prendre le *wanzo* libéré.

Dans la région de Bamako, le sang des aînés est recueilli dans deux calebasses neuves que l'on casse ensuite et dont les morceaux serviront à la confection des sistres *sinzin*.

Après la cérémonie, les enfants suivent une retraite de trois mois sous la direction d'un prêtre du Komo ; pendant cette période où ils reçoivent une éducation religieuse et technique ils ne rentrent au village que pour y coucher dans une maison particulière et pour refaire la toiture des cases de leurs instructeurs.

La nuit précédant le 6ᵉ jour après l'opération, ils sont initiés au Komo. Le lendemain ils sont conduits au fleuve où ils lavent leur plaie ; les repas sont pris en commun, suivis de chants et de danses jusqu'à la guérison. Le dernier jour, les sistres, les bâtons, les nattes et tout ce qui a été en contact avec le circoncis est mis en tas et brûlé. Chaque enfant saute trois fois par-dessus le feu et court chez lui sans se retourner pour perdre définitivement son *wanzo*. Dans la région de Bamako les sistres sont conservés dans la case du chef de village et serviront aux enfants les années suivantes. Le bonnet est remis à la mère et sera conservé jusqu'à la mort. Le lendemain, l'enfant revêt ses habits neufs.

Notons que pour la circoncision des jumeaux toutes les offrandes pour la cérémonie et les sacrifices doivent être doublées et chaque enfant possédera deux sistres. Enfin les albinos sont aujourd'hui envoyés au dispensaire, car les forgerons redoutent de les opérer, leur *wanzo* étant particulièrement dangereux.

La circoncision peut avoir lieu à titre posthume ; le circonciseur coupe alors l'oreille gauche du cadavre, car le *wanzo* libéré par la mort serait dangereux pour les vivants.

Généralement dans l'année qui suit la circoncision a lieu une sorte de cérémonie de confirmation d'appartenance au Komo.

d) *Excision*

L'excision des filles a un sens équivalent à celui de la circoncision des garçons. Elle les libère du support physique mâle résidant dans le clitoris. L'opération a lieu d'ailleurs à la même époque que la circoncision. Elle est exécutée par la potière, femme du forgeron, en plein jour, devant la parenté réunie. Pendant la retraite les jeunes filles portent un voile blanc qui joue le même rôle que le bonnet des circoncis. Au lieu de sistre elles agitent une gourde qui contient huit grains de mil et des fibres de coton que leur ont offert leur fiancé. Pour la cérémonie on sacrifie une chèvre. Le sang recueilli est donné au fiancé en hommage à ses ancêtres qui deviendront ceux de la jeune fille.

Le dernier jour de la cérémonie les jeunes filles se débarrassent définitivement de leur *wanzo* en sautant par-dessus un bûcher composé des vêtements et des détritus des excisées.

e) *Mariage*

Ce n'est qu'après avoir été circoncis ou excisés que les jeunes gens peuvent se marier. L'institution du mariage est réglée suivant un rituel qui a été souvent décrit, particulièrement par Amar, Monteil, Tauxier, Aubert...

Les accordailles sont faites par le *fa* respectif des deux fiancés, après que ceux-ci aient été consultés. La demande est faite officiellement aux parents par un intermédiaire, un homme de caste ou un *sénanku*. Elle s'accompagne de cadeaux rituels offerts au fa de la jeune fille. Dans la région de Bougouni, la demande s'accompagne de 10 noix de cola, car 10 est un chiffre complet qui désigne les bons événements et les naissances futures. (On offre 9 noix de cola pour présenter des condoléances, 4 noix en signe de salutation ; envoyer 3 noix serait injurieux, et 19 noix marquant l'incomplétude serait une marque de manque de confiance.) Les premières noix de cola sont toujours offertes enveloppées dans une ou deux feuilles de karité, symbole de vie et de fécondité. Si les 10 noix de cola sont acceptées, cela signifie que le père a ouvert la route du mariage ; alors l'intermédiaire fait un second voyage la semaine suivante en apportant un coq pour sacrifier aux ancêtres et 10 autres noix de cola ; au cours d'un 3ᵉ voyage, il offre un autre coq et 10 autres noix de cola devant toute la famille de la jeune fille réunie, témoignant que la jeune fille peut rencontrer son fiancé. C'est au cours du 4ᵉ voyage que l'intermédiaire emmène la jeune fille dans la famille du fiancé, où elle sera confiée à la femme du chef de famille qui aura soin de son éducation.

Tous les ans elle retourne dans sa famille au commencement de l'hivernage et revient dans sa future belle-famille au début de la saison sèche.

Tous les ans elle emporte chez elle 30 noix de cola et 3 coqs et le *fa* du jeune homme commence à payer la dot qui s'élevait traditionnellement à 8 bœufs et 5 moutons. La jeune fille revient à la saison sèche en apportant du fonio, des fruits de karité, de sumbalé (pour la confection des sauces) et autres produits.

Dès l'apparition des premières règles elle est mariée et son mari continue à payer la dot dans l'ordre suivant : une vache, un taureau, une génisse...

Pendant toute la durée des fiançailles, le jeune homme doit cultiver le champ de ses futurs beaux-parents.

Chez les Bambara où l'on pratique actuellement le mariage par échange de jeunes filles entre deux familles, la compensation n'est plus payée, mais les cadeaux et les prestations demeurent.

Le jour du mariage la jeune fille est accompagnée d'une suivante qui représente sa jumelle, tandis que le jeune homme est assisté d'un suivant et les deux couples symbolisent l'union des deux couples de jumeaux primordiaux. Enfin la jeune fille est portée jusqu'à la demeure que lui a construite son mari ; elle est suivie d'un cortège de 7 femmes portant chacune une charge des cadeaux de la mariée. L'enquête que poursuit Mme Dieterlen en pays bambara, laisse entrevoir que les 7 femmes représentent les 7 graines que chaque homme possède dans les clavicules ; la mariée est la graine de fonio que l'on apporte au village du mari, car le mariage est considéré comme étant une culture.

Le mariage des jumeaux comporte des rites légèrement différents. Lorsque les jumeaux ne sont pas du même sexe, le garçon doit déflorer la jeune fille avant qu'elle ne se marie (il n'y a qu'un seul rapport) ; si ce sont deux garçons, le premier qui se marie doit laisser sa femme avoir des rapports avec son jumeau ; si ce sont deux filles, le mari de la première épousée doit aussi s'unir à la seconde.

f) *Mort et funérailles*

La mort dissocie les différents éléments qui composent la personne. Les rites funéraires ont pour but de recueillir sur des autels ou des masques les principes spirituels du cadavre afin de les conserver à la communauté.

Les rites ont évolué. Autrefois, les corps étaient suspendus aux arbres jusqu'à ce qu'ils pourrissent, tandis que les os étaient conservés. Actuellement on enterre le cadavre. Seule une bande de coton symbolisant la langue du mort, c'est-à-dire sa parole est accrochée, à la branche d'un arbre. Si le mort est un initié du Komo, la société joue un rôle important dans les rites funéraires.

Tous ces rites ont été étudiés par G. Dieterlen, et Tauxier. Monteil a longuement décrit la cérémonie des funérailles d'un chef ; les trois coups de fusil rappelant ses combats, les lamentations des femmes, les faire-part aux notables du village, les offrandes des parents et amis, les aumônes à la croisée des chemins, enfin l'inhumation : le corps est préparé, la tête rasée, l'intérieur nettoyé avec l'eau et le sel ; par des ouvertures, on introduit une pâte blanche à base d'eau et de cauris broyées (qui possèdent un esprit divin assurant la conservation du cadavre) ; de cette même pâte on badigeonne le corps et particulièrement la tête, puis on couche le cadavre sur le côté droit, les pieds au nord (une femme serait couchée sur le côté gauche) ; enfin se déroule la fête des funérailles avec le festin rituel et les purifications. Sept jours plus tard a lieu la fête de commémoration (Sangha) suivie du deuil des femmes pendant quarante jours. Passé ce temps le mort est transformé en ancêtre vivant.

Les Bambara reçoivent des présages de leur mort ou de la mort d'un chef d'après certains signes que leur donne la brousse, tels que la rencontre d'un caméléon sur une fourmilière rouge, le cri d'une certaine hyène mythique, le passage de certains singes pleureurs ou de certains oiseaux.

Quelques êtres doués ont la faculté de percevoir le départ des forces spirituelles chez une personne et sa mort imminente. Parfois ils peuvent ramener ces forces et leur faire réintégrer le corps pour sauver l'homme en danger.

g) *Culte des ancêtres*

Après sa mort, l'homme est transformé en ancêtre vivant et reçoit un culte. Le culte est en liaison étroite avec les cultes agraires ; les ancêtres sont des forces vitales efficientes qui participent à la vie des hommes, les protègent et fécondent leurs champs. Les instruments aratoires sont présentés à leurs autels avant les cultures, et tous les ans, leur âme vient animer les masques qui dansent en leur honneur sous la présidence du Komo. Après le battage des grains ils reçoivent les prémices et des sacrifices leur sont offerts.

h) *Autres rites*

En dehors des rites concernant la personne les Bambara connaissent d'autres rites tels que ceux relatifs aux ordures ménagères où se sont accumulées les forces des hommes. Les rites ont pour but d'offrir ces forces à *Faro* et de rendre les hommes régénérés et purifiés. Les détritus sont brûlés périodiquement, les hommes aspirent la fumée et les cendres sont jetées au fleuve ; des sacrifices sont offerts au Dieu et des danses particulières accompagnent la cérémonie.

Les rites de pluie communs à toute l'Afrique sont pratiqués au mois de mai par les sociétaires du Kworé. Les rites de renouvellement de l'année impliquent des interventions individuelles, familiales et collectives. On trace les signes du monde sur les murs des sanctuaires individuels ou collectifs et par l'intermédiaire d'un sacrifice sur les autels, de danses et de chants rythmés, l'homme renouvelle les points cardinaux et les forces du monde qui à leur tour renouvellent son âme. (Tous ces rites ont été décrits par G. Dieterlen dans l'*Essai sur la religion bambara.*)

B) TECHNIQUES SPÉCIALES A USAGES GÉNÉRAUX

Dans la pensée bambara, « toute technique est une réparation enseignée à l'homme par *Faro*, un palliatif au désordre cosmique, dû généralement à une rupture d'interdit... Les hommes vécurent d'abord de cueillette, puis plus tard de pêche et de chasse ; ils se servaient uniquement de leurs mains. Peu à peu les techniques apparurent selon une chronologie dont les Bambara actuels ont gardé la mémoire. La première matière utilisée fut la fibre de l'arbre *nyama*, dont furent tressés les premiers filets de pêche, la première fronde, le premier cache-sexe » (1). La seconde matière fut le bois dont ils firent les outils de culture et l'arme de jet. Puis ils inventèrent la poterie crue et le tissage ; ils connurent enfin l'outillage de pierre ; le fer et la forge. La technique de l'habitation semble s'être développée plus tardivement.

a) *La pêche*

A côté des populations spécialisées dans l'art de la pêche, telles que les Bozo ou la caste des Somono, tous les Bambara pêchent dans les fleuves ou les marigots voisins de leurs habitations. Une étude détaillée a été faite par J. Daget (1). Les Somono qui sont la caste des pêcheurs bambara, utilisent pour la pêche les nasses et les filets ; les Bozo restent plutôt fidèles aux harpons et petits filets ; ce sont eux qui presque toujours construisent les pirogues, car seuls ils peuvent entrer en rapport avec le génie de l'eau *Faro*. Les filets sont à mailles nouées fabriqués avec une navette : *sia* et un moule cylindrique : *pako*. La bande de filet en fabrication est presque toujours attachée à un chevalet de bois spécialement conçu pour cet usage, le *kale* ou *dio soyo kala*, tétraèdre régulier dont les arêtes ont 20 cm environ de long, l'une d'elles se prolongeant par un manche de 1 m 50. Le pêcheur, assis par terre, pose le chevalet devant lui en maintenant le manche près de sa jambe. Les fibres utilisées pour la fabrication du filet sont ; le *da (Hibiscus cannabinus)*, le *kié (Vigna unguiculata)*, le coton et actuellement les fils européens.

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(1) G. DIETERLEN, *Essai sur la religion bambara.*

Les Bozo construisent des barrages faits de branches d'arbres coupées et enchevêtrées, qui affectent plusieurs formes suivant les régions et des pièges. Les poissons sont utilisés pour la consommation humaine ; ils sont mangés frais, grillés, frits ou bouillis, ou conservés, fumés ou séchés. De certains poissons tels que les *lineni*, on extrait de l'huile utilisée pour la cuisine et comme lubrifiant.

La pêche dans les villages bambara se fait en commun sous la direction d'un chef de pêche, au moment où les eaux baissent. Des règles précises de droits de pêche et de redevances aux maîtres des eaux sont partout respectées.

b) *Poterie*

Elle est entièrement façonnée et cuite par des femmes de la caste des forgerons, maîtres du feu. Le modelage se fait de deux manières, soit en creusant une masse d'argile à l'aide d'une pierre cylindrique (2), soit en roulant sur un moule un boudin de terre glaise. La décoration est généralement faite par une double ligne de chevrons imprimée autour du col et du pied par le bracelet torsadé de la potière. La cuisson se fait en plein air sur un feu de bois.

c) *La forge*

Le bois, le fer, les métaux en général sont façonnés par les forgerons. L'atelier du forgeron et les objets qu'il fabrique sont simples, mais ils sont riches en représentations symboliques. — « La forge représente l'artisan : le four est son corps, le soufflet ses testicules, la tuyère son sexe, le feu sa tête. Quand le fer rouge est battu par la masse, qui symbolise l'univers, les étincelles sont l'éclair et la foudre (3). » Avec ses outils rudimentaires installés à terre sous un auvent, l'artisan forge tous les instruments aratoires, dont le principal est la houe. La houe, suivant sa forme est considérée comme mâle ou femelle. La houe femelle comporte un manche court terminé par un renflement ovoïde, dans lequel pénètre la pointe d'un fer de forme triangulaire, dont les trois côtés seraient faits de trois arcs de cercle ; le trois, symbole de la masculinité, représente ici le clitoris, principe mâle qui est le support du double : dya de la femme. (Suivant le mythe, c'est à l'aide de cette partie du corps que le premier être de sexe féminin inaugura les travaux agricoles.) La houe mâle possède un fer légèrement trapézoïdal qui s'emmanche de la même manière ; les quatre côtés symbolisent la féminité de l'homme supportée par le prépuce. Ainsi le paysan creuse avec la houe mâle et recouvre avec la houe femelle ; les travaux menés avec le double femelle du cultivateur et le double mâle de la femme symbolisent l'union sexuelle. (1)

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(1) Jacques Daget, *La pêche dans le delta central du Niger.*
(2) M. Griaule, *Masques dogons.*
(3) G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara.*

d) *La vannerie*

La vannerie est exécutée par tous, hommes et femmes ; elle entre pour une grande partie dans la construction et l'ameublement de la maison. Parfois les greniers sont d'immenses vanneries, tissées en diagonale ; dans certaines régions une grande natte entoure le mur extérieur de la case ronde. Les portes des cases en torchis sont souvent constituées par une natte grossière tissée en diagonale, que l'on place devant l'ouverture, mais des nattes beaucoup plus fines exécutées en fibres de couleurs différentes, suivant des dessins géométriques au sens symbolique, couvrent le sol pour s'asseoir ou dormir.

e) *Tissage, vêtements, parures*

Le premier vêtement fut la jupe de fibre de nyama *(Bauhinia reticulata, ou Bauhinia thonningii)*, et le cache-sexe qui sont encore portés au cours de cérémonies religieuses.

La mythologie désigne le coton comme étant la première fibre tissée.

Le tissage est une des techniques les plus répandues ; le coton filé par les femmes est tissé par les hommes, anciennement par les captifs qui s'installent en plein air à proximité des cases, dans les cours ou les places publiques, à l'ombre des arbres. Un métier à tisser primitif formé de quatre bois verticaux reliés par des tiges horizontales, actionné par des pédales, tisse de longues bandes ; la chaîne et la trame forment un point toilé et symbolisent un être de lumière et de parole. Il existe d'ailleurs une science des bandes qui repose sur le symbolisme des couleurs, des dessins et des nombres.

Les Bambara distinguent 3 couleurs fondamentales : le blanc, le rouge et le noir. Chacune de ces 3 teintes a son histoire et son rôle dans les rites. « Le rouge est la couleur du milieu du monde, il caractérise la chaleur sèche ; il est la couleur de la colère et de la justice, celle du roi centre du royaume. » Le noir ou indigo (2) s'identifie avec le nord et le temps d'hivernage. Il évoque l'impureté, l'obscurité. Il marque la tristesse et la fin d'un labeur. Le sud convient aux ancêtres et au blanc, qui représente la lumière et la pureté : c'est la couleur de *Faro*. Tout le système des bandes tissées de fils de couleurs différentes suivant des dessins variés traduit les différents états du porteur, car chaque bande a son histoire propre, son emploi défini et ses correspondances cosmogoniques. L'étude en a été amorcée par G. Diéterlen dans *Essai sur la religion bambara* et se poursuit actuellement. Aujourd'hui, la forme des vêtements varie suivant l'âge et le sexe du porteur. Les enfants en bas âge sont nus, les reins ceints d'un fil de coton ou d'une ceinture de perles bleues ou de cauris ; parfois, deux clochettes de cuivre attirent par leur son la protection du *Faro*. Les fillettes jusqu'à leur mariage portent un pagne glissé entre les jambes et retenu par 8 ceintures de perles. Lorsqu'elles sont mariées, les femmes portent le pagne ouvert, attaché à la ceinture, et un mouchoir de coton recouvre leurs cheveux ; quand leur enfant est né, un autre pagne noué sur la poitrine retient le nouveau-né à califourchon sur le dos de sa mère. La femme du chef portait une pièce d'étoffe faite de 7 bandes qu'elle rejetait sur l'épaule. Les très jeunes garçons portent un petit caleçon dont le forme varie avec les classes d'âge ; plus tard ils sont vêtus d'une tunique courte à l'encolure coupée et aux manches ajustées, et d'une culotte ample et courte formée de 3 bandes (chiffre masculin) passant entre les jambes, et 3 bandes de chaque côté, couvrant les cuisses ; la taille est aussi entourée de 4 fois 3 bandes, chiffres de la féminité et de la masculinité. Par-dessus leurs vêtements, hommes et femmes portent un grand manteau fait d'une pièce d'étoffe percée au milieu d'une ouverture pour la tête, et dont les extrémités cousues ménagent de larges ouvertures de chaque côté. Ces manteaux portent une grande poche sur le devant, et sont brodés de dessins symboliques. L'influence européenne s'est naturellement fait sentir dans la mode, les fils européens remplacent les fils de coton indigènes, mais le symbolisme des couleurs demeure dans les bandes. Pourtant, si les tissus européens envahissent de plus en plus les marchés, les vêtements traditionnels restent les plus recherchés, mais ils subissent des modifications inspirées des modes européennes, bien que demeurant très originales.

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(1) M. Griaule et G. Dieterlen, L'agriculture des Bozo, *Journal des Africanistes.*

(2) Zahan, Les couleurs chez les Bambara du Soudan français, *Notes africaines*, 1951.

Si les Bambara marchent pieds nus, dans certaines circonstances, ils fabriquent des socques ouvrées que l'on offre à la nouvelle mariée. Ces sandales sont décorées de dessins géométriques, gravés au fer rouge par le forgeron, qui symbolisent la gémelléité, la multiplication des enfants, les parents, la famille du mari, la langue du couple et la fermeture de l'association ; ils sont entourés du signe de l'union de l'ensemble. Aussi, tout le rituel de la prise de possession se déroule-t-il pendant plusieurs jours.

Coiffure. — Actuellement, les hommes adultes ne portent plus la coiffure traditionnelle comprenant deux tresses latérales, mais les enfants ont encore les cheveux rasés et tressés suivant la coutume. Ainsi, les garçons incirconcis portent une crête de cheveux qui va du front à la nuque, tandis que le reste du crâne est rasé, la crête symbolisant le serpent divin ; les enfants des forgerons portent en plus, de chaque côté du crâne, deux cercles de cheveux coupés par des rayons qui figurent la forge. Lorsqu'un enfant naît après plusieurs décès de frères et sœurs, on lui rase la moitié de la tête seulement par dérision, afin que le dya qu'on feint de négliger se décide à demeurer dans l'enfant. Les enfants des marabouts ont les cheveux rasés de manière à dessiner une spirale dont le centre part du milieu du crâne, et qui couvre toute la tête. Ensuite on rase des bandes de cheveux de manière à tracer une croix sur cette spirale. Les petites filles portent une petite tresse transversale sur le front, tombant sur le côté gauche, tandis que les femmes mariées portent les deux nattes de chaque côté de la tête. Ces nattes sont obtenues avec des postiches de fibre de *da* luisante de karité, que l'on tresse avec les cheveux. Enfin, les femmes portent aux oreilles 22 anneaux d'or, images des 22 éléments primordiaux, ou parfois un seul gros anneau en forme de croissant fermé par des fils de coton rouge, qui est un résumé des 22 autres. Ces anneaux protègent des paroles impures l'oreille qui joue un rôle important dans la génération ; c'est par la parure que les génies entendent ce que l'on dit à l'homme.

Les Bambara décorent leur visage et leur corps de nombreuses scarifications dont le but est de conférer au porteur les qualités dont elles sont les symboles. Par leur influence sur le caractère et le tempérament d'un individu, elles l'aident à atteindre un idéal d'homme. Ces marques sont associées au mythe de l'origine de l'agriculture. Ce sont 8 petites cicatrices : deux verticales à la racine du nez, trois sous chaque œil ; elles imitent les marques faciales de l'être mythique moitié homme, moitié animal, qui enseigna aux hommes la culture du sol (1).

f) *Forme des agglomérations*

Le village bambara suit des règles de développement qui permettent à un étranger de reconnaître immédiatement la disposition des cases et de distinguer la maison d'un chef, d'un forgeron ou de tout autre membre de la société. En effet le village est construit au nord ou à l'est de l'arbre protecteur. Au sud du village se trouve le bois sacré demeure du chef des génies, où se déroulent les cérémonies religieuses et les rites d'initiation. A mesure que les familles viendront s'installer au village, elles construiront leurs cases autour de celle du chef, excepté à l'est, car le chef doit voir le soleil se lever. Le fils aîné du chef, son successeur éventuel, possédera sa propre concession auprès de son père. La maison du Ķomo est située hors du village, au sud ou à l'ouest, cachée dans un bois ou un buisson. A la sortie du village, se trouve une case ronde, la maison du Nyama ; au milieu, une case carrée aux murs peints, celle du Gna (voir le chapitre de la religion). Au centre du village, autour d'un doubale est ménagée une place qui sert de lieu de réunion publique : les vieillards tiennent leurs conseils sous les branches du doubale.

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(1) S. de Ganay, *On a form of cicatrisation among the Bambara*, « Man ».

Enfin le cimetière des hommes libres se trouve hors du village, à l'ouest ; celui des captifs et des gens de caste au sud du premier.

Tout village possède son forgeron, car il est la vie et sans lui le village ne saurait subsister. Avant la conquête française, les villages bambara étaient fortifiés. Ils étaient protégés par une triple enceinte construite en pisé suivant une ligne de chevrons qui abritait les sentinelles. La première muraille enfermait le village et les jardins environnants ; la seconde passait à l'intérieur du village et la troisième entourait les maisons du chef. Ces murs pouvaient atteindre 5 m de haut et 2 m de large à la base ; ils étaient précédés d'un fossé et doublés d'un escalier. On peut encore voir des restes importants de ces fortifications dans le Kourolamini à Ténintu (cercle de Bougouni).

Construction des maisons (1). — Dans tout le Soudan, la construction des maisons se fait pendant la saison sèche. Il en va de même pour les réparations, sauf les plus urgentes à la suite de dégradations causées par les pluies, les eaux de ruissellement, les vents violents ou les ravages des termites.

Choix de l'emplacement. — On choisit souvent la proximité d'un cours d'eau temporaire ou permanent où des puits peuvent être forés. On consulte ensuite un devin ou un marabout qui révèle l'existence d'un génie dont le lieu d'élection est le caïlcédrat ; si le génie est favorable, l'installation est autorisée et l'arbre sacré devient l'autel de la collectivité. On l'arrosera de sacrifices périodiques.

Types d'habitations. — 1) La case ronde à toit de chaume *(luba bo)* ; 2) La case carrée ou rectangulaire *(bili)* à toit plat.

Case ronde. — L'homme plante un piquet auquel il attache une corde de 1 m 50 au plus, reliée à la tête d'une houe. En tournant autour du piquet il trace une circonférence qui sera le plan de la maison. Aucune fondation n'est aménagée. Autour de la circonférence sont plantés une série de doubles piquets *(kassassin)*. On passe une latte de bambou qui serpente entre les piquets doubles et on monte la vannerie en partant du sol jusqu'à une hauteur de 2 m environ.

Lorsque le cylindre formant les murs de la base est terminé, on coupe la porte à 25 cm du sol, sur une hauteur de 1 m 50, en l'orientant vers le sud. On crépit ensuite de *banco*, c'est-à-dire de terre extraite non loin de la case par les jeunes gens, et pétrie avec un mélange de paille de fonio, de bouse de vache, et d'eau que vont puiser les femmes. Le toit se construit par terre ; on trace une circonférence égale à celle de la case ; on dresse autour 4 gros bambous principaux que l'on réunit ensemble à une extrémité par un lien de fibre. Au sommet de la pyramide, on installe une grosse pierre qui pèse sur les piquets et les maintient à l'écart voulu. Près du sommet, on fixe avec de la fibre 2 lattes de bambou qui entourent les 4 piquets, un à l'extérieur et l'autre à l'intérieur : c'est le *midio*. D'autres piquets sont glissés entre les 4 principaux, et attachés au double cerceau. A distance égale, on fixe 7 ou 8 autres cercles, en descendant vers la base du cône. On choisit pour recouvrir le toit, de la paille de *tji le*, très mince et blanche, qui sera le plus imperméable, ou de *uro-ba-bi* noire (herbe de hyène) plus grosse et moins appréciée. On étale une couche de paille que l'on attache au sommet et que l'on coud aux deux premiers cercles. Un troisième cercle placé sur les 2 autres maintient la paille en place. Puis on place une deuxième couche, que l'on coud au ras du sol au dernier cercle, les couches suivantes sont étalées à partir de celle-ci de manière à se recouvrir partiellement les unes les autres jusqu'au sommet. Lorsque la couche du ras du sol est cousue, on soulève le toit et un petit enfant se glisse à l'intérieur pour tirer l'aiguille de bambou qui doit coudre la paille aux cercles. Lorsque le toit est entièrement cousu, un homme l'escalade, fait basculer la pierre du sommet et s'installe à sa place. Il glisse un cercle formé de 6 lattes de bambou sur les 3 premiers cercles ; il le fixe à l'aide de 2 bâtons en croix qui percent le toit. Il rassemble la paille du sommet entre les 4 piquets qui dépassent et il la noue et la tresse « comme les cheveux d'une femme ». Si le toit doit recouvrir la case d'une femme, il n'y aura pas de faîtage, mais la paille qui dépasse est rabattue et prise dans le premier cercle. Enfin, de 15 à 30 jeunes gens se rassemblent et hissent la toiture sur la case.

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(1) Information en partie de Moussa Traoré, du village de Gouani (canton de Diemandougou), cercle de Bamako.

Actuellement, les murs de vannerie et de banco sont remplacés par des murs en briques de banco moulées et séchées au soleil.

Case rectangulaire ou carrée. — Cette forme est d'importation récente dans les cercles de Bamako et de Bougouni, alors qu'elle est fréquente à partir de Ségou jusqu'au Sahel.

Elle est construite avec des briques séchées ; lorsque le toit est plat, il repose sur des piliers de bois fourchus plantés en terre ou posés sur une grosse pierre plate. Il y a 5, 7 ou 9 poteaux dont un central ; sur les fourches on place les poutres ; en travers des quilles sont les solives. On recouvre le tout d'une natte sur laquelle on tasse une couche de banco mélangé à du beurre de karité ou de la farine de nere. Le toit est construit légèrement en pente pour l'écoulement des eaux, et on le dame avec le *bumbuli* sorte de pelle en bois. Puis on aligne une couronne de briques autour de la toiture, en ménageant la place pour les gouttières qui se déversent dans les rues. Ces maisons peuvent être surmontées d'un second toit conique en chaume. Les 4 bois principaux sont installés aux 4 angles de la maison. Une porte est ouverte dans le premier plafond, et dans cette partie de la maison on garde les effets ou les choses précieuses. Comme pour les cases rondes, la porte s'ouvre toujours vers le sud.

Les maisons sont crépies à l'extérieur avec de la terre mélangée à de la bouse de vache ; à l'intérieur, le sol et la partie inférieure des murs sont badigeonnés de terre noire mélangée de fumier de vache frais de l'écorce d'arbre de *jumbo (Napoleona Heudelotii) ;* la partie supérieure et le plafond sont recouverts de terre blanche du fleuve. A la jonction des 2 couleurs, des lignes de festons tracées au doigt symbolisent la descente du troisième verbe. Sur les murs blancs sont peints des échelles, des calebasses cuillers, des animaux, signes traduisant autant la situation dans le monde du propriétaire que l'âme de l'exécutant.

Le pourtour de la porte d'entrée est badigeonné avec de la bouse de vache fraîche tous les quinze jours, et plus largement une fois par an avant les pluies avec de la bouse de vache pourrie : cette coutume est liée au culte des ancêtres.

Des canaris contenant certaines plantes sont enterrés sous le lit du chef de famille, d'autres plantes et sucs de racines son cachés sous le lit des femmes. Les bolis sont accrochés à la toiture des maisons, car ils ne doivent toucher ni le sol, ni l'eau, ni le feu. Les filets, les *diakumadjulu*, sont accrochés au plafond ; ils contiennent les vêtements ou les calebasses de nourriture ; des nattes ou des peaux d'animaux sont étendus à terre ; des lits, des calebasses de différentes tailles et des tabourets complètent le mobilier. Les différentes cases d'une famille sont entourées d'un mur qui s'ouvre à l'extérieur par un vestibule, case à deux portes orientée nord-sud : c'est là que le chef de famille reçoit les étrangers. Dans la cour intérieure se trouvent les foyers faits de 3 pierres, les mortiers à mil, les poulaillers, sortes de petites cases carrées en torchis. Les greniers, construits sur pilotis, ont la forme des cases rondes ; ils sont divisés en 4 parties où l'on range les 4 céréales principales : mil, riz, fonio, arachide. Certaines graines peuvent être rangées dans le même compartiment, ex : mil et arachide. Certains greniers : *bonio*, sont de véritables poteries en forme de cigares construites par les femmes des forgerons. Lorsque le bonio est terminé, on le coupe en tranches que l'on fait sécher, puis on reconstruit le grenier sans souder les différents morceaux que l'on supprime au fur et à mesure que les provisions diminuent Les cuisines sont situées à l'ouest des chambres.

Répartition des cases d'une concession. — La case du chef est toujours à l'est, car il doit voir le soleil se lever. Sa case est souvent de forme quadrangulaire, et comporte plusieurs chambres. Les cases des femmes sont généralement rondes ; chacune est munie de sa cuisine située à l'ouest et fermée par une serrure individuelle ; des salles de douches particulières sont réservées aux maris et aux femmes. Des cabinets munis de 2 trous, un pour les urines et un pour les selles, sont ensuite bouchés et condamnés lorsqu'ils sont pleins.

Enfin, le puits est creusé soit au milieu de la cour, soit à proximité immédiate de la concession. L'eau est puisée directement à l'aide d'une calebasse fixée à une longue corde.

Parfois des cases particulières sont construites sur pilotis pour s'abriter la nuit contre les moustiques ; la seule ouverture est une trappe sous le plancher par où on entre dans la case.

g) *Tombeaux*

Une vieille coutume faisait enterrer les chefs de famille dans leur case. Les Fama étaient enterrés dans la cour de leur palais fortifié : au nord-ouest. Les bébés étaient enterrés près des cases de leur mère, car on attendait leur retour. Actuellement, tous les Bambara sont enterrés dans des cimetières suivant la coutume musulmane ou animiste.

Les prêtres des confréries creusent les fosses ; les tombes peuvent être individuelles ou collectives. Monteil *(Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta)*, décrit un tombeau de chef : le caveau a la forme d'un parallélépipède ; la base inférieure a 1 m de large sur 2 m de long, la base supérieure 3 m sur 2 m, et une paroi verticale de 1 m 50 forme un angle droit avec les bases.

Dans le Ouassoulou, la coutume faisait creuser un tombeau à plusieurs salles pour toute la famille indivise. Une entrée carrée de 2 m de côté environ précédait un étroit couloir qui s'ouvrait sur une première salle réservée aux enfants ; un autre couloir la faisait communiquer avec une seconde salle plus importante réservée aux femmes et aux hommes adultes, qui donnait par un troisième couloir sur une dernière salle plus petite destinée aux chefs de famille. Une lampe à huile était placée à gauche de l'entrée de chaque salle, et devait s'éteindre d'elle-même. Le cadavre était placé au milieu de la pièce, les pieds au nord et la tête au sud. Lors d'une nouvelle sépulture, on réunissait tous les os longs dans un coin de la pièce, et les crânes dans un autre, car c'est par eux que l'on vérifie le nombre des décès. Enfin, dans la région de Kokum, des centaines de tumulus recouvrent des caveaux comprenant une salle cordiforme taillée dans la latérite, précédée d'un vestibule à l'ouest, et d'un perron qui communique à l'air libre par un escalier taillé dans le rocher. Les portes extérieure et intérieure sont fermées par une dalle latéritique. La porte extérieure est cachée sous le tumulus avec 3 pierres équidistantes pour signaler l'emplacement. Les crânes sont disposés en dôme et séparés des os longs. Enfin, la tombe de l'ancêtre fondateur du village se trouve au centre même du village, au nord de l'ancienne cour fortifiée de la maison des chefs.

III. — L'art

La conception de l'art chez le Bambara est très différente de l'idée occidentale de l'art pour l'art. Tout objet que nous trouvons beau a pour le Bambara une signification sociale, religieuse ou technique précise : « L'art des Noirs est engagé... c'est une projection gratuite dans un matériel d'idées et de connaissances qui n'apportent rien d'autre qu'elles-mêmes à l'usager ou au spectateur. Fruste sans doute dans les premières étapes de l'initiation, faites souvent de demi-savoirs ou même d'erreurs calculées le sentiment esthétique des Noirs s'éclaire et s'affirme à mesure qu'ils s'instruisent et qu'ils passent d'une « connaissance légère » à celle des grands secrets. Il semble impossible à un homme enseigné de faire abstraction de ses connaissances pour juger une danse ou s'enthousiasmer au jeu d'un harpiste habile. Ce que nous nommons beauté est pour le Noir l'adéquation de l'objet à représenter ce pour quoi il est créé (1). »

Les masques dissimulent la personne et transforment l'humain en être surnaturel. Ils sont le support privilégié du nyama, le premier modèle ayant été taillé pour fixer dans une figure de bois la force vitale du premier ancêtre mort. « La société des masques c'est le monde entier, et lorsque elle s'ébranle en place publique, elle danse la marche du monde, elle danse le système du monde (1). »

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(1) M. Griaule, L'art nègre, *Présence africaine.*

A) Statuaire

La sculpture est un travail mâle exécuté par les forgerons. Elle est d'inspiration religieuse.

Il y a 3 centres de fabrication aux productions différenciées dans leur forme. Ce sont la région de Bamako ; celle de Bougouni, véritable pays des forgerons, et celle de Kinian, à cheval sur les circonscriptions de Sikasso, Koutiala, Ségou. (2)

Ils exécutent des statuettes femelles, des statuettes de fécondité, des marionnettes qui servent aux représentations théâtrales données par les jeunes gens, des masques pour les différentes sociétés, et en particulier toute une série d'antilopes stylisées, attributs des danseurs *tchi wara*.

« Pareil au sculpteur chinois de l'époque Han, le Bambara voit et détermine les formes par les profils. Il pratique la taille à claire voie, découpant des silhouettes qui s'inscrivent dans le contre-jour comme des hiéroglyphes aux contours arrêtés et suggestifs. Faisant s'interpréter les signes et les formes empruntés à une faune familière, il les combine et les associe pour créer les figures emblématiques de la tribu et du clan, les figures de reconnaissance. Ce zoomorphisme symbolique, fondement de l'héraldisme, est celui des peuples de la grande steppe asiatique, celui des peuples de la Mésopotamie et de l'Asie Mineure ; il fut en partie celui des Égyptiens de l'époque pharaonique, qui réalisèrent dans la vallée du Nil, prédestinée par sa situation et ses ressources, la synthèse d'une double culture. » C'est ainsi que le sculpteur pour exprimer sa vision a souvent recours à l'idéogramme de caractère géométrique sur lequel se fonde le caractère conceptuel des peuples de la steppe. (3)

Une grande variété de bois (4) s'offre au sculpteur, qui s'adresse surtout aux essences de grain fin dont le fil est peu sensible et évite les bois trop durs et trop denses. L'artiste travaille le bois vert, généralement à l'herminette ou doloire, qui dérive probablement de la houe ; l'instrument sert à dégrossir la masse et à établir les volumes secondaires, il donne à la statue un aspect « à facettes » très particulier. Le travail se parfait au moyen d'un couteau et de gouges. Une technique savante permet de patiner le bois ; on le noircit en inhumant les pièces dans certains limons, par bain dans l'huile de palme et badigeon de noir de fumée. On rougit le bois par applications d'emplâtres constitués à l'aide d'écorces broyées et mises en pâtes. Les objets traités sont longuement polis à la peau, et prennent l'aspect sombre et brillant de vieux bronzes. La patine des pièces est un élément important de leur beauté.

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(1) Id, *Dieu d'eau*.
(2) *Passim*, Lem, Sculptures soudanaises, *Arts et métiers graphiques*, Paris, 1948.
(3) *Passim*, F. H. Lem, *Variété et unité des traditions plastiques de l'Afrique noire*.
(4) *Passim*, H. Lavachery, L'art noir d'Afrique et son destin, *Présence africaine*.

L'art observe des conventions stylistiques telles que les déformations de la vision normale. Pour la structure de la masse, la convention règle la proportion des parties, des pleins et des creux, le développement des volumes secondaires et des surfaces des différents plans, leur étendue et leurs lignes de contact. Le volume de la statuaire obéit à un canon à peu près immuable : sur un tronc cyclindrique s'attache une tête proportionnellement énorme par rapport aux membres ; ceux-ci se meuvent dans d'étroites limites ; les membres inférieurs sont beaucoup plus courts que nature. Le gros volume de la tête est une convention qui se rattache au culte des ancêtres. La tête est sculptée en style concave, et la figure entière est soumise à une géométrisation marquée.

Les forgerons travaillent aussi l'or suivant la méthode de la fonte à la cire perdue ou le martelage, le repoussage et l'application de l'or et de l'argent en feuilles minces sur une âme de bois. C'est ainsi qu'étaient recouverts les trônes des anciens chefs bambara. Aujourd'hui les bijoux d'or ne sont plus réservés aux seules femmes des rois. Les bracelets, les pendentifs, les colliers, sont exécutés en grande quantité, suivant un travail en filigrane auquel excelle le Noir.

B) Céramique

Le pays est très riche en poteries ; néanmoins les Bambara hommes ne modèlent pas l'argile, car la poterie est un art des femmes et inversement les femmes ne font pas la statuaire.

C) Peinture

Les Bambara exécutent des peintures murales sur les murs des sanctuaires, avec de l'ocre et de la bouillie de mil, que les prêtres dessinent périodiquement. Les murs des cases des jeunes gens sont également décorés suivant des motifs symboliques, calebasses-cuillers, festons, échelles à 22 barres, dessins de mains, lignes de chevrons, que viennent peindre les jeunes filles, avec de la terre du fleuve ou un mélange de terre et de bouse de vache. Tous ces dessins géométriques sont des signes représentant non seulement la cosmogonie, mais traduisant également d'une manière nuancée tous les mouvements de l'âme de l'exécutante ; ils sont une véritable écriture.

D) Musique

La musique est un art privilégié (1), car elle est liée à des instruments, c'est-à-dire à des matériaux, au corps humain par la voix et la danse, au nombre par le rythme, à la médecine, à la divination, à la religion.

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(1) Griaule, *Passim*, Symbole des arts africains, *Présence africaine*.

Mme G. Dieterlen lors d'une communication faite le 18 février 1948 à l'Institut français d'anthropologie a décrit la morphologie et la symbolique de deux instruments de musique bambara ; la guitare du Sema et le tambour royal.

« La forme des instruments de musique bambara obéit à une symbolique qui s'inscrit dans le système métaphysique et religieux de cette population.

a) Le premier d'entre eux est le tambour, *tabale*, réservé aux rois et aux chefs. Le prototype mythique de cet instrument était de cuivre, métal primordial dont la vibration est assimilée à celle de la lumière, du son, de l'eau et de la parole dans cette population.

L'instrument actuel se compose de deux parties : une caisse de bois carrée, recouverte de peau de chèvre qui forme le corps du tambour ; un tablier de bois gravé, détachable, en forme de demi-lune sur l'une de ses faces, qui s'adapte sur l'un des côtés du tambour. Ce tablier est recouvert de plaques de bois gravées et ornées, au pourtour de la face arrondie, d'une lanière de cuir garnie d'anneaux de cuivre. Ce tablier représente une oreille qui est à la fois celle du Génie de l'air, maîtres du son et celle du roi : les anneaux de cuivre sont les répliques de ceux que chacun porte aux oreilles et dont le rôle est de transmettre au tympan les sons et les rythmes.

La baguette de bois avec laquelle est frappé l'instrument est de longueur inusitée et de forme anthropomorphe : elle comporte également une sonnaille à l'une de ses extrémités. Elle représente *Koumabana* le premier des 8 ancêtres du panthéon bambara qui ont reçu « la parole »...

b) L'anthropomorphisme de la harpe, *ngoni*, est très net dans la pensée des usagers.

La caisse rectangulaire de l'instrument représente le masque de *Koumabana*, l'ancêtre qui a reçu la parole ; les deux éclisses latérales sont ses yeux, l'ouïe, son nez et sa respiration, le cordier, sa bouche et ses dents, les cordes au nombre de 8, ses paroles. Elle est aussi l'image de sa tombe et les deux baguettes qui la traversent représentent le deuxième et le troisième ancêtre qui l'accompagnèrent dans la mort. La caisse représente aussi la face du devin et sa tombe, les deux baguettes étant les deux tiges de mil mises en terre avec le cadavre. A l'extrémité du manche, des sonnailles de cuivre ont le même rôle, à la fois technique et religieux, que celles fixées au tablier du tambour décrit plus haut.

Chaque son donné par chacune des 8 cordes est une prière. Les cordes sont pincées séparément par le devin, suivant leur rang et en fonction de la qualité du consultant et des questions qu'il pose : *modé* (petit-fils) pour les sujets de peu d'importance, chasse, voyage ; *fadé* (fils du père) pour la vie individuelle, physique et morale ; *fa* (père) pour l'avenir, le destin, la vie publique d'un homme, son autorité son commandement ; *fakoroke* (frère aîné du père) pour les semailles, les pluies, la fortune ; *fa dogone* (frère cadet du père) pour la germination des céréales ; *ba* (mère) pour tout ce qui concerne les femmes ;

faso (maison du père) pour tout ce qui concerne la demeure familiale ou les absents.

L'efficacité principale de la harpe est une remise en ordre par les rythmes et les sons répandus hors d'elle, de tout ce qui est troublé dans la marche des choses.

Elle préside aux sacrifices, aux rites cathartiques ou de médication, aux purifications, aux rites apotropaïques, aux méditations solitaires. Ses notes hautes sont célestes et symboles de plénitude ; les basses connotent les choses terrestres et l'incomplétude. Son jeu commande les arrivées et les départs, les proliférations et les amenuisements, les rappels à l'ordre ; sa présence au bord d'une mare où elle a été déposée en silence, est gage d'apaisement.

Le harpiste, avant de commencer son office, place sa bouche devant l'orifice de la caisse et murmure au maître du Verbe : « Maintenant c'est ton tour, organise le Monde (1). »

La musique, la danse et le chant sont intimement liés dans le mouvement religieux. C'est ainsi qu'un *djo* des Samaké (cercle de Bougouni) est entièrement composé de musiciens qui forment un orchestre où toute la gamme est représentée par 8 instruments principaux différents qui sont les types d'une multitude d'autres. Le premier : *n'ganian-ba*, est seul ; l'instrument est fabriqué dans un tronc d'arbre creusé en auge, dont le frottement donne un son très grave, c'est la basse qui donne la cadence. Deux à trois *Tiorõ* donnent un son plus aigu ; quatre à six *Tioun*, un son encore plus aigu, et il y a jusqu'à 10 *Fere*, qui est l'instrument le plus aigu. Enfin, une infinité de *N'ganian dyeli* sont ceux qui commencent la musique comme le griot fait taire la foule avant de débuter. Tous ces instruments ont la forme d'une pirogue. L'orchestre comprend en plus 2 chanteurs et 2 danseurs. Tous portent des masques, des bonnets avec des crêtes de fibre noire, rouge et jaune, des vêtements de fibre tressée, et une cuirasse de graines de *fana* (sorte de haricot) pour les musiciens. La basse porte une bande dans le dos, qui descend jusqu'aux talons ; elle dessine un cercle lorsque le musicien tourbillonne en se déplaçant du nord au sud et de l'est à l'ouest pour donner la cadence. Les autres musiciens forment un cercle où danseurs et chanteurs n'entrent pas. Un autre *djo* est le *So*, où les musiciens et les chanteurs portent le masque des chevaux de bois, sauf 2 bouffons qui représentent l'élément masculin au milieu de la foule des jeunes filles. Enfin le troisième *djo* est le *djõ buru* (*buru* = trompette). C'est le *djo* des esclaves ; ils jouent de l'oliphant et sont vêtus comme les N'ganian ; mais la basse représente une vache et les autres sont les génisses qui répondent à la cadence que leur indique leur mère.

E) LA LITTÉRATURE

La littérature bambara, entièrement orale, est d'une extrême richesse. Elle est le monopole des griots, qui dès leur plus jeune âge apprennent les contes, les proverbes, les devises attachées à chaque famille. Ils récitent les chansons de gestes très longues et très nombreuses relatives à chaque grande famille, en s'accompagnant sur la harpe. Certaines parties sont récitées, d'autres sont chantées en chœur par le griot et sa femme. Ces récits sont à la fois des narrations historiques de la geste des héros, en même temps que l'histoire mythique d'un démiurge que le héros symbolise. Une infime partie de ces chansons de gestes a été recueillie. Quelques proverbes et contes bambara ont été recueillis en particulier par Moussa Traoré.

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(1) *Passim*, GRIAULE, *Symbole des arts africains.*

Il est intéressant d'indiquer une autre production littéraire, où l'inspiration créatrice de l'exécutant a une plus grande part : ce sont les récits des membres de la confrérie du Kworé. Les *Kworédugas* sont des bouffons ou plutôt des comédiens dell'arte. On est Kworéduga par transmission héréditaire ou par vocation. Pendant son initiation en brousse, où il subit de mauvais traitements rituels, l'initié apprend à ne jamais se mettre en colère, dans quelque circonstance que ce soit. On lui enseigne un langage comique, des bons mots, on l'exerce à bien observer le caractère des hommes et à dire des strophes et des couplets d'après ses observations.

Ex. :

Tiekoroba kolili (le vieux qui n'a rien)
Ila rokina momindi (ce que tu dis n'est pas aimé)
Ida konieli aie (tu as raison)
N'ka idia dopina marmandi (mais on n'aime pas ce que tu dis)

Ou encore :

Demise fentili (le jeune homme riche)
Ida dokma kakadi (on aime ce que tu dis)
Ida konie tinaie (ce que tu dis n'est pas vrai)
N'ka idia dokma makodi (mais on aime ce que tu dis)

Les *Kworeduga* ont pour interdit le *su* (le Maure), et ils s'accompagnent en chantant avec une gourde sacrée, *yaraba*, qui contient des graines de *Lufa cilindrica*.

Enfin, pendant la période d'initiation de la circoncision par exemple, l'enfant apprend les danses sacrées qui souvent miment les gestes des ancêtres mythiques.

Une certaine évolution caractérise l'art indigène, qui s'est transformé d'une manière curieuse au contact des Européens ; dans les centres européens, le contact prolongé avec les Blancs a saccagé les croyances qui inspiraient l'art, mais les artistes n'ont perdu ni leur goût ni leurs dons. A la demande des Blancs eux-mêmes, ils se sont mis à faire de l'art dirigé, ayant pour but de plaire à l'Européen. Inutile de dire que, s'il conserve quelque agrément de forme, tout cet art nouveau, qui évolue au même rythme précipité que nos modes, demeure terriblement mort, car la véritable source d'inspiration est tarie. Cet art ne cherche plus à être vrai, mais à faire joli ; il signe par là sa propre condamnation.

CONCLUSION

I. — Interprétation traditionnelle des caractéristiques mentales

Dans l'introduction de la *Religion Bambara*, Tauxier insiste sur les caractéristiques mentales : « Le Bambara est resté assez franchement fétichiste » ; il possède « deux traits dominants absolument incontestés et incontestables :

« 1) C'est un très fort cultivateur.

« 2) Le Bambara donne un tirailleur solide et discipliné... Au moral il est plutôt lourd et bête, au physique trapu et solide. » Déjà l'abbé Henry avait conclu en ces termes : « Le Bambara est un agriculteur... Bien membré il tient pour la taille un juste milieu qui n'est ni grand ni petit. Il est fort de poitrine et porte sur un cou court et trapu une grosse tête couverte de cheveux noirs et crépus. Rien dans son visage ne pronostique la force d'âme, l'énergie, l'intelligence. D'un front fuyant, il a l'arcade sourcilière assez prononcée et ses yeux noirs de jais avec le blanc légèrement crème (!) sont droits. Les mâchoires, presque toujours bien dentées, s'avancent un peu en avant ; il a les lèvres fortes, épaisses, le menton court, les pommettes... un peu saillantes et il porte un nez plat affreusement ouvert et écrasé à sa racine.

« La femme tout comme le mari est forte, robuste. Le plus souvent elle est cagneuse et ce vice de constitution tient sans doute à ce qu'on l'oblige, dès sa plus tendre enfance à porter sur sa tête des fardeaux assez lourds, trop lourds souvent pour ses forces *(sic)*. Au point de vue moral le Bambara est d'un esprit aussi lourd que sa personne. Lent à comprendre et peu curieux, il n'a nul désir de sortir de sa condition. « Ce qu'ont fait mes pères, je dois le faire », c'est là son grand principe... Paresseux, fainéant même, il croit avoir tout fait s'il a dans son grenier de quoi se nourrir et nourrir sa famille... Craintif, il a peur de l'Européen tout comme l'esclave a peur de son maître et s'il le sert passablement c'est se tromper grandement que de croire avoir capté son affection. Il déteste le Blanc comme il déteste le Musulman ; le Blanc c'est le vainqueur, c'est l'anti-fétichiste et par suite l'ennemi. »

Enfin M. Monteil, dans sa *Monographie de Djenné*, nous dit à son tour : « ... Crâne allongé et prognathisme prononcé, les cheveux noirs, crépus sont souvent chez les jeunes gens réunis en cadenettes... le dessus de la tête est souvent rasé ce qui agrandit apparemment le front. Les femmes affectionnent une sorte de cimier transversal.

« Le front est fuyant, les arcades sourcilières saillantes... le nez épaté, la racine du nez écrasée, les narines largement béantes, les lèvres épaisses... les dents larges et peu espacées... le cou gros, les épaules larges et droites ; la poitrine forte et longue, les membre robustes, les attaches grossières. Assez souvent chez la femme, quelquefois chez l'homme, stéatopygie assez prononcée : la peau a toutes les teintes depuis le marron clair jusqu'au noir brun. La taille est un peu au-dessus de la moyenne...

« Le Bambara est un rustre ; son esprit est lourd pour penser et pour comprendre ; mais il tient à ses idées, rares sans doute, et il est d'un entêtement insurmontable. C'est un patient ; il endure toutes les tyrannies et subit toutes les calamités avec une résignation stupéfiante. Mais quand il a résolu de se venger par la force ou par l'exercice de son droit, il n'est rien qui puisse l'arrêter. Il ne sait pas se présenter, il a de la peine à s'expliquer, « il remonte toujours au déluge » et tout en parlant posément, les yeux distraits ou fixés au sol il ne prononce que la moitié des mots ce qui le rend difficilement intelligible. »

Ces quelques extraits auront du moins le mérite de mesurer toute l'étendue de l'incompréhension du Blanc vis-à-vis du Bambara.

II. — Réfutation de la théorie traditionnelle

Le Bambara est en effet intelligent, patient et entêté : autant de qualités indispensables pour vivre dans ce pays difficile. Nous avons pu montrer, au cours de cette étude, combien son système métaphysique était cohérent, quelle était sa rigueur intellectuelle et comment il informait toute la vie sociale et économique. Mais nous tenons à insister sur ce point : un tel système n'est pas le fruit des spéculations oisives de quelques esprits privilégiés ; il est vécu par tous, compris dans ses parties par tous les membres de la société et dans sa totalité par de nombreux vieillards.

L'absence d'un système d'écriture comme le nôtre oblige le Bambara à posséder toute la connaissance en lui-même et sa prodigieuse mémoire étonne le Blanc. Mais ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans son activité intellectuelle c'est la facilité avec laquelle il a réussi à saisir notre forme de pensée si différente de sa pensée traditionnelle et à assimiler notre vision du monde ; il n'est pas de grande école en France qui ne lui soit accessible. L'étonnante aisance avec laquelle il peut assimiler notre langue et notre pensée prouve assez la souplesse de son esprit, dressé depuis toujours à toutes les finesses spéculatives.

L'entêtement dont il fait preuve dans certains cas est souvent pour lui l'unique manière de défendre ses traditions qui sont la trame même de sa vie. Elles se sont formées au cours de milliers d'années d'expérience d'un pays dur où la vie n'est pas une chose naturelle.

Les bouleversements de la colonisation séduisent son âme curieuse, mais ils se soldent en grande partie pour lui par le déracinement et la destruction de ce qui lui permettait de vivre et de se défendre contre une nature mauvaise : le groupe. Il se défend contre l'invasion du Blanc en se cachant ; il préfère paraître bête plutôt que de révéler à l'étranger son système et de lui livrer ce qui fait sa force. Le Bambara peut sembler paresseux. En fait il sait que l'agitation est impossible sous ce climat tropical ; il est économe de ses gestes afin de leur assurer le maximum de rendement. D'ailleurs la sobriété caractérise toute cette région subdésertique. Jamais aucun laisser-aller ne développe des formes généreuses : tout est condensé pour le maximum d'efficacité. Le monde est systématisé en symboles qui échappent à la destruction. Les manifestations extérieures sont inutiles dans ce pays où le climat détruit tout. La seule chose qui résiste ce n'est pas la matière, c'est l'esprit. Le Bambara a systématiquement sacrifié tout le luxe matériel au profit de la vie spéculative et ses « yeux distraits » sont tournés vers la vie intérieure. C'est peut-être pour cela qu'il ne sait pas se « présenter » qu'il ne sait pas briller comme le Peul. Il se considère lui-même comme « un homme de terre » capable de supporter la chaleur et le froid et toutes les alternances brutales qui lui viennent de l'homme ou des éléments. C'est pourquoi il peut seul parvenir à rendre féconde une terre ingrate qui a découragé plus d'un de nos techniciens.

Mais ce qui importe le plus c'est peut-être la joie qui remplit la vie du Bambara. Les femmes pilent les grains isolément ou en groupe en claquant des doigts par jeu ; elles filent le coton, chantent, crient, rient, font la cuisine, vont chercher du bois mort dans la brousse et puiser l'eau dans le puits ou au cours d'eau voisin en multipliant les remarques malicieuses sur les petits événements de la journée ; car aucun détail ne leur échappe. Le soir ce sont les Tam-tam organisés par la jeunesse pour célébrer un mariage, pour remercier un chef d'une largesse ou pour le simple plaisir de danser, de se perdre dans le rythme des tambours et les battements précipités des mains. La nuit, le Komo, entouré par les danseurs vient provoquer une sorcière qui terrorise le village ; une terrible lutte s'engage, chacun usant de ses dons magiques. Lorsque la sorcière est vaincue, le chef du village vient féliciter publiquement le chef du Komo et les femmes et les enfants râlent de plaisir. Pendant la veillée, un griot réunit dans un coin des amis qui écoutent les chants et les récitations des temps anciens ; tous sont en extase, émus, révoltés ou consolés suivant que se déroule la longue histoire merveilleuse. Puis, ce sont les jeux et les défis des sociétés enfantines qui semblent vouloir bouleverser toute la belle ordonnance sociale du village par leurs battements de tambour, leurs larcins ou leurs réclamations.

Certes, la vie du Bambara ne manque ni de travaux ni de peines. Mais elle connaît plus encore la joie, la bienveillance et la paix. Et s'il est une chose qu'elle ignore, c'est indubitablement l'ennui.

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TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Pages

Avant-Propos VII

Chapitre Premier. — Démographie et groupement tribaux et sous-tribaux 1

I. — *Nomenclature* 1
  A) Définitions européennes 1
  B) Définitions indigènes 1

II. — *Situation* 2
  A) Situation ethnique 2
  B) Localisation géographique 2
  C) Tribus voisines 3

III. — *Caractéristiques physiques des Bambara* 4

IV. — *Données démographiques* 5
  A) Répartition de la population 5
  B) Mouvement de la population 9
  C) Emigration 11
  D) Immigration 12

Chapitre II. — Données linguistiques 14
  A) Classification du langage 14
  B) Morphologie 14
  C) Syntaxe 15
  D) Vocabulaire 15
  E) Numération 15
  F) Ecriture 16
  G) Diversités locales 18

Chapitre III. — Le milieu physique 19

I. — *Les régions naturelles* : pays et végétation 19
  A) Le Haut-Niger 19
  B) Le Bassin de Ségou 20
  C) L'Issa-Ber 21
  D) Le Plateau Mandingue 22
  E) Le Massif Sarakollé 22

II. — *Le climat et la météorologie* 23
  A) Température 23
  B) Régime des vents 24
  C) Saison des pluies 24
  D) Saison sèche 26

Chapitre IV. — Principaux traits économiques 27

I. — *Agriculture* 27
  A) Modes de culture 27
  B) Cultures vivrières (mils, sorghos, blé, riz, cultures d'appoint, cueillette) 29
  C) Cultures textiles (da, coton, sisal, kapok) 32
  D) Instruments agricoles 32
  E) Statistique de production 33

Pages

- II. — *Élevage* 34
  - A) Modes d'élevage 34
  - B) Aire d'élevage 36
  - C) Statistiques 37
  - D) Produits tirés du bétail 37
- III. — *Commerce* 38
  - A) Commerce extérieur 38
    - *a)* Voies de communications 38
    - *b)* Réglementation commerciale 39
    - *c)* Organisation : points de traite et coopératives 39
    - *d)* Exportations et importations 40
  - B) Commerce intérieur 41
    - *a)* Routes commerciales 41
    - *b)* Commerce caravanier 41
    - *c)* Régime du commerce 42
    - *d)* Banques 42

CHAPITRE V. — Histoire et traditions d'origine 44

- I. — Préhistoire 44
- II. — Histoire 45
  - A) Origines du peuple bambara 45
  - B) Constitution des royaumes bambara 46
  - C) Mamari Koulibali 47
  - D) Réformes de Mamari Koulibali 47
  - E) Les successeurs de Mamari 47
  - F) L'invasion toucouleur et la fin des royaumes bambara 48

CHAPITRE VI. — Organisation sociale 50

- I. — *Structure traditionnelle de la société bambara* 50
  - A) Organisation politique et sociale 50
    - 1) La famille 50
      - *a)* En ligne paternelle 51
      - *b)* En ligne maternelle 52
      - *c)* Par alliance 52
    - 2) De la famille à la communauté 53
      - *a)* Organisation patriarcale de la « ton » 53
      - *b)* Alliances 55
      - *c)* Classes d'âge 56
      - *d)* Le Fama 58
      - *e)* Esclavage 59
      - *f)* Armée 60
  - B) Influence de l'organisation sociale sur la vie économique 61
    - *a)* La ton, communauté de travail 61
    - *b)* Organisation du travail 62
    - *c)* Division du travail 64
  - C) Procédure légale : Héritage, propriété des terres 68
    - *a)* Preuves 69
    - *b)* Peines 70
    - *c)* Exemples de condamnations 71
    - *d)* Responsabilités 71
    - *e)* Héritage 72
  - D) Position de la femme 74

Pages

II. — *Evolution actuelle de la société bambara* 76
  A) Evolution politique 76
  B) Tendance aux changements économiques 76
    a) Urbanisation 76
    b) Développement de la grande exploitation agricole 77
    c) Conséquences sociales 77
    d) Chambres de commerce 78
    e) Réglementation du travail. Syndicats 79

Chapitre VII. — **Aspects culturels** 80

I. — *Religion* 80
  A) Cosmogonie 81
  B) Conception de l'homme 83
  C) Le rituel, le sacrifice et les cultes 84
  D) Les religions nouvelles : Islam et Christianisme 86

II. — *Les techniques* 87
  A) Les techniques du corps 88
    a) Conception 89
    b) Rites de naissances 89
    c) Circoncision 91
    d) Excision 92
    e) Mariage 93
    f) Mort et funérailles 94
    g) Culte des ancêtres 95
    h) Autres rites 95
  B) Techniques spéciales à usages généraux 95
    a) La pêche 95
    b) La poterie 96
    c) La forge 96
    d) La vannerie 97
    e) Tissage, vêtement, parures 97
    f) Forme des agglomérations, types de maisons 99
    g) Tombeaux 102

III. — *Art* 103
  A) Sculpture 104
  B) Céramique 105
  C) Peinture 105
  D) Musique 105
  E) Littérature 107

Conclusion. — **Caractéristiques mentales des Bambara** 109

I. — *Interprétation traditionnelle des caractéristiques mentales* 109
II. — *Réfutation de la théorie traditionnelle* 110

Bibliographie 113

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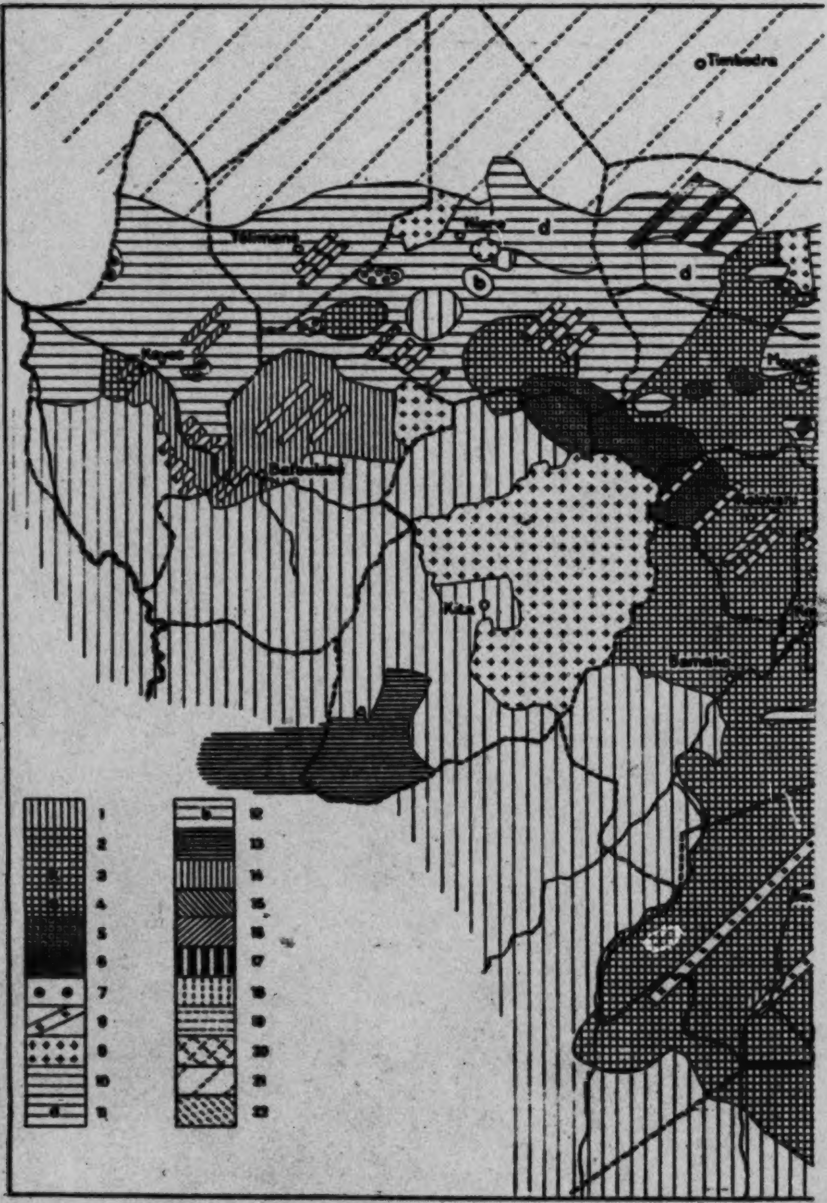
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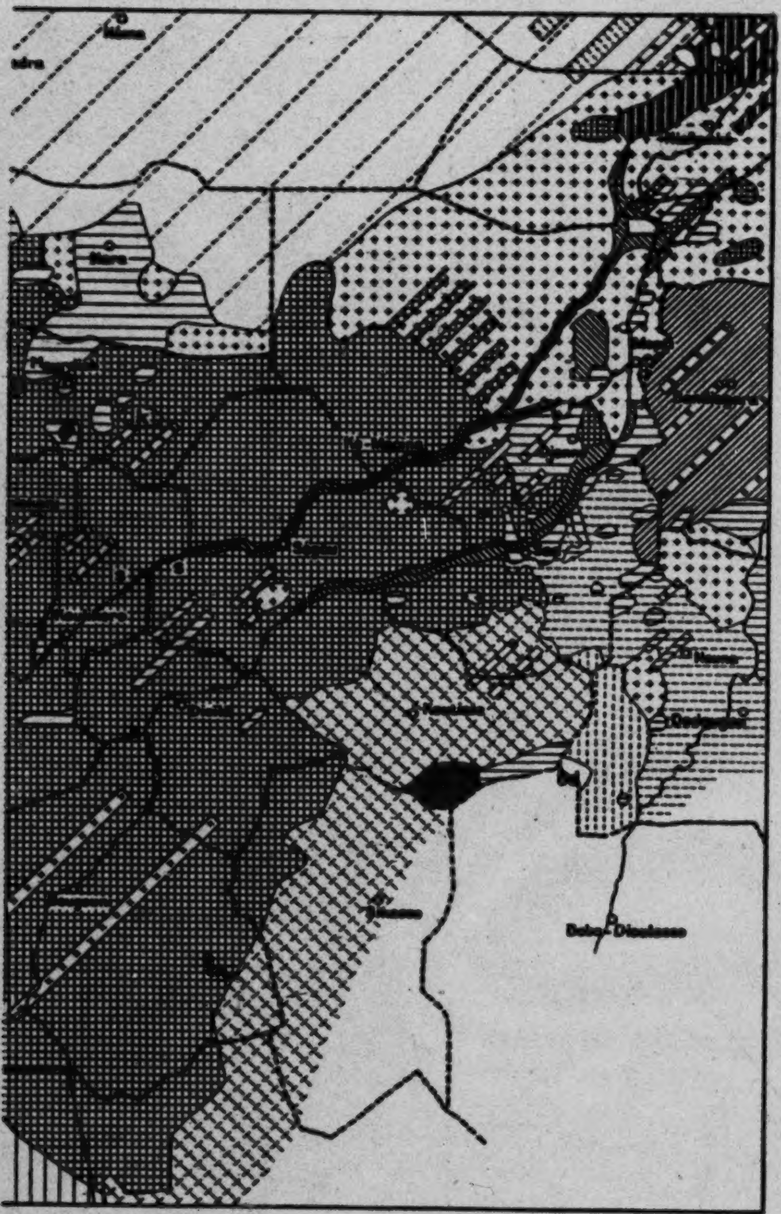
CARTE DES POPUL.

1. Malinké. — 2. Bambara. — 3. Kalonga. — 4. Somono. — 5. Kagoro
9. Peul. — 10. Sarakolé (Soninké, Marka). — 11. Diawara. — 12. Dia
— 16. Dogon. — 17. Songhaï. — 18. Bobo-Fing. — 19. Bobo-O

------ Limites des subdivisions Les bandes

[End Map (A)]

LES BAMBARA
Carte des populations



POPULATIONS

Kagoro. — 6. Dioula. — 7. Toucouleur. — 8. Diawambé. —
12. Diarisso. — 13. Diallonké. — 14. Kassonké. — 15. Bozo.
Bobo-Oulé. — 20. Somono. — 21. Maure. — 22. Touareg.

bandes obliques indiquent des populations mélangées

[End Map (B)]

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The Soul of an African People
The Bambara
Their Psychic, Ethical, Religious, and Social Life

/L'ame d'un peuple africain
Les Bambara
Leur vie psychique, éthique, sociale, religieuse/

By Father Joseph Henry

Münster, 1910
Bibliothèque-Anthropos, Vol. 1, No. 2

Translated from the French by Anne Coleman

Human Relations Area Files
1960

/Title Page/

Table of Contents

800

Page

Introduction /not translated/

Chapter 1. Bambara Mentality.

1. Beliefs concerning the Forces of Nature 1
2. Taboos 5
   Legend of theTwo Kouloubali 8
   Legend of a Branch of the Taraoulé 9
   Legend of Another Taraoulé Branch 10
   Legend of the Two Djara 10
   Legend of the Samaké 11
3. The Gnâma 17

Chapter 2. Animism and Its Consequences.

1. Beliefs about Spirits 19
2. Sorcery and Priesthood 23
3. Metamorphosis 29
4. The Dja 33

Chapter 3. The Bambara's General Ideas on Human Life.

1. Sickness 35
2. Death 38
3. The Reincarnation of Souls 48

Chapter 4. Bambara Ideas Concerning God, Invisible Beings, and Adam and Eve.

1. Belief in God 53
2. The Saraka 56
3. The Bambara Belief in God is not of Islamic Origin Any More Than Are Their Ideas on Heaven, Hell, and the World of Invisible Beings 59

Chapter 5. Fetishism among the Bambara: The Worship of the Gnéna. Classification of the Gnéna, Who Are Identical with the Arab Djiné.

1. What is Meant by Gnéna, or Djiné 81
2. Gnéna Who Dwell in the Bush 83

3. *Gnéna* Who Roam the Village and Its Environs 85
4. Genie of Ponds, Springs, and Wells 88
5. Genii of the Crops 89
6. Genii Protectors of Children 90
7. The Genie Protector of Circumcised Youths 93
8. The Women's Genie 95
9. The Twins' Genie 97
10. The Genie Protector of Villages 99
11. The *Koté*, or *Koré*, Genie 104

Chapter 6. Worship, Celebrations, *Saraka*, Sacrifices, and Dances in Honor of the *Gnéna*.

1. The First Two Groups of *Gnéna* 107
2. The *Gnéna* of the Third Group: The Eight Categories of Powerful *Gnéna* 110
The *N'tomo*, The Special Children's Fetish 111
The *N'golo*, The Special Fetish of the Circumcised 115
The *Mouso Ka Djiri*, The Women's Special Fetish 116
The *Sinsin*, the Special Twins' Fetish 117
The *Dasiri* Fetish, Protector of Villages 118
Election of the Priest 118
Choice of the *Dasiri* Fetish and His Sacred Mount 119
Enthronement of the *Gnéna-n-sonnaba*, Priest of the *Dasiri* and *Dougoutigi*, Head of the Village 120
Sacrifices Offered to the *Dasiri* 121
The Formula of the Sacrifice 123
The Semioccult Society of the *Koré*, or *Koté* 125

Chapter 7. The Worship of Satan, or the Worship of the *Gnâ*, or *Boli*.

1. What is Meant by *Gnâ*, or *Boli* 130
2. The Legend of the *Boli* 133

ODD

3. *Boli* Whose Power Is Slight 139
4. *Boli* Whose Power Is Great 144
5. Differences among the Powerful *Boli* 150
6. Talking *Boli* 167
Concerning the *Sirikoun* 168

Chapter 8. The First Years in the Life of a Bambara.

1. Sexual Morality of the Bambara 168
2. Concerning Adultery and Fornication 172
Abortion 177
3. The Birth of a Child 179
4. Tattooing 187

Chapter 9. Circumcision in Bambara Country.

1. The Importance of Circumcision 189
2. The *Soli Si Festival*, or the Vigil of the Circumcised 192
3. The *Da Woro* Festival, or the Sixth Day Festival 198
4. The Festival of *Boloko Déou Don bo*, the Coming Out of the Circumcised and the Excised; the Real Entry into Civil and Religious Life 210
Chapter 10. Bambara Marriage. 216
1. The Marriage Proposal 217
2. The Diviners and Fetishes Accept or Reject the Suitor 219
3. The Betrothal 222
4. The Wedding of a Young Bambara Girl 226
5. Exhibition of the Bride's Trousseau on the Evening of the First Day 234

Chapter 11. Bambara Burials.

1. The Grave and the Cemetery 236
2. No Sacrifice to the Shades of the Dead 237
3. Respects Paid to the Uncircumcised 238
4. Burials of the Circumcised, Old People, Heads of Families, Married and Unmarried Persons, Pregnant Women 240

000

    Burials of the First Category, Those of Old People 240
    Burials of the Second Category, Those of Heads of Families 248
    Burials of the Third Category, Those of Married Persons Who Are Not Heads of Families 249
    Burials of the Fourth Category, Those of the Unmarried 249
    Burials of Women Who Were Pregnant or Died in Childbirth 250
5. Sacrifices to Fetishes on the Occasion of a Death 251
6. Respects Paid to Initiates of the *Koré*, or *Koté* 255
7. Burial of the Excommunicated 257
8. Worship Accorded to the Dead 259

The Soul of an African People
The Bambara
Their Psychic, Ethical, Religious, and Social Life

/12/

Chapter 1

1. Beliefs Concerning the Forces of Nature

181 It would seem child's play to demonstrate to a Negro the absurdity of his prejudices and his superstitious practices; yet such a demonstration does not suceed. No matter how clear and simple your arguments may be, you will not succeed in bringing into his mind the least spark of light or the slightest doubt. The o do, "that's it," and tigné, "that's true," which spring so readily from the mouth of one whose eyes you try to open, are polite sayings, and nothing more.

There is no reason to be surprised. Being incapable of long meditation and broad reasoning, he does not grasp the illogicality of his beliefs and, the contradictions in his behavior; he believes what his fathers believed and, like them, he sacrifices, so that everything with which he comes in contact is reddened slightly with blood. Your talk at once surprises him and leaves him cold; he does not understand you or grasp what you say; he even finds you a little silly. If he does not dare to admit this feeling to himself he stops with the words: Toubabou do! (This is a white man! Can he think and judge as I myself judge?").

In addition, his beliefs are linked to one another, and if we are able to get down to his level, taking care all the while to raise him to ours, if we judge as he judges and think as he thinks, we will move from surprise to surprise, more than ever, for his conception of the world and ours are not at all the same, and his mentality and ours are different from each other.

181 Every non-Mohammedan Bambara considers himself a close
811 relative of animals and plants and, I may add with all assurance /13/,
772 a close relative of inanimate things. Without any doubt he distinguishes

181 the kingdoms from each other; for him a mineral is not a vegetable
811 nor a vegetable an animal. He differentiates between the animate
772 and the inanimate and does not confuse the genera and species. But has he known how to establish a definite, clear, and well-demarcated line of distinction between man and the rest of creation? No, he bases his ideas of all things on himself or, to be more definite, on what he feels and believes himself to be. In addition to genii and spirits, he sees conscious forces and energies everywhere in nature. He cannot define these forces; his ideas on the subject are confused and indefinite. But, nevertheless, it is true, that he attributes a glimmer of reason and feeling to everything. Obviously the black man does not attribute a soul -- in the sense that we understand it -- to everything; nor does he say that everything is the home of a genie or a spirit; yet he cannot conceive of pure matter. He finds instinct in animals and special virtues and properties in plants. In inert matter he encounters phenomena which he cannot explain, and since he always uses himself and his reasoning as the basis of comparisons, he endows everything with the immaterial, invisible, imperceptible attributes of reason and feeling. In his mind I repeat, matter is not a soul, or a genie as he conceives of one; yet it is a being, a force, a power that has its own existence and the ability to act of its own accord. Here are a few examples taken from a thousand:

811 In July, 1908 at the time when the crops were sprouting, cer-
731 tain regions of the Ségou circle were invaded by tiny caterpillars measuring barely 0.025 meters in length. They were a beautiful
782 velvety black with pale green lines on their sides; they came from the
825 east out of no one knows where and myriads of them proceeded toward the west in serried ranks. Wherever they passed everything was eaten, and the eleusine /African millet/, corn, and sorghum had to be resown.

While these creatures were devouring the crops, the Moslem cried his insignificant formula toward the east and repeated, "God is great." He prostrated himself, crouched on his heels, devoutly shaking his forefinger, but all was in vain, for the quivering black wave continued to draw back on itself, to hump its back, and then to grow longer /14/; it continued to advance and to grow. The pagan

811 whitened the front of his dwelling with a mixture of millet flour and
water that had been offered to the shades of his ancestors, and poured
131 chicken blood here and there; then he thought it best to meet in
782 council and consult his sorcerers. The same orders were given every-
825 where: a potentate, perhaps a prince, doubtless of the caterpillar
people, was celebrating his wedding and respects must be paid to him. All the pagan villages did so, and the marriage of the caterpillars took place one fine morning at daybreak. Two or three caterpillars were placed at the bottom of old worn-out gourds and carried far up a path on the west side and out of the village by a procession of women and girls, singing and dancing, and preceded by furiously beating drums. They placed the little creatures on a spot determined by the elders and, after a wild dance they made their farewells, foolish farewells, stupid perhaps and yet nevertheless touching. For if the young people called to them with a long burst of laughter: "I na somaon fo (you will greet your people)," and some old shrews in a tone of command cried: "Ta so! (Go home!)," there were more who said to them: "Toumouni (little caterpillar), an bi déli (we implore you) have pity on us, go back now to your kingdoms; everything is eaten, and there is nothing left. Go, bring greetings to the people of your family, greet them all and greet them well."

They continued to come through for at least eight days, but their number decreased and a storm came and swept them away. Every Bambara will tell you that these caterpillars do not talk, that they have no soul. And yet if you try to make him understand that he has rendered them futile, useless, childish honors and that they could neither enjoy his music and songs nor understand his prayers and supplications, he will shrug his shoulders: "Tigné o (you are right)," he will tell you with a mocking air, and cutting your talk short will add: "Ou tara!", and one who knows the Bambara will guess the full implication: "Nevertheless, they left."

In August, 1908 a large part of the population of the villages
825 located in the environs of Ségou spent the day of Friday the twenty-
787 eighth in sweet idleness. Since I knew that a Kono fetish brought
by its masters to recruit initiates was going from village /15/ to

825 village, I thought at first that here lay the reason for this rest, extraordinary
781 during the time of the most intensive hoeing. Not at all; the
pagan Bambara were resting, and the women were giving their husbands
[262] and children dégé (millet flour mixed with milk and honey
water) in obedience to a hyena's command. The hyena, it was said
-- and all the sorcerers confirmed this -- had emerged from its dumbness,
its tongue had been loosed, and it had predicted to the people
of the west that a plague even more terrible than that of the caterpillars
would descend on the country. Only one means to avert it
remained: to refrain from going to the fields on Friday and to treat
themselves to dégé, the food so dear to Moslems.

482 On my excursions I have often met men and women carrying
757 on their heads a gourd or a basket containing a handful of leaves or
824 some bundles of roots, and apart from the customary greetings it
has been impossible for me to get a word out of them. And why this
784 silence? They were carrying a medicinal plant, a remedy which
would lose all its virtue and all its efficacy if they conversed on the
way, and they had to take care not to trample such-and-such a plant
that grew on the edge of the path.

757 The Bambara quite readily names the plants and herbs whose
curative powers are known to him, and yet in the presence of a sick
753 person he will very seldom give you the name of the remedy the
784 latter is taking, or the names of the roots and leaves that make up
his poultices. Sickness, he believes is a force, a power which tortures
our bodies. He is afraid that in naming the remedy he would provide
this power with a weapon against its healing virtue, which is
another force or power. He sets the second power against the first
to make it leave.

811 It is evident that he attributes bits of reason and emotion to
784 everything, that he attributes human feelings to all that is animate
and inanimate. The "taboos" are not merely one piece of evidence
of this, they are an irrefutable proof of this attitude.

2. Taboos

614 The Bambara people are divided into several families or lineages
825 each of which bears a special name, or *diamou*, and sees at its head
784 /16/ certain plants or animals as protectors and patrons. The *Djara* lineage claims kinship with the lion, the *kana*, or iguana (1), the *boumou*, or *dondol*; the *Dambélé* with a large black monkey called *Ngoba*; the *Tankara* with a spiney silk-cotton tree, the *dondol*; the *Kouloubali* with the wild pig /*biche cochon*?/, the *Mpolio* (2), and the panther. There is not a lineage that does not have one or even several *tné*, or taboos. As will be seen below, lineages of the same name often regard themselves as bound by a tie of fraternity and friendship, while a difference in the *tné* shows, that a division occurred at some particular time.

Europeans, churchmen, military men, and civilians, usually call the Bambara *tné* "totems." Since Long, the one to speak first of "totemism" and "totems," this question has been treated at length by serious and distinguished authors, by competent authorities. Their definitions cannot be applied to the Bambara *tné*. Striking as is the resemblance of some of them to the totems of the Redskins and the Australians, I cannot apply to them the definition given by Nicolay in speaking of the Redskins: "The Redskins also believe in the existence of spirits peculiar to individuals (as fetishes are to Africans) and which, in animal form, bear the names of totems." (3) The

[136] 1. A kind of large lizard resembling a small alligator. It lives on river banks and near ponds, and though it prefers the land and climbs trees, it likes to play in the water. The French commonly call it *gueule tapée* /"smart jaw"/.

2. A slimy and spined fish.

614
825
784

3. /Fernand/ Nicolay, /Curiosités des lois et coutumes./ Histoire des croyances, /superstitions, / moeurs, /usages et/ coutumes /(selon le plan du Décalogue) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. The History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Manners, Ways, and Customs (according to the outline of the Decalogue)/. / Vol. 1, Book 1, Chap. 1. /Paris, 1901.?

Bambara tné are completely different from fetishes and have nothing in common with the latter. In a chapter (1901, p. 61) of his work, "myths, cultes et religions /Myths, Cults, and Religions/, A. Lang defines totemism for us thus:" The word "totemism" or "totamism" was applied for the first time by Long. . ., to the customs of the Indians. . which acknowledges kinship with animals. . . . Totemists spare animals which are of their flesh and blood. . . ." According to A. Lang, the Redskins and Australians believe themselves to be truly and physically related to the animal-totem, and they number among their grandparents /17/ a doe, a toad, an ant, a rabbit, etc. All actual physical kinship is of course communicated by means of blood, and two beings who have in their veins the blood of the same individual are related. In order to be of the same flesh and blood as their totems, the Redskins and Australians thus believe themselves to be actual sons of an ancestor who formerly was a doe, toad, ant, rabbit. . . . In Chapter II of his work Histoire des croyances, moeurs et coutumes, Nicolay gives one to understand that the Redskins believe that at the moment of death the spirit of their ancestor found shelter in the body of the animal which serves as totem; is it possible that Lang, who is silent on this point, is unaware of Indian beliefs in metamorphosis and metempsychosis? He does not report the fact anywhere in his work Myths, cultes et religions, but whatever hypothesis one may make on this point, the fact remains that according to him Indian beliefs imply a real physical kinship. If one assumes that the first ancestors of the Indian were changed or metamorphosed at some

614 825 784 given moment into a doe, toad, ant, or rabbit -- a singular evolution if ever there was one, one may suppose that at the moment of the metamorphosis these animals did not exist and they are all, men and animals, of the same flesh and the same blood; or, more plausibly, the ancestors changed themselves into already existing animals, procreating among them does, toads, ants, or rabbits as they had formerly reproduced human beings, so that in killing one of these totem animals a Redskin must always be afraid that he is killing a son or grandson of the ancestor, or some other of the latter's descendants, and therefore of his own flesh and blood (1).

> 1. /sic/ A. Lang does not seem to doubt that the people of whom he speaks -- Redskins, Tahitians, and Africans -- give a very broad meaning to the words "father," "mother," "brother," "wife," "son," and that they customarily use them to refer to persons with whom they have no bond of kinship.

[578] There is nothing like this for a Bambara. To call someone a wild animal is in his eyes an insult, and to call a man the son of a dog (*òulou den*) is enough to make him angry, to throw him into a fit of anger; even if he has a dog for a *tné*, that is a wrong which will sooner or later be avenged. He does not number among his ancestors a dog, or a panther, a lion or a snake. A *Kouloubali* would be much surprised to learn that a doe gave birth to him, and there is not a Tankara who thinks he has /18/ the sap of the *dondol* or the juice of its fruit in his veins. When a *Djara* calls himself the son of a lion, or a *Dambélé* the son of a big black monkey, what they say must be understood in a very broad sense, as an analogy. We ourselves say of a special benefactor: "He is my father," "he is my mother," "he is my all."

171 614 825 784 Here the Bambara is akin to the Christian Quichés of Guatemala of whom D. G. Brinton speaks in his "Nagualism," 1294, -- O. Stoll

171 in his *Die Ethnologie der Indianerstämme von Guatemala* /The
614 Ethnology of the Indian Tribes of Guatemala/, Leyden, 1882. This
825 work is cited by Lang in Chap. III of *Mythes, cultes et religions.*
184 His *tné* is a friend, a protector, and may be defined as follows: it is
an animate or inanimate being entitled to the respect and veneration
of an entire lineage, family, or clan, in recognition of an outstanding
service which has prevented the lineage, family, or clan from disappearing or becoming extinct, or has preserved them from a misfortune.

173 Every *tne* has its legend. Although in the mouth of the black
614 man the tale may be embellished and decorated a little so that it
varies somewhat, the substance remains the same. I will translate
539 a few of these legends, preserving both their form and their substance.
184
825

Legend of the Two *Kouloubali*

The people were at war; everywhere there were only fugitives. The *Kouloubali* lineage had been cruelly stricken and reduced to two members, two brothers lost in the bush with their wives and children. The elder who followed /sic/ his brother at a distance, (since for fear of being surprised, they avoided camping in the same place). He arrived at the bank of a swollen river and saw he could not cross, there being no boats. "Where can I flee now?" he lamented. "I am in the hands of my enemies! For me and my family it is death or slavery." A *mpolio* was passing by; it heard, was touched by compassion, and, raising its big, bearded head out of the water, called to him: "I can take you over, have no fear!" The elder of the *Kouloubali* and his family, with their weapons and baggage, settled themselves on the slimy back of the strange fish and crossed the river. Then he said to the fish: "Listen, good *mpolio*, my brother and his family are over there on the bank. Do not render them the /19/ service that you rendered me, for he is an ingrate, one without a heart, and he might kill you." -- "Kill me? Come now!" and the fish dove, disappeared, and emerged far over near the other bank, at the moment when the young *Kouloubali* was wondering how his older brother had been able to cross such a wide

773 and deep river when there were no boats. "It is thanks to me," said
614 the mpolio, "place yourself on my spine as he did." And so the
539 younger brother and his wives crossed the river.

784 The young Kouloubali was heartless. When the women had put
825 down their gourds and baskets on the bank, at the moment when the mpolio leaped up and raised the full height of its body out of the water in order to dive and disappear, he threw his spear at it. The fish struggled for an instant, the water foamed, reddened, and then there was quiet: it was dead.

The family of the young Kouloubali cut up the animal and, without shame or remorse, invited the family of the elder brother to come to the feast. "Eat the mpolio," cried the latter, "never! And may there be a curse on any of mine that dares to eat it." Since that day, the mpolio has been the tné of the descendants of the elder Kouloubali.

To some extent it is also the tné of the descendants of the younger brother, but they eat it except for the head.

Legend of a Branch of the Taraoulé

A woman saw all her children die, and so she trembled for her last born, a sickly, puny little boy whom her milk did not help. One day she was alone in her hut crouched on her mat with the child on her knees, spinning cotton when she began to cry and moan: "You will not live, you will join your elder brothers, you will go away and leave me alone." A spitting snake was passing by; he came in and gently coiled himself around the body of the child. The mother let out a cry, and the neighbors came running.... The snake slowly uncoiled and left the dwelling while the child held his arms out to it and smiled. He did not die but became strong and healthy, for the snake had drunk all the gnâma, all elements of illness that were in him. From that day on the Taraoulé branch of which this child is the father does not eat the spitting snake, or n'gorono, for the curse of the ancestor would descend on them: that is, the spitting snake is their tné. /20/

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Legend of Another *Taraoulé* Branch

773 A woman was fetching wood in the forest when she was seized
614 with the pains of childbirth. "All alone, what will become of me?"
539 she cried. "I have no one to help me; who will wash my child? Oh!
784 I will take a corpse home with me." She knelt by her load of wood,
gave birth to her child, collapsed, and lost consciousness. A big
825 black monkey was munching fruit in a near-by tree; it saw her and
was moved.... It played midwife, washed the little creature, rocked
him in its arms, and when the mother came to herself it gave her back
her little boy. From that day on no descendant of this *Taraoulé* branch
eats *ngoba*; this big black monkey is their *tné*, and the ancestor
would curse anyone who did so.

Legend of the Two *Djara*

Two *Djara* brothers with wives and children were fleeing before their enemies. Overcome with fatigue they sat down in the shade of a *dondol* determined to go no farther. Actually, they were so plagued by thirst that they could not go on. An iguana was wandering in the vicinity; it had pity on the two *Djara*, so it climbed the *dondol* and, working with its tail and feet, succeeded in producing a gentle dew under the tree. All were able to quench their thirst with the sap held in the calyxes of this tree's blossoms. "The *kana* (iguana) shall from now on be my *tné*," said the elder, "and I curse any one of my descendants who kills or eats it." -- "Think it over," said the younger, "is it not to the *dondol* that we owe our lives? Is it not its sap that quenched our thirst? Would it not be better to take this tree as *tné*?" The two *Djara* argued, could never agree, and separated. The *kana* became the *tné* of the older branch, and the *boumou*, or *dondol*, that of the younger branch.

Legend of the Samaké

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614 My grandfather has often told it to me; he himself got it from
539 his ancestors. . . . A Samaké -- I cannot tell whether he had been
784 fording the river or driving the stakes to which fishing mats are fastened
825 -- was seized by an alligator which dragged him to the depths of its
den. The alligator did not kill him, /21/ for it had fed. . Leaving the unhappy man to his sad thoughts, it withdrew. . . . It did not go away, however, and from time to time it hit the water with its tail at the entrance of the hole, making it quite clear that there was only one way out and that this was the door. Stretched out in the ooze, the unhappy Samaké moaned: "Who will save me from those terrible claws and those powerful teeth?" An ant lion at the top of the den was watching for flies and ants in the bottom of its pit; it had pity on the man and, working with its two horns, succeeded in bringing in a ray of sunlight to revive the hopes of the Samaké. "Will I be saved?" he asked the ant lion. Two pinches of sand were the answer, and he understood. Working with both hands, he helped the ant lion; the hole grew and he was able to get through. He escaped. When the alligator re-entered its den, exhausted with hunger, it was disappointed not to find its prey there. So as not to invite the curse of their ancestor, the descendants of this Samaké respect and venerate the géré, or ant lion, and it is their tné. Other Samaké have the elephant (sama) for their tné.

773 These few legends are sufficient; they all show us that although
825 the Bambara believes that the bond with the tné is simply one of
811 fraternity, friendship, and gratitude and not a bond of real and
772 physical kinship, he nonetheless does not fail to attribute reason and
emotion to everything around him, to animals and to plants. In nature he does not find pure matter; rather he attributes human feelings in some degree to everything, and throughout he sees a force, a power, an intangible, which he does not know how to define and which thinks, loves, laments, and weeps.

582 The Bambara tné differs further from the totem of the Redskin 614 and the Australian: it creates no obstacle to marriage between lineages of the same tne or of different tne. Each man takes a wife wherever he finds her and where he thinks best, and through these alliances the lineages mingle, cross, and recross. They do not merge, however, [571] since the husband keeps his name, or diamou, and with it his tné; he does not take that of his wife. As to the children, they have their father's tné, and his only, and it is his name, or diamou, they bear. /22/

184 The Bambara tné is nothing less than a taboo /sic/. The word itself is very vague and difficult to translate into our French language. It implies primarily a prohibitive command, an order not to do, not to act. Whenever a competent authority -- an alleged genie, such as a boli (who speaks and gives his oracles through the mouth of a herald or interpreter, the djélimac) or a priest of the genii (djiné) believed to preside over the elements, the dougoutigi (who actually does nothing without consulting his council and the sorcerers) whenever the sorcerer (the intermediary between man and the invisible world) or a priest of the shades of the ancestors' (1) --, that is, an authority of a religious character, forbids eating, killing, or looking at an animal; cutting, breaking, or using an object; drinking such-

[596] 1. This term seems to me the most accurate. Undoubtedly, the gouatigi, or head of the family makes the sacrifices, but his position does not always correspond to what we call in French the father of the family. He is not always married; although all the family except his mother, brothers, and sisters call him m'fa, "my father," the word "father" should be taken in a very broad sense, as he is quite often only a grand-uncle, an uncle, or a cousin.

784 and-such a liquid, that animal, object, or liquid assumes a certain sacredness, and the Bambara calls it a *tné*. It thus conforms to the definition of a taboo that A. Lang gives us in Chapter III of his work *Mythes, cults et religions*, and Nicolay in Chapter II, Volume I, of his work *Histoires des croyances, moeurs, coutumes* also says: "To be taboo is to be marked by a religious sign."

The *tné*, or taboos, are legion in Bambara country. Not only does each lineage have its own, but the *goua*, or families, the confraternities, villages, individuals, genii, and plants also have theirs. Many are permanent in that they are perpetuated from generation to generation. Others, on the contrary, are impermanent; they pass, fall into disuse, disappear, or are dropped as soon as they become inconvenient. All depends upon the authority from which they are derived.

Taboos can be divided into five groups. There are lineage taboos, family taboos, taboos of the *djiné* genii and the *boli* genii, and finally plant taboos. I have given some legends concerning lineage taboos (see p. 8 ff.); these are permanent, passed on from generation to generation, and cannot disappear. /23/ They embody the idea of the ancestor, not in the sense that they merge and become one, but rather because the animal or plant has saved the stock by saving him. The *tné* have become the fathers of the Bambara in the broad sense of the word; they are, on an ancestor's name, or *diamou*, like armorial bearings on a shield, and a Bambara cannot rid himself of them. The ancestor has bound himself to the *tné* as a result of a service rendered, and his oath has made the union so close that if one disappeared the other would disappear with it -- how could one repudiate someone who is, and was, an ancestor and whose name, or *diamou* one bears!

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Family taboos also have their legends and resemble those of lineages. They are different, however; the service was rendered to a member of the family and not to its head. In addition, the taboos are less extensive and include only a part of a species or race. To cite just one example, certain *Dambélé* may not buy, raise, kill, or eat a *da-n-fign*, or black dog, but they are not thereby prevented

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[362] from owning, killing, or eating a dog of another color; a dish of dog is even a delicacy served during orgies in honor of the fetishes *Nia*, *Komo*, *Kono*, *Nama*, etc. The dog is taboo for them, but only the black dog, and the reason is as follows: A *Dambélé* family was working their fields, and every noon the wife in charge of cooking brought them gruel. One fine day the cook, seeing her child asleep, laid him on the mat and left.... Hardly had she reached the field when the big black dog arrived, yapping and whining, running toward the village and coming back, and yapping and whining even more. This performance puzzled everyone, and they all dropped their hoes and followed the dog back to the village. The dwelling had been consumed by fire and was only a pile of ashes.... "My child, my child," cried the mother at once, desperate and wild with grief.... And the dog pranced around her, put its paws on her shoulders, licked her with joyful growls, and seemed to say to her: "Have no fear, I have saved him." It had in fact saved the child; seeing the fire in the dwelling, it thought of the child, took him gently in its mouth, and carried him to the hut where karité nuts were being roasted. They found him there, well and safe, sound asleep, and from that day on they took the black dog as *tné*; all the family respected and /24/ venerated it, and their descendants still respect and venerate it today.

784 Family *tné* sometimes become taboo for a whole village. For example, where the *Dambélé* of the black dog are powerful because of their number and especially through their affinal ties, members of outside lineages avoid raising these dogs or eating their flesh, out of respect for the old people and to spare the feelings of their wives and families. Little by little the custom takes root and the animal becomes a *tné* or taboo for everyone.

Its durability, however, is nowhere near that of a lineage taboo. A *Dambélé* woman married into a village where the black dog is not taboo may refrain as much as possible from eating its flesh, but she will not fear it long. Little by little the taboo is forgotten, and only a vague memory stays with her: "*An dougou tné do*, for the village I came from it is taboo," she may say, but it will seem to her that for her it is no longer so. As to members of outside

784 lineages, they usually abandon such a taboo as soon as they leave the village, and if, because of the habit they have acquired they abide by it until their death, their children give it up.

Carrying his organization into the world of invisible beings, the Bambara endows the latter also with tné, or taboos, and make these his own. Not only are the sacred woods taboo, together with all they contain, but there are also ways of acting and behaving which displease the spirits, and some animals have the capability of making them angry. When a woman comes back from the forest with her fagot of wood on her head, she must unbind it before entering the village or do so on the public square. In some places shoes are removed at the door of the entrance hut, or b'lon through which the village is entered; elsewhere the people take off their caps; and no one ever whistles in the lanes without incurring the hatred of the invisible beings. Partridges, which are numerous in the fields around the walls, must never get into the village except dead and plucked, and children who catch them in their nets never break this custom.
[787] If by mischance a partridge flies across the village and cackles in passing, all the population is in turmoil, and for three nights thereafter men, women, and children sleep under the stars. Often, /25/ depending on the oracles of the sorcerer, they even leave their homes and build them again a short distance away.

776 The genii called boli are the terror of women, children, and
784 the uninitiated, who cannot touch any object used in the ritual and who may not enter their sacred woods and their sanctuaries. The
778 boli (1) have tné, which are taboo for their owners and those that sacrifice to them, and which sometimes also become taboo for their children. One of the strangest is the tné or taboo of the Bara, which is millet beer, or d'lo. Its owner and the person sacrificing to him must avoid drinking beer if possible, and if the habit is too established

1. The term boli denotes any evil fetish, and hence any object used by an evil spirit or demon as his dwelling. See Chap. VII, 1.

776 among them, they take a complete bath before touching the fetish
784 or sacrificing to it. Usually the tné of the boli is an animal, and the
778 whole family takes it for their own. A palm rat, succulent as it may
be to a Bambara palate, will never be eaten by the owners of Bama-n-djigi and their children: it is the tné, or taboo, of the fetish.

784 I have found no tné for animals, but many trees have them, as do medicinal plants, and when these must be used for particular purposes, they must not be placed in contact with, whatever they abhor or are supposed to detest and which in the eyes of the black man is nothing less than their tné, or taboo.

Men and women, young and old, must venerate and respect their tné and those of the genii, and even children know from their earliest years that they cannot see, kill, or eat a certain animal, that they cannot touch, cut, or break a given tree or plant, without incurring either the curse of the ancestor or the anger of the genie and losing their sight.

The severity of the punishments which hang over every Black who forgets the respect due to the tné (especially to his lineage tné and those of the boli fetishes), and hence the fear of incurring them, seems at first quite tyrannical. It is not as great as one would think, however, since the Bambara is a very good casuist when his person and his interests are at stake, and all the prohibitions except those against consuming certain /26/ meats and certain drinks are but a game.

For example, a Dambelé who sees a band of black monkeys ruining his fields and stealing his crops does nothing to stop his dogs from chasing them, and if a friend of an outside lineage comes to help and shoots them, he will have no regrets. A greater confidence is shown by a Djara when a lion ravages his herds: he goes to meet it and begs it to go away, which, according to the Black it always does.

784 When the carcass of a taboo /sic/ is found by one of the people
of the lineage which it protects, it usually receives the honors of
766 burial. The Djara, whose tné is the lion, even perform the burial
with ceremony: the women weep, the drums beat, and the men offer the lion a piece of cloth, in which it is rolled before being put in the grave.

784 602 576 One might perhaps think that it would be very difficult not to see one's tné....? In the Sudan good manners require that people discipline their glances from their earliest years. A son-in-law lowers his eyes in the presence of his mother-in-law, a daughter-in-law turns her back at a three-quarters angle out of modesty in the presence of her father-in-law, and when a lover goes to win over the father of his fiancée, she runs away and hides. Any Negro, however poor his manners, will direct his look no one knows where, into space or upon his toes, every time he greets anyone and hears his news, and will chat with a person for a quarter hour without ever looking at him. No more is asked for the tné. Undoubtedly a Bambara shields himself with both hands in its presence... and he plays the young daughter-in-law; he knows well how to differentiate between seeing and looking, and he knows how to tell you at the time, however little he is accused: "Né y'a yé tigné, n'ka, nè gné tount'a la, né m'a flè. I saw it certainly, but I did not leave my eyes on it, I did not look at it."

3. The Gnâma

789 778 626 The tné are rendered sacred, above all, by the curse of the ancestor. Nothing is so much feared by the Bambara. To be cursed, and cursed by his father, is the greatest evil that can befall a man; his wives would run away from him, his children would blush to call him "father," his /27/ friends would abandon him, the people of the village would be terrified to speak to him; he would have to flee. And where would he go? The gnâma of his father, of his ancestor, of his fetish's tné, would cling to his steps and follow him everywhere. Only suffering would be left for him; sickness, hunger, poverty, and humiliation would be his lot and, rejected by humanity, he would die in despair.

789 778 The word gnâma is very difficult to translate. Does its equivalent exist in our French language? Gnâma is a force, a power, or also perhaps a /kind of/ energy, a fluid possessed by every man, every animal, every living being; it never disappears and continues to exist even

789 778 after death. This energy, this fluid, is the envoy, messenger, or emissary of hatred, vengeance, and justice, and it goes wherever it is sent by the will which is its director and master; it goes wrongly or rightly to bring misfortune, poverty, sickness, and death. The word gnâma is constantly heard from Bambara lips.

789 The song of young girls who have been excised begins with these words:

778 Bo n' yé, gnâma, o gnâma, bo n' yé!
304 Go away from me, gnâma, oh, gnâma, go away from me!
539 Dankoun bâ la
(i.e., Gnâma who dwell) at the great corner of land formed by two paths that cross.
Gnâma fambali, bo n' yé!
Gnama who kill, go away from me! (1)

> 1. Translation: "Go away from me, all kinds of gnâma, who dwell at the big dankoun (a corner of land formed by two paths that fork, intersect, or cross at the exit from the village)! Gnâma who kill, go away from me!"

789 778 The ears of those who consult sorcerers have had their fill of this word: Gnâma djougou bi é nofé. A malicious gnâma is chasing you, so avoid this and that, kill a goat, a chicken, or a dog, place a gift of cowrie shells, a kola nut, etc... in a certain place. Nonté i fa gnâma na ouli i la, otherwise the gnâma, the avenging force possessed by your father, will rise up against you.

Always, the word gnâma carries this meaning of a force, a power, a fluid that causes sickness, suffering, and death. The following proverb alone expresses much of its meaning: Ni warani-n-kala ko, /28/ ka fa, gnâma si dé t'o la. If the panther (a tyrant as wicked as a panther) says, "Let us kill him," we surely have no gnâma to set against him (no force or energy that we might set against him as a counterbalance to the force of his gnâma).

789 178 825 153 [751] Animals also have gnâma, and the gnâma of birds are among those most feared. By preference, they attack little children, who die in convulsions as a result; it is impossible to mistake the cause of their illness and death, since the hands and feet of the child curl up like a bird's claws. Birds are thought to be especially wicked in winter time, undoubtedly because they nest, find plenty of food, and are big, fat, and vigorous. During that season mothers tie around the necks of nursing infants a string that has nine knots in it, which places them under the protection of their gnâma. Birds keep their gnâma even when dead, and I remember that in November or December, 1907, all the village of Songhobougou attributed a small influenza epidemic to the death of a big black bird (the djougo), which a European killed in one of their fields. "We have pains in our kidneys, we have pains in our throats, and we cough," they said dismally, "and the hunter is to blame for it all. Toubabou ko té vva? A ye djougo do fa en ka forola, djougo gnâma do.... It is the European's fault, he killed a djougo in our fields and we are weighed down with gnâma." /29/

Chapter 2

Animism and Its Consequences

1. The Beliefs about Spirits

776 The Bambara has not deified the forces of nature. Although in some instances he shows them respect and fears them, he leaves them without priest, /sacrificial/ victim, or altar: he is not a "nature worshipper" in the strict sense of the word; his true religion is animism. His spiritualism knows no bounds and he sees genii just about everywhere. The bush is full of these spirits; they lodge in the trees or lounge astride branches; they run around the outskirts of villages; splash in ponds and wells; they pull themselves onto high rocks,

termite nests, and mounds, and like very much to crouch in the corners formed by paths that fork or intersect. Inside the villages there are also those that roll in the ashes of the hearth and stir the fire, while others watch over the household utensils -- pots, gourds, plates, and all the kitchen implements. The b'lon (vestibules or entrance huts) through which a village or a dwelling is entered are nests of genii. Individual homes are definitely not private, either; all the horns, rags, pieces of wood, and gourds, dusty and black with smoke, that are piously hung over the doors, on the beams that support the flat terrace roofs, on the walls, and pretty much everywhere, are dwellings of genii, or votive offerings in honor of those who fly in the air or run through the outbuildings.

The Bambara has not been able to rise to the conception of a complete immateriality. Although he attributes some invisible, intangible quality to everything, /30/ he also attributes to everything some material aspect or body. He thus arrives at the strangest ideas, since his imagination carries him toward the world of spirits or genii. These, with whatever name they are invested, dress in clothes and collect gold and silver, have sex and procreate; they are also seized by the lowest, vilest, and most contemptible passions. They are jealous, hateful, and intemperate, and they do evil for pleasure. The Black very seldom shows them as good, compassionate, or merciful. The life they lead is not in the least edifying; they go from orgy to orgy and are constantly fighting among themselves.

One might say that the genii are terrible tyrants, always ready to pounce on poor humanity. They are not all equally powerful or equally wicked. The Bambara divides them into two quite distinct groups: those who can directly grant a favor and, if they wish, do good; and those who can only do evil, although they can refrain from it. He makes the same petitions and uses the same words in sacrificing to both, but the words have a different meaning. When said to the first group, the words "give us rain, wives, children, prosperity," are a direct request; the words become an indirect request when addressed to spirits of the second group. In the latter case they mean "do nothing to deprive us of rain, wives, children, or prosperity."

776 In a word, "if you must work your wickedness on someone or on something, let it not be on our persons or on what belongs to us."

The spirits of the first group are *gnéna* (1), better known under the name of *djiné* (Arabic word الجنّ imported by the Moslems), and those of the second are *gnâ*, or *boli*.

As conceived of by a black man, the *gnéna*, or *djiné*, are not strictly speaking angels; they are beings intermediate between angels and men. Not only do they eat, drink, procreate, pursue well-being and wealth, they are also /31/ subject to the physical and mental suffering that afflicts human beings, and can die as the victims of the hate, vengeance, or wickedness of a stronger being. Their priests [793 782] are the *gnéna-n-sonna* or *dougoutigi* (village chiefs whose jurisdiction is religious and often also civil), and the sacrifices which are offered to them are addressed indirectly and in a very vague and very confused way to a Supreme Being. This vagueness and confusion is apparent especially at the present time, since all ideas of the Divinity are disappearing more and more every day; but it is likely that, in the beginning, God had a greater part in the honors rendered to His deputies, to those whom He appointed as guardians of the elements, dividing among them the empire of His creation.

The *djiné* remain subject to the authority of the Creator. They have not cast off the yoke and, wicked though they may be, they have not ceased to be good. If they wish, they can do good, protect men, and grant them favors. They punish and chastise because they are above all responsible for the welfare of humanity.

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1. Women and also children often refer to both the *djiné* and the *boli* under the generic term *gnena*, and in the presence of the uninitiated, initiates use these words without making any distinction. It is nonetheless true that the word *gnéna* denotes a genie called *djiné*, and the word *gnâ* a genie called *boli*.

776 They are the necessary intermediaries between man and the Divinity, and since each has absolute authority in its sphere. The black man must appeal to them first of all in all his needs. Consequently, these spirits have assumed a dominant place in the Negro mind to the detriment of God.

776 829 Every *djiné* can appear in human form, and when it does so it wears a white skin and his appearance does not differ from that of a European. Many a time I have heard women, young girls, and children whisper behind me: "*A gné dé djémé wala-wala déren*! *a boloou be iko djiniou ta tjoko*, *ne bi siran*, He has white eyeballs! his arms are like those of the genii, I am afraid...." This seems strange and leads one to think that this concept developed after the arrival of white men whom, not without reason, they regard as being superior to them in every way. However, I believe that it antedates our arrival. The old Bambara who told me that Mage and Quintin, held prisoners at Segou by King Amadou (أحمدو) until the death of his father, Omar el Hadj (1), were regarded by them as *djiné* seemed to me sincere, for an old legend states that during in /32/ one of their migrations the Bambara skirted a country inhabited by white men who resembled genii in every way. I might also add that white is the
[822] liturgical color in formal sacrifices to the *djiné*: hens, goats, sheep, even kola nuts -- short of the impossible -- are white in color, undoubtedly because of the people's notion of the color of genii. When traveling Europeans ask their hospitality, they do everything possible to find a white hen to offer them; they believe that this is the way they can most honor their guests because of the color of the latter's skin. The old men think also that we French have intimate

1. El-Hadj-Omar, or Omar the Pilgrim, so called because he saw Mecca, was at Ségou around 1835, 1837, or 1839, sometime before the death of Tjéyolo, which occurred around 1839. See Introduction /not translated/.

776 829 contact with the genii and know their family names, or diamou; however little they may be at ease with a Frenchman they will beg him to show them the place where a well should be dug, convinced that we know where live the spirits who are appointed to watch over water. Do we not bear them a certain resemblance?

776 The gnâ, or boli, also are sexed; they reproduce and found families. They are superior to the genii in power and wickedness, and, except indirectly, capable only of evil. They are at open war with God who, without taking away any of their intelligence or liberty, has condemned them tosuffer and to undergo the punishment of fire. They continually set up ambushes against the djiné to make their plans, good or evil, miscarry; they take pleasure in tormenting men, and the Bambara fears them greatly. The worship of the djiné is nothing compared to what is accorded them. Those considered most powerful have an entire retinue to serve them and to render them [651] honors and, as will be seen later, the head tax of 3.50 francs per head is nothing compared to the sums the Blacks spend to ward off the blows of the boli and avoid their wrath.

Like the djiné, the boli appears in human form, but it is disgusting and hideous to behold. All those upon whom the favor of an appearance is bestowed are frozen with terror; the body of the boli is terrifyingly black, and its face disappears in a flame above which rise horns.

[782 822] In the sacrifices to the boli the liturgical colors are black and red, and a white victim is never offered except in an indirect sacrifice necessitated by an offering called saraka, which is quite rare. /33/

2. Sorcery and Priesthood

152 Surrounded by spirits, by genii always seeking to harm him, a Bambara is quick to believe that he is the victim of one. This attitude contributes more than a little to give him a certain endurance manifested in the face of suffering. I would even say that he usually bears suffering, not with stoicism but with the torpor of an animal.

152 After all, what can one do about an evil that cannot be exorcised
except to bear it? What can one do against a powerful being that
cannot be disarmed? Nevertheless, in the depth of his being he feels
a need to enjoy himself (and enjoyment for him consists in drinking,
eating, sleeping, and procreating); therefore he feels a horror of all
suffering and neglects nothing that can protect him from it. In order
751 to live in peace, he reddens everything a little with blood and covers
789 his body with grigris or good-luck charms, with talismans that change
the course of things and even of nature, and lastly amulets which will
forearm him against poison, help him avoid an accident, cause the
sorcery of the malicious to miscarry, send away the *gnâma* of the
genii, of the living and the dead, and prevent the unknown forces
which are found more or less everywhere in nature from taking hold of
the wearer. For this protection they address themselves to the priests
of the *djiné* and the *boli*, and especially to the sorcerers who have
close contacts with the genii and are the mediators between man and
the entire invisible world.

776 Since the Bambara conceived the visible and invisible world as
782 similar to what he believes himself to be, he has come to believe
quite naturally and without any effort that the genii can be seen and
conversed with their language understood and, finally, that it is possible
to subjugate the forces of nature and hold them in one's power.
By making offerings and sacrifices or causing them to be made through
the intermediary of a priest, he can win a spirit's favor and thus
lessen his fears and terrors. But if the spirit is weak, they will be
ready to withdraw their attentions; it must be equal to the one feared
and if possible outdo it.

778 It is force, or, to use their term, *fanga*, that governs each
791 person's conduct toward his neighbor; to be obeyed, a man must first
cause himself to be feared, and only a powerful man will succeed
and see everything yield before him. /34/

The Negroes have seen people of low birth and poor family
succeed in increasing their property and become rich to the point
of where they have servants and slaves and dominate a whole village,
a whole tribe, or a whole people. Since they like to reason from

778 comparisons with themselves, they have thought that certain indi-
791 viduals could also create understandings in the world of spirits, and
thus become the spirits' equals and even command them and make
them obey. They firmly believe that such is the case, and although
there are many sorcerers, there are still more people who maneuver
to attain this position. Possession of the occult sciences cannot be acquired by anyone who wishes, however. The diploma or certificate of competence, cannot be obtained without swallowing certain mixtures of ashes, intestines, and blood, and certain repulsive eyewashes, such as the rheum from dogs' eyes, must be slid under the eyelids in order to see the invisible beings. In addition, unless a man is initiated by his father or brother, he must expect to pay a goodly sum. This is an art that pays, and generously! Every aspirant must also have a good memory in order to engrave in his mind the formulas, gestures, and rites; only the intelligent succeed.

791 The competence of sorcerers is far from equal, nor do they
proceed in an identical manner. Some read the future and discover
787 secrets in the entrails of hens; others play with knuckle bones, pebbles,
or cowrie shells (1) which they throw on the ground and count and recount, or trace cabalistic signs on scattered ashes, moving the forefinger back and forth, as in a game of Goose /a game played with dice on a board/. Some work with a gourd three quarters full of water, which they set on a *n'gô* (a kind of napkin ring or bracelet made of braided roots) washed frequently in the blood of /sacrificial/ victims. This procedure is the least complicated. The gourd is tipped right and left, forward and backward, until it sits firmly on the *n'gô* and can no longer be moved without carrying the stand along. Then the operator need only flick it three times with the middle finger of the right hand while stating the petitions..., and the spirit will answer in a soft murmur which those present can hear, but which he alone
791 understands. In a word, the /35/ good sorcerer stands out above the

[436] 1. /Torn page/ white /shells/ used as money.

791 rest of his fellows by intelligence, trickery, and deceit; the fool who vegetates is hardly patronized, for the crowd goes to the one who is craftiest, and if he is a diplomat and knows how to contrive matters to suit the occasion, he wins great fame quickly. Even while remaining a specialist (all sorcerers are to some extent), such a man is not slow to expand and, not satisfied with predicting the future, he plays the part in turn, of a doctor, a veterinary, and a pharmacist, and not a day passes when he does not find a new recipe to make his love philters, amulets, good luck charms, and talismans. Often, too, he will show off out of a desire for glory and will prescribe that a family, a village, or a whole region perform sacrifices called *saraka*, a kind of offering or tax which is usually placed at the corner of land formed by two paths that fork or intersect.

The practice of sorcery in Bambara country is what most defeats our logic. While some sorcerers address the *djiné* genii directly and begin their formulas with an invocation to the Creator -- whom they call *An tigi, min yé fen bê tigi yé*, "Our master who is the master of all things," or *An tigi Alla*, "God our master," leading one to suppose that in the beginning the greatest part of the worship was directed toward God -- others petition at the same time both the *djiné* genii and the *boli* genii, now invoking God and now denying and even insulting Him all in one and the same session. A third group of sorcerers have a more clear-cut domain leaving aside God and the *djiné* genii, they address themselves to the *boli* and to them alone. They are real [484] globe-trotters and go from one village to another with their talking *boli* -- for it is said that they talk -- enclosed in a goatskin or, more often, in the hide of a wildcat, on the paws of which swings a little bell that announces their arrival to everyone. Usually they read the [787] future in the intestines of hens, which help them to tell fortunes and draw horoscopes.

A sorcerer is honored because he is feared and dreaded, and all his orders and prescriptions are followed to the letter. Nothing serious is done except through him. He is consulted about everything, even a change of dwelling or a move to a different village, or a journey of /36/ any length; men and women and entire villages through their delegations file before him in turn. The sorcerers hold the Bambara

791 people in their hands; it is they who guide them and force them into
obedience by predicting that those who resist will be afflicted with sick-
ness, all kinds of calamities, and death. They are capable of all
sorts of actions to preserve their prestige. They compound love
philters, talismans, amulets, etc., but they are even better at com-
[278] pounding poisons: they are familiar with Strophanthus and their mix-
tures of hyena intestines, excrements of human corpses, and saliva
taken from their mouths have terrible effects.

791 648 These makers of rain and fair weather, who predict the future, cast lots, and cure the sick are all jealous of one another; there is no unity among them, and since cowardice is each one's chief virtue, there is no fear for the moment that they will press toward revolt. However, one should have no illusions, for that good-fellow smile on the lips of the Bambara in no way gives a true picture of their feelings. They hate the French because they are conquerors, and especially because the French have forbidden them to take slaves, sell, or even own them, and because they cannot administer justice as they please. The elders, who were formerly so powerful, feel their authority decreasing little by little, and there is fury in their hearts. They tremble and are afraid, they dread our rifles and cannons, whose rumblings still ring in their ears; they believe France to be even greater and more powerful than she is. But if some day a bold, enterprising, and audacious sorcerer should appear, he would succeed in creating a temporary union between these divergent groups no matter how slight a control he achieves. Then, without any doubt, we would see partial uprisings like those so frequent among the Moslems. The latter have deep in their hearts a hatred of everything that is not Islam and are never so happy as when they can march behind a fanatical Marabout; certain Frenchmen, well intentioned I like to believe, who refuse to admit thousands upon thousands of conclusive facts, continue nevertheless to help and pamper them, because they do not know the Koran and its teachings. Urged by I know not what naive philanthropy, they warm a snake which will turn against us every time it feels strong enough /37/ to raise its head, and they are preparing bloody days for our colonies in the fairly near future.

793 776 The pagan priesthood -- like the Moslem -- also casts a halo of strength and power about its priest; he becomes the close friend of his fetish, and the latter often condescends to take his diamou, or family name, and become, for example, the dasiri, or protecting genie, of a village. Depending on the name of its owner, it will be a Djara or a Kouloubali or a Tankara, etc., etc.

793 554 An intelligent Bambara who, for one reason or another, cannot be a sorcerer, has one other means of becoming feared and powerful: he can become a gnéna sonna or dougoutigi (priest of the protecting fetish of villages, called dasiri), a gnâtigi or bolitigi (matter of a boli), or at least to belong to a retinue such as surrounds every powerful boli fetish.

793 There are curbs on the thirst for fanga, or power, however. The office of gnéna sonna is the prerogative of a particular family within which it is transmitted from brother to brother by right of inheritance, and not every Negro succeeds in obtaining a boli -- I mean an influential boli that would establish him among his people -- even though one can be obtained by purchase. A man desiring a particular boli must first form a retinue for it, and its members must be taken from the village itself; the mutual mistrust and fear of poison are so great that it is not always possible to do so. Beside the price to be paid, varying between 25 and 30 francs, there are the expenses of the konio, or wedding of the fetish (the purchaser marries his boli), which raise its cost to 60, 80, and sometimes 100 francs. Furthermore, there is a mass of liturgical formulas to be engraved in the memory. These must be learned in every detail, for the omission of one sign or gesture, the garbling of one formula can easily incur the disfavor of the fetish, which is relentless with one who is careless and causes him to perish! It should be added that before a person can reward himself with such a luxury as the acquisition of a fetish, he must consult a sorcerer and take his advice, and if he is not rich and already feared, the sorcerer knows how to place his veto. For the mass
794 of the people there is thus only one way to be safe: to become
793 associated with sects, and with as many sects as possible. Through membership they earn the title of "sons of boli," and build relationships for themselves and make friends among those in power, the

774 773 *bolitigi*, the latter have every interest in protecting them, for not only do they pay /38/ their masters annual dues of 80 to 160 cowrie shells, which is little, but they also provide the meats and kola nuts for sacrifices and the *d'lo*, or beer, for the nocturnal drinking bouts and orgies, and thus are a real godsend.

3. Metamorphosis

776 789 The Negroes say that a *djiné* or a *boli* genie can pass from one body into another. Today it may paddle in a pond, be enclosed in a tree, or sit on a rock; tomorrow, if it wishes, it will make its dwelling in a cow's tail, in a horn, in a dirty rag. Whatever its dwelling may be, it is never confined. The Negroes compare these spirits to the wind, to a breath which enters and penetrates into a space through the smallest crack and fills it. Yet they have bodies and are equipped with organs; they drink, eat, and procreate and differ from man only in their tenuity. Since the Negroes are convinced that certain people have become able to master and command the spirits, could they not come to believe that it was possible to attain, like them, a rarefied state? In any case, they do believe in metamorphosis, and it is by entering into an animal or plant, or changing himself into an animal, a plant, etc., that the wicked person succeeds most often in avenging himself, in appeasing his hatred, and even in doing evil for the mere pleasure of doing it.

789 564 754 A good number of sorcerers have this privilege, and sorcerers are not the only ones! Entire castes have the power of metamorphosis; among others the *Koulé*, who dig out canoes and mend cracked gourds, can all change themselves into hyenas. The sons of the *Siri*, who are members of the sect dedicated to the *boli* of this name and are called *souba* (1) because they commit their crimes during the night, change

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1. The name *souba* is derived from *sou* ("night") and *ba* ("great"), *ma* ("man"), being implied. It means "a man of the great night," "men

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> who operate in the depth of night," but by no means refers to nocturnal sorcerers. Moreover, in the eyes of the Negroes it designates not a bugaboo, but a reality.

themselves into hyenas in order to dig up corpses and eat them, and into gingin ("owl," "screech owl") to drink the blood of sleeping men and women. It is said that the blood of young girls has an especially exquisite taste, /39/ and when the souba are unable to enter a dwelling in material form to obtain it, they change themselves into such a rarefied breath that they go through the walls and roofs.

753 789 754 All persons whose faces are disfigured with scars resulting from boils or canker sores are considered victims of a souba, as are those whose legs are rotted by syphilis; every person infected by erysipelas goes to the members of the Siri sect, the souba.

791 789 In addition to the souba there are the gné-fla (1), men with

> 1, They are supposed to have the ability to make themselves invisible by means of grisgris hung on their belts. Deprived of these, they are powerless.

two eyes, with second sight, so called because they see the world of invisible beings and know the secret thoughts of men without having to undergo metamorphosis. Some of them are good and some evil; there are those who use their prerogatives to halt the blows of the souba and protect their fellows, and others who use them only to harm their neighbors. As the good as well as the evil can abuse their power, the Negroes keep them all together, and since the souba are almost always gné-fla as well, they are indiscriminately feared and hated.

789 When a person is metamorphosed into something else he keeps his intelligence and his reason, but he is dominated by an instinct, either good or evil, which destroys his will and anesthetizes him.

789 It is impossible for him to resist this force, this power which seizes him and forces him to act. His mercy or his rage is exercised on the first person at hand; he does not even spare those who are dear to him, and his children, his wives, and his friends quite often become his victims. He has one excuse: he remembers nothing -- for a very good reason -- and if he does remember, it seems to him that he dreamed.

794 789 The *Siri* sect, which admits women to its ranks, hides its mysteries in such profound secrecy that it is impossible to have a really accurate and precise idea of them, at least for the moment. Nor is it possible to know who is a *souba* without being a *souba* oneself; one can only guess. If someone were to denounce his fellow as really being a son of the *Siri*, he would be declaring himself to be a member of the sect, and the vengeance of the people would fall on both the accuser and the accused. /40/

Belief in the *souba*, the *gne-fla*, and in all those people metamorphosing themselves is most childish, and like all Europeans I have treated it as a myth, a daydream, and a bogy used by men to terrify women and children. But now, I must state that the contrary is true: this belief is generally held and is firmly entrenched in minds of the Bambara, and anyone who would try to prove the impossibility of metamorphosis to one of them would appear a fool in his eyes, for to him it is a fact (1).

1. The Siri sect, whose members are known in the Ségou circle as the *souba*, and among the Malinké, the people of the Worodougou, etc., etc., as the *soubaga*, resembles the cannibals of Uganda, the *Basêzi*, and the cannibals of the Ouchirombo, the *Baswêzi*. These cannibals are not a separate people (in a given family some may be *Basêzi* or *Baswêzi* and others not), but members of a sect similar to that of the Bambara *souba* and capable of the same transformations

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and metamorphoses. Although I have no precise data, this coincidence leads me to think that the same is true of cannibals of the Ubangi.

782 To be convinced one need only be present at the sacrifices; no matter whether the offering is to the *djiné* genii, the *boli* genii, or to the shades of ancestors, there recurs, always, the phrase: "Deliver us from the *souba* and the *gné-fla*." One of the chief functions of the *boli* fetishes is just this, and there are some whose special and primary role is to make war against the *Siri* genii. One of these fetishes is the *Nama*, a powerful *boli* which is greatly honored, venerated, and, I should say, fashionable in the Ségou circle and among all Mande peoples. The *Ngouansa*, known especially in the Worodougou, is also said to specialize in this sphere. From time to time it makes its appearance in the Ségou circle, and its owner without fail does his bit of business and fills his purse. People run to him from all sides bringing hens, goats, and kola nuts, and I have seen these *Ngouansa-tigi*, or masters of a *Ngouansa*, red with blood after spending the entire morning sacrificing. Before cutting their victims' throats, they stand, facing east with arms akimbo, and shout at the tops of their voices: "*Souba*, you are dogs, you are even less, the excrements of dogs, *oubou bo*."

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Would the name of the *souba* and the *gné-fla* be heard so often from the lips of the Negroes, would families, villages, and sects /41/ spill so much blood or offer so many kola nuts, if they did not sincerely believe in them? Not only do they find an irrefutable proof of the possibility of metamorphosis in the fact that the caterpillar turns into a chrysalis which becomes a butterfly, they will also tell you that the winged termite, "that short-lived creature which on winter evenings comes in swarms around the lights, scattering wings everywhere, in the soup and on the plates," buries itself in the ground, swells like a sorghum seed, grows roots, and becomes a graceful shrub and then a beautiful tree provided it is spared by fire. I do not know the scientific name of this shrub or tree, but the Negroes call it *sandéré*.

4. The dja

774 Here again is a word very difficult to translate into our French
778 language. We use dja to translate the words "phantoms," "pictures," "photographs," "shadows," "that which is reflected by water or by a mirror"; but there are other meanings, and there is no question of shadows or images in the following sentences, for example: a dja tikéra, a dja oulila, misiou dja oulila. They mean: "he is afraid," "he is crazed," "the cows are crazed." In the eyes of the Bambara, the dja is not only the shadow, the image, or the outline of objects, it is also that which makes them manifest. It is a force, a power common to beings of all kinds, and even though it cannot be compared to a genie or a soul, they nevertheless think of it as a kind of being which they are unable to define but which has its own existence and can act of its own accord.

[791] The gné-fla, whom I mentioned when speaking of the souba,
774 are feared because they see the genii and our private thoughts, and
184 also because they practice sympathetic magic, by taking possession of that which makes the shadows of persons and things. The Bambara is convinced that his dja can be taken, and when this occurs he henceforth no longer casts a shadow. Although, because of their fear of the Europeans and in some cases because they have long been in contact with them, the Bambara may readily pose before a camera, one can nevertheless say that, in general, they do not like to be photographed. Particularly the old people object and begin to resist /42/ as soon as they see a lens. They have the notion in their heads that their dja will escape from them to make an imprint on the plate and leave its form there, and that this form will comprise the portrait, thus placing a part of their being in the hands of the operator and
[828] themselves at his mercy. They fear lest, as a result, they lose their shadows and the ability to cast them, and thus become idiots.

774 Even though the Bambara cannot explain their ideas on this subject, these closely resemble the theories of Mr. de Rochas, discussed by Monseigneur Méric in Volume II of his work, Imagination et Prodiges /Imagination and Marvels/ /Paris, 1905/. The dja is something similar to what English psychologists call a double and

774 the French a phantom. It may be regarded as a kind of fluid, having some degree of consciousness and capable of escaping from the animate or inanimate object to which it belongs, without becoming completely separated from it, and giving that object a shadow, bearing its external form and outline, as well as the imprint of the fear, sorrow, joy, and sadness which may be reflected on a person's face. A dja may also escape and separate and detach itself completely, but nevertheless retain the external form of the object which it left. When a dja leaves its object, it stays in the neighborhood or goes wandering far off, and the being that it has left sees this double or merely feels it, or may even be unconscious of its existence.

774 828 For the Bambara, a dream is not a product of the imagination; it is a reality. They say that while they are asleep their dja sometimes escape and wander far away, and there they actually see and chat with friends, attend real feasts on real drinking bouts. A person is not surprised to awaken after such a dream with a dry throat and an empty stomach, for what he saw, drank, and ate were the dja of things and people, nothing more tenuous or imponderable, and only his dja saw, drank, ate, and enjoyed himself.

787 A dream is quite a deceiver, and its external realization is unusual, but it does sometimes occur. Certain Negroes are famous because they know how to interpret dreams, a knowledge not available to everyone, or again because they know how to dream and prophesy /43/ the more or less immediate future. They have a booth which is fairly well patronized; people consulted them and bring them cowrie shells. There are even people who run and tell them about every interesting story they dream, and since these people take precautions afterward not to miss some predicted piece of luck or to avoid a misfortune that threatens, they are aided in the realization of their dreams without suspecting it, and these results constribute not a little toward fortifying their false beliefs. /44/

Chapter 3

The Bambara's General Ideas on Human Life

1. Sickness

152 753 In his innermost being the Bambara feels an ever unassuaged thirst for happiness, an intense and pressing need to live for enjoyment; therefore he revolts against all suffering, both physical and mental. It seems unnatural to him, and at the least discomfort a person will state and believe that he is the victim of malice, of an enemy who is taking vengeance, and he immediately blames the world of invisible beings and those who have intimate relations with it.

753 Not only do the Bambara consider sickness unnatural, they consider it a more or less conscious force which comes to torture them. For fear of displeasing it or of displeasing the genie, the superior force which has taken it into its service and is using it as it pleases, they surround themselves with precautions against announcing the sickness of one of their people. When one asks a Negro for news of his health, his first answer will be that he is well, and if a member of his family is confined to his mat in agony, he will still tell you: "Toro si t'âla (1), he is suffering no pain."

1. Toro, "suffering" ; si, "not any"; te, "is not"; â la, "on him" (la, "on").

755 The sick have unlimited confidence in their sorcerers, who are all doctors and apothecaries, and they submit blindly and without any argument to their orders and prescriptions. From them they receive herbs and leaves, and the infusions or brews made from these are prescribed as beverages or lotions, but most /45/ frequently the sorcerers rub their clients' bodies and gently stroke them, anoint them with oil and grease and spit on the affected part while reciting a formula. And always, of course, the number of grigris and talismans in the possession of the patient is increased by several items.

755 The sorcerer consulted by a sick person explains to him the nature of his illness, tells him whether he is the victim of the hatred of a fetish in the service of some one malicious or envious, or of an enemy who is taking his own vengeance; or whether he is the victim of a gnâma, that fluid, that avenging force which every genie, every man, every animal, and both the living and dead possesses. In serious cases the patient is ordered to sacrifice many hens and quite often nanny goats and billy goats, but in cases that are mild or considered so, the remedies are more childish: should I mention a few?

To cure a headache, the sorcerer sticks the blade of his knife into the ground and places a cauri (1) at the base of the handle. After having spit on the cauri and the knife handle, he lays his hands on the patient, who gazes at him; he recites a formula, and, if the sick person is not cured when the prayer is finished, he must at least feel an appreciable improvement, and he always says he does: "A kaf'sa san, I feel better now.

The sovereign cure for leucoma, they say, is a pinch of powdered hyena dung placed in the eye. Because it is rare and costly, the remedy cannot be bought by all, and powder of cauri shells is substituted for it. This powder is obtained by rubbing a cauri on the stone for grinding millet, a very long process. In order to apply oneself to the task as the old women do, more than training is needed; it calls for patience, or rather, a passivity which cannot be defined.

In cases of ophthalmia and other eye diseases, the temples, the eyebrows, and the tops of the cheeks are greased with kana mixed with a little karite (2) butter. The kana is always enclosed in a bull's

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[436] 1. A small white shell used as small change; at least 40 are needed to make a sou, or 0.05 francs.

[137] 2. Karite, or butter tree, Bassia parkii, genus of the Sapotaceae.

755 hoof or in an ox's horn; these horns and hoofs /46/ are often decorated with *cauri*, and from time to time the blood of a victim is poured on them. If a disease is a force, a power which torments human beings, the remedy is another force, another power which is opposed to the first and fights against it. In order to obtain the good graces of this second force as well as its efficacy, people feed it with blood. The *kana* is of general use; it cures all ills a little, and just as each *boli* fetish possesses a *korti*, or harmful powder, enclosed in a horn, so also it possesses its *kana*, or healing remedy. Since there are as many different *kana* as there are fetishes, and since, independent of these, the sorcerers also have theirs, the *kana* are legion and cannot be counted. It is impossible to say what goes into the making of a *kana*, and the Negroes themselves do not know; they know that charcoal powder goes into it, and that is all. A sorcerer of *Kolo. n. kolona*, much consulted for orchitis, varicocele, etc., etc., uses glow worms dried in the sun and crushed with a handful of wood charcoal.

Wounds resulting from a bruise caused by a blow or a fall are
[752] treated by throwing a handful of ashes into them. The ashes are obtained from dry leaves gathered in the evening in complete darkness under trees deep within thickets, and at random and without looking.

To cure a malady called "strained back," one or several snake sinews are worn as a belt. A hen's craw, exposed to the sun for three days and then cut into thin slices and swallowed with all its contents, will develop an appetite for you for the rest of your days, to the point
[752] of insatiability. For burns a poultice of rabbit fur and barbs of guinea-fowl feathers is the sovereign remedy.

To treat rabies, the Bambara have no need of the Pasteur Institute or serum. A person who has been bitten by a rabid dog climbs on a nearby bush, a friend comes and cuts it down, the whole thing falls and rolls on the ground, and rabies are no longer to be feared; they are entirely exercised. A thread on which a *cauri* is strung, knotted
[751] around the loins, protects a child from blackwater fever, and a string with seven or nine knots, called the *tafo*, when knotted around the neck, will save you from goiter, croup, laryngitis, a persistent cough, etc. The *tafo* is used in a general way, just /47/ like the *kana*; it is employed for almost all illnesses, and there is no malady that it

755 cannot cure. In order to become fertile, a sterile woman knots one* [842] around her wrist or biceps, and a strange *tafo* it is, taken from the skin of a monkey's hand.

Syphilitic children, covered with pimples and pustules of *magnan* -- the name with which they adorn this disease -- have chicken droppings for their *crême Simon*, and this is the ointment of ointments.

[843] Chalk is the specific for pregnant women; to ease the mild discomforts which generally precede maternity, they draw pretty white crosses on the abdomen or on the chest, between the breasts.

2. Death

761 195 If sickness is not natural, there is all the more reason why death should not be. In the eyes of the Bambara there is no evil comparable to it. They fear it and its very name makes them tremble. When it is necessary for someone to announce a death or refer to it, he quite often uses a circumlocution in the presence of a member of the family. At the death of a child it is in good taste to say: "*A sagira a ko*, he has gone backwards," and if the deceased was a grown woman: "She is no more, she has ended her career, she has been buried." The politest of all the expressions concerning married men who have passed from life to death is: "*A so yélémana*, he has changed his dwelling." The initiates of certain sects cannot bear to be spoken to about death, and the *korodouga*, of the *kouéré* or *koté* sects, for example, get up and leave in displeasure, no matter how little this subject is dwelt upon in their presence.

761 The Bambara are not unaware that Moslems, missionaries, and all Europeans make light of their fetishes and scorn them; therefore in the presence of any of these they direct to God the accusation that He has caused the death of one of their people. This procedure is only a courtesy, an indirect way of respecting the belief of those to whom they speak, whose life they share, and whom they fear. They know that God has the power of life and death over human beings, but they attribute death to Him so seldom, that during seven consecutive years spent in the Sudan I did not encounter a single instance.

/48/ Death is always caused by a wicked person, by an enemy who

*[i.e. A *tafo*, a string with seven or nine knots. —Analyst]

76 is taking vengeance, or by a djiné fetish also known as gnéna, by a boli fetish also called gnâ, by a souba or initiate of the Siri fetish who does evil for pleasure, or finally, by a gnâma, a force about which I have already said so much. Although they may assert that one can die of old age, their whole pattern of behavior and expression clearly shows that for them old age alone cannot cut the thread of a man's days; it is a grateful genie, the fetish of his favorite sect, and his family fetishes, if he has any, that come and take away his soul.

When a child has died expressions such as the following flow from all lips: "A fa gnâma do, it is his father's gnâma." -- "Souba do, it is a souba." -- "Kono gnâma do, it is the gnâma of a bird." -- "Djiné ou ta no do, it is the way the djiné genii behave." -- Since the djiné readily find homes in and on trees, the Bambara also have this easily understood metaphor: "A yéléla djiri djougou kan, he has climbed an evil tree," that is to say, he has displeased a spirit of the bush, either because he has climbed the tree which it uses as a dwelling or because he has broken its branches or picked its fruit. At the death of a young man, a young girl, or any adult, all the people of the village are plunged in sorrow, and one hears them repeating to each other: "Souba ta no do, that is the way the souba behave"; "ou yé korti sou a la, the poison of a fetish, the korti has been thrown at him," korti is the name of the poison; "doukono dir'à ma, poison has been poured for him"; "boli no do, that is how the boli fetishes behave," "Komo y'a fa, Kono (1) y'a fa, Nia y'a fa, Douga y a fa, etc.; it is Komo that has killed him, it is Kono, Nia, Nama, or Douga, etc., that has killed him." -- At the death of an old man who owned either djiné or boli fetishes, they say: "A gnénaou -- or -- a gnâou séra a ma, his djiné genii or boli fetishes have got to him; they have come to take him." If he did not have a fetish, his death is ostensibly attributed to old age, but one is given to understand that he was very specially devoted to such-and-such a fetish, which therefore is not unconnected with his death. I know the /49/ Bambara say to Europeans,

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1. Note that Komo and Kono are two different fetishes.

761 "Koroya do, it is old age," but let us allow them to finish their
sentences and continue their thoughts "a ko toun kadi Komo yé, he
was beloved by the Komo," -- "à ko toun kadi Kono yé, Nama yé,
Douga ye, he was beloved by the Kono, the Nama, the Douga," etc.

When people pass by holding a rooster or hen by the feet one
761 may wonder where they are going; if one follows, one finds that they
782 are going to the temple of a fetish, there to sacrifice and to redden
776 their god with blood. "A toun koromé Alla sérà à ma, he was old
and God came to him," is an expression which is rarely on Bambara
lips. When it is heard, it is used with a very special meaning; it
signifies that the old man in question was a good man, beloved by all,
even by God, but by no means that God killed him. The sacrifices
made on this occasion clearly demonstrate this, for they are all directed
to a fetish. If God alone were the cause and not the fetishes, the
family of the deceased would refrain from all sacrifice; at the very
most, it would offer a saraka by order of a sorcerer, but even the
saraka offered to God -- and they are offered to Him -- is not a sacrifice,
as we shall see later.

The priests of a djiné fetish and the owners and priests of a boli
761 fetish have the consolation that they always fall under the blows of
778 the genie which they hold and to which they sacrifice. As for other
mortals, 80 times out of 100, and one might say even more without
exaggerating, they are killed by a boli fetish. The Komo, Kono,
Nia, Nama, and Douga fetishes etc., are the chief murderers, and
entire villages are often decimated by them.

761 Although they are able to deliver blows on their own initiative,
they are often only intermediaries, the agents of a depraved will to
578 which they have offered their services; almost always there is either
674 a thrown poison, korti, or a poison that is poured, dounkono. Thus
754 sorcerors are consulted at every death; one is sought through their
mediation. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the great
maxim for the Bambara as for the Jews, and vengeance must be taken
on the one who was able to win over the good graces of a fetish and
force it to bring suffering or mourning into the bosom of a family.
This vengeance is obtained through the intermediary of a fetish, and

761 therefore secretly, and good relations between the actual /50/ or sup-
578 posed culprit and the unfortunate family are not broken in anyway.
674 The strange fact that has always surprised me is that all these people
converse amicably, do each other small favors, invite each other to
754 drink and eat, while in their hatred they maintain a constant guard.
They watch each other as they smile -- one party to protect their lives and their interests, the other to obtain vengeance. And on the day when it is least expected, that vengeance explodes inexorably. Cases of poisoning are not unusual in the Sudan, and it is not without reason that almost every death is blamed on the korti and the dounkono. I know that many die a perfectly natural death, and I have seen dropsy brought on by syphilitic consumption stupidly attributed to poisoning by the Komo, acute peritonitis to poisoning by the Kono, dysentery to poisoning by the Nama, undue swelling of the testicles with purulent abscesses, which were consequences of misconduct, to poisoning by the Nia, an abscess in the bladder to the Douga or the Nama. But it is a definite fact which I have noted many times in the course of seven years, and which any European living among the Negores can observe, however little he knows the language, the diseases which kills the natives is contracted when they return from a market, from a festival in honor of a fetish, or from a drinking bout where d'lo flows freely. The person's kidneys are hard and painful; his stomach causes him horrible suffering, his intestines seem to be torn by thorns, and there is complete anuria. In three or four days at the most his time is up.

The administrators at the head of a circle have all had to settle these cases which touch on the question of poisoning, and I doubt if there is one who has seen the matter clearly, so difficult it is to establish poisoning by korti and by dounkono. Let us refrain from throwing a stone at them; in a similar situation we would all be at a loss, for here there are always as many guilty persons as there are innocent, and all of them deserve the rope even while able openly to claim peace, liberty, and life. Since in the eyes of the Negro the fetish alone is guilty, there is a very simple means of stopping the decimation of the population and of allowing it to grow!

000 I pass over and do not dare to give this means: it is too radical, especially in our era; it is not anticlerical; it lacks breadth /51/ of mind. The fetish trees would have to be cut and burned, the boli confiscated, and their priests and owners employed in colonial works. Nor should the sorcerers be forgotten -- these men who spend their lives cheating people and stealing from them, who know only one kind of cultivation, the cultivation of laziness; finally, many schools would have to be opened. Paganism and barbarism would soon come to an end. The missionaries are there, ready to devote themselves, and they would ask no sacrifice from the treasury of the colony to do so; but the missionary has a morality which is too elevated, too noble, to be given to savages.... With what, then, is paganism to be replaced? With Islamism no doubt! Islam soils everything it touches, it abases a man more than it raises him. It is better to let the Negro redden the trees of his bush with blood, for he would gain nothing by the change. Every médersa (1), even that of djenné, is useless, nonsensical, and absurd; Arabic is not spoken in the Sudan, so what good is it to give the natives a language which is neither theirs nor French? Why should we want Islam in the Sudan? The villages are happy, full of zest; let us not try to make them sad and silent, let us not make them Arab villages, where one finds a human lizard on the street corner, lazily hidden in his burnoose and a hoarse dog barking on the walls, and where all the gates are shut. These Arab villages give the feeling of a prison, the chill of the tomb, and there is no liberty there except for vermin and lice.

754 674 If it is difficult to ascertain a poisoning by korti and by dounkona, here is the reason. When a Negro wants to take revenge, he goes to find a sorcerer to whom he confides his plan and gives his reasons. He is more interested in seeing his enemy suffer than in seeing him dead, and if he succeeds in injuring him and his family, harming his body and his possessions, he declares himself satisfied.

Sometimes the sorcerer undertakes the task, but he is cautious, knows how to contrive matters to suit the occasion. He can assume

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1. A médersa is an Arab school.

754 all functions to some degree, and it is to his own advantage to be con-
674 tent, in such an instance, with the position of solicitor; to whoever
/52/ consults him, he indicates a celebrated fetish in the hands of one
of his friends. The Bambara runs there without delay, and the master
of the fetish, generously and heavily paid, takes the god out of its
dirty goatskin. Onto one of its instruments (for a boli is manifold, and
[778] horns of cattle and antelopes, varnished with blood and brownish in
color, are mingled with other objects in the shape of an eggplant, a
turnip, a beetroot, a napkin ring, horse dung, etc., etc.), onto the
sirikoun, which is almost always wrapped in a red shirt front, he ties
firmly with a cotton thread seven straws five to seven centimeters
long. The petitioner explains his visit, names the enemy on whom
he wants to take vengeance, gives the reasons that compel him, and
the master of the fetish recites his formulas, reddens his sirikoun with
blood, and plasters onto its sides some spittle containing chewed kola
nut.

754 If the sacrificial hen dies with spread wings and breast on the
674 ground and if when split in half the kola nut falls with the pulp down
787 and the round side up, the contemplated revenge is put off until later,
for it is believed that the sacrifice has not been accepted. Our
Bambara then goes away, relieved of a hen, two kola nuts, and at
least 160 cauri, but nowise defeated; eight or ten days later he returns
to the charge, unless he is too impatient to wait and consults a new
sorcerer, who gives him orders to appeal to a fetish that shows a greater
interest and has a more enterprising and less timid disposition.

If the hen dies on its side or on its back with its feet in the air,
and if the pieces of kola nut fall on the round side with the pulp on
top, the sacrifice is accepted, and this is the god's answer to the
effect that he is taking his client's side. The enemy is thenceforth
754 placed under the boli a blara boli koro, the sanctioned expression;
674 he is placed under the avenging power of the fetish and is in its hands,
278 and the master of the idol, the sacrificer, and the people in his retinue
plot to make him disappear at once. They undertake the task them-
selves as seldom as possible, however; they prescribe sacrifices and
offerings to the client and give him a deer horn carefully tied up,
telling him how to use it. This deer horn is nothing less than a horn

754 674 278 of poison, and the brown powder concealed in it is usually Strophanthus seed /53/ crushed and kneaded into excreta of human corpses and saliva taken from their mouths. This mixture is dried in the shade and then wrapped in a piece of hyena intestine, and to render the effects more immediate and certain, the fetish is brought out and placed on this meal and a sacrifice made. These sacrosanct preparations are made at night, if possible in the first quarter of the moon, and never on a Monday or Thursday, which are days of rest for the boli gods (1).

527 776 1. The boli have two days' leave per week, and the Negroes also take this rest. However, they are broadminded on this point even though for certain labors they ask the religious chief or a sorcerer to be allowed to work. As a rule a boli may not go out Sunday or Monday night nor on Wednesday or Thursday. They quite often do go out, however, but only by command of the fetish or a sorcerer. To bring out a fetish is to spend the night dancing the dance of the fetish, and when the initiates want to dance they always manage to do so. The boli are also sacrificed to on Monday and Thursday even though they are at rest. In theory there is rest for the fetishes; actually, the idea is loosely applied.

754 674 To succeed and to keep from displeasing the fetish, who would then abandon your cause and turn against you, you must follow the prescriptions of the priest and members of his council to the letter; the omission of one rite, one sign, one formula, one imprecation, destroys the power of the poison contained in the horn, or at least renders it ineffective. Sometimes this powder is thrown and is called korti sou, and at other times it is poured and is called dounkono di.

754 674 The *dounkono* is administered or poured by sliding a pinch of it under the nail of the middle finger of the left hand and throwing it with a skillfully concealed flick into the food or drink of the enemy. Food sauce, *dégé* (millet flour mixed with water), millet beer (*d'lo*), and *di kolé* (hydromel) are suitable and without doubt easily poisoned.

Throwing poison, *korti sou*, remains the prerogative of the sorcerers, priests, and masters of the fetishes, and one must be somebody in order to use it (2). As with the *dounkono*, a pinch is slid under /54/ the nail of the middle finger, and with a strong flick it is thrown onto the enemy or merely toward him or onto an object which has belonged to him, and it is ordered to be effective, to kill him if possible, or at least to reward him with a sickness which he will long remember.

The Bambara fear the *korti* far more than the *dounkono* and if an enemy seriously threatens him with it they tremble. For a person so threatened is no longer dealing with a man, a power equal to his own; he must be on guard against an all-powerful god who places his strength and power at the service of the man. The force is submissive and obedient, triumphant and vengeful; it delivers its blows blindly where it is ordered and onto any person against whom it is aroused and against whom it is hurled. That, in my opinion, is the exact translation of the expression, *korti sou ma la*. As a dog is set on a person (*oulou sou ma la*), so *korti* poison is thrown at him (*korti sou ma la*).

The Negroes say that *korti* has a crushing effect: when it strikes you, you feel a violent upheaval throughout your body, your limbs stiffen, and you fall backward. You may die of the attack, but

[364 789] 2. There are many old Bambara who, after a meal with a neighbor or friend, mutter a prayer while washing their hands and make the motion of throwing *korti* poison. This is a curse which they throw against the enemies of the family that has received them.

754 usually you come back to life and get off with a fainting spell followed
674 by violent hiccups and vomiting (1). For several days afterwards, and sometimes several months, a malignant fever confines you to your mat, your limbs swell, deep and purulent sores cut into your body, and so you will drag on for months and months, incurable, and a burden to everyone and to yourself.

The korti sometimes strikes you in such an unobtrusive way that you do not feel it entering. You notice it later when sickness comes, and its nature is declared by the sorcerer, that infallible being who is never mistaken. /55/

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755 The Negro is almost without defense against the korti. A person poisoned by it must have recourse to a more powerful fetish, and he kills hens and goats in vain, for he seldom finds one. He covers himself with grigris, surrounds himself with talismans, and nothing does any good. Even the two little deer horns hung around his neck remain ineffectual and unable to defend him, holy as may be the powder they contain.

754 Against the dounkono, or poison that is poured into food and
674 drink, a victim not only has recourse to his gods and his grigris, which

1. Were I not afraid of provoking a smile, I would admit that in February, 1908, having gone to a Da woro, a celebration which takes place six days after circumcision, I was called by the master of the Komo and, when we were alone, he threw korti at me with the usual curses and left. Without doubt emotion as well as the fatigue of the journey and of the previous day had much to do with my reaction, but I immediately felt stomach cramps and held onto the wall so as not to fall. My discomfort lasted from five to ten minutes.

754 become detached and fall of their own accord "if they are well made
674 and have lost none of their complete power"; he also has a mass of antidotes. Almost always he escapes with nothing more than a few days on his mat and a good stomach-ache, and although his convalescence may be long and can sometimes go on indefintely, at least he is shown sympathy; he gets a big share in the sacrifices offered by his friends, and his broth improves.

754 If the korti are many and cannot be numbered -- "each fetish
has its own" -- the dounkono are still more numerous, for in addition
278 to the fetishes, the sorcerers, elders, men, and women, all know how to prepare a poison and give it whatever strength and power is desired. Every poison produces a special disorder in the body depending on the hand that throws or pours it. When in doubt, the Bambara consult the being who never deceives and cannot be mistaken: the sorcerer! And it is usually he who prescribes the antidote.

In the eyes of the Bambara, pouring poison (dounkono di) or
754 throwing it (korti sou) is a blameworthy act, and those who are guilty
673 of it have a dismal reputation among their fellows. One should not be surprised to see this crime remain unpunished, however, for in their eyes it does not bear the same odium as an overt or concealed murder by main force. I might even say, without fear of error, that this way of taking revenge is for them not a crime in the strict sense of the word. They so often have recourse to fetishes to settle a dispute and so readily threaten an enemy with the wrath of the gods, that taking vengeance through their intermediary leaves them calm and without any remorse. Besides, with what reproach should we reproach one who does so? It is true that he is cruel and without pity, /56/ but who gives power to the powder that he pours and the powder that he throws? It is the god, the fetish, and it alone is guilty! So let the enemy obtain the fetish's good graces and ward off its blows by sacrificing, let him set a more powerful god against it.

761 As one can see to the Bambara there is nothing natural about
753 physical and mental suffering and death; there is always an intermediary, and suffering and death are caused by an enemy who is taking vengeance, by a wicked person, by a sorcerer, or by a fetish.

3. The Reincarnation of Souls

775 It is a great surprise that the Bambara believe in the reincarnation
769 of souls. Some do not dare to believe in it because they sacrifice
to the shades of their ancestors, and others, "cultivated minds,
nourished by the sanest philosophy, " reject this belief as illogical,
since the religion of the Negro is the worship of the dead! They do,
in fact, worship the dead, but in the Bambara religion this worship,
extensive as it is, remains a detail, and not the foundation. To honor
the shades of his ancestors (but only of those who were heads of families,
so that the worship of the dead is already somewhat limited -- with all
due respect to those who see nothing but it), the Bambara family head
throws a big blot of chicken blood and a mouthful of chewed kola nut
onto the dégé, or millet flour mixed with water, and pours it onto the
wall at the entrance of his hut. He does so to implore the help and
protection of that power or authority which his predecessors possessed
in their position as family head, an authority exactly the same as
that which he himself possesses. He believes, nonetheless, in the
reincarnation of souls! This belief is general and universal among
fetishists, and if some do not dare admit it before Europeans and
[576] Moslems, their reticence is due to simple human respect, to a fear
of contradicting beliefs which they know to be contrary to their own,
a wish not to offend anyone and not to be the butt of laughter and
ridicule.

766 Infants who die at the breast before having achieved the use of
775 reason are buried in a corner of the inner courtyard and sometimes
even in the hut where they were born. Before such a child is buried,
one of its limbs, usually the big toe of the right foot, is broken, and
sometimes the father marks it with a knife on /57/ the shoulder, the
arm, or the chest. He thinks that the child who will come after it
will be animated by the soul of the dead one, and he neglects nothing
that might possibly enable him to ascertain whether it is. This
stupid and ridiculous operation is commonly performed under the eyes
of the mother, and some strange events occur. Since she must submit
775 to the will of her husband as soon as possible and have marital relations
826 with him, she soon conceives. During her pregnancy her imagination

775 826 may be active and in her dreams she may dwell on the events which accompanied the burial of her dead child. Thus, she sometimes gives birth to an infant which has the marks made by the father. Such occurences contribute not a little to "confirm" the Bambara's belief in reincarnation of souls. At Wélengéla, on the road from Ségou to Sens, there was a Negro who had a cleft upper lip from birth, and the people of the village were unanimous in giving the reason. His mother had given birth only to sickly and puny infants, all of whom died within few weeks. At the death of the last one the father, furious, cut his lip with a stroke of the knife. When he returned to life, the child did not want to take back the lip that his father had removed! I have seen others who from birth had a sort of tattoo on the back, chest, or arms, and the parents of each did not hesitate to tell me that it was the mark made on his deceased older brother.

775 551 Children born after a deceased sister or brother are given a special name; it would seem that the Negroes seek to make the soul of this small being feel how inconsiderate he was toward his parents in coming into the world and immediately leaving, after having kindled both love and hope in their hearts. Perhaps they also think to put on a good countenance before their fellows, for it is a great disgrace not to have children or to have only children who die at birth. Both theories are plausible, and the second would only be an expression of humility disguising a secret hope. The names most frequently given to these latecomers are: Malobali, "shameless one"; Ta fli, "go throw it away"; Foui té, "he is nothing"; Fou, "nothing"; etc. -- If the first theory that I propose is accepted these names would be translated as follows: "Are you not ashamed (i.e., to come into the world only to leave it so soon)?" -- "Might just as well throw you away, bury you (i.e., for all the time /58/ you spend among us)." -- "You are no good /literally, in French: "a being of nothing"/ (you are but a heartless one, you who come to us only to leave us in a short time)." -- "That is nothing." A Negro blowing on the palm of his hand gives us the full meaning of this word; the gesture translates his thought: "You are no more to us than nothing, are you not like a breath that passes and disappears?"

775 551 Like this first theory, the second, too, can be accepted, and the names can be translated as a lament of the parents to those who congratulate them: "He is without shame (doubtless he has come back to leave us again)." --"We may as well throw him away (i.e., will he not leave us shortly?)." -- "He is a worthless man (i.e., do you think he will not abandon us?)." -- "He is nothing (i.e., it all is the same to us whether we have him or not; will he stay with us longer than a breath which passes and disappears?)."

But whatever theory is accepted, the Negroes' belief in the reincarnation of children who died at the breast before having attained the use of reason remains unchanged. They are also generally unanimous in believing in the reincarnation of young men and women and men and women who die in the prime of life. Such persons have not completed the whole cycle of their existence and must begin it again.

And what of the old men? Do not they come back to life? When a child brings to mind the features of a deceased elder of the family, does it not receive his name? A Bambára never uses the name of a man whom he respects in vain or in an unsuitable manner; so a child animated by the soul of an old man is given a second name, a borrowed name, and the real name is known only by the father, the mother, close friends, and the one who bears it. However, many are given a most expressive name which testifies to this belief; they are called segi, sagi, "he who has come back to life."

764 775 The legends -- and there are many -- only confirm what I put forward; so need I cite any? An old man of Fobougou, a village about 30 or 40 kilometers from Ségou, not far from the Bani on the road that leads to Koutiala, was given magnificent funeral honors at his death. The fetishes were brought out of their dirty dens and bathed in the blood of victims; the women sang to the sound of the drum for three days running. It was a festival which lacked nothing, not even 775 d'lo, or millet beer. A few years later some young people of the village going in search of work went into the Tlébi (1) region, [illegible]

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1. The term Tlébi is used to denote the entire western region, including Bamako, Kati, Kita, Kayes, Bakel, etc., as far as the ocean.

775 walking in the direction of Kita. They stopped in a village near this city and were lodged by a Malinke (2). On entering the courtyard, they stopped dumfounded, for they found sitting on a mat an elderly man whose features were familiar to them, -- wasn't he the old man of Fobougou? It was he, for he greeted them and asked them news of the old men of the village and of the members of his family. After supper they returned to the courtyard, wanting to sit near their old man, whom they had found again so far from his native land, but he was no longer there, and their host told them that he had fled, refusing to tell what direction he was taking.... "That was our old man," say the people of Fobougou with great conviction, for they believe in this as in the capture of Ségou. "Our young people saw him, talked with him, and some had known him before his death. Without doubt," they add, "he must have suffered in his family while he was alive, so he did not dare come back to life in our midst." This story, which I heard in Fobougou itself, is told more or less everywhere with a few variations; in September, 1908, between Ségou and Koulikoro on the Niger, one of the *laptot* (3) told it to his colleagues as they squatted around him in a circle.

2. A Mandingo tribe whose group "taboo" is the *Mali* or *Mani*, the hippopotamus.

[505] 3. Negroes who serve as sailors on the river are called *laptot*.

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In Ouentja, a village an hour and a half or two hours at the most from the Bani, on the road between Ségou and Koutiala, the people have such great respect for one of their deceased former chiefs, the old *sagi*, that they avoid saying his name. They have even changed or rather abbreviated one of their greetings, and while almost everywhere else strangers are greeted with the words: "*i dangha sagi*," here they say to you only: "*i danghana* (4)." According to the /60/

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4. I dangha sagi, "may you be blessed on your arrival, on your return into our midst." -- (Your return to us is a blessing.) -- The Negroes abbreviate, saying, i dana sagi; it is only old men and those who pride themselves on speaking their language well, who articulate clearly and say i dangha sagi.

legend, this sagi whose name one avoids taking in vain, was chief of the village and influential in its environs. He died very old, took on flesh again in the womb of a woman of the family, and recommenced the cycle of his existence. He again became village chief, and again died in extreme old age, and returned to the flesh again a third time. As always he was chief, passed from life to death in extreme old age, was honored and respected by everyone, and received funeral honors such as have never been awarded to any Negro prince.

775 At the time of death the soul goes into Lahara, a vague word, so vague that a Bambara cannot define it or give you any idea of it. It is the place where the invisible beings live and where everything becomes invisible. Children and those who have not completely fulfilled the cycle of their existence, only pass through and hasten to return to the wombs of their mothers, or at least to those of women of their families.

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A secret force urges old men to return to the flesh again in their own family, but sometimes they refuse and seek limbs elsewhere. They spend a longer time in Lahara and, doubtless matured by experience, they are not always in a hurry to reappear. Many remain there for a number of years, awaiting a favorable moment, and this uncertainty hovering over the fate of the old men, may be a reason for sacrifices to the dead. One definite fact is that these sacrifices are directed only to the dead who have had authority in the country, the village, or the family, and the honors rendered them seem to be

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769 directed more to the authority which they had in their lifetimes than to the persons themselves.

775 A good number of Bambara believe in hell and assert that the souls of the wicked are condemned by God to eternal torment. It is clear that they are changed into demons and do not come back to life, but it is so difficult to deserve hell that not one Bambara goes there, and they live without any fear, just as if it did not exist. This belief in hell perhaps indicates an exception to my statement on the reincarnation of souls but does not destroy its validity, and it can be stated that the majority of Negroes believe in such a reincarnation. /61/

Chapter 4

Bambara Ideas concerning God, Invisible Beings, and Adam and Eve

1. Belief in God

776 The Bambara believe in the existence of a Supreme Being who is Creator and Master of all things; they believe in God, in a recompensing God who can punish and reward. Their most polished formulas are those in which they testify to their belief in Him, and His name is on their lips at every moment without any special reason.

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576 To a young married couple, a Bambara hastens to say: "May your union be happy, may God give you peace and many children," and when a family is in sorrow, for instance because they have lost one of the members, it is in God that they seek consolation and in invoking Him that they give comfort: "May God have pity on him and grant him a happy sojourn in Lahara," "may He not separate him from good people and may He add to your days those of which he has been deprived." (1)

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775 1. These last phrases have been taken by some as a reason to doubt that the

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> Bambara believe in the reincarnation of souls. But the Negroes say that a soul separated from the body lacks something, it is not complete. Since a soul stays in Lahara for a fairly long time, until it finds the opportunity to be reincarnated and decides to do so, the wish is expressed that during this period that it may live with the souls of good people and not suffer too much from the loss of its body -- and nothing more. These comforting expressions are heard at every death, whether of a child, a man, or an old man.

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842 The sterility of a woman is obviously not natural; it is attributed to fetishes, to the evil spells of a malicious person, and quite often /62/ also to God. "Alla b'a kégné dén-na --, God is placing an obstacle to /against/ her having children." As the Bambara gives small gifts of honey, cotton, butter, sugar, or cowrie shells to a woman who has just given birth, they say, "May God soothe your back (your pains); may He preserve your child." Upon receiving the slightest favor, the recipient commends the one who performed it to the protection of the Almighty, and the wishes at festivals and drinking bouts are an endless litany a large part of which refers to God.

776 The Bambara speak the name of God apropos of a trifle and always -- except in certain sacrifices to the boli fetishes where they use it blasphemously -- with some respect. I confess that (if I did not know through being somewhat acquainted with them that in their mouths this name is a word and no more, a commonplace into which enters neither affection nor love) it would sometimes seem that they have deep and tender feelings of piety. In fact there is nothing more [576] touching than to hear a pagan Negro, a Bambara, answer whoever asks after his health: "Nébi Alla tanoun, I praise God, I glorify God."

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782 In the mouths of the Bambara, the name of God is only a word! Although they acknowledge Him as sole and sovereign master of all things, Who created the visible, the invisible, and all that exists, although they believe Him capable of rewarding the good and punishing the evil even in this world (but suffering and death are rarely, or practically never, attributed to Him), they do not dream of praying to Him or invoking Him, and they who redden everything a little with the blood of victims leave God without an altar, without a priest, and without a sacrifice. They address Him directly only when ordered to do so by a sorcerer; and then they comply through fear, because they are forced to -- "djakoyala, by force," as they say so well, and their hearts are not in it.

They appeal to the Almighty Being indirectly, through the mediation of the fetishes called djiné, but actually this indirect appeal is barely noticeable -- their knowledge has been dimmed and is becoming dimmer each day, and the created has replaced the uncreated. As I will explain when speaking of the worship of the djiné genii, the mediator between the Bambara and the Divinity has risen to the detriment of God; He has been eclipsed and the mediator has taken His place.

000 This evolution of the Negro is in no way an ascending one; it is actually a decline, for from a more perfect state they have descended to a /63/ less perfect one, and from the less perfect they have arrived at a discord in which they bury themselves a little more every day. This is a strange evolution which in no way recalls the theories of rational evolutionists.

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782 I have said that the Bambara address God directly by order of a sorcerer, and from time to time an individual, a family, or an entire village can be seen at a crossing of paths, in a bare spot outside the village, or sometimes even in the village under one of the great trees that shade the square, offering Him /millet/ flour mixed with water, hens, goats, and kola nuts. That is the saraka.

2. The *saraka*

782 Europeans -- civilian, military, or of the church -- easily confuse a *saraka* with a sacrifice, no matter how much they know of Bambara ways and customs. They do not even see that there is a difference, since sometimes it involves the shedding of blood. But even a bloody *saraka* is not a sacrifice; I even deny it the name of offering, for it is a tax, a tribute, and in my opinion that is the only appropriate name for it.

782 791 Private or public, with or without bloodshed, it is always performed on the express order of a sorcerer who, as we know, has intimate relations with the world of spirits and learns from them what the Divinity demands. When a sorcerer speaks and gives his oracles they are obeyed and carried out, so greatly are his threats feared, and it is all done "*djakoyola*, because forced." The *saraka* is given under his orders as the tax is given to the head of the circle.

782 778 In the eyes of the Bambara the *saraka* has no other character than that of a tax, a tribute paid either to the Divinity or to the fetishes. In February, 1907 the rumor spread in the villages around Ségou that the *Komo* fetish of Sioribougou had spoken. "Quick, give Death a hen through me in a *saraka*," the fetish said. "It is preparing to decimate you, and the only way left for you to disarm it is to give it a hen." The sorcerers confirmed this folly, the masters of the *Komo* found it to their taste, and not one head of a family dared refuse the hen that Death demanded. So they offered it, and the formula on this occasion was this: "The *Komo* of Sioribougou has ordered us to offer /64/ Death a white hen as a *saraka*. *Komo*, so-and-so makes this offering for himself and his family through your mediation; it is his *saraka*. If the wind blows from the east, may this hen preserve him from it! If it blows from the west, may it also preserve him! If the wind blows from the Ouorodougou (the country of the kola nut, the south), may this hen deliver him from it, and if it blows from the north may it deliver him from it also!" Cutting the hen's throat, the sacrificer of the *Komo* then added, reddening his fetish: "This is a *saraka*, the *saraka* which so-and-so gives to Death on behalf of himself, his wives, his children, and his friends.

782 The Komo of Sioribougou has ordered us to do this; its mother,
778 M'gouni Domba, informed it that we owe this saraka to Death."

782 The saraka, a term derived from the Arabic word (صَدَقَة) meaning "alms," is no less than compulsory giving of alms to God, the djine genii, or to ancestors upon orders of a sorcerer; it really is a tax, a tribute which cannot be avoided and which is offered and presented (1) to the invisible beings.

1. Saraka di, "to give a saraka," is the Bambara expression.

A saraka is in no way a sacrifice, even when it involves bloodshed. Cutting the throat of a hen, a dog, or a kid does not in itself constitute a sacrifice, for otherwise we would have to conclude that every butcher and every cook sacrifices. He who cuts the throats must have the intention of making a sacrifice, and this intention is so essential that it is always expressed by the Negroes: "soni do, this is a sacrifice," he says as he makes the knife thrust. In performing a saraka, it is important for the officiant to say that he is not sacrificing, so he expresses his intention in the words: "saraka do, this is a saraka," and all present repeat after him: "saraka do, this is a saraka."

In every sacrifice there is a priest, and the responsibility is especially entrusted to him, but in the saraka there is no priest strictly speaking. Doubtless when a saraka is given by a village or a family, the head of the village or of the family is asked to officiate, but this is done out of deference, or by necessity if the saraka involved is given indirectly through the mediation of a fetish. In the case of a direct saraka the sorcerer himself can designate the person who should give it, and anyone, man or woman, is eligible; they need only be either circumcised or excised. Obviously, a woman is /65/ never [562] chosen for a public saraka. Where a man is available, a woman must step aside, and in order to safeguard the principles of the hierarchy, a respected old man, an elder, is chosen in the absence of a priest.

At the end of a public sacrifice the sacrificer usually receives a choice morsel and the skin of the animal, and those present roast

782 the meat and eat it on the spot. When a *saraka* is given, barring a very special order by the sorcerer, meats, millet flour, kola nuts, and cowrie shells are left on the spot, and only the poor may take and eat them. Most frequently, the children of both sexes are called, and it is they who devour the meats and the flour. As soon as this food has been received, the leftovers are gathered and placed in a corner formed by two paths that meet or cross. When a *saraka* is offered by the whole village, a goat is almost always slaughtered, and the skin, folded in four or six ply, is tied with *gnama fou* (1), and then hung on the end of a pole at the entrance of the village.

A *saraka* is never given to the *boli* fetishes; it is given to *djiné* fetishes and to God. It may, or may not, involve bloodshed, and it may be given directly or indirectly. A direct *saraka* can be given by anyone, and by either a man or a woman; they need only be circumcised or excised, depending on their sex. But to offer a *saraka*, indirectly through the mediation of a *djiné* genie or of a *boli* (a *boli* is never intermediary in a *saraka* given to God), the owners and sacrificers of the *djiné* and *boli* genii must officiate, for they alone have the privilege of speaking and appealing directly to these gods. In *saraka* of this sort two simultaneous and distinct acts are always performed; in the case of a *saraka* involving bloodshed there is no doubt on this subject. The *saraka* animal has its throat cut in front of the fetish chosen as intermediary, and this fetish takes the responsibility of telling the rightful one that this slaughtering was done as a tribute or tax presented to him. And this procedure is in no way illogical, for it is not at all the flesh and bones of the animal that are given to the invisible being; it is the animal's life, the blood which contains its *ni*, or life. Two things are given in a *saraka* -- the material and the immaterial, and when it is indirect /66/ blood must necessarily be spilled for the benefit of the mediator, so that he can lay hands on the life of the animal given in tribute and offer it to the rightful one.

[824] 1. *Bouhinia reticulata*, commonly called "tree of Judea."

782 776 The saraka is the Bambara's only direct religious act toward their Creator and sovereign Lord. Although it is often performed and presented in the corner formed by two paths that fork or cross, it may be given anywhere, and I was right in saying that the Bambara God remains without priest, altar or sacrifice, and, strictly speaking, without worship.

776 177 3. The Bambara Belief in God is not of Islamic Origin any more than are their Ideas on Heaven, Hell, and the World of Invisible Beings (1)

1. Cf. J. Brun of the White Fathers, "Notes sur les Croyances et les Pratiques religieuses des Malinkés fétishistes /Notes on the Religious Beliefs and Practices of the Malinke Fetishists/," Anthropos, II, pp. 952-954.

772 776 177 Bambara notions of God, heaven and hell, and the world of invisible beings conform so closely to the teachings of the Koran, that we ask ourselves first of all if they were not received from the Moslems. Our surprise increases even more when we begin to study these people, for with respect to religion the only terms in which they can express themselves in present-day language are purely and exclusively Arabic. This is a fact, and the similarity is very easy to establish.

The angels -- Bambara méléké, Arabic mala'ika ملائكة -- are spirits -- Bambara hakili, Arabic 'aqal [illegible] --, superior to the genii -- Bambara djiné, Arabic el-djin الجن --; beings intermediate between men and angels and to whom God has entrusted the custody of the elements. The good angels are in paradise -- Bambara ardjana, Arabic El-djanna الجنة -- up there in the blue sky and constitute the heavenly court of the Creator and sovereign Lord of all things, God -- Bambara Alla, Arabic Allah الله --, the cause of good and evil. God rules seven heavens and seven terrestrial globes placed one above the other, and the wicked angels

772 -- Bambara sétané, Arabic chéïtane شَيْطان -- are at open war with
776 Him; rooted in evil, powerful, and capable of harming and oppressing
177 human beings. They must nevertheless undergo eternal punishments in hell -- Bambara djahanéma /67/, Arabic d jahannam جَهَنَّم -- in a fire compared to which, says the legend, ours would be only the little that would remain after seven consecutive washings with large quantities of water.

As this cursory glance indicates, both concept and words are strictly from the Koran. Can it be doubted that the Negro was taught all this by the Moslem? I have lived too long among the Negroes to take appearance for reality, and here once again I am wary of accepting the statements of our learned "travelers."

For centuries now, Islam has penetrated into the heart of Africa
177 and established itself in the midst of our Negro peoples; slow as its
181 advance has been, it has not failed to leave its mark. The Bambara, the most important kernel of the Mande peoples, was always at war against the Moslem to safeguard his independence and the faith of his fathers (the wars were primarily religious). They were in turn conqueror and conquered, but most often conquered (for the Bambara, egoistic, plan their personal and individual interests before that of the group, and they always lacked cohesion and agreement, and never really had a leader at the top); they could not escape. Since they are nevertheless essentially deceitful, crafty, and hypocritical so that other peoples compare them to a piece of cow dung, dry outside but soft and loose inside so that it breaks and soils one as soon as a foot is placed on it -- and this comparison pleases them -- I do not hesitate to say that they took nothing from Islam that was not already in their minds. If they have taken Arabic terms to express themselves, I cannot doubt that this was purely diplomacy on their part. The use of Arabic terms that correspond to their own ideas in order to express their beliefs in present-day language represented adaptation and in no sense acceptance on their part. I would even assert that here they gave evidence, not of tact towards their conqueror (this is a quality which at the present time they do not possess even in an embryonic form), but of a certain pliability and shrewdness. In fact, by appearing before their tyrant on an equal footing with respect to dogma, they

177 181 avoided the stroke of the sword or slavery, kept their faith in fetishes intact, and shielded both themselves and their /68/ children from all religious propaganda -- for what was there to teach them, what could they be taught that they did not know already?

177 192 The terms from the Koran have become familiar to them in present-day language. Since they do not come from them and express primarily a concept rather than the thing itself, they have been able to use them with complete freedom, without failing in the respect due to the superior beings, their lords and gods, whose names are never spoken in vain or in an unsuitable name. Nowadays the words have become so Bambara that the people do not even suspect that they are foreign to their language, and have no cause to be surprised at them. The Bambara make anything their own that they feel translates their thought precisely, without giving much attention to the original meaning of the word, which they often do not know. Having [576] heard the Moslem repeatedly cry out *bismilahi*, they thought it in good taste to make this exclamation in the anecdotes and stories that they tell, and for two or three years this has been the super-polite expression in "smart" society for inviting a guest to enter a hut and squat on the mat. In twenty years this word *bismilahi* بسم الله, will have no other meaning! Even though it means "in the name of God," you would be laughed at if you were heard to say that it is an Arabic word with quite another meaning, just as you would waste your time telling a Negro that the expression "*fou moi le camp*" /"get out of here," literally "give me the camp."/ is plain /French/ slang. When a slave escapes, does one not say, "*a bi fou moi* (1) *le camp*?"

> 1. *a*: "he," *bi*: "is," *fou moi le camp*; the whole expression: "to desert."

It is a widely used expression known by everyone and is teamed with this other: *ze ma fo*, about which I pondered for several days, seeking to find its meaning. Yet nothing could be simpler; it is "I don't give a rap." /From the French *je m'en fous*/.

771 If the Bambara have fought to safeguard their independence,
181 they have done so primarily to preserve their faith and keep their
fetishes. They have shown such great attachment for these, that their
[101] conquerors have described them as rebels and applied to them the epithet
Bamba, synonym of Kafri. These religious struggles in themselves
allow us to state as an indisputable fact that before the arrival of the
Moslems the Bambara were animistic and sacrificed to genii. /69/

776 Did they have an exact and precise idea of their genii as they
811 do now? Apparently yes, for they always reasoned using themselves
as a basis of comparison so that in their minds the invisible, impalpable
genii to whom they sacrificed had a striking resemblance to man.
It is not a man, and yet it is one, they say unable to define their
concept or idea, ma si fa do (1).

1. Ma; "man"; si fa' "certain kind";
do; "it is."

776 The Moslem word djin translates this idea precisely, and the
782 Bambara use it in everyday language; but when the day of the sacrifice
comes, they become unaware of it and there remains only one word
-- ma, meaning "man." When they redden with blood the bark of
[824] the baobab (Adansonia digitata), the tamarind tree, the false cedar
(family of the cedrelaceae), etc., to obtain the good graces and protection of the genie who dwells there, they always confer on it the
title ma ("man"), and never that of djiné. "Ma n'zira ba, ma n'tomi
ba, ma djala ba; O great baobab man, O great tamarind tree man,
O great false-cedar man!" begins the formula used by the sacrificer
in offering victims and millet flour to the genie (2). They also have

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2. In /J. Henry/, "Culte des
esprits chez les Bambara
/Spirit Worship among the
Bambara/," Anthropos, Vol. III,
No. 4 (1908), p. 1 /p. 702/,
note 1, there is an error in translation.

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[1914]

Ma n'zira ba, etc., does not mean "great baobab of man." The real meaning is: "O man who is a great baobab." In writing it I prefer a "z" to an "a." Usually the Bambara soften the hard sound by a euphonious little "n." With a hard "s" the word sira cannot be distinguished from the word "tobacco": sira siramougou, "snuff tobacco"; n'ziremougou, "baobab flour."

776 a purely Bambara term to express their idea /of these spirits/, and
782 they to the word djiné; they call them gnéna.

Before the arrival of the Moslems, the Negro sacrificed to beings
776 to whom they have attributed bodies and souls, although imponderable
782 and invisible, who are intermediate between men and angels and whom
177 the Arabs call الجِنّ el djiné. But they also sacrificed to evil
798 beings, superior to the former in power, whom they call boli. The legend of the boli, an ironic legend which I will tell in full when I discuss this matter, is sufficient proof of this belief. For the Moslems of the Sudan only two things here below /70/ are worthy of attention: Mecca (Makka) and Stamboul -- old Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Constantinople -- who in their eyes, as in the eyes of all Moslems of our colonies, is the great Pope of Islam. Everything that does not bear the stamp of Mecca, everything that does not come from Stamboul, is to be rejected and scorned. Thus the Bambara, fertile in expedients, quickly managed to find a way out of their discussions with the propagators of Islam: "All our boli come from Mecca," was their weapon of war.

776 The Bambara were pursued from every side, unable to perform
177 publicly even religious ceremonies in honor of simple genii. Can
798 one believe that they added others that were still more terrible? As conquerors the Moslems have always ruthlessly opposed idolatry, destroying its temples and overthrowing its altars. "Believe or die" has always been their motto and always will be as long as they feel

776 strong. Is it not a fact that this law still operated forcefully at the
777 time of the last kings of Segou, when El-Hadj-Omar (1) took the
crown from the pagan king Mary to give it to his son Ahmadou (2)?

It was Ahmadou who held captive our explorers Mage and Quintin,
and at the death of his father he left for Yamina and then for Nioro,
leaving the crown to his son Madani. For those Bambara who were
incautious, whose fetishes were seized, or who were caught sacrificing,
the consequences were the confiscation of possessions, imprisonment,
slavery, and death. The huge area where the native cemetery and
[764] the European cemetery (3) are found at present was soaked with the
blood of pagans. Who will ever know how many heads rolled at that
time for a purely religious purpose! On some days the arm of the
executioner stopped only because it was tired and unable to strike
-- so I was told by some Negroes who owed their /71/ lives to this
fatigue. And I believe them, for the greatest praise that the story-tellers /*griots*/ accord these tyrants is that they knew how to cut off
heads. The legend that the *boli* came from Mecca was born inevitably

798 1. *El-Hadj-Omar* ("Omar the Pilgrim"), so named because, it is said, he made the journey to Mecca.

2. Bambara translation of the word *Ahmed*.

3. There are two European cemeteries at Ségou. The first is at the entrance of the city on the south side. The second, the only one in which burial takes place at present, is on the edge of the native cemetery, south on the road from Sens and Koutiala, about 300 or 400 meters from the city.

776 out of the Bambara's need to soften their crime of idolatry and to pre-
177 serve it by lending it extenuating circumstances. If the cradle of
798 Islam is Mecca, if its superiority is derived from the holiness of that
city, chosen and beloved by God (1), what can the Moslems want of

1. See what I said above on the subject of Mecca and Stamboul.

him, the Bambara, whose religion comes from this same much vaunted city? And if the God of Whom the Moslems preached to the Bambara has decreed everything (2), good and evil, if He is the Author of both

2. See the Koran: VI, v. 3 - 39; X, v. 99; XIV, v. 4; XVII, v. 32; XXXVI, v. 6, 7, 8, 9; LIII, v. 43, 44, 45 - 49; LXXVI, v. 29; LXXX, v. 29; etc.

good and evil and leads each person along the course that pleases Him to such a degree that he no longer has freedom of choice, why wish to take from them that which God has given them, that which comes to them from the holy city of Mecca!

776 The Bambara term for the boli is gna. Their idea of them
796 corresponds closely to the Arab concept of the chéitane شيطان,
782 and in everyday language, they define them by a single word: sétané,
[792] "satan," even though this word is never on their lips in the sacrifices.
In their nocturnal orgies and religious dances, the Negroes' notion of the genie to which they are sacrificing are shown in concrete form. And when, in their religious ceremonies in honor of the Komo, Kono,
[778] Nama, etc., the spirit appears by the glow of little fires lit in the
sacred woods, decked out in a cloak of feathers, his head hidden in a huge horned mask that has nothing human about it, one cannot help
776 thinking of the tales of old Breton grandmothers, told on a winter
796 evening in the stables. The blasting of trumpets, bamboos, and koba
534 horns (3), the tinkling of /72/ the little bell, and the shouts of the
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crowd grip and terrify you and make you think yourself transported into the midst of a sabbath of long ago. When one has been present at these scenes, one does not doubt the veracity of the Negroes who say: "When the boli appears it is hideous and freezes with fear whoever sees it. It is as black as soot and its face disappears in a flame above which there are horns."

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The face disappearing in a flame inevitably recalls the idea of an infernal spirit, and one who has been present at certain sacrifices to the Komo and the Nama, for example, and has heard the blasphemies of the sacrificer no longer doubts that it is Satan himself that is worshipped here. The blasphemies are repeated by all those present: Alla k'an bla, "may God leave us" (the real meaning: "We do not want God"); Alla djampa ba, "God is a great traitor" (meaning: "God makes promises and does not fulfill them, since he has decreed everything and his decrees are immutable"; A yé né djampa, "he has betrayed me," says a Negro of someone who has made him a promise and has not kept it). One is further convinced by being present at the sacrifice to Touafé Bla (1), one of the most ancient boli. The

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3. Formerly the trumpets and horns were ivory. The Moslem tyrants quickly had them confiscated, no doubt because they knew the price of an elephant tusk. At present the Bambara use only cattle horns and those of the koba, a large antelope which grows to the size of a fine heifer. (Koba is the word that designates this antelope in the Peul language; the Bambara call it dadjé, "white mouth," no doubt because it has two white lines on its jowls.)

1. The name Touafé Bla undoubtedly comes from the custom of suspending

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796 this boli from the belt and hanging

782 it at the side along the thigh.

three most famous sorcerers, whose names -- Makono, Tjewolo, and Tjéba -- have been preserved, but whose origin is lost in the dark of ages, sacrificed to it by preference. This is the formula:

"Touafé Bla, Touafé Bla, the mountain of Touafé Bla is known, the trees of this mountain are known, I want to speak of the fire of its mountain. Touafé Bla, spare some houses (meaning: 'those of my friends') and go and kindle (your fire) in others (meaning: 'cast ruin and desolation among my enemies, among those who wish me ill'). Touafé Bla, favor me, and if I cannot see your fire, Touafé Bla, let me at least see the tip of its long column of smoke (meaning: 'you live in the fire; I cannot see your dwelling, but I can still know your power through the smoke of your fire, that is to say, /I shall know it/ if I am a witness of the misfortunes which you will cause to fall on my enemies and those whom I hate')." /73/

This formula shows us clearly that the boli, or gnâ, live in fire. The Negroes sacrificed to them before the arrival of the Moslems, and gave concrete form to their concept of the infernal spirit, just as they do today, by decking themselves out in a hideous horned mask and a cloak of feathers. Their blowing and shouting in the sacred woods on the days of great orgies have remained the same, and although they have taken the words sétané شَيْطَان, and djahanéma جَهَنَّم, from the Moslems, they have had the concept for a long time. [192]

776 181 Now then, as to the Bambaras' knowledge of the Supreme Being, God the Creator and Ruler, Lord of all, do they owe it to the Moslems?

596 The Bambara have too hierarchical a nature to need a master here! The youngest child is always the slave of the next older brother, who is the slave of an older one, and so the progression moves up invariably without ever changing, to the grey beard, the elder, the tjekoroba, a real fetish whom everyone obeys, whatever his stupidity, his narrowness of mind, or his lack of judgment.

In every family there is the same progression: the immediate lord of the children is their father, while he in turn bows before his

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elders; and above them, as undisputed lord, soars the eldest, the *gouatigi*, or head of the family.

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All the *gouatigi* are subject to heads of quarters, led by the *dougoutigi*, (1) or village heads; these obey the *kafotigi*, or heads of the canton, who in turn are governed by the *fama déou*, sons of the king or ministers. Such was the original organization of the Bambara, and all these petty chiefs, were absolute and uncontested lords, each in his own sphere.

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Above them all there was the king, *Fama* or *Massa* (2), whose chief function was to allow himself to live in affluence and /74/ sweet idleness. He held all his subjects in his hands; all were his slaves, from the least to the highest, and he had the power of life and death over each and every one.

1. The *dougoutigi*, or religious head of the village, takes precedence over the *sotigi*, or civil head. I believe that since the time of Carrier, administrator of the circle in 1901, this hierarchy as such has been officially done away with. It persists nevertheless, and the *kafotigi* and *fama déou*, priestly in character, secretly retain their prestige.

2. The word *Massa*, used to designate the king, also means "great and powerful sorcerer." In the beginning the king really had absolute power, both civil and religious, and was really the prince or pope of fetishism. If he were not, would he have been given the title of *Massa*, "great priest," "great sorcerer?"

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Before the arrival of the Moslem, the Bambara sacrificed to the *gnéna*, otherwise known as *djiné*, and to the *gnâ*, or *sétané*; and all these genii, whatever name one is pleased to call them, were arranged in a hierarchy as they are today. They were all divided into groups, each with its head, and these heads in turn formed other groups governed by a more powerful one. And if we conclude that the Bambara owes the concept of this hierarchy to the Moslem, would we not be saying that the latter pulled his sword from its sheath in order to strengthen the Negro in his fetishism? Would not we be admitting that he betrayed the Koran which commands him to destroy idolatry: "... kill them / idolators/ wheresoever you shall find them, and take them prisoners, and besiege them, and lay wait for them in every convenient place." (1) All the evidence permits us to say that this hierarchy in the world of invisible beings comes from the Bambara themselves! How then can we believe that they stopped half-way, they who are always grouping and dividing? Is it possible that they did not attain the idea of the autocrat, the unparalleled one, God the sovereign Lord of the genii and sovereign Lord of the beings beneath them, of men and the rest of creation?

And when I study the Bambara hierarchy, I become aware that it is primarily religious! The *gouatigi*, or head of the family, is a priest; the *Fama* or *Massa*, the king, is a priest! Recognition of the genii and of the Creator must thus necessarily have preceded it.

Consequently, there is every reason to believe, not only that the Bambara had the idea of an only God, sovereign Lord of all before the arrival of the Moslems, but that this was their first belief.

776 In the mouth of a Bambara the word God has not nearly the breadth of meaning that we give it. They believe that although He sees all, knows all, and exercises His power everywhere, He is not really everywhere, for powerful, great, and immeasurable as He may be, He remains a "Being" which has quantity and dimensions; /75/ He is circumscribed and occupies space. From here the idea of good angels is only a step, and how easy it is for them to make it.

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1. Koran: chap. IX, v. 5.

776 If on this earth the smallest of rulers, the least of potentates, is surrounded by servants and slaves, could the Creator be without them? If those who form the court of a king are superior to the *gouatigi*, or "family heads," to the *dougoutigi*, or "village heads," and to the *kafotigi*, or "heads of cantons," would those who form the celestial court be inferior to men, to genii, or to demons? The conclusion is perfectly natural; they would be superior to the latter, and to what will he /the Bambara/ compare them? Since they always in every way use themselves as a basis for comparison, they have only to think of themselves in order to remain logical in their conception of the world and to attribute to these beings the nature of their souls, their *dousou*, which they also call *son*. Is this not what they have done? When the Bambara define their idea of the soul and want to be understood, have they any other word than this very one, *méléké*, which they use to designate the angels? It is clear that they do not owe their concept [777] of heaven and the angels to the Moslems; they have appropriated from a foreign language a word which corresponded to a concept they already had, and that is all.

776 777 192 196 However, I am told that they have only one word to designate the Divinity, the Only God, and that word is the Islamic term itself, *Alla*. They have no other, and the first missionaries, doubtless through ignorance of the pagans' hatred of the Moslems, adopted it, thus creating a hindrance to their ministry (1). Yes, *Alla* is the term

797 1. By translating as *Alla* both God and our concept of the Divinity, the first missionaries failed to establish the profound division which should exist between Catholicism and Islamism. The pagans regard the Catholic and the Moslem, as cousins, if not as brothers, and the word *Alla* is not irrelevant to this view. Because the Catholics believe in the Old Testament, they seem in the eyes of the Negro to border on Islamism, and the departure from it into Christianity

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> seems to them like membership in a sect derived directly from Islamism. The Moslems help with all their might to further belief in this nonsense. Therefore the missionaries should delete from their catechisms the word *Alla* for "God, " as well as the ridiculous word *mori* for "priest, " the word *néma* for "grace, " etc., etc. -- in a word, all that is not Bambara.

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they use in everyday language when they speak of God, but in the beginning did they not have another, and do they not still have one at present? /76/

I have always been surprised at the Negro's readiness to call a divine blessing by the name of its Author, and when in the winter he receives the blessing of blessings, the rain that makes plants sprout and the harvest grow, this is the way he expresses himself: "*Alla bi fign*, *Alla bi na*, *Alla bi kouloukoulou*, *Alla bi yégé yégé*, *Alla do*, etc., God darkens, God comes, God rumbles, God flashes, it is God, " etc. These are purely metaphoric expressions, which mean: "The clouds gather; it will rain; the thunder rumbles; there are flashes of lightning, it is the rain. "

I have found these metaphors on their lips also with exactly the same meaning but this time in Bambara words: "*Sa bi fign*, *sa bi na*, *sa bi kouloukoulou*, *sa bi yégé yégé*, *sa do*, " the meaning is likewise: "The clouds gather; it will rain; the thunder rumbles; there are flashes of lightning; it is the rain. " The word *sa* is strictly Bambara and so cannot reasonably be regarded as more recent than the Arab word; the Negroes therefore had it before they knew the word *Alla*. The word did not mean "cloud, " "thunder, " "lightning, " or "rain, " and there is every reason to believe that there was a time when it awakened in their minds a concept identical with that which the word *Alla* awakens in them at present, and that this word *Alla* from a foreign language is only used to express a concept long held by them.

776 196 What is the meaning of the word *sa*? Could it be the original name of the Divinity? Since certain Bantu tribes have a high regard for snakes and dedicate a cult to them, some Europeans have wanted to see in it a translation of the word "snake." That is a great and fundamental error. The word *sa*, "snake," and the word *sa* in the sentences *sa bi fign*, *sa bi na*, etc., may have the same spelling, but [194] the pronunciation is different. The hard "s" of *sa*, "snake," is pronounced by opening the teeth slightly and protruding the lips, and the word *sa in sa bi fign*, etc., is pronounced by closing the teeth and pulling in the lips. Thus, these are two quite distinct words. Moreover, to claim the snake is, or has been, the Bambara divinity seems to me a piece of stupidity. If they do not claim any bond of real or physical kinship even with the animals that are their taboo, one must believe *a fortiori* that they would not claim /77/ an animal, even a snake, as Creator and sovereign Lord. Some Bambara have it as a family taboo, and a branch of the Mande people have such great respect for the python *Minia* (1) that now they are known only by the

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776 825 101 1. The Baganda of Uganda before they became Christian venerated the snake as the dwelling place of a demon. Their snake has a great resemblance to the animals that are family taboos for the Bambara, or better still, to the python *Minia*, taboo of the Mande branch commonly known under the name of *Minia-n-ka*. Since the *Minia-n-ka* derive their name from the word *Minia*, name of the snake that is venerated and an object of public worship, some have insisted that the *Bambara* or *Bamana* derive their name from the word *Bama*, meaning "cayman" /a species of alligator/. If the cayman, *Bama* in

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the Bambara language, had given its name to the people, this animal would be taboo for them, as the Minia is taboo for the Minianka, and the Mani or Mali, the hippopotamus, is taboo for the Malinke. None of this is true of the cayman in Bambara country; it is in no way the taboo of the tribe. Moreover, the word Bamana could just as well come from the word bama, a kind of tench /a fresh-water fish of the carp family/ which is found in abundance in the Bani and the Niger. This idea has not occurred to the partisans of the cayman, who undoubtedly are not familiar with the fish called bama. The word Bambara comes from the word bamba which means "rebel" and, in the mouths of the Moslems, carries the meaning of Kafri. Bambara means "the rebel who has never submitted to Islam," and the Negroes of the west speak of Bamako or Bambako, "the river of the rebels." Father Copte, a student of the Bambara recognized by the Negroes of the Ségou, quickly understood this fact and noted it in his accounts in the Annals of the White Fathers. Mr. De Lafosse, an administrator most conversant with the native laws, customs, and ways, recognized it also, and I share their opinion concerning the name Bambara.

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name of Minia-n-ka, the people of the Minia snake. But have the Minianka ever worshipped, or do they still worship, the snake as their

776 196 God, their supreme deity? They are not that stupid, the snake is an ordinary taboo, the dwelling place of a genie, an infernal spirit or a demon, and nothing more.

The word sa in the sentences sa bi fign, sa do, etc. ("the clouds gather, it is the rain," etc.), has a broad and vague meaning, indicating everything that is on high, everything that is above us. Was this word in the past the very name of the Divinity, as the word Alla is for many today? I do not think so. The word sa was the veiled term used to speak of the Divinity and, like the word Alla, it originally expressed a concept or an idea, and not a "being" at all.

Since, according to Bambara ideas, God is a spirit dwelling above us with His court and angels, the expressions sa bi na, sa bi /78/ fign, sa bi kouloukoulou, sa-dji, etc., should be interpreted to mean: "Min bé sa-n-fé bi na, Min bé sa-n-fé bi fign, Min bé sa-n-fé bi kouloukoulou, Sa-n-fe ta dji -- He Who (the spirit which) is up above comes (will favor us with His blessing of rain); He Who is above darkens (gathers clouds); He Who is above rumbles (makes His voice heard); the water of Him Who is above."

776 196 192 The supreme blessing that the Divinity, the Supreme Being, grants to human beings, is rain. As I shall demonstrate in a moment, the Bambara were unable to speak the name of their God and in their gratitude used a metaphor. Their fact that their metaphor, Alla bi na, Alla bi fign, is identical to the one in which the word sa appears, i.e., sa bi na, sa bi fign, etc., leads me to think, nay forces me to think, that in the beginning the word Alla expressed less an individual or a being than an idea or a concept. For I must confess that although some of our Bambara have the very ideas of the Moslems concerning God and the word Alla, there are more whose ideas on this subject remain confused, and for the majority God or Alla is nothing more than the arch of heaven (1), a covering which hides from us a "Spirit,"

1. To pagan Negroes, God is a spirit Who is everywhere, sees everything, but remains ens quantum. He dwells on high, is as large as the celestial vault, and because He hovers above us

a Being endowed with reason and all powerful. The term is the translation of the word sa.

It is apparent that in the beginning the word Alla in no way meant a Being or an Individual; it simply expressed a concept, an idea already known, accepted and translated by the word sa, and the Bambara simply adopted a foreign word corresponding to their own concept.

776 If to the Bambara the word Alla had meant the Divinity Himself,
196 the Supreme Being, would they ever have dared to speak it, to make
192 it their own? I cannot bring myself to believe that they would, among
551 them the name of a powerful person, a religious chief, or venerated
576 being is never spoken in vain or in an unsuitable manner. If some of
[687] their kings, among them /79/ N'golo, not to mention others, punished
anyone caught speaking his /the royal/ name by fines and prison,
cast them into slavery, and even beheaded them as guilty of the
crime of lese majesty, what would they not have to fear from the
Creator if they spoke His name in vain and inappropriately! Furthermore, it is a widespread custom to avoid speaking the name of one who is feared or venerated.

576 No well-bred and self-respecting woman ever speaks the name
551 of her husband. She speaks of him as né tigi ("my master"), so tigi
595 ("the master of the house"). Most frequently she adorns him with a
borrowed name, a bougna toua, or name of respect, and a polygamist has several such names, each wife giving him one of her own invention.

In well-brought-up families -- and most of them are (1) -- the

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192 sees everything. The old men explain this to you with an intensity that proves their good faith, and children recite the sayings of the old men with a frankness so naive that one cannot misunderstand it.

1. Our Bambara Negroes have great respect for the members of their families and are considerate of them;

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in this respect they are far superior to any of the Arabs of Algeria, for example. Family life is more open and cordial among them.

children do not speak the name of their father, especially if he is a gouatigi, or family head, and when a swarm of children are enjoying themselves around their old daddy, only one word is on all the little lips to awaken his attention, avoid his reprimand, call for his caress, and bring forth his smile: Koké-yo -- koké-wé! (2)

2. I use the word Koké-yo -- (Né koké) koké we (koké, "I beg you, Koké") -- because it is the most common; there are obviously other similar terms. Favorite wives also like to call their husbands by this name. For everyone it is a term of respect and at the same time it is tender, affectionate, and coaxing.

[888] 576 551 Old men are given borrowed names, bougna toua, out of respect and veneration, and the reason for this practice is to avoid having to speak their names in vain and unsuitably. The practice is current, and it is even carried to an extreme, for although a child is given a respect name within his family, he is never called by that name. How many people there are whose real name is not known except by close relatives and friends! [553] All the Dougoutigi, To-n-tigi, Ba-koroba, and Moké-touama received a name on the eighth day after their birth, and the names used to designate them are borrowed names. /80/

888 793 576 551 In the environs of Ségou, where Islam is widespread and spreads farther every day, the sacrificers to the protecting genii of the villages, the gnéna-n-sonna ba, or dougoutigi, have lost some of their prestige, but anyone who respects them, even if he be a Moslem, never speaks their names. At the present time in Bani country, where the old customs and traditions are preserved with jealous care, there is not a

888 child, woman, or young man that can tell you the name of the great
793 sacrificer of the village if the latter is in the least old. Out of respect
576 and veneration his name is never spoken; he is the head, and if they
551 are questioned all will answer: "Toua si t'a la dougoutigi ko, he has
no other name than that of dougoutigi, head of the village." And, in
fact, most of the people know no other name for him.

551 This need to avoid speaking the name of whosoever is respected,
576 venerated, or feared goes so far as to bring about the abbreviation of
778 phrases customarily used in salutations (1), so it can easily be imagined that the name of the fetishes is not known except by their masters and their initiates. Of course, a Moslem, a woman, an uncircumcised man, or an unexcised woman can tell you the number of the gnéna and gnâ owned by the village, and they also know whether the gnéna (djiné) include a Dasiri, Ngolo, Koté, Ntomo, Tauri, etc., and whether the gnâ (boli, sétané) include a Komo, Nia, Douga, Kono, Nama, Bala, etc. But except for the initiates, who could tell you that a certain boli is called Sélé, Magné, Toroba, Dono, or Nono, or that the Magna is also called Tjarofign and the Nama, Sirima-n-fign? Only the generic name is known, and it is in good taste not to pronounce even that when extending an invitation to a festival in its honor. The Nama is enclosed in a beehive in the shade of a tamarind tree, which in turn are enclosed in coarse mats, and when an invitation is given to the sacrifice, the most stylish formula is: "Come and see us, an bi djasé (2) son, we are sacrificing to the /81/ palisade." The trumpet

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1. See what I said in this connection in the preceding chapter, /section on/ "Reincarnation of Souls," pertaining to Ouentja.

2. Djasé, name of a palisade composed of large mats. Children born at the time of the sacrifices to the Nama, who are dedicated to the fetish, are frequently given the name

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> Djasé instead of Nama or Namakoro. The Nama is sometimes surrounded by a wall instead of mats. This is extremely unusual, and I have seen only one sanctuary of this kind, at Dougoutigila in the Bani /region/.

of the Komo is of iron, so one says: "An bi négé son, we are sacrificing to the iron." A fetish can give health in the sense that it can refrain from causing sickness if it is a gnâ, or it can actually give health and well-being if it is a gnéna; thus the expression used most frequently is: "An ta foura bi son, we are sacrificing to our cure," or again: "An ta foura bi djigi so, our cure is paying us the honor of a visit."

776 Are we here dealing with a recent custom, which dates from the arrival of the Moslem? I cannot accept this idea, for all the evidence indicates that it antedates presence, I believe without hesitation that the name of the Divinity or Supreme Being was never spoken by the Bambara, that they were not permitted to pronounce it. It is not surprising, then, that the name should gradually have been lost, erased from their memories so that it is unknown at present.

Moreover, since the Bambara God was without priest, altar, or sacrifice, was there any need to speak His name? According to their ideas, the gnéna or djiné are beings intermediate between men and angels, put in charge of the elements by the Divinity and delegated by Him to distribute His favors and His punishments to human beings; would it then be foolish and presumptuous to believe that since the beginning he only addressed God through the mediation of the gnéna or djiné? I cannot doubt that the Bambara implored the djiné to present their homage and worship to their Lord, the Lord of the whole universe, to their Tigi ani fen bê tigi yé, as the sorcerers always say in their liturgical ceremonies. The latter are the watchful guardians of the ancient formulas and customs; that is the source of all their prestige.

Moreover, the worship of the gnéna, or djiné, antedates that of the gnâ (boli or sétané). It has no history; its origin is lost in the darkness of the ages, and in this fact I see a new reason to believe that they were the first intermediaries between man and God.

771 177 The better one knows the Bambara, the more one studies their beliefs in the light of their practices, considering them from their own way of thinking, seeing, feeling, and envisaging things, the more one is convinced that they owe none of their concepts to the Moslems. They have only taken from their conquerors certain words /82/ from the Koran, and these they have adopted to express themselves. They are words which corresponded to their ideas and which, being foreign to their language, remained terms that conceal.

772 177 It is a curious and surprising fact that certain Moslem truths suited to make an impression on their minds, such as hell, paradise, the judgment of the soul followed by reward or punishment, the end of the world, etc., have always left them cold and indifferent. Had they, perhaps, lost this concept by the time of the Moslems' arrival so that all this was new to him?

772 What does hell matter to the Bambara ! Should they fear this consuming fire compared to which ours would be only the remains from a seventh washing (1)? To begin with, they believe in the reincarnation of souls, and this belief protects them from all these tortures, and if some Negroes think of hell, they think of it without trembling. To deserve it, one must insult the gnéna or djiné, or the gnâ (boli, sétané), or be a monster to the point of denying all the laws of justice and hospitality. The occasions for sacrificing to the gnéna and to the gnâ are too frequent always to go unnoticed, their fears of the fetishes are too numerous for anyone continuously to refuse the hen and the kola nut to the invisible tyrants. And is there any monster here below whose heart is not at one time or another moved, touched, or seized with compassion for the weak? Where is the rough, rude being who is ashamed to offer a glass of water to the passing traveler or, even

1. Definition of hell: A douga ko wolonoula, min bi to a wolonoula ko, an tassouma flé nin yé, literally: "it to extinguish washing seventh that which is left to it seventh (washing) after our fire, look, that is it."

772 more, to a brother, one of his people? It is more difficult for a Bambara to deserve hell than to avoid it; thus they need not think about it and never do think about it.

Paradise hardly absorbs their thoughts more. The thought that they are called upon to contemplate the Creator, to live near Him and rejoice in Him, has not touched them for a long time; they have evolved too far; they have reached the last runs of degradation, and to go lower they would have to be Moslems. Furthermore, the paradise of Mohammed seems absurd to them! That indecent corps of virgins with modest looks and beautiful black eyes, whose color makes them resemble ostrich eggs carefully hidden in the sand (2), leaves them indifferent. They still prefer the ones here below, undoubtedly on the principle /83/ that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" /literally: "one good thing that you have is worth 36 that you will have"/. Virginity is too beautiful for the Bambara to have a word [831] for it; it is the flower of a day which a girl of ten no longer has. And what does it matter to them whether a woman is young or somewhat [562] mature, virgin or not, pretty or ugly; to them a woman, a real one, is a good servant, a good cook, and one who provides carnal pleasure at a man's will without ever tiring.

The pleasures and joys of this earth suffice for the Negro; he wishes for no others, and no doubt that is why he believes in a perpetual return. If, when barely in the grave, he already lives again in the womb of a woman, could the idea of judgment after death, the idea of the end of the world and a new judgment, make an impression on his mind? Can he who lives again and again conceive of the end of the world?

It is senseless to speak of their knowledge of Adam, father of 773 the human race, and of Eve, his wife. The Bambara meaning of the 829 words Adama (Adam) and Awa (Eve) are quite different from the one we give them. When a missionary, a Moslem, or any European introduces himself to them as the son of Adam and Eve, these words are to them generic terms denoting the first father and the first mother

2. Koran, Chap. XXXVII - v. 47.

773 of a race, but not words that denote the first father and mother of the 829 human species. A pure Bambara does not believe in the unity of mankind; God created the white man white and the black man black, to use his expression, and to each He has given a father and a mother of his own color.

829 582 Nor has the arrival of the Europeans and the Moslems changed any of his ideas in this respect. For many, each tribe and each caste had a first father and a first mother, and if there are castes which cannot be united by marriage, this seems to me to be the reason. "An té sé, a yé noumoy yé an yé Bamana déou yé an té si (1) kélé-n-yé, we cannot marry each other, he is noumou (blacksmith) and we are not of the same people, the same blood, the same stock, the same father." Some seem to me very explicit when they say: "Án té fa kélé-n-yé, we are not of the same father." /84/

Chapter 5

000 Fetishism among the Bambara; The Worship of the Gnéna Classification of the Gnéna, Who are Identical with the Arab Djiné

1. What is Meant by Gnéna or Djiné

776 The Supreme Being, the Bambara God, lives up above behind the blue sky, gliding through happy and quiet days with his celestial band, the good angels (méléké) that form His court, and, omnipotent though He is, He is without priest or sacrifice. For He concerns Himself very little with men. He has divided the dominion of creation with the djiné. His laws, which are immutable, He has decreed once

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1. Si: "similar" or "like nature;" "of the same race, descent, origin, people, nature."

776 and for all, and since then He has simply lived, resting in sweet "idleness" .... Let us not think, however, that the Negro is without religion; he is excessively religious and he spends his life sacrificing, squandering flour, and scattering the blood of victims uselessly, for the sole benefit of vultures.

Believing that he can expect nothing from God, he calls upon the djiné or gnéna who are in charge of the elements, each having absolute power in its sphere. Doubtless the latter are unable to change the whole universal order established by the Creator and Soverign Lord of all things -- au tigi ("our Lord") ani fen /85/ bê tigi yé ("and Lord of all things") --, but they can grant a material (1) blessing, turn away a misfortune, and reward or punish.

The gnéna is reminiscent of the djin of the Koran (Chap. VI, XXX, VIII, XLI). It is a being intermediate between men and angels. "Ma si fa do do, it is a kind of man, " say the Negroes, and in fact it does resemble a man since it eats, drinks, amuses itself, marries, and has children. /2/ Many even believe them /gnéna/ to be clothed, and in the late evening it is not unusual to hear a storyteller /conteur/ say of them: "Sanou b'oufé. Wari b'oufé. Bagi fana b'oufé. They have gold. They have silver. They also have fabrics. " Above all 776 they have might! They are powerful, and although some people wear little bags of cloth or leather and strings with seven and nine knots -- 751 as amulets --, and claws of wild animals, deer and goats horns, tafo

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[782] 1. A Negro does not have the idea of asking a supernatural blessing.

2. In the sacrifices it is called ma, "man, " and the name of the object in which it is found is added to this word. Thus ma djala ba, "great false-cedar man, " etc. /No text reference to this footnote. Tr:/

776 of leather wrapped in the hide of an anteater or monkey, etc. -- as
751 talismans -- which protect them from their blows; although there are
diviners, sorcerers, and certain hunters and blacksmiths (noumou), etc.,
on whom these invisible beings have no hold, it is nonetheless true that
they are feared, held in awe by all, that they are honored and their
776 good graces sought. Moreover, they give good luck, good fortune, and
success to their friends and preserve them from a host of evils -- spells,
sorcery, poverty, sickness, etc. -- springing from an enemy's rancor.

The worship of the gnéna, beings intermediate between angels and men, is among the oldest. Its origin is lost in the dark of the ages, and, unlike that of the boli or gnâ, of which I will speak later, it has no history. Since they are not all equally strong and powerful, I have divided them into three main groups: those that live in the bush, those that roam in the villages and their environs, and finally those that are really interested in the Bambara and actually protect them. /3/ /86/

3. See Anthropos, Vol. III (1908), part 4 /J. M. Henry, "Le Culte des esprits chez les Bambara (Spirit Worship among the Bambara). There is no text reference to this footnote which appears on text page 85. Tr./

2. Gnéna Who Dwell in the Bush

These /gnéna/ hide in thickets and perch on trees, and they are terrible only during the day, at high noon and in the greatest heat. Woe to him who at that time disturbs them in their walks, climbs on the trees they have chosen for a home, or tries to prune the branches on which they are frolicking or resting. They do not like children at all! For these little vandals, always running and climbing to catch lizards, rob nests, and stuff themselves with fruit, they have reserved violent headaches and stomach-aches. Often, too, they make them lame, blind, deaf and dumb, crazy, etc., and there is no village where one is not shown some of their victims (1).

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1. To understand this belief of the Negro, read the chapter on sickness and death.

The most famous and terrible of all these invisible little beings of the bush, who are without official minister or priest but to whom many offerings nevertheless are made, is the wokolo. It is black as soot, with a skin like a monkey's, and no larger than an infant of one or two months. It likes to appear, and one can say that no Negro reaches thirty without having seen it. Although sometimes during the most severe heat or in the evening by the light of the moon, it runs along the banks of the river, throwing into the stream its tiny line, almost invisible and finer than a hair, it prefers the bush and the butter tree; the karité (Bassia parkii) is its prime favorite. With quiver slung over its shoulder and bow always strung, it lies in wait, and woe betide anyone who comes by and disturbs it. To defeat it and force it to beat a retreat, the one who comes upon it must greet it as soon as he sees it, but usually it is invisible and shoots him with its arrow, an arrow so small that he does not even feel it penetrate the flesh. It is this [753] arrow that causes the deep pussy abscesses (2) from which our Negroes suffer.

Many of these invisible beings have no name. The least sociable are those that live in the false cedars, for to subdue them /87/ one must be a noumou (blacksmith), a koulé (digger of canoes, mender of gourds), etc. Only such persons dare to deal the first stroke of the ax to these trees and cut them down (1).

2. Like all superstitious and weak-minded people, the Negro believes that he has actually seen what are but imaginary dreams and wishes.

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1. Before doing so they recite a formula, and the first stroke of the ax is dealt by the chief of the blacksmiths, etc., or his deputy.

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3. Gnéna Who Roam the Village and Its Environs

These gnéna like especially to sit where paths cross and somewhat resemble the gnâma, even though they are different (2). They protect from spells and sorcery, give health and exorcise sickness, and it is not unusual in the morning at daybreak or in the evening just as the sun is about to disappear to see men and especially old women sprinkling a little clear water here and there at a crossing of paths. They are interceding for children and grandchildren or for a member of the family who is sick and lying on his mat, or they are imploring the gnéna to protect them from an enemy or an evil spell, or to shelter them from the gnâma.

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Although these gnéna have no official priest, they nevertheless receive many gifts, and there is no circumcised man who does not feel obliged to make them his small offering, at one time or another. At crossings of paths one throws them preferably flour mixed with water, cowrie shells, milk, hatching eggs, ashes of herbs and plants, gruel, kola nuts, and sorghum cakes. At children's festivals the fodder is thrown to them in greater abundance; the cakes pile up at the entrance of the village (to the great joy of dogs and hens), and the ground is moistened with a light dew of blood (3). On the second day of the drinking bout, which corresponds to the festival of the كبْش (sheep), the soli girls, who are shortly to be excised, throw them the remains of the basi k'li in great handfuls without counting. Basi k'li is the name given to the repast provided for the whole village on this

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2. See what I said about the gnâma in the first chapter.

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3. All these offerings are made by the order of a sorcerer and are called saraka. See what I have said about the saraka in Chapter IV, Section I, "Belief in God."

776 day by the soli (those who are to be excised). It is a kind of semolina
782 (very fine couscous called basi) which is eaten with an /88/ extremely
304 spicy sauce of smoked fish. It is called basi k'li because, in order to
262 provide this repast, the little girls are obliged to run from door to door, clapping their hands, singing and begging (k'li).

Among the invisible wanderers, there is one which is strongly
776 reminiscent of our "werewolf." It is the souroukou, an imaginary
825 hyena, whose supposed existence has brought about a strange practice.
514 Every evening one sees groups of little boys and groups of little girls, turning aside a little into the bush: they all go in a band to take their last precautions and attend to the wants of nature -- union is strength even against the gnéna.

776 Many other gnéna are among this group that roams the village: they flutter in the b'lon, or entrance huts, they live in horrible filth, hung over doors, on the walls, and on the posts that support the terrace roofs, and the only hangings to be seen anywhere are eggshells, heads of millet, fruit pits, and seeds from the bush, which are offered to these friends as saraka. Nor are private huts without them, for the gnéna roll in the ashes of the hearth, snore on the mats, and take the air in the conari (1); there are some everywhere.

[145] 1. The conari is a baked earth receptacle used for water, beer, and cooking food.

Finally, there are gnéna or djiné who are powerful. Without mercy for their enemies, whom they abandon to all kinds of sorcery and evil spells, they are full of both attention and consideration for their friends. They can cause sickness, poverty, and other calamities to descend on a family, a village, or a whole region; but they can also side with them against a visible or invisible enemy; they can protect them, exorcise anything, and grant real blessings to each and all. The characteristic trait of the gnéna, in fact, is not that they can refrain from doing harm, but that they can also do good directly by performing a good act. Some choose to live in a rock, others prefer a knoll or a large tree near the village, and there are those who

776 do not disdain to frolic in the bottom of a well or pond and keep cool
there. These last are put in charge of the elements in a very special
way. Although endowed /89/ with a divine virtue, they are still far
from gods and are only intermediaries between human beings and the
Divinity. This last idea seems to be in the background, almost
disappearing, and yet, if one has the patience to listen to the old men
and let them express themselves, one quickly sees that they still have
it, even though ill defined and very confused, and one can believe
that in the beginning the worship of the *gnéna* was a direct worship,
offered to the Divinity through their mediation. Men, women, children,
everybody takes part in the worship of the *gnéna*; although there is
one, *koté* (*kouéré* in Bani), whose mysteries are veiled, its sect is
only semiocclt, and the entire population takes part in the festivals
776 held in its honor. Barring a formal order from the sorcerer or the
822 impossibility of obtaining items in the liturgical (1) color, everything
used in this worship -- victims, kola nuts -- is white, and among
the Negroes white is the symbol of innocence and purity.

776 "Primitive peoples admit the existence of superhuman powers,"
782 says Nicolay. "When these are supposed to inhabit certain objects
in the form of spirits, genii, etc., that is animism." /*/ This

1. The reason for a failure to conform to the liturgy is always announced before a *saraka* or a sacrifice.

/* Fernand Nicolay, *Curiosite's des lois et coutumes - Histoire des croyances, superstitions, moeurs, usages et coutumes (selon le plan du Décalogue)* /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. The History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Ways, Practices, and Customs (according to the outline of the Decalogue). Vol. I, prop. 13. Paris: V. Retaux, 1901./

776 definition fits closely with what we have said about the gnéna, and the
782 worship of these genii is indeed animism and not idolatry. And since, according to Burton, fetishism is less adoration than a propitiation of animate or inanimate objects to which a mysterious power is attributed, the sacrifices and saraka offered by the Bambara to their genii are acts of propitiation rather than of worship.

776 To give the reader a more precise notion of the worship of the gnéna -- and they are legion -- I will divide the powerful ones, those of the third group, into eight categories: the genii of ponds, springs, and wells; the genii of the crops; those who protect children; and those who protect circumcised youths; the genii of the women, that of twins; the dasiri, protector of villages; and the koté or kouéré, a special genie of a semioccult sect. All these genii have their priests, their sacrifices, and their saraka, but since all are not equal in strength and power, the extensiveness and formality of worship is not the same with respect to all. /90/

4. Genie of Ponds, Springs, and Wells

776
782
823 There are genii splashing around in all ponds, springs, and wells, and our Negroes think that in order to obtain their good graces they are obliged from time to time to offer them a trickle of /millet/ flour and water, the blood of a white hen, or a mouthful of chewed kola nut. On the edge of a well, at the mouth of a spring, on the edge of a pond, and finally on the banks of a river, offerings, sacrifices, and saraka are made, and their purpose is to prevent our Kneippist genii from escaping. If they leave displeased they take with them the water without which people cannot live, and the spring dries. There is total drought, a terrible misfortune -- for what can become of them without water!

The sacrificer to the water genii is quite often the head of the family on whose land the spring is located. Usually this honor goes by right to the head of the quarter; there are even villages where the sacrificer is none other than the religious head of the village, the gnéna-n-sonnoba /sic/, who is priest of the dasiri, the genie protector of the village.

776 Most frequently these genii are given saraka, but a hen is sacri-
782 ficed each time the wells are cleaned: it is in good taste to do so,
823 and few villages depart from the rule. Once a year a public sacrifice is offered to them, with a degree of formality that varies according to whether the sacrificer is merely the head of a family, the head of a quarter, or the head of the village. Since the women spend a good half of their lives around the wells, they are almost everywhere the ones who provide the materials for the sacrifice.

5. Genii of the Crops

776 When planting time comes, the Bambara, who are farmers above
241 all, blossom out with sacrifices and redden just about everything with
782 blood. The head of the family does not forget the genie of the seed. He offers it a saraka at home and sometimes a sacrifice, and unless he is very old and helpless he appears at the field on the day when the first pinch of seed is consigned to the earth. Before /91/ the /sowing/ is begun a hen's blood must be offered to the genie of fertility, which is responsible for watching over the seed and causing it to sprout and grow, and it is he that makes this offering, unless he has delegated this duty to his eldest son or his brother (the one next after him in seniority).

The departure for the field at planting time has its own unique characteristics. A child (if there is one in the family, obviously) is given the gourd (1) containing the seed, and in the name of the genie the father gives him orders and admonitions. On the way out of the hut the child pays his respects to the shades of his ancestors by placing the gourd on the threshold, and leaves quickly, proud as Artaban. He must be careful not to stop on the way unless he has to, and, above all, he must keep silent so that the spirits that fly here, there, and everywhere remain ignorant of what he is carrying and cannot attack the seeds in the millet grain. Anyone who talks runs a grave

1. A pumpkin cut in two, emptied and dried in the sun.

776 risk of spoiling the crop -- *o be gno soun tigné* ("it destroys the vitality
241 of the seed of the millet grain").

782 These genii do not have special festivals in the course of the year. Their priests, the heads of families, offer them *saraka* and sacrifices at planting time, and some of them sacrifice a hen in the corner of the field while the crop is sprouting and growing, but that is all.

6. Genii Protectors of Children

889 It is not until circumcision that Bambara children take part in
the mysteries of pagan worship, but they are early prepared for it so
794 that they may be introduced to the law of secrecy which they must
776 strictly adhere to later when they are initiates of an occult sect. At about the age of seven or eight years, they become affiliated with an association worshipping the genii responsible for protecting them. All these sects are alike, differing only in name. On the banks of the
[825] Bani and the Niger, the object of worship is the *tauri* (toad or frog), and the croaking of this animal is imitated in their festivals; some villages have the *djara* (lion) and imitate its roar by whirling their
[534] slingshots, small boards four fingers wide and one to two centimeters long, attached to the end of a string. The most widespread /children's
[824] genie/ is *n'tomo*, which undoubtedly gets its name from the tree in which it lives (the /92/ jujube tree, *n'tomo*). It makes children hale and hearty, preserves them from sickness, defends them against the invisible little creatures of the bush, against spells and sorcery, and makes them strong, steadfast, and impervious to suffering.

The confraternity of the *n'tomo* is modeled after that of the *boli*. (This is true of both kinds -- for there are two; a white costume is worn to the dance for *n'tomo djé* and a black costume for *n'tomo fign*). In order to be admitted one must offer a hen to the child who is head of the *n'tomo* (the *n'tomotigi*), prostrate oneself before the tree of the genie, and swear to keep the secret and never to speak of the *n'tomo* to the uninitiated, especially not to little girls.

869 In addition to wearing the costume, which is white
794 (n'tomo djé) or yellow, black, etc. (n'tomo fign), the boy who
778 dances the dance of the genie hides his face in a frightful wooden
mask on top of which are five, seven, and sometimes eight
horns.

869 The n'tomo injects a whole organization into the world
794 of children. They quite naturally divide themselves into
561 small groups, each corresponding to a circumcision that is to take place, and are thus all of the same age, born in the same year, or very nearly so. The member of each group who is the oldest -- be it by only one day -- becomes its head, and all the younger heads obey the head of the oldest group, the n'tomotigi, and his aide, the n'tomotigi siéré (1), who is drawn from the group which will be circumcised after that

[291, 293]

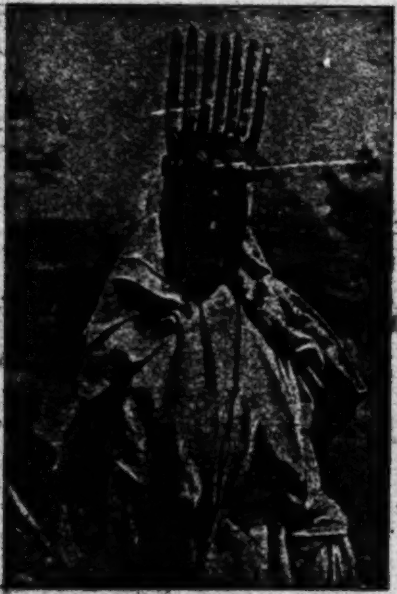
Child wearing the loincloth called yaba.

1. Siéré, "aide," "deputy."

869 of the n'tomotigi. /93/

794 561 These two children prepare the hunts for rats and lizards, organize the games and supervise them, and if an offence is committed by the band, it is up to them to discover the culprit. When quarrels, arguments, and fights arise among the children, they intervene, judge each case, and, if the matter is worth the trouble, the mischief-maker, or the one who is declared responsible, is severely beaten. All this produces unity within the various groups and prevents them from coming to blows at every moment.

[778]



Mask of the n'tomo, the children's fetish.

The little girls also have an organization into groups; but it lacks cohesion; it would have to be religious in nature, since religion is the basis of all unity in the Bambara country. Only at the time of excision does all this change, and then there is real cohesion among them.

796 857 Every year children sacrifice to the n'tomo genie through the mediation of their head, the n'tomotigi. The day of the sacrifice is a day of great rejoicing which ends in flagellation. The material for

796 857 the sacrifice is furnished by the children themselves; all of them together work a small field for this purpose during the winter, and if the harvest is not sufficient, they go begging from door to door so that nothing will be lacking at the feast -- neither d'lo, the millet beer, nor kola nuts. On the evening of this great day, each new initiate chooses his n'golo mouso, as they call the little girl each one takes as his "sister of the heart," his bonne amie as one would say in France /his girlfriend/. But she is more; she is a little maid of all work, and the gift which he gives her every year at the celebration is more a payment than a gift of friendship, "pure and simple." /94/

7. The Genie Protector of Circumcised Youths

794 776 778 At circumcision the Bambara leave the association of the n'tomo and place themselves under the protection of more powerful genii. These genii are all of the same nature, only the name differs with each region, and all the confraternities are copied after one and the same model. The most widespread is that of the n'golo (1).

1. In Bani it is the n'goso rather than the n'golo.

The n'golo is nothing but two forked branches fastened together and hung on a light dloma (2). One can meet it quite often in a corner of the village, out of doors, but usually it is under a small shed or hut. This genie gives the youths not only strength, vigor, and health, but also the talent, if not of pleasing women, at least of attracting them and thus being able to obtain some crude satisfactions. It helps the unmarried to meet the girl of the moment, and thanks to it,

[342]

2. Dloma are forked sticks on which rest the crossbars or beams that hold up the flat terrace roofs. The name dloma is given to all forked sticks, small and large.

794 a married man finds his wife gentle, submissive, and obedient. It
776 preserves the members from disgraceful ailments and, in a quite
778 special manner, from ma ko-sa (3), a paralysis of the reproductive organ.

3. Ma, "man"; ko, "affair, " "parts, " "testicles"; sa, "dead, " "lifeless. "

794 This group of worshippers forms the foundation of the organization of the fla-n-to (4), headed by the to-n-tigi (5) who is the master of the n'golo fetish. His assistants before the genie help him with his duties; he has a siéré, or aide, a djéli, who is a kind of herald and repeats his orders, advice, and thanks during the days of celebration and drinking bouts, and a djalatiké, responsible for seeing that the rules or laws of the organization are kept. Among the Negroes nothing is done without drinking and eating; they must have celebrations and drinking bouts, and in order to obtain the means for them the fla-n-to impose a large number of fines on their members, the to-n-dé (6). Their rules are /95/ nevertheless odd. For example, a fine is imposed on whoever blows his nose or sneezes, gets up from the table, or starts eating before commanded to do so by the head, the tontigi. Those who are late for the dance or sleep during the day or night of a celebration are granted no mercy! (1)

4. To, "gruel"; fla, "for"; flani, "twins of the same age. "

5. To, "gruel"; tigi, "head. "

6. To; "gruel"; "child. "

1. When the tondé organize a dance or celebration, everyone must be present and spend a sleepless night.

794 The to-n-dé, or members of the association, are formed into groups, each corresponding to a circumcision, and all these groups, united among themselves by a common bond, which is the worship to be rendered to the n'golo genie, submit to and obey the head, the n'golo tigi, preferably called to-n-tigi. Thanks to this unity, a host of quarrels and fights is avoided, and they all help each other, sharing in the joys and sorrows of their fellow members. In a word, this association corresponds, in miniature, to our societies of mutual assistance and help.

794 To get a girl of the moment, the young to-n-dé from time to
796 time sacrifice a small pullet. But a big sacrifice is made yearly and the victim is at least a goat; it is offered in the name of all. The offering of the general sacrifice does not prevent each initiate from adding a hen and a kola nut; food abounds, millet beer flows in streams, the association furnishes food and drinks to the whole village and to friends from surrounding villages. On this day also the youths circumcised during the year enter the confraternity of the n'golo and become to-n-de, or members of the organization of the fla-n-to. To do so they must spend from 80 to 120 cowrie shells (2 to 3 sous) and offer to the fetish the hen and two kola nuts as a sacrifice.

8. The Women's Genie

796 Not all villages possess this fetish tree, which is called mouso
824 ka djiri (2), but all hamlets have a genie whose chief function is to

2. This tree is often a fig tree called n'zoro or a toro sycamore (ficus vogeli, ficus ferruginosa). Mouso means "woman"; ka is particle indicating possession; djiri means "tree"; the whole phrase therefore means "the tree of the women."

776 preserve the freshness of youth in the ladies for a long time, to give
824 mothers breasts that are loaded with /96/ milk, to bring fertility to
the sterile, and finally to keep an eye on the periods, or menses, of
776 each and every one. Every month at the new moon the excised women,
married and unmarried, spend an entire night dancing in its honor,
535 to the beat of a special drum called mouso denou (1). These dances
[534] are not very decent, and except for some shameless individuals who watch even these scenes from the height of the flat terrace roofs, the men among the Bani stay at a distance.

776
824 Many villages (and they are numerous in Bani country) believe that the genie takes shelter in a fig tree near the walls and establishes its home there. It is the trunk of this tree that is reddened with blood at the annual festival, and most of the dances take place in its shade, as does the repast of which the Negro women partake on this occasion. The girls excised during the year spend 80 to 120 cowrie shells, offer a pullet for the sacrifice, and are thereafter permitted to pay their respects to the genie.

774 Out of this group of worshippers arises a small mutual aid society, identical in every way with the youth's association, the fla-n-to. The head of this organization is usually the oldest woman of the village, and she is given the title of massa, "queen." All the female population call her mba, "my mother."

This society, called mouso-n-to (2), from time to time offers the people of the village d'lo, or millet beer, and once a year at the festival of the genie a plentiful repast with a dessert of kola nuts for the old and the usual drinking bout for everyone. Those who break the laws of the association are fined, and the sum of all these fines, together with the 80 or 120 cowrie shells spend by the excised girls of the year, help the massa and her associates to meet all expenses.

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1. Mouso, "woman"; denou, "drum."

2. Mouso, "woman"; to, "gruel."

9. The Twins' Genie

845 776 Having twins is far from an unmixed blessing for Bambara women. Those whom I have seen afflicted with this good fortune and honor (for it is one, since it is regarded as /97/ a blessing from the Supreme Being, the Creator) have seemed to me greatly inconvenienced by their two babies. The healthier, stronger and more robust of the two relaxes pleasantly on the mother's back, while the one who needs a little care always gets his belly squashed on one shoulder or the other.

845 776 778 435 The genie of twins lives in a kind of hourglass made of two plates of braided grass; a bit of iron or wood onto which a piece of the umbilical cord has been rolled is hung from the centers. This fetish is called a sinsin and costs the father between 1 ba and 1 ba 200 cowrie shells (between 800 and 1200 cowrie shells, or 20 to 25 sous), not including, of course, the hens and kola nuts given to the sinsin tigi (1), more commonly called sinsin d'la tigi (2). To make this /98/ horror, which is hung in the entrance hut within an inverted gourd (1), one must own a father sinsin fetish and know the rites and formulas.

A sacrifice to the sinsin is performed every year by the head of the family, who is himself its priest; the sacrifice continues to be made even in case of the death of the twins, because it is the

1. Sinsin, the fetish bearing this name; tigi, "master," "owner."

2. Sinsin, the fetish; d'la, "maker"; tigi, "master," "He who manufactures the sinsin."

1. This gourd protects the sinsin from the teeth of rodents.

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776 peculiarity of this fetish that it continues to live in its hourglass as
778 long as a particle of this object remains.

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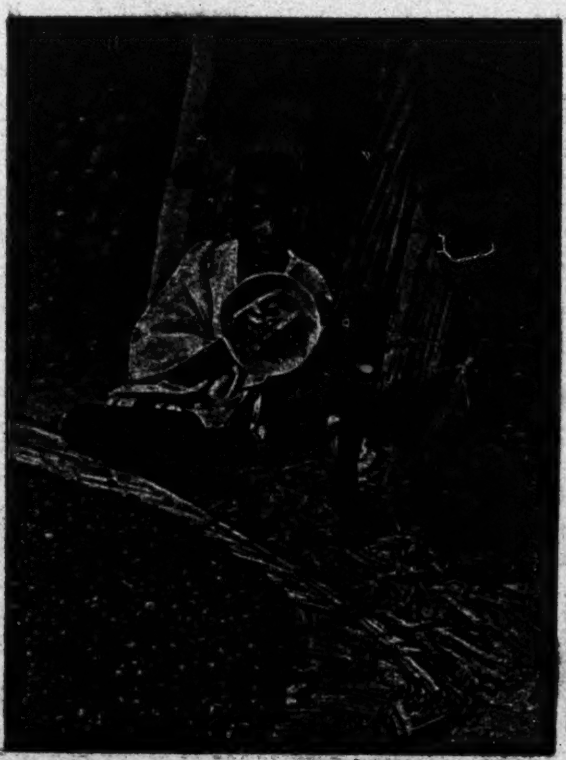

Young Bambara holding the sinsin, the fetish of twins

845 This fetish protects the mother of the twins, and unites the latter
778 in such close affection that one never receives a gift without sharing
431 it with the other. I would even go so far as to say that it is in good taste never to offer anything to one without offering as much to the other, and when they are given something, the first to be favored is the last born, who is considered by everyone as the older.

845 If one of the twins dies early in life, as usually happens, the
778 survivor receives a statuette which he keeps all his life with jealous
431 care and to which he gives the name of the deceased. He dresses it
to the best of his ability, often covers it with glass trinkets, such as
bangles, beads, bits of amber, rings, etc., and well-bred people
never give him a gift without adding at least 5 cowrie shells for the
statuette.

845 The sinsin also grants twins a curious privilege. A scorpion not
778 only cannot bite them, it is even at their service, and on their order
825 will bite a fellow who has displeased them.

845
778

A twins' doll.

845 It is easy to recognize twins (flani in Bambara) as they have
551 special names, the commonest being Sinna, Maféné, Gno, and
Ouassa. /99/

10. The Genie Protector of Villages

776 The genie protector of a village lives on a knoll or a rock;
621 almost always, if not invariably, its home is a baobab or false cedar
near the walls, in a little grove intersected by neat paths, well kept
and often raked.

776 621 793 Such a spirit is the exclusive property of one family, and even bears its name, or diamou. Its sacrificer, called gnéna-n-sonnaba, also bears the name of dougoutigi (1); he is, in fact, the real head of the village. Although at present the civil and religious authorities are separate in many places, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or religious priest, always holds precedence, and self-respecting people call him dougoutigi (head of the village), giving the title of sotigi (2) to the one who has only civil authority. Here we have further evidence that the organization of the Bambara nation was, at its origin purely religious. The separation of the two authorities in certain hamlets can easily be understood. [554]

[291 516]

Typical Bambara headman.

631 Under the Bambara dynasty the kingdom of Ségou was divided into provinces, cantons, and villages. The king, Fama or Massa

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1. Gnena, "fetish," "genie"; sonnaba, "great sacrificer"; dougou, "village"; tigi, "head," "master."

2. So, "hut," "house"; tigi, "head."

631 ("great sorcerer who has communication with the invisible beings"), lived at Ségou with his court. At the head of each of his provinces he had a minister responsible for levying the tax (/this man was/ his tool, often one of his children, to whom -- doubtless for this reason -- was given the title of Fama, petty king. The minister did his work through the intermediary of the heads of cantons, or kafotigi, under who, with respect to civil matters, were all the heads of villages, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi. /100/

The levying of the tax often gave rise to disputes between the kafotigi and the dougoutigi, and the latter would resign from his functions or be relieved of them. After that he lost all civil powers but none of his religious or priestly authority, and since the religious sphere had precedence over the civil, he kept his title of dougoutigi in his role as gnéna-n-sonnaba. The one who replaced him /in the civil sphere/ was never anything but an upstart and worthy only of the name sotigi ("head of houses"), although his responsibility became hereditary.

798 793 624 Under Moslem domination the worship of the gnéna, or djiné, was forbidden and punished by very severe penalties (slavery or death). It can thus be believed that it was to the advantage of the gnena-n-sonnaba to keep their position quiet, to refuse the title of dougoutigi, and even to forbid their people to bestow it on them. In Bani country and among the Bambara of Sikasso and Koutiala, where Moslem domination was never solidly established, there was no cause for similar fears, and it is understandable that the custom of calling the religious head dougoutigi and the civil head sotigi has been retained.

621 793 The gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, is helped in his duties by a siéré (aide, deputy); the heads of quarters (sotigi) and the heads of families (gouatigi) make up his council. Nothing important is done in the village without consulting its head, who calls all his elders together and decides nothing without them. All of them are also present at any sacrifice if it is offered by a family, and it is not unusual to see them going single file, evening or morning, to the sacred grove of the fetish. On the morning of a marriage, they always go there.

796 A great sacrifice to the spirit protector of the village, the
825 dasiri, is made every year. The spirit always has a mount such as
782 a snake, a rat, a lizard, a donkey, etc.; almost everywhere the mount is a terrible billy goat that roams through the village, enters everywhere, eats everything, and breaks everything without paying attention to the switch. For at least three days at the time of the sacrifice, the village makes merry; men, women, and children dance, stuff themselves with food, and drink and get drunk.

796 Just as everyone takes part in the feasting and drinking, so all participate in the sacrifice, even the women, who at least go to the
782 edge of the sacred grove, though they do not enter. And /101/ there is an abundance of everything: dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, d'lo, or millet beer, and finally meats. At least a goat, and sometimes a bull, is killed for the whole village, and the heads of families offer goats and hens, depending their wealth.

782 In addition to the sacrifices offered once a year and those offered
778 by a family when one of the children marries, the fetish receives
776 homage and tribute from just about everyone. Sterile women and those who habitually miscarry offer it many hens and fawn upon the animal that is its mount. If one gives birth to a baby, one consecrates it to the fetish, calling it dji-ri-ba ("great tree"), gnéna ma ké (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"; ké, "male"), or gnéna ma (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"). They even like to add the name of the village where the bountiful dasiri is found: Kolotomo gnéna ma (1), /102/ (man or daughter of the dasiri genie of Kolotomo). Actually, the name gnénama is given only to girls; for boys the word ké ("male") is added: gnénama-ké.

776 It is known through the mediation of sorcerers that a dasiri
778 sometimes leaves its sacred grove and its tree. This event is unusual;
824 the tree may fall from old age, but the sacrifices will be continued

1. Kolotomo, the name of a village about 30 kilometers from Ségou; gnena, "genie"; ma, "man."

776
778 on the stump, the open hole, or on the sprout that comes out of the
824 ground, grows, and replaces the tree.

776 Every dasiri has a sacred mount which bears its name and, as
778 I have already said, it seems to prefer a billy goat above all. The
825 latter dies of old age, that is, unless the good of the community
dictates otherwise; I saw one perish in the prime of life because of its scandalous behavior; he was inordinately fond of the ewes of the village, which he mistook for goats, and this behavior was far too shameless for a sacred being.

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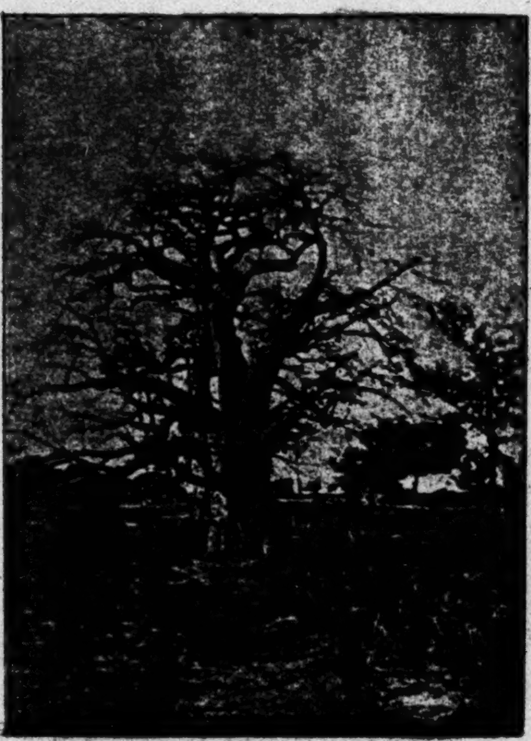

A dasiri fetish tree (of Songobougou).

776 The fetish protects the village by causing the evil spells and
778 sorcery cast on it to misfire. It defends the village against wicked
621 people and against its enemies, and thanks to it the inhabitants can
793 peacefully devote themselves to their work in the fields. While averting
plagues and diseases which decimate the population, it gives
strength, health, and vigor to all, and finally it populates the village
by making the women fertile. Above all, it is the source of unity
among families for it brings them all together under the authority of
a single head; the friends of the head of the family whose name, or
diamou, it bears, are its friends, and his enemies are also its own.
To fail the priest, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, the dougoutigi, is to fail
the fetish, so close and intimate is the union between the two.

11. The Koté, or Koré, Genie

794 Since it is the fundamental basis of power and authority, the
776 worship of the dasiri can, with some justice, be regarded as the first
778 and oldest of all Bambara religious practices. That of the koté, or
koré, likewise seems to me quite respectable from this standpoint and
just as old. As a matter of fact, this spirit, like the dasiri, lives in
[824] a little grove near the village, and the three trees it likes to inhabit
are the baobab, the false cedar, and the nettle tree.

794 The worship of the koré is especially popular in Bani country. Today not all the villages have the fetish, but all have at /103/ least a few initiates belonging to this semioccult sect. The sect includes women among its members; it is divided into eight groups, each ruled by its oldest member, who in turn is under the authority of the koretigi, the supreme head of the association.

794 At the time of the annual sacrifices, and especially at the
778 sacrifices made every seven years on the days of admission (for it is
necessary to be a koré dé (1) in order to participate in the secret part

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1. Koré, the fetish bearing this name; dé, "son."

794 of the mysteries carried out in the sacred grove), these groups present
778 the most ludicrous gathering in the circle of Ségou. The kara maou carry a red and white perforated board, about two meters long called the kara; the souroukou wear a mask resembling a hyena (souroukou) and walk leaning on two sticks; and the korodouga get themselves up in a costume impossible to describe. The ta tougoula (2) dance,

2. Ta, "fire"; tougou, "to light."

holding a burning torch in each hand; the n'goni sama (3) cover them-

3. N'goni, "thorns"; sama, "to draw to oneself"; they are also called wara, "wild," "fearless," "courageous."

selves with thorns or lacerate themselves on the chest and under the armpits until they bleed; and the bisatjila (4) whip themselves with

4. Bisa, or bousa, "stick," "switch"; tji, "hit," "break."

long, flexible switches. There are also the djara (lions), who wear a mask just like that of the hyena (souroukou) only larger, and the soula (monkeys), who parade with hideous, grimacing masks and wear a tail in back made of braided grass.

794 The koré sect is semioccult, for while only initiates are allowed at the sacrifices and within the sacred grove, the dances are held in the village, and all, men, women, and children, attend. The wives of the korodouga belong to the confraternity by right, but they do not know the password djantéma ("man of the djanté"), and they are forbidden to enter the sacred grove. Their great privilege is that they are permitted to wear their husbands' uniform, which is a long necklace of red beans, to sit with the men around the gourds of beer, and finally to dance the dirty and disgusting dance of the korodouga without having to be ashamed.

794 776 The *koré* fetish watches over the crops and gives its initiates the only pleasures that they know and desire -- to drink, to eat, and to enjoy /104/ a woman -- and, as will later be demonstrated, all this comes out in their dances and orgies. In spite of its great power, the poor genie cannot handle its many concerns; the Bambara, who judge everything according to themselves to such an extent that they inject their own organization into the world of invisible beings, have therefore given it eight groups of spirits who carry out its orders and make up its court. Some watch over the insignia and preserve the names of the initiates, and others render powerless anyone who would harm the crops. Just like a distinguished, powerful, and rich man here, the *koré* has its storyteller /*griots*/ or heralds, the *korodouga*, who sing its praises, transmit to it the petitions and prayers of the initiates, and dance its dances. The eight groups of the sect are simply the representation of this court, the concrete expression of the Negroes' concept of it.

794 The initiation into, or affiliation with, the *koré* sect takes place only every seven years. It is long and painful; for fifteen days the young initiates live in the sacred grove and cannot go into the village. Since they need some training for future dances, the old men come to torment them every noon in the worst heat, and each initiate, according to the group to which he belongs, suffers for some moments the torment of fire, thorns, or the rod.

[626] The rigor of the admission in no way alienates the Bambara, and in Bani it is a disgrace to refuse the hen for the sacrifice and the /payment of/ 120 cowrie shells, and not to join. It is true that everything is repaid, for the sect has many festivals and *d'lo*, or millet beer, is never lacking.

In addition to the annual sacrifice, a sacrifice is made to the genie every time an initiate dies. There is another sacrifice on the anniversary of his death, and during the dry season the *kore dé go* from one festival to another, spending their nights in [illegible]meless drinking bouts and orgies. /105/

Chapter 6

Worship, Celebrations, Saraka, Sacrifices, and Dances in Honor of the Gnéna

1. The First Two Groups of Gnéna

781 The fundamental bases of all Bambara devotions are first, and
776 above all, fear and secondly, the desire to have everything without
effort or work. The Bambara respect a strong, powerful being because
it can punish and reward, and since their fetishes are not equal in
power, they take care not to honor all equally.

776 The genii of the first two groups have no priest or official
minister, and public, solemn sacrifices are offered them very rarely.
782 In the dry season, however, some festivals are held in their honor.
852 The chief participants are children, who on these days stuff themselves
with /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, and with
sorghum cakes. When they are full they take the leftovers outside the
village to a place where paths cross, and many hens, dogs, and other
animals come for the booty. The poor and unfortunate also come, for
[735] they, too, may take their share; every saraka (1) belongs to them.

1. Tax, tribute, alms.

776 Little girls and boys take part in these festivals, but there is a
852 special one for unexcised girls, and those who are soon to be excised
and are getting ready for this great event in Bambara life bear /106/
all the expenses. It is the celebration of soli basi k'li (1), of which
I will speak at greater length in my chapter on circumcision.

1. Soli, "young firls who will soon be excised"; basi, a kind of couscous with very small grains which distantly resembles semolina; k'li, "obtained by singing and clapping hands."

000 I will speak at greater length in my chapter on circumcision.

776 Although the individual worship of the lesser genii by one per-
782 son or family is seldom public -- except sometimes temporarily, it
nonetheless involves an enormous waste of /millet/ flour, kola nuts,
cotton, cowrie shells, etc. Nevertheless, there are very few sacrifices
in these offerings; most frequently, if not always, they are saraka,
or alms, and a kind of tax or tribute since they are obligatory.

782 They are, in fact, obligatory alms, paid by an individual, a
791 family, or a whole quarter of a village, upon the command of a
sorcerer. Some sorcerers who have renown or want to acquire it
manage to prescribe these taxes for an entire village and, sometimes,
even for a whole region. The occurence is not unusual; I have seen
it happen every year. A shrewd operator from Bélé Koun in the circle
of Sikasso, crosses the Bani in every dry season, and there is not a
village in the circle of Ségou but feels called upon to hand hens and
cowrie shells over to him and, in addition, afterwards to take a large
contribution to one of the nearby crossroads. In spite of his youth --
[787] he is twenty-five or thirty at most -- he is said to learn everything
by searching hens' entrails and crushing their viscera between his
fingers. He makes profit by predicting terrible calamities everywhere.
All his knowledge is summed up in the following words: "The genii
are displeased, offer a saraka and offer it quickly, for if you do not,
all children under three years old will die... goats, cows, horses,
and sheep will die... springs will dry up..., the karité butter will
fail..., etc." In one place the words are those of a hyena, in
another, those of a cow, and farther away it is a wild pig that speaks.
And the dégé (/millet/ flour mixed with water) is spread and the
blood of hens flows in streams. In short, the people are always ex-
pected to give to the fetishes and the sorcerers, and to give everything.
Some occasionally balk and do not want to obey. The orders of the
sorcerer become urgent, his prophesies more terrible than ever; at
the end of his patience, he may spit out insults and /107/ curses,
and then everyone comes to offer the saraka. Even Moslems let
themselves be taken in.

782 In Bambara eyes, the saraka never has the character of a sacrifice.
As I explained at length in speaking of the worship of God, it is always

782 alms, an obligatory gift, and consequently a tribute or tax paid to the genii in order to consecrate to them an object, an animal, a person for the purpose of protecting oneself, of avoiding the risk of any disfavor or of receiving a blessing. That is its nature whether it is individual or village-wide, regardless of whether it does or does not involve bloodshed. The Bambara call this kind of offering saraka bo, saraka di (1).

782 754 Saraka are also offered to consecrate an object, an animal, or a person to the genii for the purpose of harming a neighbor. There is always a little magic involved in these offerings, and it is not unusual, at a short distance from the corner of land fromed by paths that join or cross, to find on the path a wad of hair, a bit of a horn, a box full of ashes, etc.

The Bambara performs this magic to help the fulfillment of his saraka, his entreaty; he is convinced that if his enemy touches the magic object thus thrown out at random, his vengeance will be more certain, prompt, and drastic. There is more to this symbolic magic: how many times have I seen, at these corners of land where the gnâma (2) stay and the saraka are held, a chicken heart fastened to the ground by a bamboo spike! Often someone will crucify a little animal, usually a lizard, on the ground, and a nail will be driven into the part where he wants his enemy to be stricken. For this kind of saraka the Bambara have a standard term, saraka da ma kan (3), ("to make a saraka against someone").

1. Bo, "go out"; di, "give."

2. Fluids, conscious forces which cause death and sickness. See my chapter on the gnâma.

3. Saraka, "obligatory alms," "tribute," "tax"; da, "to place," "to put"; ma-kan, "on a man."

782 There are many kinds of *saraka*, and they are offered for just
857 about all purposes. Besides those given by order of sorcerers, there
are some established by custom itself, and uncircumcised children are
required to carry them out. They often hunt turtles, /108/ palm rats,
guinea fowl, and partridges, so they plant a strong dry branch either
outside the village or even inside it, and on its branches hang the
heads of captured animals and the shells of eggs they have sucked.
This is their way of thanking the genii, of ensuring other successful
hunts, and of protecting themselves from the *gnâma* of their many
victims.

782 The Bambara also give the name of *saraka* to some practices
that are purely and simply superstitious and do not, strictly speaking,
have the character of religious worship. In these instances the word
saraka must be given a broader meaning than that which I have
attributed to it. The old shoes, caps, fruit rinds, rags, etc., hung
here and there on branches of trees are not so much a rendering of
homage by the Black to a genie, to an external agent, as they are a
tribute paid their own inner, personal, and unreasoned fear. In this
respect they are like some Europeans, foster brothers of these idiots,
who believe in the salt cellar, crossed knives, thirteen at the table,
Friday, etc., who turn over the salad bowl before undertaking a
serious matter, or slide a four-leaf clover into their vest pockets.
And why? It brings good luck, causes success. And how? They cannot tell you, for with them it is not reasoned -- nor is it with the
Bambara.

2. *Gnéna* of the Third Group;
The Eight /sic/ Categories of Powerful *Gnéna*

776 The third group of genii have their priests and ministers;
782 *saraka* are not enough for them, and they receive sacrifices. The
796 public sacrifices are annual, and the whole population -- men,
women, and children -- participate. *Dégé* (/millet/ flour mixed
with water), white hens, and white kola nuts are the usual material
of the sacrifice, and the formula recited can always be reduced to the
following: "Give us water; cause peace to reign among us, in the

776 village and in our families; grant us plenty and wealth, give us many
782 wives, healthy and vigorous children, and a long and hearty old age."
796 If the occasion is semipublic /109/ or public, a general sacrifice is always offered in the name of the family, the quarter, or the village, and then individual sacrifices follow. On the days when they are held, there are always dances and drinking bouts, for the favors of a fetish cannot be obtained except by leaping to the sound of drums and by getting drunk.

At the risk of repeating myself, I cannot resist giving the fascinating side of the Negroes' attachment to their fetishism and describing the festivals and celebrations in honor of the principal fetishes -- in order that the reader may gain a greater understanding and feeling for their worship.

The N'tomo, the Special Children's Fetish

852 The harvest is over, and the yield of the field cultivated by the
796 children during the winter, together with the small donations received from the people of the village, allows the n'tomigi (head of the confraternity) and his siéré (aide, deputy) to furnish its initiates and the old men -- the latter are never forgotten -- with a plentiful feast of kola nuts, millet beer, or d'lo, and /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, or dégé. The day of the celebration is set by the head of the village and by the elders, and everyone prepares for it two weeks in advance. In the blon, or entrance huts, and in the
852 shade of trees, one sees nothing but old men cutting and sewing dloki,
796 bougi, boga, and yaba (1), which will be worn for the first time on
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1. Dloki, a large blouse. Bougi, near Ségou, a kind of pants without legs; in Bani country, a strip of cloth three to four fingers wide which goes around the waist, passes between the thighs, and drops in back, forming flaps over the heavy part of the thighs.

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The end of this strip is tucked up.
Bogo, garment worn by girls until their marriage, consisting of a strip of cloth tied at the waist and falling in back to make a train.
Yaba, boys' jacket, especially common in Bani country.

that day. A swarm of children patch the yellow or white blouses that will be worn during the dance, and grease and re-grease the mask of the n'tomo. They pay special attention to the horns, which are often hidden under little thongs of red leather decorated from end to end with well-polished cowrie shells as white as snow.

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But now we come to the longed-for day! All the little rebels go single file to the fetish tree, and each carries the hen, its feet tied, which he intends for the sacrifice. They /110/ all take off their blouses -- the little undergarment allows freer movement and is less hampering -- and, after some whispering they finally end up squatting, fixing their big, black eyes on the leader, the n'tomotigi, who begins the sacrifice with the assistance of his aide, the siéré.

This little fellow is really funny, as with the solemnity of an old man he pours the dégé, sprinkles the blood of the hens, and noisily spits the remains of a piece of chewed kola nut onto the sacred tree, the dwelling of his genie. I do not doubt that he is convinced, and thoroughly convinced, that he is not addressing a tree trunk that has no consciousness; he believes that he is in the presence of who watches him, waits for him, and asks only to grant his wishes. Since he is addressing a powerful being, fear and emotion at first make him tremble; but gradually his voice grows firmer, and very clearly he pronounces his formula: "N'tomo ye, see this hen, a beautiful hen, isn't it? It is fat! n'tomo, on behalf of all of us I offer you this hen as a sacrifice. Favor us, defend us against the fury of the genii of the bush and against the malicious. Make us strong and vigorous, give us plenty to eat and drink, drive sickness from us. Give us water and a good harvest, n'tomo, and give wealth to our families."

852 796 782 After this special sacrifice come the individual sacrifices, and the very young boys who are henceforth to belong to the n'tomo prostrate themselves before the fetish tree and take an oath to reveal nothing to the uninitiated, and especially not to little girls. This oath is not at all trivial: "If you talk, if you reveal your oath," says the leader showing each one some black powder, "you will die." And they all reply without trembling: "May I die!"

852 796 When the rite of admission is over, each initiate plucks his hen and draws it, and while the victims simmer over the fire in an earthen conari, the youngsters beat drums and abandon themselves to the dance, and so into a frenzy which continues under the eye of the fetish, in the shade of its preferred tree until the time of the feast. Each child in turn dances the dance of the fetish, which consists of leaps and capers and a graceful twirling of a flexible switch. To dance he dons [292] the white or yellow blouse of the fetish (n'tomo ka dloki, "the blouse of the n'tomo"), which is white (dje) or black, yellow (fign, as I said in the preceding chapter) /sic/ /111/, and takes the horned mask, the n'tomo kongolo ("head of the n'tomo") by means of which he externalizes in a concrete form his concept of the genie.

Victims abound, and the feast is plentiful. There is enough for everybody, and there is not one on that day who does not lick his fingers and say with a smile: "Ne ne fara de! (1), How full I am!"

The little boys' families contribute much, for Bambara mothers and little sisters have good hearts. Thanks to them, every initiate can offer from 10 to 20 liters of dégé, the same amount of d'lo; and his gourd of to (gruel) holds enough to tire six to eight big eaters. In addition to the dessert, which is kola nut, each boy receives a new garment for himself and a light bogo and sometimes a tafé (2) for

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1. Né, "me," "I"; fara, "am full"; dé, "surely."

[291] 2. Tafé, rectangular piece of cloth which the women wear around their hips.

852 796 his "sister of the heart." In fact, on the day of his admission to the *n'tomo* every small Bambara chooses a *n'golo mouso* to whom he gives a small gift each year. The dreadful part of this custom is that in Bambara country the *n'golo mouso* is less prudish than the girl friend or sweetheart of a little French boy and is often a little maid-of-all-work who lends herself without qualms to unhealthy and indecent play.

After the feast, which takes about three hours, the *n'tomo déou* (sons of the *n'tomo*) leave the place of sacrifice and return to the village in Indian file, preceded by drums. *D'lo*, or millet beer, awaits them, but before touching the divine liqueur they must perform a bloody rite. It is hideous, and yet, it is the high point and chief attraction of the celebration!

On the public square, in front of drums that give the measure 852 796 185 and beat the rhythm, the young *n'tomo déou* flagellate themselves, usually until they bleed. The old men run up, dragging their mats after them; the women, squatting on their tiny stools, clap their hands and sing; and mothers wrap the loins of their children in long white scarves to protect their lower abdomens from misdirected blows. The *n'tomigi* and his *siéré* -- honor to whom honor is due -- go into the arena, and while the little leader holds his switch above his head with both hands, /112/ the *siéré* beats him hard with his own switch on the back chest, calves, soles of his feet, and everywhere. When he is tired of beating or his switch breaks, he stops and the leader in his turn gives a round to his aide. In this way, two by two, according to age and size, the children flagellate (1) each other. The flick, flack of whip lashes, which cause blood to spurt, bruise the flesh, and always leave a furrow as wide as a thumb, may often be heard for hours. Little boys of six or seven years often stop at the second blow to scratch their backs and open their mouths to cry, but I have seen some stay unmoved just like their elders of ten to twelve years, without a

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1. In Bani country each child flagellates himself. Although that is not the usual custom, it may be encountered in many villages.

852 tear, a complaint, or a cry of pain, and they are so imperious that
796 one might think they were of bronze.
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The *N'golo*, the Special Fetish of the Circumcised

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794 The children of this fetish, whose function I explained in the preceding chapter, grant themselves many days of celebration in its honor in the course of the year. The main festival, however, is annual and in addition to the *dégé*, a hen, and two kola nuts offered by each initiate, a goat is sacrificed on behalf of all.

Since it is from this fetish that the *fla-n-to* organization derives its existence, its members, the *to-n-déou*, offer drink and food to the whole village for two or three days. The women, too, contribute their share to this horrible drinking bout, and their queen (*fama*, *massa*) -- humbling herself before the *to-n-tigi*, head of the *fla-n-to* and priest of the *n'golo*, who thoughtlessly wastes the produce of the field worked by his subjects in the winter -- distributes many kola nuts and adds still more to the *d'lo*, which already flows in streams.

The beer is drunk out of doors on the public square, and everyone -- men, women, and children -- is there, shouting, dancing, and getting drunk. [346] Seated under a *goua*, a shed covered with coarse mats, /113/ and surrounded by his acolytes (the *siéré*, the *djéli*, and the *djalatiké*), the *to-n-tigi* sits in the place of honor, and it is he who directs the drinking and the dances. He is really king on these days, and all obey him at the slightest sign, gesture, or word. When he gets up to romp or take a turn before the drums, he is honored; all the initiates call "*you you*," shake their caps (*ban fla*), and compete as to who will take his gun, spear, stick, or ax and beat the time for the dance. But he wants to speak; he must speak; he feels the need to issue an order, to give thanks, or to impose a light fine on his band; and his spokesman runs to his side. He repeats the speech of his chief word for word and sentence by sentence, and sometimes even adds a comment of his own, for some Bambara have a sharp wit and very easily find a saying to bring a laugh.

852 Every time one of the three principal members of the staff,
794 wants to dance, respects are paid to them or to their leader, and all day and all night nothing is heard but frightful "*you you*" and atrocious cries. There is a protocol for everyone to follow, and before each *to-n-dé* begins to prance in front of the drums, he goes and bows to his leader to show his devotion and respect for him. He holds himself like a spring, brandishes the gun, ax, or stick that he will use in the dance, and in one jump strikes his feet together under the nose of the one to whom he is paying his respects. The women are quieter and show their respect by a genuflection before the master.

In addition to his staff the master of a *n'golo*, the *to-n-tigi*, has pages, a standard bearer, trumpeters, and soldiers, and to vary the program he goes here and there with his frenzied band to greet an elder and give him a serenade. In some villages custom decrees that the youths put on the best they have in the way of clothing; in others, on the contrary, they must get themselves up in horrible, dirty rags so that, on seeing them thus clad, one asks where they could have dug up all these horrors. They must amuse themselves and be
[522] amused, laugh and cause laughter, and this last aim is always accomplished as they have such priceless mimics. /114/

The *Mouso ka djiri*, the Women's Special

776 It is impossible to know all the genii responsible for watching
796 over women, for they are legion. Every month, at the new moon,
831 the women organize a dance in their honor, and every year they make a public, solemn sacrifice to them. The most widespread is the *mouso ka djiri*, and its worship flourishes especially in Bani country.

When its festival comes, all the excised women offer it a little /millet/ flour mixed with water, a hen, and two kola nuts, and the head of the village, or, in his absence, an elder, goes and reddens the bark of the fetish tree (1). There is no need for me to go into

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[782] 1. Some people assert that they have seen women sacrificing. I have seen women perform *saraka* involving bloodshed, but never a sacrifice.

776 this sacrifice at length, for in the preceding chapter I stated the
796 function of the fetish; it may be imagined that the ladies and maidens
831 ask for whatever makes a woman strong and beautiful. Moreover,
the indecent dances to which they abandon themselves under the
sacred tree sufficiently reveal their inner thoughts. They have only
one -- to show their breasts to the fetish and scratch their navels on
its bark; in some villages custom demands this, and it is required of
all. Young girls do it to develop their breasts, married women to
become fertile, and all of them to be protected from the unpleasant
accidents peculiar to their sex.

There is no festival without a feast and none without drinking,
796 and the women offer the whole village sorghum gruel and beer for
a drinking bout. They also offer kola nuts to all the elders and heads
of families, and they know better than to withhold this treat from
fathers, husbands, grown sons, older brothers, and those they love.

The *Sinsin*, the Special Twin's Fetish

782 The sacrifice to a *sinsin* is made on the umbilical cord which
845 is hung in the center of plates of woven grass that constitute the
778 fetish. Each plate belongs to one of the twins and even bears his
852 name. The sacrifices in honor of this fetish are always double; for
each child separately, the family offers /millet/ flour /115/ mixed
with water, millet beer, a kola nut, and a hen.

This is strictly a family fetish; the father of the family is its
845 priest, and only the children and their parents are present at the
778 sacrifices. Everything is done in a quiet and happy intimacy, and
852 although there may be a few drunkards here and there, there is
never an orgy. Sacrifices to a *sinsin* are made very frequently to
bring its blessing to the mother and children; they are also performed
on all occasions of the slightest importance in the lives of the twins:
when their hair is cut eight days after birth, at the tattooing festival,
at circumcision, at marriage, etc. Once a year a more formal
sacrifice is made; the women cook *d'lo*, the millet beer, and the

845 778 852 old men and important people of the village, as well as friends, are invited to squat before the jugs and partake of the liquid refreshment.

The *Dasiri* Fetish, Protector of Villages

776 621 The *dasiri* is the chief of all the *gnena*, or *djine*. In order that its worship may be better understood and that the reader may have an idea of the power of its priest, I must go into a few details which cannot help but throw some light on Bambara organization. Let us, for example, take a village that is being founded: we are present at the election of the priest of the *dasiri*, the *gnéna-n-sonnaba*; at the choice of the fetish tree and of the sacred animal, the genie's mount; at the enthroning of the sacrificer; and finally at the sacrifices.

Election of the priest

776 621 713 182 The population has grown, the surrounding land is exhausted, and a group of families must move out. The old men who are still lively and the youths full of strength and life take up their arms and fasten a dirty goatskin, a *foroko* of provisions, on their shoulders and scatter in the bush in search of less ungrateful soil. When they have found it they go back to their homes, and the council of family heads meets to choose a leader. This leader is really a priest, for his chief function is to sacrifice in a public and formal manner to the *blonda ba sou* (1), the shades of the great entry hut /116/, that is, to leaders and priests who, just like him, held the reins of power, and to the *gnéna*, genii, spirits, and fetishes, whence come his names of *gnéna-n-sonna* ("he who sacrifices to the *gnéna* fetishes") and *gnéna-n-sonnaba* ("great sacrificer of the *gnéna* fetishes"). He alone has the authority to sacrifice to all /these spirits/ in the name of all /the people/.

1. *Blon*, "entry hut"; *da*, "door," "doorsill"; *ba*, "great"; *sou*, "corpses," "shades."

621 793 555 The palavers and deliberations are long, but the choice is a happy one; the old man chosen as gnéna-n-sonnaba always has the slyness and guile characteristic of the Bambara type. Patient and likeable, he will know how to be just and impartial in disputes, diplomatic and sufficiently master of himself to say only what he intends to. He will know how to acquire the reputation of an upright man who does not know theft or falsehood.

621 793 Elected for life to hold both civil and religious power, he is truly the head of the village, the dougoutigi. His position is hereditary; it passes from brother to brother and, when there are none, goes by right to his oldest son. The one who is to succeed him becomes his aide (siéré), and the heads of families (gouatigi-ou) compose his council; they are always summoned when a question is to be handled or a decision made.

The Choice of the dasiri fetish and its sacred mount

776 778 787 The new village has a head, his aide, and its council; it is organized. Now they must find out the whereabouts of the spring, rock, or tree where lives the protecting spirit, the dougou dasiri (1), who fastens the entrance to the village and watches over it. For this knowledge the people appeal to a sorcerer; he has intimate contact with the spirits, knows their ways and customs, and understands their language.

There are many sorcerers, and they do not all work in the same way. One discovers his oracles in the entrails of a hen, a second traces cabalistic signs on ashes, a third endlessly moves little stones, bones, and cowrie shells, counting them again and again. To locate the dasiri, people have recourse to the flélikéla (2) diviner, who

1. Dougou dasiri: /dougou/, "village"; da, "mouth," "entrance"; siri, "bind."

2. Flélikè, "to look attentively, curiously."

776 works with a gourd three quarters full of water.

778 787 When he has received his honorarium of 40 cowrie shells, which he takes in both hands, he places beside him in the dust his little /117/ gift, consisting of two kola nuts, a few hens, or better, a small billy goat. He asks about the place chosen for the new village and has it described to him down to the smallest detail. Then he takes down a dirty n'go (1) on which he places a gourd which he tips slowly right and left, forward and backward, to give it a firm position on its stand. Having done this, he sums up for the spirits the conversation which he has had, and then, with eyes afire and holding his breath, he gives the gourd three flicks with the middle finger of his right hand. They say that a soft murmur, a murmur which is none other than the voices of the genii, is noticed by all present. They hear without understanding, but the sorcerer knows these voices and when he rises it is with a tone of authority that he names the dasiri and the animal which will be its mount.

In the province of Ségou the dasiri is a tree; the tamarind, the false cedar, and the baobab are the preferred trees. The sacred mount, also called dasiri, is a snake, an iguana, a rat, a donkey, etc., but most frequently it is a billy goat.

778 621 Enthronement of the gnéna-n-sonnaba, priest of the dasiri and dougoutigi, head of the village

Our Blacks establish the new village and build their huts. Near the fetish tree each family sets up its mortars for grinding sorghum, places its hearths, and installs its kitchens. Bows, guns, and farming implements are hung on the branches of the dasiri, and while the work of settling continues, meals are eaten and dances held in its shade, and in the evening when the moon is shining it is near the tree that they finally stretch out to sleep.

1. A ring made of braided roots bound with cotton thread, which is covered with a thick layer of blood.

783 782 621 778 The *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, the *dougoutigi*, assumes office from the first day and offers a sacrifice in the name of his people. On the trunk of the tree, about a meter from the ground, he pours *d'lo*, or millet beer, and *dégé*, or /millet/ flour mixed with water, and causes a flow of blood from hens, roosters, goats, and sometimes from a young bull. After this general sacrifice, individual ones follow, for, in order to /118/ place himself under the protection of the genie, each family head in order of seniority offers it a little *dégé* and a little blood, through the intermediary of his leader, the priest. And on the trunk of the tree there is nothing but great blood stains with feathers, hairs, and shreds of skin stuck in their midst with the remains of chewed kola nuts. Then come the dances, and men, women, and children go into a frenzy at the sound of drums; and the tumult is indescribable.

Sacrifices offered to the *dasiri*

778 782 796 A path a meter wide leads from the village to the fetish tree which is always located in the middle of a small grove if possible. Heads of families sacrifice to it several times a year -- on the morning after the *konio*, or first night of marriage, for example, but the festival in which the whole village takes part is annual. The ceremony has greater importance every second year, and every seventh year it degenerates into an orgy.

During the sacrifice the women stay at the edge of the sacred grove, and only the men and boys go inside and surround the fetish. After an offering of *dégé* and a little *d'lo*, the throat of a sheep or goat is cut in the name of the whole village, and the head of each family, comes with hens, sheep, goats, etc., according to the family's means and the number of members; the meat piles up. The hens are plucked on the spot, the large pieces are cut up, and the women carry it all back to the village. Each family head is given a piece as big as a fist from the first sacrifice offered in the name of all, and this, too, is
[252] taken back to the village; the rest is roasted and then grilled on the spot and eaten by the men, without salt, pepper, or any kind of seasoning. The *dégé* and *d'lo* of the main sacrifice are drunk under

778 the fetish tree, the former by the children who smear themselves
782 and whiten their entire faces, and the latter by the men and circum-
796 cised youths (1).

1. By the main sacrifice I mean the sacrifice made in the name of the whole village.

After the noon meal men, women, and children go to the public square to drink beer, or d'lo, and to dance. /119/ The signal for the celebration is given by the gnéna-n-sonnaba, who makes a little speech inviting his children (né ka démisenou, "my children, " "my subjects") to have fun and to drink but to avoid fights and quarrels, and then launches into a quadrille. While he dances, the crowd stands bareheaded, cries "you you" loudly, and competes as to who will shake his spear or ax to beat the measure. This annual festival goes on for three or four days, as long as the d'lo, or millet beer, lasts.

776 All circumcised men and excised women may, through the
782 intermediary of the gnéna-n-sonnaba, offer a sacrifice to the genie
protector of the village. Anyone who thinks he has offended or displeased it offers one -- with or without bloodshed according to his means -- to obtain pardon, propitiate it, and gain its favor. Individuals sacrifice primarily to make requests; a di ("give it") are the first words they were able to lisp as infants. A sterile woman
[842] will offer it a kola nut, dégé, a rooster or a hen at every moment,
always promising not to be miserly and to give more if she becomes a mother. She will be especially assiduous toward the dasiri animal, the mount of the genie of this name; she will coax it, stuff it with bran, and will often go far into the bush to pick it a stalk of grass or a leafy branch which are its delicacies.

776 Genii spirits can leave the spring, the rock, or the tree where
they have established their dwellings, and the dasiri is no exception
778 to this rule. If it does so, the fetish tree loses its sanctity, becomes
a common object, and can be destroyed. Similarly, all things in the sacred grove, both plant and animal, cease to be taboo and can be used for their customary purposes. The dasiri is not at all fickle.

776 778 It rarely leaves its tree; it likes its little grove and shady park, and in many places it is satisfied with a stump that is all blackened, worm eaten, rotten, and falling to pieces.

The formula of the sacrifice

782 781 When one is present at a sacrifice to the dasiri and sees the gnéna-n-sonnaba uncover his head, take off his large blouse, and crouch at the feet of the fetish, one expects something imposing and grand. Nothing of the sort occurs, and one is quite surprised to find so little gravity /120/ in such an important act. People enjoy themselves and chat; the priest, red with blood, tosses off witticisms and coarse jokes, and while feet and wings of the victims -- goats, sheep, and hens -- twitch in the agonies of death, nothing passes from one group to another but bursts of laughter that finally disappear far off at the edge of the grove where the women are.

782 The words in the sacrificial formula vary a little from one village to another, all depending on the volubility of the sacrificer. Nevertheless, it remains basically the same everywhere. After having greeted the fetish in his own name and the name of his subjects, he implores it to forgive them all the insults, offenses, and disrespect toward it, of which they have been guilty, voluntarily or involuntarily, during the entire year. He then calls it by a name related to the type of tree in which it is located -- e. g., ma ziraba ("great baobab man"), ma djala ba ("great false-cedar man"), -- and announces that he is going to sacrifice. While offering the dégé and d'lo, he implores it to protect them against the evils of the sons of the fetish siri, the souba (1), to preserve them from the souya maou (2), the

[754] 1. Sou, "night"; ba, "great." The souba are masters of the night who change themselves into hyenas or owls, dig up corpses, and eat human flesh.

2. Souyaké, "to prowl at night."

782 gné-foula (3), and from the wokolo, a little dwarf genie. He then asks for strength and health for all, for children who will be healthy, strong, and vigorous, and for wives. "Preserve us," he adds in closing, "from wicked people, discord, quarrels, and fights, from the rage of women who easily fall under the power of 'satan,' and from sickness; finally, give us rain, without which a harvest is not possible." Then he cuts the throat of a goat or a white sheep, and while he reddens the bark of the sacred tree with blood, he repeats his pleas and requests, and he says them again a third time while offering the kola nut.

At individual sacrifices nothing in the formula is changed. However, if the person on whose behalf the sacrifice is offered wants a special blessing or favor, he tells the sacrificer about it, and the latter states the request then and there. /121/

When the head of a family cannot be present at a sacrifice, his substitute gives the reason for his absence. Two witnesses then come to testify that the reason given is the true one and that there is no ill will whatever on the part of the absentee.

Sometimes a great clamor arises during the sacrifice, and one would say that people were fighting under the sacred tree, or at least arguing.

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781 Nothing of the sort is happening; the crowd is crying out against the fetish and interceding for an unfortunate whose sacrifice has not been accepted. It is known that this has happened when the hen does not fall on its back or its side with its feet in the air. The kola nut gives the genie's answer much more definitely. The sacrificer cuts it in two, holds the two pieces together between thumb and forefinger, and having touched the ground with them twice saying, "Tell us if you accept the sacrifice," he throws them at the foot of the sacred tree. If the two pieces fall with the pulp on top, no further doubt is possible; the sacrifice is accepted, and he repeats the same procedure again, saying, "Since you accept the sacrifice, tell us if

3. "Two eyes," i.e., people with second sight.

782 781 you accept it at my hands." If one of the pieces falls with the pulp on top and the other onto the pulp, there is an affirmative answer from the *dasiri*. The sacrificer bites the kola nut, cuts out with his teeth the piece that contains the seed, and, when he has chewed it a moment, spits the remains onto the bark of the fetish tree.

This procedure, wholly dependent on chance, is often long, for the pieces of kola nut do not always fall in the desired position at the first try. After three failures the crowd ceases to restrain itself and, with gestures and voice, each person intercedes for the unfortunate one. The cries do not stop until the kola nut gives the answer, "I accept and am no longer angry!"

The Semioccult Society of the *Koré*, or *Koté*

794 241 [461] The Bambara are, above all, farmers, and cultivating a field has such great importance in their eyes that for them it alone really deserves the name of work. One who does not handle the pick may be active and skillful, but he is not a worker and one does not say of him: "*A bi ajaké*, he is working." But will the seed that /122/ they consign to the earth in the winter sprout, grow, become large, and ripen? However little one knows the Bambara, one can imagine and understand their fears, for they are surrounded by a band of malicious spirits ever ready to pounce on them. Therefore they heed protectors and helpers, and at planting time they offer something to all, even to the rain. The main fetish to which they appeal is the *koté*, or *koré*, which lives in a tree in the middle of a small grove.

794 796 534 In order to be present at the sacrifices to the *koté*, it is necessary to be initiated and to know the password. This initiation, may take place by day, but at least in Bani country, it usually takes place at nightfall when the setting sun takes on a bloody hue. The sons of the genie go in procession to the sacred grove. The *korétigi*, the priest, opens the march, preceded by musicians who beat the *denouba* (1) and the *kingé* (2). With him are the *kârâ ma* ("man of

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1. Drums over a meter long and peculiar to the koré.

2. A kind of triangle which is hung on the thumb of the left hand and is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger.

[778] the kârâ"), one of whom carries the kârâ, the perforated board which is the emblem of the fetish and at the same time the altar on which sacrifice is made to deceased members. First come the souroukou (hyenas) who guard the sacred grove and during the sacrifices drive away prying, uninitiated people; they wear crude masks, roll their big heads right and left, and utter frightful "hou hous." The [522] korodouga (clowns), who rake the paths in the sacred grove as well as its environs to protect it from brush fires, run from one to another shouting obscenities. Furiously they shake their gourds, which have handles and are perforated and filled with small stones, and furiously they blow into pipes made of pumpkin stems. The leader of this [292] band is dressed up in a cloak made of reed stems, he also wears a reed headdress which is topped by a pyramid of large red beans called n'go blé and decorated with a plume; in his hands he holds the emblem of the group, a long pole on which are hung dirty bags, sorghum stems 10 to 20 centimeters long bound into bundles, pumpkin stems, /123/ skulls of rats, beaks of ducks and hawks, panther claws, etc.

794 796 292 522 Apart from the long string of red beans which all korodougo are required to wear which they twine around their necks several times or sling over the shoulder, crossing and recrossing it on the back and chest, each one dresses according to his own inspiration. The hats are made of bunches of feathers, wings of vultures and ducks, and even entire birds, and around them to decorate them further are red beans, rat skulls, birds beaks, claws, and small bones; all these objects fall on the neck and shoulders and knock together with a sinister sound. Next to men in full breeches are men in rags or men with close-fitting trousers made of innumerable pieces all in different

794 colors, one leg of which goes down to the ankle while the other does
796 not even reach the knee. Some brandish wooden swords, and others
292 ride astride on a bamboo, a reed, or a sorghum stalk, rearing and
522 kicking, and there is not one who does not act the clown.

794 The bisatjila (flagellants) make their flexible whips whistle in
796 the air; shortly thereafter these whips rain blows onto their backs; the
[185] ta tougoula (fire lighters, incendiaries) seem impatient to shower
their bare backs with sparks. The djara (lions) or sogo (beasts, animals) with masks even larger than those of the souroukou (hyenas) growl around the n'goni sama (1), also called wara (fearless wild animals).

1. N'goni, "thorns"; sama, "to kill for oneself."

The soula run from one group to another, slip between legs, and never stay still; they are seen everywhere, sometimes standing, sometimes with hands on the ground on all fours, or again sitting down, breaking bundles of grass or bits of wood between their hands and throwing them with shrill cries at the heads of their companions. And at the end of the procession come the old men, weighed down by the years and no longer of an age for all this fancy dress. They drag or carry the victims intended for the sacrifices.

In the grove around the sacred tree, there is a deafening noise of drums, triangles, reed pipes, and many voices /124/ that shout all together without ever harmonizing. At a sign from the leader, the kârâ bearer goes and stands before the fetish tree, and everything becomes calm and quiet. The youths who have been waiting for seven years to be initiated advance in a line, fall on their knees before the fetish and its emblem, and then prostrate themselves with foreheads in the dust. They remain in this position as long as the sacred hymn
lasts. On rising, they say: "Djanté koré déou djanté (djanté children
[535 of the djanté koré), djanté ma (man of the djanté)," and each dances
931] the dance of the group to which he belongs. These dances are indecent
and always conclude with an obscene gesture.

The oldest sons belong to the groups of their fathers; as to the others, they choose the group they like best. Thenceforth they are

794 korédé ("sons of koré"), and in all the province of Ségou, wherever
796 a sacrifice is offered to the fetish, they may go into the sacred grove without any fear and take part in the mysteries. They have the password -- "djanté ma, man of djanté," and will know how to answer when interrogated by the souroukou (group of the hyena).

794 After the initiation the korétigi (priest of koré) proceeds with sacrifices. Everything happens as at the dasiri: after the libations of
796 /millet/ flour (dégé) and beer (d'lo), the trunk of the sacred tree is
782 reddened with blood, and all around the blood are tufts of fur and feathers stuck to the bark by remainders of chewed kola nut. A hyena mask called koré koungolo ("head /tête/ of koré") is also reddened with blood, as is the kârâ, the emblem of the genie which is used as an altar for deceased initiates. Part of the meat is taken to the village, and the rest is grilled on the spot and eaten without any seasoning whatever.

In the sacrifices, koré and those that form its court are asked to watch over the harvest so that it may be abundant, to watch over the flocks so that they may thrive, to provide the petitioners with their fill of food and drink all their lives, and to give them a vigorous old age, etc., and all this is requested for one sole purpose: "so that we may be able to enjoy a woman and devote ourselves to carnal pleasures."

794 After the repast the crowd abandons itself to the dance, and un-
796 til morning there is an indescribable uproar and endless shouting. At daybreak they go to the public square, and as long as the beer (d'lo) lasts /125/ the orchestra makes bedlam in front of the drinkers who squat around full gourds, and the women sit on mats or tiny stools piled on top of each other, clap their hands, and answer the obscenities of the korodouga with further obscenities.

[535] The dance of the groups, in which all members, young and old, take part, consists of more or less comical contortions which they execute going around in a circle, one behind the other. The old men tire quickly and their throats soon get dry, so they are not slow to sit down and get drunk to please koré, and the young people then abandon themselves and dance to their hearts' content.

794 Two or three tatougoula, a flaming torch in each hand, open
796 the dance. They scorch their backs, chests, and armpits, and
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794 thousands of sparks rain onto their heads and bare bodies, and smoke
796 and sizzle on their skins before going out. The korodouga, armed with
785 leafy branches, chase the sparks. They devote themselves chiefly to their obscene songs; their minds on the perforated gourds which they shake furiously, and more than one dancer feels himself getting roasted. And when the torches are almost burned out the tatougoula squat before the big drum and for the last time shake the handful of
[522] burning straw that they have left. An obscene gesture provokes a stifled laugh here and there, a "hou hou" from the souroukou, a roar from the djara, a chuckle from the soula, and cries of encouragement from around the gourds: "O do, that's it!"

While the djara /lions/ or sogo /beasts/, /wearing/ huge masks roar around the groups of drinkers, the ng'oni sama or wara tear their chests and their armpits with brushes of thorns, and the soula, grimacing and weeping, throw the group of women into confusion and put the children to flight. As to the bisatjila, they circle like lions in a cage, uttering wild animal cries and trying to excite themselves. Suddenly, as if seized by fury, they brandish their long, flexible whips. These whirl for a moment above their heads, whistle in the air, and then slap the flesh. The men strike hard; each blow leaves its mark or furrow, and /126/ blood often flows. They pale and tremble in all their limbs under the pain, but in spite of everything they strike and strike, for the instrument of torture must be worn to shreds and fly to pieces. At every blow of the whip the korodouga band throw themselves onto the victim and massage and rub him, and the souroukou lose themselves in indecent behavior in front of the great drum.

794 In addition to the sacrifice offered every seven years, there are
796 annual sacrifices to the koré, to the shades of its priests, the korétigi,
788 and finally to the shades of its initiates, the korédé. There is always
764 a sacrifice at the death of an initiate; the groups dance the sacred dance, and for three nights there is the shouting and the indescribable bedlam in the koré tou ("grove of the koré") of which I have told.

794 If the deceased initiate was an old man, a graybeard, he has
764 completed his whole career and his fellow-members come in great numbers to pay him their respects. Before the corpse, which is laid out under the trees which shade the entrance of the village, they

794 carry out their indecencies, shout obscenities, drink, and get drunk.
764 And for three consecutive nights after the burial the same scenes are
repeated in front of the fetish tree.

794 The anniversary of the death of a koredé ("son of koré") who
769 became a korétigi (priest of koré), a gnéna-n-sonnaba (priest of the
dasiri) or a gouatigi (head of a group, of a family), is celebrated with pomp; the family always makes it a point of honor to cook d'lo (beer), and people come from all directions to take part in the orgy. /127/

Chapter 7

The Worship of Satan or Worship of the Gnâ, or Boli

1. What is Meant by Gnâ, or Boli

776 Ever since God created their race and put it into the world, the Bambara have respected, venerated, and sacrificed to the gnéna, or djiné, those beings who are intermediate between angels and men. When one of them forgets himself under the influence of a jug of beer so far as to open to you -- oh, very slightly! -- a recess of his soul, he delights in telling you this, but he is careful not to make such a statement when he speaks to you of the gnâ, or boli. For although the beginnings of boli worship fade into the dark of the ages, it nevertheless has its history. The origin of each boli is known, and an initiate, however little instructed in its rites, can tell you whether it comes from the north or south, east or west, and whether it is male or female; and every graybeard can recite its family tree for you.

There is a great difference between the gnéna and the gnâ; they are different in every way, and we have here two beliefs which, though parallel, are absolutely distinct. Any object, whatever it may be, can become the home of a gnena, but these spirits prefer a living being, a plant, a tree, or an animal, for example, and when one is tired of its dwelling it moves elsewhere. A gnâ always lives in an

176 inanimate object, and whether the form it takes is human or animal, whether it resembles an eggplant, a potato, or a napkin ring, that form remains a *boli* as long /128/ as there is a piece left that is visible to the naked eye, and the *boli* never leaves it. In the case of the *boli*, there is such a close union between the object and the spirit that this combination becomes one and the same individual; it is the union of soul and body in order to make up a person or individual.

176 182 In sacrifices to the *gnéna*, the reverence of the Negro is not directed to the spring, the tree, the plant, etc., but to the genie that inhabits it. But in sacrifices to the *gnâ*, reverence is directed simultaneously to the spirit and to its object; one does not exist, is not thought of, without the other. Negroes have often given me to understand this, and one of my old friends, in order to explain his worship, expressed himself in these words: "When you honor your friend, is it his body or his soul that you honor? It is neither his body nor his soul; you honor both at the same time, the person himself as a whole, your friend; that is how it is with the boli." (1) /129/

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1. In Bambara:	Translation:
"Ne koko, n'i bé i terké bôgna, i be a fari bôgna wa ouala a dousou bôgna. I té i terké bôgna wa? A bé té boliou fé koï. An bi Sétané bôgna wa ouala a fen yéré bôgna, héwa, anou dé bi boli bôgna.	"I myself say: if you honor your friend, do you honor his body or his soul? You honor your friend, don't you? It is the same with the *boli*. Do we honor satan or do we honor his object? Assuredly, it is the *boli*.
"Faran fasili do be dasiri, djiri an'a djiné tjé. N'i b'a djiri son, i dé bé dasiri son, nka, i bé dasiri bôgna doron? Djiri te fen gouansan yé? a ti fouï gnâ.	"There is a difference between the *dasiri* tree and its genie. If you sacrifice to the tree, you sacrifice to the *dasiri*, but do you not honor the *dasiri* alone? Is the tree not a mere object? It gives us nothing.
"Taï, o do.	"Exactly, that's right.

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"O fara n fasili-ln te boli dé ni sétané tjé wa? Nibé boli dé son, i be Sétané son tigné, nka i be sétané bògna doron, boli dé, héwa fen min yéra o dé te foui gnâ.

"O té, djiné ni boli ma-n-kan, boli dé hen, an be fen min yé, o be fen gnà dérén. Sétané an'o fen olou foula té ké boli yé wa?"

"Does this difference not exist between the boli and satan? If you sacrifice to the boli, you sacrifice to satan, that is certain; but you honor only the demon, and its object is no help to you.

"No, you haven't understood. A genie and a boli are not the same. The boli is bound to what we see; it is useful to us. Satan and his object, both together -- do they not make up the boli?"

Boli dé: An object in which is found the spirit the Negroes call Sétané, "Satan."

776 The gnéna, or djiné, half man and half angel, malicious though it is, can nevertheless do good and grant a direct blessing by performing a good act. But the gnâ, the boli, a fallen angel (méléké sifa do do, " it is a kind of angel"), in revolt against God and, as I stated in my chapter on God, condemned to the tortures of fire, is entirely evil and cannot directly do a good deed (1). It can never-

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1. I challenge the European "Bambara scholars" of Ségou to listen to the two djéli (storytellers /griots/) of Goïn, a small village a short distance from this center. The sacred dances and songs of the boli are their specialty, and they travel over the

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> whole circle in the dry season. For example, the master of a Nama will give an account, and the storyteller will take up the refrain, which always ends: "I have told you truly, the Nama can refrain from evil, but it is capable only of evil (a ka fari, a ka djougou ko djougou). It is evil, very evil!"

776 theless refrain from an evil act and thus indirectly grant a blessing to human beings. The words of the formula in the sacrifices to the gnéna and the gnâ seem identical, and yet, when one has understood the inmost feelings of the Bambara soul, one sees all the difference between them. To one as to the other the Negroes say: "Ka dji d'amma (give us water), ka mousoou d'amma (give us wives), ka nafolo d'amma (give us wealth), etc." But while in speaking to the first they actually ask for water, wives, etc., they make an indirect request to the second, so that their words mean: "Do nothing to keep us from having wives," "do nothing to keep us from having water," etc. In expressing himself this way he uses all his cunning, and all his deceit comes to the surface and is revealed. Yes, he really deserves the epithet that neighboring tribes have given him and of which he is proud; it is misi bo, "cow dung," -- dry on the outside but limp and soft inside, so that it is squashed when it is stepped on. His inner feeling when he addresses the boli is this: "O Spirits, evil genii, you are capable only of evil; may your hatred not attack me or those who are dear to me, may it all be for my enemies and those that can harm me!" /130/

2. The Legend of the Boli

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This is a very curious legend, for it makes the boli come from Mecca, the holy city! To understand it better, let us remember in passing that Islam has only made the Bambara more attached to their idols. They have died in order to keep them; they answered the

771 "believe or die" of the Moslems by taking up their spears, and when
798 they were conquered, reduced to servitude, and unable to continue
778 their worship openly, they remained true to the faith they received
from their ancestors. Severed heads became the prey of vultures,
and spilled blood flowed, but those that survived only became hardened.
The Moslem conquerors, tired of striking and in need of slaves and
manpower, had to admit their defeat in the field of religion.

Some fell away from the idols (slaves, and some rich people
seeking to safeguard their lives and possessions), but their apostasy
was strictly external and a lie, for they shouted the formula but in
secret devoted themselves to their bloody rites, imbuing their children
with their own faith and not that of their masters. A lie has never
[577] been difficult for the Bambara; to know how to lie is for them more
than half a virtue. Thus, when the right to freedom was proclaimed
[667] in 1907, I was not at all surprised to see that out of nearly 5,000
slaves who spontaneously set themselves free, the majority returned to
their homes or to the land of their fathers, forgot the formula, and
declared themselves to be fetishists. They did not get initiated then
since they already had been (1).

1. Those who took back their own freedom in 1907 were all slaves of the Moslems. The "Peulls" /Fulani/, a shepherd people, saw almost all their slaves escape. The Bambara in slavery kept their traditions as well as they could; in the Negro village of Biskra I found sons of the Bambara who did not know their own language and were fanatical Moslems, yet kept their tattoos, sacrificed to the family boli handed down by their fathers, danced the dance of the korodouga, and used the Bambara formulas and songs although they no longer understood them.

798 Since all the Bambara could not be made to submit to shameful
771 servitude, the Moslems were satisfied to impose a tax, to forbid
778 public worship of the idols, and, with sheathed sword, sought to make converts by persuasion. Their caravans were quick to cover the country, preaching Islam in all places both favorable and unfavorable, but the mass of the people could not be approached. In order to give /131/ their beliefs a rational basis, they always did everything in the name of "Alla," "Stamboul" (the Sultan of Constantinople), and "Makka (Mecca), and said to the conqueror: "All true belief comes from Mecca (Makka); it is the center of all religious life, so why do you fight so hard against our boli? They all come from Mecca. God has given you the formula: 'there is no Divinity other than God and Mohammed is His prophet'; for you He prescribes ablutions, Friday rest, etc.. Keep your formula and shout it! To us Bambara He has given the boli and bloody sacrifices, so why do you want to take from us our treasures that are hungry for blood?" I do not doubt that we owe
773 our "legend" to the discussions which arose between the m'rabet (the
776 marabout, or Moslem priest) and the gnâtigi, or bolitigi. Here it is
794 as I so often heard it told by bold old men:

A group of youths who were devoting themselves to trade and following lady luck (ou toumbe kolo (1) gnini, "they were seeking cowrie shells"), one day took the road to the east. Over mountains and valleys the little band walked and walked for a long time, and then finally they reached the great, blue, salty water, the ocean, on the shores of which lies the holy city, Mecca (Makka) (2).

[436] 1. Kolo, "cowrie shells" (singular, koké), small shells used as money.

[823] 2. Since the Moslems said that Mecca was located on the seacoast, and since the Bambara did not know Arabia, they believed it to be in this direction. In their minds the ocean does not have to be crossed to get there. Actually, this is the least of their worries.

773 776 794 Their stay there lasted several years, and no one expected to see them again. It was said that bandits had fallen upon them and massacred them or reduced them to slavery, and funeral rites were to be given them. The *sanga fo* (3) in their honor began; the women wept, filling the air with their cries, and after several days of dancing, everybody went back to pleasure and work.

The young Bambara were not dead, they came back and, better yet, were in no way stained by Mohammedanism. Even in the heart of Mecca they met a Bambara tribe, brothers who were thoroughly fetishist, and their secret rites, sacred dances, and sacrifices made more impression on their hearts and imaginations than the worn and cold formula, stupid prostrations, and tiresome /132/ ablutions of the sons of Islam. They were initiated into the rites of the *gnâ*, or *boli*; they bought some; and one fine day, rich in gold and silver, flocks of goats and sheep, women and slaves, they took the road back to the Niger. The caravan was large, the loads heavy, the road was barely passable, and discouragement touched the hearts of the bravest more than once. Finally, they reached the great river and the loads and *boli* filled boats by the hundreds.

The start of the voyage was happy; only a very few loads fell into the water and were lost going through rapids. Then a day came when everything changed; the wind started to blow violently; the water boiled, foamed, and swelled; and the boats, made of two hollowed tree trunks placed end to end and bound together with weak ropes, crashed together and broke. Who can tell how many disappeared in the floods that day with all their cargoes! The loss was great, especially in *boli*, but these have the power of gods, and they quickly changed into fish. According to the legend there have been torpedo fish, manatee, etc. in the depths of the river since that day.

Everything was not lost, however. When the travelers arrived in the Béledougou and the Ben-dougou (1), they still had a large stock

3. Condolences from acquaintances to the family of the deceased.

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of *boli*. People came running from all directions. Of course there were festivals and amusements, and everyone wanted news and wished to learn about this Mecca which was so vaunted by the Moslems. "It is indeed a large city," they said, "but do not think that all they know there is the worn formula *la ilah ill l'allah*, which is shouted by the sons of the Prophet all day long. At Mecca there are Bambara (2) who sacrifice to genii as we do. They have additional rites that you do not know; /133/ they know how to protect themselves from evil genii and demons they sacrifice to the *boli*. The latter /*boli*/ are terrible. They kill anyone who insults or displeases them and actually have consideration only for those who give themselves to them and become their children. Thanks to them, our brothers in Mecca are rich and powerful and live to be old. They quickly discover thefts, lies, and adultery. In fact, the *boli* render justice, and whoever asks it of them cannot lie with impunity. The deepest insult against them is to call on them to witness a lie; they always take vengeance for this offense, causing endless evils to its perpetrator

1. *Bélédougou*: *bélé*, "ferruginous rock"; *dougou*, "village," "country"; a province back of Bamako kati. *Ben-dougou*: *ben*, "meet"; *dougou*, "country"; the eastern end of Bambara country, on the Bani.

2. This word *Bambara* (*Bamana*) of the legend denotes less the people than the religion, and it seems to me that it should be understood in the sense of *kafri*, as already indicated in speaking of the origin of the word Bambara. (As I pointed out /in Chap. IV, 3/ I believe its original meaning to have been "rebel" and not "son of the alligator" or of the fish *ban ma*, a kind of tench.)

773 778 794 and even going so far as tocause his death." These accounts excited the Negroes' curiosity; they wished to see the *boli*, wanted to sacrifice to them. They gave themselves to the *boli*, and thus became their children.

Once the people were initiated, the travelers unveiled the mysteries to them, bound them by the law of secrecy. They imposed upon them the prohibition against admitting uninitiated men and women and children to their ranks, and the sects were formed. These have multiplied continuously; each *boli* has its own, and since the *boli* are male and female and produce children, they have become legion, and each village has sects and *boli* of its own. Although the 778 794 worship of the boli has not destroyed that of the *gnéna*, or *djiné*, it has long exceeded the latter; their sacrifices and drinking bouts are accompanied by an external pomp that has a different grandeur, and no important action is taken without their agreement. It can be asserted without fear of error that the worship of the *gnâ*, or *boli*, is the chief religion of the Bambara at the present time. It is the basis of union within families and the foundation of the *sina-n-koun*, or sworn friendship; through the *boli* the people of the same village are closely united, and this union extends from one village to another and from one province to another, since all members of a *boli*'s sect are brothers and owe each other mutual assistance under certain specified circumstances.

776 778 782 In the Bambara's mind (and I have spoken of this at length in my chapter, "The Ideas of the Bambara are not of Islamic Origin"), the *boli* are nothing less than intrinsically evil beings in revolt against the Supreme Being, God the Creator and Lord of all things. As the formula of the sacrifice to *Touafé Bla* suggests, the place where they dwell is fire or hell, and there is not a Negro who will not tell you /134/ that the *boli* is a demon (*sétané*). Can it not be said that his religion is a worship rendered to "Satan himself?" He renders this worship in full knowledge of what he is doing. Have I not heard the sacrificer in a sacrifice to a *Nama boli* (1), shout before cutting the

1. A note by Father Coppe of the White Fathers (unpublished manuscript).

throat of the victim of the general sacrifice: "Alla djampa ba, i k'an bla, i ka bo an koun na, God, great traitor, leave us, go away from us!" -- and the crowd repeated the blasphemy after him: "Alla djampa ba, i k'anbla, i ka bo an koun na!"

3. Boli Whose Power is Slight

776 778 Since the boli do not all have the same strength and power, and fear is the basis and foundation of Bambara worship, they are not all equally honored. We will divide them into two main groups, those of "little power" and those of "great power," and we will end this chapter with a word on the talking boli, the prerogative of certain sorcerers, and on the sirikoun, another, quite special, kind of boli.

778 278 By boli of little power I mean all evil fetishes which are basically not very terrifying, in the sense that it is thought that they very seldom cause anyone's death. Many of them are primarily medicines, and almost everyone has them. They are tails of cows, goats, dogs, and wild animals; they have no specific names and are generally called foura (2) ("medicine"). Additional "medicines" are the kana,

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776 778 782 which I have before me, reports the same fact on the subject of the Komo boli. Moreover, this Father is a student of the Bambara -- when the Blacks of Ségou speak of him, they say, "Bamana-n-do," which means that he spoke and understood their language well.

2. This name foura is given in a general way to all boli; I should therefore remark that the word "medicine" in the sense that we understand it, is not the exact translation of the word foura. This word is in itself untranslatable

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> into our language and means a force, a conscious force, that opposes another conscious force which seeks to harm us, and destroys it.

horns and hoofs of bulls filled with an ointment the composition of which it is very difficult to specify: blood, fat, and dried, crushed glow-worms are combined with iron powder, charcoal, and other /135/ ingredients. They are the Bambara equivalent of the "pink" pills which cure all ills, including baldness and ingrowing nails -- and that sums it up. The kana of which I speak are boli, and differ from the kana possessed by each powerful boli, which are no longer boli but parts of boli. Let us quickly admit that the word kana is as indefinite as the word foura, and means primarily "that which protects, preserves, and keeps us from harm."

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782 These little fetishes are not given festivals, and only their owners sprinkle them with blood and sacrifice to them. They cost little, and a sorcerer or the owner of a father foura or kana will make [436] one for a modest sum varying between 5 kémés and a ba fla (5 kémés = 200 cowrie shells; ba fla = 1, 600 cowrie shells), which is from 5 sous to 2 francs.

Apart from the sorcerers, whose boli are innumerable, there is a whole group of people, the noumons (blacksmiths), the koulés (who dig canoes and mend broken gourds), the donzo (hunters), etc., who have such strong confidence in all these horrors that they would rather die of hunger than be deprived of them. 224 778 782 The hunters all have some to make them active and alert. Before every hunt of the least importance there is a black pullet from each, and on the return another sacrifice is made, however unlucky the hunt may have been. The keeper of each fetish is usually the only one to pay respects to it. However, his brother hunters may give it a small offering, and it is understandable that they do so, since each fetish has its specialty. One is for deer, another for guinea fowl, a third for the big antelope (dadjé in Bambara and best known to Europeans under the name of koba, a word of the Peul language) or for the wild pig /facochère/, for the panther or the

224 778 782 lion, for the hyena or for the anteater, etc., and since each cannot possess them all, one or the other is appealed to according to the need of the moment.

The most interesting of this group of boli are the togo fen foula, which watch over the gun and arms of the hunter in a quite special way, protecting them from the ko nege ba, a greedy and rough hand which deprives a woman of her periods if she touches meat offered to it in sacrifice or game killed under its auspices, and from the tougourouna, which has consideration only for those who own it and makes all others /136/ powerless /the French word here is impuissant, meaning both "powerless" and "impotent"/ if they touch the meat of its sacrifices or game killed under its auspices (1).

224 778 Along with the fetish some hunters also own the gnâma daha (2), a conari in which roots and leaves gathered at night by moonlight, here and there at random are simmered and soaked. When certain kinds of game, such as an anteater, for example, have been killed, the animal is washed with these roots and this juice of doubtful color. I have been told that the juice of the gnâma daha induces the flow of urine, so that the gnâma (3) of the animal leaves, its wild animal smell disappears, and then the meat can be eaten (4). /137/

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1. Game killed under the auspices of a boli belongs to it just like the victims of a sacrifice, and if these are "taboo" for a class of people, the game similarly becomes taboo.

2. Gnâma, "force," "power," "malignant fluid"; daha, earthen receptacle called a conari.

3. See what I said about the gnâma in Chap. I, p. 17ff.

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4. All Negroes do not resort to the gnâma daha. But then they are not limited to a single means of handling

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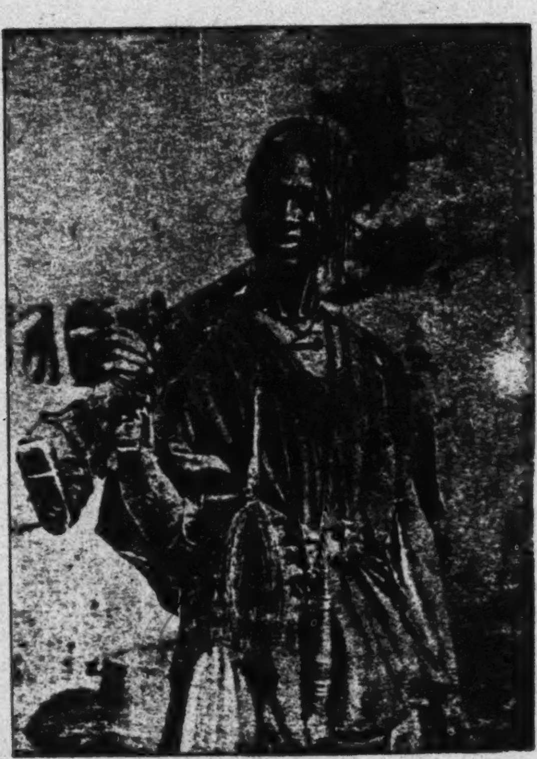

Costume of a Bambara hunter.

the problem; they have more than one string to their bow. Immediately after killing a fur-bearing animal, every hunter empties the urine by pressure or cutting.

224 778 These little hunters' fetishes have no festival or formal sacrifice. Some ultimately gain great renown in the ranks of our "Nimrods," however, and then they come in large numbers bringing black pullets. The master of the idol then chooses a day for a strictly private drinking bout at which only initiates of the hunter sect are present.

778 596 The most powerful of all the *boli* whose influence is slight are the *boli* of the hut or the family, the familial *boli* to which the heads of families, the *gouatigi*, sacrifice. These take practically all shapes: they are horns, balls coated with blood resembling all the tubers of creation, all kinds of tomatoes and eggplants, napkin rings, etc. -- in sum, horrors, each wrapped in a very dirty, filthy goatskin. They are to be found hung in the *b'lon*, or entry hut, together with the *ex voto*, a package of goat skulls carefully emptied and stripped of flesh. The family *boli* are legion, and it is impossible to know them all. The most widespread and the most highly valued are the *ma bara*, the *sirini*, the *bala*, the *bara*, the *baga* (1), and the *bama-n-djigi*.

1. A *boli* is always made of several pieces, each with a special name. All these pieces are called *boli dé*. Among the *boli dé* there is one which is called *boli dén fa*. One piece of the *baga* is a thong which forms a belt that the sacrificer puts around his thighs, all covered with blood, before proceeding with the individual sacrifices. The *baga* protects against bullets, arrows, and spears. Some *baga* are famous, and Negroes go to find the masters of these fetishes and receive from them a small facsimile of the *baga* belt.

778 596 782 At the annual sacrifice the gouatigi, or head of the family, offers a goat and at least a hen and a kola nut for each male child no matter how strained his circumstances or how slight his self-respect. He also offers d'lo, or millet beer, and all his family make merry. [574] Some even do things in a big way, and although the whole village does not take part in the drinking bout, all the old men are invited, and many close friends come from everywhere.

778 596 The family boli take the interests of the head of the family in their hands; they are responsible for driving away illness and reverses of fortune. /138/ Through them one gains many descendants, wealth, wives, a happy and lively old age, honor and respect. They are also appealed to on all occasions in life that are of the slightest importance. Before a long journey is undertaken or a business venture is entered into, when a disaster threatens or there is a possibility of a piece of unhoped-for good fortune, they are reddened with a trickle of blood. Sacrifice is also made to them at harvest time (many are even called by the generic name of gno four, "millet medicine"), but especially at circumcisions and excisions, at betrothals, marriages, and funerals. The tne, or "taboo," of these fetishes (see above, p. 5ff.), is taboo for each wife's eldest son, and sometimes the whole family makes it its own.

4. Boli whose Power is Great

778 782 796 I call powerful boli all those gnâ of every shape and size whose worship is secret and in whose mysteries only those participate who have been initiated into the rites, after having sworn on their lives never to reveal them. Countless victims are offered to these boli; some of them are always warm and are ceaselessly reddened with blood. At the annual festivals not only is there a hecatomb of roosters and hens, but dogs and goats by the dozen also die, and in Bani country I have seen as many as five or six sacrificers working at the same time. This is the great and true Bambara worship, and it gives rise to orgies of four to eight days; it eclipses the ancient worship, that

778 of the *gnéna*, or *djiné*, and like it or not, the worship of the dead is
782 trivial in comparison, a little devotion, one might say.

796 These *boli* are greatly feared and dreaded. They render justice and decide all controversies; they have the right of life and death over human beings; and it is through their intermediary that the Bambara avenge themselves and take reprisal on a real or imaginary enemy.

No victims are too fine for the powerful *boli*. There was a time
778 when men were sacrificed to them -- I think that this cannot possibly
782 be doubted. At the time of the Negro king *N'golo*, says the legend, a man of Faléma -- a small village on the road from Ségou to Koutiala which is now in ruins -- went to the king with his fetish /139/ *Sa folo*. The king had himself initiated, wanted to own it, and his first victim was the owner himself, the man from Faléma. If old men talk to you about the capture of Sikasso by the French, they will all tell you that, on the morning of the attack, men were sacrificed to the chief *boli* of the city. Were there not, in 1907, in a temple not far from Koutiala, a row of human skulls hung on the walls as *ex voto*? A little before the conquest, under the reign of the Moslem princes El-Hadj-Omar and Amadou, the master of the *Nama* fetish of Misango was asked to go to Ségou with his idol. He said he did not own one, but a woman betrayed him, and a search was made in Misango and its environs. The man was informed in time, and he changed the hiding place of his *Nama*, and the woman, convicted of lying, was given him as a slave in compensation. A little later, a sacrifice of thanksgiving was offered to the fetish, and the traitorous woman was among the victims. She was old, and the god considered her too tough; he ordered that she be sold and some children be bought, since they were victims worthy of it. Its orders were carried out, "for," say the storytellers who sing it praises, "when sacrifice is made to the *Nama* one must never forget *nzégéné dégé* (1), honey, two red

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1. Millet flour and *nzégéné* (*Balanites oethiopica*).

778 782 roosters, two red kola nuts, and one dégenéni, an infant of two to three months."

Since the French occupation and the suppression of slavery, human beings are no longer sacrificed regularly. All the legends give one to understand, moreover, that they were always unusual and very infrequent. Yet who will ever be able to say what took place, and what still takes place nowadays at night in those sacred groves which only initiates can enter? One can always imagine that, lacking sacrifices, the initiates of the siri, the fetish of the souba or soubaga, disinter corpses in order to have human blood to offer to their idol and human flesh to taste. It is a unanimous belief among all the Negroes that they do so, and no sacrifice is made to the gnéna, to the gnâ, or to the shades of ancestors without a repetition of the words: "Protect us from the souba," -- in other words: "Protect us against the initiates of siri." These souba, of which I have already spoken /140/ in my chapter on metamorphosis (see above, p. 29), do not seem to differ in any way from the occult religious sects of the Basêzi of Uganda and the Baswêzi of the Ouchirombo, the cannibals of the equator.

778 And of what are they made, all these boli that for the most part have their temples and their sacred groves? A little of everything, I think, goes into the making of these horrors. Many times have I untangled these blood-coated gods and found only the bark of trees, roots, horns of goats, deer, and bulls, and finally claws of almost
778 all quadrupeds. It is said that the Komo of Tigini, 30 or 35 kilometers
773 from Ségou, is the body of a child. The legend says it was made by one Kari, the great-great-grandfather of the man who owns it at present, and this miserable man pushed barbarism to the point of taking his first grandson, a few months old, and grinding him alive in a mortar. An almost identical legend is current about the Komo of Kégné in Bani country which is at present in the hands of quite a young man called Marka N'zan. It is even said that if the first child of the owner of this latter fetish is a boy it belongs to the Komo. Is this child sacrificed or do they simply poison him? I have nothing definite on this matter.

778 All these are obviously legends and I give them as such, not having been able to assure myself of the facts de visu; I maintain, however, that they may be true. I broke open not a Komo, but a Kono, which was the torso of a child three to four years old.

Some boli, like the Tji wara and the Nama, are made of wood; others, like the Douga, consist of a considerable number of bulls' horns. They also take on almost all shapes, and when one opens the dirty goatskins that serve as their tabernacles, one finds horns and napkin rings, and among them balls suggesting all the fruits and tubers of creation, and one has to be more than an initiate to recognize the main item in this conglomeration. There are also some that resemble a crude doll whose arms are two horns; others are in the form of a hippopotamus, a cow, or an elephant, and in the Magna of Zambala on the Bani, in the circle of Sikasso, I even saw a little horse.

The boli are always composed of several pieces called boli dé, among which is the boli den fa, a little larger /141/ and rounder than the others because it receives the first trickle of blood and the mouthful of chewed kola nut. Some boli are strictly male or female, and others, like the Nama and Tji wara, for example, are mated and live in their temples with the females. The latter always resemble their husbands; they are less strong, but that is all. These fetishes, especially those that are famous, feared, and dreaded, often stay hidden, and their covering is not taken off until the moment of sacrifice.

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The worship of the powerful boli is more complicated than that of the gnéna, or djiné, and an entire staff is needed to serve them. First, there is the owner of the fetish, the gnâtigi, or bolitigi, and the sacrificer, the mouroukalatigi. These are helped in their duties by two wara da (also called waraminadé), who are intermediaries between the fetish and its owner (1). It is through them that the genie

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1. The Komo being the most famous in the province of Ségou, it is the staff of this fetish I am giving here. The others have staffs that are similar, but

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of course the names change a little.
On the staff of the Nama there are
not only warada but also djenfa tje
and djenfa mouso, who go through
the village to exorcise /all evil
from/ it, holding the fetish in their
hands or putting it over their faces.
They are preceded by a torch bearer,
who is usually the darotigi, or beadle.
Some fetishes, the Kono for example,
have a person especially responsible
for carrying it to the place of
sacrifice. He performs the duties of
the darotigi; the one who carries the
Kono is quite often called Kono
guenguéba.

778 791 158 makes known its wishes and gives its orders; and when it does so, its spokesman is always seized by an epileptic attack followed by catalepsy. When he has spoken he is brought out of this state by being sprinkled with consecrated water, and he goes back to his place as if nothing unusual had happened. He seems to feel no fatigue, his features are composed; and yet only a moment earlier his body ran with sweat, his limbs shook with nervous trembling, his eyes were wild and starting out of their sockets, saliva that was often tinged with blood ran from his mouth, and his breath was whistling and irregular.

778 791 The gnâ also has its beadle, the darotigi, who rings for the sacrifice, thus warning the initiates to come quickly and the uninitiated to stay in their huts. Since he also sings the praises of the fetish while ringing his bell, he is also called /142/ gnâ djéli, storyteller /griot/of the gnâ. To all these are added the band of members and initiates, whose function consists chiefly in providing the food and beer for the orgies. These are the gnako dé-n-ou, children of the gnâ.

778 425 One becomes master of a gnéna, or djiné (1), by election or

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1. The sinsin, the gnéna of twins, is an exception, as it may also be bought.

inheritance, and rarely by purchase. The gnâ pass from father to son by inheritance, but it is always possible to obtain one by purchase; all that is necessary is to find in the village the number of people needed to make up the staff of the idol, provided one is not opposed by the sorcerer's veto.

Every purchase of a powerful boli occasions celebrations, festivals, and drinking bouts that last from three to eight days. These festivals are like marriage celebrations. Surrounded by his staff, the new fetish owner spends the day offering d'lo, or millet beer, to the many friends who come to congratulate him and give him their gifts. It is not until evening that he leaves his b'lon, or entry hut, and, followed by initiates carrying the idol, goes to the sacred grove or under the trees chosen to be the meeting place henceforth. The night is spent in dancing and shouting hymns.

In the eyes of the Negro to buy a gnâ is to become united with it in a firm and indissoluble way. It is equivalent to marrying the fetish, and they have no other phrase to express their idea, their notion of the matter: "A yé boli fourou, he got married"; "ayé boli fourou gosi, he has stamped and sealed his marriage with the boli" (2); "ne ka fourouboloma faro (3) flé, here is my wedding present";

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2. Fourou gosi. In order to enjoy the marriage lawfully, whoever marries must, in the presence of the head of the village, pay his wife's parents a handful of kola nuts -- usually eleven, one more than the required ten.

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3. Fourouboloma fara: This is the name of the small present of cowrie shells given to a

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585 /newly married/ couple by their friends. It varies from 40 cowrie shells to 2 *kémés*, or 160 cowrie shells.

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425 "*a taboli konio kera*, the marriage of his *boli* has taken place."

[illegible] The value of a *gnâ* varies between 30 and 40 francs, and whoever owns one can from then on make them. If one counts the presents given to the maker and to his staff, the dogs, goats, and kola nuts offered in sacrifice on the day of his reception, and finally the beer of the wedding, its value is undoubtedly more than 100 francs.

5. Differences among the Powerful *Boli*

778 I class all the powerful *boli* into three main groups. In the first I place those which formerly were the prerogative of kings, princes, and ministers; in the second, those which have neither temple nor sacred grove; and in the third, those which have a temple and a sacred grove, or at least one or the other.

Those of the first group are not at all numerous, and the most popular are the *Safolo*, the *Kongoba*, the *Nan*-*Woloko*, and the *Kouantara*. They are usually found in villages which were formerly capitals of cantons or provinces and are in the hands of people whose families have included a *kafotigi* (head of a canton) or a *fama* (king or petty king), i.e., a head of a province, a minister of the king on whom the title of ruler (*fama*) was bestowed.

Everything leads me to think that in the beginning these were merely fetishes responsible for watching over the king and the people of his court, analogous to what above I have called the family *boli*. At present they have become *boli* of sects. But although all circumcised men can enter the ranks of those who pay them respect, only married men become initiated, and the orgies in their honor are private orgies whose entire cost is borne by graybeards.

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782 According to legend, slaves were sacrificed to these *boli* in the time of the Bambara kings. Since then the worshippers have been content to offer them millet beer, hens, and goats in addition to the

778 kola nuts required in every sacrifice. All the people of the village
782 rejoice at the annual sacrifice. From the goat hut, where hangs the goatskin that serves as its tabernacle (1), the fetish is carried in procession to the place of sacrifice, a large tree that casts a little shade inside the village. During the procession the initiates shout sacred hymns at the tops of their voices, drums and xylophones beat and rumble, and all the circumcised stop when it passes /144/ and reverently bare their heads. The women and the uncircumcised kneel and bow their heads respectfully at the passing of the idol, which is hidden from profane view by a dirty cloth covering.

778 The *boli* of the second group are legion, and it is very difficult to know all of them. The main two are the *Tji wara* and the *Douga*.

A *Tji wara* seldom gives evidence of its power. Although it may kill its owner or anyone who happens to separate the male from the female in the course of the sacred dance, a Negro is seldom heard to blame it for the death of one of his family. This fetish is made of two forked sticks, one male and the other female, on which sacrifices are made. It may be seen hanging in the entry hut of its master, along with its cloak of false-cedar bark and its mask which are used in the sacred dance.

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532 The mask of the *Tji wara* is tastefully made; in fact, it is the best Bambara sculpture I have seen. It is carved of the wood of the *dondol* (*Bombax cornui*) and seems intended to represent a goat or a deer. The male often has curved horns and sometimes measures almost a meter in height. The female is smaller, its horns are straight, rings hang from its nose and ears and, no doubt because a goddess could not be sterile, it carries its child on its back. (1) During the

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346 1. The Bambara, whose huts are usually very clean, put their gods away in dark, filthy corners. The temples are small and have such low doors that it is often necessary to lie prone in order to enter.

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1. It is easy to obtain a mask of the tji wara. Many colonials bring them back from the Sudan, but they are mistaken in speaking of it as a "Sudanese fetish." This mask and all the other masks, including the twins' doll, are not "fetishes" at all. They externalize for the Negroes their idea of the genie -- sétané -- which animates the object to which they sacrifice. /Placement of this footnote is editor's emendation, the original gives it on following page 153/.

During the sacred dance the Negroes, decked out in mask and cloak, are bent double and constantly in motion. From time to time they bellow [516] into a bull's horn. Since they cannot stand straight without failing in respect for the idol, they stretch out on the ground or crouch on all fours when they are tired and weary.

778 782 At the time of the arrival of the bani-n-kono (storks), a little before the rainy season, a sacrifice of dogs, goats, and hens is offered to the Tji wara. This fetish is especially venerated by youths; they ask it for strength, health, and earnestness in work. Thus, when young people get together to cut shrubs and make a new field in the midst of the bush or to pull out weeds in the winter, a goat is sacrificed; and they work to the sound of the drum and the tji wara bellowing into his horn. Upon their return from the field, the workers are given millet beer; then the sacred dance begins in the public square /145/ and continues far into the night, to the great delight of the women and children.

778 The douga consists of a fairly large number of bulls' horns enclosed in a goatskin. It is hung in the entry hut, and it is there its altar is set; this altar is a square column of earth attached to one of the corners of the room. It often measures a meter in height; the

778 corner that is visible is decorated with horns, and a conari, a receptacle of baked earth, is fastened to the platform to catch the overflow of victims' blood. This receptacle is always surrounded by a little hedge made of porcupine quills, which gives the whole arrangement a somewhat fancy appearance.

More terrible than the tji wara, it is popular with some people;
778 the Negroes readily appeal to it when they want to take revenge on
782 an enemy. Nor is it unusual to hear a Bambara blame it for the death of one of his family, and since several victims are offered whenever such situations and occasions arise, it receives a good sprinkling of blood from here and there. A great sacrifice is made to it annually, and on the assigned day dogs, goats, and hens are offered to it. Following the sacrifice, the initiates meet at the home of one or another of the most influential members of the sect, and the day is spent emptying jugs of millet beer and getting drunk.

The specialty of the douga is to protect people from snake bites. Nevertheless the Bambara sacrifice to it to some extent for everything. From it, as from the others, they ask for wealth, wives, rain in the winter, etc., etc. (2).

2. In every sacrifice there is the sacramental consumption of part of the meat and objects offered to the idol. These present partake of this communion at the actual site of the sacrifice and without any seasoning whatever.

778 Many other /boli in this category/ could be mentioned; for example, there is the da, to which the Bambara sacrifice in order to have a good harvest. But, although these are terrible, they are still not the boli which they really fear and dread and to which /146/ they sacrifice continuously throught their lives. The latter form a separate group; they have temples and sacred groves, nothing is done without them, and they are always being taken out of their stinking dens and filthy temples. Men, women -- everybody worships and consults

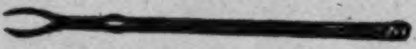
778 them, they have unlimited power. They render justice, oaths are taken on them, they exorcise all evils to some degree, they give fertility to the sterile, they have the right of life and death over human beings, and it is to them that appeal is made for vengeance on an enemy.

[291 534]

Nia *ngoni*: the harp of the *Nia* fetish

778 534 Chief among these fetishes are the *Komo*, the *Nama*, the *Kono*, the *Nia*, the *Wara* (or *Djara*), the *Djo* and the *Magna*, also called *Tjaro* *fign*. All of them have their special drums and musical instruments, and some, like the *Nia* and the *Magna*, even have an entire band. The band of the *Nia* consists primarily of guitars, skin bags, and small baskets in the shape of hourglasses filled with stones or bits of scrap iron. That of the *Magna* consists of one or /147/ two long

778 534 drums and a fairly large number of antelope horns (1). These are tuned by means of a wooden bell, and each gives a special note and tone. 778 533 In fact, Bambara music is the sweetest and the least shrill that I have heard. Moreover the Negroes enjoy [534] it; one day at Bagini on the Bani, when three such bands gave a concert together, the women were so happy, so pleased and moved by the charm of its sweetness, that they took off their bracelets, earrings, and nose rings and laid them at the feet of the musicians.



Horned iron tube, trumpet of the *Komo* fetish (seen at Bagini in Bani country at the home of Boya, head owner of the fetish; it is between 0.30 and 0.35 meters long.

The *Komo*, the *Kono*, and the *Nama* have the wildest music there is -- trumpet blasts and frightful bellowings that freeze one with 778 534 terror. In the *Komo* music, an iron tube which is part of the fetish is blown into, and the initiates, *warada darotigi*, accompany the sacred songs on bamboo pipes. The pipes of the *Kono* are bulls' horns (2), and the sounds that come out of them are real roars. Those of

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1. The old men say that before the Moslem invasion of Omar el Hadj, the musicians blew into elephant tusks. The tusks were confiscated because of the ivory and were replaced by horns of the great antelope, which the Europeans call by the Peul name, *koba*.

2. To make these pipes the Negroes cut the tip of the horn and close the opening with a spider's web.

178 the Nama are made of bamboo and smaller than those of the Komo.
534 The big instrument here is the drum which is beaten with a bent iron
rod. The syncopation is given on the bass drum which is wooden; the
vibrations of the skins stop, and one would say that the sound is the
knock of a bone that is broken clean; it gives one the shivers.

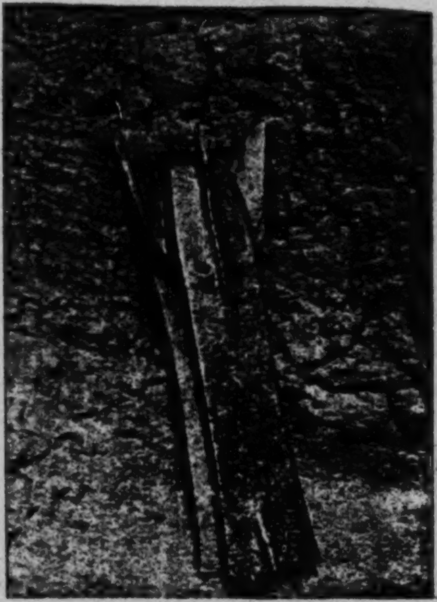
The Komo is always most carefully hidden, and one has to be-
178 long to the village to know in which hut it dwells. The main parts
of the fetish are enclosed in baskets just like those used for transport-
ing cotton, but three iron rods (3) on which /148/ sacrifices are made
are usually kept in the skin of a striped cat. The Nama lives under
a tamarind tree outside the village and has a beehive for a tabernacle.
[417] The whole thing is surrounded by a djasé, a kind of palisade made of
coarse mats which hides from the uninitiated both the hive and the
receptacle into which the remainder of the victims' blood is poured.

178 The Nia and the Wara, or Djara, have round huts surmounted
by conical thatch roofs. While the first is inside the village, the
346 second is always outside at one of the entrances. The Kono has a
square house with a flat terrace roof. It is always decorated with
small bells fastened by lines on which are hung skulls of dogs and
goats that have been sacrificed. Usually, if not always, it faces the
inside of the village. The Magna does not have a temple strictly
speaking, but it has its altar, a round turret surmounted by a receptacle
[824] to receive the blood of victims. It is outside the village and always
under a silk-cotton tree (Eriodendron anfractuosum -- kapok tree).

178 The Komo is equipped with a jointed mask and a cloak made
of feathers of guinea fowl, hens, etc., which are used for the sacred
dance. By means of a stick which the feather cloak hides from sight,

3. In the presence of the uninitiated these sticks are called Komo djoloko, and (again so that none of the mysteries will be revealed) the warada, those who speak in the name of the idol, are called djoloko samana, "those who carry the chains of Komo."

118 the dancer raises or lowers his mask, and at night, in the dim light of the fires, one might think it a dwarf demon which alternately grows little by little and then becomes smaller again. /149/ The *Kono* also has a mask. It is not jointed, and its cloak is not variegated like that of the *Komo*, for all its feathers are those of the *djougo* (1), which are black.



Mask of the *Kono* fetish

All these fetishes are made up of a fairly large number of objects. Among the chief pieces there is usually a horn called *kana*, and a *sirikoun* which is used to will death to one's enemy and at the same time shield oneself from it. The principal part of the *Kono*, called *boli den fa*, is a kind of ragged doll with two horns for arms.

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1. A large black bird the French name of which I do not know.

118 [54] In the Komo an important part is played by three iron tubes, one of which is used as a trumpet (2). The most interesting and original

2. Tama guengueba is its name.

unquestionably is the Nama, which consists of two wooden heads called koungolo Nama ("heads of the Nama"); one, the male, is called tjéma and the other, the female, is called mousoma.

The Nama Fetish

"These two heads seem to represent two fantastic birds, and the illusion created is complete when, preceded by the darotigi who shakes his bell and carries a lantern, the djenfa mousoou (3) run

3. The term applied to those who are permitted to take the heads in their hands.

through the village and around its walls looking for siri. It becomes even stronger when they place the heads on their foreheads and mingle

778 with the dancers /150/ who, with torsos naked to the waist, gesticulate and shout their sacred songs to the sound of drums and pipes:

778 A djigina so, gnâ, ma fambali, a djigina so, tjon k'a e.
539 He is our guest, the gnâ, great killer of men, he is our guest
tjon k'a é.
A fiéréla ka dén, boli fiéréla ka dén.
He has blossomed to bear, to bear his fruits; this boli has
blossomed, he has his fruit.
Soubaou, yo, nin kéra malo ko ye.
Souba, yo, this is done because of shame.
Soubaya kéra, dabali bé an ko yé.
Someone has devoted himself to the practices of the souba, we
have a means of saving ourselves.

778 Nor does sacrifice to the Nama fail to be impressive. Only
782 members of the staff enter the enclosure where the beehive used as its tabernacle is located. The crowd of members remains outside, and no one approaches the palisade before it is his turn to give a sacrificial hen and kola nuts to the sacrificer. While the idol is being reddened with blood (1), /151/ two men, naked to the waist and facing the

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1. The Nama of the Malinké is absolutely identical with that of their Bambara brothers. At Bendougouba, a village of the Kosilanbougou culture near Kita, there is a Nama, and one can identify the words as they are very nearly the same.

Bambara	Malinké
Male Nama: Tjema	Male Nama: Kema
Female Nama: Mousoma	Female Nama: Mousoma
The Nama protects chiefly against initiates of the siri, who are said to eat human flesh and are called souba.	The Nama protects against the soubaga, identical with the souba. It comes from Misèngo in Bélédougou.

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The Nama comes from Misango, a province of Bélédougou.	
The Nama is sometimes called Souyakoro, Namakoro, and its diamou, or lineal name, is Sirima-n-fign.	There are three names for one and the same thing, say the Negroes of Kita: Souyakoro, Namakoro, and Sirimafing.
The palisade around the Nama is called djasé; the receptacle for the blood, da.	The palisade is called djasa; the receptacle, daga.
The horned pieces of wood are called wara se and gnê bla, djenfa mousoou, djenfa tjeou, sometimes called waraou.	The horned pieces of wood are called gnâ bla and ko bla Wara, or Waradjeli or gnâ Wara.
The master of the Nama at Misango, which is father of all /Nama/ is at present Tjema-n-djan; out of respect all masters of the Nama of Misango are called Foura tigiba.	Out of respect all masters of the Nama of Misango are called Foura tigiba (foura, "medicine"; tigiba, "great master").

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crowd, stand immobile on each side of the sacrificer and hold in their hands two pieces of wood about a meter long on which are tied three rams' horns (wara se) and two horns /sic/ (gné blà). It is an honor, even a distinction, to hold these horned pieces of wood, and these men are called djenfa tjéou.

Two annual sacrifices are offered to the boli of this group: one before the rainy season when, the Negroes say, the male and female idols mate, and the other about three months later, a little before harvesting begins when the grain is almost ripe. This is the time when the female idols give birth to their offspring, the best time to buy fetishes and to have fourou and konio made, because, as I said

778 before, whoever wants to own a boli must unite with it in as close a
782 bond as if he were contracting a fourou marriage. In order to seal this union he must offer kola nuts, fourou gosi (1), to the village head and the elders, in short, have a wedding (konio).

Women, uncircumcised men, and the uninitiated are never
778 present at the sacrifices and festivals in honor of the fetishes of which
782 I speak. However, I have seen women summoned to clap their hands
562 and sing the praises of the Komo or the Kono. On the nights of the festivals they stay inside the village, and paths leading to the square where they are gathered are closed with kara, or coarse mats. Near them they hear the roar of trumpets and horns, and from time to time, above the mats, the silhouette of a hideous mask appears in sight and freezes them with fear and terrifies them, but in the dark of the night they cannot see details and are not able to say what they have seen. When the Nama is brought out (2), the women are summoned at daybreak at the moment when the god is put back into his beehive, and

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1. The tribute which every man must pay if he wishes to enjoy his marriage legitimately.

2. The phrase "to bring out the Nama" is my translation for the Bambara expression, Nama bora, which means that a sacrifice to the idol has been made, and that the night is spent in shouting and dancing the sacred dances. The Negroes also have the expression, a djigina so, "he came to visit us at home," (a djigina, ("he visited us at"...; so, "our home"). These expressions are used in relation to all boli.

778 782 562 /152/ at the foot of the tree under which the initiates shouted and danced all night, they are shown the *siri* found by the *djenfa tjéou* (1) and the *darotigi*, or *darotala* (2). While these *siri* (3) are burned, the women dance and sing the praises of the idol.

778 782 The *boli* have two days of rest a week, Monday and Thursday (4). It is nevertheless permissible to sacrifice to them on these days,

1. *Djenfa tjeou*: those who run with heads of the *Nama*.

2. *Darotigi*, or *darotala*: he who rings the bell and precedes the *djenfa tjéou* with a lantern.

[754] 3. The *siri* are sacred objects which initiates of *siri*, the *souba*, throw here and there in the environs of the village in order to cast evil spells and sorcery on persons to whom they wish harm. Every time the *Nama* is brought out 20 to 40 *siri* are found. These small amulets /sic/, made of a little of everything, including trouser buttons, hooks, and belt buckles, tremble and moan while the women watch them. I have been present several times at this performance but have never perceived these tremblings and moanings, doubtless because I am not a Negro.

[304] 4. They rest in the sense that a festival at which they preside, e.g., a circumcision, never takes place on those days.

778 and on Sunday evening (*tné sou*, "the night of Monday"), the initiates
782 of the *Komo* like to go out or, if you like, dance their dances and shout their sacred hymns. Since the *boli* preside at all important events of life, circumcisions, marriages, deaths, etc., I will speak of the admission to the sects of these fetishes and the sacrifices offered to them when I discuss these matters. I will say, however, before closing this paragraph, that at no time or season does a village let a week go by without offering a sacrifice to the great *boli* which they own or dancing their dances. The staff of these fetishes is feared, dreaded, respected, and honored, and on days of celebration their owners are in the place of honor and sit next to the *gnéna-n-sonnaba* (religious head of a village), or at least next to the *sotigi* (civil head).

In addition to the formal sacrifices at which the initiates are
778 present, the great *boli* receive homage, tribute, and great streams of
782 blood from individuals; appeals for their intervention are made
695 constantly. Over a mere nothing an oath on such a fetish -- called *kali boli la* (5) is required, and if a dispute arises between two families,

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5. There is a slight difference between *kali boli la* and *boli sien*. To take the oath called *kali boli la* is to swear on the fetish that one is telling the truth, that one is innocent. Only the accuser sacrifices. Seven straws must be fastened onto the object called *sirikoun*, and the accused, *blara boli koro*, is placed under the *boli* -- his life is placed in its hands -- and is to die if he has lied. In performing the *boli sien*, the accuser and the accused both sacrifice. Here again seven straws are fastened onto the *sirikoun*, and the accused is placed in the fetish's power twice:

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first by the accuser and a second time of his own accord (a blara boli koro, " the accuser places him under the boli"; a y'i bla boli koro, "the accused has placed himself under the fetish").

a boli sien (5) is needed, for the fetish must again be called on to be

/See footnote 5 immediately preceding. /

a witness. /153/ These oaths entail heavy expenses, for one hen is seldom enough and a goat is very often necessary. I have seen four or five dogs, equal to an expenditure of 20 to 30 francs, sacrificed over a trivial matter.

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The three chief sacrifices offered by individuals are the fani-nké (1), the gnénama fani (2), and the soú fani (3). The first is made

1. Fani, "small throat cutting"; ké, "to make."

2. Gnénama, "one who has life," "alive."

3. Sou, "corpse."

to obtain a favor, to place oneself in the good graces of the fetish; the second, to preserve one's life, to escape a death already decreed; and the third is offered to appease a fetish whom one blames for the death of a relative (4) and to entreat it to spare the survivors of the

[761]
4. Eighty times out of 100, without exaggeration, death is blamed on a boli fetish.

778 family.

782 At the end of every important sacrifice, all the objects which make up the fetish are washed in the blood that has collected in the earthen receptacles called *da*, and it is not until after this operation, performed in the deepest silence, that the objects are replaced in their goatskins.

778 551 Negroes like to give the name of the fetish to children born at times of great sacrifices. I would even say that in studying the "names of people" one learns to know the *gnâ*, or *boli*, the *gnéna*, or *djiné*, and becomes initiated into the usages and customs of the country.

Names of children dedicated to the *Komo*, the most popular in the district of Ségou: *Boli*, *boli ba*, *Néné*, *Nono*, *Négé son* (or *Négi son*) (5), *Togo-ba-tjé* (6). /154/

5. *Négi son*: sacrifice to iron. Sometimes the word *Komo* is left unspoken out of respect, and the child is designated by one of the pieces of the fetish. The objects mentioned in the case of the *Komo* are three iron tubes (*négi*), sometimes called *Komo djoloko* ("chains of the *Komo*") in the presence of the uninitiated. The tube used as a trumpet is called *tama guengueba*.

6. *Togo*, "name"; *ba*, "big"; *tjé*, "man," etc.

Names of children dedicated to the *Nama*, the most important fetish after the *Komo*: *Djasé*, *Sirima*, *Namakoro*, *Nama* (1).

1. *Djasé*, the palisade which surrounds the sanctuary of the *Nama*. *Sirimafign* is the *diamou*, or family or lineal name, of the *Nama*.

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551 Children dedicated to the Nia: Nia-gné foula, Nia-n-ti, Nia-n-nkoro, Nia.

Children dedicated to the Kono: Nièlé, Tjétjélé, Djonké (2).

[576] 2. Djonke, a respectful appellation often applied to the master of the Kono. Tjétjélé, the password of the initiates of the Kono and its family name, or diamou. When a stranger appears at the sacrifice, he is asked the question: "E b'a la wa Wélema djonké? Are you of the sect of Wélema djonké?" Only a brother can answer: "Tjétjélé, ne b'a la. Tjétjélé, I am."

Children dedicated to the Magna: Ma-n-djé, Magna, Magné.
Children dedicated to the Djo: Djo, Djokoro, Djoméné.
Children dedicated to the Douga: Dougakoro, Douga-n-tjé.
Children dedicated to the Da: Dakoro, Da-n-son, Da-n-wélé.
Children dedicated to the Bala: Bala, Balake, Mousa and Misa (3).

3. Mousa and Misa are synonyms of Bala and not a translation of the name Moses.

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572 It is also on a powerful boli, or rather in its presence, that the Bambara swear to an indissoluble friendship, a friendship so close that it finds the two persons and their children like a kinship tie. This is the sinnakoun! No Negro has ever been able to talk to me about it with any clarity or precision, so that I am unable to give it a very exact definition. Basing my interpretation on the custom -- widespread among the Bambara -- of a woman showing her breast in order to indicate clearly that she is the mother of a child (a wolo ba, "his

778 572 mother who bore him"), and on the phrase sinna dé meaning "a child at the breast," I believe I can give this meaning to the word sinnakoun ("head, " "tip of the breast": or again, "because of the breast"): "Between us it is as if we had sucked the same breast; therefore, we are like brothers." And /155/the persons bound by this type of friendship regard themselves as such, exchanging witticisms and light jokes without ever quarreling. Yet the Negroes are very sensitive and hardly ever allow joking. Seing such friends one would take them for kanémé, and the latter are relatives since they are maternal cousins (1).

1. A woman's children and the children of her brothers are kanémé to each other. Sinnakoun and kanémé are not impediments to marriage.

The sinnakoun between families dates from time immemorial; it appears to have no history, or at least I was unable to persuade anyone to tell me what it is. In any case, one can believe that it is a friendship sworn on a boli, or in its presence if you like, since nowadays two heads of families who wish to be united, to be sinnakoun, together redden a powerful fetish.

6. Talking Boli

778 [761] These are supposed to bring death to anyone who scorns them. Nevertheless, they are seldom blamed for death, and they bring chiefly evil spells, sorcery, and sickness. They are in the hands of so-called sorcerers, real leeches who go through villages in the dry season, always holding out their hands and begging.

778 791 A talking boli is usually the tail of an animal and the sacrifices are made on this tail. The owner always has his instrument in an unusual skin, often the hide of a small wild animal, and he lets an end protrude. That, I believe, is his insignia, his mark of identification, unless it be the small bell he hangs on the paws of the hide and which he knows so well how to shake in order to notify people of his arrival.

778 791 The Bambara consult these sorcerers to find out the future and to draw their horoscopes or good luck. The fee for a seance is not at all unreasonable; it seldom exceeds the moderate sum of 40 cowrie shells, or one sou.

Concerning the Sirikoun

Every great boli includes an object called sirikoun. There are 778 other sirikoun which are no longer parts of boli, but have become 754 actual boli. The latter are hung at the waist and are always /156/ covered with a red cloth. Almost everyone owns them, although they are most frequently in the hands of the owners and sacrificers of great fetishes. They are usually ends of the tails of cows, horses, wild pigs, etc., and are often sprinkled with blood. They are sought in order to cast a spell or sorcery on an enemy, to make him sick, and even [157] cause him to die, or again to protect oneself from a spell, sorcery, sickness, or death.

The sirikoun and the talking boli are fetishes belonging to individuals; they have neither festivals nor formal sacrifices, and they are not publically worshipped.

Chapter 8

The First Years in the Life of a Bambara

1. The Sexual Morality of the Bambara

181 Those who have seen the Bambara and have the slightest acquaintance with them will not hesitate to tell you: "They are liars and thieves." They certainly never pass up a chance to take the property of another, and they lie boldly and with such complete calm that not a muscle in their bodies flinches. This has always surprised

181 me, and it seems to me that the Bambara might describe himself as:
"A man sufficiently master of himself to be able always to agree with
you without ever revealing his inner thoughts."

Their character is not made up entirely of vices, however, and
I have been told by earnest men that the Bambara never, at least in
public, practice those familiarities with women which shock and
wound every person of high principles. They have added that the two
[674] crimes of adultery and fornication are unusual with them, and this,
one may be sure, is less on account of the severe penalties which they
incur (it seems that before the French conquest the punishment was
death without reprieve), than because they are without feelings, that
181 is, strong passions. Their women can without any difficulty go around
with bare bosoms, breasts exposed, hips girded with a paltry rag
291 knotted under the navel, and their young girls are satisfied with their
small strip of cloth, three fingers wide, which is knotted in front at
the waist, slides between the legs, and is caught up in back by the
cord, to fall in a long train decorated by a gorgeous pompon the size
of a fist. They did not tell me, of course, but /158/ they gave me
to understand quite well that if it were absolutely necessary the girls
could without blushing go around in the scant garb of children who
roll in the dust dressed as on the day they were born, quite naked.
Nakedness cannot stir a Negro; beauty does not excite his eyes, for he
does not have the feeling for it. And for a long time I believed the
Bambara to be endowed with an angelic nature.

181 All these beautiful thoughts have left me, and I must admit
831 that the Bambara are hideously degraded! Every day has made the
matter clearer to me, for when I have left the mission to go to the
surrounding villages, as the duties of my office oblige me to do
several times a week, I have seen the same scenes again and again,
heard the same songs and the same conversations, and I have found
nothing very angelic in any of them. If I went into a field, I saw
young men bent over their hoes, backs running with sweat, who got
up and jumped, shouted the most raucous "you you," and made an
obscene gesture. If a little girl, a child, came to give them a jug
of cool water, she would get a coarse word as thanks and payment,
and often, not to say almost always, a rough hand would remind her

181 that she is a girl, that one day she will be a man's plaything, an
831 object for his pleasure. The child would leave smiling and replace
her three fingers of rag even as she walked away. At dinner time a
[482] big girl would come carrying the gourd of *tô*, or sorghum gruel, on
her head, and on the palm of her right hand, at shoulder height, the
platter of dried fish sauce. She would be greeted from as far away
as she could be seen and asked for a report on her whole body, and
indeed there would be no stopping at "how are your feet" nor even at
"how are your breasts." And the girl would answer all these vile questions
without getting excited, and when a well-washed hand, ready to
be used as a spoon, embraced her or lifted her breasts, she was not
shocked; only the opposite would surprise her.

887 Here and there in the village a giant tree stretches its branches
538 afar, and the old men, lovers of endless palaver, enjoy themselves
521 under its shade. They go there from the early morning to weave cloth,
make mats, tan hides, scour goats' horns intended for powerful
amulets, etc., and often even /159/ just for the purpose of spending
the hours dozing. And in the midst of all these gray, or at least
graying, beards, swarms a world of children. Among the old men
there are good storytellers /*conteur*/, who excel in stories of hunting
and war that throb with interest -- but why, alas, must they always
graft on some salacious incident? Their mouths are full chiefly with
[831] stories of adultery and fornication. They will not spare you a single
detail, and they will readily go back to the very beginning so as to
lack no precision whatever. And the moral of these stories can be
reduced to this: "There is nothing in this world comparable to the
pleasures of the flesh; let us enjoy marriage and never pass up a chance
to obtain this satisfaction."

524 If the old men are this lewd, is it surprising to hear the young
831 men describe the ugliness of their bestial evenings while they make
mats, stretch the hides of drums, or sew a blouse, a cap, or trousers
864 for themselves in the *b'lon*, or entry hut? They talk constantly of their
soungourou, and this term, which should simply mean an unmarried
girl, means any woman, married or not, who gives herself to the
first comer.

Without any shame they talk and chat about all these vile acts
before their little brothers, before children ten and twelve years old,

521 and before little girls, and it is not unusual to see a big girl leaning
831 against the door of the hut with ears wide open so as not to miss a
864 word, and finding cause to burst into gales of laughter. Are all these people capable of being shocked? I doubt it, even as far as the young girls are concerned, for all or almost all of them have their favorite nooks in the bush. Moreover, they can tell each other vulgar stories, and one should hear them as they clean and spin cotton, or when in the evening, shut in a communal hut (1), they play, laugh, and chatter before going to sleep. Could it be otherwise? Since all the men have *soungourou*, they know that their fathers and brothers each have one, and they are not unaware that their mothers see no /160/ wrong in giving themselves to their men friends. The great crime is allowing oneself to be caught.

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831 You may think I exaggerate, yet when two women, each with a nursing infant in her arms, are crouched in the court by their pots in which tô (gruel) is simmering, it is very unusual for them not to be gossiping about the marital infidelities of their neighbors and sometimes even their own. I am saying nothing about the old women with turned-up chins and toothless jaws; they are experienced midwives and talk mainly about abortions.

They are all the same, and more than one mother has made me blush as she gave the breast to her last born and smiled sweetly at the rest of the brood frolicking near her. In wishing health and prosperity to a child that a woman is nursing, one sometimes makes a mistake about its sex, and without respect for one's ears nor pity for

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882] 1. In the evening all young girls are shut in a communal hut or dormitory under the supervision of an old woman. The woman's duty is to prevent young men from coming in and to see that the girls do not go out and seek a boy friend's hospitality. There is a dormitory in each quarter.

521 one's eyes, the answer is almost always: "A flé bani, mousoni do, ne
831 na d'ima, ka ké i soungourou yé. But look here, this is a girl; I
will give her to you, she will be your soungourou."

521 And all this carelessness from the moral standpoint should not
831 surprise us in a country where a crowd of young men greet each other
576 even in the presence of their mothers: "I sounna ko? About the affair
836 of your sleep? And your lovemaking at night?" "I soungourou ka
kendé? How is your soungourou?"

And where young girls do not blush to say to young men: "Do me the favor that I am asking you."

"Ne na ko doumani fo i ye.

I will tell you of a sweet affair (or: conversation, shameful embraces).

"Né na ne ko doumani d'i ma.

I will give you my sweet affair (or: I give myself to you).

In short, every Bambara who awards himself the prize of virtue, avoids saying that he has respected foreign women and girls temporarily under his roof. The statement would be received with a shrug of the shoulders and a smile. He merely says: "I have respected the women and girls of the village," and he does not shout this very loud nor before everybody.

2. Concerning Adultery and Fornication

684 Adultery is a crime in the eyes of every Negro, and the guilty one caught in the act is brought before the council of elders and severely punished. I must state, however, that although adultery seems a serious offence to all, the crime does not lie in the satisfaction obtained. There has been a lack of fairness, the rights of a third party have been violated, and in this lies all the wrongdoing.

Caught in the act, red handed, the guilty party makes a friendly deal with the husband, who rarely asks him for more than 16,000 cowrie shells (from 15 to 20 francs) and the material for a sacrifice to the family boli, comprising perhaps two hens, a goat, two kola nuts, and between 5 to 800 cowrie shells for the sacrificer's bonus.

684 626 As long as he has not received the entire indemnity, the injured husband shouts, threatens, and attacks the guilty woman and man with his fists, but then the last cowrie shell is paid and all is quiet. Furthermore, should he be slow in calming down, his wife would most certainly run away and everyone would treat him as a boor. In fact, after having harshly rebuked the culprit and his accomplice and made them promise never to repeat the offense, the headman and elders go to the hut of the husband and say to him: "Your wife has promised not to default on her honor again, her seducer has paid the fine, so come, pardon them!" When the elders, the headman in the lead, put themselves out like this, they impose their will, and whoever does not say with them: "Kouma banna (1), the matter is settled, let us speak no more of it," is no less than a cad.

684 695 If adultery is established but the seducer and his accomplice have not been caught, the case becomes complicated, for the accused will deny the crime. The matter is brought before the court of elders, and, the powerful boli come out of their sanctuaries and for a moment leave the goatskins which they use as tabernacles. The accusers swear on the fetish (kali, "to swear," boli la) (2), and on the basis of the verbal proofs that they bring testify that there has been adultery. The accused are summoned, and if they persist in denying the charge, they are commanded to swear on the fetish to attest their innocence. Quite often they refuse, /162/ and matters drag on. The suit must finally be settled, so the husband and the accusers call on the most popular fetish with the words: "An ta boli sien (1) let us sacrifice to

1. Kouma, "word," "talk"; banna, "is finished."

2. Kali boli la, " may the boli kill me if I am lying."

1. The boli sien consists of oaths by both the accusers and the accused.

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> The accusers swear: "If we are accusing falsely, may the boli kill us." The accused swear: "We are not guilty, and if we are may the boli kill us."

the boli, and may he take the life of the liar." When the council of elders has decided on the boli sien, it must be carried out. If the accused is guilty he will admit it, for to call on an idol to bear witness to a lie is to doom oneself to death, to decree one's own death. For a boli has no pity for a perjurer, and legends tell of more than one case identical to that of Ananias and Sapphira.

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Some Negroes nevertheless perjure themselves. From then on they lose all peace; one fine day they can hold out no longer, and they go to find the master of the idol, and to him they confess their crime and their transgression. In order to save their lives they make a gnénama fani (2), and when they have paid the fani-n-kolo (3),

> 2. Gnénama, "living thing," "one who lives"; fani, "throat cutting"; gnénama fani, "throat cutting for one's life."

> 3. Fani, "throat cutting," "sacrifice"; kolo, "cowrie shells," "price"; fani-n-kolo, "price of the sacrifice."

the staff of the fetish denounces the culprit (4).

> 4. A Negro who perjures himself in the presence of a fetish believes himself lost. Moreover, the boli taken as witness is the one most famous for its power in that circle, for instance, the Komo of Tigini,

688 Tjoïna, or Kégné, and the Nama
of Misango, Kokodjan, or Guendo.
The Djara of Tjikoumela is very
popular in Bani country. A per-
jured Negro offers a gnénama fani,
and the fani-n-kolo is costly.
For the Komo it consists of two
red roosters, two goats, a dog,
two red kola nuts, a basket of
millet (between 18 and 20
kilograms) and three times 8
[804 kémé (the kémé is worth 80
436] cowrie shells) if the culprit is
a man, or four times 8 kémé if
it is a woman. For the Nama
the price includes a gourd of honey,
two gourds of karité butter, a red
hen, two red kola nuts, a basket of
[804 millet, and 8 ba (the ba is worth
436] 800 cowrie shells, or one franc),
a kémé, and a débé (120 cowrie
shells). In addition these are one
to two kilograms of salt and a gourd
of gnama-n-kou (malagueta pepper:
amomum melegueta) for the
sacrificer. For the Nia the cost is
12 ba, four chickens, two dogs,
and two hens.

684 Adultery is frequent; it occurs daily and is the source of most
837 of the disputes that arise. Some husbands are tolerant, however, and
many are satisfied with 2 to 3 ba (between 1,600 and 2,400 cowrie
shells, or 2 to 3 francs) and victims for a sacrifice to the family boli,
such as a hen, a dog, a kid, or two kola nuts.

684 Like adultery, fornication is a serious offence because it violates
836 the rights of third parties. It is less serious /163/ than adultery,

684 however, because the Negroes say that although the betrothed girl
836 does not belong entirely to herself, neither does she belong entirely
to her fiancé; she still retains certain rights to her own person, "à ma di ban, she has not yet been given."

684 When a girl becomes pregnant, she is arraigned before the
627 family council. After a goat has been slaughtered for the family boli,
she is asked the name of her partner, and if she refuses to disclose it the council of the elders is called in. She has to yield; otherwise she is tied to one of the forked sticks that support the flat terrace roof, and blows rain thick on her back.

As soon as the guilty man is named, she swears on a powerful boli (1) that she has told the truth, and the man is summoned. Nothing is to be gained by being a perjurer; it is better to pay the fine and live. The stain on his honor is slight, and he confesses without much shame: "Tigné (that is true); né no do (it is my fault)."

The fine is between 15 and 20 francs and often between 25 and 30 francs (2), not including the sacrifice to the boli, which consists of two hens, two dogs, a goat, and two kola nuts. Quite often the injured fiancé has to be satisfied with the victims for the sacrifice and a small present, one to two kilos of salt, and 800 to 1, 600 cowrie shells, or 1 to 2 francs. As for the child of an unmarried mother, its
847 fate is in the hands of the grandmothers, and of the father and the
848 mother, and it quite often happens that it does not cry twice in this
567 world; to use the Bambara expression: "N'a kasira, a t'na foula ké, if
he has cried, he will not do it a second time." I am speaking here of a free girl, for the child of an unmarried slave girl is welcome; it is a gain for the house, and no attention is paid to the guilty man. This is easy to understand, for is there a Negro who does not abuse his slave?

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1. It is almost always a Komo, a Nama, or a Kono.

[583] 2. The rule is that the culprit should pay the fiancé the entire bride price, or some 30 francs.

626 Every seducer who has paid the fine demanded by the fiancé can walk with head held high, for he has satisfied justice, cleansed his honor, and his shield is unstained. But let him not be careless enough to go to the village of the injured fiancé, for he will be /164/ beaten hard by the young people; his exclusion often lasts for years.

010 Now, there is no reason to be surprised at the Bambara attitude toward adultery and fornication. If it can all be reduced to a violated principle of justice and nothing more, that is because they have fallen so low that they believe they were created and put in the world by God in order to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh as much as possible.

Abortion

562 Monsieur Louis Barbier wrote in the "Quinzaine" (January 16, 1906) /"Étude sur les populations Bambaras de la Vallée du Niger (A Study of the Bambara Peoples of the Niger Valley)"/: "The Bambara woman is a machine to produce children and do heavy work." In this statement he expresses, I am sure, the belief of all Europeans who have stayed among the Negroes without mingling with them or living their life. If the Bambara woman "is a machine to produce children," [163] it is a slow machine. I know families where there are seven and eight children by the same wife, but that is unusual; the average remains two or three children per woman.

853 837 It is not through frequent childbearing or because they are prolific that Bambara women lose their charms and wither. They do not, and cannot, conceive but every two or three years; they cannot bear a child more than once every three or four years, since every mother nurses her child for at least two whole years, and quite often three, and during all that time she may not conceive. Does she remain continent during that time? What is to be thought of these utterances on the part of a husband:

> A ye den sóro a ti son toun.
> She has had a child, she wants no more relations with me.
> Né t'a don toun, ne tigouéré a la toun.
> I do not know her any more, I no longer go near her.

837 Such statements simply mean that there is cheating (1) on both

[833 839] 1. Onanism is very common. Married men tell you openly: "We cannot have too many children, our wives have to go to the markets, and a pregnant woman cannot do this; an b'an dabali ("we manage to avoid having children"). There are few unmarried mothers, and yet the marriage of a virgin is unusual. They have little recourse to abortion, so there is onanism on their part. "Ka bogotigi soro min te djakouma koun don i na yala, to find a young girl who has not fornicated, you will take a walk." It is true that their lovers are often children, who cannot make them mothers.

sides, for all precautions are taken to see that the /165/ mother's breasts do not dry up to avoid the possibility of her conceiving. The soungourou, the widows and divorcées, "real cradle vultures," know how much these precautions weary a young husband, and they come running in large numbers, without shame or modesty.

And while the husband absents himself from his wife for fuller enjoyment, she on her part proves easy with the men friends who visit her or whom she visits, friends who give her the desired enjoyment without ever compromising her. I would go so far as to say that [847] she is glad to find herself deserted, for she might conceive with her husband and then it would be difficult to resort to abortion, while with her friends there is greater freedom.

And if she conceives, a pretext is quickly found for her to go 847 to her mother or whoever takes her place. Three fourths of the old women are past masters in abortions. Camphor in large doses is the basis of their brews, and they know how to use gold chloride for a modest fee; they know how to serve each and every one and safeguard their honor.

847 And is abortion such a great crime in the eyes of the Bambara?
Less serious, surely, than one might imagine. It is very common,
and when a woman passes, one may overhear from the lips of the
Negroes, even those of children: "a y'i kono tigné, she has destroyed
the fruit of her womb." There is nothing to teach Bambara children;
[804] at eight and ten years they know everything! When one listens to
their conversations and lends an ear to their songs, they always revolve
around the vilest subjects.

3. The Birth of a Child

842 Before birth. -- Not only is it impossible for the Bambara to accept the idea that a man could live without a wife or a woman without a husband, they likewise cannot conceive of a home without children. They desire the pleasures of fatherhood, and a couple who are healthy or, to put it better, capable of consummating the conjugal act, /166/ quickly appeal to a diviner's knowledge, however short a time they have waited to have children. They believe that sterility is the result of sorcery or an evil spell.

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847 When the husband is impotent or afflicted with an illness which prevents all marital relations, his wife readily becomes unfaithful and commits adultery in order to avoid the shame of sterility. Moreover, in order not to have to face a winking eye that speaks volumes or a disdainful smile which reveals everything, the husband is indulgent and even approves her crime, at least for the first times. Let us admit quickly that he can do nothing about it, for if she cannot be unfaithful, the wife will abandon herself to loud cries, demand a divorce, and reject the man, who would himself leave her if she were in a similar situation. Without approving of such indulgence, one can understand it on the part of an unfortunate who needs to keep his cook and safeguard his honor before a people that scorns an impotent man and sees nothing amiss in adultery since it is a crime that can be redeemed.

[164]
843 If a woman who conceives is in a syphilitic condition, which is often the case, the fruit of her womb seldom comes to full term

843 but is lost after the first months -- something that is inexplicable to her. To avoid this misfortune she covers herself with grigris and talismans; she wears them on her neck, on her hips, down her breasts, on her arms. One in particular I cannot silently pass over; it is the *tafo*, a narrow leather thong held in the skin of a monkey's hand and knotted sometimes around the wrist and sometimes above the biceps.

842 A sterile woman or one subject to accidents during her
843 pregnancies appeals to the *Komo*, *Kono*, or *Nama boli* fetishes, but
more often to the *gnena*, or *djine*, fetishes, and above all to the
782 *dasiri* fetish, the genie protector of the village. Through the inter-
778 mediary of the priest, the *gnena-sonnaba*, or *dougoutigi*, she offers
it hens, kola nuts, and *dégé*, or millet flour mixed with water. She dedicates and consecrates the fruit of her womb to the *dasiri* and swears an oath to offer a sacrifice worthy of it if she succeeds in carrying her child to full term.

I should reiterate in passing that the *dasiri gnéna* is not, as
842 one might suppose, constantly sitting down or astride of a /167/ leafy
843 branch or, if you like, enclosed in a tree trunk with bark as a fitted
782 jacket. It walks around, readily leaves the tree, the spring, or the
778 rock which it uses as dwelling, home, or resting place; it visits its
825 relatives and close friends, it carouses with its companions every time
a drinking bout is held in honor of one of them, and when there are no parties, it takes advantage of its freedom. It is afraid of walking with its feet on the ground, so for its romantic excursions in and around the village, it straddles its mount, which is a snake, a lizard, or a donkey, but usually, as we already know, a terrible billy goat. It is this animal, especially, that the sterile woman showers with her attentions; she often goes far into the bush to fetch a handful of tender grass which is its delicacy, and every day measures of millet and maize bran are set aside for it. When she becomes a mother, she overflows with sacrifices and acts of thanksgiving, and her child receives the name of the fetish. He will be *djiriba*, *gnénama*, or *gnénamaké*, as I have already said in the paragraph in which I discussed the *dasiri*, who is the genie protector of the village and the first of the *gnéna*.

843 291 One last discreet word about the pregnant women: Their loincloths, the cloth rags with which they gird their hips, are held in place by means of a cord, a common string knotted below the navel, a very unsightly thing, or sometimes by means of a colored cloth, a red handkerchief, for example, folded in a triangle.

842 789 A male child, is more highly valued than a girl, and to obtain this blessing the Bambara consult sorcerers and diviners and sacrifice to the *boli* fetishes. The women have great confidence in amulets, and they wear hung at the waist many dirty bags which form an ugly roll under the *tafé* or loincloth (the knotted cord, *tafo*, is worn around the hips). Some wear their "boy bringer" where it can be seen; it is a square leather bag three fingers wide which contains medicine: bits of bark and wood, and sometimes a goat's horn which the woman slips between her thighs (1). /168/

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1. This horn is also often worn in order that the child may have a perfect body, or so as not to have a premature delivery. Nicolay says that these talismans or magic objects, which are capable of changing the course of events and even of nature, are made and sold by sorcerers. /Fernand Nicolay, *Curiosités des lois et coutumes. Histoire des croyances, superstitions, moeurs, usages et coutumes (selon le plan du Décalogue)* /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. A History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Manners, Usages and Customs (according to the Outline of the Decalogue), Paris: V. Retaux, 1901./

844 Birth of a child. -- In Bambara country the "demon" usually takes part in the joys and sorrows of the family. However, I have

844 not discovered the slightest satanic rite in connection with the birth of a child; not a boli is brought out of its dirty hole.

The Bambara woman gives birth to her child kneeling on a mat with her hands behind her head or propped against the wall. The oldest woman present ties the umbilical cord and cuts it with a dull razor. The infant is washed and washed again; then liberally greased with karité butter (Bassia parkii) and, if possible, with butter. The section at the navel is seldom successful, and a large proportion of the Negroes suffer from birth from umbilical hernias. The child's head is also rubbed, and it is wrapped in a white cloth. This massage, called kounkolo d'la (1), is performed with the palm of the hand and ends with a gentle blow of the thumb on the nose to turn it up a little.

When the delivery is over, the hut is tidied, and the woman who tied the cord goes out on the doorstep and calls the father, who is sitting in the court or in an entry hut with two or three close friends: "K'i ka na san, you can come now" (2). He comes in, and the wife, who is sitting on her bed, shows him the newborn child and tells him its sex. Since her chief responsibility is to watch over this little one, to feed it, and preserve its life, she hastens to cover it so as not to be blamed some day for having been careless. One glance was enough for her to note the defects of this frail body. "Manoum, is it possible! Look," she says to her husband, "look at this leg, this arm, this back, this chest. Can he live with such an infirmity?" She enumerates all the physical defects, and if she sees a pimple, a beauty spot, or a slight blueness, it must be noted, for might it not be the mark of an elder, a deceased member of the family?

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1. Kounkolo, "head"; d'la, "to arrange."

2. If the father is away, the person who watches over the hut in his absence, a relative or close friend, is called.

844 851 In the end comes a word of encouragement from the midwives and the father: "A gnéna, that is good." The woman who tied /sic/ the umbilical cord runs to tell the head of the village, the dougoutigi, or /169/ gnéna-n-sonnaba, and the sotigi (if the civil and religious powers do not rest in one and the same head), and the members of his council, the gouatigi (or heads of families), that the village has one more inhabitant. To each and every one she tells the news of the newborn in a flood of words, she declares her fears or her hopes, and everyone greets her, thanks her, and makes her one of those wishes that go straight to the heart. She deserves these praises and can desire them, for she has done her duty. Besides, these are her only fees. A Bambara midwife does not get paid; she receives a present or is given a tip, so let us leave her her glory and not call her mercenary.

The child receives a name; his head is shaved. -- 846 Two or three days after her delivery before she has recovered, a Bambara woman begins to tend to her household duties. But she does not leave her hut at all; she sits on a mat, spins cotton, and smiles at her child or fondles it in her arms. And why does she not get a breath of air at least in her court? Could it be false modesty on her part? Not at all; she is proud to be a mother, but can she leave her darling for even a moment? It has no swaddling clothes or cradle; it can only cry, demand the breast, struggle and get into a position that is harmful to his frail body, and to go outdoors and visit the men friends who seem to ignore her since she became a mother (1), she would have to leave it there alone, all by itself. [854] Until the infant's navel dries, she cannot put the infant astride on her back, which is the only way she knows to carry him, and if she were to go out without her child, her milk would dry up and become full of substances harmful to the nursing infant.

1. Men do not enter the hut of a woman in confinement until after the tonsure and naming of the infant. The husband himself does not go in except when necessary.

[846] 852 553 The navel dries between the sixth and eighth day. The headman and elders are told of the event, and all the heads of families (the gouatigou) come and sit in order of age and rank at the entrance door of the hut which opens into the court of the confined woman. The religious head, the gnéna-sonnaba (2), goes alone into the hut

[793] 2. Usually it is the religious head, priest of the dasiri, who shaves the child, but there are exceptions to this rule. In some villages it is the civil head who performs the tonsure; in others this task is the prerogative of a family. Sometimes the shaving is done by the father or the grandfather. The families in which this custom is followed are not pure Bambara but are mixed with Marka blood.

and /170/ shaves the head of the infant on its mother's knees. Long [201 431] lines of women push into the inner court, clap their hands, let out shrill cries of "kouyo kouyo" as signs of joy, and give their friend a small present of millet and cotton (1).

1. The women give a handful of cotton and about a pound of millet.

When the head of the child has been shaved and well cleaned, the headman lays his hands on him to drive away evil spirits that might wish to harm his life; he gently strokes his back and chest and, spitting lightly, recites a short formula which he alone knows and can understand. Then he goes and sits among his people, and the father presents him with eleven kola nuts on a platter of braided grass. The heads of families, in order of age, place their offering of 40 to 80 cowrie shells (2) on this same platter, and the gnéna-sonnaba asks

2. The men give 40 cowrie shells. The generous ones go as high as 80.

852
553 the father or the grandfather (3) the name of the child. Instead of

3. It is the head of the family
who names the child.

answering the question, he points to the kola nuts and the cowrie shells and says to the headman: "Let us divide the kola nuts and give to each the price of the name." Two kola nuts are set aside, and the cowrie shells are divided into two equal parts, one of which the headman takes to the mother with two kola nuts one red and one white.

The nine remaining kola nuts are divided among those present, and each family head receives at least one piece, which is the ni woro (ni, "life"; woro, "kola"). Each one also receives 4 or 5 cowrie shells (4), and the head of the family announces the name of his son and

4. Toua da kola: (toua, "name";
da, "to give," "to impose"; kolo,
"cowrie shells").

gives the reason for his choice. Everybody shouts: "A toua dara, he has received a name, may God preserve him, may he be strong and vigorous, may he be a help and support to his parents!"

The women do not know the name that has been given, but they know it has been announced, and the woman who bound the navel takes the child from the arms of the mother and washes it three times with warm water and soap. When she has done this, three times she takes a mouthful of cool water and spits it on the nape of his neck, his back, and his thighs, saying: "May God /171/ preserve you, do not go away, stay with us, be strong and always well, may your descendants be many!"

With the child in her arms, she goes to the door of the entry hut where the father is and asks him the name. When she knows it, she goes back to the women and lays the infant on the knees of an old woman. The latter blows into his ears three times and then six times -- three times for each ear -- and shouts to him at the top of her lungs: "Kouyo kouyo, i toua dara (here she says the name), 852 533 Alla m'i balola, kouyo kouyo, you are called (. . .), may God make you live!" Two women take up the corners of the rectangular cloth which will hold the child cradled on its mother's back, and the little one is rolled three times on an ax head if it is a boy or on the iron stick used to clean cotton if it is a girl, as if to say: "Be strong and vigorous, be a help and a support to your family!"

The child is placed astride on the back of a young girl and knotted into the rectangular piece of cloth, its mother's tafé, or loincloth. An old woman sticks a pinch of chewed kola nut on its forehead, on each side of its cranium above the ears, and on top of its head, and she knots a white cloth band a finger wide around its forehead. The girl receives a handful of millet, goes to the public square to pound it, and, with the child still on her back, prepares dégé (millet flour mixed with water). When she has prepared the gruel, she goes and offers it to the mother, who puts a pinch of it into the little one's moth, and the ceremony is finished. Not entirely, however, for a few old women run around the village with a gourd of dégé in their hands. They look for sterile women, who shut themselves in their huts and hide. Some are always caught, and they are covered with dégé; the more they cry out and the more they struggle, the more they get whitewashed.

846 852 302 After her child is shaved, a Bambara woman goes about the village and attends to her work. But she does not braid her hair for three months if she has given birth to a boy and for four months if she has had a girl (1), /172/ nor does she go to neighboring villages.

1. Women who braid their hair are not of pure stock.

When this period is over, she braids her hair, covers herself with beads, with bits of amber and bracelets, dresses in her best, makes herself beautiful, and goes to present her baby, all running with butter, to
514 the headman and elders. Her husband grants her several days' leave (1), and she immediately goes to her family.

1. About 8 to 15 days.

4. Tattooing

304 In the third or fourth month, the middle of a little girl's nose and her ear lobes (2) are pierced. This is also the time when every Bambara can be tattooed (3).

The Bambara men wear a tattoo of three parallel lines that start at the temples and end under the chin. In addition to the three lines that furrow their cheeks, Bambara women wear a small horizontal line of one to two centimeters on each cheekbone (4). They make a star on the chin, and their foreheads are all furrowed with little knife cuts, so that from a distance one would say they are encircled by a crown.

In Bani country the women also tattoo their chests, their abdomens, and their lower abdomens, and on the biceps and forearm they wear three lines that meet in a rose shape at the joint. In the environs of Ségou this tattoo is less common, and the majority are satisfied to emphasize their breasts by encircling them with two or three rows of little dots in a semicircle, and they do this tattooing themselves.

The tattooing of the cheeks, the chest, the abdomen, and the lower abdomen among the women of Bani country is performed every

2. A woman can hang from 10 to 12 rings from each ear lobe.

3. Some mothers wait longer before performing this operation on their infants.

4. This mark on the cheeks is especially common among the women of the Bani.

304 seven years and has a strictly religious character (5). The gnénasonnaba, surrounded by his council, the gouatigi, sacrifices to the dasiri; a hen is offered to the shades of the ancestors, the family boli are /173/ taken out of their dirty skins and sprinkled with blood, and all the village makes merry. People go in procession to the place 304 where the blacksmith tattooer is, and as long as the operation lasts 553 the women clap their hands, marking time for the blacksmith, who sings as he operates, and together they join in the chorus.

The tattoo, the chief distinctive mark of the people, is made 304 with a knife having one or two blades. The two-bladed knife cer- 413 tainly makes a tattoo which stands out more and has more detail, but it also requires more skill on the part of the operator, and, doubtless for this reason, it is relatively unusual.

At present a great many Bambara no longer wear the mark of 314 their tribe on their cheeks. The Moslems have contributed greatly to the abolition of this painful practice. Before the arrival of Europeans, under the reigns of Ahmadou and Madani, very severe punishments were inflicted on anyone who tattooed himself or had his children tattooed. One should not think, however, that tattooing was ever a [187] strict and unqualified requirement; in this connection everything is entrusted to the decision of diviners and sorcerers, of djiné, or gnéna, genii, and especially of the family boli, which are consulted and sacrificed to in order to find out whether or not it is necessary to wear the marks of the tribe. Thus it is not unusual to find that some members of a family are tattooed and others are not, and that those who are not tattooed have their children tattooed, while the tattooed refrain from doing so. This ceremony is carried out every seven years, and the head of the family may be away when the blacksmith tattooer comes by, so that the sacrifices do not take place, and the tattooing of the children is put off until seven years later. When they have

5. This ceremony takes place only once every seven years. The girls are always fairly big when their chests are tattooed.

304 grown up they are allowed complete freedom as to whether they undergo the operation or not. For fear of the pain and of letting a sigh or tears escape them and becoming the laughing stock of the whole village, many children of ten to fifteen years refuse (1).

1. Male children that are not tattooed usually have their ears pierced.

Bambara tattoos are simple and not at all ugly when well done. Although it disfigures some, leaving lumps as big as a thumb on their cheeks and chest, such an accident is /174/ extremely unusual, considering the number of those tattooed. They use no unclean substances to dry their wounds and make them swell, charcoal powder being the only medicine used in tattooing.

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178 Although this practice is being lost around Ségou, and many families no longer want it for their children, it is nevertheless not on the verge of disappearing entirely and completely. To remove a religious practice from an entire people takes years, centuries, and if a famous sorcerer came and ordered it for those who dispense with it, they would undergo it at once.

Chapter 9

Circumcision in Bambara Country

1. The Importance of Circumcision

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304 The important act in the life of the Bambara man and woman -- both sexes are mutilated -- is unquestionably circumcision. And whence did they get this custom? Some people settle the question with one word: "It is of Mohammedan origin." I refrain from being so categorical, for the Bambara have always rejected Islam, they have

881 304 defended their gods with spear in hand, and I can find in their circumcision nothing which resembles the religion of the Prophet in the slightest. For the Bambara, circumcision is not only the seal of the tribe, it is also a second birth, the entrance into civil and religious life.

It is the occasion for four great festivals. On the second day of the festival which corresponds to the Moslem festival of the كبش (sheep), those about to be circumcised, who are given the special name of soli, offer to the to-n-déou, or members of the mutual aid society, fla-n-ton, a very fine couscous called basi. To obtain it, they have had to go begging and singing from door to door (kili), whence the name soli kili basi, which is given to this festival. Before going under the knife, all the soli make a vigil of arms. The soli kili basi is followed by the soli si (1), and six days later the da woro is held. When the circumcised boys and excised girls are healed, the drums roll again, /176/ more drinking bouts are organized, and the boloko déou don bo, the coming out of the circumcised, takes place (1).

881 857 During the days between the festival of Ramadan (2) and the

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1. Si, "spend the night."

1. From boli, "hand," "arm" (veiled terms designating the sex organs); ko, "wash"; deou, plural of de, "child," "son"; don, "day"; bo, "to come out."

2. Under Moslem domination, the Bambara had to observe the festivals of Ramadan and of the كبش, (sheep). They have become national festivals with sacrifices to the shades of ancestors and to the good fetishes. The observances do not include a single Moslem rite . . . .

881 festival of the sheep كبش , the little soli girls, those chosen
857 for the next circumcision, go with their still unmarried older sisters
to thank the elders for the honor which has been done them. In the
[538] evening, at nightfall, they visit the families and in a nasal song
recall the glories of their ancestors. They also have the most flattering
words for those still living, and it all ends with this plea: "We are
soli and haven't a penny! On the tenth day of the next moon we must
offer you a fine "couscous" with very small grains, the basi, and we
want a good sauce. Help us in this, I beg you, we are soli without
a penny."

881 The songs of the soli remind the old men and women of their
younger days, the days of their youth, and they run to the granary,
857 search the gourds that they use as cupboards, unlace the long roll of
481 close-packed straw where the cowrie shells are piled, and the young
people leave triumphantly, rich in cowrie shells, millet, and decayed
fish. The proceeds of the quest are entrusted to the oldest of the
soli, and, on the second day of the festival of the sheep, our belles
gather, grind furiously, and provide the whole village with its ration,
basi kili, which is the name of the festival.

881 On the stroke of noon and even before, everybody is fed and is
eagerly tasting the sorghum /sic/ beer, d'lo, and the soli girls run
from one house to another to gather the leftovers from the feast. They
do it hurriedly, eagerly, and feverishly, for they are impatient to
perform their great religious, public, and solemn act, and at the
soli kili basi they are the cooks and servants of the spirits.

The latter /spirits/ stay at the outskirts of villages, invisible, and drag the soles of their feet along the paths of yawn as they crouch /177/ at the crossroads. The songs of happiness, the cries of joy, the hiccups of the drinkers, and the deafening noise of the bass drums split their eardrums, the scent of decayed fish swells their nostrils, and no doubt, between two sighs, as they lick their lips with their tongues, they say to themselves in a murmur which the wind carries away: "Oh! the gluttons, they are forgetting us!"

But not at all -- they are remembered! A little soli girl smears her face, breasts, and back with milk, ashes, also and with other things whose names I do not know; she makes herself hideous to behold,

881 as ugly as possible, and plays the fool. Armed with a long stick -- the stick which is used to stir the gruel that is simmering on the fire (1) -- she darts out of the village, agile as a gazelle. Her companions all chase her at a full run, giving many shouts; they circle around the walls four times. At every fork in the path they form a circle, dance with frenzy, and throw large handfuls of basi and smoked fish sauce to the spirits without keeping count. "Dégé dounlé, idiots," shouts the smeared girl, and all her retinue repeats with ever increasing enthusiasm: "Nalouma, big fool. . . . " And this day, which is not very edifying, is full of delights for the little Bambara girls who are to be excised.

[415] 1. To-n-galama: a stick with a large, flattened end, used to stir gruel in the pot.

The little soli boys are satisfied with sacrificing to n'tomo, a good fetish which is their protector, but although they dance wearing masks with six, seven, and sometimes eight horns, they do not [785] flagellate themselves, or at least flagellation is not required on this day.

2. The Soli Si Festival, or the Vigil of the Circumcised

Here we are on the eve of the circumcision! It is black night, d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer, hums and foams in the earthenware bowls, and a thin mist comes out of all the huts and envelops them. Here karité grease sputters as it melts in the pot and browns the skin of a chicken or the leg of a goat; there one hears the loud laughter of people with full stomachs, the hiccups of a glutton, the dry and decisive sound of two heavy lips releasing five great /178/ sticky fingers glued to each other by a remainder of gruel. Their foreheads [301 291] decorated with beads in a kind of crown of white, red, and yellow, the colors of the rainbow, and their bodies draped in blankets, Roman style, groups of women glide silently like shadows along the alleys, carrying on their heads huge gourds full of dégé, millet flour mixed with honey water and milk,

881 with honey water and milk. They go to the public square, the only ballroom known in Bambara country. The big boys, their heads freshly shaved and their bodies thoroughly greased and all shining, also arrive in a long line, and in the square there is nothing but indescribable bedlam, for all these people at once greet each other, talk and shout, and not a voice is in harmony.

[821] Young and old consult the canopy of stars, for although they are not astronomers they know that around midnight a certain star of the firmament is at such and such an angle, and they are impatient. Then the hour has come, and the male *soli* are crouched in the place of honor, and the young lady *soli* arrive in single file, their hair in disorder and their hips girded with paltry loincloths that reach from the knees up to the navel. The loincloths are gifts from the fiancé [292] of each one, and must be worn. Their colors vary, indicating the tribe and caste of each girl, so one can see that they are of some importance (1).

1. The Moslems have blue. The pure Bambara wants a yellow background with black rose shapes and lines.

[186] A Bambara woman is proud of her blood and proud of her tribe, and, wearing her loincloth in the national colors, a narrow cloth band of black stripes on a yellow background, she almost thinks she is a queen, if not a goddess, at the *soli si*. The girls' gait reflects this feeling: with heads high, eyes 15 paces ahead, chests stuck out like Prussians (they puff themselves up a little to bring out their charms), they admire themselves and are enraptured, each knowing that she is the focus of more than one shining eye full of desire. They advance slowly, raising a cloud of dust, and in her hands each one shakes a bag of goatskin and an iron box filled with little pebbles; her torso bends to the left and bends to the right. In the dark of the night as the little fires /179/ cast their gleams here and there, one might say that they are frail shells lost in the waves and tossed by the winds, struck by the swell and always ready to capsize.

881 534 Shouting -- and that is an understatement, the young people throw themselves onto their instruments, which are drums of every shape and size. Some, the bass drums, are carried on the abdomen and fastened to the waist by a bark cord; others, smaller but longer, are slid between the legs or under the arms, and tambourines, hung from the neck, swing at the level of the navel as a new kind of pendant. The old women with toothless jaws join in; they scrape two iron rods together or create syncapation by furiously beating on an inverted gourd floating in a *conari* full of water with a piece of wood or a pumpkin stem.

881 Virgins, married women, widows, prostitutes (all mingling) slowly circle again and again around the orchestra behind the *soli*, shaking in their hands the bags of goatskin or boxes of white iron, and until morning every boy that is to be circumcised and every girl to be excised hears the glories and feats of his lineage. There is nothing very lofty about these songs containing thousands and thousands of wishes; although there is a feeling of passion in them, there is no love; beauty of the heart is lacking, and all is badly told. The men also from time to time leave the jug and mingle in the dance, but the night belongs to the women. And it belongs to the gods. If, tired of the bedlam, you leave the ball and go outside the village to breathe a little fresh air, you hear the piercing cries of the herald of the gods, you even see him in the darkness, running from one tree
[292] to another; with horns on his head and a coat decorated with feathers of hens, guinea fowl, egrets (1), etc., he looks like those story demons which grandmothers depict so well in the late evenings.

[789] And this herald of the gods, with his retinue, is performing a curious rite: he is chasing out the evil spirits and clearing a place for the favorite god of the village so as to drive away sorcery from the circumcised and the excised. /180/ In Bambara this is called *kéné sâlo* (1) and can be translated into French as "exorcising the place."

1. This is the costume worn by Negroes when they dance the dance of the *Komo* fetish.

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1. Kéné, "public place, " "court";
salo, "to stroke gently with the hand, "
"to make gestures. "

One after the other the stars of the firmament go out, and only the morning star (sigi dolo) still shines, seeming to defy the dawn. Many "kouyô kouyô, " shouted from a hundred throats, rise from the village, and the square is emptied. Everybody (I mean the women, for the squatting men keep on drinking and stirring the fire) rushes out of the village and forms a circle around the sacred karité tree. With
881 his back against the tree, separated from the crowd by a white cloth,
304 a blacksmith is kneeling rather than sitting and, razor in hand, await-
326 ing the victims. He is calm, sure of himself, and not afraid; after all, it is quickly done. He grasps the foreskin, recites his formula as he spits, and the iron is raised, throws a gleam, and falls. A gunshot announces to the drinkers on the square that there is one more Bambara in the village, and while a woman storyteller /griotte/ applauds him, the owner of the god burns a few nayanka (2) leaves

2. A tree whose name in French
I do not know.

between two brands, and feverishly and eagerly goes to place the ashes on the kara, the altar dedicated to the shades of the ancestors (3), in the court of the one who was circumcised or excised.

3. This is the procedure wherever the Komo fetish is found. In the circle of Ségou a Komo is almost always the one appealed to, and if none is owned in the village, it is brought from a neighboring village for the occasion.

881 Limping, the circumcised go under the sacred trees where the dances in honor of the fetish are held, and that is where they stay

881 [292] until they are completely healed; for it is not until evening, when the setting sun reddens the horizon and takes on its bloody hue that they re-enter the village. From this day on they wear a costume (all yellow if they are Bambara) of trousers, a blouse, and on their heads a kind of handkerchief tied under the chin (4). They pass the time in making mats, singing, striking together gourd disks strung on a stick, and especially in eating, "for they are being stuffed," and in sleeping. /181/

4. In some villages, instead of the yellow handkerchief the circumcised have a cap with two points. In Bani country the circumcised wear the blouse and handkerchief, or cap, and nothing more.

881 304 [285 415 189] But in speaking of the boys, I forgot the little girls! They undress under the tree nearest to the sacred karité. Naked as a worm, each one when her turn comes runs at top speed with her abdomen to the ground and throws herself into the arms of a woman, also of the blacksmith caste, who immediately cuts her. On a braided platter, made of fine, pliable grass, the mother or her substitute receives the bloody fragment which will be a grigri, a talisman or good-luck charm for the house, and while the gunpowder speaks, the disabled girl, pretending not to be suffering at all from the loss of her clitoris, goes back to her place, and another replaces her.

881 [482] The session ends with the last girl, and the crowd breaks out in a song of joy and triumph. The mother, the eldest sister, or a serving woman wraps the excised girl in a big white cloth and carries her astride her back to the village to the hut which has been prepared for her (1). This carrying, so laughable in itself (they can walk, even

[621 346] 1. Each village is divided into quarters. The excised girls of each quarter have their hut in that quarter.

881 run, as they have demonstrated under the karité tree), is the part of whole festival which is most reminiscent of a child, and of the function of the circumcision. It is the second birth, and just as the infant appears in public for the first time on the back of her mother, so she again enters the civil and religious life on the back of her mother or of the woman who takes her place.

The excised girls do very little in their huts, and like the boys, they yawn, sleep, and eat. However, they spin a little cotton and very often sing in a low voice while they practice gracefully shaking a gourd the size of a fist, pierced with little holes and filled with small pebbles. They lead a very easy life, and one might think they were happy, but a toothless old woman who is always grumbling watches over them. This is a great nuisance! It is impossible to move, impossible to wiggle a toe; one must have permission for everything, and it is never granted gracefully. The wants of nature [514 must be satisfied in a group and at stated hours.... When the girls go 293] through the village, they lean, in accordance with custom, on a millet stalk at the end of which is hung the perforated gourd in which little pebbles rattle. /182/

881 533 On the way out as they go into the bush, they sing to the gnâma to protect themselves from them:

Bo n'yé, gnâma, ô gnâma,
Go away from me, gnâma, ô gnâma,
Dankoun ba la,
Of the great corner of land (1).

1. The corner of land formed by two paths that cross, the place where the gnâma dwell. /The slight discrepancy between the translations of the song given here and in Chapter 1, Section 3, is present in the original French. Ed./

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533 Gnâma fambali, bo n'yé!
Murderer gnâma (who kills), go away from me!

And coming back they sing songs and even improvise some to greet the old and influential men of the village. Back in their huts they kneel on the mat to stretch out or sit down, and there is silence, the silence of schoolgirls which is not broken except in secret, with trembling and in a low voice.

3. The Da Woro Festival, or the Sixth Day Festival

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796 Boys and girls have paid the tribute of blood to the tribe, five days have already elapsed, and this is the evening before the sixth. Far over there in the west the sun has disappeared behind the heavy baobab trees that border the horizon, myriads of stars twinkle in the sky, and the moon, followed by Venus (Kolo mouso, Nièlé, "Nièlé, wife of the moon"), traces on a blue background its silver crescent singed with a gold border.

All the paths that lead to the village are full of people walking, seeming like an endless ribbon or a snake that folds back on itself only to stretch out suddenly. Behind the band of young girls walk the women, each with a black cherub on her back that always wakes up to cry and demand the breast; and to them the girls have entrusted their little loincloths, the cloth slings with which they gird themselves for the dance. The girls walk quickly, for although they carry on [482] their heads tall pyramids of gourds held in nets of large mesh, although they carry the fiancé's present to the queen of his heart -- salt; dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water and milk; d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer; millet and dried fish in which worms crawl; they are confortable in their clothing; /183/ nothing hinders their movements except a narrow cloth band three fingers wide which passes between the legs, is fastened at the waist in front, and waves in back in a limp and soft train. And in the night there is the rustling of dry grass trodden under foot; /there are/ long peals of laughter, light jibes that are well aimed and to the point, and witticisms, for the maiden's tongues have been loosened, and they do not lack wit.

796 881 The youths follow, dressed in blouses knotted at the abdomen like towels and trousers into which three pairs of legs and three abdomens could fit without any trouble, dragging drums and bass drums. To keep up the march and cause it to be forgotten (they often come from far away) they shout a loud "you you" and make coarse jokes, which are here addressed to the fair sex more than elsewhere. Sometimes also, between two laughs, two great silly laughs, something like the crack of a whip is heard. This sound is made by five stubby fingers as they are applied to the cheeks of dear little angels, warming them. In fact, a band of little boys and girls trot among the youths in their birthday suits, passing to the right and to the left and winding between their legs, and patience wears out and quickly comes to an end.

After the young people come the old men; they are bent double,
leaning on spears, and even while talking of future projects they re-
call the days of the past. It is quite apparent that there are no more
like them, their equal cannot be found. Into the foroko, the goatskins
they slip over their arms and fasten on their shoulders, they have slipped
some good handfuls of cowrie shells for the mothers of the circumcised
[276 and excised, a box of the snuff that every self-respecting stranger
431] gives as a gift to the men of the village, and finally the kola nuts
that the sacrificer will chew before spitting the remains onto the
front side of the god and some that, as educated, well-bred men, they
keep for close friends. They also carry the hens or roosters for the
sacrifice; these are attached by the feet to the straps of the foroko
and hung head down their wings flapping horribly.

881 796 301 The human flood arrives at the gates of the village, stops a moment under the big trees, and tidies itself. The pointed caps /184/ are put a little to one side of the head, the blouses are unfolded, and nakedness is concealed. On the women's side there is indescribable hubbub, like the sound of the distant ocean at rising tide; they polish and adorn themselves and beautify themselves. On their feet they put little chains, on their arms heavy bracelets that knock together with the sound of old iron, and on their hips the young girls at least hang belts of beads sprinkled with little bells that tinkle at the slightest movement. In their noses they put crescents of gold or copper, in

881 each ear ten to twelve rings of soft iron, tin, or silver, and those that
796 they put on their fingers and toes number more than twenty.

301 On the braids of their hair, all running with grease, they hang bits of amber and rings of polished pottery as white as snow, and around all their necks are bead necklaces from which dangle bits of amber, grigris, and here and there, held by leather strips, pottery rings that fall back between the shoulders and in front on their bosoms. They also bind their foreheads with narrow crowns of rainbow-colored beads or diadems of coral. Such are the Negro girls in their most beautiful array.

796 At the homes of the circumcised and excised, the huts and
881 courts are crowded with people, for in addition to friends and storytellers /griots/ -- the poor troubadours of the country -- there may be in each home older married daughters who have come with their husbands, children, and parents-in-law, and the fiancé's delegation to his betrothed seem to be in every corner. This is really the festival of the tribe, and everybody is present; only the fiancés are excluded and cannot appear on this day. And how very Bambara it is! In one
[264] spot people quench their thirst with great drinks of d'lo, or millet beer, while nearby, squatted around steaming gourds, others stuff themselves with to, or gruel. The hands held out to you are running with sauce; the children who surround you are covered with leftovers from the feast and brandish under your nose bones that they gnaw clean with their bare teeth, and while they call to you Sogo ("some meat"), the satiated people next to you exclaim: "Abarka, thank you Né fara san, I am full for the moment." And everywhere there is an infernal bedlam! Old women beat furiously on inverted pumpkins in conari full of water /185/; youths beat drums, women and young girls clap their hands in rhythm, and everybody shouts the glories of the family. The families of the circumcised and excised are beside
[431] themselves, so great is their joy, and if you are one of their close friends you will be shown all the gifts received, in plain sight in the court. You are made to taste of everything, to touch and feel everything, and, just as on the day when the child is given its name, you receive, on leaving, the kola nut of life (le ni woro).

881 It is after midnight. The circumcised boys are seated in the
796 place of honor where their older brothers sat before, and they furious-
794 ly shake their gourd disks strung on sticks. Leaning on their millet stalks, the regulation sticks, the excised girls in their turn arrive at the public square, singing and shaking their pierced gourds, and the dances begin as at the *soli si* and continue until morning. Outside, under the sacred trees, the bell of the fetish tinkles and summons the initiates, and the *Komo* god roars through the mouth of its herald. At a sign from the priest the circumcised boys get up, leave the village, and go under the big trees to swear loyalty and to dedicate themselves, body and soul, to the prince of darkness (1). How can this scene be described! The circumcised boys sit under the god's favorite tree, and the crowd of initiates, grouped by villages, gather around the gourds full of *d'lo* that froths and bubbles. Little fires are lighted and cast a strange light into the night, and a circle of crouching human beings appears and takes shape. The master of the idol (*Komo tigi*); the sacrificer (*mourou kala tigi*); the beadle (*darotigi*), who rings for the sacrifice and gathers the initiates; the fetish's storytellers /*griots*/ (*Komo djeli maou*), who sing the praises of the god, fall into catalepsy at the sacrifices and then give out oracles;
[778 the *Komo warada*, who wear a coat covered with the feather of guinea
534] hens, hens, egrets, etc., and a long horned mask, and who carry the fetish to the place of sacrifice and blow into an iron tube that ends in two horns /186/ and is at once idol and trumpet, and draw from it frightful "*fouin fouin*" that freeze you with fear: in short, all the staff of the *Komo* appear on the scene, and there is a lascivious dance, the dance of the god, the sacred dance. Then there is the

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1. The scene which I describe sometimes takes place the evening before. Sometimes, by order of a sorcerer and for a reason considered serious, the entrance into the sect of a fetish is postponed until later.

881 796 794 rallying cry, bellowed by a hundred throats, "*kou kou kou*, *ke ke ke*"; drums roll, and drunken voices shout:

T'an ta bara ladjé.
Stop, let us go and see the gourd (of beer).
Bara ma dja an na,
When the beer has made us joyful (1).

1. *Dja*, "to make happy," "to please," "to be agreeable," "to make joyful."

An na youyouba yougouba.
We will dance and dance (2).

2. *Yougouba*, "to dance with a shaking of the whole body."

Gnâ tigi,, *né ka nougouni-n-ko min yé*?
Master of the *gnâ*, what has happened to my (hen's) entrails? (3)

[782] 3. This line recalls a peculiarity of the sacrifice of the newly initiated. With one twist of the finger the sacrificer takes the entrails out of the hen, and when the young initiate wants to draw it, he is quite surprised to find that none of the viscera are in it any more.

Gnâ tigi do nougou na bo gnouan yé.
A master of the *gnâ* (*kodit*) the entrails will come out together.

Excited, or rather irritated, by the wait, the circumcised boys get up, move forward in a line, and prostrate themselves before the god's escort, the one who shakes without any rest under his cloak of feathers and brings resounding blasts from his horned tube (4), and

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4. While the trumpet is blowing, the initiates accompany it with pipes.

grows and shrinks by raising and lowering his jointed mask. The hour of the initiation has rung, and they will be born into the religious life.

The master of the idol, the Komo tigi, places the horned iron tube on each initiates shoulder, and in a slow, solemn, hollow voice, he says these words of the initiation ceremony (5):

5. During this ceremony the initiates are prostrate.

For the Komo

Q. Moun bé i koun? What have you on your head?
A. A kala be n'koun. His handle is on my head (repeated three times). /187/
Q. I y'a yé wa? Have you seen him?
A. Né m'a yé. I have not seen him.
Q. Nin be ma fa. I y a fo ma min yé, a k'i fo! He kills a man. If you speak of him to anyone, may he kill you!
A. Ni ne y'a fo ma min yé, a k'a né fa! If I speak of him, may he kill me!
Q. I si sirila gnâma-n-fou, djala la. Your life is fastened onto the cedar with gnâma-n-fou!
A. Né si sirila à la. My life is bound to it.
Q. Ni se ma fo ma si yé, Komo k'i kisi! If you do not speak of him to anyone, may the Komo be your protector!
A. A ka né kisi! May he be my protector!
Q. I y'a fo ma min ye, i kono ka founou, a k'i fa! If you speak of if, may your abdomen swell, may he kill you!
A. A ka né fa! May he kill me!
Q. Komo k'i son ni bien (1) ta, ki koun ti, né kana bo djoli kana bo.

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1. Bien, a woman's sexual organs. Bien, "horn"; this is a veiled term sometimes meaning a man's organs. They also say k'i bien ta, "may he tear out the organs."

May the Komo take away your heart and your organs, may he crush your head without your brains coming out, without your blood coming out.

A. O k'a ké. May it be so.

For the Nama

Q. I y'a fo ma min ye, Boli k'i so ta, k'i bien ta (1), ka doun i

/1. Same as preceding footnote 1/

djoufé ka bo i da fé. If you speak of him, may the boli cause your house and your wives to perish, may he enter you by the anus and leave you by the mouth.

A. O k'a ké! May it be so!

Q. K'i Kono gni bri, ka gni bri, gna bara.

A. O k'a ké.

Q. Ni e ma fo ma yé, k'i disi soubaou ma. K'i son sila, k'i son kénéyala! If you keep the secret may he save you from the souba, may he give you descendants and health!

"Tell me, what have you on your head? Yourlife is henceforth bound with gnâma-n-fou (bark of Bauhinia reticulata): if you talk, /188/ if you reveal our mysteries, may your abdomen swell, may the Komo kill you, may he tear out your organs, may he tear out your heart, may he break your head without your brain coming out, without blood flowing."

This ceremony in the night, in the light of the little fires that distort the shadows and lengthen them, impresses, pierces, and grips the youths, and they are heard to answer all atremble in these words that at every moment break through the nasal tone of the pipes and

881 796 794 the trumpet blasts: "I have the kala (1) on my head, my life is hence-

1. Kala, "handle of a tool, "
"a pestle, " "an oblong object";
Komo kalà, iron tube ending in
two horns.

forth bound with gnâma-n-fou; if I reveal the secrets of the sect, may my abdomen swell and may the Komo kill me." Then they get up, 881 796 794 539 and the crowd of initiates sing hymns to the Komo at the tops of their voices:

Da Woro la nana, Boloko déou da Worola.
To the festival of Da Woro he (the fetish) has come, to
Da Woro of the circumcised (he has come).
Toro ma na kola gnini.
Toro (2) has not come to cause evil.

2. Toro, the name of a Komo.

Sira bo nin ye, ko dougoulé dén.
To him we give an (open) road because (he is) a child of the
village.
Sira bo nin yé, ko dougoulen sira.
Give him an (open) road to know the road of the children of
the village (He is one of us, let us make room for him)
(3).

3. Songs of Nama:
A djigina so Nama fambali, a djigina
so, tjon k'a'é.
The Nama that kills has paid us a
visit, he has visited us*, let us not be

*The Nama protects against the
souba, initiates of siri, reputed
to be cannibals.

[266]

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796 neglectful toward him (let us welcome
794 the Nama who comes to visit us).
539 A fiéréla ka den, boli fiéréla ka den.
He has blossomed to have fruits, the
boli has blossomed to have fruits
(the Nama has had a child).
Souba yo nin kéra ma lo ko yé.
Souba yo. This is done because of shame.
Souyaya kéra dabali bé an koyé.
The practice of the souba has been done
(among us), we have a means of protecting ourselves from it. /189/

881 While these hymns are being sung, the circumcised boys dance
796 with the idol -- this is the standard expression to signify that for the
794 first time they are executing the lascivious motions of the sacred dance.

And when they get back to their places, they are transformed, they are no longer the plain, good children who, even the day before, approached you nicely with a frank smile on their lips. They have become Bambara, and we, we are white men and strangers, masters and conquerors, and between them and us an abyss has been opened. And this abyss is opened further every day, for every time the god Komo comes out of its temple and out of the dirty foroko (goatskin) that serves as its tabernacle, they will go under the sacred trees, and will strengthen their faith and harden their hearts (1). Henceforth they will be at home in every part of the Sudan; they need not fear

1. The initiates of powerful boli's sect make a sort of "renewal of vows" a year after their admission. Those of the Komo, who are given the name of timini deou, hold a festival to break all records; there is meat and gruel to spare, and the divine liqueur, d'lo, or millet beer, is plentiful.

881 the poison that kills the inquisitive and the traitors, and wherever they
796 are asked the question, "Are you of the Komo?", they can give the
794 password, draw two crossed lines in the sand, and then, holding the thumb, the middle finger, and fourth finger in the hand, extend the forefinger and the little finger over this mark, saying to the questioner, "I am one of you."

I have noted here the verbal text of these questions and the answers to give them.

For the Komo

Q. E b'a la Wa? Are you of the Komo?
A. Ne b'a la. I am.
Q. N'i b'a la, tjoko djira anna? If you are, show us the sign.
A. Ka'l ta Drahamé.

In saying these words bend the thumb, the middle finger, and the fourth finger while extending the forefinger and the little finger. /190/

II.

Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Komo?
A. Né b'a la. I am.
Q. Tjoko djira anna wé? Show us the sign.
A. Da sigi da da la.

Place a container on the mouth of a container. While saying these words, place the feet one in front of the other, and immediately add: Djan kéné ouala djan djala. Make two parallel lines in the dust.

III.

Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Komo?
A. Né b'a la. I am.
Q. E n'i so mâou benna mi ni? And where did you and your people meet?

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794
A. An benna dlaba da la, ou bi gouélé foura bosi. We met at the door of dlaba; they pick the leaves of the gouélé (false ebony) (1).

1. For the Nama.
Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Nama?
A. Né b'a la. I am.
Q. Féré tjon k'an.
Two straws are laid in a cross of
St. Andrew and shown to you.
A. Nin yé sira gné bo la yé. This is
the road that guides, lights.
Q. A perpendicular straw is laid down.
A. Nin yé wara sé n-yé. Wara ti tama
sén ko. This is the foot of a wild animal*.

* The boli are often given the
epithet of wara, "wild animal, "
meaning "strong, " "powerful. "

A wild animal does not walk without
legs.
Sirima-n-fign: this word is the family name, the diamou of Nama. End of the questions: Dja e b'a la koï ! Dja (exclamation) you surely are [of the Nama].

Through the whole night there are howls of wild animals, songs and lascivious dances, bellowings of trumpets freezing one with fear, and the nasal and piercing sounds of the pipes.

At dawn a warada, speaking into the horned tube, thanks those present in the name of the god Komo; a second repeats his words into a pipe, and a djélima (storyteller /griot/ of the Komo) repeats the words of the god in plainer terms to those present. And the /191/ crowd gives thanks, utters cries, makes its requests. Everyone retires exhausted, worn out, with his throat on fire and foam on his lips,

881 reeling on his legs -- in these festivals one must get drunk to please
796 the god.

794 While all these things are happening outside, the women and little girls on the public square abandon themselves to their hearts' content. They perform none of the leaps and capers customary at ordinary festivals: shaking in their hands the goatskin bag or the white iron box full of little stones, they circle slowly, with short steps, around the orchestra, and only their buttocks move. These roll to the right and roll to the left, dip forward and quickly draw back -- a movement which is definitely not graceful. The excised girls spend the night sitting on mats covered with white cloths, between the legs of their mothers or serving women, and their heads, loosely thrown back, rest on the breasts whence they drew their life. They are wrapped in covers that have blue stripes on white background, only their heads showing, and one might say this was a display of new, shiny dolls with big black eyes, happy and all sparkling with joy. From time to time at the invitation of the dancers who sing of their grace and beauty, they shake their pierced gourds, make them rattle in their hands, and take part in the dance; then at dawn, in the morning, in a final round, they put their heels together and three times make three leaps in the air with their hands crossed on top of their heads.

And, if one believes the Negroes, this custom is not without meaning. The whitecloth on an excised girl's mat reminds the mother of one of the beautiful days of her life, the one when she gave herself to her husband in the bonds of marriage, and reminds the child hidden in her arms, wrapped in the cover like an infant in its cloths, that since she has now become a grown girl and has left childhood, she must guard her virginity. This large white cloth will testify for her on the day of her marriage as it testified for her mother, and it will be inexorable. The circle around the orchestra in short steps is the infant practicing its first steps; but now she has reached her full development, /192/ she can be sufficient to herself, and for that reason she makes these nine leaps with her hands crossed on top of her head.

881 As soon as the sabbath of the sons of the Komo is terminated
796 outside, the excised girls are led back to their huts with great pomp, with music in the lead, and the festival still goes on, for a Bambara

881 festival lasts as long as there is d'lo. After a few hours of sleep, before
196 the noon meal, the excised girls come back, and around the well
there is an endless babel punctuated by joyous laughter as they wash
their loincloths, the cloths soiled by the dust of the night, and as they
mend gourds, the dishes of this country. The pure Bambara girls,
those who are not of the blacksmith caste nor of the "Marka" people of
more or less mixed stock, have lost their grace and beauty and seem
quite comical with their shaved heads. Just as at six to eight days
[302] after birth the head of the village, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, priest of the
dasiri fetish, made motions over their heads and cut their hair, since
the "hair of the womb" is not allowed to be seen in public, so at the
da woro, six days after circumcision, they lose it again, since they
cannot enter life with the hair of childhood; a dirty handkerchief re-
places the locks of which they were so proud, they are without bead
or jewel, and on their foreheads, in place of the multicolored crown,
[751] is the string with nine knots called the tafo, and it is fastened in back
at the nape of the neck to the string called the djo, which is intended
to protect them from sore throat, mumps, headache, and just about
all illnesses.

4. The Festival of the Boloko Déou Don Bo, The Coming Out of the Circumcised and the Excised, The Real Entry into Civil and Religious Life

881 After the da woro, the festival of the sixth day, the circumcised
883 boys go back under the sacred tree outside the village, and the excised girls return to their huts. They take up again their life of "sweet idleness," and their little excursions in a group, at specified hours, to satisfy the wants of nature. They also have their days of big excursions. When the markets take place, they go to cut thorns at some 100 meters from the village. They bar the paths, set up /193/ a barricade, and ask every passer-by for a doua-mo, a share of the market. From habit, and especially from fear of the cuffings that are readily given out and of the spirits that watch over and protect the young people, everybody obeys and pays the toll. In addition to fish tails they also take in enough cowrie shells to buy a bit of meat and make themselves a treat.

881 This quiet life, this life of retreat, wearies the young boys and girls. At the end of four to five weeks they get hotheaded, they become insubordinate, and want to go home, for they are healed. Since the Negro man and woman appointed to watch them no longer insist, the council of elders meets and declares their task finished. In the afternoon when the sun, still high above the horizon, gathers all its rays to cast them furiously for one last time before going out in a purple disk, under the sacred trees and in the courts in front of the huts of the girls, the heads of the quarters make their gestures and simultaneously, without taking breath, recite their formulas and spit and then proceed to the exorcisms. "Bissimillahi (a phrase which in the mouth of a Bambara has not at all the meaning "in the name of God," but rather signifies "everything goes as desired"), our children are healed and they are going home, under the paternal roof; spirits that watch over them, spirits that protect them, let them go!"

881 184 There is a reason for this exorcism. Since the day when the blacksmith's razor, all shining, was lifted to cut, the little Negroes have been under the tutelage of fiercely jealous spirits. That is even one of the chief reasons why they are set apart and live far from the world, its ceremony and its work. No circumcised or excised child can set foot in a village hut, not even in that of their parents; their invisible protectors draw after them a whole series of evils, and wherever they are forced to enter they bring ruin and desolation (1).

To let one of these boys or girls enter one's home is to invite, if not death, at least sickness, bad luck, or the most dreadful poverty. To guard against such misfortunes, /194/ the Bambara must drive away these spirits, and since their assistance is considered useless, they are thanked with arm gestures and spitting.

889 When the exorcisms are over, the young brood scatters and runs everywhere into the huts; in the public square and in the alleys one hears interminable greetings and endless chatter. But the Bambara are too fond of drinking and eating, and they must celebrate the

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1. O be n'wanso bla mala, "this causes misfortune to fall on a man."

881 healing of their children and their return home. The next morning around the wells one sees only women and young girls with naked torsos washing up in millet in plenty of water; it is to be fermented for the coming drinking bout.

881 183 And on that day, a little before the sun sets and when it is only a bloody disk, the circumcised and excised young people bring their mats, the gourd disks strung on sticks, the pierced gourds the size of a fist and filled with small pebbles, the millet stalks carried for so long as sticks, and the dirty handkerchiefs that wrapped their heads under the sacred trees, and the *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, the one who sacrifices to the genii protectors of the village, sets them afire. A black, thick, acrid and loathsome smoke fouls the air, and an uncertain flame of greenish red tries in vain to rise, so choked is it by old dirt and sweat. Boys and girls dart forward and jump three times over this fire of joy. At once they are purified of all their pollution; they have left behind and abandoned the old selves, smoked them out. Agile as deer or 881 gazelles they run to their huts to *masiri don* ("to make themselves beautiful"). Everywhere there is an indescribable bustle! Lids of gourds, which are the Negroes' cupboards, roll on the ground, split, break, and fall to pieces, and in the midst of laughter of delirious joy there are the lamentations of an old woman who screams and grumbles. This haste and fever is the cause of delays, and the girls especially cannot yet done with arraying themselves. A piece of amber hangs too low or not low enough, the necklaces are too loose and have to be shortened, worn threads break, and beads by handfuls are lost in the dust.

At last, to the great relief of all, the cry of joy "*Kouyo ê, Kouyo ê!*" rings out from the four corners of the village. Preceded 533 by the /195/ chorus of singers (a group of women and girls who clap their hands and sing a most barbaric tune in falsetto, without ever being in harmony), the drums slowly head toward the great trees of the square that is the ballroom. In all the alleys that intersect the village and make it a labyrinth, a crowd of women, men, and children rush, jostle elbows, and shout, and in a moment the square is full.

881 Moment by moment the old women come closer and the word [887] "Kouyo ê, Kouyo ê" resounds louder and louder. But now they come out, and their bodies move as if they were made of rings, so closely do they imitate a worm surprised by a ray of sunshine who is hastily returning to its nest in the ground. With their pointed chins, wrinkled skins, and toothless jaws, they look like real savages as they furiously scrape two iron rods; on their bald heads they wear dirty towels, the filthy appurtenances of sorceresses, wound without skill or taste. With spear in hand the young citizens appear in full trousers; they wear caps with double points or loud-colored turbans with long fringes, and their bodies disappear under loose blouses still all perfumed with the musty smell of the bottom of a storage bin, all stiff and shiny under a paste of starch. They leap and shout, they brandish their arms, assume the look of warriors, and especially assume such a look of conceit that one's laughter is unloosed.

After the boys come the girls, fanning their "alms purses" all [415] decorated with cowrie shells; these are platters braided of fine, pliable grass, doubtless those onto which the bloody remnants were placed on the morning of the soli si, or arms' vigil. They come forward stiffly, and glide rather than walk over the ground, for their feet are weighed [301] down by small chains and iron rings, and can hardly be lifted. Gold or copper crescents pull down the septum of their noses, a handful of striped periwinkle shells hangs from the lobe of each ear, several coral necklaces encircle their heads, and everywhere, chiefly around their necks, are pieces of amber interspersed by grigris and beads of 881 302 every size and shade. Bambara of the noumou, or blacksmith caste, the Marka turned Bambara, and every Bambara girl /196/ of more or less mixed stock whose head was not shaved at the da woro, or festival of the sixth day, has their hair braided, and on top of the crest which ends in two small braids along each ear, there is an odd little bundle, a handful of hair. This is in memory of the eighth day after the girl's birth, the day when she was given her name, and what she is wearing is nothing less than what the Bambara call "the hair of the womb" (1). If this has been lost, as is usually the case, the

881 292 mother provides some of hers. The dress-up outfit of our excised girls is a regular harness; two or three loincloths in layers encircle their waists, and of the actual costume, the band of cloth which shakes behind in limp and loose trains, the big pompom is all that shows. At least one can look at them and see them, as for once pretty white blouses clothe them; the long cloth slings required in the dances are thrown over their shoulders and brought to the front and create quite a pretty effect. 881 301 583 In Bani country the girls wear a wide belt of cowrie shells around the hips and over the loincloths, and on each side two bundles of cowrie shells hang from leather thongs that pass over the shoulders and are crossed on the chest. This dousou ko (2), as it is called, is the remaining portion of the bride price given by the fiancé, and is worth 5,000 to 6,000 cowrie shells.

881 Around the drums that rage in the square, behind the old women who scrape their pieces of scrap iron, and behind the female storytellers /griottes/ who sing of their charms, their strength and their beauty, the circumcised boys and excised girls circle for a few moments and go and sit on the mats that have been prepared for them.

Kola nuts are distributed to the new citizens; gourds of dégé, millet flour mixed with honey water and milk, are placed at the feet of the girls, queens of the day, and the head of the village makes the speech that is required at the beginning of every festival. His herald, standing beside him, repeats it word by word, sentence by

881 302 1. Newborn infants have their heads shaved six to eight days after birth; they cannot go out of their homes before being shorn of the hair of the womb (ou ba, "their mothers"; kono, "womb"; si, hair).

2. Dousou, "soul," "heart," "seat of love"; ko, "affair," "pledge of love."

881 sentence, for the headman only talks in a low voice, as is in good taste. /197/ The speech is short; he calls by name each circumcised boy and excised girl and reminds everybody that among them circumcision is as old as the world, that is to say, as old as the Bambara people. "Yes," he exclaims, "our circumcised children are on the path of their fathers; they are Bambara. Youths, young girls, men and women, old men and old women, our circumcised ones can henceforth take part in palavers, sit with their elder brothers around the gourds of d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer, and take part in our games, our merry-making, and our rites. May everyone know it and no one forget, or ever treat them as if they were uncircumcised (1) -- that is the deepest insult! Everyone will know how to avenge an insult to his child, and I will know how to avenge an insult to mine." He ends by saying: "Truce to disputes; let us eat, drink, dance, and enjoy ourselves, and /leave/ serious matters (2) /until/ after the festival."

From then on, d'lo flows in streams and throats are cleansed. Everybody, young and old, men and women, dances in honor of the young "citizens," and as long as the sparkling, foaming liquor lasts, there are songs, dances, cries and shouts without end on the public square, day and night. And when the beer reaches its end, each circumcised boy and excised girl, in order of age, stretches his or her muscles before the public, accompanied by father, mother, and all his family and that of his fiancée or her finacé. This is the climax of the festival. At this point the cries and shouts redouble,
881 and the drinkers, jug in hand, foam on their lips, gazing into space
431 and wavering on their legs, place beads, cowrie shells, and a kola nut in the large pockets of the blouses of the circumcised youths and

[578] 1. To call someone blakoro ("uncircumcised") is the insult of insults.

2. All disputes, all litigation, everything that disunites.

881 431 onto the platters of the excised girls. With the last kola nut all leaping stops, and the festival ends. Slowly the crowd withdraws and goes home, for it has only too much need of a little rest.

881 514 On the days following this "coming out of the circumcised" (the name given to this occasion by the Bambara), the youths and maids run around the country dressed up, and go to thank those who were at the da woro, or festival of the sixth day. Boys and girls, in two groups, under the /198/ direction of their old woman guardian, walk along the paths one after another, Indian file. At the head of the column is the massa, or queen; the massa ma Kono, her deputy, comes next, and she is followed by the massa ma Kono ségére, who again is the deputy of the one in front of her. All the others are girls that are healed, and the last, the youngest of all, is called koulé. The boys march in the same order and bear the same titles. This way of thanking people is very Bambara; although they insist on showing themselves so that people will know that they are circumcised, [431] they want especially that alms be given them, and they go to ask a gift and hold out both hands. The Bambara people are a beggar people!

Chapter 10

Bambara Marriage

584 Little Bambara girls are betrothed when they are very young, generally between the ages of four to ten, and girls of twelve, fourteen, and sixteen years who still await a suitor are very unusual. Yet age matters little, for there are three stages in marriage: the proposal, the betrothal, and the wedding, and whoever wants to take a wife, whether he is young, mature, or an old man, married, widower, or unmarried, must obey this law.

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1. The Marriage Proposal (1)

1. The procedures described here apply to the marriage of a young girl. For widows or divorcées who remarry, there are consultations of diviners, sacrifices to the evil fetishes, etc., but the betrothal and wedding ceremonies are performed with a minimum of show.

832 581 The Bambara are not unmoved by the beauty of a woman's form; they can distinguish a well-formed body from a malformed one, a pretty woman from an ugly one, and they find a coppery skin more attractive than one of ebony black. Similarly, a face pitted by smallpox or a bosom covered with scars displeases them, and a man talks to you about his fiancée or his wife, he is quite proud to be able to say: "sien si t'a la, she has a body without blemish," therefore she is beautiful. When it comes to marriage, however, he does not look too closely! He readily keeps silent about his tastes and seldom consults his heart, for a wife to him is primarily a source of pleasure and profit. /200/

581 What he sees in a woman above all is a being of a different sex than he, and if she is industrious, cooks well, and is good at business, he will know how to close his eyes to her defects in order to keep her and allow her to be an important person in his home who must be reckoned with.

584 When a Negro who wants a wife finds an unbetrothed girl, he quickly confides his secret, his fears and hopes, to his close friend, a man of mature age who enjoys some respect in the country (1). The

564 1. Some people have thought that the "storytellers /griots/" act as intermediaries in asking the hand of a child. Nothing is more

564 erroneous, for the Bambara despises this breed and would never entrust one with such a delicate mission. The Bambara dreads the storyteller in his private festivals. How many times they say as they invite us: "We came ourselves to invite you so that the news may not reach the ears of the storytellers." The *to-n-tigi*, head of the association of the *fla-n-to*, plays no important role in the marriage of a *to-n-dé*, or member. The *to-n-déou*, members of the association of the *fla-n-to*, are invited and enjoy themselves at the wedding of a fellow *te-n-de*, and that is all. Mr. Barbier Louis /sic/ makes a mistake; see page 527, Dec. 16, 1907, of the review *La Quinzaine*.

584 latter receives four kola nuts wrapped in green leaves and tied again and again so that they will not wither, and, spear in hand and his inseparable goatskin, or *foroko*, well fastened to his shoulder, he starts on his way, proud to be assigned such a pleasant mission and happy and pleased to be the *fourouboloma tigi*, guardian of the wedding gifts (2).

2. *Fourouboloma*, "engagement gift"; *tigi*, "master."

584 887 576 At the end of his journey, on the public square, he extends a very friendly greeting to the old men who there devote themselves to laziness in the shade of a great tree with the apathy of lizards; he gives them all generously of the snuff that every stranger must offer, and if he has no friend or acquaintance in the village, he chooses from among them a man of good will who will introduce him to the family and smooth the way for him. When this man is found, he goes

584 887 there without further delay and makes his request, which the man who introduced him repeats word by word and sentence by sentence.

584 The father of the girl ponders a moment, and if the suit pleases him he answers in a word: "A gnéna, that's good." The little package of four kola nuts is then offered him, he summons his daughter and her mother, and the fourouboloma tigi again explains the reason for his /201/ coming. Everything is settled with the following words: "Give my greetings to the one who sent you and all his family, tell him that I am happy he is asking for my daughter. A diara an ye hali (1), it is a great joy for us, but this, you know, needs reflection! I will speak to my friends soon, and in a few days you will know my decision." The emissary has not been refused and, satisfied with himself and the good prospects of the matter, he leaves to carry to the suitor the words of the girl's father, which should open the door of hope to his heart.

2. The Diviners and Fetishes Accept or Reject the Suitor

584 593 To marry their daughter and marry her well is a nightmare to every father and mother, and both remain anxious when a suitor presents himself. The Bambara know anguish! A daughter may not be beautiful; often she is even ugly, with a large navel, an umbilical hernia, or blood blister due to the clumsiness of the midwife, but her father lives in her large, white eyes marked with a black spot that is full of life and shining, in her broadly slit mouth and puffy lips; he recognizes his own, and his whole inner being cries to him: "This is your daughter, this is your blood."

Frightful thoughts come to torment him: "If the suitor should have the character of a villain and the brutality of a beast, will he not beat my child mercilessly? Might he have one of those shameful diseases that people hide and do not name, so that my daughter will commit adultery in order to avoid the embarrassment of being

1. A, "that"; diara, "is happy"; an ye, "for us"; hali, "much."

584 sterile? And if he should be one of those sensualists so numerous
593 among us, and, bored after having enjoyed her, should drive her away
and reject her?" He trembles and wants to know what the future holds
both for him and for her, and goes to consult the diviners.

Two and often three diviners are consulted. If they all agree in
584 testifying that the suitor is of good character, that divorce is not to
593 be feared, and that the child will become the mother of healthy, strong,
787 and vigorous children who will perpetuate her people and her blood,
he finds joy again. He tells the verdict to both his wife and his
daughter, he imparts his decision to the head of the village and the
council of elders, and /202/ without any delay, freed as he is from
all fear, he notifies the suitor that the doors of his home are open
to him.

584 At this announcement the suitor chooses a fat hen from his hen
house, takes one or two kola nuts from his store, and again the
787 fourouboloma tigi, the guardian of the wedding gifts, starts on his way,
for this time he must find out whether the family boli, and sometimes
the shades of its ancestors, are opposed to the proposed union (1).

1. If some occurrence later causes the engagement to be broken, or if there is a marriage followed by divorce, it does not enter his mind that the diviners were mistaken. The whole responsibility falls on the head of an enemy, who through hatred or jealousy has found a way to disrupt everything. It is almost always someone unknown, which is fortunate.

584 The father of the little girl takes down his goatskin, or often the
skin of a wild animal, a frightful, dirty foroko, the tabernacle of the
787 family boli; he sprinkles them with the blood of the hen and then spits
778 a piece of chewed kola nut on them. If he does not have family boli
-- an unusual situation -- he sacrifices to his ancestors on the doorsill
of the entry hut, or b'lon, and on the kârâ, if he owns one.

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A kârâ is an earthern bas-relief inside the b'lon, or entry hut, which very crudely depicts a woman and a man and is used as an altar.

When the sacrifice is accepted -- that is, if the feathered biped has the fortunate idea of not dying with its wings spread and its breast on the ground, and if the pieces of kola nut, cut in two, which are thrown on the boli or the kârâ, fall with the rounded part on the ground and the pulp on top (2) -- there is an unequivocal "yes" on the part of the family, and all hearts rejoice. As to the fourouboloma tigi, he delightedly sucks his piece of kola nut, he savors his piece of the hen, and the scene of the sacrifice is far from his memory. Yet he trembled when, crouched before his boli or the kârâ, altar of his ancestors, the father-in-law cut the throat of the victim and threw down the kola nut, saying in a solemn and cavernous voice: "We have consulted the diviners, and they all agree in praising the suitor; if they are to be believed, he is worthy of our daughter. But you, what do you think of this union? If it is to be /203/ happy, if divorce is not to be feared, if it is to be fertile, accept my sacrifice, I pray you. In that case, grant them wealth, long life, many children, and peace. This hen and the kolas are indeed for the sacrifice, and it is a true sacrifice which the suitor offers you through my mediation."

This manner of accepting or rejecting a suitor is most ingenious! Since everything is referred to the decision of the diviners, the boli, and the shades of ancestors, any dispute on the part of a rejected man is impossible, no quarrel arises between the two families, and when a more fortunate suitor obtains the little girl's hand, he need not fear the hate, rancor, or vengeance of his predecessor for he has nothing to do with the latter's misfortune.

2. A procedure which is repeated up to three times in case of failure.

3. The Betrothal

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583 I have often heard it said that a Bambara marriage is nothing less than a sale and a purchase: the woman goes to the highest bidder. I cannot share such an opinion. The suitor gives a bride price, I know, but this bride price is a present to the fiancée, and its entire value is returned to him. When the fiancée's father receives it, he treats himself to trousers, a cap with three points, a new blouse, a few jugs of d'lo, or millet beer, and many kola nuts; but when the wedding comes, it is the father who provides his child with loincloths, gourds, pottery, in fact her whole trousseau, and however slight his vanity -- and what Bambara is not vain! -- he will spend the bride price and even more.

When the suitor has been able to gather two to three kilograms of salt, a few bits of cloth for the little girl and her mother, and a portion of the bride price (1), which varies between 25 and 30 francs, he pays his respects to the family through his intermediary, the fourouboloma tigi, or guardian of the wedding gifts. The latter goes to the father-in-law, escorted /204/ by a few young girls who carry the fouroufen, or bride price, the gifts of cloth and salt, and a few jugs

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[436] 1. The bride price is set at ba mougan ni tan, about 24,000 cowrie shells. Each ba equals 10 kémé. The kémé is worth 80 cowrie shells, the ba 800 cowrie shells. In ordinary times a 5-franc piece is exchanged for ba dourou ni kémé dourou, or 4,400 cowrie shells. The value of the cowries is subject to rise and fall, so that the 5-franc piece is sometimes worth 4,400 cowrie shells; at other times the cowries drop and the 5-franc piece is worth ba woro ni kémé dourou, or 6 ba and 5 kémé, or ba wolonoula, 7 ba.

583 of d'lo, or millet beer. The head of the village and his council,
584 friends, and the to-n-déou, or members of the association of the
fla-n-to (1), go at once to pay their respects to the happy father and
583 to tell the girl that her betrothal is being celebrated and cannot henceforth be broken without a grave and important reason. Soon the b'lon
584 of /sic/ the entry hut and the inner court are full of crouching men who drink d'lo, or millet beer, and soon ramble in their talk. And

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575 1. The association of the fla-n-to, with a to-n-tigi at its head, is made up of several groups of to-n-déou, or members of the association. Every group corresponds to a circumcision. /sic/ When many are circumcised at the same time, they form a group, but if there are only one, two, or three, they join the group of those circumcised at the preceding occasion. The to-n-dé invites to his betrothal and his wedding the members of his group, who were circumcised with him, and the members of the older groups. As to the younger groups, he does not invite them. The women also form an association of fla-n-to similar to that of the men but separate from it. The woman who is at the head of the association, usually the oldest in the village, is called to-n-tigi, or massa fama, queen, and the to-n-dé mouso (the to-n-dé women) call her m'ba, mother. They are summoned only to the wedding.

583 the fiancée has time to reflect and to open her heart to love, for her
584 wedding will not take place until one, two, or often three years after
excision; once this has been performed she will be qualified to be a
mother.

584 From the time of the engagement the two families draw together,
establish friendly relations, and visit each other. After the girl has
574 grown up, during the year or two that elapse between the excision
and the wedding, she spends two weeks to a month each year with her
parents-in-law. One might say that in Bani country, this is the
general custom (2). When the young men sent to bring her arrives,
she /205/ hides in the hut of friends, and the little band runs right
and left looking for her. They soon find her, members of her family--

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2. In the environs of Ségou this
custom is less comon. Often the
two families come to an agree-
ment, and on the appointed day
the fiancée goes to the home of
her fiancé, accompanied by a
young man appointed by the council
of elders. After the last festival
of the circumcision (baloko déou
don bo, "the coming out of the
circumcised"), some, even
many villages hold a festival for
the fiancée. She goes to the
home of her fiancé all loaded with
beads and necklaces and escorted
by all the young girls of the village.
The fiancé bears all the cost of this
festival, called mousodjira, "to show
the wife." All the youths of the
[431] village and of neighboring villages
give 80 to 160 cowrie shells to help
the fiancé cover the expenses.

584 her mother, step-mothers, and sisters -- join them, and the little
514 procession goes to the religious head, the gnéna-sonnaba, priest of the dasiri, genie protector of the village, who gives some advice to the child and sets the day of her return. On leaving the village, the girl stops and refuses to go on; the youths take hold of her and carry her in their arms, and she abandons herself to cries and shouts that must not cease before she reaches the edge of the fields that surround the village.

584 Although the bride price is set, it is more difficult to determine
431 the value of the fiancé's presents of millet, hens, salt, kola, and d'lo, or millet beer. The size of these presents, given gratuitously over four, five, or six years and often more, depends largely on the fortune of each man and the prestige of the fiancée's family. At harvest time he supplies one or two baskets of millet /each/ weighing 20 to 40 kilograms; at the great annual sacrifice offered to the family boli he provides a hen, salt, kola nuts, and dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water. From time to time he gives his prospective father-in-law some well-filled jugs of d'lo containing at least 20 to 30 liters /each/, and if there is a festival at his home, he is careful not to forget the latter. He shows his generosity at the festival on the occasion of his fiancée's excision (1); at the da woro, or festival of the sixth day, he shows himself to be generous, and the guardian of the wedding gifts takes her the required present, a loincloth in black stripes on a yellow background, four to five pounds /the French livre equals one half a kilogram, a little more than a pound avoirdupois/ of butter, two to three kilograms of salt, 20 to 30 liters of d'lo, or millet beer, an equal amount of dégé, or flour mixed with honey water, and finally some decorative ornaments -- a bead necklace, a piece of amber, a bracelet. These last gifts are in no way required; they are given purely out of amiable courtesy.

584 One little fact without importance, remains to be noted. From
606 the time of the engagement, the fiancée may not eat in the presence

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1. A Bambara man is not present at the festival which takes place at the excision of his fiancée.

584 606 of her father-in-law nor linger with him in endless conversations, especially when no witnesses are present, and the fiancé is subject to the same rules with regard to his mother-in-law. /206/

583 584 In a word, they may no longer even look at each other! If the fiancé dies before the wedding, it is in good taste for the girl to become the fiancée of a younger brother, but if there is no brother she regains her liberty and keeps her bride price. If the fiancée dies, the family usually keeps the bride price they have received; custom permits the fiancé to demand the return of half the bride price but, in the eyes of everyone, to do so would indicate a lack of tact and delicacy. But if for one reason or another the engagement is broken, the bride price and small presents are returned to the fiancé in their entirety.

4. The Wedding of a Young Bambara Girl

584 585 The fiancé asks for the girl (1). -- The *fourou fen* (the bride price and small presents) have been paid, the fiancée is a grown young lady who has long been excised, and only rags remain of the beautiful yellow loincloth with black stripes which was received at the *da woro*, or festival that follows the sixth day after the circumcision. *A kouara* -- she has reached her full development and henceforth can only decline in grace and beauty, and her fiancé desires her. The

1. It happens sometimes that the family cannot refuse the suitor's request for the girl, although she does not have all her trousseau. In that case the wedding festival is put off, but she is led to her husband, and a little private celebration takes place on that day. When she has her trousseau she goes back to her family, and the big festival is held.

584 fourouboloma tigi, or guardian of the wedding gifts, puts on his festive
585 clothes and takes 5 kémé, or 400 cowrie shells, to the father-in-law. The gesture is understood by everyone and means: "When will the wedding be?" A Negro has only one love: his interests; only one affect of affection: himself. In his egotism he thinks only of himself and of receiving cowrie shells; his heart is not unduly stirred. He thinks of his fields, his business, and his stomach. The members of the family, from the oldest to the youngest, have only these words on their lips: "How she handles the hoe! What a good tongue for praising merchandise and selling it; how well she cooks!" And it all stops there, for no one pays heed to her feelings. In vain will she cry that she detests her fiancé, that she does not love him at all, never could love him, and that she prefers another; in vain will she flee the /207/ paternal roof and take refuge with a sympathetic relative; she must obey! Her father and mother have received the oracle of the diviners; in accepting the sacrifice, the family boli have accepted the suitor, and they /the family/ cannot oppose the orders of their gods or, if one prefers the other term, their family fetishes (1).

[836] 1. Custom decrees that the girl spend one night with her fiancé 10 or 15 days before the wedding. Some families dispense with this practice. The whole procedure is carried out in privacy: the girl arrives at night, brought by a member of her family, and withdraws at dawn. The two following expressions denote this procedure: Ou tara di à tjéma ("they have gone to give her to her husband").

Moreover, I must admit that there are very few Bambara women who openly show their antipathy. They cannot resist paternal authority and freely give themselves to the man to whom they have been betrothed; "an ka lada do, it is our custom," they say, and the idea does not occur to them that there could be another.

585 Departure of the bride. Exorcism of her hut by the boli of the village. Her entrance into the village. The first night. -- It is night, the hour when families crouch in a circle around the gourds of to, or millet gruel, stuff themselves with food, and noisily suck their fingers. Why is it, then, that this evening the women hurry in such numbers to the public square with gourds on their heads? At every turning of the streets there are people who are cleaning their long flintlocks, and in the b'lon, or entry huts, there is the deafening noise of drums as the skins are stretched and they are tuned. And the cries that fill the village crack your ears and jar your nerves. What is it then? A young woman, a fiancée, who is struggling in the arms of two husky fellows and shrieking -- for appearances, since as soon as she is outside the walls her cries cease and she places on her head the long cloth (a present from her husband) from which she can make herself three loincloths and in very lively fashion follows the women and girls who are carrying her trousseau. The band of young men, with drums, trumpets, and guns, hurries after her, and there are songs of joy and hand clappings, and from time to time the long-drawn-out cry, "kouyo, kouyo," uttered by an old woman, tears the peace and silence of the night. /208/

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178 And while the bride, in short steps, continues her triumphal march, a strange scene takes place in the village where she is going. The chief boli of the village has left its putrid hiding place, and while women, children, and the uninitiated, huddled in their huts, tremble at each roar given forth by its herald, it runs about the alleys in the hands of its initiates (1). This is not all; it goes into the husband's

(1) Ou tara djira à tjéma k'a d'a ma: "They have gone to show her to her husband in order to give her to him." The real expression is as follows: A wéléla k'a se-n-don, A se-n-donna; "Her husband has summoned her in order to sleep with her. She has slept with her husband." The answer is: Fourou kera: "They got married."

585 789 778 court and enters the hut of the bride. At that instant the *boli déou*, sons of the *boli*, sing the sacred hymn and abandon themselves to their dances, and the god itself lies on the white cloth spread on the bed, on the mat where the poor girl soon will rest. Like every rite of this kind, this ceremony is called *kéné salo*, "to exorcise the place (2)," and its purpose is to drive out the harmful spirits who might have evil intentions against the woman and her husband. For the husband it is also a means of publicly bearing witness to his faith in the *boli* and his love and his attachment for it, in short, a means of obtaining its favor and attaining a happy and fertile marriage.

585 The young woman and her retinue continue to walk very slowly along the winding paths, and in the distance, here and there, a gunshot, a clapping of hands, and the famous cry of "*kouyo kouyo*" can be heard; the cry comes near and again draws away, depending on the bends of the path, only to draw near again with a stronger burst. Finally they arrive at the edge of the fields, 200 to 300 meters at most from the village. The young men run to place themselves at the head of the procession, the bearers of the trousseau pass to the rear, the drums roll, and the horns of the band roar loudly, for this is the dance. But what a dance! The women, bent double, move [535] their torsos back and forth in a manner which might best be compared with that of a worm that draws back and slowly stretches out; they glide over the ground without lifting /209/ their feet, leaving on the sand behind them a long trail as if a boa had passed by. With discouraging slowness, they go like this to the gate of the village, taking an hour, and often two, to cover these few hundred meters.

Covered with sweat and white with dust, the procession moves along the walls; here it is at the gate, firing guns, clapping hands,

2. *Kéné*, "surface," "plane," "floor," "court"; *salo*, "stroke gently with the hand"; this term denotes a movement of the hands that the sorcerers use when they are treating an invalid, "to make /ritual/ gestures."

585 shouting songs that partly drown out the rolling of the drums and the roaring of the horns of the band. The boli gives a last roar, and its priest carries it to its foul temple where the air breathed is warmed by the steam of hot blood and never cooled. The huts open their doors, and a stream of women, children, and young girls rush along the alleys and mingle their voices with those that are arriving. The [535] crowd of women divides into several groups, and again they bend double in unimaginable contorsions that a pen cannot describe; all parts of their bodies shake and move, as in a gentle wave that goes forward and folds back on itself. They glide over the ground raising a cloud of dust and, preceded by drums and in a blast of guns, they arrive thus slowly in the couple's inner court. Here everybody flinds food ready. The middle of the court is full of huge gourds of to, or gruel, dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water, and jugs full of d'lo, or millet beer, and while the newlyweds are enjoying their first love-making, drinking, eating, dancing, and shouting is going on near them. For I forgot to say that the young bride will long since have left her frenzied, howling mob. As soon as the boli has been put away, the women come to lead her to her dwelling (1). Before taking her into the marital sanctuary, where her husband is already

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1. Every Bambara woman has her own hut separate from her husband's. A Bambara man who has only one wife sleeps in his wife's hut; if he has several, on the contrary, the woman who is summoned goes to lie in that of her husband. Some rich men provide each wife with a hut, an inner court, and a b'lon, or entry hut. In that case the first wife does not have a hut separate from that of her husband, and the husband goes to spend his nights with one or another as he chooses.

585 awaiting her, they undo her young girl's hair; they take off the cloth ribbon three /210/ fingers wide which is fastened in front at her waist and passes between the legs to fall behind in a loose, soft train; they unknot her belt of beads and bells; they help her to take her bath and lay her on the couch, rolled in a loincloth (1).

> 1. This ceremony terminating the wearing of a young girl's attire is often carried out in the village before leaving, especially if the village to which the bride is going is far away and will not be reached until late at night.

Suddenly all the guns are fired and many loud "kouyo kouyo" ring out, overpowering the songs, the noise of the drums, and that of feet beating on the ground in rhythm, and old women with wrinkled, parchment-like skin rush into the hut with warm water for ablutions(2).

> 2. This whole scene takes place in the morning, a few moments before sunrise.

Dressed in his new blouse, the groom leaves the dwelling of his bride, greets the strangers who fill his court, and sits down on the mat with the fourouboloma tigi and his close friends. The bride also quickly appears and walks across the court. She is dressed in [291] the loincloth of married women which is held at the waist by a thin cord while graceful red and white pompons, often marked with yellow and green lines, hang discreetly at the sides along her thighs. She walks with timid eyes, her head bowed, and a band of women story-tellers /griottes/ (singers) follow her with their songs of love; they tell of the delicacy of her skin, the elegance of her form, the breadth of her torso, the firmness of her breasts. There is still more -- and at the very least one would blush; the old women in back shake a large, bloody white cloth (3), which bears witness to her virginity

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3. Even those who have known their husbands before this day are honored in this fashion, for the family will have kept this cloth faithfully, and if there is occasion to unfold it, they are very proud.

before all. In a word, everybody praises the bride for having been [831] able to remain a virgin, but they praise her in Bambara, which means they do so in coarse terms, and in order to emphasize her virtue they present her with a bouquet of roses rolled in filth.

When the bride leaves the court, her maids of honor come to fetch her, and while the men stay and get drunk and the women continue to clap their hands, to sing at the top /211/ of their lungs, and to dance to the sound of the drums, trumpets, and guitars, she herself goes into the hut of friends to end the first night of her wedding in sleep. She may not go out for eight days; she takes her meals in the hut and spends her days sitting on a mat with a white veil on her head, spinning cotton in the company of her maids of honor (1).

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1. Many have freed themselves from this custom. Those who submit to it -- and they are in the majority -- can see their families again after these eight days of imprisonment and stay with them for two weeks. The bride's trip to her family at this time is called bina kounna sago. A few weeks later she again spends four days -- sou nani yé -- with her parents, and a little later she stays with them for one night, sou kélen si.

The groom stays in his hut for the whole day following the first night, and just about everybody, men and women, come to pay him

585 their respects. It is chiefly the d'lo, or millet beer, that attracts them, but under these circumstances the Bambara forget that they are beggars always holding out their hands. Although the visitors eat, drink, and get drunk, they pay for at least a part of what they consume.

585 431 Through the intermediary of the fourouboloma tigi, each guest and visitor, man or woman, gives the couple a fourouboloma fara, or wedding present, in kind or in money. They know, after all, that this is a means -- and the best -- by which they can empty a jug of d'lo, then a second, and finally several.

585 I know nothing more taxing than a Bambara wedding, which lasts two, three days, and often eight, if the husband is rich or wants to appear so. As long as the festivities last, the bride and groom are in their respective huts, surrounded by people who are sweating from having eaten or drunk too much, in an atmosphere warmed by foul breaths, and where there is never any fresh air. They do not have a minute, not an instant, of peace, and they cannot even attend to [514] the wants of nature without being escorted by a numerous band. After each meal there is in their courts a deafening noise of drums, horns, and songs shouted by voices never in harmony, and their ears hear nothing but these sentences, which must be a torture to them in the long run: "May your marriage be happy, may hands and feet spring from it (may you have many children), may God preserve your /212/ health, may He grant you a long and vigorous old age. Thank you, thank you, you have received us well, you have not been sparing of the d'lo, I am full (nzé dé fara -- or again -- né fara dérén) (1)."

1. On the day of her wedding, a young woman talks only with the many women who have come to keep her company and with her maids of honor. When the time has come when she can talk, she is offered a hen.

5. Exhibition of the Bride's Trousseau on the Evening of the First Day

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Although the sun is high above the horizon, it is already without strength and life, and at the door of the entry hut to the couple's dwelling, drums and trumpetings rage and give honor to the young woman who is seated in the midst of them on a tiny stool. She allows people to admire her adornment, her beads and her jewels, her rings of copper and tin and sometimes also of gold and silver; she allows them to rave about the shoes with soles three fingers thick, which are a gift of the groom, and about her artistic, finely braided coiffure, [302] a mountain of hair forming a crest across her head which ends in two thin locks in front of and behind each ear -- cavalryman's helmet with a broken chin strap, one might say, all ebony and thrown on its side. But she has given her heart and her promise, and she covers her face with the platter of braided grass that she holds in her right hand.

[534] The horns of antelopes, cows, and bulls, which are the Bambara trumpets, cease to roar, the drums stop booming, and a group of women (usually storytellers /griottes/, for they sniff out festivals and orgies with the scent of a vulture who smells carrion for 20 leagues) place themselves behind her and sing songs of love.

Preceded by a band of singers and a group of drums (2), the file djiralaou (the women who show the gourds) have run through the village all morning, going from hut to hut to display the trousseau. That is not enough; under the eyes of the bride it is displayed again, exhibited one last time, and without fail the connoisseurs /213/ assess it and, without any embarrassment whatsoever, set an accurate value on it (1).

[556] 2. This parade of the trousseau across the village only occurs at rich weddings when the trousseau is really worth the trouble. Most frequently only one exhibition takes place, the one in the evening.

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1. Sometimes this exhibition is made before the arrival of the young bride.

The shoes with soles three fingers thick, the white blouse and the loincloth that the bride wears, together with the koundougou fini, a huge piece of cloth that can yield three or four loincloths, are a gift from the husband; the rest -- cloth, gourds, pottery, mortars for grinding millet, cotton to be carded and spun, all come to her from her family. The size of the trousseau depends a little on the family's fortune, but as a general rule it can be stated that at her marriage every young woman receives some ten tafé (pieces of cloth, one and a half to two meters long by one meter wide, which the women wind around their bodies), some 15 gourds, and for ornaments at least a bracelet and a bead necklace (2). One is sometimes present at hilarious scenes, for among the crowd of the curious that press around, there are inevitably some rejected suitors. They have put aside hatred and rancour, for the boli of the village protects her. Yet they love her; deep in their hearts they keep all their love for her, and it is certainly they, the wounded ones, who take her free hand and pour onto her knees a few handfuls of cowrie shells.

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2. Brides from rich families receive a slave called gouadani to do the cooking, as well as a cow, small chains for their feet, bracelets, a bead necklace with a piece of amber the size of a hen's egg, and two small gold earrings.

When the vainglorious exhibition of the trousseau is finished, the fouroubolowa tigi or the guardian of the wedding presents, gives the mistress of song 5 kémé, or 400 cowrie shells, and the guns are fired one last time. The young bride gets up at once, her platter of grass still over her face, and gliding with her heels on the ground, not lifting her feet, she goes into her dwelling followed by two or three matrons, and then she disappears in a light cloud of dust. The crowd withdraws, for to follow her or even to stay where they are would be indiscreet.

Chapter 11

Bambara Burials

1. The Grave and the Cemetery

764 The Bambara bury their dead, and the graves they dig for them are about one meter fifty to one meter sixty in depth. They are two meters long, and two to three meters wide at the opening, and about one meter wide at the bottom. Three of the walls are shaped with a pick, so that there is a ledge of 0.10 to 0.50 meter above its greatest depth; the fourth wall, which rises in a gentle slope, is not shaped with a pick except at the level of the ledge left on the other three sides. A niche is dug the whole length of this wall to receive the corpse, so that the Negroes sleep their last sleep in a kind of little hut, the part dug in a gentle slope forming the roof. Men lie on their right sides with their heads to the south and their faces to the east; women lie on their left sides with their heads to the north and their feet to the south.

Some old men are buried in the inner courts of their dwellings. This custom is not at all widespread, and almost everywhere the cemetery is located around the village, and each one rests in his field of maize. The choice places are reserved for the heads of families and elders, however; the more authority they have and the greater /215/ their age, the nearer to the wall are their graves. Some villages have their cemeteries around the sacred grove which is reserved for the *dasiri*, genie protector of hamlets. The choice places are at the edge of the grove, and the priests of the fetish, the *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, or *dougoutigi*, are quite often buried on the near side of the grove, leaving the fetish tree between them and their subjects.

2. No Sacrifice to the Shades of the Dead

764 182 At every death the blood of hens, goats, and dogs flows in streams. I would like to be able to think and say with some Europeans that all these sacrifices are an honor paid to the shades of the deceased and the ancestors, but that is impossible for me. Not the slightest sacrifice is offered to a person's soul on the day of death or the day of burial. The Negroes are logical in their beliefs; the soul does not leave the body until after burial, and a dead person has no right to a sacrifice until he is in Lahara, or the world of spirits. Prayers are undoubtedly said. Objects which belonged to the deceased or were used in paying the final respects to him are destroyed and placed as saraka at the corner of land formed by paths that cross. But nothing in all this would be a sacrifice, bloody or bloodless in Bambara eyes (1).

[761] 1. Very rarely, a dead person is thought to have caused a Negro's death. If the sorcerer asserts that a deceased individual is the cause of a death, a sacrifice is made to him, but it is made to quiet him because he is a murderer, and not at all because he is dead.

764 182 761 And to whom are they directed, all these hecatombs and streams of blood? I already said, in the chapter where I discussed sickness and death, that a Bambara never dies a natural death. Always he is the victim of poison, of a gnâma or of a djiné, or -- 80 times out of 100 -- a powerful fetish, such as a Komo, Kono, Nama, Nia, or Douga, has caused him to perish. At every death one or another of the following expressions is on all lips: "Souba ta no do, that is the way the souba act"; -- "keroti kér'a la, the poison of the fetishes was thrown at him"; -- "dounkono dir'a ma, he has been given poison"; -- "Komo, Kono, or Nama, etc., sera a ma, the Komo, Kono, or /216/ Nama

764 762 761 has reached him"; -- "djinéou no do, the djiné are the cause of it"; -- "a fa gnâma do, it is his father's gnâma"; -- "boli y'a fa, a boli killed him."

Thus, all the sacrifices which are made on the occasion of a death are directed to the fetishes which are thought to be murderers, and if a deceased member of the family or of a family of strangers gets a slight trickle of blood, that is because on the word of a sorcerer he is guilty. When it is thought that the deceased was the victim of poured poison (dounkono) or korti (poison of the fetishes), thrown sorcery, there is recourse to the diviners and sorcerers to ascertain what invisible being must be soothed and what sacrifice should be uttered. If a gnâma is involved, a sacrifice to a fetish is often prescribed to ensure its protection, but to the gnâma itself a plain saraka, with or without bloodshed, is offered. These saraka are seldom made to the Supreme Being Alla; they are offered to the lesser djiné genii that run around the village and like to rest in the da-n-koun in among the gnâma.

3. Respects Paid to the Uncircumcised

766 [304] Few honors are rendered at death to the uncircumcised and unexcised; such persons are not really Bambara, for they lack the tribal mark. The head of the village and his council ascertain that the death has occurred and, depending on the order received from the diviners, a sacrifice is offered or a saraka placed. The people of the village come to offer their condolences to the bereaved family, and when the grave has been dug, two or three youths bury the corpse without further ceremony.

The father wears mourning for a whole day, and for at least three days the mother grieves in her hut with a few women friends, her neighbors. A barbaric custom also decrees that if the deceased is an unweaned infant its big toe must be broken, in the presence of its mother, and many fathers do more. They mark it with a knife on the forehead, the nape of the neck, the shoulders, the arms; they cut the upper lip or the lobe of an ear. This procedure always makes a deep impression on a mother, especially if she has given birth when

766 young, and since custom demands that she take advantage of her marriage without delay and conceive as soon as possible, she may give birth to an infant bearing a mark or /217/ the appearance of a mark made on the corpse of its older brother. Such an event contributes more than a little toward strengthening the Bambara belief in the reincarnation of souls. This belief is even one of the reasons why infants at the breast are buried in the inner court and sometimes in the mother's hut, and are very seldom taken to the cemetery (1).

[775] 1. The soul leaves the body after burial. The soul of a child must take on flesh again in the womb of its mother, and she must conceive as soon as possible. When an infant is buried in the court or the hut, its soul does not have to roam and cannot mistake the family.

764 The respects paid to the circumcised and the excised vary a little according to the age and status of the individuals; it might be said that there is no burial without some particular, characteristic little feature. To give as accurate an idea of the proceedings as possible, I have divided the burials into four categories: first, that of old people; second, that of heads of families; third, that of married persons; and fourth, that of the unmarried. After a word concerning the burial of pregnant women or those dying in childbirth, I will speak of the sacrifices made to the fetishes, of the respects paid to initiates of koré, or koté, and I will close this chapter with a description of the burial of the excommunicated and of the way the dead are worshipped.

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4. Burials of the Circumcised, Old People, Heads of Families, Married and Unmarried Persons, Pregnant Women

Burials of the First Category, Those of Old People

[388] When I speak of old people I mean every Bambara (man or
woman) who has grandchildren and so is a grandfather or grandmother.
[224 When such an old person dies, gunpowder speaks and the shooting is
575] even quite heavy if the deceased belongs to the association of hunters
or there is an initiate of that sect (2) among his children. The chief
764 202 slave or, if there is none, a trusted man runs to notify the headman
and his council, and all these dignitaries, spear in hand, come to
verify the death and offer the /218/ first condolences to the family.
Couriers at once go off in all directions to notify members of the
family and friends. The person sent to married children is usually
the one who was best man and sometimes the fourouboloma tigi
(guardian of the wedding gifts) -- at the marriage. He carries out his
mission with tact and delicacy. He first notifies the husband /of a
daughter/ who summons his legal wife and orders her to go and take
care of her father, who is seriously ill. So she leaves her house knowing
nothing, and at least keeping a remnant of hope in her heart.
It is only when she is on the way that she learns the sad news.

764 [844] While everyone is running right and left, the women wash the body with an aromatic plant called sou kola (1). They dress it in

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2. Hunters (douzo) all belong to a special sect. In order to enter it, a man must have passed his tests and killed a deer. The hunter has a special costume. See pp. 140 ff.

1. Basil, a labiata, ocymum album and febrifugum.

764 white clothes or wrap it in a shroud, and when they have finished preparing it, they lay it in the middle of the dwelling on a coarse mat (called tjékala or sometimes kara) which is covered with a fine mat in which it will be wrapped to be carried to the grave. Many times, too, a heavy stone, used to grind sorghum, is laid on the abdomen of the corpse, doubtless to keep it from swelling. The women then cover themselves with white cloths, bed covers if nothing else is available; then they sit on their tiny stools and mourn and weep.

The eldest in the family, the new gouatigi (head of the family) also has much to do. /Note the assumption throughout that the old person deceased was also a family head. - Ed./ He consults the sorcerers, places saraka or has them placed, sacrifices, and he does not rest until the diviners have indicated to him the guilty one, the fetish who is the assassin. Dressed in white, he then goes to sit in the b'lon or at the door of the b'lon (the entry hut), and the headman and his council as well as neighbors and friends from the village and from neighboring villages come to pay their respects and express their sympathy.

All these people behave correctly; they talk in low tones and avoid laughter, and the monotony of the silence is broken by the cries of the women. As soon as they come in sight of the village, they throw white cloths over their heads and their cries grow ever louder until at last they are in the hut /219/ of the deceased. There they stop crying, dry their tears, and immediately begin to clap their hands, beat a gourd inverted in a conari full of water, and sing of the honors and achievements of the deceased.

[761] Indeed, there is nothing sad about the death of an old man; he has finished to the end the cycle of his existence, and it is in good taste to rejoice. The grandchildren of the deceased are full of joy, for their great-uncles and uncles give them a ba (800 cowrie shells); they are allowed to take a fat hen from the hen house (often even a billy or nanny goat from the grandfather's stable), and they are made [534] to dance to the sound of xylophones, drums, and triangles (kingé). This dance of the grandchildren is held before the first djansa (1).

1. A kind of alms given to the players of instruments and to the children.

764 during the night that precedes the burial in front of the corpse which is displayed in the court, and again during the night that follows the burial. The djansa is performed once in the morning and once in the afternoon for three days running. The members of the family, men and women, arrive in Indian file, singing in low tones; they form a ring and circle to the sound of the music. From time to time they throw out a few cowrie shells, and the children, who have come in large numbers for the occasion, scramble after them. On leaving, each places his offering on the ground near the chief musician.

At the cemetery near a fresh grave many feathers, a remnant of ashes, and a few small, carefully picked bones are to be seen. One imagines a sacrifice, but there has been none. The youths who dig the grave receive a hen in payment, and it is a gift from the deceased. For this reason, incidentally, it is given to them dead, after an old man has cracked its skull against the wall of the b'lon, or entry hut.

The grave is dug; the children of the deceased are all present (2), and he is about to be buried. The corpse is wrapped in a mat
343 and then laid under the goua, a coarse shelter that casts a little shade at the entrances of the dwellings, and through the mediation of the one in charge of the funeral ceremony, almost always a sorcerer, those present pay their respects /220/ to the deceased and offer him a few cowrie shells. Children and grandchildren, each in turn, accuse themselves of lack of consideration and respect in their conduct and ask pardon. Strangers also come and beg the deceased not to be angry, not to wish them ill, and all one hears is the voice of the herald crying: "Pardon, do not be angry, we loved you and respected you, be happy during your stay in Lahara (kingdom of invisible beings)."

2. All the children and grandchildren must be there, and in fact they all come unless it is absolutely impossible to do so. Except for a case of emergency, people sometimes wait one to three days to allow everyone to be present.

764 This ceremony, as beautiful as it is touching, ends with this prayer: "Give us rain when winter comes, give us a plentiful harvest, a vigorous old age, children and wives, and give us prosperity." [482] Four strong fellows then come and take the corpse on their shoulders and, preceded by children and grandchildren who shout and cry, they carry it to the cemetery at almost a run, and the whole crowd follows them (1). The men line up around the grave, the women place themselves behind them, and the sons of the deceased go down into the grave. They undo the mat, take their father in their arms, and lay him in the niche on his right side, facing east. Then they tear a little of the shroud, or white blouse, of the buried man, and one of those present takes the strip torn off and holds it outside of the grave. [417] The children build an arch above the corpse out of small boards that are sometimes worked and colored, but most frequently out of wood chips (faléma) or large slabs of earth dried in the sun. While they are building, the youths mix mortar to stop up the cracks and thoroughly coat the whole structure. The women clap their hands and then sing in low tones to the sound of the drums.

764 782 When the work is done, the children come out of the grave, and the person in charge of the funeral ceremony comes forward, on his shoulder a hoe with the blade hafted in reverse and in his hand a gourd of water. He leans over the grave. The drums stop beating, the women are silent, and he pours water on the head of the buried man three times, saying: "See /221/ this water, do not be angry, forgive us, give us rain in winter and a plentiful harvest (1). Whether

1. In Bani country I have seen the spear of the deceased carried with great ceremony. The oldest son from time to time threw a few cowrie shells onto the corpse, and the crowd rushed to get them. This djansa is seldom performed, and the custom is not at all general.

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1. In the eyes of the Negroes this ceremony is not a bloodless sacrifice but a simple prayer; and the water is poured to give the words greater emphasis, since in their eyes it is the element without which nothing lives nor can live.

the wind blows from the west or the east, from the north or the south, may it be favorable to us. Give us a long life, many descendants, wives and prosperity." The audience answers, "Amina -- o dé ka ké (let it be so)," and, using hoes hafted in reverse so that the curve of the blade is on the outside, the youths fill the grave. The drums beat again, and the women clap their hands and improvise a song whose words usually can be reduced to these: "Our father is dead, we have been told he is dead. But he will come back! Young men, fill the grave well, so that no souba, no hyena, nor any wild animal can take away the corpse."

764 When the grave is filled, the one who is holding the strip of cloth attached to the blouse, or the shroud, of the deceased pulls it toward him until it tears and remains in his hands. This ribbon is a [751] precious relic of which tafo are made; they are a protection from a host of evils, especially throat ailments and gnâma. The coarse mat (tjékala or kara) which was the bed or the seat of the deceased, quite often together with his shoes and the small earthen pot that was his wash basin, are laid on the tomb. If the deceased was a woman, pieces of a gourd, fragments of a hearth, or the stick for stirring gruel (to-n-galama) are thrown onto the tomb instead of the wash basin. The pliant mat in which the corpse was wrapped is often given to a friend. The latter goes and burns it outside the village, or before entering his own village if he is a foreigner; he says: "Here is a mat on which no one will die from now on."

[777] 764 782 Wednesday and Saturday are two unlucky days. On these days strangers never present their condolences to the bereaved family, and if a burial takes place, a small white chicken is killed and given to the deceased so that he can placate the spirits as soon as the grave

764 782 has been filled and his soul goes to Lahara. In the eyes of the Negroes, this act has none of the attributes of a sacrifice; it is the price of the right to enter Lahara and is given by the children to /222/ their father's soul. Moreover, they give it to him alive, and it is slipped into the grave at the moment when the last small board, the last wood chip, or the last earthen slab making up the root is set in place (1).

1. A nest egg is slipped in instead of a hen if the deceased was a woman.

764 At the end of the ceremony the deceased's dog is killed (2),

[231] 2. If the deceased owned a dog it is always killed unless the old man decided otherwise while he was alive. There are Bambara, especially women, who raise dogs in order to have this honor, and for this reason only.

and the sons-in-law and the brothers-in-law eat to, or millet gruel. [431] When they depart they also receive a rooster or a hen. It is given them in the name of the deceased, and since it is the gift of a dead person, they kill and eat it on the way (3). The fetishes and the genii

[782] 3. This practice, again, is no sacrifice in the eyes of the Negro.

would be displeased if such a gift should arrive in the village alive, and whoever became guilty of such a crime would become the plaything of most of the gnâma and could dig his grave.

The Bambara do not place any kind of food either on or in the grave. But for three days in the evening, at nightfall, a dish of tô (gruel) and a little fresh water is placed on the gouâ so that the soul of the old man may satisfy his hunger and quench his thirst.

715 The great mourning lasts at least three days, and during all this time the people of the village rest (4). From all sides people come running in large numbers to be present at the djansa and to keep company with the new head of the family and this is understandable, for however little the family esteems itself, d'lo flows in streams, and 273 the Negroes dread neither travel nor the sun when there is the prospect of gorging themselves with millet beer. At the end of the great mourning, the great sanga fo (5), there is a crowd at the home of the family of the deceased, for all the friends are there to pay their respects for the last time to the departed old man and to install his successor. The women grind false-cedar bark, soak it in water, and spread it in the /223/ hut of the deceased. Armed with a broom of dry straw, they sweep from floor to roof, gather the dirt in a worn-out gourd and throw it all onto the da-n-koun (1) of the quarter. To do this they form a procession; an old hag marches in front, brandishing the broom, and, half dancing and half walking, they all shout:

"Fari ô, fari doun ka di

4. For distinguished religious heads (gnéna-n-sonnaba), for example, there are often eight days of rest if the season permits. In the winter this is impossible because there is urgent work.

5. Sanga fo means "to go and give one's condolences to a family on the occasion of a death."

1. Da-n-koun, corner of land formed by paths that cross, hence outside the village.

765 Malakou, salakou
Fari ô, fari doun ka di." (2)

2. A song heard in Bani country. Since these songs are often improvised, they differ from one region to another.

Translation: "Ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans (fari) and to eat all one's fill, ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans!"

The excised daughters and granddaughters of the deceased wear mourning for about eight to ten days. During this time they stay in the b'lon, or entry hut, and spin cotton. The only noteworthy fact [513, 514] is that they all sleep in the same hut and attend to the wants of nature at set times, going to the bush evening and morning in Indian file with white veils on their heads. For the whole moon following the [292] death, the wife (the wives if the old man was polygamous) of the deceased wear sandals of goatskin and go out dressed only in white.

718 562 428 At the end of the moon, the wives of the deceased become the property of the head of the family, who makes them his own or gives them to his circumcised children (3). Some freedom is left to them,

3. Brothers succeed brothers. If there are no brothers, the oldest son inherits. If the deceased is younger than the brother who inherits, the latter possesses the wives but may not enjoy them. If the heir is the son of the deceased, all the father's or grandfather's wives belong to him, and he may enjoy them all except his mother.

for they can ransom themselves if they wish, and for the old and worn, difficulties are soon smoothed away. If the new family head is without a brother and without children or if he is older than the deceased,

slipped into the grave.

Burials of the Third Category, Those of Married Persons Who are not Heads of Families

The death of married persons who do not have the honor of being gouatigi, or head of a family, is not announced by a gunshot unless they belong to the sect of hunters. For them there is no arch of small boards, chips of wood, or dried bricks; a few tree branches are thrown onto the corpse, and the grave is completed. At the removal of the body the prayer is recited, but no one offers cowrie shells and there is no djansa (2). Depending on their sex, they receive a white hen or an egg, if the burial /225/ takes place on a Saturday or a Wednesday or if they die without a child, and their dog, faithful companion in travels in the bush, is not killed (1).

2. I have seen the djansa held even for young men who were circumcised and not married, but these were exceptions and did not reflect a general practice.

1. It is not a general practice to offer gruel, or to.

Burials of the Fourth Category, Those of the Unmarried

Circumcised men and excised women who are unmarried are offered primarily tears. They have not completed the cycle of their existence, they have hardly begun, and at the death of one of them the whole village is in consternation. The gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, (the religious head), offers his condolences and withdraws into his hut; he does not appear at any of the funeral ceremonies.

764 There is seldom a djansa for unmarried persons, and the corpse lying in the grave does not even get branches to protect it from the earth with which it is covered. Not having had children, the young man receives his live hen and the girl her egg.

Burials of Women Who Were Pregnant or Died in Childbirth

766 845 The death of a woman during pregnancy or while giving birth to her child stirs the whole female population. To appease the spirits, drive away the gnâma, and protect the village from another misfortune of this kind, all the excised women go to cut branches of karité (Bassia parkii) or dogora. As soon as the deceased is carried to the grave, they burst out of the village, crying and weeping. Three times they go back toward the village, waving their branches, and call out "hou" three times in shouts that disturb and chill you.

[326] At the edge of the grave, or most often in the grave itself, a blacksmith -- the surgeon of the occasion -- removes the child, tells its sex, and lays it near the mother (2). During the operation the

766 845 847 2. If the deceased has already been delivered, the stillborn child is wrapped in the mother's mat. The operation is performed for one who has not been delivered, less to save the child's life than to spare the deceased the disgrace of the egg. A newborn child deprived of its mother is condemned to death. It is not strangled, of course, but no woman wants to give it her breast, and the little thing dies of hunger. If a woman were to nurse it out of compassion, the spirits and gnâma would take revenge by

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causing her own child to die. A mother who has lost her child may adopt an orphan and give it her breast.

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crowd /226/ always withdraws, and the blacksmith remains alone with his assistant. When the work is done, they wash their hands on the grave itself, and the operator makes the customary prayer: "Whether the wind comes from the east or the west, from the north or the south, etc., " (see above, p. 244).

5. Sacrifices to Fetishes on the Occasion of a Death

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Although at the time of death there is no sacrifice to the soul of the deceased nor to the shades of ancestors, blood flows nevertheless. It even flows in torrents for the Bambara are not satisfied with reddening the family boli; they stain with blood all the boli fetishes they believe to be guilty. Nor do initiates of the sects forget their deceased brothers, and for a friend who was initiated the same day as they themselves, they cannot refuse the boli a hen and a kola nut. If the deceased is the master of a fetish, its priest, or an influential person on its staff, all the initiates comply, and the sacrifice becomes general. The initiates do more; in the evening they take the god out of its temple, and all night long they mingle their wild animal shouts with the blasts of sacred horns and trumpets blown by heralds. The latter very often wear hideous horned masks on their heads and are dressed in cloaks of feathers.

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Eighty times out of a hundred, death is attributed to a powerful boli which is taking vengeance, punishing or rewarding, and in the environs of Ségou the Komo, Nia, Kono, Nama, and Douga are the ones who have the most deaths to their credit. When the murdering boli is known, the entire village is notified; the trousers, blouse and bed cover of the deceased, or the tafé (1) if it is a woman, are hung

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(1) Tafé: a rectangular piece of cloth which women wind around their bodies to cover themselves.

761 on the branches of the sacred tree under which the fetish dwells and
782 at the door of its temple, and the members of its staff know how to
764 extol their god. Under these conditions they are without pity; they
bleed the bereaved family white, so that the tax demanded by our
778 circle officers (2) is nothing compared to the tax that they have to pay. /227/

782 What do they not have to give for a sacrifice to the Komo, for
764 example? The whole house is turned upside down to find goats, dogs,
kola nuts, roosters, and hens, gnâma-n-kou (Amormum melegueta),
[824] and djalakouma (a plant whose name I do not know). The family needs all this, cost what it may, and if they have to buy it all they have to pay double or triple the value of the objects, for others make profits from their necessity. First a dog or a goat is sacrificed to appease the fetish and pay respects to it. Then to find out whether it is satisfied and its hatred assuaged, two red roosters and two hens with golden necks bite the dust. A bara (1) (gourd) full of gnâma-n-kou fruit and another full of djalakouma are offered. One portion of these fruits is used for holy water (2); the other is sold for the benefit

[651] 2. The head tax is 3. 50 francs per person and 5 francs for the servants of Europeans. Here France is surely not a "tyrant," but a tender mother.

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834] 1. This bara (a large pumpkin /courge/ with a small opening at the top) can hold from 18 to 20 liters of liquid. The true gourd is half of a pumpkin.

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824 2. The holy water of the Komo is made of roots and leaves of the djalakouma and the fruit of the

782 764 of the staff, which lives off the altar. For the mere act of having killed a dog or a goat, of which they receive a good share of the meat, they get a fee consisting of a basket of sorghum (18 to 20 kilograms) and 1,600 cowrie shells (about 2 francs).

Since initiates of the fetish are the only ones who can touch the corpse and lay it in its final home, they receive 8,000 to 10,000 cowrie shells (about 8 to 10 francs) on that score. At the end of the sangafo (3) the god's retinue go and sweep the hut of the deceased, purify it with holy water, and drive out the last gnâma of the murdering Komo, and for this five fine hens are slaughtered. As payment for their trouble, the family also gives them five to six meters of cloth and 8 to 10 ba (4) (about 8 to 10 francs); 50 francs do not cover the cost.

Fortunately, the family does not bear all the expenses. Friends [431] help a little, and everyone brings his offering: from one person they get a /228/ hen, from another a débé (40 cowrie shells) or a kémé (80 cowrie shells). Nevertheless, they bear most of the cost, and [426] the fetishes are one of the chief reasons for that bonding of children (1)

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782 764 824 gnâma-n-kou or the na-yanka (I do not know the name of this plant), put to boil and soak in water. To make it effective, at least two kola nuts are offered to the fetish and five hens are sacrificed to it.

3. Sangafo, to go and offer condolences to the relatives of a deceased."

[802] 4. A ba is worth 800 cowrie shells or about 1 franc. (The Bambara count by 40 and 80, and not by 50 and 100. 40, débé; 80, kémé.)

4: Henry--254 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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1. A bonded person works for his food, just like a slave. His condition is worse than that of the slave, for in addition to his food, the latter receives a bit of cloth to cover himself, but the bonded person does not. A slave can ransom himself for a sum varying between 100 and 200 francs, and at present he can escape without fear of being pursued and without paying anything at all. A bonded person must pay the amount of his bond to the last cowrie shell, whether he escapes or not. There are Negroes who, for a certain amount, will give you one of their children for one or two years. These children are not paid since the amount has already been paid, but besides food they get clothing and some gratuities beyond the payment for their work. Lacking the proper words, the Bambara call this also, "bonding" even though it is basically a real "domestic service." When the agreed time has passed, these young people go back to their homes without any payment being made. Even though the Negroes call this bonding, they make a distinction: a) slavery is a stigma which always remains; b) true bonding is a stigma that does not disappear unless the bonded person himself pays the price of his bonding; c) the bonding which is called "domestic service" does not involve any stigma; they are workers and not menial laborers.

764 which is nothing less than disguised slavery. In the presence of a
782 European the Negroes like to complain that he cannot meet their taxes,
but they should not be listened to too closely -- 99 times out of 100
they are lying! Let us not make war against the military or civil
official responsible for levying the tax, which is not at all exorbitant;
let us think before all about the boli and their staffs, a band of persons
without principles or law, human vultures with greedy fingers who
attack the weak, the widows and orphans, terrify them with their
threats of death. They do not leave these people in peace until they
have taken everything: hens, goats, dogs, cowrie shells, sorghum,
and often freedom.

6. Respects Paid to Initiates of the Koré, or Koté

794 The initiates of a fetish are never indifferent to the death of a
766 brother, and they hasten to find a hen and a kola nut with which to
prove their attachment to the deceased and to assuage the wrath of
the god. The sect of koré does things in a grand, even in a ceremonious,
manner, if there is any ceremony in those nocturnal orgies where
d'lo, or millet beer, is drunk to /229/ the point of senselessness, and
where lascivious and obscene dances are danced.

When a young man who is koré dé (son of koré, initiate of the
[778] sect) dies, relatives and friends redden with blood the sacred tree and
the kara, a perforated board painted red and white, which is the genie's
emblem. Although there is general mourning in the village, tears
are dried when evening comes, and for three nights there is nameless
[785] bedlam and endless shouting in the kore tou (the sacred grove) as
initiates flagellate themselves, burn their backs with torches, tear
their bodies with thorns, abandon themselves to their barbaric dances,
[534] and lose themselves in lewd gestures in front of the dénouba (drums
measuring from one to one and a half meters) and the kingé (a triangle,
an iron tube, which is hung from the thumb of the left hand and which
is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger).

For the old people who are granted not a tear nor a regret but for whom there are dances and songs, fellow initiates come in large numbers, and during the night preceding the burial, they make a

794 766 bedlam and racket in front of the corpse, which is displayed under the great trees that shade the entrance of the village. That is a most lugubrious and macabre rite! After the burial for three successive nights, the same respects are paid to the deceased in front of the fetish tree in the koré tou (sacred grove), and if the deceased was a korétigi (head of the sect of koré), a gnéna-n-sonnaba (head of the village and priest of the dasiri), a bolitigi (master of a boli), a flélikéla (famous sorcerer), a gouatigi (family head), a souroukou tigi or a korodouga tigi (head of a group in the sect (1)), they often continue their orgies for eight days running, gorging themselves with d'lo (beer), and getting drunk.

794 769 The anniversaries of the old people, those who had fame, authority, and especially authority in the sect, are observed regularly every year, and on that day there is a memorial to members of the family who belonged to the sect. Youths in large numbers come from all directions to abandon themselves to barbaric dances, and since beer flows in streams, the drinking bout that takes place is indescribable. /230/ Only a family reduced to the blackest poverty would neglect to offer d'lo (millet beer).

794 769 185 On the morning that follows these dances in honor of a deceased koré dé, a saraka is placed with great ceremony at the dankoun ba (1) of the village. It consists of the remains of the torches of the tatougoula (2), the bent, broken, and unraveled whips of the bisatjila (3), the thorn brooms of the woni sama (4), and finally the leafy branch

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1. See my chapter on the koré, or koté.

1. Dankoun, a corner of land formed by two paths that cross; dankoun ba, "great dankoun," the dankoun most popular in the village.

2. Tatougoula, those who dance with fire.

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3. Bisatjila, those who flagellate themselves.

4. Woni sama, those who scratch themselves with thorns.

used by the korodouga (5) to drive away the sparks crackling on the

5. Korodouga, clowns, storytellers /griots/ of the sect.

backs of the tatougoula.

7. Burial of the Excommunicated

766 Those with sores, lepers, and persons killed by a fetish who did not accept their sacrifice may be said to be excommunicated. No [illegible] adult who dies without hair on his head or body has the right to the honor of a Bambara burial, and he is given that of lepers.

A leper is never buried in the common cemetery; he is sent far off into the bush to a separate place. The more usual custom, actually, is to slip the corpse into a hollow baobab (Adansonia digitata) with a small, live pullet as companion -- or an egg, if the deceased is a girl. The same fate befalls a bald person.

The reason for this custom is that this class of people have been abandoned by the Creator and the spirits, all of whom scorn them and withdraw from them. If ever the ground where ancestors rest should receive the remains of one of these accursed ones, their bones would shake with disgust. Moreover, they would take revenge for having to rest near people who during their lifetime were without hair; they would be deaf to every prayer and would refuse every sacrifice. The village and the entire region there would suffer a total lack of rain, a drought without any equal, in short, a famine with all its horrors. /231/

766 The victim of a boli may also become for the village and the region an impure, base creature that has lived all too long. This happens when the murdering, or supposedly murdering, fetish three times refuses the sacrifices offered to appease it (1). When this occurs the whole family, men, women and children, must still their cries and must not weep, however great their sorrow may be. Family heads abandon themselves to sacrifices, the initiates of the sect do the same, and everybody thanks the boli for having caused the death of a person who deserved only scorn and should never have lived, and begs never to meet such a fate nor to be like him.

766 194 When the grave has been dug (a plain grave without a niche), the men of the murdering boli (2) come and wrap the corpse in a mat.

782 1. A sacrifice is not accepted if the hen charged with giving the god's answer dies on its breast with its feet under it, and the kola nut, cut in two, falls on its pulp with the rounded part on top.

2. When a boli has killed someone, it is the men of that boli who come to bury him. It is not always a boli of the village, but sometimes from a distance of one, two, or three days' journey, and if the men of that fetish cannot come at once, e.g., if they are elsewhere burying a man killed by the god, people close the door of the hut in which the corpse lies and wait until the gravediggers choose to arrive. I saw the corpse of a blacksmith left like this for four full days. The sorcerers are the ones who name the boli and the village where it is.

766 794 When they have sewed and tied it well, they take it on their shoulders and head on the double for the exit door. There they stop and without any respect roughly set the body down. Armed with picks they make an opening in the wall of the hut and, seizing the corpse by the feet, they drag it and put it into this opening. Strong hands seize it from the outside, they pull and the others push, and the excommunicated one comes out of his dwelling and appears in the alley or on the square. [482] Four fellows -- sons of the fetish, for they alone are present at these burials -- take him on their shoulders and, running, carry him to the cemetery. At the edge of the grave they put down their load, the initiates give a loud cry, a sort of roar, and they roll him with their feet into his final home. For such people there is not the slightest farewell or prayer, and the grave is filled at once.

In the evening the fetish is brought out, and the initiates abandon [789] themselves to their sacred dances, while the god, in the hands of its priests, /232/ runs about the village and its environs, exorcising. All night long nothing is heard but the bellowing of horns and trumpets and sacred hymns shouted by the crowd, and from a distance one would say they were dull rumblings or the actual cries of wild animals.

8. Worship accorded to the Dead

769 At the death of a Bambara not the slightest sacrifice is directed either to him or to the deceased of the family. However, the worship of the dead is prevalent among the Bambara, althought it cannot be compared to the worship of the genii, especially of the boli. Nevertheless, everyday one can see, at the door of one family or another, a large splash of blood on the wall about a meter from the ground, a brownish octopus one might say, throwing its twisted arms here and there and struggling against a clump of feathers stuck on its back with the juice of a chewed kola nut. Some people have seen in this worship the basis of the Negro religion and, no doubt because they did not know the language and have been unable to give an exact meaning to the words caught by their ears, they have portrayed the Bambara with knife always in hand, ready to slaughter in honor of his relatives. Because they group together all saraka and sacrifices,

769 and do not know the ways and customs of the country, they take for sacrifices to the shades of the ancestors, the sacrifices which are made to the gnéna, or djiné, genii and to the gnâ, or boli, genii.

768 554 Thus, worship of the dead does not have all the scope that people sometimes choose to attribute to it. Moreover, the Bambara revere only those dead who had a little authority on this earth, such as the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or the dougoutigi (village heads, priests of the dasiri), the sotigi (heads of quarters), and the gouatigi (1) (heads of families), and this reverence is given less to the individuals themselves than to the authority they had. /233/

769 The first sacrifice to an ancestor who was a headman is made a year after his death and at the second big festival that follows his death. In order for him to be entitled to a trickle of blood, the sangafo (1) must have been completed, and it ends at the first festival held at the end of the sounkalo (soun, "fast"; kalo, "month"), or Ramadan (2).

1. The gouatigi, head of the family, is called fa, "father." This word "father" should be taken in a broad sense, for to much of the family the gouatigi is a grandfather, a brother, or an uncle. Making a sacrifice to the fa sou (fa, "father"; sou, "corpse") does not mean sacrificing to the father who begot you, to the father of the family, to the one who bore the title of gouatigi. The chief wife of a gnéna-n-sonnaba, sotigi, and gouatigi, like her husband, receives a share of the sacrifice.

1. Sangafo, "to offer condolences on the occasion of a death."

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> 2. The Negroes' great festival is held at the end of Ramadan. They have a second at the festival of the كَبش sheep. The Moslem masters forced them to observe these two festivals, but the Bambara have not adopted a single Moslem rite. They sacrifice to the dasiri, to some djiné genii, and to the dead.

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The great sacrifice to the dead is made at the end of Ramadan and at the festival of the كَبش sheep. The gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, first sacrifices to the b'lon da ba sou (3), those who,

> 3. Sou, "corpses"; b'lon da ba, "of the great b'lon," the great entry hut giving access to the village.

like themselves, were priests of the dasiri and, in a general way, to all those who had some civil or religious authority in the village. All the members of his council are present at this sacrifice. After the libations of millet flour mixed with water and d'lo, or millet beer, a fine white hen (4) is slaughtered, and sometimes a sheep then, two

[822]

> 4. In general sacrifices where the whole population or a whole sect participates, the liturgical color is the primary consideration, and a pullet a day old has as much value as a large rooster. When a victim of the liturgical color cannot be obtained, only water, dégé, and the kola nut are offered.

white kola nuts are offered and, if the sacrifice is accepted, a clump of wool or a few feathers are torn from the victim and stuck onto the

769 782 middle of the splash of blood by means of a bit of chewed kola nut. When the general sacrifice has been made, every member of the council offers his white hen and his kola nut.

When the village has paid its respects to the *blonda ba sou*, the *sotigi* (heads of quarters) gather the *gouatigi* (heads of families) under their jurisdiction, and all these people sacrifice as before to the shades of those who were heads of quarters (5). Each family head then goes back to his home, gathers his children, and sacrifices to the shades of his fathers, to those who, like him, were heads of the family. /234/

The Bambara sacrifice to their ancestors very often; they do so by order of a sorcerer and on any occasions in their lives that are at all important, such as the circumcision or excision of one of their children, a betrothal or a wedding (1), but they do so especially when winter comes and the fields are sown. The sacrifices are simple and individual, and only the people of the house are present; just a hen, with a little *dégé* and a kola nut, comprise the whole expense.

The formula of the sacrifice has no special characteristics. The same ideas are always repeated: "I offer this *dégé*, this *d'lo*, and this hen; it is a sacrifice that I make to you in my name and in the name of my children. Preserve us from the *souba*, from sorcery, and from evil-doers. Favor us, preserve us from sickness, give us wives and healthy children, cause us to have rain in the winter, health to work our fields, and a fine harvest."

5. Only hens are slaughtered. There are always libations of *dégé* (millet flour mixed with water) and of *d'lo* (beer), and offerings of kola nuts.

1. Many Bambara do not sacrifice even on these occasions (circumcision, wedding, betrothal) but prefer to call on the family *boli*, which they dread more. In the winter everybody sacrifices to the shades of ancestors.

4: Henry--263 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

769 The sacrifice to the dead is most often made on the doorsill of
782 the entry hut, and a splash of blood is spread on the wall on each side
778 of the door, about a meter and half from the ground. Many families
also have an altar for sacrificing to the dead in their main b'lon; it
is the kârâ, an earthen bas-relief depicting a man and a woman.
It is all crudely made and has no human qualities about it. Nevertheless, one can guess what the Negroes wanted to depict, for although the woman is without mouth, ears, nose, or eyes, just like her mate, she is always adorned with two fine breasts.

4: Henry--264 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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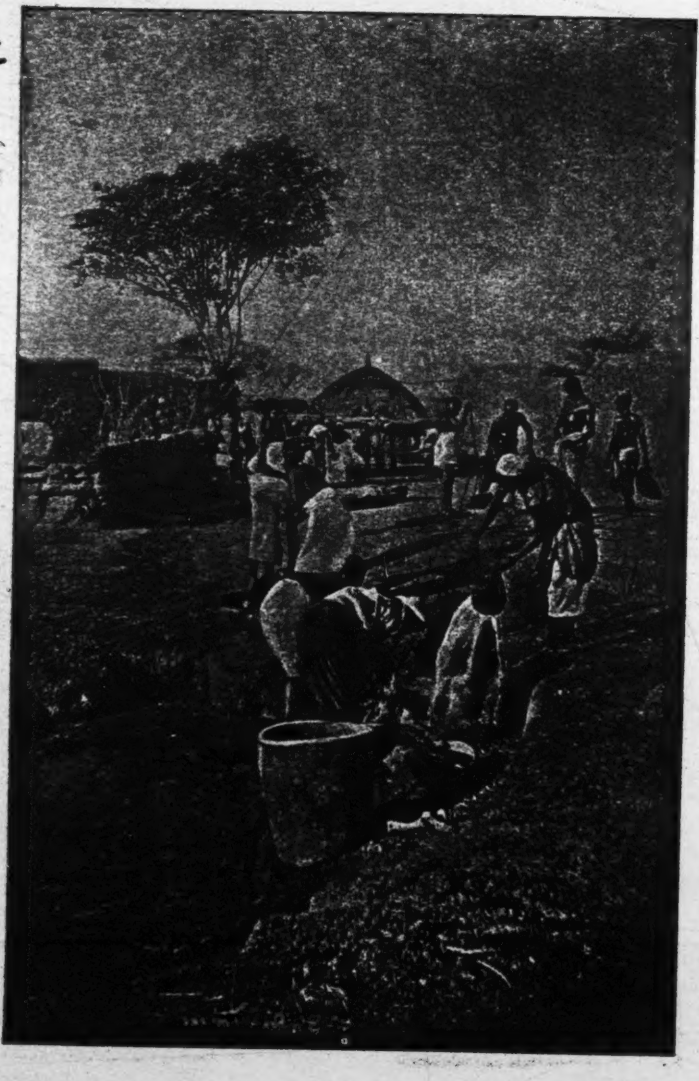
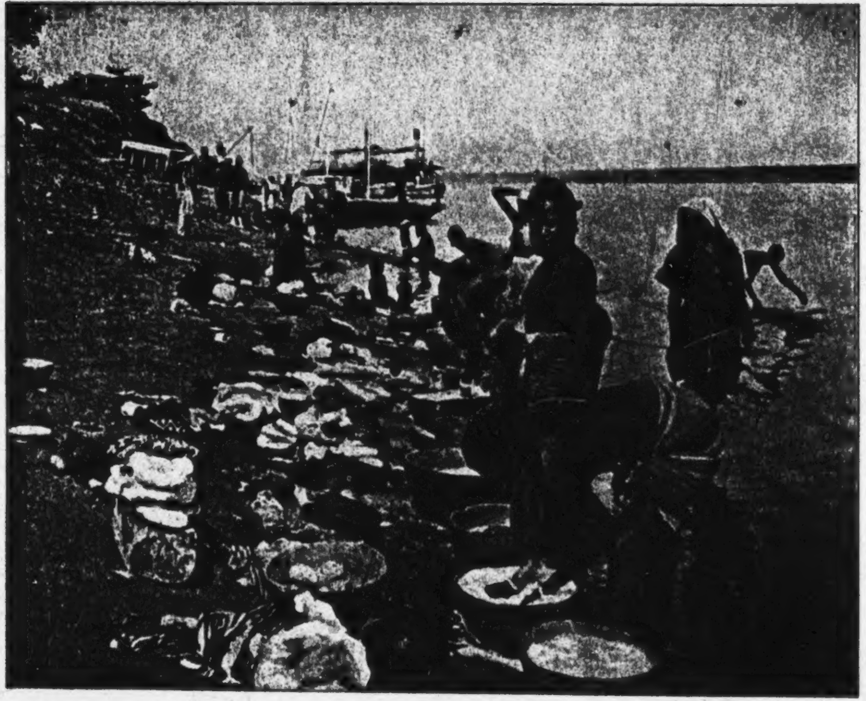


At the edge of the well, in Bambara country.

4: Henry--265 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



The Ségou bank of the Niger.

4: Henry--266 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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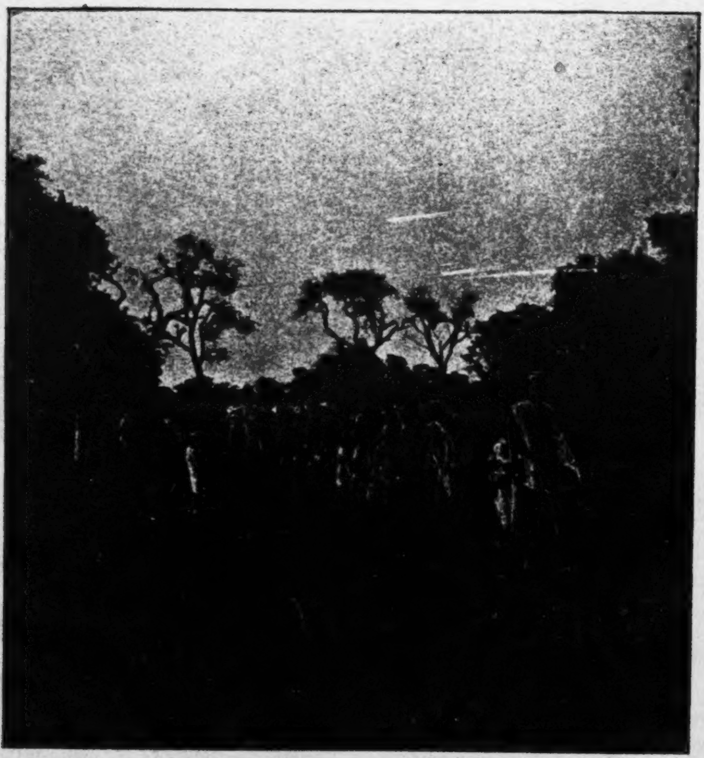
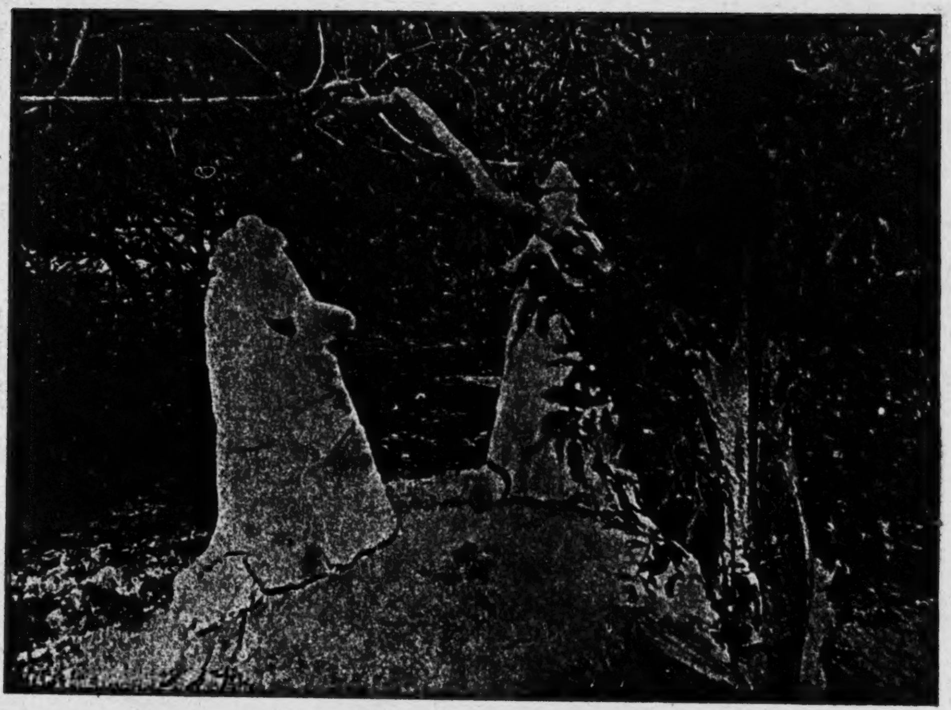


Wedding procession of the caterpillars at Banankourou in July, 1908.

4: Henry--267 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



A fetish in the bush; the dwelling of a djiné genie (near Bamako).

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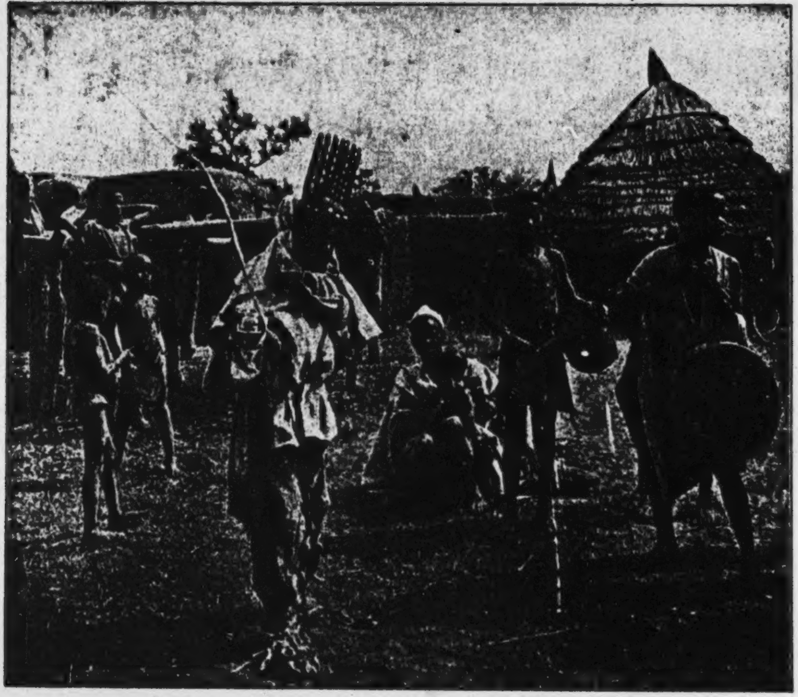

Sacred dance in honor of the N'tomo, the children's fetish.
/sub-caption: The hut with a conical roof, on the right, is the temple of the boli fetish Nia./

4: Henry--268 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

4: Henry--269 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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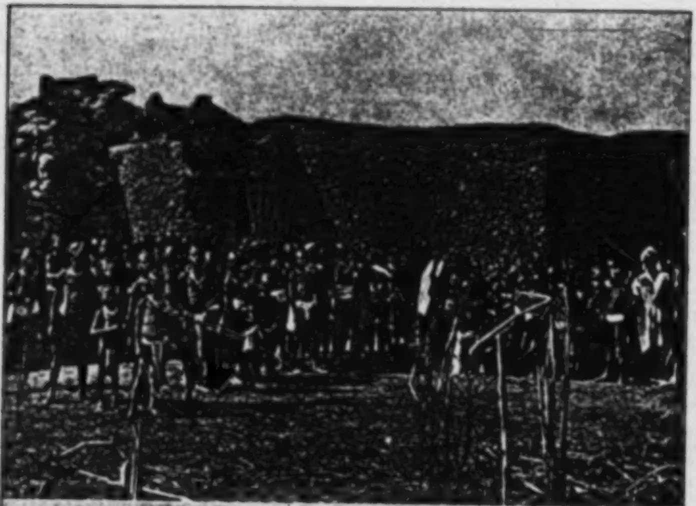

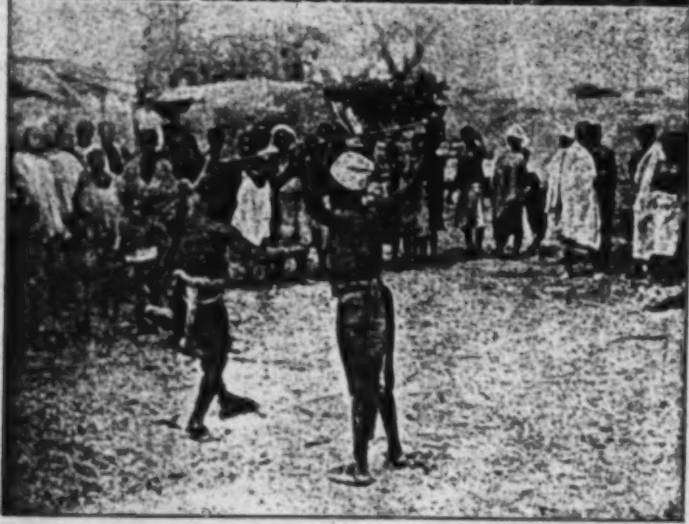

Festival of the N'tomo.
Flagellation of children.

Above: Festival of N'tomo.
Before the flagellation.

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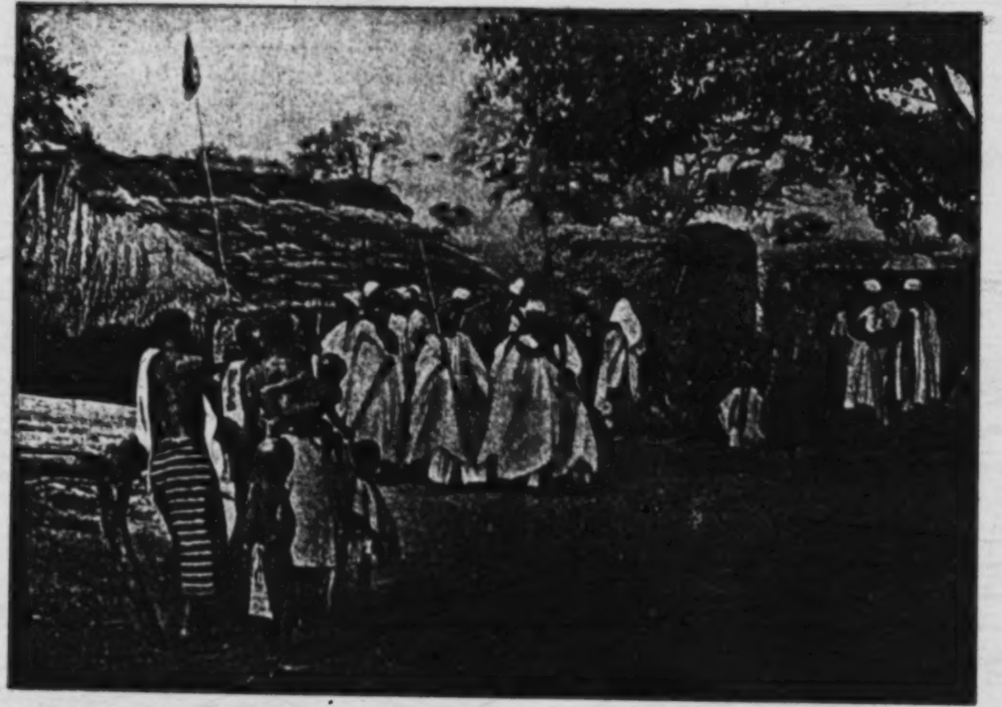

Festival of the N'golo fetish: An outing of the to-n-de, of the association of the fla-n-to.

4: Henry--270 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

4: Henry--271 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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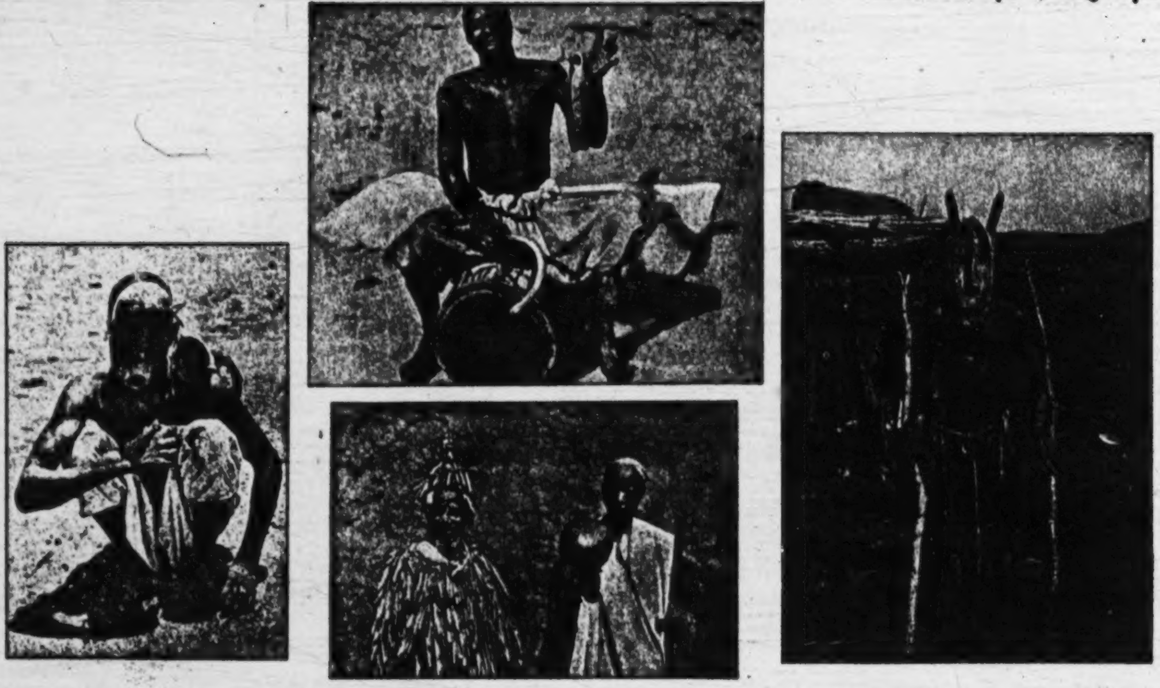

Left: Souba (monkey), society of the Koré. Above: Denouba (the big drum) and kinge (a triangle), society of the Koré. Center: Head korodouga and his herald, society of the Koré. Right: Souroukou (hyena), society of the Koré.

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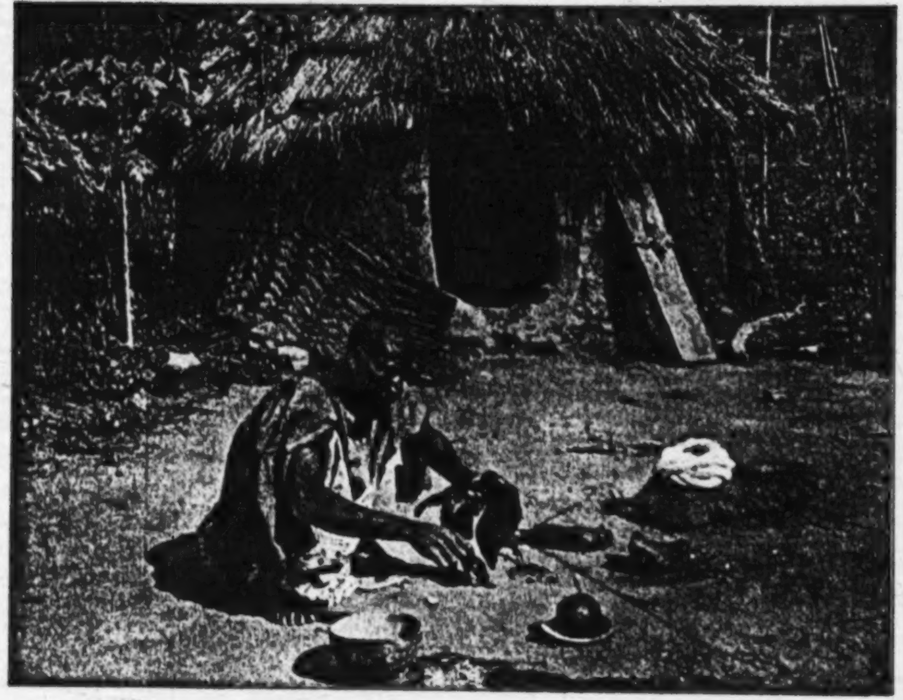

Sacrifice of a hen to the "family *boli*."

4: Henry--272 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

4: Henry--273 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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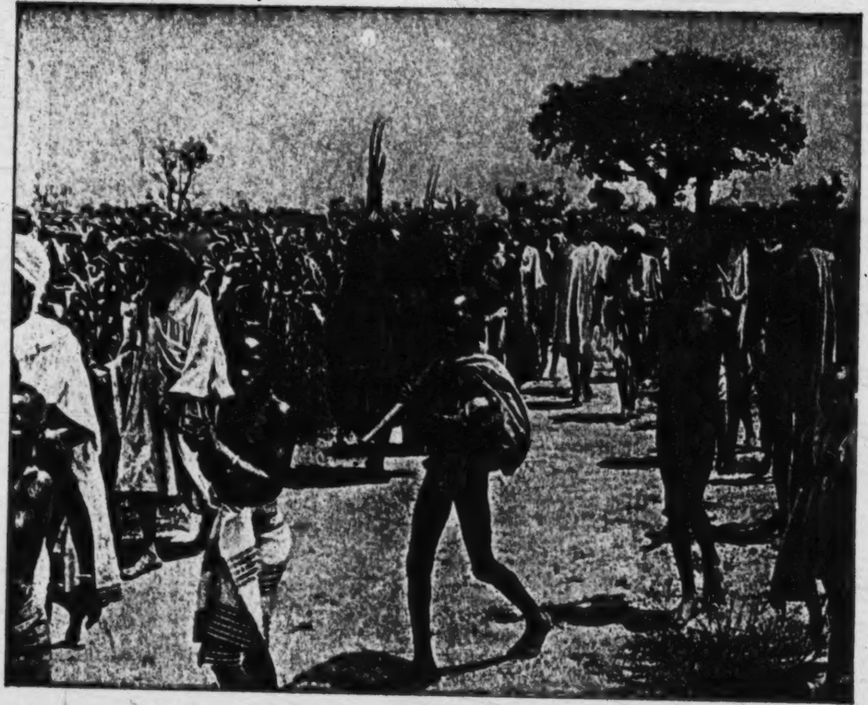

Procession of the Tji wara: the young people meet at the field to work under the eyes of two companions dressed in the insignia of the fetish of work.

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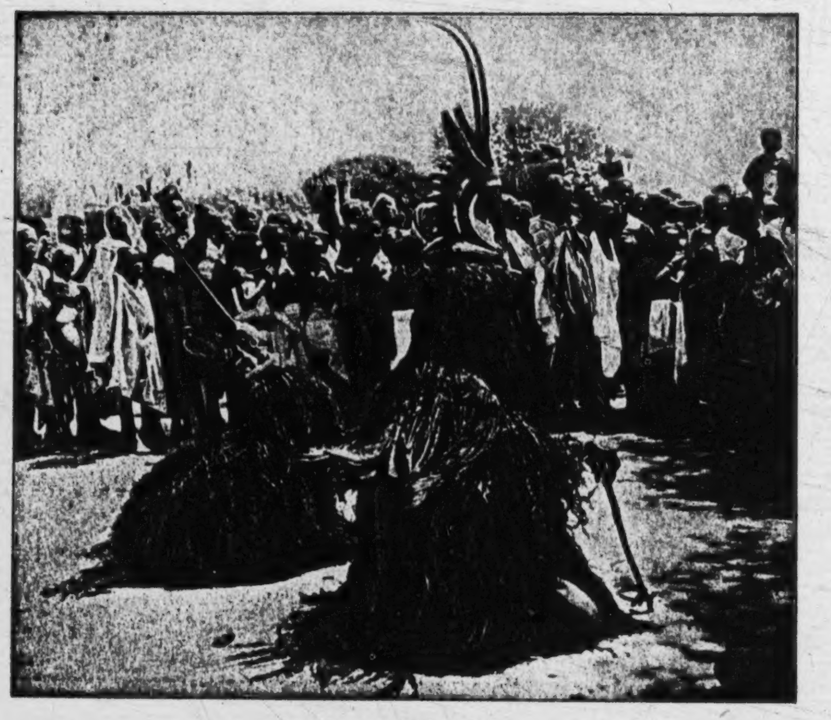
4: Henry--274 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Sacred dance in honor of the Tji wara fetish, the genie of work.

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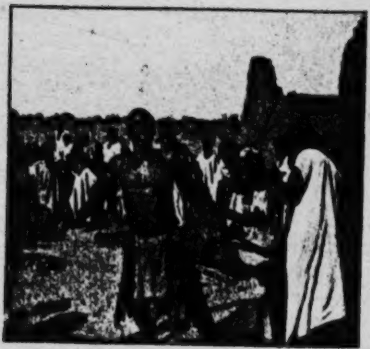
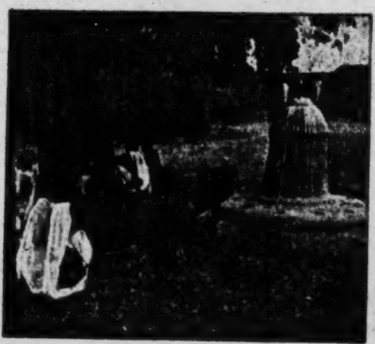
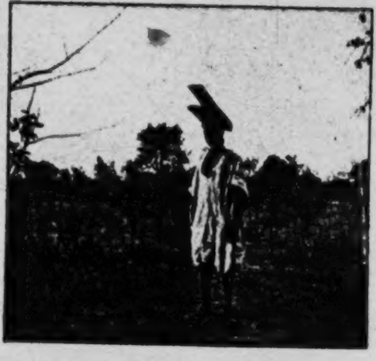


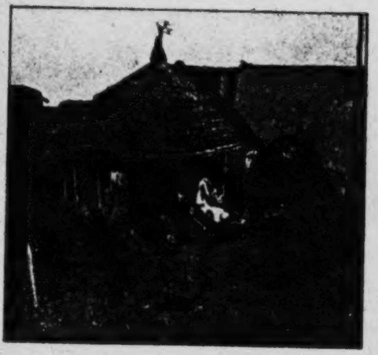
Sacred dance of the mourou kalatigi (sacrificer) after a sacrifice accepted by the boli M'bie Djougou at Talakala.





Mask of the boli fetish Komo.

Above: Pillar of the Magnan, a powerful boli fetish.



Temple of Nia, a powerful boli.

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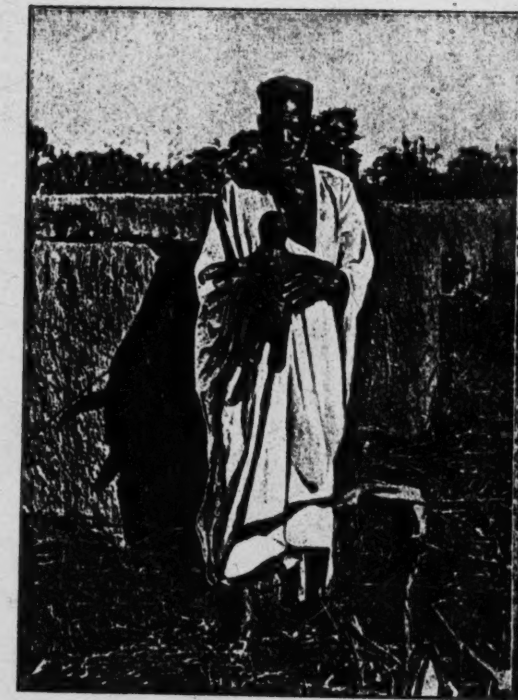
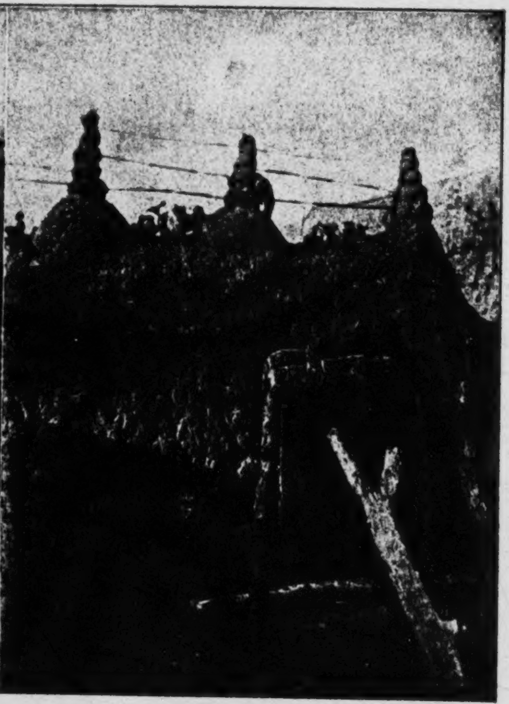
4: Henry--276 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Zanké and the boli fetish, Kono.



Temple of the Kono fetish.

4: Henry--277 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910
FA8 Bambara FA8

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The Nama fetish.

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4: Henry--278 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910
FA8 Bambara FA8

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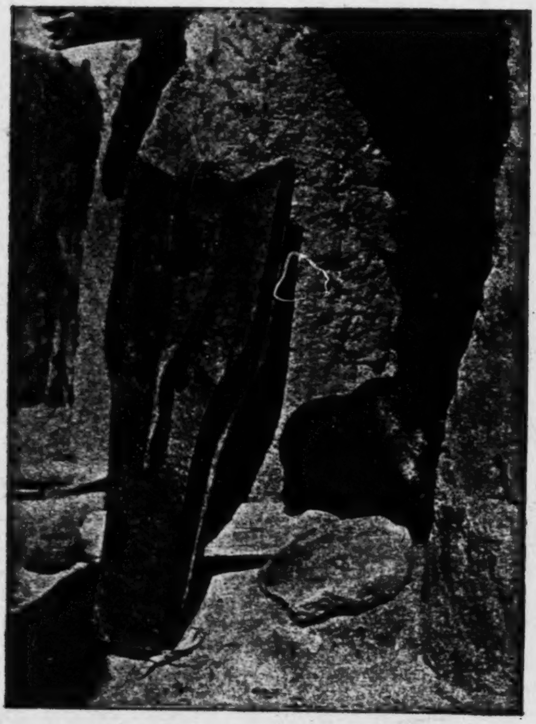

A boli fetish in the shape of a hippopotamus,
with the mask worn during the sacred dance.

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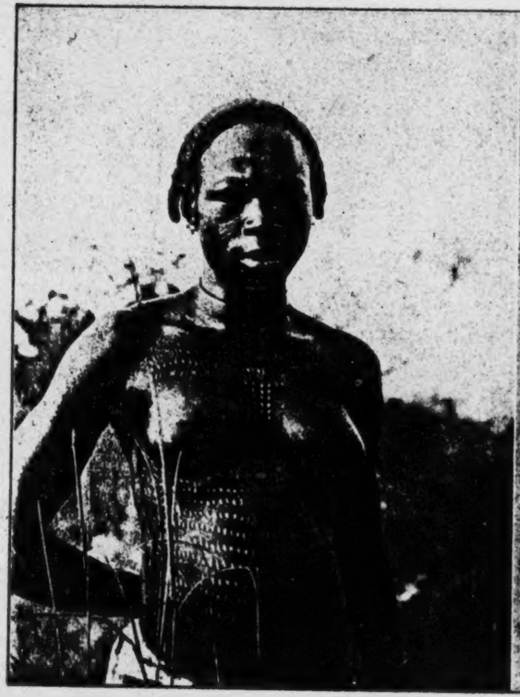
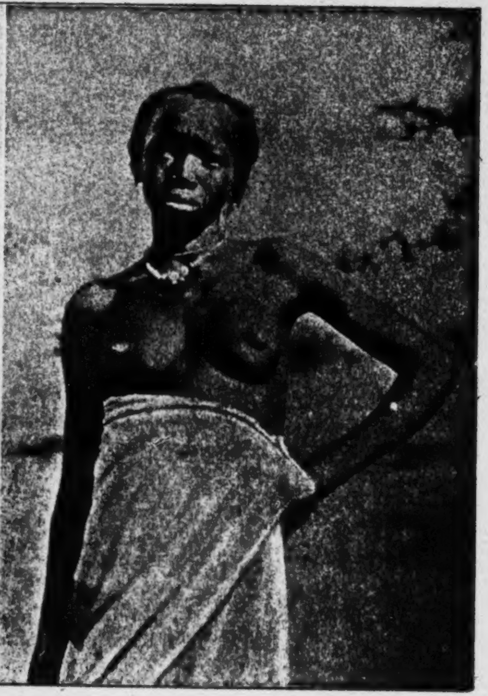
4: Henry--279 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Tattoo worn by the women of Bani country.



Tattoo worn around the breasts by young girls of Ségou and made by themselves.

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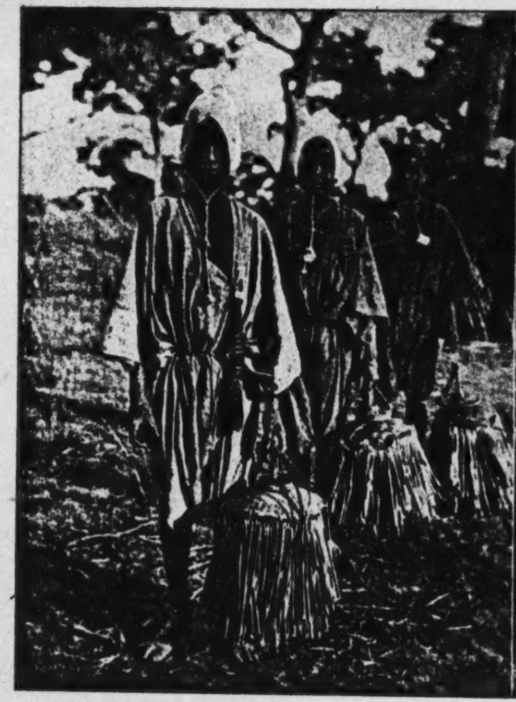
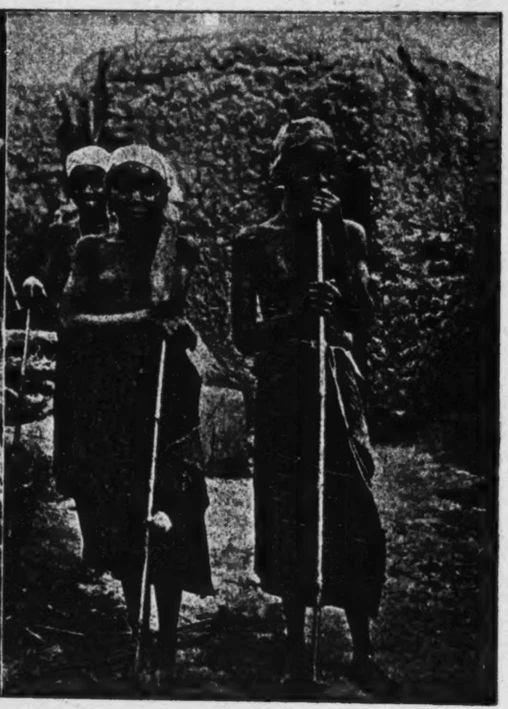
4: Henry--280 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Circumcised Bambara youths.



Excised Bambara girls.

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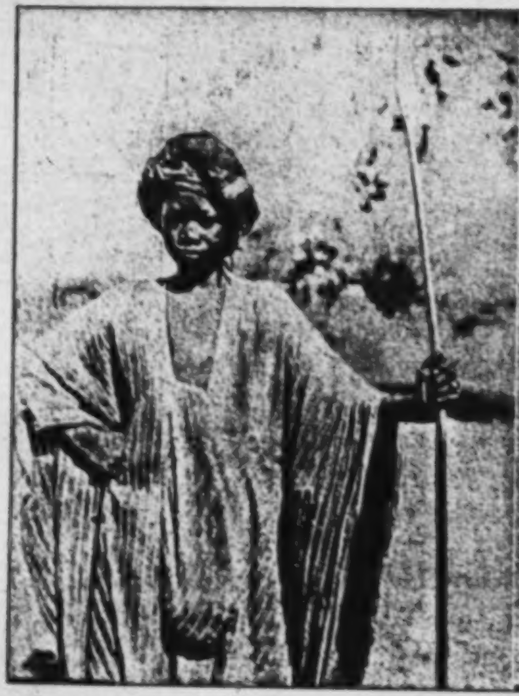
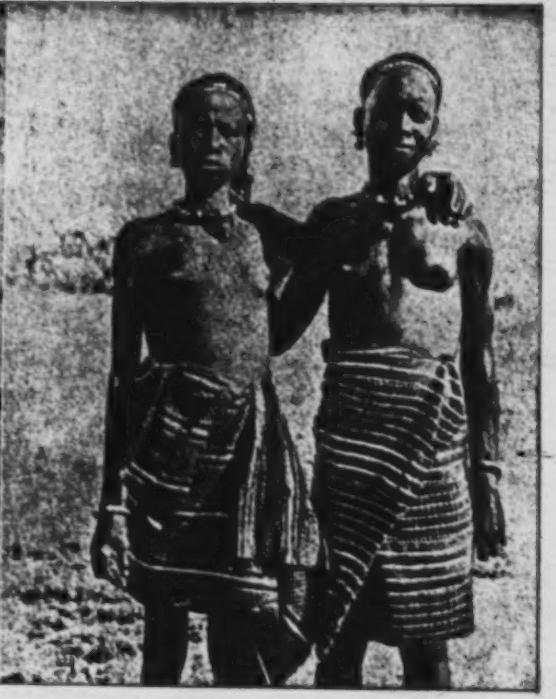


Circumcised youth dressed up.



Young Bambara girls dressed to go out.

4: Henry--281 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

292
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142

4.- Henry--282 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

Excised girl in the dress-up attire of Bani country.

Excised girl dressed up.

4: Henry--283 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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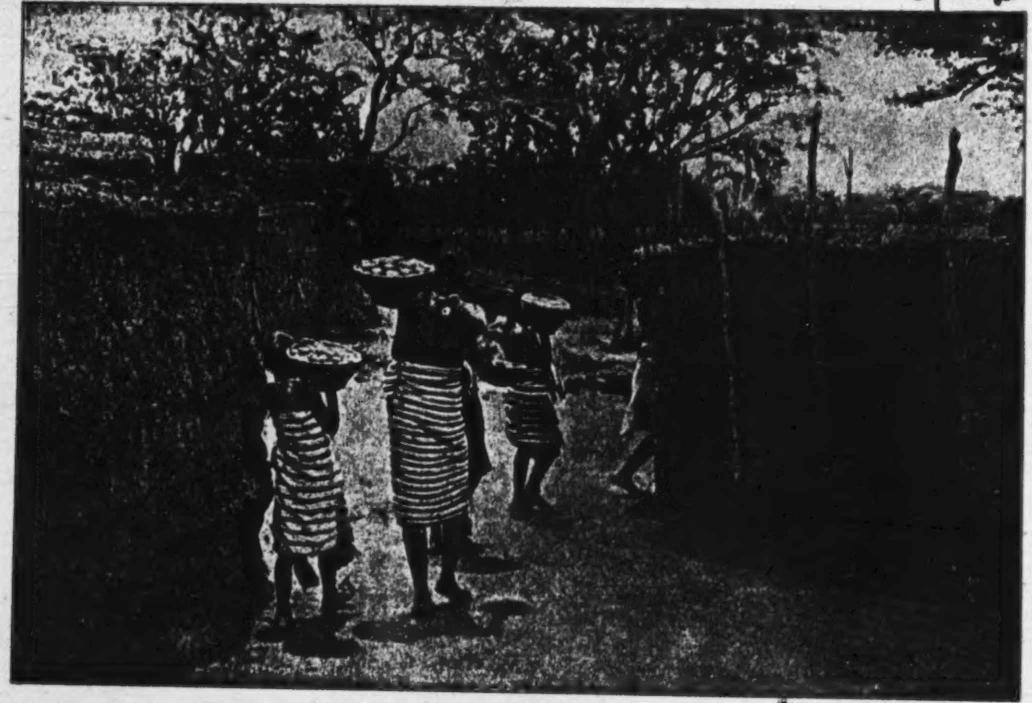

Bambara wedding.

The meal is carried to the young bride and her maids of honor (at Moundjirila).

4: Henry--284 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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Bambara wedding: the guests go to thank the young bride after the meal. Above: Bambara wedding: procession of a young bride going to the home of her groom.

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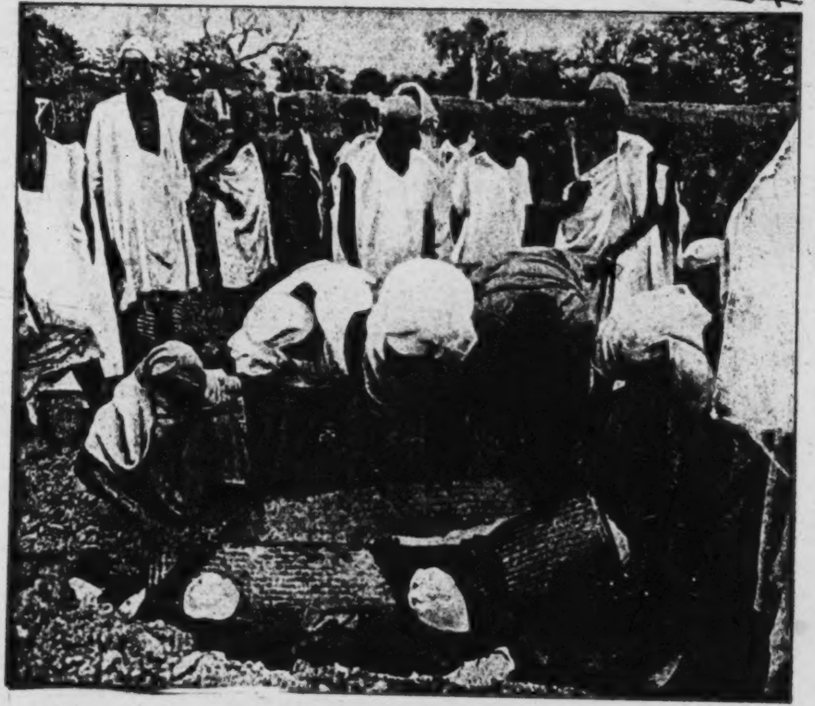

Bambara burial.
The corpse being laid in the grave.

4: Henry--285 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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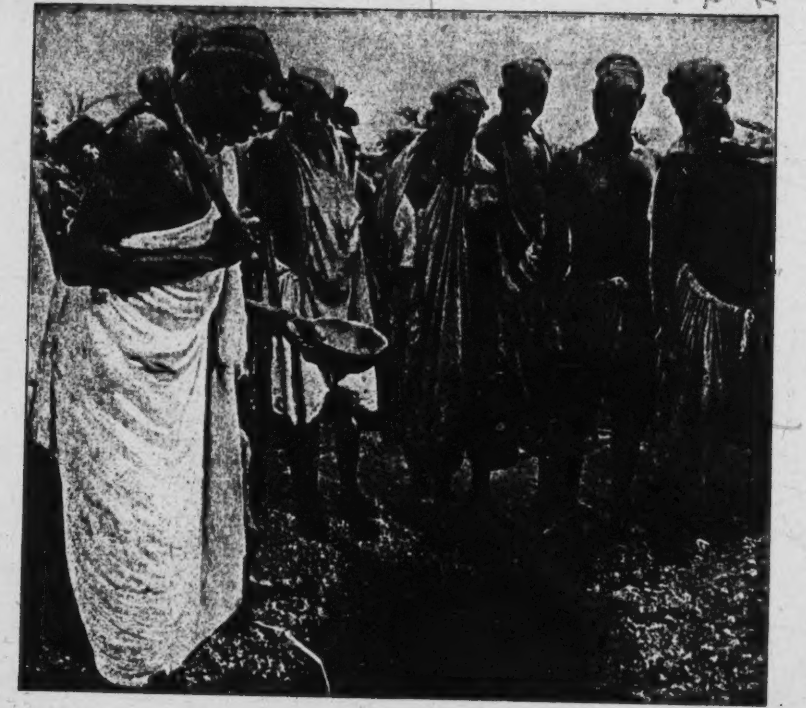
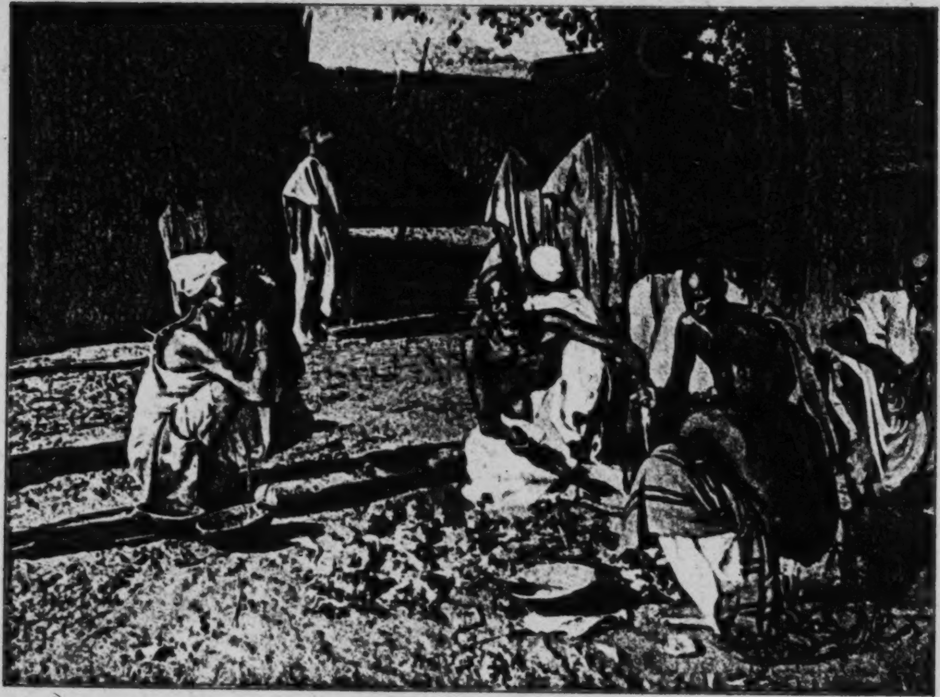


Bambara burial.

The last prayer.

4: Henry--286 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



After the sacrifice: division of the sacred meats.

516
782

4: Henry--287 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

4: Henry FA8 Bambara

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L'AME D'UN PEUPLE AFRICAIN

LES BAMBARA

LEUR VIE
PSYCHIQUE, ÉTHIQUE, SOCIALE, RELIGIEUSE.

PAR

L'ABBÉ JOS. HENRY,
ANCIEN MISSIONNAIRE CHEZ LES BAMBARA.

AVEC 11 ILLUSTRATIONS DE TEXTE
ET 24 PLANCHES HORS TEXTE.

[p. i]

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Table des matières.

Introduction 1

Chap. I. Mentalité du Bambara.

§ 1. Croyances aux forces de la nature 12
§ 2. Les Tabous 15
Légende des deux *Kouloubali* 18
Légende d'une branche *Taraoulé* 19
Légende d'une autre branche *Taraoulé* 20
Légende des deux *Djara* 20
Légende des *Samakés* 20
§ 3. Le *gnâma* 26

Chap. II. L'animisme et ses conséquences.

§ 1. Croyances aux Esprits 29
§ 2. Sorcellerie et Sacerdoce 33
§ 3. Métamorphose 38
§ 4. Le *Dja* 41

Chap. III. Idées générales du Bambara sur la vie humaine.

§ 1. La maladie 44
§ 2. De la mort 47
§ 3. La Réviviscence des âmes 56

Chap. IV. Notions du Bambara sur Dieu, les invisibles, Adam et Eve.

§ 1. Croyance en Dieu 61
§ 2. Le *Saraka* 63
§ 3. La croyance du Bambara en Dieu n'est pas d'origine islamique, pas plus que ses concepts sur le ciel, l'enfer et le monde des invisibles 66

Chap. V. Le fétichisme chez les Bambara, le culte des *gnéna*. Classification des *gnéna*, identiques aux *djiné* des Arabes.

§ 1. Ce qu'on entend par *gnéna* ou *djiné* 84
§ 2. *Gnéna* résidant dans la brousse 86

4:Henry FA8 Bambara

§ 3. *Gnéna* rôdant PROWL aux alentours et dans le village 87
§ 4. Génie des mares POND, des sources et des puits WELL 90
§ 5. Génies de la moisson HARVEST 90
§ 6. Génies protecteurs des enfants 91
§ 7. Le génie protecteur des jeunes gens circoncis 94
§ 8. Le génie des femmes 95
§ 9. Le génie des jumeaux TWINS 96
§ 10. Génie protecteur des villages 99
§ 11. Le génie *koté* ou *koré* 102

Chap. VI. Culte, réjouissances, *saraka,* sacrifices et danses en l'honneur des *gnéna.*

§ 1. *Gnéna* des deux premiers groupes 105
§ 2. *Gnéna* du 3ème groupe, les huit catégories des *gnéna* puissants . 108
Fétiche *N'tomo* spécial aux enfants 109
Le fétiche *N'golo* spécial aux circoncis 112
Le *Mouso ka djiri,* fétiche spécial des femmes 114
Le fétiche *Sinsin,* spécial des femmes 114
Le fétiche *Dasiri,* protecteur des villages 115
Election du prêtre 115
Choix du fétiche *dasiri* et de sa monture sacrée . . . 116
Intronisation du *gnéna-n-sonnaba,* prêtre du *dasiri,* et chef du village, *dougoutigi* 117
Sacrifices offerts au *dasiri* 118
Formule du sacrifice 119
Société semi-occulte du *Koré* ou *Koté* 121

Chap. VII. Le Culte à Satan ou culte des *Gnâ* ou *Boli.*

§ 1. Ce qu'on entend par *Gnâ* ou *Boli* 127
§ 2. Légende des *Boli* 130
§ 3. *Boli* de «petite envergure» 134
§ 4. *Boli* de «grosse envergure» 138
§ 5. Différence parmi les *Boli* de grosse envergure 143
§ 6. Des *Boli* parleurs 155
Du *Sirikoun* 155

Chap. VIII. Premières années de la vie du Bambara.

§ 1. Moralité sexuelle du Bambara 157
§ 2. De l'adultère et de la fornication 161
De l'avortement 164
§ 3. Naissance d'un enfant 165
§ 4. Tatouage 172

Chap. IX. La circoncision en pays Bambara.

§ 1. Importance de la circoncision 175

§ 2. La fête du *Soli si* ou veillée EVENING des circoncis 177

§ 3. La fête du *Da Woro* ou/du sixième jour 182

§ 4. La fête du *Boloko déou dou bo* la sortie des circoncis et des excisées, l'entrée réelle dans la vie civile et religieuse 192

Chap. X. Le Mariage Bambara.

§ 1. Demande en Mariage 199

§ 2. Les devins et les fétiches acceptent ou refusent le prétendant . 201

§ 3. Les Fiançailles 203

§ 4. Les Noces d'une jeune Bambara 206

§ 5. L'exhibition du trousseau de la mariée au soir du premier jour . 212

Chap. XI. Enterrements Bambara.

§ 1. Fosse et cimetière 214

§ 2. Pas de sacrifice aux mânes des défunts 215

§ 3. Honneurs rendus aux non circoncis 216

§ 4. Enterrements des circoncis, vieillards, chefs de familles, mariés et non mariés, femmes enceintes 217

Enterrement des vieillards ou de 1re classe 217

Enterrement d'un chef de famille ou de 2e classe 224

Enterrement des mariés qui ne sont pas chefs de famille ou de 3e classe 224

Enterrement des non-mariés ou de 4e classe 225

Enterrements des femmes enceintes ou mourant en couches . 225

§ 5. Sacrifices aux fétiches à l'occasion d'un décès 226

§ 6. Honneurs rendus aux adeptes du *Koré* ou *Koté* 228

§ 7. Exterrement des excommuniés 230

§ 8. Culte des morts 232

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LES BAMBARA

LEUR VIE PSYCHIQUE, ÉTHIQUE, SOCIALE, RELIGIEUSE.

[p. vii]

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4: Henry FA8 Bambara

Introduction.

C'est au fort de la lutte contre Samory, en avril 1890, que le colonel Archinard, aujourd'hui général, fit tonner ses canons sur Ségou, s'empara de la ville et donna à la France un des cercles les plus importants (dit Mr. Perrichon, ancien administrateur de Ségou) du gouvernement de la côte Occidentale d'Afrique. Les colonnes françaises avaient à leur tête un homme ferme et énergique, allant toujours de l'avant lors même que la fièvre le tourmentait. Soldat dans l'âme, il avait les qualités qui dénotent un vrai chef, de la prudence, de la décision, il savait joindre à la justice l'équité.

Sa campagne contre Samory était connu du fils d'El-Hadj-Omar[1], Amadou Cheïkou, roi de Ségou. Celui-ci, homme cauteleux, fourbe, sanguinaire et lâche, avait dès 1884 établi sa résidence à Yamina, entre Ségou et Kouloukoro, sur le Niger, sans doute pour se ménager une porte de sortie sur le Nioro, qu'il avait fait sien en guerroyant contre son frère Mountaga, et fuir tranquille à la première alerte. Il était loin du reste d'avoir l'âme tranquille, le vieux roi Bambara. Mary Djara détrôné par El-Hadj-Omar, vivait encore et désireux de reprendre sa couronne, il faisait appel, il le savait, à nos armes. La France pouvait-elle ne pas prendre en mains la cause du roi Mary? Le tyran El-Hadj-Omar avait passé des traités au point de vue commercial avec la France sans en tenir jamais aucun, la captivité de Mage et de Quintin si longtemps retenus comme ôtages prouvait hautement qu'il n'avait nul désir de voir l'Européen s'installer dans ses royaumes. Entre lui et Samory des lettres avaient été échangées et des traités sans doute conclus pour empêcher, si possible, la marche en avant de nos colonnes. — Amadou Cheïkou, son fils et successeur, se montre tolérant; en prenant les rênes du gouvernement, il rend la liberté à Mage et à Quintin, et négocie avec nos officiers leur donnant les plus belles espérances. Ses promesses étaient promesses de nègre doublé de musulman, il suivit en tous points la tactique de son père. Pour l'honneur du drapeau, pour établir notre puissance d'une façon nette et décisive aux yeux du noir, aux yeux du musulman surtout qui se targuait d'être invincible et de ne pas craindre nos canons et nos fusils, étant invulnérable, il fallait prendre Ségou. Attendre plus longtemps, c'était devenir la risée des populations nègres, c'était attacher au roi musulman détesté tous les fétichistes.

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[1] *El-Hadj-Omar* (Omar le Pèlerin) a *été* un conquérant et non plus comme Samory un brigand et un dévastateur. Energique, plein de bravoure, soldat dans l'âme, il avait l'esprit de suite et était organisateur. Son fils Aguibou fut placé par lui à la tête du Dinguiray, Moungana eut le Nioro et Amadou Cheïkou fut roi de Ségou. El-Hadj-Omar perdit la vie dans les montagnes du Bandjagara, en luttant contre les Peulls. Moungana fut tué par son frère Amadou. Aguibou est mort, il y a environ 2 ans, toujours fidèle à la France et la servant. Amadou est mort à Say.

Au moment où le colonel Archinard [1] à la tête de sa colonne quitte Bamako pour descendre le fleuve, Amadou Cheïkou a fuit de Yamina, il est au Nioro laissant la couronne à son fils Madani, lequel réside à Ségou. Il avait celui-ci la première qualité de son père: la lâcheté. Prompt à la fuite au premier coup de canon, il monte à cheval et bride abattue va rejoindre son père au Nioro, laissant à ses ministres l'honneur du combat. Cette désertion du roi attrista tous nos vieux musulmans qui avaient combattu sous El-Hadj-Omar et suivi sa fortune. La légende rapporte même que caracolant sur sa monture au moment du départ, en face de ses ministres, l'un d'eux ne craignit pas de le traiter de lâche et un *djanfanti* (traître) est la dernière salutation, le dernier hommage que perçurent dans Ségou les oreilles de Madani, petit-fils d'El-Hadj-Omar, le grand conquérant nègre du siècle dernier.

Maître de Ségou, le vainqueur rétablit sur le trône le vieux roi Bambara, Mary Djara. Celui-ci oublia vite ce qu'il devait à nos officiers; s'apercevant qu'une poignée d'hommes et quelques officiers seulement restaient à Ségou, il résolut de se défaire d'une tutelle qui le gênait et l'empêchait de pressurer ses sujets. Le complot ourdi par lui contre nos officiers fut connu et le capitaine Underberg pour conserver la vie, dut le passer au fil de l'épée. Un Bambara du Káarta Bodyan, généralissime des armées nègres du roi Mary, lui succéda. Son règne fut de courte durée, en 1893 on l'envoya dans le Káarta, son pays d'origine, et Mr. Bonnacorsi, avec résidence à Ségou, eut le commandement du cercle.

---

[1] Monsieur Archinard après la campagne de Ségou fit celle du Nioro. Madani fut tué dans la lutte ou se tua et Amadou, son père, abandonné de tous même de ses femmes, parvint à s'enfuir et à se réfugier à Say. C'est là qu'il est mort il y a 6 à 7 ans environ.

Le cercle de Ségou est traversé par le Djéliba (fleuve du griot), connu sous le nom de «Niger». Son affluent principal est le Bani [1], qui se jette dans le Niger à Mopti. Le Bani est formé par le Baoulé (*ba* fleuve, *oulé* rouge) et par le Bagoué (*ba* fleuve, *goué* blanc). Ces deux rivières, dont la première a ses sources dans le Bougouni et la seconde à Njibi dans le cercle de Sikasso, se joignent un peu au-dessus de Bélékoun, village mi-Bambara ou fétichiste et mi-Marka ou musulman. 15 ou 20 kilomètres plus loin, au dessous du village Bambara de Kouralé, le Bani est grossi par les eaux du Banifign (*Bani* fleuve Bani, *fign* noir). Cette rivière coule entre deux berges hautes taillées en pente douce, on dirait un canal creusé par la main des hommes. Sur ses bords c'est la végétation luxuriante des tropiques, ce ne sont que fourrés et hautes futaies. Pas de village pourtant sur ses rives; ses eaux, disent les noirs, sont malsaines. Aux hommes elles donnent le *soumma* ou maladie du sommeil et aux animaux la *souma*, qui à mon avis n'est aussi rien moins que la maladie du sommeil. La tsétsé abonde dans ces parages et pour se préserver de sa morsure de bonnes guêtres sont nécessaires [2].

Au Nord le cercle est limité par les villages de Malado, Kolokourou, Sirakoro, Kokry, qui le séparent du cercle de Sokolo, et à l'Est par une ligne partant de Kagou et allant aboutir au Bani en passant par Nonango, Diabougou, Diongasso, villages frontières avec le cercle de Djenné. Le Bani et le Bagoué jusqu'à Kinian le séparent des cercles de Kouttiala et Sikasso et une ligne imaginaire partant de Kinian pour aboutir sur le Niger en face Kouloukoro, en passant par Toukoro, le sépare du cercle de Bamako et achève sa limite sud. Sa limite ouest, c'est le Niger lui-même jusqu'à Marigot à l'est de Yamina.

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[1] Le Niger, dit par les noirs *Djéliba*, est dit aussi *Baba*, le grand fleuve. Le *Bani* (petit fleuve) est ainsi appelé par opposition au grand fleuve, le Niger, *Baba*. — Le Niger étant au Nord et le Bani au Sud, nous devons sans doute à cela le mot *Baba* pour désigner le nord et *Bani* pour désigner le sud.

[2] Tout le Bani est malsain sur les bords du fleuve. Pour les hommes et les animaux il y a à craindre la maladie du sommeil.

Le pays est relativement plat, avec ça et là quelques légers mamelons ferrugineux. Sur la rive gauche du Niger, au sud, sur la rive droite, au nord et au Bani entre le Bagoué et le Banifign, le pays est légèrement accidenté et coupé de quelques chaînes de collines qui mériteraient mieux le nom de sur-élévation de terrain, tant elles sont basses et peu importantes. Les collines sud-Niger et Bani sont principalement ferrugineuses, quelques mamelons seulement à Kokodjan, Nyamana, Nangola, sont un grès d'un grain très grossier. Dans maint village, sur les bords du Bani, il m'est arrivé de trouver dans les cimetières et les bois sacrés, dédiés au *Dasiri* et au *Korè*, de petits blocs de granit. Ils viennent ceux-ci de je ne sais trop où, les Bambara eux-mêmes l'ignorent et sont incapables de vous le dire de façon sûre et précise.

Monsieur Perrichon, ancien administrateur de Ségou, cote la population à 130.000 habitants, répartis en 1200 villages environ. La masse est fétichiste[1], avec deux cultes parallèles et bien distincts, celui des *gnéna* ou *djiné* et celui des *gnâ* ou *boli*[2], et appartient à la race Bambara, le plus fort noyau de la race Mandingue.

Peulls, Marka, Somono, Boso, Djeli, installés au milieu d'eux, sont des étrangers et leur religion est l'Islam. A part les *Marka*, qui appartiennent à la secte des *Kadria* avec un Almani à Marka Dougouba, leur plus fort village, ils suivent les rites de la secte des *Tidjani*, dont l'Almani réside à Ségou. Pour tous ces gens, le chef suprême, le roi fétiche, est le *Stamboul*, le vieil Abdoul-Hamid de Constantinople, auquel, pensent-ils, tous les souverains d'Orient et d'Occident paient tribut. Tout en conservant leur langue maternelle, ils parlent Bambara, la langue courante et usuelle, la vraie langue du pays, et vivent le plus souvent dans des villages à part, sans se mélanger aux Bambara. Le Peull est avant tout pasteur, le Marka s'adonne au commerce et les Somono et Boso, installés sur le Niger et le Bani, sont pêcheurs. Le Djéli, connu sous le nom de *griot*, est souvent cordonnier cobbler, bourrelier harness maker et court le pays jouant de la guitare, chantant les louanges des gens ou les insultant, s'il juge insuffisant le cadeau reçu. Dans la race Djéli il y a plusieurs branches ou catégories. La caste principale, la caste noble pourrait-on dire, porte le nom de *Djéli* (griot). Viennent ensuite les *Founé* et les *Koyaté*, puis enfin les *Gaoûlo*. Le *Gaoûlo* est sans pudeur aucune, c'est un être infect allant jusqu'à lancer ses excréments à la tête des gens qui lui refusent l'aumône. Les Peulls sont affligés eux aussi, d'un griot qui ne quémande que chez eux. Ils lui donnent un nom qui témoigne assez de leur mépris pour cette race, ils l'appellent *mabo* (*ma* homme, *bo* excrément).

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[1] Fétiches Bambara.

[2] *Gnéna* ou *djiné*, génies pouvant poser un acte bon; *gnâ* ou *boli*, génies ne pouvant poser qu'un acte mauvais mais pouvant s'abstenir de le poser et faisant le bien indirectement; vgl. Chap. II § 1.

Le Bambara, lui, est agriculteur[1], et celui-là seul à ses yeux mérite le nom de travailleur qui sait manier la pioche et la houe. Bien membré, il tient pour la taille un juste milieu, il n'est ni grand ni petit. Il est fort de poitrine et porte sur un cou court et trapu, une grosse tête couverte de cheveux noirs et crépus. Rien dans son visage ne pronostique la force d'âme, l'énergie, l'intelligence. D'un front fuyant, il a l'arcade sourcillière assez prononcée et ses yeux noirs de jais avec le blanc légèrement crême, sont droits. Ses mâchoires presque toujours bien dentées, s'avancent un peu en avant, il a les lèvres fortes, épaisses, le menton court, les pommettes peu saillantes et il porte un nez plat, affreusement ouvert et écrasé à sa racine.

La femme tout comme le mari, est forte, robuste. Le plus souvent elle est cagneuse et ce vice de constitution tient sans doute à ce qu'on l'oblige dès sa plus tendre enfance, à porter sur la tête des fardeaux assez lourds, trop lourds souvent pour ses forces.

Jusqu'à quatre ans environ, les enfants des deux sexes sont nus. A cet âge, la fillette reçoit un *bogo*, petite bande d'étoffe liée par devant à une ficelle formant ceinture, passant entre les jambes et retombant par derrière en queue flasque et molle, ornée d'un superbe pompon. Elle reçoit aussi pour les jours de sortie une pièce d'étoffe rectangulaire pour se couvrir. Cet sorte de pagne (dit *tafé*) se noue au dessus du nombril et descend à mi jambes. Le *bogo* est le costume nationale; la fillette le porte jusqu'à son mariage, d'où le nom de *bogo tigi* (*bogo* bande d'étoffe large comme la main, *tigi* maître, possesseur, le tout = qui possède un *bogo,* qui porte le *bogo*) donné aux jeunes filles[1]. Au mariage elles perdent le *bogo* et ne portent plus que le *tafé,* retenu à la ceinture par un fin cordon orné de deux pompons. Elles portent dès lors le nom de *fini siri* (*fini* habit, *siri* lier, attacher).

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[1] Il n'y a que l'agriculteur duquel il dit: *a bi tyaké*, il travaille; les autres ne sont pour lui que des habiles, *a ka kisé*.

La Bambara aime être habillée, et aux jours de fête et de marché elle porte volontiers une large blouse dite *dloki.* Dans l'impossibilité de se la procurer, elle aura du moins un vaste *tafé* qui la peut couvrir tout entière et le grand «chic» est de le nouer sous les aisselles en laissant à découvert le sein gauche. Elle a bon goût dans le choix des étoffes, celles à tons voyants et criards la laissent indifférente, elle affectionne surtout un pagne à fond blanc rayé de lignes bleues. Le vrai *tafé* ou pagne Bambara en étoffe du pays, est à fond jaune, rayé de lignes noires.

Comme parure elle porte des chaînettes à la cheville des pieds, un ou deux bracelets aux poignets et au cou, un collier de perles parsemé de boules d'ambre et d'anneaux en faïence, qui retombent sur la poitrine et sur le bas du cou, suspendus à des baguettes de cuir. Elle charge ses doigts de bagues, même le pouce; à l'entour des lobes de chaque oreille on peut compter de 10 à 12 anneaux et elle porte à la paroi médiane du nez, un petit croissant. A part ce croissant qui est d'or, anneaux, bagues et bracelets sont en fer doux généralement, bien que beaucoup les aient en argent. A l'entour de son front, elle noue un petit diadème fait de perles, rouge, jaune, blanche et verte, couleur arc-en-ciel[2].

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[1] Les fillettes des musulmans portent le *lempé,* deux banderolles d'étoffe nouées à la ceinture et descendant à la cheville. Un pan flotte par devant et l'autre par derrière. Le *lempé* n'est pas Bambara.

[2] La jeune fille porte une ceinture de perles à laquelle s'attachent quelques petits grelots.

Jusqu'à 8 ou 9 ans, la petite fille a la tête rasée et on lui laisse sur le haut du front une mèche de cheveux qui se natte et se termine par une tressette, rejetée en arrière et à la racine de laquelle on fixe bien souvent un petit anneau blanc en faïence. Vers 9 ans elle laisse croître sa chevelure. Celle-ci se natte, de façon générale[1], se divisant en quatre parties égales, se terminant chacune par une tressette dont l'une va se perdre dans le cou, et les autres derrière les oreilles. Celle du front se relève et à force de beurre et de graisse, on l'oblige à pencher vers le haut de la tête. Les cheveux trop courts pour avoir pu être saisis et nattés, sont rasés, et nos fillettes ont sur la tête une croix parfaite. Plus âgée, elle conserve toujours ce mode de coiffure, mais tous les cheveux ayant pu être nattés, on n'a plus recours au rasoir pour enlever le duvet et elle porte sur la tête deux cimiers: l'un, le principal longitudinal partant du front et se terminant en arrière, l'autre plus bas et transversal. Après l'excision — parfois même un peu avant — sa coiffure se compose de deux petits cimiers transversaux sur le haut du front, un peu plus fort sur le haut de la tête avec deux tressettes allant se perdre derrière chaque oreille, et deux petits cimiers encore sur le derrière de la tête. Mariée, elle conserve ce dernier mode de coiffure, avec cette particularité pourtant qu'elle n'a que trois cimiers, l'un sur le haut du front, le second sur le haut de la tête et le troisième par derrière.

Vers l'âge de trois à quatre ans, le petit garçon reçoit une blouse, une pièce d'étoffe rectangulaire ayant un trou en son centre pour y passer la tête, et une bande d'étoffe large comme la main qu'il se noue à la ceinture et se passe entre les cuisses. Il ressemble au *bogo* des filles, mais il ne pend pas par derrière en longue queue; le noir appelle ce costume *bogi, bougi* et le porte jusqu'à la circoncision. Au lieu de cette bande d'étoffe, beaucoup portent une sorte de caleçon de bain sans le moindre embryon de jambes et dans les jours de fête un petit pagne dit *yaba,* qui leur donne un air tout sauvage, un air de huron.

A partir de la circoncision le jeune homme porte les culottes, une blouse et une calotte *(banfla)* à double pointes. Il prend pour s'habiller les cotonnades vendues par nos commerçants, il n'y a plus que quelques vieux pour porter des étoffes teintes en jaune, la couleur nationale, et encore ne le font-ils qu'au temps de l'hivernage, pour s'attirer les bonnes grâces des génies.

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[1] Quelques-unes ont toute la tête ornée d'une multitude de petites tressettes.

L'enfant a la tête rasée jusqu'à la circoncision avec sur le haut du front une ligne de cheveux transversale *(goufa)* et plus souvent une ligne longitudinale partageant le chef en deux parties égales *(fali kama)*. A la circoncision il peut laisser croître sa chevelure et dans ce cas il se natte les cheveux tout comme une femme. Cette mode, jadis générale, se perd; la majorité des Bambara se rasent la tête complètement. Certains sorciers et maîtres de fétiches *boli* laissent sur tout le haut de la tête une ligne de cheveux longitudinale, large de deux à trois doigts.

Ses gris-gris mis à part, le garçon est sobre d'ornements. Il porte quelques bagues aux doigts, un coulant de bois ou de marbre aux biceps, une ou deux grosses perles blanches rayées de lignes rouges ou bleues au cou et c'est tout. En voyage il a la lance, un fusil à pierre ou un immense couteau à lame courbe. Ce couteau se suspend sur l'épaule au moyen de cordelettes en cuir et pend sur le côté à la hauteur de la ceinture.

Le tatouage de la race consiste en trois balafres parallèles partant des tempes et allant se terminer sous le menton. La femme, par coquetterie sans doute, se tatoue parfois le front, le menton, la poitrine sauf les seins, et tout le ventre. Au Bani elle se fait encore un petit trait sur les pommettes. Le tatouage qui donne lieu à des fêtes religieuses et se pratique de 7 ans en 7 ans, n'est plus comme jadis obligatoire et beaucoup s'en affranchissent.

Peu industrieux, le Bambara, d'une façon générale, ne sait pas faire grand chose en dehors de ses champs. Durant la saison sèche il trompe ses heures d'ennuis en tressant des nattes en jonc, en grosse paille, en tiges de mil. Beaucoup savent tisser, mais nos tisserands sont surtout musulmans et appartiennent à la race *Marka* et *Somomo*. Quant aux travaux d'art, orfèvrerie forge, sculpture sur bois, poterie, chaussures, cuirs ouvragés, il les abandonne aux races *Noumou* (forgerons), *Koulé* (charrons, creuseurs de pirogues), *Djéli* (griots).

La femme Bambara, c'est évident, ignore la couture; tirer l'aiguille et faire un ourlet revient de droit à l'homme. Assez bonne cuisinière, elle sait varier l'ordinaire, et la farine de sorgho, fond de la nourriture, peut être apprêtée par elle à quatorze sauces différentes. La nourriture du noir est propre, saine, rafraîchissante, et l'Européen qui parvient à s'accoutumer au rance du beurre de karité et à l'odeur du poisson boucané, a vite fait de l'aimer, et une fois habitué, c'est une privation pour lui de n'avoir plus son mets indigène *to* (bouillie), *basi* (sorte de couscous), *dégé* (farines délayées dans du lait), etc., etc.

La femme nègre n'est pas, comme la femme arabe, une esclave, une sorte d'animal humain parqué dans un intérieur tout barricadé comme une prisonnière. Elle visite ses voisins et ses voisines, elle cause sur la place publique, elle tient les marchés, elle jouit en toute liberté et du ciel et du soleil. Piler le sorgho et chercher le bois dans la brousse[1], est, je n'en doute pas, et dur et pénible, mais tous nos Bambara vivent en famille sous la présidence d'un chef, le *gouatigi*, comme nos patriarches de l'Ancien Testament, et les femmes et les belles-sœurs savent s'arranger pour faire ces durs et pénibles travaux chacune sa semaine.

CRUSH [illegible]

La semaine où elle est libre, la femme va aux marchés, cuit le *d'lo* ou bière de sorgho, file le coton, prépare son beurre de karité *(Bassia Parkii)*. Un village noir est toujours plein de vie et plein d'entrain. Elle tient propre sa petite case et sa cour intérieure, et si elle n'a qu'un chiffon à donner à ses enfants, du moins elle les lave, elle les oint d'huile et de beurre; et sous les gourbis soudanais, on ne trouve pas ces petites horreurs des gourbis arabes d'Algérie, couvertes de vermines, noires d'une crasse épaisse à gratter au couteau.

Au point de vue moral, le Bambara est d'un esprit aussi lourd que sa personne. Lent à comprendre et peu curieux, il n'a nul désir de sortir de sa condition. Ce qu'ont fait mes pères je dois le faire, c'est là son grand principe, aussi est-il très entêté dans ses croyances et très attaché à ses coutumes.

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[1] Un noir qui se respecte coupe lui-même son bois et la femme n'a qu'à aller le prendre et à le porter.

S'accroupir sous un arbre feuillé et y passer la journée dans un long bavardage ou un demi-sommeil, est son rêve et fait son bonheur. Paresseux, fainéant même, il croit avoir tout fait, s'il a dans son grenier de quoi se nourrir et nourrir sa famille. L'impôt de capitation, le culte des fétiches surtout, le forcent à secouer sa torpeur; mais il a tout calculé, il travaille pour se procurer ce dont il a besoin et aussitôt s'arrête. Craintif, il a peur de l'Européen tout comme l'esclave a peur de son maître, et s'il le sert passablement, c'est se tromper grandement que de croire avoir capté son affection. Il déteste le blanc comme il déteste le musulman, le blanc c'est le vainqueur, c'est l'anti-fétichiste, et par suite l'ennemi.

Endurant, on arrive à faire de lui un homme, si on lui donne l'éducation du soldat. Il lui faut une discipline ferme, sévère, et lorsque son chef est juste, équitable, il l'estime, marche au premier commandement et jamais ne se rebiffe.

Astucieux, rusé jusqu'à la fourberie, le Bambara même au paroxysme de la colère se peut définir: «Un homme assez maître de lui, pour ne jamais dévoiler le fond de sa pensée.» Le mensonge lui coûte peu, ses serments sont serments de musulman, aussi les races soudanaises le définissent-elles: *«Misi bo djalé a kono ka maga*: Bouse de vache à l'extérieur desséchée et toute molle en son intérieur» — autrement dit — hypocrite.

Le Bambara ne dévoile jamais, ai-je dit, le fond de sa pensée, et dès qu'il s'agit de ses croyances religieuses il sait nous berner. En cette matière, bien difficile de s'en remettre à ses dires; il faut le surprendre et tout voir soi-même. Du reste, lorsque dans un moment d'oubli, d'abandon, il nous lance une vérité, il ne tarde pas à s'en repentir et il vous l'enveloppe si adroitement d'un mensonge que vous vous y perdez.

Aussi, ce qui m'a poussé à reprendre mes notes et à les confier à la «Bibliothèque-Anthropos», c'est le désir d'être utile surtout aux missionnaires. Pour faire tomber les préjugés de la population qu'ils évangélisent, il leur importe de connaître la mentalité du noir et de connaître le plus possible ses croyances. Si, pour ne pas bien posséder la langue on froisse le nègre, on l'éloigne, on le fait rire, on le froisse encore d'avantage lorsque l'on traite son culte, ses superstitions, ses us et ses coutumes de sots, de stupides, d'irraisonnables. Il se base sur des principes faux, j'en conviens, mais pour lui le sont-ils? Nullement, et comme il ne comprend pas, il ne saisit pas nos principes à nous, principes qu'il entend émettre pour la première fois — doit-on s'étonner qu'il nous trouve étranges, curieux, qu'il soit défiant et fermé?

J'ose l'espérer que l'utilité de mes modestes notes ne se bornera pas aux missionnaires seulement. Pour tous ceux qui ont affaire aux indigènes il est du plus haut intérêt de les connaître, de connaître leur mentalité, leurs prédilections et leurs aversions, leurs croyances et leurs coutumes. Il me paraît donc que, également, les fonctionnaires publics, les officiers coloniaux, les marchands, les voyageurs, etc., etc. peuvent tirer quelque profit de ces notes.

Et comme elles sont le fruit d'une expérience de quelques années, d'une connaissance parfaite de la langue des indigènes, de recherches consciencieuses, réitérées scrupuleusement pour obtenir des résultats fondés, je crois même qu'elles fourniront aux ethnologues un fondament assez ferme et solid pour leurs recherches et leurs comparaisons ultérieures.

Les photographies du Révérend Père Dubernet (des Pères Blancs), le missionnaire aimable, zélé, si connu dans Ségou, et des noirs et des Européens, seront pour tous d'un très haut intérêt, elles sont toutes ou peu s'en faut inédites; je le remercie de m'avoir autorisé à les reproduire.

Chap. I.

Mentalité du Bambara.

§ 1. Croyances aux forces de la nature. § 2. Les Tabou.
§ 3. Le *gnâma*.

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§ 1. Croyances aux forces de la nature.

Démontrer à un noir l'ineptie de ses préjugés et de ses pratiques superstitieuses semble un jeu et pourtant on n'y parvient pas, car toute claire, toute simple que soit votre argumentation, vous n'arrivez pas à jeter en son esprit la plus petite étincelle de lumière ou le plus léger doute. Ces *o do* «c'est cela» et ces *tigné* «c'est vrai» dont il a la bouche pleine dès que vous tentez un effort pour lui désiller les yeux, sont des termes polis et rien de plus.

Il n'y a pas lieu de s'en étonner. Incapable de longue réflexion et de grand raisonnement, il ne saisit pas l'illogisme dans ses croyances, la contradiction dans sa façon d'agir; il croit à ce qu'ont cru ses pères, et comme eux il sacrifie, rougissant de sang un peu tout. Vos discours tout à la fois et l'étonnent et le laissent froid; il ne vous comprend pas, il ne vous saisit pas, il vous trouve même un peu sot et s'il n'ose se l'avouer, il s'arrête à ces mots: «*Toubabou do!* C'est un blanc! peut-il penser et juger comme je juge moi?»

Il y a du reste en ses croyances un certain enchainement, et si nous savons descendre à son niveau en nous gardant de l'élever au nôtre, si nous jugeons comme il juge et pensons comme il pense, nous allons tout au plus de surprise et en surprise, car sa conception du monde et la nôtre sontloin d'être identiques, sa mentalité et la nôtre diffèrent.

Tout Bambara non islamisé se considère comme proche parent des animaux et des végétaux, j'ajouterai même en toute assurance, comme proche parent des êtres inorganiques. Sans nul doute il distingue les règnes entre eux et pour lui le minéral n'est pas un végétal ni le végétal un animal; il différencie le vivant du sans vie et ne confond pas les genres et les espèces, mais a-t-il su établir entre lui et le reste de la création une ligne de séparation nette, franche, bien tranchée? Non, il juge tout d'après ce qu'il est ou, pour préciser davantage, d'après ce qu'il se sent et se croit être, et en plus des génies et des esprits il voit dans la nature, un peu partout, des forces, des énergies conscientes. Il ne les peut définir; ses idées à ce sujet demeurent confuses, imprécises, mais il n'en reste pas moins vrai qu'il prête à tout une lueur de raison et de la passion. Le noir n'attribue pas une âme à tout, évidemment, — une âme dans le sens où nous l'entendons —; il ne dit pas que tout soit la résidence d'un esprit ou d'un génie, et néanmoins il ne peut concevoir un matériel pur. Dans l'animal il trouve l'instinct, dans les végétaux des vertus et propriétés spéciales. La matière inerte le met en présence de phénomènes qu'il ne peut expliquer, et se prenant toujours en ses raisonnements comme terme de comparaison, il donne à tout un immatériel, un invisible, un insaisissable doué de raison et de passion. En son esprit, je le répète, ce n'est pas une âme, ce n'est pas un génie dans le sens qu'il le conçoit, et pourtant c'est un être, c'est une force, une puissance ayant son existence et pouvant agir par elle-même. Quelques exemples entre mille:

En juillet 1908, au moment où la moisson sortait de terre, ce fut dans certaines régions du cercle de Ségou une invasion de toutes petites chenilles mesurant à peine 0^{m} 025 en longueur. D'un beau noir velouté avec sur les côtés un liserai vert pâle elles venaient de l'Est sortant on ne sait d'où et par myriades s'avançaient vers l'ouest en rangs serrés. Là où elles passèrent, tout fut mangé, il fallut réensemencer éleuzine, maïs et sorgho.

Pendant que ces bestioles dévoraient la moisson, le musulman hurlait à l'Orient sa fade formule et ses «Dieu est grand», il se prosternait, il s'accroupissait sur les talons secouant d'un air béat les index; mais bien en vain, car le flot noir et frémissant continuait à se retirer sur lui même à bosser du dos pour s'allonger ensuite, toujours il avançait et croissait. Le païen lui, après avoir blanchi le devant de sa demeure avec la farine délayée dans l'eau offerte aux mânes des ancêtres, après avoir versé à un peu tout et sur tout le sang des poules, crut mieux de tenir conseil et de consulter ses sorciers. L'ordre fut général: quelque puissant sans doute de la gent chenille, un prince peut-être, célèbre ses noces, il faut lui rendre les honneurs. Tous les villages païens les lui rendirent, et le mariage des chenilles eut lieu un beau matin au lever du jour. Deux ou trois chenilles furent placées au fond de vieilles calebasses hors d'usage, et les femmes et les jeunes filles précédées de tambours qui ouvrent la marche et battent avec rage, s'en vont chantant et dansant les porter hors du village au loin sur un sentier du côté de l'ouest. Au lieu fixé par les anciens elles déposent les petites bêtes et après une ronde échevelée elles lui font leurs adieux, adieux sots, stupides peut-être, et néanmoins touchants quand même, car si la jeunesse leur lance dans une longue fusée de rires: «*i na somaon fo* vous saluerez vos gens», si quelques vieilles acariâtres leur crient sur un ton de commandement: «*Ta so*! Allez chez vous!», plus nombreuses sont celles qui leur disent: «*Toumouni* petites chenilles, *an bi dèli* nous vous en supplions, ayez pitié de nous, retournez désormais en vos royaumes, tout est dévoré et il ne reste plus rien. Allons, saluez les gens de votre famille, saluez-les tous et saluez-les bien.»

Elles passèrent encore durant huit jours au moins, mais elles diminuaient et un orage vint qui les balaya. Tout Bambara vous dira que ces chenilles ne parlent pas, qu'elles n'ont pas d'âme, et pourtant essayez de lui faire comprendre qu'il leur a rendu des honneurs vains, inutiles, enfantins et qu'elles n'ont pu ni goûter sa musique et ses chants ni comprendre ses prières et ses supplications, il haussera les épaules: «*Tigné o*: Tu as raison», vous dira-t-il d'un air gouailleur, et coupant court à vos discours il ajoutera: «*Ou tara*!« et qui connaît le Bambara en devine tout le sous-entendu: «elles sont pourtant parties».

En août 1908 une bonne partie de la population des villages situés aux alentours de Ségou passa la journée du vendredi 28 dans un doux farniente. Sachant qu'un fétiche *Kono* allait d'un village à l'autre, porté par ses maîtres pour y recruter des adeptes, je pensai tout d'abord que la raison d'être de ce repos, insolite au plus fort des travaux du sarclage, était là. Pas du tout, les Bambara païens se reposaient et les femmes offraient à leurs maris et à leurs enfants le *dégé* (farine de mil délayée dans du lait et de l'eau de miel) sur l'ordre d'une hyène. Celle-ci, disait-on, et tous les sorciers l'assuraient, était sorti de son mutisme, sa langue s'était déliée et elle avait prédit à des gens de l'Ouest qu'un fléau plus terrible encore que celui des chenilles allait s'abattre sur la région. Pour le conjurer un seul moyen restait s'abstenir d'aller aux champs le vendredi et de s'offrir ce mets si cher aux musulmans, le *dégé*.

Dans mes excursions il m'est arrivé bien des fois de rencontrer des hommes et des femmes portant sur la tête dans une calebasse ou dans un panier, une poignée de feuilles, quelques paquets de racines, et à part les salutations d'usage il m'était impossible de leur arracher un mot. Et pourquoi ce silence? Ils portaient une plante médicinale, un remède qui devait perdre toute sa vertu et toute son efficacité, s'ils bavardaient en chemin et ils devaient veiller à ne pas fouler du pied telle et telle herbe qui borde le sentier.

Le Bambara nomme assez facilement les plantes et les herbes dont les vertus curatives lui sont connues, et pourtant il est bien rare qu'en présence d'un malade il vous donne le nom du remède qu'il absorbe, le nom des racines et des feuilles qui composent ses cataplasmes. La maladie, croit-il, est une force, une puissance qui tourmente notre corps, en nommant le remède il craint d'offrir à celle-ci une arme contre sa vertu curative, autre force, autre puissance, qu'il oppose à la première pour la forcer à déloger la place. A tout, on le voit, il prête une bribe de raison et de la passion, à tous les êtres animés et inanimés il prête des sentiments humains. Les «Tabous» en sont non seulement une preuve de plus, ils sont un témoignage irréfroyable de cette mentalité.

§ 2. Les Tabous.

La race Bambara se partage en plusieurs familles ou lignées qui chacune porte un nom speciale, ou *diamou*, et voit à sa tête comme protecteurs et amis des animaux ou des végétaux. La lignée des *Djara* se réclame du lion, du *kana* ou iguane[1], du *boumou* ou dondol —, la *Dambélé* d'un gros singe noir dit *Ngoba* —, la *Tankara* d'un bombax cornui, le dondol —, la *Kouloubali* de la biche cochon, du *Mpolio*[2], de la panthère. Pas une lignée qui n'ait son *tné* et même ses *tné* ou tabous. Comme on le verra dans la suite, les lignées d'un même nom souvent se regardent comme liées entre elles par un lien de fraternité et d'amitié, et la différence des *tné* indique au contraire qu'une scission s'est produité à un moment donné.

Les Européens, religieux, militaires et civils, appellent les *tné* bambara des «totem» ordinairement. Depuis Long qui le premier nous parle du «totémisme» et des «totems», cette question a été longuement traitée par des auteurs sérieux et de grand renom, par des maîtres compétents. Leurs définitions ne peuvent s'appliquer aux *tné* bambara. Toute frappante que soit l'analogie de certains d'entre eux avec le totem des Peaux-Rouges et des Australiens, je ne les puis définir avec Nicolay parlant des Peaux-Rouges: «Les Peaux-Rouges croient de plus à l'existence d'esprits propre aux individus (comme sont les fétiches pour les Africains) et qui, sous une forme animale, portent les noms de Totems»[3]. Les *tné* bambara diffèrent totalement des fétiches, ils n'ont rien de commun avec ceux-ci. Au chapitre (1901 p. 61) de son ouvrage: «Mythes, cultes et religions», A. Lang nous définit le Totémisme ainsi: «Le mot Totémisme ou Totamisme a été appliqué pour la première fois par Long ... aux coutumes des Indiens ... qui se reconnaissent une parenté avec les animaux ... Les Totémistes épargnent les animaux qui sont leur chair et leur sang ...» D'après A. Lang, les Peaux-Rouges et les Australiens se croient une parenté physique et réelle avec l'animal-totem, ils ont compté parmi leur grands pères une biche, un crapaud, une fourmi, un lapin, etc. Toute parenté physique et réelle se communique en effet par voie de sang et deux êtres ayant dans les veines du sang d'un même individu sont parents. Pour être avec leurs totems d'une même chair et d'un même sang les Peaux-Rouges et les Australiens se croient donc fils réels d'un ancêtre qui jadis fut biche, crapaud, fourmi, lapin ... Nicolay au chapitre II de son ouvrage «Histoires des croyances, mœurs et coutumes» donne à entendre que le Peau-Rouge admet que l'âme d'un ancêtre est venue au moment de la mort, prendre gîte dans le corps de la bête qui sert de totem; se peut-il que Lang, qui se tait sur ce point, ignore la croyance des Peaux-Rouges à la métamorphose et métempsycose? Nullement il relate le fait dans son ouvrage «Mythes, cultes et religions», mais quelque hypothèse que l'on fasse il y a pour lui parenté physique et réelle. Si l'on admet que les premiers ancêtres du Peau Rouge se sont changés ou métamorphosés à un moment donné en biche, en crapaud, fourmi ou lapin, évolution singulière si jamais il en fût, on peut supposer qu'au moment de la métamorphose ces animaux n'existaient pas et ils sont tous hommes et animaux d'une même chair et d'un même sang ou encore la chose est plus raisonnable ils se sont métamorphosés en animaux déja existants, procréant parmi ceux-ci biches, crapauds, fourmis ou lapins comme ils procréèrent auparavant des êtres humains, et le Peau-Rouge a toujours à craindre en tuant un de ces animaux-totems, de tuer un fils ou petit-fils de l'ancêtre, un de ses descendants, un être, par suite, de sa chair et de son sang[1].

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[1] Sorte de gros lézard ressemblant à un petit caiman. Il vit sur les bords du fleuve, près des mares, et bien qu'il préfère la terre et grimpe sur les arbres il aime prendre ses ébats dans l'eau. Les Français l'appellent vulgairement gueule tapée.

[2] Poisson visqueux et barbu.

[3] Nicolay, Histoire des croyances, mœurs, coutumes Tome Iier Livre Iier, chap. premier.

Rien de tel chez le Bambara; car traiter quelqu'un de fauve est à ses yeux une insolence, et pour le mettre en colère, au paroxysme de la colère, il suffit de l'appeler fils de chien *(oulou den)*; même s'il l'a pour *tné*, c'est là une injure qui tôt ou tard se venge. Il ne compte pas dans ses ancêtres un chien ou une panthère, un lion ou un serpent. Un *Kouloubali* serait fort surpris d'apprendre qu'une biche lui donna le jour, et pas un *Tankara* qui pense avoir dans les veines de la sève du dondol ou du jus de son fruit. Quand un *Djara* se dit fils du lion, un *Dambélé* fils d'un gros singe noir, il faut l'entendre dans un sens très large, il le dit par analogie, tout comme nous le disons, nous, d'un bienfaiteur insigne: c'est mon père, c'est ma mère, c'est mon tout.

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[1] A. Lang ne semble pas se douter que les peuples dont ils nous parle, Peaux-Rouges, Tahitiens, Africains donnent à ces mots: père, mère, frère, femme, fils, un sens très large et qu'ils les donnent couramment à des personnes avec lesquelles ils n'ont aucun lien de parenté.

Le Bambara fraternise ici avec les Quichés chrétiens du Guatemala dont parle D. G. Brinton dans son «Nagualism» 1294 — O. Stoll dans son «Die Ethnologie der Indianerstämme von Guatemala» (Leyde 1882), et que cite A. Lang au chap. III de son ouvrage «Mythes, cultes et religions». Son *tné* est un ami, un protecteur, et on lui peut donner cette définition: c'est un être animé ou inanimé ayant droit au respect et à la vénération de toute une lignée, d'une famille, d'un clan, en considération d'un service signalé qui a valu à la lignée, à la famille, au clan de ne pas disparaître, de ne pas s'éteindre, ou les a préservés d'un malheur.

Chaque *tné* a sa légende. Si dans la bouche du noir le récit s'enjolive, s'émaille de quelques fleurs et varie un peu, le fond reste le même. Tout en leur conservant et la forme et le fond, j'en traduirai quelques unes.

Légende des deux *Kouloubali*.

On était en guerre; ce n'était de toutes parts que fugitifs. La lignée des *Kouloubali* avait été cruellement éprouvée, elle se trouvait réduite à deux membres, deux frères égarés dans la brousse avec femmes et enfants. L'aîné qui suivait de loin son frère (ils évitaient de camper dans un seul et même lieu dans la crainte d'une surprise), parvint au bord d'un fleuve grossi par les eaux et se voyant dans l'impossibilité de le traverser, toute barque faisant défaut, cette plainte lui échappa: «Où fuir désormais? Je suis aux mains de mes ennemis! Pour moi et ma famille, c'est la mort ou l'esclavage.» Un *mpolio* passait; il l'entendit, fut touché de compassion et sortant sa grosse tête barbue hors de l'eau lui cria: «Je puis te passer moi, ne crains rien!» L'aîné des *Kouloubali* et sa famille avec armes et bagages s'installent sur le dos visqueux de l'étrange poisson, ils passèrent le fleuve. «Ecoute, bon *Mpolio,* mon frère et sa famille sont là-bas sur la berge, évite de leur rendre ce service que tu viens de me rendre, c'est un ingrat, un sans cœur, il pourrait te tuer.» — «Me tuer? allons donc!» le poisson plonge, disparaît, le voilà qui émerge là-bas au loin, près de l'autre berge, au moment où le jeune *Kouloubali* se demande comment son aîné a pu traverser, toute barque manquant, un fleuve si large et si profond. «C'est grâce à moi, lui dit le *mpolio,* également comme lui installez-vous sur mon échine.» Ils passèrent le fleuve.

Le jeune *Kouloubali* était un sans cœur. Quand les femmes eurent déposé leurs calebasses et leurs paniers sur la berge, au moment où le *mpolio* prend son élan et sort le haut du corps hors de l'eau pour plonger et disparaître, il lui lance son javelot. Le poisson un instant se débat, l'eau écume, rougit, et ce fut le calme: il était mort.

La famille du jeune *Kouloubali* dépeça l'animal et, sans honte comme sans remords, elle pria la famille de l'aîné de venir au festin. «Manger du *mpolio,* s'écria le chef de celle-ci, à jamais! et qu'il soit maudit celui de mes enfants qui osera en manger.» Depuis ce jour le *mpolio* est le *tné* des descendants de l'aîné des *Kouloubali.*

Il est un peu celui des descendants du jeune, mais ils le mangent, sauf la tête.

Légende d'une branche *Taraoulé.*

Une femme voyait tous ses enfants mourir, aussi tremblait-elle pour son dernier né, un petit garçon malingre et chétif, auquel son lait ne profitait pas. Un jour qu'accroupie sur la natte, seule en sa case, son enfant sur les genoux, elle filait le coton, elle se prend à pleurer et à gémir: «Toi non plus, tu ne vivras pas, tu rejoindras tes aînés, tu t'en iras, me laissant seule.» Un serpent-cracheur passait, il entre et doucement s'enroule sur le corps de l'enfant. La mère pousse un cri, et les voisins accourent... Le serpent lentement se déroule et quitte la demeure pendant que l'enfant lui tend les bras et sourit. Il ne mourut pas, il devint fort et vigoureux, car le serpent avait bu tous les *gnâma* ou principes morbides qui se trouvaient en lui. Depuis ce jour, la branche *Taraoulé* dont il est le père, ne mange pas du serpent-cracheur ou *n'gorono,* car la malédiction de l'ancêtre pèserait sur elle: c'est son *tné.*

Légende d'une autre branche *Taraoulé*.

Une femme cherchait du bois dans la forêt quand les douleurs de l'enfantement la prirent. «Seule que vais-je devenir? cria-t-elle. Je n'ai personne pour m'aider; qui lavera mon enfant? Oh! je vais rapporter chez moi un cadavre.» Elle s'agenouille près de sa charge de bois, donne le jour à son enfant, s'affaisse et perd connaissance. Un gros singe noir croquait des fruits sur un arbre voisin, il la vit et fut ému . . . Il fit la sage-femme, lava le petit être, le berça dans ses bras, et quand la maman revint à elle, il lui remit son petit garçon. Depuis ce jour pas un descendant de cette branche *Taraoulé* qui mange du *ngoba;* ce gros singe noir est leur *tné,* l'ancêtre le maudirait.

Légende des deux *Djara*.

Deux frères des *Djara* fuyaient avec femmes et enfants devant leurs ennemis. Harrassés de fatigue ils s'assoient à l'ombre d'un dondol, décidés à ne pas aller plus loin. Ils n'en pouvaient plus, du reste, tant la soif les tiraillait. Une iguane rôdait aux alentours, elle eut pitié des deux *Djara* et grimpant sur le dondol, elle fit si bien de la queue et des pattes, que ce fut sous l'arbre une douce rosée et chacun put étancher sa soif du suc contenu dans le calice des fleurs de cet arbre. «Le *kana* (iguane) sera désormais mon *tné,* dit l'aîné, et je maudis celui de mes descendants qui le tuera ou le mangera.» — «Y songes-tu, dit le jeune, n'est-ce pas au dondol que nous devons la vie? n'est-ce pas son suc qui nous a désaltérés? ne vaut-il pas mieux prendre cet arbre pour *tné?*» Les deux *Djara* se chicanèrent, ne purent jamais s'entendre et se séparèrent. Le *kana* est devenu le *tné* de la branche aînée, et le *boumou* ou dondol celui de la branche cadette.

Légende des *Samakés*.

Mon grand-père me l'a souvent raconté; il le tenait, lui, de ses ancêtres . . . Un *Samaké,* traversait-il le fleuve à gué ou enfonçait-il les piquets auxquels s'attachent les nattes de la trappe aux poissons — je ne saurais le dire —, fut happé par un caïman qui l'entraîna au plus profond de son antre . . . Il ne le tua pas, il était repu... Laissant le malheureux à ses tristes pensées, il se retire... Sans s'éloigner pourtant, de temps en temps il frappe de la queue dans l'eau à l'entrée du trou, donnant assez à entendre qu'il n'a qu'une sortie et qu'il en est la porte. Etendu dans la vase, le malheureux *Samaké* gémissait: «Qui donc va me sauver de ses griffes terribles et de ses mâchoires puissantes?» Un fourmilion tout au haut de l'antre guettait mouches et fourmis au fond de son entonnoir; il eut pitié de l'homme et travaillant des deux cornes, fit si bien qu'un rayon de soleil vint ranimer l'espoir du *Samaké*. «Serai-je sauvé?» dit-il au fourmilion. Deux pincées de sable furent la réponse et il comprit. Travaillant des deux mains, il aida le fourmilion, la fissure s'aggrandit, il put passer et s'évada. Quand, épuisé par la faim, le caïman rentra dans son antre, il fut déçu, car il n'y trouva pas sa proie. Pour ne pas encourir la malédiction de leur ancêtre les descendants de ce *Samaké* respectent, vénèrent le *géré* ou fourmilion et c'est leur *tné*. D'autres *Samakés* ont l'éléphant *(sama)* pour *tné*.

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Ces quelques légendes suffisent; elles nous prouvent toutes que, si le Bambara ne croit avoir avec son *tné* qu'un simple lien de fraternité, d'amitié, de reconnaissance et nullement un lien de parenté réelle et physique, il n'en manque pas moins d'attribuer à tout ce qui l'entoure, aux animaux et aux végétaux, de la raison et de la passion. Dans la nature, il ne trouve pas un matériel pur, il prête à un peu tout des sentiments humains, à tout et en tout il voit une force, une puissance, un insaisissable qu'il ne sait définir et qui pense, qui aime, qui gémit, et qui pleure.

Le *tné* Bambara diffère encore du *totem* du Peau Rouge et de l'Australien: il ne crée aucun empêchement de mariage entre les lignées d'un même *tné* ou de *tné* différents. Chacun va prendre femme là où il la trouve et où bon lui semble, et par les alliances, les lignées se mélangent, se croisent et s'entrecroisent. Sans se confondre pourtant, car l'époux conservant son nom ou *diamou*, conserve aussi son *tné* sans prendre celui de l'épouse. Quant aux enfants, ils ont pour *tné* celui du père dont ils portent le nom ou *diamou* et celui-là seul.

Le *tné* Bambara n'est rien moins qu'un *tabou*. Le mot lui même est des plus vagues, il est difficile de le rendre en notre langue française. Il implique avant tout une prescription prohibitive, un ordre de ne pas faire, de ne pas agir, et chaque fois qu'une autorité compétente, un génie supposé, un *boli* par exemple (qui parle et rend ses oracles par la bouche d'un hérault, d'un interprète, le *djélima*) ou un prêtre des génies *(djinés)* censés présider à la garde des éléments, le *dougoutigi* (qui du reste ne fait rien sans consulter son conseil et les sorciers), quand le sorcier (l'intermédiaire entre les hommes et le monde invisible) ou un prêtre des mânes des ancêtres[1], par suite une autorité ayant un caractère religieux, prescrit de ne pas manger, tuer, regarder un animal, de ne pas couper, briser, se servir d'un objet, de ne pas boire tel ou tel liquide: cet animal, cet objet et ce liquide revêtent une sorte de caractère sacré et le Bambara l'appelle un *tné*. Mais c'est là la définition que nous donne A. Lang du tabou au chapitre III de son ouvrage «Mythes, cultes et religions», et Nicolay au chapitre II du tome I de son ouvrage «Histoires des croyances, mœurs, coutumes» le dit aussi: «Etre tabou c'est être marqué du signe pieux.»

Les *tné* ou tabous sont légions en pays Bambara. Non seulement chaque lignée a les siens, les *goua* ou familles, les confréries, les villages, les individus, les génies et les plantes ont aussi les leurs. Beaucoup sont stables en ce sens qu'ils se perpétuent de génération en génération; d'autres, au contraire, sont instables, ils passent, tombent, disparaissent, on s'en débarrasse pour peu qu'ils soient gênants, tout ici dépend de l'autorité d'où ils émanent.

Les tabous se peuvent diviser en cinq groupes. Aux tabous de lignées viennent se joindre les tabous de familles, ceux des génies *djinés* et des génies *boli*, ceux enfin des plantes. Les tabous de lignées dont j'ai donné quelques légendes (v. p. 18 suiv.), sont stables, ils se passent de génération en génération et ne peuvent disparaître.

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[1] Cette appellation me paraît plus juste. Sans doute c'est le *gouatigi* ou chef de famille qui accomplit ces sacrifices, mais celui-ci n'est pas toujours ce que nous disons en français père de famille. Il n'est pas toujours marié; si toute la famille sauf la mère, les frères et les sœurs l'appellent *m'fa* mon père, ce mot «père» doit être pris dans un sens très large, il n'est bien souvent qu'un grand-oncle, un oncle, un cousin.

Ceux-là incarnent l'idée de l'ancêtre, non pas en ce sens qu'ils se confondent et ne font qu'un, mais bien parce que l'animal ou la plante a sauvé la souche en le sauvant. Ils sont devenus leurs pères au sens large du mot, on les peut comparer à des armes posées sur un blason, le nom de l'ancêtre ou *diamou,* et un Bambara ne peut s'en débarrasser. A la suite d'un service rendu, l'ancêtre s'est lié au *tné* et le serment a rendu l'union si étroite que l'un disparaissant, l'autre disparaît . . . comment nier un ancêtre qu'on a eu, que l'on a et dont porte le nom ou *diamou!*

Les tabous de familles ont eux aussi leurs légendes, et rappellent ceux des lignées. Ils diffèrent pourtant; le service a été rendu à un membre de la famille et non plus à son chef. Egalement ils sont moins étendus et n'englobent qu'une partie de l'espèce ou de la race. Certains *Dambélé,* pour ne citer qu'un exemple, ne peuvent acheter, élever, tuer et manger un *da-n-fign* ou chien noir, ce qui ne les empêche pas de posséder, tuer, et manger un chien d'une autre couleur; un plat de chien fait même leurs délices dans les orgies en l'honneur des fétiches *Nia, Komo, Kono, Nama* etc. Le chien pour eux est tabou, mais le chien noir seulement et en voici la raison: Une famille *Dambélé* travaillait ses champs et chaque midi, la femme chargée de la cuisine allait lui porter la bouillie. Un beau jour, la cuisinière voyant son enfant endormi, le déposa sur la natte et partit . . . A peine est-elle au champ, que le gros chien noir arrive, jappant et pleurant, courant vers le village et revenant, pour japper et pleurer de plus bel. Ce manège intrigue tout le monde, chacun abandonne la houe et à la suite du chien retourne au village. Le logis a été la proie des flammes, ce n'est plus qu'un amas de cendres . . . «Mon enfant, mon enfant», crie aussitôt la mère, au désespoir, folle de douleur . . . Et le chien gambade autour d'elle, il lui pose les pattes sur les épaules, il la lèche, avec de joyeux grognements, il semble lui dire: «Ne crains rien, je l'ai sauvé.» Il l'avait sauvé de fait; voyant le feu au logis il songea à l'enfant, le prit délicatement dans sa gueule et le fut porter dans la case où se grillent les noix de karité. On l'y trouva sain et sauf, dormant profondément, et depuis ce jour, ils ont pris le chien noir pour *tné*; toute la famille le respecte et le vénère et leurs descendants le respectent et le vénèrent encore aujourd'hui.

Ces *tné* de familles deviennent parfois tabou pour tout le village. Là par exemple où le *Dambélé* du chien noir est puissant par le nombre et surtout par les alliances, les gens de lignées étrangères, par respect pour les anciens et pour ménager les susceptibilités des épouses et de leurs familles, se gardent d'élever ces chiens et d'en manger la chair. Peu à peu l'usage s'enracine, l'animal devient pour tous un *tné* ou tabou.

Il est loin pourtant d'avoir la stabilité de celui de la lignée. Une *Dambélé* mariée dans un village où le chien noir est admis, tout en s'abstenant le plus possible d'en manger la chair, ne tarde pas à ne pas le craindre. Peu à peu c'est l'oubli, un souvenir vague seul lui en reste: «*An dougou tné do*, pour le village d'où je sors il est tabou», et il lui semble qu'il ne l'est plus pour elle. Quant aux membres des lignées étrangères, ils l'abandonnent ordinairement dès qu'ils quittent le village et si, en vertu de l'habitude acquise, ils le conservent jusqu'à leur mort, leurs enfants le délaissent.

Portant son organisation dans le monde des invisibles, le Bambara leur prête des *tné* ou *tabos* qu'il fait siens. Non seulement les bois sacrés avec ce qu'ils renferment sont tabous, il est encore des façons de faire et d'agir qui déplaisent aux esprits, et des animaux ont le don de les mettre en colère. Une femme qui revient de la forêt avec son fagot de bois sur la tête, doit en défaire les liens avant d'entrer au village ou tout au moins sur la place publique. Ici, on enlève ses savates à la porte de la case d'entrée ou *b'lon* qui donne accès dans le village, et là, on ôte son bonnet; et jamais on ne siffle dans les ruelles, sans encourir la haine des invisibles. Les perdrix, et elles courent nombreuses dans les champs à l'entour des murs, ne doivent jamais pénétrer dans le village sinon mortes et déplumées, et les enfants qui les prennent dans leurs filets, n'enfreignent jamais cette coutume. Si, par malheur, une perdrix traverse le village en volant et caquette en passant, toute la population est en émoi et trois nuits de suite, hommes, femmes et enfants vont coucher à la belle étoile, souvent même, ceci dépend des oracles du sorcier, ils abandonnent leurs pénates et les vont construire un peu plus loin.

Les génies dits *boli* sont la terreur des femmes, des enfants et des non initiés, qui ne peuvent toucher à aucun objet servant au culte, qui ne peuvent pénétrer dans leurs bois sacrés et dans leurs sanctuaires. Les *bolis*[1] ont des *tné* qui sont tabou pour leurs possesseurs et leurs sacrificateurs et qui le deviennent encore parfois pour leurs enfants. L'un des plus curieux est le *Bara*, dont le *tné* ou tabou est la bière de mil ou *d'lo*. Son possesseur et son sacrificateur doivent s'abstenir de boire de la bière si possible, et si l'habitude est chez eux trop invétérée, ils prennent un bain complet avant de toucher au fétiche et de lui sacrifier. D'ordinaire le *tné* du *boli* est un animal et toute la famille le fait sien. Un rat palmiste, tout succulant qu'il soit pour un palais Bambara, ne sera jamais mangé par les possesseurs du *Bama-n-djigi* et leurs enfants: c'est le *tné* ou tabou du fétiche.

Je n'ai point trouvé de *tné* pour les animaux, mais beaucoup d'arbres ont les leurs, les plantes médicinales elles aussi, et quand on doit les employer pour ses besoins particuliers, il faut éviter de les mettre en contact avec ce qu'elles abhorrent ou sont supposées détester et qui aux yeux du noir n'est rien moins que leur *tné* ou tabou.

Hommes et femmes, jeunes et vieux doivent vénérer et respecter leurs *tné* et ceux des génies, aussi les enfants savent dès leurs plus tendres années qu'ils ne peuvent voir, tuer et manger tel et tel animal, qu'ils ne peuvent toucher, couper, briser tel et tel arbre, telle et telle plante, sous peine d'encourir ou la malédiction de l'ancêtre ou le courroux du génie et de perdre la vue.

La rigueur des châtiments qui pèsent sur tout noir oublieux des égards dus aux *tné* (à ceux de la lignée et à ceux des fétiches *boli* surtout) et par suite, la crainte de les encourir semble au premier abord bien tyrannique. Elle l'est moins pourtant qu'on ne se le figure, car le Bambara est fort bon casuiste quand sa personne et ses intérêts sont en jeu, et la manducation de certaines viandes, la prohibition de certains liquides mises à part, le reste est un jeu.

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[1] On entend par *boli* tout fétiche mauvais, par suite un objet servant de résidence à un esprit mauvais ou démon, v. chap. VII § 1.

Un *Dambelé*, par exemple, qui voit une bande de singes noirs dévaster ses champs et piller sa moisson, n'empêche nullement ses chiens de leur donner la chasse, et si un ami de lignée étrangère les vient aider et faire le coup de feu, il n'aura nul regret. Le *Djara* est plus confiant avec le lion, quand celui-ci dévaste ses troupeaux; il va à sa rencontre et le prie de s'en aller, ce qu'il fait toujours, dit le noir . .

Quand le cadavre d'un tabou est trouvé par un des gens de la lignée qu'il protège, il reçoit les honneurs de la sépulture ordinairement. Le *Djara* du lion le fait même avec pompe; les femmes pleurent, les tambours battent et les hommes vont lui offrir une pièce d'étoffe, dans laquelle on l'enroule avant de le déposer dans la fosse.

Ne pas voir son *tné*, pensera-t-on peut-être, doit être bien difficile . . .? Au Soudan on se dompte la vue dès ses plus tendres années par politesse. Un gendre baisse les yeux en présence de sa belle-mère, une bru, en présence de son beau-père, lui tourne le dos aux trois quarts par modestie, et quand un fiancé vient amadouer le papa de sa fiancée, celle-ci s'enfuit et va se cacher. Tout noir, pour peu qu'il soit poli, a le regard plongé on ne sait où, dans le vague, ou contemplant ses orteils, chaque fois qu'il salue quelqu'un et prend de ses nouvelles, il lui cause un quart d'heure sans le regarder jamais. On n'en demande pas plus pour le *tné*. Sans doute, en sa présence il se voile des deux mains . . . alors il joue à la jeune bru; entre voir et regarder il sait fort bien distinguer, il sait vous le dire à l'occasion pour peu qu'on l'accuse: «*Nè y'a yé tigné, n'ka, nè gné tount'a la, nè m'a flè.* Je l'ai vu, c'est certain, mais je n'y ai pas arrêté mon regard, je ne l'ai pas regardé.»

§ 3. Le *gnâma*.

La malédiction de l'ancêtre est, avant tout, ce qui rend le *tné* sacré: il n'est rien que le Bambara craigne tant. Etre maudit, et maudit de son père est le plus grand des maux, ses femmes le fuiraient, ses enfants rougiraient de lui donner le nom de père, ses amis l'abandonneraient, les gens du village trembleraient de lui adresser la parole, il lui faudrait s'enfuir. Et où ira-t-il? Le *gnâma* du père, le *gnâma* de l'ancêtre, du *tné* du fétiche s'attachera à ses pas, le suivra en tout lieu. Pour lui il ne reste que la souffrance; la maladie, la faim, la pauvreté et l'humiliation seront son partage et rebut de l'humanité, il mourra en désespéré.

Le mot *gnâma* est bien difficile à traduire. Son correspondant existe-t-il dans notre langue française? Le *gnâma* est une force, une puissance, ou, si l'on veut encore, une énergie, un fluide que possède tout homme, tout animal, tout être vivant, et qui ne disparaît jamais, car même après la mort, il continue d'exister. Cette énergie, ce fluide, c'est l'envoyé, le messager, l'émissaire de la haine, de la vengeance, de la justice, et il va là où le pousse une volonté, sa directrice et sa maîtresse, porter à tort ou à raison la malchance, la pauvreté, la maladie, la mort. Ce mot se rencontre à chaque instant sur les lèvres Bambara.

La chanson des jeunes filles incisées commence par ces mots:

Bo n' yé, gnâma, o gnâma, bo n' yé!
Eloignez-vous de moi gnâma, ô gnâma, éloignez-vous de moi!
Dankoun bâ la
(sc. Gnâma qui vous tenez) au grand angle de terre formé par deux sentiers qui se croisent.
Gnâma fambali, bo n' yé!
Gnâma qui tues, éloignez-vous de moi![1]

Ceux qui consultent les sorciers ont les oreilles rassasiées de ce mot: *Gnâma djougou bi é nofé.* Tu as un méchant *gnâma* à ta poursuite, évite donc et ceci et cela, tue une chèvre, une poule, un chien, pose un présent à tel endroit, des cauris, une noix de kola etc.... *Nonté i fa gnâma na ouli i la,* autrement le *gnâma,* la force vengeresse que possède ton père, se lèvera contre toi.

Toujours et toujours, ce mot *gnâma* a ce sens de force, de puissance, de fluide causant la maladie, la souffrance, la mort, et ce proverbe à lui seul est des plus expressifs: *Ni warani-n-kala ko,*

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[1] **Traduction.** Eloignez vous de moi, toute espèce de *gnâma*, qui vous tenez au grand *dankoun* (angle de terre formé par deux sentiers qui bifurquent, se coupent ou se croisent au sortir du village)! *Gnâma* qui tuez éloignez-vous de moi!

ka fa, gnâma si dé t'o la. Si la panthère (un tyran ayant la méchanceté de la panthère) dit: «Tuons-le», nous n'avons certes aucun *gnâma* à lui opposer (aucune force, énergie que nous puissions lui opposer pour contrebalancer la sienne, son *gnâma* à lui).

Les animaux ont aussi un *gnâma* et celui des oiseaux est des plus craints. Ils s'attaque de préférence aux petits enfants qui, dans ce cas, meurent dans des convulsions, et toute méprise est impossible, car les mains et les pieds se crispent à la façon d'une patte d'oiseau. Au temps de l'hivernage, sans doute parce qu'ils nichent, ils trouvent leur nourriture en abondance et sont gros, gras, vigoureux, on les croit plus méchants, et les mamans nouent autour du cou de l'enfant à la mamelle une cordelette à 9 nœuds qui le met à l'abri de leurs *gnâma.* Morts, ils conservent encore leurs *gnâma,* et je me souviens qu'en novembre ou décembre 1907, tout le village de Songhobougou attribua une petite épidémie d'influenza à la mort d'un gros oiseau noir (le *djougo*), qu'un Européen tua dans un de leurs champs. «Nous souffrons des reins, nous souffrons de la gorge, nous toussons, disaient-ils avec mélancolie, toute la faute en est au chasseur. *Toubabou ko té vva? A ye djougo do fa en ka forola, djougo gnâma do . . .* La faute en est à l'Européen, il a tué un *djougo* dans nos champs et son *gnâma* s'appesantit sur nous.»

Chap. II.

L'animisme et ses conséquences.

§ 1. Croyances aux Esprits. § 2. Sorcellerie et Sacerdoce.
§ 3. Métamorphose. § 4. Le *Dja*.

§ 1. Croyances aux Esprits.

Le Bambara n'a pas déifié les forces de la nature. Si dans certains cas il leur témoigne du respect, s'il les craint, il les laisse sans prêtre, sans victime et sans autel: il n'est pas «naturiste» au sens strict du mot, sa vraie religion est l'animisme. D'un spiritualisme effréné, il voit des génies un peu partout, la brousse en est pleine, ils gîtent dans les arbres ou se prélassent à califourchon sur les branches, ils courent aux alentours des villages, ils clapotent dans les mares et les puits, ils se hissent sur les hautes roches, les termitières, les monticules, et beaucoup aiment s'accroupir aux angles formés par les chemins qui bifurquent ou se croisent. A l'intérieur des villages, on en trouve aussi qui se roulent dans les cendres du foyer et tisonnent le feu, alors que d'autres veillent sur les ustensiles du ménage — pots, calebasses, plats et toute la batterie de cuisine — et les *b'lon* (vestibules, cases d'entrée) donnant accès dans un village, dans une demeure, sont un nid à génies. Les habitations des particuliers n'en sont certes pas privées non plus; toutes ces cornes, tous ces chiffons, bouts de bois, calebasses, poussiéreux et noirs de fumée, pieusement suspendus au dessus des portes, aux poutrelles qui supportent la terrasse, sur les murs, un peu partout, sont une demeure de génie, ou un ex-voto en l'honneur de ceux qui voltigent dans les airs ou courent à travers les dépendances.

Le Bambara n'a pu s'élever à la conception d'un immatériel pur, et s'il veut à tout un je ne sais quoi d'invisible, d'insaisissable, il veut également à tout un matériel, un corps, aussi en arrive-t-il aux idées les plus étranges, dès que son imagination l'emporte vers le monde des esprits ou génies. Ceux-ci, de quelque nom qu'on les décore, se drapent dans des vêtements et amassent or et argent, ils ont sexe et procréent, ils sont aux prises avec les passions les plus basses, les plus viles et les plus méprisables. Jaloux, haineux, intempérants, ils accomplissent le mal par plaisir, et le noir vous les montre bien rarement bons, compatissants et miséricordieux. La vie qu'ils mènent n'a rien d'édifiant; ils roulent d'orgie en orgie et sont continuellement en luttes les uns contre les autres.

Les génies, affreux tyrans peut-on dire, toujours prêts à fondre sur la pauvre humanité, sont loin de posséder une même puissance et d'avoir une égale méchanceté. Le Bambara les divise en deux groupes bien distincts: ceux qui directement peuvent accorder un bienfait et, s'ils le veulent, faire le bien, et ceux qui ne peuvent que le mal, tout en pouvant s'abstenir néanmoins de le commettre. Dans les sacrifices, il fait aux deux les mêmes demandes et use des mêmes paroles et pourtant avec un sens différent. Ces mots «donne-nous de la pluie, des femmes, des enfants, l'aisance», dits aux premiers, sont une demande directe, et ils deviennent une demande indirecte, adressée à ceux du second groupe. Ils ont alors ce sens: «ne fais rien pour nous priver de la pluie, des femmes, des enfants, de l'aisance», en un mot si vous devez exercer votre méchanceté sur quelqu'un ou sur quelque chose, que ce ne soit pas sur nos personnes et sur ce qui nous appartient.

Les premiers sont les *gnéna*[1] plus connus sous le nom de *djiné* (mot arabe الجن importé par les musulmans) et les seconds les *gnâ* ou *boli*.

Les *gnéna* ou *djiné*, tels que les conçoit un noir, ne sont pas des anges au sens strict du mot, ce sont des êtres intermédiaires entre l'ange et l'homme. Non seulement ils mangent, boivent, procréent, courent après le bien être et la fortune, ils sont encore soumis aux souffrances physiques et morales qui affligent les humains, ils peuvent mourir, victimes de la haine, de la vengeance, de la méchanceté d'un plus fort. Leurs prêtres sont les *gnéna-n-sonna* ou *dougoutigi* (chefs du village au for religieux et bien souvent aussi au for civil) et les sacrifices qui leur sont offerts, s'adressent indirectement à l'Etre suprême d'une façon bien vague et bien confuse surtout en ce moment, car toute idée de la divinité disparaît chaque jour de plus en plus; mais on peut croire que, dans le principe, Dieu avait une part plus grande dans les honneurs rendus à ses lieutenants, à ceux qu'il à préposés à la garde des éléments, divisant entre eux l'empire de sa création.

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[1] Les femmes souvent et les enfants eux aussi désignent les *djiné* et les *boli* sous ce terme générique *gnéna*, les initiés se servent indistinctement de ces mots par devant les non-initiés. Il n'en reste pas moins vrai que le mot *gnéna* signifie génie dit *djiné* et le mot *gnâ* génie dit *boli*.

Les *djiné* restent soumis à l'autorité du Créateur, ils n'en ont pas secoue le joug, et tout méchants qu'ils soient, ils ne cessent pas d'être bons; ils peuvent, s'ils le veulent, faire le bien, protéger les hommes et leur accorder des bienfaits. S'ils punissent et châtient, ils ont avant tout à leur charge le bonheur de l'humanité. Ils sont les intermédiaires nécessaires entre l'homme et la divinité, et au détriment de Dieu, ils ont pris dans l'esprit du noir une place prépondérante, car chacun dans sa sphère ayant une autorité absolue, c'est à eux avant-tout qu'il faut s'adresser en tous ses besoins.

Tout *djiné* peut apparaître sous une forme humaine et dans ce cas, il se revêt d'une peau blanche et ne diffère pas de l'Européen. Que de fois j'ai HEARD ouï les femmes, les jeunes filles et les enfants chuchoter derrière moi: «*A gné dé djémé wala-wala déren! a boloou be iko djiniou ta tjoko, ne bi siran* = Ce qu'il a le globe, de l'œil blanc! ses bras ressemblent à ceux des génies, j'ai peur . . .» Ceci paraît curieux, et donne à penser que ce concept est postérieur à l'arrivée des blancs qu'ils regardent, et non sans raison, comme leur étant supérieurs en tout et pour tout. Je crois pourtant ce concept antérieur à notre arrivée, et les vieux Bambara qui me disent avoir vu Mage et Quintin retenus prisonniers à Ségou par le roi Amadou (أحمد) jusqu'à la mort de son père Omar el Hadj[1] pour des *djiné*, me semblent sincères, car une vieille légende assure que dans une de leurs immigrations, les Bambara longèrent un pays habité par des hommes blancs en tout semblables aux génies. J'ajouterai aussi que le blanc dans les sacrifices solennels est la couleur liturgique; poules, chèvres, moutons, noix de kola elles-mêmes, à moins d'impossibilité, sont de couleur blanche et sans doute à cause de l'idée qu'ils se font de la couleur du génie. Aux Européens de passage qui leur demandent l'hospitalité, ils font tout pour trouver une poule blanche à lui offrir, c'est, croient-ils, le plus grand honneur qu'ils leur puissent faire, à cause de la couleur de leur peau. Les vieux pensent du reste que nous avons, nous autres Français, commerce intime avec les génies et connaissons leurs noms de famille ou *diamou*; pour peu qu'ils soient à l'aise avec vous, ils vous supplient de leur indiquer l'endroit où se doit creuser un puits, persuadés que nous savons où gîtent les esprits préposés à la garde des eaux. N'avons-nous pas avec eux un air de ressemblance?

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[1] El-Hadj-Omar = Omar le pèlerin, ainsi appelé parce qu'il a vu La Mecque, passa à Ségou vers 1835, 1837 ou 1839, avant la mort de Tjéyolo qui eut lieu vers 1839. Voir l'Introduction.

Les *gná* ou *boli* ont aussi un sexe, ils procréent et fondent famille. Supérieurs aux génies en puissance et en méchanceté, ils ne peuvent directement que le mal et sont en lutte ouverte avec Dieu, qui, sans rien enlever à leur intelligence et à leur liberté, les a condamnés à souffrir et à souffrir les peines du feu. Ils dressent continuellement des embûches aux *djiné* pour faire avorter leurs plans bons ou mauvais, ils se plaisent à tourmenter les hommes, et le Bambara les craint beaucoup. (Le culte des *djiné* n'est rien, comparé à celui qu'on leur rend.) Ceux de grosse envergure ont toute une escorte pour les servir et leur rendre les honneurs, et l'impôt de capitation: 3,50 frcs par tête n'est rien comme on le verra plus loin, comparé aux sommes que versent nos noirs pour suspendre leurs coups et ne pas encourir leurs courroux.

Comme le *djiné*, le *boli* apparaît sous une forme humaine, mais il est répugnant, hideux à voir. Il glace d'effroi tous ceux à qui il accorde cette faveur, il a le corps affreusement noir, et son visage disparaît dans une flamme surmontée de cornes.

Dans les sacrifices la couleur liturgique est le noir et le rouge, jamais on ne lui offre une victime de couleur blanche, sauf dans un sacrifice indirect nécessité par une offrande dite *saraka*, ce qui est assez rare.

§ 2. Sorcellerie et Sacerdoce.

Entouré d'esprits, de génies toujours en quête de lui nuire, le Bambara se croit vite la victime de l'un d'eux. Ceci ne contribue pas peu à lui donner une certaine endurance dans la souffrance, je dirai même qu'il la supporte ordinairement, non pas avec stoïcisme, mais avec la torpeur de l'animal. Que faire de fait contre un mal qu'on ne peut conjurer, sinon le supporter? que faire contre un puissant qu'on ne peut désarmer? Sentant pourtant au fond de son être un besoin de jouir (et jouir pour lui consiste à boire, à manger, à dormir et à procréer), il a horreur de toute souffrance et ne néglige rien pour s'en mettre à l'abri. Afin de pouvoir vivre tranquille, il rougit de sang un peu tout et se couvre le corps de gris-gris ou porte bonheur, de talismans qui changent le cours des choses et même de la nature, d'amulettes enfin pour se prémunir contre le poison, pour éviter un accident, pour faire avorter les maléfices des méchants, pour éloigner les *gnâma* des génies, des vivants et des morts, et ne donner aucune prise à ces forces ignorées qu'il trouve un peu partout dans la nature. Pour ceci, il s'adresse aux prêtres des *djiné* et des *boli,* aux sorciers surtout, qui ont commerce intime avec les génies et sont les médiateurs entre l'homme et tout le monde invisible.

Etant donné l'idée qu'il se fait du monde visible et invisible lequel ne diffère guère de ce qu'il se croit être lui-même, le Bambara, tout naturellement et sans effort aucun, est venu à penser qu'on peut voir les génies, comprendre leur langage et converser avec eux, qu'on peut enfin soumettre les forces de la nature et les tenir en son pouvoir. Par les offrandes et les sacrifices qu'il offre ou fait offrir par l'intermédiaire d'un prêtre, il peut mitiger ses craintes et ses terreurs, en captant les bonnes grâces d'un esprit, mais au faible, facilement on retire ses faveurs, il faut être l'égal de celui que l'on craint et si possible le surpasser.

La force, le *fanga,* pour employer son terme, est ce qui règle la ligne de conduite d'un chacun vis à vis du voisin; pour se faire obéir, il faut d'abord se faire craindre, et seul le puissant y arrive et voit tout plier devant lui.

Aimant à se prendre lui-même comme terme de comparaison en ses raisonnements, le noir qui a vu des gens de basse extraction, de famille pauvre, réussir à accroître leur avoir et à devenir riches au point de posséder serviteurs et esclaves et de s'imposer à tout un village, à toute une tribu, à tout un peuple, a pensé que certains individus peuvent, eux aussi, se créer des intelligences dans le monde des esprits, en devenir les égaux, et même leur commander et s'en faire obéir. Ceci, il le croit fermement et si les sorciers sont nombreux, plus nombreux sont encore ceux qui briguent de l'être. N'arrive pourtant pas qui veut à posséder la science occulte qui vaut le diplôme, le brevet de capacité, indépendamment de certaines mixtures de cendres, d'intestins et de sang qu'il faut avaler, de certains collyres repoussants, comme de la chassie de chiens qu'il faut se glisser sous les paupières pour voir les invisibles. Il faut de plus, à moins d'être initié par son père ou son frère, compter avec sa bourse; c'est là un art qui se paie et grassement! Une bonne mémoire également est nécessaire à tout aspirant, pour se graver dans la tête les formules, les passes, les rites, et les intelligents seuls y réussissent.

Les sorciers sont loin de se valoir et de procéder d'une façon identique. Les uns lisent l'avenir et découvrent les secrets dans le ventre des poules, les autres jouent avec des osselets, des galets, des cauris[1] qu'ils jettent sur le sol, comptent et recomptent, ou tracent sur de la cendre répandue des signes cabalistiques, sur lesquels ils promènent l'index, allant et revenant, comme au jeu de l'oie. Certains opèrent avec une calebasse remplie d'eau aux trois quarts, qu'ils déposent sur un *n'gô* (sorte de rouleau de serviette, de bracelet, fait de racines tressées) qu'ils lavent fréquemment dans le sang des victimes. Cette manière de faire est la moins compliquée. Quand la calebasse, que l'on penche à droite, à gauche, en avant et en arrière, se trouve bien assise sur le *n'gô* et ne peut plus être remuée sans entraîner son support, il suffit de lui donner trois chiquenaudes du médius de la main droite, en posant les demandes . . . et l'esprit répond en un doux murmure que saisit l'assistance, mais que seul comprend l'opérateur. En un mot, le

ez rare.

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[1] blancs servant de monnaie.

bon sorcier tranche par l'intelligence, la ruse et la fourberie, sur le reste de ses congénères; l'imbécile végète et n'est guère achalandé, la masse va au plus roublard, qui vite acquiert grande renommée, s'il est diplomate et sait ménager à l'occasion et la chèvre et le chou. Tout en restant spécialiste (les sorciers le sont tous un peu), il ne tarde pas à cumuler, et non content de prédire l'avenir, on le voit tour à tour, médecin, vétérinaire, pharmacien et pas de jour qu'il ne trouve une recette nouvelle, pour composer ses philtres amoureux, ses amulettes, ses portebonheur et ses talismans. Souvent aussi, un besoin de gloire le force à se produire, et on le voit prescrire à une famille, à un village, à toute une région, des sacrifices, des *saraka,* sorte d'offrande ou d'impôt qui d'ordinaire se pose à l'angle de terre formé par deux sentiers qui bifurquent ou se croisent.

La pratique de la sorcellerie en pays Bambara est ce qui déroute le plus notre logique. Pendant que les uns s'adressent directement aux génies *djinés* et commencent leurs formules par une invocation au Créateur — qu'ils appellent *An tigi, min yé fen bê tigi yé* «Notre maître qui est le maître de toutes choses», ou *An tigi Alla* «Dieu notre maître», ce qui donne à supposer que dans le principe Dieu avait bien dans le culte la part la plus large — d'autres s'adressent à la fois aux génies *djiné* et aux génies *boli,* invoquant tantôt Dieu et tantôt le reniant et même l'insultant dans une seule et même séance. Une troisième classe est plus catégorique, elle laisse de côté Dieu et les génies *djiné,* pour s'adresser aux génies *boli* et à eux seuls. Vrais globe-trotters, ceux-ci, ils vont d'un village à l'autre avec leurs *boli* parleurs — car ils parlent, dit-on — enfermés dans une peau de bouc, et plus souvent dans une peau de chat sauvage, aux pattes duquel se balance une petite clochette qui annonce à tous leur arrivée. D'ordinaire, ils lisent l'avenir dans les intestins des poules, c'est ce morceau qui les aide à tirer la bonne aventure et leurs horoscopes.

Honoré parce que craint et redouté, le sorcier voit tous ses ordres et toutes ses prescriptions suivis à la lettre. Rien de sérieux ne se fait sans passer par lui. On le consulte pour tout, même pour un changement de demeure, de village, pour un voyage de quelque durée, et tour à tour défilent devant lui les hommes et les femmes, les villages entiers par leurs délégations. Il tient en ses mains le peuple Bambara, c'est lui qui le dirige et le force à l'obéissance, en prédisant aux récalcitrants la maladie, des fléaux de toutes sortes, la mort, et de quoi n'est-il pas capable pour conserver son prestige? S'il compose les philtres amoureux, les talismans, les amulettes etc., il compose encore mieux les poisons, il connait le strophantus, et ses mixtures d'intestins de hyènes, d'excréments de cadavres humains et de bave prise dans leurs bouches, ont des effets foudroyants.

Ils se jalousent tous, ces faiseurs de pluie et de beau temps, qui prédisent l'avenir, jettent les sorts et guérissent les malades; il n'y a pas d'union entre eux et la lâcheté étant pour chacun la vertu principale, il n'y a pas à craindre pour le moment de les voir pousser à la révolte. Pourtant, qu'on ne se fasse pas illusion, ce sourire bon garçon sur les lèvres du Bambara ne donne nullement la note exacte de ses sentiments. Il hait le Français parce que vainqueur, il le hait surtout parce qu'il lui défend de faire des esclaves, d'en vendre et même d'en posséder, parce qu'il ne peut se rendre justice à sa guise, et les vieux, jadis si puissants, sentant tomber peu à peu leur autorité, ont la rage au cœur. Ils tremblent et ont peur, ils craignent nos fusils et nos canons, dont les grondements résonnent encore à leurs oreilles; ils ont de la France et de sa puissance une idée plus grande encore que n'est la réalité: mais qu'il vienne un jour un sorcier hardi, entreprenant, audacieux, il réussira pour peu qu'il arrive à en imposer, à jeter entre tous ces groupes disparates une union passagère. Nous verrons alors, sans doute aucun, de ces soulèvements partiels si fréquents chez le musulman, qui a au fond du cœur la haine de tout ce qui n'est pas Islam, qui n'est jamais si heureux que de pouvoir marcher à la suite d'un marabout fanatique, et que certains Français bien intentionnés, je veux le croire, mais refusant de constater des milliers et milliers de faits probants, continuent néanmoins à aider et à choyer, parce qu'ils ignorent le Coran et sa doctrine. Poussés par je ne sais quelle philantropie naïve, ils réchauffent un serpent qui se retournera contre nous chaque fois qu'il se sentira la force de relever la tête, et ils préparent à toutes nos colonies, dans un avenir plus ou moins prochain, des jours sanglants.

Le sacerdoce païen jette lui aussi sur son prêtre une auréole de force et de puissance, celui-ci devient l'intime de son fétiche qui, souvent, condescend à prendre son *diamou* ou nom de famille comme le *dasiri* ou génie protecteur des villages, par exemple, lequel est suivant le nom de son possesseur un *Djara*, un *Kouloubali*, un *Tankara* etc. etc.

Au Bambara intelligent qui, pour une raison ou pour une autre, ne peut être sorcier, un moyen reste encore d'être craint et de devenir puissant; c'est d'être *gnéna sonna* soit *dougoutigi* (prêtre du fétiche protecteur des villages dit *dasiri*), d'être *gnâtigi* soit *bolitigi* (chef de *boli*), ou pour le moins d'appartenir à l'état-major qui entoure tout fétiche *boli* de grosse envergure.

Il est un frein pourtant à cette soif de *fanga* ou de puissance. La charge de *gnéna sonna* est l'apanage d'une famille qui se la transmet de frère à frère par droit d'héritage, et tout noir ne parvient pas à se procurer un *boli* — un *boli* de grosse envergure qui le pose parmi les siens, j'entends — bien qu'il s'achète. Il se doit d'abord composer pour le *boli* convoité un état-major, dont les membres seront pris dans le village même, et on n'y parvient pas toujours, tant on se craint mutuellement et tant on a peur du poison. En plus du prix à verser, et celui-ci varie entre 25 et 30 frcs, il y a les frais du *konio* ou noces du fétiche (on se marie à son *boli*), qui montent sa valeur à 60, 80 et parfois 100 frcs, et un tas de formules liturgiques à se graver dans la mémoire. Il faut les savoir sur le bout des ongles, car manquer un signe, tronquer une formule, omettre un geste, fait facilement encourir la disgrâce du fétiche. Pour l'insouciant, il est inexorable, il le fait périr! Ajoutons encore qu'avant de se payer pareil luxe, on doit consulter le sorcier et prendre son avis, et si on n'est pas riche et déjà craint, il sait celui-ci poser son veto. Pour la masse des gens, il n'y a donc qu'une planche de salut: s'affilier aux sectes et au plus de sectes possibles. Par l'affiliation, ils méritent le titre de fils de *boli*, et se créent des relations, se font des amis parmi les puissants, les *bolitigi*, qui ont tout intérêt à les protéger, car non seulement ils paient aux maîtres une redevance annuelle de 80 à 160 cauris, ce qui est peu, mais ils fournissent encore les viandes et noix de kola des sacrifices, le *d'lo* ou bière des beuveries et orgies nocturnes, et sont une vraie providence.

§ 3. Métamorphose.

Le génie *djiné* ou *boli* peut, dit le noir, passer d'un corps dans un autre. Aujourd'hui barbotant dans une mare, enfermé dans un arbre ou assis sur une roche, demain, s'il le veut, il établira son gîte dans une queue de vache, dans une corne, dans un chiffon crasseux, et jamais, quelque soit son gîte, il ne se trouve à l'étroit. Il le compare au vent, à un souffle qui entre, pénètre dans un lieu par la moindre fissure et le remplit. Le génie a pourtant un corps, il est pourvu d'organes, il boit, il mange, il procrée, il ne diffère de l'homme que par sa subtilité, et, persuadé que certaines gens sont parvenus à le dompter et à lui commander, le noir pouvait-il ne pas arriver à cette croyance qu'il lui était possible de se donner à lui-même une subtilité analogue? Toujours est-il qu'il croit à la métamorphose, et c'est en pénétrant dans un animal, dans une plante, ou en se transformant en animal, en plante etc., que le méchant parvient le plus souvent à se venger, à assouvir sa haine et même à faire le mal pour le simple plaisir de le commettre.

Bon nombre de sorciers ont ce privilège et ils ne sont pas les seuls! Des castes entières ont le pouvoir de se métamorphoser et les *Koulés*, pour n'en pas citer d'autres, qui creusent les pirogues et réparent les calebasses fêlées, se peuvent tous changer en hyènes. Les fils du *Siri*, les affiliés à la secte du *boli* de ce nom, et appelés *souba* [1], parce qu'ils commettent leurs forfaits pendant la nuit, se changent en hyènes pour déterrer les cadavres et les manger, en *gingin* (hibou, chouette) pour boire le sang des dormeurs et des dormeuses. Le sang des jeunes filles surtout est d'un goût exquis, dit-on, et dans l'impossibilité de pénétrer dans un logis sous une forme matérielle, ils se changent en un souffle si subtil qu'ils traversent les murs et les terrasses.

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[1] *Souba*, de *sou* nuit, *ba* grande, sous entendu *mo* homme = homme de la grande nuit, hommes qui opèrent en pleine nuit, et nullement sorcier nocturne. Également aux yeux des noirs ce n'est pas un loup garou, c'est une réalité.

Tous les visages défigurés par une cicatrice de phlégmons et de chancres, se disent victimes d'un *souba;* les jambes pourries par la syphilis, s'en croient la victime aussi, et tout individu atteint d'une érésypèle, s'en prend aux adeptes du *Siri* ou *souba.*

Aux *souba* viennent se joindre les *gné-fla*[1], hommes à deux yeux, hommes à double vue et ainsi appelés parce qu'ils voient le monde des invisibles et connaissent les secrètes pensées des hommes, sans avoir à se métamorphoser. On compte parmi eux des bons et des mauvais, ceux qui usent de leur privilège pour arrêter les coups des *souba* et protéger leurs semblables, et ceux qui ne s'en servent que pour causer du dommage au prochain. Les bons comme les mauvais: pouvant abuser de leur puissance, le noir les met sur une même ligne, et les *souba* étant eux aussi *gné-fla* presque toujours, on les confond dans une même crainte et une même haine.

Tout individu métamorphosé conserve son intelligence et sa raison, mais il est dominé ou par un instinct bon ou par un instinct méchant qui détruit sa volonté, qui l'anesthésie, et il lui est impossible de résister à cette force, à cette puissance qui le saisit et le pousse à agir. Sa clémence ou sa furie s'exerce sur le premier venu, il n'épargne même pas les êtres qui lui sont chers: ses enfants, ses femmes, ses amis, deviennent bien souvent ses victimes. Une excuse lui reste: il ne se souvient de rien — et pour cause — et s'il s'en souvient, il lui semble qu'il a rêvé.

La secte du *Siri,* qui admet les femmes dans ses rangs, cache ses mystères d'un secret si profond qu'il est impossible, du moins pour le moment, d'en avoir une idée exacte et bien précise; également, impossible de connaître un *souba* sans être *souba* soi même, on ne peut que les supposer. Si quelqu'un dénonçait un congénère comme étant vraiment fils du *Siri,* il se déclarerait lui-même adepte de la secte, et la vengeance des gens retomberait sur les deux, et sur l'accusateur et sur l'accusé.

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[1] Ceux-ci ont un grisgris pendu à la ceinture pour se rendre invisible. Privés de leur grisgris, ils sont sans puissance.

La croyance aux *souba*, aux *gné-fla*, à tous ces gens qui se métamorphosent, est des plus puériles, et avec tous les Européens je l'ai traité de mythe, de conte à dormir debout, et d'épouvantail aux mains des hommes pour terrifier les femmes et les enfants. Force m'est actuellement de déclarer le contraire: c'est une croyance générale, elle est fortement ancrée dans les esprits, et quiconque chercherait à prouver à un Bambara l'impossibilité de la métamorphose, passerait à ses yeux pour un sot, elle est pour lui une réalité [1].

Pour s'en convaincre, il suffit d'assister aux sacrifices; qu'ils soient offerts aux génies *djiné*, aux génies *boli* ou aux mânes des ancêtres, toujours revient cette parole: «Délivre-nous des *souba* et des *gné-fla*». L'une des principales raisons d'être des fétiches *boli* est même celle-là, et il s'en trouve dont la fonction spéciale et principale est de faire la guerre au génie *Siri*. Le *Nama*, *boli* de grande envergure, très honoré, très vénéré, en vogue, dirais-je bien, dans le cercle de Ségou et chez toutes les peuplades Mandé, est de ce nombre. Le *Ngouansa*, connu surtout dans le Worodougou a, lui aussi, cette spécialité. De temps en temps, il fait son apparition dans le cercle de Ségou, et son possesseur ne manque pas de faire ses petites affaires et d'arrondir sa bourse. De tous côtés on accourt vers lui avec poules, chèvres et noix de kola, et j'ai vu des ces *Ngouansa tigi* ou maîtres de *Ngouansa*, rouges de sang, ayant passé la matinée entière à sacrifier. Debouts, face à l'Orient et les poings sur les hanches, ils hurlent à tue-tête avant de trancher le cou des victimes: «*Souba*, vous êtes des chiens, vous êtes moins encore, des excréments de chiens, *oubou bo*.»

Le nom des *souba* et des *gné-fla* se rencontrerait-il si souvent sur les lèvres de nos noirs, les familles, les villages, les sectes, verseraient-ils tant de sang, offriraient-ils tant de noix de kola, s'ils n'y croyaient et sincèrement? Non seulement le passage de la chenille en chrysalide pour devenir papillon est pour eux une preuve irréfragable de la possibilité d'une métamorphose. Ils vous diront encore que la termite ailée, «cette éphémère qui, le soir, au temps de l'hivernage, accourt par essaims autour des photophores jetant les ailes un peu partout, dans le potage et les assiettes», s'enfonce dans le sol, gonfle comme un grain de sorgho, pousse des racines et devient un gracieux arbuste, puis un bel arbre pour peu que l'incendie l'épargne. J'ignore le nom scientifique de cet arbuste, de cet arbre, le noir l'appelle *Sandéré.*

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[1] La secte du *Siri*, dont les affiliés sont dans le cercle de Ségou, des *souba*, chez les Malinkés, les gens du Worodougou etc. etc. les *soubaga*, ont un caractère commun avec les anthropophages de l'Ouganda, les *Basézi*, et les anthropophages de l'Ouchirombo, les *Baswézi*. Ces anthropophages ne sont pas une race à part (dans une famille certaine peuvent être *Basézi* ou *Baswézi* et d'autres ne l'être pas), mais une secte analogue à celle des *souba* Bambara et capable des mêmes transformations et métamorphoses. Bien que sans données précises, cette coïncidence me fait pencher à croire qu'il en est ainsi des anthropophages de l'Oubanghi.

§ 4. Le *Dja.*

C'est, ici encore, un mot bien difficile à traduire en notre langue française. Nous traduisons par *dja* les mots: fantômes, images, photographies, ombres, ce qui est réfléchi par l'eau, un miroir; mais il a d'autres acceptions, et dans ces phrases par exemple: *a dja tikéra, a dja oulila, misiou dja oulila,* il n'est question ni d'ombre ni d'images, elles signifient: «il a peur, il est affolé, les vaches sont affolées». Aux yeux du Bambara, le *dja* n'est pas seulement l'ombre, l'image, le contour des objets, il est encore ce qui les produit... C'est une force, une puissance commune aux êtres de tous les règnes, et bien qu'il ne puisse être comparé à un génie, à l'âme, il n'en reste pas moins dans sa pensée une sorte d'être qu'il est incapable de définir, mais qui a son existence et peut agir de par lui-même.

Les *gné-fla,* dont j'ai dit un mot en parlant des *souba,* sont craints, parce qu'ils voient les génies et nos pensées intimes, et aussi par ce qu'ils usent de la magie sympathique, en s'emparant de ce qui produit l'ombre des personnes et des choses. Le Bambara est persuadé lui qu'on peut prendre son *dja* et dès lors, il ne projette plus son ombre. Si les gens, par crainte de l'Européen et pour certains, parce qu'ils ont été en long contact avec lui, posent facilement devant un appareil photographique, on peut néanmoins dire que, d'une façon générale, ils n'aiment pas à être photographiés. Les vieux surtout font des difficultés et se montrent récalcitrants, dès qu'ils voient un objectif. Ils ont dans la tête que leur *dja* va s'échapper d'eux pour aller impressionner la plaque et y laisser sa forme, le portrait, ils pensent qu'une partie de leur être va se trouver aux mains de l'opérateur, et qu'ils seront à sa merci, ils craignent que, le retenant, ils ne perdent leur ombre et ne soient dans l'impossibilité de la projeter désormais et deviennent idiots.

Bien qu'il ne puisse rendre compte de son concept à ce sujet, le Bambara cousine de près ici avec les théories de Mr. de Rochas dont parle Mgr Méric au tome II de son ouvrage «Imagination et Prodiges». Le *dja* est quelque chose d'analogue à ce que nos psychologues anglais appellent le double et nos français le fantôme. On le peut regarder comme étant une sorte de fluide, plus ou moins conscient, qui s'échapperait de son objet animé ou inanimé sans s'en séparer complètement, pour en donner l'ombre, la forme extérieure, les contours, et toutes ces impressions de crainte, de douleur, de joie, de tristesse qui se réflètent sur le visage de quelqu'un, ou s'en échappant, s'en séparant, s'en détachant complètement, conserve néanmoins la forme extérieure de l'objet qu'il a abandonné. Sorti de son objet, le *dja* reste dans le voisinage ou s'en va vagabonder au loin, et l'être qu'il a quitté voit ce double ou simplement le sent, il peut même être inconscient de son existence.

Le rêve, pour le Bambara, n'est pas un effet de l'imagination, il est une réalité. Pendant son sommeil, son *dja*, dit-il, s'enfuit parfois pour aller vagabonder au loin, et dès lors il voit et cause réellement avec un ami, il assiste à une vraie fête, à une vraie beuverie. Se sentir au réveil la gorge sèche et le ventre creux, ne l'étonne point, car son *dja* seul a vu, bu, mangé, s'est réjoui, et ce qu'il a vu, bu, mangé, n'était rien moins que les *dja*, eux-mêmes, des personnes et des choses, et rien de plus subtil, de plus impondérable.

Le rêve est bien trompeur et sa réalisation extérieure peu fréquente, et pourtant le fait se produit. Certains noirs sont fameux, parce qu'ils savent interpréter les rêves, science que tout le monde ne peut avoir, ou encore parce qu'ils savent rêver et prophétiser un avenir plus ou moins prochain. Ils ont une arrière boutique pas mal achalandée; on les consulte, on leur porte des cauris. Certains même ne rêvent jamais d'une histoire intéressante sans courir les avertir, et comme ils prennent leurs précautions dans la suite pour ne point rater une aubaine annoncée ou pour éviter un malheur qui menace, ils aident, sans s'en douter, à la réalisation de leurs rêves, et ceci ne contribue pas peu à les affermir dans leurs croyances fausses.

Chap. III.

Idées générales du Bambara sur la vie humaine.

§ 1. La maladie. § 2. La mort. § 3. La réviviscence des âmes.

§ 1. La maladie.

Sentant au fond de son être une soif toujours inassouvie de bonheur, un besoin intense et pressant de vivre pour jouir, le Bambara se révolte contre toute souffrance et physique et morale. Celle-ci lui semble contre nature et au moindre malaise, il se dit et se croit la victime d'un méchant, la victime d'un ennemi qui se venge, et il s'en prend sur le champ, au monde des invisibles et à ceux qui ont commerce intime avec celui-ci.

Je dirai plus, non seulement la maladie n'est pas naturelle, le Bambara la regarde encore comme une force plus ou moins consciente, qui le vient torturer, et par crainte de lui déplaire ou de déplaire au génie, à la force supérieure qui l'a prise à son service et s'en sert au gré de ses caprices, il s'entoure de précautions pour annoncer la maladie de l'un des siens. Quand on demande à un noir des nouvelles de sa santé, sa première réponse sera qu'il est bien portant, et si un membre de la famille est cloué sur la natte, à l'agonie, il vous dit encore: «*Toro si t'âla*[1], il ne souffre d'aucun mal.»

Les malades ont une confiance illimitée en leurs sorciers, qui tous sont et médecins et apothécaires, et ils se soumettent aveuglément et sans discuter jamais, à leurs ordres et prescriptions. Ils reçoivent d'eux des herbes et des feuilles dont les infusions ou les décoctions sont prescrites comme breuvage ou pour se lotionner, mais le plus souvent ils voient les sorciers leur masser le corps et le caresser doucement, les oindre d'huile et de graisse, leur cracher sur la partie malade en récitant une formule. Toujours, c'est évident, ils se voient augmenter de quelques unités le nombre de leurs gris-gris et de leurs talismans.

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[1] *Toro* souffrance, *si* aucune, *te* n'est pas, *â la* sur lui (*la* sur).

Le sorcier consulté par un malade, lui expose la nature de son mal, lui déclare s'il est victime de la haine d'un fétiche au service d'un méchant, d'un envieux, d'un ennemi ou se vengeant lui même, s'il est victime d'un *gnâma,* ce fluide, cette force vengeresse que tout génie, tout homme, tout animal, et les vivants et les morts possèdent. Dans les cas graves le patient reçoit l'ordre de sacrifier force poules et bien souvent des chèvres et des boucs, mais dans les cas bénins ou jugés tels, les remèdes sont des plus enfantins: dois-je en citer quelques-uns?

Pour guérir un mal de tête, le sorcier enfonce en terre la lame de son couteau et dépose un *cauri*[1] au pied du manche. Après avoir craché sur le *cauri* et le manche du couteau, il impose les mains sur le patient qui le fixe, il débite une formule, et sa prière achevée, le malade, s'il n'est pas guéri, doit du moins ressentir un mieux sensible, ce qu'il avoue toujours: «*A kaf'sa san,* je vais mieux maintenant.»

Pour guérir les taies, une pincée de crotte de hyène pulvérisée et mise dans l'œil est, dit-on, souverain. Parce que cher et rare toutes les bourses ne peuvent s'approprier le remède, on le remplace par de la poudre de *cauris.* On obtient cette poudre en frottant un *cauri* sur la pierre à moudre le grain de mil, opération fort longue. Pour s'y astreindre, et les vieilles s'y astreignent, il faut plus que de l'entraînement, il faut une patience ou mieux une passivité qui ne se peut définir.

Dans les ophtalmies et autres maux d'yeux, on se graisse les tempes, les sourcils et le haut des joues avec du *kana* délayé dans un peu de beurre de *karité*[2]. Le *kana* est toujours enfermé dans un sabot de taureau ou dans une corne de bœuf, cornes et sabots qu'enjolivent souvent des *cauris* et sur lesquels on fait couler de temps en temps le sang d'une victime. Si le mal est une force, une puissance qui tourmente les humains, le remède est également une autre force, une autre puissance qu'on oppose à la première et qui va lutter contre elle. Pour s'attirer ses bonnes grâces et la voir efficace, on le nourrit de sang. Le *kana* est d'un usage courant; il guérit un peu tous les maux, et de même que chaque fétiche *boli* possède, enfermé dans une corne, son *korti* ou poudre malfaisante, de même aussi il possède son *kana,* ou remède guérisseur. Autant de fétiches, autant de *kana* différents, et comme indépendamment de ceux-ci, les sorciers ont encore les leurs, les *kana* sont légion et ne se comptent pas. Impossible de dire ce qui entre dans la composition d'un *kana,* les noirs eux-mêmes l'ignorent; ils savent qu'il y entre de la poudre de charbon et c'est tout. Un sorcier de *Kolo. n. kulona,* très consulté pour les orchites, varicocèles etc. etc. se sert pour composer son *kana* de lampyres séchés au soleil et pilés avec une poignée de charbon de bois.

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[1] Petit coquillage blanc servant de menue monnaie, il en faut au moins quarante pour faire un sou ou 0 frc 05.

[2] *Karité* ou arbre à beurre, *Bassia Parkii,* genre des Sapotées.

Dans les plaies qui résultent d'une contusion par suite d'un coup ou d'une chute, on jette une poignée de cendre. Celle-ci s'obtient de feuilles sèches, cueillies le soir, en pleine nuit, sous les arbres à l'intérieur des buissons et au petit hasard, sans regarder.

Pour guérir du mal dit «tour de reins», on porte en guise de ceinture, un ou plusieurs nerfs de serpents. Un jabot de poule, exposé au soleil trois jours durant, puis taillé en tranches fines et avalé avec tout son contenu, vous développe l'appétit pour le reste de vos jours au point d'être insatiable. Contre les brûlures, un cataplasme en poils de lièvre et en barbes de plumes de pintade est souverain.

Contre la rage, nul besoin pour le Bambara d'Institut Pasteur et de sérum. Mordu par un chien enragé, il grimpe sur l'arbuste voisin, un ami vient qui le coupe, le tout tombe, roule sur le sol et la rage n'est plus à craindre, tout est conjuré. Une ficelle sur laquelle glisse un *cauri* et nouée autour des reins, préserve l'enfant d'une hématurie, et une cordelette à 7 ou 9 nœuds, le *tafo,* nouée autour du cou, vous délivre d'un goître, du croup, d'une laryngite, d'une toux opiniâtre etc. Le *tafo* est d'un usage courant, tout comme le *kana,* on l'emploie dans un peu toutes les maladies, il n'y a pas de mal qu'il ne puisse guérir. La femme stérile, pour devenir féconde, s'en noue un au poignet ou au biceps et quelle drôle de *tafo,* il est pris dans la peau de la main d'un singe.

Les enfants syphilitiques, couverts des boutons et pustules du *magnan* — c'est le nom dont on décore pour eux ce mal —, ont en guise de «crème Simon» la fiente de poule, c'est l'onguent des onguents.

La chaux est le spécifique des femmes enceintes; pour calmer les légers malaises qui d'ordinaire précèdent la maternité, elles se tracent de belles croix blanches sur le ventre ou sur la poitrine, entre les seins.

§ 2. De la mort.

Si la maladie n'est pas naturelle, à plus forte raison la mort. Aux yeux du Bambara il n'y a pas de mal comparable à celui-là, il le craint et son nom seul le fait trembler. Bien souvent quand il doit par nécessité annoncer un décès ou y faire allusion, il se sert d'une périphrase en présence d'un membre de la famille. A la mort d'un enfant il est de bon ton de dire: «*A sagira a ko,* il est retourné en arrière», et s'il s'agit d'une grande personne: «elle n'est plus, elle a terminé sa carrière, on l'a enfouie». Pour les gens mariés passés de vie à trépas, la plus polie de toutes les expressions est celle-ci: «*A so yélémana,* il a changé de demeure». Les adeptes de certaines sectes ne peuvent souffrir qu'on leur parle de la mort, et les *korodouga,* de la secte du *kouéré* ou *koté* par exemple, se lèvent et s'en vont mécontents, pour peu qu'on s'étende sur ce sujet en leur présence.

N'ignorant pas que le musulman, le missionnaire et tout Européen fait fi de ses fétiches et les méprise, le Bambara accuse Dieu devant eux d'avoir causé la mort de l'un des siens. Cette façon de faire n'est chez lui qu'une politesse, une manière détournée de respecter la croyance de ceux auxquels il parle, dont il partage la vie et qu'il craint. Dieu, il le sait, a sur les humains droit de vie et de mort, mais si rarement il lui attribue la mort, que durant sept années consécutives passées au Soudan, je n'ai jamais vu le cas se présenter. La mort est toujours causée par un méchant ou un ennemi qui se venge, par un fétiche *djiné* dit aussi *gnéna,* ou par un fétiche *boli* dit *gnâ,* par un *souba* ou adepte du fétiche *Siri,* qui fait le mal par plaisir, par un *gnâma* enfin, dont j'ai tant parlé déjà. Egalement, s'il assure qu'on puisse mourir de vieillesse, tout dans sa façon de faire et de s'exprimer prouve clairement que la vieillesse ne peut à elle seule trancher le fil de ses jours, c'est un génie reconnaissant, le fétiche de la secte favorite, et s'il en possède, les fétiches familiaux qui viennent et emportent l'âme.

Un enfant vient-il de mourir, ces expressions courent sur toutes les lèvres: «*A fa gnâma do,* c'est le gnâma de son père». — «*Souba do,* c'est un souba». — «*Kono gnâma do,* c'est le gnâma d'un oiseau». — «*Djiné ou ta no do,* c'est la façon de faire des génies *djiné*», — et comme ceux-ci élisent facilement domicile dans les arbres et sur les arbres, ils ont encore cette métaphore facile à comprendre: «*A yéléla djiri diougou kan,* il est grimpé sur un arbre méchant», c'est-à-dire, il a mécontenté un esprit de la brousse, soit parce qu'il est grimpé sur l'arbre qui lui servait de résidence ou parce qu'il en a brisé les branches ou cueilli les fruits. A la mort d'un jeune homme, d'une jeune fille, de tout adulte, tous les gens du village sont plongés dans la tristesse et on les entend se répéter les uns aux autres: «*Souba ta no do,* c'est la façon de faire des *souba*», «*ou gé korti sou a la,* on lui a lancé le poison d'un fétiche, le *korti*», tel est son nom, «*dounkono dir'à ma,* on lui a versé le poison», «*boli no do,* c'est la façon de faire des fétiches *bolis*», «*Komo y'a fa, Kono*[1] *y'a fa, Nia y'a fa, Douga y a fa* etc., c'est le Komo qui l'a tué, c'est le Kono, le Nia, le Nama, le Douga etc., qui l'a tué». — «*A gnénaou* — ou encore — *a gnâou séra à ma,* dit-on à la mort d'un vieillard possédant des fétiches ou *djiné* ou *boli* = ses génies *djiné* ou ses fétiches *boli* sont parvenus jusqu'à lui, le sont venus prendre». S'il est sans fétiche, tout en attribuant sa mort à la vieillesse, on donne à entendre qu'il avait une dévotion toute spéciale pour tel et tel fétiche, qui par suite n'est pas étranger à son trépas. Je le sais, «*Koroya do,* c'est la vieillesse», disent les

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[1] A noter que *Komo* et *Kono* sont deux fétiches différents.

Bambara aux Européens, mais laissons-les achever leurs phrases et continuer leurs pensées: «*à ko toun kadi Komo yé,* il était chéri du *Komo,*» — «*à ko toun kadi Kono yé, Nama yé, Douga yé,* il était chéri du *Kono,* du *Nama,* du *Douga*» etc.

On se demande où vont ces gens qui passent tenant par les pattes un coq ou une poule; qu'on les suive, ils se rendent au temple d'un fétiche, ils vont sacrifier et rougir de sang leur dieu. «*A toun koromé Alla séra à ma,* il était vieux et Dieu est parvenu jusqu'à lui», est une expression qui rarement se trouve sur des lèvres Bambara. On la trouve pourtant, mais avec un sens tout spécial, elle signifie que le vieillard en question était un homme de bien, chéri de tous, même de Dieu, mais nullement que Dieu l'a tué. Les sacrifices faits à cette occasion le prouvent hautement, ils s'adressent tous à un fétiche. Si Dieu seul était en cause et nullement les fétiches, la famille du défunt s'abstiendrait de tout sacrifice; tout au plus offrirait-elle sur l'ordre d'un sorcier un *saraka,* et le *saraka* même offert à Dieu — car on lui en offre — n'est pas, comme nous le verrons dans la suite, un sacrifice.

Les prêtres d'un fétiche *djiné,* les possesseurs et prêtres d'un fétiche *boli,* ont cette consolation de tomber toujours sous le coup du génie qu'ils détiennent et auquel ils sacrifient. Quant au reste des mortels, 80 fois sur 100 et même plus sans exagération aucune, ils sont tués par un fétiche *boli.* Les fétiches *Komo, Kono, Nia, Nama, Siri, Douga* etc. sont les principaux meurtriers, et des villages entiers souvent sont par eux décimés.

Bien qu'ils puissent frapper directement leurs coups, ils ne sont le plus souvent que des intermédiaires, les exécuteurs d'une volonté perverse, à laquelle ils ont offert leurs services; presque toujours il y a eu ou poison lancé, le *korti,* ou poison versé, le *dounkono.* A chaque décès, on consulte donc les sorciers et par leur entremise, on cherche le coupable. Dent pour dent, œil pour œil, est, tout comme chez le juif, la grande maxime Bambara, on doit se venger de celui qui a su capter les bonnes grâces d'un fétiche et l'a forcé à jeter la souffrance ou le deuil au sein d'une famille. Cette vengeance se tire par l'intermédiaire d'un fétiche, en secret par suite, et les bonnes relations ne sont nullement rompues entre le coupable vrai ou supposé et la famille éprouvée. C'est un fait curieux et il m'a toujours étonné, tous ces gens se parlent amicalement, se rendent de menus services, s'invitent à boire et à manger et dans leurs haines jamais néanmoins ne désarment. Ils se surveillent tout en souriant, ceux-ci pour sauvegarder leurs vies et leurs intérêts, ceux-là pour tirer vengeance, et au jour où l'on s'y attend le moins, elle éclate implacable. Les cas d'empoisonnement ne sont pas rares au Soudan; ce n'est pas sans raison qu'on accuse à presque tout décès le *korti,* et le *dounkono.* Je le sais, beaucoup meurent d'une mort bien naturelle, et j'ai vu sottement attribuer à un empoisonnement du *Komo* une hydropisie provoquée par une pulmonie syphilitique, à un empoisonnement du *Kono* une péritonite aigüe, à un empoisonnement du *Nama* une dyssenterie, une enflure disproportionnée des testicules avec abcès purulents, suites d'une mauvaise conduite, à un empoisonnement du *Nia,* du *Douga,* du *Nama,* un abcès dans la vessie: mais il est un fait certain, je l'ai maintes fois constaté, pendant sept ans, et tout Européen vivant au milieu des noirs et sachant tant soit peu la langue le peut constater, l'indigène contracte la maladie qui l'emporte, au retour d'un marché, au retour d'une fête en l'honneur d'un fétiche, au retour d'une beuverie ou le *d'lo* coulait à flots. Les reins sont durs et douloureux, son estomac le fait horriblement souffrir, il lui semble avoir les intestins déchirés par des épines, l'anurie est complète. En trois ou quatre jours au plus, son compte est réglé.

Les administrateurs à la tête d'un cercle ont tous eu à trancher de ces cas frisant l'empoisonnement, et je doute qu'il s'en trouve un à y avoir vu clair, tant l'empoisonnement au *korti* et au *dounkono* est difficile à constater. Gardons-nous de leur jeter la pierre; dans un cas analogue nous serions tous fort embarrassés, car ici, il y a toujours trente-six coupables et trente-six innocents, qui tous méritent la corde tout en pouvant revendiquer hautement la paix, la liberté et la vie. Comme aux yeux du noir, le fétiche seul est coupable, il est un moyen bien simple d'arrêter le décimage de la population et de lui permettre de s'accroître!

Je passe et n'ose donner ce moyen; il est trop radical, surtout à notre époque, il manque d'anticléricalisme, il manque de largeu d'esprit. Il faudrait scier et brûler les arbres fétiches, confisquer les *boli*, utiliser aux travaux de la colonie leurs prêtres et leurs possesseurs, sans oublier les sorciers qui passent leur vie à tromper les gens et à les voler, qui ne connaissent qu'un genre de culture, la culture de la paresse, ouvrir enfin de nombreuses écoles: et on en aurait vite fait du paganisme et de la barbarie. Les missionnaires sont là, prêts à se dévouer, ils ne demanderaient pour le faire aucun sacrifice au trésor de la colonie, mais le missionnaire a une morale trop sublime, trop relevée, pour qu'on tienne à le voir la donner aux sauvages... Et par quoi dès lors remplacer le paganisme? Par l'islamisme sans doute! L'islam souille tout ce qu'il touche, il ravale plus l'homme qu'il ne le relève; mieux vaut laisser le noir rougir de sang les arbres de sa brousse, il ne gagnerait rien au change. Toute *médersa*[1], même celle de *djenné*, est inutile, c'est un non-sens, une ineptie, on ne parle pas arabe au Soudan, à quoi bon donner aux indigènes une langue qui n'est pas la leur et qui n'est pas française? A quoi bon vouloir l'islam au Soudan? Les villages sont gais, pleins d'entrain, ne cherchons pas à les rendre tristes et silencieux, n'en faisons pas un village arabe, un village où l'on trouve au tournant d'une ruelle un lézard humain, paresseusement enfoui dans son burnous, où l'on voit sur les murs un chien enroué qui aboie, et dont toutes les portes sont closes. Ces villages sentent la prison, ont le froid du tombeau, il n'y a de liberté là que pour la vermine et les poux.

Si un empoisonnement au *korti* et au *dounkona* est difficile à constater, en voici la raison. Quand un noir veut se venger, il va trouver un sorcier auquel il confie son dessein et donne ses raisons. C'est moins la mort de son ennemi qu'il désire que de le voir souffrir, et s'il parvient à lui causer du dommage, à lui et à sa famille, dans son corps et dans ses biens, il se déclare satisfait.

Parfois le sorcier se charge de la besogne, mais il est prudent, sait ménager la chèvre et le choux, et comme il cumule un peu toutes les fonctions, il se contente pour le plus grand profit de ses petits intérêts, de faire l'office d'avoué et de désigner à qui le consulte, un fétiche en renom aux mains de l'un de ses amis. Le Bambara y court sans tarder, et le maître du fétiche largement et grassement payé sort le dieu de son outre crasseuse. Sur l'un de ses engins (car un *boli* est multiple et les cornes de bœufs, d'antilopes, vernissées de sang et de couleur brunâtre, se jouent avec d'autres objets, ayant la forme d'une aubergine, d'un navet, d'une betterave, d'un rouleau de serviette, d'un crotin de cheval etc. etc.), sur le *sirikoun,* presque toujours enveloppée dans une chemisette rouge, il lie fortement avec un fil de coton, sept pailles de 5 à 6 centimètres de long. Le solliciteur narre sa visite au sorcier, nomme l'ennemi dont il veut tirer vengeance, il donne les raisons qui l'y poussent, et le maître du fétiche prononce ses formules, rougit de sang son *sirikoun* et lui colle sur les flancs un crachat de noix de *kola* mâchée.

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[1] *Médersa*, école arabe.

Si la poule du sacrifice expire les ailes déployées et la poitrine sur le sol, si la noix de *kola* fendue en deux retombe sur la pulpe, la partie sphérique en haut, la vengeance est remise à plus tard, le sacrifice est jugé non agréé. Notre Bambara s'en retourne alors allégé d'une poule, de deux noix de *kola* et d'au moins 160 *cauris,* mais nullement désarmé; huit ou dix jours après il revient à la charge à moins que dans son impatience il n'aille consulter un nouveau sorcier et recevoir l'ordre de s'adresser à un fétiche d'un cœur mieux trempé, plus entreprenant et moins craintif.

Si la poule crève sur le flanc ou sur le dos, les pattes en l'air, si les morceaux de la noix de *kola* retombent sur la partie sphérique, la pulpe en haut, le sacrifice est agréé, c'est la réponse du dieu prenant fait et cause pour son client. L'ennemi est dès lors placé sous le *boli a blara boli koro,* c'est l'expression consacrée, il est placé sous sa puissance vengeresse, il se trouve en ses mains, et le maître de l'idole, le sacrificateur et les gens de son escorte s'ingénient à le faire disparaître promptement. Le moins souvent possible pourtant ils se chargent de cette besogne; ils prescrivent au client des sacrifices et des offrandes et lui donnent, en indiquant la façon de s'en servir, une corne de biche soigneusement ficelée. Cette corne de biche n'est rien moins qu'une corne de poison, cette poudre brune qu'elle recèle est d'ordinaire de la graine de strophantus pilée et malaxée dans des excréments de cadavres humains et la bave prise dans leurs bouchés. Après un séchage à l'ombre, le tout est enveloppé dans un morceau d'intestins de hyène et pour rendre ses effets plus prompts et plus sûrs, on sort le fétiche, on le dépose sur cette farine et on lui sacrifie. Ces préparations sacro-saintes se font de nuit, autant que possible au premier quartier de la lune et jamais un lundi ou un jeudi, jours de repos pour les dieux *boli*[1].

Pour réussir et ne pas mécontenter le fétiche qui, dans ce cas, abandonnerait votre cause pour se retourner contre vous, il faut suivre à la lettre les prescriptions du prêtre et des membres de son conseil; l'oubli d'un rite, d'un signe, d'une formule, d'une imprécation, détruit la vertu du poison contenu dans la corne ou du moins la rend inefficace. Cette poudre parfois se lance et se dit: *korti sou*, et d'autres fois se verse et se dit: *dounkono di*.

Pour donner ou verser le *dounkono*, on s'en glisse une pincée sous l'ongle du médius de la main gauche et dans une chiquenaude adroitement dissimulée, on la jette dans la nourriture ou le breuvage de son ennemi. La sauce des aliments, le *dégé* ou farine de mil délayée dans de l'eau, la bière de mil ou *d'lo*, le *di kolé* ou hydromel, sont de la sorte et sans qu'on s'en doute facilement empoisonnés.

Lancer le poison, *korti sou*, reste l'apanage des sorciers, des prêtres et des maîtres des fétiches, il faut être quelqu'un pour s'en servir[2]. Comme pour le *dounkono*, on s'en glisse une pincée sous l'ongle du médius et par une chiquenaude vigoureusement lancée, on la jette ou sur son ennemi ou vers lui tout simplement ou sur un objet lui ayant appartenu, en lui commandant d'être efficace, de le tuer si possible, de le gratifier pour le moins d'une maladie dont il se souviendra longtemps.

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[1] Les *boli* ont deux jours de congé par semaine et les noirs prennent eux aussi ce repos. Ils sont larges pourtant sur ce point, bien que, pour certains travaux, ils demandent au chef religieux ou à un sorcier pouvoir travailler. Régulièrement, un *boli* ne doit pas sortir la nuit du dimanche au lundi, et du mercredi au jeudi. Bien souvent pourtant ils sortent, mais sur l'ordre du fétiche ou d'un sorcier. Sortir un fétiche c'est passer la nuit à danser la danse du fétiche et quand ses adeptes veulent sauter ils y parviennent toujours. Egalement bien qu'au repos, on sacrifie aux *boli* le lundi et le jeudi. En principe, il y a repos pour les fétiches, en fait, on se montre large.

[2] Les vieux Bambara sont nombreux qui, après un repas chez le voisin ou un ami, marmottent une prière en se lavant les mains et font le geste de lancer le poison *korti*. C'est une imprécation qu'ils lancent contre les ennemis de la famille qui les reçoit.

Le Bambara a peur du *korti* bien plus que du *dounkono* et il tremble dès qu'un ennemi l'en menace sérieusement. C'est qu'ici il n'a plus affaire à un homme, à une puissance égale à la sienne, il lui faut se mettre en garde contre un dieu tout-puissant qui met sa force et sa puissance au service de l'homme, force soumise, obéissante, qui va, triomphante et vengeresse, porter ses coups à l'aveugle là où on le lui commande et sur toute personne contre laquelle on l'excite, sur laquelle on la lance, car telle est, à mon avis, la traduction exacte de cette expression *korti sou ma la.* Ainsi qu'on lance un chien sur une personne, *oulou sou ma la,* ainsi on lance sur elle le poison *korti, korti sou ma la.*

Le *korti,* dit le noir, a un effet foudroyant, on ressent dans tout son corps, quand il s'abat sur vous, une commotion violente et vos membres se raidissent et vous tombez à la renverse. Il arrive que du coup vous passiez de vie à trépas, mais d'ordinaire, vous revenez à la vie et vous en êtes quitte pour une syncope suivie de violents hoquets et de vomissements[1]. Plusieurs jours après et parfois plusieurs mois, une fièvre maligne vous cloue sur la natte, vos membres enflent et ce sont des plaies profondes et purulentes, qui déchiquètent votre corps, et vous allez ainsi traînant des mois et des mois, incurable, à charge à tout le monde et à charge à vous même.

Le *korti* s'abat quelquefois sur vous de façon si discrète qu'on ne le sent pas pénétrer. On s'en aperçoit plus tard quand vient la maladie, quand le déclare le sorcier, l'être infaillible qui jamais ne se trompe.

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[1] Si je ne craignais pas de faire sourire, j'avouerais qu'en février 1906, m'étant rendu à un *Da woro,* fête qui a lieu 6 jours après la circoncision, le chef du *Komo* m'appela, et quand nous fûmes seuls, il me lança le *korti* avec les imprécations d'usage et s'en alla. Sans doute, l'émotion y était pour beaucoup, la fatigue de la course et de la veille aussi, mais sur le champ je ressentis des tiraillements d'estomac et je m'accrochai au mur pour ne pas tomber. Mon malaise dura de cinq à dix minutes.

Contre le *korti*, le noir est presque sans défense. Il lui faut recourir à un fétiche plus puissant et en vain il tue des poules et il tue des boucs, rarement il le trouve. Il se couvre de grisgris, il s'enveloppe de talismans et rien n'y fait. Les deux petites cornes de biche suspendues à son cou restent elles mêmes inefficaces et dans l'impossibilité de le défendre, toute divine que soit la poudre qu'elles recèlent.

Contre le *dounkono* ou poison qui se verse dans la nourriture et le breuvage, il a, en plus du recours à ses dieux et de ses grisgris qui d'eux mêmes se détachent et tombent, «s'ils sont bien faits et n'ont rien perdu de leur toute puissance», une foule de contre-poisons. Presque toujours il s'en tire avec quelques jours de natte et un bon mal de ventre, et si la convalescence est longue et parfois s'éternise, du moins lui témoigne-t-on de la sympathie et dans les sacrifices offerts par les amis, il a sa grosse part et son brouet s'améliore.

Si les *korti* sont nombreux et ne se comptent pas — «chaque fétiche à le sien» —, plus nombreux sont encore les *dounkono*, car en plus des fétiches, les sorciers, les vieillards, les hommes et les femmes savent tous vous préparer un poison et lui donner la force et l'énergie que vous lui désirez. Chaque poison, suivant la main qui la lance ou le verse, produit dans l'organisme un trouble spécial; on consulte dans le doute l'être qui jamais ne trompe et ne peut se tromper: le sorcier! et c'est lui d'ordinaire qui prescrit le contre-poison.

Aux yeux du Bambara verser le poison *(dounkono di)* ou le lancer *(korti sou)* est un acte blâmable et ceux qui s'en rendent coupables ont une triste réputation parmi leurs congénères. Qu'on ne s'étonne pourtant pas de voir ce crime rester impuni, il ne revêt pas à ses yeux l'odieux d'un meurtre à main armée, public ou caché. Je dirai plus et sans crainte d'errer, cette façon de se venger n'est pas pour lui un crime au sens propre du mot. Il a si souvent recours aux fétiches pour trancher un différend et si facilement il menace un ennemi de la colère des dieux, que se venger par leur intermédiaire le laisse tranquille et sans remords aucun. Quel reproche du reste lui faire? Il est cruel, sans pitié, c'est vrai, mais la poudre qu'il verse et la poudre qu'il lance, qui la rend puissante? C'est le dieu, le fétiche, celui-ci seul est coupable! que son ennemi s'attire donc ses bonnes grâces et pare à ses coups en sacrifiant, qu'il lui oppose un dieu plus puissant.

La souffrance physique et morale, la mort n'ont rien pour lui, comme on le voit, de naturel, toujours et toujours il y a un intermédiaire, souffrance et mort sont causées par un ennemi qui se venge, par un méchant, par un sorcier, par un fétiche.

§ 3. La Réviviscence des âmes.

On est tout surpris de la croyance du Bambara à la réviviscence des âmes. Certains n'osent y croire parce qu'ils sacrifient aux mânes des ancêtres, et d'autres, «esprits cultivés, nourris de la plus saine philosophi[illegible] rejettent cette croyance comme illogique, car la religion du noir c'est le culte des morts! Il l'a de fait, le culte des morts, mais dans la religion Bambara ce culte, tout vaste qu-il soit, reste un point, il n'en est pas le fondement. Pour honorer les mânes de ses ancêtres (de ceux-là seuls qui furent chefs de famille et le culte des morts déjà se restreint un peu, n'en déplaise à ceux qui ne voient que lui), le Bambara chef de famille jette une grosse tache de sang de poule et un crachat de noix de *kola* mâchée sur le *dégé* ou farine de mil délayée dans de l'eau qu'il verse à l'entrée de sa case, sur le mur. C'est pour implorer aide et protection de cette puissance, l'autorité que possédaient ses prédécesseurs dans la charge de chef de famille et une autorité identique à celle qu'il possède lui-même. Il n'en croit pas moins à la réviviscence des âmes! Cette croyance est générale, universelle chez les fétichistes et si quelques-uns n'osent l'avouer devant les Européens et les musulmans, c'est par pur respect humain, par crainte de contredire à des croyances qu'ils savent contraires aux leurs, pour ne froisser personne, pour n'être pas en but aux rires et aux moqueries.

Les enfants qui meurent à la mamelle et avant d'avoir atteint l'usage de la raison, sont enterrés dans un coin de la cour intérieure et parfois même dans la case où ils sont venus au monde. Avant de l'enfouir, on lui brise un membre, l'orteil du pied droit le plus souvent, et quelquefois le père le marque au couteau sur l'épaule, sur le bras, ou sur la poitrine. Il a dans sa pensée que l'enfant qui lui succèdera, sera animé par l'âme du défunt et il ne néglige rien pour en avoir, si possible, la certitude. Cette opération stupide et ridicule se pratiquant ordinairement sous les yeux de la maman, des faits curieux se produisent. Celle-ci devant se soumettre de fait le plus-tôt possible à la volonté de son mari et avoir avec lui les rapports conjugaux, elle ne tarde pas à concevoir. Comme il arrive que durant sa gestation, son imagination travaille et qu'elle rêvasse aux circonstances qui ont accompagné l'enfouissement de son enfant défunt, elle donne parfois le jour à un bébé ayant les marques faites par le père. Ceci ne contribue pas peu à les «établir» dans la croyance à la réviviscence des âmes. Sur la route de Ségou à Sens, à Wéléngéla, il y avait un noir ayant de naissance la lèvre supérieure fendue, et les gens du village étaient unanimes à vous en donner la raison. Sa mère ne donnant le jour qu'à des enfants malingres et chétifs qui tous mouraient après quelques semaines, le père furieux tranche la lèvre du dernier d'un coup de couteau . . . En revenant à la vie, il n'a pas voulu reprendre la lèvre que lui avait ôtée son père! J'en ai vu d'autres ayant de naissance comme un tatouage sur le dos, sur la poitrine, sur les bras, et ses parents n'hésitaient pas à me dire que c'était la marque faite à son aîné défunt.

Aux enfants qui succèdent ainsi à une sœur ou un frère défunt, on donne un nom spécial; il semble que le noir cherche à faire sentir à l'âme de ce petit être ce qu'il y a d'indélicatesse de sa part vis à vis de ses parents, à venir au monde et à s'en aller aussitôt, après avoir allumé en leur cœurs et l'amour et l'espoir. Peut-être songent-ils aussi à se donner une contenance devant leurs congénères, car c'est grande honte de n'avoir pas d'enfants ou d'en avoir qui meurent aussitôt nés. Les deux hypothèses sont plausibles, et la seconde ne serait qu'un terme d'humilité déguisant un secret espoir. Les principaux noms donnés à ces derniers sont: ***Malobali*** l'éhonté, ***Ta fli*** va le jeter, ***Foui té*** c'est un rien, ***Fou*** un rien etc. — Si on tient à la première hypothèse que j'émets, on traduira ces noms: N'as tu pas honte (sc. de venir au monde pour t'en aller si vite)? — Autant vaut te jeter, t'enfouir (sc. pour le temps que tu passes au milieu de nous). — Tu es un être de rien (tu n'es qu'un sans cœur, toi qui nous viens pour nous quitter à bref délai). — C'est un rien: le noir soufflant sur la paume de sa main pour nous donner à comprendre toute la portée de ce mot, traduit sa pensée «tu n'es guère plus pour nous qu'un rien, ne ressembles-tu pas au souffle qui passe et s'enfuit?»

Tout comme cette première hypothèse, on peut admettre la seconde et la traduire par une plainte des parents à ceux qui les félicitent: Il est sans honte (sans doute il nous revient pour nous délaisser encore). — Autant vaut le jeter (sc. ne va-t-il pas sous peu nous quitter?) — C'est un homme de rien (sc. pensez-vous qu'il ne va pas nous abandonner?) — C'est un rien (sc. le posséder ou ne le pas posséder c'est tout un pour nous, nous restera-t-il plus longtemps qu'un souffle qui passe et s'enfuit?)

Mais quelque soit l'hypothèse admise, ceci ne change rien à la croyance du noir à la réviviscence des enfants morts à la mamelle et avant d'avoir atteint l'usage de la raison. — Pour les jeunes gens et les jeunes filles, pour les hommes et les femmes qui meurent dans la vigueur de l'âge, cette croyance est aussi unanime et générale. Ceux-ci n'ont pas accompli en entier le cycle de leur existence, ils doivent la recommencer.

Et les vieillards eux ne reviennent-ils pas à la vie? Dès qu'un enfant rappelle les traits d'un ancien décédé dans la famille, n'en reçoit-il pas le nom? Un Bambara n'emploie jamais en vain et mal à propos le nom d'un homme qu'il respecte; aussi à ces enfants animés par l'âme du vieux, on donne un second nom, un nom d'emprunt, le nom vrai n'est connu que du père, de la mère, des intimes et de celui qui le porte. A beaucoup pourtant on donne un nom des plus expressifs et qui témoigne de cette croyance, on les appelle *segi, sagi* «qui est revenu à la vie».

Les légendes, et elles sont nombreuses, ne sont qu'une confirmation de ce que j'avance, est-il besoin d'en citer? Un vieillard de Fobougou, village situé à 30 ou 40 Kilomètres de Ségou, non loin du Bani, sur la route qui conduit à Kouttiala, reçut à la mort des honneurs funèbres superbes. Les fétiches sortirent de leurs antres crasseuses et furent baignés dans le sang des victimes, trois jours durant les femmes chantèrent au son du tambour, ce fut une fête à laquelle rien ne manqua pas, même le *d'lo* ou bière de mil. Quelques années après, des jeunes gens du village, en quête de travail, se rendirent dans le *Tlébi*[1], marchant vers Kita. Ils s'arrêtèrent dans un village à proximité de cette ville et furent hébergés par un Malinke[2]. En pénétrant dans la cour, ils s'arrêtent interdits, ils trouvent assis sur une natte un homme d'un certain âge dont les traits leurs sont connus, ne serait-ce pas là le vieux de Fobougou? C'était lui, car il les salua, leur demandant des nouvelles des anciens du village et des membres de sa famille. Après souper, ils reviennent dans la cour, désireux de s'asseoir près de leur ancien, retrouvé si loin de sa terre d'origine, mais il n'y était plus et leur hôte leur apprend qu'il s'est enfui, refusant d'indiquer la direction qu'il prenait ... C'était notre ancien, disent les gens de Fobougou avec grande conviction, car ils y croient comme à la prise de Ségou, nos jeunes gens l'ont vu, lui ont causé et avant sa mort certains l'avaient connu. Sans doute ajoutent-ils, il a dû de son vivant avoir à souffrir dans sa famille et il n'a pas osé revivre au milieu de nous. Cette histoire que j'ai ouï raconter à Fobougou même, se raconte un peu partout avec quelques variantes, et en septembre 1908, de Ségou à Koulikoro, sur le Niger, un des *laptots*[3] la narrait à ses confrères accroupis en cercle autour de lui.

Sur la route de Ségou à Kouttiala, à Ouentja, village à une heure et demie, deux heures tout au plus du Bani, les gens ont un respect si grand pour un de leurs anciens chefs décédés, le vieux *sagi,* qu'ils évitent d'en prononcer le nom. Ils ont même transformé ou mieux tronqué une de leurs salutations et alors que presque partout ailleurs, on salue les étrangers par ces mots: «*i dangha sagi,* on se contente ici de vous dire: *i danghana*»[4]. D'après la légende ce *sagi* dont on évite de prononcer en vain le nom, était chef du village et puissant aux alentours. Il mourut très âgé, reprit chair dans le sein d'une femme de la famille et de nouveau recommença le cycle de son existence. Il redevint chef de village, mourut encore dans une extrême vieillesse et reprit chair une troisième fois. Comme toujours il fut chef, passa de vie à trépas dans une extrême vieillesse, honoré et respecté de tous, et reçut des honneurs funèbres, tels que prince noir n'en a jamais reçu.

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[1] On entend par *Tlébi* toute la région de l'ouest — Bamoko, Kati, Kita, Kayes, Bakel etc. jusqu'à l'océan.

[2] Tribu mandingue dont le «tabou» de la race est le *Mali, Mani* ou hippopotame.

[3] On appelle *laptots* les nègres qui font sur le fleuve l'office de matelots.

[4] *I dangha sagi,* que tu sois béni dans ton arrivée, ton retour au milieu de nous. — (Ton retour parmi nous est une bénédiction.) — Les nègres par abréviation prononcent *i dana sagi*; il n'y a que les anciens et ceux qui se piquent de bien parler leur langue, qui articulent bien et prononcent *i dangha sagi*.

A la mort, l'âme s'en va dans le *Lahara,* mot vague, si vague, qu'un Bambara ne peut le définir ou vous en donner une idée. C'est le lieu où résident les invisibles et où tout devient invisible. Les enfants et ceux qui n'ont pas complètement accompli le cycle de leur existence, n'y font que passer, ils se hâtent de réintégrer le sein de leurs mères ou tout au moins d'une femme de la famille.

Une force secrète pousse les vieux à reprendre chair dans la famille, mais il arrive qu'ils s'y refusent et vont chercher membres ailleurs. Ils passent un séjour plus long dans le *Lahara* et mûris sans doute par l'expérience, ne se pressent pas toujours de réapparaître. Beaucoup y croupissent un certain nombre d'années, attendant une occasion favorable, et dans ce doute planant au dessus du sort des anciens, on peut trouver une raison d'être des sacrifices aux morts. Un fait certain c'est que ces sacrifices ne s'adressent qu'à des défunts ayant eu de l'autorité dans le pays, dans le village, dans la famille, et les honneurs rendus à ceux-ci semblent plus s'adresser à l'autorité possédée par eux de leur vivant, qu'à la personne elle même.

Bon nombre de Bambara croient à l'enfer et assurent que l'âme des pervers est condamnée par Dieu aux supplices éternels. Ceux-ci, c'est évident, sont changés en démons et ne reviennent plus à la vie, mais il est si difficile de mériter l'enfer que pas un Bambara n'y entre et il vit sans crainte aucune, tout comme s'il n'existait pas. Cette croyance à l'enfer pose peut-être une exception à mon affirmation sur la réviviscence des âmes, il ne la détruit pas et on peut affirmer que la majorité des noirs y croit.

Chap. IV.

Notions du Bambara sur Dieu, les invisibles, Adam et Eve.

1. Croyance en Dieu. § 2. Le *Saraka*. § 3. La croyance en Dieu n'est pas d'origine islamique.

§ 1. Croyance en Dieu.

Le Bambara croit à l'existence d'un être suprême créateur et naître de toute chose, il croit en Dieu, en un Dieu rémunérateur ouvant châtier et récompenser. Ses formules les plus polies sont elles par lesquelles il atteste de sa croyance en lui, son nom evient à chaque instant sur ses lèvres et à propos de rien.

A un couple de jeunes mariés, il se hâte de dire: «Que votre mion soit heureuse, que Dieu vous donne la paix et de nombreux nfants», et dès qu'une famille se trouve dans l'épreuve, vient à erdre, par exemple, un de ses membres, c'est en Dieu qu'il va ercher ses consolations et c'est par lui qu'il console: «Que Dieu it pitié de lui et lui accorde dans le *Lahara* un séjour heureux», qu'il ne le sépare pas des gens de bien et qu'il ajoute à vos jours eux dont il vient d'être privé» [1].

La stérilité de la femme n'est évidemment pas naturelle; on 'attribue aux fétiches, aux maléfices d'un méchant et bien souvent aussi à Dieu. «*Alla b'a kégné dén-na* —, Dieu met obstacle à c qu'elle ait des enfants.» «Que Dieu calme ton dos (tes douleurs)» dit-on à une nouvelle accouchée à laquelle on offre son obole: d miel, du coton, du beurre, du sucre, des cauris, «qu'il conserve to enfant.» Au moindre service reçu, on confie son auteur à la protection du Tout-Puissant, et dans les souhaits, aux fêtes et au beuveries, c'est une litanie sans fin où Dieu a grosse part.

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[1] Certains se basent sur ces dernières expressions pour mettre en doute la croyance du Bambara à la réviviscence des âmes. A l'âme séparée du corps il manque quelque chose, elle n'est pas complète, dit le noir. Comme elle séjourne dans le *Lahara* un temps plus ou moins long, jusqu'au moment où elle trouve occasion de se réincarner et s'y décide, on lui souhaite durant ce temps, de vivre avec les âmes des gens de bien et de n'avoir pas trop à souffrir de la privation de leurs corps — et rien de plus. Ces expressions consolatrices se ouvent à tout décès, qu'il s'agisse d'un enfant, d'un homme ou d'un vieillard.

Pour un rien, le Bambara prononce le nom de Dieu, et — sa dans certains sacrifices aux fétiches *boli*, où il l'emploie pour blasphémer — toujours avec un certain respect. J'avoue même (si je n savais pour le connaitre un peu que ce nom dans sa bouche es un mot et rien de plus, une banalité où n'entre ni affection, n amour) qu'il semble parfois avoir des sentiments de piété profond et tendres. De fait, est-il rien de plus touchant que d'entendre u nègre païen, un Bambara, répondre à qui lui demande des nouvelle de sa santé: «*Nébi Alla tanoun* je loue Dieu, je glorifie Dieu.»

Dans la bouche du Bambara, le nom de Dieu n'est qu'u mot! S'il le reconnait comme unique et souverain maître de toute choses, ayant créé le visible, l'invisible et tout ce qui existe, s'il l croit capable de récompenser les bons et de punir les méchants même en ce monde (bien que rarement et pratiquement jamais n'attribue à Dieu ni la souffrance ni la mort), il ne songe pas le prier, à l'invoquer, il le laisse sans autel, sans prêtre, sans sacr fice, lui qui rougit un peu tout du sang des victimes. Directemen il ne s'adresse à lui que sur l'ordre d'un sorcier, et il s'y soum par crainte, parce que forcé, «*djakoyala*, de force» comme il le d si bien, et le cœur n'y est pas.

Indirectement, par l'intermédiaire des fétiches dits *djiné*, il recours à l'Etre Tout-Puissant, mais actuellement c'est à peine on s'aperçoit de ce recours indirect. Ses connaissances se so obscurcies, elles vont chaque jour s'obscurcissant davantage et créé a remplacé l'incréé. Comme je le dirai en parlant du cult des génies *djiné*, l'intermédiaire entre lui et la divinité a grandi a détriment de Dieu, il l'a éclipsé et il en a pris la place.

Cette évolution du nègre n'a rien d'ascendant, elle est même décroissante, car d'un état plus parfait, il est descendu à un noins parfait et de ce moins parfait, il en est arrivé à la cacophonie t il s'y enfonce chaque jour un peu plus. Evolution étrange qui e rapelle en rien les théories des évolutionnistes rationalistes.

Directement, ai-je dit, le Bambara sur l'ordre d'un sorcier adresse à Dieu et de temps en temps on voit un individu, une amille, un village entier lui offrir ou au croisement des sentiers u en un lieu dégarni en dehors du village, ou parfois même dans e village, sous un des gros arbres qui ombragent les places, des arines délayées dans de l'eau, des poules, des chèvres, des noix kola. C'est le *saraka*.

§ 2. Le *Saraḳa*.

Les Européens, religieux, civils et militaires pour peu qu'ils gnorent les usages et coutumes Bambara, confondent facilement un *raka* avec un sacrifice, ils n'en voient même pas la différence, s'il st sanglant. Le *saraka* même sanglant n'est pas un sacrifice; je ui refuse même le nom d'offrande, c'est un impôt, un tribut et ce om seul, à mon avis, lui convient.

Privé ou public, sanglant ou non sanglant, toujours il est ccompli sur l'ordre exprès d'un sorcier, qui, comme on le sait, commerce intime avec le monde des esprits et apprend d'eux e que réclame la divinité. Dès qu'un sorcier parle et donne es oracles, on les subit et on les exécute, tellement on craint ses menaces, et tout se fait «*djakoyola* parce que forcé». Sur son ordre n donne le *saraka* comme on donne l'impôt au chef du cercle.

Aux yeux du Bambara, le *saraka* ne revêt d'autre caractère que celui d'impôt, de tribut à payer soit à la divinité soit aux fétiches. En février 1907, le bruit se répandit dans les villages aux alentours de Ségou que le fétiche *Komo* de Sioribougou avait rié. «Vite, donnez par mon entremise une poule en *saraka* à la ort, avait-il dit, elle s'apprête à vous décimer; pour la désarmer, seul moyen qui vous reste, est de lui donner une poule.» Les ciers affirmaient cette ineptie, les maîtres du *Komo* la trouvaient leur goût et pas un chef de famille n'osa refuser la poule lamée par la mort. Ils l'offrirent donc et la formule en cette ccasion fût celle-ci: «Le *Komo* de Sioribougou nous prescrit d'offrir une poule blanche à la mort comme *saraka*. *Komo,* un tel, l'offr pour lui et sa famille par ton entremise, c'est son *saraka*. Si l vent souffle de l'Est, que cette poule l'en préserve! s'il souffle d l'Ouest, qu'elle l'en préserve encore! Si le vent souffle du Ouoro dougou (pays de la noix de kola, le Sud) que cette poule l'e délivre et s'il souffle du Nord qu'elle l'en délivre aussi!» Tranchar le cou de la poule, le sacrificateur du *Komo* ajoutait alors, e rougissant son fétiche: «C'est un *saraka,* le *saraka,* qu'un tel donn à la mort pour lui, pour ses femmes, ses enfants, pour ses amis Le *Komo* de Sioribougou nous a prescrit de faire ainsi, c'est sa mèr *M'gouni Domba,* qui lui a fait savoir que nous devions ce *sarak* à la mort.»

Le *saraka,* du mot arabe صَرَقَة qui signifie aumône, n'est rie moins qu'une aumône forcée, faite sur l'ordre d'un sorcier à Die aux génies *djiné,* aux ancêtres; c'est bien un impôt, un tribut auquel on ne peut se soustraire, offert, donné[1] aux invisibles.

Même sanglant, un *saraka* n'a rien du sacrifice. L'égorgement d'une poule, d'un chien ou d'un chevreau ne constitue pas : lui seul un sacrifice, il faudrait admettre autrement que tout boucher et tout cuisinier sacrifie. Il faut dans celui qui égorge, l'intentio de faire un sacrifice et cette intention est si nécessaire que le noi l'exprime toujours: «*soni do,* c'est un sacrifice», dit-il, en donnant l coup de couteau. Dans le *saraka,* il tient à attester qu'il ne sacrifi pas; il exprime donc son intention «*saraka do* c'est un *saraka*», et toute l'assistance reprend après lui: «*saraka do* c'est un *saraka*».

Dans tout sacrifice, il y a le prêtre à qui cette charge es spécialement confiée, et dans le *saraka* il n'y a pas de prêtre à proprement parler. Sans doute, dans le *saraka* donné par un village, par une famille, on s'adresse au chef du village, au chef de la famille, mais c'est par déférence, ou par nécessité, s'agit d'un *saraka* indirect par l'entremise d'un fétiche. Dans *saraka* direct, le sorcier peut désigner lui même qui doit le donner et tout le monde, homme ou femme, y est apte; il suffit d'être ou circoncis ou excisée. Dans un *saraka* public, une femme évidemment n'est jamais l'élue. Là où se trouve un homme, la femme doit céder le pas, et pour sauvegarder les principes de la hiérarchie, on choisit à défaut de prêtre, un vieillard considéré, un ancien.

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[1] *Saraka di,* donner un *saraka,* c'est l'expression Bambara.

A la fin d'un sacrifice public, le sacrificateur reçoit d'ordinaire un morceau de choix et la peau de l'animal, et les assistants grillent les viandes et les dévorent sur place. Dans le *saraka*, à moins d'un ordre tout spécial du sorcier, viandes, farines, noix de *kola*, cauris, sont abandonnés au lieu même où il est donné, et seuls les pauvres peuvent les prendre et les manger. Le plus souvent, les enfants des deux sexes sont appelés, ce sont eux qui dévorent les viandes et les farines. Dès qu'ils sont reçus, on ramasse les restes et on les va déposer à l'angle formé par deux sentiers qui se rencontrent ou se croisent. Dans un *saraka* offert par tout le village, une chèvre presque toujours est égorgée et la peau pliée en quatre ou en six est ficelée avec du *gnâma fou* [1], puis suspendue au bout d'une perche, à l'entrée du village.

Un *saraka* n'est jamais donné aux fétiches *boli*, il se donne aux fétiches *djiné* et à Dieu, et il est sanglant ou non sanglant; il se donne aussi directement ou indirectement. Le *saraka* direct est donné par n'importe qui, par un homme ou par une femme; il suffit, suivant le sexe, d'être circoncis ou excisée. Pour le *saraka* indirect offert par l'entremise d'un génie *djiné* ou par l'entremise d'un *boli* (et celui qui se donne à Dieu ne se fait jamais par l'intermédiaire du *boli*), on doit recourir aux possesseurs et sacrificateurs de ces génies *djiné* et *boli*, car eux seuls ont le privilége de pouvoir parler et s'adresser directement à ces dieux. Dans ces sortes de *saraka*, il y a toujours deux actes simultanés et distincts et le *saraka* sanglant ne laisse aucun doute à ce sujet. On égorge au fétiche, pris comme médiateur, la bête du *saraka*, et ce fétiche prend sous sa responsabilité d'avertir qui de droit que cet égorgement lui a été fait en tant que tribut, impôt à lui présenté. Et ceci n'a rien d'illogique; ce qu'on donne à l'être invisible n'est pas du tout les chairs et les os de l'animal; c'est sa vie, le sang qui contient le *ni*, la vie. Dans le *saraka* deux choses sont données, le matériel et l'immatériel; et quand il est indirect, il y a nécessairement versement de sang au profit du médiateur, pour qu'il puisse se saisir de la vie de la bête donnée en tribut et l'offrir à qui de droit.

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[1] *Bauhinia reticulata*, vulgairement appelé «Arbre de Judée».

Le *saraka* est l'unique acte religieux direct du Bambara vis à vis de son créateur et souverain maître. Bien qu'il se fasse et se donne souvent à l'angle que forment deux sentiers qui bifurquent ou se croisent, il se peut donner n'importe où, et le Dieu Bambara, j'avais raison de le dire, reste sans prêtre, sans autel, sans sacrifice, sans culte proprement dit.

§ 3. La croyance du Bambara en Dieu n'est pas d'origine islamique, pas plus que ses concepts sur le ciel, l'enfer et le monde des invisibles[1].

Les connaissances du Bambara sur Dieu, le ciel et l'enfer, su le monde des invisibles sont si conformes aux instructions du Coran qu'on se demande tout d'abord, s'il ne les a pas reçues du musulman. Notre surprise augmente encore quand on commence à l'étudier; au point de vue religieux, il n'a pour s'exprimer dans l langage courant que des termes purement et exclusivement arabes. C'est un fait et ce rapprochement est des plus faciles à établir.

Les anges — Bambara *méléké*, Arabe *malaïka* مَلَائِكَة — sont des esprits — Bambara *hakili*, Arabe *'aqal* عَقَل —, supérieurs aux génies — Bambara *djiné*, Arabe *el-djin* أَلْجِنّ —, êtres intermédiaires entre les hommes et les anges auxquels Dieu a confié la garde des éléments. Les anges bons sont en paradis — Bambara *ardjana*, Arabe *El-djanna* أَلْجَنَّة —, là haut dans le ciel bleu et forment la cour céleste du créateur et souverain maître de toute chose, de Dieu — Bambara *Alla*, Arabe *Allah* أَللّٰه —, cause du bien et du mal. Dieu commande à 7 cieux et à 7 globes terrestres superposés, et les mauvais anges — Bambara *sétané*, Arabe *chêitane* شَيْطَان — sont en lutte ouverte avec lui, confirmés dans le mal, puissants et pouvant nuir aux humains et les opprimer. Ils n'en restent pas moins de subir des châtiments éternels en enfer — Bambara *djahanéma*,

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[1] Cf. J. Brun, des Pères Blancs, Notes sur les Croyances et les Pratiques religieuses des Malinkés fétichistes «Anthropos» II. p. 952—954.

Arabe *djahannam* جهنم — dans un feu dont le nôtre comparé à lui, dit la légende, ne serait que le peu qui en subsisterait après 7 lavages consécutifs à grande eau.

Comme on le voit dans ce léger aperçu, tout, et concept et mots, est purement coraniques. Peut-on douter que le noir n'ait été instruit de tout ceci par le musulman? Trop longtemps j'ai vécu au milieu des noirs pour prendre l'apparence pour la réalité, et ici encore, je me garde de suivre dans leurs affirmations nos savants voyageurs de «passage».

Voici des siècles que l'Islam a pénétré au cœur de l'Afrique et s'est implanté au milieu de nos populations noires; si lent qu'ait été son progrès, il n'a pas été sans y laisser son empreinte. Toujours en lutte contre le musulman pour sauvegarder son indépendance et la foi de ses pères (ce furent avant tout des luttes religieuses), le noyau le plus important de la race mandé, tour à tour vainqueur et vaincu, le plus souvent vaincu (car le Bambara, égoïste, met ses intérêts personnels et particuliers avant l'intérêt général et il manqua toujours de cohésion, d'entente, n'eut jamais réellement à sa tête un chef), n'a pu s'y soustraire. Comme il est néanmoins essentiellement cauteleux, fourbe, hypocrite au point que les autres races le comparent — et cette comparaison lui plaît — à une bouse de vache à l'extérieur désséchée mais flasque et molle en son interne de telle sorte qu'elle s'écrase et vous souille sitôt qu'on y pose le pied: je n'hésite pas à dire qu'il n'a rien pris à l'Islam qui ne fut déjà dans son concept. Si pour s'exprimer il a pris les termes arabes, c'est de sa part pure diplomatie, je n'en puis douter. En employant les termes arabes répondant à ses concepts pour exprimer dans le langage courant ses croyances, il y a eu chez lui adaptation et nullement acceptation. J'avoue même qu'il a fait preuve ici non pas de tact vis à vis de son vainqueur (c'est là une qualité qu'il n'a même pas à l'état d'embryon à l'heure actuelle), mais d'une certaine souplesse et finesse. Se présentant, en effet, devant son tyran au point de vue du dogme sur un même pied d'égalité, il évitait par là le tranchant du glaive ou l'esclavage, il conservait intact sa foi aux fétiches, il se garantissait et lui et ses enfants contre toute propagande religieuse, car qu'avait-on à lui apprendre, que pouvait-on lui apprendre qu'il ne sût déjà?

Dans le langage courant, ces termes coraniques lui sont devenus familiers. Ne venant pas de lui et exprimant avant tout un concept qu'il avait et non la chose elle-même, il a pu en toute liberté les employer, sans manquer au respect dû aux êtres supérieurs, ses maîtres et ses dieux, dont on ne prononce jamais les noms en vain et mal à propos. Actuellement il les a bambarisés, à tel point, qu'il ne se doute même point que ce sont là des mots étrangers à sa langue, et il n'y a pas lieu de s'en étonner. Le Bambara fait sien tout ce qui traduit exactement, d'après lui, sa pensée, et sans faire grande attention au sens primitif du mot, qu'il ignore bien souvent. A force d'entendre le musulman crier à tout moment *bismilahi,* il a cru de bon ton de pousser cette exclamation dans les anecdotes qu'il raconte, dans ses récits; depuis deux ou trois ans, c'est pour le monde «chic» le terme supra-poli pour inviter un hôte à entrer dans la case et à s'accroupir sur la natte. Dans 20 ans ce mot, *bismilahi* بسم الله, n'aura pas d'autre sens! Bien qu'il signifie «au nom de Dieu» on rira de vous si on vous entend dire que c'est là un mot arabe, ayant un sens tout autre; tout comme vous perdrez votre temps à dire à un noir que le mot «*fou moi* le camp» est pur argot. Quand un esclave s'enfuit, ne dit-on pas «*a bi fou moi* [1] le camp?» C'est une expression fort répandue, elle est connue de tous et marche de pair avec cette autre: *zé ma fo,* sur laquelle je séchai plusieurs jours pour en trouver le sens, or rien de plus simple, «je m'en fous».

Si le Bambara à lutté pour sauvegarder son indépendance, il a lutté avant tout pour sauvegarder sa foi et conserver ses fétiches. Pour ceux-ci il a montré un attachement si grand, que son vainqueur l'a qualifié de révolté, de *Bamba,* synonyme de *Kafri.* Ces luttes religieuses à elles seules nous permettent de dire et de regarder comme un fait indiscutable, qu'avant l'arrivée des musulmans il était animiste et sacrifiait à des génies.

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[1] *a* = lui, *bi* = est, *fou moi* le camp; toute l'expression = déguerpir.

Avait-il, comme actuellement, une idée exacte et précise de ses génies? Evidemment oui, car se prenant toujours en ses raisonnements comme terme de comparaison, le génie invisible, impalpable, auquel il sacrifiait, avait dans son esprit une ressemblance frappante avec l'homme. Ce n'est pas un homme et c'en est un pourtant, dit-il, ne parvenant pas à définir son concept, son idée, *ma si fa do*[1].

Le mot *djin* du musulman traduite xactement son concept, et dans le langage courant il s'en sert; mais quand vient le jour du sacrifice, il ignore ce mot et un seul reste, le mot *ma* «homme». Quand il rougit de sang l'écorce du baobab *(Adansonia digitata)* du tamarinier, du caïlcédra (famille des Cédrelacées) etc. . . . pour s'attirer les bonnes grâces et la protection du génie qui y réside, toujours il lui décerne le titre de *ma* «homme» et jamais celui de *djiné*. — «*Ma n'zira ba, ma n'tomi ba, ma djala ba;* ô homme grand baobab, ô homme grand tamarinier, ô homme grand caïlcédra!», tel est le commencement de la formule du sacrificateur en offrant au génie les victimes et les farines[2]. Dans sa langue il a encore pour s'exprimer un terme purement Bambara, il le préfère au mot *djiné*, il appelle ces génies des *gnéna*.

Si, avant l'arrivée des musulmans, le noir sacrifiait à des êtres ayant un corps et une âme bien qu'impondérables et invisibles, à des êtres intermédiaires entre l'homme et l'ange, à ce que les Arabes appellent اَلْجِنّ *el djiné*, il sacrifiait encore à des êtres mauvais, supérieurs à ceux-ci en puissance, à ce qu'il appelle les *boli*. La légende des *boli*, légende ironique, que je raconterai tout au long quand je traiterai cette question, nous le prouve assez. Pour les musulmans du Soudan, il n'y a que deux choses ici-bas qui vaillent la peine d'attirer l'attention: la Mecque *(Makka)* et le *Stamboul,* autrement dit le vieux Abdul Hamid, sultan de Constantinople, qui est à leurs yeux, comme aux yeux de tous les musulmans de nos colonies, le grand pape de l'Islam. Tout ce qui ne porte pas l'estampille de la Mecque, tout ce qui ne vient pas du Stamboul est à rejeter et à mépriser . . . et le Bambara fertile en expédients a eu vite fait dans ses discussions avec les fauteurs de l'islam, de trouver un échappatoire: tous nos ***boli*** viennent de la Mecque, telle a été son arme de combat.

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[1] *Ma* homme, *si fa* espèce certaine, *do* c'est.

[2] Dans le fascicule 4, tome III (1908) Anthropos, Culte des esprits, 1ère page, note 1, il y a une erreur de traduction. *Ma n'zira ba* etc. ne veut pas dire «grand baobab de l'homme». Le vrai sens est celui-ci: ô homme qui est grand baobab . . . Pour l'écriture je préfère un *z* à un *s*. D'ordinaire ils adoucissent le son dur par un petit *n* euphonique. Avec un *s* dur ce mot *sira* ne se distinguerait pas du mot tabac: *sira siramougou*: Tabac à priser, *n'ziramougou* farine baobab.

Traqué de toutes parts, dans l'impossibilité d'exercer publiquement ses cérémonies religieuses même en l'honneur des simples génies, peut-on croire que le Bambara vint ajouter à celles-ci des plus terribles encore? Le musulman vainqueur s'est toujours acharné contre l'idolâtrie en détruisant ses temples et en renversant ses autels; «crois ou meurs», a toujours été sa devise et le sera toujours dès qu'il se sentira fort. Au temps des derniers rois de Ségou, El-Hadj-Omar [1], qui enleva la couronne au roi païen Mary, pour la donner à son fils Ahmadou [2], lequel retint captifs nos explorateurs Mage et Quintin et partit à la mort de son père pour Yamina, puis pour Nioro, laissant la couronne à son fils Madani, cette loi n'était-elle pas encore en pleine vigueur? Pour l'imprudent dont on saisissait les fétiches ou que l'on surprenait à sacrifier, c'était la confiscation des biens, l'emprisonnement, l'esclavage, la mort, et le vaste terrain où se trouvent à l'heure actuelle le cimetière indigène et le cimetière européen [3], a été détrempé par le sang des païens. Qui pourra jamais dire le nombre des têtes qui roulaient à cette époque, dans un but exclusivement religieux! Le bras du bourreau ne s'arrêtait certains jours que parce que las et dans l'impossibilité de frapper, m'ont dit certains noirs, qui doivent la vie à cette lassitude, et je le crois, car le plus grand éloge que décernent les griots à ces tyrans est d'avoir su couper les têtes. La légende des *boli* venant de la Mecque est nécessairement née du besoin qu'il avait de pallier son crime d'idolâtrie et de le conserver en lui accordant les circonstances atténuantes. Si le berceau de l'islam est la Mecque, s'il tient sa supériorité de ce que la Mecque est la ville sainte, choisie et chérie de Dieu [1], que lui veut-on, à lui Bambara, dont le culte vient de cette ville même tant vantée? Et si ce Dieu qu'on lui prêche, a tout décrété [2], le bien et le mal, s'il est l'auteur et du bien et du mal et conduit chacun dans la voie qui lui plaît au point qu'il n'a plus la liberté du choix, pourquoi vouloir lui arracher ce que Dieu lui a donné, ce qui lui vient de la ville sainte, de la Mecque!

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[1] *El-Hadj-Omar* (Omar le Pèlerin) ainsi dénominé parce qu'il fit, dit-on, le voyage de la Mecque.

[2] Traduction Bambara du mot *Ahmed.*

[3] Il y a deux cimetières européens à Ségou. Le premier se trouve à l'entrée de la ville côté sud. Le second, le seul dans lequel on enterre actuellement, se trouve sur la ligne du cimetière indigène, au sud sur la route de Sens et de Kouttiala à 300 ou 400 mètres de la ville.

Le terme Bambara pour désigner les *bolis* est le mot *gná*. L'idée qu'il s'en fait, répond bien au concept arabe du *chéitane* شيطان, aussi dans le langage courant, bien que le mot ne soit jamais sur ses lèvres dans les sacrifices, il les définit d'un seul mot: *sétané*, satan. Dans ses orgies nocturnes, dans ses danses religieuses, le noir concrétise l'idée qu'il se fait du génie auquel il sacrifie; et quand, dans ses cérémonies pieuses en l'honneur du *Komo*, du *Kono*, du *Nama* etc. on le voit à la lueur des petits feux allumés dans le bois sacré, affublé d'un manteau de plumes, la tête perdue dans un immense masque cornu qui n'a rien d'humain, on songe malgré soi aux récits des vieilles grand-mères bretonnes, faits le soir à la veillée d'hiver, dans les étables. Le beuglement des trompes, des bambous et des cornes de *koba* [3], le tintement de de la clochette et les hurlements de la foule vous saisissent, vous terrifient, c'est à se croire transporté au milieu d'un sabbat d'antan. Et quand on a assisté à ces scènes, on ne doute pas de la véracité du noir qui nous dit: «Quand le *boli* apparait il est hideux et glace d'effroi qui le voit; il est noir comme la suie et son visage disparait dans une flamme surmontée de cornes.»

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[1] Voir ce que je dis plus haut au sujet de la Mecque et du Stamboul.

[2] Voir le Coran (VI — V. 3—39) (X — V. 99) (XIV — V. 4) (XVII — V. 32) (XXXVI — V. 6. 7. 8. 9) (LIII — V. 43. 44. 45—49) (LXXVI — V. 29) (LXXX — V. 29) etc. etc.

[3] Autrefois les trompes et les cornes étaient d'ivoire. Les tyrans musulmans, connaissant sans doute le prix d'une dent d'éléphant, ont eu vite fait de les confisquer. Les Bambara ne se servent actuellement que de cornes de bœufs et de cornes de *koba* ou grande antilopé, atteignant la taille d'une belle génisse. (*Koba* est le mot de la langue Peull, désignant cette antilope, appelée par le Bambara *dadjé*, bouche blanche, sans doute à cause des deux lignes blanches qu'elle a sur les joues.)

Ce visage disparaissant dans une flamme réveille nécessairement l'idée d'un esprit infernal, et quand on assiste à certains sacrifices au *Komo,* et au *Nama,* par exemple, et qu'on entend les blasphèmes du sacrificateur, blasphèmes que répète toute l'assistance: *Alla k'an bla,* que Dieu nous laisse (vrai sens: Nous ne voulons pas de Dieu), *Alla djampa ba* Dieu est un grand traître (avec ce sens: Dieu fait des promesses et ne les exécute pas, puisqu'il a tout décrété et que ses décrets sont immuables; *A yé né djampa,* il m'a trahi, dit un noir de quelqu'un qui lui a fait une promesse et ne l'a pas tenue); on ne doute plus, qu'il ne s'agisse là d'un culte à Satan lui-même On s'en convainc d'avantage en assistant au sacrifice du *Toua Bla*[1], *boli* des plus anciens, auquel sacrifiaient de préférence l trois plus fameux sorciers dont il ait conservé les noms et don l'origine se perd dans la nuit des temps, *Makono, Tjewolo,* et *Tjéba* En voici la formule:

«*Touafé Bla, Touafé Bla,* on connait la montagne du *Touafé Bla,* on connait les arbres de cette montagne, je veux parler du feu de sa montagne. *Touafé Bla,* épargne certaines maisons (avec ce sens: celles de mes amis) et va l'allumer (ton feu) en d'autres (avec ce sens: jette la ruine et la désolation chez mes ennemis, chez ceux qui me souhaitent le mal). — *Touafé Bla,* sois moi favorable et si je ne puis voir ton feu, *Touafé Bla* fais m'en voir du moins la pointe de sa longue colonne de fumée (avec ce sens: tu habites dans le feu, je ne puis voir ta demeure, je puis connaître pourtant ta puissance par la fumée de ton feu, c.-à-d., si je suis témoin des malheurs que tu feras fondre sur mes ennemis et ceux que je déteste).»

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[1] *Touafé Bla,* ainsi appelé sans doute parce qu'il se pend à le ceinture et balance sur le côté le long de la cuisse.

Cette formule nous laisse assez voir que les *boli* ou *gna* habitent le feu. Avant l'arrivée du musulman le noir leur sacrifiait et tout comme aujourd'hui il concrétisait son concept de l'esprit infernal en s'affublant d'un hideux masque cornu et d'un manteau de plumes. Ses beuglements et ses hurlements dans les bois sacrés aux jours des grandes orgies sont restés les mêmes et s'il a pris au musulman le mot *sétané* شَيْطَان, et le mot *djahanéma* أَلْجَهَنَّم, il en avait depuis longtemps le concept. — —

Sa connaissance maintenant de l'Etre Suprême, du Dieu créateur et souverain, maître de toute chose, la doit-il au musulman?

Pour avoir besoin d'un maître ici, le Bambara a l'esprit trop hiérarchique! Le benjamin est toujours l'esclave de son aîné, celui-ci l'esclave d'un plus âgé et progressivement et invariablement il monte ainsi sans varier jamais, jusqu'à la barbe blanche, jusqu'à l'ancien, le *tjékoroba,* vrai fétiche à qui tout obéit, quelque soit sa sottise, son étroitesse d'esprit, son manque de jugement.

Dans toute famille c'est la même progression; les enfants ont pour maître immédiat le père, celui-ci s'incline devant ses aînés, au dessus desquels plane, comme maître incontesté, le plus ancien, le *gouatigi* ou chef de famille.

Tous les *gouatigi* sont soumis aux chefs de quartier, ayant à leur tête les *dougoutigi*[1] ou chefs de village, lesquels obéissent aux *kafotigi* ou chefs de canton, régis par les *fama déou* fils du roi ou ministres. L'organisation primitive chez les Bambara était telle, et tous ces petits chefs, chacun dans sa sphère, étaient maîtres absolus et maîtres incontestés.

Au dessus de tous il y avait le roi *Fama* ou *Massa*[2], dont la fonction principale était de se laisser vivre dans l'abondance et le doux farniente. Il avait dans la main tous ses sujets, tous ils étaient ses esclaves, du plus petit au plus élevé, sur tous et sur chacun il avait le droit de vie et de mort.

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[1] Le *dougoutigi* ou chef de village au for religieux passe avant le *sotigi* ou chef au for civil. Depuis Monsieur Carrier, administrateur du cercle en 1901, je crois, cette hiérarchie a *été* officiellement détruite en soi. Elle subsiste néanmoins, et les *kafotigi* et *fama déou* ayant le caractère sacerdotal, conservent en secret leur prestige.

[2] Le mot *Massa* pour désigner le roi, signifie aussi sorcier, grand et puissant. Dans le principe le roi avait bien tout pouvoir, tant au for civil qu'au for religieux, il était bien le prince ou pape du fétichisme, lui aurait-on donné autrement le titre de *Massa*, grand prêtre, grand sorcier?

Avant l'arrivée du musulman, le Bambara sacrifiait aux *gnéna,* autrement dits les *djinés,* il sacrifiait aux *gnâ* ou *sétané,* et tous ces génies, sous quel nom qu'on se plaise à les appeler, étaient comme aujourd'hui, hiérarchisés. Tous ils se divisent en groupes, ayant chacun un chef, ces chefs à leur tour forment d'autres groupes régis par un plus puissant, et s'il doit au musulman le concept de cette hiérarchie, n'est-ce pas dire de ce dernier qu'il a tiré le sabre du fourreau pour affermir le noir dans son fétichisme? n'est-ce pas avouer qu'il a trahi le Coran, lui faisant un précepte de détruire l'idolatrie: «Tuez-les partout où vous les trouverez, faites-les prisonniers, assiégez-les et guettez-les en toute embuscade»[1]. Tout nous permet de dire que cette hiérarchie dans le monde des invisibles vient de lui! Comment croire dès lors qu'il se soit arrêté en chemin, lui qui va toujours groupant et divisant? Se peut-il qu'il ne soit pas arrivé à l'autocrate, à l'unique, au Dieu souverain maître des génies et souverain maître des êtres inférieurs à ceux-ci, les hommes et le reste de la création?

Et si j'étudie la hiérarchie Bambara, je m'aperçois qu'elle est avant tout religieuse! Le *gouatigi* ou chef de famille est prêtre, le *dougoutigi* ou chef de village est prêtre, le *Fama* ou *Massa,* le roi, est prêtre! La connaissance des génies et la connaissance du créateur a donc dû nécessairement précéder.

Il y a tout lieu de croire, par conséquent, que non seulement avant l'arrivée du musulman le Bambara avait l'idée d'un Dieu Unique, souverain maître de toute chose, mais que sa première croyance fut celle-là!

Ce mot Dieu, dans la bouche d'un Bambara, est loin d'avoir toute l'ampleur que nous lui donnons. S'il voit tout, connaît tout, exerce sa puissance en tout lieu, il n'est pas présent en tout lieu d'une présence réelle, car tout puissant, tout grand, tout immense soit-il, il demeure un «Etre» ayant la quantité, ayant des dimensions, limité par suite et occupant un lieu. D'ici à la notion des anges bons il n'y a qu'un pas, et qu'il est pour eux facile à franchir!

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[1] Coran chap. IX — V. 5.

Si sur cette terre le plus petit des puissants, le moindre des potentats s'entoure de serviteurs et d'esclaves, le créateur pouvait-il rester sans en avoir? Si ceux qui forment la cour du roi sont supérieurs aux *gouatigi*, ou «chefs de famille», aux *dougoutigi* ou «chefs de village», aux *kafotigi* ou «chefs de cantons», ceux qui forment la cour céleste seront-ils inférieurs aux hommes, aux génies, aux démons? La conclusion est toute naturelle, ils leur seront supérieurs et à quoi les va-t-il comparer? Se prenant en tout et toujours comme terme de comparaison, il n'a, pour rester logique avec sa façon d'envisager le monde, qu'à se considérer lui même et à donner à ces êtres la nature de son âme, son *dousou*, qu'il appelle encore *son*. N'est-ce pas ce qu'il a fait? Quand il définit son concept de l'âme et veut être compris, a-t-il un autre mot que celui-là même dont il se sert pour désigner les anges, *méléké*? On le voit, il ne doit pas au musulman son concept du ciel et des anges, il s'est appropié un mot de langue étrangère, répondant à un concept que déjà il avait, et c'est tout.

Il n'a pourtant qu'un mot, me dira-t-on, pour désigner la divinité, le Dieu Unique, et ce mot est le terme islamique lui même, *Alla*. Il n'en a pas d'autre et les premiers missionnaires, par ignorance sans doute de la haine du païen contre le musulman, l'ont adopté nuisant ainsi à leur ministère[1]. Oui, le mot *Alla* est le terme dont-il se sert dans le langage courant lorsqu'il parle de Dieu, mais dans le principe n'en possédait-il pas un autre, actuellement encore n'en a-t-il pas un?

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[1] En traduisant par *Alla* et Dieu et notre concept de la divinité, les premiers missionnaires n'ont pas creusé entre le catholicisme et l'islamisme le fossé profond qui devrait exister. Le païen regarde le catholique et le musulman si non comme frères, du moins comme cousins, et le mot *Alla* n'y est pas étranger. Le catholique, par sa croyance à l'ancien Testament, semble friser aux yeux du noir 'islamisme, et s'il s'en sépare au Christianisme, il lui apparaît comme appartenant une secte découlant en droite ligne de l'islamisme. Les musulmans aident e toutes leurs forces à faire croire cette ineptie, et les missionnaires devraient yer de leurs catéchisme et le mot *Alla* pour dire Dieu et le mot absurde *ori* pour dire prêtre, et le mot *néma* pour dire la grâce etc. etc., tout ce qui 'est pas Bambara, en un mot.

J'ai toujours été surpris de la facilité avec laquelle le noir désigne un bienfait divin du nom de son Auteur, et quand, au temps de l'hivernage, il reçoit le bienfait des bienfaits, la pluie qui fait germer les plantes et croître la moisson, voici sa façon de s'exprimer: «*Alla bi fign, Alla bi na, Alla bi kouloukoulou, Alla bi yégé yégé, Alla do* etc. Dieu noircit, Dieu arrive, Dieu gronde, Dieu étincelle, c'est Dieu» etc. Ce sont là des expressions purement métaphoriques pour dire: «Les nuages s'amoncellent, il va pleuvoir, le tonnerre gronde, il fait des éclairs, c'est la pluie.»

Ces mêmes métaphores, je les retrouve dans sa bouche avec un sens absolument identique, mais en termes Bambara cette fois: «*Sa bi fign, sa bi na, sa bi kouloukoulou, sa bi yégé yégé, sa do*», signifient également: «Les nuages s'amoncellent, il va pleuvoir, le tonnerre gronde, il fait des éclairs, c'est la pluie.» Le mot *sa* étant exclusivement Bambara, on ne peut raisonnablement pas le regarder comme postérieur au mot arabe, le noir le possédait donc avant de connaître le mot *Alla*. Ce mot ne signifia pas «nuage», «tonnerre», «éclair», «pluie», il y a tout lieu de croire qu'il fut un temps, où, comme aujourd'hui, il réveillait en son esprit un concept identique à celui qu'éveille en lui actuellement le mot *Alla*, et par ce mot *Alla*, de langue étrangère, il ne fait qu'exprimer un concept depuis longtemps possédé par lui.

Que signifie ce mot *sa*? Serait-ce le nom primitif de la divinité? Certaines races Bantous ayant beaucoup d'égards pour les serpents et leur rendant un culte, des Européens ont voulu y voir la traduction du mot «serpent». C'est ici une erreur grossière, profonde. Le mot *sa* «serpent» et le mot *sa* dans ces phrases *sa bi fign, sa bi na* etc. peuvent avoir une même orthographe, mais la prononciation diffère. L'*s* [illegible]ur du *sa* «serpent» se prononce en desserrant légèrement les dents, et en avançant les lèvres, et le mot *sa* dans *sa bi fign* etc. se prononce en serrant les dents et en retirant à soi les lèvres. Ce sont donc là deux mots bien distincts' Vouloir du reste le serpent comme étant ou ayant été la divinit Bambara me semble une stupidité. Si même avec ses *tabou* pr parmi les animaux il ne se veut aucun lien de parenté physique réel, *a fortiori* doit-on croire, qu'il ne peut vouloir pour créateur souverain maître un animal, fût-il serpent. Certains Bambara l'ont pour *tabou* de famille, et une branche de la race Mandé a respect un si grand pour le serpent python *Minia*[1], qu'on ne la connaît désormais plus que sous ce nom: les *Minia-n-ka*, les gens du serpent *Minia*. Mais les Minianka ont-ils jamais vénéré et vénèrent-ils encore le serpent comme leur Dieu, leur divinité suprême? Ils sont moins sots, le serpent est un vulgaire *tabou*, la résidence d'un génie, la résidence d'un esprit infernal ou démon et rien de plus.

Le mot *sa* dans ces phrases *sa bi fign, sa dò* etc. «les nuages s'amoncellent, c'est la pluie» etc., a un sens large et vague, il signifie tout ce qui est en haut, tout ce qui est au dessus de nous. Ce mot a-t-il été jadis le nom lui-même de la divinité, comme l'est actuellement pour beaucoup le mot *Alla?* Je ne le crois pas. Ce mot *sa* était le terme voilé pour parler de la divinité, il exprimait tout comme le mot *Alla* dans le principe un concept, une idée, et nullement un «être».

Dieu étant d'après ses concepts un esprit résidant au dessus de nous avec sa cour, les anges, ces expressions *sa bi na, sa bi*

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[1] Chez les Baganda de l'Ouganda le serpent était vénéré avant qu'ils fussent chrétiens, comme résidence d'un démon. Le serpent chez eux ressemble fort aux animaux tabous de famille chez les Bambara ou mieux au serpent python le *Minia*, tabou de la branche Mandé connue vulgairement sous le nom de *Minia-n-ka*. Les *Minia-n-ka* tirant leur nom du mot *Minia* serpent vénéré, objet d'un culte public, certains ont voulu que les *Bambara* ou *Bamana* tirent leur nom du mot *Bama* caïman. Si le caïman, dans la langue Bambara *Bama*, avait donné le nom à la race, cet animal serait pour la race un tabou, comme le *Minia* est tabou pour les *Minianka*, le *Mani* ou *Mali*, soit l'hippopotame, est tabou pour le Malinké. Rien de tel pour le caïman en pays Bambara, il n'est en aucune façon le tabou de la race. — Egalement le mot *Bamana* pourrait tout aussi bien venir du mot *bama*, sorte de tanche qui se trouve à foison dans le Bani et le Niger. L'idée n'en est pas venue aux amants du caïman qui ignorent sans doute ce poisson *bama*. — Le mot *Bambara* vient du mot *bamba* qui signifie révolté, qui dans la bouche du musulman a le sens e *Kafri*. *Bambara* signifie le révolté, qui ne s'est jamais soumis à l'Islam, et s nègres de l'ouest appellent *Bamako, Bambako*, le fleuve des révoltés. Le ère Copte, bambarisant, reconnu des noirs de Ségou, l'a vite compris et l'a oté dans ses récits aux Annales des Pères Blancs. Monsieur De Lafosse, ministrateur, très compétent dans les lois, coutumes et mœurs indigènes, l'a econnu, et je partage leurs avis sur le nom Bambara.

fign, sa bi kouloukoulou, sa-dji, etc. doivent être traduits pour avoir un sens: «*Min be sa-n-fé bi na, Min bé sa-n-fé bi fign, Min bé-sa-n-fé bi kouloukoulou, Sa-n-fé ta dji* — Celui qui (l'esprit qui) est là haut arrive (va nous gratifier de son bienfait la pluie), Celui qui est là haut noircit (amoncelle les nuages), Celui qui est là haut gronde (fait entendre sa voix), L'eau de celui qui est là haut».

Le bienfait par excellence qu'accorde aux humains la Divinité, l'Etre Suprême, c'est la pluie, et le Bambara, comme je vais le prouver dans un instant, ne pouvant prononcer le nom de ce Dieu, s'est servi dans sa reconnaissance d'une métaphore. Sa métaphore: *Alla bi na, Alla bi fign,* identique à celle où entre le mot *sa,* v. g. *sa bi na, sa bi fign* etc. me penche à croire, que dis-je, me fait croire que ce mot *Alla* dans le principe exprimait moins un individu, un être. qu'une idée, un concept. J'avoue du reste que si certains de nos Bambaras ont sur Dieu et sur le mot *Alla* les notions elles-mêmes du musulman, plus nombreux sont encore ceux dont les notions sur ce point restent confuses, et Dieu, *Alla,* pour la majorité n'est rien moins que la voûte céleste [1], enveloppe qui nous cache un «Esprit», un Etre doué de raison et Tout-Puissant; c'est la traduction du mot *sa.*

On le voit, le mot *Alla* ne désignant nullement dans le principe un Etre, un Individu, mais exprimant tout simplement un concept, une idée déjà connue, acquise et traduite par le mot *sa,* le Bambara n'a fait qu'adopter un mot étranger répondant à son concept.

Si le mot *Alla* avait désigné pour lui la Divinité elle-même, l'Etre suprême, eût-il jamais osé la prononcer, le faire sien? Je ne puis me résoudre à le croire, car chez le Bambara on ne prononce jamais en vain et mal à propos le nom d'un puissant, d'un chef religieux, d'un être vénéré. Si certains de ses rois et parmi eux

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[1] Pour les noirs païens Dieu est un esprit qui est partout, voit tout, me il reste *ens quantum.* Il habite là haut, est grand comme la voûte céleste parce que planant au dessus de nous, il voit tout. Les vieux vous expliquen cela avec une vigueur qui prouve leur bonne foi et les enfants vous raconte les dires des vieux avec une candeur si naïve, qu'on ne peut s'y méprendre

N'golo, pour n'en pas citer d'autres, punissait de l'amende, de la prison, quiconque était surpris prononçant son nom, s'il les jetait dans l'esclavage et même leur tranchait la tête comme coupable de crime de lèse-majesté, que n'avait-il pas à craindre du créateur, s'il venait à prononcer son nom en vain et mal à propos! Taire le nom de celui que l'on craint ou que l'on vénère, est du reste une coutume générale.

Toute femme bien élevée et qui se respecte, ne prononce jamais le nom de son mari. ***Né tigi,*** mon maître, ***so tigi*** le maître de la maison, dit-elle, en parlant de lui; le plus souvent elle l'affuble d'un nom d'emprunt, d'un ***bougna toua*** ou nom respectueux, et les polygames en ont plus d'un, chaque femme lui en donnant un de son crû.

Dans les familles bien éduquées, et d'ordinaire elles le sont[1], les enfants taisent le nom du père, surtout s'il est ***gouatigi,*** soit chef de famille, et quand la marmaille autour du vieux papa se réjouit, il n'y a qu'un mot sur toutes ces petites lèvres pour éveiller son attention, éviter sa réprimande, cueillir sa caresse, forcer son sourire: ***Koké-yo — koké-wé!***[2]

Par respect et vénération pour les anciens on leur donne un nom d'emprunt, un ***bougna toua,*** et la raison d'être de tout ceci est de n'avoir pas à prononcer son nom en vain et mal à propos. Ceci est d'un usage courant, on le pousse même un peu loin, car si dans la famille on impose à un enfant le nom de respect, jamais on ne l'appelle de ce nom. Combien de personnes dont le vrai nom n'est pas connu en dehors des proches et des amis! Tous les ***Dougoutigi, To-n-tigi, Ba-koroba, Moké-touama*** ont reçu un nom au 8ème jour de leur naissance et les noms pour les désigner sont des noms d'emprunt.

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[1] Nos noirs Bambara ont grand respect pour les membres de leurs familles, ils sont prévenant à leur égard et bien supérieurs à tous les Arabes l'Algérie par exemple sur ce point. Chez les premiers la vie de famille est plus franche, plus cordiale.

[2] Je donne ce mot *Koké-yo — (Né koké) koké wé (koké* donc = je t'en prie, Koké) car il est le plus usité — il y en a d'autres, c'est évident. Les femmes préférées aussi aiment-elles donner ce nom à leurs maris. C'est pour tous un terme de respect et en même temps il est tendre, affectueux, câlin.

Aux alentours de Ségou, où l'Islam s'est répandu et chaque jour se répand davantage, les sacrificateurs des génies protecteurs des villages, les *gnéna-n-sona ba* ou *dougoutigi*, ont perdu de leur prestige, mais quiconque les respecte, fût-il musulman, ne prononce jamais leurs noms. Dans le Bani maintenant, où l'on conserve avec un soin jaloux les coutumes vieilles et les traditions, pas un enfant, pas une femme, pas un jeune homme, ne peut vous donner le nom du grand sacrificateur, si celui-ci est un peu ancien. Par respect et vénération on ne prononce jamais son nom, c'est le chef, et tous vous répondent lorsqu'on les interroge: «*Toua si t'a la dougoutigi ko* il n'a d'autre nom que celui de *dougoutigi*, chef de village» et de fait la majorité de la population ne lui en connaît pas d'autre.

Ce besoin de taire le nom du respecté, du vénéré et du craint, va jusqu'à tronquer les formules usitées dans les salutations[1]; aussi conçoit-on facilement que le nom des fétiches ne soit connu que de leurs maîtres et de leurs adeptes. Evidemment un musulman, une femme, un incirconcis, une non excisée, peuvent vous donner le nombre des *gnéna* et des *gnâ* possédés par le village, ils savent aussi si les *gnéna (djiné)* sont un *Dasiri*, un *Ngolo*, un *Koté*, un *Ntomo*, un *Tauri* etc.; si les *gnâ (boli, sétané)* sont un *Komo*, un *Nia*, un *Douga*, un *Kono*, un *Nama*, un *Bala* etc. Mais à part les initiés, qui pourra vous dire que tel *boli* s'appelle *Sélé*, *Magné*, *Toroba*, *Dono*, *N[illegible]o*, que le *Magna* se dit aussi *Tjarofign* et le *Nama*, *Sirima-n-fign?* Le nom générique seul est connu et il est encore de bon ton de le taire lorsqu'on invite à une réjouissance en son honneur. Le *Nama* est enfermé dans une ruche d'abeilles, à l'ombre d'un tamarinier. Le tout est cloturé avec des nattes grossières et quand on invite au sacrifice, voici la formule du plus grand chic: «Viens nous voir, *an bi djasé*[2] *son*, nous sacrifions à la palissade». La trompe du *Komo* est en fer, on dira donc: «*An bi négé son* = nous sacrifions au fer». Le fétiche donne la santé en ce sens qu'il peut s'abstenir de rendre malade, s'il est *gnâ,* ou réellement il donne santé et le bien-être, s'il est *gnéna;* on dira donc le plus souvent: «*An ta foura bi son,* nous sacrifions à notre remède», ou encore: «*An ta foura bi djigi so,* notre remède nous fait l'honneur d'une visite»:

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[1] Voir ce que je dis à ce propos au chap. précédent: Réviviscence des âmes au sujet de Ouentja.

[2] *Djasé*, nom de la palissade en nattes grossières. Aux enfants qui naisser à l'époque des sacrifices au *Nama*, qui sont voués au fétiche, on donne fréquemment le nom de *Djasé* au lieu de *Nama*, *Namakoro*. Le *Nama* est parfois entouré d'un mur au lieu de nattes. C'est excessivement rare, je n'ai vu qu'un sanctuaire de ce genre, à Dougoutigila, dans le Bani.

Sommes-nous ici en présence d'une coutume récente, date-t-elle du musulman? Je ne saurais l'admettre, elle précède celui-ci, c'est de toute évidence et je n'hésite pas à croire que le nom de la Divinité, de l'Etre Suprême, n'était jamais prononcé et ne pouvait être prononcé. Rien d'étonnant désormais qu'il se soit peu à peu perdu, effacé des mémoires au point d'être actuellement inconnu.

Le Dieu Bambara étant du reste sans prêtre, sans autel, sans sacrifice, avait-on à prononcer son nom? Dans ses concepts, les *gnéna,* soit les *djiné,* sont les êtres intermédiaires entre l'homme et l'ange, préposés par la Divinité à la garde des éléments et chargés par elle de distribuer aux humains ses faveurs et ses châtiments, serait-ce absurde et téméraire de croire, que dès le commencement il ne s'adressait à Dieu que par l'intermédiaire des *gnéna* ou *djiné?* Je n'en puis douter, le Bambara suppliait les *djiné* de présenter leurs hommages et leurs adorations à leur Maître et au Maître de l'univers entier, à leur *Tigi ani fen bè tigi yé,* comme le disent toujours les sorciers dans leurs cérémonies liturgiques, et ceux-ci sont les gardiens vigilants des formules anciennes et des coutumes, tout leur prestige vient de là.

Du reste, le culte des *gnéna* ou *djiné* précède celui des *gnâ (boli* ou *sétané).* Il n'a pas d'histoire, son origine se perd dans la nuit des temps et j'y vois une nouvelle raison de croire qu'ils furent les premiers intermédiaires entre l'homme et Dieu.

Plus on connaît le Bambara, plus on étudie ses croyances d'après ses usages, en les jugeant dans sa façon à lui de penser, de voir, de sentir de concevoir les choses, plus on se convaincra qu'il ne doit au musulman aucun de ses concepts. Il n'a pris à son vainqueur, il n'a adopté pour s'exprimer que certains mots coraniques qui répondaient à ses idées et qui, étant étrangers à sa langue, restaient des termes voilés.

Fait curieux et surprenant, certaines vérités musulmanes propres à faire impression sur son âme, comme l'enfer, le paradis, le jugement de l'âme suivi de la récompense ou du châtiment, la fin du monde etc., l'ont toujours laissé froid et indifférent. Ne serait-ce pas qu'à l'arrivée du musulman, il en avait perdu le concept, et que tout ceci fut pour lui du nouveau?

Au Bambara, qu'importe l'enfer! A-t-il à craindre ce feu pénétrant dont le nôtre, comparé à lui, ne serait que le reste d'un septième lavage?[1] D'abord, il croit à la réviviscence des âmes, ce qui le met à l'abri de toutes ces tortures, et si certains noirs pensent à l'enfer, ils y pensent sans trembler. Pour le mériter, il faut mépriser les *gnéna* ou *djiné*, les *gnâ (boli, sétané)*, être monstre, au point de méconnaître toutes les lois de la justice et de l'hospitalité. Les occasions de sacrifier aux *gnéna* et aux *gnâ* sont trop fréquentes, pour toujours passer inaperçues, ses craintes des fétiches trop nombreuses, pour refuser sans cesse aux tyrans invisibles la poule et la noix de *kola*, et se trouve-t-il un monstre ici bas qui, un jour ou l'autre, ne se sente le cœur ému, touché, pris de compassion pour le faible? Où est l'être hirsute, impoli qui rougit d'offrir le verre d'eau au voyageur de passage et à plus forte raison au frère de la race? Il est plus difficile à un Bambara de mériter l'enfer que de l'éviter; aussi n'a-t-il pas à y songer et il n'y songe jamais.

Le paradis ne le préoccupe guère plus. Cette pensée, qu'il est appelé à contempler le Créateur, à vivre près de Lui et à en jouir, depuis longtemps ne l'effleure plus, il a trop évolué, il est parvenu au dernier cran de la dégradation, pour descendre plus bas il lui faudrait être musulman. Le paradis de Mahomet d'ailleurs lui semble absurde! Cette impudique phalange de vierges aux regards modestes, aux beaux yeux noirs, semblables par leur teint aux œufs d'autruches cachés avec soin dans le sable[2], le trouve indifférent, il préfère encore celles d'ici bas, se basant sur ce principe sans doute qu'un bon tiens vaut 36 tu l'auras. La virginité est trop belle pour qu'il ait un mot pour l'exprimer, c'est là une fleur d'un jour qu'à dix ans on n'a plus; aussi que lui importe qu'une femme soit jeune ou un peu mûre, vierge ou non vierge, jolie ou laide, la femme pour lui, la vraie, c'est la bonne servante, la bonne cuisinière, celle qui fournit à discrétion le plaisir charnel sans se lasser jamais.

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[1] Définition de l'enfer. *A douga ko wolonoula, min bi to a wolonoula ko an tassouma flé nin yé,* mot à mot = lui éteindre lavage septième ce qui est restant lui (lavage) septième après notre feu, regarde, c'est lui.

[2] Coran chap. XXXVII — V. 47.

Plaisirs et jouissances de cette terre suffisent amplement au noir; il n'en souhaite pas d'autres et pour cette raison sans doute, il croit au perpétuel retour! Si à peine dans la tombe, il revit déjà dans le sein d'une femme, l'idée d'un jugement au trépas, l'idée de la fin du monde et d'un nouveau jugement, peut-elle faire impression sur son âme? lui qui revit et toujours revit, peut-il s'imaginer la fin du monde?

Inutile de parler de la connaissance qu'il a d'Adam, père du genre humain et d'Eve, son épouse. Ces mots *Adama* (Adam), *Awa* (Eve) sont loin d'avoir le sens que nous leur donnons. Le missionnaire, le musulman, tout Européen, se présentant à lui comme fils d'Adam et Eve, ces mots sont pour lui un terme générique pour désigner le premier père et la première mère d'une race, mais nullement les mots qui désignent le premier père et la première mère de tout le genre humain. Un Bambara pur ne croit pas à l'unité de l'espèce humaine; Dieu à créé le Blanc blanc et le Noir noir pour employer son expression, à chacun il donne un père et une mère de sa couleur.

L'arrivée de l'Européen et du musulman n'a rien changé encore ici à son concept. Pour beaucoup chaque tribu, chaque caste a eu un premier père et une première mère; s'il est des castes ne pouvant s'allier par le mariage, la raison me semble être celle-là. *An té si, a yé noumou yé an yé Bamana dion yé an té si*[1] *kélé-n-yé*, Nous ne pouvons pas nous marier, il est *noumou* (forgeron) et nous ne sommes pas de la même race, du même sang, de la même souche, d'un même père. Certains me paraissent très explicites ils vous disent: «*An té fa kélé-n-yé*. Nous ne sommes pas d'un père commun».

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[1] *Si* = pareil — semblable — nature — de même race, génération, engendrement, peuple, nature.

Chap. V.

Le fétichisme chez les Bambara, le culte des *gnéna*. Classification des *gnéna*, identiques aux *djiné* des Arabes.

§ 1. Ce qu'on entend par *gnéna* ou *djiné*. § 2. *Gnéna* résidant dans la brousse. § 3. *Gnéna* rôdant aux alentours et dans le village. § 4. Génies des mares, des sources et des puits. § 5. Génies de la moisson. § 6. Génies protecteurs des enfants. § 7. Le génie protecteur des jeunes gens circoncis. § 8. Le génie des femmes. § 9. Le génie des jumeaux. § 10. Génie protecteur des villages. § 11. Le génie *koté* ou *koré*.

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§ 1. Ce qu'on entend par *gnéna* ou *djiné*.

L'Etre Suprême, le Dieu Bambara vit là haut derrière le ciel bleu, coulant des jours heureux et tranquilles, avec la troupe céleste qui forme sa cour, les anges bons *(méléké)*, et il reste, tout omnipotent soit-il, sans prêtre et sans sacrifice. C'est qu'il s'occupe bien peu des hommes; il a partagé l'empire de la création avec les *djiné*, il a décrété une fois pour toutes ses lois qui sont immuables et depuis il se laisse vivre, se reposant dans un doux «farniente» ... Ne pensons point pourtant que le noir soit sans religion, il est religieux à l'excès et il passe sa vie à sacrifier et il gaspille les farines et il répand le sang des victimes en pure perte, au seul profit des vautours.

Croyant n'avoir rien à attendre de Dieu, il s'adresse aux *djiné* ou *gnéna* préposés à la garde des éléments et possédant, chacun dans sa sphère, un pouvoir absolu. Sans doute, ils ne peuvent, ceux-ci, changer tout l'ordre général, établi par le Créateur et souverain maître de toute chose (*an tigi* notre maître *ani fen* *bè tigi yé* et le maître de toute chose), mais ils peuvent accorder un bienfait matériel[1], détourner un malheur, récompenser et châtier.

Le *gnéna* rappelle le *djin* du Coran (chap. VI. XXX. VIII. XLI). C'est un être intermédiaire entre l'homme et l'ange. *Ma si fa do do,* c'est une espèce d'homme, disent les noirs et de fait, il ressemble à l'homme, puisqu'il mange, boit, s'amuse, se marie, a des enfants. Beaucoup même les croient vêtus, et le soir à la veillée, il n'est pas rare d'entendre un conteur dire d'eux: «*Sanou b'oufé. Wari b'oufé. Bagi fana b'oufé.* Ils ont de l'or. Ils ont de l'argent. Ils ont encore des étoffes». — Ils ont surtout la force! Ils sont puissants et si quelques uns portent des sachets en toile ou en cuir, des ficelles à sept et neuf nœuds — soit des amulettes —, des griffes de fauves, des cornes de biches et des cornes de boucs, des *tafo* en cuir pris dans la peau d'un fourmilier, d'un singe etc. — soit des talismans — qui les mettent à l'abri de leurs coups, s'il se trouve des devins, des sorciers, certains chasseurs et certains forgerons *(noumou)* etc. sur lesquels nos invisibles n'ont guère prise, il n'en reste pas moins vrai qu'ils sont craints, redoutés de tous, et on les honore et on veut leurs bonnes grâces. A leurs amis du reste, ils donnent la chance, la bonne fortune, le succès et ils les préservent de foule de maux — des sorts, des maléfices, de la pauvreté, de la maladie etc. —. de la rancœur d'un ennemi.

Le culte des *gnéna,* êtres intermédiaires entre l'ange et l'homme, est des plus anciens. Son origine se perd dans la nuit des temps et il n'a pas, comme le *boli* ou *gnâ* dont je parlerai plus tard, une histoire. Comme ils ne sont pas tous également forts et également puissants, je les divise en trois groupes principaux, ceux qui vivent dans la brousse, ceux qui rôdent à l'entour et à l'intérieur des villages, ceux enfin qui réellement s'intéressent aux Bambara et vraiment les protègent.

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[1] Un noir n'a pas l'idée de réclamer un bien surnaturel.

[2] Dans les sacrifices on l'appelle *ma*, homme en y joignant le mot de l'objet dans lequel il se trouve *ma djala ba* homme grand calleédra etc. . . .

[3] Voir Anthropos tome III (1908) fascicule 4.

§ 2. *Gnéna* résidant dans la brousse.

Ceux-ci se cachent dans les fourrés, perchent sur les arbres et ce n'est que le jour, en plein midi et au plus fort de la chaleur, qu'ils sont terribles. Malheur à qui les trouble à ce moment dans leurs promenades, grimpe sur les arbres où ils ont élu domicile, cherche à émonder les branches sur lesquelles ils prennent leurs ébats ou se reposent. Ils n'aiment guère les enfants! ils ont en réserve pour ces petits brise-tout, toujours courant et grimpant pour prendre les lézards, dénicher les nids et se gaver de fruits, de violents maux de tête et de violents maux de ventre. Bien souvent aussi, ils les rendent boiteux, aveugles, sourds et muets, fous etc. et pas un village où l'on ne vous montre quelques unes de leurs victimes[1].

Le plus fameux et le plus terrible de tous ces petits invisibles de la brousse, sans ministre, sans prêtre attitré, et auxquels pourtant maintes offrandes sont faites, est le *wokolo*. Noir comme la suie, velu comme un singe, pas plus gros qu'un enfant de un à deux mois, il aime à se montrer, et pas un noir, peut-on dire, qui atteigne la trentaine, sans l'avoir vu. Si parfois, au plus fort de la chaleur ou le soir au clair de la lune, il longe les bords du fleuve, lançant dans l'onde sa ligne minuscule, presqu'invisible et plus ténue qu'un cheveu, il préfère la brousse et l'arbre à beurre, le *karité (Bassia Parkii)*, a toutes ses prédilections. Le carquois en bandoulière, l'arc toujours tendu, il se met aux aguets, et gare à qui passe et le vient déranger. Pour le vaincre et le forcer à battre en retraite, il faut le saluer sitôt qu'on l'aperçoit, mais d'ordinaire il reste invisible et vous décoche sa flèche, flèche si petite, qu'on ne la sent même pas vous pénétrer les chairs. C'est elle qui vaut à nos noirs leurs abcès profonds et phlegmoneux[2].

Beaucoup de ces invisibles n'ont pas de nom! Les moins sociables sont ceux qui gîtent dans les caïlcédras, car pour en venir à bout, il faut être *noumou* (forgeron), *koulé* (creuseurs de pirogues, raccommodeurs de calebasses) etc.; eux-seuls osent donner à ces arbres le premier coup de hache et les abattre[1].

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[1] Pour comprendre cette croyance du noir, lisez le chapitre sur la maladie et la mort.

[2] Comme tous les superstitieux et les cerveaux faibles, le noir croit voir en réalité ses rêves et ses désirs imaginaires.

§ 3. *Gnéna* rôdant aux alentours et dans le village.

Ces *gnéna* aiment avant tout s'asseoir là où les chemins se croisent et ils se confondent un peu avec les *gnâma*, bien qu'ils en diffèrent[2]. Ils préservent des sorts et des maléfices, ils donnent la santé, conjurent la maladie, et il n'est pas rare, le matin, à la pointe du jour, le soir, au moment où le soleil s'apprête à disparaître, de voir des hommes et surtout de vieilles femmes qui répandent ça et là au croisement des sentiers, un peu d'eau claire. Ils intercèdent pour les enfants et petits enfants, pour un membre de la famille malade et gisant sur la natte, ils supplient les *gnéna* de les protéger contre un ennemi, un sortilège, de les mettre à l'abri des *gnâma*.

Sans prêtre attitré, ils reçoivent néanmoins force cadeaux, et pas un circoncis qui, un jour ou l'autre, ne se croit obligé de leur verser son obole. Aux croisements des sentiers, on leur jette de préférence de la farine délayée dans de l'eau, des cauris, du lait, des œufs couvés, des cendres d'herbes et de plantes, de la bouillie, des noix de kola, des galettes de sorgho. Aux fêtes des enfants, on leur jette la pâture avec plus d'abondance; les galettes s'empilent (au grand contentement des chiens et des poules) à l'entrée du village et le sol se détrempe d'une légère rosée de sang[3]. Quand vient le second jour de la beuverie qui correspond à la fête du كبش (mouton), les jeunes filles *soli*, celles qui sous peu seront excisées, leur jettent à grandes poignées et sans compter, les restes du *basi k'li*. On donne ce nom au repas fourni en ce jour, au village entier, par les *soli* (celles qui vont être excisées). C'est une sorte de semoule (couscous très fin = *basi*) qui se mange avec une sauce au poisson boucané, affreusement pimentée, et on l'appelle *basi k'li,* car pour fournir ce repas, les fillettes ont dû courir de porte en porte, battant des mains, chantant et quémandant *(k'li).*

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[1] Avant de le faire ils récitent une formule, et le premier coup de hache est donné par le chef des forgerons etc. ou son délégué.

[2] Voir ce que je dis des *gnâma* au 1er chapitre.

[3] Toutes ces offrandes sont faites sur l'ordre d'un sorcier, on les appelle *saraka*. Voir ce que je dis du *saraka* au chap. Croyance en Dieu.

Parmi nos invisibles rôdeurs, il s'en trouve un qui rappelle fameusement notre «loup-garou». C'est le ***souroukou,*** hyène imaginaire, qui donne lieu à un singulier usage. Chaque soir, on voit ici un groupe de petits garçons, là un groupe de fillettes, qui s'écartent un peu dans la brousse, ils vont tous en chœur prendre leurs dernières précautions et soulager la nature — l'union fait la force même contre les ***gnéna.***

Nombreux sont encore les ***gnéna*** de ce groupe qui rôdent dans le village; ils voltigent dans les ***b'lon*** ou cases d'entrée, ils gîtent dans d'affreuses saletés suspendues au dessus de la porte, sur les murs, aux poutres qui soutiennent la terrasse, on ne voit partout, en guise de tentures, que coquilles d'œufs, épis de mil, noyaux de fruits, graines de la brousse offerts à ces amis, en ***saraka.*** Les cases particulières n'en sont pas privées; les ***gnéna*** roulent dans les cendres du foyer, font ron ron sur les nattes, prennent le frais dans les conaris[1], il y en a partout.

Viennent enfin les ***gnéna*** ou ***djiné*** puissants. Sans merci pour leurs ennemis, qu'ils abandonnent aux maléfices et sortilèges de toutes sortes, ils sont pour leurs amis et pleins d'attention et pleins d'égards. Sur une famille, sur un village, sur toute une région, ils peuvent faire fondre la maladie, la pauvreté et autres fléaux; mais ils peuvent également prendre parti pour eux contre un ennemi visible ou invisible, ils peuvent les protéger, tout conjurer et accorder à tous et à chacun de réels bienfaits. Le propre du ***gnéna*** en effet ne consiste pas en ceci qu'il puisse s'abstenir de faire le mal, il peut encore faire le bien directement, en posant un acte bon. Certains élisent domicile dans un rocher, d'autres préfèrent un monticule, un gros arbre à proximité du village, et il en est qui ne dédaignent pas de prendre leurs ébats, au fond d'un puits ou d'une mare et de s'y tenir au frais. Ces derniers sont préposés d'une façon toute spéciale à la garde des éléments! Bien que doués d'une vertu divine, ils sont pourtant loin d'être des dieux, ils ne sont que des intermédiaires entre l'être humain et la divinité. Cette idée dernière s'efface, semble prête à disparaître et pourtant, si on a la patience d'écouter les vieux et de les laisser s'exprimer, on s'aperçoit vite qu'ils l'ont encore, quoique peu nette et très confuse, et on peut croire que le culte des *gnéna* était, dans le principe, un culte direct, offert à la divinité par leur entremise. Hommes, femmes, enfants, tout le monde participe au culte des *gnéna*, et s'il en est un, le *koté* (*kouéré* au Bani) dont on voile les mystères, la secte n'est que semi occulte et la population entière participe aux réjouissances faites en son honneur. Noix de kola, victimes, tout est blanc, à moins d'un ordre formel des sorciers ou l'impossibilité de se procurer la couleur liturgique[1], et le blanc chez les noirs est le symbole de l'innocence et de la pureté.

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[1] Le conari est un récipient en terre cuite, servant pour l'eau, la bière, la cuisson des aliments.

«Les peuples sauvages, dit NICOLAY (T. I. 13 prop.), admettent l'existence de puissances surhumaines. Quand elles sont réputées habiter certains objets en qualité d'esprit, de génies etc., c'est l'animisme.» Cette définition répond bien à ce que nous avons dit des *gnéna*, et le culte de ces génies est bien l'animisme et nullement l'idolâtrie. Et puisque le fétichisme, dit BURTON, est moins une adoration qu'une propitiation d'objets animés ou inanimés auxquels une influence mystérieuse est attribuée, les sacrifices et *saraka* offerts par nos Bambara à leurs génies sont moins un acte d'adoration qu'un acte de propitiation.

Pour donner au lecteur une idée plus exacte du culte des *gnéna*, et ils sont légions, je diviserai les puissants, ceux du troisième groupe, en huit catégories: les génies des mares, des sources et des puits, les génies de la moisson, ceux qui protègent les enfants, et ceux qui protègent les jeunes gens circoncis, le génie des femmes, celui des jumeaux, le *dasiri*, protecteur des villages et le *koté* ou *kouéré*, génie spécial d'une secte semi-occulte. Tous ces génies ont leurs prêtres, leurs sacrifices et leurs *saraka*, mais comme tous ne sont pas égaux en force et en puissance, le culte qui leur est offert est plus ou moins général plus ou moins solennel.

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[1] La raison pour laquelle on manque à la liturgie est toujours annoncée avant le *saraka* ou avant le sacrifice.

§ 4. Génie des mares, des sources et des puits.

Dans toutes les mares, dans toutes les sources et dans tous les puits, barbotent des génies, et nos noirs, pour s'attirer leurs bonnes grâces, se croient obligés de leur offrir de temps à autre une coulée de farine delayée dans de l'eau, le sang d'une poule blanche, un crachat de noix de kola mâchée. Offrandes, sacrifices et *saraka* se font sur la margelle du puits, à l'entrée de la source, sur les bords de la mare, sur la berge enfin, s'il s'agit du fleuve, et la raison de tout ceci est d'empêcher nos génies kneippistes de s'enfuir. Quand ils partent mécontents, ils emportent avec eux les eaux sans lesquelles ils ne peuvent vivre, et la source tarit; c'est la sècheresse complète, un malheur terrible, car que devenir sans eau!

Le sacrificateur du génie des eaux est bien souvent le chef de famille sur le terrain duquel se trouve la source. D'ordinaire, cet honneur revient de droit au chef du quartier; il se trouve même des villages où le sacrificateur n'est rien moins que le chef religieux du village, le *gnéna-n-sonnoba,* prêtre du *dasiri,* génie protecteur du village.

Le plus souvent, on offre à ces génies un *saraka,* mais chaque fois qu'on cure les puits, une poule est sacrifiée: c'est de bon ton et peu de villages dérogent à cette règle. Une fois l'an, on leur offre un sacrifice public, et il est plus ou moins solennel, suivant que le sacrificateur est ou un simple chef de famille, ou un chef de quartier, ou le chef du village. Comme les femmes passent la bonne moitié de leurs existences autour des puits, ce sont elles qui, presque partout, fournissent la matière du sacrifice.

§ 5. Génies de la moisson.

Le moment d'ensemencer étant venu, le Bambara, cultivateur avant tout, se répand en sacrifices, rougissant de sang un peu tout. Le chef de famille n'oublie pas le génie des semences. Il lui offre chez lui un *saraka* et parfois un sacrifice, et il faut qu'il soit bien vieux, bien impotent pour ne pas se rendre au champ le jour où la première pincée de graines est confiée à la terre. Avant de commencer, à moins qu'il ne délègue son fils aîné, ou son frère (le plus âgé après lui), il doit offrir le sang d'une poule au génie de la fécondité, chargé de veiller sur le germe et de lui donner de croître et de grandir.

Le départ pour le champ, au temps de l'ensemencement, a son cachet et son originalité. On remet à un enfant (s'il y en a dans la famille, évidemment) la calebasse [1] contenant la semence, et le père au nom du génie, lui fait ses monitions et recommandations. Au sortir de la case, l'enfant salue les mânes de ses ancêtres en déposant la calebasse sur le seuil de la porte et il part prestement, fier comme Artaban. Il doit veiller à ne pas s'arrêter en chemin sans nécessité, il doit avant tout garder le silence, afin que les esprits qui voltigent ici et là un peu partout, ignorent ce qu'il porte et ne puissent s'attaquer aux germes des grains de mil. Celui qui parle, risque fort de compromettre sa moisson, *o be gno soun tigné* (cela détruit la vitalité du germe du grain de mil).

Ces génies n'ont pas durant l'année de fêtes spéciales; leurs prêtres, les chefs de famille, leur offrent des *saraka* et des sacrifices au moment d'ensemencer; ici et là, pendant que la moisson pousse et grandit, ils sacrifient une poule au coin du champ, et c'est tout.

§ 6. Génies protecteurs des enfants.

Ce n'est qu'à la circoncision que nos enfants participent aux mystères du culte païen, mais on les y prépare de bonne heure, pour les initier à la loi du secret qu'il leur faudra strictement observer plus tard, lorsqu'ils seront adeptes d'une secte occulte. Vers l'âge de 7 à 8 ans, on les affilie à la confrérie des génies chargés de les protéger. Toutes ces sectes se ressemblent, il n'y a que le nom qui diffère. Sur les rives du Bani et du Niger, ils vénèrent le *tauri* (crapeaud, grenouille), imitant dans leurs fêtes le coassement de cette bête; certains villages ont le *djara* (lion), dont ils imitent le rugissement, en tournant leurs frondes, planchette large de quatre doigts et longue de un à deux centimètres, au bout d'une ficelle. Le plus répandu est le *n'tomo*. Ce génie qui prend son nom, sans doute, de l'arbre dans lequel il gîte (le jujubier = *n'tomo*), donne aux enfants bon œil et bon pied, il les préserve des maladies, les défend contre les petits invisibles de la brousse, contre les sorts et les maléfices, il les rend forts, vigoureux, solides et durs à la souffrance.

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[1] Courge fendue en deux, vidée et séchée au soleil.

La confrérie du *n'tomo* (qu'il s'agisse du *n'tomo djé*) ou du *n'tomo fign* — car il est de deux sortes, WHETHER soit que l'on prenne pour la danse un costume blanc, *n'tomo djé*, ou un costume noir, *n'tomo fign* — est COPIED calquée sur celle des *bolis*. Pour y être admis, il faut offrir sa poule à l'enfant chef du *n'tomo* (le *n'tomotigi*), se prosterner devant l'arbre du génie et jurer de garder le secret, de ne parler jamais du *n'tomo* aux non-initiés et surtout aux fillettes.

Enfant portant le pagne dit *yaba*.

En plus du costume qui est blanc *(n'tomo djé)*, ou qui est jaune, noir etc. *(n'tomo fign)* le danseur qui danse la danse du génie, se cache le visage dans un affreux masque en bois, surmonté de cinq, sept et parfois huit cornes.

Le *n'tomo* jette toute une organisation dans le monde des enfants. Ceux-ci, tout naturellement, se divisent en petits groupes correspondants chacun à une circoncision à venir; ils sont donc tous du même âge, nés la même année ou peu s'en faut. Le plus âgé du groupe, le fût-il d'un jour, en devient le chef, et tous ces petits chefs sont soumis à celui du groupe des plus âgés, le *n'tomotigi* et à son adjoint le *n'tomotigi siiré*[1], lequel est pris dans le groupe qui sera circoncis après celui du *n'tomotigi*.

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[1] *Siiré* adjoint, remplaçant.

Ces deux enfants préparent les chasses aux rats et aux lézards, ils organisent les jeux et les régissent, et si un mauvais coup est commis par la bande, c'est à eux de découvrir le coupable. Dans les querelles, discussions et luttes qui surgissent entre enfants, ils interviennent, jugent le cas, et si la chose en vaut la peine, le brouillon ou le déclaré tel, est pilé d'importance. Tout ceci jette l'unité dans les différents groupes et leur évite d'en venir aux mains à chaque instant.

Les fillettes ont, elles, aussi cette organisation par groupes, mais elle manque de cohésion; il lui faudrait le caractère religieux, base de toute union en pays Bambara, et ce n'est qu'à l'excision que tout change chez elles et qu'on la trouve vraiment.

Tous les ans, les enfants sacrifient au génie *n'tomo* par l'entremise du chef, le *n'tomotigi*. C'est un jour de grande réjouissance qui se termine par la flagellation. La matière du sacrifice est fournie par les enfants eux-mêmes; tous en chœur, ils travaillent à cet effet un petit champ au temps de l'hivernage, et si la récolte ne leur suffit pas, ils vont quémander de porte en porte pour que rien ne manque à la fête, ni le *d'lo* ou bière de mil, ni la noix de kola. Au soir de ce grand jour, chaque nouvel initié choisit sa *n'golo mouso*, ainsi désigne-t-on la fillette qu'il prend pour sœur de cœur, pour bonne amie, dirait-on en France . . . mais c'est plus, c'est une petite bonne à tout faire et le cadeau qu'il lui offre chaque année, à la fête, est plus un payement qu'un présent d'amitié «simple et pure»

Le masque du *n'tomo* du fétiche des enfants.

§ 7. Le génie protecteur des jeunes gens circoncis.

A la circoncision, nos Bambara quittent la confrérie du *n'tomo* et vont se mettre sous ta tutelle de génies plus puissants. Ces génies sont tous du même acabit, il n'y a que le nom qui diffère suivant la région, et toutes les confréries sont calquées sur un seul et même moule. La plus répandue est celle du *n'golo*[1].

Le *n'golo* n'est rien d'autre que deux branches fourchues, accrochées ensemble et suspendues à un léger *dloma*[2]. On le rencontre bien souvent dans un coin du village, en plein air, mais d'ordinaire il se tient sous un petit hangar ou une maisonnette. Ce génie, tout en accordant à nos jeunes gens force, vigueur et santé, leur donne encore le talent, sinon de plaire aux femmes, du moins celui de les attirer et de pouvoir par là s'accorder quelques grossières satisfactions. Il aide le non marié à rencontrer l'amie de passage, et le marié voit, grâce à lui, son épouse douce, soumise, obéissante. Il préserve les confrères des maladies honteuses, et d'une façon toute particulière du *ma ko sa*[3], paralysie de l'organe générateur.

Cette confrérie est le fondement de la corporation des *fla-n-to*[4], ayant à sa tête le *to-n-tigi*[5] qui est le chef du fétiche *n'golo*. Ses assesseurs près du génie l'aident dans ses fonctions, il a un *siéré* ou adjoint, un *djéli*, sorte de hérault qui répète ses ordres, ses recommandations et ses remerciements dans les jours de réjouissances et de beuveries, et un *djalatiké*, chargé de faire observer les règles ou statuts de la corporation. Rien ne va chez le noir sans le boire et le manger, il lui faut des réjouissances et des beuveries, et pour se procurer des ressources, les *fla-n-to* ont un grand nombre d'amendes, imposées aux adhérents, les *to-n-dé*[6]. Ces règles ne laissent pas d'être singulières. On punit d'amende, par exemple, quiconque se mouche ou éternue, se lève de table ou commence à manger avant l'ordre du chef, le *tontigi*. Les retardataires pour le bal et ceux qui dorment de jour ou de nuit pendant les réjouissances, n'ont jamais grâce![1]

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[1] Au Bani c'est le *n'goso*, de préférence au *n'golo*.

[2] *Dloma*, bois fourchus sur lesquels reposent les traverses ou poutres qui soutiennent la terrasse. A tout bois fourchu — petit et grand — on donne le nom de *dloma*.

[3] *Ma* homme, *ko* affaire, parties, testicules, *sa* mort, sans vie.

[4] *To* bouillie, *fla* pour, *flani* jumeaux du même âge.

[5] *To* bouillie, *tigi* chef.

[6] *To* bouillie, *dé* enfant.

WHOEVER BLOWS HIS NOSE OR SNEEZES

Les *to-n-dé* ou membres de l'association se composent de groupes, correspondants chacun à une circoncision, et tous ces groupes, unis entre eux par un lien commun, qui est le culte à rendre au génie *n'golo*, se soumettent et obéissent au chef *n'golo tigi*, appelé de préférence *to-n-tigi*. Grâce à cette union, une foule de chicanes et de rixes sont évitées, tout le monde s'entr'aide, participant à la joie et à la tristesse d'un confrère. En un mot, cette association est en petit ce qu'est chez nous une société d'assistance, de secours mutuels.

Pour obtenir une amie de passage, les jeunes *to-n-dé* sacrifient de temps en temps une petite poulette; mais le grand sacrifice est annuel, et la victime est pour le moins une chèvre, offerte au nom de tous. Ceci n'empêche pas chaque adepte d'y ajouter une poule et une noix de kola, les viandes abondent, la bière de mil coule à flots, et le repas et la beuverie sont fournis par eux au village entier, et aux amis des villages environnants. En ce jour également, les jeunes circoncis de l'année entrent dans la confrérie du *n'golo* et deviennent *to-n-dé* ou membres de la corporation des *fla-n-to*. Pour ceci, ils doivent verser de 80 à 120 cauris (2 à 3 sous) et offrir au fétiche la poule et les 2 noix de kola du sacrifice.

§ 8. Le génie des femmes.

Tous les villages ne possèdent pas cet arbre fétiche dit *mouso ka djiri*[2], bien que tous les hameaux possèdent un génie dont la fonction principale est de conserver longtemps à nos dames la fraîcheur première, de donner aux mamans des seins gorgés de lait, aux stériles la fécondité, d'avoir l'œil enfin sur les règles ou menstrues de toutes et de chacune. Chaque mois, à la nouvelle lune, nos excisées mariées et non mariées, passent la nuit entière à danser en son honneur au son d'un tambour spécial appelé *mouso denou*[1]. Ces danses n'ont rien de très décent; à part quelques individus sans vergogne qui assistent même à ces scènes du haut des terrasses; les hommes, au Bani, se tiennent un peu à l'écart.

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[1] Quand nos *tondé* organisent un bal, des réjouissances, tout le monde doit être présent et passer la nuit blanche.

SLEEPLESS NIGHT

[2] Cet arbre est souvent un ficus dit *n'soro*, ou un *toro* sycomore *(ficus vogeli, ficus ferruginosa)* — *mouso* femme, *ka* particule indiquant la possession, *djiri* arbre, le tout donc = l'arbre des femmes.

Bien des villages (et ils sont nombreux dans le Bani) voient le génie prendre gîte et établir sa résidence dans un ficus à proximité des murs. C'est le tronc de cet arbre que l'on rougit de sang à la fête annuelle et sous son ombrage se font une grande partie des danses et se prend le repas que s'offrent nos noires en cette circonstance. Les jeunes excisées de l'année versent de 80 à 120 cauris, offrent une poulette pour le sacrifice, et peuvent dès lors présenter leurs hommages au génie.

Cette confrérie donne lieu à une petite société de secours mutuels, identique en tous points à celle des *fla-n-to* des jeunes gens. La principale de cette corporation est d'ordinaire la plus vieille du village, et on lui décerne le titre de *massa* = reine. Toute la gent féminine l'appelle *mba* = ma mère.

Cette association, dite *mouso-n-to*[2], offre de temps en temps le *d'lo* ou bière de mil aux gens du village, et, une fois l'an, à la fête du génie, un repas copieux avec dessert pour les vieux, la noix de kola, et pour tous, une beuverie en règle. Celles qui violent les statuts de la confrérie sont mises à l'amende, et tout ceci, joint aux 80 ou 120 cauris versés par les excisées de l'année, aident la *massa* et ses acolytes à faire MEET face à tous les EXPENSES frais.

§ 9. Le génie des jumeaux.

La naissance de deux jumeaux, est loin d'être pour la Bambara une sinécure. Celles que j'ai vues affligées de ce bonheur et de cet honneur (car c'en est un, puisqu'on le regarde comme une bénédiction de l'Etre suprême, le Créateur) m'ont paru fort incommodées, de leurs deux poupons. Le plus sain, le plus fort et le plus robuste, gentiment se prélasse sur l'échine de la mère, et celui qui mériterait quelques soins, toujours s'écrase le ventre sur une épaule ou sur l'autre.

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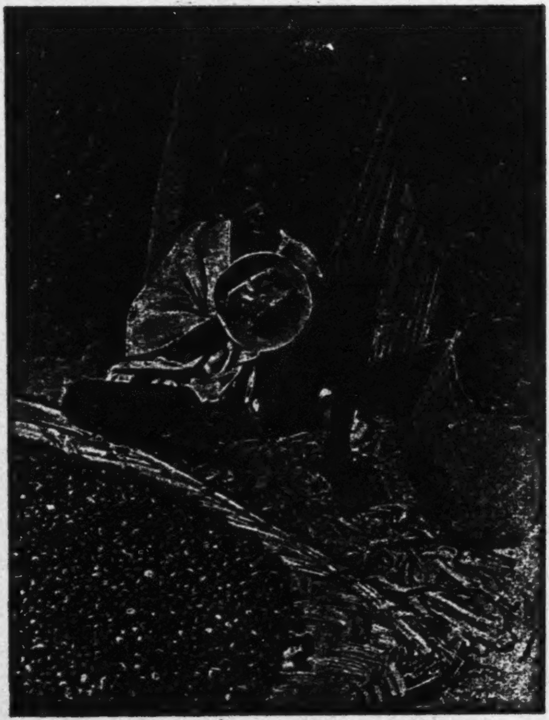
[1] *Mouso* femme, *denou* tambour.

[2] *Mouso* femme, *to* bouillie.



Jeune Bambara tenant le *sinsin*, fétiche des jumeaux.

Le génie des jumeaux gîte dans une sorte de sablier, composé de deux plateaux d'herbes tressées, au centre desquels se suspend un bout de fer ou de bois sur lequel on enroule un morceau du cordon ombilical. Ce fétiche s'appelle *sinsin* et coûte au père de 1 *ba* à 1 *ba* 200 cauris (de 800 à 1200 cauris soit 20 à 25 sous), non compris, bien entendu, les poules et les noix de kola données au *sinsin tigi*[1], appelé plus communément *sinsin d'la tigi*[2]. Pour fabriquer cette horreur que l'on suspend dans la case d'entrée à l'intérieur d'une calebasse renversée[1], il faut avoir en sa possession un fétiche *sinsin* père et connaître les rites et les formules.

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[1] *Sinsin* fétiche de ce nom, *tigi* maître, possesseur.

[2] *Sinsin* fétiche, *d'la* fabricant, *tigi* maître: celui qui fabrique le *sinsin*.

Le sacrifice au *sinsin*, dont le prêtre est le chef de famille lui-même, se fait tous les ans et se continue même à la mort des jumeaux, ce fétiche ayant cette particularité qu'il gîte toujours dans son sablier, tant qu'il en subsiste une parcelle.

Ce fétiche protège la mère des jumeaux et unit ceux-ci dans une si étroite affection, que l'un ne reçoit jamais un présent sans le partager avec l'autre. Je dirai même qu'il est de bon ton de ne jamais rien offrir à l'un sans en offrir autant à l'autre, et dans ce cas on gratifie d'abord le dernier-né, regardé par tous comme l'aîné.

Poupée des jumeaux.

Si l'un des jumeaux vient à mourir en bas âge, et d'ordinaire c'est le cas, le survivant reçoit une statuette qu'il conserve toujours avec un soin jaloux et à laquelle il donne le nom du défunt ou de la défunte. Il l'habille de son mieux, la couvre souvent de verroteries, perles, bouts d'ambre, anneaux etc., et les gens bien élevés ne lui font jamais un présent, sans ajouter au moins cinq cauris pour la statuette.

Le *sinsin* gratifie aussi les jumeaux d'un curieux privilège. Non seulement le scorpion ne peut les piquer, il est encore à leur service, et sur leur ordre va piquer un camarade dont on est mécontent.

Il est facile de reconnaître les jumeaux (*flani* en Bambara), ils portent tous un nom spécial, et *Sinna, Maféné, Gno, Ouassa*, sont les plus répandus.

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[1] Cette calebasse met le *sinsin* à l'abri des dents des rongeurs.

§ 10. Génie protecteur des villages.

Le génie protecteur des villages habite un monticule, une roche, et presque toujours, pour ne pas dire toujours, un baobab ou un cailcédra, à proximité des murs, dans un petit bois coupé d'allées proprettes, bien entretenues et souvent ratissées.

well kept and often scraped.

Il est la propriété exclusive d'une famille, il en a même le nom ou *diamou*, et son sacrificateur, appelé *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, porte encore le nom de *dougoutigi*[1]. Il est de fait le vrai chef du village, et si actuellement le pouvoir au for civil et le pouvoir au for religieux en maints endroits sont séparés, le *gnéna-n-sonnaba* ou prêtre religieux conserve toujours la priorité, et les gens qui se respectent l'appellent *dougoutigi* (chef du village), décernant le titre de *sotigi*[2] à celui qui ne possède que le pouvoir au for civil. Nous avons ici une nouvelle preuve de l'organisation purement religieuse de la nation Bambara dans ses débuts, et la séparation de deux pouvoirs dans certains hameaux se conçoit facilement.

Bestow

Justice, Judges

Type de chef Bambara.

Sous la dynastie Bambara le royaume de Ségou était divisé en provinces, en cantons et en villages. Le roi, *Fama* ou *Massa* (grand sorcier ayant commerce avec les invisibles), résidait à Ségou avec sa cour. Il avait à la tête de chacune de ses provinces un ministre (une créature à lui, un de ses enfants souvent, auquel on donnait sans doute pour cette raison, le titre de *Fama*, roitelet), chargé de prélever l'impôt. Il le faisait, celui-ci, par l'entremise des chefs de cantons ou *kafotigi*, desquels dépendaient, au for civil, tous les chefs de villages, les *gnéna-n-sonnaba* ou *dougoutigi*.

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[1] *Gnéna* fétiche, génie, *sonnaba* grand sacrificateur — *dougou* village, *tigi* chef, maître.

[2] *So* case, maison, *tigi* chef.

Le prélèvement de l'impôt soulevait souvent des différends entre *kafotigi* et *dougoutigi*, et ce dernier résiliait ses fonctions ou en était relevé. Dès lors il perdait toute autorité au for civil, mais nullement son pouvoir religieux, sacerdotal, et le religieux l'emportant sur le civil, il conservait en tant que *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, son titre de *dougoutigi*, alors que son remplaçant, tout en voyant sa charge devenir héréditaire, n'était jamais qu'un parvenu auquel convenait seulement le nom de *sotigi* (chef des cases).

Sous la domination musulmane, le culte des *gnéna* ou *djiné* était défendu et puni de peines très sévères (l'esclavage ou la mort). On peut donc croire que le *gnéna-n-sonnaba* avait avantage à taire ses qualités, à refuser le titre de *dougoutigi*, à défendre même à ses gens de le lui décerner. Dans le Bani et chez les Bambara de Sikasso, Kouttiala, où la domination musulmane n'a jamais été solidement établie, pareilles craintes n'étaient pas à redouter, on conçoit que l'usage se soit conservé de désigner le chef religieux par *dougoutigi*, et le chef civil par *sotigi*.

Le *gnéna-n-sonnaba* ou *dougoutigi* est aidé dans ses fonctions par un *siéré* (adjoint, remplaçant), et les chefs de quartiers *(sotigi)* forment avec les chefs de famille *(gouatigi)* son conseil. Rien de sérieux ne se fait dans le village, sans consulter le chef, qui réunit tous ses vieux et ne décide rien sans eux. Aux sacrifices, tous également assistent, s'il est offert par une famille, et il n'est pas rare de les voir se rendre à la queue-leu-leu, soit le soir, soit le matin, au bois sacré du fétiche. Au matin d'un mariage ceci se fait toujours.

Le grand sacrifice au génie protecteur des villages, au *dasiri*, lequel possède toujours pour monture un serpent, un rat, un lézard, un âne etc. et presque partout un affreux bouc qui rode à travers le village, entre partout, mange dans tout et brise tout sans connaître le rotin, se fait tous les ans. Durant au moins trois jours le village est en liesse; hommes, femmes et enfants dansent, se gonflent de nourriture, boivent et se soûlent.

Si tout le monde participe au festin et à la beuverie, tout le monde également participe au sacrifice, même les femmes, qui, sans entrer dans le bois sacré, vont du moins sur la lisière du bois. Et tout abonde: le *dégé* ou farine délayée dans de l'eau de miel et du lait, le *d'lo* ou bière de mil, les viandes enfin. Pour le village entier, on tue au moins une chèvre et parfois un taureau, et les chefs de famille, suivant leur fortune, offrent des chèvres et des poules.

Indépendamment des sacrifices offerts une fois l'an, et des sacrifices offerts par la famille, quand un des enfants se marie, un peu tout le monde se plait à présenter ses hommages et à payer tribut au fétiche. Les femmes stériles et celles dont les enfants n'arrivent jamais à terme, lui offrent force poules et cajolent sa monture. Si elles donnent le jour à un bébé, elles le lui vouent l'appelant *djiri-ba* (grand arbre), *gnéna ma ké* (*gnéna* génie, *ma* homme, *ké* mâle), *gnéna ma* (*gnéna* génie, *ma* homme), elles se plaisent même à y ajouter le nom du village où se trouve le *dasiri* bienfaisant: *Kolotomo gnéna ma*[1],

Arbre fétiche *dasiri* (de Songobougou).

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[1] *Kolotomo*, nom de village à 30 kilomètres environ de Ségou, *gnéna* génie, *ma* homme.

homme, fille du génie Dasiri de Kolotomo. Le nom *gnénama,* de fait, ne se donne qu'aux filles; pour les garçons on ajoute le mot *kè* (mâle): *gnénama-kè.*

Le *dasiri* quitte parfois son bois sacré et son arbre, ce que l'on sait par l'entremise des sorciers. C'est chose rare; il tombe de vieillesse, et on continue à sacrifier sur la souche, sur le trou béant, sur le rejeton qui sort de terre, pousse et le remplace.

Tout *dasiri* a sa monture sacrée, portant son nom, et comme je l'ai déjà dit, il semble qu'il préfère à tout un bouc. Celui-ci meurt de vieillesse, à moins pourtant que le bien public en décide autrement; j'en ai vu un périr, à la fleur de l'âge, parce que scandaleux; il affectionnait outre mesure les brebis du village, qu'il prenait pour des chèvres, c'était pour un être sacré par trop de sans gêne.

Notre fétiche protège le village en faisant avorter les sorts et les maléfices qu'on lui lance, il le défend contre les méchants et contre ses ennemis, grâce à lui on peut s'adonner tranquillement aux travaux des champs. Tout en écartant les fléaux, les maladies qui déciment, il donne à tous force, santé et vigueur, il peuple enfin le village en rendant les femmes fécondes. Avant tout, il est l'union des familles entre elles, il les réunit toutes sous l'autorité d'un seul et même chef, car les amis du chef dont il porte le nom de famille ou *diamou,* sont ses amis, et ses ennemis sont aussi les siens. Manquer au prêtre, le *gnéna-n-sonnaba,* le *dougoutigi,* c'est manquer au fétiche, tant entre les deux il y a union étroite et intime.

§ 11. Le génie *koté* ou *koré.*

Base fondamentale du pouvoir et de l'autorité, le culte du *dasiri* peut être regardé, et à bon droit, comme le premier et le plus ancien de tous. Celui du *koté* ou *koré* me semble également bien respectable à ce point de vue et tout aussi ancien. Comme le premier du reste, il se tient dans un petit bois à proximité du village et le baobab, le caïlcédra, le micocoulier, sont les trois arbres qu'il aime habiter.

Le culte du *koré* est surtout en honneur dans le Bani. Maintenant, si tous les villages ne possèdent pas le fétiche, tous du moins, possèdent quelques adeptes appartenant à la secte. Cette secte semi-occulte, comptant des femmes en son sein, se divise en huit groupes, régis chacun par le plus âgé sous l'autorité du *koretigi*, chef suprême de l'association.

Dans les sacrifices annuels et dans les sacrifices surtout qui se font tous les sept ans aux jours de réception (car il faut être *koré dé*[1], pour participer à la partie intime des mystères s'accomplissant dans le bois sacré), ces groupes nous offrent l'assemblée la plus burlesque du cercle de Ségou. Les *kara maou* portent une planche ajourée, rouge et blanche, le *kara*, longue de deux mètres environ; les *souroukou* se mettent un masque rappelant la hyène *(souroukou)* et marchent en s'appuyant sur deux bâtons; et les *korodouga* sont dans un accoutrement impossible à décrire. Les *ta tougoula*[2] dansent en tenant en chaque main une torche enflammée; les *n'goni sama*[3] s'enveloppent dans des épines ou se déchirent jusqu'au sang sur la poitrine et sous les aisselles; et les *bisatjila* se flagellent avec des gaules longues et flexibles[4]. Il y a encore des *djara* (lions), qui portent un masque identique à celui de la hyène *(souroukou)* mais plus grand, et les *soula* (singes), qui se promènent avec un masque hideux et grimaçant et portent par derrière une queue faite d'herbes tressées.

La secte du *koré* est semi-occulte, car si les adeptes seuls sont admis aux sacrifices et à pénétrer dans le bois sacré, les danses se font dans le village et tout le monde, hommes, femmes et enfants, y assistent. Les femmes des *korodouga* sont de droit dans la confrérie, mais elles ignorent le mot de passe *djantéma* (homme du *djanté*) et on leur refuse l'entrée du bois sacré. Leur grand privilège est de porter la livrée du mari, un long collier en fèves rouges, de pouvoir s'asseoir avec les hommes autour des calebasses de bière et enfin de danser la danse sale et dégoûtante des *korodouga* sans avoir à rougir.

Le fétiche *koré* veille sur les moissons et donne à ses adeptes les seuls plaisirs qu'ils connaissent et envient, boire, manger, jouir de la femme; et tout ceci, comme on pourra s'en convaincre plus loin, ressort de leurs danses et de leurs orgies. Comme il ne peut, le pauvre, malgré sa grande puissance, faire face à ses nombreuses occupations, le Bambara, qui juge tout d'après ce qu'il est, et va jusqu'à jeter son organisation dans le monde des invisibles, lui adjoint huit groupes d'esprits, qui exécutent ses ordres et forment sa cour. Les uns veillent sur les emblèmes et conservent les noms des adeptes et les autres réduisent à l'impuissance quiconque voudrait nuire à la moisson. Tout comme ici-bas, l'homme de marque, le puissant, le riche, il a ses griots ou hérauts, les *korodouga,* qui chantent ses louanges, lui transmettent les demandes et les prières des adeptes et dansent ses danses. Les huit groupes de la secte ne sont que la représentation de cette cour, la concrétisation de l'idée que s'en font nos noirs.

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[1] *Koré* fétiche de ce nom, *dé* fils.

[2] *Ta* feu, *tougou* allumer.

[3] *N'goni* épines, *sama* tirer à soi, dit aussi *wara* fauve, intrépide, courageux.

[4] *Bisa* ou *bousa* baguette, gaule, *tji* frapper, briser.

L'initiation ou affiliation à la secte du *koré* se fait tous les sept ans seulement. Celle-ci est longue et pénible; durant quinze jours nos jeunes initiés vivent dans le bois sacré et ne peuvent pénétrer dans le village. Comme pour les danses futures il leur faut un peu d'entraînement; nos vieux, tous les midi, au plus fort de la chaleur, les viennent tourmenter, et chaque adepte suivant le groupe auquel il appartient, souffre quelques instants le supplice du feu, des épines ou de la verge.

Le dur de la réception n'éloigne nullement nos Bambara, et c'est une honte au Bani, de refuser la poule du sacrifice et les 120 cauris, de ne pas y entrer. Il est vrai que tout se compense, car la secte a des fêtes nombreuses et le *d'lo* ou bière de mil ne leur fait jamais défaut.

Indépendamment du sacrifice annuel, on sacrifie au génie chaque fois qu'un adepte passe de vie à trépas; à l'anniversaire de sa mort on sacrifie encore et durant la saison sèche, nos *koré dé* courent d'une fête à l'autre, passant leurs nuits dans des beuveries et orgies sans nom.

Chap. VI.

Culte, réjouissances, *saraka*, sacrifices et danses en l'honneur des *gnéna*.

§ 1. *Gnéna* des deux premiers groupes. § 2. *Gnéna* du 3ème groupe, les huit catégories des *gnéna* puissants.

§ 1. *Gnéna* des deux premiers groupes.

Toutes les dévotions du Bambara ont pour bases fondamentales en premier chef la crainte et en second lieu le désir de tout avoir sans effort, sans travail. Le Bambara a du respect pour l'être fort, puissant, par ce qu'il peut châtier et récompenser, et ses fétiches n'étant pas égaux, il se garde de donner à tous un égal honneur.

Les génies des deux premiers groupes sont sans prêtre, sans ministre attitré, et des sacrifices publics et solennels ne leur sont que bien rarement offerts. Quelques fêtes pourtant, auxquelles participent principalement les enfants, qui se gonflent en ces jours de farines délayées dans de l'eau de miel et du lait, de galettes de sorgho, leur sont données durant la saison sèche. Rassasiés, nos enfants vont porter les restes en dehors du village, là où les chemins se croisent, et les poules, les chiens et autres animaux arrivent nombreux à la curée . . . et les pauvres et les malheureux aussi, car ils peuvent également prendre leur part, tout *saraka*[1] leur appartient.

Fillettes et petits garçons participent à ces fêtes, mais il en est une spéciale aux fillettes non excisées; et celles qui bientôt vont l'être et se préparent à ce grand acte de la vie Bambara, en font tous les frais. C'est la fête du *soli basi k'li*[1], j'en parlerai plus longuement dans mon chapitre sur la circoncision.

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[1] Impôt, tribut, aumône.

Tout en étant rarement public — il l'est parfois de façon transitoire — le culte particulier, rendu individuellement ou par famille à nos petits génies, n'entraine pas moins un gaspillage énorme de farines, de noix de kola, de coton, de cauris etc. Dans toutes ces offrandes néanmoins il n'y a que très peu de sacrifices: le plus souvent, pour ne pas dire toujours, ce sont des *saraka*, des aumônes, et parce que forcées, une sorte de tribut ou d'impôt.

Ce sont de fait des aumônes forcées, versées par un individu, par une famille, par tout un quartier de village sur l'ordre d'un sorcier. Certains sorciers de renom ou voulant s'en donner arrivent à prescrire ces tributs à tout un village, parfois même à toute une région. Le fait n'est pas rare, et tous les ans je l'ai vu se produire. Un malin de Bélé Koun, dans le cercle de Sikasso, traverse le Bani à chaque saison sèche, et pas un village du cercle de Ségou qui, après lui avoir versé poules et cauris, n'aille encore porter à l'un des carrefours voisins une large obole. Malgré son jeune âge, il compte 25 à 30 ans tout au plus, il est réputé tout apprendre en fouillant le ventre des poules et en écrasant leur viscères entre ses doigts. Il en profite prédisant partout des calamités affreuses. Toute sa science se résume en ces mots: «Les génies sont mécontents, offrez un *saraka*, offrez-le vite, car si vous ne le faites, tous les enfants au dessous de trois ans vont mourir . . ., chèvres, vaches, chevaux, moutons vont crever . . . les sources vont tarir . . . le beurre de *karité* va faire défaut etc.» Ici c'est une hyène qui parle, là une vache et plus loin un facochère et le *dégé* (farine délayée dans de l'eau) se répand et le sang des poules coule à flots. A brief dire, il faut toujours donner et donner de tout aux fétiches et aux sorciers. Certains régimbent parfois et ne veulent pas obéir! Les ordres de notre sorcier deviennent pressants, ses prophéties plus terribles que jamais, il en arrive, à bout de patience, à vomir l'injure et les malédictions, et tout le monde se rend et offre le *saraka*, les musulmans eux-mêmes s'y laissent prendre.

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[1] *Soli* jeunes filles qui sous peu vont être excisées, *basi* sorte de couscous à graine très fine et qui rappelle de loin la semoule, *k'li* obtenu par chants et battements de mains.

Le *saraka* ne revêt jamais aux yeux du Bambara le caractère d'un sacrifice. Particulier ou général, sanglant ou non sanglant, comme je l'ai longuement expliqué en parlant du culte à Dieu, il reste toujours une aumône, un don forcé, par suite un tribut, un impôt versé aux génies pour leur consacrer un objet, un animal, une personne dans le but de se protéger, de n'encourir aucune disgrâce, de recevoir un bienfait. Nos Bambara appellent ce genre d'offrandes *saraka bo, saraka di* [1].

Pour la consécration d'un objet, d'un animal, d'une personne aux génies, on offre encore des *saraka* dans le but de nuire à son prochain. Dans ces offrandes-ci, un peu de magie se mêle toujours; aussi n'est-il pas rare de trouver sur le sentier, à peu de distance de l'angle de terre formé par des pistes qui se joignent ou se croisent, une mèche de cheveux, un bout de corne, une tabatière remplie de cendres etc.

Le Bambara fait cela pour aider à son *saraka*, à sa prière; il est persuadé, que si son ennemi vient à toucher l'objet magique ainsi jeté au petit hazard, sa vengeance sera plus sûre, plus prompte, plus radicale. Cetté magie symbolique va plus loin: que de
j'ai vu à ces angles de terre où se tiennent les *gnâma* [2] e
les *saraka*, un cœur de poulet fixé en terre par u
bambou! Ils crucifient souvent sur le sol un petit animal.
d'ordinaire, et une cheville est enfoncée à l'endroit où l
son ennemi atteint. Pour ces sortes de *saraka* ils ont une expr
typique, *saraka da ma kan* [3], faire un *saraka* contre quelqu'un.

Les *saraka* sont nombreux et offerts un peu pour tous les motifs. Indépendamment de ceux que l'on fait sur l'ordre des sorciers, il en est d'établis par la coutume elle-même, et les enfants incirconcis y sont astreints. Comme ils chassent beaucoup les tourterelles, rats palmistes, pintades et perdrix, ils plantent, soit à l'extérieur du village soit même à l'intérieur, une forte branche sèche et ils suspendent aux rameaux la tête des animaux capturés, la coquille des œufs humés. C'est leur façon à eux de remercier les génies, d'avoir de nouvelles chasses heureuses et de se mettre à couvert du *gnâma* de leurs nombreuses victimes.

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[1] *Bo* sortir, *di* donner.

[2] Fluides, forces conscientes causant la mort, donnant les maladies. Voir mon chap. sur les *gnâma*.

[3] *Saraka* aumône forcée, tribut, impôt, *da* placer, poser, *ma-kan* sur un homme.

On trouve aussi certaines pratiques purement et exclusivement superstitieuses qui ne revêtent pas à proprement parler le caractère d'un culte religieux et auxquelles le Bambara donne le nom de *saraka*. Etant donné la signification que j'attribue à ce mot, il faut le prendre ici dans son sens le plus large. Ces vieilles savattes et ces vieilles calottes, ces gousses de fruits et ces chiffons etc. suspendus çà et là aux branches des arbres sont moins un hommage rendu par le noir à un génie, à une cause extérieure, qu'un tribut offert à sa propre crainte intérieure personnelle et non réfléchie. Il ressemble en ceci à certains Européens, frères de lait de nos imbéciles, qui croient à la salière, au couteau en croix, aux treize à table, au vendredi etc., qui renversent le saladier avant d'entreprendre une affaire sérieuse, ou se glissent dans la poche du gilet un trèfle à quatre feuilles. Et pourquoi? Cela donne de la chance, réussir . . . Et comment donc? Ils ne savent vous le dire, chez 'est pas raisonné . . .! Ni chez les Bambara non plus!

2. *Gnéna* du 3ème groupe, les huit catégories des *gnéna* puissants.

Nos génies du troisième groupe ont leurs prêtres et leurs ministres, on ne se contente plus de leur offrir des *saraka*, on leur sacrifie. Les sacrifices publics sont annuels et la population entière, hommes, femmes et enfants, y participent. *Dégé* (farine délayée dans de l'eau), poules blanches et kola blancs sont la matière ordinaire du sacrifice, et sa formule revient toujours à ceci: «Donne-nous de l'eau, fais que la paix règne chez nous, dans le village et dans les familles, accorde-nous l'abondance et la richesse, donne-nous des femmes nombreuses, des enfants sains, vigoureux, une longue et verte vieillesse». Il y a toujours, qu'il soit semi-public, ou public, un sacrifice offert d'une façon générale au nom de la famille, du quartier, du village, et ensuite les sacrifices particuliers, offerts par les individus. Dans ces jours il y a toujours danses et beuveries, on ne s'attire les faveurs d'un fétiche qu'en sautant au son des tambours et en se saoulant.

Pour mieux faire connaître et sentir l'attachement du noir à son fétichisme, je ne puis résister, au risque de me répéter, à en donner le côté captivant et à décrire les fêtes et réjouissances en l'honneur des principaux fétiches.

Fétiche *N'tomo* spécial aux enfants.

La moisson est faite, et le produit du champ cultivé par nos enfants au temps de l'hivernage, joint aux petites aumônes reçues des gens du village, permet au *n'tomotigi* (chef de la confrérie) et à son *siéré* (adjoint, remplaçant) de fournir aux adeptes et aux vieux — ils ne sont jamais oubliés ceux-ci — un repas copieux, des noix de kola, de la bière de mil ou *d'lo,* des farines délayées dans de l'eau de miel et du lait ou *dégé.* Le jour de la réjouissance est désigné par le chef du village et par les anciens, et tout le monde s'y prépare quinze jours à l'avance . . . Dans les *blon* ou cases d'entrée, à l'ombre des arbres, on ne voit que vieux taillant et cousant, *dloki, bougi, bogo* et *yaba*[1], qui seront étrennés en ce jour, la marmaille rapièce la blouse jaune ou blanche qui se revêt pendant la danse, graisse et regraisse le masque du *n'tomo.* Ils en veulent surtout aux cornes, elles disparaissent souvent sous de petites lanières de cuir rouge parsemées d'ici de là de cauris bien polis et d'un blanc de neige.

Mais nous voici au jour tant désiré! Tous nos petits sans culotte se rendent à la queue leu sous l'arbre fétiche et chacun porte, ficelée par les pattes, la poule qu'il destine au sacrifice. Ils quittent tous la blouse — le petit costume de dessous rend plus leste, est moins gênant — et après quelques chuchotements finissent enfin par s'accroupir, dardant leurs gros yeux noirs sur le chef, le *n'tomotigi,* qui commence le sacrifice, assisté de son adjoint, le *siéré.*

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[1] *Dloki,* vaste blouse. — *Bougi,* du côté de Ségou sorte de petits caleçons sans jambes. Dans le Bani bande-d'étoffe, large de trois à quatre doigts, qui entoure la ceinture, se passe entre les cuisses et retombe par derrière, formant aiguillettes sur le gras des cuisses. Le bout de cette bande est relevé. — *Bogo,* habit des fillettes jusqu'au mariage, bande d'étoffe nouée à la ceinture et retombant en arrière pour former queue. — *Yaba,* jaquette des garçonnets, commun surtout au Bani.

Il est vraiment cocasse ce petiot, et c'est avec le sérieux d'un ancien qu'il verse le *dégé,* répand le sang des poules et crache avec bruit sur l'arbre sacré, demeure de son génie, le résidu d'un bout de noix de kola mâchée. Je n'en doute pas, il est convaincu et pleinement convaincu qu'il ne s'adresse pas à un tronc d'arbre inconscient; pour lui, il y a là un invisible qui le regarde, qui l'attend et ne demande qu'à l'exaucer. Comme il s'adresse à un puissant, la crainte et l'émotion d'abord le font trembler; mais sa voix peu à peu s'affermit et c'est très distinctement, qu'il profère sa formule: «*N'tomo yé* vois cette poule, une belle poule, n'est-ce pas? elle est grasse! *n'tomo,* pour nous tous, je t'offre cette poule en sacrifice. Sois-nous propice, défends-nous contre la furie des génies de la brousse et contre les méchants, rends-nous forts, vigoureux, donne-nous l'abondance en boire et en manger, éloigne de nous la maladie. Accorde-nous de l'eau, une belle moisson, *n'tomo,* donne la richesse à nos familles.»

Après ce sacrifice spécial, viennent les sacrifices individuels, et les tout jeunes qui doivent désormais faire partie du *n'tomo,* se prosternent devant l'arbre fétiche et font serment de ne rien dévoiler aux non initiés et surtout aux fillettes. Ce serment n'est pas banal du tout: «Si tu parles, si tu dévoiles ton serment, dit le chef en montrant à chacun un peu de poudre noire, tu mourras», et tous répondent sans trembler: «Que je meure!»

La réception terminée, chaque adepte déplume sa poule, puis la vide, et pendant que nos victimes mijotent sur le feu, dans un *conari* en terre, nos gamins font ronfler les tambours, se livrent à la danse et jusqu'au repas délirent sous l'œil du fétiche, à l'ombre de son arbre privilégié. Chaque enfant, à son tour, danse la danse du fétiche, qui consiste en sauts et gambades et à tournoyer avec grâce une gaule flexible. Pour ceci il endosse la blouse blanche ou jaune du fétiche (*n'tomo ka dloki,* blouse du *n'tomo*) lequel est blanc *(dje)* ou noir jaune (*fign* comme je l'ai dit au chapitre précédent) et prend le masque cornu, le *n'tomo kongolo* (tête du *n'tomo*) par lequel il concrétise et extériorise l'idée qu'il se fait du génie.

Les victimes abondent et le repas est copieux. Il y en a pour tout le monde et pas un qui ne se lèche les doigts en ce jour, en disant d'un air souriant: «*Né né fara dé!*[1] Que je suis plein!» Les familles de nos petiots y contribuent pour beaucoup, elles ont bon cœur, les mamans et sœurettes Bambara! Chaque adepte, grâce à celles-ci, peut offrir de 10 a 20 litres de *dégé*, autant de *d'lo*, et la calebasse de *to* (bouillie) en contient assez pour fatiguer six à huit gros mangeurs. En plus du dessert, la noix de kola, chaque enfant reçoit un habit neuf pour lui et un léger *bogo* et parfois un *tafé*[2] pour sa sœur de cœur. Tout petit Bambara, de fait, choisit le jour de son admission dans le *n'tomo* une *n'golo mouso,* auquelle il offre chaque année un petit présent. Le terrible de cette coutume, c'est qu'en pays Bambara la *n'golo mouso* est moins prude que la bonne amie ou sœur de cœur d'un petit français, elle est souvent une petite bonne à tout faire, se prêtant sans sourciller à des jeux malsains et déshonnêtes.

Après le repas qui se prend vers les trois heures, les *n'tomo déou* (fils du *n'tomo*) quittent le lieu du sacrifice et à la file indienne se rendent au village, précédés des tambours. Du *d'lo* ou bière de mil les attend, mais avant de toucher à la dive liqueur, il leur faut accomplir un rite sanglant. C'est hideux et pourtant n'est-ce pas là le beau, le clou de la fête!

Sur la place publique, en face des tambours qui donnent la mesure et battent la cadence, nos jeunes *n'tomo déou* vont se flageller et pour la plupart jusqu'au sang. Les vieux accourent, trainant leurs nattes après eux, les femmes accroupies sur leurs tabourets minuscules frappent des mains et chantent, et les mamans ceignent les reins de leurs enfants d'une longue écharpe blanche, pour leur protéger le bas-ventre d'un mauvais coup. Le *n'tomotigi* et son *siéré* — à tout seigneur tout honneur — descendent dans l'arène, et tant que le petit chef tient sa gaule levée des deux mains, au dessus de sa tête, le *siéré* de sa gaule à lui le roue d'importance, sur le dos, sur la poitrine, sur les mollets, sous la plante des pieds, un peu partout. Las de frapper ou sa badine brisée, il s'arrête et le chef donne à son tour une volée à son adjoint. Tous ainsi, deux par deux, par rang d'âge et de taille, les enfants se flagellent[1], et durant des heures souvent, c'est surpassant les applaudissements de la foule et ses cris d'encouragement, le flic et le flac des coups de gaules, faisant jaillir le sang, meurtrissant les chairs, toujours laissant pour marque, un sillon gros comme le pouce. Les petiots de 6 à 7 ans, s'arrêtent souvent au deuxième coup, pour se gratter l'échine, ouvrir la bouche et pleurer, mais j'en ai vu rester impassibles tout comme leurs aînés de 10 à 12 ans, pas une larme, pas une plainte, pas un cri de douleur, c'est à les croire de bronze, tant ils sont insensibles.

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[1] *Né* moi, je, *fara* suis plein, *dé* certes.

[2] *Tafé* . . . pièce d'étoffe rectangulaire dont les femmes se ceignent les reins.

Le fétiche *N'golo* spécial aux circoncis.

Ce fétiche dont j'ai expliqué au chapitre précédent la raison d'être, voit ses enfants s'accorder dans le cours de l'année, de nombreux jours de réjouissance en son honneur. La fête principale pourtant est annuelle, et en plus du *dégé,* d'une poule et de deux noix de kola, offerts par chaque adepte, une chèvre est sacrifiée au nom de tous.

Ce fétiche donnant naissance à la corporation du *fla-n-to,* ses membres, les *to-n-déou,* offrent le boire et le manger au village entier, durant deux et trois jours. Les femmes, elles aussi, contribuent pour leur part à la hideuse beuverie, leur reine *(fama, massa)* — tout en s'effaçant devant le *to-n-tigi,* chef du *fla-n-to,* prêtre du *n'golo,* qui gaspille sans compter le produit du champ travaillé par ses sujets au temps de l'hivernage — distribue force noix de kola et ajoute encore au *d'lo* qui pourtant coule à flot.

La bière se boit en plein air, sur la place publique, et tout le monde, hommes, femmes et enfants, sont là hurlant, dansant, se soûlant. Assis sous un *goua* ou hangar recouvert de nattes grossières, le *to-n-tigi,* entouré de ses acolytes (le *siéré,* le *djéli,* le *djalatiké,* siège à la place d'honneur, c'est lui qui dirige la beuverie et les danses. Il est vraiment roi en ces jours, au moindre signe, au moindre geste, au moindre mot, tous lui obéissent. Quand il se lève pour gambader ou faire la roue en face des tambours, on lui rend les honneurs, tous les adeptes poussent des *you you,* agitent leurs calottes *(ban fla),* et c'est à qui lui prendra son fusil, sa lance, son bâton, sa hache et lui marquera le pas pour la danse. Mais la langue lui démange, il faut qu'il parle, il sent le besoin de jeter un ordre, de remercier, d'imposer un léger tribut à sa troupe, et son griot accourt se mettre à ses côtés. Il répète mot pour mot, phrase par phrase, le discours de son chef, parfois même il ajoute une réflexion de son cru, certains Bambara ont une pointe d'esprit et trouvent fort bien le mot pour rire.

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[1] Dans le Bani chaque enfant se flagelle lui-même. Cette coutume sans être générale, se rencontre dans beaucoup de villages.

Tout comme au chef, on rend les honneurs aux trois principaux de son état-major chaque fois qu'il plait à l'un deux de danser, et tout le jour et toute la nuit, ce n'est que *you you* formidables et cris atroces. Pour tous il est un protocole à suivre, et avant de trémousser en face des tambours, chaque *to-n-dé,* par respect pour son chef et pour lui attester son dévouement, va lui faire la courbette. Il se dresse comme un ressort, brandit le fusil, la hache, le bâton, qui lui doit servir pour la danse, et dans un saut se frappe les deux pieds l'un contre l'autre, au nez de celui auquel il présente ses hommages. Les femmes sont plus calmes, elles témoignent de leur respect par une génuflexion devant le maître.

En plus de son état-major, le chef du *n'golo* ou *to-n-tigi* possède ses pages, son porte-étendard, ses trompettes, ses soldats, et pour varier le programme, il va ici et là avec sa troupe en délire, saluer un ancien et lui donner une sérénade. Dans certains villages la coutume veut que nos jeunes gens endossent ce qu'ils ont de mieux en fait de costumes, et dans d'autres, au contraire, il faut s'affubler de loques affreuses et sales, si bien, qu'à les voir ainsi accoutrés, on se demande où ils ont pu dénicher toutes ces horreurs. Il faut s'amuser et amuser, rire et faire rire et ce dernier but toujours est atteint, ils ont de ces mimiques impayables.

Le *Mouso ka djiri*, fétiche spécial des femmes.

Il est impossible de connaître tous les génies chargés de veiller sur les femmes, ils sont légion! Chaque mois, à la nouvelle lune, elles organisent une danse en leur honneur et chaque année elles leur font un sacrifice public et solennel. Le plus répandu, et son culte est surtout en vigueur dans le Bani, est le *mouso ka djiri*.

Quand vient sa fête, toutes les excisées lui offrent un peu de farine délayée dans de l'eau, une poule, deux noix de kola, et le chef du village, ou à son défaut un ancien, vient rougir l'écorce de l'arbre fétiche[1]. Sur ce sacrifice, inutile de m'étendre, au chapitre précédent j'ai donné la raison d'être de ce fétiche; on conçoit, que nos dames et demoiselles lui demandent ce qui rend la femme forte et belle. Les danses peu décentes auxquelles elles se livrent sous l'arbre sacré, dévoilent assez du reste leurs pensées intimes; il n'y en a pas qu'une, à présenter ses seins au fétiche et à se gratter le nombril sur son écorce; dans certains villages la coutume le veut et elle est de rigueur pour toutes. Les jeunes filles le font pour se développer la poitrine, les mariées pour devenir fécondes, et toutes pour être à l'abri des accidents fâcheux, inhérents à leur sexe.

Pas de fête sans festin, pas de fête sans libation, et elles offrent au village entier la bouillie de sorgho et la bière pour une beuverie. A tous les anciens et chefs de famille elles offrent encore la noix de kola, et elles savent ne pas priver de cette douceur les papas, les maris, les grands fils, les grands frères et ceux qu'elles aiment.

Le fétiche *Sinsin*, spécial aux enfants jumeaux.

Le sacrifice au *sinsin* se fait sur le cordon ombilical suspendu au milieu des plateaux d'herbes tressés qui composent le fétiche. Chaque plateau appartient à l'un des jumeaux, il en porte même le nom, et les sacrifices en son honneur sont toujours doubles, la famille offrant séparément pour chacun des enfants de la farine délayée dans de l'eau, de la bière de mil, une noix de kola et une poule.

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[1] Certains assurent avoir vu des femmes sacrifier. J'ai vu des femmes accomplir des *saraka* sanglants, mais faire un sacrifice, jamais.

Ce fétiche, qui a pour prêtre le père de famille, est exclusivement familial; les enfants et les parents seuls assistent aux sacrifices, tout se passe dans une douce et joyeuse intimité, et si ici et là il y a quelques ivrognes, il n'y a jamais d'orgie. On sacrifie fort souvent au *sinsin* pour attirer sa bénédiction sur la mère et les enfants, et dans toutes les occasions un peu importantes de la vie des jumeaux: à la tonte des cheveux, huit jours après la naissance, à la fête du tatouage, à la circoncision, au mariage etc. Une fois l'an, on lui sacrifie encore d'une façon plus solennelle; les femmes cuisent le *d'lo* ou bière de mil, et les vieux, les influents du village, les amis, sont invités à s'accroupir devant les cruches et à déguster le rafraîchissant liquide.

Le fétiche *Dasiri*, protecteur des villages.

Le *dasiri* est de tous les *gnéna* ou *djiné* le principal. Je dois pour mieux faire comprendre son culte et donner au lecteur une idée de l'influence de son prêtre, entrer dans certains détails qui ne peuvent que jeter quelques clartés sur l'organisation Bambara. Si nous prenons par exemple un village qui se forme; nous assistons à l'élection du prêtre du *dasiri*, le *gnéna-n-sonnaba,* au choix de l'arbre fétiche et de l'animal sacré, monture du génie, à l'intronisation du sacrificateur, aux sacrifices enfin.

Election du prêtre.

La population s'est accrue, la terre aux alentours s'épuise, un groupe de familles doit émigrer. Les vieillards encore verts, les jeunes gens pleins de force et de vie prennent leurs armes et le *foroko* à provisions, une peau de bouc crasseuse, affermi sur l'épaule, ils se dispersent dans la brousse à la recherche d'un sol moins ingrat. Celui-ci trouvé, ils retournent au logis et le conseil des chefs de famille se rassemble pour se donner un chef, un prêtree car sa fonction principale est de sacrifier d'une façon publique et solennelle aux *blonda ba son*[1], aux mânes de la grande cas, d'entrée, soit aux chefs et prêtres qui tinrent tout comme lui les rênes du pouvoir, et aux *gnéna,* génies, esprits, fétiches, d'où son nom de *gnéna-n-sonna* (qui sacrifie aux fétiches *gnéna*) et de *gnéna-n-sonnaba* (grand sacrificateur des fétiches *gnéna*), lui seul ayant autorité pour le faire à tous au nom de tous.

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[1] *Blon* case d'entrée, *da* porte, seuil, *ba* grand, *son* cadavres, mânes.

Palabres et délibérations sont longues, mais le choix est heureux, l'ancien choisi comme *gnéna-n-sonnaba* possédant toujours ce qui caractérise le type Bambara, la ruce et l'astuce. Patient et aimable, il saura dans les différends être droit et impartial, diplomate et assez maître de lui pour ne dire que ce qu'il veut; il saura se créer une réputation d'homme intègre qui ignore le vol et le mensonge.

Elu à vie et possédant le pouvoir tant au for civil qu'au for religieux, il est vraiment le chef du village, le *dougoutigi.* Sa charge est héréditaire, passe de frère à frère et, à défaut de ceux-ci, revient de droit au fils aîné. Celui qui doit lui succéder, devient son adjoint *(siéré);* les chefs de famille *(gouatigi-ou),* toujours appelés quand il faut traiter une question et prendre une décision, forment son conseil.

Choix du fétiche *dasiri* et de sa monture sacrée.

Le nouveau village a son chef, son adjoint et son conseil, il est organisé. Il s'agit maintenant de savoir où se trouve la source, la roche, l'arbre où gîtent les esprits protecteurs, le *dougou dasiri* [1], qui lie l'entrée du village, qui veille sur le village. Nos gens ont recours pour ceci au sorcier; celui-ci a commerce intime avec les esprits, il connaît leurs us et coutumes, il comprend leur langage.

Les sorciers sont nombreux et n'opèrent pas tous d'une façon identique. L'un découvre ses oracles dans le ventre d'une poule, un second trace sur la cendre des signes cabalistiques, un troisième sans cesse remue des petites pierres, des osselets, des cauris, qu'il compte et recompte. Pour le *dasiri* on a recours au devin *flélikéla* [2] qui opère avec une calebasse aux trois quarts remplie d'eau.

Quand il a reçu ses honoraires, quarante cauris, qu'il prend des deux mains, il place près de lui, dans la poussière, son petit cadeau, deux noix de kola, quelques poules ou ce qui est mieux, un petit bouc; il s'enquiert du lieu choisi pour la fondation nouvelle et se le fait décrire jusque dans ses moindres détails. Il décroche alors un crasseux *n'go*[1], sur lequel il dépose une calebasse que lentement il penche à droite et à gauche, en avant et en arrière, pour l'affermir sur sa base. Ceci fait, il résume aux esprits la conversation qu'il a eue, puis, l'œil en feu et retenant son souffle, il donne à la calebasse trois chiquenaudes du médius de la main droite. Un léger murmure, murmure qui n'est autre que la voix des génies, est perçu, dit-on, par toute l'assistance. Elle entend sans comprendre, mais le sorcier connaît ces voix, et quand il se relève, c'est avec un ton d'autorité qu'il nomme le *dasiri* et la bête qui lui doit servir de monture.

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[1] *Dougou dasiri* village, *da* bouche, entrée, *siri* lier.

[2] *Fléliké* regarder attentivement, curieusement.

Dans la province de Ségou le *dasiri* est un arbre, et les arbres privilégiés sont le tamarinier, le caïlcédra et le baobab. La monture sacrée, elle aussi appelée *dasiri*, est un serpent, une iguane, un rat, un âne etc., le plus souvent c'est un bouc.

Intronisation du *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, prêtre du *dasiri*, et chef du village, *dougoutigi*.

Nos noirs fondent le nouveau village et bâtissent leurs cases. A proximité de l'arbre fétiche, chaque famille dispose ses mortiers pour piler le sorgho, place ses foyers et installe ses cuisines. Aux branches du *dasiri* sont suspendus les arcs, les fusils, les instruments aratoires, et tant que durent les travaux d'installation, c'est sous son ombre que se prennent les repas et que se font les danses, et le soir quand la lune brille, c'est près de lui que l'on s'étend enfin pour dormir.

Dès le premier jour, le *gnéna-n-sonnaba, dougoutigi*, entre en fonction et au nom de ses administrés il offre un sacrifice. A un mètre environ du sol, sur le tronc de l'arbre, il verse le *d'lo* ou bière de mil, le *dégé* ou farine délayée dans l'eau et fait couler à flot le sang des poules, des coqs, des chèvres et parfois d'un petit taureau. A ce sacrifice général, succèdent les particuliers, car, pour se mettre sous la protection du génie, chaque chef de famille, par ordre d'ancienneté, lui offre un peu de *dégé* et un peu de sang, par l'intermédiaire de son chef, le prêtre . . . Et sur le tronc de l'arbre, ce ne sont plus que larges taches de sang avec, au milieu, collés par le résidu des noix de kola machées, des plumes, des poils, des lambeaux de peau . . . Viennent alors les danses, et hommes, femmes, enfants, délirent au son des tambours, c'est un vacarme sans nom.

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[1] Coulant fait de racines tressées, liées avec du fil de coton et que recouvre une épaisse couche de sang.

Sacrifices offerts au *dasiri*.

Un sentier large d'un mètre, conduit du village à l'arbre fétiche, toujours situé à moins d'impossibilité, au centre d'un petit bois. Plusieurs fois dans l'année — au matin qui suit le *konio* ou première nuit de noces par exemple —, les chefs de famille lui vont sacrifier; mais la fête à laquelle participe le village entier, est annuelle. Tous les deux ans, la solennité a plus d'importance, et tous les sept ans, elle dégénère en une orgie.

Pendant le sacrifice, les femmes se tiennent sur la lisière du bois sacré, seuls les hommes et les garçons pénètrent à l'intérieur et entourent le fétiche. Après une offrande de *dégé,* d'un peu de *d'lo,* un mouton ou une chèvre est égorgé au nom de tous, et chaque chef de famille, suivant sa fortune et le nombre des gens, arrive avec poules, moutons, chèvres etc., et les viandes s'entassent, Sur place on plume les poules, on dépèce les grosses pièces et le tout est emporté par les femmes au village. Du premier sacrifice offert au nom de tous, un morceau gros comme le poing est donné à chaque chef de famille et emporté au village; le reste est rôti, puis grillé sur place et mangé par les hommes, sans sel, sans piment, sans aucune espèce de condiments. Le *dégé* et le *d'lo* du principal sacrifice sont absorbés sous l'arbre fétiche, le premier par les enfants, qui se barbouillent et se blanchissent toute la face, et le second par les hommes et les jeunes gens circoncis[1].

Après le repas du midi, hommes, femmes et enfants se rendent sur la place publique pour boire la bière ou *d'lo* et danser.

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[1] Par sacrifice principal j'entends le sacrifice fait au nom du village entier.

Le signal de la réjouissance est donné par le *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, qui, après un petit discours pour inviter ses enfants (*né ka démisenou* mes enfants, mes sujets) à s'amuser et à boire, tout en sachant éviter les rixes et les querelles, attaque un quadrille. Pendant qu'il danse, la foule se tient debout et tête nue, elle pousse des *you you* puissants, et c'est à qui agitera sa lance ou sa hache et lui marquera la cadence. Cette fête annuelle dure trois et quatre jours, aussi longtemps que dure le *d'lo* ou bière de mil.

Tout circoncis et toute excisée peuvent, par l'intermédiaire du *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, offrir un sacrifice au génie protecteur du village. Chacun l'offre suivant ses moyens, sanglant ou non sanglant, pour obtenir son pardon, s'il croit l'avoir offensé ou lui avoir déplu, pour se le rendre propice et agréable. Il sacrifie avant tout pour demander; «*a di* — donne-le», est le premier mot qu'a su bégayer sa bouche d'enfant. La femme stérile lui offre à chaque instant une noix de kola, du *dégé*, un coq, une poule, lui promettant toujours de n'être point ladre et d'en donner d'avantage, si elle devient mère. Elle est surtout empressée près de l'animal *dasiri*, monture du génie de ce nom, elle le cajole, le bourre de son, et bien loin souvent dans la brousse, va lui cueillir la brindille d'herbe, la branche feuillue dont il fait ses délices.

Les esprits génies peuvent quitter la source, la roche, l'arbre où ils ont établi leur demeure, et le *dasiri* n'est nullement en dehors de cette règle. Dans ce cas, l'arbre fétiche perd sa consécration, devient une chose vulgaire et peut-être détruit. Egalement, tout dans le bois sacré, et plantes et animaux cessent d'être tabou, et on peut s'en servir pour ses besoins usuels. Le *dasiri* n'est guère volage! Il quitte rarement son arbre, il aime son petit bois et son parc ombragé; dans bien des endroits, il se contente d'une souche, toute noircie, vermoulue, pourrie et qui s'émiette.

Formule du sacrifice.

Lorsqu'on assiste à un sacrifice du *dasiri* et que l'on voit le *gnéna-n-sonnaba* se découvrir, enlever sa grande blouse et s'accroupir au pied du fétiche, on s'attend à de l'imposant, à du grandiose. Il n'en est rien et on reste tout surpris de trouver si peu de sérieux dans un acte si solennel. Les gens s'amusent et causent, le prêtre, rouge de sang, lance des bons mots, de grasses plaisanteries, et pendant que les victimes, chèvres, moutons, poules secouent les pattes, secouent les ailes dans les affres de la mort, ce n'est que fusées de rires qui courrent d'un groupe à l'autre, pour s'aller perdre là-bas, au loin, sur la lisière du bois, où se tiennent les femmes.

Les paroles dans la formule du sacrifice varient un peu d'un village à l'autre, tout dépend de la loquacité du sacrificateur. Le fond néanmoins reste le même partout. Après avoir salué le fétiche au nom de ses administrés et en son propre nom, il le supplie de leur pardonner toutes les injures, tous les outrages, tous les manquements de respect volontaires ou involontaires, dont ils se sont rendus coupables vis à vis de lui durant tout le cours de l'année. L'appelant alors suivant l'arbre dans lequel il se trouve: «*Ma ziraba* (homme grand baobab), *ma djala ba* (homme grand cailcédra)» etc. il lui annonce qu'il va sacrifier. En offrant le *dégé* et le *d'lo* il le supplie de les mettre à l'abri des méfaits des fils du fétiche *siri*, les *souba*[1], de les préserver des *souya maou*[2], des *gné-foula*[3], du *wokolo*, petit génie nain. Il demande ensuite de la force, de la santé pour tous, des enfants qui seront sains, forts, vigoureux, des femmes. «Préserve nous, ajoute-il en terminant, des méchants, des discordes, querelles et rixes, de la furie des femmes qui facilement tombent sous le pouvoir de «satan», des maladies; donne nous enfin la pluie, sans laquelle pas de moisson possible.» Il égorge alors la chèvre ou le mouton blanc, et pendant qu'il rougit de sang l'écorce de l'arbre sacré, il reprend ses supplications et ses demandes et il les redit une troisième fois, en offrant la noix de kola.

Aux sacrifices particuliers, il n'y a rien de changé à la formule. Si pourtant celui qui fait offrir le sacrifice, désire une grâce, une faveur spéciale, il en avertit le sacrificateur qui, séance tenante, présente sa requête.

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[1] *Sou* nuit, *ba* grande, maîtres de la nuit qui se métamorphosent en hyènes, en chouettes, déterrent les cadavres et mangent de la chair humaine.

[2] *Souyaké* = rôder la nuit.

[3] Deux yeux, gens ayant double vue.

Quand un chef de famille ne peut assister au sacrifice, son remplaçant donne la raison de son absence. Deux témoins viennent alors attester que la raison donnée est la vraie et qu'il n'y a mauvais vouloir aucun de la part de l'absent.

Parfois, durant le sacrifice, une grande clameur s'élève, on dirait sous l'arbre fétiche des gens qui se battent, ou pour le moins se chicanent.

Il n'en est rien, c'est la foule qui crie vers le fétiche et intercède pour un malheureux dont le sacrifice n'a pas été agrée. Ceci se sait quand la poule ne tombe pas sur le dos, ou sur le flanc, les pattes en l'air. La noix de kola donne la réponse du génie de façon beaucoup plus sûre. Le sacrificateur la fend en deux, rejoint les deux parties entre le pouce et l'index, et après les avoir fait par deux fois toucher la terre en prononçant ces mots: «Dis-nous si tu agrées le sacrifice», il les jette au pied de l'arbre sacré. Si les deux morceaux retombent la pulpe en haut, plus de doute possible, le sacrifice est agréé et il recommence la même opération en disant: «Puisque tu agrées le sacrifice, dis-nous, si tu l'agrées de ma main.» Si l'un des morceaux retombe la pulpe en haut et l'autre sur sa pulpe, il y a du *dasiri* une réponse affirmative. Il mord la noix de kola, en coupe avec les dents le morceau qui contient le germe, et quand il l'a en un instant mâché, il en crache les débris sur l'écorce de l'arbre fétiche.

Cette opération, toute de hasard, est souvent longue, les morceaux de la noix de kola ne tombant pas toujours du premier coup dans la position voulue. Après trois insuccès, la foule ne se contient plus, et des gestes et de la voix, chacun intercède à sa façon pour le malheureux. Les cris ne cessent que lorsque la noix de kola donne la réponse, «j'accepte et ne suis plus courroucé!»

Société semi-occulte du *Koré* ou *Koté*.

Le Bambara est cultivateur avant tout et faire un champ revêt à ses yeux importance si grande, que cela seul pour lui mérite vraiment le nom de travailler. Celui qui ne manie pas la pioche, peut être un actif, un habile, il n'est pas un travailleur et on ne dira pas de lui: «*A bi ajaké* = il travaille.» Mais ce grain qu'au temps de l'hivernage il confie à la terre, va-t-il germer, croître et grandir, arriver à terme? Pour peu qu'on connaisse le Bambara, on conçoit ses craintes et on les comprend, il est entouré d'une troupe d'esprits malfaisants, toujours prêts à fondre sur lui! Il lui faut donc des protecteurs, des aides, et au moment des semailles, il offre un peu à tout, même à la pluie. Le principal fétiche auquel il s'adresse, est le *koté* ou *koré,* qui gîte dans un arbre, au milieu d'un petit bois.

Pour assister aux sacrifices du *koté,* il faut se faire initier et connaître le mot de passe. Cette initiation qui peut se faire de jour, se fait le plus souvent, du moins au Bani, à la tombée de la nuit, au moment où notre soleil couchant prend sa teinte de sang. Les fils du génie se rendent au bois sacré en procession. Le *korétigi,* le prêtre, précédé des musiciens qui battent les *denouba*[1] et les *kingé*[2], ouvre la marche avec les *kârâ ma* (homme du *kârâ*), dont l'un porte le *kârâ,* la planche ajourée, emblème du fétiche et tout à la fois l'autel sur lequel on sacrifie aux confrères défunts. Les *souroukou* (hyènes), qui ont la garde du bois sacré et durant les sacrifices éloignent les indiscrets, les non initiés, viennent les premiers avec leurs masques grossiers, roulant leurs grosses têtes de droite et de gauche en poussant d'affreux *hou hou.* Les *korodouga* (bouffons), qui râtissent les allées du bois sacré et tout à l'entour pour le mettre à l'abri des feux de brousse, courent de l'un à l'autre, et hurlent des obscénités. Ils secouent avec furie leurs calebasses à queue, ajourées, remplies de petites pierres, ils soufflent avec furie dans des mirlitons, faits de queues de courges. Le chef de cette bande est affublé d'un manteau en tige de roseau, il porte sur la tête un casque également en roseau, terminé par une pyramide de gros haricots rouges, dits *n'go blé,* agrémentée d'un plumet, et il tient dans ses mains l'emblème du groupe, une longue perche à laquelle sont suspendus des sachets crasseux, des tiges de sorgho de 10 à 20 centimètres, liées en paquets, des queues de courges, des crânes de rats, des becs de canards, d'éperviers, des griffes de panthères etc.

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[1] Tambours longs de plus d'un mètre et spéciaux au *koré.*

[2] Sorte de triangle qui se suspend au pouce de la main gauche et sur lequel on frappe avec un anneau ou un ongle de fer passé au petit doigt.

A part le long chapelet à fèves rouges, celui-ci de rigueur, plusieurs fois enroulé autour du cou, ou passé en bandoulière et se croisant et recroisant sur le dos, sur la poitrine, chaque *korodougo* a suivi dans sa toilette sa propre inspiration. Les chapeaux sont faits d'un bouquet de plumes, d'ailes de vautours, de canards et même d'oiseaux entiers, avec, autour, pour mieux l'orner, des fèves rouges, des crânes de rats, des becs d'oiseaux, des griffes, des osselets qui leur retombent sur le cou, sur les épaules et s'entrechoquent avec un bruit sinistre. A côté de gens en culottes bouffantes, ce sont des gens en guenilles ou des gens avec le pantalon collant, fait de 36 pièces ayant 36 couleurs, dont une jambe descend à la cheville alors que l'autre n'arrive même pas au genou. Les uns brandissent des sabres en bois, d'autres à cheval sur un bambou, sur un roseau, sur une tige de sorgho, se cabrent et ruent, pas un qui ne fasse le «clown».

Les *bisatjila* (flagellants) font siffler dans l'air les gaules flexibles qui vont bientôt voler sur leur dos en éclats, les *ta tougoula* (allumeurs de feu, incendiaires) semblent impatients de faire pleuvoir les étincelles sur leur échine nue. Les *djara* (lions) ou *sogo* (bêtes, animaux) avec des masques encore plus grands que celui des *souroukou* (hyènes) mugissent autour des *n'goni sama* [1], dits encore *wara* (fauves intrépides). Les *soula,* eux, courent d'un groupe à l'autre, se faufilent entre les jambes et ne tiennent pas en place; on les voit partout, tantôt debout, tantôt les mains sur le sol comme à quatre pattes, ou bien encore assis, brisant entre leurs mains des brindilles d'herbes, des morceaux de bois qu'ils lancent avec un petit cri strident, à la tête des confrères. Et les vieux qu'appesantissent les ans, qui ne sont plus d'âge pour tous ces déguisements, ferment la marche! Ils traînent ou portent les victimes destinées aux sacrifices.

Dans le bois, autour de l'arbre sacré, c'est un bruit assourdissant de tambours, de triangles, de mirlitons, de voix nombreuses.

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[1] *N'goni* épines, *sama* tuer à soi.

qui hurlent toutes ensemble sans jamais s'accorder. Sur un signe du chef le porte-*kârâ* va se placer devant l'arbre fétiche et tout se calme et tout s'apaise. Les jeunes gens qui depuis sept ans attendent pour s'initier, s'avancent en ligne, tombent à genoux devant le fétiche et son emblème, puis se prosternent le front dans la poussière et conservent cette position tant que dure l'hymne sacrée. «*Djanté koré déou djanté* (*djanté* enfants du *koré djanté*), *djanté ma* (homme du *djanté*)», disent-il en se relevant, et chacun danse la danse du groupe auquel il appartient. Ces danses sont indécentes et toujours s'achèvent par un geste obscène.

Les fils aînés appartiennent au groupe de leurs pères; quant aux autres, ils jettent leur dévolu sur le groupe qui leur plait davantage, et les voilà désormais *korédé* (fils du *koré*), et dans toute la province de Ségou, partout où s'offrira un sacrifice au fétiche, ils pourront sans crainte aucune pénétrer dans le bois sacré et participer aux mystères, ils ont le mot d'ordre et sauront répondre aux interrogations des *souroukou* (groupe de la hyène): «*djanté ma* homme du djanté».

Après l'initiation, le *korétigi* (prêtre du *koré*) procède aux sacrifices. Tout se passe comme au *dasiri;* après les libations de farines *(dégé)* et de bière *(d'lo)* on rougit de sang le tronc de l'arbre sacré, et c'est tout à l'entour des touffes de poils et de plumes que des débris de noix de kola mâchées collent sur l'écorce. On rougit encore de sang un masque de hyène dit *koré koungolo* (tête du *koré*), puis le *kârâ,* emblème du génie servant d'autel pour les adeptes défunts. Une partie des viandes est emportée au village, et le reste, grillé sur place, se mange sans condiment aucun.

Dans ces sacrifices on demande au *koré* et à ceux qui forment sa cour, de veiller sur la moisson, pour qu'elle soit abondante, de veiller sur les troupeaux, pour qu'ils prospèrent, d'avoir toute sa vie à boire et à manger tout son soûl, d'avoir une verte vieillesse etc. et on demande tout cela pour ce seul et unique but «afin de pouvoir jouir de la femme et de s'adonner aux plaisirs charnels».

Après le repas la foule se livre à la danse, et c'est jusqu'au matin un vacarme sans nom et des hurlements sans fin. Au petit jour, ils viennent sur la place publique, et tant que dure la bière *(d'lo)*, l'orchestre fait rage en face des buveurs accroupis autour des calebasses pleines, et les femmes assises sur des nattes ou des tabourets minuscules, les unes sur les autres, entassées, frappent des mains et répondent aux obscénités des *korodouga* par d'autres obscénités.

La danse des groupes, à laquelle tous les confrères prennent part, et les jeunes et les vieux, consiste en contorsions plus ou moins burlesques, qu'ils accomplissent en tournant en cercle, les uns à la suite des autres. Les vieux se fatiguent vite, et vite leurs gosiers se dessèchent, ils ne tardent pas à s'asseoir et à s'enivrer pour être agréables au *kori* . . . et la jeunesse alors s'en donne à cœur joie.

Deux ou trois *tatougoula*, une torche enflammée en chaque main, ouvrent la danse. Ils se roussissent le dos, la poitrine et les aisselles, et font pleuvoir sur leurs têtes, sur leurs torses nus des myriades d'étincelles qui fument et grésillent sur leurs peaux, avant de s'éteindre. Les *korodouga*, armés d'une branche feuillue, chassent les étincelles. Ils sont avant tout à leurs chants orduriers, ils songent à leurs calebasses ajourées qu'ils secouent avec rage, et plus d'un danseur se sent rôtir . . . Et quand les torches touchent à leur fin, ils s'accroupissent devant le grand tambour, secouent une dernière fois la poignée de paille enflammée qui leur reste, et c'est un geste obscène qui provoque ici et là un rire étouffé, un *hos hos* des *souroukou*, un mugissement des *djara*, un ricanement des *soula*, et à l'entour des calebasses des cris d'encouragements: «*O de* c'est cela!»

Pendant qu'autour des cercles de buveurs les *djara* ou *sogo* aux masques géants mugissent, les *ng'oni sama* ou *wara* se déchirent la poitrine et le dessous des aisselles avec un balai d'épines, et les *soula*, grimaçant et pleurant, jettent le désarroi dans le groupe des femmes, mettent en fuite les enfants. Quant aux *bisatjila*, ils tournent comme des lions en cage, poussant des cris de fauves, et cherchent à s'exciter. Soudain, comme pris de rage, ils brandissent leurs gaules longues et flexibles. Elles tournoient un instant au dessus des têtes, elles sifflent dans l'air et claquent sur les chairs. Ils frappent ferme, chaque coup laisse sa marque, son sillon, et souvent le sang coule. Sous le coup de la douleur, ils blêmissent et tremblent de tous leurs membres; malgré tout ils frappent et frappent, il faut que l'instrument du supplice s'use, s'effiloche, vole en éclats. A chaque coup de verge la troupe des *korodouga* se précipite sur le patient, le frotte et le masse, et les *souroukou* s'oublient dans l'indécence en face du grand tambour.

Indépendamment du sacrifice septennal, des sacrifices annuels sont offerts au *koré*, aux mânes de ses prêtres, les *korétigi*, et aux mânes des adeptes enfin, les *korédé*. A la mort d'un adepte, il y a toujours sacrifice; les groupes dansent la danse sacrée, et durant trois nuits, c'est dans le *koré tou* (bois du *koré*) ces hurlements, ce vacarme sans nom dont je viens de parler.

Si l'adepte défunt est un ancien, une barbe blanche, il a accompli toute sa carrière, et les confrères accourent nombreux lui rendre leurs hommages. Devant le cadavre, exposé sous les arbres qui ombragent l'entrée du village, ils accomplissent leurs indécences, ils hurlent leurs obscénités, ils boivent et se soûlent. Et après l'enterrement, trois nuits de suite, ces mêmes scènes se reproduisent devant l'arbre fétiche.

L'anniversaire de la mort d'un *korédé* (fils du *koré*) devenu *korétigi* (prêtre du *koré*), *gnéna-n-somaba* (prêtre du *dasiri*), *gouatigi* (chef de groupe, chef de famille), se célèbre avec pompe; la famille toujours se fait un point d'honneur de cuire le *d'lo* (bière), et de tous côtés on vient prendre part à l'orgie.

Chap. VII.

Le Culte à Satan ou culte des *Gnâ* ou *Boli*.

§ 1. Ce qu'on entend par *Gnâ* ou *Boli*. § 2. Legende de *Gnâ* ou *Boli*; ce sont de démons. § 3. Classification des *Boli*, des *Boli* de petite envergure. § 4. *Boli* de grosse envergure. § 5. Différence parmi les *Boli* de grosse envergure. Le *Sinnakoun*. § 6. *Boli* parleurs et *Sirikoun*.

§ 1. Ce qu'on entend par *Gnâ* ou *Boli*.

Depuis que Dieu a créé sa race et l'a mise au monde, le Bambara respecte, vénère et sacrifie aux *gnéna* ou *djiné*, ces êtres intermédiaires entre l'ange et l'homme. Lorsqu'il s'oublie sous l'émotion d'une cruche de bière à vous ouvrir, oh! bien faiblement, un recoin de son âme, il se complait à vous le dire, ce qu'il se garde de faire lorsqu'il vous parle des *gnâ* ou *boli*. C'est que le culte des *boli*, tout en se perdant dans la nuit des temps, ne laisse pas d'avoir son histoire; on connait l'origine d'un chacun, et un initié, tant soit peu instruit dans ses rites, vous saura dire s'il vient du Nord ou du Sud, de l'Est ou de l'Ouest, s'il est mâle ou femelle, et toute barbe blanche peut vous en dresser l'arbre généalogique.

Entre le *gnéna* et le *gnâ*, la différence est grande; ils diffèrent du tout au tout, et nous sommes ici en présence de deux cultes parallèles et absolument distincts. Tout objet, quelqu'il soit, peut devenir la résidence d'un *gnéna*; mais il préfère un être animé, une plante, un arbre, un animal par exemple, et las de son gîte, il se transporte ailleurs. Le *gnâ* habite toujours un objet inanimé, et qu'il prenne une forme humaine ou animale, qu'il rappelle une aubergine, une patate ou un rouleau de serviette, il reste *boli* tant qu'il en subsiste une partie visible à l'œil nu, et ne le quitte jamais. Dans le *boli*, il y a union si intime entre l'objet et l'esprit, que ce composé devient un seul et même individu; c'est l'union de l'âme et du corps pour constituer une personne, un individu.

Dans les sacrifices aux *gnéna*, l'hommage du noir ne s'adresse pas à la source, à l'arbre, à la plante etc., il s'adresse au génie qui l'habite et exclusivement à lui, alors que dans les sacrifices aux *gnâ*, l'hommage s'adresse tout à la fois à l'esprit et à són objet, l'un n'allant pas sans l'autre, l'un ne se concevant pas sans l'autre. Les noirs me l'ont donné souvent à entendre, et un vieux de mes amis, pour m'expliquer son culte, s'exprimait en ces termes: «Lorsque tu honores ton ami, est-ce son corps ou son âme que tu honores? Ce n'est ni son corps ni son âme, tu honores les deux à la fois, la personne elle-même toute entière, ton ami; ainsi en est-il des *boli*!» [1]

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[1] *En Bambara:*	**Traduction:**
«*Ne ko ko, n'i bé i terké bógna, i be a fari bógna wa ouala a dônsou bógna. I té i terkè bógna wa? A bé té bolim fé koï. An bi Sétané bógna wa ouala a fen yéré bógna, héca, anou dé ñi boli bógna.*	**«Moi, je dis que, si tu honores ton ami, honores-tu son corps ou honores-tu son âme? Tu honores ton ami, n'est-ce pas? Il en est de même des boli. Honorons-nous satan ou bonorons-nous son objet? Eh bien, nous honorons assurément le boli.**
Faran fasili do be dasiri, djiri un'a djiné tjé. N'i b'a djiri son, i dé bé dasiri son, nka, i bé dasiri bógna doron? Djiri te fen gonausou yé? a ti fouï gnâ.	**Une différence existe entre l'arbre dasiri et son génie. Si tu sacrifies à l'arbre, tu sacrifies au dasiri, mais n'honores-tu pas le dasiri seulement? L'arbre n'est-il pas chose vaine? Il ne nous donne rien, lui.**
Taï, o do.	**Parfait, c'est cela.**
O fara n fasili-ïn te boli dé ni sétané tjé wa? Nibé boli dé son, i be Sétané son tigné, nka i be sétané bógna doron, boli dé, héca fen min yéra o dé te fouï gnâ.	**Cette différence n'existe-t-elle pas entre le boli et satan? Si tu sacrifies au boli, tu sacrifies à satan, c'est certain; mais tu honores le démon seul, son objet ne t'est d'aucun secours.**
O té, djiné ni boli ma-n-kan, boli dé heu, an be fen min yé, a be fen gnâ dérén. Sétané an'o fen olou foula té bé boli yé wa?»	**Tu n'y es pas. Un génie et un boli ne sont pas pareils. Le boli lie ce que nous voyons, il nous est utile. Satan et son objet, ces deux ensemble, ne font-ils pas le boli?»**

Boli dé: **Objet dans lequel se trouve l'esprit appelé par les noirs *Sétané* Satan.**

Le *gnéna* moitié homme, moitié ange, un *djiné*, peut encore, tout méchant qu'il soit, faire le bien et octroyer un bienfait directement en posant un acte bon. Mais le *gnâ* lui, le *boli*, ange échu (*mélékè sifa do do*, c'est une espèce d'ange), en révolte contre Dieu et condamné, comme je le dis dans mon chapitre sur Dieu, aux peines du feu, est exclusivement mauvais, il ne peut poser directement un acte bon[1]. Il peut toutefois s'abstenir de poser un acte mauvais et indirectement il octroie ainsi aux humains un bienfait. Les paroles de la formule dans les sacrifices des *gnéna* et des *gnâ* semblent identiques et pourtant, quand on a saisi le sentiment intime de l'âme Bambara, on en voit toute la différence. «*Ka dji d'amma* (donnez-nous de l'eau), *ka mousoou d'amma* (donnez-nous des femmes), *ka nafolo d'amma* (donnez-nous les richesses) etc.», dit le noir aux uns et aux autres; mais pendant qu'aux premiers, il demande vraiment de l'eau, des femmes etc., ils fait aux seconds une demande indirecte, donnant ce sens à ses paroles: «Ne faites rien, pour nous empêcher d'avoir des femmes», «ne faites rien, pour nous empêcher d'avoir de l'eau etc.» Dans cette façon de s'exprimer, il met toute sa roublardise, et il se peint sur le vif et dévoile toute sa fourberie. Oui, il mérite vraiment l'épithète que lui accordent les tribus voisines et dont il s'en orgueillit, *misi bo* bouse de vache, à l'extérieur desséchée et à l'intérieur flasque et molle, si bien qu'elle s'écrase lorsqu'on y met le pied. Son sentiment intime lorsqu'il s'adresse aux *boli* est celui-ci: «O Esprits, génies malfaisants, vous ne pouvez que le mal, que votre haine ne s'attaque pas à moi et à ceux qui me sont chers, qu'elle soit toute pour mes ennemis et ceux qui me peuvent nuire!»

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[1] J'engage les «Bambarisants» européens de Ségou à écouter les deux *djéli* (griots) de Goïn, petit village peu distant de ce centre. Ils ont comme spécialité les danses et chants sacrés des *boli* et parcourent tout le cercle à la saison sèche. Un chef de *Nama* p. ex. fait le récit, et le griot prend au refrain lequel toujours se termine: «Je vous l'ai bien dit, le *Nama* peut s'abstenir d'un mal, mais il ne peut que le mal *(a ka fari, a ka djougou ko djougou)*. Il est méchant, mais méchant!»

§ 2. Légende des *Boli*.

Cette légende est des plus curieuses, car elle nous fait venir les *boli* de la Mecque, la ville sainte! Pour la mieux faire comprendre, rappelons en passant que l'Islam n'a fait qu'attacher le Bambara à ses idoles. Pour les garder il a su mourir: au «crois ou meurs» des musulmans, il a répondu en prenant la lance, et vaincu, réduit en servitude, dans l'impossibilité de continuer son culte d'une façon extérieure, il est resté fidèle à la foi reçue des ancêtres. Les têtes tranchées et devenant la proie des vautours, le sang versé à flots, a endurci encore ceux qui restaient, et le vainqueur, le musulman, las de frapper, ayant besoin d'esclaves et de bras, a dû avouer sa défaite sur le terrain religieux.

Certains apostasièrent aux idoles (les esclaves et certains riches pour sauvegarder leurs vies et leurs biens), mais cette apostasie fut purement extérieure, fut un mensonge, ils hurlaient la formule, et en secret, ils s'adonnaient à leurs rites sanglants, inculquant à leurs enfants leur foi à eux et non celle du maître. Le mensonge n'a jamais coûté au Bambara; savoir mentir est pour lui plus qu'une demi-vertu, et quand, en 1907, le droit à liberté a été publié, je n'ai nullement été surpris de voir (sur près de 5000 esclaves se libérant spontanément) la majeure partie retourner chez eux ou au pays de leurs pères, oublier la formule et se déclarer fétichistes sans se faire initier, ils l'étaient déjà [1].

Tous nos Bambara ne pouvant subir une honteuse servitude, le musulman se contenta de prescrire l'impôt, de défendre le culte public des idoles, et, l'épée mise au fourreau, il chercha par la persuasion à se faire des adeptes. Ses caravanes ne tardèrent pas à sillonner le pays, prêchant l'Islam en tous lieux *opportune et importune*, mais la masse ne se laissa pas entamer, et pour donner à ses croyances un fondement rationel, elle dit à son vainqueur, faisant toujours tout au nom d'«Alla» du «Stamboul» (sultan de Constantinople) et de la «Makka» (la Mecque): «Toute croyance vraie vient de la Mecque (Makka), elle est le centre de toute vie religieuse. pourquoi donc vous acharner si vivement contre nos *boli?* ils viennent tous de la Mecque. Dieu vous a donné la formule: il n'y a pas de Divinité autre que Dieu et Mahomet est son prophète, il vous prescrit les ablutions, le repos du vendredi etc.: gardez votre formule et hurlez-la! A nous Bambara, ils a donné les *boli* et les sacrifices sanglants, pourquoi vouloir nous arracher nos trésors avides de sang?» Aux discussions qui surgirent entre le *m'rabet* (marabout, prêtre musulman) et le *gnâtigi* ou *bolitigi* nous devons, je n'en doute pas, notre «légende», et la voici, telle que je l'ai ouïe si souvent narrer, par nos vieux à têtes chenues.

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[1] Ceux qui en 1907 ont repris d'eux-mêmes la liberté, étaient tous des esclaves de musulmans. Les «Peulls», race de pasteurs, ont vu fuir presque tous leurs esclaves. — Les Bambara dans l'esclavage conservent les traditions le plus qu'ils peuvent, j'ai trouvé au village nègre de Biskra des fils de Bambara ignorant leur langue; musulmans fanatiques, et ils conservent leurs tatouages, sacrifiant à des *boli* familiaux, légués par leurs pères, dansant la danse des *korodouga* et employant les formules et les chants Bambara qu'ils ne comprennent plus.

Un groupe de jeunes gens se livrant au commerce et courant après dame fortune (*ou toumbe kolo*[1] *gnini*, ils cherchaient des cauris), prit un jour la route de l'Est. Par monts et par vaux, la petite troupe marcha et longtemps marcha, puis atteignit enfin la grande eau bleue et salée, la mer, sur les bords de laquelle se dresse la ville sainte, la Mecque *(Makka)*[2].

Leur séjour là-bas fut de plusieurs années, on ne pensait guère les revoir. Des brigands, se disait-on, ont dû fondre sur eux, les massacrer ou les réduire en esclavage; que les honneurs funèbres leur soient rendus. Les *sanga fo*[3] commencèrent en leur honneur, les femmes pleurèrent emplissant les airs de leurs cris, et après quelques jours de danses, chacun se remit à la joie et au travail.

Nos jeunes Bambara n'étaient pas morts, ils revinrent et qui mieux est, nullement entachés d'Islamisme. Au sein même de la Mecque ils rencontrèrent une tribu Bambara, des frères foncièrement fétichistes, et leurs rites secrets, leurs danses sacrées et leurs sacrifices firent plus d'impression sur leurs cœurs et leurs imaginations que la fade et froide formule, les stupides prosternations et les gênantes ablutions des fils de l'Islam. Ils s'initient aux rites des *gnâ* ou *boli*, ils en achètent, et un beau jour, riches d'or et d'argent, de troupeaux de chèvres et de moutons, de femmes et d'esclaves, ils reprennent la route du Niger. La caravane était nombreuse, les charges pesantes, la route se parcourait avec peine, et le découragement, plus d'une fois, frôla le cœur des plus vaillants. Enfin, le grand fleuve fut atteint et des barques par centaines reçurent les charges et les *boli*.

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[1] *Kolo* cauris (au sing: *kolé*) petit coquillage servant de monnaie.

[2] Le musulman donnant la Mecque comme située sur le bord de la mer, et le Bambara ignorant l'Arabie, il la croit de ce côté-ci. Dans sa pensée il n'y a pas la mer à traverser. Au fond c'est le cadet de ses soucis.

[3] Condoléances faites par les connaissances à la famille d'un défunt.

Les débuts du voyage sont heureux; à peine si quelques charges au passage des rapides tombent à l'eau et se perdent. Un jour vint où tout changea; le vent se met à souffler avec violence, les eaux bouillonnent, blanchissent et s'enflent, et les barques, deux troncs d'arbres creusés, mis bout à bout et liés ensemble par de méchantes cordes, viennent l'une contre l'autre se heurter et se disloquer. Qui pourra jamais dire le nombre de celles qui disparurent en ce jour dans les flots, avec toute la cargaison! Le désastre fut grand, en *boli* surtout, mais ceux-ci ont la puissance de dieux et pour ne pas se noyer, ils eurent vite fait de se changer en poissons. De ce jour, si l'on en croit la légende, le fleuve compte en son sein le poisson torpille, le lamentin etc.

Tout pourtant ne fut pas perdu. En arrivant dans le Bélédougou et le Ben-dougou [1], nos voyageurs possédaient encore un fort stock de *boli*. De toutes parts, on accourut! Evidemment ce furent des fêtes et des divertissements, tout le monde voulait des nouvelles et désirait s'instruire qu'était-ce que cette Mecque tant vantée des musulmans. «Une grande ville, assurément, disaient-ils, mais ne croyez pourtant point qu'on ne connaisse là-bas que la fade formule *la ilah ill l'allah,* hurlée par les fils du prophète à longueur de journées. A la Mecque se trouvent des Bambara [2] qui comme nous sacrifient aux génies. Ils ont encore des rites que vous ignorez, ils savent se mettre à l'abri des génies mauvais, des démons, ils sacrifient aux *boli*. Ceux-ci sont terribles, ils tuent quiconque les méprise et quiconque leur déplaît, ils n'ont vraiment d'égards que pour ceux qui se donnent à eux et deviennent leurs enfants. Nos frères de la Mecque sont, grâce à eux, riches et puissants, ils vivent vieux, et le vol, le mensonge et l'adultère sont par eux vite découverts. Ils rendent de fait la justice et quiconque en appelle à eux ne saurait mentir impunément. La plus grave injure qu'on leur puisse causer est de les prendre à témoin d'un mensonge; ils s'en vengent toujours, gratifiant son auteur de maux sans fin, allant même jusqu'à le faire mourir.» Ces tirades piquèrent la curiosité de nos noirs, ils voulurent voir les *boli*, ils désirèrent leur sacrifier, ils se donnèrent à eux, se faisant leurs enfants.

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[1] *Bélédougou* — *bélé* roche ferrugineuse, *dougou* village, pays — province derrière Bamako kati. *Ben-dougou.* — *ben* rencontre, *dougou* pays — fin du pays Bambara, partie à l'Est, sur le Bani.

[2] Ce mot *Bambara* (*Bamanu . . .*) de la légende désigne moins la race que le culte et me semble devoir être pris dans le sens de *kafri* comme je l'ai déjà indiqué en parlant de l'origine du mot *Bambara*, «révolté» et non «fils du caïman» ou de ce poisson *bun ua*, sorte de tanche.

Une fois initiés, nos voyageurs leur dévoilent leurs mystères, ils leur imposent la loi du secret avec l'impossibilité d'admettre dans leurs rangs les non initiés, les femmes et les enfants, et les sectes se créent. Elles n'ont fait que se multiplier, chaque *boli* a la sienne, et comme ils sont mâles et femelles procréant des enfants ils sont devenus légions et chaque village compte ses sectes et ses *boli*. Ce dernier culte — sans effacer celui des *gnéna* ou *djiné* — l'a depuis longtemps surpassé; leurs sacrifices et leurs beuveries sont accompagnés d'une pompe extérieure bien autrement grande, aucun acte sérieux ne se fait sans leur concours! On peut, sans craindre de se tromper, assurer que le culte des *gnâ* ou *boli* est le culte principal, à l'heure actuelle, du Bambara. Il est la base de l'union dans les familles, le fondement du *sina-n-koùn* ou amitié jurée; par eux les gens d'un même village sont étroitement unis, et cette union s'étend d'un village à l'autre, d'une province à l'autre, tous les membres de la secte d'un *boli* étant frères et se devant de mutuels services, en certaines circonstances déterminées.

Dans son concept (et j'en ai longuement parlé dans mon chap.: «Les Concepts du Bambara ne sont pas d'origine islamique), les *boli* ne sont rien moins que des êtres intrinsèquement mauvais, en révolte contre l'Etre Suprême, le Dieu Créateur et Maitre de toute chose. Comme l'insinue la formule du sacrifice au *Touafé Bla*, le lieu où ils résident est le feu, l'enfer, et pas un noir qui ne vous dise que le *boli* ne soit un démon *(sétané)*. Ne peut-on pas dire que sa religion est un culte rendu à «Satan lui-même»? Ce culte, il le lui rend en pleine connaissance de cause. N'ai-je pas ouï dans un sacrifice au *boli Nama* [1], le sacrificateur s'écrier, avant de trancher le cou à la victime du sacrifice général: «*Alla djampa ba, i k'an bla, i ka bo an koun na*. Dieu, grand traitre, laisse-nous, éloigne-toi de nous!» — et la foule après lui répétait le blasphème: «*Alla djampa ba, i k'an bla, i ka bo an koun na!*»

§ 3. *Boli* de «petite envergure».

Les *boli* n'ayant pas tous une même force, une même puissance, et la crainte étant la base et le fondement du culte Bambara, un même et égal honneur ne leur est pas rendu. Nous les diviserons en deux groupes principaux, ceux de «petite envergure» et ceux de «grosse envergure», et nous terminerons ce chapitre par un mot sur les *boli* parleurs, apanages de certains sorciers, et sur les *sirikoun*, autres *boli* d'un genre tout spécial.

J'entends par *boli* de petite envergure, tous ces fétiches mauvais n'ayant au fond rien de bien terrifiant, en ce sens qu'on les regarde comme causant bien rarement la mort d'un individu. Un grand nombre d'entre eux sont surtout médicines, et un peu tout le monde les possède. Ce sont de queues de vaches, de boucs, de chiens, de fauves sans nom bien déterminé et appelés de façon générale *foura* [2] (remède). A ceux-ci peuvent se joindre encore les *kana*, cornes et ongles de taureaux, emplis d'un onguent dont il est bien difficile de donner la composition, le sang, la graisse et les lampyres séchés puis pilés, s'alliant ici avec la poudre de fer, de charbon et autres ingrédients. Ils valent à leurs yeux les pilules «Pink» guérissant tous les maux, y compris le pelade et les ongles incarnés — et c'est tout dire. Ces *kana* dont je parle, sont des *boli* et diffèrent du *kana* que possède chaque *boli* de grosse envergure et ne sont plus *boli*, mais une partie du *boli*. Ce mot *kana*, avouons-le bien vite, reste aussi vague que le mot *foura;* il signifie avant tout «ce qui protège, conserve, nous évite des maux».

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[1] Une note du R. P. Coppe des P. Blancs (manuscrite et non publiée) et que j'ai sous les yeux rapporte le même fait au sujet du *boli Komo*. Or ce Père est un Bambarisant — *Bamana-n-do*, disent de lui les noirs de Ségou lorsqu'ils en parlent, ce qui revient à dire que ce Père parlait et comprenait bien leur langue.

[2] Ce nom *foura* est donné de façon générale à tous les *boli*; je ferai donc remarquer que le mot «remède» dans le sens où nous l'entendons, n'est pas la traduction exacte du mot *foura*. Ce mot en soi est intraduisible en notre langue, il veut dire une force et une force consciente qui s'oppose à une autre force consciente cherchant à nous nuir et qu'elle annihile.

Ces petits fétiches ne sont point fêtés, leurs possesseurs seuls les arrosent de sang et leur sacrifient. Ils coûtent peu chers, et un sorcier ou le possesseur d'un *foura* et *kana* père, vous en fabrique pour une modeste somme variant entre 5 *kémés* et *ba fla* (5 *kémés* = 200 cauris, *ba fla* = 1600 cauris) = de 5 sous à 2 frcs.

Sans parler des sorciers, dont on ne compte pas les *boli*, il se trouve toute une catégorie de gens, des *noumons* (forgerons), des *koulés* (qui creusent les pirogues et raccommodent les calebasses fêlées), des *donzo* (chasseurs) etc., qui ont une confiance si grande en toutes ces horreurs qu'ils préfèreraient périr de faim que d'en être privés. Les chasseurs en ont tous pour se donner et bon œil et bon pied; avant toute chasse un peu sérieuse chacun y va d'une poulette noire, et au retour on sacrifie encore pour peu que la chasse ait été heureuse. Le détenteur de ces fétiches est d'ordinaire le seul à lui présenter ses hommages. Il arrive pourtant que les confrères chasseurs leur viennent donner un léger tribut, et ceci se conçoit, chaque fétiche ayant sa spécialité! L'un est pour la biche et l'autre pour la pintade, un troisième pour la grande antilope (*dadjé* en Bambara et surtout connu par les Européens sous le nom de *koba*, mot de langue Peull) ou pour le facochère, pour la panthère ou pour le lion, pour la hyène ou pour le fourmilier etc., et comme tous et chacun ne les peuvent possèder on s'adresse à l'un ou à l'autre, selon les besoins du moment.

Les plus intéressants sont le *togo fen foula*, qui de façon toute spéciale veille sur le fusil et les armes du chasseur, les mettant à l'abri d'une main rapace et peu délicate, le *ko négé ba*, qui prive de ses règles toute femme qui touche aux viandes à lui offertes en sacrifice ou le gibier tué sous ses auspices, le *tougourouna*, qui n'a d'égards que pour ceux qui le possèdent, il rend tous les autres impuissants s'ils touchent aux viandes de ses sacrifices, ou du gibier tué sous ses auspices[1].

Avec le fétiche, certains chasseurs possèdent encore le *gnâma daha*[2], soit un *conari* dans lequel on mijote et trempe des racines et des feuilles, cueillies la nuit au clair de la lune, un peu partout et au petit hasard. Lorsque l'on a tué certain gibier, un fourmilier par exemple, on lave la bête avec ces racines et ce jus de couleur douteuse. Ce jus du *gnâma daha* provoque, m'a-t-on dit, l'écoulement des urines, le *gnâma*[3] de la bête s'en va, son odeur de fauve disparaît et la viande dès lors se peut manger[4].

Tenue du chasseur Bambara.

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[1] Le gibier tué sous les auspices d'un *boli* lui appartient tout comme les victimes du sacrifice, celles-ci étant «tabou» pour une catégorie de gens, le gibier devient lui aussi tabou au même titre.

[2] *Gnâma* force, puissance, fluide malfaisant, *daha* récipient en terre dit conari.

[3] Voir ce que je dis du *gnâma* au chap. premier p. 26 suiv.

[4] Tous les noirs n'ont pas recours à ce *gnâma daha*. Il ne sont pas liés du reste à un moyen unique de se tirer d'affaire et ont plus d'une ficelle à

Ces petits fétiches des chasseurs restent sans fête et sans sacrifice solennel. Certains pourtant finissent par acquérir grand renom dans la phalange de nos «Nemrods», et ceux-ci venant nombreux avec les poulettes noires, le maître de l'idole choisit un jour pour une beuverie toute intime à laquelle n'assistent que les adeptes de la secte des chasseurs.

Les plus puissants de tous ces *boli* de petite envergure sont les *boli* de la case, de la famille, les *boli* familiaux auxquels sacrifient les chefs de famille ou *gouatigi*. Ceux-ci prennent un peu toutes les formes; ce sont des cornes, des boules vernissées de sang, rappelant un peu tous les tubercules de la création, toutes les espèces de tomates et d'aubergines, ce sont des coulants de serviettes etc., des horreurs pour tout dire, enfouies dans une peau de bouc toute sale, toute crasseuse. On les trouve suspendus dans les *b'lon* ou cases d'entrée avec les *ex-voto*, un paquet de crânes de chèvres, soigneusement vidés et dépouillés de leurs chairs. Les *boli* familiaux sont légion, impossible de les connaître tous. Les plus répandus et les mieux côtés sont le *ma bara*, le *sirini*, le *bala*, le *bara*, le *baga*[1], le *bama-n-djigi*.

Au sacrifice annuel, le *gouatigi* ou chef de famille, pour peu qu'il soit à l'aise et se respecte, offre une chèvre et au moins une poule et une noix de kola pour chaque enfant mâle. Il offre aussi le *d'lo* ou bière de mil, et toute la famille est en liesse. Certains font même les choses en grand; et si tout le village ne participe pas à la beuverie, tous les vieux sont invités et les intimes accourent de toutes parts et nombreux.

Les *boli* familiaux prennent en mains les intérêts du chef de famille, ils ont à charge d'éloigner les maladies et les revers de

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leur arc. Au gibier à poil tout chasseur vide les urines par pression ou section, aussitôt après l'avoir tué.

[1] Un *boli* se compose toujours de plusieurs pièces ayant chacune un nom spécial. Toutes ces pièces se disent *boli dé*. Parmi les *boli dé* il en est un qui s'appelle *boli dén fa*. — Une pièce du *baga* est une sangle, formant ceinture, le sacrificateur se la met autour des reins toute ensanglantée et procède aux sacrifices particuliers. — Le *baga* protège contre les balles, les flèches et les lances. Certains *baga* ont du renom et les noirs vont trouver les maîtres de ces fétiches et reçoivent d'eux une petite ceinture *fac simile* du *baga*.

fortune. Par eux on acquiert une postérité nombreuse, la richesse, des femmes, une heureuse et verte vieillesse, de l'honneur, de la considération: aussi a-t-on recours à eux dans toutes les occasions un peu importantes de la vie. Avant d'entreprendre un long voyage, avant de se lancer dans une affaire commerciale, dès qu'un malheur menace ou qu'un bonheur inespéré est entrevu, une coulée de sang les rougit. On leur sacrifie encore au temps de la moisson (beaucoup même se désignent sous le nom générique de *gno foura* remède du mil), mais surtout aux circoncisions et excisions, aux fiançailles, aux mariages, aux funérailles. Le *tné* de ces fétiches, soit son «tabou» (v. ci-dessus p. 15 suiv), est tabou pour l'aîné de chaque femme et parfois toute la famille le fait sien.

§ 4. *Boli* de «grosse envergure».

Je donne ce nom aux *gnâ* de toute forme et de tout calibre dont le culte est secret et aux mystères desquels ne participent que ceux qui sont initiés aux rites, après avoir juré sur leur vie de ne les dévoiler jamais. A ceux-ci on offre les victimes sans compter, certains sont toujours tièdes, on ne s'arrête pas de les rougir de sang. Aux fêtes annuelles, ce n'est plus seulement une hécatombe de coqs et de poules, ce sont des chiens et des chèvres, à la douzaine, qui passent de vie à trépas, et j'ai vu, au Bani, jusqu'à 5 et 6 sacrificateurs, opérant à la fois. C'est ici le grand et vrai culte Bambara, donnant lieu à des orgies de quatre et huit jours, éclipsant le culte ancien, celui des *gnéna* ou *djiné*, et en face duquel, qu'on le veuille ou qu'on ne le veuille pas, le culte des morts est bien mesquin . . . une dévotionette, peut-on dire.

Ces *boli*-ci sont très craints, très redoutés. Ils rendent la justice et président à tous les différends, ils ont sur les humains droit de vie et de mort, c'est par leur entremise que le Bambara se venge et exerce sa vindicte contre un ennemi réel ou imaginaire.

Pour nos *boli* de grosse envergure, pas de victimes trop nobles; il fut un temps où on leur sacrifiait des hommes et pour moi pas de doute possible! Au temps du roi nègre *N'golo,* rapporte la légende, un homme de Faléma — petit village actuellement en ruines sur la route de Ségou à Kouttiala — se rendit près du roi avec son fétiche

Sa folo. Le roi se fit initier, désira le posséder, et sa première victime fut son possesseur lui-même, notre homme de Faléma. Que nos vieux vous parlent de la prise de Sikasso par les Français, tous vous diront qu'au matin de l'assaut des hommes furent sacrifiés aux *boli* principaux de la cité. En 1907, dans un temple non loin de Kouttiala, ne voyait-on pas suspendus aux murs, comme *ex-voto,* une rangée de crânes humains . . .? Peu avant la conquête, sous le règne des princes musulmans El-Hadj-Omar et Amadou, le maître du fétiche *Nama* de Misango fut prié de se rendre à Ségou avec son idole. Il déclara n'en pas posséder, mais une femme le trahit et une perquisition fut faite dans Misango et aux alentours. Averti à temps, notre homme change son *Nama* de cachette et la femme convaincue de mensonge lui est donnée comme esclave, à titre de compensation. Peu après, un sacrifice d'action de grâce est offert au fétiche et la femme traîtresse compte parmi les victimes. Elle était vieille, le dieu la juge trop coriace et ordonne de la vendre et d'acheter quelques enfants, les seules victimes dignes de lui. Ses ordres furent exécutés, «car, disent les griots qui chantent ses louanges, quand on sacrifie au *Nama,* il ne faut jamais oublier le *nzégéné dégé* [1], du miel, deux coqs rouges, deux noix de kola rouge, et un *dégenéni,* soit un enfant de 2 à 3 mois».

Depuis l'occupation française et la suppression de l'esclavage, il n'y a plus de sacrifices humains réguliers. Toutes les légendes donnent du reste à entendre qu'ils furent toujours rares et peu fréquents. Maintenant, qui pourra dire jamais ce qui s'est passé et ce qui se passe encore la nuit, de nos jours, dans ces bois sacrés où les initiés seuls peuvent pénétrer? On peut toujours penser qu'à défaut de sacrifices, les adeptes du *siri,* fétiche des *souba* ou *soubaga,* déterrent les cadavres pour avoir du sang humain à offrir à leur idole et de la chair humaine à déguster. C'est là une croyance unanime chez tous nos noirs: pas un sacrifice aux *gnéna,* aux *gnâ* et aux mânes des ancêtres où ces mots ne reviennent: «Mets-nous à l'abri des *souba*», ce qui revient à ceci: «Protège nous contre les adeptes du *siri*». Ces *souba,* j'en ai déjà parlé dans mon chapitre sur la métamorphose (v. ci-dessus p. 38), semblent ne différer en rien des sectes religieuses occultes des Basêzi de l'Ouganda et des Baswêzi de l'Ouchirombo, les anthropophages de l'équateur.

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[1] Farine de mil et de *nzégéné (Balanites æthiopica).*

Et de quoi sont faits tous ces *boli* ayant pour la plupart, leurs temples et leurs bois sacrés? Un peu tout, je crois, entre dans la composition de ces horreurs. Maintes fois il m'est arrivé de défaire ces dieux vernissés de sang, et je n'y ai trouvé qu'écorces d'arbres, racines, cornes de chèvres, de biches et de taureaux, ongles enfin d'un peu tous les quadrupèdes. Le *Komo* de Tigini, à 30 ou 35 kilomètres de Ségou, serait, dit-on, le corps d'un enfant. Il fut façonné, dit la légende, par le trisaïeul de celui qui le possède actuellement, un nommé *Kari*, et ce malheureux poussa la barbarie jusqu'à prendre son premier petit-fils, âgé de quelques mois et à l'écraser tout vivant, dans un mortier. Une légende presqu'identique roule sur le *Komo* de Kégné dans le Bani, actuellement aux mains d'un tout jeune homme nommé *Marka N'zan*. On assure même que le premier enfant du possesseur de ce dernier fétiche, appartient au *Komo*, s'il est garçon. Cet enfant est-il sacrifié ou se contente-t-on de l'empoisonner? Je n'ai rien de précis à cet égard.

Tout ceci sont des légendes évidemment, et je les donne comme telles, n'ayant pu m'assurer du fait *de visu;* j'avoue pourtant qu'elles peuvent être vraies. J'ai éventré non plus un *Komo* mais un *Kono*, lequel était un buste d'enfant de 3 à quatre ans.

Certains comme le *Tji wara* et le *Nama* sont de bois, d'autres comme le *Douga* sont un nombre plus ou moins considérable de cornes de taureaux. Ils prennent aussi un peu toutes les formes, et quand on ouvre ces outres crasseuses qui leur servent de tabernacles, on voit se jouant au milieu des cornes et des rouleaux de serviettes, des boules rappelant tous les fruits et tubercules de la création et dans ce pêle-mêle, il faut être plus qu'initié pour connaître la pièce principale. Quelques-uns aussi rappellent une poupée grossière avec deux cornes pour bras, d'autre un hippopotame, une vache, un éléphant, j'ai même vu un petit cheval dans le *Magna* de Zambala sur le Bani, dans le cercle de Sikasso.

Nos *boli* se composent toujours de plusieurs pièces dites *boli dé,* parmi lesquelles se trouvent le *boli dén fa,* un peu plus gros, un peu plus rondelet parce qu'il reçoit la première coulée du sang et le crachat de la noix de kola mâchée. Les uns sont mâles, les autres femelles d'une façon exclusive, et d'autres, comme le *Nama* et le *Tji wara* par exemple, sont accouplés et gisent dans leurs temples avec la femelle. Celle-ci ressemble toujours à son mari; elle est moins forte, mais c'est tout. Ces fétiches, surtout s'ils ont du renom, s'ils sont craints et redoutés, restent souvent voilés, on ne leur ôte la chemisette qu'au moment du sacrifice.

Le culte de nos *boli* de grosse envergure est plus compliqué que celui des *gnéna* ou *djiné;* il faut pour les servir tout un état-major. Il y a d'abord le propriétaire du fétiche, le *gnâtigi* ou *bolitigi,* et le sacrificateur le *mouroukalatigi*. Ceux-ci sont aidés dans leurs fonctions par deux *wara da* (dit aussi *waraminadé*) qui sont les intermédiaires entre le fétiche et son possesseur [1]. C'est par eux que le génie fait connaître ses désirs et donne ses ordres, et son porte-parole est toujours saisi, dans ce cas, d'une crise d'épilepsie suivie de catalepsie. Quand il a parlé, on le retire de cet état en l'aspergeant avec une eau consacrée, et il reprend sa place, comme si rien d'anormal ne s'était passé. Il semble ne ressentir aucune fatigue, ses traits sont reposés, et pourtant il n'y a qu'un instant, son corps ruisselait de sueur, ses membres s'agitaient sous un tremblement nerveux, il avait les yeux hagards et sortant des orbites, une bave souvent sanguinolente lui coulait de la bouche, sa respiration était sifflante et saccadée.

Le *gnâ* possède aussi son bedeau, le *darotigi,* qui sonne le sacrifice et prévient ainsi les initiés de se hâter de venir, et les non initiés d'avoir à se tenir dans leurs cases. Comme en sonnant sa cloche, il chante encore les louanges du fétiche, on l'appelle aussi *gnâ djéli,* le griot du *gnâ*. A tous ceux-ci se joignent la troupe des adeptes et des initiés, dont la fonction consiste avant tout à fournir les viandes et la bière des orgies. Ce sont les *gnako dé-n-ou,* les enfants du *gnâ*.

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[1] Le *Kono* étant le plus en renom dans la province de Ségou, je donne ici l'état-major de ce fétiche. Les autres ont bien tout cela, mais les noms évidemment changent un peu. Dans le *Nama*, plus de *warada* ce sont les *djenfa tje* et *djenfa mouso* qui parcourent le village pour l'exorciser, en tenant à la main le fétiche ou en le plaçant sur leurs figures. Ils sont précédés d'un porte-torche, qui d'ordinaire est le *darotigi* ou bedeau. Certains fétiches, le *Kono* par exemple, ont un individu chargé de façon spéciale de le porter au lieu du sacrifice. Il fait l'office de *darotigi;* bien souvent celui du *Kono* s'appelle *Kono yurngulba*.

On devient maître d'un *gnéna* ou *djiné*[1] par élection ou par héritage et rarement par achat. Les *gnâ* passent de père en fils par voie d'héritage. Par achat on peut toujours s'en procurer un, il suffit pour cela de trouver dans le village le nombre de gens voulus, pour composer l'état-major de l'idole et n'avoir pas contre soi le *veto* du sorcier.

Tout achat de *boli* puissant donne lieu à des réjouissances, à des fêtes et beuveries qui durent de trois à huit jours. Ces fêtes rappellent celles du mariage. Entouré de son état-major, le nouveau chef de fétiche passe la journée à offrir le *d'lo* ou bière de mil aux nombreux amis qui le viennent féliciter et lui remettre leurs cadeaux. Ce n'est que le soir qu'il quitte son *b'lon* ou case d'entrée, et suivi des adeptes qui portent l'idole, il se rend au bois sacré ou sous les arbres choisis pour être désormais le lieu de réunion, et la nuit se passe à danser et à hurler les hymnes.

Acheter un *gnâ* c'est aux yeux du noir s'unir à lui de façon ferme et indissoluble. C'est se marier avec lui, et pour rendre son idée, son concept de la chose, il n'a pas d'autre expression: «*A yé boli fourou* il s'est marié»; « *ayé boli fourou gosi* il a frappé, scellé son mariage avec le boli»[2]; «*né ka fouroubboloma faro*[3] *flé,* voici mon cadeau de noces»; «*a ta boli konio kéra,* les noces de son *boli* ont eu lieu.»

La valeur d'un *gnâ,* et quiconque en possède peut désormais en fabriquer, varie entre 30 et 40 fres. Si l'on compte les cadeaux donnés au fabricant et à son état-major, les chiens, les chèvres, les noix de kola offerts en sacrifice le jour de sa réception, la bière des noces enfin, son prix dépasse sans nul doute 100 fres.

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[1] Le *gnéna* des jumeaux, le *sinsin* fait exception, lui aussi s'achète.

[2] *Fourou gosi.* Quiconque se marie doit, pour pouvoir user du mariage d'une façon légitime, verser aux parents de la femme en présence du chef, une poignée de noix de kola — onze ordinairement, un de plus que les dix requis.

[3] *Fouroubolomа faru.* Ainsi appele-t-on le petit cadeau en cauris fait par les amis aux mariés. Il varie de quarante cauris à 2 kémés soit 160 cauris.

§ 5. Différence parmi les *Boli* de grosse envergure.

Je ramène à trois groupes principaux tous nos *boli* de grosse envergure. Dans le premier je place ceux qui jadis OFOLD étaient l'apanage exclusif des rois, des princes et des ministres, dans le second ceux qui n'ont ni temple ni bois sacré, et dans le troisième ceux qui possèdent un temple et un bois sacré ou tout au moins ou un temple ou un bois sacré.

Ceux du premier groupe ne sont guère nombreux; les plus en vogue sont le *Safolo,* le *Kongoba,* le *Nan-Woloko* et le *Kouantara.* On les trouve, le plus souvent, dans les villages qui jadis étaient chefs-lieux de cantons ou de provinces, ils sont aux mains de gens ayant compté dans leurs familles un *kafotigi* (chef de canton) ou un *fama* (roi, roitelet) ou chef de province, ministre du roi auquel on décernait le titre du souverain *(fama).*

Tout me donne à penser qu'ils n'étaient dans le principe que des fétiches chargés de veiller sur le roi et les gens de son entourage, quelque chose d'analogue à ce que j'appellai plus haut *boli* familiaux. Actuellement ils sont devenus *boli* de sectes. Mais si tout circoncis peut entrer dans les rangs de ceux qui lui présentent leurs hommages, il n'y a que les hommes mariés à se faire initier, et les orgies en leur honneur sont des orgies intimes, dont les barbes blanches font tous les COST frais.

Au temps des rois Bambara on leur sacrifiait, assure la légende, des esclaves. On se contente [illegible] désormais de leur offrir avec les noix de kola, de rigueur dans tout sacrifice, de la bière de mil, des poules et des chèvres. Le sacrifice annuel met tous les gens du village en liesse. Le fétiche est conduit en procession de la case aux chèvres, où se suspend la peau de bouc qui lui sert de tabernacle[1], au lieu du sacrifice, un gros arbre qui jette un peu d'ombre à l'intérieur du village. Durant la procession, les adeptes SCREAM hurlent à plein VOICE gosier les hymnes sacrées, les tambours et xylophones battent et ronflent, et sur son passage, tous les circoncis s'arrêtent et pieusement se découvrent. Les femmes et les incirconcis s'agenouillent et baissent respectueusement la tête au passage de l'idole, que cache aux regards profanes une crasseuse chemisette.

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[1] Les Bambara, dont les cases sont généralement très propres, remisent leurs dieux dans des coins obscurs et infects. Les temples sont petits, ont une porte si étroite qu'il faut bien souvent se mettre à plat ventre pour y pénétrer.

Ceux du second groupe sont légion; il est bien difficile de les connaître tous. Les deux principaux sont le *Tji wara* et le *Douga*.

Le *Tji wara* témoigne rarement de sa puissance. S'il tue son possesseur et celui qui pendant la danse sacrée sépare en passant le mâle de la femelle, on entend peu souvent le noir lui attribuer la mort de l'un des siens. Ce fétiche se compose de deux bois fourchus, l'un mâle, l'autre femelle, sur lesquels on sacrifie et on le voit suspendu dans la case d'entrée de son maître, avec le manteau en écorce de caïlcédra et le masque qui servent à la danse sacrée.

Le masque du *Tji wara* est fait avec goût, c'est en fait de sculpture Bambara ce que j'ai vu de mieux. Il est taillé dans le bois du *dondol (Bombax Cornui)* et semble vouloir représenter un bouc ou une biche Le mâle a souvent les cornes recourbées et parfois mesure près d'un mètre de haut. La femelle est plus petite, ses cornes sont droites, des anneaux lui pendent au nez et aux oreilles et sans doute par ce qu'une déesse ne saurait-être stérile, elle porte sur le dos son petit. Durant la danse sacrée, les noirs affublés du masque et du manteau, sont courbés en deux et toujours en mouvement. De temps en temps ils beuglent dans une corne de taureau, et comme il ne peuvent se tenir droits sans manquer de respect à l'idole, ils s'allongent sur le sol ou s'accroupissent comme à quatre pattes lorsqu'ils sont las et fatigués.

A l'arrivée des *bani-n-kono* (cigognes), un peu avant la saison des pluies, un sacrifice de chiens, de chèvres et de poules est offert au *Tji wara*. Ce fétiche est surtout vénéré des jeunes gens qui lui demandent de la force, de la santé, de l'ardeur au travail. Aussi lorsque la jeunesse se réunit pour couper les arbustes et créer un champ nouveau en pleine brousse ou pour arracher les mauvaises herbes au temps de l'hivernage. une chèvre, est sacrifiée. et c'est au son du tambour, pendant que le *tji wara* beugle dans sa corne, que le travail s'accomplit. Au retour des champs, on offre de la bière de mil aux travailleurs, et sur la place publique commence la danse sacrée, laquelle se continue fort avant dans la nuit, au grand contentement des femmes et des enfants.

Le *douga* est un nombre plus ou moins considérable de cornes de taureaux, enfermées dans une peau de bouc. On le suspend dans la case d'entrée où se dresse son autel, une colonne de terre carrée, accolée à l'un des angles de l'appartement. Cet autel mesure souvent un mètre de haut, l'arête en vue est ornée de cornes, et sur la plate-forme est fixé un conari ou récipient en terre cuite, pour recevoir le surplus du sang des victimes. Ce récipient est toujours entouré d'une petite haie faite de piquants de porc-épic, ce qui donne à tout l'ensemble un petit air coquet.

Plus terrible que le *tji wara,* il est en vogue près de certains et le noir a facilement recours à lui, lorsqu'il veut se venger d'un ennemi. Il n'est pas rare, non plus, d'entendre un Bambara lui attribuer la mort de l'un des siens, et comme dans toutes ces circonstances et occasions, on offre quelques victimes, il reçoit d'ici de là une bonne coulée de sang. Son grand sacrifice est annuel et on lui offre, en ce jour, des chiens, des chèvres et des poules[1]. A la suite du sacrifice, les adeptes se réunissent chez l'un ou l'autre des plus influents de la secte, et la journée se passe à vider des cruches de bière de mil et à s'enivrer.

La spécialité du *douga* est de mettre les gens à l'abri de la morsure des serpents. On lui sacrifie néanmoins un peu pour tout, à lui comme aux autres on demande la richesse, des femmes, de la pluie au temps de l'hivernage etc. etc.[2]

Il y en aurait bien d'autres à citer comme le *da,* par exemple, auquel on sacrifie pour avoir bonne récolte. Mais bien que terribles ce ne sont pas là encore les vrais *boli* craints et redoutés auxquels le Bambara passe sa vie à sacrifier! Ceux-ci forment un groupe à part, ils ont des temples et des bois sacrés, rien ne se fait sans eux et nous les verrons sortir à tout instant de leurs antres infects et de leurs temples sordides. Hommes et femmes, tout le monde les adore et va les consulter, ils ont une puissance sans limites. Ils rendent la justice et sur eux on prête serment, ils conjurent un peu tous les maux, ils donnent aux stériles la fécondité, ils ont sur les humains droit de vie et de mort, c'est à eux que l'on s'adresse pour se venger d'un ennemi.

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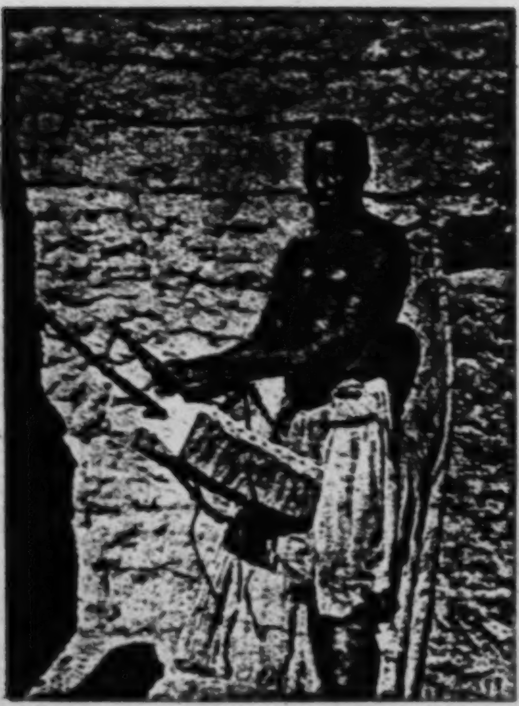
[1] Il est facile de se procurer un masque du *tji wara.* Beaucoup de coloniaux en rapportent du Soudan, ils n'ont qu'un tort d'appeler cela «un fétiche soudanais». Ce masque et tous les autres masques — y compris la poupée des jumeaux — ne sont pas du tout des «fétiches»; ils servent au noir à extérioriser l'idée qu'il se fait du génie — *sétané* — qui anime l'objet auquel il sacrifie.

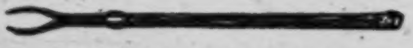
[2] Dans tout sacrifice il y a manducation d'une partie des viandes et choses offertes à l'idole. Cette communion se fait au lieu même du sacrifice, sans assaisonnement aucun.



Nia ngoni, **Harpe du fétiche *Nia.***

Tous ces fétiches dont les principaux sont le *Komo,* le *Nama,* le *Kono,* le *Nia,* le *Wara* ou *Djara,* le *Djo,* le *Magna* dit encore *Tjaro fign,* ont leurs tambours et leurs instruments de musique spéciaux, certains même comme le *Nia* et le *Magna* ont toute une fanfare. La fanfare du *Nia* se compose surtout de guitare, de sachets en peaux et de petits paniers en forme de sabliers emplis de pierres ou de bouts de ferrailles. Celle du *Magna* se compose d'un ou deux tambourins et d'un nombre plus ou moins considérable de cornes d'antilopes[1]. Celles-ci sont accordées au moyen d'un pavillon en bois et chacune donne une note et un son spécial. En fait la musique Bambara, c'est la plus douce et la moins criarde que j'ai ouïe. Les noirs, du reste, la goûtent et à Bagini, sur le Bani, un jour où trois fanfares de ce genre se trouvaient réunies et donnaient un concert, les femmes étaient si heureuses, si contentes, si empoignées par le charme de cette douceur, qu'elles enlevaient leurs bracelets, leurs boucles d'oreilles et leurs boucles du nez, pour les déposer aux pieds des musiciens.

Le *Komo*, le *Kono* et le *Nama* ont comme musique tout ce qu'il y a de plus sauvage, ce sont des coups de trompes, d'affreux beuglements qui vous glacent d'effroi. Dans le *Komo* on souffle dans un tube en fer faisant partie du fétiche, et les adeptes, *warada darotigi*, accompagnent les chants sacrés avec des mirlitons en bambou. Les mirlitons du *Kono* sont des cornes de taureaux[2] et les sons qui en sortent sont de vrais rugissements. Ceux du *Nama* sont en bambou et plus petits que ceux du *Komo*. Le grand instrument ici, c'est le tambour qui se bat avec une tige de fer recourbée. Le contre-temps se donne sur la caisse qui est de bois, les vibrations des peaux cessent, c'est le coup sec d'un os qui, dirait-on, se brise net, et vous donne le frisson.



Tube en fer cornu, trompe du fétiche *Komo* (vu à Bagini dans le Bani chez Boya, chef possesseur du fétiche — de 0,30 à 0,35 m de long).

Le *Komo* est toujours des mieux cachés, il faut être du village pour connaître la case où il se tient. Les pièces principales du fétiche sont enfermées dans des couffins identiques à ceux dont on se sert pour transporter le coton; mais trois tiges de fer[3] sur lesquelles on sacrifie, sont le plus souvent dans une peau de chat tigré. Le *Nama* gîte sous un tamarinier en dehors du village et il a pour tabernacle une ruche d'abeilles. Le tout est entouré d'un *djasé*, sorte de palissade faite de nattes grossières, qui cache aux profanes la ruche et le récipient, où l'on verse le surplus du sang des victimes.

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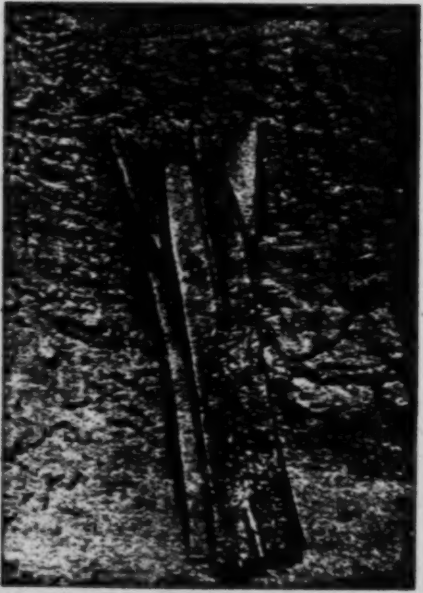
[1] Avant l'invasion musulmane d'Omar el Hadj nos musiciens soufflaient dans des dents d'éléphants, assurent les anciens. Les dents furent confisquées à cause de l'ivoire, et on les remplaça par les cornes de la grande antilope, appelée par les Européens du nom peull kobe.

[2] Pour faire ces mirlitons le noir scie la pointe de la corne et ferme l'ouverture avec une toile d'araignée.

[3] Devant les non initiés, ces tiges sont appelées *Komo djoloko* et les *warada*, ceux qui parlent au nom de l'idole, sont appelés (toujours pour ne rien laisser transpirer des mystères) *djoloko semana* ceux qui portent les chaînes du *Komo*.

Le *Nia* et le *Wara* ou *Djara* ont une case ronde surmontée d'un toit conique en chaume. Pendant que le premier est à l'intérieur du village, le second est toujours à l'extérieur à l'une des entrées. Le *Komo* a une case carrée avec terrasse. De petits clochetons reliés par des fils auxquels on suspend le crâne des chiens et des chèvres sacrifiés l'enjolivent toujours et il se dresse d'ordinaire, pour ne pas dire toujours, à l'intérieur du village. Le *Magna* n'a pas de temple proprement dit, il a son autel, une tourelle ronde, surmontée d'un récipient pour recevoir le sang des victimes, en dehors du village et toujours sous un fromager (*eriodendron anfractuosum* — kapoquier).



Masque du fétiche *Komo*.

Le *Komo* est pourvu d'un masque articulé et d'un manteau de plumes de pintades, de poules etc. que l'on prend pour la danse sacrée. Au moyen d'un bâton que cache aux regards le manteau de plumes, le danseur élève ou descend son masque, et la nuit, à la lueur indécise des feux, on dirait un démon nain qui tour à tour et peu à peu grandit, puis grandit et de nouveau diminue. Le

Kono a lui aussi son masqué! Il n'est pas articulé et son manteau de plumes n'est plus comme le premier bigarré; toutes ses plumes sont des plumes de *djougo*[1], des plumes noires.

Tous ces fétiches sont composés d'un nombre plus ou moins grand d'objets parmi lesquels on compte d'ordinaire au milieu des pièces principales, une corne dite *kana* et un *sirikoun* qui sert à vouer son ennemi à la mort et en même temps à s'y soustraire soi-même. Le *Kono* a pour pièce principale, dite *boli dén fa*, une sorte de poupon mal fagoté avec deux cornes en guise de bras. Dans le *Komo*, trois tubes en fer dont l'un sert de trompe[2], jouent un grand rôle. Le plus intéressant et le plus original est sans contredit le *Nama*, deux têtes en bois dites *koungolo Nama* (têtes du *Nama*), dont l'une, le mâle, est appelée *tjéma* et la seconde, la femelle, *mousoma*. Ces deux têtes semblent représenter deux oiseaux fantastiques et quand, précédés du *darotigi* qui agite sa clochette et porte un falot, les *djenfa mousoou*[3] courent à travers le village et à l'entourdes murs à la recherche des *siri*, l'illusion est complète. Elle l'est encore d'avantage quand ils les posent sur leurs fronts et se mêlent aux danseurs

Fétiche *Nama*.

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[1] Gros oiseau noir dont j'ignore le nom français.

[2] *Tama gurugube*, tel est son nom.

[3] Ainsi appelle-t-on ceux qui peuvent les prendre en leurs mains.

qui gesticulent le buste nu jusqu'à la ceinture et hurlent au son des tambours et des mirlitons leurs chants sacrés:

A djigina so, gnâ, ma fambali, a djigina so, tjon k'a e.
Il est notre hôte, le *gnâ*, grand tueur d'hommes, il est notre hôte *tjon k'a é.*
A fiérêla ka dén, boli fiérêla ka dén.
Il a fleuri pour porter porter ses fruits, ce *boli* a fleuri, il a ses fruit.
Soubaou, yo, nin kéra malo ko ye.
Souba, yo, ceci s'est fait à cause de la honte.
Soubaya kéra, dabali bé an ko yé.
Un s'est adonné à la pratique des *souba*, nous avons un moyen de nous tirer d'affaire.

Le sacrifice au *Nama* ne reste pas non plus d'être imposant. Dans l'enceinte où se trouve la ruche servant de tabernacle, seuls entrent les membres de l'état-major. La foule des confrères se tient à l'extérieur et personne n'approche de la palissade, avant que ne vienne son tour de présenter au sacrificateur la poule et les noix de kola du sacrifice. Pendant qu'on rougit l'idole de sang[1].

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[1] Le *Nama* des Malinkés est absolument identique à celui de leurs frères Bambara. A Bendougouba, village de culture de Kosilanbougou près Kita, il y a un *Nama*; on peut les identifier, c'est à peu de chose près les mêmes mots.

Bambara.	Malinkés.
Nama mâle. *Tjéma.*	*Nama* mâle. *Kéma.*
Nama femelle. *Mousoma.*	*Nama* femelle. *Mousoma.*
Le Nama protège surtout contre les adeptes du *siri*, réputés manger de la chair humaine et appelés *souba*. *Le Nama* vient de Misango, province du Bélédougou.	*Le Nama* protège contre les *soubaga* identiques aux *souba*. *Le Nama* vient de Misango, dans le Bélédougou.
Le *Nama* est appelé parfois *Souye-koro*, *Namakoro*, son *diamou* ou nom générique est *Sirima-n-fign*.	Trois noms pour une seule et même chose disent les noirs de Kita: *Souye-kore*, *Namakoro* et *Sirimafing*.
La palissade du *Nama* s'appelle *djasé*, le récipient pour le sang *da*.	La palissade s'appelle *djasa*, le récipient *daga*.
Bois cornus *waro se* et *gué bla*, *djenfa mousou*, *djenfa tjéou*, dits parfois *waraou*.	Bois cornus *gué bla* et *ko bla Wara* ou *Waradjéli* ou *gué Wara*.
Le chef du *Nama*, père de tous, lequel se trouve à Misango, est actuellement *Tjema-n-djan*; par respect on appelle *Foura tigiba* tous les chefs du *Nama* de Misango.	Tous les chefs du *Nama* de Misango sont appelés par respect *foura tigiba* (*foura* remède, *tigiba* grand maître).

deux hommes, nus jusqu'à la ceinture et face à la foule, se tiennent immobiles de chaque côté du sacrificateur avec en leurs mains deux bois d'un mètre de long environ, sur lesquels sont liés trois cornes de moutons *(wara se)* et deux cornes *(gné bla)*. C'est un honneur de pouvoir tenir ces bois encornés, c'est même une dignité et ces gens sont appelés les *djenfa-tjéou*.

Deux sacrifices annuels sont offerts aux *boli* de ce groupe l'un avant la saison des pluies, moment où, disent les noirs, les idoles mâles et femelles s'accouplent, et l'autre trois mois environ plus tard, un peu avant de moissonner, quand les blés sont près d'être murs. C'est le moment où les idoles femelles donnent le jour à leurs rejetons, le moment où s'achètent de préférence les fétiches et se font les *fourou* et les *konio*, car, je l'ai déjà dit, qui veut posséder un *boli*, doit s'unir à lui d'une union aussi étroite que s'il s'agissait d'un mariage *fourou;* pour sceller cette union il doit offrir au chef et aux anciens les noix de kola *fourou gosi*[1] et faire enfin des noces *(konio)*.

Les femmes, les incirconcis et les non initiés n'assistent jamais aux sacrifices et aux fêtes en l'honneur des fétiches dont je parle. J'ai vu pourtant appeler les femmes pour battre les mains et chanter les louanges du *Komo* et du *Kono*. Ces nuits-là, les femmes restent à l'intérieur du village et on ferme avec des *kara* ou nattes grossières les rues donnant sur la place où elles sont réunies. Elles entendent près d'elles les beuglements des trompes et des cornes, de temps en temps, au dessus des nattes, elles voient apparaître la silhouette d'un masque hideux qui les glace d'effroi et les épouvante, mais dans le sombre de la nuit, elles ne peuvent distinguer et elles ne sont pas à même de pouvoir dire ce qu'elles ont vu. Quand sort le *Nama*[2], les femmes sont appelées à la pointe du jour, au moment où l'on remise le dieu dans sa ruche, et on leur montre au pied de l'arbre sous lequel, durant toute la nuit, nos adeptes ont hurlé et dansé, les *siri* trouvés par les *djenfa tjéou*[1] et le *darotigi* ou *darotala*[2]. Pendant qu'on brûle ces *siri*[3], les femmes dansent et chantent les louanges de l'idole.

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[1] Tribut que doit payer tout homme qui veut user du mariage de façon légitime.

[2] Par ce mot «sortir le *Nama*», je traduis l'expression Bambara: *Nama bora*, ce qui veut dire qu'on a sacrifié à l'idole et que la nuit se passe à beugler et à danser les danses sacrées. Nos noirs ont encore l'expression: *a djigina so*, il est venu nous visiter chez nous (*a djigina* il nous a rendu visite chez . . ., *so* notre demeure). Pour tout *boli* ces expressions existent.

Nos *boli* ont deux jours de repos par semaine, le lundi et le jeudi[4]. Néanmoins il est permis de leur sacrifier en ces jours, et le dimanche au soir (*tné sou*, la nuit du lundi), nos adeptes du *Komo* aiment sortir ou, si l'on préfère, danser leurs danses et beugler leurs hymnes sacrées. Comme ils président à tous les événements importants de la vie, circoncisions, mariages, morts etc., je parlerai en traitant ces questions de l'admission dans la secte des fétiches et des sacrifices qui leur sont offerts. Je dirai pourtant avant de clore ce paragraphe qu'en tout temps et en toute saison, un village ne passe pas huit jours sans offrir un sacrifice aux grands *boli* qu'il possède, et danser ses danses. L'état-major de ces fétiches est craint, redouté, respecté et honoré, et les possesseurs dans les jours de réjouissance sont à la place d'honneur, ils vont s'asseoir près du *gnéna-n-sonnaba* (chef religieux) ou tout au moins du *sotigi* (chef civil).

Indépendamment des sacrifices solennels auxquels assistent les adeptes, nos grands *boli* reçoivent des hommages particuliers, tributs et grosses coulées de sang, car à chaque instant on a recours à leur intervention. Pour un rien, il faut sur eux prêter serment *kali boli la*[5], et si un différend surgit entre deux familles, il faut encore *boli sien*[5] pour le prendre à témoin de nouveau. Ceci entraîne de fortes dépenses; bien rarement on se contente d'une poule, il faut très souvent une chèvre, et j'en ai vus qui, pour une futilité, sacrifiaient quatre ou cinq chiens, faisaient une dépense de 20 à 30 frcs.

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[1] *Djenfa tjéou* = ceux qui courent avec les têtes du *Nama*.

[2] *Darotigi* ou *darotala* = celui qui sonne la clochette et précède les *djenfa tjéou* avec un falot.

[3] Les *siri* sont des objets consacrés que les adeptes du *siri*, les *soubø*, jettent ici et là aux alentours du village pour jeter des sorts et maléfices sur les personnes auxquelles ils en veulent. A chaque sortie du *Nama* de 20 à 40 *siri* sont trouvés. Ces petites amulettes composées avec un peu tout, même de boutons de culottes, des agrafes, des boucles de ceintures, frémissent et gémissent pendant que les femmes les regardent. Plusieurs fois j'ai assisté à cette séance et jamais n'ai perçu ces frémissements et gémissements, sans doute par ce que je ne suis pas noir.

[4] Ils ont repos en ce sens qu'une fête à laquelle ils président, v. g. la circoncision, n'a jamais lieu ces jours-là.

[5] *Kali boli la* et *boli sien* diffèrent un peu. *Kali boli la* c'est jurer sur le fétiche qu'on a dit la vérité, qu'on est innocent. L'accusateur seul sacrifie

Les trois principaux sacrifices offerts par les particuliers, sont le *fani-ké*[1] le *gnénama fani*[2] et le *sou fani*[3]. Le premier se fait pour obtenir une faveur, pour s'attirer les bonnes grâces du fétiche, le second pour conserver sa vie, se soustraire à une mort déjà décrétée, et le troisième est offert pour apaiser un fétiche auquel on attribue la mort de l'un des siens[4], pour le supplier d'épargner les survivants de la famille.

A la fin de chaque sacrifice important toutes les pièces qui composent le fétiche, sont lavées dans le surplus du sang cueilli dans des récipients en terre dits *da*, et ce n'est qu'après cette opération qui s'accomplit dans le plus profond silence, qu'on les replace dans leurs peaux de bouc.

Les noirs aiment à donner à leurs enfants qui naissent aux époques des grands sacrifices, le nom du fétiche, j'avoue même qu'en étudiant les «noms des gens» on apprend à connaître les *gnâ* ou *boli*, les *gnéna* ou *djiné*, on s'initie aux us et coutumes du pays.

Enfants voués au *Komo* le plus en vogue dans le cercle de Ségou:

Boli, boli ba, Néné, Nono, Négé son ou *Négi son*[5] *Togo-ba-tjé*[6].

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ici. Il fait lier 7 pailles sur la pièce dite *sirikoun* et l'accusé, *blara boli koro*, est placé sous le *boli* — sa vie est remise entre ses mains —, il mourra s'il a menti. Quand il y a *boli sien*, l'accusateur et l'accusé sacrifient. Ici encore on lie 7 pailles sur le *sirikoun* et l'accusé est deux fois au pouvoir du fétiche. Une première fois par l'accusateur, une seconde fois par lui-même (*a blara boli koro* = l'accusateur le place sous le *boli*; *a y'i bla boli korò* = l'accusé s'est lui-même placé sous le fétiche).

[1] *Fani* petit égorgement, *ké* faire.

[2] *Gnénama* qui a la vie, vivant. [3] *Sou* cadavre.

[4] 80 fois sur 100 et sans exagération aucune, la mort est attribuée à un fétiche *boli*.

[5] *Négi son* = sacrifice au fer. Par respect on tait parfois le nom *Komo*, on le désigne par une des pièces du fétiche, dans le *Komo* trois tubes en fer (*négi*), appelées parfois *Komo djoloko* (chaine du *Komo*) devant les non initiés. Le tube qui sert de trompe s'appelle *tama guenguéba*.

[6] *Togo* nom, *ba* grand, *tjé* homme etc.

Enfants voués au *Nama,* le plus important après le *Komo:*
Djasé, Sirima, Namakoro, Nama[1].
Enfants voués au *Nia:*
Nia-gné foula, Nia-n-ti, Nia-n-n-koro, Nia.
Enfants voués au *Kono:*
Niélé, Tjètjèlé, Djonké[2].
Enfants voués au *Magna:*
Ma-n-djé, Magna, Magné.
Enfants voués au *Djo:*
Djo, Djokoro, Djoméné.
Enfants voués au *Douga:*
Dougakoro, Douga-n-tjé.
Enfants voués an *Da:*
Dakoro, Da-n-son, Da-n-wèlé.
Enfants voués au *Bala:*
Bala, Balaké, Mousa et *Misa*[3].

C'est encore sur un *boli* de grosse envergure, en sa présence, veux-je dire, que l'on se jure une inviolable amitié, et une amitié si étroite qu'il surgit entre les deux et leurs enfants comme un lien de parenté. C'est le *sinnakoun*! Jamais un noir n'a pu m'en parler d'une façon claire et précise, je ne saurais donc en donner une très exacte définition. Me basant sur la coutume générale parmi les femmes de montrer le sein pour bien indiquer qu'elles sont la mère d'un enfant (*a wolo ba* = sa mère qui l'a enfanté) et sur l'expression *sinna dé* pour dire «un enfant à la mamelle», je crois pouvoir donner ce sens au mot *sinnakoun* (tête, extremité du sein — ou encore — à cause du sein): «Nous sommes entre nous comme si nous avions sucé le même sein, comme des frères par suite.» Et ils se regardent comme tels, se lançant des bons mots et de légères plaisanteries sans jamais se froisser. Le noir pourtant est très susceptible et n'admet guère la plaisanterie! A les voir on les prendrait pour des *kanémé*, et ceux-ci sont parents puisqu'ils sont cousins maternels[1].

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[1] *Djasé,* palissade qui entoure le sanctuaire du *Nama.* *Sirimafign* est le *diamou* ou nom de famille, nom générique du *Nama.*

[2] *Djonké,* surnom respectueux donné souvent au chef du *Kono.* *Tjètjèlé* mot de passe des adeptes du *Kono,* c'est le nom de famille, le *diamou* du *Kono.* Quand un étranger se présente au sacrifice on lui pose la question: «*E b'a la wo Welema djonké?* Es-tu de la secte *Wèlema djonke?*» Un frère seul sait repondre: «*Tjètjèlé, né b'a la.* *Tjètjrlé,* j'en suis.»

[3] *Mousa* et *Misa* sont synonymes de *Bala* et nullement la traduction du nom Moïse.

Le *sinnakoun* date de temps immémorial entre les familles, du moins il n'a pas d'histoire, ou du moins je n'ai pu me la faire donner. On peut croire toutefois que c'est une amitié jurée sur un *boli* ou en sa présence, si l'on préfère, puisque de nos jours deux chefs de familles qui veulent s'unir, être *sinnakoun*, vont rougir ensemble un puissant fétiche.

§ 6. Des *Boli* parleurs.

Ceux-ci sont réputés donner la mort à quiconque les méprise. Néanmoins on leur attribue rarement la mort, ce sont surtout les sorts, les maléfices et les maladies qu'ils lancent. Ils sont aux mains de SELF STYLED soi-disant sorciers, véritables BLOODSUCKERS sangsues qui courent les villages à la saison sèche, toujours tendant la mains et BEGGING quémandant.

Le *boli* parleur est le plus souvent une queue d'animal, sur laquelle on sacrifie. Le possesseur a toujours son engin dans une outre originale, dans une peau de petit fauve bien souvent, et il en laisse sortir un bout. C'est là, je pense, son enseigne, sa plaque d'identité, à moins que ce ne soit la petite clochette suspendue aux pattes de son [illegible] outre et qu'il sait si bien agiter pour annoncer aux gens son arrivée.

Nos Bambara consultent ceux-ci pour connaître l'avenir et pour tirer leur horoscope ou bonne aventure. Le tarif d'une séance n'a rien d'exagéré, il dépasse rarement la modique somme de quarante cauris, soit un sou.

Du *Sirikoun*.

Chaque grand *boli* possède une pièce dite *sirikoun*. Il est d'autres *sirikoun* qui ne sont plus une partie de *boli* mais de véritables *boli*. — Ceux-ci se suspendent à la ceinture et sont toujours voilés d'une étoffe rouge. Un peu tout le monde les possède, bien qu'ils soient le plus souvent aux mains des possesseurs et sacrificateurs de grands fétiches. Ce sont d'ordinaire des bouts de queue de vache, de cheval, de facochère etc. fréquemment arrosés de sang; on va à eux pour jeter un sort, un maléfice sur un ennemi, pour le rendre malade et même le faire mourir, ou encore pour se soustraire soi-même à un sort, à une maléfice, à une maladie, à la mort.

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[1] *Kanémé* — les enfants d'une femme et les enfants des frères de cette femme sont *kanémé*. Le *sinnakoun* et le *kunémé* ne sont pas un empêchement au mariage.

NEARLY EVERYONE?

ONESELF

Les *sirikoun* et les *boli* parleurs sont des fétiches appartenant à des particuliers, ils n'ont ni fête, ni sacrifice solennels, on ne leur rend pas un culte public.

Chap. VIII.

Premières années de la vie du Bambara.

§ 1. Moralité sexuelle du Bambara. § 2. De l'adultère et de la fornication.
§ 3. Naissance d'un enfant. § 4. Tatouage.

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§ 1. Moralité sexuelle du Bambara.

Ceux qui ont vu le Bambara et un tantinet le connaissent, n'hésitent pas à vous dire: «C'est un menteur et un voleur . . .» Il est certain, qu'il ne laisse jamais passer une occasion pour s'attribuer le bien d'autrui, et il vous ment effrontément, avec un calme si grand, que pas un muscle de sa personne ne bronche. Ceci m'a toujours surpris, et le Bambara, il me semble, se pourrait définir: «Un homme assez maître de lui, pour toujours être de votre avis et ne jamais dévoiler le fond de sa pensée».

Il n'a pourtant pas que des vices, et je me suis laissé dire par des hommes sérieux qu'il n'a jamais avec les femmes, du moins en public, de ces familiarités qui choquent toute âme bien née et la blessent. Ces deux crimes, l'adultère et la fornication, sont rares chez lui, m'ont-ils ajouté, et ceci, bien moins, soyez-en sûr, à cause des peines sévères qui les punissent (avant la conquête française, c'était, paraît-il, la mort et la mort sans sursis), que parce qu'il est sans passions, sans passions vives, j'entends! Sans inconvénient aucun, ses femmes se peuvent promener le buste nu, les mamelles au vent, les reins ceints d'un méchant chiffon noué en dessous du nombril, et ses jeunes filles en ont bien assez de leur petite bande d'étoffe, large de trois doigts, qui se noue par devant à la ceinture, se glisse entre les jambes, se fait prendre en arrière, par la ficelle, pour retomber en longue queue, ornée d'un superbe pompon de la grosseur du poing. Sans doute, ils ne me le disaient pas, mais

[p. 157]

suffisamment me le donnaient à entendre: Elles peuvent à la rigueur, sans avoir à rougir, s'en aller en la toilette légère de ces enfants qui roulent dans la poussière, vêtus comme au jour de leur naissance, tous nus. Une nudité ne saurait émouvoir un noir, le beau ne chatouille point son regard, il n'en a pas le sentiment... Et longtemps j'ai cru le Bambara doué d'une nature angélique.

Toutes ces belles pensées m'ont fui, et force m'est d'avouer que le Bambara est hideusement dégradé! Chaque jour m'a rendu la chose plus évidente, car si je quittais la mission pour me rendre dans les villages d'alentour, et mes devoirs d'état m'y obligaient souvent la semaine, je revoyais les mêmes scènes, j'entendais les mêmes chants, les mêmes conversations, et ne trouvais en tout cela rien de bien angélique... Si je passais dans un champ, j'apercevais des jeunes gens courbés sur la houe, le dos tout ruisselant de sueur qui se relèvent pour bondir, pousser un *you you* des plus rauques, accomplir un geste obscène; si une fillette, une enfant, leur vient présenter une cruche d'eau fraîche, elle reçoit comme remerciement, en guise de salaire, un mot grossier et souvent, pour ne pas dire presque toujours, une main peu délicate lui rappelle qu'elle est fille, qu'elle sera un jour pour l'homme un jouet, un objet de plaisir... et l'enfant s'éloigne souriante et replace, tout en marchant, ses trois doigts de chiffon... Il est l'heure du dîner, une grande jeune fille arrive portant sur la tête la calebasse de *tô* ou bouillie de sorgho et sur la paume de la main droite à la hauteur de l'épaule, le plat de sauce au poisson séché. On la salue d'aussi loin qu'on la voit, on demande des nouvelles de toute sa personne, et certes on ne s'arrête pas au «comment vont tes pieds», pas même au «comment vont tes seins». Et la fillette, sans s'émouvoir, répond à toutes ces vilenies, et quand une main bien lavée, prête à servir de cuiller, vient, qui l'enlace ou lui soupèse les seins, elle ne s'effarouche pas, le contraire seul l'étonnerait.

Ici et là, dans le village, un arbre géant étend au loin sa ramure, et nos vieux, amis de palabres sans fin, se plaisent sous son ombrage! Ils y viennent dès les premières heures du jour pour tisser la toile, faire des nattes, tanner des peaux, récurer des cornes de bouc, destinées à de puissantes amulettes etc., souvent même, à seule fin, de passer les heures dans un demi-sommeil — et au milieu de toutes ces barbes blanches ou pour le moins grisonnantes, grouillent un monde d'enfants. Parmi eux se trouvent de bons conteurs, ils excellent dans les récits de chasse et de guerre, ils sont palpitants d'intérêt, pourquoi, faut-il, hélas! qu'ils y greffent toujours quelque fait scabreux? Ils ont surtout, pleine la bouche, les récits d'adultère et de fornication, ils ne vous font grâce d'aucun d'étail et facilement ils remonteraient au déluge, pour ne manquer point de précision. Et la morale de ces contes revient à ceci: «Il n'est rien, ici bas, de comparable aux plaisirs de la chair, usons du mariage et ne laissons jamais passer une occasion de nous procurer cette satisfaction.»

Si nos vieux sont lubriques à ce point, s'étonnera-t-on d'entendre nos jeunes gens qui font des nattes, tendent les peaux des tambours, se cousent une blouse, une calotte, des culottes, dans le *b'lon* ou case d'entrée, narrer le hideux de leurs bestiales soirées? Ils parlent continuellement de leurs *soungourou*, et ce terme, qui devrait désigner, simplement, une fille non mariée, désigne toute femme, mariée ou non, qui se livre au premier venu.

Et sans pudeur aucune, ils parlent et causent de toutes ces vilenies, devant leurs petits frères, devant des enfants de dix et douze ans, devant des fillettes, et il n'est pas rare de voir une grande jeune fille appuyée à la porte de la case, et les oreilles bien ouvertes, pour ne pas perdre un mot, pour trouver occasion de rire aux éclats, à gorge déployée. Et tout ce monde est-il scandalisable? J'en doute, même pour les jeunes filles, qui toutes, ou peu s'en faut, ont dans la brousse des coins choisis. Celles-ci du reste savent se raconter des anecdotes grossières, il faut les entendre lorsqu'elles égrènent et filent le coton, et le soir, lorsque parquées dans une case commune [1], elles s'amusent, rient et causent avant de s'endormir. Se peut-il qu'il en soit autrement? Leurs pères et leurs frères ont, elles le savent, une *soungourou*, puisque tout le monde a la sienne, et leurs mères, elles ne l'ignorent pas, ne voient aucun mal à se livrer à un ami; le grand crime consiste à se laisser prendre.

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[1] Toutes les jeunes filles sont parquées le soir dans une case commune ou dortoir, sous la vigilance d'une vieille. La fonction de cette dernière est d'empêcher les jeunes gens d'entrer et de veiller à ce que les fillettes n'aillent pas demander l'hospitalité à un ami. Il y a un dortoir dans chaque quartier.

On croit que j'exagère, et pourtant! quand deux femmes, ayant chacune en ses bras un enfant à la mamelle, sont accroupies dans la cour, en face de leurs marmites où mijote le *tô* (bouillie) il est bien rare qu'elles ne devisent pas sur les infidélités conjugales des voisines et parfois même sur les leurs. Je ne dis rien de ces vieilles aux mentons retroussés, aux mâchoires vides de dents, elles sont sages-femmes émerites, elles causent surtout avortements.

Elles en sont toutes là, et plus d'une maman, donnant le sein au dernier né et souriant bonnement au reste de la nichée qui près d'elle prend ses ébats, m'a fait rougir. On se trompe parfois sur le sexe quand on souhaite santé et prospérité à l'enfant qu'une femme allaite, et sans respect pour vos oreilles, comme sans pitié pour vos yeux, presque toujours on vous reprend:

«*A flé bani, mousoni do, ne na d'ima, ka ké i soungourou yé.*

Mais regarde donc, c'est une fille, je te la donnerai, elle sera ta *soungourou*.»

Et tout ce laisser-aller au point de vue de la moralité, n'a pas lieu de nous étonner, dans un pays où une foule de jeunes gens se saluent même en présence de leurs mères:

I sounna ko?	*I soungourou ka kendé?*
De ton sommeil l'affaire?	**Ta soungourou, comment va-t-elle?**
Et tes amours de la nuit?	

Dans un pays où des jeunes filles ne rougissent pas de dire à des jeunes gens: Rends-moi le service que je te demande.

Ne na ko doumani fo i yé.

Je te parlerai d'une douce affaire (soit = conversation, caresses honteuses).

Né na ne ko doumani d'i ma.

Je te donnerai ma douce affaire (soit = je me livre à toi).

A bref dire, tout Bambara qui se décerne le prix de vertu se garde d'avouer qu'il a respecté les femmes et les filles étrangères de passage sous son toit, il ferait hausser des épaules et sourire; il se contente de dire: «J'ai respecté les femmes et les filles du village . . .», et il ne le crie pas fort haut et devant tous.

§ 2. De l'adultère et de la fornication.

L'adultère est aux yeux de tout noir un crime, et le coupable pris en flagrant délit, se voit traduit devant le conseil des anciens et sévèrement repris. Je dois pourtant avouer que, si l'adultère semble à tous une faute grave, ce n'est point la satisfaction que l'on s'est procurée qui vous est imputée à crime, on a manqué à la justice, on a lésé les droits d'un tiers, tout le mal est là!

Pris sur le fait, en flagrant délit, le coupable s'arrange à l'amiable avec le mari, qui rarement lui demande plus de 16000 cauris (de 15 à 20 frs) et la matière d'un sacrifice aux *boli* de famille, soit deux poules, un bouc, 2 noix de kola et de 5 à 800 cauris comme prime au sacrificateur.

Tant qu'il n'a pas touché l'amende en son entier, le mari lésé crie, menace, tombe à coups de poing sur la coupable et le coupable; puis tout s'apaise le dernier cauri payé. S'il tardait du reste à se calmer, son épouse sans nul doute s'enfuirait, et il se verrait traité par tous de malotru. Après avoir gourmandé, de fait, le coupable et sa complice, après leur avoir fait promettre de ne plus recommencer, le chef et les anciens se sont rendus en la case du mari pour lui dire: «Ton épouse a promis de ne plus forfaire à l'honneur, son séducteur a payé l'amende, allons, pardonne!» Quand nos anciens, chef en tête, se dérangent de la sorte, c'est leur volonté qu'ils imposent, et celui qui ne dit pas avec eux: «*Kouma banna*[1], l'affaire est close, n'en parlons plus», n'est rien moins qu'un goujat.

Si l'adultère est certain, mais si le séducteur et sa complice n'ont pas été surpris, le cas se complique, car nos deux accusés nient le crime. L'affaire est portée devant le tribunal des anciens, et nos *boli* de grosse envergure sortent de leurs sanctuaires et quittent un instant la peau de bouc qui leur sert de tabernacle. Les accusateurs jurent sur le fétiche (*kali* jurer, *boli la*)[2] et par les preuves morales qu'ils apportent, attestent qu'il y a eu adultère. Les accusés sont appelés et s'ils persistent à nier, on leur ordonne de jurer sur le fétiche, pour attester de leur innocence. Bien souvent ils refusent et les choses traînent en longueur. Il faut enfin vider le procès, le mari et les accusateurs en appellent au fétiche le plus en vogue: «*An ta boli sien*[1], allons sacrifier au *boli* et qu'il enlève la vie au menteur.» Quand le conseil des anciens a décidé le *boli sien*, il faut s'exécuter. Si l'accusé est coupable, il avouera, car prendre une idole à témoin d'un mensonge c'est se vouer à la mort, c'est décréter sa propre mort. Un *boli*, de fait, est sans pitié pour le parjure, et la légende cite plus d'un cas identique à celui d'Ananie et de Saphire.

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[1] *Kouma* parole, discours, *banna* est terminé.

[2] *Kali boli la*, que le boli me tue si je mens.

Certains noirs néanmoins parfois se parjurent! Dès lors ils perdent toute tranquillité, un beau jour ils n'y tiennent plus et ils s'en vont trouver le maître de l'idole auquel ils avouent leur crime et leur félonie. Pour conserver leur vie ils font un *gnénama fani*[2], et le *fani-n-kolo*[3] versé, l'état-major du fétiche dénonce le coupable[4].

L'adultère est fréquent, il est quotidien, et la majeure partie des disputes qui surgissent, viennent de là. Certains maris pourtant sont tolérants, beaucoup se contentent de 2 à 3 *ba* (de 1600 à 2400 cauris, soit 2 à 3 frcs) et des victimes pour le sacrifice aux *boli* familiaux, soit une poule, un chien, un chevreau, deux noix de kola.

Tout comme l'adultère, la fornication est faute grave parce qu'elle lèse les droits de tierces personnes. Elle l'est moins pourtant que le précédent, car, disent les noirs, si la jeune fille fiancée ne s'appartient pas totalement, elle n'appartient pas non plus de façon définitive à son fiancé, elle conserve encore certains droits sur sa personne, «*à ma di ban,* elle n'a pas été encore donnée».

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[1] *Boli sien.* Accusateurs et accusés prêtent serment. Accusateurs: Si nous accusons faux que le *boli* nous tue. Accusés: Nous ne sommes pas coupables, et si nous le sommes, que le *boli* nous tue.

[2] *Gnénama* chose vivante, qui vit, *fani* égorgement = égorgement pour sa vie.

[3] *Fani* égorgement, sacrifice, *kolo* cauri, prix = prix du sacrifice.

[4] Un noir qui se parjure en présence d'un fétiche se croit perdu. Ils prennent du reste à témoins les *boli* les plus réputés en puissance dans le cercle, à savoir les *Komo* de Tigini, Tjoina, Kégné, les *Nama* de Misango, Kokodjan, Guendo. Le *Djara* de Tjikoumela est très en vogue dans le Bani. Un noir parjure offre un *gnénama fani* et le *fani-n-kolo* est coûteux. Pour le *Komo* = 2 coqs rouges, 2 chèvres, un chien, 2 noix de kola rouge, un panier de mil (de 18 à 20 kilos) 3 fois 8 *kémés* (le *kémé* va[illegible]0 cauris), s'il s'agit d'un homme, 4 fois 8 *kémé*, s'il s'agit d'une femme. Pour le *Nama*: une calebasse de miel, 2 calebasses de beurre de *karité*, une poule rouge, 2 noix de kola rouge, un panier de mil, 8 *ba* (le *ba* vaut 800 cauris, soit 1 frc) un *kémé* et un *débé* (120 cauris). Pour le sacrificateur, de 1 à 2 kilos de sel, une calebasse de *gnama-n-kou* (Amomée: *amomum melegueta*). Pour le *Nia*: 12 *ba*, quatre poulets, 2 chiens, 2 poules.

Dès qu'une jeune fille est enceinte, elle est traduite devant le conseil de famille. Après l'égorgement d'une chèvre aux *boli* familiaux, on lui demande le nom de son complice, et si elle refuse de le dévoiler, on en appelle au conseil des anciens. Il faut qu'elle s'exécute, autrement on l'attache à l'un des bois fourchus qui supportent la terrasse et les coups sur son échine pleuvent drus.

Sitôt le coupable désigné, elle jure sur un *boli* de grosse envergure[1] avoir dit la vérité, et notre homme est appelé. On ne gagne rien à être parjure, mieux vaut payer l'amende et vivre! La tache faite à l'honneur est maigre, il avoue, et sans grande honte: «*Tigné* c'est vrai, *né no do* c'est ma faute.»

L'amende varie entre 15 et 20 frcs et souvent entre 25 et 30 frcs[2], non compris le sacrifice aux *boli*: 2 poules, 2 chiens, un bouc, deux noix de kola. Bien souvent le fiancé lésé doit se contenter des victimes du sacrifice et d'un léger cadeau, un à deux kilos de sel, et de 800 à 1600 cauris, soit 1 à 2 frcs. Quant à l'enfant d'une fille-mère, son sort est aux mains des grand-mères, du père et de la mère, et il arrive bien souvent qu'il ne pleure pas deux fois en ce monde, pour employer l'expression Bambara: «*N'a kasira, a t'na foula ki* — s'il a pleuré, il ne le fera pas une seconde fois.» Je parle ici d'une fille libre, car l'enfant d'une fille-mère esclave est le bienvenu, c'est un bon pour la maison, et on ne s'occupe pas du coupable. Ceci se conçoit, est-il un noir qui n'abuse pas de son esclave?

Tout séducteur qui a payé l'amende réclamée par le fiancé, peut marcher le front haut, il a satisfait à la justice et lavé son honneur, son blason est sans tache. Qu'il n'aille pourtant pas s'oublier jusqu'à se rendre au village du fiancé lésé, il se ferait piler d'importance par la jeunesse, et cette exclusion pour lui souvent dure des années.

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[1] C'est presque toujours le *Komo*, le *Nama* et le *Kono*.

[2] Régulièrement le coupable devrait verser au fiancé la dot en son entier, soit 30 frcs.

Maintenant, qu'on ne s'étonne point de la mentalité Bambara au sujet de l'adultère et de la fornication. Si tout se ramène à un principe de justice lésé et à cela seul, c'est qu'il croit, tant il est tombé bas, qu'il a été créé et mis au monde par Dieu pour jouir le plus possible des plaisirs de la chair.

De l'avortement.

Monsieur Louis Barbier écrit dans la «Quinzaine» (16 Janvier 1906): «La femme Bambara, c'est une machine à faire des enfants et le gros ouvrage . . .» Par là il traduit, j'en suis sûr, la pensée de tous nos Européens qui ont séjourné au milieu des noirs, sans se mêler à eux et vivre leur vie. Si la femme Bambara «est une machine à faire des enfants», c'est une machine lente. Je connais des familles de 7 et 8 enfants d'un même lit; mais c'est chose rare, la moyenne se maintient à 2 et 3 enfants par femme.

Ce n'est pas par leurs maternités fréquentes et parce que prolifiques, que nos femmes Bambara perdent leurs charmes et se fanent. Elles ne conçoivent et ne peuvent concevoir qu'une fois chaque deux ou trois ans, elles ne peuvent donner le jour à un enfant qu'une fois chaque trois ou quatre ans, puisque toute maman allaite son enfant au moins deux ans entiers, bien souvent trois ans et durant tout ce temps elle ne doit point concevoir. Dirai-je maintenant que durant ce temps elle garde la continence? que penser de ces expressions dans la bouche du mari:

> *A ye den soro a ti son toun.*
> Elle a eu un enfant, elle ne veut plus de mes rapports.
>
> *Nè t'a don toun, ne tigouéré a la toun.*
> Je ne la connais plus, je ne m'approche plus d'elle.

Elles signifient simplement que de part et d'autre, il y a fraude[1], on s'entoure de précautions pour ne point tarir les seins de la mère et pour qu'elle ne puisse concevoir. Les *soungourou*, ces veuves et ces divorcées, «vrais charognards des berceaux», n'ignorent pas combien ces précautions fatiguent un jeune mari, elles accourent nombreuses, sans honte comme sans pudeur.

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[1] L'onanisme est très fréquent. Les mariés vous le disent ouvertement: «Nous ne pouvons avoir trop d'enfants, nos femmes doivent faire les marchés, et une femme enceinte ne le peut; *an b'an dabali* nous nous débrouillons pour n'avoir pas d'enfants. Peu de filles-mères, et c'est pourtant une rareté de voir

Et pendant que le mari s'éloigne de son épouse pour des plaisirs plus complets, celle-ci de son côté se montre facile avec ses amis qui la viennent visiter ou qu'elle va visiter, amis qui lui donnent la jouissance souhaitée sans la jamais compromettre. J'avoue même qu'elle est heureuse de se voir délaissée, car avec son mari elle pourrait concevoir et avoir, dès lors difficilement recours à l'avortement, tandisqu'avec les amis, les libertés sont plus grandes.

Et si elle vient à concevoir, un prétexte est vite trouvé pour se rendre chez la maman ou celle qui la remplace. Les trois quarts de nos vieilles sont passées maitres ès-avortements. Le camphre à haute dose est la base de leurs breuvages, elles savent user du chlorure d'or, pour un modeste salaire; à toutes et à chacune elles savent rendre service et sauve-garder l'honneur.

Et l'avortement est-il aux yeux du Bambara un crime si grand? Moins grave, assurément, qu'on pourrait se l'imaginer. Il est très fréquent et quand une femme passe, on surprend sur les lèvres des noirs, sur celles même des enfants «*a y'i kono tigné* elle a détruit le fruit de son sein». A nos enfants Bambara il n'y a rien à apprendre, à 8 et 10 ans ils connaissent tout! qu'on écoute leurs conversations, qu'on tende l'oreille à leurs chants, ils roulent toujours sur la plus vile des matières.

§ 3. Naissance d'un enfant.

Avant la naissance. — Si le Bambara est dans l'impossibilité de se faire à cette idée qu'un homme puisse vivre sans femme et une femme sans mari, il ne peut admettre également un foyer vide d'enfants. Il veut les douceurs de la paternité, et deux époux sains, capables de consommer l'acte conjugal, serait mieux dire, ont

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une vierge se marier . . . elles ont peu recours à l'avortement, il y a donc de leur part onamisme. «*Ka bogotigi soro min te djakoumse boun don i na yala*, pour trouver une jeune fille qui n'a pas forniqué, tu te promèneras.» — Il est vrai qu'elles ont souvent pour amant un enfant qui ne peut les rendre mères.

vite recours à la science des devins pour peu qu'ils tardent d'avoir des enfants. La stérilité, pensent-ils, est la résultante d'un maléfice ou d'un sortilège.

Lorsque le mari est impuissant ou affligé d'un mal qui lui interdit tout rapport conjugal, son épouse pour éviter la honte de la stérilité, ne tarde pas à être infidèle et à commettre l'adultère. Pour n'avoir pas du reste à affronter un œil clignant qui en dit long, un sourire dédaigneux qui dévoile tout, le mari se montre indulgent, il favorise même son crime, du moins les premières fois. Avouons-le vite, il n'y peut rien, car dans l'impossibilité d'être infidèle, l'épouse se perd en hauts cris, demande le divorce et rejette celui qui la délaisserait, si elle se trouvait dans un cas analogue. Sans approuver, on conçoit pareille indulgence de la part d'un malheureux dans la nécessité de conserver sa cuisinière et de sauvegarder son honneur, en face d'un peuple qui méprise un impuissant et ne trouve rien à redire à un adultère, puisque c'est là un crime qui se rachète.

De constitution souvent syphilitique, il arrive à la femme de concevoir, et, chose pour elle inexplicable, le fruit de son sein rarement arrive à terme, il tombe dès les premiers mois. Pour obvier à cet inconvénient, elle se couvre de gris-gris et de talismans, elle en porte au cou, sur les reins, le long des seins, sur les bras, et je ne saurais passer sous silence le *tafo,* mince lanière de cuir, prise dans la peau de la main d'un singe et nouée tantôt au poignet, tantôt au dessus du biceps.

La femme stérile ou sujette aux accidents durant les temps de la grossesse, s'adresse aux fétiches *boli Komo, Kono, Nama,* mais plus souvent aux fétiches *gnéna* ou *djiné* et principalement au fétiche *dasiri,* génie protecteur du village. Par l'intermédiaire du prêtre, le *gnéna-sonnaba* ou *dougoutigi,* elle lui offre poules et noix de kola, le *dégé* enfin ou farines délayées dans de l'eau. Au *dasiri* elle voue et consacre le fruit de ses entrailles et jure avec serment de lui offrir un sacrifice digne de lui, si elle parvient à conduire son enfant à terme.

Je rappelle en passant que le *gnéna dasiri* n'est pas, comme on le pourrait croire, continuellement assis ou à cheval sur une branche feuillue, enfermé si l'on veut dans un tronc d'arbre avec l'écorce comme juste au corps. Il se promène, il quitte facilement l'arbre, la source, la roche qui lui sert de gîte, de demeure, de lieu de repos, il visite ses parents et ses intimes, il festoie avec ses compères, chaque fois qu'une beuverie est organisée en l'honneur de l'un d'eux et libre de ses soirées, il en profite. Dans ses promenades sentimentales, dans le village et autour du village, il craint de fouler le sol de ses pieds, il enfourche sa monture laquelle est un serpent, un lézard, un âne et le plus souvent, comme on le sait déjà, un affreux bouc. C'est cette bête que la femme stérile choie avant tout, elle va souvent loin dans la brousse lui chercher la poignée d'herbe tendre dont il fait ses délices et c'est chaque jour, mises de côté pour lui, des mesures de son de mil et de son de maïs. Elle se répand en sacrifices d'action de grâces, une fois mère et son enfant reçoit le nom du fétiche, il sera *djiriba*, *gnénama*, *gnénamaki*, j'en ai déjà parlé au paragraphe où je traitai du *dasiri*, génie protecteur du village et le premier des *gnéna*.

Sur la femme enceinte encore un mot discret! Elle retient son pagne, le chiffon d'étoffe dont elle se ceint les reins, avec un cordon, une vulgaire ficelle nouée au dessous du nombril, chose des plus disgracieuses, ou encore avec une étoffe de couleur, un mouchoir rouge, par exemple, plié en triangle.

L'enfant mâle, le garçon, est plus prisé que la fille; pour avoir ce bonheur, nos Bambara consultent sorciers et devins, vont sacrifier aux fétiches *boli*. La femme a grande confiance dans les amulettes, aussi porte-t-elle suspendus à la ceinture (la ficelle à nœuds, *tafe*, des reins) de nombreux sachets crasseux qui forment sous son *tafé* ou pagne, un hideux bourrelet. Certaines portent ostensiblement leur «garçonnière», un sachet de cuir, carré, de la largeur de trois doigts, renfermant en son interne le remède, des bouts d'écorce et de bois, et parfois une corne de bouc qu'elle se glisse entre les cuisses[1].

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[1] Cette corne est souvent portée aussi pour que l'enfant soit d'un corps sans défaut, pour n'avoir pas un accouchement prématuré. Ces talismans ou objets magiques, dit Nicolay, capables de changer le cours des choses et même de la nature — sont façonnés et vendus par les sorciers.

Naissance d'un enfant. — Le «démon» en pays Bambara participe d'ordinaire aux joies et aux tristesses de la famille. A la naissance d'un enfant, je ne découvre pourtant pas le plus léger rite satanique, pas un *boli* à sortir de son outre crasseuse.

Agenouillée sur une natte, les mains derrière la tête ou appuyées sur le mur, la Bambara donne le jour à son enfant. La plus âgée des femmes qui l'assistent, lie le cordon ombilical et le tranche, avec un méchant rasoir. Le petit être est lavé et relavé, puis copieusement graissé avec du beurre de *karité (Bassia Parkii)* et, si possible, avec du beurre. La coupe du nombril est rarement réussie, une bonne partie des noirs est affligée dès la naissance d'une hernie ombilicale. On masse aussi la tête de l'enfant qu'on entoure d'un linge blanc. Ce massage, dit *kounkolo d'la* [1], se fait avec la paume de la main et se termine par un léger coup de pouce sur le nez, pour un tantinet le retrousser.

L'accouchement terminé, on répare le désordre de la case et la lieuse du cordon sort sur le pas de la porte et appelle le père, assis dans la cour ou dans une case d'entrée, avec deux ou trois intimes: «*K'i ka na san* — tu peux venir maintenant» [2]. Il entre, et la femme, assise sur sa couche, lui présente le nouveau né et lui donne son sexe. Comme sa charge principale à celle-ci, est de veiller sur ce petit être, de le nourrir et de lui conserver la vie, elle s'empresse de le mettre à couvert, pour n'encourir pas un jour, le blâme d'avoir été négligente. Un coup d'œil lui a suffi pour constater les défauts de ce frêle corps. «*Manoum,* Est-ce possible! vois, dit-elle à son mari, vois cette jambe, ce bras, ce dos, cette poitrine, peut-il vivre avec pareille infirmité?» Tous les vices de constitution, elle les énumère, et si elle aperçoit un bouton, un grain de beauté, un léger bleu, il faut le constater, ne serait-ce pas là la marque d'un aîné, d'un membre de la famille défunt?

Tout se termine par un mot d'encouragement de la part des sage-femmes et du papa: «*À gnéna* c'est bien». La lieuse du cordon ombilical court avertir le chef du village, le *dougoutigi* ou

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[1] *Kounkolo tête, d'la* arranger.

[2] Si le père est absent, celui qui veille sur la maison en son absence, un parent ou un intime, est appelé.

gnéna-n-sonnaba, et le *sotigi* (si le pouvoir civil et religieux ne repose pas sur une seule et même tête), les membres de son conseil, les *gouatigi* ou chefs de famille, que le village compte un être de plus. A tous et à chacun, elle donne dans un flux de paroles des nouvelles du nouveau-né, elle déclare ses craintes ou ses espérances, et tout le monde la salue, la remercie, lui fait un de ces souhaits qui vont droit au cœur. Ces louanges elle les mérite et elle les peut désirer, elle a fait son devoir. Ce sont là du reste, ses seuls honoraires; une sage-femme Bambara ne se fait pas payer, elle reçoit un cadeau, on lui donne un pourboire, conservons lui cette gloire et n'en faisons pas une mercenaire.

L'enfant reçoit un nom, on lui rase la tête. — Sans être guérie, une femme Bambara vaque aux soins du ménage, deux ou trois jours après son accouchement. Elle ne quitte pourtant point sa case, assise sur une natte, elle file le coton, sourit à son enfant où le dorlote en ses bras. Et pourquoi ne prend-elle pas l'air, du moins dans sa cour? Serait-ce de sa part fausse honte? Nullement, elle est fière d'être mère, mais peut-elle, même un instant, quitter son cher amour? Privé de langes, sans berceau, il ne sait que pleurer, réclamer le sein, se débattre, prendre une position fâcheuse pour son frêle corps, et pour sortir au grand air, visiter les amis qui semblent l'ignorer depuis qu'elle est maman [1], il faudrait l'abandonner là, seul à lui-même. Avant la dessiccation du NAVEL nombril elle ne peut placer le bébé à califourchon sur son dos, le seul mode de portage qu'elle connaisse, et sortir sans son enfant serait tarir son lait, le charger de principes nocibles pour le nourrisson.

Du 6 au 8ème jour, la dessiccation du nombril s'opère et le chef et les anciens en sont informés. Tous les chefs de famille (les *gouatigos*) vont s'asseoir par rang d'âge et de grade à la porte d'entrée de la case, qui donne accès dans la cour de l'accouchée. Le chef religieux, le *gnéna-sonnaba* [2], pénètre seul dans la case et sur les genoux de la mère, il rase la tête du bébé. Les femmes en longues files se pressent dans la cour intérieure, elles battent des mains, poussent les cris perçants *kouyo kouyo*, signes d'allégresse, et font à leur amie un léger cadeau en mil et en coton[1].

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[1] Les hommes ne rentrent dans la case d'une accouchée qu'après la tonte et l'imposition du nom. Le mari lui-même n'y entre pas sans nécessité.

[2] D'ordinaire c'est le chef religieux, prêtre du *dasiri*, qui tond l'enfant. Cette règle souffre des exceptions. Dans certains villages ce sont les chefs au for civil, dans d'autres cette fonction est l'apanage d'une famille. Parfois la tonte est faite par le père, le grand père. Les familles où cette coutume se pratique, ne sont pas Bambara purs, elles sont melangées du sang Marka.

Le crâne de l'enfant rasé et bien nettoyé, le chef lui impose les mains pour chasser les esprits malfaisants qui en voudraient à sa vie, de la main il lui caresse doucement le dos et la poitrine et il récite, en crachotant, une courte formule que lui seul connaît et peut comprendre. Il vient alors s'asseoir au milieu de ses gens, et le père lui offre onze noix de kola, sur un plateau d'herbe tressée. Sur ce même plateau, les chefs de famille, par ordre d'ancienneté, déposent leur obole, de 40 à 80 cauris[2], et le *guénasonnaba* demande au père ou au grand père[3] le nom de l'enfant. Au lieu de répondre à la question, il montre les noix de kola et les cauris et dit au chef: «Partageons les noix de kola et donnons à chacun le prix du nom.» Deux noix de kola sont mises de côté, les cauris sont partagés en deux parts égales, et le chef en va porter une à la maman avec deux noix de kola, une rouge et une blanche.

Les 9 noix de kola qui restent sont partagées entre les assistants, chaque chef de famille en reçoit au moins un morceau, c'est le *ni woro* (*ni* vie, *woro* kola). Chacun reçoit aussi quatre ou cinq cauris[4], et le chef de famille proclame le nom de son fils, et donne la raison de son choix. Tout le monde s'écrie: «*A toua dara* il a reçu un nom, que Dieu le conserve, qu'il soit fort et vigoureux, qu'il soit pour ses parents un aide et un soutien!»

Les femmes ignorent le nom imposé, mais elles le savent proclamé, et la lieuse du nombril prenant l'enfant des bras de la mère, par trois fois le lave et le relave avec de l'eau tiède et du savon. Ceci fait, elle prend par trois fois une gorgée d'eau fraîche, et la lui crache sur la nuque, le dos et les reins, en disant: «Que Dieu te conserve, ne t'en va pas, reste avec nous, sois fort et toujours bien portant, que ta postérité soit nombreuse!

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[1] Les femmes donnent une poignée de coton et environ une livre de mil.

[2] Les hommes donnent 40 cauris. Les généreux vont jusqu'à 80 cauris.

[3] C'est le chef de famille qui impose le nom à l'enfant.

[4] *Toua da kolo* (*toua* nom, *da* donner, imposer, *kolo* cauris).

Avec l'enfant dans ses bras, elle se rend à la porte de la case d'entrée où se tient le père et lui demande son nom. Quand elle le sait, elle retourne près des femmes et dépose le bébé sur les genoux d'une vieille. Celle-ci, par trois fois lui souffle dans les oreilles et 6 fois de suite, 3 fois pour chaque oreille, lui hurle à pleins poumons: «*Kouyo kouyo, i toua dara* (ici le nom), *Alla m'i balola*, kouyo kouyo, tu t'appelles (. . .) que Dieu te fasse vivre!» Deux femmes saisissent par les angles l'étoffe rectangulaire qui fixera l'enfant au berceau, sur le dos de sa mère; et sur un fer de hache s'il est garçon ou sur la tige de fer servant à égrener le coton s'il s'agit d'une fille, le petiot par trois fois est roulé et s'entend dire: «Sois fort et vigoureux, sois pour ta famille un aide et un soutien!»

Sur le dos d'une jeune fille l'enfant est mis à califourchon et noué dans la pièce d'étoffe rectangulaire, le *tafé* ou pagne de sa maman. Une vieille lui colle une pincée de noix de kola mâchée sur le front, de chaque côté du crâne, audessus des oreilles, sur le haut de la tête, et lui noue autour du front une bande d'étoffe blanche de la largeur d'un doigt. La fillette reçoit une poignée de mil, la va piler sur la place publique, et l'enfant toujours sur son dos, prépare le *dégé* (farine délayée dans de l'eau). Le brouet préparé, elle va l'offrir à la maman, qui en met une pincée dans la bouche du petit et la cérémonie est achevée . . . Pas complètement pourtant; quelques vieilles courent le village, une calebasse de *dégé* en mains, elles cherchent les stériles qui se terrent en leurs cases et se cachent. Quelques-unes sont toujours prises, on les couvre de *dégé;* plus elles crient, plus elles se débattent et plus on les blanchit.

Après la tonte de son enfant, toute femme Bambara se promène dans le village et vaque à ses travaux. Durant trois mois si elle a donné le jour à un garçon et durant quatre mois si elle a eu une fille, elle reste pourtant sans se natter les cheveux[1] et ne se rend pas dans les villages voisins. Passé ce temps, elle se natte la chevelure, se couvre de perles, de boules d'ambre et de bracelets, elle se pare de son mieux, se fait belle et va présenter son bébé, tout ruisselant de beurre, au chef et aux anciens. Son mari lui octroie quelques jours de congé[1], et elle se rend aussitôt dans sa famille.

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[1] Celles qui se nattent la chevelure, ne sont pas de souche pure.

§ 4. Tatouage.

Les fillettes ont la partie médiane du nez et les lobes[2] des oreilles percés, du 3e au 4e mois. C'est aussi l'époque à laquelle tout Bambara peut être tatoué[3].

Le Bambara porte comme tatouage trois lignes parallèles, qui partent des tempes et vont se terminer sous le menton. La Bambara, en plus des trois lignes qui lui labourent les joues, porte un petit trait horizontal de 1 à 2 centimètres, qui lui marque les pommettes[4]. Elle se fait une étoile sur le menton, son front est tout labouré de petits coups de couteau, on dirait de loin que son front est ceint d'un diadème.

Au Bani, la femme se tatoue encore la poitrine, le ventre et le bas-ventre, et trois lignes sur le biceps et l'avant-bras vont se rejoindre, dans une rosace, à la jointure du bras. Aux environs de Ségou ce tatouage est plus rare, la majorité se contente, pour donner du relief aux seins, de les entourer de deux ou trois rangées de petits points en demi-cercle, et elles se font elles-mêmes ce tatouage.

Le tatouage des joues et celui de la poitrine, du ventre et du bas-ventre chez les femmes du Bani se fait de sept ans en sept ans et revêt un caractère exclusivement religieux[5]. Le *gnénasonnaba*, entouré de son conseil, les *gouatigi*, sacrifie au *dasiri*; une poule est offerte aux mânes des ancêtres, les *boli* familiaux sont sortis de leurs outres crasseuses et arrosés de sang, et tout le village est en fête. On se rend en procession au lieu où se trouve le forgeron tatoueur, et tant que dure l'opération, les femmes battent des mains, donnent la mesure au forgeron qui opère en chantant, et prennent en chœur au refrain.

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[1] De 8 à 15 jours environ.

[2] A chaque lobe des oreilles une femme peut suspendre de 10 à 12 anneaux.

[3] Certaines mamans tardent plus longtemps à leur faire cette opération.

[4] Ce trait sur les joues se voit surtout chez les femmes du Bani.

[5] Cette cérémonie n'a lieu qu'une fois tous les sept ans; nos fillettes sont toujours grandelettes quand on leur tatoue la poitrine.

Le tatouage, signe distinctif avant tout de la race, se fait au couteau, à une lame ou à deux lames, et celui à deux lames a certes plus de relief et plus de détails. De la part de l'opérateur il demande aussi plus d'habileté et pour cette raison sans doute il est relativement rare.

On trouve actuellement foule de Bambara ne portant plus sur les joues les marques de la tribu. Le musulman a puissamment contribué à l'abolition de cette douloureuse pratique. Avant l'arrivée des Européens, sous les règnes de Ahmadou et Madani, des peines très sévères étaient portées contre quiconque se tatouait ou faisait tatouer ses enfants. Qu'on ne pense pourtant pas que le tatouage fût jamais d'une obligation stricte et absolue, tout ici est remis à l'arbitre des devins et des sorciers, des génies *djiné* ou *gnéna* et, avant tout, des *boli* familiaux que l'on consulte et auxquels on sacrifie pour savoir s'il y a nécessité ou non de porter les marques de la race. Il n'est donc pas rare de trouver dans une famille des tatoués et d'autres qui ne le sont pas, de voir des non tatoués faire tatouer leurs enfants et des tatoués s'abstenir de le faire. Cette cérémonie se faisant de 7 ans en 7 ans, il arrive que le chef de famille est absent quand passe le forgeron tatoueur, et les sacrifices n'ayant pas eu lieu, les enfants à tatouer sont remis à 7 ans plus tard. Devenus grands, on leur laisse toute liberté de subir l'opération ou de ne la subir pas. Par crainte de la souffrance, par crainte de laisser échapper un soupir, des larmes, ce qui les rendrait la risée de tout le village, foule d'enfants de 10 à 15 ans refusent [1].

Le tatouage Bambara est simple, et bien réussi n'a rien de laid. S'il défigure certains, leur laissant sur les joues et sur la poitrine des bourrelets gros comme le pouce, c'est là un accident excessivement rare étant donné le nombre des tatoués. Pour sécher leurs plaies et les faire boursouffler ils ne se servent du reste d'aucun ingrédient malpropre, la poudre de charbon étant le seul remède employé dans le tatouage.

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[1] Aux enfants mâles non tatoués on perce ordinairement les oreilles.

Si cette pratique se perd aux alentours de Ségou, si foule de familles n'en veulent plus pour leurs enfants, elle n'est pas à la veille néanmoins de disparaître de façon entière et complète. Pour arracher à tout un peuple une pratique religieuse, il faut des années, il faut des siècles, et si un sorcier de renom venait à l'imposer à ceux qui s'en exemptent, ils s'y soumettraient aussitôt.

Chap. IX.

La circoncision en pays Bambara.

§ 1. Importance de la circoncision. § 2. La fête *Soli si* ou veillée des circoncis. § 3. La fête du *Da Woro* ou du sixième jour. § 4. La fête du *Boloko déou don bo* la sortie des circoncis et des excisées.

§ 1. Importance de la circoncision.

L'acte important dans la vie du noir et de la noire Bambara — nos deux sexes se mutilent — est sans contredit la circoncision. Et d'où leur vient cette coutume? Certains trancheront d'un mot la question: «Elle est d'origine islamique . . .». Je me garde d'être aussi catégorique, car les Bambara ont toujours refusé l'Islam, ils ont défendu leurs dieux la lance au poing, et dans la circoncision je ne trouve rien qui rappelle un tant soit peu la religion du prophète. Tout en étant le sceau de la race, la circoncision est encore une seconde naissance, c'est l'entrée dans la vie civile et religieuse.

Elle donne lieu à quatre grandes fêtes. Le second jour de la fête qui correspond à la fête musulmane du كبش (mouton), les futurs circoncis que d'une façon toute spéciale on appelle *soli*, offrent aux *to-n-déou* ou membres de l'association de secours mutuels des *fla-n-ton*, un couscous à grains très fins dit *basi*. Pour se le procurer, ils ont dû mendier, aller chanter de porte en porte *(kili)*, d'où le nom de *soli kili basi*, donné à cette fête. Avant de passer au couperet tous nos *soli* font la veillée des armes, au *soli kili basi* succède le *soli si*[1], et six jours plus tard se fait le *da woro*. Circoncis et excisées une fois guéris, les tambours ronflent de nouveau, de nouvelles beuveries s'organisent et nous assistons au *boloko déou don bo* à la sortie des circoncis [1].

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[1] *Si* passer la nuit.

Durant les jours qui séparent la fête du Ramadan [2] de la fête du mouton كَبْش, les fillettes *soli*, les élues de la prochaine circoncision, vont avec leurs aînées non encore mariées remercier les anciens de l'honneur qui leur est fait. Le soir, à la tombée de la nuit, elles visitent les familles et dans un chant nazillard, rappellent les gloires des ancêtres. Elles ont aussi pour ceux qui restent, paroles des plus flatteuses, et tout s'achève par cette supplique: «Nous sommes *soli* et sans un sou vaillant! au 10ième jour de la lune prochaine, nous devons vous offrir le «couscous» à grains très fins, le *basi*, et bonne nous voulons la sauce. Pour cela aidez nous, je vous prie, nous sommes *soli* et sans un sou vaillant.»

Les chants de nos *soli* rappellent aux vieux et aux vieilles leur jeune temps, le temps de la jouvence, ils courrent au grenier, fouillent les calebasses qui leurs servent d'armoires, délacent le long boudin à mailles serrées où s'entassent les cauris, et toute triomphante, notre jeunesse s'en va riche de cauris, de mil et de poisson pourri. Le produit de la quête est confié à la plus âgée des *soli*, et quand vient le second jour de la fête du mouton, nos belles se réunissent, pilent avec furie et fournissent au village entier la pitance, le *basi kili*, c'est le nom du festin.

Sur le coup de midi et même avant, tout le monde est repu, déguste avec entrain la bière de sorgho, le *d'lo*, et nos fillettes *soli* courrent d'une case à l'autre cueillir les restes du festin. Elles le font hâtivement, empressées, fiévreuses, il leur tarde d'accomplir leur grand acte religieux, public, solennel, elles sont au *soli kili basi* les cuisinières et les servantes des esprits.

Ils se tiennent ceux-ci, aux abords des villages, ils trainent la semelle, invisibles, à travers les sentiers ou bâillent accroupis, là où les chemins se croisent. Les chants d'allégresse, les cris de joie, les hoquets des buveurs, le bruit assourdissant des grosses caisses leur rompt les tympans, le fumet du poisson pourri leur gonfle les narines, nul doute qu'ils ne se disent en caressant de la langue le rose de leurs lèvres, entre deux soupirs, dans un murmure qu'emporte le vent: «Oh! les goinfres, ils nous oublient!»

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[1] De *bolo* = main, bras (termes voilés pour indiquer les parties sexuelles), *ko* laver, *déou* pluriel, de, *dé* enfant, fils, *don* jour, *bo* sortir.

[2] Sous la domination musulmane les Bambara ont dû faire la fête du Ramadan et du كَبْش (mouton). Elles sont devenues fêtes nationales avec sacrifices aux mânes des ancêtres et aux *fétiches* bons. Aucun rite musulman . . .

Eh non! on songe à eux! De lait, de cendres et autres choses encore dont j'ignore le nom, une fillette *soli* se barbouille la face, les seins, le dos . . . elle se rend hideuse à voir, la plus laide possible et fait la folle. Armée d'un long bois — ce bois qui sert à remuer la bouillie qui mijote sur le feu[1] — elle s'élance, agile comme une gazelle, hors du village: toutes ses compagnes la poursuivent en poussant force cris au grand galop, quatre fois de suite elles tournent autour des murs. A chaque bifurcation de sentier, elles forment cercle, dansent avec furie, et à grandes poignées, sans compter, elles jettent aux esprits le *basi* et les sauces au poisson boucané. «*Dégé dounlé*, imbéciles», hurle la barbouillée, et toute son escorte reprend avec entrain toujours croissant. «*Naloumа*, grosse sotte . . .» Et cette journée qui n'a rien de bien relevé, est pleine de charmes pour nos petites Bambara, nos futures excisées.

Nos petits garçons *soli* se contentent de sacrifier au *n'tomo*, fétiche bon, qui leur sert de protecteur, mais s'ils dansent avec la masque à 6, 7 et parfois 8 cornes, ils ne se flagellent pas, du moins la flagellation n'est pas de rigueur en ce jour.

§ 2. La fête du *Soli si* ou veillée des circoncis.

Nous voici à la veille de la circoncision! Il fait nuit noire, le *d'lo* ou bière de sorgho chantonne, écume dans les terrines, une buée légère s'échappe de toutes les cases et les enveloppe . . . Ici, c'est la graisse de *karité* qui, fondant dans la marmite, grésille et dore la carapace d'un poulet ou le gigot de chèvre, là le gros rire de gens aux ventres pleins, les hoquets d'un gourmand, le bruit sec et ferme de deux lèvres lippues, rendant la liberté à cinq gros doigts gluants que collent l'un à l'autre, une reste de bouillie. Le front orné de perles, une sorte de diadème bleu, blanc, rouge, jaune, couleur arc-en-ciel, drapées dans la couverture à la Romaine, les groupes de femmes, comme des ombres, glissent silencieuses à travers les ruelles, portant sur la tête d'immenses calebasses pleines de *dégé* ou farine de mil délayée dans de l'eau de miel et du lait; elles se rendent sur la place publique, en pays Bambara l'unique salle de danse connue . . . Nos grands garçons, la tête rasée de frais, le corps vigoureusement graissé, tout luisants eux-aussi arrivent en longue file et ce n'est plus sur la place qu'un vacarme sans nom, car tout ce monde à la fois, salue, parle et crie, pas une voix qui s'accorde.

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[1] *To-u-galama*, bâton avec gros bout aplati, servant à remuer la bouillie dans la marmite.

Jeunes et vieux interrogent la voûte étoilée; sans être astronomes, ils savent que vers minuit, tel astre au firmament a telle et telle inclinaison, ils s'impatientent . . . Mais c'est l'heure, nos *soli* mâles se sont accroupis à la place d'honneur, et voici venir à la queue leu-leu nos jeunes demoiselles *soli,* la chevelure en brouissaille, les reins ceints du méchant pagne qui monte des genoux à la hauteur du nombril. Ce pagne, cadeau du fiancé, est de rigueur; on reconnait grâce à lui la race de chacune et sa caste aussi, car les couleurs diffèrent, il a son importance, on le voit![1]

La Bambara est fière de son sang et fière de sa race, dans son pagne aux couleurs nationales, une étroite bande d'étoffe à fond jaune rayé de lignes noires, elle est près de penser, au *soli si,* qu'elle est reine sinon déesse. Sa démarche s'en ressent; le front haut, les yeux à quinze pas, la poitrine bombée à la prussienne (elle se gonfle un tantinet pour faire ressortir ses charmes), elle s'admire, s'extasie sur elle-même, se sachant le point de mire de plus d'un œil luisant et plein de convoitise. Elle s'avance lentement, soulevant un nuage de poussière, elle secoue dans ses mains un pochon en peau de bouc, une boîte en fer remplie de petits cailloux et son torse se penche à gauche et son torse se penche à droite . . . on dirait — dans le sombre de la nuit, à travers les petits feux ici et là jetant leurs clartés — une frêle coquille perdue au sein des flots, ballotée par les vents, atteinte du roulis et toujours prête à chavirer.

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[1] Les musulmanes l'ont bleu. La Bambara pure le veut à fond jaune avec des rosaces et lignes noires.

En hurlant — et j'atténue le terme — les jeunes gens se jettent sur leurs instruments, des tambours de toutes formes et de tout calibre. Les uns, les grosses caisses, se portent sur le ventre, liés à ceinture par une ficelle en écorce, les autres, plus petits mais plus longs, se glissent entre les jambes, sous les bras, et les tambourins suspendus aux cous, se balancent, breloques d'un nouveau genre, à la hauteur des nombrils. Les vieilles femmes aux mâchoires vides de dents, se mettent de la partie, elles raclent l'une contre l'autre deux tiges de fer ou font les contre-temps, en frappant avec rage d'un bout de bois ou d'une queue de courge, sur une calebasse renversée, flottant dans un *canari* plein d'eau.

Vierges, mariées, veuves, prostituées (tout ce monde se mêle), lentement tournent et tournent à la suite des *soli*, autour de l'orchestre, en secouant dans leurs mains le pochon en peau de bouc ou la boîte en fer blanc, et jusqu'au matin chaque futur circoncis, chaque future excisée, entend de sa lignée les gloires et les prouesses. Ces chants à mille et mille souhaits n'ont rien de très relevé; si on y sent la passion, on n'y trouve point l'amour, le beau du cœur y fait défaut et le tout est mal dit . . . Les hommes eux aussi, de temps en temps quittent la cruche et se mêlent à la danse, mais la nuit est aux femmes . . . Et aux dieux, car si, las du vacarme, vous quittez le bal et pour respirer un peu d'air pur, allez hors du village, vous entendez les cris stridents du hérault des dieux, vous le voyez même dans l'ombre, courant d'un arbre à l'autre, des cornes sur la tête, et ressemblant sous son manteau orné de plumes de poules, de pintades, d'aigrette[1] etc. . . . à ces démons des contes, que peignent si bien les grands mères, le soir à la veillée . . .

Et ce hérault des dieux, avec son escorte, accomplit un rite curieux, il chasse les esprits malfaisants, fait place libre au dieu privilégié du village, pour éloigner des circoncis et des excisées les maléfices. Ceci s'appelle en Bambara *kéné sâlo*[1], et se peut traduire en français: exorciser la place.

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[1] Costume dont s'affuble le noir quand il danse la danse du fétiche *Komo*.

L'une après l'autre les étoiles au firmament s'éteignent, une seule, l'étoile du matin *(sigi dolo)* brille encore et semble braver l'aurore. Des *kouyô kouyô* nombreux, poussés par 100 poitrines, s'élèvent du village et la place se vide. Tout le monde (les femmes j'entends, car les hommes accroupis continuent de boire et tisonnent le feu) se précipite hors du village et forment cercle autour du *karité* sacré. Adossé à l'arbre, derrière un drap blanc qui le sépare de la foule, un forgeron agenouillé plutôt qu'assis et le rasoir à la main, attend les victimes. Il est calme, sûr de lui et n'a pas peur, c'est du reste vite fait! Il s'empare du prépuce, récite sa formule en crachotant, et le fer se lève, lance un éclair et s'abat . . . Un coup de fusil annonce aux buveurs de la place qu'un Bambara de plus se compte au village et pendant qu'une griotte l'acclame, le possesseur du dieu brûle entre deux tisons quelques feuilles de *nayanka*[2], et fiévreux, empressé il va en déposer les cendres dans la cour du circoncis ou de l'excisée, sur le *kârâ,* autel dédié aux mânes des ancêtres[3].

Clopin-clopant, les circoncis se rendent sous les arbres sacrés où se font les danses en l'honneur du fétiche, et jusqu'à guérison complète, c'est là qu'ils se tiennent: car ce n'est que le soir, quand le soleil couchant rougit à l'horizon et prend sa teinte de sang, qu'ils rentrent au village. De ce jour aussi, ils portent un costume (le tout de couleur jaune s'ils sont Bambara), des culottes, une blouse et sur la tête une sorte de mouchoir, lié sous le menton[4]. Leur temps se passe à faire des nattes, à chanter, à frapper l'une contre l'autre des rondelles de calebasses, enfilées sur un bois, à manger surtout, «car on les gave», et à dormir.

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[1] *Kéné* place, publique, cour, *sâlo* caresser doucement de la main, faire des passes.

[2] Arbre dont j'ignore le nom en français.

[3] Là où se trouve le fétiche *Komo* la chose se passe ainsi. Dans le cercle de Ségou c'est au *Komo* que l'on s'adresse presque toujours, et si on ne le possède pas, on le fait venir d'un village voisin pour la circonstance.

[4] Dans certains villages, au lieu du mouchoir jaune, les circoncis ont un bonnet à deux pointes. Dans le Bâni le circoncis porte la blouse, le mouchoir ou le bonnet et rien plus.

Et pour parler des garçons, j'oubliais nos fillettes! Sous l'arbre le plus voisin du *karité* sacré, elles se déshabillent. Nue comme un vers, chacune quand vient son tour, en courant, ventre à terre, s'élance dans les bras d'une femme, elle aussi forgeron de race, qui incontinent la tranche. Sur un plateau tressé, fait d'herbes fines et liantes, la maman ou sa suivante, reçoit le débris sanguinolent, qui sera pour la maison un gris-gris, un talisman, un porte-bonheur, et pendant que la poudre parle, l'estropiée, feignant de ne point souffrir de la perte du clitoris, regagne sa place et une autre la remplace.

Avec la dernière la séance prend fin, et la foule éclate en un chant d'allégresse, en un chant de triomphe. La maman, la grande sœur ou une suivante, d'un grand drap blanc enveloppe l'excisée, et à califourchon sur son dos, l'emporte au village dans la case qui lui est préparée[1]. Ce portage en soi si risible (elles peuvent marcher, courir même, elles en ont donné la preuve sous le *karité*), est de toute la fête ce qui rappelle le plus à l'enfant, la raison d'être de la circoncision. C'est la seconde naissance, et de même que l'enfant apparaît en public pour la première fois sur le dos de sa mère, elle entre encore ainsi dans la vie civile et religieuse, sur le dos de sa mère ou de celle qui la remplace!

Les excisées ne s'occupent guère en leurs cases, comme les garçons, elles bâillent, dorment et mangent. Elles filent pourtant un peu de coton et chantent fort souvent à mi-voix, en s'exerçant à secouer avec grâce une calebasse de la grosseur du poing, percée de petits trous et remplie de petites pierres. Elles mènent vie bien douce, on les pourrait croire heureuses, mais une vieille édentée toujours ronchonnant veille sur elles. C'est la grosse épine! impossible de bouger, impossible de remuer d'un orteil, il faut des permissions et toujours des permissions qui jamais ne sont accordées avec grâce. Et on satisfait aux besoins naturels en chœur, à des heures déterminées... En traversant le village, elles s'appuient pour la forme sur une tige de mil au bout de laquelle se balance la calebasse ajourée où remuent les petites pierres.

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[1] Chaque village est divisé en quartiers. Les excisées d'un quartier ont leur case en ce quartier.

A l'aller, en s'enfonçant dans la brousse, elles chantent les *gnâma* pour s'en mettre à couvert:

Bo n'yé, gnâma, ô gnâma,
Eloigne-toi de moi, *gnâma, ô gnâma,*
Dankoun ba la,
Du grand angle du terre [1],
Gnâma fambali, bo n'yé!
Gnâma meurtrier (qui tue), éloignez-vous de moi!

et au retour elles ont des chants et même en improvisent pour saluer les vieux, les influents du village. De nouveau dans leurs cases elles s'agenouillent sur la natte pour s'y étendre ou s'asseoir, et c'est le silence, ce silence des collégiens qui ne se rompt qu'en secret, en tremblant, à voix basse.

§ 3. La fête du *Da Woro* ou du sixième jour.

Garçons et filles ont payé à la race le tribut du sang, cinq jours déjà se sont écoulés, nous sommes au soir qui précède le sixième. Là-bas, au loin, du côté de l'ouest, derrière les lourds baobabs qui bordent l'horizon, le soleil a disparu et ce n'est au firmament que myriades d'étoiles qui scintillent, la lune suivie de Vénus (*Kolo mouso, Nièlé* = Nièlé, épouse de la lune), qui détache sur un fond d'azur son croissant tout d'argent bouclé d'un liseré d'or.

Sur tous les sentiers qui conduisent au village, ce n'est que gens qui cheminent, on dirait un ruban sans fin, un serpent qui sur lui-même se replie pour soudain se détendre . . . Aux femmes qui les suivent, avec sur le dos un noir chérubin toujours se réveillant pour pleurer et réclamer le sein, la bande des jeunes filles a confié le petit pagne, la banderolle d'étoffe dont on se ceint pour la danse. Et elles marchent allègrement: car si elles portent sur la tête de hautes pyramides de calebasses retenues dans un filet à larges mailles, si elles portent le cadeau du fiancé à sa reine de cœur, du sel, du *dégé* ou farine de mil délayée dans de l'eau de miel et du lait, du *d'lo* ou bière de sorgho, du mil et du poisson séché où grouillent les vers — elles sont à l'aise dans leurs costumes n'ayant pour toute gêne qu'une étroite bande d'étoffe, large de trois doigts, passée entre les jambes, retenue par devant à la ceinture et frétillant par derrière en queue flasque et molle. Et c'est dans la nuit le froissement d'herbes sèches, foulées par les pieds, de longues fusées de rire, de légères malices tombant justes, décochées à propos, des bons mots enfin, car nos pucelles ont la langue déliée et ne manquent pas d'esprit.

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[1] Angle de terre formé par deux sentiers qui se croisent, et lieu où se tiennent les *gnâma*.

La blouse nouée sur le ventre, en torchon, dans des culottes où trois paires de jambes et trois ventres aussi pourraient entrer et sans gêne aucune, les jeunes gens suivent, traînant tambours et grosses caisses. Pour soutenir la marche et la faire oublier (ils viennent souvent de loin), ils poussent de temps en temps un puissant *you you* et lancent ces grasses plaisanteries qu'ici plus qu'ailleurs peut-être, on adresse au beau sexe ... Parfois aussi, entre deux rires, deux gros rires niais, on surprend comme un claquement de fouet ..., ce sont cinq doigts trapus qui s'appliquent sur les joues de bien chers angelots et les réchauffent. Une troupe de gamins et de gamines trottinent, en effet, au milieu d'eux dans leur costume de naissance, ils passent à droite et ils passent à gauche, ils se faufilent entre les jambes, et les patiences se lassent et sont vite à bout.

Après la jeunesse les vieillards; ils viennent courbés en deux, appuyés sur la lance, et tout en parlant projets futurs, ils se rappellent les jours d'autrefois. C'est de toute évidence, il n'y en a plus comme eux, on ne peut trouver leurs pareils. Dans le *foroko*, la peau de bouc passée au bras, affermie sur l'épaule, ils ont glissé quelques bonnes poignées de cauris pour les mamans des circoncis et des excisées, la boite à prise que tout étranger qui se respecte présente aux gens du village, les noix de kola enfin, celles que le sacrificateur va mâcher avant d'en cracher les débris, à la face du dieu et celles qu'en hommes stylés, bien élevés, ils réservent pour les intimes. Ils portent aussi, suspendu tête en bas et secouant affreusement des ailes, la poule, le coq du sacrifice, attaché par les pattes aux liens du *foroko*.

Et le flot humain arrive aux portes du village, s'arrête un instant sous les gros arbres, et soigne sa tenue. Les bonnets à pointes se placent sur les têtes un peu de côté, les blouses se déploient et les nudités se voilent. Du côté des femmes, c'est un brouhaha sans nom, le bruit lointain de l'océan à la marée montante, elles s'astiquent, se parent, se font belles . . . Aux pieds, ce sont des chaînettes qu'elles se passent, aux bras des bracelets pesants qui s'entrechoquent dans un bruit de ferraille, et sur les flancs, du moins les jeunes filles, une ceinture de perles, semée de légers grelots qui tintent au moindre mouvement. Elles se mettent au nez un croissant ou d'or ou de cuivre, à chaque oreille 10 à 12 anneaux de fer doux, d'étain, d'argent, et ceux qu'elles s'enfilent aux doigts des mains et des pieds, dépassent la vingtaine.

Aux tresses de la chevelure, toute ruisselante de graisse, elles suspendent des boules d'ambre, des anneaux en faïence polis, d'un blanc de neige, et c'est à tous les cous, des colliers de perles où se jouent les boules d'ambre, les gris-gris, avec ici et là, retenus à des languettes de cuir, des anneaux en faïence qui retombent par derrière, entre les épaules, et par devant, sur la poitrine. Elles se ceignent encore le front d'un étroit diadème de perles couleur arc-en-ciel, ou d'un diadème en corail, et nous avons nos filles noires dans leurs plus beaux atours.

Chez les circoncis et les excisées, les cases et les cours sont bondées de gens, car en plus des amis et des griots — les pauvres trouvères du pays — chacun compte chez soi les grandes filles mariées venues avec leurs maris, leurs enfants, leurs beaux-parents, et dans tous les coins on rencontre des membres d'une députation du fiancé à sa promise. A vrai dire, c'est la fête de la race et tout le monde est présent! sauf les fiancés pourtant, ils sont exclus, ne peuvent paraître en ce jour. Et que c'est Bambara! Ici on s'abreuve à grands coups de *d'lo* ou bière de mil, pendant qu'à côté, accroupis autour des calebasses fumantes, on se gave de *to* ou bouillie. Les mains qu'on vous présente, sont ruisselantes de sauce, les enfants vous entourent couverts des déchets du festin, ils vous brandissent sous le nez des os qu'ils dépouillent à belles dents, et pendant qu'ils vous crient *sogo* (de la viande), les repus d'à côté s'exclament: «*Abarka*, merci: *Né fara san* je suis plein pour le moment . . .» Et c'est partout vacarme infernal! Sur les courges renversées dans les conaris pleins d'eau, les vieilles frappent avec furie: les jeunes gens battent le tambour, les femmes et les jeunes filles claquent des mains en cadence, et tout le monde hurle les gloires de la famille. La famille des circoncis et des excisées est hors d'elle-même, tant est grande sa joie, et si vous êtes des amis, des intimes, on vous montre dans la cour bien en vue, tous les cadeaux reçus. On vous fait goûter à tout, vous touchez, vous palpez tout et vous recevez au départ, tout comme au jour où l'on imposa le nom à l'enfant, la noix de kola de la vie *(le ni woro)*.

Il est minuit passé! les circoncis sont assis à la place d'honneur là où jadis se sont assis leurs aînés, et ils secouent avec rage leurs rondelles de calebasses enfilées sur un bois . . . Appuyées sur la tige de mil, le bâton d'ordonnance, les excisées arrivent à leur tour sur la place publique, en chantant, en secouant leurs calebasses ajourées, et les danses commencent tout comme au *soli si*, pour se poursuivre jusqu'au matin. A l'extérieur, sous les arbres sacrés, la cloche du fétiche tinte et rassemble les adeptes, le dieu *Komo* rugit par la bouche de son hérault. Sur un signe du prêtre, les circoncis se lèvent, quittent le village et vont sous les gros arbres jurer fidélité, se vouer corps et âme, au prince des ténèbres . . .[1] Et comment dépeindre cette scène! Sous l'arbre privilégié du dieu s'assoient les circoncis, et la foule des initiés réunis par villages, se groupent autour des calebasses pleines d'un *d'lo* qui mousse et qui pétille. Des petits feux s'allument, qui jettent dans la nuit une étrange clarté, et un cercle d'êtres humains accroupis, se forme et se dessine. Le maître de l'idole *(Komo tigi)*, le sacrificateur *(mourou kala tigi)*, le bedeau *(darotigi)* qui sonne le sacrifice et rassemble les adepts, les griots du fétiche *(Komo djéli maou)* qui chantent les louanges de dieu, tombent en catalepsie dans les sacrifices et donnent ensuite les oracles, les *Komo warada* qui revêtent un manteau couvert de plumes de pintades, de poules, d'aigrettes etc. qui prennent un long masque cornu et portent le fétiche au lieu du sacrifice, qui soufflent dans un tube en fer, terminé par deux cornes tout à la fois idole et trompette, et en retirent des *fouin fouin* formidables à vous glacer d'effroi: tout l'état-major du *Komo* enfin entre en scène, et c'est une danse lascive, la danse du dieu, la danse sacrée . . . Puis, c'est le cri de ralliement, beuglé par 100 poitrines «*kou kou kou, kê kê kê*», les tambours qui ronflent, les voix avinées qui hurlent:

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[1] La scène que je décris, se passe parfois la veille. Quelquefois sur l'ordre d'un sorcier, pour une raison jugée grave, cette entrée dans la secte d'un fétiche est renvoyée à plus tard.

T'an ta bara ladjé.
Laisse, allons voir la calebasse (de bière).
Bara ma dja an na,
Lorsque la bière nous aura réjouis[1].
An na youyouba yougouba.
Nous danserons et danserons[2].
Gnâ tigi, né ka nougouni-n-ko min yé?
Chef du *gnâ*, que sont devenus mes intestins (de poule)?[3]
Gnâ tigi do nougou na bo gnouan yé.
Un chef du *gnâ* (kodit) les intestins sortiront ensemble.

Emus, énervés par l'attente, serait mieux dire, nos jeunes circoncis se lèvent, s'avancent sur une ligne et se prosternent devant l'escorte du dieu, devant celui qui sous sa houppelande de plumes s'agite, sans jamais de repos, sort de son tube encorné des beuglements sonores[4], se grandit et s'amoindrit en élevant et en abaissant son masque articulé. L'heure de l'initiation a sonné, ils vont naître à la vie religieuse.

Sur l'épaule de chacun, le maître de l'idole le *Komo tigi*, pose le tube de fer cornu et d'une voix lente, grave, caverneuse, il dit les paroles de la cérémonie de l'initiation[5]:

Pour le *Komo*.

D. *Moun bé i koun?* Qu'as-tu sur la tête?
R. *A kala be n'koun.* Son manche est sur ma tête (se répète 3 fois).

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[1] *Dja* rendre content, plaire, être agréable, rejouir.

[2] *Yougouba* danser avec frémissement de tout le corps.

[3] Rappelle une particularité du sacrifice des nouveaux initiés . . . D'un tour de doigt le sacrificateur sort les intestins de la poule, et quand le jeune initié veut la vider il reste tout étonné de ne plus y trouver tous les viscères.

[4] Pendant que beugle la trompette, des initiés accompagnent avec des mirlitons.

[5] Pendant cette cérémonie les initiés sont prosternés.

D. *I y'a yé wa?* L'as-tu vu?

R. *Né m'a yé.* Je ne l'ai pas vu.

D. *Nin be ma fa. I y a fo ma min yé, a k'i fo!*
Celui-ci tue l'homme. Si tu en parles à quelqu'un, qu'il te tue!

R. *Ni ne y'a fo ma min yé, a k'a né fa!*
Si j'en parle, qu'il me tue!

D. *I si sirila gnâma-n-fou, djala la.*
Ta vie est attaché, avec du *gnâma-n-fou*, sur le cailcédra!

R. *Né si sirila à la.* Ma vie y est liée.

D. *Ni se ma fo ma si yé, Komo k'i kisi!*
Si tu n'en parles à personne, que le *Komo* soit ta sauvegarde!

R. *A ka né kisi!* Qu'il soit ma sauvegarde!

D. *I y'a fo ma min yé, i kono ka founou, a k'i fa!*
Si tu en parles, que ton ventre enfle, qu'il te tue!

R. *A ka né fa!* Qu'il me tue!

D. *Komo k'i son ni bien*[1] *ta, ki koun ti, né kana bo djoli kana bo.*
Que le *Komo* te ravisse le cœur et les parties, qu'il t'écrase la tête sans que ta cervelle répande, sans que ton sang se répande.

R. *O k'a ké.* Qu'il en soit ainsi.

Pour le *Nama.*

D. *I y'a fo ma min ye, Boli k'i so ta, k'i bien ta*[1], *ka doun i djoufé ka bo i da fé.*
Si tu en parles, que le *boli* fasse périr ta maison, tes femmes, qu'il t'entre par l'anus et te sorte par la bouche.

R. *O k'a ké!* Qu'il en soit ainsi!

D. *K'i Kono gni bri, ka gni bri, gna bara.*

R. *O k'a ké.*

D. *Ni e ma fo ma yé, k'i kisi soubaou ma. K'i son sila, k'i son kénéyala!*
Si tu gardes le secret qu'il te sauve des *souba*, qu'il te donne des descendants, de la santé!

«Dis-le moi, qu'as-tu sur la tête? Ta vie désormais est liée avec du *gnâma-n-fou* (écorce du *Bauhinia reticulata*); si tu parles, si tu dévoiles nos mystères, que ton ventre se gonfle, que le *Komo* te tue, qu'il t'arrache les parties, qu'il t'arrache le cœur, qu'il te brise la tête sans que la cervelle ne se répande, sans que le sang ne coule.

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[1] *Bien* = parties sexuelles de la femme. — *Bien* = corne c'est un mot voilé pour dire parfois les parties de l'homme, dit aussi *k'i bien ta* = qu'il t'arrache les parties.

Cette cérémonie dans la nuit, à la clarté des petits feux qui difforment les ombres et les allongent, fait impression, pénètre, empoigne nos jeunes gens, et on les entend qui répondent tout tremblant ces mots que coupe à chaque instant le son nasillard des mirlitons, les coups de trompe: «J'ai sur la tête le *kala*[1], ma vie est désormais liée avec du *gnâma-n-fos*; si je dévoile les secrets de la secte, que mon ventre se gonfle et que le *Komo* me tue . . . .» Ils se rélèvent alors, et la foule des initiés chante à tue tête les hymnes au *Komo*:

Da Woro la nana, Boloko déna da Worola.

A la fête du *Da Woro*, il est venu (le fétiche) au *Da Woro* des circoncis (il est venu).

Toro ma na kola gnini.

Toro[2] n'est pas venu pour causer le mal.

Sira bo nin ye, ko dougoulé dén.

A celui-ci donne chemin (libre), parce que (il est) enfant du village.

Sira bo nin yé, ko dougoulen sira.

A celui-ci donne chemin (libre) à savoir le chemin des enfants du village (= Celui-ci est des nôtres, faisons-lui place)[3].

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[1] *Kala* manche d'outil, pilon, objet oblong, *Komo kala* tube de fer terminé par deux cornes.

[2] Toro nom d'un *Komo*.

[3] Chants du *Nama*:

A djigina so Nama fambali, a djigina so, tjen k'a'i.

Il nous a rendu visite le Nama qui tue, il nous a visité*, ne soyons pas négligents à son égard (= Fêtons le Nama qui nous vient visiter).

A fiérila ka den, bòli fiérila ka den.

Il a fleuri pour avoir des fruits, le boli a fleuri pour avoir des fruits (= Le Nama vient d'avoir un enfant).

Souba ye nin kéra an le ka yé.

Souba ya. Ceci s'est fait à cause de la honte.

Soubaya kéra dabali bé an bolo.

La pratique des *souba* s'est faite (chez nous), nous avons un moyen de nous en préserver.

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* Le *Nama* protège contre les *souba* adeptes du *siri*, reputés anthropophages.

Pendant que ces hymnes sont chantées, les circoncis dansent avec l'idole — telle est l'expression consacrée pour dire qu'ils exécutent pour la première fois les mouvements lascifs de la danse sacrée . . .

Et quand ils regagnent leurs places ils sont transformés, ce ne sont plus les enfants simples et bons qui, la veille encore, vous abordaient gentiment avec sur les lèvres un franc sourire, ils sont devenus Bambara, nous sommes nous, les blancs, les étrangers, les maîtres et les vainqueurs — entre eux et nous un abîme s'est creusé. Et cet abîme chaque jour se creusera davantage, car chaque fois que le dieu *Komo* sortira de son temple et du *foroko* (peau de bouc) crasseux qui lui sert de tabernacle, ils iront sous les arbres sacrés et retremper leur foi et endurcir leurs cœurs[1]. En tout lieu du Soudan, ils seront désormais chez eux, ils n'ont pas à craindre le poison qui tue les indiscrets, les faux-frères, partout où on leur posera la question: «Es-tu du *Komo*?» ils sauront donner le mot de passe, tracer sur le sable deux lignes qui se croisent, puis le pouce, le médius et l'annulaire rentrés dans la main, étendre l'index et le petit doigt sur ce signe en disant au questionneur: «Je suis des vôtres.»

J'ai noté ici le texte verbal de ces questions et des réponses à y donner.

Pour le *Komo*.

I.

D. *E b'a la Wa?* Es-tu du Komo?

R. *Ne b'a la?* J'en suis.

D. *N'i b'a la, tjoko djira anna?* Si tu en es, montre nous le signe.

R. *Kaï ta Drahamé.*

En prononçant ces mots ployer le pouce, le médius et l'annulaire en allongeant l'index et le petit doigt.

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[1] Les adeptes d'une secte d'un *boli* puissant font une sorte de «rénovation des «vœux», un an après leur entrée. Ceux du *Komo* auxquels on donne le nom de *timini déu*, font une fête à tout casser; viandes et bouillie, on a tout à gogo, et la dive liqueur, le *d'lo* ou bière de mil, abonde.

II.

D. *E b'a la wa?* Es-tu du Komo.

R. *Né b'a la.* J'en suis.

D. *Tjoko djira anna wé?* Montre nous le signe.

R. *Da sigi da da la.*

Placer un récipient sur la bouche d'un récipient. En disant ces mots: placer les pieds l'un devant l'autre, on ajoute aussitôt:

Djan kéné ouala djan djala.

Faire deux traits parallèles dans la poussière.

III.

D. *E b'a la wa?* Es-tu du Komo?

R. *Né b'a la.* J'en suis.

D. *E n'i so mâou benna mi ni?*

Et toi et tes gens où vous êtes-vous rencontrés?

R. *An benna dlaba da la, ou bi goulé foura bosi.*

Nous nous sommes rencontrés à la porte de *dlaba*, ils arrachent les feuilles du *goulé* (faux ébénier)[1].

Durant toute la nuit ce sont des hurlements de fauves, des chants et des danses lascives, des beuglements de trompes à vous glacer d'effroi et les sons nasillards et agaçants des mirlitons.

A l'aube, un *warada* remercie l'assistance au nom du dieu *Komo* en parlant dans le tube à cornes, un second répète ses phases dans un mirliton et un *djélima* (griot du *Komo*) répète à l'assistance en termes plus clairs, les paroles du Dieu . . . Et la

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[1] Pour le *Nama.*

D. *E b'a la wa?* Es-tu du Nama?

R. *Né b'a la.* J'en suis.

D. *Féré tjon k'an.*

On place 2 pailles en croix de S^tAndré et on vous la montre.

R. *Nin yé sira gné bo la yé.* Ceci est le chemin qui dirige, éclaire.

D. On place une paille perpendiculaire.

R. *Nin yé wara sé n-yé. Wara ti tama sén bo.*

Ceci est le pied du fauve*. Un fauve ne marche pas sans jambes.

Sirima-n-figa ce mot est le nom de famille, le *diamou* du *Nama.*

Cessation des interrogations: *Dja e b'a la koï! Dja* (exclamatif) tu en es, certes!

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* Au *boli* on donne souvent l'épithète de *wara*, fauve = pour fort, puissant.

foule remercie, pousse des cris, pose ses demandes, et chacun se retire moulu, éreinté, le gosier en feu, la bave aux lèvres et titubant sur ses jambes — dans ces fêtes, il faut s'enivrer, c'est faire plaisir au dieu.

Pendant qu'à l'extérieur toutes ces choses se passent, nos femmes et nos fillettes sur la place publique, s'en donnent à cœur joie. Point de ces sauts, de ces gambades comme on a coutume de faire dans les fêtes ordinaires, elles secouent en leurs mains le pochon en peau de bouc ou la boîte en fer blanc remplie de petites pierres, elles tournent lentement à petits pas autour de l'orchestre et seuls les arrière-trains se trémoussent. Ceux-ci roulent à droite et roulent à gauche, ils plongent en avant et vivement se retirent, ce n'est certes pas gracieux . . . Les excisées passent la nuit assises sur une natte recouverte d'un drap blanc, entre les jambes de leurs mamans ou des suivantes, et leurs têtes reposent, mollement renversées, sur ces poitrines où elles puisèrent la vie. Enveloppées dans une couverture à fond blanc rayée de lignes bleues, on ne voit d'elles que la tête, on dirait un étalage de poupées fraiches, luisantes, avec deux gros yeux noirs, heureux, tout pétillants de bonheur. De temps en temps, sur l'invitation des danseuses qui chantent leurs grâces et leur beauté, elles secouent leurs calebasses ajourées, les font grésiller en leurs mains, et prennent part à la danse; puis le matin, à l'aube, dans une dernière ronde, elles joignent les talons et par trois fois, font trois bonds en l'air, les mains croisées sur le haut de la tête.

Et cette coutume n'est pas, si l'on en croit les noirs, sans signification aucune. Le drap blanc sur la natte des excisées, tout en rappelant à la maman un des beaux jours de la vie, celui où elle se livra à son époux dans les liens du mariage, rappelle à l'enfant cachée dans ses bras, enveloppée dans la couverture, tel l'enfant dans ses langes, que si elle est devenue grande jeune fille et a quitté l'enfance, elle doit veiller à sa virginité. Comme il a témoigné pour sa mère, ce grand drap blanc témoignera pour elle au jour de son mariage, et il sera inexorable! La ronde à petits pas, autour de l'orchestre, c'est l'enfant s'exerçant à faire ses premiers pas, mais désormais elle a atteint son développement parfait, elle peut se suffire à elle-même et pour cela elle fait ces neufs bonds, les mains croisées sur le haut de la tête.

Au moment où s'achève à l'extérieur le sabbat des fils du *Komo*, on reconduit nos excisées en leurs cases en grande pompe, musique en tête, et la fête toujours se poursuit, car une fête Bambara dure ce que dure le *d'lo*. Après quelques heures de sommeil, avant le repas du midi, nos excisées reviennent, et c'est autour du puits pendant qu'elles lavent les pagnes, les draps souillés des poussières de la nuit, pendant qu'elles récurent les calebasses, vaisselle du pays, un babil sans fin, coupé de rires joyeux. Les pures Bambara, celles qui ne sont pas de la race des forgerons, de la race des «Marka» de souche plus ou moins mélangée, ont perdu leurs grâces et leur beauté, elles vous paraissent toutes drôles avec leurs crânes rasés. De même que six à huit jours après la naissance, le chef du village, le *gnéna-n-sonnaba,* prêtre du fétiche *dasiri,* leur a fait des passes sur la tête et rasé la chevelure, la toison du sein ne pouvant se voir en public, ainsi au *da woro* six jours après la circoncision, elles la perdent encore ne pouvant faire leur entrée dans la vie, avec la toison de l'enfance: un mouchoir crasseux remplace les tressettes dont elles etaient si fières, elles sont sans perle et sans joyau, c'est sur leur front en place du diadème multicolore, la ficelle à 9 nœuds du *tafo* reliée par derrière sur la nuque à celle du *djo,* qui les doit protéger de l'angine, des oreillons, des maux de tête et d'un peu tous les maux.

§ 4. La fête du *Boloko déou don bo* la sortie des circoncis et des excisées, l'entrée réelle dans la vie civile et religieuse.

Après le *da woro,* la fête du sixième jour, les circoncis retournent sous l'arbre sacré en dehors du village, et les excisées en leurs cases. Ils reprennent tous leur vie de doux «farniente» avec les petites sorties en chœur, à des heures réglées, pour satisfaire aux exigences de la nature. Ils ont aussi leurs jours de grande sortie! Quand viennent les marchés, ils vont couper des épines à quelques 100 mètres du village, ils barrent les sentiers, ils dressent une barricade et demandent à tout passant un *doua-mo,* la part du marché. Par habitude, par crainte surtout des horions que facilement ils lançent, par crainte aussi des esprits qui les veillent et les protègent, tout le monde s'exécute et paie l'octroi. Ils recueillent aussi en plus des queues de poissons assez de cauris pour se payer un bout de viande et se faire bonne bouche.

Cette vie calme, vie de retraite, fatigue nos jouvenceaux, fatigue nos jouvencelles; au bout de 4 à 5 semaines les cervelles s'échauffent, ils deviennent indociles, ils veulent rentrer au logis, car ils sont guéris. Le noir et la noire préposés à leur garde n'y tenant plus, rassemblent le conseil des anciens, déclarent leur tâche accomplie, et dans l'après-dîner, au moment où le soleil, encore haut sur l'horizon, rassemble tous ses feux pour une dernière fois les lancer avec furie avant de s'éteindre en un disque empourpré, les chefs des quartiers, sous les arbres sacrés et dans la cour qui précède les cases des fillettes, font leurs passes, récitent en crachotant, d'un trait et sans prendre haleine, leurs formules et procèdent aux exorcismes. «*Bissimillahi* (ce qui dans la bouche d'un Bambara ne signifie pas du tout, au nom de Dieu, mais bien «tout va à souhait») nos enfants sont guéris ils vont rentrer au logis, sous le toit paternel; esprits qui les veillez, esprits qui les protégez, laissez-les!»

Cet exorcisme à sa raison d'être. Depuis le jour où le rasoir du forgeron s'est levé tout luisant pour trancher, nos petits noirs sont sous la tutelle d'esprits jaloux et d'une jalousie féroce. C'est même une des principales raisons pour lesquelles ils sont mis à l'écart et vivent loin du monde, de ses pompes et de ses œuvres. Un circoncis et une excisée ne peuvent mettre les pieds dans une case du village, pas même dans celle de leurs parents; leurs invisibles protecteurs traînent à leur suite toute une série de maux et ils jettent là où on les force à entrer, la ruine et la désolation[1].

Permettre à l'un ou à l'une de pénétrer en sa demeure, c'est se vouer si non à la mort, du moins à la maladie, à la malchance, à la pauvreté la plus affreuse. Pour parer à tant d'inconvénients, il faut à nos Bambara chasser ces esprits, et leur concours jugé inutile, on les remercie à coups de passes et de crachotements.

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[1] *O be n'wasso bla mala,* cela fait tomber la malchance sur un homme.

Les exorcismes achevés, la jeune nichée se disperse, court un peu partout dans les cases, et c'est sur la place publique, dans les ruelles, des salutations interminables, un caquetage sans fin ... Mais le Bambara aime trop le boire et le manger, il doit se réjouir de la guérison de son enfant, de son retour au logis. Au matin qui suit ce jour, ce n'est autour du puits que femmes et fillettes aux torses nus, qui lavent à grande eau le mil destiné à la fermentation de la beuverie prochaine.

Et quand vient ce jour, sous les arbres sacrés, un peu avant le coucher du soleil, quand il n'est plus qu'un disque ensanglanté, circoncis et excisées portent les nattes, les rondelles de calebasse enfilées sur un bois, les calebasses ajourées, grosses comme le poing, remplies de petites pierres, les tiges de mil si longtemps traînées en guise de bâton, les mouchoirs crasseux qui enveloppèrent leurs têtes, et le *gnéna-n-sonnaba,* celui qui sacrifie aux génies protecteurs du village, y met le feu. Une fumée noire, épaisse, âcre et nauséabonde empeste l'air, une flamme indécise; d'un rouge vert, cherche, mais en vain, à s'élever, tant l'étreignent les crasses et les sueurs anciennes; garçons et filles prennent leur élan et sautent par trois fois par-dessus ce feu de joie. Du coup ils sont purifiés de toutes leurs souillures; ils ont quitté, abandonné le vieil homme. Ils l'ont enfumé, et agiles comme des cerfs, agiles comme des gazelles, ils s'enfuient en leurs cases pour *masiri don* se faire beaux, se faire belles ... C'est partout un remue-ménage sans nom! les couvercles des calebasses, l'armoire des noirs, roulent sur le sol et se fendent, ils se brisent et tombent en morceaux, c'est au milieu des rires d'une joie délirante, les lamentations d'une vieille qui glapit et grogne. Et cet empressement, cette fièvre est cause de retards, nos fillettes surtout, n'en finissent de se parer. Une boule d'ambre pend trop bas ou pas assez, les colliers sont trop lâches, il faut les raccourcir, et les fils usés se rompent et les perles par poignées se perdent dans la poussière ...

Enfin, et c'est grand soulagement, des quatres coins du village retentit le cri d'allégresse *Kouyo é, Kouyo é!* Précédés du chœur de chant (un groupe de femmes et de fillettes qui battent des mains, chantent en fausset, sans jamais s'accorder, un air des plus barbares), les tambours lentement se dirigent vers les gros arbres de la place, la salle des bals. Dans toutes les ruelles qui sillonnent le village, en font un labyrinthe, c'est un monde de femmes, d'hommes, d'enfants, qui se pressent, jouent des coudes et crient, en un instant la place est remplie.

D'instant en instant, nos vieilles se rapprochent et de plus fort en plus fort, le mot *Kouyo è, Kouyo è* retentit ... Mais les voici qui débouchent, remuant du corps à le faire croire annelé, tant elles imitent le ver surpris par un rayon de soleil et regagnant son nid, dans la terre, en grande hâte. Vraies sauvagesses avec leurs mentons pointus, la peau plissée, les mâchoires vides de dents, elles raclent avec furie deux tiges de fer et portent sur leurs têtes chenues un torchon sale, crasseux apanage des sorcières, enroulé sans art et sans goût. La lance au poing nos jeunes citoyens apparaissent dans des culottes bouffantes; ils portent le bonnet à double pointe ou le turban à tons criards et à longues franges et disparaissent sous une ample blouse toute parfumée encore de l'odeur du moisi d'un fond de magasin, toute roide et toute luisante, sous sa colle d'amidon. Ils sautent et hurlent, ils brandissent leurs armes, se donnent des airs guerriers, se donnent surtout un tel air de suffisance que votre rire se déclanche.

Après les garçons, les fillettes qui s'éventent avec leurs «aumonières» tout ornées de cauris, un plateau tressé fait d'herbes fines et liantes, celui sans doute, sur lequel on déposa au matin du *soli si* ou veillée des armes, le débri sanguinolent. Elles avancent avec raideur, glissent sur le sol plutôt qu'elles ne marchent; car leurs pieds sont alourdis par les chaînettes, les anneaux de fer et ont peine à se lever. Un croissant ou d'or ou de cuivre leur tire la paroi médiane du nez, une poignée de bigorneaux zébrés leur balancent aux lobes des oreilles, plusieurs colliers de corail leur courent sur la tête, et c'est, un peu partout, autour du cou surtout, des boules d'ambre séparées entre elles par des gris-gris, par des perles de tout calibre et de toute nuance. Les Bambara de caste *noumou* ou forgeron, les Marka bambarisés, toute Bambara de souche plus ou moins mélangée et dont on n'a pas rasé le crâne au *da woro* ou fête du sixième jour, ont la chevelure nattée et sur le haut du cimier qui se termine par deux tressettes le long de chaque oreille, un petit paquet bizarre, une poignée de cheveux. C'est en souvenir du 8ème jour de leur naissance, jour où on leur imposa un nom, et ce qu'elle porte n'est rien moins que ce que le Bambara appelle «la toison du sein»[1]. Quand celle-ci est perdue et c'est d'ordinaire le cas, la maman y pourvoit en en donnant des siens. La tenue de parade de nos excisées est un véritable harnachement; deux ou trois pagnes en étage leur enserrent la taille et du vrai costume, la bande d'étoffe qui frétille par derrière en queue flasque et molle, le gros pompon tout au plus se montre. Du moins on les peut voir et regarder, une belle blouse blanche pour une fois les habille et la longue banderolle d'étoffe, de rigueur dans les danses, jetée sur les épaules et ramenée par devant, fait assez bel effet. Au Bani, c'est autour des hanches par-dessus les pagnes, une large ceinture en cauris et de chaque côté, suspendus à des lanières de cuir passées en bandouilière et se croisant sur la poitrine, deux paquets de cauris. Ce *dousou ko*[2], tel est son nom, est le reste de la dot offert par le fiancé et compte à 5 à 6000 cauris.

Autour des tambours qui sur la place font rage, circoncis et excisées à la suite des vieilles qui raclent leurs ferrailles, à la suite de griottes qui chantent leurs grâces, leur force et leur beauté, tournent quelques instants et vont s'asseoir sur les nattes qui leur sont préparées.

Aux nouveaux citoyens, on distribue les noix de kola; aux pieds des fillettes, les reines du jour, on dépose les calebasses de *dégé*, farine délayée dans de l'eau de miel et du lait, et le chef du village prononce le discours de rigueur au début de toute fête, son hérault debout à ses côtés le répète mot par mot, phrase par phrase, car lui le chef il ne parle qu'à mi-voix, c'est de bon ton.

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[1] Aux enfants nouveau-nés on rase la tête 6 à 8 jours après la naissance, ils ne peuvent sortir hors du logis avant de s'être dépouillés de la toison du sein (*ou ba* leurs mères, *kono* sein, *si* chevelure).

[2] *Dousou* âme, cœur, siège de l'amour, *ko* affaire, gage d'amour.

Le discours est bref, il nomme par son nom chaque circoncis, chaque excisée, et rappelle à tous que la circoncision chez eux est vieille comme le monde, comme la race Bambara, je veux dire. «Oui, s'exclame-t-il, nos enfants circoncis sont dans la voie de leurs pères; ils sont Bambara. Jeunes gens, jeunes filles, hommes et femmes, vieux et vieilles, nos circoncis peuvent désormais prendre part aux palabres, s'asseoir avec leurs aînés autour des calebasses de *d'lo* ou bière de sorgho, et participer à nos jeux, à nos réjouissances, à nos rites. Que tout le monde le sache et que personne ne l'oublie, qu'on ne les traite jamais d'incirconcis[1], c'est l'insulte la plus grave! Chacun saura venger l'insulte faite à son enfant et je saurai venger celle faite au mien.» Il termine en disant: «Trêve au disputes, mangeons, buvons, dansons, réjouissons-nous, et les choses sérieuses[2] après la fête.»

Le *d'lo* dès lors coule à flot et les gosiers se décrassent. Tout le monde, jeunes et vieux, hommes et femmes dansent en l'honneur des jeunes «citoyens» et tant que dure la liqueur pétillante et mousseuse, ce sont des chants, des danses, des cris et des hurlements sans fin sur la place publique, le jour et la nuit. Et quand la bière touche à sa fin, accompagnés du père, de la mère, de toute sa famille et de celle de sa fiancée ou de son fiancé, chaque circoncis et chaque excisée, à son tour, par rang d'ancienneté, se dégourdit les muscles en face du public. C'est le clou de la fête! A ce moment, les cris, les hurlements redoublent et dans la vaste poche de la blouse du circoncis, sur le plateau de l'excisée, des buveurs, la cruche à la main, la bave aux lèvres, les yeux dans le vide et titubant sur leurs jambes, vont déposer des perles, des cauris, une noix de kola. Avec la dernière, toute sauterie cesse et la fête prend fin. Lentement la foule se retire, regagne ses pénates, elle n'a que trop besoin d'un peu de repos.

Les jours qui suivent cette «sortie des circoncis» (le Bambara lui donne ce nom), jouvenceaux et jouvencelles courent le pays en tenue de parade et vont remercier ceux qui furent au *da woro* ou fête du 6ème jour. Filles et garçons, en deux bandes, sous la conduite de leur vieille surveillante, cheminent á travers les sentiers à la queue leu-leu, en file indienne. En tête marche la *massa* ou reine; la *massa ma Kono*, sa remplaçante, vient ensuite, puis la *massa ma Kono ségire* remplaçante elle aussi de celle qui précède. Toutes les autres sont des sains et la dernière, la plus jeune de toutes, s'appelle *koulé*. Les garçons eux aussi marchent dans le même ordre et portent les mêmes titres . . . Cette façon de remercier les gens est des plus Bambara; s'ils tiennent à se montrer, à ce que l'on sache qu'ils sont circoncis, ils veulent avant tout qu'on leur fasse l'aumône, et ils vont réclamer une obole, tendre les deux mains. La race Bambara est une race de mendiants!

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[1] Traiter quelqu'un de *blakoro* (incirconcis) est l'injure des injures.

[2] Toute contestation, tout litige, tout ce qui désunit.

Chap. X.

Le Mariage Bambara.

§ 1. Demande en Mariage. § 2. Les devins et les fétiches acceptent ou refusent le prétendant. § 3. Les Fiançailles. § 4. Les Noces d'une jeune Bambara. § 5. L'exhibition du trousseau de la mariée au soir du premier jour.

Les fillettes Bambara sont fiancées dès leurs plus tendres années, de quatre à dix ans ordinairement, et celles qui, âgées de 12, 14 et 16 ans, attendent un prétendant, sont bien rares. L'âge du reste importe peu, il y a trois phases dans le mariage: la demande, les fiançailles et les noces, et quiconque veut prendre femme, qu'il soit jeune homme, d'un âge mûr, ou vieillard, marié, veuf, ou non marié, doit se soumettre à cette loi.

§ 1. Demande en Mariage[1].

La beauté plastique d'une femme ne laisse pas d'émouvoir un Bambara; il sait distinguer un corps bien fait d'un corps mal fait, une jolie d'une vilaine, et une peau cuivrée l'attire plus qu'une peau d'un noir d'ébène. Egalement, un visage grêlé des marques de la variole, un buste couvert de cicatrices lui déplait, et s'il vous parle de sa fiancée, de son épouse, il est tout fier de pouvoir dire: „*sien si t'a la,* elle est d'un corps sans défaut", par suite elle est belle. Quand il s'agit du mariage pourtant, il n'y regarde pas de trop près! facilement il fait taire ses goûts, et rarement il consulte son cœur, la femme est avant tout pour lui un objet de plaisir et un objet de rapport.

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[1] Il s'agit du mariage d'une jeune fille. Pour les veuves, les divorcées se remariant, il y a consultation des devins, sacrifices aux fétiches mauvais etc., mais la cérémonie des fiançailles et des noces se fait avec un moindre éclat.

Ce qu'il voit en premier lieu dans la femme, c'est l'être d'un sexe différent du sien, et si elle est travailleuse, cuisine bien et s'entend au négoce, il saura, pour la conserver, fermer les yeux sur ses défauts et lui permettre d'être, en son logis, un personnage important avec lequel il faut compter.

Un noir qui désire une femme, vient-il à découvrir une fillette non fiancée, vite il confie son secret, ses craintes et ses espérances à son intime, à un homme d'un âge mûr et jouissant dans le pays d'une certaine considération[1]. Celui-ci reçoit quatre noix de kola, empaquetées dans des feuilles vertes, ficelées et reficelées pour qu'elles ne se fanent point, et la lance au poing, la peau de bouc ou *foroko,* son inséparable, bien attachée sur l'épaule, il se met en route tout fier d'être délégué pour une mission si douce, heureux et content d'être *fourouboloma tigi,* le chargé des cadeaux du mariage[2].

Au terme de son voyage, sur la place publique, il salue de façon fort aimable les vieux qui y cultivent la paresse avec l'apathie d'un lézard à l'ombre d'un gros arbre; il fournit à tous et abondamment la prise de rigueur qu'offre tout étranger, il choisit parmi eux, si tout ami, toute connaissance lui fait défaut au village, l'homme de bonne volonté, qui le présentera à la famille et lui aplanira les voies. Celui-ci trouvé, il s'y rend sans plus tarder et expose sa requête, que répète mot par mot, phrase par phrase, son introducteur.

Le père de la fillette réfléchit un instant et si le parti lui plait, il répond d'un mot: «*A gnéna* C'est bien.» Le petit paquet aux quatres noix de kola lui est alors offert, il appelle sa fille et la mère, et le *fourouboloma tigi* expose de nouveau le motif de sa venue. Tout s'achève par ces mots: «Salue bien celui qui t'envoie et toute sa famille, dis-lui que je suis heureux qu'il demande ma fille. *A diara an yé hali*[1] c'est pour nous joie bien grande mais ceci, sais-tu, demande réflexion! J'en parlerai à mes amis sous peu, et dans quelques jours tu connaîtras ma décision...» Il n'y a pas eu refus, et l'envoyé satisfait de lui-même et de la bonne tournure de l'affaire, s'en va porter à l'aspirant ces paroles qui lui doivent ouvrir au cœur la porte de l'espérance.

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[1] Les «griots», ont pensé certains, servent d'intermédiaires pour demander la main d'une enfant. Rien de plus faux, le Bambara déteste cette race, il ne lui confiera jamais une mission si délicate. Le Bambara redoute le griot dans ses fêtes intimes. Que de fois ils nous disent en nous invitant: «Nous sommes venus nous-mêmes t'inviter afin que la nouvelle n'en parvienne pas aux oreilles des griots.» Le *to-n-tigi,* chef de l'association des *fla-n-to,* ne joue aucun rôle important dans le mariage d'un *to-n-dé* ou membre de l'association. Les *to-n-déou,* membres de l'association des *fla-n-to,* sont invités et se réjouissent aux noces d'un confrère *to-n-dé* et c'est tout. — Mr. BARBIER LOUIS commet une erreur; voir page 827, 10e decembre 1907, Revue «La Quinzaine».

[2] *Fourouboloma* cadeau de fiançailles, *tigi* maître.

§ 2. Les devins et les fétiches acceptent ou refusent le prétendant.

Marier sa fille et la bien marier, pour tout papa et toute maman, est un cauchemar, les deux restent soucieux quand un prétendant se présente. Le Bambara connaît ces angoisses! si sa fille n'est pas belle, si souvent même elle est laide, avec un gros nombril, une hernie ombilicale, une vessie due à la maladresse de la sage-femme, il vit dans ses gros yeux blancs, marqués d'un point noir plein de vie et brillant, dans sa bouche largement fendue, aux lèvres boursouflées, il retrouve la sienne propre, et tout son être intime lui crie: «C'est ta fille, c'est ton sang.»

D'affreuses pensées le viennent tourmenter: si le prétendant avait un caractère de vilain et une sauvagerie de brute, ne va-t-il pas sans aucune pitié rouer de coups mon enfant? Peut-être a-t-il une de ces maladies honteuses qui se cachent et ne se nomment pas, et ma fille commettra l'adultère pour n'avoir pas à rougir d'être stérile? Et s'il était de ces jouisseurs si nombreux parmi nous et que dégoûté après en avoir joui, il la chassait, la répudiait? Il tremble, il voudrait connaître ce que l'avenir réserve et à lui et à elle: il va consulter les devins.

Deux et souvent trois devins sont consultés; si tous s'accordent pour attester que le prétendant est d'un bon caractère, que le divorce n'est pas à craindre et que l'enfant deviendra mère d'enfants sains, forts, vigoureux, qui perpétueront et sa race et son sang, il renaît à la joie. Il en avertit et sa femme et sa fille, il fait part de sa décision au chef du village, au conseil des anciens et sans retard aucun, affranchi qu'il est de toute crainte, prévient le prétendant que les portes de sa demeure lui sont ouvertes.

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[1] *A* = cela, *diara* = est heureux, *an yé* = pour nous, *hali* = beaucoup.

A cette annonce, le prétendant choisit en son poulailler une poule grasse, sort de sa réserve une ou deux noix de kola, et de nouveau le *fouroubolama tigi*, le chargé des cadeaux du mariage, se met en route, car il s'agit de savoir cette fois, si les *boli* de famille et parfois les mânes des ancêtres ne s'opposent pas à l'union projetée[1].

Le père de la fillette décroche sa peau de bouc et souvent de fauve un affreux *foroko* tout crasseux, tabernacle des *boli* de la famille et les arrose du sang de la poule, puis leur crache dessus un morceau de noix de kola mâché. S'il manque de *boli* de famille, et c'est chose rare, il sacrifie dans ce cas à ses ancêtres sur le seuil de la porte de la case d'entrée ou *b'lon* et, s'il le possède, sur le *kârâ*, bas relief en terre à l'intérieur du *b'lon* ou case d'entrée, qui représente de façon fort grossière une femme et un homme et sert d'autel.

Quand le sacrifice est agréé, ce qui a lieu si la bipède emplumée a l'heureuse idée de ne pas crever les ailes deployées, la poitrine sur le sol, si les morceaux de la noix de kola, fendue en deux, et jetés sur le *boli* ou sur le *kârâ*, retombent la partie sphérique sur le sol, la pulpe en haut[2], c'est de la part de la famille un oui catégorique, et tous les cœurs se réjouissent. Quant au *fouroubolama tigi*, il suce tout ravi son morceau de noix de kola, il déguste son morceau de la poule et la scène du sacrifice est loin de sa mémoire. Il a pourtant tremblé, quand accroupi devant ses *boli* ou devant le *kârâ*, l'autel de ses ancêtres, le beau père a tranché le cou de la victime et jeté la noix de kola en disant d'une voix grave et caverneuse: «Nous avons consulté les devins, tous sont d'accord pour louer le prétendant; à les croire il est digne de notre fille. Mais vous, qu'en pensez-vous de cette union? Si elle doit être heureuse, si le divorce n'est pas à craindre, si elle doit être féconde, agréez, je vous prie, mon sacrifice. Dans ce cas accordez-leur les richesses, une longue vie, des enfants nombreux, la paix. Cette poule et les kola sont bien pour le sacrifice, et c'est un vrai sacrifice que, par mon entremise, vous offre le prétendant.»

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[1] Si dans la suite un événement vient rompre les fiançailles, s'il y a mariage suivi de divorce, il ne lui viendra pas à la pensée que les devins se sont trompés. Tout retombera sur la tête d'un ennemi, un inconnu presque toujours, et c'est heureux, qui par haine, par jalousie s'est débrouillé pour tout brouiller.

[2] Opération qui se recommence jusqu'à 3 fois en cas d'insuccès.

Cette façon d'agréer, ou d'écarter un prétendant, est des plus ingénieuses! Tout étant remis à l'arbitre des devins, des *boli*, des mânes des ancêtres, toute contestation de la part de l'évincé est impossible, aucune querelle ne surgit entre les deux familles, et quand un prétendant plus heureux obtient la main de la fillette, il n'a pas à craindre la haine, la rancune, la vengeance de celui qui l'a précédé, il n'est pour rien dans son infortune.

§ 3. Les Fiançailles.

Le mariage Bambara, ai-je souvent ouï dire, n'est rien moins qu'une vente, un achat: la femme appartient au plus offrant. Je me garde de partager pareille opinion. Le prétendant donne une dot, je le sais, mais cette dot est un cadeau, fait à la fiancée et lui revient en entier. Au moment où il la reçoit, le père se paie des culottes, un calotte à trois pointes, une blouse neuve, quelques cruches de *d'lo* ou bière de mil, force noix de kola; mais quand viennent les noces, c'est lui, le père, qui fournit à son enfant les pagnes, les calebasses, la poterie, tout le trousseau enfin, et pour peu qu'il soit vaniteux, — et quel Bambara ne l'est pas! — la dot y passe et même plus.

Quand le prétendant a pu réunir 2 à 3 kilos de sel, quelques lambeaux d'étoffe pour la fillette et pour sa mère, une partie de la dot[1] qui varie entre 25 et 30 frcs, il présente ses hommages à la famille par son intermédiaire, le *fouroubolomа tigi* ou chargé des cadeaux de mariage. Celui-ci se rend chez le beau-père, escorté de quelques jeunes filles, qui portent le *fouroufen* ou la dot, les cadeaux d'étoffes et de sel, quelques cruches de *d'lo* ou bière de mil; et le chef du village, et son conseil, les amis, les *to-n-déou* ou membres de l'association du *fla-n-to*[1] vont aussitôt présenter leurs hommages à l'heureux père, apprendre à la fillette qu'on célèbre ses fiançailles, qui ne se peuvent désormais plus rompre, sans un motif grave et sérieux, et ce n'est bientôt dans le *b'lon* de la case d'entrée, dans la cour intérieure, que gens accroupis, qui boivent le *d'lo* ou bière de mil, et ne tardent pas à divaguer . . . Et la fiancée a du temps pour réfléchir, pour ouvrir son cœur à l'amour, ses noces ne se feront qu'un an, deux ans et souvent trois après l'excision, et quand celle-ci se pratique elle est à même d'être mère.

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[1] La dot est fixée à *ba mougan ni tan* environ 24,000 cauris. Chaque *ba* compte 10 *kémé*. — Le *kémé* vaut 80 cauris, le *ba* 800 cauris. La pièce de 5 frcs se change en temps ordinaire *ba dourou ni kémé dourou* soit 4400 cauris. — La valeur des cauris est sujette à la hausse et à la baisse, et il arrive que la pièce de 5 frcs vaut à certains moments 4400 cauris: à d'autres moments les cauris baissent et la pièce de 5 frcs vaut *ba woro ni kémé dourou* soit 6 *ba* et 5 *kémé*, *ba wolonoula* soit 7 *ba*.

A partir des fiançailles les deux familles se rapprochent, des relations s'établissent, on se rend mutuellement visite. Quand la fillette a grandi, un an, deux ans après l'excision, durant le temps qui s'écoule entre l'excision et les noces, elle va chaque année passer quinze jours, un mois chez ses beaux-parents. Dans la région du Bani, cette coutume est, on peut le dire, générale[2]. Quand les jeunes gens envoyés pour la prendre arrivent, elle se cache dans une case amie, et la petite troupe court de droite et de gauche à sa recherche. Ils ne tardent pas à la trouver, des membres de la famille, la mère, les belles-mères et les sœurs se joignent à eux, et le petit cortège se rend chez le chef religieux, *gnéna-sonnaba,* prêtre du *dasiri,* génie protecteur du village, qui donne quelques conseils à l'enfant et lui fixe le jour du retour. Au sortir du village, la jeune fille s'arrête, refuse d'avancer; les jeunes gens l'empoignent, la portent en leurs bras, et elle se perd en des cris, en des hurlements, qui ne doivent cesser qu'à la limite des champs qui entourent le village.

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[1] L'association des *fla-n-to* ayant à sa tête un *to-n-tigi* se compose de plusieurs groupes de *to-n-déou* ou membres de l'association. Chaque groupe correspond à une circoncision. Quand les circoncis sont nombreux, ils forment un groupe nouveau, mais s'il n'y a qu'1, 2 ou 3 circoncis, ils font partie du groupe de la circoncision précédente. Le *to-n-dé* invite à ses fiançailles et à ses noces les membres de son groupe, ceux de sa circoncision, et les membres des groupes plus anciens. Quant aux groupes moins anciens il ne les invite pas. — Les femmes forment elles aussi une association de *fla-n-to* semblable à celle des hommes mais distincte. Celle qui se trouve à la tête de l'association, la plus vieille du village ordinairement, s'appelle *to-n-tigi*, *massa fama*, reine, et les *to-n-dé mouso* (les femmes *to-n-dé*), l'appellent *m'ba* mère. Celles-ci ne sont appelées qu'aux noces.

[2] Dans les environs de Ségou cette coutume est moins générale. Souvent les deux familles s'entendent, et au jour indiqué, la fiancée se rend chez son fiancé, accompagnée par un jeune homme désigné par le conseil des anciens. Après la dernière fête de la circoncision (*boloko déou don bo*, sortie des circoncis), certains villages, ils sont même nombreux, font une fête à la fiancée. Celle-ci se rend chez son fiancé toute chargée de perles et de colliers et escortée de toutes les jeunes filles du village. Le fiancé supporte tous les frais de cette fête dite *mousodjira* montrer la femme. Tous les jeunes gens du village et des villages voisins offrent de 80 à 160 cauris pour aider le fiancé à couvrir les frais.

Si la dot est fixée, il est plus difficile de déterminer la somme des cadeaux offerts par le fiancé, en mil, poules, sel, kola, et *d'lo* ou bière de mil. Ces cadeaux offerts à titre gracieux, pendant 4, 5, 6 ans et souvent plus, dépendent beaucoup de la fortune d'un chacun et de l'honorabilité de la famille de la fiancée. Au moment de la récolte, il fournit un ou deux paniers de mil de 20 à 40 kilos: au grand sacrifice offert une fois l'an aux *boli* de famille, une poule, du sel, des noix de kola et du *dégé* ou farine de mil délayée dans de l'eau de miel. De temps en temps, il offre quelques bonnes cruches de *d'lo,* contenant pour le moins, de 20 à 30 litres, et s'il y a fête chez lui, il se garde bien d'oublier son futur beau-père. A la fête de l'excision de sa fiancée[1], au *da woro,* ou fête du sixième jour, il se montre généreux, et le chargé des cadeaux du mariage va porter à celle-ci le cadeau de rigueur, un pagne à fond jaune rayé de lignes noires, 4 à 5 livres de beurre, 2 à 3 kilos de sel, 20 à 30 litres de *d'lo* ou bière de mil, autant de *dégé* ou farine délayée dans de l'eau de miel, quelques ornements de parure enfin — un collier de perles, un bout d'ambre, un bracelet —, et ceci est pure gracieuseté et nullement obligatoire.

Un petit fait me reste encore à noter et il ne manque pas d'importance, c'est qu'à partir des fiançailles, la fiancée ne peut manger en présence de son beau-père, s'attarder avec lui dans des conversations sans fin, surtout sans présence de témoins, et le fiancé est soumis aux mêmes règles vis à vis de sa belle-mère.

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[1] Le Bambara n'assiste pas à la fête qui a lieu à l'excision de sa fiancée.

A bref dire, ils ne peuvent même plus s'entre-regarder! Et si le fiancé meurt avant les noces, la fillette devient la fiancée d'un frère plus jeune, c'est de bon ton, mais à défaut de frère, elle recouvre sa liberté et conserve sa dot. Si la fiancée vient à mourir, la famille d'ordinaire conserve la dot reçue; exiger la restitution de la moitié de la dot, chose permise par la coutume, serait de la part du fiancé et aux yeux de tous, un manque de tact et de délicatesse. Maintenant si, pour un motif ou pour un autre, les fiançailles sont rompues, on rend au fiancé dot et menus cadeaux en entier.

§ 4. Les Noces d'une jeune Bambara.

Le fiancé demande la jeune fille[1]. — Les *fourou fen* (la dot et les menus cadeaux) ont été versés, notre fiancée est une grande démoiselle depuis longtemps excisée, et du beau pagne à fond jaune rayé de lignes noires, reçu au *da woro* ou fête qui suit le sixième jour de la circoncision, il ne reste que des loques. *A kouara,* elle a atteint son développement parfait, elle ne peut désormais que déchoir en grâces et en beauté, son fiancé la désire. Le *fouroubolomo tigi*, ou chargé des cadeaux du mariage, endosse l'habit des fêtes et va porter au beau-père 5 *kéme* soit 400 cauris. Le geste est compris de tous, il signifie: à quand les noces? Le noir n'a qu'un amour: son intérêt; il n'a qu'une affection: lui-même; dans son égoïsme il ne songe qu'à lui et à la réception des cauris; son cœur ne s'émeut point outre mesure. Il pense à ses champs, à ses affaires, à son ventre, et dans la famille, du plus vieux au plus petit, ces seuls mots sont sur les lèvres: «Comme elle maniait la houe! quelle bonne langue pour vanter la marchandise et la vendre, qu'elle cuisinait bien . . .!» Et tout s'arrête là, car de ses sentiments à elle, personne n'en a cure. En vain elle s'écriera qu'elle déteste son fiancé, qu'elle ne l'aime point, ne le pourra jamais aimer, et qu'elle en préfère un autre: en vain elle fuira le toit paternel, ira s'abriter chez un parent complaisant, il lui faudra se soumettre! son père et sa mère ont reçu l'augure des devins, les *boli* de famille, en agréant le sacrifice, ont agréé le prétendant, ils ne peuvent contrecarrer les ordres de leurs dieux, ou si l'on préfère l'autre terme, de leurs fétiches familiaux[1]. Du reste je dois l'avouer, bien rares sont les femmes Bambara qui hautement dévoilent leur antipathie, elles ne savent pas résister à l'autorité paternelle, et librement elles se donnent à celui à qui on les fiance; *an ka lada do* c'est notre coutume à nous, disent elles, et l'idée ne leur vient pas qu'il en puisse exister une autre.

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[1] Il arrive parfois que la famille ne peut refuser la jeune fille à son prétendant, et comme celle-ci n'a pas tout son trousseau, la fête des noces est remise. On la conduit chez son mari, une petite fête intime a lieu en ce jour. Quand elle a son trousseau elle retourne dans sa famille et la grande fête se fait.

Le départ de l'épousée. Exorcisme de sa case par le *boli* du village. — Son entrée au village. La première nuit. — Il fait nuit, c'est l'heure où les familles accroupies en rond autour des calebasses de *to* ou bouillie de mil, se bourrent de nourriture, et fort bruyamment se sucent les doigts. Qu'y a-t-il donc ce soir que les femmes se pressent si nombreuses sur la place publique, des calebasses sur la tête? A chaque tournant des rues, on ne trouve que gens qui bourrent leurs longs fusils à pierre, et c'est dans les *b'lon* ou cases d'entrée le bruit assourdissant des tambours dont on tend les peaux et qu'on accorde. Et ces cris qui emplissent le village, vous cassent les oreilles, vous énervent, qu'est-ce donc? . . . Une jeune femme, une fiancée, qui se débat dans les bras de deux vigoureux gaillards et hurle . . . pour la forme, car sitôt hors les murs, elle cesse ses cris, place sur sa tête la longue étoffe (un cadeau de son mari) dans laquelle elle se peut tailler trois pagnes, et fort alerte elle suit les femmes et les jeunes filles qui portent son trousseau. La troupe des jeunes gens, avec tambours, trompes et fusils, se presse à sa suite, et ce sont des chants d'allégresse, des battements de mains, puis de temps en temps ce cri allongé *kouyo, kouyo* que pousse une vieille et qui déchire le calme, le silence de la nuit.

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[1] La coutume veut que la jeune fille couche une nuit avec son fiancé 10 à 15 jours avant les noces. Certaines familles se dispensent de cette coutume. Pour ceci tout se passe dans l'intimité; la fillette arrive de nuit, conduite par un membre de la famille, et se retire à l'aube. Les deux expressions suivantes pour désigner cette manière de faire sont: «*On tara di à tjima* Ils sont allés la donner à son mari.»

Et pendant que l'épousée poursuit sa marche triomphale, à petits pas, c'est au village où elle se rend une scène étrange qui se passe. Le *boli* principal du village a quitté sa puante cachette, et pendant que les femmes, les enfants, les non initiés, tapis en leurs cases, tremblent à chaque rugissement poussé par son héraut, il court les ruelles dans les mains de ses adeptes[1]. Ce n'est pas tout, il pénètre dans la cour du mari, il entre dans la case de l'épousée. A ce moment les *boli déou*, les fils du *boli*, chantent l'hymne sacrée, s'oublient en leurs danses et lui, le dieu, il est couché sur le drap blanc étendu sur le lit, sur la natte où sous peu va reposer la pauvrette. Cette cérémonie comme tout rite de ce genre s'appelle *kéné salo* exorciser la place[2], et son but est de chasser les esprits malfaisants qui en voudraient à la femme et au mari. C'est aussi pour l'époux un moyen de témoigner publiquement de sa foi, de son amour, de son attachement au *boli*, un moyen de s'attirer enfin ses faveurs et d'avoir un mariage heureux et fécond.

La jeune femme et son escorte toujours cheminent très lentement à travers les sentiers sinueux, et dans le lointain, ici et là, on entend un coup de fusil, un battement de mains, le fameux cri *kouyo kouyo*, qui, suivant les coudes du sentier, tantôt se rapproche, et tantôt s'éloigne pour se rapprocher de nouveau dans un éclat plus fort ... Enfin, ils arrivent, ils sont sur la limite des champs à 200, 300 mètres au plus du village ... Les jeunes gens courent se mettre à la tête du cortège, les porteurs du trousseau passent à l'arrière et les tambours ronflent et les cornes de la fanfare mugissent puissamment, c'est la danse. Mais quelle danse! Courbées en deux les femmes donnent à leurs bustes un mouvement de va-et-vient, qu'on ne saurait mieux comparer qu'à celui d'un ver qui se rentre et lentement se détend, elles glissent sur le sol sans lever les pieds, laissant derrière elles sur le sable une longue traînée, tel un boa à son passage. Elles vont ainsi jusqu'à la porte du village avec une lenteur désespérante, mettant une heure et souvent deux pour couvrir ces quelques cents mètres.

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[1] *Ou tara djira à tjéna k'a d'a ma.* Ils sont allés la montrer à son mari pour la lui donner. — L'expression vraie est celle-ci: *A wéléla k'a se-n-don. A se-n-donna*: Son mari l'a appelée pour coucher avec elle. Elle a couché avec son mari. *Fourou kéra* = Ils se sont mariés, est la réponse.

[2] *Kéné* surface, plane, parquet, cour, *salo* caresser doucement de la main, passement de mains qu'accomplissent les sorciers quand ils traitent un malade, faire des passes.

Le cortège couvert de sueur, blanc de poussière, longe les murs; le voici à la porte tirant du fusil, battant des mains, hurlant des chants qu'étouffent en partie les roulements des tambours et les mugissements des cornes de la fanfare. Le *boli* lance un dernier rugissement, son prêtre le va porter en son temple sordide, où se respire un air attiédi par les vapeurs d'un sang chaud et jamais refroidi, et les cases ouvrent leurs portes et un flot de femmes, d'enfants, de jeunes filles, se précipitent à travers des ruelles, vont mêler leurs voix à celles qui arrivent. La foule des femmes se partage en plusieurs chœurs; et de nouveau courbées en deux, dans des contorsions inimaginables et qu'une plume ne peut décrire, car toutes les parties du corps frémissent et remuent, une vogue douce, dirait-on, qui avance et sur elle-même se replie, elles glissent sur le sol, soulevant un nuage de poussière, et précédées de tambours, dans une décharge de fusils, lentement ainsi elles se rendent dans la cour intérieure des époux. Ici tout le monde trouve la nourriture prête, ce n'est au milieu de la cour qu'immenses calebasses de *to* ou bouillie, de *dégé* ou farine de mil delayée dans de l'eau de miel, des cruches pleines de *d'to* ou bière de mil, et pendant que les nouveaux mariés sont à la joie de leurs premières amours, on boit, on mange, on danse, on hurle près d'eux . . . Car j'oubliais de le dire, la jeune épouse a depuis longtemps quitté sa horde beuglante en délire. Sitôt le *boli* remisé, des femmes la sont venues prendre et conduire en sa demeure[1]. Avant de l'introduire dans le sanctuaire conjugal, où déjà l'attend son mari, elles lui défont sa chevelure de jeune fille, elles lui enlèvent son ruban d'étoffe, large de trois doigts lié par devant à la ceinture et passe entre les jambes pour retomber par derrière en queue flasque et molle; elles dénouent sa ceinture à perles et à grelots, elles l'aident à prendre son bain et la déposent enroulée dans un pagne, sur sa couche[1].

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[1] Chaque femme Bambara a sa case distincte de celle de son mari. Un Bambara qui n'a qu'une femme, couche dans la case de son épouse; s'il en a plusieurs, c'est le contraire qui a lieu, la femme appelée va coucher chez son mari. Certains riches fournissent à chaque femme une case, une cour intérieure et un *b'lon* ou case d'entrée. Dans ce cas la première femme n'a pas une case distincte de celle de son mari, et le mari va passer ses nuits ou chez l'une ou chez l'autre à sa guise.

Tous les fusils soudain se déchargent, de nombreux et puissants *kouyo kouyo* retentissent dominant les chants, le bruit des tambours, le bruit des pieds frappant sur le sol en cadence et des vieilles à peau parcheminée, plissée, se précipitent dans la case... avec l'eau tiède des ablutions[2].

Drapé dans sa blouse neuve, l'époux quitte la demeure de son épouse, salue les étrangers qui emplissent sa cour et va s'asseoir sur la natte avec le *fourouboloma tigi* et ses intimes. L'epousée à son tour, vêtue du pagne des mariées que retient à la ceinture un fin cordon, dont les gracieux pompons rouge et blanc, souvent coupés de lignes jaunes et vertes, discrètement se balancent sur le côté le long des hanches, ne tarde pas, elle aussi, à paraître, à traverser la cour. Elle marche les yeux timides, la tête baissée, une troupe de griottes (chanteuses) la poursuivent de leurs chansons d'amour; elles disent la finesse de sa peau, l'élégance de sa taille, la carrure de son buste, la fermeté de ses seins. Il y a plus encore et on rougirait à moins; des vieilles par derrière secouent un grand drap blanc ensanglanté[3]. qui témoigne par devant tous de sa virginité: A brief dire tout le monde la loue d'avoir su rester vierge, mais il la loue en Bambara, ce qui veut dire en termes gras, et pour faire ressortir sa vertu, il lui présente un bouquet de roses roulé dans l'ordure.

Au sortir de la cour, ses demoiselles d'honneur viennent la prendre, et pendant que les hommes restent là s'enivrer, pendant que les femmes continuent de battre des mains, de chanter à tue tête et de danser au son des tambours, des trompes et des guitares, elle se rend, elle, dans une case amie pour achever dans le sommeil sa première nuit de noces. Sans jamais pouvoir sortir, huit jours durant, elle prend là ses repas et assise sur une natte, un voile blanc sur la tête, elle passe ses jours à filer le coton, en compagnie des demoiselles d'honneur[1].

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[1] Cette cérémonie de la suppression du costume de la jeune fille se fait souvent au village avant le départ, surtout si le village où se rend l'épousée est éloigné et ne sera atteint que fort avant dans la nuit.

[2] Toute cette scène se passe le matin, quelques instants avant le lever du soleil.

[3] Même pour celles qui ont connu leur mari avant ce jour, on rend cet honneur, la famille a pieusement conservé ce drap, et s'il y a lieu de le déployer, elle est tout fière.

L'époux se tient en sa case tout le jour qui suit cette nuit et un peu tout le monde, des hommes et des femmes, lui viennent présenter leurs hommages. C'est le *d'lo* ou bière de mil qui surtout attire, mais dans ces circontances le Bambara oublie qu'il est gueux et toujours à tendre la main: s'il mange, s'il boit et s'enivre, il paie du moins en partie ce qu'il absorbe.

Par l'intermédiaire du *fourouboloma tigi,* chaque invité et chaque visiteur, homme ou femme, offre aux époux en nature ou en espèces un *fourouboloma fara,* ou cadeau de noces. Du reste ils le savent, c'est un moyen et le meilleur de pouvoir vider une cruche de *d'lo,* puis une seconde et enfin plusieurs.

Je ne connais rien de plus astreignant que des noces Bambara, qui durent deux, trois jours et souvent huit, si le mari est riche ou veut passer pour tel. Tant que durent les fêtes, les deux époux sont chacun dans leur case, entourés de gens en sueur pour avoir trop mangé ou trop bu, dans une atmosphère attiédie par les respirations puantes et sans jamais un renouveler l'air. Pour eux, pas une minute, pas un instant de tranquillité, ils ne peuvent même pas satisfaire aux exigences de la nature sans se voir escortés d'une troupe nombreuse. Après chaque repas, c'est en leurs cours un bruit assourdissant de tambours, de cornes, de chants hurlés par des voix qui jamais ne s'accordent, leurs oreilles ne perçoivent que ces phrases qui, à la longue, leur doivent être un supplice: «Que votre mariage soit heureux, qu'il en sorte des mains et des pieds (ayez des enfants nombreux), que Dieu vous conserve la santé, qu'il vous accorde une longue et verte vieillesse. Merci, merci, vous nous avez bien reçus, vous n'avez pas ménagé le ***d'lo,*** je suis plein ***(nzé dé fara*** — ou encore — ***né fara dérén)*** »[1].

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[1] Beaucoup s'affranchisent de cette coutume. Celles qui s'y soumettent, et c'est la majorité, peuvent après ces huit jours d'emprisonnement revoir leurs familles et y séjourner quinze jours. Cette promenade de l'épousée en sa famille s'appelle *bisa kounna sago.* Quelques semaines après elle passe de nouveau quatre jours — *sou nani yé* — chez ses parents et un peu plus tard une nuit *sou kélen si.*

§ 5. L'exhibition du trousseau de la mariée au soir du premier jour.

Bien que haut sur l'horizon, le soleil désormais est sans force et sans vie, et à la porte de la case d'entrée de la demeure des époux, tambours et fanfares font rage, rendent les honneurs à la jeune femme assise au milieu d'eux, sur un tabouret minuscule. Elle permet qu'on admire sa parure, ses perles et ses bijoux, ses anneaux de cuivre et d'étain, parfois aussi et d'or et d'argent, elle permet qu'on s'extasie sur ses savates aux semelles hautes de trois doigts, cadeaux de son époux, sur sa chevelure artistique finement nattée, une montagne de cheveux en cimier transversal qui vient se terminer devant et derrière chaque oreille par deux minces tressettes, un casque de hussard, dirait-on à la jugulaire brisée, qui serait tout d'ébène et jeté sur le côté; mais elle a donné son cœur et donné sa parole, elle se voile la face du plateau d'herbes tressées qu'elle tient en sa droite.

Les cornes d'antilopes, de vaches et de bœufs, trompettes Bambara, cessent de mugir, les tambours cessent de ronfler, et un groupe de femmes (des griottes ordinairement, elles sentent, celles-ci, les fêtes et les orgies avec un flair de vautour qui sent la charogne à vingt lieues) viennent se placer derrière elle et chanter des chants d'amour.

Précédées d'un chœur de chant et d'un groupe de tambours[2] les ***file djiralaou*** (montreuses de calebasses), ont toute la matinée parcouru le village, allant de case en case étaler le trousseau. Ce n'est point suffisant: sous les yeux de la mariée, on l'étale à nouveau, on l'exhibe une dernière fois, et les connaisseurs ne manquent pas pour en faire l'estimation et sans gêne aucune, en donner le juste prix[1].

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[1] La jeune femme, le jour des noces, ne cause qu'aux femmes venues nombreuses lui tenir compagnie et à ses filles d'honneur. Quand son moment est venu de pouvoir causer, on lui offre une poule.

[2] Cette promenade du trousseau à travers le village ne se fait que dans les noces riches, quand le trousseau en vaut vraiment la peine. Le plus souvent une seule exhibition, celle du soir, a lieu.

Les savates SLIPPER aux semelles SOLE hautes de trois doigts, la blouse blanche et le pagne loin cloth que porte l'épousée sont, avec le *koundougou fini,* vaste pièce d'étoffe qui peut donner trois à quatre pagnes, un cadeau du mari; quant au reste, étoffes, calebasses, poterie, mortiers pour piler le mil, coton à carder et à filer, tout lui vient de sa famille. Le trousseau dépend un peu de la fortune d'un chacun, mais on peut pourtant poser en règle générale que toute jeune femme reçoit au mariage une dizaine de *tafé* (pièce d'étoffe de 1,50 m à 2 m de long sur 1 m de large, que les femmes s'enroulent autour du corps), une quinzaine de calebasses et comme ornements au moins un bracelet et un collier de perles[2]. On assiste parfois à des scènes hilarantes, car dans la troupe des curieux qui se pressent à l'entour, inévitablement se trouvent des évincés. Ils ont mis bas la haine, et mis bas la rancune, le *boli* du village la protège... pourtant ils l'aiment, au fond du cœur ils lui conservent tout leur amour, et ce sont eux sans doute, les brisés, qui vont lui prendre la main restée libre et verser sur ses genoux quelques poignées de cauris.

L'exhibition vaniteuse du trousseau s'achève, le *fourouboloma tigi* ou chargé des cadeaux du mariage remet à la maîtresse du chant cinq *kémé*, soit 400 cauris, et une dernière fois les fusils se déchargent. La jeune épouse se lève aussitôt, son plateau d'herbes tressées toujours sur la face et glissant du talon sur le sol sans lever les pieds, pénètre en sa demeure suivie de deux ou trois matrones, puis disparaît dans un léger nuage de poussière. Et la foule se retire, car la suivre et même rester là, serait être indiscret.

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[1] Parfois cette exhibition se fait avant l'arrivée de la jeune épouse.

[2] Les épousées BRIDE de famille riches reçoivent une esclave dite *gouadani* pour faire la cuisine, une vache cow, des chaînettes pour les pieds, des bracelets, un collier de perles avec une boule d'ambre de la grosseur d'un œuf de poule, deux petits pendants d'oreilles en or.

Chap. XI.

Enterrements Bambara.

§ 1. Fosse et cimetière. § 2. Pas de sacrifice aux mânes des défunts. § 3. Honneurs rendus aux non circoncis. § 4. Enterrements des circoncis, vieillards, chefs de familles, mariés et non mariés, femmes enceintes. § 5. Sacrifices aux fétiches à l'occasion d'un décès. § 6. Honneurs rendus aux adeptes du *Koré* ou *Koté*. § 7. Enterrement des excommuniés. § 8. Culte des morts.

§ 1. Fosse et cimetière.

Le Bambara enterre ses morts, et la fosse qu'il leur creuse a près d'un mètre cinquante à un mètre soixante de profondeur. Longue de deux mètres elle a une ouverture large de deux à trois mètres et un mètre environ à sa base. Trois des parois sont taillées à pic avec un rebord de 0,10 m, à 0,50 m au-dessus de sa dernière profondeur, et la quatrième paroi qui s'en va en pente douce, n'est taillée à pic qu'au niveau du rebord abandonné sur les trois autres côtés. Dans toute la longueur de cette paroi, une niche est creusée pour recevoir le cadavre de sorte que nos noirs dorment leur dernier sommeil dans une sorte de petite case dont la partie creusée en pente douce, formerait le toit. Couchés sur le côté droit, les hommes ont la tête au Sud et regardent l'Orient, et couchées sur le côté gauche, les femmes ont la tête au Nord et les pieds au Sud.

Certains vieillards sont enterrés dans la cour intérieure de leur habitation. Cette coutume est loin d'être générale, presque partout le cimetière est à l'entour du village et chacun repose dans son champ de maïs. Des places de choix pourtant sont réservées aux chefs de famille et aux anciens; plus on a d'autorité, plus on a d'ans et plus on voit sa fosse se rapprocher du mur d'enceinte. Certains villages ont leurs cimetières à l'entour du bois sacré réservé au *dasiri,* génie protecteur des hameaux. Les places de choix sont sur la lisière du bois, et les prêtres du fétiche, les *gnéna-n-sonnaba* ou *dougoutigi,* sont enfouis bien souvent en deçà du bois, laissant l'arbre fétiche entre eux et leurs sujets.

§ 2. Pas de sacrifice aux mânes des défunts.

A chaque trépas, le sang des poules, des chèvres et des chiens coule à flots. Je voudrais pouvoir penser et dire avec certains Européens que tous ces sacrifices sont un honneur rendu aux mânes du défunt et aux mânes des ancêtres, mais ce m'est chose impossible. Pas le plus léger sacrifice n'est offert aux mânes, les jours de trépas et d'enfouissements. Le noir reste logique avec ses croyances, l'âme ne quitte le corps qu'après l'enfouissement et un défunt n'a droit à un sacrifice qu'alors qu'il se trouve dans le *Lahara* ou monde des esprits. Sans nul doute, des prières sont faites! Des objets ayant appartenu au défunt ou ayant servi à lui rendre les derniers honneurs sont détruits et posés en *saraka* aux angles de terre formés par des sentiers qui se croisent, mais rien en tout cela qui soit aux yeux du Bambara un sacrifice sanglant ou non sanglant[1].

Et toutes ces hécatombes et tous ces flots de sang, à qui s'adressent-ils? Je l'ai déjà dit au chapitre où je parle de la maladie et de la mort, un Bambara ne meurt jamais de mort naturelle. Sans cesse et toujours, il est victime du poison, victime d'un *gnâma,* d'un *djiné,* et 80 fois sur cent un fétiche de grosse envergure, *Komo, Kono, Nama, Nia, Douga,* l'a fait périr. A chaque trépas l'une ou l'autre de ces expressions se trouvent sur toutes les lèvres: «*Souba ta no do* c'est la façon de faire des *souba* — *koroti kér'a la* on lui a lancé le poison des fétiches — *dounkono dir'a ma* on lui a donné le poison — *Komo, Kono, Nama* etc. *séra à ma* le *Komo,* le *Kono,* le *Nama* est parvenu jusqu'à lui — *djinéou no do* les *djiné* en sont cause — *a fa gnâma do* c'est le *gnâma* de son père — *boli y'a fa* un *boli* l'a tué.»

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[1] Il est bien rare qu'un défunt soit supposé avoir causé la mort d'un noir. Si le sorcier l'assure, on lui sacrifie, mais ce sacrifice lui est fait pour le calmer par ce que meurtrier et nullement par ce que défunt.

Tous les sacrifices qui se font donc à l'occasion d'un décès, s'adressent aux fétiches supposés meurtriers, et si un défunt de la famille ou d'une famille étrangère cueille un léger filet de sang, c'est qu'au dire du sorcier il est le coupable. Dès que l'on suppose qu'il y a eu poison versé *(dounkono)* ou *korti* (poison des fétiches) et maléfices lancés, on a recours aux devins et aux sorciers pour connaître l'invisible à calmer et quel sacrifice lui offrir. S'il s'agit d'un *gnâma,* un sacrifice est souvent prescrit à un fétiche pour s'assurer sa protection, mais au *gnâma* lui-même on offre un simple *saraka* sanglant ou non sanglant. Ces *saraka* sont rarement faits à l'Etre Suprême *Alla,* ils sont faits à ces petits génies *djiné* qui courent autour du village et aiment se reposer dans les *da-n-koun* au milieu des *gnâma.*

§ 3. Honneurs rendus aux non circoncis.

Aux incirconcis et aux non excisées peu d'honneurs sont rendus; ils ne sont pas vraiment Bambara, il leur manque le signe de la race. La constatation du décès est faite par le chef du village et son conseil, et suivant l'ordre reçu des devins, un sacrifice est offert ou un *saraka* déposé. Les gens du village viennent présenter leurs condoléances à la famille éprouvée, et la fosse creusée, deux ou trois jeunes gens vont enfouir le cadavre sans plus de cérémonie.

Le père porte le deuil un jour entier, et la mère durant au moins trois jours se lamente en sa case, avec quelques commères, ses voisines. Une coutume barbare veut aussi qu'en présence de la mère on brise un gros orteil à l'enfant non sevré et bien des papas font plus! Ils le marquent au couteau sur le front, sur la nuque, les épaules, les bras, ils lui fendent la lèvre supérieure ou le bout d'une oreille. Cette façon de faire impressionne toujours une maman, surtout si elle est jeune accouchée, et comme l'usage veut qu'elle use du mariage sans retard et conçoive au plus vite, il arrive qu'elle donne le jour à un enfant portant une marque ou semblant de marque faite sur le cadavre de l'aîné, ce qui ne contribue pas peu à les confirmer dans leur croyance à la réviviscence des âmes. C'est même une des raisons pour lesquelles les enfants à la mamelle sont enfouis dans la cour intérieure et parfois dans la case de la maman et bien rarement conduits au cimetière[1].

Les honneurs rendus aux circoncis et aux excisées, varient un peu suivant l'âge et la qualité des personnes; pas un enterrement, peut-on dire, qui n'ait sa petite note spéciale, caractéristique. Pour en donner une idée aussi exacte que possible, je les ramène à quatre classes: celui des vieillards ou de 1re classe, celui des chefs de famille ou de 2e classe, celui des mariés ou de 3e classe et celui des non mariés ou de 4e classe. Après un mot sur l'enterrement des femmes enceintes ou mourant en couches, je parlerai des sacrifices faits aux fétiches, des honneurs rendus aux adeptes du *koré* ou *koté* et terminerai ce chapitre par l'enterrement des excommuniés, et le culte rendu aux morts.

§ 4. Enterrements des circoncis, vieillards, chefs de familles, mariés et non mariés, femmes enceintes.

Enterrement des vieillards ou de 1re classe.

J'entends par vieillard tout Bambara (homme ou femme) qui a des petits enfants, est par suite ou grand-père ou grand-mère. Quand un vieillard passe de vie à trépas, la poudre parle et il y a même décharge de fusils assez forte, si le décédé appartient à la confrérie des chasseurs ou compte parmi ses enfants un adepte de cette secte[2]. L'esclave principal et à son défaut un homme de confiance court avertir le chef et son conseil, et tous nos dignitaires, la lance au poing, viennent constater le décès et présenter à la famille, les premières condoléances. Des estafettes partent immédiatement dans toutes les directions pour prévenir les membres de la famille et les amis. Aux enfants mariés, on dépêche le plus souvent celui qui fut à son mariage garçon d'honneur et quelquefois le *fouroubolama tigi* (le préposé aux cadeaux du mariage). Il s'acquitte de sa mission avec tact et délicatesse. Il prévient d'abord le mari, lequel appelle sa légitime et lui donne l'ordre d'aller soigner son père gravement malade. Elle quitte donc sa maison, ignorant tout, conservant du moins au cœur un reste d'espoir. Ce n'est qu'en chemin qu'elle apprend la triste nouvelle.

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[1] L'âme quitte le corps après l'enfouissement. L'âme de l'enfant doit reprendre chair dans le sein de sa mère, et celle-ci doit concevoir au plus tôt. Quand l'enfant est enterré dans la cour ou la case, son âme n'a pas à courir, elle ne peut se tromper de famille.

[2] Les chasseurs *(donso)* appartiennent tous à une secte spéciale. Pour y entrer il faut avoir fait ses preuves et tué une biche. Le chasseur a un costume spécial. Voir p. 135 suiv.

Pendant que l'on court de droite et de gauche, les femmes lavent le cadavre avec une plante aromatique dite *sou kola* [1]. Elles le revêtent de vêtements blancs ou le roulent dans un linceul, et la toilette achevée, elles le déposent au milieu de l'appartement sur une natte grossière *(tjékala,* parfois *kara),* recouverte d'une natte fine, dans laquelle on l'enroulera pour le porter en terre. Souventes fois aussi, sur le ventre du mort, et sans doute pour l'empêcher d'enfler, on dépose une lourde pierre, celle qui sert à moudre le sorgho. Nos femmes se drapent alors dans une étoffe blanche, la couverture de nuit à défaut d'autre, et assises sur leurs tabourets minuscules, elles se lamentent et pleurent.

L'aîné de la famille, le nouveau *gouatigi* (chef de famille), a lui aussi fort à faire. Il consulte les sorciers, il pose des *saraka* ou en fait poser, il sacrifie et ne se donne de repos que lorsque les devins lui ont désigné le coupable, le fétiche assassin. Vêtu de blanc, il va s'asseoir alors dans le *b'lon* ou à la porte du *b'lon* (case d'entrée), et le chef et son conseil, les voisins et les amis, tant du village que des villages environnants, viennent lui présenter leurs hommages et leurs condoléances.

Tout ce monde se tient correctement, on cause à mi-voix, on évite de rire, il n'y a que les femmes qui rompent par leurs cris la monotonie du silence. Dès qu'elles sont en vue du village, elles se jettent un drap blanc sur la tête et ce sont des cris qui vont toujours croissant, jusqu'à ce qu'enfin elles soient dans la case mortuaire. Ici, elles se taisent, sèchent leurs larmes et ne tardent pas à battre des mains, à frapper une calebasse renversée dans un conari plein d'eau, à chanter les gloires et prouesses du disparu.

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[1] Le Basilic, une labiée, *ocymum album* et *febrifugum*.

La mort d'un vieux n'a du reste rien de triste, il a accompli jusqu'au bout le cycle de son existence, il est de bon ton de se réjouir. Les petits enfants du défunt sont tout à la joie, les grands oncles et les oncles leur donnent un *ba* (soit 800 cauris), on leur a permis de prendre au poulailler une poule grasse (souvent même un bouc ou une chèvre dans l'écurie du grand père), et on les fait danser au son des xylophones, des tambours et des triangles *(kingé)*. Cette danse des petits enfants se fait avant le premier *djansa*[1], pendant la nuit qui précède l'enterrement, devant le cadavre exposé dans la cour, et la nuit qui suit l'enfouissement. Le *djansa* se fait durant trois jours une fois dans la matinée et une fois dans l'après-dîner. Pour le *djansa,* les gens de la famille, hommes et femmes, arrivent à la file indienne en chantant à mi-voix, et formant cercle, se mettent à tourner au son de la musique. De temps en temps, ils lancent une pincée de cauris, sur laquelle se précipitent les enfants venus nombreux pour la circonstance, et au départ, chacun dépose son obole par terre près du chef musicien.

Au cimetière, près d'une fosse fraiche, on voit force plumes, un reste de cendres, quelques osselets soigneusement dépouillés, on songe à un sacrifice. Il n'en est rien! Les jeunes gens qui creusent la fosse, reçoivent une poule pour salaire, et c'est un don du défunt. Pour cette raison ils la reçoivent du reste morte, un ancien avant de la leur remettre lui brise le crâne sur le mur du *b'lon* ou case d'entrée.

La fosse est creusée, les enfants du défunt sont tous là[2], on va l'enfouir. Le cadavre est enroulé dans une natte, puis déposé sous le *goua,* abri grossier qui jette un peu d'ombre à l'entrée des habitations et par l'intermédiaire du chargé des pompes funèbres, un sorcier presque toujours, les assistants présentent leurs hommages au défunt et viennent lui offrir quelques cauris. Enfants et petits-enfants, chacun à son tour vient s'accuser d'un manque d'égard, d'un manque de respect à son adresse et lui demander pardon, les étrangers eux aussi viennent le supplier de ne se point fâcher, de ne pas leur en vouloir, on n'entend que la voix du hérault qui crie: «Pardon, ne te fâche pas, nous t'aimions, nous te respections, sois heureux durant ton sejour dans le *Lahara* (royaume des invisibles).»

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[1] Sorte d'aumône faite aux joueurs d'instruments et aux enfants.

[2] Tous les enfants et petits enfants doivent être là, ils arrivent tous du reste à moins d'impossibilité absolue. Sauf cas urgent, on attend parfois de un à trois jours pour leur permettre à tous d'être présents.

Cette cérémonie aussi belle que touchante, se termine par cette prière: «Donne-nous de la pluie quand viendra l'hivernage. donne-nous une moisson abondante, une verte vieillesse, des enfants, des femmes, donne-nous l'aisance.» Quatre vigoureux gaillards viennent alors qui placent le cadavre sur leurs épaules et précédés des enfants et petits enfants qui hurlent et crient, ils le portent au cimetière presque courant, et toute la foule les suit[1]. Les hommes se rangent autour de la tombe. les femmes se placent en arrière et les fils du défunt descendent dans la fosse. Ils défont la natte, prennent leur père dans leurs bras et le couchent dans sa niche sur le côté droit, face à l'Orient. Ils déchirent aussitôt un peu du linceul ou de la blouse de l'enterré, et un assistant saisit le ruban et le tient hors de la fosse. Pendant que les enfants construisent une voûte par dessus le cadavre avec des planchettes parfois travaillées et coloriées, le plus souvent avec des éclats de bois *(faléma)* ou encore de larges dalles en terre séchées au soleil, les jeunes gens pétrissent du mortier pour boucher les interstices et bien enduire le tout. Les femmes frappent des mains, puis chantent à mi-voix, au son des tambours.

Le travail achevé, les enfants sortent de la fosse et le préposé aux pompes funèbres, la houe sur l'épaule avec le fer emmanché à l'envers, s'avance une calebasse d'eau à la main et se penche sur la fosse. Les tambours cessent de battre, les femmes se taisent et par trois fois, il verse de l'eau sur la tête de l'enfoui en disant: «Vois cette eau, ne te fâche pas, pardonne-nous, donne-nous de la pluie au temps de l'hivernage et une abondante moisson[1]. Que le vent souffle de l'Ouest ou de l'Est, du Nord ou du Sud qu'il nous soit favorable. Donne-nous une longue vie, une postérité nombreuse, des femmes, de l'aisance.» «*Amina — o dé ka ké* (qu'il en soit ainsi)», répond l'assistance, et nos jeunes gens la houe emmanchée à l'envers, la courbe du fer à l'extérieur, comblent la fosse. Les tambours battent de nouveau, les femmes frappent des mains et improvisent un chant, d'ordinaire il revient à ceci: «Notre père est mort, on nous l'a dit, il est mort. Mais il reviendra! jeunes gens, comblez bien la fosse et que pas un *souba*, pas une hyène, pas un fauve ne puisse enlever le cadavre.»

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[1] Au Bani j'ai vu porter la lance du défunt en grande pompe. Le fils ainé jetait de temps en temps une pincée de cauris sur le cadavre et la foule se précépitait pour les prendre. Ce *djasso* se fait rarement, il est loin d'être une coutume générale

La fosse comblée, celui qui tient le ruban attaché à la blouse ou au linceul du défunt, le tire à lui jusqu'à ce qu'il déchire et lui reste dans les mains. Ce ruban est une précieuse relique, on en fait des *tafo* qui préservent de foule de maux et tout spécialement des maux de gorge et des *gnâma*. On dépose sur la tombe la natte grossière *(tjékala* ou *kara)* qui fut ou le lit ou le siège du trépassé et bien souvent ses savates et le petit pot en terre qui fut son lavabo. Au lieu du lavabo on jette, s'il s'agit d'une femme, les débris d'une calebasse, les tessons d'un foyer, le bois à remuer la bouillie *(to-n-galama)*. La natte souple dans laquelle on enroule le cadavre, est souvent donnée à un ami. Celui-ci va la brûler hors du village, ou la brûle avant d'entrer dans son village, s'il est étranger — en disant: «Voilà une natte sur laquelle personne ne mourra désormais.»

Le mercredi et le samedi sont deux jours néfastes. En ces jours, les étrangers ne présentent point leurs condoléances à la famille éprouvée, et si un enterrement se fait, un petit poulet blanc est remis au trépassé pour qu'il se puisse concilier les esprits, au moment où, la fosse comblée, son âme s'en ira dans le *Lahara*. Ceci, aux yeux des noirs, n'a rien d'un sacrifice; c'est le prix du droit d'entrée dans le *Lahara*, donné par les enfants à l'âme de leur père. Ils le lui remettent du reste tout vivant, on le glisse dans la fosse au moment où l'on dépose la dernière planchette, le dernier éclat de bois, la dernière dalle en terre de la voûte [1].

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[1] Cette cérémonie aux yeux des noirs n'est pas un sacrifice non sanglant, c'est une simple prière, et comme l'eau est à leurs yeux l'élément sans lequel rien n'a vie et ne peut vivre il verse de l'eau pour mieux accentuer ses paroles.

A l'issue de la cérémonie, on assomme le chien du décédé [2] et les gendres et les beaux-frères mangent le *tô* ou bouillie de mil. Au départ ils reçoivent encore, ceux-ci, un coq ou une poule. Il leur est donné au nom du défunt, et comme c'est là le cadeau d'un mort, ils le tuent et le mangent sur la route [3]. Les fétiches et les génies seraient mécontents, si pareil don parvenait vivant au village, et qui se rendrait coupable d'un pareil crime, deviendrait le jouet d'un peu tous les *gnâma,* pourrait creuser sa tombe.

Le Bambara ne dépose aucun aliment ni sur la fosse ni dans la fosse. Durant trois jours pourtant, le soir, à la tombée de la nuit, on pose un plat de *tô* (bouillie) et un peu d'eau fraîche sur le *gouâ* pour que l'âme du vieux puisse assouvir sa faim et se désaltérer.

Le grand deuil dure au moins trois jours et durant tout ce temps, les gens du village se reposent [4]. De toutes parts, on accourt nombreux pour assister au *djansa* et tenir compagnie au nouveau chef de famille. Et cela se conçoit; pour peu que la famille se respecte, le *d'lo* coule à flot, et pour se gorger de bière de mil, un noir ne redoute ni la marche ni le soleil. A la fin du grand deuil, du grand *sanga fo* [5], il y a foule, tous les amis sont là pour rendre une dernière fois les honneurs au vieillard disparu, et introniser son remplaçant. Les femmes pilent de l'écorce de caïlcédra, la détrempent dans l'eau et la vont répandre dans la case du défunt. Armées d'un balai en paille sèche, elles la balaient de fond en comble, elles ramassent les ordures dans une calebasse hors d'usage et vont jeter le tout au *da-n-koun*[1] du quartier. Pour ceci elles s'organisent en procession; une vieille mégère marche devant, brandissant le balai et moitié dansant, moitié marchant tout ce monde hurle:

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[1] Au lieu d'un poulet on glisse un œuf couvé s'il s'agit d'une femme.

[2] Si le défunt possède un chien, il est toujours assommé à moins que de son vivant le vieux en ait décidé autrement. On trouve des Bambara, des femmes surtout, qui élèvent un chien pour avoir cet honneur et exclusivement pour cela. Aux yeux des noirs ce n'est pas un sacrifice.

[3] Ici encore il n'y a pas sacrifice aux yeux du nègre.

[4] Pour des chefs religieux de marque *(gnéna-u-sonnaba)* par exemple, il y a souvent 8 jours de repos si la saison le permet. Pendant l'hivernage c'est impossible, les travaux pressent.

[5] *Sanga fo* signifie aller porter ses condoléances à une famille à l'occasion d'un décès.

«Fari ô, fari doun ka di
Malakou, salakou
Fari ô, fari doun ka di»[2].

Traduction: «Ah! qu'il est doux de manger de la purée de haricots *(fari)* et d'en manger tout son sâoul, ah! qu'il est doux de manger de la purée de haricots!»

Les filles et petites-filles excisées du défunt portent le deuil environ huit à dix jours. Durant ce temps elles se tiennent dans le *b'lon* ou case d'entrée et filent le coton. Le seul fait à noter c'est qu'elles couchent toutes dans une même case, et satisfont au besoins naturels à des heures déterminées, car soir et matin, elles se rendent dans la brousse, à la file indienne, un voile blanc sur la tête. La femme (les femmes, si notre vieux était polygame) porte durant toute la lune qui suit le décès, des sandales en peau de chèvre et ne sort que vêtue de blanc.

A la fin de la lune, les femmes du défunt deviennent la propriété du chef de famille, qui les fait siennes ou les donne à ses enfants circoncis[3]. Une certaine liberté leur est laissée, elles peuvent se racheter, si bon leur semble, pour les vieilles et les usées les difficultés sont vite aplanies. Si le nouveau chef est sans frère et sans enfants, s'il est plus âgé que le disparu, les femmes lui appartiennent mais il ne peut les faire siennes. Celles-ci restent dès lors sans mari à moins qu'elles ne se rachètent, et elles ne tardent pas à devenir des *soungourou*[4].

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[1] *Da-n-koun* angle de terre formé par des sentiers qui se croisent. Hors du village par suite.

[2] Chant entendu au Bani. Ces chants étant souvent improvisés, ils changent d'une région à l'autre.

[3] Les frères succèdent aux frères. A défaut de frères l'aîné des enfants hérite. Si le défunt est moins âgé que le frère héritier, celui-ci a les femmes et n'en peut user. Si l'héritier est le fils, toutes les femmes du père ou du grand-père sont à lui, il peut user de toutes, sauf de sa mère.

[4] *Soungourou* femme qui se livre au premier venu.

Enterrement d'un chef de famille ou de 2e classe.

Les honneurs rendus aux vieillards, aux grands-pères j'entends, étant connus, il ne me reste désormais qu'à procéder par élimination et à dire ce qui ne se fait pas pour les autres. Marié ou non marié, le *gouatigi* ou chef de famille reçoit des honneurs identiques ou peu s'en faut, à ceux des vieillards. S'il n'est pas chasseur et ne compte parmi ses enfants aucun adepte de la secte, son décès ne s'annonce point à coups de fusil pourtant, et sauf le *djansa* qui soir et matin se fait trois jours durant, il n'y a pas de danses. A la levée du corps, personne non plus ne vient s'accuser ou s'excuser d'un manque de respect ou d'un manque d'égard à son endroit. Par l'intermédiaire du hérault ou préposé aux pompes funèbres, chacun lui offre ses hommages et sa pincée de cauris, et après une demande de pardon faite d'une façon générale, on récite la prière.

S'il meurt sans enfant ou est mis au tombeau un mercredi ou un samedi, jours néfastes, il reçoit pour payer sa bienvenue aux esprits, en entrant dans le *Lahara* une poulette blanche, et il la reçoit vivante. A une femme de *gouatigi* que l'on enterre un jour néfaste ou qui meurt sans avoir donné le jour à un enfant [1], on glisse dans la tombe un œuf de poule couvé.

Enterrement des mariés qui ne sont pas chefs de famille ou de 3e classe.

Les mariés qui n'ont pas l'honneur d'être *gouatigi* ou chef de famille, n'ont le coup de fusil que s'ils appartiennent à la secte des chasseurs. Pour eux, point de voûte avec planchettes, éclats de bois ou briques séchées, on jette sur le cadavre quelques branches d'arbre et la fosse est comblée. A la levée du corps, on récite la prière mais personne n'offre les cauris et il n'y a pas *djansa* [2]. Ils reçoivent, suivant le sexe, une poule blanche ou un œuf, si l'enterrement se fait un samedi ou un mercredi, ou encore s'ils meurent sans enfant, et le chien, fidèle compagnon des voyages dans la brousse, n'est pas assommé[1].

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[1] Celle qui a donné le jour à un enfant et l'a allaité, n'est pas dans ce cas, si elle vient à disparaître après tous ses enfants. C'est une honte de recevoir un œuf de poule par ce qu'on n'a pas eu d'enfants. La règle est la même pour les hommes.

[2] J'ai vu faire le *djansa* même pour des jeunes gens circoncis et non mariés. C'est une exception, cette coutume n'est pas générale.

Enterrement des non-mariés ou de 4e classe.

Aux circoncis et aux excisées non-mariés, on offre surtout des pleurs. Ils n'ont pas accompli le cycle de leur existence, ils l'ont à peine commencé, et à la mort de l'un d'eux, le village entier est dans la consternation. Après avoir présenté ses condoléances, le *gnâma-n-sonnaba* ou *dougoutigi* (le chef religieux) se retire en sa case, il n'apparait à aucune des cérémonies funèbres.

Pour ceux-ci il y a rarement *djansa,* et le cadavre couché dans la tombe ne reçoit même pas de branchages pour le mettre à l'abri de la terre dont on le recouvre. N'ayant pas eu d'enfants, le jeune homme reçoit sa poule vivante et la fillette son œuf.

Enterrements des femmes enceintes ou mourant en couches.

La mort d'une femme enceinte ou mourant en donnant le jour à son enfant, jette l'émoi dans toute la gent féminine. Pour apaiser les esprits, pour chasser les *gnâma*, pour mettre le village à l'abri d'un nouveau malheur de ce genre, toutes les excisées vont couper des branches de *karité (Bassia Parkii)* ou de *dogora.* Au moment où l'on porte la morte en terre, elles s'élancent hors du village criant et pleurant. Par trois fois, elles se retournent vers le village, et hurlent en agitant leurs branches trois *hou* qui vous troublent et vous glacent.

Sur le bord de la fosse, le plus souvent dans la fosse même, un forgeron — chirurgien d'occasion — sort l'enfant, en donne le sexe et le couche près de la mère[2]. Pendant l'opération la foule toujours se retire et notre forgeron reste seul avec son aide. Le travail achevé, ils se lavent les mains sur la tombe même et l'opérateur fait la prière accoutumée: «Que le vent vienne de l'Est ou de l'Ouest, du Nord ou du Sud etc., v. ci-haut p. 221.

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[1] La coutume d'offrir la bouillie ou *tô* n'est pas générale.

[2] Si la morte a déjà accouché, l'enfant mort-né est enroulé dans la natte de la mère. Si l'opération a lieu pour la non accouchée, c'est moins pour sauver la vie à l'enfant que pour éviter la honte de l'œuf à la défunte. Un nouveau-né privé de sa mère est un condamné à mort. Sans doute on ne l'étrangle pas, mais pas une femme ne veut lui donner le sein . . . et le petiot meurt de faim. Si une femme par compassion venait à l'allaiter, les esprits et les *gnâma* se vengeraient en faisant périr le sien. Une mère qui a perdu son enfant, peut adopter un orphelin et lui donner le sein.

§ 5. Sacrifices aux fétiches à l'occasion d'un décès.

Si au décès il n'y a aucun sacrifice aux mânes du défunt et aux mânes des ancêtres, le sang ne laisse pas de couler. Il coule même à flots, car non content d'ensanglanter ses *boli* de famille, le Bambara rougit de sang tous les fétiches *boli* supposés coupables. Les adeptes des sectes n'oublient pas non plus les confrères défunts, et pour l'ami qui s'initia au jour où ils s'initièrent eux mêmes, ils ne sauraient refuser au *boli* la poule et la noix de kola. Si le défunt est un maître de fétiche, son prêtre, un influent de l'état-major, tous les adeptes s'exécutent, le sacrifice devient général. Ils font plus, car le soir ils sortent le dieu de son temple et toute la nuit, ils mêlent leurs hurlements de fauves aux beuglements des cornes et des trompes sacrées, soufflées par des héraults qui portent bien souvent sur la tête un masque hideux et cornu, et se revêtent d'un manteau de plumes.

80 fois sur 100 la mort est attribuée à un *boli* puissant qui se venge, punit ou récompense, et le *Komo,* le *Nia,* le *Kono,* le *Nama* et le *Douga* sont, aux environs de Ségou, ceux qui ont le plus de décès à leur actif. Le *boli* meurtrier connu, tout le village en est averti; on suspend aux branches de l'arbre sacré sous lequel gîte le fétiche, à la porte de son temple, les culottes, la blouse, la couverture de nuit du défunt ou son *tafé*[1] s'il s'agit d'une femme, et les membres de l'état-major savent faire mousser leur dieu. Dans ces circonstances ils sont sans pitié, ils vous saignent à blanc la famille éprouvée, et l'impôt réclamé par nos commandants de cercle[2] n'est rien comparé à l'impôt qu'il leur faut verser.

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[1] *Tafé,* pièce d'étoffe rectangulaire que les femmes enroulent autour de leurs corps pour se couvrir.

[2] L'impôt de capitation est de 3,50 frcs par personne et de 5 frcs pour les domestiques des Européens . . . La France ici n'est certes pas un «tyran», elle est une tendre mère.

Pour un sacrifice au *Komo* par exemple, que ne faut-il pas donner? Toute la maison est sans dessus dessous pour trouver des chèvres, des chiens, des noix de kola, des coqs et des poules, du *gnâma-n-kou (Amormum méléguéta)* et du *djalakoúma* (plante d'ont j'ignore le nom). Il lui faut cela coûte que coûte, et si elle doit acheter le tout; c'est le double, le triple de la valeur des objets à verser, on profite de la nécessité. Un chien ou une chèvre est d'abord sacrifié pour apaiser le fétiche et lui rendre les honneurs. Pour savoir s'il est satisfait maintenant et s'il a assouvi sa haine, deux coqs rouges et deux poules aux cous dorés mordent la poussière. Deux *bara*[1] (calebasses), l'une pleine de fruits de *gnâma-n-kou* et l'autre de *djalakouma,* sont offerts. Une partie de ces fruits sert aux eaux lustrales[2], l'autre est vendue au bénéfice de l'état-major, qui vit, celui-ci, de l'autel. Pour le seul fait d'avoir tué un chien ou une chèvre, dont-il reçoit une bonne partie des viandes, il a pour honoraires un panier de sorgho (18 à 20 kilos) et 1600 cauris (environ 2 frcs).

Les adeptes du fétiche étant les seuls à pouvoir toucher le cadavre et le déposer en sa dernière demeure, ils reçoivent de ce chef 8000 à 10000 cauris (soit 8 à 10 frcs). A la fin du *sangafo*[3] l'escorte du dieu vient balayer la case mortuaire et la désinfecter avec ses eaux lustrales, elle chasse les derniers *gnâma* du *Komo* meurtrier, et pour ceci cinq belles poules sont égorgées. Pour prix de son dérangement la famille lui remet encore 5 à 6 mètres d'étoffe, 8 à 10 *ba*[4] (soit 8 à 10 frcs), elle ne s'en tire pas avec 50 frcs.

Elle n'en supporte heureusement pas tous les frais! les amis l'aident un peu, chacun lui apporte son obole; de l'un elle a une poule, de l'autre un *débé* (40 cauris), un *kémé* (80 cauris). Le fort de la dépense lui reste pourtant, et nos fétiches sont une des principales causes de ces engagements d'enfants[1] qui ne sont rien moins qu'un esclavage déguisé. Le noir, devant un Européen, se plait à dire qu'il ne peut faire face à son impôt, mais qu'on se garde de trop l'écouter — 99 fois sur 100 il ment! — Ne partons pas en guerre contre le militaire et le civil chargé de prélever l'impôt qui n'a rien d'exorbitant, que l'on songe avant tout aux *boli*, à leurs état-majors, une bande de gens sans foi ni loi, des vautours humains aux doigts rapaces, qui s'attaquent aux faibles, aux veuves et aux orphelins, qui les terrifient par leurs menaces de mort et ne les laissent tranquilles, qu'après avoir tout pris: poules, chèvres, chiens, cauris, sorgho, et souvent la liberté.

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[1] Ce *bara* (grosse courge avec une petite ouverture à son sommet) pourrait contenir de 18 à 20 litres de liquide. La vraie calebasse est une moitié de courge.

[2] Eau lustrale du *Komo* se fait avec les racines et les feuilles du *djalakouma*, les fruits du *gnâma-n-kou* ou du *sa-yaaka* (j'ignore le nom de cette plante) mises à bouillir et à macérer dans de l'eau. Pour la rendre efficace on offre deux noix de kola au moins au fétiche et on lui sacrifie cinq poules.

[3] *Sangafo* aller présenter ses condoléances aux parents d'un défunt.

[4] *Ba* vaut 800 cauris, environ 1 frcs. (Le Bambara compte par 40 et 80, et nullement par 50 et 100. 40 = *débé*, 80 = *kémé*.)

§ 6. Honneurs rendus aux adeptes du *Koré* ou *Koté*.

Les adeptes d'un fétiche ne restent jamais indifférents à la mort d'un confrère, et ils ont vite fait de trouver une poule et une noix de kola, pour attester de leur attachement au disparu et apaiser le courroux du dieu. La secte du *koré* fait largement les choses, elle le fait même pompeusement, s'il y a quelque pompe dans ces orgies nocturnes où l'on boit le *d'lo* ou bière de mil, au point d'en perdre la raison, où l'on danse des danses lascives et obscènes.

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[1] Un engagé, tout comme l'esclave, travaille pour sa nourriture. Sa condition est inférieure à celle de l'esclave. Celui reçoit en plus de la nourriture un bout d'étoffe pour se couvrir et l'engagé non. L'esclave se rachète pour une somme variant entre 100 et 200 frcs. Actuellement il peut s'enfuir sans crainte d'être poursuivi et sans rien verser du tout. Un engagé, qu'il s'enfuie ou non, doit verser, jusqu'au dernier cauri, la somme de son engagement. On trouve des noirs qui pour une certaine somme vous donnent un de leurs enfants pour un an, deux ans. Ces enfants ne sont pas payés, la somme a déjà été versée, mais ils touchent en plus de la nourriture le vêtement et certaines gratifications sur le *boni* du travail. Le Bambara manquant de mots appelle ceci encore «engagement» bien que ce soit au fond une véritable «domesticité». Le temps fixé écoulé ces jeunes gens retournent chez eux sans aucune redevance à verser. Bien qu'appelant cela engagement le noir y met une différence: a) l'esclavage est une *tare* qui toujours reste; b) l'engagement vrai est une *tare* qui ne disparait que si l'engagé verse lui même le prix de son engagement; c) l'engagement qui s'appelle «domesticité», ne constitue aucune *tare*, ils sont travailleurs et pas hommes de peine.

Quand un jeune homme *koré dé* (fils du *koré*, adepte de la secte) passe de vie à trépas, parents et amis font rougir de sang l'arbre sacré et l'emblème du génie, le *kârá*, planche ajourée, peinte en rouge et en blanc. Bien qu'au village le deuil soit général, on sèche ses larmes quand vient le soir, et durant trois nuits, c'est dans le *koré tou* (le bois sacré) le vacarme sans nom, les hurlements sans fin, des adeptes se flagellant, se brûlant l'échine avec des torches, se déchirant le buste avec des épines, se livrant à leurs danses barbares et s'oubliant dans leurs gestes obscènes en face du *dénouba* (tambours mesurant de 1 m à 1,50 m) et du *kingé* (triangle, tube de fer, qui se suspend au pouce de la main gauche et sur lequel on frappe avec un anneau ou un ongle de fer passé au petit doigt).

Pour les vieillards, auxquels on n'accorde ni une larme ni un regret mais des danses et des chants, les confrères accourent nombreux, et la nuit qui précède l'enfouissement, ils font vacarme et charivari devant le cadavre exposé sous les gros arbres qui ombragent l'entrée du village. C'est là un rite des plus lugubres et des plus macabres! Après l'enterrement, trois nuits de suite, ces mêmes honneurs lui sont rendus devant l'arbe fétiche, au *koré tou* (bois sacré), et si le trépassé est un *korétigi* (chef de la secte du *koré*), un *gnéna-n-sonnaba* (chef de village, prêtre du *dasiri*), un *bolitigi* (chef de *boli*), un *flélikéla* (sorcier de renom), un *gouatigi* (chef de famille), un *souroukou tigi*, un *korodouga tigi* (un chef de groupe de la secte[1], ils continuent souvent leurs orgies huit jours durant, se gorgeant de *d'lo* (bière) et s'enivrant.

L'anniversaire des vieillards, de ceux qui ont eu du renom, de l'autorité, et de l'autorité surtout dans la secte, se fait régulièrement tous les ans, et on fait mémoire en ce jour des membres de la famille ayant appartenu à la secte. De toutes parts la jeunesse accourt nombreuse pour se livrer à ses danses barbares, et comme la bière coule à flots, c'est une beuverie qui n'a pas de nom. Pour ne pas offrir le *d'lo* (bière de mil) il faudrait que le famille fût réduite à la plus noire des misères.

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[1] Voir mon chapitre sur le *koré* ou *koté*.

Le matin qui suit ces danses en l'honneur d'un *koré dé* défunt, on dépose en grande pompe au *dankoun ba*[1] du village en *saraka,* les restes des torches des *tatougoula*[2], les gaules brisées cassées effilochées des *bisatjila*[3], les balais d'épine des *woni sama*[4], la branche feuillue enfin ayant servie aux *korodouga*[5] à chasser les étincelles grésillant sur le dos des *tatougoula.*

§ 7. Enterrement des excommuniés.

Aux ladres, aux lépreux et à ceux qu'un fétiche a tués et dont le sacrifice n'a pas été agréé, on peut donner le nom d'excommuniés. Tout adulte qui meurt sans chevelure et sans un poil sur le corps, n'a pas le droit aux honneurs de la sépulture Bambara, on lui donne celle des lépreux.

Un lépreux n'est jamais enterré dans le cimetière commun, on l'expédie au loin, dans la brousse; dans un endroit à part. D'ordinaire, et cette coutume même est plus générale, on le glisse dans un baobab creux *(Adansonia digitata)* avec pour compagnon, un petit poulet vivant — ou un œuf, s'il s'agit d'une fille. — Le glabre a le même sort.

La raison de cette coutume est que cette catégorie de gens est abandonnée du créateur et des esprits, qui tous les méprisent et s'éloignent d'eux. Si jamais le sol où reposent les ancêtres, recevait la dépouille de l'un de ces maudits, leurs ossements frémiraient de dégoût. Ils se vengeraient du reste d'avoir à reposer près de gens qui de leur vivant furent sans poils, ils seraient sourds à toute prière, refuseraient tout sacrifice; ce serait pour le village, pour toute la région, un manque total de pluies, une sècheresse à nulle autre pareille, la famine enfin avec toutes ses horreurs.

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[1] *Dankoun* angle de terre formé par deux sentiers qui se croisent, *dankoun-ba* — grand *dankoun*, le *dankoun* le plus en vogue au village.

[2] *Tatougoula* ceux qui dansent avec le feu.

[3] *Bisatjila* ceux qui se flagellent.

[4] *Woni sama* ceux qui se grattent avec des épines.

[5] *Korodouga* bouffons, griots de la secte.

Il arrive aussi que la victime d'un *boli* devient pour le village et la région un être impur, un être abject qui n'a que trop vécu. Ceci arrive, lorsque le fétiche meurtrier ou supposé tel, refuse par trois fois les sacrifices offerts pour l'apaiser[1]. Lorsque le cas se présente, la famille entière, hommes, femmes et enfants, doit taire ses cris et, quelle que soit sa douleur, ne pas pleurer. Les chefs de famille se perdent en sacrifices, les adeptes de la secte aussi et tout le monde remercie le *boli* d'avoir fait disparaître un individu qui ne méritait que le mépris et n'eût jamais dû vivre, le suppliant de n'encourir jamais pareil sort et de ne pas lui ressembler.

Quand la fosse est creusée (fosse simple et sans niche), les gens du *boli* meurtrier[2] viennent et roulent le cadavre dans une natte. L'ayant bien cousu, bien ficelé, ils le prennent sur leurs épaules et au pas de charge se dirigent vers la porte de sortie. Ici ils s'arrêtent et sans respect aucun, déposent brusquement le mort. Armés de pioches, ils font une ouverture dans le mur de la case et saisissant le cadavre par les pieds, il le traînent et l'introduisent dans cette ouverture. Des mains vigoureuses à l'extérieur le saisissent, et ceux-ci tirant et les autres poussant, notre excommunié sort de son logis et apparaît dans la ruelle ou sur la place. Quatre gaillards — des fils du fétiche, car ceux-ci seuls assistent à ces enterrements — le prennent sur leurs épaules, et le portent en courant au cimetière. Sur le bord de la fosse, ils déposent leur fardeau, et les adeptes poussant un grand cri, une sorte de rugissement, le font rouler du pied dans sa dernière demeure. Pour ceux-ci pas le moindre adieu, pas la moindre prière, et on comble aussitôt la fosse.

Le soir il y a sortie du fétiche et nos adeptes se livrent à leurs danses sacrées, pendant que le dieu, aux mains des ses prêtres, court dans le village et aux alentours pour exorciser. Ce n'est durant toute la nuit que beuglements de cornes et de trompes, hymnes sacrés hurlés par la foule; on dirait de loin de sourds rugissements ou de vrais cris de fauves.

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[1] Un sacrifice n'est pas agréé quand la poule chargée de donner le réponse du dieu meurt sur le ventre, les pattes sous elle, et que la noix de kola fendue en deux retombe sur sa pulpe, la partie sphérique en haut.

[2] Quand un *boli* a tué quelqu'un, ce sont les gens de ce *boli* qui viennent l'enterrer. Ce n'est pas toujours un *boli* du village, il est quelque *fois* à 1, 2 et 3 jours de marche, et si les gens de ce *fétiche* ne peuvent venir aussitôt, v. g. ils enterrent ailleurs un homme tué par le dieu, on ferme la porte de la case où se trouve le cadavre et on attend qu'ils plaise aux fossoyeurs de venir. J'ai vu un cadavre de forgeron demeurer ainsi quatre jours pleins. Ce sont les sorciers qui nomment le *boli* et le village où il se trouve.

§ 8. Culte des morts.

Au décès d'un Bambara, pas le moindre sacrifice s'adressant à lui ou aux défunts de la famille! Chez lui pourtant le culte des morts est en honneur, et s'il ne peut être comparé au culte des génies, au culte des *boli* surtout, pas de jour néanmoins, où l'on ne voie à la porte de l'une ou de l'autre famille, sur le mur, à un mètre environ du sol, une large flaque de sang, une poulpe brunâtre dirait-on, jetant d'ici de là ses bras tordus et se débattant contre une pincée de plumes collées sur son échine, par le jus d'une noix de kola mâchée. Certains ont vu dans ce culte le fond de la religion du nègre et ne pouvant donner, faute de savoir la langue sans doute, un sens exact aux termes perçus par leurs oreilles, ils nous montrent le Bambara toujours le couteau à la main pour égorger en l'honneur des parents. Comme ils confondent tout *saraka* et sacrifice, comme ils ignorent les us et les coutumes du pays, ils prennent pour des sacrifices aux mânes des ancêtres, des sacrifices faits aux génies *gnéna* ou *djiné* et aux génies *gnâ* ou *boli.*

Le culte des morts n'a donc pas toute l'ampleur que l'on se plaît parfois à lui donner. Le Bambara n'adresse du reste ses hommages qu'aux défunts ayant possédé une bribe d'autorité sur cette terre, aux *gnéna-n-sonnaba,* les *dougoutigi* (chefs de villages, prêtres du *dasiri*), aux *sotigi* (chefs de quartiers) et aux *gouatigi*[1] (chefs de familles), et ces hommages s'adressent moins aux individus eux-mêmes, qu'à l'autorité possédée par eux.

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[1] Le *gouatigi* chef de la famille est appele *fa* père. Ce mot «père» doit être pris dans un sens large, le *gouatigi* pour beaucoup de la famille est un grand père, un frère, un oncle. Faire un sacrifice au *fa sou* (*fa* père, *sou* cadavre) ne veut pas dire faire un sacrifice au père qui vous a engendré, mais faire un sacrifice au père de la famille, à celui qui portait le titre du *gouatigi.* — La femme principale de ces *gnéna-n-sonnaba, sotigi* et *gouatigi* reçoit comme son mari sa part dans le sacrifice.

Le premier sacrifice à un chef, à un ancêtre, se fait un an après sa mort et à la seconde grande fête qui suit le décès. Pour avoir droit à la coulée de sang, il faut que le *sangafo*[1] soit achevé et il se termine à la première fête qui se fait à la fin du *sounkalo* (*soun* jeûne, *kalo* mois) ou Ramadan[2].

Le grand sacrifice aux morts se fait à fin du Ramadan, et à la fête du كبش (mouton). Le *gnéna-n-sonnaba* ou *dougoutigi* sacrifie d'abord au *b'lon da ba sou*[3], à ceux qui comme lui furent prêtres du *dasiri* et, d'une façon générale, à tous ceux qui dans le village eurent quelque autorité, tant civile que religieuse. Tous les membres de son conseil assistent à ce sacrifice. Après les libations de farine délayée dans de l'eau, de *d'lo* ou bière de mil, une belle poule blanche[4] est égorgée et parfois un mouton. Deux noix de kola blanches sont alors offertes, et si le sacrifice a été agréé, on arrache à la victime une pincée de poils, quelques plumes, que l'on colle au milieu de la flaque de sang, en crachant dessus un bout de noix de kola mâchée. Le sacrifice général achevé, chaque membre du conseil offre sa poule blanche et sa noix de kola.

Quand le village a rendu les honneurs aux *blonda ba sou*, les *sotigi* (chefs de quartiers) rassemblent les *gouatigi* (chefs de famille) soumis à leur autorité, et tous nos gens sacrifient comme pécedemment aux mânes de ceux qui furent chefs de quartier[5]. Chaque chef de famille retourne alors en sa demeure, il rassemble ses enfants et il sacrifie aux mânes de ses pères, à ceux qui comme lui furent chefs de famille.

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[1] *Sangafo* faire des condoléances à l'occasion d'un décès.

[2] La grande fête des noirs se fait à la fin du Ramadan. Ils en ont une seconde à la fête du كبش (mouton). Les maîtres musulmans les forcèrent à faire ces deux fêtes, mais nos Bâmbara n'ont pris aucun rite musulman. Ils sacrifient au *dasiri*, à certains génies *djiné* et aux morts.

[3] *Sou* cadavres, *b'lon da ba* du grand *b'lon*, de la grande case d'entrée donnant accès dans le village.

[4] Dans les sacrifices généraux où toute la population au encore toute la secte participe, on vise avant tout à la couleur liturgique et un poulet d'un jour a autant de valeur qu'un gros coq. Quand on n'a pas pu se procurer une victime liturgique, on offre l'eau, le *dégé* et la noix de kola seulement.

[5] On n'égorge que des poules. Il y a toujours libations de *dégé* (farines délayées dans de l'eau) et de *d'lo* (bière) et offrandes de noix de kola.

Le Bambara sacrifie fort souvent à ses ancêtres, sur l'ordre du sorcier et dans les circonstances un peu importantes de la vie, comme à la circoncision et excision de l'un de ses enfants, aux fiançailles, aux noces[1], mais surtout quand vient l'hivernage et qu'il ensemence ses champs. Ce sont ici de simples sacrifices particuliers, auxquels n'assistent que les gens de la maison, et une simple poule, avec un peu de *dégé* et une noix de kola, en font tous les frais.

La formule du sacrifice n'a rien de spéciale, c'est toujours la même répétition: «Je t'offre ce *dégé,* ce *d'lo,* cette poule, c'est un sacrifice que je te fais en mon nom et au nom de mes enfants. Préserve-nous des *souba*, des maléfices et des méchants. Sois bon pour nous, préserve-nous de la maladie, donne nous des femmes, des enfants sains, fais qu'au temps de l'hivernage nous ayons de la pluie, de la santé pour faire nos champs et une excellente récolte.»

Le sacrifice aux morts se fait le plus souvent sur le seuil de la porte de la case d'entrée, et une flaque de sang est répandue sur le mur à un mètre cinquante environ du sol, de chaque côté de la porte. Bien des familles ont aussi dans leur *b'lon* principal un autel pour sacrifier aux défunts. C'est le *kârâ*, bas-relief en terre représentant un homme et une femme. Tout ceci est grossièrement fait et n'a rien d'humain. On devine pourtant ce que nos noirs ont voulu représenter, la femme, tout comme son conjoint, sans bouche, sans oreille, sans nez, sans yeux, est toujours ornée de deux beaux seins.

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[1] Beaucoup de Bambara ne sacrifient même pas dans ces circonstances (circoncision, noces, fiançailles), ils préfèrent s'adresser aux *boli* familiaux qu'ils redoutent d'avantage. A l'hivernage tous sacrifient aux mânes des ancêtres.

Index
rerum et nominum.

(Les chiffres en parenthèse signifient une note en bas de la page indiquée.)

Abdul-Hamid 4.
Adam 83.
adultère 161.
agriculture 5, 8.
Aguibou (1).
Allah 66, (75).
Amadou Cheikou 1 s., 31.
anges 66.
animisme 29.
Arabie (131).
ARCHINARD 1.
avortement 164.

Baba (3).
Baganda (77).
Bagoué 3 s.
Bamako 2, 4, (77).
Bambara (le) 5, 8 s.
  — (la) 5, 9.
  — (pays) 1—5.
  — (nom) 68, (77), (132).
Bambako (77).
Bandjagara (1).
Bani 3 s., 80, (112).
Banifign 3, 4.
Baoulé 3.
banfla 7.
Bélékoun 3.
beuverie 124 s.
blasphémies 71.
Bodyan 3.
bogi 7.
bogo 6.
  — *tigi* 6.
boli = *gnà* (25), 35, 38, 40, 62, 65, 69 ss., 127, 130.
  — de petite envergure 134.
  — de grosse envergure 138.
  — parleurs 155.
BONNACORSI 3.
Bougouni 3.
Boso 4 s.
BRINTON 18.

Caïman (77).
cauri 45, 46.
chapelet 123.
chasseurs 135 s.
chef de famille (22), 73.
  — de quartier 73.
  — de village 73.
  — de canton 73.
chéitane 71.
circoncision 175—198.
coiffure 7 s.
collines 4.
conari (88).
Constantinople 4.
COPPE (134).
couleur liturgique 32.
couteau 8.
couture 9.
croisements des sentiers 87.
croyances aux forces de la nature 12 ss.
  — aux esprits 29 s.
  — en Dieu 61 ss.
culte 89.
  — des *gnà* ou *boli* 127—156.

culte des *guéna* 105.
— des morts 56, 232.
— à Satan 127—156.

Dambélé 18, 23.
danses 105 ss.
dasiri (fétiche) 37, 100 ss., 115 s.
— choix du *dasiri* 116.
— prêtre 115, 117.
— sacrifice 118.
— formule du sacrifice 119.
dégé 56.
demande en mariage 199.
demeure (209).
dévins 201.
Diangasso 3.
diamou 27.
Dieu 61 ss.
— (nom) 76.
Dinguiray (1).
Dja 41 ss.
Djara 18, 20, 148.
Djéli 5.
Djeliba 3.
Djenné 4.
djin 69, 85.
djiné = *guéna* 4 s., 35, 38, 40, 65, 69, 74, 81, 84 ss.
Diabougou 3.
dloki 6.
dondol (tabou) 20.
dot (203).
dortoir (159).
Douga 48.
dougoutigi 73, 75.
dounkono 49, 50, 53 ss.
DUBERNET 11.

El-Hadj-Omar 1 s.
elephant (*tabou*) 21.
empoisonnement 51 ss.
enfants 5 ss., 167.
enfer 82.
Enterrement des femmes enceintes 225.
— d'un chef de famille 224.
— des mariés 224.
— des non-mariés 225.
Enterrement des vieillards 217.
ensemencement 91.
Eve 83.
excision 181.
exhibition du trousseau 212.
exorcisme 193.
Exterrement des excommuniés 230.

***F**ama* 73.
— *déou* 73.
fanga 33.
femme 151, (209).
— stérile 166.
— enceinte 117, 225.
fiançailles 203.
fini siri 6.
fétiches 149.
fétiche spécial aux femmes 114.
— spécial aux jumeaux 114.
— spécial à l'agriculture 121 s.
fétichisme 4.
fête du *soli si* 177 s.
— du sixième jour 182 s.
— de la sortie des circoncis et des excisées 192 s.
flagellants 123, 125.
flagellation 111.
foli kama 8.
forces de la nature 12 ss.
Founé 5.
fourmilion (tabou) 21.
formule du sacrifice 119.
fornication 161.

Gaoûlo 5.
génies 29 ss., 90.
— notion 29.
— division 30.
— des mares 90.
— des sources 90.
— des puits 90.
— de la moisson 90.
— des enfants 91.
— des jeunes gens 94.
— des jumeaux 96.
— des villages 99.
— des femmes 95.

gnâ = *boli* 32, 71, 74, 127, 130 ss.
gnâ = *boli* notion 127 s.
— legende des *boli* 130.
— deux groupes principaux 134.
gnâma 26—28.
gnéna = *djiné* 30 s., 69, 81, 84 ss.
gné-fla 39, 40, 41 s.
goufa 8.
gouatigi 9, 73.
griot 5.
guitare 5.

Habillements 5 s.
hierarchie 73, 74.

Iguane (tabou) 20.
incirconcis 151, 216.
initiation 122 ss.
Islam 67.

Jours néfastes 221.
jumeaux 96.

Kaarta 3.
Kadria 4.
kafotigi 73.
Kagou 3.
Kari 140.
karité (arbre a beurre) 45, 86.
kana 45 s.
Kinian 4.
Kokry 3.
Kokodjan 4.
kola (noix de) 52, 56, 121.
Kolokourou 3.
Kouloukoro 1, 4.
Komo (48), 63, 81, 147, 149, 186, 189.
Kono (48), 147, 148 s.
kouloubali 17, 18.
korti 46, 49, 53 ss.
koré = *koté* 121 s., 102.
koté = *koré* 121 s., 102.
Kouralé 3.
Koutiala 4.
Koyaté 5.

Lahara 60, 61, 220 s.
LAFOSSE (DE) (77).
LANG 16.
lempé (6).
LONG 16.
loup-garou 88.

Mabo 5.
Madani 2.
Mage 2, 31.
Malado 3.
maladie 44 ss.
— de sommeil 3.
malédiction 26.
Malinkés (150).
mariage 199—213.
Marka 4 s.
— Dougouba 4.
Mary Djara 1, 2, 3.
Massa 73, 99.
masques 123, 125, 144, 148.
Mecque 70, 130 s.
Mérig 42.
métamorphose 38 s.
Minianka 77.
ministre 73.
Mopti 3.
mpolio 18 s.
mort 47 ss.
moralité 157.
Moungana (1).
Mountaga 1.
musique 147.

Nama 40, 48, 80, 147, 149 s., 187, 190.
Nangola 4.
naissance 165.
nia 48, 148.
NICOLAY 16, 89, (167).
Niger 1, 3, 4.
Nioro 1, 2.
Njibi 3.
n'go 34.
N'golo 79, 94.
— (fétiche spécial aux circoncis) 112.
Ngouansa 40.
noces 126.
nom de l'enfant 169.
Nouango 3.
Noumou 8.

4: Henry FA8 Bambara

nouriture 9.
n'tomo 92.
— (fétiche special aux enfants) 109 s.
Nyamana 4.

Onanisme (164).
Organisation 73.
Omar el Hadj 31.

Paraoulé 19 s.
paradies 82.
parure 6 s.
perdrix 24.
Perrichon 1, 4.
Peulls (1), 4 s., (130).
pluie 78.
population 4.
prêtre 74, 81, 117.

Quichés 18.
QUINTIN 31, 2.

Réjouissances 105 ss.
religion 66 ss.
résidence 86, 90.
rêve 42.
réviviscence des âmes 56 ss., 83.
ROCHAS (DE) 42.
roi 73.
Roulé 8.

Sa 76 s.
sacerdoce 33 ss.
sacrifice 33, 40, 49, 64, 105, 150, 153.
Sacrifices aux fétiches 226.
— au dasiri 118.
— humains 139.
Samakés 20.
Samono 4 s.
Samory 1.
saraka 63 s., 105 ss.
Say (1).
secte 121.
secte du Siri (40).
sectes 91 s.
Segou 1 ss., 80.
serpent-cracheur (tabou) 19.
Sikasso 3, 4.
singe (tabou) 20.
sinnakoun 154.
Sirakoro 3.
siri 38, (152).
sirikoun 52, 155.
Sokolo 3.
sorciers 33 ss., 44 s.
souba 38 s., 40.
sorcellerie 33 ss.
soungourou 159.
souroukou 88.
souma 3.
sounna 3.
Stambul 4, 70, 131.
stérilité 61.
STOLL 18.

Tabou 15 ss.
tafé 6.
Tankara 17.
tatouage 8, 172.
Tidjani 4.
tné 16 s.
tafo 46.
totem 16 s.
totémisme 16 s.
Toukoro 4.
Touafé Bla 71.
tsétsé 3.

UNDERBERG 3.
unité de l'espèce humaine 83.

Woro 148.

Yaba 7.
Yamina 1, 2, 4.

4: Henry FA8 Bambara

Planches hors texte.

pag.
Au bord du puits, en pays Bambara 6
Berge de Ségou sur le Niger 8
La procession du mariage des chenilles, à Banankourou en juillet 1908 . 14
Fétiche dans la brousse, résidence d'un génie *djiné* (près Bamako) . . 86
La danse sacrée on l'honneur du *N'tomo,* fétiche des enfants . . . 110
Fête du *N'tomo.* Avant la flagellation. — Fête du *N'tomo.* Flagellation des enfants 111
Fête du fétiche *N'golo.* Sortie des *to-n-de,* de l'association des *fla-n-to* . 112
Souba (singe), société du *Korè.* — *Denouba* (grand tambour) et *kinge* (triangle), société du *Korè.* — Chef *korodouga* et son hérault, société du *Korè.* — *Souroukou* (hyène), société du *Korè* 122
Le sacrifice d'un poulet au «*boli* de famille» 137
Procession du *Tji wara.* La jeunesse se rend au champ pour travailler sous les yeux de deux camarades revêtus des insignes du fétiche du travail 143
La danse sacrée en l'honneur du fétiche *Tji wara* ou génie du travail . 144
Danse sacrée du *mourou kalatigi* (sacrificateur) après un sacrifice agréé du fétiche *boli M'biè Djougou* à Talakala. — Colonne du *Magnan,* fétiche *boli* de grosse envergure. — Masque du fétiche *boli Komo.* — Temple du *Nia,* fétiche *boli* de grosse envergure 146
Zanké et le fétiche *boli Kono.* — Temple du fétiche *Kono* 148
Fétiche *Nama* 150
Fétiche *boli,* ayant la forme d'un hippopotame, avec le masque porté durant la danse sacrée 152
Tatouage des femmes du Bani. — Tatouage des jeunes filles de Ségou, fait par elles-mêmes, à l'entour des seins 172
Circoncis Bambara. — Excisées Bambara 176
Circoncis, en tenue de parade. — Jeunes filles Bambara, toilette de sortie 180
Excisée, tenue de parade au Bani. — Excisée, tenue de parade . . 190
Mariage Bambara. On porte le repas à la jeune mariée et à ses filles d'honneur (à Moundjirila) 204
Mariage Bambara. Les invités vont remercier la jeune mariée après le repas. — Mariage Bambara. Cortége d'une mariée se rendant chez son époux 210
Enterrement Bambara. La mise au tombeau 216
Enterrement Bambara. La dernière prière 224
Après le Sacrifice. Le partage des viandes sacrées 226

[p.239]

Figures en texte.

pag.
Enfant portant le pagne dit *yaba* 92
Le masque du *n'tomo* du fétiche des enfants 93
Jeune Bambara tenant le *sinsin*, fétiche des jumeaux 97
Poupée des jumeaux 98
Type de chef Bambara 99
Arbre fétiche *dasiri* (de Songobougou) 101
Tenue du chasseur Bambara 136
***Nia ngoni*. Harpe du fétiche *Nia* 146**
Tube en fer cornu, trompe du fétiche *Komo* (vu à Bagini dans le Bani chez Boya, chef possesseur du fétiche — de 0,30 à 0,35 m de long) 147
Masque du fétiche *Kono* 148
Fétiche *Nama* 149

[p. 240]

p. 6.

Au bord du puits,
en pays Bambara.

[End Plate 1]

[End plate 2]

Phot. du R. P. Dubernet.

Berge de Ségou sur le Niger.

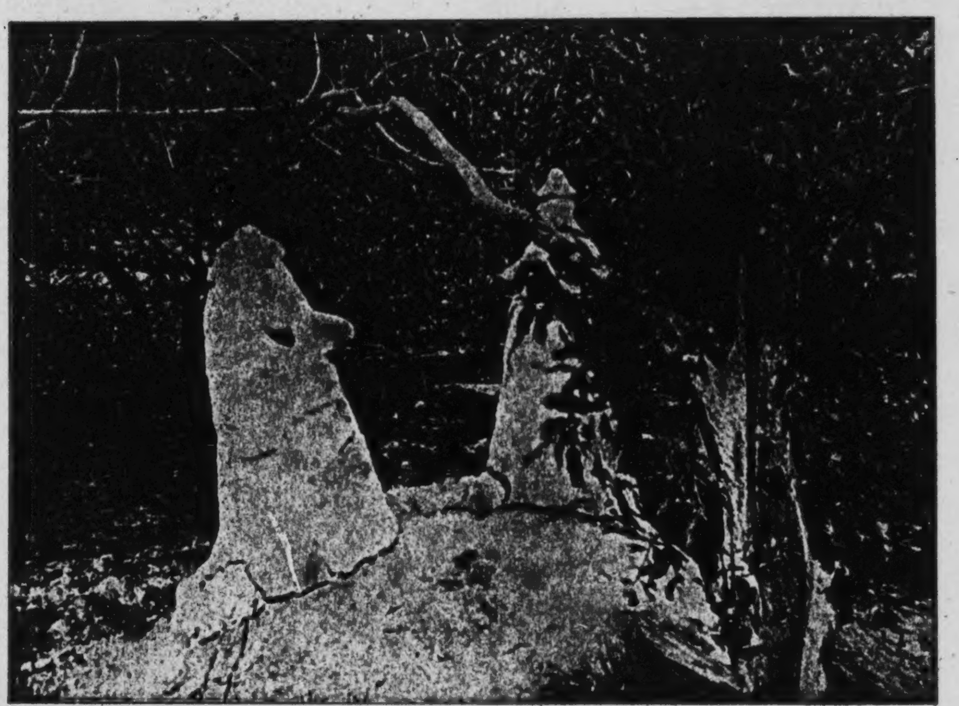
p. 8.

Phot. du R. P. Dubernet. p. 14.

La procession du mariage des chenilles,
à Banankourou en juillet 1906.

[End plate 3]

[End Plate 4]



Phot. du R. P. Dubernet.

p. 96.

Fétiche dans la brousse, résidence d'un génie *djiné* (près Bamako).

[End Plate 5]

Phot. du R. P. Dubernet. p. 110.

La danse sacrée en l'honneur du *N'tomo*, fétiche des enfants.

La case à toit conique, à droite, est le temple du fétiche *boli Nia*.

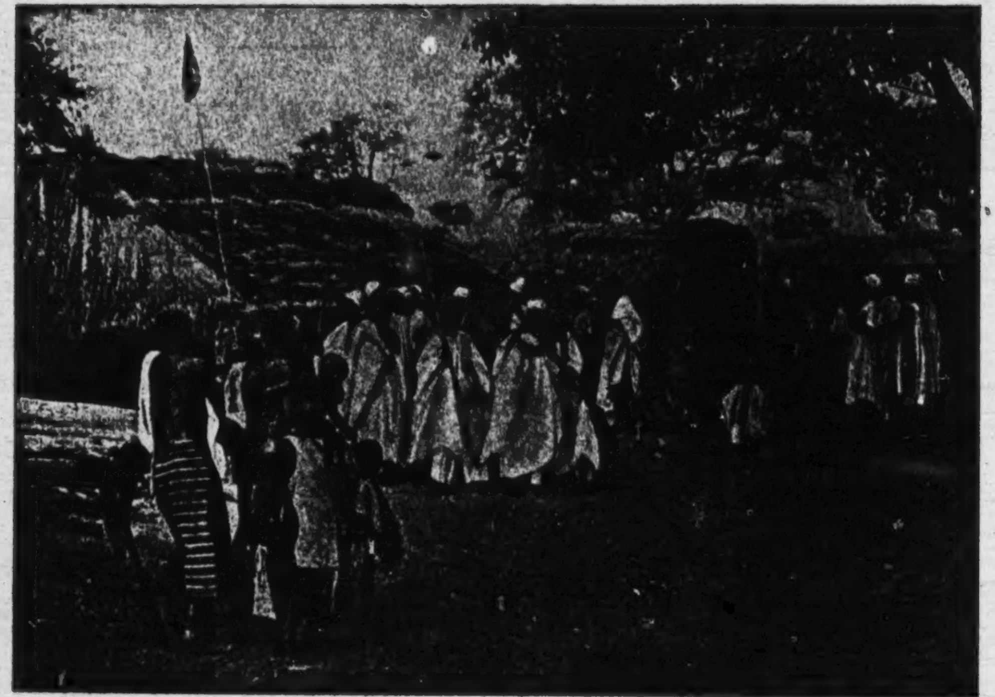
Phot. du R. P. Dubernet. p. 111.

Fête du *N'tomo*.
Flagellation des enfants.

En haut: Fête du *N'tomo*.
Avant la flagellation.

[End Plate 6]

[End Plate 7]



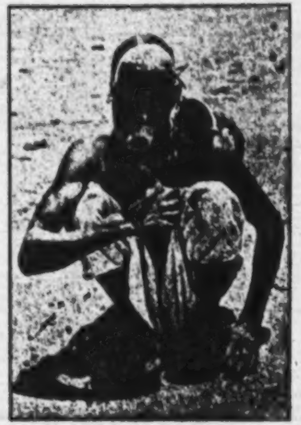
Phot. du R. P. Dubernet.

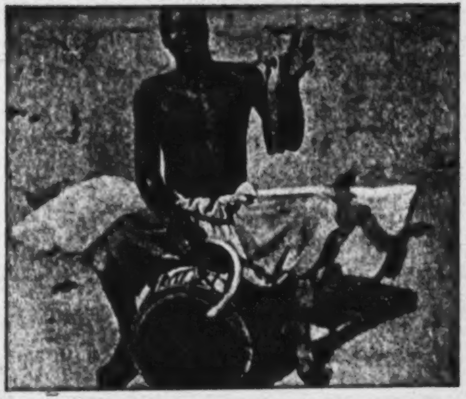
p. 412.

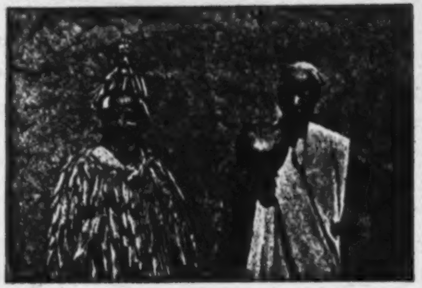
Fête du fétiche *N'golo*.

Sortie des *to-n-de*, de l'association des *fla-n-to*.

[End Plate 8]







p. 122

Souba (singe),
société du *Korè*.

Chef *korodouga* et son hérault,
société du *Korè*.

Souroukou (hyène),
société du *Korè*.

En haut: *Denouba* (grand tambour) et *kinge* (triangle),
société du *Korè*, se joue au Bani à la mort.

4:Henry

FA8 Bambara

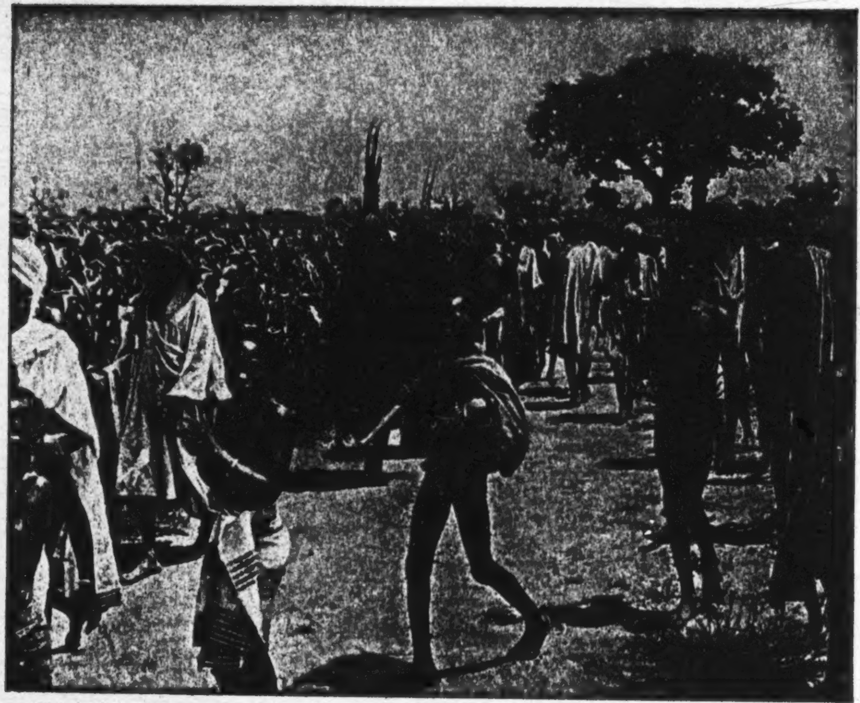
[End Plate 9]

Phot. du R. P. Dubernet.

p. 137.

Le sacrifice d'un poulet au «*boli* de famille».

[End Plate 10]



Phot. du R. P. Dubernet. p. 143.

Procession du *Tji wara*.

La jeunesse se rend au champ pour travailler sous les yeux de deux camarades revêtus des insignes du fétiche du travail.

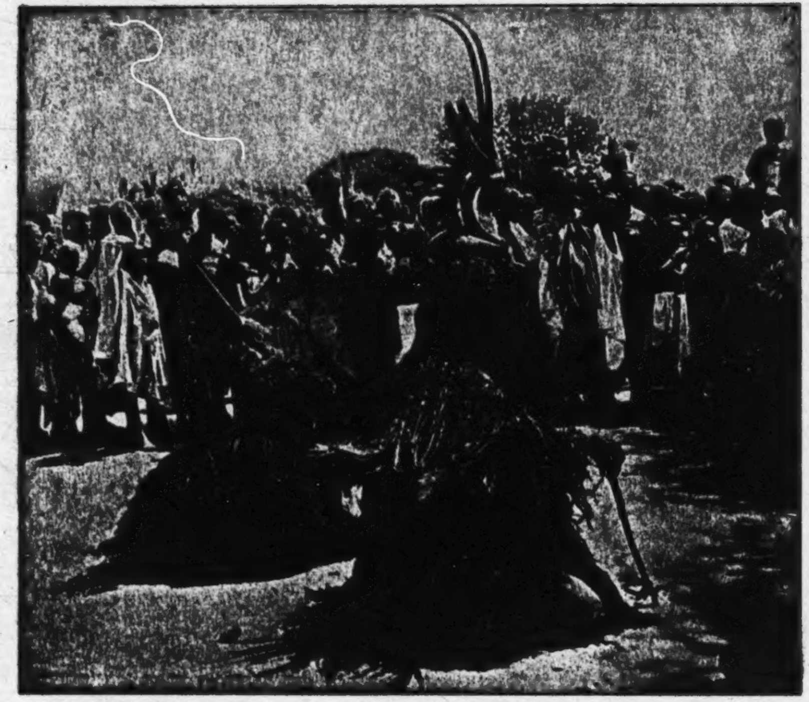
4: Henry

FA8 Bambara

4: Henry

FA8 Bambara

[Epd Plate 11]



Phot. du R. P. Dubernet. p. 144.

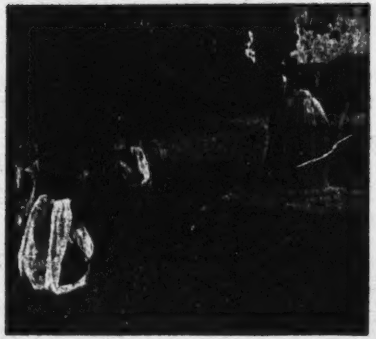
La danse sacrée en l'honneur du fétiche *Tyi wara* ou génie du travail.

4:Henry

[End Plate 12]

Phot. du R. P. Dubernet.

Danse sacrée du *mourou kalatigi* (sacrificateur) après un sacrifice agréé du fétiche *boli M'biè Djougou* à Talakala.



Phot. du R. P. Dubernet.

Masque du fétiche *boli Komo*.

En haut: Colonne du *Magnan*, fétiche *boli* de grosse envergure.

Phot. du R. P. Dubernet. p. 146.

Temple du *Nia*, fétiche *boli* de grosse envergure.

[End Plate 13]

Phot. du R. P. Dubernet.

Kanké et le fétiche *boli Kono.*

p. 148.

Temple du fétiche *Kono.*

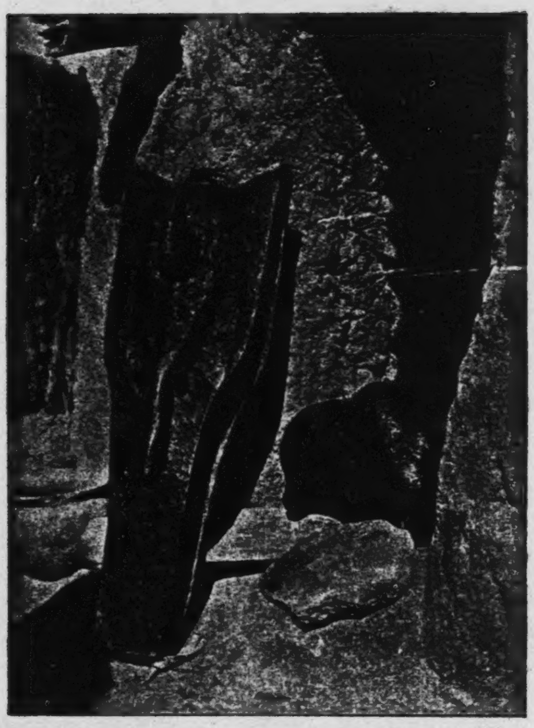
4:Henry

FA8 Bambara

p. 150.

Fétiche Nama.

[End Plate 14]



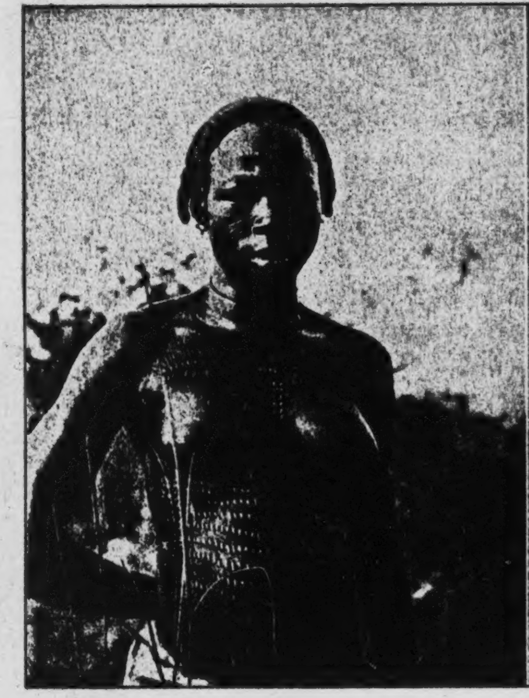
p. 132.

Fétiche *boli*, ayant la forme d'un hippopotame, avec le masque porté durant la danse sacrée.

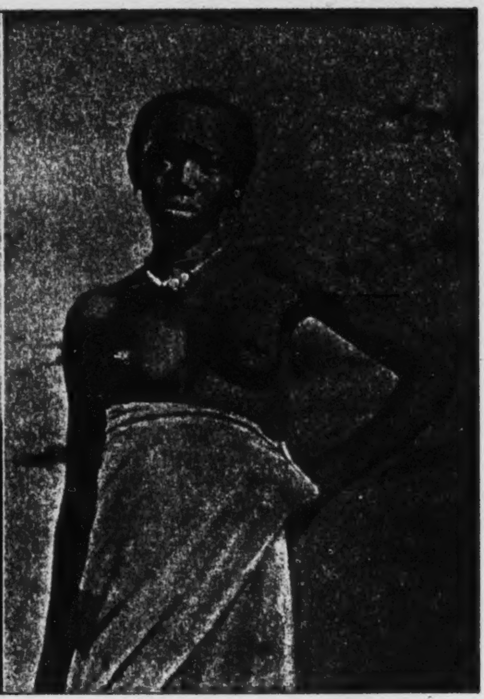
[End Plate 15]

4:Henry

[End Plate 16]



Tatouage des femmes du Bani.



p. 172.

Tatouage des jeunes filles de Ségou,
fait par elles-mêmes, à l'entour des seins.

[End plate 17]

Circoncis Bambara.

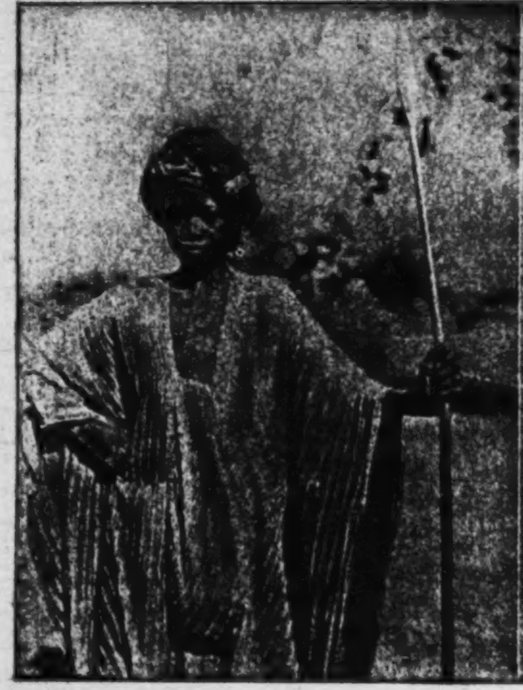
Excisées Bambara.

p. 176.

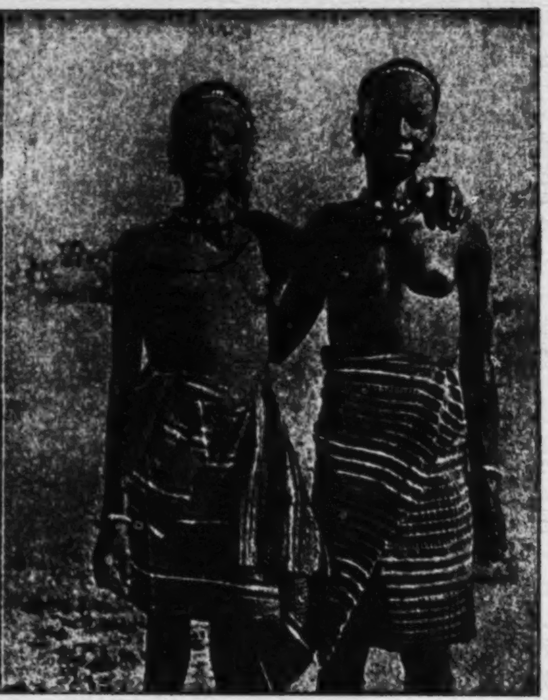
4: Henry

FA8 Bambara

[End Plate 18]



Circoncis,
en tenue de parade.



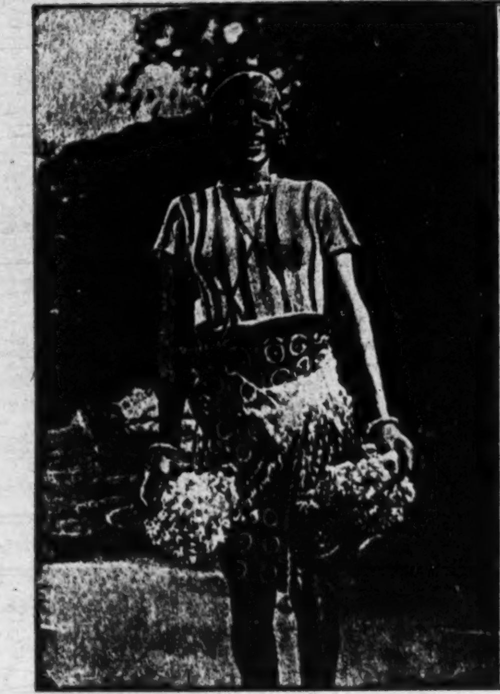
Jeunes filles Bambara,
toilette de sortie.

p. 180.

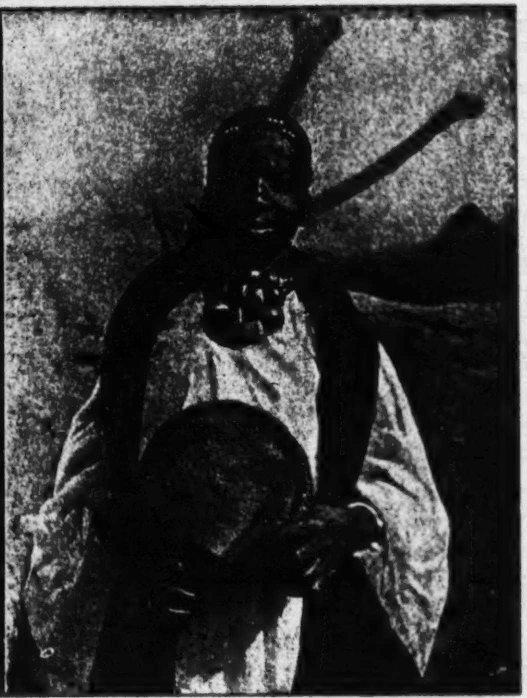
4: Henry

FA8 Bambara

[End Plate 19]



Excisée,
tenue de parade au Bani.



Excisée,
tenue de parade.

[End plate 20]

Phot. du R. P. Dubernet.

p. 204.

Mariage Bambara.

On porte le repas à la jeune mariée et à ses filles d'honneur (à Moundjirila).

4: Henry

FA8 Bambara

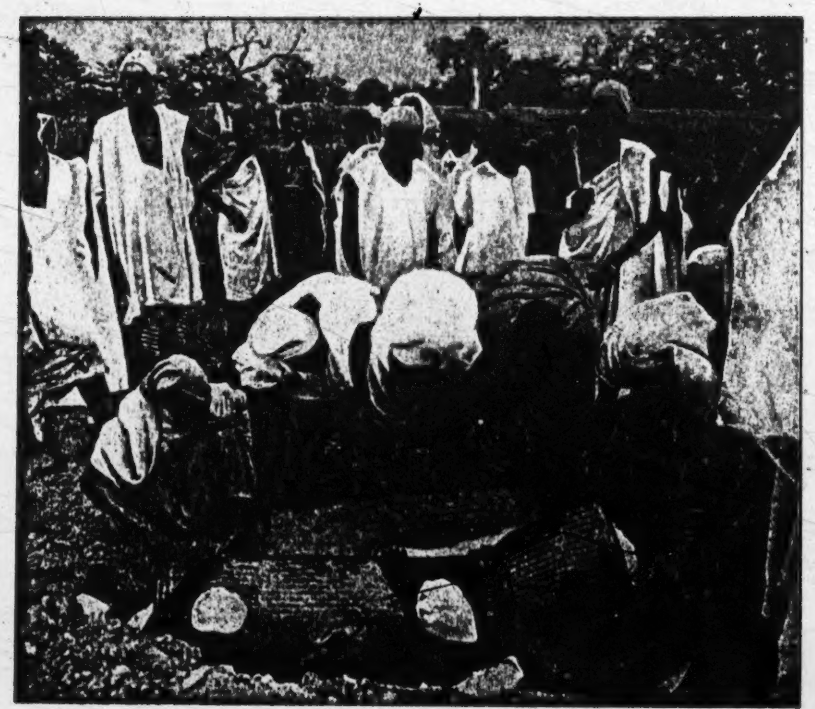
p. 200.

Mariage Bambara.
Cortège d'une mariée se rendant chez son époux.

En haut: Mariage Bambara.
Les invités vont remercier la jeune mariée après le repas.

[End Plate 21]

[End plate 22]



Phot. du R. P. Dubernet.

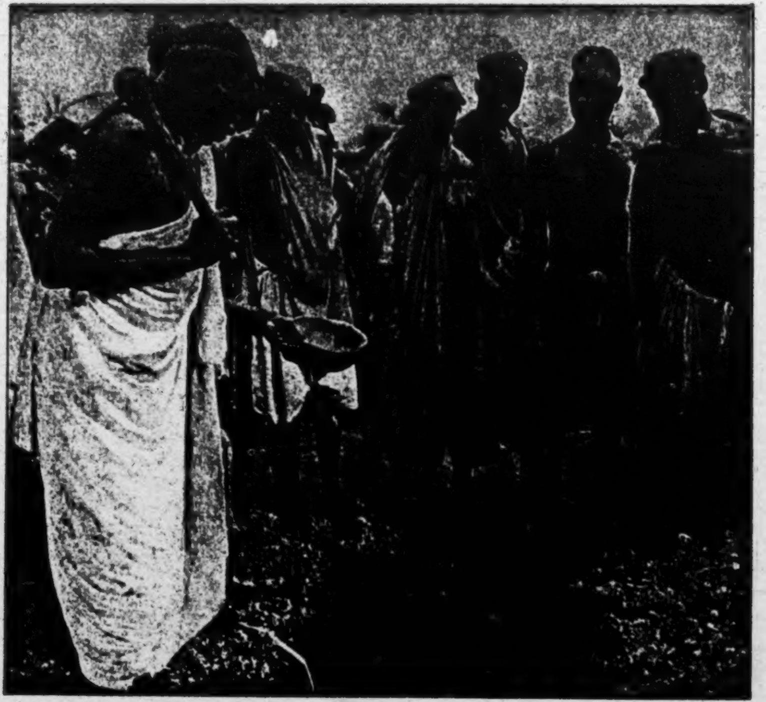
p. 216.

Enterrement Bambara.
La mise au tombeau.

4:Henry

FA8 Bambara

[End Plate 23]



Phot. du R. P. Dubernet. p. 224.

Enterrement Bambara.

La dernière prière.

[End plate 24]

Phot. du R. P. Dubernet.

p. 220.

Après le Sacrifice.
Le partage des viandes sacrées.

4: Henry
FA8 Bambara

197 systems of signs and ideograms which may be considered as a sort of
212 writing and the study of which is currently pursued. The system from which all the others supposedly stem, the *glã glã zo*, has 226 ideograms which, according to informants, summarize the knowledge of the
[182] Bambara (1). On the other hand, the Bamba use a numerical system based on twenty. Moreover, an analysis of the texts collected, some of them quoted in this essay, has brought to light an /xvi/ important number of words which, according to informants, belong to an ancient language of Mandingo origin, now used as liturgical language. It is not within the framework of this essay to present this material or to comment upon it, but it is appropriate to note that the study of this vocabulary would contribute to an understanding of religious thinking among the Bambara.

173 The Bambara have a rather clear idea of their early history and even of their prehistory. They describe their ancestors with precision and know the phases of development of their technology. These premises are necessary to an understanding of their religion which, like the other institutions, is especially linked to this technological development. Moreover, the only observable remains comprise household furniture and utensils, transient but perennial material whose forms and ornamentation indicate the metaphysical principles on which their way of thinking is based.

177 It is appropriate not to neglect those influences which have acted
121 upon the Bambara through their contacts with other Sudanese tribes

---

1. See. p. 21. This system and two of the ideograms, of which *to* designates the mash of boiled cereals and by extension nourishment in general, will be the object of a comment by M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen. "Signes graphiques des Soudanais. L'Homme. /Graphic signs of the Sudanese man/." *Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie et de linguistique, Hermann* (in press).

On certain types of writing observed among the Mandé and the Vai, see J. Février, *Histoire de l'écriture* /The History of Writing/, pp. 528-529.

177 connected since ancient times with the Mediterranean basin (1). The

121

Mali empires, in particular, by encouraging the expansion of Islam have maintained a center in the heart of the Sudan, which has left traces in the social and religious institutions of the Bambara.

However, it is difficult, if not impossible, at the present time to make a historical presentation of this religion or even to consider the problem of influences. We have with us the last phase of this religion and we know its development only through myths which, furthermore, do not make it appear to be a system established very early; it seems to have developed slowly with various additions which were felt and expressed in the myths. On the other hand the present religions of the Sudanese seem national; they form separate entities among the Dogon (2) the Bozo, the Kouroumba /Kurumba/, the Minianka, the Sonray /Sonhrai/, and the /xvii/ Mossi. However, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that their systematic observation, undertaken a few years ago, has brought to light a common

---

1. We wish to draw attention to M. P. M. Schuhl's point and his allusion: "The premises which we owe at present to investigations like those of M. Griaule would seem to call for new syntheses and provide curious terms of comparison. Indirect influence from Greek myths on Sudanese mythology is, furthermore, not impossible." Essai sur la formation de la pensée grecque /Essay on the Formation of Greek Thought/, Presses Universitaires de France, 2nd ed., 1949, p. xv.

M. Schuhl recalls, on the other hand, the resemblances proposed by M. A. Jeanmaire, between Greek facts and some African institutions considered as survivals of a proto-Mediterranean civilization (Couroi et courètes), Lille, 1939.

2. See M. Griaule. Dieu d'eau /water god/.

177 substratum on which each tribe has grafted its original system. The
121 study of this substratum would help define the problem of origins and influences.

After this, we have at our disposal the support of philology and above all the advantage of seeing the Bambara live their beliefs and of discovering their myths in a crude but expressive material as well as in numerous rites. The observations made over a wide field of inquiry serve as the basis for the presentation of this religious system.

114 The Bambara have been for a long time the subject of articles and
121 works, of which we will give below a concise bibliography. The only author who, until now, has attempted to describe their beliefs as a system is L. Tauxier whose study of *La Religion Bambara* /Bambara religion/ takes into account to a large extent the works of the Abbé Henry and Ch. Monteil. However, through the descriptions of these different observers which are certainly conscientious, this religion appears as a composite of diverse and even inconsistent elements with no apparent link between them. Despite a uniform plan and a laudable absence of preconceived ideas, L. Tauxier has been unable to bring out the fundamental concepts of the people he observed.

In fact, the study of a present-day Negro religion runs into difficulties of various kinds stemming on the one hand from the necessity of going into the field and on the other hand from the largely esoteric character of the doctrine. These circumstances make this study essentially a work of discovery.

Indeed, Bambara religion, like all Sudanese religions, has an exoteric part, quite easily accessible, which observation conducted along scientific lines may reveal in detail. Rules of life admitted by all, beliefs openly professed, and public or private practices may be the object of detailed work. But this religion, like that of the neighboring peoples, rests upon a doctrine whose fundamental principles
[609] are known to elders and initiates who show considerable aversion to confiding in strangers, particularly whites. Such a situation explains the ignorance in which scholarship has remained for so long concerning the religious way of thinking of this people (1).

812 1. The Bambara themselves distinguish between two kinds of knowledge. The first, called *doni fyẽma* "knowledge (which has) wind" /xviii/ is superficial

812

> and considered to be "the introduction to beliefs and customs." It belongs to adults who know little of cosmology. On the contrary, the second, called "deep knowledge" (doniya duna or kuru doniya), is restricted to priests, heads of families, elders of both sexes who are versed in "the science of the things of creation." It can only be acquired slowly in the course of successive initiations and through actual instruction which is sometimes diffused during the rites.

114 121 /xviii/ A rigorous method of observation which neglects no detail and which involves the use of close collaboration from the natives has brought forth a system coherent in all its parts and, it may be said, based on a metaphysics hitherto unknown. Taking the Bambara postulates as a point of departure, the sequence of events through the myths, the development of institutions and technology, their operation and the actual destiny of man in the cosmos all unfold in a logical framework.

On the other hand, this system is projected into the concrete in the form of symbols which borrow the most diversified aspects and which play an active role. The symbolism not only penetrates religious life proper by appearing in the sanctuaries, in the cult materials (shapes and sign writing), or during religious ceremonies (times and places, rituals, etc.), but is present in every aspect of secular life and daily behavior.

The metaphysics and the religion of this people offer a structural entity which includes all social, technological, and economic activities. In the following chapters, we shall attempt to clarify these principles and this system. We believe we may safely state that certain inconsistencies or contradictions presented by the religious system as it is described here are not due to Bambara thought—even though it is subtle and based on a dialectic—but to lacunae in the investigation.

791 this song calms his restlessness and gives him back peace and serenity.

533 "Whatever man is, he may not go beyond God" (1). The Soma
181 plays this air if the consulter harbors bad intentions or if he is ignorant or stubborn. He does the same to discover the gifts of a child and to encourage the family to develop his learning.

"Joy embellishes the world" (2) is performed for futile and pleasant things: feasts and dances, ornaments.

...gs: feasts and dances, ornaments.

1. Moko a kera čokočoko a te teme ngala ka.

2. Klo ye dine dya.

181 Divination, in a large measure, is the application of the static
801 and dynamic quality of numbers. On the one hand these translate the relationships; on the other, they are symbols for phenomena, beings, behaviors, situations, and in general all the constituent parts of the universe. Though not endowed with power in themselves, they symbolize powerful and well regulated elements. It may also be said that the numbers are superior realities, the same as the primordial signs which preceded the perceptibility of all things and on account of which the things began to exist once man had taken them into his consciousness. (3)

3. See p. 17.

In the course of divination, they indicate to the individual or collective consulter his personal position with regard to the rest of the universe. In a way, they permit the formulation of a particular equation for each person at a given time.

CONCLUSION

121 /227/ It is only recently that the discipline of silence adhered to by the Blacks has been relaxed in certain circles of the initiates. Human behavior, backed up by a rigorous method, has allowed a group of researchers to establish a documentation which suffers less from the usual faults. It is no longer superficial or fragmentary; it is

no longer encumbered with a systematic hostility, which by its consistency and generalized character misled us for many years.

Until the present, the facts gathered among the Bambara were chiefly concerned with appearances. The institutions which might be referred to as "mysteries" were only known through allusions made inadvertently by a mulish people. This was true to such an extent that, for example, in the functioning of the Komo the personality of the universal Monitor had never even figured.

But the study of these people suffered from a constraint more serious than esoterism or distrust: the skepticism and indifference of scholarship which systematically, so to speak, has failed to recognize or has denied the existence of a profound thought among the Blacks.

This contribution demonstrates that certain difficulties in approaching the work may be untangled on the one hand, and that on the other it is no longer appropriate to hold an image of the tropical African world as one in which nothing is harmonious, great, or even worthy of speculation.

This contribution also proves the complexity of the facts. A few only were selected from a vast documentation, the work of a team. And even this documentation appears infinitesimal compared to that which can be foreseen.

The fact is that the Bambara—and like him many other Blacks—makes of man a universe and of the universe a system where everything has a place and a role, from the heavenly bodies to objects of everyday usage, from the mind of man to his ordure.

Years of patient research will therefore be necessary to reveal the immense network of representations and rituals so as not to overlook any materials or gestures, however insignificant in appearance. /228/ We know, in fact, from experience that behind each utensil looms a facet of the organization of men, and that a few lines incised without artistry with a fingernail on a wall express the unfolding of creation.

The negligence of the lowliest of these details may shut off whole areas of knowledge. This entails extensive work covering all the activities of a people, not only that which is properly classified in our mind as religious.

Even if we assume a knowledge of an imposing body of facts concerning the Bambara, this would only lend itself to speculation of a specific nature. A description of the structure and function of the religion of these people would certainly constitute a valuable addition to human

12| knowledge. However, the same effort would have to be undertaken with regard to their neighbors so that gradually from one tribe to the next, it can be extended to the whole Black world.

For it is true that, however indispensable it is to order the facts concerning the Bambara themselves and to seek an internal explanation, the comparative method is necessary for the understanding of a religion. This method imposes itself with particular force in this context. The Bambara system does appear to be, on the one hand, the original synthesis of several other systems found by them on the spot at the time when they made their ultimate settlement, or brought along at the time of the great migratory movements. On the other hand this system is in a state of perpetual symbiosis with those of other Sudanese peoples, as is proved indubitably by recent observations.

12| 17| 779 At present we can already state that at least nine tribes of varying importance (1) live on the same metaphysical, if not religious, foundation. They have a common theme of the creation by means of a word, which is originally motionless and whose vibration determines little by little the essence and later the existence of all things. The same is true of the movement of the universe in a conical spiral which is constantly extending itself. They share the same conception of the person, as well as of the primordial duality, the expression of perfect unity. All these peoples admit the mediation by a hypostasis of the divinity which sometimes takes on the aspect of a redeemer, master of a world, whose appearance is everywhere identical. All believe in the necessity /229/ of universal harmony as well as that of the internal harmony of beings, both being related. One of the

1. In the order of increasing depth of studies, we cite the following groups: Dogon and Bambara, blacksmiths, Kouroumba (or Foulsé), Bozo, Manding, Samogo /Samoro/, Mossi, Koulé, altogether amounting to more than two million people. It is fitting to note likewise that several tens of peoples or tribes of the Sudan (in the wider meaning of the word) consider themselves of the same origin. Important rituals, materials, agents, and places reinforce this belief (see p. 2).

121 corollaries of this notion is the subtle mechanism of disorder which we
171 call impurity for lack of a better term, and which goes hand in hand
119 with that of highly developed cathartic practices.

Finally, all these offer an extraordinary efflorescence—not to be called abuse—of the spoken, written, drawn, or gesticulated symbols many of which are found everywhere, each one of them being the basis for several levels of images.

We may therefore speak from now on of a Sudanese civilization whose substratum may be discerned among many tribes as it has been among the Dogon and the Bambara in particular. Under the diversity of languages and institutions is hidden the same framework of representations. It is as though each tribe had arranged the designs characteristic of its own genius on an identical canvas.

For this reason, it is appropriate to consider the present essay as a
121 first step toward an understanding of this civilization. In the future,
this vast entity will have to take its place in relation to the Mediterranean and Asiatic system. And there is no doubt that this search for its position will bring up problems of borrowings, migrations, and assimilation. And doubtless, too, an anatomy of the old civilizations which had taken refuge in the western impasse in Africa will throw a valuable light on the primitive organizations which were found in contact with each other during the high period in these regions, and which were able toeffect a union between indigenous ways of thinking and others with which we are more familiar.

It is tempting to reconstruct archaic states of humanity with the help of broken potsherds or literary shreds. In the more favorable cases, abundant texts and materials have permitted syntheses, whose vicissitudes are one of the reasons for the existence of erudition. On no occasion has anyone ever been discouraged by terrains without echoes, by the absence of the authors of texts and materials. Thus, a wealth of activity concerning the situations and thoughts of ancient times was instituted, a kind of science shrouded in silence where the spirit of research alone was alive.

Today it seems possible, in the light of new observations, to find among numerous and diverse living people, archaic forms and wellsprings common to men of another color living in another time. This does not imply that one should disregard the cautious advice given by the men of the old schools (1); but this advice rests /230/ on postulates

121 1. Among others J. Toutain, C. R. des Garnered Shelves de J. Frazer /Report on the Garnered Shelves by J. Frazer/.

concerning the absence of historical documents and the difference in periods. To admit these postulates, it is necessary to prove precisely this absence and also the incapability of oral tradition to keep alive the traditions and ways of viewing the world over long periods of time.

In any event, whatever the opinion adopted, it would be good methodology to admit as an immediate hypothesis the probable or possible role played by the Sudanese world as a preserver or transformer of attitudes, rites, and concepts which scholars find everywhere else but which remain unexplained. For in a few years nothing will remain to be either disclaimed or confirmed concerning these systems which are on their way to rapid disintegration. Because of mechanization and an unconscious wish for self destruction the Black civilizations will soon become only a shadow of their former selves and the instability of their material will not allow them to be reconstituted in their complexity and grandeur.

And whatever the fate of this hypothesis, we may find, as a result of such thinking that the religious thought of the Blacks, whether original or not, will take its place in the philosophy of history and in the history of humanity.

/231/ ADDENDA

000 The research conducted in the field during the publishing of the present work has brought to light the following facts which, we believe, it will be useful to present succinctly to the reader.

Chapter 1

776 825 Because of the loss of the seeds in their collarbones, Pemba and Mousso Koroni actually have an animal aspect which they owe to their impurity as well as to that of the uncultivated earth which they symbolize. Pemba is represented by the warableni (Vulpes pallida) and Mousso Koroni by the kongowuluni (unidentified fox). It is this

[1] Introduction

161 According to the census referred to hereafter, the Bambara number more than 500,000, thus forming one of the largest population groups in West Africa.

184 This group is not homogeneous; however, in addition to its language, which is in fact its characteristic element, it does have certain basic customs common - at least in a general way - to all its members. It is possible to observe this common heritage by [121] studying one section of the group, and such is the purpose of this work.

121 127 The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta, who concern us here, have the distinction over their congeners of having evolved well-known empires. To the history of these empires, already known through the research of my predecessors, I shall add new documentation, based primarily on an unpublished chronicle of the empire of Ségou. This chronicle is interesting, among other reasons, because it is entirely the work of one of the traditionists whose erudition, as reliable and exact as possible within the limitations of native competence, merits our serious attention. Indeed, my book is simply a detailed commentary on this chronicle, buttressed by knowledge acquired on the spot during the course of my administrative duties and by information obtained from the works listed in the bibliography.

121 It should be noted that, though these documents and this store of knowledge make it easy enough to describe the customs if one limits oneself to generalities, it is on the other hand a difficult and delicate task to define the customs as they are applied to given social manifestations and to try to deduce the principles underlying these manifestations.

This is all the more true in that experience acquired elsewhere [2] is often, instead of a help, a reef which is as perilous as it is appealing. So it is that one is naturally tempted to apply to native institutions the nomenclature and the fundamental characteristics of institutions - especially European ones - which are assumed to be comparable. When origins and development are thus transferred to a foreign context, native custom is deformed. It can

121 keep its own features only on the native plane on which it was formed and developed.

I have not felt, however, that it was necessary to abandon entirely the French terminology which is familiar to us; it is sufficient to make it fit its new role. Indeed, it would be very difficult to limit oneself to native terms, since it would be awkward and even impossible to find expression in these terms for abstractions which the writer's analysis brings out and of which the native has no knowledge.

A study of custom in its intimate associations thus requires both method and experience if one hopes to arrive at precise facts which have logical interrelationships. The results thus obtained are certainly significant since they show that, perhaps from the very beginning and certainly from a very long time past, the native character follows a path which it has itself chosen and which we can only suspect, rather than observe. This is because the concrete facts which are the landmarks of that history are subject to various interpretations.

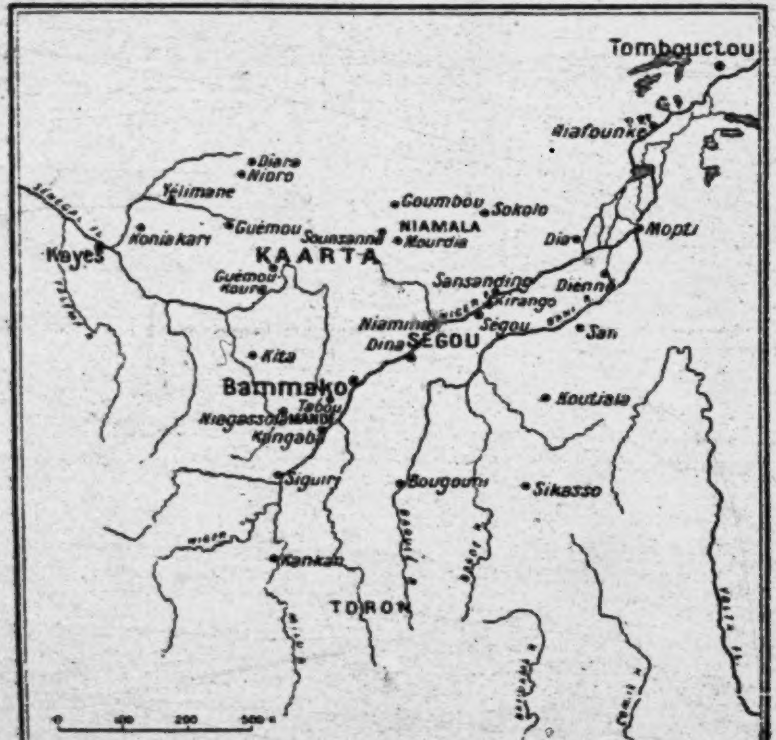
177 182 Today, dislocated by the collapse - thanks to our intervention - of the social framework in which he was developing, the native character is working out new spiritual directives based on its own past, making use of contributions of our civilizations whenever they are in accord with the native's own deepest tendencies. The present-day life of the Black man is merely the reflection of this mystique; hence, whatever may be our wishes in the matter and whatever may be the outward appearances, the Black man continues in all fields to be dominated by his past.

121 This fact would in itself justify a study such as the present one - if there were need for justification - for, in the matter of custom particularly, nothing that has happened in the past is unimportant when both the present and the future are closely and inevitably dependent on this past.

Orthez, February 22, 1923

121 This work deals only with the Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta since it has already been noted that, save for their specifically local history, [4] a study of their concepts and institutions is valid in general for all of the Bambara.

103 131 [133] It is exceedingly difficult, besides, to be entirely certain as to which of the Bambara actually belong to the Kaarta and Ségou areas since the two designations do not correspond to any very exact geographical region. When a native speaks of Kaarta or of Ségou, he only vaguely understands the terms, and this with good reason.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KAARTA
Kayes
Guémou Kouré
Dia
Mopti
Sansanding
Kirango
Djenné
Niamina
Ségou
SÉGOU
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101 103 131 I have noted elsewhere (1) that, etymologically speaking, the

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1. In my work Les Khassonké [The Kasonke], which appeared in the series, Revue du Monde Musulman.

115 me the benefit of his experience in translating these tales. I
*173 hereby thank him most sincerely.

As far as Ségou is concerned, Karé Tammoura's story does not seriously modify the known general outline, but all the same it differs from earlier publications in its essentially native feeling, which I have tried to preserve. It is very interesting, for instance, to see how step-by-step [26] an empire developed out of a fla-n-ton': this change in a strictly native form of association is most instructive. It shows in detail how one of these Sudanese empires -- and not the least of them -- was organized. It is essential to know this if one is to understand the political history of this country. Community, brotherhood, clan, slavery, Islam -- all essential and too-little-known factors of Sudanese society -- are there to be seen, alive and just as they are.

In spite of its weaknesses and its lacunae, I am therefore giving, without change, the story told by the dyeli Karé Tammoura. This Ségou Bambara has occasionally allowed himself to cover the truth with a Moslem veil, because he is a convert; but it is easy to discern the facts under the poorly applied make-up.

115 My informant for Kaarta was principally the dyeli Gran Koaté, who was also a native of Ségou and a Moslem. He was for a long time attached to the person of Ahmadou, son of Omar, with whom he resided at Ségou and at Nioro, where he acted as a close confidant and was sometimes charged with important missions.

● 124 I feel obliged to point out that these two informants are not entirely responsible for the lacunae in their stories. I had had these two learned men brought from Ségou to Djenné, where I was commandant of the circle in 1902. In spite of my desire to learn as much as possible from them, I had to consider the demands of my post, which left me little leisure, and also had to avoid keeping them too long away from their homes. Hence, I was forced to cut short their long speeches. I do not think that I missed anything essential, but undoubtedly there was much to be gleaned from what had to be sacrificed for lack of time. I hope that one of my more fortunate successors may be able to fill in the lacunae in the stories set down here.

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/xix/ Organization of the Book

● 128 In the first chapter of this work we present the myths which form the framework of the religious representations. A deep knowledge of the cosmogony and myths is necessary to understanding the institutions as well as the most current rituals.

The second chapter analyzes the representations, particularly that of Faro, master of the word and holder of life, whose cult is general and who presides at all human activities.

The third chapter approaches the notion of the person and describes in succession the spiritual principles and the body which are dependent upon Faro, then the name, the device, and the taboos which integrate the individual into society. It also examines the dissociation of these various elements at the moment of death.

The fourth chapter summarizes the mechanism of the blood sacrifice, the most important moment of the ritual, which disposes of the elements making up the person as described in the preceding chapter. It also includes the description of the places where the cult is practiced and the original altars of the Bambara.

The fifth chapter deals with the origin, development, and organization of technology such as fishing, hunting, agriculture, weaving, the forge, and pottery, the performance of which is largely ritual in character and which support the religious representations.

The sixth chapter describes individual and family cults as well as those pertaining to the village as a whole. The great religious societies, which group individuals around the altars set up for specific purposes, are also examined. These cults, so different in appearance, bring into play the same representations, and the rituals involve comparable mechanisms of the forces brought into motion.

In the seventh chapter we give a detailed description of a certain number of rituals chosen from the most representative. A predominant place is reserved for those relating more directly to the "person": birth, circumcision /xx/ and excision, initiations, funeral, and ancestor cults. Among others, those concerning refuse, rain, and general rites called "the renewal of the year" are commented upon.

The eighth chapter presents an analysis of several methods of divination which appear as a synthesis of Bambara metaphysics and reflect in very subtle symbolism the entirety of their knowledge.

128 Note: In the following pages, as well as in the foregoing, words in Bambara or other Sudanese dialects which are used are italicized; see Chapter 7 for explanations. [Omitted in translation.]

[7] I. Origin

Name

101 The peoples with whom this work is concerned are known, generally speaking, by the name of Bambara, both to Europeans and to most of the natives. They call themselves Banmana or Bamana.

European writers have offered two theories to explain the etymology of the words Bambara, Banmana and Bamana.

According to one school of thought, the word Bambara derives from bamba or bamma (crocodile) and alludes to a tne (1) which is reputedly common to all natives known as Bambara. This theory is nullified by the fact that the taboo, which was supposed to be generally imposed, is actually imposed on only a few of the Bambara. Further, the suggested correlation has never been proved to exist between the name of the tne and either individual or collective denomination among the Bambara.

Other authorities suggest that, according to the Banmana themselves, the word Banmana means "rejection of a master" (ban-ma-na) and alludes to the legend which tells how, early in the thirteenth century, the Banmana left their native land and went to Toron in order to escape from the yoke of their Malinké conquerors. This etymology, which is linguistically defensible, would apply only to the people who immigrated to Toron, and it still does not tell us by what name they and their congeners were known before the migration.

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1. A magico-religious taboo, see Chapter 2.

614 631 "the people (of the clan) of Massa"; the Segu-n-ka-u (2),

2. From another point of view, Segu-n-ka-u means "the people of the country of Ségou."

"the people (of the clan) of Ségou."

104 128 Since we are always obsessed by our own system of organization, these terms appear in our writings as village (dugu), canton or province (kafu), and empire (ton', which is a clan).

Because of the convenience of expressions that are familiar to us, we shall use this terminology in this study, and it seems essential to define briefly the value of these terms in native society in order to avoid ambiguity which, to say the least, gives rise to distorted delusions.

173 563 631 In Kaarta and the Ségou country before the time of the two great clans whose history we have given and whose development and operation we are about to describe, there were dugu which usually had no connections or at most were joined in some ephemeral kafu. These kafu were composed of a majority of Bambara mixed with Soninké and people of other races. The Soninké dugu were noted for their prosperity, sometimes even wealth, and this gave them a degree of pre-eminence over the Bambara dugu. This prosperity rested on the labor of a slave population that the Soninké had managed to acquire for the most part by commercial dealings.

This de facto hegemony usually had no corresponding political or administrative organization; its only outward sign was the scorn with which the Soninké regarded the less fortunate Bambara and, conversely, the sullen hostility of the Bambara toward the rich Marka (as they called the Soninké). As a consequence, local quarrels broke out from time to time which sometimes developed into bloody conflicts. The early history of the Massa-si clan is a good example of this state of affairs, to judge by the record in the chronicle cited above.

173 631 The Ségou-Kaarta regions, under the authority of Mandé and Songhaï clans, were in this state, in semiobscurity because they were outside the zone of direct administration by these clans.

/xiii/ Introduction

101 131 The Bambara tribes which form part of the Mandé group are at present spread out in French Sudan from the 11th to the 14th degrees latitude north and from the 7th to the 11th degrees longitude west. Three groups which have settled respectively in the circle of Issa Ber, in Kaarta, and in the circle of Odienné are noticeably separated from the central group which occupies the shores of the Niger around Bamako and Ségou.

105 The Bambara live in small villages in the savanna; they practice primarily agriculture (millet, digitaria /Fonio/, rice, maize, etc.), but also herding and gardening. The shore dwellers of the Niger are fishermen and live in symbiotie relationships with the Bozo who taught them fishing techniques and who are generally recognized as the first inhabitants of these regions.

173 The Bambara state that they came from Mandé. This region, where the successive capitals of the ancient kingdom of Mali were situated, has long attracted the attention of research workers (1).

(1) See J. Vidal, *Au sujet de l'emplacement du Mali (ou Melli* /on the subject of the Mali site/), pp. 251-268; *Le véritable emplacement du Mali* /The true site of the Mali/, pp. 606-619. This author designates by Mali I to IV the four villages of Dyélibakoro, Niani, Maninkoura, and Kangaba, which had been successively the royal city. See also Ch. Monteil, *Les Empires du Mali* /The empires of Mali/, p. 13.

Moreover, it is "the center from which radiated forty-four tribes at present spread out in the area between the Atlantic coast, the Senegal, and the Niger, or to Dahomey" (2). The region indicated above also

(2) See D. Zahan. *Aperçu sur la pensée théogonique des Dogon* /Survey of theogonic thought of the Dogon/, pp. 113-133. This author gives the name of the tribes originating

[3]

Chapter 1

Origin and History

Preliminaries

● 131 As they have for a long time past, the Bambara today occupy in compact groups a vast region on either side of the Niger, which comprises most of the territory in the circles [administration division] of Bammako, Bougouni and Ségou in the French colony of the Upper Senegal and Niger.

162 According to the census (1), the following list shows the distribution of the Bambara in that colony:

Circle of Bougouni	146,966
" " Bammako	104,216
" " Ségou	109,758
" " Sikasso	30,000
" " Kita	2,339
" " Bafoulabé	2,100
" " Koutiala	30,055
" " Goumbou	22,110
" " San	20,103
" " Sokolo	19,996
" " Diénné	17,247
" " Niafounké	16,000
" " Nioro	9,355
" " Mopti	7,277
" " Bandiagara	928
Total	538,450

After the Mossi, this is the largest group in the colony of Upper Senegal and Niger.

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1. In Haut-Sénégal et Niger [The Upper Senegal and Niger], by Delafosse.

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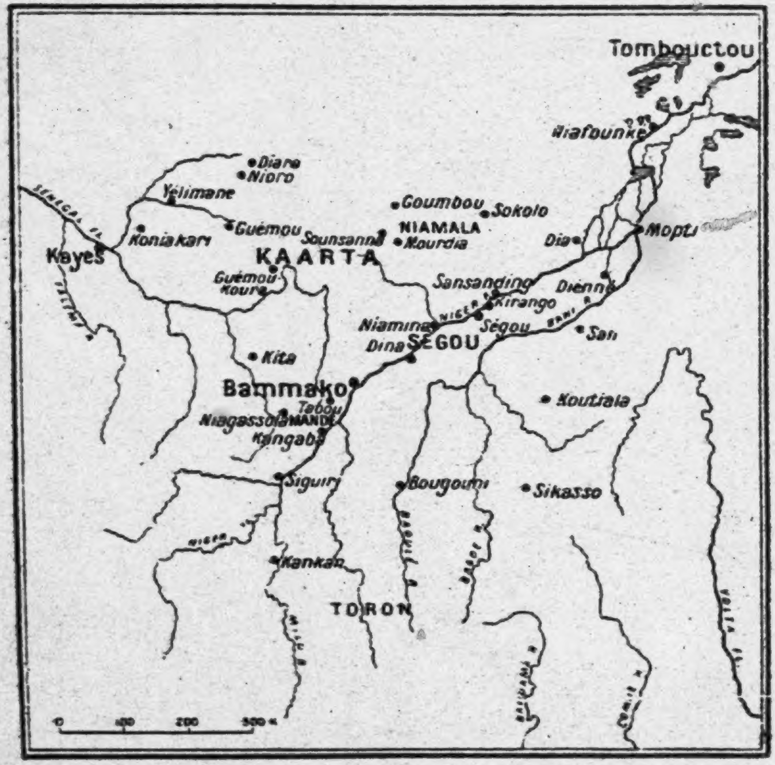
103 131 [133] It is exceedingly difficult, besides, to be entirely certain as to which of the Bambara actually belong to the Kaarta and Ségou areas since the two designations do not correspond to any very exact geographical region. When a native speaks of Kaarta or of Ségou, he only vaguely understands the terms, and this with good reason. C


Tombouctou
Niafounké
Diara
Nioro
Yélimané
Sénégal Fl.
Koniakari
Guémou
Kayes
KAARTA
Guémou Koura
Falémé
Sounsanna
Goumbou
Sokolo
NIAMALA
Mourdia
Dia
Mopti
Sansanding
Djenné
Niger
Kirango
Niamina
Ségou
Bani
San
Dina
SÉGOU
Kita
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101 103 131 I have noted elsewhere (1) that, etymologically speaking, the

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1. In my work Les Khassonké [The Kasonke], which appeared in the series, Revue du Monde Musulman.

101 word which we write and pronounce Kaarta means "country of
103 the Karé" or, more accurately, "the group of the Karé." Wher-
131 ever there are Karé people they are called, in the Soninké language, Karu-ta, [5] which is contracted to Karta. From this we made Kaarta because we misheard the long first "a." The word Kaarta designates a particular area only because of the people who inhabit it, and its value as a geographical expression is acquired only by extension. Among the natives the term is used for various areas within the region which extends from Goumbou to Koniakari and from Nioro to the Senegal River. On our maps, Kaarta is bounded by Kingui on the north, Diomboko on the west, Senegal and Bélédougou on the south, and Kaniaga on the east. However, all of these names of cantons themselves have very vague meanings.

101 For the purpose of the present work, the word Kaarta takes
103 on a special meaning. The Bambara who founded a clan at
131 Sounsan-na in the Karé country are called Karta-n-ko in the
614 Soninké language and Karta-n-ka-u (the Kaarta people) in the Bambara language. As a result, Kaarta has become the name of the areas occupied by the clan in its various peregrinations.

The "people of Ségou" acquired their name in quite a different manner, since they were named for Ségou, the capital of the clan. The country of Ségou should be understood strictly to allude to the to-da which, to be described in chapter 5, was, by and large the area surrounding Ségou and occupied by the chief and his family and followers. In a wider sense, the country of Ségou referred to all the territory under the authority of the Ségou clan. At the height of the clan's power, "the country of Ségou" occupied both banks of the Niger, following the axis of the river from Kangaba to Timbuktu.

101 Our European need to have things clearly defined may be
131 satisfied by having the territorial limits of Kaarta and Ségou set
631 forth on a map, but on the native level, with which this book is primarily concerned, such local definition has little relevance. These empires did not aim to dominate any given area but rather sought to exploit as large a number of individuals as possible without regard to country or race.

144 Third group (southern): four peoples, the Diallonké [Dialonke], the Samo, the Samorho, and the Sia; plus four small tribes of doubtful classification, the Blé, the Natioro, the Ouara, and the Sembla.

More recent studies by Urvoy, Dr. Pales, and Mlle. Tassin de Saint-Péreuse involving very numerous measurements will soon permit determination of the racial characteristics of the Sudanese populations and the establishment of a new classification.

B. Geographical Distribution

131 In his study of the Bambara of Ségou, Charles Monteil tells us that it is impossible to determine what the precise boundaries of the Bambara empire were, because a frontier as we understand it has no meaning for the Black. The empires did not seek to dominate such and such a region; their goal was, above all, the exploitation of the greatest possible number of individuals, without regard to localities or races.

131 162 At the present time, the Encyclopédie coloniale et maritime [Colonial and Maritime Encyclopedia] considers that [3] the Bambara form a group of about a million individuals who extend west-east from the region of Siguirio as far as Macina along both sides of the Niger and the Bani rivers, and south-north from the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta to Sahel de Nioro. In addition, there are 40,000 in Senegal: peanut farmers near Kaolack, Thiès, and Diourbel, and captives at Fouta Toro, Saint-Louis, etc. But they are most numerous in the circles [a "circle" is an administrative division] of Bamako (310,000), Ségou (190,000), and Bougouni (110,000). To 563 these one may add 125,000 Métis [mixed bloods], Peul-Bambara, of whom 72,000 live in the Bougouni circle alone.

131 619 More precisely, the great mass of the Bambara is distributed in a region that may be delimited as follows.

To the northwest, three tribes have been catalogued in the Kaarta: the Dianguirté in the circle of Nioro, the Niamassa at Nioro, and the Massassi to the south of Nioro.

To the north, in the Sahel, the region of Bakounou and Waghadou is inhabited by the Kalongo tribe.

To the northeast, the Bambara live in the Macina, the Issa Ber, the region of Goundam, and up to Timbuktu.

|3| To the east, they are found in the Bendougou, Minianka
619 (the banks of the Niger and the Bani to the south of San and Ségou being occupied by the caste of Somono fishermen), and Kénédougou regions.

To the south, in the Ouassoulou.

To the southwest, in the Manding, the Bélédougou, and Fouladougou regions.

To the west, in the Kangaran, the Bambouk, and the Guidimaka regions on the banks of the Senegal.

In short, the habitat of the Bambara lies within a large V formed by the upper Senegal and the upper Niger.

C. Neighboring Tribes

|0| The Bambara are the most important people of the western Sudan and of the southern circles. Nevertheless, they are very mingled with other populations according to the regions we shall further define.

Among these other populations the principal ones are:

The Peul (Foula [Fulah], Foulbé [Fulbe], Fellata [Felāta], a nomadic population found throughout West Africa from Senegal to the Egyptian Sudan. They speak the same language as the Toucouleur [Tukolor] Popular.

The Malinké, an important Mandingue people who speak a dialect close to Banmana and who are found in Guinea and in the Sudan (Satadougou, Nioro, Kayes, Bafoulabé, Kita, Bamako, Bougouni).

The Kasonké, who live in the Senegal Valley upriver from Kayes, are of mixed Malinké and Toucouleur origin; they speak a dialect close to Malinké.

The Sarakolé, Soninké or Marka, are an ancient people linked to the history of the empire of Ghana; they speak a Mandingue dialect related to Bambara. Those of Kouroumari speak Bambara and are of mixed Bambara blood.

[4] In Mourdiah, out of 14,000 Marka, a large proportion is Bambarized.

The Songhaï, a people of the middle Niger, have swarmed from the region of Niamey up to Lake Débo and Djenné.

[19]

CHAPTER 3

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

I. Natural Regions

131 The Bambara live in a region stretching between the 11th and 14th degrees of latitude north and between the 7th and 11th degrees of longitude west. They are grouped around the upper Senegal and upper Niger in the zone of basins bordered on the south by the Fouta-Djallon and the Guinea Ridge. The land is divided into several natural regions.

A. The Upper Niger

133 Framed by the outer ranges of the Fouta-Djallon and the cliffs
135 of the Manding plateau, witness of the Pre-Cambrian shelf, the region is essentially schistose, with small veins of quartz and chimneys of dolerite; there are large intrusions of granite to the north 50 kilometers from Bamako, to the northwest and north of Siguiri, and to the south at the approach to the massif of the Fouta-Djallon. All the region is rich in gold. Several centers have long been exploited
316 by the natives by means of a network of narrow shafts which reach down to the auriferous seam. The whole region is encrusted with a shell of iron.

133 The region of the upper Niger is an immense plain covered with mammilliform hills. The plain rises gradually from the pass of Bamako to the mountains of the south, broken only by occasional dikes, such as that of Kouroussa-Kankan. The overall relief is very simple and monotonous; the local relief is very animated and varied because of the network of valleys hemmed in by steep cliffs 10 to 12 meters high.

The Niger, fed by the Tinkisso, the Milo, the Fié and, the Sankarani, reaches Bamako with a width of about 900 meters. It flows through a plain three to four kilometers wide in a southwest-northeast direction up to Timbuktu. It undergoes an annual rise which depends solely on the amount of rainfall. From Kouroussa to
132 Bamako the first rains at the end of April, and then of May and June, begin to feed the river; the flood period begins in June. At the time

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132 of high water, part of the narrow plains bordering the river are inundated.

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II. Climate and Meteorology

132 This region belongs to the zones of Sudanese and Sahelian climate. Its climate may be characterized thus:

A single rainy season, in summer;

Annual precipitation from 2,000 to 250 millimeters, decreasing from south to north;

Maximum precipitation in August.

A. Temperatures

The temperatures offer:

- a maximum corresponding to the passage of the sun to its zenith (March to May) with an absolute maximum of $>40^{\circ}$;
- a secondary maximum corresponding to the end of the rainy season;
- a minimum corresponding to the maximum remoteness of the sun (December-January) with an absolute minimum of $< 15^{\circ}$;
- a secondary minimum corresponding to the maximum precipitations.

132 The vapor pressure follows fairly closely the rainfall curve and has a maximum of > 25 millibars in August (1).

1. This information was furnished to us by M. de Lorme of the Meteorological Service of Bamako.

The year is divided into two seasons, the dry season and the rainy season or "winter."

[24] B. Winds

The different types of weather are determined by the succession of different and quite distinctive air currents. Practically speaking, only two air currents are of interest in the region: the harmattan and the monsoon.

The harmattan -- This is a wind which circulates on the southern face of the continental African anticyclone. It blows generally from the east, and its rate is slow. It is a dry wind (vapor pressure about 10 millibars, which may drop below 5 millibars).

The southwest monsoon -- The air which circulated around the Saint Helena anticyclone is deflected as it crosses the equator and circulates around its Saharan thermic depression.

This wind blows from a general southwesterly direction, is very slow and very humid (vapor pressure about 25 millibars). The depth of the monsoon varies between 1,000 and 2,500 meters in general. It is surmounted by the harmattan, under which it thrusts itself like a wedge.

The zone where these two currents meet forms the intertropical front (F.I.T.), axis of the Saharan depression. This F.I.T. is clearly oriented east-west and follows slightly behind the movements of the sun. It oscillates between 6° north (January) and 21° north (July), climbing from January to July and dropping back afterwards. The progress of the F.I.T. takes place by jumps because the monsoon establishes itself in successive waves.

The regions to the north of the F.I.T., where the harmattan prevails, are in the dry season.

The regions to the south of the F.I.T., where the monsoon prevails, are in the rainy season.

132 This explains why the rainy season is progressively shorter as one goes north.

C. Rainy Season

At ground level the southwest monsoon prevails.

This is a wind from a general southwesterly direction, of very little speed, which drops more and more as one goes north. It is very humid and its vapor pressure is about 25 millibars.

Upon contact with the ground it is heated and rises, giving birth to vertical clouds from which may fall rather heavy showers, stormy or not, but localized, with calm or with moderate winds at ground level. The clouds undergo a great variation during the day and are developed to their maximum at the end of the day. The showers are generally confined to the end of the afternoon and the beginning of the night.

The normal height of the monsoon varies between 1,000 and 2,500 meters. It is surmounted by the harmattan.

The harmattan does not reach the ground except after "squalls." Its direction [25] is from the east, and its speed is then very great; its temperature and vapor pressure are lower than those of the monsoon, although it is generally at the saturation point.

Monsoon rains -- When currents meet within the monsoon, compact cloud masses several kilometers high may form, from which fall abundant and generalized precipitations called "monsoon rains." These cloud masses are virtually stationary; a fine, continuous rain falls from them, and the rare rifts in the clouds generally occur at sunset. These rains may be accompanied by sporadic storm phenomena. This type of weather lasts on the average from several days to about ten days, and the cloud system is reabsorbed in place when it is no longer sufficiently fed.

In the south these rains occur several times during the season, while in the north they are practically unknown.

Squalls -- They are commonly called "tornadoes." They occur when the monsoon at ground level becomes lighter than the east wind which is normally found above it.

132 Process of formation -- The surface of separation between monsoon and harmattan being practically horizontal, there forms there for some reason (generally, the thermic rise of the monsoon in contact with the overheated ground) a wave which is amplified more and more. The monsoon in rising cools and produces a vertical cloud formation. At the same time, the horizontal speed of the monsoon being slow and the harmattan rapid, the wave and the cloud have a tendency to move westwards. A hollow then forms in front of the wave of the monsoon, and the base of the harmattan drops towards the ground.

In the mature stage, in front of the rising column, a whirlwind is formed with a horizontal axis which rotates without touching the ground; thus, the impression of calm one has before the arrival of a squall. This whirlwind carries low, black clouds which yield no precipitation, but which move very rapidly in the form of a roll or cylinder.

Then comes a whirlwind of the opposite rotation, to which the spread and the speed of the whirlwind are added, hence, a violent gust of wind (the speed may attain 100 kilometers per hour) from a general easterly direction. The rain follows almost immediately. It falls in the form of a very violent downpour (the instantaneous intensity of the precipitation may exceed a millimeter per minute) and may last as long as an hour. It is accompanied by considerable storm phenomena and sometimes by hail.

Then, during two to three hours, generally, a fine, continuous rain falls, coming from rather high stratiform clouds.

The mass moves westwards with the average speed of the upper east wind (50 kilometers per hour generally).

Finally, when the stratum of the anterior monsoon offers an obstacle of sufficient resistance, the squall must rise above it; it rapidly loses its intensity and dies out if it is not regenerated by favorable conditions (thermic rise).

[26] The squalls range themselves generally in a north-south direction, forming a "squall line," a veritable cloud barrier which may mount up to 15 kilometers altitude. Some of these squall lines may be 1,000 kilometers long and extend from Timbuktu to Abidjan; they may cover 3,000 kilometers and cross all of French West Africa, but most have a far more modest extent and range.

After the passage of a strong "squall line," there is generally a break in the weather for two or three days without rain or storms, but several small squall lines may succeed each other during a day. At the height of the season there is an average of about ten squalls a month. They are responsible for the most violent storms, rains, and winds.

The squalls undergo a rather pronounced diurnal variation, and their intensity is at its maximum at the end of the afternoon and at the beginning of the night.

D. Dry Season

At ground level the harmattan prevails. This is a wind of a general east to northeast direction; its speed is feeble but undergoes a marked diurnal variation, for it is subject to considerable thermic differences. At night there is almost absolute calm, then the east wind sets in. At first it blows regularly, then, during the hot hours, in widely scattered "gusts" following the thermic rises that are produced from contact with the overheated ground, then it dies little by little at night. The vapor pressure is about 10 millibars and may drop to less than 5 millibars.

There is a great diurnal increase in temperature, with the maxima capable of passing 45°.

The low humidity does not permit condensation of large clouds, and the only clouds to be found are high ones.

The high temperatures cause a very considerable thermic instability over the sand and produce effects of "hot air wavering" and of "mirage." Visibility is sometimes substantially reduced by particles of sand suspended in the air, forming what is called the "dry fog." The fogs are generally born in the north and are carried afar by the wind.

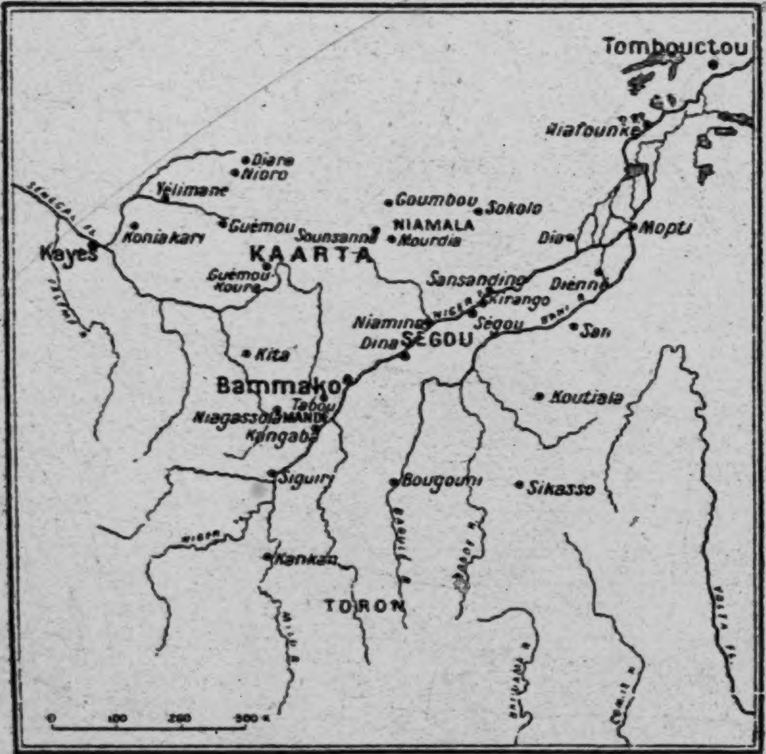
Winter rains -- Air coming from high latitudes sometimes descends as far as French West Africa, notably in January and February. Rather elevated clouds are then formed, and the sky remains overcast for two or three days. Light rains may fall, which generally do not reach the ground, notably in the northern regions. The clouds also may lead to feeble high-altitude storms.

This phenomenon generally occurs two or three times a season.

121 This work deals only with the Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta since it has already been noted that, save for their specifically local history, [4] a study of their concepts and institutions is valid in general for all of the Bambara.

103 131 It is exceedingly difficult, besides, to be entirely certain as to which of the Bambara actually belong to the Kaarta and Ségou areas since the two designations do not correspond to any very exact geographical region. When a native speaks of Kaarta or of Ségou, he only vaguely understands the terms, and this with good reason.

[133]


Tombouctou
Niafounke
Diara
Nioro
Yelimane
Coumbou
Sokolo
Guémou
Sounsanna
NIAMALA
Mourdia
Mopti
Dia
Koniakari
Kayes
SENEGAL FL.
KAARTA
Guémou Koura
Sansanding
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Kirango
Niamina
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MANDE
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101 103 131 I have noted elsewhere (1) that, etymologically speaking, the

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1. In my work Les Khassonké [The Kasonke], which appeared in the series, Revue du Monde Musulman.

CHAPTER 3

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

I. Natural Regions

131 The Bambara live in a region stretching between the 11th and 14th degrees of latitude north and between the 7th and 11th degrees of longitude west. They are grouped around the upper Senegal and upper Niger in the zone of basins bordered on the south by the Fouta-Djallon and the Guinea Ridge. The land is divided into several natural regions.

A. The Upper Niger

133 Framed by the outer ranges of the Fouta-Djallon and the cliffs
135 of the Manding plateau, witness of the Pre-Cambrian shelf, the region is essentially schistose, with small veins of quartz and chimneys
of dolerite; there are large intrusions of granite to the north 50 kilometers from Bamako, to the northwest and north of Siguiri, and to
the south at the approach to the massif of the Fouta-Djallon. All
the region is rich in gold. Several centers have long been exploited
[316] by the natives by means of a network of narrow shafts which reach
down to the auriferous seam. The whole region is encrusted with a
shell of iron.

133 The region of the upper Niger is an immense plain covered with mammilliform hills. The plain rises gradually from the pass of Bamako to the mountains of the south, broken only by occasional dikes, such as that of Kouroussa-Kankan. The overall relief is very simple and monotonous; the local relief is very animated and varied because of the network of valleys hemmed in by steep cliffs 10 to 12 meters high.

The Niger, fed by the Tinkisso, the Milo, the Fié and, the
Sankarani, reaches Bamako with a width of about 900 meters. It
flows through a plain three to four kilometers wide in a southwest-northeast direction up to Timbuktu. It undergoes an annual rise
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B. The Ségou Basin

This is a plain framed by the sandstone of the Manding and Dogon plateaus, by the Goundam range and the range south of the Dehar near Bassi Kounou.

●/33 In the south the basin is formed by mammilliform laterite hills (tertiary fluvial deposits). Upriver from Bamako, as well as for about 50 kilometers downriver, one finds sandstone which has been covered in the center by quaternary clayey deposits of fluvial origin coming from the schist, granite, sandstone, and dolerite of the upper basin. Finally, to the northwest the basin is covered with sands (sand dunes of Ouagadou [Waghadou?]) of aeolian origin.

The western part is dry and broken only by chains of wooded swamps, former branches of the river, which are scarcely enlivened by a few beds of sand or by the ferruginous ripples of Boulel. Monotonous, deserted, and sinister, it stretches up to the blond barrier dunes of the north.

The eastern part is traversed by the Niger and the Bani. It contrasts with the west; "it is flat and bare, but the river's waters give it immense stretches of flood plain of [21] intense green." To the south, these marshes form a narrow and discontinuous band; they spread out more and more toward the north, and after the confluence of the two rivers they cover the whole region up to Bara.

The inundation lasts for several months. In fact, from Koulikoro to Lake Débo the Niger flows between two banks one to two kilometers apart, seven to eight meters high. Held back by the dam at Sotuba, the flood is felt a little later at Koulikoro. At Diafarabé, the water begins to rise in June, attaining its maximum height in the beginning of October and falling rapidly at the end of October. It is lowest in April and May. During high water (August to the beginning of January) the low plains are entirely submerged to a width of 150 kilometers.

C. Issa Ber

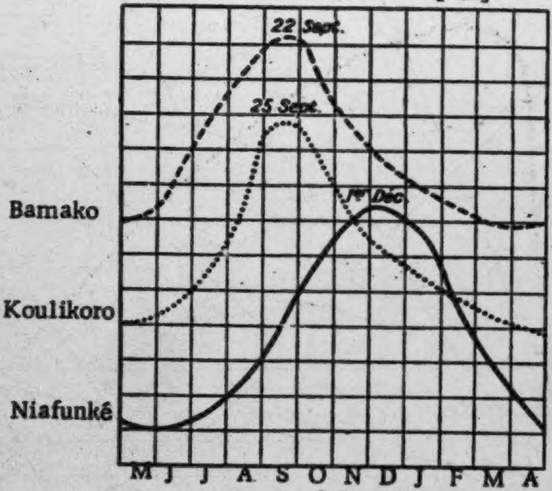
The region formed by the central delta of the Niger is a network, beginning at Diafarabé, of small channels, lakes, swampy lowlands, and streams. The important lands begin at the large double basin of Lake Débo and Lake Korienzé and spread out to the right and left of the river up to Timbuktu. This delta is traversed by three principal channels: the Issa Ber, the Bara Issa and the Koli-Koli. During low water the adjacent lowlands dry up in places and form chains of [chart appears here in the original text] [22] stagnant swamps which evaporation empties little by little. The level of lakes cut off

133

The curves show the average relation of the flood to the lowest level of the water. For each observation post the 1909 level was taken as zero for the low-water reference.

The side of each square represents one meter of water rise. Example: at the end of September at Bamako, the average flood level of the Niger is five meters.

[21]



Floods of the Niger

133 from the river goes down and uncovers land excellent for cultivation.

From Débo-Korienzé the water rises at the beginning of July, reaches its maximum level at the beginning of November and drops rapidly in mid-December to reach its lowest level in June.

D. The Manding Plateau

Lying between the valley of the Falémé to the west, the upper Niger to the south, Bamako to the east, and the Baoulé-Senegal furrow to the north, the plateau offers a fine geological unity; it is the region of Cambrian sandstone.

The plateau is surrounded by a crowded network of valleys, affluents to the Senegal, particularly the valley of the Bakoy which is fed by the Baoulé and the Bafing. The streams cut between large cliffs 100 to 200 meters high, bordering wide ravines which are wooded or periodically cultivated and which separate tabular hills bearing laterite in the south. On these heights, where a thin layer of clayey soil is spread, clings a scanty brush of baobab, acacia, and tamarind trees.

In the eastern half, at the middle Baoulé, the rock is progressively buried beneath clay and sand, then the Baoulé makes an elbow bend in a very wide valley marked by small discontinuous sandstone cliffs.

E. The Sarakollé Massif

This is a long outcropping of schist 400 kilometers long and from 150 to 200 kilometers wide. The eastern part is covered with sand, which further softens the modelling of erosion; only on the northern slope do fragments of bare schist appear. The western part presents a very different aspect; due to a covering of dolerite, it has a tabular look, and the sand disappears. It presents fine cliffs, and the valleys are veritable canyons. The schists and dolerites support a very thin vegetation whereas a very dense one flourishes in the valleys thanks to soils from decomposed dolerite and to the abundance of water.

The Bafing and the Bakoy are in fact formed by a series of basins, some of which are quite deep and separated by bars of schist

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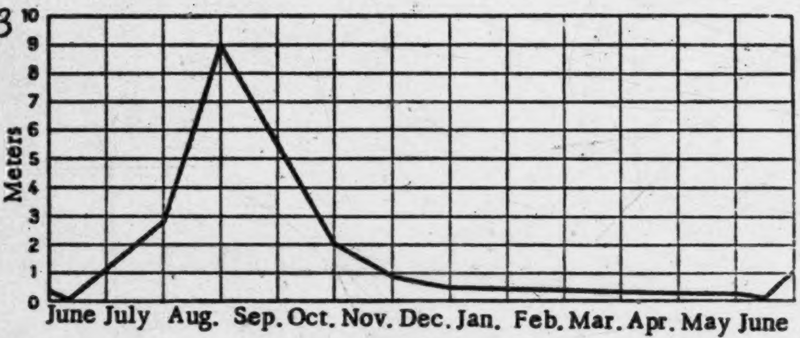

Typical Average Rise of Water at Kayes

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2. Taboos

114 The Bambara people are divided into several families or lineages
825 each of which bears a special name, or *diamou*, and sees at its head
784 /16/ certain plants or animals as protectors and patrons. The *Djara* lineage claims kinship with the lion, the *kana*, or iguana (1), the *boumou*, or *dondol*; the *Dambélé* with a large black monkey called *Ngoba*; the *Tankara* with a spiney silk-cotton tree, the *dondol*; the *Kouloubali* with the wild pig /*biche cochon*?/, the *Mpolio* (2), and the panther. There is not a lineage that does not have one or even several *tné*, or taboos. As will be seen below, lineages of the same name often regard themselves as bound by a tie of fraternity and friendship, while a difference in the *tné* shows, that a division occurred at some particular time.

[136] 1. A kind of large lizard resembling a small alligator. It lives on river banks and near ponds, and though it prefers the land and climbs trees, it likes to play in the water. The French commonly call it *gueule tapée* /"smart jaw"/.

2. A slimy and spined fish.

Europeans, churchmen, military men, and civilians, usually call the Bambara *tné* "totems." Since Long, the one to speak first of "totemism" and "totems," this question has been treated at length by serious and distinguished authors, by competent authorities. Their definitions cannot be applied to the Bambara *tné*. Striking as is the resemblance of some of them to the totems of the Redskins and the Australians, I cannot apply to them the definition given by Nicolay in speaking of the Redskins: "The Redskins also believe in the existence of spirits peculiar to individuals (as fetishes are to Africans) and which, in animal form, bear the names of totems." (3) The

837

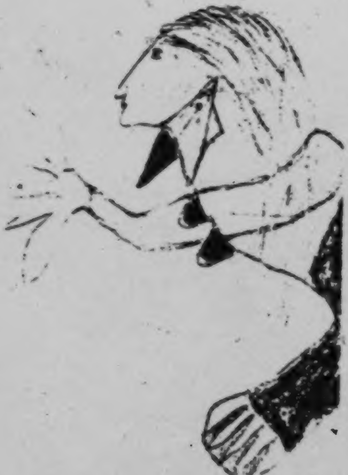
a) The *Acacia albida* called *kokuruni* (Banankoroni).

Plate I

b) In the foreground, baskets of
285 spiralled straw called *yugu* (Ségou market).
415

532

c) Drawing representing
Faro (Sama).



326 791 Raffenel has given us an interesting portrait of one of these Bambara blacksmiths, whom he called father Niany, whose guest he was at Foutobi (Kaarta). He saw him act successively as fa, as priest of the manes and of the guardian spirits of the family, as doctor, and as exorcist. He was always alert, always excited and ever watching for the thousand manifestations of the invisible and hastening either to cooperate with them or to force them to do his will.

752 Here are some excerpts concerning the highly characteristic personage, father Niany:

"I saw a small child die of a snake-bite," reports Raffenel (2); "the poor creature was hideous and swollen up like a balloon. Its mother had laid it [144] down in a field of millet which she was hoeing. A snake appeared (1) and bit the child. The mother misinterpreted its cries and offered her breast. Soon, however, the swelling became evident and the child had died within 24 hours." ....

2. In Nouveau voyage au pays des nègres [A New Journey to the Land of the Negroes], Vol. 1, p. 417.

[137] 1. "These snakes are 50 centimeters long and about 4 centimeters in diameter. Their back is gray, with very conspicuous black rings around the body. They have white bellies and a flat head rounded at the end. The part nearest the tail is covered on the upper surface by a series of vertical scales covering about a quarter of the length of the body. The tail is much smaller in diameter than the body. They like the outskirts of villages and are markedly fond of the roofs of houses." (Raffenel)

132 of high water, part of the narrow plains bordering the river are inundated.

At the pass of Bamako the cliffs on the left bank are close to 133 the river and hem in the city. The pass is marked by the appearance of rapids (Sotuba, Kénié), for the river meets for the first time the [20] sandstone it cuts through. The water is highest at Bamako around September 22 and begins to subside towards October 15. It is lowest around April and May.

The vegetation is quite unvaried. Species of great forest trees 137 are found in the ravines of the mountains to the south; the small Sudanese forest covers the whole Niger region up to Bamako where the layer of laterite is thin. It is a forest of deciduous trees; the trees shed their leaves, and flower in the middle of the dry season while they are still bare; then the leaves appear before the return of rainy season which marks the awakening of the herbaceous plants. Let us note particularly the karite [shea] tree (Butyrospermum Parkii) which is the most widespread and characteristic of the Sudan; the néré (Parkia biglobosa); the téli (Erythrophloeum guineense); the lingué (Afzelia africana); the caïlcedrat (Khaya senegalensis), as well as enormous gramineous plants of the Andropogon family which are more abundant in the humid depressions than on the plateaus. [134] However, large areas covered with a layer of laterite are bare except for some scanty gramineous plants: this is the "bowal." These immense iron flats, barren of humanity, make excellent hunting 136 grounds. Buffaloes, panthers, Derby's elans, various kinds of monkeys, elephants, antelopes, lions, wart hogs, hippopotamuses, and crocodiles live there. The glossine (tsetse fly) abounds in the same region.

Between these immense, desolate bowals grow rice, millet, 241 and fonio (Digitaria exilis), the most wretched of the world's cereals and the most important for ritual purposes.

In the valleys, outside of the beds of laterite gravel, one finds 133 the small forest or cultivation in newly cleared places and prairies are found in the sections that are annually inundated.

B. The Ségou Basin

This is a plain framed by the sandstone of the Manding and Dogon plateaus, by the Goundam range and the range south of the Dehar near Bassi Kounou.

133 or sandstone. Some of these bars result in handsome waterfalls. Between Bafoulabé and Kayes, the Senegal has two important waterfalls: those of Gouina and Félou. The Senegal flows between banks 300 to 800 meters apart, forming a channel from 10 to 12 meters deep; it is subject to periodic floods depending on the rainfall.

Two kilometers downstream from Kayes the river is joined at the right by the Kolombiné, which, north of Nioro, forms the Korkodio marsh, a veritable lake in the rainy season.

Near Nioro, the Sarakollé Massif joins the valley of the southern Hodh in hilly outcroppings; to the east of Nioro, one again finds fragments of sandstone and of white marble.

137 This region is characteristic of the Sahel savanna. The karite tree disappears in favor of shrubs: doum palms (Hyphaene thebaica), and cram-cram (Cenchrus catharticus). The climate being [23] [chart appears here in the original text] drier, the brush becomes thorny, but one still finds the baobab, numerous Combretaceae, and the precious Palmyra palm.

II. Climate and Meteorology

132 This region belongs to the zones of Sudanese and Sahelian climate. Its climate may be characterized thus:

A single rainy season, in summer;

Annual precipitation from 2,000 to 250 millimeters, decreasing from south to north;

Maximum precipitation in August.

A. Temperatures

The temperatures offer:

- a maximum corresponding to the passage of the sun to its zenith (March to May) with an absolute maximum of $>40^\circ$;
- a secondary maximum corresponding to the end of the rainy season;
- a minimum corresponding to the maximum remoteness of the sun (December-January) with an absolute minimum of $< 15^\circ$;
- a secondary minimum corresponding to the maximum precipitations.

755 The sorcerer consulted by a sick person explains to him the nature of his illness, tells him whether he is the victim of the hatred of a fetish in the service of some one malicious or envious, or of an enemy who is taking his own vengeance; or whether he is the victim of a gnâma, that fluid, that avenging force which every genie, every man, every animal, and both the living and dead possesses. In serious cases the patient is ordered to sacrifice many hens and quite often nanny goats and billy goats, but in cases that are mild or considered so, the remedies are more childish: should I mention a few?

To cure a headache, the sorcerer sticks the blade of his knife into the ground and places a cauri (1) at the base of the handle. After having spit on the cauri and the knife handle, he lays his hands on the patient, who gazes at him; he recites a formula, and, if the sick person is not cured when the prayer is finished, he must at least feel an appreciable improvement, and he always says he does: "A kaf'sa san, I feel better now.

The sovereign cure for leucoma, they say, is a pinch of powdered hyena dung placed in the eye. Because it is rare and costly, the remedy cannot be bought by all, and powder of cauri shells is substituted for it. This powder is obtained by rubbing a cauri on the stone for grinding millet, a very long process. In order to apply oneself to the task as the old women do, more than training is needed; it calls for patience, or rather, a passivity which cannot be defined.

In cases of ophthalmia and other eye diseases, the temples, the eyebrows, and the tops of the cheeks are greased with kana mixed with a little karite (2) butter. The kana is always enclosed in a bull's

[136] 1. A small white shell used as small change; at least 40 are needed to make a sou, or 0.05 francs.

[137] 2. Karite, or butter tree, Bassia parkii, genus of the Sapotaceae.

142 Races]; Lieutenant Girard, Notes anthropométriques sur quelques Soudanais occidentaux [Anthropometric Notes on Some West Sudanese], 1909; Les races et les peuples de la terre [Races and Peoples of the Earth]; Chantre, Contribution à l'étude des races humaines du Soudan occidental [Contribution to the Study of the Human Races of the Western Sudan], 1918; Dr. Verneau, L'homme, races et coutumes [Man, Races and Customs], 1931.

From this study, a little hasty since the observations were made on very few subjects, we will retain the following features:

141 Without attaining the ultradolichocephaly of the Malinké, the Bambara is [5] characterized by his dolichocephaly (horizontal cephalic index 75.05; for Deniker 76.4) and his fairly considerable height (1.71 meters for the "aristocrats," a result of interbreeding with the Peul population, and 1.65 meters for the ordinary Bambara). Dr. Pales and Tassin de Saint-Péreuse give us figures which are considerably different and which are particularly interesting because their observations were made on 893 individuals. They give the horizontal cephalic index as 74.3, and the average height as 171.8.

Tauxier concluded in these terms: "It is a good Negro race, crossbred with several superior elements!"

142 Let us add to his description that the Bambara has a solid build, with no dissymmetry, a platyrrhinian nose, a pronouncedly [147] ogival skull, a skin whose scars have a keloidian tendency, and an [64] excellent natural defense against infection, although certain regions are particularly infested with goiter. They practice cranial deforma- [304] tion very little, differing in that from the Malinké and the Kassonké. Let us note, finally, that the Bambara have black wooly hair, but that some women have hair with red lights which is considered by 143 the natives as a magnificent trait. We shall not discuss the albinos with white skin and colorless hair, of whom the percentage is small.

R. Koerber, in Etude de la répartition des groupes sanguins chez quelques races d'A.O.F. [Study of the Distribution of Blood Groups in Several Races of French West Africa], out of a total of 1,066 Bambara found 3.9 percent of group AB; 25.7 percent of group A; 27.7 percent of group B, and 42.7 percent of group B, and 42.7 percent of group O. Group O then is dominant, but less frequent than for the Ouolof [Wolof], Malinké, Foula, and Sérère [Serer] races.

141 Finally, let us point out that according to the observations of
143 Dr. Pales, the cormique index of the Bambara is 50.8. Dr. Pales and J. Linhard have calculated the percentage of sickle cell anemia which is: 108 B, 8 percent.

IV. Demographic Data

A. Distribution of the Population

162 The different censuses of recent years give the following estimates.

Senegal -- 150,000 Mandingue; 711,000 Ouolof; 288,500 Peul; 264,000 Sérère; 202,500 Toucouleur; 132,511 Dioula (most
[166] of the Bambara coming to Senegal are Navétanes [temporary workers]).

Guinea -- Bambara are found in the circles of Kankan, Kouroussa, and Siguiri. They are for the most part Navétanes, the major part of the population consisting of the Foula, the Malinké, the Soussou [Susu], the Kissien, the Guerzé, the Toma, the Baga, the Diallonké.

Mauritania -- 500 Bambara live in the circle of Gorgol, along with 8,500 white Moors, 10,000 Foula, 22,000 Toucouleur, 250 Ouolof, 4,500 Sarakolé; and 1,000 Bambara live in the circle of Guidimaka among 13,000 Moors, 4,500 Foula, 1,000 Toucouleur. [6] [Chart appears here in the original text.]

[7] Upper Volta -- Some Bambara live in the Ouahigouya circle, mingled with Mossi (a majority), Peul and Rimaïbé, Yarcé [Yarse], Foulcé [Fulse], etc.

Ivory Coast -- The Korhogo circle includes 290,000 Sénoufo, Malinké, and Bambara.

Finally, the census of 1950 in the Sudan shows a total of 798,900 Bambara out of a total population of 3,336,740, divided as indicated in the recapitulatory table on page 6.

We see that the Bambara are grouped in the circles of Ségou, Bamako, and Bougouni, where they form the majority of the population.

We shall give a somewhat more detailed breakdown for these three centers, using the still fragmentary information that has been assembled up to now.

In the Bamako circle the population is divided into ethnic groups in the following manner: [pp. 8-9]

Plate 2

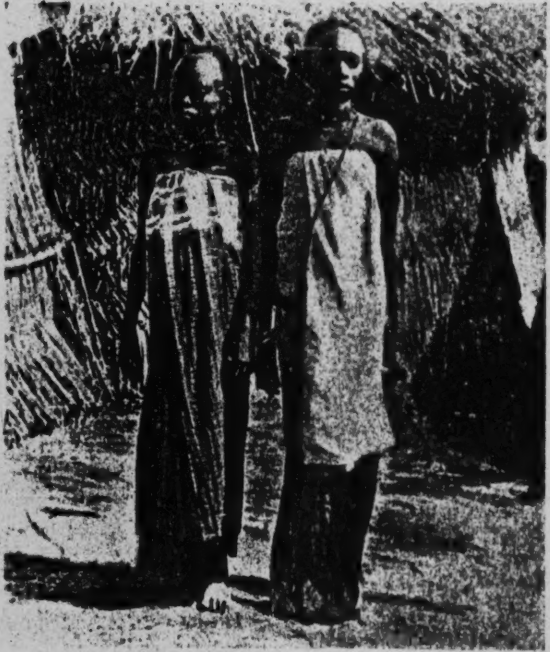


Fig. 3. Bambara girls in outdoor dress, Djenné Region.

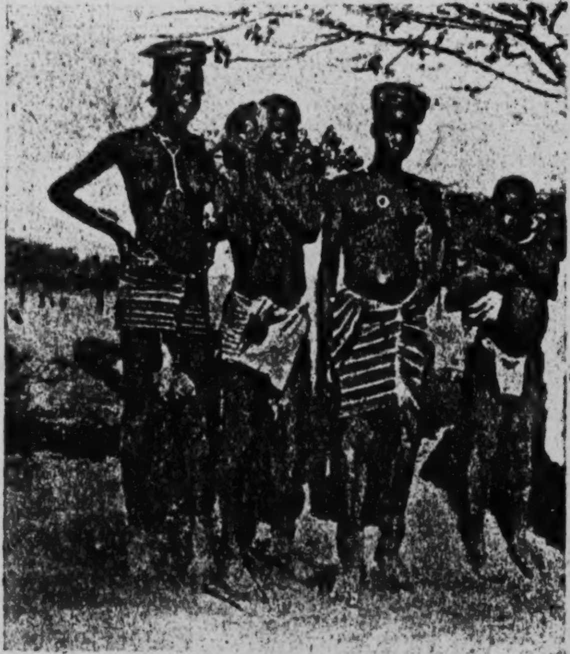


Fig. 4. Bambara women and girls about to set down burdens carried on their heads, Djenné Region.

[End Plate 2]

Plate 3

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[854]

[304]

[End Plate 3]

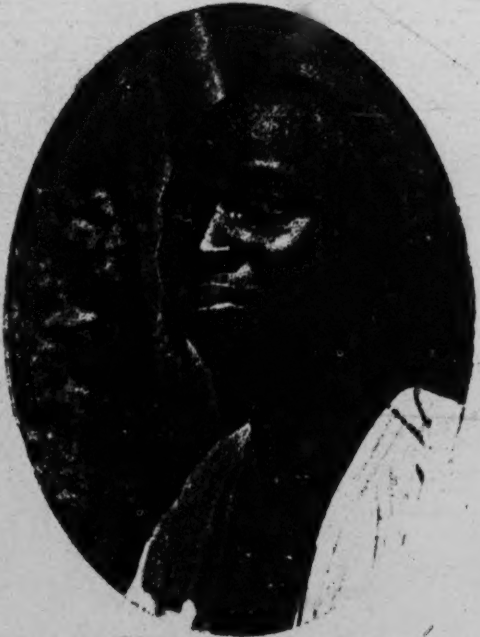

Fig. 5. Bambara with his cheeks slashed in imitation of the tattooing characteristic of the slaves of the Kouloubali, Djenné region.

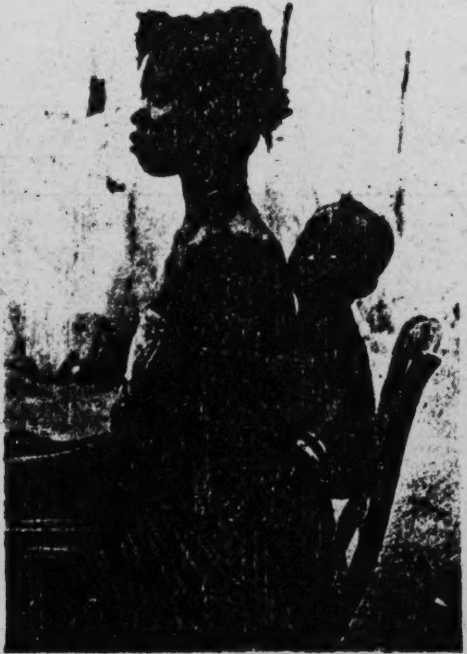

Fig. 6. Woman and child, Djenné Region.

101 The Senoufo or Minianka, an important people in the circles of San, Koutiala, Bougouni, and Bobo Dioulasso, speak Sénoufo.

The Bobo in the region of San, Bobo-Dioulasso, and Dedougou, speak Bobo but are divided into two large branches according to their dialects: the Black Bobo and the Red Bobo.

The Dogon, remainder of the ancient inhabitants of the Nigerian regions from Bamako to Lake Débo, live for the most part in Bandiagara and Douentza and speak Dogon.

The Mossi live in Ouahigouya, Kaya, Tougan, Fada, and the circles of Ouagadougou, Koudougou, Tenkodogo and Dedougou; their language is Moré.

The Toucouleur, originally from the middle Senegal, are numerous particularly in Senegal and Mauritania; they also live in the region of Kayes and Bafoulabé.

Finally, the Touareg [Tuareg] roam from Goundam to Gouré. Their proportion of white blood is weak; the same thing applies to the Moors, Arabized Berbers who are counted with their former black captives. The tribes of the Niger region are the Almoussakaré, the Attouajiten, and the Euddè; they speak Touareg.

III. Physical Characteristics of the Bambara

142 History and ethnology show us that the Bambara of today is the product of several peoples whose origin is still unknown to us. Yet, common biological characteristics have developed so the Bambara distinguish themselves physically from other peoples, either by color (they say they are less black than the Bozo and the Sarakolé), by the structure of the body and musculature (they are tall, robust, muscled . . . very different in that from the "feeble Peuls"), or by the form of the skull, with its receding forehead (that of the Peul is straight, "bulging and bumpy").

Tauxier, in his Histoire des Bambara [History of the Bambara], has given an anthropological description based on the work of the following authors: Quatrefages and Hamy, Crania ethnica [Ethnic Crania], 1882; Dr. Collomb, Bull. de la Soc. d'Anth. de Lyon [Bulletin of the Anthropological Society of Lyon], 1885; Hovelacque, Les Nègres d'Afrique sus-équatoriale [Negroes of Supra-Equatorial Africa], 1889; Dr. Verneau, Les races humaines [Human

142 Races]; Lieutenant Girard, *Notes anthropométriques sur quelques Soudanais occidentaux* [Anthropometric Notes on Some West Sudanese], 1909; *Les races et les peuples de la terre* [Races and Peoples of the Earth]; Chantre, *Contribution à l'étude des races humaines du Soudan occidental* [Contribution to the Study of the Human Races of the Western Sudan], 1918; Dr. Verneau, *L'homme, races et coutumes* [Man, Races and Customs], 1931.

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181 "2. The Bambara makes a solid and disciplined infantryman ...
142 Mentally he is rather dull and stupid, physically he is stocky and solid." Previously, the Abbé Henry had concluded in these terms: "The Bambara is a farmer ... Well proportioned, his height is medium, neither tall nor short. His chest is strong, and his short, thickset neck supports a large head covered with black, wooly hair. Nothing in his visage betokens spiritual force, energy, intelligence. His forehead is receding, his eyebrow arches are rather pronounced, and his jet-black eyes, of which the white part is slightly cream (!), are straight. His jaws, nearly always well toothed, project slightly; he has strong, thick lips, a short chin, cheekbones ... a little projecting, and his flat nose is horribly open and squashed at its root.

145 "The wife, as well as the husband, is strong, robust. More often than not she is knock-kneed, and this constitutional defect doubtless comes from the fact that she is obliged, from her earliest
142 childhood, to carry rather heavy burdens on her head, burdens often too heavy for her strength [sic]. Mentally, the Bambara has a mind
181 as thick as his body. Slow to understand and lacking curiosity, he has no desire to improve his condition. 'What my fathers did, I must do' -- that is his great principle ... Lazy, good-for-nothing even, he believes he's done everything if he has enough in his granary to feed himself and his family ... Timorous, he fears the European exactly as a slave fears his master, and if he serves the European passably well, the latter is greatly mistaken if he thinks he has gained the native's affection. He detests the White, as he detests the Moslem; the White is the conqueror, an anti-fetishist, and therefore an enemy."

Finally, M. Monteil, in his Monographie de Djenné [Djenné
142 Monograph], tells us in his turn: "... elongated skull and pronounced
302 prognathism; the black, wooly hair is often gathered in braids by the young people ... the top of the head is often shaven, which makes the forehead look larger. The women affect a sort of transversal crest.

142 "The forehead recedes, the eyebrow arches project ... the nose [110] flattened, the root of the nose squashed, the nostrils gaping wide, the lips thick ... the teeth wide with little space between ... the neck large, the shoulders wide and straight, the chest strong and long, the members robust, the joints thick. Rather often for the woman, sometimes for the man, a fairly pronounced steatopygia.

142 The skin is in all tints, from light maroon to dark black. The height is a little above average ...

"The Bambara is a bumpkin; he is dull and slow to understand, 181 but he clings to his ideas, doubtless rare, and has an insurmountable stubbornness. He is patient; he endures every tyranny and submits to every calamity with a stupefying resignation. But when he has resolved to exact vengeance by force or by exercising his rights, nothing can stop him. He does not know how to present himself, he has trouble explaining himself, he always goes on interminably before coming to the point, and even though speaking deliberately, his eyes averted or fixed on the ground, he only pronounces half of the words, which makes it difficult to understand him."

These few extracts at least have the merit of giving a measure of the extent to which the Bambara is incomprehensible to the White.

II. Refutation of the Traditional Theory

The Bambara is, in fact, intelligent, patient, and stubborn, so many qualities indispensable for living in this difficult country. We have been able to show, in the course of this study, how coherent his metaphysical system was, its intellectual rigor, and how it influenced all social and economic life. But we must insist on this point: such a system is not the fruit of the idle speculations of a few privileged minds; it is lived by all, understood in its parts by all members of the society and in its totality by numerous old men.

The absence of a system of writing like our own obliges the 153 Bambara to possess all this knowledge himself, and his prodigious 181 memory astonishes the White. But the most remarkable thing in his intellectual makeup is the facility with which he has managed to seize our modes of thought, so different from his traditional thought, and to assimilate our vision of the world; there is no great school in France that is not within his reach. The astonishing ease with which he is able to assimilate our language and our thought is adequate proof of the suppleness of his mind which has always been trained in all the speculative subtleties.

181 The stubbornness he exhibits in certain cases is often his only manner of defending his traditions, which are the very stuff of his life. These traditions were formed in the course of thousands of years of experience in a hard country where life is not a natural thing.

4: Henry--279 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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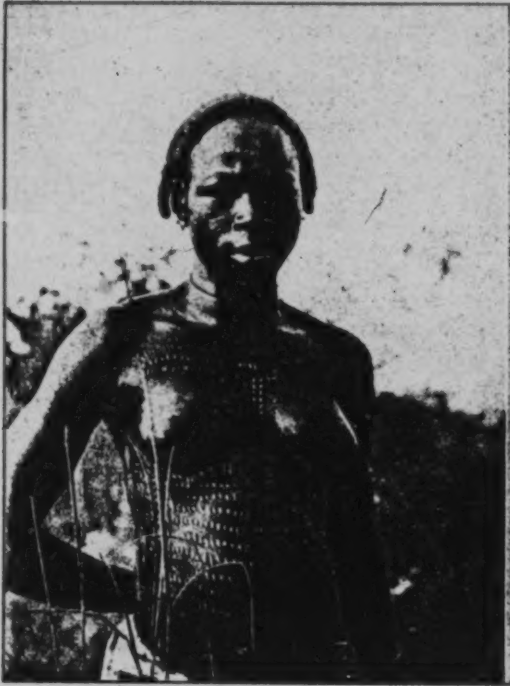
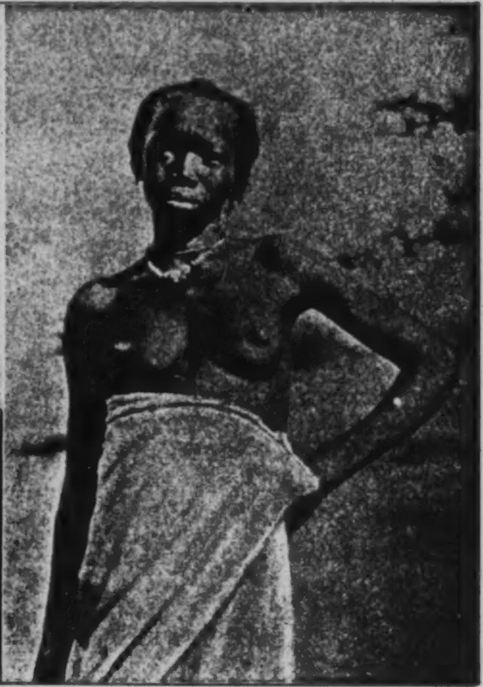


Tattoo worn by the women of Bani country.



Tattoo worn around the breasts by young girls of Ségou and made by themselves.

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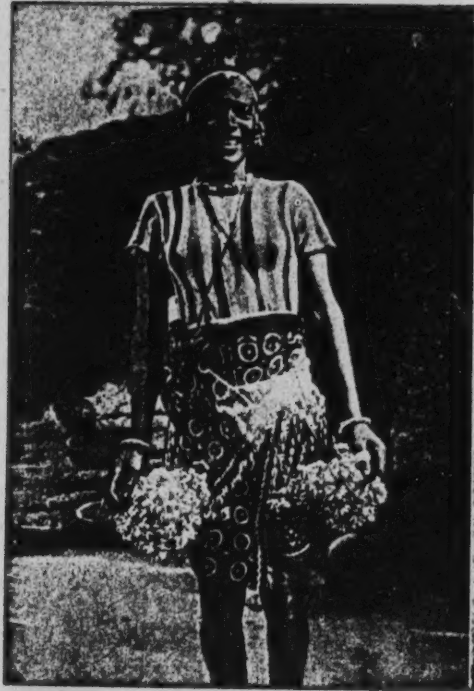
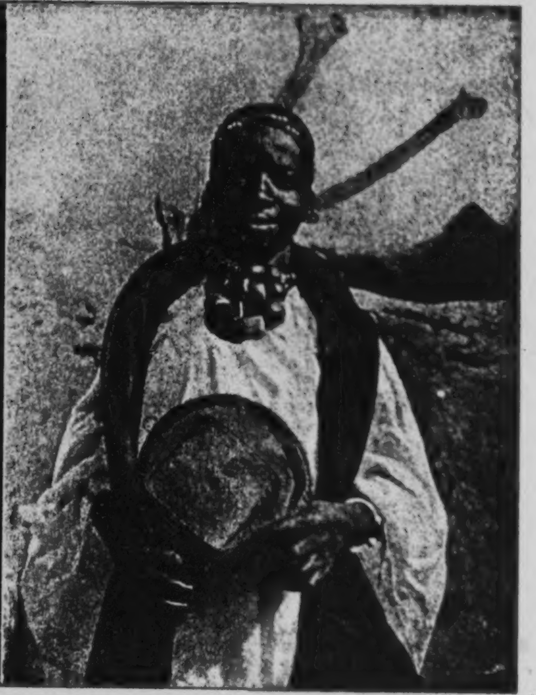
4: Henry--282 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Excised girl in the dress-up attire of Bani country.



Excised girl dressed up.

845 Up to the time they are twelve, the children bathe themselves preferably in the Niger. They supposedly can walk on water and never run the risk of drowning.

The twins do not become separated from each other any more than the dya is separated from the living being to which it is attached. They wear the same clothes and eat the same food simultaneously. Formerly male twins married the same woman. If one of them dies
845 at an early age, the blacksmith carves a small wooden doll called
778 flanitokele, which takes the name of the deceased and which the mother puts on the mat next to the living child. The latter takes this doll with him at the time of his circumcision and keeps it during the period of his seclusion in order to bring it back to the parental home whence it is never removed. When he marries, he sticks the doll into the earth along with another piece of wood symbolizing the wife of the deceased. Since twins are in a sense a living replica of Faro, none can bother them without showing disrespect to him. On the other hand, they are the object of attention and precaution on the part of their family as well as their neighbors. Their presence is always beneficial. Considered invulnerable, twins used to march ahead of
[728] troups in times of war and would serve as inviolable intermediaries between the warring parties during truce.

The Hermaphrodite

826 The hermaphrodite, being both male and female, is to all extent and purpose his own twin. Consequently, he has no dya (1).

[825
304] 1. The hyena is considered a hermaphrodite; it can engender or conceive, depending on its size and strength: "the stronger impregnating the weaker." A tattooing system is based upon this belief.

/88/ The Albino

[143] Albinos of light or reddish skin and red hair are called gombele or yepege, this latter term being reserved for those who show the most accentuated characteristics.

826
833 The albino is supposedly born of sexual relations which took place in the middle of the day when the sun is in the koblenkaba, sky of

142 Races]; Lieutenant Girard, Notes anthropométriques sur quelques Soudanais occidentaux [Anthropometric Notes on Some West Sudanese], 1909; Les races et les peuples de la terre [Races and Peoples of the Earth]; Chantre, Contribution à l'étude des races humaines du Soudan occidental [Contribution to the Study of the Human Races of the Western Sudan], 1918; Dr. Verneau, L'homme, races et coutumes [Man, Races and Customs], 1931.

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142 Let us add to his description that the Bambara has a solid build, with no dissymmetry, a platyrrhinian nose, a pronouncedly [147] ogival skull, a skin whose scars have a keloidian tendency, and an [[64] excellent natural defense against infection, although certain regions are particularly infested with goiter. They practice cranial deforma- [304] tion very little, differing in that from the Malinké and the Kassonké. Let us note, finally, that the Bambara have black wooly hair, but that some women have hair with red lights which is considered by 143 the natives as a magnificent trait. We shall not discuss the albinos with white skin and colorless hair, of whom the percentage is small.

R. Koerber, in Etude de la répartition des groupes sanguins chez quelques races d'A.O.F. [Study of the Distribution of Blood Groups in Several Races of French West Africa], out of a total of 1,066 Bambara found 3.9 percent of group AB; 25.7 percent of group A; 27.7 percent of group B, and 42.7 percent of group B, and 42.7 percent of group O. Group O then is dominant, but less frequent than for the Ouolof [Wolof], Malinké, Foula, and Sérère [Serer] races.

141 143 Finally, let us point out that according to the observations of Dr. Pales, the cormique index of the Bambara is 50.8. Dr. Pales and J. Linhard have calculated the percentage of sickle cell anemia which is: 108 B, 8 percent.

IV. Demographic Data

A. Distribution of the Population

162 The different censuses of recent years give the following estimates.

Senegal -- 150,000 Mandingue; 711,000 Ouolof; 288,500 Peul; 264,000 Sérère; 202,500 Toucouleur; 132,511 Dioula (most [166] of the Bambara coming to Senegal are Navétanes [temporary workers]).

Guinea -- Bambara are found in the circles of Kankan, Kouroussa, and Siguiri. They are for the most part Navétanes, the major part of the population consisting of the Foula, the Malinké, the Soussou [Susu], the Kissien, the Guerzé, the Toma, the Baga, the Diallonké.

Mauritania -- 500 Bambara live in the circle of Gorgol, along with 8,500 white Moors, 10,000 Foula, 22,000 Toucouleur, 250 Ouolof, 4,500 Sarakolé; and 1,000 Bambara live in the circle of Guidimaka among 13,000 Moors, 4,500 Foula, 1,000 Toucouleur. [6] [Chart appears here in the original text.]

[7] Upper Volta -- Some Bambara live in the Ouahigouya circle, mingled with Mossi (a majority), Peul and Rimaïbé, Yarcé [Yarse], Foulcé [Fulse], etc.

Ivory Coast -- The Korhogo circle includes 290,000 Sénoufo, Malinké, and Bambara.

Finally, the census of 1950 in the Sudan shows a total of 798,900 Bambara out of a total population of 3,336,740, divided as indicated in the recapitulatory table on page 6.

We see that the Bambara are grouped in the circles of Ségou, Bamako, and Bougouni, where they form the majority of the population.

We shall give a somewhat more detailed breakdown for these three centers, using the still fragmentary information that has been assembled up to now.

In the Bamako circle the population is divided into ethnic groups in the following manner: [pp. 8-9]

101 Example: Those of Bélédougou are the Bélédugu-ka-u;
Those of Kaarta are the Kaarta-n-ka-u;
Those of Ségou are the Ségu-n-ka-u . . .

Each of these expressions has at the same time a political significance. Ségu-n-ka-u means the people of the party in power at Ségou. The context alone determines which people are meant.

[2] Among themselves, the Bambara factions sometimes [552] call each other by nicknames: of the people of Ségou, the people of Kaarta say ironically, "those of Tu-kele-u" (those of the single braid), alluding to their coiffure, or else Nya-ni-nyele-u, "those of Nya and Nyélé" (Nya and Nyélé are women's names common at Ségou). All the members of a clan may also be grouped under a term derived from the name of the founder or ancestor of the clan: the people of Kaarta may call themselves Nya-Ngolo-la (the people of Nya-Ngolo, ancestor of the clan); the people of Ségou may be called Barama-Ngolo-la (the people of Barama-Ngolo, ancestor of the clan).

There are also nicknames for individuals of other tribes. [186] The Bambara are called Dyonko (slaves) by the Soninké, who long exploited the Bambara for the slave trade, while the Bambara in turn call the Soninké the Marka Dialan'u (Marka Seer), because they gave up their own dialect for the Bambara dialect.

II. Situation

A. Ethnic Classification

● 144

Delafosse has made a broad classification of the peoples inhabiting Upper Senegal and Niger. Unfortunately, this classification too often mixes language and physical traits. Thus, he puts the Bambara in the Mandé family, which is divided into three groups comprised of these main peoples:

First group (northern): three peoples, the Bozo, the Soninké (or Sarakolé or Marka), and the Dioula.

Second group (central): five peoples, the Kagoro, the Banmana (or Bambara, including the Somono caste), the Kassonké (or Mandingue [Mandingo]), and the Foulanké.

● 144 Third group (southern): four peoples, the Diallonké [Dialonke], the Samo, the Samorho, and the Sia; plus four small tribes of doubtful classification, the Blé, the Natioro, the Ouara, and the Sembla.

More recent studies by Urvoy, Dr. Pales, and Mlle. Tassin de Saint-Péreuse involving very numerous measurements will soon permit determination of the racial characteristics of the Sudanese populations and the establishment of a new classification.

B. Geographical Distribution

131 In his study of the Bambara of Ségou, Charles Monteil tells us that it is impossible to determine what the precise boundaries of the Bambara empire were, because a frontier as we understand it has no meaning for the Black. The empires did not seek to dominate such and such a region; their goal was, above all, the exploitation of the greatest possible number of individuals, without regard to localities or races.

131 162 At the present time, the Encyclopédie coloniale et maritime [Colonial and Maritime Encyclopedia] considers that [3] the Bambara form a group of about a million individuals who extend west-east from the region of Siguirio as far as Macina along both sides of the Niger and the Bani rivers, and south-north from the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta to Sahel de Nioro. In addition, there are 40,000 in Senegal: peanut farmers near Kaolack, Thiès, and Diourbel, and captives at Fouta Toro, Saint-Louis, etc. But they are most numerous in the circles [a "circle" is an administrative division] of Bamako (310,000), Ségou (190,000), and Bougouni (110,000). To [563] these one may add 125,000 Métis [mixed bloods], Peul-Bambara, of whom 72,000 live in the Bougouni circle alone.

131 619 More precisely, the great mass of the Bambara is distributed in a region that may be delimited as follows.

To the northwest, three tribes have been catalogued in the Kaarta: the Dianguirté in the circle of Nioro, the Niamassa at Nioro, and the Massassi to the south of Nioro.

To the north, in the Sahel, the region of Bakounou and Waghadou is inhabited by the Kalongo tribe.

To the northeast, the Bambara live in the Macina, the Issa Ber, the region of Goundam, and up to Timbuktu.

144 771 which encompasses all social, technical and economic activities" (1) of this people. The myths are "a sum of knowledge, wisdom, and not a series of fixed etiological recitations. One may say that they constitute a metaphysic including the knowledge of created things, as well as the principles of their state of being and of their action." (2)

171 771 Thorough investigation of other Sudanese peoples has revealed that the Bambara religion is part of a pan-Sudanese system in which differences lie in the modes of expression and not in the essence of the thought.

A. Cosmogony

772 The Bambara conceive the world as a mass of active forces which man can influence. Thanks to certain techniques, the pivotal one being the blood sacrifice, man may amass or liberate these forces, may direct and orient them; in short, man may have a hand in the movement of the world and may aid it in its consciousness and accomplishment. This central role of man is explained to us by the order of creation itself, which governs all the rites to which man is subject. The Bambara conceive the world as having issued from an 773 original void which was endowed with movement (3): the gla. This void emitted a voice which created its double, and from the couple came a humid substance, zo sumale (cold rust), which formed hard shining bodies. After a series of movements and transformations, there was an explosion between the two gla, which caused the ejection of a hard and powerful matter that vibrated as it fell. Out of this vibration came signs which settled on all the things as yet uncreated to designate them. Then, man's consciousness detached itself from the gla and settled on things to awaken their consciousness in naming them. In the

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1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion], P.U.F., 1951.

2. Id., ibid.

3. Passim, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

181 "2. The Bambara makes a solid and disciplined infantryman ...
142 Mentally he is rather dull and stupid, physically he is stocky and
solid." Previously, the Abbé Henry had concluded in these terms:
"The Bambara is a farmer ... Well proportioned, his height is medium,
neither tall nor short. His chest is strong, and his short, thickset neck
supports a large head covered with black, wooly hair. Nothing in
his visage betokens spiritual force, energy, intelligence. His forehead
is receding, his eyebrow arches are rather pronounced, and his jet-black eyes, of which the white part is slightly cream (!), are straight.
His jaws, nearly always well toothed, project slightly; he has strong,
thick lips, a short chin, cheekbones ... a little projecting, and his
flat nose is horribly open and squashed at its root.

145 "The wife, as well as the husband, is strong, robust. More
often than not she is knock-kneed, and this constitutional defect
182 doubtless comes from the fact that she is obliged, from her earliest
childhood, to carry rather heavy burdens on her head, burdens often
too heavy for her strength [sic]. Mentally, the Bambara has a mind
181 as thick as his body. Slow to understand and lacking curiosity, he has
no desire to improve his condition. 'What my fathers did, I must
do' -- that is his great principle ... Lazy, good-for-nothing even, he
believes he's done everything if he has enough in his granary to feed
himself and his family ... Timorous, he fears the European exactly
as a slave fears his master, and if he serves the European passably
well, the latter is greatly mistaken if he thinks he has gained the
native's affection. He detests the White, as he detests the Moslem;
the White is the conqueror, an anti-fetishist, and therefore an enemy."

Finally, M. Monteil, in his Monographie de Djenné [Djenné
142 Monograph], tells us in his turn: "... elongated skull and pronounced
302 prognathism; the black, wooly hair is often gathered in braids by the
young people ... the top of the head is often shaven, which makes
the forehead look larger. The women affect a sort of transversal
crest.

142 "The forehead recedes, the eyebrow arches project ... the
nose [110] flattened, the root of the nose squashed, the nostrils
gaping wide, the lips thick ... the teeth wide with little space between ... the neck large, the shoulders wide and straight, the chest
strong and long, the members robust, the joints thick. Rather often
for the woman, sometimes for the man, a fairly pronounced steatopygia.

142 Races]; Lieutenant Girard, Notes anthropométriques sur quelques
Soudanais occidentaux [Anthropometric Notes on Some West Sudanese],
1909; Les races et les peuples de la terre [Races and Peoples of the
Earth]; Chantre, Contribution à l'étude des races humaines du Soudan
occidental [Contribution to the Study of the Human Races of the Western Sudan], 1918; Dr. Verneau, L'homme, races et coutumes [Man, Races and Customs], 1931.

From this study, a little hasty since the observations were made on very few subjects, we will retain the following features:

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the Bambara is [5] characterized by his dolichocephaly (horizontal cephalic index 75.05; for Deniker 76.4) and his fairly considerable height (1.71 meters for the "aristocrats," a result of interbreeding with the Peul population, and 1.65 meters for the ordinary Bambara). Dr. Pales and Tassin de Saint-Péreuse give us figures which are considerably different and which are particularly interesting because their observations were made on 893 individuals. They give the horizontal cephalic index as 74.3, and the average height as 171.8.

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769 continuity is established between the living and the dead, with the deceased acting as intermediary. Religious customs, magic, and civil law, all are intermingled in apparent disorder, and the casual or inexperienced observer is all the more confused inasmuch as diverse accessory or circumstantial features mask the essentials in being more obvious. [164]

Does not the same sort of confusion confront a foreigner in France who sees the funeral of a prominent citizen? If he is uninformed, how is he to recognize the religious rites and civil requirements which form the common basis of all funeral ceremonies, for the great and for the humble, brought to their highest development for the one, reduced to their absolute minimum for the other.

Therefore, the important thing to show here is the sub-
764 stratum on which all funeral observances rest. For the sake of
clarity, we shall divide the period of 40 days into four phases:
(a) from death to burial; (b) burial; (c) the funeral celebration;
(d) the period of mourning.

(a) From death to burial. As soon as death occurs, the
763 fact is announced to everyone by appropriate means.

The lamentations of the women burst forth, and this spreads the news in the immediate vicinity, while gunshots inform the whole settlement. These acts have something of the ritual that was carried out when a Bambara died in war. Raffenel has given us a remarkable picture of it.

"When a Bambara died in battle, three gunshots, fired
763 near the door of his hut by one of his companions-at-arms, an-
152 nounced his death to the family. Wailings answered this an-
nouncement, and the weeping women of the village came out
of all the huts to run to the house from where the signal had
been heard. Everything was abandoned in order to share in this
sorrow. First they wept, and then they ran to find out where the
mourning was...

763 "The warrior charged with this mission arrived at the door at a gallop. He pulled up his horse, slowly loaded his gun, shot it, reloaded it again, then again... , and when the third shot had rung out, he rode off with equal speed, without uttering a word, without giving a single detail... Two shots announced enslavement."

763 A gunshot today most likely signals the death of a
hunter or the father of a hunter. In any case, however, there
are always cries and vociferations by [165] the women, who
are joined by their friends, relatives, and neighbors.

Horsemen ride off to notify any of the sons of the deceased who are away.

[567] Meanwhile, the chief of the slaves, the major-domo,
the confidential agent, or a friend or neighbor of the deceased
goes to inform the chief and the principal men in the village.

These personages come to the mortuary house at once,
764 spear in hand. After being received by the man temporarily
in charge of the house, they go to the deceased to discover his
identity and at the same time express their condolences to the
family represented by the person who received them; then they
withdraw.

In the mortuary hut silence descends while the women
prepare the body. They wash it with warm water usually
[824] scented with basil, *su-ko-la* (*Ocimum album* and *febrifugum*);
they dry it and wrap it in pieces of native white cotton material or else dress it in its own garments, likewise white. A mat
[285] of coarse straw (*tyekala*, *kara*) is placed in the middle of the
room. A fine, flexible mat made of *iphène* leaves is put on
top of it, and the women lay out the corpse on the second mat.
Sometimes they place a grindstone on the abdomen to keep it
from swelling.

When these preparations are completed, the women,
[352 dressed in white native cloth, sit down in the native fashion on
516] tiny stools in the mortuary hut. Those who come in from outside give evidence of terrible grief: they cry out, they weep,
● [152] they cover their heads with a bit of cloth and hurry toward the
mortuary hut. As soon as they enter, they become quiet and
stop weeping.

152 Among the Bambara grief is never silent; it is custom-
764 ary to show it overtly. As soon as there is a crowd, the singing
767 begins, in rhythm to the clapping of hands. One person or
another will be inspired to sing of the achievements and virtues
of the deceased. Professional weepers and mourners mingle
with the crowd, guiding and gradually encouraging the noisy
display.

776 829 contact with the genii and know their family names, or *diamou*; however little they may be at ease with a Frenchman they will beg him to show them the place where a well should be dug, convinced that we know where live the spirits who are appointed to watch over water. Do we not bear them a certain resemblance?

776 The *gnâ*, or *boli*, also are sexed; they reproduce and found families. They are superior to the genii in power and wickedness, and, except indirectly, capable only of evil. They are at open war with God who, without taking away any of their intelligence or liberty, has condemned them tosuffer and to undergo the punishment of fire. They continually set up ambushes against the *djiné* to make their plans, good or evil, miscarry; they take pleasure in tormenting men, and the Bambara fears them greatly. The worship of the *djiné* is nothing compared to what is accorded them. Those considered most powerful have an entire retinue to serve them and to render them [651] honors and, as will be seen later, the head tax of 3.50 francs per head is nothing compared to the sums the Blacks spend to ward off the blows of the *boli* and avoid their wrath.

Like the *djiné*, the *boli* appears in human form, but it is disgusting and hideous to behold. All those upon whom the favor of an appearance is bestowed are frozen with terror; the body of the *boli* is terrifyingly black, and its face disappears in a flame above which rise horns.

[782 822] In the sacrifices to the *boli* the liturgical colors are black and red, and a white victim is never offered except in an indirect sacrifice necessitated by an offering called *saraka*, which is quite rare. /33/

2. Sorcery and Priesthood

152 Surrounded by spirits, by genii always seeking to harm him, a Bambara is quick to believe that he is the victim of one. This attitude contributes more than a little to give him a certain endurance manifested in the face of suffering. I would even say that he usually bears suffering, not with stoicism but with the torpor of an animal.

152 After all, what can one do about an evil that cannot be exorcised
except to bear it? What can one do against a powerful being that
cannot be disarmed? Nevertheless, in the depth of his being he feels
a need to enjoy himself (and enjoyment for him consists in drinking,
eating, sleeping, and procreating); therefore he feels a horror of all
suffering and neglects nothing that can protect him from it. In order
751 to live in peace, he reddens everything a little with blood and covers
789 his body with grigris or good-luck charms, with talismans that change
the course of things and even of nature, and lastly amulets which will
forearm him against poison, help him avoid an accident, cause the
sorcery of the malicious to miscarry, send away the gnâma of the
genii, of the living and the dead, and prevent the unknown forces
which are found more or less everywhere in nature from taking hold of
the wearer. For this protection they address themselves to the priests
of the djiné and the boli, and especially to the sorcerers who have
close contacts with the genii and are the mediators between man and
the entire invisible world.

776 Since the Bambara conceived the visible and invisible world as
782 similar to what he believes himself to be, he has come to believe
quite naturally and without any effort that the genii can be seen and
conversed with their language understood and, finally, that it is possible
to subjugate the forces of nature and hold them in one's power.
By making offerings and sacrifices or causing them to be made through
the intermediary of a priest, he can win a spirit's favor and thus
lessen his fears and terrors. But if the spirit is weak, they will be
ready to withdraw their attentions; it must be equal to the one feared
and if possible outdo it.

778 It is force, or, to use their term, fanga, that governs each
791 person's conduct toward his neighbor; to be obeyed, a man must first
cause himself to be feared, and only a powerful man will succeed
and see everything yield before him. /34/

The Negroes have seen people of low birth and poor family succeed in increasing their property and become rich to the point of where they have servants and slaves and dominate a whole village, a whole tribe, or a whole people. Since they like to reason from

Chapter 3

The Bambara's General Ideas on Human Life

1. Sickness

152 In his innermost being the Bambara feels an ever unassuaged
753 thirst for happiness, an intense and pressing need to live for enjoyment; therefore he revolts against all suffering, both physical and mental. It seems unnatural to him, and at the least discomfort a person will state and believe that he is the victim of malice, of an enemy who is taking vengeance, and he immediately blames the world of invisible beings and those who have intimate relations with it.

753 Not only do the Bambara consider sickness unnatural, they consider it a more or less conscious force which comes to torture them. For fear of displeasing it or of displeasing the genie, the superior force which has taken it into its service and is using it as it pleases, they surround themselves with precautions against announcing the sickness of one of their people. When one asks a Negro for news of his health, his first answer will be that he is well, and if a member of his family is confined to his mat in agony, he will still tell you: "Toro si t'âla (1), he is suffering no pain."

1. Toro, "suffering" ; si, "not any"; te, "is not"; â la, "on him" (la, "on").

755 The sick have unlimited confidence in their sorcerers, who are all doctors and apothecaries, and they submit blindly and without any argument to their orders and prescriptions. From them they receive herbs and leaves, and the infusions or brews made from these are prescribed as beverages or lotions, but most /45/ frequently the sorcerers rub their clients' bodies and gently stroke them, anoint them with oil and grease and spit on the affected part while reciting a formula. And always, of course, the number of grigris and talismans in the possession of the patient is increased by several items.

142 The skin is in all tints, from light maroon to dark black. The height is a little above average . . .

181 "The Bambara is a bumpkin; he is dull and slow to understand, but he clings to his ideas, doubtless rare, and has an insurmountable stubbornness. He is patient; he endures every tyranny and submits to every calamity with a stupefying resignation. But when he has resolved to exact vengeance by force or by exercising his rights, nothing can stop him. He does not know how to present himself, he has trouble explaining himself, he always goes on interminably before coming to the point, and even though speaking deliberately, his eyes averted or fixed on the ground, he only pronounces half of the words, which makes it difficult to understand him."

These few extracts at least have the merit of giving a measure of the extent to which the Bambara is incomprehensible to the White.

II. Refutation of the Traditional Theory

The Bambara is, in fact, intelligent, patient, and stubborn, so many qualities indispensable for living in this difficult country. We have been able to show, in the course of this study, how coherent his metaphysical system was, its intellectual rigor, and how it influenced all social and economic life. But we must insist on this point: such a system is not the fruit of the idle speculations of a few privileged minds; it is lived by all, understood in its parts by all members of the society and in its totality by numerous old men.

153 181 The absence of a system of writing like our own obliges the Bambara to possess all this knowledge himself, and his prodigious memory astonishes the White. But the most remarkable thing in his intellectual makeup is the facility with which he has managed to seize our modes of thought, so different from his traditional thought, and to assimilate our vision of the world; there is no great school in France that is not within his reach. The astonishing ease with which he is able to assimilate our language and our thought is adequate proof of the suppleness of his mind which has always been trained in all the speculative subtleties.

181 The stubbornness he exhibits in certain cases is often his only manner of defending his traditions, which are the very stuff of his life. These traditions were formed in the course of thousands of years of experience in a hard country where life is not a natural thing.

787 With the same equipment the diviner sometimes operates differently. Setting the gourd firmly on the crown that supports it, he then taps it two or three times with his middle finger. Then, it is claimed, he can hear special sounds, which are revelations by the water-spirit and which he alone can understand.

In short, there is an endless number of divining practices and here, if anywhere, the old saw which says that the spirit blows where, when and how it listeth, is singularly appropriate. And nothing is more accommodating than human credulity. [198] It goes without saying that there are some remarkable ventriloquists among the Bambara, who give such talented support to inanimate objects that the latter become veritable oracles. A piece of horn stuck into the ground or a mute block of wood are thus transformed through such artifice into mediums that answer anyone on any subject.

[828] [154] There are also many highly suggestible individuals who readily fall into wakeful or hypnotic states, during which they reveal hidden things.

787 763 Another practice among the Bambara is the use of the kolon' kala (1) which is specially amenable to hypnotic suggestion. When a suspicious death requires search for a murderer, the corpse is often used for the discovery. It is carried on the heads of [138] two impressionable young men, who are then assumed to be possessed by the soul of the deceased. The lugubrious remains are rapidly borne through the settlement or the countryside, disregarding obstacles, until it finally stops of itself at a spot where the murderer or some revelatory sign is to be found.

787 A kind of effigy is often used instead of a corpse. This is made of a kolon' kala to which is tied a little bag containing bits of the body (finger-nails, hair, etc.) and which is wrapped in a cloth. The effigy plays the role of the corpse.

[412] 1. This is the wooden pestle used in all native kitchens to crush grain and condiments.

577 an uncomfortable situation among his own family; but under-
626 neath this surface, the evil shows through. It is not unusual to
577 be faced with a disconcerting absence of moral sense, ferocious
157 egotism, deep-seated duplicity, impudent treachery and cold,
unperturbed cruelty (1). And one can see, perhaps in all of them, the scorn and even hatred felt for anyone who is unfortunate, weak, ill or abandoned. However, it should certainly be noted that there are also Bambara who display the most disinterested devotion, generous hospitality and remarkable courage; some even give evidence of that kind of inborn distinction which is to be found among even the most primitive peoples and which is the mark of superior people.

183 Thus, no code organizes Bambara rules of life. Everything depends upon custom, that mysterious thread, at once fragile and strong, which links the generations one with another [130] and which sustains the individual, though he is unaware of it, to such an extent that he is completely lost without it. Handed down by earlier generations, superstitiously preserved, it is imposed through fear of the punishment which will follow transgression. At first glance, custom appears to be an amalgam of the most heterogeneous elements and that is why we Europeans find it at once respectable and ridiculous, good and bad, useful and futile, sometimes atrocious and then again excellent. On closer study it is seen to exhibit, on the basis of feelings common to all humanity, an efflorescence peculiar to the native milieu, a natural morality which duplicates positive laws.

It is the nature of man to observe certain laws, to see the good and the bad in what surrounds him and, in his conduct, to display a leaning toward the good and an aversion to the bad. He recognizes within himself something which criticizes his actions from a similar point of view and, ~~which;~~ in fact, judges them.

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1. The chronicle of Ségou, especially, attests this tradition of trickery and hypocrisy (see especially the tales about Ma-n-son, p. 93, and about Da, p. 101).

778 All these are obviously legends and I give them as such, not having been able to assure myself of the facts de visu; I maintain, however, that they may be true. I broke open not a Komo, but a Kono, which was the torso of a child three to four years old.

Some boli, like the Tji wara and the Nama, are made of wood; others, like the Douga, consist of a considerable number of bulls' horns. They also take on almost all shapes, and when one opens the dirty goatskins that serve as their tabernacles, one finds horns and napkin rings, and among them balls suggesting all the fruits and tubers of creation, and one has to be more than an initiate to recognize the main item in this conglomeration. There are also some that resemble a crude doll whose arms are two horns; others are in the form of a hippopotamus, a cow, or an elephant, and in the Magna of Zambala on the Bani, in the circle of Sikasso, I even saw a little horse.

The boli are always composed of several pieces called boli dé, among which is the boli den fa, a little larger /141/ and rounder than the others because it receives the first trickle of blood and the mouthful of chewed kola nut. Some boli are strictly male or female, and others, like the Nama and Tji wara, for example, are mated and live in their temples with the females. The latter always resemble their husbands; they are less strong, but that is all. These fetishes, especially those that are famous, feared, and dreaded, often stay hidden, and their covering is not taken off until the moment of sacrifice.

778 791 •158 The worship of the powerful boli is more complicated than that of the gnéna, or djiné, and an entire staff is needed to serve them. First, there is the owner of the fetish, the gnâtigi, or bolitigi, and the sacrificer, the mouroukalatigi. These are helped in their duties by two wara da (also called waraminadé), who are intermediaries between the fetish and its owner (1). It is through them that the genie

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778 791 (1) The Komo being the most famous in the province of Ségou, it is the staff of this fetish I am giving here. The others have staffs that are similar, but

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of course the names change a little. On the staff of the Nama there are not only warada but also djenfa tje and djenfa mouso, who go through the village to exorcise /all evil from/ it, holding the fetish in their hands or putting it over their faces. They are preceded by a torch bearer, who is usually the darotigi, or beadle. Some fetishes, the Kono for example, have a person especially responsible for carrying it to the place of sacrifice. He performs the duties of the darotigi; the one who carries the Kono is quite often called Kono guenguéba.

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makes known its wishes and gives its orders; and when it does so, its spokesman is always seized by an epileptic attack followed by catalepsy. When he has spoken he is brought out of this state by being sprinkled with consecrated water, and he goes back to his place as if nothing unusual had happened. He seems to feel no fatigue, his features are composed; and yet only a moment earlier his body ran with sweat, his limbs shook with nervous trembling, his eyes were wild and starting out of their sockets, saliva that was often tinged with blood ran from his mouth, and his breath was whistling and irregular.

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The gnâ also has its beadle, the darotigi, who rings for the sacrifice, thus warning the initiates to come quickly and the uninitiated to stay in their huts. Since he also sings the praises of the fetish while ringing his bell, he is also called /142/ gnâ djéli, storyteller /griot/of the gnâ. To all these are added the band of members and initiates, whose function consists chiefly in providing the food and beer for the orgies. These are the gnako dé-n-ou, children of the gnâ.

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One becomes master of a gnéna, or djiné (1), by election or

[1] Introduction

161 According to the census referred to hereafter, the Bambara number more than 500,000, thus forming one of the largest population groups in West Africa.

184 This group is not homogeneous; however, in addition to its language, which is in fact its characteristic element, it does have certain basic customs common - at least in a general way - to all its members. It is possible to observe this common heritage by [121] studying one section of the group, and such is the purpose of this work.

121 The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta, who concern us here, have the distinction over their congeners of having evolved well-
127 known empires. To the history of these empires, already known through the research of my predecessors, I shall add new documentation, based primarily on an unpublished chronicle of the empire of Ségou. This chronicle is interesting, among other reasons, because it is entirely the work of one of the traditionists whose erudition, as reliable and exact as possible within the limitations of native competence, merits our serious attention. Indeed, my book is simply a detailed commentary on this chronicle, buttressed by knowledge acquired on the spot during the course of my administrative duties and by information obtained from the works listed in the bibliography.

121 It should be noted that, though these documents and this store of knowledge make it easy enough to describe the customs if one limits oneself to generalities, it is on the other hand a difficult and delicate task to define the customs as they are applied to given social manifestations and to try to deduce the principles underlying these manifestations.

This is all the more true in that experience acquired elsewhere [2] is often, instead of a help, a reef which is as perilous as it is appealing. So it is that one is naturally tempted to apply to native institutions the nomenclature and the fundamental characteristics of institutions - especially European ones - which are assumed to be comparable. When origins and development are thus transferred to a foreign context, native custom is deformed. It can

B. Population Movement

162 In 1912, Delafosse in Haut-Sénégal et Niger [Upper Senegal and Niger] gave a total of 538,450 [sic] Bambara in the following regions:

Bamako	146,966	Bougouni	104,216	Ségou	109,758
Sikasso	30,000	Kita	2,339	Bafoulabé	2,100
Koutiala	30,035	Goumbou	22,110	San	20,103
Sokolo	19,996	Djenné	17,246	Niafunké	16,000
Nioro	9,355	Mopti	7,277	Bandiagara	928

161 All of these figures are notably lower than current ones. However, one must not infer a population increase too hastily. The difference in population figures result of better census methods rather than of a real increase.

Moreover, current demographic information must be considered as still approximate. In fact, censuses may go on for several years in a single region, and those of certain cantons are not yet finished. A large part of the population still avoids the census in order to escape taxes and military service. In certain villages the clandestine population may be as large as the declared population.

167 A number of the Bambara who leave the country temporarily as migratory workers in Guinea, Senegal, the Ivory Coast, and the Gold Coast escape all registration.

161
563 Finally, as soon as we leave the purely Bambara region of the Ségou circle to go into the region of Bougouni, for example, a large part of the population counted as Bambara is in fact of mixed origin, Foula, Malinké, but follows Bambara custom, often no longer speaking the language.

563 This simple enumeration shows how rare it is to find a Bambara ethnic bloc which is not heavily mixed with other tribes. This dispersion is doubtless the result of a complicated historical evolution as we shall see further on.

But we can already point out that the link which unites the different peoples is the chefferie. The different peoples under a common chief little by little consider themselves to be of the same people as their chief. Sometimes the chief may have adopted the nationality of the country whose direction he has assumed.

As an indication, we give the following tables, furnished by the Bureau of Political Affairs of the Sudan. It has not yet been possible to evaluate the rates of births and deaths nor to establish

[text continues on p. 13]

I. Demographic Situation of the Population of African Status

Circle	Area in Sq. Km.	On 12/31/49	On 12/31/50	Density per Sq. Km.	Comparison between 1949 and 1950	
					Plus	Minus
Bafoulabé	39,000	131,603	137,347	3.54	5,744	
Bamako	57,405	451,377	499,034	7.96	47,657	
Bandiagara	53,000	307,936	307,946	5.81	8	
Bougouni	34,000	202,907	208,984	6.14	6,077	
Gao	411,170	215,875	221,883	0.53	6,008	
Goundam	55,000	134,312	130,935	2.48	2,623	
Kayes	21,000	119,294	117,017	5.57		2,277
Kita	37,000	103,132	105,550	2.65	3,418	
Koutiala	20,665	187,706	190,645	9.22	2,939	
Mopti	14,300	156,116	156,194	10.92	78	
Niafunké	22,500	129,463	129,558	5.76	95	
Nioro	56,000	256,149	260,413	4.5	4,164	
San	15,000	182,142	185,187	12.34	3,045	
Ségou	52,000	362,215	369,921	7.11	7,706	
Sikasso	20,475	206,828	207,038	10.11	210	
Timbuktu	283,700	90,981	102,475	0.36	11,494	
Totals	1,192,215	3,237,705	3,337,127	2.79	101,266	2,277

Plus: 98,989

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II. Demographic Situation of the Nomadic Population

[in the Sudan]

		Moors		Touareg	
1940:	Gao	9,494	23,322	57,945	139,236
	Goundam	2,885		40,757	
	Timbuktu	10,943		40,934	
1944:	Gao	18,812	34,073	74,357	128,057
	Goundam	2,505		16,105	
	Timbuktu	12,756		37,595	
1959:	Gao	19,078	37,723	77,640	153,246
	Goundam	2,743		17,004	
	Timbuktu	15,502		58,599	

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III. General Movement of the Population in the Past Ten Years

	Sedentary and Semi-nomadic	Nomadic
1940	2,750,950	163,000
1941	2,790,000	
1942	2,840,000	
1943	2,870,000	162,000
1944	2,900,000	
1945	2,800,000	
1946	2,810,000	
1947	2,840,000	
1948	3,125,000	
1949	3,237,000	
1950	3,337,000	190,000
Total increase	586,000	27,000
Rate of increase	21%	16%

an age profile of the population. The censuses of future years will no doubt permit a better study of the country's demography.

[11] IV. General Movement of the Urban Population

161 The urban population numbers 220,317, or 6.5 percent of the
162 total population.

The principal urban centers are: Bamako, Kayes, Ségou, Mopti, Sikasso, and Gao. Except for Gao, the growth is considerable.

Cities	1939	1950	Increase	Percent of Increase
Bamako	32,761	85,000	52,239	162.5
Kayes	15,894	23,275	7,381	46.4
Ségou	8,391	15,335	6,944	83
Mopti	6,379	9,208	2,829	45
Sikasso	11,817	19,558	7,741	15.2
Gao	6,923	7,231	308	4.90

C. Emigration

167 It is rarely definitive. It is undertaken either for commercial reasons or from the desire of the young to earn enough to pay the bride price of their fiancée. It affects chiefly the circles of Gao, Timbuktu, Niafunké, Goundam, Mopti, Ségou, and Bamako. The region most often visited is the Gold Coast.

At Timbuktu, there is caravan traffic with Morocco by way of Taouedi and Tindouf, and with the Touat.

At Bandiagara, certain cantons (Dinangourou, Ibi, Iréli) experience a traditional temporary emigration to Upper Volta where the young go to work a year or two and then return.

At Bafoulabé, the emigration movement towards French Guinea remains very weak, about 20 persons.

At Bougouni, about 1,500 young people annually leave for the Ivory Coast, following the example of the Dioula. This is a seasonal movement, but the youths often prolong the venture year after year before going home, and some of them ultimately settle on the Ivory Coast.

At Nioro, from Bakounou northwards (circle of Aioun and Atrouss [Aioun el Atrous?], there is an agricultural nomadism to new lands. This migration from one settlement to another is concerned only with the fertility of the soil, without regard for the border at Nioro and Yélimané. One also notes temporary emigrations towards

[3]

Chapter 1

Origin and History

Preliminaries

131 As they have for a long time past, the Bambara today occupy in compact groups a vast region on either side of the Niger, which comprises most of the territory in the circles [administration division] of Bammako, Bougouni and Ségou in the French colony of the Upper Senegal and Niger.

162 According to the census (1), the following list shows the distribution of the Bambara in that colony:

Circle of Bougouni	146,966
" " Bammako	104,216
" " Ségou	109,758
" " Sikasso	30,000
" " Kita	2,339
" " Bafoulabé	2,100
" " Koutiala	30,055
" " Goumbou	22,110
" " San	20,103
" " Sokolo	19,996
" " Diénné	17,247
" " Niafounké	16,000
" " Nioro	9,355
" " Mopti	7,277
" " Bandiagara	928
Total	538,450

After the Mossi, this is the largest group in the colony of Upper Senegal and Niger.

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1. In Haut-Sénégal et Niger [The Upper Senegal and Niger], by Delafosse.

144 Third group (southern): four peoples, the Diallonké [Dialonke], the Samo, the Samorho, and the Sia; plus four small tribes of doubtful classification, the Blé, the Natioro, the Ouara, and the Sembla.

More recent studies by Urvoy, Dr. Pales, and Mlle. Tassin de Saint-Péreuse involving very numerous measurements will soon permit determination of the racial characteristics of the Sudanese populations and the establishment of a new classification.

B. Geographical Distribution

131 In his study of the Bambara of Ségou, Charles Monteil tells us that it is impossible to determine what the precise boundaries of the Bambara empire were, because a frontier as we understand it has no meaning for the Black. The empires did not seek to dominate such and such a region; their goal was, above all, the exploitation of the greatest possible number of individuals, without regard to localities or races.

At the present time, the Encyclopédie coloniale et maritime
131 [Colonial and Maritime Encyclopedia] considers that [3] the Bambara
162 form a group of about a million individuals who extend west-east from the region of Siguirio as far as Macina along both sides of the Niger and the Bani rivers, and south-north from the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta to Sahel de Nioro. In addition, there are 40,000 in Senegal: peanut farmers near Kaolack, Thiès, and Diourbel, and captives at Fouta Toro, Saint-Louis, etc. But they are most numerous in the circles [a "circle" is an administrative division] of Bamako (310,000), Ségou (190,000), and Bougouni (110,000). To
[563] these one may add 125,000 Métis [mixed bloods], Peul-Bambara, of whom 72,000 live in the Bougouni circle alone.

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619 More precisely, the great mass of the Bambara is distributed in a region that may be delimited as follows.

To the northwest, three tribes have been catalogued in the Kaarta: the Dianguirté in the circle of Nioro, the Niamassa at Nioro, and the Massassi to the south of Nioro.

To the north, in the Sahel, the region of Bakounou and Waghadou is inhabited by the Kalongo tribe.

To the northeast, the Bambara live in the Macina, the Issa Ber, the region of Goundam, and up to Timbuktu.

141 143 Finally, let us point out that according to the observations of Dr. Pales, the cormique index of the Bambara is 50. 8. Dr. Pales and J. Linhard have calculated the percentage of sickle cell anemia which is: 108 B, 8 percent.

IV. Demographic Data

A. Distribution of the Population

162 The different censuses of recent years give the following estimates.

Senegal -- 150,000 Mandingue; 711,000 Ouolof; 288,500 Peul; 264,000 Sérère; 202,500 Toucouleur; 132,511 Dioula (most of the Bambara coming to Senegal are Navétanes [temporary workers]). [166]

Guinea -- Bambara are found in the circles of Kankan, Kouroussa, and Siguiri. They are for the most part Navétanes, the major part of the population consisting of the Foula, the Malinké, the Soussou [Susu], the Kissien, the Guerzé, the Toma, the Baga, the Diallonké.

Mauritania -- 500 Bambara live in the circle of Gorgol, along with 8,500 white Moors, 10,000 Foula, 22,000 Toucouleur, 250 Ouolof, 4,500 Sarakolé; and 1,000 Bambara live in the circle of Guidimaka among 13,000 Moors, 4,500 Foula, 1,000 Toucouleur.
[6] [Chart appears here in the original text.]

[7] Upper Volta -- Some Bambara live in the Ouahigouya circle, mingled with Mossi (a majority), Peul and Rimaïbé, Yarcé [Yarse], Foulcé [Fulse], etc.

Ivory Coast -- The Korhogo circle includes 290,000 Sénoufo, Malinké, and Bambara.

Finally, the census of 1950 in the Sudan shows a total of 798,900 Bambara out of a total population of 3,336,740, divided as indicated in the recapitulatory table on page 6.

We see that the Bambara are grouped in the circles of Ségou, Bamako, and Bougouni, where they form the majority of the population.

We shall give a somewhat more detailed breakdown for these three centers, using the still fragmentary information that has been assembled up to now.

In the Bamako circle the population is divided into ethnic groups in the following manner: [pp. 8-9]

Recapitulatory Table by Circles (General Population), 1950

Established by the Bureau of Political Affairs of the Sudan General Government

[6]

* Races et territoires A. O. F. Africains de statut commun et de statut personnel	Bafoulabé	Bamako	Bandiagara	Bougouni	Gao	Goundam	Issa-Ber Niafunké	Kayes	Kita	Koutiala	Mopti	Nioro	San	Ségou	Sikasso	Timbuktu Tombouctou	Total pour le territoire
Bellat						35.026											35.026
Bambara	994	299.074	21.538	110.000			20.765	13.896	3.200	33.536	20.530	20.973	42.424	202.617	9.082	293	798.922
Peul	10.200	8.213	97.001		11.095	12.875	71.258	1.962	200	3.217	33.318	39.831	15.297	77.595		1.822	383.884
Mossi	28	857	4.043		61		135	234		49	27.955		303	4.832		9	38.506
Marka	150	27.746					4.381	29.519	3.000	8.100	26.870	112.776	30.679	21.553	406		265.180
Songhai		647	9.962		102.712	62.821	1.025			454	6.000		625			26.518	210.764
Malinké	68.753	62.671	2	4.932				11.503	53.530			3.598	52				206.041
Minianka		400	3							125.551	500		29.697	2.843			158.994
Maures		2.958	433		19.266	2.743		3.536		67		9.313				15.502	53.818
Senoufo		300	1	10.000						15				228	117.588		128.132
Touareg		20	19		77.640	17.007	252									58.599	153.537
Samogo		150	4.999												26.218	8	31.375
Foula Bambara		9.600		42.100					21.600	182				2.444	22.673	15	98.614
Bobo		500								11.933	2.570					1	15.004
Bozo		400	22			1.582	4.916				18.000		61.712			83	86.715
Kassonkés	23.800	600						20.297				5.734	474	23.447		9	74.361
Dioula	270	11.050								6.958					29.333		47.611
Toucouleurs		700	1.781					23.574	320		1.500	19.680		84	934		48.573
Kagoro		17.395							5.010			4.492					26.897
Somono	4	5.748						1.762			7.000						14.514
Marka Bambara	13.350	750	8.115	885			4.381							14.787		28	42.296
Diallonke	5.100	100							4.600					5.112		8	14.920
Peuls berberisés													60				60
Ouolofs	76	700	68		3	1	7	1.055	132	4	25	2.139	2	65	23	28	4.328
Ouassoulounké	3.200		2	41.000				8.790				1.675					54.667
Diawara	2.500		274									33.785					36.559
Diawambé	2.520	150							515		3.500	4.143		1.684			12.512
Diakanke																	2.016
Dogon		386	157.966				20.675			30	680		3.779				183.516
Guirganke			42									1.620					1.662
** Divers	726	48.340	2.209	346	11.187	3.820	1.725	889	13.421	569	9.925	1.148		12.527	727	192	107.751
TOTAUX	133.671	499.455	308.480	209.263	221.964	136.875	129.520	117.017	105.328	190.665	158.373	260.907	185.104	369.818	206.984	103.115	3.836.739

* Races and territories French West Africa - Africans of public status and of personal status.

** Others

B
M
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3: Paques--7A S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8

Mossi FA28
Wolof MS30

B
M
162

3: Paques--8 S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8

Mossi FA28

[Bamako circle] [population division of Ethnic groups]

	City	Central Subdivision	Koulikoro Subdivision	Kolokani Subdivision	Dioïla Subdivision	Kourémalé Subdivision
Bambara	19,000	93,974	56,048	59,930	68,310	812
Peul	1,000	2,074	4,251	500	350	38
Mossi	500		157	200		
Marka	1,000		26,746			
Habbe	250		136			
Songhaï	450		197			
Malinké	3,200	32,434	139			26,898
Minianka	400					
Moors	2,600		358			
Sénoufo	300					
Touareg	20					
Samo	150					
Foula-Bambara	600				9,000	
Bozo.	400					
Bobo	500					
Kassonké	600					
Dioula	5,200			850	5,000	
Toucouleur	700					
Kagoro	100		3,795	13,500		
Somono	500	804	3,454		300	690
Marka Bambara	150				600	

(continued)

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W
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Wolof M530

[7]

	City	Central Subdivision	Koulikoro Subdivision	Kolokani Subdivision	Dioïla Subdivision	Kourémalé Subdivision
Diallonké	100					
Ouolof	700					
Diawambé	150					
Others	130	5,698	196	610	344	

[Bamako cercle]

[population division of ethnic groups]

[8] The Bougouni circle is divided as follows:

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Cantons	No. of Villages	Population	Observations
Bambeledougou	13	1,785	Bambara
Banimonatie	47	10,829	F. B and Bambara
Bilatouma	5	1,771	Foulah-Bambara
Danou	8	3,413	Bambara
Debelendoudou	11	2,053	—
Dialakadougou	6	1,696	—
Diban	7	2,398	—
Domba	18	2,510	—
Falani-Auola	16	5,086	—
Gouantiedougou	41	9,771	—
Keikero	8	1,705	—
Kokoun	16	3,157	—
Kola	13	2,122	—
Kouroulamini	30	8,653	—
Niene	20	12,525	Senoufo
Siankadougou	16	2,288	Bambara
Sibirila	29	9,652	—
Siondougou	28	3,697	
Tiemala	54	16,492	Foulah-Bambara
Tiendougou	69	16,624	—
Tinkatougou	16	3,342	Bambara
Tyan	16	3,369	—
Yiridougou	13	3,263	—
Zana	8	2,939	—
Yorobadougou			
Niamala	15	2,886	—
Keleyadougou	Census in progress		
Nienendougou			
Nafanandougou			
Fulala			

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Mopti	6, 379	9, 208	2, 829	45
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Gao	6, 923	7, 231	308	4. 90

C. Emigration

167 It is rarely definitive. It is undertaken either for commercial reasons or from the desire of the young to earn enough to pay the bride price of their fiancée. It affects chiefly the circles of Gao, Timbuktu, Niafunké, Goundam, Mopti, Ségou, and Bamako. The region most often visited is the Gold Coast.

At Timbuktu, there is caravan traffic with Morocco by way of Taouedi and Tindouf, and with the Touat.

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At Bafoulabé, the emigration movement towards French Guinea remains very weak, about 20 persons.

At Bougouni, about 1, 500 young people annually leave for the Ivory Coast, following the example of the Dioula. This is a seasonal movement, but the youths often prolong the venture year after year before going home, and some of them ultimately settle on the Ivory Coast.

At Nioro, from Bakounou northwards (circle of Aioun and Atrouss [Aioun el Atrous?], there is an agricultural nomadism to new lands. This migration from one settlement to another is concerned only with the fertility of the soil, without regard for the border at Nioro and Yélimané. One also notes temporary emigrations towards

626 Every seducer who has paid the fine demanded by the fiancé can walk with head held high, for he has satisfied justice, cleansed his honor, and his shield is unstained. But let him not be careless enough to go to the village of the injured fiancé, for he will be /164/ beaten hard by the young people; his exclusion often lasts for years.

010 Now, there is no reason to be surprised at the Bambara attitude toward adultery and fornication. If it can all be reduced to a violated principle of justice and nothing more, that is because they have fallen so low that they believe they were created and put in the world by God in order to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh as much as possible.

Abortion

562 Monsieur Louis Barbier wrote in the "Quinzaine" (January 16, 1906) /"Étude sur les populations Bambaras de la Vallée du Niger (A Study of the Bambara Peoples of the Niger Valley)"/: "The Bambara woman is a machine to produce children and do heavy work." In this statement he expresses, I am sure, the belief of all Europeans who have stayed among the Negroes without mingling with them or living their life. If the Bambara woman "is a machine to produce children," ● [163] it is a slow machine. I know families where there are seven and eight children by the same wife, but that is unusual; the average remains two or three children per woman.

853 837 It is not through frequent childbearing or because they are prolific that Bambara women lose their charms and wither. They do not, and cannot, conceive but every two or three years; they cannot bear a child more than once every three or four years, since every mother nurses her child for at least two whole years, and quite often three, and during all that time she may not conceive. Does she remain continent during that time? What is to be thought of these utterances on the part of a husband:

A ye den soro a ti son toun.
She has had a child, she wants no more relations with me.
Né t'a don toun, ne tigouéré a la toun.
I do not know her any more, I no longer go near her.

142 Races]; Lieutenant Girard, Notes anthropométriques sur quelques Soudanais occidentaux [Anthropometric Notes on Some West Sudanese], 1909; Les races et les peuples de la terre [Races and Peoples of the Earth]; Chantre, Contribution à l'étude des races humaines du Soudan occidental [Contribution to the Study of the Human Races of the Western Sudan], 1918; Dr. Verneau, L'homme, races et coutumes [Man, Races and Customs], 1931.

From this study, a little hasty since the observations were made on very few subjects, we will retain the following features:

Without attaining the ultradolichocephaly of the Malinké,
141 the Bambara is [5] characterized by his dolichocephaly (horizontal
cephalic index 75. 05; for Deniker 76. 4) and his fairly considerable height (1. 71 meters for the "aristocrats," a result of interbreeding with the Peul population, and 1. 65 meters for the ordinary Bambara). Dr. Pales and Tassin de Saint-Péreuse give us figures which are considerably different and which are particularly interesting because their observations were made on 893 individuals. They give the horizontal cephalic index as 74. 3, and the average height as 171. 8.

Tauxier concluded in these terms: "It is a good Negro race, crossbred with several superior elements!"

Let us add to his description that the Bambara has a solid
142 build, with no dissymmetry, a platyrrhinian nose, a pronouncedly
[147] ogival skull, a skin whose scars have a keloidian tendency, and an
[[64]] excellent natural defense against infection, although certain regions
are particularly infested with goiter. They practice cranial deforma-
[304] tion very little, differing in that from the Malinké and the Kassonké.
Let us note, finally, that the Bambara have black wooly hair, but
that some women have hair with red lights which is considered by
143 the natives as a magnificent trait. We shall not discuss the albinos
with white skin and colorless hair, of whom the percentage is small.

R. Koerber, in Étude de la répartition des groupes sanguins chez quelques races d'A.O.F. [Study of the Distribution of Blood Groups in Several Races of French West Africa], out of a total of 1,066 Bambara found 3. 9 percent of group AB; 25. 7 percent of group A; 27. 7 percent of group B, and 42. 7 percent of group B, and 42. 7 percent of group O. Group O then is dominant, but less frequent than for the Ouolof [Wolof], Malinké, Foula, and Sérère [Serer] races.

847 And is abortion such a great crime in the eyes of the Bambara? Less serious, surely, than one might imagine. It is very common, and when a woman passes, one may overhear from the lips of the Negroes, even those of children: "a y'i kono tigné, she has destroyed the fruit of her womb." There is nothing to teach Bambara children; [864] at eight and ten years they know everything! When one listens to their conversations and lends an ear to their songs, they always revolve around the vilest subjects.

3. The Birth of a Child

842 Before birth. -- Not only is it impossible for the Bambara to accept the idea that a man could live without a wife or a woman without a husband, they likewise cannot conceive of a home without children. They desire the pleasures of fatherhood, and a couple who are healthy or, to put it better, capable of consummating the conjugal act, /166/ quickly appeal to a diviner's knowledge, however short a time they have waited to have children. They believe that sterility is the result of sorcery or an evil spell.

833 When the husband is impotent or afflicted with an illness which prevents all marital relations, his wife readily becomes unfaith- 847 ful and commits adultery in order to avoid the shame of sterility. Moreover, in order not to have to face a winking eye that speaks volumes or a disdainful smile which reveals everything, the husband is indulgent and even approves her crime, at least for the first times. Let us admit quickly that he can do nothing about it, for if she cannot be unfaithful, the wife will abandon herself to loud cries, demand a divorce, and reject the man, who would himself leave her if she were in a similar situation. Without approving of such indulgence, one can understand it on the part of an unfortunate who needs to keep his cook and safeguard his honor before a people that scorns an impotent man and sees nothing amiss in adultery since it is a crime that can be redeemed.

[164] If a woman who conceives is in a syphilitic condition, which 843 is often the case, the fruit of her womb seldom comes to full term

421 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show
596 his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as
614 usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to
the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

466 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is
596 at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate
614 to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not
wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself, [186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

●166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave
to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them never return, either because they have managed to create an independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More often, however, the young man, having founded an independent family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and watches developments there in case he may one day be able to profit from them.

578 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue
561 which is forever at war with the fa and the senate. Their op-
885 position weakens, however, as they approach the age at which
they too will participate in the faya to which they aspire. Gradually, as one changes from kamalen' to bina, he acquires the same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity of the new kamalen'-u.

562 In concluding this study of the members of the commun-
583 ity, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys,
they belong completely to the community, which, as a result, has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So, since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

141
143 Finally, let us point out that according to the observations of Dr. Pales, the cormique index of the Bambara is 50.8. 'Dr. Pales and J. Linhard have calculated the percentage of sickle cell anemia which is: 108 B, 8 percent.

IV. Demographic Data

A. Distribution of the Population

162 The different censuses of recent years give the following estimates.

Senegal -- 150,000 Mandingue; 711,000 Ouolof; 288,500 Peul; 264,000 Sérère; 202,500 Toucouleur; 132,511 Dioula (most of the Bambara coming to Senegal are Navétanes [temporary workers]). [162]

Guinea -- Bambara are found in the circles of Kankan, Kouroussa, and Siguiri. They are for the most part Navétanes, the major part of the population consisting of the Foula, the Malinké, the Soussou [Susu], the Kissien, the Guerzé, the Toma, the Baga, the Diallonké.

Mauritania -- 500 Bambara live in the circle of Gorgol, along with 8,500 white Moors, 10,000 Foula, 22,000 Toucouleur, 250 Ouolof, 4,500 Sarakolé; and 1,000 Bambara live in the circle of Guidimaka among 13,000 Moors, 4,500 Foula, 1,000 Toucouleur.

[6] [Chart appears here in the original text.]

[7] Upper Volta -- Some Bambara live in the Ouahigouya circle, mingled with Mossi (a majority), Peul and Rimaïbé, Yarcé [Yarse], Foulcé [Fulse], etc.

Ivory Coast -- The Korhogo circle includes 290,000 Sénoufo, Malinké, and Bambara.

Finally, the census of 1950 in the Sudan shows a total of 798,900 Bambara out of a total population of 3,336,740, divided as indicated in the recapitulatory table on page 6.

We see that the Bambara are grouped in the circles of Ségou, Bamako, and Bougouni, where they form the majority of the population.

We shall give a somewhat more detailed breakdown for these three centers, using the still fragmentary information that has been assembled up to now.

In the Bamako circle the population is divided into ethnic groups in the following manner: [pp. 8-9]

a. Urbanization

166 177 369 The Bambara, who are essentially agriculturalists, have no cities. All the cities owe their origin to the Whites and were created for commerce, administration, industry, banking, and education. But the city has exercised the same attraction on the Black peasant as it has on the French one. This taste for city life has been made easier to indulge by the creation of railroads and roads. Cities, such as Bamako, are invaded by ever-increasing populations who leave the bush and the close-knit community to create a de-tribalized mob which adapts more or less well to a European economic organization. Thus, the industrial equipping of Africa tends to transform the native artisanry, because the industrial establishments of the European type require a specialized [77] labor force that will adopt French work methods and economic life. It is in this way that the railroad yards at Thiès were created, as well as the industries of construction in solid materials, the quarries, the brickyards, the limeworks of Bamako, Mopti, and Ségou, and the food industries: icehouses, waterworks, the cotton gins of Koutiala and Sikasso. Industrialization is just beginning in the Bambara country, but the European form of economic organization has spread widely even where native work methods exist, leading, as a result, to economic individualism.

b. Development of Large-scale Agricultural Exploitation

177 241 473 Agricultural exploitation itself has been radically transformed in certain regions. Side by side with food crops which vary according to the needs of the community and which are cultivated in the traditional extensive manner, an intensive monoculture of money crops has developed with peanuts, rice, cotton, etc. This has been made possible by modern techniques of agricultural exploitation: experimental gardens, centers of scientific research, creation of pilot sections, scientific management of the plains. This development has led to the creation of such organizations as the C.G.O.T. in Casamance, a company for diversified economy whose initial capital was underwritten by the State and by professional processors of fatty substances. This company clears and de-stumps the great forest brush with heavy tractors, bulldozers, treedozers, and strumpers [de-stumpers ?] in

177 order to cultivate peanuts, sunflowers, millet, and cotton. Every
241 three years, the company distributes green manure crops in order to
473 reconstitute the soil's humus. Moreover, the company has created veritable villages to house its technicians and the colonists.

177 Other organizations, such as the Niger Office, have charge
241 of the basic water control of the central delta (dams, large canals).
312 Thanks to the creation of a network of waterways, to the clearing
433 and de-stumping of lands, and to the development of general equipment (processing factories, workshops, stores, dwellings, road network), the end of 1949 saw 11,000 hectares of rice fields, with a yield of 18 quintals of paddy and a commercial production of 8,000 metric tons of husked rice. Six thousand hectares have been prepared either for growing cotton (2,000 hectares), for growing rice for food (1,000 hectares), or for lying fallow (3,000 hectares). These fields
[166] permit the exportation of 360 metric tons of cotton fiber. Twenty-two thousand persons have been settled as colonists. Finally, let us note that the F.I.D.E.S. by its financial support has permitted the development of peanut cultivation in Senegal, of rice in Guinea and the Sudan, of karite in Upper Volta, as well as the creation of several technical schools.

c. Social Consequences

177 This technical evolution has profound repercussions on the
596 native way of life. We notice the same change in the Bambara peasant as in the Bambara artisan. The large united family which
241 was [78] the cornerstone of agricultural technique tends to split up more and more, even in the regions where the traditional farming methods are still used. The family field, a great deal less carefully tended than in the past, gives way in importance to the individual's field. Moreover, the family field traditionally was at the end of a path bordered by small individual fields where each peasant went to work for himself before and after the collective labor. Today, we see the creation of individual fields in the brush far from the path which leads from the village to the family field, clearly indicating the desire of the individual to separate himself from the large family and to escape the control of the farming chief in order to realize personal benefits for himself, not subject to family inspection.

Death at War

727 When a warrior returns home in good health after a battle, the sacrificer or the village chief orders the performance of the *ni yere klo*, "game of the vibration of the soul," to celebrate his return. Men and women gather in the village square to sing: "The soul is come, the light of the soul is come, the drum of the soul will be played for it" (1). Next they form a circle and turning first in one direction and then in the other, throw a little water on the head of the individual concerned, thus "refreshing his soul."

766 When a man dies at war, the rituals whose object he becomes bring into play the *nyama boli* of the Komo, the altar dedicated to the conservation of the souls of those who die a vilent death.

In former times the stone which had mortally hit a warrior was carefully kept. The corpse was washed /200/ on cowries and on stones used for slings because its *nyama*, which impregnated them, made them more efficient in killing. The body was also transported to the exit of the village where each villager offered cowrie shells while he pronounced the name of the victim. Then it was swung three times in the direction of the village, first feet forward and next head forward. After all the villagers had retired to their homes, the Komo was brought out. The stone that had killed the man was struck to call forth his soul; then it was rubbed on the *nyama boli* to make the soul penetrate the altar. A dance was held with the altar, and the body [824] was buried and covered with fresh branches of *ngamyã* (2). The grave was watered to "refresh the dead man" while the chief

was watered to "refresh the dead man" while the chief of the Komo made sacrifices over the *nyama* and the *nimara boli*.

Death Away from Home

766
167 The necessity of performing the rituals as well as their detailed quality are such that a Bambara is always advised against expatriation.

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1. *Ni nana, ni yelengu nana, ni dunu na fo o la.*

2. *Celtis integrifolia.*

766 167 In fact, if he dies far away his breath cannot be captured nor can the successive transfers be made. For this reason the family head disclaims all responsibility in such a case by warning those who are about to leave for along time of the impossibility of fulfilling his duties toward them.

766 Nevertheless, a ritual has been instituted for the young men obliged to leave the family groups because of military service. The case is submitted to the chief of the Komo and the party concerned has two goats sacrificed over the altars. While the blood runs, the chief asks the Komo to watch over the soul and to be willing to reclaim it as it would if the person died among his family.

[787] If the news of the death of an absent person spreads, the family questions the Komo through divining procedures to find out if the soul has returned and if, by this fact, order has been reestablished.

Death by Lightning and Drowning

761 766 Death which occurs in certain ways considered abnormal and a proof of Faro's wrath does not permit the reincarnation of the spiritual principles. This is true of men killed by the Komo for sorcery, and of people struck by lightning for having broken a taboo of Faro's. Their /201/ soul and their double are lost forever to their descendants, and their bodies thrown into the common grave.

Drowning is either accidental or due to Faro's wrath, in which case the corpse is returned with the nose and navel cut. In both instances, the double preserved in the water is not lost, but sacrifices are necessary for the return of the soul and of the double to a child in the family.

If the body has not risen to the surface, the father of the drowned person has the right to mourn him only when all the rituals have been performed. He asks the chief of the Komo to intercede with Faro to obtain his permission to search for the body in the water. He offers seven tomatoes which the chief throws into the water in exchange for the corpse in the presence of seven elders of his age grade. Some Bozo mobilized for this purpose dive in to bring back the body. The chief cuts the nose and the navel which he throws into the water as an offering. Then the corpse is placed flat on its stomach and pressed vigorously to extract the water, for to bury it full of water is equivalent [821] to "burying rain" and dooming the countryside to drought.

B. Population Movement[1]

162 In 1912, Delafosse in Haut-Sénégal et Niger [Upper Senegal and Niger] gave a total of 538,450 [sic] Bambara in the following regions:

Bamako . . .	146,966	Bougouni . . .	104,216	Ségou . .	109,758
Sikasso . . .	30,000	Kita	2,339	Bafoulabé	2,100
Koutiala. . .	30,035	Goumbou. . .	22,110	San . . .	20,103
Sokolo . . .	19,996	Djenné . . .	17,246	Niafunké..	16,000
Nioro . . .	9,355	Mopti . . .	7,277	Bandiagara	928

161 All of these figures are notably lower than current ones. However, one must not infer a population increase too hastily. The difference in population figures result of better census methods rather than of a real increase.

Moreover, current demographic information must be considered as still approximate. In fact, censuses may go on for several years in a single region, and those of certain cantons are not yet finished. A large part of the population still avoids the census in order to escape taxes and military service. In certain villages the clandestine population may be as large as the declared population.

167 A number of the Bambara who leave the country temporarily as migratory workers in Guinea, Senegal, the Ivory Coast, and the Gold Coast escape all registration.

161 563 Finally, as soon as we leave the purely Bambara region of the Ségou circle to go into the region of Bougouni, for example, a large part of the population counted as Bambara is in fact of mixed origin, Foula, Malinké, but follows Bambara custom, often no longer speaking the language.

563 This simple enumeration shows how rare it is to find a Bambara ethnic bloc which is not heavily mixed with other tribes. This dispersion is doubtless the result of a complicated historical evolution as we shall see further on.

But we can already point out that the link which unites the different peoples is the chefferie. The different peoples under a common chief little by little consider themselves to be of the same people as their chief. Sometimes the chief may have adopted the nationality of the country whose direction he has assumed.

As an indication, we give the following tables, furnished by the Bureau of Political Affairs of the Sudan. It has not yet been possible to evaluate the rates of births and deaths nor to establish

[text continues on p. 13]

[11] IV. General Movement of the Urban Population

161 162 The urban population numbers 220, 317, or 6. 5 percent of the total population.

The principal urban centers are: Bamako, Kayes, Ségou, Mopti, Sikasso, and Gao. Except for Gao, the growth is considerable.

Cities	1939	1950	Increase	Percent of Increase
Bamako	32, 761	85, 000	52, 239	162. 5
Kayes	15, 894	23, 275	7, 381	46. 4
Ségou	8, 391	15, 335	6, 944	83
Mopti	6, 379	9, 208	2, 829	45
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At Nioro, from Bakounou northwards (circle of Aioun and Atrouss [Aioun el Atrous?], there is an agricultural nomadism to new lands. This migration from one settlement to another is concerned only with the fertility of the soil, without regard for the border at Nioro and Yélimané. One also notes temporary emigrations towards

167 Senegal (five to ten years) and seasonal emigrations of commercial character in the dry season, following the crops, from Nioro and Yélimané toward the Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Guinea.

At San, a large number of emigrants leave for the Ivory Coast where they go to work for several years on the plantations; they return home with their savings.

At Ségou, movement is not noticeable. A few departures for the [12] Ivory Coast are recorded in the subdivision of Macina (settlers of the Niger Office) ; 879 departures.

At Sikasso, numerous youths from 18 to 30 years old emigrate from October to May to Bobo-Dioulasso and the Ivory Coast. Almost all return in May when the fields are prepared for cultivation, but some finally settle abroad permanently, mainly in the lower Ivory Coast. This movement is increasing because of high salaries.

D. Immigration

Immigration has a sporadic and seasonal character (gold prospectors from Guinea, fishermen from Niger, cattle breeders from Mauritania). The only regular immigration is that of the colonists of the Niger Office.

At Bafoulabé, one notes the temporary presence of 10,000 gold washers from Guinea and the Ivory Coast; 75 farmers from Senegal and Guinea have settled permanently.

At Bamako, Guinean gold washers come in the dry season to work at the placers of the subdivision of Kangaba. They go home at the beginning of winter.

At Gao, when the Niger's water level begins to fall, Haoussa [Hausa] and Bozo fishermen install themselves on the banks. They leave in August, loaded with dried or smoked fish.

From the interior, Kounba, driven by the drought, look for pastures at water holes (leading to friction with the original occupants).

Kayes is an area of nomadism for the Moors of Kiffa and Sélibaby.

At Mopti, a large number of foreigners from the Upper Volta are found in the cities. They return to their country in the rainy season.

● 167 At Nioro, during eight months of the year, live most of the Moors who go up to Mauritania at the beginning of the rains.

At Ségou, the colonists of the Niger Office are concentrated. In 1951 1,166 arrived, 660 coming from Nioro and 506 from Macina.

Temporary Workers

Circles of Origin	Temporary Workers Leaving in Official Convoys in:			
	1947	1948	1949	1950
Bafoulabé	1,017	1,008	969	492
Bamako	6,626	4,376	4,046	8,678
Bougouni	405	776	3,000	36
Kayes	1,794	2,195	3,230	1,368
Kita	1,419	1,559	1,352	226
Nioro	2,744	747	3,000	1,504
				135
Totals	14,005	10,661	15,602	12,439

[13] Individual migrations are very numerous, and the real number of temporary workers is much higher than the official figure. Currently, one notes a drop due to two causes:

1. The discontent of the workers after the 1949 season. In 1948, they had brought home from 15,000 to 20,000 francs; in 1949 from 5,000 to 10,000, and as little as 1,500 to 2,000 francs for the Siné Saloum. Some were repatriated at the expense of their families, others preferred to stay in the Senegal to avoid reproaches. The reasons for the setback may be laid to a bad distribution of rainfall and to insufficient lodgings due to the unexpected arrival of too many workers.

[208] 2. The counter-propaganda of the elders, who want to keep the young workers in the Sudan.

244 The Bambara groundnut ripens its seed underground. It is cultivated from the southern border of the Sahara to the Cape, but its primary home [31] is in the Sudan where the greatest number of cultivated varieties is found. (1)

> 1. Jacques Félix, for a study on the Bambara groundnut (Voandzeia subterrena), Agriculture tropicale [Tropical Agriculture], January-February, 1950. [Ed., Revue d'agronomie tropicale.]

Manioc and yams at certain points along the Niger escape the devastations of the Acridiidae insects which can not attack their roots.

Other crops are used to balance the diet: condiments and
[263] fleshy plants, such as, pimento, sesame, various labiates, okra,
[177] sorrel, squash, peanuts (imported in the sixteenth century from
America). Peanuts, to thrive, need loose, light soil. They are sown
in June at the beginning of the rainy season and are harvested in
[252] November. The natives eat them roasted; they make oil and soap
from them and give the stalks to their animals. Cultivation is entirely in the hands of the natives. In Senegal manpower is insufficient;
[464] before 1940 thousands of Sudanese workers were called upon each
[167] season, particularly Bambara, the "Navétanes," who hired themselves out to the farmers of Senegal in order to acquire the textiles and other products they needed. The peanut is an export product. Also cultivated are nitrogenous vegetables (Bambara groundnuts, black-eyed peas, dolichos, kissis, etc.) and the numerous and varied amaranths, tomatoes, eggplants, gourds, and, since 1940, potatoes which are grown more and more.

222 Finally, we will cite: a) the gathering of wild plants which
263 serve as condiments: the fruits of the baobab (Adansonia digitata), of the corchorus, of the Parkia biglobosa [néré], and of the karite tree (Butyrospermum), formerly called the "butter tree," which is cultivated to some degree -- the fruit is something like that of the palm tree and contains a core whose kernels enclose a fatty matter, shea butter, valued for making soap, as an illuminant, for the toilet;
222 b) the gathering of scarcity foods: baobab, cenchrus, cassia, the kola nut (Sterculia acuminata). Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;

173
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1. In her Notes sur la théodicée Bambara, Mrs. S. de Ganay has given a first version of the creation in which Koni (alias Pemba), conceived of as the only creator, gives birth to "female twins in the divine substance," Mousso Koroni and Faro respectively, the latter seen in his female aspect. This version is in line with Bambara thought which sees creation as founded on the principle of duality.

The version presented here is of interest because it is absolutely comparable to the Dogon creation myth and takes into account the identity of representations among both tribes. Indeed, in the Dogon myth, creative thought (the god Amma), having formed the "egg of the world," splits it into two placentae (me), each containing one of the Nommo twins, bearers of his word charged respectively with the creation of sky and earth. The same is true of Faro and Pemba (see p. 31). But the Nommo of the earth, having lost his female double, was transformed into an animal desperately seeking his double. As a result, disorder was introduced and the Nommo of the sky was charged with putting the confusion into order. To do this, he recognized the universe, reclaiming from the other Nommo the words Amma had entrusted him with. Among the Bambara, the same roles of Pemba, Mousso Koroni, and Faro are found.

To elaborate on this, Pemba and the balanza have their counterparts in the yurugu (Vulpes pallida) and the senge (Acacia albida), Mousso Koroni in the female being Yasigui, twin of yurugu, now represented by a dignitary of the Mask Society, the yasigine. Yasigui, like Mousso Koroni, revealed the words of the creator, that is, the language of Sigui. She circumcised and excised men and women and

173 171 [821] taught certain agricultural techniques. In both tribes, the same star, Sirius (called sigi toto by the Dogon; sigi doto by the Bambara), represents them. The androgynous Faro is comparable in all ways to the Nommo, the universal monitor, custodian of the word and of life. The yurugu and the Nommo made voyages similar to those of Pemba and Faro. In particular, at the time of their descent on earth, the yurugu, and later the Nommo, used an "ark," koro, whose counterparts are Pemba's wood pembele and Faro's ark kuru, described by certain initiates (see M. Griaule, L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes. /The ark of the world among Nigerian peoples/.

For both tribes, man "the seed of the world," is the image of the cosmos. The exact role of the seed of the Acacia albida does not appear clearly in the two myths, but in both cases, it is considered to be a first aborted creation.

Faro's Reign

173 Faro, having vanquished the balanza and overcome Téliko, took over the creation himself. He reorganized the whole universe and established the order under which it still functions today. /27/ He spread his word and his light; he named and classified all things: "All things (of the universe) are under the domination of Faro; eight hundred transformations are in his power" (1).

801 802 1. Fêw be be faro ka se kono, yelemani ba kele be a la a fe.

The number 800 which is "the end of the count," here expresses the infinite. In the so-called "eastern number system," now

773 west, klebi, the seat of customs and of good and beautiful things.

He then started off in the direction of the north, taking eight epochs to cross the spaces and the depths. He named the north baba, "great river, " for the distance was great, the water deep, and the area difficult. In the north, which he reached in the ninth epoch, he established the seat of his control and that of all royalty.

He then went to the south where evil creatures who had listened to Mousso Koroni and followed her advice spoke a language they had stolen (1). The tried to resist Faro, but he destroyed great numbers of them. Although the survivors submitted to him, he made their domain the seat of impurity and named it /28/ bani, "little river, " to emphasize their weakness and their shameful failure.

The itinerary was measured in palms, sibiri, the unit of measurement being 22 palms (2). The distance separating the cardinal points, the height of the sky and the depth of the earth were measured in the same way.

During the same period he determined the seasons and created the regular alternation of day and night to replace the premordial darkness. Having measured space, he created time.

Faro then placed himself in the center of the universe: still actuated by a vibratory movement, he traversed in a spiral turning from right to left up to the outer boundaries, "where there is no more than a trembling of the surface." Then he returned along the same route, going from left to right in order to "place himself at the central point (3) whence he distinguished between beings and things" (4).

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[171] 1. The Dogon have a similar notion of the theft of the language. See p. 47, n. 1.

[804] 2. sibiri nye, literally "eye of the palm." The Bambara palm is a length obtained with an open hand, from the extremity of the thumb to the extremity of the middle finger.

3. It is said of this act, faro tyema yera; or faro sigi yoro seleke nani tyela. "Faro

173 Finally, he occupied himself with agriculture. In particular, he gave men, through the intermediary of the blacksmiths, the eight cereal grains that had been created simultaneously with man but had remained hidden in the sky (1). The eight grains became the basis for subsistence and are fundamental to the human being who carried the symbol of them on his collar-bone (2).

Everything on earth is represented in the water: living beings by their doubles or witnesses, dya; plants and minerals by an exact replica, which enabled Faro to exert constant control over the existence and actions of the beings placed in his power.

He put spirits as his representatives everywhere in charge of watching over the universal order.

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[171] 1. A myth parallel to this can be found among the Dogon (see M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*). It makes the Bambara blacksmith into a civilizing hero, a metamorphosis of Faro, descended from the sky in an ark, *kuru*, and holding in his hand a mass containing the eight cereal grains. See M. Griaule, *L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes*; S. de Ganay, *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, pp. 194-196.

[171 243] 2. The eight grains are as follows: *sañõ*, small millet (*Pennicillaria spicata*); *keninge*, large millet (*Sorghum gambicum*); *kende*, red millet (*Sorghum magaritiferum*); *fini*, fonio (*Digitaria exilis*); *šyõ*, beans (*Vigna maniculata*); *tiǩaninkuru*, peas; *malo*, rice. The names of the seeds vary, but the same symbols occur among the Dogon. In the Bozo myth, the collar-bone is the receptacle for eight fish, represented by symbols on the forward part of canoes. See G. Dieterlen. *Les Correspondances cosmo-biologiques chez les Soudanais* /Cosmic-Biological Correspondences among the Sudanese/.

The Future Waters

173 The order of the universe prevails in space and time: the present order of things is but one phase thereof. When the "first running waters" covered the ground, Faro permitted only the primordial water to spread out; twelve waters remained hidden and they will rush forth and submerge the earth when he gives the order. The words they contain will be revealed and the "world to come" as thought out by *yo* will be realized.

Meanwhile, in the expectation of these "future waters," men must provide themselves with objects that will save them; the Bozo and some Bambara have canoes, shepherds have their gourds, spinners their spindles, and women their wooden stools (1). The coming /31/ of the waters is represented by a drawing on these objects as well as on a number of other everyday tools (Fig. 3).

173 524 This drawing serves as the framework for a game, the *sumangolo*, which the Bambara of all ages and both sexes play in order to "contribute to the progress of the world."

This game bears the name of the ancestor Soumangolo who traveled throughout the universe to find out and reveal to men "the

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[192] 1. It is significant that *kuru* (canoe), *kuruni* (spindle), and *kuruni* (stool) come from the same root. The word *kuru* designates the original globule in which Pemba descended, and which later became the wood *pembele* in the shape of a trough; it also designates the case or ark used by the mythical blacksmith, bearer of the nutritive
● [171] seeds. See p. 53, n. 1. The word *kuru* should be compared to *koro* which, in the Dogon language, has the general meaning of case, box, wooden receptacle, trough, and canoe, and which also designates, among these people, the vessel in which the blacksmith descended. See M. Griaule. *L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes*, p. 117, n. 3.

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is represented as making her nocturnal visitation at the time the grain is threshed. An old woman, dressed in rags, wearing old unmatched sandals, and carrying broken gourds, runs about the countryside simulating madness. She follows the mythological itinerary from west to south and from east to north, and then returns and sits down near the granaries (1).

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1. However, the very first agricultural techniques known as fyɛ̃·ti (literally, cultivation of the wind) are recalled, particularly among the Bozo, by random sowings of a certain number of wild grasses, then cereals, in the fields where the harvest is offered to Faro. Similar rituals are celebrated in certain Bambara villages. The techniques taught by Mousso Koroni came after those "of the wind," and precede that of millet cultivation.

For information on some agricultural rituals of the Bozo, see G. Dieterlen, "L'Agriculture rituelle des Bozo /Ritual Agriculture of the Bozo/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 20 (1950).

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Mousso Koroni's agricultural work and her unhappy wanderings are also represented in a children's ritual, carried out at night during the cultivation period. One of the players, the yukuri or dantoni (literally, little hunchback), wears sandals for ears, a hump at the small of his back, a cloth tail tied low about his waist. He goes begging from /40/ door to door, followed by all the uncircumcised of his neighborhood. He pretends to cultivate and to thresh grain while his companions intone chants recalling Mousso Koroni's mythical actions. After his round is finished and the presents of millet are gathered, the player, pursued by all the others, runs off and disappears amid catcalls.

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But while this parody of cultivation, with its rituals and chants, recalls the phases of Mousso Koroni's disorderly life, the agricultural techniques she initiated earlier are in themselves an important expression of the reparation made to the confusions she had caused. Every hoeing by the farmer is a wound inflicted on the impure earth,

776 241 183 hence on Mousso Koroni. The ritual cultivation of millet, a noble activity to which every aristocratic Bambara must dedicate himself, is an institution which Faro taught in his time and constitutes a purification and a reordering of the soil (1).

1. *Dugukolo* *be* *be* *dyuruma*, "the whole earth is impure." But as only virgin soil is considered impure, it is also said: *dyurumu* *be* *be* *dugukolo* *ka* *forow* *sani* *nyala* *do*, "the whole earth is impure except for the cultivated fields." The word *dugukolo* (literally, bone of the earth) designates both the earth as a whole and the earth as matter. The same notions concerning the impurity of the earth hold for the Dogon. See M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, p. 94. [171]

Faro

Faro's Shapes

776 Faro was a "voice" before he materialized into a body. In his role as master of the word and reorganizer of the universe, he is represented by a spiral, *munu*, in which he occupies the point of origin at all times. The spiral is situated in the center of the cardinal points (2). Its vibratory unrolling represents "the displacement of Faro for the realization of all things in the universe."

2. This "central point," which is also the firmament, is described by the Bambara as *sǎ* *tyema* *kolo*, literally, the bone of the middle of the sky.

776 292 This image is materialized in a basketry headdress, *yugu*, with a spiral of eight turns. The straw sprigs that form the spokes supporting the spiral symbolize the vibration; the intervals, *yugunye* or eye of the *yugu*, which separate them are rays of light, the spiral representing

776 seized by Faro who, after giving the genitals to the dogfish, completed
773 his own physical being. His head and torso were made of the albino's flesh; his tail was of copper, as were his breasts, the "essential organs that fed and revived the world."

Faro's head can be compared to that of a white woman: his eyes are black and piercing; his hair is black, straight and long like a horsetail.

/42/ His ears are two holes with no outer ear, but are protected by two fins. Two necklaces of copper and gold hang from his neck and act as receivers, enabling him to hear all sounds and all words: the copper necklace reports idle talks of little importance; the gold one, secret conversations and powerful words. Faro puts all that the receivers collect in his fins, which are also the mirror reflecting all that his eyes have seen, both good or bad. He looks, shuts his eyes, and puts out his tongue; the images penetrate into his fins and classify themselves according to the regular movements of his tail. Thus, images and sounds are chronologically inscribed and can be brought before him at any moment "like a card pulled out of a file." In this way he knows to what use he can put things and events.

Both his hands—the right one male and the other female—and the end of his tail are webbed. Without any apparent sex, the preeminence of the feminine shape usually attributed to him recalls that he once impregnated himself in order to give birth to twin girls at the time the first waters streamed onto the earth.

Faro's appearance, which is linked to the problem of his origin, has been the object of legends and tales among the people. While these have attracted the scholar's attention, they present a serious problem. The legends are truncated, episodic, and often childish versions of an imposing myth, which is perfectly constructed and often expresses a dogma.

776 Two examples will be given of legends whose only interest here is
773 to suggest further research into myths forming the framework for
171 collective symbols. One of these legends is Peul /Fulani/, and the other Touareg /Tuareg/.

1. At a time when the Niger was but a narrow, deep river, a pregnant Peul woman asked some Bozo fishermen, who usually ferried people on request, to take her across the stream. At first they refused,

using her pregnancy as an excuse. As she insisted, they took her in their canoe, left her on the other shore, and went away.

As soon as she had landed, she was seized with pains of her labor. The water of the river dried up at the point where it had been deepest. A voice came out of it, advising the woman to bear her child there. She went down into the pit after having left her clothes on the shore.

From her womb there first came forth milk, honey, and precious stones (*lulu*) which dropped onto the milk and honey as though on /43/ a straw mat. The woman was writhing with pain: the child finally appeared feet first and fell on the stones. His hands and feet were webbed.

As the water began to reappear, she attempted to get away, but in vain. Her husband, who had run up to the river's edge and had found her clothing there, saw her appear three times holding the child above the waters. She then disappeared, carried away by the current. Both she and the child became Faro spirits.

2. The village of Siyango, located fifteen kilometers from Nyono, has a very deep, perennial natural well called *ala kolo faro*, Faro of the well of god, "or *Mbata dyi*, " "water of *Mbata*." No one drinks its water. At the beginning of creation, a woman named *Mbata* lived alone and without water. She gave birth to twins. Exhausted and dying of thirst, she came out of the cave and, going down to the edge of the sand, prayed that God let her die if she could have no water. A spirit appeared and said to her: "God will entrust all waters to you; but he will first prepare you a home." A pit having been formed and filled with water, the woman stepped inside and was transformed into Faro. She then took her two children in with her; one became a male spirit and the other, a female spirit.

The pit extended underground through a kind of tunnel and Mbata, who had followed it down, came out again with so much water that the Niger was created.

The water of this well was soon forbidden to human beings, for if anyone looked at himself in it, Mbata would take hold of his shadow and make him fall. The corpse, using the underground passage, came out into the river. Those who threw themselves into the water sometimes also became Faro.

One day Mbata resumed her human shape and went to the market where she bought tomatoes. She asked those she met what they did for the spirit who owned the water they so much needed. She advised them to offer him copper and gold and to slaughter white rams at the well.

776 The following day, in order to give thanks to Faro, the villagers
173 went to the edge of the well to the sound of drums and sacrificed the
171 animal. The water swelled, seethed up, and formed a streat which
still runs into the Niger today.

The composition of Faro's body determines the behavior of men in the rituals performed in his honor. While the usual offerings of blood, tomatoes, raw cereal mash, and baked cakes are consumed by him and returned to the givers in the shape of material possessions (children, millet, rain) or spiritual possessions (preservation of the souls of the living and the dead), the choice content of the offerings or sacrifices, the albino and copper, are reserved only for him and help increase his strength and stimulate his action. /44/ He absorbs them for his own sake; thus it is said that: "copper and albino are the sacrificial privileges of Faro."

Manifestations of Faro

776 All the atmospheric manifestations in the sky are evidence of
824 Faro's presence and power. Rain, thunder, squalls, hail, and the
rainbow all demonstrate his action. The lightning that bursts forth
in the koblenkaba is a weapon, a small axe (sempere ni or dyele dẽ
čini) which he throws from the top of the sky. If lightning strikes,
[825] it is a proof of his revenge. In the tree, the lightning hits the gecko
(ala ǰugu), an evil animal which, when it lives in homes near the hearth, supposedly stirs up fires of conflagration. When lightning strikes men, it is in punishment for the breaking of a taboo. The stone axes, found at the point where lightning strikes, are collected and kept in the sanctuaries of the rain altars, to be used in case of drought or in the course of seasonal rites. They are also placed in the seeded fields, so that their strength, by communicating itself to the seed, may be beneficial to germination.

776 On earth, Faro is conceived of as a unique being whose principal home is the Niger; he is present everywhere. In practice, the Bambara believe that a spirit haunts each torrent, pond, or well, each gourd of water, each dewdrop; they call him dyi tigi, "master of water."

826 is also through the feet that a part of man's strength is deposited in the sweepings and rubbish upon which he treads. Their role as receptacles appears in the rituals concerning household refuse and the dirt on roads and paths.

Like the little finger, the small toe symbolizes the whole person. [301] It is sometimes adorned with a silver ring, symbol of the word, which recalls that man's body is the seat of the word extended within him from head to feet (1).

831 The notion of the bisexuality of human beings is fundamental: the spiritual principles are sexed like the body, whose ambivalence
826 /71/ is evident during childhood: the boy is feminine in his foreskin; the girl is masculine in her clitoris. One of the aims of circumcision
[344] and excision is to help the child attain the sex to which it is apparently destined by removing the organ of the opposite sex. (2). But the initial duality of the soul and body is the very foundation of the human being. He is complete only if he originally received it, and he retains it even after the operation imposed by physical and social life,
[774] for the soul of the opposite sex, though diminished in the body, remains present in the shadow, the *dya*. He also rediscovers his dual unity when he marries. A married couple are a unit for their *dya*
[581] join as do their bodies in an act which is not merely physical and which realizes the ideal union of twins.

831 The sex to which one belongs dominates one's whole existence on earth. Objects and tools bear masculine or feminine marks, according
801 to the rules of the division of labor. The numbers three (man) and four (woman) are abridged forms of the sex. "Primitive men" who, according to the Bambara expressed themselves mostly by gestures and signs, engraved their rare objects with the number of

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1. In olden times the ring on the small toe was made of red *nyama* fiber (*nyama fu*), which played the same role as metal.

[171] 2. The same conception is found among the Dogon; see M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, p. 185.

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3. The mechanism of blood sacrifice among the Bambara is comparable to that observed among the Dogon and described by M. Griaule, "Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice dogon (Soudan Français) /Remarks on the Mechanism of Dogon Sacrifice (French Sudan)/," _Journal de la Société des Africanistes._ Vol. 10, 1940, pp. 127 ff.

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the altar. At the time men gave the _balanza_ their blood, they would let it dry and then, licking the trunk with their tongue, would reclaim it after it was rid of the element constituting the offering. All their active forces passed into the tree and a substance almost totally lacking in vitality was returned to them.

782 The blood sacrifices which were originally instituted on the trunk of the _balanza_ are actually performed in the most varied sites: earth, trees, ponds, wells, etc. Moreover, as the Bambara developed their technology, they would sacrifice on those objects, utensils, or contrivances which they discovered or invented such as the forge and its tools, the loom, and agricultural implements.

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778 The Bambara also have altars which may be classified into three categories:

1. The wood stumps called _pembele_, which represent Pemba. Many heads of families or of religious societies keep one of these (1).

1. See p. 77 for a description of the _pembele_ altars.

A unique sanctuary at Massala is a pilgrimage center for Bambara from all regions who come in great numbers to take part in the annual sacrifice. Besides _pembele_, it contains two large pots, _da_, covered with sacrificial blood, which give the sanctuary its name. It is in this place that ordeals are executed, judicial questions settled, and serious illnesses treated.

2. The altars, made of stones crudely cut and occasionally engraved, have their origin in a mythical stone, issued out of the seventh part of the earth, and situated under the mound where Faro's female twins were born. Having a red color, it was itself a symbol of sacrifice. It divided itself and gave birth to all other sacrificial stones (Fig. 5 and Pl. V. b).

/98/ Chapter 5

TECHNOLOGY

773 The Bambara who are conscious of the evolution of their civilization trace it far back in time. The history of their origin as well as the feats and exploits of their most distant ancestors are not only inscribed in their memories but also in present day ceremonies and often in the material products of the culture, secular as well as religious.

The invention and evolution of technology, in the course of which the spiritual and the material, revelation and human effort, all work together, give rise to legends and representations which are characteristic of Bambara psychology (1).

1. What we relate here concerning the origin of technology is exclusively a summary of what the natives tell. The context, in the form of practical daily rituals, of which the forge is the best example, is sufficient and requires no commentary.

According to Bambara thought, all technology is an atonement taught man by Faro, a palliative to cosmic disorder, generally induced by a broken taboo. Famine, war, epidemics, misery, and death, which such disorders bring about, are compensated for —as far as possible—by new technologies which are revealed as needs arise. All these exist potentially in the wooden club used to smash and beat the fiber, which was the first raw material used (2).

●[171] 2. The wooden club is a duplicate of the mythical blacksmith's hammer which contained the techniques and the cultivable grains (see p. 53, n. 1). The same origin of technology is given by the Dogon, see Dieu d'Eau, p. 84.

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829 The first works were made by "primitive men," ancestors of the Bambara of whom the following description is given:

773 829 knowing its power, men at first used it sparingly. A question was never discussed twice. If a request was reiterated, after an objection, the party requested would bow and agree at the risk and peril of the person making the request."

Men first lived by gathering and later by fishing and hunting without tools, using only /100/ hands to seize their prey, and nails and teeth to tear and cut it. Gradually this primitive life changed; technologies developed one by one according to a chronology which the present Bambara still remember.

773 The first raw material used, according to a tradition which is not confined to the Bambara alone, was the fiber of the _nyama_ tree (1) (_nyama fu_) out of which were woven the first fishing nets, the first sling, and the first loincloth (2).

When they began to work the soil, they developed a set of primitive wooden tools. At the same time, they invented a throwing weapon made of the same material. Wood remained in use for a long time; the invention of weaving and crude pottery goes back to this period. Later, they came to know stone tools, iron, and the forge. The art of house building, about which no myth has been gathered until now, seems to have developed much later, after the discovery of iron (3).

The study of this assemblage of tools and of their ritual use is most suggestive because they are a first indication of technological

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[829] 1. _Bauhinia reticulata_ (in the north), _Bauhinia Thonningii_ (in the south).

● [171] 2. The Dogon also mention this fiber as the first material used by men. With them as with the Bambara, it has a ritual function. See M. Griaule, _Dieu d'eau_, p. 26.

3. Certain parts of the investigation concerning technology have been summarized by the author in "l'Arme et l'outil chez les anciens Bambara /Weapons and Tools among the Ancient Bambara/," _Africa_, Vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 105-111.

173 224 411 Propitiatory sacrifices were offered on the wooden lamellae and the blood ran along the thong into the net. In addition, the hunter would saturate his weapon with the blood of wounded or killed animals to give his contrivance the victims' strength and to increase his own skill.

The *ndõfere* was used for a long time as a military weapon.

Weaving

173 286 The invention of weaving is linked to the discovery of cotton cultivation. The latter appeared long before that of millet at a time when the only known tools were those of wood used to scratch /103/ the earth at the base of the wild grasses with which men nourished themselves (1).

The myth mentions simultaneously the appearance of cotton and the invention of spindles and shuttle; it does not mention the loom which appeared later. The tale of the manufacture of the first clothing also includes details on dyeing which seems to have been known at a very early date.

When the men returned from the bush where they had been cultivating the *norolã sise* (commonly known as *cram-cram*) and the *narakata*, a kind of couch grass which provided them with edible seeds, they would often abandon their wooden hoes at the crossroads in honor of the Soba spirit.

One day an old man who used to pass nearby was summoned by the spirit, saying: "To all of you who leave your hoes as you pass by, I wish to give something to hide your nakedness; but I will do it if you offer me a sacrifice."

The old man reported this incident to the men of his generation, who decided to sacrifice an albino at the crossroads. The spirit then told them to take the seed which they would find at the intersection of the roads and taught them how to sow and harvest it.

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[171] 1. See p. 154. The Dogon admit the same priority of weaving over cultivation of cereal grains. See M. Griaule. *Dieu d'eau*, pp. 31ff.

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Sistrums, sticks, mats, as well as the wood from the huts and the refuse that has been carefully swept up, are put in a pile which is ignited. Each circumcised boy jumps over the fire three times and then runs to his home without looking back. In this way he finally loses the rest of the wanzo which he has kept after the operation. Only his cap is brought back and given his mother who keeps it until her death. On the next day, after putting on new clothes the boy is taught what he himself is in the following words: "the person is yo and yo is the person (1)" and in the circumstances of creation. He is then admitted completely into the society of the male adults of his village.

Circumcision has a profound effect upon the person. At this moment, the child loses the physical support of the female sex which is the foreskin; he becomes a man (vir) ready to fulfill his role of a male capable of reproducing. Moreover, he "throws off his wanzo" which escapes from the body at the moment of the operation (2). In his leap above the fire this force joins, in the altars and the mask of the ndomo, the forces of both the uncircumcised and the circumcised of the preceding years (3).

At the same time the circumcised boy improves his tere, for this latter force, diminished by the bloody operation, increases at the moment when the child dons his new clothing. Until his circumcision, the child only performed minor tasks; after circumcision he is considered a male adult and officially admitted to the rituals and labors of the community.

1. Ma ye yo ye, yo ye ma ye. On yo see pp. 18-26.

[171] 2. Wanzo file la. The wearing of clothing and ornaments assumes great importance in the loss of the wanzo. Among the Bozo, where the children are circumcised very young, they are not considered to have lost their wanzo until the moment these clothes are given to them.

3. See p. 227.

121 knowledge. However, the same effort would have to be undertaken with regard to their neighbors so that gradually from one tribe to the next, it can be extended to the whole Black world.

For it is true that, however indispensable it is to order the facts concerning the Bambara themselves and to seek an internal explanation, the comparative method is necessary for the understanding of a religion. This method imposes itself with particular force in this context. The Bambara system does appear to be, on the one hand, the original synthesis of several other systems found by them on the spot at the time when they made their ultimate settlement, or brought along at the time of the great migratory movements. On the other hand this system is in a state of perpetual symbiosis with those of other Sudanese peoples, as is proved indubitably by recent observations.

121 ●171 779 At present we can already state that at least nine tribes of varying importance (1) live on the same metaphysical, if not religious, foundation. They have a common theme of the creation by means of a word, which is originally motionless and whose vibration determines little by little the essence and later the existence of all things. The same is true of the movement of the universe in a conical spiral which is constantly extending itself. They share the same conception of the person, as well as of the primordial duality, the expression of perfect unity. All these peoples admit the mediation by a hypostasis of the divinity which sometimes takes on the aspect of a redeemer, master of a world, whose appearance is everywhere identical. All believe in the necessity /229/ of universal harmony as well as that of the internal harmony of beings, both being related. One of the

1. In the order of increasing depth of studies, we cite the following groups: Dogon and Bambara, blacksmiths, Kouroumba (or Foulsé), Bozo, Manding, Samogo /Samoro/, Mossi, Koulé, altogether amounting to more than two million people. It is fitting to note likewise that several tens of peoples or tribes of the Sudan (in the wider meaning of the word) consider themselves of the same origin. Important rituals, materials, agents, and places reinforce this belief (see p. 2).

121 corollaries of this notion is the subtle mechanism of disorder which we
● 171 call impurity for lack of a better term, and which goes hand in hand
779 with that of highly developed cathartic practices.

Finally, all these offer an extraordinary efflorescence—not to be called abuse—of the spoken, written, drawn, or gesticulated symbols many of which are found everywhere, each one of them being the basis for several levels of images.

We may therefore speak from now on of a Sudanese civilization whose substratum may be discerned among many tribes as it has been among the Dogon and the Bambara in particular. Under the diversity of languages and institutions is hidden the same framework of representations. It is as though each tribe had arranged the designs characteristic of its own genius on an identical canvas.

For this reason, it is appropriate to consider the present essay as a
121 first step toward an understanding of this civilization. In the future, this vast entity will have to take its place in relation to the Mediterranean and Asiatic system. And there is no doubt that this search for its position will bring up problems of borrowings, migrations, and assimilation. And doubtless, too, an anatomy of the old civilizations which had taken refuge in the western impasse in Africa will throw a valuable light on the primitive organizations which were found in contact with each other during the high period in these regions, and which were able toeffect a union between indigenous ways of thinking and others with which we are more familiar.

It is tempting to reconstruct archaic states of humanity with the help of broken potsherds or literary shreds. In the more favorable cases, abundant texts and materials have permitted syntheses, whose vicissitudes are one of the reasons for the existence of erudition. On no occasion has anyone ever been discouraged by terrains without echoes, by the absence of the authors of texts and materials. Thus, a wealth of activity concerning the situations and thoughts of ancient times was instituted, a kind of science shrouded in silence where the spirit of research alone was alive.

Today it seems possible, in the light of new observations, to find among numerous and diverse living people, archaic forms and wellsprings common to men of another color living in another time. This does not imply that one should disregard the cautious advice given by the men of the old schools (1); but this advice rests /230/ on postulates

*173
175 came, everyone was astounded to see him leave everything for the birds.

The oracle was fulfilled at once. Biton ruled from Timbuktu to the Atlantic. And the dyeli, Karé Tammoura, who told me the legend, adds that thereafter there was a very strange thing at Ségou: a combination animal and plant which the Bambara called Sanu-so or "golden horse." Ahmadou, the son of Omar, had a mosque erected on the spot where Sanu-so was wont to appear but, all the same, it did not disappear until the arrival of the French. Even since then, there are those who say that on certain days strange lights appear at the spot on the Niger where Monseigneur Hacquart died and where the genie appeared to Mamari.

● [171] This fable about a local genie is not in itself remarkable, but when compared to the legend about Ngolo Dyara (see later, p. 51) and to many other similar ones current in the Sudan (2), what it really is becomes clear: the figurative expression of a native mentality about which the European is usually very ill-informed and which deserves to be noted here briefly.

778 [23] Anything that departs from the average, the ordinary, or the normal -- power, wealth, success, ... illness, poverty, misfortune -- to any extraordinary degree or in a suspicious way, is, for the Bambara in particular and for the Black in general, the manifestation of an occult force acting either spontaneously or after provocation.

643
778 That is why, in the eyes of a native, a chief (a paramount chief, of course) is out of the common run, not so much because of the position he occupies as because of the magic powers attributed to him (1). Power is merely the reflection of his

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2. See, especially, the legend of Ndyadyane Ndyaye in "Légendes et coutumes sénégalaises [Senegalese Legends and Customs] by H. Gaden, 1912, and the "Dyide de Djenné" in Contes du Sénégal et du Niger, by Zeltner.

881 evil genii in order to preserve the "people of the soli" (*soli*-*ma*-*u*)
789 from their bewitchments.

881 *The soli*. The *soli*, this make-believe birth, is marked
by a bloody operation, circumcision for the boys and excision
304 for the girls. The fact that the ceremony does not get its name
from this operation demonstrates that it is merely show; it is
merely a rite of separation between the previous state and the
new one (3). The operation takes place at dawn.

[171] 3. That is why among other peoples the operation does not exist or represented by a mere slash on the thigh (among the Koniagui).

Boys. The blacksmith who is to circumcise the boys waits outside the village under a tree. Assisted by members [243] of the sects and especially by the *Komo*-*tigi*, he performs the operation behind a loincloth hung up as a screen. The boy stands erect, and the blacksmith draws out the prepuce and cuts it off, after having determined approximately the proper place to cut. The patient is expected to show no weakness; on the contrary, he exerts himself to say a few words to show his courage.

As soon as the operation is finished, a gunshot announces the news to the elders crouched about the village fires, and a female *griot* proclaims it to the bystanders. The *Komo*-*tigi* takes a few *nyanka* leaves, burns them, and goes to place the ashes on the boy's familial *kara*. The boy runs off to rejoin his companions under the tree especially chosen for this reassembly. All the boys will spend their days there, on the fringe of society with which they are forbidden to mingle. They return to the village only at night, to sleep in a hut reserved for them.

881 A man reputed to know how to care for circumcised
boys lives with them, takes care of them, and closely supervises
304 them; this is the *sema*-*tye*. Every day abundant food is brought
292 to him for his patients. The latter wear a *dloki* (blouse) and
kursi (trousers) made of cotton cloth, blue or yellow-brown (*basa*)
depending on their affiliations (1), and their headgear is usually

1. The *basa* color is much in demand

881 301 and friends have kindly lent for the occasion, they advance shyly. In some areas, notably in the Bani region, they wear bundles of cowries, from the bride price already paid for them, around the hips and hanging on each side of the head (1).

[302 171] 1. Bambara girls who have gone through the soli have their heads shaved. Among other peoples, on the contrary, girls have their hair braided like women for the first time, but to the braid is added a tuft of the hair shaved off seven days after birth; this hair has usually been lost, but a small tuft is made to simulate it.

881 [535] Boys and girls, following the old women who lead them, dance around the orchestra, and then all sit down in a circle. The nyana-n-son-na-ba takes the floor. He speaks in a low voice, and, as is proper, his words are repeated in a loud voice by a herald. He proclaims the end of the soli, recalls its principal events, and indicates clearly which children have participated in the rite; each boy and girl is specifically named. He will also be sure to point out that the soli is an immemorial custom [578] among the Bambara and that there is no worse insult than to treat a Bambara as uncircumcised. He closes by inviting everyone to eat, drink, and celebrate in the joy and harmony appropriate to such a festival.

[535] Dancing is resumed, and the boys and girls of the soli take part. The festivities continue as long as the refreshments last, usually several days.

To end it all, no one leaves without giving at least a few kola nuts to the heroes of the festival, the boys and girls.

The last phase is the thanks given by the soli-ma to those who assisted at the da-woro. In noisy bands, boys and girls dash about the village in two distinct groups. The girls' group is headed by the soma-moso who is called masa (queen), followed by the masa-ma-kono (vice-queen) and the masa-ma-kono-segere [248] (follower of the vice-queen); the last girl in the

561 575 association, each fula-ni is a ton'-den'.

The bachelors and some of the married men regard the fla-n-ton' simply as a means of having a good time in the company of boon companions. Anything brought by an individual member goes to swell the common fund which is most often used to organize feasts and drinking bouts. At these banquets, it is customary to comply with rules which appear curious at first sight and which must be obeyed unless the member wants to pay a fine into the common fund. Thus, anyone who acts on his own prior to or contrary to an order from the ton-tigi, anyone who comes or leaves, blows his nose, [250] spits, sneezes, and so on, without permission, is fined. Aside from the profit to the common fund, the procedure has its uses in making the ton-den' amenable to discipline.

In principle, the treasury of the fla-n-ton' is supposed to be used only to succor poor, embarrassed, or unfortunate members, who are expected to repay with interest insofar as they are able to do so. In theory, also, all of the ton-den' can count on moral and material aid from their fla-ni whenever there is need for it. It goes without saying that this fine spirit of altruism is rarely put into practice.

The fact of the matter is that the young masters (kamale-u) make use of the organization to resist the omnipotence of the elders (koro-u); malcontents of all sorts take refuge in it; adventurers find it useful in promoting their schemes. We shall see how the two most powerful Bambara empires were built on the fla-n-ton'.

2. General Considerations Concerning the Brotherhoods

Origin of the Brotherhoods

177 794 There is no reason to suppose that the Bambara brotherhoods are not purely native institutions; similar organizations are to be found all over Africa, particularly in areas untouched by Moslem influence. All of them follow similar principles made manifest in ways characteristic of African occultism.

177 794 There is no doubt, however, that in the case of the Bambara with whom we are here concerned this native foundation

784
778 terms nyana and boli are used interchangeably. This is natural enough since the latter is merely the symbol of the former.

Each nyana has a boli which in form and substance is peculiar to it. Anything may be used to make boli: horn or hair of the hare, hind, or cattle; nails or claws; animal venom or excretions. It is not unusual to find parts of a human body put to use. As the chronicle tells, the war drums of the ton-dyon' were elevated to the rank of boli and were then adorned with the craniums and jaws of human beings sacrificed to them. Often the ball tied to the end of a piece of rope or leather and used to beat the tabala [Tr., big drum] is a human hand which has been severed and wrapped in a leather cover. [727 782]

Certain of the boli, particularly those of the Komo and the Kono, are said to be made of a child's torso; those of the Tyi-wara and Nama are made of wood, and those of the Duga of horn.

All sorts of shapes are employed: men, animals, doll-like figures, balls, small crowns, etc. The principal boli, called boli-de-n-fa, is accompanied by subsidiary ones called boli-de.

The boli is also given sex: one is male, another female; and it is said that there is a kind of mystical copulation [254] from which at the time of initiation are born the spiritual sons of the nyana.

Among boli should be noted those made of forked sticks, such as the n-Golo and the Tyi-wara, both patrons of brotherhoods of young men (1).

171 1. If one makes certain comparisons, the forked stick seems to deserve special attention. Among the Khassonké, for instance, the soli-ma always build their seclusion hut (bire) with a forked post in the center. This post, called biri-makho (master of the hut), is a tree trunk chosen

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and cut by the gankurango (magician-protector of the soli-ma among the Khassonké) because it is so placed in the forest that the normal progress of the sun follows the axis formed by the two branches of the fork. There is thus some relation between the sun and the forked tree called biri-makho. Perhaps the same relationship accounts for the sleeping position of the boys in the bire: they always lie with their heads toward the center post and their bodies forming the spokes of a wheel around it. During the soli ceremonies the same Khassonké soli-ma use a short wand forked at one end.

The forked stick with mystical significance is also found among the Koniagui.

It is not possible, given the present state of our knowledge, to be specific about the origin or significance of this symbol. For the same reason, we cannot say whether it can be related to the lyre-shaped stones found in the mysterious collection of rocks discovered in Gambia, in which there is thought to be discernible a clearly defined cult of the sun (cf. Bulletin du Comité d'études historiques et scientifiques de l'A.O.F., 1920, No. 1).

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778 To the European these boli are thoroughly repulsive objects. Since magic utilizes everything (2), all kinds of things

2. And particularly things which are considered repulsive in ordinary life.

are used to make them, and during the sacrifices, blood, hair, feathers, viscera, etc., are usually placed on the boli. The result is usually a repugnant sight. The native, however, seems to pay no attention to this repulsive aspect which so horrifies

144 771 which encompasses all social, technical and economic activities" (1)

1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion], P.U.F., 1951.

of this people. The myths are "a sum of knowledge, wisdom, and not a series of fixed etiological recitations. One may say that they constitute a metaphysic including the knowledge of created things, as well as the principles of their state of being and of their action." (2)

2. Id., ibid.

171 771 Thorough investigation of other Sudanese peoples has revealed that the Bambara religion is part of a pan-Sudanese system in which differences lie in the modes of expression and not in the essence of the thought.

A. Cosmogony

772 The Bambara conceive the world as a mass of active forces which man can influence. Thanks to certain techniques, the pivotal one being the blood sacrifice, man may amass or liberate these forces, may direct and orient them; in short, man may have a hand in the movement of the world and may aid it in its consciousness and accomplishment. This central role of man is explained to us by the order of creation itself, which governs all the rites to which man is subject. 773 The Bambara conceive the world as having issued from an original void which was endowed with movement (3): the gla. This

3. Passim, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

void emitted a voice which created its double, and from the couple came a humid substance, zo sumale (cold rust), which formed hard shining bodies. After a series of movements and transformations, there was an explosion between the two gla, which caused the ejection of a hard and powerful matter that vibrated as it fell. Out of this vibration came signs which settled on all the things as yet uncreated to designate them. Then, man's consciousness detached itself from the gla and settled on things to awaken their consciousness in naming them. In the

532 the masks is an entire world, and when it sets itself in motion in the public place, it dances the movement of the world, it dances the system of the world." (1)

1. Ibid., "Dieu d'eau" [God of Water] .

A. Statuary

Sculpture is man's work, done by the blacksmiths. It is of religious inspiration.

There are three centers of fabrication, whose productions differ in their form. These are the regions of Bamako, Bougouni (a veritable land of blacksmiths), and Kinian, of which the latter covers part of the Sikasso, Koutiala, and Ségou districts. (2)

2. Passim, Lem, "Sculptures soudanaises" [Sudanese Sculptures], Arts et métiers graphiques, Paris, 1948.

They make female statuettes, fertility statuettes, marionettes

545 used for theatrical representations given by the young people, masks for the different societies, and, in particular, a whole series of stylized antelopes, special symbols of the tchi wara dancers.

"Like the Chinese sculptor of the Han period, the Bambara

532 sees and fixes forms in terms of profiles. He practices openwork

● 171 carving, cutting silhouettes which appear against the light as hieroglyphs with fixed and suggestive outlines. Giving interpretations to signs and forms borrowed from familiar animals, the Bambara combine and associate them to create figures emblematic of the tribe or clan, figures of recognition. This symbolic zoomorphism, the basis of heraldry, is that of the peoples of the great Asiatic steppe, that of the peoples of Mesopotamia and of Asia Minor; it was, in part, that of the Egyptians of the age of the Pharaohs who achieved in the valley of the Nile, predestined for this by its situation and its resources, the synthesis of a double culture." Thus it is that the sculptor, in order to express his vision, often has recourse to the ideogram of geometric character, upon which is founded the conceptual character of the peoples of the steppe. (3)

3. Passim, F.H. Lem, Variété et unité des

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● 171

traditions plastiques de l'Afrique noire
[Variety and Unity of the Plastic Art
Traditions of Black Africa].

532 A great variety of wood (4) is available to the sculptor, who

4. Passim, H. Lavachery, "L'art noir d'Afrique et son destin" [Negro Art of Africa and its Destiny], Présence africaine.

chiefly uses fine-grained species whose fibers are not very sensitive, and who avoids woods that are too hard and too dense. The artist [412] works with green wood, generally with an adze, or chip-axe, which probably is derived from the hoe. This instrument serves for rough chipping the mass and for establishing the secondary volumes; it gives the statue a singular "faceted" aspect. The work is completed [412] by means of a knife and gouges. A skillful technique makes it possible to give the wood a patina; it is blackened by burying the pieces in certain types of mud, by being immersed in palm oil, and daubed with lampblack. The wood is reddened by applying plasters made by grinding barks and making pastes from them. The objects so treated are [105] lengthily polished with skins and take on the sombre, brilliant aspect of old bronzes. The patina of the pieces is an important element of their beauty.

The art observes stylistic conventions, such as the deformation of normal appearances. In the structure of the mass, convention regulates the proportion of the parts, of the solid portions and the hollows; it regulates the development of the secondary volumes and of the surfaces of the different planes, their extent and their lines of contact. In its volume, the statuary obeys an almost immutable canon: to a cylindrical trunk is attached a head that is enormous in proportion to the other members, which are confined to narrow limits; the lower members are much shorter than in nature. The oversized head is a convention related to ancestor worship. The head is sculpted in concave style, and the entire figure is subordinated to a marked geometrization.

321 The blacksmiths also work gold by using the "lost wax"
531 method, or by hammering, embossing anf fixing thin leaves of gold,

614 825 784 given moment into a doe, toad, ant, or rabbit -- a singular evolution if ever there was one, one may suppose that at the moment of the metamorphosis these animals did not exist and they are all, men and animals, of the same flesh and the same blood; or, more plausibly, the ancestors changed themselves into already existing animals, procreating among them does, toads, ants, or rabbits as they had formerly reproduced human beings, so that in killing one of these totem animals a Redskin must always be afraid that he is killing a son or grandson of the ancestor, or some other of the latter's descendants, and therefore of his own flesh and blood (1).

> 1. /sic/ A. Lang does not seem to doubt that the people of whom he speaks -- Redskins, Tahitians, and Africans -- give a very broad meaning to the words "father," "mother," "brother," "wife," "son," and that they customarily use them to refer to persons with whom they have no bond of kinship.

[578] There is nothing like this for a Bambara. To call someone a wild animal is in his eyes an insult, and to call a man the son of a dog (oulou den) is enough to make him angry, to throw him into a fit of anger; even if he has a dog for a tné, that is a wrong which will sooner or later be avenged. He does not number among his ancestors a dog, or a panther, a lion or a snake. A Kouloubali would be much surprised to learn that a doe gave birth to him, and there is not a Tankara who thinks he has /18/ the sap of the dondol or the juice of its fruit in his veins. When a Djara calls himself the son of a lion, or a Dambélé the son of a big black monkey, what they say must be understood in a very broad sense, as an analogy. We ourselves say of a special benefactor: "He is my father," "he is my mother," "he is my all."

171 614 825 784 Here the Bambara is akin to the Christian Quichés of Guatemala of whom D. G. Brinton speaks in his "Nagualism," 1294, -- O. Stoll

171 in his *Die Ethnologie der Indianerstämme von Guatemala* /The
614 Ethnology of the Indian Tribes of Guatemala/, Leyden, 1882. This
825 work is cited by Lang in Chap. III of *Mythes, cultes et religions*.
784 His *tné* is a friend, a protector, and may be defined as follows: it is an animate or inanimate being entitled to the respect and veneration of an entire lineage, family, or clan, in recognition of an outstanding service which has prevented the lineage, family, or clan from disappearing or becoming extinct, or has preserved them from a misfortune.

773 Every *tne* has its legend. Although in the mouth of the black
614 man the tale may be embellished and decorated a little so that it
539 varies somewhat, the substance remains the same. I will translate
784 a few of these legends, preserving both their form and their substance.
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Legend of the Two *Kouloubali*

The people were at war; everywhere there were only fugitives. The *Kouloubali* lineage had been cruelly stricken and reduced to two members, two brothers lost in the bush with their wives and children. The elder who followed /sic/ his brother at a distance, (since for fear of being surprised, they avoided camping in the same place). He arrived at the bank of a swollen river and saw he could not cross, there being no boats. "Where can I flee now?" he lamented. "I am in the hands of my enemies! For me and my family it is death or slavery." A *mpolio* was passing by; it heard, was touched by compassion, and, raising its big, bearded head out of the water, called to him: "I can take you over, have no fear!" The elder of the *Kouloubali* and his family, with their weapons and baggage, settled themselves on the slimy back of the strange fish and crossed the river. Then he said to the fish: "Listen, good *mpolio*, my brother and his family are over there on the bank. Do not render them the /19/ service that you rendered me, for he is an ingrate, one without a heart, and he might kill you." -- "Kill me? Come now!" and the fish dove, disappeared, and emerged far over near the other bank, at the moment when the young *Kouloubali* was wondering how his older brother had been able to cross such a wide

778 with the dancers /150/ who, with torsos naked to the waist, gesticulate and shout their sacred songs to the sound of drums and pipes:

778 A djigina so, gnâ, ma fambali, a djigina so, tjon k'a e.
539 He is our guest, the gnâ, great killer of men, he is our guest
tjon k'a é.
A fiéréla ka dén, boli fiéréla ka dén.
He has blossomed to bear, to bear his fruits; this boli has
blossomed, he has his fruit.
Soubaou, yo, nin kéra malo ko ye.
Souba, yo, this is done because of shame.
Soubaya kéra, dabali bé an ko yé.
Someone has devoted himself to the practices of the souba, we
have a means of saving ourselves.

778 Nor does sacrifice to the Nama fail to be impressive. Only
782 members of the staff enter the enclosure where the beehive used as its tabernacle is located. The crowd of members remains outside, and no one approaches the palisade before it is his turn to give a sacrificial hen and kola nuts to the sacrificer. While the idol is being reddened with blood (1), /151/ two men, naked to the waist and facing the

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171 1. The Nama of the Malinké is absolutely identical with that of their Bambara brothers. At Bendougouba, a village of the Kosilanbougou culture near Kita, there is a Nama, and one can identify the words as they are very nearly the same.

Bambara	Malinké
Male Nama: Tjema	Male Nama: Kema
Female Nama: Mousoma	Female Nama: Mousoma
The Nama protects chiefly against initiates of the siri, who are said to eat human flesh and are called souba.	The Nama protects against the soubaga, identical with the souba. It comes from Misèngo in Bélédougou.

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The Nama comes from Misango, a province of Bélédougou.

The Nama is sometimes called Souyakoro, Namakoro, and its diamou, or lineal name, is Sirima-n-fign.

The palisade around the Nama is called djasé; the receptacle for the blood, da.

The horned pieces of wood are called wara se and gnê bla, djenfa mousoou, djenfa tjeou, sometimes called waraou.

The master of the Nama at Misango, which is father of all /Nama/ is at present Tjema-n-djan; out of respect all masters of the Nama of Misango are called Foura tigiba.

There are three names for one and the same thing, say the Negroes of Kita: Souyakoro, Namakoro, and Sirimafing.

The palisade is called djasa; the receptacle, daga.

The horned pieces of wood are called gnâ bla and ko bla Wara, or Waradjeli or gnâ Wara.

Out of respect all masters of the Nama of Misango are called Foura tigiba (foura, "medicine"; tigiba, "great master").

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crowd, stand immobile on each side of the sacrificer and hold in their hands two pieces of wood about a meter long on which are tied three rams' horns (wara se) and two horns /sic/ (gné bla). It is an honor, even a distinction, to hold these horned pieces of wood, and these men are called djenfa tjéou.

Two annual sacrifices are offered to the boli of this group: one before the rainy season when, the Negroes say, the male and female idols mate, and the other about three months later, a little before harvesting begins when the grain is almost ripe. This is the time when the female idols give birth to their offspring, the best time to buy fetishes and to have fourou and konio made, because, as I said

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829 "They were covered with shaggy body hair, beard and hair; their long nails resembled claws; their teeth resembled fangs. They knew no language and had no clothing to protect themselves from bad weather; they lived in holes dug in the /99/ ground or in habitable natural caves, at the bottom of which they slept and kept their prey. To defend themselves against wild animals, they placed wooden spikes and pointed rocks at the entrance of these quarters. These deep holes communicated with each other and together formed regular underground villages" (Fig. 6) (1).

[332]

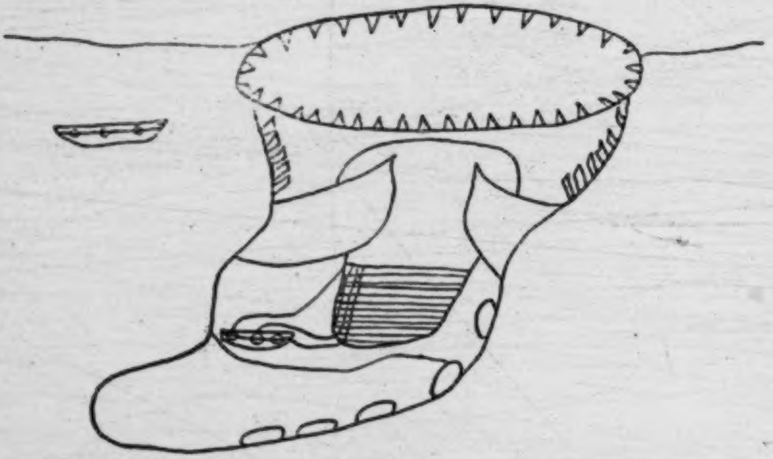

Fig. 6 —Underground home of primitive men. The entrance is guarded by pointed rocks. In the center, the drawing of the first loom invented by men. At the left, the shuttle (see p. 181). (Drawing by an informant.)

● [172] 1. Some of these excavations in the neighborhood of Ségou, which may still be visited today, are venerated by the Bambara as ancestral homes.

Since they did not know language these men communicated by means of head gestures, movements of the feet and hands, and grunts. When a difference arose between them, before using their hands they drew back their lips and measured their long canines to determine who the winner would be. "Later they were given language, but

773 The first agricultural tool was the *yirewolo* (literally, noble, Fig.
564 9, B), thus named because of its antiquity, *mogokoroba* (literally, old
324 person, ancestor).
412 b. *Stone tools* Later, craftsmen learned to use stone. They used
[172] neolithic axes called "thunder stones" (1) which were used as scissors.

> 1. The Bambara, like other Blacks of the Sudan, attributed divine origin to certain neolithic axes (see p. 71. It would seem that a great many primitive tools had been found by them in the area at the time of their arrival.

Those of the Gwondougou were at all times famous for their solidity. The craftsmen worked together and when they had rough-hewn their models, certain individuals among them were delegated to sharpen these by rubbing them on a rock.

The *farakun* (literally, stone head) (Fig. 9, D) was the first axe the handle of which was invented by an artisan who, having poisoned the sharp edge of his tool, wished to try it out on a tree. He sank the stone into a young tree trunk with the idea that the leaves would dry up of themselves. But he died without having ascertained the result. Later a passerby, having tried in vain to remove the stone from the tree, cut the wood above and below it, and in handling this new tool, was surprised at its efficiency. The use of the hafted axe spread among men who utilized the fiber of the *nyama* to tie the stone to the wood. In addition, the stone could be separated quickly from the handle and used as a knife to cut meat or bones. The handle was used as a pointed stick with which to dig in the ground and to attack animals.

It is probable that hafting was also applied to wooden hoes made in two sections and used /117/ for a long time in areas where there was no hard stone. In fact, a myth concerning the discovery of the cultivation of cotton, which preceded that of cereal grains, mentions the fact that men used to take their handles home, but left the ends of their hoes at the crossroads each day in honor of the local spirit.

c. *Iron tools* Finally, the Gwonna discovered iron and developed the science of metallurgy (2).

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Kaarta people are called Nya-Ngolo-la after Nya-Ngolo, an ancestor of the chiefs of the clan; and the Ségou people are called Barama-Ngolo-la after Barama-Ngolo, an ancestor of their clan.

B S 101 [56]

Nicknames are also used between individuals of different tribes. The Soninké often call the Bambara Dyon-ko (slaves) because, having long been engaged in the slave trade, they sold many Bambara as slaves (1). The Bambara generally call the Soninké Marka (for Mara-ka). They still use the term Marka dialan'u (dry Marka people) to designate the Soninké who abandoned their own dialect in favor of the Bambara dialect. On the other hand, they use the term Marka kan'-fo-la-u (those who speak Marka) for those among the Soninké who have retained their own dialect.

In the Ségou region, the Bambara use the expression Bani-n-kono-u (birds of the Bani) for the Soninké,people who live along the banks of [11] that river; their more general term for the Soninké is the surname Dyeme-ka-u, from Dyeme (or Dyime) meaning "a long-legged water bird" of the marabou species. According to the interpretation given to me, the names Bani-n-kono-u and Dyeme-ka-u allude to periodic journeys made by the Soninké to the large commercial centers to the south, especially Oucrodougou [Ouagadougou?].

The Ségou country was called Dyeme-ka-u by the Bambara during the period of the Soninké rule (1). On the other hand, when

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1. See in the Kaarta chronicle which follows how Massa and others after him captured caravans of Bambara slaves belonging to Soninké owners.

B S 172 101

1. At this period, the Soninké chief, Souleiman-ba Kofta, lived at Sora, today a ruin, which the Bambara call Soro-toumou (ruins of Sora) and which is situated in the Ségou country between Massa-la and Kono-dimini.

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Sora was the capital of a territorial district called Tandougou.

The songs of the gessere, who are the Soninké equivalents of the Bambara dyeli, often tell of Souleimanba Kofta, of Sora and Tandougou.

the Bambara came into power, the Soninké called it Dyon-kadugu (land of slaves).

Origin

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The tradition which is generally accepted, and which was first reported by Raffenel and Quintin, has it that the ancestors of the Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta came originally from Toron, a region situated at the headwaters of the Milo and the Baoulé, both tributaries of the upper Niger. From there they presumably moved in a northeasterly direction and then spread out toward their present habitat and developed the empires of Ségou and Kaarta (2).

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[174]

2. "An oft-reported tradition says that the Banmana came from Toron, the eastern province of Oussoulou, situated in the present colony of the Ivory Coast. It was on the route between Odienné and Sikasso, not far from the former. It seems, indeed, likely that the original habitat of the Banmana was located in the extreme southeast corner of the cradle of the Mandé family and that it extended from the right bank of the upper Niger, approximately near Siguiri, to the left bank of the upper Bagbé (or Bagoé), where it touched the territory of the Sénoufo [Senufo] people. The first conquests of the Mandingue [Mondingo]

*173 himself into the position of being in open conflict with the people of Doua, since he felt that he was not yet ready. So he simply sent back the following answer: "Let anyone at Banan-koroni who desires to join the ton' present himself, and the members will decide." Six men from Banan-koroni were admitted under the sponsorship of Ménkoro.

When winter was approaching, Kassoum asked that a field be cultivated for him. Mamari persuaded his ton' to cultivate a field for his mother and for fodder for his own horse, a second field for Kassoum, and a third for Sibiri, the dyala-tige.

Old fa Séri, on learning of this decision, said to the other elders: "Our young men, who do nothing for us, who obey us only when they feel like it and who help themselves from our granaries to provide their beer, are now going to spend their time working on fields from which we'll not get a single grain. Don't you think we'd better put an end to this state of affairs?" An old marabout interrupted: "The boys are entitled to use their two free days, Monday and Thursday, to do whatever they want." This opinion was heeded and the young men were left in peace.

The harvest was very abundant and Mamari, particularly, had a great deal of millet. He divided it into two equal piles and, having called his father, said to him: "Here is the result of my companions' labor, and I am giving half to you. However, it must not be forgotten that those who have provided our food are not our slaves but rather, free men, [36] to whom we must show gratitude and generosity. Therefore, from this day forward, you will send to the ton' 10 gourds of couscous and 20 jugs of beer. Have no fear that you will lack for food. I need only give the order and every granary and every field will be pillaged."

The old man departed, delighted to have a son who paid such deference to his old age. However, either because of an excess of joy or for some other reason, he died soon after, and Mamari congratulated himself on having escaped his father's curse (1).

• [172]

1. He built a house in the Djenné style at Ségou-koro, of which I have seen the last remaining vestige.

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[172] consisting of a rectangular pillar
worn away by the rains.

[765] According to custom, the members of the ton' settled down in front of the deceased's house for a week, singing, dancing and generally carousing in the usual way.

When this traditional period was over, Mamari asked them to enclose his father's and his mother's houses within a single wall. [622] They set to work and built a wall with only one door, over which they placed the pyramidal ornaments used only for chiefs' doorways. Within the enclosure they left the existing division in two parts, and it was henceforth understood that the part formerly occupied by Mamari's father would be reserved for people from Doukounna when they wished to stay in Ségou.

Kassoum was determined to show that he had been properly brought up and knew how to return courtesy; so, one day, he invited Mamari to a drinking party, planned especially in his honor. Mamari accepted and, on arriving, found that Kassoum, from impatience no doubt, had started the celebration so far ahead that he was already dead drunk.

According to the usual custom, Mamari ordered one of the [273] ton-den', as it was his duty, to taste the dlo first (2). Lacking

2. A precautionary measure to
guard against poison.

a utensil in which to pour a small quantity of the beer, the taster sipped from the crock itself. Kassoum jumped up in a fury, crying out that the ton-den' was a disgusting person, and [37] broke a gourd full of beer over the fellow's head. In turn, Mamari became angry at Kassoum, whose manners struck him as coarse and intolerable. Then, after much invective on both sides, Mamari left the place to return home. Kassoum took up his bow and arrows and set out after Mamari. However, since he was slowed down by his drunkenness, he could not go far and his arrows missed their mark. Mamari returned to Ségou and, for the first time, installed himself in his father's house.

*173 In order to extricate himself from this crisis, Mamari appealed to his sister, Sana-ba, wife of an important chief, Wara Dyara, whose residence was at Dina on the Niger, upstream from Ségou. Sana-ba offered Mamari her gold jewelry to clear himself, but, again at the instigation of the Soninké, the jewelry was refused in order to force Mamari to declare himself insolvent and thus to bring about the separation of the ton'-den'.

The chronicle reveals in detail this internal struggle which was destined to have far-reaching consequences. In the end, the matter was settled by the "elders" who recognized the original cause of all the trouble. They advised the separation of the two antagonistic elements. This advice was followed, and two fla-n-ton' were formed: one composed of the Bambara with Mamari as ton'-tigi, and the other of the Soninké under Kassoum.

Mamari's fla-n-ton' resumed its normal life once more. The ton'-den' met on Monday and Thursday of each week. [294] They prepared their own meals from what they obtained by hunting, but Mamari's mother provided the dlo and mead. In order to reimburse her, each ton'-den' was assessed a donation which, because of its destination, was called di-songo (price of honey).

These festivities and the pillage required to support them angered the "elders," and the fa, Siné, Mamari's father, ordered his son in the presence of a blacksmith to give up this disgraceful way of life. The young man made use of this threat to persuade his companions to help him build an independent dwelling. This house was erected at Ségou-koro on the spot where the fla-n-ton' usually met and where, later on, was built that part of Mamari's residence -- by then he had become fama of Ségou -- which was called Biton' blon da' (entrance of the house of Biton) (1).

[172]

1. In 1902 I was shown the last vestige of this structure, a square pillar of sun-dried brick in the last stages of disintegration.

From that time on, the fla-n-ton' had a reputation that attracted everyone who was anxious to escape from the overly

173 there is no country called Mandé and there never was. Every chief situates its capital wherever seems best to him."

Among these capitals are counted: Kangaba, Miami, Tabou, Diakala, Kounfangué ... For the Bambara, Mandé is the center from which issued the 48 Sudanese populations which spread out following a definite movement (3) to cover the territory included between the Atlantic coast, the Senegal, the Niger, and up to Dahomey. (4)

796 The memory of this expansion is still preserved today in the septennial cult which brings all the people to the sanctuary of Kangaba, the Mandé blow (the vestibule of Mandé), under the direction of persons of pure race belonging to the Kéita family. (5) Other traditions recognize two centers of expansion: one to the south of Kangaba at Balanzan, the other in the Nioro circle to the south of Goumbou, Waghadou. Intertribal septennial cults commemorate this event.

From our historical point of view, we know very little about the origins of the Bambara.

172 Prehistoric geological strata, still poorly dated, found in the valleys of the Senegal and the Niger show us that these territories were very anciently inhabited. Franz de Zeltner (6) has gathered

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3. S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara" [Notes on Bambara Theodicy]. [Ed., Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, Vol. 135 (1949), pp. 187-213]]

4. Zahan, Aperçu sur la théogonie dogon [A Look At Dogon Theogony].

5. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

6. Fr. Zeltner, "Quelques gisements préhistoriques de la vallée du Sénégal" [Some Prehistoric Strata in the Valley

of the Senegal]. [Ed., *Bull. et Mém. de la Soc. d'Anthropologie de Paris*, 16 Nov. 1916.]

objects of worked stone in the valley of the Senegal over a distance of 200 kilometers between Bafoulabé and the confluence of the Falémé. The Kolimbiné basin also presents numerous strata. Zeltner and Waterlot have found worked stones as far as Nioro, 250 kilometers from Kayes; this is the northernmost [45] point. The tools described by R. Vaufrey (1) are made of worked schist and labradorite. They include polished and unpolished axes, disks, scrapers, graters, polishers, etc. R. Furon specifies that the strata of Kaarta have yielded a Mousterian jasper industry in the upper alluvial layers of a site at Baoulé, along with Neolithic tools of Nigritic type above the alluvial layers, and, finally, at Guétéla there were numerous tumuli, from two to three meters, covered with pottery debris. In the vicinity of Bamako, Waterlot gathered, from the surface of the ground, paratumbian works in schist and dolerite, including, among others, incompletely polished axes, microliths of quartz, and a whole collection of agricultural material.

Painted grottoes have been described by Zeltner. One near Bamako represents men and horses (the Bambara designate these grottoes by the name of *kouloubléma*). Four others in the vicinity of Kita present the figures of men and animals, and alphabet-like forms (the Malinké call them *Sebe*, "writing," and attribute them to the *Niamara*, giants who were the first men), as well as paintings of hands in negative. Finally, the grotto of Boudoufo contains geometric drawings. The conventional representations of men and animals recall the rock carvings of the Sahara and Egypt.

1. R. Vaufrey, *Le Néolithique paratumbien: une civilisation agricole primitive du Soudan* [The Paratumbian Neolithic: a Primitive Agricultural Civilization of the Sudan].

/xiii/ Introduction

101 The Bambara tribes which form part of the Mandé group are at 131 present spread out in French Sudan from the 11th to the 14th degrees latitude north and from the 7th to the 11th degrees longitude west. Three groups which have settled respectively in the circle of Issa Ber, in Kaarta, and in the circle of Odienné are noticeably separated from the central group which occupies the shores of the Niger around Bamako and Ségou.

105 The Bambara live in small villages in the savanna; they practice primarily agriculture (millet, digitaria /Fonio/, rice, maize, etc.), but also herding and gardening. The shore dwellers of the Niger are fishermen and live in symbiotie relationships with the Bozo who taught them fishing techniques and who are generally recognized as the first inhabitants of these regions.

173 The Bambara state that they came from Mandé. This region, where the successive capitals of the ancient kingdom of Mali were situated, has long attracted the attention of research workers (1). Moreover, it is "the center from which radiated forty-four tribes at present spread out in the area between the Atlantic coast, the Senegal, and the Niger, or to Dahomey" (2). The region indicated above also

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1. See J. Vidal, *Au sujet de l'emplacement du Mali* (*ou Melli* /on the subject of the Mali site/), pp. 251-268;*Le véritable emplacement du Mali* /The true site of the Mali/, pp. 606-619. This author designates by Mali I to IV the four villages of Dyélibakoro, Niani, Maninkoura, and Kangaba, which had been successively the royal city. See also Ch. Monteil, *Les Empires du Mali* /The empires of Mali/, p. 13.

2. See D. Zahan. *Aperçu sur la pensée théogonique des Dogon* /Survey of theogonic thought of the Dogon/, pp. 113-133. This author gives the name of the tribes originating

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[778]

in Mandé. See also S. de Ganay, Notes sur la théodicée bambara /Notes on Bambara theodicy/, pp. 212-213. "In the village of Manin Kaba, there exists what is called the manti blo, 'the vestibule of the Mande,' in which are arranged around the object called pembele twelve seats (sigi yoro) representing the forty-four 'races' of this common hearth."

This origin is well known to the Sudanese, but the number of tribes varies. In the course of the septennial ceremony of Kangaba (see p. 15 note 1) the griot say: "We were forty-eight; through the mixture of the winds, the races came out at the four cardinal points" (an tumbi debe ni seki la, siaw bwora fyẽ nyamile seleke nami).

has the name of Dyéliba and used to be /xiv/ called Toubla. The name of Kaba (1) given by all Sudanese to the ancient capital of Mali

1. The word kaba has its origin in ni ya ka ba ko ye "this is astonishing," an expression currently used concerning the sanctuary and the ritual objects it contains. The Dogon, who claim to originate in Mandé and who have dispersed into the cliffs of Bandiagara from agglomerations to which they had given the name Kani, explain this last term by giving it the meaning of "little Ka." These were, in a sense, relay stations between their original habitat and the one they now occupy. Concerning these migrations, see G. Dieterlen, Les Ames des Dogon /The souls of the Dogon/, pp. 9ff.

actually designates the village of Kangaba. But the oldest agglomerations known, before Dyéliba (Mali I according to J. Vidal), are situated in the regions of Kri Koroni and Ouanda.

197 systems of signs and ideograms which may be considered as a sort of
212 writing and the study of which is currently pursued. The system from which all the others supposedly stem, the *glã glã zo*, has 226 ideograms which, according to informants, summarize the knowledge of the
[802] Bambara (1). On the other hand, the Bamba use a numerical system based on twenty. Moreover, an analysis of the texts collected, some of them quoted in this essay, has brought to light an /xvi/ important number of words which, according to informants, belong to an ancient language of Mandingo origin, now used as liturgical language. It is not within the framework of this essay to present this material or to comment upon it, but it is appropriate to note that the study of this vocabulary would contribute to an understanding of religious thinking among the Bambara.

173 The Bambara have a rather clear idea of their early history and even of their prehistory. They describe their ancestors with precision and know the phases of development of their technology. These premises are necessary to an understanding of their religion which, like the other institutions, is especially linked to this technological development. Moreover, the only observable remains comprise household furniture and utensils, transient but perennial material whose forms and ornamentation indicate the metaphysical principles on which their way of thinking is based.

177 It is appropriate not to neglect those influences which have acted
121 upon the Bambara through their contacts with other Sudanese tribes

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1. See. p. 21. This system and two of the ideograms, of which *to* designates the mash of boiled cereals and by extension nourishment in general, will be the object of a comment by M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen. "Signes graphiques des Soudanais. L'Homme. /Graphic signs of the Sudanese man/." *Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie et de linguistique*, *Hermann* (in press).

On certain types of writing observed among the Mandé and the Vai, see J. Février, *Histoire de l'écriture* /The History of Writing/, pp. 528-529.

Bozo MS6

Ba 776 436

Legend has it that cowrie shells, widespread throughout Black Africa and used as money, come from the deep water where Faro keeps his fortune. Faro "sleeps on a bed of cowrie." Their mythical origin explains their role and both the economic and religious value attributed to them.

Ba 776 823

The black earth of the river banks, bogo fi, such as that found on the sea shore in sandy places, contains the strength of the spirit and is used in numerous rites. Smeared at the base of the interior walls of the huts, it symbolizes Faro's presence in the bosom of the family. It serves to decorate the headdress of the circumcised (1). Those who live far from the Niger or from any source of water pray to it as if addressing Faro.

Ba 776 173

Some men occupy a privileged position in their relationship with the spirit. The first are the eight mythical ancestors, the eldest of whom is Koumabana. They received the word of the spirit, transmitted it to their descendants, explained before dying the new order of things, and instituted the cult.

At present they are still venerated as the prototypes of /50/ the human being in his new environment. Along with immortality, man lost the heavenly food which, until then, had been sufficient to nourish him. The articulated limbs which were provided for him dedicated him to manual labor, the techniques of which were taught him little by little. On the other hand, in the spiritual domain a deep change also occurred. In primitive times, man lived an almost animal existence and was without any responsibility. His abandonment by the balanza brought him suffering and death, but with them, his consciousness, symbolized by Faro's "word," developed. Along with death, illness, sorrow, bad instincts and the hard daily labor, there appeared also man's feeling about his own person and his place in an ordered universe, governed by Faro, as opposed to primitive chaos.

The eight ancestors taught men to venerate Faro, to ask him for all they needed, and to thank him for all they received. Therefore their names are invoked in most prayers and the episodes of their lives are told to the young to whom their works are held up as an example.

Bo 776 773

Mention should also be made here of the special position held by the Bozo who were born to the mythical girl twins, daughters of Faro (2).

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1. See p. 233, Fig. 14.

551 Bearing a name confers on the bearer the obligation of respecting a taboo (tne or tana). He may neither kill nor, more especially, eat the animal or the plant that represents his name; any infraction of this rule affects his physical and spiritual integrity.

551 602 On the other hand, relationships commonly known as "joking relationships" are established between families respecting different taboos and bearing different names. One of the characteristic aspects of this kind of alliance is the fact that members of one family are in the habit of carrying out purification rites for members of the other in case a taboo is broken.

551 173 Stories relating the origin of family names are well known and there are several versions that have been published for the principal families (1). Some of these bring out not only the history of the head of the family, the first-named, but at the same time the origin of the taboo /75/ attached to the name or the origin of the kinship ties observed by the bearers of the name with members of another family.

In this respect, one of the versions concerning the Kouloubali is most suggestive:

"The Kouloubali are descended from a family called kuludyu which lived in an underground village in a place called kuluba (literally, big mountain) in Mandé. A famine which lasted for fifty-two years hit the region; the people did not know what to do and ate the leaves of trees in order to survive.

Two friends, called Konyo (literally, marriage) and Mbadun (literally, I eat), left their homes and set out on a trip to find food. They met three men and decided to join forces with them in order to escape this painful situation. Upon returning to the village, the newcomers, noticing the excrement of a hyena, joked about its white color: "You have only been eating bones," they said. "But no," laughingly answered the other two, " it is hyena excrement." And they asked their new friends their names, adding that they themselves had none. Then together, they tried to make a fire. One night they noticed a flame apparently coming out of the branches of a kapok tree. The tree grew near a rock and the wind, by making

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1. See among others L. Tauxier. La Religion bambara, pp. 119ff.

551 173 its branch rub against the stone, caused sparks which ignited the kapok. They then rubbed two pieces of wood against each other and managed to light a fire which they kept burning for six months. They jealously guarded their secret; men, some of whom still knew nothing of fire and who were in the habit of drying their meat in the sun, came to ask them for burning coals and gave them millet, salt, and domestic animals in exchange. They also gave them their daughters in marriage. One of the men, who belonged to the Diara family, asked them their family names. They answered that they had none. "What does that matter?" he replied. "You will live on a great mountain and take the name of Kouloubali." They then asked the name of their ally (senãnku). "We have none," said the new men, "but since this famine we have been living with friends."

They then decided to celebrate the marriage of Konyo with Diara's daughter and a new alliance (senãnkuya) was arranged between the two families. Later on, other members of the Diara family came to live with them, and a prosperous village grew up where the Kouloubali lived.

As their numbers had grown, the men decided to go to war to gain other arable lands. They vanquished the Toucouleurs /Tokulor/ of the Ségou region and ended up by taking the town, which they entered as conquerors.

One of the phrases of their device: kulubali kulu dyã tasuma /76/ "Kouloubali of the fire of the great mountain" is a reminder of both their geographical origin and their fortune.

The Device

551 A device, barama, is generally attached to a name and, when pronounced, has the same kind of effective communication (1). Its

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1. We refer the reader to the work of Mme. Solange de Ganay, Les Devises des Dogon, in which this important institution has been studied at length and commented upon. The characteristics of Bambara devices are similar. Without taking up the whole problem, it is appropriate here to define the effect of these devices on the person according to the Bambara concept.

782 requesting it. Thus, a black stone is given to those who have broken
778 a /92/ taboo, a stone of two colors to a stranger, and the red stone
[326] "rounded and polished by the ancestors" to those whom one wishes to honor.

The stone altars which are innumerable (both private and public ones) generally represent the ancestors. When they are placed in the fields they receive the sacrifices offered in their name for helping the crops. At the intersection of narrow roads and on the public square, they assure the stability of ancestral customs.

3. The Bambara also sacrifice on manufactured objects which bear the general name of *boli* (literally, to run) and which are the equivalent of the altars although they are of an entirely different nature than the preceding ones. Their origin is different. To the initiates they originate in the twelfth bangini which gave birth to the day (see pp. 30-31). In the shape of "globules" they were released in space by Faro as he descended to the earth; they were collected by the spirits of the air and of the ground into which some of them penetrated, and were later given to men (1).

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1. The popular belief has it that the eight principal *boli* of the Bambara were brought back from Mecca by the famous Makanta Djigui, a personage whose name is cited in numerous prayers (particularly in the course of the ceremonies of the Komo). L. Tauxier attributes this tradition to Islam influence under the reign of Soundiata's successor, Malinké Kankan Moussa, who made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324 (*La Religion bambara*, p. 287, n. 3).

The name of Makanta Djigui is cited in the device (*burudyu*) of the Komo: the chiefs of this important society carry their altars each year to the shore of the Niger near the village of Tikko on the spot where the historical canoe which transported him is said to have sunk.

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It is possible that this figure played the role of a religious legislator by codifying certain beliefs and founding associations around the boli which, according to qualified informants, existed before his intervention. On this point see also L. Tauxier, La Religion bambara, p. 287, n. 3.

The versions of the voyage of Makanta Djigui, which the natives readily tell, are innumerable. See the Abbé Henry, L'Âme d'un peuple africain: les Bambara /The Soul of an African People: The Bambara/, pp. 131-133: Ch. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta /The Bambara of Ségou and of Kaarta/, p. 170; D. Traore, Makanta Djigui, fondateur de la magie soudanaise /Makanta Djigui, Founder of Sudanese Magic/, pp. 23-25.

We have collected two versions of this episode, which we do not feel useful for presentation in this study.

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The boli, also called nyana, are made with the most diverse materials: hyena tails, peppers, honey, coal, precious metals, parts of the body. Each element has its value, and its use is determined by its place in the categories: the time of its manufacture is also important. But whatever its composition, each boli, whose name expresses the universal movement of things, is a combination of elements representing the parts of the universe (1). /93/ It is,

1. At the present stage of this investigation the classification by categories of materials or elements composing the Bambara universe has only been outlined. It is only after the completion of this study that the exact role given the elements composing the boli will become clear and that the problem of the origin of these altars can be considered.

2: Monteil
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Bambara FA8

/For information on legendary history see category 116, pages 9, 11-13, 16-21, 23-131, 322-330, 333, 335-336, 340-341, 354-360, 373-376.--Analyst/

794 still -- aside from the fact that this would not appreciably alter the broad lines already indicated -- the present state of our knowledge makes it possible to describe in detail only a few great brotherhoods which are widespread among [270] the Bambara with whom we are here concerned; these are based on cults of Komo, Nama, Kore, and Nya.

The Komo

794 173 ● The Komo is held in particularly high esteem in the Ségou area. According to the accepted legend, the Komo was brought from Mandé country, where it is supposed to have been introduced by El Hadj Moussa. El Hadj Moussa, having failed to obtain pardon for his sins during a visit to Mecca, turned to the study of magic. He obtained the Komo in exchange for a miraculous shirt (dloki) which some sorcerers had woven for him and which had the faculty of growing longer or shorter at the pleasure of its owner (1).

(1) Another example of miraculous cloth, in that case a gift of the marabouts of Djenné, is referred to in the chronicle of Ségou in connection with the installation of Bakari, son of Biton (p.).

El Hadj Moussa is also supposed to have brought a no less miraculous canoe from Mecca, which is still preserved in the greatest secrecy in a swamp in the vicinity of Kouri, near Naréna, in Mandé country.

Finally, he brought back many boli. As he was coming up the Niger, some of them fell into the river and were transformed; [825] the n-tigi (silurids or torpedo fish) is thought to be the result of such a transformation.

According to another legend, the Komo was brought from the Orient, not by El Hadj Moussa but by Fa Koli Sissokho, a follower of El Hadj Moussa.

Whatever may be the truth of the matter, the Bambara are convinced that the Komo was brought to Ségou from Mandé

794 173 country and that the Bambara Massa-si, who had fled to Gadiaga, received it, in turn, from one Namori or Nyamori, a former slave who had been initiated into the mysteries of the Koré and who, for that reason, was named Kor-dyuga.

794 778 Over and above the general characteristics already noted, the Komo has the following peculiarities.

It is said that to make it perfect the boli of the Komo requires the body of a degeni, that is, of a very young boy. Thus, the body of the Komo of Tiguini (20 to 40 kilometers from Ségou) is said to be none other than the body of the grandson [271] of its founder. The same thing is said of the boli of the Komo at Kégué in Bani territory.

This boli-den'-fa is equipped with three iron tubes, and the whole thing is called tama gengen-ba (1). There is a horn at the end of one of these tubes, with an opening serving as a mouthpiece. The sound drawn from this trumpet of sorts by the wara-da announces a meeting of the Komo.

The usual accessories accompany the boli-den'-fa: korti, kana, and siri-kun', which we have already mentioned.

When not in use for ceremonies, all this equipment is [281] put into baskets similar to those used to transport cotton. The tama-gengen-ba are wrapped in a tiger skin. A hut with a conical roof, similar to the native huts, serves as a temple and holds all the regalia. It is called the Komo-bon' (hut of the Komo).

When he is on duty, the wara-da, "oracle" of the Komo, 793 is dressed in a special costume consisting of a mask and a cloak. 794 The mask is surmounted by horns and does not cover the face, but 778 rather is affixed to a stick hidden in the folds of the cloak; it goes up and down at the pleasure of the wara-da, who is completely

1. The term Komo dyoloro, meaning "chain of the Komo," is used in front of the uninitiated. The wara-da, oracle of the Komo, is called dyoloro samana, "he who drags the chain" of the Komo. In the special language of the cult, "sacrificing to the Komo" is expressed by an bi nege son' (we pay homage to the iron).

614 631 "the people (of the clan) of Massa"; the *Segu-n-ka-u* (2),

> 2. From another point of view,
> *Segu-n-ka-u* means "the people of
> the country of Ségou."

"the people (of the clan) of Ségou."

104 128 Since we are always obsessed by our own system of organization, these terms appear in our writings as village (*dugu*), canton or province (*kafu*), and empire (*ton'*, which is a clan).

Because of the convenience of expressions that are familiar to us, we shall use this terminology in this study, and it seems essential to define briefly the value of these terms in native society in order to avoid ambiguity which, to say the least, gives rise to distorted delusions.

•173 563 631 In Kaarta and the Ségou country before the time of the two great clans whose history we have given and whose development and operation we are about to describe, there were *dugu* which usually had no connections or at most were joined in some ephemeral *kafu*. These *kafu* were composed of a majority of Bambara mixed with Soninké and people of other races. The Soninké *dugu* were noted for their prosperity, sometimes even wealth, and this gave them a degree of pre-eminence over the Bambara *dugu*. This prosperity rested on the labor of a slave population that the Soninké had managed to acquire for the most part by commercial dealings.

This *de facto* hegemony usually had no corresponding political or administrative organization; its only outward sign was the scorn with which the Soninké regarded the less fortunate Bambara and, conversely, the sullen hostility of the Bambara toward the rich Marka (as they called the Soninké). As a consequence, local quarrels broke out from time to time which sometimes developed into bloody conflicts. The early history of the Massa-si clan is a good example of this state of affairs, to judge by the record in the chronicle cited above.

173 631 The Ségou-Kaarta regions, under the authority of Mandé and Songhaï clans, were in this state, in semiobscurity because they were outside the zone of direct administration by these clans.

173 631 Their people, [290] except for the payment of required tribute, lived as they pleased and followed their own customs as long as the latter did not offend the dominant clan.

2. Clan of the "People of Ségou"

Development of the Fla-n-ton' of Ségou-koro

575 561 According to the chronicle cited earlier, the origin of the clan of Ségou must be attributed to the development of a fla-n-ton'.

Those persons who have undergone the rite of soli together are united in a fla-n-bolo (band of peers); the fla-n-bolo of three consecutive soli form a fla-n-ton' (assemblage of peers). The members call themselves ton'-den' in relation to the association, and fla-ni in relation to one another.

In each fla-n-ton' there is a ton'-tigi (head of the assemblage) elected by the ton' den', who is just as likely to be a wolo-su (slave born in the house) as the son of a notable; a dyala-tigi (distributor), likewise elected by the ton'-den', is especially charged with the distribution of food for the group's banquets and with the enforcement of regulations; a ton' dyeli is a kind of beadle appointed by the ton'-tigi who has him make preparations for meetings, assemble the members, announce orders, etc., and he is usually a young person of caste. There are people of all races and of all ranks in the fla-n-ton', and in the association there is theoretically, complete equality among them. Indeed, this equality explains the term fla-ni-u (peers) which they use among themselves.

In principle the aim of the fla-n-ton' (1) is to establish

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1. As we have noted, there are fla-n-ton' for women as well as for men, but we are not considering them here; their role is insignificant from the present point of view.

CHAPTER 1

DEMOGRAPHY AND TRIBAL AND SUBTRIBAL GROUPS

I. Nomenclature

A. European Definitions

101 Monseigneur Bazin, in his Bambara dictionary of 1906, gave us the etymology of Banmana, "men of the cayman," whereas Mani or Mali would mean "those of the hippopotamus," the two names having a totemic origin.

For Élisée Reclus in 1887 (Nouvelle géographie universelle [New Universal Geography], Vol. XII: L'Afrique occidentale [West Africa]), Bamana means "steep crag."

Delafossé (Haut Sénégal-Niger [Upper Senegal and Niger]) in 1923 makes a distinction between Bambara and Banmana.

The Banmana would commonly be called Bambara by Europeans and the other Sudanese. Bambara is the word used in the Tarikh-es-Soudan [History of Sudan]. The Moslems designate all non-Moslem Sudanese as Bambara. Thus, the Sénoufo [Senufo] are called Bambara by the Dioula of Sikasso; the non-Moslem Malinké are called Bambara by the Dioula of Odienné; similarly for the Gbanian and Dagari of Upper Volta, etc. That is why Delafosse prefers to
173 name the people of Ségou, Bélédougou, etc., as they name themselves, that is, Banmana, which supposedly means "the refusal of the Master," in allusion to the legend according to which the Banmana left their land of origin (Ouassoulou) at the beginning of the thirteenth century to escape the yoke of the conquering Malinké.

According to Monteil, Bambara comes from the root Ba, "black."

B. Native Definitions

The Bambara often designate themselves by terms which indicate their geographical distribution.

453 3. discounts negotiable obligations or non-negotiable obligations guaranteed by warrants or receipts for merchandise, by assignment of pending harvests, by bills of lading, by pledges of securities, by deposits of gold and silver ingots, and monies in bullion.

4. participates in loans to the State or Colonies with the provision that, except for special authorization, this participation does not total more than half the reserves.

5. participates in the creation of financial, commercial, and agricultural enterprises in the interest of the country, providing this participation does not amount to more than a quarter of its reserves.

The private banks are:

The National Bank for Commerce and Industry with a branch at Bamako and another at Kayes.

The African Commercial Bank with a branch at Bamako.

These are deposit banks, but the second is also an investment bank.

[44]

CHAPTER 5

HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN

I. Prehistory

173 The Bambara have fairly precise notions about their prehistory and their protohistory, and about the history of their ancestors and the evolution of their techniques. Their tradition has them as coming from Mandé, a country whose location remains uncertain for several authors (1), and which even leads Monteil (2) to say: "... in fact

1. J. Vidal, Au sujet de l'emplacement du Mali ou Melli; le véritable emplacement du Mali [Concerning the Location of the Mali or Melli; The True Location of the Mali].

2. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

173 there is no country called Mandé and there never was. Every chief situates its capital wherever seems best to him."

Among these capitals are counted: Kangaba, Miami, Tabou, Diakala, Kounfangué ... For the Bambara, Mandé is the center from which issued the 48 Sudanese populations which spread out following a definite movement (3) to cover the territory included between the Atlantic coast, the Senegal, the Niger, and up to Dahomey. (4)

The memory of this expansion is still preserved today in the [796] septennial cult which brings all the people to the sanctuary of Kangaba, the Mandé *blow* (the vestibule of Mandé), under the direction of persons of pure race belonging to the Kéita family. (5) Other traditions recognize two centers of expansion: one to the south of Kangaba at Balanzan, the other in the Nioro circle to the south of Goumbou, Waghadou. Intertribal septennial cults commemorate this event.

From our historical point of view, we know very little about the origins of the Bambara.

172 Prehistoric geological strata, still poorly dated, found in the valleys of the Senegal and the Niger show us that these territories were very anciently inhabited. Franz de Zeltner (6) has gathered

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3. S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara" [Notes on Bambara Theodicy]. [Ed., *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, Vol. 135 (1949), pp. 187-213.]

4. Zahan, *Aperçu sur la théogonie dogon* [A Look At Dogon Theogony].

5. G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].

6. Fr. Zeltner, "Quelques gisements préhistoriques de la vallée du Sénégal" [Some Prehistoric Strata in the Valley

B. Constitution of the Bambara Kingdoms

175 At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Peul invasion introduced the Bambara into history.

173 This history, moreover, begins by a legend: two brothers,
Baramangolo and Niangolo, coming from Torone, one moon east
175 of Ségou, succeeded in crossing the Niger on the back of a fish,
M'Polio (Heterobrancus), which earned them the cognomen of
Kouloubali (without pirogue). Baramangolo, who was good, obtained
the heritage of the king of Ségou; Niangolo, who was bad (he had
killed the fish M'Polio), could not remain in this peaceful country
and went further west to wage war against the people of Mali.

Local traditions confirm this legend. Due to the Sudanese anarchy of the seventeenth century caused by the fall of the Songhaï empire (1591), population movements brought Peul horsemen into contact with Bambara outposts in the region of Diénné. The Peuls imposed their suzerainty, organized the anarchic Bambara, and led them to the conquest of the Ségou and Baïko regions, populated chiefly by the Soninké (the traditions suggest that this conquest was a largely peaceful penetration).

175 Two small kingdoms then established themselves: that of the legendary Baramangolo on the right bank at Ségou, that of Niangolo on the left bank at Sounsana (near Mourdiah). After union with the Soninké was accomplished, the successor of Baramangolo, Kaladian Koulibali (1652-82), had impressive forces at his disposal; he freed himself from the nominal authority of the Moroccan caïds of Diénné, and may even have conducted a victorious attack against Timbuktu. The Bambara star at Ségou dimmed somewhat under his successors, Danfassari (1682-97) and Souma. But in 1712 Souma ceded the throne to the man who was to become the great warrior chief, the Tigi-ton Mamari Koulibali.

For his part, the wicked Niangolo revealed himself to be an adroit politician. uHe married his son Soussa to a Kéita, thus ennobling his family and giving it rights to the ancient Mali empire. Their son Massa was an amiable and adroit monarch who accumulated resources in men and money. His successor, Bénéfali (1710-45), used them well, but his increasing power aroused the distrust of his cousin

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[172]
S
[533]

Sora was the capital of a territorial district called Tandougou.

The songs of the gessere, who are the Soninké equivalents of the Bambara dyeli, often tell of Souleimanba Kolta, of Sora and Tandougou.

the Bambara came into power, the Soninké called it Dyon-kadugu (land of slaves).

Origin

B
*173 The tradition which is generally accepted, and which was first reported by Raffenel and Quintin, has it that the ancestors of the Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta came originally from Toron, a region situated at the headwaters of the Milo and the Baoulé, both tributaries of the upper Niger. From there they presumably moved in a northeasterly direction and then spread out toward their present habitat and developed the empires of Ségou and Kaarta (2).

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● [174]

2. "An oft-reported tradition says that the Banmana came from Toron, the eastern province of Oussoulou, situated in the present colony of the Ivory Coast. It was on the route between Odienné and Sikasso, not far from the former. It seems, indeed, likely that the original habitat of the Banmana was located in the extreme southeast corner of the cradle of the Mandé family and that it extended from the right bank of the upper Niger, approximately near Siguiri, to the left bank of the upper Bagbé (or Bagoé), where it touched the territory of the Sénoufo [Senufo] people. The first conquests of the Mandingue [Mondingo]

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> category of slaves is also found among
> the Rimaïbé people of Macina, all of
> whom may be called Tammoura or
> Tamboura.

B
*173 This group was that of the Boula, who made a fortune from both
M Soumangourou and Soun Dyata by supporting alternately the one
173 or the other until Soun Dyata finally prevailed.

These people, who are called Mandinké by the Soninké,
M Maninka by the Bambara, and Mallinké by the Peul, call them-
101 selves Mandinga. It should be noted, however, that the Mandinké
173 do not date from the thirteenth century empire of the Keïta but
B are rather of earlier origin than that clan. It is my opinion that
*173 they derive originally from very ancient Soninké clan groups in
the process of breaking up, from which they acquired their essential elements and their name. The name, indeed, refers to a social group which is identical with that of the furu-ba-dyon', described hereafter in Chapter 5, and the same group was established in the same way by the Bambara, i.e., by the Blacks, the natives of various races. In any event, this is said in the traditions told to me.

M Furthermore, I do not think that all the Bambara peoples
B who today occupy the area under consideration are accounted
174 for by the migrations of the Bambara-speaking Bambara from the
aforesaid Mandé region at the time when the Keïta clan took over that region in the thirteenth century. I believe that, in the geographical region known to us under the names Mandé, Toron, Baninko, Ségou, Bélédougou and Kaarta, there have been Bambara-speaking Bambara since well before the thirteenth century.

The Kouloubali

B The migrations of which the traditionists tell us invariably
*173 refer only to the movements of [17] certain families who were
more or less important and who had usually figured prominently in clan affairs. As far as Ségou and Kaarta are concerned, the traditions apply solely to the Kouloubali chiefs of these clans and clearly indicate that they found other similar Bambara families already long settled in these and surrounding regions.

II. History

A. Origins of the Bambara People

●174 Where do the historical Bambara people come from, that is, the people who installed themselves on the banks of the Niger to form the kingdoms of Ségou, Bélédougou, Kaarta, and who are more or less known to us through certain Arab chronicles (Tarikh-es-Soudan [History of Sudan], 1665, Tarikh-el-Fettach [History of Fettach], 1670, chronicles of Néma and Oualata, translated in 1927) or through certain explorer's reports (Mungo Park, Raffenel, etc.)?

According to a tradition reported by Delafosse, the Bambara came from Toron, an eastern province of Ouassoulou, situated in the present-day Ivory Coast, on the route from Odienné to Sikasso. Tauxier has shown that this tradition confused two events separated by a rather long period of time.

1) The slow descent in a southeast to northwest direction of Bambara masses coming, doubtless, from the Bougouni-Sikasso region (where they are still very numerous) down to the Niger, which they undoubtedly reached about the twelfth century.

2) An invasion of the Peul of Macina, who, in the seventeenth century, overran the Bambara masses and organized them into a kingdom in the Ségou region before crossing the Niger and advancing in an east-west direction. These Peul supposedly originated in a city named Torone, explaining the possible error by Delafosse.

Naturally, none of these regions was deserted before the arrival [46] of the Bambara. The original inhabitants of Ségou were Bozo fishermen who came from the north (seventh century). At the same time as the infiltration of the Bambara from the southeast, there were several invasions from the north by the Soninké, who, richer and more advanced, organized the rough Bambara agriculturalists into chiefdoms. After a short domination by the Soso (twelfth century), the Mali empire spread in the upper valley of the Niger; it is probable that when the empire lost its dynamism the region occupied by the Bambara, mingled with Mandingue, Sénoufo, and Bobo, acquired a certain autonomy (seventeenth century).

196 secretly replaces the object in the new thatch. A white ox is sacrificed at the well.

The information collected on this ceremony is still fragmentary but the color of the clothing worn by those officiating, that of the victim, the number of bands of the loin-cloth, and the number of cowrie shells given by the griot to his sister, the origin of the gravel used as the seat for the Kéita are evidence that we have here a ritual executed under the protection of Faro (see Chap. II)

175 As early as the fourteenth century numerous travelers described the Bambara /xv/as organized into small groups headed by a chief and more or less submitting to the neighboring empires. This state of affairs lasted until the period of the Peul invasion of this region (in the seventeenth century) which founded two kingdoms and created a local aristocracy of mixed Peul and Bambara blood. The first of these kingdoms was that of Ségou, the history of which is partly known (1). The investigations centered particularly in this area; the chief town which was a capital for a long time retains the traces of a well organized legal system and religion. It is also in this area that, according to specialists, the purest dialect is spoken. (2) [197]

1. On the history of the Bambara we refer the reader to the well documented volume of L. Tauxier. Histoire des Bambara.

[556 191] 2. The children of families sufficiently wealthy to afford it were formerly sent to Ségou to live with affinals in order to learn how to speak well an elegant and pure language.

197 212 The Bambara dialects belong to the sub-group of Mandingo languages of the Nigero-Senegalese group. (3) The Bambara know certain

3. See A. Meillet et M. Cohen. Les Langues du Monde /Languages of the World/, p. 546.

*173 is known as the solo (1); they sought [19] a remedy to this

[551]

1. Solo is a woman's surname.

calamity by emigrating. Some went to Dia-bolo near Djenné; others went to Nya Ngolo-la in Kaminiadougou.

Is there a relationship between the origin of the Kouloubali family just discussed and that of the Kouloubali founders of Ségou and Kaarta? I have no doubt that there is, because all the Kouloubali go back to a common ancestor prior to the thirteenth century, one of whose descendants, allying himself by marriage to the Kefta clan, founded the branch of Kouloubali composed of the so-called masa-rin' families (1).

[614]

1. By the term masa-rin', the traditionists mean, in addition to the ruling Kefta and their followers, various families who are closely connected with them. The following are prominently mentioned: the Kouloubali, the Konaté and the Kourouma. Not all the members of these dyamu, even the Kefta, are masa-rin'; only certain branches are.

The Bambara of the Tarikh-es-Soudan

● 175 The Bambara, established in the area with which we are concerned before or after the Kouloubali, whose traditions we have just discussed, have no precise traditions - at least none which give any detail. The general history of all of these peoples is doubtful.

To be sure, the Tarikh-es-Soudan does allude to the Bambara, but it is difficult to tell in what sense the term is used, since it often simply means "pagans." However, in the following citations, it seems to me that the Tarikh does refer to the Bambara here studied, all the more so because in this chronicle,

175 the principalities of Kala, Bendougou and Sébéridougou correspond to territories west of Djenné and Dia which have been under the domination of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta.

The Tarikh-es-Soudan reports: "When Askia Daoud was addressing the chief of Djenné, El Amin, he said: 'We put you at the head of a district and you are not watching over it properly, because the Bambara have managed to acquire privileges which they had ceased to have.' " This was in 1558 and the last words in the passage show that before that period the Bambara had enjoyed an important position.

According to the same chronicle, when the Moroccans arrived in 1691 [sic, probably 1591] [20] the countries of the middle Niger which had been enjoying relative peace under king Soughaï, were being terrorized, especially around Djenné, by the Bambara aided, incited and even led by the Peul chief of Macina.

In 1599 a great many Bambara had been recruited into the army of Macina by Hamedi Amina, the sultan of the country, who was stirring up a general rebellion against the Moroccans.

In 1600, on orders from the Moroccan pasha Djouder, the caïd [alcaide] El Mostapha-et-Torki led an expedition against Macina, and the Bambara, having been abandoned by the people of Macina, were cut off in a forest and massacred in large numbers.

In 1644, when his troops were fleeing before the combined forces of the pasha and the askia, Hamedi Amina had to flee also, leaving quantities of booty behind. He and his followers took refuge with the Bambara, who appropriated anything that came within their borders.

Finally, the Tarikh-es-Soudan mentions that in 1645 the Bambara rebelled against the chiefs of Sana and Farko and sacked Sibila, the capital of the Sana region.

It is of course true that account must be taken of the fact that Es-Sadi, the author of the Tarikh-es-Soudan, is likely to include all pagans under the designation "Bambara." However, there is no ground for assuming that the Bambara with whom we are concerned are not meant when it is a question of the regions mentioned in the citation. Indeed, the contrary is the case, since

175 no other pagan people of the area has such a long tradition of warlike actions.

*173 175 The old Sudanese chronicle never mentions a Bambara king. According to the traditionists, the Bambara villages of the area lived independently of each other before the time of Biton. They sometimes embarked on joint raids against certain neighbors or carried out other important enterprises together. On such occasions they used bands organized and equipped in line with the usual native practice (1).

1. See in the foregoing how they acted as mercenaries to the sultan of Macina, for example.

[21] There is nothing surprising in the fact that a chief of one of these bands may have succeeded in creating a kind of empire in the manner of a Samori. Indeed, according to Quintin (1) there is a tradition that a certain Kaladian Kouloubali,

1. See also Delafosse in this connection.

a descendant of Barama Ngolo and living at Markadougou-ba, established his authority over both banks of the Niger in the Ségou area around 1600, either by his own efforts or aided by his sons. The Tarikh-es-Soudan makes no mention of this ruler, nor does the dyeli Karé Tammoura. History in that part of the world abounds in missing links and divergencies of this kind.

Kaladian's empire probably did not last long in any case, but Biton Kouloubali, founder of the empire of Ségou which we shall discuss, was precisely the grandson of Kaladian through Soma and Danfassari.

2. History

Sources

Thus, a general history of the Bambara is yet to be written; all that is known in any detail relates to the clans of Ségou and of Kaarta and, even in this limited area, the knowledge is anything but well-documented.

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175 The literature on the subject that has already been published, as well as the accounts given here, necessarily rests on native traditions which are vague, confused and shrouded in legend, and it is difficult to establish real, precise and consistent facts from such sources. So it is that we shall later see, presented as a fact in the earliest history of the clan of Kaarta, that the old fa Siné only granted hospitality and a limited alliance to Sounsan because a bird had told him of the power that was eventually to accrue to the family of the fugitive.

Also in this connection there is, for example, a version concerning Mamari, called Biton Kouloubali, the founder of the clan of Ségou. Mamari had created a garden on the banks of the Niger for his mother. It was there, one day, that a "water genie" (dyiden) appeared to him at the very spot where Monseigneur Hacquart died. [22] The genie urged Mamari to follow and was so insistent and so persuasive that Mamari yielded (1).

1. On the subject of water genies, compare this legend with the tales entitled "Les Dyide de Djenné" [The Water Genies of Djenné] in Contes du Sénégal et du Niger [Tales of the Senegal and the Niger] by Zeltner, pp. 173 ff.

Drawn by his guide, he penetrated to the depths of the water without the least discomfort and so came to a miraculous city. There, the genie showed him a heap of gold and silver and a pile of grain and said: "Choose: gold and silver mean wealth; grain means power. Now what does wealth signify if one is at the mercy of a powerful man; the master controls everything. If, however, you choose the grain, sow it in an enormous field and work hard to have a large harvest. Then leave the harvest to the birds and your power will extend to all the lands touched by the marauding birds."

Mamari carried off the grain, preserved it carefully and, when winter came, sowed it in an enormous field. During the whole season he worked hard at cultivating and, when harvesttime

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175 came, everyone was astounded to see him leave everything for the birds.

The oracle was fulfilled at once. Biton ruled from Timbuktu to the Atlantic. And the dyeli, Karé Tammoura, who told me the legend, adds that thereafter there was a very strange thing at Ségou: a combination animal and plant which the Bambara called Sanu-so or "golden horse." Ahmadou, the son of Omar, had a mosque erected on the spot where Sanu-so was wont to appear but, all the same, it did not disappear until the arrival of the French. Even since then, there are those who say that on certain days strange lights appear at the spot on the Niger where Monseigneur Hacquart died and where the genie appeared to Mamari.

[171] This fable about a local genie is not in itself remarkable, but when compared to the legend about Ngolo Dyara (see later, p. 51) and to many other similar ones current in the Sudan (2), what it really is becomes clear: the figurative expression of a native mentality about which the European is usually very ill-informed and which deserves to be noted here briefly.

778 [23] Anything that departs from the average, the ordinary, or the normal -- power, wealth, success, ... illness, poverty, misfortune -- to any extraordinary degree or in a suspicious way, is, for the Bambara in particular and for the Black in general, the manifestation of an occult force acting either spontaneously or after provocation.

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778 That is why, in the eyes of a native, a chief (a paramount chief, of course) is out of the common run, not so much because of the position he occupies as because of the magic powers attributed to him (1). Power is merely the reflection of his

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2. See, especially, the legend of Ndyadyane Ndyaye in "Légendes et coutumes sénégalaises [Senegalese Legends and Customs] by H. Gaden, 1912, and the "Dyide de Djenné" in Contes du Sénégal et du Niger, by Zeltner.

*173 From 1870 to 1878, Nyénè-n-ba kept up a running fight with his predecessors' partisans after settling at Samba-la, not far from Touna.

Mamourou, who ruled for only a few days, was succeeded by Kara-moko, who had no fixed residence and who was plagued by serious family squabbles. Being unable to come to any sort of agreement with his cousins Togoma and Ma-n-son, both sons of Tyé-folo, he had them poisoned. He was himself poisoned in 1887.

175 When Colonel Archinard entered Ségou on April 6, 1890, he summoned Kara-moko's successor and gave him authority over the natives under the direction of a French resident, Captain Hunderberg. However, Mari Dyara, who had accepted this role, secretly organized a plot to assassinate the resident and thus put an end to our control. This treason was punished as it deserved: Mari was shot by the army.

Massa-si Bo-dyan was then called to occupy the post, but former hatred made his position untenable. Direct administration henceforth appeared to be the only possible solution to safeguard our interests.

[102]

*173 Genealogical Table of the Chiefs of the Clan of Ségou
(1660-1861)

The Kouloubali

Barama-Ngolo
|
Soma
|
fa Siné
|
Mamari, called Biton
(1660-1710)

Bakari 1710	Dé-koro 1711-1736	(Dyon-kolo)

*173 with the chief of Bondou. He thus found himself drawn into making peace with the chief of Khasso, who was an ally of the Bondou chief.

[117] Nyaralen Gran (1835-1844). We know nothing about this nine-year reign.

Mamari Kan-dyan (1844-1854). He left Yelimané for Khondié and then settled at Nioro. He was in command of the Massa-si when El Hadj Omar appeared. Before this, he had ousted the Diawara from Nioro, where he had settled; but he had had to fight for seven years with these same Diawara and his authority had only just begun to seem established when the Foutanké prophet arrived. Mamari Kan-dyan was unable to resist and fell into the hands of the invader. At first his life was spared but he was finally put to death, as will be described in what follows (see Chapter 6, Islam).

Those of the Massa-si who eluded El Hadj Omar fled to Bangassi (Foula-dougou), where they settled under the authority of their chief, Diringa Mori, who died 16 years later.

Under Boussei, who succeeded Diringa Mori, the Massa-si broke up into two groups: one settled at Guémou-koura (Kaarta-binné) and the other emigrated to Diani (Gadiaga).

On the death of Bousseï there were new migrations. Modi Siré, son of Gran, settled first at Fata-fin and then at Félé-ba, villages near Badoumké; another group went to the Bondou area and settled at the village of Kidira.

Dama, who succeeded Bousseï, abandoned Kidira and went to Goré, near Daramané, and then to Guémou, south of Diani (Gadiaga). There he divided the Massa-si into seven villages: Guémou, Dyidyan, Dyané-khassé, Taroutallah, Madi-na, Nyaralén Dyogou and Mouna Makhana.

After the French had taken Nioro, Dama, who had al-
175 ways been hostile to the "people of Fouta," was called to Kaarta by Colonel Archinard. He settled at Farabougou and died there. When Ségou was captured by the French, we chose Dama's son, Bo-dyan, to govern there.

Dama was succeeded as chief of the Massa-si by Allahi, whose authority lasted for only nine months. He was succeeded

*173 797 Omar then proceeded to Nioro, where he confiscated the treasure of the Massa-si, put to death the children of Mamadi Kandia and imposed Islam on the people of Nioro. In particular, he ordered polygamous individuals to keep only four of their wives and to turn over the rest to his talibés.

These victories and the excesses that accompanied them made inevitable the revolt of the native populations. Omar was then besieged at Nioro, while the rest of his army was blocked in the Kolomina area. He managed to raise the siege and get away to aid his people at Kolomina. In spite of a serious defeat at Kandiari, he succeeded in freeing Kolomina.

Thence he returned to Nioro and, after putting Mamadi Kandia to death, succeeded in quelling the Bambara revolt. Then Kaarta was conquered and Omar settled at Nioro, which he fortified.

The Diawara, aroused and led by Karouga, revolted. Omar defeated them at Diabigué, was halted at Bambéro, but finally put down this rebellion of the Kingui region.

Then he entered into negotiations with Ahmadou, Sultan of Macina, hoping to arrange an alliance to make a joint attack on Ségou. Ahmadou refused and marched against Omar, only to be defeated at Kassakaré.

Omar then made a deal with Touro-koro Mari, the chief of Ségou, but the latter, accused of betraying his clan, was put to death by Kégné-Mari and replaced by Ali (1856).

• 175 797 'It was at this point that Omar came up against the French at Médina. For a period of three years his activity was limited to the west by the affairs of Médina, Koundian and Guémou (1856-1859).

In 1859, revolt again threatened in Kaarta. Omar left Nioro, which he turned over to his devoted follower, Moustapha. Through Bagofna, he passed around the Diangounté region to fall on the Bambara of Kaarta and Bélédougou at Marikoya. The capture of Marikoya was echoed far and wide. This agglomeration was a kind of capital of [342] paganism, and it is said that Omar, rushing about the burning village, kept running into magic objects which had been scattered about for the purpose of killing him. He touched each of these objects with the tip of

475 his iron-shod staff and pronounced a formula of exorcism; at
797 once the object threw itself in the flames.

After his defeat, Karouga, chief of the Diawara, fled to Ségou. He persuaded Ali to give him an army and marched against Omar.

The latter defeated him in the northern part of Bélédougou.

The Bambara of the Bélédougou and Fadougou areas were likewise beaten, as was a new army from Ségou which had come to help them.

Since there was nothing left with which to feed his people at Marikoya, Omar decided to march on Ségou. An episode, characteristic of these times of banditry, marked his departure. He decided to abandon the women whom his faithful followers had taken from the conquered because they were useless mouths to feed, so he turned the poor creatures over to the fetishists.

Omar entered Myamina in April, 1860. When he had exhausted the provisions in that region he marched on Oftalà, the village of Ali's son Tata and captured it. Sansanding was delivered to him by the Khomma people because of their hatred for the Cissé people.

Ahmadou, Sultan of Macina, wrote Omar to ask him to leave the country and then sent an army against him. This force, commanded by Ahmadon's uncle, Ba Lobba, reached Kani, below Sansanding on the Niger, and then Ali, chief of Ségou, joined Ba Lobba at Tio.

Omar crossed the Niger in January, 1861, defeated the allies and entered Ségou on March 10, 1861.

The two Bambara clans of Ségou and Kaarta were now finally defeated.

Within a few months of his arrival at Ségou, Omar received the submission of the former Bambara officials: army chiefs and territorial chiefs. Among other conditions, he imposed on them the following orders: they were to shave their heads; to stop drinking fermented beverages; to eat no more unclean meats; to make the ritual prayers; and for each of them, to have no more than four legitimate wives. He demanded hostages from the sons or brothers of chiefs or other notables, and incorporated them into his *sofa*.

●175 747 When Omar left Ségou in April, 1862, [343] to march against Handallahi, he left his son Ahmadou in command, backed by a guard of 1,500 tabilés and the support of the Bambara chiefs who had sworn loyalty to him.

3. The Results

175 614 797 It is usual to consider Omar's warlike enterprises solely from the point of view of Islam and to attribute their purpose and result to Peul proselytism. Such an explanation is dubious at best and in any case is very ambiguous. This question, however, involves a detailed study which is beyond the scope of this work, so we shall limit ourselves here to the subject at hand.

Omar replaced the clans of Kaarta and Ségou with the clan of the "people of Fouta," claiming that his conquests were due to a desire to convert the Bambara to Islam. In reality, this Moslem label did not change the native customs in the least; the clan of the people of Fouta proved to be conditioned and dominated by the same principles as the clans of Kaarta and Ségou.

The composition of this clan is a proof of this similarity. Omar and his community are at the head of an association made up of the tabilés, the people of Fouta, the usual sofa and ton'-dyon', and the tuburu, who are people converted to Islam by force. All these people, linked by material interests, are brought together by a common faith. Leaders of the slaves hold important military or political posts. What is there in all this that is not already to be found in what we have discussed before? The means used to gain power are identical, and the only thing that differs is the label. It is claimed that Islam instead of paganism constitutes the motivating force.

In general, the evolution of this clan differs not at all from that of the clans already discussed; it can be described in the same terms.

175 797 A man of remarkable intelligence and powers of leadership, Omar would probably have given his achievements the cohesion and stability needed to make them endure if he had lived long enough. However, he died too soon before he had

175 reached a point of limiting, at least temporarily, the extent
797 of his conquests.

He left his son Ahmadou to face the worst possible difficulties. Ahmadou had neither Omar's authority nor his prestige to impose them on the chiefs of Fouta whom his [344] father had drawn into his orbit. Therefore they formed a party of malcontents who intrigued against him at the behest and for the profit of his various adversaries or enemies.

He was forced to deal with serious treason fomented against him within his own family by his brothers. He managed to get rid of some of the latter by criminal means. He was one of those *fa* who, at once weak and cruel, are incapable either of making their authority acceptable or of imposing it in case of need. As a result, Ahmadou was never supported by the confident or devoted affection of his own people.

At the mercy of the implacable and changeable machinations of a small group of his intimates, he was a puppet in the hands of these intriguers.

The occasionally successful expeditions which he led against his enemies and which, at the same time, served to satisfy his subjects' need for booty, had no important political significance. This was because they were carried out without any careful planning which would have made it possible to profit from them by taking local conditions into account.

The net result was that this long reign represented simply a long period of unrest among the members of the clan, accompanied by a brutal exploitation of the conquered people.

What could Islam gain from such a regime? If we set aside, as outside the sphere of our subject, the matter of doctrinal influence, which was the work of Omar, it can be stated that the domination of the *fouta-n-ke* was an unfortunate development for the spread of Islam among the Bambara people with whom we are here concerned. No adequate organization, comparable to that of Sheik Ahmadou Bari at Macina, was formed to discipline the pagans and to interest them, especially to link them to the destinies of the clan of the Fouta people. The fanaticism of the *talibé*, the ferocious brutality of the *sofa*

175 and the political incoherence of the fama all combined to keep
797 the Bambara in a state of perpetual rebellion, either open or
latent. Islam itself was not responsible for this state of affairs;
rather, it was the incompetence and tyranny of its agents and
the political regime in general which were at the root of the
implacable hostility of the Bambara.

797 Islam prospers during peaceful eras. In itself it is not in the least antipathetic to pagans; on the contrary, the Bambara live perfectly harmoniously with the faithful, who, for their part, [345] successfully accommodate their brand of Islam to local native customs. That is why the Somono, the Bozo and the Marka are the best-qualified and most successful propagandists for Islam in the Bambara country. It was through their effort that, little by little, Moslem influence slowly penetrated the native atmosphere as if through a process of absorption.

True conversion occurs most often in an unconscious manner as a result of the Sudanization of Islam, whose endless ramifications form a kind of network of capillaries through which the Moslem sap in turn finds its way and, in the process, transforms the native temperament, often without the latter's awareness. The result of this process is a religion which is Islam only in name but which, being perfectly adapted to the purpose, has exercised, still exercises and will for a long time continue to exercise a vital role in the development of native society.

B. Constitution of the Bambara Kingdoms

● 175 At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Peul invasion introduced the Bambara into history.

173 This history, moreover, begins by a legend: two brothers,
Baramangolo and Niangolo, coming from Torone, one moon east
175 of Ségou, succeeded in crossing the Niger on the back of a fish,
M'Polio (Heterobrancus), which earned them the cognomen of
Kouloubali (without pirogue). Baramangolo, who was good, obtained
the heritage of the king of Ségou; Niangolo, who was bad (he had
killed the fish M'Polio), could not remain in this peaceful country
and went further west to wage war against the people of Mali.

Local traditions confirm this legend. Due to the Sudanese anarchy of the seventeenth century caused by the fall of the Songhaï empire (1591), population movements brought Peul horsemen into contact with Bambara outposts in the region of Diénné. The Peuls imposed their suzerainty, organized the anarchic Bambara, and led them to the conquest of the Ségou and Baïko regions, populated chiefly by the Soninké (the traditions suggest that this conquest was a largely peaceful penetration).

175 Two small kingdoms then established themselves: that of the legendary Baramangolo on the right bank at Ségou, that of Niangolo on the left bank at Sounsana (near Mourdiah). After union with the Soninké was accomplished, the successor of Baramangolo, Kaladian Koulibali (1652-82), had impressive forces at his disposal; he freed himself from the nominal authority of the Moroccan caïds of Diénné, and may even have conducted a victorious attack against Timbuktu. The Bambara star at Ségou dimmed somewhat under his successors, Danfassari (1682-97) and Souma. But in 1712 Souma ceded the throne to the man who was to become the great warrior chief, the Tigi-ton Mamari Koulibali.

For his part, the wicked Niangolo revealed himself to be an adroit politician. He married his son Soussa to a Kéita, thus ennobling his family and giving it rights to the ancient Mali empire. Their son Massa was an amiable and adroit monarch who accumulated resources in men and money. His successor, Bénéfali (1710-45), used them well, but his increasing power aroused the distrust of his cousin

175 at Ségou. Bénéfali had the wisdom to avoid a conflict, but his brother, Foulakoro, who took the throne in 1745, was less happily inspired and was crushed in 1754 by Mamari Koulibali.

[47] C. Mamari Koulibali

Here is the veritable creator of the kingdom of Ségou, one of those powerful personalities who crop up from time to time in the Black anarchy, such as a Soundiata or a Sonni Ali. He represents the moment of maximum expansion of the Peul-Bambara conglomerate which was formed in the seventeenth century by interbreeding of the Bambara mass with the feudal Peul from the east.

Mamari Koulibali was essentially a war leader, and the great events of his reign were military events. He subjugated local chiefs; with aid of the Peul he repulsed the assault launched against Ségou by the powerful king of Kong (1725); he liberated the country from the suzerainty of the Soninké Boaré and took their capital, Kirango (1740); finally, solicited by the Soninké of Mourdiah, he destroyed Sounsana, capital of the brother kingdom of the descendants of Niangolo. He killed their chief, Foulakoro (1754), and unified all the Bambara of the Niger Valley. Having assembled a redoubtable army, which he even endowed with a fleet and a corps of engineers, he was able to impose his sovereignty on the Peul kingdom of Macina and may even have menanced Timbuktu. It was during the course of his reign that one sees an important evolution in the structure of Bambara society.

D. Reforms of Mamari Koulibali

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567 It was in taking into account the role of slaves in the army that Mamari Koulibali was to revolutionize the ancestral society (see the traditional social organization).

He managed, first of all, to take away the greatest number of men, free or slaves, from their family community, in order to make of them Ton-dyon (slaves of the ton [ton is the largest unit of social organization]. To do this, he used the following methods: when a criminal was condemned to a fine, Mamari paid it; if a man was condemned to death, Mamari pardoned him; when one of his subjects could not pay his taxes, Mamari freed him of his debt on condition that the man put himself or one of his sons at the disposition of the

175 sovereign. In all cases the man, although pardoned, was deprived
567 of his personal liberty and became the emperor's chattel.

Mamari next wished to assure himself of the personal fidelity
[576 of his Ton-dyon by enrolling them in cults dedicated to his person. Thus, the old ton was transformed into a brotherhood with Mamari as both political and religious chief. In this way he was able to replace the political anarchy and social structure of the old Bambara regime by a new organization, despotic, very efficient militarily when fully controlled by the chief, but sometimes very dangerous to the stability of the country, as soon was seen.

E. Successors of Mamari

175 Mamari's son, Denkoro (1755-57), was to be the first victim of this all-powerful army. Exasperated by his cruelties, the military chiefs assassinated him and replaced him by his brother, Ali.[48] A Moslem, Ali wanted to propagate Islam and to forbid the use of fermented beverages and the worship of spirits. The Ton-dyon chiefs then massacred Ali and all of the Koulibali family, except two girls who were saved by one of the chiefs, N'Golo Diara. Different chiefs then contended for power: Ton-Mansa, then Kaniouba-Niouma, then Kafa-Diougou, who, all of them, reigned merely a short while before dying a violent death. Finally, N'Golo Diara, descendant of a great family who had become enslaved to Mamari and who, as we have seen, saved his daughters and then married one of them, reestablished order, moved the capital to Ségou-Sikoro, and resumed the work of the great Tigi-ton.

In the course of his long reign, (1766-90), N'Golo knew how to make himself respected and loved by his subjects and how to impose his will elsewhere; he established his authority over the Macina region, the Sokolo region, at Diénné, and Timbuktu. He only failed against the Mossi of Yatenga.

Meanwhile, the elder branch of the Koulibali family, crushed by Mamari in 1754 and chased from Bélédougou, rose again. If the successors of the unfortunate Foulakoro, Sey Bamana and Deni Babo, were nothing more than pillaging chiefs raiding at Kaarta, Bélédougou, and Khasso, Sira Bo did establish a stable kingdom with Guémou as capital. His successor, Dessé Koulibali (1788-99) even believed himself strong enough to impose his suzerainty on the Bambara of Ségou.

● 175 The occasion seemed favorable. After the death of the great N'Golo-Diara, two of his sons disputed the power. Dessé had the bad luck to support the loser. The victor, Mansóng (1792-1808), came at once to punish the Kaarta inhabitants and destroyed Guémou, but he could not establish himself in the region.

After this, the evolution of the two kingdoms is roughly parallel. When the people of Ségou are occupied in the east against the people of Macina, the people of Kaarta seize the occasion to raid in the west against the Diawara and the Kassonké. When things go poorly in Macina, the people of Ségou revenge themselves by forays into the territory of the Massassi of Kaarta, who, less powerful, then have to relinguish their expansionist plans. Moreover, somber hours approach for the Bambara. In the east Ahmadou Bari founded a powerful Peul kingdom (1810) in the Macina, and his grandson Hamadou-Hamadou exerts more and more pressure on the kingdom of Ségou. To the west the great Massassi king, Bodian Moriba (1815-32), by repeated blows has exhausted the forces of the Diawara and the Kassonké. This done, he rules over Nioro, but at the same time suppresses those who could have helped him resist the Moslem push of the Toucouleur.

F. The Toucouleur Invasion and the End of the Bambara Kingdoms

175 In 1854 El Hadj Omar, leading his "Talibés" animated by a
797 fierce proselytizing spirit, occupied Nioro and Kaarta and attempted to impose Islam on the Bambara population. The Bambara resisted, supported by their racial brothers of Ségou who had forgotten, too late, the old quarrels. El Hadj Omar, vanquished by the French before Medina, [49] abandoned his dream of a push to the west and sought compensation by turning toward Ségou.

175 The Bambara then put aside their family resentments and joined the Peul of Macina, who were equally menaced by the Toucouleur expansion. But they were up against too strong a foe. Tata, son of the king Ali Diara, resisted for five days against El Hadj Omarls howitzers at Oïtala on the Niger (1861), then succumbed. Hamadou-Hamadou, who had come to his aid, was beaten at Sansanding. Ségou opened its doors; Ali Diara was put in irons. His brother, Kégué-Mari, continued the fight against Ahmadou, son

175 of El Hadj Omar, up to April 6, 1890, the day French troups under Lt. Colonel Archinard delivered Ségou from the cruel Moslem occupation.

The Bambara did not long accept the French yoke. To put an end to their plots, the French resident, Captain Underberg, had to execute the king Mari Diara, an act which inspired several local revolts, chiefly in the Sénoufo region. But the new Fama, Bodian, supported by the French, was able to rapidly re-establish peace. Moreover, the destruction of the Toucouleur kingdom of Macina by Colonel Archinard deprived the rebel Bambara of all possibility of outside support. The Ségou kingdom was definitively pacified in 1893.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

I. Traditional Structure of Bambara Society

A. Social and Political Organization

182 Traditional Bambara social organization is entirely tied up with religious organization; moreover, the social organization determines the whole economic organization to such an extent that the latter cannot be studied independently.

114 In fact, we still know very little about Bambara social organization. Some good records are available to us in the work of Monteil (1), Aubert and Ortoli (2), Delafosse (3), Labouret (4),

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1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Segou and Kaarta].

2. Aubert et Ortoli, Coutumier juridique de l'A.O.F. [French West African Common Law].

197 systems of signs and ideograms which may be considered as a sort of
212 writing and the study of which is currently pursued. The system from
which all the others supposedly stem, the *glã glã zo*, has 226 ideograms
which, according to informants, summarize the knowledge of the
[802] Bambara (1). On the other hand, the Bamba use a numerical system
based on twenty. Moreover, an analysis of the texts collected,
some of them quoted in this essay, has brought to light an /xvi/ important number of words which, according to informants, belong to an ancient language of Mandingo origin, now used as liturgical language. It is not within the framework of this essay to present this material or to comment upon it, but it is appropriate to note that the study of this vocabulary would contribute to an understanding of religious thinking among the Bambara.

173 The Bambara have a rather clear idea of their early history and even of their prehistory. They describe their ancestors with precision and know the phases of development of their technology. These premises are necessary to an understanding of their religion which, like the other institutions, is especially linked to this technological development. Moreover, the only observable remains comprise household furniture and utensils, transient but perennial material whose forms and ornamentation indicate the metaphysical principles on which their way of thinking is based.

177 It is appropriate not to neglect those influences which have acted
121 upon the Bambara through their contacts with other Sudanese tribes

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1. See. p. 21. This system and two of the ideograms, of which *to* designates the mash of boiled cereals and by extension nourishment in general, will be the object of a comment by M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen. "Signes graphiques des Soudanais. L'Homme. /Graphic signs of the Sudanese man/." *Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie et de linguistique, Hermann* (in press).

On certain types of writing observed among the Mandé and the Vai, see J. Février, *Histoire de l'écriture* /The History of Writing/, pp. 528-529.

177 121 connected since ancient times with the Mediterranean basin (1). The Mali empires, in particular, by encouraging the expansion of Islam have maintained a center in the heart of the Sudan, which has left traces in the social and religious institutions of the Bambara.

However, it is difficult, if not impossible, at the present time to make a historical presentation of this religion or even to consider the problem of influences. We have with us the last phase of this religion and we know its development only through myths which, furthermore, do not make it appear to be a system established very early; it seems to have developed slowly with various additions which were felt and expressed in the myths. On the other hand the present religions of the Sudanese seem national; they form separate entities among the Dogon (2) the Bozo, the Kouroumba /Kurumba/, the Minianka, the Sonray /Sonhrai/, and the /xvii/ Mossi. However, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that their systematic observation, undertaken a few years ago, has brought to light a common

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1. We wish to draw attention to M. P. M. Schuhl's point and his allusion: "The premises which we owe at present to investigations like those of M. Griaule would seem to call for new syntheses and provide curious terms of comparison. Indirect influence from Greek myths on Sudanese mythology is, furthermore, not impossible." *Essai sur la formation de la pensée grecque* /Essay on the Formation of Greek Thought/, Presses Universitaires de France, 2nd ed., 1949, p. xv.

M. Schuhl recalls, on the other hand, the resemblances proposed by M. A. Jeanmaire, between Greek facts and some African institutions considered as survivals of a proto-Mediterranean civilization (*Couroi et courètes*), Lille, 1939.

2. See M. Griaule. *Dieu d'eau* /water god/.

177 121 substratum on which each tribe has grafted its original system. The study of this substratum would help define the problem of origins and influences.

After this, we have at our disposal the support of philology and above all the advantage of seeing the Bambara live their beliefs and of discovering their myths in a crude but expressive material as well as in numerous rites. The observations made over a wide field of inquiry serve as the basis for the presentation of this religious system.

114 121 The Bambara have been for a long time the subject of articles and works, of which we will give below a concise bibliography. The only author who, until now, has attempted to describe their beliefs as a system is L. Tauxier whose study of La Religion Bambara /Bambara religion/ takes into account to a large extent the works of the Abbé Henry and Ch. Monteil. However, through the descriptions of these different observers which are certainly conscientious, this religion appears as a composite of diverse and even inconsistent elements with no apparent link between them. Despite a uniform plan and a laudable absence of preconceived ideas, L. Tauxier has been unable to bring out the fundamental concepts of the people he observed.

In fact, the study of a present-day Negro religion runs into difficulties of various kinds stemming on the one hand from the necessity of going into the field and on the other hand from the largely esoteric character of the doctrine. These circumstances make this study essentially a work of discovery.

Indeed, Bambara religion, like all Sudanese religions, has an exoteric part, quite easily accessible, which observation conducted along scientific lines may reveal in detail. Rules of life admitted by all, beliefs openly professed, and public or private practices may be the object of detailed work. But this religion, like that of the neighboring peoples, rests upon a doctrine whose fundamental principles [609] are known to elders and initiates who show considerable aversion to confiding in strangers, particularly whites. Such a situation explains the ignorance in which scholarship has remained for so long concerning the religious way of thinking of this people (1).

812 1. The Bambara themselves distinguish between two kinds of knowledge. The first, called doni fyɛ̃ma "knowledge (which has) wind" /xviii/ is superficial

845 [431] Everyone visits the parents' home and takes to them what gifts one can give for to give to twins is equivalent to giving to Faro.

845 553 851 The name-giving ceremony is carried out on the river bank if the village is situated close to the Niger, or otherwise on the edge of a pond. The children are brought by their parents who, between them, represent the number seven. They are bathed, their hair shaved off and thrown into the river, while the father says: "Mother Faro, your sons are born, here is their hair." (1) He then gives the cotton band, dyala, which was worn by the mother to the officiant who encircles the child's forehead with it while saying: "These two people are older than I am; let the nyama of the name which is to be given them leave with the dyala." (2) Then he gives them a special name. (3)

1. Ba faro i wolo dew kunsi ye nin ye.

2. Nin ma fla ka koro u ma, u čua dali nyama ka ta fini disa f͡ew dyala fę.

[177] 3. Séni and Sinè for boys; Bintou and Wasa for girls. Among the Islamized Bambara this custom is also respected; the names given are always Alassan and Fouséni. This is most likely a distortion of the Arab names given to twins in Morocco.

845 851 The next day, carrying one of the children and accompanied by a woman in charge of the other, the mother goes begging for millet or cotton in the village. She holds two identical spoon gourds in her hands. The gifts, equal in weight and quality, symbolize the twins; they are placed on the spoons. Then crossing her hands, the woman pours them into the basket in which she carries the gifts (4).

4. All the symbolism of gifts made to twins, like that of the double pot (see below), confirms observations made in the Sudan on the relationships between gifts and trade. On this subject, see M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, pp. 234 ff. It is interesting to note here that

121 keep its own features only on the native plane on which it was formed and developed.

I have not felt, however, that it was necessary to abandon entirely the French terminology which is familiar to us; it is sufficient to make it fit its new role. Indeed, it would be very difficult to limit oneself to native terms, since it would be awkward and even impossible to find expression in these terms for abstractions which the writer's analysis brings out and of which the native has no knowledge.

A study of custom in its intimate associations thus requires both method and experience if one hopes to arrive at precise facts which have logical interrelationships. The results thus obtained are certainly significant since they show that, perhaps from the very beginning and certainly from a very long time past, the native character follows a path which it has itself chosen and which we can only suspect, rather than observe. This is because the concrete facts which are the landmarks of that history are subject to various interpretations.

177 Today, dislocated by the collapse - thanks to our inter-
vention - of the social framework in which he was developing,
182 the native character is working out new spiritual directives based
on its own past, making use of contributions of our civilizations
whenever they are in accord with the native's own deepest tendencies. The present-day life of the Black man is merely the reflection of this mystique; hence, whatever may be our wishes in the matter and whatever may be the outward appearances, the Black man continues in all fields to be dominated by his past.

121 This fact would in itself justify a study such as the present one - if there were need for justification - for, in the matter of custom particularly, nothing that has happened in the past is unimportant when both the present and the future are closely and inevitably dependent on this past.

Orthez, February 22, 1923

*173 These, in brief, are the difficulties encountered in deal-
814 ing with sources for native historical tradition. When Islam
217 introduced [25] a written language, there was created a new
212 category of archivists, the marabouts. They have added this duty
to many others; it cannot be proved that they have purged the job of its former vices, but it may be stated categorically that they have added a few new ones.

It is notorious that, in the Sudan, the Moslem traditionists have an ineradicable tendency to transpose everything into their own mentality. Further, since a manuscript gives a kind of quasi definitiveness to the oral tradition, including all its errors, it becomes almost impossible to eliminate these errors because of the unquestioning respect usually accorded a written document.

*173 There are also the non-literate Moslem traditionists:
814 ordinary dyeli who have been converted in the usual Sudanese
fashion, as described in Chapter 6, and who have abandoned none
● [177] of the characteristics of their caste. They have merely added a
few peculiarities due to Moslem influence.

114 In drawing on these sources, European publications add new reasons for doubt. Most especially, because of a desire -- legitimate, in principle -- to bring some sort of order out of the incoherent mass of traditions, but also because of a need to make them fit a personal theory, the European author takes refuge in an hypothesis. Now there is no objection to this, assuming that the hypothesis on which the author bases his theories is clearly stated. Too often, however, the hypothesis is so well concealed or even so intricately entwined in the tradition that it is impossible either to discover what it is or to set an exact limit to its range. This new metamorphosis of tradition is not the least dangerous for historical truth.

115 It is to two non-literate Moslem dyeli that I am indebted
*173 for the traditions concerning the Ségou and Kaarta clans. My
interpreter, Souleïman Goundiamou (1), whose services as a

1. Now chief of the village of Ambidédi (Gadiaga).

guide and informant on native matters were invaluable to me, gave

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1. The name Mamari, among the Bambara, is the equivalent of Mohammed. It is a common given name, even among pagans; the *dyeli* Karé Tammoura, perhaps because of his own conversion to Islam, used the name Mamari more often than the more common Biton. The cognomen Biton, is a hybrid adopted by the Peul as an equivalent for *ton-den'*. The same personage was formerly called *fa Tigi-ton'*, which also indicates Peul influence and which is, on occasion, shortened to *fa Tigi*, rendered by some who misheard the original as *fo Tige* and also *fo Tinye*.

[177]

*173 increased over his people, Mamari felt the stirrings of ambition grow. The defeat and rout of the people of Doua gave a definite orientation to his projects for domination. However, there was one thing he needed to carry out his plans: an army completely under his control.

As a start toward carrying out his designs, he sent a message to the people of Doukounna and Banan-koroni, his oldest and most faithful allies, with a request that they send their elders to him on a permanent basis to form a council which he would consult on all appropriate occasions. The elders agreed to remain with him during the dry season, but they insisted on returning home in the winter to look after their own affairs and those of their people.

While these negotiations were proceeding, the young men of Doukounna and Banan-koroni were fighting around Kirango on Mamari's behalf. When the latter could not overcome the elders' resistance, he resolved to use force (2). He caused a deep well

2. With the assistance of his new partisans, the people of Dina and those from the left bank of the Niger.

The third class comprises the enormous throng [redacted] of all sorts included under the vague and general term nyana (3).

●[177]

3. One also hears the word nyena. I do not think that this is a corruption of the Arab word jinn. In the first place, it was not Islam that introduced the concept to the Bambara, since it is common to all Blacks. Further, the word nyana is connected with a root nya meaning "powerful," "lord," "master," and nyena is only a dialectal variant.

The nyana may be divided into two categories: the [127] wandering and the solitary, for whom no permanent or formal cult is provided. They live pretty much anywhere. Some have a marked preference for being near men, for cross-roads or for the vicinity of wells or springs. They also wander, invisible and ready for pranks, in the courtyards of houses where during the night they love to roam among the kitchen-ware. It is said that they put unclean things into the pots unless one has been careful to turn them upside down. It is even said that if any woman is so imprudent as to use a pot in which one of these wandering spirits has urinated, she will give birth to a sorcerer.

Others of these cult-less spirits throng the countryside and are the terror of travelers (1). Everyone has heard of Wokolo: a little black, hairy hunter who likes to live in the trees, along the paths and also in the brush, beside creeks. Others say that he likes to live in the si (Bassia Parkii) which we call the butter tree or karite. In any case one cannot escape his sharp arrows except

1. They can assume any form they like and take part in the life of humans under the most diverse forms. See p. 123 for the horse Kori.

776 precision of which the native substratum seems unaware. In any event, there is no Bambara word for "God" except the one [[77]] brought by the Moslems -- "Allah;" pronounced as Ngala. This lack of a Bambara word may be explained by their custom of avoiding pronouncing the name of powerful people for fear of incurring their wrath.

[[77]] There is no superior spirit of evil: Seĩtane [Satan] is likewise a Moslem introduction. The Bambara does not visualize a hierarchy of spirits.

776 778 789 Finally, it must be concluded, from the existence of many magic practices, that there is a belief in a kind of universal energy, which is diffuse by nature and which, by appropriate means, one can capture and use as one likes. Certain genii or gods are merely emanations of this invisible, imponderable and active force, which no obstacle can stop and which can instantly overcome space and strike at a distance. This is the basis of all native magic.

[129] 2. Morality and Customs

776 577 When, as among Catholics and Moslems, the after-life is believed to be influenced by one's conduct in this life, there is a rule which determines what is and what is not proper if one wishes to earn the greatest possible rewards in the life to come. The saints and pious men have shown the way to this end.

For the Bambara, however, the next life is merely a continuation of this one and he does not think that he can, by conduct, improve his chances in the next life since it offers no rewards or punishments for his day-by-day actions. Neither his manes nor his genii give him an example of conduct to guide him. Therefore, without thought of the future, he goes along solely concerned with the present; he seeks what will give him pleasure, tries to avoid what seems harmful, and all this in a groping way, as one walks in the dark.

577 626 Sometimes, it is true, he is led to behave with a degree of decency and to avoid certain too shocking lapses, which would expose him to reproach, alienate his friends and create for him

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575 association, each fula-ni is a ton'-den'.

The bachelors and some of the married men regard the fla-n-ton' simply as a means of having a good time in the company of boon companions. Anything brought by an individual member goes to swell the common fund which is most often used to organize feasts and drinking bouts. At these banquets, it is customary to comply with rules which appear curious at first sight and which must be obeyed unless the member wants to pay a fine into the common fund. Thus, anyone who acts on his own prior to or contrary to an order from the ton-tigi, anyone who comes or leaves, blows his nose, [250] spits, sneezes, and so on, without permission, is fined. Aside from the profit to the common fund, the procedure has its uses in making the ton-den' amenable to discipline.

In principle, the treasury of the fla-n-ton' is supposed to be used only to succor poor, embarrassed, or unfortunate members, who are expected to repay with interest insofar as they are able to do so. In theory, also, all of the ton-den' can count on moral and material aid from their fla-ni whenever there is need for it. It goes without saying that this fine spirit of altruism is rarely put into practice.

The fact of the matter is that the young masters (kamale-u) make use of the organization to resist the omnipotence of the elders (koro-u); malcontents of all sorts take refuge in it; adventurers find it useful in promoting their schemes. We shall see how the two most powerful Bambara empires were built on the fla-n-ton'.

2. General Considerations Concerning the Brotherhoods

Origin of the Brotherhoods

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744 There is no reason to suppose that the Bambara brotherhoods are not purely native institutions; similar organizations are to be found all over Africa, particularly in areas untouched by Moslem influence. All of them follow similar principles made manifest in ways characteristic of African occultism.

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744 There is no doubt, however, that in the case of the Bambara with whom we are here concerned this native foundation

177 794 has acquired various elements brought in from the outside world by Berbers, Arabs, and others, or by Sudanese pilgrims returning from the Orient. In any event, this foreign occultism -- usually oriental -- certainly did not give rise to or greatly modify the local Sudanese occultism; it merely strengthened its organization, its institutions, and its methods by adding new knowledge.

The legend (1) which claims that the *nyana* of the *boli* are a Moslem importation does not mean that these "gods" were introduced [251] actually and exclusively by such means. It means only that pre-existing native institutions have received foreign support from pilgrims or others returning or arriving from the Orient.

Dogma

794 Are these brotherhoods based on a more or less secret teaching of cardinal truths? It does not seem to me to be risky to say that they are not. Everything in these cults may be summed up as empirical practices which are believed to have the effect of forcing a "god" (that is, an extranatural force) to serve man. The aim is essentially utilitarian and worldly: to acquire a "powerful protector" (*dyigi seme*) for defence, for offence, and especially for the purpose of attaining sufficient power for the realization of all desires.

Such an alliance with a god by means of a cult compels one to behave in certain ways, but discipline of this type does not lead to the improvement of either the individual or the society through the acquisition of what we call moral qualities or virtues. It is all the more obvious, then, that the brotherhoods are not trying to assure their members entry into a supernatural world; they can barely claim to assure them protection and a modicum of material well-being. A spiritual mysticism is unknown to them (1).

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1. Reported below in the chapter on Islam.

1. However, see Chapter 7. [Not translated.]

parallel cuts from temple to lower jaw on either side of the face. Furthermore, these people borrowed the *dyamu* of the *fama* (Kouloubali, Dyara, etc.), just as certain servants in some of the French provinces are called by their master's name because they are members of the household bearing that name.

614 701 411 The elite troops (*sofa*, *ton'-dyon'*, etc.) were armed with axes (*sukala*) (2). Important chiefs also had axes, the insignia of command, sometimes made of precious metal, such as copper or silver. The axe carried by the *fama* was made of gold and enchased (3).

The spear (*tama*) was often regarded as a weapon of distinction also. The ordinary warriors were armed with bows (*kala*) and arrows (*bimye*), the latter usually poisoned.

[177] Guns (*marfa*) gradually came into use, imported by native traders (Dyula). The chronicle claims that the first firearms were introduced among "the people of Ségou" in Mamari's time by an army from Kong and that these guns were of the blunderbuss type.

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614 567 701 304 incautiously on tattooing as a distinguishing mark of race or even of rank; the tattoo described here has not only been used by people of various origins, but has even been appropriated by all kinds of people as a form of snobbishness.

2. An instrument's name derived from *suka*, a variant of *sua*, meaning "to pierce." The men armed with axes were, in fact, assigned the special task of "making a breach" in the wall inclosing the settlement under attack.

3. The chronicle relates that Tonmassa, after murdering Dékoro, carried off the golden axe, the symbol of supreme command.

771 came to me to complain that [332] my Negroes were using a
787 satala (1) to take water from his jug.

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" 'What difference does that make to you?' I asked him.

" 'What difference does it make! ' he answered with an angry air.

"And with that he favored me with the following astonishing line of reasoning:

" 'Now you see, I am not a (Moslem) marabout and if the marabouts take water from my jar with the satala, the water that remains in the jar will necessarily be sanctified because it came into contact with that vessel. My children and I drink this water and, since we don't know how to salaam and don't fast, and since we eat pork, God (2) will punish us for having failed to obey his orders. For, after all, any water that has touched a satala makes a marabout (3) of the person who drinks it. That is what I heard from my father."

776 The net result is that, on the whole, Ngalla (Allah) is regarded as one of the nyana which we have mentioned and for which the Bambara has a superstitious respect without for that matter being a worshiper. He avoids any contact with all that concerns the nyana, not because of hostility, but for fear of incurring its wrath on account of some impurity. Just as he may call upon any convenient nyana for aid, so he asks the help of

1, A kind of saucepan made of copper or tin, of European origin, used by Moslem Sudanese for their ritual ablutions.

2. That is, in Niany's mind, the nyana called Ngalla (Allah) by the Bambara.

3. That is, an initiate of Ngalla (Allah).

771 787 Ngalla through his priests, the marabouts. At other times he thinks he will get into Ngalla's good graces by taking part in the great Moslem festivals and by imitating the visible rites (4) of the faithful. He has not the faintest doubt but that he can produce the same effects as they do.

So it is that the pagan, deriving from Islam whatever his own concepts can make use of, "Sudanizes" it in the process. As a result, between the two poles of Islam and paganism, there exists an infinity of intermediate states which link the two and which, depending on the angle of observation, sometimes look like an Islamization of the Sudanese and, at other times, like a Sudanization of Islam.

Father Niany, of the blacksmiths' caste, was one of those [333] individuals who, being versed in the practice of native occultism, consider Islam as a rival Hermetism until the day when they realize that it can provide them with useful new magic power. Many are the blacksmiths, magicians like Niany, who have become Moslems for the purpose of getting their hands on the arsenal of magic which Islam brings into these lands.

787 [177] So it is that all the native brotherhoods have adopted divination by geomancy which was introduced by the Moslems and there is not a Bambara who does not on occasion consult the geomancer, known as laturudala or kenyelala (1) or the

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4. In the tale of the Hyena, given later, there is an example of this mimicry in the way in which those who follow the Hyena each pretend to be the nyana discovered by the Hyena (see Chapter 7 [not translated]).

1. Derived from kenye meaning "sand," and la meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the sand."

787 buguri gala (2). These three words are sufficient in themselves
177 to illustrate the process of Sudanization. Although the first comes from a corruption of the Arabic word el tereb (earth), the other two are strictly Bambara in all respects. Besides, the manner in which the natives have altered the practice of geomancy is an illustration of the same process.

771 797 It may therefore be concluded that, in certain respects, Islam has strengthened paganism. For example, the pagans commonly believe that an illiterate geomancer, who is nevertheless an expert in this type of divination, will obtain the same results as a learned marabout who is guided by the book of Er Zenati. As a result, a well-known laturadala enjoys special prestige because of the fact that his prognostications are corroborated by a book, and the same fact accounts in part for the influence of the priests of the brotherhoods.

We are thus able to verify the contacts between Islam and the paganism of the Bambara who are the subject of this study.

693 The historical tales related in the foregoing show the continuous relations which existed between the native chiefs and the pious and renowned marabouts. Whenever a legal dispute arose which could not be settled by pagan arbitration, the last recourse was an appeal for judgment or conciliation to a marabout, who was always sought out and greeted with deference. Mamari, Tonmassa, Ngolo and Ma-n-son's sons all had occasion to make such appeals in some most embarrassing situations.

[334] Further, on occasions when they hoped to bring off some questionable deal or to improve their prospects, the chiefs were also wont to call on a marabout. Mamari did so against the Massa-si Foro-koro and so did Ngolo when he was anxious to make sure that his fame would survive him.

In matters of judicial arbitration, it appears that the marabout derives his authority rather more, perhaps, from his

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2. Derived from buguri meaning "dust," and da meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the dust."

243 manifesting itself too violently and afterwards hold back the receding
312 waters. In the Sahel, the arrangements affect the plains bordering the Niger, where earthen dikes protect the rice from the floods and also control the tributary lakes where they join the river, holding the receding waters in the lakes, thus permitting transplantation of the rice and preventing the subsiding flood from drowning the plants before harvest. From 1944 to 1949, 101,550 hectares were regulated in this manner in the upper valley, the Delta, and the valley of the Sahel.
343 There is a plan to regulate 331,000 new hectares by 1956. In addition, experiments in mechanical tillage have begun. Up until now two methods of cultivation have been applied.

a. Without burning: the hoed land is prepared in furrows 40 to 50 centimeters apart; the seeding is done in seed holes 25 centimeters apart along the furrows. (1)

1. L'agronomie tropicale [Tropical Agronomy], July-August, 1950. [Ed., Revue d'agronomie tropicale, 1951.]

b. With burning: the wild grasses are pulled up in March and April and gathered in beds 1 meter wide and 3 to 6 meters long. They are lightly covered with earth and then set on fire. At the end of June the mounds are turned by hoe, and the seeds planted in holes 30 centimeters apart and 4 centimeters deep. Fifteen grains are put in each hole, or 45 to 50 kilograms per hectare. The yields vary between 800 and 1,200 kilograms of paddy per hectare.

To these basic crops are added the following early carry-over crops:

The millets. Fonio (Digitaria exilis) is cultivated in the region of Senegambia, and iburu (D. Iburna) in the central sector of the Sudan.

Maize and banana trees south of Bamako. Maize is the most widespread crop after millet. Nevertheless, some maize is imported
[351] from Dahomey. Banana trees are planted around the huts and form a belt around the villages. They are also planted in the small fields which border the water courses. Large bananas are harvested which are picked green and cooked.

245 Mango trees, recently imported (about fifty years ago), give
177 an excellent yield and are destined to be developed more and more.

244 The Bambara groundnut ripens its seed underground. It is cultivated from the southern border of the Sahara to the Cape, but its primary home [31] is in the Sudan where the greatest number of cultivated varieties is found. (1)

1. Jacques Félix, for a study on the Bambara groundnut (*Voandzeia subterrena*), *Agriculture tropicale* [Tropical Agriculture], January-February, 1950. [Ed., *Revue d'agronomie tropicale.*]

Manioc and yams at certain points along the Niger escape the devastations of the Acridiidae insects which can not attack their roots.

Other crops are used to balance the diet: condiments and
[263] fleshy plants, such as, pimento, sesame, various labiates, okra,
[177] sorrel, squash, peanuts (imported in the sixteenth century from America). Peanuts, to thrive, need loose, light soil. They are sown in June at the beginning of the rainy season and are harvested in
[252] November. The natives eat them roasted; they make oil and soap from them and give the stalks to their animals. Cultivation is entirely in the hands of the natives. In Senegal manpower is insufficient;
[464] before 1940 thousands of Sudanese workers were called upon each
[167] season, particularly Bambara, the "Navétanes," who hired themselves out to the farmers of Senegal in order to acquire the textiles and other products they needed. The peanut is an export product. Also cultivated are nitrogenous vegetables (Bambara groundnuts, black-eyed peas, dolichos, kissis, etc.) and the numerous and varied amaranths, tomatoes, eggplants, gourds, and, since 1940, potatoes which are grown more and more.

222 Finally, we will cite: a) the gathering of wild plants which
263 serve as condiments: the fruits of the baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), of the corchorus, of the *Parkia biglobosa* [*néré*], and of the karite tree (*Butyrospermum*), formerly called the "butter tree," which is cultivated to some degree -- the fruit is something like that of the palm tree and contains a core whose kernels enclose a fatty matter, shea butter, valued for making soap, as an illuminant, for the toilet;
222 b) the gathering of scarcity foods: baobab, cenchrus, cassia, the kola nut (*Sterculia acuminata*). Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;

248 into narrow bands by weavers [men] who make clothes from it in 286 unbleached, indigo-blue, yellow, or black fabrics. At the present time, after numerous attempts at improvement since the occupation, [654] seeds selected according to the zones of cultivation are distributed to the farmers, and the administration encourages industrial cotton cultivation in irrigated regions, as well as mechanical spinning and weaving.

248 Sisal is an agave of Mexican origin. The long, thick, pointed [177] leaves, after undergoing a series of industrial operations including mechanical extraction of the fibers, yields very strong textile fibers suitable for cordage, rope making, rug manufacture, canopies, etc.

Kapok (Eriodendron anfractuosum) until a few years ago was merely gathered, but now plantations have been created. The fruit is in the form of capsules containing seeds enveloped in a vegetal wadding. In one year the kapok tree can furnish 30 kilograms of fibers used in mattress-making, hat-making . . .

D. Agricultural Tools

241 Bambara farming tools are very simple. The hoe is almost the only agricultural instrument used. There are several kinds of hoe, particularly in the Bougouni region: the tyerengu, 0.50 meters wide, with a straight handle (chiefly used by the Sénoufo); the n'gu kala, 0.30 meters wide, with a curved handle. These two are used for digging, scraping, and banking. The flotton, from 0.10 to 0.20 meters wide and with a handle made from a forked branch, is used for the second dressing of the earth and for weeding. (When the weeds are too big, the weeding is done by hand). These hoes oblige the peasant to work stopped over. Let us also mention the axe, dyeli, which serves to cut shrubs and the branches of trees in clearing land, the machete, and a small pickaxe with a hoe handle, the yalo.

[33] Millet spikes are harvested with the aid of a special small knife to cut the stalk into pieces. Finally, the threshing of the ears is done with large bent sticks having round handles and flat ends.

[533] Agricultural labors, tillage and threshing, are undertaken [461] collectively following the cadence indicated by an instrumentalist. Work in the fields is generally done by starting at the bottom of a slope and working up, so the rain will wash off the weeds. The

114 3. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal et Niger [Upper Senegal and Niger].

4. Labouret, Les Mandingues et leur langue [The Mandingo and Their Language].

etc., but these are still very fragmentary and incomplete. In addition, this society was completely disrupted by the French conquest, either by such radical measures as the suppression of slavery or by a natural evolution as a result of contact with European societies. Nevertheless, traditional structures retain their vitality, despite the effort to adapt them to European formulas. 177

178 The society seems to have oscillated between familial anarchy and the clan stage, according to alternating ranges of groupings, disassociation, and regroupings.

1. The Family

594 596 Concerning the Sudanese, Delafosse has already made the distinction between "the restricted family" and the "extended family." The restricted family is composed of the parents and children who live in the "hut." Taken alone, it does not represent a social unit. The true social cell is the extended family. This is the large united family made up of a group of restricted families whose heads recognize a common ancestor. This group, composed of agnates in principle, is the ba-denya, whose members live in huts within an enclosure: gwa or so. The two ends of this [51] enclosure rest on a blõ (vestibule) where the ancestors' altar is found.

601 612 According to Labouret, the Bambara distinguish three categories of family ties: the paternal line, the maternal line, and relationship by marriage. The child takes the dyamu (honorable name) of his father's group, but the terms applied to ancestors and descendants are the same as those of the maternal line.

"... Kinship includes the following generations: tolo-mina... tolo-sama... tolo-ma-sama: who seizes or pulls ears (a belief has it that if a great grandson pulls the ear of his great grandfather, the latter becomes deaf); [822]

692 In matters of justice, the Bambara frequently continue to consult
their old tribal judges. It must be noted, however, that in taking
[177 away the judicial competence of the old chiefs, the French administration
622] has contributed to diminishing, and almost to completely
destroying, their power.

The Bambara had a judicial organization quite as precise and
671 regulated as their religious organization, although there was no
codified law, such as the Koran or the Hebrew tables of law. Justice
was rendered according to rules which each community passed on
from generation to generation. These rules are not of divine origin,
but they [69] are sacred nevertheless, for custom is the legacy of
[643 the ancestors. The Fama and his council of notables could promulgate
645] new laws, but, before deciding on a new rule, they consult the
Komo and the Nyama [an altar]. Then, in the presence of a priest,
each one swears on the altar to obey the law which becomes sacred.
Moreover, the customary rules cannot be separated from the moral
code and the religion to which they are linked. They are not uniform;
[184] each canton has its own, and often each village, and within
each of these there are observances peculiar to certain families or to
certain castes. Nevertheless, the sentiment of fair play is very strong
[181] among the Blacks, but they do not admit the equality of men, who
are naturally different one from another according to their aptitudes,
means, and condition.

Custom regulates all relations between individuals and between
individuals and the collectivity.

692 Two sorts of native tribunals existed in the Bambara country:
a tribunal of conciliation, presided over by the village chief,
who assembled a council of notables; and a high tribunal presided
over by the Fama, to whom were submitted the matters which the
first tribunal had been unable to settle. In addition, the Fama could
call before his tribunal the civil or penal matters which seemed to
him to be of importance to the public order.

695 Justice was without charge and rendered day and night by the
643 Fama as one of his essential functions, for the judge is the one who
repairs the disorders that shake society. The hearings were solemnly
conducted and took place under the silk-cotton tree (Ceiba pentandra)

[76] II. Present Evolution of Bambara Society

A. Political Evolution

648 636 At the present time, all the territory of the Sudan is unified and endowed with a political organization permitting it to play an active role within the framework of the French Union. The Sudan, like each of the eight territories of French West Africa, is represented in the National Assembly, in the Senate [Conseil de la République], and in the Assembly of the French Union by elected members. These members have been chosen from among the sons of former slaves or people of caste as well as from among the sons of former chiefs.

The administrative organization is placed under the authority of a governor general, seconded by two councils: the High Council of West Africa and the Government Council. At the head of the territory is a governor who is the administrative chief of the territory; he is assisted by a secretary general, named, like the governor, by decree, and by a civil and military cabinet which transmits the governor's orders.

Finally, the circles are directed by colonial administrators directly responsible to the governor. The circles are divided into subdivisions headed by assistant administrators who are directly responsible to the circle administrators. They are charged with the general administration and control of all the civil and financial functions of the circle.

Each circle is divided into cantons based on the territorial divisions of the old military districts. A canton has a head sometimes named by the administration but generally elected according to the traditional custom of the old Fama. The canton head is charged with representing the interests of the natives before the administration.

B. Tendency to Economic Change

177 The principal transformation in the Bambara economy stems from the French pacification and from the contributions of the European social and economic organization.

a. Urbanization

166 The Bambara, who are essentially agriculturalists, have no
● 177 cities. All the cities owe their origin to the Whites and were created
369 for commerce, administration, industry, banking, and education. But the city has exercised the same attraction on the Black peasant as it has on the French one. This taste for city life has been made easier to indulge by the creation of railroads and roads. Cities, such as Bamako, are invaded by ever-increasing populations who leave the bush and the close-knit community to create a de-tribalized mob which adapts more or less well to a European economic organization. Thus, the industrial equipping of Africa tends to transform the native artisanry, because the industrial establishments of the European type require a specialized [77] labor force that will adopt French work methods and economic life. It is in this way that the railroad yards at Thiès were created, as well as the industries of construction in solid materials, the quarries, the brickyards, the limeworks of Bamako, Mopti, and Ségou, and the food industries: icehouses, waterworks, the cotton gins of Koutiala and Sikasso. Industrialization is just beginning in the Bambara country, but the European form of economic organization has spread widely even where native work methods exist, leading, as a result, to economic individualism.

b. Development of Large-scale Agricultural Exploitation

177 Agricultural exploitation itself has been radically transformed
241 in certain regions. Side by side with food crops which vary according
473 to the needs of the community and which are cultivated in the traditional extensive manner, an intensive monoculture of money crops has developed with peanuts, rice, cotton, etc. This has been made possible by modern techniques of agricultural exploitation: experimental gardens, centers of scientific research, creation of pilot sections, scientific management of the plains. This development has led to the creation of such organizations as the C.G.O.T. in Casamance, a company for diversified economy whose initial capital was underwritten by the State and by professional processors of fatty substances. This company clears and de-stumps the great forest brush with heavy tractors, bulldozers, treedozers, and strumpers [de-stumpers ?] in

177 order to cultivate peanuts, sunflowers, millet, and cotton. Every
241 three years, the company distributes green manure crops in order to
473 reconstitute the soil's humus. Moreover, the company has created veritable villages to house its technicians and the colonists.

177 Other organizations, such as the Niger Office, have charge
241 of the basic water control of the central delta (dams, large canals).
312 Thanks to the creation of a network of waterways, to the clearing
433 and de-stumping of lands, and to the development of general equipment (processing factories, workshops, stores, dwellings, road network), the end of 1949 saw 11,000 hectares of rice fields, with a yield of 18 quintals of paddy and a commercial production of 8,000 metric tons of husked rice. Six thousand hectares have been prepared either for growing cotton (2,000 hectares), for growing rice for food (1,000 hectares), or for lying fallow (3,000 hectares). These fields
[166] permit the exportation of 360 metric tons of cotton fiber. Twenty-two thousand persons have been settled as colonists. Finally, let us note that the F.I.D.E.S. by its financial support has permitted the development of peanut cultivation in Senegal, of rice in Guinea and the Sudan, of karite in Upper Volta, as well as the creation of several technical schools.

c. Social Consequences

177 This technical evolution has profound repercussions on the
native way of life. We notice the same change in the Bambara
596 peasant as in the Bambara artisan. The large united family which
241 was [78] the cornerstone of agricultural technique tends to split up more and more, even in the regions where the traditional farming methods are still used. The family field, a great deal less carefully tended than in the past, gives way in importance to the individual's field. Moreover, the family field traditionally was at the end of a path bordered by small individual fields where each peasant went to work for himself before and after the collective labor. Today, we see the creation of individual fields in the brush far from the path which leads from the village to the family field, clearly indicating the desire of the individual to separate himself from the large family and to escape the control of the farming chief in order to realize personal benefits for himself, not subject to family inspection.

● 177 596 241 Finally, the breaking up of the family cell is manifest in the increasing number of children who prefer to work as farm laborers far from their home country rather than submit to the tutelage of the farming chief.

177 377 489 The economic transformation proceeds due to electrification (regulation of the great falls near Conakry and those of Sotuba near Bamako) and the creation, alongside the old strategic roads, of commercial roads and bridges to facilitate shipping peanuts, rice, cotton, and millet. The ports and wharfs are being put in order, the railroad network being modernized (increasing the matériel, transforming beds and embankments, repairing the tracks, installing and extending yards, improving the depots, constructing stations, buffets, hotels, cheap housing for the employees). On the Niger, improvements are being made in the river ports of Koulikoro, Ségou, Mopti, Bamako, and Gao, and, on the Senegal, of Kayes and Saint-Louis.

177 Finally, the new economy is accompanied by social accomplishments in the fields of health, education, and urbanization.

d. Chambers of Commerce

Thus, two forms of economic organization exist side by side in Bambara country: on the one hand, the traditional and artisan native organization, and, on the other, the European organization which has shattered the ancient society and has put the local economy of the country within the framework of international economy.

177 441 But it is perhaps in the realm of commerce that the influence of European methods has been most felt, particularly in the creation of Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry.

The creation of Chambers of Commerce dates from a decree of the Governor General in 1906. Members are elected for four years and are re-eligible. They are elected by an electoral college made up of the chiefs of French or African commercial establishments. The function of these Chambers is to give the administration advice and information when requested on any question of an economic nature.

The Chambers of Agriculture and Industry have substantially the same organization as the Chambers of Commerce, but in addition they are called on by the governors to group and codify the local customs [79] and usages of an agricultural character. These reports serve as the

177 basis of judicial decisions, and the Chambers also give advice on the
441 program of agricultural improvement undertaken by the administration
and the welfare societies.

In Senegal, there are Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry at Dakar, Saint-Louis, Thiès, Kaolack, and Ziguinchor; in the Sudan, at Bamako; in Guinea and the Ivory Coast, at Conakry and Abidjan.

e. Work Regulation. Unions

464 Sparsely populated, West Africa lacks manpower. A decree of October 22, 1925, and an order of the Governor General of March 29, 1926, set the conditions by which workers could be recruited and work contracts established: salary, bonus, food, lodgings, medical care ... Individual or collective disputes between employers and employees are taken before arbitration boards presided over by a French employer and a native assistant judge.

An act of April 2, 1932, regulates the work of women and
464 children. One of March 11, 1937, organizes the trade unions, and
467 a decree of March 20, 1937, the native professional associations.
Others regulate collective agreements applying to work. The National Assembly has voted the Overseas Work Code which is beginning to be applied. African unions have developed a great deal in the course of these last years; there are six African unions in the Sudan. The complexity of labor problems has led to the creation at Dakar of an office to inspect manpower problems, this office being attached to the General Bureau of Political, Administrative, and Social Affairs.

[80]

CHAPTER 7

CULTURAL ASPECTS

I. Religion

771 One can never insist too much on the importance of religion. It governs the entire social, political, artistic, and even economic life of the country. No institution can be understood without knowing

D. The New Religions: Islam and Christianity

797 177 Alongside this ancestral religion, the Bambara have been exposed to imported religions: Islam and Christianity. The Bambara long resisted the advance of Islam from the Sahara and the cruel Toucouleur domination lasted too briefly to transform a solidly organized religion. But the social evolution provoked by the French conquest has realized what El-Hadj-Omar's conquest could not. The breakdown of the traditional social structures was accompanied by a loosening of religious authority, counterbalanced by the political and administrative authority of the French. Moreover, European educational practices tend to replace the initiation each child received and to turn the children away from the traditional notions. [87] Now, this ignorance and this loss of religious authority are particularly favorable to the diffusion of Islam whose powerful propagandizing is well-known. This diffusion seems to be helped besides by the development of the means of communication, which, on the one hand, aid in separating the young people from the traditional familial authority, and, on the other hand, promote the travel of Dioula and Syrian merchants. All these Mussulmans live in close contact with the population and spread their beliefs, as well as their merchandise, throughout the country. If Islam is constantly on the increase, its practice remains nevertheless superficial and very far from orthodox. Very often it affects only the external forms of the ritual, while the old beliefs and even the traditional sacrifices remain. In addition, the country is still more divided by a certain number of sects, each of which has a Marabout at its head. But the Istiklal constantly attempts, by means of Koran schools directed by Egyptian Mussulmans, to unify this movement which is political as well as religious.

797 The Christian movement is much less important. In the Sudan it is essentially Catholic; missions are created in the bush and in certain centers, but they are still very few and far between. However, the creation of a Black clergy permits easier contacts with the population. The principal centers of the Catholic cult in the Sudan are at Bamako, the residence of the apostolic vicar, at Kati, Ouoloseougou (Bamako circle), Béléko (Diaila subdivision), Gualala (Yanfolila circle), Kayes, an apostolic prefecture with two churches, at Kakoulou (Kayes circle), Kita (White fathers and sisters of Our Lady of Africa), Karangasso

291 designs. European influence has naturally made itself felt in the
● [177] fashions, and European thread is replacing native cotton thread, but the color symbolism in the bands is retained. Even though European fabrics invade the markets more and more, the traditional clothes remain the most sought after, although they have undergone certain modifications inspired by European fashions even while remaining very original.

291 531 585 Although the Bambara go barefoot, in certain circumstances they make ornamented clogs to give to the new bride. These sandals are decorated with geometric designs, engraved with a hot iron by the blacksmith, that symbolize the twinship, the multiplication of children, the parents, the husband's family, the couple's language, and the sealing of the association. These signs are encircled by the sign of the union of the whole. Also, the whole ritual of taking possession lasts for several days.

302 Coiffure. At the present time, the adult males no longer wear the traditional coiffure consisting of two plaits at the side, but the children still have their hair shaved and braided according to custom. Thus, the uncircumcised boys wear a crest of hair going from the forehead to the nape of the neck, while the rest of the head is shaved. The crest symbolizes the [99] divine serpent. The children of blacksmiths also wear, at the sides of the head, two circles of hair which are cut by lines representing the forge. When a child is born after the death of several brothers and sisters, only half of his head is shaved in mockery, so that the dya subject to this pretended neglect will decide to stay in the child. The children of Marabouts have their hair shaved in such a manner that it forms a spiral which starts in the middle of the skull and covers the whole head. Afterwards, bands of hair are shaved in a manner to trace a cross on this spiral. The little girls wear a small braid across the forehead, falling on the left side, while married women wear a braid at each side of the head. These braids are made by adding fibers of the da, shining with karite, plaited with the hair. Finally, the women wear
301 22 gold rings at the ears, images of the 22 primordial elements, or sometimes a single large ring in the form of a crescent closed by threads of red cotton, which is a résumé of the 22 others. These rings keep impure words from the ear, which plays an important
[776] role in generation; it is through the ornamentation that the spirits hear what is said to man.

342 of the hut is traced; around this, four large bamboo stakes are erected which are all tied together at one end with a fiber rope. A large stone is placed on top of the pyramid to weigh on the stakes and keep them properly apart. Near the top, two bamboo strips are tied around the four stakes, one on the outside and the other on the inside: this is the midio. Other stakes are slipped between the four principal ones and are attached to the double hoop. Equally spaced, [101] seven or eight other circles are tied on, descending toward the base of the cone. For covering the roof, straw of tji le, very thin and white, is chosen, which will be the most rainproof, or else straw of black uro-ba-bi, "hyena grass", coarser and less esteemed. A layer of straw is spread on, attached to the top, and sewed to the first two circles. A third hoop placed over the two others keeps the straw in place. Then a second row is put on and sewed to the last hoop, at ground level. The succeeding rows then are laid from the bottom up to the top in such a manner that they partially cover each other. When the bottom row has been sewed, the roof is lifted, and a small child slips inside to pull in the bamboo needle used to sew the straw to the hoops. When the roof is entirely sewed, a man climbs up, knocks the stone off the top, and takes its place. He slips a hoop made of six bamboo strips over the first three hoops of the roof, attaching it with the aid of two crossed sticks that pierce the roof. He gathers the straw at the top between the ends of the four stakes which are sticking out and knots and plaits it "like a woman's hair." If the roof is to cover a woman's hut, this is not done, but the straw which sticks out is folded down and held by the first hoop. Finally, from 15 to 30 young men assemble and lift the roof onto the hut.

At the present time, walls of basketwork and banco are replaced by walls made of molded banco bricks, dried in the sun.

[177] Rectangular or square hut. This form is of recent importation in the Bamako and Bougouni circles; it is frequently found starting at Ségou and up to the Sahel.

This type is constructed with dried bricks. When the roof is flat, it rests on forked wooden posts that are planted in the ground or that stand on big flat stones. There are five, seven, or nine of these posts, including a central one. Beams are placed in the forks; joists go across the supports. The whole is covered with matting which is packed with a layer of banco mixed with karite butter or with nere flour. The roof is constructed with a slight incline to let the water run off, and it is tamped with the bumbuli, a sort of wooden

545 Example:
794 Tiekoroba kolili (the old man who has nothing)
522 Ita rokina momindi (what you say is not liked)
Ida konieti aie (you are right)
N'ka idia dopina marmandi (but one doesn't like what you say)
Or again:
Demise fentili (the rich young man)
Ida dokma kakadi (one likes what you say)
Ida konie tinaie (what you say is not true)
N'ka idia dokma makadi (but one likes what you say)

545 534 794 The Kworeduga have the su (Moor) as taboo, and they accompany themselves in singing with a sacred gourd, yaraba, which contains seeds of Lufa cilindrica.

535 881 Finally, during the circumcision initiation period for example, the child learns the sacred dances which often mime exploits of the mythical ancestors.

● 177 517 A certain evolution characterizes the native art which has been transformed in a curious fashion by contact with Europeans. In European centers, prolonged contact with the Whites has confused the beliefs that inspired the art, but the artists have lost neither their taste nor their gifts. At the request of the Whites themselves, they have undertaken a controlled art, with the aim of pleasing the Europeans. Needless to say, even if it conserves some charm in its form, all this new art, which evolves with the same swift rhythm as our modes, remains terribly dead, for the true source of inspiration has dried up. This art no longer seeks to be true, but to be pretty; by this it signs its own death warrant.

[109] CONCLUSION

I. Traditional Interpretation of Mental Characteristics

181 In the introduction to Religion Bambara, Tauxier insists on the mental characteristics: "The Bambara has remained rather openly fetishist"; he possesses "two dominant traits, which are absolutely undisputed and indisputable:

"1. He is a very good farmer.

782 776 The *saraka* is the Bambara's only direct religious act toward their Creator and sovereign Lord. Although it is often performed and presented in the corner formed by two paths that fork or cross, it may be given anywhere, and I was right in saying that the Bambara God remains without priest, altar or sacrifice, and, strictly speaking, without worship.

776 177 3. The Bambara Belief in God is not of Islamic Origin any more than are their Ideas on Heaven, Hell, and the World of Invisible Beings (1)

1. Cf. J. Brun of the White Fathers, "Notes sur les Croyances et les Pratiques religieuses des Malinkés fétishistes /Notes on the Religious Beliefs and Practices of the Malinke Fetishists/," *Anthropos,* II, pp. 952-954.

772 776 177 Bambara notions of God, heaven and hell, and the world of invisible beings conform so closely to the teachings of the Koran, that we ask ourselves first of all if they were not received from the Moslems. Our surprise increases even more when we begin to study these people, for with respect to religion the only terms in which they can express themselves in present-day language are purely and exclusively Arabic. This is a fact, and the similarity is very easy to establish.

The angels -- Bambara *méléké*, Arabic *mala'ika* ملائكة -- are spirits -- Bambara *hakili*, Arabic *'aqal* الكربين --, superior to the genii -- Bambara *djiné*, Arabic *el-djin* الجنة --, beings intermediate between men and angels and to whom God has entrusted the custody of the elements. The good angels are in paradise -- Bambara *ardjana*, Arabic *El-djanna* الجنة -- up there in the blue sky and constitute the heavenly court of the Creator and sovereign Lord of all things, God -- Bambara *Alla*, Arabic *Allah* الله --, the cause of good and evil. God rules seven heavens and seven terrestrial globes placed one above the other and the wicked angels

172 -- Bambara sétané, Arabic chéitane شيطان -- are at open war with
176 Him; rooted in evil, powerful, and capable of harming and oppressing
177 human beings. They must nevertheless undergo eternal punishments
in hell -- Bambara djahanéma /67/, Arabic djahannam جهنم -- in a fire compared to which, says the legend, ours would be only the little that would remain after seven consecutive washings with large quantities of water.

As this cursory glance indicates, both concept and words are strictly from the Koran. Can it be doubted that the Negro was taught all this by the Moslem? I have lived too long among the Negroes to take appearance for reality, and here once again I am wary of accepting the statements of our learned "travelers."

For centuries now, Islam has penetrated into the heart of Africa
177 and established itself in the midst of our Negro peoples; slow as its
181 advance has been, it has not failed to leave its mark. The Bambara, the most important kernel of the Mande peoples, was always at war against the Moslem to safeguard his independence and the faith of his fathers (the wars were primarily religious). They were in turn conqueror and conquered, but most often conquered (for the Bambara, egoistic, plan their personal and individual interests before that of the group, and they always lacked cohesion and agreement, and never really had a leader at the top); they could not escape. Since they are nevertheless essentially deceitful, crafty, and hypocritical so that other peoples compare them to a piece of cow dung, dry outside but soft and loose inside so that it breaks and soils one as soon as a foot is placed on it -- and this comparison pleases them -- I do not hesitate to say that they took nothing from Islam that was not already in their minds. If they have taken Arabic terms to express themselves, I cannot doubt that this was purely diplomacy on their part. The use of Arabic terms that correspond to their own ideas in order to express their beliefs in present-day language represented adaptation and in no sense acceptance on their part. I would even assert that here they gave evidence, not of tact towards their conqueror (this is a quality which at the present time they do not possess even in an embryonic form), but of a certain pliability and shrewdness. In fact, by appearing before their tyrant on an equal footing with respect to dogma, they

177 avoided the stroke of the sword or slavery, kept their faith in fetishes 181 intact, and shielded both themselves and their /68/ children from all religious propaganda -- for what was there to teach them, what could they be taught that they did not know already?

177 192 The terms from the Koran have become familiar to them in present-day language. Since they do not come from them and express primarily a concept rather than the thing itself, they have been able to use them with complete freedom, without failing in the respect due to the superior beings, their lords and gods, whose names are never spoken in vain or in an unsuitable name. Nowadays the words have become so Bambara that the people do not even suspect that they are foreign to their language, and have no cause to be surprised at them. The Bambara make anything their own that they feel translates their thought precisely, without giving much attention to the original meaning of the word, which they often do not know. Having [576] heard the Moslem repeatedly cry out *bismilahi*, they thought it in good taste to make this exclamation in the anecdotes and stories that they tell, and for two or three years this has been the super-polite expression in "smart" society for inviting a guest to enter a hut and squat on the mat. In twenty years this word *bismilahi* بسم الله, will have no other meaning! Even though it means "in the name of God," you would be laughed at if you were heard to say that it is an Arabic word with quite another meaning, just as you would waste your time telling a Negro that the expression "*fou moi le camp*" /"get out of here," literally "give me the camp."/ is plain /French/ slang. When a slave escapes, does one not say, "*a bi fou moi* (1) *le camp*?"

1. *a*: "he," *bi*: "is," *fou moi le camp*: the whole expression: "to desert."

It is a widely used expression known by everyone and is teamed with this other: *ze ma fo*, about which I pondered for several days, seeking to find its meaning. Yet nothing could be simpler; it is "I don't give a rap." /From the French *je m'en fous*/.

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[194]

> *Ma n'zira ba*, etc., does not mean "great baobab of man." The real meaning is: "O man who is a great baobab." In writing it I prefer a "z" to an "a." Usually the Bambara soften the hard sound by a euphonious little "n." With a hard "s" the word *sira* cannot be distinguished from the word "tobacco": *sira siramougou*, "snuff tobacco"; *n'ziremougou*, "baobab flour."

776 a purely Bambara term to express their idea /of these spirits/, and
782 they to the word *djiné*; they call them *gnéna*.

Before the arrival of the Moslems, the Negro sacrificed to beings
776 to whom they have attributed bodies and souls, although imponderable
782 and invisible, who are intermediate between men and angels and whom
●177 the Arabs call الجن *el djiné*. But they also sacrificed to evil
798 beings, superior to the former in power, whom they call *boli*. The legend of the *boli*, an ironic legend which I will tell in full when I discuss this matter, is sufficient proof of this belief. For the Moslems of the Sudan only two things here below /70/ are worthy of attention: Mecca (*Makka*) and *Stamboul* -- old Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Constantinople -- who in their eyes, as in the eyes of all Moslems of our colonies, is the great Pope of Islam. Everything that does not bear the stamp of Mecca, everything that does not come from Stamboul, is to be rejected and scorned. Thus the Bambara, fertile in expedients, quickly managed to find a way out of their discussions with the propagators of Islam: "All our *boli* come from Mecca," was their weapon of war.

776 The Bambara were pursued from every side, unable to perform
177 publicly even religious ceremonies in honor of simple genii. Can
798 one believe that they added others that were still more terrible? As conquerors the Moslems have always ruthlessly opposed idolatry, destroying its temples and overthrowing its altars. "Believe or die" has always been their motto and always will be as long as they feel

776 ●777 798 strong. Is it not a fact that this law still operated forcefully at the time of the last kings of Segou, when El-Hadj-Omar (1) took the crown from the pagan king Mary to give it to his son Ahmadou (2)? It was Ahmadou who held captive our explorers Mage and Quintin, and at the death of his father he left for Yamina and then for Nioro, leaving the crown to his son Madani. For those Bambara who were incautious, whose fetishes were seized, or who were caught sacrificing, the consequences were the confiscation of possessions, imprisonment, slavery, and death. The huge area where the native cemetery and [764] the European cemetery (3) are found at present was soaked with the blood of pagans. Who will ever know how many heads rolled at that time for a purely religious purpose! On some days the arm of the executioner stopped only because it was tired and unable to strike -- so I was told by some Negroes who owed their /71/ lives to this fatigue. And I believe them, for the greatest praise that the story-tellers /griots/ accord these tyrants is that they knew how to cut off heads. The legend that the boli came from Mecca was born inevitably

1. El-Hadj-Omar ("Omar the Pilgrim"), so named because, it is said, he made the journey to Mecca.

2. Bambara translation of the word Ahmed.

3. There are two European cemeteries at Segou. The first is at the entrance of the city on the south side. The second, the only one in which burial takes place at present, is on the edge of the native cemetery, south on the road from Sens and Koutiala, about 300 or 400 meters from the city.

776 out of the Bambara's need to soften their crime of idolatry and to pre-
177 serve it by lending it extenuating circumstances. If the cradle of
798 Islam is Mecca, if its superiority is derived from the holiness of that
city, chosen and beloved by God (1), what can the Moslems want of

him, the Bambara, whose religion comes from this same much vaunted city? And if the God of Whom the Moslems preached to the Bambara has decreed everything (2), good and evil, if He is the Author of both good and evil and leads each person along the course that pleases Him to such a degree that he no longer has freedom of choice, why wish to take from them that which God has given them, that which comes to them from the holy city of Mecca!

776 The Bambara term for the boli is gna. Their idea of them
796 corresponds closely to the Arab concept of the chéitane شيطان ,
782 and in everyday language, they define them by a single word: sétané,
[192] "satan," even though this word is never on their lips in the sacrifices.
In their nocturnal orgies and religious dances, the Negroes' notion
of the genie to which they are sacrificing are shown in concrete form.
And when, in their religious ceremonies in honor of the Komo, Kono,
[178] Nama, etc., the spirit appears by the glow of little fires lit in the
sacred woods, decked out in a cloak of feathers, his head hidden in a
huge horned mask that has nothing human about it, one cannot help
776 thinking of the tales of old Breton grandmothers, told on a winter
796 evening in the stables. The blasting of trumpets, bamboos, and koba
534 horns (3), the tinkling of /72/ the little bell, and the shouts of the
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1. See what I said above on the subject of Mecca and Stamboul.

2. See the Koran: VI, v. 3 - 39; X, v. 99; XIV, v. 4; XVII, v. 32; XXXVI, v. 6, 7, 8, 9; LIII, v. 43, 44, 45 - 49; LXXVI, v. 29; LXXX, v. 29; etc.

176 If on this earth the smallest of rulers, the least of potentates, is surrounded by servants and slaves, could the Creator be without them? If those who form the court of a king are superior to the gouatigi, or "family heads," to the dougoutigi, or "village heads," and to the kafotigi, or "heads of cantons," would those who form the celestial court be inferior to men, to genii, or to demons? The conclusion is perfectly natural; they would be superior to the latter, and to what will he /the Bambara/ compare them? Since they always in every way use themselves as a basis for comparison, they have only to think of themselves in order to remain logical in their conception of the world and to attribute to these beings the nature of their souls, their dousou, which they also call son. Is this not what they have done? When the Bambara define their idea of the soul and want to be understood, have they any other word than this very one, méléké, which they use to designate the angels? It is clear that they do not owe their concept [177] of heaven and the angels to the Moslems; they have appropriated from a foreign language a word which corresponded to a concept they already had, and that is all.

176 177 192 196 However, I am told that they have only one word to designate the Divinity, the Only God, and that word is the Islamic term itself, Alla. They have no other, and the first missionaries, doubtless through ignorance of the pagans' hatred of the Moslems, adopted it, thus creating a hindrance to their ministry (1). Yes, Alla is the term

197 1. By translating as Alla both God and our concept of the Divinity, the first missionaries failed to establish the profound division which should exist between Catholicism and Islamism. The pagans regard the Catholic and the Moslem, as cousins, if not as brothers, and the word Alla is not irrelevant to this view. Because the Catholics believe in the Old Testament, they seem in the eyes of the Negro to border on Islamism, and the departure from it into Christianity

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> seems to them like membership in a sect derived directly from Islamism. The Moslems help with all their might to further belief in this nonsense. Therefore the missionaries should delete from their catechisms the word *Alla* for "God," as well as the ridiculous word *mori* for "priest," the word *néma* for "grace," etc., etc. -- in a word, all that is not Bambara.

776 they use in everyday language when they speak of God, but in the be-
177 ginning did they not have another, and do they not still have one at
192 present? /76/
196

I have always been surprised at the Negro's readiness to call a divine blessing by the name of its Author, and when in the winter he receives the blessing of blessings, the rain that makes plants sprout and the harvest grow, this is the way he expresses himself: "*Alla bi fign*, *Alla bi na*, *Alla bi kouloukoulou*, *Alla bi yégé yégé*, *Alla do*, etc., God darkens, God comes, God rumbles, God flashes, it is God," etc. These are purely metaphoric expressions, which mean: "The clouds gather; it will rain; the thunder rumbles; there are flashes of lightning, it is the rain."

I have found these metaphors on their lips also with exactly the same meaning but this time in Bambara words: "*Sa bi fign*, *sa bi na*, *sa bi kouloukoulou*, *sa bi yégé yégé*, *sa do*," the meaning is likewise: "The clouds gather; it will rain; the thunder rumbles; there are flashes of lightning; it is the rain." The word *sa* is strictly Bambara and so cannot reasonably be regarded as more recent than the Arab word; the Negroes therefore had it before they knew the word *Alla*. The word did not mean "cloud," "thunder," "lightning," or "rain," and there is every reason to believe that there was a time when it awakened in their minds a concept identical with that which the word *Alla* awakens in them at present, and that this word *Alla* from a foreign language is only used to express a concept long held by them.

771 177 The better one knows the Bambara, the more one studies their beliefs in the light of their practices, considering them from their own way of thinking, seeing, feeling, and envisaging things, the more one is convinced that they owe none of their concepts to the Moslems. They have only taken from their conquerors certain words /82/ from the Koran, and these they have adopted to express themselves. They are words which corresponded to their ideas and which, being foreign to their language, remained terms that conceal.

772 177 It is a curious and surprising fact that certain Moslem truths suited to make an impression on their minds, such as hell, paradise, the judgment of the soul followed by reward or punishment, the end of the world, etc., have always left them cold and indifferent. Had they, perhaps, lost this concept by the time of the Moslems' arrival so that all this was new to him?

772 What does hell matter to the Bambara! Should they fear this consuming fire compared to which ours would be only the remains from a seventh washing (1)? To begin with, they believe in the reincarnation of souls, and this belief protects them from all these tortures, and if some Negroes think of hell, they think of it without trembling. To deserve it, one must insult the gnéna or djiné, or the gnâ (boli, sétané), or be a monster to the point of denying all the laws of justice and hospitality. The occasions for sacrificing to the gnéna and to the gnâ are too frequent always to go unnoticed, their fears of the fetishes are too numerous for anyone continuously to refuse the hen and the kola nut to the invisible tyrants. And is there any monster here below whose heart is not at one time or another moved, touched, or seized with compassion for the weak? Where is the rough, rude being who is ashamed to offer a glass of water to the passing traveler or, even

1. Definition of hell: A douga ko wolonoula, min bi to a wolonoula ko, an tassouma flé nin yé, literally: "it to extinguish washing seventh that which is left to it seventh (washing) after our fire, look, that is it."

826 827 The mouth and tongue, ejectors of the word, can be compared in importance to the ear, a receptive organ. It is through the ear that man receives and remembers the word. Its role is comparable to that of the sex organs which eject life and receive it. The ear in itself has both sexes: male by its auricle, female by its orifice. This duality expresses the basic duality of man. That is why the corpse of [764] an uncircumcised man is sometimes amputated at the ear rather than at the foreskin.

826 301 Because of the symbolism of its shape and because of its function, the ear is adorned. Men formerly wore three copper rings on the right ear and four on the left, the number seven representing the complete being, male and female, ni and dya. Women wear four rings on each auricle or, if they can, twenty-two, which represent the twenty-two stages of creation, or the twenty-two generative categories. Sometimes, for both men and women, a single ring attached to the earlobe represents the mother of the other rings (1).

[178] 1. In olden times, men and women wore cowrie shells on their ears in the place of copper rings, a custom which would seem to be still respected in certain villages today. These shells played the same part as copper.

827 191 301 776 But the role of this adornment goes much further. As symbol of the word, it is through the ornaments that the spirit Téliko, master of sound, hears what /68/ is said to man. They attract sound and send it back to Téliko and Faro, who thus judge the acts and words of men. To wear earrings did not originally mean to adorn oneself, but to hear the spirits as well as to force them to hear what was said (2). Its second effect is to embarass the liar, the bearer of false news

2. Rings placed on musical instruments have the same purpose and also symbolize those worn by men. See p. 282.

or evil words, by putting him in the position of being understood by the invisible, therefore of being judged by them. A pleasant or well-intentioned word benefits the one to whom it is addressed and this

114 3. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal et Niger
[Upper Senegal and Niger].

4. Labouret, Les Mandingues et leur
langue [The Mandingo and Their
Language].

etc., but these are still very fragmentary and incomplete. In addi-
177 tion, this society was completely disrupted by the French conquest,
either by such radical measures as the suppression of slavery or by a
natural evolution as a result of contact with European societies.
Nevertheless, traditional structures retain their vitality, despite the
effort to adapt them to European formulas.

178 The society seems to have oscillated between familial
anarchy and the clan stage, according to alternating ranges of
groupings, disassociation, and regroupings.

1. The Family

594 Concerning the Sudanese, Delafosse has already made the
596 distinction between "the restricted family" and the "extended
family." The restricted family is composed of the parents and
children who live in the "hut." Taken alone, it does not represent
a social unit. The true social cell is the extended family. This
is the large united family made up of a group of restricted families
whose heads recognize a common ancestor. This group, composed
of agnates in principle, is the ba-denya, whose members live in
huts within an enclosure: gwa or so. The two ends of this [51]
enclosure rest on a blõ (vestibule) where the ancestors' altar is found.

601 According to Labouret, the Bambara distinguish three cate-
612 gories of family ties: the paternal line, the maternal line, and re-
lationship by marriage. The child takes the dyamu (honorable
name) of his father's group, but the terms applied to ancestors and
descendants are the same as those of the maternal line.

"... Kinship includes the following generations:
tolo-mina... tolo-sama... tolo-ma-sama: who seizes or pulls ears
[822] (a belief has it that if a great grandson pulls the ear of his great
grandfather, the latter becomes deaf);

304 grown up they are allowed complete freedom as to whether they undergo the operation or not. For fear of the pain and of letting a sigh or tears escape them and becoming the laughing stock of the whole village, many children of ten to fifteen years refuse (1).

1. Male children that are not tattooed usually have their ears pierced.

Bambara tattoos are simple and not at all ugly when well done. Although it disfigures some, leaving lumps as big as a thumb on their cheeks and chest, such an accident is /174/ extremely unusual, considering the number of those tattooed. They use no unclean substances to dry their wounds and make them swell, charcoal powder being the only medicine used in tattooing.

304 178 Although this practice is being lost around Ségou, and many families no longer want it for their children, it is nevertheless not on the verge of disappearing entirely and completely. To remove a religious practice from an entire people takes years, centuries, and if a famous sorcerer came and ordered it for those who dispense with it, they would undergo it at once.

Chapter 9

Circumcision in Bambara Country

1. The Importance of Circumcision

881 304 The important act in the life of the Bambara man and woman -- both sexes are mutilated -- is unquestionably circumcision. And whence did they get this custom? Some people settle the question with one word: "It is of Mohammedan origin." I refrain from being so categorical, for the Bambara have always rejected Islam, they have

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3. Even those who have known their husbands before this day are honored in this fashion, for the family will have kept this cloth faithfully, and if there is occasion to unfold it, they are very proud.

before all. In a word, everybody praises the bride for having been [831] able to remain a virgin, but they praise her in Bambara, which means they do so in coarse terms, and in order to emphasize her virtue they present her with a bouquet of roses rolled in filth.

When the bride leaves the court, her maids of honor come to fetch her, and while the men stay and get drunk and the women continue to clap their hands, to sing at the top /211/ of their lungs, and to dance to the sound of the drums, trumpets, and guitars, she herself goes into the hut of friends to end the first night of her wedding in sleep. She may not go out for eight days; she takes her meals in the hut and spends her days sitting on a mat with a white veil on her head, spinning cotton in the company of her maids of honor (1).

[178 574]

1. Many have freed themselves from this custom. Those who submit to it -- and they are in the majority -- can see their families again after these eight days of imprisonment and stay with them for two weeks. The bride's trip to her family at this time is called bina kounna sago. A few weeks later she again spends four days -- sou nani yé -- with her parents, and a little later she stays with them for one night, sou kélen si.

The groom stays in his hut for the whole day following the first night, and just about everybody, men and women, come to pay him

183 The Bambara has a very highly developed sense of this 181 idea of justice and there is nothing he resents more than injustice or a denial of justice. His resentment is stubborn and his vengeance, which may be deferred under a show of indifference, is implacable. The chronicle of Ségou is rich in pertinent examples. There was Ngolo Dyara, bringing murder and disaster on his own relatives in order to satisfy his hatred for having been sold into slavery by his uncle and not ransomed by any of his relatives. There was Kégné Mari who, watching the murder of Touro-koro in the Komo wood, expressed his vengeance finally fulfilled by saying: "Remember how, falsely accusing me of adultery with one of your wives, you had me lashed? And how on that day I told you that even though I were lying on the ground, if I could touch you with my foot, I would lay you low? Here at last is the day of my vengeance!" Similar examples are innumerable.

If he is powerless against injustice, the Bambara will wait patiently and, each time he has to speak, will dissimulate his weakness in formulas which have a double meaning, such as 195 O do!, meaning "That's it!" O nya-na, meaning "Oh well!" Tigi!, meaning "That's true"; and other similar expressions. At the same time, he is repeating to himself his proverb: don' m'i fantan', a bla k'a teme, meaning "Don't pay attention while you are weak," that is, "Wait until I am strong enough to take vengeance (lit., to pay you back)."

This instinctive feeling for justice accounts, in a certain 181 measure, for the family bonds made up of reciprocal rights [131] 571 and duties between parents and between them and their children 626 and, by an analogy of which we shall see other examples, between master and slave and between chief and subject. The obligation to respect all pacts concluded in the form of vows, oaths or fraternal alliance rests on the same basis. And it is the same notion that inspires the repression of acts which are almost universally condemned: perjury, treason, false witness, slander, 691 theft and murder. It sustains the tireless persistence of the pleader who will go through endless lawsuits to obtain redress for a wrong done to him or to one of his people. And it gives strength to public vengeance against the sorcerer.

692 In matters of justice, the Bambara frequently continue to consult
their old tribal judges. It must be noted, however, that in taking
[177 away the judicial competence of the old chiefs, the French administration
has contributed to diminishing, and almost to completely
622] destroying, their power.

The Bambara had a judicial organization quite as precise and
671 regulated as their religious organization, although there was no
codified law, such as the Koran or the Hebrew tables of law. Justice
was rendered according to rules which each community passed on
from generation to generation. These rules are not of divine origin,
but they [69] are sacred nevertheless, for custom is the legacy of
[643 the ancestors. The Fama and his council of notables could promulgate
645] new laws, but, before deciding on a new rule, they consult the
Komo and the Nyama [an altar]. Then, in the presence of a priest,
each one swears on the altar to obey the law which becomes sacred.
Moreover, the customary rules cannot be separated from the moral
code and the religion to which they are linked. They are not uniform;
[184] each canton has its own, and often each village, and within
each of these there are observances peculiar to certain families or to
certain castes. Nevertheless, the sentiment of fair play is very strong
[181] among the Blacks, but they do not admit the equality of men, who
are naturally different one from another according to their aptitudes,
means, and condition.

Custom regulates all relations between individuals and between
individuals and the collectivity.

692 Two sorts of native tribunals existed in the Bambara country:
a tribunal of conciliation, presided over by the village chief,
who assembled a council of notables; and a high tribunal presided
over by the Fama, to whom were submitted the matters which the
first tribunal had been unable to settle. In addition, the Fama could
call before his tribunal the civil or penal matters which seemed to
him to be of importance to the public order.

695 Justice was without charge and rendered day and night by the
643 Fama as one of his essential functions, for the judge is the one who
repairs the disorders that shake society. The hearings were solemnly
conducted and took place under the silk-cotton tree (Ceiba pentandra)

545 Example:
794 Tiekoroba kolili (the old man who has nothing)
522 Ita rokina momindi (what you say is not liked)
Ida konieti aie (you are right)
N'ka idia dopina marmandi (but one doesn't like what you say)
Or again:
Demise fentili (the rich young man)
Ida dokma kakadi (one likes what you say)
Ida konie tinaie (what you say is ~~not~~ true)
N'ka idia dokma makadi (but one likes what you say)

545 534 794 The Kworéduga have the su (Moor) as taboo, and they accompany themselves in singing with a sacred gourd, yaraba, which contains seeds of Lufa cilindrica.

535 881 Finally, during the circumcision initiation period for example, the child learns the sacred dances which often mime exploits of the mythical ancestors.

177 517 A certain evolution characterizes the native art which has been transformed in a curious fashion by contact with Europeans. In European centers, prolonged contact with the Whites has confused the beliefs that inspired the art, but the artists have lost neither their taste nor their gifts. At the request of the Whites themselves, they have undertaken a controlled art, with the aim of pleasing the Europeans. Needless to say, even if it conserves some charm in its form, all this new art, which evolves with the same swift rhythm as our modes, remains terribly dead, for the true source of inspiration has dried up. This art no longer seeks to be true, but to be pretty; by this it signs its own death warrant.

[109] CONCLUSION

I. Traditional Interpretation of Mental Characteristics

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In the introduction to Religion Bambara, Tauxier insists on the mental characteristics: "The Bambara has remained rather openly fetishist"; he possesses "two dominant traits, which are absolutely undisputed and indisputable:

"1. He is a very good farmer.

3: Paques--146 S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8

181 "2. The Bambara makes a solid and disciplined infantryman ...
142 Mentally he is rather dull and stupid, physically he is stocky and
solid." Previously, the Abbé Henry had concluded in these terms:
"The Bambara is a farmer ... Well proportioned, his height is medium,
neither tall nor short. His chest is strong, and his short, thickset neck
supports a large head covered with black, wooly hair. Nothing in
his visage betokens spiritual force, energy, intelligence. His forehead
is receding, his eyebrow arches are rather pronounced, and his jet-black
eyes, of which the white part is slightly cream (!), are straight.
His jaws, nearly always well toothed, project slightly; he has strong,
thick lips, a short chin, cheekbones ... a little projecting, and his
flat nose is horribly open and squashed at its root.

145 "The wife, as well as the husband, is strong, robust. More
often than not she is knock-kneed, and this constitutional defect
doubtless comes from the fact that she is obliged, from her earliest
482 childhood, to carry rather heavy burdens on her head, burdens often
too heavy for her strength [sic]. Mentally, the Bambara has a mind
181 as thick as his body. Slow to understand and lacking curiosity, he has
no desire to improve his condition. 'What my fathers did, I must
do' -- that is his great principle ... Lazy, good-for-nothing even, he
believes he's done everything if he has enough in his granary to feed
himself and his family ... Timorous, he fears the European exactly
as a slave fears his master, and if he serves the European passably
well, the latter is greatly mistaken if he thinks he has gained the
native's affection. He detests the White, as he detests the Moslem;
the White is the conqueror, an anti-fetishist, and therefore an enemy."

Finally, M. Monteil, in his Monographie de Djenné [Djenné
142 Monograph], tells us in his turn: "... elongated skull and pronounced
302 prognathism; the black, wooly hair is often gathered in braids by the
young people ... the top of the head is often shaven, which makes
the forehead look larger. The women affect a sort of transversal
crest.

142 "The forehead recedes, the eyebrow arches project ... the
nose [110] flattened, the root of the nose squashed, the nostrils
gaping wide, the lips thick ... the teeth wide with little space between
... the neck large, the shoulders wide and straight, the chest
strong and long, the members robust, the joints thick. Rather often ..
for the woman, sometimes for the man, a fairly pronounced steatopygia.

142 The skin is in all tints, from light maroon to dark black. The height is a little above average . . .

●181 "The Bambara is a bumpkin; he is dull and slow to understand, but he clings to his ideas, doubtless rare, and has an insurmountable stubbornness. He is patient; he endures every tyranny and submits to every calamity with a stupefying resignation. But when he has resolved to exact vengeance by force or by exercising his rights, nothing can stop him. He does not know how to present himself, he has trouble explaining himself, he always goes on interminably before coming to the point, and even though speaking deliberately, his eyes averted or fixed on the ground, he only pronounces half of the words, which makes it difficult to understand him."

These few extracts at least have the merit of giving a measure of the extent to which the Bambara is incomprehensible to the White.

II. Refutation of the Traditional Theory

The Bambara is, in fact, intelligent, patient, and stubborn, so many qualities indispensable for living in this difficult country. We have been able to show, in the course of this study, how coherent his metaphysical system was, its intellectual rigor, and how it influenced all social and economic life. But we must insist on this point: such a system is not the fruit of the idle speculations of a few privileged minds; it is lived by all, understood in its parts by all members of the society and in its totality by numerous old men.

153 181 The absence of a system of writing like our own obliges the Bambara to possess all this knowledge himself, and his prodigious memory astonishes the White. But the most remarkable thing in his intellectual makeup is the facility with which he has managed to seize our modes of thought, so different from his traditional thought, and to assimilate our vision of the world; there is no great school in France that is not within his reach. The astonishing ease with which he is able to assimilate our language and our thought is adequate proof of the suppleness of his mind which has always been trained in all the speculative subtleties.

181 The stubbornness he exhibits in certain cases is often his only manner of defending his traditions, which are the very stuff of his life. These traditions were formed in the course of thousands of years of experience in a hard country where life is not a natural thing.

181 The upheavals caused by the colonization fascinate his curious soul, but their ultimate result is the uprooting and the destruction of the thing that permitted him to live and to defend himself against a harsh environment, the group. He defends himself against the White invasion by hiding; he prefers to appear stupid rather than to reveal [111] his system to the stranger and to confide to him what constitutes its force. The Bambara may seem lazy. In reality, he knows that agitation is impossible in this tropical climate; he is sparing in his movements in order to assure the maximum return from them. Moreover, moderation characterizes the whole of this sub-desert region. Never does any unconstraint develop generous forms; everything is condensed for maximum efficacity. The world is systematized into symbols which escape destruction. Exterior manifestations are useless in this country where the climate destroys everything. The only thing that resists is not matter, but spirit. The Bambara has systematically sacrificed all material luxury in favor of the speculative life, and his "averted eyes" are turned toward the inner life. It is perhaps because of that that he does not know how to "present" himself and that he doesn't sparkle like the Peul. He considers himself "a man of the soil," capable of enduring heat and cold and all the brutal changes that are visited on him by men or the elements. This is why he alone is able to render fecund a sterile land that has discouraged more than one of our technicians.

But what is perhaps the most important thing is the joy which fills the life of the Bambara. The women pound the cereals alone or in a group snapping their fingers in play; they spin cotton, sing, shout, laugh, cook, go seek dead wood in the bush, and draw water from the well or from a neighboring watercourse, all the while making waggish remarks on the small events of the day, for no detail escapes them. In the evening there are the *Tam-tam*, organized by the young people to celebrate a marriage, to thank a chief for his bounty, or for the simple pleasure of dancing, of losing oneself in the rhythm of the drums and rapid handclapping. At night, the *Komo*, surrounded by the dancers, comes to challenge a witch who terrorizes the village. A terrible fight ensues, with each one using his magic gifts. When the witch is vanquished, the village chief comes to felicitate the *Komo* chief publicly, and the women and and children gasp with pleasure. During a social evening, a *griot*

[8] gathers several friends in a corner to listen to songs and recitations of the old times; all are in ecstasy, moved, revolted or consoled, according to what happens in the long, marvelous story. Then, there are the games and challenges of the children's societies, which seem to want to upset all the fine social order of the village by their drum beatings, their petty thefts, or their claims.

To be sure, the life of the Bambara is exempt from neither work nor difficulties. But still it knows joy, goodwill, and peace. And if there is one thing that it does not know, that is, indubitably, boredom.

4: Henry--1 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

The Soul of an African People
The Bambara
Their Psychic, Ethical, Religious, and Social Life

/12/

Chapter 1

1. Beliefs Concerning the Forces of Nature

● 181 It would seem child's play to demonstrate to a Negro the absurdity of his prejudices and his superstitious practices; yet such a demonstration does not suceed. No matter how clear and simple your arguments may be, you will not succeed in bringing into his mind the least spark of light or the slightest doubt. The o do, "that's it," and tigné, "that's true," which spring so readily from the mouth of one whose eyes you try to open, are polite sayings, and nothing more.

There is no reason to be surprised. Being incapable of long meditation and broad reasoning, he does not grasp the illogicality of his beliefs and, the contradictions in his behavior; he believes what his fathers believed and, like them, he sacrifices, so that everything with which he comes in contact is reddened slightly with blood. Your talk at once surprises him and leaves him cold; he does not understand you or grasp what you say; he even finds you a little silly. If he does not dare to admit this feeling to himself he stops with the words: Toubabou do! (This is a white man! Can he think and judge as I myself judge?").

In addition, his beliefs are linked to one another, and if we are able to get down to his level, taking care all the while to raise him to ours, if we judge as he judges and think as he thinks, we will move from surprise to surprise, more than ever, for his conception of the world and ours are not at all the same, and his mentality and ours are different from each other.

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772 Every non-Mohammedan Bambara considers himself a close relative of animals and plants and, I may add with all assurance /13/, a close relative of inanimate things. Without any doubt he distinguishes

181 811 772 the kingdoms from each other; for him a mineral is not a vegetable nor a vegetable an animal. He differentiates between the animate and the inanimate and does not confuse the genera and species. But has he known how to establish a definite, clear, and well-demarcated line of distinction between man and the rest of creation? No, he bases his ideas of all things on himself or, to be more definite, on what he feels and believes himself to be. In addition to genii and spirits, he sees conscious forces and energies everywhere in nature. He cannot define these forces; his ideas on the subject are confused and indefinite. But, nevertheless, it is true, that he attributes a glimmer of reason and feeling to everything. Obviously the black man does not attribute a soul -- in the sense that we understand it -- to everything; nor does he say that everything is the home of a genie or a spirit; yet he cannot conceive of pure matter. He finds instinct in animals and special virtues and properties in plants. In inert matter he encounters phenomena which he cannot explain, and since he always uses himself and his reasoning as the basis of comparisons, he endows everything with the immaterial, invisible, imperceptible attributes of reason and feeling. In his mind I repeat, matter is not a soul, or a genie as he conceives of one; yet it is a being, a force, a power that has its own existence and the ability to act of its own accord. Here are a few examples taken from a thousand:

811 731 782 825 In July, 1908 at the time when the crops were sprouting, certain regions of the Ségou circle were invaded by tiny caterpillars measuring barely 0.025 meters in length. They were a beautiful velvety black with pale green lines on their sides; they came from the east out of no one knows where and myriads of them proceeded toward the west in serried ranks. Wherever they passed everything was eaten, and the eleusine /African millet/, corn, and sorghum had to be resown.

While these creatures were devouring the crops, the Moslem cried his insignificant formula toward the east and repeated, "God is great." He prostrated himself, crouched on his heels, devoutly shaking his forefinger, but all was in vain, for the quivering black wave continued to draw back on itself, to hump its back, and then to grow longer /14/; it continued to advance and to grow. The pagan

772 -- Bambara sétané, Arabic chéitane شيطان -- are at open war with
776 Him; rooted in evil, powerful, and capable of harming and oppressing
177 human beings. They must nevertheless undergo eternal punishments in hell -- Bambara djahanéma /67/, Arabic djahannam جهنم -- in a fire compared to which, says the legend, ours would be only the little that would remain after seven consecutive washings with large quantities of water.

As this cursory glance indicates, both concept and words are strictly from the Koran. Can it be doubted that the Negro was taught all this by the Moslem? I have lived too long among the Negroes to take appearance for reality, and here once again I am wary of accepting the statements of our learned "travelers."

For centuries now, Islam has penetrated into the heart of Africa
177 and established itself in the midst of our Negro peoples; slow as its
181 advance has been, it has not failed to leave its mark. The Bambara, the most important kernel of the Mande peoples, was always at war against the Moslem to safeguard his independence and the faith of his fathers (the wars were primarily religious). They were in turn conqueror and conquered, but most often conquered (for the Bambara, egoistic, plan their personal and individual interests before that of the group, and they always lacked cohesion and agreement, and never really had a leader at the top); they could not escape. Since they are nevertheless essentially deceitful, crafty, and hypocritical so that other peoples compare them to a piece of cow dung, dry outside but soft and loose inside so that it breaks and soils one as soon as a foot is placed on it -- and this comparison pleases them -- I do not hesitate to say that they took nothing from Islam that was not already in their minds. If they have taken Arabic terms to express themselves, I cannot doubt that this was purely diplomacy on their part. The use of Arabic terms that correspond to their own ideas in order to express their beliefs in present-day language represented adaptation and in no sense acceptance on their part. I would even assert that here they gave evidence, not of tact towards their conqueror (this is a quality which at the present time they do not possess even in an embryonic form), but of a certain pliability and shrewdness. In fact, by appearing before their tyrant on an equal footing with respect to dogma, they

177 avoided the stroke of the sword or slavery, kept their faith in fetishes 181 intact, and shielded both themselves and their /68/ children from all religious propaganda -- for what was there to teach them, what could they be taught that they did not know already?

177 192 The terms from the Koran have become familiar to them in present-day language. Since they do not come from them and express primarily a concept rather than the thing itself, they have been able to use them with complete freedom, without failing in the respect due to the superior beings, their lords and gods, whose names are never spoken in vain or in an unsuitable name. Nowadays the words have become so Bambara that the people do not even suspect that they are foreign to their language, and have no cause to be surprised at them. The Bambara make anything their own that they feel translates their thought precisely, without giving much attention to the original meaning of the word, which they often do not know. Having [576] heard the Moslem repeatedly cry out *bismilahi*, they thought it in good taste to make this exclamation in the anecdotes and stories that they tell, and for two or three years this has been the super-polite expression in "smart" society for inviting a guest to enter a hut and squat on the mat. In twenty years this word *bismilahi* بسم الله, will have no other meaning! Even though it means "in the name of God," you would be laughed at if you were heard to say that it is an Arabic word with quite another meaning, just as you would waste your time telling a Negro that the expression "*fou moi le camp*" /"get out of here," literally "give me the camp."/ is plain /French/ slang. When a slave escapes, does one not say, "*a bi fou moi* (1) *le camp*?"

> 1. *a:* "he," *bi:* "is," *fou moi le camp*; the whole expression: "to desert."

It is a widely used expression known by everyone and is teamed with this other: *ze ma fo*, about which I pondered for several days, seeking to find its meaning. Yet nothing could be simpler; it is "I don't give a rap." /From the French *je m'en fous*/.

771 If the Bambara have fought to safeguard their independence,
181 they have done so primarily to preserve their faith and keep their fetishes. They have shown such great attachment for these, that their
[101] conquerors have described them as rebels and applied to them the epithet Bamba, synonym of Kafri. These religious struggles in themselves allow us to state as an indisputable fact that before the arrival of the Moslems the Bambara were animistic and sacrificed to genii. /69/

776 Did they have an exact and precise idea of their genii as they
811 do now? Apparently yes, for they always reasoned using themselves as a basis of comparison so that in their minds the invisible, impalpable genii to whom they sacrificed had a striking resemblance to man. It is not a man, and yet it is one, they say unable to define their concept or idea, ma si fa do (1).

1. Ma; "man"; si fa' "certain kind"; do; "it is."

776 The Moslem word djin translates this idea precisely, and the
782 Bambara use it in everyday language; but when the day of the sacrifice comes, they become unaware of it and there remains only one word -- ma, meaning "man." When they redden with blood the bark of
[824] the baobab (Adansonia digitata), the tamarind tree, the false cedar (family of the cedrelaceae), etc., to obtain the good graces and protection of the genie who dwells there, they always confer on it the title ma ("man"), and never that of djiné. "Ma n'zira ba, ma n'tomi ba, ma djala ba; O great baobab man, O great tamarind tree man, O great false-cedar man!" begins the formula used by the sacrificer in offering victims and millet flour to the genie (2). They also have

114 2. In /J. Henry/, "Culte des esprits chez les Bambara /Spirit Worship among the Bambara/," Anthropos, Vol. III, No. 4 (1908), p. 1 /p. 702/, note 1, there is an error in translation.

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this boli from the belt and hanging
it at the side along the thigh.

three most famous sorcerers, whose names -- Makono, Tjewolo, and Tjéba -- have been preserved, but whose origin is lost in the dark of ages, sacrificed to it by preference. This is the formula:

"Touafé Bla, Touafé Bla, the mountain of Touafé Bla is known, the trees of this mountain are known, I want to speak of the fire of its mountain. Touafé Bla, spare some houses (meaning: 'those of my friends') and go and kindle (your fire) in others (meaning: 'cast ruin and desolation among my enemies, among those who wish me ill'). Touafé Bla, favor me, and if I cannot see your fire, Touafé Bla, let me at least see the tip of its long column of smoke (meaning: 'you live in the fire; I cannot see your dwelling, but I can still know your power through the smoke of your fire, that is to say, /I shall know it/ if I am a witness of the misfortunes which you will cause to fall on my enemies and those whom I hate')." /73/

This formula shows us clearly that the boli, or gnâ, live in fire. The Negroes sacrificed to them before the arrival of the Moslems, and gave concrete form to their concept of the infernal spirit, just as they do today, by decking themselves out in a hideous horned mask and a cloak of feathers. Their blowing and shouting in the sacred woods on the days of great orgies have remained the same, and although they have taken the words sétané شَيْطَان, and djahanéma جَهَنَّم, from the Moslems, they have had the concept for a long time. [192]

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Now then, as to the Bambaras' knowledge of the Supreme Being, God the Creator and Ruler, Lord of all, do they owe it to the Moslems?

The Bambara have too hierarchical a nature to need a master here! The youngest child is always the slave of the next older brother, who is the slave of an older one, and so the progression moves up invariably without ever changing, to the grey beard, the elder, the tjekoroba, a real fetish whom everyone obeys, whatever his stupidity, his narrowness of mind, or his lack of judgment.

In every family there is the same progression: the immediate lord of the children is their father, while he in turn bows before his

596 776 181 elders; and above them, as undisputed lord, soars the eldest, the *gouatigi*, or head of the family.

776 181 631 All the *gouatigi* are subject to heads of quarters, led by the *dougoutigi*, (1) or village heads; these obey the *kafotigi*, or heads of the canton, who in turn are governed by the *fama déou*, sons of the king or ministers. Such was the original organization of the Bambara, and all these petty chiefs, were absolute and uncontested lords, each in his own sphere.

1. The *dougoutigi*, or religious head of the village, takes precedence over the *sotigi*, or civil head. I believe that since the time of Carrier, administrator of the circle in 1901, this hierarchy as such has been officially done away with. It persists nevertheless, and the *kafotigi* and *fama déou*, priestly in character, secretly retain their prestige.

776 181 631 643 Above them all there was the king, *Fama* or *Massa* (2), whose chief function was to allow himself to live in affluence and /74/ sweet idleness. He held all his subjects in his hands; all were his slaves, from the least to the highest, and he had the power of life and death over each and every one.

2. The word *Massa*, used to designate the king, also means "great and powerful sorcerer." In the beginning the king really had absolute power, both civil and religious, and was really the prince or pope of fetishism. If he were not, would he have been given the title of *Massa*, "great priest," "great sorcerer?"

776 Before the arrival of the Moslem, the Bambara sacrificed to the
181 *gnéna*, otherwise known as *djiné*, and to the *gnâ*, or *sétané*; and all these genii, whatever name one is pleased to call them, were arranged in a hierarchy as they are today. They were all divided into groups, each with its head, and these heads in turn formed other groups governed by a more powerful one. And if we conclude that the Bambara owes the concept of this hierarchy to the Moslem, would we not be saying that the latter pulled his sword from its sheath in order to strengthen the Negro in his fetishism? Would not we be admitting that he betrayed the Koran which commands him to destroy idolatry: "... kill them /idolators/ wheresoever you shall find them, and take them prisoners, and besiege them, and lay wait for them in every convenient place." (1) All the evidence permits us to say that this hierarchy in the world of invisible beings comes from the Bambara themselves! How then can we believe that they stopped half-way, they who are always grouping and dividing? Is it possible that they did not attain the idea of the autocrat, the unparalleled one, God the sovereign Lord of the genii and sovereign Lord of the beings beneath them, of men and the rest of creation?

And when I study the Bambara hierarchy, I become aware that it is primarily religious! The *gouatigi*, or head of the family, is a priest; the *Fama* or *Massa*, the king, is a priest! Recognition of the genii and of the Creator must thus necessarily have preceded it.

Consequently, there is every reason to believe, not only that the Bambara had the idea of an only God, sovereign Lord of all before the arrival of the Moslems, but that this was their first belief.

776 In the mouth of a Bambara the word God has not nearly the breadth of meaning that we give it. They believe that although He sees all, knows all, and exercises His power everywhere, He is not really everywhere, for powerful, great, and immeasurable as He may be, He remains a "Being" which has quantity and dimensions; /75/ He is circumscribed and occupies space. From here the idea of good angels is only a step, and how easy it is for them to make it.

1. Koran: chap. IX, v. 5.

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791 The Bambara consult these sorcerers to find out the future and to draw their horoscopes or good luck. The fee for a seance is not at all unreasonable; it seldom exceeds the moderate sum of 40 cowrie shells, or one sou.

Concerning the Sirikoun

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754 Every great boli includes an object called sirikoun. There are other sirikoun which are no longer parts of boli, but have become actual boli. The latter are hung at the waist and are always /156/ covered with a red cloth. Almost everyone owns them, although they are most frequently in the hands of the owners and sacrificers of great fetishes. They are usually ends of the tails of cows, horses, wild pigs, etc., and are often sprinkled with blood. They are sought in order to cast a spell or sorcery on an enemy, to make him sick, and even cause him to die, or again to protect oneself from a spell, sorcery, sickness, or death. [751]

The sirikoun and the talking boli are fetishes belonging to individuals; they have neither festivals nor formal sacrifices, and they are not publically worshipped.

Chapter 8

The First Years in the Life of a Bambara

1. The Sexual Morality of the Bambara

181 Those who have seen the Bambara and have the slightest acquaintance with them will not hesitate to tell you: "They are liars and thieves." They certainly never pass up a chance to take the property of another, and they lie boldly and with such complete calm that not a muscle in their bodies flinches. This has always surprised

181 me, and it seems to me that the Bambara might describe himself as:
"A man sufficiently master of himself to be able always to agree with
you without ever revealing his inner thoughts."

Their character is not made up entirely of vices, however, and
I have been told by earnest men that the Bambara never, at least in
public, practice those familiarities with women which shock and
wound every person of high principles. They have added that the two
[674] crimes of adultery and fornication are unusual with them, and this,
one may be sure, is less on account of the severe penalties which they
incur (it seems that before the French conquest the punishment was
death without reprieve), than because they are without feelings, that
181 is, strong passions. Their women can without any difficulty go around
291 with bare bosoms, breasts exposed, hips girded with a paltry rag
knotted under the navel, and their young girls are satisfied with their
small strip of cloth, three fingers wide, which is knotted in front at
the waist, slides between the legs, and is caught up in back by the
cord, to fall in a long train decorated by a gorgeous pompon the size
of a fist. They did not tell me, of course, but /158/ they gave me
to understand quite well that if it were absolutely necessary the girls
could without blushing go around in the scant garb of children who
roll in the dust dressed as on the day they were born, quite naked.
Nakedness cannot stir a Negro; beauty does not excite his eyes, for he
does not have the feeling for it. And for a long time I believed the
Bambara to be endowed with an angelic nature.

181 All these beautiful thoughts have left me, and I must admit
831 that the Bambara are hideously degraded! Every day has made the
matter clearer to me, for when I have left the mission to go to the
surrounding villages, as the duties of my office oblige me to do
several times a week, I have seen the same scenes again and again,
heard the same songs and the same conversations, and I have found
nothing very angelic in any of them. If I went into a field, I saw
young men bent over their hoes, backs running with sweat, who got
up and jumped, shouted the most raucous "you you," and made an
obscene gesture. If a little girl, a child, came to give them a jug
of cool water, she would get a coarse word as thanks and payment,
and often, not to say almost always, a rough hand would remind her

181 that she is a girl, that one day she will be a man's plaything, an
831 object for his pleasure. The child would leave smiling and replace
her three fingers of rag even as she walked away. At dinner time a
[482] big girl would come carrying the gourd of tô, or sorghum gruel, on
her head, and on the palm of her right hand, at shoulder height, the
platter of dried fish sauce. She would be greeted from as far away
as she could be seen and asked for a report on her whole body, and
indeed there would be no stopping at "how are your feet" nor even at
"how are your breasts." And the girl would answer all these vile questions
without getting excited, and when a well-washed hand, ready to
be used as a spoon, embraced her or lifted her breasts, she was not
shocked; only the opposite would surprise her.

887 Here and there in the village a giant tree stretches its branches
538 afar, and the old men, lovers of endless palaver, enjoy themselves
521 under its shade. They go there from the early morning to weave cloth,
make mats, tan hides, scour goats' horns intended for powerful
amulets, etc., and often even /159/ just for the purpose of spending
the hours dozing. And in the midst of all these gray, or at least
graying, beards, swarms a world of children. Among the old men
there are good storytellers /conteur/, who excel in stories of hunting
and war that throb with interest -- but why, alas, must they always
graft on some salacious incident? Their mouths are full chiefly with
[831] stories of adultery and fornication. They will not spare you a single
detail, and they will readily go back to the very beginning so as to
lack no precision whatever. And the moral of these stories can be
reduced to this: "There is nothing in this world comparable to the
pleasures of the flesh; let us enjoy marriage and never pass up a chance
to obtain this satisfaction."

521 If the old men are this lewd, is it surprising to hear the young
831 men describe the ugliness of their bestial evenings while they make
864 mats, stretch the hides of drums, or sew a blouse, a cap, or trousers
for themselves in the b'lon, or entry hut? They talk constantly of their
soungourou, and this term, which should simply mean an unmarried
girl, means any woman, married or not, who gives herself to the
first comer.

Without any shame they talk and chat about all these vile acts
before their little brothers, before children ten and twelve years old,

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The victim offered by the responsible party then has its throat cut, its body is thrown into the water, and the members take some black earth to smear again on the regenerated nya.

If the chief does not observe the chastity imposed upon him before every sacrifice, he must advise the elders of his age grade and purify the altars by sacrificing two roosters or a goat.

It would seem that the taboo of the nimara boli may not be broken without danger, and that in this case the fault is almost irreparable. The Komo is affected not only in one of its parts, but in its entirety, and a general reordering becomes necessary for the society. The chief and the elders carry away the principal altars to their place of origin, that is to say to the village where they were consecrated through contact with those of the local Komo (1). The owner of this latter Komo keeps the tainted objects for seven days. After this delay, the petitioners return, bringing victims which are sacrificed upon the altars now placed in contact with those from which they originated (2). The meat is eaten by the chief who is being consulted, and by him alone. The petitioners must then return home with their sack without speaking a word to anyone during the trip.

This ceremony, which is a second consecration, may under no circumstances be repeated. If the taboo is broken once more after a first fault and a first reordering, the Komo is considered to be entirely destroyed and the village is sometimes abandoned by the inhabitants who have "lost their soul" and who fear the wrath of Faro; they disperse, unhappy and powerless. Some conversions to Islam or to Christianity may have had no other motivation.

H. Role of the Komo

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"The Komo is a society which unites the highest divine power, men, animals, and plants until the /165/ end of the world. It is the

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1. See p. 190.

2. The nimara boli is "rubbed" on the nimara boli of the tro ba, the nyõ boli on the nyõ boli of the same, etc.

194 182 keeper of souls. When there is no longer life on earth, when there are neither men, nor animals, nor plants, the Komo will awaken the souls of the dead which have been in its keeping for eternity."

As a repository of the spiritual forces of its members, the Komo is involved in most of their activities and participates in daily life. Birth, circumcision, marriage, burial, and the cult of the ancestors are all characterized by its direct or indirect intervention. It plays a remarkable role in agricultural life (rain, agrarian rites, household and communal excrement) as well as in the functioning of handicraft technologies. Collective issues (war, political conflict) and economic questions are submitted to its decision. In fact, the members' belongings (grain, cowries) are kept in granaries for which the chief is responsible and from which he agrees to make interest loans to needy members. The chief of the Komo, who is a diviner, is consulted directly by petitioners. Assisted by the elders of his age grade, he is also responsible for dispensing justice (1). Thus the name of an unworthy member is pronounced above the pembele which is immediately removed. This gesture deprives the culprit of the protection of Pemba and abandons him to misery and shame.

On the other hand, the actual functioning of the society develops social life. The initiates of neighboring villages are invited when the mask is brought out and a number of marriage negotiations are concluded during the drinking parties which follow the ceremonies. These also favor cultural exchanges. It is during publicly held conversations that teaching is furthered, for the rituals are commented upon and explained, and the myths and their metaphysical foundations are presented in detail. The most knowledgeable informants all speak of nights spent in listening to the competent elders around the jars of millet beer.

The Komo is the repository of traditional beliefs and rules of solidarity between members. It diffuses a thorough knowledge of civic and moral instructions, the rights and duties of the members, the taboos and sanctions which affect those who break taboos. Its juridical role makes it a disciplinary agent: it is a powerful support of the Bambara social organization.

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1. The judicial role has been notably pointed out by L. Tauxier in La Religion bambara, p. 300.

D. Role of the Institution

794 According to Bambara expression, the ndomo is "the mother of the
182 wanzo of the uncircumcised (1)" for its power which resides in the ritual objects /175/ is composed of the wanzo of all adolescents.

The mask and the altars at first keep a part of the wanzo of the members who wear them, manipulate them, or offer them sacrifices. On the other hand, after circumcision, at the moment of the final leap of the newly circumcised over the ritual fire, the wanzo ultimately leaves them to settle itself in the mask of the ndomo. Thus channeled and conserved, these forces add themselves to those of the uncircumcised in the masks which become the repositories of their life.

[775] Moreover, the soul of the uncircumcised and nonexcised who have died prematurely establishes itself in the altars during the funeral rites celebrated by the members.

The mask of the ndomo is thus the receptacle of the wanzo of the circumcised, living and dead; as for the altars, they contain all the souls of the uncircumcised dead. All of this confers upon the ndomo the responsibility for the life of the adolescents and gives it such power that to a certain extent, this society of young people is feared by the adults (2) who have left it.

1. Wanzo ba ye čeble

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182 2. When an adult, especially a member of the Komo society, has disturbed the peace of a member of the ndomo or has wronged the society, the wanzo may cause him to be impotent. In this case, in order to recover his virility, the man must obtain several tens of gray lizards which are sacrificed in his name on the mask and other altars. The animals are then cooked and the man is completely smeared over with the cooked substance which is then placed in the calabash and poured over the altars; the wanzo assigned to the man by the ndomo thus returns to the latter and the man is rid of its evil.

121 keep its own features only on the native plane on which it was formed and developed.

I have not felt, however, that it was necessary to abandon entirely the French terminology which is familiar to us; it is sufficient to make it fit its new role. Indeed, it would be very difficult to limit oneself to native terms, since it would be awkward and even impossible to find expression in these terms for abstractions which the writer's analysis brings out and of which the native has no knowledge.

A study of custom in its intimate associations thus requires both method and experience if one hopes to arrive at precise facts which have logical interrelationships. The results thus obtained are certainly significant since they show that, perhaps from the very beginning and certainly from a very long time past, the native character follows a path which it has itself chosen and which we can only suspect, rather than observe. This is because the concrete facts which are the landmarks of that history are subject to various interpretations.

177 182 Today, dislocated by the collapse - thanks to our intervention - of the social framework in which he was developing, the native character is working out new spiritual directives based on its own past, making use of contributions of our civilizations whenever they are in accord with the native's own deepest tendencies. The present-day life of the Black man is merely the reflection of this mystique; hence, whatever may be our wishes in the matter and whatever may be the outward appearances, the Black man continues in all fields to be dominated by his past.

121 This fact would in itself justify a study such as the present one - if there were need for justification - for, in the matter of custom particularly, nothing that has happened in the past is unimportant when both the present and the future are closely and inevitably dependent on this past.

Orthez, February 22, 1923

789 The individual is therefore required to [155] undergo proper
783 treatment to return him to his normal, harmless state.

789 From this point of view, social life seems to give rise
to a series of rites involving the disintegration and reintegra-
788 tion or the aggregation of the individual in relation to the group
182 in which he lives. Birth, circumcision, marriage, illness, death and the performance of certain trades are all modes of existence, whose beginning and end usually involve three stages: separation from the common milieu, accomplishment of the act, and reintegration into the former milieu or aggregation in a new milieu. Between the first and the second state as well as between the third and the fourth there exists usually a kind of negative interval which we call marginal. This system, which comes to light upon an analysis of multiple facts, is actually subject to modifications or alterations which can change its physiognomy. Nevertheless, the basis of these ritual sequences is so well established that by comparing external manifestations with the theoretical system it is possible to understand them better and to restore to some of them, which have become badly mutilated, their real meaning, which the native is usually, if not always, unable to explain or to define precisely.

A detailed study of institutions will give an opportunity for concrete analysis of these ritual sequences, which a kind of age-old empiricism has transformed into laws of a sort. They have come to represent that part of custom which has acquired a kind of permanence by virtue of public acceptance.

It is apparent everywhere among the Blacks that events of a general character (birth, coming-of-age, marriage, illness and death) are surrounded by ritual practices that vary outwardly from place to place but may all fit our theoretical system of three stages with marginal periods. All denote a common basis of magic and all derive from a long-tried empiricism which has given them a peculiar and relatively stable physiognomy in terms of the milieu with which the rites are connected.

571 What we have just said about individuals must also ap-
182 ply to collective groups: the latter deal with each other or

571 with individuals in the same way as individuals deal with each other. They are not only moral persons, as we put it,
182 but they are truly persons, [156] as evidenced by the Blacks' impulsive need for anthropomorphism.

812 Let us note, finally, that a Black does not abstract himself from surrounding nature; nor has he reached the stage of development at which man regards himself as a kind of intermediary between the natural and the supernatural. The Black is an integral part of nature and that is why he treats it like himself. Therefore, natural phenomena are subjected on his behalf to the same kind of ritual sequences as those followed in his own behavior.

Chapter 3

Communities

1. General Considerations

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631 Native society is not simple, and Europeans studying these countries have used terminology which, not being defined, has obscured reality.

In particular, they have used the terms "kingdom" and "empire" to describe Sudanese states, and both authors and readers have taken these expressions to imply a social organization more or less analogous to those meant by these words in our country.

631 These empires or kingdoms, however, are simply clans, i.e., political groups that have imposed their authority on other groups whose members then become their tributaries, members of a caste, or slaves. Such an empire, if one wishes to use this term, has no exact geographical boundaries or, if one prefers, its boundaries are constantly changing. Furthermore, the country embraced by this term has two parts: territories which may be said to be under direct administration, in which the authority of the clan is directly imposed; and those territories whose position with respect to the ruling clan

584 Thus, the fa of the two communities manage the entire transaction. Does this mean that the young people have no way of influencing the decision of the "elders"? No, because here, as elsewhere, all sorts of intrigue affect the decision of the fa. He must take account of the views of those around him; he is aware of their feelings, and he is just as likely to subordinate his interests to affection as to hatred. He is perfectly well aware, as is his entourage, that although he can impose his will, even though arbitrary, while he lives, all he has achieved may collapse at his death if his work was ill supported.

In short, the rigidity of the principles which put the "young" at the mercy of the "elders" is, in fact, more often
[182] than not relaxed in favor of the young people's desires. The solidarity between members of the community makes them give heed to the opinions of others; it is this need to minimize differences of opinion that makes any family affair drag on endlessly. Discussions, agreements, and reciprocal gifts characterize the [197] bargaining and compromise which are so great a part of the transactions. From this it is apparent what an essential role is played by the numerous intermediaries who are called in to prevent clashes and to mitigate friction, but too often turn to exploiting community difficulties.

In any event, these discussions serve to publicize these transactions just as we achieve the same end through legal means.

The request and agreements. The request is made by an
[564] intermediary. In Kaarta this is a man of caste, usually a dyeli (griot), accompanied by a free man. Elsewhere, notably at Ségou, he is sometimes a middle-aged man, known for his experience in such matters, who in this role is called furu-bolo-ma-tigi, "marriage director."

The furu-bolo-ma-tigi goes to the house of the fa of the girl, states his mission, and if he is favorably received, offers him some kola nuts which he has brought with him. He returns home with a promise that the request will be considered.

The fa does in fact consult his entourage and especially his ancestors and gods. The furu-bolo-ma-tigi returns with offerings to be used in questioning the ancestors and gods; if the reply

794 brotherhoods together, although the latter seem to dominate the
621 former. These brotherhoods hem in the communities they dominate by abusively extending their jurisdiction far beyond its proper limits. Indeed, the faithful are not the only ones who are subject to the judgments handed down by the brotherhoods, whose clergy make decisions affecting not only members involved but often also third parties in the neighborhood or even people from neighboring or distant regions. The brotherhoods are tyrannical toward their own members and no less so to strangers, who often see no way of escaping persecution short of asking to be received into the ranks.

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● 182 Thus, it is apparent how a brotherhood increases in size and in power as time passes. Each year it takes in the young people at the end of the soli, and as a result all the communities are at length absorbed by it live in it and for it (1). It

778 1. The following is a typical example.

In the village of Marenna (Fouladougou Arbala), the natives belong to the cult of Ba-ku. This boli consists of a small sheaf of roots of the indigo tree. For every newborn child the nyana-tigi makes and consecrates a small Ba-ku, which he places in a gourd and puts in the temple of this nyana. At the time of the soli, the child becomes affiliated with the cult, takes the boli placed in the gourd for him at birth and henceforth wears it on his person. All the families in Marenna are thus closely involved in the cult of Ba-ku, being, as it were, engendered by this god to whom each person owes both physical and spiritual birth. Ba-ku comes from Sangaran, and his high priest is a Dyara; that is why he is invoked and called by the expression Ba-ku Dyara Sangaran-ka. The word ba-ku literally means "tail of a

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goat," and, indeed, that describes the appearance of the little bunch of roots. It is possible that the word Ba-ku is merely the profane name and that the real name of the nyana is kept secret.

claims eminent rights over every person or thing it touches, as a consequence of the supernatural power of the nyana protecting them. [268]

So it is that the brotherhood, by what might be called divine right, comes to play a political role which is inconsistent only because it was not designed to play such a role. Let an ambitious man come forth, one who knows how to make use of the organization and its redoubtable power for his own ends, and the brotherhood then becomes the cradle of a veritable political state.

So it is that when the regular authority cannot firmly resist its encroachments, the brotherhood becomes a kind of high judge and uses that high office to establish a reign of terror which exploits the defections due to hatreds its own machinations have aroused and encouraged. This wretched [578] game naturally brings repercussions within the brotherhood itself: the nyana-den' are at each other's throats, and the grimmest dramas accompany the indulgence of the lowest instincts. The chronicle of Ségou bears witness to these facts.

It is, unfortunately, by no means unusual for the established authority to condone these crimes through weakness, interest, or membership in the brotherhood. As a result, innumerable regions have fallen into anarchy.

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That is why and how the brotherhoods have been the cause of a great deal of unrest in the native milieu. As a refuge for escaped slaves, malcontents, vagabonds, intriguers, in a word, for all enemies of public order, the brotherhoods everywhere set themselves up in opposition to regularly constituted authority, and when they are unable to take it over, seek to thwart it by taking the head into partnership.

The dynastic convulsions of most of the Sudanese empires, especially that of Ségou, are in large part explained by the usurpations of these great brotherhoods of nyana.

794 The family, too, has been assailed, perverted, [269]
● 182 and disorganized, because dissident elements found support in
578 the brotherhoods that made it possible for them to combat their
"own people" in the communities and sometimes even to bring
about their downfall.

Moreover, within the community, they set up the cult of nyana of the boli in opposition to the cult of the manes. In associations of communities, the nyana dugu-da-siri has been gradually abandoned in favor of these imperious and jealous nyana of the boli. Although the latter could not entirely eliminate the former because of their failure to appropriate the rights over the land, they have nevertheless eclipsed it by their all-encompassing authority. So it has come about that nyana of the boli have been created who are honored as protectors of the citizens, although they do not own the soil.

It is remarkable that these destroyers of the natural family always seek to organize themselves as artificial families by taking on certain characteristics of the family: communities of inalienable spiritual and temporal property; communities of the dead and the living; the cult of the manes of the high priests, etc.

It is the secular action of these laboratories of magic that has most strongly shaken the foundations of native society. Only a strong power could contend with them effectively, and such a power has seldom presented itself. Islam has often been their implacable enemy and yet has actually strengthened them by introducing a knowledge of oriental occultism.

3. Some Important Brotherhoods

794 The cult is the essential framework of all the brotherhoods. One must know its principal characteristics in order to understand the organization and operation of any brotherhood. Each nyana has its special cult, characterized by particular traits, of course, but these differences do not change the basic elements in which all cults of nyana resemble each other.

Therefore, although descriptions of all the different cults would no doubt bring out an interesting variety of details,

175 of El Hadj Omar, up to April 6, 1890, the day French troups under Lt. Colonel Archinard delivered Ségou from the cruel Moslem occupation.

The Bambara did not long accept the French yoke. To put an end to their plots, the French resident, Captain Underberg, had to execute the king Mari Diara, an act which inspired several local revolts, chiefly in the Sénoufo region. But the new Fama, Bodian, supported by the French, was able to rapidly re-establish peace. Moreover, the destruction of the Toucouleur kingdom of Macina by Colonel Archinard deprived the rebel Bambara of all possibility of outside support. The Ségou kingdom was definitively pacified in 1893.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

I. Traditional Structure of Bambara Society

A. Social and Political Organization

182 Traditional Bambara social organization is entirely tied up with religious organization; moreover, the social organization determines the whole economic organization to such an extent that the latter cannot be studied independently.

114 In fact, we still know very little about Bambara social organization. Some good records are available to us in the work of Monteil (1), Aubert and Ortoli (2), Delafosse (3), Labouret (4),

1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Segou and Kaarta].

2. Aubert et Ortoli, Coutumier juridique de l'A.O.F. [French West African Common Law].

797 (Koutiala circle), Mandjakuy (San circle), Ségou, Kolongotomo (Macina subdivision), and at Sikasso (apostolic prefecture). In Guinea there is a Catholic center at Siguiri. In Upper Volta there are centers at Niangoloko (Banfora circle), Ouahigouya, and Bam: Black sisters (Ouahigouya circle). Finally, in the Ivory Coast there is a center at Gorhogo.

Protestant missions are even less numerous; they are generally American. The efforts they have exerted are far from having been crowned with success. We will mention, however, the cultural centers at Bamako with two protestant schools, the center at Sirakoro (Yanfolila circle), the ones at Baramba and Somasso (Koutiala circle), comprising two missions, the center at N'Torosso (San circle), and that of Sikasso. In Upper Volta, centers are at Siniena (Banfora circle) and at Ouahigouya. Finally, in the Ivory Coast there is one at Torogo (Korhogo circle).

II. Techniques

182 It is impossible to give a complete picture of all Bambara techniques; we are far from knowing them all. Investigations are being carried out on the spot, and already they indicate that no object, in its form or its material, no gesture of the customary actions, is due to the imagination of the maker. On the contrary, the material, [88] as well as the movements, is integrated in a system of representations that the Bambara can explain. The principal techniques among these have been analyzed and explained, but many have been described in a very superficial manner.

A. Body Techniques

The Bambara think that fecundation is the work of Faro. This
776 creative function is represented materially by the eating of a tomato
833 by each spouse before sexual relations, which must be repeated twice.
842 It is by means of this consecrated tomato that Faro transmits the life
he conserves in water. The role of the father is to give the new-born
his articulations which make him fit for work. He transforms the
celestial seed into terrestial seed.

577 an uncomfortable situation among his own family; but under-
626 neath this surface, the evil shows through. It is not unusual to
577 be faced with a disconcerting absence of moral sense, ferocious
157 egotism, deep-seated duplicity, impudent treachery and cold,
unperturbed cruelty (1). And one can see, perhaps in all of them, the scorn and even hatred felt for anyone who is unfortunate, weak, ill or abandoned. However, it should certainly be noted that there are also Bambara who display the most disinterested devotion, generous hospitality and remarkable courage; some even give evidence of that kind of inborn distinction which is to be found among even the most primitive peoples and which is the mark of superior people.

183 Thus, no code organizes Bambara rules of life. Everything depends upon custom, that mysterious thread, at once fragile and strong, which links the generations one with another [130] and which sustains the individual, though he is unaware of it, to such an extent that he is completely lost without it. Handed down by earlier generations, superstitiously preserved, it is imposed through fear of the punishment which will follow transgression. At first glance, custom appears to be an amalgam of the most heterogeneous elements and that is why we Europeans find it at once respectable and ridiculous, good and bad, useful and futile, sometimes atrocious and then again excellent. On closer study it is seen to exhibit, on the basis of feelings common to all humanity, an efflorescence peculiar to the native milieu, a natural morality which duplicates positive laws.

It is the nature of man to observe certain laws, to see the good and the bad in what surrounds him and, in his conduct, to display a leaning toward the good and an aversion to the bad. He recognizes within himself something which criticizes his actions from a similar point of view and, ~~which; in fact, judges~~ them.

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l 1. The chronicle of Ségou, especially, attests this tradition of trickery and hypocrisy (see especially the tales about Ma-n-son, p. 93, and about Da, p. 101).

183 The Bambara has a very highly developed sense of this 181 idea of justice and there is nothing he resents more than injustice or a denial of justice. His resentment is stubborn and his vengeance, which may be deferred under a show of indifference, is implacable. The chronicle of Ségou is rich in pertinent examples. There was Ngolo Dyara, bringing murder and disaster on his own relatives in order to satisfy his hatred for having been sold into slavery by his uncle and not ransomed by any of his relatives. There was Kégné Mari who, watching the murder of Touro-koro in the Komo wood, expressed his vengeance finally fulfilled by saying: "Remember how, falsely accusing me of adultery with one of your wives, you had me lashed? And how on that day I told you that even though I were lying on the ground, if I could touch you with my foot, I would lay you low? Here at last is the day of my vengeance!" Similar examples are innumerable.

If he is powerless against injustice, the Bambara will wait patiently and, each time he has to speak, will dissimulate his weakness in formulas which have a double meaning, such as [195] O do!, meaning "That's it!" O nya-na, meaning "Oh well!" Tigi!, meaning "That's true"; and other similar expressions. At the same time, he is repeating to himself his proverb: don' m'i fantan', a bla k'a teme, meaning "Don't pay attention while you are weak," that is, "Wait until I am strong enough to take vengeance (lit., to pay you back)."

This instinctive feeling for justice accounts, in a certain 181 measure, for the family bonds made up of reciprocal rights [131] 571 and duties between parents and between them and their children 626 and, by an analogy of which we shall see other examples, between master and slave and between chief and subject. The obligation to respect all pacts concluded in the form of vows, oaths or fraternal alliance rests on the same basis. And it is the same notion that inspires the repression of acts which are almost universally condemned: perjury, treason, false witness, slander, [691] theft and murder. It sustains the tireless persistence of the pleader who will go through endless lawsuits to obtain redress for a wrong done to him or to one of his people. And it gives strength to public vengeance against the sorcerer.

183 However, there is superimposed upon this natural law its application, the so-called positive law. How very odd is the aspect of this natural law beneath its external surface! For there are as many ways of envisaging the application of natural law as there are legislators, and among the Bambara, in many respects everyone is his own legislator since each has his own custom. All these [individual] customs which jostle, cross, interpenetrate and superpose each other, constitute for the European a compact mass which he calls "custom," whose thousand facets are changeable, elusive, diverse and unstable. However, under these disparate exteriors emerge general traits which are, so to speak, the framework of custom, and this will be shown in the following study of institutions.

183 784 Among the laws which the Bambara imposes on himself or on his fellows, the most widespread and, in any event, the ones most noticed by Europeans, are the taboos (tne). The Bambara forbids himself, his relatives and his congeners to do or to say certain things; and the domain of these prohibitions has, theoretically, no limits. A hasty and therefore superficial and incomplete study of what may be called "the honorable name" (dyamu) has given rise to research by ethnographers on these taboos as they affect the limited area of the dyamu; they have chosen to study taboos especially in this connection.

In actual fact, however, the taboo (tne) penetrates the entire native milieu and is really its law. The purpose is to prevent any contact whatsoever with the invisible [132] on the theory that, should such contact take place, it would inevitably unleash severe punishment upon its author unless the latter had the time and the means to purify himself at once through ritual procedures. As a result, the only person who can state what a taboo is, is one who has knowledge of the invisible and can discern its presence when the ordinary person is aware of nothing. Knowledge is the prerogative of the old (koro) and of the master (fa), who represent the ancestors and are the guardians of custom. It is also the secret of a small number of "seers," whose natural methods are ordinarily reinforced by innumerable processes of mantic.

● 183 784 Thus used, taboo has organized and transformed the native milieu; it has established a line of demarcation between the sacred and the profane by removing from ordinary intercourse persons, places and objects connected with the invisible and considered to be impregnated by it. However, since by its very nature it forms an incontestable and nonappealable law, it has been the favorite means of anyone in authority wishing to impose his will without fear of protest. Thus the laity has, so to speak, had to submit to a arbitrary system of law that is essentially religious. Social regulations, rules of hygiene, medical prescriptions, culinary preparations, forms of courtesy -- all these are surrounded with taboos and all have absorbed from the tne the very essence of its vitality and its constraining force.

784 593 Within the family, which is the generating force of any collective group, the individual finds himself surrounded by taboos throughout his life. They are what establish and maintain the authority of the elders (koro-u) and especially of their head (fa). Taboos impose ancestral traditions which have developed separately and become gradually superimposition from earliest times to the present, the whole of which constitute, in fact, family custom.

784 [571] Patriarchy, brotherhood, the state, and all Bambara collectivities operate in the same way, since all collectivities are in a sense modeled on the natural family.

Religion, family, and society as a whole, in short the whole of Bambara civilization, have been and continue to be largely dependent on the tne.

## [133] 3. Mantic, Religion and Magic

787 Mantic. Among the Bambara, as among all the Sudanese, religion and magic are both based on a belief in a permanent revelation which the manes, the spirits and the gods give to men with regard to the events of their lives.

The various means by which man can come to know this revelation on the part of invisible beings are what is called divination or mantic. This is extra-rational knowledge since it makes known things which could not be learned through reason

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[1] Introduction

161 According to the census referred to hereafter, the Bambara number more than 500,000, thus forming one of the largest population groups in West Africa.

184 This group is not homogeneous; however, in addition to its language, which is in fact its characteristic element, it does have certain basic customs common - at least in a general way - to all its members. It is possible to observe this common heritage by studying one section of the group, and such is the purpose of this work. 121

121 127 The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta, who concern us here, have the distinction over their congeners of having evolved well-known empires. To the history of these empires, already known through the research of my predecessors, I shall add new documentation, based primarily on an unpublished chronicle of the empire of Ségou. This chronicle is interesting, among other reasons, because it is entirely the work of one of the traditionists whose erudition, as reliable and exact as possible within the limitations of native competence, merits our serious attention. Indeed, my book is simply a detailed commentary on this chronicle, buttressed by knowledge acquired on the spot during the course of my administrative duties and by information obtained from the works listed in the bibliography.

121 It should be noted that, though these documents and this store of knowledge make it easy enough to describe the customs if one limits oneself to generalities, it is on the other hand a difficult and delicate task to define the customs as they are applied to given social manifestations and to try to deduce the principles underlying these manifestations.

This is all the more true in that experience acquired elsewhere [2] is often, instead of a help, a reef which is as perilous as it is appealing. So it is that one is naturally tempted to apply to native institutions the nomenclature and the fundamental characteristics of institutions - especially European ones - which are assumed to be comparable. When origins and development are thus transferred to a foreign context, native custom is deformed. It can

584 is unfavorable, that is by no means the end of the matter, for both ancestors and gods usually allow themselves to be persuaded, for a price. When the reply is, or becomes, favorable, the futu-bolo-ma-tigi gives customary presents to the fa and to the girl's family. Henceforth, the two communities, that of the young man and that of the girl, are united by a bond that can be broken only for the gravest reasons, and even then a rupture will usually give rise to serious disagreements.

583 It is at this point that the parties agree, not without much argument and bargaining, on the amount, type, and mode of payment of the bride price and the date on which the girl will be handed over.

Between the time of the agreement and the release of the woman, there is a period which is often very long and in some cases several years. This interval is used by the girl's mother to prepare the things she will give her daughter (clothing, household utensils, etc.). [198] The fiancé, meanwhile, needs the time to accumulate what he has promised to pay when the girl is given to him.

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602 From this moment on, the relations between the two communities are very strictly governed. Native etiquette forbids the fiancée henceforth to meet or to take meals with her future brother-in-law unless a third party is present. The same applies to the young man and his future mother-in-law. The fiancé must constantly show that he takes an interest in anything that concerns his future affinal family. He must attend funerals and festivals or at least send a material contribution consistent with his wealth and social standing. When field work is in progress, it is customary for the fiancé's fula-ni to appear in a body and ceremoniously share the work. This demonstration of solidarity is mostly more noisy than helpful; the work is wholly simulated, but the proceedings always end in dancing and copious drinking.

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• 184 Bride price (1) and gifts. The woman is not turned over

1. In certain regions (Bougouni, Sikasso, Koutiala, San) there is no regularly constituted bride price; the bridegroom's

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● [184] family gives the bride's family a young girl to replace the one taken away.

until all or a portion of the agreed bride price has been paid and especially not before the customary gifts have been received.

The nature and value of the bride price and gifts vary since they depend on the wealth of the future husband, the rank of the woman and family customs. Among the poor, the bride price is small: a few handfuls of cowries, a chicken, a few [435] kola nuts, a few lengths of native cotton. An average bride price is worth, in all, 25,000 to 30,000 cowries (about 25 to 30 francs). Among the rich, the bride price may include one or more slaves, gold jewelry, silver, fabrics, clothing, etc.

The same is true of the gifts; everything depends on the families involved. It is customary around Ségou, however, for the fiancé to give his bride a large piece of native material called kundugu fini, a dloké (a kind of blouse), and a pair of sandals with very thick soles. He must also, if he can afford to, give her a slave to do the kitchen work, a cow, jewelry, etc. [199]

He must also give presents to the girl's parents in accordance with his means.

The totality of the bride price and gifts is called furu-fen', literally, "the property of the marriage." As soon as part of this furu-fen' is handed over to the furu-bolo-ma-tigi, he takes it, [273] escorted by some of the fiancé's friends, to the girl's fa. All of these proceedings, of course, involve jugs of native beer (dlo). The notables of the place, the dugu-tigi, the "elders," and even the kamalen', come at once to congratulate the family, to share in the drinking, and to receive a share of the furu-fen'.

The fiancée is often a little girl, and in that case the duties of the young man and his family go on for several years. The giving of gifts is repeated, to an extent commensurate with the young man's wealth and the standing of the girl's family. 431 583 At the time of harvest it is customary for the fiancé to send one or more baskets of millet, each weighing 20 to 40 kilos, and from time to time, a jug of beer, 20 to 30 liters. On the

553 Women are not admitted to the men's circle. Gathered 851 near the mother's hut, they know that a name has been given, but do not know what it is. The woman who tied the cord then [562] washes the baby three times in warm, soapy water and, taking water into her mouth, sprinkles the tiny body from neck to lower back three times. She then expresses her good wishes. Carrying the child, she goes to the door of the hut, where the father and family heads are waiting, and asks the name. Then she returns to the women and places the child on the lap of an old woman who blows into the baby's ears three times and then shouts in each ear: "Kuyo! Kuyo! i tua dara, "that is, "Kuyo! Kuyo! [854] your name is ...." The child is then wrapped in the narrow swaddling band which the mother will henceforth use to carry him on her back, and if it is a boy, the baby is rolled three times over the blade of an ax, or if a girl, over an iron implement for picking cotton. While this is going on, everyone is expressing best wishes.

● [184] In Kaarta the ceremony is somewhat different. A beef or a sheep killed in front of the mother's hut, and dege [Ed., coarsely ground millet in water] is also prepared. The baby's [564] head is shaved, and the hair is placed on the dege. Each guest puts his right hand on the edge of the gourd and a griot expresses good wishes for the newborn child. Then the guests dance around the dish of dege; the hair is removed from it and given to the mother to keep. [213] Then if the occasion warrants it, the [304] three lines of tattooing peculiar to the Kouloubali are made on the baby's face with a dagger. Finally the griot takes the child, carries it around the crowd, and returns it to the father, who must then make known the chosen name. When the father has pronounced the name, the griot again takes the child and, making a trumpet of his hands, cries out to him three times: "your name is...."

551 In principle, the name (tua) recalls some circumstance surrounding the birth. A posthumous child is usually given his father's name, as though he were the reincarnation of the father, or more commonly, he is called Fa-n-ko, "posthumous" (literally, "the one who came after the fa"). If the baby shows some resemblance to a deceased person, he is named for the person or,

614 Lengthy and noisy festivities, where dlo (millet beer) flows freely, food is abundant, and songs and dances are performed, [329] mark the general rejoicing. They last for seven days, but forty days must elapse before the new fama is deemed definitively installed.

In theory, the new fama must turn over the management of his own community to his heir presumptive. In fact, however, this retirement is usually fictitious. The fama intermingles his [421] own property and the property he administers for the clan to such an extent that, in the last analysis, the Massa-si and everything dependent on them -- persons and things -- are an inherent and inseparable part of the clan. Under the cover of this confusion, the general and determined tendency of all the fama was to work unceasingly at confiscation from the clan for the benefit of the community of the Massa-si. At least they have managed to make their office absolutely hereditary, with no possibility of competition, and as a result the election is merely the public recognition as fama of whatever individual is considered by the Massa-si to be fa of their community.

This accounts for the superior role of the Massa-si. They are the provincial governors, heads of army corps, etc., thus confirming the seizure of all sorts of clan property by the Massa-si community.

The corps of sofa is particularly powerful, and through it the fama is easily able to counterbalance any attempted insubordination which sometimes shows itself among the heads of the ton'-dyon'. The leader of the slaves is, in any case, the personal tool of the fama.

•184 614 These measures emphasize the close connection between the fama and the ton'-dyon'. On examination, this appears to be much closer than at Ségou, because from the very beginning in Kaarta the fama assured himself of unquestioned pre-eminence over the ton'-dyon', and later he was able to remain free of the influence of the ton' and even to impose his authority by relying on the loyalty of the sofa.

There was another peculiarity in the fact that the principal allies of the Massa-si, the Konaré, called Kala-n-ka-u (people

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from Kala), are priests of the protective idol of the clan. This clan brotherhood is likewise very strong and gives valuable support to the fama by guaranteeing everyone's loyalty to him. Each army corps, each segment of the clan of whatever sort, is organized as a branch of this brotherhood, so that not only everything [330] that belongs to the clan but actually everything that touches it in any way is subject to the same religious guardianship.

In Kaarta, as in Ségou, the ton'-dyon' are divided into chiefdoms of varying importance. With the fama, the principal chiefs of the ton'-dyon' form a kind of permanent council of the clan. On the other hand, the familiars of the fama, chosen at his pleasure, constitute a privy council whose influence is often in conflict with the decisions and desires of the council of the dyon'-kuntigi.

As at Ségou, the supreme leader of the slaves has a very important position, but aside from the fact that he is a tool of the fama, the homogeneity of the ton' prevents him from developing into as dangerous an antagonist as the ton'-masa at Ségou.

The general assemblies are also somewhat different from those at Ségou. They are made up of other elements; in addition to the fama and his people, the dyon'-kuntigi, and the ton'-dyon, there are the allies, whose role is not insignificant, and also some important tributaries, Diawara and Kagoro, who make their importance felt and thus influence the fama. Hence, especially when grave situations arise, these assemblies have a certain amount of independence which imposes decisions on the fama.

The revenue of the clan, generally speaking, does not differ from that at Ségou.

In conclusion and by way of comparison with the people of Ségou, the clan of the Massa-si appears to be more homogeneous because in the beginning it was not restricted by the framework of a pre-existent native institution. It was formed and developed freely through the initiative of the Massa-si family, which always jealously safeguarded its management.

184 614 On the other hand, it closely resembles the clan of the Khasso region, on which we have published a detailed study (1). [331]

1. See Les Khassonké in the series Revue du Monde musulman.

Chapter 6

Islam

1. Islamism and Paganism

771 797 It is a commonplace to say that the Bambara are implacable enemies of Islam.

However, history shows that for centuries the Bambara have been living in contact with Islam, that they maintain close relations with native communities of Islamic converts, and that they are willing to seek the good offices of marabouts of all races and ranks.

Are they, besides, as refractory to conversion as they are said to be? The chiefs of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta and some of their near connections and intimates, as well as other notables, have been practicing Islam. The Somono, who are of Bambara extraction, are faithful believers and, what is even more significant, they are fervent propagandists for Islam.

Actually, paganism and Islamism are not mutually antagonistic dogmas in the minds of the Bambara or of the Sudanese people in general, as many Europeans believe and state it to be. In these regions, Islamization has a counterpart which prepares the way for it and explains it, and that is the "sudanization" of Islam.

During his sojourn in Kaarta Raffenel tells of an interesting incident: "I had as a landlord a blacksmith named Niany, a grotesque personage, excessively naive and with a corresponding sense of logic, but a good fellow and very amusing. One day he

192 with nature; the same terms designate the parts of animals, plants, or even objects. These words serve as roots, as do the names of the four elements and of their properties. Two consequences follow:

1. A great ease in forming compound words; 2. The existence [194] of a multiplicity of homonyms which we can distinguish only by the context, but which the natives distinguish by differences in tone or in vowel length.

E. Numeration

802 In contrast to the Ouolof and Peul, who first count to five and then say "five and one," "five and two," etc., the Bambara have a different name for each number from one to ten (the word "five," doulou, [16] comes from "hand"; the word "ten", tan, from "to thank," to give both hands). After ten, they count "ten and one," "ten and two," up to 20, which is said as two tens, then three tens, four tens, etc., up to 80. The series begins again after 80 as it does in French after 100.

212 The Bambara have graphic signs to represent numbers. These signs have been studied by S. de Ganay (1).

1. S. de Ganay, "Graphie Bambara des nombres" [Bambara Number Writing]. [Ed., Journal de la Société de Africanistes, No. 2, 1950.]

[184] The graphic system varies with regions and sometimes from one village to another, but the most widespread method uses a series of vertical lines, each line representing a unit. To indicate that the number is doubled, the lines are placed inside a circle or crossed by a horizontal bar: |||| or (||) or -||- = four. To indicate an uneven number, a line is added under the horizontal bar.

But a line may indicate not only a unit, but a group of ten, and even a "hundred," keme (whose value is 80). To keep this clear, an arc is put over the line: ⌒| = 80.

212
801 Some systems represent ten by ten lines or by five barred lines under a single line. This method has a religious origin; it recalls that "creation is the issue of a unique principle symbolized

231 [35] However, the Bambara can assemble flocks by exchanging
431 their grain for animals obtained from Peul, Moor, or Touareg shepherds. It is their way of investing their savings; thus, they never dispose of their animals during their periods of increase, but let them grow old in the herds, and their capital increases effortlessly, watched over by the head of the family.

233 In the Sahel, during the rainy season, the animals live by
184 grazing on the numerous grasses and leguminous plants that grow on the mimosa-studded steppe. During the dry season, they live on the fallen branches and husks of the acacias. Then there is transhumance
[221] to the inundated regions which become pastures as the waters recede. In the Nioro region, transhumance is towards the Kaarta, the Baoulé, and the Bakoy.

In the Sudan region the animals entrusted to the Peul make short journeys to change pastures; in the rainy season, to the plateaus which are immense pastures; from November on, they return to the valleys and streams.

In the Guinean area, the village flock is entrusted to a Peul shepherd who leads it off in the morning and brings it back at night. The animals are then tethered to the stakes in their owners' courtyards or are penned in an enclosure where the women go to milk them. After the harvest the flocks graze in the fields, but, from the beginning of February, they no longer stray from the dwellings, because everything is parched. The beasts are then fed millet, peanut stalks, or foliage.

231 Neither cattle nor sheep are in the least supervised in reproduction. Coupling is unrestricted and takes place at random in the pastures and at the whim of the animals throughout the year. Birth occurs no matter where; the herdsmen know nothing of obstetrical practice. The calves are nourished with a lightly salted mash of millet stalks or with the crushed fruit of a fig named aourou which supposedly has milk-producing properties.

[232] The finest male goats often are castrated to fatten or tame them. In Kaarta and Mandé goats are raised in pens constructed on piles one or two meters from the ground, with a flooring of boughs which allows excrement to fall through. In this way, the animals are protected from the humidity and from wild beasts.

692 In matters of justice, the Bambara frequently continue to consult
their old tribal judges. It must be noted, however, that in taking
[177 away the judicial competence of the old chiefs, the French ad-
ministration has contributed to diminishing, and almost to com-
622] pletely destroying, their power.

The Bambara had a judicial organization quite as precise and
671 regulated as their religious organization, although there was no
codified law, such as the Koran or the Hebrew tables of law. Justice
was rendered according to rules which each community passed on
from generation to generation. These rules are not of divine origin,
but they [69] are sacred nevertheless, for custom is the legacy of
[643 the ancestors. The Fama and his council of notables could promul-
645] gate new laws, but, before deciding on a new rule, they consult the
Komo and the *Nyama* [an altar]. Then, in the presence of a priest,
each one swears on the altar to obey the law which becomes sacred.
Moreover, the customary rules cannot be separated from the moral
code and the religion to which they are linked. They are not uni-
[184] form; each canton has its own, and often each village, and within
each of these there are observances peculiar to certain families or to
certain castes. Nevertheless, the sentiment of fair play is very strong
[181] among the Blacks, but they do not admit the equality of men, who
are naturally different one from another according to their aptitudes,
means, and condition.

Custom regulates all relations between individuals and be-
tween individuals and the collectivity.

692 Two sorts of native tribunals existed in the Bambara coun-
try: a tribunal of conciliation, presided over by the village chief,
who assembled a council of notables; and a high tribunal presided
over by the Fama, to whom were submitted the matters which the
first tribunal had been unable to settle. In addition, the Fama could
call before his tribunal the civil or penal matters which seemed to
him to be of importance to the public order.

695 Justice was without charge and rendered day and night by the
643 Fama as one of his essential functions, for the judge is the one who
repairs the disorders that shake society. The hearings were solemnly
conducted and took place under the silk-cotton tree (*Ceiba pentandra*)

101 Example: Those of Bélédougou are the Bélédugu-ka-u;
Those of Kaarta are the Kaarta-n-ka-u;
Those of Ségou are the Ségu-n-ka-u . . .

Each of these expressions has at the same time a political significance. Ségu-n-ka-u means the people of the party in power at Ségou. The context alone determines which people are meant.

[552] [2] Among themselves, the Bambara factions sometimes call each other by nicknames: of the people of Ségou, the people of Kaarta say ironically, "those of Tu-kolo-u" (those of the single braid), alluding to their coiffure, or else Nya-ni-nyele-u, "those of Nya and Nyélé" (Nya and Nyélé are women's names common at Ségou). All the members of a clan may also be grouped under a term derived from the name of the founder or ancestor of the clan: the people of Kaarta may call themselves Nya-Ngolo-la (the people of Nya-Ngolo, ancestor of the clan); the people of Ségou may be called Barama-Ngolo-la (the people of Barama-Ngolo, ancestor of the clan).

[186] There are also nicknames for individuals of other tribes. The Bambara are called Dyonko (slaves) by the Soninké, who long exploited the Bambara for the slave trade, while the Bambara in turn call the Soninké the Marka Dialan'u (Marka Seer), because they gave up their own dialect for the Bambara dialect.

II. Situation

A. Ethnic Classification

144 Delafosse has made a broad classification of the peoples inhabiting Upper Senegal and Niger. Unfortunately, this classification too often mixes language and physical traits. Thus, he puts the Bambara in the Mandé family, which is divided into three groups comprised of these main peoples:

First group (northern): three peoples, the Bozo, the Soninké (or Sarakolé or Marka), and the Dioula.

Second group (central): five peoples, the Kagoro, the Banmana (or Bambara, including the Somono caste), the Kassonké (or Mandingue [Mandingo]), and the Foulanké.

881 with honey water and milk. They go to the public square, the only ballroom known in Bambara country. The big boys, their heads freshly shaved and their bodies thoroughly greased and all shining, also arrive in a long line, and in the square there is nothing but indescribable bedlam, for all these people at once greet each other, talk and shout, and not a voice is in harmony.

[821] Young and old consult the canopy of stars, for although they are not astronomers they know that around midnight a certain star of the firmament is at such and such an angle, and they are impatient. Then the hour has come, and the male *soli* are crouched in the place of honor, and the young lady *soli* arrive in single file, their hair in disorder and their hips girded with paltry loincloths that reach from the knees up to the navel. The loincloths are gifts from the fiancé [292] of each one, and must be worn. Their colors vary, indicating the tribe and caste of each girl, so one can see that they are of some importance (1).

(1). The Moslems have blue. The pure Bambara wants a yellow background with black rose shapes and lines.

•[186] A Bambara woman is proud of her blood and proud of her tribe, and, wearing her loincloth in the national colors, a narrow cloth band of black stripes on a yellow background, she almost thinks she is a queen, if not a goddess, at the *soli si*. The girls' gait reflects this feeling: with heads high, eyes 15 paces ahead, chests stuck out like Prussians (they puff themselves up a little to bring out their charms), they admire themselves and are enraptured, each knowing that she is the focus of more than one shining eye full of desire. They advance slowly, raising a cloud of dust, and in her hands each one shakes a bag of goatskin and an iron box filled with little pebbles; her torso bends to the left and bends to the right. In the dark of the night as the little fires /179/ cast their gleams here and there, one might say that they are frail shells lost in the waves and tossed by the winds, struck by the swell and always ready to capsize.

196 secretly replaces the object in the new thatch. A white ox is sacrificed at the well.

The information collected on this ceremony is still fragmentary but the color of the clothing worn by those officiating, that of the victim, the number of bands of the loin-cloth, and the number of cowrie shells given by the griot to his sister, the origin of the gravel used as the seat for the Kéita are evidence that we have here a ritual executed under the protection of Faro (see Chap. II)

175 As early as the fourteenth century numerous travelers described the Bambara /xv/as organized into small groups headed by a chief and more or less submitting to the neighboring empires. This state of affairs lasted until the period of the Peul invasion of this region (in the seventeenth century) which founded two kingdoms and created a local aristocracy of mixed Peul and Bambara blood. The first of these kingdoms was that of Ségou, the history of which is partly known (1). The investigations centered particularly in this area; the chief town which was a capital for a long time retains the traces of a well organized legal system and religion. It is also in this area that, according to specialists, the purest dialect is spoken. (2) [197]

197 The Bambara dialects belong to the sub-group of Mandingo languages of the Nigero-Senegalese group. (3) The Bambara know certain 212

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1. On the history of the Bambara we refer the reader to the well documented volume of L. Tauxier. Histoire des Bambara.

[556 191] 2. The children of families sufficiently wealthy to afford it were formerly sent to Ségou to live with affinals in order to learn how to speak well an elegant and pure language.

3. See A. Meillet et M. Cohen. Les Langues du Monde /Languages of the World/, p. 546.

826 827 The mouth and tongue, ejectors of the word, can be compared in importance to the ear, a receptive organ. It is through the ear that man receives and remembers the word. Its role is comparable to that of the sex organs which eject life and receive it. The ear in itself has both sexes: male by its auricle, female by its orifice. This duality expresses the basic duality of man. That is why the corpse of [764] an uncircumcised man is sometimes amputated at the ear rather than at the foreskin.

826 301 Because of the symbolism of its shape and because of its function, the ear is adorned. Men formerly wore three copper rings on the right ear and four on the left, the number seven representing the complete being, male and female, ni and dya. Women wear four rings on each auricle or, if they can, twenty-two, which represent the twenty-two stages of creation, or the twenty-two generative categories. Sometimes, for both men and women, a single ring attached to the earlobe represents the mother of the other rings (1).

[178] 1. In olden times, men and women wore cowrie shells on their ears in the place of copper rings, a custom which would seem to be still respected in certain villages today. These shells played the same part as copper.

827 191 301 776 But the role of this adornment goes much further. As symbol of the word, it is through the ornaments that the spirit Téliko, master of sound, hears what /68/ is said to man. They attract sound and send it back to Téliko and Faro, who thus judge the acts and words of men. To wear earrings did not originally mean to adorn oneself, but to hear the spirits as well as to force them to hear what was said (2). Its second effect is to embarass the liar, the bearer of false news or evil words, by putting him in the position of being understood by the invisible, therefore of being judged by them. A pleasant or well-intentioned word benefits the one to whom it is addressed and this

2. Rings placed on musical instruments have the same purpose and also symbolize those worn by men. See p. 282.

827 gain is felt as a contribution to the beneficial nyama. "The spirit
•191 Téliko transforms the air emitted by the speaker into favorable nyama;
381 upon hearing a good word, it would be necessary to stop one's ears so
776 that this nyama does not leave the person who received it." Moreover, if a person opens his eyes wide while watching the speaker, "the latter's nyama is able to penetrate the body of the listener" and spread within it as a reviving tide. While this takes place, the good word saturates the air, helping the action of breathing, hence the life, of the listener. "One breathes, " says an informant, "with the nyama of the words which enter through the eyes and ears." But this process is not one-sided. The good nyama returns to the speaker through his own eyes while he is looking at the other person. He is reflected in the person with whom he is talking and it is as though he were talking to himself. There is a beneficial exchange even when only one of the two actors speaks.

Inversely, a bad word or an insult upsets the listener and rebounds, acting upon the insulting person. This harmonious arrangement summarizes precisely and powerfully the universal movement, principle of life and strength for all beings. It comprises an individual movement provoked by the word which acts upon the body by developing and regularizing the rhythm of breathing, and a collective movement set off by the return of the word to the speaker. Because of the effect of the spoken word, exchanges are established that are favorable both to the rhythm of individual breathing and to the equilibrium of universal life. This effect is not limited to words in the strict sense; sight enjoys the same prerogatives as hearing and diction. If an object
[431] belonging to a certain person is seen and coveted by another, the owner cannot refuse to give it to him. The act of seeing has established by itself, between the stranger and the object, a bond which is affectively stronger than that of ownership.

836 The articulated parts of the human body are just as meaningful as the head. The bones, more lasting than the flesh /69/ and a testimony, in the grave, of the life that has passed, are its foundation and framework.

The navel is the central point of the articulations: that is why Faro, when he drowns a person, returns the body after having slit the nose and navel. This double mutilation shows that he has reclaimed the head and the body of the guilty man. The articulations are the indication of man's condition in the new order. Where he was once

805 the angles represents 90 days (the year, for the Bambara, is 360 days).
815 The symbols are not merely mathematical; they form part of the daily life of the society. [18] The zigzags are a characteristic theme [531] in the decoration of pottery, weapons, tools, sanctuaries, and houses. One finds them in agricultural techniques and in ritual dance figures. The universal rhythms of the earth and sky echo through all the activities of man and society. (1) Finally, another series of 16 signs is habitually used in geomancy. It is interesting to note that these signs were used in a practical manner for correspondence. The Bambara chiefs used multiple combinations of them to send each other messages.

G. Local Diversities

197 Given the extent and the diversity of the regions where Bambara is spoken, it is no wonder one notices differences in pronunciation, and even in structure and vocabulary, from one province to another. At Kaarta the speech is not the same as at Ségou, and a Bambara of Ségou has trouble understanding a Bambara of Bougouni. This is due partly to the influence of other languages which are in contact with Bambara and which ultimately alter and modify it, and partly to the normal evolution of language within a group separated for centuries from its place of origin. It is interesting to note that in the Bougouni circle the conservatives in speech are the old men, while the women are the evolutionary element.

191 Traditionally, Ségou was considered the center for the most elegant Bambara speech. Before the conquest, children were sent to Ségou to learn the purest Bambara.

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1. Id., "Conception de l'écliptique chez les Dogons et les Bambara" [The Dogon and Bambara Conception of the Ecliptic]. [Ed., Africa, 1951.]

D. Position of Women

562 Women's society has remained much more impenetrable to
European civilization. Women very rarely go to French schools, and
unlike the men, who, during their military service and otherwise,
are partly immersed in our system of civilization, they have few
contacts with the Whites and appear to be even more attached to custom
than their husbands. Very few speak French, and for all these
[191] reasons their society has remained closed and very imperfectly known
to the Whites.

562 Reasoning from what is known of their juridicial situation, we
858 have deduced their inferior position. Perhaps a better knowledge of
their role and of their importance in the society will lead us to very
different conclusions. From the legal point of view, a woman is always
a minor; she belongs first to her own community, to which she
owes obedience, then to her husband's community. When the marriage
is legal, that is to say, when the husband has paid the matrimonial
settlement, the children belong to the husband; if not, in
the case of concubinage, the woman's family can claim the child,
because it belongs to the family, as does everything of the mother's.

562 Her marriage is decided on by the *fa*; although in practice
the woman is often consulted indirectly beforehand, and she has a
582 certain liberty in her choice. Even a slave can refuse to marry her
583 master, despite gifts and promises. But a woman is forbidden to
marry someone she considers a relative, that is, someone who belongs
to her paternal line and who bears the same name she does.
Exogamy is the rule.

Yet, when a woman marries, she keeps her paternal name and
562 her personal taboos; sometimes she adds her name to that of her son,
593 who normally bears the *dyamu* of his father. The woman remains
very attached [75] to her family and goes to stay with them often.
Among them she will find support in case of a difference of opinion
[586] with her husband. In case of divorce through the fault of the husband,
he loses all rights over the wife as well as the settlement he had paid.

595 In the system of polygamy, the first wife is mistress of the
house; the other wives gather at her place for meals. She distributes
[431] the husband's presents, but aside from these privileges, the rights
of the wives are equal as are those of their children.

782 "Road of knowledge, I am not small,
I am not big. A thing arrives, a thing with
a large head, a large mouth, a large foot.
I am the master of fertility; I am the master
of trees. Where does it come from? It comes
from the weariness of my seed. My master is
the vibration, out of which came the spirit,
the rain of which fertilizes."

172 contributed to the building of the visible world, especially engendering
173 particles, *moño moño*, which entered into the composition of the earth, and a radiance, *noro*, used for the formation of the sky.

At the same time, the spirit let fall upon the earth (still in the process of formation) a heavy object in the form of a globule, *kulu*, which was later named *pemba* (1). *Pemba*, moving as a whirlwind to the four cardinal points (south, west, east, and north), received twelve of the elements issued from the spirit. Then, with the help of the particles that came out of *fã*, he modeled lumps and mounds which gave shape to the earth.

But in the course of rising, the spirit had thrown upwards that which was later called *fãro* (2). Faro, who was then no more than vibration,

1. From *fẽ*, thing and *ba*, big.

192 2. The Bambara use either *faro* or *fãro*, from *fa* (creation) or *fã* (knowledge) in the ancient language. This double etymology indicates the closeness in their minds between the concepts of creation and knowledge (see p. 17). The suffix *ro* expresses the idea of a whole, a totality. Another etymology has been suggested by S. de Ganay, in *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, p. 196. "...the words Fané (the name of a family of blacksmiths), Faro, *fan* (force), *fara* (stone), and *fari* (body) all have the same origin. Faro is the secret name of stone." This etymology

is interesting in that it accentuates the ties which, in the Sudan, bind the Faro of the Bambara and the Bozo, the Nommo of the Dogon, and the blacksmiths. See M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau* (*passim*).

772 helped the spirit with ten of its elements and with the radiance from
773 *fā* to build the sky along an oriented trajectory. Faro first went to the west, then the south, the east, and the north, thus determining the celestial cardinal points.

/14/ The sky is distinct from empty space, *kęnę*, which separates it from the earth and which is the product of the "*yereyereli*'s shedding after it had given birth to the spirit." The sky, composed of seven parts placed one above the other, was completed before the earth which itself is also made up of seven corresponding parts.

773 Although he had received the larger share of the elements disgorged by the spirit, Pemba could not finish his work alone. When the sky was completed, the spirit blessed Faro, precipitated him in the form of water along the trajectory followed by Pemba during his descent. This water fell drop by drop from the seventh part of the sky to the seventh part of the earth into which it streamed to gain knowledge of the earth's foundations. As Faro descended vertically, he left a globule in space which became the spirit of the air, Teliko (1); on earth, he deposited a particle which formed the spirit Soba (2). As he dripped between the mounds which made up the earth, he saw that the latter was not completed, so he filled the empty pockets with water, thus forming the hidden springs of today.

Then life appeared on earth. Faro, impregnated by the vibration which was potentially masculine and feminine, gave birth to twin daughters on a deserted hillock (3). As soon as they appeared, the

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1. From *teli*, to go quickly.

2. Literally: *so*, house, *ba*, big.

[823] 3. Naked hillocks, *walawala*, and clearings are the scene of rituals concerning the twins.

The Future Waters

773 The order of the universe prevails in space and time: the present order of things is but one phase thereof. When the "first running waters" covered the ground, Faro permitted only the primordial water to spread out; twelve waters remained hidden and they will rush forth and submerge the earth when he gives the order. The words they contain will be revealed and the "world to come" as thought out by yo will be realized.

Meanwhile, in the expectation of these "future waters," men must provide themselves with objects that will save them; the Bozo and some Bambara have canoes, shepherds have their gourds, spinners their spindles, and women their wooden stools (1). The coming /31/ of the waters is represented by a drawing on these objects as well as on a number of other everyday tools (Fig. 3).

773 524 This drawing serves as the framework for a game, the sumangolo, which the Bambara of all ages and both sexes play in order to "contribute to the progress of the world."

This game bears the name of the ancestor Soumangolo who traveled throughout the universe to find out and reveal to men "the

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[192] 1. It is significant that kuru (canoe), kuruni (spindle), and kuruni (stool) come from the same root. The word kuru designates the original globule in which Pemba descended, and which later became the wood pembele in the shape of a trough; it also designates the case or ark used by the mythical blacksmith, bearer of the nutritive seeds. See p. 53, n. 1. The word kuru should be compared to koro which, in the Dogon language, has the general meaning of case, box, wooden receptacle, trough, and canoe, and which also designates, among these people, the vessel in which the blacksmith descended. See M. Griaule. L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes, p. 117, n. 3. [171]

193 are combined only by juxtaposition. To distinguish nuances of thought, the role of the word in the sentence, one has only the context and auxiliary particles to go by.

The distinction between the sexes is marked only by adding the words "male" or "female" to the root. The plural is formed by adding [15] to the substantive the suffix "w" and the necessary figure or the adverb "many."

Person, tense, and mood of the verbs are distinguished in like manner. The root remains invariable, and one expresses the accessory idea of person by personal pronouns, and the ideas of tense and mood with the aid of particles placed before or after the verbal root. The neutral or passive voice has but one special tense: the past, while the active voice includes three tenses, or more exactly, three aspects.

The first indicates that an action is not completed (this can be, then, a present or a future).

The second implies that the action is completed or that a state has been reached or still exists (this is approximately a past tense).

The third refers to an action which is to be completed in the present, past, or future under the influence of another action or another subject (this may render our subjunctive, our imperative, our optative, and, in general, the infinitive complement of a verb).

C. Syntax

Bambara is extremely simple. Whether the clause be relative, interrogative, or conditional, the word order is not changed. This uniformity, this monotony of style, does not preclude eloquence, but it lies all in the action, the gesture, the tone of voice, the repeated use of onomatopoeia and of particles like "dɛ̲," "kwo̲," "kɛ̲."

D. Vocabulary

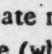
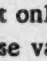
192 This poverty of syntax is not accompanied by a poverty of vocabulary nor by an impossibility to express abstractions. The Bambara express very easily, and in a manner intelligible to all, ideas of belief, of hope, of ethics, of religion. The most striking characteristic of their vocabulary is the constant comparison of man

192 with nature; the same terms designate the parts of animals, plants, or even objects. These words serve as roots, as do the names of the four elements and of their properties. Two consequences follow: 1. A great ease in forming compound words; 2. The existence [194] of a multiplicity of homonyms which we can distinguish only by the context, but which the natives distinguish by differences in tone or in vowel length.

E. Numeration

802 In contrast to the Ouolof and Peul, who first count to five and then say "five and one," "five and two," etc., the Bambara have a different name for each number from one to ten (the word "five," doulou, [16] comes from "hand"; the word "ten", tan, from "to thank," to give both hands). After ten, they count "ten and one," "ten and two," up to 20, which is said as two tens, then three tens, four tens, etc., up to 80. The series begins again after 80 as it does in French after 100.

The Bambara have graphic signs to represent numbers. These 212 signs have been studied by S. de Ganay (1).

[184] The graphic system varies with regions and sometimes from one village to another, but the most widespread method uses a series of vertical lines, each line representing a unit. To indicate that the number is doubled, the lines are placed inside a circle or crossed by a horizontal bar: |||| or  or  = four. To indicate an uneven number, a line is added under the horizontal bar.

But a line may indicate not only a unit, but a group of ten, and even a "hundred," keme (whose value is 80). To keep this clear, an arc is put over the line: 80.

212 801 Some systems represent ten by ten lines or by five barred lines under a single line. This method has a religious origin; it recalls that "creation is the issue of a unique principle symbolized

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1. S. de Ganay, "Graphie Bambara des nombres" [Bambara Number Writing]. [Ed., Journal de la Société de Africanistes, No. 2, 1950.]

177 181 avoided the stroke of the sword or slavery, kept their faith in fetishes intact, and shielded both themselves and their /68/ children from all religious propaganda -- for what was there to teach them, what could they be taught that they did not know already?

177 192 The terms from the Koran have become familiar to them in present-day language. Since they do not come from them and express primarily a concept rather than the thing itself, they have been able to use them with complete freedom, without failing in the respect due to the superior beings, their lords and gods, whose names are never spoken in vain or in an unsuitable name. Nowadays the words have become so Bambara that the people do not even suspect that they are foreign to their language, and have no cause to be surprised at them. The Bambara make anything their own that they feel translates their thought precisely, without giving much attention to the original meaning of the word, which they often do not know. Having [576] heard the Moslem repeatedly cry out bismilahi, they thought it in good taste to make this exclamation in the anecdotes and stories that they tell, and for two or three years this has been the super-polite expression in "smart" society for inviting a guest to enter a hut and squat on the mat. In twenty years this word bismilahi بسم الله, will have no other meaning! Even though it means "in the name of God," you would be laughed at if you were heard to say that it is an Arabic word with quite another meaning, just as you would waste your time telling a Negro that the expression "fou moi le camp" /"get out of here," literally "give me the camp."/ is plain /French/ slang. When a slave escapes, does one not say, "a bi fou moi (1) le camp?"

1. a: "he," bi: "is," fou moi le camp; the whole expression: "to desert."

It is a widely used expression known by everyone and is teamed with this other: ze ma fo, about which I pondered for several days, seeking to find its meaning. Yet nothing could be simpler; it is "I don't give a rap." /From the French je m'en fous/.

776 out of the Bambara's need to soften their crime of idolatry and to pre-
777 serve it by lending it extenuating circumstances. If the cradle of
778 Islam is Mecca, if its superiority is derived from the holiness of that
city, chosen and beloved by God (1), what can the Moslems want of

1. See what I said above on the subject of Mecca and Stamboul.

him, the Bambara, whose religion comes from this same much vaunted city? And if the God of Whom the Moslems preached to the Bambara has decreed everything (2), good and evil, if He is the Author of both

2. See the Koran: VI, v. 3 - 39; X, v. 99; XIV, v. 4; XVII, v. 32; XXXVI, v. 6, 7, 8, 9; LIII, v. 43, 44, 45 - 49; LXXVI, v. 29; LXXX, v. 29; etc.

good and evil and leads each person along the course that pleases Him to such a degree that he no longer has freedom of choice, why wish to take from them that which God has given them, that which comes to them from the holy city of Mecca!

776 The Bambara term for the boli is gna. Their idea of them
796 corresponds closely to the Arab concept of the chéitane شيطان ,
782 and in everyday language, they define them by a single word: sétané,
[192] "satan, " even though this word is never on their lips in the sacrifices.
In their nocturnal orgies and religious dances, the Negroes' notion of the genie to which they are sacrificing are shown in concrete form. And when, in their religious ceremonies in honor of the Komo, Kono,
[778] Nama, etc., the spirit appears by the glow of little fires lit in the
sacred woods, decked out in a cloak of feathers, his head hidden in a huge horned mask that has nothing human about it, one cannot help
776 thinking of the tales of old Breton grandmothers, told on a winter
796 evening in the stables. The blasting of trumpets, bamboos, and koba
534 horns (3), the tinkling of /72/ the little bell, and the shouts of the
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776
796 this boli from the belt and hanging
782 it at the side along the thigh.

three most famous sorcerers, whose names -- Makono, Tjewolo, and Tjéba -- have been preserved, but whose origin is lost in the dark of ages, sacrificed to it by preference. This is the formula:

"Touafé Bla, Touafé Bla, the mountain of Touafé Bla is known, the trees of this mountain are known, I want to speak of the fire of its mountain. Touafé Bla, spare some houses (meaning: 'those of my friends') and go and kindle (your fire) in others (meaning: 'cast ruin and desolation among my enemies, among those who wish me ill'). Touafé Bla, favor me, and if I cannot see your fire, Touafé Bla, let me at least see the tip of its long column of smoke (meaning: 'you live in the fire; I cannot see your dwelling, but I can still know your power through the smoke of your fire, that is to say, /I shall know it/ if I am a witness of the misfortunes which you will cause to fall on my enemies and those whom I hate')." /73/

This formula shows us clearly that the boli, or gnâ, live in fire. The Negroes sacrificed to them before the arrival of the Moslems, and gave concrete form to their concept of the infernal spirit, just as they do today, by decking themselves out in a hideous horned mask and a cloak of feathers. Their blowing and shouting in the sacred woods on the days of great orgies have remained the same, and although they have taken the words sétané (شَيْطَان) and djahanéma (جَهَنَّم), from the Moslems, they have had the concept for a long time. [192]

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Now then, as to the Bambaras' knowledge of the Supreme Being, God the Creator and Ruler, Lord of all, do they owe it to the Moslems?

The Bambara have too hierarchical a nature to need a master here! The youngest child is always the slave of the next older brother, who is the slave of an older one, and so the progression moves up invariably without ever changing, to the grey beard, the elder, the tjekoroba, a real fetish whom everyone obeys, whatever his stupidity, his narrowness of mind, or his lack of judgment.

In every family there is the same progression: the immediate lord of the children is their father, while he in turn bows before his

176 If on this earth the smallest of rulers, the least of potentates, is surrounded by servants and slaves, could the Creator be without them? If those who form the court of a king are superior to the gouatigi, or "family heads," to the dougoutigi, or "village heads," and to the kafotigi, or "heads of cantons," would those who form the celestial court be inferior to men, to genii, or to demons? The conclusion is perfectly natural; they would be superior to the latter, and to what will he /the Bambara/ compare them? Since they always in every way use themselves as a basis for comparison, they have only to think of themselves in order to remain logical in their conception of the world and to attribute to these beings the nature of their souls, their dousou, which they also call son. Is this not what they have done? When the Bambara define their idea of the soul and want to be understood, have they any other word than this very one, méléké, which they use to designate the angels? It is clear that they do not owe their concept [177] of heaven and the angels to the Moslems; they have appropriated from a foreign language a word which corresponded to a concept they already had, and that is all.

176 177 ●192 196 However, I am told that they have only one word to designate the Divinity, the Only God, and that word is the Islamic term itself, Alla. They have no other, and the first missionaries, doubtless through ignorance of the pagans' hatred of the Moslems, adopted it, thus creating a hindrance to their ministry (1). Yes, Alla is the term

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197 1. By translating as Alla both God and our concept of the Divinity, the first missionaries failed to establish the profound division which should exist between Catholicism and Islamism. The pagans regard the Catholic and the Moslem, as cousins, if not as brothers, and the word Alla is not irrelevant to this view. Because the Catholics believe in the Old Testament, they seem in the eyes of the Negro to border on Islamism, and the departure from it into Christianity

> 797 seems to them like membership in a sect derived directly from Islamism. The Moslems help with all their might to further belief in this nonsense. Therefore the missionaries should delete from their catechisms the word Alla for "God," as well as the ridiculous word mori for "priest," the word néma for "grace," etc., etc. -- in a word, all that is not Bambara.

776 they use in everyday language when they speak of God, but in the be-
177 ginning did they not have another, and do they not still have one at
●192 present? /76/

196 I have always been surprised at the Negro's readiness to call a divine blessing by the name of its Author, and when in the winter he receives the blessing of blessings, the rain that makes plants sprout and the harvest grow, this is the way he expresses himself: "Alla bi fign, Alla bi na, Alla bi kouloukoulou, Alla bi yégé yégé, Alla do, etc., God darkens, God comes, God rumbles, God flashes, it is God," etc. These are purely metaphoric expressions, which mean: "The clouds gather; it will rain; the thunder rumbles; there are flashes of lightning, it is the rain."

I have found these metaphors on their lips also with exactly the same meaning but this time in Bambara words: "Sa bi fign, sa bi na, sa bi kouloukoulou, sa bi yégé yégé, sa do," the meaning is likewise: "The clouds gather; it will rain; the thunder rumbles; there are flashes of lightning; it is the rain." The word sa is strictly Bambara and so cannot reasonably be regarded as more recent than the Arab word; the Negroes therefore had it before they knew the word Alla. The word did not mean "cloud," "thunder," "lightning," or "rain," and there is every reason to believe that there was a time when it awakened in their minds a concept identical with that which the word Alla awakens in them at present, and that this word Alla from a foreign language is only used to express a concept long held by them.

776 196 God, their supreme deity? They are not that stupid, the snake is an ordinary taboo, the dwelling place of a genie, an infernal spirit or a demon, and nothing more.

The word sa in the sentences sa bi fign, sa do, etc. ("the clouds gather, it is the rain," etc.), has a broad and vague meaning, indicating everything that is on high, everything that is above us. Was this word in the past the very name of the Divinity, as the word Alla is for many today? I do not think so. The word sa was the veiled term used to speak of the Divinity and, like the word Alla, it originally expressed a concept or an idea, and not a "being" at all.

Since, according to Bambara ideas, God is a spirit dwelling above us with His court and angels, the expressions sa bi na, sa bi /78/ fign, sa bi kouloukoulou, sa-dji, etc., should be interpreted to mean: "Min bé sa-n-fé bi na, Min bé sa-n-fé bi fign, Min bé sa-n-fé bi kouloukoulou, Sa-n-fe ta dji -- He Who (the spirit which) is up above comes (will favor us with His blessing of rain); He Who is above darkens (gathers clouds); He Who is above rumbles (makes His voice heard); the water of Him Who is above."

776 196 192 The supreme blessing that the Divinity, the Supreme Being, grants to human beings, is rain. As I shall demonstrate in a moment, the Bambara were unable to speak the name of their God and in their gratitude used a metaphor. Their fact that their metaphor, Alla bi na, Alla bi fign, is identical to the one in which the word sa appears, i.e., sa bi na, sa bi fign, etc., leads me to think, nay forces me to think, that in the beginning the word Alla expressed less an individual or a being than an idea or a concept. For I must confess that although some of our Bambara have the very ideas of the Moslems concerning God and the word Alla, there are more whose ideas on this subject remain confused, and for the majority God or Alla is nothing more than the arch of heaven (1), a covering which hides from us a "Spirit,"

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1. To pagan Negroes, God is a spirit Who is everywhere, sees everything, but remains ens quantum. He dwells on high, is as large as the celestial vault, and because He hovers above us

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192 sees everything. The old men explain this to you with an intensity that proves their good faith, and children recite the sayings of the old men with a frankness so naive that one cannot misunderstand it.

a Being endowed with reason and all powerful. The term is the translation of the word *sa*.

It is apparent that in the beginning the word *Alla* in no way meant a Being or an Individual; it simply expressed a concept, an idea already known, accepted and translated by the word *sa*, and the Bambara simply adopted a foreign word corresponding to their own concept.

776 If to the Bambara the word *Alla* had meant the Divinity Himself,
196 the Supreme Being, would they ever have dared to speak it, to make
192 it their own? I cannot bring myself to believe that they would, among
551 them the name of a powerful person, a religious chief, or venerated
576 being is never spoken in vain or in an unsuitable manner. If some of
[687] their kings, among them /79/ N'golo, not to mention others, punished
anyone caught speaking his /the royal/ name by fines and prison,
cast them into slavery, and even beheaded them as guilty of the
crime of lese majesty, what would they not have to fear from the
Creator if they spoke His name in vain and inappropriately! Further-
more, it is a widespread custom to avoid speaking the name of one
who is feared or venerated.

576 No well-bred and self-respecting woman ever speaks the name
551 of her husband. She speaks of him as *né tigi* ("my master"), *so tigi*
595 ("the master of the house"). Most frequently she adorns him with a
borrowed name, a *bougna toua*, or name of respect, and a polygamist
has several such names, each wife giving him one of her own invention.

In well-brought-up families -- and most of them are (1) -- the

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1. Our Bambara Negroes have great respect for the members of their families and are considerate of them;

The Kore (1)

The Kore is particularly popular in the Bani region, that is to say, the riverine area of this tributary of the Niger, in the part that is on a line with Ségou.

This brotherhood has the peculiarity of having a cult which honors the three divinities always worshiped by the Bambara: [778] the manes, the god of the soil, and the *nyana* of the *boli*. Therefore the site of the brotherhood is the chosen site of the god of the soil, usually a tree within a grove (*Kore-tu*, "grove of the Kore") near the village. A *kara*, that is, the little board symbolic of the dead, and a *surku-kongolo* (skull of a hyena), the *boli* of the Kore and for that reason called the *Kore-kongolo* (skull of the Kore), are kept here.

The clergy and its assistants form a large body of personnel that includes all of the faithful. [281]

In addition to the high priest, *Kore-tigi*, there are the "people of the *kara*" (*kara-ma-u*) and the persons who wear masks, called *wara-u* (1) (wild beasts) or *sogo-u* (savage animals), among whom are hyenas (*suruku*), lions (*dyara*), and monkeys (*sũba*). The persons in costume, called *Kor'dyuga* (2), are for the

[193] 1. One also hears "Kote" and, in the Bani region, "Kwere." It should be noted that these three words, Kore, Kote, and Kwere, all have an ending which is frequently found in Soninké but not in Bambara.

1. The terms *wara* or *sogo* are usually applied to all those who have some function, from the *suruku* to the *ngoni-sama*.

2. The term seems to come from the Soninké language: *Kore yugo* or *Kor'-dyuga*, "man of the Kore." The expression *Koré-duga-tigi* is a corruption

CHAPTER 2

LINGUISTIC DATA

A. Linguistic Classification

197 According to the classification by Delafosse (1), Bambara or Banmana is a dialect of the Mandé or Mandingue language, which in turn belongs to the central subgroup of the Nigerian-Senegalese languages. It is, then, very close to the Dioula, Kassonké, dialects, which belong to the same Mandé language and which are spoken by peoples with whom the Bambara cohabit geographically. (The differences with the Soso, the Soninké, and above all the Peul are much more marked).

Among the Nigerian-Senegalese languages, Mandé is distin-
193 guished chiefly by four traits:
197 1. The nominal forms have almost completely disappeared.

2. Noun and verb are distinguished only by their respective places in the sentence.

3. Conjugation includes a large number of verbal aspects.

4. The subject, noun or pronoun, precedes the verb.

The disappearance of the nominal forms marks an important evolution in comparison with the archaic language, in which they are, on the contrary, of pronounced importance. Of all the Mandé dialects, Bambara appears to be the most advanced. It is characterized particularly by its extreme conciseness and by the deformation words undergo through excessive contraction.

B. Morphology

193 Bambara makes no differentiation by inflexions: nothing indicates whether a word is subject or object, whether a verb is present or past, active or passive. The words are absolutely invariable and

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1. Delafosse, Langues du Soudan [Languages of the Sudan] (Meillet and Cohen, Les Langues du monde [Languages of the World]).

● 193 are combined only by juxtaposition. To distinguish nuances of thought, the role of the word in the sentence, one has only the context and auxiliary particles to go by.

The distinction between the sexes is marked only by adding the words "male" or "female" to the root. The plural is formed by adding [15] to the substantive the suffix "w" and the necessary figure or the adverb "many."

Person, tense, and mood of the verbs are distinguished in like manner. The root remains invariable, and one expresses the accessory idea of person by personal pronouns, and the ideas of tense and mood with the aid of particles placed before or after the verbal root. The neutral or passive voice has but one special tense: the past, while the active voice includes three tenses, or more exactly, three aspects.

The first indicates that an action is not completed (this can be, then, a present or a future).

The second implies that the action is completed or that a state has been reached or still exists (this is approximately a past tense).

The third refers to an action which is to be completed in the present, past, or future under the influence of another action or another subject (this may render our subjunctive, our imperative, our optative, and, in general, the infinitive complement of a verb).

C. Syntax

Bambara is extremely simple. Whether the clause be relative, interrogative, or conditional, the word order is not changed. This uniformity, this monotony of style, does not preclude eloquence, but it lies all in the action, the gesture, the tone of voice, the repeated use of onomatopoeia and of particles like "dé," "kwo," "kê."

D. Vocabulary

192 This poverty of syntax is not accompanied by a poverty of vocabulary nor by an impossibility to express abstractions. The Bambara express very easily, and in a manner intelligible to all, ideas of belief, of hope, of ethics, of religion. The most striking characteristic of their vocabulary is the constant comparison of man

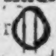
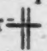
192 with nature; the same terms designate the parts of animals, plants, or even objects. These words serve as roots, as do the names of the four elements and of their properties. Two consequences follow:

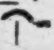
1. A great ease in forming compound words; 2. The existence [194] of a multiplicity of homonyms which we can distinguish only by the context, but which the natives distinguish by differences in tone or in vowel length.

E. Numeration

802 In contrast to the Ouolof and Peul, who first count to five and then say "five and one," "five and two," etc., the Bambara have a different name for each number from one to ten (the word "five," doulou, [16] comes from "hand"; the word "ten", tan, from "to thank," to give both hands). After ten, they count "ten and one," "ten and two," up to 20, which is said as two tens, then three tens, four tens, etc., up to 80. The series begins again after 80 as it does in French after 100.

The Bambara have graphic signs to represent numbers. These 212 signs have been studied by S. de Ganay (1).

[184] The graphic system varies with regions and sometimes from one village to another, but the most widespread method uses a series of vertical lines, each line representing a unit. To indicate that the number is doubled, the lines are placed inside a circle or crossed by a horizontal bar: |||| or  or  = four. To indicate an uneven number, a line is added under the horizontal bar.

But a line may indicate not only a unit, but a group of ten, and even a "hundred," keme (whose value is 80). To keep this clear, an arc is put over the line:  80.

212 801 Some systems represent ten by ten lines or by five barred lines under a single line. This method has a religious origin; it recalls that "creation is the issue of a unique principle symbolized

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1. S. de Ganay, "Graphie Bambara des nombres" [Bambara Number Writing]. [Ed., Journal de la Société de Africanistes, No. 2, 1950.]

114 Ma n'zira ba, etc., does not mean
"great baobab of man." The real
meaning is: "O man who is a great
baobab." In writing it I prefer a
"z" to an "a." Usually the Bambara
[194] soften the hard sound by a euphonious
little "n." With a hard "s" the
word sira cannot be distinguished from
the word "tobacco": sira siramougou,
"snuff tobacco"; n'ziremougou,
"baobab flour."

776 a purely Bambara term to express their idea /of these spirits/, and
782 they to the word djiné; they call them gnéna.

776 Before the arrival of the Moslems, the Negro sacrificed to beings
to whom they have attributed bodies and souls, although imponderable
782 and invisible, who are intermediate between men and angels and whom
777 the Arabs call الجن el djiné. But they also sacrificed to evil
798 beings, superior to the former in power, whom they call boli. The
legend of the boli, an ironic legend which I will tell in full when I discuss this matter, is sufficient proof of this belief. For the Moslems of the Sudan only two things here below /70/ are worthy of attention: Mecca (Makka) and Stamboul -- old Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Constantinople -- who in their eyes, as in the eyes of all Moslems of our colonies, is the great Pope of Islam. Everything that does not bear the stamp of Mecca, everything that does not come from Stamboul, is to be rejected and scorned. Thus the Bambara, fertile in expedients, quickly managed to find a way out of their discussions with the propagators of Islam: "All our boli come from Mecca," was their weapon of war.

776 The Bambara were pursued from every side, unable to perform
777 publicly even religious ceremonies in honor of simple genii. Can
798 one believe that they added others that were still more terrible? As
conquerors the Moslems have always ruthlessly opposed idolatry, destroying its temples and overthrowing its altars. "Believe or die" has always been their motto and always will be as long as they feel

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196 What is the meaning of the word *sa*? Could it be the original name of the Divinity? Since certain Bantu tribes have a high regard for snakes and dedicate a cult to them, some Europeans have wanted to see in it a translation of the word "snake." That is a great and fundamental error. The word *sa*, "snake," and the word *sa* in the sentences *sa bi fign*, *sa bi na*, etc., may have the same spelling, but [194] the pronunciation is different. The hard "s" of *sa*, "snake," is pronounced by opening the teeth slightly and protruding the lips, and the word *sa* in *sa bi fign*, etc., is pronounced by closing the teeth and pulling in the lips. Thus, these are two quite distinct words. Moreover, to claim the snake is, or has been, the Bambara divinity seems to me a piece of stupidity. If they do not claim any bond of real or physical kinship even with the animals that are their taboo, one must believe *a fortiori* that they would not claim /77/ an animal, even a snake, as Creator and sovereign Lord. Some Bambara have it as a family taboo, and a branch of the Mande people have such great respect for the python *Minia* (1) that now they are known only by the

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1. The Baganda of Uganda before they became Christian venerated the snake as the dwelling place of a demon. Their snake has a great resemblance to the animals that are family taboos for the Bambara, or better still, to the python *Minia*, taboo of the Mande branch commonly known under the name of *Minia-n-ka*. Since the *Minia-n-ka* derive their name from the word *Minia*, name of the snake that is venerated and an object of public worship, some have insisted that the *Bambara* or *Bamana* derive their name from the word *Bama*, meaning "cayman" /a species of alligator/. If the cayman, *Bama* in

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1. A ngari ko le ye ngo (ngari is a word of the archaic language which expresses submission.)

Each person responds by striking their genital organs with the little finger: "It is well humiliated" (2).

[826] 2. A ngari ko karu. The little finger is the symbol of the whole person; to strike with it is to acquiesce with all one's being.

They are led to the door of their home where the village elders of both sexes are gathered; they repeat their apologies to which the same response is given, accompanied by the same gesture of acquiescence.

[304] The chief of the Komo and three elders of his age grade who have never broken any taboos led them to the river bank where they undergo a new circumcision for the man and a new excision for the woman; the blood which is a gift to Faro must fall into the water. This operation is called "purification of the foreskin" (yiriyiri tige) and the pain suffered has an expiatory value.

The sixth day after the operation the members, gathered on the village square (3), dance and sing to the rhythm of the Komo, which

3. This ceremony, called daworo is comparable to that celebrated on the sixth day after circumcision.

is furiously beaten out, in the following words:

"Circumcised children, it is not good to break the taboo of the anus. I am telling you, Soma and members of the society, do not count their faults. Faro "(ter) (4).

4. (I ye ye) boloko dew tne tyẽ mañi boda la; nye fo aw ye somaw moko ka na jigi u la; faro (ter). That is to say, "forgive them." The word anus here replaces the word genitals which, according to propriety, is not spoken. [195]

*173 Dyoni Kolé, that is, a man named Kolé who came from Dioni.

Mamari himself had no fixed residence and his presence in a vicinity was always a source of anxiety for any who might cause him displeasure. It is said that one day he told the almami Ousman, who was somewhat a friend of his: "I intend to establish my home at Ségou-Sikoro." "Fine! (1)" said the almami, who was ready to leave when Mamari shortly afterward added: "On second thought, I'd rather build a 'New-Ségou' (Ségou-koura)." "Fine!" repeated the almami Ousman. However, Mamari again changed his mind and summoned the almami Ousman Dyiré in order to hand over to him the responsibility for affairs at Ségou-Sikoro. Since the old Moslem had no wish to get too intimately involved with his turbulent neighbor, he declined the honor and invented an excuse for a trip to Togou.

●[195]

Around this time, the Somono Tyéro people, migrating from the Bobo country, arrived at Ségou and obtained permission to remain there. Soon after, the people of Kong, who had recovered from their defeat, appeared on the frontiers of the Ségou country. Since they were warlike and well armed, they were redoutable adversaries and indeed they very nearly routed Mamari. It is said that in the decisive battle Mamari owed his victory solely to the Somono Tyéro people who routed the Kong forces by causing a swarm of bees to attack them.

[44] Old Ton-massa died during this engagement, and Mamari felt the loss all the more keenly because the soothsayers he had consulted predicted that his own run of good fortune would vanish with the old man. However, he arranged for a replacement for the deceased old man and gave his duties to a slave whom he bought from the Somono people at Néré-koro.

In that same year he modified the tax which had been required of his followers and proclaimed that in future instead of the di-songo, they would only have to give him the grain which

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1. This expression "a nyana" is an evasive answer, often used to hide hostility. See many examples in Chap. 7 following.

[119] Chapter 2

Concepts

1. Beliefs

195 826 The Bambara, like ourselves, has a sense of inner life and he expresses it in his language through figurative expressions which, in a sense, localize his sensations.

The eye, whose lens reflects everything that goes on around us, is, for the Bambara, a kind of mirror of the inner life: to be sad, nye na-fin, means "to have a somber eye"; to be cheerful, nye na-dye, means "to have a bright eye"; to be beaten down, nye na-koro, means "to have an eye that is old."

The head is the seat of decision, will and pride. To be active, kun' kene, is "to have an ardent head"; to be tenacious, kun' gwele, is "to have a hard head."

All emotional life is concentrated in the heart. A man who has proper feelings, a son' ka nyi, "has a good heart"; one who is bad, a son' ka dyugu, "has an evil heart." In a more general sense, anything that acts within (kono) us is a be n-kono, literally "it is within myself," meaning "I think, I intend, etc."

It is noteworthy that for these people life resides especially in two organs, the heart and the liver. The most solemn oath among them always contains the phrase: i ka n son' ni m bien' ta or "take my heart and my liver," that is, "destroy me, annihilate me, by removing these two knots of life."

774 195 In addition to these figurative expressions, which are common to [120] all languages, there are abstract terms which serve to express all that we imply in the words "life," "soul," etc. In Bambara, ni is "physical life," characterized by the drawing of breath (ni), which begins and ends with life. Dusu is emotional or moral life; si is duration, in the sense of living and also of becoming.

774 The Bambara does not conceive of a body's shadow as being caused by the interception of light by that body. For him

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181 The Bambara has a very highly developed sense of this idea of justice and there is nothing he resents more than injustice or a denial of justice. His resentment is stubborn and his vengeance, which may be deferred under a show of indifference, is implacable. The chronicle of Ségou is rich in pertinent examples. There was Ngolo Dyara, bringing murder and disaster on his own relatives in order to satisfy his hatred for having been sold into slavery by his uncle and not ransomed by any of his relatives. There was Kégné Mari who, watching the murder of Touro-koro in the Komo wood, expressed his vengeance finally fulfilled by saying: "Remember how, falsely accusing me of adultery with one of your wives, you had me lashed? And how on that day I told you that even though I were lying on the ground, if I could touch you with my foot, I would lay you low? Here at last is the day of my vengeance!" Similar examples are innumerable.

[195] If he is powerless against injustice, the Bambara will wait patiently and, each time he has to speak, will dissimulate his weakness in formulas which have a double meaning, such as O do!, meaning "That's it!" O nya-na, meaning "Oh well!" Tigi!, meaning "That's true"; and other similar expressions. At the same time, he is repeating to himself his proverb: don' m'i fantan', a bla k'a teme, meaning "Don't pay attention while you are weak," that is, "Wait until I am strong enough to take vengeance (lit., to pay you back)."

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626 This instinctive feeling for justice accounts, in a certain measure, for the family bonds made up of reciprocal rights [131] and duties between parents and between them and their children and, by an analogy of which we shall see other examples, between master and slave and between chief and subject. The obligation to respect all pacts concluded in the form of vows, oaths or fraternal alliance rests on the same basis. And it is the same notion that inspires the repression of acts which are almost universally condemned: perjury, treason, false witness, slander, [691] theft and murder. It sustains the tireless persistence of the pleader who will go through endless lawsuits to obtain redress for a wrong done to him or to one of his people. And it gives strength to public vengeance against the sorcerer.

857 use corporal punishment.

From this early age, therefore, a Bambara is subject to the corporate discipline which will henceforth dominate his whole life, for the same sort of discipline prevails in the adult brotherhoods.

857 The genie-protector is honored by offerings, [237] sacrifices, and ritual dances. When they perform these dances, the 292 n-Tomo-den' take turns wearing the ceremonial mask and cos- [782] tume. The mask has the form of a human face surmounted by a number of vertical horns (five to eight of these) and decorated with a few cowries. The costume consists of a dloki (a kind of blouse with wide sleeves) and a pair of long trousers, which completely cover the body. If the costume is yellowish-brown (basa) or white (dye), the association is called "n-Tomo-fin' (black n-Tomo)" or "n-Tomo-dye (white n-Tomo)," respectively. Is this costume supposed to represent the adepts' conception of their protector's appearance? No. As in all sects, it is intended to differentiate the officiant from the profane world (1).

[536] 1. Some of these associations give a kind of public performance from which they derive profit. Notably, they exhibit a kind of puppet called peremperen' (dancers) which members of the n-Tomo manipulate in a more or less comical manner; often one of the puppets represents a man and the other a woman, and [831] their movements abound in the obscenities which are so popular with the onlookers.

831 857 A wooden phallus (or a small board) is commonly used to summon the n-Tomo-den' to meetings. This is tied to the end [534] of a rope and whirled like a sling, producing a noise which the operator can vary and which carries a considerable distance. This apparatus is called n-Tomo-ulu, translated as "dog of the [195] n-Tomo." It should be noted that the words used in the brotherhoods usually have a double meaning, with a special sense under a vulgar form. For instance, the word ulu means both

857 831 195 "dog" and "the sexual parts of a man," and it seems evident that the expression n-Tomo-ulu should be taken in the latter sense. This is all the more likely since in the similar organization among the Khassonké the same apparatus is called khe-fengo, literally, "thing of a man," that is, "sexual parts of a man."

857 796 The great festival of the association takes place every year after the harvest and does not differ essentially from the one celebrated at the same time by all the brotherhoods. It involves offerings and sacrifices to the genie-protector, communion by the n-Tomo-den' at a corporate banquet, and the admission of new members. The following is a detailed description. [238]

At the instigation of the n-Tomo-tigi, the brotherhood's field has been harvested and to the grain collected has been added whatever the boys could obtain from their families or friends by any means, even theft. From this millet the n-Tomo-[273] tigi has had dlo (beer) prepared, which is drunk in great quantities on such occasions. The "elders" (koro-u), relatives, and friends can be counted on to send their contributions in kind.

Each n-Tomo-den' is given a little outfit appropriate to the occasion. The ceremonial costume is put in order; the dloki and trousers are washed and ironed, if need be, and the mask is rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu) to give it gloss.

On the day set, everything is in readiness. Many gourds of dege (1) and to (2), numerous jars of beer (dlo), and also some kola nuts have been assembled, along with sacrificial victims.

857 796 782 The n-Tomo-den', each leading a chicken on a string, go to the meeting place in single file, with the n-Tomo-tigi

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1. Dege is made by putting coarsely ground millet into a small quantity of water.

2. A native mush.

695 643 or in the chief's vestibule, that is to say, under the light of a certain constellation and witnessed by the founding ancestors who link the judge with the supernatural powers. The Fama was seated on a throne perched on a platform; at his right were the notables, at his left the *griot*, the priests, and the old captives; behind him stood the *sofa*. [195] The blacksmith or a captive repeated aloud what the Fama whispered, for the Fama should not raise his voice. Neither women nor children could attend the public sessions. Formerly, the mere view of the Fama filled the accused with terror, and he prostrated himself in the Fama's presence. The Fama could put the accused in irons until he was judged (1).

1. V. Paques, "L'estrade royale des Niaré" [The Royal Platform of the Niaré] *Bull. de l'Ifan*, Vol. XV (1953), No. 4.

671 Bambara law sought above all to make reparation, to restore order, and only after that to punish.

a. Proofs (2)

2. Passim. *Coutumier juridique de l'A.O.F.* [French West African Common Law].

695 The plaintiff must prove his case, and the accused must prove his innocence. Elements of proof may be confession, testimony by witnesses, oath taking, expert opinion, and examination of the scene.

If indications of guilt are strong enough, the Fama may force the accused to confess by having him whipped.

Each party may call witnesses in the following order: circumcised men, married women, unmarried girls (who, however, cannot [70] take the oath), and, lastly, children if there are no other witnesses. [608] The *sénanku* are exempted from bearing witness against each other.

755 [842] cannot cure. In order to become fertile, a sterile woman knots one* around her wrist or biceps, and a strange tafo it is, taken from the skin of a monkey's hand.

Syphilitic children, covered with pimples and pustules of magnan -- the name with which they adorn this disease -- have chicken droppings for their crême Simon, and this is the ointment of ointments.

[843] Chalk is the specific for pregnant women; to ease the mild discomforts which generally precede maternity, they draw pretty white crosses on the abdomen or on the chest, between the breasts.

2. Death

761 195 If sickness is not natural, there is all the more reason why death should not be. In the eyes of the Bambara there is no evil comparable to it. They fear it and its very name makes them tremble. When it is necessary for someone to announce a death or refer to it, he quite often uses a circumlocution in the presence of a member of the family. At the death of a child it is in good taste to say: "A sagira a ko, he has gone backwards," and if the deceased was a grown woman: "She is no more, she has ended her career, she has been buried." The politest of all the expressions concerning married men who have passed from life to death is: "A so yélémana, he has changed his dwelling." The initiates of certain sects cannot bear to be spoken to about death, and the korodouga, of the kouéré or koté sects, for example, get up and leave in displeasure, no matter how little this subject is dwelt upon in their presence.

761 The Bambara are not unaware that Moslems, missionaries, and all Europeans make light of their fetishes and scorn them; therefore in the presence of any of these they direct to God the accusation that He has caused the death of one of their people. This procedure is only a courtesy, an indirect way of respecting the belief of those to whom they speak, whose life they share, and whom they fear. They know that God has the power of life and death over human beings, but they attribute death to Him so seldom, that during seven consecutive years spent in the Sudan I did not encounter a single instance. /48/ Death is always caused by a wicked person, by an enemy who

*[i.e. A tafo, a string with seven or nine knots. —Analyst]

176 If on this earth the smallest of rulers, the least of potentates, is surrounded by servants and slaves, could the Creator be without them? If those who form the court of a king are superior to the gouatigi, or "family heads, " to the dougoutigi, or "village heads, " and to the kafotigi, or "heads of cantons, " would those who form the celestial court be inferior to men, to genii, or to demons? The conclusion is perfectly natural; they would be superior to the latter, and to what will he /the Bambara/ compare them? Since they always in every way use themselves as a basis for comparison, they have only to think of themselves in order to remain logical in their conception of the world and to attribute to these beings the nature of their souls, their dousou, which they also call son. Is this not what they have done? When the Bambara define their idea of the soul and want to be understood, have they any other word than this very one, méléké, which they use to designate the angels? It is clear that they do not owe their concept
[177] of heaven and the angels to the Moslems; they have appropriated from a foreign language a word which corresponded to a concept they already had, and that is all.

176 However, I am told that they have only one word to designate
177 the Divinity, the Only God, and that word is the Islamic term itself,
Alla. They have no other, and the first missionaries, doubtless
192 through ignorance of the pagans' hatred of the Moslems, adopted it,
196 thus creating a hindrance to their ministry (1). Yes, Alla is the term

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197 1. By translating as Alla both God and our concept of the Divinity, the first missionaries failed to establish the profound division which should exist between Catholicism and Islamism. The pagans regard the Catholic and the Moslem, as cousins, if not as brothers, and the word Alla is not irrelevant to this view. Because the Catholics believe in the Old Testament, they seem in the eyes of the Negro to border on Islamism, and the departure from it into Christianity

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> seems to them like membership in a sect derived directly from Islamism. The Moslems help with all their might to further belief in this nonsense. Therefore the missionaries should delete from their catechisms the word Alla for "God," as well as the ridiculous word mori for "priest," the word néma for "grace," etc., etc. -- in a word, all that is not Bambara.

176 they use in everyday language when they speak of God, but in the be-
177 ginning did they not have another, and do they not still have one at
192 present? /76/

196 I have always been surprised at the Negro's readiness to call a divine blessing by the name of its Author, and when in the winter he receives the blessing of blessings, the rain that makes plants sprout and the harvest grow, this is the way he expresses himself: "Alla bi fign, Alla bi na, Alla bi kouloukoulou, Alla bi yégé yégé, Alla do, etc., God darkens, God comes, God rumbles, God flashes, it is God," etc. These are purely metaphoric expressions, which mean: "The clouds gather; it will rain; the thunder rumbles; there are flashes of lightning, it is the rain."

I have found these metaphors on their lips also with exactly the same meaning but this time in Bambara words: "Sa bi fign, sa bi na, sa bi kouloukoulou, sa bi yégé yégé, sa do," the meaning is likewise: "The clouds gather; it will rain; the thunder rumbles; there are flashes of lightning; it is the rain." The word sa is strictly Bambara and so cannot reasonably be regarded as more recent than the Arab word; the Negroes therefore had it before they knew the word Alla. The word did not mean "cloud," "thunder," "lightning," or "rain," and there is every reason to believe that there was a time when it awakened in their minds a concept identical with that which the word Alla awakens in them at present, and that this word Alla from a foreign language is only used to express a concept long held by them.

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What is the meaning of the word sa? Could it be the original name of the Divinity? Since certain Bantu tribes have a high regard for snakes and dedicate a cult to them, some Europeans have wanted to see in it a translation of the word "snake." That is a great and fundamental error. The word sa, "snake," and the word sa in the sentences sa bi fign, sa bi na, etc., may have the same spelling, but [194] the pronunciation is different. The hard "s" of sa, "snake," is pronounced by opening the teeth slightly and protruding the lips, and the word sa in sa bi fign, etc., is pronounced by closing the teeth and pulling in the lips. Thus, these are two quite distinct words. Moreover, to claim the snake is, or has been, the Bambara divinity seems to me a piece of stupidity. If they do not claim any bond of real or physical kinship even with the animals that are their taboo, one must believe *a fortiori* that they would not claim /77/ an animal, even a snake, as Creator and sovereign Lord. Some Bambara have it as a family taboo, and a branch of the Mande people have such great respect for the python Minia (1) that now they are known only by the

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1. The Baganda of Uganda before they became Christian venerated the snake as the dwelling place of a demon. Their snake has a great resemblance to the animals that are family taboos for the Bambara, or better still, to the python Minia, taboo of the Mande branch commonly known under the name of Minia-n-ka. Since the Minia-n-ka derive their name from the word Minia, name of the snake that is venerated and an object of public worship, some have insisted that the Bambara or Bamana derive their name from the word Bama, meaning "cayman" /a species of alligator/. If the cayman, Bama in

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the Bambara language, had given its name to the people, this animal would be taboo for them, as the *Minia* is taboo for the *Minianka,* and the *Mani* or *Mali,* the hippopotamus, is taboo for the Malinke. None of this is true of the cayman in Bambara country; it is in no way the taboo of the tribe. Moreover, the word *Bamana* could just as well come from the word *bama*, a kind of tench /a fresh-water fish of the carp family/ which is found in abundance in the Bani and the Niger. This idea has not occurred to the partisans of the cayman, who undoubtedly are not familiar with the fish called *bama*. The word *Bambara* comes from the word *bamba* which means "rebel" and, in the mouths of the Moslems, carries the meaning of *Kafri.* *Bambara* means "the rebel who has never submitted to Islam, " and the Negroes of the west speak of *Bamako* or *Bambako,* "the river of the rebels. " Father Copte, a student of the Bambara recognized by the Negroes of the Ségou, quickly understood this fact and noted it in his accounts in the *Annals* of the White Fathers. Mr. De Lafosse, an administrator most conversant with the native laws, customs, and ways, recognized it also, and I share their opinion concerning the name Bambara.

776 name of *Minia-n-ka*, the people of the Minia snake. But have the
196 Minianka ever worshipped, or do they still worship, the snake as their

776 196 God, their supreme deity? They are not that stupid, the snake is an ordinary taboo, the dwelling place of a genie, an infernal spirit or a demon, and nothing more.

The word sa in the sentences sa bi fign, sa do, etc. ("the clouds gather, it is the rain," etc.), has a broad and vague meaning, indicating everything that is on high, everything that is above us. Was this word in the past the very name of the Divinity, as the word Alla is for many today? I do not think so. The word sa was the veiled term used to speak of the Divinity and, like the word Alla, it originally expressed a concept or an idea, and not a "being" at all.

Since, according to Bambara ideas, God is a spirit dwelling above us with His court and angels, the expressions sa bi na, sa bi /78/ fign, sa bi kouloukoulou, sa-dji, etc., should be interpreted to mean: "Min bé sa-n-fé bi na, Min bé sa-n-fé bi fign, Min bé sa-n-fé bi kouloukoulou, Sa-n-fe ta dji -- He Who (the spirit which) is up above comes (will favor us with His blessing of rain); He Who is above darkens (gathers clouds); He Who is above rumbles (makes His voice heard); the water of Him Who is above."

776 196 192 The supreme blessing that the Divinity, the Supreme Being, grants to human beings, is rain. As I shall demonstrate in a moment, the Bambara were unable to speak the name of their God and in their gratitude used a metaphor. Their fact that their metaphor, Alla bi na, Alla bi fign, is identical to the one in which the word sa appears, i.e., sa bi na, sa bi fign, etc., leads me to think, nay forces me to think, that in the beginning the word Alla expressed less an individual or a being than an idea or a concept. For I must confess that although some of our Bambara have the very ideas of the Moslems concerning God and the word Alla, there are more whose ideas on this subject remain confused, and for the majority God or Alla is nothing more than the arch of heaven (1), a covering which hides from us a "Spirit,"

1. To pagan Negroes, God is a spirit Who is everywhere, sees everything, but remains ens quantum. He dwells on high, is as large as the celestial vault, and because He hovers above us

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a Being endowed with reason and all powerful. The term is the translation of the word sa.

It is apparent that in the beginning the word Alla in no way meant a Being or an Individual; it simply expressed a concept, an idea already known, accepted and translated by the word sa, and the Bambara simply adopted a foreign word corresponding to their own concept.

776 If to the Bambara the word Alla had meant the Divinity Himself,
196 the Supreme Being, would they ever have dared to speak it, to make
192 it their own? I cannot bring myself to believe that they would, among
551 them the name of a powerful person, a religious chief, or venerated
576 being is never spoken in vain or in an unsuitable manner. If some of
[687] their kings, among them /79/ N'golo, not to mention others, punished
anyone caught speaking his /the royal/ name by fines and prison, cast them into slavery, and even beheaded them as guilty of the crime of lese majesty, what would they not have to fear from the Creator if they spoke His name in vain and inappropriately! Furthermore, it is a widespread custom to avoid speaking the name of one who is feared or venerated.

576 No well-bred and self-respecting woman ever speaks the name
of her husband. She speaks of him as né tigi ("my master"), so tigi
551 ("the master of the house"). Most frequently she adorns him with a
595 borrowed name, a bougna toua, or name of respect, and a polygamist
has several such names, each wife giving him one of her own invention.

In well-brought-up families -- and most of them are (1) -- the

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sees everything. The old men explain this to you with an intensity that proves their good faith, and children recite the sayings of the old men with a frankness so naive that one cannot misunderstand it.

1. Our Bambara Negroes have great respect for the members of their families and are considerate of them;

196 secretly replaces the object in the new thatch. A white ox is sacrificed at the well.

The information collected on this ceremony is still fragmentary but the color of the clothing worn by those officiating, that of the victim, the number of bands of the loin-cloth, and the number of cowrie shells given by the griot to his sister, the origin of the gravel used as the seat for the Kéita are evidence that we have here a ritual executed under the protection of Faro (see Chap. II)

175 As early as the fourteenth century numerous travelers described the Bambara /xv/as organized into small groups headed by a chief and more or less submitting to the neighboring empires. This state of affairs lasted until the period of the Peul invasion of this region (in the seventeenth century) which founded two kingdoms and created a local aristocracy of mixed Peul and Bambara blood. The first of these kingdoms was that of Ségou, the history of which is partly known (1). The investigations centered particularly in this area; the chief town which was a capital for a long time retains the traces of a well organized legal system and religion. It is also in this area that, according to specialists, the purest dialect is spoken. (2) [197]

197 The Bambara dialects belong to the sub-group of Mandingo languages of the Nigero-Senegalese group. (3) The Bambara know certain
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1. On the history of the Bambara we refer the reader to the well documented volume of L. Tauxier. Histoire des Bambara.

[556 191] 2. The children of families sufficiently wealthy to afford it were formerly sent to Ségou to live with affinals in order to learn how to speak well an elegant and pure language.

3. See A. Meillet et M. Cohen. Les Langues du Monde /Languages of the World/, p. 546.

197 systems of signs and ideograms which may be considered as a sort of 212 writing and the study of which is currently pursued. The system from which all the others supposedly stem, the *glã glã zo*, has 226 ideograms which, according to informants, summarize the knowledge of the [102] Bambara (1). On the other hand, the Bamba use a numerical system based on twenty. Moreover, an analysis of the texts collected, some of them quoted in this essay, has brought to light an /xvi/ important number of words which, according to informants, belong to an ancient language of Mandingo origin, now used as liturgical language. It is not within the framework of this essay to present this material or to comment upon it, but it is appropriate to note that the study of this vocabulary would contribute to an understanding of religious thinking among the Bambara.

173 The Bambara have a rather clear idea of their early history and even of their prehistory. They describe their ancestors with precision and know the phases of development of their technology. These premises are necessary to an understanding of their religion which, like the other institutions, is especially linked to this technological development. Moreover, the only observable remains comprise household furniture and utensils, transient but perennial material whose forms and ornamentation indicate the metaphysical principles on which their way of thinking is based.

177 It is appropriate not to neglect those influences which have acted 121 upon the Bambara through their contacts with other Sudanese tribes

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1. See. p. 21. This system and two of the ideograms, of which *to* designates the mash of boiled cereals and by extension nourishment in general, will be the object of a comment by M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen. "Signes graphiques des Soudanais. L'Homme. /Graphic signs of the Sudanese man/." *Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie et de linguistique*, *Hermann* (in press).

On certain types of writing observed among the Mandé and the Vai, see J. Février, *Histoire de l'écriture* /The History of Writing/, pp. 528-529.

772 This knowledge, derived from the Kéita of Mandé, is called glã glã zo and describes the timeless and primordial state that preceded the stages of creation. The word glã which indicates the original void, connotes at the same time the ideas of movement, awakening, reawakening, and resurrection; glã is the principle of the inner universal movement of the cosmos and all that composes it. On the other hand, the term implies the idea that creation is continuous /3/ from the moment of its beginning and perpetually maintained in all things as well as in the universe taken as a whole (1).

[197] 1. The word glã belongs to the ancient language. The Bambara term closest to it in meaning is kununi, which means "reawakening, resurrection." Glã is the principle of the eternal resurrection of all things.

Glã, "full of its own emptiness and its emptiness full of itself," extended its power everywhere. It sounded "a voice of emptiness" which brought into being its double, dya; glã became two, thus indicating the primordial character of duality, the existential principle (2). The

2. It is said: glã ye lankolo nye, lankolo nye glã ye, glã ye a yere ke lankolo fla ye, lankolo fla ye a yere ke glã ye; "glã is the emptiness, emptiness is glã, glã made itself into two emptinesses, two emptinesses made themselves into glã itself."

two gave forth a damp substance, zo zumale, "cold rust," which came out as invisible liquid vapor and formed hard shiny substances (3).

3. glã ye koloya a la ka kr zo ye, boli tumbi kẹ šiši ye bali ye, ka kẹ dyi sumale ye, ka kẹ zo yele gele ye; "glã made a substance which was rust come out of itself; this emission was invisible smoke which then became cold water, the latter becoming a hard and shiny rust." The informant translated the word zo as "rust."

CHAPTER 2

LINGUISTIC DATA

A. Linguistic Classification

197 According to the classification by Delafosse (1), Bambara or Banmana is a dialect of the Mandé or Mandingue language, which in turn belongs to the central subgroup of the Nigerian-Senegalese languages. It is, then, very close to the Dioula, Kassonké, dialects, which belong to the same Mandé language and which are spoken by peoples with whom the Bambara cohabit geographically. (The differences with the Soso, the Soninké, and above all the Peul are much more marked).

193 197 Among the Nigerian-Senegalese languages, Mandé is distinguished chiefly by four traits:

1. The nominal forms have almost completely disappeared.
2. Noun and verb are distinguished only by their respective places in the sentence.
3. Conjugation includes a large number of verbal aspects.
4. The subject, noun or pronoun, precedes the verb.

The disappearance of the nominal forms marks an important evolution in comparison with the archaic language, in which they are, on the contrary, of pronounced importance. Of all the Mandé dialects, Bambara appears to be the most advanced. It is characterized particularly by its extreme conciseness and by the deformation words undergo through excessive contraction.

B. Morphology

193 Bambara makes no differentiation by inflexions: nothing indicates whether a word is subject or object, whether a verb is present or past, active or passive. The words are absolutely invariable and

1. Delafosse, Langues du Soudan [Languages of the Sudan] (Meillet and Cohen, Les Langues du monde [Languages of the World]).

805 the angles represents 90 days (the year, for the Bambara, is 360 days).
815 The symbols are not merely mathematical; they form part of the
daily life of the society. [18] The zigzags are a characteristic theme
[531] in the decoration of pottery, weapons, tools, sanctuaries, and houses.
One finds them in agricultural techniques and in ritual dance figures.
The universal rhythms of the earth and sky echo through all the
activities of man and society. (1) Finally, another series of 16 signs
is habitually used in geomancy. It is interesting to note that these signs were used in a practical manner for correspondence. The Bambara chiefs used multiple combinations of them to send each other messages.

G. Local Diversities

197 Given the extent and the diversity of the regions where Bambara is spoken, it is no wonder one notices differences in pronunciation, and even in structure and vocabulary, from one province to another. At Kaarta the speech is not the same as at Ségou, and a Bambara of Ségou has trouble understanding a Bambara of Bougouni. This is due partly to the influence of other languages which are in contact with Bambara and which ultimately alter and modify it, and partly to the normal evolution of language within a group separated for centuries from its place of origin. It is interesting to note that in the Bougouni circle the conservatives in speech are the old men, while the women are the evolutionary element.

191 Traditionally, Ségou was considered the center for the most elegant Bambara speech. Before the conquest, children were sent to Ségou to learn the purest Bambara.

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[787] 1. *Id.*, "Conception de l'écliptique chez les Dogons et les Bambara" [The Dogon and Bambara Conception of the Ecliptic]. [Ed., *Africa*, 1951.]

194 196 533 During the masked dances, once the drummers have begun the rhythm of the Komo, they must neither slow down nor cease their playing; otherwise the masker will rush at the player and threaten him with his left hook. In this case, the musician changes the rhythm in order to soothe the masker and sings: "You, old men, you are with the bara; listen, this bara is not empty." (1).

1. Aw ni bara makorabaw; klo madyo,
nin bara te bara lãkulo ye.

194 196 198 /162/ The masker participates in the ceremony not only by dancing and by uttering cries, whose pitch and intensity vary according to the action which he is preparing or performing.

A guttural and very muffled cry (buâ, buâ, buâ) called komo suruku (literally, hyena of the Komo) is used to frighten the participants.

A shrill and short cry (pyę, pyę, pyę) called kono fari kasi (literally, cry of the bad bird) is frequently used to animate the dance and amuse the spectators.

A long and softer cry (ô-ô, ô, ô, the last three ô's being very close together) called morokorobaw kasi (literally, cry of the ancestors) greets the chief and his age grade.

194 196 During the mask dance, the Komo's griot encourages it by reciting the devices which exalt its power, authority, and judicial powers:

"You, Komo, you griot of the Komo, you, ringer of the bell, from whom do you come? You come from Makanta Djigui. You, bad Komo, from whom do you come? You come from Soma Moriba. To whom did this one give it? He gave it to the sons of the blacksmiths. Who are the owners of the Komo? Makanta Djigui, Soma Moriba, the sons of the blacksmiths. These have not known shame; you must not be ashamed. These have not received humiliations; you must not be humiliated.

"You, little living Komo, enemy of non-members, friend of members, take your enemy's heart, take his liver. I follow behind you and not before you. Ah! Komo; you, killer of the fat dead ones, shroud of those living, act upon him who provokes you as you do upon him who does not provoke you" (2).

2. E komo, e dyeli, e ndara kolo fo,
e bwora dyeni ma, e bwora makanta

787 which the god speaks. In the brotherhoods of which we shall
presently speak, the wara-mina-den' is, as the term indicates,
"possessed by the god"; he is also said to be "the mouth of the
god" (wara da). However, the diviner can speak only unin-
198 telligible gibberish during trance, and so this half-human, half-
divine language must be interpreted by the wara-tigi or high-
priest.

During dream or divine possession, the invisible is brought within man's reach by a sort of inner illumination; both methods may be said to be intuitive divination. Other methods, even more widely used, are based on a different procedure. These methods purport to penetrate the divine intention and will by observation of external signs. How do these signs differ from natural phenomena?

The native pays very little attention to what we call
811 natural laws. He reasons by analogy and attributes any un-
familiar phenomenon to an invisible being endowed like himself
with intelligence and will. The indications of this will are not
precise, and it is up to each person to recognize and to interpret
them. Divination based on external signs may be called deduc-
tive. The signs may be classified in two categories: those in-
volving living beings and those involving inanimate objects.

787 Living beings. Theoretically, any animal is useful for
825 purposes of observation because its actions, whose determining
cause is unknown to the ordinary man, reveal to the seer the
divine will or intervention.

Observations of this kind have given rise to many taboos (tne). Here is an example: while crossing a [135] stream an ancestor of the Samakɛ was caught by a crocodile and carried down through the water to the creature's lair, where he was abandoned. It happened that the man was merely stunned and when he came to, he pondered how he might escape. Suddenly he felt some grains of sand fall on his face and, seeking the source, noticed that a thread of light came in through a tiny fissure in the rock. The grains of sand were coming through this crack, and he realized that an ant lion (gere) was throwing them in an effort to show him how to get out; so he managed to enlarge the crack enough to escape. But, remembering the insect to

787 With the same equipment the diviner sometimes operates differently. Setting the gourd firmly on the crown that supports it, he then taps it two or three times with his middle finger. Then, it is claimed, he can hear special sounds, which are revelations by the water-spirit and which he alone can understand.

In short, there is an endless number of divining practices and here, if anywhere, the old saw which says that the spirit blows where, when and how it listeth, is singularly appropriate. And nothing is more accommodating than human credulity. It
[198] goes without saying that there are some remarkable ventriloquists among the Bambara, who give such talented support to inanimate objects that the latter become veritable oracles. A piece of horn stuck into the ground or a mute block of wood are thus transformed through such artifice into mediums that answer anyone on any subject.

[828] [154] There are also many highly suggestible individuals who readily fall into wakeful or hypnotic states, during which they reveal hidden things.

787 Another practice among the Bambara is the use of the
763 kolon' kala (1) which is specially amenable to hypnotic suggestion. When a suspicious death requires search for a murderer, the corpse is often used for the discovery. It is carried on the heads of [138] two impressionable young men, who are then assumed to be possessed by the soul of the deceased. The lugubrious remains are rapidly borne through the settlement or the countryside, disregarding obstacles, until it finally stops of itself at a spot where the murderer or some revelatory sign is to be found.

787 A kind of effigy is often used instead of a corpse. This is made of a kolon' kala to which is tied a little bag containing bits of the body (finger-nails, hair, etc.) and which is wrapped in a cloth. The effigy plays the role of the corpse.

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[413] 1. This is the wooden pestle used in all native kitchens to crush grain and condiments.

794 [292] Some of the clergy use a disguise when officiating in public; furthermore, the ceremonies are held only at night.

● [198] [551] Finally, in the presence of the profane, the initiated use a special language for everything referring specifically to the cult. The greatest secret of all is the name of the nyana, because anyone who knows the name has complete power over the spirit it designates.

794 298 From the point of view of the disguised clerical body, this secrecy is virtually impenetrable. A disguised person loses his human personality and is withdrawn from the natural world. It is an accepted fact that it is dangerous for those not affiliated to intercept his glance through the tiny openings in the mask; undoubtedly his person on that occasion is impregnated with a fluid whose emanations are fatal to those who, not being affiliated, are unprotected against them.

[825 776] Some of these disguises include a headdress or mask and for the body a kind of costume usually made of long strips of vegetal material; is this, as has been suggested, simply a means of dominating the herd of adepts and even more the profane through the terror such regalia inspires when seen at night by the flickering light of torches and bonfires? It seems more probable that one must put this matter on the plane of the supernatural in order to understand it. Dangerous wild animals are believed to be incarnations of evil and powerful gods, and an attempt is made to present an outward appearance consistent with the terror merely seeing them inspires, in order thereby to acquire the supernatural qualities that characterize them (1).

(1) There is no doubt that some individuals, under the influence of the role of wild beast that they are portraying, have been led to commit actual murders during ritual observances. I have often heard this asserted in connection with the dyara (lion).

794 782 It should be noted that the costume, gestures, [259] dances, songs, and music of the dye-n-fa and their acolytes

794 overpowered by the god, he always comes to die near the temple.
796 When this happens, the wretch's corpse is left there, naked; his clothing is thrown to the roof of the temple where it remains for a long time as an example. The siri-fen' are also displayed near the temple, within sight of the women, who are allowed to come and look at them.

It is just prior to these solemn sorties of the Nama that the clergy begins the proceedings to admit the youths who have just completed the soli. In the center of a circle of the faithful in front of the temple, they take their oath of secrecy:

794 --I y'a fo ma min' ye, boli k'i son' ta, k'i been'ta, ka
796 [280] dun' i dyu fe'ka bo i da fe: If you speak to anyone, may
539 the boli take your heart and your liver, may he go in through your anus and go out through your mouth.

--O ka ke: Let it be so.

-- Ni e ma fo ma ye, k'i kisi suba-u ma k'i son' si la, k'i son' keneya la: If you tell no one, may he protect you from the suba, grant you descendants, and give you good health.

-- O ka ke: Let it be so.

The new members must pay an entrance fee of a franc and ten kola nuts and must go through a kind of initiation. For a fortnight they live apart under supervision and are required to learn the songs and dances under the tutelage of the clergy and
198 old men. They are told the significance of the words with double meanings, which constitute the language peculiar to the brotherhood, and are also given the formula of recognition, of which the following are some examples:

-- E b'a la wa? (Are you one of us?)

-- Ne b'a la (I am).

-- Fere tyon' kan' (Show the sign).

He shows it and explains it. The questioner then concludes:

--Dya! e b'a la, ko! (You are indeed one of us)!

826 immortal with smooth limbs, he became mortal and hard working. As seats of the male semen, they transmit this condition to the embryo, formed in the maternal womb by Faro. The weariness felt in the limbs after the sexual act is proof of this transmission. As Locus of [829] the virile semen, framework of the man, and a mechanism suitable for physical labor, the articulations are also the symbol of society. The chief's throne, in the shape of a knee, is the image of its owner's articulated body as well as that of the armature of the social body and of the grouping of individuals under his jurisdiction (1).

1. See p. 178.

826 823 201 The limbs represent the right and the left. Rectitude, firmness, and directed action are "right"; incertitude, the spirit of indecision, and inconsistency in behavior are "left." The right is male and symbolizes man's labor; the other is female. All gestures, profane and religious, and all representations of objects bear witness to this. Performing his first task in the fields before the rain, the farmer gives three blows with his hoe held in his left hand in order to absorb the impurity of the earth. After this, he works until the harvest with his right hand. To cross one's hands means supplication, to put them behind one's back means humiliation.

826 201 576 Each finger has its value. The little finger, bolokoni lakare, is "the son of the other fingers" and in it is concealed the entire strength of the hand; it "carries the nyama of the fingers." Hence its use as a measure of divinations. To point to someone with one's little finger means to belittle him with respect to those present. Thus one casts a spell (korti) against an enemy or an undesirable person with the little finger.

826 622 The index finger and the thumb of a chief, formerly those of a king, are marked on certain occasions with signs called bolo ti doniya, "knowledge of the signs of the hand." On the index are drawn three "acts of the world today" (bi dyẽ walew) and on the thumb, two "things of the interior of the secret world" (dyẽ gundo kono fẽw), for it is said that "the knowledge of the signs of the hand /70/ is the road of the creation 5, the index is the world in 3 and the thumb is the new world" (1). The whole represents the worlds thought out by

784 acts more energetically. But it is even more serious to eat one's taboo
783 than to ill it, for then the person cannot get rid of his victim's nyama
and must suffer all the consequences.

The guilty person goes to the shore of the Niger and in a loud voice, discloses the facts to Faro while making him an offering (millet mash, copper, etc.), then he drinks a little water and goes home. If he lives too far from the river, he goes to a remote place and acts in the same way by spilling a little of his own blood as a sign of expiation. These acts have the effect of rectifying everything with Faro whom he has offended by breaking the established order. Next, he undergoes the purification rites. Their agent is his ally senānku and the rites are carried out at an intersection, dangu (1). The effect of such rites is to rid him of his victim's nyama, and then to reinstate the symbol of the eight life-giving cereal seeds in his collarbone: thus he recovers his lost strength. After his recovery, the old men of his family summon him and give him some stern advice for another breaking of the taboo cannot be atoned by any purification: the animal's nyama will no no longer leave the repeating offender who may die of it.

784 Voluntary infractions, which are very rare, of course bring about
far more serious consequences for the person in question since his re-
sponsibility is involved. This is not so in the opposite case. If a
man has eaten his taboo without knowing it during a meal taken at the
home of another, the animal's nyama may attack those responsible:
either the host or his wife becomes ill. The guilty woman must then
[201] ask the man's forgiveness. On her knee and with her hands at the
back, she discloses the facts to the person she has injured who may ask
for time to think and make her wait in order to punish her. Other-
wise he demands three kola nuts with which he carried out the
dyanzani or "replacement." He throws them in the bush or gives them
to the first poor person he meets. A few days later the responsible per-
son is liberated.

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[602] 1. See p. 183. In certain cases the purification may be carried out by a kinsman of an ascending generation and may include ablutions with water consecrated by a prayer addressed to Faro.

602 783 that is, sixteen. This fact qualifies him, by his gesture of purification and through his essential role as provider of sustenance, to restore the seeds that had left the guilty man's collarbone. If the offense is slight, the offender gives him millet, money, or an object. The wounded animal's nyama settles on the object, and the senãnku who receives it rids him of it without being affected himself. If the offense is more serious, the two allies go off together to a road intersection, dangu; then the senãnku takes a straw torch in the shape of a cross and circles the guilty man's head with it from left to right. The being who has been offended by the broken taboo can refuse nothing when confronted with this procedure. He removes the nyama he had inflicted and the man, powerfully aided by the forces of the purifying agent, recovers those he had lost, as symbolized by the seeds in his collarbone.

This cathartic role of reinstating subsistence forces into the human body is illustrated in daily life by the food prestations to which the partners are held. This is like the secular and materialistic representation of an invisible operation of purification.

The Person: Exceptional Cases

000 Certain physical peculiarities constitute the manifest evidence of a modification of the elements making up the person. It is appropriate here to examine the cases of individuals who are thus affected.

Twins

845 Twins, flani (literally, two little ones), are two new beings given to men by Faro and considered as his offspring alone. Because of this fact, twins inherit neither the ni nor the dya of a dead person, but they inherit new principles which come to them from the spirit. Moreover, their dya never leaves the water for the shadow, but remains in the hands of the spirit throughout their entire life. Because of this they are protected from all danger and from all impurity.

● [201] Such a birth is considered a blessing and is granted only to certain privileged people called kunandi. It is announced by holding up the right and left forefingers without uttering a word, for its announcement would be so powerful that it would harm the newborn. Their mother wraps a white cotton band called dyala about her forehead to indicate the presence of the children's dya /86/ in Faro's hands.

326/184 Taboos Provided with vital force and a soul, ŋi, the forge, a living being, is surrounded by taboos aimed at protecting its material and spiritual integrity.

These taboos, numbering seven, are peculiar to the forge and to the altars which it contains; they concern not only the /123/ blacksmiths, but also his clients, the passers-by, whatever sex they may belong.

[252] 1. None may cook meat on the fire of the forge; it would be equivalent to "eating the meat of the Soba spirits." To break this rule deprives the fire of its strength and causes the abdomen of the person breaking the taboo to swell (1).

> 1. It is said of the culprit: soko dyeni bala, fa ta sababu yalla: "he is full of meat cooked on the fire of the forge."

2. No insult may be uttered near the forge, particularly if it is of a sexual nature (2). This would be equivalent to insulting the fire;

> 2. Neni teke fã nda la: "Insults are not to be spoken at the door of the forge."

the flame would waver and, despite the bellows, no heat would rise from the hearth.

[201] 3. The sole of the foot and the palm of the hand are never presented to the fire, for the forge is alive and just as these same gestures made towards another human being would bring about physical disorders, so the various parts of the forge are vulnerable and may break (the hammer or anvil) or tear (the membrane of the bellows) (3).

> 3. Se ndege tere te jira fa na: "The tere of the sole of the foot must not be presented to the forge."

4. Any quarrel or misunderstanding disturbs the forge, upsets it, and harms the work (4).

> 4. Dadyuguya, filibatya, kunasirinlenya, konodyuguya te kę fã nda la: "Meanness,

794 The rituals in which the mask participates generally /161/ take
796 place the following night in a thicket called komo tu, "bushy one of
201 the Komo," situated in the bush near the village.

As soon as they hear the mask whistling, the members approach according to their age grades, the older ones first. In principle, only those under the jurisdiction of the functioning Komo and their guests are present. However, any initiated stranger who wishes to attend the dances makes his status known by means of the following signs:

1. Shouting "hé" or "ho," he presents his right hand to the mask with all the fingers folded except the index and the little finger which point towards it. The index, in this case, represents the circumcised man, member of the Komo society, in sum, the petitioner. The little finger, which is smaller, expresses this man's submission to the Komo and the fact that he is and will always remain its inferior.

2. He puts a twig of straw in his mouth; the light colored straw signifies that his heart is pure, that he has no evil intention. The mouth, closed over the straw, shows that the man, "understanding the word of the Komo," has no need to speak of it.

3. On his arrival, he says: ani bara (literally, I am with the bara). The masker, hearing these words, crouches and then straightens up suddenly before the newcomer as though to frighten him. The latter then says: "I am a new child of the society" (1). When he is accepted, the masker resumes the dance and the ceremony continues.

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533 The rhythms of the Komo bear the general name of komo bara or
komo foli dunu (literally, rhythm of the Komo drums) (2). They are numerous, adapted to the rituals they accompany, each endowed with a separate name. The Bambara classify them into three categories: the rapid, violent, and difficult rhythms performed against the non-initiates; the soft rhythms for circumcision; the sad rhythms for funerals.

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1. Ne ye timidɛ̃ kura ye.

2. The word bara is reserved for the rhythms of the masked Komo dances. The rhythms of the profane dances of the elders are called mabere fo, those of the young men, bɔ̃dyala, those of the girls, kofili.

881 In a compact group, the women and girls of all ages
and stations shuffle slowly around the orchestra, while the men
535 drink and sing around small fires of dry millet stalks.

From time to time, upon being invited to do so, one of the girls, soli-ma-moso, gets up, rattles her gourd, and joins the dance with slow, deliberate steps.

At dawn, when they are about to return to their huts, the girls, soli-ma-moso, make one last circuit, and then each one, with her heels together and her hands crossed above her head, makes three leaps into the air. She does this three times.

The Bambara themselves interpret these various details
881 concerning girls, the soli-ma-moso, as symbolic. The girl's
201 position between her mother's legs recalls physical birth. The
white cloth represents the one that at her mother's marriage bore witness to virginity and reminds the girl that she will have to give similar proof to her husband. The dance done with slow, measured steps is the symbol of a child learning to walk, and the nine leaps that close the ceremony attest to the fact that the girl is now an adult. A final rite shows the parallelism between the soli and [246] birth: on the sixth day, the nyana-n-
[302] son-na-ba shaves the head of the soli-ma-moso (1).

1. In place of the braided coiffure, young girls wear the magic cord with nine knots, called tafo, on the crown of the head, and this is connected to a similar one, called dyo, at the nape of the neck.

881 End of the soli. On the seventh day, before noon, all the soli-ma-moso go to the well or to the river to wash the soiled clothes and to scour the pots and gourds used for the festival. Then all return to the discipline of the soli; the boys under their tree, and the girls in their huts. The sema watch over the youngsters, who by now are bored with the discipline. About three weeks must pass after the operation before all the soli-ma completely recover.

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796 For a certain length of time, the new members are kept in seclusion while being instructed by initiates, especially the older ones, who see to it that they learn the songs and dances and become familiar with the special language. It is in the course of this instruction that they are given certain formulas to use for recognition among the komo-den' (sons of the Komo). The following are two examples and by no means the only ones; each Komo-ya has its own formulas, and in addition the adepts of the various Komo-ya are readily inclined to fraternize, especially when they are alone, far from their respective groups. In such cases, the identical principles of their cults bring them together, and they question each other at once:

[539] --E b' a la wa (Are you a member)?

--M ba' la (I am).

--N'i b'a la, tyoko dyira r na (If you are, show me the secret sign).

[201] This sign varies and is completely arbitrary. Sometimes it involves raising the hand with the fingers spread apart in a certain way; at other times, twigs are placed in a special pattern, and so on. [275]

The Nama

794 This cult arose at an unknown date at Missango (Bélédougou). The head of the Nama at Missango is addressed respectfully as Fura-tigi-ba, meaning literally, "grand master of the fura (fura specifically means "leaf" of a tree and, by extension, "remedy"). This is one of the expressions with double meanings which are so common in the brotherhoods: Fura-tigi-ba, the great physician, great savant, grand master.

The Nama is also called Nama-koro and Suya-koro, and a certain Nama is called Siriman 'fin'.

[778] Objects used in worship include; the Nama-kon-golo-u (craniums of the Nama), which are a kind of headdress, usually made of linge wood and shaped like fantastic birds; the wara-se (literally, "foot of the wara"), a small wooden board about a meter high with three horns affixed to it; and a similar board with two horns, called nye-bla.

844 Before delivery of her child, a woman is advised to pound grain.
When the labor pains come, the woman retires to her hut with several
matrons (men are not allowed access). If the child is poorly presented,
the priest is called. He performs outside the hut, simulating the delivery
and chanting the formulas that ease labor. To deliver the
infant, the woman kneels with her hands thrown behind her, while
the midwife supports the small of her back. At birth the infant's
shoulders must touch the ground; this is the moment when he receives
his spiritual principles. The infant is washed several times and
smeared with karite butter.

846 The mother must not go out during the first eight days after the
853 birth; she must devote herself entirely to the new-born. She massages
854 his head daily in order to give it a more rounded form, and she
pinches his nose. She nurses the infant for the first two years, then
the weaned child passes directly to the communal calabash. Until
the child can walk, the mother carries it astraddle on her back with
the aid of a loincloth knotted at her chest. In this manner the infant
accompanies the mother everywhere, to work as well as to the dance.
868 It is during these intimate contacts that the mother teaches her child
to talk. Later, the little girls stay with their mothers who teach them
all the domestic arts, while the boys are educated in outside work.
[867] During their childhook they are taught the usages and rules of deportment:
a woman knows she must never shake the hand of a man to
201 greet him, and, if he extends his hand, she flings up her arm "as a
576 sign of not being interested." A man will salute his superior by extending
his hand palm upwards, and the superior will put his over it;
inversely, when a man greets an inferior he extends his hand with the
palm down, while for an equal his hand will be perpendicular to the
ground. If a man must ask someone's pardon, he puts his hands behind
his back to simulate the tail of an animal (for he has acted like
an animal). Crossing the hands in front of or upon the head is a sign
of sadness. To mark his submission to a king, a man puts his right
elbow to the ground. To pray to God, the two hands are extended
with the palms turned [89] outward. A woman learns that it is im-
576 pudent to question her husband during the day, and when she speaks
593 of him, she says koke, that is, big brother, for she cannot pronounce
833 his name or in any way recall the bonds which exist between them.
It is only during the two consecutive nights that she couples with him

852 with water added (to recall the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni). The patriarch shakes the family pembélé three or four times over the infant's head to give him the nyama of the recently deceased whose ni and dya he has inherited. Then he places the altar (kere la boli ni) on the infant's chest three times, after having recited a prayer. He cuts the throat of a red cock, dips his index finger in the blood, and traces three or four crosses on the newborn's forehead, who be-
553 comes boli din. The name is given the eighth day by the Komo chief
[431] under the doubalé, where the old people assemble. The father offers 100 kola nuts, two jars of millet beer, plus a ram whose throat is cut, and money for the griot. Part of the baby's hair is shaved off and kept in [90] a case (sebe); another part of the hair is thrown in the river as a sacrifice to Faro. The eldest of the old men examines the roots of the infant's hair and the conjunction of the eyebrows, thus determining its character (téré). Then he swings the baby seven times in an east-west direction and eight times north-south, giving him the first name of the deceased ancestor and, at the same time, his spiritual principles. The griot recite the father's mottoes, the sénanku come to joke with the baby, and the blacksmith traces the scarifications.

845 Twins. We have seen the belief that in the beginning twins were always born, and Faro subsequently punished man by abolishing double births which he no longer accords except to certain privileged persons. For the Bambara, twins are new beings who inherit neither the ni nor the dya of any ancestor. Special rites are observed at their
[201] birth which is announced by showing the raised right and left index fingers, without saying anything, for the proclamation would be so powerful that it would be harmful to the newborn twins (see G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].
553 The rite of name-giving is carried out on the bank of the river. The following day, accompanied by another woman, the mother goes in search of millet and cotton which she gathers in identical calabash ladles. Equal gifts are put in the ladles, which the mother presents
[301] in crossed hands. Later, the twins are fitted with metal bracelets representing their dya, and, in certain regions, with a pendant in the form of double slave irons. The twins always stay together; they
856 wear identical clothes. If one dies in early infancy, the mother places on the mat beside the surviving infant a small doll made by

[846] 852 553 The navel dries between the sixth and eighth day. The headman and elders are told of the event, and all the heads of families (the gouatigou) come and sit in order of age and rank at the entrance door of the hut which opens into the court of the confined woman. The religious head, the gnéna-sonnaba (2), goes alone into the hut

[793] 2. Usually it is the religious head, priest of the dasiri, who shaves the child, but there are exceptions to this rule. In some villages it is the civil head who performs the tonsure; in others this task is the prerogative of a family. Sometimes the shaving is done by the father or the grandfather. The families in which this custom is followed are not pure Bambara but are mixed with Marka blood.

and /170/ shaves the head of the infant on its mother's knees. Long [201 431] lines of women push into the inner court, clap their hands, let out shrill cries of "kouyo kouyo" as signs of joy, and give their friend a small present of millet and cotton (1).

1. The women give a handful of cotton and about a pound of millet.

When the head of the child has been shaved and well cleaned, the headman lays his hands on him to drive away evil spirits that might wish to harm his life; he gently strokes his back and chest and, spitting lightly, recites a short formula which he alone knows and can understand. Then he goes and sits among his people, and the father presents him with eleven kola nuts on a platter of braided grass. The heads of families, in order of age, place their offering of 40 to 80 cowrie shells (2) on this same platter, and the gnéna-sonnaba asks

2. The men give 40 cowrie shells. The generous ones go as high as 80.

534 beating surface. The most highly regarded was the denu-ba; 614 made of a hollowed cylindrical trunk with fairly thick walls, 701 the denu-ba is sometimes more than a meter high, with its lower third often slightly tapered with an adze. The drumhead is made of strong hide, reinforced in the center by a patch of leather sewed to it and stretched on pegs driven into the sides of the drum a few centimeters below the upper edge. When it is to be played, the drum is inclined on a fork that supports it. The drummer uses a kind of wooden hook, cleverly curved for elasticity and provided at one end [315] with a rounded part, often formed by a swelling contrived for the purpose or at other times made of a leather ball. The drummer's free hand provides the syncopation.

In certain cases, two denu-ba are used together; the drummer strikes them in such a way as to obtain a variety of sounds to form the basis for conventional harmony. Thus, the soldiers not only were trained to obey appropriate flourishes, but also were kept in touch with distant battalions by means of the drums. When it was skillfully played, the denu-ba made it possi- [202] ble to transmit information for considerable distances, because other drummers would retransmit it in turn. That is why it has [778] been said that the denu-ba can talk and no doubt why it was so highly regarded by the ton'-dyon' that they considered it an oracle and honored the god who spoke through the drum by making the denu-ba the boli of this god. Hence, human victims came to [782] be sacrificed to the drums of the ton'-dyon', especially under Ngolo, according to the chronicle.

[237] Trumpets (buru) were formerly made of ivory. The Tedzkiret speaks of the ivory trumpets used by a certain Bambara named Maro, and Mage relates that Ahmadou, Sultan of Ségou, gave the Bambara their ivory trumpets on the occasion of the Moslem festival.

[237] These ivory trumpets, however, have disappeared, no doubt carried off by traders. Trumpets made of horn, which were used concurrently with the ivory instruments, have been substituted for them. The horns of the large antelope are much in demand for this purpose. An opening is made a few centimeters from the pointed end, and the trumpeter makes the sound through this opening. The only result is a loud but monotonous noise.

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4. Burials of the Circumcised, Old People, Heads of Families, Married and Unmarried Persons, Pregnant Women

Burials of the First Category, Those of Old People

[388] When I speak of old people I mean every Bambara (man or woman) who has grandchildren and so is a grandfather or grandmother. [224 575] When such an old person dies, gunpowder speaks and the shooting is even quite heavy if the deceased belongs to the association of hunters or there is an initiate of that sect (2) among his children. The chief 764 202 slave or, if there is none, a trusted man runs to notify the headman and his council, and all these dignitaries, spear in hand, come to verify the death and offer the /218/ first condolences to the family. Couriers at once go off in all directions to notify members of the family and friends. The person sent to married children is usually the one who was best man and sometimes the fourouboloma tigi (guardian of the wedding gifts) -- at the marriage. He carries out his mission with tact and delicacy. He first notifies the husband /of a daughter/ who summons his legal wife and orders her to go and take care of her father, who is seriously ill. So she leaves her house knowing nothing, and at least keeping a remnant of hope in her heart. It is only when she is on the way that she learns the sad news.

764 [844] While everyone is running right and left, the women wash the body with an aromatic plant called sou kola (1). They dress it in

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2. Hunters (douzo) all belong to a special sect. In order to enter it, a man must have passed his tests and killed a deer. The hunter has a special costume. See pp. 140 ff.

1. Basil, a labiata, ocymum album and febrifugum.

844 good taste. The placenta is buried outdoors near the hut or sometimes in the floor of the hut itself. The mother is washed and often given an infusion to drink which is alleged to stop bleeding.

The baby is washed several times and then anointed with vegetable fat (1) (se tlu) or butter made from cow's milk. Its head is massaged to give it a nice shape, and then the baby is wrapped in a white cloth.

The child is usually not fed for the first 24 hours, although it is sometimes given a few drops of goat's milk, a beverage with mystical qualities. It is then given the breast.

851 At the earliest possible moment the father must be informed of the birth and sex of the child. Indeed, he is brought in by the woman who cut the cord, and the mother shows him the baby, pointing out any body characteristic which seems to her a manifest sign that the child is a reincarnation [211] of a deceased member of the family or other evidence that there has been some influence from the invisible world.

[203] The same woman informs the local authorities (dugu-tigi, nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc.) and the people in the vicinity; the news spreads rapidly.

846 The mother resumes her normal activities as soon as possible and is often on her feet within 24 hours. In any event, she never remains in bed for more than a week, unless it is absolutely impossible for her to get up. For seven or eight days, however, she remains in seclusion. Furthermore, particularly in Kaarta, her food is prepared exclusively by girl friends of her choice.

[751] The detachment of the umbilical cord marks the end of this period of seclusion. In Kaarta the cord is preserved and placed in a small bag which is tied around the baby's neck; later on it will be made into a precious talisman. It is only after the detachment of the cord that the child is considered to be definitely

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1. Known to Europeans as karite, originally a Soninké word.

167 At Nioro, during eight months of the year, live most of the Moors who go up to Mauritania at the beginning of the rains.

At Ségou, the colonists of the Niger Office are concentrated. In 1951 1,166 arrived, 660 coming from Nioro and 506 from Macina.

Temporary Workers

Circles of Origin	Temporary Workers Leaving in Official Convoys in:			
	1947	1948	1949	1950
Bafoulabé	1,017	1,008	969	492
Bamako	6,626	4,376	4,046	8,678
Bougouni	405	776	3,000	36
Kayes	1,794	2,195	3,230	1,368
Kita	1,419	1,559	1,352	226
Nioro	2,744	747	3,000	1,504
				135
Totals	14,005	10,661	15,602	12,439

[13] Individual migrations are very numerous, and the real number of temporary workers is much higher than the official figure. Currently, one notes a drop due to two causes:

1. The discontent of the workers after the 1949 season. In 1948, they had brought home from 15,000 to 20,000 francs; in 1949 from 5,000 to 10,000, and as little as 1,500 to 2,000 francs for the Siné Saloum. Some were repatriated at the expense of their families, others preferred to stay in the Senegal to avoid reproaches. The reasons for the setback may be laid to a bad distribution of rainfall and to insufficient lodgings due to the unexpected arrival of too many workers.

[209] 2. The counter-propaganda of the elders, who want to keep the young workers in the Sudan.

776 It is also at the crossroads that the elders place the child whose
778 legitimacy is in doubt. If the diviner who is then consulted declares
823 that the child is a bastard, he is deprived of the protection of the spirits
848 and is supposedly unable to survive the nyama which he has acquired
787 at the place. In this same spot are buried abnormal children, in par-
[766] ticular hydrocephalics who are considered undesirable. The spindle
of a dead woman is placed here along with the broom she habitually
used.

776 But the ritual most characteristic of the crossroads is the one re-
778 sorted to by the village when it is in trouble: the primitive wooden
823 mallet, gosilanda is planted in the ground; it is then struck with a
783 stalk of millet to chase away evil and to induce new techniques of
reparation to come out of the instrument (1).

C. Stone Altars.

778 In the villages, at the intersections of lanes, and in the squares,
211 the founding ancestors are represented by stones under which various
objects are buried (see Pl. V, b).

At Sama, four large stones, encased in a clay platform, symbolize both the cardinal points and the ancestors. They are in touch with the dasiri and receive the same offerings. At Banankoroni, the fara ba is partly buried. Under its point is an albino skull which represents those of the first ancestors and their bones. Two hoes, one placed near the right ear and the other near the left ear, convey the idea that "the man who cultivates the earth will never hear a humiliating word." Under the chin, another hoe recalls that the villagers who are faithful to agriculture will never know famine. Under the hoe, a siriku (2) protects them against those who try to harm them, and brings them "the hyena's luck"; it also means that some of their ancestors were transformed into hyenas in former times. A circumcision knife recalls that all males are circumcised, and all women excised (Fig. 15). Finally, three albino bones and a small pile of copper are a testimony to /142/ Faro's presence and power. Drawings are made on these

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1. See p. 145.

2. See p. 179, n. 1.

178 211 stones at the time of the collective ceremonies called the years "renewal" (1).

1. See pp. ff.

III. The Religious Societies

794 Members of groups formed by families in a broad sense, headed by patriarchs and owning lands which cannot be divided, also belong to other collective groups called *flâ*; these are formed by the age grade of circumcision, excision, or initiation, and grouped around altars which are their own and which possess their special rituals.

These societies are called by the general term *dyo* (2) meaning 794 "to build, "to edify" and also "secret." This term recalls that each individual constitutes an element of the whole group formed by the society.

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476 2. It is appropriate to distinguish the religious societies, *dyo*, described in this work, from the mutual aid societies, *tõ*, of apparently secular character. The latter are also very numerous and exist in all the Bambara villages.

These organizations are strongly hierarchical and are placed under the direction of responsible chiefs. Their members perform communal work which concerns the life of the village: felling trees, clearing, cultivation of individual or communal fields, house construction, etc., and participation in marriage ceremonies. The detailed study of the *tõ* whose role is considerable would be indispensable to an understanding of the social and economic organization of this tribe.

The participation of the *tõ* in agricultural work will be described by Mme. de Ganay in *Techniques et rites de l'agriculture* (in press).

175 As early as the fourteenth century numerous travelers described the Bambara /xv/as organized into small groups headed by a chief and more or less submitting to the neighboring empires. This state of affairs lasted until the period of the Peul invasion of this region (in the seventeenth century) which founded two kingdoms and created a local aristocracy of mixed Peul and Bambara blood. The first of these kingdoms was that of Ségou, the history of which is partly known (1). The investigations centered particularly in this area; the chief town which was a capital for a long time retains the traces of a well [197] organized legal system and religion. It is also in this area that, according to specialists, the purest dialect is spoken. (2)

197 212 The Bambara dialects belong to the sub-group of Mandingo languages of the Nigero-Senegalese group. (3) The Bambara know certain

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196 secretly replaces the object in the new thatch. A white ox is sacrificed at the well.

The information collected on this ceremony is still fragmentary but the color of the clothing worn by those officiating, that of the victim, the number of bands of the loin-cloth, and the number of cowrie shells given by the griot to his sister, the origin of the gravel used as the seat for the Kéita are evidence that we have here a ritual executed under the protection of Faro (see Chap. II)

1. On the history of the Bambara we refer the reader to the well documented volume of L. Tauxier. Histoire des Bambara.

[556 191] 2. The children of families sufficiently wealthy to afford it were formerly sent to Ségou to live with affinals in order to learn how to speak well an elegant and pure language.

3. See A. Meillet et M. Cohen. Les Langues du Monde /Languages of the World/, p. 546.

197 systems of signs and ideograms which may be considered as a sort of
212 writing and the study of which is currently pursued. The system from which all the others supposedly stem, the *glã glã zo*, has 226 ideograms which, according to informants, summarize the knowledge of the
[162] Bambara (1). On the other hand, the Bamba use a numerical system

> 1. See. p. 21. This system and two of the ideograms, of which *to* designates the mash of boiled cereals and by extension nourishment in general, will be the object of a comment by M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen. "Signes graphiques des Soudanais. L'Homme. /Graphic signs of the Sudanese man/." *Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie et de linguistique*, *Hermann* (in press).
>
> On certain types of writing observed among the Mandé and the Vai, see J. Février, *Histoire de l'écriture* /The History of Writing/, pp. 528-529.

based on twenty. Moreover, an analysis of the texts collected, some of them quoted in this essay, has brought to light an /xvi/ important number of words which, according to informants, belong to an ancient language of Mandingo origin, now used as liturgical language. It is not within the framework of this essay to present this material or to comment upon it, but it is appropriate to note that the study of this vocabulary would contribute to an understanding of religious thinking among the Bambara.

173 The Bambara have a rather clear idea of their early history and even of their prehistory. They describe their ancestors with precision and know the phases of development of their technology. These premises are necessary to an understanding of their religion which, like the other institutions, is especially linked to this technological development. Moreover, the only observable remains comprise household furniture and utensils, transient but perennial material whose forms and ornamentation indicate the metaphysical principles on which their way of thinking is based.

177 It is appropriate not to neglect those influences which have acted
121 upon the Bambara through their contacts with other Sudanese tribes

*173 These, in brief, are the difficulties encountered in deal-
814 ing with sources for native historical tradition. When Islam
217 introduced [25] a written language, there was created a new
●212 category of archivists, the marabouts. They have added this duty to many others; it cannot be proved that they have purged the job of its former vices, but it may be stated categorically that they have added a few new ones.

It is notorious that, in the Sudan, the Moslem traditionists have an ineradicable tendency to transpose everything into their own mentality. Further, since a manuscript gives a kind of quasi definitiveness to the oral tradition, including all its errors, it becomes almost impossible to eliminate these errors because of the unquestioning respect usually accorded a written document.

*173 There are also the non-literate Moslem traditionists:
814 ordinary _dyeli_ who have been converted in the usual Sudanese fashion, as described in Chapter 6, and who have abandoned none
[177] of the characteristics of their caste. They have merely added a few peculiarities due to Moslem influence.

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1. Now chief of the village of Ambidédi (Gadiaga).

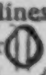
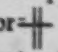
192 with nature; the same terms designate the parts of animals, plants, or even objects. These words serve as roots, as do the names of the four elements and of their properties. Two consequences follow:

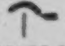
1. A great ease in forming compound words; 2. The existence [194] of a multiplicity of homonyms which we can distinguish only by the context, but which the natives distinguish by differences in tone or in vowel length.

E. Numeration

802 In contrast to the Ouolof and Peul, who first count to five and then say "five and one," "five and two," etc., the Bambara have a different name for each number from one to ten (the word "five," doulou, [16] comes from "hand"; the word "ten", tan, from "to thank," to give both hands). After ten, they count "ten and one," "ten and two," up to 20, which is said as two tens, then three tens, four tens, etc., up to 80. The series begins again after 80 as it does in French after 100.

The Bambara have graphic signs to represent numbers. These 212 signs have been studied by S. de Ganay (1).

[184] The graphic system varies with regions and sometimes from one village to another, but the most widespread method uses a series of vertical lines, each line representing a unit. To indicate that the number is doubled, the lines are placed inside a circle or crossed by a horizontal bar: |||| or  or  = four. To indicate an uneven number, a line is added under the horizontal bar.

But a line may indicate not only a unit, but a group of ten, and even a "hundred," keme (whose value is 80). To keep this clear, an arc is put over the line:  = 80.

212 801 Some systems represent ten by ten lines or by five barred lines under a single line. This method has a religious origin; it recalls that "creation is the issue of a unique principle symbolized

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1. S. de Ganay, "Graphie Bambara des nombres" [Bambara Number Writing]. [Ed., Journal de la Société de Africanistes, No. 2, 1950.]

● 212 by numbers, and notably by ten, which may be obtained, among
801 other ways and if it's a question of representing the Creator, by
adding the first four numbers, or by adding the number five to
[776] itself." Ten is the numerical symbol of Faro (god of water); it
symbolizes what is just, true, perfect, and complete.

The symbolism of numbers is used in divination: a first
[787] group of eight signs, called the secret count, reproduces the seven
first numbers which, according to a Bambara myth, were engraved
in space at the instant that the Creator by his word formed the universe. They contain the whole universe.

These numerical signs were ritually traced on the most varied occasions.

[802] Finally, we must note the existence of the sign for "nothing,"
fu gundo, zero, which stands at the beginning of a series of 196
numerical signs used by those who practice arithomancy.

The word Mandé, of central significance for 44 peoples, may be interpreted, according to some, as manin (the secret name for ten), number of unity and of the cultural community.

F. Writing

212 For everyday use, the Bambara have adopted arabic characters, called by them "writing of the Blacks." In fact, only those
who have studied in the Marabouts' schools know how to read or
write them. No written literature, properly speaking, exists. A
538 large store of traditions, epics, tales, legends, songs, and proverbs
is transmitted orally from generation to [17] generation by professional storytellers, the griot. Moreover, the whole sum of sci-
867 entific, juridical, ethical, and practical knowledge is taught orally
868 in the course of daily life or during long years of initiation. Certain old masters renowned for their learning are consulted from far distances when a chief is in doubt on a point of tradition.

212 Nevertheless, signs do exist for a secret writing that the
priests, the heads of families, or blacksmiths draw on the sanctuaries,
on masks, furniture, clothing, cabin walls, or in the sand.

For the Bambara, things exist by signs. These signs have at-
212 tached themselves to things, calling them to consciousness and to
812 the attention of man.

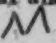
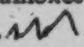
● 212 812 From the central core of creation four categories of signs have emerged, 266 in all, which represent the complete signs of the world; they give color, form, and matter to things. In time these 266 signs came to head lists of an infinity of other signs encompassing all of creation.

"It is by these signs that man enters into possession of the greatest part of his domain, which is the universe. And in the measure that he does not know a sign, that he cannot analyze it, that is, possess it in its component parts, he finds certain sectors of the total knowledge of things closed to him." (1)

1. M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, Signes graphiques soudanais [Sudanese Graphic Signs].

815 The Bambara, like the Dogon, represent the movement of the stars graphically as well as mathematically, and, in particular, the revolution of the sun around the earth, center of the cosmos. These movements are measured by a cylindrical granary that they use as gnomon (wati dyati dyiginye); it is a round structure of seko [plaited walling?] with a conical roof, constructed according to precise measurements. It rests on a small packed mound in the form of a square which has first been carefully measured and oriented. Twenty-two stones are buried in each angle of the square, and 22 more in the center. Three rows of four big stones are oriented east-west on the little hill: one row on the southern side, one to the north, and one in the middle. Small wooden beams are laid on these rows. Each part and each measurement has a symbolic meaning. The gnomon serves to determine the dates of the solstices and the equinoxes by the observation of its shadow on the ground. (2)

2. D. Zahan, "Un gnomon soudanais" [A Sudanese Gnomon], Africa, 1950.

805 815 The diurnal and annual movements of the sun are represented by a zigzag line,  . Certain variations in the form of the zigzag represent the procession of the equinoxes and the variable length of the days in summer and winter,  . Four angles represent the four cardinal points, and each of the lines that make up

805 the angles represents 90 days (the year, for the Bambara, is 360 days).
815 The symbols are not merely mathematical; they form part of the
daily life of the society. [18] The zigzags are a characteristic theme
[534] in the decoration of pottery, weapons, tools, sanctuaries, and houses.
One finds them in agricultural techniques and in ritual dance figures.
The universal rhythms of the earth and sky echo through all the
activities of man and society. (1) Finally, another series of 16 signs
is habitually used in geomancy. It is interesting to note that these
signs were used in a practical manner for correspondence. The
Bambara chiefs used multiple combinations of them to send each
other messages.

G. Local Diversities

197 Given the extent and the diversity of the regions where Bambara is spoken, it is no wonder one notices differences in pronunciation, and even in structure and vocabulary, from one province to another. At Kaarta the speech is not the same as at Ségou, and a Bambara of Ségou has trouble understanding a Bambara of Bougouni. This is due partly to the influence of other languages which are in contact with Bambara and which ultimately alter and modify it, and partly to the normal evolution of language within a group separated for centuries from its place of origin. It is interesting to note that in the Bougouni circle the conservatives in speech are the old men, while the women are the evolutionary element.

191 Traditionally, Ségou was considered the center for the most elegant Bambara speech. Before the conquest, children were sent to Ségou to learn the purest Bambara.

●212
[787] 1. Id., "Conception de l'écliptique chez les Dogons et les Bambara" [The Dogon and Bambara Conception of the Ecliptic], [Ed., Africa, 1951.]

*173 814 ●217 212 These, in brief, are the difficulties encountered in dealing with sources for native historical tradition. When Islam introduced [25] a written language, there was created a new category of archivists, the marabouts. They have added this duty to many others; it cannot be proved that they have purged the job of its former vices, but it may be stated categorically that they have added a few new ones.

It is notorious that, in the Sudan, the Moslem traditionists have an ineradicable tendency to transpose everything into their own mentality. Further, since a manuscript gives a kind of quasi definitiveness to the oral tradition, including all its errors, it becomes almost impossible to eliminate these errors because of the unquestioning respect usually accorded a written document.

*173 814 [177] There are also the non-literate Moslem traditionists: ordinary dyeli who have been converted in the usual Sudanese fashion, as described in Chapter 6, and who have abandoned none of the characteristics of their caste. They have merely added a few peculiarities due to Moslem influence.

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1. Now chief of the village of Ambidédi (Gadiaga).

231/ 439 [35] However, the Bambara can assemble flocks by exchanging their grain for animals obtained from Peul, Moor, or Touareg shepherds. It is their way of investing their savings; thus, they never dispose of their animals during their periods of increase, but let them grow old in the herds, and their capital increases effortlessly, watched over by the head of the family.

233 184 In the Sahel, during the rainy season, the animals live by grazing on the numerous grasses and leguminous plants that grow on the mimosa-studded steppe. During the dry season, they live on the fallen branches and husks of the acacias. Then there is transhumance [221] to the inundated regions which become pastures as the waters recede. In the Nioro region, transhumance is towards the Kaarta, the Baoulé, and the Bakoy.

In the Sudan region the animals entrusted to the Peul make short journeys to change pastures; in the rainy season, to the plateaus which are immense pastures; from November on, they return to the valleys and streams.

In the Guinean area, the village flock is entrusted to a Peul shepherd who leads it off in the morning and brings it back at night. The animals are then tethered to the stakes in their owners' courtyards or are penned in an enclosure where the women go to milk them. After the harvest the flocks graze in the fields, but, from the beginning of February, they no longer stray from the dwellings, because everything is parched. The beasts are then fed millet, peanut stalks, or foliage.

231 Neither cattle nor sheep are in the least supervised in reproduction. Coupling is unrestricted and takes place at random in the pastures and at the whim of the animals throughout the year. Birth occurs no matter where; the herdsmen know nothing of obstetrical practice. The calves are nourished with a lightly salted mash of millet stalks or with the crushed fruit of a fig named aourou which supposedly has milk-producing properties.

[232] The finest male goats often are castrated to fatten or tame them. In Kaarta and Mandé goats are raised in pens constructed on piles one or two meters from the ground, with a flooring of boughs which allows excrement to fall through. In this way, the animals are protected from the humidity and from wild beasts.

244 The Bambara groundnut ripens its seed underground. It is cultivated from the southern border of the Sahara to the Cape, but its primary home [31] is in the Sudan where the greatest number of cultivated varieties is found. (1)

> 1. Jacques Félix, for a study on the Bambara groundnut (Voandzeia subterrena), Agriculture tropicale [Tropical Agriculture], January-February, 1950. [Ed., Revue d'agronomie tropicale.]

Manioc and yams at certain points along the Niger escape the devastations of the Acridiidae insects which can not attack their roots.

[263] [177] Other crops are used to balance the diet: condiments and fleshy plants, such as, pimento, sesame, various labiates, okra, sorrel, squash, peanuts (imported in the sixteenth century from America). Peanuts, to thrive, need loose, light soil. They are sown in June at the beginning of the rainy season and are harvested in [252] November. The natives eat them roasted; they make oil and soap from them and give the stalks to their animals. Cultivation is entirely in the hands of the natives. In Senegal manpower is insufficient; [464] [167] before 1940 thousands of Sudanese workers were called upon each season, particularly Bambara, the "Navétanes," who hired themselves out to the farmers of Senegal in order to acquire the textiles and other products they needed. The peanut is an export product. Also cultivated are nitrogenous vegetables (Bambara groundnuts, black-eyed peas, dolichos, kissis, etc.) and the numerous and varied amaranths, tomatoes, eggplants, gourds, and, since 1940, potatoes which are grown more and more.

222 263 Finally, we will cite: a) the gathering of wild plants which serve as condiments: the fruits of the baobab (Adansonia digitata), of the corchorus, of the Parkia biglobosa [néré], and of the karite tree (Butyrospermum), formerly called the "butter tree," which is cultivated to some degree -- the fruit is something like that of the palm tree and contains a core whose kernels enclose a fatty matter, shea butter, valued for making soap, as an illuminant, for the toilet; 222 b) the gathering of scarcity foods: baobab, cenchrus, cassia, the kola nut (Sterculia acuminata). Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;

Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;

222 [276] 782 787 their caffeine content makes them a stimulant and energizer. The Bambara use seven kinds of kola nuts in their sacrificial and divinatory rites: 1. Dangoro (red nut); 2. Geleworo (white nut); Sosokuworo (a red nut pointed at one end); 4. Flaniworo (yellow kola); 5. Worodanda (kola without opening) which has no apparent cleft where it may be split open; 6. Bassiworo (a dark red, bitter nut); 7. Ryeworo (nut of light and indeterminate color). (This list is given us by G. Dieterlen in her Essai sur la religion Bambara [Essay on the Bambara Religion]).

252 To prepare kola nuts, they are placed in baskets of very coarse mesh lined with leaves that are moistened every four or five days.

245 Among cultivated trees, other than banana, mango, lemon, orange, pineapple trees [ananas, may be a kind of pine; the pineapple is not a tree fruit], etc., one must mention the Acacia albida, which plays a large role in Bambara mythology. In the dry season, it is used as fodder for cattle.

[32] C. Textile Crops

248 Side by side with these food crops, the Bambara cultivate textile plants which they use in addition to the wild textile plants. Among the principal ones, we shall point out the da (Hibiscus cannabinus) whose fibers are used by fishermen to make their nets. [227 286] It does not rot and is a possible rival of jute. The labor to exploit it, pulling up the stalks, retting, extraction of the fibers, is done in the dry season, when many hands are available. (1)

1. G. Spitz, L'Ouest africain francais [The French West African]. [Ed., L'Ouest africain, A.O.F. et Togo; The West African, French West Africa and Togo.]

Cotton, which grows spontaneously in many places, is cultivated near the villages as an annual plant; it is a perennial plant which renews itself every four or five years. During the cultivation cycle, it is grown between millet and maize. The harvesting is [288] done by women; it is picked out and spun by women, but it is woven

773 224 411 Propitiatory sacrifices were offered on the wooden lamellae and the blood ran along the thong into the net. In addition, the hunter would saturate his weapon with the blood of wounded or killed animals to give his contrivance the victims' strength and to increase his own skill.

The ndõfere was used for a long time as a military weapon.

Weaving

773 286 The invention of weaving is linked to the discovery of cotton cultivation. The latter appeared long before that of millet at a time when the only known tools were those of wood used to scratch /103/ the earth at the base of the wild grasses with which men nourished themselves (1).

The myth mentions simultaneously the appearance of cotton and the invention of spindles and shuttle; it does not mention the loom which appeared later. The tale of the manufacture of the first clothing also includes details on dyeing which seems to have been known at a very early date.

When the men returned from the bush where they had been cultivating the norolã sise (commonly known as cram-cram) and the narakata, a kind of couch grass which provided them with edible seeds, they would often abandon their wooden hoes at the crossroads in honor of the Soba spirit.

One day an old man who used to pass nearby was summoned by the spirit, saying: "To all of you who leave your hoes as you pass by, I wish to give something to hide your nakedness; but I will do it if you offer me a sacrifice."

The old man reported this incident to the men of his generation, who decided to sacrifice an albino at the crossroads. The spirit then told them to take the seed which they would find at the intersection of the roads and taught them how to sow and harvest it.

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[171] 1. See p. 154. The Dogon admit the same priority of weaving over cultivation of cereal grains. See M. Griaule. Dieu d'eau, pp. 31ff.

791
609 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that
821 was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
224 start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equipment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well as an arsenal of magic weapons.

825 The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
778 they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[562] wara-ba means lion; sa-ma, elephant; ma-li, hippopotamus; bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an application of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

231 It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
552 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
825 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once held and which is still shown on occasion: fa-li meaning "donkey" derives from fa meaning "powerful," just as nya-ri meaning "cat" derives from nya and has the same meaning, along with ba meaning "goat."

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> into our language and means a force,
> a conscious force, that opposes
> another conscious force which seeks
> to harm us, and destroys it.

horns and hoofs of bulls filled with an ointment the composition of which it is very difficult to specify: blood, fat, and dried, crushed glow-worms are combined with iron powder, charcoal, and other /135/ ingredients. They are the Bambara equivalent of the "pink" pills which cure all ills, including baldness and ingrowing nails -- and that sums it up. The kana of which I speak are boli, and differ from the kana possessed by each powerful boli, which are no longer boli but parts of boli. Let us quickly admit that the word kana is as indefinite as the word foura, and means primarily "that which protects, preserves, and keeps us from harm."

778 These little fetishes are not given festivals, and only their
782 owners sprinkle them with blood and sacrifice to them. They cost
little, and a sorcerer or the owner of a father foura or kana will make
[436] one for a modest sum varying between 5 kémés and a ba fla (5 kémés =
200 cowrie shells; ba fla = 1, 600 cowrie shells), which is from 5 sous
to 2 francs.

Apart from the sorcerers, whose boli are innumerable, there is a
whole group of people, the noumons (blacksmiths), the koulés (who
dig canoes and mend broken gourds), the donzo (hunters), etc., who
have such strong confidence in all these horrors that they would rather
die of hunger than be deprived of them. The hunters all have some to
224 make them active and alert. Before every hunt of the least importance
778 there is a black pullet from each, and on the return another sacrifice
782 is made, however unlucky the hunt may have been. The keeper of
each fetish is usually the only one to pay respects to it. However,
his brother hunters may give it a small offering, and it is understandable
that they do so, since each fetish has its specialty. One is for deer,
another for guinea fowl, a third for the big antelope (dadjé in Bambara
and best known to Europeans under the name of koba, a word of the
Peul language) or for the wild pig /facochère/, for the panther or the

224 777 782 lion, for the hyena or for the anteater, etc., and since each cannot possess them all, one or the other is appealed to according to the need of the moment.

The most interesting of this group of *boli* are the *togo fen foula*, which watch over the gun and arms of the hunter in a quite special way, protecting them from the *ko nege ba*, a greedy and rough hand which deprives a woman of her periods if she touches meat offered to it in sacrifice or game killed under its auspices, and from the *tougourouna*, which has consideration only for those who own it and makes all others /136/ powerless /the French word here is *impuissant*, meaning both "powerless" and "impotent"/ if they touch the meat of its sacrifices or game killed under its auspices (1).

224 778 Along with the fetish some hunters also own the *gnâma daha* (2), a *conari* in which roots and leaves gathered at night by moonlight, here and there at random are simmered and soaked. When certain kinds of game, such as an anteater, for example, have been killed, the animal is washed with these roots and this juice of doubtful color. I have been told that the juice of the *gnâma daha* induces the flow of urine, so that the *gnâma* (3) of the animal leaves, its wild animal smell disappears, and then the meat can be eaten (4). /137/

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1. Game killed under the auspices of a *boli* belongs to it just like the victims of a sacrifice, and if these are "taboo" for a class of people, the game similarly becomes taboo.

2. *Gnâma*, "force," "power," "malignant fluid"; *daha*, earthen receptacle called a *conari*.

3. See what I said about the *gnâma* in Chap. I, p. 17ff.

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4. All Negroes do not resort to the gnâma daha. But then they are not limited to a single means of handling

[411
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Costume of a Bambara hunter.

the problem; they have more than one string to their bow. Immediately after killing a fur-bearing animal, every hunter empties the urine by pressure or cutting.

224 778 These little hunters' fetishes have no festival or formal sacrifice. Some ultimately gain great renown in the ranks of our "Nimrods," however, and then they come in large numbers bringing black pullets. The master of the idol then chooses a day for a strictly private drinking bout at which only initiates of the hunter sect are present.

778 596 The most powerful of all the *boli* whose influence is slight are the *boli* of the hut or the family, the familial *boli* to which the heads of families, the *gouatigi*, sacrifice. These take practically all shapes: they are horns, balls coated with blood resembling all the tubers of creation, all kinds of tomatoes and eggplants, napkin rings, etc. -- in sum, horrors, each wrapped in a very dirty, filthy goatskin. They are to be found hung in the *b'lon*, or entry hut, together with the *ex voto*, a package of goat skulls carefully emptied and stripped of flesh. The family *boli* are legion, and it is impossible to know them all. The most widespread and the most highly valued are the *ma bara*, the *sirini*, the *bala*, the *bara*, the *baga* (1), and the *bama-n-djigi*.

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1. A *boli* is always made of several pieces, each with a special name. All these pieces are called *boli dé*. Among the *boli dé* there is one which is called *boli dén fa*. One piece of the *baga* is a thong which forms a belt that the sacrificer puts around his thighs, all covered with blood, before proceeding with the individual sacrifices. The *baga* protects against bullets, arrows, and spears. Some *baga* are famous, and Negroes go to find the masters of these fetishes and receive from them a small facsimile of the *baga* belt.

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4. Burials of the Circumcised, Old People, Heads of Families, Married and Unmarried Persons, Pregnant Women

Burials of the First Category, Those of Old People

[888] When I speak of old people I mean every Bambara (man or woman) who has grandchildren and so is a grandfather or grandmother. When such an old person dies, gunpowder speaks and the shooting is [224 575] even quite heavy if the deceased belongs to the association of hunters or there is an initiate of that sect (2) among his children. The chief

764 202 slave or, if there is none, a trusted man runs to notify the headman and his council, and all these dignitaries, spear in hand, come to verify the death and offer the /218/ first condolences to the family. Couriers at once go off in all directions to notify members of the family and friends. The person sent to married children is usually the one who was best man and sometimes the fourouboloma tigi (guardian of the wedding gifts) -- at the marriage. He carries out his mission with tact and delicacy. He first notifies the husband /of a daughter/ who summons his legal wife and orders her to go and take care of her father, who is seriously ill. So she leaves her house knowing nothing, and at least keeping a remnant of hope in her heart. It is only when she is on the way that she learns the sad news.

764 [824] While everyone is running right and left, the women wash the body with an aromatic plant called sou kola (1). They dress it in

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2. Hunters (douzo) all belong to a special sect. In order to enter it, a man must have passed his tests and killed a deer. The hunter has a special costume. See pp. 140 ff.

1. Basil, a labiata, ocymum album and febrifugum.

773 evolution. They also indicate different stages in the development of the forms. These may be observed in certain museums of arts and crafts which, in some villages, are the sanctuaries where ancestral material is kept. Finally, in numerous ceremonies and in the education of the young, they constitute precious milestones in the history of the Bambara people.

Fishing and Hunting

773 226 According to tradition, the fishing net was the first instrument of technology taught men, and fish constituted the primeval food.

"One day, four women went to the shore of the Niger to collect sand which they used for bedding and which also served as food since they no longer received any from the sky. As they advanced, the sand drew back so that they soon found themselves very far from their usual stopping place. They /101/ then wished to return, but Faro prevented them from doing so and asked them to work for him, promising them a precious gift in return. They "swept up the spirit's excrements" for seven days; on the eighth day, "the words began with Faro." He showed them two fishing nets, dyo, and explained to them their manufacture and use. One had very fine loops, dyonyemise (literally, net of the thin eyes), and the other larger loops, dyonyekumba (literally, net with big eyes). Both were made of the fiber of the nyama tree. The first was reserved for tneni (1) fishing, called "Faro's excrements," and the second for the capture of larger fish such as sheatfish, gurnard, and catfish. 825

"For seven days the women were taught by the spirit and his captive; on the eighth day they were liberated. Seven days after these events they began to fish and to nourish themselves with fish.

"But they soon abused the gift they had received. Taking turns day and night, and fishing without interruption at the very place of the revelation, they taxed the spirit's patience. The latter appeared to them above the water, holding his girl twins in his arms; he complained of their harshness, their stupidity, and the weariness they caused him. Reclaiming the secret he had given them, he indicated to them that fishing would hereafter be a man's job and that they would only have the right to sell the fish.

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1. Alestes nigrinileatus.

773 226 "Despite their tears, the spirit gave the nets to three men who were present and repeated his teaching. The women left the water's edge while the men turned their new knowledge to account. But at the end of a few days the women became hungry; they went to ask for fish which for seven days was denied them. They then united with the fishermen and the Bozo people were the issue of these first marriages."

At first, fishing was reserved for the Bozo people alone and it was only later that the Bambara learned from the Bozo how to make and manage the fishing nets as well as how to carry out the numerous rites centered around them.

773 226 411 The Bambara practiced hunting and gathering before becoming farmers. It is interesting to compare the fishing net with the sling (ndõfere) now mostly used by children. One of its models (Fig. 7) is described as having been the most ancient of their weapons of the hunt and war. The central portion of this sling which in reality had the shape of a net /102/ (dyoba, literally, big net) woven from nyama fibers and similar to the one used by fishermen, was drawn out into two thongs. The right one (kinintegere, literally, tegere of the right) ended in a sort of a bouquet of wooden lamellae (tegere), making it easier to hold. The left one (missema, literally, little thing) or numan (literally, left) was free. The man would hold the weapon by both ends, putting stones in the net and "blowing on the right thong to give breath" to the sling. Placing his left foot forward, would twirl it rapidly and let go the left thong, thus releasing the projectiles.

[532]

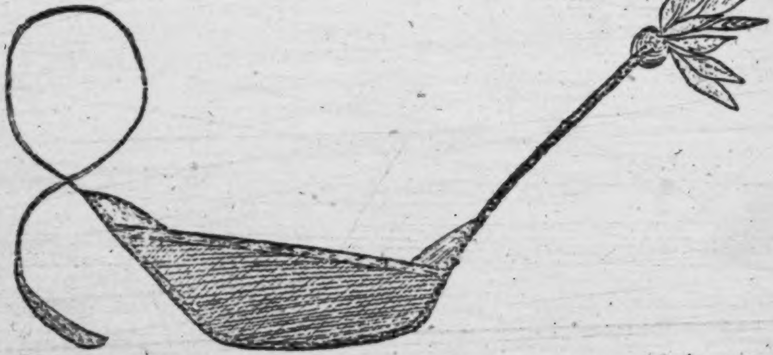

Fig. 7 — Sling (ndõfere) of the ancient Bambara (Drawing by an informant).

Ba
773 tools and the throwing weapon were made. Then, unfired pottery and weaving were invented; and men finally came to know stone tools, iron and the forge. The technique of making dwellings seems to have developed more slowly.

Ba
Bo
a. Fishing

226 Side by side with populations who specialize in the art of fish-
463 ing, such as the Bozo or the Somono caste, all the Bambara fish in
564 the [96] rivers or watercourses in the neighborhood of their dwellings.
A detailed study has been made by J. Daget (1). The Somono, who are the caste of Bambara fishermen, use traps and nets for fishing; the Bozo remain faithful rather to harpoons and small nets. They are
Ba the ones who almost always make the pirogues, for they alone may
Bo enter in rapport with the spirit of the water, Faro. The nets are of
286 knotted mesh made with a weaver's shuttle, *sia*, and a cylindrical
227 mold, *pako*. The band of the net, as it is being made, is nearly always attached to a wooden bridge especially conceived for this purpose, the *kale* or *dio soyo kala*, a regular tetrahedron whose edges
Ba are about 20 centimeters long, one of which is prolonged by a handle
Bo 1.50 meters long. The fisherman, seated on the ground, puts the
283 bridge before him, keeping the handle close to his leg. The fibers
824 used in netmaking are *da* (*Hibiscus cannabinus*), *kie* (*Figna unguiculata*), cotton, and now European thread.

Bo
The Bozo construct weirs from cut and joined tree branches;
226 the weirs assume several different forms according to the regions and
Bo the snares used. Fish are used for human consumption; they are eaten
Ba fresh, grilled, fried or boiled, or preserved by smoking or drying. Oil,
251 used for cooking and as a lubricant, is extracted from certain fish,
252 such as the *tineni*.

Ba Fishing in Bambara villages is done communally under the
226 direction of a fishing chief at the time the waters recede. Precise rules of fishing rights and of rents due the masters of the waters are respected everywhere.

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1. Jacques Daget, "La pêche dans le delta central du Niger" [Fishing in the Central Delta of the Niger], *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. XIX (1949), No. 1.

Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;
222 their caffeine content makes them a stimulant and energizer. The
[276] Bambara use seven kinds of kola nuts in their sacrificial and
782 divinatory rites: 1. Dangoro (red nut); 2. Geleworo (white nut);
787 Sosokuworo (a red nut pointed at one end); 4. Flaniworo (yellow
kola); 5. Worodanda (kola without opening) which has no apparent
cleft where it may be split open; 6. Bassiworo (a dark red, bitter
nut); 7. Ryeworo (nut of light and indeterminate color). (This list
is given us by G. Dieterlen in her Essai sur la religion Bambara
[Essay on the Bambara Religion]).

252 To prepare kola nuts, they are placed in baskets of very coarse mesh lined with leaves that are moistened every four or five days.

245 Among cultivated trees, other than banana, mango, lemon, orange, pineapple trees [ananas, may be a kind of pine; the pineapple is not a tree fruit], etc., one must mention the Acacia albida, which plays a large role in Bambara mythology. In the dry season, it is used as fodder for cattle.

[32] C. Textile Crops

248 Side by side with these food crops, the Bambara cultivate textile plants which they use in addition to the wild textile plants. Among the principal ones, we shall point out the da (Hibiscus
● [227 cannabinus) whose fibers are used by fishermen to make their nets.
286] It does not rot and is a possible rival of jute. The labor to exploit it, pulling up the stalks, retting, extraction of the fibers, is done in the dry season, when many hands are available. (1)

1. G. Spitz, L'Ouest africain français [The French West African]. [Ed., L'Ouest africain, A.O.F. et Togo; The West African, French West Africa and Togo.]

Cotton, which grows spontaneously in many places, is cultivated near the villages as an annual plant; it is a perennial plant which renews itself every four or five years. During the cultivation cycle, it is grown between millet and maize. The harvesting is
[286] done by women; it is picked out and spun by women, but it is woven

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respected everywhere.

791
609 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that
821 was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and
show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the
Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equip-
224 ment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well
as an arsenal of magic weapons.

The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
825 they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of
778 this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at
some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The
animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[552] wara-ba means lion; sa-ma, elephant; ma-li, hippopotamus;
bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names
indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief
that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The
attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an application of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual
and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a
small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
● 231 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
552 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of
825 their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once
held and which is still shown on occasion: fa-li meaning "donkey"
derives from fa meaning "powerful," just as nya-ri meaning "cat"
derives from nya and has the same meaning, along with ba
Meaning "goat."

● 231 825 meaning "goat." In the case of the goat, there remain some customs that are very suggestive. Its milk is the basis of the most solemn of all oaths, that of fraternization; milk is also used to put out fires started by lightning and the hide is used to make sandals worn by widows during the period of mourning. The chronicle tells us that a certain dish made of a goat's head gives rise to the chief's power and sustains it (1). In spite of all this, the goat shares with the donkey a general scorn and they are considered to be the born companions of slaves. This is perhaps why some people refuse to allow either animal to come into the house. Indeed, it is believed that a rich and powerful man can be ruined if either of these animals enters his house or, even worse, if he touches them.

718 791 754 Magician's work. So it is that man is immersed in a strange fluid. In the final analysis, everything, man included, [149] is merely a manifestation of this fluid. Currents and eddies have all forms of life at their mercy, and only the strongest are able to resist, control and even acquire in the struggle greater power than they would otherwise display. "The one who knows" can avoid or follow this chaotic movement; he can control himself and others. He is the real "master" (soma) and he alone can utilize this ever present and ever powerful invisible world.

754 What makes a magician can be described by a single term: the magic weapon, to be used for defense as well as for attack, and indeed for anything else, by one who knows how to use it. Let us consider some of the examples in the Bambara arsenal.

For anyone who wants to destroy an enemy, the so ma sama (lit., "bundle of the person of the house") is a valuable weapon. It is a mysterious powder, kept in the horn of a hind, in which is placed a small stick. It is used in the following manner: let us suppose that a Bambara wishes to harm a person who is passing through the village. The Bambara secretly takes

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1. See p. 31, in connection with Dina Wara.

583 431 occasion of funerals or religious ceremonies, he brings offerings (fowl, kola nuts, millet, salt, etc.). The ceremony at which his contribution is indispensable is the da woro (1). On this

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1. See p. 264 below.

occasion the furu-bolo-ma-tigi is entrusted with important gifts for the girl (clothing and jewelry) as well as for the relatives assembled (food of all kinds).

583 Just as the amount and nature of the furu-fen' vary, the manner of payment and the time set for the payment of the bride price are likewise left to the discretion of the parties. There may be a single payment or there may be installments, either before or partly before and partly after the bride is handed over. From the material point of view, the persons of the bride and groom are actually of no importance. The fa who gives the bride price wants a girl from the family with which he wishes an alliance, and all that matters is that the girl be marriageable at the date agreed upon, provided that she is handed over in accordance with the agreement. In the same connection, the person giving the bride price is not required to have the whole amount needed at the time of [200] the agreement; it is sufficient that he be in a position to pay when the amount falls due. This explains certain usages which might otherwise seem odd.

[584] It often happens that a fa arranging a marriage speaks for a very young girl or even for one not yet born. If the child is handed over before nubility, the marriage is not consummated until after the first menses. We have mentioned above that in such cases the marriage payment involves repeated gifts for years.

583 ● 231 Another very curious method of paying the bride price is to follow a custom called "the mare's foot." Its essential features are as follows.

A person giving bride price has a mare that he could sell to pay off the obligation, but he prefers to promise one or more of the foals or, as the natives say, one or more of "feet." This method of turning a brood mare to account without selling it is common among the natives of western Sudan.

583 ●231 If the payer has promised "a foot," he turns the mare over to the recipient, who will have to feed it and breed it. The latter keeps the foal and returns the mare after the foal is weaned; the risk is his, unless a major catastrophe occurs, and he must prove that such was the case.

If two "feet" are called for, the mare is as it were, jointly owned, each person alternately taking care of the animal and exploiting it for an agreed period. The first foal is jointly held, and after it is weaned, the contracting parties equalize the costs by alternately caring for the mare and the foal. This continues until three foals have been born and weaned. Then the mare and one of the foals goes into one share and the other two foals in another; the share allotted to each party is determined by drawing lots.

When he has completed the payment of "feet," the payer can obtain the woman without having paid any of the bride price since her family has the mare as security.

584 It may happen that one or the other of the fiancés dies. In principle, it is well to bear in mind the material standpoint involved: persons are secondary in concluding the affair; the two fa look out for their respective interests while finding a solution to the difficulties that [201] arise during the period of betrothal, often a very long one. The dead fiancé is not uncommonly replaced by one of his brothers (1), and the girl by one of her sisters (2); nothing changes in either case. If the fiancé or fiancée cannot be replaced in this way, the disposition of the furu-fen' already received by the girl's family is decided by agreement between the parties. Sometimes the proceeds are divided, with half going to each community; at other times they may be returned to the groom's family, or conversely, they may be left with the bride's family.

1. More commonly by one of the sons of the fiancé's community.

2. More commonly by one of the daughters of the fiancée's community.

231 439 [35] However, the Bambara can assemble flocks by exchanging their grain for animals obtained from Peul, Moor, or Touareg shepherds. It is their way of investing their savings; thus, they never dispose of their animals during their periods of increase, but let them grow old in the herds, and their capital increases effortlessly, watched over by the head of the family.

233 184 In the Sahel, during the rainy season, the animals live by grazing on the numerous grasses and leguminous plants that grow on the mimosa-studded steppe. During the dry season, they live on the fallen branches and husks of the acacias. Then there is transhumance [221] to the inundated regions which become pastures as the waters recede. In the Nioro region, transhumance is towards the Kaarta, the Baoulé, and the Bakoy.

In the Sudan region the animals entrusted to the Peul make short journeys to change pastures; in the rainy season, to the plateaus which are immense pastures; from November on, they return to the valleys and streams.

In the Guinean area, the village flock is entrusted to a Peul shepherd who leads it off in the morning and brings it back at night. The animals are then tethered to the stakes in their owners' courtyards or are penned in an enclosure where the women go to milk them. After the harvest the flocks graze in the fields, but, from the beginning of February, they no longer stray from the dwellings, because everything is parched. The beasts are then fed millet, peanut stalks, or foliage.

231 Neither cattle nor sheep are in the least supervised in reproduction. Coupling is unrestricted and takes place at random in the pastures and at the whim of the animals throughout the year. Birth occurs no matter where; the herdsmen know nothing of obstetrical practice. The calves are nourished with a lightly salted mash of millet stalks or with the crushed fruit of a fig named aourou which supposedly has milk-producing properties.

[232] The finest male goats often are castrated to fatten or tame them. In Kaarta and Mandé goats are raised in pens constructed on piles one or two meters from the ground, with a flooring of boughs which allows excrement to fall through. In this way, the animals are protected from the humidity and from wild beasts.

231 [556] Horses, a mark of wealth, receive scarcely more attention. The stallions, particularly those of the chief, are fettered to stakes at the hut, but the mares are left free to roam around the village and at the age of 20 months are covered by any male horse whatever. The feeding of the mare and her offspring is neglected, that of the male horse is more satisfactory.

235 Poultry is raised in all villages, in hearly every yard. They live on what they can find. In upper Ivory Coast the natives drive them onto the cultivated fields after the harvest. Often, the villagers build small roosts attached to the house walls.

[36] B. Stock Raising Areas

231 In the Sahelian zone, shrubby vegetation affords a very precious source of nutriment for camels, horses, cattle, sheep, and goats. The 14th parallel marks the line of demarcation between the zebus to the north and the taurins to the south. This line passes through Kayes, Bafoulabé, Kolokani, south of Ségou, San, and Tougan. It corresponds to the northern limit of the tsetse fly.

Peul zebus are very well represented in the Macina region during the dry season and in the Haoussa [Hausa] region in the north and the Gourma region in the south during the rainy season. It is a good animal for butchering. Faraboué zebus, produced by the crossing of taurins with zebus, live in the zone cohabited by the two species. Finally, Moorish zebus in the Nioro, Nara, and Macina circles are not so good for butchering as the Peul zebus, but the cows are better milk producers (six to seven liters a day compared to two or three).

Woolly sheep are found at Macina, in the Macina circle, and in the Issa Ber circle. They die where more than 60 centimeters of rain falls per year. Their shepherds, the Rimaïbé, change their pastures according to the Niger floods. Finally, the delicate, well-muscled goats of the Sahel are found again in the Fouta-Djallon to the south.

The Sudan zone is less suited to stock raising. The high bush is infested with tsetse flies, ticks, and gastro-intestinal parasites. Camels disappear.

The taurins, doubtless introduced by the Berber peoples from southern Morocco, are derived from long-horned cattle. The

231 subspecies Méré or Bambara, which is found at Kaarta, Bélédougou, Mandé, and Minianka, is produced by the crossing of the N'Dama strain with the zebu. The male is a good animal for butchering; the cow is a poor milk producer.

The long-haired Moorish sheep, raised in the Néma regions, Nara, and Nioro, is poor for butchering, while the Peul sheep with greatly developed horns, originating in the Sudan, is an excellent animal for butchering. Finally, the sheep of the Fouta-Djallon, or to the south up to the 14th degree of latitude north, is more thickset; it has short hair, but when crossed with the merino sheep furnishes a fleece of from 500 to 600 grams.

The goats raised at Kaarta and Mandé are also stockier than those of the Sahel because they do not roam.

Horses diminish in number and size. They become tame and soft. The southern horse is a Barbary horse enfeebled by the climate. It is found to the south of Kaarta, at Minianka, in the regions of San and Djenné. The Bélédougou horse is a Barbary horse transformed by the climate and by man. The center for raising it is in the Touba canton 90 kilometers to the northeast of Koulikoro.

The ass of Minianka and of the southern Sudan is small, 0.90 meters to 1 meter, but stout. It has a beige coat with a darker dorsal band and cross stripe.

Few mules are found, for if the ass is scorned, the mule is despised.

Pig raising appears, as well as the keeping of domestic fowl.
235 [37] The chicken is of an archaic type, small in size and light in weight (one kilogram). It has few muscles. A half-wild bird, it lays only about a hundred eggs a year and sits on them all. The Guinea fowl weighs about 1.2 kilograms and has a coarse flesh. The musk or Barbary duck is raised in large numbers on the banks of the Senegal and the Niger. The females are excellent layers and sitters. They weigh from 3 kilograms to 3.5 kilograms. The flesh of the young is good, that of the adults musky. Finally, the turkey is raised in all regions, but only rarely because it requires too much attention.
231 Rabbits are not raised; they are too sensitive to local diseases.

The Guinean zone permits no more than the raising of pigs and poultry. Horses are not found there.

C. Statistics

● 231
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	Sheep Goats	Bovines	Horses	Asses
Bamako	64,987	49,425	6,227	10,356
Ségou	234,645	161,965	10,454 -5,165	12,159
Bougouni	17,360	29,197	431	1,651

Estimates for the three Bambara centers.

D. Products from Livestock

253 Meat -- The principal slaughtering centers are Bamako and Kayes.

439 Some of the available bovines are exported to Senegal. This is done from the Kayes circle by way of the routes: Néma, Timbesa, Nioro, Kayes; or Néma, Nara, Yelamano, Kayes. Others are sent to Guinea to provide meat for the workers in the gold placers of the Siguiri region. Some go to the Ivory and Gold Coasts, where the animals are sent chiefly from Mopti, with participation from the circles [487] of Ségou, San, and Niafunké. Numerous caravan routes penetrate to the Ivory Coast by way of Odienné, Seguela, Korhogo, Bouaké, and Boho-Dioulasso.

[255] Preserves are made in the factories of Lyndiane.

281 Leather -- Leather comes either from the slaughter houses or from the bush. It is of mediocre quality because of poor preparation: the skins are dried in the sun, folded in two lengthwise, hair against hair, and tied together with a wire, ten to a bundle. About 600 metric tons pass through Bamako annually.

234 Milk and milk derivatives -- The cows are poor producers; most of the milk is furnished by the Moorish, Peul, and Toronké zebus. Butter production is primitive: the sour milk is put in calabashes, cans, or goat skins and shaken until it turns to butter. At Falaladji near Kayes there is a butter and cheese factory.

236
439 Wool -- The wool is generally used locally for weaving; only a small percentage is exported to France. A great effort has been

764 782 has been filled and his soul goes to Lahara. In the eyes of the Negroes, this act has none of the attributes of a sacrifice; it is the price of the right to enter Lahara and is given by the children to /222/ their father's soul. Moreover, they give it to him alive, and it is slipped into the grave at the moment when the last small board, the last wood chip, or the last earthen slab making up the root is set in place (1).

1. A nest egg is slipped in instead of a hen if the deceased was a woman.

764 At the end of the ceremony the deceased's dog is killed (2),

[231] 2. If the deceased owned a dog it is always killed unless the old man decided otherwise while he was alive. There are Bambara, especially women, who raise dogs in order to have this honor, and for this reason only.

and the sons-in-law and the brothers-in-law eat to, or millet gruel. [431] When they depart they also receive a rooster or a hen. It is given them in the name of the deceased, and since it is the gift of a dead person, they kill and eat it on the way (3). The fetishes and the genii

[782] 3. This practice, again, is no sacrifice in the eyes of the Negro.

would be displeased if such a gift should arrive in the village alive, and whoever became guilty of such a crime would become the plaything of most of the gnâma and could dig his grave.

The Bambara do not place any kind of food either on or in the grave. But for three days in the evening, at nightfall, a dish of tô (gruel) and a little fresh water is placed on the gouâ so that the soul of the old man may satisfy his hunger and quench his thirst.

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A great effort has been

654 232 made to improve the exploitation of livestock; in this regard [38] one must mention the stock-raising experimental center of the Service Zootechnique, the Serotherapy Center and the Farm School of Sotuba, near Bamako; the sheepfolds at El Oualadji, Nioro, and Nara; and the stallion corrals at Nioro, Ouahigouya, Mopti, Bandiagara, Gao, Bamako, and Goundam.

III. Commerce

651 441 The Bambara region follows the commercial regulations of French West Africa. It is, in particular, subject to the customs regulations put into force November 30, 1950 (Journal officiel A.O.F., No. 2507 [French West African Official Journal]), which include a tax on merchandise of whatever origin and a customs surtax on each product coming within the framework of the international conventions to which France has subscribed.

Customs receipts for 1950 were 131,000,000 francs for the whole of the Sudan. They reveal a rather mediocre commercial traffic, definitely inferior to that of Senegal for example (3,325,000,000 francs). This is partly due to the geographic situation of the country and to the state of the means of communication, and partly to the limited resources of the region.

A. External Commerce

a. Means of Communication

439 External commerce has three outlets: Dakar, Conakry, Abidjan. It is through these outposts that the Bambara world communicates with Europe and the United States. This is why the continental isolation of the country remains a formidable impediment to outside commerce.

505 The means of communication remain very mediocre across this country so inordinately spread out. Navigable waterways are irregular. Commercial navigation is possible as follows: on the Senegal from Saint-Louis to Kayes from July to October, and up to Podor during the rest of the year; on the Niger, by steamer during the flood period and by barge the rest of the year, between Koulikoro

*173 we have just noted, would have formed an unbreakable bloc
614 if both elements had not been affected by the ferment of
dissociation referred to in the course of this study.

The *to-da* derived the larger portion of its prosperity from
[487] the Niger. Communication and transport could most easily be maintained along this artery, and it was the need to make the greatest possible use of the river that brought about the organization of the Somono.

[101] Etymologically, the word Somono simply means "fisherman." Like any trade practiced exclusively, professional fish-
[564] ing involves a certain loss of standing, and that is why the Somono are said to be people of caste. This status is especially due to the supremacy of the clan over the Somono, without whom it could not have exploited the river.

614 After using force to annex them, Mamari added to their
number by assigning some of the *furu-ba dyon'* to the group, so
564 that the Somono were soon closely dependent on the *furu-ba*.
*173 At the orders of the *fama* and his agents, they were required to
[505] maintain ferry service across the river, to provide river transport
in both directions, and to pay a fee in kind on their catch, with the understanding that they could continue to live according to the traditional Somono customs.

In return, the Somono were under the protection of the clan and their leaders benefitted from the generosity of the *fama*. They would occasionally be given a share of booty. [324]

Little by little, the few original Somono families were lost in the flood of newcomers. These included: the *furu-ba dyon'* who had become Somono on orders from the *fama*; people of diverse origins who had adopted Somono status of their own accord because they found it better than their own; and finally, the children of both, who were Somono by birth.

It was likewise the exploitation of the property of the
[233] *to-da* that brought about a similar organization of the shepherds, or Peul. Let us first note that this term has no ethnic significance; it designates all who raise or watch over animals as a regular and professional occupation. Here, too, there is a kind of loss of standing, since a working shepherd could hardly do without a sponsor and must attach himself to a master. This is the case for

231 [35] However, the Bambara can assemble flocks by exchanging their grain for animals obtained from Peul, Moor, or Touareg shepherds. It is their way of investing their savings; thus, they never dispose of their animals during their periods of increase, but let them grow old in the herds, and their capital increases effortlessly, watched over by the head of the family.
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233 In the Sahel, during the rainy season, the animals live by grazing on the numerous grasses and leguminous plants that grow on the mimosa-studded steppe. During the dry season, they live on the fallen branches and husks of the acacias. Then there is transhumance to the inundated regions which become pastures as the waters recede. In the Nioro region, transhumance is towards the Kaarta, the Baoulé, and the Bakoy.
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[221]

In the Sudan region the animals entrusted to the Peul make short journeys to change pastures; in the rainy season, to the plateaus which are immense pastures; from November on, they return to the valleys and streams.

In the Guinean area, the village flock is entrusted to a Peul shepherd who leads it off in the morning and brings it back at night. The animals are then tethered to the stakes in their owners' courtyards or are penned in an enclosure where the women go to milk them. After the harvest the flocks graze in the fields, but, from the beginning of February, they no longer stray from the dwellings, because everything is parched. The beasts are then fed millet, peanut stalks, or foliage.

231 Neither cattle nor sheep are in the least supervised in reproduction. Coupling is unrestricted and takes place at random in the pastures and at the whim of the animals throughout the year. Birth occurs no matter where; the herdsmen know nothing of obstetrical practice. The calves are nourished with a lightly salted mash of millet stalks or with the crushed fruit of a fig named aourou which supposedly has milk-producing properties.

[232] The finest male goats often are castrated to fatten or tame them. In Kaarta and Mandé goats are raised in pens constructed on piles one or two meters from the ground, with a flooring of boughs which allows excrement to fall through. In this way, the animals are protected from the humidity and from wild beasts.

C. Statistics

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	Sheep Goats	Bovines	Horses	Asses
Bamako	64,987	49,425	6,227	10,356
Ségou	234,645	161,965	10,454	12,159
			-5,165	
Bougouni	17,360	29,197	431	1,651

Estimates for the three Bambara centers.

D. Products from Livestock

253 Meat -- The principal slaughtering centers are Bamako and Kayes.

439 Some of the available bovines are exported to Senegal. This is done from the Kayes circle by way of the routes: Néma, Timbesa, Nioro, Kayes; or Néma, Nara, Yelamano, Kayes. Others are sent to Guinea to provide meat for the workers in the gold placers of the Siguiri region. Some go to the Ivory and Gold Coasts, where the animals are sent chiefly from Mopti, with participation from the circles [487] of Ségou, San, and Niafunké. Numerous caravan routes penetrate to the Ivory Coast by way of Odienné, Seguela, Korhogo, Bouaké, and Boho-Dioulasso.

[255] Preserves are made in the factories of Lyndiane.

Leather -- Leather comes either from the slaughter houses or 281 from the bush. It is of mediocre quality because of poor preparation: the skins are dried in the sun, folded in two lengthwise, hair against hair, and tied together with a wire, ten to a bundle. About 600 metric tons pass through Bamako annually.

● Milk and milk derivatives -- The cows are poor producers; 234 most of the milk is furnished by the Moorish, Peul, and Toronké zebus. Butter production is primitive: the sour milk is put in calabashes, cans, or goat skins and shaken until it turns to butter. At Falaladji near Kayes there is a butter and cheese factory.

236 Wool -- The wool is generally used locally for weaving; only 431 a small percentage is exported to France. A great effort has been

231 Horses, a mark of wealth, receive scarcely more attention. [558] The stallions, particularly those of the chief, are fettered to stakes at the hut, but the mares are left free to roam around the village and at the age of 20 months are covered by any male horse whatever. The feeding of the mare and her offspring is neglected, that of the male horse is more satisfactory.

235 Poultry is raised in all villages, in hearly every yard. They live on what they can find. In upper Ivory Coast the natives drive them onto the cultivated fields after the harvest. Often, the villagers build small roosts attached to the house walls.

[36] B. Stock Raising Areas

231 In the Sahelian zone, shrubby vegetation affords a very precious source of nutriment for camels, horses, cattle, sheep, and goats. The 14th parallel marks the line of demarcation between the zebus to the north and the taurins to the south. This line passes through Kayes, Bafoulabé, Kolokani, south of Ségou, San, and Tougan. It corresponds to the northern limit of the tsetse fly.

Peul zebus are very well represented in the Macina region during the dry season and in the Haoussa [Hausa] region in the north and the Gourma region in the south during the rainy season. It is a good animal for butchering. Faraboué zebus, produced by the crossing of taurins with zebus, live in the zone cohabited by the two species. Finally, Moorish zebus in the Nioro, Nara, and Macina circles are not so good for butchering as the Peul zebus, but the cows are better milk producers (six to seven liters a day compared to two or three).

Woolly sheep are found at Macina, in the Macina circle, and in the Issa Ber circle. They die where more than 60 centimeters of rain falls per year. Their shepherds, the Rimaïbé, change their pastures according to the Niger floods. Finally, the delicate, well-muscled goats of the Sahel are found again in the Fouta-Djallon to the south.

The Sudan zone is less suited to stock raising. The high bush is infested with tsetse flies, ticks, and gastro-intestinal parasites. Camels disappear.

The taurins, doubtless introduced by the Berber peoples from southern Morocco, are derived from long-horned cattle. The

231 subspecies Méré or Bambara, which is found at Kaarta, Bélédougou, Mandé, and Minianka, is produced by the crossing of the N'Dama strain with the zebu. The male is a good animal for butchering; the cow is a poor milk producer.

The long-haired Moorish sheep, raised in the Néma regions, Nara, and Nioro, is poor for butchering, while the Peul sheep with greatly developed horns, originating in the Sudan, is an excellent animal for butchering. Finally, the sheep of the Fouta-Djallon, or to the south up to the 14th degree of latitude north, is more thickset; it has short hair, but when crossed with the merino sheep furnishes a fleece of from 500 to 600 grams.

The goats raised at Kaarta and Mandé are also stockier than those of the Sahel because they do not roam.

Horses diminish in number and size. They become tame and soft. The southern horse is a Barbary horse enfeebled by the climate. It is found to the south of Kaarta, at Minianka, in the regions of San and Djenné. The Bélédougou horse is a Barbary horse transformed by the climate and by man. The center for raising it is in the Touba canton 90 kilometers to the northeast of Koulikoro.

The ass of Minianka and of the southern Sudan is small, 0.90 meters to 1 meter, but stout. It has a beige coat with a darker dorsal band and cross stripe.

Few mules are found, for if the ass is scorned, the mule is despised.

Pig raising appears, as well as the keeping of domestic fowl. 235 [37] The chicken is of an archaic type, small in size and light in weight (one kilogram). It has few muscles. A half-wild bird, it lays only about a hundred eggs a year and sits on them all. The Guinea fowl weighs about 1.2 kilograms and has a coarse flesh. The musk or Barbary duck is raised in large numbers on the banks of the Senegal and the Niger. The females are excellent layers and sitters. They weigh from 3 kilograms to 3.5 kilograms. The flesh of the young is good, that of the adults musky. Finally, the turkey is raised in all regions, but only rarely because it requires too much attention. 231 Rabbits are not raised; they are too sensitive to local diseases.

The Guinean zone permits no more than the raising of pigs and poultry. Horses are not found there.

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609 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that
821 was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and
show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the
Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equip-
224 ment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well
as an arsenal of magic weapons.

The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
825 they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of
778 this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at
some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The
animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[552] wara-ba means lion; sa-ma, elephant; ma-li, hippopotamus;
bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names
indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief
that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The
attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
● [237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an appli-
cation of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual
and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a
small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
231 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
552 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of
825 their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once
held and which is still shown on occasion: fa-li meaning "donkey"
derives from fa meaning "powerful," just as nya-ri meaning "cat"
derives from nya and has the same meaning, along with ba
meaning "goat."

534 beating surface. The most highly regarded was the *denu-ba*; 614 made of a hollowed cylindrical trunk with fairly thick walls, 701 the *denu-ba* is sometimes more than a meter high, with its lower third often slightly tapered with an adze. The drumhead is made of strong hide, reinforced in the center by a patch of leather sewed to it and stretched on pegs driven into the sides of the drum a few centimeters below the upper edge. When it is to be played, the drum is inclined on a fork that supports it. The drummer uses a kind of wooden hook, cleverly curved for elasticity and provided at one end [315] with a rounded part, often formed by a swelling contrived for the purpose or at other times made of a leather ball. The drummer's free hand provides the syncopation.

In certain cases, two *denu-ba* are used together; the drummer strikes them in such a way as to obtain a variety of sounds to form the basis for conventional harmony. Thus, the soldiers not only were trained to obey appropriate flourishes, but also were kept in touch with distant battalions by means of the [202] drums. When it was skillfully played, the *denu-ba* made it possible to transmit information for considerable distances, because other drummers would retransmit it in turn. That is why it has [778] been said that the *denu-ba* can talk and no doubt why it was so highly regarded by the *ton'-dyon'* that they considered it an oracle and honored the god who spoke through the drum by making the *denu-ba* the *boli* of this god. Hence, human victims came to [782] be sacrificed to the drums of the *ton'-dyon'*, especially under Ngolo, according to the chronicle.

Trumpets (*buru*) were formerly made of ivory. The ● [237] Tedzkiret speaks of the ivory trumpets used by a certain Bambara named Maro, and Mage relates that Ahmadou, Sultan of Ségou, gave the Bambara their ivory trumpets on the occasion of the Moslem festival.

These ivory trumpets, however, have disappeared, no [237] doubt carried off by traders. Trumpets made of horn, which were used concurrently with the ivory instruments, have been substituted for them. The horns of the large antelope are much in demand for this purpose. An opening is made a few centimeters from the pointed end, and the trumpeter makes the sound through this opening. The only result is a loud but monotonous noise.

342 shovel. A coping of bricks is then laid out around the roof, leaving
room for the gutters which spill into the streets. These houses may
be topped with a second roof, a thatched cone. The four chief
timbers are set at the four angles of the house. There is a door in
the first ceiling, and precious goods or objects are kept in this part
of the house. As in the round huts, the door always opens to the
south.

[237] The outside of the houses are plastered with earth mixed with
cow dung; on the inside, the floor and lower part of the walls are
daubed with black earth mixed with fresh cow manure and bark from
[824] the jumbo tree (Napoleona Heudelotii); the upper walls and the ceiling
are covered with white river clay. Where the two colors meet,
[531] lines of festoons traced with the finger symbolize the descent of the
third Word. On the white walls are painted ladders, calabash spoons,
animsla, signs conveying [102] the worldly situation of the owner
as well as the soul of the artist.

[356] The periphery of the entrance door is daubed with fresh cow
[769] dung every 15 days, and more liberally with rotted cow dung once
a year before the rains. This custom is linked to ancestor worship.

Canari [earthenware vessels] containing certain plants are
353 buried under the bed of the head of the family; other plants and
352 juice from roots are hidden under the women's beds. The boli are
hooked to the roofing of the houses for they must touch neither earth,
water, nor fire. Nets, diakumadjulu, are hung from the ceiling;
they hold clothes or calabashes for the food; mats or animal skins
are spread on the ground; beds, different-sized calabashes, and stools
complete the furnishings. The different huts belonging to one family
351 are surrounded by a wall that opens into the vestibule of a hut with
342 two doors, oriented north-south. This is where the head of the
family receives strangers. In the inside court are found hearths made
[354] of three stones, mortars for millet, and chicken coops, a sort of
small square hut made of clay mixed with straw. The granaries,
343 constructed on piles, have the form of round huts. They are divided
251 into four parts, where the four principal grains are kept: millet,
rice, fonio, ground nuts. Some grains may be kept together in the
same compartment, for example, millet and ground nuts. Certain
granaries, bonio, are veritable cigar-shaped pots made by the blacksmiths'
wives. When the bonio is finished, it is cut into sections

326 as well as of silver, on a wooden core. The thrones of the ancient
[531] Bambara chiefs were covered in this manner. Today the golden
ornaments are no longer reserved exclusively for the wives of kings.
[301] Bracelets, pendants, and necklaces are produced in large quantities
in a filigree work in which the Black excels.

B. Ceramics

The land is very rich in pottery, but Bambara men do not
323 model clay, pottery being a woman's art. Inversely, the women do
not work on statuary.

C. Painting

531 The Bambara paint murals on the sanctuary walls with ocher
386 and a millet paste. The priests make these drawings periodically.
The walls of the young people's huts are also decorated with symbolic
motifs: calabash spoons, festoons, ladders with 22 bars, drawings
of hands, lines of chevrons. The young girls come to paint these,
● [337] with clay from the river or with a mixture of clay and cow dung.
All these geometric drawings are signs representing not only the
cosmogony, but a subtle translation of all the movements of the
executing artist's soul. They are a veritable form of writing.

D. Music

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771 Music is a privileged art (1) because it is bound to instruments, that is to say, to materials, to the human body by the voice and the dance, to numbers by the rhythm, to medicine, to divination, and to religion.

[106] In a report to the French Institute of Anthropology on
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771 February 18, 1948, Mme. G. Dieterlen described the structure and
symbolism of the two Bambara musical instruments, the Sema guitar
and the royal drum.

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1. Griaule, Passim, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the African Arts], Présence africaine.

824 245 the latter... We are familiar enough with the Bambara agricultural customs, but none of them would have brought about the spread of the balanzas, their regular spacing in the fields, and their protection from goats. In almost all the cases we have observed, the balanzas are of considerable age, development and density. There lies in this subject a fine dissertation topic for a young ethnographer and naturalist." (pp. 135, 136).

The myths of the Bambara answer M. Roberty's questions.

/39/ Mousso Koroni

776 Mousso Koroni is the impure earth; she symbolizes all that is opposed to light: darkness, night, witchcraft. She is also the symbol of rebellion, disorder, and impurity. Pemba pursued her in vain in his effort to take back what he had given her: the "words" she had received from him were divulged to men in spite of him.

Although no cult honors her and no sacrifice is offered her, her name is cited in various ceremonies and mentioned in the chants; her actions are recalled by certain gestures in the ritual.

776 304 On the other hand, she is the initiator of the separation of the sexes realized in the human body by the removal of the foreskin and the clitoris, an operation which after her betrayal, she performed on all those she met. In this way, she placed them in the same state of rupture in which she found herself: a female principle as opposed to Pemba, the male principle. In addition, she is present in every human being in the form of an evil force, the wanzo, which she had communicated to all those she approached, and of which one must rid oneself through the methods she herself inaugurated: circumcision and excision (1).

1. See p. 95.

776 241 Mousso Koroni is also the originator of certain agricultural techniques which she taught men, and every year, in certain villages, she

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is represented as making her nocturnal visitation at the time the grain is threshed. An old woman, dressed in rags, wearing old unmatched sandals, and carrying broken gourds, runs about the countryside simulating madness. She follows the mythological itinerary from west to south and from east to north, and then returns and sits down near the granaries (1).

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1. However, the very first agricultural techniques known as fyɛ̃ ti (literally, cultivation of the wind) are recalled, particularly among the Bozo, by random sowings of a certain number of wild grasses, then cereals, in the fields where the harvest is offered to Faro. Similar rituals are celebrated in certain Bambara villages. The techniques taught by Mousso Koroni came after those "of the wind," and precede that of millet cultivation.

For information on some agricultural rituals of the Bozo, see G. Dieterlen, "L'Agriculture rituelle des Bozo /Ritual Agriculture of the Bozo/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 20 (1950).

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Mousso Koroni's agricultural work and her unhappy wanderings are also represented in a children's ritual, carried out at night during the cultivation period. One of the players, the yukuri or dantoni (literally, little hunchback), wears sandals for ears, a hump at the small of his back, a cloth tail tied low about his waist. He goes begging from /40/ door to door, followed by all the uncircumcised of his neighborhood. He pretends to cultivate and to thresh grain while his companions intone chants recalling Mousso Koroni's mythical actions. After his round is finished and the presents of millet are gathered, the player, pursued by all the others, runs off and disappears amid catcalls.

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But while this parody of cultivation, with its rituals and chants, recalls the phases of Mousso Koroni's disorderly life, the agricultural techniques she initiated earlier are in themselves an important expression of the reparation made to the confusions she had caused. Every hoeing by the farmer is a wound inflicted on the impure earth,

776 hence on Mousso Koroni. The ritual cultivation of millet, a noble
244 activity to which every aristocratic Bambara must dedicate himself,
183 is an institution which Faro taught in his time and constitutes a purifi-
cation and a reordering of the soil (1).

Faro

Faro's Shapes

776 Faro was a "voice" before he materialized into a body. In his role as master of the word and reorganizer of the universe, he is represented by a spiral, *munu*, in which he occupies the point of origin at all times. The spiral is situated in the center of the cardinal points (2). Its vibratory unrolling represents "the displacement of Faro for the realization of all things in the universe."

776 This image is materialized in a basketry headdress, *yugu*, with a
292 spiral of eight turns. The straw sprigs that form the spokes supporting
the spiral symbolize the vibration; the intervals, *yugunye* or eye of
the *yugu*, which separate them are rays of light, the spiral representing

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1. *Dugukolo be be dyuruma*, "the whole earth is impure." But as only virgin soil is considered impure, it is also said: *dyurumu be be dugukolo ka forow sani nyala do*, "the whole earth is impure except for the cultivated fields." The word *dugukolo* (literally, bone of the earth) designates both the earth as a whole and the earth as matter. The same notions [171] concerning the impurity of the earth hold for the Dogon. See M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, p. 94.

2. This "central point," which is also the firmament, is described by the Bambara as *sã tyema kolo*, literally, the bone of the middle of the sky.

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At death, he takes back the spiritual principles of the diseased and preserves them in water so as to reintegrate them into another body, thus using forces which are eternally reusable. The product of the "shedding" (mana or folo) of souls which remain on the altars is for him in a way of constantly verifying the account of those living and dead who are entrusted to him.

On earth, men are indebted to him for all they possess. He gave them language, an expression of thought, and taught them its usage, having warned them against the misuse and evil use of words.

The techniques of survival, another expression of "Faro's words," so necessary to their lives since they have to provide the means for their existence, were revealed to them by the spirit. He helped them with his sovereign power, either by directly providing them with new tools, or by inspiring some of them to develop new techniques by putting to use observed facts. In this way, he gave the Bozo fishing nets which enabled them to catch the first recorded animal food, the fish; likewise, he encouraged among the Bambara the discovery of weaving through observing the spider's web.

He also gave men certain seeds which became the origin of farming, such as cotton and fonio, both of them being known before millet and the other cereals.

As proprietor of cowrie shells and metals, he is the master of wealth, distributing it as he pleases. Thus, one who owns precious
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metal is responsible to Faro for it and owes him a part of one's earnings. For this reason many offerings are made by throwing gold or copper into the river.

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Faro's deed is essential where the Bambara's main activity, agricultural work, is concerned. Every man with dignity and nobility must cultivate the earth in order to honor Faro. Each stroke of the hoe is a wound inflicted upon the earth and a punishment for its impurity. Each stroke of the hoe humiliates Mousso Koroni and purifies the earth. Faro watches over the soul and the vital force of the seeds. Only he can provide rain necessary to germination, for rain contains the soul, (ni) of the cereal grains as does the water of ponds and streams which one collects in case of drought.

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Millet receives its soul as soon as it gets the humidity of the earth, and from that time on, it accompanies the various stages of germination with utterances which, at the beginning of the world, could be heard. As soon as /54/ it has received the rain, the seed splits and says: "My place is assigned." Then the sprout comes out of the earth

776 774 241 with the words: "May I be protected." Finally the growth of the stem is accompanied by a third utterance: "May I be obeyed" (1). It preserves its soul until full maturity, that is, the moment is is harvested. When the harvester's blade cuts the spike or the cluster, the plant sends its soul into Faro's realm with these words: "Iron is forbidden my grain; soul, go away to the house of water" (2). Thus deprived of its soul, the millet becomes suitable for eating and it says: "If I were not dead, I could not be eaten; my breed cannot be lost: whether or not I am eaten, nothing can reduce me for my soul is in water" (3).

776 241 Many agrarian rituals are celebrated in order to assure Faro's protection. The high quality of the first fruits of the harvest offered to him indicates the importance of his role. It is in fact a payment made to him for the past harvest and in anticipation of the harvest to come.

776 He is also the guardian of the artisan's skill. The first object forged by the young blacksmith and the first spindle of thread woven by the young weaver are brought to him. Through this gesture, the individual entrusts him with both his work and his manual dexterity. After Faro has seen the work, he does not let the worker forget what he has learned and will help him perfect his skill.

Faro is a judge. Those who break the rules he has made are the object of his righteous wrath: those who are drowned or struck by lightning are always persons who have broken a taboo. Men submit most difficult cases to him as a last resort. Through the intermediary of the agents of different rituals such as the intermediary of the diviners, he answers requests and "settles the words." Most prayers

776 782 are addressed to him and in many cases the invocations end with his name. He is omnipresent, invoked everywhere, and the seat of his power, as of all others, is the seventh heaven, to which the Bambara

1. These are the three formula:
ndyora, nga kolosi, nga bunye.

2. Neke ye nkise tne ye, ni, ta dyi so la.

3. Ni ńa sale te nti dũ, n šia tise ka tunu,
ndunaw ma dũn wo, fẽ te bwona, ni be dyi la.

B. The Altars

778 Each family head wears a small altar called kere la boli ni (literally,
794 little side altar), which maintains relations with the souls of the members of the family for which he is, in part, responsible. /132/ In case of illness he offers sacrifices on this boli for the recovery of the patient. In case of death, he keeps the soul in it temporarily before carrying it to the collective altar of the Komo (1). He also sacrifices on this altar at the time of sowing.

If the family head is himself very ill, the altar is placed on his
[763] head in an effort to replace the soul which is escaping with that which
the altar contains. If he dies, it is placed on his chest to take in the
[764] soul which is then transported to the sanctuary of the Komo. At the
end of seven days, the object is given to the deceased's eldest son
who, upon becoming family head, sacrifices two goats to the Komo
on this occasion.

The čuafebla (literally, worn at the hip) is made by a father for his son when the latter attains maturity and is on the point of leading a man's life, farming his own field and founding a family.

If there is no Komo in the village, the father may make it earlier, right after the name-giving ceremony.

The altar is made of hyena tails, scorpion tails, and whole peppers tied with a little stick; it represents the owner's flesh and blood.

It receives an annual sacrifice at the time of sowing after the collective offering tothe Komo. This takes place in the family courtyard in the presence of all the members of the family (2). Moreover,

1. The society, the altars, and the role of the Komo are described on pages ff.

778 2. The cult rendered on this altar brings the
794 intervention of the Sago spirit whose agri-
773 cultural role is still obscure at the present
241 stage of the inquiry. He taught men how to
water their fields.

"Two birds konodyanfi began to circle
and sing above the workers in the fields;

> 778 the latter abandoned their hoes in order
> 794 to watch them. The birds fetched water
> 773 with their beaks on the shore of a neigh-
> 241 boring pond and returned to pour it at the foot of a millet stalk, the ear of which was not yet formed. The men put a mark on this stalk in order to recognize it and later observed that it produced a finer ear than the others. Imitating the bird, they dampened their plantings and watered their fields; their harvest was considerably improved by it. They kept up this habit and, in acknowledgment, produced a cult to the Sago spirit whose emissaries the birds were and who comes to slake his thirst at the Čuafebla."

778 it is the object of sacrifices when important business is being handled:
794 marriage, private or administrative action, fight against an epidemic.

[428] A son may inherit his father's altar and keep it with his own which he wears tied to his hip.

The Čuafebyɛ̃ni (literally, little horn at the hip) is composed of a cowrie, taken from Faro's granary, copper which is the altar's soul /133/ (ni), pepper, charcoal, and honey. This mixture is introduced into a ram's horn decorated with cowries at its opening and often wrapped in a red cloth bearing the same ornamentation.

[782] The altar is consecrated on those of the Komo, over which it is passed seven times. The throats of victims are cut, their blood is collected in a gourd, and the boli dipped into it three times before being taken out in the sun to dry.

Its role is one of protection. Its owner carries it during the Komo ceremonies to defend himself against spells, korti, which may be cast by someone in the audience.

It also maintains the integrity of its owner's forces. If the latter faints or goes into a trance, he is returned to his normal state by completely renewing the ingredients which constitute it. When the horn is emptied of its contents, "both the soul of the altar and that of the man" are removed. The container is rinsed out with water from the

776 778 823 783 the word, is offered as clothing, and the eggs are offered as purification. As for the ashes, it is the ideal pure element since fire has "removed" its *tere* from the wood; here it represents the man from whom "the bad force acting on his *tere* has been removed" (1). Whoever murders an animal proceeds in the samw way with the animal's hide upon which he throws cowrie shells. In both cases, the spirits absorb the *tere* and *nyama*, which add to their own forces and free the culprit.

Collective purifications are carried out on the *dangu* when sexual taboos regarding cultivated fields and bush are broken. The impurity [833] resulting from copulation performed outdoors is communicated to all the land belonging to the village; the trees in the bush will no longer bear fruit; the harvests will deteriorate. Formerly the two lovers [684] taken by surprise were deprived of their clothing which was burned on the *dangu* after they had circled the village three times starting at the left. The culprits were then banished. At present, if the plight of the fields suggests that such an act has been committed, all varieties of cultivated seeds are gathered in a basket which is placed at the crossroads. Then, all the villagers and their domestic animals circle the village three times while sham battles take place between men mounted on horseback. After a sacrifice offered at the *dangu*, the seeds, thus purified, are sown.

776 778 823 241 Offerings are made to the spirits of the crossroads at the time of sowing to invoke their protection. This ritual is obligatory for whomever sows cotton, since this seed was given to men by these spirits. The farmer places the seeds, sits down facing west, and cries out three times the name of the *dangu* above the seeds. He leaves three small piles in homage to the spirit along with fibers from the plant, and kills a victim before proceeding to sow his field. When the stalks are up, he cuts some boughs and returns to the place of sacrifice to sweep up the seeds, thus impregnating them with the *nyama* of the *dangu*. He then dries them, grinds, sifts, and mixes them with earth picked up on the same spot. In his field, he shouts /141/ the name of the *dangu* and throws the mixture with all his strength in the direction of the cardinal points, the zenith, and the ground. When the plants are mature he picks the first seven ripe seeds, brings them to the same place, and offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

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1. See pp. 90 ff.

776 attend his burial despite the fact that the rituals have not been per-
787 formed. If not, he is abandoned to the care of his family.

To neglect the rituals assuring life in the beyond and the security
764 of the living causes the shadow *šu dya*, or the ghost *šu kere dye*
775 (literally, white side of the dead man), to arise and present itself under the same which the dead man had on earth, to claim his due from his descendants.

Ancestor Cult

769 In the entryway of some residences a supporting stake (*čě dloma*),
778 sometimes marked by seven notches, represents the founding ancestor of the family. On the anniversary of his death the stake is oiled "to refresh his soul." In addition, each year the owner of the house sacrifices to all the ancestors on the family altar, on the stake, and on the threshold of the door. In some villages the ancestors are called upon by tapping the threshold with a little wooden hammer, *dyele kala ni*, which represents them.

In the courtyards, pieces of wood stuck in the ground (*ǰigi semen dloma*) represent the paternal uncle, the brother of the founder, and are used as seats for the heads of families who lean against them "in order to lean well upon the traditions." Farmers, before leaving for the fields, rub their hoes on them to show them to the ancestors.

Before planting the women give the head of the family a ball of
769 raw millet, which he lines up to represent the dead according to age
241 and rank. Then he gives them a pinch of the seed beginning with the one representing the most recent deceased and calling successively all the dead by name. The paste and the seeds are then put in water and the mash thus obtained is poured on the /196/ doorposts to the entryway of the family house upon which the blood of a sacrificial victim also is poured. When the planting time comes, the chief who has prepared the mash made with a few grains taken from the seeds distributes this to the women, beginning with the one who represents the oldest deceased. He asks the ancestors to watch over, during the germination period, the soul of the millet which will descend into the seed with the first rainfall. When the millet has reached maturity, the first seeds harvested are placed in a pot on the threshing floor where the grain will be threshed later, and are distributed to the women in the same manner as the time of planting, the oldest of the deceased having to receive the first of the seed.

364 the chief throws dust three times to the four cardinal points. The
778 masker then stands in the wind in such a way as to receive the smoke;
the chief and the members crouch in line behind him with their mouths
796 open to inhale better. When the wind changes its direction they all
move to continue this fumigation, wušuli, which constitutes a purification as well as an increment of forces. At the moment the fire is
almost out, the most courageous of the participants stamps on it in
order to assimilate better the nyama which it exudes. The ashes,
[804] gathered by the chief, are distributed, the unit of measurement being
the gourd mure. An important share goes to the nyama boli, another
is given as an offering to Faro, and a third is distributed among the
members.

Several days later, the group goes to the river bank to the sound of drums beating out the murumuruw foli (literally, rhythm of the refuse); they throw the ashes reserved for Faro into the water and, continuing to dance, return to the village.

364 Those ashes given to the members are used to prepare the potass
778 which is mixed into the millet cake, the daily food of the Bambara,
and which will make the members of the family share in the powers
252 contained in the nyamanto.

364 The eating of this mixture closes the cycle of the transfer of forces,
778 which were temporarily communicated to the refuse by the individuals,
then recovered by Faro, and finally redistributed to the social body.

III. Rain Rites

789 At the time the first work is done in the fields, a drawing is made
● 241 with millet mash upon the tree of the Kworè in the shape of a lozenge
inscribed within a rectangle, which represents "the great fire which issued /204/ from the cardinal angles" at the time of their creation. While this is being done, the following words are spoken: "The four elbows (the lozenge) are the fire of the angles; here is the anniversary of the Kworè." The clearing of the field or the first plowing always symbolizes the very first clearing obtained through fire.

During the month of May, the members of the Kworè society make
789 sacrifices upon their altars before the first rumbling of thunder in
796 order to purify the first sky where clouds are formed from the impure
794 passage of Mousso Koroni. The chief gathers the members about the
tree and recites the following prayer:

132 of high water, part of the narrow plains bordering the river are inundated.

133 At the pass of Bamako the cliffs on the left bank are close to the river and hem in the city. The pass is marked by the appearance of rapids (Sotuba, Kénié), for the river meets for the first time the [20] sandstone it cuts through. The water is highest at Bamako around September 22 and begins to subside towards October 15. It is lowest around April and May.

137 The vegetation is quite unvaried. Species of great forest trees are found in the ravines of the mountains to the south; the small Sudanese forest covers the whole Niger region up to Bamako where the layer of laterite is thin. It is a forest of deciduous trees; the trees shed their leaves, and flower in the middle of the dry season while they are still bare; then the leaves appear before the return of rainy season which marks the awakening of the herbaceous plants. Let us note particularly the karite [shea] tree (Butyrospermum Parkii) which is the most widespread and characteristic of the Sudan; the néré (Parkia biglobosa); the téli (Erythrophloeum guineense); the lingué (Afzelia africana); the caïlcedrat (Khaya senegalensis), as well as enormous gramineous plants of the Andropogon family which are more abundant in the humid depressions than on the plateaus. [134] However, large areas covered with a layer of laterite are bare except for some scanty gramineous plants: this is the "bowal." These immense iron flats, barren of humanity, make excellent hunting 136 grounds. Buffaloes, panthers, Derby's elans, various kinds of monkeys, elephants, antelopes, lions, wart hogs, hippopotamuses, and crocodiles live there. The glossine (tsetse fly) abounds in the same region.

241 Between these immense, desolate bowals grow rice, millet, and fonio (Digitaria exilis), the most wretched of the world's cereals and the most important for ritual purposes.

133 In the valleys, outside of the beds of laterite gravel, one finds the small forest or cultivation in newly cleared places and prairies are found in the sections that are annually inundated.

B. The Ségou Basin

This is a plain framed by the sandstone of the Manding and Dogon plateaus, by the Goundam range and the range south of the Dehar near Bassi Kounou.

[27] CHAPTER 4

PRINCIPAL ECONOMIC TRAITS

I. Agriculture

241

Among the Bambara "farming remains extensive [as opposed to 'intensive'] . It has not, generally speaking, passed the quasi-primitive stage where a man's labor, without the aid of modern techniques, produces little and, usually, badly. The climate is hard in the tropics, making physical effort taxing, and the naturally rich areas are rare and scattered. Finally, industrialization is only just beginning in West Africa, and in that field, as in the related one of producing hydro-electric power -- of capital importance in a country where all coal must be imported -- the stage of the schoolroom has hardly been passed." (1)

1. Georges Spitz, Sansanding.

A. Methods of Cultivation

We may distinguish three principal methods of cultivation, which apply respectively to vegetable gardens, to fields bordering water courses, and to fields in the brush.

The vegetable gardens are arranged around the huts and are worked by methods of intensive cultivation, using domestic refuse and irrigation, with no fallow land. They are meticulously cared for by the women. Each parcel of land is knowingly exploited by layers of crops, root crops and high plants which draw on the soil at different levels. These village gardens are designed to provide the carry-over between harvests. Millet, maize, tobacco (mid-August), etc., are cultivated in them. They are surrounded by productive trees.

The most fertile fields border water courses, where the land is easily irrigated. These small fields are generally worked by the women for raising rice, cotton, onions, and fruit trees.

241 Lastly, the furuba are veritable brush fields where wide, extensive, and cyclical cultivation is carried out, the brush being cleared by burning. During the dry season, the trees are cut at 0.70 meters or 1 meter from the ground [28] without removing the stumps, so that the subsequent fallow period may be brief. The cut branches are piled by the stumps. After drying, the grass is set on fire. On old fields, millet stalks and high grass are piled up before setting the fire; then the ground is superficially loosened by hoeing, and the ashes are mixed into the soil. The first year millet and peanuts are sown, during the following years less rich crops until the soil is exhausted (by manioc).

The preparation of the soil and the sowing must be done very
rapidly (in about three weeks or a month) at the beginning of the
rainy season. Sometimes the farmer must hastily sow an insufficiently
prepared field, being obliged to transplant later. Sowing time is
821 determined by the appearance in the sky of the Pleiades, which the
Bambara call "the hen and the chicks." In the Macina region the
sowing begins at a certain village and follows a route going successively
from the south northwards, in a zigzag movement corresponding to
the appearance of the rains.

In the brush fields, maize is planted, then fonio and coarse millet (sorghum), peanuts and small millet (Pennisetum), etc. (see below). In the fields, monoculture is practiced, or else the cultivation of associated crops: for example, black-eyed peas (Vigna unguiculati walp = V. Catjang) and okra (Hibiscus esculentus) with millets and maize; the da sauce (Hibiscus sabdariffa Linn) with fonio (Digitaria exilis); peanuts with underground peas. In some fields these crops are associated: millets, maize, black-eyed peas, cotton, underground peas, peanuts, sweet potatoes, manioc, and okra (each plant exploiting the soil at a different level).

Sowing is always preceded by famillial sacrifices and general rites.

Harvest time is determined by the vegetative period of the plants, without regard to their apparent ripeness. Thus, errors often result when new varieties are introduced by the administration. Accordingly, the harvest date for peanuts, sweet potatoes, and yams

241 may be set too early, and no amount of advice to be patient will retard it. However, for the millets, fonio, and rice, the visible characters of ripeness are known and respected (opening of the husk in the case of millet, color and bowing of the spike in the case of fonio and rice).

242 824 When a field is exhausted, it is allowed to lie fallow, and another terrain is cleared of brush, sometimes several kilometers from the village. A field is recognized as being exhausted when a variety of plant known as *sęgę* (*Striga senegalensis Benth*) appears spontaneously; when the soil is reconstituted and regains its richness, *tiękala* (*Cymbopogon giganteus Benth*) and *wăgha* (*Andropogon Gayanus Kunth*) appear, which indicates that the field may again be cultivated. Thus, the fields are rotated around the village that cultivates them, following a cycle which may last 20 years. 342 Temporary dwellings are set up near the fields under cultivation, and the farmer lives there during the work with each of his wives in turn.

[29]

B. Food Crops

243 The Bambara cultivate food plants and textile plants. Millet is the basic crop in the savanna. The *pénicillaires*, small millet (*Pennisetum typhoïdeum R.*), are cultivated very far north. Their types are characterized by the length of their vegetative cycles, which vary from 65 to 140 days. In general, they are sown in a rather light soil at the beginning of the rainy season. The grain is put in the ground, without preliminary working of the soil, in holes one pace apart and a few centimeters deep. A pinch of seed is put in each hole, and one to three subsequent workings are given the soil; the first, 15 days after reaping, the others in July and August. The yield varies from 350 to 1,000 kilograms per hectare.

The sorghums (*Sorghum vulgare*) include a considerable number of varieties with vegetative cycles varying from 120 to 150 days. M. Vichon has collected 11 samples of sugar sorghums, 132 of late mid-season, 87 early, 138 of transplants. M. Creak divides the sorghums into three types: with full, compact, conical spikes; with elongated spikes and more detached spikelets; with very elongated spikes and with spikelets even more detached from the axis. A third

248 286 into narrow bands by weavers [men] who make clothes from it in unbleached, indigo-blue, yellow, or black fabrics. At the present time, after numerous attempts at improvement since the occupation, [654] seeds selected according to the zones of cultivation are distributed to the farmers, and the administration encourages industrial cotton cultivation in irrigated regions, as well as mechanical spinning and weaving.

248 [177] Sisal is an agave of Mexican origin. The long, thick, pointed leaves, after undergoing a series of industrial operations including mechanical extraction of the fibers, yields very strong textile fibers suitable for cordage, rope making, rug manufacture, canopies, etc.

Kapok (*Eriodendron anfractuosum*) until a few years ago was merely gathered, but now plantations have been created. The fruit is in the form of capsules containing seeds enveloped in a vegetal wadding. In one year the kapok tree can furnish 30 kilograms of fibers used in mattress-making, hat-making ...

D. Agricultural Tools

241 Bambara farming tools are very simple. The hoe is almost the only agricultural instrument used. There are several kinds of hoe, particularly in the Bougouni region: the *tyerengu*, 0. 50 meters wide, with a straight handle (chiefly used by the Sénoufo); the *n'gu kala*, 0. 30 meters wide, with a curved handle. These two are used for digging, scraping, and banking. The flotton, from 0. 10 to 0. 20 meters wide and with a handle made from a forked branch, is used for the second dressing of the earth and for weeding. (When the weeds are too big, the weeding is done by hand). These hoes oblige the peasant to work stopped over. Let us also mention the axe, *dyeli*, which serves to cut shrubs and the branches of trees in clearing land, the machete, and a small pickaxe with a hoe handle, the *yalo.*

[33] Millet spikes are harvested with the aid of a special small knife to cut the stalk into pieces. Finally, the threshing of the ears is done with large bent sticks having round handles and flat ends.

[533 461] Agricultural labors, tillage and threshing, are undertaken collectively following the cadence indicated by an instrumentalist. Work in the fields is generally done by starting at the bottom of a slope and working up, so the rain will wash off the weeds. The

241 threshing of millet is done on the village threshing floor, facing west.

Attempts have been made to substitute the plow for the hoe, but with indifferent success, for deep plowing of these fragile soils brings the laterite bed of the subsoil to the surface, resulting in the final ruin of the fields.

The Bambara have no organic fertilizer other than household wastes, except in some regions where the shepherds lead their flocks onto the stubble after the harvest. Although only superficially worked, the soils are quickly exhausted and must be abandoned after a few years. Clearing the land by brush fire has the drawback of progressive deforestation.

E. Production Statistics

241 433 As statistics are established by circles or by administrative centers, it is impossible to give precise figures on the volume of agricultural production which may be attributed specifically to the Bambara. However, since the Bambara constitute the vast majority of the population in certain circles, it is not without interest to furnish some figures on Sudanese agriculture. It must be pointed out, however, that the acreage under cultivation in the country cannot be estimated even approximately. The statistics established by the circles or administrative centers are founded on approximations so vague that it is not even reasonable to take them into consideration.

As an indication of this, we may cite the figures furnished by the administration of the Bougouni circle. The estimates are calculated on the probable number of workers in a region, to each of whom is attributed a field of theoretical acreage. Three-fourths of the production is assigned to millet and the rest to regional crops. The average yields per hectare calculated in this manner may give a probable indication of the quantity harvested, but they cannot be verified in any manner.

Production According to "Le Guide A.O.F. (1950)"
[The French West African Guidebook]

Bamako

241

433 Export Products -- Karite, peanuts, 11,700 M.T. [metric
439 tons]; sisal, 300 M.T.; cotton, 20 M.T.; tobacco, 35 M.T.

Food crops -- Millet, 92,256 M.T.; maize, 11,200 M.T.; rice, 4,917 M.T.; fonio, 200 M.T.; yams, 1,000 M.T.; manioc, 2,600 M.T.; potatoes, 1,506 M.T.; sweet potatoes, 3,810 M.T.; beans and onions, 15,200 M.T.; peas, 8,420 M.T.

[34]

Ségou

Exports -- Peanuts, 10,000 M.T.; rice, 6,000 M.T.; kapok, 600 M.T.; karite almonds, 1,000 M.T.; butter, 100 M.T.; gum, 20 M.T.

Production of the Niger Office -- Rice, 10,000 M.T.; cotton, 1; 300 M.T.

Food crops -- Millet, 15,400 M.T.; maize, 1,000 M.T.; fonio, 4,200 M.T.; peas, 2,600 M.T.; beans, 1,600 M.T.

Bougouni

Exports -- Karite butter, 100 to 600 M.T.; peanuts, 500 M.T.; millet, 1,000 M.T.; wax.

Food crops -- Millet, 40,000 M.T.; fonio, 10,000 M.T.; rice, 6,000 M.T.; maize, 5,000 M.T.; peanuts, manioc, yams, sweet potatoes. (Charts on following pages.)

II. Animal Husbandry

A. Methods of Stock Raising

439 The Bambara are a sedentary, agricultural people; they have a symbiotic relationship with the Somono and Bozo, who are fishermen and sailors exclusively, and with other semi-nomadic peoples like the Peul who are shepherds.

561 and religious life). The young men of the same *soli* form what is called a *flambolo*. Three consecutive classes of *flambolo* form a *flanton*. The women have a parallel organization. Each *fulani* is a *ton-den* (child of the *ton*), with a corresponding association.

561 241 476 The association's role, apart from the seasonal celebrations and the copious feasts, accompanied by a great deal of drinking, is that of a mutual aid society and of a veritable village work cooperative. It is organized, administered, and articulated with a view to the agricultural work. The chief, *kariku*, expedites current business, with the assistance of a *syere* (witness, deputy). He has a treasurer who receives offerings and makes payments, the *femmaraba* (he who preserves things), plus an honorary president and an adviser, chosen from among the notables and delegated by them; he must supervise the society and orient its activities.

431 824 This social organism rests, in the last analysis, on the exchanges of services initiated and supported by the *kariku*. He sees to it that help is forthcoming to a man making the customary work payments in the fields of his parents-in-law or future parents-in-law (in exchange for food and drink furnished by the parents-in-law to these *ton-den*). In like manner, a farmer asks the *kariku* for help in clearing a field of brush. This request is made through an intermediary or a *sènanku* who [58] accompanies the request with ten kola nuts. The chief accepts the present and calls his council into session to study the affair technically and to fix the salary. The same procedure is followed for the winter weeding, which calls for rapid completion, as well as for building dams, irrigating canals, paths, roads suitable for carting, etc.

An analogous system exists for the female *kari*, for sowing the crops as well as for gathering the harvest, mutual domestic aid, etc. The two groups collaborate for the seasonal celebrations.

643 d. *The Fama*. -- We see that the canton is a grouping formed under the authority and influence of a dominant family. Its unity is determined by political, social, and religious laws which regulate it. The *fa* or head of the dominant family becomes the *Fama*, that is, the patriarch, chief of the canton. He then often renounces the administration of the *faya*, which he turns over to his second (*syere*),

b. Organization of Work

●241 Work on the land is the only kind of work suitable for free
621 men, for to work the land is to purify it. All agricultural operations
[622 are set in motion by the dugu-tigi and are regulated by the fa who
591] assigns tasks by age classes. Each member of the community must
work for it every day, except Monday and Thursday, from dawn to
about 4:30 p.m. He may be helped, or even replaced, by his children and his captives. The rest of the time he may work for himself in his personal field or in the little fields situated along the water courses and the rivers, which are not periodically redistributed and are considered almost as personal and hereditary property. The fruit of this labor constitutes the personal savings of the community member.

316 The exploitation of the subsoil is governed by other rules
which we still know only imperfectly. Like the soil, the subsoil be-
423 longs to the master of the land. Iron ore was extracted solely by the
[328] blacksmith who paid the master of the land a rent in the form of hoes
or axes. To exploit the gold mines, thousands of natives went in family groups to the placers at the beginning of the dry season. [63] The location of the placers was determined by the priests and changed every year. The men dig multiple small holes very close to each other, which may go very deep depending on the depth of the barren layer. When the calabashes of gold-bearing earth are brought up, the women wash the earth. The placers are abandoned at the beginning of the rains after three or four months of exploitation. Before the French occupation, gold was the exclusive property of the Fama and could in no case be the object of commerce. To-
[439] day, gold is generally sold at the placers to Syrian, native, or
European merchants, who have established veritable shops at the mining centers, shops which contain everything necessary for the miner's life.

463 The exercise of a profession other than the cultivation of the
554 land is reserved to artisans who are accorded the insulting name of
nyaman-kala, for only work on the land is noble work. These artisans form separate families in every Sudanese society, which has caused Europeans to call them, improperly, people of caste. They are divided into independent guilds.

462

Men	Women	Common Tasks
Making arms and tools		
Hunting		
Agriculture: Clearing brush, hoeing, harvesting, constructing granaries and drying sheds.	Agriculture: Collaboration with men on these tasks; the men do work requiring strength. Sowing.	Agriculture
Handicrafts: Stone, wood, iron, copper, basketry, weaving, sewing.	Handicrafts: Basketry, plaiting or spinning, pottery, dyeing scents, perfumes.	
Construction and maintenance of the house	Construction and maintenance of the house	Construction and maintenance of house
Commerce	Commerce	Commerce
Raising domestic animals	Preparation of food, plus wood and water	
	Keeping house	
	Raising poultry	

241
462 Labouret hastens to add that there is close collaboration everywhere. Thus, when the husband fells the trees and cuts them up, the [68] wife and daughters pile the branches and burn them in a corner of the field. Then, when the earth has been turned by the men with their large hoes, the women break up the clods, level and loosen the soil for sowing.

241 After the men have cleared the big weeds, the women come
462 along to finish up. At harvest time, the women and children chase
[411] the birds from the fields with loud cries, sling shots, and by heating
bamboo on a hard rock to cause a detonation. All chase the spar-
[401] rows, partridges, guinea-fowls ... Harvesting is done together ...

In addition, by the side of the men's fields there are little women's fields where the women cultivate sorrel, okra, eggplant, tomatoes, beans, and all the condiments. The accessory crops of the women are the raro, bananas, manioc, sometimes rice or peanuts (1).

1. Labouret, Paysans noirs [Black Peasants].

241 Naturally, the work varies according to the social order. The
565 Bambara divide themselves into free men, people of caste, and,
567 formerly, slaves, all having a chief at their head. All members of
the community must work the land; in fact, the poor work more than the slaves. The more fortunate do little work; they formerly directed and controlled the work of the slaves, today that of the agricultural workers.

C. Legal Procedure: Inheritance, Land Ownership

692 In Bambara country today, as in all of French West Africa, justice is dispensed by two tribunals: that presided over by a justice of the peace for important affairs, and that presided over by the administrator for other cases. The justice of the peace renders justice following the French code; the administrator according to local custom. A chamber of the Court of Appeals of Dakar is represented at Bamako, whose jurisdiction includes the Sudan and Niger territories. The Assize Court holds a session at Bamako, which also possesses an inferior court. Justices of the peace of wide jurisdiction are found at Kayes, Gao, Mopti, Ségou, Sikasso, Bougouni; other justices of the peace with wide jurisdiction have been created and will soon take up their functions.

One easily imagines the conflicts of principles and method which may arise between the two sorts of tribunals have just indicated.

a. Urbanization

166 177 369 The Bambara, who are essentially agriculturalists, have no cities. All the cities owe their origin to the Whites and were created for commerce, administration, industry, banking, and education. But the city has exercised the same attraction on the Black peasant as it has on the French one. This taste for city life has been made easier to indulge by the creation of railroads and roads. Cities, such as Bamako, are invaded by ever-increasing populations who leave the bush and the close-knit community to create a de-tribalized mob which adapts more or less well to a European economic organization. Thus, the industrial equipping of Africa tends to transform the native artisanry, because the industrial establishments of the European type require a specialized [77] labor force that will adopt French work methods and economic life. It is in this way that the railroad yards at Thiès were created, as well as the industries of construction in solid materials, the quarries, the brickyards, the limeworks of Bamako, Mopti, and Ségou, and the food industries: icehouses, waterworks, the cotton gins of Koutiala and Sikasso. Industrialization is just beginning in the Bambara country, but the European form of economic organization has spread widely even where native work methods exist, leading, as a result, to economic individualism.

b. Development of Large-scale Agricultural Exploitation

177 241 473 Agricultural exploitation itself has been radically transformed in certain regions. Side by side with food crops which vary according to the needs of the community and which are cultivated in the traditional extensive manner, an intensive monoculture of money crops has developed with peanuts, rice, cotton, etc. This has been made possible by modern techniques of agricultural exploitation: experimental gardens, centers of scientific research, creation of pilot sections, scientific management of the plains. This development has led to the creation of such organizations as the C. G. O. T. in Casamance, a company for diversified economy whose initial capital was underwritten by the State and by professional processors of fatty substances. This company clears and de-stumps the great forest brush with heavy tractors, bulldozers, treedozers, and strumpers [de-stumpers ?] in

177 order to cultivate peanuts, sunflowers, millet, and cotton. Every
241 three years, the company distributes green manure crops in order to
473 reconstitute the soil's humus. Moreover, the company has created
veritable villages to house its technicians and the colonists.

177 Other organizations, such as the Niger Office, have charge
241 of the basic water control of the central delta (dams, large canals).
312 Thanks to the creation of a network of waterways, to the clearing
433 and de-stumping of lands, and to the development of general equipment (processing factories, workshops, stores, dwellings, road network), the end of 1949 saw 11,000 hectares of rice fields, with a yield of 18 quintals of paddy and a commercial production of 8,000 metric tons of husked rice. Six thousand hectares have been prepared either for growing cotton (2,000 hectares), for growing rice for food (1,000 hectares), or for lying fallow (3,000 hectares). These fields
[166] permit the exportation of 360 metric tons of cotton fiber. Twenty-two thousand persons have been settled as colonists. Finally, let us note that the F.I.D.E.S. by its financial support has permitted the development of peanut cultivation in Senegal, of rice in Guinea and the Sudan, of karite in Upper Volta, as well as the creation of several technical schools.

c. Social Consequences

177 This technical evolution has profound repercussions on the
native way of life. We notice the same change in the Bambara
596 peasant as in the Bambara artisan. The large united family which
241 was [78] the cornerstone of agricultural technique tends to split up more and more, even in the regions where the traditional farming methods are still used. The family field, a great deal less carefully tended than in the past, gives way in importance to the individual's field. Moreover, the family field traditionally was at the end of a path bordered by small individual fields where each peasant went to work for himself before and after the collective labor. Today, we see the creation of individual fields in the brush far from the path which leads from the village to the family field, clearly indicating the desire of the individual to separate himself from the large family and to escape the control of the farming chief in order to realize personal benefits for himself, not subject to family inspection.

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Production figures furnished by the Bougouni circle for the year 1950

Crop	Area planted	Average yield per hectare in metric tons	Quantities harvested in metric tons	Metric tons needed for seed	For Food	Available for sale
Millet	60,000	0.500	30,000	1,200	27,000	2,000
Rice	1,500	0.700	1,000	100	800	100
Peanuts	2,500	0.600	1,500	150	350	1,000
Maize	4,000	0.700	2,800	50	2,750	
Fonio	1,000	0.700	700	100	600	
Manioc, sweet potatoes, yams	300	2.000	600		600	
Beans and peas	100	0.800	80	10	70	

Area cultivated . . 69,400

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Industrial Crops

Crop	Hectares planted	Average yield per hectare	Quantities harvested in metric tons	Local Consumption	Seed	Available for sale
Peanuts	2,500	0.600	1,500	150	350	1,000
Native cotton	500	0.150	75	75		
"N'Courala" cotton	60	0.200	12			
Tobacco	750	0.400	300	150		150
Dah[sic], sisal	insignificant					

The Société de Prevoyance [Welfare Society?] has stocked 600 groves with mango trees, cailcedra, and poincianas.

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241 Finally, the breaking up of the family cell is manifest in the increasing number of children who prefer to work as farm laborers far from their home country rather than submit to the tutelage of the farming chief.

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489 The economic transformation proceeds due to electrification (regulation of the great falls near Conakry and those of Sotuba near Bamako) and the creation, alongside the old strategic roads, of commercial roads and bridges to facilitate shipping peanuts, rice, cotton, and millet. The ports and wharfs are being put in order, the railroad network being modernized (increasing the matériel, transforming beds and embankments, repairing the tracks, installing and extending yards, improving the depots, constructing stations, buffets, hotels, cheap housing for the employees). On the Niger, improvements are being made in the river ports of Koulikoro, Ségou, Mopti, Bamako, and Gao, and, on the Senegal, of Kayes and Saint-Louis.

177 Finally, the new economy is accompanied by social accomplishments in the fields of health, education, and urbanization.

d. Chambers of Commerce

Thus, two forms of economic organization exist side by side in Bambara country: on the one hand, the traditional and artisan native organization, and, on the other, the European organization which has shattered the ancient society and has put the local economy of the country within the framework of international economy.

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441 But it is perhaps in the realm of commerce that the influence of European methods has been most felt, particularly in the creation of Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry.

The creation of Chambers of Commerce dates from a decree of the Governor General in 1906. Members are elected for four years and are re-eligible. They are elected by an electoral college made up of the chiefs of French or African commercial establishments. The function of these Chambers is to give the administration advice and information when requested on any question of an economic nature.

The Chambers of Agriculture and Industry have substantially the same organization as the Chambers of Commerce, but in addition they are called on by the governors to group and codify the local customs [79] and usages of an agricultural character. These reports serve as the

b. Pottery

323 Pottery is entirely fashioned and fired by the women of the blacksmiths' caste, masters of the fire. The modelling is done in two ways, either by hollowing a mass of clay with the aid of a cylindrical stone (2), or by rolling a cylinder of clay around a mold. The

2. M. Griaule, Masques dogons [Dogon Masks].

[631]

decoration is generally a double line of chevrons imprinted around the neck and the foot by the potter's twisted bracelet. The firing is done in the open air over a wood fire.

c. The Forge

326 Wood, iron, metals in general, are fashioned by the blacksmiths. The blacksmith's workshop and the objects he makes are simple, but they are rich in symbolic representations. "The forge represents the artisan: the furnace is his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red-hot iron is beaten by the hammer, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and the thunderbolt." (3) With his

3. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

rudimentary tools spread on the ground under a shelter, the artisan forges all farming instruments, the principal one being the hoe. The
412 hoe, [97] according to its shape, is considered to be male or female.
831 The female hoe has a short handle with an ovoid swelling at the end,
[801] into which sticks the point of an iron triangle. The three sides of this triangle are three arcs of a circle; three, symbol of masculinity, represents here the clitoris, the male principle which sustains the
[773 double, the dya, of the woman. (According to myth, it was with the
241] aid of this part of the body that the first being of female sex inaugurated agricultural labors.) The male hoe has a slightly trapezoidal iron part which is attached to the handle in the same manner. The four sides symbolize the femininity of man sustained by the prepuce. Thus,

776 Most frequently these genii are given saraka, but a hen is sacri-
782 ficed each time the wells are cleaned: it is in good taste to do so,
823 and few villages depart from the rule. Once a year a public sacrifice is offered to them, with a degree of formality that varies according to whether the sacrificer is merely the head of a family, the head of a quarter, or the head of the village. Since the women spend a good half of their lives around the wells, they are almost everywhere the ones who provide the materials for the sacrifice.

5. Genii of the Crops

776 When planting time comes, the Bambara, who are farmers above
241 all, blossom out with sacrifices and redden just about everything with
782 blood. The head of the family does not forget the genie of the seed. He offers it a saraka at home and sometimes a sacrifice, and unless he is very old and helpless he appears at the field on the day when the first pinch of seed is consigned to the earth. Before /91/ the /sowing/ is begun a hen's blood must be offered to the genie of fertility, which is responsible for watching over the seed and causing it to sprout and grow, and it is he that makes this offering, unless he has delegated this duty to his eldest son or his brother (the one next after him in seniority).

The departure for the field at planting time has its own unique characteristics. A child (if there is one in the family, obviously) is given the gourd (1) containing the seed, and in the name of the genie the father gives him orders and admonitions. On the way out of the hut the child pays his respects to the shades of his ancestors by placing the gourd on the threshold, and leaves quickly, proud as Artaban. He must be careful not to stop on the way unless he has to, and, above all, he must keep silent so that the spirits that fly here, there, and everywhere remain ignorant of what he is carrying and cannot attack the seeds in the millet grain. Anyone who talks runs a grave

1. A pumpkin cut in two, emptied and dried in the sun.

776 risk of spoiling the crop -- o be gno soun tigné ("it destroys the vitality
● 241 of the seed of the millet grain").

782 These genii do not have special festivals in the course of the year. Their priests, the heads of families, offer them saraka and sacrifices at planting time, and some of them sacrifice a hen in the corner of the field while the crop is sprouting and growing, but that is all.

6. Genii Protectors of Children

It is not until circumcision that Bambara children take part in
889 the mysteries of pagan worship, but they are early prepared for it so
794 that they may be introduced to the law of secrecy which they must
776 strictly adhere to later when they are initiates of an occult sect. At
about the age of seven or eight years, they become affiliated with an
association worshipping the genii responsible for protecting them.
All these sects are alike, differing only in name. On the banks of the
[825] Bani and the Niger, the object of worship is the tauri (toad or frog),
and the croaking of this animal is imitated in their festivals; some
villages have the djara (lion) and imitate its roar by whirling their
[534] slingshots, small boards four fingers wide and one to two centimeters
long, attached to the end of a string. The most widespread /children's
[824] genie/ is n'tomo, which undoubtedly gets its name from the tree in
which it lives (the /92/ jujube tree, n'tomo). It makes children hale
and hearty, preserves them from sickness, defends them against the
invisible little creatures of the bush, against spells and sorcery, and
makes them strong, steadfast, and impervious to suffering.

The confraternity of the n'tomo is modeled after that of the boli. (This is true of both kinds -- for there are two; a white costume is worn to the dance for n'tomo djé and a black costume for n'tomo fign). In order to be admitted one must offer a hen to the child who is head of the n'tomo (the n'tomotigi), prostrate oneself before the tree of the genie, and swear to keep the secret and never to speak of the n'tomo to the uninitiated, especially not to little girls.

782 787 you accept it at my hands." If one of the pieces falls with the pulp on top and the other onto the pulp, there is an affirmative answer from the *dasiri*. The sacrificer bites the kola nut, cuts out with his teeth the piece that contains the seed, and, when he has chewed it a moment, spits the remains onto the bark of the fetish tree.

This procedure, wholly dependent on chance, is often long, for the pieces of kola nut do not always fall in the desired position at the first try. After three failures the crowd ceases to restrain itself and, with gestures and voice, each person intercedes for the unfortunate one. The cries do not stop until the kola nut gives the answer, "I accept and am no longer angry!"

The Semioccult Society of the *Koré*, or *Koté*

794 241 [461] The Bambara are, above all, farmers, and cultivating a field has such great importance in their eyes that for them it alone really deserves the name of work. One who does not handle the pick may be active and skillful, but he is not a worker and one does not say of him: "*A bi ajaké*, he is working." But will the seed that /122/ they consign to the earth in the winter sprout, grow, become large, and ripen? However little one knows the Bambara, one can imagine and understand their fears, for they are surrounded by a band of malicious spirits ever ready to pounce on them. Therefore they heed protectors and helpers, and at planting time they offer something to all, even to the rain. The main fetish to which they appeal is the *koté*, or *koré*, which lives in a tree in the middle of a small grove.

794 796 534 In order to be present at the sacrifices to the *koté*, it is necessary to be initiated and to know the password. This initiation may take place by day, but at least in Bani country, it usually takes place at nightfall when the setting sun takes on a bloody hue. The sons of the genie go in procession to the sacred grove. The *korétigi*, the priest, opens the march, preceded by musicians who beat the *denouba* (1) and the *kingé* (2). With him are the *kârâ ma* ("man of

241 may be set too early, and no amount of advice to be patient will retard it. However, for the millets, fonio, and rice, the visible characters of ripeness are known and respected (opening of the husk in the case of millet, color and bowing of the spike in the case of fonio and rice).

242 824 When a field is exhausted, it is allowed to lie fallow, and another terrain is cleared of brush, sometimes several kilometers from the village. A field is recognized as being exhausted when a variety of plant known as sęgę (Striga senegalensis Benth) appears spontaneously; when the soil is reconstituted and regains its richness, tiękala (Cymbopogon giganteus Benth) and wăgha (Andropogon Gayanus Kunth) appear, which indicates that the field may again be cultivated. Thus, the fields are rotated around the village that cultivates them, 342 following a cycle which may last 20 years. Temporary dwellings are set up near the fields under cultivation, and the farmer lives there during the work with each of his wives in turn.

[29] B. Food Crops

243 The Bambara cultivate food plants and textile plants. Millet is the basic crop in the savanna. The pénicillaires, small millet (Pennisetum typhoïdeum R.), are cultivated very far north. Their types are characterized by the length of their vegetative cycles, which vary from 65 to 140 days. In general, they are sown in a rather light soil at the beginning of the rainy season. The grain is put in the ground, without preliminary working of the soil, in holes one pace apart and a few centimeters deep. A pinch of seed is put in each hole, and one to three subsequent workings are given the soil; the first, 15 days after reaping, the others in July and August. The yield varies from 350 to 1,000 kilograms per hectare.

The sorghums (Sorghum vulgare) include a considerable number of varieties with vegetative cycles varying from 120 to 150 days. M. Vichon has collected 11 samples of sugar sorghums, 132 of late mid-season, 87 early, 138 of transplants. M. Creak divides the sorghums into three types: with full, compact, conical spikes; with elongated spikes and more detached spikelets; with very elongated spikes and with spikelets even more detached from the axis. A third

773 Finally, he occupied himself with agriculture. In particular, he gave men, through the intermediary of the blacksmiths, the eight cereal grains that had been created simultaneously with man but had remained hidden in the sky (1). The eight grains became the basis for subsistence and are fundamental to the human being who carried the symbol of them on his collar-bone (2).

Everything on earth is represented in the water: living beings by their doubles or witnesses, dya; plants and minerals by an exact replica, which enabled Faro to exert constant control over the existence and actions of the beings placed in his power.

He put spirits as his representatives everywhere in charge of watching over the universal order.

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[171] 1. A myth parallel to this can be found among the Dogon (see M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*). It makes the Bambara blacksmith into a civilizing hero, a metamorphosis of Faro, descended from the sky in an ark, *kuru*, and holding in his hand a mass containing the eight cereal grains. See M. Griaule, *L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes*; S. de Ganay, *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, pp. 194-196.

[171 243] 2. The eight grains are as follows: *sañõ*, small millet (*Pennicillaria spicata*); *keninge*, large millet (*Sorghum gambicum*); *kende*, red millet (*Sorghum magaritiferum*); *fini*, fonio (*Digitaria exilis*); *šyõ*, beans (*Vigna maniculata*); *tikaninkuru*, peas; *malo*, rice. The names of the seeds vary, but the same symbols occur among the Dogon. In the Bozo myth, the collar-bone is the receptacle for eight fish, represented by symbols on the forward part of canoes. See G. Dieterlen. *Les Correspondances cosmo-biologiques chez les Soudanais* /Cosmic-Biological Correspondences among the Sudanese/.

326 778 243 The lower compartment contains millet from a field called kongobwona foro, reserved for the needs of the cult of the forge. This land is placed under the guardianship of the patriarch belonging to the Gwonna family, and its upkeep is assured by the community. The seeds are given by each blacksmith to the old man who sows them himself. The work of cultivation and threshing is done communally. The millet is stored in the old man's granary and each blacksmith receives a share. This share is not eaten, but is put aside. From time to time the artisan takes a few seeds which he places as an offering, on his altar, and which remain for a time in the compartment reserved for them; then they are considered to have been eaten by the axe and are removed and replaced by others. Part of the millet is kept as seed for the following year.

326 778 789 Each compartment is open and the blacksmith may insert his fingers; if his earnings are insufficient, he rubs his body and tongue with the hand which he has just dipped into the pocket containing money; the price, set by the spoken word, will not be questioned by the client. If he goes to work in his field, he places his hand into the millet each morning to draw upon the strength it contains and to improve the results of his agricultural work. If he burns himself while working at the forge, he dips his fingers into the third compartment and cools himself in Faro's water. It is this same water which a young artisan must drink at the beginning of his apprenticeship.

326 778 776 The triangular iron, farabye, which constitutes the axe proper is placed under the power of three spirits belonging to the group of air spirits: A gayru who revealed iron to men; Tengu who taught them Faro's supremacy; and Gullé. The first two are the masters of the bellows and direct the work as a whole; the third does their bidding and teaches men the technology of ironwork (1). When the owner of the altar dies, the /121/ axe is removed and placed in the village sanctuary where the ancestral tools are kept. But the remaining objects are inherited by the son. [428]

1. The spirit would have refused to teach the blacksmiths the working of copper and gold, as these two metals belonged to Faro who reserved for himself the right to use them. Since iron was black he had abandoned its use to the spirits of the air.

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243 classification is based on the distinction between the sorghums of ordinary soils and those of inundated soils. The latter are sown in August in nursery beds in fresh non-inundated ground and are transplanted at the end of the rainy season in land exposed by the receding waters. The yields vary from 400 to 1,200 kilograms per hectare.

[252 273] Millet is consumed in the form of flour or is used to make a fermented beverage, dolo, which is something like weak beer.

Wheat is cultivated in the wadies where the water is shallow from November to February. Cultivation is carried out with or without irrigation in seed holes 25 centimeters apart and 4 centimeters deep, where the farmer deposits a pinch of seed (70 kilograms of seeds are necessary per hectare). The harvest is at the end of March at the latest. The average yields are from 1,000 to 1,500 kilograms. The wheats are generally tender and give excellent flours for bread, but this culture is still in the experimental stage.

Rice is cultivated on 80,000 hectares, of which almost half are in the central Delta (Mopti, Macina, Djenné) which constitutes the true rice granary of the territory. Outside of the Delta, the productive regions are: the upper basin of the Niger (Bamako), the lake and post-lake region (from Lake Débo to Ansongo), the region near Guinea (south of Sikasso and Bougouni), and finally 10,000 hectares of irrigated rice of the Niger Office.

Two kinds of rice are cultivated: one, an African rice (Oryza glaberrima) in the Delta, is a floating rice capable of enduring considerable submersion. The other, of Asiatic origin (Oryza saliva) [sic], is cultivated in the upper valley of the Niger and in the valleys of the small water courses. Lastly, a mountain rice which grows on dry ground must be mentioned.

What characterizes native rice culture is the absence of [30] 243 312 hydraulic control. It is a rice culture of submersion, thus very insecure. Since 1944 attempts have been made to end these processes of "wild" submersion. In the upper valley of the Niger where the plains are insufficiently and tardily submerged, rice is sown at the beginning of the rainy season, and when it attains a growth of 20 to 25 centimeters, the water is sent gradually into the plain. When the rice is mature, the water is drawn off into the river through overflow outlets. In the Delta, where the rise of the Niger is utilized directly, regulating works prevent the flood from

[sic] [should be sativa - Analyst]

243 manifesting itself too violently and afterwards hold back the receding
312 waters. In the Sahel, the arrangements affect the plains bordering the Niger, where earthen dikes protect the rice from the floods and also control the tributary lakes where they join the river, holding the receding waters in the lakes, thus permitting transplantation of the rice and preventing the subsiding flood from drowning the plants before harvest. From 1944 to 1949, 101,550 hectares were regulated in this manner in the upper valley, the Delta, and the valley of the Sahel.
243 There is a plan to regulate 331,000 new hectares by 1956. In addition, experiments in mechanical tillage have begun. Up until now two methods of cultivation have been applied.

a. Without burning: the hoed land is prepared in furrows 40 to 50 centimeters apart; the seeding is done in seed holes 25 centimeters apart along the furrows. (1)

1. L'agronomie tropicale [Tropical Agronomy], July-August, 1950. [Ed., Revue d'agronomie tropicale, 1951.]

b. With burning: the wild grasses are pulled up in March and April and gathered in beds 1 meter wide and 3 to 6 meters long. They are lightly covered with earth and then set on fire. At the end of June the mounds are turned by hoe, and the seeds planted in holes 30 centimeters apart and 4 centimeters deep. Fifteen grains are put in each hole, or 45 to 50 kilograms per hectare. The yields vary between 800 and 1,200 kilograms of paddy per hectare.

To these basic crops are added the following early carry-over crops:

The millets. Fonio (Digitaria exilis) is cultivated in the region of Senegambia, and iburu (D. Iburna) in the central sector of the Sudan.

Maize and banana trees south of Bamako. Maize is the most widespread crop after millet. Nevertheless, some maize is imported
[351] from Dahomey. Banana trees are planted around the huts and form a belt around the villages. They are also planted in the small fields which border the water courses. Large bananas are harvested which are picked green and cooked.

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177 Mango trees, recently imported (about fifty years ago), give an excellent yield and are destined to be developed more and more.

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7. Only vegetables whose spiritual essence does not have to be preserved are cooked, "for to cook is to shatter the soul."

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In each village are grown one or several small fields of tomatoes, called "Faro's fields," or "fields of twins." The fruits of these fields are reserved for the worship of the spirit (1).

1. On the site of the ancient village of Soroba, at the edge of a pond located near the present-day village, there are two rectangular fields of tomatoes dedicated to male twins and four square fields dedicated to female twins in the village. Each year the villagers gather at the edge of the pond for a ceremony. The symbolic words relating to twins are recited and a prayer is said, to be followed by ablutions.

The fruit that is harvested is offered to the spirit by squashing it on a neighboring tree trunk.

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/49/ All metals belong to Faro. The seven /sic/ principal metals are the following: copper (male), brass (female), gold, silver, tin, and iron. Copper and brass come from the fifth sky (koblenkaba). They descend at each thunderclap and, along with the "thunderstones," penetrated into the soil. They were discovered by a diviner at the bottom of a pond that had dried up because of a broken taboo. Because of their divine origin, copper and brass represent "Faro's sounds." [301] These sounds twist themselves around the spiralled copper or brass earrings that everyone wears and penetrate the eardrum, thus making it possible to hear words. Gold plays a part in the building of certain altars (boli) to which it confers strength and stability.

The sacrifices made with or on copper, brass, or gold have a restraining influence on the spirit for they are of his own essence.

No woman wearing copper, brass, or gold jewelry, may cross the Niger without opening her luggage out of deference to the spirit, for "all ornaments belong to him and often must be returned to him after death.

[784] It is taboo to bring metal into contact with cow's butter, an oily substance that does not allow water to penetrate.

323 Faro. These places have as taboos the wearing of indigo and pregnancy.
317 No pregnant woman may approach them without provoking the death
784 of the child she is carrying, thus ultimately impairing the durability
of pottery and seriously harming the society of which she is a member.

An annual sacrifice is offered by the potters at the end of the winter
323 season when, the level of the river having dropped and the banks
796 lowered, they return for the first time to collect the clay which they
need. Dressed in white, they bring out their hoes and the sickle with which they cut the damp grasses used to cover the pots on the hearth during firing, while the head of the society carries the altars. The objects are placed in a pile on a bed of *nyama* fibers used for separating them from the ground. The throats of two red roosters are cut open over this pile while a prayer is addressed to Faro, requesting authorization to take the /127/ *mbogo pasa* during the year, and seeking his protection and help for the work of the society's membership.

The potters make an annual offering to their altars on the day their husbands sacrifice on the forges. Immediately after the libations, they come and squat before the forge altar on which they throw some ten cowrie shells. They then go to the *ñintin*, undress, and present to it their genitals from the front and from the back, this gesture being an indication of their submission to the spirits of pottery which are the same as those of the forge. Still naked, they circle the pile of ashes left from the last firing and light a big bonfire; this fire attracts the bee eaters, *tatugu kononi*, which circle over the flames. They shoot some down with a sling, cook them, and reduce them to ashes which they mix with karite oil; they rub their bodies with this mixture before purifying themselves by going through the flames. As an offering to the spirits, they then throw pots on the fire which they put out before returning home.

The potters cultivate together a small ritual field in which a fe-
323 male twin sows white peas, *tikaninkuru*, symbols of their right hand.
244 The produce of this harvest is eaten communally on a mound,
walawala, after an offering of several seeds is made to the altars and tools. A potter whose tools are broken by the fire must go through a purification with the products of this field.

326 The wives of blacksmiths, whether or not they are potters, are
304 skilled in practicing excision on young girls.

244 The Bambara groundnut ripens its seed underground. It is cultivated from the southern border of the Sahara to the Cape, but its primary home [31] is in the Sudan where the greatest number of cultivated varieties is found. (1)

1. Jacques Félix, for a study on the Bambara groundnut (Voandzeia subterrena), Agriculture tropicale [Tropical Agriculture], January-February, 1950. [Ed., Revue d'agronomie tropicale.]

Manioc and yams at certain points along the Niger escape the devastations of the Acridiidae insects which can not attack their roots.

Other crops are used to balance the diet: condiments and
[263] fleshy plants, such as, pimento, sesame, various labiates, okra,
[177] sorrel, squash, peanuts (imported in the sixteenth century from
America). Peanuts, to thrive, need loose, light soil. They are sown
in June at the beginning of the rainy season and are harvested in
[252] November. The natives eat them roasted; they make oil and soap
from them and give the stalks to their animals. Cultivation is entirely in the hands of the natives. In Senegal manpower is insufficient;
[464] before 1940 thousands of Sudanese workers were called upon each
[167] season, particularly Bambara, the "Navétanes," who hired themselves out to the farmers of Senegal in order to acquire the textiles and other products they needed. The peanut is an export product. Also cultivated are nitrogenous vegetables (Bambara groundnuts, black-eyed peas, dolichos, kissis, etc.) and the numerous and varied amaranths, tomatoes, eggplants, gourds, and, since 1940, potatoes which are grown more and more.

222 Finally, we will cite: a) the gathering of wild plants which
263 serve as condiments: the fruits of the baobab (Adansonia digitata), of the corchorus, of the Parkia biglobosa [néré], and of the karite tree (Butyrospermum), formerly called the "butter tree," which is cultivated to some degree -- the fruit is something like that of the palm tree and contains a core whose kernels enclose a fatty matter, shea butter, valued for making soap, as an illuminant, for the toilet;
222 b) the gathering of scarcity foods: baobab, cenchrus, cassia, the kola nut (Sterculia acuminata). Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;

824 considered as the founding ancestor transformed into a tree. The old
men of the village come to the tree each year, leaning their backs
[844] against its trunk, while the placentae of newly delivered women are
hung on it (1).

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1. The *balanza* groves around the Bambara settlements have attracted the attention of botanists. M. G. Roberty, in *Les Associations végétales de la vallée moyenne du Niger* /The Vegetable Associations of the Middle Nigerian Valley/, has studied their agricultural role: "The Dumosaeptum arboreitoides, cultivation under the *balanzas.* Artificial, well defined landscape. Trees losing their leaves during the rainy season, regaining them during the dry season, thorny, regularly spaced, but planted in the distant past. The *Acacia albida* loses its leaves in June and grows them again in December, thus furnishing shade in the dry season and humus in the rainy season. The Dumosaeptum owes it its permanent villages.... The date of the introduction of this very useful tree into the western Sudan remains shrouded in mystery, as is the time and method of its dissemination over cultivated fields. It is probable that the *Acacia albida* comes from eastern Africa, somewhere south of the equator. How did it come as far as the Bambara country without losing its original seasonal cycle? What sultan, or what agronomer of genius forced its multiplication around the Bambara villages? These questions remain, for the time being, without answers. The tales of the first European conquerors seem to have proved that numerous "*tatas,*" the enormous citadels of red mud, were enclosed by living *balanzas* fences with joined trunks... It is probable that their military use has preceeded everywhere their agricultural use... We have very little information concerning

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the latter... We are familiar enough with the Bambara agricultural customs, but none of them would have brought about the spread of the balanzas, their regular spacing in the fields, and their protection from goats. In almost all the cases we have observed, the balanzas are of considerable age, development and density. There lies in this subject a fine dissertation topic for a young ethnographer and naturalist." (pp. 135, 136).

The myths of the Bambara answer M. Roberty's questions.

/39/ Mousso Koroni

776 Mousso Koroni is the impure earth; she symbolizes all that is opposed to light: darkness, night, witchcraft. She is also the symbol of rebellion, disorder, and impurity. Pemba pursued her in vain in his effort to take back what he had given her: the "words" she had received from him were divulged to men in spite of him.

Although no cult honors her and no sacrifice is offered her, her name is cited in various ceremonies and mentioned in the chants; her actions are recalled by certain gestures in the ritual.

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On the other hand, she is the initiator of the separation of the sexes realized in the human body by the removal of the foreskin and the clitoris, an operation which after her betrayal, she performed on all those she met. In this way, she placed them in the same state of rupture in which she found herself: a female principle as opposed to Pemba, the male principle. In addition, she is present in every human being in the form of an evil force, the wanzo, which she had communicated to all those she approached, and of which one must rid oneself through the methods she herself inaugurated: circumcision and excision (1).

1. See p. 95.

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Mousso Koroni is also the originator of certain agricultural techniques which she taught men, and every year, in certain villages, she

243 manifesting itself too violently and afterwards hold back the receding
312 waters. In the Sahel, the arrangements affect the plains bordering the
Niger, where earthen dikes protect the rice from the floods and also
control the tributary lakes where they join the river, holding the re-
ceding waters in the lakes, thus permitting transplantation of the rice
and preventing the subsiding flood from drowning the plants before
harvest. From 1944 to 1949, 101,550 hectares were regulated in this
manner in the upper valley, the Delta, and the valley of the Sahel.
343 There is a plan to regulate 331,000 new hectares by 1956. In addi-
tion, experiments in mechanical tillage have begun. Up until now
two methods of cultivation have been applied.

a. Without burning: the hoed land is prepared in furrows 40 to 50 centimeters apart; the seeding is done in seed holes 25 centimeters apart along the furrows. (1)

b. With burning: the wild grasses are pulled up in March and April and gathered in beds 1 meter wide and 3 to 6 meters long. They are lightly covered with earth and then set on fire. At the end of June the mounds are turned by hoe, and the seeds planted in holes 30 centimeters apart and 4 centimeters deep. Fifteen grains are put in each hole, or 45 to 50 kilograms per hectare. The yields vary between 800 and 1,200 kilograms of paddy per hectare.

To these basic crops are added the following early carry-over crops:

The millets. Fonio (*Digitaria exilis*) is cultivated in the region of Senegambia, and *iburu* (*D. Iburna*) in the central sector of the Sudan.

Maize and banana trees south of Bamako. Maize is the most
widespread crop after millet. Nevertheless, some maize is imported
[351] from Dahomey. Banana trees are planted around the huts and form a
belt around the villages. They are also planted in the small fields
which border the water courses. Large bananas are harvested which
are picked green and cooked.

245 Mango trees, recently imported (about fifty years ago), give
177 an excellent yield and are destined to be developed more and more.

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1. *L'agronomie tropicale* [Tropical Agronomy], July-August, 1950. [Ed., *Revue d'agronomie tropicale*, 1951.]

Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;
222 [276] 782 787 their caffeine content makes them a stimulant and energizer. The Bambara use seven kinds of kola nuts in their sacrificial and divinatory rites: 1. Dangoro (red nut); 2. Geleworo (white nut); Sosokuworo (a red nut pointed at one end); 4. Flaniworo (yellow kola); 5. Worodanda (kola without opening) which has no apparent cleft where it may be split open; 6. Bassiworo (a dark red, bitter nut); 7. Ryeworo (nut of light and indeterminate color). (This list is given us by G. Dieterlen in her Essai sur la religion Bambara [Essay on the Bambara Religion]).

252 To prepare kola nuts, they are placed in baskets of very coarse mesh lined with leaves that are moistened every four or five days.

245 Among cultivated trees, other than banana, mango, lemon, orange, pineapple trees [ananas, may be a kind of pine; the pineapple is not a tree fruit], etc., one must mention the Acacia albida, which plays a large role in Bambara mythology. In the dry season, it is used as fodder for cattle.

[32] C. Textile Crops

248 Side by side with these food crops, the Bambara cultivate textile plants which they use in addition to the wild textile plants. Among the principal ones, we shall point out the da (Hibiscus cannabinus) whose fibers are used by fishermen to make their nets. [227 289] It does not rot and is a possible rival of jute. The labor to exploit it, pulling up the stalks, retting, extraction of the fibers, is done in the dry season, when many hands are available. (1)

1. G. Spitz, L'Ouest africain français [The French West African]. [Ed., L'Ouest africain, A.O.F. et Togo; The West African, French West Africa and Togo.]

Cotton, which grows spontaneously in many places, is cultivated near the villages as an annual plant; it is a perennial plant which renews itself every four or five years. During the cultivation cycle, it is grown between millet and maize. The harvesting is [288] done by women; it is picked out and spun by women, but it is woven

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248 286 into narrow bands by weavers [men] who make clothes from it in unbleached, indigo-blue, yellow, or black fabrics. At the present time, after numerous attempts at improvement since the occupation, [654] seeds selected according to the zones of cultivation are distributed to the farmers, and the administration encourages industrial cotton cultivation in irrigated regions, as well as mechanical spinning and weaving.

248 [177] Sisal is an agave of Mexican origin. The long, thick, pointed leaves, after undergoing a series of industrial operations including mechanical extraction of the fibers, yields very strong textile fibers suitable for cordage, rope making, rug manufacture, canopies, etc.

Kapok (Eriodendron anfractuosum) until a few years ago was merely gathered, but now plantations have been created. The fruit is in the form of capsules containing seeds enveloped in a vegetal wadding. In one year the kapok tree can furnish 30 kilograms of fibers used in mattress-making, hat-making ...

D. Agricultural Tools

241 Bambara farming tools are very simple. The hoe is almost the only agricultural instrument used. There are several kinds of hoe, particularly in the Bougouni region: the tyerengu, 0.50 meters wide, with a straight handle (chiefly used by the Sénoufo); the n'gu kala, 0.30 meters wide, with a curved handle. These two are used for digging, scraping, and banking. The flotton, from 0.10 to 0.20 meters wide and with a handle made from a forked branch, is used for the second dressing of the earth and for weeding. (When the weeds are too big, the weeding is done by hand). These hoes oblige the peasant to work stopped over. Let us also mention the axe, dyeli, which serves to cut shrubs and the branches of trees in clearing land, the machete, and a small pickaxe with a hoe handle, the yalo.

[33] Millet spikes are harvested with the aid of a special small knife to cut the stalk into pieces. Finally, the threshing of the ears is done with large bent sticks having round handles and flat ends.

[533] [461] Agricultural labors, tillage and threshing, are undertaken collectively following the cadence indicated by an instrumentalist. Work in the fields is generally done by starting at the bottom of a slope and working up, so the rain will wash off the weeds. The

BA
773 tools and the throwing weapon were made. Then, unfired pottery
and weaving were invented; and men finally came to know stone
tools, iron and the forge. The technique of making dwellings
seems to have developed more slowly.

a. Fishing

BA
BO
226 Side by side with populations who specialize in the art of fish-
463 ing, such as the Bozo or the Somono caste, all the Bambara fish in
564 the [96] rivers or watercourses in the neighborhood of their dwellings.
A detailed study has been made by J. Daget (1). The Somono, who

are the caste of Bambara fishermen, use traps and nets for fishing;
the Bozo remain faithful rather to harpoons and small nets. They are
BA the ones who almost always make the pirogues, for they alone may
BO enter in rapport with the spirit of the water, Faro. The nets are of
286 knotted mesh made with a weaver's shuttle, sia, and a cylindrical
227 mold, pako. The band of the net, as it is being made, is nearly
always attached to a wooden bridge especially conceived for this
purpose, the kale or dio soyo kala, a regular tetrahedron whose edges
BA are about 20 centimeters long, one of which is prolonged by a handle
BO 1.50 meters long. The fisherman, seated on the ground, puts the
[283 bridge before him, keeping the handle close to his leg. The fibers
824] used in netmaking are da (Hibiscus cannabinus), kie (Figna unguiculata),
cotton, and now European thread.

BO The Bozo construct weirs from cut and joined tree branches;
226 the weirs assume several different forms according to the regions and
BO the snares used. Fish are used for human consumption; they are eaten
●BA fresh, grilled, fried or boiled, or preserved by smoking or drying. Oil,
●251 used for cooking and as a lubricant, is extracted from certain fish,
252 such as the tineni.

BA Fishing in Bambara villages is done communally under the
226 direction of a fishing chief at the time the waters recede. Precise
rules of fishing rights and of rents due the masters of the waters are
respected everywhere.

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1. Jacques Daget, "La pêche dans le delta central du Niger" [Fishing in the Central Delta of the Niger], Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. XIX (1949), No. 1.

342 shovel. A coping of bricks is then laid out around the roof, leaving
room for the gutters which spill into the streets. These houses may
be topped with a second roof, a thatched cone. The four chief
timbers are set at the four angles of the house. There is a door in
the first ceiling, and precious goods or objects are kept in this part
of the house. As in the round huts, the door always opens to the
south.

The outside of the houses are plastered with earth mixed with
[237] cow dung; on the inside, the floor and lower part of the walls are
daubed with black earth mixed with fresh cow manure and bark from
[824] the jumbo tree (Napoleona Heudelotii); the upper walls and the ceiling
are covered with white river clay. Where the two colors meet,
[531] lines of festoons traced with the finger symbolize the descent of the
third Word. On the white walls are painted ladders, calabash spoons,
animsla, signs conveying [102] the worldly situation of the owner
as well as the soul of the artist.

[356] The periphery of the entrance door is daubed with fresh cow
[769] dung every 15 days, and more liberally with rotted cow dung once
a year before the rains. This custom is linked to ancestor worship.

Canari [earthenware vessels] containing certain plants are
353 buried under the bed of the head of the family; other plants and
352 juice from roots are hidden under the women's beds. The boli are
hooked to the roofing of the houses for they must touch neither earth,
water, nor fire. Nets, diakumadjulu, are hung from the ceiling;
they hold clothes or calabashes for the food; mats or animal skins
are spread on the ground; beds, different-sized calabashes, and stools
complete the furnishings. The different huts belonging to one family
351 are surrounded by a wall that opens into the vestibule of a hut with
342 two doors, oriented north-south. This is where the head of the
family receives strangers. In the inside court are found hearths made
[354] of three stones, mortars for millet, and chicken coops, a sort of
small square hut made of clay mixed with straw. The granaries,
343 constructed on piles, have the form of round huts. They are divided
251 into four parts, where the four principal grains are kept: millet,
rice, fonio, ground nuts. Some grains may be kept together in the
same compartment, for example, millet and ground nuts. Certain
granaries, bonio, are veritable cigar-shaped pots made by the blacksmiths'
wives. When the bonio is finished, it is cut into sections

343 which are dried. Then it is reassembled without sealing the pieces
251 together, and as the level of the provisions goes down, the unnecessary sections are taken off. The kitchens are situated to the west of the rooms.

Arrangement of the huts in a concession. The chief's hut is
342 always to the east, for he must see the sun rise. His hut is often
361 quadrangular and has several rooms. The women's huts are generally round; each has its kitchen situated to the west and closed by a separate lock. Private shower rooms are reserved for husbands and
514 wives. Privy cabinets with two holes, one for urine and one for stool, are stopped up and condemned when they are full.

312 Finally, the well is sunk in the middle of the court or else in the immediate proximity of the concession. Water is drawn directly with a calabash fixed to a long rope.

Sometimes individual huts are constructed on piles for pro-
342 tection against mosquitoes at night; the only opening is a trap door in the floor by which the hut is entered.

g. Tombs

764 An old custom had the family heads buried in their huts. The Fama were buried in the courts of their fortified palaces, to the northwest. Babies were buried near their mothers' huts, for their return was awaited. At the present time the Bambara are buried in cemeteries following Moslem or animist custom.

[103] The brotherhood priests dig the graves; tombs may be
767 individual or collective. Monteil (Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta]) describes a chief's tomb: the vault has the form of a parallelepiped; the lower base is one meter wide and two long, the upper base three wide and two long, and a vertical partition of 1. 50 meters forms a right angle with the bases.

In Ouassoulou the custom was to dig a common tomb of several chambers for the whole family. A square entrance about two meters high and two wide led into a narrow corridor that opened on a first chamber reserved for children; another corridor connected the first chamber with a second, larger one reserved for women and for adult males; from this a third corridor led to a last chamber, a smaller one for heads of the family. An oil lamp was placed at the

326 184 Taboos Provided with vital force and a soul, ni, the forge, a living being, is surrounded by taboos aimed at protecting its material and spiritual integrity.

These taboos, numbering seven, are peculiar to the forge and to the altars which it contains; they concern not only the /123/ blacksmiths, but also his clients, the passers-by, whatever sex they may belong.

[252] 1. None may cook meat on the fire of the forge; it would be equivalent to "eating the meat of the Soba spirits." To break this rule deprives the fire of its strength and causes the abdomen of the person breaking the taboo to swell (1).

> 1. It is said of the culprit: soko dyeni bala, fa ta sababu yalla: "he is full of meat cooked on the fire of the forge."

2. No insult may be uttered near the forge, particularly if it is of a sexual nature (2). This would be equivalent to insulting the fire;

> 2. Neni teke fã nda la: "Insults are not to be spoken at the door of the forge."

the flame would waver and, despite the bellows, no heat would rise from the hearth.

[201] 3. The sole of the foot and the palm of the hand are never presented to the fire, for the forge is alive and just as these same gestures made towards another human being would bring about physical disorders, so the various parts of the forge are vulnerable and may break (the hammer or anvil) or tear (the membrane of the bellows) (3).

> 3. Se n[illegible]ege tere te jira fa na: "The tere of the sole of the foot must not be presented to the forge."

4. Any quarrel or misunderstanding disturbs the forge, upsets it, and harms the work (4).

> 4. Dadyuguya, filibatya, kunasirinlenya, konodyuguya te kȩ fã nda la: "Meanness,

Pottery

323 773 The ancient Bambara did not know about pottery. At the time they lived in caverns, they let their meat dry in the sun on the rocks. Next, they manufactured receptacles by hollowing out stones, of which certain unused millstones /125/ seen today are copies. When they had invented fire, they cooked meat by spitting it with skewers of green sunzun wood and by exposing it to flames and live coals.

Later, they shaped and dried vessels of coarse clay, imitating the hollowed-out stones. One of these vessels, which was exposed to the fire in order to cook the food it contained, was observed to have changed color, hardened, and become more resistant. In this way they developed the technology of making pottery at a time when they still had only wooden tools.

323 326 778 575 Since this technology is related to the invention of fire, the wives of the blacksmiths were the first to practice it (1). Today they form a society (tŏ) in each village and own many altars entrusted to the care of the head of the society.

The principal altar, the dyo kala, which represents the thumb of the potters, is made of wood carved in the shape of a thumb and engraved with symbolic lines. To learn her trade, each initiate is lightly touched on the head with it. The head of the society spills her blood over it in the case of a broken taboo affecting the society. But its principal function is to be the receptacle for the spiritual forces of the group: upon a member's death, this object, placed upon the corpse, gathers up the soul which escapes from the body.

● [252] In certain villages, the pots with holes, ñintin, used for cooking couscous, are placed near the village upon the pile of ashes from the great hearth where the pots are fired (see Pl. IV, a); they also serve as altars at the time when the potters are consecrated.

323 561 575 Since her childhood the potter, following the example of her seniors, practices kneading and shaping little pots, bokofani (literally, little clay pots). After excision at the required age, she joins

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1. The different techniques of pottery making were supposedly revealed to the village of Gwondougou (see p. 155) by the Soba spirits of the crossroads.

364 the chief throws dust three times to the four cardinal points. The
778 masker then stands in the wind in such a way as to receive the smoke;
the chief and the members crouch in line behind him with their mouths
796 open to inhale better. When the wind changes its direction they all
move to continue this fumigation, *wušuli*, which constitutes a purification as well as an increment of forces. At the moment the fire is almost out, the most courageous of the participants stamps on it in order to assimilate better the *nyama* which it exudes. The ashes,
[804] gathered by the chief, are distributed, the unit of measurement being
the gourd *mure*. An important share goes to the *nyama boli*, another is given as an offering to Faro, and a third is distributed among the members.

Several days later, the group goes to the river bank to the sound of drums beating out the *murumuruw foli* (literally, rhythm of the refuse); they throw the ashes reserved for Faro into the water and, continuing to dance, return to the village.

364 Those ashes given to the members are used to prepare the potass
778 which is mixed into the millet cake, the daily food of the Bambara,
and which will make the members of the family share in the powers
252 contained in the *nyamanto*.

364 The eating of this mixture closes the cycle of the transfer of forces,
which were temporarily communicated to the refuse by the individuals,
778 then recovered by Faro, and finally redistributed to the social body.

III. Rain Rites

789 At the time the first work is done in the fields, a drawing is made
241 with millet mash upon the tree of the Kworè in the shape of a lozenge
inscribed within a rectangle, which represents "the great fire which issued /204/ from the cardinal angles" at the time of their creation. While this is being done, the following words are spoken: "The four elbows (the lozenge) are the fire of the angles; here is the anniversary of the Kworè." The clearing of the field or the first plowing always symbolizes the very first clearing obtained through fire.

During the month of May, the members of the Kworè society make
789 sacrifices upon their altars before the first rumbling of thunder in
796 order to purify the first sky where clouds are formed from the impure
794 passage of Mousso Koroni. The chief gathers the members about the
tree and recites the following prayer:

857 "dog" and "the sexual parts of a man," and it seems evident
831 that the expression n-Tomo-ulu should be taken in the latter
195 sense. This is all the more likely since in the similar organization among the Khassonké the same apparatus is called khe-fengo, literally, "thing of a man," that is, "sexual parts of a man."

857 The great festival of the association takes place every year after the harvest and does not differ essentially from the
796 one celebrated at the same time by all the brotherhoods. It involves offerings and sacrifices to the genie-protector, communion by the n-Tomo-den' at a corporate banquet, and the admission of new members. The following is a detailed description. [238]

At the instigation of the n-Tomo-tigi, the brotherhood's field has been harvested and to the grain collected has been added whatever the boys could obtain from their families or friends by any means, even theft. From this millet the n-Tomo-
[273] tigi has had dlo (beer) prepared, which is drunk in great quantities on such occasions. The "elders" (koro-u), relatives, and friends can be counted on to send their contributions in kind.

Each n-Tomo-den' is given a little outfit appropriate to the occasion. The ceremonial costume is put in order; the dloki and trousers are washed and ironed, if need be, and the mask is rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu) to give it gloss.

On the day set, everything is in readiness. Many gourds of dege (1) and to (2), numerous jars of beer (dlo), and also some kola nuts have been assembled, along with sacrificial victims.

857 The n-Tomo-den', each leading a chicken on a string,
796 go to the meeting place in single file, with the n-Tomo-tigi
782

● [258]

1. Dege is made by putting coarsely ground millet into a small quantity of water.

2. A native mush.

243 classification is based on the distinction between the sorghums of ordinary soils and those of inundated soils. The latter are sown in August in nursery beds in fresh non-inundated ground and are transplanted at the end of the rainy season in land exposed by the receding waters. The yields vary from 400 to 1,200 kilograms per hectare.

● [252 273] Millet is consumed in the form of flour or is used to make a fermented beverage, dolo, which is something like weak beer.

Wheat is cultivated in the wadies where the water is shallow from November to February. Cultivation is carried out with or without irrigation in seed holes 25 centimeters apart and 4 centimeters deep, where the farmer deposits a pinch of seed (70 kilograms of seeds are necessary per hectare). The harvest is at the end of March at the latest. The average yields are from 1,000 to 1,500 kilograms. The wheats are generally tender and give excellent flours for bread, but this culture is still in the experimental stage.

Rice is cultivated on 80,000 hectares, of which almost half are in the central Delta (Mopti, Macina, Djenné) which constitutes the true rice granary of the territory. Outside of the Delta, the productive regions are: the upper basin of the Niger (Bamako), the lake and post-lake region (from Lake Débo to Ansongo), the region near Guinea (south of Sikasso and Bougouni), and finally 10,000 hectares of irrigated rice of the Niger Office.

Two kinds of rice are cultivated: one, an African rice (Oryza glaberrima) in the Delta, is a floating rice capable of enduring considerable submersion. The other, of Asiatic origin (Oryza saliva), [sic] is cultivated in the upper valley of the Niger and in the valleys of the small water courses. Lastly, a mountain rice which grows on dry ground must be mentioned.

What characterizes native rice culture is the absence of [30]
243 hydraulic control. It is a rice culture of submersion, thus very
312 insecure. Since 1944 attempts have been made to end these processes of "wild" submersion. In the upper valley of the Niger where the plains are insufficiently and tardily submerged, rice is sown at the beginning of the rainy season, and when it attains a growth of 20 to 25 centimeters, the water is sent gradually into the plain. When the rice is mature, the water is drawn off into the river through overflow outlets. In the Delta, where the rise of the Niger is utilized directly, regulating works prevent the flood from

[sic] [should be sativa - Analyst]

244 The Bambara groundnut ripens its seed underground. It is cultivated from the southern border of the Sahara to the Cape, but its primary home [31] is in the Sudan where the greatest number of cultivated varieties is found. (1)

1. Jacques Félix, for a study on the Bambara groundnut (*Voandzeia subterrena*), *Agriculture tropicale* [Tropical Agriculture], January-February, 1950. [Ed., *Revue d'agronomie tropicale.*]

Manioc and yams at certain points along the Niger escape the devastations of the Acridiidae insects which can not attack their roots.

Other crops are used to balance the diet: condiments and
[263] fleshy plants, such as, pimento, sesame, various labiates, okra,
[177] sorrel, squash, peanuts (imported in the sixteenth century from
America). Peanuts, to thrive, need loose, light soil. They are sown
in June at the beginning of the rainy season and are harvested in
● [262] November. The natives eat them roasted; they make oil and soap
from them and give the stalks to their animals. Cultivation is entirely in the hands of the natives. In Senegal manpower is insufficient;
[464] before 1940 thousands of Sudanese workers were called upon each
[167] season, particularly Bambara, the "Navétanes," who hired themselves out to the farmers of Senegal in order to acquire the textiles
and other products they needed. The peanut is an export product.
Also cultivated are nitrogenous vegetables (Bambara groundnuts,
black-eyed peas, dolichos, kissis, etc.) and the numerous and varied
amaranths, tomatoes, eggplants, gourds, and, since 1940, potatoes
which are grown more and more.

222 Finally, we will cite: a) the gathering of wild plants which
263 serve as condiments: the fruits of the baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), of
the corchorus, of the *Parkia biglobosa* [néré], and of the karite tree
(*Butyrospermum*), formerly called the "butter tree," which is cultivated to some degree -- the fruit is something like that of the palm
tree and contains a core whose kernels enclose a fatty matter, shea
butter, valued for making soap, as an illuminant, for the toilet;
222 b) the gathering of scarcity foods: baobab, cenchrus, cassia, the kola
nut (*Sterculia acuminata*). Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;

Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;
222 their caffeine content makes them a stimulant and energizer. The
[276] Bambara use seven kinds of kola nuts in their sacrificial and
782 divinatory rites: 1. Dangoro (red nut); 2. Geleworo (white nut);
787 Sosokuworo (a red nut pointed at one end); 4. Flaniworo (yellow
kola); 5. Worodanda (kola without opening) which has no apparent
cleft where it may be split open; 6. Bassiworo (a dark red, bitter
nut); 7. Ryeworo (nut of light and indeterminate color). (This list
is given us by G. Dieterlen in her Essai sur la religion Bambara
[Essay on the Bambara Religion]).

252 To prepare kola nuts, they are placed in baskets of very coarse mesh lined with leaves that are moistened every four or five days.

245 Among cultivated trees, other than banana, mango, lemon, orange, pineapple trees [ananas, may be a kind of pine; the pineapple is not a tree fruit], etc., one must mention the Acacia albida, which plays a large role in Bambara mythology. In the dry season, it is used as fodder for cattle.

[32] C. Textile Crops

248 Side by side with these food crops, the Bambara cultivate
textile plants which they use in addition to the wild textile plants.
Among the principal ones, we shall point out the da (Hibiscus
[227 cannabinus) whose fibers are used by fishermen to make their nets.
286] It does not rot and is a possible rival of jute. The labor to exploit
it, pulling up the stalks, retting, extraction of the fibers, is done
in the dry season, when many hands are available. (1)

1. G. Spitz, L'Ouest africain français [The French West African]. [Ed., L'Ouest africain, A.O.F. et Togo; The West African, French West Africa and Togo.]

Cotton, which grows spontaneously in many places, is cultivated near the villages as an annual plant; it is a perennial plant which renews itself every four or five years. During the cultivation cycle, it is grown between millet and maize. The harvesting is
[282] done by women; it is picked out and spun by women, but it is woven

Bozo MS6

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773 tools and the throwing weapon were made. Then, unfired pottery
and weaving were invented; and men finally came to know stone
tools, iron and the forge. The technique of making dwellings
seems to have developed more slowly.

Ba
Bo

a. Fishing

226 Side by side with populations who specialize in the art of fish-
463 ing, such as the Bozo or the Somono caste, all the Bambara fish in
564 the [96] rivers or watercourses in the neighborhood of their dwellings.
A detailed study has been made by J. Daget (1). The Somono, who
are the caste of Bambara fishermen, use traps and nets for fishing;
the Bozo remain faithful rather to harpoons and small nets. They are
Ba the ones who almost always make the pirogues, for they alone may
Bo enter in rapport with the spirit of the water, Faro. The nets are of
286 knotted mesh made with a weaver's shuttle, *sia*, and a cylindrical
227 mold, *pako*. The band of the net, as it is being made, is nearly
always attached to a wooden bridge especially conceived for this
purpose, the *kale* or *dio soyo kala*, a regular tetrahedron whose edges
Ba are about 20 centimeters long, one of which is prolonged by a handle
Bo 1.50 meters long. The fisherman, seated on the ground, puts the
[283 bridge before him, keeping the handle close to his leg. The fibers
824] used in netmaking are *da* (*Hibiscus cannabinus*), *kie* (*Figna unguiculata*),
cotton, and now European thread.

Bo The Bozo construct weirs from cut and joined tree branches;
226 the weirs assume several different forms according to the regions and
Bo the snares used. Fish are used for human consumption; they are eaten
● Ba fresh, grilled, fried or boiled, or preserved by smoking or drying. Oil,
251 used for cooking and as a lubricant, is extracted from certain fish,
● 252 such as the *tineni*.

Ba Fishing in Bambara villages is done communally under the
226 direction of a fishing chief at the time the waters recede. Precise
rules of fishing rights and of rents due the masters of the waters are
respected everywhere.

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1. Jacques Daget, "La pêche dans le delta central du Niger" [Fishing in the Central Delta of the Niger], *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. XIX (1949), No. 1.

793 782 621 778 The gnéna-n-sonnaba, the dougoutigi, assumes office from the first day and offers a sacrifice in the name of his people. On the trunk of the tree, about a meter from the ground, he pours d'lo, or millet beer, and dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with water, and causes a flow of blood from hens, roosters, goats, and sometimes from a young bull. After this general sacrifice, individual ones follow, for, in order to /118/ place himself under the protection of the genie, each family head in order of seniority offers it a little dégé and a little blood, through the intermediary of his leader, the priest. And on the trunk of the tree there is nothing but great blood stains with feathers, hairs, and shreds of skin stuck in their midst with the remains of chewed kola nuts. Then come the dances, and men, women, and children go into a frenzy at the sound of drums; and the tumult is indescribable.

Sacrifices offered to the dasiri

778 782 796 A path a meter wide leads from the village to the fetish tree which is always located in the middle of a small grove if possible. Heads of families sacrifice to it several times a year -- on the morning after the konio, or first night of marriage, for example, but the festival in which the whole village takes part is annual. The ceremony has greater importance every second year, and every seventh year it degenerates into an orgy.

During the sacrifice the women stay at the edge of the sacred grove, and only the men and boys go inside and surround the fetish. After an offering of dégé and a little d'lo, the throat of a sheep or goat is cut in the name of the whole village, and the head of each family, comes with hens, sheep, goats, etc., according to the family's means and the number of members; the meat piles up. The hens are plucked on the spot, the large pieces are cut up, and the women carry it all back to the village. Each family head is given a piece as big as a fist from the first sacrifice offered in the name of all, and this, too, is [252] taken back to the village; the rest is roasted and then grilled on the spot and eaten by the men, without salt, pepper, or any kind of seasoning. The dégé and d'lo of the main sacrifice are drunk under

C. Statistics

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	Sheep Goats	Bovines	Horses	Asses
Bamako	64,987	49,425	6,227	10,356
Ségou	234,645	161,965	10,454 -5,165	12,159
Bougouni	17,360	29,197	431	1,651

Estimates for the three Bambara centers.

D. Products from Livestock

253 Meat -- The principal slaughtering centers are Bamako and Kayes.

439 Some of the available bovines are exported to Senegal. This is done from the Kayes circle by way of the routes: Néma, Timbesa, Nioro, Kayes; or Néma, Nara, Yelamano, Kayes. Others are sent to Guinea to provide meat for the workers in the gold placers of the Siguiri region. Some go to the Ivory and Gold Coasts, where the animals are sent chiefly from Mopti, with participation from the circles [487] of Ségou, San, and Niafunké. Numerous caravan routes penetrate to the Ivory Coast by way of Odienné, Seguela, Korhogo, Bouaké, and Boho-Dioulasso.

[255] Preserves are made in the factories of Lyndiane.

281 Leather -- Leather comes either from the slaughter houses or from the bush. It is of mediocre quality because of poor preparation: the skins are dried in the sun, folded in two lengthwise, hair against hair, and tied together with a wire, ten to a bundle. About 600 metric tons pass through Bamako annually.

234 Milk and milk derivatives -- The cows are poor producers; most of the milk is furnished by the Moorish, Peul, and Toronké zebus. Butter production is primitive: the sour milk is put in calabashes, cans, or goat skins and shaken until it turns to butter. At Falaladji near Kayes there is a butter and cheese factory.

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In theory, a husband is supposed to treat his wives alike in all things, although it is apparent from the foregoing that this is practically impossible. Besides, it is usually agreed that the first wife, no matter who she is, whether slave or free, has certain prerogatives. She acts as a kind of mother to her co-wives, supervises their work and their pursuits, and issues all the supplies. With reference to her husband, she acts as confidante and adviser.

851 Filiation. This is to be regarded as the totality of facts which, for the sake of clarity, we shall divide into two groups: birth, and giving a name. [209]

843 Birth. A pregnant woman, by virtue of her condition, is subject to a kind of special regime whose special features are the following.

In principle, she must forego sexual relations from the moment she feels the child move until two or three months after its birth. This is not done for reasons of hygiene, but rather because the child is thought to require it as a kind of deference, without which it will die.

From the standpoint of diet, the expectant mother should
be well and even abundantly fed. When possible she is given the
[262] heart and liver of slaughtered wild animals; these are centers of
life which, if eaten, will strengthen the child's soul and make the
child a courageous individual. A pregnant woman often wants some
[261] of the yellow or red clay which is sold in the markets, which
[443] for some unknown reason she will eat as if it were chocolate.

She must refrain from visiting dying people, attending funerals, going into mourning, or mingling with crowds, all this in order to avoid any contact that might injure the fragile soul she is carrying.

Mersadier

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Bambara FA8

/For a detailed study of the income and expenses of 4 Bambara families in the city of Thiès, Senegal (including percentage of income spent on and average consumption of particular foodstuffs) see 4: Mersadier, MS37 Senegal, Category 116./

776 brought to the middle of the river and thrown in while the villagers
782 prayed the spirit to give the village his protection and to bring rain
to future harvests.

Faro's Taboos

776 All of Faro's subjects, in particular the Bambara of both sexes and
784 of all ages, are requested to respect a certain number of taboos.
The black earth, bogo fi, of the river banks, used ritually in many instances, would be excellent in pottery making. The women potters, however, cannot use it because it blackens in the process of baking. No pottery that has been fired may be washed in those places haunted by the spirit (1).

> 1. At Ségou, numerous drownings are blamed on the increasing frequency with which this taboo is broken.

[262] Butter in many places is forbidden by Faro and may not be preserved in water. (2)

> 2. This taboo is linked to the relation between Faro and the Peul, but the nature of their relationship has not been clarified.

No one crosses the river without opening his luggage and presenting Faro with the gold, copper, or food it contains. As a rule, the wearing of metals is forbidden in those places haunted by the spirit.

776 The principal taboo concerns menstrual blood which was originally
784 caused to flow because of the sins and impurity of Mousso /52/
841 Koroni. No menstruating woman may visit the places inhabited by Faro; none may draw water, wash clothes or cooking utensils, or cleanse herself in any of these spots. In addition, a man whose wife is in such condition must refrain from appearing at religious ceremonies or, if he is a priest, from performing the ritual.

In this part of Africa, as in many others, menses are conceived of as a necessary flow of empty blood, impure because it has not contributed to the formation of the foetus, the embryo of which each

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531 to replace the blood lost in childbirth; this piece is then burned to hasten the healing of the wounds.

The loincloth of a woman who has given birth to twins is made of the *sukaba* band with large, regular, alternating squares of yellow and indigo. The mother places on the garment as an offering a little of the millet mash she feeds her children for the first time.

The band *nyoronga* was formerly used for shrouds. The king would wear a whole garment of this or had three bands sewn onto his tunic when he went off to war; thus he wore his own shroud. A brave man would tie a piece of it to the barrel of his rifle to show his indifference in the face of death. A strip was tied to the right hand of those killed on the battlefield as a reward for having done their duty. Today, a shred of this band is hung at the door of a home where a death has occurred; People bandage a wounded limb with it before going to the healer's.

The *wutu tyerokole* with three stripes is worn by a child born after the death in infancy of numerous brothers and sisters. It represents the departure of these members of the family and their return in the newborn. Shaking such a band in the air honors the seventh sky and the seventh earth and asks their protection for the child. This cloth is never worn at funerals.

/113/ The *kemba* (literally, mother of scarifications) (Pl. III, a, 10) substitutes for scarifications when it has not been possible to perform them; on the other hand, this band is taboo to those who are ritually scarred.

The *warabawolo* (Pl. III, a, 12) represents the lion of the Diara: the first son of this family was born on this cloth. A boy born with a lock of hair on his forehead is seated on the cotton band to make him strong and rich. Formerly the king made a rug for his throne out of it. Since the lion is their taboo, the Diara do not have the right to wear it or even to see it.

Weapons and Tools

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824 Originally, men lived by hunting and fishing. But hunger drove them to eat plants of which the first three are the *yayalẽ*, an aquatic plant commonly found on the shores of the Niger; the *narakata*, couch grass; and the *norolã* size, commonly called cramcram (1). Long

before the cultivation of cotton and cereals was known to them, the Bambara worked the soil with wooden sticks around the base of those grasses whose seeds they then sowed. As their stock of tools developed,
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they began to make the first hoes and axes. In the case of the Mandé Bambara (2) the origin of these tools is linked with the history of the blacksmiths, numu, who form a kind of caste in this part of Africa as in many others. They practice endogamy, maintain joking relationships, senankuya, with other Blacks, and are in charge of certain cults dedicated to ancestors and to Faro (3).

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1. These three plants are respectively: Andropogon (Hyparrhenia) hirtus, Digitaria debilis, Cenchrus catharticus.

2. The names and the origin of tools of the Bambara of the Ségou region are different.

3. On the myth of the divine origin of blacksmiths, see S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara." See also infra, p. 53 n. 1

Before the discovery of metal, ancestors of the present blacksmiths worked with wood, then stone. From then on they bore the name of numu, a term which today is reserved exclusively for the artisans of iron, jirifa numu or farafa numu, according to whether they worked with wood or stone (4).

4. L. Desplagnes mentions the historical aspect of the origin and role of the Sudanese blacksmiths (Le Plateau central nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, p. 110).
The peoples issued from the intermixture of the ou, shepherds (Getules), with the ar, sedentary tribes (Fari), have already been pointed out in earliest antiquity by writers, historians, and geographers who called them Numidians. Salluste tells us that "The Faronsũ, in mixing with the

794 On the following night, the future initiates are led into the bush to a place called biri yoro (literally, place of initiation), where they sit down upon the ground, their heads covered with a piece of cloth.

At a sign from the dyolokotigi, a member causes the ritual instruments to roar or sing in succession; then he hides them and the postulants must find them. As they are not able to do so, a series of hazings are inflicted upon them (1) after which they are shown the instruments and each in turn made to repeat the solemn oath:

"If you have heard the dyara of the uncircumcised, that is it. Chisel a piece of wood, make a hole, put a string through, turn it, it is that which is the word of the ndomo dyara. If you reveal it, may it take your heart, may it take your liver, may it kill you" (2).

Next, they are made to lick three times the object which is then entrusted to them so that they may learn to use it. The same ritual is performed for each instrument, and the prayer is repeated with only a change in the name.

The young men frequently sacrifice upon the altars of the ndomo.
794 The usual content of the sacrifice is the gray lizard /margouillat/,
782 busa, likened to an uncircumcised boy (its tail representing the
825 foreskin). The victim's wanzo, liberated by death, joins the wanzo contained in the altars and, consequently, that of the members.
[262] The animal is then cooked and eaten.

C. Activity of the Society

794 At the time the fields are being cultivated, the members who are called upon to do work take their ritual objects along. The young

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1. These hazings are often severe; fun is made of the ignorance and fears of the postulant.

2. Ni ye me bilakorow ka ndomo dyara, nin do ka djiri dese, ka wo bo o la, ka dyuru ndo o la, o bi fyeku, o de bi ndomo dyara ka fo, ni ya korobo, a ki sõ ta, a ki biñe ta, a ki fa.

304 The foreskin, which is tied by a string (drawn at the center of the
532 blade) at the moment of the operation, is placed upon the pembele
413 (black rectangle) and the cutting knife is tapped with a small wooden
mallet, gossilã (drawn at the tip of the knife). These three figures receive during operation the offering of the first spurt of blood from the circumcised boy.

The line, which crosses the blade along the middle, separates the bird and the ancestors who gave proof of courage from the instruments used for the circumcision. As a division it symbolizes first of all that each grade of circumcised boys must be considered apart from the others. This is its social meaning. But the delicacy of the line itself has a meaning which applies to the individual: each one must, in his own image, be morally /183/ simple, just, and sensitive. By conforming to the rule symbolically indicated by the design, the individual will become a member of the elite.

384 The date of the operation is fixed when Mousso Koroni's star, sigi
787 dolo (Sirius), rises in the evening at a certain point in the east (1).
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After the boys to be operated have been counted, each gets ready, and on the appointed day the mother washes her son's penis with water in which an iron axe or hoe has been soaked. Then she prepares a dish
● [362] of rice, ye farina to "dish of man's bravery," which the child eats
before he is led to the place of the operation, called yorola sakole "reserved place," located in the bush.

304 When all are gathered together the blacksmith-circumciser operates
326 upon each one in turn after he has made them sit down in a circle on
the ground. Pulling and twisting the foreskin, he ties it with the string which he keeps taut by securing its extremity between his toes. He next places the member upon the pembele, rests the knife /on the foreskin/ and taps /it/ with the wooden mallet. In this way he cuts off the foreskin while saying the following words:

"Circumcised one, your father, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, the father of that one too, the ear (the genitals) of the ancestors of the latter have withstood (the pain); you, yourself, withstand it as

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1. See note 1 p. 47. To determine the date, however, the ndomo society may be consulted, which sometimes postpones it to keep its members longer.

194 attacked /206/ the fighters. Between dances the participants drink beer
116 brought to the spot for the occasion in order to nourish the invisible beings which they represent.

[262] All the participants also eat a dish made up of peas, beans, groundnuts, rice, manioc, millet, fonio, cooked with baobab leaves and karite oil. This mixture is identified with the spirits' struggle with the clouds which they supposedly swallow at the height of the battle. When the ceremony draws to an end, the chief sends the women and children home and fetches the kwore boli which he swings eighteen times over the square.

In a file, the members of the society return to the tree to "bring back" the Kworè which, while invisible, has been present at all the ceremonies. They circle around the tree singing to the rhythm of the drums. Then they put out their torches and throw them at the foot of the tree along with the whips before returning to their homes.
[752] Their wounds and burns are cared for by their wives with water from the Kworè altar, this medication bearing the name of kworę kane (remedy of the Kworè).

The same dances and the comings out of the mask take place three days in succession. On the fourth day the chief and the elders, all undressed, crawl to the sanctuary for the annual sacrifice offered inside it. The chief gathers the thunder stones collected during the past year and places them in the sack containing the altars which are to be sold.

To "clarify" the mirrors, he pours millet mash over them; he cut the throat of fowls and places kola nut juice over the snake and the ñõ boli; he next fills the ñõ boli with millet previously taken from that of the Komo. With the remaining seeds he makes a mash with which to pour a libation over the sack. He next passes a burning twig of straw over the snake while saying:

"You, snake, you do not fear the fire; you must not fear fire and rain" (1).

1. E ngorongo e ma sira tasuma ne e kana sira sandyi tasuma ñe.

The effect of this action is to prepare the snake by means of these burns and to attract lightning whose effects it must not fear.

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Soli (2)

The single word soli is used for what we call circumcision and excision. This is because a Bambara has in mind not this or that surgical operation, accessory in nature, but rather the ceremony which for boys and girls alike marks the passage or, more accurately in line with the etymology of the word soli, the fact of being born to a new status.

881 The soli does not take place every year, because it involves considerable expense for the families, which they cannot always meet. At the instigation of the boys who must undergo the soli and who, therefore are called soli-ma-u (people of the soli), the family heads assemble at the call of the nyana-n-sonna-ba to decide whether or not the soli will be held. If the decision is affirmative, the boys and girls then take steps to make sure that the festival (nyara, "orgy, wedding") will be as elaborate as possible. In principle, the date coincides with the third day of the festival of the sheep.

Guided by their elders, the young girls (soli-ma-moso-u) [262] go from door to door to solicit millet for the banquet (3) which they are expected to give the elders (koro-u) on the second day of the feast of the sheep. The period of the ceremonies of the soli actually begins with this meal. [241]

In the afternoon of this day, the boys make the customary sacrifice to their genie-protector, dancing in his honor in ceremonial costume but without flagellation.

2. The word soli is used in Kaarta; at Ségou the term is boloko or ngolo-ko, literally, "affair of birth."

3. The menu includes couscous (basi), and it is called soli-kili-basi, "basi of the solicitation for the soli," on account of the source of the millet used to prepare it, solicited by the children.

881
302 On the same day the young girls in certain localities have a characteristic ceremony. One of them whitens her face, breast, and back with a mixture of milk and ashes. Thus daubed, she dashes out of the village brandishing the spatula (to-n-galama) which is used to stir mush (to) in the pot; her companions follow her, shouting. The band goes around the village four times in this fashion, each time stopping at the crossroads. At these points the girl who is bedaubed throws handfuls of food (1), provided by her companions, to the spirits,

● [262] 1. Usually basi (couscous) made with fish.

crying: "Dege dule (2)." Her companions reply: "Naloma (3)."

2. Literally, "thick mush."

3. That is, "fool."

881 The eve of the soli (soli-si). During the evening preceding
the soli, the families concerned enjoy an ample meal,
527 accompanied by innumerable jugs of beer (dlo) as is the custom
[273] at all festivals among the Bambara. This is a time of special
[576] merriment, of shining faces and greasy hands, and it is good
form for the men and boys to belch noisily, saying repeatedly:
"ne ne fa," literally, "I am full," that is, "I am replete." The
[301] women wander about the lanes, wrapped in their best skirts,
with balls of amber in their hair and small silver or even gold
rings in their ears and nostrils and rather heavy bracelets on their
[482] arms and ankles. Some carry jars of dlo on their heads, while
others carry gourds full of couscous, dege, or hot sauces which
are often nauseous with smoked or spoiled fish. After the meal
everyone gathers on the public square, forming a wide circle
whose center is reserved for the dancers; piles of dried millet
[373] stalks are used to make bright fires which illuminate the scene
and warm the audience.

881 The "boys of the soli" (soli-ma-tye-u), their heads
302 freshly

825 village, I thought at first that here lay the reason for this rest, extraor-
787 dinary during the time of the most intensive hoeing. Not at all; the
pagan Bambara were resting, and the women were giving their hus-
[262] bands and children dégé (millet flour mixed with milk and honey
water) in obedience to a hyena's command. The hyena, it was said -- and all the sorcerers confirmed this -- had emerged from its dumbness, its tongue had been loosed, and it had predicted to the people of the west that a plague even more terrible than that of the caterpillars would descend on the country. Only one means to avert it remained: to refrain from going to the fields on Friday and to treat themselves to dégé, the food so dear to Moslems.

482 On my excursions I have often met men and women carrying
757 on their heads a gourd or a basket containing a handful of leaves or
824 some bundles of roots, and apart from the customary greetings it
784 has been impossible for me to get a word out of them. And why this silence? They were carrying a medicinal plant, a remedy which would lose all its virtue and all its efficacy if they conversed on the way, and they had to take care not to trample such-and-such a plant that grew on the edge of the path.

757 The Bambara quite readily names the plants and herbs whose
753 curative powers are known to him, and yet in the presence of a sick
784 person he will very seldom give you the name of the remedy the latter is taking, or the names of the roots and leaves that make up his poultices. Sickness, he believes is a force, a power which tortures our bodies. He is afraid that in naming the remedy he would provide this power with a weapon against its healing virtue, which is another force or power. He sets the second power against the first to make it leave.

811 It is evident that he attributes bits of reason and emotion to
784 everything, that he attributes human feelings to all that is animate and inanimate. The "taboos" are not merely one piece of evidence of this, they are an irrefutable proof of this attitude.

784 and-such a liquid, that animal, object, or liquid assumes a certain sacredness, and the Bambara calls it a *tné*. It thus conforms to the definition of a taboo that A. Lang gives us in Chapter III of his work *Mythes, cults et religions*, and Nicolay in Chapter II, Volume I, of his work *Histoires des croyances, moeurs, coutumes* also says: "To be taboo is to be marked by a religious sign."

The *tné*, or taboos, are legion in Bambara country. Not only does each lineage have its own, but the *goua*, or families, the confraternities, villages, individuals, genii, and plants also have theirs. Many are permanent in that they are perpetuated from generation to generation. Others, on the contrary, are impermanent; they pass, fall into disuse, disappear, or are dropped as soon as they become inconvenient. All depends upon the authority from which they are derived.

Taboos can be divided into five groups. There are lineage taboos, family taboos, taboos of the *djiné* genii and the *boli* genii, and finally plant taboos. I have given some legends concerning lineage taboos (see p. 8 ff.); these are permanent, passed on from generation to generation, and cannot disappear. /23/ They embody the idea of the ancestor, not in the sense that they merge and become one, but rather because the animal or plant has saved the stock by saving him. The *tné* have become the fathers of the Bambara in the broad sense of the word; they are, on an ancestor's name, or *diamou*, like armorial bearings on a shield, and a Bambara cannot rid himself of them. The ancestor has bound himself to the *tné* as a result of a service rendered, and his oath has made the union so close that if one disappeared the other would disappear with it -- how could one repudiate someone who is, and was, an ancestor and whose name, or *diamou* one bears!

784 773 762 Family taboos also have their legends and resemble those of lineages. They are different, however; the service was rendered to a member of the family and not to its head. In addition, the taboos are less extensive and include only a part of a species or race. To cite just one example, certain *Dambélé* may not buy, raise, kill, or eat a *da-n-fign*, or black dog, but they are not thereby prevented

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●[362] from owning, killing, or eating a dog of another color; a dish of dog is even a delicacy served during orgies in honor of the fetishes *Nia*, *Komo*, *Kono*, *Nama*, etc. The dog is taboo for them, but only the black dog, and the reason is as follows: A *Dambélé* family was working their fields, and every noon the wife in charge of cooking brought them gruel. One fine day the cook, seeing her child asleep, laid him on the mat and left.... Hardly had she reached the field when the big black dog arrived, yapping and whining, running toward the village and coming back, and yapping and whining even more. This performance puzzled everyone, and they all dropped their hoes and followed the dog back to the village. The dwelling had been consumed by fire and was only a pile of ashes.... "My child, my child," cried the mother at once, desperate and wild with grief.... And the dog pranced around her, put its paws on her shoulders, licked her with joyful growls, and seemed to say to her: "Have no fear, I have saved him." It had in fact saved the child; seeing the fire in the dwelling, it thought of the child, took him gently in its mouth, and carried him to the hut where karité nuts were being roasted. They found him there, well and safe, sound asleep, and from that day on they took the black dog as *tné*; all the family respected and /24/ venerated it, and their descendants still respect and venerate it today.

784 Family *tné* sometimes become taboo for a whole village. For example, where the *Dambélé* of the black dog are powerful because of their number and especially through their affinal ties, members of outside lineages avoid raising these dogs or eating their flesh, out of respect for the old people and to spare the feelings of their wives and families. Little by little the custom takes root and the animal becomes a *tné* or taboo for everyone.

Its durability, however, is nowhere near that of a lineage taboo. A *Dambélé* woman married into a village where the black dog is not taboo may refrain as much as possible from eating its flesh, but she will not fear it long. Little by little the taboo is forgotten, and only a vague memory stays with her: "*An dougou tné do*, for the village I came from it is taboo," she may say, but it will seem to her that for her it is no longer so. As to members of outside

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3. Gnéna Who Roam the Village and Its Environs

These gnéna like especially to sit where paths cross and somewhat resemble the gnâma, even though they are different (2). They

2. See what I said about the gnâma in the first chapter.

protect from spells and sorcery, give health and exorcise sickness, and it is not unusual in the morning at daybreak or in the evening just as the sun is about to disappear to see men and especially old women sprinkling a little clear water here and there at a crossing of paths. They are interceding for children and grandchildren or for a member of the family who is sick and lying on his mat, or they are imploring the gnéna to protect them from an enemy or an evil spell, or to shelter them from the gnâma.

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782 Although these gnéna have no official priest, they nevertheless receive many gifts, and there is no circumcised man who does not feel obliged to make them his small offering, at one time or another. At crossings of paths one throws them preferably flour mixed with water, cowrie shells, milk, hatching eggs, ashes of herbs and plants, gruel, kola nuts, and sorghum cakes. At children's festivals the fodder is thrown to them in greater abundance; the cakes pile up at the entrance of the village (to the great joy of dogs and hens), and the ground is moistened with a light dew of blood (3). On the second day of the

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3. All these offerings are made by the order of a sorcerer and are called saraka. See what I have said about the saraka in Chapter IV, Section I, "Belief in God."

drinking bout, which corresponds to the festival of the كَبْش (sheep), the soli girls, who are shortly to be excised, throw them the remains of the basi k'li in great handfuls without counting. Basi k'li is the name given to the repast provided for the whole village on this

776 day by the soli (those who are to be excised). It is a kind of semolina
782 (very fine couscous called basi) which is eaten with an /88/ extremely
304 spicy sauce of smoked fish. It is called basi k'li because, in order to
262 provide this repast, the little girls are obliged to run from door to door,
clapping their hands, singing and begging (k'li).

Among the invisible wanderers, there is one which is strongly
776 reminiscent of our "werewolf." It is the souroukou, an imaginary
825 hyena, whose supposed existence has brought about a strange practice.
514 Every evening one sees groups of little boys and groups of little girls,
turning aside a little into the bush: they all go in a band to take their
last precautions and attend to the wants of nature -- union is strength
even against the gnéna.

776 Many other gnéna are among this group that roams the village;
they flutter in the b'lon, or entrance huts, they live in horrible filth,
hung over doors, on the walls, and on the posts that support the terrace
roofs, and the only hangings to be seen anywhere are eggshells, heads
of millet, fruit pits, and seeds from the bush, which are offered to
these friends as saraka. Nor are private huts without them, for the
gnéna roll in the ashes of the hearth, snore on the mats, and take the
air in the conari (1); there are some everywhere.

[415] 1. The conari is a baked earth receptacle used for water, beer, and cooking food.

Finally, there are gnéna or djiné who are powerful. Without mercy for their enemies, whom they abandon to all kinds of sorcery and evil spells, they are full of both attention and consideration for their friends. They can cause sickness, poverty, and other calamities to descend on a family, a village, or a whole region; but they can also side with them against a visible or invisible enemy; they can protect them, exorcise anything, and grant real blessings to each and all. The characteristic trait of the gnéna, in fact, is not that they can refrain from doing harm, but that they can also do good directly by performing a good act. Some choose to live in a rock, others prefer a knoll or a large tree near the village, and there are those who

*173 chief was served special food prepared according to rites known only to him. The basis of this food was goat's head, and the meal had to be eaten in complete darkness. Thus Mamari, admitted to the room by his sister, was able to share his brother-in-law's repast without being found out. It was because of this food that he was later to occupy the highest position in the country.

The fla-n-ton (2) of the People of Ségou and its Development

2. See Chapter 4, p. for the organization of the fla-n-ton'.

When he returned to Ségou-koro, Mamari lived mostly with his mother, whose favorite he was. For her he cultivated [263] [29] on the river bank the n-koyo, a kind of bitter pepper used in native cookery. He worked here virtually every day and, in the course of his labors, made the acquaintance of the water genie who taught him many magic practices which made him superior to other boys of his age. For these reasons, no less than for his unusual strength, they chose him leader of the ton' (ton-tigi).

The ton' members were young men of various races belonging to the villages of Doukounna, Si-do, Bignébougou, Sola, Banan-koroni, Ségou-Sikoro, Doua, etc. Mamari's mother, Sanou Saro, often made dlo (millet beer) or hydromel for her son's friends. In order to repay her kindness, which had gradually come to be habitual, the ton-den' [ton members] decided each to subscribe ten cowries to reimburse the good woman for the expenses incurred by the weekly drinking bout on Thursday. The assessment was known as di-songo, meaning, literally, "price of the honey," because of the purpose for which it was collected.

As time passed, the ton' became tyrannical toward its members. The frequent and large fines could be collected only by force and Mamari went so far as to put the recalcitrants

244 The Bambara groundnut ripens its seed underground. It is cultivated from the southern border of the Sahara to the Cape, but its primary home [31] is in the Sudan where the greatest number of cultivated varieties is found. (1)

> 1. Jacques Félix, for a study on the Bambara groundnut (Voandzeia subterrena), Agriculture tropicale [Tropical Agriculture], January-February, 1950. [Ed., Revue d'agronomie tropicale.]

Manioc and yams at certain points along the Niger escape the devastations of the Acridiidae insects which can not attack their roots.

Other crops are used to balance the diet: condiments and
[263] fleshy plants, such as, pimento, sesame, various labiates, okra,
[177] sorrel, squash, peanuts (imported in the sixteenth century from
America). Peanuts, to thrive, need loose, light soil. They are sown
in June at the beginning of the rainy season and are harvested in
[262] November. The natives eat them roasted; they make oil and soap
from them and give the stalks to their animals. Cultivation is entirely in the hands of the natives. In Senegal manpower is insufficient;
[464] before 1940 thousands of Sudanese workers were called upon each
[167] season, particularly Bambara, the "Navétanes," who hired themselves out to the farmers of Senegal in order to acquire the textiles and other products they needed. The peanut is an export product. Also cultivated are nitrogenous vegetables (Bambara groundnuts, black-eyed peas, dolichos, kissis, etc.) and the numerous and varied amaranths, tomatoes, eggplants, gourds, and, since 1940, potatoes which are grown more and more.

222 Finally, we will cite: a) the gathering of wild plants which
263 serve as condiments: the fruits of the baobab (Adansonia digitata), of
the corchorus, of the Parkia biglobosa [néré], and of the karite tree
(Butyrospermum), formerly called the "butter tree," which is cultivated to some degree -- the fruit is something like that of the palm tree and contains a core whose kernels enclose a fatty matter, shea butter, valued for making soap, as an illuminant, for the toilet;
222 b) the gathering of scarcity foods: baobab, cenchrus, cassia, the kola
nut (Sterculia acuminata). Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;

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674 The dounkono is administered or poured by sliding a pinch of it under the nail of the middle finger of the left hand and throwing it with a skillfully concealed flick into the food or drink of the enemy. Food sauce, dégé (millet flour mixed with water), millet beer (d'lo), and di kolé (hydromel) are suitable and without doubt easily poisoned.

Throwing poison, korti sou, remains the prerogative of the sorcerers, priests, and masters of the fetishes, and one must be somebody in order to use it (2). As with the dounkono, a pinch is slid under /54/ the nail of the middle finger, and with a strong flick it is thrown onto the enemy or merely toward him or onto an object which has belonged to him, and it is ordered to be effective, to kill him if possible, or at least to reward him with a sickness which he will long remember.

The Bambara fear the korti far more than the dounkono and if an enemy seriously threatens him with it they tremble. For a person so threatened is no longer dealing with a man, a power equal to his own; he must be on guard against an all-powerful god who places his strength and power at the service of the man. The force is submissive and obedient, triumphant and vengeful; it delivers its blows blindly where it is ordered and onto any person against whom it is aroused and against whom it is hurled. That, in my opinion, is the exact translation of the expression, korti sou ma la. As a dog is set on a person (oulou sou ma la), so korti poison is thrown at him (korti sou ma la).

The Negroes say that korti has a crushing effect: when it strikes you, you feel a violent upheaval throughout your body, your limbs stiffen, and you fall backward. You may die of the attack, but

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2. There are many old Bambara who, after a meal with a neighbor or friend, mutter a prayer while washing their hands and make the motion of throwing korti poison. This is a curse which they throw against the enemies of the family that has received them.

881 each ear ten to twelve rings of soft iron, tin, or silver, and those that
796 they put on their fingers and toes number more than twenty.

301 On the braids of their hair, all running with grease, they hang bits of amber and rings of polished pottery as white as snow, and around all their necks are bead necklaces from which dangle bits of amber, grigris, and here and there, held by leather strips, pottery rings that fall back between the shoulders and in front on their bosoms. They also bind their foreheads with narrow crowns of rainbow-colored beads or diadems of coral. Such are the Negro girls in their most beautiful array.

796 At the homes of the circumcised and excised, the huts and
881 courts are crowded with people, for in addition to friends and story-tellers /griots/ -- the poor troubadours of the country -- there may be in each home older married daughters who have come with their husbands, children, and parents-in-law, and the fiancé's delegation to his betrothed seem to be in every corner. This is really the festival of the tribe, and everybody is present; only the fiancés are excluded and cannot appear on this day. And how very Bambara it is! In one
[264] spot people quench their thirst with great drinks of d'lo, or millet beer, while nearby, squatted around steaming gourds, others stuff themselves with to, or gruel. The hands held out to you are running with sauce; the children who surround you are covered with leftovers from the feast and brandish under your nose bones that they gnaw clean with their bare teeth, and while they call to you Sogo ("some meat"), the satiated people next to you exclaim: "Abarka, thank you Né fara san, I am full for the moment." And everywhere there is an infernal bedlam! Old women beat furiously on inverted pumpkins in conari full of water /185/; youths beat drums, women and young girls clap their hands in rhythm, and everybody shouts the glories of the family. The families of the circumcised and excised are beside
[431] themselves, so great is their joy, and if you are one of their close friends you will be shown all the gifts received, in plain sight in the court. You are made to taste of everything, to touch and feel everything, and, just as on the day when the child is given its name, you receive, on leaving, the kola nut of life (le ni woro).

782 826 789 "To see the king is to see gold" (1).

1. Fama yele ye sanu yele ye.

He gave some of it to his wives and children who put it in their drinks in order "to inherit his place and his goods." This powder was offered at each sacrifice to Faro in order to fertilize the kingdom.

782 826 266 3. When a family was plagued by numerous deaths, they asked the king to authorize the sacrifice of an albino whom he furnished himself. The victim's tongue was dried, pounded to powder, seasoned with pepper, and eaten by the father of the family to permit him to "reclaim the words and the nyama of the deceased." The nose was swallowed by the mother so that she might "reclaim the breath of the dead children." The father then ate the broiled eyes to "preserve lost sights." The dried ears were hung above the sill of the entrance "so that death, upon hearing the funeral wails, might not return." The skull was retained as a token and buried in the courtyard; a wooden stick marked the burial place. The rest of the body was thrown into the Niger, "for an ordinary man does not have the right to keep that which is reserved for the king."

782 826 622 If the king permitted it, chiefs of the important villages /97/ also placed the body of an albino under their seats "in order that their authority be solid and enduring" (2).

2. Sometimes the sum total of the taxes raised in a village were given the parents of an albino in exchange for the child. Those who could not obtain a victim used an animal bone as a substitute and performed the ritual as though it were an albino. Regarding the chief's seat, see p. 178.

782 826 In certain serious cases, the albino was sacrificed on the altar of Komo. This sacrifice was accomplished in silence for "a prayer unknown to the person sacrificing is in the blood of the albino" who is powerful enough to act without words.

614 beginning with his relatives, to avenge his hatred toward them
794 for selling him into slavery. It seems likely that the establish-
776 ment of these ferocious deities may well date from the time of
this despot and perhaps was due to his personal initiative.

The "people of Ségou" also held in high esteem the deities of the people they conquered. Indeed, there is no doubt that they constituted the most precious part of the booty of war. The Toucouleur [Tukolor] relate that when they entered Ségou-Sikoro they found an idol in chains; it was the protective deity of a group of the Nono-n-kobe people of the cliff of Bandiagara. With the evident intention of keeping this conquered people forever enslaved, the Bambara had captured their god and were having its cult observed by its own priest, kept captive likewise for the purpose (2). [320]

2. See Desplagnes, Le plateau central nigérien [The Nigerian Central Plateau], p. 175.

The chronicle shows that the Komo also figured in the Ségou pantheon, and if one refers to what we have said about this brotherhood, he will understand the important role it played in the to-da since the fama himself acted as Komo-tigi.

614 There is absolutely no doubt that cannibalism was in
794 favor on certain definite occasions and, according to appropriate,
ritual, especially, at the time of the election of a fama. It is
761 obvious, in any case, that under the despotic rule of the clan
[266] human life had little value. The atrocities of Dékoro, the
passiveness of his victims, the help given him in the execution of his worst crimes by the very people who were directly threatened -- these are not isolated cases. They are indicative of the basic Sudanese temperament in general, which, if not innate, at least is affected by a very ancient atavism. It is because this kind of arbitrary command over the lives of individuals has been practiced for so many centuries that the Bambara often remain impassive in the face of death. They consider its unforeseen occurrence, even when sudden and the result of man's

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the trumpet blasts: "I have the kala (1) on my head, my life is hence-

> 1. Kala, "handle of a tool, "
> "a pestle, " "an oblong object";
> Komo kala, iron tube ending in
> two horns.

forth bound with gnâma-n-fou; if I reveal the secrets of the sect, may my abdomen swell and may the Komo kill me. " Then they get up, and the crowd of initiates sing hymns to the Komo at the tops of their voices:

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Da Woro la nana, Boloko déou da Worola.
To the festival of Da Woro he (the fetish) has come, to
Da Woro of the circumcised (he has come).
Toro ma na kola gnini.
Toro (2) has not come to cause evil.

> 2. Toro, the name of a Komo.

Sira bo nin ye, ko dougoulé dén.
To him we give an (open) road because (he is) a child of the village.
Sira bo nin yé, ko dougoulen sira.
Give him an (open) road to know the road of the children of the village (He is one of us, let us make room for him) (3).

> 3. Songs of Nama:
> A djigina so Nama fambali, a djigina so, tjon k'a'é.
> The Nama that kills has paid us a visit, he has visited us*, let us not be

[566]

*The Nama protects against the souba, initiates of siri, reputed to be cannibals.

771 considered, follows the chronological order used by this power in the beginning. Similarly, the various skies where Faro reigns are invoked according to their role and the aims of the petitioners /177/ who appeal to them in many cases with very long prayers.

In order not to overload this discussion, a very limited number of rites are described below. Among them, an important place is reserved for those concerning the person (see Ch. 3), which relate to birth, circumcision and excision, funeral rites, and the cult of ancestors: For each one of these the respective positions of the elements composing the individuality at different times have been pointed out.

The rites relating to the ordinary which come next, affect the collective life of the family and village. They concern the residences, the crossroads, and the public squares. They have a very definite character of a gathering together and redistribution of individual forces for the good of the community.

The rain rituals, also collective, which involve the Komo and the Kworè, present a typical example of Bambara symbolism.

Finally, the rituals for "the renewal of the year" have still a more general character: they show close ties uniting individual and community to the cosmos (1).

I. Rites Concerning the Person

Birth and Name-Giving

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• 271 From the moment of his birth, a newborn is washed with millet beer mixed with water. The beer has a purifying quality and the

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1. The agricultural rites have not been touched upon in this work as they will be the object of a detailed description in: S. de Ganay, Techniques et rites de l'agriculture chez les Bambara (to be published).

In addition, most of the rituals are duplicated by a series of games of a cosmogonic character which relate to the stages of creation and to its past, present, or future states. See p. 54.

844 273 271 contact with water which symbolizes "the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni in the matter of family names" is a prefiguration of name-giving.

851 As soon as the patriarch hears of the birth, he comes and shakes the family pembele over the child's head, three or four times according to the sex, in order to pass on to him the nyama and the qualities of the deceased person from whom he has inherited the ni and the dya. Then, he brings the family altar kere la boli ni into the house of the woman who has just given birth and places it before him. Crouching upon the ground, with fingers spread over the object, he pronounces the following prayer: "You, boli, make me a chief, so that my family prospers, a child is /178/ born, his soul is entrusted to you; I invoke you, boli, night and day" (1).

Holding the child on his knees, he places the object on its chest for three consecutive times. Repeating the prayer, he next cuts the throat of a red rooster over the open sac, dips the right index into the blood, and, depending upon whether it is a boy or a girl, makes three or four crosses on the forehead of the newborn who thus becomes the "son of the boli," boli dě.

A white sea shell, krokrodya (2), is placed before the newborn and gently moved about to "condense his dya within him." Then it is tied to the child's foot for three or four days according to its sex. 846 824 751 At the same time, the mother who is entrusted with the child's dya until the name-giving ritual, adorns herself during the eight days following the birth with a collar (madya, "dya of the person") made from the odoriferous root of the tree bearing the same name. She will wear it until the child takes its first steps so as to protect it and to recall that she herself carried the soul of the newborn.

553 852 The name is given on the eighth day by the chief of the Komo. Under the dubale, a tree which shelters the village meetings, the elders assemble around the Komo altars which have been carried to the spot (3). If it is a first son, the father gives one hundred kola nuts,

1. Boli tigi i ka masaya kanu ñe, de wolo la, a ni kalifa be i la, ngo boli šu ani kle.

2. Cardita vingens.

771 considered, follows the chronological order used by this power in the beginning. Similarly, the various skies where Faro reigns are invoked according to their role and the aims of the petitioners /177/ who appeal to them in many cases with very long prayers.

In order not to overload this discussion, a very limited number of rites are described below. Among them, an important place is reserved for those concerning the person (see Ch. 3), which relate to birth, circumcision and excision, funeral rites, and the cult of ancestors: For each one of these the respective positions of the elements composing the individuality at different times have been pointed out.

The rites relating to the ordinary which come next, affect the collective life of the family and village. They concern the residences, the crossroads, and the public squares. They have a very definite character of a gathering together and redistribution of individual forces for the good of the community.

The rain rituals, also collective, which involve the Komo and the Kworè, present a typical example of Bambara symbolism.

Finally, the rituals for "the renewal of the year" have still a more general character: they show close ties uniting individual and community to the cosmos (1).

I. Rites Concerning the Person

Birth and Name-Giving

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271 From the moment of his birth, a newborn is washed with millet beer mixed with water. The beer has a purifying quality and the

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1. The agricultural rites have not been touched upon in this work as they will be the object of a detailed description in: S. de Ganay, Techniques et rites de l'agriculture chez les Bambara (to be published).

In addition, most of the rituals are duplicated by a series of games of a cosmogonic character which relate to the stages of creation and to its past, present, or future states. See p. 54.

844 273 271 contact with water which symbolizes "the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni in the matter of family names" is a prefiguration of name-giving.

851 As soon as the patriarch hears of the birth, he comes and shakes the family pembele over the child's head, three or four times according to the sex, in order to pass on to him the nyama and the qualities of the deceased person from whom he has inherited the ni and the dya. Then, he brings the family altar kere la boli ni into the house of the woman who has just given birth and places it before him. Crouching upon the ground, with fingers spread over the object, he pronounces the following prayer: "You, boli, make me a chief, so that my family prospers, a child is /178/ born, his soul is entrusted to you; I invoke you, boli, night and day" (1).

1. Boli tigi i ka masaya kanu ñe, de wolo la, a ni kalifa be i la, ngo boli šu ani kle.

Holding the child on his knees, he places the object on its chest for three consecutive times. Repeating the prayer, he next cuts the throat of a red rooster over the open sac, dips the right index into the blood, and, depending upon whether it is a boy or a girl, makes three or four crosses on the forehead of the newborn who thus becomes the "son of the boli," boli dẽ.

A white sea shell, krokrodya (2), is placed before the newborn

2. Cardita vingens.

and gently moved about to "condense his dya within him." Then it is tied to the child's foot for three or four days according to its sex. 846 824 751 At the same time, the mother who is entrusted with the child's dya until the name-giving ritual, adorns herself during the eight days following the birth with a collar (madya, "dya of the person") made from the odoriferous root of the tree bearing the same name. She will wear it until the child takes its first steps so as to protect it and to recall that she herself carried the soul of the newborn.

553 852 The name is given on the eighth day by the chief of the Komo. Under the dubale, a tree which shelters the village meetings, the elders assemble around the Komo altars which have been carried to the spot (3). If it is a first son, the father gives one hundred kola nuts,

*173 [172] consisting of a rectangular pillar
worn away by the rains.

[765] According to custom, the members of the ton' settled down in front of the deceased's house for a week, singing, dancing and generally carousing in the usual way.

When this traditional period was over, Mamari asked them to enclose his father's and his mother's houses within a single wall. They set to work and built a wall with only one door, [622] over which they placed the pyramidal ornaments used only for chiefs' doorways. Within the enclosure they left the existing division in two parts, and it was henceforth understood that the part formerly occupied by Mamari's father would be reserved for people from Doukounna when they wished to stay in Ségou.

Kassoum was determined to show that he had been properly brought up and knew how to return courtesy; so, one day, he invited Mamari to a drinking party, planned especially in his honor. Mamari accepted and, on arriving, found that Kassoum, from impatience no doubt, had started the celebration so far ahead that he was already dead drunk.

According to the usual custom, Mamari ordered one of the ● [273] ton-den', as it was his duty, to taste the dlo first (2). Lacking

2. A precautionary measure to
guard against poison.

a utensil in which to pour a small quantity of the beer, the taster sipped from the crock itself. Kassoum jumped up in a fury, crying out that the ton-den' was a disgusting person, and [37] broke a gourd full of beer over the fellow's head. In turn, Mamari became angry at Kassoum, whose manners struck him as coarse and intolerable. Then, after much invective on both sides, Mamari left the place to return home. Kassoum took up his bow and arrows and set out after Mamari. However, since he was slowed down by his drunkenness, he could not go far and his arrows missed their mark. Mamari returned to Ségou and, for the first time, installed himself in his father's house.

769 782 As a substitute for the chicken, it is very common to offer some dege, a bit of millet coarsely ground and thrown in a little water. The fa keeps this liquid in a small gourd. It is perhaps [182] reasonable to think that this is the most ancient manner of honoring the dead and, in particular, calling for their protection in obtaining the two essentials of life: grain and water.

[273] An equally common libation is made with dlo, a kind of millet beer which every Bambara enjoys drinking to the point of intoxication. The dead could hardly fail to be pleased with an offering of what they had enjoyed so much on earth!

[276] One must conclude, too, that offerings of kola nuts please the dead because it gives them a chance to enjoy a favorite treat. The officiator chews the kola nut and then spits out his saliva mixed with the juice and remains along the walls of the blon'.

Such are the ordinary offerings, but on special occasions the quantity and importance of the gifts are increased according to the desired results. When many people are present and the [781] house is prosperous, the victims are oxen and sheep. It should not be forgotten that the flesh of these consecrated victims, eaten in common, makes a very strong mystical bond between the participants; it is a true communion. It is generally conceded that the bond created by drinking consecrated liquids together is much less strong.

776 778 In addition to his ancestors, every Bambara has as his special protector, one of those gods (nyana) which are created wholly by the work of the magician. Every family has one or more nyana, whose priest is the fa. The boli, the symbol and altar of this type of divinity, is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put into a leather or canvas sack, a gourd, or a pot. The nyana of Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, was a n-ko whose boli was kept in a monkey skin. The boli is taken out of its cover so that libations can be poured over it and animal remains smeared on it. If there is some objection to exposing it, the offering is put on the cover.

769 794 Everything that takes place relative to the cult of the nyana is analogous to that described for the cult of the ancestors.

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[184]

family gives the bride's family a young girl to replace the one taken away.

until all or a portion of the agreed bride price has been paid and especially not before the customary gifts have been received.

The nature and value of the bride price and gifts vary since they depend on the wealth of the future husband, the rank of the woman and family customs. Among the poor, the bride price is small: a few handfuls of cowries, a chicken, a few kola nuts, a few lengths of native cotton. An average bride price is worth, in all, 25,000 to 30,000 cowries (about 25 to 30 francs). Among the rich, the bride price may include one or more slaves, gold jewelry, silver, fabrics, clothing, etc. [435]

The same is true of the gifts; everything depends on the families involved. It is customary around Ségou, however, for the fiancé to give his bride a large piece of native material called kundugu fini, a dloké (a kind of blouse), and a pair of sandals with very thick soles. He must also, if he can afford to, give her a slave to do the kitchen work, a cow, jewelry, etc. [199]

He must also give presents to the girl's parents in accordance with his means.

The totality of the bride price and gifts is called furu-fen', literally, "the property of the marriage." As soon as part of this furu-fen' is handed over to the furu-bolo-ma-tigi, he takes it, escorted by some of the fiancé's friends, to the girl's fa. All of these proceedings, of course, involve jugs of native beer (dlo). The notables of the place, the dugu-tigi, the "elders," and even the kamalen', come at once to congratulate the family, to share in the drinking, and to receive a share of the furu-fen'. [273]

The fiancée is often a little girl, and in that case the duties of the young man and his family go on for several years. The giving of gifts is repeated, to an extent commensurate with the young man's wealth and the standing of the girl's family. At the time of harvest it is customary for the fiancé to send one or more baskets of millet, each weighing 20 to 40 kilos, and from time to time, a jug of beer, 20 to 30 liters. On the

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857 "dog" and "the sexual parts of a man," and it seems evident
831 that the expression n-Tomo-ulu should be taken in the latter
195 sense. This is all the more likely since in the similar organization among the Khassonké the same apparatus is called khefengo, literally, "thing of a man," that is, "sexual parts of a man."

857 The great festival of the association takes place every year after the harvest and does not differ essentially from the
796 one celebrated at the same time by all the brotherhoods. It involves offerings and sacrifices to the genie-protector, communion by the n-Tomo-den' at a corporate banquet, and the admission of new members. The following is a detailed description. [238]

At the instigation of the n-Tomo-tigi, the brotherhood's field has been harvested and to the grain collected has been added whatever the boys could obtain from their families or friends by any means, even theft. From this millet the n-Tomo-
● [273] tigi has had dlo (beer) prepared, which is drunk in great quantities on such occasions. The "elders" (koro-u), relatives, and friends can be counted on to send their contributions in kind.

Each n-Tomo-den' is given a little outfit appropriate to the occasion. The ceremonial costume is put in order; the dloki and trousers are washed and ironed, if need be, and the mask is rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu) to give it gloss.

On the day set, everything is in readiness. Many gourds of dege (1) and to (2), numerous jars of beer (dlo), and also some kola nuts have been assembled, along with sacrificial victims.

857 The n-Tomo-den', each leading a chicken on a string,
796 go to the meeting place in single file, with the n-Tomo-tigi
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[252]

1. Dege is made by putting coarsely ground millet into a small quantity of water.

2. A native mush.

881 302 On the same day the young girls in certain localities have a characteristic ceremony. One of them whitens her face, breast, and back with a mixture of milk and ashes. Thus daubed, she dashes out of the village brandishing the spatula (to-n-gàlama) which is used to stir mush (to) in the pot; her companions follow her, shouting. The band goes around the village four times in this fashion, each time stopping at the crossroads. At these points the girl who is bedaubed throws handfuls of food (1), provided by her companions, to the spirits,

[262] 1. Usually basi (couscous) made with fish.

crying: "Dege dule (2)." Her companions reply: "Naloma (3)."

2. Literally, "thick mush."

3. That is, "fool."

881 527 ● [273] [576] The eve of the soli (soli-si). During the evening preceding the soli, the families concerned enjoy an ample meal, accompanied by innumerable jugs of beer (dlo) as is the custom at all festivals among the Bambara. This is a time of special merriment, of shining faces and greasy hands, and it is good form for the men and boys to belch noisily, saying repeatedly: "ne ne fa," literally, "I am full," that is, "I am replete." The [301] women wander about the lanes, wrapped in their best skirts, with balls of amber in their hair and small silver or even gold rings in their ears and nostrils and rather heavy bracelets on their [482] arms and ankles. Some carry jars of dlo on their heads, while others carry gourds full of couscous, dege, or hot sauces which are often nauseous with smoked or spoiled fish. After the meal everyone gathers on the public square, forming a wide circle whose center is reserved for the dancers; piles of dried millet [373] stalks are used to make bright fires which illuminate the scene and warm the audience.

881 302 The "boys of the soli" (soli-ma-tye-u), their heads

freshly

794 [787] Furthermore, every *wara-mina-den'* is able to read the will of the Nya and, more generally, to reveal the acts of the invisible by means of the divination practices which we have already mentioned.

[782] The sacrifices are performed by the *muru-kala-tigi*, and a *dyeli* (herald) serves as factotum, just as in the other brotherhoods. [285]

794 796 The faithful are initiated and called to participate in the cult to an extent determined by the clergy; they are called *Nya-bo-den'-u*, literally, "those who follow the Nya." In order to be admitted, an individual must give a chicken and 120 cowries. The next day, in the presence of the *Nya-tigi* and the *wara-mina-den'*, the chicken is sacrificed on the *boli* by the *muru-kala-tigi*. The candidate is present, and in his behalf the *Nya-tigi* asks the Nya for protection against the *suba*, snakes, *korti*, and the evil eye. Then the neophyte is led to the sacred grove to be ritually purified with consecrated water contained in a vessel used exclusively for this purpose (1).

[783] 1. Every year at the time of harvest, the clergy undergoes ritual purification by washing in the sacred water. When a Nya is inaugurated, this purification takes place at the first harvest after the installation.

[731] The two great annual festivals are celebrated at the times of planting and harvesting. Similar ceremonies take place in connection with important events (epidemics, public catastrophes, etc.). For these ceremonies,, during which the Nya is supposed to give revelations about the event in question and to answer various other questions troubling the faithful, the *wara-mina-den'* [273] undergo special preparation and at the proper time drink a very heady beverage (2) which, they say, brings on their extra-lucidity.

[691]

2. I learned most of these details about the Nya during a criminal trial brought against the *wara-mina-den'* of Soun-Bambara,

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● 273
[691]

> near Djenné. The son of the chief of that village drank the special liquid, in spite of the fact that the wara-mina-den' had told him not to do so, and died. The latter was accused of having poisoned him, but when he explained the circumstances before the native tribunal, he was acquitted.

It is said that this drink is made by soaking any sort of root found while digging graves and seasoning it with pepper, salt, and red peppers. The beverage, which is highly intoxicating, is ritually consecrated.

794
796 Excited by this beverage and by the songs and dances of a crowd which is itself warmed with drink, the wara-mina-den' during major festivals acts as a visionary who freely reveals the will and desires of the god. On the evening before these important ceremonies and for several evenings before that, all the clergy and their aides meet for a kind of rehearsal of the dances and songs. It is then that the young men prepare for the major roles they will later play. The [286] wara-mina-den' is particularly concerned with the training of the man who will replace him in case of need.

There is nothing of special interest to note about the brotherhood's treasury, which is acquired and appropriated just as in other brotherhoods. The political action of the Nya and its relations with the communities are also such that they require no special attention. [287]

Chapter 5

The Clans

1. General Considerations

631 It is usual to use the word "empire" or "kingdom" to describe the form of government of most of the Sudanese states and particularly those founded in Kaarta and Ségou by the

243 classification is based on the distinction between the sorghums of ordinary soils and those of inundated soils. The latter are sown in August in nursery beds in fresh non-inundated ground and are transplanted at the end of the rainy season in land exposed by the receding waters. The yields vary from 400 to 1,200 kilograms per hectare.

[252 Millet is consumed in the form of flour or is used to make a
273] fermented beverage, *dolo,* which is something like weak beer.

Wheat is cultivated in the wadies where the water is shallow from November to February. Cultivation is carried out with or without irrigation in seed holes 25 centimeters apart and 4 centimeters deep, where the farmer deposits a pinch of seed (70 kilograms of seeds are necessary per hectare). The harvest is at the end of March at the latest. The average yields are from 1,000 to 1,500 kilograms. The wheats are generally tender and give excellent flours for bread, but this culture is still in the experimental stage.

Rice is cultivated on 80,000 hectares, of which almost half are in the central Delta (Mopti, Macina, Djenné) which constitutes the true rice granary of the territory. Outside of the Delta, the productive regions are: the upper basin of the Niger (Bamako), the lake and post-lake region (from Lake Débo to Ansongo), the region near Guinea (south of Sikasso and Bougouni), and finally 10,000 hectares of irrigated rice of the Niger Office.

Two kinds of rice are cultivated: one, an African rice (*Oryza glaberrima*) in the Delta, is a floating rice capable of enduring considerable submersion. The other, of Asiatic origin (*Oryza saliva*)[sic], is cultivated in the upper valley of the Niger and in the valleys of the small water courses. Lastly, a mountain rice which grows on dry ground must be mentioned.

What characterizes native rice culture is the absence of [30]
243 hydraulic control. It is a rice culture of submersion, thus very
312 insecure. Since 1944 attempts have been made to end these processes of "wild" submersion. In the upper valley of the Niger where the plains are insufficiently and tardily submerged, rice is sown at the beginning of the rainy season, and when it attains a growth of 20 to 25 centimeters, the water is sent gradually into the plain. When the rice is mature, the water is drawn off into the river through overflow outlets. In the Delta, where the rise of the Niger is utilized directly, regulating works prevent the flood from

[sic] [should be *sativa*-Analyst]

715 The great mourning lasts at least three days, and during all this time the people of the village rest (4). From all sides people come running in large numbers to be present at the *djansa* and to keep company with the new head of the family and this is understandable, for however little the family esteems itself, *d'lo* flows in streams, and [273] the Negroes dread neither travel nor the sun when there is the prospect of gorging themselves with millet beer. At the end of the great mourning, the great sanga *fo* (5), there is a crowd at the home of the family of the deceased, for all the friends are there to pay their respects for the last time to the departed old man and to install his successor. The women grind false-cedar bark, soak it in water, and spread it in the /223/ hut of the deceased. Armed with a broom of dry straw, they sweep from floor to roof, gather the dirt in a worn-out gourd and throw it all onto the *da*-*n*-*koun* (1) of the quarter. To do this they form a procession; an old hag marches in front, brandishing the broom, and, half dancing and half walking, they all shout:

"*Fari ô.* *fati doun ka di*

4. For distinguished religious heads (*gnéna*-*n*-*sonnaba*), for example, there are often eight days of rest if the season permits. In the winter this is impossible because there is urgent work.

5. *Sanga fo* means "to go and give one's condolences to a family on the occasion of a death."

1. *Da*-*n*-*koun*, corner of land formed by paths that cross, hence outside the village.

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782 offer some dege, a bit of millet coarsely ground and thrown
in a little water. The fa keeps this liquid in a small gourd.
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769 Everything that takes place relative to the cult of the
794 nyana is analogous to that described for the cult of the ancestors.

222 [276] 782 787 Kola nuts are much prized by the natives; their caffeine content makes them a stimulant and energizer. The Bambara use seven kinds of kola nuts in their sacrificial and divinatory rites: 1. Dangoro (red nut); 2. Geleworo (white nut); Sosokuworo (a red nut pointed at one end); 4. Flaniworo (yellow kola); 5. Worodanda (kola without opening) which has no apparent cleft where it may be split open; 6. Bassiworo (a dark red, bitter nut); 7. Ryeworo (nut of light and indeterminate color). (This list is given us by G. Dieterlen in her Essai sur la religion Bambara [Essay on the Bambara Religion]).

252 To prepare kola nuts, they are placed in baskets of very coarse mesh lined with leaves that are moistened every four or five days.

245 Among cultivated trees, other than banana, mango, lemon, orange, pineapple trees [ananas, may be a kind of pine; the pineapple is not a tree fruit], etc., one must mention the Acacia albida, which plays a large role in Bambara mythology. In the dry season, it is used as fodder for cattle.

[32] C. Textile Crops

248 Side by side with these food crops, the Bambara cultivate textile plants which they use in addition to the wild textile plants. Among the principal ones, we shall point out the da (Hibiscus cannabinus) whose fibers are used by fishermen to make their nets. [227 286] It does not rot and is a possible rival of jute. The labor to exploit it, pulling up the stalks, retting, extraction of the fibers, is done in the dry season, when many hands are available. (1)

1. G. Spitz, L'Ouest africain français [The French West African]. [Ed., L'Ouest africain, A.O.F. et Togo; The West African, French West Africa and Togo.]

Cotton, which grows spontaneously in many places, is cultivated near the villages as an annual plant; it is a perennial plant which renews itself every four or five years. During the cultivation cycle, it is grown between millet and maize. The harvesting is [28[illegible]] done by women; it is picked out and spun by women, but it is woven

796 881 The youths follow, dressed in blouses knotted at the abdomen like towels and trousers into which three pairs of legs and three abdomens could fit without any trouble, dragging drums and bass drums. To keep up the march and cause it to be forgotten (they often come from far away) they shout a loud "you you" and make coarse jokes, which are here addressed to the fair sex more than elsewhere. Sometimes also, between two laughs, two great silly laughs, something like the crack of a whip is heard. This sound is made by five stubby fingers as they are applied to the cheeks of dear little angels, warming them. In fact, a band of little boys and girls trot among the youths in their birthday suits, passing to the right and to the left and winding between their legs, and patience wears out and quickly comes to an end.

After the young people come the old men; they are bent double, leaning on spears, and even while talking of future projects they recall the days of the past. It is quite apparent that there are no more like them, their equal cannot be found. Into the foroko, the goatskins they slip over their arms and fasten on their shoulders, they have slipped some good handfuls of cowrie shells for the mothers of the circumcised [276 431] and excised, a box of the snuff that every self-respecting stranger gives as a gift to the men of the village, and finally the kola nuts that the sacrificer will chew before spitting the remains onto the front side of the god and some that, as educated, well-bred men, they keep for close friends. They also carry the hens or roosters for the sacrifice; these are attached by the feet to the straps of the foroko and hung head down their wings flapping horribly.

881 796 301 The human flood arrives at the gates of the village, stops a moment under the big trees, and tidies itself. The pointed caps /184/ are put a little to one side of the head, the blouses are unfolded, and nakedness is concealed. On the women's side there is indescribable hubbub, like the sound of the distant ocean at rising tide; they polish and adorn themselves and beautify themselves. On their feet they put little chains, on their arms heavy bracelets that knock together with the sound of old iron, and on their hips the young girls at least hang belts of beads sprinkled with little bells that tinkle at the slightest movement. In their noses they put crescents of gold or copper, in

754 the tiny horn in his hand, grasps the stick, and, after uttering maledictions against the person in question and saying his name, places the stick on his tongue, first lengthwise and then crosswise. After this manipulation in the pattern of a cross, he replaces the stick in the horn. When the traveler returns to his own village, the charm will take effect. If, on arriving, he is so careless as to sit down anywhere but on the bare ground, he will die. If he does sit on the bare ground, he will be safe.

If it is not the traveler whom our man wishes to harm, but someone in the traveler's village, the Bambara, after having gone through the afore-mentioned ritual proceedings against the enemy, will then seek out the traveler and engage him in polite conversation. Just as the traveler is about to take his leave, he will say to him: "Give my regards to So-and-So." When the returned traveler delivers the message, the person receiving it will suffer no harm if he repays in exactly the same way the compliments that have been conveyed to him; however, if he merely says "maraba" (thank you), he will die at once.

The so ma sama belongs to a category of magic weapons, which are especially and deservedly feared and which [150] the Bambara include under the general name, korti. There are endless korti, usually powders made of every imaginable and often repugnant ingredient (snake venom, the dung of wild animals, putrefied entrails from all kinds of corpses, etc.).

[278] Here, for instance, is the procedure used to make su-mugu. A very dry stalk of millet is inserted into the intestine of a dead animal through the anus and is left there long enough for it to become impregnated with the toxins produced by cadavers; it is then withdrawn and thoroughly dried before being pulverized. The resulting powder is kept in horns or boxes, either as it is or mixed with an ointment.

Many of these powders are put into the food or drink to be consumed by the victim. Various methods are employed for this purpose. A ready method is for the harmful powder -- notably su-mugu -- to be placed under a fingernail; then the

791 people in their hands; it is they who guide them and force them into obedience by predicting that those who resist will be afflicted with sickness, all kinds of calamities, and death. They are capable of all sorts of actions to preserve their prestige. They compound love philters, talismans, amulets, etc., but they are even better at compounding poisons: [278] they are familiar with Strophanthus and their mixtures of hyena intestines, excrements of human corpses, and saliva taken from their mouths have terrible effects.

791 648 These makers of rain and fair weather, who predict the future, cast lots, and cure the sick are all jealous of one another; there is no unity among them, and since cowardice is each one's chief virtue, there is no fear for the moment that they will press toward revolt. However, one should have no illusions, for that good-fellow smile on the lips of the Bambara in no way gives a true picture of their feelings. They hate the French because they are conquerors, and especially because the French have forbidden them to take slaves, sell, or even own them, and because they cannot administer justice as they please. The elders, who were formerly so powerful, feel their authority decreasing little by little, and there is fury in their hearts. They tremble and are afraid, they dread our rifles and cannons, whose rumblings still ring in their ears; they believe France to be even greater and more powerful than she is. But if some day a bold, enterprising, and audacious sorcerer should appear, he would succeed in creating a temporary union between these divergent groups no matter how slight a control he achieves. Then, without any doubt, we would see partial uprisings like those so frequent among the Moslems. The latter have deep in their hearts a hatred of everything that is not Islam and are never so happy as when they can march behind a fanatical Marabout; certain Frenchmen, well intentioned I like to believe, who refuse to admit thousands upon thousands of conclusive facts, continue nevertheless to help and pamper them, because they do not know the Koran and its teachings. Urged by I know not what naive philanthropy, they warm a snake which will turn against us every time it feels strong enough /37/ to raise its head, and they are preparing bloody days for our colonies in the fairly near future.

754 all functions to some degree, and it is to his own advantage to be content,
674 in such an instance, with the position of solicitor; to whoever
/52/ consults him, he indicates a celebrated fetish in the hands of one
of his friends. The Bambara runs there without delay, and the master
of the fetish, generously and heavily paid, takes the god out of its
dirty goatskin. Onto one of its instruments (for a boli is manifold, and
[778] horns of cattle and antelopes, varnished with blood and brownish in
color, are mingled with other objects in the shape of an eggplant, a
turnip, a beetroot, a napkin ring, horse dung, etc., etc.), onto the
sirikoun, which is almost always wrapped in a red shirt front, he ties
firmly with a cotton thread seven straws five to seven centimeters
long. The petitioner explains his visit, names the enemy on whom
he wants to take vengeance, gives the reasons that compel him, and
the master of the fetish recites his formulas, reddens his sirikoun with
blood, and plasters onto its sides some spittle containing chewed kola
nut.

754 If the sacrificial hen dies with spread wings and breast on the
674 ground and if when split in half the kola nut falls with the pulp down
787 and the round side up, the contemplated revenge is put off until later,
for it is believed that the sacrifice has not been accepted. Our
Bambara then goes away, relieved of a hen, two kola nuts, and at
least 160 cauri, but nowise defeated; eight or ten days later he returns
to the charge, unless he is too impatient to wait and consults a new
sorcerer, who gives him orders to appeal to a fetish that shows a greater
interest and has a more enterprising and less timid disposition.

If the hen dies on its side or on its back with its feet in the air,
and if the pieces of kola nut fall on the round side with the pulp on
top, the sacrifice is accepted, and this is the god's answer to the
effect that he is taking his client's side. The enemy is thenceforth
754 placed under the boli a blara boli koro, the sanctioned expression;
674 he is placed under the avenging power of the fetish and is in its hands,
● 278 and the master of the idol, the sacrificer, and the people in his retinue
plot to make him disappear at once. They undertake the task themselves
as seldom as possible, however; they prescribe sacrifices and
offerings to the client and give him a deer horn carefully tied up,
telling him how to use it. This deer horn is nothing less than a horn

754 674 278 of poison, and the brown powder concealed in it is usually Strophanthus seed /53/ crushed and kneaded into excreta of human corpses and saliva taken from their mouths. This mixture is dried in the shade and then wrapped in a piece of hyena intestine, and to render the effects more immediate and certain, the fetish is brought out and placed on this meal and a sacrifice made. These sacrosanct preparations are made at night, if possible in the first quarter of the moon, and never on a Monday or Thursday, which are days of rest for the boli gods (1).

527 776 1. The boli have two days' leave per week, and the Negroes also take this rest. However, they are broad-minded on this point even though for certain labors they ask the religious chief or a sorcerer to be allowed to work. As a rule a boli may not go out Sunday or Monday night nor on Wednesday or Thursday. They quite often do go out, however, but only by command of the fetish or a sorcerer. To bring out a fetish is to spend the night dancing the dance of the fetish, and when the initiates want to dance they always manage to do so. The boli are also sacrificed to on Monday and Thursday even though they are at rest. In theory there is rest for the fetishes; actually, the idea is loosely applied.

754 674 To succeed and to keep from displeasing the fetish, who would then abandon your cause and turn against you, you must follow the prescriptions of the priest and members of his council to the letter; the omission of one rite, one sign, one formula, one imprecation, destroys the power of the poison contained in the horn, or at least renders it ineffective. Sometimes this powder is thrown and is called korti sou, and at other times it is poured and is called dounkono di.

754 become detached and fall of their own accord "if they are well made
674 and have lost none of their complete power"; he also has a mass of antidotes. Almost always he escapes with nothing more than a few days on his mat and a good stomach-ache, and although his convalescence may be long and can sometimes go on indefintely, at least he is shown sympathy; he gets a big share in the sacrifices offered by his friends, and his broth improves.

754 If the korti are many and cannot be numbered -- "each fetish has its own" -- the dounkono are still more numerous, for in addition
278 to the fetishes, the sorcerers, elders, men, and women, all know how to prepare a poison and give it whatever strength and power is desired. Every poison produces a special disorder in the body depending on the hand that throws or pours it. When in doubt, the Bambara consult the being who never deceives and cannot be mistaken: the sorcerer! And it is usually he who prescribes the antidote.

754 In the eyes of the Bambara, pouring poison (dounkono di) or throwing it (korti sou) is a blameworthy act, and those who are guilty
673 of it have a dismal reputation among their fellows. One should not be surprised to see this crime remain unpunished, however, for in their eyes it does not bear the same odium as an overt or concealed murder by main force. I might even say, without fear of error, that this way of taking revenge is for them not a crime in the strict sense of the word. They so often have recourse to fetishes to settle a dispute and so readily threaten an enemy with the wrath of the gods, that taking vengeance through their intermediary leaves them calm and without any remorse. Besides, with what reproach should we reproach one who does so? It is true that he is cruel and without pity, /56/ but who gives power to the powder that he pours and the powder that he throws? It is the god, the fetish, and it alone is guilty! So let the enemy obtain the fetish's good graces and ward off its blows by sacrificing, let him set a more powerful god against it.

761 As one can see to the Bambara there is nothing natural about physical and mental suffering and death; there is always an intermediary,
153 and suffering and death are caused by an enemy who is taking vengeance, by a wicked person, by a sorcerer, or by a fetish.

776 778 782 which I have before me, reports the same fact on the subject of the Komo boli. Moreover, this Father is a student of the Bambara -- when the Blacks of Ségou speak of him, they say, "Bamana-n-do," which means that he spoke and understood their language well.

throat of the victim of the general sacrifice: "Alla djampa ba, i k'an bla, i ka bo an koun na, God, great traitor, leave us, go away from us!" -- and the crowd repeated the blasphemy after him: "Alla djampa ba, i k'anbla, i ka bo an koun na!"

3. Boli Whose Power is Slight

776 778 Since the boli do not all have the same strength and power, and fear is the basis and foundation of Bambara worship, they are not all equally honored. We will divide them into two main groups, those of "little power" and those of "great power," and we will end this chapter with a word on the talking boli, the prerogative of certain sorcerers, and on the sirikoun, another, quite special, kind of boli.

778 278 By boli of little power I mean all evil fetishes which are basically not very terrifying, in the sense that it is thought that they very seldom cause anyone's death. Many of them are primarily medicines, and almost everyone has them. They are tails of cows, goats, dogs, and wild animals; they have no specific names and are generally called foura (2) ("medicine"). Additional "medicines" are the kana,

[2] This name foura is given in a general way to all boli; I should therefore remark that the word "medicine" in the sense that we understand it, is not the exact translation of the word foura. This word is in itself untranslatable

778
278

> into our language and means a force, a conscious force, that opposes another conscious force which seeks to harm us, and destroys it.

horns and hoofs of bulls filled with an ointment the composition of which it is very difficult to specify: blood, fat, and dried, crushed glow-worms are combined with iron powder, charcoal, and other /135/ ingredients. They are the Bambara equivalent of the "pink" pills which cure all ills, including baldness and ingrowing nails -- and that sums it up. The kana of which I speak are boli, and differ from the kana possessed by each powerful boli, which are no longer boli but parts of boli. Let us quickly admit that the word kana is as indefinite as the word foura, and means primarily "that which protects, preserves, and keeps us from harm."

778 These little fetishes are not given festivals, and only their
782 owners sprinkle them with blood and sacrifice to them. They cost
little, and a sorcerer or the owner of a father foura or kana will make
[436] one for a modest sum varying between 5 kémés and a ba fla (5 kémés =
200 cowrie shells; ba fla = 1,600 cowrie shells), which is from 5 sous
to 2 francs.

Apart from the sorcerers, whose boli are innumerable, there is a
whole group of people, the noumons (blacksmiths), the koulés (who
dig canoes and mend broken gourds), the donzo (hunters), etc., who
have such strong confidence in all these horrors that they would rather
die of hunger than be deprived of them. The hunters all have some to
224 make them active and alert. Before every hunt of the least importance
778 there is a black pullet from each, and on the return another sacrifice
782 is made, however unlucky the hunt may have been. The keeper of
each fetish is usually the only one to pay respects to it. However,
his brother hunters may give it a small offering, and it is understandable
that they do so, since each fetish has its specialty. One is for deer,
another for guinea fowl, a third for the big antelope (dadjé in Bambara
and best known to Europeans under the name of koba, a word of the
Peul language) or for the wild pig /facochère/, for the panther or the

794 173 country and that the Bambara Massa-si, who had fled to Gadiaga, received it, in turn, from one Namori or Nyamori, a former slave who had been initiated into the mysteries of the Koré and who, for that reason, was named Kor-dyuga.

794 778 Over and above the general characteristics already noted, the Komo has the following peculiarities.

It is said that to make it perfect the *boli* of the Komo requires the body of a *degeni*, that is, of a very young boy. Thus, the body of the Komo of Tiguini (20 to 40 kilometers from Ségou) is said to be none other than the body of the grandson [271] of its founder. The same thing is said of the *boli* of the Komo at Kégué in Bani territory.

This *boli-den'-fa* is equipped with three iron tubes, and the whole thing is called *tama gengen-ba* (1). There is a horn at the end of one of these tubes, with an opening serving as a mouthpiece. The sound drawn from this trumpet of sorts by the *wara-da* announces a meeting of the Komo.

The usual accessories accompany the *boli-den'-fa*: *korti*, *kana*, and *siri-kun'*, which we have already mentioned.

When not in use for ceremonies, all this equipment is [281] put into baskets similar to those used to transport cotton. The *tama-gengen-ba* are wrapped in a tiger skin. A hut with a conical roof, similar to the native huts, serves as a temple and holds all the regalia. It is called the *Komo-bon'* (hut of the Komo).

When he is on duty, the *wara-da*, "oracle" of the Komo, 793 794 778 is dressed in a special costume consisting of a mask and a cloak. The mask is surmounted by horns and does not cover the face, but rather is affixed to a stick hidden in the folds of the cloak; it goes up and down at the pleasure of the *wara-da*, who is completely

1. The term *Komo dyoloro*, meaning "chain of the Komo," is used in front of the uninitiated. The *wara-da*, oracle of the Komo, is called *dyoloro samana*, "he who drags the chain" of the Komo. In the special language of the cult, "sacrificing to the Komo" is expressed by *an bi nege son'* (we pay homage to the iron).

794 process, let loose a rain of sparks which the *Kore-duga* zealously
776 put out with leafy branches. Then each dancer, carrying what
786 is left of his torch, kneels before the drums, making an obscene
gesture which arouses the laughter of the onlookers and giving
the cries, roars, or laugh of the "wild beasts." Elsewhere, the
nyoni-sa-ma are roaming among the drinkers, tearing at them-
selves with thorns. Flagellants lash themselves with switches
[785] that leave cuts from which the blood flows. They stiffen themselves against the pain and keep up this cruel sport, which once again the *Kore-duga* mitigate by binding up the wounds.

There appears to be no doubt that during these orgies the most shameful excesses are committed without the slightest restraint.

The Nya

794 This brotherhood is highly esteemed in all the Bambara villages in the cantons of Say and Karadougou. It is less common in the canton of Séladougou; in the canton of Saro, five-sixths of the villages are loyal to it. It is rarely found in Nyansannari, and outside these areas in the circle of Djenné, there are only a few scattered Nya brotherhoods in the Bendougou and Ségou areas.

The cult arose in the Bendougou region. As has been
[443] noted above, the villages of Moribala, Kourbadougou, Diali, etc., are market villages where all the *boli* are found, together with directions for using them.

778 The *boli* of the Nya consists of a piece of wood from 25
794 to 30 centimeters in length and from 10 to 15 centimeters in
height and width. It is wrapped in an absorbent material, usually cotton. The blood of the victims and the liquid of the libations are poured on this *boli*, and then hairs or feathers and bits of entrails, eggs, and kola nuts are stuck to it, giving it a
repulsive appearance. It is true that the *boli* is often concealed
[281] from inquisitive eyes by putting it in a container made of an old piece of the hide of a she-goat. However, since the container is given the same treatment as the *boli* it contains, it is just as disgusting.

C. Statistics

231
433

	Sheep Goats	Bovines	Horses	Asses
Bamako	64,987	49,425	6,227	10,356
Ségou	234,645	161,965	10,454 -5,165	12,159
Bougouni	17,360	29,197	431	1,651

Estimates for the three Bambara centers.

D. Products from Livestock

253 Meat -- The principal slaughtering centers are Bamako and Kayes.

439 Some of the available bovines are exported to Senegal. This is done from the Kayes circle by way of the routes: Néma, Timbesa, Nioro, Kayes; or Néma, Nara, Yelamano, Kayes. Others are sent to Guinea to provide meat for the workers in the gold placers of the Siguiri region. Some go to the Ivory and Gold Coasts, where the animals are sent chiefly from Mopti, with participation from the circles [487] of Ségou, San, and Niafunké. Numerous caravan routes penetrate to the Ivory Coast by way of Odienné, Seguela, Korhogo, Bouaké, and Boho-Dioulasso.

[255] Preserves are made in the factories of Lyndiane.

281 Leather -- Leather comes either from the slaughter houses or from the bush. It is of mediocre quality because of poor preparation: the skins are dried in the sun, folded in two lengthwise, hair against hair, and tied together with a wire, ten to a bundle. About 600 metric tons pass through Bamako annually.

234 Milk and milk derivatives -- The cows are poor producers; most of the milk is furnished by the Moorish, Peul, and Toronké zebus. Butter production is primitive: the sour milk is put in calabashes, cans, or goat skins and shaken until it turns to butter. At Falaladji near Kayes there is a butter and cheese factory.

236 431 Wool -- The wool is generally used locally for weaving; only a small percentage is exported to France. A great effort has been

782 As an example we will summarize below the ritual killing of albinos as it was practiced under the royalty. This underlines the mystical value of the victim and is an excellent example of the mechanism inherent in sacrifice; it brings out the ritual value of the details on each of which the Bambara place particular emphasis. Finally, it confirms the value and symbolism of different parts of the body as described in the preceding chapter.

782 826 /95/ The kings of Ségou were formerly provided with albinos by a man from the village of Pelengena who kept them prisoners and set them aside for this purpose. But this man exploited them by shaving their hair and selling it to the chiefs of neighboring villages as symbols of the men whom, sooner or later, they could reckon to have under their domination. The chief, having counted his subjects, war prisoners held as slaves as well as captives received as tribute, would prepare as many small sticks as there were men; then he would mix up these sticks with the hair and bury them all in the wall over the sill of the entrance to his home. The hair is supposed to represent beforehand an increase in the subjects of his domain and to help bring in the taxes.

But the albinos themselves were kept for the king who sacrificed them to Faro in cases involving the affairs of the kingdom.

1. When the king found himself in difficulties of an administrative nature, the victim was cut in half through the middle of the body at the level of the abdomen by means of a rope of the *da* fiber (1): his cries, gestures, and excrement were considered the vehicles of a *nyama* which "would eliminate the difficulty encountered by the king." No one was supposed to hear his cries which were not intended for human ears but for Faro, to whom suffering was also due. The king, above all, should not hear the screams under penalty of failing in his enterprise, and yet he had to be present at the torture and watch it with complete detachment.

● [283 824]

The lower half of the victim's body was Faro's due. It was carried to the Niger by three men if the victim was a male, or by four if it was a female. One of them carried the body on his head.

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1. *Hibiscus*. The *nyama* fiber was considered impure and could not be used for the albino.

BA
773 tools and the throwing weapon were made. Then, unfired pottery
and weaving were invented; and men finally came to know stone
tools, iron and the forge. The technique of making dwellings
seems to have developed more slowly.

BA
BO
a. Fishing

226 Side by side with populations who specialize in the art of fish-
463 ing, such as the Bozo or the Somono caste, all the Bambara fish in
564 the [96] rivers or watercourses in the neighborhood of their dwellings.
A detailed study has been made by J. Daget (1). The Somono, who
are the caste of Bambara fishermen, use traps and nets for fishing;
the Bozo remain faithful rather to harpoons and small nets. They are
BA the ones who almost always make the pirogues, for they alone may
BO enter in rapport with the spirit of the water, Faro. The nets are of
286 knotted mesh made with a weaver's shuttle, *sia*, and a cylindrical
227 mold, *pako*. The band of the net, as it is being made, is nearly
always attached to a wooden bridge especially conceived for this
purpose, the *kale* or *dio soyo kala*, a regular tetrahedron whose edges
BA are about 20 centimeters long, one of which is prolonged by a handle
BO 1.50 meters long. The fisherman, seated on the ground, puts the
[283 bridge before him, keeping the handle close to his leg. The fibers
824] used in netmaking are *da* (*Hibiscus cannabinus*), *kie* (*Figna unguiculata*),
cotton, and now European thread.

BO
The Bozo construct weirs from cut and joined tree branches;
226 the weirs assume several different forms according to the regions and
BO the snares used. Fish are used for human consumption; they are eaten
BA fresh, grilled, fried or boiled, or preserved by smoking or drying. Oil,
251 used for cooking and as a lubricant, is extracted from certain fish,
252 such as the *tineni*.

BA Fishing in Bambara villages is done communally under the
226 direction of a fishing chief at the time the waters recede. Precise
rules of fishing rights and of rents due the masters of the waters are
respected everywhere.

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1. Jacques Daget, "La pêche dans le delta central du Niger" [Fishing in the Central Delta of the Niger], *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. XIX (1949), No. 1.

137

a) The Acacia albida called kokuruni (Banankoroni).

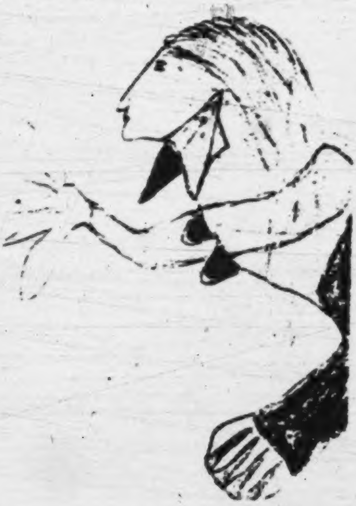
Plate I

b) In the foreground, baskets of spiralled straw called yugu (Ségou market).

285
415

532

c) Drawing representing Faro (Sama).



763 A gunshot today most likely signals the death of a
hunter or the father of a hunter. In any case, however, there
are always cries and vociferations by [165] the women, who
are joined by their friends, relatives, and neighbors.

Horsemen ride off to notify any of the sons of the deceased who are away.

[567] Meanwhile, the chief of the slaves, the major-domo,
the confidential agent, or a friend or neighbor of the deceased
goes to inform the chief and the principal men in the village.

These personages come to the mortuary house at once,
764 spear in hand. After being received by the man temporarily
in charge of the house, they go to the deceased to discover his
identity and at the same time express their condolences to the
family represented by the person who received them; then they
withdraw.

In the mortuary hut silence descends while the women
prepare the body. They wash it with warm water usually
[824] scented with basil, su-ko-la (Ocimum album and febrifugum);
they dry it and wrap it in pieces of native white cotton material or else dress it in its own garments, likewise white. A mat
[285] of coarse straw (tyekala, kara) is placed in the middle of the
room. A fine, flexible mat made of iphène leaves is put on
top of it, and the women lay out the corpse on the second mat.
Sometimes they place a grindstone on the abdomen to keep it
from swelling.

When these preparations are completed, the women,
[352 dressed in white native cloth, sit down in the native fashion on
516] tiny stools in the mortuary hut. Those who come in from outside give evidence of terrible grief: they cry out, they weep,
[152] they cover their heads with a bit of cloth and hurry toward the
mortuary hut. As soon as they enter, they become quiet and
stop weeping.

152 Among the Bambara grief is never silent; it is custom-
764 ary to show it overtly. As soon as there is a crowd, the singing
767 begins, in rhythm to the clapping of hands. One person or
another will be inspired to sing of the achievements and virtues
of the deceased. Professional weepers and mourners mingle
with the crowd, guiding and gradually encouraging the noisy
display.

463 make tools, farming implements in current use, furnishings, orna-
326 mental objects, bracelets, different kinds of rings. They also work gold and silver to make jewelry in filigree.

462 Weaving and basket-making are not done by the people of caste, but by all men, or, formerly, by their house captives.
286 Primitive looms, worked by treadles, are set up outside of the
285 houses in the shade of the trees. The men weave long bands of cotton for making clothes, loin-cloths, and blankets. These bands, several meters long, are sometimes made into rolls weighing as much as 30 kilograms and are carried off to market by the diula
[531] (itinerant merchants). The Bambara practice dyeing, batik, and embroidery (done by the men).

433 All this industry remains of strictly local interest and is directed solely toward meeting the immediate needs of the community.

c. Division of Labor

462 The Bambara are essentially an agricultural people. Never-
857 theless, as all members of the society must contribute a certain amount of work to the community, the nature of this work varies according to the social classes and according to whether a man, a woman, or a child is involved. The following tables indicate how the work is divided.

1. Distribution of tasks according to A. Aubert.

Men	Women	Children	All
	Foodstuffs		
	Preparation of food and dolo (beer)		
	Sale of dolo		
Preparation of hives, setting them, gathering the honey	Bottling and sale of honey	Helping	

412
831 the peasant digs with the male hoe and covers with the female hoe; the work done with the female double of the peasant and the male double of the wife symbolizes the sexual union. (1)

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1. M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, "L'agriculture des Bozo," [Bozo Agriculture] Journal des Africanistes [Ed., Journal de la Société des Africanistes, 1949.]

d. Basketry

● 285 Basketry is done by everyone, men and women; it plays a
large part in the construction and furnishing of the house. Sometimes
the lofts are immense baskets, woven on the diagonal. In certain
regions a great mat is wrapped around the exterior wall of the round
hut. The doors of mud huts are often coarse mats woven diagonally
[531] which are placed before the opening. But much finer mats, made
from fibers of different colors and with geometric designs with a
symbolic meaning, cover the ground for sitting or sleeping.

e. Weaving, Clothes, Ornaments

291 The first article of clothing was the fiber skirt made from the
[824] nyama (Bauhinia reticulata, or Bauhinia thonningii) and the cover-
ing for the sexual parts which are still worn during religious cere-
monies.

[773] Mythology designates cotton as the first fiber to be woven.

286 Weaving is one of the most widespread techniques. Cotton, spun by the women, is woven by the men, in olden times by the captives, who work in the open air near the huts, in the shade of trees in the courtyards or in the public places. A primitive loom made of four vertical wooden parts connected by horizontal shafts and driven by pedals weaves long bands. The warp and woof form a ground stich and symbolize a being of intelligence and eloquence. Moreover, a science of the bands exists which is based on the symbolism of colors, designs, and numbers.

822 The Bambara distinguish three fundamental colors: white, red, and black. Each of these three tints has its history and its role

845
776 peculiarity of this fetish that it continues to live in its hourglass as
778 long as a particle of this object remains.

516
● 285
778

Young Bambara holding the sinsin, the fetish of twins

845 This fetish protects the mother of the twins, and unites the latter
778 in such close affection that one never receives a gift without sharing
431 it with the other. I would even go so far as to say that it is in good taste never to offer anything to one without offering as much to the other, and when they are given something, the first to be favored is the last born, who is considered by everyone as the older.

881 until they are completely healed; for it is not until evening, when
the setting sun reddens the horizon and takes on its bloody hue that
they re-enter the village. From this day on they wear a costume (all
[292] yellow if they are Bambara) of trousers, a blouse, and on their heads
a kind of handkerchief tied under the chin (4). They pass the time in
making mats, singing, striking together gourd disks strung on a stick,
and especially in eating, "for they are being stuffed," and in sleeping. /181/

881 But in speaking of the boys, I forgot the little girls! They
undress under the tree nearest to the sacred karité. Naked as a worm,
304 each one when her turn comes runs at top speed with her abdomen
to the ground and throws herself into the arms of a woman, also of the
blacksmith caste, who immediately cuts her. On a braided platter,
[285 made of fine, pliable grass, the mother or her substitute receives the
415 bloody fragment which will be a grigri, a talisman or good-luck
189] charm for the house, and while the gunpowder speaks, the disabled
girl, pretending not to be suffering at all from the loss of her clitoris,
goes back to her place, and another replaces her.

881 The session ends with the last girl, and the crowd breaks out
in a song of joy and triumph. The mother, the eldest sister, or a
[482] serving woman wraps the excised girl in a big white cloth and carries
her astride her back to the village to the hut which has been prepared
for her (1). This carrying, so laughable in itself (they can walk, even

4. In some villages, instead of the yellow handkerchief the circumcised have a cap with two points. In Bani country the circumcised wear the blouse and handkerchief, or cap, and nothing more.

[621
346] 1. Each village is divided into quarters. The excised girls of each quarter have their hut in that quarter.

773 224 411 Propitiatory sacrifices were offered on the wooden lamellae and the blood ran along the thong into the net. In addition, the hunter would saturate his weapon with the blood of wounded or killed animals to give his contrivance the victims' strength and to increase his own skill.

The ndõfere was used for a long time as a military weapon.

Weaving

773 286 ● The invention of weaving is linked to the discovery of cotton cultivation. The latter appeared long before that of millet at a time when the only known tools were those of wood used to scratch /103/ the earth at the base of the wild grasses with which men nourished themselves (1).

[171] 1. See p. 154. The Dogon admit the same priority of weaving over cultivation of cereal grains. See M. Griaule. Dieu d'eau, pp. 31ff.

The myth mentions simultaneously the appearance of cotton and the invention of spindles and shuttle; it does not mention the loom which appeared later. The tale of the manufacture of the first clothing also includes details on dyeing which seems to have been known at a very early date.

When the men returned from the bush where they had been cultivating the norolã sise (commonly known as cram-cram) and the narakata, a kind of couch grass which provided them with edible seeds, they would often abandon their wooden hoes at the crossroads in honor of the Soba spirit.

One day an old man who used to pass nearby was summoned by the spirit, saying: "To all of you who leave your hoes as you pass by, I wish to give something to hide your nakedness; but I will do it if you offer me a sacrifice."

The old man reported this incident to the men of his generation, who decided to sacrifice an albino at the crossroads. The spirit then told them to take the seed which they would find at the intersection of the roads and taught them how to sow and harvest it.

773 286 "This," he said, "will be useful to you later as clothing." Men first made skirts of leaves and fibers which they used as loincloth. Then they sent their women to sing and give thanks to the spirit. When they had sown and harvested, they placed the cotton on the crossroads as a gesture of homage (1). The spirit then taught the wife of a farmer, who used to come and greet him everyday at noon. One day she saw at the crossroads a bird whose name means "little bird who spins the cotton of God" (ala ka kwori parata kono ni). It held white fibers in its beak, pulled them out with its feet, and rolled the thread thus obtained around the body with its wings. "Watch the bird," said the spirit. "In this way he spins and weaves in the sky in order to protect his eggs. Cotton should be used in this way. Your death is near. Begin work from tomorrow on this little stick," he added, pointing to a spindle, "and teach the women of your family and the children."

The woman first spun awkwardly and went down to the river to show Faro her work and to ask for help. A fish came out of the water and gave her a spindle whorl in the shape of a ball, showed her how to adapt it to the spindle, and explained to her its use and divine origin. It announced to her that hereafter similar spindle whorl would fall from the sky with the rain for the women who spun cotton.

/104/ Having resumed her work with this new tool the woman was successful in it and taught her companions. They then threw their first threads into the Niger as an offering to the spirit so that the secret might not be lost. All artisans did the same with their first piece of work (2).

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1. This custom is still observed today.

[782] 2. Every first piece of work is thrown into the river as an offering to Faro. It is a guarantee for the artisan that his skill will be retained and that his technique will improve. Actually the young spinners of Ségou throw their first spindle into the river. In addition, the parata bird which taught weaving is captured, its wings and feet are roasted, and the powder is given to whoever begins the appreticeship so that it may be over rapidly.

773 286 Seventeen days after the apprenticeship the old woman died. Her companions continued to spin but since they did not work on wood (1), they had to ask the men to carve spindles, thus revealing their secret.

Some time after this the spirit sent a spider to weave its web at the opening of one of the underground holes used for habitation (see Fig. 6), where lived a man called Bambou Diara. The latter watched the insect and they called in his friend, Kari Mariko. They wished to imitate the web by using the spider's thread which, however, proved too fragile to work with. They then asked the women for their cotton threads. Holding a twig of straw on which he had wound the thread, and having secured the warp, as had the insect, to the two rocks protecting the entrance, Bambou imitated the spider and made a kind of round fan, shaped like the web with coarse loops. When he had woven two, he joined them with a rope made of *nyama* bark, thus obtaining the first loincloth (*mbogo nimba*).

Kari Mariko had watched the work and had noticed the difficulty with which his friend threaded the woof through the warp. He got the idea of winding the thread on a thin stick more resistant than the straw and of placing this in a stone trough which would slide easily between the elements of the warp. This was the first shuttle (*kuruni*). He wound the thread on it in three bobbins, the symbol of masculinity, thus consecrating weaving as man's work. The threads were then stretched horizontally and the shuttle was used vertically, thus cutting across the warp each time it went up or down (Fig. 6).

All came to see the work of the two artisans and named the village where they lived the "village of intelligence, *hakilidugu*." They learned from them the art of weaving and today the names of the two friends are still invoked over the plate of food which each apprentice must eat before beginning his instruction.

Following the breaking of a taboo in the course of a fishing expedition on the river, the spindle whorls ceased to fall from the sky. Since then, fishermen /105/ produce them by mixing clay with karite oil and drying them in the sun.

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[412] 1. Except for cooking, a woman never uses a knife, an object reserved for men.

173 The loom was invented later. The positions of the warp and woof
286 and the practice of breaks and knots were modified. The loom was
[782] formerly the object of nocturnal human sacrifices whereas the shuttle received lesser sacrifices in the day time (1).

1. At present, looms are set in the ground above a piece of pottery, the bottom of which is pierced before the pot is buried.

The stone on which women clean the cotton, kaba, represents the sky and recalls the divine origin of cotton and of the technology relating to it.

Clothing

291 Clothing which has intimate contact with the human body is a part of the person wearing it. On the other hand, the material of which it is made, and the various elements which compose it and which are associated with one or another aspect of Bambara metaphysics, exercise an influence on the wearer. The choice of clothing is rarely a matter of chance or individual taste and the various manifestations of social or religious life usually obligate people to wear appropriate clothing, the symbolism of which is linked to the action or circumstance under consideration. The role of the garment appears as early as infancy: a newborn wears around his loins a cotton thread, dyura dyuru, which is both a protection (for it "solidifies his spinal column") and a foreshadowing of what he will wear later. When he reaches the required age, a family reunion takes place on the day he is dressed for the first time. Before this, it is necessary for him to have dreamed of his first garment and to have talked to his mother of this dream; she then begins to spin the necessary cotton. Before dressing, the initiate proceeds with an ablution called mayadyi (literally, water of the person's action) in water taken from the Niger or from a pond of Faro's. The dressed child is told "that he is now a man and may become a member of the ndomo (2)"; then his kinsfolk tease

2. Society of the uncircumcised (see p. 222).

Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;
222 their caffeine content makes them a stimulant and energizer. The
[276] Bambara use seven kinds of kola nuts in their sacrificial and
782 divinatory rites: 1. Dangoro (red nut); 2. Geleworo (white nut);
787 Sosokuworo (a red nut pointed at one end); 4. Flaniworo (yellow kola); 5. Worodanda (kola without opening) which has no apparent cleft where it may be split open; 6. Bassiworo (a dark red, bitter nut); 7. Ryeworo (nut of light and indeterminate color). (This list is given us by G. Dieterlen in her Essai sur la religion Bambara [Essay on the Bambara Religion]).

252 To prepare kola nuts, they are placed in baskets of very coarse mesh lined with leaves that are moistened every four or five days.

245 Among cultivated trees, other than banana, mango, lemon, orange, pineapple trees [ananas, may be a kind of pine; the pineapple is not a tree fruit], etc., one must mention the Acacia albida, which plays a large role in Bambara mythology. In the dry season, it is used as fodder for cattle.

[32] C. Textile Crops

248 Side by side with these food crops, the Bambara cultivate textile plants which they use in addition to the wild textile plants. Among the principal ones, we shall point out the da (Hibiscus
[227 cannabinus) whose fibers are used by fishermen to make their nets.
286] It does not rot and is a possible rival of jute. The labor to exploit it, pulling up the stalks, retting, extraction of the fibers, is done in the dry season, when many hands are available. (1)

1. G. Spitz, L'Ouest africain français [The French West African]. [Ed., L'Ouest africain, A.O.F. et Togo; The West African, French West Africa and Togo.]

Cotton, which grows spontaneously in many places, is cultivated near the villages as an annual plant; it is a perennial plant which renews itself every four or five years. During the cultivation cycle, it is grown between millet and maize. The harvesting is
[286] done by women; it is picked out and spun by women, but it is woven

248 into narrow bands by weavers [men] who make clothes from it in
286 unbleached, indigo-blue, yellow, or black fabrics. At the present
time, after numerous attempts at improvement since the occupation,
[654] seeds selected according to the zones of cultivation are distributed
to the farmers, and the administration encourages industrial cotton
cultivation in irrigated regions, as well as mechanical spinning and
weaving.

248 Sisal is an agave of Mexican origin. The long, thick, pointed
[177] leaves, after undergoing a series of industrial operations including
mechanical extraction of the fibers, yields very strong textile fibers
suitable for cordage, rope making, rug manufacture, canopies, etc.

Kapok (Eriodendron anfractuosum) until a few years ago was merely gathered, but now plantations have been created. The fruit is in the form of capsules containing seeds enveloped in a vegetal wadding. In one year the kapok tree can furnish 30 kilograms of fibers used in mattress-making, hat-making ...

D. Agricultural Tools

241 Bambara farming tools are very simple. The hoe is almost the only agricultural instrument used. There are several kinds of hoe, particularly in the Bougouni region: the tyerengu, 0.50 meters wide, with a straight handle (chiefly used by the Sénoufo); the n'gu kala, 0.30 meters wide, with a curved handle. These two are used for digging, scraping, and banking. The flotton, from 0.10 to 0.20 meters wide and with a handle made from a forked branch, is used for the second dressing of the earth and for weeding. (When the weeds are too big, the weeding is done by hand). These hoes oblige the peasant to work stopped over. Let us also mention the axe, dyeli, which serves to cut shrubs and the branches of trees in clearing land, the machete, and a small pickaxe with a hoe handle, the yalo.

[33] Millet spikes are harvested with the aid of a special small knife to cut the stalk into pieces. Finally, the threshing of the ears is done with large bent sticks having round handles and flat ends.

Agricultural labors, tillage and threshing, are undertaken
[533] collectively following the cadence indicated by an instrumentalist.
[461] Work in the fields is generally done by starting at the bottom of a
slope and working up, so the rain will wash off the weeds. The

438 643 [648] the gold. But they, in turn, could in no case resell the gold to anybody other than the Fama. Aside from certain sacrificial uses and the making of jewels for the Fama's wives, gold served to ransom captives or to negotiate royal alliances.

435 The price of the commodities was set by agreement between buyer and seller, except for cloth which had a fixed price, 100 cowrie shells per cubit in the Bamako region. As a matter of fact, the cotton gathered in the fields of the community was woven by captives [286] who were not paid.

426 686 Loans were made without interest. Interest, *korko*, is still forbidden today. Loans are guaranteed by labor. The debtor who could not repay his debt on time and whose family head refused to pay it for him was seized by the Fama and held as security until such time as he had reimbursed his debt.

804 Side by side with French units of measurement, the natives use their own for trade. Their measures of length: the cubit (elbow to tip of middle finger), the span, the foot, the length of both arms extended, the pace, the *diare*, and the *kala* . . . ; their measures of capacity: the *sawel* or *mouré*, the *mud*; their weights: the *moutkhal*, the *catal*, the large and little *karoni*, the *wakie*, the pellet of *tali*, of *tomi*, of *bagana*, of *gelen*. Cotton is weighed on rough scales whose pointer is a wooden rod and the balances large gourds hung by strings. For weights, large rocks, *kulu*, from 800 to 1,200 grams are [436] used. Finally, the Bambara use French money almost exclusively: one franc of metropolitan France is equivalent to 0.50 francs C.F.A. Nevertheless, the use of cowrie shells is still frequent.

d. Banks

453 One bank of issue exists in French West Africa: the Bank of French West Africa. There are also private banks, the number of which has increased during the past few years.

The Bank of French West Africa, which has a branch at Bamako, carries out the following operations: [43]

1. discounts notes or bills of two or several signatures due in not more than 180 days;
2. creates, negotiates, or buys drafts;

463 make tools, farming implements in current use, furnishings, orna-
326 mental objects, bracelets, different kinds of rings. They also work
gold and silver to make jewelry in filigree.

Weaving and basket-making are not done by the people of
462 caste, but by all men, or, formerly, by their house captives.
286 Primitive looms, worked by treadles, are set up outside of the
285 houses in the shade of the trees. The men weave long bands of
cotton for making clothes, loin-cloths, and blankets. These bands,
several meters long, are sometimes made into rolls weighing as
much as 30 kilograms and are carried off to market by the diula
[531] (itinerant merchants). The Bambara practice dyeing, batik, and
embroidery (done by the men).

All this industry remains of strictly local interest and is
433 directed solely toward meeting the immediate needs of the community.

c. Division of Labor

The Bambara are essentially an agricultural people. Never-
462 theless, as all members of the society must contribute a certain
857 amount of work to the community, the nature of this work varies
according to the social classes and according to whether a man, a
woman, or a child is involved. The following tables indicate how
the work is divided.

1. Distribution of tasks according to A. Aubert.

Men	Women	Children	All
	Foodstuffs		
	Preparation of food and dolo (beer)		
	Sale of dolo		
Preparation of hives, setting them, gathering the honey	Bottling and sale of honey	Helping	

BA
173 tools and the throwing weapon were made. Then, unfired pottery
and weaving were invented; and men finally came to know stone
tools, iron and the forge. The technique of making dwellings
seems to have developed more slowly.

a. Fishing

Ba
Bo
226 Side by side with populations who specialize in the art of fish-
463 ing, such as the Bozo or the Somono caste, all the Bambara fish in
564 the [96] rivers or watercourses in the neighborhood of their dwellings.
A detailed study has been made by J. Daget (1). The Somono, who
are the caste of Bambara fishermen, use traps and nets for fishing;
the Bozo remain faithful rather to harpoons and small nets. They are
Ba the ones who almost always make the pirogues, for they alone may
Bo enter in rapport with the spirit of the water, Faro. The nets are of
286 knotted mesh made with a weaver's shuttle, sia, and a cylindrical
227 mold, pako. The band of the net, as it is being made, is nearly
always attached to a wooden bridge especially conceived for this
purpose, the kale or dio soyo kala, a regular tetrahedron whose edges
Ba are about 20 centimeters long, one of which is prolonged by a handle
Bo 1.50 meters long. The fisherman, seated on the ground, puts the
[283 bridge before him, keeping the handle close to his leg. The fibers
824] used in netmaking are da (Hibiscus cannabinus), kie (Figna unguiculata),
cotton, and now European thread.

Bo
226 The Bozo construct weirs from cut and joined tree branches;
the weirs assume several different forms according to the regions and
Bo the snares used. Fish are used for human consumption; they are eaten
BA fresh, grilled, fried or boiled, or preserved by smoking or drying. Oil,
251 used for cooking and as a lubricant, is extracted from certain fish,
252 such as the tineni.

Ba
226 Fishing in Bambara villages is done communally under the
direction of a fishing chief at the time the waters recede. Precise
rules of fishing rights and of rents due the masters of the waters are
respected everywhere.

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1. Jacques Daget, "La pêche dans le delta central du Niger" [Fishing in the Central Delta of the Niger], Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. XIX (1949), No. 1.

412 831 the peasant digs with the male hoe and covers with the female hoe; the work done with the female double of the peasant and the male double of the wife symbolizes the sexual union. (1)

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1. M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, "L'agriculture des Bozo," [Bozo Agriculture] *Journal des Africanistes* [Ed., *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, 1949.]

d. Basketry

285 Basketry is done by everyone, men and women; it plays a large part in the construction and furnishing of the house. Sometimes the lofts are immense baskets, woven on the diagonal. In certain regions a great mat is wrapped around the exterior wall of the round hut. The doors of mud huts are often coarse mats woven diagonally [531] which are placed before the opening. But much finer mats, made from fibers of different colors and with geometric designs with a symbolic meaning, cover the ground for sitting or sleeping.

e. Weaving, Clothes, Ornaments

291 The first article of clothing was the fiber skirt made from the [824] *nyama* (*Bauhinia reticulata*, or *Bauhinia thonningii*) and the covering for the sexual parts which are still worn during religious ceremonies.

[173] Mythology designates cotton as the first fiber to be woven.

●286 Weaving is one of the most widespread techniques. Cotton, spun by the women, is woven by the men, in olden times by the captives, who work in the open air near the huts, in the shade of trees in the courtyards or in the public places. A primitive loom made of four vertical wooden parts connected by horizontal shafts and driven by pedals weaves long bands. The warp and woof form a ground stich and symbolize a being of intelligence and eloquence. Moreover, a science of the bands exists which is based on the symbolism of colors, designs, and numbers.

822 The Bambara distinguish three fundamental colors: white, red, and black. Each of these three tints has its history and its role

822 in the rites. "Red is the color of the middle regions of the world. It characterizes dry heat; it is the color of anger and of justice, that of the king, center of the kingdom." Black or indigo (2) is

2. Zahan, Les couleurs chez les Bambara du Soudan français [Colors Among the Bambara of the French Sudan], Notes Africaines, 1951.

identified with the North and the [98] rainy season. It evokes impurity, obscurity. It denotes sadness and the end of labor. The South accords with the ancestors and the color white which represents light and purity; it is the color of Faro. The whole system
286 of bands woven from different colored threads according to various
802 designs translates the different conditions of the wearer, for each band has its own history, its definite use, and its cosmogonic correspondences. The study of this was begun by G. Dieterlen in Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion] and is being
291 pursued at the present time. Today the form of clothing varies according to the age and sex of the wearer. Young children are nude, with the loins girt with a cotton string or with a belt of blue beads or cowry shells. Sometimes, two small copper bells attract the protection of Faro by their sound. Up until their marriage, the young girls wear a loincloth passed between their legs and held in place by eight bead belts. When they are married, women wear the loincloth open, attached at the waist, and a cotton handkerchief covers
[854] their hair. When a child is born, another cloth knotted at the chest holds the infant astraddle on the mother's back A chief's wife
[554] wore a piece of material made of seven bands which she threw over her shoulder. Very young boys wear short drawers whose form varies with the age classes. Later they are dressed in a short tunic with a neck opening cut out and fitted sleeves, and in ample short breeches
[801] formed of three bands (the masculine number), passing between the legs and three bands on each side covering the thighs. The waist is also encircled by four times three bands, numbers of femininity and of masculinity. Over their clothes, men and women wear a large cloak with an opening cut out in the middle for the head and whose ends are sown together, leaving large openings on each side. These cloaks have a large pocket in front and are embroidered with symbolic

826
622 1. Bolo ti doniya ye dali duru sira ye, bolokoni kumba dãga ye dyẽ saba gundo ye, tyemasa bolokoni ye dyẽ dura ye.

yo, of which only the first is realized (2).

2. On the worlds thought out by yo, see pp. 23-26.

826
643 On another level, the signs of the thumb are related to powers and those of the index to royal domains (fig. 1, nos. 8-12):*1

1. Sign zero (fu) represents the beginning of creation, the origin of all things. A curved segment extended from left to right denotes the dynamic quality of the universe. It is intersected by a multiplication sign expressing the infinite development of beings and things. But the vertical stroke crossing it on the left indicates both the cessation and the suppression of the whole (no. 11).

2. Sign of lightning. It expresses royal power and justice and is traced under the thumb ring of the king. The latter, when giving an order, would swing his hand, which means he is swinging lightning before those he addresses (no. 12).

3. Sign of the royal domain. The opening asserts the possible extension of the kingdom; the transversal bar is a protection of this kingdom from all destruction (no. 8).

4. Sign of the extension of this domain at the tree cardinal sides: east, west, and south (no. 9).

5. Sign of union. The oval represents the whole group of functionaries called tódyõ and barodẽ, officers and councilors who administer the kingdom under the king's authority (no. 10).

826
[783] As the feet are constantly in touch with the soil, they take on its impurity. An individual who has gone through severe purifications will need to avoid putting his feet on the ground during a period of time occasionally quite prolonged, for "to place one's toes on the ground is to put one's soul in contact with the impure earth" (1). It

● [241] 1. The invention of the shoe is mythically linked to the notion of the earth's impurity; the wearer must therefore avoid this contact.

*1[p.22, category 116—Analyst.]

173 The loom was invented later. The positions of the warp and woof
286 and the practice of breaks and knots were modified. The loom was
formerly the object of nocturnal human sacrifices whereas the shuttle
[785] received lesser sacrifices in the day time (1).

1. At present, looms are set in the ground above a piece of pottery, the bottom of which is pierced before the pot is buried.

The stone on which women clean the cotton, *kaba*, represents the sky and recalls the divine origin of cotton and of the technology relating to it.

Clothing

291 Clothing which has intimate contact with the human body is a part of the person wearing it. On the other hand, the material of which it is made, and the various elements which compose it and which are associated with one or another aspect of Bambara metaphysics, exercise an influence on the wearer. The choice of clothing is rarely a matter of chance or individual taste and the various manifestations of social or religious life usually obligate people to wear appropriate clothing, the symbolism of which is linked to the action or circumstance under consideration. The role of the garment appears as early as infancy: a newborn wears around his loins a cotton thread, *dyura dyuru*, which is both a protection (for it "solidifies his spinal column") and a foreshadowing of what he will wear later. When he reaches the required age, a family reunion takes place on the day he is dressed for the first time. Before this, it is necessary for him to have dreamed of his first garment and to have talked to his mother of this dream; she then begins to spin the necessary cotton. Before dressing, the initiate proceeds with an ablution called *mayadyi* (literally, water of the person's action) in water taken from the Niger or from a pond of Faro's. The dressed child is told "that he is now a man and may become a member of the *ndomo* (2)"; then his kinsfolk tease

2. Society of the uncircumcised (see p. 222).

291 him and joke with him, indicating by semi-ritual jokes his accession
to a new status.

291 773 Men's first garment was the skirt of nyama fibers (Fig. 8, A). The
bark was beaten and prepared by means of a club, a wooden club,
gosilande or kuruninde, which is /106/ supposed "to contain potentially
all human technology invented as the need arose." It is said of this
club that it is "the mold of perfection and the place from which all
useful things issue." The club was also originally a primitive instrument of rhythm (1); the hammering of blows "chased away the evil
[755] sounds emitted by Téliko at the time of his revolt." Even today, a
deafmute is seated near the gosilande which is prayed to so that he
may be rid of his infirmity. The clothing of a woman in labor, in
[844] order to purify it, is beaten with the gosilande at the same time the
infant utters its first cry. Dyed clothing is beaten not only to make
the color penetrate, but also to chase out any impurity.

When they first learned about cotton, and after the invention of weaving, the Bambara made garments which are in disuse today but of which they still make specimens for ritual purposes. In fact, with the exception of the loincloth, these ancient garments are worn only during religious ceremonies and their principal function is to represent the ancestors who were their progenitors.

291 773 386 The first garment woven was an imitation of the fiber skirt. The
men made loincloth (mboko nimba) still worn today by the uncircumcised and dyed it yellow, wolo (2) (Fig. 8, B), a color which
represents that which a certain disease gives to the black's skin,

[783] 1. kow dyele bwo yoro. On certain occasion when the Komo masks are brought out, the chief carries on his head the gosilande which represents the universe. Certain collective purifications are also executed with this instrument at the crossroads (see p. 186).

[824] 2. This dye is made with the leaves of the ngalama (Angeissus leiocarpus), which are boiled, dried, and pulverized. The powder is put in water.

● 291 which they got rid of by means of this dye. A live swallow was im-
773 mersed in the liquid, which was obtained by soaking the leaves and to
386 which was mixed ground charcoal, and later was released, thus consecrating the dye into which the loincloth was soaked.

291 The next garment was made of two strips, dyo kama (literally,
773 shoulder nets), which were hooked on to each arm. The strip on the right arm, representing male, was attached by three thin straps (male number). The other was attached by four straps, four and left being female. The wearer would lie down over the strip on the right side

[532]

[787]

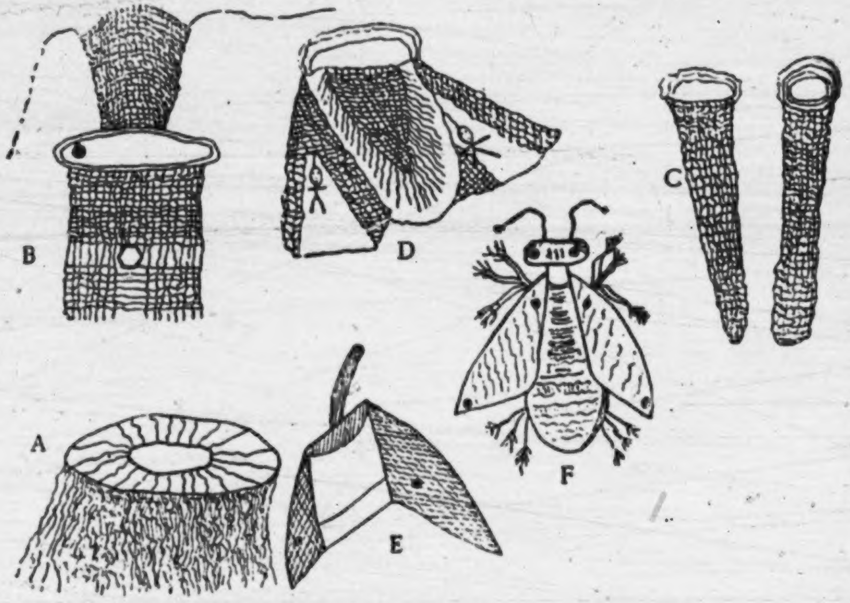

Fig. 8—Ancient Clothing of the Bambara.
(A) The skirt of nyama fibers; (B) the loincloth; (C) the "shoulder nets"; (D) the tunic; (E) the bonnet are made of dyed and woven cotton threads. (F) the dung beetle, an insect which plays a part in geomancy. (Drawing by an informant).

and would cover himself with that on the left (Fig. 8, C).

Next, men made a kind of short tunic, wọlọ kama (literally, partridge wings), which was dyed red (Fig. 8, D). At the top of the openings where the arms passed were suspended /107/ two little figures (mani) carved out of wood. These represented the souls of the wearer, "took their life from the veins, and gave their strength to the

291 773 arms on which they rested." The center of the garment represented the chest, the liver, and the heart of the wearer; the horizontal threads the veins and arteries. The supporting collar, made of three bark fibers of the da tree, was "the individual's double during his sleep." Sweat was the offering made to this garment. In the cold season it was replaced by salt.. The first time a man wore this garment he would pray: "Garment, we wear you in the name of our old ancestors and in honor of those who created you."

The ancestors drawn on the sanctuaries and the granaries are all equipped with caps, banfla, which they wore in olden times (Fig. 8, E). At the top were affixed a wooden picket and a hyena tail, through which the sky gave its strength to man who in return /108/ would send his "through the wind." The cap (čema), made of strips of yellow dyed cotton, had wings (bamadae), symbol of the ears: the lines on the right wing assured numerous offspring and those on the left, a secure and righteous life. The wings also recall those of the swallow, the water spirit's messenger entrusted with carrying into the womb, at the moment of sexual union, the drop of blood containing the child's life and soul. The two indigo dyed spots on each wing are the symbol of this womb.

The cap as a whole (farofla) was the "link maintaining the life of man," who is himself represented by the line which encircles the cap. It protected him against cold, disaster, and death. It was also the symbol of Faro's home and power. When he received it, the wearer would say: "Wing of the cap, cap, son of Faro, I have drawn you with strength. Oh, swallow" (1).

1. Bamade, bonza, farode, ni be ke ola ni barikaye, nanale. The primitive clothes described above were observed by an informant at Bougoula and are presented to the postulants at the moment of their initiation.

After the invention of the loom, clothes were no longer made piece by piece. Bands of cotton made by weavers were used, cut up, fitted, and sewn—a technique still observed today throughout the Sudan.

291 773 531 There exists a "science of the bands," finew tno or finew dongo, which is familiar to all those who wear the traditional clothes. It

● 291 rests upon the knowledge of the symbolism of colors, drawings, and
773 numbers. The bands are numerous and each one represents one aspect
531 of metaphysics, one fragment of the myth. Thus, the story of Mousso Koroni is told in four successive bands (Pl. III, from 5 to 8). The wearing of the bands depends upon the physical or moral state of the wearer, upon his functions and activities (1).

> 1. We give below the description of a certain number of these bands, chosen from the ones most representative; we intend to publish a complete study of this aspect of a technique most revealing of Sudanese psychology.

291 The white band, *finin muku dye*, represents Faro, being as white
773 and luminous as the sky and the rays of the sun. White denotes wis-
531 dom and purity of the spirit, the purity of blood. The one who ap-
822 pears in public thus dressed is respected because he affirms thereby his desire to follow religious rules. It is also the color of offerings made to the spirit. A piece of white cloth is sometimes hung over the door of a home where people have just /109/ made a sacrifice. A sick man throws three white bands into the river, or gives them to a person poorer than himself. A white cloth, worn over a man's shoulder, "strengthens his nerves and articulations." At nightfall every evening, all the children put on a tunic of this color. Thus, despite the darkness, they are "in Faro's light" and will recognize each other in times to come as the children of one father, one family, one blood. The marriage veil is made up of eleven bands each measuring eleven cubits; these are not sewn together but rather basted in spirals. Thus dressed, the woman goes in the night to her future husband's village, in the luminous word of Faro and surrounded by the twenty-two elements of creation, the eleven spirals intersecting each other on the right and left. A dead person is also dressed in white: trousers with six strips representing man and his *dya*, and a hat with three bands. He is rolled up in a blanket of the same color and visitors place upon the corpse pieces of white cloth or cowrie shells. The whole signifies good will, sincerity, and devotion toward Faro of the deceased who must be "white under the earth" if he has not broken any taboos.

The opposite of white is indigo, *konofi*, which symbolizes darkness and impurity and which is worn in most cases where the spirit's

291 activity is not involved. Nevertheless, a woman puts on an indigo
773 loincloth the day she resumes sexual relations with her husband after
822 the end of her menses; she retains it until pregnancy. When she is sure
531 of her condition, she puts the loincloth in the sun to purify it and will
place the newborn child in it to remind him later that he owes his
life to his parents. A dead person who has broken a taboo is buried
[764 in an indigo shroud, the only reminder of light being a white cotton
784] thread which is placed on the corpse as an expression of apology and
forgiveness. Since indigo is taboo in most of Faro's sacred places, no
one wears it during sacrifices or religious ceremonies.

White and indigo complement each other. To twist a white and
[789] an indigo thread together to make a string used for holding an amulet
is to "roll together happiness and unhappiness, as in life."

The dye wolo is the color of yellow copper. It is in this color that the newly circumcised are dressed after the operation and until they are healed. Red, mbegu, is the color of copper and of blood. Hunters who wear a tunic of mbegu are "covered with a garment of blood." The band kayo (Pl. III, a, 1), in which are found these two colors, indigo and white, reproduces the rainbow: the white intervals are symbols of the word and of purity. /110/ A person making a sacrifice sews a piece of this band on his clothing to indicate that he is circumcised, that he is a hunter, and that he is truthful in his actions and words. A band is hung at the gate of the northern entry to the village in order to protect its inhabitants from dangers coming from outside. A man wears it when he has been ill or has suffered serious financial or family difficulties. On the altars, on the doorways, the colors are represented by millet mash, blood, and kola nut extract.
[821 As the rainbow keeps away the rain and dries up water, the kayo
784] strip may not be worn near the river or during sexual intercourse, for
it is Faro's taboo.

The band sirakele (literally, a road) (Pl. III, a, 2) represents Faro's descent from the seventh part of the sky down to the seventh part of the earth, the indigo stripe being the dyi fi, "black water," the spirit's earth seat. When put on the loincloth of a married woman, it expresses her rectitude and the good behavior she intends to maintain towards her husband. When worn by a traveler, it prevents him from losing his way.

291 The buguni (1) (Pl. III, a, 3) is "the sun ray Faro gave to Pemba
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821 1. The word designates the band's place of
531 origin, Bougouni.

● 291 for his great earthly labors." When clouds form, it is said that Faro
773 "is showing the buguni in the sky" and the diviners advise each person
821 to wear a strip in homage to the spirit and to facilitate the coming of
531 rain. The geomaneer gently rubs the earth, where he is going to
draw signs, with a cloth of this design. It is as though he has injected
sun, light, and truth into the work he must execute on the impure soil.

291 This band is also called kolõso mako, "necessity of the mixture,"
773 or kami, guinea hen, whose plumage as well as whose fragility the
band betokens. In this respect, the buguni symbolizes man's weak-
ness and incompleteness. When placed on a convalescent's clothing,
[155] it signifies that the latter has lost some of his vitality during his ill-
ness. Dressed in this fashion, he goes to the Niger and bathes so that
Faro might heal him. A man who has suffered severe financial losses
also wears the buguni. At the market, in public meetings, he will
not be made to pay his share of beer because of the band's silent
language which is clearer than words. If a widower remarries, he
sews a piece of it on his cap in memory of his first wife. The knife
of the person offering a sacrifice is wrapped in the buguni, for it
"never has enough blood," also in certain boli which continually
crave it.

/111/ In conclusion, the squares of indigo cloth represent the void and darkness; the white ones, fulfillment and light. To wear the buguni signifies hope, the impure or weak man hoping to become pure, strong, and fulfilled.

The bugunimba (literally, large buguni) or nyedẽ (literally, threads of the eye) has the same symbolism. A wound is bandaged with it. A man who has broken a taboo wears a cap of this material; an illegitimate child also wears it. The buguni tyekorole which symbolizes the impurity of Mousso Koroni is used to implore Faro's help in great calamities and for misfortunes without remedy. Thus, the body of a stillborn child is covered with it.

291 The buguni nyama (Pl. III, a, 4), made of twenty-two alternating
773 indigo and white squares, symbolizes creation in its harmonious and
822 orderly entirety. Its separation into two layers recalls the duality of
801 nature, represented by a thin stripe through the middle. A happy
man sews an entire strip into his tunic. The man who has difficulties
of any kind divides it lengthwise and pins a small piece at the bottom
of his garment.

291 773 822 801 The nyeba, "big eye," or koloso tyema, "mixed masculinity" (with femininity), (Pl. III, a, 11) also represents creation, here symbolized by the double layer of five indigo and white bands (1). At the same time the cloth also symbolizes the complete man, said to be both masculine and feminine. A newborn child, but never an illegitimate one, is clothed in it.

291 773 The band soli (Pl. III, a, 5) represents the good conduct of Mousso Koroni at the beginning of her life as well as her betrayal which brought disorder on earth.

[764] In olden times, people who had committed bad deeds were obliged to wear it. Today it is used as the shroud for a child who dies immediately after birth; a strip is sewn to the garment of a recently excised girl or to the loincloth of a woman insured in childbirth. When differences or conflicts arise within a family, a fragment is placed in amulets which the women must then wear.

[828] The wutu nyekorotike (Pl. III, a, 6) pictures the disorderly voyage of Mousso Koroni, her despair and her madness. This pattern is reserved for insane people in order to warn others of their condition.

The band gombo (Pl. III, a, 7) recalls the pursuit of Mousso /112/ Koroni by the god Pemba into the depths of the sky and the earth.

The band tyatyeli (Pl. III, a, 8) a picture of Mousso Koroni's defeat, symbolizes human work. It is given to a courageous and energetic woman. It is circulated among those present at religious ceremonies and its mere presence indicates that nothing here below is obtained without work and that all stems from work. To wear this band strengthens the man who is entering upon a task in a village other than his own.

The band saki is the koblenkaba, "red-sky." It symbolizes heat, anger, difficulties, and sorrows. It is woven at the time of marriage negotiations for the purpose of resolving any differences of opinion. [844] A piece of it is dipped into the blood after birth and then thrown away in order to purify everything.

[822] The blue stripes of dyitala represent impurity, and the red stripes, purification by sacrifice. Whoever has broken a taboo wears the blue, and the red when he is purified. A piece of red cloth may be inserted into the vagina of a young woman, after she has lost her virginity or

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1. On the value of number 5, see pp. 24, 25.

291 773 531 to replace the blood lost in childbirth; this piece is then burned to hasten the healing of the wounds.

The loincloth of a woman who has given birth to twins is made of the sukaba band with large, regular, alternating squares of yellow and indigo. The mother places on the garment as an offering a little of the millet mash she feeds her children for the first time.

The band nyoronga was formerly used for shrouds. The king would wear a whole garment of this or had three bands sewn onto his tunic when he went off to war; thus he wore his own shroud. A brave man would tie a piece of it to the barrel of his rifle to show his indifference in the face of death. A strip was tied to the right hand of those killed on the battlefield as a reward for having done their duty. Today, a shred of this band is hung at the door of a home where a death has occurred; People bandage a wounded limb with it before going to the healer's.

The wutu tyerokole with three stripes is worn by a child born after the death in infancy of numerous brothers and sisters. It represents the departure of these members of the family and their return in the newborn. Shaking such a band in the air honors the seventh sky and the seventh earth and asks their protection for the child. This cloth is never worn at funerals.

/113/ The kemba (literally, mother of scarifications) (Pl. III, a, 10) substitutes for scarifications when it has not been possible to perform them; on the other hand, this band is taboo to those who are ritually scarred.

The warabawolo (Pl. III, a, 12) represents the lion of the Diara: the first son of this family was born on this cloth. A boy born with a lock of hair on his forehead is seated on the cotton band to make him strong and rich. Formerly the king made a rug for his throne out of it. Since the lion is their taboo, the Diara do not have the right to wear it or even to see it.

Weapons and Tools

773 262 824 Originally, men lived by hunting and fishing. But hunger drove them to eat plants of which the first three are the yayalɛ̃, an aquatic plant commonly found on the shores of the Niger; the narakata, couch grass; and the norolã size, commonly called cramcram (1). Long

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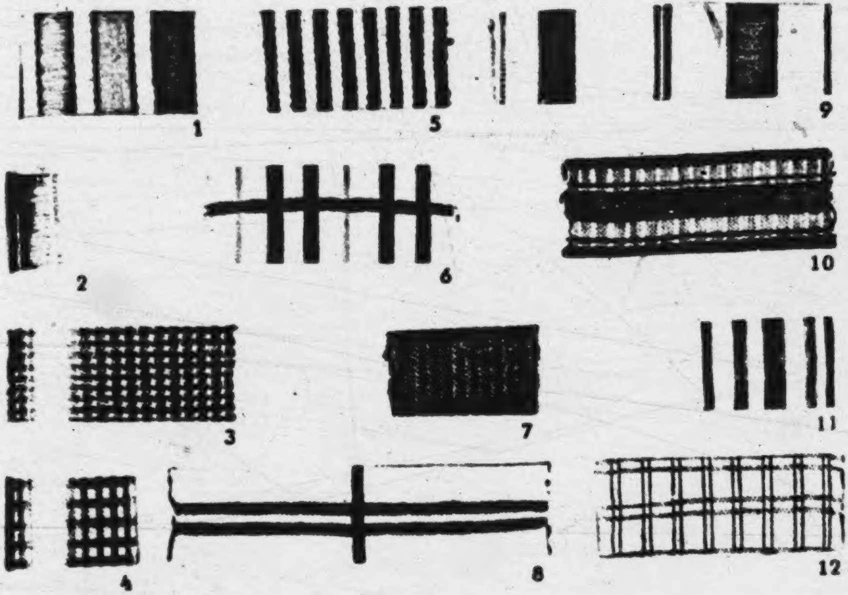

(a) Bands of cotton (the warp is presented vertically).

Plate III

(b) Offering of a band of cotton to the dasiri tree (Soroba).

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(a) Pot dipping after firing (Konodimini).

Plate IV

(b) Communal anvil, kula, of the blacksmiths (Konodimini).

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*173 several occasions and suspected the truth; so he used a trick. He pretended to take a bath and, while the water was running out, looked outside. He saw the child beneath the gutter and struck him with his iron-tipped stick.

Ngolo was terrified and ran off to tell his story to Danté Balo. The good woman interceded with Mamari and persuaded him to relent. Nevertheless, Mamari decided to separate from his favorite and summoned Kolé, the leader of the sofa, to whom he entrusted the child, saying: "Here's a bad boy; don't be afraid to make him work hard."

One day, when he had taken the bila-koro (1) in his charge to the field to cut fodder, Kolé sat down in a place called Sirani-n-tu (lit., forest of the little baobab tree) after the small baobab tree which grew there in the middle of a grove. The spirit of the place, who lived in the baobab tree, appeared to Kolé and said: "If you come tomorrow to this same spot and if you bring me a white ram, a white rooster and some rice, I will make it possible for you to become king of Ségou." Now Ngolo, who was wandering about nearby, had seen and heard everything. When he returned to Ségou he ran weeping to Danté Balo; when she asked what was the matter, he answered that a spirit had threatened to kill him unless he sacrificed a white ram, a white rooster and some rice. "Ah well," she said, "Cheer up, here's a white rooster and some rice, and you can take the ram from the master's flock. If anyone is surprised at seeing you with a ram, just say that I gave it to you." He followed her advice and arrived on time at the rendezvous, which Kolé, on the other hand, had forgotten.

After killing the rooster and the ram, in accordance with the rites with which he was familiar, and offering the rice, Ngolo saw the genie appear, while a distant voice said: "Ah, it's you, friend Kolé (2), I'm glad to see you obey my orders and, in return,

[56]
[291]

1. A young boy old enough to be circumcised and wearing a piece of cloth called bila between his legs, instead of trousers.

2. It is interesting to note that the genie

881 At the end of this time, the nyana-n-son-na-ba and his council having come to an agreement with the sema to end the period of seclusion, each leader performs certain magic passes, under the boys' tree and near the girls' huts, to dispel any evil. The Bambara are convinced that so long as the period of convalescence is not officially closed the circumcised boys or excised girls are as much a danger to society as society is to them; that is why they must spend this period in seclusion. Furthermore, anything used by them during their seclusion is impregnated with this evil and may spread it. 881 783

Therefore, as soon as the interdict is lifted, everything is collected to be burned at sunset (2).. Near the trees outside the village the mats, the n-koso-m-bara, the gourds, millet stalks, rags, etc., are all piled up, and the nyana-n-son-na-ba sets them afire. The boys and girls jump over the fire three times; they are then free to return to the village. They run home promptly to adorn themselves for the festival celebrating their return.

881 Once more there are lavish meals and interminable drinking bouts, followed by a general gathering in the public square. People come from all directions, among them appallingly decrepit old women who try to manage everything. [247]

On this occasion, the boys, soli-ma-tye, appear for the first time in true man's attire, full trousers, cap with earlaps, and an ample new shirt. With lance in hand, they swagger about and simulate the behavior of warriors; they are now tye-kura, "new men." [291]

881 301 The girls also are decked out to excess in women's attire. Wearing several skirts and adorned with all the jewelry relatives

[789] 2. However, personal effects (the boys' kursi, dloki, and baufla, and the girls' tafe) are not burned; along with their stains, these are impregnated with virtues which make them particularly valuable for talismans, amulets, and other magic weapons.

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Plate 1

[End plate 1]

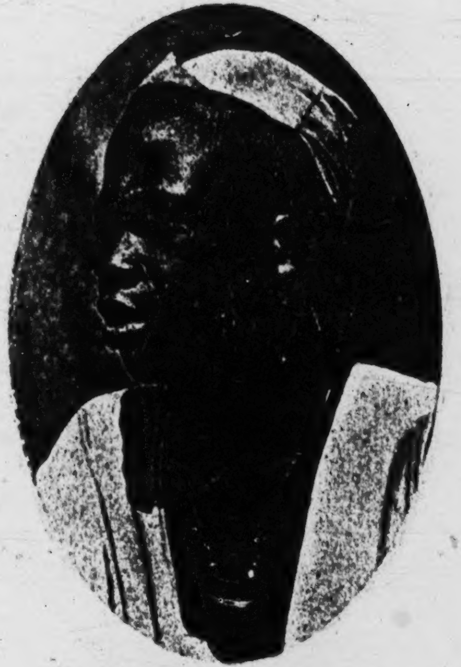

Fig. 1. Young Bambara from Djenné Region.

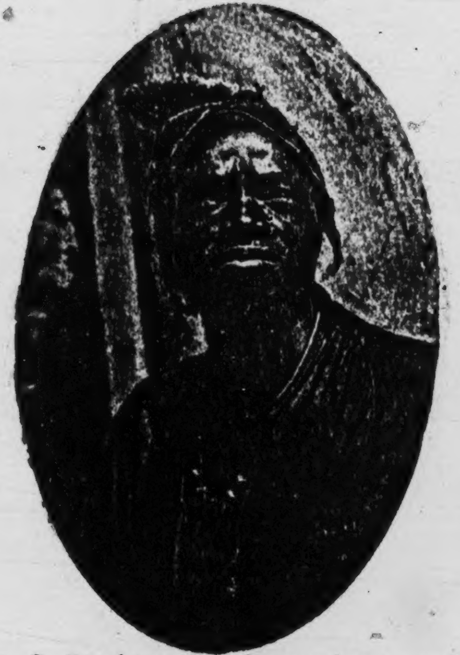

Fig. 2. Bambara with the cap known as bamma da (crocodile's tail), Djenné Region.

Plate 2

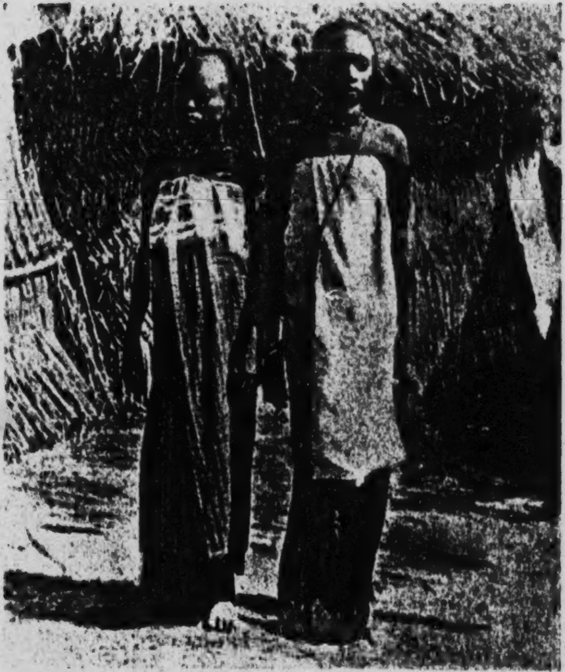

Fig. 3. Bambara girls in outdoor dress, Djenné Region.

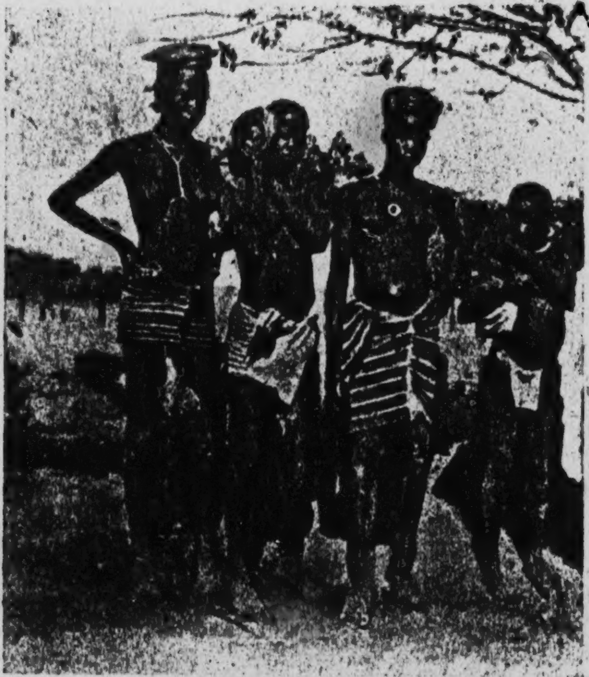

Fig. 4. Bambara women and girls about to set down burdens carried on their heads, Djenné Region.

[End Plate 2]

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831 the peasant digs with the male hoe and covers with the female hoe; the work done with the female double of the peasant and the male double of the wife symbolizes the sexual union. (1)

1. M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, "L'agriculture des Bozo," [Bozo Agriculture] Journal des Africanistes [Ed., Journal de la Société des Africanistes, 1949.]

d. Basketry

285 Basketry is done by everyone, men and women; it plays a large part in the construction and furnishing of the house. Sometimes the lofts are immense baskets, woven on the diagonal. In certain regions a great mat is wrapped around the exterior wall of the round hut. The doors of mud huts are often coarse mats woven diagonally [531] which are placed before the opening. But much finer mats, made from fibers of different colors and with geometric designs with a symbolic meaning, cover the ground for sitting or sleeping.

e. Weaving, Clothes, Ornaments

● 291 The first article of clothing was the fiber skirt made from the [824] nyama (Bauhinia reticulata, or Bauhinia thonningii) and the covering for the sexual parts which are still worn during religious ceremonies.

[173] Mythology designates cotton as the first fiber to be woven.

286 Weaving is one of the most widespread techniques. Cotton, spun by the women, is woven by the men, in olden times by the captives, who work in the open air near the huts, in the shade of trees in the courtyards or in the public places. A primitive loom made of four vertical wooden parts connected by horizontal shafts and driven by pedals weaves long bands. The warp and woof form a ground stich and symbolize a being of intelligence and eloquence. Moreover, a science of the bands exists which is based on the symbolism of colors, designs, and numbers.

822 The Bambara distinguish three fundamental colors: white, red, and black. Each of these three tints has its history and its role

822 in the rites. "Red is the color of the middle regions of the world.
It characterizes dry heat; it is the color of anger and of justice,
that of the king, center of the kingdom." Black or indigo (2) is
identified with the North and the [98] rainy season. It evokes
impurity, obscurity. It denotes sadness and the end of labor. The
South accords with the ancestors and the color white which represents
light and purity; it is the color of Faro. The whole system
286 of bands woven from different colored threads according to various
822 designs translates the different conditions of the wearer, for each
band has its own history, its definite use, and its cosmogonic correspondences.
The study of this was begun by G. Dieterlen in Essai
sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion] and is being
291 pursued at the present time. Today the form of clothing varies according
to the age and sex of the wearer. Young children are nude,
with the loins girt with a cotton string or with a belt of blue beads or
cowry shells. Sometimes, two small copper bells attract the protection
of Faro by their sound. Up until their marriage, the young
girls wear a loincloth passed between their legs and held in place
by eight bead belts. When they are married, women wear the loincloth
open, attached at the waist, and a cotton handkerchief covers
[854] their hair. When a child is born, another cloth knotted at the chest
holds the infant astraddle on the mother's back A chief's wife
[554] wore a piece of material made of seven bands which she threw over
her shoulder. Very young boys wear short drawers whose form varies
with the age classes. Later they are dressed in a short tunic with a
neck opening cut out and fitted sleeves, and in ample short breeches
[801] formed of three bands (the masculine number), passing between the
legs and three bands on each side covering the thighs. The waist is
also encircled by four times three bands, numbers of femininity and of
masculinity. Over their clothes, men and women wear a large cloak
with an opening cut out in the middle for the head and whose ends
are sown together, leaving large openings on each side. These
cloaks have a large pocket in front and are embroidered with symbolic

2. Zahan, Les couleurs chez les Bambara du Soudan français [Colors Among the Bambara of the French Sudan], Notes Africaines, 1951.

291 designs. European influence has naturally made itself felt in the
[177] fashions, and European thread is replacing native cotton thread, but
the color symbolism in the bands is retained. Even though European
fabrics invade the markets more and more, the traditional clothes
remain the most sought after, although they have undergone certain
modifications inspired by European fashions even while remaining
very original.

Although the Bambara go barefoot, in certain circumstances
291 they make ornamented clogs to give to the new bride. These sandals
531 are decorated with geometric designs, engraved with a hot iron by
585 the blacksmith, that symbolize the twinship, the multiplication of
children, the parents, the husband's family, the couple's language,
and the sealing of the association. These signs are encircled by the
sign of the union of the whole. Also, the whole ritual of taking
possession lasts for several days.

302 *Coiffure*. At the present time, the adult males no longer
wear the traditional coiffure consisting of two plaits at the side, but
the children still have their hair shaved and braided according to custom. Thus, the uncircumcised boys wear a crest of hair going from
the forehead to the nape of the neck, while the rest of the head is
shaved. The crest symbolizes the [99] divine serpent. The children of blacksmiths also wear, at the sides of the head, two circles
of hair which are cut by lines representing the forge. When a child
is born after the death of several brothers and sisters, only half of his
head is shaved in mockery, so that the *dya* subject to this pretended
neglect will decide to stay in the child. The children of Marabouts
have their hair shaved in such a manner that it forms a spiral which
starts in the middle of the skull and covers the whole head. Afterwards, bands of hair are shaved in a manner to trace a cross on this
spiral. The little girls wear a small braid across the forehead, falling on the left side, while married women wear a braid at each side
of the head. These braids are made by adding fibers of the *da*,
shining with karite, plaited with the hair. Finally, the women wear
301 22 gold rings at the ears, images of the 22 primordial elements, or
sometimes a single large ring in the form of a crescent closed by
threads of red cotton, which is a résumé of the 22 others. These
rings keep impure words from the ear, which plays an important
[776] role in generation; it is through the ornamentation that the spirits
hear what is said to man.

869 In addition to wearing the costume, which is white
794 (n'tomo djé) or yellow, black, etc. (n'tomo fign), the boy who
778 dances the dance of the genie hides his face in a frightful wooden
mask on top of which are five, seven, and sometimes eight
horns.

869 The n'tomo injects a whole organization into the world
794 of children. They quite naturally divide themselves into
561 small groups, each corresponding to a circumcision that is to take place, and are thus all of the same age, born in the same year, or very nearly so. The member of each group who is the oldest -- be it by only one day -- becomes its head, and all the younger heads obey the head of the oldest group, the n'tomotigi, and his aide, the n'tomotigi siéré (1), who is drawn from the group which will be circumcised after that

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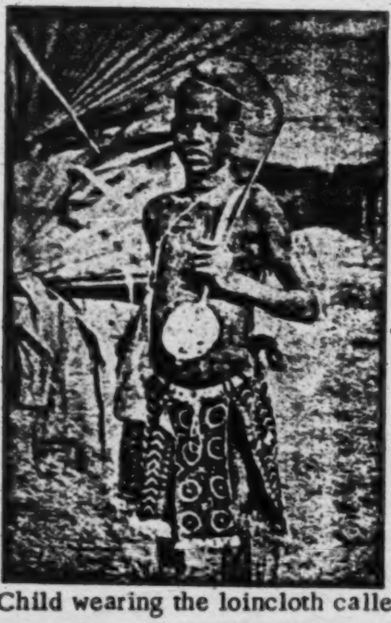

Child wearing the loincloth called yaba.

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1. Siéré, "aide," "deputy."

776 Such a spirit is the exclusive property of one family, and even
621 bears its name, or *diamou*. Its sacrificer, called *gnéna-n-sonnaba*,
793 also bears the name of *dougoutigi* (1); he is, in fact, the real head of the village. Although at present the civil and religious authorities
[554] are separate in many places, the *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, or religious priest, always holds precedence, and self-respecting people call him *dougoutigi* (head of the village), giving the title of *sotigi* (2) to the one who has only civil authority. Here we have further evidence that the organization of the Bambara nation was, at its origin purely religious. The separation of the two authorities in certain hamlets can easily be understood.

631 Under the Bambara dynasty the kingdom of Ségou was divided into provinces, cantons, and villages. The king, *Fama* or *Massa*

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Typical Bambara headman.

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1. *Gnena*, "fetish," "genie"; *sonnaba*, "great sacrificer"; *dougou*, "village"; *tigi*, "head," "master."

2. *So*, "hut," "house"; *tigi*, "head."

776 village and in our families; grant us plenty and wealth, give us many
782 wives, healthy and vigorous children, and a long and hearty old age."
796 If the occasion is semipublic /109/ or public, a general sacrifice is
always offered in the name of the family, the quarter, or the village, and then individual sacrifices follow. On the days when they are held, there are always dances and drinking bouts, for the favors of a fetish cannot be obtained except by leaping to the sound of drums and by getting drunk.

At the risk of repeating myself, I cannot resist giving the fascinating side of the Negroes' attachment to their fetishism and describing the festivals and celebrations in honor of the principal fetishes -- in order that the reader may gain a greater understanding and feeling for their worship.

The N'tomo, the Special Children's Fetish

852 The harvest is over, and the yield of the field cultivated by the
796 children during the winter, together with the small donations received
from the people of the village, allows the n'tomigi (head of the confraternity) and his siéré (aide, deputy) to furnish its initiates and the old men -- the latter are never forgotten -- with a plentiful feast of kola nuts, millet beer, or d'lo, and /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, or dégé. The day of the celebration is set by the head of the village and by the elders, and everyone prepares for it two weeks in advance. In the blon, or entrance huts, and in the
852 shade of trees, one sees nothing but old men cutting and sewing dloki,
796 bougi, bogo, and yaba (1), which will be worn for the first time on
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[1] Dloki, a large blouse. Bougi, near Ségou, a kind of pants without legs; in Bani country, a strip of cloth three to four fingers wide which goes around the waist, passes between the thighs, and drops in back, forming flaps over the heavy part of the thighs.

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The end of this strip is tucked up. Bogo, garment worn by girls until their marriage, consisting of a strip of cloth tied at the waist and falling in back to make a train. Yaba, boys' jacket, especially common in Bani country.

that day. A swarm of children patch the yellow or white blouses that will be worn during the dance, and grease and re-grease the mask of the n'tomo. They pay special attention to the horns, which are often hidden under little thongs of red leather decorated from end to end with well-polished cowrie shells as white as snow.

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But now we come to the longed-for day! All the little rebels go single file to the fetish tree, and each carries the hen, its feet tied, which he intends for the sacrifice. They /110/ all take off their blouses -- the little undergarment allows freer movement and is less hampering -- and, after some whispering they finally end up squatting, fixing their big, black eyes on the leader, the n'tomotigi, who begins the sacrifice with the assistance of his aide, the siéré.

This little fellow is really funny, as with the solemnity of an old man he pours the dégé, sprinkles the blood of the hens, and noisily spits the remains of a piece of chewed kola nut onto the sacred tree, the dwelling of his genie. I do not doubt that he is convinced, and thoroughly convinced, that he is not addressing a tree trunk that has no consciousness; he believes that he is in the presence of who watches him, waits for him, and asks only to grant his wishes. Since he is addressing a powerful being, fear and emotion at first make him tremble; but gradually his voice grows firmer, and very clearly he pronounces his formula: "N'tomo ye, see this hen, a beautiful hen, isn't it? It is fat! n'tomo, on behalf of all of us I offer you this hen as a sacrifice. Favor us, defend us against the fury of the genii of the bush and against the malicious. Make us strong and vigorous, give us plenty to eat and drink, drive sickness from us. Give us water and a good harvest, n'tomo, and give wealth to our families."

852 796 782 After this special sacrifice come the individual sacrifices, and the very young boys who are henceforth to belong to the n'tomo prostrate themselves before the fetish tree and take an oath to reveal nothing to the uninitiated, and especially not to little girls. This oath is not at all trivial: "If you talk, if you reveal your oath," says the leader showing each one some black powder, "you will die." And they all reply without trembling: "May I die!"

852 796 When the rite of admission is over, each initiate plucks his hen and draws it, and while the victims simmer over the fire in an earthen conari, the youngsters beat drums and abandon themselves to the dance, and so into a frenzy which continues under the eye of the fetish, in the shade of its preferred tree until the time of the feast. Each child in turn dances the dance of the fetish, which consists of leaps and capers and a graceful twirling of a flexible switch. To dance he dons [292] the white or yellow blouse of the fetish (n'tomo ka dloki, "the blouse of the n'tomo"), which is white (dje) or black, yellow (fign, as I said in the preceding chapter) /sic/ /111/, and takes the horned mask, the n'tomo kongolo ("head of the n'tomo") by means of which he externalizes in a concrete form his concept of the genie.

Victims abound, and the feast is plentiful. There is enough for everybody, and there is not one on that day who does not lick his fingers and say with a smile: "Ne ne fara de! (1), How full I am!"

The little boys' families contribute much, for Bambara mothers and little sisters have good hearts. Thanks to them, every initiate can offer from 10 to 20 liters of dégé, the same amount of d'lo; and his gourd of to (gruel) holds enough to tire six to eight big eaters. In addition to the dessert, which is kola nut, each boy receives a new garment for himself and a light bogo and sometimes a tafé (2) for

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1. Né, "me," "I"; fara, "am full"; dé, "surely."

[291] 2. Tafé, rectangular piece of cloth which the women wear around their hips.

224/778

4. All Negroes do not resort to the gnâma daha. But then they are not limited to a single means of handling

[411
291
224]

Costume of a Bâmbara hunter.

the problem; they have more than one string to their bow. Immediately after killing a fur-bearing animal, every hunter empties the urine by pressure or cutting.

778 them, they have unlimited power. They render justice, oaths are taken on them, they exorcise all evils to some degree, they give fertility to the sterile, they have the right of life and death over human beings, and it is to them that appeal is made for vengeance on an enemy.

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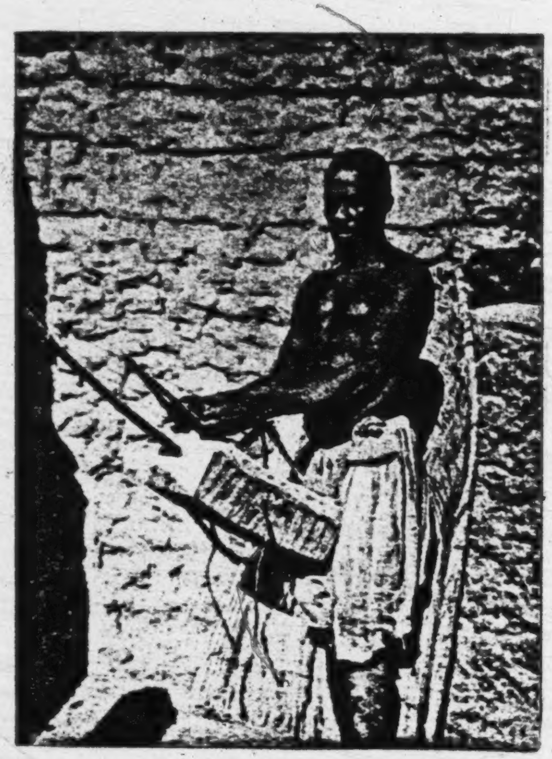

Nia ngoni: the harp of the Nia fetish

778
534 Chief among these fetishes are the Komo, the Nama, the Kono, the Nia, the Wara (or Djara), the Djo and the Magna, also called Tjaro fign. All of them have their special drums and musical instruments, and some, like the Nia and the Magna, even have an entire band. The band of the Nia consists primarily of guitars, skin bags, and small baskets in the shape of hourglasses filled with stones or bits of scrap iron. That of the Magna consists of one or /147/ two long

181 me, and it seems to me that the Bambara might describe himself as:
"A man sufficiently master of himself to be able always to agree with
you without ever revealing his inner thoughts."

Their character is not made up entirely of vices, however, and
I have been told by earnest men that the Bambara never, at least in
public, practice those familiarities with women which shock and
wound every person of high principles. They have added that the two
[674] crimes of adultery and fornication are unusual with them, and this,
one may be sure, is less on account of the severe penalties which they
incur (it seems that before the French conquest the punishment was
death without reprieve), than because they are without feelings, that
181 is, strong passions. Their women can without any difficulty go around
291 with bare bosoms, breasts exposed, hips girded with a paltry rag
knotted under the navel, and their young girls are satisfied with their
small strip of cloth, three fingers wide, which is knotted in front at
the waist, slides between the legs, and is caught up in back by the
cord, to fall in a long train decorated by a gorgeous pompon the size
of a fist. They did not tell me, of course, but /158/ they gave me
to understand quite well that if it were absolutely necessary the girls
could without blushing go around in the scant garb of children who
roll in the dust dressed as on the day they were born, quite naked.
Nakedness cannot stir a Negro; beauty does not excite his eyes, for he
does not have the feeling for it. And for a long time I believed the
Bambara to be endowed with an angelic nature.

181 All these beautiful thoughts have left me, and I must admit
831 that the Bambara are hideously degraded! Every day has made the
matter clearer to me, for when I have left the mission to go to the
surrounding villages, as the duties of my office oblige me to do
several times a week, I have seen the same scenes again and again,
heard the same songs and the same conversations, and I have found
nothing very angelic in any of them. If I went into a field, I saw
young men bent over their hoes, backs running with sweat, who got
up and jumped, shouted the most raucous "you you," and made an
obscene gesture. If a little girl, a child, came to give them a jug
of cool water, she would get a coarse word as thanks and payment,
and often, not to say almost always, a rough hand would remind her

843 291 One last discreet word about the pregnant women: Their loincloths, the cloth rags with which they gird their hips, are held in place by means of a cord, a common string knotted below the navel, a very unsightly thing, or sometimes by means of a colored cloth, a red handkerchief, for example, folded in a triangle.

842 789 A male child, is more highly valued than a girl, and to obtain this blessing the Bambara consult sorcerers and diviners and sacrifice to the boli fetishes. The women have great confidence in amulets, and they wear hung at the waist many dirty bags which form an ugly roll under the tafé, or loincloth (the knotted cord, tafo, is worn around the hips). Some wear their "boy bringer" where it can be seen; it is a square leather bag three fingers wide which contains medicine: bits of bark and wood, and sometimes a goat's horn which the woman slips between her thighs (1). /168/

1. This horn is also often worn in order that the child may have a perfect body, or so as not to have a premature delivery. Nicolay says that these talismans or magic objects, which are capable of changing the course of events and even of nature, are made and sold by sorcerers. /Fernand Nicolay, Curiosités des lois et coutumes. Histoire des croyances, superstitions, moeurs, usages et coutumes (selon le plan du Décalogue) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. A History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Manners, Usages and Customs (according to the Outline of the Decalogue), Paris: V. Retaux, 1901./

844 Birth of a child. -- In Bambara country the "demon" usually takes part in the joys and sorrows of the family. However, I have

881 as ugly as possible, and plays the fool. Armed with a long stick -- the stick which is used to stir the gruel that is simmering on the fire (1) -- she darts out of the village, agile as a gazelle. Her companions all chase her at a full run, giving many shouts; they circle around the walls four times. At every fork in the path they form a circle, dance with frenzy, and throw large handfuls of basi and smoked fish sauce to the spirits without keeping count. "Dégé dounlé, idiots," shouts the smeared girl, and all her retinue repeats with ever increasing enthusiasm: "Nalouma, big fool. . . . " And this day, which is not very edifying, is full of delights for the little Bambara girls who are to be excised.

The little soli boys are satisfied with sacrificing to n'tomo, a good fetish which is their protector, but although they dance wearing masks with six, seven, and sometimes eight horns, they do not [785] flagellate themselves, or at least flagellation is not required on this day.

2. The Soli Si Festival, or the Vigil of the Circumcised

Here we are on the eve of the circumcision! It is black night, d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer, hums and foams in the earthenware bowls, and a thin mist comes out of all the huts and envelops them. Here karité grease sputters as it melts in the pot and browns the skin of a chicken or the leg of a goat; there one hears the loud laughter of people with full stomachs, the hiccups of a glutton, the dry and decisive sound of two heavy lips releasing five great /178/ sticky fingers glued to each other by a remainder of gruel. Their foreheads [301 291] decorated with beads in a kind of crown of white, red, and yellow, the colors of the rainbow, and their bodies draped in blankets, Roman style, groups of women glide silently like shadows along the alleys, carrying on their heads huge gourds full of dégé, millet flour mixed with honey water and milk,

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[415] 1. To-n-galama: a stick with a large, flattened end, used to stir gruel in the pot.

585 awaiting her, they undo her young girl's hair; they take off the cloth ribbon three /210/ fingers wide which is fastened in front at her waist and passes between the legs to fall behind in a loose, soft train; they unknot her belt of beads and bells; they help her to take her bath and lay her on the couch, rolled in a loincloth (1).

> 1. This ceremony terminating the wearing of a young girl's attire is often carried out in the village before leaving, especially if the village to which the bride is going is far away and will not be reached until late at night.

Suddenly all the guns are fired and many loud "kouyo kouyo" ring out, overpowering the songs, the noise of the drums, and that of feet beating on the ground in rhythm, and old women with wrinkled, parchment-like skin rush into the hut with warm water for ablutions(2).

> 2. This whole scene takes place in the morning, a few moments before sunrise.

Dressed in his new blouse, the groom leaves the dwelling of his bride, greets the strangers who fill his court, and sits down on the mat with the fourouboloma tigi and his close friends. The bride also quickly appears and walks across the court. She is dressed in [291] the loincloth of married women which is held at the waist by a thin cord while graceful red and white pompons, often marked with yellow and green lines, hang discreetly at the sides along her thighs. She walks with timid eyes, her head bowed, and a band of women story-tellers /griottes/ (singers) follow her with their songs of love; they tell of the delicacy of her skin, the elegance of her form, the breadth of her torso, the firmness of her breasts. There is still more -- and at the very least one would blush; the old women in back shake a large, bloody white cloth (3), which bears witness to her virginity

4: Henry--264 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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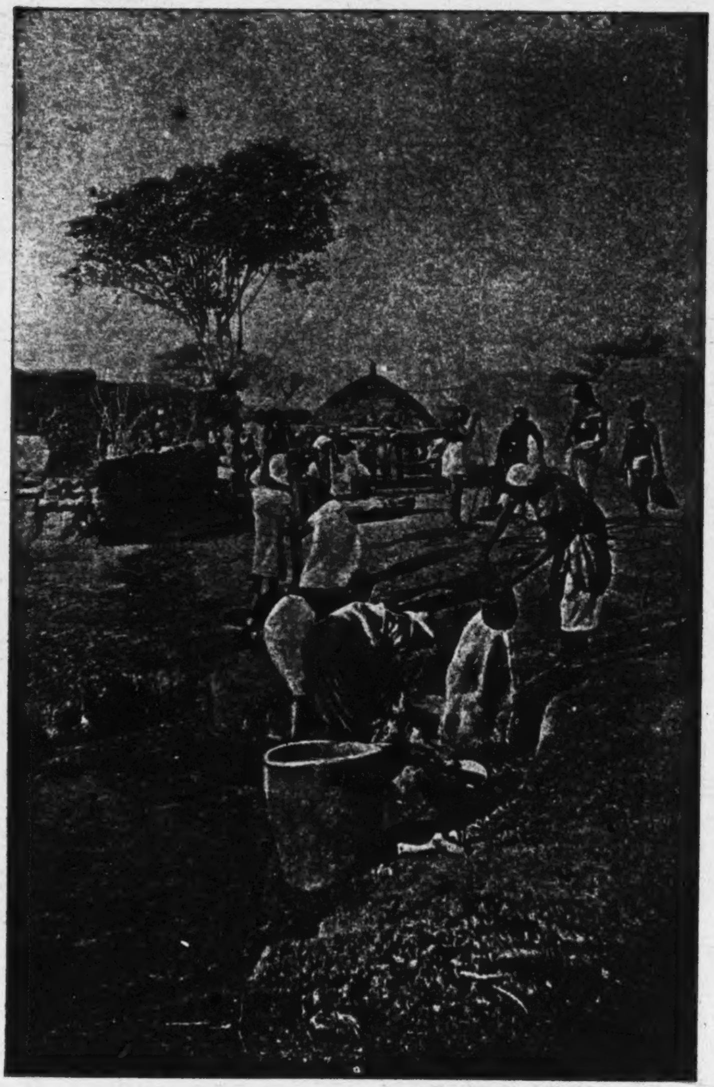

At the edge of the well, in Bambara country.

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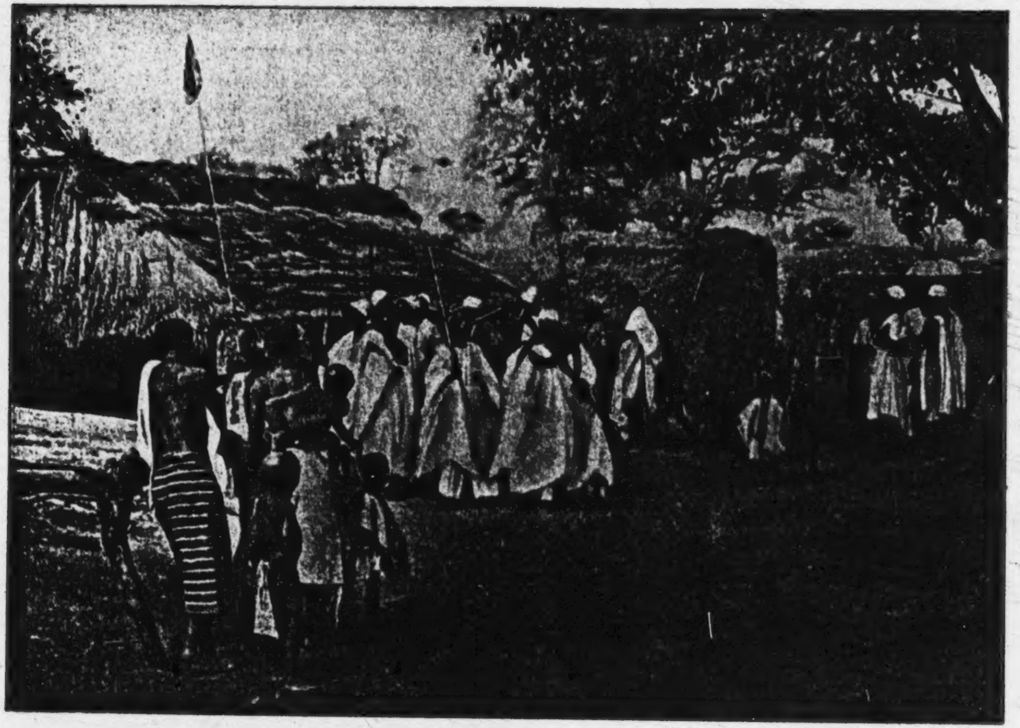

Festival of the N'golo fetish: An outing of the to-n-de, of the association of the fla-n-to.

4: Henry--270 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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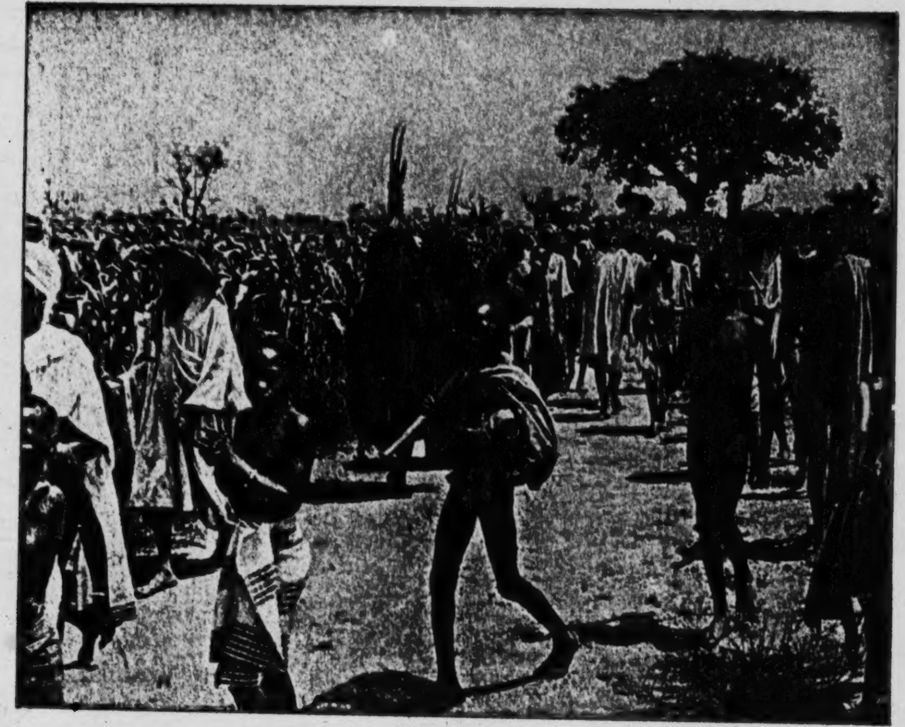
4: Henry--273 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Procession of the Tji wara: the young people meet at the field to work under the eyes of two companions dressed in the insignia of the fetish of work.

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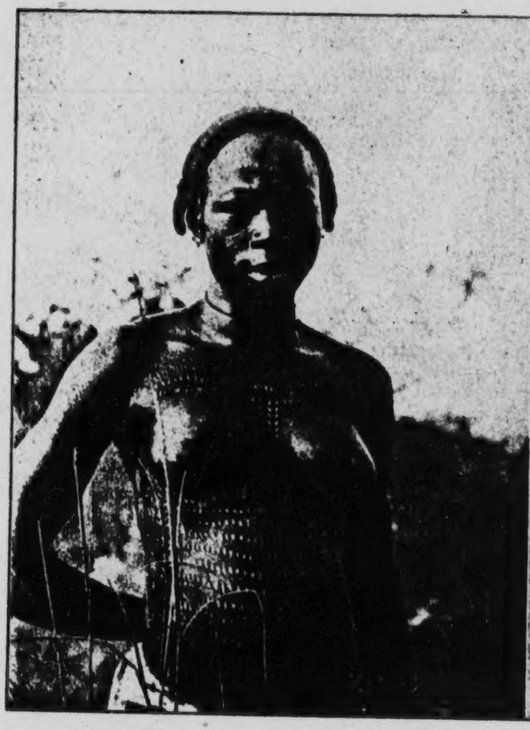
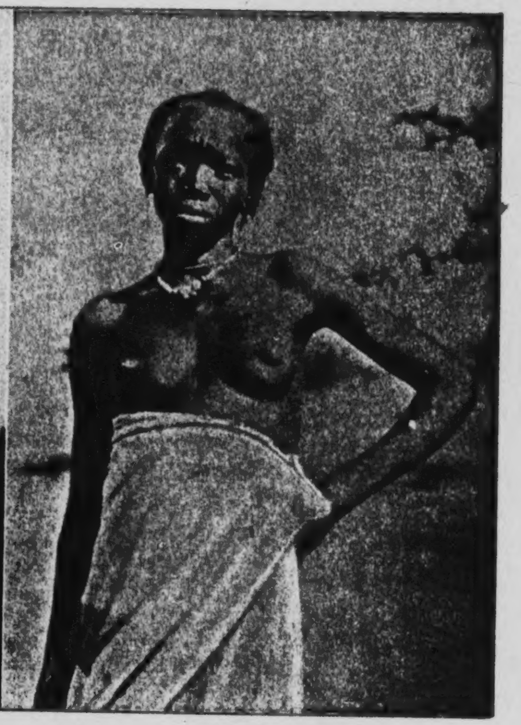


Tattoo worn by the women of Bani country.



Tattoo worn around the breasts by young girls of Ségou and made by themselves.

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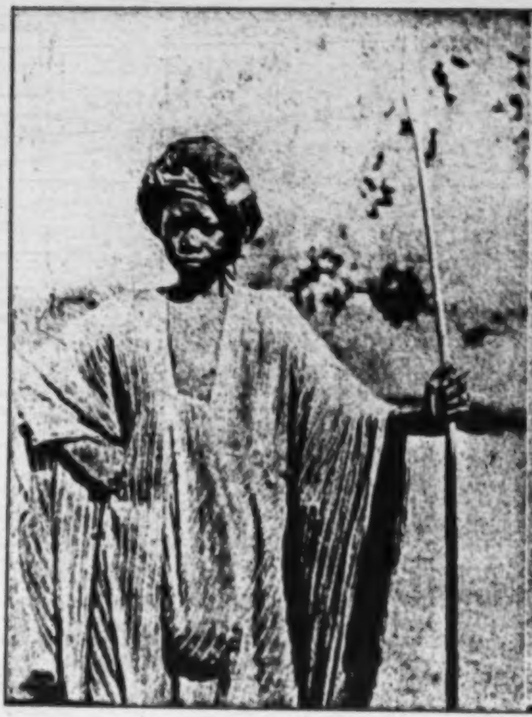
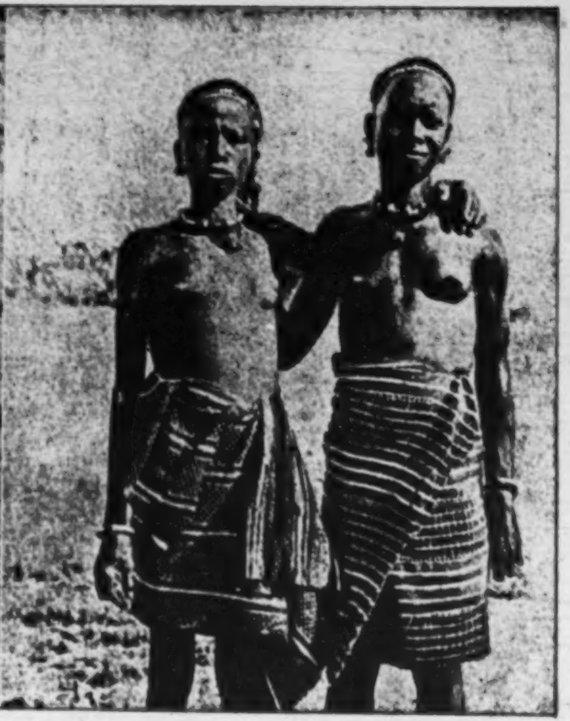
4: Henry--281 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Circumcised youth dressed up.



Young Bambara girls dressed to go out.

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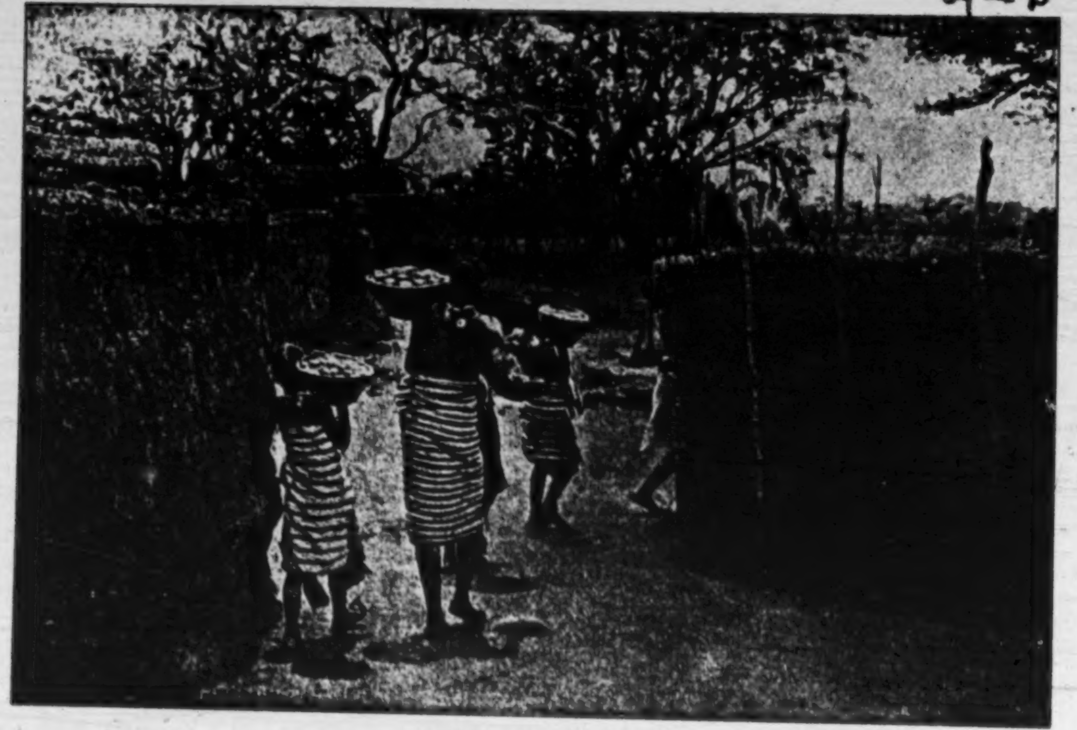
4: Henry--283 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Bambara wedding.

The meal is carried to the young bride and her maids of honor (at Moundjirila).

4: Henry--284 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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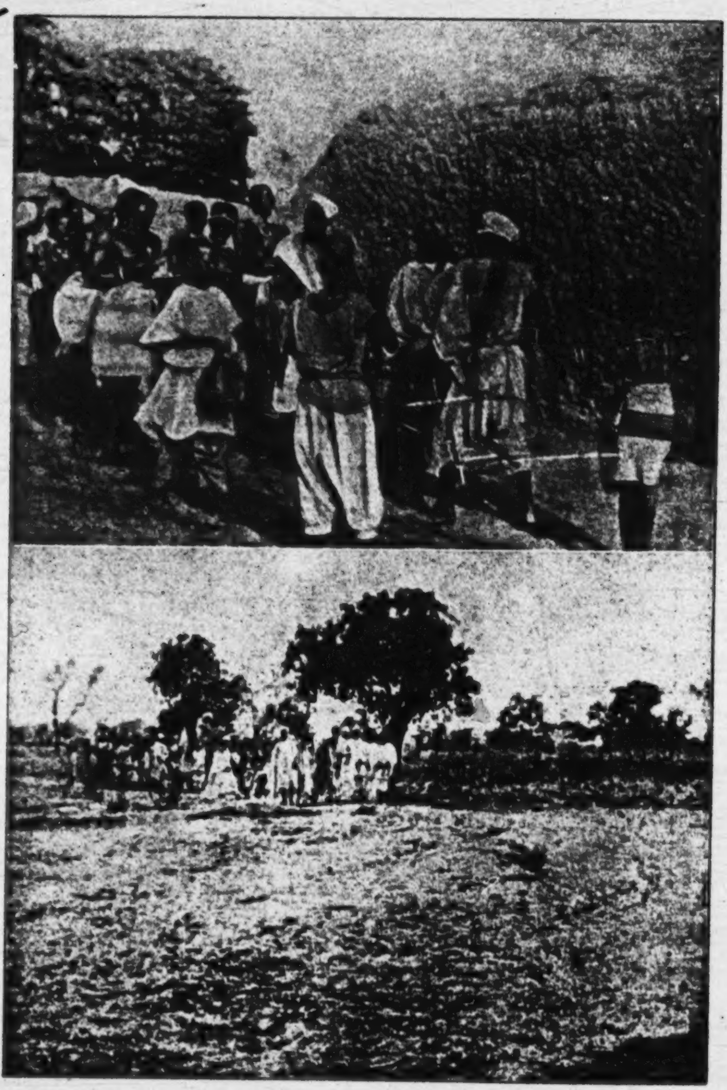

Bambara wedding: the guests go to thank the young bride after the meal. Above: Bambara wedding: procession of a young bride going to the home of her groom.

4: Henry--285 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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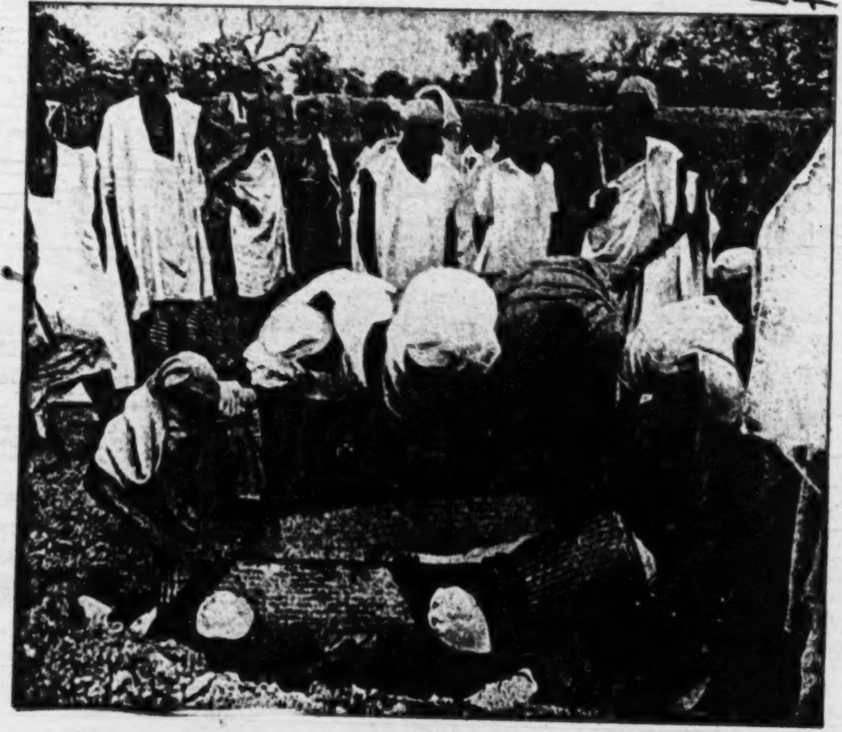

Bambara burial.
The corpse being laid in the grave.

776 hence on Mousso Koroni. The ritual cultivation of millet, a noble
241 activity to which every aristocratic Bambara must dedicate himself,
183 is an institution which Faro taught in his time and constitutes a purification and a reordering of the soil (1).

1. Dugukolo be be dyuruma, "the whole earth is impure." But as only virgin soil is considered impure, it is also said: dyurumu be be dugukolo ka forow sani nyala do, "the whole earth is impure except for the cultivated fields." The word dugukolo (literally, bone of the earth) designates both the earth as a whole and the earth as matter. The same notions [171] concerning the impurity of the earth hold for the Dogon. See M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau, p. 94.

Faro

Faro's Shapes

776 Faro was a "voice" before he materialized into a body. In his role as master of the word and reorganizer of the universe, he is represented by a spiral, munu, in which he occupies the point of origin at all times. The spiral is situated in the center of the cardinal points (2). Its vibratory unrolling represents "the displacement of Faro for the realization of all things in the universe."

2. This "central point," which is also the firmament, is described by the Bambara as sa tyema kolo, literally, the bone of the middle of the sky.

776
292 This image is materialized in a basketry headdress, yugu, with a spiral of eight turns. The straw sprigs that form the spokes supporting the spiral symbolize the vibration; the intervals, yugunye or eye of the yugu, which separate them are rays of light, the spiral representing

776 292 the daily movement of the sun "which unfolds until evening." The regularity of the rays symbolizes order and the classification of beings and things by Faro. The /41/ ends of the straw sprigs forming the spiral must remain free: they represent the infinite extension of Faro's realm and power. The hat is also a mask "which hides Faro's invisible face and through which he watches over the world" (1).

1. Today, a basket of considerably higher dimensions is made and used by women (See pl. I, b).

[643] The headgear yugu was formerly reserved for the king, who wore it under a turban. Certain deserving old men were also permitted to keep it. The rituals of making and wearing this headdress attest to the importance attributed to it. In particular, when an old man was [695] suspected of having committed a serious offense, his hat was pierced with four holes representing the four cardinal points. He was then made to wear it, thus submitting him to Faro's judgment; if found guilty, he died.

776 As the spirit of the waters, Faro is supposed to belong to the white race and his body to be half albino flesh and half copper (pl. I, c).

776 773 A myth relates how his physical being was formed.

When Faro caused the streaming waters to descend on earth, he manifested himself for a long time only by his voice. He had no body, and since he needed appropriate matter to achieve one, he bided his time in the waters of the sea.

The winged spirit Téliko, who had the body of an albino, wished one day, in his arrogance and jealousy, to cross the world in order to know it and to dominate it. Faro, warned by the dogfish, decided to seize his enemy's body to complete his own. The albino, who always flew, fed on his own substance. He chewed his own flesh and his bones were soon bare; the marrow came out of them. It turned into red copper which fell into the sea and nourished Faro.

While Téliko descended to the water level, the dogfish that was watching him sang in order to attract him. The albino, aware of the danger, climbed back to the highest heaven, attempting to continue his flight and to reach the ends of the world. But he quickly lost strength and after his dya had fallen into the waters, his body was

794 The costume worn by the dancer is held up by a sort of carcass 292 (*bry*) made of *ngolobe* (1) wood used because of its flexibility, and is enveloped with a light blanket for protection. Inside the *bry* are suspended various flutes (*komo fle*) which are blackened by the blood of sacrifices offered to "improve their sound" and which will be used in the course of the ceremonies. Along with these flutes is a little bag filled with spare spider webs. Any individual who goes under the [834] *bry* to dance must abstain from sexual relations for a specified period of time prior to the ceremony.

The costume (*nya*) which covers the carcass is made with the clothing of individuals killed by the Komo (2). Contrary to the *bry*, which has no active role but serves only to isolate the dancer inside the mask, the religious role of the costume is very important. It represents the "body and the valor of the ancestors." It is not the object of blood sacrifices, but is covered by a powder made of the bones of individuals killed by the Komo to which has been added kola nut juice. The 794 cloth is dyed with black earth taken from the river bank in exchange 292 for a small offering of copper, gold, or cereals. Drawings called 532 *komo mani* (literally, little people of the Komo) are made on the cloth to represent Faro on the one hand, recognizable by his long black hair, and on the other the eight ancestors who received the word. All the first agricultural implements of the Bambara are drawn with red ochre. The feathers of black, white, and red egrets are then sewn on the *nya* to hide /151/ the black earth, which is the spirit's abode. Two days before everything is taken out, these feathers are the object of offerings of kola nut juice, millet mash, and the blood of fowls.

794 The costume, like the head of the mask, must be seen neither 292 by women nor by noninitiates. "Its color would change and it would 784 become dull, making a purification necessary."

794 The body of the mask has two arms into which the dancer intro- 532 duces his own. The arms terminate in a hook, *koli* (3), which is

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1. *Combretum micranthum*.

2. When a guilty member or a non-initiate is "killed" by the Komo, his clothing is offered to it.

304
561 The date of the circumcision alone makes a coherent whole of a heterogeneous group—an age grade within /181/ which all the members owe each other friendship, confidence, and help in all phases of social and private life.

Once the operation has been decided upon, the relatives proceed

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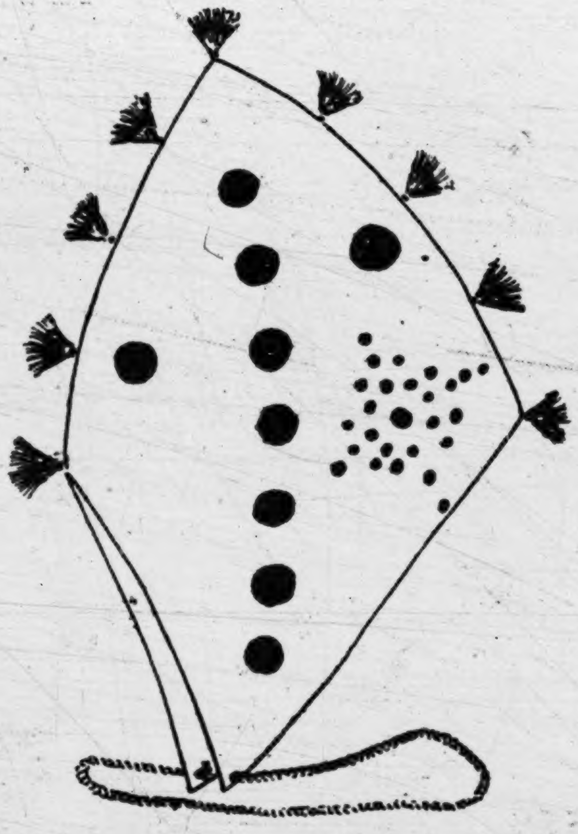

Fig. 14 — Cap of the circumcised Bambara. The nine black spots represent the child, his dya, and the cardinal points. The design at the right represents the sumangolo, or the coming of the twelve waters of the future. (See Fig. 3)

first to make the cap worn during the seclusion. The white cloth is presented to the Niger by a uterine brother who addresses a prayer to Faro requesting permission to draw with black earth the designs that will cover it. They will protect the child who is in a state of impurity

304 throughout the seclusion, the cap itself guaranteeing protection of his
292 head against the rays of fire from the fifth sky, koblẽnkaba (see Fig. 14).

Seven large black dots, vertically disposed, represent the child, 3,
304 and his dya, 4, as well as the man, 3, which he will later become, and
292 his future wife, 4. They also insure his protection from east to west.
531 The two other dots insure it from north to south. The cross of small dots recalls the sumangolos, the "realization of the world" (1) and the purification obtained after the operation and the loss of the wanzo. Eight tassels (Faro's number) are placed on the cap, whose fringes were spun by a grandmother and are sewn on to "attract the forces of space." A ninth at the top is blackened with the spirit's earth. With his head thus covered, the circumcised boy is placed in the protective and purifying light of Faro. To operate upon a child without putting the cap on him would in fact amount to "bowing down before the acts of Mousso Koroni."

On his part, the blacksmith-circumciser makes preparations for the
304 operation, the essential instrument of which is a knife called boloko
326 kumba moru (literally, knife head, mother of the circumcision).
413 He himself has forged it and carries it in a small leather sheath hung from his hip (see Fig. 15) (2).

The handle is slipped into a sort of iron sheath closed at one extremity called kurukun (literally, ball head) and open at the other called sukala (literally, sorcerer's handle). It is forged from one piece with the blade dyomuru fala (literally, orphan of the knife) and called "without pity" in archaic language.

The knife and its handle on the one hand, together with the metal sheath on the other, symbolize the person of the circumcised boy and the foreskin which is to be removed.

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1. See p. 56, Fig. 4.

[582] 2. The endogamy among blacksmiths is attributed to their role in circumcision and to the fact that their tools, especially this knife, are impregnated with the wanzo of the adolescents.

304 recovers part of his tere. The organ is then held up by means of a
326 small apparatus, mine naw, made of a millet stem split in two in the shape of a fork.

"Circumcision is a sacrifice" (1). It is only valid if blood has run,

1. Bolokoli ye saraka ye.

and any patient who has not wet the ground with his blood is wounded on the thigh by the circumciser. The same is true for a child born
[732 without a foreskin. This detail must, moreover, be kept secret by
582] the members of his age grade, since the revelation of a malformation might prevent the individual concerned from contracting a marriage (2).

2. A woman might believe that these malformations are the sign that the man who was operated upon has not lost his wanzo, a fact which would be a definite obstacle to marriage.

/186/ When all is finished, the operator, holding the foreskins in his hand, says these words before burying them:

"We have transferred the wanzo of the circumcised child, may the tere be well" (3).

3. Ãn ye dẽ bolokole wanzo fili la, tere ka ñe.

304 After this, the circumcised boys have their caps put first on their
292 napes and foreheads representing the east-west direction, and then on
561 the sides of their heads representing the north-south direction. All their strength resides from then on in the headpiece which they will wear night and day, without removing it, during the entire period of seclusion.

304 The approach to the site of the operation is formally forbidden to
784 women and uncircumcised males. The one who might go there out of
561 curiosity "would contract the wanzo" (wanzo ba nofe, "the wanzo follows him"). Any uncircumcised boy who might break this law would have to take the consequences at the time of his own operation

304 During the seclusion, they wear about their head a piece of white
●[292 cloth, Faro's color, which has the same function as the cap of the
534] circumcised boy. They shake a gourd *bolokode barani*, filled with eight
grains or small pebbles, whose sound keeps passers-by away. The
leaps, which they perform over the fire made of clothes, gourds, and
refuse that have been ignited, end the seclusion and rid them of their
wanzo, which goes to settle in the altars of the *ndomo*.

It is said of a young girl who was well excised that she is well behaved and carries herself with dignity. On the contrary, it is said of a girl of light morals "that her hands were not washed clean" (1).

1. *A bolo ma ko ka dye ya.*

which means that she was improperly excised.

Funerals

761 The effect of death is to dissociate the elements composing the
person. The body becomes a corpse (*šu*) from which the /189/ *ni* and
764 the *dya* escape to follow their particular destinies, while the *tere* is
115 transformed into *nyama*, an active and dangerous force which wanders
about the deceased. The funeral rites aim first to channel the deceased's spiritual elements which must be conserved in the interest of the deceased as well as that of the community. Moreover, through the care given to the body and to these elements, the memory of the dead person is piously kept up. The notion of a final resurrection, promised to all who have lived, inspires these preparations. The bones of the deceased, which are like the exuvia of his physical body, its solid and durable framework, join the exuvia of his soul which is kept in the altars of the Komo. Thus, at the end of time, the dead man "will rise and, to everyone's joy, join his family."

764 The funeral rites, which the Bambara have always celebrated, have
evolved along with their beliefs. At the time when the cult of the
balanza was flourishing, the dead bodies were hung from trees until
they rotted, their bones picked up and kept by their descendants.
[532 The ancestors of the Gwonna then carved pieces of *sunzun* wood
532] called *mani* (literally, little person) in the image of the dead. The
length of the wood was proportionate to the length of the body; the
head, arms, legs, and genitals were carefully reproduced. The *mani*

765 twice a day, morning and evening, they go in procession, their
[514] heads covered with caps made of white cloth. They spend the nights together, in a single hut if possible.

The wives of the deceased go out only when it is ab-
[292] solutely necessary during the first moon after the death; they are dressed in white and wear a kind of white hood on their heads and sandals made of goatskin on their feet. At the end of the moon, at night and separately, they go to a sort of puri-
[783] fication rite that takes place at the crossroads outside the village.

Up to the fortieth day there is a very gradual return to ordinary life. Then, and only then, the successor to the deceased is finally recognized and installed, as is shown in the chronicle of Ségou.

801 In closing, let us note how every ritual sequence rests on periods of time whose real meaning must be sought in
805 magic. The astral religion of the Semites in fact taught that on the third, seventh, and fortieth day after death the moon acts more powerful to destroy the body (1). Apparently some such beliefs must account for the Bambara rites planned precisely according to these numbers. This seems all the more likely since the Sudanese commonly believe that the fortieth day marks the separation of the flesh from the bones of buried corpses.

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1. See the meeting of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres of August 9, 1918, paper by Franz Cumont, "La commémoration des morts et l'astrologie [The Commemoration of the Dead and Astrology]," Journal Officiel (1918), p. 7224.

857 use corporal punishment.

From this early age, therefore, a Bambara is subject to the corporate discipline which will henceforth dominate his whole life, for the same sort of discipline prevails in the adult brotherhoods.

The genie-protector is honored by offerings, [237] sacri-
857 fices, and ritual dances. When they perform these dances, the
● 292 *n-Tomo-den'* take turns wearing the ceremonial mask and cos-
[782] tume. The mask has the form of a human face surmounted by
a number of vertical horns (five to eight of these) and decorated with a few cowries. The costume consists of a *dloki* (a kind of blouse with wide sleeves) and a pair of long trousers, which completely cover the body. If the costume is yellowish-brown (*basa*) or white (*dye*), the association is called "n-Tomo-fin' (black n-Tomo)" or "n-Tomo-dye (white n-Tomo)," respectively. Is this costume supposed to represent the adepts' conception of their protector's appearance? No. As in all sects, it is intended to differentiate the officiant from the profane world (1).

831 A wooden phallus (or a small board) is commonly used to
857 summon the *n-Tomo-den'* to meetings. This is tied to the end
[534] of a rope and whirled like a sling, producing a noise which the
operator can vary and which carries a considerable distance.
This apparatus is called *n-Tomo-ulu*, translated as "dog of the
[195] n-Tomo." It should be noted that the words used in the brother-
hoods usually have a double meaning, with a special sense under a vulgar form. For instance, the word *ulu* means both

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[536] 1. Some of these associations give a kind of public performance from which they derive profit. Notably, they exhibit a kind of puppet called *peremperen'* (dancers) which members of the n-Tomo manipulate in a more or less comical manner; often one of the puppets rep-
[831] resents a man and the other a woman, and their movements abound in the obscenities which are so popular with the onlookers.

881 789 evil genii in order to preserve the "people of the soli" (soli-ma-u) from their bewitchments.

881 304 The soli. The soli, this make-believe birth, is marked by a bloody operation, circumcision for the boys and excision for the girls. The fact that the ceremony does not get its name from this operation demonstrates that it is merely show; it is merely a rite of separation between the previous state and the new one (3). The operation takes place at dawn.

[171]

3. That is why among other peoples the operation does not exist or represented by a mere slash on the thigh (among the Koniagui).

Boys. The blacksmith who is to circumcise the boys waits outside the village under a tree. Assisted by members [243] of the sects and especially by the Komo-tigi, he performs the operation behind a loincloth hung up as a screen. The boy stands erect, and the blacksmith draws out the prepuce and cuts it off, after having determined approximately the proper place to cut. The patient is expected to show no weakness; on the contrary, he exerts himself to say a few words to show his courage.

As soon as the operation is finished, a gunshot announces the news to the elders crouched about the village fires, and a female griot proclaims it to the bystanders. The Komo-tigi takes a few nyanka leaves, burns them, and goes to place the ashes on the boy's familial kara. The boy runs off to rejoin his companions under the tree especially chosen for this reassembly. All the boys will spend their days there, on the fringe of society with which they are forbidden to mingle. They return to the village only at night, to sleep in a hut reserved for them.

881 304 292 A man reputed to know how to care for circumcised boys lives with them, takes care of them, and closely supervises them; this is the sema-tye. Every day abundant food is brought to him for his patients. The latter wear a dloki (blouse) and kursi (trousers) made of cotton cloth, blue or yellow-brown (basa) depending on their affiliations (1), and their headgear is usually

1. The basa color is much in demand

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among the Bambara, while the Marka
use cloth dyed indigo-blue.

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a high cap with strings extending from the earlaps. They can only leave the place where they are assembled, even for the needs of nature, under the leadership of the sema-tye and shaking a stick of wood to which are attached bits of broken pottery. This rattle is called n-koso-m-bara.

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304 They pass the time plaiting mats, gossiping, laughing, and pestering passers-by. On market days they are permitted to block the paths leading to the village and to collect a tithe from the traders.

The officials of the sects often visit them in their retreat.

Girls. The blacksmiths' wives who are to remove part of the clitoris await the girls outside the village under the trees. Some matrons assist them. Each child in turn runs up to the operator and squeezes herself between [244] the legs of the matron who exposes the clitoris. The excised clitoris is laid [789] in a little woven basket and is carefully preserved for making talismans.

The completion of the operation is announced in the same way as for the boys, and the Komo-tigi likewise puts the ashes from nyanka leaves on the familial kara.

The girl then rejoins her companions in the hut reserved for them in each section of the settlement. There they are under the surveillance of an old woman, the sema-moso, who knows how to take care of them and who sees to it that they behave properly. They are very well fed.

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[514] Wrapped in skirts, they lean on canes of dried millet stalks when they walk and shake a gourd pierced with holes and filled with pebbles. They go out only for the needs of nature and then all in a body. They warn the passers-by by shaking their rattles and singing improvised songs. As they near paths outside the village, they intone a refrain.

Soli da woro (1). The seclusion of the soli-ma ceases

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1. Literally, "sixth day of the soli."

794 Some of the clergy use a disguise when officiating in
[292] public; furthermore, the ceremonies are held only at night.

Finally, in the presence of the profane, the initiated
[198] use a special language for everything referring specifically to
the cult. The greatest secret of all is the name of the nyana,
[551] because anyone who knows the name has complete power over
the spirit it designates.

794 From the point of view of the disguised clerical body,
this secrecy is virtually impenetrable. A disguised person loses
298 his human personality and is withdrawn from the natural world. It is an accepted fact that it is dangerous for those not affiliated to intercept his glance through the tiny openings in the mask; undoubtedly his person on that occasion is impregnated with a fluid whose emanations are fatal to those who, not being affiliated, are unprotected against them.

Some of these disguises include a headdress or mask and for the body a kind of costume usually made of long strips of vegetal material; is this, as has been suggested, simply a means of dominating the herd of adepts and even more the profane through the terror such regalia inspires when seen at night by the flickering light of torches and bonfires? It seems more probable that one must put this matter on the plane of the supernatural in order to understand it. Dangerous wild animals
[825 are believed to be incarnations of evil and powerful gods, and
776] an attempt is made to present an outward appearance consistent
with the terror merely seeing them inspires, in order thereby
to acquire the supernatural qualities that characterize them (1).

1. There is no doubt that some individuals, under the influence of the role of wild beast that they are portraying, have been led to commit actual murders during ritual observances. I have often heard this asserted in connection with the dyara (lion).

794 It should be noted that the costume, gestures, [259]
782 dances, songs, and music of the dye-n-fa and their acolytes

794 over the threshold (2). The ceremonies are announced and
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2. Then the door is called su-bo-da, "exit of the corpse," and the sacrificer is called moso-bolo (literally, "woman's hand").

[534] accompanied by a strident, wild orchestra made up of drums (denu-ba) which are accompanied by iron instruments, called kinge, consisting of pieces of metal that are struck against each other or shaken to obtain sound from the rings attached to them. The "cry" of the Komo, which the wara-da shouts through his horn, is accompanied by a kind of reed pipe played by his companions.

[782] There is nothing unusual about the offerings, sacrifices, or communion. The blood of the victim is used to wash the boli and the priests, as will be described for the Nama.

Processions held at night are always very effective, and they strike terror into the hearts of not only the uninitiated but also the initiated themselves. This long cortege, lighted by the torchbearers who shout and dash about like madmen while the wara-da gives the "cry" of the Komo, makes a very strong impression on everyone who sees or hears it (3). [273]

3. Elsewhere, the Komo meets in the daytime, and in the old days, notably in Bobo country, it was very popular (cf. Binger, Du Niger au golfe de Guinée [From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea], Vol. 1, p. 379, and Monteil, De Saint-Louis à Tripoli par le Tchad [From Saint-Louis to Tripoli via Chad], p. 89). We have already seen that all the officiants in the brotherhood are called dou, "the hidden people," because of the disguises they affect. "The dou are persons ludicrously disguised, wearing clothing on which are sewed bits of da-fou (native

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> 794 hemp), palm fibers, and leaves.
> 796 On their heads they wear a cap or
> 292 calotte, also made of hemp and surmounted by a yellowish-red wooden crest or a bird's beak, also of wood. There are two holes in the calotte for the eyes. These dou are given free dlo by the populace which makes up their cortege. They wander about the village and fields day and night..." (Binger).

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796 There is never any cult service or ceremony on Monday or Thursday.

The clergy serves as an administrative council for the property of the Komo-ya (brotherhood of the Komo) in accordance with the general principles already noted. The Komo-tigi of Tiguini, we have been told, is especially famous for respecting the principles which give the treasury of the brotherhood an exclusively fraternal character.

The Komo-ya are mutually independent, and all have experienced the kind of deviations which give rise to political action. The Komo has played a preponderant role in the affairs of the clan of Ségou, as is evident from the chronicle.

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539 Young men are taken into the brotherhood during the harvest festivals. They appear before the circle of initiates, while those present sing:

Da woro-na nana,
Bolo-ko deu da woro-na,
Toro man na ko la-nyini.
Sira bo nin' ye, ko dugu le den';
Sira bo nin' ye ko dugu le sira.

Translation: "The sixth day has come, the sixth day of the newborn (1), and there has been no accident. Let us show the

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1. That is, those who have just been born to a new status through the soli or bolo-ko.

794 of Kore-dyuga-tigi and has the same meaning.

[301] most part strangely accoutered dancers, each of whom dresses as his fancy dictates. As ornaments, the Kor'dyuga wear strings of beautiful red beans, which are inedible, called n-go ble. These beans are about the size of a large dragée and throughout the western Sudan are used as protection against evil spirits. [292] These dancers have a leader, the Koro-duga-tigi or Kor'dyuga-tigi, who is further distinguished by a kind of cloak made entirely of bits of reed stalks. On his head he wears a conical hat made of the same reeds, and in his hand he carries a long wand from which hang birds' skulls, packets of sorghum straw, gourd stems, etc. In addition to the dancers, the clergy is accompanied by [785] flagellants (bisa-tyi-la), torchbearers (ta-tugu-la-n-tigi), and people who lash themselves with bundles of thorns (the ngoni-sa-ma-u).

[534] Of course, the Kore has its orchestra, which includes drums (denu-ba), a kind of castanet (kinge), and gourds filled with seeds or pebbles (nkude) and pierced with holes.

794 796 The cult has the usual ceremonies, with the two great festivals at the times of planting and harvesting. On these occasions the Kore-tigi officiates, as the nyana-n-son-na-ba does with respect to nyana dugu-da-siri. He makes the offerings, performs the sacrifices, and sets forth the requests at the foot of the sacred tree, after having thanked the god-protector. The kara and the Kore-kongolo are sprinkled with the blood of the victims; thus, the manes and the nyana of the boli are honored simultaneously.

[764] There is always a meeting of the brotherhood when a Kore-de dies. There are offerings, sacrifices, and communion with all the offerings, which require one or more days of orgies to be consumed, depending on the importance of the deceased, because elders in [282] important posts like that of nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc., are particularly honored at their death.

Young men are admitted only once every seven years, and it is at this time that the ceremonies are most elaborate.

Plate 4

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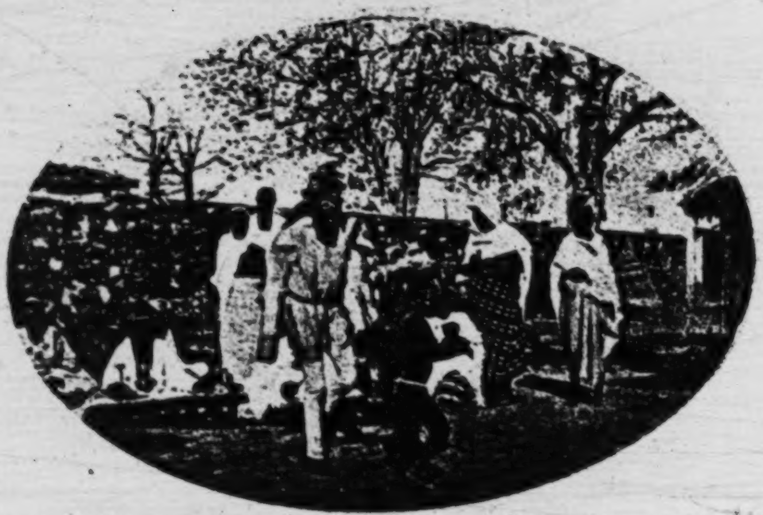

Fig. 7. Penperenni, small dancers in costume.

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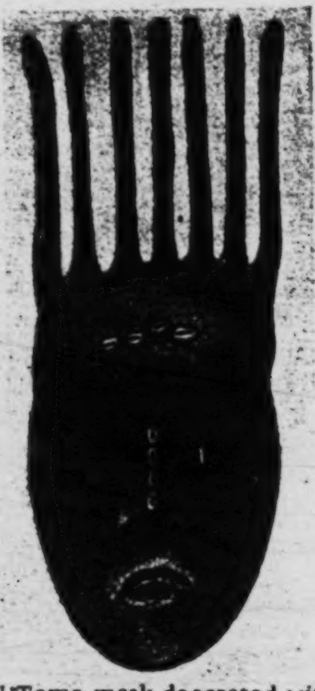

Fig. 8. N'Tomo mask decorated with cowries.

[End Plate 4]

534 asks: modè (grandson) for unimportant subjects, hunting, voyages;
787 fadè (son of the father) for individual life, physical and moral; fa (father) for the future, destiny, the public life of a man, his authority, his rule; fakoroke (father's older brother) for the plantings, the rains, for fortune; fa dogone (father's younger brother) for germination of the cereals; ba (mother) for everything concerning the women; [107] faso (father's house) for everything concerning the familial abode or the absent.

534 The principal efficacy of the harp is in bringing order, by the rhythms and sounds emanating from it, to all that is troubled in the march of events.

The harp presides at sacrifices, at cathartic or medical rites, at purifications, at apotropaic rites, at solitary méditations. Its high notes are celestial and symbolic of completeness; the low notes connote terrestrial things and incompleteness. Its playing commands arrivals and departures, proliferations and diminutions, calls to order; its presence at the edge of a pool, where it had been silently placed, is assurance of appeasement.

The harpist, before beginning his service, puts his mouth to
788 the orifice in the frame and murmurs to the master of the Word: "Now it is your turn, organize the world." (1)

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1. Passim, Griaule, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the Africain Arts].

533 Music, dance, and song are intimately linked in the religious
534 movement. Thus it is that a djo of the Samakè (Bougouni circle) is composed entirely of musicians who form an orchestra in which the whole scale is represented by eight different principal instruments, which are types of a multitude of others. There is one n'ganian-ba, an instrument made by hollowing out a trough in a tree trunk, which gives a very deep sound when rubbed; it is the bass which gives the cadence. Two to three tiorõ give a sharper sound; four to six tioun, a still sharper sound, and there are as many as ten fere, the instrument
533 with the sharpest sound. Finally, a host of N'ganian dyeli begin the
212 music as the griot quiets the crowd at the start. All these instruments have the form of a pirogue. In addition, the orchestra includes two singers and two dancers. Everyone wears masks, bonnets with crests

533 of black, red, and yellow fibers, clothes of plaited fibers, and the
292 musicians wear a cuirass made of fana seeds (a sort of bean). The bass player wears a band in the back which reaches to his heels and describes a circle when the musician whirls in going from north to south and from east to west to give the cadence. The other musicians form a circle which the dancers and singers do not enter. Another djo is the So, where the musicians and the singers wear masks of wooden horses, except for two clowns who represent the masculine element in the midst of the crowd of young girls. Lastly, the third djo is the djõ buru (buru, "trumpet"). This is the djo of the slaves; they play the ivory horn and are clothed like the N'ganian, but the bass player represents a cow, and the others are the heifers who respond to the cadence indicated to them by their mother.

E. Literature

538 Bambara literature, entirely oral, is extremely rich. It is the monopoly of the griot who from their earliest days learn the stories, the proverbs, the mottoes associated with each [108] family. They recite very long and very numerous epic songs concerning each great family, accompanying themselves on the harp. Certain parts are recited, others are sung in chorus by the griot and his wife. These stories are at the same time historical narratives of heroes' exploits and the mythical history of a demiurge symbolized by the hero. An infinitely small part of these epic songs has been collected. Some Bambara proverbs and stories have been collected by Moussa Traorē in particular.

545 It is interesting to mention another literary production, one
794 in which the creative inspiration of the artist plays a greater part:
522 these are the narratives of the members of the Kworē brotherhood. The Kworēduga are clowns, or rather commedia dell'arte players. One is a Kworēduga by hereditary transmission or by natural bent. During his initiation in the bush, where he submits to ritual harsh treatment, the initiate learns never to lose his temper, no matter what the circumstances. He is taught a comic language, witty sayings. He is trained to observe men's character closely and to recite stanzas and couplets giving his observations.

852 796 782 After this special sacrifice come the individual sacrifices, and the very young boys who are henceforth to belong to the n'tomo prostrate themselves before the fetish tree and take an oath to reveal nothing to the uninitiated, and especially not to little girls. This oath is not at all trivial: "If you talk, if you reveal your oath," says the leader showing each one some black powder, "you will die." And they all reply without trembling: "May I die!"

852 796 When the rite of admission is over, each initiate plucks his hen and draws it, and while the victims simmer over the fire in an earthen conari, the youngsters beat drums and abandon themselves to the dance, and so into a frenzy which continues under the eye of the fetish, in the shade of its preferred tree until the time of the feast. Each child in turn dances the dance of the fetish, which consists of leaps and capers and a graceful twirling of a flexible switch. To dance he dons [292] the white or yellow blouse of the fetish (n'tomo ka dloki, "the blouse of the n'tomo"), which is white (dje) or black, yellow (fign, as I said in the preceding chapter) /sic/ /111/, and takes the horned mask, the n'tomo kongolo ("head of the n'tomo") by means of which he externalizes in a concrete form his concept of the genie.

Victims abound, and the feast is plentiful. There is enough for everybody, and there is not one on that day who does not lick his fingers and say with a smile: "Ne ne fara de! (1), How full I am!"

The little boys' families contribute much, for Bambara mothers and little sisters have good hearts. Thanks to them, every initiate can offer from 10 to 20 liters of dégé, the same amount of d'lo; and his gourd of to (gruel) holds enough to tire six to eight big eaters. In addition to the dessert, which is kola nut, each boy receives a new garment for himself and a light bogo and sometimes a tafé (2) for

1. Né, "me," "I"; fara, "am full"; dé, "surely."

[291] 2. Tafé, rectangular piece of cloth which the women wear around their hips.

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1. Drums over a meter long and peculiar to the *koré*.

2. A kind of triangle which is hung on the thumb of the left hand and is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger.

[778] the *kârâ*"), one of whom carries the *kârâ*, the perforated board which is the emblem of the fetish and at the same time the altar on which sacrifice is made to deceased members. First come the *souroukou* (hyenas) who guard the sacred grove and during the sacrifices drive away prying, uninitiated people; they wear crude masks, roll their big heads right and left, and utter frightful "*hou hous*." The [522] *korodouga* (clowns), who rake the paths in the sacred grove as well as its environs to protect it from brush fires, run from one to another shouting obscenities. Furiously they shake their gourds, which have handles and are perforated and filled with small stones, and furiously they blow into pipes made of pumpkin stems. The leader of this [292] band is dressed up in a cloak made of reed stems, he also wears a reed headdress which is topped by a pyramid of large red beans called *n'go blé* and decorated with a plume; in his hands he holds the emblem of the group, a long pole on which are hung dirty bags, sorghum stems 10 to 20 centimeters long bound into bundles, pumpkin stems, /123/ skulls of rats, beaks of ducks and hawks, panther claws, etc.

794 796 292 522 Apart from the long string of red beans which all *korodougo* are required to wear which they twine around their necks several times or sling over the shoulder, crossing and recrossing it on the back and chest, each one dresses according to his own inspiration. The hats are made of bunches of feathers, wings of vultures and ducks, and even entire birds, and around them to decorate them further are red beans, rat skulls, birds beaks, claws, and small bones; all these objects fall on the neck and shoulders and knock together with a sinister sound. Next to men in full breeches are men in rags or men with close-fitting trousers made of innumerable pieces all in different

794 colors, one leg of which goes down to the ankle while the other does
796 not even reach the knee. Some brandish wooden swords, and others
● 292 ride astride on a bamboo, a reed, or a sorghum stalk, rearing and
522 kicking, and there is not one who does not act the clown.

794 The *bisatjila* (flagellants) make their flexible whips whistle in
796 the air; shortly thereafter these whips rain blows onto their backs; the
[185] *ta tougoula* (fire lighters, incendiaries) seem impatient to shower
their bare backs with sparks. The *djara* (lions) or *sogo* (beasts, animals)
with masks even larger than those of the *souroukou* (hyenas) growl
around the *n'goni sama* (1), also called *wara* (fearless wild animals).

1. *N'goni*, "thorns"; *sama*, "to kill for oneself."

The *soula* run from one group to another, slip between legs, and never stay still; they are seen everywhere, sometimes standing, sometimes with hands on the ground on all fours, or again sitting down, breaking bundles of grass or bits of wood between their hands and throwing them with shrill cries at the heads of their companions. And at the end of the procession come the old men, weighed down by the years and no longer of an age for all this fancy dress. They drag or carry the victims intended for the sacrifices.

In the grove around the sacred tree, there is a deafening noise
of drums, triangles, reed pipes, and many voices /124/ that shout all
together without ever harmonizing. At a sign from the leader, the
kârâ bearer goes and stands before the fetish tree, and everything be-
comes calm and quiet. The youths who have been waiting for seven
years to be initiated advance in a line, fall on their knees before the
fetish and its emblem, and then prostrate themselves with foreheads
in the dust. They remain in this position as long as the sacred hymn
lasts. On rising, they say: "*Djanté koré déou djanté* (*djanté* children
[535 of the *djanté koré*), *djanté ma* (man of the *djanté*)," and each dances
831] the dance of the group to which he belongs. These dances are indecent
and always conclude with an obscene gesture.

The oldest sons belong to the groups of their fathers; as to the others, they choose the group they like best. Thenceforth they are

881 with honey water and milk. They go to the public square, the only ballroom known in Bambara country. The big boys, their heads freshly shaved and their bodies thoroughly greased and all shining, also arrive in a long line, and in the square there is nothing but indescribable bedlam, for all these people at once greet each other, talk and shout, and not a voice is in harmony.

[821] Young and old consult the canopy of stars, for although they are not astronomers they know that around midnight a certain star of the firmament is at such and such an angle, and they are impatient. Then the hour has come, and the male soli are crouched in the place of honor, and the young lady soli arrive in single file, their hair in disorder and their hips girded with paltry loincloths that reach from the knees up to the navel. The loincloths are gifts from the fiancé [292] of each one, and must be worn. Their colors vary, indicating the tribe and caste of each girl, so one can see that they are of some importance (1).

(1) The Moslems have blue. The pure Bambara wants a yellow background with black rose shapes and lines.

[186] A Bambara woman is proud of her blood and proud of her tribe, and, wearing her loincloth in the national colors, a narrow cloth band of black stripes on a yellow background, she almost thinks she is a queen, if not a goddess, at the soli si. The girls' gait reflects this feeling: with heads high, eyes 15 paces ahead, chests stuck out like Prussians (they puff themselves up a little to bring out their charms), they admire themselves and are enraptured, each knowing that she is the focus of more than one shining eye full of desire. They advance slowly, raising a cloud of dust, and in her hands each one shakes a bag of goatskin and an iron box filled with little pebbles; her torso bends to the left and bends to the right. In the dark of the night as the little fires /179/ cast their gleams here and there, one might say that they are frail shells lost in the waves and tossed by the winds, struck by the swell and always ready to capsize.

881 534 Shouting -- and that is an understatement, the young people throw themselves onto their instruments, which are drums of every shape and size. Some, the bass drums, are carried on the abdomen and fastened to the waist by a bark cord; others, smaller but longer, are slid between the legs or under the arms, and tambourines, hung from the neck, swing at the level of the navel as a new kind of pendant. The old women with toothless jaws join in; they scrape two iron rods together or create syncapation by furiously beating on an inverted gourd floating in a conari full of water with a piece of wood or a pumpkin stem.

881 Virgins, married women, widows, prostitutes (all mingling) slowly circle again and again around the orchestra behind the soli, shaking in their hands the bags of goatskin or boxes of white iron, and until morning every boy that is to be circumcised and every girl to be excised hears the glories and feats of his lineage. There is nothing very lofty about these songs containing thousands and thousands of wishes; although there is a feeling of passion in them, there is no love; beauty of the heart is lacking, and all is badly told. The men also from time to time leave the jug and mingle in the dance, but the night belongs to the women. And it belongs to the gods. If, tired of the bedlam, you leave the ball and go outside the village to breathe a little fresh air, you hear the piercing cries of the herald of the gods, you even see him in the darkness, running from one tree [292] to another; with horns on his head and a coat decorated with feathers of hens, guinea fowl, egrets (1), etc., he looks like those story demons which grandmothers depict so well in the late evenings.

[789] And this herald of the gods, with his retinue, is performing a curious rite: he is chasing out the evil spirits and clearing a place for the favorite god of the village so as to drive away sorcery from the circumcised and the excised. /180/ In Bambara this is called kéné sâlo (1) and can be translated into French as "exorcising the place."

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1. This is the costume worn by Negroes when they dance the dance of the Komo fetish.

881 until they are completely healed; for it is not until evening, when the setting sun reddens the horizon and takes on its bloody hue that [272] they re-enter the village. From this day on they wear a costume (all yellow if they are Bambara) of trousers, a blouse, and on their heads a kind of handkerchief tied under the chin (4). They pass the time in making mats, singing, striking together gourd disks strung on a stick, and especially in eating, "for they are being stuffed," and in sleeping. /181/

4. In some villages, instead of the yellow handkerchief the circumcised have a cap with two points. In Bani country the circumcised wear the blouse and handkerchief, or cap, and nothing more.

881
304 But in speaking of the boys, I forgot the little girls! They undress under the tree nearest to the sacred karité. Naked as a worm, each one when her turn comes runs at top speed with her abdomen to the ground and throws herself into the arms of a woman, also of the blacksmith caste, who immediately cuts her. On a braided platter, [285 415 189] made of fine, pliable grass, the mother or her substitute receives the bloody fragment which will be a grigri, a talisman or good-luck charm for the house, and while the gunpowder speaks, the disabled girl, pretending not to be suffering at all from the loss of her clitoris, goes back to her place, and another replaces her.

881 The session ends with the last girl, and the crowd breaks out in a song of joy and triumph. The mother, the eldest sister, or a [482] serving woman wraps the excised girl in a big white cloth and carries her astride her back to the village to the hut which has been prepared for her (1). This carrying, so laughable in itself (they can walk, even

[621 346] 1. Each village is divided into quarters. The excised girls of each quarter have their hut in that quarter.

881
302 1. Newborn infants have their heads shaved six to eight days after birth; they cannot go out of their homes before being shorn of the hair of the womb (*ou ba*, "their mothers"; *kono*, "womb"; *si*, hair).

881 mother provides some of hers. The dress-up outfit of our excised girls
881 is a regular harness; two or three loincloths in layers encircle their
292 waists, and of the actual costume, the band of cloth which shakes behind in limp and loose trains, the big pompom is all that shows. At least one can look at them and see them, as for once pretty white blouses clothe them; the long cloth slings required in the dances are thrown over their shoulders and brought to the front and create quite a
881 pretty effect. In Bani country the girls wear a wide belt of cowrie
881 shells around the hips and over the loincloths, and on each side two
301 bundles of cowrie shells hang from leather thongs that pass over the
583 shoulders and are crossed on the chest. This *dousou ko* (2), as it is called, is the remaining portion of the bride price given by the fiancé, and is worth 5, 000 to 6, 000 cowrie shells.

881 Around the drums that rage in the square, behind the old women who scrape their pieces of scrap iron, and behind the female storytellers /*griottes*/ who sing of their charms, their strength and their beauty, the circumcised boys and excised girls circle for a few moments and go and sit on the mats that have been prepared for them.

Kola nuts are distributed to the new citizens; gourds of *dégé*, millet flour mixed with honey water and milk, are placed at the feet of the girls, queens of the day, and the head of the village makes the speech that is required at the beginning of every festival. His herald, standing beside him, repeats it word by word, sentence by

2. *Dousou*, "soul," "heart," "seat of love"; *ko*, "affair," "pledge of love."

765 Malakou, salakou
Fari ô, fari doun ka di." (2)

2. A song heard in Bani country. Since these songs are often improvised, they differ from one region to another.

Translation: "Ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans (fari) and to eat all one's fill, ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans!"

The excised daughters and granddaughters of the deceased wear mourning for about eight to ten days. During this time they stay in the b'lon, or entry hut, and spin cotton. The only noteworthy fact [513 514] is that they all sleep in the same hut and attend to the wants of nature at set times, going to the bush evening and morning in Indian file with white veils on their heads. For the whole moon following the ●[292] death, the wife (the wives if the old man was polygamous) of the deceased wear sandals of goatskin and go out dressed only in white.

768 562 428 At the end of the moon, the wives of the deceased become the property of the head of the family, who makes them his own or gives them to his circumcised children (3). Some freedom is left to them, for they can ransom themselves if they wish, and for the old and worn, difficulties are soon smoothed away. If the new family head is without a brother and without children or if he is older than the deceased,

3. Brothers succeed brothers. If there are no brothers, the oldest son inherits. If the deceased is younger than the brother who inherits, the latter possesses the wives but may not enjoy them. If the heir is the son of the deceased, all the father's or grandfather's wives belong to him, and he may enjoy them all except his mother.

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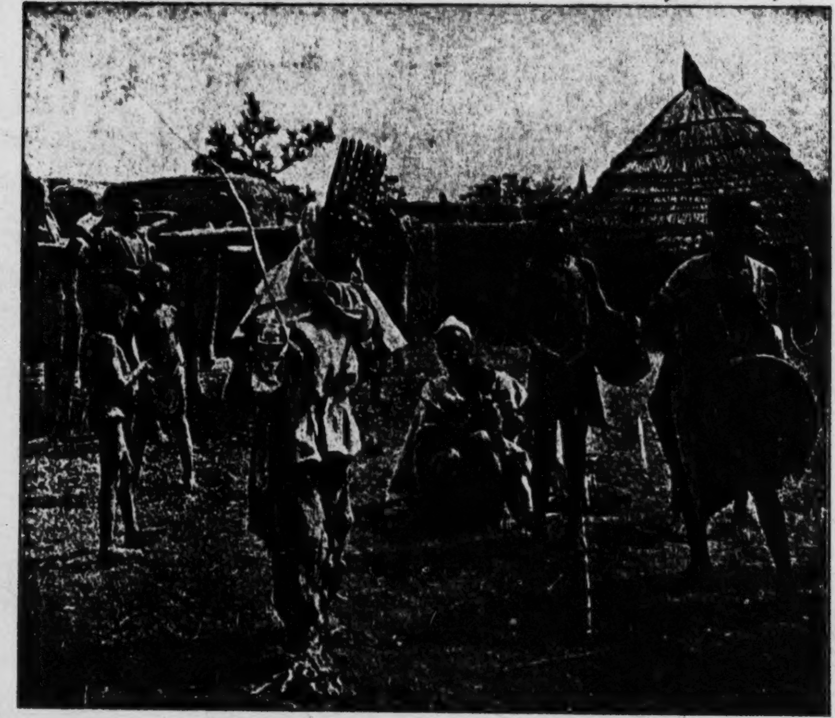
4: Henry--268 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Sacred dance in honor of the N'tomo, the children's fetish.

/sub-caption: The hut with a conical roof, on the right, is the temple of the boli fetish Nia./

4: Henry--271 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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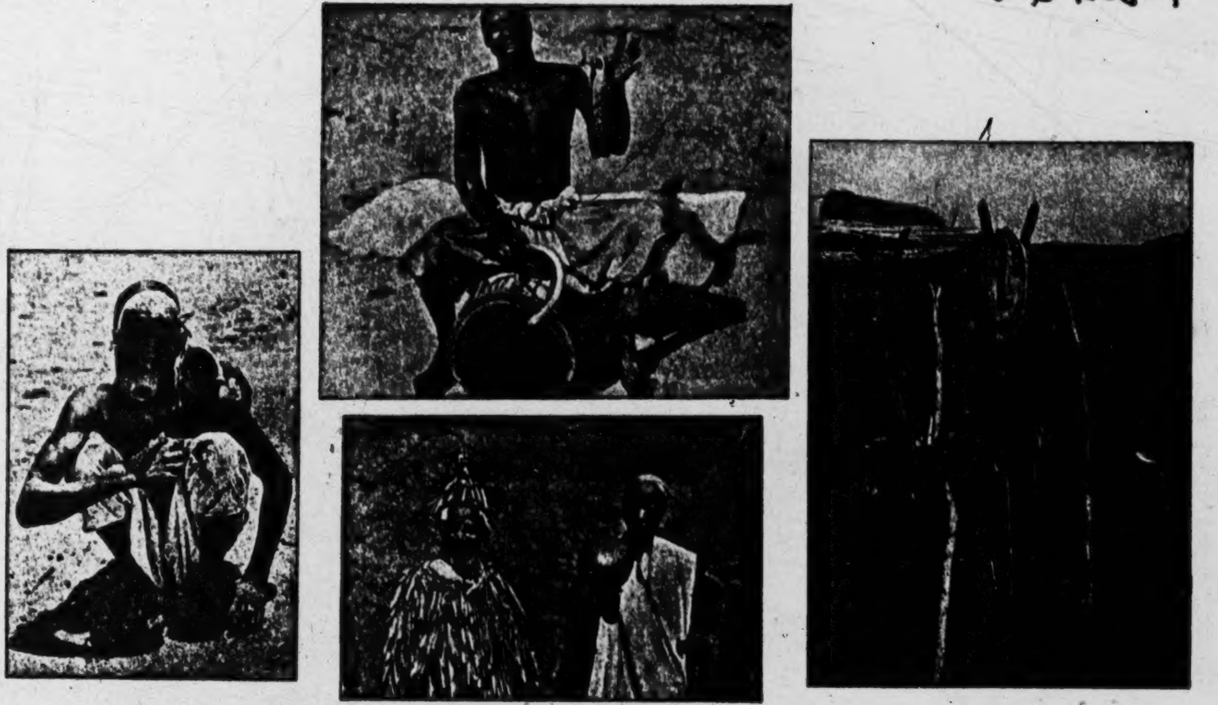

Left: Souba (monkey), society of the Koré. Above: Denouba (the big drum) and kinge (a triangle), society of the Koré. Center: Head korodouga and his herald, society of the Koré. Right: Souroukou (hyena), society of the Koré.

4: Henry--280 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

Circumcised Bambara youths.

Excised Bambara girls.

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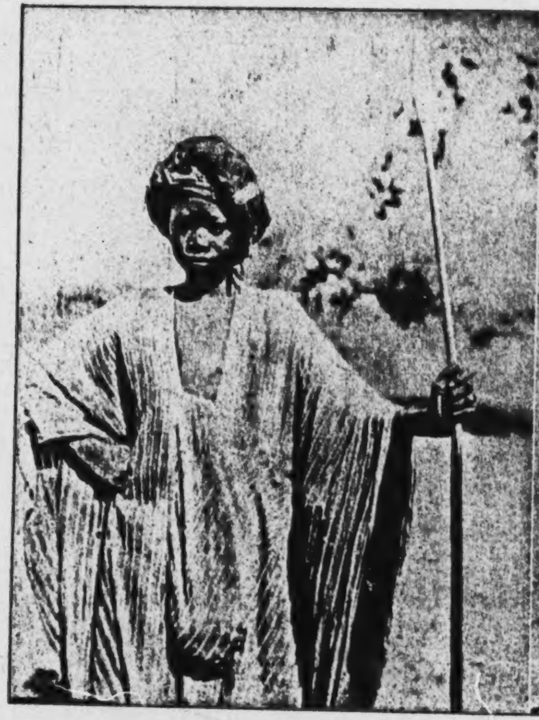
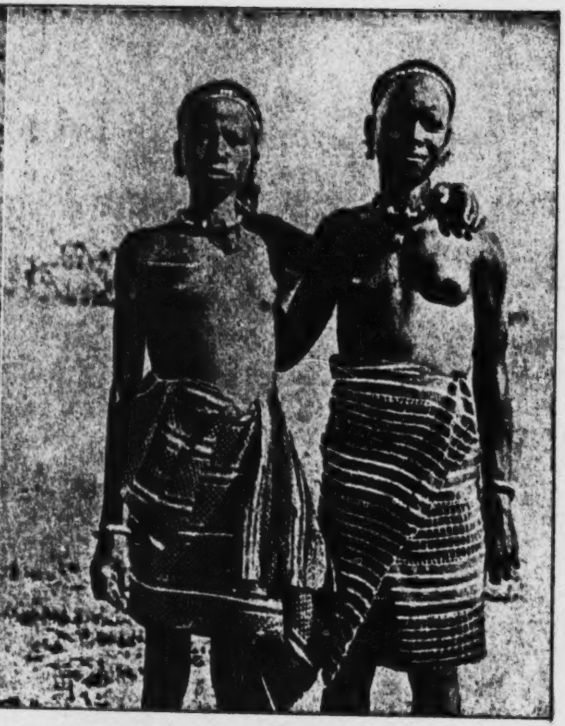


Circumcised youth dressed up.



Young Bambara girls dressed to go out.

4: Henry--281 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

4: Henry--282 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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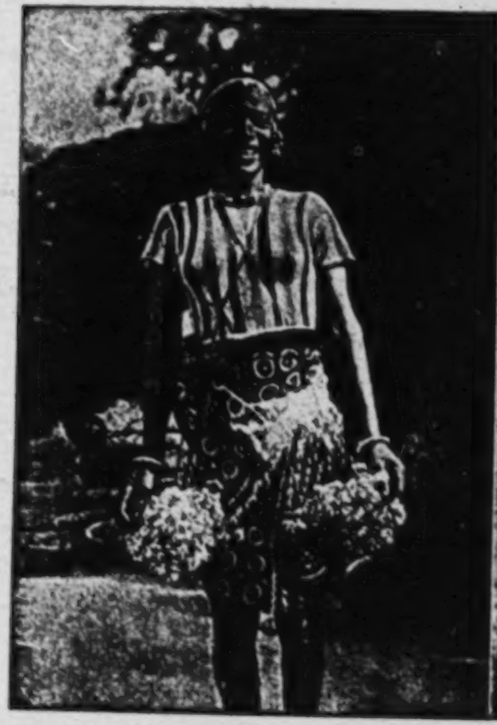
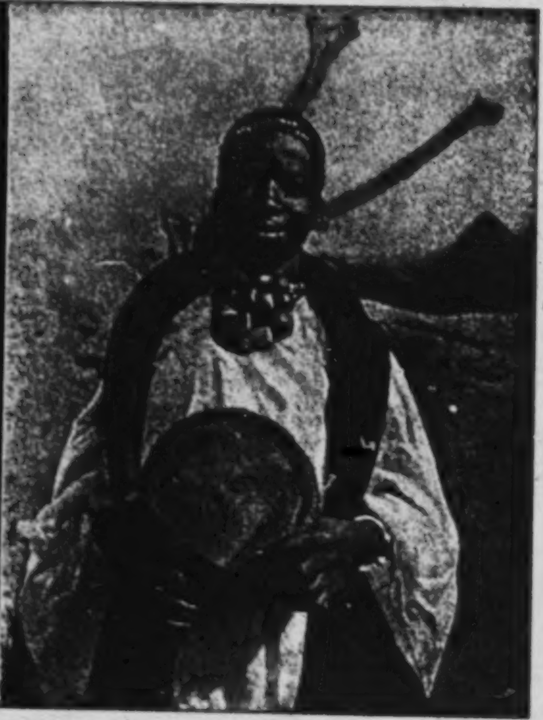


Excised girl in the dress-up attire of Bani country.

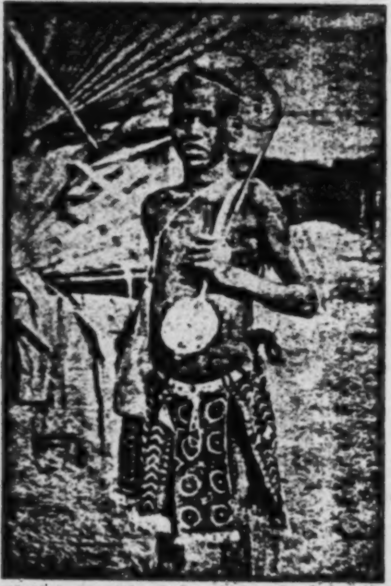


Excised girl dressed up.

869 794 778 In addition to wearing the costume, which is white (n'tomo djé) or yellow, black, etc. (n'tomo fign), the boy who dances the dance of the genie hides his face in a frightful wooden mask on top of which are five, seven, and sometimes eight horns.

869 794 561 The n'tomo injects a whole organization into the world of children. They quite naturally divide themselves into small groups, each corresponding to a circumcision that is to take place, and are thus all of the same age, born in the same year, or very nearly so. The member of each group who is the oldest -- be it by only one day -- becomes its head, and all the younger heads obey the head of the oldest group, the n'tomotigi, and his aide, the n'tomotigi siéré (1), who is drawn from the group which will be circumcised after that

[291 293]



Child wearing the loincloth called yaba.

1. Siéré, "aide," "deputy."

881 run, as they have demonstrated under the karité tree), is the part of whole festival which is most reminiscent of a child, and of the function of the circumcision. It is the second birth, and just as the infant appears in public for the first time on the back of her mother, so she again enters the civil and religious life on the back of her mother or of the woman who takes her place.

The excised girls do very little in their huts, and like the boys, they yawn, sleep, and eat. However, they spin a little cotton and very often sing in a low voice while they practice gracefully shaking a gourd the size of a fist, pierced with little holes and filled with small pebbles. They lead a very easy life, and one might think they were happy, but a toothless old woman who is always grumbling watches over them. This is a great nuisance! It is impossible to move, impossible to wiggle a toe; one must have permission for everything, and it is never granted gracefully. The wants of nature [514 must be satisfied in a group and at stated hours.... When the girls go ● 293] through the village, they lean, in accordance with custom, on a millet stalk at the end of which is hung the perforated gourd in which little pebbles rattle. /182/

881 533 On the way out as they go into the bush, they sing to the gnâma to protect themselves from them:

Bo n'yé, gnâma, ô gnâma,
Go away from me, gnâma, ô gnâma,
Dankoun ba la,
Of the great corner of land (1),

1. The corner of land formed by two paths that cross, the place where the gnâma dwell. /The slight discrepancy between the translations of the song given here and in Chapter 1, Section 3, is present in the original French. Ed./

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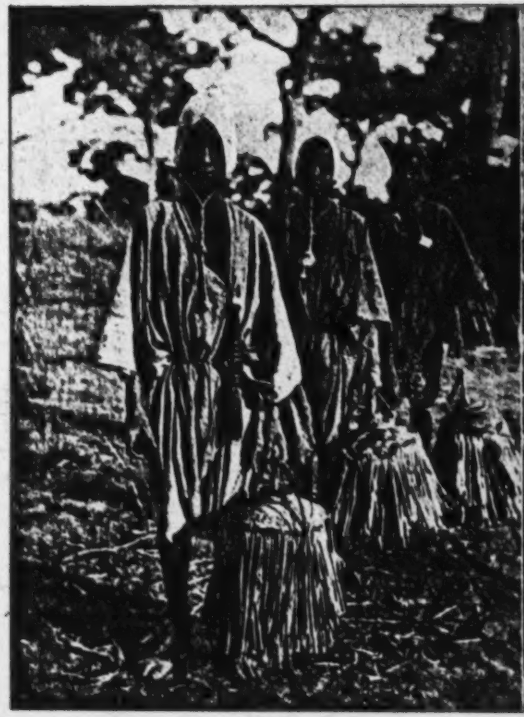
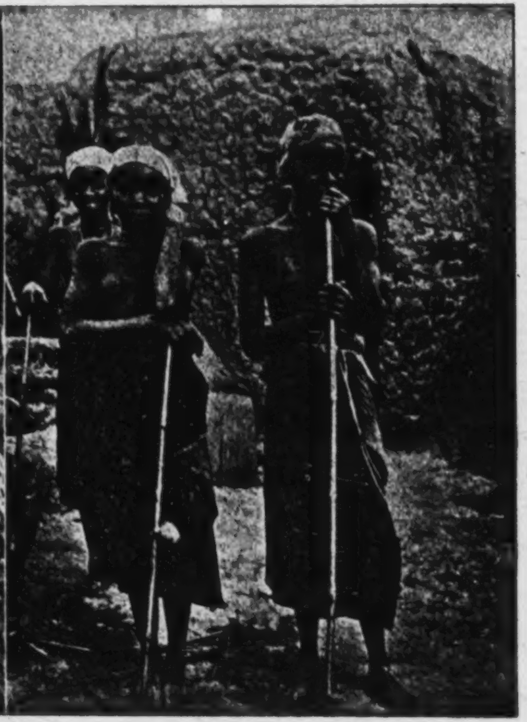
4: Henry--280 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Circumcised Bambara youths.



Excised Bambara girls.

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The Ségou bank of the Niger.

4: Henry--265 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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> 7. Only vegetables whose spiritual essence does not have to be preserved are cooked, "for to cook is to shatter the soul."

776 In each village are grown one or several small fields of tomatoes,
824 called "Faro's fields," or "fields of twins." The fruits of these fields
244 are reserved for the worship of the spirit (1).
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> 1. On the site of the ancient village of Soroba, at the edge of a pond located near the present-day village, there are two rectangular fields of tomatoes dedicated to male twins and four square fields dedicated to female twins in the village. Each year the villagers gather at the edge of the pond for a ceremony. The symbolic words relating to twins are recited and a prayer is said, to be followed by ablutions.
>
> The fruit that is harvested is offered to the spirit by squashing it on a neighboring tree trunk.

776 /49/ All metals belong to Faro. The seven /sic/ principal metals
823 are the following: copper (male), brass (female), gold, silver, tin, and iron. Copper and brass come from the fifth sky (koblenkaba). They descend at each thunderclap and, along with the "thunderstones," penetrated into the soil. They were discovered by a diviner at the bottom of a pond that had dried up because of a broken taboo. Be-
[301] cause of their divine origin, copper and brass represent "Faro's sounds." These sounds twist themselves around the spiralled copper or brass earrings that everyone wears and penetrate the eardrum, thus making it possible to hear words. Gold plays a part in the building of certain altars (boli) to which it confers strength and stability.

The sacrifices made with or on copper, brass, or gold have a restraining influence on the spirit for they are of his own essence.

No woman wearing copper, brass, or gold jewelry, may cross the Niger without opening her luggage out of deference to the spirit, for "all ornaments belong to him and often must be returned to him after death.

[784] It is taboo to bring metal into contact with cow's butter, an oily substance that does not allow water to penetrate.

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[764]

The mouth and tongue, ejectors of the word, can be compared in importance to the ear, a receptive organ. It is through the ear that man receives and remembers the word. Its role is comparable to that of the sex organs which eject life and receive it. The ear in itself has both sexes: male by its auricle, female by its orifice. This duality expresses the basic duality of man. That is why the corpse of an uncircumcised man is sometimes amputated at the ear rather than at the foreskin.

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Because of the symbolism of its shape and because of its function, the ear is adorned. Men formerly wore three copper rings on the right ear and four on the left, the number seven representing the complete being, male and female, ni and dya. Women wear four rings on each auricle or, if they can, twenty-two, which represent the twenty-two stages of creation, or the twenty-two generative categories. Sometimes, for both men and women, a single ring attached to the earlobe represents the mother of the other rings (1).

[178]

1. In olden times, men and women wore cowrie shells on their ears in the place of copper rings, a custom which would seem to be still respected in certain villages today. These shells played the same part as copper.

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But the role of this adornment goes much further. As symbol of the word, it is through the ornaments that the spirit Téliko, master of sound, hears what /68/ is said to man. They attract sound and send it back to Téliko and Faro, who thus judge the acts and words of men. To wear earrings did not originally mean to adorn oneself, but to hear the spirits as well as to force them to hear what was said (2). Its second effect is to embarass the liar, the bearer of false news or evil words, by putting him in the position of being understood by the invisible, therefore of being judged by them. A pleasant or well-intentioned word benefits the one to whom it is addressed and this

2. Rings placed on musical instruments have the same purpose and also symbolize those worn by men. See p. 282.

827 191 381 776 gain is felt as a contribution to the beneficial nyama. "The spirit Téliko transforms the air emitted by the speaker into favorable nyama; upon hearing a good word, it would be necessary to stop one's ears so that this nyama does not leave the person who received it." Moreover, if a person opens his eyes wide while watching the speaker, "the latter's nyama is able to penetrate the body of the listener" and spread within it as a reviving tide. While this takes place, the good word saturates the air, helping the action of breathing, hence the life, of the listener. "One breathes," says an informant, "with the nyama of the words which enter through the eyes and ears." But this process is not one-sided. The good nyama returns to the speaker through his own eyes while he is looking at the other person. He is reflected in the person with whom he is talking and it is as though he were talking to himself. There is a beneficial exchange even when only one of the two actors speaks.

Inversely, a bad word or an insult upsets the listener and rebounds, acting upon the insulting person. This harmonious arrangement summarizes precisely and powerfully the universal movement, principle of life and strength for all beings. It comprises an individual movement provoked by the word which acts upon the body by developing and regularizing the rhythm of breathing, and a collective movement set off by the return of the word to the speaker. Because of the effect of the spoken word, exchanges are established that are favorable both to the rhythm of individual breathing and to the equilibrium of universal life. This effect is not limited to words in the strict sense; sight enjoys the same prerogatives as hearing and diction. If an object [431] belonging to a certain person is seen and coveted by another, the owner cannot refuse to give it to him. The act of seeing has established by itself, between the stranger and the object, a bond which is affectively stronger than that of ownership.

826 The articulated parts of the human body are just as meaningful as the head. The bones, more lasting than the flesh /69/ and a testimony, in the grave, of the life that has passed, are its foundation and framework.

The navel is the central point of the articulations: that is why Faro, when he drowns a person, returns the body after having slit the nose and navel. This double mutilation shows that he has reclaimed the head and the body of the guilty man. The articulations are the indication of man's condition in the new order. Where he was once

826 is also through the feet that a part of man's strength is deposited in the
sweepings and rubbish upon which he treads. Their role as receptacles
appears in the rituals concerning household refuse and the dirt on
roads and paths.

Like the little finger, the small toe symbolizes the whole person.
[301] It is sometimes adorned with a silver ring, symbol of the word, which
recalls that man's body is the seat of the word extended within him
from head to feet (1).

831 The notion of the bisexuality of human beings is fundamental:
the spiritual principles are sexed like the body, whose ambivalence
826 /71/ is evident during childhood: the boy is feminine in his foreskin;
the girl is masculine in her clitoris. One of the aims of circumcision
[304] and excision is to help the child attain the sex to which it is apparently
destined by removing the organ of the opposite sex. (2). But the
initial duality of the soul and body is the very foundation of the human
being. He is complete only if he originally received it, and he retains
it even after the operation imposed by physical and social life,
[774] for the soul of the opposite sex, though diminished in the body, remains
present in the shadow, the dya. He also rediscovers his dual
unity when he marries. A married couple are a unit for their dya
[581] join as do their bodies in an act which is not merely physical and
which realizes the ideal union of twins.

831 The sex to which one belongs dominates one's whole existence on
earth. Objects and tools bear masculine or feminine marks, according
801 to the rules of the division of labor. The numbers three (man)
and four (woman) are abridged forms of the sex. "Primitive men"
who, according to the Bambara expressed themselves mostly by
gestures and signs, engraved their rare objects with the number of

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1. In olden times the ring on the small toe was made of red nyama fiber (nyama fu), which played the same role as metal.

[171] 2. The same conception is found among the Dogon; see M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau, p. 185.

845 851 each twin is the dya of the other and that this term means "shadow of the body," "spiritual double," as well as "balance." To trade is dyago.

845 301 [531] Three or four days after the name-giving ceremony, depending on their sex, the twins are given bracelets of white metal representing their dya. Geometrical symbols of the universe, the sky and the earth, are engraved on each of these (1). The opening of the bracelet represents that of the incomplete terrestrial world. When the twins die [766] they will be buried with the bracelets closed over their arms or their ankles to signify that they have penetrated a complete and closed world. Formerly the sacrifices to Faro were carried out with ornaments 845 301 782 borrowed from a twin. The person making the sacrifice presented them to the /87/ river while saying: "The iron of the twins is witness to the sacrifice offered to Faro." (2) After the ceremony, everyone gave white kola nuts to the twin; the interested party then went to the village square and waved in the air his arms bedecked with ornaments to spread to the four cardinal points Faro's beneficial nyama acquired in the course of the sacrifice. In certain areas twins wear a pendant in the shape of double slave fetters, called dyõ neke, "irons of the captive," or an amulet called sinzin, "support," composed of a little piece of wood carved in the shape of a double cup and preferably made by a Bozo. A man who has had twins three times [778] must acquire a double pot which is always kept full of water and which becomes the object of an annual sacrifice (3).

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1. This figure is formed by a rectangle divided into two equal superposed squares, including a multiplication sign in the lower square to represent the earth, and an open v in the upper square to represent the sky.

2. Flani neke ye ma šere ye faro sõni la.

3. See p. 124, n. 1.

881 On the same day the young girls in certain localities
302 have a characteristic ceremony. One of them whitens her face,
breast, and back with a mixture of milk and ashes. Thus
daubed, she dashes out of the village brandishing the spatula
(to-n-galama) which is used to stir mush (to) in the pot; her
companions follow her, shouting. The band goes around the
village four times in this fashion, each time stopping at the
crossroads. At these points the girl who is bedaubed throws
handfuls of food (1), provided by her companions, to the spirits,

[262] 1. Usually basi (couscous) made with fish.

crying: "Dege dule (2)." Her companions reply: "Naloma (3)."

2. Literally, "thick mush."

3. That is, "fool."

881 The eve of the soli (soli-si). During the evening pre-
527 ceding the soli, the families concerned enjoy an ample meal,
accompanied by innumerable jugs of beer (dlo) as is the custom
[273] at all festivals among the Bambara. This is a time of special
[576] merriment, of shining faces and greasy hands, and it is good
form for the men and boys to belch noisily, saying repeatedly:
"ne ne fa," literally, "I am full," that is, "I am replete." The
● [301] women wander about the lanes, wrapped in their best skirts,
with balls of amber in their hair and small silver or even gold
rings in their ears and nostrils and rather heavy bracelets on their
[482] arms and ankles. Some carry jars of dlo on their heads, while
others carry gourds full of couscous, dege, or hot sauces which
are often nauseous with smoked or spoiled fish. After the meal
everyone gathers on the public square, forming a wide circle
whose center is reserved for the dancers; piles of dried millet
[373] stalks are used to make bright fires which illuminate the scene
and warm the audience.

881 The "boys of the soli" (soli-ma-tye-u), their heads
302

881 At the end of this time, the *nyana-n-son-na-ba* and his council having come to an agreement with the *sema* to end the period of seclusion, each leader performs certain magic passes, under the boys' tree and near the girls' huts, to dispel any evil. The Bambara are convinced that so long as the period of convalescence is not officially closed the circumcised boys or excised girls are as much a danger to society as society is to them; that is why they must spend this period in seclusion. 881 783 Furthermore, anything used by them during their seclusion is impregnated with this evil and may spread it.

Therefore, as soon as the interdict is lifted, everything is collected to be burned at sunset (2). Near the trees outside the village the mats, the *n-koso-m-bara*, the gourds, millet stalks, rags, etc., are all piled up, and the *nyana-n-son-na-ba* sets them afire. The boys and girls jump over the fire three times; they are then free to return to the village. They run home promptly to adorn themselves for the festival celebrating their return.

881 Once more there are lavish meals and interminable drinking bouts, followed by a general gathering in the public square. People come from all directions, among them appallingly decrepit old women who try to manage everything. [247]

291 On this occasion, the boys, *soli-ma-tye*, appear for the first time in true man's attire, full trousers, cap with earlaps, and an ample new shirt. With lance in hand, they swagger about and simulate the behavior of warriors; they are now *tye-kura*, "new men."

881 301 The girls also are decked out to excess in women's attire. Wearing several skirts and adorned with all the jewelry relatives

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789 2. However, personal effects (the boys' *kursi*, *dloki*, and *baufla*, and the girls' *tafe*) are not burned; along with their stains, these are impregnated with virtues which make them particularly valuable for talismans, amulets, and other magic weapons.

881 and friends have kindly lent for the occasion, they advance
● 301 shyly. In some areas, notably in the Bani region, they wear
bundles of cowries, from the bride price already paid for them,
around the hips and hanging on each side of the head (1).

[302 171] 1. Bambara girls who have gone through the *soli* have their heads shaved. Among other peoples, on the contrary, girls have their hair braided like women for the first time, but to the braid is added a tuft of the hair shaved off seven days after birth; this hair has usually been lost, but a small tuft is made to simulate it.

881 Boys and girls, following the old women who lead them,
[535] dance around the orchestra, and then all sit down in a circle.
The *nyana-n-son-na-ba* takes the floor. He speaks in a low
voice, and, as is proper, his words are repeated in a loud voice
by a herald. He proclaims the end of the *soli*, recalls its principal
events, and indicates clearly which children have participated
in the rite; each boy and girl is specifically named. He
will also be sure to point out that the *soli* is an immemorial custom
[578] among the Bambara and that there is no worse insult than to
treat a Bambara as uncircumcised. He closes by inviting everyone
to eat, drink, and celebrate in the joy and harmony appropriate
to such a festival.

[535] Dancing is resumed, and the boys and girls of the *soli* take part. The festivities continue as long as the refreshments last, usually several days.

To end it all, no one leaves without giving at least a few kola nuts to the heroes of the festival, the boys and girls.

The last phase is the thanks given by the *soli-ma* to those who assisted at the *da-woro*. In noisy bands, boys and girls dash about the village in two distinct groups. The girls' group is headed by the *soma-moso* who is called *masa* (queen), followed by the *masa-ma-kono* (vice-queen) and the *masa-ma-kono-segere* [248] (follower of the vice-queen); the last girl in the

794 of *Kore-dyuga-tigi* and has the same meaning.

most part strangely accoutered dancers, each of whom dresses
● [301] as his fancy dictates. As ornaments, the *Kor'dyuga* wear strings
of beautiful red beans, which are inedible, called *n-go ble.*
These beans are about the size of a large *dragée* and throughout
the western Sudan are used as protection against evil spirits.
[292] These dancers have a leader, the *Koro-duga-tigi* or *Kor'dyuga-tigi*,
who is further distinguished by a kind of cloak made entirely
of bits of reed stalks. On his head he wears a conical hat made
of the same reeds, and in his hand he carries a long wand from
which hang birds' skulls, packets of sorghum straw, gourd stems,
etc. In addition to the dancers, the clergy is accompanied by
[785] flagellants (*bisa-tyi-la*), torchbearers (*ta-tugu-la-n-tigi*), and
people who lash themselves with bundles of thorns (the *ngoni-sama-u*).

[534] Of course, the Kore has its orchestra, which includes
drums (*denu-ba*), a kind of castanet (*kinge*), and gourds filled
with seeds or pebbles (*nkude*) and pierced with holes.

794 The cult has the usual ceremonies, with the two great
festivals at the times of planting and harvesting. On these occasions
796 the *Kore-tigi* officiates, as the *nyana-n-son-na-ba* does
with respect to *nyana dugu-da-siri.* He makes the offerings, performs
the sacrifices, and sets forth the requests at the foot of
the sacred tree, after having thanked the god-protector. The
kara and the *Kore-kongolo* are sprinkled with the blood of the
victims; thus, the manes and the *nyana* of the *boli* are honored
simultaneously.

[764] There is always a meeting of the brotherhood when a
Kore-de dies. There are offerings, sacrifices, and communion
with all the offerings, which require one or more days of orgies
to be consumed, depending on the importance of the deceased,
because elders in [282] important posts like that of *nyana-n-son-na-ba*, etc., are particularly honored at their death.

Young men are admitted only once every seven years,
and it is at this time that the ceremonies are most elaborate.

766 White oxen are sacrificed on the tomb; their hides are
614 used to make new drumheads for the *tabala*, and the meat [328]
is offered to the manes of the deceased and then distributed
among members of the family, allies, familiars, etc. The
women wail, weep, and sing the praises of the deceased in com-
786 pany with the people of caste who organize everything. Outside,
banquets and virtual orgies, complete with noisy dances and
songs, are organized in honor of the deceased.

This ceremony goes on for seven days.

614 At the close of this period, the new *fama* is publicly pro-
claimed. For this purpose, the leader of the slaves has the
walled-up door of the *tata* reopened, and the whole company as-
sembles in the large open area in front of the house of the *fama*.
Those present include the newly elected *fama*, the members of
the family of the Massa-si, allies, tributaries, heads of the
ton'-dyon', and the *sofa*.

769 An ox has been sacrificed and offered to the manes of
782 the defunct. Its hide is stretched in the center of an open area
surrounded by the crowd, and on it is spread out the sheepskin,
adorned with precious amulets, which has long served as a rug
for the *fama* of the Massa-si. Other precious family relics include
301 the scarlet cap adorned with amulets, twists of gold for the ears,
and heavy silver bracelets.

The representative of the family of Kassi Konaré seats the newly elected *fama* on the sheepskin, puts the scarlet cap on his head, and adorns him with the gold earrings and silver bracelets. Then he makes a speech to the new *fama*, outlining the policies followed by his deceased predecessor and enumerating the desiderata of the people of the clan.

At this point the leader of the slaves prostrates himself
567 before the new *fama* and places himself in his hands to show that
all the *ton'-dyon'* are loyal to him. He then presents individually
the principal groups of slaves, tributaries, etc.

Another ceremony brings the new *fama*, prominent Massa-si, their allies, the principal leaders of the slaves, and the tributaries to the wood sacred to the protective idol of the clan, where a reciprocal oath of loyalty is taken. A ritual communion follows.

852 with water added (to recall the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni).
The patriarch shakes the family pembélé three or four times over the
infant's head to give him the nyama of the recently deceased whose
ni and dya he has inherited. Then he places the altar (kere la boli
ni) on the infant's chest three times, after having recited a prayer.
He cuts the throat of a red cock, dips his index finger in the blood,
and traces three or four crosses on the newborn's forehead, who be-
553 comes boli din. The name is given the eighth day by the Komo chief
[431] under the doubalé, where the old people assemble. The father offers
100 kola nuts, two jars of millet beer, plus a ram whose throat is cut,
and money for the griot. Part of the baby's hair is shaved off and
kept in [90] a case (sebe); another part of the hair is thrown in the
river as a sacrifice to Faro. The eldest of the old men examines the
roots of the infant's hair and the conjunction of the eyebrows, thus
determining its character (téré). Then he swings the baby seven
times in an east-west direction and eight times north-south, giving
him the first name of the deceased ancestor and, at the same time,
his spiritual principles. The griot recite the father's mottoes, the
sénanku come to joke with the baby, and the blacksmith traces the
scarifications.

845 Twins. We have seen the belief that in the beginning twins
were always born, and Faro subsequently punished man by abolishing
double births which he no longer accords except to certain privileged
persons. For the Bambara, twins are new beings who inherit neither
the ni nor the dya of any ancestor. Special rites are observed at their
[201] birth which is announced by showing the raised right and left index
fingers, without saying anything, for the proclamation would be so
powerful that it would be harmful to the newborn twins (see G.
Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].
553 The rite of name-giving is carried out on the bank of the river. The
following day, accompanied by another woman, the mother goes in
search of millet and cotton which she gathers in identical calabash
ladles. Equal gifts are put in the ladles, which the mother presents
[301] in crossed hands. Later, the twins are fitted with metal bracelets
representing their dya, and, in certain regions, with a pendant in the
form of double slave irons. The twins always stay together; they
856 wear identical clothes. If one dies in early infancy, the mother
places on the mat beside the surviving infant a small doll made by

291 designs. European influence has naturally made itself felt in the [177] fashions, and European thread is replacing native cotton thread, but the color symbolism in the bands is retained. Even though European fabrics invade the markets more and more, the traditional clothes remain the most sought after, although they have undergone certain modifications inspired by European fashions even while remaining very original.

Although the Bambara go barefoot, in certain circumstances 291 they make ornamented clogs to give to the new bride. These sandals 531 are decorated with geometric designs, engraved with a hot iron by 585 the blacksmith, that symbolize the twinship, the multiplication of children, the parents, the husband's family, the couple's language, and the sealing of the association. These signs are encircled by the sign of the union of the whole. Also, the whole ritual of taking possession lasts for several days.

302 Coiffure. At the present time, the adult males no longer wear the traditional coiffure consisting of two plaits at the side, but the children still have their hair shaved and braided according to custom. Thus, the uncircumcised boys wear a crest of hair going from the forehead to the nape of the neck, while the rest of the head is shaved. The crest symbolizes the [99] divine serpent. The children of blacksmiths also wear, at the sides of the head, two circles of hair which are cut by lines representing the forge. When a child is born after the death of several brothers and sisters, only half of his head is shaved in mockery, so that the dya subject to this pretended neglect will decide to stay in the child. The children of Marabouts have their hair shaved in such a manner that it forms a spiral which starts in the middle of the skull and covers the whole head. Afterwards, bands of hair are shaved in a manner to trace a cross on this spiral. The little girls wear a small braid across the forehead, falling on the left side, while married women wear a braid at each side of the head. These braids are made by adding fibers of the da, shining with karite, plaited with the hair. Finally, the women wear 301 22 gold rings at the ears, images of the 22 primordial elements, or sometimes a single large ring in the form of a crescent closed by threads of red cotton, which is a résumé of the 22 others. These rings keep impure words from the ear, which plays an important [776] role in generation; it is through the ornamentation that the spirits hear what is said to man.

326 as well as of silver, on a wooden core. The thrones of the ancient
[531] Bambara chiefs were covered in this manner. Today the golden
ornaments are no longer reserved exclusively for the wives of kings.
[301] Bracelets, pendants, and necklaces are produced in large quantities
in a filigree work in which the Black excels.

B. Ceramics

The land is very rich in pottery, but Bambara men do not
323 model clay, pottery being a woman's art. Inversely, the women do
not work on statuary.

C. Painting

531 The Bambara paint murals on the sanctuary walls with ocher
386 and a millet paste. The priests make these drawings periodically.
The walls of the young people's huts are also decorated with symbolic
motifs: calabash spoons, festoons, ladders with 22 bars, drawings
of hands, lines of chevrons. The young girls come to paint these,
[237] with clay from the river or with a mixture of clay and cow dung.
All these geometric drawings are signs representing not only the
cosmogony, but a subtle translation of all the movements of the
executing artist's soul. They are a veritable form of writing.

D. Music

533 Music is a privileged art (1) because it is bound to instruments, that is to say, to materials, to the human body by the voice
771 and the dance, to numbers by the rhythm, to medicine, fo divination, and to religion.

534 [106] In a report to the French Institute of Anthropology on
771 February 18, 1948, Mme. G. Dieterlen described the structure and
symbolism of the two Bambara musical instruments, the Sema guitar
and the royal drum.

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1. Griaule, Passim, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the African Arts], *Présence africaine.*

881 as ugly as possible, and plays the fool. Armed with a long stick -- the stick which is used to stir the gruel that is simmering on the fire (1) -- she darts out of the village, agile as a gazelle. Her companions all chase her at a full run, giving many shouts; they circle around the walls four times. At every fork in the path they form a circle, dance with frenzy, and throw large handfuls of *basi* and smoked fish sauce to the spirits without keeping count. "*Dégé dounlé*, idiots," shouts the smeared girl, and all her retinue repeats with ever increasing enthusiasm: "*Nalouma*, big fool. . . . " And this day, which is not very edifying, is full of delights for the little Bambara girls who are to be excised.

The little *soli* boys are satisfied with sacrificing to *n'tomo*, a good fetish which is their protector, but although they dance wearing masks with six, seven, and sometimes eight horns, they do not [785] flagellate themselves, or at least flagellation is not required on this day.

2. The *Soli Si* Festival, or the Vigil of the Circumcised

Here we are on the eve of the circumcision! It is black night, *d'lo*, or sorghum /sic/ beer, hums and foams in the earthenware bowls, and a thin mist comes out of all the huts and envelops them. Here karité grease sputters as it melts in the pot and browns the skin of a chicken or the leg of a goat; there one hears the loud laughter of people with full stomachs, the hiccups of a glutton, the dry and decisive sound of two heavy lips releasing five great /178/ sticky fingers glued to each other by a remainder of gruel. Their foreheads [301 291] decorated with beads in a kind of crown of white, red, and yellow, the colors of the rainbow, and their bodies draped in blankets, Roman style, groups of women glide silently like shadows along the alleys, carrying on their heads huge gourds full of *dégé*, millet flour mixed with honey water and milk.

[415] 1. *To-n-galama*: a stick with a large, flattened end, used to stir gruel in the pot.

796 881 The youths follow, dressed in blouses knotted at the abdomen like towels and trousers into which three pairs of legs and three abdomens could fit without any trouble, dragging drums and bass drums. To keep up the march and cause it to be forgotten (they often come from far away) they shout a loud "you you" and make coarse jokes, which are here addressed to the fair sex more than elsewhere. Sometimes also, between two laughs, two great silly laughs, something like the crack of a whip is heard. This sound is made by five stubby fingers as they are applied to the cheeks of dear little angels, warming them. In fact, a band of little boys and girls trot among the youths in their birthday suits, passing to the right and to the left and winding between their legs, and patience wears out and quickly comes to an end.

After the young people come the old men; they are bent double, leaning on spears, and even while talking of future projects they recall the days of the past. It is quite apparent that there are no more like them, their equal cannot be found. Into the foroko, the goatskins they slip over their arms and fasten on their shoulders, they have slipped some good handfuls of cowrie shells for the mothers of the circumcised [276 431] and excised, a box of the snuff that every self-respecting stranger gives as a gift to the men of the village, and finally the kola nuts that the sacrificer will chew before spitting the remains onto the front side of the god and some that, as educated, well-bred men, they keep for close friends. They also carry the hens or roosters for the sacrifice; these are attached by the feet to the straps of the foroko and hung head down their wings flapping horribly.

881 796 •301 The human flood arrives at the gates of the village, stops a moment under the big trees, and tidies itself. The pointed caps /184/ are put a little to one side of the head, the blouses are unfolded, and nakedness is concealed. On the women's side there is indescribable hubbub, like the sound of the distant ocean at rising tide; they polish and adorn themselves and beautify themselves. On their feet they put little chains, on their arms heavy bracelets that knock together with the sound of old iron, and on their hips the young girls at least hang belts of beads sprinkled with little bells that tinkle at the slightest movement. In their noses they put crescents of gold or copper, in

881 each ear ten to twelve rings of soft iron, tin, or silver, and those that
796 they put on their fingers and toes number more than twenty.

301 On the braids of their hair, all running with grease, they hang bits of amber and rings of polished pottery as white as snow, and around all their necks are bead necklaces from which dangle bits of amber, grigris, and here and there, held by leather strips, pottery rings that fall back between the shoulders and in front on their bosoms. They also bind their foreheads with narrow crowns of rainbow-colored beads or diadems of coral. Such are the Negro girls in their most beautiful array.

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881 At the homes of the circumcised and excised, the huts and courts are crowded with people, for in addition to friends and story-tellers /griots/ -- the poor troubadours of the country -- there may be in each home older married daughters who have come with their husbands, children, and parents-in-law, and the fiancé's delegation to his betrothed seem to be in every corner. This is really the festival of the tribe, and everybody is present; only the fiancés are excluded and cannot appear on this day. And how very Bambara it is! In one
[264] spot people quench their thirst with great drinks of d'lo, or millet beer, while nearby, squatted around steaming gourds, others stuff themselves with to, or gruel. The hands held out to you are running with sauce; the children who surround you are covered with leftovers from the feast and brandish under your nose bones that they gnaw clean with their bare teeth, and while they call to you Sogo ("some meat"), the satiated people next to you exclaim: "Abarka, thank you Né fara san, I am full for the moment." And everywhere there is an infernal bedlam! Old women beat furiously on inverted pumpkins in conari full of water /185/; youths beat drums, women and young girls clap their hands in rhythm, and everybody shouts the glories of the family. The families of the circumcised and excised are beside
[431] themselves, so great is their joy, and if you are one of their close friends you will be shown all the gifts received, in plain sight in the court. You are made to taste of everything, to touch and feel everything, and, just as on the day when the child is given its name, you receive, on leaving, the kola nut of life (le ni woro).

881 Moment by moment the old women come closer and the word
[887] "Kouyo ê, Kouyo ê" resounds louder and louder. But now they come out, and their bodies move as if they were made of rings, so closely do they imitate a worm surprised by a ray of sunshine who is hastily returning to its nest in the ground. With their pointed chins, wrinkled skins, and toothless jaws, they look like real savages as they furiously scrape two iron rods; on their bald heads they wear dirty towels, the filthy appurtenances of sorceresses, wound without skill or taste. With spear in hand the young citizens appear in full trousers; they wear caps with double points or loud-colored turbans with long fringes, and their bodies disappear under loose blouses still all perfumed with the musty smell of the bottom of a storage bin, all stiff and shiny under a paste of starch. They leap and shout, they brandish their arms, assume the look of warriors, and especially assume such a look of conceit that one's laughter is unloosed.

After the boys come the girls, fanning their "alms purses" all
[415] decorated with cowrie shells; these are platters braided of fine, pliable grass, doubtless those onto which the bloody remnants were placed on the morning of the soli si, or arms' vigil. They come forward stiffly, and glide rather than walk over the ground, for their feet are weighed
[301] down by small chains and iron rings, and can hardly be lifted. Gold or copper crescents pull down the septum of their noses, a handful of striped periwinkle shells hangs from the lobe of each ear, several coral necklaces encircle their heads, and everywhere, chiefly around their necks, are pieces of amber interspersed by grigris and beads of
881 every size and shade. Bambara of the nourmou, or blacksmith caste, the Marka turned Bambara, and every Bambara girl /196/ of more or
302 less mixed stock whose head was not shaved at the da woro, or festival of the sixth day, has their hair braided, and on top of the crest which ends in two small braids along each ear, there is an odd little bundle, a handful of hair. This is in memory of the eighth day after the girl's birth, the day when she was given her name, and what she is wearing is nothing less than what the Bambara call "the hair of the womb" (1). If this has been lost, as is usually the case, the

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1. Newborn infants have their heads shaved six to eight days after birth; they cannot go out of their homes before being shorn of the hair of the womb (ou ba, "their mothers"; kono, "womb"; si, hair).

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292 mother provides some of hers. The dress-up outfit of our excised girls is a regular harness; two or three loincloths in layers encircle their waists, and of the actual costume, the band of cloth which shakes behind in limp and loose trains, the big pompom is all that shows. At least one can look at them and see them, as for once pretty white blouses clothe them; the long cloth slings required in the dances are thrown over their shoulders and brought to the front and create quite a pretty effect.

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● 301
583 In Bani country the girls wear a wide belt of cowrie shells around the hips and over the loincloths, and on each side two bundles of cowrie shells hang from leather thongs that pass over the shoulders and are crossed on the chest. This dousou ko (2), as it is called, is the remaining portion of the bride price given by the fiancé, and is worth 5,000 to 6,000 cowrie shells.

2. Dousou, "soul," "heart," "seat of love"; ko, "affair," "pledge of love."

881 Around the drums that rage in the square, behind the old women who scrape their pieces of scrap iron, and behind the female storytellers /griottes/ who sing of their charms, their strength and their beauty, the circumcised boys and excised girls circle for a few moments and go and sit on the mats that have been prepared for them.

Kola nuts are distributed to the new citizens; gourds of dégé, millet flour mixed with honey water and milk, are placed at the feet of the girls, queens of the day, and the head of the village makes the speech that is required at the beginning of every festival. His herald, standing beside him, repeats it word by word, sentence by

4: Henry--279 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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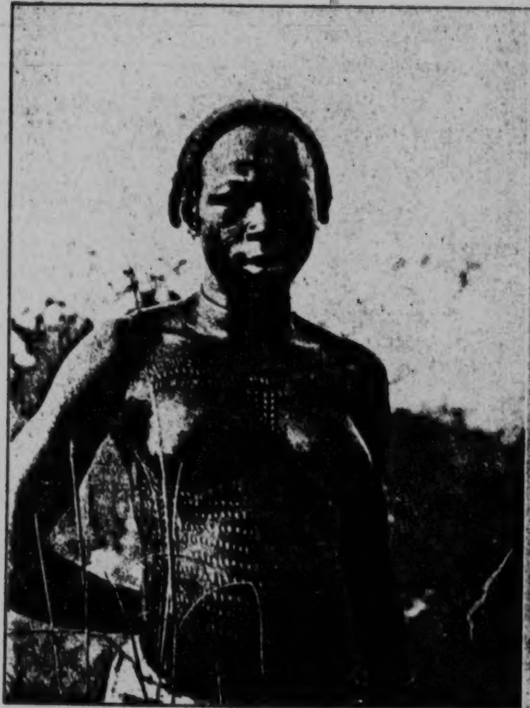
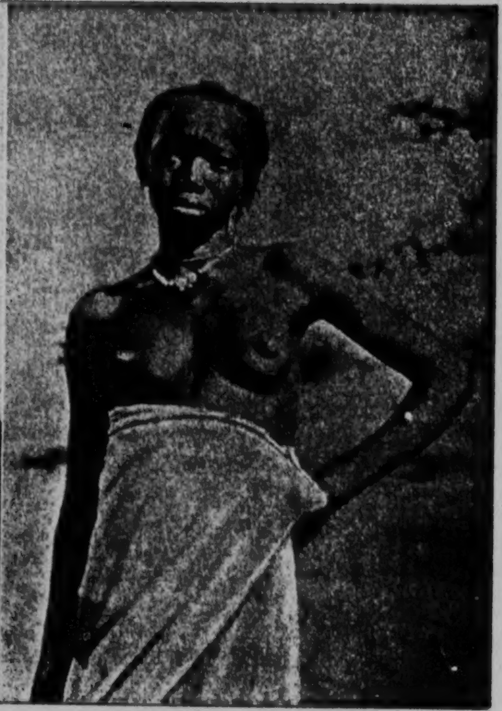


Tattoo worn by the women of Bani country.



Tattoo worn around the breasts by young girls of Ségou and made by themselves.

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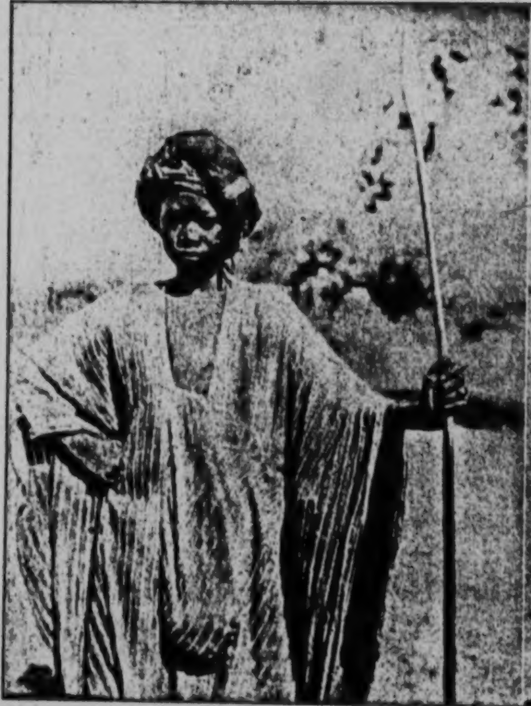
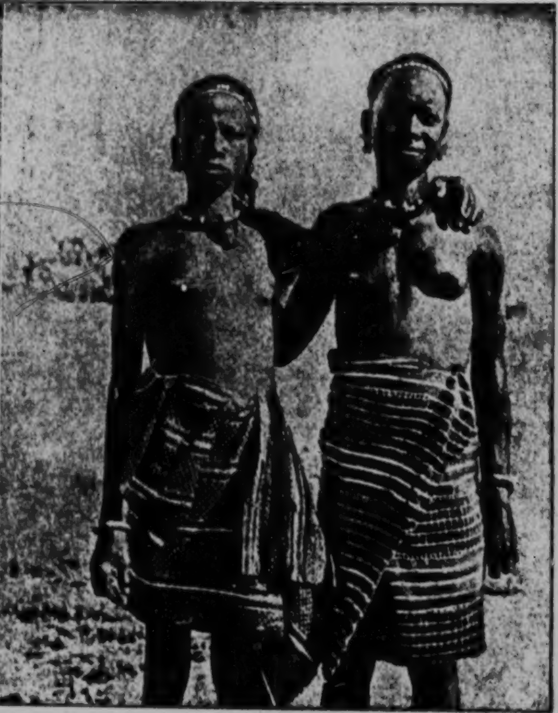


Circumcised youth dressed up.



Young Bambara girls dressed to go out.

4: Henry--281 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

4: Henry--282 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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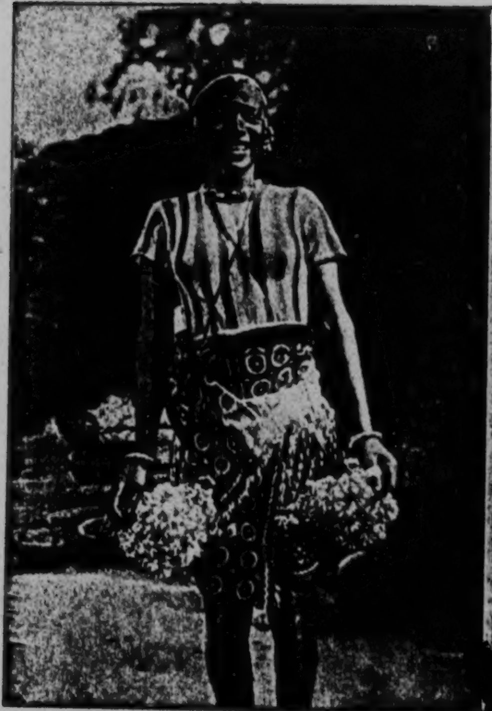
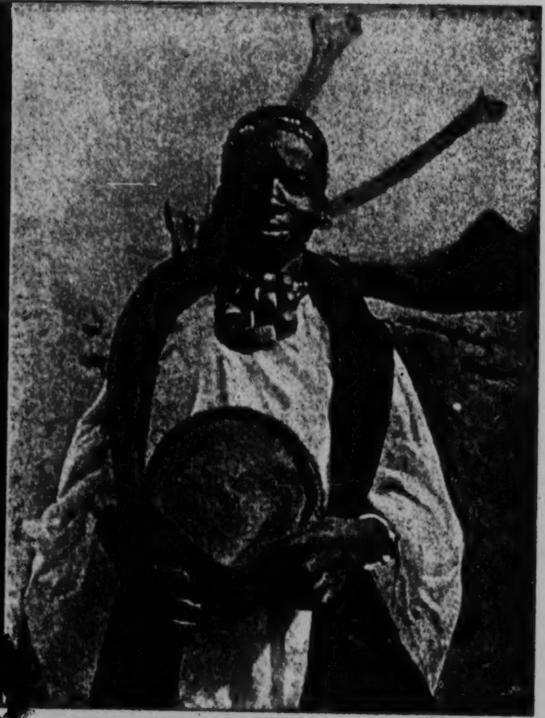


Excised girl in the dress-up attire of Bani country.



Excised girl dressed up.

101 the word has so thoroughly taken on a pejorative sense that its
578 use may be a grave insult. What an insult it would be for a
Moslem to be called a Bambara, i.e., an infidel, a pagan and
an alcoholic!

101 In the strictest sense, however, the word Bambara is applied by the Malinké and, following their lead, by the French only to natives who speak the Bambara dialect and who call themselves Banmana or Bamana. Barring specific exceptions, we shall henceforth use the word in this limited sense in the present work.

x 173 It is evident from the foregoing remarks that the Bambara belong to very ancient indigenous families; indeed, they themselves consider this to be so, and they are so considered by others.

Native informants are likely to say that the Bambara are former slaves of the Malinké; but they also say that the Somono are former slaves of the "Ségou people." Later on (see Chapter 4), we shall see in what sense [10] this slavery should be understood. It was a characteristic result of the political form of the native governments.

101 In addition to the general name given to them or accepted by them, which applies to one or another group, the Bambara are designated by terms expressing their geographic distribution. There are, for instance, those who live at Bélédougou (called Beledugu-ka-u); those in the Kaarta area (Karta-n-ka-u); those at Ségou (Segu-n-ka-u); these around Bani-n-ko (Bani-n-ko-ka-u). Each of these expressions also has a political connotation; Ségu-n-ka-u is often used for members of the ruling party, which holds power at and operates from Ségou, and only the context or the drift of the conversation will make it possible to know what people are actually being discussed.

Among themselves the various Bambara groups often de-
scribe one another by nicknames. The "Kaarta people" ironi-
[302] cally call the "Ségou people" Tlu-kene-u, "those with a single
braid," because of a peculiar way of doing their hair, or Nya-ni-
Nyélé-u, because Nya and Nyélé are popular names for women
among the people around Ségou.

101 It is common, too, to call all the members of a clan by a
614 name derived from that of a clan founder or ancestor. Thus, the

*173 to be dug in the courtyard of his house and then summoned the recalcitrant elders, ostensibly for consultation on urgent matters. When they had arrived, Mamari told them that he wished to interview them two by two in order better to know their opinion concerning the questions under consideration. The elders refused. Then, at a sign from Mamari, [40] men who had been posted at hand for the purpose hurled themselves upon the elders, massacred them and threw their corpses into the well, which was then sealed up. It is said that there were 740 elders and also that, since that time, people from Doukounna and Banan-koroni who reach Ségou in the evening never spend the night there.

Now deprived of their rightful leaders, the people of Doukounna and Banan-koroni were henceforth at the mercy of Mamari. He recalled the column from Kirango and, as soon as it had arrived, he summoned the young men of Doukounna and [300 567] Banan-koroni. Without giving them any explanation, he ordered them to wear their hair in the fashion of the ton-dyon', i.e., to have their hair shaved off except for two locks at the forehead and another at the nape of the neck. The young men protested that they were free men, but Mamari told them: "Your elders are buried here because they persisted in acting like free men, and there are now only women and slaves in your villages." When they were told what had happened in their absence, the young men realized that any resistance was out of the question; so they submitted and went to swell the numbers of the ton-dyon'.

This bold act gave Mamari a permanent army and he was so well aware of the extent of his success that his pride was already openly displayed. "The Dyémè-ka-dougou," he said, "extends from the Mindaka watercourse to that of Sitadougou. On the other bank of the Mindaka, the country belongs to the people of Doua. Let it be well understood that you are either on their side or on mine. We shall no longer eat groundnuts in the ton' together, nor drink our rounds of ton' millet beer. I am the son of Allah and henceforth shall drink only a king's beer in a royal cup. Let those who want to drink with me remain, and all others depart. From now on, the only free men are Nyé Tyétigi of Banankoroni and Mansa of Banamba. All the rest are my slaves. Therefore, let each village send me 100 men to make up my personal guard."

585 The husband spends the whole day after the wedding night in his hut, where relatives, friends, and neighbors come to congratulate him and present minor gifts of food. He invites them to eat and drink. The wedding is thus prolonged for several days, depending on the husband's wealth, during which time the couple is at the disposal of the guests.

[556] Rich families like to show off the trousseau, jewels, and
gifts bestowed on the bride, so during the whole day after the
wedding night everything is paraded with great pomp through the
village by people of caste who proclaim the items and exaggerate
their value. Toward evening the presents are shown one last
time to the bride, who sits on a low bench with her face hidden
behind a kind of tray, woven with grass, which she holds in her
[533] hand. Drums and other instruments make a great uproar, while a
female griot, standing behind the bride, sings love songs. Every-
[302] one admires the bride's hair, which is artistically braided in a
flat crest with two small braids on each side of the face hanging
in front and behind the ears. The women finger her jewels as
they admire them and her thick-soled sandals.

To conclude the ceremony, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives
cowries to the leader of the singing, and guns are fired for the
[481] last time. Then the bride gets up, glides over the ground without
lifting her feet, and enters the hut with her companions, while
the guests retire. [204]

Second Marriage

595 The number of wives is limited only by the necessity of providing each one with a suitable living. This means that, theoretically, polygamy is a privilege of the rich. Some men practice it in order to pass as rich men, which flatters their pride, while others use it to gratify a sensual temperament. Most often, however, people in modest circumstances have several wives solely for economic reasons.

When an only wife has young children and no servant to help her, she is extremely overworked. When this is the case,

881 On the same day the young girls in certain localities
302 have a characteristic ceremony. One of them whitens her face,
● breast, and back with a mixture of milk and ashes. Thus
daubed, she dashes out of the village brandishing the spatula
(to-n-galama) which is used to stir mush (to) in the pot; her
companions follow her, shouting. The band goes around the
village four times in this fashion, each time stopping at the
crossroads. At these points the girl who is bedaubed throws
handfuls of food (1), provided by her companions, to the spirits,

[262] 1. Usually basi (couscous) made with fish.

crying: "Dege dule (2)." Her companions reply: "Naloma (3)."

2. Literally, "thick mush."

3. That is, "fool."

881 The eve of the soli (soli-si). During the evening pre-
ceding the soli, the families concerned enjoy an ample meal,
527 accompanied by innumerable jugs of beer (dlo) as is the custom
[273] at all festivals among the Bambara. This is a time of special
[576] merriment, of shining faces and greasy hands, and it is good
form for the men and boys to belch noisily, saying repeatedly:
"ne ne fa," literally, "I am full," that is, "I am replete." The
[301] women wander about the lanes, wrapped in their best skirts,
with balls of amber in their hair and small silver or even gold
rings in their ears and nostrils and rather heavy bracelets on their
[482] arms and ankles. Some carry jars of dlo on their heads, while
others carry gourds full of couscous, dege, or hot sauces which
are often nauseous with smoked or spoiled fish. After the meal
everyone gathers on the public square, forming a wide circle
whose center is reserved for the dancers; piles of dried millet
[373] stalks are used to make bright fires which illuminate the scene
and warm the audience.

881 The "boys of the soli" (soli-ma-tye-u), their heads
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881 [302] freshly shaved (4), their bodies rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu), [242] arrive in single file. Greeted by the onlookers, they take their places in the front row. Shouts, noisy conversation, and songs are intermingled and make a racket which is interrupted by the arrival of the "girls of the soli" (soli-ma-moso-u). With their hair in a tangle and dressed in short skirts (1) reaching from the navel to the knee, they enter one behind the other, walk around the assemblage, and finally take their places in a group near their mothers and friends.

The assembled men drink around the fires.

881 533 534 All the drums are there, and as soon as the girls appear, the drummers rush to their instruments. There are big drums resting on three legs (denu-ba), others which hang from the shoulder, and still others carried under the arm. Young women shake bits of iron (kinge) as one shakes castanets, and there are other iron instruments provided with rings. Old women pound on gourds turned upside down in pots filled with water.

The noise is deafening, and it is dominated by songs in honor of the ancestors shouted by the whole assemblage as loudly as possible. Then the whole crowd, where the tipsy are in the majority and where everyone is at the highest possible pitch of excitement, starts a frenzied dance accompanied by songs usually improvised.

881 781 While all this is going on, the adepts of the major brotherhood (2) are outside the village, noisily driving out the

4. Just as their heads were shaved at birth.

1. Blue for Moslems and yellowish-brown (basa) for the purely pagan Bambara.

2. The Komo around Ségou; the Nama in the Kaarta area.

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In a compact group, the women and girls of all ages and stations shuffle slowly around the orchestra, while the men drink and sing around small fires of dry millet stalks.

From time to time, upon being invited to do so, one of the girls, soli-ma-moso, gets up, rattles her gourd, and joins the dance with slow, deliberate steps.

At dawn, when they are about to return to their huts, the girls, soli-ma-moso, make one last circuit, and then each one, with her heels together and her hands crossed above her head, makes three leaps into the air. She does this three times.

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The Bambara themselves interpret these various details concerning girls, the soli-ma-moso, as symbolic. The girl's position between her mother's legs recalls physical birth. The white cloth represents the one that at her mother's marriage bore witness to virginity and reminds the girl that she will have to give similar proof to her husband. The dance done with slow, measured steps is the symbol of a child learning to walk, and the nine leaps that close the ceremony attest to the fact that the girl is now an adult. A final rite shows the parallelism between the soli and [246] birth: on the sixth day, the nyana-n-son-na-ba shaves the head of the soli-ma-moso (1). [302]

1. In place of the braided coiffure, young girls wear the magic cord with nine knots, called tafo, on the crown of the head, and this is connected to a similar one, called dyo, at the nape of the neck.

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End of the soli. On the seventh day, before noon, all the soli-ma-moso go to the well or to the river to wash the soiled clothes and to scour the pots and gourds used for the festival. Then all return to the discipline of the soli: the boys under their tree, and the girls in their huts. The sema watch over the youngsters, who by now are bored with the discipline. About three weeks must pass after the operation before all the soli-ma completely recover.

881 301 and friends have kindly lent for the occasion, they advance shyly. In some areas, notably in the Bani region, they wear bundles of cowries, from the bride price already paid for them, around the hips and hanging on each side of the head (1).

[302 171] 1. Bambara girls who have gone through the soli have their heads shaved. Among other peoples, on the contrary, girls have their hair braided like women for the first time, but to the braid is added a tuft of the hair shaved off seven days after birth; this hair has usually been lost, but a small tuft is made to simulate it.

881 [535] Boys and girls, following the old women who lead them, dance around the orchestra, and then all sit down in a circle. The nyana-n-son-na-ba takes the floor. He speaks in a low voice, and, as is proper, his words are repeated in a loud voice by a herald. He proclaims the end of the soli, recalls its principal events, and indicates clearly which children have participated in the rite; each boy and girl is specifically named. He will also be sure to point out that the soli is an immemorial custom among the Bambara and that there is no worse insult than to [578] treat a Bambara as uncircumcised. He closes by inviting everyone to eat, drink, and celebrate in the joy and harmony appropriate to such a festival.

[535] Dancing is resumed, and the boys and girls of the soli take part. The festivities continue as long as the refreshments last, usually several days.

To end it all, no one leaves without giving at least a few kola nuts to the heroes of the festival, the boys and girls.

The last phase is the thanks given by the soli-ma to those who assisted at the da-woro. In noisy bands, boys and girls dash about the village in two distinct groups. The girls' group is headed by the soma-moso who is called masa (queen), followed by the masa-ma-kono (vice-queen) and the masa-ma-kono-segere [248] (follower of the vice-queen); the last girl in the

614 701 religious and reciprocal oath. Their contribution entitled them to a share of the booty. Volunteers, who enlisted for an engagement or a whole campaign, came in under conditions settled in advance.

The fama furnished the allies, just as he did the volunteers, with whatever they needed and deducted the amount from their share of the loot. Sometimes a third party, not involved in the expedition, provided mounts, equipment, and weapons for the enterprise in exchange for a prearranged reward.

In short, armed pillage was a business directed by the fama, who could admit interested participants if he so desired. [727] If the operation were successful, the clan gained predominance over the conquered regions, which the fama then exploited as he saw fit. The booty was the first result of the enterprise, and it served both to pay the expenses incurred in the affair and to swell the treasury of the clan.

This explains why the clan's army, for a consideration, hired itself out to anyone who asked for support, as an ally, as a mercenary force, or in any other capacity. The army might simply intervene in a quarrel of its own accord when there seemed to be profit to be gained (1). [313]

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1. See below how the fama of Ségou lent his support to a marabout of Sous. The Bambara also intervened ~~on num~~erous occasions in the internal quarrels of Khasso, Boundou, Fouta, etc. Their role as mercenaries is clearly shown in the Tarikh es Soudan.

614 701 569 [302] The ton'-dyon' were distinguished by a special hair arrangement. Their heads were completely shaved except for three tufts of hair which formed two braids on the crown of the head and one at the nape of the neck.

The slaves of the household of the fama could be recognized by their well-known tattoo (1) which consisted of three

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[304] 1. In general, it is risky to depend

Men	Women	Children	All
462 463	**Circumcision and excision**		
Male smiths for the boys	Females of smiths' caste for the girls		
	Midwifery		
	All women past menopause		
	Religion		
Koma and Dio reserved to men	?		
	Coiffure		
[302] Men's heads are shaved by men	Women braid the men's hair where this mode of hairdressing survives		
	All the women's coiffures		
	Ropes		
Preparation of fiber, drying, cording			
	Tanning		
Male shoemakers			
[67]	**Rubber**		
[857] Sale		Gathering and preparation	

291 designs. European influence has naturally made itself felt in the [177] fashions, and European thread is replacing native cotton thread, but the color symbolism in the bands is retained. Even though European fabrics invade the markets more and more, the traditional clothes remain the most sought after, although they have undergone certain modifications inspired by European fashions even while remaining very original.

Although the Bambara go barefoot, in certain circumstances 291 they make ornamented clogs to give to the new bride. These sandals 531 are decorated with geometric designs, engraved with a hot iron by 585 the blacksmith, that symbolize the twinship, the multiplication of children, the parents, the husband's family, the couple's language, and the sealing of the association. These signs are encircled by the sign of the union of the whole. Also, the whole ritual of taking possession lasts for several days.

302 Coiffure. At the present time, the adult males no longer wear the traditional coiffure consisting of two plaits at the side, but the children still have their hair shaved and braided according to custom. Thus, the uncircumcised boys wear a crest of hair going from the forehead to the nape of the neck, while the rest of the head is shaved. The crest symbolizes the [99] divine serpent. The children of blacksmiths also wear, at the sides of the head, two circles of hair which are cut by lines representing the forge. When a child is born after the death of several brothers and sisters, only half of his head is shaved in mockery, so that the dya subject to this pretended neglect will decide to stay in the child. The children of Marabouts have their hair shaved in such a manner that it forms a spiral which starts in the middle of the skull and covers the whole head. Afterwards, bands of hair are shaved in a manner to trace a cross on this spiral. The little girls wear a small braid across the forehead, falling on the left side, while married women wear a braid at each side of the head. These braids are made by adding fibers of the da, shining with karite, plaited with the hair. Finally, the women wear 301 22 gold rings at the ears, images of the 22 primordial elements, or sometimes a single large ring in the form of a crescent closed by threads of red cotton, which is a résumé of the 22 others. These rings keep impure words from the ear, which plays an important [776] role in generation; it is through the ornamentation that the spirits hear what is said to man.

181 "2. The Bambara makes a solid and disciplined infantryman ...
142 Mentally he is rather dull and stupid, physically he is stocky and
solid." Previously, the Abbé Henry had concluded in these terms:
"The Bambara is a farmer ... Well proportioned, his height is medium,
neither tall nor short. His chest is strong, and his short, thickset neck
supports a large head covered with black, wooly hair. Nothing in
his visage betokens spiritual force, energy, intelligence. His forehead
is receding, his eyebrow arches are rather pronounced, and his jet-
black eyes, of which the white part is slightly cream (!), are straight.
His jaws, nearly always well toothed, project slightly; he has strong,
thick lips, a short chin, cheekbones ... a little projecting, and his
flat nose is horribly open and squashed at its root.

145 "The wife, as well as the husband, is strong, robust. More
often than not she is knock-kneed, and this constitutional defect
doubtless comes from the fact that she is obliged, from her earliest
482 childhood, to carry rather heavy burdens on her head, burdens often
too heavy for her strength [sic]. Mentally, the Bambara has a mind
181 as thick as his body. Slow to understand and lacking curiosity, he has
no desire to improve his condition. 'What my fathers did, I must
do' -- that is his great principle ... Lazy, good-for-nothing even, he
believes he's done everything if he has enough in his granary to feed
himself and his family ... Timorous, he fears the European exactly
as a slave fears his master, and if he serves the European passably
well, the latter is greatly mistaken if he thinks he has gained the
native's affection. He detests the White, as he detests the Moslem;
the White is the conqueror, an anti-fetishist, and therefore an enemy."

Finally, M. Monteil, in his Monographie de Djenné [Djenné
142 Monograph], tells us in his turn: "... elongated skull and pronounced
302 prognathism; the black, wooly hair is often gathered in braids by the
young people ... the top of the head is often shaven, which makes
the forehead look larger. The women affect a sort of transversal
crest.

142 "The forehead recedes, the eyebrow arches project ... the
nose [110] flattened, the root of the nose squashed, the nostrils
gaping wide, the lips thick ... the teeth wide with little space be-
tween ... the neck large, the shoulders wide and straight, the chest
strong and long, the members robust, the joints thick. Rather often
for the woman, sometimes for the man, a fairly pronounced steatopygia.

852 *Alla* *m'i* *balola*, *kouyo kouyo*, you are called (. . .), may God make
533 you live!" Two women take up the corners of the rectangular cloth which will hold the child cradled on its mother's back, and the little one is rolled three times on an ax head if it is a boy or on the iron stick used to clean cotton if it is a girl, as if to say: "Be strong and vigorous, be a help and a support to your family!"

The child is placed astride on the back of a young girl and knotted into the rectangular piece of cloth, its mother's *tafé*, or loincloth. An old woman sticks a pinch of chewed kola nut on its forehead, on each side of its cranium above the ears, and on top of its head, and she knots a white cloth band a finger wide around its forehead. The girl receives a handful of millet, goes to the public square to pound it, and, with the child still on her back, prepares *dégé* (millet flour mixed with water). When she has prepared the gruel, she goes and offers it to the mother, who puts a pinch of it into the little one's moth, and the ceremony is finished. Not entirely, however, for a few old women run around the village with a gourd of *dégé* in their hands. They look for sterile women, who shut themselves in their huts and hide. Some are always caught, and they are covered with *dégé*; the more they cry out and the more they struggle, the more they get whitewashed.

846 After her child is shaved, a Bambara woman goes about the village and attends to her work. But she does not braid her hair for
852 three months if she has given birth to a boy and for four months if
302 she has had a girl (1), /172/ nor does she go to neighboring villages.

1. Women who braid their hair are not of pure stock.

When this period is over, she braids her hair, covers herself with beads, with bits of amber and bracelets, dresses in her best, makes herself beautiful, and goes to present her baby, all running with butter, to the headman and elders. Her husband grants her several days' leave
[574] (1), and she immediately goes to her family.

1. About 8 to 15 days.

881 796 festival lasts as long as there is d'lo. After a few hours of sleep, before the noon meal, the excised girls come back, and around the well there is an endless babel punctuated by joyous laughter as they wash their loincloths, the cloths soiled by the dust of the night, and as they mend gourds, the dishes of this country. The pure Bambara girls, those who are not of the blacksmith caste nor of the "Marka" people of more or less mixed stock, have lost their grace and beauty and seem quite comical with their shaved heads. [302] Just as at six to eight days after birth the head of the village, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, priest of the dasiri fetish, made motions over their heads and cut their hair, since the "hair of the womb" is not allowed to be seen in public, so at the da woro, six days after circumcision, they lose it again, since they cannot enter life with the hair of childhood; a dirty handkerchief replaces the locks of which they were so proud, they are without bead or jewel, and on their foreheads, in place of the multicolored crown, [751] is the string with nine knots called the tafo, and it is fastened in back at the nape of the neck to the string called the djo, which is intended to protect them from sore throat, mumps, headache, and just about all illnesses.

4. The Festival of the Boloko Déou Don Bo, The Coming Out of the Circumcised and the Excised, The Real Entry into Civil and Religious Life

881 883 After the da woro, the festival of the sixth day, the circumcised boys go back under the sacred tree outside the village, and the excised girls return to their huts. They take up again their life of "sweet idleness," and their little excursions in a group, at specified hours, to satisfy the wants of nature. They also have their days of big excursions. When the markets take place, they go to cut thorns at some 100 meters from the village. They bar the paths, set up /193/ a barricade, and ask every passer-by for a doua-mo, a share of the market. From habit, and especially from fear of the cuffings that are readily given out and of the spirits that watch over and protect the young people, everybody obeys and pays the toll. In addition to fish tails they also take in enough cowrie shells to buy a bit of meat and make themselves a treat.

881 [887] Moment by moment the old women come closer and the word "Kouyo ê, Kouyo ê" resounds louder and louder. But now they come out, and their bodies move as if they were made of rings, so closely do they imitate a worm surprised by a ray of sunshine who is hastily returning to its nest in the ground. With their pointed chins, wrinkled skins, and toothless jaws, they look like real savages as they furiously scrape two iron rods; on their bald heads they wear dirty towels, the filthy appurtenances of sorceresses, wound without skill or taste. With spear in hand the young citizens appear in full trousers; they wear caps with double points or loud-colored turbans with long fringes, and their bodies disappear under loose blouses still all perfumed with the musty smell of the bottom of a storage bin, all stiff and shiny under a paste of starch. They leap and shout, they brandish their arms, assume the look of warriors, and especially assume such a look of conceit that one's laughter is unloosed.

[415] After the boys come the girls, fanning their "alms purses" all decorated with cowrie shells; these are platters braided of fine, pliable grass, doubtless those onto which the bloody remnants were placed on the morning of the soli si, or arms' vigil. They come forward stiffly, [301] and glide rather than walk over the ground, for their feet are weighed down by small chains and iron rings, and can hardly be lifted. Gold or copper crescents pull down the septum of their noses, a handful of striped periwinkle shells hangs from the lobe of each ear, several coral necklaces encircle their heads, and everywhere, chiefly around their necks, are pieces of amber interspersed by grigris and beads of every size and shade. 881 302 Bambara of the noumou, or blacksmith caste, the Marka turned Bambara, and every Bambara girl /196/ of more or less mixed stock whose head was not shaved at the da woro, or festival of the sixth day, has their hair braided, and on top of the crest which ends in two small braids along each ear, there is an odd little bundle, a handful of hair. This is in memory of the eighth day after the girl's birth, the day when she was given her name, and what she is wearing is nothing less than what the Bambara call "the hair of the womb" (1). [illegible] this has been lost, as is usually the case, the

881 292 mother provides some of hers. The dress-up outfit of our excised girls is a regular harness; two or three loincloths in layers encircle their waists, and of the actual costume, the band of cloth which shakes behind in limp and loose trains, the big pompom is all that shows. At least one can look at them and see them, as for once pretty white blouses clothe them; the long cloth slings required in the dances are thrown over their shoulders and brought to the front and create quite a pretty effect. 881 301 583 In Bani country the girls wear a wide belt of cowrie shells around the hips and over the loincloths, and on each side two bundles of cowrie shells hang from leather thongs that pass over the shoulders and are crossed on the chest. This dousou ko (2), as it is called, is the remaining portion of the bride price given by the fiancé, and is worth 5,000 to 6,000 cowrie shells.

881 Around the drums that rage in the square, behind the old women who scrape their pieces of scrap iron, and behind the female story-tellers /griottes/ who sing of their charms, their strength and their beauty, the circumcised boys and excised girls circle for a few moments and go and sit on the mats that have been prepared for them.

Kola nuts are distributed to the new citizens; gourds of dégé, millet flour mixed with honey water and milk, are placed at the feet of the girls, queens of the day, and the head of the village makes the speech that is required at the beginning of every festival. His herald, standing beside him, repeats it word by word, sentence by

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881 302 1. Newborn infants have their heads shaved six to eight days after birth; they cannot go out of their homes before being shorn of the hair of the womb (ou ba, "their mothers"; kono, "womb"; si, hair).

2. Dousou, "soul," "heart," "seat of love"; ko, "affair," "pledge of love."

5. Exhibition of the Bride's Trousseau on the Evening of the First Day

585 Although the sun is high above the horizon, it is already without strength and life, and at the door of the entry hut to the couple's dwelling, drums and trumpetings rage and give honor to the young woman who is seated in the midst of them on a tiny stool. She allows people to admire her adornment, her beads and her jewels, her rings of copper and tin and sometimes also of gold and silver; she allows them to rave about the shoes with soles three fingers thick, which are a gift of the groom, and about her artistic, finely braided coiffure, [302] a mountain of hair forming a crest across her head which ends in two thin locks in front of and behind each ear -- cavalryman's helmet with a broken chin strap, one might say, all ebony and thrown on its side. But she has given her heart and her promise, and she covers her face with the platter of braided grass that she holds in her right hand.

[534] The horns of antelopes, cows, and bulls, which are the Bambara trumpets, cease to roar, the drums stop booming, and a group of women (usually storytellers /griottes/, for they sniff out festivals and orgies with the scent of a vulture who smells carrion for 20 leagues) place themselves behind her and sing songs of love.

Preceded by a band of singers and a group of drums (2), the file djiralaou (the women who show the gourds) have run through the village all morning, going from hut to hut to display the trousseau. That is not enough; under the eyes of the bride it is displayed again, exhibited one last time, and without fail the connoisseurs /213/ assess it and, without any embarrassment whatsoever, set an accurate value on it (1).

[556] 2. This parade of the trousseau across the village only occurs at rich weddings when the trousseau is really worth the trouble. Most frequently only one exhibition takes place, the one in the evening.

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245 the latter... We are familiar enough with the Bambara agricultural customs, but none of them would have brought about the spread of the *balanzas*, their regular spacing in the fields, and their protection from goats. In almost all the cases we have observed, the *balanzas* are of considerable age, development and density. There lies in this subject a fine dissertation topic for a young ethnographer and naturalist." (pp. 135, 136).

The myths of the Bambara answer M. Roberty's questions.

/39/ Mousso Koroni

776 Mousso Koroni is the impure earth; she symbolizes all that is opposed to light: darkness, night, witchcraft. She is also the symbol of rebellion, disorder, and impurity. Pemba pursued her in vain in his effort to take back what he had given her: the "words" she had received from him were divulged to men in spite of him.

Although no cult honors her and no sacrifice is offered her, her name is cited in various ceremonies and mentioned in the chants; her actions are recalled by certain gestures in the ritual.

776
304 On the other hand, she is the initiator of the separation of the sexes realized in the human body by the removal of the foreskin and the clitoris, an operation which after her betrayal, she performed on all those she met. In this way, she placed them in the same state of rupture in which she found herself: a female principle as opposed to Pemba, the male principle. In addition, she is present in every human being in the form of an evil force, the *wanzo*, which she had communicated to all those she approached, and of which one must rid oneself through the methods she herself inaugurated: circumcision and excision (1).

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1. See p. 95.

776
241 Mousso Koroni is also the originator of certain agricultural techniques which she taught men, and every year, in certain villages, she

The *wanzo*

778 304 The *wanzo*, an evil force created in the beginning by Mousso Koroni's impurity, was caused by the curse, of which she was the object after her betrayal, and which she communicated to the earth during her underground journey. After she had maimed herself on Pemba while having sexual relations with him, her jealousy pushed her into avenging herself on the women who mated with the *balanza*. Her madness and despair prompted her to pursue her betrayal to the very end. With nails and teeth she excised and circumcised the men and women she met during her travels. The *wanzo* she carried about thus penetrated the human species, making the operation necessary for all those to follow. Faro could not remedy this, but his protection is invoked for each child during the operation. The headdress of the circumcised symbolizes the sky and the purifying light.

At birth, each child receives the *wanzo*, "the word of Mousso Koroni," in its blood and on its skin at the moment of contact with the earth on which it is born. This force, also called *kono nyama*, "the *nyama* of the inside," is not to be confused with the *tere* but is of the same nature and is transmitted to everything the bearer touches. [826] Its seat is mostly in the foreskin of the man and the clitoris of the woman, and it represents the disorder in the individual: "it makes man such that he can live with no one, can stand no one, and cannot stand himself." In addition, it is opposed to fertility.

In order to become a stable individual, to marry, procreate, and to sacrifice, the child must be rid of his *wanzo*. This is achieved in the course of circumcision or excision and in the rituals that end the seclusion of those operated upon. The greatest part of its force runs into the earth with the blood of the mutilated organ. The rest of it escapes with the smoke of the fire over which the children jump (three or four times according to their sex) before returning to their homes. The act of abandoning their /65/ old clothes and putting on new ones at that time confirms their new status. But the *wanzo* does not disappear; it is channeled into the masks of the *ndomo* society to which the uncircumcised belong (1). Similarly, when a child dies before being

1. See p. 222.

circumcised, appropriate rituals have the effect of channeling the

778 304 wanzo and directing it into the mask to prevent it from doing harm (1). Thus, nothing of the individual forces is lost. The wanzo itself harmful at the beginning, when properly channeled and directed, serves to consolidate the collective energies of the infantile societies based on it.

[582] Only when an adolescent has lost his wanzo is he permitted to marry; any individual would refuse to marry a partner who is not completely rid of it.

The Body

826 The Bambara have a notion of their bodies and the role of the different parts and organs. This notion is all the deeper because it is linked to that of the spiritual principles that animate it.

Indeed, the tere is determined by certain visible aspects of the body, while the ni and the dya also have sexes like the body. Therefore any study should include the links that unite the spiritual elements to the physical body in order to understand properly its state and function.

Blood, which together with breath is the seat of life, is also the vehicle of physical and spiritual forces that circulate with it in the veins and arteries. The blood sacrifice liberates these forces which sustain the altars, the soil, and the beings who receive them. Certain alliances are consecrated by an exchange of blood. The clear color of blood is proof of its purity: all infractions bring about a [841] change and cause it to become pale. Menstrual blood, testimony to Mousso Koroni's impurity and of the momentary sterility of women, is the principal taboo of the supernatural powers that create and protect life.

826 828 827 The head, which contains thought, is an essential part of the individual and his symbol: "the head of the members of society" is represented by a stroke in the course of the rituals performed by members of the Komo or the Kwore. Man grows through his head just as a plant "grows through its head bud" (2). Man's head is protected

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1. See p. 256.

2. The myth mentions the "head of the balanza" at the time that men broke the

826 is also through the feet that a part of man's strength is deposited in the
sweepings and rubbish upon which he treads. Their role as receptacles
appears in the rituals concerning household refuse and the dirt on
roads and paths.

Like the little finger, the small toe symbolizes the whole person.
[301] It is sometimes adorned with a silver ring, symbol of the word, which
recalls that man's body is the seat of the word extended within him
from head to feet (1).

831 The notion of the bisexuality of human beings is fundamental:
the spiritual principles are sexed like the body, whose ambivalence
826 /71/ is evident during childhood: the boy is feminine in his foreskin;
the girl is masculine in her clitoris. One of the aims of circumcision
[304] and excision is to help the child attain the sex to which it is apparently
destined by removing the organ of the opposite sex. (2). But the
initial duality of the soul and body is the very foundation of the human
being. He is complete only if he originally received it, and he retains
it even after the operation imposed by physical and social life,
[774] for the soul of the opposite sex, though diminished in the body, remains
present in the shadow, the dya. He also rediscovers his dual
unity when he marries. A married couple are a unit for their dya
[581] join as do their bodies in an act which is not merely physical and
which realizes the ideal union of twins.

831 The sex to which one belongs dominates one's whole existence on
earth. Objects and tools bear masculine or feminine marks, accord-
801 ing to the rules of the division of labor. The numbers three (man)
and four (woman) are abridged forms of the sex. "Primitive men"
who, according to the Bambara expressed themselves mostly by
gestures and signs, engraved their rare objects with the number of

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1. In olden times the ring on the small toe was made of red nyama fiber (nyama fu), which played the same role as metal.

[171] 2. The same conception is found among the Dogon; see M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau, p. 185.

845 Up to the time they are twelve, the children bathe themselves preferably in the Niger. They supposedly can walk on water and never run the risk of drowning.

The twins do not become separated from each other any more than the dya is separated from the living being to which it is attached. They wear the same clothes and eat the same food simultaneously. Formerly male twins married the same woman. If one of them dies
845 at an early age, the blacksmith carves a small wooden doll called
778 flanitokele, which takes the name of the deceased and which the mother puts on the mat next to the living child. The latter takes this doll with him at the time of his circumcision and keeps it during the period of his seclusion in order to bring it back to the parental home whence it is never removed. When he marries, he sticks the doll into the earth along with another piece of wood symbolizing the wife of the deceased. Since twins are in a sense a living replica of Faro, none can bother them without showing disrespect to him. On the other hand, they are the object of attention and precaution on the part of their family as well as their neighbors. Their presence is always beneficial. Considered invulnerable, twins used to march ahead of
[728] troups in times of war and would serve as inviolable intermediaries between the warring parties during truce.

The Hermaphrodite

826 The hermaphrodite, being both male and female, is to all extent and purpose his own twin. Consequently, he has no dya (1).

[825
304] 1. The hyena is considered a hermaphrodite; it can engender or conceive, depending on its size and strength, "the stronger impregnating the weaker." A tattooing system is based upon this belief.

/88/ The Albino

[143] Albinos of light or reddish skin and red hair are called gombele or yepege, this latter term being reserved for those who show the most accentuated characteristics.

826
833 The albino is supposedly born of sexual relations which took place in the middle of the day when the sun is in the koblenkaba, sky of

826 Faro's wrath—a fact which constitutes a serious breaking of taboo.
[833] The consequence of this is to coalesce in the maternal womb the twins
originally granted to the woman by Faro and to decolorize the skin
of the being thus formed. Because of this fact, the albino, the
embodiment of twins, does not inherit the spiritual princples of a de-
ceased person and is also a new being given to men by Faro. But the
impurity he has acquired increases tenfold his tere and his wanzo,
which are so active that the circumciser must sacrifice on his own
[304] personal altars before performing the operation. From the ambivalence
of the albino, originally of the same essence as Faro but fallen be-
cause of the impurity transmitted by his parents, stem various customs
and representations. (1).

> 1. This ambivalence is also at the root of the belief that the albino is a being formerly provided with wings and able to fly (see p. 68, a quality he lost after his contact with the impure soil.

826 718 His body is believed to be endowed with special powers. The person who owns his skull will have a numerous family and prosperity; his hair brings wealth; the marrow of his bones provides gold and copper. If he is made to sit at a place where bones are buried, whatever one asks for is granted. His excrements, mixed with seed, have the effect of increasing the harvest for the year.

826 782 Because of the value attributed to the albino he is a choice victim for the sacrifices to Faro. His nyama is such that he can be sacrificed without prayer, the act itself constituting an efficacious invocation. Lacking living albinos, men often tried to appropriate the remains of a buried body.

/89/ Chapter 4

SACRIFICE AND THE ALTAR

782 To call upon spiritual forces and to influence them, the Bambara use prayer, offering, and sacrifice. They perform oral and manual

564 326 774 Every blacksmith is regarded as the holder of an excellent tere. He is well-intentioned, affable, and never hurts anyone. It is easy to make friends with him, to joke with him, even if one knows him but a short time. The senankuya relationships which he has with other Blacks also contribute to the cordiality of these ties.

[304] The good tere of the blacksmith is brought into play particularly at circumcision which is preferably entrusted to a Gwonna. Being circumcised by a blacksmith causes the wanzo to diminish rapidly, hastens the healing, and improves the tere. A blacksmith is reputed to have the power of transforming himself at will into an animal or a plant. In those places where hyenas are venerated as the animal [825] protectors of a village (dasiri), they are always considered as the blacksmith's ancestors who have undergone metamorphosis. (1).

773 564 326 412 The ritual paraphernalia now preserved in each village comprise models of all the tools manufactured by the blacksmiths since their first appearance.

a. Wooden tools The craftsmen first used wood, gradually changing the shape of the objects. From a simple stick /116/ (generally in sunzun) (2) or from a rough-hewn block, they gradually made more perfect tools, obtaining the shape desired by rubbing and polishing on rocks.

773 564 326 411 The first weapon used in hunting was a throwing instrument in the shape of a boar-spear, the semenkala (from kala, handle, Fig. 9, A). Hewn from one piece, it comprised three distinct parts: (1) the bulonda; (2) the semenu; and (3) the koli (literally, hook). Men threw the object with all their strength at the pursued animal or else they dug into the earth where their prey was hiding with the pointed end (semena) which was often poisoned with a viper's venom. The weapon was the object of blood sacrifices carried out on the koli and destined to increase its strength.

1. Particularly in the village of Konodimi, situated 21 km. to the southwest of Ségou.

2. Diospyros mespiliformis. The wood of this tree is very hard.

575
323 the society during a public consecration which she receives with
[561] several others, the group forming an age grade.

After an apprenticeship of seven days, the potters decide upon the date of the ceremony which is celebrated at the firing spot near the altars. Each member provides a hairpin (bandigi), which represents her on this occasion, and the skin of a hedgehog. Disrobed in front of the assembled villages, each girl is seated in turn on the altar as an aged woman examines her genitals to verify her virginity and the proper execution of the excision.

/126/ If the young girl is no longer a virgin, she is publicly de-
[831] clared dangade (literally, bastard) and finds herself automatically
excluded from the society; she will never be able to receive the
potter's title. Otherwise, a proclamation is made immediately to
the great joy of the public. If the excision has not been judged
[304] sufficient, the patient is given the title of potter after having sub-
mitted to a new operation performed in such a way that the blood
runs over the pottery (1).

575 An old woman then appears seated before members of the age grade
323 and instructs them. She tells of the origin and history of pottery,
867 apprising them of the difficulties of the craft such as fatigue, burns,
etc. She teaches them patience towards the client and enumerates the rules which will have to be observed during their lifetime: to be pure in heart and to hate no one; not to undertake work shortly after having had sexual relations; to work in silence; to respect all taboos in general.

575 She then makes a libation of karite oil on the altar and rubs it on
323 the bodies of the initiates who must run their tongues over the pottery,
782 thus making an oath. Sheep, brought by the initiates' parents, are
then killed by having their throat cut over the hearth in the name of
431 the potters while the elders of the society present to the initiates gifts
consisting of several pots which they will sell for profit while waiting for their first work. This gift is moreover a sign of adoption.

323 The utensils are made with clay, mbogo pasa, taken from the
317 bottom of the watercourse or along the river's edge; they belong to
784

1. If excision is not possible, the operation takes the form of a wound inflicted with the hedgehog's skin (see p. 243).

323 Faro. These places have as taboos the wearing of indigo and pregnancy.
317 No pregnant woman may approach them without provoking the death
784 of the child she is carrying, thus ultimately impairing the durability
of pottery and seriously harming the society of which she is a member.

An annual sacrifice is offered by the potters at the end of the winter
323 season when, the level of the river having dropped and the banks
796 lowered, they return for the first time to collect the clay which they
need. Dressed in white, they bring out their hoes and the sickle with which they cut the damp grasses used to cover the pots on the hearth during firing, while the head of the society carries the altars. The objects are placed in a pile on a bed of *nyama* fibers used for separating them from the ground. The throats of two red roosters are cut open over this pile while a prayer is addressed to Faro, requesting authorization to take the /127/ *mbogo pasa* during the year, and seeking his protection and help for the work of the society's membership.

The potters make an annual offering to their altars on the day their husbands sacrifice on the forges. Immediately after the libations, they come and squat before the forge altar on which they throw some ten cowrie shells. They then go to the *ñintin*, undress, and present to it their genitals from the front and from the back, this gesture being an indication of their submission to the spirits of pottery which are the same as those of the forge. Still naked, they circle the pile of ashes left from the last firing and light a big bonfire; this fire attracts the bee eaters, *tatugu kononi*, which circle over the flames. They shoot some down with a sling, cook them, and reduce them to ashes which they mix with karite oil; they rub their bodies with this mixture before purifying themselves by going through the flames. As an offering to the spirits, they then throw pots on the fire which they put out before returning home.

The potters cultivate together a small ritual field in which a fe-
323 male twin sows white peas, *tikaninkuru*, symbols of their right hand.
244 The produce of this harvest is eaten communally on a mound,
walawala, after an offering of several seeds is made to the altars and tools. A potter whose tools are broken by the fire must go through a purification with the products of this field.

326 The wives of blacksmiths, whether or not they are potters, are
304 skilled in practicing excision on young girls.

794 or Koma/, " Outremer, 1929; H. Labouret, Les Manding et leur langue.

794 The Komo
794 society, komo tyew (literally, men, people of the Komo) is composed
561 of all circumcised men, with the exception of the griot who may under no condition become members, after an initiation performed according to the age grade, the members of which are called tonyaw. The hierarchy is rigorously respected: an earlier age grade will always be ahead of the one that follows it in all circumstances of secular or religious life. The Komo recognizes a chief, komotigi (literally, master or owner of the Komo) who preferably belongs to the caste of blacksmiths and whose function is hereditary. The son automatically assumes command of the age grade which follows that of his father. Upon the latter's death, he changes his age grade and becomes the head of his father's. In the case where the owner of the Komo dies
[304] young and his eldest son, who is to inherit the office, is not yet circumcised, he is made to undergo the operation in the night following the death, and on the following day is proclaimed chief (1).

1. In La Religion Bambara, L. Tauxier points out that in some villages the chief of the Komo exercises his power only during a seven-year term. At the end of seven years an election takes place and the function is not hereditary.

794 Because of the importance of his functions, the chief of the Komo
784 is made to respect a great number of taboos. In particular he may not penetrate into the sanctuary if he has not been chaste during the past twenty-four hours. If the taboo is broken, he must warn the men of his age grade and sacrifice two roosters upon the altars to purify himself. His wife is initiated (for she is apt to see certain ritual
[562] objects generally hidden from women because of her intimacy with the chief), but she is not present at any of the ceremonies to which only the members are /144/ admitted. If she commits adultery she
[837] brings about her husband's exclusion from the society, not only as chief but also as member.

794 The chief is often assisted by two elders belonging to his age grade, whose advice he seeks in all cases concerning the community. In
561 addition, he is always helped by young initiates. If one of these

two jars of millet beer, a ram which will be sacrificed, and money to the griot who will sing during the ceremony.

A lock of the newborn's hair is shaved off and kept in a case (sebe) [789 which, before being carried away, will be hidden in an oil container 826] for the following reasons: to protect the person from magical practices; to prevent a donkey from eating it, an occurrence which would cause the child's death; to permit him to seek for himself health and a long life in the image of his hair which will have remained in good condition.

The rest of the hair is carried by a female relative to the river, into which it is thrown in honor of Faro. Next a band of white cotton called faro fini (literally, Faro's clothing), on which someone has "spat" kola nut juice, is bound around the forehead of the newly baptized baby to indicate his subjugation to the spirit.

The senior elder then examines with attention the hairline and the meeting point of the eyebrows on the forehead before announcing in a loud voice the signs determining the child's character (tere). Then he grasps the child and swings it /179/ seven times from east to west, eight times from south to north above the altar while giving it the forename (toko) which he has inherited from a dead person along with the spiritual principles (1). The griot recite the father's genealogy (burudyu); the senanku comes to joke with the newborn and gently pulls his nose and ears.

852 On the same day the blacksmith draws on the child's face the 304 wolo ti, consisting of seven vertical frontal scars and two horizontal scars under each eye. The first scars represent the complete man (ni and dya); the second, representing the number two, symbol of

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553 852 3. If the village has no Komo, the name may be given above the paternal cuafebla.

1. According to another source of information, the eldest son receives the forename of his paternal grandfather, the second son that of his father, and the following sons those of the mother's fathers and grandfathers.

852 304 "the unknown in creation" (see pp 23 and 24), recall man's existence in this state. Consequently he is conscious of the unknown and has the possibility of apprehending it. These scars act upon the tere of the child and give him at the same time strength, courage, virtue, as well as the strength to penetrate the knowledge of the invisible (1).

[842] 1. They may be redrawn at the root of the nose of an adult who has despaired of having any children, or on the thigh of a woman who wishes to be fertile. These scars, drawn at birth, are not the only ones which the Bambara wear. See S. de Ganay, "On a Form of Cicatrization among the Bambara."

852 553 326 In a blacksmith's family, the name is given near the paternal forge. In the presence of all the village artisans, the kotigi shaves the head of the newborn while an elder prepares seven small sticks, over each one of which he pronounces the name of an ancestor. The kotigi, whose eyes are blindfolded, pulls out in succession three sticks from the group; the third determines the name which he immediately proclaims. While the women chant, the father removes from his altar the kongobwona axe as well as the other ritual objects. The throat of a sheep is cut over all these objects while a prayer is recited. The newborn's head is rubbed first with the axe, then with shaved off hair saturated with sacrificial blood. This gesture introduces the child into the family group. Next he receives the scars of the blacksmiths.

Circumcision

304 561 Whereas in former times circumcision was mandatory and performed upon young men (about twenty years), it is now practiced at an early age if the parents are wealthy enough to afford the expenses involved.

/180/ Because of this fact, a child of eight years may be circumcised with an adolescent of sixteen to eighteen years, whose parents are poor and have only slowly accumulated the articles necessary for the ceremony. These two boys will belong to the same age grade (flã̌), and will be comrades (flani) all their lives, having the same rights and duties. Age thus has a restricted role in social relations.

304 561 The date of the circumcision alone makes a coherent whole of a heterogeneous group—an age grade within /181/ which all the members owe each other friendship, confidence, and help in all phases of social and private life.

Once the operation has been decided upon, the relatives proceed

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[531]

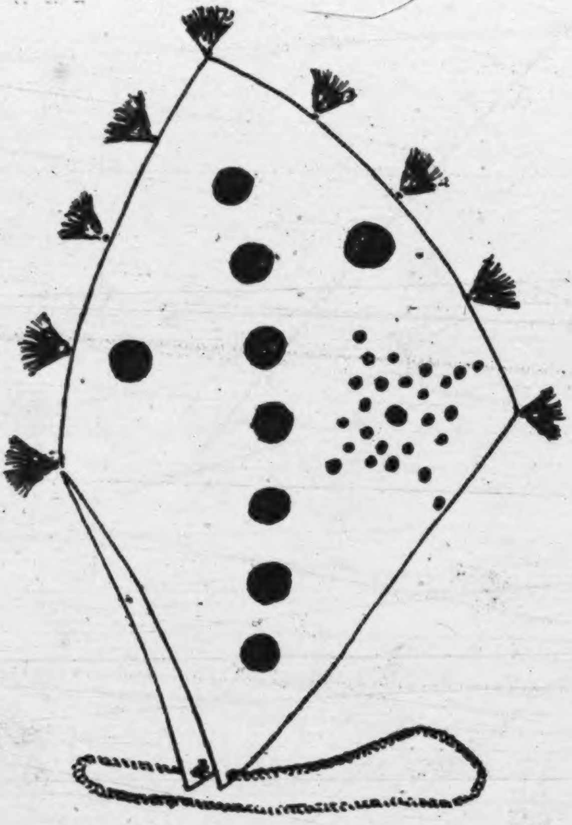

Fig. 14 — Cap of the circumcised Bambara. The nine black spots represent the child, his *dya*, and the cardinal points. The design at the right represents the *sumangolo*, or the coming of the twelve waters of the future. (See Fig. 3)

first to make the cap worn during the seclusion. The white cloth is presented to the Niger by a uterine brother who addresses a prayer to Faro requesting permission to draw with black earth the designs that will cover it. They will protect the child who is in a state of impurity

304 throughout the seclusion, the cap itself guaranteeing protection of his
292 head against the rays of fire from the fifth sky, koblẽnkaba (see Fig.
14).

Seven large black dots, vertically disposed, represent the child, 3,
304 and his dya, 4, as well as the man, 3, which he will later become, and
292 his future wife, 4. They also insure his protection from east to west.
531 The two other dots insure it from north to south. The cross of small
dots recalls the sumangolos, the "realization of the world" (1) and the
purification obtained after the operation and the loss of the wanzo.
Eight tassels (Faro's number) are placed on the cap, whose fringes were spun by a grandmother and are sewn on to "attract the forces of space." A ninth at the top is blackened with the spirit's earth. With his head thus covered, the circumcised boy is placed in the protective and purifying light of Faro. To operate upon a child without putting the cap on him would in fact amount to "bowing down before the acts of Mousso Koroni."

On his part, the blacksmith-circumciser makes preparations for the
304 operation, the essential instrument of which is a knife called boloko
326 kumba moru (literally, knife head, mother of the circumcision).
413 He himself has forged it and carries it in a small leather sheath hung
from his hip (see Fig. 15) (2).

The handle is slipped into a sort of iron sheath closed at one extremity called kurukun (literally, ball head) and open at the other called sukala (literally, sorcerer's handle). It is forged from one piece with the blade dyomuru fala (literally, orphan of the knife) and called "without pity" in archaic language.

The knife and its handle on the one hand, together with the metal sheath on the other, symbolize the person of the circumcised boy and the foreskin which is to be removed.

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1. See p. 56, Fig. 4.

[582] 2. The endogamy among blacksmiths is attributed to their role in circumcision and to the fact that their tools, especially this knife, are impregnated with the wanzo of the adolescents.

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Before the operation, the blacksmith washes the handle, an act which parallels /182/ the washing of the penis, and draws on the blade ritual designs either in charcoal or with boiled millet (1).

> 1. Some artisans have, once and for all, engraved the ritual designs on the blade.

The three figures če mani saba (literally, three little male persons) represent the first three circumcised men (Gwonna, Gwondo, and Gwonkè) who belonged to the blacksmiths' families at the village of Gwondougou. Every descendant of these ancestors must be circumcised like them. In making the drawing the operator says:

"Gwonna, Gwondo, Gwonkè, you have discovered iron and you withstood the pain (of the first circumcision), you feel shame neither by night nor by day; our feet are placed in your footsteps; the iron did not shame you, let it not shame us; it is the will of Faro... attack, attack, attack" (these last three words are addressed to the knife)(2).

> 2. Gwonna, gwondo, gwonkè, aw ye neke damene,
> ka neke gale munyu, aw ma malo šu ani kle,
> an se daledo an se danola, neke maw malo a ka
> na an malo, faro hakili do, šu šu šu.

The four figures, muso mani nani (literally, four little female persons), are the first four excised women, the inventors of pottery, who were the wives of these blacksmith.

The bird is the tatugu koroni, the incarnation of the eight ancestors of the blacksmiths. It recalls that circumcision is painful, hard, hot, comparable to the effects of fire, and that it is necessary to labor and suffer in order to withstand the cutting knife. This is also what the artisan recalls when, as he operates the children, he sings several times over:

"The knife is hot; the timorous man cannot stand it. It is a purification" (3).

> 3. A ka gwã, če ǰito tise ka muñu,
> saniyali do.

304 532 413 The foreskin, which is tied by a string (drawn at the center of the blade) at the moment of the operation, is placed upon the pembele (black rectangle) and the cutting knife is tapped with a small wooden mallet, gossilã (drawn at the tip of the knife). These three figures receive during operation the offering of the first spurt of blood from the circumcised boy.

The line, which crosses the blade along the middle, separates the bird and the ancestors who gave proof of courage from the instruments used for the circumcision. As a division it symbolizes first of all that each grade of circumcised boys must be considered apart from the others. This is its social meaning. But the delicacy of the line itself has a meaning which applies to the individual: each one must, in his own image, be morally /183/ simple, just, and sensitive. By conforming to the rule symbolically indicated by the design, the individual will become a member of the elite.

304 787 821 The date of the operation is fixed when Mousso Koroni's star, sigi dolo (Sirius), rises in the evening at a certain point in the east (1).

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1. See note 1 p. 47. To determine the date, however, the ndomo society may be consulted, which sometimes postpones it to keep its members longer.

After the boys to be operated have been counted, each gets ready, and on the appointed day the mother washes her son's penis with water in which an iron axe or hoe has been soaked. Then she prepares a dish [262] of rice, ye farina to "dish of man's bravery," which the child eats before he is led to the place of the operation, called yorola sakole "reserved place," located in the bush.

304 326 When all are gathered together the blacksmith-circumciser operates upon each one in turn after he has made them sit down in a circle on the ground. Pulling and twisting the foreskin, he ties it with the string which he keeps taut by securing its extremity between his toes. He next places the member upon the pembele, rests the knife /on the foreskin/ and taps /it/ with the wooden mallet. In this way he cuts off the foreskin while saying the following words:

"Circumcised one, your father, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, the father of that one too, the ear (the genitals) of the ancestors of the latter have withstood (the pain); you, yourself, withstand it as

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326 /184/ they did. Faro, Teliko, Soba! You who are a man, your number is three; three of the penis, three of the twins, designs of the penis, it is the tradition, withstand it; Faro!" (ter) /repeat three times/(1).

1. Bolokodē i fa, i moke, o ta fa,
o ta fa were, o ta fa klo masamaw ye
munyu, i yere ka munyu u cǒko la,
faro, teliko, soba, o ye če ta saba ye,
wulu wo, flani wo, kolo nyeke, lada
do, i ka munyu; faro (ter).

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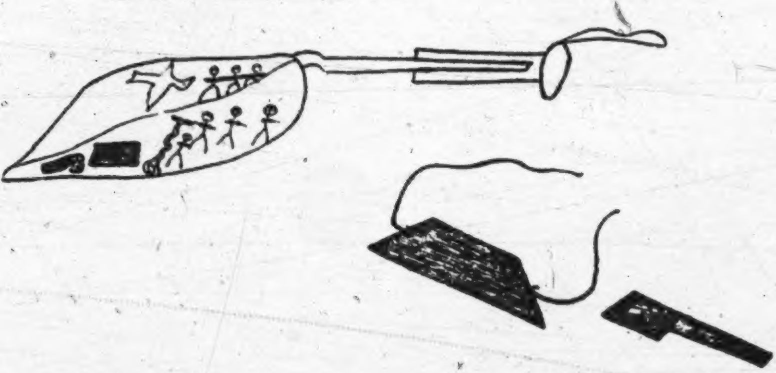

Fig. 15. — The circumcision knife decorated with ritual designs: three men and four women (representing the number seven); the bee eater symbolizing fire; the string; the small board; and the hammer used for the operation (these last two objects are reproduced on a larger scale to the right). (Drawing by an informant.)

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831 After the removal, the operator makes scars upon the child's penis, called faro nyeke (literally, signs of Faro). Under the muscle wulu dyuru (literally, rope of the penis), a small hole is carefully made. Since the penis is considered a source of strength, the muscle which maintains it and erects it binds the circulation of the blood and helps man in all his acts. It is through this muscle that man transmits nerves to his children. A straight organ, firmly held in check, keeps the man and his descendants from numerous illnesses; the aim of this mutilation is to obtain complete and well formed foreskins and clitoris in the children of the party concerned. After the perforation,
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843 the operator places in the orifice a little pepper and tomato juice while saying:

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"Strong (when you form) the child, (you who form) the child (in the) womb, give it to Faro" (1).

1. Fariña dɛ̃, dɛ̃zo dɛ̃, i ka di faro ma.

The embryo, placed in the feminine womb by Faro, receives force and virility from the pepper and is developed with the help of the tomato.

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Two small holes are carefully made symbolizing man and his dya, while the following prayer is recited:

"Two holes of the penis; I draw the twins and I do it well, the skin of the person is captive, the skin of the person (gives) the twins; withstand them; Faro" (ter) (2).

2. Wulu wo fla, flani mba ti ka nɛ̃,
moko wolo ye dyo ye, moko wolo ye
flani nye, i ka munyu faro (ter).

"The skin of man, they say, and his entire body are miserable, captives. He is condemned to work, sweat, and suffer. But these two perforations indicate that man is always called upon to procreate twins, the visible images of Faro. Lacking them, he may have numerous children who will return to him, in sweat and work, the seed which he has placed in the maternal womb and which gives shape to the seeds given by Faro."

At the root of the penis, small lines, kolo nyeke, are made with the knife while the operator says:

"Mark of the penis, the genital organ receives this scarification because of the child (whom it will procreate); it is for this that man may be courageous; the one who has (this scar) is respected; great Faro, satiation of Faro" (3).

3. Kolo nyeke, wulu ti kũye dẽ koye,
a ye če fariña ko ye, min ya ke bonyedo,
faro ba, faro fa.

/185/ These recall the scars inflicted upon man's body and symbolize the desired multiplication of his offspring. Finally, they indicate the superiority of the one who has withstood and accepted pain.

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If the patient has inherited the ni and the dya of a child who died just before his birth in the family (in the narrow sense), the penis is perforated while the following prayer is recited:

"You, so and so, the sons of your fathers are dead, may you replace them night and day, the hole in the penis has been made on you; "Faro" (ter) (1).

1. Ê kari macina, e fa dew bana, e ka o lu soro šu ani kle la, wulu wo ke la e la; faro (ter).

This perforation designates him to procreate the children his father has lost.

Seated in a circle, all the circumcised boys bleed upon the ground into individual holes, nyama bla dinge (literally, hole in which the nyama is left) (2), dug between their parted legs, thus passing on to the impure earth their wanzo and a part of their tere. Meanwhile, the circumciser recited the following prayer:

2. Dinge is a word in the ancient language.

"Blood of the penis, blood of the transfer of the wanzo, blood which chases the wanzo, enter the hole, may you pay (my debt), may you protect me (against the nyama of the foreskin), against bad fortune, against space; o mound" (ter) (3).

3. Wulu dyoli, wanzo fili dyoli, wanzo gẽ dyoli, i bi dõ dinge kono, i kã sara, i kã kisi a makunangoya, i ka kisi kene ama; walawala (ter).

Then, he kneads a bit of blood-covered earth, the principle of which, bwa, is stronger than the wanzo (4) and makes from it a kind of dressing which he applies to the wounds. In this way the child also

4. The word bwa is provisionally translated by "essence, extract." One says dukukolo bwa or seke, "principle or extract of the earth."

304 326 recovers part of his tere. The organ is then held up by means of a small apparatus, mine naw, made of a millet stem split in two in the shape of a fork.

"Circumcision is a sacrifice" (1). It is only valid if blood has run,

> 1. Bolokoli ye saraka ye.

and any patient who has not wet the ground with his blood is wounded on the thigh by the circumciser. The same is true for a child born [732 582] without a foreskin. This detail must, moreover, be kept secret by the members of his age grade, since the revelation of a malformation might prevent the individual concerned from contracting a marriage (2).

> 2. A woman might believe that these malformations are the sign that the man who was operated upon has not lost his wanzo, a fact which would be a definite obstacle to marriage.

/186/ When all is finished, the operator, holding the foreskins in his hand, says these words before burying them:

"We have transferred the wanzo of the circumcised child, may the tere be well" (3).

> 3. Ãn ye dẽ bolokole wanzo fili la, tere ka ñe.

304 292 561 After this, the circumcised boys have their caps put first on their napes and foreheads representing the east-west direction, and then on the sides of their heads representing the north-south direction. All their strength resides from then on in the headpiece which they will wear night and day, without removing it, during the entire period of seclusion.

304 784 561 The approach to the site of the operation is formally forbidden to women and uncircumcised males. The one who might go there out of curiosity "would contract the wanzo" (wanzo ba nofe, "the wanzo follows him"). Any uncircumcised boy who might break this law would have to take the consequences at the time of his own operation

304 784 561 which would be a dangerous one (1). The same rule applies to the

1. The approach of the virulent wanzo of the uncircumcised boy acts upon those of the boys undergoing the operations and afflicts them in the genital organs.

enclosure, consisting of several huts, where the newly circumcised boys remain under the surveillance of the sema. The enclosure is situated at a distance of several tens of meters from the village in order to isolate the age grade. For all that touches them, such as clothing, sticks, sistrums, dishes, and refuse, with the exception of the cap, is impregnated with their wanzo.

561 304 [431] The newly circumcised boys receive from their parents gifts of cowrie shells and food called wanzo sababu yala, "in honor of the wanzo," to speed their recovery.

[794] On the night which precedes the sixth day after the operation, a day called daworo, the children are initiated to the Komo (2).

2. See p. 203.

The following day, the sema leads them to the edge of the river, where they wash their wounds for the first time. This act, which brings about direct intervention of the element in which Faro lives, has moreover a social meaning: it consecrates the age grade and from this moment on, the children belong for the rest of their lives to the same flã, exchanging jokes and insults which are suitable between senãnku (3). It must be noted that this very simple act of communal

3. See p. 119.

ablution constitutes the inauguration of an age grade of circumcised boys and sets off from that moment all the rights and obligations its members will have toward each other.

A meal, eaten in common and accompanied by songs and dances, ends the ceremonies of the daworo. Hereafter the ablutions are repeated daily until the wounds are healed.

304 561 881 /187/ On the last day, all that has been in contact with the newly circumcised boys is gathered together at a crossroad near the enclosure.

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Sistrums, sticks, mats, as well as the wood from the huts and the refuse that has been carefully swept up, are put in a pile which is ignited. Each circumcised boy jumps over the fire three times and then runs to his home without looking back. In this way he finally loses the rest of the wanzo which he has kept after the operation. Only his cap is brought back and given his mother who keeps it until her death. On the next day, after putting on new clothes the boy is taught what he himself is in the following words: "the person is yo and yo is the person (1)" and in the circumstances of creation. He is then admitted completely into the society of the male adults of his village.

Circumcision has a profound effect upon the person. At this moment, the child loses the physical support of the female sex which is the foreskin; he becomes a man (vir) ready to fulfill his role of a male capable of reproducing. Moreover, he "throws off his wanzo" which escapes from the body at the moment of the operation (2). In his leap above the fire this force joins, in the altars and the mask of the ndomo, the forces of both the uncircumcised and the circumcised of the preceding years (3).

[171]

At the same time the circumcised boy improves his tere, for this latter force, diminished by the bloody operation, increases at the moment when the child dons his new clothing. Until his circumcision, the child only performed minor tasks; after circumcision he is considered a male adult and officially admitted to the rituals and labors of the community.

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1. Ma ye yo ye, yo ye ma ye.
On yo see pp. 18-26.

2. Wanzo file la. The wearing of clothing and ornaments assumes great importance in the loss of the wanzo. Among the Bozo, where the children are circumcised very young, they are not considered to have lost their wanzo until the moment these clothes are given to them.

3. See p. 227.

304 766 The importance of the wanzo and the necessity of its leaving the person are such that in the case where a child dies uncircumcised, the operation is performed on his corpse. If this is not possible, the circumciser cuts his left ear and says:

"I cut the ear instead of circumcision" (1).

1. Mba klo tike bolokoli nona bi la ye.

It is buried with the corpse or kept in the paternal home, but the wanzo leaves the child. If the operation was not performed, it would contribute to the formation of a very dangerous nyama, which would be more aggressive even than that of an old man and from which the society would have to suffer.

/188/

Excision

304 323 189 The operation is performed with a little iron knife by a potter, the wife of a blacksmith. The blade, which is male, represents the sun; the handle, which is female, represents both the clitoris and the moon. The woman protects herself from the wanzo of the newly excised girls by wearing bracelets and charms and by smearing a black salve on her eyes.

304 323 The operation is performed in full daylight at the edge of the village and in the presence of the assembled kinsmen. In certain localities it takes place near the potters' hearth. Each little girl is seated in turn on an inverted pot and is operated upon while prayers are recited. Just as the boy whose foreskin is badly formed is wounded on the thigh, so the girl in the same situation is considered excised if she submits to a test which replaces excision. In the latter case, the woman operator places a hedgehog skin between the girl's thighs and presses these together energetically so as to make the blood run (2).

2. In case the girl is the daughter of a blacksmith, the blood running over the pottery indicates her future role as potter (see p. 169.

The young girls must neither cry nor moan; on the contrary, they sing to exalt the departure of the wanzo.

304 During the seclusion, they wear about their head a piece of white
[292 cloth, Faro's color, which has the same function as the cap of the
circumcised boy. They shake a gourd bolokode barani, filled with eight
534] grains or small pebbles, whose sound keeps passers-by away. The
leaps, which they perform over the fire made of clothes, gourds, and
refuse that have been ignited, end the seclusion and rid them of their
wanzo, which goes to settle in the altars of the ndomo.

It is said of a young girl who was well excised that she is well behaved and carries herself with dignity. On the contrary, it is said of a girl of light morals "that her hands were not washed clean" (1).

1. A bolo ma ko ka dye ya.

which means that she was improperly excised.

Funerals

The effect of death is to dissociate the elements composing the
761 person. The body becomes a corpse (šu) from which the /189/ ni and
764 the dya escape to follow their particular destinies, while the tere is
115 transformed into nyama, an active and dangerous force which wanders
about the deceased. The funeral rites aim first to channel the deceased's spiritual elements which must be conserved in the interest of the deceased as well as that of the community. Moreover, through the care given to the body and to these elements, the memory of the dead person is piously kept up. The notion of a final resurrection, promised to all who have lived, inspires these preparations. The bones of the deceased, which are like the exuvia of his physical body, its solid and durable framework, join the exuvia of his soul which is kept in the altars of the Komo. Thus, at the end of time, the dead man "will rise and, to everyone's joy, join his family."

The funeral rites, which the Bambara have always celebrated, have
764 evolved along with their beliefs. At the time when the cult of the
balanza was flourishing, the dead bodies were hung from trees until
they rotted, their bones picked up and kept by their descendants.
The ancestors of the Gwonna then carved pieces of sunzun wood
[532] called mani (literally, little person) in the image of the dead. The
length of the wood was proportionate to the length of the body; the
head, arms, legs, and genitals were carefully reproduced. The mani

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1. A ngari ko le ye ngo (ngari is a word of the archaic language which expresses submission.)

Each person responds by striking their genital organs with the little finger: "It is well humiliated" (2).

[826] 2. A ngari ko karu. The little finger is the symbol of the whole person; to strike with it is to acquiesce with all one's being.

They are led to the door of their home where the village elders of both sexes are gathered; they repeat their apologies to which the same response is given, accompanied by the same gesture of acquiescence.

[304] The chief of the Komo and three elders of his age grade who have never broken any taboos led them to the river bank where they undergo a new circumcision for the man and a new excision for the woman; the blood which is a gift to Faro must fall into the water. This operation is called "purification of the foreskin" (yiriyiri tige) and the pain suffered has an expiatory value.

The sixth day after the operation the members, gathered on the village square (3), dance and sing to the rhythm of the Komo, which is furiously beaten out, in the following words:

3. This ceremony, called daworo is comparable to that celebrated on the sixth day after circumcision.

"Circumcised children, it is not good to break the taboo of the anus. I am telling you, Soma and members of the society, do not count their faults. Faro "(ter) (4).

4. (I ye ye) boloko dew tne tyẽ mañi boda la; nye fo aw ye somaw moko ka na jigi u la; faro (ter). That is to say, "forgive them." The word anus here replaces the word genitals which, according to propriety, is not spoken.

[195]

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783 2. Ni nya ke šyẽ fla i ka n fa; ka kadi ka kago, gariseke bo fã ka čã; faro (ter).

The water swallowed after these words constitutes a solemn promise to Faro not to repeat the fault.

Next, they are carried home, the man by two members of the society and the woman by three of her companions, so that their toes, [826] the temporary lodging places of the spiritual principles which have returned to them, may not touch the impure earth. They remain three and four days, respectively, on their mats without making a movement. On the seventeenth day, with a thousand precautions, they may resume a more normal life, but they will be entirely free only when a birth occurring in the family will eliminate from their bodies the soul and the double of the dead child by transferring these to the newborn.

/199/ Death of an Uncircumcised Boy

When an uncircumcised boy is seriously ill the chief of the ndomo 763 (1) has a rooster sacrificed in order to find out if recovery is possible.

1. See p. 222.

In the case of a negative response the children, taking turns night and day, go into the bush and sound off the ritual objects under the leadership of an initiate. In this way the soul of the dying boy is certain to be captured at the moment of death and channeled by the sound wave and led into the ritual objects themselves. Two initiates are posted near the home of the sick and, as soon as they learn of his death, they go to warn the children in the bush to make them stop playing. The chief sits down facing the west and recites a prayer; then he sacrifices the victims offered by the family.

766 Before the corpse is buried, it is circumcised, and the wanzo goes [304] to settle in the mask of the ndomo. During the night following the burial the members go to the fresh grave and sound the ritual instruments which contain the soul. Each year they repeat this action above the children's graves following the threshing of the harvest to "awaken the dead and to tell them that their souls are not lost."

*173 Déssé-koro (1789-1802). According to one tradition, Déssé was captured at the same time as Foro-koro and taken with him to Ségou where he is said to have been marked with the [115] tatoo (1) peculiar to the slaves of the Ségou branch of the Kouloubali. Authority would normally have passed to Déssé on the death of Séba Mana, but because Déssé's fate was uncertain it was offered instead to Sira Bo. The latter is said to have refused at first, but he accepted when his brother Mo-siré guaranteed that even if Déssé should return, the power would not be withdrawn. When Déssé returned ten years later, he respected the promise made by his brother Mo-siré and waited until the death of Sira Bo to take command.

Whatever may be the truth of the matter, Déssé took advantage of the quarrels that arose at Ségou upon Ngolo Dyara's death to capture Niamina. It is said that a small forest of baobab trees later arose on the spot where his troops had encamped.

When Ma-n-son had been relieved of the worst of his worries by his victory over Nyana-n-koro, he was anxious to avenge the capture of Niamina (2) and so turned his attention to

● [304-567] 1. This well-known tatoo consists of three cuts on each side of the face running from the temples to the lower jaw in front of the ears.

2. The relations between Déssé and the people of Ségou are very obscure. Some say that, on being asked for help by Nyana-n-koro, Déssé stipulated that he would only agree to help if Foro-koro's skull were returned to him. When he had gained possession of the relic, he returned to Kaarta, promising to come back at the appropriate time. He did in fact return and encamped near Ségou after the defeat and death of Nyana-n-koro; he

567 slaves (1). The master often keeps this paramount head near him as his confidential agent; otherwise, he buys a slave or selects a free man for this high post and thus better controls the situation. In such a case, the paramount leader recognized by the slaves is merely the spokesman for his congeners in their dealings with the master.

[304] Among the Kouloubali the wolo-so have a characteristic tattoo formed by three broad incisions from temple to lower jaw on both sides of the face. Far from feeling humiliated by this mark, every wolo-so is as proud of it as though it were a sign of noble origin. Many free men have adopted this tattoo in order to pose as members of the great Bambara family.

The status of a slave is not immutable, but generally includes three stages described by the following names: san'dyon', "a slave acquired through trade"; dyon'wolo-so, "slave born in the house"; and dyongoro, "freed."

A newly purchased slave is put under observation. If he appears to be intractable or vicious or is afflicted with a serious disease (epilepsy, Leprosy, sleeping sickness, nyctalopia), one gets rid of him as soon as possible.

If he proves to be docile, devoted, industrious, and a good worker, he is kept. He is given a job in the house or is [192] placed with an old servant to be trained or with an artisan to be taught a trade.

A female slave in the same circumstances who becomes a mother at once finds her situation improved (1). Her child is wolo-so, "born in the house," and she acquires the same

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1. This appears to be the application of a kind of right of seniority, analogous to that of primogeniture.

1. The father's identity is of no importance, since the children all belong by law to her master.

553 Women are not admitted to the men's circle. Gathered
near the mother's hut, they know that a name has been given,
851 but do not know what it is. The woman who tied the cord then
[562] washes the baby three times in warm, soapy water and, taking
water into her mouth, sprinkles the tiny body from neck to lower
back three times. She then expresses her good wishes. Carrying the child, she goes to the door of the hut, where the father
and family heads are waiting, and asks the name. Then she returns to the women and places the child on the lap of an old
woman who blows into the baby's ears three times and then shouts
in each ear: "*Kuyo! Kuyo! i tua dara*," that is, "*Kuyo! Kuyo!*
[854] your name is ...." The child is then wrapped in the narrow
swaddling band which the mother will henceforth use to carry
him on her back, and if it is a boy, the baby is rolled three
times over the blade of an ax, or if a girl, over an iron implement for picking cotton. While this is going on, everyone is expressing best wishes.

[184] In Kaarta the ceremony is somewhat different. A beef or
a sheep killed in front of the mother's hut, and *dege* [Ed.,
coarsely ground millet in water] is also prepared. The baby's
head is shaved, and the hair is placed on the *dege*. Each guest
[564] puts his right hand on the edge of the gourd and a *griot* expresses
good wishes for the newborn child. Then the guests dance around
the dish of *dege*; the hair is removed from it and given to the
mother to keep. [213] Then if the occasion warrants it, the
[304] three lines of tattooing peculiar to the Kouloubali are made on
the baby's face with a dagger. Finally the *griot* takes the child,
carries it around the crowd, and returns it to the father, who must
then make known the chosen name. When the father has pronounced the name, the *griot* again takes the child and, making
a trumpet of his hands, cries out to him three times: "your
name is...."

551 In principle, the name (*tua*) recalls some circumstance
surrounding the birth. A posthumous child is usually given his
father's name, as though he were the reincarnation of the father,
or more commonly, he is called *Fa-n-ko*, "posthumous" (literally,
"the one who came after the *fa*"). If the baby shows some resemblance to a deceased person, he is named for the person or,

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Soli (2)

2. The word soli is used in Kaarta; at Ségou the term is boloko or ngolo-ko, literally, "affair of birth."

The single word soli is used for what we call circumcision and excision. This is because a Bambara has in mind not this or that surgical operation, accessory in nature, but rather the ceremony which for boys and girls alike marks the passage or, more accurately in line with the etymology of the word soli, the fact of being born to a new status.

881 The soli does not take place every year, because it involves considerable expense for the families, which they cannot always meet. At the instigation of the boys who must undergo the soli and who, therefore are called soli-ma-u (people of the soli), the family heads assemble at the call of the nyana-n-sonna-ba to decide whether or not the soli will be held. If the decision is affirmative, the boys and girls then take steps to make sure that the festival (nyara, "orgy, wedding") will be as elaborate as possible. In principle, the date coincides with the third day of the festival of the sheep.

Guided by their elders, the young girls (soli-ma-moso-u) go from door to door to solicit millet for the banquet (3) which [262] they are expected to give the elders (koro-u) on the second day of the feast of the sheep. The period of the ceremonies of the soli actually begins with this meal. [241]

3. The menu includes couscous (basi), and it is called soli-kili-basi, "basi of the solicitation for the soli," on account of the source of the millet used to prepare it, solicited by the children.

In the afternoon of this day, the boys make the customary sacrifice to their genie-protector, dancing in his honor in ceremonial costume but without flagellation.

881 evil genii in order to preserve the "people of the soli" (soli-ma-u)
789 from their bewitchments.

881 The soli. The soli, this make-believe birth, is marked by a bloody operation, circumcision for the boys and excision
● 304 for the girls. The fact that the ceremony does not get its name from this operation demonstrates that it is merely show; it is merely a rite of separation between the previous state and the new one (3). The operation takes place at dawn.

[171] 3. That is why among other peoples the operation does not exist or represented by a mere slash on the thigh (among the Koniagui).

Boys. The blacksmith who is to circumcise the boys waits outside the village under a tree. Assisted by members [243] of the sects and especially by the Komo-tigi, he performs the operation behind a loincloth hung up as a screen. The boy stands erect, and the blacksmith draws out the prepuce and cuts it off, after having determined approximately the proper place to cut. The patient is expected to show no weakness; on the contrary, he exerts himself to say a few words to show his courage.

As soon as the operation is finished, a gunshot announces the news to the elders crouched about the village fires, and a female griot proclaims it to the bystanders. The Komo-tigi takes a few nyanka leaves, burns them, and goes to place the ashes on the boy's familial kara. The boy runs off to rejoin his companions under the tree especially chosen for this reassembly. All the boys will spend their days there, on the fringe of society with which they are forbidden to mingle. They return to the village only at night, to sleep in a hut reserved for them.

881 A man reputed to know how to care for circumcised
304 boys lives with them, takes care of them, and closely supervises them; this is the sema-tye. Every day abundant food is brought
292 to him for his patients. The latter wear a dloki (blouse) and kursi (trousers) made of cotton cloth, blue or yellow-brown (basa) depending on their affiliations (1), and their headgear is usually

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1. The basa color is much in demand

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304 among the Bambara, while the Marka use cloth dyed indigo-blue.
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a high cap with strings extending from the earlaps. They can only leave the place where they are assembled, even for the needs of nature, under the leadership of the sema-tye and shaking a stick of wood to which are attached bits of broken pottery. This rattle is called n-koso-m-bara.

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304 They pass the time plaiting mats, gossiping, laughing, and pestering passers-by. On market days they are permitted to block the paths leading to the village and to collect a tithe from the traders.

The officials of the sects often visit them in their retreat.

Girls. The blacksmiths' wives who are to remove part of the clitoris await the girls outside the village under the trees. Some matrons assist them. Each child in turn runs up to the operator and squeezes herself between [244] the legs of the matron who exposes the clitoris. The excised clitoris is laid [789] in a little woven basket and is carefully preserved for making talismans.

The completion of the operation is announced in the same way as for the boys, and the Komo-tigi likewise puts the ashes from nyanka leaves on the familial kara.

The girl then rejoins her companions in the hut reserved for them in each section of the settlement. There they are under the surveillance of an old woman, the sema-moso, who knows how to take care of them and who sees to it that they behave properly. They are very well fed.

881 Wrapped in skirts, they lean on canes of dried millet stalks when they walk and shake a gourd pierced with holes and [514] filled with pebbles. They go out only for the needs of nature and then all in a body. They warn the passers-by by shaking their rattles and singing improvised songs. As they near paths outside the village, they intone a refrain.

Soli da woro (1). The seclusion of the soli-ma ceases

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1. Literally, "sixth day of the soli."

614 701 religious and reciprocal oath. Their contribution entitled them to a share of the booty. Volunteers, who enlisted for an engagement or a whole campaign, came in under conditions settled in advance.

The fama furnished the allies, just as he did the volunteers, with whatever they needed and deducted the amount from their share of the loot. Sometimes a third party, not involved in the expedition, provided mounts, equipment, and weapons for the enterprise in exchange for a prearranged reward.

In short, armed pillage was a business directed by the fama, who could admit interested participants if he so desired. [727] If the operation were successful, the clan gained predominance over the conquered regions, which the fama then exploited as he saw fit. The booty was the first result of the enterprise, and it served both to pay the expenses incurred in the affair and to swell the treasury of the clan.

This explains why the clan's army, for a consideration, hired itself out to anyone who asked for support, as an ally, as a mercenary force, or in any other capacity. The army might simply intervene in a quarrel of its own accord when there seemed to be profit to be gained (1). [313]

1. See below how the fama of Ségou lent his support to a marabout of Sous. The Bambara also intervened on numerous occasions in the internal quarrels of Khasso, Boundou, Fouta, etc. Their role as mercenaries is clearly shown in the Tarikh es Soudan.

614 701 569 [302] The ton'-dyou' were distinguished by a special hair arrangement. Their heads were completely shaved except for three tufts of hair which formed two braids on the crown of the head and one at the nape of the neck.

The slaves of the household of the fama could be recognized by their well-known tattoo (1) which consisted of three

[304] 1. In general, it is risky to depend

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incautiously on tattooing as a distinguishing mark of race or even of rank; the tattoo described here has not only been used by people of various origins, but has even been appropriated by all kinds of people as a form of snobbishness.

parallel cuts from temple to lower jaw on either side of the face. Furthermore, these people borrowed the dyamu of the fama (Kouloubali, Dyara, etc.), just as certain servants in some of the French provinces are called by their master's name because they are members of the household bearing that name.

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The elite troops (sofa, ton'-dyon', etc.) were armed with axes (sukala) (2). Important chiefs also had axes, the insignia of

2. An instrument's name derived from suka, a variant of sua, meaning "to pierce." The men armed with axes were, in fact, assigned the special task of "making a breach" in the wall inclosing the settlement under attack.

command, sometimes made of precious metal, such as copper or silver. The axe carried by the fama was made of gold and enchased (3).

3. The chronicle relates that Tonmassa, after murdering Dékoro, carried off the golden axe, the symbol of supreme command.

The spear (tama) was often regarded as a weapon of distinction also. The ordinary warriors were armed with bows (kala) and arrows (bimye), the latter usually poisoned.

[177] Guns (marfa) gradually came into use, imported by native traders (Dyula). The chronicle claims that the first firearms were introduced among "the people of Ségou" in Mamari's time by an army from Kong and that these guns were of the blunderbuss type.

Plate 3

[304]

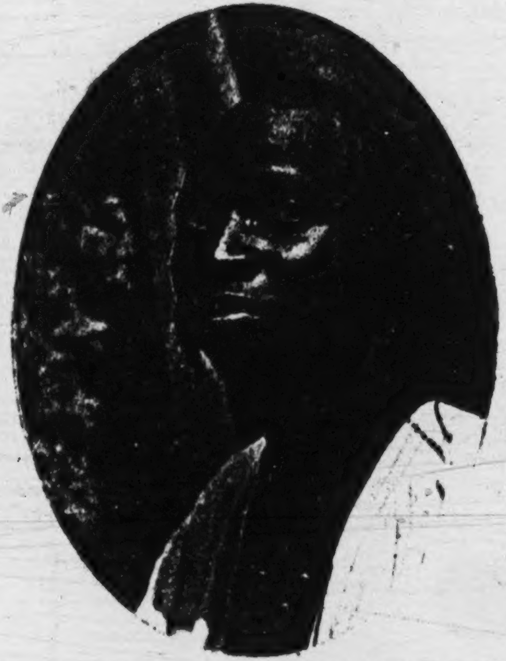

Fig. 5. Bambara with his cheeks slashed in imitation of the tattooing characteristic of the slaves of the Kouloubali, Djenné region.

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[854]

Fig. 6. Woman and child, Djenné Region.

[End Plate 3]

142 Races]; Lieutenant Girard, Notes anthropométriques sur quelques Soudanais occidentaux [Anthropometric Notes on Some West Sudanese], 1909; Les races et les peuples de la terre [Races and Peoples of the Earth]; Chantre, Contribution à l'étude des races humaines du Soudan occidental [Contribution to the Study of the Human Races of the Western Sudan], 1918; Dr. Verneau, L'homme, races et coutumes [Man, Races and Customs], 1931.

From this study, a little hasty since the observations were made on very few subjects, we will retain the following features:

Without attaining the ultradolichocephaly of the Malinké, 141 the Bambara is [5] characterized by his dolichocephaly (horizontal cephalic index 75.05; for Deniker 76.4) and his fairly considerable height (1.71 meters for the "aristocrats," a result of interbreeding with the Peul population, and 1.65 meters for the ordinary Bambara). Dr. Pales and Tassin de Saint-Péreuse give us figures which are considerably different and which are particularly interesting because their observations were made on 893 individuals. They give the horizontal cephalic index as 74.3, and the average height as 171.8.

Tauxier concluded in these terms: "It is a good Negro race, crossbred with several superior elements!"

Let us add to his description that the Bambara has a solid 142 build, with no dissymmetry, a platyrrhinian nose, a pronouncedly [147] ogival skull, a skin whose scars have a keloidian tendency, and an [164] excellent natural defense against infection, although certain regions are particularly infested with goiter. They practice cranial deforma- [304] tion very little, differing in that from the Malinké and the Kassonké. Let us note, finally, that the Bambara have black wooly hair, but that some women have hair with red lights which is considered by 143 the natives as a magnificent trait. We shall not discuss the albinos with white skin and colorless hair, of whom the percentage is small.

R. Koerber, in Étude de la répartition des groupes sanguins chez quelques races d'A.O.F. [Study of the Distribution of Blood Groups in Several Races of French West Africa], out of a total of 1,066 Bambara found 3.9 percent of group AB; 25.7 percent of group A; 27.7 percent of group B, and 42.7 percent of group B, and 42.7 percent of group O. Group O then is dominant, but less frequent than for the Ouolof [Wolof], Malinké, Foula, and Sérère [Serer] races.

[826]
774 its seat in the prepuce and the clitoris, necessitating circumcision
761 and excision). The body is conceived as being the support of all
spiritual forces; each part is distinctly known [84] for its particular
role. The body, like the spiritual principles, is bisexual; the boy
[304 is feminine in his prepuce, the girl masculine in her clitoris, and it
831] is only after circumcision and excision that the man and woman can
unite and realize the original fruitful twinship. On the metaphysical
plane, there is identity between man, "seed of the world," and the
cereal seed; the basic nutriments that are made up of the eight
principal cereals are represented symbolically in men's clavicles.
775 Finally, death separates all of these elements composing the person.
The *dya* remains in the water where it will become the *ni* of the
761 new-born in the family of the deceased; the *ni* is caught by the family
head and transported to the altar where it will animate the *dya* of the
new-born; the *téré* becomes *nyama*, a dangerous and vengeful force;
it is deposited on the *pembele*, where it rejoins the ancestral forces.
The body is buried and belongs to the termites. At birth, all the
spiritual forces are transmitted again, whole, "refreshed," and
purified. One being replaces another until the final resurrection.

C. Ritual, Sacrifice, and Cults

782 To appeal to and influence the spiritual forces, the Bambara
use prayer, offerings, and sacrifices. Oral rites are used everywhere
and at any time. "They pray to the sky, the cardinal points, the
spirits; they sacrifice on stones, on the ground, on trees, by water
holes, just as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries or situated in
public or private places. Every circumcized adult, father of a family,
owner of a home and cultivatable land, is a sacrificer, a capacity
[531] emphasized by the red spot which sometimes is an ornament of the
walls of the principal room in the man's residence." (1)

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1. G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].

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the blacksmith. The doll is given the name of the dead infant, the [304 child¹ carries it with him to the circumcision, and, when he marries, 589] he buries the doll with a piece of wood representing the wife of the deceased.

845 Twins are replicas of Faro, their presence is beneficial, and they are considered invulnerable.

826 833 904 The albino is supposed to be the issue of sexual relations held in sunlight, a breach of taboo. He, too, is a new being. His wanzo is so active that the circumciser must take great precautions before operating on it.

826 782 He is considered to be endowed with special powers which make him a choice victim for the sacrifices offered to the spirit of the water.

553 326 To the children of blacksmiths, the name is given near the paternal forge in the presence of all the artisans. An old man prepares seven little sticks, giving each the name of an ancestor. Three of these are drawn at random from the group, and the third gives the name of the baby. The head of the baby is rubbed with the axe Kongobwona, and his shaved hair is soaked in sacrificial blood.

553 782 In the Bamako region two chickens or a sheep are sacrificed to celebrate the name-giving. The distribution of the meat is made according to established custom. If it is a chicken, the patriarch receives the head and the gizzard, while the wing and white meat go to the old woman who washed the baby during the first eight days. If it is a sheep, the patriarch receives [91] the ribs (because they are a bulwark, and the patriarch is the defender of the village) and the heart; the blacksmith receives the shoulder; the infant's family gets the head (so that the infant will go ahead), the back (symbol of prosperity), and the limbs (supports one wishes the new-born to have); the blood which runs on the ground is destined for the infant's protective ancestors. Then the family divides the raw meat with the heads of family, and the old woman thus receives her part indirectly.

c. Circumcision

881 304 831 A male infant is born, but he still keeps (because of the primordial twinship) the prepuce as the physical support of the female sex. He will only be freed of this by circumcision. It is this operation that definitively determines his sexual qualification and renders him fit to contract marriage.

¹[ie., the surviving child of twins. -Analyst]

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794 The society of n'Domo has the task of preparing children for circumcision; the wanzo of the child liberated by the operation goes in the mask of the n'Domo.

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304 Formerly, circumcision took place between 18 and 20 years of age, and the circumcised had to bear arms the following year. At present, the children are circumcised between 8 and 16 years of age, but all those of the same promotion are considered to belong to [561] the same age class and are flani [sic] (twins) all their lives.

The ritual of circumcision has been described many times, in particular by Tauxier and G. Dieterlen. Therefore we will only report the essential phases.

The ceremony takes place during the dry season, in bountiful years after the harvest. The appearance of the constellation "Sigi-lolo" is watched for at a certain point in the sky, and when it is very brilliant, the date is fixed. The operation cannot take place except every three years.

The parents prepare for the ceremony long in advance: they make the child a bonnet of white cloth which they present to the Niger, and they make the signs representing the person of the child with earth from the river. Some days before the operation, the child enters into a period of seclusion; he is placed under the protection of the purifying light of Faro and receives gifts (cowries, food ....).

When the day arrives, his hair is shaved off. His mother washes his shaft with water in which an iron axe has been soaked, then has him eat a plate of rice.

The blacksmith prepares his knife, boloko kumba moru, which is enclosed in an iron sheath, this knife represents the circumcised and the prepuce which will be taken from him. The priest washes the handle and, symbolically, the penis. Then with coal or with millet paste he traces the blade with ritual designs symbolizing the three first circumcised men, the four first excised women, and the bird which is the avatar of the eight ancestral blacksmiths. Next, he ties the prepuce with a small cord (drawn on the middle of the blade) and places it on the pembelé. The cutting knife is hit with a small block of wood, and the blacksmith then traces the scarifications on the shaft. The circumcised bleed in a circle on the ground, in individual holes [92] dug between their legs. They thus deliver the wanzo to the impure earth, while the circumciser recites the prayers. Then they apply a dressing of bloody earth to the wound,

881 and the member is held up by a split millet stalk. The prepuces are
304 buried, and their white bonnets are put on the circumcised. The
place of the operation is forbidden to women and to the non-circumcised who could take the liberated wanzo.

In the Bamako region the blood of the oldest is gathered in
[534] two new calabashes, which are later broken and the pieces used to
make sistrums, sinzin.

After the ceremony, the children retire for three months un-
881 der the direction of a priest of the Komo. During this period, when they receive a religious and technical education, they enter the village only to sleep in a special house and to repair the roofs of their teachers' huts.

The night before the sixth day after the operation, they are
[794] initiated in the Komo. The next day they are led to the river where they wash their wound. Meals are taken together, followed by songs and dances, until they are healed. The last day, the sistrums, sticks, mats, and everything that has been in contact with the circumcised are put in a pile and burned. Each child jumps over the fire three times and runs home, without turning around, to lose his wanzo definitively. In the Bamako region the sistrums are preserved in the cabin of the village chief and will be used for the children of the following years. The bonnet is returned to the mother and will be preserved until death. The next day the child puts on his new clothes.

881 Let us note that for the circumcision of twins all the offerings
304 for the ceremony and the sacrifices must be doubled, and each child
826 will possess two sistrums. Finally, the albinos today are sent to the dispensary, because the blacksmiths are afraid to operate on them, their wanzo being particularly dangerous.

Circumcision may take place posthumously. The circumciser
304 then cuts the left ear of the body, since the wanzo freed by death
766 would be dangerous to the living.

Generally, a sort of ceremony of confirmation of membership
794 in the Komo takes place in the year following the circumcision.

d. Excision

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304 The excision of the girls has a meaning equivalent to that
[831] of the circumcision of the boys. The operation frees them of the
physical male factor residing in the clitoris.

881 physical male factor residing in the clitoris. The operation takes
304 place, moreover, during the same period as the circumcision. It is
carried out by the potteress, wife of the blacksmith, in full daylight
before the assembled kin. During their seclusion the girls wear a
white veil which plays the same role as the bonnet of the circumcised.
534 Instead of the sistrum, the girls shake a gourd which contains eight
millet seeds and cotton fibers which their fiancés have given them.
A goat is sacrificed for the ceremony. The collected blood is given
to the fiancé in honor of his ancestors who become those of the girl.

[93] On the last day of the ceremony the girls definitively rid themselves of their *wanzo* by jumping over a pyre composed of the clothes and scraps of the excised.

e. Marriage

582 It is only after having been circumcised or excised that young
584 people may marry. The institution of marriage is regulated by a
ritual which has often been described, particularly by Amar, Monteil,
Tauxier, Aubert . . .

The marriage arrangements are made by the respective *fa*
of the two betrothed, after the young people have been consulted.
The request is officially made to the parents by an intermediary, a
man of caste or a *sénanku*. It is accompanied by ritual gifts offered
to the *fa* of the girl. In the Bougouni region the request is accom-
panied by ten kola nuts, because ten is a complete number that
80 designates good events and future births. (Nine kola nuts are offered
576 to present condolences, four as a sign of greeting. To send three
431 nuts would be insulting, and 19 nuts, marking incompleteness, would
be a sign of lack of confidence.) The first kola nuts to be offered
824 are always wrapped in one or two karite leaves, symbol of life and
of fecundity. If the ten kola nuts are accepted, it means that the
father has opened the way to the marriage. The intermediary then
make a second trip the following week, bringing a cock for sacrifice
to the ancestors and ten more kola nuts; during a third trip he offers
another cock and ten more kola nuts before the entire assembled
family of the young girl, witnessing that the girl may meet her
fiancé. In the course of the fourth trip, the intermediary leads the
girl to the fiancé's family, where she will be confided to the wife
of the head of the family who will undertake her education.

304 773 The Bambara decorate their faces and bodies with numerous scarifications, with the aim of conferring on the wearer the qualities symbolized by the scars. By their influence on the character and temperament of an individual, they help him to come up to the ideal man. These marks are associated with the myth of the origin of agriculture They are eight small scars: two vertical ones at the root of the nose, three under each eye. They imitate the facial marks of the mythical being, half man, half animal, who taught men how to cultivate the soil. (1)

1. S. de Ganay, "On a form of cicatrisation among the Bambara," Man.

f. Arrangement of the Settlements

361 The Bambara village follows rules of development which allow a stranger to recognize the disposition of the huts immediately and to single out a chief's house, that of a blacksmith, or that of any other member of the society. In fact, the village is built to the north or east of the protective tree. To the south of the village,
778 is the sacred wood, dwelling place of the chief of the spirits, where the religious ceremonies and the initiation rites take place. As more families come to live in the village, they build their huts around that of the chief, except to the east, for the chief must see the sun rise. The oldest son of the chief, his eventual successor, will have his own plot near his father's. The house of the Komo is situated outside of the village, to the south or west, hidden in a wood or a thicket. At the edge of the village is a round cabin, the house of the Nyama, in the middle is a square cabin with painted walls, house of the Gna (see the chapter on religion). In the center of the village, a cleared place around a doubalé serves for public meetings; the elders hold their councils under the branches of the doubalé.

764 554 [100] Finally, the cemetery of the free men is found outside the village, to the west; that of captives and people of caste is to the south of the free men's cemetery.

326 600 Every village has its blacksmith, for he is life, and the village could not subsist without him. Before the French conquest,

789 after death. This energy, this fluid, is the envoy, messenger, or
778 emissary of hatred, vengeance, and justice, and it goes wherever it
is sent by the will which is its director and master; it goes wrongly
or rightly to bring misfortune, poverty, sickness, and death. The
word gnâma is constantly heard from Bambara lips.

The song of young girls who have been excised begins with
789 these words:

778 Bo n' yé, gnâma, o gnâma, bo n' yé!
●304 Go away from me, gnâma, oh, gnâma, go away from me!
539 Dankoun bâ la
(i.e., Gnâma who dwell) at the great corner of land formed
by two paths that cross.
Gnâma fambali, bo n' yé!
Gnama who kill, go away from me! (1)

1. Translation: "Go away from me, all kinds of gnâma, who dwell at the big dankoun (a corner of land formed by two paths that fork, intersect, or cross at the exit from the village)! Gnâma who kill, go away from me!"

789 The ears of those who consult sorcerers have had their fill of
778 this word: Gnâma djougou bi é nofé. A malicious gnâma is chasing
you, so avoid this and that, kill a goat, a chicken, or a dog, place
a gift of cowrie shells, a kola nut, etc... in a certain place.
Nonté i fa gnâma na ouli i la, otherwise the gnâma, the avenging
force possessed by your father, will rise up against you.

Always, the word gnâma carries this meaning of a force, a power, a fluid that causes sickness, suffering, and death. The following proverb alone expresses much of its meaning: Ni warani-n-kala ko, /28/ ka fa, gnâma si dé t'o la. If the panther (a tyrant as wicked as a panther) says, "Let us kill him, " we surely have no gnâma to set against him (no force or energy that we might set against him as a counterbalance to the force of his gnâma).

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3. *Gnéna* Who Roam the Village and Its Environs

These *gnéna* like especially to sit where paths cross and somewhat resemble the *gnâma*, even though they are different (2). They protect from spells and sorcery, give health and exorcise sickness, and it is not unusual in the morning at daybreak or in the evening just as the sun is about to disappear to see men and especially old women sprinkling a little clear water here and there at a crossing of paths. They are interceding for children and grandchildren or for a member of the family who is sick and lying on his mat, or they are imploring the *gnéna* to protect them from an enemy or an evil spell, or to shelter them from the *gnâma*.

776 782 Although these *gnéna* have no official priest, they nevertheless receive many gifts, and there is no circumcised man who does not feel obliged to make them his small offering, at one time or another. At crossings of paths one throws them preferably flour mixed with water, cowrie shells, milk, hatching eggs, ashes of herbs and plants, gruel, kola nuts, and sorghum cakes. At children's festivals the fodder is thrown to them in greater abundance; the cakes pile up at the entrance of the village (to the great joy of dogs and hens), and the ground is moistened with a light dew of blood (3). On the second day of the drinking bout, which corresponds to the festival of the كبش (sheep), the *soli* girls, who are shortly to be excised, throw them the remains of the *basi k'li* in great handfuls without counting. *Basi k'li* is the name given to the repast provided for the whole village on this

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2. See what I said about the *gnâma* in the first chapter.

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3. All these offerings are made by the order of a sorcerer and are called *saraka*. See what I have said about the *saraka* in Chapter IV, Section I, "Belief in God."

776 day by the soli (those who are to be excised). It is a kind of semolina
782 (very fine couscous called basi) which is eaten with an /88/ extremely
304 spicy sauce of smoked fish. It is called basi k'li because, in order to
262 provide this repast, the little girls are obliged to run from door to door,
clapping their hands, singing and begging (k'li).

Among the invisible wanderers, there is one which is strongly
776 reminiscent of our "werewolf." It is the souroukou, an imaginary
825 hyena, whose supposed existence has brought about a strange practice.
514 Every evening one sees groups of little boys and groups of little girls,
turning aside a little into the bush: they all go in a band to take their
last precautions and attend to the wants of nature -- union is strength
even against the gnéna.

776 Many other gnéna are among this group that roams the village; they flutter in the b'lon, or entrance huts, they live in horrible filth, hung over doors, on the walls, and on the posts that support the terrace roofs, and the only hangings to be seen anywhere are eggshells, heads of millet, fruit pits, and seeds from the bush, which are offered to these friends as saraka. Nor are private huts without them, for the gnéna roll in the ashes of the hearth, snore on the mats, and take the air in the conari (1); there are some everywhere.

[415] 1. The conari is a baked earth receptacle used for water, beer, and cooking food.

Finally, there are gnéna or djiné who are powerful. Without mercy for their enemies, whom they abandon to all kinds of sorcery and evil spells, they are full of both attention and consideration for their friends. They can cause sickness, poverty, and other calamities to descend on a family, a village, or a whole region; but they can also side with them against a visible or invisible enemy; they can protect them, exorcise anything, and grant real blessings to each and all. The characteristic trait of the gnéna, in fact, is not that they can refrain from doing harm, but that they can also do good directly by performing a good act. Some choose to live in a rock, others prefer a knoll or a large tree near the village, and there are those who

778 782 562 /152/ at the foot of the tree under which the initiates shouted and danced all night, they are shown the siri found by the djenfa tjéou (1) and the darotigi, or darotala (2). While these siri (3) are burned, the women dance and sing the praises of the idol.

778 782 The boli have two days of rest a week, Monday and Thursday (4). It is nevertheless permissible to sacrifice to them on these days,

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1. Djenfa tjeou; those who run with heads of the Nama.

2. Darotigi, or darotala: he who rings the bell and precedes the djenfa tjéou with a lantern.

[754] 3. The siri are sacred objects which initiates of siri, the souba, throw here and there in the environs of the village in order to cast evil spells and sorcery on persons to whom they wish harm. Every time the Nama is brought out 20 to 40 siri are found. These small amulets /sic/, made of a little of everything, including trouser buttons, hooks, and belt buckles, tremble and moan while the women watch them. I have been present several times at this performance but have never perceived these tremblings and moanings, doubtless because I am not a Negro.

[304] 4. They rest in the sense that a festival at which they preside, e.g., a circumcision, never takes place on those days.

4. Tattooing

●304 In the third or fourth month, the middle of a little girl's nose and her ear lobes (2) are pierced. This is also the time when every Bambara can be tattooed (3).

The Bambara men wear a tattoo of three parallel lines that start at the temples and end under the chin. In addition to the three lines that furrow their cheeks, Bambara women wear a small horizontal line of one to two centimeters on each cheekbone (4). They make a star on the chin, and their foreheads are all furrowed with little knife cuts, so that from a distance one would say they are encircled by a crown.

In Bani country the women also tattoo their chests, their abdomens, and their lower abdomens, and on the biceps and forearm they wear three lines that meet in a rose shape at the joint. In the environs of Ségou this tattoo is less common, and the majority are satisfied to emphasize their breasts by encircling them with two or three rows of little dots in a semicircle, and they do this tattooing themselves.

The tattooing of the cheeks, the chest, the abdomen, and the lower abdomen among the women of Bani country is performed every

2. A woman can hang from 10 to 12 rings from each ear lobe.

3. Some mothers wait longer before performing this operation on their infants.

4. This mark on the cheeks is especially common among the women of the Bani.

304 seven years and has a strictly religious character (5). The gnéna-sonnaba, surrounded by his council, the gouatigi, sacrifices to the
dasiri; a hen is offered to the shades of the ancestors, the family boli
are /173/ taken out of their dirty skins and sprinkled with blood, and
all the village makes merry. People go in procession to the place
304 where the blacksmith tattooer is, and as long as the operation lasts
533 the women clap their hands, marking time for the blacksmith, who
sings as he operates, and together they join in the chorus.

304 The tattoo, the chief distinctive mark of the people, is made
with a knife having one or two blades. The two-bladed knife cer-
413 tainly makes a tattoo which stands out more and has more detail, but
it also requires more skill on the part of the operator, and, doubtless
for this reason, it is relatively unusual.

314 At present a great many Bambara no longer wear the mark of
their tribe on their cheeks. The Moslems have contributed greatly
to the abolition of this painful practice. Before the arrival of Europeans,
under the reigns of Ahmadou and Madani, very severe punishments
were inflicted on anyone who tattooed himself or had his children
tattooed. One should not think, however, that tattooing was ever a
[187] strict and unqualified requirement; in this connection everything is
entrusted to the decision of diviners and sorcerers, of djiné, or gnéna,
genii, and especially of the family boli, which are consulted and
sacrificed to in order to find out whether or not it is necessary to wear
the marks of the tribe. Thus it is not unusual to find that some members of a family are tattooed and others are not, and that those who are
not tattooed have their children tattooed, while the tattooed refrain
from doing so. This ceremony is carried out every seven years, and
the head of the family may be away when the blacksmith tattooer
comes by, so that the sacrifices do not take place, and the tattooing
of the children is put off until seven years later. When they have

5. This ceremony takes place only once every seven years. The girls are always fairly big when their chests are tattooed.

304 grown up they are allowed complete freedom as to whether they undergo the operation or not. For fear of the pain and of letting a sigh or tears escape them and becoming the laughing stock of the whole village, many children of ten to fifteen years refuse (1).

1. Male children that are not tattooed usually have their ears pierced.

Bambara tattoos are simple and not at all ugly when well done. Although it disfigures some, leaving lumps as big as a thumb on their cheeks and chest, such an accident is /174/ extremely unusual, considering the number of those tattooed. They use no unclean substances to dry their wounds and make them swell, charcoal powder being the only medicine used in tattooing.

304 178 Although this practice is being lost around Ségou, and many families no longer want it for their children, it is nevertheless not on the verge of disappearing entirely and completely. To remove a religious practice from an entire people takes years, centuries, and if a famous sorcerer came and ordered it for those who dispense with it, they would undergo it at once.

Chapter 9

Circumcision in Bambara Country

1. The Importance of Circumcision

881 304 The important act in the life of the Bambara man and woman -- both sexes are mutilated -- is unquestionably circumcision. And whence did they get this custom? Some people settle the question with one word: "It is of Mohammedan origin." I refrain from being so categorical, for the Bambara have always rejected Islam, they have

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defended their gods with spear in hand, and I can find in their circumcision nothing which resembles the religion of the Prophet in the slightest. For the Bambara, circumcision is not only the seal of the tribe, it is also a second birth, the entrance into civil and religious life.

It is the occasion for four great festivals. On the second day of the festival which corresponds to the Moslem festival of the كبش (sheep), those about to be circumcised, who are given the special name of soli, offer to the to-n-déou, or members of the mutual aid society, fla-n-ton, a very fine couscous called basi. To obtain it, they have had to go begging and singing from door to door (kili), whence the name soli kili basi, which is given to this festival. Before going under the knife, all the soli make a vigil of arms. The soli kili basi is followed by the soli si (1), and six days later the da woro is held. When the circumcised boys and excised girls are healed, the drums roll again, /176/ more drinking bouts are organized, and the boloko déou don bo, the coming out of the circumcised, takes place (1).

1. Si, "spend the night."

1. From boli, "hand," "arm" (veiled terms designating the sex organs); ko, "wash"; deou, plural of de, "child," "son"; don, "day"; bo, "to come out."

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During the days between the festival of Ramadan (2) and the

2. Under Moslem domination, the Bambara had to observe the festivals of Ramadan and of the كبش (sheep). They have become national festivals with sacrifices to the shades of ancestors and to the good fetishes. The observances do not include a single Moslem rite . . . .

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1. *Kené*, "public place," "court"; *salo*, "to stroke gently with the hand," "to make gestures."

881 364 326 One after the other the stars of the firmament go out, and only the morning star (*sigi dolo*) still shines, seeming to defy the dawn. Many "*kouyô kouyô*," shouted from a hundred throats, rise from the village, and the square is emptied. Everybody (I mean the women, for the squatting men keep on drinking and stirring the fire) rushes out of the village and forms a circle around the sacred karité tree. With his back against the tree, separated from the crowd by a white cloth, a blacksmith is kneeling rather than sitting and, razor in hand, awaiting the victims. He is calm, sure of himself, and not afraid; after all, it is quickly done. He grasps the foreskin, recites his formula as he spits, and the iron is raised, throws a gleam, and falls. A gunshot announces to the drinkers on the square that there is one more Bambara in the village, and while a woman storyteller /*griotte*/ applauds him, the owner of the god burns a few *nayanka* (2) leaves between two brands, and feverishly and eagerly goes to place the ashes on the kara, the altar dedicated to the shades of the ancestors (3), in the court of the one who was circumcised or excised.

2. A tree whose name in French I do not know.

3. This is the procedure wherever the *Komo* fetish is found. In the circle of Ségou a *Komo* is almost always the one appealed to, and if none is owned in the village, it is brought from a neighboring village for the occasion.

881 Limping, the circumcised go under the sacred trees where the dances in honor of the fetish are held, and that is where they stay

881 until they are completely healed; for it is not until evening, when the setting sun reddens the horizon and takes on its bloody hue that [292] they re-enter the village. From this day on they wear a costume (all yellow if they are Bambara) of trousers, a blouse, and on their heads a kind of handkerchief tied under the chin (4). They pass the time in making mats, singing, striking together gourd disks strung on a stick, and especially in eating, "for they are being stuffed," and in sleeping. /181/

881 But in speaking of the boys, I forgot the little girls! They undress under the tree nearest to the sacred karité. Naked as a worm, ●304 each one when her turn comes runs at top speed with her abdomen to the ground and throws herself into the arms of a woman, also of the blacksmith caste, who immediately cuts her. On a braided platter, [285 415 189] made of fine, pliable grass, the mother or her substitute receives the bloody fragment which will be a grigri, a talisman or good-luck charm for the house, and while the gunpowder speaks, the disabled girl, pretending not to be suffering at all from the loss of her clitoris, goes back to her place, and another replaces her.

881 The session ends with the last girl, and the crowd breaks out in a song of joy and triumph. The mother, the eldest sister, or a [482] serving woman wraps the excised girl in a big white cloth and carries her astride her back to the village to the hut which has been prepared for her (1). This carrying, so laughable in itself (they can walk, even

4. In some villages, instead of the yellow handkerchief the circumcised have a cap with two points. In Bani country the circumcised wear the blouse and handkerchief, or cap, and nothing more.

[621 346] 1. Each village is divided into quarters. The excised girls of each quarter have their hut in that quarter.

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762 has reached him"; -- "djinéou no do, the djiné are the cause of it";
761 -- "a fa gnâma do, it is his father's gnâma"; -- "boli y'a fa, a boli killed him."

Thus, all the sacrifices which are made on the occasion of a death are directed to the fetishes which are thought to be murderers, and if a deceased member of the family or of a family of strangers gets a slight trickle of blood, that is because on the word of a sorcerer he is guilty. When it is thought that the deceased was the victim of poured poison (dounkono) or korti (poison of the fetishes), thrown sorcery, there is recourse to the diviners and sorcerers to ascertain what invisible being must be soothed and what sacrifice should be uttered. If a gnâma is involved, a sacrifice to a fetish is often prescribed to ensure its protection, but to the gnâma itself a plain saraka, with or without bloodshed, is offered. These saraka are seldom made to the Supreme Being Alla; they are offered to the lesser djiné genii that run around the village and like to rest in the da-n-koun in among the gnâma.

3. Respects Paid to the Uncircumcised

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[304] Few honors are rendered at death to the uncircumcised and unexcised; such persons are not really Bambara, for they lack the tribal mark. The head of the village and his council ascertain that the death has occurred and, depending on the order received from the diviners, a sacrifice is offered or a saraka placed. The people of the village come to offer their condolences to the bereaved family, and when the grave has been dug, two or three youths bury the corpse without further ceremony.

The father wears mourning for a whole day, and for at least three days the mother grieves in her hut with a few women friends, her neighbors. A barbaric custom also decrees that if the deceased is an unweaned infant its big toe must be broken, in the presence of its mother, and many fathers do more. They mark it with a knife on the forehead, the nape of the neck, the shoulders, the arms; they cut the upper lip or the lobe of an ear. This procedure always makes a deep impression on a mother, especially if she has given birth when

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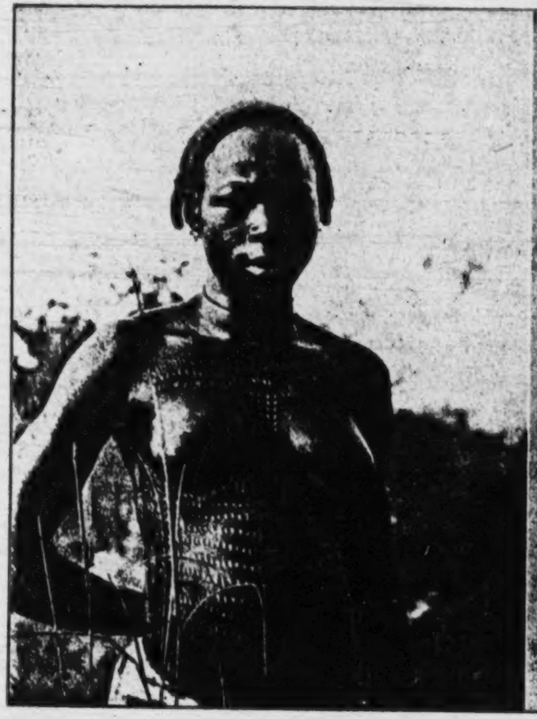
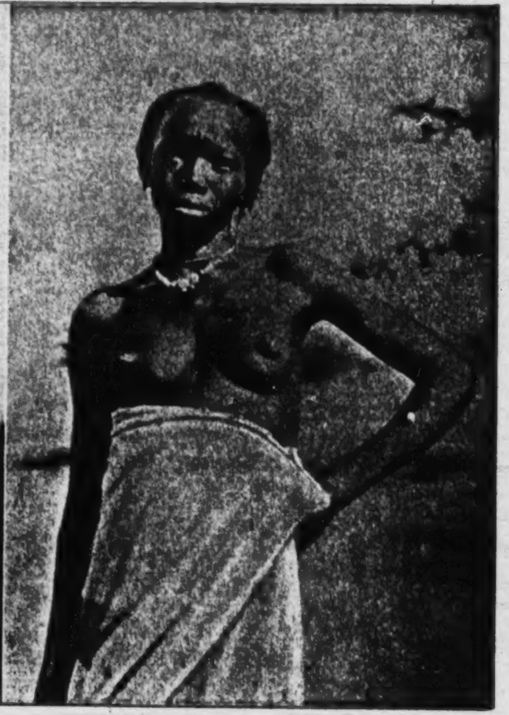
4: Henry--279 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Tattoo worn by the women of Bani country.



Tattoo worn around the breasts by young girls of Ségou and made by themselves.

576 This conjugal union differs clearly from [227] ordinary
614 forms of marriage. In view of the fact that the husband gets a
624 wife without paying a bride price for her, the wife is not given
in usufruct, and therefore she must be treated with the greatest
583 consideration or she may be taken back. The situation can only be normalized if the husband is rich enough to present to the donor a gift equal to or preferably, if possible, greater than the dowry brought by the wife, or he may give a similar gift to the wife (1).

1. Such property is the wife's paraphernalia.

In these situations also, the procedure varies a great deal. The donor may offer a girl from another community and provide her with a dowry. This is what Biton did in order to bind Ngolo to him: Biton gave him a girl designated by the marabouts as one of the elect, and he also provided the girl with a rich dowry.

The significance of such alliances can be estimated only when one has some knowledge of the intentions of the parties involved, especially those of the donor. We shall see one important type in the chapter on Islam, the marriage of Allah.

IV. The common cult (2). The territorial community.

● 311 2. Communities may be united under the
621 protection of the same god. Here we shall
776 study only their union under the protection
794 of the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-siri). Other common cults will be studied in the following chapter, "Brotherhoods."

In the mind of the Bambara, the earth, together with everything in it, is the property of the spirits. As a result, no one may make use of it or presume to settle on or cultivate an unused field without first going through certain ceremonies.

For this purpose, either on his own responsibility or, more often, with the aid of "the one who knows" (don-na-ba), a

311 Bambara seeks the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-
621 siri) or, more exactly, determines where this genie dwells. It
776 may be a spring, a hill, or a rock; often it is a fine tree, in-
794 variably surrounded by a grove or at least with a grove nearby.
Then, always following the same procedure, he finds out the conditions under which the genie will allow someone to settle in his domain in order to live there and cultivate the lands. Thus, a contract is worked out which governs the man's exploitation of the genie's territorial domain. As a result, provided he worships the genie in the manner required, the man [228] will be able to work under the protection of the god. Anyone who has had a share in the contract, even if only through representatives, will likewise profit if he scrupulously observes the conditions.

621 The establishment of a village requires the cooperation of
several communities, each represented by its fa. One of these fa
622 will either appropriate the leadership or be chosen as the rep-
793 resentative or chief of the others. Sometimes he may be merely
794 primus inter pares; otherwise he may have managed to have his
primacy conceded by the rest. It is this chief who treats with the genie in the name of the whole village; thus, he becomes the "high priest of the genie" (nyana-n-son-na-ba) with the essential function of "making the offerings" (son') required by the cult. Furthermore, he administers the earthly domain of the genie and is therefore called dugu-tigi (master of the earth).

To the nyana dugu-da-siri is usually attributed the same dyamu as that of its high priest, just as though the genie belonged to the spiritual family of the priest. This is a result consistent with the mentality of the Bambara.

621 The same mental state accounts for the custom in certain
villages of dedicating a living animal, often a ram, to the
776 nyana dugu-da-siri and believing it to be the god's mount. The
778 animal is allowed to wander freely about the village, and its
[825] mischief is never punished; indeed, the people enjoy caressing
and indulging it. The animal takes on some of the attributes of the genie and is, as it were, endowed with certain supernatural virtues, so only good can come from contact with it.

621 Theoretically, each settlement has only one genie, but
776 actually it may have several, especially if it has been settled by

621 successive groups, each recognizing a genie-protector. In that
776 case, the genie first recognized and worshiped takes precedence
over the others. In any case, social life requires each segment to respect the gods of its neighbors, and this respect carries with it a certain amount of superstitious fear.

● 311 It is evident from the foregoing that occupying and
cultivating land poses certain problems for the settlement bene-
621 fited, and these may be grouped under three heads: the cult of
794 the genie-protector; the exploitation of the land; and the organization of the territorial community.

793 The cult. This is mainly supported by the high priest,
whose principal duty is to "make the offerings" (son) to the
794 "genie" [229] (nyana), hence his title nyana-son-na-ba. He is assisted by the council of fa, one of whom, the syere (follower), may replace him in case of need. The office of high priest is for life and is inherited in the same way as his faya. This continuity shows that the genie is actually regarded as a kind of spiritual ancestor of the priest, as we have seen from the fact that it is given the same dyamu as its high priest.

794 The cult ceremonies are very simple. They consist of
offerings made by the high priest, who at the same time indi-
796 cates to the genie the purpose for which they are being made. The most solemn ceremonies take place when millet is sown and harvested. For these occasions, every worshiper is expected to bring a contribution in proportion to his resources. The kind of gift is not specified; everyone brings whatever he can or whatever he wishes, usually animals (sheep, beef, fowl, etc.), grain, and especially millet beer (dlo).

782 During these general gatherings, from which no one is
excluded, only the high priest and the members of the council
796 enter the sacred grove or approach the genie's abode. There,
778 the high priest makes known the purpose of the sacrifice: to
+ thank the genie for his past favors; to offer him the gifts brought by everyone; and to ask him to continue to protect the community so that its prosperity may be assured. Then the victims are sacrificed, and their blood is sprinkled on the tree trunk or whatever object or place is reputed to be the home of the genie.

782 genie. The same is done with libations of *dlo* or the juice of
796 kola nuts. Since anything offered to the genie is supposed to be
[786] consumed on the spot, an orgy lasting for several days usually
follows.

782 In addition to these two great obligatory ceremonies especially concerned with the exploitation of the land, the god's protection is sought by similar, but much simplified means in all affairs whether they concern the entire settlement (wars, disasters), a particular patriarchal or familial community, or even a single individual. Through the high priest as intermediary, the offering and the request are made for the purpose indicated by the petitioner, who often promises to make a further gift to the genie when his wish has been granted. Vows of this type are made very frequently.

794 The cult of his high [230] priests and of all the im-
portant men of the settlement is tied in with the cult of the
769 genie, obviously a consequence of the fact that the genie is the spiritual patron of the community which honors him; its members are his children and with him form what amounts to a family. So, in line with what happens in a patriarchal or familial community, the territorial community also holds an annual festival for the dead, during which special honor is paid to noted personages, among whom deceased high priests have first place.

● 311 *Exploitation of the land.* The high priest in charge of
621 the cult likewise regulates everything concerning the exploita-
tion of the terrestrial domain of the genie, and in this capacity
423 he is known as the *dugu-tigi* (1), master of the earth. In this
793 office he has the help of the council of *fa*, and in important matters he must follow their advice.

With the help of this council, he allots the land when

1. In line with common practice, I shall henceforth use this title to designate both capacities, the high priest and the master of the earth.

311 the community is founded. His permission is required before
621 anyone may build a dwelling in the portion reserved as the seat
423 of the community; the village is therefore kept within precise
793 limits. In practice, however, everyone builds wherever he
pleases if there is no objection. If there is an objection, the
dispute is settled by the dugu-tigi and his council.

Outside the village proper, the terrain includes fields
423 which, either at the start or during the course of settlement,
621 are allotted in perpetuity to the various fa of the community
by the dugu-tigi in council. Each fa and his dependents have
indefinite use of the same fields, although by law the authority
which assigned them may take them away without being required to justify the act. This use is a kind of usufruct that is
more extensive than that of our law, since the beneficiary may
[425] use the land without restriction, except that he may not alienate
it. The tenant, however, may not use the land in any way that
might be prejudicial to the community as a whole without the
consent of the dugu-tigi and council. For example, such would
be the case if he proposed to give his right of use to an outsider.

Any land not specifically allotted [231] and anything it
produces or contains belongs, theoretically, to the member of
the community who cultivates it. Certain fruits or produce, however, are sometimes reserved for the community as a whole:
the leaves or fruit of the baobab, karite, nété, tamarind trees,
etc.; the fish in certain ponds, watercourses, fluvial zones,
[476] etc.; the game in certain cantons, etc. On the dates set for
these collective enterprises by the dugu-tigi and his council,
the people proceed in a body to gather fruit, harvest the crop,
fish, or hunt. Sometimes each person is allowed to keep what
he has gathered; sometimes all the proceeds are collected for
the dugu-tigi to distribute according to custom. There are also
special regulations governing the extraction of matter or materials from the ground.

621 Organization of the territorial community. The duties
of the dugu-tigi and his council are not limited to directing the
622 cult and regulating the use of land. Anything that happens
within the territorial community concerns the nyana-dugu-da-siri, because the members of the community are his children

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[312]

As for Ton-massa himself, he settled at Kohin (1) and so effectively isolated himself from his subjects that he did not return to Ségou-koro for about a year. He returned then only because as chief he had to preside at the great annual festival which, in his absence, Ngolo had organized. Moreover, having arrived in the morning barely in time to preside over the ceremonies, he departed that same evening for Kohin. In that village he called a general assembly of the slaves and told them that, since he intended to return to Miniankala, his native place, he wanted before his departure a reciprocal oath to be exchanged to unite them forever. He caused his idol, Nko, to be brought in, enclosed in the skin of a black cat, and after having sacrificed a chicken, he said: "Nko, you may kill me if I ever betray the people of Ségou, but also kill the people of Ségou if they betray me."

Kanou-ba-nyouma interrupted: "No! You've no right to take an oath for us; you've spoken for yourself and it's our turn now."

Ton-massa went off to a distance.

Kanou-ba-nyouma sacrificed a chicken and, over the victim's palpitating body, said: "Nko, kill anyone who comes to Ségou to make his fortune and then goes away again. On the other hand, enrich any man who comes to make his fortune and remains."

However, Ton-massa persisted in his plan and departed.

A small escort of a few sofa under Mori-fin accompanied him. He crossed the Bani and halted at Fallo, where he had a stockade built that could protect him until the arrival of the column he had requested from Ségou. Four months passed, however, and the column did not come.

One day Kanou-ba-nyouma called a general assembly of the ton-dyon' and said: "Is there among you a [64] man with enough courage to go after Ton-massa?"

1. He is said to have started work on a canal which was to bring water from the Niger to Kohin (Quintin and Delafosse).

243 classification is based on the distinction between the sorghums of ordinary soils and those of inundated soils. The latter are sown in August in nursery beds in fresh non-inundated ground and are transplanted at the end of the rainy season in land exposed by the receding waters. The yields vary from 400 to 1,200 kilograms per hectare.

[252 Millet is consumed in the form of flour or is used to make a
273] fermented beverage, *dolo*, which is something like weak beer.

Wheat is cultivated in the wadies where the water is shallow from November to February. Cultivation is carried out with or without irrigation in seed holes 25 centimeters apart and 4 centimeters deep, where the farmer deposits a pinch of seed (70 kilograms of seeds are necessary per hectare). The harvest is at the end of March at the latest. The average yields are from 1,000 to 1,500 kilograms. The wheats are generally tender and give excellent flours for bread, but this culture is still in the experimental stage.

Rice is cultivated on 80,000 hectares, of which almost half are in the central Delta (Mopti, Macina, Djenné) which constitutes the true rice granary of the territory. Outside of the Delta, the productive regions are: the upper basin of the Niger (Bamako), the lake and post-lake region (from Lake Débo to Ansongo), the region near Guinea (south of Sikasso and Bougouni), and finally 10,000 hectares of irrigated rice of the Niger Office.

Two kinds of rice are cultivated: one, an African rice (*Oryza glaberrima*) in the Delta, is a floating rice capable of enduring considerable submersion. The other, of Asiatic origin (*Oryza saliva*),[sic] is cultivated in the upper valley of the Niger and in the valleys of the small water c[illegible]es. Lastly, a mountain rice which grows on dry ground must be mentioned.

What characterizes native rice culture is the absence of [30]
243 hydraulic control. It is a rice culture of submersion, thus very
312 insecure. Since 1944 attempts have been made to end these processes of "wild" submersion. In the upper valley of the Niger where the plains are insufficiently and tardily submerged, rice is sown at the beginning of the rainy season, and when it attains a growth of 20 to 25 centimeters, the water is sent gradually into the plain. When the rice is mature, the water is drawn off into the river through overflow outlets. In the Delta, where the rise of the Niger is utilized directly, regulating works prevent the flood from

[sic] [should be *sativa*-Analyst]

243 manifesting itself too violently and afterwards hold back the receding
312 waters. In the Sahel, the arrangements affect the plains bordering the
Niger, where earthen dikes protect the rice from the floods and also
control the tributary lakes where they join the river, holding the receding waters in the lakes, thus permitting transplantation of the rice and preventing the subsiding flood from drowning the plants before harvest. From 1944 to 1949, 101,550 hectares were regulated in this manner in the upper valley, the Delta, and the valley of the Sahel.
243 There is a plan to regulate 331,000 new hectares by 1956. In addition, experiments in mechanical tillage have begun. Up until now two methods of cultivation have been applied.

a. Without burning: the hoed land is prepared in furrows 40 to 50 centimeters apart; the seeding is done in seed holes 25 centimeters apart along the furrows. (1)

b. With burning: the wild grasses are pulled up in March and April and gathered in beds 1 meter wide and 3 to 6 meters long. They are lightly covered with earth and then set on fire. At the end of June the mounds are turned by hoe, and the seeds planted in holes 30 centimeters apart and 4 centimeters deep. Fifteen grains are put in each hole, or 45 to 50 kilograms per hectare. The yields vary between 800 and 1,200 kilograms of paddy per hectare.

To these basic crops are added the following early carry-over crops:

The millets. Fonio (*Digitaria exilis*) is cultivated in the region of Senegambia, and *iburu* (*D. Iburna*) in the central sector of the Sudan.

Maize and banana trees south of Bamako. Maize is the most widespread crop after millet. Nevertheless, some maize is imported
[351] from Dahomey. Banana trees are planted around the huts and form a belt around the villages. They are also planted in the small fields which border the water courses. Large bananas are harvested which are picked green and cooked.

245 Mango trees, recently imported (about fifty years ago), give
177 an excellent yield and are destined to be developed more and more.

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1. *L'agronomie tropicale* [Tropical Agronomy], July-August, 1950. [Ed., *Revue d'agronomie tropicale*, 1951.]

177 order to cultivate peanuts, sunflowers, millet, and cotton. Every
241 three years, the company distributes green manure crops in order to
473 reconstitute the soil's humus. Moreover, the company has created veritable villages to house its technicians and the colonists.

177 Other organizations, such as the Niger Office, have charge
241 of the basic water control of the central delta (dams, large canals).
312 Thanks to the creation of a network of waterways, to the clearing
433 and de-stumping of lands, and to the development of general equipment (processing factories, workshops, stores, dwellings, road network), the end of 1949 saw 11,000 hectares of rice fields, with a yield of 18 quintals of paddy and a commercial production of 8,000 metric tons of husked rice. Six thousand hectares have been prepared either for growing cotton (2,000 hectares), for growing rice for food (1,000 hectares), or for lying fallow (3,000 hectares). These fields
[166] permit the exportation of 360 metric tons of cotton fiber. Twenty-two thousand persons have been settled as colonists. Finally, let us note that the F.I.D.E.S. by its financial support has permitted the development of peanut cultivation in Senegal, of rice in Guinea and the Sudan, of karite in Upper Volta, as well as the creation of several technical schools.

c. Social Consequences

177 This technical evolution has profound repercussions on the
native way of life. We notice the same change in the Bambara
596 peasant as in the Bambara artisan. The large united family which
241 was [78] the cornerstone of agricultural technique tends to split up more and more, even in the regions where the traditional farming methods are still used. The family field, a great deal less carefully tended than in the past, gives way in importance to the individual's field. Moreover, the family field traditionally was at the end of a path bordered by small individual fields where each peasant went to work for himself before and after the collective labor. Today, we see the creation of individual fields in the brush far from the path which leads from the village to the family field, clearly indicating the desire of the individual to separate himself from the large family and to escape the control of the farming chief in order to realize personal benefits for himself, not subject to family inspection.

343 251 which are dried. Then it is reassembled without sealing the pieces together, and as the level of the provisions goes down, the unnecessary sections are taken off. The kitchens are situated to the west of the rooms.

342 361 Arrangement of the huts in a concession. The chief's hut is always to the east, for he must see the sun rise. His hut is often quadrangular and has several rooms. The women's huts are generally round; each has its kitchen situated to the west and closed by a separate lock. Private shower rooms are reserved for husbands and 514 wives. Privy cabinets with two holes, one for urine and one for stool, are stopped up and condemned when they are full.

● 312 Finally, the well is sunk in the middle of the court or else in the immediate proximity of the concession. Water is drawn directly with a calabash fixed to a long rope.

342 Sometimes individual huts are constructed on piles for protection against mosquitoes at night; the only opening is a trap door in the floor by which the hut is entered.

g. Tombs

764 An old custom had the family heads buried in their huts. The Fama were buried in the courts of their fortified palaces, to the northwest. Babies were buried near their mothers' huts, for their return was awaited. At the present time the Bambara are buried in cemeteries following Moslem or animist custom.

767 [103] The brotherhood priests dig the graves; tombs may be individual or collective. Monteil (Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta]) describes a chief's tomb: the vault has the form of a parallelepiped; the lower base is one meter wide and two long, the upper base three wide and two long, and a vertical partition of 1.50 meters forms a right angle with the bases.

In Ouassoulou the custom was to dig a common tomb of several chambers for the whole family. A square entrance about two meters high and two wide led into a narrow corridor that opened on a first chamber reserved for children; another corridor connected the first chamber with a second, larger one reserved for women and for adult males; from this a third corridor led to a last chamber, a smaller one for heads of the family. An oil lamp was placed at the

4: Henry--264   M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910   FA8 Bambara FA8

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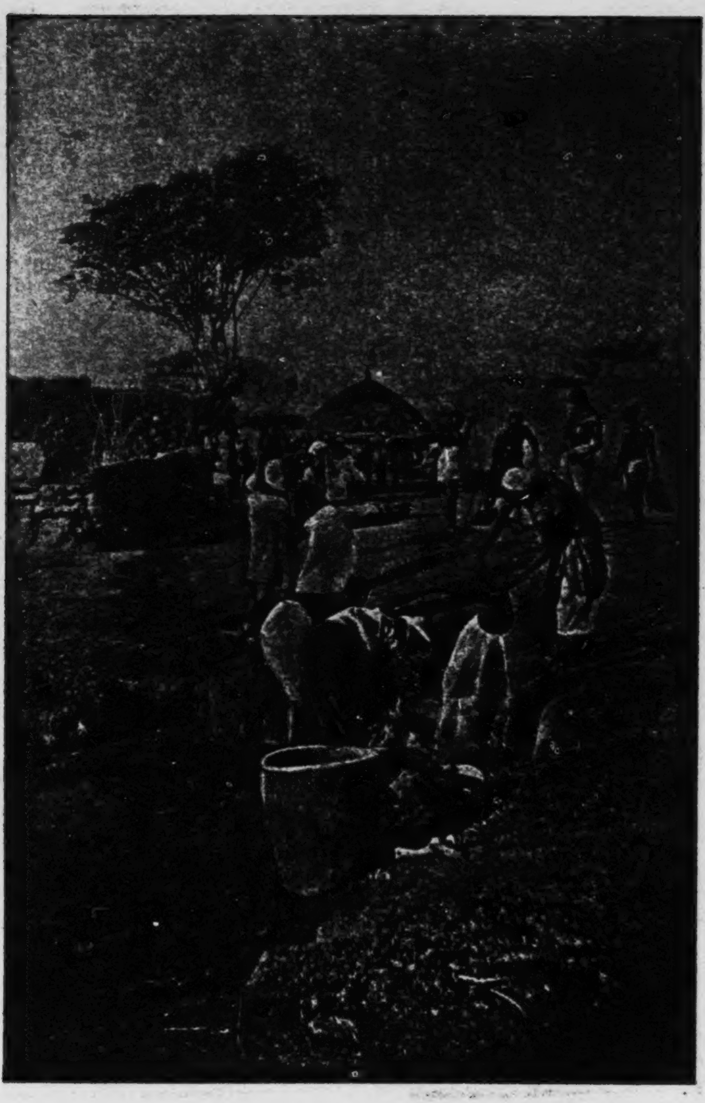

At the edge of the well, in Bambara country.

[19]

CHAPTER 3

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

I. Natural Regions

131 The Bambara live in a region stretching between the 11th and 14th degrees of latitude north and between the 7th and 11th degrees of longitude west. They are grouped around the upper Senegal and upper Niger in the zone of basins bordered on the south by the Fouta-Djallon and the Guinea Ridge. The land is divided into several natural regions.

A. The Upper Niger

133 Framed by the outer ranges of the Fouta-Djallon and the cliffs
135 of the Manding plateau, witness of the Pre-Cambrian shelf, the re-
gion is essentially schistose, with small veins of quartz and chimneys
of dolerite; there are large intrusions of granite to the north 50 kilo-
meters from Bamako, to the northwest and north of Siguiri, and to
the south at the approach to the massif of the Fouta-Djallon. All
the region is rich in gold. Several centers have long been exploited
● 316 by the natives by means of a network of narrow shafts which reach
down to the auriferous seam. The whole region is encrusted with a
shell of iron.

The region of the upper Niger is an immense plain covered
133 with mammilliform hills. The plain rises gradually from the pass of
Bamako to the mountains of the south, broken only by occasional
dikes, such as that of Kouroussa-Kankan. The overall relief is very
simple and monotonous; the local relief is very animated and varied
because of the network of valleys hemmed in by steep cliffs 10 to 12
meters high.

The Niger, fed by the Tinkisso, the Milo, the Fié and, the
Sankarani, reaches Bamako with a width of about 900 meters. It
flows through a plain three to four kilometers wide in a southwest-
northeast direction up to Timbuktu. It undergoes an annual rise
which depends solely on the amount of rainfall. From Kouroussa to
132 Bamako the first rains at the end of April, and then of May and June,
begin to feed the river; the flood period begins in June. At the time

b. Organization of Work

241 621 Work on the land is the only kind of work suitable for free men, for to work the land is to purify it. All agricultural operations [622 are set in motion by the dugu-tigi and are regulated by the fa who [519] assigns tasks by age classes. Each member of the community must work for it every day, except Monday and Thursday, from dawn to about 4:30 p.m. He may be helped, or even replaced, by his children and his captives. The rest of the time he may work for himself in his personal field or in the little fields situated along the water courses and the rivers, which are not periodically redistributed and are considered almost as personal and hereditary property. The fruit of this labor constitutes the personal savings of the community member.

316 ● The exploitation of the subsoil is governed by other rules which we still know only imperfectly. Like the soil, the subsoil be- 423 longs to the master of the land. Iron ore was extracted solely by the [324] blacksmith who paid the master of the land a rent in the form of hoes or axes. To exploit the gold mines, thousands of natives went in family groups to the placers at the beginning of the dry season. [63] The location of the placers was determined by the priests and changed every year. The men dig multiple small holes very close to each other, which may go very deep depending on the depth of the barren layer. When the calabashes of gold-bearing earth are brought up, the women wash the earth. The placers are abandoned at the beginning of the rains after three or four months of exploitation. Before the French occupation, gold was the exclusive property of the Fama and could in no case be the object of commerce. To- [439] day, gold is generally sold at the placers to Syrian, native, or European merchants, who have established veritable shops at the mining centers, shops which contain everything necessary for the miner's life.

463 The exercise of a profession other than the cultivation of the 554 land is reserved to artisans who are accorded the insulting name of nyaman-kala, for only work on the land is noble work. These artisans form separate families in every Sudanese society, which has caused Europeans to call them, improperly, people of caste. They are divided into independent guilds.

575 323 [561] the society during a public consecration which she receives with several others, the group forming an age grade.

After an apprenticeship of seven days, the potters decide upon the date of the ceremony which is celebrated at the firing spot near the altars. Each member provides a hairpin (*bandigi*), which represents her on this occasion, and the skin of a hedgehog. Disrobed in front of the assembled villages, each girl is seated in turn on the altar as an aged woman examines her genitals to verify her virginity and the proper execution of the excision.

/126/ If the young girl is no longer a virgin, she is publicly de-
[831] clared *dangadè* (literally, bastard) and finds herself automatically excluded from the society; she will never be able to receive the potter's title. Otherwise, a proclamation is made immediately to the great joy of the public. If the excision has not been judged
[304] sufficient, the patient is given the title of potter after having submitted to a new operation performed in such a way that the blood runs over the pottery (1).

1. If excision is not possible, the operation takes the form of a wound inflicted with the hedgehog's skin (see p. 243).

575 323 867 An old woman then appears seated before members of the age grade and instructs them. She tells of the origin and history of pottery, apprising them of the difficulties of the craft such as fatigue, burns, etc. She teaches them patience towards the client and enumerates the rules which will have to be observed during their lifetime: to be pure in heart and to hate no one; not to undertake work shortly after having had sexual relations; to work in silence; to respect all taboos in general.

575 323 782 431 She then makes a libation of karite oil on the altar and rubs it on the bodies of the initiates who must run their tongues over the pottery, thus making an oath. Sheep, brought by the initiates' parents, are then killed by having their throat cut over the hearth in the name of the potters while the elders of the society present to the initiates gifts consisting of several pots which they will sell for profit while waiting for their first work. This gift is moreover a sign of adoption.

323 317 784 The utensils are made with clay, *mbogo pasa*, taken from the bottom of the watercourse or along the river's edge; they belong to

323 Faro. These places have as taboos the wearing of indigo and pregnancy.
317 No pregnant woman may approach them without provoking the death
784 of the child she is carrying, thus ultimately impairing the durability
of pottery and seriously harming the society of which she is a member.

An annual sacrifice is offered by the potters at the end of the winter
323 season when, the level of the river having dropped and the banks
796 lowered, they return for the first time to collect the clay which they
need. Dressed in white, they bring out their hoes and the sickle with which they cut the damp grasses used to cover the pots on the hearth during firing, while the head of the society carries the altars. The objects are placed in a pile on a bed of nyama fibers used for separating them from the ground. The throats of two red roosters are cut open over this pile while a prayer is addressed to Faro, requesting authorization to take the /127/ mbogo pasa during the year, and seeking his protection and help for the work of the society's membership.

The potters make an annual offering to their altars on the day their husbands sacrifice on the forges. Immediately after the libations, they come and squat before the forge altar on which they throw some ten cowrie shells. They then go to the ñintin, undress, and present to it their genitals from the front and from the back, this gesture being an indication of their submission to the spirits of pottery which are the same as those of the forge. Still naked, they circle the pile of ashes left from the last firing and light a big bonfire; this fire attracts the bee eaters, tatugu kononi, which circle over the flames. They shoot some down with a sling, cook them, and reduce them to ashes which they mix with karite oil; they rub their bodies with this mixture before purifying themselves by going through the flames. As an offering to the spirits, they then throw pots on the fire which they put out before returning home.

The potters cultivate together a small ritual field in which a fe-
323 male twin sows white peas, tikaninkuru, symbols of their right hand.
244 The produce of this harvest is eaten communally on a mound,
walawala, after an offering of several seeds is made to the altars and tools. A potter whose tools are broken by the fire must go through a purification with the products of this field.

326 The wives of blacksmiths, whether or not they are potters, are
304 skilled in practicing excision on young girls.

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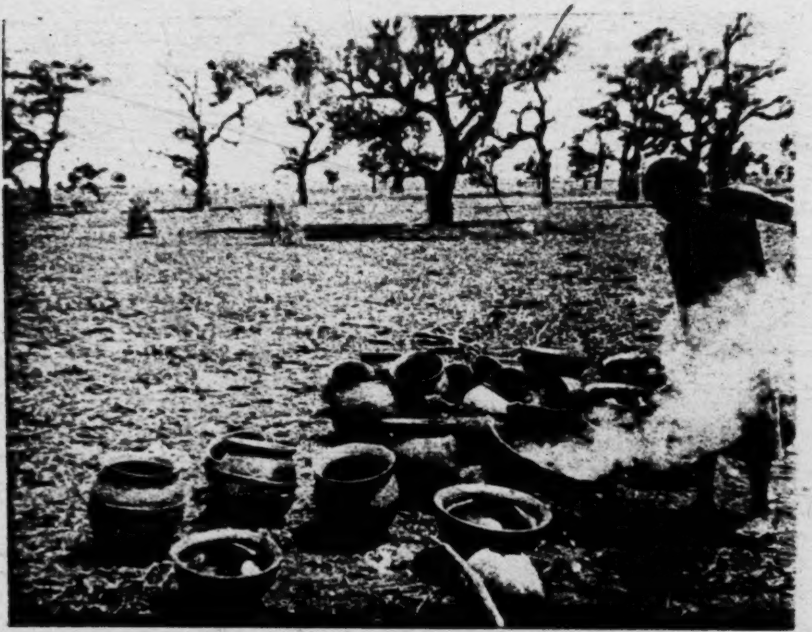

(a) Pot dipping after firing (Konodimini).

Plate IV

(b) Communal anvil, kula, of the blacksmiths (Konodimini).

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Pottery

323 173 The ancient Bambara did not know about pottery. At the time they lived in caverns, they let their meat dry in the sun on the rocks. Next, they manufactured receptacles by hollowing out stones, of which certain unused millstones /125/ seen today are copies. When they had invented fire, they cooked meat by spitting it with skewers of green sunzun wood and by exposing it to flames and live coals.

Later, they shaped and dried vessels of coarse clay, imitating the hollowed-out stones. One of these vessels, which was exposed to the fire in order to cook the food it contained, was observed to have changed color, hardened, and become more resistant. In this way they developed the technology of making pottery at a time when they still had only wooden tools.

323 326 778 575 Since this technology is related to the invention of fire, the wives of the blacksmiths were the first to practice it (1). Today they form a society (tõ) in each village and own many altars entrusted to the care of the head of the society.

The principal altar, the dyo kala, which represents the thumb of the potters, is made of wood carved in the shape of a thumb and engraved with symbolic lines. To learn her trade, each initiate is lightly touched on the head with it. The head of the society spills her blood over it in the case of a broken taboo affecting the society. But its principal function is to be the receptacle for the spiritual forces of the group: upon a member's death, this object, placed upon the corpse, gathers up the soul which escapes from the body.

[252] In certain villages, the pots with holes, ñintin, used for cooking couscous, are placed near the village upon the pile of ashes from the great hearth where the pots are fired (see Pl. IV, a); they also serve as altars at the time when the potters are consecrated.

323 561 575 Since her childhood the potter, following the example of her seniors, practices kneading and shaping little pots, bokofani (literally, little clay pots). After excision at the required age, she joins

1. The different techniques of pottery making were supposedly revealed to the village of Gwondougou (see p. 155) by the Soba spirits of the crossroads.

515
323 the society during a public consecration which she receives with
[561] several others, the group forming an age grade.

After an apprenticeship of seven days, the potters decide upon the date of the ceremony which is celebrated at the firing spot near the altars. Each member provides a hairpin (*bandigi*), which represents her on this occasion, and the skin of a hedgehog. Disrobed in front of the assembled villages, each girl is seated in turn on the altar as an aged woman examines her genitals to verify her virginity and the proper execution of the excision.

/126/ If the young girl is no longer a virgin, she is publicly de-
[831] clared *dangade* (literally, bastard) and finds herself automatically excluded from the society; she will never be able to receive the potter's title. Otherwise, a proclamation is made immediately to the great joy of the public. If the excision has not been judged
[304] sufficient, the patient is given the title of potter after having submitted to a new operation performed in such a way that the blood runs over the pottery (1).

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867 An old woman then appears seated before members of the age grade and instructs them. She tells of the origin and history of pottery, apprising them of the difficulties of the craft such as fatigue, burns, etc. She teaches them patience towards the client and enumerates the rules which will have to be observed during their lifetime: to be pure in heart and to hate no one; not to undertake work shortly after having had sexual relations; to work in silence; to respect all taboos in general.

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431 She then makes a libation of karite oil on the altar and rubs it on the bodies of the initiates who must run their tongues over the pottery, thus making an oath. Sheep, brought by the initiates' parents, are then killed by having their throat cut over the hearth in the name of the potters while the elders of the society present to the initiates gifts consisting of several pots which they will sell for profit while waiting for their first work. This gift is moreover a sign of adoption.

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784 The utensils are made with clay, *mbogo pasa*, taken from the bottom of the watercourse or along the river's edge; they belong to

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1. If excision is not possible, the operation takes the form of a wound inflicted with the hedgehog's skin (see p. 243).

● 323 Faro. These places have as taboos the wearing of indigo and pregnancy.
317 No pregnant woman may approach them without provoking the death
784 of the child she is carrying, thus ultimately impairing the durability
of pottery and seriously harming the society of which she is a member.

An annual sacrifice is offered by the potters at the end of the winter
323 season when, the level of the river having dropped and the banks
796 lowered, they return for the first time to collect the clay which they
need. Dressed in white, they bring out their hoes and the sickle
with which they cut the damp grasses used to cover the pots on the
hearth during firing, while the head of the society carries the altars.
The objects are placed in a pile on a bed of nyama fibers used for
separating them from the ground. The throats of two red roosters are
cut open over this pile while a prayer is addressed to Faro, requesting
authorization to take the /127/ mbogo pasa during the year, and
seeking his protection and help for the work of the society's membership.

The potters make an annual offering to their altars on the day their husbands sacrifice on the forges. Immediately after the libations, they come and squat before the forge altar on which they throw some ten cowrie shells. They then go to the ñintin, undress, and present to it their genitals from the front and from the back, this gesture being an indication of their submission to the spirits of pottery which are the same as those of the forge. Still naked, they circle the pile of ashes left from the last firing and light a big bonfire; this fire attracts the bee eaters, tatugu kononi, which circle over the flames. They shoot some down with a sling, cook them, and reduce them to ashes which they mix with karite oil; they rub their bodies with this mixture before purifying themselves by going through the flames. As an offering to the spirits, they then throw pots on the fire which they put out before returning home.

The potters cultivate together a small ritual field in which a fe-
323
244 male twin sows white peas, tikaninkuru, symbols of their right hand.
The produce of this harvest is eaten communally on a mound,
walawala, after an offering of several seeds is made to the altars and
tools. A potter whose tools are broken by the fire must go through a
purification with the products of this field.

326 The wives of blacksmiths, whether or not they are potters, are
304 skilled in practicing excision on young girls.

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The importance of the wanzo and the necessity of its leaving the person are such that in the case where a child dies uncircumcised, the operation is performed on his corpse. If this is not possible, the circumciser cuts his left ear and says:

"I cut the ear instead of circumcision" (1).

1. Mba klo tikę bolokoli nona bi la ye.

It is buried with the corpse or kept in the paternal home, but the wanzo leaves the child. If the operation was not performed, it would contribute to the formation of a very dangerous nyama, which would be more aggressive even than that of an old man and from which the society would have to suffer.

/188/

Excision

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The operation is performed with a little iron knife by a potter, the wife of a blacksmith. The blade, which is male, represents the sun; the handle, which is female, represents both the clitoris and the moon. The woman protects herself from the wanzo of the newly excised girls by wearing bracelets and charms and by smearing a black salve on her eyes.

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The operation is performed in full daylight at the edge of the village and in the presence of the assembled kinsmen. In certain localities it takes place near the potters' hearth. Each little girl is seated in turn on an inverted pot and is operated upon while prayers are recited. Just as the boy whose foreskin is badly formed is wounded on the thigh, so the girl in the same situation is considered excised if she submits to a test which replaces excision. In the latter case, the woman operator places a hedgehog skin between the girl's thighs and presses these together energetically so as to make the blood run (2).

2. In case the girl is the daughter of a blacksmith, the blood running over the pottery indicates her future role as potter (see p. 169.

The young girls must neither cry nor moan; on the contrary, they sing to exalt the departure of the wanzo.

b. Pottery

323 Pottery is entirely fashioned and fired by the women of the blacksmiths' caste, masters of the fire. The modelling is done in two ways, either by hollowing a mass of clay with the aid of a cylindrical stone (2), or by rolling a cylinder of clay around a mold. The decoration is generally a double line of chevrons imprinted around the neck and the foot by the potter's twisted bracelet. The firing is done in the open air over a wood fire.

c. The Forge

326 Wood, iron, metals in general, are fashioned by the blacksmiths. The blacksmith's workshop and the objects he makes are simple, but they are rich in symbolic representations. "The forge represents the artisan: the furnace is his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red-hot iron is beaten by the hammer, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and the thunderbolt." (3) With his rudimentary tools spread on the ground under a shelter, the artisan forges all farming instruments, the principal one being the hoe. The
412 hoe, [97] according to its shape, is considered to be male or female.
831 The female hoe has a short handle with an ovoid swelling at the end,
[801] into which sticks the point of an iron triangle. The three sides of this triangle are three arcs of a circle; three, symbol of masculinity, represents here the clitoris, the male principle which sustains the
[773 double, the dya, of the woman. (According to myth, it was with the
241] aid of this part of the body that the first being of female sex inaugurated agricultural labors.) The male hoe has a slightly trapezoidal iron part which is attached to the handle in the same manner. The four sides symbolize the femininity of man sustained by the prepuce. Thus,

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2. M. Griaule, Masques dogons [Dogon Masks]. [531]

3. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

326 as well as of silver, on a wooden core. The thrones of the ancient
[531] Bambara chiefs were covered in this manner. Today the golden
ornaments are no longer reserved exclusively for the wives of kings.
[301] Bracelets, pendants, and necklaces are produced in large quantities
in a filigree work in which the Black excels.

B. Ceramics

● 323 The land is very rich in pottery, but Bambara men do not model clay, pottery being a woman's art. Inversely, the women do not work on statuary.

C. Painting

531 The Bambara paint murals on the sanctuary walls with ocher
386 and a millet paste. The priests make these drawings periodically.
The walls of the young people's huts are also decorated with symbolic
motifs: calabash spoons, festoons, ladders with 22 bars, drawings
of hands, lines of chevrons. The young girls come to paint these,
[337] with clay from the river or with a mixture of clay and cow dung.
All these geometric drawings are signs representing not only the
cosmogony, but a subtle translation of all the movements of the
executing artist's soul. They are a veritable form of writing.

D. Music

533 771 Music is a privileged art (1) because it is bound to instruments, that is to say, to materials, to the human body by the voice and the dance, to numbers by the rhythm, to medicine, to divination, and to religion.

534 771 [106] In a report to the French Institute of Anthropology on
February 18, 1948, Mme. G. Dieterlen described the structure and
symbolism of the two Bambara musical instruments, the Sema guitar
and the royal drum.

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1. Griaule, Passim, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the African Arts], Présence africaine.

773 intervention of any kind, they gave birth after drinking water in which Faro had secretly mixed tomato juice. They offered thanks by giving him three or four tomatoes, depending upon the sex of the child.

After the women, the men, too, gave up worshiping the tree. Instead of seeking wood elsewhere, as they had been in the habit of doing, they began to burn the twigs that fell under the balanza in order to maintain their fire, the fire it had given them.

The tree cursed them. They were thus preyed upon by illness and bad feelings: vindictiveness, hatred, jealousy. The wounds they /23/ inflicted upon themselves in order to give blood and regain their youth no longer healed and became infected.

773 A few among them tried to remedy this new state of affairs. Eight
825 of the eldest men went up to the balanza and, in spite of the heat it gave off in order to repel them, they made incisions on their tongues and offered it their blood. The tree was surprised and first gave out a sort of sigh, for it appreciated the sacrifice. Finally it spoke to them and announced the coming of death. But because of their submission and the sacrifice they had consented to, it transformed them into birds, tatugu kononi (literally: little birds of fire). In order to accomplish this, it demanded that they rub their backs against the tree trunk until all their blood was gone. The men cried out in pain in the process, but just as they were about to die, their souls were transformed into birds. Their flesh and skin penetrated into the tree; their bones mingled with the white bark and the marrow became the red fruit which, from that day on, ripened on the tree. Since that time, the "human flesh" which is the wood of the balanza is rarely put to profane use. These first eight elders transformed into birds were subsequently venerated by men (1).

[326]

1. In particular by all blacksmiths. Since their transformation the birds tatugu kononi supposedly live near the balanza and respect a certain number of taboos: they must not separate but must live communally outside of villages. They are responsible for fire; though incapable of lighting it, they have the power, by their very presence, to keep it up or to put it out. A twig of damp

782 /91/ Actually the altars from the region of Ségou originate mostly
778 in Toko, a settlement situated to the south of the town where the king's
326 blacksmiths lived. The ancestor of these blacksmiths is buried in the
rocks which border Toko and from which the stones used as altar are

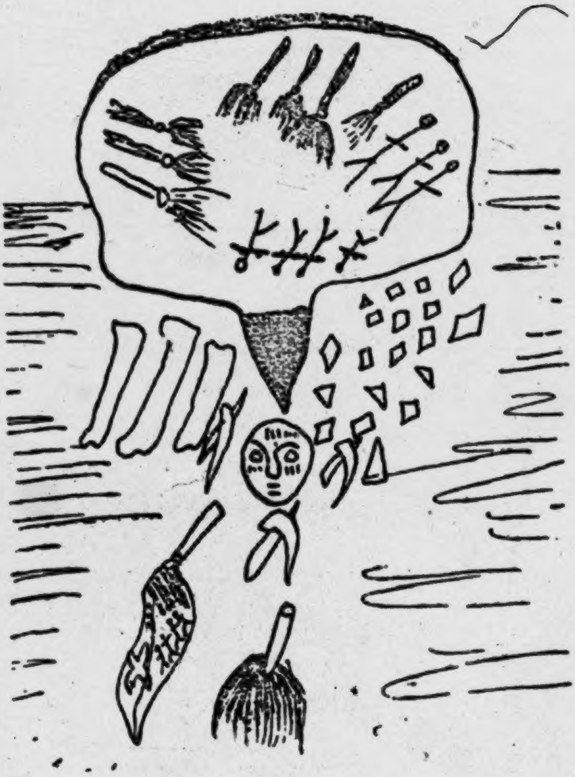

Fig. 5.—Stone altar, fara ba, of Banankoroni, consecrated to ancestors. It is stuck into the ground above the skull and bones of an albino, hoes, and a circumcision knife. The ritual drawing traced during the ceremonies of the renewal of the year represents the torches and the whips of the Kworè, 3 men and 4 women, which recall the number 7, image of the creation (Informant's drawing). [532 769]

carved. If a village chief wants to obtain one he sends a delegate to Toko. This emissary receives from the blacksmith the stone appropriate to the function of the altar and the quality of the person

782 778 [326] requesting it. Thus, a black stone is given to those who have broken a /92/ taboo, a stone of two colors to a stranger, and the red stone "rounded and polished by the ancestors" to those whom one wishes to honor.

The stone altars which are innumerable (both private and public ones) generally represent the ancestors. When they are placed in the fields they receive the sacrifices offered in their name for helping the crops. At the intersection of narrow roads and on the public square, they assure the stability of ancestral customs.

3. The Bambara also sacrifice on manufactured objects which bear the general name of boli (literally, to run) and which are the equivalent of the altars although they are of an entirely different nature than the preceding ones. Their origin is different. To the initiates they originate in the twelfth bangini which gave birth to the day (see pp. 30-31). In the shape of "globules" they were released in space by Faro as he descended to the earth; they were collected by the spirits of the air and of the ground into which some of them penetrated, and were later given to men (1).

173 782 778 1. The popular belief has it that the eight principal boli of the Bambara were brought back from Mecca by the famous Makanta Djigui, a personage whose name is cited in numerous prayers (particularly in the course of the ceremonies of the Komo). L. Tauxier attributes this tradition to Islam influence under the reign of Soundiata's successor, Malinké Kankan Moussa, who made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324 (La Religion bambara, p. 287, n. 3).

The name of Makanta Djigui is cited in the device (burudyu) of the Komo: the chiefs of this important society carry their altars each year to the shore of the Niger near the village of Tikko on the spot where the historical canoe which transported him is said to have sunk.

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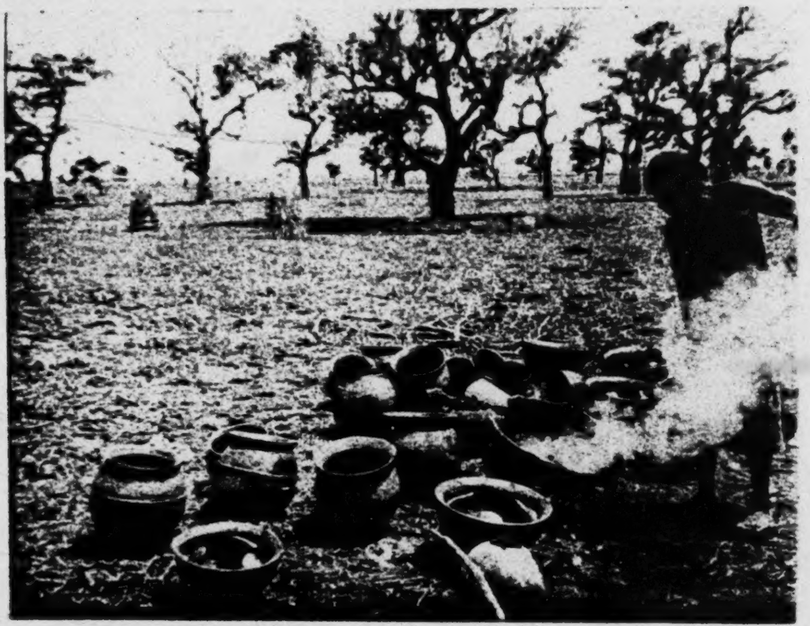

(a) Pot dipping after firing (Konodimini).

Plate IV

(b) Communal anvil, kula, of the blacksmiths (Konodimini).

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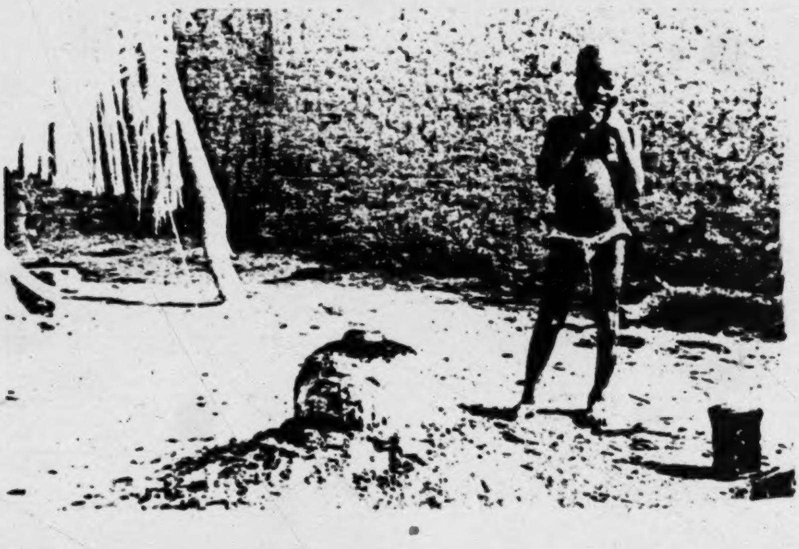

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1. These three plants are respectively: Andropogon (Hyparrhenia) hirtus, Digitaria debilis, Cenchrus catharticus.

before the cultivation of cotton and cereals was known to them, the Bambara worked the soil with wooden sticks around the base of those grasses whose seeds they then sowed. As their stock of tools developed, they began to make the first hoes and axes. In the case of the Mandé Bambara (2) the origin of these tools is linked with the history of the

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2. The names and the origin of tools of the Bambara of the Ségou region are different.

blacksmiths, numu, who form a kind of caste in this part of Africa as in many others. They practice endogamy, maintain joking relationships, senankuya, with other Blacks, and are in charge of certain cults dedicated to ancestors and to Faro (3).

3. On the myth of the divine origin of blacksmiths, see S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara." See also infra, p. 53 n. 1

Before the discovery of metal, ancestors of the present blacksmiths worked with wood, then stone. From then on they bore the name of numu, a term which today is reserved exclusively for the artisans of iron, jirifa numu or farafa numu, according to whether they worked with wood or stone (4).

4. L. Desplagnes mentions the historical aspect of the origin and role of the Sudanese blacksmiths (Le Plateau central nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, p. 110).

The peoples issued from the intermixture of the ou, shepherds (Getules), with the ar, sedentary tribes (Fari), have already been pointed out in earliest antiquity by writers, historians, and geographers who called them Numidians. Salluste tells us that "The Faronsû, in mixing with the

> 113 getules (gne-Toules), formed the nation
> 326 of Numidians.
>
> 564 But according to tradition, these half-breed Numidians, today called Noumous, were the first initiators among primitive peoples of the industrial arts; thereafter the title of Noumous was kept and applied to all blacksmiths."
>
> And in the footnote on the same page: "But in Nigerian countries, this term for blacksmith, Noumou, does not necessarily contain the notion of a metallurgist."

/114/ All blacksmiths said to be of "pure blood," that is to say those who belong to the three families of Fané, Koumaré, and Balo, are descended from the Gwonna, who came from the underground village of Gwondougou and to whom goes the glory of having discovered iron.

According to informants, the word Gwonna comes from gwã, a name usually given to the hearth of the forge, which designates precisely the place from which the ore is extracted and where it is treated. The high furnace is called gwã so. The gwã tuku munu, extracting blacksmith, is the only one able to perform important rites. The word Fané derives from fã, which designates the forge in its entirety. Koumaré comes from kuma, word. It is the Koumaré who are charged [537] with the responsibility of debating in council meetings or in public gatherings. The word Balo recalls the fact that the bearers came to settle in former days on the shores of the Niger, ba.

The Gwonna are senãnku of the other blacksmiths. Moreover, in the villages where they live together with other artisans, they are by right the chiefs of the Komo and guardians of the sanctuaries where the ancestral tools are kept. Only if they fail in their obligation will the blacksmiths belonging to other families assume these duties.

The titles of the Gwonna are linked to the mythical origin of the forge which is under the domination of the Téliko spirits, masters of the air and wind, hence of the bellows and fire.

773 564 326 They inherited them from the eight ancestors who, before the appearance of death, were transformed into bee eaters (tatugu kononi) by the balanza and who received the power to activate or to extinguish fire (1).

1. See p. 43.

The Téliko spirits, jealous of the independence of these new beings, resolved to subdue them and waged war on them. The birds, who had no weapons, bewailed and a Gwonna blacksmith took pity on them; he requested axes, hoes, and arrows from the men of his family and gave them to the birds, receiving in return the promise of revelations which would be useful to him. Having made this arrangement, the birds, armed with weapons, went to meet Téliko at the place called gonya. They used their weapons in a gigantic conflict in which neither adversary could vanquish the other.

/115/ The birds then returned to earth and thanked the blacksmiths by teaching them three secrets necessary to the good progress of their work:

1. How to build their altars by mixing in a panther skin cold water, iron, and a stone, soul of the forge.
2. How to protect from the fire the hands of women potters.
3. How to make and consecrate the circumcision knife.

Since these revelations, the Gwonna venerate these teachers, thus raising the number of their ancestors to sixteen: the first eight transformed into birds who had not the use of speech, and the eight others who received the word from Faro.

564 326 In each village the patriarch of the Gwonna holds the title of kotigi (literally, owner of things). He guarantees the custody of the ancestral tools deposited in a sanctuary and of the ritual objects which belong to the blacksmiths of the village, and which are kept in his home. In addition, he is the only one who may perform the rituals concerning these tools and the purifications.

The important position of the Gwonna family is translated into ritual. Whereas an ordinary blacksmith, after breaking a taboo, must request the intervention of the kotigi to purify himself, a Gwonna simply asks the members of his own family.

564 Every blacksmith is regarded as the holder of an excellent tere.
326 He is well-intentioned, affable, and never hurts anyone. It is easy
774 to make friends with him, to joke with him, even if one knows him
but a short time. The senankuya relationships which he has with other
Blacks also contribute to the cordiality of these ties.

The good tere of the blacksmith is brought into play particularly
[304] at circumcision which is preferably entrusted to a Gwonna. Being
circumcised by a blacksmith causes the wanzo to diminish rapidly,
hastens the healing, and improves the tere. A blacksmith is reputed
to have the power of transforming himself at will into an animal or
a plant. In those places where hyenas are venerated as the animal
[825] protectors of a village (dasiri), they are always considered as the
blacksmith's ancestors who have undergone metamorphosis. (1).

773 The ritual paraphernalia now preserved in each village comprise
564 models of all the tools manufactured by the blacksmiths since their
326 first appearance.
412 a. Wooden tools The craftsmen first used wood, gradually changing
the shape of the objects. From a simple stick /116/ (generally in
sunzun) (2) or from a rough-hewn block, they gradually made more
perfect tools, obtaining the shape desired by rubbing and polishing
on rocks.

773 The first weapon used in hunting was a throwing instrument in the
564 shape of a boar-spear, the semenkala (from kala, handle, Fig. 9, A).
326 Hewn from one piece, it comprised three distinct parts: (1) the
411 bulonda; (2) the semenu; and (3) the koli (literally, hook). Men
threw the object with all their strength at the pursued animal or else
they dug into the earth where their prey was hiding with the pointed
end (semena) which was often poisoned with a viper's venom. The
weapon was the object of blood sacrifices carried out on the koli
and destined to increase its strength.

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1. Particularly in the village of Konodimi, situated 21 km. to the southwest of Ségou.

2. Diospyros mespiliformis. The wood of this tree is very hard.

773 The first agricultural tool was the *yirewolo* (literally, noble, Fig.
564 9, B), thus named because of its antiquity, *mogokoroba* (literally, old
● 324, person, ancestor).
41 b. *Stone tools* Later, craftsmen learned to use stone. They used
[172] neolithic axes called "thunder stones" (1) which were used as scissors. Those of the Gwondougou were at all times famous for their solidity. The craftsmen worked together and when they had rough-hewn their models, certain individuals among them were delegated to sharpen these by rubbing them on a rock.

The *farakun* (literally, stone head) (Fig. 9, D) was the first axe the handle of which was invented by an artisan who, having poisoned the sharp edge of his tool, wished to try it out on a tree. He sank the stone into a young tree trunk with the idea that the leaves would dry up of themselves. But he died without having ascertained the result. Later a passerby, having tried in vain to remove the stone from the tree, cut the wood above and below it, and in handling this new tool, was surprised at its efficiency. The use of the hafted axe spread among men who utilized the fiber of the *nyama* to tie the stone to the wood. In addition, the stone could be separated quickly from the handle and used as a knife to cut meat or bones. The handle was used as a pointed stick with which to dig in the ground and to attack animals.

It is probable that hafting was also applied to wooden hoes made in two sections and used /117/ for a long time in areas where there was no hard stone. In fact, a myth concerning the discovery of the cultivation of cotton, which preceded that of cereal grains, mentions the fact that men used to take their handles home, but left the ends of their hoes at the crossroads each day in honor of the local spirit.

c. *Iron tools* Finally, the Gwonna discovered iron and developed the science of metallurgy (2).

1. The Bambara, like other Blacks of the Sudan, attributed divine origin to certain neolithic axes (see p. 71. It would seem that a great many primitive tools had been found by them in the area at the time of their arrival.

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> 2. The Blacks consider that the discovery of iron and metallurgy are due to the Gwonna. It is, however, not impossible that this technology was imported by craftsmen who came from the Mediterranean.

At a time when the men had left the village of Gwondougou, taking their altars with them, two-girls left their home and went to live with two artisans of the Fané and Koumaré families.

[532]

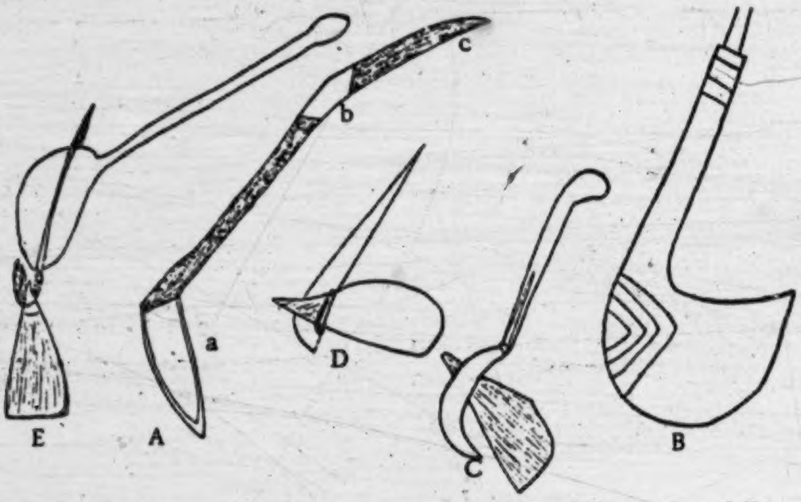

Fig. 9 —Weapons and tools of wood (A and B), of stone (C and D), of iron (E) of the ancient Bambara. (Drawing by an informant).

When the men returned to the village to get some hard stone which they would like to use, they were very much troubled not to find their girls. They dug the ground to search for them, thinking that they had been buried, since men in those days lived in laid-out underground holes. In the course of this work they discovered some rocks which were hitherto unknown to them and which are called farabele. The men thought these rocks beautiful and wished to use them. When placed in fire they were changed and became so hard /118/ that the hammers with which the men attempted to shape them split. The pieces of irón were then used as projectiles to replace the stones of the slings. But the blacksmiths, who had abducted the young girls and who had returned to the village with their wives, saw the new substance and suggested the idea of making axes out of it.

773 The first forged tool, the *kongobwona* (literally, to abandon hunger),
564 is still used by blacksmiths today as a ritual axe (Fig. 9, E).

326 It is made up of a wooden handle terminating in an enlargement
412 which forms its bulk, and pierced by a bent iron rod which in turn holds the cutting edge (*farabye*) of the axe proper. The handle is very long, allowing the man to work without bending over.

The tool justifies its name for it brought prosperity to the craftsmen. The symbolism of the different sections shows this: the enlarged part of the consecrated model, which each blacksmith keeps on his altar and which is the object of regular rituals, is hollowed out and holds money, millet, and copper. The iron rod which pierces it represents at its lower extremity the tongue of the oldest of the Gwonna, and at its upper extremity that of the youngest, thus recalling the actions and the words of those who discovered the metal for the benefit of all.

Later, blacksmiths manufactured other models of iron axes and hoes, copying those previously used, but reducing their size.

Each day the end piece of the wooden hoes was abandoned at the crossroads after they had been used in honor of the local spirit. The worker kept only the handle and carved a new tool for the following day. The handles of hoes and axes were considered to be people because they were impregnated with the vital force of those who held them. The farmer left the cutting edge (of stone or iron) in his field and brought home the handle which he placed on his mat at night.

[782] Weapons and tools were the objects of regular sacrifices. The handle was removed and the blood of victims would flow first into the hole used to secure it, then on the cutting edge, while the officiating person recited a prayer.

773 Today, the assemblages of ancient tools are called *makorobaw ka*
564 *minew* (literally, tools of the great ancestor). Considered as the
326 most respectable and precious /119/ testimony of their civilization,
412 models of each object are kept in sanctuaries called *makoroba so*
778 (literally, house of the ancestors) which are generally natural caves or holes dug in the ground, reminiscent of primitive habitations. These tools are identified with the ancestors who used them and who were, long before the organization of religious societies, the object of a regular cult. That is why, in deference to this fundamental hierarchy, they are presented to the circumcised in front of the family altars (1) at the time of the initiation of the Komo. Similarly, they

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1. Particularly in the village of Konodimini in the Ségou region.

773 564 are removed from the sanctuaries, honored, and replaced before the
324 Komo altars during the agricultural and funerary rituals; to fail to ob-
412 serve this rule would constitute the breaking of a taboo and entail
778 the most serious disorders.

In the course of the annual ceremony consecrating the dead, these tools are carried to the cemetery and receive as many victims as do the dead, for they represent the ancestors.

The kotigi brings them to the same place on two other occasions: during the agricultural ceremonies carried on after the growth of the ear of corn and after threshing the harvest. Axes and hoes are presented one by one at the tombs of the dead and then, reunited in the center of the cemetery, each of them is used once to cut a branch or to dig the soil. This ritual gesture recalls the use which the ancestors made of them.

The Forge

326 826 The blacksmith establishes his workshop under a shed, usually located in one of the squares or at the entrance to the village. It is the simplest of its kind and involves a minimum of equipment. The forge represents the craftsman: the furnace his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red hot metal is beaten with the hammer, a replica of the gosilande, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and thunder bolts.

326 778 The altar of the forge, sometimes situated to the west of the hearth, contains blackened hoe, pickaxe and axe handles, coal (fininkoro, literally, old coal) ashes kneaded with clay (buguri, literally, ashes of the hearth), all of which belonged to former owners, and finally an axe kongobwona called "mother of the altar," a smaller replica of the ancestral axes.

The bulk of the wood which holds the iron hooks and the blade /120/ is hollowed out and forms a kind of storage divided into three compartments.

The upper one contains money so that whatever happens, the blacksmith will have means to live.

In the central compartment are placed copper and iron, metals which the blacksmith works, as well as water, basic element and preferred seat of Faro, master of the word.

326 778 243 The lower compartment contains millet from a field called *kongobwona foro*, reserved for the needs of the cult of the forge. This land is placed under the guardianship of the patriarch belonging to the Gwonna family, and its upkeep is assured by the community. The seeds are given by each blacksmith to the old man who sows them himself. The work of cultivation and threshing is done communally. The millet is stored in the old man's granary and each blacksmith receives a share. This share is not eaten, but is put aside. From time to time the artisan takes a few seeds which he places as an offering on his altar, and which remain for a time in the compartment reserved for them; then they are considered to have been eaten by the axe and are removed and replaced by others. Part of the millet is kept as seed for the following year.

326 778 789 Each compartment is open and the blacksmith may insert his fingers; if his earnings are insufficient, he rubs his body and tongue with the hand which he has just dipped into the pocket containing money; the price, set by the spoken word, will not be questioned by the client. If he goes to work in his field, he places his hand into the millet each morning to draw upon the strength it contains and to improve the results of his agricultural work. If he burns himself while working at the forge, he dips his fingers into the third compartment and cools himself in Faro's water. It is this same water which a young artisan must drink at the beginning of his apprenticeship.

326 778 776 The triangular iron, *farabye*, which constitutes the axe proper is placed under the power of three spirits belonging to the group of air spirits: A gayru who revealed iron to men; Tengu who taught them Faro's supremacy; and Gullé. The first two are the masters of the bellows and direct the work as a whole; the third does their bidding and teaches men the technology of ironwork (1). When the owner of the altar dies, the /121/ axe is removed and placed in the village sanctuary where the ancestral tools are kept. But the remaining objects are inherited by the son. [428]

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1. The spirit would have refused to teach the blacksmiths the working of copper and gold, as these two metals belonged to Faro who reserved for himself the right to use them. Since iron was black he had abandoned its use to the spirits of the air.

● 326 778 In addition, in each blacksmith's home, a replica of the kongobwona axe preserved in the common sanctuary, constitutes the family altar, passed on from father to son, on which the interested party offers to his ancestors regular or occasional sacrifices. Sometimes it also possesses a small iron plate upon which is engraved a drawing representing the creation and in particular the "spirals of the creative spirit at the cardinal angles, " the multiplication sign, etc. The angles of this object are drawn up to indicate that the world is lifting itself up, awakening, and constantly reviving.

The forges of the village artisans are generally grouped in a public square, around a large anvil, kula, held in a wooden piece forming its base and buried deep in the ground (Pl. IV, b). In front of this communal anvil judicial affairs are settled, such as marriages or broken agreements; before it vows are pronounced and solemn promises are made to the boli. It is also here that the purifications for breaking taboos take place.

The blacksmiths are also communal owners of a certain number of ritual objects which are usually kept by the kotigi and brought out for religious ceremonies. Among these, the nege dyun (literally, mother of iron) (1) is a lump of iron forged in the likeness of the semẽkala (see Fig. 9, B), on which the kotigi draws small lines. Some of these lines represent the heads of each of the Gwonna blacksmiths; others, well separated from the first, recall the heads of the artisans belonging to other families. The whole symbolizes the total number of blacksmiths in the village. The nege dẽ (literally, son of iron) is a ritual bell also decorated with lines representing members of the blacksmith families.

After it has been made, the nege dyun is placed in the sanctuary of ancestral tools. It remains there two or three months in order to become saturated with the strength of the ancestors and from time to time receives the blood of sacrifices performed at night. It is after this period that it is placed with the nege dẽ in the kotigi's home.

Each artisan offers individual sacrifices on the kongobwona axe kept in his home as well as on the objects /122/ contained in the altar of his forge: at the same time his tools receive libations of boiled millet mash.

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1. Dyun means "mother" in archaic language.

● 326 778 796 In addition, each year the blacksmiths join together and offer a sacrifice on the communal anvil. All tools are placed around it, overflowed with the blood of the victims.

An annual ceremony which also brings the craftsmen together has the purpose of asking Faro to help in the cooling of the wrought iron and to give the water into which the iron is dipped the strength to fulfill its function. Assembled before the *kotigi*'s forge, they bring a certain number of tomatoes which are first presented to the altar, then to the ancestral axe *farakun* on which each one in turn licks with his tongue.

Keeping their mouths closed so as not to let the strength thus gathered escape, they all walk toward the river, while one of the [534 533] participants strikes up, on the ritual bell (*nege dẽ*) with a lump of (*nege dyun*), the rhythm called *klide fo* (literally, rhythm of the sons of the testicles) (1) addressed to the one-arm blacksmith, the *bolokuruni*, Faro's companion. Once on the bank, the *kotigi* undresses and throws himself into the water. When re reappears on the surface, all the participants open their hands the better to seize the strength of Faro and his companion, which the man is supposed to bring back. They rush to help him dress and the one who succeeds in touching him believes he receives Faro's special favors.

The tomatoes are then squashed into a gourd and the pulp is thrown into the river at a deep spot where each participant draws water and drinks to communicate with Faro. The group then returns, bringing back in the gourd a little water into which each one dips his individual axe, starting with the patriarch who, at the end of the ceremony, drinks up the rest.

326 778 842 If a woman is sterile, she asks the help of the three spirits protecting the forge as they have the reputation of being very prolific. Without her presence, the blacksmith crouches before the altar with his hands spread out, his head lowered, and prays. The woman must then swear to respect scrupulously the taboo of the invoked spirits, which is to pronounce their name. She may also ask the blacksmith to implore the help of the ritual ashes of the altar.

[522] 1. *Kli dẽ*, "son of the testicle, " is one of the ritual jokes addressed to the blacksmiths by their *senãnku*.

326 784 *Taboos* Provided with vital force and a soul, *ni*, the forge, a living being, is surrounded by taboos aimed at protecting its material and spiritual integrity.

These taboos, numbering seven, are peculiar to the forge and to the altars which it contains; they concern not only the /123/ blacksmiths, but also his clients, the passers-by, whatever sex they may belong.

[252] 1. None may cook meat on the fire of the forge; it would be equivalent to "eating the meat of the Soba spirits." To break this rule deprives the fire of its strength and causes the abdomen of the person breaking the taboo to swell (1).

> 1. It is said of the culprit: *soko dyeni bala, fa ta sababu yalla*: "he is full of meat cooked on the fire of the forge."

2. No insult may be uttered near the forge, particularly if it is of a sexual nature (2). This would be equivalent to insulting the fire;

> 2. *Neni teke fã nda la*: "Insults are not to be spoken at the door of the forge."

the flame would waver and, despite the bellows, no heat would rise from the hearth.

[201] 3. The sole of the foot and the palm of the hand are never presented to the fire, for the forge is alive and just as these same gestures made towards another human being would bring about physical disorders, so the various parts of the forge are vulnerable and may break (the hammer or anvil) or tear (the membrane of the bellows) (3).

> 3. *Se ndege tere te jira fa na*: "The *tere* of the sole of the foot must not be presented to the forge."

4. Any quarrel or misunderstanding disturbs the forge, upsets it, and harms the work (4).

> 4. *Dadyuguya, filibatya, kunasirinlenya, konodyuguya te kę fã nda la*: "Meanness,

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hypocrisy, humiliation, and cheating
are not done at the door of the forge."

5. Envy, jealousy, and ill humor are generally bad for the blacksmith who loses his "turn of the hand." He must "have a pure heart" (1).

1. Numu te keleya note i bolo na tye:
"The blacksmith must not be jealous,
otherwise his hand is spoiled."

6. A mirror must never be brought near the forge; it would take hold of its soul which resides in the axe at the altar (2).

2. Dugalle te gere fã na a kanana; ka fã
ni tà: "The mirror must not be brought near
the forge; it will take the soul from the forge."

[834] 7. Sexual relations near the forge prevent its functioning (3).

3. Noa te gere fa nda la: "No obscene
action may take place near the door of
the forge."

Breaking the taboos of the forge is equivalent to attacking the virility of the blacksmith, for the bellows are his testicles. Thus the artisans present themselves naked before the culprit to shame him; he is seated on the communal anvil and water in which large millet (keninge) has been soaking is poured over his head to purify the instrument (4). [783]

4. If the fault is irreparable, the kneeling chief crushes three grains of large millet (keninge) on the anvil, a gesture which symbolizes the death of the culprit whose name he pronounces at the same time.

326 783 /124/ The affected owner then proceeds to reconstruct his forge. Having taken a piece of charcoal, a piece of iron, a piece of leather, and his tools, he goes to the *kotigi* to ask him to perform the necessary purifications. In the presence of the parents gathered around the forge and in front of the culprit, the *kotigi* officiating alone, crushes the iron, leather, and charcoal, and then goes to fetch the *kongobwona* axe kept in the sanctuary of ancestral tools. He places all this before the altar facing the east, and recites the following prayer over a gourd filled with water, which he holds in his hands:

"You forge, ancient thing, you belong to us, to us Gwonna; so and so has broken his taboo, I am his *senãnku* and am apologizing to you for this deed. I have said: forge; I have said: blacksmith of Gwondougou" (1).

1. *E fã*, *fẽ koro*, *e ye an gwonna ta ye*; *kari macina ye tnę tyẽ*, *ne ye senãnku ye*, *nye delili kę a ko la*; *ngo fã*; *ngo gwondugu numu*.

The axe is then washed in water to which has been added some earth taken out of the hut. Next, the officiator completely demolishes the tainted forge and rebuilds it with the mud thus obtained while one of the Gwonna witnesses keeps a little of this earth in a piece of cloth as a testimony to the reconstruction.

The blacksmith slits the throats of two roosters over the new forge while the ingredients groundup by the *kotigi* are placed on the altar. The following day, accompanied by his parents, he goes to ask the chief of the Komo to proceed with the purification. The members of the society meet at his home and the masker whistles into the forge to chase away ultimately the miasmas provoked by the breaking of the taboo. The fowls brought by the participants are sacrificed on the forge and all join in drinking beer offered by the interested party. The following day, the chief of the Komo calls for the latter's wives. Each in her turn, they place their heads on the anvil, an act which chases away the *nyama* which they have been concealing since the offense was committed, and then leave on it, cowrie shells and kola nuts, as an offering.

Pottery

323 The ancient Bambara did not know about pottery. At the time they
113 lived in caverns, they let their meat dry in the sun on the rocks. Next, they manufactured receptacles by hollowing out stones, of which certain unused millstones /125/ seen today are copies. When they had invented fire, they cooked meat by spitting it with skewers of green sunzun wood and by exposing it to flames and live coals.

Later, they shaped and dried vessels of coarse clay, imitating the hollowed-out stones. One of these vessels, which was exposed to the fire in order to cook the food it contained, was observed to have changed color, hardened, and become more resistant. In this way they developed the technology of making pottery at a time when they still had only wooden tools.

323 Since this technology is related to the invention of fire, the wives
326 of the blacksmiths were the first to practice it.(1). Today they form
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a society (tõ) in each village and own many altars entrusted to the care of the head of the society.

The principal altar, the dyo kala, which represents the thumb of the potters, is made of wood carved in the shape of a thumb and engraved with symbolic lines. To learn her trade, each initiate is lightly touched on the head with it. The head of the society spills her blood over it in the case of a broken taboo affecting the society. But its principal function is to be the receptacle for the spiritual forces of the group: upon a member's death, this object, placed upon the corpse, gathers up the soul which escapes from the body.

[252] In certain villages, the pots with holes, ñintin, used for cooking couscous, are placed near the village upon the pile of ashes from the great hearth where the pots are fired (see Pl. IV, a); they also serve as altars at the time when the potters are consecrated.

323 Since her childhood the potter, following the example of her
561 seniors, practices kneading and shaping little pots, bokofani (literal-
575 ly, little clay pots). After excision at the required age, she joins

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1. The different techniques of pottery making were supposedly revealed to the village of Gwondougou (see p. 155) by the Soba spirits of the crossroads.

323 Faro. These places have as taboos the wearing of indigo and pregnancy.
317 No pregnant woman may approach them without provoking the death
784 of the child she is carrying, thus ultimately impairing the durability
of pottery and seriously harming the society of which she is a member.

An annual sacrifice is offered by the potters at the end of the winter
323 season when, the level of the river having dropped and the banks
796 lowered, they return for the first time to collect the clay which they
need. Dressed in white, they bring out their hoes and the sickle with which they cut the damp grasses used to cover the pots on the hearth during firing, while the head of the society carries the altars. The objects are placed in a pile on a bed of nyama fibers used for separating them from the ground. The throats of two red roosters are cut open over this pile while a prayer is addressed to Faro, requesting authorization to take the /127/ mbogo pasa during the year, and seeking his protection and help for the work of the society's membership.

The potters make an annual offering to their altars on the day their husbands sacrifice on the forges. Immediately after the libations, they come and squat before the forge altar on which they throw some ten cowrie shells. They then go to the ñintin, undress, and present to it their genitals from the front and from the back, this gesture being an indication of their submission to the spirits of pottery which are the same as those of the forge. Still naked, they circle the pile of ashes left from the last firing and light a big bonfire; this fire attracts the bee eaters, tatugu kononi, which circle over the flames. They shoot some down with a sling, cook them, and reduce them to ashes which they mix with karite oil; they rub their bodies with this mixture before purifying themselves by going through the flames. As an offering to the spirits, they then throw pots on the fire which they put out before returning home.

The potters cultivate together a small ritual field in which a fe-
323 male twin sows white peas, tikaninkuru, symbols of their right hand.
244 The produce of this harvest is eaten communally on a mound,
walawala, after an offering of several seeds is made to the altars and tools. A potter whose tools are broken by the fire must go through a purification with the products of this field.

326 The wives of blacksmiths, whether or not they are potters, are
304 skilled in practicing excision on young girls.

852 304 "the unknown in creation" (see pp 23 and 24), recall man's existence in this state. Consequently he is conscious of the unknown and has the possibility of apprehending it. These scars act upon the tere of the child and give him at the same time strength, courage, virtue, as well as the strength to penetrate the knowledge of the invisible (1).

[842] 1. They may be redrawn at the root of the nose of an adult who has despaired of having any children, or on the thigh of a woman who wishes to be fertile. These scars, drawn at birth, are not the only ones which the Bambara wear. See S. de Ganay, "On a Form of Cicatrization among the Bambara."

852 553 326 In a blacksmith's family, the name is given near the paternal forge. In the presence of all the village artisans, the kotigi shaves the head of the newborn while an elder prepares seven small sticks, over each one of which he pronounces the name of an ancestor. The kotigi, whose eyes are blindfolded, pulls out in succession three sticks from the group; the third determines the name which he immediately proclaims. While the women chant, the father removes from his altar the kongobwona axe as well as the other ritual objects. The throat of a sheep is cut over all these objects while a prayer is recited. The newborn's head is rubbed first with the axe, then with shaved off hair saturated with sacrificial blood. This gesture introduces the child into the family group. Next he receives the scars of the blacksmiths.

Circumcision

304 561 Whereas in former times circumcision was mandatory and performed upon young men (about twenty years), it is now practiced at an early age if the parents are wealthy enough to afford the expenses involved.

/180/ Because of this fact, a child of eight years may be circumcised with an adolescent of sixteen to eighteen years, whose parents are poor and have only slowly accumulated the articles necessary for the ceremony. These two boys will belong to the same age grade (flã), and will be comrades (flani) all their lives, having the same rights and duties. Age thus has a restricted role in social relations.

304 throughout the seclusion, the cap itself guaranteeing protection of his
292 head against the rays of fire from the fifth sky, koblẽnkaba (see Fig.
14).

Seven large black dots, vertically disposed, represent the child, 3,
304 and his dya, 4, as well as the man, 3, which he will later become, and
292 his future wife, 4. They also insure his protection from east to west.
531 The two other dots insure it from north to south. The cross of small
dots recalls the sumangolos, the "realization of the world" (1) and the
purification obtained after the operation and the loss of the wanzo. Eight tassels (Faro's number) are placed on the cap, whose fringes were spun by a grandmother and are sewn on to "attract the forces of space." A ninth at the top is blackened with the spirit's earth. With his head thus covered, the circumcised boy is placed in the protective and purifying light of Faro. To operate upon a child without putting the cap on him would in fact amount to "bowing down before the acts of Mousso Koroni."

On his part, the blacksmith-circumciser makes preparations for the
304 operation, the essential instrument of which is a knife called boloko
326 kumba moru (literally, knife head, mother of the circumcision).
413 He himself has forged it and carries it in a small leather sheath hung
from his hip (see Fig. 15) (2).

The handle is slipped into a sort of iron sheath closed at one extremity called kurukun (literally, ball head) and open at the other called sukala (literally, sorcerer's handle). It is forged from one piece with the blade dyomuru fala (literally, orphan of the knife) and called "without pity" in archaic language.

The knife and its handle on the one hand, together with the metal sheath on the other, symbolize the person of the circumcised boy and the foreskin which is to be removed.

1. See p. 56, Fig. 4.

[582] 2. The endogamy among blacksmiths is attributed to their role in circumcision and to the fact that their tools, especially this knife, are impregnated with the wanzo of the adolescents.

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Before the operation, the blacksmith washes the handle, an act which parallels /182/ the washing of the penis, and draws on the blade ritual designs either in charcoal or with boiled millet (1).

1 1. Some artisans have, once and for all, engraved the ritual designs on the blade.

The three figures če mani saba (literally, three little male persons) represent the first three circumcised men (Gwonna, Gwondo, and Gwonkè) who belonged to the blacksmiths' families at the village of Gwondougou. Every descendant of these ancestors must be circumcised like them. In making the drawing the operator says:

"Gwonna, Gwondo, Gwonkè, you have discovered iron and you withstood the pain (of the first circumcision), you feel shame neither by night nor by day; our feet are placed in your footsteps; the iron did not shame you, let it not shame us; it is the will of Faro...attack, attack, attack" (these last three words are addressed to the knife)(2).

2. Gwonna, gwondo, gwonkè, aw ye neke damene,
ka neke gale munyu, aw ma malo šu ani kle,
an se daledo an se danola, neke maw malo a ka
na an malo, faro hakili do, šu šu šu.

The four figures, muso mani nani (literally, four little female persons), are the first four excised women, the inventors of pottery, who were the wives of these blacksmith.

The bird is the tatugu koroni, the incarnation of the eight ancestors of the blacksmiths. It recalls that circumcision is painful, hard, hot, comparable to the effects of fire, and that it is necessary to labor and suffer in order to withstand the cutting knife. This is also what the artisan recalls when, as he operates the children, he sings several times over:

"The knife is hot; the timorous man cannot stand it. It is a purification" (3).

3. A ka gwã, če ǰito tise ka muñu,
saniyali do.

304 The foreskin, which is tied by a string (drawn at the center of the
532 blade) at the moment of the operation, is placed upon the pembele
413 (black rectangle) and the cutting knife is tapped with a small wooden
mallet, gossilã (drawn at the tip of the knife). These three figures receive during operation the offering of the first spurt of blood from the circumcised boy.

The line, which crosses the blade along the middle, separates the bird and the ancestors who gave proof of courage from the instruments used for the circumcision. As a division it symbolizes first of all that each grade of circumcised boys must be considered apart from the others. This is its social meaning. But the delicacy of the line itself has a meaning which applies to the individual: each one must, in his own image, be morally /183/ simple, just, and sensitive. By conforming to the rule symbolically indicated by the design, the individual will become a member of the elite.

384 The date of the operation is fixed when Mousso Koroni's star, sigi
787 dolo (Sirius), rises in the evening at a certain point in the east (1).
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1. See note 1 p. 47. To determine the date, however, the ndomo society may be consulted, which sometimes postpones it to keep its members longer.

After the boys to be operated have been counted, each gets ready, and on the appointed day the mother washes her son's penis with water in which an iron axe or hoe has been soaked. Then she prepares a dish
[262] of rice, ye farina to "dish of man's bravery," which the child eats
before he is led to the place of the operation, called yorola sakole "reserved place," located in the bush.

When all are gathered together the blacksmith-circumciser operates
304 upon each one in turn after he has made them sit down in a circle on
326 the ground. Pulling and twisting the foreskin, he ties it with the
string which he keeps taut by securing its extremity between his toes. He next places the member upon the pembele, rests the knife /on the foreskin/ and taps /it/ with the wooden mallet. In this way he cuts off the foreskin while saying the following words:

"Circumcised one, your father, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, the father of that one too, the ear (the genitals) of the ancestors of the latter have withstood (the pain); you, yourself, withstand it as

304 326 /184/ they did. Faro, Teliko, Soba! You who are a man, your number is three; three of the penis, three of the twins, designs of the penis, it is the tradition, withstand it; Faro!" (ter) /repeat three times/(1).

1. Bolokodɛ i fa, i moke, o ta fa,
o ta fa were, o ta fa klo masamaw ye
munyu, i yere ka munyu u cǒko la,
faro, teliko, soba, o ye če ta saba ye,
wulu wo, flani wo, kolo nyeke, lada
do, i ka munyu; faro (ter).

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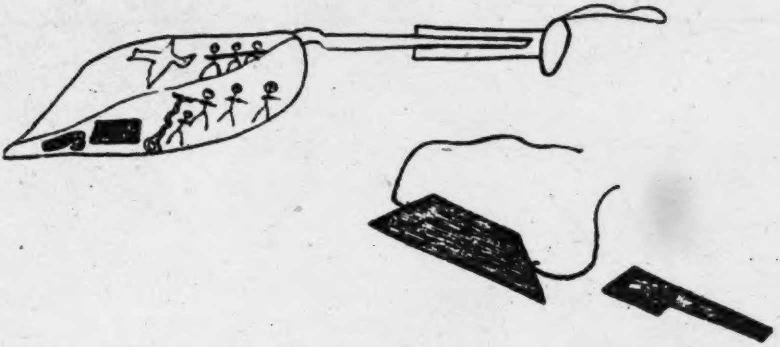

Fig. 15. — The circumcision knife decorated with ritual designs: three men and four women (representing the number seven); the bee eater symbolizing fire; the string; the small board; and the hammer used for the operation (these last two objects are reproduced on a larger scale to the right). (Drawing by an informant.)

304 326 831 After the removal, the operator makes scars upon the child's penis, called faro nyeke (literally, signs of Faro). Under the muscle wulu dyuru (literally, rope of the penis), a small hole is carefully made. Since the penis is considered a source of strength, the muscle which maintains it and erects it binds the circulation of the blood and helps man in all his acts. It is through this muscle that man transmits nerves to his children. A straight organ, firmly held in check, keeps the man and his descendants from numerous illnesses; the aim of this mutilation is to obtain complete and well formed foreskins and clitoris in the children of the party concerned. After the perforation, 304 326 843 the operator places in the orifice a little pepper and tomato juice while saying:

304 326 843 "Strong (when you form) the child, (you who form) the child (in the) womb, give it to Faro" (1).

1. Fariña dɛ̃, dɛ̃zo dɛ̃, i ka di faro ma.

The embryo, placed in the feminine womb by Faro, receives force and virility from the pepper and is developed with the help of the tomato.

304 326 Two small holes are carefully made symbolizing man and his dya, while the following prayer is recited:

"Two holes of the penis; I draw the twins and I do it well, the skin of the person is captive, the skin of the person (gives) the twins; withstand them; Faro" (ter) (2).

2. Wulu wo fla, flani mba ti ka nɛ̃,
moko wolo ye dyo ye, moko wolo ye
flani nye, i ka munyu faro (ter).

"The skin of man, they say, and his entire body are miserable, captives. He is condemned to work, sweat, and suffer. But these two perforations indicate that man is always called upon to procreate twins, the visible images of Faro. Lacking them, he may have numerous children who will return to him, in sweat and work, the seed which he has placed in the maternal womb and which gives shape to the seeds given by Faro."

At the root of the penis, small lines, kolo nyeke, are made with the knife while the operator says:

"Mark of the penis, the genital organ receives this scarification because of the child (whom it will procreate); it is for this that man may be courageous; the one who has (this scar) is respected; great Faro, satiation of Faro" (3).

3. Kolo nyeke, wulu ti kũye dɛ̃ koye,
a ye če fariña ko ye, min ya ke bonyedo,
faro ba, faro fa.

/185/ These recall the scars inflicted upon man's body and symbolize the desired multiplication of his offspring. Finally, they indicate the superiority of the one who has withstood and accepted pain.

304 326 If the patient has inherited the ni and the dya of a child who died just before his birth in the family (in the narrow sense), the penis is perforated while the following prayer is recited:

"You, so and so, the sons of your fathers are dead, may you replace them night and day, the hole in the penis has been made on you; "Faro" (ter) (1).

1. E kari macina, e fa dew bana, e ka o lu soro šu ani kle la, wulu wo ke la e la; faro (ter).

This perforation designates him to procreate the children his father has lost.

Seated in a circle, all the circumcised boys bleed upon the ground into individual holes, nyama bla dinge (literally, hole in which the nyama is left) (2), dug between their parted legs, thus passing on to the impure earth their wanzo and a part of their tere. Meanwhile, the circumciser recited the following prayer:

"Blood of the penis, blood of the transfer of the wanzo, blood which chases the wanzo, enter the hole, may you pay (my debt), may you protect me (against the nyama of the foreskin), against bad fortune, against space; o mound" (ter) (3).

2. Dinge is a word in the ancient language.

3. Wulu dyoli, wanzo fili dyoli,
wanzo gẽ dyoli, i bi dõ dinge kono,
i kã sara, i kã kisi a makunangoya, i ka
kisi kene ama; walawala (ter).

Then, he kneads a bit of blood-covered earth, the principle of which, bwa, is stronger than the wanzo (4) and makes from it a kind of dressing which he applies to the wounds. In this way the child also

4. The word bwa is provisionally translated by "essence, extract." One says dukukolo bwa or seke, "principle or extract of the earth."

304 recovers part of his tere. The organ is then held up by means of a
326 small apparatus, mine naw, made of a millet stem split in two in the
shape of a fork.

"Circumcision is a sacrifice" (1). It is only valid if blood has run,

1. Bolokoli ye saraka ye.

and any patient who has not wet the ground with his blood is wounded
on the thigh by the circumciser. The same is true for a child born
[732 without a foreskin. This detail must, moreover, be kept secret by
582] the members of his age grade, since the revelation of a malformation
might prevent the individual concerned from contracting a marriage
(2).

2. A woman might believe that these malformations are the sign that the man who was operated upon has not lost his wanzo, a fact which would be a definite obstacle to marriage.

/186/ When all is finished, the operator, holding the foreskins in his hand, says these words before burying them:

"We have transferred the wanzo of the circumcised child, may the tere be well" (3).

3. Ãn ye dẽ bolokole wanzo fili la, tere ka ñe.

304 After this, the circumcised boys have their caps put first on their
292 napes and foreheads representing the east-west direction, and then on
the sides of their heads representing the north-south direction. All
561 their strength resides from then on in the headpiece which they will
wear night and day, without removing it, during the entire period of
seclusion.

304 The approach to the site of the operation is formally forbidden to
784 women and uncircumcised males. The one who might go there out of
curiosity "would contract the wanzo" (wanzo ba nofe, "the wanzo
561 follows him"). Any uncircumcised boy who might break this law
would have to take the consequences at the time of his own operation

791 Every magician (soma) (2) has his own methods: one

2. A sorcerer is a suba (See Chapter 7).

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may be intuitive and work from an inner light; another may operate only by deductive divination. All who lay claim to real power submit to rules which are often strange and rigorous and which dominate the most trifling activities of their lives. And all are fanatically determined to keep the secrets which, in their own eyes no less than in the eyes of the uninitiated, are the foundation of their mysterious powers.

[143] Very properly, the range of their investigations and their action is without limits, since everything is impregnated by the energy which is everywhere and in everything and which perhaps is everything, material form being merely one of its manifestations.

789 It is worthy of note that artisans are subject to the same
463 dislike as that for ill-famed magicians. It is not too hazardous
791 to deduce that manual labor once consisted of magic rites which were held to be indispensable in conquering matter. This is still evident in the case of blacksmiths and hunters.

791 Everywhere in the Sudan, blacksmiths are considered
326 and, indeed, behave like magicians. The extraction of iron is surrounded by essentially magic rites in which only blacksmiths may participate. After ritual preparation, they work naked while the job lasts and return to normal life only for a certain time after the work has been completed; even then they have to observe special rules. Their work is commonly thought to be tinged with magic. Their tools are impregnated by this invisible energy and, on certain days, the hut in which they are kept becomes a sort of temple, with the blacksmith as priest. The chronicle (1) attributes to fa Sinè Dyara, a blacksmith who

1. See p. 112.

could understand the language of the birds, a role especially helpful to the Massa-si.

326 791 Raffenel has given us an interesting portrait of one of these Bambara blacksmiths, whom he called father Niany, whose guest he was at Foutobi (Kaarta). He saw him act successively as fa, as priest of the manes and of the guardian spirits of the family, as doctor, and as exorcist. He was always alert, always excited and ever watching for the thousand manifestations of the invisible and hastening either to cooperate with them or to force them to do his will.

752 Here are some excerpts concerning the highly characteristic personage, father Niany:

"I saw a small child die of a snake-bite," reports Raffenel (2); "the poor creature was hideous and swollen up like a balloon. Its mother had laid it [144] down in a field of millet which she was hoeing. A snake appeared (1) and bit the child. The mother misinterpreted its cries and offered her breast. Soon, however, the swelling became evident and the child had died within 24 hours." ....

2. In Nouveau voyage au pays des nègres [A New Journey to the Land of the Negroes], Vol. 1, p. 417.

[137] 1. "These snakes are 50 centimeters long and about 4 centimeters in diameter. Their back is gray, with very conspicuous black rings around the body. They have white bellies and a flat head rounded at the end. The part nearest the tail is covered on the upper surface by a series of vertical scales covering about a quarter of the length of the body. The tail is much smaller in diameter than the body. They like the outskirts of villages and are markedly fond of the roofs of houses." (Raffenel)

791
609 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that
821 was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and
show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the
Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equip-
224 ment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well
as an arsenal of magic weapons.

The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
825 they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of
778 this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at
some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The
animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[552] wara-ba means lion; sa-ma, elephant; ma-li, hippopotamus;
bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names
indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief
that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The
attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an appli-
cation of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual
and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a
small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
231 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
552 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of
825 their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once
held and which is still shown on occasion: fa-li meaning "donkey"
derives from fa meaning "powerful," just as nya-ri meaning "cat"
derives from nya and has the same meaning, along with ba
Meaning "goat."

643 so that he may keep separate the interests of his house and those of the country.

Nomination of the Fama. The title of Fama remains in the family around which the canton has grown. Power passes from older to younger brother until a generation dies out, then goes to the oldest brother in the next generation, for, as a general rule, the living male nearest to the original ancestor should reign. However, the history of Ségou shows us how certain Fama have tried to establish direct succession from themselves to their eldest son. But the
643 accession of the Fama is submitted to the ratification of a council
645 of notables which includes the following persons.

a. The young chiefs, male descendants in the first degree of the Fama; they are directed by the eldest among them, with the second eldest being his syere or heir presumptive.

b. The old masters who are the Fama's brothers.

c. Their sons and all circumcised fathers of families.

643 Power of the Fama. The power of the Fama is founded on custom and religion. He is the earthly representative of all the ancestors; he is the radiating center which gives life to all the society; he is the Word of his people. He decides the crops, regulates commerce, concludes alliances, declares wars, renders justice, imposes taxes. He is the guardian of custom and the legislator of new laws, the organizer of the time and space he governs. His word
● [326] is very powerful and dangerous; his decisions are whispered in the
ear of a blacksmith, who repeats them aloud to the assembly. His very glance makes his subjects tremble, and they approach him grovelling, forehead in the dust. No quarrel may break out in his presence, no violence committed; his power over men and goods is
[645 absolute. Nevertheless, all his decisions are taken after consultation
646] with the notables and with the assembly of delegates from each village.
If one of the members of the assembly disagrees with the Fama about a point of law, he gets up and leaves the meeting without saying anything, marking his disapprobation in this manner. When a law is
[695] passed by all the assembly, each member swears an oath, on the
tomb of an ancestor or the altar of the komo [one of the mens' societies], in behalf of himself and his descendants.

b. Organization of Work

241 621 Work on the land is the only kind of work suitable for free men, for to work the land is to purify it. All agricultural operations 622 are set in motion by the dugu-tigi and are regulated by the fa who 591 assigns tasks by age classes. Each member of the community must work for it every day, except Monday and Thursday, from dawn to about 4:30 p.m. He may be helped, or even replaced, by his children and his captives. The rest of the time he may work for himself in his personal field or in the little fields situated along the water courses and the rivers, which are not periodically redistributed and are considered almost as personal and hereditary property. The fruit of this labor constitutes the personal savings of the community member.

316 423 The exploitation of the subsoil is governed by other rules which we still know only imperfectly. Like the soil, the subsoil belongs to the master of the land. Iron ore was extracted solely by the 324 blacksmith who paid the master of the land a rent in the form of hoes or axes. To exploit the gold mines, thousands of natives went in family groups to the placers at the beginning of the dry season. [63] The location of the placers was determined by the priests and changed every year. The men dig multiple small holes very close to each other, which may go very deep depending on the depth of the barren layer. When the calabashes of gold-bearing earth are brought up, the women wash the earth. The placers are abandoned at the beginning of the rains after three or four months of exploitation. Before the French occupation, gold was the exclusive property of the Fama and could in no case be the object of commerce. To- 439 day, gold is generally sold at the placers to Syrian, native, or European merchants, who have established veritable shops at the mining centers, shops which contain everything necessary for the miner's life.

463 554 The exercise of a profession other than the cultivation of the land is reserved to artisans who are accorded the insulting name of nyaman-kala, for only work on the land is noble work. These artisans form separate families in every Sudanese society, which has caused Europeans to call them, improperly, people of caste. They are divided into independent guilds.

463
554 The numu: blacksmiths, whose wives are generally potters.
[324] The smiths are the masters of fire, those who cook the sacred earth
in order to extract the minerals or to fix the form of pottery.

The loro: coppersmiths.

The garanka: leatherworkers.

The kule: woodworkers, and sometimes saddlemakers.

The donso: hunters, who form powerful and feared associations.

The somono, or fishermen, who have a status a little less restricted than that of the artisans mentioned above.

The dyeli or griot, domestic factotums of a kind, who, although the most disdained of all these, are nevertheless the family archivists.

[563] One may add two Peul shepherd tribes, identified by Manson:
the Dyanna and the Bouguena (1).

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1. See Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

463 All of these artisans are endogamous and fixed in caste,
564 father to son. However, the fact that a man belongs to a caste does not obligate him to exercise the caste trade.

326 The most powerful guild is incontestably that of the black-
463 smiths. From their ranks are recruited all the priests, the Fama's
608 interpreters, the well-diggers, the grave-diggers, the executioners,
the circumcisers, etc. They are the sénanku of all the families and are in charge of all the purification rites.

554 The griot are equally feared, because of the power of their words and because they spread afar the renown of the chiefs.

564 The free man who marries a woman of caste marries beneath himself, and his children are looked down on.

[326] The purest blacksmith families are those of the Fané Balo;
the purest griot those of the Koniaté. People of caste always remain
[527] at liberty; when they are captured during a war, they make them-
selves known and keep their status.

[64] These different guilds are sufficient to maintain in the
463 Bambara country a certain industry of a distinctly artisan and non-
326 specialized type. Thus, the smiths work iron, copper, and wood to

463 make tools, farming implements in current use, furnishings, orna-
326 mental objects, bracelets, different kinds of rings. They also work
gold and silver to make jewelry in filigree.

462 Weaving and basket-making are not done by the people of
caste, but by all men, or, formerly, by their house captives.
286 Primitive looms, worked by treadles, are set up outside of the
285 houses in the shade of the trees. The men weave long bands of
cotton for making clothes, loin-cloths, and blankets. These bands,
several meters long, are sometimes made into rolls weighing as
much as 30 kilograms and are carried off to market by the diula
[531] (itinerant merchants). The Bambara practice dyeing, batik, and
embroidery (done by the men).

433 All this industry remains of strictly local interest and is
directed solely toward meeting the immediate needs of the community.

c. Division of Labor

462 The Bambara are essentially an agricultural people. Never-
857 theless, as all members of the society must contribute a certain
amount of work to the community, the nature of this work varies
according to the social classes and according to whether a man, a
woman, or a child is involved. The following tables indicate how
the work is divided.

1. Distribution of tasks according to A. Aubert.

Men	Women	Children	All
	Foodstuffs		
	Preparation of food and dolo (beer)		
	Sale of dolo		
Preparation of hives, setting them, gathering the honey	Bottling and sale of honey	Helping	

856
the blacksmith. The doll is given the name of the dead infant, the
[304 child[1] carries it with him to the circumcision, and, when he marries,
585] he buries the doll with a piece of wood representing the wife of the
deceased.

845 Twins are replicas of Faro, their presence is beneficial, and they are considered invulnerable.

The albino is supposed to be the issue of sexual relations held
826
833 in sunlight, a breach of taboo. He, too, is a new being. His wanzo
304 is so active that the circumciser must take great precautions before operating on it.

826 He is considered to be endowed with special powers which
782 make him a choice victim for the sacrifices offered to the spirit of the water.

553 To the children of blacksmiths, the name is given near the paternal forge in the presence of all the artisans. An old man pre-
326 pares seven little sticks, giving each the name of an ancestor. Three of these are drawn at random from the group, and the third gives the name of the baby. The head of the baby is rubbed with the axe Kongobwona, and his shaved hair is soaked in sacrificial blood.

553 In the Bamako region two chickens or a sheep are sacrificed to celebrate the name-giving. The distribution of the meat is made
782 according to established custom. If it is a chicken, the patriarch receives the head and the gizzard, while the wing and white meat go to the old woman who washed the baby during the first eight days. If it is a sheep, the patriarch receives [91] the ribs (because they are a bulwark, and the patriarch is the defender of the village) and the heart; the blacksmith receives the shoulder; the infant's family gets the head (so that the infant will go ahead), the back (symbol of prosperity), and the limbs (supports one wishes the new-born to have); the blood which runs on the ground is destined for the infant's protective ancestors. Then the family divides the raw meat with the heads of family, and the old woman thus receives her part indirectly.

c. Circumcision

881 A male infant is born, but he still keeps (because of the
304 primordial twinship) the prepuce as the physical support of the female
831 sex. He will only be freed of this by circumcision. It is this operation that definitively determines his sexual qualification and renders him fit to contract marriage.

[1] [i.e., the surviving child of twins. -Analyst]

b. Pottery

323 Pottery is entirely fashioned and fired by the women of the blacksmiths' caste, masters of the fire. The modelling is done in two ways, either by hollowing a mass of clay with the aid of a cylindrical stone (2), or by rolling a cylinder of clay around a mold. The decoration is generally a double line of chevrons imprinted around the neck and the foot by the potter's twisted bracelet. The firing is done in the open air over a wood fire.

[531] 2. M. Griaule, Masques dogons [Dogon Masks].

c. The Forge

326 Wood, iron, metals in general, are fashioned by the blacksmiths. The blacksmith's workshop and the objects he makes are simple, but they are rich in symbolic representations. "The forge represents the artisan: the furnace is his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red-hot iron is beaten by the hammer, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and the thunderbolt." (3) With his rudimentary tools spread on the ground under a shelter, the artisan forges all farming instruments, the principal one being the hoe. The
412 hoe, [97] according to its shape, is considered to be male or female.
831 The female hoe has a short handle with an ovoid swelling at the end,
[801] into which sticks the point of an iron triangle. The three sides of this triangle are three arcs of a circle; three, symbol of masculinity, represents here the clitoris, the male principle which sustains the
[773 double, the dya, of the woman. (According to myth, it was with the
241] aid of this part of the body that the first being of female sex inaugurated agricultural labors.) The male hoe has a slightly trapezoidal iron part which is attached to the handle in the same manner. The four sides symbolize the femininity of man sustained by the prepuce. Thus,

3. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

304 773 The Bambara decorate their faces and bodies with numerous scarifications, with the aim of conferring on the wearer the qualities symbolized by the scars. By their influence on the character and temperament of an individual, they help him to come up to the ideal man. These marks are associated with the myth of the origin of agriculture They are eight small scars: two vertical ones at the root of the nose, three under each eye. They imitate the facial marks of the mythical being, half man, half animal, who taught men how to cultivate the soil. (1)

1. S. de Ganay, "On a form of cicatrisation among the Bambara," Man.

f. Arrangement of the Settlements

361 The Bambara village follows rules of development which allow a stranger to recognize the disposition of the huts immediately and to single out a chief's house, that of a blacksmith, or that of any other member of the society. In fact, the village is built to the north or east of the protective tree. To the south of the village, [778] is the sacred wood, dwelling place of the chief of the spirits, where the religious ceremonies and the initiation rites take place. As more families come to live in the village, they build their huts around that of the chief, except to the east, for the chief must see the sun rise. The oldest son of the chief, his eventual successor, will have his own plot near his father's. The house of the Komo is situated outside of the village, to the south or west, hidden in a wood or a thicket. At the edge of the village is a round cabin, the house of the Nyama, in the middle is a square cabin with painted walls, house of the Gna (see the chapter on religion). In the center of the village, a cleared place around a doubalé serves for public meetings; the elders hold their councils under the branches of the doubalé.

764 554 [100] Finally, the cemetery of the free men is found outside the village, to the west; that of captives and people of caste is to the south of the free men's cemetery.

326 600 Every village has its blacksmith, for he is life, and the village could not subsist without him. Before the French conquest,

3: Paques--140 S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8

532
171 traditions plastiques de l'Afrique noire
[Variety and Unity of the Plastic Art
Traditions of Black Africa].

532 A great variety of wood (4) is available to the sculptor, who

4. Passim, H. Lavachery, "L'art noir d'Afrique et son destin" [Negro Art of Africa and its Destiny], Présence africaine.

chiefly uses fine-grained species whose fibers are not very sensitive, and who avoids woods that are too hard and too dense. The artist [412] works with green wood, generally with an adze, or chip-axe, which probably is derived from the hoe. This instrument serves for rough chipping the mass and for establishing the secondary volumes; it gives the statue a singular "faceted" aspect. The work is completed [412] by means of a knife and gouges. A skillful technique makes it possible to give the wood a patina; it is blackened by burying the pieces in certain types of mud, by being immersed in palm oil, and daubed with lampblack. The wood is reddened by applying plasters made by grinding barks and making pastes from them. The objects so treated are [105] lengthily polished with skins and take on the sombre, brilliant aspect of old bronzes. The patina of the pieces is an important element of their beauty.

The art observes stylistic conventions, such as the deformation of normal appearances. In the structure of the mass, convention regulates the proportion of the parts, of the solid portions and the hollows; it regulates the development of the secondary volumes and of the surfaces of the different planes, their extent and their lines of contact. In its volume, the statuary obeys an almost immutable canon: to a cylindrical trunk is attached a head that is enormous in proportion to the other members, which are confined to narrow limits; the lower members are much shorter than in nature. The oversized head is a convention related to ancestor worship. The head is sculpted in concave style, and the entire figure is subordinated to a marked geometrization.

326 The blacksmiths also work gold by using the "lost wax"
531 method, or by hammering, embossing anf fixing thin leaves of gold,

326 as well as of silver, on a wooden core. The thrones of the ancient [531] Bambara chiefs were covered in this manner. Today the golden ornaments are no longer reserved exclusively for the wives of kings. [301] Bracelets, pendants, and necklaces are produced in large quantities in a filigree work in which the Black excels.

B. Ceramics

323 The land is very rich in pottery, but Bambara men do not model clay, pottery being a woman's art. Inversely, the women do not work on statuary.

C. Painting

531 386 The Bambara paint murals on the sanctuary walls with ocher and a millet paste. The priests make these drawings periodically. The walls of the young people's huts are also decorated with symbolic motifs: calabash spoons, festoons, ladders with 22 bars, drawings of hands, lines of chevrons. The young girls come to paint these, [237] with clay from the river or with a mixture of clay and cow dung. All these geometric drawings are signs representing not only the cosmogony, but a subtle translation of all the movements of the executing artist's soul. They are a veritable form of writing.

D. Music

533 771 Music is a privileged art (1) because it is bound to instruments, that is to say, to materials, to the human body by the voice and the dance, to numbers by the rhythm, to medicine, to divination, and to religion.

534 771 [106] In a report to the French Institute of Anthropology on February 18, 1948, Mme. G. Dieterlen described the structure and symbolism of the two Bambara musical instruments, the Sema guitar and the royal drum.

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1. Griaule, Passim, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the African Arts], Présence africaine.

881 1. Kené, "public place, " "court"; salo, "to stroke gently with the hand, " "to make gestures. "

One after the other the stars of the firmament go out, and only the morning star (sigi dolo) still shines, seeming to defy the dawn. Many "kouyô kouyô, " shouted from a hundred throats, rise from the village, and the square is emptied. Everybody (I mean the women, for the squatting men keep on drinking and stirring the fire) rushes out of the village and forms a circle around the sacred karité tree. With
881 his back against the tree, separated from the crowd by a white cloth,
364 a blacksmith is kneeling rather than sitting and, razor in hand, await-
● 326 ing the victims. He is calm, sure of himself, and not afraid; after all, it is quickly done. He grasps the foreskin, recites his formula as he spits, and the iron is raised, throws a gleam, and falls. A gunshot announces to the drinkers on the square that there is one more Bambara in the village, and while a woman storyteller /griotte/ applauds him, the owner of the god burns a few nayanka (2) leaves

2. A tree whose name in French I do not know.

between two brands, and feverishly and eagerly goes to place the ashes on the kara, the altar dedicated to the shades of the ancestors (3), in the court of the one who was circumcised or excised.

3. This is the procedure wherever the Komo fetish is found. In the circle of Ségou a Komo is almost always the one appealed to, and if none is owned in the village, it is brought from a neighboring village for the occasion.

881 Limping, the circumcised go under the sacred trees where the dances in honor of the fetish are held, and that is where they stay

764 There is seldom a djansa for unmarried persons, and the corpse lying in the grave does not even get branches to protect it from the earth with which it is covered. Not having had children, the young man receives his live hen and the girl her egg.

Burials of Women Who Were Pregnant or Died in Childbirth

766 845 The death of a woman during pregnancy or while giving birth to her child stirs the whole female population. To appease the spirits, drive away the gnâma, and protect the village from another misfortune of this kind, all the excised women go to cut branches of karité (Bassia parkii) or dogora. As soon as the deceased is carried to the grave, they burst out of the village, crying and weeping. Three times they go back toward the village, waving their branches, and call out "hou" three times in shouts that disturb and chill you.

[326] At the edge of the grave, or most often in the grave itself, a blacksmith -- the surgeon of the occasion -- removes the child, tells its sex, and lays it near the mother (2). During the operation the

766 845 847 2. If the deceased has already been delivered, the stillborn child is wrapped in the mother's mat. The operation is performed for one who has not been delivered, less to save the child's life than to spare the deceased the disgrace of the egg. A newborn child deprived of its mother is condemned to death. It is not strangled, of course, but no woman wants to give it her breast, and the little thing dies of hunger. If a woman were to nurse it out of compassion, the spirits and gnâma would take revenge by

592 comparable to what our law defines as a family. In fact, the 601 four terms just discussed, ton', ba-denya, gwa, and so, are 596 all used for the purpose. It is what is intended by their use that gives them their meaning, and depending on the region, each term has a meaning made precise by usage.

The dwelling of the Bambara family usually includes 592 a fairly large number of huts of various kinds. Some are 342 cylindrical and built of native masonry with a conical straw roof and, for a door, a slit or opening which does not extend all the way to the ground. Others are parallelepiped, made of native masonry, and ordinarily also provided with no opening except the door.

Shelters (gwa), consisting of flat straw roofs supported on forked sticks, are usually placed haphazardly or wherever the master of the house wants them and are certainly not governed by any traditional rules or fixed orientation. All these dwellings or out-buildings are enclosed by either a clay wall [343] or an unbroken hedge whose two ends are supported by the walls of the hut called blon' which serves as a vestibule for the establishment.

[178] The altar of the ancestors and of the household gods is found in the blon'.

The houses of notables are somewhat more elaborately arranged: instead of a single inner court, there are two, three, or even more, sometimes graduated in extent. The master arranges his people in such a way as to divide into sections the heterogeneous elements gathered together under his protection. 592 The domestic servants and the young [161] men, the women, girls, and small children, and finally the eventual successor are, as it were, fenced apart in their own blocks of dwellings, while the fa himself is to be found in impressive isolation, which lends weight to his authority.

Among great personages, especially among heads of 592 clans, this arrangement is the rule, and their isolation deep in 712 the interior is virtually a security measure. In the old days a kind of fortress or redoubt, the tata, was built in the center of the royal residence. Gunpowder, weapons, and all the means of defense were kept there, and it was no easy matter to capture

241 may be set too early, and no amount of advice to be patient will retard it. However, for the millets, fonio, and rice, the visible characters of ripeness are known and respected (opening of the husk in the case of millet, color and bowing of the spike in the case of fonio and rice).

242 824 When a field is exhausted, it is allowed to lie fallow, and another terrain is cleared of brush, sometimes several kilometers from the village. A field is recognized as being exhausted when a variety of plant known as *sęgę* (*Striga senegalensis Benth*) appears spontaneously; when the soil is reconstituted and regains its richness, *tiękala* (*Cymbopogon giganteus Benth*) and *wāgha* (*Andropogon Gayanus Kunth*) appear, which indicates that the field may again be cultivated. Thus, the fields are rotated around the village that cultivates them, 342 following a cycle which may last 20 years. Temporary dwellings are set up near the fields under cultivation, and the farmer lives there during the work with each of his wives in turn.

[29] B. Food Crops

243 The Bambara cultivate food plants and textile plants. Millet is the basic crop in the savanna. The *pénicillaires*, small millet (*Pennisetum typhoïdeum R.*), are cultivated very far north. Their types are characterized by the length of their vegetative cycles, which vary from 65 to 140 days. In general, they are sown in a rather light soil at the beginning of the rainy season. The grain is put in the ground, without preliminary working of the soil, in holes one pace apart and a few centimeters deep. A pinch of seed is put in each hole, and one to three subsequent workings are given the soil; the first, 15 days after reaping, the others in July and August. The yield varies from 350 to 1,000 kilograms per hectare.

The sorghums (*Sorghum vulgare*) include a considerable number of varieties with vegetative cycles varying from 120 to 150 days. I M. Vichon has collected 11 samples of sugar sorghums, 132 of late mid-season, 87 early, 138 of transplants. M. Creak divides the sorghums into three types: with full, compact, conical spikes; with elongated spikes and more detached spikelets; with very elongated spikes and with spikelets even more detached from the axis. A third

712 Before the French conquest, Bambara villages were fortified. They were protected by a triple enclosure of clay blocks following a line of beams that sheltered the sentinels. The first wall enclosed the village and the surrounding gardens, the second circled the interior of the village, and the third surrounded the chief's houses. These walls could be as high as five meters and as wide as two meters at the base. They had a ditch in front of them and were re-inforced by steps. Considerable ruins of these fortifications may still be seen in the Kourolamini at Ténintu (Bougouni circle).

342 *House construction.* (1) Throughout the Sudan, house construction is carried out during the dry season. The same is true for repairs, except for the most urgent caused by damage from rains, streaming waters, violent winds, or by the ravages of termites.

342 361 787 778 *Choice of the site.* The choice is often made near a temporary or permanent watercourse where wells may be sunk. A soothsayer or Marabout is next consulted, who reveals the existence of a spirit whose favorite place is the cailcedra; if the spirit is benevolent, the installation is authorized, and the sacred tree becomes the altar of the collectivity. It is bathed with periodic sacrifices.

342 *Types of habitation.* 1. The round hut with thatched roof (*tuba bo*); 2 the square or rectangular hut (*bili*) with flat roof.

401 *Round hut.* The man drives a stake to which he attaches a cord 1.50 meters long at the most, which is also tied to the head of a hoe. The man circles the stake and traces a circumference that will be the scheme of the house. No foundation is laid. A series of double pickets (*kassassin*) is set up around the circumference. A bamboo strip is passed in and out between the double stakes, and this basketwork is raised from the ground up to a height of about two meters.

When the cylinder forming the walls of the base is finished, a door is cut, facing south, 25 centimeters from the ground and 1.50 meters high. One then plasters with *banco*, that is, with earth dug not far from the hut by the young people and made into a paste with a mixture of *fonio* straw, cow dung, and water drawn by the women. The roof is constructed on the ground. A circumference equal ~~to~~ that

1. Information, in part, given by Moussa Traoré, from the village of Gouani (Diemandougou canton), Bamako circle.

● 342 of the hut is traced; around this, four large bamboo stakes are erected which are all tied together at one end with a fiber rope. A large stone is placed on top of the pyramid to weigh on the stakes and keep them properly apart. Near the top, two bamboo strips are tied around the four stakes, one on the outside and the other on the inside: this is the midio. Other stakes are slipped between the four principal ones and are attached to the double hoop. Equally spaced, [101] seven or eight other circles are tied on, descending toward the base of the cone. For covering the roof, straw of tji le, very thin and white, is chosen, which will be the most rainproof, or else straw of black uro-ba-bi, "hyena grass", coarser and less esteemed. A layer of straw is spread on, attached to the top, and sewed to the first two circles. A third hoop placed over the two others keeps the straw in place. Then a second row is put on and sewed to the last hoop, at ground level. The succeeding rows then are laid from the bottom up to the top in such a manner that they partially cover each other. When the bottom row has been sewed, the roof is lifted, and a small child slips inside to pull in the bamboo needle used to sew the straw to the hoops. When the roof is entirely sewed, a man climbs up, knocks the stone off the top, and takes its place. He slips a hoop made of six bamboo strips over the first three hoops of the roof, attaching it with the aid of two crossed sticks that pierce the roof. He gathers the straw at the top between the ends of the four stakes which are sticking out and knots and plaits it "like a woman's hair." If the roof is to cover a woman's hut, this is not done, but the straw which sticks out is folded down and held by the first hoop. Finally, from 15 to 30 young men assemble and lift the roof onto the hut.

At the present time, walls of basketwork and banco are replaced by walls made of molded banco bricks, dried in the sun.

Rectangular or square hut. This form is of recent importation [177] in the Bamako and Bougouni circles; it is frequently found starting at Ségou and up to the Sahel.

This type is constructed with dried bricks. When the roof is flat, it rests on forked wooden posts that are planted in the ground or that stand on big flat stones. There are five, seven, or nine of these posts, including a central one. Beams are placed in the forks; joists go across the supports. The whole is covered with matting which is packed with a layer of banco mixed with karite butter or with nere flour. The roof is constructed with a slight incline to let the water run off, and it is tamped with the bumbuli, a sort of wooden

342 shovel. A coping of bricks is then laid out around the roof, leaving room for the gutters which spill into the streets. These houses may be topped with a second roof, a thatched cone. The four chief timbers are set at the four angles of the house. There is a door in the first ceiling, and precious goods or objects are kept in this part of the house. As in the round huts, the door always opens to the south.

The outside of the houses are plastered with earth mixed with
[237] cow dung; on the inside, the floor and lower part of the walls are
daubed with black earth mixed with fresh cow manure and bark from
[824] the *jumbo* tree (*Napoleona Heudelotii*); the upper walls and the ceiling are covered with white river clay. Where the two colors meet,
[531] lines of festoons traced with the finger symbolize the descent of the third Word. On the white walls are painted ladders, calabash spoons, animsla, signs conveying [102] the worldly situation of the owner as well as the soul of the artist.

[356] The periphery of the entrance door is daubed with fresh cow
[769] dung every 15 days, and more liberally with rotted cow dung once a year before the rains. This custom is linked to ancestor worship.

Canari [earthenware vessels] containing certain plants are
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352 juice from roots are hidden under the women's beds. The *boli* are hooked to the roofing of the houses for they must touch neither earth, water, nor fire. Nets, *diakumadjulu*, are hung from the ceiling; they hold clothes or calabashes for the food; mats or animal skins are spread on the ground; beds, different-sized calabashes, and stools complete the furnishings. The different huts belonging to one family
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[354] of three stones, mortars for millet, and chicken coops, a sort of small square hut made of clay mixed with straw. The granaries,
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343 which are dried. Then it is reassembled without sealing the pieces
251 together, and as the level of the provisions goes down, the unnecessary sections are taken off. The kitchens are situated to the west of the rooms.

342 Arrangement of the huts in a concession. The chief's hut is
342 always to the east, for he must see the sun rise. His hut is often
361 quadrangular and has several rooms. The women's huts are generally round; each has its kitchen situated to the west and closed by a separate lock. Private shower rooms are reserved for husbands and
514 wives. Privy cabinets with two holes, one for urine and one for stool, are stopped up and condemned when they are full.

312 Finally, the well is sunk in the middle of the court or else in the immediate proximity of the concession. Water is drawn directly with a calabash fixed to a long rope.

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g. Tombs

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796 857 the sacrifice is furnished by the children themselves; all of them together work a small field for this purpose during the winter, and if the harvest is not sufficient, they go begging from door to door so that nothing will be lacking at the feast -- neither d'lo, the millet beer, nor kola nuts. On the evening of this great day, each new initiate chooses his n'golo mouso, as they call the little girl each one takes as his "sister of the heart," his bonne amie as one would say in France /his girlfriend/. But she is more; she is a little maid of all work, and the gift which he gives her every year at the celebration is more a payment than a gift of friendship, "pure and simple." /94/

7. The Genie Protector of Circumcised Youths

794 776 778 At circumcision the Bambara leave the association of the n'tomo and place themselves under the protection of more powerful genii. These genii are all of the same nature, only the name differs with each region, and all the confraternities are copied after one and the same model. The most widespread is that of the n'golo (1).

1. In Bani it is the n'goso rather than the n'golo.

The n'golo is nothing but two forked branches fastened together and hung on a light dloma (2). One can meet it quite often in a

[342] 2. Dloma are forked sticks on which rest the crossbars or beams that hold up the flat terrace roofs. The name dloma is given to all forked sticks, small and large.

corner of the village, out of doors, but usually it is under a small shed or hut. This genie gives the youths not only strength, vigor, and health, but also the talent, if not of pleasing women, at least of attracting them and thus being able to obtain some crude satisfactions. It helps the unmarried to meet the girl of the moment, and thanks to it,

Serer FA32
Wolof MS30
Bambara FA8

S 369 361 SR [361] W [361] [351]

/376 cont./

The appearance of the village itself varies according to the ethnic groups. Among the None, it is tightly grouped around a little central plaza, in the middle of which grows a majestic baobab. The Wolof disperses his compounds of huts, each delimited by a tapade (1) made of plaited millet-stalks.

1. Tapade: a kind of walling made of straw, bamboo, branches, which separates the space between two familial compounds.

This dispersion is also found at Karamoko and at Keur-Issa-Bambara.

Apparently the city seems not to have had an influence on the arrangement proper of the village. It has very nearly preserved its old plan.

S 342 SR [342] [343]

Even today the traditional mode of construction of the hut appears different according to the ethnic group. The None erect strong mud dwellings on a square base with a floor of stamped earth; the whole is covered by a roof of thatch. The kitchen, on the other hand, is made of some posts fastened to the ground itself and supporting a roof of palmyra leaves.

W [342] B [342]

/377/ The Wolof prefers straw or plaited millet stalks as material. The house rests merely on the sandy ground, without any floor of stamped earth. The Bambara willingly lives in a hut of straw, but he is careful to fill in the interstices with mud. The floor is of stamped earth; a wide pent roof generally protects the entrance. Sometimes two huts are connected by a kind of veranda where he spends the evening; mud is frequently utilized in this group. /Fig. 2 appears here./

S SR 342 369

The proximity of the city has to a certain extent improved the traditional modes of construction. The plan and the material used have been improved.

The hut with a single room and a square base has been replaced by a cottage with a rectangular base and often containing two rooms with the narrow window closed by a solid shutter.

592 comparable to what our law defines as a family. In fact, the
601 four terms just discussed, ton', ba-denya, gwa, and so, are
596 all used for the purpose. It is what is intended by their use
that gives them their meaning, and depending on the region,
each term has a meaning made precise by usage.

The dwelling of the Bambara family usually includes
592 a fairly large number of huts of various kinds. Some are
342 cylindrical and built of native masonry with a conical straw
roof and, for a door, a slit or opening which does not extend all the way to the ground. Others are parallelepiped, made of native masonry, and ordinarily also provided with no opening except the door.

Shelters (gwa), consisting of flat straw roofs supported on forked sticks, are usually placed haphazardly or wherever the master of the house wants them and are certainly not governed by any traditional rules or fixed orientation. All these dwellings or out-buildings are enclosed by either a clay wall
or an unbroken hedge whose two ends are supported by the walls
[343] of the hut called blon' which serves as a vestibule for the establishment.

The altar of the ancestors and of the household gods is
[778] found in the blon'.

The houses of notables are somewhat more elaborately arranged: instead of a single inner court, there are two, three, or even more, sometimes graduated in extent. The master arranges his people in such a way as to divide into sections the heterogeneous elements gathered together under his protection.
592 The domestic servants and the young [161] men, the women,
girls, and small children, and finally the eventual successor are, as it were, fenced apart in their own blocks of dwellings, while the fa himself is to be found in impressive isolation, which lends weight to his authority.

Among great personages, especially among heads of
592 clans, this arrangement is the rule, and their isolation deep in
712 the interior is virtually a security measure. In the old days a
kind of fortress or redoubt, the tata, was built in the center of the royal residence. Gunpowder, weapons, and all the means of defense were kept there, and it was no easy matter to capture

596 honored by the new fa, and there is nothing to prevent him
614 from adding to the treasure.

The basic cult of the family is the cult of the ancestors.
769 Although the dead are frequently buried outside the family resi-
dence, their souls are thought to live in the blon' of the dwell-
● [343 ing. The blon' is a hut with two openings on opposite sides, one
592] to the street and the other to the interior, usually the court-
yard. It is impossible to enter or leave a house without going
through the blon', where there is always a guard, at least in
important houses. The ancestors are usually represented in the
778 blon' by a group of crude, conical clay figures of a man and
769 woman, the latter identifiable by the exaggerated breasts.
Sometimes the symbol of the dead is a small board about a
meter long, twenty centimeters wide, and a little more than
a centimeter thick; at one of its extremities a slight protuber-
ance vaguely suggests a head, a kind of ellipsoidal cylinder
with eyes, nose, mouth, and chin faintly carved on one side.
On the side with the face, the board has a checkerboard pat-
tern, often of alternating black and red squares, probably to
indicate the material of a loincloth. The lower extremity of
the figure has a semicircular portion cut away to give the ef-
fect of legs spread apart when the effigy is set up.

769 Whatever form it may have, the representation of the
dead is called kara (1) and serves in some manner as an altar
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1. In Soninké, kara means "to die" and "death."

on which libations are poured and to which are attached the
remains of the sacrifices made to the dead (su-u). Nevertheless,
it is also a very widespread practice to make libations and
sacrifices before the door of the blon' and, more rarely, before
the door of an inner hut. In this case the liquid is poured and
[775] the remains smeared on the vertical edge of the opening. This
practice is based on the belief that the souls of the dead ances-
tors like to return to the place where the fa liked to sit during
his lifetime. Undoubtedly, the ancestors are regarded as guardians
of the threshold; they are [181] honored as such because it is
believed that they prefer to be honored in this way.

342 shovel. A coping of bricks is then laid out around the roof, leaving room for the gutters which spill into the streets. These houses may be topped with a second roof, a thatched cone. The four chief timbers are set at the four angles of the house. There is a door in the first ceiling, and precious goods or objects are kept in this part of the house. As in the round huts, the door always opens to the south.

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764 during the night that precedes the burial in front of the corpse which is displayed in the court, and again during the night that follows the burial. The *djansa* is performed once in the morning and once in the afternoon for three days running. The members of the family, men and women, arrive in Indian file, singing in low tones; they form a ring and circle to the sound of the music. From time to time they throw out a few cowrie shells, and the children, who have come in large numbers for the occasion, scramble after them. On leaving, each places his offering on the ground near the chief musician.

At the cemetery near a fresh grave many feathers, a remnant of ashes, and a few small, carefully picked bones are to be seen. One imagines a sacrifice, but there has been none. The youths who dig the grave receive a hen in payment, and it is a gift from the deceased. For this reason, incidentally, it is given to them dead, after an old man has cracked its skull against the wall of the *b'lon*, or entry hut.

The grave is dug; the children of the deceased are all present (2), and he is about to be buried. The corpse is wrapped in a mat 343 and then laid under the *goua*, a coarse shelter that casts a little shade at the entrances of the dwellings, and through the mediation of the one in charge of the funeral ceremony, almost always a sorcerer, those present pay their respects /220/ to the deceased and offer him a few cowrie shells. Children and grandchildren, each in turn, accuse themselves of lack of consideration and respect in their conduct and ask pardon. Strangers also come and beg the deceased not to be angry, not to wish them ill, and all one hears is the voice of the herald crying: "Pardon, do not be angry, we loved you and respected you, be happy during your stay in *Lahara* (kingdom of invisible beings)."

2. All the children and grandchildren must be there, and in fact they all come unless it is absolutely impossible to do so. Except for a case of emergency, people sometimes wait one to three days to allow everyone to be present.

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778 In the village of Kangaba a sanctuary, called *mande blo* "vestibule of Mande," or *kaba blo* "vestibule of astonishment," is the object of a septennial ritual attended by representatives of all the races /who are/ said to be of the same origin. There ceremony consists in rebuilding the roof of the sanctuary which shelters an object *dolin,* but only those persons of pure race belonging to the Kéita family (1) and the traditional *griot* of the chiefs of Mandé, the Dyabaté, are authorized to perform the ritual. Only they may penetrate the sanctuary and tread on its soil, which is said to be "heavier and more powerful than all things." (2)

551 1. The name of Kéita, for which various etymologies have been found, is that of the founders of the Mandingo empire. Cf. C. Monteil, *Les Empires du Mali,* p. 31, and L. Tauxier, *Histoire des Bambara* /Bambara History/, p. 40: "The first kings of Mali lived at Kangaba and were in fact Kéita."

By extension the name of Kéita may be adopted by individuals belonging to one of the tribes originating in Mandé. Thus a Dogon will take on as *dyamu* Kéita if he comes to live in Mandé. On the other hand, the heraldic device of the Kéita, which relates the high deeds of the Mandingo princes, includes the devices of almost all the tribes said to be of the same origin. This common origin may perhaps throw some light on the institution of regularized name changes observed in Black Africa, a problem which has claimed the attention of some authors; see in particular P. Humblot, *Du nom et des appellations chez les Malinke* /Names and nomenclature among the Maunke/.

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346 2. *Kangaba dugukolo ka gri féw be.* The sanctuary is a round hut provided with two doors, one oriented to the east and the

778 other to the west, and covered with a
346 thatched roof in which is hidden an object called dolin. The village is surrounded by several sacred places: a sunzun tree to the north; a well to the west; two stones, one (fara fi) situated near the village and the other (fara gwe) on the river's edge.

796 The septennial ceremony is performed at night. Toward evening, the eldest of the Kéita goes secretly to remove the object dolin from the old thatch and hides it. The new roof is made with materials gathered by the descendants of Farako Makan Kegni (straw, bamboo, and fibers) while the women of the same relationship plaster the walls. The Dyabaté griot who will officiate provide themselves with a little stick of sunzun wood about the length of the ring finger with which they will rub their teeth; the twigs must be cut by the elder sister of the chief of the griot who gives her in exchange /xv/ a loin-cloth of eight
[801] bands of white cotton and a number of cowries in multiples of 8 such as 8, 480.

The orators who will officiate during the night wear a white cap topped by a band of cotton of the same color and a yellow tunic (wolo) (see p. 20). Sitting inside the hut from which the old roof has been removed, facing east, they spit into a receptacle in order not to soil the ground. The Kéita remain outside the hut on a site marked by stones and covered with gravel collected in the river bed by young men. During the entire night, the griot, each in turn and encouraged by a relative, recite from the devices of all the tribes issued from Mandé. At dawn, they sing as they circle the construction; then the Kéita hoist up the new roof. Next, the elder

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B. Altars of the Komo

The boli altars occupy a distinguished place in the religious and mythological representations of the society organized around them. On the one hand they are a capsule of the universe because of their composition; on the other they are a capsule of the society as all its members are present in them. In fact, each member has provided a part of the composing elements after having impregnated them with his person by salivating over them while pronouncing his name.

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The altars of the Komo are kept in a sanctuary, the komo so (literally, house of the Komo), a medium sized hut built either in the chief's dwelling place, or in the bush at some distance from the village. The approach to this structure which is under Faro's protection is forbidden to the ordinary person. The chief himself never enters alone. It is said that a snake, the soul and guardian of the sanctuary, is born and lives at the top of the hut in the branches which form the roof (Pl. VI, a).

The hut is divided into a number of floors on each of which is placed /146/ an altar. The highest one contains at its center the nimara boli (literally, altar of the souls) which, as its name indicates, is the container of the souls belonging to deceased members of the society and to sacrificed animals (1). It contains, from top to bottom, hair of the dead, copper for the souls of animals, gold for those of men. These various ingredients, placed in a double sac, receive the sacrificial blood which runs between the two layers and soaks them.

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The nimara boli is surrounded by small individual altars which have served to channel the souls of the dying and lead them to the common receptacle (2). These small boli remain in the hut only

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1. There is constant preoccupation with preserving all vital elements. The souls of sacrificed animals are the object of the same care as those of humans. Like them, they participate in the resurrection promised to everything which has lived.

2. See p. 175.

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a) Hut of the Komo (Konodimini).

Plate VI

b) Holes for refuse (Banankoroni).

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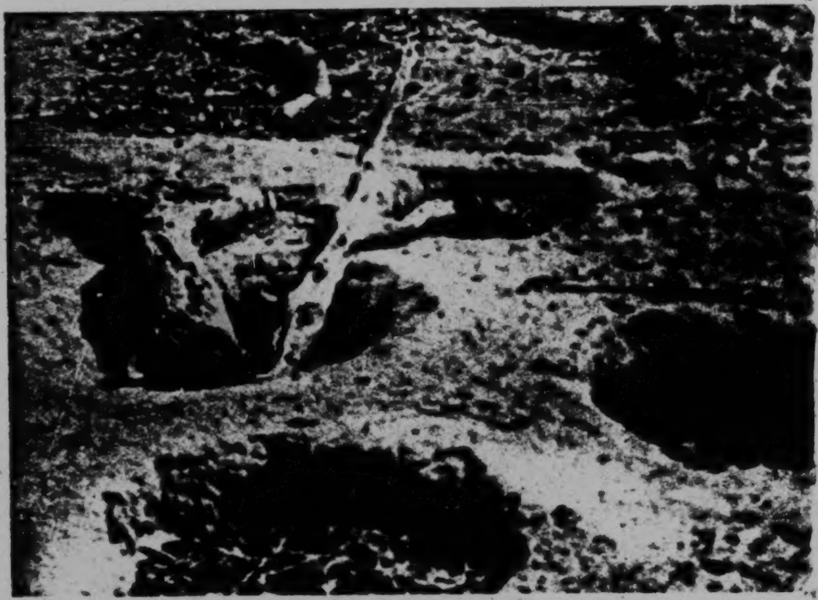

794 778 "After the creation came the consecration. The Kouroubari and the leaders of the people witnessed it. A white ox, a red ox, and a red rooster were sacrificed for the occasion (2)."

2. Raffenel, *Nouveau voyage au Pays des Nègres* [New Journey to the Country of the Negroes], Vol. 1, p. 237.

846 The *boli* is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put in a sack or other receptacle, and except during ceremonies it is stored with other cult objects in a kind of temple often resembling a miniature native hut and called *nyana*-*bon*', "hut of the *nyana*."

776 Obviously there are differences between the various *nyana*, because peculiar practices call up unlike spirits. In any event, however, the captive spirit is, as it were, a slave of the magician, who treats it as such and even sells it, along with instructions for its use. There are magicians who go from place to place, making and selling *nyana* and other magic weapons, and 443 there are recognized markets where one can always [256] obtain the *boli* of the most popular *nyana*. The markets at Bélédougou, Bendougou, and Follona are especially well known.

Trade in Boli

794 778 438 The chronicle of Ségou tells that Biton, the founder of the empire, acquired his principal idols in the Bendougou region where the popular markets of Moribala, Kourbadougou, and Diali are located.

Itinerant merchants deal in all sorts of cult objects, and there are settled traders who are sometimes very well known, like a certain Minkoli who made *boli* and was so famous that his village is named after him: *Minkoli ka dugu* (village of Minkoli). I have never been able to find out, however, which village in the Bendougou area was the home of the famous Minkoli.

By such means the cult of a given *nyana*, once it has been created, spreads to some extent, depending on the degree

794 This boli-den'-fa is provided with the usual boli-de:
[778] kana, korti, siri-kun', etc. [284]

[346] A hut with a conical roof serves as temple (Nya-bon').

[534] An orchestra accompanies the ceremonies; it includes a kind of harp, made by the natives and peculiar to the Nya, plus large numbers of the usual drums, bells, and trumpets.

Since the Nya is acquired by purchase, the high priest (Nya-tigi) is theoretically the person who contributed most generously to this purchase. The office may also be attained by inheritance or by election. The truly religious role, however, is that of the wara-mina-den', the medium through which the god reveals his will or his desires and who is, therefore, the oracle (wara-da) of the Nya. A certain amount of training by appropriate methods is necessary to acquire the degree of extra-lucidity claimed by the wara-mina-den', and that is why they are recruited by co-optation.

794
787 Under the influence of the Nya, the wara-mina-den' falls into a trance. His speech, hesitant and strange, is incomprehensible to the common people. The Nya-tigi then approaches to receive and to interpret the oracle. The inspiration of the wara-mina-den' may be spontaneous or it may be provoked and deliberately sought by him. For example, when a person dies, the wara-mina-den' questions the Nya, either at the request of the interested parties or of his own volition. For this purpose, he retires to the temple (Nya-bon'), concentrates on the point to be clarified, and after meditating, withdraws (1). He then sometimes falls asleep, and while he sleeps, the Nya reveals the truth to him in a dream. On other occasions the wara-mina-den' falls into a trance, and the spirit speaks through his mouth. One way or another, it is learned whether the death is to be attributed to the Nya and, if so, why. Or it is made plain that it is the work of the suba and under what form, human or otherwise, they are hiding. Or, finally, it is learned whether some other nyana struck down the deceased.

1. These details were given to me by a wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara.

764 left of each chamber's entrance and was left to go out by itself. The body was placed in the middle of the chamber, the feet to the north and the head to the south. At the time of a new burial, all the long bones were gathered in one corner of the chamber and all the skulls in another, for the number of deceased was verified by these. Finally in the Kokum region hundreds of tumuli cover vaults consisting of a
346 heart-shaped chamber cut in the laterite and preceded by a vestibule to the west and by steps cut into the rock which lead to the open air. The outside and inside doors are closed by a slab of laterite. The outside door is hidden under the tumulus, with three equally-spaced stones marking the location. The skulls are arranged in a dome and separated from the long bones. Lastly, the tomb of the village's founding ancestor is found in the center of the village, to the north of the old fortified court of the chiefs' house.

III. Art

517 The Bambara conception of art is very different from the occidental idea of art for art's sake. Every object that we find beautiful has a precise social, religious, or technical significance for the Bambara: "The art of the Blacks is purposeful ... it is gratuitous projection in a material of ideas and knowledge which bring the user or spectator nothing other than themselves. Doubtless crude in the first stages, often the product of superficial knowledge or even of calculated errors, the esthetic sense of the Blacks is clarified and affirmed as they learn and as they pass from a 'light knowledge' to a knowledge of the great secrets. It seems impossible to an educated man that he could make an abstraction of his knowledge to judge a dance or to become enthusiastic over the playing of a clever harpist. What we call beauty is for the Black the adequacy of the object to represent that for which it is created." (1)

1. M. Griaule, "L'art nègre" [Negro Art], Présence africaine.

532 The masks conceal the person and transform the human being into a supernatural being. They are the privileged instrument of the
769 nyama, the first [104] model having been carved to fix the vital force of the first dead ancestor in a wooden figure. "The society of

852 tear, a complaint, or a cry of pain, and they are so imperious that
796 one might think they were of bronze.
785

The N'golo, the Special Fetish of the Circumcised

852 The children of this fetish, whose function I explained in the
794 preceding chapter, grant themselves many days of celebration in its honor in the course of the year. The main festival, however, is annual and in addition to the dégé, a hen, and two kola nuts offered by each initiate, a goat is sacrificed on behalf of all.

Since it is from this fetish that the fla-n-to organization derives its existence, its members, the to-n-déou, offer drink and food to the whole village for two or three days. The women, too, contribute their share to this horrible drinking bout, and their queen (fama, massa) -- humbling herself before the to-n-tigi, head of the fla-n-to and priest of the n'golo, who thoughtlessly wastes the produce of the field worked by his subjects in the winter -- distributes many kola nuts and adds still more to the d'lo, which already flows in streams.

The beer is drunk out of doors on the public square, and everyone -- men, women, and children -- is there, shouting, dancing, and getting drunk. Seated under a goua, a shed covered with coarse
[346] mats, /113/ and surrounded by his acolytes (the siéré, the djéli, and the djalatiké), the to-n-tigi sits in the place of honor, and it is he who directs the drinking and the dances. He is really king on these days, and all obey him at the slightest sign, gesture, or word. When he gets up to romp or take a turn before the drums, he is honored; all the initiates call "you you," shake their caps (ban fla), and compete as to who will take his gun, spear, stick, or ax and beat the time for the dance. But he wants to speak; he must speak; he feels the need to issue an order, to give thanks, or to impose a light fine on his band; and his spokesman runs to his side. He repeats the speech of his chief word for word and sentence by sentence, and sometimes even adds a comment of his own, for some Bambara have a sharp wit and very easily find a saying to bring a laugh.

778 782 kola nuts required in every sacrifice. All the people of the village rejoice at the annual sacrifice. From the goat hut, where hangs the goatskin that serves as its tabernacle (1), the fetish is carried in procession to the place of sacrifice, a large tree that casts a little shade inside the village. During the procession the initiates shout sacred hymns at the tops of their voices, drums and xylophones beat and rumble, and all the circumcised stop when it passes /144/ and reverently bare their heads. The women and the uncircumcised kneel and bow their heads respectfully at the passing of the idol, which is hidden from profane view by a dirty cloth covering.

778 The *boli* of the second group are legion, and it is very difficult to know all of them. The main two are the *Tji wara* and the *Douga*.

A *Tji wara* seldom gives evidence of its power. Although it may kill its owner or anyone who happens to separate the male from the female in the course of the sacred dance, a Negro is seldom heard to blame it for the death of one of his family. This fetish is made of two forked sticks, one male and the other female, on which sacrifices are made. It may be seen hanging in the entry hut of its master, along with its cloak of false-cedar bark and its mask which are used in the sacred dance.

778 532 The mask of the *Tji wara* is tastefully made; in fact, it is the best Bambara sculpture I have seen. It is carved of the wood of the *dondol* (*Bombax cornui*) and seems intended to represent a goat or a deer. The male often has curved horns and sometimes measures almost a meter in height. The female is smaller, its horns are straight, rings hang from its nose and ears and, no doubt because a goddess could not be sterile, it carries its child on its back. (1) During the

● 346 1. The Bambara, whose huts are usually very clean, put their gods away in dark, filthy corners. The temples are small and have such low doors that it is often necessary to lie prone in order to enter.

178 534 the *Nama* are made of bamboo and smaller than those of the *Komo*. The big instrument here is the drum which is beaten with a bent iron rod. The syncopation is given on the bass drum which is wooden; the vibrations of the skins stop, and one would say that the sound is the knock of a bone that is broken clean; it gives one the shivers.

178 The *Komo* is always most carefully hidden, and one has to belong to the village to know in which hut it dwells. The main parts of the fetish are enclosed in baskets just like those used for transporting cotton, but three iron rods (3) on which /148/ sacrifices are made are usually kept in the skin of a striped cat. The *Nama* lives under a tamarind tree outside the village and has a beehive for a tabernacle. [417] The whole thing is surrounded by a *djasé*, a kind of palisade made of coarse mats which hides from the uninitiated both the hive and the receptacle into which the remainder of the victims' blood is poured.

178 346 The *Nia* and the *Wara*, or *Djara*, have round huts surmounted by conical thatch roofs. While the first is inside the village, the second is always outside at one of the entrances. The *Kono* has a square house with a flat terrace roof. It is always decorated with small bells fastened by lines on which are hung skulls of dogs and goats that have been sacrificed. Usually, if not always, it faces the inside of the village. The *Magna* does not have a temple strictly speaking, but it has its altar, a round turret surmounted by a receptacle [824] to receive the blood of victims. It is outside the village and always under a silk-cotton tree (*Eriodendron anfractuosum* -- kapok tree).

178 The *Komo* is equipped with a jointed mask and a cloak made of feathers of guinea fowl, hens, etc., which are used for the sacred dance. By means of a stick which the feather-cloak hides from sight,

3. In the presence of the uninitiated these sticks are called *Komo djoloko*, and (again so that none of the mysteries will be revealed) the *warada*, those who speak in the name of the idol, are called *djoloko samana*, "those who carry the chains of *Komo*."

881 until they are completely healed; for it is not until evening, when the setting sun reddens the horizon and takes on its bloody hue that [292] they re-enter the village. From this day on they wear a costume (all yellow if they are Bambara) of trousers, a blouse, and on their heads a kind of handkerchief tied under the chin (4). They pass the time in making mats, singing, striking together gourd disks strung on a stick, and especially in eating, "for they are being stuffed," and in sleeping. /181/

881 304 But in speaking of the boys, I forgot the little girls! They undress under the tree nearest to the sacred karité. Naked as a worm, each one when her turn comes runs at top speed with her abdomen to the ground and throws herself into the arms of a woman, also of the blacksmith caste, who immediately cuts her. On a braided platter, [285 415 789] made of fine, pliable grass, the mother or her substitute receives the bloody fragment which will be a grigri, a talisman or good-luck charm for the house, and while the gunpowder speaks, the disabled girl, pretending not to be suffering at all from the loss of her clitoris, goes back to her place, and another replaces her.

881 The session ends with the last girl, and the crowd breaks out in a song of joy and triumph. The mother, the eldest sister, or a [482] serving woman wraps the excised girl in a big white cloth and carries her astride her back to the village to the hut which has been prepared for her (1). This carrying, so laughable in itself (they can walk, even

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4. In some villages, instead of the yellow handkerchief the circumcised have a cap with two points. In Bani country the circumcised wear the blouse and handkerchief, or cap, and nothing more.

[621 346] 1. Each village is divided into quarters. The excised girls of each quarter have their hut in that quarter.

4: Henry--268 M-5 (ca. ~~1900)~~ 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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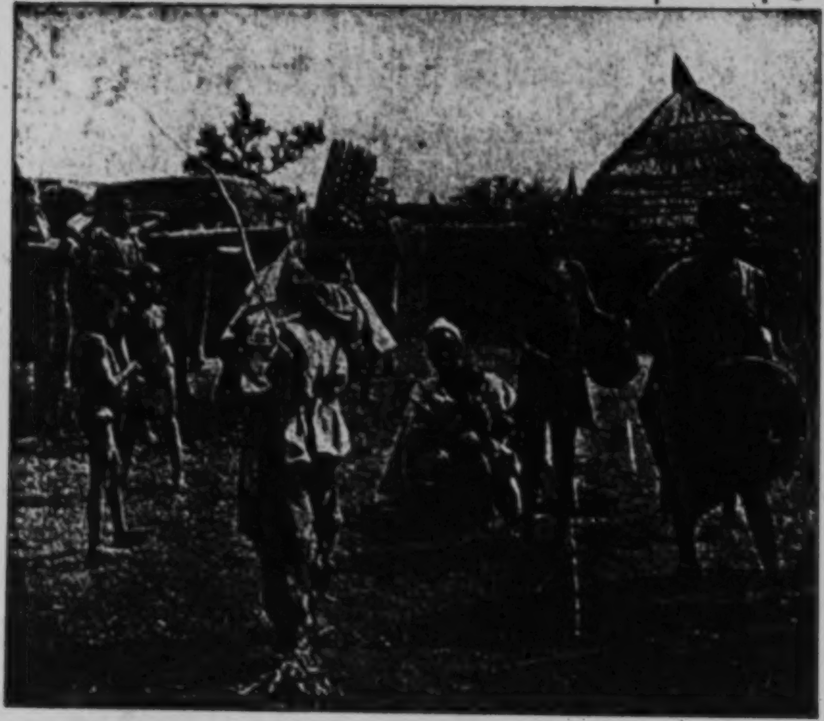

Sacred dance in honor of the N'tomo, the children's fetish.

/sub-caption: The hut with a conical roof, on the right, is the temple of the boli fetish Nia./

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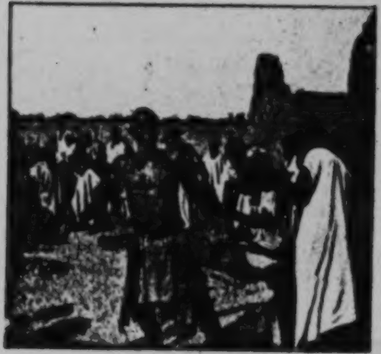
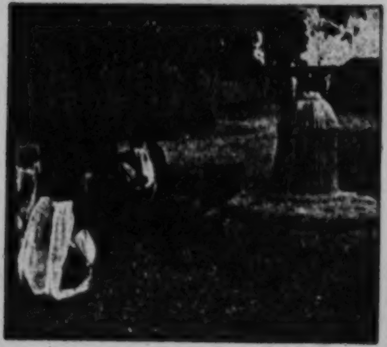
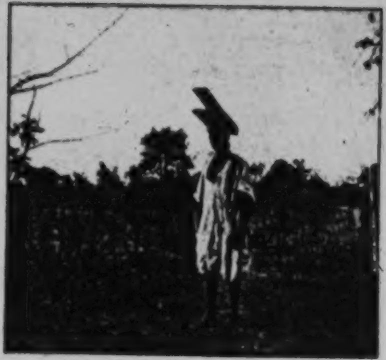
4: Henry-275 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Sacred dance of the mourou kalatigi (sacrificer) after a sacrifice accepted by the boli M'bie Djougou at Talakala.



Temple of Nia, a powerful boli.



Mask of the boli fetish Komo.

Above: Pillar of the Magnan, a powerful boli fetish.

4: Henry--276 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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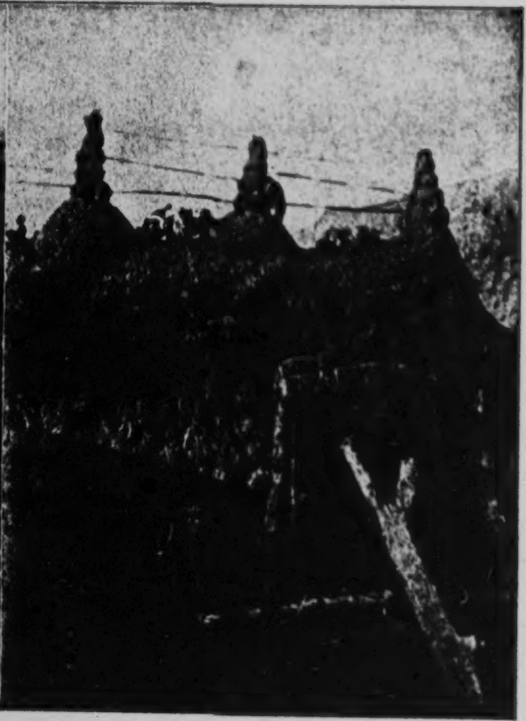
Zanké and the boli fetish, Kono.



Temple of the Kono fetish.

243 manifesting itself too violently and afterwards hold back the receding
312 waters. In the Sahel, the arrangements affect the plains bordering the Niger, where earthen dikes protect the rice from the floods and also control the tributary lakes where they join the river, holding the receding waters in the lakes, thus permitting transplantation of the rice and preventing the subsiding flood from drowning the plants before harvest. From 1944 to 1949, 101,550 hectares were regulated in this manner in the upper valley, the Delta, and the valley of the Sahel.
243 There is a plan to regulate 331,000 new hectares by 1956. In addition, experiments in mechanical tillage have begun. Up until now two methods of cultivation have been applied.

a. Without burning: the hoed land is prepared in furrows 40 to 50 centimeters apart; the seeding is done in seed holes 25 centimeters apart along the furrows. (1)

b. With burning: the wild grasses are pulled up in March and April and gathered in beds 1 meter wide and 3 to 6 meters long. They are lightly covered with earth and then set on fire. At the end of June the mounds are turned by hoe, and the seeds planted in holes 30 centimeters apart and 4 centimeters deep. Fifteen grains are put in each hole, or 45 to 50 kilograms per hectare. The yields vary between 800 and 1,200 kilograms of paddy per hectare.

To these basic crops are added the following early carry-over crops:

The millets. Fonio (*Digitaria exilis*) is cultivated in the region of Senegambia, and *iburu* (*D. Iburna*) in the central sector of the Sudan.

Maize and banana trees south of Bamako. Maize is the most widespread crop after millet. Nevertheless, some maize is imported
[351] from Dahomey. Banana trees are planted around the huts and form a belt around the villages. They are also planted in the small fields which border the water courses. Large bananas are harvested which are picked green and cooked.

245 Mango trees, recently imported (about fifty years ago), give
177 an excellent yield and are destined to be developed more and more.

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1. *L'agronomie tropicale* [Tropical Agronomy], July-August, 1950. [Ed., *Revue d'agronomie tropicale*, 1951.]

342 shovel. A coping of bricks is then laid out around the roof, leaving
room for the gutters which spill into the streets. These houses may
be topped with a second roof, a thatched cone. The four chief
timbers are set at the four angles of the house. There is a door in
the first ceiling, and precious goods or objects are kept in this part
of the house. As in the round huts, the door always opens to the
south.

[237] The outside of the houses are plastered with earth mixed with
cow dung; on the inside, the floor and lower part of the walls are
daubed with black earth mixed with fresh cow manure and bark from
[824] the *jumbo* tree (*Napoleona Heudelotii*); the upper walls and the ceil-
ing are covered with white river clay. Where the two colors meet,
[531] lines of festoons traced with the finger symbolize the descent of the
third Word. On the white walls are painted ladders, calabash spoons,
animsla, signs conveying [102] the worldly situation of the owner
as well as the soul of the artist.

[356] The periphery of the entrance door is daubed with fresh cow
[769] dung every 15 days, and more liberally with rotted cow dung once
a year before the rains. This custom is linked to ancestor worship.

Canari [earthenware vessels] containing certain plants are
353 buried under the bed of the head of the family; other plants and
352 juice from roots are hidden under the women's beds. The *boli* are
hooked to the roofing of the houses for they must touch neither earth,
water, nor fire. Nets, *diakumadjulu*, are hung from the ceiling;
they hold clothes or calabashes for the food; mats or animal skins
are spread on the ground; beds, different-sized calabashes, and stools
351 complete the furnishings. The different huts belonging to one family
342 are surrounded by a wall that opens into the vestibule of a hut with
two doors, oriented north-south. This is where the head of the
[354] family receives strangers. In the inside court are found hearths made
of three stones, mortars for millet, and chicken coops, a sort of
small square hut made of clay mixed with straw. The granaries,
343 constructed on piles, have the form of round huts. They are divided
251 into four parts, where the four principal grains are kept: millet,
rice, fonio, ground nuts. Some grains may be kept together in the
same compartment, for example, millet and ground nuts. Certain
granaries, *bonio*, are veritable cigar-shaped pots made by the black-
smiths' wives. When the *bonio* is finished, it is cut into sections

763 A gunshot today most likely signals the death of a hunter or the father of a hunter. In any case, however, there are always cries and vociferations by [165] the women, who are joined by their friends, relatives, and neighbors.

Horsemen ride off to notify any of the sons of the deceased who are away.

[567] Meanwhile, the chief of the slaves, the major-domo, the confidential agent, or a friend or neighbor of the deceased goes to inform the chief and the principal men in the village.

764 These personages come to the mortuary house at once, spear in hand. After being received by the man temporarily in charge of the house, they go to the deceased to discover his identity and at the same time express their condolences to the family represented by the person who received them; then they withdraw.

[824] [285] In the mortuary hut silence descends while the women prepare the body. They wash it with warm water usually scented with basil, su-ko-la (Ocimum) album and febrifugum); they dry it and wrap it in pieces of native white cotton material or else dress it in its own garments, likewise white. A mat of coarse straw (tyekala, kara) is placed in the middle of the room. A fine, flexible mat made of iphène leaves is put on top of it, and the women lay out the corpse on the second mat. Sometimes they place a grindstone on the abdomen to keep it from swelling.

● [352 516] [152] When these preparations are completed, the women, dressed in white native cloth, sit down in the native fashion on tiny stools in the mortuary hut. Those who come in from outside give evidence of terrible grief: they cry out, they weep, they cover their heads with a bit of cloth and hurry toward the mortuary hut. As soon as they enter, they become quiet and stop weeping.

152 764 767 Among the Bambara grief is never silent; it is customary to show it overtly. As soon as there is a crowd, the singing begins, in rhythm to the clapping of hands. One person or another will be inspired to sing of the achievements and virtues of the deceased. Professional weepers and mourners mingle with the crowd, guiding and gradually encouraging the noisy display.

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[769] dung every 15 days, and more liberally with rotted cow dung once
a year before the rains. This custom is linked to ancestor worship.

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567 status (2). The wolo-so is not usually sold or, more accurately, he will be disposed of only in the most desperate circumstances. The master's wealth and prosperity are dependent on the wolo-so.

Indeed, the wolo-so is a kind of member of the community; nothing happens in the community without his knowing it and participating in accordance with his position. It is true that he is required to work for the community, but no more nor less than any of the "poor people," and he often succeeds in establishing for himself a position that is considerably better than that of a child of the house. He and all of his dependents belong to the master, but barring the most serious circumstances, the master will not take anything away from him. On the contrary, the master furnishes him an enviable lot: he provides for his marriage and sets him up; he entrusts him with the management of property, often very valuable; and he treats him with a degree of affection not always displayed toward his own family because jealousy brings tensions and hatred between members of the community. Thus, the wolo-so often profits by his status rather than suffers from it.

Like the members of the community, he may exempt himself from the labor of the community by sending one of his children as a substitute and paying an annual fee in addition to certain services (3). If he is really prosperous -- and this is

● [352]

2. It should be noted that there is an analogy here with the case of a concubine who becomes a mother; because her child by a free father is free, she becomes free ipso facto.

3. In general, the fee consists of a certain number of measures (moudd) of millet, approximately enough to feed an adult for a year. The services consist of work on the upkeep of buildings, repairs on the roofs and walls of the huts.

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[237] cow dung; on the inside, the floor and lower part of the walls are
daubed with black earth mixed with fresh cow manure and bark from
[824] the jumbo tree (Napoleona Heudelotii); the upper walls and the ceiling are covered with white river clay. Where the two colors meet,
[531] lines of festoons traced with the finger symbolize the descent of the
third Word. On the white walls are painted ladders, calabash spoons,
animsla, signs conveying [102] the worldly situation of the owner
as well as the soul of the artist.

[356] The periphery of the entrance door is daubed with fresh cow
[769] dung every 15 days, and more liberally with rotted cow dung once
a year before the rains. This custom is linked to ancestor worship.

Canari [earthenware vessels] containing certain plants are
353 buried under the bed of the head of the family; other plants and
352 juice from roots are hidden under the women's beds. The boli are
hooked to the roofing of the houses for they must touch neither earth,
water, nor fire. Nets, diakumadjulu, are hung from the ceiling;
they hold clothes or calabashes for the food; mats or animal skins
are spread on the ground; beds, different-sized calabashes, and stools
complete the furnishings. The different huts belonging to one family
351 are surrounded by a wall that opens into the vestibule of a hut with
342 two doors, oriented north-south. This is where the head of the
family receives strangers. In the inside court are found hearths made
[354] of three stones, mortars for millet, and chicken coops, a sort of
small square hut made of clay mixed with straw. The granaries,
343 constructed on piles, have the form of round huts. They are divided
251 into four parts, where the four principal grains are kept: millet,
rice, fonio, ground nuts. Some grains may be kept together in the
same compartment, for example, millet and ground nuts. Certain
granaries, bonio, are veritable cigar-shaped pots made by the blacksmiths' wives. When the bonio is finished, it is cut into sections

763 deceased in case he had been killed by a genie (nyana). Sacri-
764 fices, alms, or the payment of a fine are necessary in that
event, along with intervention by the priest of the nyana in
question.

764 Most often, the body is turned over to a priest (nyana-
n-tigi) [167] if the deceased was a member of a brotherhood.

In any event, it is customary to give alms at the cross-
[735] roads near the village.

Further, the death of the fa puts an end (1) to the authority held by him, and this may have serious consequences,
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since for the moment everyone is virtually independent. That is why the servitor who had the master's confidence and who actually ran the establishment retains his role after taking certain precautions (2). In particular he must make sure that the movable property of the deceased is not carried off. He is familiar with these things, and he is the guardian responsible for them. He makes the women return the gold jewelry and valuable fabrics, puts everything in a safe place, and makes an inventory in the presence of the heir presumptive.

764 (b) Burial. The deceased may be buried in the ground
within his hut or at least in a corner of his establishment. In former times there was a cemetery outside the village, often near the grove of the nyana dugu-da-siri (guardian genie of the village), and in such cases it was apparent that the more important the deceased, the nearer his tomb to the sacred place.

766 For persons of distinction there is usually a special kind
764 of grave. It is about two meters long, and while the opening

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357 1. When a king of Kaarta died, the interruption in sovereignty often gave rise to serious anarchic disturbances.

2. This was the role that Ngolo Dyâra was seeking when he asked to be placed as "guard at the master's door."

4: Henry--254 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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● 357
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1. A bonded person works for his food, just like a slave. His condition is worse than that of the slave, for in addition to his food, the latter receives a bit of cloth to cover himself, but the bonded person does not. A slave can ransom himself for a sum varying between 100 and 200 francs, and at present he can escape without fear of being pursued and without paying anything at all. A bonded person must pay the amount of his bond to the last cowrie shell, whether he escapes or not. There are Negroes who, for a certain amount, will give you one of their children for one or two years. These children are not paid since the amount has already been paid, but besides food they get clothing and some gratuities beyond the payment for their work. Lacking the proper words, the Bambara call this also, "bonding" even though it is basically a real "domestic service." When the agreed time has passed, these young people go back to their homes without any payment being made. Even though the Negroes call this bonding, they make a distinction: a) slavery is a stigma which always remains; b) true bonding is a stigma that does not disappear unless the bonded person himself pays the price of his bonding; c) the bonding which is called "domestic service" does not involve any stigma; they are workers and not menial laborers.

794 769 778 The ancestors are worshipped in various places: at the doors and thresholds of houses, at the cemetery, and at stone altars placed at the intersections of lanes and in public squares. These positive cults, which are aimed at the acquisition of beneficial forces, have as a counterpart, cults in which the villagers rid themselves of all their unlucky and infectious elements; these take place, in particular, at the corssroads, dangu, which are placed under the guardianship of the earth Soba spirits.

It would be impossible to treat all of the cults of the Bambara villages. Among these, three have caught our attention; they concern the dasiri, the dangu, and the ancestral altar stones.

A. The dasiri

794 776 778 The word dasiri (literally, which binds the mouth) designates the invisible spirit, Faro's representative entrusted with watching over /138/ the village, as well as the seat of this spirit and, sometimes too, the animal which accompanies it or symbolizes it.

The spirit haunts a rock, a thicket, or a tree situated near the village; the approaches to this spot are reserved for the elder in charge of the ritual (1).

[824] 1. In Massala and Soroba it is a baobab tree; in Sama, a tamarind tree, etc. See the observations on the dasiri collected by Ch. Monteil, Monographie de Djenné /Monograph of Djenne/, pp. 137-138; L. Tauxier. La Religion Bambara, pp. 195-208.

[787 361] Generally the place is pointed out by the geomancer at the time the village is founded, or else determined by an event which occurred at that time. It is after this operation that the buildings are erected to the west of the chosen spot.

If the dasiri is a tree, no one may burn or cut its branches. In [822] many cases it cannot be approached by anyone dressed in black or indigo, colors which represent obscurity. No Peul may sit in its [563] shade (2). Any infraction of these taboos brings about the death of

2. The reasons for the taboo concerning the Peul have not yet been ascertained.

476 461 567 [361] The patriarchal community draws its subsistence from this agricultural exploitation, and as a result, a kind of work organization has developed. Patriarchal communities or important families have agricultural land in various regions and these tracts are often far apart. Some members of the community or a group of slaves are therefore settled in each domain, sometimes on a permanent basis, sometimes for the period of clearing and cultivating the soil, sometimes for the period of harvest.

Theoretically, every member of the community and every slave must work for the community from dawn to around noon every day during the farming season. Two days, however, Monday and Thursday, are given to these persons for work in their own fields. Anyone who cannot or will not work has the right to provide a replacement from among his dependents.

There are, of course, many exceptions to these rules. In the first place, everyone works according to his position. Among the poor, the master works as hard as the slave, if not harder; among people in comfortable circumstances, the master merely controls and directs the work, sometimes reserving a particular job for himself. In important communities, field work [189] is almost exclusively the duty of the slaves, under the surveillance of their leaders and following the orders of the _fa_, who either supervises it himself or has a member of his entourage do so.

583 589 768 _Conjugal usufruct._ When she marries, a woman is given in usufruct in exchange for the bride price. This usufruct is community property exactly like the things used for the bride price.

When a _fa_ dies, the disposal of the conjugal usufruct included in the estate is a serious matter. Since the conjugal usufruct is of the same duration as the life of the woman, the death of the husband has no legal effect on the situation of his spouse. Since it is understood, however, that the widow has no sexual obligations to her husband's heirs, the usufruct is reduced in that respect. Such is the lot of widows when the heirs decide to keep them without marrying them and the women elect to remain.

[8] The Bougouni circle is divided as follows:

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Cantons	No. of Villages	Population	Observations
Bambeledougou	13	1,785	Bambara
Banimonatie	47	10,829	F. B and Bambara
Bilatouma	5	1,771	Foulah-Bambara
Danou	8	3,413	Bambara
Debelendoudou	11	2,053	—
Dialakadougou	6	1,696	—
Diban	7	2,398	—
Domba	18	2,510	—
Falani-Auola	16	5,086	—
Gouantiedougou	41	9,771	—
Keikero	8	1,705	—
Kokoun	16	3,157	—
Kola	13	2,122	—
Kouroulamini	30	8,653	—
Niene	20	12,525	Senoufo
Siankadougou	16	2,288	Bambara
Sibirila	29	9,652	—
Siondougou	28	3,697	
Tiemala	54	16,492	Foulah-Bambara
Tiendougou	69	16,624	—
Tinkatougou	16	3,342	Bambara
Tyan	16	3,369	—
Yiridougou	13	3,263	—
Zana	8	2,939	—
Yorobadougou			
Niamala	15	2,886	—
Keleyadougou	Census in progress		
Nienendougou			
Nafanandougou			
Fulala			

Ségou

Chefferie of Somonos....		28 villages	8,440 hectares	
" " Bolomissé...	2,600km^2		27,550 "	Bambara Markas
" " Dokono...	270 "	98 "	11,083 "	" "
" " M'Pebala .	4,000 "	138 "	27,540 "	Bambara
" " Bibelambés.	500 "	9 "	1,846 "	Peul + some Bambara
" " Koulala....	400 "	18 "	4,545 "	Bambara
" " Sana	400 "	16 "	6,054 "	Markas Bambara
" " the Thiandis Peul	3,200 "	37 "	5,660 "	Peul
" " M Pérédiola .	1,250 " "	20 "	5,384 "	Bambara
" " Farako	2,000 "	47 "	14,092 "	Bambara Markas Peul
" " Malaké Markas	100 "	4 "	2,310 "	Markas
" " Sansanding .	400 "	6 "		Bambara
" " Bambougou .	900 "	99 "	33,504 "	Bambara and Peul
" " Bebe	400 "	28 "	4,576 "	Bambara
" " Kalaké Bambara	700 "	13 "	2,911 "	"
" " Dioforongo .	1,200 "	72 "	12,935 "	Peul, Bambara

Nioro

Chefferie of the canton of Kala	1,900 km^2	5,400 hectares	Bambara
" Markabougou	3,200 "	2,782 "	"
" Sokolo	4,200 "	6,126 "	Bambara Markas
" Miempiéna	1,000 "	3,332 "	Bambara
" Segala	3,200 "	1,773 "	"
" Mossi of the Sahel .		1,254 "	Mossi

3e Paques--10A S-4 (no date) 1954 FA8 Bambara FA8

Mossi FA28

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304 773 The Bambara decorate their faces and bodies with numerous scarifications, with the aim of conferring on the wearer the qualities symbolized by the scars. By their influence on the character and temperament of an individual, they help him to come up to the ideal man. These marks are associated with the myth of the origin of agriculture They are eight small scars: two vertical ones at the root of the nose, three under each eye. They imitate the facial marks of the mythical being, half man, half animal, who taught men how to cultivate the soil. (1)

1. S. de Ganay, "On a form of cicatrisation among the Bambara," Man.

f. Arrangement of the Settlements

361 The Bambara village follows rules of development which allow a stranger to recognize the disposition of the huts immediately and to single out a chief's house, that of a blacksmith, or that of any other member of the society. In fact, the village is built to the north or east of the protective tree. To the south of the village, 778 is the sacred wood, dwelling place of the chief of the spirits, where the religious ceremonies and the initiation rites take place. As more families come to live in the village, they build their huts around that of the chief, except to the east, for the chief must see the sun rise. The oldest son of the chief, his eventual successor, will have his own plot near his father's. The house of the Komo is situated outside of the village, to the south or west, hidden in a wood or a thicket. At the edge of the village is a round cabin, the house of the Nyama, in the middle is a square cabin with painted walls, house of the Gna (see the chapter on religion). In the center of the village, a cleared place around a doubalé serves for public meetings; the elders hold their councils under the branches of the doubalé.

764 554 [100] Finally, the cemetery of the free men is found outside the village, to the west; that of captives and people of caste is to the south of the free men's cemetery.

326 600 Every village has its blacksmith, for he is life, and the village could not subsist without him. Before the French conquest,

Before the French conquest,

712 Bambara villages were fortified. They were protected by a triple enclosure of clay blocks following a line of beams that sheltered the sentinels. The first wall enclosed the village and the surrounding gardens, the second circled the interior of the village, and the third surrounded the chief's houses. These walls could be as high as five meters and as wide as two meters at the base. They had a ditch in front of them and were re-inforced by steps. Considerable ruins of these fortifications may still be seen in the Kourolamini at Tēnintu (Bougouni circle).

342 House construction. (1) Throughout the Sudan, house construction is carried out during the dry season. The same is true for repairs, except for the most urgent caused by damage from rains, streaming waters, violent winds, or by the ravages of termites.

342 361 787 778 Choice of the site. The choice is often made near a temporary or permanent watercourse where wells may be sunk. A soothsayer or Marabout is next consulted, who reveals the existence of a spirit whose favorite place is the cailcedra; if the spirit is benevolent, the installation is authorized, and the sacred tree becomes the altar of the collectivity. It is bathed with periodic sacrifices.

342 Types of habitation. 1. The round hut with thatched roof (tuba bo); 2 the square or rectangular hut (bili) with flat roof.

401 Round hut. The man drives a stake to which he attaches a cord 1.50 meters long at the most, which is also tied to the head of a hoe. The man circles the stake and traces a circumference that will be the scheme of the house. No foundation is laid. A series of double pickets (kassassin) is set up around the circumference. A bamboo strip is passed in and out between the double stakes, and this basketwork is raised from the ground up to a height of about two meters.

When the cylinder forming the walls of the base is finished, a door is cut, facing south, 25 centimeters from the ground and 1.50 meters high. One then plasters with banco, that is, with earth dug not far from the hut by the young people and made into a paste with a mixture of fonio straw, cow dung, and water drawn by the women. The roof is constructed on the ground. A circumference equal to that

1. Information, in part, given by Moussa Traoré, from the village of Gouani (Diemandougou canton), Bamako circle.

343 which are dried. Then it is reassembled without sealing the pieces
251 together, and as the level of the provisions goes down, the unnecessary sections are taken off. The kitchens are situated to the west of the rooms.

Arrangement of the huts in a concession. The chief's hut is
342 always to the east, for he must see the sun rise. His hut is often
361 quadrangular and has several rooms. The women's huts are generally round; each has its kitchen situated to the west and closed by a separate lock. Private shower rooms are reserved for husbands and
[514] wives. Privy cabinets with two holes, one for urine and one for stool, are stopped up and condemned when they are full.

312 Finally, the well is sunk in the middle of the court or else in the immediate proximity of the concession. Water is drawn directly with a calabash fixed to a long rope.

Sometimes individual huts are constructed on piles for pro-
342 tection against mosquitoes at night; the only opening is a trap door in the floor by which the hut is entered.

g. Tombs

764 An old custom had the family heads buried in their huts. The Fama were buried in the courts of their fortified palaces, to the northwest. Babies were buried near their mothers' huts, for their return was awaited. At the present time the Bambara are buried in cemeteries following Moslem or animist custom.

[767] [103] The brotherhood priests dig the graves; tombs may be
individual or collective. Monteil (*Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta* [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta]) describes a chief's tomb: the vault has the form of a parallelepiped; the lower base is one meter wide and two long, the upper base three wide and two long, and a vertical partition of 1.50 meters forms a right angle with the bases.

In Ouassoulou the custom was to dig a common tomb of several chambers for the whole family. A square entrance about two meters high and two wide led into a narrow corridor that opened on a first chamber reserved for children; another corridor connected the first chamber with a second, larger one reserved for women and for adult males; from this a third corridor led to a last chamber, a smaller one for heads of the family. An oil lamp was placed at the

766 532 After the burial[1] a drawing is made on the sanctuary with millet mash made of grain from Faro's field; this drawing represents the dead man and the mutilations inflicted upon him. The seven attending elders close their eyes as a sign of respect in order not to "register a drawing made for Faro." In fact, its aim is to obtain the spirit's pity and to ask him to include the dead among the count he keeps of his subjects. [769] It is also in front of this drawing that the family will come to make an offering and mourn every week.

II. Rituals of the Refuse

364 778 The debris, sweepings, and refuse collected in the homes, courtyards, public squares, and crossroads all contain forces which men have communicated to them.

The rituals, of which these are the objects and which vary according to their origin, have as their aim the offering of these forces to Faro who returns them to men purified and regenerated in the form of rainwater with which he irrigates the fields and in the form of ponds and wells. They are thus redistributed and used again for the benefit of the community.

The refuse at the crossroads, called dangu kalaw, stalks or straw of the dangu, contains the force, nyama, of all the beings that have trampled it.

/202/ The refuse from the homes contains the wanzo of the uncircumcised, the nyama which the inhabitants have to bear for having killed animals or insects and for having received insults, and their good or bad tere. These forces, called wanzo dla (literally, to arrange the wanzo) (1) or nyama dlà, constantly come to the aid of all the members of the family; they improve the wanzo of the uncircumcised, facilitate the women's childbirth, and renew the vigor of the old men. A small altar, konye, kept in the room reserved for the head of the family, is dedicated to them.

After the coming out of the Komo, the sweepings gathered on the spot where the dances take place contain the forces of the members.

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1. This term is applied to them particularly in houses where there are many children.

[1] [Of a drowned person — Analyst]

364 (a) Household refuse, collected individually, is placed in separate
778 piles inside shallow circular excavations dug out at the approaches to
782 the villages (see Pl. VI, b). Among wealthy people a goat is sacrificed each week by having its throat cut above the pile on which the altar is temporarily placed. The sacrifice effects a double exchange: the blood nourishes the altar while at the same time it brings about the transfer into the altar of the forces contained in the refuse.

364 Every two months and seven days, at the decision of the village chief, these individual rubbish piles are removed from the holes.
778 Each person burns his own pile and inhales the smoke. The ashes are
796 deposited on the river bank, dampened so that the wind does not blow them away, and abandoned during seven days, a period during which Faro "comes to visit them and to bless them."

On the eighth day, after a meeting at the chief's residence, the villagers gather at the crossroads to burn the collective refuse piles, to collect the ashes, and to transport them, accompanied by the rhythm wanzo foli beaten on the drums, to the river bank where they will join those of the individual heaps.

After a sacrifice offered upon the konye altars of the participants, the griot of the Komo is struck by the nyama boli until he goes into a trance and flings himself into the water without saying a word. All must throw their ashes in after him before he comes out again. At that moment the spittles of the man who flutters about in the water are collected as a gift from Faro in exchange for the refuse which has been thrown in. Each person rubs his hands and feet with the saliva and upon returning, which is done in silence, impregnates the threshold of his home with it as evidence of the sacrifice so that Faro "might recognize his own and protect their life."

/203/ The following Thursday the people gather to dance according to the rhythms appropriate to each sex and generation. In the evening, each person places his foot on the site of the refuse heap; then all gather at the crossroads to offer the Soba spirit some millet, cotton, and kola nuts. The ceremony ends with a meeting at the chief's residence where he gives advice and encourages each one to respect tradition and to honor the ancestors and the protecting spirits.

(b) After the comings out of the Komo, the refuse is swept up and deposited in front of the sanctuary. Each participant leaps over the pile three times to communicate his nyama to it. In the evening the masker circles and whistles around the heap on which fire is lit while

364 778 796 the chief throws dust three times to the four cardinal points. The masker then stands in the wind in such a way as to receive the smoke; the chief and the members crouch in line behind him with their mouths open to inhale better. When the wind changes its direction they all move to continue this fumigation, wušuli, which constitutes a purification as well as an increment of forces. At the moment the fire is almost out, the most courageous of the participants stamps on it in order to assimilate better the nyama which it exudes. The ashes, [804] gathered by the chief, are distributed, the unit of measurement being the gourd mure. An important share goes to the nyama boli, another is given as an offering to Faro, and a third is distributed among the members.

Several days later, the group goes to the river bank to the sound of drums beating out the murumuruw foli (literally, rhythm of the refuse); they throw the ashes reserved for Faro into the water and, continuing to dance, return to the village.

364 778 252 Those ashes given to the members are used to prepare the potass which is mixed into the millet cake, the daily food of the Bambara, and which will make the members of the family share in the powers contained in the nyamanto.

364 778 The eating of this mixture closes the cycle of the transfer of forces, which were temporarily communicated to the refuse by the individuals, then recovered by Faro, and finally redistributed to the social body.

III. Rain Rites

789 241 At the time the first work is done in the fields, a drawing is made with millet mash upon the tree of the Kworè in the shape of a lozenge inscribed within a rectangle, which represents "the great fire which issued /204/ from the cardinal angles" at the time of their creation. While this is being done, the following words are spoken: "The four elbows (the lozenge) are the fire of the angles; here is the anniversary of the Kworè." The clearing of the field or the first plowing always symbolizes the very first clearing obtained through fire.

789 796 794 During the month of May, the members of the Kworè society make sacrifices upon their altars before the first rumbling of thunder in order to purify the first sky where clouds are formed from the impure passage of Mousso Koroni. The chief gathers the members about the tree and recites the following prayer:

a. Urbanization

166 The Bambara, who are essentially agriculturalists, have no
177 cities. All the cities owe their origin to the Whites and were created
369 for commerce, administration, industry, banking, and education. But the city has exercised the same attraction on the Black peasant as it has on the French one. This taste for city life has been made easier to indulge by the creation of railroads and roads. Cities, such as Bamako, are invaded by ever-increasing populations who leave the bush and the close-knit community to create a de-tribalized mob which adapts more or less well to a European economic organization. Thus, the industrial equipping of Africa tends to transform the native artisanry, because the industrial establishments of the European type require a specialized [77] labor force that will adopt French work methods and economic life. It is in this way that the railroad yards at Thiès were created, as well as the industries of construction in solid materials, the quarries, the brickyards, the limeworks of Bamako, Mopti, and Ségou, and the food industries: icehouses, waterworks, the cotton gins of Koutiala and Sikasso. Industrialization is just beginning in the Bambara country, but the European form of economic organization has spread widely even where native work methods exist, leading, as a result, to economic individualism.

b. Development of Large-scale Agricultural Exploitation

177 Agricultural exploitation itself has been radically transformed
241 in certain regions. Side by side with food crops which vary according
473 to the needs of the community and which are cultivated in the traditional extensive manner, an intensive monoculture of money crops has developed with peanuts, rice, cotton, etc. This has been made possible by modern techniques of agricultural exploitation: experimental gardens, centers of scientific research, creation of pilot sections, scientific management of the plains. This development has led to the creation of such organizations as the C.G.O.T. in Casamance, a company for diversified economy whose initial capital was underwritten by the State and by professional processors of fatty substances. This company clears and de-stumps the great forest brush with heavy tractors, bulldozers, treedozers, and strumpers [de-stumpers ?] in

881 On the same day the young girls in certain localities
302 have a characteristic ceremony. One of them whitens her face,
breast, and back with a mixture of milk and ashes. Thus
daubed, she dashes out of the village brandishing the spatula
(to-n-galama) which is used to stir mush (to) in the pot; her
companions follow her, shouting. The band goes around the
village four times in this fashion, each time stopping at the
crossroads. At these points the girl who is bedaubed throws
handfuls of food (1), provided by her companions, to the spirits,
crying: "Dege dule (2)." Her companions reply: "Naloma (3)."

[262] 1. Usually basi (couscous) made with fish.

2. Literally, "thick mush."

3. That is, "fool."

881 The eve of the soli (soli-si). During the evening pre-
527 ceding the soli, the families concerned enjoy an ample meal,
accompanied by innumerable jugs of beer (dlo) as is the custom
[273] at all festivals among the Bambara. This is a time of special
[576] merriment, of shining faces and greasy hands, and it is good
form for the men and boys to belch noisily, saying repeatedly:
"ne ne fa," literally, "I am full," that is, "I am replete." The
[301] women wander about the lanes, wrapped in their best skirts,
with balls of amber in their hair and small silver or even gold
rings in their ears and nostrils and rather heavy bracelets on their
[482] arms and ankles. Some carry jars of dlo on their heads, while
others carry gourds full of couscous, dege, or hot sauces which
are often nauseous with smoked or spoiled fish. After the meal
everyone gathers on the public square, forming a wide circle
whose center is reserved for the dancers; piles of dried millet
● [373] stalks are used to make bright fires which illuminate the scene
and warm the audience.

881 The "boys of the soli" (soli-ma-tye-u), their heads
302

177 Finally, the breaking up of the family cell is manifest in the in-
596 creasing number of children who prefer to work as farm laborers far
241 from their home country rather than submit to the tutelage of the
farming chief.

The economic transformation proceeds due to electrification
177 (regulation of the great falls near Conakry and those of Sotuba near
377 Bamako) and the creation, alongside the old strategic roads, of com-
489 mercial roads and bridges to facilitate shipping peanuts, rice, cotton,
and millet. The ports and wharfs are being put in order, the railroad network being modernized (increasing the matériel, transforming beds and embankments, repairing the tracks, installing and extending yards, improving the depots, constructing stations, buffets, hotels, cheap housing for the employees). On the Niger, improvements are being made in the river ports of Koulikoro, Ségou, Mopti, Bamako, and Gao, and, on the Senegal, of Kayes and Saint-Louis.

177 Finally, the new economy is accompanied by social accomplishments in the fields of health, education, and urbanization.

d. Chambers of Commerce

Thus, two forms of economic organization exist side by side in Bambara country: on the one hand, the traditional and artisan native organization, and, on the other, the European organization which has shattered the ancient society and has put the local economy of the country within the framework of international economy.

177 But it is perhaps in the realm of commerce that the influence
of European methods has been most felt, particularly in the creation
441 of Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry.

The creation of Chambers of Commerce dates from a decree of the Governor General in 1906. Members are elected for four years and are re-eligible. They are elected by an electoral college made up of the chiefs of French or African commercial establishments. The function of these Chambers is to give the administration advice and information when requested on any question of an economic nature.

The Chambers of Agriculture and Industry have substantially the same organization as the Chambers of Commerce, but in addition they are called on by the governors to group and codify the local customs [79] and usages of an agricultural character. These reports serve as the

551 The device is recited on numerous occasions. After a birth, the
576 griot proclaim it in the course of the name-giving ceremony, address-
778 ing themselves to the father, then to the newborn child /79/ who thus
564 receives it for the first time. At a marriage the barama of the two partners are alternatly recited. In everyday life, the recitation is carried on most frequently during religious ceremonies or feasts. In the hunt or at war, it has the effect of helping the participants and increasing their courage (1). In a meeting it is used to greet people bearing the same name, and if one of the assistants is to be particularly honored, the first words of his device are recited.

551 In case of illness, the ally (senãnku) (2) comes to the patient's
755 side and recites his barama to encourage him and help him get well. If he is dying, the recitation, which is then the equivalent of a prayer, may help his soul return. After death, the ally, the griot, and the
[764] blacksmiths come near the corpse to recite his barama in order to honor him.

551 The devices pertaining to the various crafts are used when address-
576 ing the artisan with whom one has business. Thus the blacksmith to
539 whom one brings work is greeted first by his name to which is then added:

"ini fara ani goni, you are with stone and fire."

A person crossing a field will say to the farmer bent over the earth: "i ni tye i ba ka kusebe daba, greeting to him who handles the hoe well," or simply: "i ni tye daba la, greeting to him who is with the hoe." To the shoemaker one would say: "bana ani ba golo, (you are) with the acacia (3) and the goat leather."

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[727] 1. If the griot recites it to a war chief and the town under attack is taken, he receives part of the loot.

2. See p. 119.

[386] 3. This refers to the bana or boina (Acacia arabica) used by the shoemaker to make a black dye.

291 him and joke with him, indicating by semi-ritual jokes his accession to a new status.

291 Men's first garment was the skirt of nyama fibers (Fig. 8, A). The 773 bark was beaten and prepared by means of a club, a wooden club, gosilande or kuruninde, which is /106/ supposed "to contain potentially all human technology invented as the need arose." It is said of this club that it is "the mold of perfection and the place from which all useful things issue." The club was also originally a primitive instrument of rhythm (1); the hammering of blows "chased away the evil [755] sounds emitted by Téliko at the time of his revolt." Even today, a deafmute is seated near the gosilande which is prayed to so that he may be rid of his infirmity. The clothing of a woman in labor, in [844] order to purify it, is beaten with the gosilande at the same time the infant utters its first cry. Dyed clothing is beaten not only to make the color penetrate, but also to chase out any impurity.

When they first learned about cotton, and after the invention of weaving, the Bambara made garments which are in disuse today but of which they still make specimens for ritual purposes. In fact, with the exception of the loincloth, these ancient garments are worn only during religious ceremonies and their principal function is to represent the ancestors who were their progenitors.

291 773 386 The first garment woven was an imitation of the fiber skirt. The men made loincloth (mboko nimba) still worn today by the uncircumcised and dyed it yellow, wolo (2) (Fig. 8, B), a color which represents that which a certain disease gives to the black's skin,

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[783] 1. kow dyele bwo yoro. On certain occasion when the Komo masks are brought out, the chief carries on his head the gosilande which represents the universe. Certain collective purifications are also executed with this instrument at the crossroads (see p. 186).

[824] 2. This dye is made with the leaves of the ngalama (Angeissus leiocarpus), which are boiled, dried, and pulverized. The powder is put in water.

291 773 386 which they got rid of by means of this dye. A live swallow was immersed in the liquid, which was obtained by soaking the leaves and to which was mixed ground charcoal, and later was released, thus consecrating the dye into which the loincloth was soaked.

291 773 The next garment was made of two strips, dyo kama (literally, shoulder nets), which were hooked on to each arm. The strip on the right arm, representing male, was attached by three thin straps (male number). The other was attached by four straps, four and left being female. The wearer would lie down over the strip on the right side and would cover himself with that on the left (Fig. 8, C).

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[787]

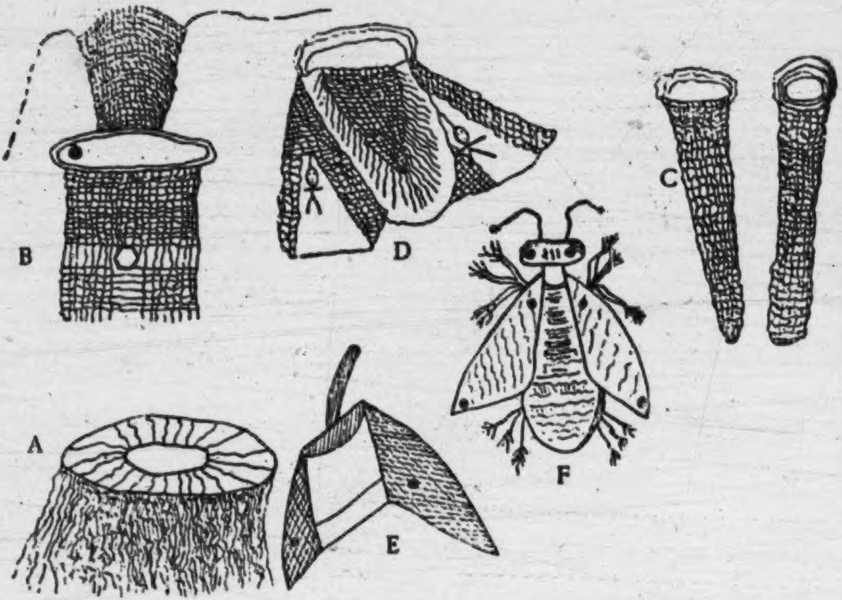

Fig. 8 —Ancient Clothing of the Bambara.
(A) The skirt of nyama fibers; (B) the loincloth; (C) the "shoulder nets"; (D) the tunic; (E) the bonnet are made of dyed and woven cotton threads. (F) the dung beetle, an insect which plays a part in geomancy. (Drawing by an informant).

Next, men made a kind of short tunic, wọlọ kama (literally, partridge wings), which was dyed red (Fig. 8, D). At the top of the openings where the arms passed were suspended /107/ two little figures (mani) carved out of wood. These represented the souls of the wearer, "took their life from the veins, and gave their strength to the

326 as well as of silver, on a wooden core. The thrones of the ancient
[531] Bambara chiefs were covered in this manner. Today the golden
ornaments are no longer reserved exclusively for the wives of kings.
[301] Bracelets, pendants, and necklaces are produced in large quantities
in a filigree work in which the Black excels.

B. Ceramics

The land is very rich in pottery, but Bambara men do not
323 model clay, pottery being a woman's art. Inversely, the women do
not work on statuary.

C. Painting

531 The Bambara paint murals on the sanctuary walls with ocher
●386 and a millet paste. The priests make these drawings periodically.
The walls of the young people's huts are also decorated with symbolic
motifs: calabash spoons, festoons, ladders with 22 bars, drawings
of hands, lines of chevrons. The young girls come to paint these,
[337] with clay from the river or with a mixture of clay and cow dung.
All these geometric drawings are signs representing not only the
cosmogony, but a subtle translation of all the movements of the
executing artist's soul. They are a veritable form of writing.

D. Music

533 771 Music is a privileged art (1) because it is bound to instruments, that is to say, to materials, to the human body by the voice and the dance, to numbers by the rhythm, to medicine, to divination, and to religion.

534 771 [106] In a report to the French Institute of Anthropology on February 18, 1948, Mme. G. Dieterlen described the structure and symbolism of the two Bambara musical instruments, the Sema guitar and the royal drum.

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1. Griaule, Passim, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the African Arts], Présence africaine.

241 462 [411] [401] After the men have cleared the big weeds, the women come along to finish up. At harvest time, the women and children chase the birds from the fields with loud cries, sling shots, and by heating bamboo on a hard rock to cause a detonation. All chase the sparrows, partridges, guinea-fowls ... Harvesting is done together ...

In addition, by the side of the men's fields there are little women's fields where the women cultivate sorrel, okra, eggplant, tomatoes, beans, and all the condiments. The accessory crops of the women are the raro, bananas, manioc, sometimes rice or peanuts (1).

1. Labouret, Paysans noirs [Black Peasants].

241 566 567 Naturally, the work varies according to the social order. The Bambara divide themselves into free men, people of caste, and, formerly, slaves, all having a chief at their head. All members of the community must work the land; in fact, the poor work more than the slaves. The more fortunate do little work; they formerly directed and controlled the work of the slaves, today that of the agricultural workers.

C. Legal Procedure: Inheritance, Land Ownership

692 In Bambara country today, as in all of French West Africa, justice is dispensed by two tribunals: that presided over by a justice of the peace for important affairs, and that presided over by the administrator for other cases. The justice of the peace renders justice following the French code; the administrator according to local custom. A chamber of the Court of Appeals of Dakar is represented at Bamako, whose jurisdiction includes the Sudan and Niger territories. The Assize Court holds a session at Bamako, which also possesses an inferior court. Justices of the peace of wide jurisdiction are found at Kayes, Gao, Mopti, Ségou, Sikasso, Bougouni; other justices of the peace with wide jurisdiction have been created and will soon take up their functions.

One easily imagines the conflicts of principles and method which may arise between the two sorts of tribunals have just indicated.

Before the French conquest,

712 Bambara villages were fortified. They were protected by a triple enclosure of clay blocks following a line of beams that sheltered the sentinels. The first wall enclosed the village and the surrounding gardens, the second circled the interior of the village, and the third surrounded the chief's houses. These walls could be as high as five meters and as wide as two meters at the base. They had a ditch in front of them and were re-inforced by steps. Considerable ruins of these fortifications may still be seen in the Kourolamini at Tènintu (Bougouni circle).

342 House construction. (1) Throughout the Sudan, house construction is carried out during the dry season. The same is true for repairs, except for the most urgent caused by damage from rains, streaming waters, violent winds, or by the ravages of termites.

342 361 787 778 Choice of the site. The choice is often made near a temporary or permanent watercourse where wells may be sunk. A soothsayer or Marabout is next consulted, who reveals the existence of a spirit whose favorite place is the cailcedra; if the spirit is benevolent, the installation is authorized, and the sacred tree becomes the altar of the collectivity. It is bathed with periodic sacrifices.

342 Types of habitation. 1. The round hut with thatched roof (tuba bo); 2 the square or rectangular hut (bili) with flat roof.

401 Round hut. The man drives a stake to which he attaches a cord 1. 50 meters long at the most, which is also tied to the head of a hoe. The man circles the stake and traces a circumference that will be the scheme of the house. No foundation is laid. A series of double pickets (kassassin) is set up around the circumference. A bamboo strip is passed in and out between the double stakes, and this basketwork is raised from the ground up to a height of about two meters.

When the cylinder forming the walls of the base is finished, a door is cut, facing south, 25 centimeters from the ground and 1. 50 meters high. One then plasters with banco, that is, with earth dug not far from the hut by the young people and made into a paste with a mixture of fonio straw, cow dung, and water drawn by the women. The roof is constructed on the ground. A circumference equal to that

1. Information, in part, given by Moussa Traoré, from the village of Gouani (Diemandougou canton), Bamako circle.

173 226 "Despite their tears, the spirit gave the nets to three men who were present and repeated his teaching. The women left the water's edge while the men turned their new knowledge to account. But at the end of a few days the women became hungry; they went to ask for fish which for seven days was denied them. They then united with the fishermen and the Bozo people were the issue of these first marriages."

At first, fishing was reserved for the Bozo people alone and it was only later that the Bambara learned from the Bozo how to make and manage the fishing nets as well as how to carry out the numerous rites centered around them.

173 226 411 The Bambara practiced hunting and gathering before becoming farmers. It is interesting to compare the fishing net with the sling (ndõfere) now mostly used by children. One of its models (Fig. 7) is

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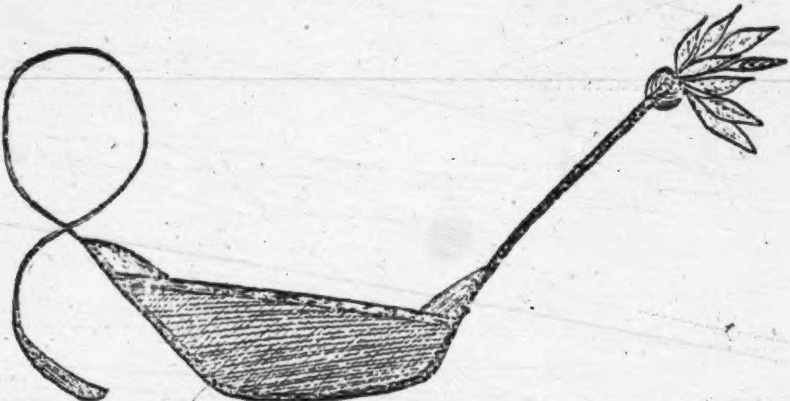

Fig. 7 — Sling (ndõfere) of the ancient Bambara (Drawing by an informant).

described as having been the most ancient of their weapons of the hunt and war. The central portion of this sling which in reality had the shape of a net /102/ (dyoba, literally, big net) woven from nyama fibers and similar to the one used by fishermen, was drawn out into two thongs. The right one (kinintegere, literally, tegere of the right) ended in a sort of a bouquet of wooden lamellae (tegere), making it easier to hold. The left one (missema, literally, little thing) or numan (literally, left) was free. The man would hold the weapon by both ends, putting stones in the net and "blowing on the right thong to give breath" to the sling. Placing his left foot forward, would twirl it rapidly and let go the left thong, thus releasing the projectiles.

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Propitiatory sacrifices were offered on the wooden lamellae and the blood ran along the thong into the net. In addition, the hunter would saturate his weapon with the blood of wounded or killed animals to give his contrivance the victims' strength and to increase his own skill.

The ndõfere was used for a long time as a military weapon.

Weaving

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The invention of weaving is linked to the discovery of cotton cultivation. The latter appeared long before that of millet at a time when the only known tools were those of wood used to scratch /103/ the earth at the base of the wild grasses with which men nourished themselves (1).

[171]
1. See p. 154. The Dogon admit the same priority of weaving over cultivation of cereal grains. See M. Griaule. Dieu d'eau, pp. 31ff.

The myth mentions simultaneously the appearance of cotton and the invention of spindles and shuttle; it does not mention the loom which appeared later. The tale of the manufacture of the first clothing also includes details on dyeing which seems to have been known at a very early date.

When the men returned from the bush where they had been cultivating the norolã sise (commonly known as cram-cram) and the narakata, a kind of couch grass which provided them with edible seeds, they would often abandon their wooden hoes at the crossroads in honor of the Soba spirit.

One day an old man who used to pass nearby was summoned by the spirit, saying: "To all of you who leave your hoes as you pass by, I wish to give something to hide your nakedness; but I will do it if you offer me a sacrifice."

The old man reported this incident to the men of his generation who decided to sacrifice an albino at the crossroads. The spirit then told them to take the seed which they would find at the intersection of the roads and taught them how to sow and harvest it.

564 326 774 Every blacksmith is regarded as the holder of an excellent tere. He is well-intentioned, affable, and never hurts anyone. It is easy to make friends with him, to joke with him, even if one knows him but a short time. The senankuya relationships which he has with other Blacks also contribute to the cordiality of these ties.

[304] The good tere of the blacksmith is brought into play particularly at circumcision which is preferably entrusted to a Gwonna. Being circumcised by a blacksmith causes the wanzo to diminish rapidly, hastens the healing, and improves the tere. A blacksmith is reputed to have the power of transforming himself at will into an animal or a plant. [825] In those places where hyenas are venerated as the animal protectors of a village (dasiri), they are always considered as the blacksmith's ancestors who have undergone metamorphosis. (1).

1. Particularly in the village of Konodimi, situated 21 km. to the southwest of Ségou.

773 564 326 412 The ritual paraphernalia now preserved in each village comprise models of all the tools manufactured by the blacksmiths since their first appearance.

a. Wooden tools The craftsmen first used wood, gradually changing the shape of the objects. From a simple stick /116/ (generally in sunzun) (2) or from a rough-hewn block, they gradually made more

2. Diospyros mespiliformis. The wood of this tree is very hard.

perfect tools, obtaining the shape desired by rubbing and polishing on rocks.

773 564 326 411 The first weapon used in hunting was a throwing instrument in the shape of a boar-spear, the semenkala (from kala, handle, Fig. 9, A). Hewn from one piece, it comprised three distinct parts: (1) the bulonda; (2) the semenu; and (3) the koli (literally, hook). Men threw the object with all their strength at the pursued animal or else they dug into the earth where their prey was hiding with the pointed end (semena) which was often poisoned with a viper's venom. The weapon was the object of blood sacrifices carried out on the koli and destined to increase its strength.

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> incautiously on tattooing as a distinguishing mark of race or even of rank; the tattoo described here has not only been used by people of various origins, but has even been appropriated by all kinds of people as a form of snobbishness.

parallel cuts from temple to lower jaw on either side of the face. Furthermore, these people borrowed the dyamu of the fama (Kouloubali, Dyara, etc.), just as certain servants in some of the French provinces are called by their master's name because they are members of the household bearing that name.

614 701 The elite troops (sofa, ton'-dyon', etc.) were armed with axes (sukala) (2). Important chiefs also had axes, the insignia of

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> 2. An instrument's name derived from suka, a variant of sua, meaning "to pierce." The men armed with axes were, in fact, assigned the special task of "making a breach" in the wall inclosing the settlement under attack.

command, sometimes made of precious metal, such as copper or silver. The axe carried by the fama was made of gold and enchased (3).

> 3. The chronicle relates that Tonmassa, after murdering Dékoro, carried off the golden axe, the symbol of supreme command.

The spear (tama) was often regarded as a weapon of distinction also. The ordinary warriors were armed with bows (kala) and arrows (bimye), the latter usually poisoned.

[177] Guns (marfa) gradually came into use, imported by native traders (Dyula). The chronicle claims that the first firearms were introduced among "the people of Ségou" in Mamari's time by an army from Kong and that these guns were of the blunderbuss type.

614 Chiefs and other notables carried a short sabre (m-pan)
701 slung from their shoulders. These were probably Turkish in
411 origin and were largely ceremonial weapons.

The troops wore no specific uniform. Only a few of the
614 more important personages were recognizable by certain insignia,
714 and it sometimes happened that certain individuals were honored
by distinguishing marks. The chronicle tells us that Mamari
[314] had Ngolo Dyara outfitted in red, a uniform particularly
desired. Likewise, he gave Tonmassa a pair of trousers that
were unusually wide and consequently attracted everyone's attention.

534 Drummers (dunu) and trumpeters (buru) made up a mili-
614 tary clique which also included men who played xylophones (bala)
701 and various accessory instruments, especially bells (tana, veleni,
etc.), and gourds half-filled with pebbles or grain.

The drum beaten to sound a rally, which was, therefore,
in a manner of speaking, the announcer of war, was the tabala.
The cylinder, bowl-shaped and usually made of wood or some-
times pottery, was covered with an ox-hide, often untanned,
which was stretched by thongs tied under the drum. In theory,
766 this drumhead was always changed at the death of a fama, when
the skin was broken as a sign of mourning (1), and was replaced
by the hide of the ox sacrificed in honor of the deceased. The tabala was carried horizontally between two men by means of leather grips and a third individual beat it by means of a ball attached to his wrist by a leather thong.

Other drums were of varying sizes and shapes. Some were carried under the arm (dunkan') or slung from the shoulder (tama); others, mounted on three feet (dange), presented a horizontal

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1. It should be noted that the destruction of the drumhead is comparable with the killing of the dead chief's dog and the presentation of a dead chicken to his relatives. All these are obviously "intentional breaks."

241 After the men have cleared the big weeds, the women come
462 along to finish up. At harvest time, the women and children chase
[411] the birds from the fields with loud cries, sling shots, and by heating
bamboo on a hard rock to cause a detonation. All chase the spar-
[401] rows, partridges, guinea-fowls . . . Harvesting is done together . . .

In addition, by the side of the men's fields there are little women's fields where the women cultivate sorrel, okra, eggplant, tomatoes, beans, and all the condiments. The accessory crops of the women are the *raro*, bananas, manioc, sometimes rice or peanuts (1).

1. Labouret, *Paysans noirs* [Black Peasants].

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4. All Negroes do not resort to the gnâma daha. But then they are not limited to a single means of handling

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Costume of a Bambara hunter.

the problem; they have more than one string to their bow. Immediately after killing a fur-bearing animal, every hunter empties the urine by pressure or cutting.

773 286 Seventeen days after the apprenticeship the old woman died. Her companions continued to spin but since they did not work on wood (1), they had to ask the men to carve spindles, thus revealing their secret.

Some time after this the spirit sent a spider to weave its web at the opening of one of the underground holes used for habitation (see Fig. 6), where lived a man called Bambou Diara. The latter watched the insect and they called in his friend, Kari Mariko. They wished to imitate the web by using the spider's thread which, however, proved too fragile to work with. They then asked the women for their cotton threads. Holding a twig of straw on which he had wound the thread, and having secured the warp, as had the insect, to the two rocks protecting the entrance, Bambou imitated the spider and made a kind of round fan, shaped like the web with coarse loops. When he had woven two, he joined them with a rope made of nyama bark, thus obtaining the first loincloth (mbogo nimba).

Kari Mariko had watched the work and had noticed the difficulty with which his friend threaded the woof through the warp. He got the idea of winding the thread on a thin stick more resistant than the straw and of placing this in a stone trough which would slide easily between the elements of the warp. This was the first shuttle (kuruni). He wound the thread on it in three bobbins, the symbol of masculinity, thus consecrating weaving as man's work. The threads were then stretched horizontally and the shuttle was used vertically, thus cutting across the warp each time it went up or down (Fig. 6).

All came to see the work of the two artisans and named the village where they lived the "village of intelligence, hakilidugu." They learned from them the art of weaving and today the names of the two friends are still invoked over the plate of food which each apprentice must eat before beginning his instruction.

Following the breaking of a taboo in the course of a fishing expedition on the river, the spindle whorls ceased to fall from the sky. Since then, fishermen /105/ produce them by mixing clay with karite oil and drying them in the sun.

● [412] 1. Except for cooking, a woman never uses a knife, an object reserved for men.

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1. Particularly in the village of Konodimi, situated 21 km. to the southwest of Ségou.

2. Diospyros mespiliformis. The wood of this tree is very hard.

773 The first agricultural tool was the *yirewolo* (literally, noble, Fig.
564 9, B), thus named because of its antiquity, *mogokoroba* (literally, old
326 person, ancestor).
412 b. *Stone tools* Later, craftsmen learned to use stone. They used
[172] neolithic axes called "thunder stones" (1) which were used as scissors.

> 1. The Bambara, like other Blacks of the Sudan, attributed divine origin to certain neolithic axes (see p. 71. It would seem that a great many primitive tools had been found by them in the area at the time of their arrival.

Those of the Gwondougou were at all times famous for their solidity. The craftsmen worked together and when they had rough-hewn their models, certain individuals among them were delegated to sharpen these by rubbing them on a rock.

The *farakun* (literally, stone head) (Fig. 9, D) was the first axe the handle of which was invented by an artisan who, having poisoned the sharp edge of his tool, wished to try it out on a tree. He sank the stone into a young tree trunk with the idea that the leaves would dry up of themselves. But he died without having ascertained the result. Later a passerby, having tried in vain to remove the stone from the tree, cut the wood above and below it, and in handling this new tool, was surprised at its efficiency. The use of the hafted axe spread among men who utilized the fiber of the *nyama* to tie the stone to the wood. In addition, the stone could be separated quickly from the handle and used as a knife to cut meat or bones. The handle was used as a pointed stick with which to dig in the ground and to attack animals.

It is probable that hafting was also applied to wooden hoes made in two sections and used /117/ for a long time in areas where there was no hard stone. In fact, a myth concerning the discovery of the cultivation of cotton, which preceded that of cereal grains, mentions the fact that men used to take their handles home, but left the ends of their hoes at the crossroads each day in honor of the local spirit.

c. *Iron tools* Finally, the Gwonna discovered iron and developed the science of metallurgy (2).

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2. The Blacks consider that the discovery of iron and metallurgy are due to the Gwonna. It is, however, not impossible that this technology was imported by craftsmen who came from the Mediterranean.

At a time when the men had left the village of Gwondougou, taking their altars with them, two girls left their home and went to live with two artisans of the Fané and Koumaré families.

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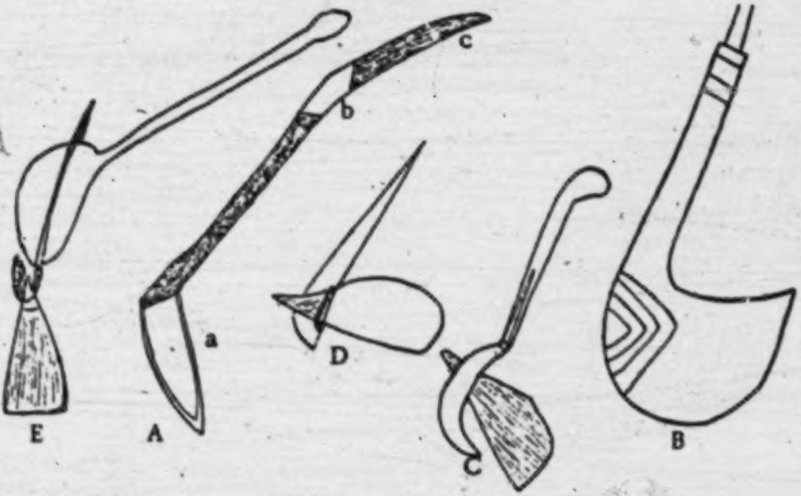

Fig. 9 —Weapons and tools of wood (A and B), of stone (C and D), of iron (E) of the ancient Bambara. (Drawing by an informant).

When the men returned to the village to get some hard stone which they would like to use, they were very much troubled not to find their girls. They dug the ground to search for them, thinking that they had been buried, since men in those days lived in laid-out underground holes. In the course of this work they discovered some rocks which were hitherto unknown to them and which are called farabele. The men thought these rocks beautiful and wished to use them. When placed in fire they were changed and became so hard /118/ that the hammers with which the men attempted to shape them split. The pieces of iron were then used as projectiles to replace the stones of the slings. But the blacksmiths, who had abducted the young girls and who had returned to the village with their wives, saw the new substance and suggested the idea of making axes out of it.

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The first forged tool, the kongobwona (literally, to abandon hunger), is still used by blacksmiths today as a ritual axe (Fig. 9, E).

It is made up of a wooden handle terminating in an enlargement which forms its bulk, and pierced by a bent iron rod which in turn holds the cutting edge (farabye) of the axe proper. The handle is very long, allowing the man to work without bending over.

The tool justifies its name for it brought prosperity to the craftsmen. The symbolism of the different sections shows this: the enlarged part of the consecrated model, which each blacksmith keeps on his altar and which is the object of regular rituals, is hollowed out and holds money, millet, and copper. The iron rod which pierces it represents at its lower extremity the tongue of the oldest of the Gwonna, and at its upper extremity that of the youngest, thus recalling the actions and the words of those who discovered the metal for the benefit of all.

Later, blacksmiths manufactured other models of iron axes and hoes, copying those previously used, but reducing their size.

Each day the end piece of the wooden hoes was abandoned at the crossroads after they had been used in honor of the local spirit. The worker kept only the handle and carved a new tool for the following day. The handles of hoes and axes were considered to be people because they were impregnated with the vital force of those who held them. The farmer left the cutting edge (of stone or iron) in his field and brought home the handle which he placed on his mat at night.

[782] Weapons and tools were the objects of regular sacrifices. The handle was removed and the blood of victims would flow first into the hole used to secure it, then on the cutting edge, while the officiating person recited a prayer.

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Today, the assemblages of ancient tools are called makorobaw ka minew (literally, tools of the great ancestor). Considered as the most respectable and precious /119/ testimony of their civilization, models of each object are kept in sanctuaries called makoroba so (literally, house of the ancestors) which are generally natural caves or holes dug in the ground, reminiscent of primitive habitations. These tools are identified with the ancestors who used them and who were, long before the organization of religious societies, the object of a regular cult. That is why, in deference to this fundamental hierarchy, they are presented to the circumcised in front of the family altars (1) at the time of the initiation of the Komo. Similarly, they

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1. Particularly in the village of Konodimini in the Ségou region.

773 are removed from the sanctuaries, honored, and replaced before the
564 Komo altars during the agricultural and funerary rituals; to fail to ob-
326 serve this rule would constitute the breaking of a taboo and entail
412 the most serious disorders.
778

In the course of the annual ceremony consecrating the dead, these tools are carried to the cemetery and receive as many victims as do the dead, for they represent the ancestors.

The kotigi brings them to the same place on two other occasions: during the agricultural ceremonies carried on after the growth of the ear of corn and after threshing the harvest. Axes and hoes are presented one by one at the tombs of the dead and then, reunited in the center of the cemetery, each of them is used once to cut a branch or to dig the soil. This ritual gesture recalls the use which the ancestors made of them.

The Forge

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The blacksmith establishes his workshop under a shed, usually located in one of the squares or at the entrance to the village. It is the simplest of its kind and involves a minimum of equipment. The forge represents the craftsman: the furnace his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red hot metal is beaten with the hammer, a replica of the gosilande, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and thunder bolts.

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The altar of the forge, sometimes situated to the west of the hearth, contains blackened hoe, pickaxe and axe handles, coal (fininkoro, literally, old coal) ashes kneaded with clay (buguri, literally, ashes of the hearth), all of which belonged to former owners, and finally an axe kongobwona called "mother of the altar," a smaller replica of the ancestral axes.

The bulk of the wood which holds the iron hooks and the blade /120/ is hollowed out and forms a kind of storage divided into three compartments.

The upper one contains money so that whatever happens, the blacksmith will have means to live.

In the central compartment are placed copper and iron, metals which the blacksmith works, as well as water, basic element and preferred seat of Faro, master of the word.

787 surrounded by several others, this designates a powerful master surrounded by his proteges and promises aid. If one cowrie is stuck perpendicularly in another, that pattern is called "little girl in the gourd" and presages the birth of a girl. If two cowries are close together and turned in opposite directions, this is the symbol of sexual intercourse and presages the success of a love affair.

The kola nut is used as often as the chicken for divinatory offering. Here is how the method operates with respect to the nyana dugu-da-siri, of which we shall soon speak. After separating the nut into its two parts, the officiant brings them together again between his thumb and index finger and touches the ground with them, while asking the nyana to make known whether the offering is accepted. Then from a point not far off the ground, he casts the nut against, or a little in front of, that which is supposed to be the seat of the nyana. If the two parts both turn toward the officiant on the sides which were formerly in contact, the reply is favorable.

The officiant then repeats the proceedings in order to find out if the nyana agrees that he should make the offering. A new position, with one part turned toward the officiant and the other toward the ground, means that the answer is favorable once more. In case of doubt or failure, the process is repeated as many as three times.

Stones are also used as intermediaries for divination. On ●[412] top of a flat stone -- usually one used for crushing condiments [137] is placed another stone, also flat but smaller. After having reflected deeply upon the object of his inquiry, the diviner holds the smaller stone with his fingertips and guides it slowly over the surface of the larger stone. He then interprets any slight resistance that developes as the smaller stone is moved around,

There is another method very similar to the one just described. The diviner places a gourd filled with water on some kind of rag or straw crown which water-carriers, in particular, place on their heads beneath the vessel to be carried. He rocks the gourd gently to and fro and then, as before, interprets the resistance produced.

b. Pottery

323 Pottery is entirely fashioned and fired by the women of the blacksmiths' caste, masters of the fire. The modelling is done in two ways, either by hollowing a mass of clay with the aid of a cylindrical stone (2), or by rolling a cylinder of clay around a mold. The decoration is generally a double line of chevrons imprinted around the neck and the foot by the potter's twisted bracelet. The firing is done in the open air over a wood fire.

c. The Forge

326 Wood, iron, metals in general, are fashioned by the blacksmiths. The blacksmith's workshop and the objects he makes are simple, but they are rich in symbolic representations. "The forge represents the artisan: the furnace is his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red-hot iron is beaten by the hammer, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and the thunderbolt." (3) With his rudimentary tools spread on the ground under a shelter, the artisan forges all farming instruments, the principal one being the hoe. The
412 hoe, [97] according to its shape, is considered to be male or female.
831 The female hoe has a short handle with an ovoid swelling at the end,
[801] into which sticks the point of an iron triangle. The three sides of this triangle are three arcs of a circle; three, symbol of masculinity, represents here the clitoris, the male principle which sustains the
[773 double, the *dya*, of the woman. (According to myth, it was with the
241] aid of this part of the body that the first being of female sex inaugurated agricultural labors.) The male hoe has a slightly trapezoidal iron part which is attached to the handle in the same manner. The four sides symbolize the femininity of man sustained by the prepuce. Thus,

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2. M. Griaule, *Masques dogons* [Dogon
[531] Masks].

3. G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].

412 831 the peasant digs with the male hoe and covers with the female hoe; the work done with the female double of the peasant and the male double of the wife symbolizes the sexual union. (1)

1. M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, "L'agriculture des Bozo," [Bozo Agriculture] Journal des Africanistes [Ed., Journal de la Société des Africanistes, 1949.]

d. Basketry

285 Basketry is done by everyone, men and women; it plays a large part in the construction and furnishing of the house. Sometimes the lofts are immense baskets, woven on the diagonal. In certain regions a great mat is wrapped around the exterior wall of the round hut. The doors of mud huts are often coarse mats woven diagonally [531] which are placed before the opening. But much finer mats, made from fibers of different colors and with geometric designs with a symbolic meaning, cover the ground for sitting or sleeping.

e. Weaving, Clothes, Ornaments

291 [824] The first article of clothing was the fiber skirt made from the nyama (Bauhinia reticulata, or Bauhinia thonningii) and the covering for the sexual parts which are still worn during religious ceremonies.

[173] Mythology designates cotton as the first fiber to be woven.

286 Weaving is one of the most widespread techniques. Cotton, spun by the women, is woven by the men, in olden times by the captives, who work in the open air near the huts, in the shade of trees in the courtyards or in the public places. A primitive loom made of four vertical wooden parts connected by horizontal shafts and driven by pedals weaves long bands. The warp and woof form a ground stich and symbolize a being of intelligence and eloquence. Moreover, a science of the bands exists which is based on the symbolism of colors, designs, and numbers.

822 The Bambara distinguish three fundamental colors: white, red, and black. Each of these three tints has its history and its role

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171 traditions plastiques de l'Afrique noire
[Variety and Unity of the Plastic Art
Traditions of Black Africa].

532 A great variety of wood (4) is available to the sculptor, who

4. Passim, H. Lavachery, "L'art noir d'Afrique et son destin" [Negro Art of Africa and its Destiny], Présence africaine.

chiefly uses fine-grained species whose fibers are not very sensitive, and who avoids woods that are too hard and too dense. The artist ●[412] works with green wood, generally with an adze, or chip-axe, which probably is derived from the hoe. This instrument serves for rough chipping the mass and for establishing the secondary volumes; it gives the statue a singular "faceted" aspect. The work is completed [412] by means of a knife and gouges. A skillful technique makes it possible to give the wood a patina; it is blackened by burying the pieces in certain types of mud, by being immersed in palm oil, and daubed with lampblack. The wood is reddened by applying plasters made by grinding barks and making pastes from them. The objects so treated are [105] lengthily polished with skins and take on the sombre, brilliant aspect of old bronzes. The patina of the pieces is an important element of their beauty.

The art observes stylistic conventions, such as the deformation of normal appearances. In the structure of the mass, convention regulates the proportion of the parts, of the solid portions and the hollows; it regulates the development of the secondary volumes and of the surfaces of the different planes, their extent and their lines of contact. In its volume, the statuary obeys an almost immutable canon: to a cylindrical trunk is attached a head that is enormous in proportion to the other members, which are confined to narrow limits; the lower members are much shorter than in nature. The oversized head is a convention related to ancestor worship. The head is sculpted in concave style, and the entire figure is subordinated to a marked geometrization.

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531 The blacksmiths also work gold by using the "lost wax" method, or by hammering, embossing anf fixing thin leaves of gold,

787 With the same equipment the diviner sometimes operates differently. Setting the gourd firmly on the crown that supports it, he then taps it two or three times with his middle finger. Then, it is claimed, he can hear special sounds, which are revelations by the water-spirit and which he alone can understand.

In short, there is an endless number of divining practices and here, if anywhere, the old saw which says that the spirit blows where, when and how it listeth, is singularly appropriate. And nothing is more accommodating than human credulity. It [198] goes without saying that there are some remarkable ventriloquists among the Bambara, who give such talented support to inanimate objects that the latter become veritable oracles. A piece of horn stuck into the ground or a mute block of wood are thus transformed through such artifice into mediums that answer anyone on any subject.

[828] [154] There are also many highly suggestible individuals who readily fall into wakeful or hypnotic states, during which they reveal hidden things.

787 763 Another practice among the Bambara is the use of the kolon' kala (1) which is specially amenable to hypnotic suggestion. When a suspicious death requires search for a murderer, the corpse is often used for the discovery. It is carried on the heads of [138] two impressionable young men, who are then assumed to be possessed by the soul of the deceased. The lugubrious remains are rapidly borne through the settlement or the countryside, disregarding obstacles, until it finally stops of itself at a spot where the murderer or some revelatory sign is to be found.

787 A kind of effigy is often used instead of a corpse. This is made of a kolon' kala to which is tied a little bag containing bits of the body (finger-nails, hair, etc.) and which is wrapped in a cloth. The effigy plays the role of the corpse.

[412] 1. This is the wooden pestle used in all native kitchens to crush grain and condiments.

778 794 532 of the initiates' word" and are exposed to fire to increase this power (Fig. 10, 4). Beside them, /131/ a large red stain, dyoli ɲikin, painted in ochre, states that man is the sacrificer, that the cult has immolation as its basis. Of such a man it is said that: "he reckons with the proof of the blood (1)" (Fig. 10, 5).

Above the bed which consists of a simple mat placed on the ground, three engraved lines symbolize the man and two four lines the two women who alternately share his bed (Fig. 10, 6).

778 794 532 413 In certain villages, the drawings are made by an instrument called ngwoni, used during the rituals of the year's "renewal" (2).

The point of baobab wood, which is used for engraving, is as slim as a slat and fits on to a kind of racket made of sunzun wood which holds a net of da fibers. The hide of a male goat, called soni wolo ni (literally, soul of the skin of sacrifice), and two handles of ngolobe wood (3) complete the assemblage. The net, made of sixteen cotton threads dyed with red ochre, kolo, is called ngwoni kene ba (literally, great space of the ngwoni) and represents Faro.

778 794 532 Before being used, the instrument is washed with water which will be used later to cook the food for the family. Next, tomatoes are pressed on the net and the juice runs into the hide which forms a pocket; holding the point in the right hand and the handle in the left, one then makes the drawings on the wall of the česo. The seeds of the fruit remain in the pouch until the following year to serve as a testimony to the offering. Next, with a red hot knife the following lines are engraved on the object: four lines, representing Faro, and two 16 lines, multiples of four, the female symbol. After each cut, "a rag saturated with fresh water is placed on it to soothe the pain." The frame is saturated with kola nut extract and four dots, the womb of women, are also marked with a black stone, kolofin. An egg is then smashed on the object to "refresh the soul of the ensemble."

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1. Dyoli tamaše mine ba.

2. Particularly at Banankoroni.

3. Combretum michrantum.

304 292 throughout the seclusion, the cap itself guaranteeing protection of his head against the rays of fire from the fifth sky, koblẽnkaba (see Fig. 14).

Seven large black dots, vertically disposed, represent the child, 3,
304 and his dya, 4, as well as the man, 3, which he will later become and
292 his future wife, 4. They also insure his protection from east to west.
531 The two other dots insure it from north to south. The cross of small dots recalls the sumangolos, the "realization of the world" (1) and the purification obtained after the operation and the loss of the wanzo. Eight tassels (Faro's number) are placed on the cap, whose fringes were spun by a grandmother and are sewn on to "attract the forces of space." A ninth at the top is blackened with the spirit's earth. With his head thus covered, the circumcised boy is placed in the protective and purifying light of Faro. To operate upon a child without putting the cap on him would in fact amount to "bowing down before the acts of Mousso Koroni."

On his part, the blacksmith-circumciser makes preparations for the
304 operation, the essential instrument of which is a knife called boloko
326 kumba moru (literally, knife head, mother of the circumcision).
413 He himself has forged it and carries it in a small leather sheath hung from his hip (see Fig. 15) (2).

The handle is slipped into a sort of iron sheath closed at one extremity called kurukun (literally, ball head) and open at the other called sukala (literally, sorcerer's handle). It is forged from one piece with the blade dyomuru fala (literally, orphan of the knife) and called "without pity" in archaic language.

The knife and its handle on the one hand, together with the metal sheath on the other, symbolize the person of the circumcised boy and the foreskin which is to be removed.

1. See p. 56, Fig. 4.

[582] 2. The endogamy among blacksmiths is attributed to their role in circumcision and to the fact that their tools, especially this knife, are impregnated with the wanzo of the adolescents.

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Before the operation, the blacksmith washes the handle, an act which parallels /182/ the washing of the penis, and draws on the blade ritual designs either in charcoal or with boiled millet (1).

> 1. Some artisans have, once and for all, engraved the ritual designs on the blade.

The three figures *če* *mani* *saba* (literally, three little male persons) represent the first three circumcised men (Gwonna, Gwondo, and Gwonkè) who belonged to the blacksmiths' families at the village of Gwondougou. Every descendant of these ancestors must be circumcised like them. In making the drawing the operator says:

"Gwonna, Gwondo, Gwonkè, you have discovered iron and you withstood the pain (of the first circumcision), you feel shame neither by night nor by day; our feet are placed in your footsteps; the iron did not shame you, let it not shame us; it is the will of Faro... attack, attack, attack" (these last three words are addressed to the knife)(2).

> 2. *Gwonna,* *gwondo,* *gwonkè,* *aw* *ye* *neke* *damene,* *ka* *neke* *gale* *munyu,* *aw* *ma* *malo* *šu* *ani* *kle,* *an* *se* *daledo* *an* *se* *danola,* *neke* *maw* *malo* *a* *ka* *na* *an* *malo,* *faro* *hakili* *do,* *šu* *šu* *šu.*

The four figures, *muso* *mani* *nani* (literally, four little female persons), are the first four excised women, the inventors of pottery, who were the wives of these blacksmith.

The bird is the *tatugu* *koroni,* the incarnation of the eight ancestors of the blacksmiths. It recalls that circumcision is painful; hard, hot, comparable to the effects of fire, and that it is necessary to labor and suffer in order to withstand the cutting knife. This is also what the artisan recalls when, as he operates the children, he sings several times over:

"The knife is hot; the timorous man cannot stand it. It is a purification" (3).

> 3. *A* *ka* *gwã,* *če* *ǰito* *tise* *ka* *muñu,* *saniyali* *dò.*

304 532 413 The foreskin, which is tied by a string (drawn at the center of the blade) at the moment of the operation, is placed upon the pembele (black rectangle) and the cutting knife is tapped with a small wooden mallet, gossilã (drawn at the tip of the knife). These three figures receive during operation the offering of the first spurt of blood from the circumcised boy.

The line, which crosses the blade along the middle, separates the bird and the ancestors who gave proof of courage from the instruments used for the circumcision. As a division it symbolizes first of all that each grade of circumcised boys must be considered apart from the others. This is its social meaning. But the delicacy of the line itself has a meaning which applies to the individual: each one must, in his own image, be morally /183/ simple, just, and sensitive. By conforming to the rule symbolically indicated by the design, the individual will become a member of the elite.

304 787 821 The date of the operation is fixed when Mousso Koroni's star, sigi dolo (Sirius), rises in the evening at a certain point in the east (1).

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1. See note 1 p. 47. To determine the date, however, the ndomo society may be consulted, which sometimes postpones it to keep its members longer.

After the boys to be operated have been counted, each gets ready, and on the appointed day the mother washes her son's penis with water in which an iron axe or hoe has been soaked. Then she prepares a dish [262] of rice, ye farina to "dish of man's bravery," which the child eats before he is led to the place of the operation, called yorola sakole "reserved place," located in the bush.

304 326 When all are gathered together the blacksmith-circumciser operates upon each one in turn after he has made them sit down in a circle on the ground. Pulling and twisting the foreskin, he ties it with the string which he keeps taut by securing its extremity between his toes. He next places the member upon the pembele, rests the knife /on the foreskin/ and taps /it/ with the wooden mallet. In this way he cuts off the foreskin while saying the following words:

"Circumcised one, your father, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, the father of that one too, the ear (the genitals) of the ancestors of the latter have withstood (the pain); you, yourself, withstand it as

304 326 /184/ they did. Faro, Teliko, Soba! You who are a man, your number is three; three of the penis, three of the twins, designs of the penis, it is the tradition, withstand it; Faro!" (ter) /repeat three times/(1).

1. Bolokodẽ i fa, i moke, o ta fa,
o ta fa were, o ta fa klo masamaw ye
munyu, i yere ka munyu u cǒko la,
faro, teliko, soba, o ye če ta saba ye,
wulu wo, flani wo, kolo nyeke, lada
do, i ka munyu; faro (ter).

304 532 413

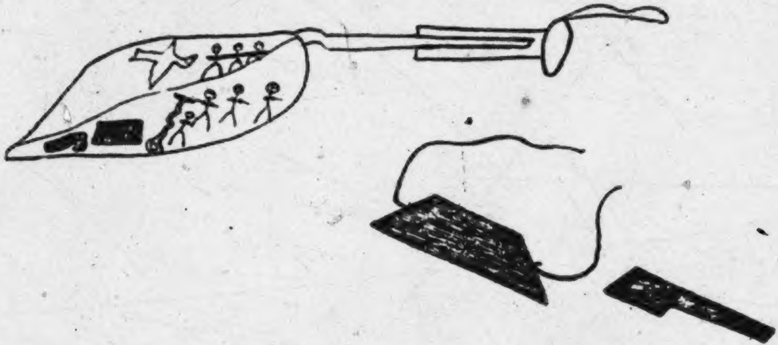

Fig. 15. — The circumcision knife decorated with ritual designs: three men and four women (representing the number seven); the bee eater symbolizing fire; the string; the small board; and the hammer used for the operation (these last two objects are reproduced on a larger scale to the right). (Drawing by an informant.)

304 326 831 After the removal, the operator makes scars upon the child's penis, called faro nyeke (literally, signs of Faro). Under the muscle wulu dyuru (literally, rope of the penis), a small hole is carefully made. Since the penis is considered a source of strength, the muscle which maintains it and erects it binds the circulation of the blood and helps man in all his acts. It is through this muscle that man transmits nerves to his children. A straight organ, firmly held in check, keeps the man and his descendants from numerous illnesses; the aim of this mutilation is to obtain complete and well formed foreskins and clitoris in the children of the party concerned. After the perforation, 304 326 843 the operator places in the orifice a little pepper and tomato juice while saying:

304 seven years and has a strictly religious character (5). The gnénasonnaba, surrounded by his council, the gouatigi, sacrifices to the
dasiri; a hen is offered to the shades of the ancestors, the family boli
are /173/ taken out of their dirty skins and sprinkled with blood, and
all the village makes merry. People go in procession to the place
304 where the blacksmith tattooer is, and as long as the operation lasts
533 the women clap their hands, marking time for the blacksmith, who
sings as he operates, and together they join in the chorus.

The tattoo, the chief distinctive mark of the people, is made
304 with a knife having one or two blades. The two-bladed knife cer-
413 tainly makes a tattoo which stands out more and has more detail, but
it also requires more skill on the part of the operator, and, doubtless
for this reason, it is relatively unusual.

At present a great many Bambara no longer wear the mark of
314 their tribe on their cheeks. The Moslems have contributed greatly
to the abolition of this painful practice. Before the arrival of Europeans,
under the reigns of Ahmadou and Madani, very severe punishments
were inflicted on anyone who tattooed himself or had his children
tattooed. One should not think, however, that tattooing was ever a
[787] strict and unqualified requirement; in this connection everything is
entrusted to the decision of diviners and sorcerers, of djiné, or gnéna,
genii, and especially of the family boli, which are consulted and
sacrificed to in order to find out whether or not it is necessary to wear
the marks of the tribe. Thus it is not unusual to find that some members of a family are tattooed and others are not, and that those who are not tattooed have their children tattooed, while the tattooed refrain from doing so. This ceremony is carried out every seven years, and the head of the family may be away when the blacksmith tattooer comes by, so that the sacrifices do not take place, and the tattooing of the children is put off until seven years later. When they have

5. This ceremony takes place only once every seven years. The girls are always fairly big when their chests are tattooed.

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a) The Acacia albida called kokuruni (Banankoroni).

Plate I

b) In the foreground, baskets of spiralled straw called yugu (Ségou market).

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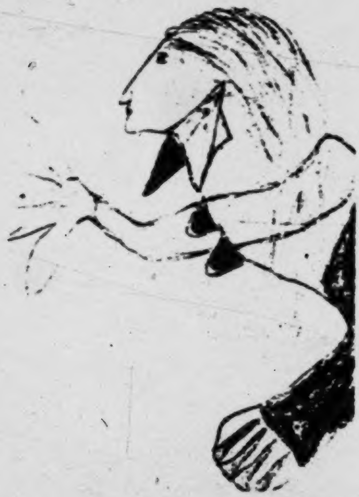
c) Drawing representing Faro (Sama).



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a) Ngoyo tomatoes (Ségou market).

Plate II

b) Faro's water gourd (Ségou market).

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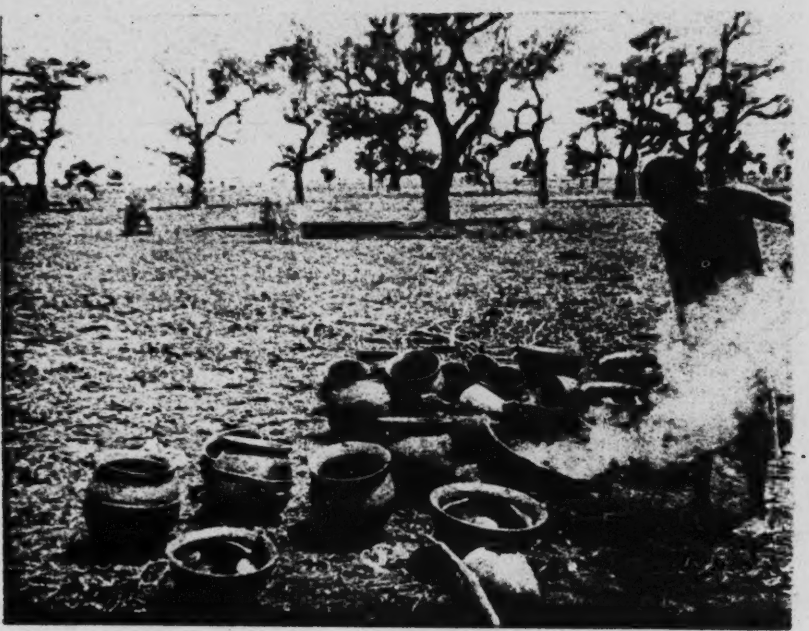

(a) Pot dipping after firing (Konodimini).

Plate IV

(b) Communal anvil, kula, of the blacksmiths (Konodimini).

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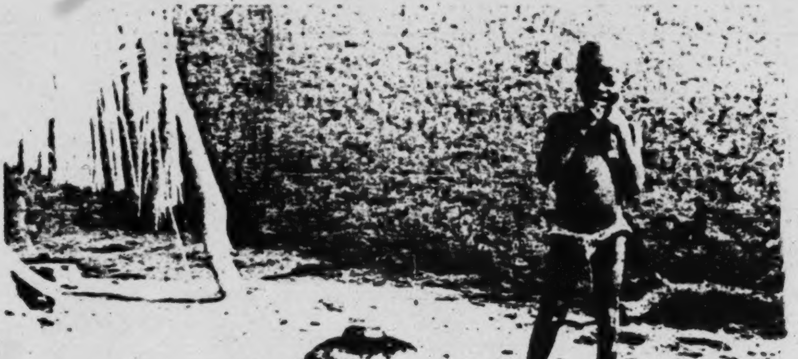

771 came to me to complain that [332] my Negroes were using a
797 satala (1) to take water from his jug.

● 415 783 177 1. A kind of saucepan made of copper or tin, of European origin, used by Moslem Sudanese for their ritual ablutions.

" 'What difference does that make to you?' I asked him.

" 'What difference does it make!' he answered with an angry air.

"And with that he favored me with the following astonishing line of reasoning:

" 'Now you see, I am not a (Moslem) marabout and if the marabouts take water from my jar with the satala, the water that remains in the jar will necessarily be sanctified because it came into contact with that vessel. My children and I drink this water and, since we don't know how to salaam and don't fast, and since we eat pork, God (2) will punish us for having failed to obey his orders. For, after all, any water that has touched a satala makes a marabout (3) of the person who drinks it. That is what I heard from my father."

2. That is, in Niany's mind, the nyana called Ngalla (Allah) by the Bambara.

3. That is, an initiate of Ngalla (Allah).

776 The net result is that, on the whole, Ngalla (Allah) is regarded as one of the nyana which we have mentioned and for which the Bambara has a superstitious respect without for that matter being a worshiper. He avoids any contact with all that concerns the nyana, not because of hostility, but for fear of incurring its wrath on account of some impurity. Just as he may call upon any convenient nyana for aid, so he asks the help of

776 day by the soli (those who are to be excised). It is a kind of semolina
782 (very fine couscous called basi) which is eaten with an /88/ extremely
304 spicy sauce of smoked fish. It is called basi k'li because, in order to
262 provide this repast, the little girls are obliged to run from door to door,
clapping their hands, singing and begging (k'li).

Among the invisible wanderers, there is one which is strongly
776 reminiscent of our "werewolf." It is the souroukou, an imaginary
825 hyena, whose supposed existence has brought about a strange practice.
514 Every evening one sees groups of little boys and groups of little girls,
turning aside a little into the bush: they all go in a band to take their
last precautions and attend to the wants of nature -- union is strength
even against the gnéna.

776 Many other gnéna are among this group that roams the village; they flutter in the b'lon, or entrance huts, they live in horrible filth, hung over doors, on the walls, and on the posts that support the terrace roofs, and the only hangings to be seen anywhere are eggshells, heads of millet, fruit pits, and seeds from the bush, which are offered to these friends as saraka. Nor are private huts without them, for the gnéna roll in the ashes of the hearth, snore on the mats, and take the air in the conari (1); there are some everywhere.

● [415] 1. The conari is a baked earth receptacle used for water, beer, and cooking food.

Finally, there are gnéna or djiné who are powerful. Without mercy for their enemies, whom they abandon to all kinds of sorcery and evil spells, they are full of both attention and consideration for their friends. They can cause sickness, poverty, and other calamities to descend on a family, a village, or a whole region; but they can also side with them against a visible or invisible enemy; they can protect them, exorcise anything, and grant real blessings to each and all. The characteristic trait of the gnéna, in fact, is not that they can refrain from doing harm, but that they can also do good directly by performing a good act. Some choose to live in a rock, others prefer a knoll or a large tree near the village, and there are those who

881 as ugly as possible, and plays the fool. Armed with a long stick -- the stick which is used to stir the gruel that is simmering on the fire (1) -- she darts out of the village, agile as a gazelle. Her companions all chase her at a full run, giving many shouts; they circle around the walls four times. At every fork in the path they form a circle, dance with frenzy, and throw large handfuls of basi and smoked fish sauce to the spirits without keeping count. "Dégé dounlé, idiots," shouts the smeared girl, and all her retinue repeats with ever increasing enthusiasm: "Nalouma, big fool. . . . " And this day, which is not very edifying, is full of delights for the little Bambara girls who are to be excised.

The little soli boys are satisfied with sacrificing to n'tomo, a good fetish which is their protector, but although they dance wearing masks with six, seven, and sometimes eight horns, they do not [785] flagellate themselves, or at least flagellation is not required on this day.

2. The Soli Si Festival, or the Vigil of the Circumcised

Here we are on the eve of the circumcision! It is black night, d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer, hums and foams in the earthenware bowls, and a thin mist comes out of all the huts and envelops them. Here karité grease sputters as it melts in the pot and browns the skin of a chicken or the leg of a goat; there one hears the loud laughter of people with full stomachs, the hiccups of a glutton, the dry and decisive sound of two heavy lips releasing five great /178/ sticky fingers glued to each other by a remainder of gruel. Their foreheads [30] decorated with beads in a kind of crown of white, red, and yellow, 291 the colors of the rainbow, and their bodies draped in blankets, Roman style, groups of women glide silently like shadows along the alleys, carrying on their heads huge gourds full of dégé, millet flour mixed with honey water and milk.

[415] 1. To-n-galama: a stick with a large, flattened end, used to stir gruel in the pot.

881 until they are completely healed; for it is not until evening, when the setting sun reddens the horizon and takes on its bloody hue that [292] they re-enter the village. From this day on they wear a costume (all yellow if they are Bambara) of trousers, a blouse, and on their heads a kind of handkerchief tied under the chin (4). They pass the time in making mats, singing, striking together gourd disks strung on a stick, and especially in eating, "for they are being stuffed," and in sleeping. /181/

881 304 But in speaking of the boys, I forgot the little girls! They undress under the tree nearest to the sacred karité. Naked as a worm, each one when her turn comes runs at top speed with her abdomen to the ground and throws herself into the arms of a woman, also of the blacksmith caste, who immediately cuts her. On a braided platter, [285 445 189] made of fine, pliable grass, the mother or her substitute receives the bloody fragment which will be a grigri, a talisman or good-luck charm for the house, and while the gunpowder speaks, the disabled girl, pretending not to be suffering at all from the loss of her clitoris, goes back to her place, and another replaces her.

881 [482] The session ends with the last girl, and the crowd breaks out in a song of joy and triumph. The mother, the eldest sister, or a serving woman wraps the excised girl in a big white cloth and carries her astride her back to the village to the hut which has been prepared for her (1). This carrying, so laughable in itself (they can walk, even

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4. In some villages, instead of the yellow handkerchief the circumcised have a cap with two points. In Bani country the circumcised wear the blouse and handkerchief, or cap, and nothing more.

[621 346] 1. Each village is divided into quarters. The excised girls of each quarter have their hut in that quarter.

881 Moment by moment the old women come closer and the word
[887] "Kouyo ê, Kouyo ê" resounds louder and louder. But now they come
out, and their bodies move as if they were made of rings, so closely do they imitate a worm surprised by a ray of sunshine who is hastily returning to its nest in the ground. With their pointed chins, wrinkled skins, and toothless jaws, they look like real savages as they furiously scrape two iron rods; on their bald heads they wear dirty towels, the filthy appurtenances of sorceresses, wound without skill or taste. With spear in hand the young citizens appear in full trousers; they wear caps with double points or loud-colored turbans with long fringes, and their bodies disappear under loose blouses still all perfumed with the musty smell of the bottom of a storage bin, all stiff and shiny under a paste of starch. They leap and shout, they brandish their arms, assume the look of warriors, and especially assume such a look of conceit that one's laughter is unloosed.

After the boys come the girls, fanning their "alms purses" all
● [415] decorated with cowrie shells; these are platters braided of fine, pliable grass, doubtless those onto which the bloody remnants were placed on the morning of the soli si, or arms' vigil. They come forward stiffly, and glide rather than walk over the ground, for their feet are weighed
[301] down by small chains and iron rings, and can hardly be lifted. Gold or copper crescents pull down the septum of their noses, a handful of striped periwinkle shells hangs from the lobe of each ear, several coral necklaces encircle their heads, and everywhere, chiefly around their necks, are pieces of amber interspersed by grigris and beads of
881 every size and shade. Bambara of the nourhou, or blacksmith caste, the Marka turned Bambara, and every Bambara girl /196/ of more or
302 less mixed stock whose head was not shaved at the da woro, or festival of the sixth day, has their hair braided, and on top of the crest which ends in two small braids along each ear, there is an odd little bundle, a handful of hair. This is in memory of the eighth day after the girl's birth, the day when she was given her name, and what she is wearing is nothing less than what the Bambara call "the hair of the womb" (1). If this has been lost, as is usually the case, the

761 on the branches of the sacred tree under which the fetish dwells and
782 at the door of its temple, and the members of its staff know how to
764 extol their god. Under these conditions they are without pity; they
778 bleed the bereaved family white, so that the tax demanded by our
circle officers (2) is nothing compared to the tax that they have to pay. /227/

782 What do they not have to give for a sacrifice to the Komo, for
764 example? The whole house is turned upside down to find goats, dogs,
[824] kola nuts, roosters, and hens, gnâma-n-kou (Amormum melegueta),
and djalakouma (a plant whose name I do not know). The family needs all this, cost what it may, and if they have to buy it all they have to pay double or triple the value of the objects, for others make profits from their necessity. First a dog or a goat is sacrificed to appease the fetish and pay respects to it. Then to find out whether it is satisfied and its hatred assuaged, two red roosters and two hens with golden necks bite the dust. A bara (1) (gourd) full of gnâma-n-kou fruit and another full of djalakouma are offered. One portion of these fruits is used for holy water (2); the other is sold for the benefit

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[651] 2. The head tax is 3.50 francs per person and 5 francs for the servants of Europeans. Here France is surely not a "tyrant," but a tender mother.

●[415 824] 1. This bara (a large pumpkin /courge/ with a small opening at the top) can hold from 18 to 20 liters of liquid. The true gourd is half of a pumpkin.

782 764 824 2. The holy water of the Komo is made of roots and leaves of the djalakouma and the fruit of the

4: Henry--264 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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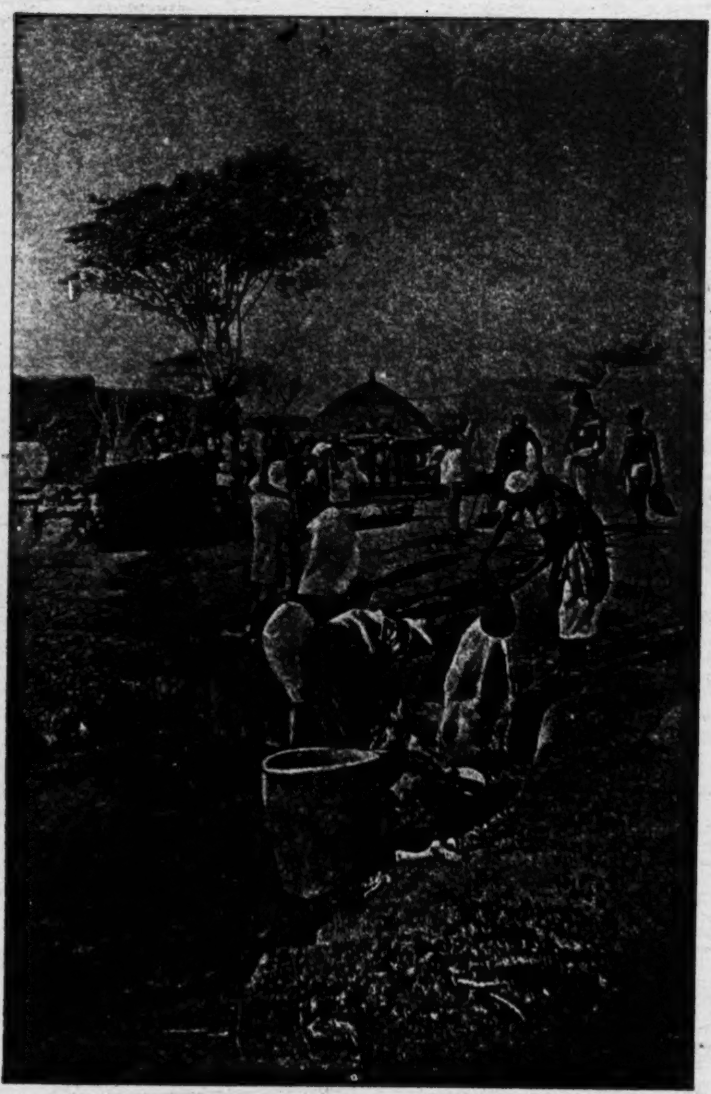

At the edge of the well, in Bambara country.

4: Henry--265 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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The Ségou bank of the Niger.

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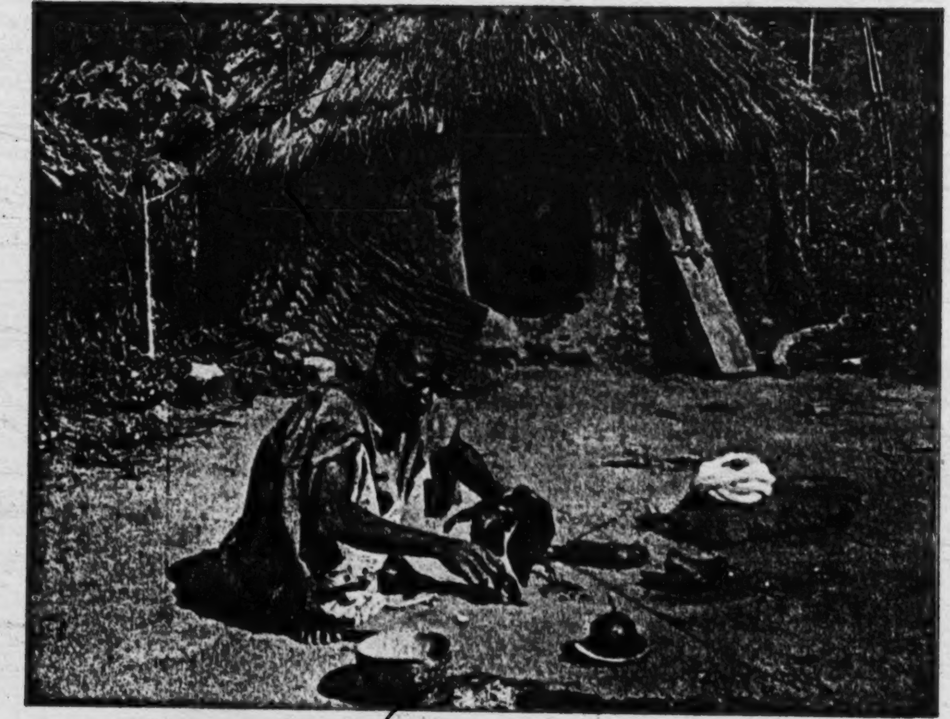

Sacrifice of a hen to the "family boli."

4: Henry--272 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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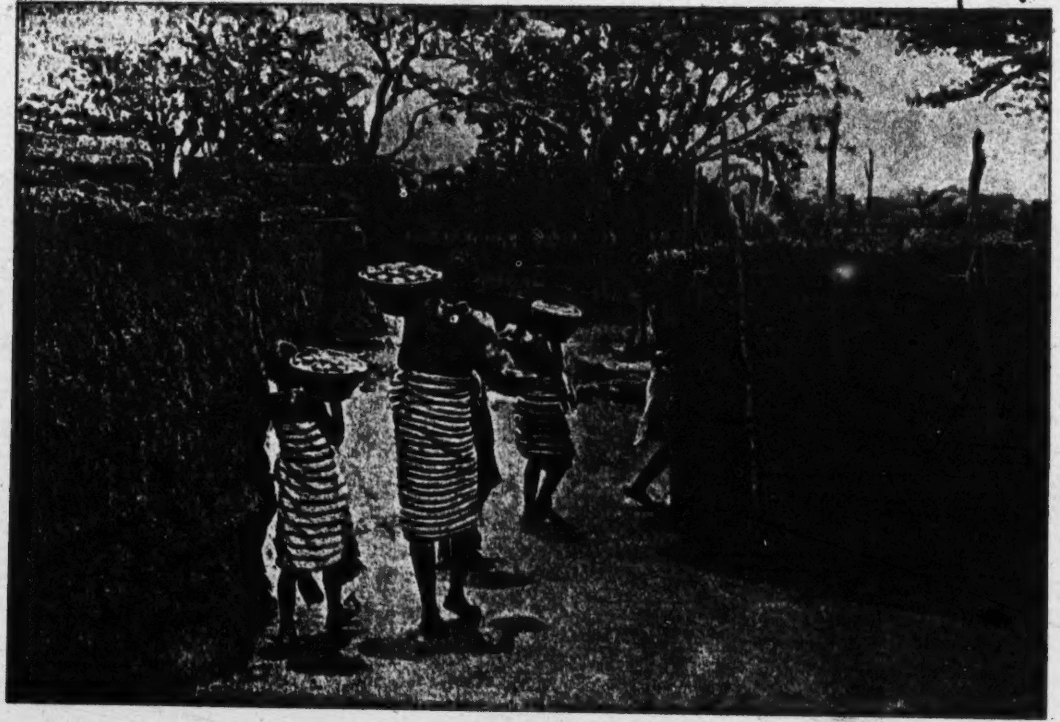

Bambara wedding.

The meal is carried to the young bride and her maids of honor (at Moundjirila).

4: Henry--283 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

178 534 the Nama are made of bamboo and smaller than those of the Komo. The big instrument here is the drum which is beaten with a bent iron rod. The syncopation is given on the bass drum which is wooden; the vibrations of the skins stop, and one would say that the sound is the knock of a bone that is broken clean; it gives one the shivers.

178 The Komo is always most carefully hidden, and one has to belong to the village to know in which hut it dwells. The main parts of the fetish are enclosed in baskets just like those used for transporting cotton, but three iron rods (3) on which /148/ sacrifices are made are usually kept in the skin of a striped cat. The Nama lives under a tamarind tree outside the village and has a beehive for a tabernacle. [417] The whole thing is surrounded by a djasé, a kind of palisade made of coarse mats which hides from the uninitiated both the hive and the receptacle into which the remainder of the victims' blood is poured.

178 346 The Nia and the Wara, or Djara, have round huts surmounted by conical thatch roofs. While the first is inside the village, the second is always outside at one of the entrances. The Kono has a square house with a flat terrace roof. It is always decorated with small bells fastened by lines on which are hung skulls of dogs and goats that have been sacrificed. Usually, if not always, it faces the inside of the village. The Magna does not have a temple strictly speaking, but it has its altar, a round turret surmounted by a receptacle [824] to receive the blood of victims. It is outside the village and always under a silk-cotton tree (Eriodendron anfractuosum -- kapok tree).

178 The Komo is equipped with a jointed mask and a cloak made of feathers of guinea fowl, hens, etc., which are used for the sacred dance. By means of a stick which the feather cloak hides from sight,

3. In the presence of the uninitiated these sticks are called Komo djoloko, and (again so that none of the mysteries will be revealed) the warada, those who speak in the name of the idol, are called djoloko samana, "those who carry the chains of Komo."

764 This ceremony, as beautiful as it is touching, ends with this prayer: "Give us rain when winter comes, give us a plentiful harvest, a vigorous old age, children and wives, and give us prosperity." [482] Four strong fellows then come and take the corpse on their shoulders and, preceded by children and grandchildren who shout and cry, they carry it to the cemetery at almost a run, and the whole crowd follows them (1). The men line up around the grave, the women place themselves behind them, and the sons of the deceased go down into the grave. They undo the mat, take their father in their arms, and lay him in the niche on his right side, facing east. Then they tear a little of the shroud, or white blouse, of the buried man, and one of those present takes the strip torn off and holds it outside of the grave. [417] The children build an arch above the corpse out of small boards that are sometimes worked and colored, but most frequently out of wood chips (faléma) or large slabs of earth dried in the sun. While they are building, the youths mix mortar to stop up the cracks and thoroughly coat the whole structure. The women clap their hands and then sing in low tones to the sound of the drums.

764 782 When the work is done, the children come out of the grave, and the person in charge of the funeral ceremony comes forward, on his shoulder a hoe with the blade hafted in reverse and in his hand a gourd of water. He leans over the grave. The drums stop beating, the women are silent, and he pours water on the head of the buried man three times, saying: "See /221/ this water, do not be angry, forgive us, give us rain in winter and a plentiful harvest (1). Whether

1. In Bani country I have seen the spear of the deceased carried with great ceremony. The oldest son from time to time threw a few cowrie shells onto the corpse, and the crowd rushed to get them. This djansa is seldom performed, and the custom is not at all general.

596 614 most of the great empires have survived their founders for only a short time.

More often than not, a "young master" has a position in the community which is considerably less pleasant than that of a domestic slave who lives alongside him and ostensibly under his command. A domestic slave can escape or stir up all sorts of difficulties that result in the diminution of the patrimony. There is no such thing to be feared from a member of the community; should he be punished, banished, or leave, the common property does not suffer. If he goes away and is successful, he will not fail to share his good fortune with the community. Indeed, anyone who loses interest in the welfare of his community runs the risk of being cut off from it. He must actually live with the community; if not, he is treated as a dead member. [185] He must be present for anything that transpires. The chronicle of Ségou gives an example. Quarrels broke out among Ngolo's sons when he died. Nyana-n-koro, who had been favored by his father, thought that this affection designated him as the successor to the deceased. Ngolo, however, had expressly chosen Ma-n-son in conformity with custom. Nevertheless, confident of winning, Nyana-n-koro tried to oust Ma-n-son by force, but in vain. In the course of these fratricidal struggles, certain members of the community remained neutral, hoping in this way to retain the good will of the victor. They gained nothing, however, because Ma-n-son was the winner and turned against them. He sentenced his brothers Séri and Ba to a sort of exile from the community, giving each of them a token share of the estate and ordering them not to increase it.

421 596 614 Since property is held in common, the fa is obliged to give some benefits to all the members of the community. This is why, when necessary, he provides the marriage payment that enables a young man to found a family; he ransoms persons who have been enslaved; he provides for the sick when their expenses are high; he pays civil, judicial, or other debts when the debtor is forced to pay and the community is responsible. These payments, however, which are made with the approval of the senate, are regarded as loans to the recipient with his consent, he is henceforth in debt to the community. He will not only have to repay

421 546 614 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

466 546 614 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself, [186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them never return, either because they have managed to create an independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More often, however, the young man, having founded an independent family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and watches developments there in case he may one day be able to profit from them.

578 561 885 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue which is forever at war with the fa and the senate. Their opposition weakens, however, as they approach the age at which they too will participate in the faya to which they aspire. Gradually, as one changes from kamalen' to bina, he acquires the same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity of the new kamalen'-u.

562 583 In concluding this study of the members of the community, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys, they belong completely to the community, which, as a result, has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So, since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

562 inevitably leave the community, she can never claim any
583 authority. Thus condemned to perpetual powerlessness, a woman never has the right to any position other than an inferior one in native society. Motives based on interest or affection may modify her situation more or less to her advantage, but they will not change her basic rights, which are at the root of all disputes about women, between spouses or between communities.

II. The Community of Property

●421 What is the property of which the patrimony is composed?

It is impossible to provide a detailed list, which would, in any case, he endless. Nor should we limit ourselves to the definitions of our legal system, which are too narrow. From the native point of view, patrimonial property [187] may be divided into three principal categories.

[776] First, there are the gods; the manes, or souls of the ancestral protectors of the family; and the nyana, the gods created by the magician. Some of them protect only the community, while others are also concerned with other collectivities. Finally, there are the innumerable magic weapons, which are gods of a sort. In the discussion of the duties of the fa, I spoke of these gods, and they are also mentioned in other parts of this work.

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424 A second category of property is made up of the reciprocal rights of the community and its members, on the one hand, and of the community and similar collectivities, on the other. I have just explained the first, and the second will be dealt with later in the chapter under the heading "Relations between Communities."

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423 Finally, all the things that are particularly valued make up the third category: gold; cattle and sheep; grain; agricultural, industrial, and commercial products of all kinds; dwellings; etc. Three points related to this last category require special consideration: agrarian usufruct, conjugal usufruct, and slaves.

421 Finally, the status of a community is, as it were, syn-
424 thesized and symbolized by the "honorable name" (dyamu), by
596 which this collectivity titles itself and which it considers one of
614 its most precious possessions.

Agrarian usufruct. Ownership of land does not exist.
423 Each family has a right of use, uncertain in principle but permanent in fact, over the lands assigned to it in the domain of the genie-protector (nyana dugu-da-siri).

It may happen that a single family is the sole beneficiary of a given domain because it is the only one linked to the genie protecting the place.

More generally, various families are under the protection of the same local genie, whose domain in that case includes the parts exploited in common as well as the fields expressly assigned to individual families under its protection. The agrarian usufruct which is included as part of the community property exists with respect to these individual fields.

This usufruct differs from that recognized by our law. It is the dugu-tigi and his council who allot the common lands, and the process always involves wrangling and [187] deals. In principle, the plot assigned remains indefinitely with the family benefited if it is continuously farmed and an annual fee is paid. Following the land for several years is permitted. The family exploiting the land may use it in any way, and its right is as complete as possible, short only of alienating it. The family may lease, cede, or pawn its usufruct. If a transaction involves a foreigner, however, it may not be concluded without the consent of the dugu-tigi, who consults his council. In general, any action which might conceivably injure the welfare of the community as a whole must be submitted to the dugu-tigi for approval before being undertaken.

The usufruct comes to an end under the following circumstances: when a family permanently leaves the community governing the fields; when the dugu-tigi and his council decide to dispose of the land for reasons which they are not required to give; when a family gives the land up voluntarily or has been deprived of it because it has been used in a manner contrary to the interests of the agrarian community.

794 681 his acolytes are exceedingly zealous in discovering wrong-doings and the guilty parties and in requiring material proof of repentance, which they determine and try to multiply since they appropriate the whole profit, albeit abusively. Theoretically, these fines are not very heavy and are paid in kind (fowl, a goat, a dog, some kola nuts, millet, beer), but, when multiplied, they become a heavy burden for the debtor. He cannot evade this method of extortion, because his persecutors, in league against him, use every means, even criminal, to force him to pay.

794 421 426 Strictly speaking, all the property belongs to the nyana; it is by rights the common property of the nyana-den' and in principle is not to be privately appropriated nor alienated. It is to be used only for the needs of the cult, for assisting needy members, and in exceptional cases for loans to outsiders at exorbitant interest. For that matter, the nyana-den' who gets a loan from the common fund must repay it [261] as soon as his affairs take a turn for the better and, insofar as possible, add a certain amount in order to show his gratitude. It sometimes happens that an outsider is aided out of the common fund; this is a kind of charity which is both a good advertisement and extremely profitable.

794 421 The common property is not to be appropriated by any dignitary or member of the brotherhood for his own benefit. Although there is certainly not a single native who is unaware of this regulation (1), it is all too evident that abuses have led to extraordinary perversions. The clergy regularly appropriates the property of the nyana to its own use, and in order to increase the profit, they do not hesitate to commit actual crimes that enable them to exploit the terror they inspire, which they are careful to nurture and to reinforce.

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1. Raffenel writes (op. cit., p. 239): "The victims' flesh and other objects become the property of the poor."

614 was called *fama* (1) (lord).

> 1. Etymologically, *fama* or *fa-ma*, "the powerful," from *fa*, "power, authority."

Mamari played a dual rôle: *fa* of his patriarchal community and at the same time *fama* of the clan. His successors followed the same practice. However, in order that his duties as *fama* may be carried out honestly, custom requires the incumbent to turn over the authority and the property of his patriarchal community to his eventual successor, thus retaining a merely honorary *fa-ya*, so as to avoid confusion whose origin and consequences are easy to imagine.

● 421 614 In reality, all the property of the *furu-ba* which the *fama* held for his use and exploitation always belonged to the clan, and consequently, in principle, was supposed to profit only the clan. When the *fama* retained his duties as *fa*, the property of the *furu-ba* and that of the patriarchal community were likely to be inextricably intermingled, and in the process a considerable fortune would be built up for the community. This wealth, dishonestly acquired, so aroused envy and criticism among the *furu-ba dyon'* that many of them tried -- sometimes successfully -- to enrich themselves in no less questionable a manner and also sought to lay hands on the estate of the *fama* because of the clan property taken into it.

In the last analysis, indeed, the only reason for belonging to a clan -- and this is its essential trait in common with the *fla-n-ton'* -- the possibility of enriching oneself in every way possible; each member of the clan hopes to appropriate as much of the property as possible. On the other hand, each member tries to prevent his brothers from doing likewise, on the pretext of that equality which legally is the basis of the relations between clan members. This hypocrisy dominates the whole life of the clan. It inspires all the acts of the *fama* in the course of his duties, and it also animates each *furu-ba dyon'* to such a degree that every one of them aspires to become *fama*. [304]

614 The *fama* receives his powers by election, the form of which has changed very little since Mamari's time.

614 Within the clan, property is also held in common and
575 administered by the fama who distributes it among the dyon'-
[421] kuntigi. The latter, in turn, make a further distribution as it is
needed.

In the fla-n-ton' the important thing was provisions, material well-being. The same thing is true in the clan. The ton'-dyon' are interested in the profit to be derived from the association, and their feeling for the state is embodied in a very prosaic word, to-da, literally, "the pot of mush." Indeed, this is the principal item on the menue of any fraternal feast of the fla-n-ton'.

614 421 The property of the clan, as of the fla-n-ton', is theoretically jointly held by all the members, but since there is a large amount of it, some sort of sharing is necessary, first to consume it and then to reward zeal and fidelity and to encourage emulation and devotion. As a result, the basic egalitarianism is altered. From the clan's beginning it was conceded that a substantial part of the wealth should go to those [308] who had done most to acquire it. Thus, the leader of an expedition had a prior right because of his "luck," and he and his men further received the wherewithal "to repair the rents in their shirts," i.e., to indemnify them for damages suffered during the expedition.

[727] Each warrior kept his own loot, except for unusually valuable things which went to the clan and therefore to the fama who represented it. The part of the loot not taken by individuals was distributed by the fama after abstracting the best and largest part of it for himself.

Strictly speaking, no one actually owned any of this wealth, since all of them, even the fama, merely held it on very precarious terms. Through the caprice of the clan, anyone could [562] have everything taken away, and this applied to persons as well as to things, because the wives and children of the ton'-dyon' were, like himself, the "chattels" of the clan.

The passage of time softened the outward form of these principles; barring abuse or notorious misconduct, each individual had indefinite use of what was allotted to him and handed it on to his descendants. This usufruct, incidentally, was broader than that of our law. In addition, Mamari arrogated to himself a kind of eminent right: he appointed himself -- through usurpation facilitated by his power -- the dispenser of offices and wealth

614 421 and kept considerable property for himself. For their part, the ton'-dyon', pleased with their lot, carefully kept out of sight so as to be able to enjoy what they had been given and what they had managed to add to it.

These usurpations tended to become stabilized through inheritance, although not without dreadful disturbances.

614 +173 After Mamari, the office of fama was handed down within his family until the day when the assembly of the ton'-dyon', dissatisfied with Dékoro's regime, decided to "change the seed," a quaint metaphor for the clan's determination to have a more amenable fama.

The ease with which Dékoro was eliminated (and others after him) also shows that the fama was, and after all could only be, what the ton'-dyon' allowed him to be. This makes it clear that the spirit [309] of the fla-n-ton' never died; the fama merely appeared to be more than primus inter pares at times when his personal influence temporarily made him master of the situation.

At such times, then, he may have governed without the opposition of the majority, but such a period of dominance has always been personal and temporary. In reality, dissension was [578] ever present and was made manifest in fratricidal quarrels, during which the fama seemed to be principally concerned with gratifying personal grudges.

The chronicle shows us that the fama was at the mercy of the ton'-dyon'; without them he could do nothing. The Monday and Thursday meetings, which were a condition of his authority, continued for a long period of time. In any event, this assembly (furu-ba) was the whole of the clan. In ordinary times, the assembly was stimulated by the pleasure of drinking the beer which the fama, like the ton'-tigi before him, always provided. Worship of the clan idols was also the occasion for some of these meetings, accompanied by eating and drinking. The fama invariably made every effort to use these gatherings, usually disorganized, to further his own interests as well as those of the clan.

When Mamari's authority was well established, these meetings no longer played any deliberative or even consultative role, except in the gravest circumstances when the very existence of the clan was at stake. It was logical that the council of the

614 Lengthy and noisy festivities, where dlo (millet beer) flows freely, food is abundant, and songs and dances are performed, [329] mark the general rejoicing. They last for seven days, but forty days must elapse before the new fama is deemed definitively installed.

In theory, the new fama must turn over the management of his own community to his heir presumptive. In fact, however, this retirement is usually fictitious. The fama intermingles his
[421] own property and the property he administers for the clan to such an extent that, in the last analysis, the Massa-si and everything dependent on them -- persons and things -- are an inherent and inseparable part of the clan. Under the cover of this confusion, the general and determined tendency of all the fama was to work unceasingly at confiscation from the clan for the benefit of the community of the Massa-si. At least they have managed to make their office absolutely hereditary, with no possibility of competition, and as a result the election is merely the public recognition as fama of whatever individual is considered by the Massa-si to be fa of their community.

This accounts for the superior role of the Massa-si. They are the provincial governors, heads of army corps, etc., thus confirming the seizure of all sorts of clan property by the Massa-si community.

The corps of sofa is particularly powerful, and through it the fama is easily able to counterbalance any attempted insubordination which sometimes shows itself among the heads of the ton'-dyon'. The leader of the slaves is, in any case, the personal tool of the fama.

184 These measures emphasize the close connection between the fama and the ton'-dyon'. On examination, this appears to be
614 much closer than at Ségou, because from the very beginning in Kaarta the fama assured himself of unquestioned pre-eminence over the ton'-dyon', and later he was able to remain free of the influence of the ton' and even to impose his authority by relying on the loyalty of the sofa.

There was another peculiarity in the fact that the principal allies of the Massa-si, the Konaré, called Kala-n-ka-u (people

562 583 inevitably leave the community, she can never claim any authority. Thus condemned to perpetual powerlessness, a woman never has the right to any position other than an inferior one in native society. Motives based on interest or affection may modify her situation more or less to her advantage, but they will not change her basic rights, which are at the root of all disputes about women, between spouses or between communities.

II. The Community of Property

421 What is the property of which the patrimony is composed?

It is impossible to provide a detailed list, which would, in any case, be endless. Nor should we limit ourselves to the definitions of our legal system, which are too narrow. From the native point of view, patrimonial property [187] may be divided into three principal categories.

[776] First, there are the gods; the manes, or souls of the ancestral protectors of the family; and the nyana, the gods created by the magician. Some of them protect only the community, while others are also concerned with other collectivities. Finally, there are the innumerable magic weapons, which are gods of a sort. In the discussion of the duties of the fa, I spoke of these gods, and they are also mentioned in other parts of this work.

421 424 A second category of property is made up of the reciprocal rights of the community and its members, on the one hand, and of the community and similar collectivities, on the other. I have just explained the first, and the second will be dealt with later in the chapter under the heading "Relations between Communities."

421 422 423 Finally, all the things that are particularly valued make up the third category: gold; cattle and sheep; grain; agricultural, industrial, and commercial products of all kinds; dwellings; etc. Three points related to this last category require special consideration: agrarian usufruct, conjugal usufruct, and slaves.

● 422 The idea of transferable property is complex in native law.
423 The distinction between movable and immovable goods is often difficult to establish; the huts of uncertain durability are easily moved, while a Fama's throne is attached to a fixed site and cannot be considered movable.

Land ownership poses problems still more complex. We have
423 seen that land is never sold. The lands have a primary owner who is the spirit of the bush or a mythical ancestor, a possessor who is the first occupant having concluded a pact with the master of the soil, and, finally, a detainer who has received the land in usufruct from the possessor. The detainer is a family head, and the field he has received belongs to his community which exploits it. But after long years of working the land, the detainer tends to consider himself the owner of it, and when he leaves it during a cycle of crop rotation, it sometimes happens that the land's possessor bestows the
578 detainer's old vacant field on a newcomer, which gives birth to interminable disputes between the old and new cultivators. We have seen elsewhere how certain plots of land particularly well-placed on river banks or near huts were meticulously [74] cultivated. These tend to become veritable private property which families hand down from one generation to the next. In addition to the family fields, there exist fields reserved to certain brotherhoods, such as the n'Domo or the Gna, the members of which work the fields to meet the needs of the cult. Finally, two days each week each community member has the right to cultivate his own personal field which is outside the control of the family. These fields take on more and more importance with the development of a sense of individualism and with it a sense of individual property.

We see, then, that land may be meted out for the benefit of family, religious, or interfamily groups, or for the benefit of individuals. Although none of the parties holding the land are acknowledged as owners, they make use of it as if they were the masters and go so far as to transmit it to their heirs.

It must be noted that a special law exists to regulate the possession of trees and the gathering of their fruits, and the trees are not necessarily connected legally to the fields where they grow. Certain trees, the home of spirits, belong to a certain family, while others, such as the karite, are common property, and their fruits belong to the collectivity.

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421 424 596 614 Finally, the status of a community is, as it were, synthesized and symbolized by the "honorable name" (dyamu), by which this collectivity titles itself and which it considers one of its most precious possessions.

Agrarian usufruct. Ownership of land does not exist.

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The usufruct comes to an end under the following circumstances: when a family permanently leaves the community governing the fields; when the dugu-tigi and his council decide to dispose of the land for reasons which they are not required to give; when a family gives the land up voluntarily or has been deprived of it because it has been used in a manner contrary to the interests of the agrarian community.

782 genie. The same is done with libations of dlo or the juice of
796 kola nuts. Since anything offered to the genie is supposed to be
[786] consumed on the spot, an orgy lasting for several days usually
follows.

782 In addition to these two great obligatory ceremonies especially concerned with the exploitation of the land, the god's protection is sought by similar, but much simplified means in all affairs whether they concern the entire settlement (wars, disasters), a particular patriarchal or familial community, or even a single individual. Through the high priest as intermediary, the offering and the request are made for the purpose indicated by the petitioner, who often promises to make a further gift to the genie when his wish has been granted. Vows of this type are made very frequently.

794 The cult of his high [230] priests and of all the im-
portant men of the settlement is tied in with the cult of the
769 genie, obviously a consequence of the fact that the genie is the spiritual patron of the community which honors him; its members are his children and with him form what amounts to a family. So, in line with what happens in a patriarchal or familial community, the territorial community also holds an annual festival for the dead, during which special honor is paid to noted personages, among whom deceased high priests have first place.

311 Exploitation of the land. The high priest in charge of
621 the cult likewise regulates everything concerning the exploita-
tion of the terrestrial domain of the genie, and in this capacity
●423 he is known as the dugu-tigi (1), master of the earth. In this
773 office he has the help of the council of fa, and in important matters he must follow their advice.

With the help of this council, he allots the land when

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1. In line with common practice, I shall henceforth use this title to designate both capacities, the high priest and the master of the earth.

311 the community is founded. His permission is required before
621 anyone may build a dwelling in the portion reserved as the seat
●423 of the community; the village is therefore kept within precise
793 limits. In practice, however, everyone builds wherever he
pleases if there is no objection. If there is an objection, the
dispute is settled by the *dugu-tigi* and his council.

Outside the village proper, the terrain includes fields
423 which, either at the start or during the course of settlement,
621 are allotted in perpetuity to the various *fa* of the community
by the *dugu-tigi* in council. Each *fa* and his dependents have
indefinite use of the same fields, although by law the authority
which assigned them may take them away without being required
to justify the act. This use is a kind of usufruct that is
more extensive than that of our law, since the beneficiary may
[425] use the land without restriction, except that he may not alienate
it. The tenant, however, may not use the land in any way that
might be prejudicial to the community as a whole without the
consent of the *dugu-tigi* and council. For example, such would
be the case if he proposed to give his right of use to an outsider.

Any land not specifically allotted [231] and anything it
produces or contains belongs, theoretically, to the member of
the community who cultivates it. Certain fruits or produce, however,
are sometimes reserved for the community as a whole:
the leaves or fruit of the baobab, karite, *nété*, tamarind trees,
etc.; the fish in certain ponds, watercourses, fluvial zones,
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these collective enterprises by the *dugu-tigi* and his council,
the people proceed in a body to gather fruit, harvest the crop,
fish, or hunt. Sometimes each person is allowed to keep what
he has gathered; sometimes all the proceeds are collected for
the *dugu-tigi* to distribute according to custom. There are also
special regulations governing the extraction of matter or materials
from the ground.

Organization of the territorial community. The duties
621 of the *dugu-tigi* and his council are not limited to directing the
622 cult and regulating the use of land. Anything that happens
within the territorial community concerns the *nyana-dugu-da-siri*,
because the members of the community are his children

631 Bambara, with whom we are here concerned. Each writer, however, uses these terms to refer to an ill-defined type of authority, sometimes without even attempting a critical comparison with similar institutions in our own countries.

423 This uncertainty is accompanied by other such doubtful similarities, which result in confused conceptions. Is it not common to speak of feudalism, of a feudal system, to describe the kind of hierarchy among various native chiefs? In the Sudan, however, there is no connection between man and the land comparable to that which was the basis of the feudal system. Indeed, no such meaning is possible, since the Sudanese does not recognize any right of ownership of land. Therefore, political ties between native chiefs are never based on land; how then can one speak of a feudal system?

614 621 631 As a matter of fact, the social unit is the community based on the family; it develops into a patriarchy and expands into a tribe and a people. Its members are united by blood ties, which are confirmed by the ancestor cult. [288]

Since they are proud and jealous of their freedom, communities seek to remain independent. Their relationships, however, determined especially the occupation and exploitation of a common territory, force them to give up this independence, and joining together in the same cult, the sign of their spiritual solidarity, they form a dugu (1).

1. This word is not without ambiguity. On the one hand, it means "that which is below," hence, "the soil"; on the other hand, it means "place," "residence," or "at the home of." It is understood to mean "territory" or "country" occupied by a human collectivity, and by an easily understandable deviation, it likewise designates the organization which governs this collectivity in relation to this territory.

567 3. The ton-koro-bolo behind the disi is a special reserve formed
701 entirely of pure ton-dyon.

4. The keli-tigi was the chief of the expedition, designated by the Fama. He might be a dyon-kuntigi (chief of the furuba-dyon), a member of the Fama's community, or the Fama himself.

708 Finally, the army was accompanied by a musical corps, com-
534 posed essentially of drums which transmitted messages. There were armpit drums (dunkan'), shoulder drums (taura), three-legged drums (dange), drums carried by two men (tabala), and coupled drums (denuba). Often horns (buru) were added, sometimes small horns made of ivory or horn, and sometimes xylophones (bada) and cowbells.

708 A dyeli (griot) follows the expedition to observe the exploits
537 that he must retransmit; he must encourage the warriors and dispel panic by the power of his oratory.

B. Influence of Social Organization on Economic Life

a. The ton, Work Community

621 We have seen that the social unit among the Bambara is the community. The community is also the work unit and the economic unit. The independent individual is not conceived of. The community owns all the wealth which makes up the spiritual and material patrimony: the land, the agricultural, industrial, and commercial products, the habitations ...

● 423 The community regulates the exploitation of the land. The
dugu-tigi is the first occupant, master of the land, of which he dis-
621 tributes the lots to the different family heads. When a stranger, a
622 family head, wants to enter into a community, he chooses an unoc-
609 cupied field and asks the village chief for it. The request is accom-
[431] panied by ten kola nuts and a chicken. Authorization cannot then be refused. The chief of the land sacrifices the chicken before the entire community and informs it of the installation of the newcomer. When the stranger wants to leave the land, he is given back his chicken and kola nuts.

423 Land assigned to a family head may always be taken back
621 from him without justification by the dugu-tigi and his council.
622

423 Thus, the man holding the land can neither sell it nor take any ac-
621 tion regarding it which would involve the interests of the whole com-
622 munity; but he can rent it out, pledge it, or [62] cede it, which
leads to manifold disputes at the time of redistribution of the land
in the case of cyclical cultures.

621 The dugu-tigi also prepares the community's budget. The
622 resources include: gifts made to the gods, thanksgiving offerings
652 for the hunt, for the fishing catch, and for the millet harvest, pay-
ments for concession of land or for services rendered, rent of com-
munity goods (fixed revenues or exceptional tribute), receipts from
fines, confiscations, escheatage, and finally, the extraordinary aid
formerly obtained for war, constructions, etc.

Among the expenditures are included the cost of supporting
[651 members of the community if need be, of maintaining the proper
746] appearance, assistance to the sick, and, especially, the tax or
tribute formerly paid to the sovereign, legitimate or not, and today
paid to the French administration.

596 The family patrimony (tien) is administered by the fa, head of the family. A. Aubert (1) gives us the composition of this patrimony which includes: "Rights on the lands cultivated by the community; animals; serfs; money owed and money owing; the dowries of the daughters and women who are issue of members of the settlement; the inheritances; the dwellings of the settlement and their furnishings; the foodstuffs of the communal granaries (foro-ba), and, in general, all wealth resulting from the communal work of the family members."

Moreover, the fa must: "see to the material life of all the members of the family; provide dowries for the women of the community; pay back the dowries of the women of the community who are to be divorced; ransom members of the family who are taken prisoner or are sold, and pay taxes in goods or in money."

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1. A. Aubert, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Bougouni Circle)].

b. Organization of Work

241 Work on the land is the only kind of work suitable for free
621 men, for to work the land is to purify it. All agricultural operations
[622 are set in motion by the dugu-tigi and are regulated by the fa who
516] assigns tasks by age classes. Each member of the community must
work for it every day, except Monday and Thursday, from dawn to
about 4:30 p.m. He may be helped, or even replaced, by his children and his captives. The rest of the time he may work for himself in his personal field or in the little fields situated along the water courses and the rivers, which are not periodically redistributed and are considered almost as personal and hereditary property. The fruit of this labor constitutes the personal savings of the community member.

316 The exploitation of the subsoil is governed by other rules which we still know only imperfectly. Like the soil, the subsoil be-
423 longs to the master of the land. Iron ore was extracted solely by the
[326] blacksmith who paid the master of the land a rent in the form of hoes
or axes. To exploit the gold mines, thousands of natives went in family groups to the placers at the beginning of the dry season. [63] The location of the placers was determined by the priests and changed every year. The men dig multiple small holes very close to each other, which may go very deep depending on the depth of the barren layer. When the calabashes of gold-bearing earth are brought up, the women wash the earth. The placers are abandoned at the beginning of the rains after three or four months of exploitation. Before the French occupation, gold was the exclusive property of the Fama and could in no case be the object of commerce. To-
[439] day, gold is generally sold at the placers to Syrian, native, or
European merchants, who have established veritable shops at the mining centers, shops which contain everything necessary for the miner's life.

463 The exercise of a profession other than the cultivation of the
554 land is reserved to artisans who are accorded the insulting name of
nyaman-kala, for only work on the land is noble work. These artisans form separate families in every Sudanese society, which has caused Europeans to call them, improperly, people of caste. They are divided into independent guilds.

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778
791 of course the names change a little. On the staff of the *Nama* there are not only *warada* but also *djenfa tje* and *djenfa mouso*, who go through the village to exorcise /all evil from/ it, holding the fetish in their hands or putting it over their faces. They are preceded by a torch bearer, who is usually the *darotigi*, or beadle. Some fetishes, the *Kono* for example, have a person especially responsible for carrying it to the place of sacrifice. He performs the duties of the *darotigi*; the one who carries the *Kono* is quite often called *Kono guenguéba*.

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158 makes known its wishes and gives its orders; and when it does so, its spokesman is always seized by an epileptic attack followed by catalepsy. When he has spoken he is brought out of this state by being sprinkled with consecrated water, and he goes back to his place as if nothing unusual had happened. He seems to feel no fatigue, his features are composed; and yet only a moment earlier his body ran with sweat, his limbs shook with nervous trembling, his eyes were wild and starting out of their sockets, saliva that was often tinged with blood ran from his mouth, and his breath was whistling and irregular.

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791 The *gnâ* also has its beadle, the *darotigî*, who rings for the sacrifice, thus warning the initiates to come quickly and the uninitiated to stay in their huts. Since he also sings the praises of the fetish while ringing his bell, he is also called /142/ *gnâ djéli*, storyteller /*griot*/of the *gnâ*. To all these are added the band of members and initiates, whose function consists chiefly in providing the food and beer for the orgies. These are the *gnako dé-n-ou*, children of the *gnâ*.

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425 One becomes master of a *gnéna*, or *djiné* (1), by election or

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1. The sinsin, the gnéna of twins, is an exception, as it may also be bought.

inheritance, and rarely by purchase. The gnâ pass from father to son by inheritance, but it is always possible to obtain one by purchase; all that is necessary is to find in the village the number of people needed to make up the staff of the idol, provided one is not opposed by the sorcerer's veto.

Every purchase of a powerful boli occasions celebrations, festivals, and drinking bouts that last from three to eight days. These festivals are like marriage celebrations. Surrounded by his staff, the new fetish owner spends the day offering d'lo, or millet beer, to the many friends who come to congratulate him and give him their gifts. It is not until evening that he leaves his b'lon, or entry hut, and, followed by initiates carrying the idol, goes to the sacred grove or under the trees chosen to be the meeting place henceforth. The night is spent in dancing and shouting hymns.

In the eyes of the Negro to buy a gnâ is to become united with it in a firm and indissoluble way. It is equivalent to marrying the fetish, and they have no other phrase to express their idea, their notion of the matter: "A yé boli fourou, he got married"; "ayé boli fourou gosi, he has stamped and sealed his marriage with the boli" (2); "ne ka fourouboloma faro (3) flé, here is my wedding present";

[583]

2. Fourou gosi: In order to enjoy the marriage lawfully, whoever marries must, in the presence of the head of the village, pay his wife's parents a handful of kola nuts -- usually eleven, one more than the required ten.

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3. Fourouboloma fara: This is the name of the small present of cowrie shells given to a

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585 /newly married/ couple by their friends. It varies from 40 cowrie shells to 2 kémés, or 160 cowrie shells.

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425 "a taboli konio kera, the marriage of his boli has taken place."

435 The value of a gnâ varies between 30 and 40 francs, and whoever owns one can from then on make them. If one counts the presents given to the maker and to his staff, the dogs, goats, and kola nuts offered in sacrifice on the day of his reception, and finally the beer of the wedding, its value is undoubtedly more than 100 francs.

5. Differences among the Powerful Boli

778 I class all the powerful boli into three main groups. In the first I place those which formerly were the prerogative of kings, princes, and ministers; in the second, those which have neither temple nor sacred grove; and in the third, those which have a temple and a sacred grove, or at least one or the other.

Those of the first group are not at all numerous, and the most popular are the Safolo, the Kongoba, the Nan-Woloko, and the Kouantara. They are usually found in villages which were formerly capitals of cantons or provinces and are in the hands of people whose families have included a kafotigi (head of a canton) or a fama (king or petty king), i.e., a head of a province, a minister of the king on whom the title of ruler (fama) was bestowed.

Everything leads me to think that in the beginning these were merely fetishes responsible for watching over the king and the people of his court, analogous to what above I have called the family boli. At present they have become boli of sects. But although all circumcised men can enter the ranks of those who pay them respect, only married men become initiated, and the orgies in their honor are private orgies whose entire cost is borne by graybeards.

778
782 According to legend, slaves were sacrificed to these boli in the time of the Bambara kings. Since then the worshippers have been content to offer them millet beer, hens, and goats in addition to the

794 distinguishes himself through diligence, obedience, and skill, he may
561 occasionally, if the elders so decide, be promoted to a more advanced age grade than his own and thus find himself on an equal footing with his elders.

The responsibilities of the Komo chief are considerable. He is the
794 guardian of the altars which, as we shall later see, contain all the spiritual forces of the society; he is the only one able to manipulate them and is in charge of all the rituals which depend upon them. He
426 manages the patrimony of the group (seeds and money) which is kept in the cowrie or millet granaries, and which he may tap, in case of necessity, in order to make interest loans to members of the society who request them. (1)

But this function, honorary and advantageous from many points of view, involves not only rights but, more important, duties from which the chief cannot be exemated. He must, under no circumstances, abuse his power; he can make no decision without the agreement of the members and may not act, even in the most insignificant case, without advising each and every one of them. Each person is kept up to date as regarding the smallest details concerning the general activity of the Komo and the entire age grade must be informed at the same moment. To break these rules would mean to become exposed to the greatest dangers. Just like the head of the total family whose power is far from being absolute (2), the responsible person

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1. See S. de Ganay, "Un jardin d'essai et son autel chez les Bambara /A Sample Garden and Its Altar among the Bambara/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 17 (1947), pp. 57-63.

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614
2. "The Mandingo fa," says Henri Labouret, in Les Manding et leur langue, "appears less free in his acts and decisions than the master of the ancient taisible fraternity. Far from being the tyrannical and strong willed autocrat whom people have frequently taken pleasure in describing, he seems to me, rather, to fulfill therole of a delegated administrator,

787 This text determines the interpretation of the answer which will be given. The diviner next opens his hand, releases the pieces, and watches the way in which they fall on the ground: if they are arranged in the same way on the inner or outer sides, the answer is affirmative; it is negative.

Divination by Cowrie Shells

This practice is called: kolo nin fli, literally, "to throw the soul of the cowries." These shells are in no way different from those used for trade or ornamentation. Only one taboo is attached to the way in which they are acquired; they must not be bought or obtained without payment. To acquire them, the diviner must secure a loan called [426] kuma boli (literally, to come out of the word); he gives as surety a product or an object which will be reclaimed by him later when he returns the cowries.

The 22 cowries used summarize "that which is necessary to man" and are divided into three groups:

The first seven, teliko dẽ, sons of Téliko, represent the spirit of the air, Téliko and his children, as well as "the respiration" of men. In fact, it is said of them: "The Téliko spirits are the man's respiration" (1).

1. Teliko ye adamadẽ ninakli kuma bo ye.

The next seven, faro dẽ, sons of Faro, symbolize human /219/ beings. One of them, chosen because it is easy to distinguish from the others, represents Faro; the diviner repeats the name of the spirit seven times over this shell before mixing it with the others, the effect being to give all of them the strength of the spirit.

The last eight, kumabana dẽ, sons of Koumabana, are the words of the eight great ancestors. One of them, different from the others, is called "mother of words." It is both Koumabana, first of the eight ancestors, and the unequaled word which he "spat" since Koumabana had known "all the words now existing on earth."

Thus 22, the expressions of the universe, summarize the human individual in the system of the 22 cowries: body and soul, Faro; breath and respiration, Téliko; revealed word, Koumabana. The division into three series, two of which are 7 and one 8, is also

794 681 his acolytes are exceedingly zealous in discovering wrongdoings and the guilty parties and in requiring material proof of repentance, which they determine and try to multiply since they appropriate the whole profit, albeit abusively. Theoretically, these fines are not very heavy and are paid in kind (fowl, a goat, a dog, some kola nuts, millet, beer), but, when multiplied, they become a heavy burden for the debtor. He cannot evade this method of extortion, because his persecutors, in league against him, use every means, even criminal, to force him to pay.

794 421 426 Strictly speaking, all the property belongs to the nyana; it is by rights the common property of the nyana-den' and in principle is not to be privately appropriated nor alienated. It is to be used only for the needs of the cult, for assisting needy members, and in exceptional cases for loans to outsiders at exorbitant interest. For that matter, the nyana-den' who gets a loan from the common fund must repay it [261] as soon as his affairs take a turn for the better and, insofar as possible, add a certain amount in order to show his gratitude. It sometimes happens that an outsider is aided out of the common fund; this is a kind of charity which is both a good advertisement and extremely profitable.

794 421 The common property is not to be appropriated by any dignitary or member of the brotherhood for his own benefit. Although there is certainly not a single native who is unaware of this regulation (1), it is all too evident that abuses have led to extraordinary perversions. The clergy regularly appropriates the property of the nyana to its own use, and in order to increase the profit, they do not hesitate to commit actual crimes that enable them to exploit the terror they inspire, which they are careful to nurture and to reinforce.

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1. Raffenel writes (op. cit., p. 239): "The victims' flesh and other objects become the property of the poor."

438 the gold. But they, in turn, could in no case resell the gold to any-
613 body other than the Fama. Aside from certain sacrificial uses and the
[648] making of jewels for the Fama's wives, gold served to ransom cap-
tives or to negotiate royal alliances.

The price of the commodities was set by agreement between
435 buyer and seller, except for cloth which had a fixed price, 100 cowrie
shells per cubit in the Bamako region. As a matter of fact, the cot-
[284] ton gathered in the fields of the community was woven by captives
who were not paid.

426 Loans were made without interest. Interest, korko, is still
686 forbidden today. Loans are guaranteed by labor. The debtor who
could not repay his debt on time and whose family head refused to
pay it for him was seized by the Fama and held as security until such
time as he had reimbursed his debt.

804 Side by side with French units of measurement, the natives
use their own for trade. Their measures of length: the cubit (elbow
to tip of middle finger), the span, the foot, the length of both arms
extended, the pace, the diare, and the kala . . . ; their measures of
capacity: the sawel or moure, the mud; their weights: the moutkhal,
the catal, the large and little karoni, the wakie, the pellet of tali,
of tomi, of bagana, of gelen. Cotton is weighed on rough scales
whose pointer is a wooden rod and the balances large gourds hung by
strings. For weights, large rocks, kulu, from 800 to 1,200 grams are
[436] used. Finally, the Bambara use French money almost exclusively:
one franc of metropolitan France is equivalent to 0.50 francs C.F.A.
Nevertheless, the use of cowrie shells is still frequent.

d. Banks

453 One bank of issue exists in French West Africa: the Bank of
French West Africa. There are also private banks, the number of
which has increased during the past few years.

The Bank of French West Africa, which has a branch at Bamako, carries out the following operations: [43]

1. discounts notes or bills of two or several signatures due in not more than 180 days;
2. creates, negotiates, or buys drafts;

642

565 3. the free men;

4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);

5. slaves.

567 e. Slavery. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by violence, by obligation, or by birth.

567 727 554 1. By violence. If a war captive is important, he may be killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration. A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[608] [561] [60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama; if he is a sénanku of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

567 681 426 858 2. By obligation. A free individual became a slave in punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the profit of the Fama. A fa could sell one of his children to meet his debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was freed of his obligations.

567 3. By birth. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a wolo-so. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

567 644 As the number of slaves grew, their organization became complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Ségou were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the dyon-kuru or dyon-futu (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Ségou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him, the submission of all the slaves.

782 764 824 gnâma-n-kou or the na-yanka (I do not know the name of this plant), put to boil and soak in water. To make it effective, at least two kola nuts are offered to the fetish and five hens are sacrificed to it.

782 764 of the staff, which lives off the altar. For the mere act of having killed a dog or a goat, of which they receive a good share of the meat, they get a fee consisting of a basket of sorghum (18 to 20 kilograms) and 1,600 cowrie shells (about 2 francs).

Since initiates of the fetish are the only ones who can touch the corpse and lay it in its final home, they receive 8,000 to 10,000 cowrie shells (about 8 to 10 francs) on that score. At the end of the sangafo (3) the god's retinue go and sweep the hut of the deceased,

3. Sangafo, to go and offer condolences to the relatives of a deceased."

purify it with holy water, and drive out the last gnâma of the murdering Komo, and for this five fine hens are slaughtered. As payment for their trouble, the family also gives them five to six meters of cloth and 8 to 10 ba (4) (about 8 to 10 francs); 50 francs do not cover

[802] 4. A ba is worth 800 cowrie shells or about 1 franc. (The Bambara count by 40 and 80, and not by 50 and 100. 40, débé; 80, kémé.)

the cost.

Fortunately, the family does not bear all the expenses. Friends [431] help a little, and everyone brings his offering: from one person they get a /228/ hen, from another a débé (40 cowrie shells) or a kémé (80 cowrie shells). Nevertheless, they bear most of the cost, and [42] the fetishes are one of the chief reasons for that bonding of children (1)

4: Henry--254 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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1. A bonded person works for his food, just like a slave. His condition is worse than that of the slave, for in addition to his food, the latter receives a bit of cloth to cover himself, but the bonded person does not. A slave can ransom himself for a sum varying between 100 and 200 francs, and at present he can escape without fear of being pursued and without paying anything at all. A bonded person must pay the amount of his bond to the last cowrie shell, whether he escapes or not. There are Negroes who, for a certain amount, will give you one of their children for one or two years. These children are not paid since the amount has already been paid, but besides food they get clothing and some gratuities beyond the payment for their work. Lacking the proper words, the Bambara call this also, "bonding" even though it is basically a real "domestic service." When the agreed time has passed, these young people go back to their homes without any payment being made. Even though the Negroes call this bonding, they make a distinction: a) slavery is a stigma which always remains; b) true bonding is a stigma that does not disappear unless the bonded person himself pays the price of his bonding; c) the bonding which is called "domestic service" does not involve any stigma; they are workers and not menial laborers.

4: Mersadier--17 U-5 (1954) 1955 MS37 Senegal MS37

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SONINKE MS21
FULANI MS11
Wolof MS30
SERER FA32
TUKOLOR MS37
BAMBARA FA8

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Table III

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No.	Ethnic Group	Occupation	Income	Monthly Surplus or Deficit	% in Relation to Income
1	Sarakolé	Laborer	5,800	- 1,555	26.8
2	Peul	Orderly	6,100	- 1,642	26.9
3	Wolof	Laborer	6,500	- 416	6.4
4	Sérère	Laborer	6,700	- 3,034	45.2
5	Toucouleur	Orderly D. N.	6,745	- 1,237	18.3
6	Wolof	Mattress-maker	7,000	- 1,471	21.0
7	Wolof	Laborer	7,000	- 2,231	31.8
8	Wolofo	Orderly	7,410	- 1,124	15.1
9	Wolof	Baker	7,500	- 2,967	39.5
10	Wolof	Cultivator	8,150	- 1,641	20.1
11	Moor	Auxiliary D. N.	8,940	- 2,168	29.2
12	Peul	Laborer	9,000	- 1,593	17.5
13	Wolof	Laborer	9,800	- 1,614	16.4
14	Wolof	Cultivator	10,000	- 1,354	13.5
15	Bambara	Laborer	10,000	- 1,621	16.2
16	Bambara	Auxiliary	10,675	- 2,206	20.6
17	Moor	Auxiliary	10,800	- 2,306	21.3
18	Peul	Spec. laborer	11,000	- 1,758	15.9
19	Toucouleur	Accountant	11,950	- 2,418	20.2
20	Bambara	Auxiliary D. N.	12,000	- 2,582	21.5
21	Wolof	Clerk	13,000	- 3,579	27.5
22	Wolof	Auxiliary	14,000	- 1,488	10.6
23	Wolof	Cultivator	15,000	+ 452	3.0
24	Wolof	Cultivator	15,000	- 426	2.5
25	Wolof	Auxiliary	15,630	- 837	5.3
26	Wolof	Employee P. T. T	15,800	- 529	3.3
27	Wolof	Shoemaker	16,200	+ 1,567	9.2
28	Wolof	Worker D. N.	22,000	+ 259	1.1
29	Toucouleur	Police sergeant	22,000	+ 286	1.3
30	Wolof	Weigher D. N.	24,000	+ 2,004	8.3
31	Wolof	Carpenter	25,000	+ 1,079	4.3

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Wolof MS30
Serer FA32
SONINKE MS21
BAMBARA FA8

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Table III (cont.)

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No.	Ethnic Group	Occupation	Income	Monthly Surplus or Deficit	% in Relation to Income
32	Wolof	Cultivator	25,000	+ 1,442	5.7
33	Sérère	Chauffeur	25,000	+ 1,128	4.5
34	Wolof	Employee P.T.T.	25,900	+ 977	3.7
35	Wolof	Staff employee D.N.	27,000	+ 2,117	7.8
36	Wolof	Private accountant	34,000	+ 751	2.2
37	Wolof	Truck-gardener	36,000	+ 1,237	3.4
38	Wolof	Jeweler	50,000	+ 2,555	5.1
39	Sarakolé	Teacher	51,000	+12,894	25.2
40	Wolof	Staff worker	55,000	+ 2,494	4.5
41	Sarakolé	Head employee D.N.	55,500	+ 5,599	10.0
42	Bambara	Chief worker C.D.N.	56,000	+ 4,726	8.4
43	Wolof	Doctor	81,000	+ 847	1.0

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*511 /400 cont./ of supporting a second wife in another city on an income that is not very high. Nos. 36 and 43 have a lower percentage of surplus, but here we were able to get quite precise information on the utilization of the /401/ surplus and were able to include these sums in the total expenses.

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It has become banal to state that the diet of Africans lacks variety. The food habits remain the most deep-rooted, and although one sees imported food products appear more and more among the African families of the cities, it is striking to verify that almost all are merely superimposed on the old ones. The food base, the meals at noon and in the evening, rarely evolves, no matter what the ethnic group, the income, or the

326 778 243 The lower compartment contains millet from a field called kongobwona foro, reserved for the needs of the cult of the forge. This land is placed under the guardianship of the patriarch belonging to the Gwonna family, and its upkeep is assured by the community. The seeds are given by each blacksmith to the old man who sows them himself. The work of cultivation and threshing is done communally. The millet is stored in the old man's granary and each blacksmith receives a share. This share is not eaten, but is put aside. From time to time the artisan takes a few seeds which he places as an offering, on his altar, and which remain for a time in the compartment reserved for them; then they are considered to have been eaten by the axe and are removed and replaced by others. Part of the millet is kept as seed for the following year.

326 778 789 Each compartment is open and the blacksmith may insert his fingers; if his earnings are insufficient, he rubs his body and tongue with the hand which he has just dipped into the pocket containing money; the price, set by the spoken word, will not be questioned by the client. If he goes to work in his field, he places his hand into the millet each morning to draw upon the strength it contains and to improve the results of his agricultural work. If he burns himself while working at the forge, he dips his fingers into the third compartment and cools himself in Faro's water. It is this same water which a young artisan must drink at the beginning of his apprenticeship.

326 778 776 The triangular iron, farabye, which constitutes the axe proper is placed under the power of three spirits belonging to the group of air spirits: A gayru who revealed iron to men; Tengu who taught them Faro's supremacy; and Gullé. The first two are the masters of the bellows and direct the work as a whole; the third does their bidding and teaches men the technology of ironwork (1). When the owner of the altar dies, the /121/ axe is removed and placed in the village sanctuary where the ancestral tools are kept. But the remaining objects are inherited by the son. 428

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1. The spirit would have refused to teach the blacksmiths the working of copper and gold, as these two metals belonged to Faro who reserved for himself the right to use them. Since iron was black he had abandoned its use to the spirits of the air.

> 778 794 773 241 the latter abandoned their hoes in order to watch them. The birds fetched water with their beaks on the shore of a neighboring pond and returned to pour it at the foot of a millet stalk, the ear of which was not yet formed. The men put a mark on this stalk in order to recognize it and later observed that it produced a finer ear than the others. Imitating the bird, they dampened their plantings and watered their fields; their harvest was considerably improved by it. They kept up this habit and, in acknowledgment, produced a cult to the Sago spirit whose emissaries the birds were and who comes to slake his thirst at the *Čuafeblá*."

778 794 it is the object of sacrifices when important business is being handled: marriage, private or administrative action, fight against an epidemic.

[428] A son may inherit his father's altar and keep it with his own which he wears tied to his hip.

The *Čuafebyɛ̄ni* (literally, little horn at the hip) is composed of a cowrie, taken from Faro's granary, copper which is the altar's soul /133/ (*ni*), pepper, charcoal, and honey. This mixture is introduced into a ram's horn decorated with cowries at its opening and often wrapped in a red cloth bearing the same ornamentation.

[782] The altar is consecrated on those of the Komo, over which it is passed seven times. The throats of victims are cut, their blood is collected in a gourd, and the *boli* dipped into it three times before being taken out in the sun to dry.

Its role is one of protection. Its owner carries it during the Komo ceremonies to defend himself against spells, *korti*, which may be cast by someone in the audience.

It also maintains the integrity of its owner's forces. If the latter faints or goes into a trance, he is returned to his normal state by completely renewing the ingredients which constitute it. When the horn is emptied of its contents, "both the soul of the altar and that of the man" are removed. The container is rinsed out with water from the

*173 Since Ma-koro felt incapable of restoring peace between her children, she sought the intervention of Massa Taraoré, chief of Sou, near Diaba. The latter asked the help of Massa Taraoré or Sou ba, near Sansanding, and of Massa Doua-n-tan of Kama-na.

All three came to Farko, whither they summoned Ngolo's sons.

Ma-n-son came alone; Nyana-n-kolo was accompanied by two of his brothers. The three Massa insisted vigorously that Ngolo's last wishes be honored by his children and added in conclusion: "Didn't he himself have to wait a long time? He never complained, he never rebelled against the established order of succession." Nyana-n-koro remained inflexible and went off, saying: "My brother Ma-n-son has tricked me. He acted without my knowledge, treating me as something negligible. Any agreement between us is out of the question."

Ma-koro then appealed to the marabouts of Ségou-Sikoro and Togou. But Nyana-n-koro refused to heed their advice either. [428] "Under Moslem law," he asked, "what is done with the effects of a dead man?" "They are divided among his children," they replied. "Very well, that is what I want and what has been unjustly refused me."

Ma-koro summoned two other marabouts: Birama Kané of Sien and Kakamoko Abdoullahi Diari of Niamina. [78] In order to get rid of them, Nyana-n-koro gave each of them a mare, 100,000 cowries and 30 gros of gold, saying: "It's useless to insist; even if Ngolo himself implored me, I wouldn't yield."

Finally Nzan-fato, thinking to overcome Nyana-n-koro's stubbornness, appealed to those sentiments most likely to be susceptible of influence. "I'm older than your father," he told him. "You are my son and, if only for that reason, you should heed me; you cannot fail to respect the last wishes of your father." But Nyana-n-koro replied without emotion. "The time for words has passed -- all that matters rest between Allah and myself."

Nyana-n-koro opened hostilities one Sunday with a raid around Ségou; thus he took 200 prisoners, whom he carried off to

The Patriarchal Community

428 When the fa is dead, all his property remains jointly among his legal heirs, thus constituting a patriarchal community whose investigation has two parts: the community of persons and the community of property. [173]

I. The Community of Persons

596 614 Members of the community. The patriarchal community is made up solely of the legitimate descendants of the deceased fa: immediate descendants (sons and daughters), or his descendants exclusively in the male line (descendants of his sons and grandsons).

The descendants of the fa through his daughters are outside the community since they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.

428 596 614 If, at his death, the fa leaves no male heirs, there can be no patriarchal community; his property is divided among his daughters or, if there are none, among his brothers. If only a father or mother or some other ascendant were left, his property would go to them, or if he leaves only daughters, his property goes to them, but in either case there will no longer be a community.

848 596 614 578 Legitimacy is the necessary and sufficient condition for inclusion as a member of the community. A legitimate child is one born of a marriage, that is, of a union between two free individuals that conforms to custom. When slavery introduced concubinage into the household, however, the rule was relaxed because a free man was unwilling to have his sons slaves. In practice, therefore, maternity resulting from intercourse with a free man frees his concubine from slavery, and the children of the union become members of the community. This dangerous privilege is often contested by agnate brothers born of free mothers.

Given the diversity of conjugal bonds, ranging from marriage to free union, it is easy to imagine the discussions that

596 614 opinion of those around him, his intimates and friends. He exercises the right of agrarian usufruct over the lands under cultivation, and he may dispose of movable property without restriction. As regards persons, his own issue [218] are at his mercy, and he profits from their labor. He can hire them out, put them up for security, sell them, and even put them to death. He has the right of conjugal usufruct over his wives, and his slaves are merely chattels.

Patriarchal faya. This differs in extent from the foregoing. Anything connected in whatever way to the patriarchal community itself or to the family communities under its authority comes under the patriarchal faya.

Though the maintenance of this power presents no problems in theory, practice is quite another matter.

The fact is that the fa of a familial community is completely subject to a patriarch only if, being connected through the male line, he has some property in the patriarchy or intends to claim rights in it.

If this is not the case, the familial fa acts as though he did not belong to the patriarchy, and the latter can only treat him accordingly. This is what happens when a "son" goes off, establishes himself far away, and prospers there by his own efforts and at his own risk. Breaking all agnatic ties, he in fact frees himself from any authority that his patriarchy might seek to impose upon him.

This has produced innumerable dissident branches which have the same dyamu but which can only hypothetically trace their descent through the males back to a common male ancestor.

●428 Inheritance. It is necessary, first, to know whether the deceased was a fa or a fantan', that is, whether he exercised the authority of a fa or was under the authority of a fa.

Let us say the deceased was a fa.

In principle, if he was fa of a family, everything belonging to him remains undivided under the new faya of his eldest son.

If he was fa of a patriarchy, a new patriarch succeeds him.

It is unnecessary to belabor these points or the consequences of the variations in view of the details given above.

● 428 Now let us say the deceased was a fantan', that is, he did not exercise a faya. [219]

A son who dies before becoming fa rarely leaves any property. If he should by chance do so, such wealth theoretically belongs to the community of which he was a member. The disposition of property from special sources must be settled according to the nature of the source. Thus, property which the deceased may have inherited from his mother would go to his uterine heirs.

What has just been said of a son applies all the more to a daughter, since, after all, she is nothing more than a kind of property belonging to the community.

428 567 The most hapless fantan' is the slave. In principle, he could hardly be expected to leave an inheritance since even his own person does not belong to him. In fact, however, the situation is quite different. A slave generally does have some property and may even be very rich. His fa allows him the use of his property for his lifetime, and it is current practice for him to leave it likewise to his children. As a result, everything transpires just as though the deceased were a free man, and what we have said about other communities applies to this type of community which, strictly speaking, has only a kind of de facto existence. The action of custom, in freeing the slave, gives him access to the position of a free man without depriving him of what his fa has allowed him to enjoy. In the end, this enjoyment of use is gradually transformed and strengthened by inheritance until it is the equivalent of similar rights to property which are accorded to men born free.

596 614 Order of succession. Patriarchal community. The fa is the eldest of the surviving males who are direct descendants in the male line of the fa who founded the community.

428 596 614 Familial community. 1. The eldest surviving son of the deceased; upon his death, succession follows the same pattern as for the patriarchal community.

If there are only daughters, the property is divided among them.

428 2. If there are no children, the collateral males and,
596 lacking them, ~~the~~ wives.
614 3. If there are no collateral relatives, the ascendants.

4. If there are no ascendants, the surviving spouse.

5. If there is no surviving spouse, escheat occurs: [220] the inheritance reverts to the head of the settlement, the dugutigi, when this settlement is independent; otherwise to the head of the clan, the fama.

596 614 The community and the individual. The result of the foregoing is that the individual, whoever he may be and whatever his situation, has no value except as a member of a community (1); it is the community that exists and has an identity, while the individual exists and is identified only through the community and for the community.

An individual who exists apart from any faya is, therefore, an anomaly, and this situation comes to an end as soon as the individual himself becomes fa.

596 614 There are cases, however, when an individual is put out of his community because of his own action or because of circumstances, and extraordinary changes of status result.

626 Anyone driven from his community for bad conduct loses his rights to the faya in that community.

564 558 If his disqualification results from the practice of a trade regarded as degrading, he falls into what the Bambara call nyama-ka-la and Europeans call "people of caste." Henceforth he is not only excluded from his community, but he lives apart from all persons not declassed; he is a free man of inferior standing. He usually lives under the protection of a community of persons not declassed, earning his living from it and deriving from it such consideration as may be sometimes given him.

564 463 Among the Bambara, the nyama-ka-la include: the numu, blacksmiths, whose wives are usually potters; the loro, who work with copper; the garanke, who work leather; and the kule, who work with wood and are sometimes saddlers,

[567] 1. A slave has no rights because, as a person, he belongs to no community.

689 Public violation of decency is punished by death.

For adultery, the man is put in irons and pays a fine, the
684 woman is whipped by her husband, her brothers, or the Fama's police.
Relations with a woman in mourning draws public scorn on the guilty,
while a man who commits adultery with a pregnant woman is put to
death. A captive who is the lover of his master's wife is put to death.

689 Vagrant individuals are presumed to be escaped captives and
are handed over to the Fama.

735 Finally, begging is authorized, because, say the Bambara,
it is better to have begging than stealing.

d. Responsibility

[608] The Fama judges all his subjects, except his own sénanku whom
he has judged by his tribunal. The law is applicable to every cir-
672 cumcised man and excised woman recognized as sane. (The de-
mented are put in irons.) They are responsible for their acts, but
the family of the guilty is also responsible. The father of an un-
circumcised boy is responsible for the boy's acts, the husband for the
acts of his wife, and we have seen that a man's crime may lead to
the punishment of his whole family. Let us further remark that a
567 master was judge of his slave, but when a difference arose between
692 slaves of different houses, their case was referred to the tribunal.
The tribunal also weighed the death penalty [72] when a slave com-
[609] mitted a grave fault. Finally, the foreigner who lives in the Bam-
bara country is judged by Bambara laws.

We must also note that the penalties apply to all crimes
672 committed voluntarily; every infraction or damage involuntarily
committed is excusable on the condition that it be immediately
confessed. Thus it is that a hunter meeting a pair of lovers in the
[684] bush may kill them for outraging public decency, but must admit
his crime immediately upon returning to the village.

e. Inheritance

Monteil has noticed an order of succession in the Ségou re-
428 gion which does not correspond to that described by other authors,
such as Ortoli or Aubert. In fact, at the death of the fa, " ... every-
thing that belonged to him remains undivided under the new faya of

428 his oldest son. If there are only daughters, the goods are divided among them. Secondly, if there are no children, the heirs are the collateral males, or, in the absence of these, the collateral females. Third in line, if there are no collateral relatives, are relatives of preceding generations. In default of these, the fourth in line is the surviving spouse. If there is none, the estate is without heir, it goes to the head of the settlement (the dugu-tigi) when the settlement is an independent one, to the Fama in the contrary case (1)."

1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

428 587 562 In the Bougouni region, Aubert distinguishes two orders of succession: "First, that which concerns disposition of the women, second, that which concerns disposition of the privileges and wealth of the faya ... as far as the disposition of women is concerned, the men succeed each other in the following order: 1. the younger brother in order of primogeniture; 2. the men of the following generation in order of primogeniture; 3. the Fama ... And as far as wealth is concerned: 1. the oldest brother; 2. the son (always in order of primogeniture); 3. the father; 4. the younger brother in order of primogeniture; 5. the oldest relative; 6. the Fama." (2)

2. Aubert, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Bougouni Circle) [.

Women can neither inherit nor transmit.

428 For the Bamako circle, Ortoli sets forth the following rules of succession: " ... Only men, in the following order, have rights of succession: 1. full brothers of the deceased in order of primogeniture, 2. half-brothers on the father's side in the same order; 3. sons of the deceased in the same order; 4. nephews of the deceased in the same order and following the order of primogeniture of the full and half-brothers (on the father's side); 5. grandsons and grandnephews following the same rule of order; 6. the village; 7. the Fama ... But as concerns the personal patrimony, the order of inheritance is as follows: 1. younger full brothers in order of primogeniture; 2. younger half-brothers on the father's side in order of primogeniture;

428 3. and 4. as above for the head of the family; 5. oldest full brother; 6. oldest half-brother on father's side; 7. the family; 8. the village; 9. the Fama ... Married women may transmit personal property in the following order: 1. her oldest son; 2. her husband's oldest son by another wife; 3. the husband; 4. the woman's family ... [587] At the death of her [73] husband, a woman is not required to marry his heir." (1)

1. Ortoli, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bamako) [Bambara Customs (Bamako Circle)].

We should explain here the notion of seniority which is not 851 always easy to distinguish in a polygamous society. As a matter of fact, when two wives of the same husband bear children at roughly the same time, an intermediary announces the births to the fa, and the first baby to be announced is considered to be the oldest. It may even happen that the first one to be announced is in fact the last-born; he nevertheless remains the senior. In the case of twins, the senior [845] is the one brought forth last, for it is thought that twins are not conceived at the same time, and that the last-born is the one first con- [551] ceived. Certain special names are used for the oldest children: N'tyi for boys, Nya or Nyélé for girls.

At the Fama's death, several lines of succession are involved: 643 that of his own family, that of the family community, and that of the patriarchy.

As far as election to the title of Fama is concerned, we have seen how the new Fama was the senior male of the same generation and same family as the deceased Fama, or the eldest of the following generation. It is noteworthy that in the case of no male heir, the succession passes to the Fama's daughter whose husband governs in her name; but that is an exceptional case.

When the new Fama is designated by the notables, he oc- 643 cupies the fortified residence of the previous Fama, where the found- 644 ing ancestor is buried; the women and children of the deceased Fama must leave these premises. While his father lived, the Fama's eldest son led a luxurious and independent life; he often commanded an important dugu, sometimes founded by himself. At his father's death, he is a very important person for the new Fama.

562 428 768 587 When the husband dies, the wives are considered the principal wealth of the heir. Among certain Bambara, the wives are divided among the brothers; the eldest brother chooses and then has the other brothers choose in order of age. Among others, the heritage goes to the children who must ally themselves with their father's wives. The wives who do not want to remain with the heir have the option of returning to their families, providing the settlement is returned.

428 562 The wife may have personal property given to her by her parents at the time of marriage. Among certain Bambara, the father of the bride must give her the settlement paid by the husband, and this becomes her personal property. When a widow dies, all of her goods go to her eldest son; if there is no son, half of her goods goes to her daughters, and the other half is divided among her father, her mother, and her brother. When a married woman dies without children, her goods are divided between her husband and her father; if she no longer has her father, half goes to her husband and the other half to her brothers and sisters.

On the other hand, we have seen how a woman may inherit all of the wealth of a family head, and even of a chief, in default of male heirs, and the Mali empire had a woman Keïta at its head, daughter of Naré, fa Maghan.

562 662 A woman must not take part in any political discussion or demonstration, which does not mean that her role in these matters is nil. All the history of Mali is full of palace intrigues which reach their acute stage at the moment of a Fama's death and of the election of a new chief. It is at this moment that the women knew how to throw into the balance all the weight of their family's power to determine the new election.

562 561 575 Finally, we have seen that in a fashion parallel to the male brotherhoods and societies, the women were organized into powerful hierarchical societies according to their age classes and their degree of initiation. These societies, where men do not enter, are still imperfectly known, but they are at least as formidable as the male brotherhoods.

562 The woman must pound the millet, draw water, and carry out all the household chores, but when the man kills an animal, the meat belongs to the wife, and the man must accept in turn what she will give him.

765 Malakou, salakou
Fari ô, fari doun ka di." (2)

2. A song heard in Bani country. Since these songs are often improvised, they differ from one region to another.

Translation: "Ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans (fari) and to eat all one's fill, ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans!"

The excised daughters and grandaughters of the deceased wear mourning for about eight to ten days. During this time they stay in the b'lon, or entry hut, and spin cotton. The only noteworthy fact
[513 is that they all sleep in the same hut and attend to the wants of nature
514] at set times, going to the bush evening and morning in Indian file with white veils on their heads. For the whole moon following the
[293] death, the wife (the wives if the old man was polygamous) of the deceased wear sandals of goatskin and go out dressed only in white.

718 At the end of the moon, the wives of the deceased become the property of the head of the family, who makes them his own or gives
562 them to his circumcised children (3). Some freedom is left to them,
428

3. Brothers succeed brothers. If there are no brothers, the oldest son inherits. If the deceased is younger than the brother who inherits, the latter possesses the wives but may not enjoy them. If the heir is the son of the deceased, all the father's or grandfather's wives belong to him, and he may enjoy them all except his mother.

for they can ransom themselves if they wish, and for the old and worn, difficulties are soon smoothed away. If the new family head is without a brother and without children or if he is older than the deceased,

882 [836] in the [216] soli, the n-golo-moso, and with other girl friends are not merely platonic; indeed, sexual licentiousness is common.

As in everything else, a girl's life is more restricted. For her, the soli is merely a way of being presented to society, as we would say, that is, a means of attracting a prospective husband.

884 Coming-of-age, guardianship, deprivation of civil rights. It is obvious from the above that a Bambara has no way of knowing his age with any certainty. At best, he can estimate it by referring to some important event known to have occurred at about the time of his birth.

Since this is the case, we can see that coming-of-age has no correlation with chronological age. The individual's physical development and, still more, his intellectual maturity are signs that lead his family to grant a kamalen' the rights that distinguish a man from a boy. The most important of these rights is assuredly that of taking a wife and founding a family.

As a matter of fact, the soli marks the point after which the young people of both sexes are deemed competent to contract [582] marriages. Indeed, girls of 16 or 18 years of age and boys over 25 are rarely unmarried. It should further be understood that a girl may be betrothed at birth or even when she is being carried in the womb, as has been explained above.

● 429 562 Guardianship is intended to protect the individual from the follies of inexperience and the natural weakness of the female sex, a weakness to be understood here to include not only actual lack of physical strength but also incompetence imposed by custom which forbids a woman any power whatever over community rights or property. This is why young men are subject to guardianship until the fa, in council, recognizes their right to exercise the prerogatives of man's estate. In principle, women are subject to guardianship throughout their lives.

429 During his married life, the father is the legal administrator of any properties coming to his minor children, and he usually employs such property with discretion since he is legally bound to render an account when the children reach their majority.

● 429 A person who is away for a long or indefinite period [217] delegates the direction of the family community for as long as necessary to a friend or relative. This substitute, however, is expected to act only in accordance with the customary counsel and the family of the absent person.

[586] In case of divorce, the children always remain with the father. A divorced woman again comes under the guardianship of her own community.

768 429 When the mother dies, the father retains the administration of her property which belongs jointly to her children. If, however, one of her sons is married or of marriageable age and is competent, all such property is supposed to be handed over to him to administer in his capacity as fa of the uterine community.

When a father dies, his minor children are placed under the guardianship of the patriarch under whose authority the deceased was living. If he was independent, guardianship would be set up in accordance with his wishes which he would not have failed to make known.

In any event, if one of his sons is married or of marriageable age and sufficiently competent, he becomes fa of the familial community which gradually, as the younger sons grow up and establish families of their own, becomes a patriarchy such as we have described above.

[641] According to native law, deprivation of civil rights does not exist. In fact, however, persons who by reason of ill-health or senility are unable to comply with custom in carrying out their functions are supplanted by such persons as are designated by custom to replace them at the time of death.

596 614 Faya. The faya is the authority and power of the fa over all his dependents. It has the same character, differing only in extent, whether it concerns a familial or a patriarchal community.

Familial faya. Within the family, the fa theoretically has complete authority over everything that constitutes this community. It makes little difference whether he acts on his own initiative or whether he allows himself to be swayed by the

827 191 381 776 gain is felt as a contribution to the beneficial nyama. "The spirit Téliko transforms the air emitted by the speaker into favorable nyama; upon hearing a good word, it would be necessary to stop one's ears so that this nyama does not leave the person who received it." Moreover, if a person opens his eyes wide while watching the speaker, "the latter's nyama is able to penetrate the body of the listener" and spread within it as a reviving tide. While this takes place, the good word saturates the air, helping the action of breathing, hence the life, of the listener. "One breathes," says an informant, "with the nyama of the words which enter through the eyes and ears." But this process is not one-sided. The good nyama returns to the speaker through his own eyes while he is looking at the other person. He is reflected in the person with whom he is talking and it is as though he were talking to himself. There is a beneficial exchange even when only one of the two actors speaks.

Inversely, a bad word or an insult upsets the listener and rebounds, acting upon the insulting person. This harmonious arrangement summarizes precisely and powerfully the universal movement, principle of life and strength for all beings. It comprises an individual movement provoked by the word which acts upon the body by developing and regularizing the rhythm of breathing, and a collective movement set off by the return of the word to the speaker. Because of the effect of the spoken word, exchanges are established that are favorable both to the rhythm of individual breathing and to the equilibrium of universal life. This effect is not limited to words in the strict sense; sight enjoys the same prerogatives as hearing and diction. If an object
●[431] belonging to a certain person is seen and coveted by another, the owner cannot refuse to give it to him. The act of seeing has established by itself, between the stranger and the object, a bond which is affectively stronger than that of ownership.

826 The articulated parts of the human body are just as meaningful as the head. The bones, more lasting than the flesh /69/ and a testimony, in the grave, of the life that has passed, are its foundation and framework.

The navel is the central point of the articulations: that is why Faro, when he drowns a person, returns the body after having slit the nose and navel. This double mutilation shows that he has reclaimed the head and the body of the guilty man. The articulations are the indication of man's condition in the new order. Where he was once

845 Everyone visits the parents' home and takes to them what gifts one can
[431] give for to give to twins is equivalent to giving to Faro.

The name-giving ceremony is carried out on the river bank if the
845 village is situated close to the Niger, or otherwise on the edge of a
553 pond. The children are brought by their parents who, between them,
851 represent the number seven. They are bathed, their hair shaved off
and thrown into the river, while the father says: "Mother Faro, your
sons are born, here is their hair." (1) He then gives the cotton band,
dyala, which was worn by the mother to the officiant who encircles
the child's forehead with it while saying: "These two people are older
than I am; let the nyama of the name which is to be given them
leave with the dyala." (2) Then he gives them a special name. (3)

1. Ba faro i wolo dew kunsi ye nin ye.

2. Nin ma fla ka koro u ma, u čua dali nyama ka ta fini disa f͡ew dyala fę.

[177] 3. Séni and Sinè for boys; Bintou and Wasa for girls. Among the Islamized Bambara this custom is also respected; the names given are always Alassan and Fouséni. This is most likely a distortion of the Arab names given to twins in Morocco.

845 The next day, carrying one of the children and accompanied
851 by a woman in charge of the other, the mother goes begging for
millet or cotton in the village. She holds two identical spoon gourds
in her hands. The gifts, equal in weight and quality, symbolize the
twins; they are placed on the spoons. Then crossing her hands, the
woman pours them into the basket in which she carries the gifts (4).

4. All the symbolism of gifts made to twins, like that of the double pot (see below), confirms observations made in the Sudan on the relationships between gifts and trade. On this subject, see M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau, pp. 234 ff. It is interesting to note here that

575
323 the society during a public consecration which she receives with
[561] several others, the group forming an age grade.

After an apprenticeship of seven days, the potters decide upon the date of the ceremony which is celebrated at the firing spot near the altars. Each member provides a hairpin (*bandigi*), which represents her on this occasion, and the skin of a hedgehog. Disrobed in front of the assembled villages, each girl is seated in turn on the altar as an aged woman examines her genitals to verify her virginity and the proper execution of the excision.

/126/ If the young girl is no longer a virgin, she is publicly de-
[831] clared *dangade* (literally, bastard) and finds herself automatically
excluded from the society; she will never be able to receive the
potter's title. Otherwise, a proclamation is made immediately to
the great joy of the public. If the excision has not been judged
[304] sufficient, the patient is given the title of potter after having sub-
mitted to a new operation performed in such a way that the blood
runs over the pottery (1).

575 An old woman then appears seated before members of the age grade
323 and instructs them. She tells of the origin and history of pottery,
867 apprising them of the difficulties of the craft such as fatigue, burns,
etc. She teaches them patience towards the client and enumerates
the rules which will have to be observed during their lifetime: to be
pure in heart and to hate no one; not to undertake work shortly after
having had sexual relations; to work in silence; to respect all taboos
in general.

575 She then makes a libation of karite oil on the altar and rubs it on
323 the bodies of the initiates who must run their tongues over the pottery,
782 thus making an oath. Sheep, brought by the initiates' parents, are
then killed by having their throat cut over the hearth in the name of
431 the potters while the elders of the society present to the initiates gifts
consisting of several pots which they will sell for profit while waiting
for their first work. This gift is moreover a sign of adoption.

323 The utensils are made with clay, *mbogo pasa*, taken from the
317 bottom of the watercourse or along the river's edge; they belong to
184

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1. If excision is not possible, the operation takes the form of a wound inflicted with the hedgehog's skin (see p. 243).

304 784 561 which would be a dangerous one (1). The same rule applies to the enclosure, consisting of several huts, where the newly circumcised boys remain under the surveillance of the sema. The enclosure is situated at a distance of several tens of meters from the village in order to isolate the age grade. For all that touches them, such as clothing, sticks, sistrums, dishes, and refuse, with the exception of 561 the cap, is impregnated with their wanzo.

304 The newly circumcised boys receive from their parents gifts of [431] cowrie shells and food called wanzo sababu yala, "in honor of the wanzo," to speed their recovery.

[794] On the night which precedes the sixth day after the operation, a day called daworo, the children are initiated to the Komo (2).

The following day, the sema leads them to the edge of the river, where they wash their wounds for the first time. This act, which brings about direct intervention of the element in which Faro lives, has moreover a social meaning: it consecrates the age grade and from this moment on, the children belong for the rest of their lives to the same flã, exchanging jokes and insults which are suitable between senãnku (3). It must be noted that this very simple act of communal ablution constitutes the inauguration of an age grade of circumcised boys and sets off from that moment all the rights and obligations its members will have toward each other.

A meal, eaten in common and accompanied by songs and dances, ends the ceremonies of the daworo. Hereafter the ablutions are repeated daily until the wounds are healed.

304 561 881 /187/ On the last day, all that has been in contact with the newly circumcised boys is gathered together at a crossroad near the enclosure.

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1. The approach of the virulent wanzo of the uncircumcised boy acts upon those of the boys undergoing the operations and afflicts them in the genital organs.

2. See p. 203.

3. See p. 119.

*173 interview with his father, asked them to help him build a house where he could live independently. They set to work, and Mamari's house was soon built at Ségou-koro on the site of the future Biton-blon-da, the place where the ton' had been meeting up to that time. On Mondays and Thursdays, after a hunt to provide game, the members met there and had a feast. Each brought some sort of utensil and they prepared their own meals.

An old slave belonging to fa Siné, named bina (1) Bilali,

[576]

had been attracted by the fine food and asked to be taken in as a "slave of the ton' " (ton-dyon'). He was admitted on that basis and became a sort of general factotum. A Soninké slave followed his example and was likewise admitted and given the important role of trumpeter. Using a horn which he sounded three times, he called together the members of the ton' when ordered to do so by Mamari. He was called ton-masa, "master of the ton'," because his summons was not to be disobeyed on pain of [32] a fine of ten jugs of millet beer for recalcitrants.

A Somono slave named Allah-doungo (lit., Allah's pleasure) also offered his services to the ton', and the organization increasingly became the refuge of men seeking to evade any authority they deemed excessive.

These recruits were the first ton-dyon'; all were slaves in quest of freedom. Soon, however, the movement they had started was extended, thanks to the influence of the ton-tigi's diplomacy.

One day Mamari's mother gave (1) a free gift of twenty jugs of beer to the ton', and Mamari used the occasion to tell the

[431]

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1. Bina, whose literal meaning is "uncle," is here used as a title of respect.

1. It is entirely typical of native custom to give ostensibly free gifts in this way, when it is actually intended that the giver receive more than he gives. This is an example.

764 789. Burials are never willingly held on either Wednesday or Saturday (1) [Ed., see footnote above].

Finally, a small white chicken (2) to ward off bad luck is sometimes put into the niche just before it is closed off (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above].

Upon returning from the burial, someone clubs the dead man's dog (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above], unless he left express orders to the contrary. Some Bambara even go so far [554] as to buy a dog with this posthumous honor in mind. This seems to be another magic practice to exorcise the ghost of the deceased (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above].

When they have returned to the house, the brothers-in-law of the deceased eat the national dish, millet mush (to). When they leave for their homes, each is given a rooster or a hen in the name of the deceased, which they must eat en route before they reach home. If the fowl [170] were not eaten until they reached their villages, it would arouse the dead man's vengeance; his ghost (nyama) would haunt these impious persons. This too seems to be another magic practice to counteract the evil effects of death.

764 431 (c) The funeral celebration. As soon as the death has been announced, it is the duty of every relative, neighbor, friend, or anyone under any sort of obligation to the deceased to bring an offering in proportion to his rank or degree of obligation for the purpose of honoring the dead (1).

In certain cases, the total of these offerings is very large. The chronicle of Ségou tells us that when Ngolo died the cowries contributed filled seven huts, representing several thousand francs. Besides, people give whatever they wish or can afford: a horse, a cow, a sheep, fowl, cowries, gold, strips of native cotton, fabrics, grain, etc.

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2. If the corpse is a woman, a fertilized egg is used.

1. We noted earlier the sanctions applied at the funerals of Biton and Ngolo.

583
[184] family gives the bride's family a young girl to replace the one taken away.

until all or a portion of the agreed bride price has been paid and especially not before the customary gifts have been received.

The nature and value of the bride price and gifts vary since they depend on the wealth of the future husband, the rank of the woman and family customs. Among the poor, the bride price is small: a few handfuls of cowries, a chicken, a few [435] kola nuts, a few lengths of native cotton. An average bride price is worth, in all, 25,000 to 30,000 cowries (about 25 to 30 francs). Among the rich, the bride price may include one or more slaves, gold jewelry, silver, fabrics, clothing, etc.

The same is true of the gifts; everything depends on the families involved. It is customary around Ségou, however, for the fiancé to give his bride a large piece of native material called kundugu fini, a dloké (a kind of blouse), and a pair of sandals with very thick soles. He must also, if he can afford to, give her a slave to do the kitchen work, a cow, jewelry, etc. [199]

He must also give presents to the girl's parents in accordance with his means.

The totality of the bride price and gifts is called furu-fen', literally, "the property of the marriage." As soon as part of this furu-fen' is handed over to the furu-bolo-ma-tigi, he takes it, [273] escorted by some of the fiancé's friends, to the girl's fa. All of these proceedings, of course, involve jugs of native beer (dlo). The notables of the place, the dugu-tigi, the "elders," and even the kamalen', come at once to congratulate the family, to share in the drinking, and to receive a share of the furu-fen'.

The fiancée is often a little girl, and in that case the duties of the young man and his family go on for several years. The giving of gifts is repeated, to an extent commensurate with the young man's wealth and the standing of the girl's family. ● 431 583 At the time of harvest it is customary for the fiancé to send one or more baskets of millet, each weighing 20 to 40 kilos, and from time to time, a jug of beer, 20 to 30 liters. On the

583 occasion of funerals or religious ceremonies, he brings offerings
●431 (fowl, kola nuts, millet, salt, etc.). The ceremony at which his contribution is indispensable is the da woro (1). On this

1. See p. 264 below.

occasion the furu-bolo-ma-tigi is entrusted with important gifts for the girl (clothing and jewelry) as well as for the relatives assembled (food of all kinds).

583 Just as the amount and nature of the furu-fen' vary, the manner of payment and the time set for the payment of the bride price are likewise left to the discretion of the parties. There may be a single payment or there may be installments, either before or partly before and partly after the bride is handed over. From the material point of view, the persons of the bride and groom are actually of no importance. The fa who gives the bride price wants a girl from the family with which he wishes an alliance, and all that matters is that the girl be marriageable at the date agreed upon, provided that she is handed over in accordance with the agreement. In the same connection, the person giving the bride price is not required to have the whole amount needed at the time of [200] the agreement; it is sufficient that he be in a position to pay when the amount falls due. This explains certain usages which might otherwise seem odd.

[584] It often happens that a fa arranging a marriage speaks for a very young girl or even for one not yet born. If the child is handed over before nubility, the marriage is not consummated until after the first menses. We have mentioned above that in such cases the marriage payment involves repeated gifts for years.

583
231 Another very curious method of paying the bride price is to follow a custom called "the mare's foot." Its essential features are as follows.

A person giving bride price has a mare that he could sell to pay off the obligation, but he prefers to promise one or more of the foals or, as the natives say, one or more of "feet." This method of turning a brood mare to account without selling it is common among the natives of western Sudan.

857 and his syere at the head. There, the n-Tomo-den' squat at
796 a little distance from the n-Tomo-tigi, who takes his place in
782 front of them, facing the tree where the guardian genie dwells,
in order to perform the libations and sacrifices. First he takes a small gourd and pours the dege it contains against the trunk of the tree; he cuts the throat of a chicken and dribbles its blood on the tree in the same way; next, in a jet of saliva, he spits on it the juice and particles of kola nuts which he has chewed for the purpose; finally, he fastens a few of the chicken's feathers in the smear of blood. As he makes each of these offerings, he says to the genie: "Look here, I offer you this chicken, protect us, defend us against the wicked and against evil genii. Give us enough to live well. Save us from illness. Give us rain to make our fields fruitful and be propitious to our families."

He speaks thus for everybody, after which each one comes in turn to offer his sacrifice and to make personal requests through him as intermediary.

The admission of new members follows. Each of them
857 pays his entrance fee and then, prostrate before the genie,
796 swears never to reveal anything to the uninitiated, [239] above all to the women." If you betray your brothers," says the n-Tomo-tigi, "may the genie kill you!" The new member repeats: "May he kill me!"

At this point the victims are cooked, and while they are
[535] being prepared, the n-Tomo-den' dance in turn, dressed in the ceremonial regalia. Their steps are accompanied by the beating of drums, and they twirl a flexible stick as they dance. When the victims are cooked, the banquet begins. Everyone eats and drinks as much as he can; a special treat of kola nuts brings the banquet to a close.

857 On this day each n-Tomo-den' is expected to take one of
796 his gifts or some other personal possession and make a present of
572 it to his n-golo-moso (1). This is how one names the young

● [431]

1. N-golo-moso, literally, "woman of the birth," is the companion associated with the rite which he is to undergo.

561 and religious life). The young men of the same *soli* form what is called a *flambolo*. Three consecutive classes of *flambolo* form a *flanton*. The women have a parallel organization. Each *fulani* is a *ton-den* (child of the *ton*), with a corresponding association.

561 241 476 The association's role, apart from the seasonal celebrations and the copious feasts, accompanied by a great deal of drinking, is that of a mutual aid society and of a veritable village work cooperative. It is organized, administered, and articulated with a view to the agricultural work. The chief, *kariku*, expedites current business, with the assistance of a *syere* (witness, deputy). He has a treasurer who receives offerings and makes payments, the *femmaraba* (he who preserves things), plus an honorary president and an adviser, chosen from among the notables and delegated by them; he must supervise the society and orient its activities.

This social organism rests, in the last analysis, on the exchanges of services initiated and supported by the *kariku*. He sees to it that help is forthcoming to a man making the customary work payments in the fields of his parents-in-law or future parents-in-law (in exchange for food and drink furnished by the parents-in-law to these *ton-den*). In like manner, a farmer asks the *kariku* for help in clearing a field of brush. 431 824 This request is made through an intermediary or a *sénanku* who [58] accompanies the request with ten kola nuts. The chief accepts the present and calls his council into session to study the affair technically and to fix the salary. The same procedure is followed for the winter weeding, which calls for rapid completion, as well as for building dams, irrigating canals, paths, roads suitable for carting, etc.

An analogous system exists for the female *kari*, for sowing the crops as well as for gathering the harvest, mutual domestic aid, etc. The two groups collaborate for the seasonal celebrations.

643 d. *The Fama*. -- We see that the canton is a grouping formed under the authority and influence of a dominant family. Its unity is determined by political, social, and religious laws which regulate it. The *fa* or head of the dominant family becomes the *Fama*, that is, the patriarch, chief of the canton. He then often renounces the administration of the *faya*, which he turns over to his second (*syere*),

567 701 3. The ton-koro-bolo behind the disi is a special reserve formed entirely of pure ton-dyon.

4. The keli-tigi was the chief of the expedition, designated by the Fama. He might be a dyon-kuntigi (chief of the furuba-dyon), a member of the Fama's community, or the Fama himself.

708 534 Finally, the army was accompanied by a musical corps, composed essentially of drums which transmitted messages. There were armpit drums (dunkan'), shoulder drums (taura), three-legged drums (dange), drums carried by two men (tabala), and coupled drums (denuba). Often horns (buru) were added, sometimes small horns made of ivory or horn, and sometimes xylophones (bada) and cowbells.

708 537 A dyeli (griot) follows the expedition to observe the exploits that he must retransmit; he must encourage the warriors and dispel panic by the power of his oratory.

B. Influence of Social Organization on Economic Life

a. The ton, Work Community

621 We have seen that the social unit among the Bambara is the community. The community is also the work unit and the economic unit. The independent individual is not conceived of. The community owns all the wealth which makes up the spiritual and material patrimony: the land, the agricultural, industrial, and commercial products, the habitations ...

423 621 622 609 [431] The community regulates the exploitation of the land. The dugu-tigi is the first occupant, master of the land, of which he distributes the lots to the different family heads. When a stranger, a family head, wants to enter into a community, he chooses an unoccupied field and asks the village chief for it. The request is accompanied by ten kola nuts and a chicken. Authorization cannot then be refused. The chief of the land sacrifices the chicken before the entire community and informs it of the installation of the newcomer. When the stranger wants to leave the land, he is given back his chicken and kola nuts.

423 621 622 Land assigned to a family head may always be taken back from him without justification by the dugu-tigi and his council.

D. Position of Women

562 Women's society has remained much more impenetrable to European civilization. Women very rarely go to French schools, and unlike the men, who, during their military service and otherwise, are partly immersed in our system of civilization, they have few contacts with the Whites and appear to be even more attached to custom than their husbands. Very few speak French, and for all these reasons their society has remained closed and very imperfectly known to the Whites. [191]

562 858 Reasoning from what is known of their juridicial situation, we have deduced their inferior position. Perhaps a better knowledge of their role and of their importance in the society will lead us to very different conclusions. From the legal point of view, a woman is always a minor; she belongs first to her own community, to which she owes obedience, then to her husband's community. When the marriage is legal, that is to say, when the husband has paid the matrimonial settlement, the children belong to the husband; if not, in the case of concubinage, the woman's family can claim the child, because it belongs to the family, as does everything of the mother's.

562 582 583 Her marriage is decided on by the fa; although in practice the woman is often consulted indirectly beforehand, and she has a certain liberty in her choice. Even a slave can refuse to marry her master, despite gifts and promises. But a woman is forbidden to marry someone she considers a relative, that is, someone who belongs to her paternal line and who bears the same name she does. Exogamy is the rule.

562 593 Yet, when a woman marries, she keeps her paternal name and her personal taboos; sometimes she adds her name to that of her son, who normally bears the dyamu of his father. The woman remains very attached [75] to her family and goes to stay with them often. Among them she will find support in case of a difference of opinion with her husband. In case of divorce through the fault of the husband, he loses all rights over the wife as well as the settlement he had paid. [586]

595 [431] In the system of polygamy, the first wife is mistress of the house; the other wives gather at her place for meals. She distributes the husband's presents, but aside from these privileges, the rights of the wives are equal as are those of their children.

852 with water added (to recall the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni).
The patriarch shakes the family pembélé three or four times over the
infant's head to give him the nyama of the recently deceased whose
ni and dya he has inherited. Then he places the altar (kere la boli
ni) on the infant's chest three times, after having recited a prayer.
He cuts the throat of a red cock, dips his index finger in the blood,
and traces three or four crosses on the newborn's forehead, who be-
553 comes boli din. The name is given the eighth day by the Komo chief
under the doubalé, where the old people assemble. The father offers
[431] 100 kola nuts, two jars of millet beer, plus a ram whose throat is cut,
and money for the griot. Part of the baby's hair is shaved off and
kept in [90] a case (sebe); another part of the hair is thrown in the
river as a sacrifice to Faro. The eldest of the old men examines the
roots of the infant's hair and the conjunction of the eyebrows, thus
determining its character (téré). Then he swings the baby seven
times in an east-west direction and eight times north-south, giving
him the first name of the deceased ancestor and, at the same time,
his spiritual principles. The griot recite the father's mottoes, the
sénanku come to joke with the baby, and the blacksmith traces the
scarifications.

845 Twins. We have seen the belief that in the beginning twins
were always born, and Faro subsequently punished man by abolishing
double births which he no longer accords except to certain privileged
persons. For the Bambara, twins are new beings who inherit neither
the ni nor the dya of any ancestor. Special rites are observed at their
birth which is announced by showing the raised right and left index
[201] fingers, without saying anything, for the proclamation would be so
powerful that it would be harmful to the newborn twins (see G.
Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].
553 The rite of name-giving is carried out on the bank of the river. The
following day, accompanied by another woman, the mother goes in
search of millet and cotton which she gathers in identical calabash
ladles. Equal gifts are put in the ladles, which the mother presents
in crossed hands. Later, the twins are fitted with metal bracelets
[301] representing their dya, and, in certain regions, with a pendant in the
form of double slave irons. The twins always stay together; they
856 wear identical clothes. If one dies in early infancy, the mother
places on the mat beside the surviving infant a small doll made by

881 physical male factor residing in the clitoris. The operation takes 304 place, moreover, during the same period as the circumcision. It is carried out by the potteress, wife of the blacksmith, in full daylight before the assembled kin. During their seclusion the girls wear a white veil which plays the same role as the bonnet of the circumcised. [534] Instead of the sistrum, the girls shake a gourd which contains eight millet seeds and cotton fibers which their fiancés have given them. A goat is sacrificed for the ceremony. The collected blood is given to the fiancé in honor of his ancestors who become those of the girl.

[9[illegible]] On the last day of the ceremony the girls definitively rid themselves of their wanzo by jumping over a pyre composed of the clothes and scraps of the excised.

e. Marriage

[582] It is only after having been circumcised or excised that young 584 people may marry. The institution of marriage is regulated by a ritual which has often been described, particularly by Amar, Monteil, Tauxier, Aubert . . .

The marriage arrangements are made by the respective fa of the two betrothed, after the young people have been consulted. The request is officially made to the parents by an intermediary, a man of caste or a sénanku. It is accompanied by ritual gifts offered to the fa of the girl. In the Bougouni region the request is accompanied by ten kola nuts, because ten is a complete number that [80] designates good events and future births. (Nine kola nuts are offered 576 to present condolences, four as a sign of greeting. To send three ● [431] nuts would be insulting, and 19 nuts, marking incompleteness, would be a sign of lack of confidence.) The first kola nuts to be offered [824] are always wrapped in one or two karite leaves, symbol of life and of fecundity. If the ten kola nuts are accepted, it means that the father has opened the way to the marriage. The intermediary then make a second trip the following week, bringing a cock for sacrifice to the ancestors and ten more kola nuts; during a third trip he offers another cock and ten more kola nuts before the entire assembled family of the young girl, witnessing that the girl may meet her fiancé. In the course of the fourth trip, the intermediary leads the girl to the fiancé's family, where she will be confided to the wife of the head of the family who will undertake her education.

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778 peculiarity of this fetish that it continues to live in its hourglass as

778 long as a particle of this object remains.

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Young Bambara holding the sinsin, the fetish of twins

845 This fetish protects the mother of the twins, and unites the latter

778 in such close affection that one never receives a gift without sharing

431 it with the other. I would even go so far as to say that it is in good taste never to offer anything to one without offering as much to the other, and when they are given something, the first to be favored is the last born, who is considered by everyone as the older.

845 778 431 If one of the twins dies early in life, as usually happens, the survivor receives a statuette which he keeps all his life with jealous care and to which he gives the name of the deceased. He dresses it to the best of his ability, often covers it with glass trinkets, such as bangles, beads, bits of amber, rings, etc., and well-bred people never give him a gift without adding at least 5 cowrie shells for the statuette.

845 778 825 The sinsin also grants twins a curious privilege. A scorpion not only cannot bite them, it is even at their service, and on their order will bite a fellow who has displeased them.

845 778

A twins' doll.

845 551 It is easy to recognize twins (flani in Bambara) as they have special names, the commonest being Sinna, Mafénè, Gno, and Ouassa. /99/

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10. The Genie-Protector of Villages

776 621 The genie protector of a village lives on a knoll or a rock; almost always, if not invariably, its home is a baobab or false cedar near the walls, in a little grove intersected by neat paths, well kept and often raked.

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1. The *sinsin*, the *gnéna* of twins, is an exception, as it may also be bought.

inheritance, and rarely by purchase. The *gnâ* pass from father to son by inheritance, but it is always possible to obtain one by purchase; all that is necessary is to find in the village the number of people needed to make up the staff of the idol, provided one is not opposed by the sorcerer's veto.

Every purchase of a powerful *boli* occasions celebrations, festivals, and drinking bouts that last from three to eight days. These festivals are like marriage celebrations. Surrounded by his staff, the new fetish owner spends the day offering *d'lo*, or millet beer, to the many friends who come to congratulate him and give him their gifts. It is not until evening that he leaves his *b'lon*, or entry hut, and, followed by initiates carrying the idol, goes to the sacred grove or under the trees chosen to be the meeting place henceforth. The night is spent in dancing and shouting hymns.

In the eyes of the Negro to buy a *gnâ* is to become united with it in a firm and indissoluble way. It is equivalent to marrying the fetish, and they have no other phrase to express their idea, their notion of the matter: "*A yé boli fourou*, he got married"; "*ayé boli fourou gosi*, he has stamped and sealed his marriage with the *boli*" (2); "*ne ka fouroubolom faro* (3) *flé*, here is my wedding present";

[583]

2. *Fourou gosi*: In order to enjoy the marriage lawfully, whoever marries must, in the presence of the head of the village, pay his wife's parents a handful of kola nuts -- usually eleven, one more than the required ten.

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3. *Fouroubolom fara*: This is the name of the small present of cowrie shells given to a

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/newly married/ couple by their friends. It varies from 40 cowrie shells to 2 kémés, or 160 cowrie shells.

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425 "a taboli konio kera, the marriage of his boli has taken place."

135 The value of a gnâ varies between 30 and 40 francs, and whoever owns one can from then on make them. If one counts the presents given to the maker and to his staff, the dogs, goats, and kola nuts offered in sacrifice on the day of his reception, and finally the beer of the wedding, its value is undoubtedly more than 100 francs.

5. Differences among the Powerful Boli

778 I class all the powerful boli into three main groups. In the first I place those which formerly were the prerogative of kings, princes, and ministers; in the second, those which have neither temple nor sacred grove; and in the third, those which have a temple and a sacred grove, or at least one or the other.

Those of the first group are not at all numerous, and the most popular are the Safolo, the Kongoba, the Nan-Woloko, and the Kouantara. They are usually found in villages which were formerly capitals of cantons or provinces and are in the hands of people whose families have included a kafotigi (head of a canton) or a fama (king or petty king), i.e., a head of a province, a minister of the king on whom the title of ruler (fama) was bestowed.

Everything leads me to think that in the beginning these were merely fetishes responsible for watching over the king and the people of his court, analogous to what above I have called the family boli. At present they have become boli of sects. But although all circumcised men can enter the ranks of those who pay them respect, only married men become initiated, and the orgies in their honor are private orgies whose entire cost is borne by graybeards.

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782 According to legend, slaves were sacrificed to these boli in the time of the Bambara kings. Since then the worshippers have been content to offer them millet beer, hens, and goats in addition to the

[846] 852 553 The navel dries between the sixth and eighth day. The headman and elders are told of the event, and all the heads of families (the gouatigou) come and sit in order of age and rank at the entrance door of the hut which opens into the court of the confined woman. The religious head, the gnéna-sonnaba (2), goes alone into the hut and /170/ shaves the head of the infant on its mother's knees. Long [201] 431 lines of women push into the inner court, clap their hands, let out shrill cries of "kouyo kouyo" as signs of joy, and give their friend a small present of millet and cotton (1).

[793] 2. Usually it is the religious head, priest of the dasiri, who shaves the child, but there are exceptions to this rule. In some villages it is the civil head who performs the tonsure; in others this task is the prerogative of a family. Sometimes the shaving is done by the father or the grandfather. The families in which this custom is followed are not pure Bambara but are mixed with Marka blood.

1. The women give a handful of cotton and about a pound of millet.

When the head of the child has been shaved and well cleaned, the headman lays his hands on him to drive away evil spirits that might wish to harm his life; he gently strokes his back and chest and, spitting lightly, recites a short formula which he alone knows and can understand. Then he goes and sits among his people, and the father presents him with eleven kola nuts on a platter of braided grass. The heads of families, in order of age, place their offering of 40 to 80 cowrie shells (2) on this same platter, and the gnéna-sonnaba asks

2. The men give 40 cowrie shells. The generous ones go as high as 80.

796 881 The youths follow, dressed in blouses knotted at the abdomen like towels and trousers into which three pairs of legs and three abdomens could fit without any trouble, dragging drums and bass drums. To keep up the march and cause it to be forgotten (they often come from far away) they shout a loud "you you" and make coarse jokes, which are here addressed to the fair sex more than elsewhere. Sometimes also, between two laughs, two great silly laughs, something like the crack of a whip is heard. This sound is made by five stubby fingers as they are applied to the cheeks of dear little angels, warming them. In fact, a band of little boys and girls trot among the youths in their birthday suits, passing to the right and to the left and winding between their legs, and patience wears out and quickly comes to an end.

After the young people come the old men; they are bent double, leaning on spears, and even while talking of future projects they recall the days of the past. It is quite apparent that there are no more like them, their equal cannot be found. Into the foroko, the goatskins they slip over their arms and fasten on their shoulders, they have slipped some good handfuls of cowrie shells for the mothers of the circumcised [276 431] and excised, a box of the snuff that every self-respecting stranger gives as a gift to the men of the village, and finally the kola nuts that the sacrificer will chew before spitting the remains onto the front side of the god and some that, as educated, well-bred men, they keep for close friends. They also carry the hens or roosters for the sacrifice; these are attached by the feet to the straps of the foroko and hung head down their wings flapping horribly.

881 796 301 The human flood arrives at the gates of the village, stops a moment under the big trees, and tidies itself. The pointed caps /184/ are put a little to one side of the head, the blouses are unfolded, and nakedness is concealed. On the women's side there is indescribable hubbub, like the sound of the distant ocean at rising tide; they polish and adorn themselves and beautify themselves. On their feet they put little chains, on their arms heavy bracelets that knock together with the sound of old iron, and on their hips the young girls at least hang belts of beads sprinkled with little bells that tinkle at the slightest movement. In their noses they put crescents of gold or copper, in

881 each ear ten to twelve rings of soft iron, tin, or silver, and those that
796 they put on their fingers and toes number more than twenty.

301 On the braids of their hair, all running with grease, they hang bits of amber and rings of polished pottery as white as snow, and around all their necks are bead necklaces from which dangle bits of amber, grigris, and here and there, held by leather strips, pottery rings that fall back between the shoulders and in front on their bosoms. They also bind their foreheads with narrow crowns of rainbow-colored beads or diadems of coral. Such are the Negro girls in their most beautiful array.

796 At the homes of the circumcised and excised, the huts and
881 courts are crowded with people, for in addition to friends and story-tellers /griots/ -- the poor troubadours of the country -- there may be in each home older married daughters who have come with their husbands, children, and parents-in-law, and the fiancé's delegation to his betrothed seem to be in every corner. This is really the festival of the tribe, and everybody is present; only the fiancés are excluded and cannot appear on this day. And how very Bambara it is! In one
[264] spot people quench their thirst with great drinks of d'lo, or millet beer, while nearby, squatted around steaming gourds, others stuff themselves with to, or gruel. The hands held out to you are running with sauce; the children who surround you are covered with leftovers from the feast and brandish under your nose bones that they gnaw clean with their bare teeth, and while they call to you Sogo ("some meat"), the satiated people next to you exclaim: "Abarka, thank you Né fara san, I am full for the moment." And everywhere there is an infernal bedlam! Old women beat furiously on inverted pumpkins in conari full of water /185/; youths beat drums, women and young girls clap their hands in rhythm, and everybody shouts the glories of the family. The families of the circumcised and excised are beside
[431] themselves, so great is their joy, and if you are one of their close friends you will be shown all the gifts received, in plain sight in the court. You are made to taste of everything, to touch and feel everything, and, just as on the day when the child is given its name, you receive, on leaving, the kola nut of life (le ni woro).

881 sentence, for the headman only talks in a low voice, as is in good taste. /197/ The speech is short; he calls by name each circumcised boy and excised girl and reminds everybody that among them circumcision is as old as the world, that is to say, as old as the Bambara people. "Yes," he exclaims, "our circumcised children are on the path of their fathers; they are Bambara. Youths, young girls, men and women, old men and old women, our circumcised ones can henceforth take part in palavers, sit with their elder brothers around the gourds of d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer, and take part in our games, our merry-making, and our rites. May everyone know it and no one forget, or ever treat them as if they were uncircumcised (1) -- that is the deepest insult! Everyone will know how to avenge an insult to his child, and I will know how to avenge an insult to mine." He ends by saying: "Truce to disputes; let us eat, drink, dance, and enjoy ourselves, and /leave/ serious matters (2) /until/ after the festival."

From then on, d'lo flows in streams and throats are cleansed. Everybody, young and old, men and women, dances in honor of the young "citizens," and as long as the sparkling, foaming liquor lasts, there are songs, dances, cries and shouts without end on the public square, day and night. And when the beer reaches its end, each circumcised boy and excised girl, in order of age, stretches his or her muscles before the public, accompanied by father, mother, and all his family and that of his fiancée or her finacé. This is the climax of the festival. At this point the cries and shouts redouble,
881 and the drinkers, jug in hand, foam on their lips, gazing into space
431 and wavering on their legs, place beads, cowrie shells, and a kola nut in the large pockets of the blouses of the circumcised youths and

[578] 1. To call someone blakoro ("uncircumcised") is the insult of insults.

2. All disputes, all litigation, everything that disunites.

881 onto the platters of the excised girls. With the last kola nut all leap-
431 ing stops, and the festival ends. Slowly the crowd withdraws and
goes home, for it has only too much need of a little rest.

881 On the days following this "coming out of the circumcised"
(the name given to this occasion by the Bambara), the youths and
574 maids run around the country dressed up, and go to thank those who
were at the *da woro*, or festival of the sixth day. Boys and girls, in
two groups, under the /198/ direction of their old woman guardian,
walk along the paths one after another, Indian file. At the head of
the column is the *massa*, or queen; the *massa ma Kono*, her deputy,
comes next, and she is followed by the *massa ma Kono ségére*, who
again is the deputy of the one in front of her. All the others' are girls
that are healed, and the last, the youngest of all, is called *koulé*.
The boys march in the same order and bear the same titles. This
way of thanking people is very Bambara; although they insist on show-
ing themselves so that people will know that they are circumcised,
[431] they want especially that alms be given them, and they go to ask a
gift and hold out both hands. The Bambara people are a beggar people!

Chapter 10

Bambara Marriage

584 Little Bambara girls are betrothed when they are very young, generally between the ages of four to ten, and girls of twelve, fourteen, and sixteen years who still await a suitor are very unusual. Yet age matters little, for there are three stages in marriage: the proposal, the betrothal, and the wedding, and whoever wants to take a wife, whether he is young, mature, or an old man, married, widower, or unmarried, must obey this law.

583 the fiancée has time to reflect and to open her heart to love, for her
584 wedding will not take place until one, two, or often three years after excision; once this has been performed she will be qualified to be a mother.

584 From the time of the engagement the two families draw together,
574 establish friendly relations, and visit each other. After the girl has grown up, during the year or two that elapse between the excision and the wedding, she spends two weeks to a month each year with her parents-in-law. One might say that in Bani country, this is the general custom (2). When the young men sent to bring her arrives,

2. In the environs of Ségou this custom is less comon. Often the two families come to an agreement, and on the appointed day the fiancée goes to the home of her fiancé, accompanied by a young man appointed by the council of elders. After the last festival of the circumcision (baloko déou don bo, "the coming out of the circumcised"), some, even many villages hold a festival for the fiancée. She goes to the home of her fiancé all loaded with beads and necklaces and escorted by all the young girls of the village. The fiancé bears all the cost of this festival, called mousodjira, "to show the wife." All the youths of the village and of neighboring villages give 80 to 160 cowrie shells to help the fiancé cover the expenses.

[431]

she /205/ hides in the hut of friends, and the little band runs right and left looking for her. They soon find her, members of her family--

584 514 her mother, step-mothers, and sisters -- join them, and the little procession goes to the religious head, the gnéna-sonnaba, priest of the dasiri, genie protector of the village, who gives some advice to the child and sets the day of her return. On leaving the village, the girl stops and refuses to go on; the youths take hold of her and carry her in their arms, and she abandons herself to cries and shouts that must not cease before she reaches the edge of the fields that surround the village.

584 431 Although the bride price is set, it is more difficult to determine the value of the fiancé's presents of millet, hens, salt, kola, and d'lo, or millet beer. The size of these presents, given gratuitously over four, five, or six years and often more, depends largely on the fortune of each man and the prestige of the fiancée's family. At harvest time he supplies one or two baskets of millet /each/ weighing 20 to 40 kilograms; at the great annual sacrifice offered to the family boli he provides a hen, salt, kola nuts, and dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water. From time to time he gives his prospective father-in-law some well-filled jugs of d'lo containing at least 20 to 30 liters /each/, and if there is a festival at his home, he is careful not to forget the latter. He shows his generosity at the festival on the occasion of his fiancée's excision (1); at the da woro, or festival of the sixth day, he shows himself to be generous, and the guardian of the wedding gifts takes her the required present, a loincloth in black stripes on a yellow background, four to five pounds /the French livre equals one half a kilogram, a little more than a pound avoirdupois/ of butter, two to three kilograms of salt, 20 to 30 liters of d'lo, or millet beer, an equal amount of dégé, or flour mixed with honey water, and finally some decorative ornaments -- a bead necklace, a piece of amber, a bracelet. These last gifts are in no way required; they are given purely out of amiable courtesy.

584 606 One little fact without importance, remains to be noted. From the time of the engagement, the fiancée may not eat in the presence

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1. A Bambara man is not present at the festival which takes place at the excision of his fiancée.

585 their respects. It is chiefly the d'lo, or millet beer, that attracts
them, but under these circumstances the Bambara forget that they are
beggars always holding out their hands. Although the visitors eat,
drink, and get drunk, they pay for at least a part of what they consume.

585 Through the intermediary of the fouroubolоma tigi, each guest
431 and visitor, man or woman, gives the couple a fourouboloma fara,
or wedding present, in kind or in money. They know, after all, that
this is a means -- and the best-- by which they can empty a jug of
d'lo, then a second, and finally several.

585 I know nothing more taxing than a Bambara wedding, which
lasts two, three days, and often eight, if the husband is rich or wants
to appear so. As long as the festivities last, the bride and groom are
in their respective huts, surrounded by people who are sweating from
having eaten or drunk too much, in an atmosphere warmed by foul
breaths, and where there is never any fresh air. They do not have
a minute, not an instant, of peace, and they cannot even attend to
[514] the wants of nature without being escorted by a numerous band. After
each meal there is in their courts a deafening noise of drums, horns,
and songs shouted by voices never in harmony, and their ears hear
nothing but these sentences, which must be a torture to them in the
long run: "May your marriage be happy, may hands and feet spring
from it (may you have many children), may God preserve your /212/
health, may He grant you a long and vigorous old age. Thank you,
thank you, you have received us well, you have not been sparing of
the d'lo, I am full (nzé dé fara -- or again -- né fara dérén) (1)."

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1. On the day of her wedding, a young woman talks only with the many women who have come to keep her company and with her maids of honor. When the time has come when she can talk, she is offered a hen.

764 782 has been filled and his soul goes to Lahara. In the eyes of the Negroes, this act has none of the attributes of a sacrifice; it is the price of the right to enter Lahara and is given by the children to /222/ their father's soul. Moreover, they give it to him alive, and it is slipped into the grave at the moment when the last small board, the last wood chip, or the last earthen slab making up the root is set in place (1).

764 At the end of the ceremony the deceased's dog is killed (2), and the sons-in-law and the brothers-in-law eat to, or millet gruel. [431] When they depart they also receive a rooster or a hen. It is given them in the name of the deceased, and since it is the gift of a dead person, they kill and eat it on the way (3). The fetishes and the genii would be displeased if such a gift should arrive in the village alive, and whoever became guilty of such a crime would become the plaything of most of the gnâma and could dig his grave.

The Bambara do not place any kind of food either on or in the grave. But for three days in the evening, at nightfall, a dish of tô (gruel) and a little fresh water is placed on the gouâ so that the soul of the old man may satisfy his hunger and quench his thirst.

1. A nest egg is slipped in instead of a hen if the deceased was a woman.

[231] 2. If the deceased owned a dog it is always killed unless the old man decided otherwise while he was alive. There are Bambara, especially women, who raise dogs in order to have this honor, and for this reason only.

[782] 3. This practice, again, is no sacrifice in the eyes of the Negro.

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gnâma-n-kou or the na-yanka (I do not know the name of this plant), put to boil and soak in water. To make it effective, at least two kola nuts are offered to the fetish and five hens are sacrificed to it.

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of the staff, which lives off the altar. For the mere act of having killed a dog or a goat, of which they receive a good share of the meat, they get a fee consisting of a basket of sorghum (18 to 20 kilograms) and 1, 600 cowrie shells (about 2 francs).

Since initiates of the fetish are the only ones who can touch the corpse and lay it in its final home, they receive 8, 000 to 10, 000 cowrie shells (about 8 to 10 francs) on that score. At the end of the sangafo (3) the god's retinue go and sweep the hut of the deceased, purify it with holy water, and drive out the last gnâma of the murdering Komo, and for this five fine hens are slaughtered. As payment for their trouble, the family also gives them five to six meters of cloth and 8 to 10 ba (4) (about 8 to 10 francs); 50 francs do not cover the cost.

[431] Fortunately, the family does not bear all the expenses. Friends help a little, and everyone brings his offering: from one person they get a /228/ hen, from another a débé (40 cowrie shells) or a kémé (80 cowrie shells). Nevertheless, they bear most of the cost, and [426] the fetishes are one of the chief reasons for that bonding of children (1)

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3. "Sangafo, to go and offer condolences to the relatives of a deceased."

[802] 4. A ba is worth 800 cowrie shells or about 1 franc. (The Bambara count by 40 and 80, and not by 50 and 100. 40, débé; 80, kémé.)

241 threshing of millet is done on the village threshing floor, facing west.

Attempts have been made to substitute the plow for the hoe, but with indifferent success, for deep plowing of these fragile soils brings the laterite bed of the subsoil to the surface, resulting in the final ruin of the fields.

The Bambara have no organic fertilizer other than household wastes, except in some regions where the shepherds lead their flocks onto the stubble after the harvest. Although only superficially worked, the soils are quickly exhausted and must be abandoned after a few years. Clearing the land by brush fire has the drawback of progressive deforestation.

E. Production Statistics

241 433 As statistics are established by circles or by administrative centers, it is impossible to give precise figures on the volume of agricultural production which may be attributed specifically to the Bambara. However, since the Bambara constitute the vast majority of the population in certain circles, it is not without interest to furnish some figures on Sudanese agriculture. It must be pointed out, however, that the acreage under cultivation in the country cannot be estimated even approximately. The statistics established by the circles or administrative centers are founded on approximations so vague that it is not even reasonable to take them into consideration.

As an indication of this, we may cite the figures furnished by the administration of the Bougouni circle. The estimates are calculated on the probable number of workers in a region, to each of whom is attributed a field of theoretical acreage. Three-fourths of the production is assigned to millet and the rest to regional crops. The average yields per hectare calculated in this manner may give a probable indication of the quantity harvested, but they cannot be verified in any manner.

Production According to "Le Guide A.O.F. (1950)"
[The French West African Guidebook]

Bamako

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Export Products -- Karite, peanuts, 11,700 M.T. [metric tons]; sisal, 300 M.T.; cotton, 20 M.T.; tobacco, 35 M.T.

Food crops -- Millet, 92,256 M.T.; maize, 11,200 M.T.; rice, 4,917 M.T.; fonio, 200 M.T.; yams, 1,000 M.T.; manioc, 2,600 M.T.; potatoes, 1,506 M.T.; sweet potatoes, 3,810 M.T.; beans and onions, 15,200 M.T.; peas, 8,420 M.T.

[34]

Ségou

Exports -- Peanuts, 10,000 M.T.; rice, 6,000 M.T.; kapok, 600 M.T.; karite almonds, 1,000 M.T.; butter, 100 M.T.; gum, 20 M.T.

Production of the Niger Office -- Rice, 10,000 M.T.; cotton, 1,300 M.T.

Food crops -- Millet, 15,400 M.T.; maize, 1,000 M.T.; fonio, 4,200 M.T.; peas, 2,600 M.T.; beans, 1,600 M.T.

Bougouni

Exports -- Karite butter, 100 to 600 M.T.; peanuts, 500 M.T.; millet, 1,000 M.T.; wax.

Food crops -- Millet, 40,000 M.T.; fonio, 10,000 M.T.; rice, 6,000 M.T.; maize, 5,000 M.T.; peanuts, manioc, yams, sweet potatoes. (Charts on following pages.)

II. Animal Husbandry

A. Methods of Stock Raising

439 The Bambara are a sedentary, agricultural people; they have a symbiotic relationship with the Somono and Bozo, who are fishermen and sailors exclusively, and with other semi-nomadic peoples like the Peul who are shepherds.

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Production figures furnished by the Bougouni circle for the year 1950

Crop	Area planted	Average yield per hectare in metric tons	Quantities harvested in metric tons	Metric tons needed for seed	For Food	Available for sale
Millet	60,000	0.500	30,000	1,200	27,000	2,000
Rice	1,500	0.700	1,000	100	800	100
Peanuts	2,500	0.600	1,500	150	350	1,000
Maize	4,000	0.700	2,800	50	2,750	
Fonio	1,000	0.700	700	100	600	
Manioc, sweet potatoes, yams	300	2.000	600		600	
Beans and peas	100	0.800	80	10	70	

Area cultivated . . 69,400

[34]

Industrial Crops

Crop	Hectares planted	Average yield per hectare	Quantities harvested in metric tons	Local Consumption	Seed	Available for sale
Peanuts	2,500	0.600	1,500	150	350	1,000
Native cotton	500	0.150	75	75		
"N'Courala" cotton	60	0.200	12			
Tobacco	750	0.400	300	150		150
Dah[sic], sisal	insignificant					

The Société de Prevoyance [Welfare Society?] has stocked 600 groves with mango trees, cailcedra, and poincianas.

C. Statistics

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	Sheep Goats	Bovines	Horses	Asses
Bamako	64,987	49,425	6,227	10,356
Ségou	234,645	161,965	10,454 -5,165	12,159
Bougouni	17,360	29,197	431	1,651

Estimates for the three Bambara centers.

D. Products from Livestock

253 Meat -- The principal slaughtering centers are Bamako and Kayes.

439 Some of the available bovines are exported to Senegal. This is done from the Kayes circle by way of the routes: Néma, Timbesa, Nioro, Kayes; or Néma, Nara, Yelamano, Kayes. Others are sent to Guinea to provide meat for the workers in the gold placers of the Siguiri region. Some go to the Ivory and Gold Coasts, where the animals are sent chiefly from Mopti, with participation from the circles [487] of Ségou, San, and Niafunké. Numerous caravan routes penetrate to the Ivory Coast by way of Odienné, Seguela, Korhogo, Bouaké, and Boho-Dioulasso.

[255] Preserves are made in the factories of Lyndiane.

281 Leather -- Leather comes either from the slaughter houses or from the bush. It is of mediocre quality because of poor preparation: the skins are dried in the sun, folded in two lengthwise, hair against hair, and tied together with a wire, ten to a bundle. About 600 metric tons pass through Bamako annually.

234 Milk and milk derivatives -- The cows are poor producers; most of the milk is furnished by the Moorish, Peul, and Toronké zebus. Butter production is primitive: the sour milk is put in calabashes, cans, or goat skins and shaken until it turns to butter. At Falaladji near Kayes there is a butter and cheese factory.

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439 Wool -- The wool is generally used locally for weaving; only a small percentage is exported to France. A great effort has been
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463 make tools, farming implements in current use, furnishings, ornamental objects, bracelets, different kinds of rings. They also work
326 gold and silver to make jewelry in filigree.

462 Weaving and basket-making are not done by the people of caste, but by all men, or, formerly, by their house captives.
286 Primitive looms, worked by treadles, are set up outside of the
285 houses in the shade of the trees. The men weave long bands of cotton for making clothes, loin-cloths, and blankets. These bands, several meters long, are sometimes made into rolls weighing as much as 30 kilograms and are carried off to market by the diula
[531] (itinerant merchants). The Bambara practice dyeing, batik, and [illegible] embroidery (done by the men).

433 All this industry remains of strictly local interest and is directed solely toward meeting the immediate needs of the community.

c. Division of Labor

462 The Bambara are essentially an agricultural people. Never-
857 theless, as all members of the society must contribute a certain amount of work to the community, the nature of this work varies according to the social classes and according to whether a man, a woman, or a child is involved. The following tables indicate how the work is divided.

1. Distribution of tasks according to A. Aubert.

Men	Women	Children	All
	Foodstuffs		
	Preparation of food and dolo (beer)		
	Sale of dolo		
Preparation of hives, setting them, gathering the honey	Bottling and sale of honey	Helping	

177 order to cultivate peanuts, sunflowers, millet, and cotton. Every
241 three years, the company distributes green manure crops in order to
473 reconstitute the soil's humus. Moreover, the company has created
veritable villages to house its technicians and the colonists.

177 Other organizations, such as the Niger Office, have charge
241 of the basic water control of the central delta (dams, large canals).
312 Thanks to the creation of a network of waterways, to the clearing
433 and de-stumping of lands, and to the development of general equip-
● ment (processing factories, workshops, stores, dwellings, road net-
work), the end of 1949 saw 11,000 hectares of rice fields, with a
yield of 18 quintals of paddy and a commercial production of 8,000
metric tons of husked rice. Six thousand hectares have been prepared
either for growing cotton (2,000 hectares), for growing rice for food
(1,000 hectares), or for lying fallow (3,000 hectares). These fields
[166] permit the exportation of 360 metric tons of cotton fiber. Twenty-
two thousand persons have been settled as colonists. Finally, let us
note that the F.I.D.E.S. by its financial support has permitted the
development of peanut cultivation in Senegal, of rice in Guinea and
the Sudan, of karite in Upper Volta, as well as the creation of several
technical schools.

c. Social Consequences

177 This technical evolution has profound repercussions on the
596 native way of life. We notice the same change in the Bambara
241 peasant as in the Bambara artisan. The large united family which
was [78] the cornerstone of agricultural technique tends to split up
more and more, even in the regions where the traditional farming methods are still used. The family field, a great deal less carefully tended than in the past, gives way in importance to the individual's field. Moreover, the family field traditionally was at the end of a path bordered by small individual fields where each peasant went to work for himself before and after the collective labor. Today, we see the creation of individual fields in the brush far from the path which leads from the village to the family field, clearly indicating the desire of the individual to separate himself from the large family and to escape the control of the farming chief in order to realize personal benefits for himself, not subject to family inspection.

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Wolof MS30
Serer FA32
Tukolor MS27
Fulani MS11
Soninke MS21
Bambara FA8

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Table II

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No.	Ethnic Group	Occupation	Income	Expenses
1	Sarakolé	Laborer	5,800	5,839
2	Peul	Orderly	6,100	6,726
3	Wolof	Laborer	6,500	5,383
4	Sérère	Laborer	6,700	8.251
5	Toucouleur	Orderly D. N.	6,745	6,772
6	Wolof	Mattress-maker	7,000	7,471
7	Wolof	Laborer	7,000	7,231
8	Wolof	Orderly	7.410	7.234
9	Wolof	Baker	7.500	7,842
10	Wolof	Cultivator	8,150	8,133
11	Moor	Auxiliary D. N.	8,940	9,067
12	Peul	Laborer	9,000	8,952
13	Wolof	Laborer	9,800	9,981
14	Wolof	Cultivator	10,000	8,092
15	Bambara	Laborer	10,000	8,501
16	Bambara	Auxiliary	10,675	10,013
17	Moor	Auxiliary	10,800	10,892
18	Peul	Spec. laborer	11,000	9,816
19	Toucouleur	Accountant	11,950	10,860
20	Bambara	Auxiliary D. N.	12,000	13,557
21	Wolof	Clerk	13,000	13,799
22	Wolof	Auxiliary	14,000	14,405
23	Wolof	Cultivator	15,000	9,182
24	Wolof	Cultivator	15,000	13,809
25	Wolof	Auxiliary D. N.	15,630	13,801
26	Wolof	Employee P. T. T	15,800	10,238
27	Wolof	Shoemaker	16,200	10,600
28	Wolof	Worker D. N.	22,000	18,641
29	Toucouleur	Police sergeant	22,000	18,730
30	Wolof	Weigher D. N.	24,000	14,305
31	Wolof	Carpenter	25,000	21,571
32	Wolof	Cultivator	25,000	7,850

Thiès
Serer FA32
Wolof MS30
SONINKE MS21
BAMBARA FA8

/397 cont./

Table II (cont.)

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No.	Ethnic Group	Occupation	Income	Expenses
33	Sérère	Chauffeur	25,000	15,706
34	Wolof	Employee P.T.T.	25,900	14,715
35	Wolof	Staff employee D.N.	27,000	16,654
36	Wolof	Private accountant	34,000	19,829
37	Wolof	Truck-gardener	36,000	23,680
38	Wolof	Jeweler	50,000	27,397
39	Sarakolé	Teacher	51,000	21,240
40	Wolof	Staffworker D.N.	55,000	31,004
41	Sarakolé	Head employee D.N.	55,500	21,105
42	Bambara	Chief worker, C.D.N.	56,000	24,548
43	Wolof	Doctor	81,000	34,612

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deficits of Nos. 24, 25, and 26, which are less significant. The slenderness of the deficit of No. 3 can be explained by the limited number of persons that the unit of consumption contains.

in the care of one of the families having the smallest income.)

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This deficit is, of course, theoretical. Not having followed these families closely for an entire year, we cannot pretend to present an exact balance-sheet of their budget. It is possible that our percentages would be reduced in the course of a year, or a longer period, either by a reduction in expenses (reduction of consumption, or reduction of the unit of consumption itself) or by the creation of another source of income. The fact remains, however, that they do exist and that they are important.

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It will be easy for us to show where they come from. It is almost impossible to explain, rationally their persistence and their

583 [184] family gives the bride's family a
young girl to replace the one taken
away.

until all or a portion of the agreed bride price has been paid and especially not before the customary gifts have been received.

The nature and value of the bride price and gifts vary since they depend on the wealth of the future husband, the rank of the woman and family customs. Among the poor, the bride price is small: a few handfuls of cowries, a chicken, a few
[435] kola nuts, a few lengths of native cotton. An average bride price is worth, in all, 25,000 to 30,000 cowries (about 25 to 30 francs). Among the rich, the bride price may include one or more slaves, gold jewelry, silver, fabrics, clothing, etc.

The same is true of the gifts; everything depends on the families involved. It is customary around Ségou, however, for the fiancé to give his bride a large piece of native material called kundugu fini, a dloké (a kind of blouse), and a pair of sandals with very thick soles. He must also, if he can afford to, give her a slave to do the kitchen work, a cow, jewelry, etc. [199]

He must also give presents to the girl's parents in accordance with his means.

The totality of the bride price and gifts is called furu-fen', literally, "the property of the marriage." As soon as part of this furu-fen' is handed over to the furu-bolo-ma-tigi, he takes it,
[273] escorted by some of the fiancé's friends, to the girl's fa. All of these proceedings, of course, involve jugs of native beer (dlo). The notables of the place, the dugu-tigi, the "elders," and even the kamalen', come at once to congratulate the family, to share in the drinking, and to receive a share of the furu-fen'.

The fiancée is often a little girl, and in that case the duties of the young man and his family go on for several years. The giving of gifts is repeated, to an extent commensurate with the young man's wealth and the standing of the girl's family.
431 At the time of harvest it is customary for the fiancé to send one
583 or more baskets of millet, each weighing 20 to 40 kilos, and from time to time, a jug of beer, 20 to 30 liters. On the

The cash value of *boli* varies considerably. At the most
778 it is between 30 and 40 francs, payable in kind or in cowries.
435 The cost is increased, however, by gifts to the seller and his
acolytes who come to instruct the new clergy in their functions.
As a result, considering the various kinds of refreshments, dogs,
goats, and chickens, as well as kola nuts and millet beer (*dlo*),
the price may actually come to 100 francs.

778 Since the *nyana-tigi* (master of the *nyana*) has full con-
794 trol over his *nyana*, he may admit anyone he likes to the benefits of his cult. Well-known cults have been much sought after, and as they developed, they became complicated. As the importance of a cult increases, its ceremonies are amplified and augmented in proportion to the number of people taking part in them. Initiation requires a fee, and a clergy becomes necessary. This is the way that these cults, established through participation, have given rise to associations which the Europeans call "secret societies" but which might better be called "brotherhoods," because of the spiritual filiation uniting the affiliates.

Mysteries and Liturgical Equipment

Everything that concerns the brotherhood of the *nyana* is shrouded in mystery; for various reasons, everything is concealed (*do*, as the natives put it). It is, indeed, a principle of magic that power exists only insofar as its essence evades the investigation of its adversaries. The uninitiated therefore, must not know the basis of the supernatural power of the *nyana*, because, if they knew, they would be able to acquire the means of [258] destroying it, resisting it, or at the very least rendering it inefficacious. Anything related to the *nyana* is bound to it and is, so to speak, an integral part of the *nyana* by virtue of consecration: the clergy and the liturgical equipment. That is why both are *do* and why every effort is made to hide them, in their magical aspect, from curiosity of the profane. By extension, however, all members of a brotherhood of any *nyana* of the *boli* in Bambara country are identified as *do-u*, "the hidden people."

438 the gold. But they, in turn, could in no case resell the gold to any-
643 body other than the Fama. Aside from certain sacrificial uses and the
[648] making of jewels for the Fama's wives, gold served to ransom cap-
tives or to negotiate royal alliances.

The price of the commodities was set by agreement between
435 buyer and seller, except for cloth which had a fixed price, 100 cowrie
shells per cubit in the Bamako region. As a matter of fact, the cot-
[286] ton gathered in the fields of the community was woven by captives
who were not paid.

426 Loans were made without interest. Interest, *korko*, is still
686 forbidden today. Loans are guaranteed by labor. The debtor who
could not repay his debt on time and whose family head refused to
pay it for him was seized by the Fama and held as security until such
time as he had reimbursed his debt.

804 Side by side with French units of measurement, the natives
use their own for trade. Their measures of length: the cubit (elbow
to tip of middle finger), the span, the foot, the length of both arms
extended, the pace, the *diare*, and the *kala* ...; their measures of
capacity: the *sawel* or *mouré*, the *mud*; their weights: the *moutkhal*,
the *catal*, the large and little *karoni*, the *wakie*, the pellet of *tali*,
of *tomi*, of *bagana*, of *gelen*. Cotton is weighed on rough scales
whose pointer is a wooden rod and the balances large gourds hung by
strings. For weights, large rocks, *kulu*, from 800 to 1,200 grams are
[436] used. Finally, the Bambara use French money almost exclusively:
one franc of metropolitan France is equivalent to 0.50 francs C.F.A.
Nevertheless, the use of cowrie shells is still frequent.

d. Banks

453 One bank of issue exists in French West Africa: the Bank of French West Africa. There are also private banks, the number of which has increased during the past few years.

The Bank of French West Africa, which has a branch at Bamako, carries out the following operations: [43]

1. discounts notes or bills of two or several signatures due in not more than 180 days;
2. creates, negotiates, or buys drafts;

9. The Twins' Genie

845 776 Having twins is far from an unmixed blessing for Bambara women. Those whom I have seen afflicted with this good fortune and honor (for it is one, since it is regarded as /97/ a blessing from the Supreme Being, the Creator) have seemed to me greatly inconvenienced by their two babies. The healthier, stronger and more robust of the two relaxes pleasantly on the mother's back, while the one who needs a little care always gets his belly squashed on one shoulder or the other.

845 776 778 435 The genie of twins lives in a kind of hourglass made of two plates of braided grass; a bit of iron or wood onto which a piece of the umbilical cord has been rolled is hung from the centers. This fetish is called a sinsin and costs the father between 1 ba and 1 ba 200 cowrie shells (between 800 and 1200 cowrie shells, or 20 to 25 sous), not including, of course, the hens and kola nuts given to the sinsin tigi (1), more commonly called sinsin d'la tigi (2). To make this /98/ horror, which is hung in the entrance hut within an inverted gourd (1), one must own a father sinsin fetish and know the rites and formulas.

A sacrifice to the sinsin is performed every year by the head of the family, who is himself its priest; the sacrifice continues to be made even in case of the death of the twins, because it is the

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1. Sinsin, the fetish bearing this name; tigi, "master," "owner."

2. Sinsin, the fetish; d'la, "maker"; tigi, "master," "He who manufactures the sinsin."

1. This gourd protects the sinsin from the teeth of rodents.

431
585 /newly married/ couple by their friends. It varies from 40 cowrie shells to 2 kémés, or 160 cowrie shells.

778
425 "a taboli konio kera, the marriage of his boli has taken place."

1435 The value of a gnâ varies between 30 and 40 francs, and whoever owns one can from then on make them. If one counts the presents given to the maker and to his staff, the dogs, goats, and kola nuts offered in sacrifice on the day of his reception, and finally the beer of the wedding, its value is undoubtedly more than 100 francs.

5. Differences among the Powerful Boli

778 I class all the powerful boli into three main groups. In the first I place those which formerly were the prerogative of kings, princes, and ministers; in the second, those which have neither temple nor sacred grove; and in the third, those which have a temple and a sacred grove, or at least one or the other.

Those of the first group are not at all numerous, and the most popular are the Safolo, the Kongoba, the Nan-Woloko, and the Kouantara. They are usually found in villages which were formerly capitals of cantons or provinces and are in the hands of people whose families have included a kafotigi (head of a canton) or a fama (king or petty king), i.e., a head of a province, a minister of the king on whom the title of ruler (fama) was bestowed.

Everything leads me to think that in the beginning these were merely fetishes responsible for watching over the king and the people of his court, analogous to what above I have called the family boli. At present they have become boli of sects. But although all circumcised men can enter the ranks of those who pay them respect, only married men become initiated, and the orgies in their honor are private orgies whose entire cost is borne by graybeards.

778
782 According to legend, slaves were sacrificed to these boli in the time of the Bambara kings. Since then the worshippers have been content to offer them millet beer, hens, and goats in addition to the

Bozo MS6

Ba 776 436 Legend has it that cowrie shells, widespread throughout Black Africa and used as money, come from the deep water where Faro keeps his fortune. Faro "sleeps on a bed of cowrie." Their mythical origin explains their role and both the economic and religious value attributed to them.

Ba 776 823 The black earth of the river banks, bogo fi, such as that found on the sea shore in sandy places, contains the strength of the spirit and is used in numerous rites. Smeared at the base of the interior walls of the huts, it symbolizes Faro's presence in the bosom of the family. It serves to decorate the headdress of the circumcised (1). Those who live far from the Niger or from any source of water pray to it as if addressing Faro.

Ba 776 173 Some men occupy a privileged position in their relationship with the spirit. The first are the eight mythical ancestors, the eldest of whom is Koumabana. They received the word of the spirit, transmitted it to their descendants, explained before dying the new order of things, and instituted the cult.

At present they are still venerated as the prototypes of /50/ the human being in his new environment. Along with immortality, man lost the heavenly food which, until then, had been sufficient to nourish him. The articulated limbs which were provided for him dedicated him to manual labor, the techniques of which were taught him little by little. On the other hand, in the spiritual domain a deep change also occurred. In primitive times, man lived an almost animal existence and was without any responsibility. His abandonment by the balanza brought him suffering and death, but with them, his consciousness, symbolized by Faro's "word," developed. Along with death, illness, sorrow, bad instincts and the hard daily labor, there appeared also man's feeling about his own person and his place in an ordered universe, governed by Faro, as opposed to primitive chaos.

The eight ancestors taught men to venerate Faro, to ask him for all they needed, and to thank him for all they received. Therefore their names are invoked in most prayers and the episodes of their lives are told to the young to whom their works are held up as an example.

Bo 776 773 Mention should also be made here of the special position held by the Bozo who were born to the mythical girl twins, daughters of Faro (2).

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1. See p. 233, Fig. 14.

438 643 [648] the gold. But they, in turn, could in no case resell the gold to anybody other than the Fama. Aside from certain sacrificial uses and the making of jewels for the Fama's wives, gold served to ransom captives or to negotiate royal alliances.

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426 686 Loans were made without interest. Interest, korko, is still forbidden today. Loans are guaranteed by labor. The debtor who could not repay his debt on time and whose family head refused to pay it for him was seized by the Fama and held as security until such time as he had reimbursed his debt.

804 Side by side with French units of measurement, the natives use their own for trade. Their measures of length: the cubit (elbow to tip of middle finger), the span, the foot, the length of both arms extended, the pace, the diare, and the kala . . . ; their measures of capacity: the sawel or mouré, the mud; their weights: the moutkhal, the catal, the large and little karoni, the wakie, the pellet of tali, of tomi, of bagana, of gelen. Cotton is weighed on rough scales whose pointer is a wooden rod and the balances large gourds hung by strings. For weights, large rocks, kulu, from 800 to 1,200 grams are used. [436] Finally, the Bambara use French money almost exclusively: one franc of metropolitan France is equivalent to 0.50 francs C.F.A. Nevertheless, the use of cowrie shells is still frequent.

d. Banks

453 One bank of issue exists in French West Africa: the Bank of French West Africa. There are also private banks, the number of which has increased during the past few years.

The Bank of French West Africa, which has a branch at Bamako, carries out the following operations: [43]

1. discounts notes or bills of two or several signatures due in not more than 180 days;
2. creates, negotiates, or buys drafts;

778 comparisons with themselves, they have thought that certain indi-
791 viduals could also create understandings in the world of spirits, and
thus become the spirits' equals and even command them and make
them obey. They firmly believe that such is the case, and although
there are many sorcerers, there are still more people who maneuver
to attain this position. Possession of the occult sciences cannot be ac-
quired by anyone who wishes, however. The diploma or certificate
of competence, cannot be obtained without swallowing certain mixtures
of ashes, intestines, and blood, and certain repulsive eyewashes, such
as the rheum from dogs' eyes, must be slid under the eyelids in order
to see the invisible beings. In addition, unless a man is initiated by
his father or brother, he must expect to pay a goodly sum. This is
an art that pays, and generously! Every aspirant must also have a good
memory in order to engrave in his mind the formulas, gestures, and
rites; only the intelligent succeed.

791 The competence of sorcerers is far from equal, nor do they
787 proceed in an identical manner. Some read the future and discover
secrets in the entrails of hens; others play with knuckle bones, pebbles,
or cowrie shells (1) which they throw on the ground and count and
recount, or trace cabalistic signs on scattered ashes, moving the fore-
finger back and forth, as in a game of Goose /a game played with
dice on a board/. Some work with a gourd three quarters full of water,
which they set on a n'gô (a kind of napkin ring or bracelet made of
braided roots) washed frequently in the blood of /sacrificial/ victims.
This procedure is the least complicated. The gourd is tipped right and
left, forward and backward, until it sits firmly on the n'gô and can
no longer be moved without carrying the stand along. Then the
operator need only flick it three times with the middle finger of the
right hand while stating the petitions..., and the spirit will answer
in a soft murmur which those present can hear, but which he alone
791 understands. In a word, the /35/ good sorcerer stands out above the

● [436] 1. /Torn page/ white /shells/ used as money.

755 The sorcerer consulted by a sick person explains to him the nature of his illness, tells him whether he is the victim of the hatred of a fetish in the service of some one malicious or envious, or of an enemy who is taking his own vengeance; or whether he is the victim of a gnâma, that fluid, that avenging force which every genie, every man, every animal, and both the living and dead possesses. In serious cases the patient is ordered to sacrifice many hens and quite often nanny goats and billy goats, but in cases that are mild or considered so, the remedies are more childish: should I mention a few?

To cure a headache, the sorcerer sticks the blade of his knife into the ground and places a cauri (1) at the base of the handle. After having spit on the cauri and the knife handle, he lays his hands on the patient, who gazes at him; he recites a formula, and, if the sick person is not cured when the prayer is finished, he must at least feel an appreciable improvement, and he always says he does: "A kaf'sa san, I feel better now.

The sovereign cure for leucoma, they say, is a pinch of powdered hyena dung placed in the eye. Because it is rare and costly, the remedy cannot be bought by all, and powder of cauri shells is substituted for it. This powder is obtained by rubbing a cauri on the stone for grinding millet, a very long process. In order to apply oneself to the task as the old women do, more than training is needed; it calls for patience, or rather, a passivity which cannot be defined.

In cases of ophthalmia and other eye diseases, the temples, the eyebrows, and the tops of the cheeks are greased with kana mixed with a little karite (2) butter. The kana is always enclosed in a bull's

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[136] 1. A small white shell used as small change; at least 40 are needed to make a sou, or 0.05 francs.

[137] 2. Karite, or butter tree, Bassia parkii, genus of the Sapotaceae.

798 Since all the Bambara could not be made to submit to shameful
771 servitude, the Moslems were satisfied to impose a tax, to forbid
public worship of the idols, and, with sheathed sword, sought to make
778 converts by persuasion. Their caravans were quick to cover the
country, preaching Islam in all places both favorable and unfavorable,
but the mass of the people could not be approached. In order to give
/131/ their beliefs a rational basis, they always did everything in
the name of "Alla, " "Stamboul" (the Sultan of Constantinople), and
"Makka (Mecca), and said to the conqueror: "All true belief comes
from Mecca (Makka); it is the center of all religious life, so why do
you fight so hard against our boli? They all come from Mecca. God
has given you the formula: 'there is no Divinity other than God and
Mohammed is His prophet'; for you He prescribes ablutions, Friday
rest, etc.. Keep your formula and shout it! To us Bambara He has
given the boli and bloody sacrifices, so why do you want to take from
us our treasures that are hungry for blood?" I do not doubt that we owe
773 our "legend" to the discussions which arose between the m'rabet (the
776 marabout, or Moslem priest) and the gnâtigi, or bolitigi. Here it is
794 as I so often heard it told by bold old men:

A group of youths who were devoting themselves to trade and following lady luck (ou toumbe kolo (1) gnini, "they were seeking cowrie shells"), one day took the road to the east. Over mountains and valleys the little band walked and walked for a long time, and then finally they reached the great, blue, salty water, the ocean, on the shores of which lies the holy city, Mecca (Makka) (2).

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[136] 1. Kolo, "cowrie shells" (singular, kokɛ), small shells used as money.

[823] 2. Since the Moslems said that Mecca was located on the seacoast, and since the Bambara did not know Arabia, they believed it to be in this direction. In their minds the ocean does not have to be crossed to get there. Actually, this is the least of their worries.

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> into our language and means a force,
> a conscious force, that opposes
> another conscious force which seeks
> to harm us, and destroys it.

horns and hoofs of bulls filled with an ointment the composition of which it is very difficult to specify: blood, fat, and dried, crushed glow-worms are combined with iron powder, charcoal, and other /135/ ingredients. They are the Bambara equivalent of the "pink" pills which cure all ills, including baldness and ingrowing nails -- and that sums it up. The kana of which I speak are boli, and differ from the kana possessed by each powerful boli, which are no longer boli but parts of boli. Let us quickly admit that the word kana is as indefinite as the word foura, and means primarily "that which protects, preserves, and keeps us from harm."

778
782 These little fetishes are not given festivals, and only their owners sprinkle them with blood and sacrifice to them. They cost little, and a sorcerer or the owner of a father foura or kana will make [436] one for a modest sum varying between 5 kémés and a ba fla (5 kémés = 200 cowrie shells; ba fla = 1, 600 cowrie shells), which is from 5 sous to 2 francs.

Apart from the sorcerers, whose boli are innumerable, there is a whole group of people, the noumons (blacksmiths), the koulés (who dig canoes and mend broken gourds), the donzo (hunters), etc., who have such strong confidence in all these horrors that they would rather die of hunger than be deprived of them. The hunters all have some to
224 make them active and alert. Before every hunt of the least importance
778 there is a black pullet from each, and on the return another sacrifice
782 is made, however unlucky the hunt may have been. The keeper of each fetish is usually the only one to pay respects to it. However, his brother hunters may give it a small offering, and it is understandable that they do so, since each fetish has its specialty. One is for deer, another for guinea fowl, a third for the big antelope (dadjé in Bambara and best known to Europeans under the name of koba, a word of the Peul language) or for the wild pig /facochère/, for the panther or the

688 Tjoïna, or Kégné, and the Nama of Misango, Kokodjan, or Guendo. The Djara of Tjikoumela is very popular in Bani country. A perjured Negro offers a gnénama fani, and the fani-n-kolo is costly. For the Komo it consists of two red roosters, two goats, a dog, two red kola nuts, a basket of millet (between 18 and 20 kilograms) and three times 8
[804 kémé (the kémé is worth 80
436] cowrie shells) if the culprit is a man, or four times 8 kémé if it is a woman. For the Nama the price includes a gourd of honey, two gourds of karité butter, a red hen, two red kola nuts, a basket of
[804 millet, and 8 ba (the ba is worth
436] 800 cowrie shells, or one franc), a kémé, and a débé (120 cowrie shells). In addition these are one to two kilograms of salt and a gourd of gnama-n-kou (malagueta pepper: amomum melegueta) for the sacrificer. For the Nia the cost is 12 ba, four chickens, two dogs, and two hens.

684 837 Adultery is frequent; it occurs daily and is the source of most of the disputes that arise. Some husbands are tolerant, however, and many are satisfied with 2 to 3 ba (between 1, 600 and 2, 400 cowrie shells, or 2 to 3 francs) and victims for a sacrifice to the family boli, such as a hen, a dog, a kid, or two kola nuts.

684 836 Like adultery, fornication is a serious offence because it violates the rights of third parties. It is less serious /163/ than adultery.

3. The Betrothal

584 583 I have often heard it said that a Bambara marriage is nothing less than a sale and a purchase: the woman goes to the highest bidder. I cannot share such an opinion. The suitor gives a bride price, I know, but this bride price is a present to the fiancée, and its entire value is returned to him. When the fiancée's father receives it, he treats himself to trousers, a cap with three points, a new blouse, a few jugs of d'lo, or millet beer, and many kola nuts; but when the wedding comes, it is the father who provides his child with loincloths, gourds, pottery, in fact her whole trousseau, and however slight his vanity -- and what Bambara is not vain! -- he will spend the bride price and even more.

When the suitor has been able to gather two to three kilograms of salt, a few bits of cloth for the little girl and her mother, and a portion of the bride price (1), which varies between 25 and 30 francs, he pays his respects to the family through his intermediary, the fourouboloma tigi, or guardian of the wedding gifts. The latter goes to the father-in-law, escorted /204/ by a few young girls who carry the fouroufen, or bride price, the gifts of cloth and salt, and a few jugs

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● [436] 1. The bride price is set at ba mougan ni tan, about 24, 000 cowrie shells. Each ba equals 10 kémé. The kémé is worth 80 cowrie shells, the ba 800 cowrie shells. In ordinary times a 5-franc piece is exchanged for ba dourou ni kémé dourou, or 4, 400 cowrie shells. The value of the cowries is subject to rise and fall, so that the 5-franc piece is sometimes worth 4, 400 cowrie shells; at other times the cowries drop and the 5-franc piece is worth ba woro ni kémé dourou, or 6 ba and 5 kémé, or ba wolonouia, 7 ba.

794 if one had to travel, since the Dyuola [Diula] and other travelers were at the mercy of the whims and banditry of the [278] Nama-den' (1) and only avoided them to a certain extent by claiming to be of the Nama-den'. Even Moslems often became adherents of the Nama; all that was required of them was absolute secrecy and a few gifts in exchange for the secret passwords.

794 There are two great annual ceremonies: one at planting
796 and the other at harvest, the dates for both decided by the
782 Nama-tigi and his council. Each of them involves offerings, sacrifice, communion, and a nocturnal procession. Young members are usually admitted at the harvest ceremony.

The initiates gather for the sacrifice before the temple (Nama-bon'). Only the Nama-tigi and his clergy may enter the sacred place; the common worshipers remain outside. The sacrificial animals are brought up. Two sacrificers (muru-kala-tigi), naked to the waist, stretch their arms toward the four cardinal points and spit three times in each direction. Two dye-n-fa, also naked to the waist, hold the pieces of wood bearing horns and face the faithful. Three times the sacrificers utter the cry, "ture-dyo," twice alternating this cry with another, "dyo-Nama." They invoke the god two times, and then they slaughter the victims, sometimes inside the temple and sometimes outside.

The blood is carefully collected in receptacles, and the ashes of straw are added to it. All the cult objects, especially the boli itself, are smeared with the mixture. The Nama-tigi and the other principal initiates remove their clothing to anoint themselves with the same mixture and do not put on their garments again until the blood has dried on their bodies.

[796 437] 1. Cf. Monteil, Binger, op. cit.; at the time of the great annual festivals of the Komo, all trading was halted for several days. Strangers could be sure of being respected only by claiming membership in the brotherhood. The same was true of the Nama.

794 "After the creation came the consecration. The 778 Kouroubari and the leaders of the people witnessed it. A white ox, a red ox, and a red rooster were sacrificed for the occasion (2)."

2. Raffenel, *Nouveau voyage au Pays des Nègres* [New Journey to the Country of the Negroes], Vol. 1, p. 237.

The *boli* is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put in a sack or other receptacle, and except during ceremonies it 846 is stored with other cult objects in a kind of temple often resembling a miniature native hut and called *nyana*-*bon'*, "hut of the *nyana*."

776 Obviously there are differences between the various *nyana*, because peculiar practices call up unlike spirits. In any event, however, the captive spirit is, as it were, a slave of the magician, who treats it as such and even sells it, along with instructions for its use. There are magicians who go from place to place, making and selling *nyana* and other magic weapons, and 443 there are recognized markets where one can always [256] obtain the *boli* of the most popular *nyana*. The markets at Bélédougou, Bendougou, and Follona are especially well known.

Trade in Boli

794 778 438 The chronicle of Ségou tells that Biton, the founder of the empire, acquired his principal idols in the Bendougou region where the popular markets of Moribala, Kourbadougou, and Diali are located.

Itinerant merchants deal in all sorts of cult objects, and there are settled traders who are sometimes very well known, like a certain Minkoli who made *boli* and was so famous that his village is named after him: *Minkoli* *ka* *dugu* (village of Minkoli). I have never been able to find out, however, which village in the Bendougou area was the home of the famous Minkoli.

By such means the cult of a given *nyana*, once it has been created, spreads to some extent, depending on the degree

794 to which its creator chooses to reveal the ritual of initiation.

778 The head of a family, just like an isolated individual
438 or the head of a large community, will not fail to acquire, for a monetary consideration, exclusive possession of one of these powerful boli, which becomes his personal protector. Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, had with him the nyana n-Ka; Biton, the founder of the empire of Ségou, possessed several famous nyana: na n-Golo-ko (1), Nye-n-dinge du (2), and ba Kung-o-

[776]

1. Literally, na-n-Goloko, "the mother concerned with birth" or, freely translated, "the goddess who presides at birth."

2. Nye dinge du, "the deep orbit of the eye."

ba (3). Generally speaking, these private cults cannot spread,

3. Ba-kung-o-ba, "mother of the great bush."

but when their possessor becomes a powerful chief, they migrate rapidly. This is what happened to Biton's cults; his followers took up the worship of his idols.

794 When an individual becomes the acknowledged possessor of a nyana the result is an alliance with this nyana, which in the native language is called furu, the same word as that used for the
[833] conjugal union of a man and a woman. Indeed, the installation of a renowned nyana in its master's village gives rise to rejoicing [257] similar to that occasioned by a wedding; hence, the following expressions: a ye boli furu, "he is united with a boli"; a ye boh' furu gosi, "he has effected a union with a boli"; a-ta boli konyo kera, "he has celebrated the wedding of his boli." On the day of such festivals, the master of the nyana (nyana-tigi or boli-tigi, surrounded by his acolytes, offers dlo to his guests who have come to greet him and give him presents. At nightfall, when the uninitiated have withdrawn, the clergy and the adepts in a procession take the boli to the "sacred wood" where the first cult ceremony is held, characterized principally by dancing and singing.

439 By the south -- Guinea: rubber, ivory, gold, livestock, rice, millet. Ivory Coast: Sahel salt, livestock, wax, karite, native cotton and wool cloth and blankets. Gold Coast: livestock, native cloth.

443 In addition, all centers of any importance had a large periodic market which was a sort of regional fair, plus a small daily market which permitted the inhabitants of the locality to obtain provisions as needed.

b. Caravan Commerce

443 Over and above these markets, a long-distance caravan trade
484 is carried on by the Haoussa and the Dioula, who transport their merchandise in the north with beasts of burdens, in the south by human bearers. These movements continue a commercial tradition and have been altered only by legislation. Before the conquest, any man who wished could enter this commerce on the condition of paying his "Fama" the usual sum. The traders, to protect themselves against brigands, traveled [42] in caravans. Practice had it that the
[787] traders consulted a priest before leaving to find out if their undertaking would succeed. After the usual sacrifices, the priest revealed the name of the one who would direct the group. The caravan chief could even be a captive, but everyone owed him obedience because a divine force inhabited him. To each state which is crossed, the
[651] caravan paid a customs fee on entering and asked the Fama for permission to cross, indicating the extent of their route and making propitiatory sacrifices in each region. Sometimes certain districts, such as the region of Bougouni, forbade blood sacrifices for fear of bringing down evil forces on themselves. The caravans then let loose an animal secretly at night.

c. Commercial Practices

438 Everything could be sold except gold, which was the property
643 of the Fama. No one was supposed to possess gold. If the gold miners of Bouré could sell the gold extracted from the mines, when the buyers entered the Bambara country, they had to present it to the Fama. If he did not wish to buy it, he authorized certain rich people permanently settled in the district (that is, who would be unlikely to leave) to buy

438 the gold. But they, in turn, could in no case resell the gold to anybody
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Production According to "Le Guide A.O.F. (1950)"
[The French West African Guidebook]

Bamako

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439 Export Products -- Karite, peanuts, 11,700 M.T. [metric tons]; sisal, 300 M.T.; cotton, 20 M.T.; tobacco, 35 M.T.

Food crops -- Millet, 92,256 M.T.; maize, 11,200 M.T.; rice, 4,917 M.T.; fonio, 200 M.T.; yams, 1,000 M.T.; manioc, 2,600 M.T.; potatoes, 1,506 M.T,; sweet potatoes, 3,810 M.T.; beans and onions, 15,200 M.T.; peas, 8,420 M.T.

[34] Ségou

Exports -- Peanuts, 10,000 M.T.; rice, 6,000 M.T.; kapok, 600 M.T.; karite almonds, 1,000 M.T.; butter, 100 M.T.; gum, 20 M.T.

Production of the Niger Office -- Rice, 10,000 M.T.; cotton, 1,300 M.T.

Food crops -- Millet, 15,400 M.T.; maize, 1,000 M.T.; fonio, 4,200 M.T.; peas, 2,600 M.T.; beans, 1,600 M.T.

Bougouni

Exports -- Karite butter, 100 to 600 M.T.; peanuts, 500 M.T.; millet, 1,000 M.T.; wax.

Food crops -- Millet, 40,000 M.T.; fonio, 10,000 M.T.; rice, 6,000 M.T.; maize, 5,000 M.T.; peanuts, manioc, yams, sweet potatoes. (Charts on following pages.)

II. Animal Husbandry

A. Methods of Stock Raising

439 The Bambara are a sedentary, agricultural people; they have a symbiotic relationship with the Somono and Bozo, who are fishermen and sailors exclusively, and with other semi-nomadic peoples like the Peul who are shepherds.

231/ 431 [35] However, the Bambara can assemble flocks by exchanging their grain for animals obtained from Peul, Moor, or Touareg shepherds. It is their way of investing their savings; thus, they never dispose of their animals during their periods of increase, but let them grow old in the herds, and their capital increases effortlessly, watched over by the head of the family.

233 184 In the Sahel, during the rainy season, the animals live by grazing on the numerous grasses and leguminous plants that grow on the mimosa-studded steppe. During the dry season, they live on the fallen branches and husks of the acacias. Then there is transhumance
[221] to the inundated regions which become pastures as the waters recede. In the Nioro region, transhumance is towards the Kaarta, the Baoulé, and the Bakoy.

In the Sudan region the animals entrusted to the Peul make short journeys to change pastures; in the rainy season, to the plateaus which are immense pastures; from November on, they return to the valleys and streams.

In the Guinean area, the village flock is entrusted to a Peul shepherd who leads it off in the morning and brings it back at night. The animals are then tethered to the stakes in their owners' courtyards or are penned in an enclosure where the women go to milk them. After the harvest the flocks graze in the fields, but, from the beginning of February, they no longer stray from the dwellings, because everything is parched. The beasts are then fed millet, peanut stalks, or foliage.

231 Neither cattle nor sheep are in the least supervised in reproduction. Coupling is unrestricted and takes place at random in the pastures and at the whim of the animals throughout the year. Birth occurs no matter where; the herdsmen know nothing of obstetrical practice. The calves are nourished with a lightly salted mash of millet stalks or with the crushed fruit of a fig named aourou which supposedly has milk-producing properties.

[232] The finest male goats often are castrated to fatten or tame them. In Kaarta and Mandé goats are raised in pens constructed on piles one or two meters from the ground, with a flooring of boughs which allows excrement to fall through. In this way, the animals are protected from the humidity and from wild beasts.

C. Statistics

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	Sheep Goats	Bovines	Horses	Asses
Bamako	64,987	49,425	6,227	10,356
Ségou	234,645	161,965	10,454	12,159
			-5,165	
Bougouni	17,360	29,197	431	1,651

Estimates for the three Bambara centers.

D. Products from Livestock

253 Meat -- The principal slaughtering centers are Bamako and Kayes.

439 Some of the available bovines are exported to Senegal. This is done from the Kayes circle by way of the routes: Néma, Timbesa, Nioro, Kayes; or Néma, Nara, Yelamano, Kayes. Others are sent to Guinea to provide meat for the workers in the gold placers of the Siguiri region. Some go to the Ivory and Gold Coasts, where the animals are sent chiefly from Mopti, with participation from the circles [487] of Ségou, San, and Niafunké. Numerous caravan routes penetrate to the Ivory Coast by way of Odienné, Seguela, Korhogo, Bouaké, and Boho-Dioulasso.

[255] Preserves are made in the factories of Lyndiane.

281 Leather -- Leather comes either from the slaughter houses or from the bush. It is of mediocre quality because of poor preparation: the skins are dried in the sun, folded in two lengthwise, hair against hair, and tied together with a wire, ten to a bundle. About 600 metric tons pass through Bamako annually.

234 Milk and milk derivatives -- The cows are poor producers; most of the milk is furnished by the Moorish, Peul, and Toronké zebus. Butter production is primitive: the sour milk is put in calabashes, cans, or goat skins and shaken until it turns to butter. At Falaladji near Kayes there is a butter and cheese factory.

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439 Wool -- The wool is generally used locally for weaving; only a small percentage is exported to France. A great effort has been

[illegible]

A great effort has been
654 made to improve the exploitation of livestock; in this regard [38]
232 one must mention the stock-raising experimental center of the Service Zootechnique, the Serotherapy Center and the Farm School of Sotuba, near Bamako; the sheepfolds at El Oualadji, Nioro, and Nara; and the stallion corrals at Nioro, Ouahigouya, Mopti, Bandiagara, Gao, Bamako, and Goundam.

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d. Imports and Exports

Aside from food peanuts, which remain one of the principal export products, we may mention among the vegetable [41] exports: cotton, rubber from the forests of the south, and "salabraida" and "galam" gums. Livestock and its by-products are too mediocre to mention and are not shipped out of Africa. Let us note, however, the growing export of hides from Kayes, Mopti, the Sudan, and Guinea. As far as mineral products are concerned, the most important one for export is still provided by the old gold mines of Bouré and Bambouk. The Macenta region produces a small quantity of industrial diamonds which are sold in London. Sudanese iron is too far from the coast to be profitable.

The country imports all manufactured objects, construction materials, tools, coal, mineral oils, steel bars, edible foodstuffs, fabrics ...

B. Internal Commerce

a. Commercial Routes

More important commercial traffic takes place within the Sudan or with surrounding countries by way of Senegal, the Sahel, and the southern colonies.

Imports:

By way of Senegal -- French and English thread; salts from Roumania (formerly) and from southern France; wrought and unwrought metals; construction and transportation materials.

By way of the Sahel -- salt in bars from Sebka d'Idjil; bulk salt from Seye; cattle, sheep and goats, horses, gum.

By way of the south -- Guinea: kolas, glass necklaces, ornamental and toilet articles. Ivory Coast: kola nuts, glass trinkets, ornamental and toilet articles. Gold Coast: kola nuts, loincloths and pieces of English cloth, copper rods, glassware, and necklaces.

Exports:

By way of Senegal -- rubber, gold, ivory, peanuts, gum, wool, karite butter, hides of cattle, sheep and goats ...

By the Sahel -- grains, native cotton and wool cloth, sugar, ornamental articles.

●439 By the south -- Guinea: rubber, ivory, gold, livestock, rice, millet.
Ivory Coast: Sahel salt, livestock, wax, karite, native cotton and
wool cloth and blankets. Gold Coast: livestock, native cloth.

In addition, all centers of any importance had a large periodic
443 market which was a sort of regional fair, plus a small daily market
which permitted the inhabitants of the locality to obtain provisions
as needed.

b. Caravan Commerce

443 Over and above these markets, a long-distance caravan trade
484 is carried on by the Haoussa and the Dioula, who transport their
merchandise in the north with beasts of burdens, in the south by
human bearers. These movements continue a commercial tradition
and have been altered only by legislation. Before the conquest, any
man who wished could enter this commerce on the condition of paying
his "Fama" the usual sum. The traders, to protect themselves
against brigands, traveled [42] in caravans. Practice had it that the
[787] traders consulted a priest before leaving to find out if their undertaking
would succeed. After the usual sacrifices, the priest revealed the
name of the one who would direct the group. The caravan chief
could even be a captive, but everyone owed him obedience because
a divine force inhabited him. To each state which is crossed, the
[651] caravan paid a customs fee on entering and asked the Fama for permission
to cross, indicating the extent of their route and making
propitiatory sacrifices in each region. Sometimes certain districts,
such as the region of Bougouni, forbade blood sacrifices for fear of
bringing down evil forces on themselves. The caravans then let loose
an animal secretly at night.

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of Bouré could sell the gold extracted from the mines, when the buyers
entered the Bambara country, they had to present it to the Fama. If
he did not wish to buy it, he authorized certain rich people permanently
settled in the district (that is, who would be unlikely to leave) to buy

b. Organization of Work

241 Work on the land is the only kind of work suitable for free
621 men, for to work the land is to purify it. All agricultural operations
622 are set in motion by the dugu-tigi and are regulated by the fa who
516 assigns tasks by age classes. Each member of the community must
work for it every day, except Monday and Thursday, from dawn to about 4:30 p.m. He may be helped, or even replaced, by his children and his captives. The rest of the time he may work for himself in his personal field or in the little fields situated along the water courses and the rivers, which are not periodically redistributed and are considered almost as personal and hereditary property. The fruit of this labor constitutes the personal savings of the community member.

The exploitation of the subsoil is governed by other rules
316 which we still know only imperfectly. Like the soil, the subsoil be-
423 longs to the master of the land. Iron ore was extracted solely by the
324 blacksmith who paid the master of the land a rent in the form of hoes
or axes. To exploit the gold mines, thousands of natives went in family groups to the placers at the beginning of the dry season. [63] The location of the placers was determined by the priests and changed every year. The men dig multiple small holes very close to each other, which may go very deep depending on the depth of the barren layer. When the calabashes of gold-bearing earth are brought up, the women wash the earth. The placers are abandoned at the beginning of the rains after three or four months of exploitation. Before the French occupation, gold was the exclusive property of the Fama and could in no case be the object of commerce. To-
● 439 day, gold is generally sold at the placers to Syrian, native, or
European merchants, who have established veritable shops at the mining centers, shops which contain everything necessary for the miner's life.

463 The exercise of a profession other than the cultivation of the
554 land is reserved to artisans who are accorded the insulting name of
nyaman-kala, for only work on the land is noble work. These artisans form separate families in every Sudanese society, which has caused Europeans to call them, improperly, people of caste. They are divided into independent guilds.

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654 made to improve the exploitation of livestock; in this regard [38]
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177 Finally, the breaking up of the family cell is manifest in the in-
596 creasing number of children who prefer to work as farm laborers far
241 from their home country rather than submit to the tutelage of the
farming chief.

The economic transformation proceeds due to electrification
177 (regulation of the great falls near Conakry and those of Sotuba near
377 Bamako) and the creation, alongside the old strategic roads, of com-
489 mercial roads and bridges to facilitate shipping peanuts, rice, cotton,
and millet. The ports and wharfs are being put in order, the railroad network being modernized (increasing the matériel, transforming beds and embankments, repairing the tracks, installing and extending yards, improving the depots, constructing stations, buffets, hotels, cheap housing for the employees). On the Niger, improvements are being made in the river ports of Koulikoro, Ségou, Mopti, Bamako, and Gao, and, on the Senegal, of Kayes and Saint-Louis.

177 Finally, the new economy is accompanied by social accomplishments in the fields of health, education, and urbanization.

d. Chambers of Commerce

Thus, two forms of economic organization exist side by side in Bambara country: on the one hand, the traditional and artisan native organization, and, on the other, the European organization which has shattered the ancient society and has put the local economy of the country within the framework of international economy.

But it is perhaps in the realm of commerce that the influence
177 of European methods has been most felt, particularly in the creation
441 of Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry.

The creation of Chambers of Commerce dates from a decree of the Governor General in 1906. Members are elected for four years and are re-eligible. They are elected by an electoral college made up of the chiefs of French or African commercial establishments. The function of these Chambers is to give the administration advice and information when requested on any question of an economic nature.

The Chambers of Agriculture and Industry have substantially the same organization as the Chambers of Commerce, but in addition they are called on by the governors to group and codify the local customs [79] and usages of an agricultural character. These reports serve as the

177 444 basis of judicial decisions, and the Chambers also give advice on the program of agricultural improvement undertaken by the administration and the welfare societies.

In Senegal, there are Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry at Dakar, Saint-Louis, Thiès, Kaolack, and Ziguinchor; in the Sudan, at Bamako; in Guinea and the Ivory Coast, at Conakry and Abidjan.

e. Work Regulation. Unions

464 Sparsely populated, West Africa lacks manpower. A decree of October 22, 1925, and an order of the Governor General of March 29, 1926, set the conditions by which workers could be recruited and work contracts established: salary, bonus, food, lodgings, medical care . . . Individual or collective disputes between employers and employees are taken before arbitration boards presided over by a French employer and a native assistant judge.

464 467 An act of April 2, 1932, regulates the work of women and children. One of March 11, 1937, organizes the trade unions, and a decree of March 20, 1937, the native professional associations. Others regulate collective agreements applying to work. The National Assembly has voted the Overseas Work Code which is beginning to be applied. African unions have developed a great deal in the course of these last years; there are six African unions in the Sudan. The complexity of labor problems has led to the creation at Dakar of an office to inspect manpower problems, this office being attached to the General Bureau of Political, Administrative, and Social Affairs.

[80]

CHAPTER 7

CULTURAL ASPECTS

I. Religion

771 One can never insist too much on the importance of religion. It governs the entire social, political, artistic, and even economic life of the country. No institution can be understood without knowing

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a) Ngoyo tomatoes (Ségou market).

Plate II

b) Faro's water gourd (Ségou market).

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595 A husband owes his wife food, clothing, and lodging within his means, and unless he has imprudently acquired too many wives, everything will be kept within the proper limits. In any event, he must be impartial toward all his wives on one particular point if he wants domestic tranquillity: he must honor each of them in turn with his favors.

In theory, a husband is supposed to treat his wives alike in all things, although it is apparent from the foregoing that this is practically impossible. Besides, it is usually agreed that the first wife, no matter who she is, whether slave or free, has certain prerogatives. She acts as a kind of mother to her co-wives, supervises their work and their pursuits, and issues all the supplies. With reference to her husband, she acts as confidante and adviser.

851 Filiation. This is to be regarded as the totality of facts which, for the sake of clarity, we shall divide into two groups: birth, and giving a name. [209]

Birth. A pregnant woman, by virtue of her condition,
843 is subject to a kind of special regime whose special features are the following.

In principle, she must forego sexual relations from the moment she feels the child move until two or three months after its birth. This is not done for reasons of hygiene, but rather because the child is thought to require it as a kind of deference, without which it will die.

From the standpoint of diet, the expectant mother should
be well and even abundantly fed. When possible she is given the
[262] heart and liver of slaughtered wild animals; these are centers of
life which, if eaten, will strengthen the child's soul and make the
child a courageous individual. A pregnant woman often wants some
[261] of the yellow or red clay which is sold in the markets, which
● [443] for some unknown reason she will eat as if it were chocolate.

She must refrain from visiting dying people, attending funerals, going into mourning, or mingling with crowds, all this in order to avoid any contact that might injure the fragile soul she is carrying.

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778 "After the creation came the consecration. The Kouroubari and the leaders of the people witnessed it. A white ox, a red ox, and a red rooster were sacrificed for the occasion (2)."

> 2. Raffenel, Nouveau voyage au Pays des Nègres [New Journey to the Country of the Negroes], Vol. 1, p. 237.

[246] The boli is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put in a sack or other receptacle, and except during ceremonies it is stored with other cult objects in a kind of temple often resembling a miniature native hut and called nyana-bon', "hut of the nyana."

[776] Obviously there are differences between the various nyana, because peculiar practices call up unlike spirits. In any event, however, the captive spirit is, as it were, a slave of the magician, who treats it as such and even sells it, along with instructions for its use. There are magicians who go from place to place, making and selling nyana and other magic weapons, and [443] there are recognized markets where one can always [256] obtain the boli of the most popular nyana. The markets at Bélédougou, Bendougou, and Follona are especially well known.

Trade in Boli

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438 The chronicle of Ségou tells that Biton, the founder of the empire, acquired his principal idols in the Bendougou region where the popular markets of Moribala, Kourbadougou, and Diali are located.

Itinerant merchants deal in all sorts of cult objects, and there are settled traders who are sometimes very well known, like a certain Minkoli who made boli and was so famous that his village is named after him: Minkoli ka dugu (village of Minkoli). I have never been able to find out, however, which village in the Bendougou area was the home of the famous Minkoli.

By such means the cult of a given nyana, once it has been created, spreads to some extent, depending on the degree

794 796 786 process, let loose a rain of sparks which the *Kore-duga* zealously put out with leafy branches. Then each dancer, carrying what is left of his torch, kneels before the drums, making an obscene gesture which arouses the laughter of the onlookers and giving the cries, roars, or laugh of the "wild beasts." Elsewhere, the *nyoni-sa-ma* are roaming among the drinkers, tearing at them-
[785] selves with thorns. Flagellants lash themselves with switches that leave cuts from which the blood flows. They stiffen themselves against the pain and keep up this cruel sport, which once again the *Kore-duga* mitigate by binding up the wounds.

There appears to be no doubt that during these orgies the most shameful excesses are committed without the slightest restraint.

The Nya

794 This brotherhood is highly esteemed in all the Bambara villages in the cantons of Say and Karadougou. It is less common in the canton of Séladougou; in the canton of Saro, five-sixths of the villages are loyal to it. It is rarely found in Nyansannari, and outside these areas in the circle of Djenné, there are only a few scattered Nya brotherhoods in the Bendougou and Ségou areas.

The cult arose in the Bendougou region. As has been
[443] noted above, the villages of Moribala, Kourbadougou, Diali, etc., are market villages where all the *boli* are found, together with directions for using them.

778 794 The *boli* of the Nya consists of a piece of wood from 25 to 30 centimeters in length and from 10 to 15 centimeters in height and width. It is wrapped in an absorbent material, usually cotton. The blood of the victims and the liquid of the libations are poured on this *boli*, and then hairs or feathers and bits of entrails, eggs, and kola nuts are stuck to it, giving it a
[281] repulsive appearance. It is true that the *boli* is often concealed from inquisitive eyes by putting it in a container made of an old piece of the hide of a she-goat. However, since the container is given the same treatment as the *boli* it contains, it is just as disgusting.

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443 record of production and provide a replacement for the markets and fairs abolished by a general decree in 1946. For business, the result is less scattered buying centers and less need for vehicles, packing, etc.

474 The cooperatives and the trading posts -- Since 1951 two
443 African cooperatives have been in existence: one at Kita, termed a production cooperative, the other at Kayes, termed commercial and industrial. They are organized under the aegis of the Administration by native businessmen, notables who, under cover of the association, hope to escape the influence of the large commercial houses on which they depend. These cooperatives function in a disappointing manner and lack technique, experience, and a sense of continuity. However, they benefit from concealed subsidies in the form of loans from the Common Funds of the Crédit Agricole and from the Société de Prévoyance.

These cooperatives are not required to buy products only at the trading posts. A village where only one cooperative member resides may be chosen as a buying center by the cooperative directors without it even being necessary for them to have the permission of the Administration.

Situation in 1950-51 -- Profiting from the freedom to choose buying centers that the Administration granted them, the cooperatives established them near the trading posts, thus diverting to themselves a large part of the goods that would normally arrive at the posts. Certain trading posts, notably Sirakoro in the Kita circle, saw their purchases drop by 80 percent because buyers of the cooperative were installed at Goro, 30 kilometers back in the hinterland of this canton. The buyers of the commercial houses, who had granted credit to the cultivators during the rainy season, were unable to recover their loans and, therefore installed themselves in the "cooperative" villages outside the trading posts. The cooperatives protested, and the Administration imposed fines, seizure of scales, products, etc. , and, above all, brought intimidation to bear through the intermediary of canton and village heads who forbade the local populations to sell their products to buyers from the commercial houses. The only method of countering these acts was to buy everywhere the cooperative bought.

439 By the south -- Guinea: rubber, ivory, gold, livestock, rice, millet. Ivory Coast: Sahel salt, livestock, wax, karite, native cotton and wool cloth and blankets. Gold Coast: livestock, native cloth.

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438 the gold. But they, in turn, could in no case resell the gold to any-
643 body other than the Fama. Aside from certain sacrificial uses and the
[648] making of jewels for the Fama's wives, gold served to ransom cap-
tives or to negotiate royal alliances.

The price of the commodities was set by agreement between
435 buyer and seller, except for cloth which had a fixed price, 100 cowrie
shells per cubit in the Bamako region. As a matter of fact, the cot-
[286] ton gathered in the fields of the community was woven by captives
who were not paid.

426 Loans were made without interest. Interest, *korko*, is still
686 forbidden today. Loans are guaranteed by labor. The debtor who
could not repay his debt on time and whose family head refused to
pay it for him was seized by the Fama and held as security until such
time as he had reimbursed his debt.

804 Side by side with French units of measurement, the natives
use their own for trade. Their measures of length: the cubit (elbow
to tip of middle finger), the span, the foot, the length of both arms
extended, the pace, the *diare*, and the *kala* . . . ; their measures of
capacity: the *sawel* or *mouré*, the *mud*; their weights: the *moutkhal*,
the *catal*, the large and little *karoni*, the *wakie*, the pellet of *tali*,
of *tomi*, of *bagana*, of *gelen*. Cotton is weighed on rough scales
whose pointer is a wooden rod and the balances large gourds hung by
strings. For weights, large rocks, *kulu*, from 800 to 1,200 grams are
[436] used. Finally, the Bambara use French money almost exclusively:
one franc of metropolitan France is equivalent to 0.50 francs C.F.A.
Nevertheless, the use of cowrie shells is still frequent.

d. Banks

One bank of issue exists in French West Africa: the Bank of
453 French West Africa. There are also private banks, the number of
which has increased during the past few years.

The Bank of French West Africa, which has a branch at Bamako, carries out the following operations: [43]

1. discounts notes or bills of two or several signatures due in not more than 180 days;
2. creates, negotiates, or buys drafts;

453 3. discounts negotiable obligations or non-negotiable obligations guaranteed by warrants or receipts for merchandise, by assignment of pending harvests, by bills of lading, by pledges of securities, by deposits of gold and silver ingots, and monies in bullion.

4. participates in loans to the State or Colonies with the provision that, except for special authorization, this participation does not total more than half the reserves.

5. participates in the creation of financial, commercial, and agricultural enterprises in the interest of the country, providing this participation does not amount to more than a quarter of its reserves.

The private banks are:

The National Bank for Commerce and Industry with a branch at Bamako and another at Kayes.

The African Commercial Bank with a branch at Bamako.

These are deposit banks, but the second is also an investment bank.

[44]

CHAPTER 5

HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN

I. Prehistory

173 The Bambara have fairly precise notions about their prehistory and their protohistory, and about the history of their ancestors and the evolution of their techniques. Their tradition has them as coming from Mandé, a country whose location remains uncertain for several authors (1), and which even leads Monteil (2) to say: "... in fact

1. J. Vidal, *Au sujet de l'emplacement du Mali ou Melli; le véritable emplacement du Mali* [Concerning the Location of the Mali or Melli; The True Location of the Mali].

2. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

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[361]

The patriarchal community draws its subsistence from this agricultural exploitation, and as a result, a kind of work organization has developed. Patriarchal communities or important families have agricultural land in various regions and these tracts are often far apart. Some members of the community or a group of slaves are therefore settled in each domain, sometimes on a permanent basis, sometimes for the period of clearing and cultivating the soil, sometimes for the period of harvest.

Theoretically, every member of the community and every slave must work for the community from dawn to around noon every day during the farming season. Two days, however, Monday and Thursday, are given to these persons for work in their own fields. Anyone who cannot or will not work has the right to provide a replacement from among his dependents.

There are, of course, many exceptions to these rules. In the first place, everyone works according to his position. Among the poor, the master works as hard as the slave, if not harder; among people in comfortable circumstances, the master merely controls and directs the work, sometimes reserving a particular job for himself. In important communities, field work [189] is almost exclusively the duty of the slaves, under the surveillance of their leaders and following the orders of the *fa*, who either supervises it himself or has a member of his entourage do so.

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Conjugal usufruct. When she marries, a woman is given in usufruct in exchange for the bride price. This usufruct is community property exactly like the things used for the bride price.

When a *fa* dies, the disposal of the conjugal usufruct included in the estate is a serious matter. Since the conjugal usufruct is of the same duration as the life of the woman, the death of the husband has no legal effect on the situation of his spouse. Since it is understood, however, that the widow has no sexual obligations to her husband's heirs, the usufruct is reduced in that respect. Such is the lot of widows when the heirs decide to keep them without marrying them and the women elect to remain.

794 It is not rash to suppose that in this case they are symbolizing
776 the role, probably primordial and in any event primary, of
825 the *nyana* to control the supernatural and particularly malevolent forces of the bush. As a matter of fact, the most popular and important *nyana* are the protectors of the harvests which represent virtually the only property of the natives. One of the *nyana* is even especially concerned with agricultural work (2); this is Tyi-wara (god of agricultural work), who presides over the first clearing of the land at the beginning of the winter season.

In any case, whether the animal is regarded as the visible form of a spirit or, if one prefers, the perceptible manifestation of a supernatural force, the belief is strengthened by the common practice of the interdict (*tne*) and, still more, by the magical acts required of a hunter.

Another aspect of this belief is seen in the choice of an animal to represent the mount of the *nyana dugu-da-siri*.

It is for a similar reason that the brotherhoods usually
794 adopt the name of an animal: for the Nama this is usually the
825 hyena (*suruku*) (3); for the Komo, the hyena (*suruku*) or the elephant (*sama*); for the Dyara, the lion; for the Kono, the ostrich (*kono-ba*), etc. It is said that the cries, the shouts, and

● [461] 2. In the native vocabulary, "to work" (*tya-ke*, short for *tyi-ya-ke*) primarily means "to work in the fields."

[552] 3. The hyena is often designated by the words *nama-koro* (old Nama) or *suya-koro* (old sorcerer) when the speaker does not want to use the animal's real name (*suruku*). There is a whole vocabulary for use to "avoid" the names that are dangerous to utter, and the name of the hyena is one of them.

248 286 into narrow bands by weavers [men] who make clothes from it in unbleached, indigo-blue, yellow, or black fabrics. At the present time, after numerous attempts at improvement since the occupation, [654] seeds selected according to the zones of cultivation are distributed to the farmers, and the administration encourages industrial cotton cultivation in irrigated regions, as well as mechanical spinning and weaving.

248 [177] Sisal is an agave of Mexican origin. The long, thick, pointed leaves, after undergoing a series of industrial operations including mechanical extraction of the fibers, yields very strong textile fibers suitable for cordage, rope making, rug manufacture, canopies, etc.

Kapok (Eriodendron anfractuosum) until a few years ago was merely gathered, but now plantations have been created. The fruit is in the form of capsules containing seeds enveloped in a vegetal wadding. In one year the kapok tree can furnish 30 kilograms of fibers used in mattress-making, hat-making ...

D. Agricultural Tools

241 Bambara farming tools are very simple. The hoe is almost the only agricultural instrument used. There are several kinds of hoe, particularly in the Bougouni region: the tyerengu, 0. 50 meters wide, with a straight handle (chiefly used by the Sénoufo); the n'gu kala, 0. 30 meters wide, with a curved handle. These two are used for digging, scraping, and banking. The flotton, from 0. 10 to 0. 20 meters wide and with a handle made from a forked branch, is used for the second dressing of the earth and for weeding. (When the weeds are too big, the weeding is done by hand). These hoes oblige the peasant to work stopped over. Let us also mention the axe, dyeli, which serves to cut shrubs and the branches of trees in clearing land, the machete, and a small pickaxe with a hoe handle, the yalo.

[33] Millet spikes are harvested with the aid of a special small knife to cut the stalk into pieces. Finally, the threshing of the ears is done with large bent sticks having round handles and flat ends.

[533 461] Agricultural labors, tillage and threshing, are undertaken collectively following the cadence indicated by an instrumentalist. Work in the fields is generally done by starting at the bottom of a slope and working up, so the rain will wash off the weeds. The

786 you accept it at my hands." If one of the pieces falls with the pulp
787 on top and the other onto the pulp, there is an affirmative answer from the dasiri. The sacrificer bites the kola nut, cuts out with his teeth the piece that contains the seed, and, when he has chewed it a moment, spits the remains onto the bark of the fetish tree.

This procedure, wholly dependent on chance, is often long, for the pieces of kola nut do not always fall in the desired position at the first try. After three failures the crowd ceases to restrain itself and, with gestures and voice, each person intercedes for the unfortunate one. The cries do not stop until the kola nut gives the answer, "I accept and am no longer angry!"

The Semioccult Society of the Koré, or Koté

794 The Bambara are, above all, farmers, and cultivating a field
241 has such great importance in their eyes that for them it alone really
● [461] deserves the name of work. One who does not handle the pick may be active and skillful, but he is not a worker and one does not say of him: "A bi ajaké, he is working." But will the seed that /122/ they consign to the earth in the winter sprout, grow, become large, and ripen? However little one knows the Bambara, one can imagine and understand their fears, for they are surrounded by a band of malicious spirits ever ready to pounce on them. Therefore they heed protectors and helpers, and at planting time they offer something to all, even to the rain. The main fetish to which they appeal is the koté, or koré, which lives in a tree in the middle of a small grove.

794 In order to be present at the sacrifices to the koté, it is
794 necessary to be initiated and to know the password. This initiation,
796 may take place by day, but at least in Bani country, it usually takes
534 place at nightfall when the setting sun takes on a bloody hue. The sons of the genie go in procession to the sacred grove. The korétigi, the priest, opens the march, preceded by musicians who beat the denouba (1) and the kingé (2). With him are the kârâ ma ("man of

463 make tools, farming implements in current use, furnishings, orna-
326 mental objects, bracelets, different kinds of rings. They also work gold and silver to make jewelry in filigree.

● 462 Weaving and basket-making are not done by the people of
286 caste, but by all men, or, formerly, by their house captives.
285 Primitive looms, worked by treadles, are set up outside of the houses in the shade of the trees. The men weave long bands of cotton for making clothes, loin-cloths, and blankets. These bands, several meters long, are sometimes made into rolls weighing as much as 30 kilograms and are carried off to market by the diula
[531] (itinerant merchants). The Bambara practice dyeing, batik, and embroidery (done by the men).

433 All this industry remains of strictly local interest and is directed solely toward meeting the immediate needs of the community.

c. Division of Labor

462 The Bambara are essentially an agricultural people. Never-
857 theless, as all members of the society must contribute a certain amount of work to the community, the nature of this work varies according to the social classes and according to whether a man, a woman, or a child is involved. The following tables indicate how the work is divided.

1. Distribution of tasks according to A. Aubert.

Men	Women	Children	All
	Foodstuffs		
	Preparation of food and dolo (beer)		
	Sale of dolo		
Preparation of hives, setting them, gathering the honey	Bottling and sale of honey	Helping	

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Men	Women	Children	All
Smoking of the meat	Harvest of karite and its preparation	Harvest	
Slaughtering the animals (work reserved for smiths)			
	Construction of the hut		
Masonry	Drawing and carrying necessary water	Carrying water (girls)	
Cutting and carrying straw and bamboo		Carrying straw (boys)	
Roofing			
Plastering exterior	Plastering interior	Pounding the threshing floor	
[65]	**Hunting**		
Preparation of the powder		Beating for game with dogs (boys)	
Hunting			
Training dogs			
	Fishing		
Preparation of fish traps and nets	Spinning	Fishing in ponds with bell-shaped traps	In case of draining a pond

Men	Women	Children	All
	Care of the animals		
	Care and milking of cows	Helping (girls)	
	Farming		
Removing stumps			
Sowing	Sowing sometimes	Sowing sometimes	Generally speaking, all cooperate in working the land, which is the only noble work, for the Bambara is above all a farmer and maker of sacrifices.
Weeding	Weeding sometimes	Weeding sometimes	
Threshing the millet (fla-kê)			
Harvest of millet and fonio	Weeding of fonio	Helping	
Threshing millet			
Grubbing the peanuts	Gathering and husking		
Harvesting maize	Picking ears	Helping	
Threshing rice	Harvesting rice	Helping	
Planting sweet potatoes	Transplanting and harvesting	Helping	
Planting kidney beans	Harvesting kidney beans and peas	Helping	

462
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Men	Women	Children	All
Planting and harvesting manioc			
Profits from okra, da, and indigo go to the men	Okra; cultivation and harvesting Da: id. Indigo: id.	Helping Helping Helping	
Preparation of cotton lougan	Harvesting, picking out, spinning cotton	Helping	
Weaving, sewing, putting together	Sale, dyeing	Helping	
Preparation of tobacco lougan, preparation and sale	Watering, powdering, and retail sale of snuff	Helping	
Preparation of calabash lougan, harvesting, emtying, sale, and decoration		Gathering burgu for horses	
	Wells		
[463] Drilling by male smiths only.	Drawing water	Helping (girls)	

462

Men	Women	Children	All
463[66]	**Furnishings**		
Beds, mats, secco [sic]	Canari [earthenware vessel supported by a tripod] (women of smiths' caste: preparation and firing)		
	Ironwork		
Male smiths, everything from extraction of the metal to sale			
	Jewelry		
Smiths			
	Leatherwork		
Shoemakers			
	Basketry		
All men without differentiation			
	Burial		
Each for his sex			
Digging grave Carrying body Burial	Preparation of water for purification and perfumes		

Men	Women	Children	All
462 463	Circumcision and excision		
Male smiths for the boys	Females of smiths' caste for the girls		
	Midwifery		
	All women past menopause		
	Religion		
Koma and Dio reserved to men	?		
	Coiffure		
[302] Men's heads are shaved by men	Women braid the men's hair where this mode of hairdressing survives		
	All the women's coiffures		
	Ropes		
Preparation of fiber, drying, cording			
	Tanning		
Male shoemakers			
[67]	Rubber		
[857] Sale		Gathering and preparation	

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Men	Women	Children	All
Medicaments			
Preparation and application especially reserved to men	Rarely done by women if not to treat own sex		
Religious Practice (see Religion)			
Reserved to men	Women rarely take part in sacrifices		
[782] Make their personal sacrifices to the right of hut door	Make their personal sacrifices to the left of hut door		

(When one faces entrance)

2. Distribution of tasks according to Labouret.

Labouret, in Paysans noirs [Black Peasants], divides the work more specifically assigned to men and women as in the following table:

Men	Women	Common Tasks
Trapping	Gathering alimentary plants for domestic industry	
Maritime or deep-water river fishing	Shallow-water river fishing	
Preparation of the fish	Preparation and sale of the fish	Preparation and sale
Preparation of traps and hunting or fishing gear	Making women's fishing gear	

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Men	Women	Common Tasks
Making arms and tools		
Hunting		
Agriculture: Clearing brush, hoeing, harvesting, constructing granaries and drying sheds.	Agriculture: Collaboration with men on these tasks; the men do work requiring strength. Sowing.	Agriculture
Handicrafts: Stone, wood, iron, copper, basketry, weaving, sewing.	Handicrafts: Basketry, plaiting or spinning, pottery, dyeing scents, perfumes.	
Construction and maintenance of the house	Construction and maintenance of the house	Construction and maintenance of house
Commerce	Commerce	Commerce
Raising domestic animals	Preparation of food, plus wood and water	
	Keeping house	
	Raising poultry	

241
462 Labouret hastens to add that there is close collaboration everywhere. Thus, when the husband fells the trees and cuts them up, the [68] wife and daughters pile the branches and burn them in a corner of the field. Then, when the earth has been turned by the men with their large hoes, the women break up the clods, level and loosen the soil for sowing.

241 After the men have cleared the big weeds, the women come
462 along to finish up. At harvest time, the women and children chase
[411] the birds from the fields with loud cries, sling shots, and by heating
bamboo on a hard rock to cause a detonation. All chase the spar-
[401] rows, partridges, guinea-fowls ... Harvesting is done together ...

In addition, by the side of the men's fields there are little women's fields where the women cultivate sorrel, okra, eggplant, tomatoes, beans, and all the condiments. The accessory crops of the women are the raro, bananas, manioc, sometimes rice or peanuts (1).

1. Labouret, Paysans noirs [Black Peasants].

241 Naturally, the work varies according to the social order. The
565 Bambara divide themselves into free men, people of caste, and,
567 formerly, slaves, all having a chief at their head. All members of the community must work the land; in fact, the poor work more than the slaves. The more fortunate do little work; they formerly directed and controlled the work of the slaves, today that of the agricultural workers.

C. Legal Procedure: Inheritance, Land Ownership

692 In Bambara country today, as in all of French West Africa, justice is dispensed by two tribunals: that presided over by a justice of the peace for important affairs, and that presided over by the administrator for other cases. The justice of the peace renders justice following the French code; the administrator according to local custom. A chamber of the Court of Appeals of Dakar is represented at Bamako, whose jurisdiction includes the Sudan and Niger territories. The Assize Court holds a session at Bamako, which also possesses an inferior court. Justices of the peace of wide jurisdiction are found at Kayes, Gao, Mopti, Ségou, Sikasso, Bougouni; other justices of the peace with wide jurisdiction have been created and will soon take up their functions.

One easily imagines the conflicts of principles and method which may arise between the two sorts of tribunals have just indicated.

791 Every magician (soma) (2) has his own methods: one
may be intuitive and work from an inner light; another may
operate only by deductive divination. All who lay claim to
real power submit to rules which are often strange and rigorous
and which dominate the most trifling activities of their lives.
And all are fanatically determined to keep the secrets which,
in their own eyes no less than in the eyes of the uninitiated,
are the foundation of their mysterious powers.

[143] Very properly, the range of their investigations and their action is without limits, since everything is impregnated by the energy which is everywhere and in everything and which perhaps is everything, material form being merely one of its manifestations.

789 It is worthy of note that artisans are subject to the same
dislike as that for ill-famed magicians. It is not too hazardous
463 to deduce that manual labor once consisted of magic rites which
791 were held to be indispensable in conquering matter. This is
still evident in the case of blacksmiths and hunters.

791 Everywhere in the Sudan, blacksmiths are considered
and, indeed, behave like magicians. The extraction of iron is
326 surrounded by essentially magic rites in which only blacksmiths
may participate. After ritual preparation, they work naked
while the job lasts and return to normal life only for a certain
time after the work has been completed; even then they have to
observe special rules. Their work is commonly thought to be
tinged with magic. Their tools are impregnated by this invisible
energy and, on certain days, the hut in which they are kept becomes a sort of temple, with the blacksmith as priest. The
chronicle (1) attributes to fa Siné Dyara, a blacksmith who
could understand the language of the birds, a role especially
helpful to the Massa-si.

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2. A sorcerer is a suba (See Chapter 7).

1. See p. 112.

428 2. If there are no children, the collateral males and,
596 lacking them, the wives.

614 3. If there are no collateral relatives, the ascendants.

4. If there are no ascendants, the surviving spouse.

5. If there is no surviving spouse, escheat occurs: [220] the inheritance reverts to the head of the settlement, the *dugutigi*, when this settlement is independent; otherwise to the head of the clan, the *fama*.

596 614 *The community and the individual.* The result of the foregoing is that the individual, whoever he may be and whatever his situation, has no value except as a member of a community (1); it is the community that exists and has an identity, while the individual exists and is identified only through the community and for the community.

An individual who exists apart from any *faya* is, therefore, an anomaly, and this situation comes to an end as soon as the individual himself becomes *fa*.

596 614 There are cases, however, when an individual is put out of his community because of his own action or because of circumstances, and extraordinary changes of status result.

626 Anyone driven from his community for bad conduct loses his rights to the *faya* in that community.

564 558 If his disqualification results from the practice of a trade regarded as degrading, he falls into what the Bambara call *nyama-ka-la* and Europeans call "people of caste." Henceforth he is not only excluded from his community, but he lives apart from all persons not declassed; he is a free man of inferior standing. He usually lives under the protection of a community of persons not declassed, earning his living from it and deriving from it such consideration as may be sometimes given him.

564 ●463 Among the Bambara, the *nyama-ka-la* include: the *numu*, blacksmiths, whose wives are usually potters; the *loro*, who work with copper; the *garanke*, who work leather; and the *kule*, who work with wood and are sometimes saddlers.

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[567] 1. A slave has no rights because, as a person, he belongs to no community.

564 463 The hunters (*donso*), who form powerful and feared associations, and the *somono* [Somono] and *bozo* [Bozo], who are fishermen, have a less restricted status than the above-mentioned artisans.

The *dyeli* who has fallen to the level of a domestic factotum is the most scorned of all. He receives some consideration and, in exceptional cases, notable esteem only through his worth as family archivist.

564 [754] The term *nyama-ka-la* is derived from *nyama* [221] meaning "ordure" or "outcast," and these people are outcasts. They are scorned. Some are particularly feared: the blacksmiths and the *dyeli*. The former are reputed, not without cause, to be given to the practice of magic and even sorcery. The *dyeli* have a fancy for poisoning.

Since persons of caste are free, they may contract marriage, that is, a lawful union, and found families just as free, non-caste persons do. Their male children naturally inherit the father's status which, thus, is handed down indefinitely through the male line.

Ordinarily they intermarry within the caste although sometimes a member of one caste may marry a member of another.

558 564 Any non-caste individual who marries a member of a caste automatically loses status. A woman who does so is henceforth considered to be a person of caste, and her children necessarily have the status of their father. A man is less seriously affected, and it is not at all rare for a man of standing to have a wife of caste. This is indubitably a misalliance; children of such a union are not highly regarded, and this reflects on the father.

564 On the other hand, it is entirely normal and common to have persons of caste among one's friends. There is hardly a person of consequence who does not have several of them as boon companions.

Although the fact of belonging to a caste carries with it a definite status, the caste member is not necessarily expected to practice the traditional trade. A member of the *numu* caste may very well know nothing whatever about ironwork and may

b. Organization of Work

241 621 Work on the land is the only kind of work suitable for free men, for to work the land is to purify it. All agricultural operations [622 are set in motion by the dugu-tigi and are regulated by the fa who 591] assigns tasks by age classes. Each member of the community must work for it every day, except Monday and Thursday, from dawn to about 4:30 p.m. He may be helped, or even replaced, by his children and his captives. The rest of the time he may work for himself in his personal field or in the little fields situated along the water courses and the rivers, which are not periodically redistributed and are considered almost as personal and hereditary property. The fruit of this labor constitutes the personal savings of the community member.

316 423 The exploitation of the subsoil is governed by other rules which we still know only imperfectly. Like the soil, the subsoil belongs to the master of the land. Iron ore was extracted solely by the [326] blacksmith who paid the master of the land a rent in the form of hoes or axes. To exploit the gold mines, thousands of natives went in family groups to the placers at the beginning of the dry season. [63] The location of the placers was determined by the priests and changed every year. The men dig multiple small holes very close to each other, which may go very deep depending on the depth of the barren layer. When the calabashes of gold-bearing earth are brought up, the women wash the earth. The placers are abandoned at the beginning of the rains after three or four months of exploitation. Before the French occupation, gold was the exclusive property of the Fama and could in no case be the object of commerce. To- [439] day, gold is generally sold at the placers to Syrian, native, or European merchants, who have established veritable shops at the mining centers, shops which contain everything necessary for the miner's life.

463 554 The exercise of a profession other than the cultivation of the land is reserved to artisans who are accorded the insulting name of nyaman-kala, for only work on the land is noble work. These artisans form separate families in every Sudanese society, which has caused Europeans to call them, improperly, people of caste. They are divided into independent guilds.

463 554 The numu: blacksmiths, whose wives are generally potters. [326] The smiths are the masters of fire, those who cook the sacred earth in order to extract the minerals or to fix the form of pottery.

The loro: coppersmiths.

The garanka: leatherworkers.

The kule: woodworkers, and sometimes saddlemakers.

The donso: hunters, who form powerful and feared associations.

The somono, or fishermen, who have a status a little less restricted than that of the artisans mentioned above.

The dyeli or griot, domestic factotums of a kind, who, although the most disdained of all these, are nevertheless the family archivists.

[563] One may add two Peul shepherd tribes, identified by Manson: the Dyanna and the Bouguena (1).

1. See Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

463 564 All of these artisans are endogamous and fixed in caste, father to son. However, the fact that a man belongs to a caste does not obligate him to exercise the caste trade.

326 463 608 The most powerful guild is incontestably that of the blacksmiths. From their ranks are recruited all the priests, the Fama's interpreters, the well-diggers, the grave-diggers, the executioners, the circumcisers, etc. They are the sénanku of all the families and are in charge of all the purification rites.

554 The griot are equally feared, because of the power of their words and because they spread afar the renown of the chiefs.

564 The free man who marries a woman of caste marries beneath himself, and his children are looked down on.

The purest blacksmith families are those of the Fané Balo; [326] the purest griot those of the Koniaté. People of caste always remain [527] at liberty; when they are captured during a war, they make themselves known and keep their status.

[64] These different guilds are sufficient to maintain in the 463 Bambara country a certain industry of a distinctly artisan and non-326 specialized type. Thus, the smiths work iron, copper, and wood to

463 make tools, farming implements in current use, furnishings, ornamental objects, bracelets, different kinds of rings. They also work 326 gold and silver to make jewelry in filigree.

462 286 285 Weaving and basket-making are not done by the people of caste, but by all men, or, formerly, by their house captives. Primitive looms, worked by treadles, are set up outside of the houses in the shade of the trees. The men weave long bands of cotton for making clothes, loin-cloths, and blankets. These bands, several meters long, are sometimes made into rolls weighing as much as 30 kilograms and are carried off to market by the diula [531] (itinerant merchants). The Bambara practice dyeing, batik, and embroidery (done by the men).

433 All this industry remains of strictly local interest and is directed solely toward meeting the immediate needs of the community.

c. Division of Labor

462 857 The Bambara are essentially an agricultural people. Nevertheless, as all members of the society must contribute a certain amount of work to the community, the nature of this work varies according to the social classes and according to whether a man, a woman, or a child is involved. The following tables indicate how the work is divided.

1. Distribution of tasks according to A. Aubert.

Men	Women	Children	All
	Foodstuffs		
	Preparation of food and dolo (beer)		
	Sale of dolo		
Preparation of hives, setting them, gathering the honey	Bottling and sale of honey	Helping	

462
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Men	Women	Children	All
Planting and harvesting manioc			
Profits from okra, da, and indigo go to the men	Okra; cultivation and harvesting	Helping	
	Da: id.	Helping	
	Indigo: id.	Helping	
Preparation of cotton lougan	Harvesting, picking out, spinning cotton	Helping	
Weaving, sewing, putting together	Sale, dyeing	Helping	
Preparation of tobacco lougan, preparation and sale	Watering, powdering, and retail sale of snuff	Helping	
Preparation of calabash lougan, harvesting, emtying, sale, and decoration		Gathering burgu for horses	
	Wells		
● [463] Drilling by male smiths only	Drawing water	Helping (girls)	

462

Men	Women	Children	All
463 [66]	**Furnishings**		
● Beds, mats, secco [sic]	Canari [earthenware vessel supported by a tripod] (women of smiths' caste: preparation and firing)		
	Ironwork		
Male smiths, everything from extraction of the metal to sale			
	Jewelry		
Smiths			
	Leatherwork		
Shoemakers			
	Basketry		
All men without differentiation			
	Burial		
Each for his sex			
Digging grave	Preparation of water for purification and perfumes		
Carrying body			
Burial			

Men	Women	Children	All
462 463	**Circumcision and excision**		
Male smiths for the boys	Females of smiths' caste for the girls		
	Midwifery		
	All women past menopause		
	Religion		
Koma and *Dio* reserved to men	?		
	Coiffure		
[302] Men's heads are shaved by men	Women braid the men's hair where this mode of hairdressing survives All the women's coiffures		
	Ropes		
Preparation of fiber, drying, cording			
	Tanning		
Male shoemakers			
[67]	**Rubber**		
[857] Sale		Gathering and preparation	

Ba

773 tools and the throwing weapon were made. Then, unfired pottery and weaving were invented; and men finally came to know stone tools, iron and the forge. The technique of making dwellings seems to have developed more slowly.

Ba
Bo

a. Fishing

226 Side by side with populations who specialize in the art of fish-
463 ing, such as the Bozo or the Somono caste, all the Bambara fish in
564 the [96] rivers or watercourses in the neighborhood of their dwellings. A detailed study has been made by J. Daget (1). The Somono, who are the caste of Bambara fishermen, use traps and nets for fishing; the Bozo remain faithful rather to harpoons and small nets. They are
Ba the ones who almost always make the pirogues, for they alone may
Bo enter in rapport with the spirit of the water, Faro. The nets are of
286 knotted mesh made with a weaver's shuttle, sia, and a cylindrical
227 mold, pako. The band of the net, as it is being made, is nearly always attached to a wooden bridge especially conceived for this purpose, the kale or dio soyo kala, a regular tetrahedron whose edges
Ba are about 20 centimeters long, one of which is prolonged by a handle
Bo 1.50 meters long. The fisherman, seated on the ground, puts the
283 bridge before him, keeping the handle close to his leg. The fibers
824 used in netmaking are da (Hibiscus cannabinus), kie (Figna unguiculata), cotton, and now European thread.

Bo
226 The Bozo construct weirs from cut and joined tree branches; the weirs assume several different forms according to the regions and
Bo the snares used. Fish are used for human consumption; they are eaten
Ba fresh, grilled, fried or boiled, or preserved by smoking or drying. Oil,
251 used for cooking and as a lubricant, is extracted from certain fish,
252 such as the tineni.

Ba
226 Fishing in Bambara villages is done communally under the direction of a fishing chief at the time the waters recede. Precise rules of fishing rights and of rents due the masters of the waters are respected everywhere.

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1. Jacques Daget, "La pêche dans le delta central du Niger" [Fishing in the Central Delta of the Niger], Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. XIX (1949), No. 1.

4: Mersadier--13 U-5 (1954) 1955 MS37 Senegal MS37

Thiés
Wolof MS30
SERER FA32
TUKOLOR MS27
FULANI MS11
SONINKE MS21
BAMBARA FA8

/397/

Table II

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No.	Ethnic Group	Occupation	Income	Expenses
1	Sarakolé	Laborer	5,800	5,839
2	Peul	Orderly	6,100	6,726
3	Wolof	Laborer	6,500	5,383
4	Sérère	Laborer	6,700	8,251
5	Toucouleur	Orderly D. N.	6,745	6,772
6	Wolof	Mattress-maker	7,000	7,471
7	Wolof	Laborer	7,000	7,231
8	Wolof	Orderly	7,410	7,234
9	Wolof	Baker	7,500	7,842
10	Wolof	Cultivator	8,150	8,133
11	Moor	Auxiliary D. N.	8,940	9,067
12	Peul	Laborer	9,000	8,952
13	Wolof	Laborer	9,800	9,981
14	Wolof	Cultivator	10,000	8,092
15	Bambara	Laborer	10,000	8,501
16	Bambara	Auxiliary	10,675	10,013
17	Moor	Auxiliary	10,800	10,892
18	Peul	Spec. laborer	11,000	9,816
19	Toucouleur	Accountant	11,950	10,860
20	Bambara	Auxiliary D. N.	12,000	13,557
21	Wolof	Clerk	13,000	13,799
22	Wolof	Auxiliary	14,000	14,405
23	Wolof	Cultivator	15,000	9,182
24	Wolof	Cultivator	15,000	13,809
25	Wolof	Auxiliary D. N.	15,630	13,801
26	Wolof	Employee P. T. T	15,800	10,238
27	Wolof	Shoemaker	16,200	10,600
28	Wolof	Worker D. N.	22,000	18,641
29	Toucouleur	Police sergeant	22,000	18,730
30	Wolof	Weigher D. N.	24,000	14,305
31	Wolof	Carpenter	25,000	21,571
32	Wolof	Cultivator	25,000	7,850

Thiès
Serer FA32
Wolof MS30
SONINKE MS21
BAMBARA FA8

/397 cont./ Table II (cont.)

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No.	Ethnic Group	Occupation	Income	Expenses
33	Sérère	Chauffeur	25,000	15,706
34	Wolof	Employee P.T.T.	25,900	14,715
35	Wolof	Staff employee D.N.	27,000	16,654
36	Wolof	Private accountant	34,000	19,829
37	Wolof	Truck-gardener	36,000	23,680
38	Wolof	Jeweler	50,000	27,397
39	Sarakolé	Teacher	51,000	21,240
40	Wolof	Staffworker D.N.	55,000	31,004
41	Sarakolé	Head employee D.N.	55,500	21,105
42	Bambara	Chief worker, C.D.N.	56,000	24,548
43	Wolof	Doctor	81,000	34,612

S
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/398 cont./

deficits of Nos. 24, 25, and 26, which are less significant. The slenderness of the deficit of No. 3 can be explained by the limited number of persons that the unit of consumption contains.

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in the care of one of the families having the smallest income.)

This deficit is, of course, theoretical. Not having followed these families closely for an entire year, we cannot pretend to present an exact balance-sheet of their budget. It is possible that our percentages would be reduced in the course of a year, or a longer period, either by a reduction in expenses (reduction of consumption, or reduction of the unit of consumption itself) or by the creation of another source of income. The fact remains, however, that they do exist and that they are important.

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426
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It will be easy for us to show where they come from. It is almost impossible to explain rationally their persistence and their

244 The Bambara groundnut ripens its seed underground. It is cultivated from the southern border of the Sahara to the Cape, but its primary home [31] is in the Sudan where the greatest number of cultivated varieties is found. (1)

1. Jacques Félix, for a study on the Bambara groundnut (Voandzeia subterrena), Agriculture tropicale [Tropical Agriculture], January-February, 1950. [Ed., Revue d'agronomie tropicale.]

Manioc and yams at certain points along the Niger escape the devastations of the Acridiidae insects which can not attack their roots.

Other crops are used to balance the diet: condiments and
[263] fleshy plants, such as, pimento, sesame, various labiates, okra,
[177] sorrel, squash, peanuts (imported in the sixteenth century from America). Peanuts, to thrive, need loose, light soil. They are sown in June at the beginning of the rainy season and are harvested in
[252] November. The natives eat them roasted; they make oil and soap from them and give the stalks to their animals. Cultivation is entirely in the hands of the natives. In Senegal manpower is insufficient;
[464] before 1940 thousands of Sudanese workers were called upon each
[167] season, particularly Bambara, the "Navétanes," who hired themselves out to the farmers of Senegal in order to acquire the textiles and other products they needed. The peanut is an export product. Also cultivated are nitrogenous vegetables (Bambara groundnuts, black-eyed peas, dolichos, kissis, etc.) and the numerous and varied amaranths, tomatoes, eggplants, gourds, and, since 1940, potatoes which are grown more and more.

222
263 Finally, we will cite: a) the gathering of wild plants which serve as condiments: the fruits of the baobab (Adansonia digitata), of the corchorus, of the Parkia biglobosa [néré], and of the karite tree (Butyrospermum), formerly called the "butter tree," which is cultivated to some degree -- the fruit is something like that of the palm tree and contains a core whose kernels enclose a fatty matter, shea butter, valued for making soap, as an illuminant, for the toilet;
222 b) the gathering of scarcity foods: baobab, cenchrus, cassia, the kola nut (Sterculia acuminata). Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;

177 441 basis of judicial decisions, and the Chambers also give advice on the program of agricultural improvement undertaken by the administration and the welfare societies.

In Senegal, there are Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry at Dakar, Saint-Louis, Thiès, Kaolack, and Ziguinchor; in the Sudan, at Bamako; in Guinea and the Ivory Coast, at Conakry and Abidjan.

e. Work Regulation. Unions

464 Sparsely populated, West Africa lacks manpower. A decree of October 22, 1925, and an order of the Governor General of March 29, 1926, set the conditions by which workers could be recruited and work contracts established: salary, bonus, food, lodgings, medical care ... Individual or collective disputes between employers and employees are taken before arbitration boards presided over by a French employer and a native assistant judge.

An act of April 2, 1932, regulates the work of women and
464 children. One of March 11, 1937, organizes the trade unions, and
467 a decree of March 20, 1937, the native professional associations. Others regulate collective agreements applying to work. The National Assembly has voted the Overseas Work Code which is beginning to be applied. African unions have developed a great deal in the course of these last years; there are six African unions in the Sudan. The complexity of labor problems has led to the creation at Dakar of an office to inspect manpower problems, this office being attached to the General Bureau of Political, Administrative, and Social Affairs.

[80]

CHAPTER 7

CULTURAL ASPECTS

I. Religion

771 One can never insist too much on the importance of religion. It governs the entire social, political, artistic, and even economic life of the country. No institution can be understood without knowing

421 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show
596 his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as
614 usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to
the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the
better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and
plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them
after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old
debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

● 466 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is
596, at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate
614 to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not
wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute
in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To
the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself,
[186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave
to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that
is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them
never return, either because they have managed to create an
independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable
at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More
often, however, the young man, having founded an independent
family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and
watches developments there in case he may one day be able to
profit from them.

578 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue
561 which is forever at war with the fa and the senate. Their op-
885 position weakens, however, as they approach the age at which
they too will participate in the faya to which they aspire. Grad-
ually, as one changes from kamalen' to bina, he acquires the
same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity
of the new kamalen'-u.

562 In concluding this study of the members of the commun-
583 ity, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys,
they belong completely to the community, which, as a result,
has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So,
since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in
usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

177 444 basis of judicial decisions, and the Chambers also give advice on the program of agricultural improvement undertaken by the administration and the welfare societies.

In Senegal, there are Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry at Dakar, Saint-Louis, Thiès, Kaolack, and Ziguinchor; in the Sudan, at Bamako; in Guinea and the Ivory Coast, at Conakry and Abidjan.

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[80]

CHAPTER 7

CULTURAL ASPECTS

I. Religion

771 One can never insist too much on the importance of religion. It governs the entire social, political, artistic, and even economic life of the country. No institution can be understood without knowing

a. Urbanization

166 177 369 The Bambara, who are essentially agriculturalists, have no cities. All the cities owe their origin to the Whites and were created for commerce, administration, industry, banking, and education. But the city has exercised the same attraction on the Black peasant as it has on the French one. This taste for city life has been made easier to indulge by the creation of railroads and roads. Cities, such as Bamako, are invaded by ever-increasing populations who leave the bush and the close-knit community to create a de-tribalized mob which adapts more or less well to a European economic organization. Thus, the industrial equipping of Africa tends to transform the native artisanry, because the industrial establishments of the European type require a specialized [77] labor force that will adopt French work methods and economic life. It is in this way that the railroad yards at Thiès were created, as well as the industries of construction in solid materials, the quarries, the brickyards, the limeworks of Bamako, Mopti, and Ségou, and the food industries: icehouses, waterworks, the cotton gins of Koutiala and Sikasso. Industrialization is just beginning in the Bambara country, but the European form of economic organization has spread widely even where native work methods exist, leading, as a result, to economic individualism.

b. Development of Large-scale Agricultural Exploitation

177 241 473 Agricultural exploitation itself has been radically transformed in certain regions. Side by side with food crops which vary according to the needs of the community and which are cultivated in the traditional extensive manner, an intensive monoculture of money crops has developed with peanuts, rice, cotton, etc. This has been made possible by modern techniques of agricultural exploitation: experimental gardens, centers of scientific research, creation of pilot sections, scientific management of the plains. This development has led to the creation of such organizations as the C.G.O.T. in Casamance, a company for diversified economy whose initial capital was underwritten by the State and by professional processors of fatty substances. This company clears and de-stumps the great forest brush with heavy tractors, bulldozers, treedozers, and strumpers [de-stumpers ?] in

177 order to cultivate peanuts, sunflowers, millet, and cotton. Every
241 three years, the company distributes green manure crops in order to
473 reconstitute the soil's humus. Moreover, the company has created
veritable villages to house its technicians and the colonists.

177 Other organizations, such as the Niger Office, have charge
241 of the basic water control of the central delta (dams, large canals).
312 Thanks to the creation of a network of waterways, to the clearing
433 and de-stumping of lands, and to the development of general equipment (processing factories, workshops, stores, dwellings, road network), the end of 1949 saw 11,000 hectares of rice fields, with a yield of 18 quintals of paddy and a commercial production of 8,000 metric tons of husked rice. Six thousand hectares have been prepared either for growing cotton (2,000 hectares), for growing rice for food (1,000 hectares), or for lying fallow (3,000 hectares). These fields
[166] permit the exportation of 360 metric tons of cotton fiber. Twenty-two thousand persons have been settled as colonists. Finally, let us note that the F.I.D.E.S. by its financial support has permitted the development of peanut cultivation in Senegal, of rice in Guinea and the Sudan, of karite in Upper Volta, as well as the creation of several technical schools.

c. Social Consequences

177 This technical evolution has profound repercussions on the
native way of life. We notice the same change in the Bambara
596 peasant as in the Bambara artisan. The large united family which
241 was [78] the cornerstone of agricultural technique tends to split up more and more, even in the regions where the traditional farming methods are still used. The family field, a great deal less carefully tended than in the past, gives way in importance to the individual's field. Moreover, the family field traditionally was at the end of a path bordered by small individual fields where each peasant went to work for himself before and after the collective labor. Today, we see the creation of individual fields in the brush far from the path which leads from the village to the family field, clearly indicating the desire of the individual to separate himself from the large family and to escape the control of the farming chief in order to realize personal benefits for himself, not subject to family inspection.

439 The great distances to the coasts remain an obstacle to outside commerce, for the country lacks motor power. All coal must be imported, and hydroelectric equipment is scanty.

b. Commercial Regulation

The decree 3771-SE of July 21, 1949, set the terms for importing quota goods from metropolitan France and from countries of the French Union or for importing foreign goods. The regulation of exports is set forth in the decree 2233-SE of April 19, 1950. Any merchant holding an export license may export goods. According
441 to Richard-Molard, the commercial companies financed by French and foreign capital (increasingly American) still retain the old trading mentality which seeks to wring maximum profits out of the colony without reinvesting in the country's equipment. Attempts to
474 protect the native producers resulted in the creation of cooperatives which were given certain advantages; nevertheless, the cooperatives soon ran up against the competition of the European commercial houses and were discouraged.

c. Organization

443 Trading posts and cooperatives -- Enumeration and classification of trading posts is governed by a local decree, effective as of the opening of the trading which is itself governed by a general decree. In principle, the decree fixing the location of trading posts is drawn up after consultation by the administrations of the Bamako and Kayes Chambers of Commerce.

[40] It is formally forbidden to buy products elsewhere than at these trading posts, under pain of prosecution; confiscation of goods and seizure of vehicles may even be invoked in certain cases of repeated offense.

Role of the trading posts -- The role of these trading posts is to gather together the products of a region; the choice generally falls on a large village served by a practicable road or on a railway station from which the goods may be the more easily moved out. From the administrative point of view, the trading posts facilitate keeping a

443 record of production and provide a replacement for the markets and fairs abolished by a general decree in 1946. For business, the result is less scattered buying centers and less need for vehicles, packing, etc.

474 The cooperatives and the trading posts -- Since 1951 two 443 African cooperatives have been in existence: one at Kita, termed a production cooperative, the other at Kayes, termed commercial and industrial. They are organized under the aegis of the Administration by native businessmen, notables who, under cover of the association, hope to escape the influence of the large commercial houses on which they depend. These cooperatives function in a disappointing manner and lack technique, experience, and a sense of continuity. However, they benefit from concealed subsidies in the form of loans from the Common Funds of the Crédit Agricole and from the Société de Prévoyance.

These cooperatives are not required to buy products only at the trading posts. A village where only one cooperative member resides may be chosen as a buying center by the cooperative directors without it even being necessary for them to have the permission of the Administration.

Situation in 1950-51 -- Profiting from the freedom to choose buying centers that the Administration granted them, the cooperatives established them near the trading posts, thus diverting to themselves a large part of the goods that would normally arrive at the posts. Certain trading posts, notably Sirakoro in the Kita circle, saw their purchases drop by 80 percent because buyers of the cooperative were installed at Goro, 30 kilometers back in the hinterland of this canton. The buyers of the commercial houses, who had granted credit to the cultivators during the rainy season, were unable to recover their loans and, therefore installed themselves in the "cooperative" villages outside the trading posts. The cooperatives protested, and the Administration imposed fines, seizure of scales, products, etc., and, above all, brought intimidation to bear through the intermediary of canton and village heads who forbade the local populations to sell their products to buyers from the commercial houses. The only method of countering these acts was to buy everywhere the cooperative bought.

178 211 stones at the time of the collective ceremonies called the years "renewal" (1).

1. See pp. ff.

III. The Religious Societies

194 Members of groups formed by families in a broad sense, headed by patriarchs and owning lands which cannot be divided, also belong to other collective groups called *flâ*; these are formed by the age grade of circumcision, excision, or initiation, and grouped around altars which are their own and which possess their special rituals.

These societies are called by the general term *dyo* (2) meaning

476 2. It is appropriate to distinguish the religious societies, *dyo*, described in this work, from the mutual aid societies, *tõ*, of apparently secular character. The latter are also very numerous and exist in all the Bambara villages.

These organizations are strongly hierarchical and are placed under the direction of responsible chiefs. Their members perform communal work which concerns the life of the village: felling trees, clearing, cultivation of individual or communal fields, house construction, etc., and participation in marriage ceremonies. The detailed study of the *tõ* whose role is considerable would be indispensable to an understanding of the social and economic organization of this tribe.

The participation of the *tõ* in agricultural work will be described by Mme. de Ganay in *Techniques et rites de l'agriculture* (in press).

194 "to build, "to edify" and also "secret." This term recalls that each individual constitutes an element of the whole group formed by the society.

794 instruction and initiation. Five years are thus necessary to reach the highest rank. Each promotion is paid for by the individual providing [782] two roosters whose throats are cut upon the altars at the end of the annual ceremony which takes place in the bush under a tree called the kalabana, following communally performed labor. After meal, a [526] fight called bari, organized under the direction of the chiefs, puts the young boys in opposite groups and gives them the opportunity to show their courage and their initiative.

794 476 The members' activity consists of collective work at the time of the cultivation. The millet and the gifts in kind received in payment for the work are owned communally.

A. Material Objects of the Cult.

794 778 534 The society is the owner of ritual objects such as a mask and whips which are usually placed in a hut, ndomo buku, at some distance from the village.

The objects, numbering five, are rudimentary musical instruments. The wara, the clawed one, or diara, the lion, is a wooden bull-roarer approximately 35 centimeters in length, which is manipulated by means of a string a meter long. Sometimes the object is of iron and of smaller dimensions. The tori, toad, is a small box which gives off a nasal sound when it is scratched. The kono, bird, is made of two pieces of gourd bound together by spider webs. The wulu, dog, is a small calabash of about 10 centimeters in diameter, punctured by four holes. A string, threaded through its neck, allows it to be rotated like a rhombos. The ǰineble (literally, red spirit) is a buffalo horn pierced by three holes, /172/ obstructed by spider webs, into which one blows and which produce a loud, flute-like sound. One society usually owns several specimens of each of these instruments.

794 778 532 The mask, said to be the most ancient object, is of sculptured wood representing a human face crowned by several vertical, rather long horns (1). The whole is completely decorated with cowrie shells and red kise (2), grains which represent the blood from the offerings. The

1. The masks most often carry eight horns, but this rule is not always respected.

2. Linociera sudarica.

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[361] The patriarchal community draws its subsistence from this agricultural exploitation, and as a result, a kind of work organization has developed. Patriarchal communities or important families have agricultural land in various regions and these tracts are often far apart. Some members of the community or a group of slaves are therefore settled in each domain, sometimes on a permanent basis, sometimes for the period of clearing and cultivating the soil, sometimes for the period of harvest.

Theoretically, every member of the community and every slave must work for the community from dawn to around noon every day during the farming season. Two days, however, Monday and Thursday, are given to these persons for work in their own fields. Anyone who cannot or will not work has the right to provide a replacement from among his dependents.

There are, of course, many exceptions to these rules. In the first place, everyone works according to his position. Among the poor, the master works as hard as the slave, if not harder; among people in comfortable circumstances, the master merely controls and directs the work, sometimes reserving a particular job for himself. In important communities, field work [189] is almost exclusively the duty of the slaves, under the surveillance of their leaders and following the orders of the fa, who either supervises it himself or has a member of his entourage do so.

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768 Conjugal usufruct. When she marries, a woman is given in usufruct in exchange for the bride price. This usufruct is community property exactly like the things used for the bride price.

When a fa dies, the disposal of the conjugal usufruct included in the estate is a serious matter. Since the conjugal usufruct is of the same duration as the life of the woman, the death of the husband has no legal effect on the situation of his spouse. Since it is understood, however, that the widow has no sexual obligations to her husband's heirs, the usufruct is reduced in that respect. Such is the lot of widows when the heirs decide to keep them without marrying them and the women elect to remain.

311 the community is founded. His permission is required before
621 anyone may build a dwelling in the portion reserved as the seat
423 of the community; the village is therefore kept within precise
793 limits. In practice, however, everyone builds wherever he
pleases if there is no objection. If there is an objection, the
dispute is settled by the *dugu-tigi* and his council.

Outside the village proper, the terrain includes fields
423 which, either at the start or during the course of settlement,
621 are allotted in perpetuity to the various *fa* of the community
by the *dugu-tigi* in council. Each *fa* and his dependents have
indefinite use of the same fields, although by law the authority
which assigned them may take them away without being required to justify the act. This use is a kind of usufruct that is
more extensive than that of our law, since the beneficiary may
[425] use the land without restriction, except that he may not alienate
it. The tenant, however, may not use the land in any way that
might be prejudicial to the community as a whole without the
consent of the *dugu-tigi* and council. For example, such would
be the case if he proposed to give his right of use to an outsider.

Any land not specifically allotted [231] and anything it
produces or contains belongs, theoretically, to the member of
the community who cultivates it. Certain fruits or produce, however, are sometimes reserved for the community as a whole:
the leaves or fruit of the baobab, karite, *nété*, tamarind trees,
etc.; the fish in certain ponds, watercourses, fluvial zones,
● [476] etc.; the game in certain cantons, etc. On the dates set for
these collective enterprises by the *dugu-tigi* and his council,
the people proceed in a body to gather fruit, harvest the crop,
fish, or hunt. Sometimes each person is allowed to keep what
he has gathered; sometimes all the proceeds are collected for
the *dugu-tigi* to distribute according to custom. There are also
special regulations governing the extraction of matter or materials from the ground.

621 *Organization of the territorial community*. The duties
622 of the *dugu-tigi* and his council are not limited to directing the
cult and regulating the use of land. Anything that happens
within the territorial community concerns the *nyana-dugu-da-siri*, because the members of the community are his children

561 and religious life). The young men of the same soli form what is
called a flambolo. Three consecutive classes of flambolo form a
flanton. The women have a parallel organization. Each fulani is a
ton-den (child of the ton), with a corresponding association.

561 The association's role, apart from the seasonal celebrations
and the copious feasts, accompanied by a great deal of drinking, is
241 that of a mutual aid society and of a veritable village work coopera-
476 tive. It is organized, administered, and articulated with a view to
the agricultural work. The chief, kariku, expedites current business, with the assistance of a syere (witness, deputy). He has a treasurer who receives offerings and makes payments, the femmaraba (he who preserves things), plus an honorary president and an adviser, chosen from among the notables and delegated by them; he must supervise the society and orient its activities.

This social organism rests, in the last analysis, on the exchanges of services initiated and supported by the kariku. He sees to it that help is forthcoming to a man making the customary work payments in the fields of his parents-in-law or future parents-in-law (in exchange for food and drink furnished by the parents-in-law to these ton-den). In like manner, a farmer asks the kariku for help
in clearing a field of brush. This request is made through an inter-
431 mediary or a sẽnanku who [58] accompanies the request with ten
324 kola nuts. The chief accepts the present and calls his council into
session to study the affair technically and to fix the salary. The same procedure is followed for the winter weeding, which calls for rapid completion, as well as for building dams, irrigating canals, paths, roads suitable for carting, etc.

An analogous system exists for the female kari, for sowing the crops as well as for gathering the harvest, mutual domestic aid, etc. The two groups collaborate for the seasonal celebrations.

643 d. The Fama. -- We see that the canton is a grouping formed
under the authority and influence of a dominant family. Its unity is determined by political, social, and religious laws which regulate it. The fa or head of the dominant family becomes the Fama, that is, the patriarch, chief of the canton. He then often renounces the administration of the faya, which he turns over to his second (syere),

585 The husband spends the whole day after the wedding night in his hut, where relatives, friends, and neighbors come to congratulate him and present minor gifts of food. He invites them to eat and drink. The wedding is thus prolonged for several days, depending on the husband's wealth, during which time the couple is at the disposal of the guests.

[556] Rich families like to show off the trousseau, jewels, and gifts bestowed on the bride, so during the whole day after the wedding night everything is paraded with great pomp through the village by people of caste who proclaim the items and exaggerate their value. Toward evening the presents are shown one last time to the bride, who sits on a low bench with her face hidden behind a kind of tray, woven with grass, which she holds in her hand. [533] Drums and other instruments make a great uproar, while a female griot, standing behind the bride, sings love songs. [302] Everyone admires the bride's hair, which is artistically braided in a flat crest with two small braids on each side of the face hanging in front and behind the ears. The women finger her jewels as they admire them and her thick-soled sandals.

To conclude the ceremony, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives cowries to the leader of the singing, and guns are fired for the last time. [481] Then the bride gets up, glides over the ground without lifting her feet, and enters the hut with her companions, while the guests retire. [204]

Second Marriage

595 The number of wives is limited only by the necessity of providing each one with a suitable living. This means that, theoretically, polygamy is a privilege of the rich. Some men practice it in order to pass as rich men, which flatters their pride, while others use it to gratify a sensual temperament. Most often, however, people in modest circumstances have several wives solely for economic reasons.

When an only wife has young children and no servant to help her, she is extremely overworked. When this is the case,

881 festival of the sheep كبش , the little soli girls, those chosen
857 for the next circumcision, go with their still unmarried older sisters
to thank the elders for the honor which has been done them. In the
[533] evening, at nightfall, they visit the families and in a nasal song
recall the glories of their ancestors. They also have the most flattering words for those still living, and it all ends with this plea: "We are soli and haven't a penny! On the tenth day of the next moon we must offer you a fine "couscous" with very small grains, the basi, and we want a good sauce. Help us in this, I beg you, we are soli without a penny."

881 The songs of the soli remind the old men and women of their
younger days, the days of their youth, and they run to the granary,
857 search the gourds that they use as cupboards, unlace the long roll of
● 481 close-packed straw where the cowrie shells are piled, and the young
people leave triumphantly, rich in cowrie shells, millet, and decayed fish. The proceeds of the quest are entrusted to the oldest of the soli, and, on the second day of the festival of the sheep, our belles gather, grind furiously, and provide the whole village with its ration, basi kili, which is the name of the festival.

881 On the stroke of noon and even before, everybody is fed and is
eagerly tasting the sorghum /sic/ beer, d'lo, and the soli girls run from one house to another to gather the leftovers from the feast. They do it hurriedly, eagerly, and feverishly, for they are impatient to perform their great religious, public, and solemn act, and at the soli kili basi they are the cooks and servants of the spirits.

The latter /spirits/ stay at the outskirts of villages, invisible, and drag the soles of their feet along the paths of yawn as they crouch /177/ at the crossroads. The songs of happiness, the cries of joy, the hiccups of the drinkers, and the deafening noise of the bass drums split their eardrums, the scent of decayed fish swells their nostrils, and no doubt, between two sighs, as they lick their lips with their tongues, they say to themselves in a murmur which the wind carries away: "Oh! the gluttons, they are forgetting us!"

But not at all -- they are remembered! A little soli girl smears her face, breasts, and back with milk, ashes, also and with other things whose names I do not know; she makes herself hideous to behold,

764 is two or three meters wide at the surface of the ground, it is
766 barely a meter wide at a depth of a meter and a half. Three of its walls are vertical, and the fourth is sloping. At the bottom and along the whole length of this fourth side, a hollow is prepared to receive the body, which is placed on its right side with the head toward the south if the deceased is a man, and to the north in the case of a woman.

764 It is usual for the priests of the brotherhoods to dig the grave. In the course of their work, following a special ritual, they collect various elements for [168] their magic. In any case, it is regarded as dangerous to handle anything having to do with death, and only a priest can do it with impunity.

When the time for burial is at hand, the touching ceremony of farewell to the dead takes place under the direction of the principal gravedigger. Wrapped in the mats on which it lay in the house, the body is placed under a shelter (geva) in the courtyard of the house. Everyone in turn pays his respects to the deceased and asks pardon. Everyone in turn, from the eldest to the youngest, comes forward, accusing himself of failings and faults and begging the deceased to grant him protection. All this is done through the mediation of the principal gravedigger who ceaselessly intones: "Pardon us! Do not be angry; we loved you and respected you; be happy and protect us!" Then everyone chants in unison: "Give us rain in the winter, make our harvests abundant; bring prosperity to our houses, and give us many children, wives, and wealth."

When this ceremony has come to an end, the gravediggers lift the corpse to their shoulders and, preceded by the weeping and lamenting children (de-u) and followed by the
[482] crowd of relatives, friends, and neighbors, they set off at a fast pace, almost on the run, toward the tomb. There, the body is put down beside the grave; the men stand around it with the women behind them. The sons of the deceased go down into the grave, open the mat, take hold of the body, and place it in the niche. They tear loose a corner of the shroud or shirt and hand the end of this torn fragment to someone present who holds it outside the grave. With wooden scoops or sun-dried tiles they

881 On the same day the young girls in certain localities
302 have a characteristic ceremony. One of them whitens her face, breast, and back with a mixture of milk and ashes. Thus daubed, she dashes out of the village brandishing the spatula (to-n-galama) which is used to stir mush (to) in the pot; her companions follow her, shouting. The band goes around the village four times in this fashion, each time stopping at the crossroads. At these points the girl who is bedaubed throws handfuls of food (1), provided by her companions, to the spirits,

[262] 1. Usually basi (couscous) made with fish.

crying: "Dege dule (2)." Her companions reply: "Naloma (3)."

2. Literally, "thick mush."

3. That is, "fool."

881 The eve of the soli (soli-si). During the evening pre-
527 ceding the soli, the families concerned enjoy an ample meal, accompanied by innumerable jugs of beer (dlo) as is the custom
[273] at all festivals among the Bambara. This is a time of special
[576] merriment, of shining faces and greasy hands, and it is good form for the men and boys to belch noisily, saying repeatedly: "ne ne fa," literally, "I am full," that is, "I am replete." The
[301] women wander about the lanes, wrapped in their best skirts, with balls of amber in their hair and small silver or even gold rings in their ears and nostrils and rather heavy bracelets on their
● [482] arms and ankles. Some carry jars of dlo on their heads, while others carry gourds full of couscous, dege, or hot sauces which are often nauseous with smoked or spoiled fish. After the meal everyone gathers on the public square, forming a wide circle whose center is reserved for the dancers; piles of dried millet
[373] stalks are used to make bright fires which illuminate the scene and warm the audience.

881 The "boys of the soli" (soli-ma-tye-u), their heads
302

Plate 2

[End Plate 2]

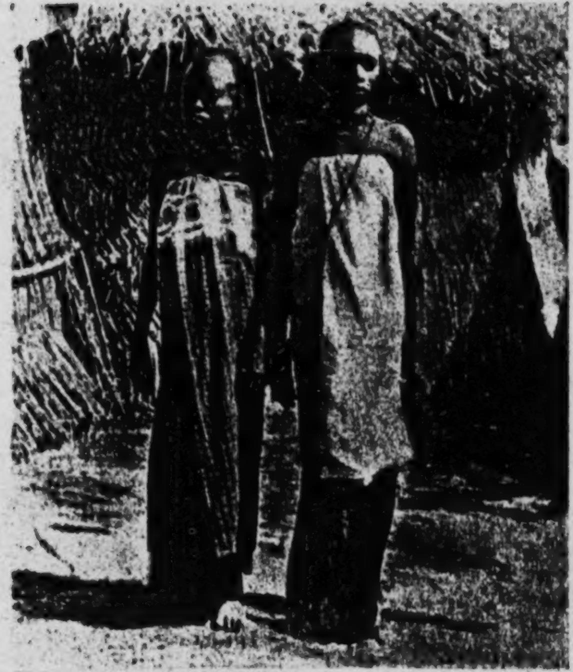

Fig. 3. Bambara girls in outdoor dress, Djenné Region.

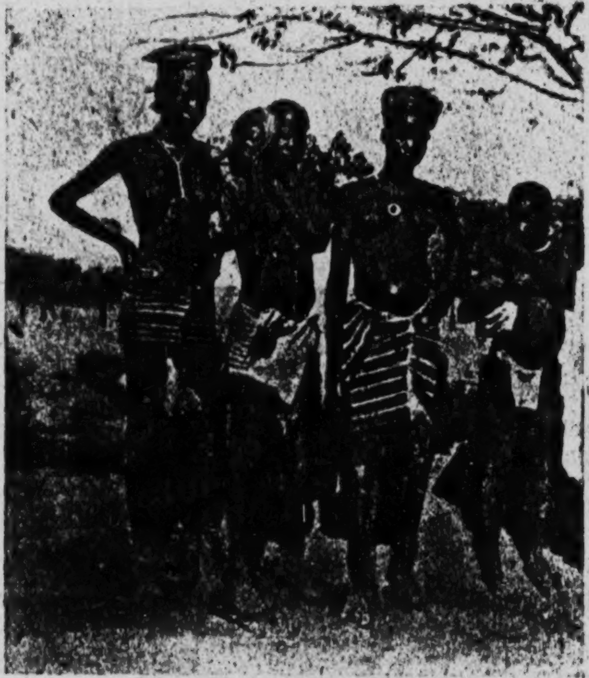

Fig. 4. Bambara women and girls about to set down burdens carried on their heads, Djenné Region.

181 "2. The Bambara makes a solid and disciplined infantryman ...
142 Mentally he is rather dull and stupid, physically he is stocky and
solid." Previously, the Abbé Henry had concluded in these terms:
"The Bambara is a farmer ... Well proportioned, his height is medium,
neither tall nor short. His chest is strong, and his short, thickset neck
supports a large head covered with black, wooly hair. Nothing in
his visage betokens spiritual force, energy, intelligence. His forehead
is receding, his eyebrow arches are rather pronounced, and his jet-black eyes, of which the white part is slightly cream (!), are straight.
His jaws, nearly always well toothed, project slightly; he has strong,
thick lips, a short chin, cheekbones ... a little projecting, and his
flat nose is horribly open and squashed at its root.

145 "The wife, as well as the husband, is strong, robust. More
often than not she is knock-kneed, and this constitutional defect
doubtless comes from the fact that she is obliged, from her earliest
482 childhood, to carry rather heavy burdens on her head, burdens often
too heavy for her strength [sic]. Mentally, the Bambara has a mind
181 as thick as his body. Slow to understand and lacking curiosity, he has
no desire to improve his condition. 'What my fathers did, I must
do' -- that is his great principle ... Lazy, good-for-nothing even, he
believes he's done everything if he has enough in his granary to feed
himself and his family ... Timorous, he fears the European exactly
as a slave fears his master, and if he serves the European passably
well, the latter is greatly mistaken if he thinks he has gained the
native's affection. He detests the White, as he detests the Moslem;
the White is the conqueror, an anti-fetishist, and therefore an enemy."

Finally, M. Monteil, in his Monographie de Djenné [Djenné
142 Monograph], tells us in his turn: "... elongated skull and pronounced
302 prognathism; the black, wooly hair is often gathered in braids by the
young people ... the top of the head is often shaven, which makes
the forehead look larger. The women affect a sort of transversal
crest.

142 "The forehead recedes, the eyebrow arches project ... the
nose [110] flattened, the root of the nose squashed, the nostrils
gaping wide, the lips thick ... the teeth wide with little space between ... the neck large, the shoulders wide and straight, the chest
strong and long, the members robust, the joints thick. Rather often
for the woman, sometimes for the man, a fairly pronounced steatopygia.

825 village, I thought at first that here lay the reason for this rest, extraor-
787 dinary during the time of the most intensive hoeing. Not at all; the
pagan Bambara were resting, and the women were giving their hus-
[262] bands and children dégé (millet flour mixed with milk and honey
water) in obedience to a hyena's command. The hyena, it was said
-- and all the sorcerers confirmed this -- had emerged from its dumbness, its tongue had been loosed, and it had predicted to the people of the west that a plague even more terrible than that of the caterpillars would descend on the country. Only one means to avert it remained: to refrain from going to the fields on Friday and to treat themselves to dégé, the food so dear to Moslems.

1182 On my excursions I have often met men and women carrying
757 on their heads a gourd or a basket containing a handful of leaves or
824 some bundles of roots, and apart from the customary greetings it
has been impossible for me to get a word out of them. And why this
784 silence? They were carrying a medicinal plant, a remedy which would lose all its virtue and all its efficacy if they conversed on the way, and they had to take care not to trample such-and-such a plant that grew on the edge of the path.

757 The Bambara quite readily names the plants and herbs whose
753 curative powers are known to him, and yet in the presence of a sick
person he will very seldom give you the name of the remedy the
784 latter is taking, or the names of the roots and leaves that make up his poultices. Sickness, he believes is a force, a power which tortures our bodies. He is afraid that in naming the remedy he would provide this power with a weapon against its healing virtue, which is another force or power. He sets the second power against the first to make it leave.

811 It is evident that he attributes bits of reason and emotion to
784 everything, that he attributes human feelings to all that is animate and inanimate. The "taboos" are not merely one piece of evidence of this, they are an irrefutable proof of this attitude.

845
778 old men and important people of the village, as well as friends, are
852 invited to squat before the jugs and partake of the liquid refreshment.

The Dasiri Fetish, Protector of Villages

776 621 The dasiri is the chief of all the gnena, or djine. In order that its worship may be better understood and that the reader may have an idea of the power of its priest, I must go into a few details which cannot help but throw some light on Bambara organization. Let us, for example, take a village that is being founded: we are present at the election of the priest of the dasiri, the gnéna-n-sonnabá; at the choice of the fetish tree and of the sacred animal, the genie's mount; at the enthroning of the sacrificer; and finally at the sacrifices.

Election of the priest

776 621 793 ●[482] The population has grown, the surrounding land is exhausted, and a group of families must move out. The old men who are still lively and the youths full of strength and life take up their arms and fasten a dirty goatskin, a foroko of provisions, on their shoulders and scatter in the bush in search of less ungrateful soil. When they have found it they go back to their homes, and the council of family heads meets to choose a leader. This leader is really a priest, for his chief function is to sacrifice in a public and formal manner to the blonda ba sou (1), the shades of the great entry hut /116/, that is, to leaders and priests who, just like him, held the reins of power, and to the gnéna, genii, spirits, and fetishes, whence come his names of gnéna-n-sonna ("he who sacrifices to the gnéna fetishes") and gnéna-n-sonnaba ("great sacrificer of the gnéna fetishes"). He alone has the authority to sacrifice to all /these spirits/ in the name of all /the people/.

---

1. Blon, "entry hut"; da, "door," "doorsill"; ba, "great"; sou, "corpses," "shades."

181 that she is a girl, that one day she will be a man's plaything, an
831 object for his pleasure. The child would leave smiling and replace
her three fingers of rag even as she walked away. At dinner time a
● [482] big girl would come carrying the gourd of tô, or sorghum gruel, on
her head, and on the palm of her right hand, at shoulder height, the
platter of dried fish sauce. She would be greeted from as far away
as she could be seen and asked for a report on her whole body, and
indeed there would be no stopping at "how are your feet" nor even at
"how are your breasts." And the girl would answer all these vile questions
without getting excited, and when a well-washed hand, ready to
be used as a spoon, embraced her or lifted her breasts, she was not
shocked; only the opposite would surprise her.

887 Here and there in the village a giant tree stretches its branches
538 afar, and the old men, lovers of endless palaver, enjoy themselves
521 under its shade. They go there from the early morning to weave cloth,
make mats, tan hides, scour goats' horns intended for powerful
amulets, etc., and often even /159/ just for the purpose of spending
the hours dozing. And in the midst of all these gray, or at least
graying, beards, swarms a world of children. Among the old men
there are good storytellers /conteur/, who excel in stories of hunting
and war that throb with interest -- but why, alas, must they always
graft on some salacious incident? Their mouths are full chiefly with
[831] stories of adultery and fornication. They will not spare you a single
detail, and they will readily go back to the very beginning so as to
lack no precision whatever. And the moral of these stories can be
reduced to this: "There is nothing in this world comparable to the
pleasures of the flesh; let us enjoy marriage and never pass up a chance
to obtain this satisfaction."

524 If the old men are this lewd, is it surprising to hear the young
831 men describe the ugliness of their bestial evenings while they make
864 mats, stretch the hides of drums, or sew a blouse, a cap, or trousers
for themselves in the b'lon, or entry hut? They talk constantly of their
soungourou, and this term, which should simply mean an unmarried
girl, means any woman, married or not, who gives herself to the
first comer.

Without any shame they talk and chat about all these vile acts before their little brothers, before children ten and twelve years old,

881 until they are completely healed; for it is not until evening, when the setting sun reddens the horizon and takes on its bloody hue that [292] they re-enter the village. From this day on they wear a costume (all yellow if they are Bambara) of trousers, a blouse, and on their heads a kind of handkerchief tied under the chin (4). They pass the time in making mats, singing, striking together gourd disks strung on a stick, and especially in eating, "for they are being stuffed," and in sleeping. /181/

881 304 But in speaking of the boys, I forgot the little girls! They undress under the tree nearest to the sacred karite. Naked as a worm, each one when her turn comes runs at top speed with her abdomen to the ground and throws herself into the arms of a woman, also of the blacksmith caste, who immediately cuts her. On a braided platter, [285 415 189] made of fine, pliable grass, the mother or her substitute receives the bloody fragment which will be a grigri, a talisman or good-luck charm for the house, and while the gunpowder speaks, the disabled girl, pretending not to be suffering at all from the loss of her clitoris, goes back to her place, and another replaces her.

881 The session ends with the last girl, and the crowd breaks out in a song of joy and triumph. The mother, the eldest sister, or a ● [482] serving woman wraps the excised girl in a big white cloth and carries her astride her back to the village to the hut which has been prepared for her (1). This carrying, so laughable in itself (they can walk, even

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4. In some villages, instead of the yellow handkerchief the circumcised have a cap with two points. In Bani country the circumcised wear the blouse and handkerchief, or cap, and nothing more.

[621 346] 1. Each village is divided into quarters. The excised girls of each quarter have their hut in that quarter.

881
533 *Gnâma fambali, bo n'yé!*
Murderer *gnâma* (who kills), go away from me!

And coming back they sing songs and even improvise some to greet the old and influential men of the village. Back in their huts they kneel on the mat to stretch out or sit down, and there is silence, the silence of schoolgirls which is not broken except in secret, with trembling and in a low voice.

3. The *Da Woro* Festival, or the Sixth Day Festival

881
796 Boys and girls have paid the tribute of blood to the tribe, five days have already elapsed, and this is the evening before the sixth. Far over there in the west the sun has disappeared behind the heavy baobab trees that border the horizon, myriads of stars twinkle in the sky, and the moon, followed by Venus (*Kolo mouso*, *Nièlé*, "*Nièlé*, wife of the moon"), traces on a blue background its silver crescent singed with a gold border.

All the paths that lead to the village are full of people walking, seeming like an endless ribbon or a snake that folds back on itself only to stretch out suddenly. Behind the band of young girls walk the women, each with a black cherub on her back that always wakes up to cry and demand the breast; and to them the girls have entrusted their little loincloths, the cloth slings with which they gird themselves for the dance. The girls walk quickly, for although they carry on
● [482] their heads tall pyramids of gourds held in nets of large mesh, although they carry the fiancé's present to the queen of his heart -- salt; *dégé*, or millet flour mixed with honey water and milk; *d'lo*, or sorghum /sic/ beer; millet and dried fish in which worms crawl; they are confortable in their clothing; /183/ nothing hinders their movements except a narrow cloth band three fingers wide which passes between the legs, is fastened at the waist in front, and waves in back in a limp and soft train. And in the night there is the rustling of dry grass trodden under foot; /there are/ long peals of laughter, light jibes that are well aimed and to the point, and witticisms, for the maiden's tongues have been loosened, and they do not lack wit.

764 This ceremony, as beautiful as it is touching, ends with this prayer: "Give us rain when winter comes, give us a plentiful harvest, a vigorous old age, children and wives, and give us prosperity."
[482] Four strong fellows then come and take the corpse on their shoulders and, preceded by children and grandchildren who shout and cry, they carry it to the cemetery at almost a run, and the whole crowd follows them (1). The men line up around the grave, the women place themselves behind them, and the sons of the deceased go down into the grave. They undo the mat, take their father in their arms, and lay him in the niche on his right side, facing east. Then they tear a little of the shroud, or white blouse, of the buried man, and one of those present takes the strip torn off and holds it outside of the grave.
[417] The children build an arch above the corpse out of small boards that are sometimes worked and colored, but most frequently out of wood chips (faléma) or large slabs of earth dried in the sun. While they are building, the youths mix mortar to stop up the cracks and thoroughly coat the whole structure. The women clap their hands and then sing in low tones to the sound of the drums.

764 782 When the work is done, the children come out of the grave, and the person in charge of the funeral ceremony comes forward, on his shoulder a hoe with the blade hafted in reverse and in his hand a gourd of water. He leans over the grave. The drums stop beating, the women are silent, and he pours water on the head of the buried man three times, saying: "See /221/ this water, do not be angry, forgive us, give us rain in winter and a plentiful harvest (1). Whether

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1. In Bani country I have seen the spear of the deceased carried with great ceremony. The oldest son from time to time threw a few cowrie shells onto the corpse, and the crowd rushed to get them. This djansa is seldom performed, and the custom is not at all general.

768 562 482 the women belong to him but he cannot make them his own. From then on they remain without husbands unless they ransom themselves, and they quickly become soungourou (4). /224/

4. Soungourou, a woman who gives herself to the first comer.

Burials of the Second Category, Those of Heads of Families

764 Having described the respects paid to old people, that is, to grandfathers, I now need only proceed by elimination and say which of the procedures listed are not included in the burials of other persons. The honors paid to the gouatigi, or head of the family, whether or not he is married, are identical, or almost identical, to those paid to old people. But if he is not a hunter and none of his children is an initiate of the sect, his death is not announced by gunshots. Moreover, there are no dances except for the djansa, held evening and morning for three days, nor does anyone come at the time when the body is removed to the cemetery to accuse or excuse himself for a lack of respect or consideration toward the deceased. Through the intermediary of the herald or of the person in charge of the funeral ceremonies, each pays his respects and his few cowrie shells, and, after a pardon is asked on behalf of all, the prayer is said.

If he dies childless or is laid in the grave on a Wednesday or Saturday, unlucky days, the deceased gouatigi receives a white pullet to pay the spirits for his welcome as he enters Lahara, and he receives it alive. If a wife of a gouatigi is buried on an unlucky day or dies without having given birth to a child (1), an egg of a brooding hen is

1. If a woman dies after all her children, but has given birth to a child and nursed it, she does not fall into this category. It is a disgrace to receive a hen's egg because one has not had children. The rule is the same for men.

[558]

766 When they have sewed and tied it well, they [illegible] it on their shoulders
794 and head on the double for the exit door. There they stop and without
any respect roughly set the body down. Armed with picks they make
an opening in the wall of the hut and, seizing the corpse by the feet,
they drag it and put it into this opening. Strong hands seize it from
the outside, they pull and the others push, and the excommunicated
one comes out of his dwelling and appears in the alley or on the square.
[482] Four fellows -- sons of the fetish, for they alone are present at these
burials -- take him on their shoulders and, running, carry him to the
cemetery. At the edge of the grave they put down their load, the
initiates give a loud cry, a sort of roar, and they roll him with their
feet into his final home. For such people there is not the slightest
farewell or prayer, and the grave is filled at once.

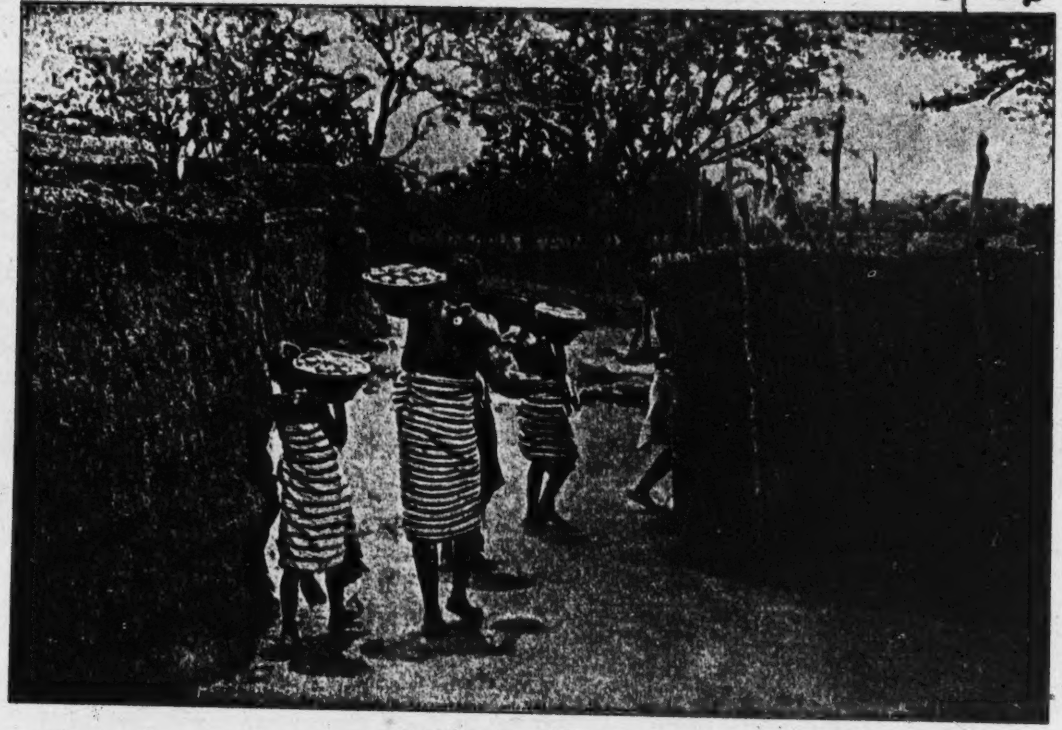
In the evening the fetish is brought out, and the initiates abandon
[789] themselves to their sacred dances, while the god, in the hands of its
priests, /232/ runs about the village and its environs, exorcising.
All night long nothing is heard but the bellowing of horns and trumpets
and sacred hymns shouted by the crowd, and from a distance one
would say they were dull rumblings or the actual cries of wild animals.

8. Worship accorded to the Dead

769 At the death of a Bambara not the slightest sacrifice is directed
either to him or to the deceased of the family. However, the worship
of the dead is prevalent among the Bambara, althought it cannot be
compared to the worship of the genii, especially of the boli. Nevertheless, everyday one can see, at the door of one family or another,
a large splash of blood on the wall about a meter from the ground,
a brownish octopus one might say, throwing its twisted arms here and
there and struggling against a clump of feathers stuck on its back with
the juice of a chewed kola nut. Some people have seen in this
worship the basis of the Negro religion and, no doubt because they
did not know the language and have been unable to give an exact
meaning to the words caught by their ears, they have portrayed the
Bambara with knife always in hand, ready to slaughter in honor of
his relatives. Because they group together all saraka and sacrifices,

482
291
415

4: Henry--283 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Bambara wedding.
The meal is carried to the young bride and her maids of honor (at Moundjirila).

439 By the south -- Guinea: rubber, ivory, gold, livestock, rice, millet. Ivory Coast: Sahel salt, livestock, wax, karite, native cotton and wool cloth and blankets. Gold Coast: livestock, native cloth.

443 In addition, all centers of any importance had a large periodic market which was a sort of regional fair, plus a small daily market which permitted the inhabitants of the locality to obtain provisions as needed.

b. Caravan Commerce

443 484 Over and above these markets, a long-distance caravan trade is carried on by the Haoussa and the Dioula, who transport their merchandise in the north with beasts of burdens, in the south by human bearers. These movements continue a commercial tradition and have been altered only by legislation. Before the conquest, any man who wished could enter this commerce on the condition of paying his "Fama" the usual sum. The traders, to protect themselves against brigands, traveled [42] in caravans. [78] Practice had it that the traders consulted a priest before leaving to find out if their undertaking would succeed. After the usual sacrifices, the priest revealed the name of the one who would direct the group. The caravan chief could even be a captive, but everyone owed him obedience because a divine force inhabited him. [651] To each state which is crossed, the caravan paid a customs fee on entering and asked the Fama for permission to cross, indicating the extent of their route and making propitiatory sacrifices in each region. Sometimes certain districts, such as the region of Bougouni, forbade blood sacrifices for fear of bringing down evil forces on themselves. The caravans then let loose an animal secretly at night.

c. Commercial Practices

438 643 Everything could be sold except gold, which was the property of the Fama. No one was supposed to possess gold. If the gold miners of Bouré could sell the gold extracted from the mines, when the buyers entered the Bambara country, they had to present it to the Fama. If he did not wish to buy it, he authorized certain rich people permanently settled in the district (that is, who would be unlikely to leave) to buy

791 rest of his fellows by intelligence, trickery, and deceit; the fool who vegetates is hardly patronized, for the crowd goes to the one who is craftiest, and if he is a diplomat and knows how to contrive matters to suit the occasion, he wins great fame quickly. Even while remaining a specialist (all sorcerers are to some extent), such a man is not slow to expand and, not satisfied with predicting the future, he plays the part in turn, of a doctor, a veterinary, and a pharmacist, and not a day passes when he does not find a new recipe to make his love philters, amulets, good luck charms, and talismans. Often, too, he will show off out of a desire for glory and will prescribe that a family, a village, or a whole region perform sacrifices called *saraka*, a kind of offering or tax which is usually placed at the corner of land formed by two paths that fork or intersect.

The practice of sorcery in Bambara country is what most defeats our logic. While some sorcerers address the *djiné* genii directly and begin their formulas with an invocation to the Creator -- whom they call *An tigi, min yé fen bê tigi yé*, "Our master who is the master of all things," or *An tigi Alla*, "God our master," leading one to suppose that in the beginning the greatest part of the worship was directed toward God -- others petition at the same time both the *djiné* genii and the *boli* genii, now invoking God and now denying and even insulting Him all in one and the same session. A third group of sorcerers have a more clear-cut domain leaving aside God and the *djiné* genii, they address themselves to the *boli* and to them alone. They are real
[484] globe-trotters and go from one village to another with their talking *boli* -- for it is said that they talk -- enclosed in a goatskin or, more often, in the hide of a wildcat, on the paws of which swings a little bell that announces their arrival to everyone. Usually they read the
[787] future in the intestines of hens, which help them to tell fortunes and draw horoscopes.

A sorcerer is honored because he is feared and dreaded, and all his orders and prescriptions are followed to the letter. Nothing serious is done except through him. He is consulted about everything, even a change of dwelling or a move to a different village, or a journey of /36/ any length; men and women and entire villages through their delegations file before him in turn. The sorcerers hold the Bambara

*173 we have just noted, would have formed an unbreakable bloc
614 if both elements had not been affected by the ferment of
dissociation referred to in the course of this study.

The *to-da* derived the larger portion of its prosperity from
● [487] the Niger. Communication and transport could most easily be
maintained along this artery, and it was the need to make the
greatest possible use of the river that brought about the organization of the Somono.

Etymologically, the word Somono simply means "fisher-
[101] man." Like any trade practiced exclusively, professional fish-
[564] ing involves a certain loss of standing, and that is why the
Somono are said to be people of caste. This status is especially
due to the supremacy of the clan over the Somono, without whom
it could not have exploited the river.

614 After using force to annex them, Mamari added to their
564 number by assigning some of the *furu-ba dyon'* to the group, so
*173 that the Somono were soon closely dependent on the *furu-ba*.
At the orders of the *fama* and his agents, they were required to
[505] maintain ferry service across the river, to provide river transport
in both directions, and to pay a fee in kind on their catch, with
the understanding that they could continue to live according to
the traditional Somono customs.

In return, the Somono were under the protection of the
clan and their leaders benefitted from the generosity of the *fama*.
They would occasionally be given a share of booty. [324]

Little by little, the few original Somono families were
lost in the flood of newcomers. These included: the *furu-ba
dyon'* who had become Somono on orders from the *fama*; people
of diverse origins who had adopted Somono status of their own
accord because they found it better than their own; and finally,
the children of both, who were Somono by birth.

It was likewise the exploitation of the property of the
[233] *to-da* that brought about a similar organization of the shepherds,
or Peul. Let us first note that this term has no ethnic significance;
it designates all who raise or watch over animals as a regular and
professional occupation. Here, too, there is a kind of loss of
standing, since a working shepherd could hardly do without a
sponsor and must attach himself to a master. This is the case for

C. Statistics

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	Sheep Goats	Bovines	Horses	Asses
Bamako	64,987	49,425	6,227	10,356
Ségou	234,645	161,965	10,454 -5,165	12,159
Bougouni	17,360	29,197	431	1,651

Estimates for the three Bambara centers.

D. Products from Livestock

253 Meat -- The principal slaughtering centers are Bamako and Kayes.

439 Some of the available bovines are exported to Senegal. This is done from the Kayes circle by way of the routes: Néma, Timbesa, Nioro, Kayes; or Néma, Nara, Yelamano, Kayes. Others are sent to Guinea to provide meat for the workers in the gold placers of the Siguiri region. Some go to the Ivory and Gold Coasts, where the animals are sent chiefly from Mopti, with participation from the circles [487] of Ségou, San, and Niafunké. Numerous caravan routes penetrate to the Ivory Coast by way of Odienné, Seguela, Korhogo, Bouaké, and Boho-Dioulasso.

[255] Preserves are made in the factories of Lyndiane.

281 Leather -- Leather comes either from the slaughter houses or from the bush. It is of mediocre quality because of poor preparation: the skins are dried in the sun, folded in two lengthwise, hair against hair, and tied together with a wire, ten to a bundle. About 600 metric tons pass through Bamako annually.

234 Milk and milk derivatives -- The cows are poor producers; most of the milk is furnished by the Moorish, Peul, and Toronké zebus. Butter production is primitive: the sour milk is put in calabashes, cans, or goat skins and shaken until it turns to butter. At Falaladji near Kayes there is a butter and cheese factory.

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439 Wool -- The wool is generally used locally for weaving; only a small percentage is exported to France. A great effort has been

177 Finally, the breaking up of the family cell is manifest in the in-
596 creasing number of children who prefer to work as farm laborers far
241 from their home country rather than submit to the tutelage of the
farming chief.

The economic transformation proceeds due to electrification
177 (regulation of the great falls near Conakry and those of Sotuba near
377 Bamako) and the creation, alongside the old strategic roads, of com-
489 mercial roads and bridges to facilitate shipping peanuts, rice, cotton,
and millet. The ports and wharfs are being put in order, the railroad network being modernized (increasing the matériel, transforming beds and embankments, repairing the tracks, installing and extending yards, improving the depots, constructing stations, buffets, hotels, cheap housing for the employees). On the Niger, improvements are being made in the river ports of Koulikoro, Ségou, Mopti, Bamako, and Gao, and, on the Senegal, of Kayes and Saint-Louis.

177 Finally, the new economy is accompanied by social accomplishments in the fields of health, education, and urbanization.

d. Chambers of Commerce

Thus, two forms of economic organization exist side by side in Bambara country: on the one hand, the traditional and artisan native organization, and, on the other, the European organization which has shattered the ancient society and has put the local economy of the country within the framework of international economy.

But it is perhaps in the realm of commerce that the influence
177 of European methods has been most felt, particularly in the creation
441 of Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry.

The creation of Chambers of Commerce dates from a decree of the Governor General in 1906. Members are elected for four years and are re-eligible. They are elected by an electoral college made up of the chiefs of French or African commercial establishments. The function of these Chambers is to give the administration advice and information when requested on any question of an economic nature.

The Chambers of Agriculture and Industry have substantially the same organization as the Chambers of Commerce, but in addition they are called on by the governors to group and codify the local customs [79] and usages of an agricultural character. These reports serve as the

505 amd Ansongo (1,400 kilometers), and between Bamako and Kouroussa (374 kilometers); on the Bani from San up to Mopti on the Niger. In addition, a very large number of native pirogues carrying merchandise swarm on the navigable waterways. These waterways, of strictly local value, remain impassable too long at a time to
496 maintain substantial trade. The railways constructed for strategic purposes are designed to link the ports with the navigable canals and form no sort of network among themselves. Moreover, the gauge (one meter) is weak, single, and capable of carrying only a small volume of traffic. The four principal lines are: Dakar-Niger up to Koulikoro, 1,697 km. and 128 stations; Conakry-Niger, 662 km., 40 stations, reaching as far as Kankan where the Milo is navigable; Abidjan-Niger, 834 km., and Benin-Niger, 579 km. Passenger and freight traffic is constantly increasing, and the insuf-
491 ficiency of the railways is compensated for by road traffic. Every secondary center may be reached by truck in the dry season but, except in the immediate suburbs of the towns [39] most of the roads are simple unpaved tracks. Watercourses are crossed by ferries, submerged causeways, or temporary log bridges ... The road network is 80 times less dense than in France, for the rainy season causes annual havoc. Its maintenance is very burdensome. Bridges are rare, but there are some fine ones that must be mentioned: over the Bagolé, over the Baoulé, and over the Milo at Kankan. Roads are classified as: inter-colonial (linking territories of French West Africa -- one of these routes links Bamako to one of the three great trans-Saharan tracks which go towards North Africa), roads of general usefulness, and roads of local usefulness.

509 Finally, an air network tends to develop more and more. One line already plies between Dakar, Bamako, Boho-Dioulasso, Ouagadougou, Niamey, and Kamo. Another serves Dakar, Kayes, Bamako, Bobo-Dioulasso, and Abidjan. Other lines just recently created have not as yet definitely fixed routes. We will mention the lines: Dakar-Bamako-Ségou-Bobo-Dioulasso-Serkédougou-Abidjan; the line, Dakar-Ségou-Mopti-Gao; that of Dakar-Boké-Conakry-Kankan; and finally a line used chiefly to transport meats in dry periods, Dakar-Kayes-Nioro-Bamako. These interior lines make up a network of connecting lines for the distribution of passengers and cargo landed at Kakar by the long-range carriers.

596 and property. On the other hand, he also has duties toward
614 them, for it is the essence of the institution to support its
members.

All the acts of the fa, even the arbitrary ones, are,
561 according to law, under the control of the senate. It should
578 not be forgotten that the members of the community are di-
596 vided into two hostile groups: that of the "elders," which in-
614 cludes the fa, and that of the "young masters." The fa could
hardly [184] keep the common property all to himself, so he shares it more or less as he pleases, and naturally, the elders are among the most generously treated. The young men seldom get any such favors, hence their resentment against the elders, due largely to envy of their favored position.

596 It is customary for a fa when he becomes the head of a
614 patriarchy to leave the management of his own community to
his eldest son (1). This separation of interests is essential in order to prevent the fa from despoiling the patriarchy to benefit his own community. The history of these countries shows how often this rule is broken by ambitious men who hope to profit by the general confusion to build up a considerable fortune. Among both the elders and the young men they find willing accomplices, and as their power increases, they extend their extortions. There are many signs, however, of the fragility of their despotism, which they themselves recognize. They usually, therefore, take pains to settle the question of succession in advance hoping to avoid the collapse of their achievements. Wasted effort! Custom, which they have ignored, regains its rights when they die and often does so during their lifetime. This is a logical explanation of the fact that

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1. The eldest son, or better, the first-born son, thus occupies a privileged position, and in Kaarta he is usually provided with a white horse to make him conspicuous. See p. 122 about the death of 98 first-born sons mounted on white horses.

505 and Ansongo (1,400 kilometers), and between Bamako and
Kouroussa (374 kilometers); on the Bani from San up to Mopti on the
Niger. In addition, a very large number of native pirogues carrying
merchandise swarm on the navigable waterways. These waterways,
of strictly local value, remain impassable too long at a time to
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periods, Dakar-Kayes-Nioro-Bamako. These interior lines make up
a network of connecting lines for the distribution of passengers and
cargo landed at Kakar by the long-range carriers.

*173 we have just noted, would have formed an unbreakable bloc
614 if both elements had not been affected by the ferment of dissociation referred to in the course of this study.

The *to-da* derived the larger portion of its prosperity from
[487] the Niger. Communication and transport could most easily be maintained along this artery, and it was the need to make the greatest possible use of the river that brought about the organization of the Somono.

Etymologically, the word Somono simply means "fisher-
[101] man." Like any trade practiced exclusively, professional fish-
[564] ing involves a certain loss of standing, and that is why the Somono are said to be people of caste. This status is especially due to the supremacy of the clan over the Somono, without whom it could not have exploited the river.

614 After using force to annex them, Mamari added to their
564 number by assigning some of the *furu-ba dyon'* to the group, so
*173 that the Somono were soon closely dependent on the *furu-ba*. At the orders of the *fama* and his agents, they were required to
● [505] maintain ferry service across the river, to provide river transport in both directions, and to pay a fee in kind on their catch, with the understanding that they could continue to live according to the traditional Somono customs.

In return, the Somono were under the protection of the clan and their leaders benefitted from the generosity of the *fama*. They would occasionally be given a share of booty. [324]

Little by little, the few original Somono families were lost in the flood of newcomers. These included: the *furu-ba dyon'* who had become Somono on orders from the *fama*; people of diverse origins who had adopted Somono status of their own accord because they found it better than their own; and finally, the children of both, who were Somono by birth.

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[233] *to-da* that brought about a similar organization of the shepherds, or Peul. Let us first note that this term has no ethnic significance; it designates all who raise or watch over animals as a regular and professional occupation. Here, too, there is a kind of loss of standing, since a working shepherd could hardly do without a sponsor and must attach himself to a master. This is the case for

A great effort has been

654 made to improve the exploitation of livestock; in this regard [38]
232 one must mention the stock-raising experimental center of the Service Zootechnique, the Serotherapy Center and the Farm School of Sotuba, near Bamako; the sheepfolds at El Oualadji, Nioro, and Nara; and the stallion corrals at Nioro, Ouahigouya, Mopti, Bandiagara, Gao, Bamako, and Goundam.

III. Commerce

651 The Bambara region follows the commercial regulations of
441 French West Africa. It is, in particular, subject to the customs regulations put into force November 30, 1950 (Journal officiel A.O.F., No. 2507 [French West African Official Journal]), which include a tax on merchandise of whatever origin and a customs surtax on each product coming within the framework of the international conventions to which France has subscribed.

Customs receipts for 1950 were 131,000,000 francs for the whole of the Sudan. They reveal a rather mediocre commercial traffic, definitely inferior to that of Senegal for example (3,325,000,000 francs). This is partly due to the geographic situation of the country and to the state of the means of communication, and partly to the limited resources of the region.

A. External Commerce

a. Means of Communication

439 External commerce has three outlets: Dakar, Conakry, Abidjan. It is through these outposts that the Bambara world communicates with Europe and the United States. This is why the continental isolation of the country remains a formidable impediment to outside commerce.

505 The means of communication remain very mediocre across this country so inordinately spread out. Navigable waterways are irregular. Commercial navigation is possible as follows: on the Senegal from Saint-Louis to Kayes from July to October, and up to Podor during the rest of the year; on the Niger, by steamer during the flood period and by barge the rest of the year, between Koulikoro

505 amd Ansongo (1,400 kilometers), and between Bamako and Kouroussa (374 kilometers); on the Bani from San up to Mopti on the Niger. In addition, a very large number of native pirogues carrying merchandise swarm on the navigable waterways. These waterways, of strictly local value, remain impassable too long at a time to
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775 walking in the direction of Kita. They stopped in a village near this city and were lodged by a Malinke (2). On entering the courtyard, they stopped dumfounded, for they found sitting on a mat an elderly man whose features were familiar to them, -- wasn't he the old man of Fobougou? It was he, for he greeted them and asked them news of the old men of the village and of the members of his family. After supper they returned to the courtyard, wanting to sit near their old man, whom they had found again so far from his native land, but he was no longer there, and their host told them that he had fled, refusing to tell what direction he was taking.... "That was our old man," say the people of Fobougou with great conviction, for they believe in this as in the capture of Ségou. "Our young people saw him, talked with him, and some had known him before his death. Without doubt," they add, "he must have suffered in his family while he was alive, so he did not dare come back to life in our midst." This story, which I heard in Fobougou itself, is told more or less everywhere with a few variations; in September, 1908, between Ségou and Koulikoro on the Niger, one of the laptot (3) told it to his colleagues as they squatted around him in a circle.

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576 In Ouentja, a village an hour and a half or two hours at the most from the Bani, on the road between Ségou and Koutiala, the people have such great respect for one of their deceased former chiefs, the old sagi, that they avoid saying his name. They have even changed or rather abbreviated one of their greetings, and while almost everywhere else strangers are greeted with the words: "i dangha sagi," here they say to you only: "i danghana (4)." According to the /60/

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2. A Mandingo tribe whose group "taboo" is the Mali or Mani, the hippopotamus.

505 3. Negroes who serve as sailors on the river are called laptot.

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Kouroussa (374 kilometers); on the Bani from San up to Mopti on the
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Bambara FA8

/For a detailed study of the income and expenses of 4 Bambara families in the city of Thiès, Senegal (including percentage of income spent on and average consumption of particular foodstuffs) see 4: Mersadier, MS37 Senegal, Category 116./

4: Mersadier--13 U-5 (1954) 1955 MS37 Senegal MS37

Thiés
Wolof MS30
Serer FA32
Tukolor MS27
Fulani MS11
Soninke MS21
Bambara FA8

/397/

Table II

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No.	Ethnic Group	Occupation	Income	Expenses
1	Sarakolé	Laborer	5,800	5,839
2	Peul	Orderly	6,100	6,726
3	Wolof	Laborer	6,500	5,383
4	Sérère	Laborer	6,700	8,251
5	Toucouleur	Orderly D. N.	6,745	6,772
6	Wolof	Mattress-maker	7,000	7,471
7	Wolof	Laborer	7,000	7,231
8	Wolof	Orderly	7,410	7,234
9	Wolof	Baker	7,500	7,842
10	Wolof	Cultivator	8,150	8,133
11	Moor	Auxiliary D. N.	8,940	9,067
12	Peul	Laborer	9,000	8,952
13	Wolof	Laborer	9,800	9,981
14	Wolof	Cultivator	10,000	8,092
15	Bambara	Laborer	10,000	8,501
16	Bambara	Auxiliary	10,675	10,013
17	Moor	Auxiliary	10,800	10,892
18	Peul	Spec. laborer	11,000	9,816
19	Toucouleur	Accountant	11,950	10,860
20	Bambara	Auxiliary D. N.	12,000	13,557
21	Wolof	Clerk	13,000	13,799
22	Wolof	Auxiliary	14,000	14,405
23	Wolof	Cultivator	15,000	9,182
24	Wolof	Cultivator	15,000	13,809
25	Wolof	Auxiliary D. N.	15,630	13,801
26	Wolof	Employee P. T. T	15,800	10,238
27	Wolof	Shoemaker	16,200	10,600
28	Wolof	Worker D. N.	22,000	18,641
29	Toucouleur	Police sergeant	22,000	18,730
30	Wolof	Weigher D. N.	24,000	14,305
31	Wolof	Carpenter	25,000	21,571
32	Wolof	Cultivator	25,000	7,850

Thiès
Serer FA32
Wolof MS30
SONINKE MS21
BAMBARA FA8

/397 cont./

Table II (cont.)

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No.	Ethnic Group	Occupation	Income	Expenses
33	Sérère	Chauffeur	25,000	15,706
34	Wolof	Employee P. T. T.	25,900	14,715
35	Wolof	Staff employee D. N.	27,000	16,654
36	Wolof	Private accountant	34,000	19,829
37	Wolof	Truck-gardener	36,000	23,680
38	Wolof	Jeweler	50,000	27,397
39	Sarakolé	Teacher	51,000	21,240
40	Wolof	Staffworker D. N.	55,000	31,004
41	Sarakolé	Head employee D. N.	55,500	21,105
42	Bambara	Chief worker, C. D. N.	56,000	24,548
43	Wolof	Doctor	81,000	34,612

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/398 cont./

deficits of Nos. 24, 25, and 26, which are less significant. The slenderness of the deficit of No. 3 can be explained by the limited number of persons that the unit of consumption contains.

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in the care of one of the families having the smallest income.)

This deficit is, of course, theoretical. Not having followed these families closely for an entire year, we cannot pretend to present an exact balance-sheet of their budget. It is possible that our percentages would be reduced in the course of a year, or a longer period, either by a reduction in expenses (reduction of consumption, or reduction of the unit of consumption itself) or by the creation of another source of income. The fact remains, however, that they do exist and that they are important.

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It will be easy for us to show where they come from. It is almost impossible to explain rationally their persistence and their

4: Mersadier--17 U-5 (1954) 1955 MS37 Senegal MS37

Thies
SONINKE MS21
FULANI MS11
Wolof MS30
SERER FA32
TUKOLOR MS27
BAMBARA FA8

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Table III

No.	Ethnic Group	Occupation	Income	Monthly Surplus or Deficit	% in Relation to Income
1	Sarakolé	Laborer	5,800	- 1,555	26.8
2	Peul	Orderly	6,100	- 1,642	26.9
3	Wolof	Laborer	6,500	- 416	6.4
4	Sérère	Laborer	6,700	- 3,034	45.2
5	Toucouleur	Orderly D. N.	6,745	- 1,237	18.3
6	Wolof	Mattress-maker	7,000	- 1,471	21.0
7	Wolof	Laborer	7,000	- 2,231	31.8
8	Wolofo	Orderly	7,410	- 1,124	15.1
9	Wolof	Baker	7,500	- 2,967	39.5
10	Wolof	Cultivator	8,150	- 1,641	20.1
11	Moor	Auxiliary D. N.	8,940	- 2,168	29.2
12	Peul	Laborer	9,000	- 1,593	17.5
13	Wolof	Laborer	9,800	- 1,614	16.4
14	Wolof	Cultivator	10,000	- 1,354	13.5
15	Bambara	Laborer	10,000	- 1,621	16.2
16	Bambara	Auxiliary	10,675	- 2,206	20.6
17	Moor	Auxiliary	10,800	- 2,306	21.3
18	Peul	Spec. laborer	11,000	- 1,758	15.9
19	Toucouleur	Accountant	11,950	- 2,418	20.2
20	Bambara	Auxiliary D. N.	12,000	- 2,582	21.5
21	Wolof	Clerk	13,000	- 3,579	27.5
22	Wolof	Auxiliary	14,000	- 1,488	10.6
23	Wolof	Cultivator	15,000	+ 452	3.0
24	Wolof	Cultivator	15,000	- 426	2.5
25	Wolof	Auxiliary	15,630	- 837	5.3
26	Wolof	Employee P. T. T	15,800	- 529	3.3
27	Wolof	Shoemaker	16,200	+ 1,567	9.2
28	Wolof	Worker D. N.	22,000	+ 259	1.1
29	Toucouleur	Police sergeant	22,000	+ 286	1.3
30	Wolof	Weigher D. N.	24,000	+ 2,004	8.3
31	Wolof	Carpenter	25,000	+ 1.079	4.3

Thie's
Wolof MS30
Serer FA32
SONINKE MS21
BAMBARA FA8

/399/

Table III (cont.)

W
SR
So
B
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S
426
511*

No.	Ethnic Group	Occupation	Income	Monthly Surplus or Deficit	% in Relation to Income
32	Wolof	Cultivator	25,000	+ 1,442	5.7
33	Sérère	Chauffeur	25,000	+ 1,128	4.5
34	Wolof	Employee P.T.T.	25,900	+ 977	3.7
35	Wolof	Staff employee D.N.	27,000	+ 2,117	7.8
36	Wolof	Private accountant	34,000	+ 751	2.2
37	Wolof	Truck-gardener	36,000	+ 1,237	3.4
38	Wolof	Jeweler	50,000	+ 2,555	5.1
39	Sarakolé	Teacher	51,000	+12,894	25.2
40	Wolof	Staff worker	55,000	+ 2,494	4.5
41	Sarakolé	Head employee D.N.	55,500	+ 5,599	10.0
42	Bambara	Chief worker C.D.N.	56,000	+ 4,726	8.4
43	Wolof	Doctor	81,000	+ 847	1.0

S
*511 /400 cont./ of supporting a second wife in another city on an income that is not very high. Nos. 36 and 43 have a lower percentage of surplus, but here we were able to get quite precise information on the utilization of the /401/ surplus and were able to include these sums in the total expenses.

S
178 *262 [369] [264] It has become banal to state that the diet of Africans lacks variety. The food habits remain the most deep-rooted, and although one sees imported food products appear more and more among the African families of the cities, it is striking to verify that almost all are merely superimposed on the old ones. The food base, the meals at noon and in the evening, rarely evolves, no matter what the ethnic group, the income, or the

765 Malakou, salakou
Fari ô, fari doun ka di." (2)

2. A song heard in Bani country. Since these songs are often improvised, they differ from one region to another.

Translation: "Ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans (fari) and to eat all one's fill, ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans!"

The excised daughters and grandaughters of the deceased wear mourning for about eight to ten days. During this time they stay in the b'lon, or entry hut, and spin cotton. The only noteworthy fact
● [513 is that they all sleep in the same hut and attend to the wants of nature
514] at set times, going to the bush evening and morning in Indian file with white veils on their heads. For the whole moon following the
[292] death, the wife (the wives if the old man was polygamous) of the deceased wear sandals of goatskin and go out dressed only in white.

At the end of the moon, the wives of the deceased become the
768 property of the head of the family, who makes them his own or gives
562 them to his circumcised children (3). Some freedom is left to them,
428

3. Brothers succeed brothers. If there are no brothers, the oldest son inherits. If the deceased is younger than the brother who inherits, the latter possesses the wives but may not enjoy them. If the heir is the son of the deceased, all the father's or grandfather's wives belong to him, and he may enjoy them all except his mother.

for they can ransom themselves if they wish, and for the old and worn, difficulties are soon smoothed away. If the new family head is, without a brother and without children or if he is older than the deceased,

764 period is sometimes reduced to three days, but a week conforms more to custom, as is shown by the Ségou chronicle cited earlier.

All this takes place "at the door of the dead," at the blon'-da, as the natives call it, that is, at the very place where the elder was wont to sit and where offerings were made to the ancestors. It is believed that the soul of the departed is there and will be gratified amidst this abundance honoring him and testifying to his kindness and also to his power. In the minds of the Bambara these repasts of communion form a very strong bond among those who partake of them. The act of eating consecrated food together is a kind of sacrament which binds the participants to mutual aid. A traitor is doomed to be cursed by the manes.

Magic, of course, can free a person from these bonds and even enable him to profit from these funeral gatherings to further the most nefarious schemes, but that does not alter the concepts on which the dyansa and the sanga-fo are based.

765 783 [824] (d) Mourning. The purification of the hut of the deceased takes place on the eighth day. Women pulverize tree bark -- from the cailcedra (2) especially -- put it in water,

2. Khaya senegalensis.

and sprinkle this liquid about the hut which they then sweep.

They assemble with native brooms, sing, and do a kind of dance step; they collect the dirt and throw it away at a crossroads outside the village (3). The hut may then be reoccupied. [172]

3. Preferably at the main crossroads (da-n-kun'-ba-la).

765 514 During the eight days following the burial, the daughters of the fa live together in strict seclusion. They spend their days in the blon', where they spin cotton and take their meals. To take care of their natural needs, they go out only in a body;

765 twice a day, morning and evening, they go in procession, their
[514] heads covered with caps made of white cloth. They spend the nights together, in a single hut if possible.

[292] The wives of the deceased go out only when it is absolutely necessary during the first moon after the death; they are dressed in white and wear a kind of white hood on their heads and sandals made of goatskin on their feet. At the end
[783] of the moon, at night and separately, they go to a sort of purification rite that takes place at the crossroads outside the village.

Up to the fortieth day there is a very gradual return to ordinary life. Then, and only then, the successor to the deceased is finally recognized and installed, as is shown in the chronicle of Ségou.

801 In closing, let us note how every ritual sequence rests on periods of time whose real meaning must be sought in
805 magic. The astral religion of the Semites in fact taught that on the third, seventh, and fortieth day after death the moon acts more powerful to destroy the body (1). Apparently some such beliefs must account for the Bambara rites planned precisely according to these numbers. This seems all the more likely since the Sudanese commonly believe that the fortieth day marks the separation of the flesh from the bones of buried corpses.

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1. See the meeting of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres of August 9, 1918, paper by Franz Cumont, "La commémoration des morts et l'astrologie [The Commemoration of the Dead and Astrology]," Journal Officiel (1918), p. 7224.

881
304 among the Bambara, while the Marka
292 use cloth dyed indigo-blue.

a high cap with strings extending from the earlaps. They can only leave the place where they are assembled, even for the needs of nature, under the leadership of the sema-tye and shaking a stick of wood to which are attached bits of broken pottery. This rattle is called n-koso-m-bara.

881
304 They pass the time plaiting mats, gossiping, laughing, and pestering passers-by. On market days they are permitted to block the paths leading to the village and to collect a tithe from the traders.

The officials of the sects often visit them in their retreat.

Girls. The blacksmiths' wives who are to remove part of the clitoris await the girls outside the village under the trees. Some matrons assist them. Each child in turn runs up to the operator and squeezes herself between [244] the legs of the matron who exposes the clitoris. The excised clitoris is laid [789] in a little woven basket and is carefully preserved for making talismans.

The completion of the operation is announced in the same way as for the boys, and the Komo-tigi likewise puts the ashes from nyanka leaves on the familial kara.

The girl then rejoins her companions in the hut reserved for them in each section of the settlement. There they are under the surveillance of an old woman, the sema-moso, who knows how to take care of them and who sees to it that they behave properly. They are very well fed.

881
[514] Wrapped in skirts, they lean on canes of dried millet stalks when they walk and shake a gourd pierced with holes and filled with pebbles. They go out only for the needs of nature and then all in a body. They warn the passers-by by shaking their rattles and singing improvised songs. As they near paths outside the village, they intone a refrain.

Soli da woro (1). The seclusion of the soli-ma ceases

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1. Literally, "sixth day of the soli."

343 which are dried. Then it is reassembled without sealing the pieces
251 together, and as the level of the provisions goes down, the unnecessary sections are taken off. The kitchens are situated to the west of the rooms.

Arrangement of the huts in a concession. The chief's hut is
342 always to the east, for he must see the sun rise. His hut is often
361 quadrangular and has several rooms. The women's huts are generally round; each has its kitchen situated to the west and closed by a separate lock. Private shower rooms are reserved for husbands and
514 wives. Privy cabinets with two holes, one for urine and one for stool, are stopped up and condemned when they are full.

312 Finally, the well is sunk in the middle of the court or else in the immediate proximity of the concession. Water is drawn directly with a calabash fixed to a long rope.

Sometimes individual huts are constructed on piles for pro-
342 tection against mosquitoes at night; the only opening is a trap door in the floor by which the hut is entered.

g. Tombs

764 An old custom had the family heads buried in their huts. The Fama were buried in the courts of their fortified palaces, to the northwest. Babies were buried near their mothers' huts, for their return was awaited. At the present time the Bambara are buried in cemeteries following Moslem or animist custom.

767 [103] The brotherhood priests dig the graves; tombs may be individual or collective. Monteil (Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta]) describes a chief's tomb: the vault has the form of a parallelepiped; the lower base is one meter wide and two long, the upper base three wide and two long, and a vertical partition of 1.50 meters forms a right angle with the bases.

In Ouassoulou the custom was to dig a common tomb of several chambers for the whole family. A square entrance about two meters high and two wide led into a narrow corridor that opened on a first chamber reserved for children; another corridor connected the first chamber with a second, larger one reserved for women and for adult males; from this a third corridor led to a last chamber, a smaller one for heads of the family. An oil lamp was placed at the

776 day by the soli (those who are to be excised). It is a kind of semolina
782 (very fine couscous called basi) which is eaten with an /88/ extremely
304 spicy sauce of smoked fish. It is called basi k'li because, in order to
262 provide this repast, the little girls are obliged to run from door to door,
clapping their hands, singing and begging (k'li).

Among the invisible wanderers, there is one which is strongly
776 reminiscent of our "werewolf." It is the souroukou, an imaginary
825 hyena, whose supposed existence has brought about a strange practice.
● 514 Every evening one sees groups of little boys and groups of little girls,
turning aside a little into the bush: they all go in a band to take their
last precautions and attend to the wants of nature -- union is strength
even against the gnéna.

776 Many other gnéna are among this group that roams the village; they flutter in the b'lon, or entrance huts, they live in horrible filth, hung over doors, on the walls, and on the posts that support the terrace roofs, and the only hangings to be seen anywhere are eggshells, heads of millet, fruit pits, and seeds from the bush, which are offered to these friends as saraka. Nor are private huts without them, for the gnéna roll in the ashes of the hearth, snore on the mats, and take the air in the conari (1); there are some everywhere.

[415] 1. The conari is a baked earth receptacle used for water, beer, and cooking food.

Finally, there are gnéna or djiné who are powerful. Without mercy for their enemies, whom they abandon to all kinds of sorcery and evil spells, they are full of both attention and consideration for their friends. They can cause sickness, poverty, and other calamities to descend on a family, a village, or a whole region; but they can also side with them against a visible or invisible enemy; they can protect them, exorcise anything, and grant real blessings to each and all. The characteristic trait of the gnéna, in fact, is not that they can refrain from doing harm, but that they can also do good directly by performing a good act. Some choose to live in a rock, others prefer a knoll or a large tree near the village, and there are those who

881 run, as they have demonstrated under the karité tree), is the part of whole festival which is most reminiscent of a child, and of the function of the circumcision. It is the second birth, and just as the infant appears in public for the first time on the back of her mother, so she again enters the civil and religious life on the back of her mother or of the woman who takes her place.

The excised girls do very little in their huts, and like the boys, they yawn, sleep, and eat. However, they spin a little cotton and very often sing in a low voice while they practice gracefully shaking a gourd the size of a fist, pierced with little holes and filled with small pebbles. They lead a very easy life, and one might think they were happy, but a toothless old woman who is always grumbling watches over them. This is a great nuisance! It is impossible to move, impossible to wiggle a toe; one must have permission for everything, and it is never granted gracefully. The wants of nature [514 must be satisfied in a group and at stated hours. . . . When the girls go 293] through the village, they lean, in accordance with custom, on a millet stalk at the end of which is hung the perforated gourd in which little pebbles rattle. /182/

881 533 On the way out as they go into the bush, they sing to the gnâma to protect themselves from them:

Bo n'yé, gnâma, ô gnâma,
Go away from me, gnâma, ô gnâma,
Dankoun ba la,
Of the great corner of land (1),

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1. The corner of land formed by two paths that cross, the place where the gnâma dwell. /The slight discrepancy between the translations of the song given here and in Chapter 1, Section 3, is present in the original French. Ed./

585 their respects. It is chiefly the d'lo, or millet beer, that attracts
them, but under these circumstances the Bambara forget that they are
beggars always holding out their hands. Although the visitors eat,
drink, and get drunk, they pay for at least a part of what they consume.

585 Through the intermediary of the fouroubolomа tigi, each guest
431 and visitor, man or woman, gives the couple a fouroubolomа fara,
or wedding present, in kind or in money. They know, after all, that
this is a means -- and the best-- by which they can empty a jug of
d'lo, then a second, and finally several.

585 I know nothing more taxing than a Bambara wedding, which
lasts two, three days, and often eight, if the husband is rich or wants
to appear so. As long as the festivities last, the bride and groom are
in their respective huts, surrounded by people who are sweating from
having eaten or drunk too much, in an atmosphere warmed by foul
breaths, and where there is never any fresh air. They do not have
a minute, not an instant, of peace, and they cannot even attend to
[514] the wants of nature without being escorted by a numerous band. After
each meal there is in their courts a deafening noise of drums, horns,
and songs shouted by voices never in harmony, and their ears hear
nothing but these sentences, which must be a torture to them in the
long run: "May your marriage be happy, may hands and feet spring
from it (may you have many children), may God preserve your /212/
health, may He grant you a long and vigorous old age. Thank you,
thank you, you have received us well, you have not been sparing of
the d'lo, I am full (nzé dé fara -- or again -- né fara dérén) (1)."

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1. On the day of her wedding, a young woman talks only with the many women who have come to keep her company and with her maids of honor. When the time has come when she can talk, she is offered a hen.

765 *Malakou, salakou*
Fari ô, fari doun ka di." (2)

2. A song heard in Bani country. Since these songs are often improvised, they differ from one region to another.

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718 property of the head of the family, who makes them his own or gives
562 them to his circumcised children (3). Some freedom is left to them,
428
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3. Brothers succeed brothers. If there are no brothers, the oldest son inherits. If the deceased is younger than the brother who inherits, the latter possesses the wives but may not enjoy them. If the heir is the son of the deceased, all the father's or grandfather's wives belong to him, and he may enjoy them all except his mother.

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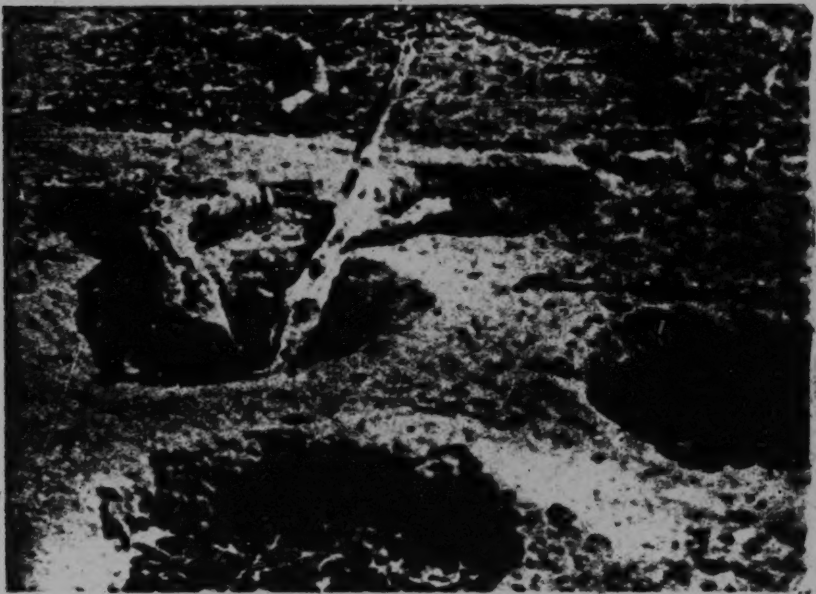
a) Hut of the Komo (Konodimini).

Plate VI

b) Holes for refuse (Banankoroni).

778
515



763 A gunshot today most likely signals the death of a hunter or the father of a hunter. In any case, however, there are always cries and vociferations by [165] the women, who are joined by their friends, relatives, and neighbors.

Horsemen ride off to notify any of the sons of the deceased who are away.

[567] Meanwhile, the chief of the slaves, the major-domo, the confidential agent, or a friend or neighbor of the deceased goes to inform the chief and the principal men in the village.

These personages come to the mortuary house at once,
764 spear in hand. After being received by the man temporarily
in charge of the house, they go to the deceased to discover his
identity and at the same time express their condolences to the
family represented by the person who received them; then they
withdraw.

In the mortuary hut silence descends while the women
prepare the body. They wash it with warm water usually
[824] scented with basil, *su-ko-la* (*Ocimum album* and *febrifugum*);
they dry it and wrap it in pieces of native white cotton mate-
rial or else dress it in its own garments, likewise white. A mat
[285] of coarse straw (*tyekala*, *kara*) is placed in the middle of the
room. A fine, flexible mat made of *iphène* leaves is put on
top of it, and the women lay out the corpse on the second mat.
Sometimes they place a grindstone on the abdomen to keep it
from swelling.

When these preparations are completed, the women,
[352 dressed in white native cloth, sit down in the native fashion on
516] tiny stools in the mortuary hut. Those who come in from out-
side give evidence of terrible grief: they cry out, they weep,
[152] they cover their heads with a bit of cloth and hurry toward the
mortuary hut. As soon as they enter, they become quiet and
stop weeping.

152 Among the Bambara grief is never silent; it is custom-
764 ary to show it overtly. As soon as there is a crowd, the singing
767 begins, in rhythm to the clapping of hands. One person or
another will be inspired to sing of the achievements and virtues
of the deceased. Professional weepers and mourners mingle
with the crowd, guiding and gradually encouraging the noisy
display.

794 796 At dusk on the day selected, the clergy proceeds with the greatest pomp to the Kore-tu (grove of the Kore). The orchestra, composed of drums (denu-ba), bells (kinge), and gourds (nkude), leads the procession. Then come the high priest (Kore-tigi) and the kara-ma, "people of the plank of the dead" (kara), which one of them carries. Finally comes the dense crowd, motley and noisy, of wara-u, Kor-dyuga, bisa-tyi-la, ta-tugu-la-n-tigi, and ngoni-sa-ma.

Everyone is performing his role. The masked men imitate the beasts they represent; the costumed Kor'dyuga act like clowns; the flagellants make their switches hiss. Thus the crowd approaches the Kore-tu amidst a great din, but only the clergy may enter it. The bearer of the kara takes his place under the sacred tree. On orders from the Kore-tigi, silence falls for the reception of the Kore-de postulants.

[516] The latter form a line facing the tree and the kara. They prostrate themselves in the dust for the duration of the sacred hymn of the Kore, which begins with the words, "Dyante Kore de-u." When they rise, they are dyante-ma-u, "affiliates."

The members thus admitted remain in the sacred grove for 15 days and are not allowed to return to the village. There they are instructed by the "elders." Then they are assigned to the different groups of wara; theoretically, an eldest son enters the group to which his father belongs, while the rest of the sons may choose whichever group they prefer. In addition to his duties during ceremonies, each wara has a certain job: the hyenas (suruku) guard and patrol the sacred grove and question the inquisitive to learn whether they are members (dyante ma); the Kore-duga see to the maintenance of the grove, clearing its environs in order to guard against the grove's being damaged by brush fires.

794 796 786 The offerings and the sacrifices, and then the communion repast, follow the ceremony of admission and are accompanied and followed by dancing and singing. The orgy then goes on for several days, as long as food remains. The various groups assemble for their dances, and the ta-tugu-la-n-tigi start the proceedings. With a flaming torch [283] in each hand, they chase each other, singe each other's backs and chests, and in the

845
776 peculiarity of this fetish that it continues to live in its hourglass as
778 long as a particle of this object remains.

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Young Bambara holding the sinsin, the fetish of twins

845 This fetish protects the mother of the twins, and unites the latter
778 in such close affection that one never receives a gift without sharing
431 it with the other. I would even go so far as to say that it is in good
taste never to offer anything to one without offering as much to the
other, and when they are given something, the first to be favored is
the last born, who is considered by everyone as the older.

776 Such a spirit is the exclusive property of one family, and even
621 bears its name, or diamou. Its sacrificer, called gnéna-n-sonnaba,
793 also bears the name of dougoutigi (1); he is, in fact, the real head of
the village. Although at present the civil and religious authorities
[554] are separate in many places, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or religious priest,
always holds precedence, and self-respecting people call him
dougoutigi (head of the village), giving the title of sotigi (2) to the
one who has only civil authority. Here we have further evidence
that the organization of the Bambara nation was, at its origin purely
religious. The separation of the two authorities in certain hamlets
can easily be understood.

631 Under the Bambara dynasty the kingdom of Ségou was divided into provinces, cantons, and villages. The king, Fama or Massa

[291
516]

Typical Bambara headman.

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1. Gnena, "fetish," "genie"; sonnaba, "great sacrificer"; dougou, "village"; tigi, "head," "master."

2. So, "hut," "house"; tigi, "head."

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52
1. It is easy to obtain a mask of the tji wara. Many colonials bring them back from the Sudan, but they are mistaken in speaking of it as a "Sudanese fetish." This mask and all the other masks, including the twins' doll, are not "fetishes" at all. They externalize for the Negroes their idea of the genie -- sétané -- which animates the object to which they sacrifice. /Placement of this footnote is editor's emendation, the original gives it on following page 153/.

During the sacred dance the Negroes, decked out in mask and cloak, are bent double and constantly in motion. From time to time they bellow [516] into a bull's horn. Since they cannot stand straight without failing in respect for the idol, they stretch out on the ground or crouch on all fours when they are tired and weary.

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782
At the time of the arrival of the bani-n-kono (storks), a little before the rainy season, a sacrifice of dogs, goats, and hens is offered to the Tji wara. This fetish is especially venerated by youths; they ask it for strength, health, and earnestness in work. Thus, when young people get together to cut shrubs and make a new field in the midst of the bush or to pull out weeds in the winter, a goat is sacrificed; and they work to the sound of the drum and the tji wara bellowing into his horn. Upon their return from the field, the workers are given millet beer; then the sacred dance begins in the public square /145/ and continues far into the night, to the great delight of the women and children.

778
The douga consists of a fairly large number of bulls' horns enclosed in a goatskin. It is hung in the entry hut, and it is there its altar is set; this altar is a square column of earth attached to one of the corners of the room. It often measures a meter in height; the

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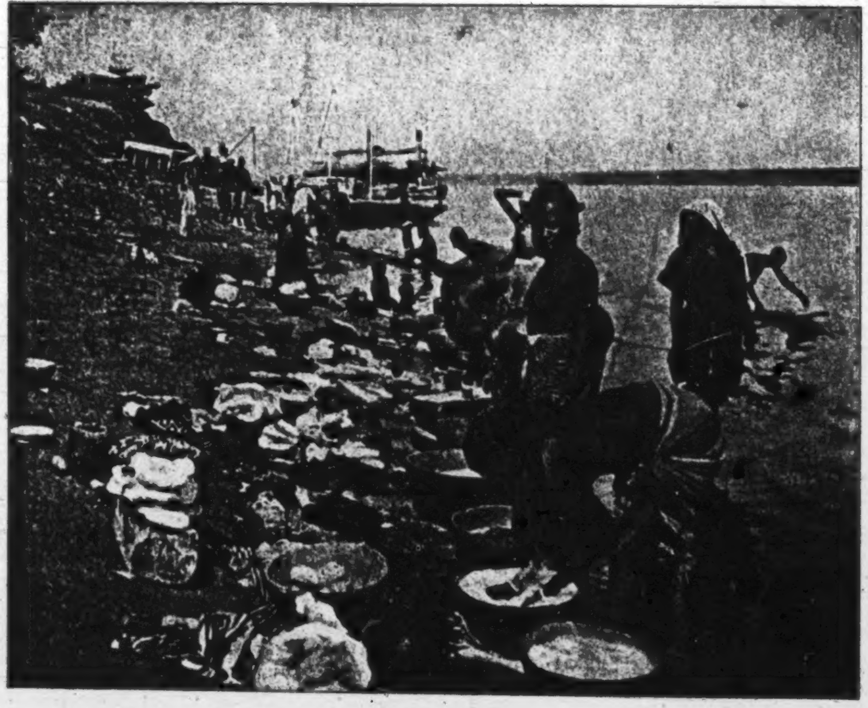
4: Henry--265 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



The Ségou bank of the Niger.

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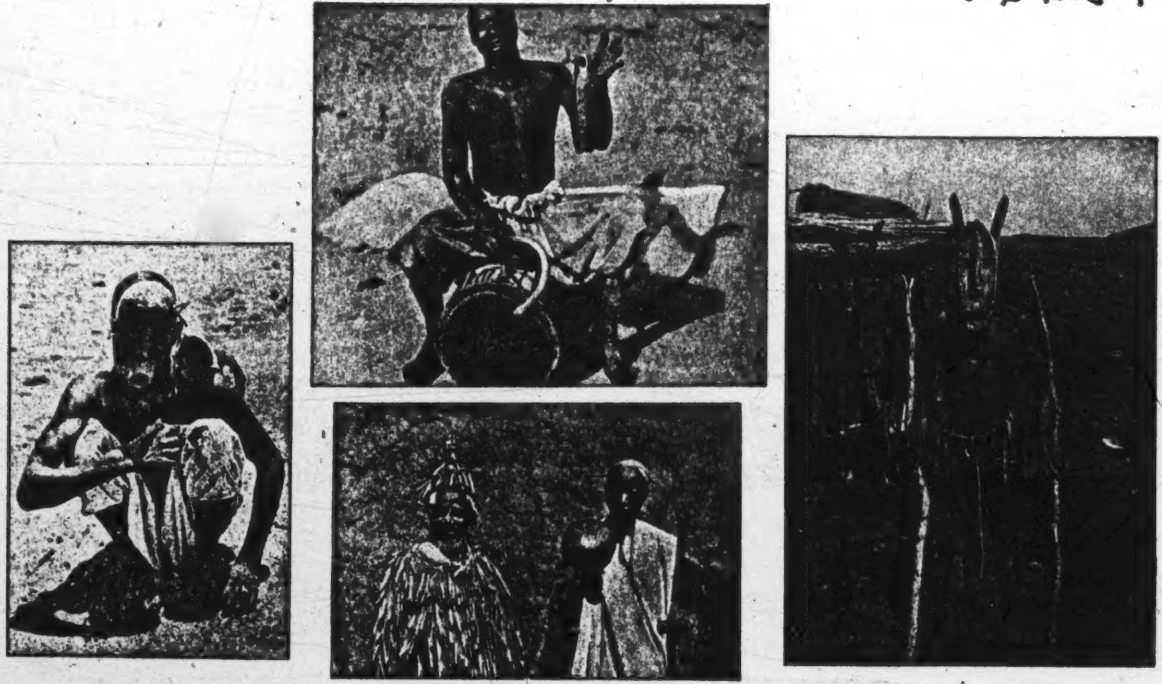
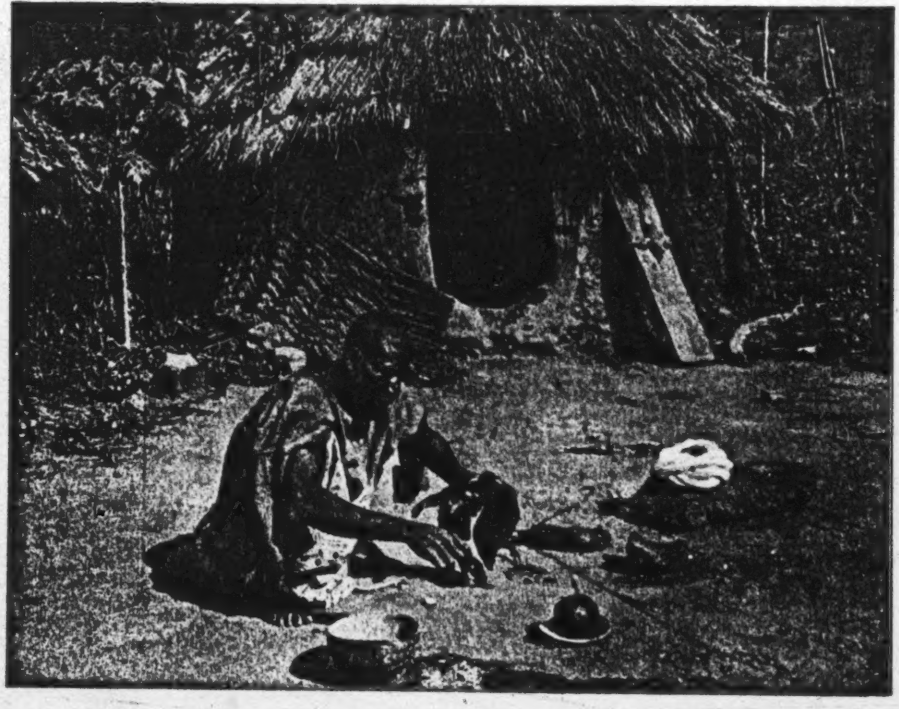
4: Henry--271 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Left: Souba (monkey), society of the Koré. Above: Denouba (the big drum) and kinge (a triangle), society of the Koré. Center: Head korodouga and his herald, society of the Koré. Right: Souroukou (hyena), society of the Koré.



Sacrifice of a hen to the "family boli."

4: Henry--272 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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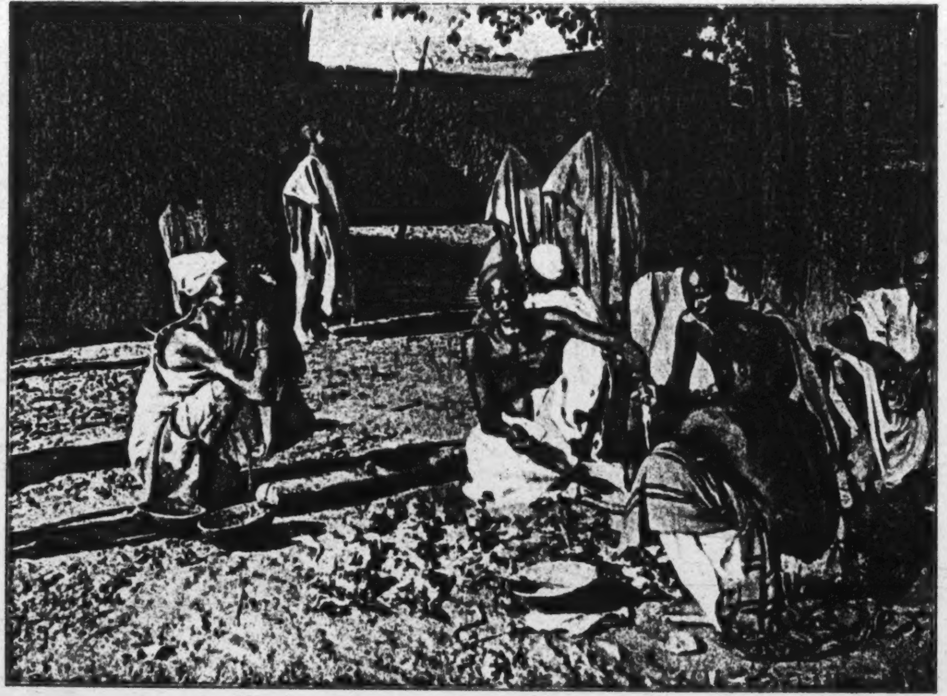
4: Henry--287 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



After the sacrifice: division of the sacred meats.

764 left of each chamber's entrance and was left to go out by itself. The body was placed in the middle of the chamber, the feet to the north and the head to the south. At the time of a new burial, all the long bones were gathered in one corner of the chamber and all the skulls in another, for the number of deceased was verified by these. Finally in the Kokum region hundreds of tumuli cover vaults consisting of a 346 heart-shaped chamber cut in the laterite and preceded by a vestibule to the west and by steps cut into the rock which lead to the open air. The outside and inside doors are closed by a slab of laterite. The outside door is hidden under the tumulus, with three equally-spaced stones marking the location. The skulls are arranged in a dome and separated from the long bones. Lastly, the tomb of the village's founding ancestor is found in the center of the village, to the north of the old fortified court of the chiefs' house.

III. Art

● 517 The Bambara conception of art is very different from the occidental idea of art for art's sake. Every object that we find beautiful has a precise social, religious, or technical significance for the Bambara: "The art of the Blacks is purposeful ... it is gratuitous projection in a material of ideas and knowledge which bring the user or spectator nothing other than themselves. Doubtless crude in the first stages, often the product of superficial knowledge or even of calculated errors, the esthetic sense of the Blacks is clarified and affirmed as they learn and as they pass from a 'light knowledge' to a knowledge of the great secrets. It seems impossible to an educated man that he could make an abstraction of his knowledge to judge a dance or to become enthusiastic over the playing of a clever harpist. What we call beauty is for the Black the adequacy of the object to represent that for which it is created." (1)

532 The masks conceal the person and transform the human being 769 into a supernatural being. They are the privileged instrument of the nyama, the first [104] model having been carved to fix the vital force of the first dead ancestor in a wooden figure. "The society of

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1. M. Griaule, "L'art nègre" [Negro Art], Présence africaine.

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522 Example:

Tiekoroba kolili (the old man who has nothing)
Ita rokina momindi (what you say is not liked)
Ida konieti aie (you are right)
N'ka idia dopina marmandi (but one doesn't like what you say)
Or again:
Demise fentili (the rich young man)
Ida dokma kakadi (one likes what you say)
Ida konie tinaïe (what you say is not true)
N'ka idia dokma makadi (but one likes what you say)

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794 The Kworéduga have the su (Moor) as taboo, and they accompany themselves in singing with a sacred gourd, yaraba, which contains seeds of Lufa cilindrica.

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●517 A certain evolution characterizes the native art which has been transformed in a curious fashion by contact with Europeans. In European centers, prolonged contact with the Whites has confused the beliefs that inspired the art, but the artists have lost neither their taste nor their gifts. At the request of the Whites themselves, they have undertaken a controlled art, with the aim of pleasing the Europeans. Needless to say, even if it conserves some charm in its form, all this new art, which evolves with the same swift rhythm as our modes, remains terribly dead, for the true source of inspiration has dried up. This art no longer seeks to be true, but to be pretty; by this it signs its own death warrant.

[109]

CONCLUSION

I. Traditional Interpretation of Mental Characteristics

181

In the introduction to Religion Bambara, Tauxier insists on the mental characteristics: "The Bambara has remained rather openly fetishist"; he possesses "two dominant traits, which are absolutely undisputed and indisputable:

"1. He is a very good farmer.

181 that she is a girl, that one day she will be a man's plaything, an
831 object for his pleasure. The child would leave smiling and replace
her three fingers of rag even as she walked away. At dinner time a
[482] big girl would come carrying the gourd of tô, or sorghum gruel, on
her head, and on the palm of her right hand, at shoulder height, the
platter of dried fish sauce. She would be greeted from as far away
as she could be seen and asked for a report on her whole body, and
indeed there would be no stopping at "how are your feet" nor even at
"how are your breasts." And the girl would answer all these vile questions
without getting excited, and when a well-washed hand, ready to
be used as a spoon, embraced her or lifted her breasts, she was not
shocked; only the opposite would surprise her.

887 Here and there in the village a giant tree stretches its branches
538 afar, and the old men, lovers of endless palaver, enjoy themselves
● 521 under its shade. They go there from the early morning to weave cloth,
make mats, tan hides, scour goats' horns intended for powerful
amulets, etc., and often even /159/ just for the purpose of spending
the hours dozing. And in the midst of all these gray, or at least
graying, beards, swarms a world of children. Among the old men
there are good storytellers /conteur/, who excel in stories of hunting
and war that throb with interest -- but why, alas, must they always
graft on some salacious incident? Their mouths are full chiefly with
[831] stories of adultery and fornication. They will not spare you a single
detail, and they will readily go back to the very beginning so as to
lack no precision whatever. And the moral of these stories can be
reduced to this: "There is nothing in this world comparable to the
pleasures of the flesh; let us enjoy marriage and never pass up a chance
to obtain this satisfaction."

524 If the old men are this lewd, is it surprising to hear the young
831 men describe the ugliness of their bestial evenings while they make
864 mats, stretch the hides of drums, or sew a blouse, a cap, or trousers
for themselves in the b'lon, or entry hut? They talk constantly of their
soungourou, and this term, which should simply mean an unmarried
girl, means any woman, married or not, who gives herself to the
first comer.

Without any shame they talk and chat about all these vile acts before their little brothers, before children ten and twelve years old,

521 831 864 and before little girls, and it is not unusual to see a big girl leaning against the door of the hut with ears wide open so as not to miss a word, and finding cause to burst into gales of laughter. Are all these people capable of being shocked? I doubt it, even as far as the young girls are concerned, for all or almost all of them have their favorite nooks in the bush. Moreover, they can tell each other vulgar stories, and one should hear them as they clean and spin cotton, or when in the evening, shut in a communal hut (1), they play, laugh, and chatter before going to sleep. Could it be otherwise? Since all the men have soungourou, they know that their fathers and brothers each have one, and they are not unaware that their mothers see no /160/ wrong in giving themselves to their men friends. The great crime is allowing oneself to be caught.

521 831 You may think I exaggerate, yet when two women, each with a nursing infant in her arms, are crouched in the court by their pots in which tô (gruel) is simmering, it is very unusual for them not to be gossiping about the marital infidelities of their neighbors and sometimes even their own. I am saying nothing about the old women with turned-up chins and toothless jaws; they are experienced midwives and talk mainly about abortions.

They are all the same, and more than one mother has made me blush as she gave the breast to her last born and smiled sweetly at the rest of the brood frolicking near her. In wishing health and prosperity to a child that a woman is nursing, one sometimes makes a mistake about its sex, and without respect for one's ears nor pity for

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[591 882] 1. In the evening all young girls are shut in a communal hut or dormitory under the supervision of an old woman. The woman's duty is to prevent young men from coming in and to see that the girls do not go out and seek a boy friend's hospitality. There is a dormitory in each quarter.

521 one's eyes, the answer is almost always: "A flé bani, mousoni do, ne
831 na d'ima, ka ké i soungourou yé. But look here, this is a girl; I
will give her to you, she will be your soungourou."

521 And all this carelessness from the moral standpoint should not
831 surprise us in a country where a crowd of young men greet each other
576 even in the presence of their mothers: "I sounna ko? About the affair
836 of your sleep? And your lovemaking at night?" "I soungourou ka
kendé? How is your soungourou?"

And where young girls do not blush to say to young men: "Do me the favor that I am asking you."

"Ne na ko doumani fo i ye.

I will tell you of a sweet affair (or: conversation, shameful embraces).

"Né na ne ko doumani d'i ma.

I will give you my sweet affair (or: I give myself to you).

In short, every Bambara who awards himself the prize of virtue, avoids saying that he has respected foreign women and girls temporarily under his roof. The statement would be received with a shrug of the shoulders and a smile. He merely says: "I have respected the women and girls of the village," and he does not shout this very loud nor before everybody.

2. Concerning Adultery and Fornication

684 Adultery is a crime in the eyes of every Negro, and the guilty one caught in the act is brought before the council of elders and severely punished. I must state, however, that although adultery seems a serious offence to all, the crime does not lie in the satisfaction obtained. There has been a lack of fairness, the rights of a third party have been violated, and in this lies all the wrongdoing.

Caught in the act, red handed, the guilty party makes a friendly deal with the husband, who rarely asks him for more than 16,000 cowrie shells (from 15 to 20 francs) and the material for a sacrifice to the family boli, comprising perhaps two hens, a goat, two kola nuts, and between 5 to 800 cowrie shells for the sacrificer's bonus.

326 778 796 In addition, each year the blacksmiths join together and offer a sacrifice on the communal anvil. All tools are placed around it, overflowed with the blood of the victims.

An annual ceremony which also brings the craftsmen together has the purpose of asking Faro to help in the cooling of the wrought iron and to give the water into which the iron is dipped the strength to fulfill its function. Assembled before the *kotigi*'s forge, they bring a certain number of tomatoes which are first presented to the altar, then to the ancestral axe *farakum* on which each one in turn licks with his tongue.

Keeping their mouths closed so as not to let the strength thus gathered escape, they all walk toward the river, while one of the
[534 participants strikes up, on the ritual bell (*nege dẽ*) with a lump of
533] (*nege dyun*), the rhythm called *klide fo* (literally, rhythm of the sons of the testicles) (1) addressed to the one-arm blacksmith, the *bolokuruni*, Faro's companion. Once on the bank, the *kotigi* undresses and throws himself into the water. When re reappears on the surface, all the participants open their hands the better to seize the strength of Faro and his companion, which the man is supposed to bring back. They rush to help him dress and the one who succeeds in touching him believes he receives Faro's special favors.

The tomatoes are then squashed into a gourd and the pulp is thrown into the river at a deep spot where each participant draws water and drinks to communicate with Faro. The group then returns, bringing back in the gourd a little water into which each one dips his individual axe, starting with the patriarch who, at the end of the ceremony, drinks up the rest.

326 778 842 If a woman is sterile, she asks the help of the three spirits protecting the forge as they have the reputation of being very prolific. Without her presence, the blacksmith crouches before the altar with his hands spread out, his head lowered, and prays. The woman must then swear to respect scrupulously the taboo of the invoked spirits, which is to pronounce their name. She may also ask the blacksmith to implore the help of the ritual ashes of the altar.

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[522] 1. *Kli dẽ*, "son of the testicle," is one of the ritual jokes addressed to the blacksmiths by their *senãnku*.

794 785 uncomplainingly the burns inflicted upon them with a torch and they whip themselves vigorously. The chief next teaches them the role of the Kworè spirits, the rituals celebrating them, and the symbolic value of the objects of the cult.

794 ●522 Some of the members are designated to take the role of kworȩ duga during the ceremonies. Masked and waving freshly cut branches in each hand, they mount a wooden horse, the kworȩduga so (1). Thus

[532 -778]

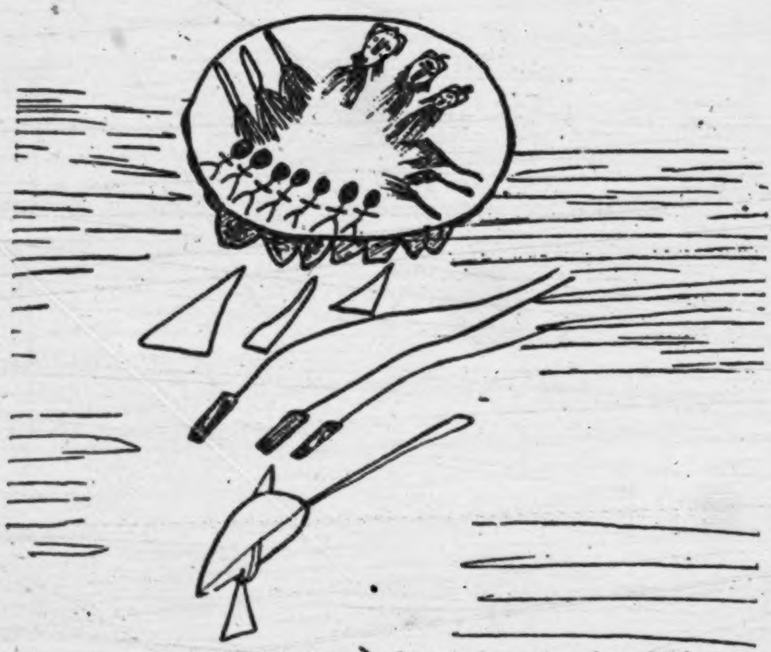

Fig. 13 —Stone altar of the Kworè of Banankoroni under which are buried three neolithic axes, three whips, the ritual iron axe, kongobwona. The drawing, made in the course of the annual ceremony, represents the first three of the eight ancestors who received the word, the members of the society, and the Kworè whips; the black spot is the "womb of Faro." (Drawing by an informant)

1. The kworȩ duga (literally, vulture of the Kworè), also called togoro koya, "jesters," are as their name indicates, jesters who have the right to joke about

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the most sacred things; their social position is comparable to that of the griot. In former times they were the first to sacrifice to the boli.

equipped, they represent the spirits of the kworɛ, mounted on their winged horses to attack the sky. One of them wears a mask, the kworɛ ku, to represent the ancestor of the group (1).

1. The materials, wooden horses, and masks are blackened by fire and saturated with karite oil.

794 Close bonds unite the Komo and the Kworɛ̀. Their cults complement each other and an individual wealthy enough to meet the necessary expenses may belong to the two societies. In fact, one of the Komo's roles is to watch /170/ over the progress of the cultivations: its altars watch over the soul and the vital force of the crop seeds. The harvest, however, depends on rain and thus comes under the jurisdiction of the altars of the Kworɛ̀. The complementary activity of the two societies is certainly felt by the users who declare that "the ño boli of the Komo and the Kworɛ̀ are united in action."

Some authors have raised the question of the Kworɛ̀'s greater antiquity, when compared to that of the Komo, on the basis of the "Priapic" aspect of the former's ceremonies (2). Since the real purposes of the institution have almost completely escaped these observers, it was not possible for them to penetrate the meaning of these rituals. It is at the foot of the tree of the Kworɛ̀ that men call upon the skies where Faro reigns; they pray to the koblenkaba in case of war, the sunãnkaba in case of epidemics, etc. The annual ceremony is a representation of the action of the invisible powers to obtain the rain necessary to men. The burns and the blows which the members inflict upon themselves, as well as the galloping of the kworɛduga, symbolize the celestial struggles of the spirits among the unleashed elements.

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2. See L. Tauxier. La Religion bambara, p. 311.

533 of black, red, and yellow fibers, clothes of plaited fibers, and the
292 musicians wear a cuirass made of *fana* seeds (a sort of bean). The bass player wears a band in the back which reaches to his heels and describes a circle when the musician whirls in going from north to south and from east to west to give the cadence. The other musicians form a circle which the dancers and singers do not enter. Another *djo* is the *So*, where the musicians and the singers wear masks of wooden horses, except for two clowns who represent the masculine element in the midst of the crowd of young girls. Lastly, the third *djo* is the *djõ buru* (*buru*, "trumpet"). This is the *djo* of the slaves; they play the ivory horn and are clothed like the *N'ganian*, but the bass player represents a cow, and the others are the heifers who respond to the cadence indicated to them by their mother.

E. Literature

538 Bambara literature, entirely oral, is extremely rich. It is the monopoly of the *griot* who from their earliest days learn the stories, the proverbs, the mottoes associated with each [108] family. They recite very long and very numerous epic songs concerning each great family, accompanying themselves on the harp. Certain parts are recited, others are sung in chorus by the *griot* and his wife. These stories are at the same time historical narratives of heroes' exploits and the mythical history of a demiurge symbolized by the hero. An infinitely small part of these epic songs has been collected. Some Bambara proverbs and stories have been collected by Moussa Traoré in particular.

545 It is interesting to mention another literary production, one
794 in which the creative inspiration of the artist plays a greater part:
● 522 these are the narratives of the members of the *Kworé* brotherhood.
The *Kworéduga* are clowns, or rather *commedia dell'arte* players. One is a *Kworéduga* by hereditary transmission or by natural bent. During his initiation in the bush, where he submits to ritual harsh treatment, the initiate learns never to lose his temper, no matter what the circumstances. He is taught a comic language, witty sayings. He is trained to observe men's character closely and to recite stanzas and couplets giving his observations.

545 Example:
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[109] CONCLUSION

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"1. He is a very good farmer.

852 794 Every time one of the three principal members of the staff, wants to dance, respects are paid to them or to their leader, and all day and all night nothing is heard but frightful "you you" and atrocious cries. There is a protocol for everyone to follow, and before each to-n-dé begins to prance in front of the drums, he goes and bows to his leader to show his devotion and respect for him. He holds himself like a spring, brandishes the gun, ax, or stick that he will use in the dance, and in one jump strikes his feet together under the nose of the one to whom he is paying his respects. The women are quieter and show their respect by a genuflection before the master.

In addition to his staff the master of a n'golo, the to-n-tigi, has pages, a standard bearer, trumpeters, and soldiers, and to vary the program he goes here and there with his frenzied band to greet an elder and give him a serenade. In some villages custom decrees that the youths put on the best they have in the way of clothing; in others, on the contrary, they must get themselves up in horrible, dirty rags so that, on seeing them thus clad, one asks where they could have dug up all these horrors. They must amuse themselves and be [525] amused, laugh and cause laughter, and this last aim is always accomplished as they have such priceless mimics. /114/

The Mouso ka djiri, the Women's Special

776 796 831 It is impossible to know all the genii responsible for watching over women, for they are legion. Every month, at the new moon, the women organize a dance in their honor, and every year they make a public, solemn sacrifice to them. The most widespread is the mouso ka djiri, and its worship flourishes especially in Bani country.

When its festival comes, all the excised women offer it a little /millet/ flour mixed with water, a hen, and two kola nuts, and the head of the village, or, in his absence, an elder, goes and reddens the bark of the fetish tree (1). There is no need for me to go into

[782] 1. Some people assert that they have seen women sacrificing. I have seen women perform saraka involving bloodshed, but never a sacrifice.

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1. Drums over a meter long and peculiar to the koré.

2. A kind of triangle which is hung on the thumb of the left hand and is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger.

[778] the kârâ"), one of whom carries the kârâ, the perforated board which is the emblem of the fetish and at the same time the altar on which sacrifice is made to deceased members. First come the souroukou (hyenas) who guard the sacred grove and during the sacrifices drive away prying, uninitiated people; they wear crude masks, roll their big heads right and left, and utter frightful "hou hous." The [522] korodouga (clowns), who rake the paths in the sacred grove as well as its environs to protect it from brush fires, run from one to another shouting obscenities. Furiously they shake their gourds, which have handles and are perforated and filled with small stones, and furiously they blow into pipes made of pumpkin stems. The leader of this [292] band is dressed up in a cloak made of reed stems, he also wears a reed headdress which is topped by a pyramid of large red beans called n'go blé and decorated with a plume; in his hands he holds the emblem of the group, a long pole on which are hung dirty bags, sorghum stems 10 to 20 centimeters long bound into bundles, pumpkin stems, /123/ skulls of rats, beaks of ducks and hawks, panther claws, etc.

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Apart from the long string of red beans which all korodougo are required to wear which they twine around their necks several times or sling over the shoulder, crossing and recrossing it on the back and chest, each one dresses according to his own inspiration. The hats are made of bunches of feathers, wings of vultures and ducks, and even entire birds, and around them to decorate them further are red beans, rat skulls, birds beaks, claws, and small bones; all these objects fall on the neck and shoulders and knock together with a sinister sound. Next to men in full breeches are men in rags or men with close-fitting trousers made of innumerable pieces all in different

794 colors, one leg of which goes down to the ankle while the other does
796 not even reach the knee. Some brandish wooden swords, and others
292 ride astride on a bamboo, a reed, or a sorghum stalk, rearing and
● 522 kicking, and there is not one who does not act the clown.

794 The bisatjila (flagellants) make their flexible whips whistle in
the air; shortly thereafter these whips rain blows onto their backs; the
796 [185] ta tougoula (fire lighters, incendiaries) seem impatient to shower
their bare backs with sparks. The djara (lions) or sogo (beasts, animals) with masks even larger than those of the souroukou (hyenas) growl around the n'goni sama (1), also called wara (fearless wild animals).

The soula run from one group to another, slip between legs, and never stay still; they are seen everywhere, sometimes standing, sometimes with hands on the ground on all fours, or again sitting down, breaking bundles of grass or bits of wood between their hands and throwing them with shrill cries at the heads of their companions. And at the end of the procession come the old men, weighed down by the years and no longer of an age for all this fancy dress. They drag or carry the victims intended for the sacrifices.

In the grove around the sacred tree, there is a deafening noise of drums, triangles, reed pipes, and many voices /124/ that shout all together without ever harmonizing. At a sign from the leader, the kârâ bearer goes and stands before the fetish tree, and everything becomes calm and quiet. The youths who have been waiting for seven years to be initiated advance in a line, fall on their knees before the fetish and its emblem, and then prostrate themselves with foreheads in the dust. They remain in this position as long as the sacred hymn
lasts. On rising, they say: "Djanté koré déou djanté (djanté children
[535 of the djanté koré), djanté ma (man of the djanté)." and each dances
831] the dance of the group to which he belongs. These dances are indecent
and always conclude with an obscene gesture.

The oldest sons belong to the groups of their fathers; as to the others, they choose the group they like best. Thenceforth they are

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1. N'goni, "thorns"; sama, "to kill for oneself."

794 thousands of sparks rain onto their heads and bare bodies, and smoke
796 and sizzle on their skins before going out. The korodouga, armed with
785 leafy branches, chase the sparks. They devote themselves chiefly to their obscene songs; their minds on the perforated gourds which they shake furiously, and more than one dancer feels himself getting roasted. And when the torches are almost burned out the tatougoula squat before the big drum and for the last time shake the handful of
[522] burning straw that they have left. An obscene gesture provokes a
● stifled laugh here and there, a "hou hou" from the souroukou, a roar from the djara, a chuckle from the soula, and cries of encouragement from around the gourds: "O do, that's it!"

While the djara /lions/ or sogo /beasts/, /wearing/ huge masks roar around the groups of drinkers, the ng'oni sama or wara tear their chests and their armpits with brushes of thorns, and the soula, grimacing and weeping, throw the group of women into confusion and put the children to flight. As to the bisatjila, they circle like lions in a cage, uttering wild animal cries and trying to excite themselves. Suddenly, as if seized by fury, they brandish their long, flexible whips. These whirl for a moment above their heads, whistle in the air, and then slap the flesh. The men strike hard; each blow leaves its mark or furrow, and /126/ blood often flows. They pale and tremble in all their limbs under the pain, but in spite of everything they strike and strike, for the instrument of torture must be worn to shreds and fly to pieces. At every blow of the whip the korodouga band throw themselves onto the victim and massage and rub him, and the souroukou lose themselves in indecent behavior in front of the great drum.

794 In addition to the sacrifice offered every seven years, there are
796 annual sacrifices to the koré, to the shades of its priests, the korétigi,
782 and finally to the shades of its initiates, the korédé. There is always
764 a sacrifice at the death of an initiate; the groups dance the sacred dance, and for three nights there is the shouting and the indescribable bedlam in the koré tou ("grove of the koré") of which I have told.

794 If the deceased initiate was an old man, a graybeard, he has
764 completed his whole career and his fellow-members come in great numbers to pay him their respects. Before the corpse, which is laid out under the trees which shade the entrance of the village, they

The Future Waters

173 The order of the universe prevails in space and time: the present order of things is but one phase thereof. When the "first running waters" covered the ground, Faro permitted only the primordial water to spread out; twelve waters remained hidden and they will rush forth and submerge the earth when he gives the order. The words they contain will be revealed and the "world to come" as thought out by yo will be realized.

Meanwhile, in the expectation of these "future waters," men must provide themselves with objects that will save them; the Bozo and some Bambara have canoes, shepherds have their gourds, spinners their spindles, and women their wooden stools (1). The coming /31/ of the waters is represented by a drawing on these objects as well as on a number of other everyday tools (Fig. 3).

173 524 This drawing serves as the framework for a game, the sumangolo, which the Bambara of all ages and both sexes play in order to "contribute to the progress of the world."

This game bears the name of the ancestor Soumangolo who traveled throughout the universe to find out and reveal to men "the

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[192] 1. It is significant that kuru (canoe), kuruni (spindle), and kuruni (stool) come from the same root. The word kuru designates the original globule in which Pemba descended, and which later became the wood pembele in the shape of a trough; it also designates the case or ark used by the mythical blacksmith, bearer of the nutritive seeds. See p. 53, n. 1. [171] The word kuru should be compared to koro which, in the Dogon language, has the general meaning of case, box, wooden receptacle, trough, and canoe, and which also designates, among these people, the vessel in which the blacksmith descended. See M. Griaule. L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes, p. 117, n. 3.

773 524 location and disposition of the waters" (dyi walew and dyi kono few). During his voyage, "he was unable to reach the central springs of the sky, " and that is why they have remained unknown to men. /32/ But he visited "the waters of the cardinal angles" from which there emanates a vapor that determines the seasons and the temperatures. Then he studied "the waters of the cardinal sides" and asked Faro to let them

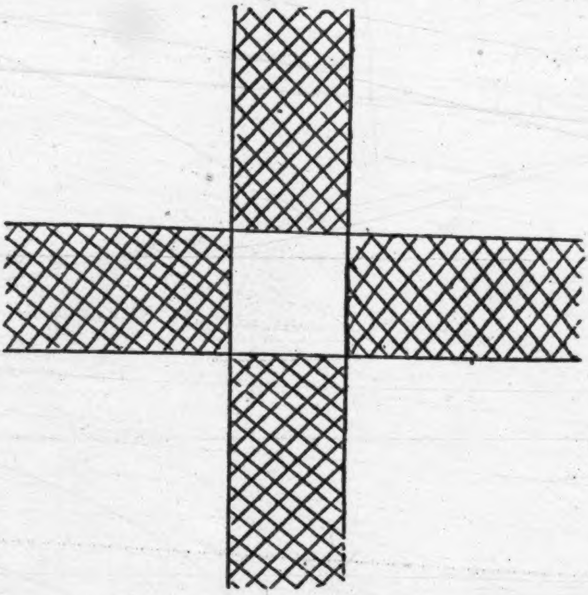

Fig. 3.—The arrival of the "twelve future waters." The central square represents the world and its four cardinal points, the arms of the cross, and the expansion of the waters. This drawing is made on a great number of objects and tools.

stream over the earth. He crossed them in order to explore them and instruct men about them. It is said: "Soumangolo of creation has shown to people and things the ponds, rivers and old ponds" (1).

1. Dali sumangolo ye ko, ba, ko koro kono ko dyira ma ni few la.

773 The game consists in the player crossing the three waters that come
524 from each of the cardinal sides. (1) The drawing represents /33/

1. See Fig. 4. This figure is drawn on the ground: the central square represents the universe and the branches of the cross are the waters emanating from the cardinal sides and divided within each group into three parts.

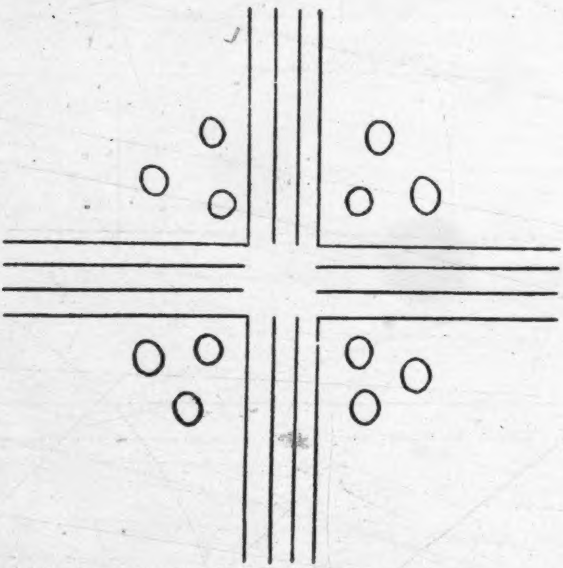

Fig. 4.—Game of the *sumangolo*, symbolizing the "arrival of the twelve future waters."

Three or four pebbles, depending on the sex of the player, are placed in the angles.

The player turns his back on the drawing and sings: "The little man has left the dance; the little man, the bad man has left the dance; another has not danced; may the difficulty of the water cease (*tyeni bwora do la; tyeni, tyendyugu bwora do la; tye were te do ke nin kelenko; dyi geleya ka ta*). He then names the three parts of water in the branch of the cross, while his partner

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points them out successively with his finger, saying: "cross the pond" (ko tike sumangolo), "cross the river" (ba tike sumangolo), "Soumangolo's descent is over" (sumangolo yigi bana). The partner removes the pebble immediately adjacent to the branch pointed to and asks: "Is this it?" (nin wa?). The player must answer: "Yes! Soumangolo." The game is again taken up in the same way at the starting point. When the onlooker places his finger on the now empty space, he asks: "Is this it?". The player must answer: "No! Soumangolo." The second pebble is removed and, to the same question, the player must then answer: "Yes! Soumangolo." Then follows the same chant, the same mimicry to get at the third pebble, which is also removed. The game is started over again in the same way, at the same starting point, and the second branch of the cross is reached. This continues until the four groups of pebbles placed in the angles are eliminated. The player who has answered without making a mistake is the winner; supposedly he has victoriously crossed "the twelve future waters."

The immediate effect of this game is to place the winner in a favorable position: his earnings increase; his enterprises succeed. But this is not all: it represents a cosmogonic operation of a high order. In the old days, sumangolo was [789] played to bring about rain in times of drought; every person playing it today contributes to the actual functioning of the universe as well as to the realization of future times awaited by men. [796] In certain villages the ancestor Soumangolo is celebrated yearly by a hearty feast at which millet beer is drunk and all day long the villagers play the game bearing his name.

The sumangolo is part of a series of figures, sometimes geometrical, which serve as the base for cosmogonic games of semi-ritual character such as the one described above.

773 [534] both the waters that flowed over the earth in the past and those that will spread over the world when Faro orders them (Fig. 4).

While awaiting that day, Faro continues his work. Taking the spiral route originally followed at the time of the reorganization of the world, every four centuries he travels about, inspecting the confines of the world, and then returns to the central point whence he surveys and governs the universe.

Chapter 2

The Representations

776 /34/ The duality of glã, in the microcosm that is man by his twin souls (ni and dya), is projected into the universe in the form of the pair, sky-earth, originally formed by the splitting of the spirit in two. The pair is represented by two supernatural powers, Faro and Pemba, to whom the principal Bambara cults are addressed.

Pemba is both spirit, strength, and matter. He is actually represented by an engraved piece of wood, symbol of plank originally responsible for the creation of all living things on earth. Theoretically, each family has one.

Faro, master of the word, reigns both in the sky and in the waters, which are the earthly reflection of the sky. In his capacity as master of the word and reorganizer of the universe, custodian of life, and guardian of souls, Faro, light and vibration, reigns in the seventh heaven. As master of the waters, he is described by the Bambara as a living being who has a body and is subject to metamorphosis. Yet to the initiated, he remains first and foremost a higher spirit, detached from contingencies and free in the exercise of the sovereign power conferred on him.

In order to understand fully the spirit of the Bambara religion, it is necessary to examine all the representations of these powers (1).

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776 114 1. A few authors have summarily described Faro, in particular, L. Tauxier in Religion bambara (pp. 142-145), in

794 instruction and initiation. Five years are thus necessary to reach the
highest rank. Each promotion is paid for by the individual providing
[782] two roosters whose throats are cut upon the altars at the end of the
annual ceremony which takes place in the bush under a tree called the
kalabana, following communally performed labor. After meal, a
[526] fight called bari, organized under the direction of the chiefs, puts the
young boys in opposite groups and gives them the opportunity to show
their courage and their initiative.

794 The members' activity consists of collective work at the time of
476 the cultivation. The millet and the gifts in kind received in payment
for the work are owned communally.

A. Material Objects of the Cult.

794 The society is the owner of ritual objects such as a mask and whips
778 which are usually placed in a hut, ndomo buku, at some distance
534 from the village.

The objects, numbering five, are rudimentary musical instruments. The wara, the clawed one, or diara, the lion, is a wooden bull-roarer approximately 35 centimeters in length, which is manipulated by means of a string a meter long. Sometimes the object is of iron and of smaller dimensions. The tori, toad, is a small box which gives off a nasal sound when it is scratched. The kono, bird, is made of two pieces of gourd bound together by spider webs. The wulu, dog, is a small calabash of about 10 centimeters in diameter, punctured by four holes. A string, threaded through its neck, allows it to be rotated like a rhombos. The ǰineble (literally, red spirit) is a buffalo horn pierced by three holes, /172/ obstructed by spider webs, into which one blows and which produce a loud, flute-like sound. One society usually owns several specimens of each of these instruments.

794 The mask, said to be the most ancient object, is of sculptured wood
778 representing a human face crowned by several vertical, rather long
532 horns (1). The whole is completely decorated with cowrie shells and
red kise (2), grains which represent the blood from the offerings. The

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1. The masks most often carry eight horns, but this rule is not always respected.

2. Linociera sudarica.

794 778 532 high forehead, black and always smeared with karite butter, confers upon the face a beneficial power. The whole mask is regularly rubbed with ground charcoal powder and with the juice of the kola nut.

The whips of the mask (*ndomo busa*) are made of *ñuana* branches 794 famous for their suppleness. They are made at the time of the annual 778 ceremony and only renewed the following year. At the time of their manufacture, they are soaked in water, which the members of the society then drink "in order not to have to suffer from the blows which they will receive."

Each member also possesses a long whip made of the branches of [824] a bush, the *ngere ni*, (1) which is also called "tree of Faro" for it grows in water, and which contains part of the beneficial power of the spirit. The whip is used to try out the children's courage. The one who cries or complains will carry this handicap with him through life; even after his circumcision he will be referred to as a coward.

B. Initiation

794 526 Each new grade is acquired in the course of the annual ceremony which takes place after the harvest. An elder entrusted with the sacrifices cuts the throats of the roosters offered by the postulants over the tree of the *ndomo* (Pl. V, a) and over the ritual objects placed at his feet, and then pours boiled millet as an offering. During this time the young people plow the ground where the contest, *bari* (2), is to take place; this fight will pit them against each other and give them the opportunity to show their courage and competitive spirit.

The chief designates the fighters two by two who are watched over /173/ by the *dyolokotigi*. In the contest, during which any use of legs or feet disqualifies the fighter, the one who makes his adversary fall three consecutive times is chosen to be initiated into a higher grade on the following night. After this contest, the losers must bring two additional roosters if they also wish to be initiated. Then a meal eaten in common brings together the members of the society and the postulants.

1. *Hibiscus pandoriformia*.

2. To make oneself fall, the joust.

881 On the same day the young girls in certain localities
302 have a characteristic ceremony. One of them whitens her face,
breast, and back with a mixture of milk and ashes. Thus
daubed, she dashes out of the village brandishing the spatula
(to-n-galama) which is used to stir mush (to) in the pot; her
companions follow her, shouting. The band goes around the
village four times in this fashion, each time stopping at the
crossroads. At these points the girl who is bedaubed throws
handfuls of food (1), provided by her companions, to the spirits,

[262] 1. Usually basi (couscous) made with fish.

crying: "Dege dule (2)." Her companions reply: "Naloma (3)."

2. Literally, "thick mush."

3. That is, "fool."

881 The eve of the soli (soli-si). During the evening pre-
ceding the soli, the families concerned enjoy an ample meal,
● 527 accompanied by innumerable jugs of beer (dlo) as is the custom
[273] at all festivals among the Bambara. This is a time of special
[576] merriment, of shining faces and greasy hands, and it is good
form for the men and boys to belch noisily, saying repeatedly:
"ne ne fa," literally, "I am full," that is, "I am replete." The
[301] women wander about the lanes, wrapped in their best skirts,
with balls of amber in their hair and small silver or even gold
rings in their ears and nostrils and rather heavy bracelets on their
[482] arms and ankles. Some carry jars of dlo on their heads, while
others carry gourds full of couscous, dege, or hot sauces which
are often nauseous with smoked or spoiled fish. After the meal
everyone gathers on the public square, forming a wide circle
whose center is reserved for the dancers; piles of dried millet
[373] stalks are used to make bright fires which illuminate the scene
and warm the audience.

881 The "boys of the soli" (soli-ma-tye-u), their heads
302 freshly

575 561 a sense of solidarity among the ton'-den'. In reality, the bachelor ton'-den' are principally concerned with amassing as much food as possible for the sole purpose of treating themselves to copious and merry banquets from time to time; for this purpose, all means are acceptable. Each member brings to the group whatever he can lay his hands on; in addition, the society assesses its members for contributions to swell the common fund. [291] First, there are the entrance fees and assessments in kind, particularly of grain. Then there are fines for infractions of the rules, involving penalties whose purpose is simply the enrichment of the group's treasury. At certain meetings, for instance, the most ordinary acts may not be performed unless permission has been given by the ton'-tigi or the dyala-tigi. A member who squats, rises, speaks, sneezes, or laughs before being authorized to do so is fined. Finally, the society goes on organized hunts, and the game thus acquired is distributed among the members on the basis of strict equality.

● [527] Ordinarily the ton'-den' meet twice a week, on Monday and Thursday; these are the free days allotted to the poor people (fantan'-u), that is, people who are wholly under control.

The ton'-tigi can make no important decision without the prior advice and agreement of the ton'-den', but this does not mean that his role is negligible. His initiative determines the orientation of acts, and he later sees to their execution. Therefore, if he is a clever man, he actually has almost sole command over an organization capable of exerting powerful pressure on the native milieu, which by nature is amorphous, because a fla-n-ton' is not an isolated group. It is linked with the one that preceded it and the one immediately following it by a kind of solidarity, so that native society, from this point of view, is made up of an uninterrupted series of fla-n-ton' closely bound to each other, since the same chain of relationship prevails for women and since every male fla-n-ton' has a brotherhood relationship with the corresponding female fla-n-ton'.

[627] If a difference arises between members of the same fla-n-ton', the "elders" of the preceding fla-n-ton', i.e., the one immediately older, intervene as conciliators to settle the quarrel.

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796 that period; his body will not be buried but will be carried off by
766 members of the Komo, who will take it to a crossroads and crush it with the aid of *komo-se-w* [sic]. The remains will be hidden in a secret place. The same treatment is accorded to the *komo-tigi* who dies during his seven-year term.

794 The cult is cantonal, and the various *komo-tigi* take their orders from their colleagues of the capital. The cult formerly was interclan and intertribal. Labouret (*Les Mandingues et leur langue* [The Mandingo and Their Language]) has made a table of the seven categories of persons who make up the hierarchical society of the initiates.

794 After initiation into the *Komo* cult, a natural sequel to cir-
793 cumcision, the young man may, if he so desires, be initiated into other cults. He then enters a powerful spiritual family which unites all its members by ties of brotherhood. This brotherhood is superimposed on the normal social hierarchy of the *flã-tõ* [this term is
[564 probably the same as *flanton*]. The chief of the brotherhood is en-
567] titled *nyama-tigi*; he is generally a man of caste or a slave. He acquires his position as chief either by inheriting it, by election, or
[778] by founding a new cult. To do this latter, he must buy an altar, *gna*, from the village or from the brotherhood that already possesses this cult. Such a purchase is considered a marriage with the *gna* and is accompanied by drinking. The higher-ranking initiates (*dyenfaw*: masters of the truth) are auxiliaries of the *nyama-tigi* and participate in the oracle, *wara-da*. All the initiates are more or less divine. The clergy includes, in addition, a sacrificer, *muru-kala-tigi*, and a *dyeli*, herald of the god. To become one of the faithful, one must pay an entrance fee and swear an oath of secrecy, obedience, and fellowship. The clergy manages the cult's treasury which is fed by the entrance fees to the brotherhood, by fees levied for a class promotion, by contributions required for the major ceremonies, and by fines imposed on the members.

The brotherhood is a spiritual family which is organized in a fashion similar to the natural filiation of the community. The *nyama-tigi* plays the role of the *fa*; the *dyen-fa-w* and the notable members form a sort of council for settling, with the chief, all ques-
[527] tions. The cult does nothing on Mondays and Thursdays, the work holidays.

754 674 278 of poison, and the brown powder concealed in it is usually Strophanthus seed /53/ crushed and kneaded into excreta of human corpses and saliva taken from their mouths. This mixture is dried in the shade and then wrapped in a piece of hyena intestine, and to render the effects more immediate and certain, the fetish is brought out and placed on this meal and a sacrifice made. These sacrosanct preparations are made at night, if possible in the first quarter of the moon, and never on a Monday or Thursday, which are days of rest for the *boli* gods (1).

527 776 1. The *boli* have two days' leave per week, and the Negroes also take this rest. However, they are broad-minded on this point even though for certain labors they ask the religious chief or a sorcerer to be allowed to work. As a rule a *boli* may not go out Sunday or Monday night nor on Wednesday or Thursday. They quite often do go out, however, but only by command of the fetish or a sorcerer. To bring out a fetish is to spend the night dancing the dance of the fetish, and when the initiates want to dance they always manage to do so. The *boli* are also sacrificed to on Monday and Thursday even though they are at rest. In theory there is rest for the fetishes; actually, the idea is loosely applied.

754 674 To succeed and to keep from displeasing the fetish, who would then abandon your cause and turn against you, you must follow the prescriptions of the priest and members of his council to the letter; the omission of one rite, one sign, one formula, one imprecation, destroys the power of the poison contained in the horn, or at least renders it ineffective. Sometimes this powder is thrown and is called *korti sou*, and at other times it is poured and is called *dounkono di*.

845 each twin is the dya of the other and that
851 this term means "shadow of the body,"
"spiritual double," as well as "balance."
To trade is dyago.

845 Three or four days after the name-giving ceremony, depending on
301 their sex, the twins are given bracelets of white metal representing
[531] their dya. Geometrical symbols of the universe, the sky and the earth,
are engraved on each of these (1). The opening of the bracelet repre-

1. This figure is formed by a rectangle divided into two equal superposed squares, including a multiplication sign in the lower square to represent the earth, and an open v in the upper square to represent the sky.

sents that of the incomplete terrestrial world. When the twins die
[766] they will be buried with the bracelets closed over their arms or their
ankles to signify that they have penetrated a complete and closed
world. Formerly the sacrifices to Faro were carried out with ornaments
845 borrowed from a twin. The person making the sacrifice presented
301 them to the /87/ river while saying: "The iron of the twins is witness
782 to the sacrifice offered to Faro." (2) After the ceremony, everyone

2. Flani neke ye ma šere ye faro sõni la.

gave white kola nuts to the twin; the interested party then went to
the village square and waved in the air his arms bedecked with
ornaments to spread to the four cardinal points Faro's beneficial
nyama acquired in the course of the sacrifice. In certain areas twins
wear a pendant in the shape of double slave fetters, called dyõ neke,
"irons of the captive," or an amulet called sinzin, "support," com-
posed of a little piece of wood carved in the shape of a double cup
and preferably made by a Bozo. A man who has had twins three times
[778] must acquire a double pot which is always kept full of water and
which becomes the object of an annual sacrifice (3).

3. See p. 124, n. 1.

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arms on which they rested." The center of the garment represented the chest, the liver, and the heart of the wearer; the horizontal threads the veins and arteries. The supporting collar, made of three bark fibers of the da tree, was "the individual's double during his sleep." Sweat was the offering made to this garment. In the cold season it was replaced by salt.. The first time a man wore this garment he would pray: "Garment, we wear you in the name of our old ancestors and in honor of those who created you."

The ancestors drawn on the sanctuaries and the granaries are all equipped with caps, banfla, which they wore in olden times (Fig. 8, E). At the top were affixed a wooden picket and a hyena tail, through which the sky gave its strength to man who in return /108/ would send his "through the wind." The cap (čema), made of strips of yellow dyed cotton, had wings (bamadae), symbol of the ears: the lines on the right wing assured numerous offspring and those on the left, a secure and righteous life. The wings also recall those of the swallow, the water spirit's messenger entrusted with carrying into the womb, at the moment of sexual union, the drop of blood containing the child's life and soul. The two indigo dyed spots on each wing are the symbol of this womb.

The cap as a whole (farofla) was the "link maintaining the life of man," who is himself represented by the line which encircles the cap. It protected him against cold, disaster, and death. It was also the symbol of Faro's home and power. When he received it, the wearer would say: "Wing of the cap, cap, son of Faro, I have drawn you with strength. Oh, swallow" (1).

After the invention of the loom, clothes were no longer made piece by piece. Bands of cotton made by weavers were used, cut up, fitted, and sewn—a technique still observed today throughout the Sudan.

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There exists a "science of the bands," finew tno or finew dongo, which is familiar to all those who wear the traditional clothes. It

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1. Bamade, bonza, farode, ni be ke ola ni barikaye, nanale. The primitive clothes described above were observed by an informant at Bougoula and are presented to the postulants at the moment of their initiation.

291 173 531 rests upon the knowledge of the symbolism of colors, drawings, and numbers. The bands are numerous and each one represents one aspect of metaphysics, one fragment of the myth. Thus, the story of Mousso Koroni is told in four successive bands (Pl. III, from 5 to 8). The wearing of the bands depends upon the physical or moral state of the wearer, upon his functions and activities (1).

> 1. We give below the description of a certain number of these bands, chosen from the ones most representative; we intend to publish a complete study of this aspect of a technique most revealing of Sudanese psychology.

291 173 531 122 The white band, finin muku dye, represents Faro, being as white [illegible] and luminous as the sky and the rays of the sun. White denotes wisdom and purity of the spirit, the purity of blood. The one who appears in public thus dressed is respected because he affirms thereby his desire to follow religious rules. It is also the color of offerings made to the spirit. A piece of white cloth is sometimes hung over the door of a home where people have just /109/ made a sacrifice. A sick man throws three white bands into the river, or gives them to a person poorer than himself. A white cloth, worn over a man's shoulder, "strengthens his nerves and articulations." At nightfall every evening, all the children put on a tunic of this color. Thus, despite the darkness, they are "in Faro's light" and will recognize each other in times to come as the children of one father, one family, one blood. The marriage veil is made up of eleven bands each measuring eleven cubits; these are not sewn together but rather basted in spirals. Thus dressed, the woman goes in the night to her future husband's village, in the luminous word of Faro and surrounded by the twenty-two elements of creation, the eleven spirals intersecting each other on the right and left. A dead person is also dressed in white; trousers with six strips representing man and his dya, and a hat with three bands. He is rolled up in a blanket of the same color and visitors place upon the corpse pieces of white cloth or cowrie shells. The whole signifies good will, sincerity, and devotion toward Faro of the deceased who must be "white under the earth" if he has not broken any taboos.

The opposite of white is indigo, konofi, which symbolizes darkness and impurity and which is worn in most cases where the spirit's

291 activity is not involved. Nevertheless, a woman puts on an indigo
773 loincloth the day she resumes sexual relations with her husband after
822 the end of her menses; she retains it until pregnancy. When she is sure
531 of her condition, she puts the loincloth in the sun to purify it and will
place the newborn child in it to remind him later that he owes his
life to his parents. A dead person who has broken a taboo is buried
[764 in an indigo shroud, the only reminder of light being a white cotton
784] thread which is placed on the corpse as an expression of apology and
forgiveness. Since indigo is taboo in most of Faro's sacred places, no
one wears it during sacrifices or religious ceremonies.

White and indigo complement each other. To twist a white and
[789] an indigo thread together to make a string used for holding an amulet
is to "roll together happiness and unhappiness, as in life."

The *dye wolo* is the color of yellow copper. It is in this color that the newly circumcised are dressed after the operation and until they are healed. Red, *mbegu*, is the color of copper and of blood. Hunters who wear a tunic of *mbegu* are "covered with a garment of blood." The band *kayo* (Pl. III, a, 1), in which are found these two colors, indigo and white, reproduces the rainbow: the white intervals are symbols of the word and of purity. /110/ A person making a sacrifice sews a piece of this band on his clothing to indicate that he is circumcised, that he is a hunter, and that he is truthful in his actions and words. A band is hung at the gate of the northern entry to the village in order to protect its inhabitants from dangers coming from outside. A man wears it when he has been ill or has suffered serious financial or family difficulties. On the altars, on the doorways, the colors are represented by millet mash, blood, and kola nut extract.
[821 As the rainbow keeps away the rain and dries up water, the *kayo*
784] strip may not be worn near the river or during sexual intercourse, for
it is Faro's taboo.

The band *sirakele* (literally, a road) (Pl. III, a, 2) represents Faro's descent from the seventh part of the sky down to the seventh part of the earth, the indigo stripe being the *dyi fi*, "black water," the spirit's earth seat. When put on the loincloth of a married woman, it expresses her rectitude and the good behavior she intends to maintain towards her husband. When worn by a traveler, it prevents him from losing his way.

291 The *buguni* (1) (Pl. III, a, 3) is "the sun ray Faro gave to Pemba
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821 1. The word designates the band's place of
531 origin, Bougouni.

291 for his great earthly labors." When clouds form, it is said that Faro
773 "is showing the *buguni* in the sky" and the diviners advise each person
821 to wear a strip in homage to the spirit and to facilitate the coming of
531 rain. The geomaneer gently rubs the earth, where he is going to
draw signs, with a cloth of this design. It is as though he has injected sun, light, and truth into the work he must execute on the impure soil.

291 This band is also called *kolõso mako*, "necessity of the mixture,"
773 or *kami*, guinea hen, whose plumage as well as whose fragility the
band betokens. In this respect, the *buguni* symbolizes man's weakness and incompleteness. When placed on a convalescent's clothing,
[155] it signifies that the latter has lost some of his vitality during his illness. Dressed in this fashion, he goes to the Niger and bathes so that Faro might heal him. A man who has suffered severe financial losses also wears the *buguni*. At the market, in public meetings, he will not be made to pay his share of beer because of the band's silent language which is clearer than words. If a widower remarries, he sews a piece of it on his cap in memory of his first wife. The knife of the person offering a sacrifice is wrapped in the buguni, for it "never has enough blood," also in certain *boli* which continually crave it.

/111/ In conclusion, the squares of indigo cloth represent the void and darkness; the white ones, fulfillment and light. To wear the *buguni* signifies hope, the impure or weak man hoping to become pure, strong, and fulfilled.

The *bugunimba* (literally, large *buguni*) or *nyedẽ* (literally, threads of the eye) has the same symbolism. A wound is bandaged with it. A man who has broken a taboo wears a cap of this material; an illegitimate child also wears it. The *buguni tyekorole* which symbolizes the impurity of Mousso Koroni is used to implore Faro's help in great calamities and for misfortunes without remedy. Thus, the body of a stillborn child is covered with it.

291 The *buguni nyama* (Pl. III, a, 4), made of twenty-two alternating
773 indigo and white squares, symbolizes creation in its harmonious and
822 orderly entirety. Its separation into two layers recalls the duality of
801 nature, represented by a thin stripe through the middle. A happy
man sews an entire strip into his tunic. The man who has difficulties of any kind divides it lengthwise and pins a small piece at the bottom of his garment.

291 773 822 801 The nyeba, "big eye," or koloso tyema, "mixed masculinity" (with femininity), (Pl. III, a, 11) also represents creation, here symbolized by the double layer of five indigo and white bands (1). At the same time the cloth also symbolizes the complete man, said to be both masculine and feminine. A newborn child, but never an illegitimate one, is clothed in it.

291 773 The band soli (Pl. III, a, 5) represents the good conduct of Mousso Koroni at the beginning of her life as well as her betrayal which brought disorder on earth.

531 [764] In olden times, people who had committed bad deeds were obliged to wear it. Today it is used as the shroud for a child who dies immediately after birth; a strip is sewn to the garment of a recently excised girl or to the loincloth of a woman insured in childbirth. When differences or conflicts arise within a family, a fragment is placed in amulets which the women must then wear.

[828] The wutu nyekorotike (Pl. III, a, 6) pictures the disorderly voyage of Mousso Koroni, her despair and her madness. This pattern is reserved for insane people in order to warn others of their condition.

The band gombo (Pl. III, a, 7) recalls the pursuit of Mousso /112/ Koroni by the god Pemba into the depths of the sky and the earth.

The band tyatyeli (Pl. III, a, 8) a picture of Mousso Koroni's defeat, symbolizes human work. It is given to a courageous and energetic woman. It is circulated among those present at religious ceremonies and its mere presence indicates that nothing here below is obtained without work and that all stems from work. To wear this band strengthens the man who is entering upon a task in a village other than his own.

The band saki is the koblenkaba, "red sky." It symbolizes heat, anger, difficulties, and sorrows. It is woven at the time of marriage negotiations for the purpose of resolving any differences of opinion. [844] A piece of it is dipped into the blood after birth and then thrown away in order to purify everything.

[822] The blue stripes of dyitala represent impurity, and the red stripes, purification by sacrifice. Whoever has broken a taboo wears the blue, and the red when he is purified. A piece of red cloth may be inserted into the vagina of a young woman, after she has lost her virginity or

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1. On the value of number 5, see pp. 24, 25.

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113 to replace the blood lost in childbirth; this piece is then burned to
531 hasten the healing of the wounds.

The loincloth of a woman who has given birth to twins is made of the *sukaba* band with large, regular, alternating squares of yellow and indigo. The mother places on the garment as an offering a little of the millet mash she feeds her children for the first time.

The band *nyoronga* was formerly used for shrouds. The king would wear a whole garment of this or had three bands sewn onto his tunic when he went off to war; thus he wore his own shroud. A brave man would tie a piece of it to the barrel of his rifle to show his indifference in the face of death. A strip was tied to the right hand of those killed on the battlefield as a reward for having done their duty. Today, a shred of this band is hung at the door of a home where a death has occurred; People bandage a wounded limb with it before going to the healer's.

The *wutu* *tyerokole* with three stripes is worn by a child born after the death in infancy of numerous brothers and sisters. It represents the departure of these members of the family and their return in the newborn. Shaking such a band in the air honors the seventh sky and the seventh earth and asks their protection for the child. This cloth is never worn at funerals.

/113/ The *kemba* (literally, mother of scarifications) (Pl. III, a, 10) substitutes for scarifications when it has not been possible to perform them; on the other hand, this band is taboo to those who are ritually scarred.

The *warabawolo* (Pl. III, a, 12) represents the lion of the Diara: the first son of this family was born on this cloth. A boy born with a lock of hair on his forehead is seated on the cotton band to make him strong and rich. Formerly the king made a rug for his throne out of it. Since the lion is their taboo, the Diara do not have the right to wear it or even to see it.

Weapons and Tools

113 Originally, men lived by hunting and fishing. But hunger drove
262 them to eat plants of which the first three are the *yayalẽ*, an aquatic
824 plant commonly found on the shores of the Niger; the *narakata*, couch
grass; and the *norolã* size, commonly called cramcram((1)). Long

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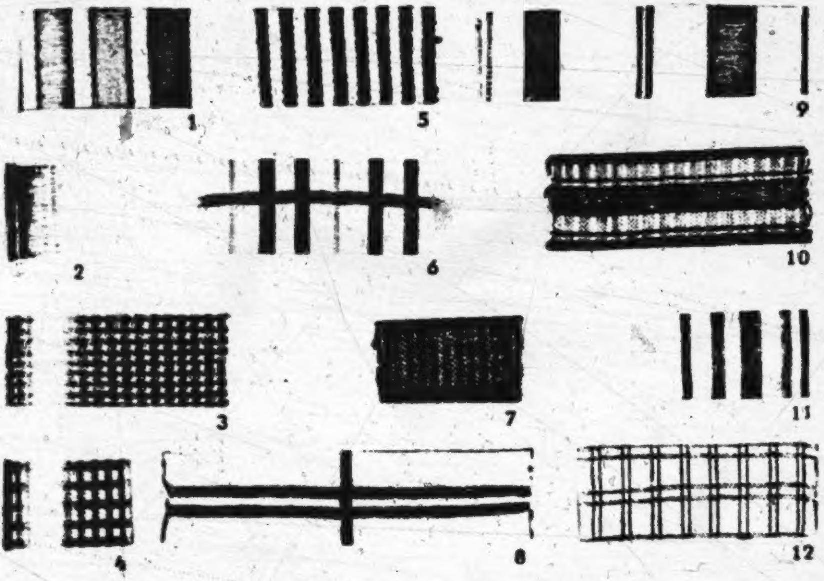

(a) Bands of cotton (the warp is presented vertically).

Plate III

(b) Offering of a band of cotton to the dasiri tree (Soroba).

782
291

304 561 The date of the circumcision alone makes a coherent whole of a heterogeneous group—an age grade within /181/ which all the members owe each other friendship, confidence, and help in all phases of social and private life.

304 292 Once the operation has been decided upon, the relatives proceed

[531]

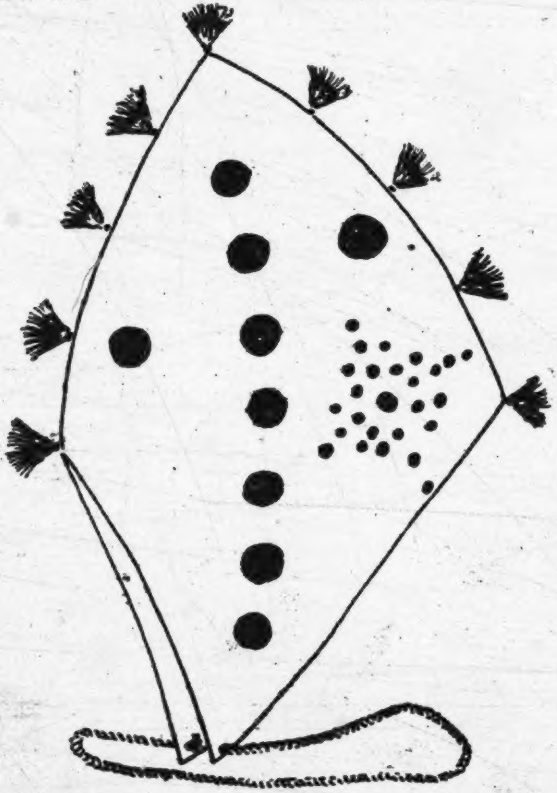

Fig. 14 — Cap of the circumcised Bambara. The nine black spots represent the child, his dya, and the cardinal points.
The design at the right represents the sumangolo, or the coming of the twelve waters of the future. (See Fig. 3)

first to make the cap worn during the seclusion. The white cloth is presented to the Niger by a uterine brother who addresses a prayer to Faro requesting permission to draw with black earth the designs that will cover it. They will protect the child who is in a state of impurity

304 throughout the seclusion, the cap itself guaranteeing protection of his 292 head against the rays of fire from the fifth sky, koblẽnkaba (see Fig. 14).

Seven large black dots, vertically disposed, represent the child, 3, 304 and his dya, 4, as well as the man, 3, which he will later become and 292 his future wife, 4. They also insure his protection from east to west. 531 The two other dots insure it from north to south. The cross of small dots recalls the sumangolos, the "realization of the world" (1) and the purification obtained after the operation and the loss of the wanzo. Eight tassels (Faro's number) are placed on the cap, whose fringes were spun by a grandmother and are sewn on to "attract the forces of space." A ninth at the top is blackened with the spirit's earth. With his head thus covered, the circumcised boy is placed in the protective and purifying light of Faro. To operate upon a child without putting the cap on him would in fact amount to "bowing down before the acts of Mousso Koroni."

On his part, the blacksmith-circumciser makes preparations for the 304 operation, the essential instrument of which is a knife called boloko 326 kumba moru (literally, knife head, mother of the circumcision). 413 He himself has forged it and carries it in a small leather sheath hung from his hip (see Fig. 15) (2).

The handle is slipped into a sort of iron sheath closed at one extremity called kurukun (literally, ball head) and open at the other called sukala (literally, sorcerer's handle). It is forged from one piece with the blade dyomuru fala (literally, orphan of the knife) and called "without pity" in archaic language.

The knife and its handle on the one hand, together with the metal sheath on the other, symbolize the person of the circumcised boy and the foreskin which is to be removed.

1. See p. 56, Fig. 4.

[582] 2. The endogamy among blacksmiths is attributed to their role in circumcision and to the fact that their tools, especially this knife, are impregnated with the wanzo of the adolescents.

805 the angles represents 90 days (the year, for the Bambara, is 360 days). 815 The symbols are not merely mathematical; they form part of the daily life of the society. [18] The zigzags are a characteristic theme [531] in the decoration of pottery, weapons, tools, sanctuaries, and houses. One finds them in agricultural techniques and in ritual dance figures. The universal rhythms of the earth and sky echo through all the activities of man and society. (1) Finally, another series of 16 signs 212 is habitually used in geomancy. It is interesting to note that these signs were used in a practical manner for correspondence. The Bambara chiefs used multiple combinations of them to send each other messages.

G. Local Diversities

197 Given the extent and the diversity of the regions where Bambara is spoken, it is no wonder one notices differences in pronunciation, and even in structure and vocabulary, from one province to another. At Kaarta the speech is not the same as at Ségou, and a Bambara of Ségou has trouble understanding a Bambara of Bougouni. This is due partly to the influence of other languages which are in contact with Bambara and which ultimately alter and modify it, and partly to the normal evolution of language within a group separated for centuries from its place of origin. It is interesting to note that in the Bougouni circle the conservatives in speech are the old men, while the women are the evolutionary element.

191 Traditionally, Ségou was considered the center for the most elegant Bambara speech. Before the conquest, children were sent to Ségou to learn the purest Bambara.

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[787] 1. Id., "Conception de l'écliptique chez les Dogons et les Bambara" [The Dogon and Bambara Conception of the Ecliptic]. [Ed., Africa, 1951.]

463 make tools, farming implements in current use, furnishings, orna-
326 mental objects, bracelets, different kinds of rings. They also work gold and silver to make jewelry in filigree.

462 Weaving and basket-making are not done by the people of
286 caste, but by all men, or, formerly, by their house captives.
285 Primitive looms, worked by treadles, are set up outside of the houses in the shade of the trees. The men weave long bands of cotton for making clothes, loin-cloths, and blankets. These bands, several meters long, are sometimes made into rolls weighing as much as 30 kilograms and are carried off to market by the *diula*
[531] (itinerant merchants). The Bambara practice dyeing, batik, and [illegible] embroidery (done by the men).

433 All this industry remains of strictly local interest and is directed solely toward meeting the immediate needs of the community.

c. Division of Labor

462 The Bambara are essentially an agricultural people. Never-
857 theless, as all members of the society must contribute a certain amount of work to the community, the nature of this work varies according to the social classes and according to whether a man, a woman, or a child is involved. The following tables indicate how the work is divided.

1. Distribution of tasks according to A. Aubert.

Men	Women	Children	All
	Foodstuffs		
	Preparation of food and *dolo* (beer)		
	Sale of *dolo*		
Preparation of hives, setting them, gathering the honey	Bottling and sale of honey	Helping	

[826] 774 761 its seat in the prepuce and the clitoris, necessitating circumcision and excision). The body is conceived as being the support of all spiritual forces; each part is distinctly known [84] for its particular role. The body, like the spiritual principles, is bisexual; the boy [304 831] is feminine in his prepuce, the girl masculine in her clitoris, and it is only after circumcision and excision that the man and woman can unite and realize the original fruitful twinship. On the metaphysical plane, there is identity between man, "seed of the world," and the cereal seed; the basic nutriments that are made up of the eight principal cereals are represented symbolically in men's clavicles. 775 761 Finally, death separates all of these elements composing the person. The dya remains in the water where it will become the ni of the new-born in the family of the deceased; the ni is caught by the family head and transported to the altar where it will animate the dya of the new-born; the téré becomes nyama, a dangerous and vengeful force; it is deposited on the pembele, where it rejoins the ancestral forces. The body is buried and belongs to the termites. At birth, all the spiritual forces are transmitted again, whole, "refreshed," and purified. One being replaces another until the final resurrection.

C. Ritual, Sacrifice, and Cults

782 To appeal to and influence the spiritual forces, the Bambara use prayer, offerings, and sacrifices. Oral rites are used everywhere and at any time. "They pray to the sky, the cardinal points, the spirits; they sacrifice on stones, on the ground, on trees, by water holes, just as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries or situated in public or private places. Every circumcized adult, father of a family, owner of a home and cultivatable land, is a sacrificer, a capacity [53] emphasized by the red spot which sometimes is an ornament of the walls of the principal room in the man's residence." (1)

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1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

b. Pottery

323 Pottery is entirely fashioned and fired by the women of the blacksmiths' caste, masters of the fire. The modelling is done in two ways, either by hollowing a mass of clay with the aid of a cylindrical stone (2), or by rolling a cylinder of clay around a mold. The decoration is generally a double line of chevrons imprinted around the neck and the foot by the potter's twisted bracelet. The firing is done in the open air over a wood fire.

c. The Forge

326 Wood, iron, metals in general, are fashioned by the blacksmiths. The blacksmith's workshop and the objects he makes are simple, but they are rich in symbolic representations. "The forge represents the artisan: the furnace is his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red-hot iron is beaten by the hammer, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and the thunderbolt." (3) With his
rudimentary tools spread on the ground under a shelter, the artisan
forges all farming instruments, the principal one being the hoe. The
412 hoe, [97] according to its shape, is considered to be male or female.
831 The female hoe has a short handle with an ovoid swelling at the end,
[804] into which sticks the point of an iron triangle. The three sides of this
triangle are three arcs of a circle; three, symbol of masculinity,
represents here the clitoris, the male principle which sustains the
[773 double, the *dya*, of the woman. (According to myth, it was with the
241] aid of this part of the body that the first being of female sex inaugurated agricultural labors.) The male hoe has a slightly trapezoidal iron
part which is attached to the handle in the same manner. The four
sides symbolize the femininity of man sustained by the prepuce. Thus,

2. M. Griaule, *Masques dogons* [Dogon Masks]. ● [531]

3. G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].

412
831 the peasant digs with the male hoe and covers with the female hoe; the work done with the female double of the peasant and the male double of the wife symbolizes the sexual union. (1)

1. M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, "L'agriculture des Bozo," [Bozo Agriculture] Journal des Africanistes [Ed., Journal de la Société des Africanistes, 1949.]

d. Basketry

285 Basketry is done by everyone, men and women; it plays a large part in the construction and furnishing of the house. Sometimes the lofts are immense baskets, woven on the diagonal. In certain regions a great mat is wrapped around the exterior wall of the round hut. The doors of mud huts are often coarse mats woven diagonally [531] which are placed before the opening. But much finer mats, made from fibers of different colors and with geometric designs with a symbolic meaning, cover the ground for sitting or sleeping.

e. Weaving, Clothes, Ornaments

291 [824] The first article of clothing was the fiber skirt made from the nyama (Bauhinia reticulata, or Bauhinia thonningii) and the covering for the sexual parts which are still worn during religious ceremonies.

[773] Mythology designates cotton as the first fiber to be woven.

286 Weaving is one of the most widespread techniques. Cotton, spun by the women, is woven by the men, in olden times by the captives, who work in the open air near the huts, in the shade of trees in the courtyards or in the public places. A primitive loom made of four vertical wooden parts connected by horizontal shafts and driven by pedals weaves long bands. The warp and woof form a ground stich and symbolize a being of intelligence and eloquence. Moreover, a science of the bands exists which is based on the symbolism of colors, designs, and numbers.

822 The Bambara distinguish three fundamental colors: white, red, and black. Each of these three tints has its history and its role

291 designs. European influence has naturally made itself felt in the
[177] fashions, and European thread is replacing native cotton thread, but
the color symbolism in the bands is retained. Even though European
fabrics invade the markets more and more, the traditional clothes
remain the most sought after, although they have undergone certain
modifications inspired by European fashions even while remaining
very original.

291 Although the Bambara go barefoot, in certain circumstances
they make ornamented clogs to give to the new bride. These sandals
531 are decorated with geometric designs, engraved with a hot iron by
585 the blacksmith, that symbolize the twinship, the multiplication of
children, the parents, the husband's family, the couple's language,
and the sealing of the association. These signs are encircled by the
sign of the union of the whole. Also, the whole ritual of taking
possession lasts for several days.

302 Coiffure. At the present time, the adult males no longer
wear the traditional coiffure consisting of two plaits at the side, but
the children still have their hair shaved and braided according to custom.
Thus, the uncircumcised boys wear a crest of hair going from
the forehead to the nape of the neck, while the rest of the head is
shaved. The crest symbolizes the [99] divine serpent. The children
of blacksmiths also wear, at the sides of the head, two circles
of hair which are cut by lines representing the forge. When a child
is born after the death of several brothers and sisters, only half of his
head is shaved in mockery, so that the dya subject to this pretended
neglect will decide to stay in the child. The children of Marabouts
have their hair shaved in such a manner that it forms a spiral which
starts in the middle of the skull and covers the whole head. Afterwards,
bands of hair are shaved in a manner to trace a cross on this
spiral. The little girls wear a small braid across the forehead, falling
on the left side, while married women wear a braid at each side
of the head. These braids are made by adding fibers of the da,
shining with karite, plaited with the hair. Finally, the women wear
301 22 gold rings at the ears, images of the 22 primordial elements, or
sometimes a single large ring in the form of a crescent closed by
threads of red cotton, which is a résumé of the 22 others. These
rings keep impure words from the ear, which plays an important
[776] role in generation; it is through the ornamentation that the spirits
hear what is said to man.

342 shovel. A coping of bricks is then laid out around the roof, leaving
room for the gutters which spill into the streets. These houses may
be topped with a second roof, a thatched cone. The four chief
timbers are set at the four angles of the house. There is a door in
the first ceiling, and precious goods or objects are kept in this part
of the house. As in the round huts, the door always opens to the
south.

The outside of the houses are plastered with earth mixed with
[237] cow dung; on the inside, the floor and lower part of the walls are
daubed with black earth mixed with fresh cow manure and bark from
[824] the *jumbo* tree (*Napoleona Heudelotii*); the upper walls and the ceiling
are covered with white river clay. Where the two colors meet,
●[531] lines of festoons traced with the finger symbolize the descent of the
third Word. On the white walls are painted ladders, calabash spoons,
animsla, signs conveying [102] the worldly situation of the owner
as well as the soul of the artist.

[356] The periphery of the entrance door is daubed with fresh cow
[769] dung every 15 days, and more liberally with rotted cow dung once
a year before the rains. This custom is linked to ancestor worship.

Canari [earthenware vessels] containing certain plants are
353 buried under the bed of the head of the family; other plants and
352 juice from roots are hidden under the women's beds. The *boli* are
hooked to the roofing of the houses for they must touch neither earth,
water, nor fire. Nets, *diakumadjulu*, are hung from the ceiling;
they hold clothes or calabashes for the food; mats or animal skins
are spread on the ground; beds, different-sized calabashes, and stools
complete the furnishings. The different huts belonging to one family
351 are surrounded by a wall that opens into the vestibule of a hut with
342 two doors, oriented north-south. This is where the head of the
family receives strangers. In the inside court are found hearths made
[354] of three stones, mortars for millet, and chicken coops, a sort of
small square hut made of clay mixed with straw. The granaries,
343 constructed on piles, have the form of round huts. They are divided
251 into four parts, where the four principal grains are kept: millet,
rice, fonio, ground nuts. Some grains may be kept together in the
same compartment, for example, millet and ground nuts. Certain
granaries, *bonio*, are veritable cigar-shaped pots made by the blacksmiths'
wives. When the *bonio* is finished, it is cut into sections

532
171 traditions plastiques de l'Afrique noire
[Variety and Unity of the Plastic Art
Traditions of Black Africa].

532 A great variety of wood (4) is available to the sculptor, who chiefly uses fine-grained species whose fibers are not very sensitive, and who avoids woods that are too hard and too dense. The artist [412] works with green wood, generally with an adze, or chip-axe, which probably is derived from the hoe. This instrument serves for rough chipping the mass and for establishing the secondary volumes; it gives the statue a singular "faceted" aspect. The work is completed [412] by means of a knife and gouges. A skillful technique makes it possible to give the wood a patina; it is blackened by burying the pieces in certain types of mud, by being immersed in palm oil, and daubed with lampblack. The wood is reddened by applying plasters made by grinding barks and making pastes from them. The objects so treated are [105] lengthily polished with skins and take on the sombre, brilliant aspect of old bronzes. The patina of the pieces is an important element of their beauty.

The art observes stylistic conventions, such as the deformation of normal appearances. In the structure of the mass, convention regulates the proportion of the parts, of the solid portions and the hollows; it regulates the development of the secondary volumes and of the surfaces of the different planes, their extent and their lines of contact. In its volume, ~~the~~ statuary obeys an almost immutable canon: to a cylindrical trunk is attached a head that is enormous in proportion to the other members, which are confined to narrow limits; the lower members are much shorter than in nature. The oversized head is a convention related to ancestor worship. The head is sculpted in concave style, and the entire figure is subordinated to a marked geometrization.

326 The blacksmiths also work gold by using the "lost wax"
531 method, or by hammering, embossing anf fixing thin leaves of gold,

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4. Passim, H. Lavachery, "L'art noir d'Afrique et son destin" [Negro Art of Africa and its Destiny], *Présence africaine*.

326 as well as of silver, on a wooden core. The thrones of the ancient [531] Bambara chiefs were covered in this manner. Today the golden ornaments are no longer reserved exclusively for the wives of kings. [301] Bracelets, pendants, and necklaces are produced in large quantities in a filigree work in which the Black excels.

B. Ceramics

323 The land is very rich in pottery, but Bambara men do not model clay, pottery being a woman's art. Inversely, the women do not work on statuary.

C. Painting

531 386 The Bambara paint murals on the sanctuary walls with ocher and a millet paste. The priests make these drawings periodically. The walls of the young people's huts are also decorated with symbolic motifs: calabash spoons, festoons, ladders with 22 bars, drawings of hands, lines of chevrons. The young girls come to paint these, [337] with clay from the river or with a mixture of clay and cow dung. All these geometric drawings are signs representing not only the cosmogony, but a subtle translation of all the movements of the executing artist's soul. They are a veritable form of writing.

D. Music

533 771 Music is a privileged art (1) because it is bound to instruments, that is to say, to materials, to the human body by the voice and the dance, to numbers by the rhythm, to medicine, to divination, and to religion.

534 771 [106] In a report to the French Institute of Anthropology on February 18, 1948, Mme. G. Dieterlen described the structure and symbolism of the two Bambara musical instruments, the Sema guitar and the royal drum.

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1. Griaule, Passim, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the African Arts], Présence africaine.

772 Then all things assembled and began to rumble in order to complete the creation of the universe. The glã remained within themselves and delegated to zo the responsibility of liberating the designated and animated objects which they contained and of which they had created the essence. Zo took possession of them and joined their elements into a huge ball, kuru, called yo yebali, "invisible yo": zo gave yo the principle of the seed and endowed it with attraction and power (1).

1. zo ye kise masa di yo ma, ka samani masa bla la, ka mineni masa bla a la.

Yo was the spirit, more exactly "the thought and action," that was to work out the creation, using the "signed objects" determined by glã.

772 /5/ The glã glã zo is represented by three engravings on wood.
532 The first, glã kele, represents the two glã in the shape of two spirals in opposite directions and with connected points of origin; below this is engraved "the object with four arms" from which issued the signs (2). These signs, 226 in number, are barely sketched out, showing that "the creation of glã takes place in the invisible, the unknown, the unrealized." The second, glã dya, is composed of 226 horizontal or vertical lines, the counterparts or "witnesses" of words. The third, glã zo, is an oval divided into seven compartments (a square in the middle and two times three lateral sections) in which the symbolic representations are clearly engraved. In the middle of the central square, there is an oval containing six signs which represent simultaneously "the egg of the world and yo, the creating voice."

[824] 2. Today this object is represented by a twig of Acacia albida, called "the wood that separates the signs," ti kla dyiri. Its bark is removed in such a way as to outline the multiplication sign enclosed in an oval representing the world.

2. The yo

772 The creation of the perceptible universe beginning with yo is conceived of as a progression in "thinking," tasi (3). This progression,

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a) The *Acacia albida* called *kokuruni* (Banankoroni).

Plate I

b) In the foreground, baskets of spiralled straw called *yugu* (Ségou market).

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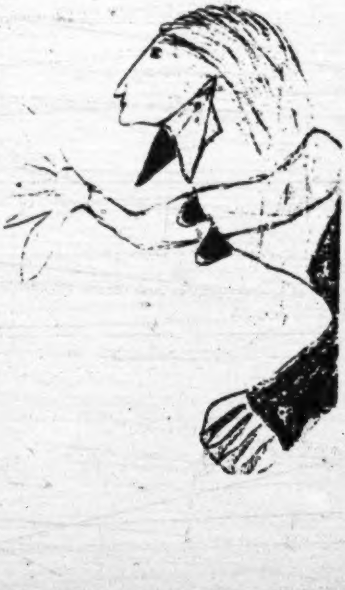
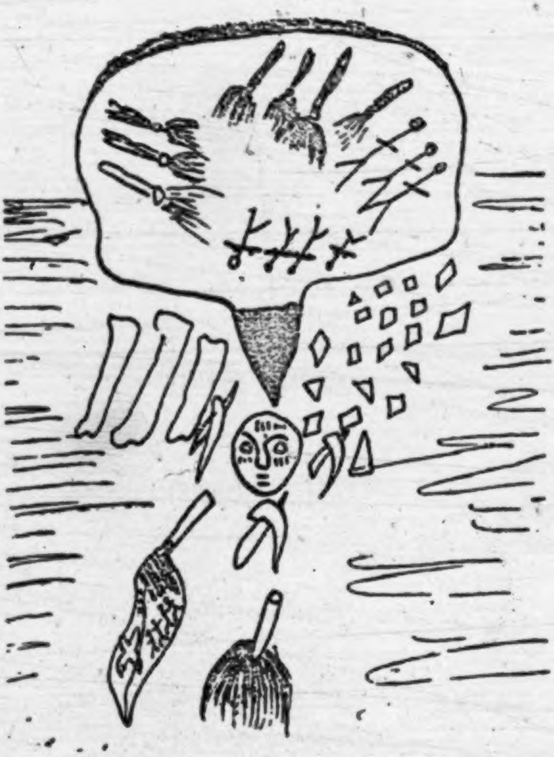
c) Drawing representing Faro (Sama).



782 /91/ Actually the altars from the region of Ségou originate mostly
778 in Toko, a settlement situated to the south of the town where the king's
326 blacksmiths lived. The ancestor of these blacksmiths is buried in the
rocks which border Toko and from which the stones used as altar are carved. If a village chief wants to obtain one he sends a delegate to Toko. This emissary receives from the blacksmith the stone appropriate to the function of the altar and the quality of the person



[532 769] Fig. 5. —Stone altar, fara ba, of Banankoroni, consecrated to ancestors. It is stuck into the ground above the skull and bones of an albino, hoes, and a circumcision knife. The ritual drawing traced during the ceremonies of the renewal of the year represents the torches and the whips of the Kworè, 3 men and 4 women, which recall the number 7, image of the creation (Informant's drawing).

773
829 "They were covered with shaggy body hair, beard and hair; their long nails resembled claws; their teeth resembled fangs. They knew no language and had no clothing to protect themselves from bad weather; they lived in holes dug in the /99/ ground or in habitable natural caves, at the bottom of which they slept and kept their prey. To defend themselves against wild animals, they placed wooden spikes and pointed rocks at the entrance of these quarters. These deep holes communicated with each other and together formed regular underground villages" (Fig. 6) (1).

[532]

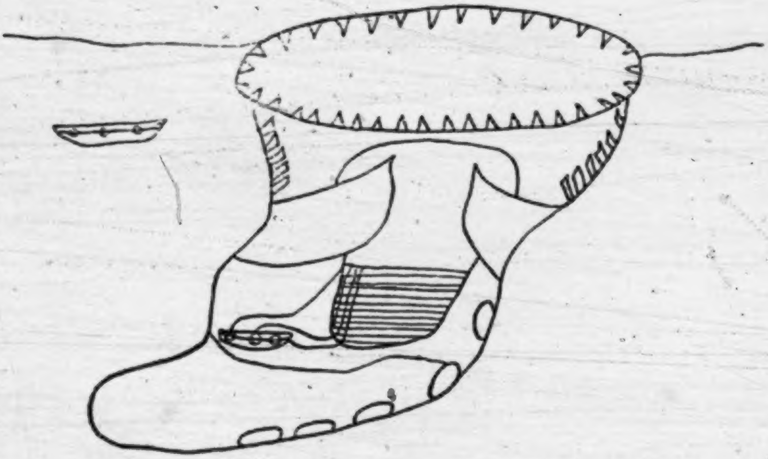


Fig. 6 —Underground home of primitive men. The entrance is guarded by pointed rocks. In the center, the drawing of the first loom invented by men. At the left, the shuttle (see p. 181). (Drawing by an informant.)

[172] 1. Some of these excavations in the neighborhood of Ségou, which may still be visited today, are venerated by the Bambara as ancestral homes.

Since they did not know language these men communicated by means of head gestures, movements of the feet and hands, and grunts. When a difference arose between them, before using their hands they drew back their lips and measured their long canines to determine who the winner would be. "Later they were given language, but

173 226 "Despite their tears, the spirit gave the nets to three men who were present and repeated his teaching. The women left the water's edge while the men turned their new knowledge to account. But at the end of a few days the women became hungry; they went to ask for fish which for seven days was denied them. They then united with the fishermen and the Bozo people were the issue of these first marriages."

At first, fishing was reserved for the Bozo people alone and it was only later that the Bambara learned from the Bozo how to make and manage the fishing nets as well as how to carry out the numerous rites centered around them.

173 226 411 The Bambara practiced hunting and gathering before becoming farmers. It is interesting to compare the fishing net with the sling (ndõfere) now mostly used by children. One of its models (Fig. 7) is

• [532]

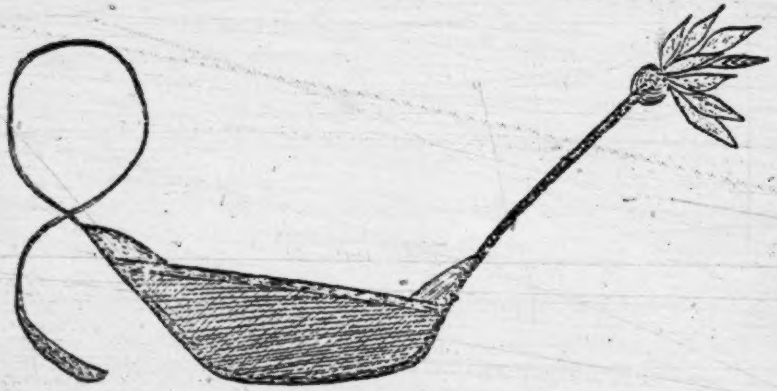


Fig. 7 — Sling (ndõfere) of the ancient Bambara (Drawing by an informant).

described as having been the most ancient of their weapons of the hunt and war. The central portion of this sling which in reality had the shape of a net /102/ (dyoba, literally, big net) woven from nyama fibers and similar to the one used by fishermen, was drawn out into two thongs. The right one (kinintegere, literally, tegere of the right) ended in a sort of a bouquet of wooden lamellae (tegere), making it easier to hold. The left one (missema, literally, little thing) or numan (literally, left) was free. The man would hold the weapon by both ends, putting stones in the net and "blowing on the right thong to give breath" to the sling. Placing his left foot forward, would twirl it rapidly and let go the left thong, thus releasing the projectiles.

291 which they got rid of by means of this dye. A live swallow was im-
773 mersed in the liquid, which was obtained by soaking the leaves and to
386 which was mixed ground charcoal, and later was released, thus conse-
crating the dye into which the loincloth was soaked.

291 The next garment was made of two strips, dyo kama (literally,
773, shoulder nets), which were hooked on to each arm. The strip on the
right arm, representing male, was attached by three thin straps (male
number). The other was attached by four straps, four and left being
female. The wearer would lie down over the strip on the right side

[532]

[787]

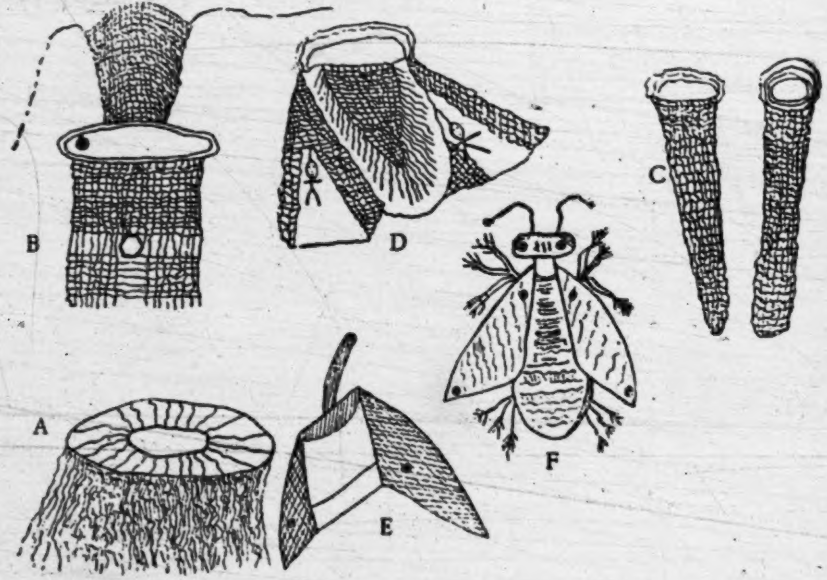


Fig. 8 —Ancient Clothing of the Bambara.

(A) The skirt of nyama fibers; (B) the loincloth; (C) the "shoulder nets"; (D) the tunic; (E) the bonnet are made of dyed and woven cotton threads. (F) the dung beetle, an insect which plays a part in geomancy. (Drawing by an informant).

and would cover himself with that on the left (Fig. 8, C).

Next, men made a kind of short tunic, wọlọ kama (literally, partridge wings), which was dyed red (Fig. 8, D). At the top of the openings where the arms passed were suspended /107/ two little figures (mani) carved out of wood. These represented the souls of the wearer, "took their life from the veins, and gave their strength to the

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412

2. The Blacks consider that the discovery of iron and metallurgy are due to the Gwonna. It is, however, not impossible that this technology was imported by craftsmen who came from the Mediterranean.

At a time when the men had left the village of Gwondougou, taking their altars with them, two girls left their home and went to live with two artisans of the Fané and Koumaré families.

[532]

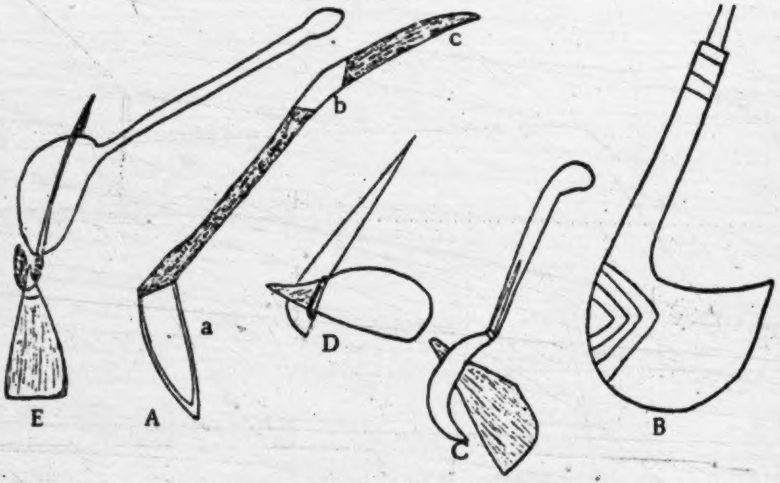

Fig. 9 —Weapons and tools of wood (A and B), of stone (C and D), of iron (E) of the ancient Bambara. (Drawing by an informant).

When the men returned to the village to get some hard stone which they would like to use, they were very much troubled not to find their girls. They dug the ground to search for them, thinking that they had been buried, since men in those days lived in laid-out underground holes. In the course of this work they discovered some rocks which were hitherto unknown to them and which are called farabele. The men thought these rocks beautiful and wished to use them. When placed in fire they were changed and became so hard /118/ that the hammers with which the men attempted to shape them split. The pieces of iron were then used as projectiles to replace the stones of the slings. But the blacksmiths, who had abducted the young girls and who had returned to the village with their wives, saw the new substance and suggested the idea of making axes out of it.

778 whether he is head of a family, head of a religious society, or a
794 bachelor.

These objects are hung from the ceiling or hidden away in corners from the looks of people and the risks of impurity. The walls of the room, daubed up to a third of their height /130/ with black earth,

[532]

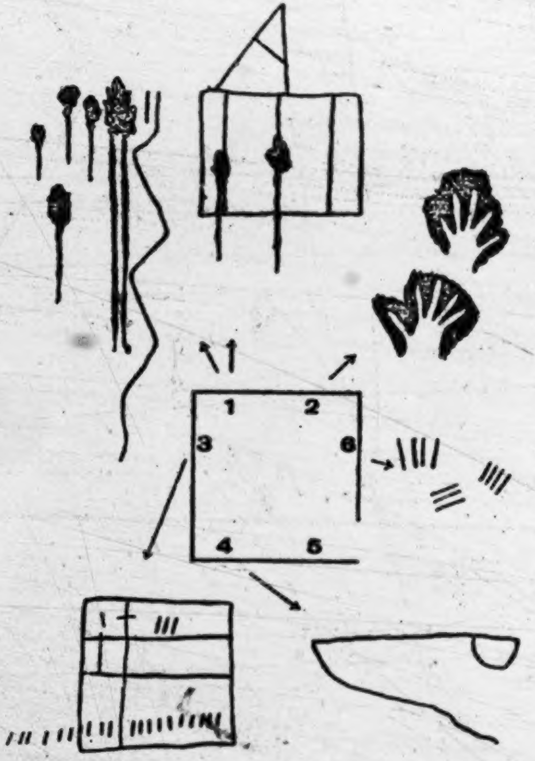

Fig. 10 — Diagram of the česo of Tètè, important citizen of Banankoroni and reproduction of the drawings on the walls: 1. The ancestors and their home. 2. The hands of the living. 3. The sky, space, the earth, and the 22 categories. 4. The Komo's whip. 5. A red stain. 6. The owner (three) and his two wives (four and four).

symbolizing Faro's presence and protection, are covered with paintings and drawings.

778 794 532 On one of the walls, small lines representing the ancestors and a broken line representing the human person are drawn with millet mash; on another, engraved with a sharp point, is a schematic geometrical figure of the ancestral home; it is accompanied by the silhouettes of two hands (see Fig. 10, 1 and 2), the hands of the living, "crossed and reaching out to the world of the dead." The left hand, symbol [826] of disorder, incertitude, and the variations of human conscience, is placed below to the right of the other to recall man's obligation towards his right hand, symbol of order, righteousness, fidelity, and work (1). Thus arranged, the hands express complete submission of the living to the ancestors.

Farther away are drawn the divisions of the universe (Fig. 10, 3) with the help of a square divided into three compartments symbolizing from top to bottom: the sky and water, the air, the earth.

In the upper square to the left, a line represents Faro in all his power, sole master of sky, water, and life. A horizontal line recalls his domination over the world. The lines that follow are his children. The total indicates the feminine form of the spirit.

All individual or family sacrifices offered to Faro are performed over his sign which the officiator rubs with copper and crushed tomatoes in order "to thank the spirit who protects his dya, and to pray to the spirit to give his wife children."

The central rectangle is the domain of Téliko: air and wind. The small line which vertically bisects the square on the left represents the spirit attempting to penetrate into Faro's plan to vanquish him. His defeat is indicated by the fact that the major portion of the line is situated in Téliko's domain, since the latter violated only temporarily the boundaries of his adversary.

The lower rectangle outlines the earth, seat of the Soba spirits. The row of 22 short lines which covers it recalls the 22 elements of creation, "the 22 things indispensable to man in this world."

On another wall, fire is indicated by two whips: that of Faro, lightning, and that of Komo, the law. They also recall "the power

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1. In making this drawing the following words are repeated: "I place my right hand on the wall night and day," *neben kinin bolo da koko la ǯu ni kle*.

778 794 532 of the initiates' word" and are exposed to fire to increase this power (Fig. 10, 4). Beside them, /131/ a large red stain, dyoli ǰikin, painted in ochre, states that man is the sacrificer, that the cult has immolation as its basis. Of such a man it is said that: "he reckons with the proof of the blood (1)" (Fig. 10, 5).

Above the bed which consists of a simple mat placed on the ground, three engraved lines symbolize the man and two four lines the two women who alternately share his bed (Fig. 10, 6).

778 794 532 413 In certain villages, the drawings are made by an instrument called ngwoni, used during the rituals of the year's "renewal" (2).

The point of baobab wood, which is used for engraving, is as slim as a slat and fits on to a kind of racket made of sunzuñ wood which holds a net of da fibers. The hide of a male goat, called soni wolo ni (literally, soul of the skin of sacrifice), and two handles of ngolobe wood (3) complete the assemblage. The net, made of sixteen cotton threads dyed with red ochre, kolo, is called ngwoni kene ba (literally, great space of the ngwoni) and represents Faro.

778 794 532 Before being used, the instrument is washed with water which will be used later to cook the food for the family. Next, tomatoes are pressed on the net and the juice runs into the hide which forms a pocket; holding the point in the right hand and the handle in the left, one then makes the drawings on the wall of the česo. The seeds of the fruit remain in the pouch until the following year to serve as a testimony to the offering. Next, with a red hot knife the following lines are engraved on the object: four lines, representing Faro, and two 16 lines, multiples of four, the female symbol. After each cut, "a rag saturated with fresh water is placed on it to soothe the pain." The frame is saturated with kola nut extract and four dots, the womb of women, are also marked with a black stone, kolofin. An egg is then smashed on the object to "refresh the soul of the ensemble."

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1. Dyoli tamaše mine ba.

2. Particularly at Banankoroni.

3. Combretum michrantum.

622 178 scars symbolizing the person (three and four) are made on it. At the moment the skin is buried under the seat, the following prayer is recited:

"I have sworn in your names by striking on the siriku of Yamba by (burying) the skin from the right and left sides of the forehead; the skin from the forehead (seven times)" (1).

[532]

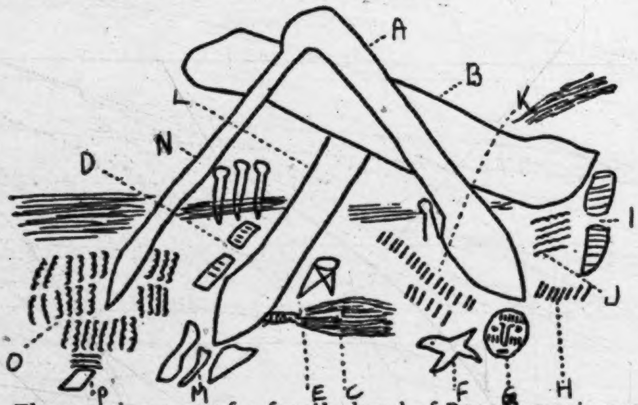

Fig. 11 — The wooden seat of a family head of Banankoroni, representing his joints. It is inserted into the ground in the courtyard above the bones of an albino, those of a child, and various symbolic objects. (Drawing by an informant.)

In (m) are placed the three principal bones of the albino; the two femurs and the right humerus, "so that the chief may have white

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1. Tena wolo fla kini ani numa yamba ka siriku nye di ka fo ani aw čua ye kena, tena wolo.

The prayer recalls here the acts of the fourth ancestor Yamba, who inaugurated the sacrifices of albinos to Faro, and his role as a chief beginning with this mythical period (see p. 46), a role which the present chief must fulfill with the same righteousness. The siriku is a small protective altar usually made from a hyena tail.

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> religious and social powers in ancient societies, it is interesting to point out that the Komo altars represent a very definite three-way division: the first is used for the conservation of spiritual forces (souls) of the group; the second presides exclusively over agricultural rites; the third is concerned with keeping the spiritual principles of individuals who died violently and of crop seeds; it played an important role during the wars. This threefold division is comparable on many points to that observed by M. Dumezil in Indo-European societies.

from the first crops /149/ used as offerings, are placed next to the sanctuaries or in the home of the chief (1).

> 1. In the village of Soroba the sanctuary includes seven granaries: three for small millet, saño; four for large millet, keninge. Seven is the number symbolic of the person, three for masculinity (small millet is male) and four for femininity (large millet is female).

C. The Mask

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The man who wears the mask during the ceremonies personifies the Komo. The head is sculptured in the shape of a human face or animal face. At Konodimini, it represents the panther; at Soungoba, a stork; at Banankoroni, an eagle; at Banoumbougoula, an elephant; at Ségoubougou, a vulture. The mask is usually decorated with elements borrowed from several animals. Thus, at Soroba, the skull and horns are those of a buffalo, but the jaw is that of a crocodile. It is, moreover, ornamented with the feathers of a wild duck (2).

> 2. An informant, who attended Komo ceremonies in a great number of villages, asserted he had never seen the same mask twice.

794 532 The head of the mask is usually made of bone (a human or hyena skull), or of wood painted white, black, and red. The mask, per se, is made in such a way as to frighten the future initiates. Just as the soul of a dead person, which requests offerings or threatens to drag his kin with it, is feared, so too is this fact which is in contact with the altar of souls (nimara boli) and which reflects the face of the ancestors. It also represents Faro: the mask is sometimes provided with a long beard symbolic of his hair, and lightly plastered with a layer of black earth taken from the river bank and impregnated with his power; it is sometimes smeared with the blood of a young girl who has died in the course of the ceremonies, in commemoration of the virgins annually offered to Faro in olden times.

Copper arrows (kun bye) are inserted into the skull and charms (kun kanana) are attached to them with the purpose of attacking the undesirables (noninitiates, women, or children) who approach the dance site.

"The eyes of the mask are large, so that the Komo may see and unveil everything; the nostrils are well opened for he must sniff everything, smell the good and bad of things. The mouth is twisted for the Komo does not talk; he only whistles and sings. The ears are vast so that he may hear everything, even that /150/ which each one says secretly in his heart. The chin of the mask is square, a sign of purity, decision, and clairvoyance." During the ceremonies, he silently opens his mouth. It is said that due to the presence of the altar of souls, nimara boli, "happiness penetrates him" (1). By singing, he redistributes this felicity to the audience and this is why he repeats the verses.

794 532 784 841 As a rule, women, griot and noninitiates are taboo to the mask. To each of the elements composing it also belongs a particular taboo. Thus, the head of the mask must never touch menstrual blood. Any infraction would bring about "a visible change to the face" and the altars contained in the sac carried by the dancer would be without strength. For this reason, no member must participate in the ceremonies if his wife is in a menstrual period.

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1. Here dun, literally, penetration of happiness.

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292 The costume worn by the dancer is held up by a sort of carcass (bry) made of ngolobe (1) wood used because of its flexibility, and is

1. Combretum micranthum.

enveloped with a light blanket for protection. Inside the bry are suspended various flutes (komo fle) which are blackened by the blood of sacrifices offered to "improve their sound" and which will be used in the course of the ceremonies. Along with these flutes is a little bag filled with spare spider webs. Any individual who goes under the [834] bry to dance must abstain from sexual relations for a specified period of time prior to the ceremony.

The costume (nya) which covers the carcass is made with the clothing of individuals killed by the Komo (2). Contrary to the bry, which

2. When a guilty member or a noninitiate is "killed" by the Komo, his clothing is offered to it.

has no active role but serves only to isolate the dancer inside the mask, the religious role of the costume is very important. It represents the "body and the valor of the ancestors." It is not the object of blood sacrifices, but is covered by a powder made of the bones of individuals killed by the Komo to which has been added kola nut juice. The 794 cloth is dyed with black earth taken from the river bank in exchange 292 for a small offering of copper, gold, or cereals. Drawings called 532 komo mani (literally, little people of the Komo) are made on the cloth to represent Faro on the one hand, recognizable by his long black hair, and on the other the eight ancestors who received the word. All the first agricultural implements of the Bambara are drawn with red ochre. The feathers of black, white, and red egrets are then sewn on the nya to hide /151/ the black earth, which is the spirit's abode. Two days before everything is taken out, these feathers are the object of offerings of kola nut juice, millet mash, and the blood of fowls.

794 The costume, like the head of the mask, must be seen neither 292 by women nor by noninitiates. "Its color would change and it would 784 become dull, making a purification necessary."

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771 The body of the mask has two arms into which the dancer intro-
532 duces his own. The arms terminate in a hook, koli (3), which is

794 532 3. Koli means nail or spur in reference to a rooster and, by extension, hook.

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impregnated with black earth from the river and made of copper, Faro's metal, soaked in the venom of a viper before the hook was formed. These hooks are also annually soaked in red venom mixed with pepper. All these preparations make them dangerous weapons used for different purposes during the ceremonies.

The right hook (kinin koli) is used to kill the guilty ones or the undesirables. A slight would brings about death which is then attributed to Faro. The left hook defends members of the society against the dangers which are present, even for them, in the actions and emanations of the right hook. It contains two shards of black pottery, Faro's taboo, which keep away and thus diminish the latter's power. During the dance the Komo, wishing to protect one of the members under its jurisdiction, waves the left arm over him to attenuate the strength of the right. During funerals a gesture of the left hook will indicate the deceased's membership in the society and will assure him protection in the hereafter.

[784 823] The taboo of the copper hooks is the same as Faro's concerning this metal. Just as no one would cross the Niger wearing an object or an ornament of copper, similarly no one would wear copper in attending the Komo ceremonies.

The wearing of the mask, which is much sought after by several initiates at each ceremony, is assigned to one of them by the chief. This role involves risks which are diminished by certain precautions such as abstention from sexual relations before the ceremony. On the day of the ceremony, the elders make the wearer drink millet beer until he is completely inebriated; then for a moment they apply to his chin and abdomen the nyama boli which he will carry in a bag during the ceremony. He also puts on a ritual headdress which sometimes has incorporated in it a particle of the one belonging to the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé. The mask is then adjusted on his head, the flute slipped between his teeth, while the chief assures him of his good faith and proves to him that he runs no danger.

/152/ D. Musical Instruments

794 534 The emergence of the Komo is accompanied by rhythms played on drums, dyiri kolo (literally, bone, wood), made of hides stretched

794 chiefs, which they did. They interrupted the dances and refused to
773 recognize the Komo which was dissolved, leaving the chief alone.
539 But Garou, who had lied, died shortly after that.

The chief of Kankan carried away the altars and put them under the protection of the Komo chief of Koulikoro, and the members participated in the ceremonies of this locality. Moridje went to Nyamina and, in the same way as Garou, incited the members to engage in a kind of rivalry with the Komo of Koulikoro. In the course of a ceremony celebrated in this latter village, he called forth the Komo of Nyamina, using the authority attached to his father's name, and offerred a male goat to both groups. The two chiefs refused, arguing with reason that one victim could not satisfy two Komo. Moridje paid no attention and brought the two maskers face to face with the goat between them. A fight took place with the animal as a pawn, each masker using his magical powers to win it, and the members gathered behind their respective masks shouting: "the goat is ours." Later, the mask wearer also died prematurely.

794 To avoid the possibility that members will give their allegiance to two Komo, they are made to lick the mask once again, while the following prayer is recited: "If you lick the mask, may you not make the *flẵvlã̃ña*, may you not perpetrate a betrayal" (1). If, after swearing this oath, the party betrays it, he becomes "a rotten person" (*matolilo*) and loses the esteem and confidence of his companions.

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869
532 As the young men grow with years and increase in knowledge, the instruction they are given is increasingly comprehensive. The head of the Komo, accompanied by men of his age grade, takes the postulant into the bush and questions him about his intentions and aims. Before indicating to him the group to which he is to be attached and introducing its members to him, he teaches him by drawing on the ground the combination of signs representing the arrangement in the universe of the Komo society, a combination which is usually reproduced before each ceremony and which permits the participants to recognize their place (see Fig. 12).

This drawing, called *wolo ti*, "sign of the generation," is composed of two long lines cutting each other at right angles and oriented

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1. *Nye komo kun no, i kana seka flẵvlã̃ña kę, nye komo kun no, i kana seka dyẵfa kę.*

794 according to the cardinal points. The point of juncture is placed in the
869 center of a square called bara kęnę, "rhythm of space," the internal
angles of which are armed with hooks. The two crossed lines are /157/
53 the symbol of the multiplication and extension of beings and things in the universe which is represented by the central square. The four angle hooks express the creation rotating upon itself (1). It is therefore,

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1. See p. 20. We have here a special representation of the swastika whose branches are turned toward the center.

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a schematic representation of the order and movement of the universe.

Along the extension of the diagonal lines outside the central square are drawn five signs which are each the symbol of a category of initiates or of a ritual object; these signs also indicate the place of the participants during the ceremonies.

On the eastern and western branches are placed the signs of the older initiates:

1. dyę, "union." Sign of the Komo Society in its entirety, the body of its members.
2. doniya, "knowledge." The point of the angle is "the point of knowledge" and its opening "the collective voice of the society." We are dealing here with the science which the initiates possess.
3. bako, "link." This closed sign expresses the ties which bind the initiates one to another and to the Komo, as well as the group spirit of which they must give proof.
4. sõni, "good will, consent." The point of departure of the stroke from the line indicates that the initiate is free to enter the society, to climb the steps of the successive grades indicated by the broken line, but not to leave it, and that he must have the will to follow the rules of the organization.
5. tyɛ̃, "truth." The members must be sincere. The two symmetrical hooks indicate that one must begin with truth and end with it.
6. tyɛ̃ šere, "evidence of truth." This drawing, testimony to the preceding, is sometimes attributed to strangers who come to attend the ceremony and recognize the conventional signs (2).

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2. See p. 211.

794 869 532 7. bẽni so, "house of agreement." Evidence of the sign 1, it represents a sickle, symbol of the house and of the union of the members. In serious cases, to stop a quarrel or to settle a difference, the Komo chief presents an ancient sickle and says: "It is the proof of the agreement, it is the evidence of the union" (1).

8. ǰigi so, "house of support." The dot symbolizes the komo so and the whole recalls the support which the chief offers the members. Orphans sit in the spot where this sign is drawn.

/158/ 9. so ba, "big house." The drawing represents "the egg of the world" and marks the spot where the oldest geomancer in the village stands alone.

10. komba, "big door." Sign and place of the person who performs the sacrifice, for the sacrifice "opens the doors" and puts man into contact with the invisible.

On the northern branch are placed the signs which concern the young initiates.

11. timidẽ, "circumcised." This refers to those circumcised in the next to the last age grade. The sign is that of the completed person (2).

12. timidẽ kle, "circumcised of the last age grade." The drawing shows the incomplete person.

13. tyi dẽ, "son of work." These are the sons of the kworę duga (3). The sign, drawn inverse to that of the person, expresses the /159/ necessary disturbances and the pleasantries brought by these dignitaries to the Kworè and Komo ceremonies.

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1. Beni so yeta do, dye šere do.

2. See G. Dieterlen, "Les signes des Kéita du Mandé /Signs of the Kéita among the Mande/," l'Homme. Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie, de linguistique (in press).

3. See p. 220.

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14. soni dẽ, "son of the sacrifice." Drawn on the place for the sacrificer's son, the sign includes a horizontal line representing the knife, for the son may be called upon to replace his father in performing his duty during the ceremonies.

15. yeleka tigela, "the laughing man who cuts." This is the individual in charge of proclaiming the good or bad position of the victims which have been sacrificed.

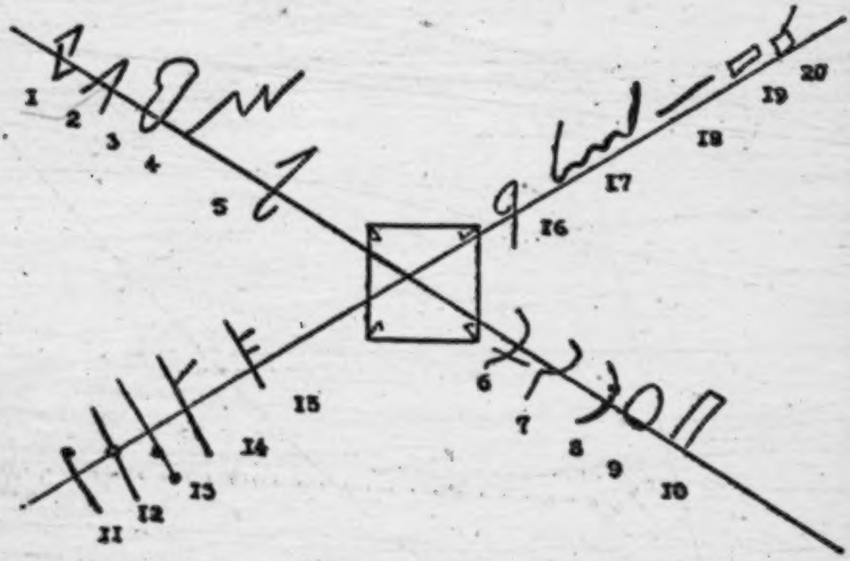

Fig. 12 — Drawing made on the ground by the chief of the Komo to mark, by their signs, the places of the participants during the ceremonies. This drawing, observed in the village of Dougoutiguibougou, is complete. When the branches forming an x are missing, the central square is always represented. (Drawing by an informant)

On the southern branch are placed the signs representing the blacksmiths; they relate to the institution of circumcision and to the functioning of the Komo of which these artisans are the dignitaries.

16. boñema, "honored person." Place of the aged blacksmiths.

17. wara da dyuru, "string from the mouth of the man armed with hooks." This is the small string of the flute, called "voice" of the Komo.

18. wara da, "mouth of the man armed with hooks." The flute of the Komo.

794 19. pembele. This sign represents both the society's pembele and
869 the board of the same name used for circumcision.

20. gosilãnde. The sign designates the primitive club and the small
532 mallet used in circumcising.

The ensemble of these figures, representing a summary of the universe in its arrangement and its movement, forms the scene upon which the actors in the ceremony take their places. The latter are in a way the living embodiment of these drawings as well as the movements which change the order of presentation and must be executed with special precautions. In effect, any change made in the arrangement of the actors in the scene is felt to have repercussions in the universal organization. This is why the movements of each one give rise to rituals of forgiveness and purification concerning the sign corresponding to him (1).

1. See below.

F. Ceremonies of the Komo

794 796 The ceremonies in which the mask participates take place several times a year according to the decision of the members. Their purpose is to discuss the interests of the society, to make joint decisions assuring the prosperity of its members, to promote harvesting, and to commemorate the organization of the Komo.

Three principal ceremonies are celebrated: the first, called /160/ "anniversary of the Komo" (komo sanyelema), at the end of the dry season; the second after the harvest, for offering of the first produce, as the mask is never taken into the fields at the time of cultivation; the third during the cold season at the time of circumcision. They involve sacrifices offered in the cemetery in honor of the dead as well as divining rites. Occasional ceremonies may also take place inbetween upon the membership's decision; the mask is taken out for purifications. The neighboring societies are generally invited to
[574] attend the reunions and the drinking which follow (2).

2. The important Komo chiefs are thus consulted by strangers in the village, who sometimes travel considerable distances.

794 785 uncomplainingly the burns inflicted upon them with a torch and they whip themselves vigorously. The chief next teaches them the role of the Kworè spirits, the rituals celebrating them, and the symbolic value of the objects of the cult.

794 522 Some of the members are designated to take the role of kworę duga during the ceremonies. Masked and waving freshly cut branches in each hand, they mount a wooden horse, the kworęduga so (1). Thus

● [532 778]

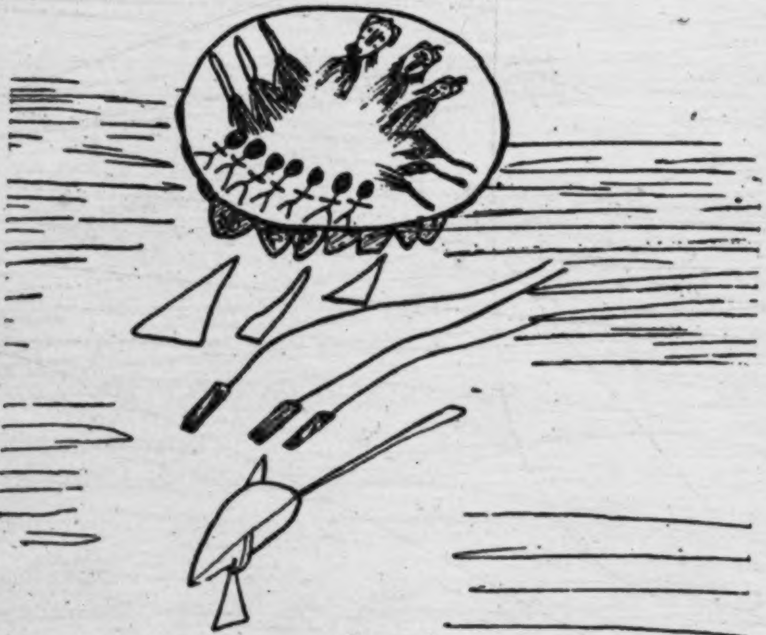

Fig. 13 —Stone altar of the Kworè of Banankoroni under which are buried three neolithic axes, three whips, the ritual iron axe, kongobwona. The drawing, made in the course of the annual ceremony, represents the first three of the eight ancestors who received the word, the members of the society, and the Kworè whips; the black spot is the "womb of Faro." (Drawing by an informant) 1

1. The kworę duga (literally, vulture of the Kworè), also called togoro koya, "jesters," are as their name indicates, jesters who have the right to joke about

794 instruction and initiation. Five years are thus necessary to reach the
highest rank. Each promotion is paid for by the individual providing
[782] two roosters whose throats are cut upon the altars at the end of the
annual ceremony which takes place in the bush under a tree called the
kalabana, following communally performed labor. After meal, a
[526] fight called bari, organized under the direction of the chiefs, puts the
young boys in opposite groups and gives them the opportunity to show
their courage and their initiative.

794 The members' activity consists of collective work at the time of
476 the cultivation. The millet and the gifts in kind received in payment
for the work are owned communally.

A. Material Objects of the Cult.

794 The society is the owner of ritual objects such as a mask and whips
778 which are usually placed in a hut, ndomo buku, at some distance
534 from the village.

The objects, numbering five, are rudimentary musical instruments. The wara, the clawed one, or diara, the lion, is a wooden bull-roarer approximately 35 centimeters in length, which is manipulated by means of a string a meter long. Sometimes the object is of iron and of smaller dimensions. The tori, toad, is a small box which gives off a nasal sound when it is scratched. The kono, bird, is made of two pieces of gourd bound together by spider webs. The wulu, dog, is a small calabash of about 10 centimeters in diameter, punctured by four holes. A string, threaded through its neck, allows it to be rotated like a rhombos. The ǰineble (literally, red spirit) is a buffalo horn pierced by three holes, /172/ obstructed by spider webs, into which one blows and which produce a loud, flute-like sound. One society usually owns several specimens of each of these instruments.

794 The mask, said to be the most ancient object, is of sculptured wood
778 representing a human face crowned by several vertical, rather long
532 horns (1). The whole is completely decorated with cowrie shells and red kise (2), grains which represent the blood from the offerings. The

1. The masks most often carry eight horns, but this rule is not always respected.

2. Linociera sudarica.

794 high forehead, black and always smeared with karite butter, confers
778 upon the face a beneficial power. The whole mask is regularly rubbed
532 with ground charcoal powder and with the juice of the kola nut.

The whips of the mask (ndomo busa) are made of ñuana branches
794 famous for their suppleness. They are made at the time of the annual
778 ceremony and only renewed the following year. At the time of their
manufacture, they are soaked in water, which the members of the
society then drink "in order not to have to suffer from the blows which
they will receive."

Each member also possesses a long whip made of the branches of
[824] a bush, the ngere ni, (1) which is also called "tree of Faro" for it
grows in water, and which contains part of the beneficial power of the
spirit. The whip is used to try out the children's courage. The one
who cries or complains will carry this handicap with him through life;
even after his circumcision he will be referred to as a coward.

B. Initiation

794 Each new grade is acquired in the course of the annual ceremony
526 which takes place after the harvest. An elder entrusted with the
sacrifices cuts the throats of the roosters offered by the postulants
over the tree of the ndomo (Pl. V, a) and over the ritual objects
placed at his feet, and then pours boiled millet as an offering.
During this time the young people plow the ground where the contest,
bari (2), is to take place; this fight will pit them against each other
and give them the opportunity to show their courage and competitive
spirit.

The chief designates the fighters two by two who are watched over /173/ by the dyolokotigi. In the contest, during which any use of legs or feet disqualifies the fighter, the one who makes his adversary fall three consecutive times is chosen to be initiated into a higher grade on the following night. After this contest, the losers must bring two additional roosters if they also wish to be initiated. Then a meal eaten in common brings together the members of the society and the postulants.

1. Hibiscus pandoriformia.

2. To make oneself fall, the joust.

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Before the operation, the blacksmith washes the handle, an act which parallels /182/ the washing of the penis, and draws on the blade ritual designs either in charcoal or with boiled millet (1).

1. Some artisans have, once and for all, engraved the ritual designs on the blade.

The three figures *če mani saba* (literally, three little male persons) represent the first three circumcised men (Gwonna, Gwondo, and Gwonkè) who belonged to the blacksmiths' families at the village of Gwondougou. Every descendant of these ancestors must be circumcised like them. In making the drawing the operator says:

"Gwonna, Gwondo, Gwonkè, you have discovered iron and you withstood the pain (of the first circumcision), you feel shame neither by night nor by day; our feet are placed in your footsteps; the iron did not shame you, let it not shame us; it is the will of Faro... attack, attack, attack" (these last three words are addressed to the knife) (2).

2. *Gwonna, gwondo, gwonkè, aw ye neke damene,*
ka neke gale munyu, aw ma malo šu ani kle,
an se daledo an se danola, neke maw malo a ka
na an malo, faro hakili do, šu šu šu.

The four figures, *muso mani nani* (literally, four little female persons), are the first four excised women, the inventors of pottery, who were the wives of these blacksmith.

The bird is the *tatugu koroni*, the incarnation of the eight ancestors of the blacksmiths. It recalls that circumcision is painful, hard, hot, comparable to the effects of fire, and that it is necessary to labor and suffer in order to withstand the cutting knife. This is also what the artisan recalls when, as he operates the children, he sings several times over:

"The knife is hot; the timorous man cannot stand it. It is a purification" (3).

3. *A ka gwã, če ǰito tise ka muñu,*
saniyali do.

304 532 413 The foreskin, which is tied by a string (drawn at the center of the blade) at the moment of the operation, is placed upon the pembele (black rectangle) and the cutting knife is tapped with a small wooden mallet, gossilã (drawn at the tip of the knife). These three figures receive during operation the offering of the first spurt of blood from the circumcised boy.

The line, which crosses the blade along the middle, separates the bird and the ancestors who gave proof of courage from the instruments used for the circumcision. As a division it symbolizes first of all that each grade of circumcised boys must be considered apart from the others. This is its social meaning. But the delicacy of the line itself has a meaning which applies to the individual: each one must, in his own image, be morally /183/ simple, just, and sensitive. By conforming to the rule symbolically indicated by the design, the individual will become a member of the elite.

304 787 821 The date of the operation is fixed when Mousso Koroni's star, sigi dolo (Sirius), rises in the evening at a certain point in the east (1).

After the boys to be operated have been counted, each gets ready, and on the appointed day the mother washes her son's penis with water in which an iron axe or hoe has been soaked. Then she prepares a dish 362 of rice, ye farina to "dish of man's bravery," which the child eats before he is led to the place of the operation, called yorola sakole "reserved place," located in the bush.

304 326 When all are gathered together the blacksmith-circumciser operates upon each one in turn after he has made them sit down in a circle on the ground. Pulling and twisting the foreskin, he ties it with the string which he keeps taut by securing its extremity between his toes. He next places the member upon the pembele, rests the knife /on the foreskin/ and taps /it/ with the wooden mallet. In this way he cuts off the foreskin while saying the following words:

"Circumcised one, your father, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, the father of that one too, the ear (the genitals) of the ancestors of the latter have withstood (the pain); you, yourself, withstand it as

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1. See note 1 p. 47. To determine the date, however, the ndomo society may be consulted, which sometimes postpones it to keep its members longer.

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/184/ they did. Faro, Teliko, Soba! You who are a man, your number is three; three of the penis, three of the twins, designs of the penis, it is the tradition, withstand it; Faro!" (*ter*) /repeat three times/(1).

1. *Bolokodɛ̃* *i* *fa*, *i* *moke*, *o* *ta* *fa*, *o* *ta* *fa* *were*, *o* *ta* *fa* *klo* *masamaw* *ye* *munyu*, *i* *yere* *ka* *munyu* *u* *cǒko* *la*, *faro*, *teliko*, *soba*, *o* *ye* *če* *ta* *saba* *ye*, *wulu* *wo*, *flani* *wo*, *kolo* *nyeke*, *lada* *do*, *i* *ka* *munyu*; *faro* (ter).

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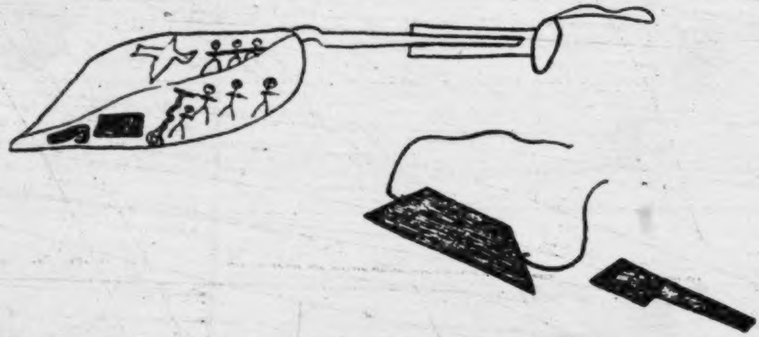

Fig. 15. — The circumcision knife decorated with ritual designs: three men and four women (representing the number seven); the bee eater symbolizing fire; the string; the small board; and the hammer used for the operation (these last two objects are reproduced on a larger scale to the right). (Drawing by an informant.)

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After the removal, the operator makes scars upon the child's penis, called *faro* *nyeke* (literally, signs of Faro). Under the muscle *wulu* *dyuru* (literally, rope of the penis), a small hole is carefully made. Since the penis is considered a source of strength, the muscle which maintains it and erects it binds the circulation of the blood and helps man in all his acts. It is through this muscle that man transmits nerves to his children. A straight organ, firmly held in check, keeps the man and his descendants from numerous illnesses; the aim of this mutilation is to obtain complete and well formed foreskins and clitoris in the children of the party concerned. After the perforation,
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the operator places in the orifice a little pepper and tomato juice while saying:

304 [292 534] During the seclusion, they wear about their head a piece of white cloth, Faro's color, which has the same function as the cap of the circumcised boy. They shake a gourd *bolokode barani*, filled with eight grains or small pebbles, whose sound keeps passers-by away. The leaps, which they perform over the fire made of clothes, gourds, and refuse that have been ignited, end the seclusion and rid them of their *wanzo*, which goes to settle in the altars of the *ndomo*.

It is said of a young girl who was well excised that she is well behaved and carries herself with dignity. On the contrary, it is said of a girl of light morals "that her hands were not washed clean" (1).

1. *A bolo ma ko ka dye ya.*

which means that she was improperly excised.

Funerals

761 764 775 The effect of death is to dissociate the elements composing the person. The body becomes a corpse (*šu*) from which the /189/ *ni* and the *dya* escape to follow their particular destinies, while the *tere* is transformed into *nyama*, an active and dangerous force which wanders about the deceased. The funeral rites aim first to channel the deceased's spiritual elements which must be conserved in the interest of the deceased as well as that of the community. Moreover, through the care given to the body and to these elements, the memory of the dead person is piously kept up. The notion of a final resurrection, promised to all who have lived, inspires these preparations. The bones of the deceased, which are like the exuvia of his physical body, its solid and durable framework, join the exuvia of his soul which is kept in the altars of the Komo. Thus, at the end of time, the dead man "will rise and, to everyone's joy, join his family."

764 The funeral rites, which the Bambara have always celebrated, have evolved along with their beliefs. At the time when the cult of the balanza was flourishing, the dead bodies were hung from trees until they rotted, their bones picked up and kept by their descendants. [532] The ancestors of the Gwonna then carved pieces of *sunzun* wood called *mani* (literally, little person) in the image of the dead. The length of the wood was proportionate to the length of the body; the head, arms, legs, and genitals were carefully reproduced. The *mani*

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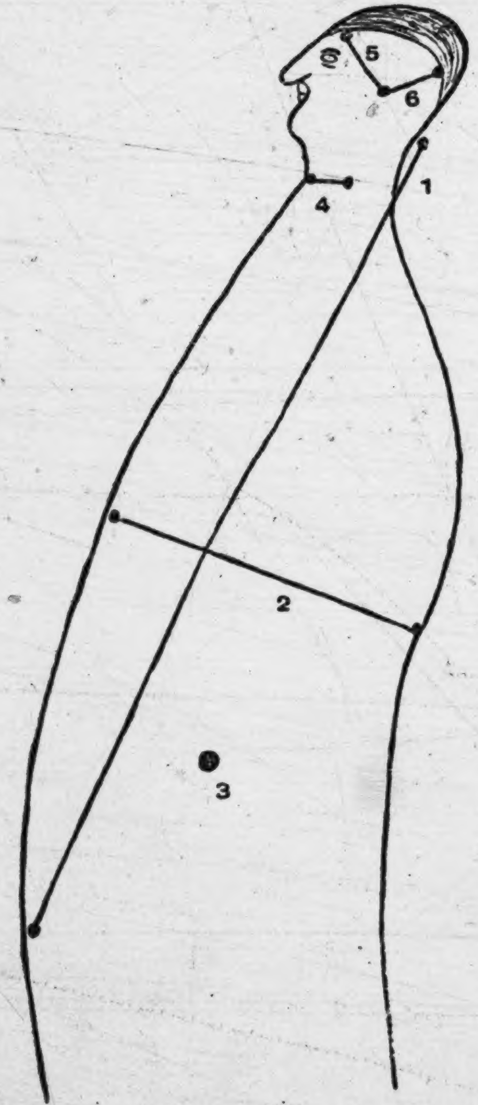

Fig. 16 — Drawing made with millet mash by the chief of the Komo on a cadaver. (Drawing by an informant.)

766 532 After the burial,[1] a drawing is made on the sanctuary with millet mash made of grain from Faro's field; this drawing represents the dead man and the mutilations inflicted upon him. The seven attending elders close their eyes as a sign of respect in order not to "register a drawing made for Faro." In fact, its aim is to obtain the spirit's pity and to ask him to include the dead among the count he keeps of his subjects. [769] It is also in front of this drawing that the family will come to make an offering and mourn every week.

II. Rituals of the Refuse

364 778 The debris, sweepings, and refuse collected in the homes, courtyards, public squares, and crossroads all contain forces which men have communicated to them.

The rituals, of which these are the objects and which vary according to their origin, have as their aim the offering of these forces to Faro who returns them to men purified and regenerated in the form of rainwater with which he irrigates the fields and in the form of ponds and wells. They are thus redistributed and used again for the benefit of the community.

The refuse at the crossroads, called dangu kalaw, stalks or straw of the dangu, contains the force, nyama, of all the beings that have trampled it.

/202/ The refuse from the homes contains the wanzo of the uncircumcised, the nyama which the inhabitants have to bear for having killed animals or insects and for having received insults, and their good or bad tere. These forces, called wanzo dla (literally, to arrange the wanzo) (1) or nyama dla, constantly come to the aid of all the members of the family; they improve the wanzo of the uncircumcised, facilitate the women's childbirth, and renew the vigor of the old men. A small altar, konye, kept in the room reserved for the head of the family, is dedicated to them.

After the coming out of the Komo, the sweepings gathered on the spot where the dances take place contain the forces of the members.

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1. This term is applied to them particularly in houses where there are many children.

[1] [Of a drowned person — Analyst]

196 183 all is returned to him. He then goes to the river or to the edge of Faro's pond, where he drinks a little water as a purification for the year to come.

2. On the day chosen for the family ceremony, the *ngoni* is solemnly removed from the room where it is usually kept hidden from view, and is presented to the family assembled before the door.

The rhythm called *kalafoli* is beaten out on the frame; the effect of this is to return the soul (*ni*) of the participants to the river or well. Then another rhythm, representing Faro, is played on the net to call in the renewed soul which has been returned by the spirit. Everyone opens his mouth and inhales the new, beneficial emanations coming over the family. When the rhythm ceases they all shut their mouths and return home without speaking. At the entrance door the children are given little strokes on the back with a little rope, *sebe dyuru* /208/ "to receive and withstand all that the new year will bring."

The instrument is then replaced in the home while all the participants shut their eyes in order not to see it. The owner goes into a trance, a fact which shows that Faro himself carried the instrument to the place where it will remain during the year. The man walks out backwards from the room where he has placed it and is carried into his *česo*, where he receives special care intended to return him to his normal state, which includes a purification performed on his individual altar, *čuafebyěni* (1).

1. See p. 175.

3. The collective ceremonies for the renewal of the person are first performed on the stone *fara ba* of the village.

The "signs of creation" (*bolo ti doniya*), engraved with a red-hot iron on a gourd as a request to the ancestors for their support, are presented to the participants. Next, the stone is removed and the objects covered by it are checked, the group thus assuring itself that none has been displaced during the year. Then they proceed to the
196 reconstruction of the ritual drawings. The operator first draws the
183 torches representing the fire used in olden times by the ancestors to
532 defend themselves against attacks and dangers from the outside while they were building the village. The following prayer is recited:

"You, torch of fire, I have prepared you in the mountain (from which our ancestors came), you who keep the souls of the village, protect us from those who wish us harm, fire" (*ter*) (2).

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> 2. *E* *mõ* *ñõ* *tasuma,* *ñe* *e* *šu* *kulu* *la* *kę* *dla,*
> *dugu* *nimara* *ba* *ke,* *i* *kã* *kla* *kelenyõ* *na,*
> *tasuma* (ter).

●

Then he draws, as on the ancestors' caps, a black dot which represents the womb of women as well as Faro. The latter will help men by giving them water, for without his help "none, not even the Kworè, have the rain necessary for agriculture.

Three small figures represent the three responsible chiefs of the Kworè who are subjected to the fire rites and who withstand with courage for the common welfare all the sufferings and burns. The other members are represented by four silhouettes to indicate their inferior position by a feminine number. The entire grouping of personages and torches converges on the black dot to show that "the men by their feet and the torches by their fire throw back their *nyama* toward him."

796 183 [185] When the drawings are finished, all the participants in turn place their little finger and then their tongue on them to abandon the *nyama* of the year and to receive new forces. The women use the same gestures as the men but repeat them four times. Each person then receives, respectively, three /209/ or four lashes of the whip on his back so as to integrate properly within him these new elements (3).

> 3. The little finger acts upon the *nyama* of the body, and the tongue upon the *nyama* of words.

The children, led by their mothers, are the objects of similar attentions. The boys press their toes upon the stone; the little girls present their genitals to it to prove their femininity. All are then seated in turn on the stone so that the old *nyama* leaves them through the anus. Then, they are lifted up above it by their parents and "are shaken in all directions to settle properly the newly received *nyama* in them." The mothers pass their hands over the fact of their children and then over their own, a gesture which binds them to their offspring for the year to come.

The assembly goes to the Kworè stone where the cardinal points are renewed by brandishing lighted torches to the west, north, south, and then east. Each person apologizes for the faults committed during

191 534 the goatskin thongs (ngoni dyuru, literally, ropes of the ngoni). At the end of the stalk, ngoni ku, is affixed an iron percussion plate (boso) decorated with rings of the same metal (nyège nyegele) which are the "earrings of the spirits." These rings are said to be "multicolored' for the sound they emit is blurred and confused.

[532]

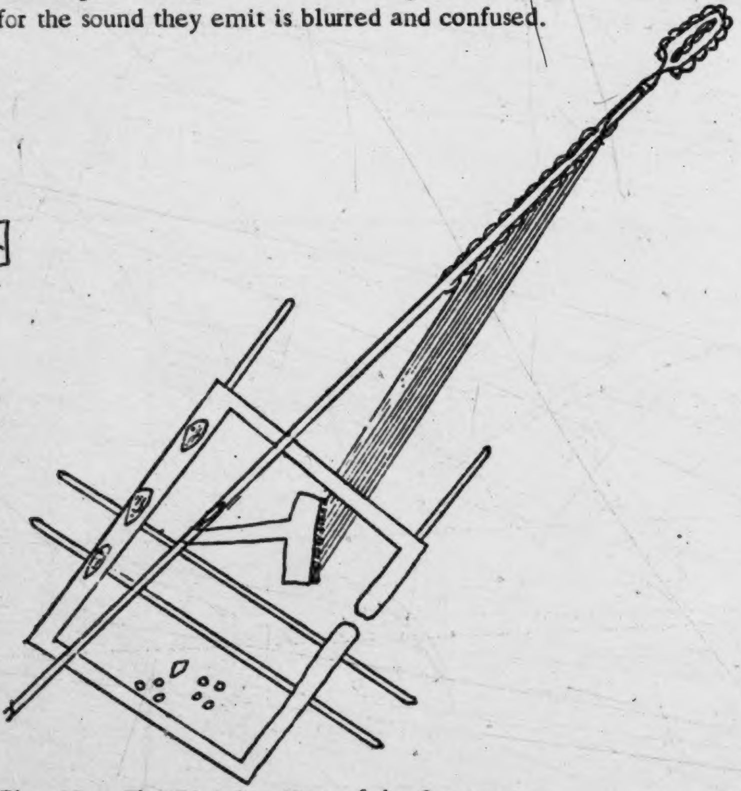

Fig. 17 —The Divining Harp of the Soma.

The instrument represents the face of the ancestor Koumabana who received "the word," and his tomb; on another level, it symbolizes also the face of the diviner and his tomb. (Drawing by an informant.)

When the percussion plate is placed on the handle, "it increases the sounds and filters them in the air, which pleases the spirits and calls them to the diviner whom they assist during his work." If the instrument /222/ is used without the percussion plate, that is to say, for a secular purpose, the spirits are not alerted by the playing of the music.

791 534 The skin, stretched on the box by means of goatskin thongs, is soaked in water over which the name of the spirit Téliko has been pronounced forty-nine times. The supporting strings are made of twisted shreds of shrouds picked up in a cemetery. The musical strings are made of goatskin, numbering eight, /223/ symbol of the word (1), and are named as follows, beginning with the shortest: kumabana, fa dẽ (son of the father), fa (father), fa koroke (elder brother of the father), fa dogone (younger brother of the father), ba (mother), modẽ (grandson), fa so (house of the father).

Tied to a bridge, ǰiri ni (literally, teeth of the ngoni), which represents the mouth and teeth of Koumabana, they are the ancestor's words. On another level, they are also the home and the family of the spirit Téliko.

Of a relatively equal length in different harps, they give eight different notes; the intervals are called dyuru fara dye (2).

[532] On the right side of the box the three first ancestors of the Bambara are sometimes drawn; Koumabana and the two elders who died after him. They may be recognized by the hair with which their faces are covered, just as those of the ancestors to whom the razor was unknown (3).

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1. The harp of the Soma differs from that of the griot which usually has even strings.

2. On some instruments we have observed, the first and the eighth string gave the same note at an interval of an octave. It may be predicted that a thorough study of Bambara music would bring to light a system of correspondences between the disposition of musical sounds and that of the world. M. Griaule, in his research on the Dogon harp, has already discovered a relationship between the notes, the numbers, and the universe.

3. This detail has been observed on ancient instruments in the region of Koutiala.

Plate 4

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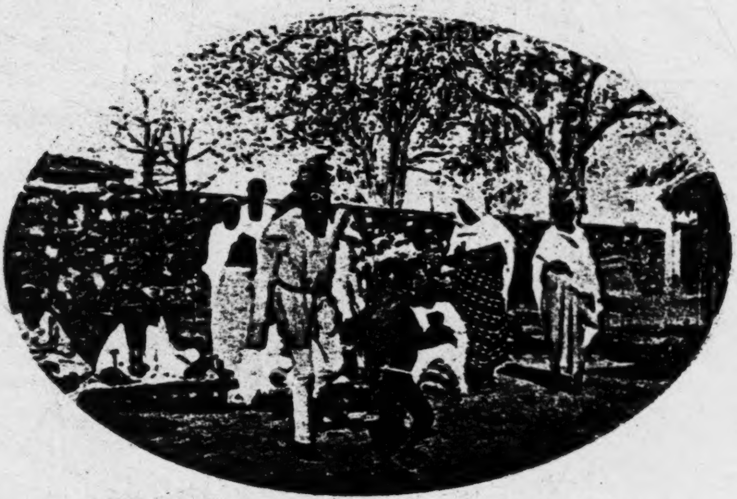

Fig. 7. Penperenni, small dancers in costume.

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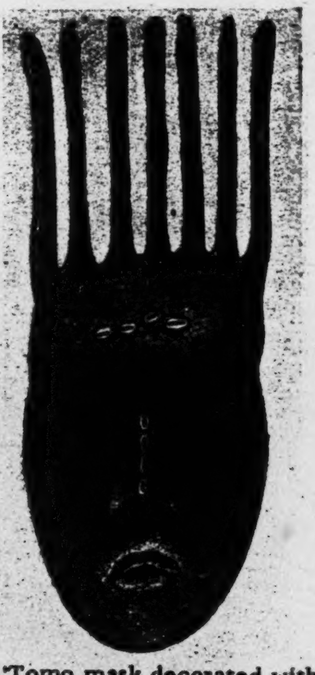

Fig. 8. N'Tomo mask decorated with cowries.

[End Plate 4]

764 left of each chamber's entrance and was left to go out by itself. The body was placed in the middle of the chamber, the feet to the north and the head to the south. At the time of a new burial, all the long bones were gathered in one corner of the chamber and all the skulls in another, for the number of deceased was verified by these. Finally in the Kokum region hundreds of tumuli cover vaults consisting of a
346 heart-shaped chamber cut in the laterite and preceded by a vestibule to the west and by steps cut into the rock which lead to the open air. The outside and inside doors are closed by a slab of laterite. The outside door is hidden under the tumulus, with three equally-spaced stones marking the location. The skulls are arranged in a dome and separated from the long bones. Lastly, the tomb of the village's founding ancestor is found in the center of the village, to the north of the old fortified court of the chiefs' house.

III. Art

517 The Bambara conception of art is very different from the occidental idea of art for art's sake. Every object that we find beautiful has a precise social, religious, or technical significance for the Bambara: "The art of the Blacks is purposeful ... it is gratuitous projection in a material of ideas and knowledge which bring the user or spectator nothing other than themselves. Doubtless crude in the first stages, often the product of superficial knowledge or even of calculated errors, the esthetic sense of the Blacks is clarified and affirmed as they learn and as they pass from a 'light knowledge' to a knowledge of the great secrets. It seems impossible to an educated man that he could make an abstraction of his knowledge to judge a dance or to become enthusiastic over the playing of a clever harpist. What we call beauty is for the Black the adequacy of the object to represent that for which it is created." (1)

1. M. Griaule, "L'art nègre" [Negro Art], *Présence africaine.*

532 The masks conceal the person and transform the human being into a supernatural being. They are the privileged instrument of the
769 *nyama*, the first [104] model having been carved to fix the vital force of the first dead ancestor in a wooden figure. "The society of

● 532 the masks is an entire world, and when it sets itself in motion in the public place, it dances the movement of the world, it dances the system of the world." (1)

1. Ibid., "Dieu d'eau" [God of Water] .

A. Statuary

Sculpture is man's work, done by the blacksmiths. It is of religious inspiration.

There are three centers of fabrication, whose productions differ in their form. These are the regions of Bamako, Bougouni (a veritable land of blacksmiths), and Kinian, of which the latter covers part of the Sikasso, Koutiala, and Ségou districts. (2)

2. Passim, Lem, "Sculptures soudanaises" [Sudanese Sculptures], Arts et métiers graphiques, Paris, 1948.

545 They make female statuettes, fertility statuettes, marionettes used for theatrical representations given by the young people, masks for the different societies, and, in particular, a whole series of stylized antelopes, special symbols of the tchi wara dancers.

532 171 "Like the Chinese sculptor of the Han period, the Bambara sees and fixes forms in terms of profiles. He practices openwork carving, cutting silhouettes which appear against the light as hieroglyphs with fixed and suggestive outlines. Giving interpretations to signs and forms borrowed from familiar animals, the Bambara combine and associate them to create figures emblematic of the tribe or clan, figures of recognition. This symbolic zoomorphism, the basis of heraldry, is that of the peoples of the great Asiatic steppe, that of the peoples of Mesopotamia and of Asia Minor; it was, in part, that of the Egyptians of the age of the Pharaohs who achieved in the valley of the Nile, predestined for this by its situation and its resources, the synthesis of a double culture." Thus it is that the sculptor, in order to express his vision, often has recourse to the ideogram of geometric character, upon which is founded the conceptual character of the peoples of the steppe. (3)

3. Passim, F.H. Lem, Variété et unité des

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171 traditions plastiques de l'Afrique noire
[Variety and Unity of the Plastic Art
Traditions of Black Africa].

532 A great variety of wood (4) is available to the sculptor, who chiefly uses fine-grained species whose fibers are not very sensitive, and who avoids woods that are too hard and too dense. The artist works with green wood, generally with an adze, or chip-axe, which probably is derived from the hoe. This instrument serves for rough chipping the mass and for establishing the secondary volumes; it gives the statue a singular "faceted" aspect. The work is completed by means of a knife and gouges. A skillful technique makes it possible to give the wood a patina; it is blackened by burying the pieces in certain types of mud, by being immersed in palm oil, and daubed with lampblack. The wood is reddened by applying plasters made by grinding barks and making pastes from them. The objects so treated are [105] lengthily polished with skins and take on the sombre, brilliant aspect of old bronzes. The patina of the pieces is an important element of their beauty. 412 412

The art observes stylistic conventions, such as the deformation of normal appearances. In the structure of the mass, convention regulates the proportion of the parts, of the solid portions and the hollows; it regulates the development of the secondary volumes and of the surfaces of the different planes, their extent and their lines of contact. In its volume, the statuary obeys an almost immutable canon: to a cylindrical trunk is attached a head that is enormous in proportion to the other members, which are confined to narrow limits; the lower members are much shorter than in nature. The oversized head is a convention related to ancestor worship. The head is sculpted in concave style, and the entire figure is subordinated to a marked geometrization.

321
531 The blacksmiths also work gold by using the "lost wax" method, or by hammering, embossing anf fixing thin leaves of gold,

4. Passim, H. Lavachery, "L'art noir d'Afrique et son destin" [Negro Art of Africa and its Destiny], Présence africaine.

778 782 kola nuts required in every sacrifice. All the people of the village rejoice at the annual sacrifice. From the goat hut, where hangs the goatskin that serves as its tabernacle (1), the fetish is carried in procession to the place of sacrifice, a large tree that casts a little shade inside the village. During the procession the initiates shout sacred hymns at the tops of their voices, drums and xylophones beat and rumble, and all the circumcised stop when it passes /144/ and reverently bare their heads. The women and the uncircumcised kneel and bow their heads respectfully at the passing of the idol, which is hidden from profane view by a dirty cloth covering.

778 The boli of the second group are legion, and it is very difficult to know all of them. The main two are the Tji wara and the Douga.

A Tji wara seldom gives evidence of its power. Although it may kill its owner or anyone who happens to separate the male from the female in the course of the sacred dance, a Negro is seldom heard to blame it for the death of one of his family. This fetish is made of two forked sticks, one male and the other female, on which sacrifices are made. It may be seen hanging in the entry hut of its master, along with its cloak of false-cedar bark and its mask which are used in the sacred dance.

778 532 The mask of the Tji wara is tastefully made; in fact, it is the best Bambara sculpture I have seen. It is carved of the wood of the dondol (Bombax cornui) and seems intended to represent a goat or a deer. The male often has curved horns and sometimes measures almost a meter in height. The female is smaller, its horns are straight, rings hang from its nose and ears and, no doubt because a goddess could not be sterile, it carries its child on its back. (1) During the

[346] 1. The Bambara, whose huts are usually very clean, put their gods away in dark, filthy corners. The temples are small and have such low doors that it is often necessary to lie prone in order to enter.

778
52 1. It is easy to obtain a mask of the tji wara. Many colonials bring them back from the Sudan, but they are mistaken in speaking of it as a "Sudanese fetish." This mask and all the other masks, including the twins' doll, are not "fetishes" at all. They externalize for the Negroes their idea of the genie -- sétané -- which animates the object to which they sacrifice. /Placement of this footnote is editor's emendation, the original gives it on following page 153/.

During the sacred dance the Negroes, decked out in mask and cloak, are bent double and constantly in motion. From time to time they bellow [516] into a bull's horn. Since they cannot stand straight without failing in respect for the idol, they stretch out on the ground or crouch on all fours when they are tired and weary.

778
782 At the time of the arrival of the bani-n-kono (storks), a little before the rainy season, a sacrifice of dogs, goats, and hens is offered to the Tji wara. This fetish is especially venerated by youths; they ask it for strength, health, and earnestness in work. Thus, when young people get together to cut shrubs and make a new field in the midst of the bush or to pull out weeds in the winter, a goat is sacrificed; and they work to the sound of the drum and the tji wara bellowing into his horn. Upon their return from the field, the workers are given millet beer; then the sacred dance begins in the public square /145/ and continues far into the night, to the great delight of the women and children.

778 The douga consists of a fairly large number of bulls' horns enclosed in a goatskin. It is hung in the entry hut, and it is there its altar is set; this altar is a square column of earth attached to one of the corners of the room. It often measures a meter in height; the

326 In addition, each year the blacksmiths join together and offer a
778 sacrifice on the communal anvil. All tools are placed around it,
796 overflowed with the blood of the victims.

An annual ceremony which also brings the craftsmen together has the purpose of asking Faro to help in the cooling of the wrought iron and to give the water into which the iron is dipped the strength to fulfill its function. Assembled before the kotigi's forge, they bring a certain number of tomatoes which are first presented to the altar, then to the ancestral axe farakun on which each one in turn licks with his tongue.

Keeping their mouths closed so as not to let the strength thus gathered escape, they all walk toward the river, while one of the
[534 participants strikes up, on the ritual bell (nege dẽ) with a lump of
533] (nege dyun), the rhythm called klide fo (literally, rhythm of the sons of the testicles) (1) addressed to the one-arm blacksmith, the bolokuruni, Faro's companion. Once on the bank, the kotigi undresses and throws himself into the water. When re reappears on the surface, all the participants open their hands the better to seize the strength of Faro and his companion, which the man is supposed to bring back. They rush to help him dress and the one who succeeds in touching him believes he receives Faro's special favors.

The tomatoes are then squashed into a gourd and the pulp is thrown into the river at a deep spot where each participant draws water and drinks to communicate with Faro. The group then returns, bringing back in the gourd a little water into which each one dips his individual axe, starting with the patriarch who, at the end of the ceremony, drinks up the rest.

326 If a woman is sterile, she asks the help of the three spirits protect-
778 ing the forge as they have the reputation of being very prolific.
842 Without her presence, the blacksmith crouches before the altar with his hands spread out, his head lowered, and prays. The woman must then swear to respect scrupulously the taboo of the invoked spirits, which is to pronounce their name. She may also ask the blacksmith to implore the help of the ritual ashes of the altar.

[522] 1. Kli dẽ, "son of the testicle," is one of the ritual jokes addressed to the blacksmiths by their senãnku.

794 796 201 The rituals in which the mask participates generally /161/ take place the following night in a thicket called komo tu, "bushy one of the Komo," situated in the bush near the village.

As soon as they hear the mask whistling, the members approach according to their age grades, the older ones first. In principle, only those under the jurisdiction of the functioning Komo and their guests are present. However, any initiated stranger who wishes to attend the dances makes his status known by means of the following signs:

1. Shouting "hé" or "ho," he presents his right hand to the mask with all the fingers folded except the index and the little finger which point towards it. The index, in this case, represents the circumcised man, member of the Komo society, in sum, the petitioner. The little finger, which is smaller, expresses this man's submission to the Komo and the fact that he is and will always remain its inferior.

2. He puts a twig of straw in his mouth; the light colored straw signifies that his heart is pure, that he has no evil intention. The mouth, closed over the straw, shows that the man, "understanding the word of the Komo," has no need to speak of it.

3. On his arrival, he says: ani bara (literally, I am with the bara). The masker, hearing these words, crouches and then straightens up suddenly before the newcomer as though to frighten him. The latter then says: "I am a new child of the society" (1). When he is accepted, the masker resumes the dance and the ceremony continues.

794 796 533 The rhythms of the Komo bear the general name of komo bara or komo foli dunu (literally, rhythm of the Komo drums) (2). They are numerous, adapted to the rituals they accompany, each endowed with a separate name. The Bambara classify them into three categories: the rapid, violent, and difficult rhythms performed against the non-initiates; the soft rhythms for circumcision; the sad rhythms for funerals.

1. Ne ye timidɛ̃ kura ye.

2. The word bara is reserved for the rhythms of the masked Komo dances. The rhythms of the profane dances of the elders are called mabere fo, those of the young men, bɔ̃dyala, those of the girls, kofili.

194 During the masked dances, once the drummers have begun the
196 rhythm of the Komo, they must neither slow down nor cease their
533 playing; otherwise the masker will rush at the player and threaten him
with his left hook. In this case, the musician changes the rhythm
in order to soothe the masker and sings: "You, old men, you are with
the bara; listen, this bara is not empty." (1).

1. Aw ni bara makorabaw; klo madyo,
nin bara te bara lãkulo ye.

194 /162/ The masker participates in the ceremony not only by dancing
196 and by uttering cries, whose pitch and intensity vary according to
the action which he is preparing or performing.
198 A guttural and very muffled cry (buâ, buâ, buâ) called komo
suruku (literally, hyena of the Komo) is used to frighten the participants.

A shrill and short cry (pyę, pyę, pyę) called kono fari kasi (literally, cry of the bad bird) is frequently used to animate the dance and amuse the spectators.

A long and softer cry (ô-ô, ô, ô, the last three ô's being very close together) called morokorobaw kasi (literally, cry of the ancestors) greets the chief and his age grade.

194 During the mask dance, the Komo's griot encourages it by reciting
196 the devices which exalt its power, authority, and judicial powers:

"You, Komo, you griot of the Komo, you, ringer of the bell, from whom do you come? You come from Makanta Djigui. You, bad Komo, from whom do you come? You come from Soma Moriba. To whom did this one give it? He gave it to the sons of the blacksmiths. Who are the owners of the Komo? Makanta Djigui, Soma Moriba, the sons of the blacksmiths. These have not known shame; you must not be ashamed. These have not received humiliations; you must not be humiliated.

"You, little living Komo, enemy of non-members, friend of members, take your enemy's heart, take his liver. I follow behind you and not before you. Ah! Komo; you, killer of the fat dead ones, shroud of those living, act upon him who provokes you as you do upon him who does not provoke you" (2).

2. E komo, e dyeli, e ndara kolo fo,
e bwora dyeni ma, e bwora makanta

791 534 The box is transpierced by two wooden sticks, če kala (literally, man-stalk), recalling the two millet stalks which accompany every dead man into his grave and which are in themselves symbols of the two elders.

791 534 755 When the Soma falls ill, he removes the two sticks from his instrument and places them beside him on his mat, anticipating the position he will lie in the grave. Thus stretched out, "he is in the grave and walks with the two ancestors"; if his condition improves the sticks have liberated him from his illness. He replaces them in the harp only after his recovery.

791 534 The box contains seven pebbles, the number of man (3 + 4) and a piece of copper in the shape of a star symbolizing the word. The Soma may look into the harp through an opening on its side, called šu wo (sorcery hole) or bara dinge (hole of the box), which "permits him to breathe," to see "the ancestor Koumabana, master of the word, and to know the deepest secrets." At the bottom of the instrument another opening, considered the anus, permits the release of all that is harmful.

/224/ A red stain placed on one of the faces, sindera ble (literally, red belt), expresses the fact that the instrument is the object of blood sacrifices like the stone ǰineworo.

The case is the image, the mask of Koumabana; the two faces, called respectively kini nye, "right eye," and numa nye, "left eye," represent his eyes; the comb, his mouth; the opening, his nose and respiration; the strings, his words. It is also the replica of the tomb and of the first three of the eight ancestors who knew death. Finally, it is the face of the Soma and his tomb.

The instrument must never be touched by a woman; moreover, no one must play it if his intentions are not pure, "if his heart is not clean."

791 533 787 When the Soma plays in response to requests from those who consult him, each sound is a prayer. With his free hand he holds a twig with which he strikes the base. Each stroke is a word. As he plays, images form before his eyes and within him. He touches the cords separately according to their position and in relation to the importance of the question that is being asked. Thus, he pinches modẽ for subjects of little importance: hunt, journey, etc.; fadẽ for that which is concerned with health, procreation, the physical or moral life of the individual; fa for the future, destiny, the private and public life of a man, his

791 authority, his command; fa koroke for planting and cultivation, the
● 533 control of water, rains, and ponds, and for fortune and wealth; fa
787 dogone for the germination of grains, the formation of the ears and
the light rains; ba for all that concerns women; faso for all that concerns the family house and those who are absent.

But the Soma also plays airs with rhythms accompanied by words. He plays them one after the other during the sitting or choses them according to the character of the person consulting him and the questions raised.

The following seven songs were collected and interpreted by the Soma of Bandiagara:

"A good thing comes with a bad thing" (1). This song has the effect of revealing to the Soma the thoughts of the consulter.

1. Ko ñumã de bina ni ko dyugu ye.

"Man knows little" (2). In spite of his learning a man knows few things; a child often knows that which an adult ignores.

2. Adama dẽ te ko do.

/225/ "Even when a man is satiated he may not go beyond the mother who has given him birth" (3). This rhythm is performed for those who show arrogance or vanity, or for those whose wife has left the conjugal home and has taken refuge with her father.

3. Mako fara čokočoko a tise ka temme
a wolo ba ka.

"Even if he is handsome, a man must have eyes (that is, to be informed)" (4). The Soma plays this air whenever there is a marriage, a birth, or an initiation.

4. Moko če kani čokočoko fo nẽ ka soro i ku.

"The world is big" (5). When anguish overwhelms the consulter,

5. Diñe ka bõ.

791 this song calms his restlessness and gives him back peace and serenity.

533 181 "Whatever man is, he may not go beyond God" (1). The Soma

1. Moko a kera čokočoko a te teme ngala ka.

plays this air if the consulter harbors bad intentions or if he is ignorant or stubborn. He does the same to discover the gifts of a child and to encourage the family to develop his learning.

"Joy embellishes the world" (2) is performed for futile and pleasant

2. Klo ye dine dya.

things: feasts and dances, ornaments.

181 801 Divination, in a large measure, is the application of the static and dynamic quality of numbers. On the one hand these translate the relationships; on the other, they are symbols for phenomena, beings, behaviors, situations, and in general all the constituent parts of the universe. Though not endowed with power in themselves, they symbolize powerful and well regulated elements. It may also be said that the numbers are superior realities, the same as the primordial signs which preceded the perceptibility of all things and on account of which the things began to exist once man had taken them into his consciousness. (3)

3. See p. 17.

In the course of divination, they indicate to the individual or collective consulter his personal position with regard to the rest of the universe. In a way, they permit the formulation of a particular equation for each person at a given time.

CONCLUSION

121 /227/ It is only recently that the discipline of silence adhered to by the Blacks has been relaxed in certain circles of the initiates. Human behavior, backed up by a rigorous method, has allowed a group of researchers to establish a documentation which suffers less from the usual faults. It is no longer superficial or fragmentary; it is

764 The provisional master takes his place at the door or inside the blon', the vestibule of the house, and receives the condolences. [166]

Several days elapse between death and burial in order to give distant or absent relatives time to arrive. During this period the funeral songs become more and more elaborate and [533] are left to professional singers who are accompanied by various instruments; tom-toms, xylophones (bala), guitars. The singers, dancers, and mourners exert themselves all the more if they think there will be substantial rewards.

The children of the house (den'-u, de-u) are allowed a good deal of freedom during this period, as though the authority which had curbed them had ended with the life of the deceased. They are allowed to take hens and goats, to eat lavishly, sing, dance, and generally rejoice.

On the night preceding the burial, the deceased is placed outside under a shelter (gwa); the songs and dances [857] continue. It is customary for the children (de-u) of the house, led by the professional members of the funeral orchestra, to take part in the singing and dancing.

Relatives, friends, neighbors, and persons obligated to the family are expected to bring offerings in proportion to their rank or indebtedness so as to contribute to the meals and to [689] the funeral alms. *This is a very strict obligation;* any failure to comply not only shows a lack of respect for the dead, but is also an offense which the family must avenge. The chronicle of Ségou bears witness to this fact.

763 764 Along with the religious ceremonies, events of an entirely different nature take place. If the death should seem in any way suspicious, it is the duty of the family to investigate the matter without delay. It is particularly the heir presumptive, if he is present, who is required to take steps at once to clarify the matter; he questions the ancestors and consults seers and magicians. The funeral ceremonies are sometimes dominated and even conditioned by the results of these investigations and consultations. At the very least, it would be essential to obtain the lifting of the interdict imposed on the

525 The well-known cry of the wara-mina-den' of the fiancé's brotherhood is heard at various points along the way; the god is watching over his disciple's fiancée and chasing evil spirits from her path.

When they approach the fiancé's village, the young men go to the head of the procession, while the fiancée's companions take their places behind her. The whole troop begins to dance to the rhythm of the drums and trumpets. The women seem to hold back and take a long time to reach the entrance to the village a few hundred meters away.

At this moment, the wara-mina-den' utters a loud and final cry; his mission is accomplished.

The women of the village welcome the newcomers and lead the girl to her husband's house. Other women join the procession. Several groups of singers are formed, and the dancers proceed slowly to the couple's house. There, in an inner court, the crowd settles down; everyone drinks, eats, dances, or sings as the spirit moves him.

The dressing of the bride begins as soon as she arrives. Her hair is taken down; the string and the beads she wears about her hips are removed; and she is helped with her bath. Then, wrapped in a white skirt cloth, she lies down on the nuptial couch.

Her husband joins her after escaping from his roistering friends.

At daybreak there is a sudden shot. Loud and frequent shouts of "kuyo! kuyo!" rise above singing [203] and the noise of an orchestra. The old women burst into the nuptial hut, carrying warm water for the ablutions. The husband comes out and goes off to sit on a mat in the courtyard with the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and his friends.

The bride appears wrapped in her marriage skirt; behind her the old women wave a piece of linen that gives visible evidence [533] of the accomplishment of intercourse, and dyeli-moso (griot [Ed., feminine]) sing of love. The young girls who accompanied the bride surround her at the exit from the courtyard and lead her to a hut arranged so that she may rest there. For eight days she has all her meals there, and seated on a mat, with a white veil on her head, she spends the days spinning with her companions.

585 The husband spends the whole day after the wedding night in his hut, where relatives, friends, and neighbors come to congratulate him and present minor gifts of food. He invites them to eat and drink. The wedding is thus prolonged for several days, depending on the husband's wealth, during which time the couple is at the disposal of the guests.

[556] Rich families like to show off the trousseau, jewels, and gifts bestowed on the bride, so during the whole day after the wedding night everything is paraded with great pomp through the village by people of caste who proclaim the items and exaggerate their value. Toward evening the presents are shown one last time to the bride, who sits on a low bench with her face hidden behind a kind of tray, woven with grass, which she holds in her [533] hand. Drums and other instruments make a great uproar, while a female griot, standing behind the bride, sings love songs. Every- [302] one admires the bride's hair, which is artistically braided in a flat crest with two small braids on each side of the face hanging in front and behind the ears. The women finger her jewels as they admire them and her thick-soled sandals.

To conclude the ceremony, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives cowries to the leader of the singing, and guns are fired for the [481] last time. Then the bride gets up, glides over the ground without lifting her feet, and enters the hut with her companions, while the guests retire. [204]

Second Marriage

595 The number of wives is limited only by the necessity of providing each one with a suitable living. This means that, theoretically, polygamy is a privilege of the rich. Some men practice it in order to pass as rich men, which flatters their pride, while others use it to gratify a sensual temperament. Most often, however, people in modest circumstances have several wives solely for economic reasons.

When an only wife has young children and no servant to help her, she is extremely overworked. When this is the case,

881 [302] freshly shaved (4), their bodies rubbed with vegetable butter

4. Just as their heads were shaved at birth.

(si tlu), [242] arrive in single file. Greeted by the onlookers, they take their places in the front row. Shouts, noisy conversation, and songs are intermingled and make a racket which is interrupted by the arrival of the "girls of the soli" (soli-ma-moso-u). With their hair in a tangle and dressed in short skirts (1)

1. Blue for Moslems and yellowish-brown (basa) for the purely pagan Bambara.

reaching from the navel to the knee, they enter one behind the other, walk around the assemblage, and finally take their places in a group near their mothers and friends.

The assembled men drink around the fires.

881 ● 533 534 All the drums are there, and as soon as the girls appear, the drummers rush to their instruments. There are big drums resting on three legs (denu-ba), others which hang from the shoulder, and still others carried under the arm. Young women shake bits of iron (kinge) as one shakes castanets, and there are other iron instruments provided with rings. Old women pound on gourds turned upside down in pots filled with water.

The noise is deafening, and it is dominated by songs in honor of the ancestors shouted by the whole assemblage as loudly as possible. Then the whole crowd, where the tipsy are in the majority and where everyone is at the highest possible pitch of excitement, starts a frenzied dance accompanied by songs usually improvised.

881 781 While all this is going on, the adepts of the major brotherhood (2) are outside the village, noisily driving out the

2. The Komo around Ségou; the Nama in the Kaarta area.

248 into narrow bands by weavers [men] who make clothes from it in.
286 unbleached, indigo-blue, yellow, or black fabrics. At the present time, after numerous attempts at improvement since the occupation,
[654] seeds selected according to the zones of cultivation are distributed to the farmers, and the administration encourages industrial cotton cultivation in irrigated regions, as well as mechanical spinning and weaving.

248 [177] Sisal is an agave of Mexican origin. The long, thick, pointed leaves, after undergoing a series of industrial operations including mechanical extraction of the fibers, yields very strong textile fibers suitable for cordage, rope making, rug manufacture, canopies, etc.

Kapok (Eriodendron anfractuosum) until a few years ago was merely gathered, but now plantations have been created. The fruit is in the form of capsules containing seeds enveloped in a vegetal wadding. In one year the kapok tree can furnish 30 kilograms of fibers used in mattress-making, hat-making ...

D. Agricultural Tools

241 Bambara farming tools are very simple. The hoe is almost the only agricultural instrument used. There are several kinds of hoe, particularly in the Bougouni region: the tyerengu, 0.50 meters wide, with a straight handle (chiefly used by the Sénoufo); the n'gu kala, 0.30 meters wide, with a curved handle. These two are used for digging, scraping, and banking. The flotton, from 0.10 to 0.20 meters wide and with a handle made from a forked branch, is used for the second dressing of the earth and for weeding. (When the weeds are too big, the weeding is done by hand). These hoes oblige the peasant to work stopped over. Let us also mention the axe, dyeli, which serves to cut shrubs and the branches of trees in clearing land, the machete, and a small pickaxe with a hoe handle, the yalo.

[33] Millet spikes are harvested with the aid of a special small knife to cut the stalk into pieces. Finally, the threshing of the ears is done with large bent sticks having round handles and flat ends.

Agricultural labors, tillage and threshing, are undertaken
[533] collectively following the cadence indicated by an instrumentalist.
[461] Work in the fields is generally done by starting at the bottom of a slope and working up, so the rain will wash off the weeds. The

326 as well as of silver, on a wooden core. The thrones of the ancient [531] Bambara chiefs were covered in this manner. Today the golden ornaments are no longer reserved exclusively for the wives of kings. [301] Bracelets, pendants, and necklaces are produced in large quantities in a filigree work in which the Black excels.

B. Ceramics

323 The land is very rich in pottery, but Bambara men do not model clay, pottery being a woman's art. Inversely, the women do not work on statuary.

C. Painting

531 386 The Bambara paint murals on the sanctuary walls with ocher and a millet paste. The priests make these drawings periodically. The walls of the young people's huts are also decorated with symbolic motifs: calabash spoons, festoons, ladders with 22 bars, drawings of hands, lines of chevrons. The young girls come to paint these, [237] with clay from the river or with a mixture of clay and cow dung. All these geometric drawings are signs representing not only the cosmogony, but a subtle translation of all the movements of the executing artist's soul. They are a veritable form of writing.

D. Music

● 533 771 Music is a privileged art (1) because it is bound to instruments, that is to say, to materials, to the human body by the voice and the dance, to numbers by the rhythm, to medicine, to divination, and to religion.

534 771 [106] In a report to the French Institute of Anthropology on February 18, 1948, Mme. G. Dieterlen described the structure and symbolism of the two Bambara musical instruments, the Sema guitar and the royal drum.

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1. Griaule, Passim, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the African Arts], Présence africaine.

534 787 asks: modê (grandson) for unimportant subjects, hunting, voyages; fadê (son of the father) for individual life, physical and moral; fa (father) for the future, destiny, the public life of a man, his authority, his rule; fakoroke (father's older brother) for the plantings, the rains, for fortune; fa dogone (father's younger brother) for germination of the cereals; ba (mother) for everything concerning the women; [107] faso (father's house) for everything concerning the familial abode or the absent.

534 The principal efficacy of the harp is in bringing order, by the rhythms and sounds emanating from it, to all that is troubled in the march of events.

The harp presides at sacrifices, at cathartic or medical rites, at purifications, at apotropaic rites, at solitary meditations. Its high notes are celestial and symbolic of completeness; the low notes connote terrestrial things and incompleteness. Its playing commands arrivals and departures, proliferations and diminutions, calls to order; its presence at the edge of a pool, where it had been silently placed, is assurance of appeasement.

The harpist, before beginning his service, puts his mouth to 788 the orifice in the frame and murmurs to the master of the Word: "Now it is your turn, organize the world." (1)

1. Passim, Griaule, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the Africain Arts].

533 534 Music, dance, and song are intimately linked in the religious movement. Thus it is that a djo of the Samaké (Bougouni circle) is composed entirely of musicians who form an orchestra in which the whole scale is represented by eight different principal instruments, which are types of a multitude of others. There is one n'ganian-ba, an instrument made by hollowing out a trough in a tree trunk, which gives a very deep sound when rubbed; it is the bass which gives the cadence. Two to three tiorõ give a sharper sound; four to six tioun, a still sharper sound, and there are as many as ten fere, the instrument with the sharpest sound. 533 292 Finally, a host of N'ganian dyeli begin the music as the griot quiets the crowd at the start. All these instruments have the form of a pirogue. In addition, the orchestra includes two singers and two dancers. Everyone wears masks, bonnets with crests

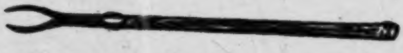
533 292 of black, red, and yellow fibers, clothes of plaited fibers, and the musicians wear a cuirass made of fana seeds (a sort of bean). The bass player wears a band in the back which reaches to his heels and describes a circle when the musician whirls in going from north to south and from east to west to give the cadence. The other musicians form a circle which the dancers and singers do not enter. Another djo is the So, where the musicians and the singers wear masks of wooden horses, except for two clowns who represent the masculine element in the midst of the crowd of young girls. Lastly, the third djo is the djõ buru (buru, "trumpet"). This is the djo of the slaves; they play the ivory horn and are clothed like the N'ganian, but the bass player represents a cow, and the others are the heifers who respond to the cadence indicated to them by their mother.

E. Literature

538 Bambara literature, entirely oral, is extremely rich. It is the monopoly of the griot who from their earliest days learn the stories, the proverbs, the mottoes associated with each [108] family. They recite very long and very numerous epic songs concerning each great family, accompanying themselves on the harp. Certain parts are recited, others are sung in chorus by the griot and his wife. These stories are at the same time historical narratives of heroes' exploits and the mythical history of a demiurge symbolized by the hero. An infinitely small part of these epic songs has been collected. Some Bambara proverbs and stories have been collected by Moussa Traoré in particular.

545 794 522 It is interesting to mention another literary production, one in which the creative inspiration of the artist plays a greater part: these are the narratives of the members of the Kworé brotherhood. The Kworéduga are clowns, or rather commedia dell'arte players. One is a Kworéduga by hereditary transmission or by natural bent. During his initiation in the bush, where he submits to ritual harsh treatment, the initiate learns never to lose his temper, no matter what the circumstances. He is taught a comic language, witty sayings. He is trained to observe men's character closely and to recite stanzas and couplets giving his observations.

778 534 drums and a fairly large number of antelope horns (1). These are tuned by means of a wooden bell, and each gives a special note and tone. 778 In fact, Bambara music is the sweetest and the least shrill that I have ●533 heard. Moreover the Negroes enjoy [534] it; one day at Bagini on the Bani, when three such bands gave a concert together, the women were so happy, so pleased and moved by the charm of its sweetness, that they took off their bracelets, earrings, and nose rings and laid them at the feet of the musicians.



Horned iron tube, trumpet of the Komo fetish (seen at Bagini in Bani country at the home of Boya, head owner of the fetish; it is between 0.30 and 0.35 meters long.

The Komo, the Kono, and the Nama have the wildest music there is -- trumpet blasts and frightful bellowings that freeze one with 778 terror. In the Komo music, an iron tube which is part of the fetish 534 is blown into, and the initiates, warada darotigi, accompany the sacred songs on bamboo pipes. The pipes of the Kono are bulls' horns (2), and the sounds that come out of them are real roars. Those of

1. The old men say that before the Moslem invasion of Omar el Hadj, the musicians blew into elephant tusks. The tusks were confiscated because of the ivory and were replaced by horns of the great antelope, which the Europeans call by the Peul name, koba.

2. To make these pipes the Negroes cut the tip of the horn and close the opening with a spider's web.

304 seven years and has a strictly religious character (5). The gnénasonnaba, surrounded by his council, the gouatigi, sacrifices to the dasiri; a hen is offered to the shades of the ancestors, the family boli are /173/ taken out of their dirty skins and sprinkled with blood, and all the village makes merry. People go in procession to the place
304 where the blacksmith tattooer is, and as long as the operation lasts
533 the women clap their hands, marking time for the blacksmith, who sings as he operates, and together they join in the chorus.

The tattoo, the chief distinctive mark of the people, is made
304 with a knife having one or two blades. The two-bladed knife cer-
413 tainly makes a tattoo which stands out more and has more detail, but it also requires more skill on the part of the operator, and, doubtless for this reason, it is relatively unusual.

At present a great many Bambara no longer wear the mark of
314 their tribe on their cheeks. The Moslems have contributed greatly to the abolition of this painful practice. Before the arrival of Europeans, under the reigns of Ahmadou and Madani, very severe punishments were inflicted on anyone who tattooed himself or had his children tattooed. One should not think, however, that tattooing was ever a
[187] strict and unqualified requirement; in this connection everything is entrusted to the decision of diviners and sorcerers, of djiné, or gnéna, genii, and especially of the family boli, which are consulted and sacrificed to in order to find out whether or not it is necessary to wear the marks of the tribe. Thus it is not unusual to find that some members of a family are tattooed and others are not, and that those who are not tattooed have their children tattooed, while the tattooed refrain from doing so. This ceremony is carried out every seven years, and the head of the family may be away when the blacksmith tattooer comes by, so that the sacrifices do not take place, and the tattooing of the children is put off until seven years later. When they have

5. This ceremony takes place only once every seven years. The girls are always fairly big when their chests are tattooed.

881 festival of the sheep كبنش , the little *soli* girls, those chosen
857 for the next circumcision, go with their still unmarried older sisters
to thank the elders for the honor which has been done them. In the
● [533] evening, at nightfall, they visit the families and in a nasal song
recall the glories of their ancestors. They also have the most flattering words for those still living, and it all ends with this plea: "We are *soli* and haven't a penny! On the tenth day of the next moon we must offer you a fine "couscous" with very small grains, the *basi*, and we want a good sauce. Help us in this, I beg you, we are *soli* without a penny."

881 The songs of the *soli* remind the old men and women of their
younger days, the days of their youth, and they run to the granary,
857 search the gourds that they use as cupboards, unlace the long roll of
481 close-packed straw where the cowrie shells are piled, and the young
people leave triumphantly, rich in cowrie shells, millet, and decayed fish. The proceeds of the quest are entrusted to the oldest of the *soli*, and, on the second day of the festival of the sheep, our belles gather, grind furiously, and provide the whole village with its ration, *basi kili*, which is the name of the festival.

881 On the stroke of noon and even before, everybody is fed and is eagerly tasting the sorghum /sic/ beer, *d'lo*, and the *soli* girls run from one house to another to gather the leftovers from the feast. They do it hurriedly, eagerly, and feverishly, for they are impatient to perform their great religious, public, and solemn act, and at the *soli kili basi* they are the cooks and servants of the spirits.

The latter /spirits/ stay at the outskirts of villages, invisible, and drag the soles of their feet along the paths of yawn as they crouch /177/ at the crossroads. The songs of happiness, the cries of joy, the hiccups of the drinkers, and the deafening noise of the bass drums split their eardrums, the scent of decayed fish swells their nostrils, and no doubt, between two sighs, as they lick their lips with their tongues, they say to themselves in a murmur which the wind carries away: "Oh! the gluttons, they are forgetting us!"

But not at all -- they are remembered! A little *soli* girl smears her face, breasts, and back with milk, ashes, also and with other things whose names I do not know; she makes herself hideous to behold,

881 run, as they have demonstrated under the karité tree), is the part of whole festival which is most reminiscent of a child, and of the function of the circumcision. It is the second birth, and just as the infant appears in public for the first time on the back of her mother, so she again enters the civil and religious life on the back of her mother or of the woman who takes her place.

The excised girls do very little in their huts, and like the boys, they yawn, sleep, and eat. However, they spin a little cotton and very often sing in a low voice while they practice gracefully shaking a gourd the size of a fist, pierced with little holes and filled with small pebbles. They lead a very easy life, and one might think they were happy, but a toothless old woman who is always grumbling watches over them. This is a great nuisance! It is impossible to move, impossible to wiggle a toe; one must have permission for everything, and it is never granted gracefully. The wants of nature must be satisfied in a group and at stated hours.... When the girls go through the village, they lean, in accordance with custom, on a millet stalk at the end of which is hung the perforated gourd in which little pebbles rattle. /182/ [514 293]

881 ●533 On the way out as they go into the bush, they sing to the gnâma to protect them selves from them:

Bo n'yé, gnâma, ô gnâma,
Go away from me, gnâma, ô gnâma,
Dankoun ba la,
Of the great corner of land (1),

1. The corner of land formed by two paths that cross, the place where the gnâma dwell. /The slight discrepancy between the translations of the song given here and in Chapter 1, Section 3, is present in the original French. Ed./

881 533 Gnâma fambali, bo n'yé!
Murderer gnâma (who kills), go away from me!

And coming back they sing songs and even improvise some to greet the old and influential men of the village. Back in their huts they kneel on the mat to stretch out or sit down, and there is silence, the silence of schoolgirls which is not broken except in secret, with trembling and in a low voice.

3. The Da Woro Festival, or the Sixth Day Festival

881 796 Boys and girls have paid the tribute of blood to the tribe, five days have already elapsed, and this is the evening before the sixth. Far over there in the west the sun has disappeared behind the heavy baobab trees that border the horizon, myriads of stars twinkle in the sky, and the moon, followed by Venus (Kolo mouso, Nièlé, "Nièlé, wife of the moon"), traces on a blue background its silver crescent singed with a gold border.

All the paths that lead to the village are full of people walking, seeming like an endless ribbon or a snake that folds back on itself only to stretch out suddenly. Behind the band of young girls walk the women, each with a black cherub on her back that always wakes up to cry and demand the breast; and to them the girls have entrusted their little loincloths, the cloth slings with which they gird themselves for the dance. The girls walk quickly, for although they carry on [482] their heads tall pyramids of gourds held in nets of large mesh, although they carry the fiancé's present to the queen of his heart -- salt; dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water and milk; d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer; millet and dried fish in which worms crawl; they are confortable in their clothing; /183/ nothing hinders their movements except a narrow cloth band three fingers wide which passes between the legs, is fastened at the waist in front, and waves in back in a limp and soft train. And in the night there is the rustling of dry grass trodden under foot; /there are/ long peals of laughter, light jibes that are well aimed and to the point, and witticisms, for the maiden's tongues have been loosened, and they do not lack wit.

881 healing of their children and their return home. The next morning around the wells one sees only women and young girls with naked torsos washing up in millet in plenty of water; it is to be fermented for the coming drinking bout.

And on that day, a little before the sun sets and when it is only
881 a bloody disk, the circumcised and excised young people bring their
183 mats, the gourd disks strung on sticks, the pierced gourds the size of a fist and filled with small pebbles, the millet stalks carried for so long as sticks, and the dirty handkerchiefs that wrapped their heads under the sacred trees, and the gnéna-n-sonnaba, the one who sacrifices to the genii protectors of the village, sets them afire. A black, thick, acrid and loathsome smoke fouls the air, and an uncertain flame of greenish red tries in vain to rise, so choked is it by old dirt and sweat. Boys and girls dart forward and jump three times over this fire of joy. At once they are purified of all their pollution; they have left behind and abandoned the old selves, smoked them out. Agile as deer or
881 gazelles they run to their huts to masiri don ("to make themselves beautiful"). Everywhere there is an indescribable bustle! Lids of gourds, which are the Negroes' cupboards, roll on the ground, split, break, and fall to pieces, and in the mid[illegible]f laughter of delirious joy there are the lamentations of an old [illegible]an who screams and grumbles. This haste and fever is the cause of delays, and the girls especially cannot yet done with arraying themselves. A piece of amber hangs too low or not low enough, the necklaces are too loose and have to be shortened, worn threads break, and beads by handfuls are lost in the dust.

At last, to the great relief of all, the cry of joy "Kouyo ê, Kouyo ê!" rings out from the four corners of the village. Preceded
● [533] by the /195/ chorus of singers (a group of women and girls who clap their hands and sing a most barbaric tune in falsetto, without ever being in harmony), the drums slowly head toward the great trees of the square that is the ballroom. In all the alleys that intersect the village and make it a labyrinth, a crowd of women, men, and children rush, jostle elbows, and shout, and in a moment the square is full.

326 778 796 In addition, each year the blacksmiths join together and offer a sacrifice on the communal anvil. All tools are placed around it, overflowed with the blood of the victims.

An annual ceremony which also brings the craftsmen together has the purpose of asking Faro to help in the cooling of the wrought iron and to give the water into which the iron is dipped the strength to fulfill its function. Assembled before the kotigi's forge, they bring a certain number of tomatoes which are first presented to the altar, then to the ancestral axe farakun on which each one in turn licks with his tongue.

Keeping their mouths closed so as not to let the strength thus gathered escape, they all walk toward the river, while one of the [534 533] participants strikes up, on the ritual bell (nege dẽ) with a lump of (nege dyun), the rhythm called klide fo (literally, rhythm of the sons of the testicles) (1) addressed to the one-arm blacksmith, the bolokuruni, Faro's companion. Once on the bank, the kotigi undresses and throws himself into the water. When re reappears on the surface, all the participants open their hands the better to seize the strength of Faro and his companion, which the man is supposed to bring back. They rush to help him dress and the one who succeeds in touching him believes he receives Faro's special favors.

The tomatoes are then squashed into a gourd and the pulp is thrown into the river at a deep spot where each participant draws water and drinks to communicate with Faro. The group then returns, bringing back in the gourd a little water into which each one dips his individual axe, starting with the patriarch who, at the end of the ceremony, drinks up the rest.

326 778 842 If a woman is sterile, she asks the help of the three spirits protecting the forge as they have the reputation of being very prolific. Without her presence, the blacksmith crouches before the altar with his hands spread out, his head lowered, and prays. The woman must then swear to respect scrupulously the taboo of the invoked spirits, which is to pronounce their name. She may also ask the blacksmith to implore the help of the ritual ashes of the altar.

[522] 1. Kli dẽ, "son of the testicle," is one of the ritual jokes addressed to the blacksmiths by their senãnku.

794
532 3. *Koli* means nail or spur in reference to a rooster and, by extension, hook.

impregnated with black earth from the river and made of copper, Faro's metal, soaked in the venom of a viper before the hook was formed. These hooks are also annually soaked in red venom mixed with pepper. All these preparations make them dangerous weapons used for different purposes during the ceremonies.

The right hook (*kinin koli*) is used to kill the guilty ones or the undesirables. A slight would brings about death which is then attributed to Faro. The left hook defends members of the society against the dangers which are present, even for them, in the actions and emanations of the right hook. It contains two shards of black pottery, Faro's taboo, which keep away and thus diminish the latter's power. During the dance the Komo, wishing to protect one of the members under its jurisdiction, waves the left arm over him to attenuate the strength of the right. During funerals a gesture of the left hook will indicate the deceased's membership in the society and will assure him protection in the hereafter.

784
823 The taboo of the copper hooks is the same as Faro's concerning this metal. Just as no one would cross the Niger wearing an object or an ornament of copper, similarly no one would wear copper in attending the Komo ceremonies.

The wearing of the mask, which is much sought after by several initiates at each ceremony, is assigned to one of them by the chief. This role involves risks which are diminished by certain precautions such as abstention from sexual relations before the ceremony. On the day of the ceremony, the elders make the wearer drink millet beer until he is completely inebriated; then for a moment they apply to his chin and abdomen the *nyama boli* which he will carry in a bag during the ceremony. He also puts on a ritual headdress which sometimes has incorporated in it a particle of the one belonging to the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé. The mask is then adjusted on his head, the flute slipped between his teeth, while the chief assures him of his good faith and proves to him that he runs no danger.

/152/ D. Musical Instruments

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534 The emergence of the Komo is accompanied by rhythms played on drums, *dyiri kolo* (literally, bone, wood), made of hides stretched

794 534 on half-gourds, and accompanied by flutes and bells. The musicians, recruited from among the musical members of the society, are obliged to submit to certain precautions because of the proximity of the mask during the performance of the dances. In fact, if the mask casts a spell (korti), they may, unwittingly, breathe in the dangerous powder and it is wise to protect oneself by taking the antidote ahead of time.

794 534 The Komo's iron bell, kolõkolõ or grinda, is kept with certain altars in the chief's residence; it is rung by a special bearer, grindavo or nadara koloyo.

713 539 A myth recalls the origin of this bell. "A small child, who went to play at the crossroads situated at the approaches to the village, heard one day a bell ring and invisible beings speak. Seized with fear, he returned home. When he was questioned by his parents, he refused to answer but with his finger pointed out to them the road which he took every day. The parents followed it and arrived at the crossroads where they found a copper bell. The spirit of the place, Soba, announced to them that he was making a gift of it so that they might call the spirits by ringing it and that the spirits would answer them (1). But he asked the father to give him in exchange the child who habitually came to the crossroads so that the child could continue to play with the spirit's children. When the father, in despair, told him he had not the courage to part with his son, the spirit advised him to consult Faro.

The man gathered the young girls of the village together and asked them to intercede for him with the spirit. Dressed in their most beautiful clothes and wearing their ornaments, they went off singing and threw cakes and couscous into the river (2). The elders went down in turn and received Faro's consent. He demanded that

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1. In olden times, "men spoke with their ancestors and with their gods."

[796] 2. Each year the offering and the race are repeated by the young girls of Ségou who go to the river singing the nyari nyari to.

794 they keep the instrument for religious ceremonies. After declaring
534 that they would obey, the elders returned to the crossroads where
773 the Soba spirit gave them the bell and left in exchange the child whom
539 the spirit had called to him in their absence.

The object was then taken to the blacksmith who made one in the same shape, using wood or bone for the body, and stone for the clapper. After the invention of iron, they were forged according to the ancient model with the addition of small copper bells."

794 /153/ To ring the bell is "to make Faro hear the sound of copper,"
534 to call him, and flatter him at the same time. When the mask is brought out, the sound warns the noninitiates to avoid the procession. The flute or reed pipe of the Komo, wara da, "mouth of the one armed with claws," is made of a bamboo stem pierced by three holes. The middle one is open and the two others are obstructed by a cobweb. The instrument is held between the bearer's teeth and is tied by a string to the back of his neck or to his ears.

794 A myth tells the origin of Faro's flute, made according to the
534 same principle, but of a different shape.

773 A woman, called Koussouba Koulibali, was bathing one morning
539 when she saw Faro and the dodo fish sitting at the river bank. The fish was playing the flute and singing:

"I will whistle, I will whistle in my Faro's flute; he who will not hear me will die, he who will die will regret it" (1).

1. Na fye, na fye ne nka faro fle flye,
nyimi mame o na sa, nyimi sara o bone na.

The woman fled and told her husband, who was a diviner and chief of the Komo, about what had happened. The latter proceeded to the banks of the Niger and frightened away the fish who abandoned its instrument. The man seized it and went home, followed by the turbulent river water from which he managed to escape in his canoe. But his whole family perished in the flood.

In the morning, the man returned to the river bank and cried as he played the flute. He played for such a long time that Faro, taking pity on him, came out and said: "I have drowned the members of your family and flooded the village. I forgive you, however,

794 because of the offerings made by other men. Keep the flute and
since you are Soma and chief of the Komo, let all the Komo flutes
•534 be blessed because of this one." By this he meant that the Komo
773 flute, like the other ritual objects, would hereafter contain his strength,
539 nyama. He added that, when men wished to call him or to talk to
him, they would have to do it through the intermediary of this
instrument.

794 Before each occasion when the mask is brought out, a sacrifice is
534 performed upon the flutes "to improve their sound." Faro's flute is
used in the rituals performed at the river bank, to pray to him or
to thank him. To play the flute is equivalent to reciting his device;
he is forced to hear. The Komo flute is used only during the masked
ceremonies; it makes those who hear it say that the Komo is "a thing
with a soft throat" (1).

1. Fẽ kã duma.

In former times the chief alone was allowed to play the flute, whatever its type; death was sanctioned for infraction of this rule. Ordinary flutes /154/ of a style different from those belonging to the cult are used by children.

E. Initiation to the Komo

794 Three days after the birth of a boy, his father presents him with
852 the elements which he has contributed to the making of the Komo
boli and recites the komo kumã: "You, Komo boli, these things are inside; society of the Komo, these things are inside; customs of the Komo, these things are inside; you are a child, your are going to approach the age of the elders; Komo boli, here is my child, watch over him" (2).

2. Komo boli la, nin waliw ba kono;
komo dyẽ la, nin fẽw ba la; komo sira
la, nin kunko ba kono; i ye demisẽ ye
i bi ta makorobaya ye; komo boli nde fle,
tyę do, i dyã to a la.

He then returns the child to its mother with these words: "The son has been introduced to the secret of masculinity; he has received

794 instruction and initiation. Five years are thus necessary to reach the
highest rank. Each promotion is paid for by the individual providing
[782] two roosters whose throats are cut upon the altars at the end of the
annual ceremony which takes place in the bush under a tree called the
kalabana, following communally performed labor. After meal, a
[526] fight called _bari_, organized under the direction of the chiefs, puts the
young boys in opposite groups and gives them the opportunity to show
their courage and their initiative.

794 The members' activity consists of collective work at the time of
476 the cultivation. The millet and the gifts in kind received in payment
for the work are owned communally.

A. Material Objects of the Cult.

794 The society is the owner of ritual objects such as a mask and whips
118 which are usually placed in a hut, _ndomo buku_, at some distance
534 from the village.

The objects, numbering five, are rudimentary musical instruments. The _wara_, the clawed one, or _diara_, the lion, is a wooden bull-roarer approximately 35 centimeters in length, which is manipulated by means of a string a meter long. Sometimes the object is of iron and of smaller dimensions. The _tori_, toad, is a small box which gives off a nasal sound when it is scratched. The _kono_, bird, is made of two pieces of gourd bound together by spider webs. The _wulu_, dog, is a small calabash of about 10 centimeters in diameter, punctured by four holes. A string, threaded through its neck, allows it to be rotated like a rhombos. The _ǰineble_ (literally, red spirit) is a buffalo horn pierced by three holes, /172/ obstructed by spider webs, into which one blows and which produce a loud, flute-like sound. One society usually owns several specimens of each of these instruments.

794 The mask, said to be the most ancient object, is of sculptured wood
118 representing a human face crowned by several vertical, rather long
532 horns (1). The whole is completely decorated with cowrie shells and red kise (2), grains which represent the blood from the offerings. The

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1. The masks most often carry eight horns, but this rule is not always respected.

2. _Linociera sudarica_.

304 [292 534] During the seclusion, they wear about their head a piece of white cloth, Faro's color, which has the same function as the cap of the circumcised boy. They shake a gourd bolokode barani, filled with eight grains or small pebbles, whose sound keeps passers-by away. The leaps, which they perform over the fire made of clothes, gourds, and refuse that have been ignited, end the seclusion and rid them of their wanzo, which goes to settle in the altars of the ndomo.

It is said of a young girl who was well excised that she is well behaved and carries herself with dignity. On the contrary, it is said of a girl of light morals "that her hands were not washed clean" (1).

1. A bolo ma ko ka dye ya.

which means that she was improperly excised.

Funerals

761 764 115 The effect of death is to dissociate the elements composing the person. The body becomes a corpse (šu) from which the /189/ ni and the dya escape to follow their particular destinies, while the tere is transformed into nyama, an active and dangerous force which wanders about the deceased. The funeral rites aim first to channel the deceased's spiritual elements which must be conserved in the interest of the deceased as well as that of the community. Moreover, through the care given to the body and to these elements, the memory of the dead person is piously kept up. The notion of a final resurrection, promised to all who have lived, inspires these preparations. The bones of the deceased, which are like the exuvia of his physical body, its solid and durable framework, join the exuvia of his soul which is kept in the altars of the Komo. Thus, at the end of time, the dead man "will rise and, to everyone's joy, join his family."

764 The funeral rites, which the Bambara have always celebrated, have evolved along with their beliefs. At the time when the cult of the balanza was flourishing, the dead bodies were hung from trees until they rotted, their bones picked up and kept by their descendants. [532] The ancestors of the Gwonna then carved pieces of sunzun wood called mani (literally, little person) in the image of the dead. The length of the wood was proportionate to the length of the body; the head, arms, legs, and genitals were carefully reproduced. The mani

791 [589] The gifts he has received and the position of his *dya* compel /221/ the Soma to remain unmarried and to observe a certain chastity. "The wife of the Soma lives with the spirits," says the informant who adds that every forty-nine days (7 x 7) his *dya* is returned to him during the night for the purpose of a sexual union.

From the moment the Soma begins to exercise his art regularly, he visits the bush from time to time to consult the spirits and make offerings to them. Moreover, the latter visit him in his home where he attracts them by burning a powder that gives off a smell of which they are fond.

Like the *griot*, the Soma has a mouth full of *nyama*: his own to which is added that of the spirits who help him and control him. His word is so powerful that he rarely announces a death, for this would contribute to the propagation of death.

The Soma must be rigorously clean, wear simple clothes, and even dress as an indigent. During ceremonies he hangs the stone *ǰineworo* around his neck with a string and must always carry this stone in a pocket of his tunic. He generally belongs to the Komo society and may become its chief. In this case he is the recognized diviner of the village.

791 766 The Soma keeps in his home his stone of alliance and his harp with its accessories. When he dies, his body is left for some time alone in the house; the spirits are supposed to come and reclaim these objects which no one must touch and which no one will inherit. The burial of the body and the funeral ceremonies are performed only after this delay. His soul is never kept in the Komo altars and goes to join the *dya* in the domains of Téliko; the spiritual principles of the Soma are not reincarnated and the gift which he has received is not hereditary.

791 534 The Soma's harp (Fig. 17) (1) is made of a rectangular chest (*bara*) pierced through longitudinally by a long piece of wood (*ngoni kala*, literally, stalk of the *ngoni*) surrounded by little leather thongs in the shape of rings (*ǰiri wolo*, literally, skin of wood). These hold

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1. See G. Dieterlen, *Morphologie et symbolique de deux instruments de musique bambara* /The Morphology and Symbolism of Two Instruments of Bambara Music/.

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the goatskin thongs (ngoni dyuru, literally, ropes of the ngoni). At the end of the stalk, ngoni ku, is affixed an iron percussion plate (boso) decorated with rings of the same metal (nyege nyegele) which are the "earrings of the spirits." These rings are said to be "multicolored' for the sound they emit is blurred and confused.

[532]

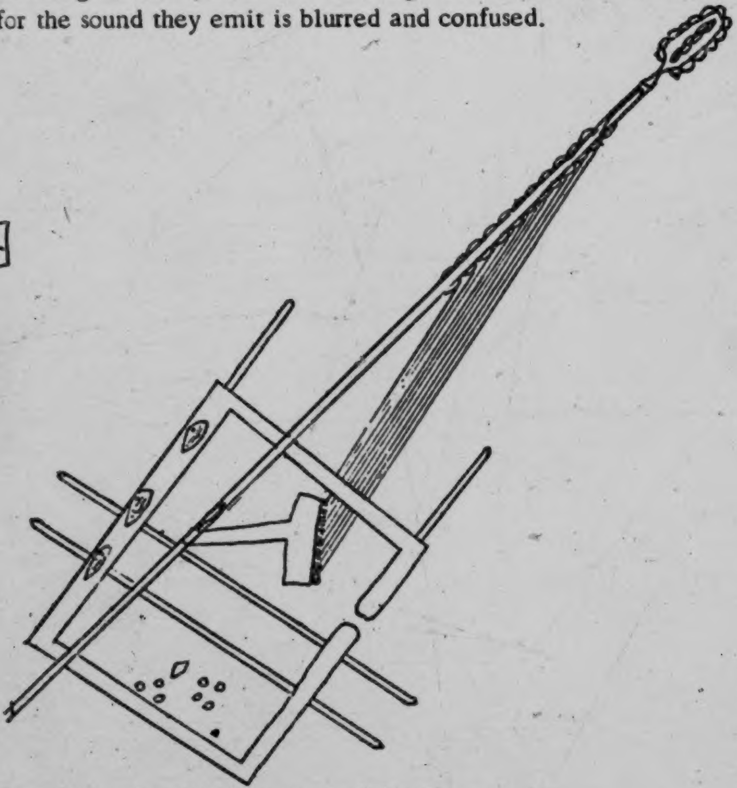

Fig. 17 —The Divining Harp of the Soma.
The instrument represents the face of the ancestor Koumabana who received "the word," and his tomb; on another level, it symbolizes also the face of the diviner and his tomb. (Drawing by an informant.)

When the percussion plate is placed on the handle, "it increases the sounds and filters them in the air, which pleases the spirits and calls them to the diviner whom they assist during his work." If the instrument /222/ is used without the percussion plate, that is to say, for a secular purpose, the spirits are not alerted by the playing of the music.

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534 The skin, stretched on the box by means of goatskin thongs, is soaked in water over which the name of the spirit Téliko has been pronounced forty-nine times. The supporting strings are made of twisted shreds of shrouds picked up in a cemetery. The musical strings are made of goatskin, numbering eight, /223/ symbol of the word (1), and are named as follows, beginning with the shortest: kumabana, fa dẽ (son of the father), fa (father), fa koroke (elder brother of the father), fa dogone (younger brother of the father), ba (mother), modẽ (grandson), fa so (house of the father).

Tied to a bridge, ǰiri ni (literally, teeth of the ngoni), which represents the mouth and teeth of Koumabana, they are the ancestor's words. On another level, they are also the home and the family of the spirit Téliko.

Of a relatively equal length in different harps, they give eight different notes; the intervals are called dyuru fara dye (2).

[532] On the right side of the box the three first ancestors of the Bambara are sometimes drawn; Koumabana and the two elders who died after him. They may be recognized by the hair with which their faces are covered, just as those of the ancestors to whom the razor was unknown (3).

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1. The harp of the Soma differs from that of the griot which usually has even strings.

2. On some instruments we have observed, the first and the eighth string gave the same note at an interval of an octave. It may be predicted that a thorough study of Bambara music would bring to light a system of correspondences between the disposition of musical sounds and that of the world. M. Griaule, in his research on the Dogon harp, has already discovered a relationship between the notes, the numbers, and the universe.

3. This detail has been observed on ancient instruments in the region of Koutiala.

791 534 The box is transpierced by two wooden sticks, če kala (literally, man-stalk), recalling the two millet stalks which accompany every dead man into his grave and which are in themselves symbols of the two elders.

791 534 755 When the Soma falls ill, he removes the two sticks from his instrument and places them beside him on his mat, anticipating the position he will lie in the grave. Thus stretched out, "he is in the grave and walks with the two ancestors"; if his condition improves the sticks have liberated him from his illness. He replaces them in the harp only after his recovery.

791 534 The box contains seven pebbles, the number of man (3 + 4) and a piece of copper in the shape of a star symbolizing the word. The Soma may look into the harp through an opening on its side, called šu wo (sorcery hole) or bara dinge (hole of the box), which "permits him to breathe," to see "the ancestor Koumabana, master of the word, and to know the deepest secrets." At the bottom of the instrument another opening, considered the anus, permits the release of all that is harmful.

/224/ A red stain placed on one of the faces, sindera ble (literally, red belt), expresses the fact that the instrument is the object of blood sacrifices like the stone ǰineworo.

The case is the image, the mask of Koumabana; the two faces, called respectively kini nye, "right eye," and numa nye, "left eye," represent his eyes; the comb, his mouth; the opening, his nose and respiration; the strings, his words. It is also the replica of the tomb and of the first three of the eight ancestors who knew death. Finally, it is the face of the Soma and his tomb.

The instrument must never be touched by a woman; moreover, no one must play it if his intentions are not pure, "if his heart is not clean."

791 533 781 When the Soma plays in response to requests from those who consult him, each sound is a prayer. With his free hand he holds a twig with which he strikes the base. Each stroke is a word. As he plays, images form before his eyes and within him. He touches the cords separately according to their position and in relation to the importance of the question that is being asked. Thus, he pinches modẽ for subjects of little importance: hunt, journey, etc.; fadẽ for that which is concerned with health, procreation, the physical or moral life of the individual; fa for the future, destiny, the private and public life of a man, his

857 use corporal punishment.

From this early age, therefore, a Bambara is subject to the corporate discipline which will henceforth dominate his whole life, for the same sort of discipline prevails in the adult brotherhoods.

857 292 [782] The genie-protector is honored by offerings, [237] sacrifices, and ritual dances. When they perform these dances, the n-Tomo-den' take turns wearing the ceremonial mask and costume. The mask has the form of a human face surmounted by a number of vertical horns (five to eight of these) and decorated with a few cowries. The costume consists of a dloki (a kind of blouse with wide sleeves) and a pair of long trousers, which completely cover the body. If the costume is yellowish-brown (basa) or white (dye), the association is called "n-Tomo-fin' (black n-Tomo)" or "n-Tomo-dye (white n-Tomo)," respectively. Is this costume supposed to represent the adepts' conception of their protector's appearance? No. As in all sects, it is intended to differentiate the officiant from the profane world (1).

[536] [831] 1. Some of these associations give a kind of public performance from which they derive profit. Notably, they exhibit a kind of puppet called peremperen' (dancers) which members of the n-Tomo manipulate in a more or less comical manner; often one of the puppets represents a man and the other a woman, and their movements abound in the obscenities which are so popular with the onlookers.

831 857 [534] [195] A wooden phallus (or a small board) is commonly used to summon the n-Tomo-den' to meetings. This is tied to the end of a rope and whirled like a sling, producing a noise which the operator can vary and which carries a considerable distance. This apparatus is called n-Tomo-ulu, translated as "dog of the n-Tomo." It should be noted that the words used in the brotherhoods usually have a double meaning, with a special sense under a vulgar form. For instance, the word ulu means both

881 [302] freshly shaved (4), their bodies rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu), [242] arrive in single file. Greeted by the onlookers, they take their places in the front row. Shouts, noisy conversation, and songs are intermingled and make a racket which is interrupted by the arrival of the "girls of the soli" (soli-ma-moso-u). With their hair in a tangle and dressed in short skirts (1) reaching from the navel to the knee, they enter one behind the other, walk around the assemblage, and finally take their places in a group near their mothers and friends.

The assembled men drink around the fires.

881 All the drums are there, and as soon as the girls appear,
533 the drummers rush to their instruments. There are big drums
● 534 resting on three legs (denu-ba), others which hang from the
shoulder, and still others carried under the arm. Young women shake bits of iron (kinge) as one shakes castanets, and there are other iron instruments provided with rings. Old women pound on gourds turned upside down in pots filled with water.

The noise is deafening, and it is dominated by songs in honor of the ancestors shouted by the whole assemblage as loudly as possible. Then the whole crowd, where the tipsy are in the majority and where everyone is at the highest possible pitch of excitement, starts a frenzied dance accompanied by songs usually improvised.

881 While all this is going on, the adepts of the major
781 brotherhood (2) are outside the village, noisily driving out the

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4. Just as their heads were shaved at birth.

1. Blue for Moslems and yellowish-brown (basa) for the purely pagan Bambara.

2. The Komo around Ségou; the Nama in the Kaarta area.

881 on the sixth day. Just as a baby is admitted to the family on the seventh day after its birth, so on the sixth day after the surgical operation which has, as it were, marked the end of childhood, one attains a new status.

881 786 The sixth day, da woro, is the most important festival of the soli. All the relatives and friends are invited and even the most distant make great efforts to be present. Each one sends or brings his contribution to the orgy-like meals which go on and on, that day and the days following. The fiancés of the girls must be represented and send gifts. Married brothers and sisters must come, bringing their respective wives and husbands. It is an occasion for feasting and drinking, and it goes on as long as the provisions last, i.e., for several days.

881 The essential part of the ceremony, for which everyone has come, takes place on the evening of the sixth day. The onlookers gather in the public square where there will be [245] dancing, but usually only the women and girls remain there; the men and boys go outside for the admittance of the soli-ma-tye to the leading brotherhood of the village (Komoya, Namaya) (1).

Sometimes, however, there is no separation of the sexes, either because there is no active brotherhood or because the high priest has set a later date for the admittance ceremony.

In any case, the performance within the village is particularly for the girls, soli-ma-moso. Wrapped in a cotton coverlet with blue and white stripes, called dampe, each girl lies between her mother's legs (2) on a white cloth laid upon a mat.

●[534] While the boys, soli-ma-tye, are noisily shaking their rattles, n-koso-m-bara, the girls, soli-ma-moso, flourish their pebble-filled gourds.

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1. We shall describe this admittance when we discuss the brotherhoods.

2. Or those of a relative or friend of her mother.

794 The sounds of the [263] trumpets to announce the meetings
825 imitate the cry of the animal (1).

● [534] 1. This is true of the Dyara. In the brotherhood of that name, a cry like a roar is drawn from an instrument made as follows: the hollow trunk of a palm tree is covered at one end by a tightly stretched skin; a long thong or rope runs down inside the trunk from the center of the skin; the operator pulls the rope tight, then lets it slip through his hand by jerks, and having achieved a certain facility, he succeeds in producing a noise like a roar.

000 Can it be that the costumes made of bark strips, the strange masks, and the mimicry of the people who wear them are connected with mysteries which are now unknown to us, either because they have been adopted without understanding and thus deformed beyond recognition, or because they are the last vestiges of far older cults, today unfathomable since they no longer exist?

Did Egypt inspire these cults, as some people believe? Or rather was Egypt herself influenced originally by a preexistent Black civilization whose last surviving traces she kept alive by altering them? This is an unlimited field for speculation.

Generally speaking, the cult is in abeyance on Monday
794 and Thursday of each week. The same days are holidays from
805 communal work and are left to the "poor people" for their own profit. There must be some connection between these two facts, and it should further be noted that, as a result, the religious week is reduced to five days. A question naturally arises, therefore, as to whether the week as now observed is truly native. It seems likely that the week is an oriental contribution, more specifically Islamic. It could be a coincidence that Islam organized slavery, and when a seven-day week was adopted, two days were allotted to the gens de poëste, as used to be said in France.

794 796 over the threshold (2). The ceremonies are announced and

2. Then the door is called su-bo-da, "exit of the corpse," and the sacrificer is called moso-bolo (literally, "woman's hand").

● [534] accompanied by a strident, wild orchestra made up of drums (denu-ba) which are accompanied by iron instruments, called kinge, consisting of pieces of metal that are struck against each other or shaken to obtain sound from the rings attached to them. The "cry" of the Komo, which the wara-da shouts through his horn, is accompanied by a kind of reed pipe played by his companions.

[782] There is nothing unusual about the offerings, sacrifices, or communion. The blood of the victim is used to wash the boli and the priests, as will be described for the Nama.

Processions held at night are always very effective, and they strike terror into the hearts of not only the uninitiated but also the initiated themselves. This long cortege, lighted by the torchbearers who shout and dash about like madmen while the wara-da gives the "cry" of the Komo, makes a very strong impression on everyone who sees or hears it (3). [273]

794 796 292 3. Elsewhere, the Komo meets in the daytime, and in the old days, notably in Bobo country, it was very popular (cf. Binger, Du Niger au golfe de Guinée [From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea], Vol. 1, p. 379, and Monteil, De Saint-Louis à Tripoli par le Tchad [From Saint-Louis to Tripoli via Chad], p. 89). We have already seen that all the officiants in the brotherhood are called dou, "the hidden people," because of the disguises they affect. "The dou are persons ludicrously disguised, wearing clothing on which are sewed bits of da-fou (native

794 of *Kore-dyuga-tigi* and has the same meaning.

most part strangely accoutered dancers, each of whom dresses [301] as his fancy dictates. As ornaments, the *Kor'dyuga* wear strings of beautiful red beans, which are inedible, called *n-go ble*. These beans are about the size of a large *dragée* and throughout the western Sudan are used as protection against evil spirits. [292] These dancers have a leader, the *Koro-duga-tigi* or *Kor'dyuga-tigi*, who is further distinguished by a kind of cloak made entirely of bits of reed stalks. On his head he wears a conical hat made of the same reeds, and in his hand he carries a long wand from which hang birds' skulls, packets of sorghum straw, gourd stems, etc. In addition to the dancers, the clergy is accompanied by [785] flagellants (*bisa-tyi-la*), torchbearers (*ta-tugu-la-n-tigi*), and people who lash themselves with bundles of thorns (the *ngoni-sa-ma-u*).

[534] Of course, the Kore has its orchestra, which includes drums (*denu-ba*), a kind of castanet (*kinge*), and gourds filled with seeds or pebbles (*nkude*) and pierced with holes.

794 796 The cult has the usual ceremonies, with the two great festivals at the times of planting and harvesting. On these occasions the *Kore-tigi* officiates, as the *nyana-n-son-na-ba* does with respect to *nyana dugu-da-siri*. He makes the offerings, performs the sacrifices, and sets forth the requests at the foot of the sacred tree, after having thanked the god-protector. The *kara* and the *Kore-kongolo* are sprinkled with the blood of the victims; thus, the manes and the *nyana* of the *boli* are honored simultaneously.

[764] There is always a meeting of the brotherhood when a *Kore-de* dies. There are offerings, sacrifices, and communion with all the offerings, which require one or more days of orgies to be consumed, depending on the importance of the deceased, because elders in [282] important posts like that of *nyana-n-son-na-ba*, etc., are particularly honored at their death.

Young men are admitted only once every seven years, and it is at this time that the ceremonies are most elaborate.

794 This boli-den'-fa is provided with the usual boli-de:
[778] kana, korti, siri-kun', etc. [284]

[346] A hut with a conical roof serves as temple (Nya-bon').

[534] An orchestra accompanies the ceremonies; it includes a kind of harp, made by the natives and peculiar to the Nya, plus large numbers of the usual drums, bells, and trumpets.

Since the Nya is acquired by purchase, the high priest (Nya-tigi) is theoretically the person who contributed most generously to this purchase. The office may also be attained by inheritance or by election. The truly religious role, however, is that of the wara-mina-den', the medium through which the god reveals his will or his desires and who is, therefore, the oracle (wara-da) of the Nya. A certain amount of training by appropriate methods is necessary to acquire the degree of extra-lucidity claimed by the wara-mina-den', and that is why they are recruited by co-optation.

794
787 Under the influence of the Nya, the wara-mina-den' falls into a trance. His speech, hesitant and strange, is incomprehensible to the common people. The Nya-tigi then approaches to receive and to interpret the oracle. The inspiration of the wara-mina-den' may be spontaneous or it may be provoked and deliberately sought by him. For example, when a person dies, the wara-mina-den' questions the Nya, either at the request of the interested parties or of his own volition. For this purpose, he retires to the temple (Nya-bon'), concentrates on the point to be clarified, and after meditating, withdraws (1). He then sometimes falls asleep, and while he sleeps, the Nya reveals the truth to him in a dream. On other occasions the wara-mina-den' falls into a trance, and the spirit speaks through his mouth. One way or another, it is learned whether the death is to be attributed to the Nya and, if so, why. Or it is made plain that it is the work of the suba and under what form, human or otherwise, they are hiding. Or, finally, it is learned whether some other nyana struck down the deceased.

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(1) These details were given to me by a wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara.

614 701 411 Chiefs and other notables carried a short sabre (*m-pan*) slung from their shoulders. These were probably Turkish in origin and were largely ceremonial weapons.

614 714 The troops wore no specific uniform. Only a few of the more important personages were recognizable by certain insignia, and it sometimes happened that certain individuals were honored by distinguishing marks. The chronicle tells us that Mamari [314] had Ngolo Dyara outfitted in red, a uniform particularly desired. Likewise, he gave Tonmassa a pair of trousers that were unusually wide and consequently attracted everyone's attention.

● 534 614 701 Drummers (*dunu*) and trumpeters (*buru*) made up a military clique which also included men who played xylophones (*bala*) and various accessory instruments, especially bells (*tana*, *veleni*, etc.), and gourds half-filled with pebbles or grain.

The drum beaten to sound a rally, which was, therefore, in a manner of speaking, the announcer of war, was the *tabala*. The cylinder, bowl-shaped and usually made of wood or sometimes pottery, was covered with an ox-hide, often untanned, which was stretched by thongs tied under the drum. 766 In theory, this drumhead was always changed at the death of a *fama*, when the skin was broken as a sign of mourning (1), and was replaced by the hide of the ox sacrificed in honor of the deceased. The *tabala* was carried horizontally between two men by means of leather grips and a third individual beat it by means of a ball attached to his wrist by a leather thong.

Other drums were of varying sizes and shapes. Some were carried under the arm (*dunkan'*) or slung from the shoulder (*tama*); others, mounted on three feet (*dange*), presented a horizontal

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1. It should be noted that the destruction of the drumhead is comparable with the killing of the dead chief's dog and the presentation of a dead chicken to his relatives. All these are obviously "intentional breaks."

534 beating surface. The most highly regarded was the *denu-ba*;
614 made of a hollowed cylindrical trunk with fairly thick walls,
701 the *denu-ba* is sometimes more than a meter high, with its lower third often slightly tapered with an adze. The drumhead is made of strong hide, reinforced in the center by a patch of leather sewed to it and stretched on pegs driven into the sides of the drum a few centimeters below the upper edge. When it is to be played, the drum is inclined on a fork that supports it. The drummer uses a kind of wooden hook, cleverly curved for elasticity and provided at one end [315] with a rounded part, often formed by a swelling contrived for the purpose or at other times made of a leather ball. The drummer's free hand provides the syncopation.

In certain cases, two *denu-ba* are used together; the drummer strikes them in such a way as to obtain a variety of sounds to form the basis for conventional harmony. Thus, the soldiers not only were trained to obey appropriate flourishes, but also were kept in touch with distant battalions by means of the
202 drums. When it was skillfully played, the *denu-ba* made it possible to transmit information for considerable distances, because other drummers would retransmit it in turn. That is why it has
778 been said that the *denu-ba* can talk and no doubt why it was so highly regarded by the *ton'-dyon'* that they considered it an oracle and honored the god who spoke through the drum by making the *denu-ba* the *boli* of this god. Hence, human victims came to
782 be sacrificed to the drums of the *ton'-dyon'*, especially under Ngolo, according to the chronicle.

237 Trumpets (*buru*) were formerly made of ivory. The Tedzkiret speaks of the ivory trumpets used by a certain Bambara named Maro, and Mage relates that Ahmadou, Sultan of Ségou, gave the Bambara their ivory trumpets on the occasion of the Moslem festival.

237 These ivory trumpets, however, have disappeared, no doubt carried off by traders. Trumpets made of horn, which were used concurrently with the ivory instruments, have been substituted for them. The horns of the large antelope are much in demand for this purpose. An opening is made a few centimeters from the pointed end, and the trumpeter makes the sound through this opening. The only result is a loud but monotonous noise.

● 534 614 701 The xylophone (bala) consists of a table made of strips of hardwood, with a gourd under each strip, like a resonator; the size of each gourd depends on the note desired. A section of the gourd is stopped by the vibrating surface which is a white material very closely woven like a cobweb. When it is played well, the bala produces various tunes, but they seem very thin compared to the noise of the drums and the shrieking of the trumpets. [316]

The accessory bells are of no particular interest.

538 701 No expedition of any consequence ever set out without a griot (dyeli) (1). The griot has acquired a deplorable reputation because of the fact that too often he uses his fluency to exploit the rich and powerful. This should not hide the fact, however, that the griot has often played a role not lacking in grandeur. In addition to being the official archivist of one or more families, he was also, in the native sense, a kind of epic bard who told his [534] tales in song, accompanying himself on a stringed instrument similar to a guitar or a rudimentary harp. When told by him, the traditions, involved with those miracles so dear to the native, had something of the quality of our medieval epics. In that respect, at least, the griot truly deserved his title of dyeli (master).

Unfortunately, however, being reduced to earning his keep by making use of his information, he resorted to slander and calumny. This made him so much to be feared that in order to buy his silence the victims despoiled themselves for his benefit, as did those whom he intoxicated with base flattery.

538 701 726 In the army the griot stirred and encouraged the brave men. On the eve of an important engagement or shortly before it, a large assembly customarily was held, and roused by the epic poems of the griot no less than by the war, ~~[illegible]~~s and copious libations, the warriors promised under oath to perform such and such acts of great courage. It was then the duty of the griot to take public note, so to speak, of this commitment and later,

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1. See above, pp. et seq., on the dyeli.

567 3. The ton-koro-bolo behind the disi is a special reserve formed
701 entirely of pure ton-dyon.

4. The keli-tigi was the chief of the expedition, designated by the Fama. He might be a dyon-kuntigi (chief of the furuba-dyon), a member of the Fama's community, or the Fama himself.

708 Finally, the army was accompanied by a musical corps, com-
534 posed essentially of drums which transmitted messages. There were armpit drums (dunkan), shoulder drums (taura), three-legged drums (dange), drums carried by two men (tabala), and coupled drums (denuba). Often horns (buru) were added, sometimes small horns made of ivory or horn, and sometimes xylophones (bada) and cowbells.

708 A dyeli (griot) follows the expedition to observe the exploits
537 that he must retransmit; he must encourage the warriors and dispel panic by the power of his oratory.

B. Influence of Social Organization on Economic Life

a. The ton, Work Community

621 We have seen that the social unit among the Bambara is the community. The community is also the work unit and the economic unit. The independent individual is not conceived of. The community owns all the wealth which makes up the spiritual and material patrimony: the land, the agricultural, industrial, and commercial products, the habitations ...

423 The community regulates the exploitation of the land. The
621 dugu-tigi is the first occupant, master of the land, of which he dis-
622 tributes the lots to the different family heads. When a stranger, a
609 family head, wants to enter into a community, he chooses an unoc-
cupied field and asks the village chief for it. The request is accom-
[431] panied by ten kola nuts and a chicken. Authorization cannot then be refused. The chief of the land sacrifices the chicken before the entire community and informs it of the installation of the newcomer. When the stranger wants to leave the land, he is given back his chicken and kola nuts.

423 Land assigned to a family head may always be taken back
621 from him without justification by the dugu-tigi and his council.
622

881 and the member is held up by a split millet stalk. The prepuces are
304 buried, and their white bonnets are put on the circumcised. The
place of the operation is forbidden to women and to the non-circumcised who could take the liberated wanzo.

In the Bamako region the blood of the oldest is gathered in
[534] two new calabashes, which are later broken and the pieces used to make sistrums, sinzin.

881 After the ceremony, the children retire for three months under the direction of a priest of the Komo. During this period, when they receive a religious and technical education, they enter the village only to sleep in a special house and to repair the roofs of their teachers' huts.

[794] The night before the sixth day after the operation, they are initiated in the Komo. The next day they are led to the river where they wash their wound. Meals are taken together, followed by songs and dances, until they are healed. The last day, the sistrums, sticks, mats, and everything that has been in contact with the circumcised are put in a pile and burned. Each child jumps over the fire three times and runs home, without turning around, to lose his wanzo definitively. In the Bamako region the sistrums are preserved in the cabin of the village chief and will be used for the children of the following years. The bonnet is returned to the mother and will be preserved until death. The next day the child puts on his new clothes.

881 Let us note that for the circumcision of twins all the offerings
304 for the ceremony and the sacrifices must be doubled, and each child
826 will possess two sistrums. Finally, the albinos today are sent to the
dispensary, because the blacksmiths are afraid to operate on them, their wanzo being particularly dangerous.

304 Circumcision may take place posthumously. The circumciser
766 then cuts the left ear of the body, since the wanzo freed by death would be dangerous to the living.

794 Generally, a sort of ceremony of confirmation of membership in the Komo takes place in the year following the circumcision.

d. Excision

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304 The excision of the girls has a meaning equivalent to that
[831] of the circumcision of the boys. The operation frees them of the
physical male factor residing in the clitoris.

881 physical male factor residing in the clitoris. The operation takes
304 place, moreover, during the same period as the circumcision. It is
carried out by the potteress, wife of the blacksmith, in full daylight
before the assembled kin. During their seclusion the girls wear a
white veil which plays the same role as the bonnet of the circumcised.
534 Instead of the sistrum, the girls shake a gourd which contains eight
millet seeds and cotton fibers which their fiancés have given them.
A goat is sacrificed for the ceremony. The collected blood is given
to the fiancé in honor of his ancestors who become those of the girl.

[93] On the last day of the ceremony the girls definitively rid themselves of their wanzo by jumping over a pyre composed of the clothes and scraps of the excised.

e. Marriage

582 It is only after having been circumcised or excised that young
584 people may marry. The institution of marriage is regulated by a
ritual which has often been described, particularly by Amar, Monteil,
Tauxier, Aubert . . .

The marriage arrangements are made by the respective fa
of the two betrothed, after the young people have been consulted.
The request is officially made to the parents by an intermediary, a
man of caste or a sénanku. It is accompanied by ritual gifts offered
to the fa of the girl. In the Bougouni region the request is accom-
panied by ten kola nuts, because ten is a complete number that
801 designates good events and future births. (Nine kola nuts are offered
576 to present condolences, four as a sign of greeting. To send three
431 nuts would be insulting, and 19 nuts, marking incompleteness, would
be a sign of lack of confidence.) The first kola nuts to be offered
834 are always wrapped in one or two karite leaves, symbol of life and
of fecundity. If the ten kola nuts are accepted, it means that the
father has opened the way to the marriage. The intermediary then
make a second trip the following week, bringing a cock for sacrifice
to the ancestors and ten more kola nuts; during a third trip he offers
another cock and ten more kola nuts before the entire assembled
family of the young girl, witnessing that the girl may meet her
fiancé. In the course of the fourth trip, the intermediary leads the
girl to the fiancé's family, where she will be confided to the wife
of the head of the family who will undertake her education.

326 as well as of silver, on a wooden core. The thrones of the ancient
[531] Bambara chiefs were covered in this manner. Today the golden
ornaments are no longer reserved exclusively for the wives of kings.
[301] Bracelets, pendants, and necklaces are produced in large quantities
in a filigree work in which the Black excels.

B. Ceramics

323 The land is very rich in pottery, but Bambara men do not model clay, pottery being a woman's art. Inversely, the women do not work on statuary.

C. Painting

531 The Bambara paint murals on the sanctuary walls with ocher
386 and a millet paste. The priests make these drawings periodically.
The walls of the young people's huts are also decorated with symbolic
motifs: calabash spoons, festoons, ladders with 22 bars, drawings
of hands, lines of chevrons. The young girls come to paint these,
[237] with clay from the river or with a mixture of clay and cow dung.
All these geometric drawings are signs representing not only the
cosmogony, but a subtle translation of all the movements of the
executing artist's soul. They are a veritable form of writing.

D. Music

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771 Music is a privileged art (1) because it is bound to instruments, that is to say, to materials, to the human body by the voice and the dance, to numbers by the rhythm, to medicine, to divination, and to religion.

534 [106] In a report to the French Institute of Anthropology on
771 February 18, 1948, Mme. G. Dieterlen described the structure and
symbolism of the two Bambara musical instruments, the Sema guitar
and the royal drum.

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1. Griaule, Passim, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the African Arts], Présence africaine.

534 771 "The form of Bambara musical instruments is governed by a symbolism which enters into the metaphysical and religious system of this population."

a. The chief instrument is the drum, the tabale, reserved to kings and chiefs. The mythical prototype of this instrument was made of copper, a primordial metal whose vibration is likened to that of light, of sound, of water, and of speech in this population.

The instrument today is composed of two parts: a square wooden frame covered with goat's skin, which forms the body of the drum, and a detachable apron of engraved wood, in the form of a half-moon on one of its faces, which is attached to one of the drum's sides. This apron is covered with plaques of engraved and adorned wood, and, on the periphery of the rounded face, with a strap of leather trimmed with copper rings. This apron represents an ear which is at the same time that of the spirit of the air, that of the masters of sound, and that of the king. The copper rings are replicas of those worn in the ears by everybody; their role is to transmit sounds and rhythms to the eardrum.

The wooden drumstick used to beat the instrument is unusually long and anthropomorphous in form. It has a bell at one end. It represents Koumabana, the first of the eight ancestors in the Bambara pantheon who received "the Word" ...

b. The anthropomorphism of the harp [guitar?], ngoni, is very plain in the minds of its users.

The instrument's rectangular frame represents the mask of Koumabana, the ancestor who received the Word; the two side pieces are his eyes; the sound hole, his nose and his respiration; the tail-piece, his mouth and his teeth; the strings, eight in number, his words. It is also the image of his tomb, and the two rods that cross it represent the second and third ancestors who accompanied him in death. The frame also represents the face of the seer and his tomb, the two rods being the two millet stalks put in the ground with the cadaver. At the end of the handle, copper bells have the same role, technical and religious at the same time, as those attached to the apron on the drum described above.

534 787 Each sound given by each of the eight strings is a prayer. The seer plucks the strings separately, following their rank and according to the importance of the questioner and of the questions he

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787 asks: modè (grandson) for unimportant subjects, hunting, voyages; fadè (son of the father) for individual life, physical and moral; fa (father) for the future, destiny, the public life of a man, his authority, his rule; fakoroke (father's older brother) for the plantings, the rains, for fortune; fa dogone (father's younger brother) for germination of the cereals; ba (mother) for everything concerning the women; [107] faso (father's house) for everything concerning the familial abode or the absent.

534 The principal efficacy of the harp is in bringing order, by the rhythms and sounds emanating from it, to all that is troubled in the march of events.

The harp presides at sacrifices, at cathartic or medical rites, at purifications, at apotropaic rites, at solitary meditations. Its high notes are celestial and symbolic of completeness; the low notes connote terrestrial things and incompleteness. Its playing commands arrivals and departures, proliferations and diminutions, calls to order; its presence at the edge of a pool, where it had been silently placed, is assurance of appeasement.

The harpist, before beginning his service, puts his mouth to
788 the orifice in the frame and murmurs to the master of the Word:
"Now it is your turn, organize the world." (1)

1. Passim, Griaule, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the Africain Arts].

533
534 Music, dance, and song are intimately linked in the religious movement. Thus it is that a djo of the Samakè (Bougouni circle) is composed entirely of musicians who form an orchestra in which the whole scale is represented by eight different principal instruments, which are types of a multitude of others. There is one n'ganian-ba, an instrument made by hollowing out a trough in a tree trunk, which gives a very deep sound when rubbed; it is the bass which gives the cadence. Two to three tiorō give a sharper sound; four to six tioun, a still sharper sound, and there are as many as ten fere, the instrument
533 with the sharpest sound. Finally, a host of N'ganian dyeli begin the
292 music as the griot quiets the crowd at the start. All these instruments
have the form of a pirogue. In addition, the orchestra includes two singers and two dancers. Everyone wears masks, bonnets with crests

545 Example:
794 Tiekoroba kolili (the old man who has nothing)
522 Ita rokiha momindi (what you say is not liked)
Ida konieti aie (you are right)
N'ka idia dopina marmandi (but one doesn't like what you say)
Or again:
Demise fentili (the rich young man)
Ida dokma kakadi (one likes what you say)
Ida konie tinaie (what you say is not true)
N'ka idia dokma makadi (but one likes what you say)

545 534 794 The Kworéduga have the su (Moor) as taboo, and they accompany themselves in singing with a sacred gourd, yaraba, which contains seeds of Lufa cilindrica.

535 881 Finally, during the circumcision initiation period for example, the child learns the sacred dances which often mime exploits of the mythical ancestors.

177 517 A certain evolution characterizes the native art which has been transformed in a curious fashion by contact with Europeans. In European centers, prolonged contact with the Whites has confused the beliefs that inspired the art, but the artists have lost neither their taste nor their gifts. At the request of the Whites themselves, they have undertaken a controlled art, with the aim of pleasing the Europeans. Needless to say, even if it conserves some charm in its form, all this new art, which evolves with the same swift rhythm as our modes, remains terribly dead, for the true source of inspiration has dried up. This art no longer seeks to be true, but to be pretty; by this it signs its own death warrant.

[109]

CONCLUSION

I. Traditional Interpretation of Mental Characteristics

181 In the introduction to Religion Bambara, Tauxier insists on the mental characteristics: "The Bambara has remained rather openly fetishist"; he possesses "two dominant traits, which are absolutely undisputed and indisputable:

"1. He is a very good farmer.

776 out of the Bambara's need to soften their crime of idolatry and to pre-
177 serve it by lending it extenuating circumstances. If the cradle of
798 Islam is Mecca, if its superiority is derived from the holiness of that
city, chosen and beloved by God (1), what can the Moslems want of him, the Bambara, whose religion comes from this same much vaunted city? And if the God of Whom the Moslems preached to the Bambara has decreed everything (2), good and evil, if He is the Author of both good and evil and leads each person along the course that pleases Him to such a degree that he no longer has freedom of choice, why wish to take from them that which God has given them, that which comes to them from the holy city of Mecca!

776 The Bambara term for the boli is gna. Their idea of them
796 corresponds closely to the Arab concept of the chéitane شيطان,
782 and in everyday language, they define them by a single word: sétané,
[192] "satan," even though this word is never on their lips in the sacrifices. In their nocturnal orgies and religious dances, the Negroes' notion of the genie to which they are sacrificing are shown in concrete form. And when, in their religious ceremonies in honor of the Komo, Kono,
[178] Nama, etc., the spirit appears by the glow of little fires lit in the sacred woods, decked out in a cloak of feathers, his head hidden in a huge horned mask that has nothing human about it, one cannot help
776 thinking of the tales of old Breton grandmothers, told on a winter
796 evening in the stables. The blasting of trumpets, bamboos, and koba
534 horns (3), the tinkling of /72/ the little bell, and the shouts of the
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1. See what I said above on the subject of Mecca and Stamboul.

2. See the Koran: VI, v. 3 - 39; X, v. 99; XIV, v. 4; XVII, v. 32; XXXVI, v. 6, 7, 8, 9; LIII, v. 43, 44, 45 - 49; LXXVI, v. 29; LXXX, v. 29; etc.

crowd grip and terrify you and make you think yourself transported into the midst of a sabbath of long ago. When one has been present at these scènes, one does not doubt the veracity of the Negroes who say: "When the boli appears it is hideous and freezes with fear whoever sees it. It is as black as soot and its face disappears in a flame above which there are horns."

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The face disappearing in a flame inevitably recalls the idea of an infernal spirit, and one who has been present at certain sacrifices to the Komo and the Nama, for example, and has heard the blasphemies of the sacrificer no longer doubts that it is Satan himself that is worshipped here. The blasphemies are repeated by all those present: Alla k'an bla, "may God leave us" (the real meaning: "We do not want God"); Alla djampa ba, "God is a great traitor" (meaning: "God makes promises and does not fulfill them, since he has decreed everything and his decrees are immutable"; A yé né djampa, "he has betrayed me," says a Negro of someone who has made him a promise and has not kept it). One is further convinced by being present at the sacrifice to Touafé Bla (1), one of the most ancient boli. The

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3. Formerly the trumpets and horns were ivory. The Moslem tyrants quickly had them confiscated, no doubt because they knew the price of an elephant tusk. At present the Bambara use only cattle horns and those of the koba, a large antelope which grows to the size of a fine heifer. (Koba is the word that designates this antelope in the Peul language; the Bambara call it dadjé, "white mouth," no doubt because it has two white lines on its jowls.)

1. The name Touafé Bla undoubtedly comes from the custom of suspending

776 risk of spoiling the crop -- o be gno soun tigné ("it destroys the vitality
241 of the seed of the millet grain").

782 These genii do not have special festivals in the course of the year. Their priests, the heads of families, offer them saraka and sacrifices at planting time, and some of them sacrifice a hen in the corner of the field while the crop is sprouting and growing, but that is all.

6. Genii Protectors of Children

819 It is not until circumcision that Bambara children take part in the mysteries of pagan worship, but they are early prepared for it so
794 that they may be introduced to the law of secrecy which they must
776 strictly adhere to later when they are initiates of an occult sect. At about the age of seven or eight years, they become affiliated with an association worshipping the genii responsible for protecting them. All these sects are alike, differing only in name. On the bank~~s~~ of the
[825] Bani and the Niger, the object of worship is the tauri (toad or frog), and the croaking of this animal is imitated in their festivals; some villages have the djara (lion) and imitate its roar by whirling their
[534] slingshots, small boards four fingers wide and one to two centimeters long, attached to the end of a string. The most widespread /children's
[824] genie/ is n'tomo, which undoubtedly gets its name from the tree in which it lives (the /92/ jujube tree, n'tomo). It makes children hale and hearty, preserves them from sickness, defends them against the invisible little creatures of the bush, against spells and sorcery, and makes them strong, steadfast, and impervious to suffering.

The confraternity of the n'tomo is modeled after that of the boli. (This is true of both kinds -- for there are two; a white costume is worn to the dance for n'tomo djé and a black costume for n'tomo fign). In order to be admitted one must offer a hen to the child who is head of the n'tomo (the n'tomotigi), prostrate oneself before the tree of the genie, and swear to keep the secret and never to speak of the n'tomo to the uninitiated, especially not to little girls.

776 preserve the freshness of youth in the ladies for a long time, to give
824 mothers breasts that are loaded with /96/ milk, to bring fertility to
the sterile, and finally to keep an eye on the periods, or menses, of
776 each and every one. Every month at the new moon the excised women,
535 married and unmarried, spend an entire night dancing in its honor,
554 to the beat of a special drum called mouso denou (1). These dances
are not very decent, and except for some shameless individuals who watch even these scenes from the height of the flat terrace roofs, the men among the Bani stay at a distance.

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824 Many villages (and they are numerous in Bani country) believe that the genie takes shelter in a fig tree near the walls and establishes its home there. It is the trunk of this tree that is reddened with blood at the annual festival, and most of the dances take place in its shade, as does the repast of which the Negro women partake on this occasion. The girls excised during the year spend 80 to 120 cowrie shells, offer a pullet for the sacrifice, and are thereafter permitted to pay their respects to the genie.

794 Out of this group of worshippers arises a small mutual aid society, identical in every way with the youth's association, the fla-n-to. The head of this organization is usually the oldest woman of the village, and she is given the title of massa, "queen." All the female population call her mba, "my mother."

This society, called mouso-n-to (2), from time to time offers the people of the village d'lo, or millet beer, and once a year at the festival of the genie a plentiful repast with a dessert of kola nuts for the old and the usual drinking bout for everyone. Those who break the laws of the association are fined, and the sum of all these fines, together with the 80 or 120 cowrie shells spend by the excised girls of the year, help the massa and her associates to meet all expenses.

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1. Mouso, "woman"; denou, "drum."

2. Mouso, "woman"; to, "gruel."

782 you accept it at my hands." If one of the pieces falls with the pulp
787 on top and the other onto the pulp, there is an affirmative answer from the dasiri. The sacrificer bites the kola nut, cuts out with his teeth the piece that contains the seed, and, when he has chewed it a moment, spits the remains onto the bark of the fetish tree.

This procedure, wholly dependent on chance, is often long, for the pieces of kola nut do not always fall in the desired position at the first try. After three failures the crowd ceases to restrain itself and, with gestures and voice, each person intercedes for the unfortunate one. The cries do not stop until the kola nut gives the answer, "I accept and am no longer angry!"

The Semioccult Society of the Koré, or Koté

794 The Bambara are, above all, farmers, and cultivating a field
241 has such great importance in their eyes that for them it alone really
[461] deserves the name of work. One who does not handle the pick may be active and skillful, but he is not a worker and one does not say of him: "A bi ajaké, he is working." But will the seed that /122/ they consign to the earth in the winter sprout, grow, become large, and ripen? However little one knows the Bambara, one can imagine and understand their fears, for they are surrounded by a band of malicious spirits ever ready to pounce on them. Therefore they heed protectors and helpers, and at planting time they offer something to all, even to the rain. The main fetish to which they appeal is the koté, or koré, which lives in a tree in the middle of a small grove.

794 In order to be present at the sacrifices to the koté, it is
196 necessary to be initiated and to know the password. This initiation,
534 may take place by day, but at least in Bani country, it usually takes place at nightfall when the setting sun takes on a bloody hue. The sons of the genie go in procession to the sacred grove. The korétigi, the priest, opens the march, preceded by musicians who beat the denouba (1) and the kingé (2). With him are the kârâ ma ("man of

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1. Drums over a meter long and peculiar to the koré.

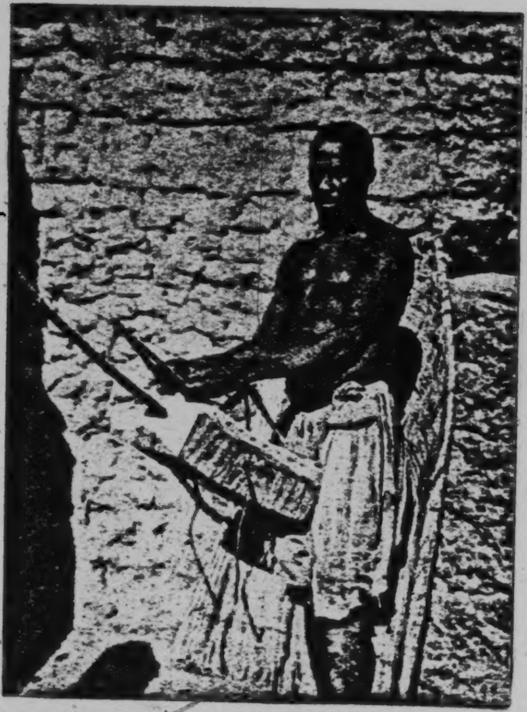
2. A kind of triangle which is hung on the thumb of the left hand and is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger.

the kârâ"), one of whom carries the kârâ, the perforated board which [778] is the emblem of the fetish and at the same time the altar on which sacrifice is made to deceased members. First come the souroukou (hyenas) who guard the sacred grove and during the sacrifices drive away prying, uninitiated people; they wear crude masks, roll their big heads right and left, and utter frightful "hou hous." The [522] korodouga (clowns), who rake the paths in the sacred grove as well as its environs to protect it from brush fires, run from one to another shouting obscenities. Furiously they shake their gourds, which have handles and are perforated and filled with small stones, and furiously they blow into pipes made of pumpkin stems. The leader of this [292] band is dressed up in a cloak made of reed stems, he also wears a reed headdress which is topped by a pyramid of large red beans called n'go blé and decorated with a plume; in his hands he holds the emblem of the group, a long pole on which are hung dirty bags, sorghum stems 10 to 20 centimeters long bound into bundles, pumpkin stems, /123/ skulls of rats, beaks of ducks and hawks, panther claws, etc.

Apart from the long string of red beans which all korodougo are
794 required to wear which they twine around their necks several times
796 or sling over the shoulder, crossing and recrossing it on the back and
292 chest, each one dresses according to his own inspiration. The hats
522 are made of bunches of feathers, wings of vultures and ducks, and even entire birds, and around them to decorate them further are red beans, rat skulls, birds beaks, claws, and small bones; all these objects fall on the neck and shoulders and knock together with a sinister sound. Next to men in full breeches are men in rags or men with close-fitting trousers made of innumerable pieces all in different.

778 them, they have unlimited power. They render justice, oaths are taken on them, they exorcise all evils to some degree, they give fertility to the sterile, they have the right of life and death over human beings, and it is to them that appeal is made for vengeance on an enemy.

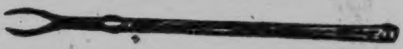
[291 534]



Nia ngoni: the harp of the Nia fetish

778 534 Chief among these fetishes are the Komo, the Nama, the Kono, the Nia, the Wara (or Djara), the Djo and the Magna, also called Tjaro fign. All of them have their special drums and musical instruments, and some, like the Nia and the Magna, even have an entire band. The band of the Nia consists primarily of guitars, skin bags, and small baskets in the shape of hourglasses filled with stones or bits of scrap iron. That of the Magna consists of one or /147/ two long

778 534 drums and a fairly large number of antelope horns (1). These are tuned by means of a wooden bell, and each gives a special note and tone. 778 533 In fact, Bambara music is the sweetest and the least shrill that I have heard. Moreover the Negroes enjoy [534] it; one day at Bagini on the Bani, when three such bands gave a concert together, the women were so happy, so pleased and moved by the charm of its sweetness, that they took off their bracelets, earrings, and nose rings and laid them at the feet of the musicians.



Horned iron tube trumpet of the Komo fetish (seen at Bagini in Bani country at the home of Boya, head owner of the fetish; it is between 0.30 and 0.35 meters long.

The Komo, the Kono, and the Nama have the wildest music there is -- trumpet blasts and frightful bellowings that freeze one with 778 534 terror. In the Komo music, an iron tube which is part of the fetish is blown into, and the initiates, warada darotigi, accompany the sacred songs on bamboo pipes. The pipes of the Kono are bulls' horns (2), and the sounds that come out of them are real roars. Those of

1. The old men say that before the Moslem invasion of Omar el Hadj, the musicians blew into elephant tusks. The tusks were confiscated because of the ivory and were replaced by horns of the great antelope, which the Europeans call by the Peul name, koba.

2. To make these pipes the Negroes cut the tip of the horn and close the opening with a spider's web.

178 the *Nama* are made of bamboo and smaller than those of the *Komo*.
● 534 The big instrument here is the drum which is beaten with a bent iron
rod. The syncopation is given on the bass drum which is wooden; the
vibrations of the skins stop, and one would say that the sound is the
knock of a bone that is broken clean; it gives one the shivers.

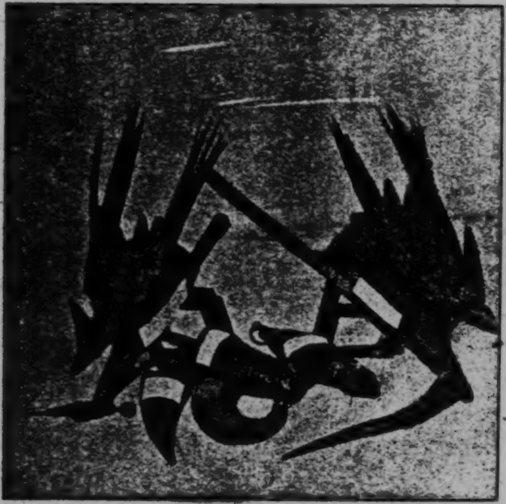
The *Komo* is always most carefully hidden, and one has to be-
178 long to the village to know in which hut it dwells. The main parts
of the fetish are enclosed in baskets just like those used for transport-
ing cotton, but three iron rods (3) on which /148/ sacrifices are made
are usually kept in the skin of a striped cat. The *Nama* lives under
a tamarind tree outside the village and has a beehive for a tabernacle.
[417] The whole thing is surrounded by a *djasé*, a kind of palisade made of
coarse mats which hides from the uninitiated both the hive and the
receptacle into which the remainder of the victims' blood is poured.

178 The *Nia* and the *Wara*, or *Djara*, have round huts surmounted
by conical thatch roofs. While the first is inside the village, the
346 second is always outside at one of the entrances. The *Kono* has a
square house with a flat terrace roof. It is always decorated with
small bells fastened by lines on which are hung skulls of dogs and
goats that have been sacrificed. Usually, if not always, it faces the
inside of the village. The *Magna* does not have a temple strictly
speaking, but it has its altar, a round turret surmounted by a receptacle
[824] to receive the blood of victims. It is outside the village and always
under a silk-cotton tree (*Eriodendron anfractuosum* -- kapok tree).

178 The *Komo* is equipped with a jointed mask and a cloak made
of feathers of guinea fowl, hens, etc., which are used for the sacred
dance. By means of a stick which the feather cloak hides from sight,

3. In the presence of the uninitiated these sticks are called *Komo djoloko*, and (again so that none of the mysteries will be revealed) the *warada*, those who speak in the name of the idol, are called *djoloko samana*, "those who carry the chains of *Komo*."

778 [54] In the Komo an important part is played by three iron tubes, one of which is used as a trumpet (2). The most interesting and original unquestionably is the Nama, which consists of two wooden heads called koungolo Nama ("heads of the Nama"); one, the male, is called tjéma and the other, the female, is called mousoma.



The Nama
Fetish

These two heads seem to represent two fantastic birds, and the illusion created is complete when, preceded by the darotigi who shakes his bell and carries a lantern, the djenfa mousoou (3) run through the village and around its walls looking for siri. It becomes even stronger when they place the heads on their foreheads and mingle

2. Tama guengueba is its name.

3. The term applied to those who are permitted to take the heads in their hands.

881 Shouting -- and that is an understatement, the young people
534 throw themselves onto their instruments, which are drums of every
shape and size. Some, the bass drums, are carried on the abdomen
and fastened to the waist by a bark cord; others, smaller but longer,
are slid between the legs or under the arms, and tambourines, hung
from the neck, swing at the level of the navel as a new kind of pendant.
The old women with toothless jaws join in; they scrape two iron rods
together or create syncapation by furiously beating on an inverted
gourd floating in a *conari* full of water with a piece of wood or a
pumpkin stem.

881 Virgins, married women, widows, prostitutes (all mingling)
slowly circle again and again around the orchestra behind the *soli*,
shaking in their hands the bags of goatskin or boxes of white iron, and
until morning every boy that is to be circumcised and every girl to
be excised hears the glories and feats of his lineage. There is nothing
very lofty about these songs containing thousands and thousands of
wishes; although there is a feeling of passion in them, there is no
love; beauty of the heart is lacking, and all is badly told. The men
also from time to time leave the jug and mingle in the dance, but
the night belongs to the women. And it belongs to the gods. If,
tired of the bedlam, you leave the ball and go outside the village
to breathe a little fresh air, you hear the piercing cries of the herald
of the gods, you even see him in the darkness, running from one tree
[292] to another; with horns on his head and a coat decorated with feathers
of hens, guinea fowl, egrets (1), etc., he looks like those story demons
which grandmothers depict so well in the late evenings.

[789] And this herald of the gods, with his retinue, is performing a
curious rite: he is chasing out the evil spirits and clearing a place
for the favorite god of the village so as to drive away sorcery from
the circumcised and the excised. /180/ In Bambara this is called
kéné sâlo (1) and can be translated into French as "exorcising the place."

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1. This is the costume worn by Negroes when they dance the dance of the *Komo* fetish.

881 196 194 It is after midnight. The circumcised boys are seated in the place of honor where their older brothers sat before, and they furiously shake their gourd disks strung on sticks. Leaning on their millet stalks, the regulation sticks, the excised girls in their turn arrive at the public square, singing and shaking their pierced gourds, and the dances begin as at the soli si and continue until morning. Outside, under the sacred trees, the bell of the fetish tinkles and summons the initiates, and the Komo god roars through the mouth of its herald. At a sign from the priest the circumcised boys get up, leave the village, and go under the big trees to swear loyalty and to dedicate themselves, body and soul, to the prince of darkness (1). How can this scene be described! The circumcised boys sit under the god's favorite tree, and the crowd of initiates, grouped by villages, gather around the gourds full of d'lo that froths and bubbles. Little fires are lighted and cast a strange light into the night, and a circle of crouching human beings appears and takes shape. The master of the idol (Komo tigi); the sacrificer (mourou kala tigi); the beadle (darotigi), who rings for the sacrifice and gathers the initiates; the fetish's storytellers /griots/ (Komo djeli maou), who sing the praises of the god, fall into catalepsy at the sacrifices and then give out oracles; [778 the Komo warada, who wear a coat covered with the feather of guinea 534] hens, hens, egrets, etc., and a long horned mask, and who carry the fetish to the place of sacrifice and blow into an iron tube that ends in two horns /186/ and is at once idol and trumpet, and draw from it frightful "fouin fouin" that freeze you with fear: in short, all the staff of the Komo appear on the scene, and there is a lascivious dance, the dance of the god, the sacred dance. Then there is the

1. The scene which I describe sometimes takes place the evening before. Sometimes, by order of a sorcerer and for a reason considered serious, the entrance into the sect of a fetish is postponed until later.

5. Exhibition of the Bride's Trousseau on the Evening of the First Day

585 Although the sun is high above the horizon, it is already without strength and life, and at the door of the entry hut to the couple's dwelling, drums and trumpetings rage and give honor to the young woman who is seated in the midst of them on a tiny stool. She allows people to admire her adornment, her beads and her jewels, her rings of copper and tin and sometimes also of gold and silver; she allows them to rave about the shoes with soles three fingers thick, which are a gift of the groom, and about her artistic, finely braided coiffure, [302] a mountain of hair forming a crest across her head which ends in two thin locks in front of and behind each ear -- cavalryman's helmet with a broken chin strap, one might say, all ebony and thrown on its side. But she has given her heart and her promise, and she covers her face with the platter of braided grass that she holds in her right hand.

[534] The horns of antelopes, cows, and bulls, which are the Bambara trumpets, cease to roar, the drums stop booming, and a group of women (usually storytellers /griottes/, for they sniff out festivals and orgies with the scent of a vulture who smells carrion for 20 leagues) place themselves behind her and sing songs of love.

Preceded by a band of singers and a group of drums (2), the file djiralaou (the women who show the gourds) have run through the village all morning, going from hut to hut to display the trousseau. That is not enough; under the eyes of the bride it is displayed again, exhibited one last time, and without fail the connoisseurs /213/ assess it and, without any embarrassment whatsoever, set an accurate value on it (1).

[556] 2. This parade of the trousseau across the village only occurs at rich weddings when the trousseau is really worth the trouble. Most frequently only one exhibition takes place, the one in the evening.

764 white clothes or wrap it in a shroud, and when they have finished preparing it, they lay it in the middle of the dwelling on a coarse mat (called tjékala or sometimes kara) which is covered with a fine mat in which it will be wrapped to be carried to the grave. Many times, too, a heavy stone, used to grind sorghum, is laid on the abdomen of the corpse, doubtless to keep it from swelling. The women then cover themselves with white cloths, bed covers if nothing else is available; then they sit on their tiny stools and mourn and weep.

The eldest in the family, the new gouatigi (head of the family) also has much to do. /Note the assumption throughout that the old person deceased was also a family head. - Ed./ He consults the sorcerers, places saraka or has them placed, sacrifices, and he does not rest until the diviners have indicated to him the guilty one, the fetish who is the assassin. Dressed in white, he then goes to sit in the b'lon or at the door of the b'lon (the entry hut), and the headman and his council as well as neighbors and friends from the village and from neighboring villages come to pay their respects and express their sympathy.

All these people behave correctly; they talk in low tones and avoid laughter, and the monotony of the silence is broken by the cries of the women. As soon as they come in sight of the village, they throw white cloths over their heads and their cries grow ever louder until at last they are in the hut /219/ of the deceased. There they stop crying, dry their tears, and immediately begin to clap their hands, beat a gourd inverted in a conari full of water, and sing of the honors and achievements of the deceased.

[761] Indeed, there is nothing sad about the death of an old man; he has finished to the end the cycle of his existence, and it is in good taste to rejoice. The grandchildren of the deceased are full of joy, for their great-uncles and uncles give them a ba (800 cowrie shells); they are allowed to take a fat hen from the hen house (often even a billy or nanny goat from the grandfather's stable), and they are made ● [534] to dance to the sound of xylophones, drums, and triangles (kingé). This dance of the grandchildren is held before the first djansa (1).

1. A kind of alms given to the players of instruments and to the children.

764 782 which is nothing less than disguised slavery. In the presence of a European the Negroes like to complain that he cannot meet their taxes, but they should not be listened to too closely -- 99 times out of 100 they are lying! Let us not make war against the military or civil official responsible for levying the tax, which is not at all exorbitant; let us think before all about the boli and their staffs, a band of persons without principles or law, human vultures with greedy fingers who attack the weak, the widows and orphans, terrify them with their threats of death. They do not leave these people in peace until they have taken everything: hens, goats, dogs, cowrie shells, sorghum, and often freedom.

6. Respects Paid to Initiates of the Koré, or Koté

794 766 The initiates of a fetish are never indifferent to the death of a brother, and they hasten to find a hen and a kola nut with which to prove their attachment to the deceased and to assuage the wrath of the god. The sect of koré does things in a grand, even in a ceremonious, manner, if there is any ceremony in those nocturnal orgies where d'lo, or millet beer, is drunk to /229/ the point of senselessness, and where lascivious and obscene dances are danced.

When a young man who is koré dé (son of koré, initiate of the
[778] sect) dies, relatives and friends redden with blood the sacred tree and
the kara, a perforated board painted red and white, which is the genie's
emblem. Although there is general mourning in the village, tears
are dried when evening comes, and for three nights there is nameless
[785] bedlam and endless shouting in the kore tou (the sacred grove) as
initiates flagellate themselves, burn their backs with torches, tear
their bodies with thorns, abandon themselves to their barbaric dances,
● [534] and lose themselves in lewd gestures in front of the dénouba (drums
measuring from one to one and a half meters) and the kingé (a triangle,
an iron tube, which is hung from the thumb of the left hand and which
is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger).

For the old people who are granted not a tear nor a regret but for whom there are dances and songs, fellow initiates come in large numbers, and during the night preceding the burial, they make a

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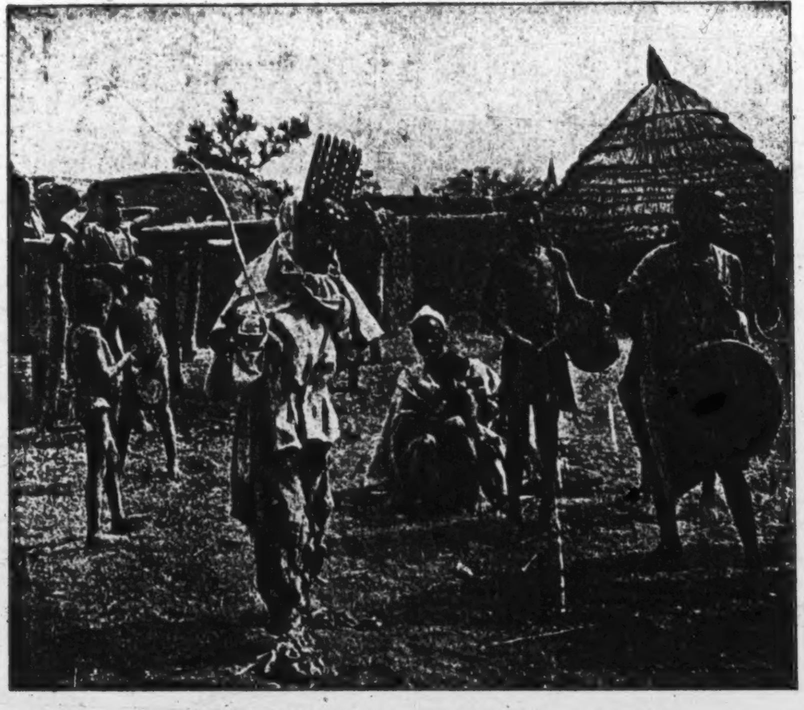
4: Henry--268 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Sacred dance in honor of the N'tomo, the children's fetish.

/sub-caption: The hut with a conical roof, on the right, is the temple of the boli fetish Nia. /

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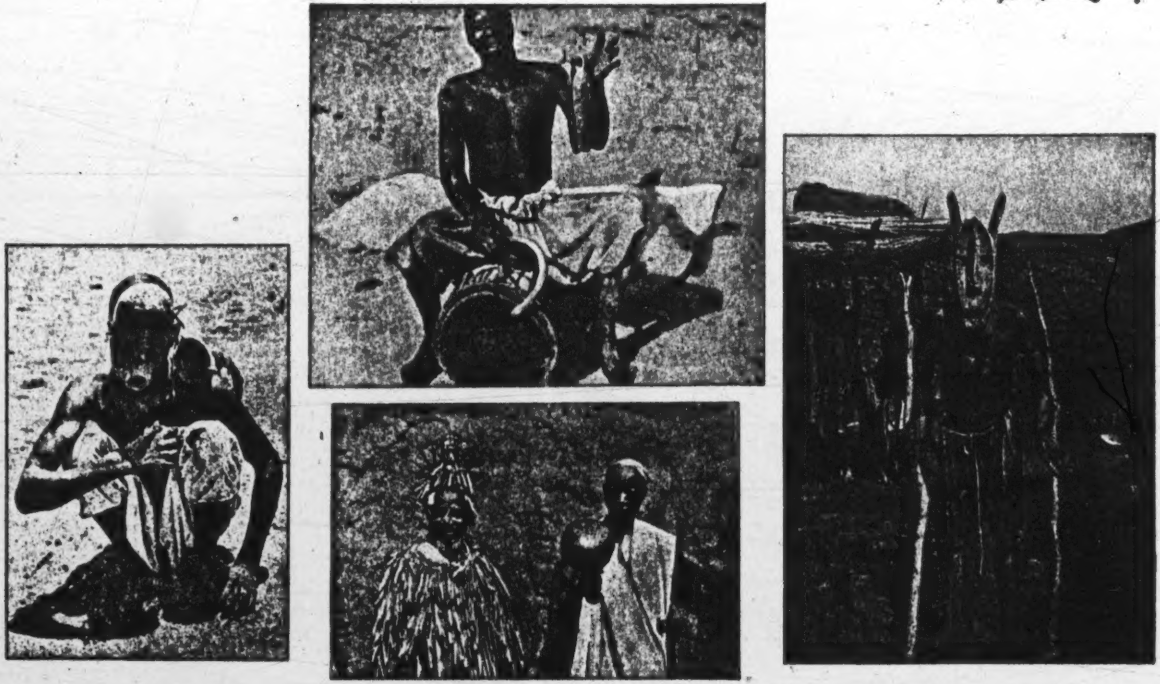
4: Henry--271 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Left: Souba (monkey), society of the Koré. Above: Denouba (the big drum) and kinge (a triangle), society of the Koré. Center: Head korodouga and his herald, society of the Koré. Right: Souroukou (hyena), society of the Koré.

and announces that the mask is about to be brought out so that people would go back to their home. At noon, a member of the society puts on the paraphernalia of the Komo society and walks forth, preceded by the son of the chief, who whistles a funeral tune. He wears on his shoulder the sack containing the altars and carries in his right hand the axe and the dagger. The two men are followed by the newly circumcised boys carrying the body and by the members who are present. At the burial ground (šudoyoro) the procession places the corpse on its back near the grave freshly dug by the young /192, Fig. 16 appears here in original text/ /193/ men of the most recent age grade (1). [535] To the rhythm beaten out by three blacksmith drummers, the son of the deceased and later all the participants dance in turn, kicking up with their feet a little earth over the corpse at the end of each musical phrase.

A female goat (or a male one) brought by the family is sacrificed and the blood runs in part over the altars and in part into the grave, while the chief of the Komo recites the following prayer:

"Let (your family) rest in peace; let our harvests be blessed; let your happiness come to us later; your sacrifices are performed" (2).

The sacrifice performed over the altars is a repetition of that which has already been accomplished in the sanctuary at the time the deceased's soul is deposited. But, to the young initiates who do not know it, it is at this moment only that the transfer of the soul to the nimara boli is effected through the vehicle of the sacrificial blood.

The eldest man of the age grade sucks up with the whistle of the Komo a little blood from the slit throat of the animal and blows on the corpse; another elder sucks up some blood in turn and blows it into the grave. A third does the same and whistles into the right ear of the corpse "so that the deceased, having received a complete sacrifice, may not ask for anything else." A griot next takes the whistles and

1. In the vicinity of Ségou the dead are most frequently buried in the fields; a ronier is planted over the grave.

2. I ka du to; ana senefẽ ka barka;
i ka here ka na an ye; i ka saraka be bwora.

857 and his *syere* at the head. There, the *n-Tomo-den'* squat at
796 a little distance from the *n-Tomo-tigi*, who takes his place in
782 front of them, facing the tree where the guardian genie dwells,
in order to perform the libations and sacrifices. First he takes
a small gourd and pours the *dege* it contains against the trunk of
the tree; he cuts the throat of a chicken and dribbles its blood
on the tree in the same way; next, in a jet of saliva, he spits
on it the juice and particles of kola nuts which he has chewed
for the purpose; finally, he fastens a few of the chicken's
feathers in the smear of blood. As he makes each of these offer-
ings, he says to the genie: "Look here, I offer you this chicken,
protect us, defend us against the wicked and against evil genii.
Give us enough to live well. Save us from illness. Give us
rain to make our fields fruitful and be propitious to our families."

He speaks thus for everybody, after which each one comes in turn to offer his sacrifice and to make personal requests through him as intermediary.

The admission of new members follows. Each of them
857 pays his entrance fee and then, prostrate before the genie,
796 swears never to reveal anything to the uninitiated, [239] above
all to the women." If you betray your brothers," says the *n-Tomo-tigi*, "may the genie kill you!" The new member repeats:
"May he kill me!"

At this point the victims are cooked, and while they are
[535] being prepared, the *n-Tomo-den'* dance in turn, dressed in the
ceremonial regalia. Their steps are accompanied by the beating
of drums, and they twirl a flexible stick as they dance. When
the victims are cooked, the banquet begins. Everyone eats and
drinks as much as he can; a special treat of kola nuts brings the
banquet to a close.

857 On this day each *n-Tomo-den'* is expected to take one of
796 his gifts or some other personal possession and make a present of
572 it to his *n-golo-moso* (1). This is how one names the young
[431]

1. *N-golo-moso*, literally, "woman of the birth," is the companion associated with the rite which he is to undergo.

881 535 In a compact group, the women and girls of all ages and stations shuffle slowly around the orchestra, while the men drink and sing around small fires of dry millet stalks.

From time to time, upon being invited to do so, one of the girls, soli-ma-moso, gets up, rattles her gourd, and joins the dance with slow, deliberate steps.

At dawn, when they are about to return to their huts, the girls, soli-ma-moso, make one last circuit, and then each one, with her heels together and her hands crossed above her head, makes three leaps into the air. She does this three times.

881 201 The Bambara themselves interpret these various details concerning girls, the soli-ma-moso, as symbolic. The girl's position between her mother's legs recalls physical birth. The white cloth represents the one that at her mother's marriage bore witness to virginity and reminds the girl that she will have to give similar proof to her husband. The dance done with slow, measured steps is the symbol of a child learning to walk, and the nine leaps that close the ceremony attest to the fact that the girl is now an adult. A final rite shows the parallelism between the soli and [246] birth: on the sixth day, the nyana-n-son-na-ba shaves the head of the soli-ma-moso (1). [302]

1. In place of the braided coiffure, young girls wear the magic cord with nine knots, called tafo, on the crown of the head, and this is connected to a similar one, called dyo, at the nape of the neck.

881 End of the soli. On the seventh day, before noon, all the soli-ma-moso go to the well or to the river to wash the soiled clothes and to scour the pots and gourds used for the festival. Then all return to the discipline of the soli: the boys under their tree, and the girls in their huts. The sema watch over the youngsters, who by now are bored with the discipline. About three weeks must pass after the operation before all the soli-ma completely recover.

8

881 and friends have kindly lent for the occasion, they advance
301 shyly. In some areas, notably in the Bani region, they wear bundles of cowries, from the bride price already paid for them, around the hips and hanging on each side of the head (1).

[302 171] 1. Bambara girls who have gone through the soli have their heads shaved. Among other peoples, on the contrary, girls have their hair braided like women for the first time, but to the braid is added a tuft of the hair shaved off seven days after birth; this hair has usually been lost, but a small tuft is made to simulate it.

881 Boys and girls, following the old women who lead them,
[535] dance around the orchestra, and then all sit down in a circle.
● The nyana-n-son-na-ba takes the floor. He speaks in a low voice, and, as is proper, his words are repeated in a loud voice by a herald. He proclaims the end of the soli, recalls its principal events, and indicates clearly which children have participated in the rite; each boy and girl is specifically named. He will also be sure to point out that the soli is an immemorial cus-
[578] tom among the Bambara and that there is no worse insult than to treat a Bambara as uncircumcised. He closes by inviting everyone to eat, drink, and celebrate in the joy and harmony appropriate to such a festival.

[535] Dancing is resumed, and the boys and girls of the soli take part. The festivities continue as long as the refreshments last, usually several days.

To end it all, no one leaves without giving at least a few kola nuts to the heroes of the festival, the boys and girls.

The last phase is the thanks given by the soli-ma to those who assisted at the da-woro. In noisy bands, boys and girls dash about the village in two distinct groups. The girls' group is headed by the soma-moso who is called masa (queen), followed by the masa-ma-kono (vice-queen) and the masa-ma-kono-segere [248] (follower of the vice-queen); the last girl in the

Plate 4

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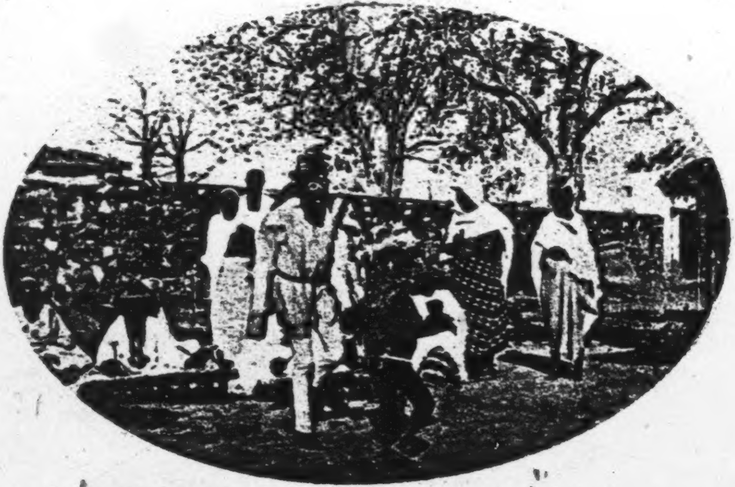

Fig. 7. Penperenni, small dancers in costume.

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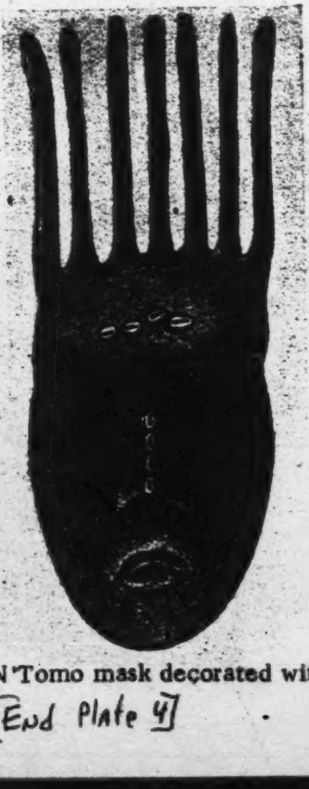

Fig. 8. N'Tomo mask decorated with cowries.

[End Plate 4]

545 Example:
794 Tiekoroba kolili (the old man who has nothing)
522 Ita rokina momindi (what you say is not liked)
Ida konieti aie (you are right)
N'ka idia dopina marmandi (but one doesn't like what you say)
Or again:
Demise fentili (the rich young man)
Ida dokma kakadi (one likes what you say)
Ida konie tinaĭe (what you say is not true)
N'ka idia dokma makadi (but one likes what you say)

545 The Kworéduga have the su (Moor) as taboo, and they accom-
534 pany themselves in singing with a sacred gourd, yaraba, which con-
794 tains seeds of Lufa cilindrica.

535 Finally, during the circumcision initiation period for example,
881 the child learns the sacred dances which often mime exploits of the mythical ancestors.

A certain evolution characterizes the native art which has
177 been transformed in a curious fashion by contact with Europeans.
517 In European centers, prolonged contact with the Whites has confused the beliefs that inspired the art, but the artists have lost neither their taste nor their gifts. At the request of the Whites themselves, they have undertaken a controlled art, with the aim of pleasing the Europeans. Needless to say, even if it conserves some charm in its form, all this new art, which evolves with the same swift rhythm as our modes, remains terribly dead, for the true source of inspiration has dried up. This art no longer seeks to be true, but to be pretty; by this it signs its own death warrant.

[109] CONCLUSION

I. Traditional Interpretation of Mental Characteristics

181

In the introduction to Religion Bambara, Tauxier insists on the mental characteristics: "The Bambara has remained rather openly fetishist"; he possesses "two dominant traits, which are absolutely undisputed and indisputable:

"1. He is a very good farmer.

776 preserve the freshness of youth in the ladies for a long time, to give
824 mothers breasts that are loaded with /96/ milk, to bring fertility to
the sterile, and finally to keep an eye on the periods, or menses, of
each and every one. Every month at the new moon the excised women,
776 married and unmarried, spend an entire night dancing in its honor,
535 to the beat of a special drum called mouso denou (1). These dances
[534] are not very decent, and except for some shameless individuals who watch even these scenes from the height of the flat terrace roofs, the men among the Bani stay at a distance.

1. Mouso, "woman"; denou, "drum."

776 Many villages (and they are numerous in Bani country) believe
824 that the genie takes shelter in a fig tree near the walls and establishes its home there. It is the trunk of this tree that is reddened with blood at the annual festival, and most of the dances take place in its shade, as does the repast of which the Negro women partake on this occasion. The girls excised during the year spend 80 to 120 cowrie shells, offer a pullet for the sacrifice, and are thereafter permitted to pay their respects to the genie.

794 Out of this group of worshippers arises a small mutual aid society, identical in every way with the youth's association, the fla-n-to. The head of this organization is usually the oldest woman of the village, and she is given the title of massa, "queen." All the female population call her mba, "my mother."

This society, called mouso-n-to (2), from time to time offers the people of the village d'lo, or millet beer, and once a year at the festival of the genie a plentiful repast with a dessert of kola nuts for the old and the usual drinking bout for everyone. Those who break the laws of the association are fined, and the sum of all these fines, together with the 80 or 120 cowrie shells spend by the excised girls of the year, help the massa and her associates to meet all expenses.

2. Mouso, "woman"; to, "gruel."

794 colors, one leg of which goes down to the ankle while the other does
796 not even reach the knee. Some brandish wooden swords, and others
292 ride astride on a bamboo, a reed, or a sorghum stalk, rearing and
522 kicking, and there is not one who does not act the clown.

794 The bisatjila (flagellants) make their flexible whips whistle in
796 the air; shortly thereafter these whips rain blows onto their backs; the
[185] ta tougoula (fire lighters, incendiaries) seem impatient to shower
their bare backs with sparks. The djara (lions) or sogo (beasts, animals) with masks even larger than those of the souroukou (hyenas) growl around the n'goni sama (1), also called wara (fearless wild animals).

1. N'goni, "thorns"; sama, "to kill for oneself."

The soula run from one group to another, slip between legs, and never stay still; they are seen everywhere, sometimes standing, sometimes with hands on the ground on all fours, or again sitting down, breaking bundles of grass or bits of wood between their hands and throwing them with shrill cries at the heads of their companions. And at the end of the procession come the old men, weighed down by the years and no longer of an age for all this fancy dress. They drag or carry the victims intended for the sacrifices.

In the grove around the sacred tree, there is a deafening noise of drums, triangles, reed pipes, and many voices /124/ that shout all together without ever harmonizing. At a sign from the leader, the kârâ bearer goes and stands before the fetish tree, and everything becomes calm and quiet. The youths who have been waiting for seven years to be initiated advance in a line, fall on their knees before the fetish and its emblem, and then prostrate themselves with foreheads in the dust. They remain in this position as long as the sacred hymn
lasts. On rising, they say: "Djanté koré déou djanté (djanté children
[535 of the djanté koré), djanté ma (man of the djanté)," and each dances
831] the dance of the group to which he belongs. These dances are indecent
and always conclude with an obscene gesture.

The oldest sons belong to the groups of their fathers; as to the others, they choose the group they like best. Thenceforth they are

194 korédé ("sons of koré"), and in all the province of Ségou, wherever
196 a sacrifice is offered to the fetish, they may go into the sacred grove without any fear and take part in the mysteries. They have the password -- "djanté ma, man of djanté," and will know how to answer when interrogated by the souroukou (group of the hyena).

194 After the initiation the korétigi (priest of koré) proceeds with sacrifices. Everything happens as at the dasiri: after the libations of
196 /millet/ flour (dégé) and beer (d'lo), the trunk of the sacred tree is
182 reddened with blood, and all around the blood are tufts of fur and feathers stuck to the bark by remainders of chewed kola nut. A hyena mask called koré koungolo ("head /tête/ of koré") is also reddened with blood, as is the kârâ, the emblem of the genie which is used as an altar for deceased initiates. Part of the meat is taken to the village, and the rest is grilled on the spot and eaten without any seasoning whatever.

In the sacrifices, koré and those that form its court are asked to watch over the harvest so that it may be abundant, to watch over the flocks so that they may thrive, to provide the petitioners with their fill of food and drink all their lives, and to give them a vigorous old age, etc., and all this is requested for one sole purpose: "so that we may be able to enjoy a woman and devote ourselves to carnal pleasures."

194 After the repast the crowd abandons itself to the dance, and un-
196 til morning there is an indescribable uproar and endless shouting. At daybreak they go to the public square, and as long as the beer (d'lo) lasts /125/ the orchestra makes bedlam in front of the drinkers who squat around full gourds, and the women sit on mats or tiny stools piled on top of each other, clap their hands, and answer the obscenities of the korodouga with further obscenities.

The dance of the groups, in which all members, young and
[535] old, take part, consists of more or less comical contortions which they execute going around in a circle, one behind the other. The old men tire quickly and their throats soon get dry, so they are not slow to sit down and get drunk to please koré, and the young people then abandon themselves and dance to their hearts' content.

194 Two or three tatougoula, a flaming torch in each hand, open
196 the dance. They scorch their backs, chests, and armpits, and
185

585 court and enters the hut of the bride. At that instant the boli déou,
189 sons of the boli, sing the sacred hymn and abandon themselves to
778 their dances, and the god itself lies on the white cloth spread on the bed, on the mat where the poor girl soon will rest. Like every rite of this kind, this ceremony is called kéné salo, "to exorcise the place (2)," and its purpose is to drive out the harmful spirits who might have evil intentions against the woman and her husband. For the husband it is also a means of publicly bearing witness to his faith in the boli and his love and his attachment for it, in short, a means of obtaining its favor and attaining a happy and fertile marriage.

585 The young woman and her retinue continue to walk very slowly along the winding paths, and in the distance, here and there, a gunshot, a clapping of hands, and the famous cry of "kouyo kouyo" can be heard; the cry comes near and again draws away, depending on the bends of the path, only to draw near again with a stronger burst. Finally they arrive at the edge of the fields, 200 to 300 meters at most from the village. The young men run to place themselves at the head of the procession, the bearers of the trousseau pass to the rear, the drums roll, and the horns of the band roar loudly, for this is the dance. But what a dance! The women, bent double, move
● 535 their torsos back and forth in a manner which might best be compared with that of a worm that draws back and slowly stretches out; they glide over the ground without lifting /209/ their feet, leaving on the sand behind them a long trail as if a boa had passed by. With discouraging slowness, they go like this to the gate of the village, taking an hour, and often two, to cover these few hundred meters.

Covered with sweat and white with dust, the procession moves along the walls; here it is at the gate, firing guns, clapping hands,

2. Kéné, "surface," "plane," "floor," "court"; salo, "stroke gently with the hand"; this term denotes a movement of the hands that the sorcerers use when they are treating an invalid, "to make /ritual/ gestures."

585 shouting songs that partly drown out the rolling of the drums and the
roaring of the horns of the band. The boli gives a last roar, and its
priest carries it to its foul temple where the air breathed is warmed
by the steam of hot blood and never cooled. The huts open their
doors, and a stream of women, children, and young girls rush along
the alleys and mingle their voices with those that are arriving. The
[535] crowd of women divides into several groups, and again they bend
● double in unimaginable contortions that a pen cannot describe; all
parts of their bodies shake and move, as in a gentle wave that goes
forward and folds back on itself. They glide over the ground raising
a cloud of dust and, preceded by drums and in a blast of guns, they
arrive thus slowly in the couple's inner court. Here everybody flinds
food ready. The middle of the court is full of huge gourds of to, or
gruel, dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water, and jugs full
of d'lo, or millet beer, and while the newlyweds are enjoying their
first love-making, drinking, eating, dancing, and shouting is going
on near them. For I forgot to say that the young bride will long since
have left her frenzied, howling mob. As soon as the boli has been
put away, the women come to lead her to her dwelling (1). Before

[595
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1. Every Bambara woman has her own hut separate from her husband's. A Bambara man who has only one wife sleeps in his wife's hut; if he has several, on the contrary, the woman who is summoned goes to lie in that of her husband. Some rich men provide each wife with a hut, an inner court, and a b'lon, or entry hut. In that case the first wife does not have a hut separate from that of her husband, and the husband goes to spend his nights with one or another as he chooses.

taking her into the marital sanctuary, where her husband is already

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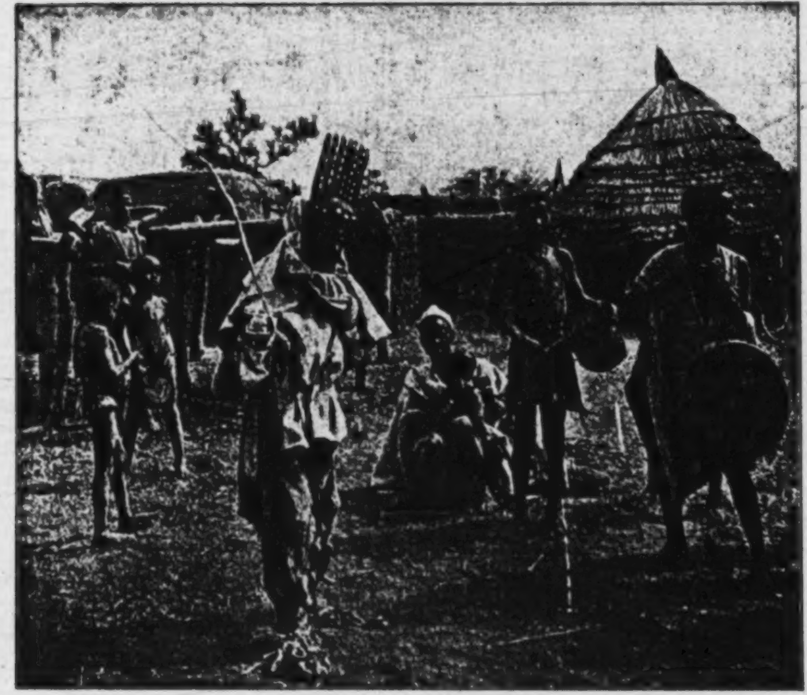
4: Henry--268 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Sacred dance in honor of the N'tomo, the children's fetish.
/sub-caption: The hut with a conical roof, on the right, is the temple of the boli fetish Nia./

857 use corporal punishment.

From this early age, therefore, a Bambara is subject to the corporate discipline which will henceforth dominate his whole life, for the same sort of discipline prevails in the adult brotherhoods.

857 292 [782] The genie-protector is honored by offerings, [237] sacrifices, and ritual dances. When they perform these dances, the n-Tomo-den' take turns wearing the ceremonial mask and costume. The mask has the form of a human face surmounted by a number of vertical horns (five to eight of these) and decorated with a few cowries. The costume consists of a dloki (a kind of blouse with wide sleeves) and a pair of long trousers, which completely cover the body. If the costume is yellowish-brown (basa) or white (dye), the association is called "n-Tomo-fin' (black n-Tomo)" or "n-Tomo-dye (white n-Tomo)," respectively. Is this costume supposed to represent the adepts' conception of their protector's appearance? No. As in all sects, it is intended to differentiate the officiant from the profane world (1).

● [534] [831] 1. Some of these associations give a kind of public performance from which they derive profit. Notably, they exhibit a kind of puppet called peremperen' (dancers) which members of the n-Tomo manipulate in a more or less comical manner; often one of the puppets represents a man and the other a woman, and their movements abound in the obscenities which are so popular with the onlookers.

831 857 [534] [195] A wooden phallus (or a small board) is commonly used to summon the n-Tomo-den' to meetings. This is tied to the end of a rope and whirled like a sling, producing a noise which the operator can vary and which carries a considerable distance. This apparatus is called n-Tomo-ulu, translated as "dog of the n-Tomo." It should be noted that the words used in the brotherhoods usually have a double meaning, with a special sense under a vulgar form. For instance, the word ulu means both

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> getules (gne-Toules), formed the nation of Numidians.
>
> But according to tradition, these half-breed Numidians, today called Noumous, were the first initiators among primitive peoples of the industrial arts; thereafter the title of Noumous was kept and applied to all blacksmiths."
>
> And in the footnote on the same page: "But in Nigerian countries, this term for blacksmith, Noumou, does not necessarily contain the notion of a metallurgist."

/114/ All blacksmiths said to be of "pure blood," that is to say those who belong to the three families of Fané, Koumaré, and Balo, are descended from the Gwonna, who came from the underground village of Gwondougou and to whom goes the glory of having discovered iron.

According to informants, the word Gwonna comes from gwã, a name usually given to the hearth of the forge, which designates precisely the place from which the ore is extracted and where it is treated. The high furnace is called gwã so. The gwã tuku munu, extracting blacksmith, is the only one able to perform important rites. The word Fané derives from fã, which designates the forge in its entirety. Koumaré comes from kuma, word. It is the Koumaré who are charged [537] with the responsibility of debating in council meetings or in public gatherings. The word Balo recalls the fact that the bearers came to settle in former days on the shores of the Niger, ba.

The Gwonna are senãnku of the other blacksmiths. Moreover, in the villages where they live together with other artisans, they are by right the chiefs of the Komo and guardians of the sanctuaries where the ancestral tools are kept. Only if they fail in their obligation will the blacksmiths belonging to other families assume these duties.

The titles of the Gwonna are linked to the mythical origin of the forge which is under the domination of the Téliko spirits, masters of the air and wind, hence of the bellows and fire.

764 574 Theoretically, all of this is supposed to be used to honor the dead, which is done in several ways. In the first place, it is obligatory to serve food and particularly drink to anyone who comes to present condolences. These meals and drinking bouts are a kind of communion since from everything consumed an offering is first made to the deceased and also [769] to the ancestors whom he has gone to join; it is a kind of communion with the departed members of the family.

These repasts and drinking bouts tend to develop into orgies, and the inexperienced or casual observer may think that they are carousals at the expense of the deceased. As a matter of fact, however, far from suffering a loss, the family of important persons receives more than it spends, at least for the time being (2). The more lavish the celebration, the more it is supposed to please the deceased and cause him to look favorably on his survivors.

764 735 In principle, everything not consumed is supposed to be given away as alms to the poor and not added to the family property. It is quite natural, therefore, that the poor of the village come to partake of the feast, and indeed, they are invited. They must be treated with much cordiality if the sentiment governing the feast conforms to the spirit of the custom. That is why the [171] chronicle tells of Nyana-n-koro, upon the death of Ngolo, claiming that the cowries given should be distributed to the poor, to travelers, and to all the needy; that is the true spirit of the custom, and that type of alms is particularly pleasing to the dead.

The funeral feasting continues for seven days, which are called dyansa, "alms." It is a time especially devoted to [537] condolences, called sanga-fo (1) "funerary discourse." The

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2. The family will have to behave reciprocally toward the families who have thus shown their respect when deaths later occur among them.

1. Literally, "sayings (for the sake) of the dead."

567 3. The *ton-koro-bolo* behind the *disi* is a special reserve formed
701 entirely of pure *ton-dyon*.

4. The *keli-tigi* was the chief of the expedition, designated by the Fama. He might be a *dyon-kuntigi* (chief of the *furuba-dyon*), a member of the Fama's community, or the Fama himself.

708 Finally, the army was accompanied by a musical corps, com-
534 posed essentially of drums which transmitted messages. There were armpit drums (*dunkan'*), shoulder drums (*taura*), three-legged drums (*dange*), drums carried by two men (*tabala*), and coupled drums (*denuba*). Often horns (*buru*) were added, sometimes small horns made of ivory or horn, and sometimes xylophones (*bada*) and cowbells.

708 A *dyeli* (*griot*) follows the expedition to observe the exploits
537 that he must retransmit; he must encourage the warriors and dispel panic by the power of his oratory.

B. Influence of Social Organization on Economic Life

a. The *ton*, Work Community

621 We have seen that the social unit among the Bambara is the community. The community is also the work unit and the economic unit. The independent individual is not conceived of. The community owns all the wealth which makes up the spiritual and material patrimony: the land, the agricultural, industrial, and commercial products, the habitations ...

423 The community regulates the exploitation of the land. The
621 *dugu-tigi* is the first occupant, master of the land, of which he dis-
622 tributes the lots to the different family heads. When a stranger, a
609 family head, wants to enter into a community, he chooses an unoccupied field and asks the village chief for it. The request is accom-
[431] panied by ten kola nuts and a chicken. Authorization cannot then be refused. The chief of the land sacrifices the chicken before the entire community and informs it of the installation of the newcomer. When the stranger wants to leave the land, he is given back his chicken and kola nuts.

423 Land assigned to a family head may always be taken back
621 from him without justification by the *dugu-tigi* and his council.
622

534 The xylophone (*bala*) consists of a table made of strips
614 of hardwood, with a gourd under each strip, like a resonator;
701 the size of each gourd depends on the note desired. A section
of the gourd is stopped by the vibrating surface which is a white material very closely woven like a cobweb. When it is played well, the *bala* produces various tunes, but they seem very thin compared to the noise of the drums and the shrieking of the trumpets. [316]

The accessory bells are of no particular interest.

538 No expedition of any consequence ever set out without a
701 *griot* (*dyeli*) (1). The *griot* has acquired a deplorable reputation because of the fact that too often he uses his fluency to exploit the rich and powerful. This should not hide the fact, however, that the *griot* has often played a role not lacking in grandeur. In addition to being the official archivist of one or more families, he was also, in the native sense, a kind of epic bard who told his
[534] tales in song, accompanying himself on a stringed instrument similar to a guitar or a rudimentary harp. When told by him, the traditions, involved with those miracles so dear to the native, had something of the quality of our medieval epics. In that respect, at least, the *griot* truly deserved his title of *dyeli* (master).

Unfortunately, however, being reduced to earning his keep by making use of his information, he resorted to slander and calumny. This made him so much to be feared that in order to buy his silence the victims despoiled themselves for his benefit, as did those whom he intoxicated with base flattery.

538 In the army the *griot* stirred and encouraged the brave
701 men. On the eve of an important engagement or shortly before it,
726 a large assembly customarily was held, and roused by the epic
poems of the *griot* no less than by the war ~~dances~~ and copious libations, the warriors promised under oath to perform such and such acts of great courage. It was then the duty of the *griot* to take public note, so to speak, of this commitment and later,

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1. See above, pp. *et seq.*, on the *dyeli*.

538 701 726 when the action had occurred, to celebrate the glory of its author. If, however, events showed that there had been mere bravado, the griot was then expected to stigmatize the braggart's cowardice -- something he never failed to do, since he found it just as profitable as to celebrate the glory of a hero.

At a critical hour when the army threatened to yield to the baser instincts engendered by rout, panic, and defeat, the griot often had the fortunate ability to arouse failing courage, sometimes [317] with cutting sarcasm, sometimes by exalting the lofty achievements of the ancestors, sometimes by setting forth in a tragic light the lot of the defeated. The chronicle shows him in this role when Ma-n-son, held in check by the stubborn resistance of Tyitya, sees himself -- final disgrace -- abandoned by his wives who have decided to return to Ségou. All through the night the griot sang battle songs, and at dawn the terrible assault proved that the army had recovered its spirit.

This handler of words was undoubtedly a formidable "master." He was said to know words that kill, since he was aware of the actions dominating every person's life. When Ma-n-son's twelve wives came in a body and told him that they had resolved to return without him to Ségou because they were all the more homesick when they felt that defeat was at hand, he ordered them to repeat their words before the griot whom he had summoned. With their action thus publicly noted, he gave them leave to depart, knowing that he would be able to avenge himself for their desertion whenever he decided to do so.

The songs of the griot, retold and repeated by the warriors and the people, gave memorable actions ineffaceable lineaments. The chronicle tells us that when the expedition against Dina was undertaken, the griot improvised the song which begins: "In the shade of the bushy kaminya tree, the hen cannot tell a grain of millet from a grain of sand." This meant that, in the confusion of battle, a warrior can make no distinctions. In fact, the country was completely laid waste during this expedition, and the booty was so abundant that forever after the griot had only to sing this song to arouse the warlike ardor of the ton'-dyon'.

538 814 A man of high rank is always accompanied by his griot, who is both a confidant and a mere factotum. It is true, of course,

538 814 that the griot is often a wretched character, an insignificant parasite living at the expense of everyone. There are those among them, however, who carry out their duties as archivist very faithfully and who are sincerely devoted to their masters, great and generous lords in the native fashion whose interests and reputations such griot ably defend.

It is griot of this last type who transmit the reliable historical tradition from which we have borrowed the foregoing accounts. There [318] is no doubt that these griot, true "masters" (dyeli) of historical traditions, have played a considerable role in native society. Therefore their words should never be passed over lightly, although obviously they should be subjected to judicious criticism.

The To-da

614 631 In origin, evolution, and contingencies, the clan developed from the social bases already studied, community and brotherhood, of which it is, in the last analysis, only an amalgamation. As a result, its various manifestations are similar to those of these institutions, even though possessing its own peculiarities.

One of the most characteristic features of the clan is the to-da, which was the familiar term used by members of the clan for the region in which they lived. The word literally means "the pot of mush" and alludes to the essential element in the corporate banquets of the fla-n-ton'. As the saying goes: "furu-ba to, to kadi, na ka ko, (at the corporate meal the mush is good and the sauce is bad.") [539]

The to-da originally was limited to Ségou-koro and its immediate environs, i.e., the small number of villages affiliated with the ton' either voluntarily or by force. It progressively extended its sway along the Niger: first on the right bank as far as Kirango; later almost to Dina; finally it extended its influence over a broad area on both sides of the river from Kan ga-ba to Timbuktu.

This territory was organized in various ways. The key region ran along the Niger from Dina to Kirango, and the sector

212 by numbers, and notably by ten, which may be obtained, among
801 other ways and if it's a question of representing the Creator, by
adding the first four numbers, or by adding the number five to
[776] itself." Ten is the numerical symbol of Faro (god of water); it
symbolizes what is just, true, perfect, and complete.

The symbolism of numbers is used in divination: a first
[787] group of eight signs, called the secret count, reproduces the seven
first numbers which, according to a Bambara myth, were engraved
in space at the instant that the Creator by his word formed the universe. They contain the whole universe.

These numerical signs were ritually traced on the most varied occasions.

[802] Finally, we must note the existence of the sign for "nothing,"
fu gundo, zero, which stands at the beginning of a series of 196
numerical signs used by those who practice arithomancy.

The word Mandé, of central significance for 44 peoples, may be interpreted, according to some, as manin (the secret name for ten), number of unity and of the cultural community.

F. Writing

212 For everyday use, the Bambara have adopted arabic characters, called by them "writing of the Blacks." In fact, only those
who have studied in the Marabouts' schools know how to read or
write them. No written literature, properly speaking, exists. A
538 large store of traditions, epics, tales, legends, songs, and proverbs
is transmitted orally from generation to [17] generation by professional storytellers, the griot. Moreover, the whole sum of sci-
867 entific, juridical, ethical, and practical knowledge is taught orally
868 in the course of daily life or during long years of initiation. Certain old masters renowned for their learning are consulted from far
distances when a chief is in doubt on a point of tradition.

212 Nevertheless, signs do exist for a secret writing that the priests, the heads of families, or blacksmiths draw on the sanctuaries, on masks, furniture, clothing, cabin walls, or in the sand.

212 For the Bambara, things exist by signs. These signs have at-
812 tached themselves to things, calling them to consciousness and to
the attention of man.

533 292 of black, red, and yellow fibers, clothes of plaited fibers, and the musicians wear a cuirass made of fana seeds (a sort of bean). The bass player wears a band in the back which reaches to his heels and describes a circle when the musician whirls in going from north to south and from east to west to give the cadence. The other musicians form a circle which the dancers and singers do not enter. Another djo is the So, where the musicians and the singers wear masks of wooden horses, except for two clowns who represent the masculine element in the midst of the crowd of young girls. Lastly, the third djo is the djõ buru (buru, "trumpet"). This is the djo of the slaves; they play the ivory horn and are clothed like the N'ganian, but the bass player represents a cow, and the others are the heifers who respond to the cadence indicated to them by their mother.

E. Literature

538 Bambara literature, entirely oral, is extremely rich. It is the monopoly of the griot who from their earliest days learn the stories, the proverbs, the mottoes associated with each [108] family. They recite very long and very numerous epic songs concerning each great family, accompanying themselves on the harp. Certain parts are recited, others are sung in chorus by the griot and his wife. These stories are at the same time historical narratives of heroes' exploits and the mythical history of a demiurge symbolized by the hero. An infinitely small part of these epic songs has been collected. Some Bambara proverbs and stories have been collected by Moussa Traoré in particular.

545 794 522 It is interesting to mention another literary production, one in which the creative inspiration of the artist plays a greater part: these are the narratives of the members of the Kworé brotherhood. The Kworéduga are clowns, or rather commedia dell'arte players. One is a Kworéduga by hereditary transmission or by natural bent. During his initiation in the bush, where he submits to ritual harsh treatment, the initiate learns never to lose his temper, no matter what the circumstances. He is taught a comic language, witty sayings. He is trained to observe men's character closely and to recite stanzas and couplets giving his observations.

776 782 539	"O fara n fasili-'ïn te boli dé ni sétané tjé wa? Nibé boli dé son, i be Sétané son tigné, nka i be sétané bôgna doron, boli dé, héwa fen min yéra o dé te fouï gnâ.	"Does this difference not exist between the boli and satan? If you sacrifice to the boli, you sacrifice to satan, that is certain; but you honor only the demon, and its object is no help to you.
	"O té, djiné ni boli ma-n-kan, boli dé hen, an be fen min yé, o be fen gnâ dérén. Sétané an'o fen olou foula té ké boli yé wa?"	"No, you haven't understood. A genie and a boli are not the same. The boli is bound to what we see; it is useful to us. Satan and his object, both together -- do they not make up the boli?"

Boli dé: An object in which is found the spirit the Negroes call Sétané, "Satan."

776 The gnéna, or djiné, half man and half angel, malicious though it is, can nevertheless do good and grant a direct blessing by performing a good act. But the gnâ, the boli, a fallen angel (méléké sifa do do, " it is a kind of angel"), in revolt against God and, as I stated in my chapter on God, condemned to the tortures of fire, is entirely evil and cannot directly do a good deed (1). It can never-

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1. I challenge the European "Bambara scholars" of Ségou to listen to the two djéli (storytellers /griots/) of Goïn, a small village a short distance from this center. The sacred dances and songs of the boli are their specialty, and they travel over the

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> whole circle in the dry season. For example, the master of a Nama will give an account, and the storyteller will take up the refrain, which always ends: "I have told you truly, the Nama can refrain from evil, but it is capable only of evil (a ka fari, a ka djougou ko djougou). It is evil, very evil!"

776 theless refrain from an evil act and thus indirectly grant a blessing to human beings. The words of the formula in the sacrifices to the gnéna and the gnâ seem identical, and yet, when one has understood the inmost feelings of the Bambara soul, one sees all the difference between them. To one as to the other the Negroes say: "Ka dji d'amma (give us water), ka mousoou d'amma (give us wives), ka nafolo d'amma (give us wealth), etc." But while in speaking to the first they actually ask for water, wives, etc., they make an indirect request to the second, so that their words mean: "Do nothing to keep us from having wives," "do nothing to keep us from having water," etc. In expressing himself this way he uses all his cunning, and all his deceit comes to the surface and is revealed. Yes, he really deserves the epithet that neighboring tribes have given him and of which he is proud; it is misi bo, "cow dung," -- dry on the outside but limp and soft inside, so that it is squashed when it is stepped on. His inner feeling when he addresses the boli is this: "O Spirits, evil genii, you are capable only of evil; may your hatred not attack me or those who are dear to me, may it all be for my enemies and those that can harm me!" /130/

2. The Legend of the Boli

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778 This is a very curious legend, for it makes the boli come from Mecca, the holy city! To understand it better, let us remember in passing that Islam has only made the Bambara more attached to their idols. They have died in order to keep them; they answered the

181 that she is a girl, that one day she will be a man's plaything, an
831 object for his pleasure. The child would leave smiling and replace
her three fingers of rag even as she walked away. At dinner time a
[482] big girl would come carrying the gourd of tô, or sorghum gruel, on
her head, and on the palm of her right hand, at shoulder height, the
platter of dried fish sauce. She would be greeted from as far away
as she could be seen and asked for a report on her whole body, and
indeed there would be no stopping at "how are your feet" nor even at
"how are your breasts." And the girl would answer all these vile questions
without getting excited, and when a well-washed hand, ready to
be used as a spoon, embraced her or lifted her breasts, she was not
shocked; only the opposite would surprise her.

887 Here and there in the village a giant tree stretches its branches
●538 afar, and the old men, lovers of endless palaver, enjoy themselves
521 under its shade. They go there from the early morning to weave cloth,
make mats, tan hides, scour goats' horns intended for powerful
amulets, etc., and often even /159/ just for the purpose of spending
the hours dozing. And in the midst of all these gray, or at least
graying, beards, swarms a world of children. Among the old men
there are good storytellers /conteur/, who excel in stories of hunting
and war that throb with interest -- but why, alas, must they always
graft on some salacious incident? Their mouths are full chiefly with
[831] stories of adultery and fornication. They will not spare you a single
detail, and they will readily go back to the very beginning so as to
lack no precision whatever. And the moral of these stories can be
reduced to this: "There is nothing in this world comparable to the
pleasures of the flesh; let us enjoy marriage and never pass up a chance
to obtain this satisfaction."

524 If the old men are this lewd, is it surprising to hear the young
831 men describe the ugliness of their bestial evenings while they make
864 mats, stretch the hides of drums, or sew a blouse, a cap, or trousers
for themselves in the b'lon, or entry hut? They talk constantly of their
soungourou, and this term, which should simply mean an unmarried
girl, means any woman, married or not, who gives herself to the
first comer.

Without any shame they talk and chat about all these vile acts
before their little brothers, before children ten and twelve years old,

551 course within the individual who hears it, its effect on him, and the return effect on the individual reciting it are all developed according to a known mechanism.

The *barama*, a word which may be translated as "encouragement," "compliment," or "flattery," is a narrative, usually in poetic form, relating the origin of the name and the exploits of the ancestors (1).

[576] 1. The device, in its entirety, is generally known only to the *griot*, but certain parts of it, certain traditional phrases known to all, are used as a greeting to its owner.

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539 Thus one of the elements of the Diara device bears witness to the role of their ancestors:

"Diara, Zan of Nyaola, Yayiri of Nyaola, your grandfather curved the world like a sickle, straightened it out like a straight road; grandson of God on earth, Diara!" (2)

2. *Dyara, nyaola za, nyaola yayiri, i moke ye ka dye kuru i ko woloso ka foni i ko sira tike nin dye; duguma ngala modẽ, dyara.* *Nyaola* is a village. The name of Zan is always given to the eldest son in a family. The word *dyara* also means lion.

Another element exalts their courage in battle:

"Diara, Koné: if there is not a Koné among the warriors who will fight, the troop will be beaten (in advance). The lion has broken a great bone" (3).

3. *Dyara, kone, kone če kele te kele min oye fele ye; dyara ye kolo ba kari.* Koné is another of the Diara's *dyamu*; *fele* describes a group of men gathered together for the hunt or for war.

The Tangara device also recalls their history and their victories:

"Descendants of Falé, Kwonda, Méné: other brave men purchased their right to sit in the village; we, brave men, won it with our bow and arrows" (4).

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539 4. Fale kwonda mene šiw, tow bomaw ye dugu sã ka sigi, aw bemaw ya soro ni to ani kala. Falé, Kwonda, and Mené are the names of ancestors. The device is that of the Tangara of the village of Barbé.

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778 Moreover, the device also carries a statement of the bearer's genealogy, burudyu (1). To say this genealogy is equivalent to "attacking the /77/ ancestors." To speak of them, to quote them, and to tell their exploits honors them and pacifies them. In the course of the recitation "the air emitted by the speaker" is transformed by the power of the spirit, Teliko, into coolness which penetrates the ancestors (2). The same is true for supernatural powers. As soon as the Komo chief recites Faro's burudyu, "the air coming out of the chief's mouth is transformed into good nyama which penetrates Faro's body through his pupils and ears."

To tell a man his burudyu is to honor him greatly. He thinks of his ancestors, their fortune, and their glory; he is proud to be descended from them and is incited to do as well or better than they. The effect of the "good word" described above is due to the indirect but powerful action of the ancestors (3). The recitation by a third party has the effect of maintaining the individual in his being, of making him persevere by affirming it (4), for the device appeals to

1. The word ši, meaning race, is used to indicate the burudyu, which is comparable to the dambe of the Peul of Mopti.

2. Teliko ba sumaya se u ma. "Téliko makes coolness come to them."

3. However the soul (ni) of the cited ancestors is neither called upon nor displaced by the recitation. It is the vital force, nyama, which is put into motion here.

551 The device is recited on numerous occasions. After a birth, the
576 *griot* proclaim it in the course of the name-giving ceremony, address-
778 ing themselves to the father, then to the newborn child /79/ who thus
564 receives it for the first time. At a marriage the *barama* of the two
partners are alternatly recited. In everyday life, the recitation is carried on most frequently during religious ceremonies or feasts. In the hunt or at war, it has the effect of helping the participants and increasing their courage (1). In a meeting it is used to greet people bearing the same name, and if one of the assistants is to be particularly honored, the first words of his device are recited.

551 In case of illness, the ally (*senãnku*) (2) comes to the patient's
755 side and recites his *barama* to encourage him and help him get well. If he is dying, the recitation, which is then the equivalent of a prayer, may help his soul return. After death, the ally, the *griot*, and the
[764] blacksmiths come near the corpse to recite his *barama* in order to
honor him.

551 The devices pertaining to the various crafts are used when address-
576 ing the artisan with whom one has business. Thus the blacksmith to
539 whom one brings work is greeted first by his name to which is then
added:

"*ini fara ani goni*, you are with stone and fire."

A person crossing a field will say to the farmer bent over the earth: "*i ni tye i ba ka kusebe daba*, greeting to him who handles the hoe well," or simply: "*i ni tye daba la*, greeting to him who is with the hoe." To the shoemaker one would say: "*bana ani ba golo*, (you are) with the acacia (3) and the goat leather."

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[727] 1. If the *griot* recites it to a war chief and the town under attack is taken, he receives part of the loot.

2. See p. 119.

[386] 3. This refers to the *bana* or *boina* (*Acacia arabica*) used by the shoemaker to make a black dye.

794 534 on half-gourds, and accompanied by flutes and bells. The musicians, recruited from among the musical members of the society, are obliged to submit to certain precautions because of the proximity of the mask during the performance of the dances. In fact, if the mask casts a spell (*korti*), they may, unwittingly, breathe in the dangerous powder and it is wise to protect oneself by taking the antidote ahead of time.

The Komo's iron bell, *kolõkolõ* or *grinda*, is kept with certain 794 534 altars in the chief's residence; it is rung by a special bearer, *grindavo* or *nadara koloyo*.

713 539 A myth recalls the origin of this bell. "A small child, who went to play at the crossroads situated at the approaches to the village, heard one day a bell ring and invisible beings speak. Seized with fear, he returned home. When he was questioned by his parents, he refused to answer but with his finger pointed out to them the road which he took every day. The parents followed it and arrived at the crossroads where they found a copper bell. The spirit of the place, Soba, announced to them that he was making a gift of it so that they might call the spirits by ringing it and that the spirits would answer them (1). But he asked the father to give him in exchange the child who habitually came to the crossroads so that the child could continue to play with the spirit's children. When the father, in despair, told him he had not the courage to part with his son, the spirit advised him to consult Faro.

The man gathered the young girls of the village together and asked them to intercede for him with the spirit. Dressed in their most beautiful clothes and wearing their ornaments, they went off singing and threw cakes and couscous into the river (2). The elders went down in turn and received Faro's consent. He demanded that

1. In olden times, "men spoke with their ancestors and with their gods."

[796] 2. Each year the offering and the race are repeated by the young girls of Ségou who go to the river singing the *nyari nyari to*.

794 they keep the instrument for religious ceremonies. After declaring
534 that they would obey, the elders returned to the crossroads where
773 the Soba spirit gave them the bell and left in exchange the child whom
the spirit had called to him in their absence.
539 The object was then taken to the blacksmith who made one in the same shape, using wood or bone for the body, and stone for the clapper. After the invention of iron, they were forged according to the ancient model with the addition of small copper bells."

794 /153/ To ring the bell is "to make Faro hear the sound of copper,"
to call him, and flatter him at the same time. When the mask is
534 brought out, the sound warns the noninitiates to avoid the procession. The flute or reed pipe of the Komo, wara da, "mouth of the one armed with claws," is made of a bamboo stem pierced by three holes. The middle one is open and the two others are obstructed by a cobweb. The instrument is held between the bearer's teeth and is tied by a string to the back of his neck or to his ears.

794 A myth tells the origin of Faro's flute, made according to the
534 same principle, but of a different shape.
773 A woman, called Koussouba Koulibali, was bathing one morning when she saw Faro and the dodo fish sitting at the river bank. The
539 fish was playing the flute and singing:

"I will whistle, I will whistle in my Faro's flute; he who will not hear me will die, he who will die will regret it" (1).

1. Na fye, na fye ne nka faro fle flye,
nyimi mame o na sa, nyimi sara o bone na.

The woman fled and told her husband, who was a diviner and chief of the Komo, about what had happened. The latter proceeded to the banks of the Niger and frightened away the fish who abandoned its instrument. The man seized it and went home, followed by the turbulent river water from which he managed to escape in his canoe. But his whole family perished in the flood.

In the morning, the man returned to the river bank and cried as he played the flute. He played for such a long time that Faro, taking pity on him, came out and said: "I have drowned the members of your family and flooded the village. I forgive you, however,

794 534 773 539 because of the offerings made by other men. Keep the flute and since you are Soma and chief of the Komo, let all the Komo flutes be blessed because of this one." By this he meant that the Komo flute, like the other ritual objects, would hereafter contain his strength, *nyama*. He added that, when men wished to call him or to talk to him, they would have to do it through the intermediary of this instrument.

794 534 Before each occasion when the mask is brought out, a sacrifice is performed upon the flutes "to improve their sound." Faro's flute is used in the rituals performed at the river bank, to pray to him or to thank him. To play the flute is equivalent to reciting his device; he is forced to hear. The Komo flute is used only during the masked ceremonies; it makes those who hear it say that the Komo is "a thing with a soft throat" (1).

1. *Fẽ kã ḍuma.*

In former times the chief alone was allowed to play the flute, whatever its type; death was sanctioned for infraction of this rule. Ordinary flutes /154/ of a style different from those belonging to the cult are used by children.

E. Initiation to the Komo

794 852 Three days after the birth of a boy, his father presents him with the elements which he has contributed to the making of the Komo *boli* and recites the *komo kumã*: "You, Komo *boli*, these things are inside; society of the Komo, these things are inside; customs of the Komo, these things are inside; you are a child, you are going to approach the age of the elders; Komo *boli*, here is my child, watch over him" (2).

2. *Komo boli la, nin waliw ba kono;*
komo dyẽ la, nin fẽw ba la; komo siṛa
la, nin kunko ba kono; i ye demisẽ ye
i bi ta makorobaya ye; komo boli nde fle,
tyę do, i dyã to a la.

He then returns the child to its mother with these words: "The son has been introduced to the secret of masculinity; he has received

794 The candidates next swear an oath the text of which is recited by the chief:

"If I reveal (the secrets of) the boli, may it kill me; if I disclose the institutions, may they kill me; until my death, if I speak, may my father die, may my mother die, may the boli break my heart" (1).

> 1. Ni nye korobo, boli ka fa, ni nye korobo,
> dyow ka fa, fo kata n sa ni nya fo n fa ka sa m
> ba ka sa, boli dyugu ka sõ ta.

Each in his turn, the children next lick the head and the hooks of the mask three times, thus assuring it their allegiance: "Until my death, I shall not reveal the koli. Faro has not been revealed! Let the koli not be revealed!" (1)

> 1. Fo ka ta n sa nte korobo koli, faro ma
> korobo, koli kana korobo.

After the altars, including the pembele, have been presented to [782] them, the postulants drink the blood of a goat offered in sacrifice; thus they assimilate the forces of the Komo and by this communion consecrate their oath.

Finally, the mechanism of the society in all its details is explained to them: the necessity of hierarchy in age grades, of respect for taboos, and of the secrecy in which all that concerns the organization must be held. A moral lesson is also taught them; in particular they [867] are advised to set themselves a line of conduct in private life as well as in public life, to be righteous, to avoid duplicity and bad faith, flãvlãña (literally, double action), never to serve two masters, and not to entertain conflicting desires among themselves.

794 As an illustration, the adventures of the first members who broke these laws are told.

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539 One of Makanta Djigui's companions, Garou Keita, was afflicted with this serious fault. He had become friendly with Moridje Sidibé, son of the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé, who had the same character. At this period three great Komo were already functioning in the region: that of Koulikouro called selo (literally, grave); that of Nyamina called dyibi (literally, dark); and that of Kankan.

Garou went to one of the ceremonies of the Komo of Kankan /156/ and by telling lies, incited the members to revolt against the local

794 chiefs, which they did. They interrupted the dances and refused to
773 recognize the Komo which was dissolved, leaving the chief alone.
539 But Garou, who had lied, died shortly after that.

The chief of Kankan carried away the altars and put them under the protection of the Komo chief of Koulikoro, and the members participated in the ceremonies of this locality. Moridje went to Nyamina and, in the same way as Garou, incited the members to engage in a kind of rivalry with the Komo of Koulikoro. In the course of a ceremony celebrated in this latter village, he called forth the Komo of Nyamina, using the authority attached to his father's name, and offerred a male goat to both groups. The two chiefs refused, arguing with reason that one victim could not satisfy two Komo. Moridje paid no attention and brought the two maskers face to face with the goat between them. A fight took place with the animal as a pawn, each masker using his magical powers to win it, and the members gathered behind their respective masks shouting: "the goat is ours." Later, the mask wearer also died prematurely.

794 To avoid the possibility that members will give their allegiance to two Komo, they are made to lick the mask once again, while the following prayer is recited: "If you lick the mask, may you not make the *flãvlãña*, may you not perpetrate a betrayal" (1). If, after swearing this oath, the party betrays it, he becomes "a rotten person" (*matolilo*) and loses the esteem and confidence of his companions.

1. *Nye komo kun no, i kana seka flãvlãña kę, nye komo kun no, i kana seka dyãfa kę.*

794 As the young men grow with years and increase in knowledge, the
869 instruction they are given is increasingly comprehensive. The head
532 of the Komo, accompanied by men of his age grade, takes the postulant into the bush and questions him about his intentions and aims. Before indicating to him the group to which he is to be attached and introducing its members to him, he teaches him by drawing on the ground the combination of signs representing the arrangement in the universe of the Komo society, a combination which is usually reproduced before each ceremony and which permits the participants to recognize their place (see Fig. 12).

This drawing, called *wolo ti*, "sign of the generation," is composed of two long lines cutting each other at right angles and oriented

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> hemp), palm fibers, and leaves. On their heads they wear a cap or calotte, also made of hemp and surmounted by a yellowish-red wooden crest or a bird's beak, also of wood. There are two holes in the calotte for the eyes. These *dou* are given free *dlo* by the populace which makes up their cortege. They wander about the village and fields day and night..." (Binger).

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[796] There is never any cult service or ceremony on Monday or Thursday.

The clergy serves as an administrative council for the property of the *Komo-ya* (brotherhood of the Komo) in accordance with the general principles already noted. The *Komo-tigi* of Tiguini, we have been told, is especially famous for respecting the principles which give the treasury of the brotherhood an exclusively fraternal character.

The *Komo-ya* are mutually independent, and all have experienced the kind of deviations which give rise to political action. The Komo has played a preponderant role in the affairs of the clan of Ségou, as is evident from the chronicle.

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● 539 Young men are taken into the brotherhood during the harvest festivals. They appear before the circle of initiates, while those present sing:

Da woro-na nana,
Bolo-ko deu da woro-na,
Toro man na ko la-nyini.
Sira bo nin' ye, ko dugu le den',
Sira bo nin' ye ko dugu le sira.

Translation: "The sixth day has come, the sixth day of the newborn (1), and there has been no accident. Let us show the

1. That is, those who have just been born to a new status through the *soli* or *bolo-ko*.

794 way to this child, the way which the village follows."

796 One by one they pass before the *wara-da* who, dressed
539 in full regalia, is supposed to receive their oath. The oracle places the tube with the horn on each boy's head in turn, and the following dialogue takes place:

--*Mun' b'i kun'* (What is it you have on your head?), asks the oracle.

A kala be n kun' (I have his symbol (2) on my head). [274]

2. *Kala*, literally, is the cylindrical part of a thing; here, in the special language, it is a way of alluding to the tube with its horn and thus is a kind of symbol of the Komo.

I y'a ye wa (Have you seen it [the Komo])?

Ne m'a ye (No, I have not seen it).

I y'a fo ma min'ye, k'i kun' ti ki' son' n'i bien' ta a k'ifa (If you speak of it to anyone, may it [the Komo] smash your head and may it [the Komo] take your heart and your liver and kill you).

A ka ne fa (May it kill me).

I sirila nyama-n-fu dyala la (You are bound by the bark thong of the *nyama*) (1).

[824] 1. An allusion to the strips of bark from the *nyama* tree (*Bauhinia reticulata*), which make up the common costume for concealing the officiants during the ceremonies. It is simply a way of saying: "Do you agree to join?" And the reply is equivalent to: "Yes, for as long as I shall live."

Ne si sirila a la (My life is bound by this thong).

Ni si m'a fo ma si ye, Komo k'i kisi (If you speak to no one about all this, may the Komo protect you [literally, "save you"]).

A ka ne kisi (May he protect me).

794 796 For a certain length of time, the new members are kept in seclusion while being instructed by initiates, especially the older ones, who see to it that they learn the songs and dances and become familiar with the special language. It is in the course of this instruction that they are given certain formulas to use for recognition among the komo-den' (sons of the Komo). The following are two examples and by no means the only ones; each Komo-ya has its own formulas, and in addition the adepts of the various Komo-ya are readily inclined to fraternize, especially when they are alone, far from their respective groups. In such cases, the identical principles of their cults bring them together, and they question each other at once:

539 --E b' a la wa (Are you a member)?
--M ba' la (I am).
--N'i b'a la, tyoko dyira r na (If you are, show me the secret sign).

201 This sign varies and is completely arbitrary. Sometimes it involves raising the hand with the fingers spread apart in a certain way; at other times, twigs are placed in a special pattern, and so on. [275]

The Nama

794 This cult arose at an unknown date at Missango (Bélédougou). The head of the Nama at Missango is addressed respectfully as Fura-tigi-ba, meaning literally, "grand master of the fura (fura specifically means "leaf" of a tree and, by extension, "remedy"). This is one of the expressions with double meanings which are so common in the brotherhoods: Fura-tigi-ba, the great physician, great savant, grand master.

The Nama is also called Nama-koro and Suya-koro, and a certain Nama is called Siriman 'fin'.

778 Objects used in worship include: the Nama-kon-golo-u (craniums of the Nama), which are a kind of headdress, usually made of linge wood and shaped like fantastic birds; the wara-se (literally, "foot of the wara"), a small wooden board about a meter high with three horns affixed to it; and a similar board with two horns, called nye-bla.

794 796 The food is eaten by those attending the ceremony; the millet mush which constitutes the meal is supposed to have been prepared by the wives of the dignitaries. This communion is the most important act of the ceremony.

When night comes, the procession of the Nama takes place. Its aim is to rid the village and its environs of sorcerers, the eaters of souls known as [279] suba (1), and to discover and destroy the objects called siri which bear witness to the measures taken by the sorcerers to harm the natives.

The ritual cries of ture-dyo and dyo-Nama break into the racket of trumpets and drums while the Nama wanders about. The dye-n-fa, wearing the symbolic headdress (Nama-kongolo) and preceded by the da-ro-tigi tinkling his bell to warn people to clear the way, is followed or surrounded by torchbearers [539] (called ta-tugula-n-tigi) who shout a hymn in praise of the god.

A dyigima so Nama fambali: He is our host, mighty Nama.
A fyerela ka den': He blossoms in order to bear fruit.
Suba yo, nin kera malo-ko ye: Oh! Suba (2), shame on you!"

One of the persons in his entourage shouts defiance and curses in all directions, aimed at the suba, the eaters of souls.

It is during this procession that the dye-n-fa, at the instigation of the bearer of the symbol, discover the siri-fen' (2) [Ed., see footnote 2 above]; these are the objects used by the eaters of souls to accomplish their sinister designs or are the remains of their macabre repasts. Here it is a knife, there a pot, elsewhere a bit of human flesh (or so it is claimed)! All these things are dug up amidst cries, exclamations, and imprecations by the whole company.

A suba discovered in the course of these proceedings is hotly pursued, and it is said that, exhausted by the chase and

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1 See Chapter 7 below. [Not translated.]

2. Literally, the "bonds" (see Chapter 7 below). [Not translated]

794 overpowered by the god, he always comes to die near the temple.
796 When this happens, the wretch's corpse is left there, naked; his
clothing is thrown to the roof of the temple where it remains for
a long time as an example. The siri-fen' are also displayed near
the temple, within sight of the women, who are allowed to come
and look at them.

It is just prior to these solemn sorties of the Nama that the clergy begins the proceedings to admit the youths who have just completed the soli. In the center of a circle of the faithful in front of the temple, they take their oath of secrecy:

794 --I y'a fo ma min' ye, boli k'i son' ta, k'i been'ta, ka
796 [280] dun' i dyu fe'ka bo i da fe: If you speak to anyone, may
539 the boli take your heart and your liver, may he go in through your
anus and go out through your mouth.

--O ka ke: Let it be so.

-- Ni e ma fo ma ye, k'i kisi suba-u ma k'i son' si la, k'i son' keneya la: If you tell no one, may he protect you from the suba, grant you descendants, and give you good health.

-- O ka ke: Let it be so.

The new members must pay an entrance fee of a franc
and ten kola nuts and must go through a kind of initiation. For
a fortnight they live apart under supervision and are required to
learn the songs and dances under the tutelage of the clergy and
[198] old men. They are told the significance of the words with
double meanings, which constitute the language peculiar to the
brotherhood, and are also given the formula of recognition, of
which the following are some examples:

-- E b'a la wa? (Are you one of us?)

-- Ne b'a la (I am).

-- Fere tyon' kan' (Show the sign).

He shows it and explains it. The questioner then concludes:

--Dya! e b'a la, koï (You are indeed one of us)!

538 814 that the griot is often a wretched character, an insignificant parasite living at the expense of everyone. There are those among them, however, who carry out their duties as archivist very faithfully and who are sincerely devoted to their masters, great and generous lords in the native fashion whose interests and reputations such griot ably defend.

It is griot of this last type who transmit the reliable historical tradition from which we have borrowed the foregoing accounts. There [318] is no doubt that these griot, true "masters" (dyeli) of historical traditions, have played a considerable role in native society. Therefore their words should never be passed over lightly, although obviously they should be subjected to judicious criticism.

The To-da

614 631 In origin, evolution, and contingencies, the clan developed from the social bases already studied, community and brotherhood, of which it is, in the last analysis, only an amalgamation. As a result, its various manifestations are similar to those of these institutions, even though possessing its own peculiarities.

One of the most characteristic features of the clan is the to-da, which was the familiar term used by members of the clan for the region in which they lived. The word literally means "the pot of mush" and alludes to the essential element in the corporate ● [539] banquets of the fla-n-ton'. As the saying goes: "furu-ba to, to kadi, na ka ko, (at the corporate meal the mush is good and the sauce is bad.")

The to-da originally was limited to Ségou-koro and its immediate environs, i.e., the small number of villages affiliated with the ton' either voluntarily or by force. It progressively extended its sway along the Niger: first on the right bank as far as Kirango; later almost to Dina; finally it extended its influence over a broad area on both sides of the river from Kan ga-ba to Timbuktu.

This territory was organized in various ways. The key region ran along the Niger from Dina to Kirango, and the sector

171 in his *Die Ethnologie der Indianerstämme von Guatemala* /The
614 Ethnology of the Indian Tribes of Guatemala/, Leyden, 1882. This
825 work is cited by Lang in Chap. III of *Mythes, cultes et religions.*
784 His *tné* is a friend, a protector, and may be defined as follows: it is
an animate or inanimate being entitled to the respect and veneration
of an entire lineage, family, or clan, in recognition of an outstanding
service which has prevented the lineage, family, or clan from disappearing or becoming extinct, or has preserved them from a misfortune.

173 Every *tne* has its legend. Although in the mouth of the black
614 man the tale may be embellished and decorated a little so that it
●539 varies somewhat, the substance remains the same. I will translate
784 a few of these legends, preserving both their form and their substance.
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Legend of the Two *Kouloubali*

The people were at war; everywhere there were only fugitives. The *Kouloubali* lineage had been cruelly stricken and reduced to two members, two brothers lost in the bush with their wives and children. The elder who followed /sic/ his brother at a distance, (since for fear of being surprised, they avoided camping in the same place). He arrived at the bank of a swollen river and saw he could not cross, there being no boats. "Where can I flee now?" he lamented. "I am in the hands of my enemies! For me and my family it is death or slavery." A *mpolio* was passing by; it heard, was touched by compassion, and, raising its big, bearded head out of the water, called to him: "I can take you over, have no fear!" The elder of the *Kouloubali* and his family, with their weapons and baggage, settled themselves on the slimy back of the strange fish and crossed the river. Then he said to the fish: "Listen, good *mpolio*, my brother and his family are over there on the bank. Do not render them the /19/ service that you rendered me, for he is an ingrate, one without a heart, and he might kill you." -- "Kill me? Come now!" and the fish dove, disappeared, and emerged far over near the other bank, at the moment when the young *Kouloubali* was wondering how his older brother had been able to cross such a wide

773 and deep river when there were no boats. "It is thanks to me," said
614 the *mpolio*, "place yourself on my spine as he did." And so the
●539 younger brother and his wives crossed the river.

784 The young *Kouloubali* was heartless. When the women had put
down their gourds and baskets on the bank, at the moment when the
825 *mpolio* leaped up and raised the full height of its body out of the water in order to dive and disappear, he threw his spear at it. The fish struggled for an instant, the water foamed, reddened, and then there was quiet: it was dead.

The family of the young *Kouloubali* cut up the animal and, without shame or remorse, invited the family of the elder brother to come to the feast. "Eat the *mpolio*," cried the latter, "never! And may there be a curse on any of mine that dares to eat it." Since that day, the mpolio has been the *tné* of the descendants of the elder *Kouloubali*.

To some extent it is also the *tné* of the descendants of the younger brother, but they eat it except for the head.

Legend of a Branch of the *Taraoulé*

A woman saw all her children die, and so she trembled for her last born, a sickly, puny little boy whom her milk did not help. One day she was alone in her hut crouched on her mat with the child on her knees, spinning cotton when she began to cry and moan: "You will not live, you will join your elder brothers, you will go away and leave me alone." A spitting snake was passing by; he came in and gently coiled himself around the body of the child. The mother let out a cry, and the neighbors came running.... The snake slowly uncoiled and left the dwelling while the child held his arms out to it and smiled. He did not die but became strong and healthy, for the snake had drunk all the *gnâma*, all elements of illness that were in him. From that day on the *Taraoulé* branch of which this child is the father does not eat the spitting snake, or *n'gorono*, for the curse of the ancestor would descend on them: that is, the spitting snake is their *tné*. /20/

Legend of Another *Taraoulé* Branch

773 A woman was fetching wood in the forest when she was seized
614 with the pains of childbirth. "All alone, what will become of me?"
539 she cried. "I have no one to help me; who will wash my child? Oh!
784 I will take a corpse home with me." She knelt by her load of wood,
825 gave birth to her child, collapsed, and lost consciousness. A big
black monkey was munching fruit in a near-by tree; it saw her and was moved.... It played midwife, washed the little creature, rocked him in its arms, and when the mother came to herself it gave her back her little boy. From that day on no descendant of this *Taraoulé* branch eats *ngoba*; this big black monkey is their *tné*, and the ancestor would curse anyone who did so.

Legend of the Two *Djara*

Two *Djara* brothers with wives and children were fleeing before their enemies. Overcome with fatigue they sat down in the shade of a *dondol* determined to go no farther. Actually, they were so plagued by thirst that they could not go on. An iguana was wandering in the vicinity; it had pity on the two *Djara*, so it climbed the *dondol* and, working with its tail and feet, succeeded in producing a gentle dew under the tree. All were able to quench their thirst with the sap held in the calyxes of this tree's blossoms. "The *kana* (iguana) shall from now on be my *tné*," said the elder, "and I curse any one of my descendants who kills or eats it." -- "Think it over," said the younger, "is it not to the *dondol* that we owe our lives? Is it not its sap that quenched our thirst? Would it not be better to take this tree as *tné*?" The two *Djara* argued, could never agree, and separated. The *kana* became the *tné* of the older branch, and the *boumou*, or *dondol*, that of the younger branch.

Legend of the *Samaké*

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614 My grandfather has often told it to me; he himself got it from
539 his ancestors.... A *Samaké* -- I cannot tell whether he had been
784 fording the river or driving the stakes to which fishing mats are fastened
825 -- was seized by an alligator which dragged him to the depths of its den. The alligator did not kill him, /21/ for it had fed.... Leaving the unhappy man to his sad thoughts, it withdrew.... It did not go away, however, and from time to time it hit the water with its tail at the entrance of the hole, making it quite clear that there was only one way out and that this was the door. Stretched out in the ooze, the unhappy *Samaké* moaned: "Who will save me from those terrible claws and those powerful teeth?" An ant lion at the top of the den was watching for flies and ants in the bottom of its pit; it had pity on the man and, working with its two horns, succeeded in bringing in a ray of sunlight to revive the hopes of the *Samaké*. "Will I be saved?" he asked the ant lion. Two pinches of sand were the answer, and he understood. Working with both hands, he helped the ant lion; the hole grew and he was able to get through. He escaped. When the alligator re-entered its den, exhausted with hunger, it was disappointed not to find its prey there. So as not to invite the curse of their ancestor, the descendants of this *Samaké* respect and venerate the *géré*, or ant lion, and it is their *tné*. Other *Samaké* have the elephant *(sama)* for their *tné*.

773 These few legends are sufficient; they all show us that although
825 the Bambara believes that the bond with the *tné* is simply one of
811 fraternity, friendship, and gratitude and not a bond of real and
772 physical kinship, he nonetheless does not fail to attribute reason and emotion to everything around him, to animals and to plants. In nature he does not find pure matter; rather he attributes human feelings in some degree to everything, and throughout he sees a force, a power, an intangible, which he does not know how to define and which thinks, loves, laments, and weeps.

789 778 after death. This energy, this fluid, is the envoy, messenger, or emissary of hatred, vengeance, and justice, and it goes wherever it is sent by the will which is its director and master; it goes wrongly or rightly to bring misfortune, poverty, sickness, and death. The word gnâma is constantly heard from Bambara lips.

789 The song of young girls who have been excised begins with these words:

778 Bo n' yé, gnâma, o gnâma, bo n' yé!
304 Go away from me, gnâma, oh, gnâma, go away from me!
539 Dankoun bâ la
(i.e., Gnâma who dwell) at the great corner of land formed
by two paths that cross.
Gnâma fambali, bo n' yé!
Gnama who kill, go away from me! (1)

1. Translation: "Go away from me, all kinds of gnâma, who dwell at the big dankoun (a corner of land formed by two paths that fork, intersect, or cross at the exit from the village)! Gnâma who kill, go away from me!"

789 778 The ears of those who consult sorcerers have had their fill of this word: Gnâma djôugou bi é nofé. A malicious gnâma is chasing you, so avoid this and that, kill a goat, a chicken, or a dog, place a gift of cowrie shells, a kola nut, etc... in a certain place. Nonté i fa gnâma na ouli i la, otherwise the gnâma, the avenging force possessed by your father, will rise up against you.

Always, the word gnâma carries this meaning of a force, a power, a fluid that causes sickness, suffering, and death. The following proverb alone expresses much of its meaning: Ni warani-n-kala ko, /28/ ka fa, gnâma si dé t'o la. If the panther (a tyrant as wicked as a panther) says, "Let us kill him," we surely have no gnâma to set against him (no force or energy that we might set against him as a counterbalance to the force of his gnâma).

176 inanimate object, and whether the form it takes is human or animal, whether it resembles an eggplant, a potato, or a napkin ring, that form remains a boli as long /128/ as there is a piece left that is visible to the naked eye, and the boli never leaves it. In the case of the boli, there is such a close union between the object and the spirit that this combination becomes one and the same individual; it is the union of soul and body in order to make up a person or individual.

176 182 In sacrifices to the gnéna, the reverence of the Negro is not directed to the spring, the tree, the plant, etc., but to the genie that inhabits it. But in sacrifices to the gnâ, reverence is directed simultaneously to the spirit and to its object; one does not exist, is not thought of, without the other. Negroes have often given me to understand this, and one of my old friends, in order to explain his worship, expressed himself in these words: "When you honor your friend, is it his body or his soul that you honor? It is neither his body nor his soul; you honor both at the same time, the person himself as a whole, your friend; that is how it is with the boli." (1) /129/

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1. In Bambara:	Translation:
"Ne koko, n'i bé i terké bôgna, i be a fari bôgna wa ouala a dousou bôgna. I té i terké bôgna wa? A bé té boliou fé koï. An bi Sétané bôgna wa ouala a fen yéré bôgna, héwa, anou dé bi boli bôgna.	"I myself say: if you honor your friend, do you honor his body or his soul? You honor your friend, don't you? It is the same with the boli. Do we honor satan or do we honor his object? Assuredly, it is the boli.
"Faran fasili do be dasiri, djiri an'a djiné tjé. N'i b'a djiri son, i dé bé dasiri son, nka, i bé dasiri bôgna doron? Djiri te fen gouansan yé? a ti fouï gnâ.	"There is a difference between the dasiri tree and its genie. If you sacrifice to the tree, you sacrifice to the dasiri, but do you not honor the dasiri alone? Is the tree not a mere object? It gives us nothing.
"Taï, o do.	"Exactly, that's right.

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"O fara n fasili-'in te boli dé ni sétané tjé wa? Nibé boli dé son, i be Sétané sontigné, nka i be sétané bôgna doron, boli dé, héwa fen min yéra o dé te fouï gnâ.	"Does this difference not exist between the boli and satan? If you sacrifice to the boli, you sacrifice to satan, that is certain; but you honor only the demon, and its object is no help to you.
"O té, djiné ni boli ma-n-kan, boli dé hen, an be fen min yé, o be fen gnâ dérén. Sétané an'o fen olou foula té ké boli yé wa?"	"No, you haven't understood. A genie and a boli are not the same. The boli is bound to what we see; it is useful to us. Satan and his object, both together -- do they not make up the boli?"

Boli dé: An object in which is found the spirit the Negroes call Sétané, "Satan."

776 The gnéna, or djiné, half man and half angel, malicious though it is, can nevertheless do good and grant a direct blessing by performing a good act. But the gnâ, the boli, a fallen angel (méléké sifa do do, " it is a kind of angel"), in revolt against God and, as I stated in my chapter on God, condemned to the tortures of fire, is entirely evil and cannot directly do a good deed (1). It can never-

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1. I challenge the European "Bambara scholars" of Ségou to listen to the two djéli (storytellers /griots/) of Goïn, a small village a short distance from this center. The sacred dances and songs of the boli are their specialty, and they travel over the

778 with the dancers /150/ who, with torsos naked to the waist, gesticulate and shout their sacred songs to the sound of drums and pipes:

778 A djigina so, gnâ, ma fambali, a djigina so, tjon k'a e.
539 He is our guest, the gnâ, great killer of men, he is our guest
tjon k'a é.
A fiéréla ka dén, boli fiéréla ka dén.
He has blossomed to bear, to bear his fruits; this boli has
blossomed, he has his fruit.
Soubaou, yo, nin kéra malo ko ye.
Souba, yo, this is done because of shame.
Soubaya kéra, dabali bé an ko yé.
Someone has devoted himself to the practices of the souba, we
have a means of saving ourselves.

778 782 Nor does sacrifice to the Nama fail to be impressive. Only members of the staff enter the enclosure where the beehive used as its tabernacle is located. The crowd of members remains outside, and no one approaches the palisade before it is his turn to give a sacrificial hen and kola nuts to the sacrificer. While the idol is being reddened with blood (1), /151/ two men, naked to the waist and facing the

778 171 1. The Nama of the Malinké is absolutely identical with that of their Bambara brothers. At Bendougouba, a village of the Kosilanbougou culture near Kita, there is a Nama, and one can identify the words as they are very nearly the same.

Bambara	Malinké
Male Nama: Tjema	Male Nama: Kema
Female Nama: Mousoma	Female Nama: Mousoma
The Nama protects chiefly against initiates of the siri, who are said to eat human flesh and are called souba.	The Nama protects against the soubaga, identical with the souba. It comes from Misèngo in Bélédougou.

881 796 794 the trumpet blasts: "I have the kala (1) on my head, my life is hence-

> 1. Kala, "handle of a tool," "a pestle," "an oblong object"; Komo kala, iron tube ending in two horns.

forth bound with gnâma-n-fou; if I reveal the secrets of the sect, may my abdomen swell and may the Komo kill me." Then they get up, 881 796 794 •539 and the crowd of initiates sing hymns to the Komo at the tops of their voices:

Da Woro la nana, Boloko déou da Worola.
To the festival of Da Woro he (the fetish) has come, to
Da Woro of the circumcised (he has come).
Toro ma na kola gnini.
Toro (2) has not come to cause evil.

> 2. Toro, the name of a Komo.

Sira bo nin ye, ko dougoulé dén.
To him we give an (open) road because (he is) a child of the village.
Sira bo nin yé, ko dougoulen sira.
Give him an (open) road to know the road of the children of the village (He is one of us, let us make room for him) (3).

> 3. Songs of Nama:
> A djigina so Nama fambali, a djigina so, tjon k'a'é.
> The Nama that kills has paid us a visit, he has visited us*, let us not be

[266] *The Nama protects against the souba, initiates of siri, reputed to be cannibals.

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796 neglectful toward him (let us welcome
794 the Nama who comes to visit us).
•539 A fiéréla ka den, boli fiéréla ka den.
He has blossomed to have fruits, the
boli has blossomed to have fruits
(the Nama has had a child).
Souba yo nín kéra ma lo ko yé.
Souba yo. This is done because of shame.
Souyaya kéra dabali bé an koyé.
The practice of the souba has been done
(among us), we have a means of protecting ourselves from it. /189/

881 796 794 While these hymns are being sung, the circumcised boys dance with the idol -- this is the standard expression to signify that for the first time they are executing the lascivious motions of the sacred dance.

And when they get back to their places, they are transformed, they are no longer the plain, good children who, even the day before, approached you nicely with a frank smile on their lips. They have become Bambara, and we, we are white men and strangers, masters and conquerors, and between them and us an abyss has been opened. And this abyss is opened further every day, for every time the god Komo comes out of its temple and out of the dirty foröko (goatskin) that serves as its tabernacle, they will go under the sacred trees, and will strengthen their faith and harden their hearts (1). Henceforth they will be at home in every part of the Sudan; they need not fear

1. The initiates of powerful boli's sect make a sort of "renewal of vows" a year after their admission. Those of the Komo, who are given the name of timini deou, hold a festival to break all records; there is meat and gruel to spare, and the divine liqueur, d'lo, or millet beer, is plentiful.

532 the masks is an entire world, and when it sets itself in motion in the public place, it dances the movement of the world, it dances the system of the world." (1)

1. Ibid., "Dieu d'eau" [God of Water] .

A. Statuary

Sculpture is man's work, done by the blacksmiths. It is of religious inspiration.

There are three centers of fabrication, whose productions differ in their form. These are the regions of Bamako, Bougouni (a veritable land of blacksmiths), and Kinian, of which the latter covers part of the Sikasso, Koutiala, and Ségou districts. (2)

2. Passim, Lem, "Sculptures soudanaises" [Sudanese Sculptures], Arts et métiers graphiques, Paris, 1948.

They make female statuettes, fertility statuettes, marionettes 545 used for theatrical representations given by the young people, masks for the different societies, and, in particular, a whole series of stylized antelopes, special symbols of the tchi wara dancers.

532 171 "Like the Chinese sculptor of the Han period, the Bambara sees and fixes forms in terms of profiles. He practices openwork carving, cutting silhouettes which appear against the light as hieroglyphs with fixed and suggestive outlines. Giving interpretations to signs and forms borrowed from familiar animals, the Bambara combine and associate them to create figures emblematic of the tribe or clan, figures of recognition. This symbolic zoomorphism, the basis of heraldry, is that of the peoples of the great Asiatic steppe, that of the peoples of Mesopotamia and of Asia Minor; it was, in part, that of the Egyptians of the age of the Pharaohs who achieved in the valley of the Nile, predestined for this by its situation and its resources, the synthesis of a double culture." Thus it is that the sculptor, in order to express his vision, often has recourse to the ideogram of geometric character, upon which is founded the conceptual character of the peoples of the steppe. (3)

3. Passim, F.H. Lem, Variété et unité des

533 292 of black, red, and yellow fibers, clothes of plaited fibers, and the musicians wear a cuirass made of fana seeds (a sort of bean). The bass player wears a band in the back which reaches to his heels and describes a circle when the musician whirls in going from north to south and from east to west to give the cadence. The other musicians form a circle which the dancers and singers do not enter. Another djo is the So, where the musicians and the singers wear masks of wooden horses, except for two clowns who represent the masculine element in the midst of the crowd of young girls. Lastly, the third djo is the djõ buru (buru, "trumpet"). This is the djo of the slaves; they play the ivory horn and are clothed like the N'ganian, but the bass player represents a cow, and the others are the heifers who respond to the cadence indicated to them by their mother.

E. Literature

538 Bambara literature, entirely oral, is extremely rich. It is the monopoly of the griot who from their earliest days learn the stories, the proverbs, the mottoes associated with each [108] family. They recite very long and very numerous epic songs concerning each great family, accompanying themselves on the harp. Certain parts are recited, others are sung in chorus by the griot and his wife. These stories are at the same time historical narratives of heroes' exploits and the mythical history of a demiurge symbolized by the hero. An infinitely small part of these epic songs has been collected. Some Bambara proverbs and stories have been collected by Moussa Traoré in particular.

545 794 522 It is interesting to mention another literary production, one in which the creative inspiration of the artist plays a greater part: these are the narratives of the members of the Kworé brotherhood. The Kworéduga are clowns, or rather commedia dell'arte players. One is a Kworéduga by hereditary transmission or by natural bent. During his initiation in the bush, where he submits to ritual harsh treatment, the initiate learns never to lose his temper, no matter what the circumstances. He is taught a comic language, witty sayings. He is trained to observe men's character closely and to recite stanzas and couplets giving his observations.

545 Example:
794 Tiekoroba kolili (the old man who has nothing)
522 Ita rokina momindi (what you say is not liked)
Ida konieti aie (you are right)
N'ka idia dopina marmandi (but one doesn't like what you say)
Or again:
Demise fentili (the rich young man)
Ida dokma kakadi (one likes what you say)
Ida konie tinaïe (what you say is not true)
N'ka idia dokma makadi (but one likes what you say)

545 The Kworéduga have the su (Moor) as taboo, and they accom-
534 pany themselves in singing with a sacred gourd, yaraba, which con-
794 tains seeds of Lufa cilindrica.

535 Finally, during the circumcision initiation period for example,
881 the child learns the sacred dances which often mime exploits of the mythical ancestors.

A certain evolution characterizes the native art which has
177 been transformed in a curious fashion by contact with Europeans.
517 In European centers, prolonged contact with the Whites has confused the beliefs that inspired the art, but the artists have lost neither their taste nor their gifts. At the request of the Whites themselves, they have undertaken a controlled art, with the aim of pleasing the Europeans. Needless to say, even if it conserves some charm in its form, all this new art, which evolves with the same swift rhythm as our modes, remains terribly dead, for the true source of inspiration has dried up. This art no longer seeks to be true, but to be pretty; by this it signs its own death warrant.

[109] CONCLUSION

I. Traditional Interpretation of Mental Characteristics

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In the introduction to Religion Bambara, Tauxier insists on the mental characteristics: "The Bambara has remained rather openly fetishist"; he possesses "two dominant traits, which are absolutely undisputed and indisputable:

"1. He is a very good farmer.

796 In the village of Kangaba a sanctuary, called *mande blo* "vestibule
778 of Mande," or *kaba blo* "vestibule of astonishment," is the object of a septennial ritual attended by representatives of all the races /who are/ said to be of the same origin. There ceremony consists in rebuilding the roof of the sanctuary which shelters an object *dolin,* but only those persons of pure race belonging to the Kéita family (1) and the traditional *griot* of the chiefs of Mandé, the Dyabaté, are authorized to perform the ritual. Only they may penetrate the sanctuary and tread on its soil, which is said to be "heavier and more powerful than all things." (2)

551 1. The name of Kéita, for which various etymologies have been found, is that of the founders of the Mandingo empire. Cf. C. Monteil, *Les Empires du Mali,* p. 31, and L. Tauxier, *Histoire des Bambara* /Bambara History/, p. 40: "The first kings of Mali lived at Kangaba and were in fact Kéita."

By extension the name of Kéita may be adopted by individuals belonging to one of the tribes originating in Mandé. Thus a Dogon will take on as *dyamu* Kéita if he comes to live in Mandé. On the other hand, the heraldic device of the Kéita, which relates the high deeds of the Mandingo princes, includes the devices of almost all the tribes said to be of the same origin. This common origin may perhaps throw some light on the institution of regularized name changes observed in Black Africa, a problem-which has claimed the attention of some authors; see in particular P. Humblot, *Du nom et des appellations chez les Malinke* /Names and nomenclature among the Maunke/.

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346 2. *Kangaba dugukolo ka gri fĕw be.* The sanctuary is a round hut provided with two doors, one oriented to the east and the

761 funeral rites. There it joins the ancestral forces, the aggregate of which forms a whole whose power is used by the descendants during the seasonal rituals for beneficial purposes.

764 761 The body is buried; it "belongs to the termites" and in the end only the bones will remain and be honored as a testimony of the physical life. Sometimes they are removed from the tomb, examined, and prayed to before being replaced.

761 844 When a birth occurs in the family the newborn child, having inherited the ni and the dya of the deceased, receives his nyama preserved in the pembele and his given name, toko; thus one being replaces another, using the same forces which are used over again and again. Life transmits itself intact. Not only is it undiminished by death, but the dya's sojourn in Faro's residence is thought to be a "reviving," a desirable and beneficial purification. Similarly, the passing of the ni onto the family altars brings about a rejuvenation.

761 On the altars and in the tombs, the "exuviae and bones counted and classified by Faro," are a valid testimony for eternity and serve to maintain the integrity of the whole world of living and dead until the final resurrection.

Attributes of the Person

The Name

551 The organization of the total family /famille indivise/ of the Bambara has already been the object of descriptive works (1). It is however, appropriate to mention it since certain elements such as family names, devices, taboos, and kinship relationships described as "joking" are related to the components of the person.

Socially, the person is first placed by his given name, toko, that of the ancestor who gave him his ni and his dya, or any other in the paternal or maternal line. The given name indicates the relation to a family group as well as /74/ the person's individuality. It is accompanied by the father's family name (dyamu), whose origin and

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1. In particular Ch. Monteil, Les Empires du Mali; H. Labouret, Les Manding et leur langue /The Malinke and their Language/.

55/ etymology are often associated with an historical event (1). The most

1. On the historical aspects of the dyamu, see P. Humblot, Du nom propre et des appellations chez les Malinké; M. Delafosse, Des soi-disant clans totémiques de l'Afrique occidentale /The So-called Totemic Clans of West Africa/, Ch. Monteil, Les Empires du Mali.

familiar names are derived from those of the mythical families (2).

[113] 2. The Bambara myth mentions family names that were determined by Faro when he classified beings and things. It is still generally said of this event: "When Faro travelled, he broke the support for Mousso Koroni, and an agreement as to names was made by him" (faro tama na muso koroni ǰigi kari la, dyama dyamy ko la dili kera faro fẹ).

On the other hand it must be noted that a dyamu, which applies to a great number of total families living in various regions, is not always reserved for the Bambara groups only. The dyamu Kouloubali, for example, also belongs to certain Somono and some blacksmiths. This means that a dyamu is not only attributed to a family in its broadest meaning, but also to people apparently unrelated to it. Another typical fact makes it impossible for us to give the term "family" the meaning it has in our societies: a person changes his name when he leaves his country. A Dogon becomes Keyta when he goes to live in Mandé. A Bambara Traoré, if he goes to the land of the Wolof, becomes a Diop (3). Finally, an important family may

3. An investigation of this very important aspect of Sudanese social organization remains to be made.

have several names and devices.

551 Bearing a name confers on the bearer the obligation of respecting a taboo (*tne* or *tana*). He may neither kill nor, more especially, eat the animal or the plant that represents his name; any infraction of this rule affects his physical and spiritual integrity.

551 602 On the other hand, relationships commonly known as "joking relationships" are established between families respecting different taboos and bearing different names. One of the characteristic aspects of this kind of alliance is the fact that members of one family are in the habit of carrying out purification rites for members of the other in case a taboo is broken.

551 173 Stories relating the origin of family names are well known and there are several versions that have been published for the principal families (1). Some of these bring out not only the history of the head of the family, the first-named, but at the same time the origin of the taboo /75/ attached to the name or the origin of the kinship ties observed by the bearers of the name with members of another family.

In this respect, one of the versions concerning the Kouloubali is most suggestive:

"The Kouloubali are descended from a family called *kuludyu* which lived in an underground village in a place called *kuluba* (literally, big mountain) in Mandé. A famine which lasted for fifty-two years hit the region; the people did not know what to do and ate the leaves of trees in order to survive.

Two friends, called *Konyo* (literally, marriage) and *Mbadun* (literally, I eat), left their homes and set out on a trip to find food. They met three men and decided to join forces with them in order to escape this painful situation. Upon returning to the village, the newcomers, noticing the excrement of a hyena, joked about its white color: "You have only been eating bones," they said. "But no," laughingly answered the other two, "it is hyena excrement." And they asked their new friends their names, adding that they themselves had none. Then together, they tried to make a fire. One night they noticed a flame apparently coming out of the branches of a kapok tree. The tree grew near a rock and the wind, by making

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1. See among others L. Tauxier. *La Religion bambara*, pp. 119ff.

551/ 173 its branch rub against the stone, caused sparks which ignited the kapok. They then rubbed two pieces of wood against each other and managed to light a fire which they kept burning for six months. They jealously guarded their secret; men, some of whom still knew nothing of fire and who were in the habit of drying their meat in the sun, came to ask them for burning coals and gave them millet, salt, and domestic animals in exchange. They also gave them their daughters in marriage. One of the men, who belonged to the Diara family, asked them their family names. They answered that they had none. "What does that matter?" he replied. "You will live on a great mountain and take the name of Kouloubali." They then asked the name of their ally (senãnku). "We have none," said the new men, "but since this famine we have been living with friends."

They then decided to celebrate the marriage of Konyo with Diara's daughter and a new alliance (senãnkuya) was arranged between the two families. Later on, other members of the Diara family came to live with them, and a prosperous village grew up where the Kouloubali lived.

As their numbers had grown, the men decided to go to war to gain other arable lands. They vanquished the Toucouleurs /Tokulor/ of the Ségou region and ended up by taking the town, which they entered as conquerors.

One of the phrases of their device: kulubali kulu dyã tasuma /76/ "Kouloubali of the fire of the great mountain" is a reminder of both their geographical origin and their fortune.

The Device

551 A device, barama, is generally attached to a name and, when pronounced, has the same kind of effective communication (1). Its

1. We refer the reader to the work of Mme. Solange de Ganay, Les Devises des Dogon, in which this important institution has been studied at length and commented upon. The characteristics of Bambara devices are similar. Without taking up the whole problem, it is appropriate here to define the effect of these devices on the person according to the Bambara concept.

551 course within the individual who hears it, its effect on him, and the return effect on the individual reciting it are all developed according to a known mechanism.

The barama, a word which may be translated as "encouragement," "compliment," or "flattery," is a narrative, usually in poetic form, relating the origin of the name and the exploits of the ancestors (1).

[576] 1. The device, in its entirety, is generally known only to the griot, but certain parts of it, certain traditional phrases known to all, are used as a greeting to its owner.

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539 Thus one of the elements of the Diara device bears witness to the role of their ancestors:

"Diara, Zan of Nyaola, Yayiri of Nyaola, your grandfather curved the world like a sickle, straightened it out like a straight road; grandson of God on earth, Diara!" (2)

2. Dyara, nyaola za, nyaola yayiri, i moke ye ka dye kuru i ko woloso ka foni i ko sira tike nin dye; duguma ngala modẽ, dyara. Nyaola is a village. The name of Zan is always given to the eldest son in a family. The word dyara also means lion.

Another element exalts their courage in battle:

"Diara, Koné: if there is not a Koné among the warriors who will fight, the troop will be beaten (in advance). The lion has broken a great bone" (3).

3. Dyara, kone, kone če kele te kele min oye fele ye; dyara ye kolo ba kari. Koné is another of the Diara's dyamu; fele describes a group of men gathered together for the hunt or for war.

The Tangara device also recalls their history and their victories:

"Descendants of Falé, Kwonda, Méné: other brave men purchased their right to sit in the village; we, brave men, won it with our bow and arrows" (4).

•551 539 4. *Fale kwonda mene šiw, tow bomaw ye dugu sã ka sigi, aw bemaw ya soro ni to ani kala.* Falé, Kwonda, and Méné are the names of ancestors. The device is that of the Tangara of the village of Barbé.

551 576 778 Moreover, the device also carries a statement of the bearer's genealogy, *burudyu* (1). To say this genealogy is equivalent to "attacking the /77/ ancestors." To speak of them, to quote them, and to tell their exploits honors them and pacifies them. In the course of the recitation "the air emitted by the speaker" is transformed by the power of the spirit, Teliko, into coolness which penetrates the ancestors (2). The same is true for supernatural powers. As soon as the Komo chief recites Faro's *burudyu*, "the air coming out of the chief's mouth is transformed into good *nyama* which penetrates Faro's body through his pupils and ears."

To tell a man his *burudyu* is to honor him greatly. He thinks of his ancestors, their fortune, and their glory; he is proud to be descended from them and is incited to do as well or better than they. The effect of the "good word" described above is due to the indirect but powerful action of the ancestors (3). The recitation by a third party has the effect of maintaining the individual in his being, of making him persevere by affirming it (4), for the device appeals to

1. The word *ši*, meaning race, is used to indicate the *burudyu*, which is comparable to the *dambe* of the Peul of Mopti.

2. *Teliko ba sumaya se u ma.* "Téliko makes coolness come to them."

3. However the soul (*ni*) of the cited ancestors is neither called upon nor displaced by the recitation. It is the vital force, *nyama*, which is put into motion here.

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4. This effect is already obtained by the simple repetition of the family name with which one greets a man upon meeting him. It is common to hear the Blacks greet each other by repeating their dyamu to each other several times.

its possessor's soul, ni. If, at this moment, the person flattered is in a normal state, his device causes his "soul to swell and his body to harden, inciting him to courageous action and joy." If the contrary is true, anger or emotion takes the place of contentment and calmness.

The reciter receives in return the strength of the beneficial word which, having contented the person it was addressed to, contents him also. There is an exchange of nyama: that which the reciter sends out and that which he receives in return and from which he benefits.

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That is why the recitation of the device is not always left to the individual's discretion. Because of its importance, it has become a public function generally reserved for the griot (dyeliw) who form a caste practicing endogamy and who earn their living by getting paid to recite the devices and adulations in daily life as well as during public or religious ceremonies (1). But the fact that they earn a salary for this service affects their dignity: nobody else ever recites the devices because nobody wishes to be taken for a griot, and nobody ever marries him. The griot is at once indispensable, feared, and despised. The mechanism of forces put into motion by his action makes it possible to understand the ambivalence of feelings of which he is the object.

/78/ When the words come out of his mouth, the griot's tere is transformed into nyama, which becomes filled with a force called kuma nyamu, "nyama of words." This force goes from the head to the mouth of the speaker and reaches the person addressed. If a man is wealthy and powerful, it is said that he gets the "nyama from the mouth of those griot who flatter him." He is then forced to pay them for their encouragement. If he does not, they remain silent when

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1. The recitation given by anyone other than the griot would be far from producing the same effect.

551 passing before his door and thus empty him of his *nyama*. The man
576 grows thin and poor. The *griot* may bring about his death with evil
778 words, their *nyama* attacking the heart, the chest, then the entire
564 body of the victim.

The *griot*'s power over the person he flatters becomes more involved and varies according to what he is reciting. If he recites the *burudyu* several times, if he speaks at length of the ancestors, their *nyama* enters his mouth and is added to his own, thus reinforcing the power of the word. Thus, when the *griot* recites a *barama* without receiving payment, his *nyama* attacks the person spoken to. If this offense is repeated and if the *burudyu* is recited, the man is forced to pay if he does not wish to be attacked by the much more formidable *nyama* of the ancestors.

In these various situations, the *tere* of the person flattered intervenes: if it is good, it fights to defend the person, but if it is weak or wicked, it joins the ancestral forces and the person is doubly threatened.

The recitation is always made by the *griot* before a witness so that his action will be more binding and make the miser lose face. On the other hand, a man who pays the *griot* generously is looked after by the latter who sings of his generosity on all occasions and announces the sum he has received; often he does not hesitate to exaggerate the total amount received if he can hope to profit by doing so (1).

[789] 1. If the *griot* knows that the wealthy man he is addressing is miserly, he rubs his teeth with roots which he knows has the power to make his words even more effective.

[554] Sometimes a man reaches a secret agreement with the *griot* in order to gain prestige. He publicly gives him a considerable sum, part of which the *griot* returns the following day as agreed upon. The gift is so generous that none can surpass it.

[585 561] This practice is particularly apparent at the time of marriage. The men of the same age grade as the groom outdo each other in their gifts to the *griot*. The one who has given most passes for the most generous. Sometimes the *griot* invents a new *barama* on the spot even though he does not know the device.

551 The device is recited on numerous occasions. After a birth, the
576 griot proclaim it in the course of the name-giving ceremony, address-
778 ing themselves to the father, then to the newborn child /79/ who thus
564 receives it for the first time. At a marriage the barama of the two partners are alternatly recited. In everyday life, the recitation is carried on most frequently during religious ceremonies or feasts. In the hunt or at war, it has the effect of helping the participants and increasing their courage (1). In a meeting it is used to greet people bearing the same name, and if one of the assistants is to be particularly honored, the first words of his device are recited.

551 In case of illness, the ally (senãnku) (2) comes to the patient's
755 side and recites his barama to encourage him and help him get well. If he is dying, the recitation, which is then the equivalent of a prayer, may help his soul return. After death, the ally, the griot, and the
[764] blacksmiths come near the corpse to recite his barama in order to honor him.

551 The devices pertaining to the various crafts are used when address-
576 ing the artisan with whom one has business. Thus the blacksmith to
539 whom one brings work is greeted first by his name to which is then added:

"ini fara ani goni, you are with stone and fire."

A person crossing a field will say to the farmer bent over the earth: "i ni tye i ba ka kusebe daba, greeting to him who handles the hoe well," or simply: "i ni tye daba la, greeting to him who is with the hoe." To the shoemaker one would say: "bana ani ba golo, (you are) with the acacia (3) and the goat leather."

[727] 1. If the griot recites it to a war chief and the town under attack is taken, he receives part of the loot.

2. See p. 119.

[386] 3. This refers to the bana or boina (Acacia arabica) used by the shoemaker to make a black dye.

551 The institution of the device, with all its elaborations, has the
576 effect of confirming people in their bodies, their spiritual principles,
and their social functions. Except for the cases of emigration mentioned above, the occasions are rare indeed when an individual is obliged to change his name or device during his life. A woman keeps her father's barama even after marriage.

551 An illegitimate child receives neither the name nor the device of
848 his family. They may be given him later if the father makes himself
known. A Bambara who contracts a misalliance, for example, by
564 marrying the daughter of a blacksmith or a griot, will bring into the
783 world impure children who will never have a right to their father's
barama (1).

1. Such a child is said to be a sofali (literally, horse donkey), that is, a bastard.

552 We must add that the prerogative of having a device is not limited
782 to humans. All animate beings, many /80/ inanimate ones, the elements of nature, places, villages, plants, animals, and all the supernatural powers have theirs which men address during prayers.

The Taboo

784 One or several eating taboos, tne or tana, are attached to the
[551] family name and are observed by all who bear the name. According to certain initiates, the taboos were decreed by Faro when he determined the food proper to each species (2) after having classified the beings of creation. For the common man, the origin of the taboo is always the subject of a tale or legend and justifies the bonds between an ancestor of the family and the animal or plant designated. Most frequently, the animal has helped the man, has saved his life, or the other way around; or else, following some serious events, the ancestor was transformed into an animal or plant. Numerous versions of the origins of such bonds are given.

2. See p. 52.

*173 is known as the solo (1); they sought [19] a remedy to this

[551] 1. Solo is a woman's surname.

calamity by emigrating. Some went to Dia-bolo near Djenné; others went to Nya Ngolo-la in Kaminiadougou.

Is there a relationship between the origin of the Kouloubali family just discussed and that of the Kouloubali founders of Ségou and Kaarta? I have no doubt that there is, because all the Kouloubali go back to a common ancestor prior to the thirteenth century, one of whose descendants, allying himself by marriage to the Kefta clan, founded the branch of Kouloubali composed of the so-called masa-rin' families (1).

[614] 1. By the term masa-rin', the traditionists mean, in addition to the ruling Kefta and their followers, various families who are closely connected with them. The following are prominently mentioned: the Kouloubali, the Konaté and the Kourouma. Not all the members of these dyamu, even the Kefta, are masa-rin'; only certain branches are.

The Bambara of the Tarikh-es-Soudan

175 The Bambara, established in the area with which we are concerned before or after the Kouloubali, whose traditions we have just discussed, have no precise traditions - at least none which give any detail. The general history of all of these peoples is doubtful.

To be sure, the Tarikh-es-Soudan does allude to the Bambara, but it is difficult to tell in what sense the term is used, since it often simply means "pagans." However, in the following citations, it seems to me that the Tarikh does refer to the Bambara here studied, all the more so because in this chronicle,

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1. The name Mamari, among the Bambara, is the equivalent of Mohammed. It is a common given name, even among pagans; the dyeli Karé Tammoura, perhaps because of his own conversion to Islam, used the name Mamari more often than the more common Biton. The cognomen Biton, is a hybrid adopted by the Peul as an equivalent for ton-dem'. The same personage was formerly called fa Tigi-ton', which also indicates Peul influence and which is, on occasion, shortened to fa Tigi, rendered by some who misheard the original as fo Tige and also fo Tinye.

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*173 increased over his people, Mamari felt the stirrings of ambition grow. The defeat and rout of the people of Doua gave a definite orientation to his projects for domination. However, there was one thing he needed to carry out his plans: an army completely under his control.

As a start toward carrying out his designs, he sent a message to the people of Doukounna and Banan-koroni, his oldest and most faithful allies, with a request that they send their elders to him on a permanent basis to form a council which he would consult on all appropriate occasions. The elders agreed to remain with him during the dry season, but they insisted on returning home in the winter to look after their own affairs and those of their people.

While these negotiations were proceeding, the young men of Doukounna and Banan-koroni were fighting around Kirango on Mamari's behalf. When the latter could not overcome the elders' resistance, he resolved to use force (2). He caused a deep well

2. With the assistance of his new partisans, the people of Dina and those from the left bank of the Niger.

*173 When he had returned to Ségou, Da asked for a column to be led against Fon-ba-na, near Sikasso; this town was taken.

He destroyed Dya-kourou-ma, near Sansanding, because its chief was called Toto, a name which he disliked. He seized Toto's son and made him take a new name.

He captured Da-tou and put him to death.

"What have I done to you?" said Da-tou.

"You once said that you'd make Ma-koro's couscous taste bitter. I am proving that, on the contrary, you will make it taste good!"

On his return to Ségou, Da received a visit from Douga-koro, of Koré, who had come to pay him respects.

"Thanks for your visit," Da said to him, "old men are the [92] remedy of the young, and it just happens that I have some information to ask of you. Do you know of any villages in the Miniankala region which my father did not succeed in capturing?"

"No, I know of none; and, if there were any, I'm sure it would only be because he did not wish to take them."

"Come now, think it over!" and Da started to talk to other visitors. Douga-koro, much upset, asked leave to retire to his host's house in order to reflect. However, as soon as he was outside, he started for his village to warn the people of the imminent arrival of Da.

On the eighth day after this interview, Da summoned the chief of the Somono and ordered him to make all arrangements for a strong column to cross the Bani; with this purpose in view, the pirogues had to go down the Niger to Mopti and then up the Bani to the desired place.

Da destroyed Koré and killed Douga-koro. He made Douga-
[55] koro's son prisoner and gave him the name M-fa-ni-moné-té-koun' (My father's soul no longer suffers), to which the reply was Den'-nyouma (good son). In the same way he had given Bani's son the name Malo-bora-m-fa-la (My father is no longer ashamed), with the reply Den'-nyouma (good son) (1).

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1. This method of naming slaves was very common. See Les Khassonké [The Kasonke], p. 344.

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History of the Empire of Kaarta

The Descendants of Nya Ngolo

*173 *Sounsan* (1). When Sounsan and his people had crossed

●[551] [845] 1. As we shall see, the given name marks some event connected with the person's birth. It is common practice, when the delivery is difficult, to hang a rabbit's foot at the mother's side, hence the name Sounsan ("rabbit" in Bambara). The name Pénɛ́, used elsewhere, has the same etymology.

*173 564 Sounsan is said to have practiced the saddle-maker's trade at Kounando. It is told how one day he went with a *kulɛ́* (a native carpenter) into the country to get some wood needed for a saddle. At one point the two became separated. The *kulɛ́* found some honey and ate it, only to be taken sick. He threw up the honey on some stones and then went away. Soon after, Sounsan passed the spot and, seeing the honey, picked it up and ate it. When, on his way back, he learned how the honey happened to be there, he was so disgusted and cursed the *kulɛ́* so roundly that, since that time, none of his people can touch a *kulɛ́* with impunity. All members of that caste are thus *tne* (taboo) for that branch of the Kouloubali.

*173 the Niger with the help of the *poyon'*, they proceeded in the direction of Lamballarɛ́ (2). There, at the village of Darigo, Sounsan

[103] 2. In the Soninkɛ́ language, this is the name of the region watered by a swamp

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Massa and His Descendants (Massa-si-ou) (3)

3. "Native traditions often make out that Sonsa and Sounsa-Massa are one and the same person, to whom they give the title of massa or mansa, meaning 'king' in Banmana, so it is that the word massa-si or mansa-si should be interpreted to mean 'descendant of the king' and not 'descendant of a man named Massa' " (Delafosse, in Traditions historiques et légendaires, p. 52, note 4).

"The Kouloubali who were descended from Niangolo, the elder brother of Baramangolo, had adopted the title of Massa-si (descendants of the king) because they belonged to the senior branch."

It is evident that this interpretation does not correspond with my text. However, I have often been told by native traditionists that Massa-si means "descendant of a man named Massa." It might be that Sounsan-Massa was a double name applied to a single person, as was the case for several Massa-si chiefs, including Seba-Mana, Gran-Forokoro, and Massa-Bakari. Even though a single person is meant, that would still be no obstacle to the assumption that the word Massa-si means "descendant of Massa" by an abbreviation of Soun-san-Massa, since we have analogous examples: Biton-si and Ngolo-si are used to designate respectively the descendants of Mamari-Biton Kouloubali and Ngolo Dyara. It is true that Massa-si, composed of massa meaning "king," may refer to a whole royal lineage, but it should be noted that among

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the Bambara with whom we are concerned, the expression Massa-si is only used when referring to the royal lineage of Kaarta.

Massa (1670-1690). In order to combat Massa, the Marka people of Darigo summoned the Bambara who were [108] under their authority and whose principal chiefs were the following: Tonnéguéla Mari-dyan Dembélé; Konikoni Tiénégué Dyara; Tiéma Dyara; and Sanou-ba-Mamari Dyara of Fala-da-la.

The siege of Sounsan-na began. Thanks to preparations made in advance, Massa was able to hold out for many months, while making sorties against the attackers.

However, neither side had prevailed when, in the eleventh month, Massa managed to escape during the night. Followed by the boldest of his followers, he fell on the village of Mari-dyan Dembélé, sacked it and, loaded with booty, managed to return to his tata. He appeared next day on the roof to taunt Mari-dyan and showed him his favorite wife and her finest embroidered blouse.

Such audacity gave the other chiefs food for thought; each of them reflected that Mari-dyan's fate might be in store for himself and so the Bambara chiefs took counsel. However, just as the discussion was about to get started, one of those present, Sanou-ba Mamari Dyara, withdrew, saying that he did not want to take part in any deliberations along with a one-eyed man, because the only result would be a disaster. He was referring to Konikoni Tiénégué Dyara who, indeed, had only one eye.

Upset by these circumstances, the allies parted to return home; so Massa was saved. However, at the instigation of the Marka people, the Bambara chiefs made all the trouble they could for Massa. They sent word to Ségou to the descendants of Barama-Ngolo that the fugitives vainly sought by their ancestor were still in their country and they offered to help in any undertaking against them (1).

1. Massa is reputed to have had 67 sons and 76 daughters. In principle, he imposed

567 unlikely -- he may even own slaves himself and use them as substitutes.

Thus the relations between master and slave gradually become very different from what our European minds imagine. A master is bound to his wolo-so [193] by a thousand ties: he admits them to the cult; he marries their daughters; he circumcises their sons along with his own; and he allies himself with some of them by fraternization or an oath.

Even if he does not have such close contact, the wolo-so who is freed from labor, who perhaps lives at some distance or, if nearby, in virtual independence, is henceforth a dyongoro, that is, "freed." The link is not severed, and the freed man is a kind of relative. He is interested in everything that happens in his master's community and is present upon all important occasions, never coming with empty hands. Reciprocally, he is never treated like a stranger by the master. The master contributes to every event concerning him: he helps him get his sons married and established; on the occasion of the soli, he assembles his children along with his own, which gives them a degree of common solidarity.

The admission of the wolo-so to his master's community is shown publicly by the fact that the wolo-so bears the dyamu of his master.

It would be an exaggeration to claim that the house slave's situation is always so fortunate; it depends on many different factors (1).

1. A slave is seldom permitted to buy his freedom; the slave himself does not seek this redemption which would free only him and leave his family and most of his property in the hands of the master.

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614 The dyamu. This is the name given to himself by the native, bestowed upon him by others, or inherited from his ancestors, but in any case one that has become such an honor that merely to pronounce it is enough to bring forth a show of homage toward one who bears it, for example, Kouloubali, Dyara, Dembélé, etc.

551 596 614 This is because the dyamu in itself sums up the history of the community that bears it; it implies everything involving the ancestors, as well as the achievements of present members, their ignominies, and even their-fraternal, conjugal, political, and supernatural alliances.

One might imagine that one or another of the characteristic aspects covered by the dyamu would serve to identify the bearers of the same name, but the Europeans who study the native milieu have long been accustomed to identifying those who bear the same dyamu by means of [194] their respective tne (interdicts), and the natives do the same (1).

> 1. When this was first being done, there was an error of interpretation and hasty generalization which falsified the results. The tne which accompanies the dyamu was made analogous with totem, and it was stated that the dyamu and the name of the tne object were one and the same. Careful study has established that there is nothing to the alleged correspondence.

For the Black, any of his fellows who bears the same dyamu as his and shares with him one or more tne is regarded as a relative, even though he may belong to a different people.

Among individuals of different peoples, certain dyamu, although dissimilar, are regarded as equivalent and are interchanged, because those who bear them have common tne (interdicts).

As a result of one of the alliances that will be described later under "Relations between Communities," the tne of one party henceforth become the tne of the other, and vice versa, and this leads to the equivalence of dyamu. Marriage sometimes has the same effect when the union is an important one, greatly, desired, or even more, is the sort of marriage that forms indissoluble bonds and an unshakable solidarity between families.

553 Women are not admitted to the men's circle. Gathered
851 near the mother's hut, they know that a name has been given,
but do not know what it is. The woman who tied the cord then
[562] washes the baby three times in warm, soapy water and, taking
water into her mouth, sprinkles the tiny body from neck to lower
back three times. She then expresses her good wishes. Carrying
the child, she goes to the door of the hut, where the father
and family heads are waiting, and asks the name. Then she returns
to the women and places the child on the lap of an old
woman who blows into the baby's ears three times and then shouts
in each ear: "Kuyo! Kuyo! i tua dara," that is, "Kuyo! Kuyo!
[854] your name is ...." The child is then wrapped in the narrow
swaddling band which the mother will henceforth use to carry
him on her back, and if it is a boy, the baby is rolled three
times over the blade of an ax, or if a girl, over an iron implement
for picking cotton. While this is going on, everyone is expressing
best wishes.

[184] In Kaarta the ceremony is somewhat different. A beef or
a sheep killed in front of the mother's hut, and dege [Ed.,
coarsely ground millet in water] is also prepared. The baby's
[564] head is shaved, and the hair is placed on the dege. Each guest
puts his right hand on the edge of the gourd and a griot expresses
good wishes for the newborn child. Then the guests dance around
the dish of dege; the hair is removed from it and given to the
mother to keep. [213] Then if the occasion warrants it, the
[304] three lines of tattooing peculiar to the Kouloubali are made on
the baby's face with a dagger. Finally the griot takes the child,
carries it around the crowd, and returns it to the father, who must
then make known the chosen name. When the father has pronounced
the name, the griot again takes the child and, making
a trumpet of his hands, cries out to him three times: "your
name is...."

● 551 In principle, the name (tua) recalls some circumstance
surrounding the birth. A posthumous child is usually given his
father's name, as though he were the reincarnation of the father,
or more commonly, he is called Fa-n-ko, "posthumous" (literally,
"the one who came after the fa"). If the baby shows some resemblance
to a deceased person, he is named for the person or,

●551 more often, called sagi, "the one who has come back." A woman who was barren for a long time gives her child the name of the agent to whom she attributes the cessation of her sterility: Nyana-m-ba, "the great nyana"; Mori-ba, "the great marabout," etc. She does the same thing if she has triumphed over some evil spirit through the aid of some such intermediary, but in that case it is usual to abandon the child at birth; a substitute mother will rescue it. This is a "castoff" child (fili), and from this comes his name, Fili. Such a child may be named for the place where it was abandoned, Sunkun', "refuse heap," for instance, or for his rescuer, Numuke, "blacksmith," or Dyelike, "griot." A child who survives after a series of stillbirths is regarded as the incarnation of an evil spirit finally defeated, and the spirit in question is, so to speak, stigmatized by having the child called Malo-bali, "shameless," or Tuantan', "anonymous." The tua is often merely the name of the month, day, or season of birth: Tenen' "Monday"; Sunkalo, "month of Ramadan"; Sama, "winter season." Twins are both called Fune, literally, [845] "alike," but they are sometimes purposely differentiated by calling one of them Sio and the other Sie-koro (1); if the twins are

1. See Humblot.

girls, they are called Wassa and Bafune (1) [Ed., footnote above]. In the Bani area, the next child born after twins is called Konimba (1) [Ed., footnote above]. A child born when it had appeared that the mother would have no more children is called Kosa (1) [Ed., foot note above], literally, "business completed." There are families [214] who always use the same name for the eldest sons. Among the Massa-si at one period this name was Bo (1) from which come: Musu-kura Bo; Sira Bo; etc. (meaning

1. Bo is etymologically the same as Ngolo.

"Bo, whose mother was Musu-kura"; "Bo, whose mother was named Sira"; etc.). In Ségou the Kouloubali likewise adopted

551 the tua Ngolo, from which come Nyana Ngolo, Barama Ngolo, Solo-Ngolo, etc. In the family of the Bambara chiefs of Femay (2) (a canton in the circle of Djeimé), the eldest son was given the name of the paternal grandfather; the second son was called Moussa; the third, Abdoullah; the fourth, Ngizi; and the fifth, Souleyman. The girls were called, in order of age: first, Fatouma; second, Awa; third, Nyele-ba or Nye-ba; fourth, Dyomene; fifth, Kounadi; and the sixth, Aminata (2) [Ed., footnote 2 above].

There are other names very commonly used for the eldest child: Ntyi and its endless variants for boys; Nya or Nyele for eldest daughters. The last two are so common in the Ségou region that the Soninké derisively designate the Bambara of that area with the expression, Nya ni Nyele-u, "the people of Nya and [606] Nyele." Since husband and wife are forbidden by custom to pronounce the names of their respective parents-in-law, complications arise when, as often happens, a child is named for them. Respect for the interdict is preserved by using a paronym: for a boy, Tye-koro, "the old man"; for a girl, Moso-koro, "the old woman." To satisfy this same interdict, there are true synonyms locally: thus, for Mussa the name Dyigi is used; for Mori-ba, Bo-dyan. Individuals are often designated by these double names whose two parts are synonymous; thus, there are the Mussa-Dyigi or Dyigi-Moussa, the Bodyan-Moriba, and so forth.

The foregoing are some of the characteristic traits that show how individuals are named among the Bambara, but actually the subject is inexhaustible.

846 After the name-giving ceremony, the mother resumes her normal life, although she must still observe certain prohibitions: notably, there must be no sexual intercourse for the first three months; and during the same period she must not change her coiffure nor leave the village. Once this period is over, she covers herself with jewelry, [215] beads and pieces of amber -- borrowed from neighbors or relatives, if need be -- rubs the baby with butter, and goes to present him to the local notables.

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2. See Humblot.

794 [292] Some of the clergy use a disguise when officiating in public; furthermore, the ceremonies are held only at night.

[198] Finally, in the presence of the profane, the initiated use a special language for everything referring specifically to the cult. The greatest secret of all is the name of the nyana, ● [551] because anyone who knows the name has complete power over the spirit it designates.

794 292 From the point of view of the disguised clerical body, this secrecy is virtually impenetrable. A disguised person loses his human personality and is withdrawn from the natural world. It is an accepted fact that it is dangerous for those not affiliated to intercept his glance through the tiny openings in the mask; undoubtedly his person on that occasion is impregnated with a fluid whose emanations are fatal to those who, not being affiliated, are unprotected against them.

Some of these disguises include a headdress or mask and for the body a kind of costume usually made of long strips of vegetal material; is this, as has been suggested, simply a means of dominating the herd of adepts and even more the profane through the terror such regalia inspires when seen at night by the flickering light of torches and bonfires? It seems more probable that one must put this matter on the plane of the supernatural in order to understand it. Dangerous wild animals [825 776] are believed to be incarnations of evil and powerful gods, and an attempt is made to present an outward appearance consistent with the terror merely seeing them inspires, in order thereby to acquire the supernatural qualities that characterize them (1).

(1). There is no doubt that some individuals, under the influence of the role of wild beast that they are portraying, have been led to commit actual murders during ritual observances. I have often heard this asserted in connection with the dyara (lion).

794 782 It should be noted that the costume, gestures, [259] dances, songs, and music of the dye-n-fa and their acolytes

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565 3. the free men;

4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);

5. slaves.

567 e. Slavery. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by
violence, by obligation, or by birth.

567 1. By violence. If a war captive is important, he may be
727 killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration.
554 A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in
the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no
case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared
captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama;
[608] if he is a sĕnanku of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing
him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious
[551] Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of
the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

567 2. By obligation. A free individual became a slave in
681 punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the
426 profit of the Fama. A fa could sell one of his children to meet his
858 debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was
freed of his obligations.

567 3. By birth. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a wolo-so. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

567 As the number of slaves grew, their organization became
644 complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Sĕgou
were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the
slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the dyon-kuru or dyon-futu (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Sĕgou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him, the submission of all the slaves.

428 3. and 4. as above for the head of the family; 5. oldest full brother;
6. oldest half-brother on father's side; 7. the family; 8. the village; 9. the Fama ... Married women may transmit personal property in the following order: 1. her oldest son; 2. her husband's oldest son by another wife; 3. the husband; 4. the woman's family ...
[587] At the death of her [73] husband, a woman is not required to marry his heir." (1)

1. Ortoli, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bamako) [Bambara Customs (Bamako Circle)].

851 We should explain here the notion of seniority which is not
always easy to distinguish in a polygamous society. As a matter of fact, when two wives of the same husband bear children at roughly the same time, an intermediary announces the births to the fa, and the first baby to be announced is considered to be the oldest. It may even happen that the first one to be announced is in fact the last-born; he nevertheless remains the senior.
[845] In the case of twins, the senior is the one brought forth last, for it is thought that twins are not conceived at the same time, and that the last-born is the one first conceived.
[551] Certain special names are used for the oldest children: N'tyi for boys, Nya or Nyɛlɛ for girls.

643 At the Fama's death, several lines of succession are involved: that of his own family, that of the family community, and that of the patriarchy.

As far as election to the title of Fama is concerned, we have seen how the new Fama was the senior male of the same generation and same family as the deceased Fama, or the eldest of the following generation. It is noteworthy that in the case of no male heir, the succession passes to the Fama's daughter whose husband governs in her name; but that is an exceptional case.

643 When the new Fama is designated by the notables, he occupies the fortified residence of the previous Fama, where the founding
644 ancestor is buried; the women and children of the deceased Fama must leave these premises. While his father lived, the Fama's eldest son led a luxurious and independent life; he often commanded an important dugu, sometimes founded by himself. At his father's death, he is a very important person for the new Fama.

582 614 The Bambara tné differs further from the totem of the Redskin and the Australian: it creates no obstacle to marriage between lineages of the same tne or of different tne. Each man takes a wife wherever he finds her and where he thinks best, and through these alliances the lineages mingle, cross, and recross. They do not merge, however, [557] since the husband keeps his name, or diamou, and with it his tné; he does not take that of his wife. As to the children, they have their father's tné, and his only, and it is his name, or diamou, they bear. /22/

184 The Bambara tné is nothing less than a taboo /sic/. The word itself is very vague and difficult to translate into our French language. It implies primarily a prohibitive command, an order not to do, not to act. Whenever a competent authority -- an alleged genie, such as a boli (who speaks and gives his oracles through the mouth of a herald or interpreter, the djélimac) or a priest of the genii (djiné) believed to preside over the elements, the dougoutigi (who actually does nothing without consulting his council and the sorcerers) whenever the sorcerer (the intermediary between man and the invisible world) or a priest of the shades of the ancestors' (1) --, that is, an authority of a religious character, forbids eating, killing, or looking at an animal; cutting, breaking, or using an object; drinking such-

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[596] 1. This term seems to me the most accurate. Undoubtedly, the gouatigi, or head of the family makes the sacrifices, but his position does not always correspond to what we call in French the father of the family. He is not always married; although all the family except his mother, brothers, and sisters call him m'fa, "my father," the word "father" should be taken in a very broad sense, as he is quite often only a grand-uncle, an uncle, or a cousin.

775 826 may be active and in her dreams she may dwell on the events which accompanied the burial of her dead child. Thus, she sometimes gives birth to an infant which has the marks made by the father. Such occurences contribute not a little to "confirm" the Bambara's belief in reincarnation of souls. At Wélengéla, on the road from Ségou to Sens, there was a Negro who had a cleft upper lip from birth, and the people of the village were unanimous in giving the reason. His mother had given birth only to sickly and puny infants, all of whom died within few weeks. At the death of the last one the father, furious, cut his lip with a stroke of the knife. When he returned to life, the child did not want to take back the lip that his father had removed! I have seen others who from birth had a sort of tattoo on the back, chest, or arms, and the parents of each did not hesitate to tell me that it was the mark made on his deceased older brother.

775 551 Children born after a deceased sister or brother are given a special name; it would seem that the Negroes seek to make the soul of this small being feel how inconsiderate he was toward his parents in coming into the world and immediately leaving, after having kindled both love and hope in their hearts. Perhaps they also think to put on a good countenance before their fellows, for it is a great disgrace not to have children or to have only children who die at birth. Both theories are plausible, and the second would only be an expression of humility disguising a secret hope. The names most frequently given to these latecomers are: Malobali, "shameless one"; Ta fli, "go throw it away"; Foui té, "he is nothing"; Fou, "nothing"; etc. -- If the first theory that I propose is accepted these names would be translated as follows: "Are you not ashamed (i.e., to come into the world only to leave it so soon)?" -- "Might just as well throw you away, bury you (i.e., for all the time /58/ you spend among us)." -- "You are no good /literally, in French: "a being of nothing"/ (you are but a heartless one, you who come to us only to leave us in a short time)." -- "That is nothing." A Negro blowing on the palm of his hand gives us the full meaning of this word; the gesture translates his thought: "You are no more to us than nothing, are you not like a breath that passes and disappears?"

775 551 Like this first theory, the second, too, can be accepted, and the names can be translated as a lament of the parents to those who congratulate them: "He is without shame (doubtless he has come back to leave us again)." --"We may as well throw him away (i.e., will he not leave us shortly?)." -- "He is a worthless man (i.e., do you think he will not abandon us?)." -- "He is nothing (i.e., it all is the same to us whether we have him or not; will he stay with us longer than a breath which passes and disappears?)."

But whatever theory is accepted, the Negroes' belief in the reincarnation of children who died at the breast before having attained the use of reason remains unchanged. They are also generally unanimous in believing in the reincarnation of young men and women and men and women who die in the prime of life. Such persons have not completed the whole cycle of their existence and must begin it again.

And what of the old men? Do not they come back to life? When a child brings to mind the features of a deceased elder of the family, does it not receive his name? A Bambara never uses the name of a man whom he respects in vain or in an unsuitable manner; so a child animated by the soul of an old man is given a second name, a borrowed name, and the real name is known only by the father, the mother, close friends, and the one who bears it. However, many are given a most expressive name which testifies to this belief; they are called segi, sagi, "he who has come back to life."

764 775 The legends -- and there are many -- only confirm what I put forward; so need I cite any? An old man of Fobougou, a village about 30 or 40 kilometers from Ségou, not far from the Bani on the road that leads to Koutiala, was given magnificent funeral honors at his death. The fetishes were brought out of their dirty dens and bathed in the blood of victims; the women sang to the sound of the drum for three days running. It was a festival which lacked nothing, not even d'lo, or millet beer. A few years later some young people of the 775 village going in search of work went into the Tlébi (1) region,

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1. The term Tlébi is used to denote the entire western region, including Bamako, Kati, Kita, Kayes, Bakel, etc., as far as the ocean.

775 walking in the direction of Kita. They stopped in a village near this city and were lodged by a Malinke (2). On entering the courtyard,

2. A Mandingo tribe whose group "taboo" is the Mali or Mani, the hippopotamus.

they stopped dumfounded, for they found sitting on a mat an elderly man whose features were familiar to them, -- wasn't he the old man of Fobougou? It was he, for he greeted them and asked them news of the old men of the village and of the members of his family. After supper they returned to the courtyard, wanting to sit near their old man, whom they had found again so far from his native land, but he was no longer there, and their host told them that he had fled, refusing to tell what direction he was taking.... "That was our old man," say the people of Fobougou with great conviction, for they believe in this as in the capture of Ségou. "Our young people saw him, talked with him, and some had known him before his death. Without doubt," they add, "he must have suffered in his family while he was alive, so he did not dare come back to life in our midst." This story, which I heard in Fobougou itself, is told more or less everywhere with a few variations; in September, 1908, between Ségou and Koulikoro on the Niger, one of the laptot (3) told it to his colleagues as they squatted

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3. Negroes who serve as sailors on the river are called laptot.

around him in a circle.

775 In Ouentja, a village an hour and a half or two hours at the
531 most from the Bani, on the road between Ségou and Koutiala, the
576 people have such great respect for one of their deceased former chiefs, the old sagi, that they avoid saying his name. They have even changed or rather abbreviated one of their greetings, and while almost everywhere else strangers are greeted with the words: "i dangha sagi," here they say to you only: "i danghana (4)." According to the /60/

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> 4. I dangha sagi, "may you be blessed on your arrival, on your return into our midst." -- (Your return to us is a blessing.) -- The Negroes abbreviate, saying, i dana sagi; it is only old men and those who pride themselves on speaking their language well, who articulate clearly and say i dangha sagi.

legend, this sagi whose name one avoids taking in vain, was chief of the village and influential in its environs. He died very old, took on flesh again in the womb of a woman of the family, and recommenced the cycle of his existence. He again became village chief, and again died in extreme old age, and returned to the flesh again a third time. As always he was chief, passed from life to death in extreme old age, was honored and respected by everyone, and received funeral honors such as have never been awarded to any Negro prince.

775 At the time of death the soul goes into Lahara, a vague word, so vague that a Bambara cannot define it or give you any idea of it. It is the place where the invisible beings live and where everything becomes invisible. Children and those who have not completely fulfilled the cycle of their existence, only pass through and hasten to return to the wombs of their mothers, or at least to those of women of their families.

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769 A secret force urges old men to return to the flesh again in their own family, but sometimes they refuse and seek limbs elsewhere. They spend a longer time in Lahara and, doubtless matured by experience, they are not always in a hurry to reappear. Many remain there for a number of years, awaiting a favorable moment, and this uncertainty hovering over the fate of the old men, may be a reason for sacrifices to the dead. One definite fact is that these sacrifices are directed only to the dead who have had authority in the country, the village, or the family, and the honors rendered them seem to be

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196 sees everything. The old men explain
192 this to you with an intensity that proves
their good faith, and children recite
the sayings of the old men with a
frankness so naive that one cannot
misunderstand it.

a Being endowed with reason and all powerful. The term is the translation of the word sa.

It is apparent that in the beginning the word Alla in no way meant a Being or an Individual; it simply expressed a concept, an idea already known, accepted and translated by the word sa, and the Bambara simply adopted a foreign word corresponding to their own concept.

776 If to the Bambara the word Alla had meant the Divinity Himself,
196 the Supreme Being, would they ever have dared to speak it, to make
192 it their own? I cannot bring myself to believe that they would, among
551 them the name of a powerful person, a religious chief, or venerated
576 being is never spoken in vain or in an unsuitable manner. If some of
[687] their kings, among them /79/ N'golo, not to mention others, punished
anyone caught speaking his /the royal/ name by fines and prison,
cast them into slavery, and even beheaded them as guilty of the
crime of lese majesty, what would they not have to fear from the
Creator if they spoke His name in vain and inappropriately! Furthermore, it is a widespread custom to avoid speaking the name of one who is feared or venerated.

576 No well-bred and self-respecting woman ever speaks the name
551 of her husband. She speaks of him as né tigi ("my master"), so tigi
551 ("the master of the house"). Most frequently she adorns him with a
545 borrowed name, a bougna toua, or name of respect, and a polygamist
has several such names, each wife giving him one of her own invention.

In well-brought-up families -- and most of them are (1) -- the

1. Our Bambara Negroes have great
respect for the members of their
families and are considerate of them;

576 551 595 in this respect they are far superior to any of the Arabs of Algeria, for example. Family life is more open and cordial among them.

children do not speak the name of their father, especially if he is a gouatigi, or family head, and when a swarm of children are enjoying themselves around their old daddy, only one word is on all the little lips to awaken his attention, avoid his reprimand, call for his caress, and bring forth his smile: Koké-yo -- koké-wé! (2)

2. I use the word Koké-yo -- (Né koké) koké we (koké, "I beg you, Koké") -- because it is the most common; there are obviously other similar terms. Favorite wives also like to call their husbands by this name. For everyone it is a term of respect and at the same time it is tender, affectionate, and coaxing.

[888] 576 551 Old men are given borrowed names, bougna toua, out of respect and veneration, and the reason for this practice is to avoid having to speak their names in vain and unsuitably. The practice is current, and it is even carried to an extreme, for although a child is given a respect name within his family, he is never called by that name. How many people there are whose real name is not known except by close [553] relatives and friends! All the Dougoutigi, To-n-tigi, Ba-koroba, and Moké-touama received a name on the eighth day after their birth, and the names used to designate them are borrowed names. /80/

888 793 576 551 In the environs of Ségou, where Islam is widespread and spreads farther every day, the sacrificers to the protecting genii of the villages, the gnéna-n-sonna ba, or dougoutigi, have lost some of their prestige, but anyone who respects them, even if he be a Moslem, never speaks their names. At the present time in Bani country, where the old customs and traditions are preserved with jealous care, there is not a

888 child, woman, or young man that can tell you the name of the great
793 sacrificer of the village if the latter is in the least old. Out of respect
576 and veneration his name is never spoken; he is the head, and if they
551 are questioned all will answer: "Toua si t'a la dougoutigi ko, he has
no other name than that of dougoutigi, head of the village." And, in
fact, most of the people know no other name for him.

551 This need to avoid speaking the name of whosoever is respected,
576 venerated, or feared goes so far as to bring about the abbreviation of
778 phrases customarily used in salutations (1), so it can easily be imagined that the name of the fetishes is not known except by their masters and their initiates. Of course, a Moslem, a woman, an uncircumcised man, or an unexcised woman can tell you the number of the gnéna and gnâ owned by the village, and they also know whether the gnéna (djiné) include a Dasiri, Ngolo, Koté, Ntomo, Tauri, etc., and whether the gnâ (boli, sétané) include a Komo, Nia, Douga, Kono, Nama, Bala, etc. But except for the initiates, who could tell you that a certain boli is called Sélé, Magné, Toroba, Dono, or Nono, or that the Magna is also called Tjarofign and the Nama, Sirima-n-fign? Only the generic name is known, and it is in good taste not to pronounce even that when extending an invitation to a festival in its honor. The Nama is enclosed in a beehive in the shade of a tamarind tree, which in turn are enclosed in coarse mats, and when an invitation is given to the sacrifice, the most stylish formula is: "Come and see us, an bi djasé (2) son, we are sacrificing to the /81/ palisade." The trumpet

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1. See what I said in this connection in the preceding chapter, /section on/ "Reincarnation of Souls," pertaining to Ouentja.

2. Djasé, name of a palisade composed of large mats. Children born at the time of the sacrifices to the Nama, who are dedicated to the fetish, are frequently given the name

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> Djasé instead of Nama or Namakoro. The Nama is sometimes surrounded by a wall instead of mats. This is extremely unusual, and I have seen only one sanctuary of this kind, at Dougoutigila in the Bani /region/.

of the Komo is of iron, so one says: "An bi négé son, we are sacrificing to the iron." A fetish can give health in the sense that it can refrain from causing sickness if it is a gnâ, or it can actually give health and well-being if it is a gnéna; thus the expression used most frequently is: "An ta foura bi son, we are sacrificing to our cure," or again: "An ta foura bi djigi so, our cure is paying us the honor of a visit."

776 Are we here dealing with a recent custom, which dates from the arrival of the Moslem? I cannot accept this idea, for all the evidence indicates that it antedates presence, I believe without hesitation that the name of the Divinity or Supreme Being was never spoken by the Bambara, that they were not permitted to pronounce it. It is not surprising, then, that the name should gradually have been lost, erased from their memories so that it is unknown at present.

Moreover, since the Bambara God was without priest, altar, or sacrifice, was there any need to speak His name? According to their ideas, the gnéna or djiné are beings intermediate between men and angels, put in charge of the elements by the Divinity and delegated by Him to distribute His favors and His punishments to human beings; would it then be foolish and presumptuous to believe that since the beginning he only addressed God through the mediation of the gnéna or djiné? I cannot doubt that the Bambara implored the djiné to present their homage and worship to their Lord, the Lord of the whole universe, to their Tigi ani fen bê tigi yé, as the sorcerers always say in their liturgical ceremonies. The latter are the watchful guardians of the ancient formulas and customs; that is the source of all their prestige.

Moreover, the worship of the gnéna, or djiné, antedates that of the gnâ (boli or sétané). It has no history; its origin is lost in the darkness of the ages, and in this fact I see a new reason to believe that they were the first intermediaries between man and God.

845 If one of the twins dies early in life, as usually happens, the
778 survivor receives a statuette which he keeps all his life with jealous
431 care and to which he gives the name of the deceased. He dresses it
to the best of his ability, often covers it with glass trinkets, such as bangles, beads, bits of amber, rings, etc., and well-bred people never give him a gift without adding at least 5 cowrie shells for the statuette.

845 The sinsin also grants twins a curious privilege. A scorpion not
778 only cannot bite them, it is even at their service, and on their order
825 will bite a fellow who has displeased them.

845
778

A twins' doll.

845 It is easy to recognize twins (flani in Bambara) as they have
551 special names, the commonest being Sinna, Maféné, Gno, and
Ouassa. /99/

10. The Genie Protector of Villages

776 The genie protector of a village lives on a knoll or a rock;
621 almost always, if not invariably, its home is a baobab or false cedar
near the walls, in a little grove intersected by neat paths, well kept and often raked.

778 family.

782 At the end of every important sacrifice, all the objects which make up the fetish are washed in the blood that has collected in the earthen receptacles called da, and it is not until after this operation, performed in the deepest silence, that the objects are replaced in their goatskins.

778 551 Negroes like to give the name of the fetish to children born at times of great sacrifices. I would even say that in studying the "names of people" one learns to know the gnâ, or boli, the gnéna, or djiné, and becomes initiated into the usages and customs of the country.

Names of children dedicated to the Komo, the most popular in the district of Ségou: Boli, boli ba, Néné, Nono, Négé son (or Négi son) (5), Togo-ba-tjé (6). /154/

5. Négi son: sacrifice to iron. Sometimes the word Komo is left unspoken out of respect, and the child is designated by one of the pieces of the fetish. The objects mentioned in the case of the Komo are three iron tubes (négi), sometimes called Komo djoloko ("chains of the Komo") in the presence of the uninitiated. The tube used as a trumpet is called tama guengueba.

6. Togo, "name"; ba, "big"; tjé, "man," etc.

Names of children dedicated to the Nama, the most important fetish after the Komo: Djasé, Sirima, Namakoro, Nama (1).

1. Djasé, the palisade which surrounds the sanctuary of the Nama. Sirimafign is the diamou, or family or lineal name, of the Nama.

778 551 Children dedicated to the Nia: Nia-gné foula, Nia-n-ti, Nia-n-nkoro, Nia.

Children dedicated to the Kono: Nièlé, Tjétjélé, Djonké (2).

[576] 2. Djonke, a respectful appellation often applied to the master of the Kono. Tjétjélé, the password of the initiates of the Kono and its family name, or diamou. When a stranger appears at the sacrifice, he is asked the question: "E b'a la wa Wélema djonké? Are you of the sect of Wélema djonké?" Only a brother can answer: "Tjétjélé, ne b'a la. Tjétjélé, I am."

Children dedicated to the Magna: Ma-n-djé, Magna, Magné.
Children dedicated to the Djo: Djo, Djokoro, Djoméné.
Children dedicated to the Douga: Dougakoro, Douga-n-tjé.
Children dedicated to the Da: Dakoro, Da-n-son, Da-n-wélé.
Children dedicated to the Bala: Bala, Balake, Mousa and Misa (3).

3. Mousa and Misa are synonyms of Bala and not a translation of the name Moses.

778 572 It is also on a powerful boli, or rather in its presence, that the Bambara swear to an indissoluble friendship, a friendship so close that it finds the two persons and their children like a kinship tie. This is the sinnakoun! No Negro has ever been able to talk to me about it with any clarity or precision, so that I am unable to give it a very exact definition. Basing my interpretation on the custom -- widespread among the Bambara -- of a woman showing her breast in order to indicate clearly that she is the mother of a child (a wolo ba, "his

551 The institution of the device, with all its elaborations, has the
576 effect of confirming people in their bodies, their spiritual principles,
and their social functions. Except for the cases of emigration mentioned above, the occasions are rare indeed when an individual is obliged to change his name or device during his life. A woman keeps her father's *barama* even after marriage.

551 An illegitimate child receives neither the name nor the device of
848 his family. They may be given him later if the father makes himself
known. A Bambara who contracts a misalliance, for example, by
564 marrying the daughter of a blacksmith or a *griot*, will bring into the
783 world impure children who will never have a right to their father's
barama (1).

1. Such a child is said to be a *sofali* (literally, horse donkey), that is, a bastard.

552 We must add that the prerogative of having a device is not limited
782 to humans. All animate beings, many /80/ inanimate ones, the elements of nature, places, villages, plants, animals, and all the supernatural powers have theirs which men address during prayers.

The Taboo

784 One or several eating taboos, *tne* or *tana*, are attached to the
[551] family name and are observed by all who bear the name. According
to certain initiates, the taboos were decreed by Faro when he determined the food proper to each species (2) after having classified the

2. See p. 52.

beings of creation. For the common man, the origin of the taboo is always the subject of a tale or legend and justifies the bonds between an ancestor of the family and the animal or plant designated. Most frequently, the animal has helped the man, has saved his life, or the other way around; or else, following some serious events, the ancestor was transformed into an animal or plant. Numerous versions of the origins of such bonds are given.

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609 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that
821 was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
224 start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equipment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well as an arsenal of magic weapons.

825 The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
778 they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[552] wara-ba means lion; sa-ma, elephant; ma-li, hippopotamus; bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an application of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
231 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
552 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of
825 their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once held and which is still shown on occasion: fa-li meaning "donkey" derives from fa meaning "powerful," just as nya-ri meaning "cat" derives from nya and has the same meaning, along with ba
Meaning "goat."

794 It is not rash to suppose that in this case they are symbolizing
776 the role, probably primordial and in any event primary, of
825 the nyana to control the supernatural and particularly malevolent forces of the bush. As a matter of fact, the most popular and important nyana are the protectors of the harvests which represent virtually the only property of the natives. One of the nyana is even especially concerned with agricultural work (2); this is Tyi-wara (god of agricultural work), who presides over the first clearing of the land at the beginning of the winter season.

In any case, whether the animal is regarded as the visible form of a spirit or, if one prefers, the perceptible manifestation of a supernatural force, the belief is strengthened by the common practice of the interdict (tne) and, still more, by the magical acts required of a hunter.

Another aspect of this belief is seen in the choice of an animal to represent the mount of the nyana dugu-da-siri.

794 It is for a similar reason that the brotherhoods usually
adopt the name of an animal: for the Nama this is usually the
825 hyena (suruku) (3); for the Komo, the hyena (suruku) or the elephant (sama); for the Dyara, the lion; for the Kono, the ostrich (kono-ba), etc. It is said that the cries, the shouts, and

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[461] 2. In the native vocabulary, "to work" (tya-ke, short for tyi-ya-ke) primarily means "to work in the fields."

[552] 3. The hyena is often designated by the words nama-koro (old Nama) or suya-koro (old sorcerer) when the speaker does not want to use the animal's real name (suruku). There is a whole vocabulary for use to "avoid" the names that are dangerous to utter, and the name of the hyena is one of them.

101 . Example: Those of Bélédougou are the Bélédugu-ka-u;
Those of Kaarta are the Kaarta-n-ka-u;
Those of Ségou are the Ségu-n-ka-u . . .

Each of these expressions has at the same time a political significance. Ségu-n-ka-u means the people of the party in power at Ségou. The context alone determines which people are meant.

[2] Among themselves, the Bambara factions sometimes [552] call each other by nicknames: of the people of Ségou, the people of Kaarta say ironically, "those of Tu-kele-u" (those of the single braid), alluding to their coiffure, or else Nya-ni-nyele-u, "those of Nya and Nyélé" (Nya and Nyélé are women's names common at Ségou). All the members of a clan may also be grouped under a term derived from the name of the founder or ancestor of the clan: the people of Kaarta may call themselves Nya-Ngolo-la (the people of Nya-Ngolo, ancestor of the clan); the people of Ségou may be called Barama-Ngolo-la (the people of Barama-Ngolo, ancestor of the clan).

There are also nicknames for individuals of other tribes. [186] The Bambara are called Dyonko (slaves) by the Soninké, who long exploited the Bambara for the slave trade, while the Bambara in turn call the Soninké the Marka Dialan'u (Marka Seer), because they gave up their own dialect for the Bambara dialect.

II. Situation

A. Ethnic Classification

144

Delafosse has made a broad classification of the peoples inhabiting Upper Senegal and Niger. Unfortunately, this classification too often mixes language and physical traits. Thus, he puts the Bambara in the Mandé family, which is divided into three groups comprised of these main peoples:

First group (northern): three peoples, the Bozo, the Soninké (or Sarakolé or Marka), and the Dioula.

Second group (central): five peoples, the Kagoro, the Banmana (or Bambara, including the Somono caste), the Kassonké (or Mandingue [Mandingo]), and the Foulanké.

774 his consciousness, as well as that part of his being which, through the body, makes him sensitive to events. If man is vulnerable through his double, it is his *tere* that is affected by any breaking of taboos; it receives and submits to impurity.

824 The *tere* has its seat in the blood and the head (*kun tere*). It develops in the foetus in the course of gestation and is composed in part of the parents' *tere* to which is added that of the deceased person whose soul and double the child has inherited.

774 553 787 The appearance of the child's *tere* is determined by the old men of the family in the course of the name-giving ceremony which takes place publicly on the eighth day after birth. After carefully examining the child's hairline along the forehead, the manner in which his eyebrows join, the shape of his eyes (the seat of intelligence), mouth, hands, and feet, one of the old men present announces in a loud voice the revealing signs of his character. The position of these signs makes it possible to say whether a child has a good or a bad *tere* and to make predictions about his life. A slight bald spot on the middle of his head will make him a rich man; a wide and deep skull will make him a chief. The old man then swings the child in the direction of the four cardinal points above the family altars and gives him the first name of the deceased person whose *ni* and *dya* he has inherited. Some of the hair, shaved off shortly before, is then thrown into the Niger by the father who pronounces the name while facing the river. The gesture and the word are meant to entrust the *tere* to the spirit of the waters and to ask his protection. On the same day the blacksmith marks out on the child's face the scarifications that act on his *tere*, giving him strength, courage, and virtue.

774 787 828 As the child grows, certain of his physical peculiarities are interpreted as characteristics of his *tere*. If he grinds his teeth while sleeping it means he will attack his parents; if he often takes hold of his left wrist with his right hand he will always be victorious. A girl who walks swinging her hands and throwing them behind and who raises dust with her feet while walking will destroy her husband's fortune. Some informants say that a person has several *tere*: /62/ one for his manner of walking, one for the way he carries his head, one for the shape of his limbs, and one for the breasts if the person is a woman (1).

1. The physical signs determining the *tere* are very numerous. On this subject see

845 Everyone visits the parents' home and takes to them what gifts one can
[431] give for to give to twins is equivalent to giving to Faro.

The name-giving ceremony is carried out on the river bank if the
845 village is situated close to the Niger, or otherwise on the edge of a
●553 pond. The children are brought by their parents who, between them,
851 represent the number seven. They are bathed, their hair shaved off and thrown into the river, while the father says: "Mother Faro, your sons are born, here is their hair." (1) He then gives the cotton band, dyala, which was worn by the mother to the officiant who encircles the child's forehead with it while saying: "These two people are older than I am; let the nyama of the name which is to be given them leave with the dyala." (2) Then he gives them a special name. (3)

1. Ba faro i wolo dew kunsi ye nin ye.

2. Nin ma fla ka koro u ma, u čua dali nyama ka ta fini disa fe͡w dyala fẹ.

[177] 3. Séni and Sinè for boys; Bintou and Wasa for girls. Among the Islamized Bambara this custom is also respected; the names given are always Alassan and Fouséni. This is most likely a distortion of the Arab names given to twins in Morocco.

845
851 The next day, carrying one of the children and accompanied by a woman in charge of the other, the mother goes begging for millet or cotton in the village. She holds two identical spoon gourds in her hands. The gifts, equal in weight and quality, symbolize the twins; they are placed on the spoons. Then crossing her hands, the woman pours them into the basket in which she carries the gifts (4).

4. All the symbolism of gifts made to twins, like that of the double pot (see below), confirms observations made in the Sudan on the relationships between gifts and trade. On this subject, see M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau, pp. 234 ff. It is interesting to note here that

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844 273 271 contact with water which symbolizes "the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni in the matter of family names" is a prefiguration of name-giving.

851 As soon as the patriarch hears of the birth, he comes and shakes the family *pembele* over the child's head, three or four times according to the sex, in order to pass on to him the *nyama* and the qualities of the deceased person from whom he has inherited the *ni* and the *dya*. Then, he brings the family altar *kere la boli ni* into the house of the woman who has just given birth and places it before him. Crouching upon the ground, with fingers spread over the object, he pronounces the following prayer: "You, *boli*, make me a chief, so that my family prospers, a child is /178/ born, his soul is entrusted to you; I invoke you, *boli*, night and day" (1).

(1) *Boli tigi i ka masaya kanu ñe, de wolo la, a ni kalifa be i la, ngo boli šu ani kle.*

Holding the child on his knees, he places the object on its chest for three consecutive times. Repeating the prayer, he next cuts the throat of a red rooster over the open sac, dips the right index into the blood, and, depending upon whether it is a boy or a girl, makes three or four crosses on the forehead of the newborn who thus becomes the "son of the *boli*," *boli dẽ*.

A white sea shell, krokrodya (2), is placed before the newborn and gently moved about to "condense his *dya* within him." Then it is tied to the child's foot for three or four days according to its sex. 846 824 751 At the same time, the mother who is entrusted with the child's *dya* until the name-giving ritual, adorns herself during the eight days following the birth with a collar (*madya*, "*dya* of the person") made from the odoriferous root of the tree bearing the same name. She will wear it until the child takes its first steps so as to protect it and to recall that she herself carried the soul of the newborn.

(2) *Cardita vingens.*

553 852 The name is given on the eighth day by the chief of the Komo. Under the *dubale*, a tree which shelters the village meetings, the elders assemble around the Komo altars which have been carried to the spot (3). If it is a first son, the father gives one hundred kola nuts,

553
852 3. If the village has no Komo, the name may be given above the paternal Ycuafebla.

two jars of millet beer, a ram which will be sacrificed, and money to the griot who will sing during the ceremony.

[789 A lock of the newborn's hair is shaved off and kept in a case (sebe) which, before being carried away, will be hidden in an oil container
826] for the following reasons: to protect the person from magical practices; to prevent a donkey from eating it, an occurrence which would cause the child's death; to permit him to seek for himself health and a long life in the image of his hair which will have remained in good condition.

The rest of the hair is carried by a female relative to the river, into which it is thrown in honor of Faro. Next a band of white cotton called faro fini (literally, Faro's clothing), on which someone has "spat" kola nut juice, is bound around the forehead of the newly baptized baby to indicate his subjugation to the spirit.

The senior elder then examines with attention the hairline and the meeting point of the eyebrows on the forehead before announcing in a loud voice the signs determining the child's character (tere). Then he grasps the child and swings it /179/ seven times from east to west, eight times from south to north above the altar while giving it the forename (toko) which he has inherited from a dead person along with the spiritual principles (1). The griot recite the father's genealogy (burudyu); the senanku comes to joke with the newborn and gently pulls his nose and ears.

852
304 On the same day the blacksmith draws on the child's face the wolo ti, consisting of seven vertical frontal scars and two horizontal scars under each eye. The first scars represent the complete man (ni and dya); the second, representing the number two, symbol of

1. According to another source of information, the eldest son receives the forename of his paternal grandfather, the second son that of his father, and the following sons those of the mother's fathers and grandfathers.

852 "the unknown in creation" (see pp 23 and 24), recall man's existence
304 in this state. Consequently he is conscious of the unknown and has the possibility of apprehending it. These scars act upon the tere of the child and give him at the same time strength, courage, virtue, as well as the strength to penetrate the knowledge of the invisible (1).

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[842] 1. They may be redrawn at the root of the nose of an adult who has despaired of having any children, or on the thigh of a woman who wishes to be fertile. These scars, drawn at birth, are not the only ones which the Bambara wear. See S. de Ganay, "On a Form of Cicatrization among the Bambara."

852 In a blacksmith's family, the name is given near the paternal
553 forge. In the presence of all the village artisans, the kotigi shaves
326 the head of the newborn while an elder prepares seven small sticks, over each one of which he pronounces the name of an ancestor. The kotigi, whose eyes are blindfolded, pulls out in succession three sticks from the group; the third determines the name which he immediately proclaims. While the women chant, the father removes from his altar the kongobwona axe as well as the other ritual objects. The throat of a sheep is cut over all these objects while a prayer is recited. The newborn's head is rubbed first with the axe, then with shaved off hair saturated with sacrificial blood. This gesture introduces the child into the family group. Next he receives the scars of the blacksmiths.

Circumcision

304 Whereas in former times circumcision was mandatory and performed
561 upon young men (about twenty years), it is now practiced at an early age if the parents are wealthy enough to afford the expenses involved. /180/ Because of this fact, a child of eight years may be circumcised with an adolescent of sixteen to eighteen years, whose parents are poor and have only slowly accumulated the articles necessary for the ceremony. These two boys will belong to the same age grade (flã), and will be comrades (flani) all their lives, having the same rights and duties. Age thus has a restricted role in social relations.

846 born. In this we see another of the interim periods which accompany any change of status (death, marriage, circumcision, etc.). The real entry of the child into social life is marked by giving it a name.

553 851 *Giving the name*. Naming the child is the prerogative of the father, and he must take into consideration the various circumstances or incidents which marked the birth; through this act the child is received into the family.

At Ségou, family heads, relatives, neighbors, and friends are all invited to this ceremony, especially the *dugu-tigi* or, more exactly, the *nyana-n-son-na-ba.* In order of rank and seniority they arrive on the day set and squat in front of the entry to the courtyard which gives access to the mother's hut. The religious leader (*nyana-n-son-na-ba*) enters the mother's hut and shaves the head of the child whom the mother holds on her knees.

While this is going on, the women, relatives, neighbors, and friends approach in single file, singing, clapping their hands, and at intervals shouting: "*Kuyo! Kuyo!*" They give millet and cotton to the mother.

After shaving the baby's head, the leader puts his hands on the child, strokes its back and chest, and spits in its face to ward off evil spirits. Then he emerges and sits outside among his people. [212] The father then gives him eleven kola nuts, and the family heads in turn give him 40 to 50 cowries; all this is placed on a woven tray.

At this point, the leader asks the father what name he has selected for the child. Before answering, the father requests that the kola nuts and cowries be divided, they constitute the *tua sara* "price of the name." Two kola nuts and half of the cowries are given to the mother; the rest is divided among the family heads present. These are the *ni wuru*, "kola of life," and the *tua kolo*, "cowrie of the naming." Then the father makes known the name and the reasons for his choice. What are these reasons? It may be some obvious sign that the child is a reincarnation of someone deceased, some incident marking the child's birth, etc. Everyone congratulates the father on the happy event and expresses good wishes for the baby and blessings on the parents.

553 Women are not admitted to the men's circle. Gathered
851 near the mother's hut, they know that a name has been given,
but do not know what it is. The woman who tied the cord then
[562] washes the baby three times in warm, soapy water and, taking
water into her mouth, sprinkles the tiny body from neck to lower
back three times. She then expresses her good wishes. Carrying
the child, she goes to the door of the hut, where the father
and family heads are waiting, and asks the name. Th[illegible] she returns
to the women and places the child on the lap of an old
woman who blows into the baby's ears three times and then shouts
in each ear: "Kuyo! Kuyo! i tua dara, "that is, "Kuyo! Kuyo!
[854] your name is ...." The child is then wrapped in the narrow
swaddling band which the mother will henceforth use to carry
him on her back, and if it is a boy, the baby is rolled three
times over the blade of an ax, or if a girl, over an iron implement
for picking cotton. While this is going on, everyone is expressing
best wishes.

[184] In Kaarta the ceremony is somewhat different. A beef or
a sheep killed in front of the mother's hut, and dege [Ed.,
coarsely ground millet in water] is also prepared. The baby's
[564] head is shaved, and the hair is placed on the dege. Each guest
puts his right hand on the edge of the gourd and a griot expresses
good wishes for the newborn child. Then the guests dance around
the dish of dege; the hair is removed from it and given to the
mother to keep. [213] Then if the occasion warrants it, the
[364] three lines of tattooing peculiar to the Kouloubali are made on
the baby's face with a dagger. Finally the griot takes the child,
carries it around the crowd, and returns it to the father, who must
then make known the chosen name. When the father has pronounced
the name, the griot again takes the child and, making
a trumpet of his hands, cries out to him three times: "your
name is...."

551 In principle, the name (tua) recalls some circumstance
surrounding the birth. A posthumous child is usually given his
father's name, as though he were the reincarnation of the father,
or more commonly, he is called Fa-n-ko, "posthumous" (literally,
"the one who came after the fa"). If the baby shows some resemblance
to a deceased person, he is named for the person or,

852 with water added (to recall the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni).
The patriarch shakes the family pembélé three or four times over the
infant's head to give him the nyama of the recently deceased whose
ni and dya he has inherited. Then he places the altar (kere la boli
ni) on the infant's chest three times, after having recited a prayer.
He cuts the throat of a red cock, dips his index finger in the blood,
and traces three or four crosses on the newborn's forehead, who be-
553 comes boli din. The name is given the eighth day by the Komo chief
[431] under the doubalé, where the old people assemble. The father offers
100 kola nuts, two jars of millet beer, plus a ram whose throat is cut,
and money for the griot. Part of the baby's hair is shaved off and
kept in [90] a case (sebe); another part of the hair is thrown in the
river as a sacrifice to Faro. The eldest of the old men examines the
roots of the infant's hair and the conjunction of the eyebrows, thus
determining its character (téré). Then he swings the baby seven
times in an east-west direction and eight times north-south, giving
him the first name of the deceased ancestor and, at the same time,
his spiritual principles. The griot recite the father's mottoes, the
sénanku come to joke with the baby, and the blacksmith traces the
scarifications.

845 Twins. We have seen the belief that in the beginning twins
were always born, and Faro subsequently punished man by abolishing
double births which he no longer accords except to certain privileged
persons. For the Bambara, twins are new beings who inherit neither
the ni nor the dya of any ancestor. Special rites are observed at their
[201] birth which is announced by showing the raised right and left index
fingers, without saying anything, for the proclamation would be so
powerful that it would be harmful to the newborn twins (see G.
Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].
553 The rite of name-giving is carried out on the bank of the river. The
following day, accompanied by another woman, the mother goes in
search of millet and cotton which she gathers in identical calabash
ladles. Equal gifts are put in the ladles, which the mother presents
[301] in crossed hands. Later, the twins are fitted with metal bracelets
representing their dya, and, in certain regions, with a pendant in the
form of double slave irons. The twins always stay together; they
856 wear identical clothes. If one dies in early infancy, the mother
places on the mat beside the surviving infant a small doll made by

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the blacksmith. The doll is given the name of the dead infant, the
[304 child^ carries it with him to the circumcision, and, when he marries,
589] he buries the doll with a piece of wood representing the wife of the
deceased.

845 Twins are replicas of Faro, their presence is beneficial, and
they are considered invulnerable.

The albino is supposed to be the issue of sexual relations held
826 833 in sunlight, a breach of taboo. He, too, is a new being. His wanzo
904 is so active that the circumciser must take great precautions before
operating on it.

826 He is considered to be endowed with special powers which
782 make him a choice victim for the sacrifices offered to the spirit of
the water.

● 553 To the children of blacksmiths, the name is given near the
paternal forge in the presence of all the artisans. An old man pre-
326 pares seven little sticks, giving each the name of an ancestor. Three
of these are drawn at random from the group, and the third gives
the name of the baby. The head of the baby is rubbed with the axe
Kongobwona, and his shaved hair is soaked in sacrificial blood.

553 In the Bamako region two chickens or a sheep are sacrificed
782 to celebrate the name-giving. The distribution of the meat is made
according to established custom. If it is a chicken, the patriarch
receives the head and the gizzard, while the wing and white meat go
to the old woman who washed the baby during the first eight days.
If it is a sheep, the patriarch receives [91] the ribs (because they are
a bulwark, and the patriarch is the defender of the village) and the
heart; the blacksmith receives the shoulder; the infant's family gets
the head (so that the infant will go ahead), the back (symbol of
prosperity), and the limbs (supports one wishes the new-born to have);
the blood which runs on the ground is destined for the infant's protective ancestors. Then the family divides the raw meat with the heads
of family, and the old woman thus receives her part indirectly.

c. Circumcision

881 A male infant is born, but he still keeps (because of the
304 primordial twinship) the prepuce as the physical support of the female
831 sex. He will only be freed of this by circumcision. It is this operation that definitively determines his sexual qualification and renders
him fit to contract marriage.

^[ie., the surviving child of twins. -Analyst]

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in this respect they are far superior to any of the Arabs of Algeria, for example. Family life is more open and cordial among them.

children do not speak the name of their father, especially if he is a gouatigi, or family head, and when a swarm of children are enjoying themselves around their old daddy, only one word is on all the little lips to awaken his attention, avoid his reprimand, call for his caress, and bring forth his smile: Koké-yo -- koké-wé! (2)

2. I use the word Koké-yo -- (Né koké) koké we (koké, "I beg you, Koké") -- because it is the most common; there are obviously other similar terms. Favorite wives also like to call their husbands by this name. For everyone it is a term of respect and at the same time it is tender, affectionate, and coaxing.

[888] 576 551 Old men are given borrowed names, bougna toua, out of respect and veneration, and the reason for this practice is to avoid having to speak their names in vain and unsuitably. The practice is current, and it is even carried to an extreme, for although a child is given a respect name within his family, he is never called by that name. How many people there are whose real name is not known except by close relatives and friends! [553] All the Dougoutigi, To-n-tigi, Ba-koroba, and Moké-touama received a name on the eighth day after their birth, and the names used to designate them are borrowed names. /80/

888 793 576 551 In the environs of Ségou, where Islam is widespread and spreads farther every day, the sacrificers to the protecting genii of the villages, the gnéna-n-sonna ba, or dougoutigi, have lost some of their prestige, but anyone who respects them, even if he be a Moslem, never speaks their names. At the present time in Bani country, where the old customs and traditions are preserved with jealous care, there is not a

[846] The navel dries between the sixth and eighth day. The head-
852 man and elders are told of the event, and all the heads of families
● 553 (the gouatigou) come and sit in order of age and rank at the entrance
door of the hut which opens into the court of the confined woman.
The religious head, the gnéna-sonnaba (2), goes alone into the hut
and /170/ shaves the head of the infant on its mother's knees. Long
[201 lines of women push into the inner court, clap their hands, let out
431] shrill cries of "kouyo kouyo" as signs of joy, and give their friend a
small present of millet and cotton (1).

[793] 2. Usually it is the religious head, priest of the dasiri, who shaves the child, but there are exceptions to this rule. In some villages it is the civil head who performs the tonsure; in others this task is the prerogative of a family. Sometimes the shaving is done by the father or the grandfather. The families in which this custom is followed are not pure Bambara but are mixed with Marka blood.

1. The women give a handful of cotton and about a pound of millet.

When the head of the child has been shaved and well cleaned, the headman lays his hands on him to drive away evil spirits that might wish to harm his life; he gently strokes his back and chest and, spitting lightly, recites a short formula which he alone knows and can understand. Then he goes and sits among his people, and the father presents him with eleven kola nuts on a platter of braided grass. The heads of families, in order of age, place their offering of 40 to 80 cowrie shells (2) on this same platter, and the gnéna-sonnaba asks

2. The men give 40 cowrie shells. The generous ones go as high as 80.

852
533 the father or the grandfather (3) the name of the child. Instead of

3. It is the head of the family who names the child.

answering the question, he points to the kola nuts and the cowrie shells and says to the headman: "Let us divide the kola nuts and give to each the price of the name." Two kola nuts are set aside, and the cowrie shells are divided into two equal parts, one of which the headman takes to the mother with two kola nuts one red and one white.

The nine remaining kola nuts are divided among those present, and each family head receives at least one piece, which is the ni woro (ni, "life"; woro, "kola"). Each one also receives 4 or 5 cowrie shells (4), and the head of the family announces the name of his son and

4. Toua da kola: (toua, "name"; da, "to give," "to impose"; kolo, "cowrie shells").

gives the reason for his choice. Everybody shouts: "A toua dara, he has received a name, may God preserve him, may he be strong and vigorous, may he be a help and support to his parents!"

The women do not know the name that has been given, but they know it has been announced, and the woman who bound the navel takes the child from the arms of the mother and washes it three times with warm water and soap. When she has done this, three times she takes a mouthful of cool water and spits it on the nape of his neck, his back, and his thighs, saying: "May God /171/ preserve you, do not go away, stay with us, be strong and always well, may your descendants be many!"

With the child in her arms, she goes to the door of the entry hut where the father is and asks him the name. When she knows it, she goes back to the women and lays the infant on the knees of an old woman. The latter blows into his ears three times and then six times -- three times for each ear -- and shouts to him at the top of her lungs: "Kouyo kouyo, i toua dara (here she says the name), 852 533 *Alla m'i balola, kouyo kouyo,* you are called (. . .), may God make you live!" Two women take up the corners of the rectangular cloth which will hold the child cradled on its mother's back, and the little one is rolled three times on an ax head if it is a boy or on the iron stick used to clean cotton if it is a girl, as if to say: "Be strong and vigorous, be a help and a support to your family!"

The child is placed astride on the back of a young girl and knotted into the rectangular piece of cloth, its mother's *tafé*, or loincloth. An old woman sticks a pinch of chewed kola nut on its forehead, on each side of its cranium above the ears, and on top of its head, and she knots a white cloth band a finger wide around its forehead. The girl receives a handful of millet, goes to the public square to pound it, and, with the child still on her back, prepares *dégé* (millet flour mixed with water). When she has prepared the gruel, she goes and offers it to the mother, who puts a pinch of it into the little one's moth, and the ceremony is finished. Not entirely, however, for a few old women run around the village with a gourd of *dégé* in their hands. They look for sterile women, who shut themselves in their huts and hide. Some are always caught, and they are covered with *dégé*; the more they cry out and the more they struggle, the more they get whitewashed.

846 852 302 After her child is shaved, a Bambara woman goes about the village and attends to her work. But she does not braid her hair for three months if she has given birth to a boy and for four months if she has had a girl (1), /172/ nor does she go to neighboring villages.

1. Women who braid their hair are not of pure stock.

When this period is over, she braids her hair, covers herself with beads, with bits of amber and bracelets, dresses in her best, makes herself beautiful, and goes to present her baby, all running with butter, to the headman and elders. Her husband grants her several days' leave (1), and she immediately goes to her family. 514

1. About 8 to 15 days.

551 passing before his door and thus empty him of his nyama. The man
576 grows thin and poor. The griot may bring about his death with evil
778 words, their nyama attacking the heart, the chest, then the entire
564 body of the victim.

The griot's power over the person he flatters becomes more involved and varies according to what he is reciting. If he recites the burudyu several times, if he speaks at length of the ancestors, their nyama enters his mouth and is added to his own, thus reinforcing the power of the word. Thus, when the griot recites a barama without receiving payment, his nyama attacks the person spoken to. If this offense is repeated and if the burudyu is recited, the man is forced to pay if he does not wish to be attacked by the much more formidable nyama of the ancestors.

In these various situations, the tere of the person flattered intervenes: if it is good, it fights to defend the person, but if it is weak or wicked, it joins the ancestral forces and the person is doubly threatened.

The recitation is always made by the griot before a witness so that his action will be more binding and make the miser lose face. On the other hand, a man who pays the griot generously is looked after by the latter who sings of his generosity on all occasions and announces the sum he has received; often he does not hesitate to exaggerate the total amount received if he can hope to profit by doing so (1).

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[789] 1. If the griot knows that the wealthy man he is addressing is miserly, he rubs his teeth with roots which he knows has the power to make his words even more effective.

[554] Sometimes a man reaches a secret agreement with the griot in order to gain prestige. He publicly gives him a considerable sum, part of which the griot returns the following day as agreed upon. The gift is so generous that none can surpass it.

[575 561] This practice is particularly apparent at the time of marriage. The men of the same age grade as the groom outdo each other in their gifts to the griot. The one who has given most passes for the most generous. Sometimes the griot invents a new barama on the spot even though he does not know the device.

764 The corpse is the object of particular care. In the case of a blacksmith or a Soma, two stalks of millet are placed for a few moments on either side "for the nostalgia of the body" (1). This custom indicates that the soul, temporarily in the Komo altar, and the exuvia which will later replace it, feel sad for the animate body that will become the prey of the termites. These stalks symbolize the two ancestors who accompanied Koumabana into the great beyond, the death in this case repeating in some way the story of the appearance of death on the world (2).

The combination of the body and the two symbols adds up to the number three, the male number, and recalls the three taps given to the newborn of male sex at his birth. A few moments later a kinsman places the stalks on each side of the door to the dead man's house. [576] The mourners who come to convey their condolences crouch before them, putting cowrie shells at their feet in the greatest silence, for "to talk and to cry increases the sins of the dead man, and tears increase his burden."

764 554 If the deceased is an important personage, especially if he is chief of the village or head of a family, the signs of the actual world and the future world (bolo ti doniya, Fig. 1) are sometimes drawn upon his index finger and thumb. The senãnku, the blacksmiths, and the griot come to recite his device (barama) and receive in thanks the clothes which belonged to him.

764 The eldest son of the Komo chief, who is first advised of the death, brings the news to his father who asks him to announce it to the men of his age grade. Each of the subsequent age grade is notified by a delegate from the preceding one. Finally, the young circumcised men, recently admitted to the society, go to tell the women and the uncircumcised the hour when the mask is to come out. However, only the funeral of an elder, a village or district chief, obligates all the members to move about.

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1. Fari nana fi, literally, "body of the black face."

2. See pp. 45, 46.

2. The kasa is a kind of woolen coverlet from Macina. Persons of importance are accompanied by a bearer who carries the coverlet and spreads it out as a seat.

[70] On the day set, Ngolo Dyara secretly sent his son Ntyi across to the left bank with 2,500 horsemen.

Each chief appeared, with his bearer carrying a chicken and a red-haired dog for use in the ceremony of swearing on the idols. Ngolo himself brought a chicken and an ox.

When the time arrived, Ngolo went first to take his place in front of the idol. He killed a chicken in accordance with the rites and said: "Idol, make me guardian of the door of my master until the day when I replace him."

"That's no oath, and your words are inadmissible," cried Ngolo Ké-ba.

"Then show me what I must do."

"It's not my place to teach you how to behave before an idol whom you have been serving for years. What I say is, you are falsifying the purpose of this meeting. You have only to say: 'Idol, if I betray my brothers, you may cut out my heart and my liver, but if they betray me, do the same thing to them.'"

"I shall never say such a thing."

"Then let us part."

"You are the oldest men here. Speak first."

"No, it is your duty to begin and you have only a few words to say."

"I shan't say them. Let's leave."

Ntyi came up to say: "What is all this, father? Hasn't the oath been taken yet?"

Ngolo Ké-ba pointed at Ntyi and asked Ngolo Dyara in an ironical tone: "This is a kasa-bearer, too, I presume?"

Then addressing those present, Ntyi called out: "I can understand that you may be in no hurry to get over this, but I'm getting anxious to be the son of the king of Ségou. Come on, hurry up! You there, Fasson, take the oath!"

At that very moment the horsemen appeared. Fasson made no objection and the others followed suit meekly. When all had sworn, Ngolo Dyara, who had taken no oath, put the idols back into his pirogue.

*173

exogamy, saying: "No one shall marry one of my daughters unless he is an inhabitant of the town." Then he charged his children never to take spouses from the Massa-si clan (Traditions historiques et légendaires, Delafosse, p. 53).

Béni Fali-Sékolo (1690-1700). Since Massa was by now a very old man, he abandoned active authority to his son, Béni Fali, called Sékoro, who was as strong and brave as his father. He continued his father's practice of armed pillage, assisted by his many brothers, the best-known of whom included: Gran, called Foro-koro; Séba, called Mana; Tyema, the son of Nyanilé; Bo, son of Déni-ba; Massa, called [109] Bakari; Séri-ba and Allahi, who were twins; and Mo-siré-bilé.

Gran, called Foro-koro (1700-1709). Some say that intrigues by the Soninké and the people of Niamala were what persuaded the fama of Ségou, Mamari called Biton Kouloubali, to attack the Massa-si. After a siege that lasted for three years, Sounsan-na had to surrender. Foro-koro was taken prisoner and sent to Ségou, where he was put to death. His skull (1) was kept as a talisman by Biton.

Others, more explicit, tell how and why the attack was carried out against Sounsan-na. Mamari called Biton Kouloubali had given his daughter ba (2) Sana in marriage to Sana-ba Mamari (3) Kouloubali of Mourdia. When the wedding party that

[554 576]

1. Mamari made it into a box for his amulets and it was the basis of his magic.

2. The word ba, which literally means "mother," is here used as a title of respect.

3. Sana-ba Mamari means "Mamari, son of the woman named Sana-ba."

764 789 Burials are never willingly held on either Wednesday or Saturday (1) [Ed., see footnote above].

Finally, a small white chicken (2) to ward off bad luck

2. If the corpse is a woman, a fertilized egg is used.

is sometimes put into the niche just before it is closed off (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above].

Upon returning from the burial, someone clubs the dead man's dog (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above], unless he left express orders to the contrary. Some Bambara even go so far [554] as to buy a dog with this posthumous honor in mind. This seems to be another magic practice to exorcise the ghost of the deceased (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above].

When they have returned to the house, the brothers-in-law of the deceased eat the national dish, millet mush (to). When they leave for their homes, each is given a rooster or a hen in the name of the deceased, which they must eat en route before they reach home. If the fowl [170] were not eaten until they reached their villages, it would arouse the dead man's vengeance; his ghost (nyama) would haunt these impious persons. This too seems to be another magic practice to counteract the evil effects of death.

764 431 (c) The funeral celebration. As soon as the death has been announced, it is the duty of every relative, neighbor, friend, or anyone under any sort of obligation to the deceased to bring an offering in proportion to his rank or degree of obligation for the purpose of honoring the dead (1).

1. We noted earlier the sanctions applied at the funerals of Biton and Ngolo.

In certain cases, the total of these offerings is very large. The chronicle of Ségou tells us that when Ngolo died the cowries contributed filled seven huts, representing several thousand francs. Besides, people give whatever they wish or can afford: a horse, a cow, a sheep, fowl, cowries, gold, strips of native cotton, fabrics, grain, etc.

596 614 and property. On the other hand, he also has duties toward them, for it is the essence of the institution to support its members.

561 578 596 614 All the acts of the fa, even the arbitrary ones, are, according to law, under the control of the senate. It should not be forgotten that the members of the community are divided into two hostile groups: that of the "elders," which includes the fa, and that of the "young masters." The fa could hardly [184] keep the common property all to himself, so he shares it more or less as he pleases, and naturally, the elders are among the most generously treated. The young men seldom get any such favors, hence their resentment against the elders, due largely to envy of their favored position.

596 614 It is customary for a fa when he becomes the head of a patriarchy to leave the management of his own community to his eldest son (1). This separation of interests is essential in order to prevent the fa from despoiling the patriarchy to benefit his own community. The history of these countries shows how often this rule is broken by ambitious men who hope to profit by the general confusion to build up a considerable fortune. Among both the elders and the young men they find willing accomplices, and as their power increases, they extend their extortions. There are many signs, however, of the fragility of their despotism, which they themselves recognize. They usually, therefore, take pains to settle the question of succession in advance hoping to avoid the collapse of their achievements. Wasted effort! Custom, which they have ignored, regains its rights when they die and often does so during their lifetime. This is a logical explanation of the fact that

● [554 492] 1. The eldest son, or better, the first-born son, thus occupies a privileged position, and in Kaarta he is usually provided with a white horse to make him conspicuous. See p. 122 about the death of 98 first-born sons mounted on white horses.

583 768 Finally, if the union is still in effect at the time of the husband's death, the wife's community theoretically regains authority over her, provided that the bride price is paid back.

581 626 These three definite points show that lawful union, or marriage, legally speaking, is essentially a kind of usufruct of the woman to the advantage of the husband, and the price is the bride price. As a result, the woman's community is obliged to see to it that the husband enjoys his rights. Hence, when a wife misbehaves, no matter how, the husband reports it to her community which takes steps to bring the erring girl to terms for fear of having to refund the bride price. On the other hand, the husband is expected to treat his wife in a manner worthy of her, that is, with consideration for her origins, and if he fails to do so, he risks the consequences of breach of the marriage contract.

There are, therefore, reciprocal rights and duties required of the spouses. Based on the marriage contract, these rights and duties are reinforced, completed, or, more generally, influenced by ethics no less than by the feelings of the [207] couple in relation to each other and to their respective communities.

581 562 [554] This is why a girl from a great house with high standing (1) cannot be treated like a common concubine, even though the husband may prefer the concubine to the wife, because the free daughter of a powerful house, richly dowered, is virtually independent in the household. If she is sufficiently well off, she may even live in a house of her own, and since her only obligation is the sexual conjugal duty, she receives her husband as she would a lover.

On the other hand the free woman of modest circumstances and, even more, of lowly birth is her husband's companion in wretchedness. She does all kinds of work, even the hardest and most disagreeable, and she desires no rupture that would deprive her of the only affection that sustains her, the love of her children.

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1. Thus, in the western Sudan, the daughters of the Massa-si are treated with great deference.

642
565 3. the free men;

4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);

5. slaves.

567 e. Slavery. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by violence, by obligation, or by birth.

567 1. By violence. If a war captive is important, he may be
727 killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration.
554 A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama;
[608] if he is a sênanku of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious
[561] Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

567 2. By obligation. A free individual became a slave in
681 punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the
426 profit of the Fama. A fa could sell one of his children to meet his
858 debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was freed of his obligations.

567 3. By birth. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a wolo-so. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

567 As the number of slaves grew, their organization became
644 complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Ségou were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the dyon-kuru or dyon-futu (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Ségou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him, the submission of all the slaves.

b. Organization of Work

241 621 Work on the land is the only kind of work suitable for free men, for to work the land is to purify it. All agricultural operations [622 are set in motion by the dugu-tigi and are regulated by the fa who 591] assigns tasks by age classes. Each member of the community must work for it every day, except Monday and Thursday, from dawn to about 4:30 p.m. He may be helped, or even replaced, by his children and his captives. The rest of the time he may work for himself in his personal field or in the little fields situated along the water courses and the rivers, which are not periodically redistributed and are considered almost as personal and hereditary property. The fruit of this labor constitutes the personal savings of the community member.

316 423 The exploitation of the subsoil is governed by other rules which we still know only imperfectly. Like the soil, the subsoil belongs to the master of the land. Iron ore was extracted solely by the [324] blacksmith who paid the master of the land a rent in the form of hoes or axes. To exploit the gold mines, thousands of natives went in family groups to the placers at the beginning of the dry season. [63] The location of the placers was determined by the priests and changed every year. The men dig multiple small holes very close to each other, which may go very deep depending on the depth of the barren layer. When the calabashes of gold-bearing earth are brought up, the women wash the earth. The placers are abandoned at the beginning of the rains after three or four months of exploitation. Before the French occupation, gold was the exclusive property of the Fama and could in no case be the object of commerce. To- [439] day, gold is generally sold at the placers to Syrian, native, or European merchants, who have established veritable shops at the mining centers, shops which contain everything necessary for the miner's life.

463 554 The exercise of a profession other than the cultivation of the land is reserved to artisans who are accorded the insulting name of nyaman-kala, for only work on the land is noble work. These artisans form separate families in every Sudanese society, which has caused Europeans to call them, improperly, people of caste. They are divided into independent guilds.

463 554 [326] The numu: blacksmiths, whose wives are generally potters. The smiths are the masters of fire, those who cook the sacred earth in order to extract the minerals or to fix the form of pottery.

The loro: coppersmiths.

The garanka: leatherworkers.

The kule: woodworkers, and sometimes saddlemakers.

The donso: hunters, who form powerful and feared associations.

The somono, or fishermen, who have a status a little less restricted than that of the artisans mentioned above.

The dyeli or griot, domestic factotums of a kind, who, although the most disdained of all these, are nevertheless the family archivists.

[563] One may add two Peul shepherd tribes, identified by Manson: the Dyanna and the Bouguena (1).

1. See Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

463 564 All of these artisans are endogamous and fixed in caste, father to son. However, the fact that a man belongs to a caste does not obligate him to exercise the caste trade.

326 463 608 The most powerful guild is incontestably that of the blacksmiths. From their ranks are recruited all the priests, the Fama's interpreters, the well-diggers, the grave-diggers, the executioners, the circumcisers, etc. They are the sénanku of all the families and are in charge of all the purification rites.

554 The griot are equally feared, because of the power of their words and because they spread afar the renown of the chiefs.

564 The free man who marries a woman of caste marries beneath himself, and his children are looked down on.

[326] [527] The purest blacksmith families are those of the Fané Balo; the purest griot those of the Koniaté. People of caste always remain at liberty; when they are captured during a war, they make themselves known and keep their status.

463 326 [64] These different guilds are sufficient to maintain in the Bambara country a certain industry of a distinctly artisan and non-specialized type. Thus, the smiths work iron, copper, and wood to

822 in the rites. "Red is the color of the middle regions of the world.
It characterizes dry heat; it is the color of anger and of justice,
that of the king, center of the kingdom." Black or indigo (2) is
identified with the North and the [98] rainy season. It evokes
impurity, obscurity. It denotes sadness and the end of labor. The
South accords with the ancestors and the color white which rep-
resents light and purity; it is the color of Faro. The whole system
286 of bands woven from different colored threads according to various
822 designs translates the different conditions of the wearer, for each
band has its own history, its definite use, and its cosmogonic cor-
respondences. The study of this was begun by G. Dieterlen in Essai
sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion] and is being
291 pursued at the present time. Today the form of clothing varies ac-
cording to the age and sex of the wearer. Young children are nude,
with the loins girt with a cotton string or with a belt of blue beads or
cowry shells. Sometimes, two small copper bells attract the pro-
tection of Faro by their sound. Up until their marriage, the young
girls wear a loincloth passed between their legs and held in place
by eight bead belts. When they are married, women wear the loin-
cloth open, attached at the waist, and a cotton handkerchief covers
[854] their hair. When a child is born, another cloth knotted at the chest
holds the infant astraddle on the mother's back A chief's wife
● [554] wore a piece of material made of seven bands which she threw over
her shoulder. Very young boys wear short drawers whose form varies
with the age classes. Later they are dressed in a short tunic with a
neck opening cut out and fitted sleeves, and in ample short breeches
[801] formed of three bands (the masculine number), passing between the
legs and three bands on each side covering the thighs. The waist is
also encircled by four times three bands, numbers of femininity and of
masculinity. Over their clothes, men and women wear a large cloak
with an opening cut out in the middle for the head and whose ends
are sown together, leaving large openings on each side. These
cloaks have a large pocket in front and are embroidered with symbolic

2. Zahan, Les couleurs chez les Bambara du Soudan francais [Colors Among the Bambara of the French Sudan], Notes Africaines, 1951.

304 773 The Bambara decorate their faces and bodies with numerous scarifications, with the aim of conferring on the wearer the qualities symbolized by the scars. By their influence on the character and temperament of an individual, they help him to come up to the ideal man. These marks are associated with the myth of the origin of agriculture. They are eight small scars: two vertical ones at the root of the nose, three under each eye. They imitate the facial marks of the mythical being, half man, half animal, who taught men how to cultivate the soil. (1)

1. S. de Ganay, "On a form of cicatrisation among the Bambara," *Man.*

f. Arrangement of the Settlements

361 The Bambara village follows rules of development which allow a stranger to recognize the disposition of the huts immediately and to single out a chief's house, that of a blacksmith, or that of any other member of the society. In fact, the village is built to the north or east of the protective tree. To the south of the village, [778] is the sacred wood, dwelling place of the chief of the spirits, where the religious ceremonies and the initiation rites take place. As more families come to live in the village, they build their huts around that of the chief, except to the east, for the chief must see the sun rise. The oldest son of the chief, his eventual successor, will have his own plot near his father's. The house of the Komo is situated outside of the village, to the south or west, hidden in a wood or a thicket. At the edge of the village is a round cabin, the house of the Nyama, in the middle is a square cabin with painted walls, house of the Gna (see the chapter on religion). In the center of the village, a cleared place around a *doubalé* serves for public meetings; the elders hold their councils under the branches of the *doubalé*.

764 554 [100] Finally, the cemetery of the free men is found outside the village, to the west; that of captives and people of caste is to the south of the free men's cemetery.

326 600 Every village has its blacksmith, for he is life, and the village could not subsist without him. Before the French conquest,

793 776 The pagan priesthood -- like the Moslem -- also casts a halo of strength and power about its priest; he becomes the close friend of his fetish, and the latter often condescends to take his diamou, or family name, and become, for example, the dasiri, or protecting genie, of a village. Depending on the name of its owner, it will be a Djara or a Kouloubali or a Tankara, etc., etc.

793 554 An intelligent Bambara who, for one reason or another, cannot be a sorcerer, has one other means of becoming feared and powerful: he can become a gnéna sonna or dougoutigi (priest of the protecting fetish of villages, called dasiri), a gnâtigi or bolitigi (matter of a boli), or at least to belong to a retinue such as surrounds every powerful boli fetish.

793 There are curbs on the thirst for fanga, or power, however. The office of gnéna sonna is the prerogative of a particular family within which it is transmitted from brother to brother by right of inheritance, and not every Negro succeeds in obtaining a boli -- I mean an influential boli that would establish him among his people -- even though one can be obtained by purchase. A man desiring a particular boli must first form a retinue for it, and its members must be taken from the village itself; the mutual mistrust and fear of poison are so great that it is not always possible to do so. Besides the price to be paid, varying between 25 and 30 francs, there are the expenses of the konio, or wedding of the fetish (the purchaser marries his boli), which raise its cost to 60, 80, and sometimes 100 francs. Furthermore, there is a mass of liturgical formulas to be engraved in the memory. These must be learned in every detail, for the omission of one sign or gesture, the garbling of one formula can easily incur the disfavor of the fetish, which is relentless with one who is careless and causes him to perish! It should be added that before a person can reward himself with such a luxury as the acquisition of a fetish, he must consult a sorcerer and take his advice, and if he is not rich and already feared, the sorcerer knows how to place his veto. For the mass
794 793 of the people there is thus only one way to be safe: to become associated with sects, and with as many sects as possible. Through membership they earn the title of "sons of boli," and build relationships for themselves and make friends among those in power, the

776 621 793 Such a spirit is the exclusive property of one family, and even bears its name, or diamou. Its sacrificer, called gnéna-n-sonnaba, also bears the name of dougoutigi (1); he is, in fact, the real head of the village. Although at present the civil and religious authorities [554] are separate in many places, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or religious priest, always holds precedence, and self-respecting people call him dougoutigi (head of the village), giving the title of sotigi (2) to the one who has only civil authority. Here we have further evidence that the organization of the Bambara nation was, at its origin purely religious. The separation of the two authorities in certain hamlets can easily be understood.

[291 516]

Typical Bambara headman.

631 Under the Bambara dynasty the kingdom of Ségou was divided into provinces, cantons, and villages. The king, Fama or Massa

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1. Gnena, "fetish," "genie"; sonnaba, "great sacrificer"; dougou, "village"; tigi, "head," "master."

2. So, "hut," "house"; tigi, "head."

769 and do not know the ways and customs of the country, they take for sacrifices to the shades of the ancestors, the sacrifices which are made to the *gnéna*, or *djiné*, genii and to the *gnâ*, or *boli*, genii.

768 554 Thus, worship of the dead does not have all the scope that people sometimes choose to attribute to it. Moreover, the Bambara revere only those dead who had a little authority on this earth, such as the *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, or the *dougoutigi* (village heads, priests of the *dasiri*), the *sotigi* (heads of quarters), and the *gouatigi* (1) (heads of families), and this reverence is given less to the individuals themselves than to the authority they had. /233/

769 The first sacrifice to an ancestor who was a headman is made a year after his death and at the second big festival that follows his death. In order for him to be entitled to a trickle of blood, the *sangafo* (1) must have been completed, and it ends at the first festival held at the end of the *sounkalo* (*soun*, "fast"; *kalo*, "month"), or Ramadan (2).

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1. The *gouatigi*, head of the family, is called *fa*, "father." This word "father" should be taken in a broad sense, for to much of the family the *gouatigi* is a grandfather, a brother, or an uncle. Making a sacrifice to the *fa sou* (*fa*, "father"; *sou*, "corpse") does not mean sacrificing to the father who begot you, to the father of the family, to the one who bore the title of *gouatigi*. The chief wife of a *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, *sotigi*, and *gouatigi*, like her husband, receives a share of the sacrifice.

1. *Sangafo*, "to offer condolences on the occasion of a death."

*173 something whose strangeness places it outside our [24] understanding or what is worse, not to be deceived into interpreting this incoherent jumble simply to fit a preconceived theory.

*173 814 To these reflections of the native mentality must be added the deformations in the hands of the collectors of historical traditions (1): the dyeli among the Bambara. This word dyeli, meaning "master," shows the esteem accorded, in principle, to the archivist, which is what each dyeli should be. Indeed the job consists essentially in preserving from oblivion the genealogy and in celebrating -- by magnifying them -- the achievements of the personage to whom the dyeli is attached. As a result, the dyeli extends his inquiries to all who come into contact with his lord, so that in fact he becomes the historian of an entire family, an entire clan and even an entire tribe.

● [555] The dyeli's great erudition and, even more, his skill in making the most of his superficial knowledge bring it about that the esteem in which he is held takes the practical form of gifts -- often so considerable as to make the dyeli very prosperous indeed. Therefore, the majority of dyeli, being less anxious to safeguard truth than to increase their own fortunes, flatter or slander, as required, those on whom they impose their services, so as to profit as much as possible. It is because of this sort of corruption that the dyeli is often scorned.

Dyeli who have kept their integrity are rare; those who possess extensive knowledge and sufficient critical sense to make a wise selection from the mass of contradictory traditions are rarer still.

In general, each dyeli works only within the very restricted limits of a clan tradition, plus a few family traditions; he is entirely ignorant of anything that concerns neighboring clans and families and, especially, people outside his own tribe and race.

The dyeli preserves in his memory the historical tradition and hands it down. Thus, since each dyeli works entirely independently, he can add any fantasies he pleases, spread them abroad, and pass them off for truth, which is accepted as such and passed on by others.

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1. Here called "traditionists."

621 793 555 The palavers and deliberations are long, but the choice is a happy one; the old man chosen as gnéna-n-sonnaba always has the slyness and guile characteristic of the Bambara type. Patient and likeable, he will know how to be just and impartial in disputes, diplomatic and sufficiently master of himself to say only what he intends to. He will know how to acquire the reputation of an upright man who does not know theft or falsehood.

621 793 Elected for life to hold both civil and religious power, he is truly the head of the village, the dougoutigi. His position is hereditary; it passes from brother to brother and, when there are none, goes by right to his oldest son. The one who is to succeed him becomes his aide (siéré), and the heads of families (gouatigi-ou) compose his council; they are always summoned when a question is to be handled or a decision made.

The Choice of the dasiri fetish and its sacred mount

776 778 787 The new village has a head, his aide, and its council; it is organized. Now they must find out the whereabouts of the spring, rock, or tree where lives the protecting spirit, the dougou dasiri (1), who fastens the entrance to the village and watches over it. For this knowledge the people appeal to a sorcerer; he has intimate contact with the spirits, knows their ways and customs, and understands their language.

There are many sorcerers, and they do not all work in the same way. One discovers his oracles in the entrails of a hen, a second traces cabalistic signs on ashes, a third endlessly moves little stones, bones, and cowrie shells, counting them again and again. To locate the dasiri, people have recourse to the flélikéla (2) diviner, who

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1. Dougou dasiri: /dougou/, "village"; da, "mouth," "entrance"; siri, "bind."

2. Flélikè, "to look attentively, curiously."

196 secretly replaces the object in the new thatch. A white ox is sacrificed at the well.

The information collected on this ceremony is still fragmentary but the color of the clothing worn by those officiating, that of the victim, the number of bands of the loin-cloth, and the number of cowrie shells given by the *griot* to his sister, the origin of the gravel used as the seat for the Kéita are evidence that we have here a ritual executed under the protection of Faro (see Chap. II)

175 As early as the fourteenth century numerous travelers described the Bambara /xv/as organized into small groups headed by a chief and more or less submitting to the neighboring empires. This state of affairs lasted until the period of the Peul invasion of this region (in the seventeenth century) which founded two kingdoms and created a local aristocracy of mixed Peul and Bambara blood. The first of these kingdoms was that of Ségou, the history of which is partly known (1). The investigations centered particularly in this area; the chief town which was a capital for a long time retains the traces of a well [197] organized legal system and religion. It is also in this area that, according to specialists, the purest dialect is spoken. (2)

197 212 The Bambara dialects belong to the sub-group of Mandingo languages of the Nigero-Senegalese group. (3) The Bambara know certain

1. On the history of the Bambara we refer the reader to the well documented volume of L. Tauxier. *Histoire des Bambara*.

• [556 191] 2. The children of families sufficiently wealthy to afford it were formerly sent to Ségou to live with affinals in order to learn how to speak well an elegant and pure language.

3. See A. Meillet et M. Cohen. *Les Langues du Monde* /Languages of the World/, p. 546.

585 The husband spends the whole day after the wedding night in his hut, where relatives, friends, and neighbors come to congratulate him and present minor gifts of food. He invites them to eat and drink. The wedding is thus prolonged for several days, depending on the husband's wealth, during which time the couple is at the disposal of the guests.

[556] Rich families like to show off the trousseau, jewels, and gifts bestowed on the bride, so during the whole day after the wedding night everything is paraded with great pomp through the village by people of caste who proclaim the items and exaggerate their value. Toward evening the presents are shown one last time to the bride, who sits on a low bench with her face hidden behind a kind of tray, woven with grass, which she holds in her [533] hand. Drums and other instruments make a great uproar, while a female griot, standing behind the bride, sings love songs. Every- [302] one admires the bride's hair, which is artistically braided in a flat crest with two small braids on each side of the face hanging in front and behind the ears. The women finger her jewels as they admire them and her thick-soled sandals.

To conclude the ceremony, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives cowries to the leader of the singing, and guns are fired for the [481] last time. Then the bride gets up, glides over the ground without lifting her feet, and enters the hut with her companions, while the guests retire. [204]

Second Marriage

595 The number of wives is limited only by the necessity of providing each one with a suitable living. This means that, theoretically, polygamy is a privilege of the rich. Some men practice it in order to pass as rich men, which flatters their pride, while others use it to gratify a sensual temperament. Most often, however, people in modest circumstances have several wives solely for economic reasons.

When an only wife has young children and no servant to help her, she is extremely overworked. When this is the case,

231 [556] Horses, a mark of wealth, receive scarcely more attention. The stallions, particularly those of the chief, are fettered to stakes at the hut, but the mares are left free to roam around the village and at the age of 20 months are covered by any male horse whatever. The feeding of the mare and her offspring is neglected, that of the male horse is more satisfactory.

235 Poultry is raised in all villages, in hearly every yard. They live on what they can find. In upper Ivory Coast the natives drive them onto the cultivated fields after the harvest. Often, the villagers build small roosts attached to the house walls.

[36] B. Stock Raising Areas

231 In the Sahelian zone, shrubby vegetation affords a very precious source of nutriment for camels, horses, cattle, sheep, and goats. The 14th parallel marks the line of demarcation between the zebus to the north and the taurins to the south. This line passes through Kayes, Bafoulabé, Kolokani, south of Ségou, San, and Tougan. It corresponds to the northern limit of the tsetse fly.

Peul zebus are very well represented in the Macina region during the dry season and in the Haoussa [Hausa] region in the north and the Gourma region in the south during the rainy season. It is a good animal for butchering. Faraboué zebus, produced by the crossing of taurins with zebus, live in the zone cohabited by the two species. Finally, Moorish zebus in the Nioro, Nara, and Macina circles are not so good for butchering as the Peul zebus, but the cows are better milk producers (six to seven liters a day compared to two or three).

Woolly sheep are found at Macina, in the Macina circle, and in the Issa Ber circle. They die where more than 60 centimeters of rain falls per year. Their shepherds, the Rimaībé, change their pastures according to the Niger floods. Finally, the delicate, well-muscled goats of the Sahel are found again in the Fouta-Djallon to the south.

The Sudan zone is less suited to stock raising. The high bush is infested with tsetse flies, ticks, and gastro-intestinal parasites. Camels disappear.

The taurins, doubtless introduced by the Berber peoples from southern Morocco, are derived from long-horned cattle. The

5. Exhibition of the Bride's Trousseau on the Evening of the First Day

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Although the sun is high above the horizon, it is already without strength and life, and at the door of the entry hut to the couple's
dwelling, drums and trumpetings rage and give honor to the young
woman who is seated in the midst of them on a tiny stool. She allows
people to admire her adornment, her beads and her jewels, her rings
of copper and tin and sometimes also of gold and silver; she allows
them to rave about the shoes with soles three fingers thick, which are
a gift of the groom, and about her artistic, finely braided coiffure,
[302] a mountain of hair forming a crest across her head which ends in two
thin locks in front of and behind each ear -- cavalryman's helmet
with a broken chin strap, one might say, all ebony and thrown on its
side. But she has given her heart and her promise, and she covers
her face with the platter of braided grass that she holds in her right
hand.

[534] The horns of antelopes, cows, and bulls, which are the Bambara trumpets, cease to roar, the drums stop booming, and a group of women (usually storytellers /griotties/, for they sniff out festivals and orgies with the scent of a vulture who smells carrion for 20 leagues) place themselves behind her and sing songs of love.

Preceded by a band of singers and a group of drums (2), the file djiralaou (the women who show the gourds) have run through the village all morning, going from hut to hut to display the trousseau. That is not enough; under the eyes of the bride it is displayed again, exhibited one last time, and without fail the connoisseurs /213/ assess it and, without any embarrassment whatsoever, set an accurate value on it (1).

[556] 2. This parade of the trousseau across the village only occurs at rich weddings when the trousseau is really worth the trouble. Most frequently only one exhibition takes place, the one in the evening.

The shoes with soles three fingers thick, the white blouse and the loincloth that the bride wears, together with the *koundougou fini*, a huge piece of cloth that can yield three or four loincloths, are a gift from the husband; the rest -- cloth, gourds, pottery, mortars for grinding millet, cotton to be carded and spun, all come to her from her family. The size of the trousseau depends a little on the family's fortune, but as a general rule it can be stated that at her marriage every young woman receives some ten *tafé* (pieces of cloth, one and a half to two meters long by one meter wide, which the women wind around their bodies), some 15 gourds, and for ornaments at least a bracelet and a bead necklace (2). One is sometimes present at hilarious scenes, for among the crowd of the curious that press around, there are inevitably some rejected suitors. They have put aside hatred and rancour, for the *boli* of the village protects her. Yet they love her; deep in their hearts they keep all their love for her, and it is certainly they, the wounded ones, who take her free hand and pour onto her knees a few handfuls of cowrie shells.

When the vainglorious exhibition of the trousseau is finished, the *fourouboloma tigi* or the guardian of the wedding presents, gives the mistress of song 5 *kèmé*, or 400 cowrie shells, and the guns are fired one last time. The young bride gets up at once, her platter of grass still over her face, and gliding with her heels on the ground, not lifting her feet, she goes into her dwelling followed by two or three matrons, and then she disappears in a light cloud of dust. The crowd withdraws, for to follow her or even to stay where they are would be indiscreet.

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1. Sometimes this exhibition is made before the arrival of the young bride.

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2. Brides from rich families receive a slave called *gouadani* to do the cooking, as well as a cow, small chains for their feet, bracelets, a bead necklace with a piece of amber the size of a hen's egg, and two small gold earrings.

428 2. If there are no children, the collateral males and, lacking them~~, the wives~~.

596 3. If there are no collateral relatives, the ascendants.

614 4. If there are no ascendants, the surviving spouse.

5. If there is no surviving spouse, escheat occurs: [220] the inheritance reverts to the head of the settlement, the dugutigi, when this settlement is independent; otherwise to the head of the clan, the fama.

596 614 **The community and the individual.** The result of the foregoing is that the individual, whoever he may be and whatever his situation, has no value except as a member of a community (1); it is the community that exists and has an identity, while the individual exists and is identified only through the community and for the community.

An individual who exists apart from any faya is, therefore, an anomaly, and this situation comes to an end as soon as the individual himself becomes fa.

596 614 There are cases, however, when an individual is put out of his community because of his own action or because of circumstances, and extraordinary changes of status result.

626 Anyone driven from his community for bad conduct loses his rights to the faya in that community.

564 558 If his disqualification results from the practice of a trade regarded as degrading, he falls into what the Bambara call nyama-ka-la and Europeans call "people of caste." Henceforth he is not only excluded from his community, but he lives apart from all persons not declassed; he is a free man of inferior standing. He usually lives under the protection of a community of persons not declassed, earning his living from it and deriving from it such consideration as may be sometimes given him.

564 463 Among the Bambara, the nyama-ka-la include: the numu, blacksmiths, whose wives are usually potters; the loro, who work with copper; the garanke, who work leather; and the kule, who work with wood and are sometimes saddlers.

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[567] 1. A slave has no rights because, as a person, he belongs to no community.

564 The hunters (donso), who form powerful and feared asso-
463 ciations, and the somono [Somono] and bozo [Bozo], who are fishermen, have a less restricted status than the above-mentioned artisans.

The dyeli who has fallen to the level of a domestic factotum is the most scorned of all. He receives some consideration and, in exceptional cases, notable esteem only through his worth as family archivist.

564 The term nyama-ka-la is derived from nyama [221] meaning "ordure" or "outcast," and these people are outcasts. They are scorned. Some are particularly feared: the black-
[754] smiths and the dyeli. The former are reputed, not without cause, to be given to the practice of magic and even sorcery. The dyeli have a fancy for poisoning.

Since persons of caste are free, they may contract marriage, that is, a lawful union, and found families just as free, non-caste persons do. Their male children naturally inherit the father's status which, thus, is handed down indefinitely through the male line.

Ordinarily they intermarry within the caste although sometimes a member of one caste may marry a member of another.

558 Any non-caste individual who marries a member of a
564 caste automatically loses status. A woman who does so is henceforth considered to be a person of caste, and her children necessarily have the status of their father. A man is less seriously affected, and it is not at all rare for a man of standing to have a wife of caste. This is indubitably a misalliance; children of such a union are not highly regarded, and this reflects on the father.

564 On the other hand, it is entirely normal and common to have persons of caste among one's friends. There is hardly a person of consequence who does not have several of them as boon companions.

Although the fact of belonging to a caste carries with it a definite status, the caste member is not necessarily expected to practice the traditional trade. A member of the numu caste may very well know nothing whatever about ironwork and may

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482 the women belong to him but he cannot make them his own. From then on they remain without husbands unless they ransom themselves, and they quickly become soungourou (4). /224/

4. Soungourou, a woman who gives herself to the first comer.

Burials of the Second Category, Those of Heads of Families

764 Having described the respects paid to old people, that is, to grandfathers, I now need only proceed by elimination and say which of the procedures listed are not included in the burials of other persons. The honors paid to the gouatigi, or head of the family, whether or not he is married, are identical, or almost identical, to those paid to old people. But if he is not a hunter and none of his children is an initiate of the sect, his death is not announced by gunshots. Moreover, there are no dances except for the djansa, held evening and morning for three days, nor does anyone come at the time when the body is removed to the cemetery to accuse or excuse himself for a lack of respect or consideration toward the deceased. Through the intermediary of the herald or of the person in charge of the funeral ceremonies, each pays his respects and his few cowrie shells, and, after a pardon is asked on behalf of all, the prayer is said.

If he dies childless or is laid in the grave on a Wednesday or Saturday, unlucky days, the deceased gouatigi receives a white pullet to pay the spirits for his welcome as he enters Lahara, and he receives it alive. If a wife of a gouatigi is buried on an unlucky day or dies without having given birth to a child (1), an egg of a brooding hen is

1. If a woman dies after all her children, but has given birth to a child and nursed it, she does not fall into this category. It is a disgrace to receive a hen's egg because one has not had children. The rule is the same for men.

[558]

1: Dieterlen
561

Bambara FA8

/For data on age-groups which are associated with the Kworè and Komo societies, see category 794.--Analyst/

831 lines or dots depending upon the sex of those who used them. Thus,
801 women marked their spindles with four lines whereas men twisted three
threads on their shuttles.

826 On the metaphysical level, man's body, "the seed of the world,"
is identified with the cereal grain. The Bambara separate cereal
824 grains into seven parts, corresponding to a division of the human
812 organs into seven groups (1). Man and grain are one and identical in
their substance. On the other hand, the basic foods, that is, the
eight principal cereals, are symbolically present in the collarbones
(kolo kalanjiri, or ka kolo). Man carries within him his subsistance,
and its location reflects the person's general condition (2). As proof
[783] of /72/ man's spiritual integrity, these grains leave him when he is
in a state of impurity. He is then drained of his substance and subsistence. Thepurpose of purification is to reestablish this wholeness.

812 Moreover, the bonds which unite the whole person, body and
561 spiritual principles, to the cosmos, are made clear by the fact that

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1. The divisions of the grain are as follows:
kungu, "little beard of millet," involucre;
fara dye, "white bark," glume and glumales;
fara fi, "black bark," bran and protein aceous
bark; fara mugu, "farinaceous bark" (which
corresponds to a milky diastatic zone); mugu
dunta, "flour for eating," starch; kolo dye, "
white bone," embryo; kise de, "son of grain,"
the micropyle from which the rootlet issues
at the time of germination. The classification
of organs in relation to these divisions is under
study. We thank M. Pitot of the Institut
Français d'Afrique Noire for the identification
of the parts of the grain corresponding to the
[782] native divisions. In certain villages, grains
undergo a process of hulling and the determined
elements only are used in the making up of
the ritually offered millet mash.

2. See p. 53, n. 2.

812 561 man's life passes through seven successive ages corresponding to the seven skies, the seven earths, the seven waters, and the seven stages of millet growth. The seven ages are: bilakoro, "an uncircumcised person"; kemẽkoro "a circumcised person of the last age grade"; tyebalẽ, literally, a big man; maselẽ, literally, a successful person; makoroba, literally, an elderly person; madeselẽ, literally, a person who cannot succeed, an old man; mabalẽ, an impotent old man.

812 561 796 These bonds are also confirmed annually for everybody in the course of the ritual called "the renewal of the year." By renewing the cardinal points, the Bambara add to the strength of these poles of attraction which are responsible for maintaining things within themselves and with respect to each other. At the same time they proceed to a "revival of the body and soul," including all from the youngest to the oldest. For the year to come, they take a fresh breath, a new life, and submit the body to internal and external purifications, making it adequate to fulfill its role.

Effects of Death on the Person

761 The first effect of death is to dissociate the elements that make up the person. The religious practices, imbued with respect for these elements, aim at organizing their preservation in order that they may not be lost to the deceased, to society, and finally, to Faro who controls life and assures the survival of souls.

The dya remains in the water where it will be kept until the birth of a child. But the ni, which escapes from the body with the last breath, is watched for by the head of the family who catches it and carries it to an altar. As we have seen above, it will return to animate the dya of the child who will inherit the deceased's spiritual principles, leaving behind it on the altar, a kind of exuvia, mana or folo, as a sign of the deceased's sojourn on earth.

The tere becomes transformed at death; liberated from the body, it becomes nyama which escapes and which may sometimes attack the living. Proof of this is the fear aroused by the sight of a corpse. /73/ It would seem that the tere's combination of strength and character is expressed by the activity of the nyama; but it is really dangerous only in the case of violent death (the murder of a man or an animal). In this case the nyama attacks the responsible party. If death is natural, the nyama, like the ni, is directed by the relatives and placed on the family altar (pembele) in the course of the

551 576 778 564 passing before his door and thus empty him of his nyama. The man grows thin and poor. The griot may bring about his death with evil words, their nyama attacking the heart, the chest, then the entire body of the victim.

The griot's power over the person he flatters becomes more involved and varies according to what he is reciting. If he recites the burudyu several times, if he speaks at length of the ancestors, their nyama enters his mouth and is added to his own, thus reinforcing the power of the word. Thus, when the griot recites a barama without receiving payment, his nyama attacks the person spoken to. If this offense is repeated and if the burudyu is recited, the man is forced to pay if he does not wish to be attacked by the much more formidable nyama of the ancestors.

In these various situations, the tere of the person flattered intervenes: if it is good, it fights to defend the person, but if it is weak or wicked, it joins the ancestral forces and the person is doubly threatened.

The recitation is always made by the griot before a witness so that his action will be more binding and make the miser lose face. On the other hand, a man who pays the griot generously is looked after by the latter who sings of his generosity on all occasions and announces the sum he has received; often he does not hesitate to exaggerate the total amount received if he can hope to profit by doing so (1).

[789] 1. If the griot knows that the wealthy man he is addressing is miserly, he rubs his teeth with roots which he knows has the power to make his words even more effective.

[554] Sometimes a man reaches a secret agreement with the griot in order to gain prestige. He publicly gives him a considerable sum, part of which the griot returns the following day as agreed upon. The gift is so generous that none can surpass it.

[585 561] This practice is particularly apparent at the time of marriage. The men of the same age grade as the groom outdo each other in their gifts to the griot. The one who has given most passes for the most generous. Sometimes the griot invents a new barama on the spot even though he does not know the device.

Pottery

323 773 The ancient Bambara did not know about pottery. At the time they lived in caverns, they let their meat dry in the sun on the rocks. Next, they manufactured receptacles by hollowing out stones, of which certain unused millstones /125/ seen today are copies. When they had invented fire, they cooked meat by spitting it with skewers of green sunzun wood and by exposing it to flames and live coals.

Later, they shaped and dried vessels of coarse clay, imitating the hollowed-out stones. One of these vessels, which was exposed to the fire in order to cook the food it contained, was observed to have changed color, hardened, and become more resistant. In this way they developed the technology of making pottery at a time when they still had only wooden tools.

323 326 778 575 Since this technology is related to the invention of fire, the wives of the blacksmiths were the first to practice it.(1). Today they form a society (tõ) in each village and own many altars entrusted to the care of the head of the society.

The principal altar, the dyo kala, which represents the thumb of the potters, is made of wood carved in the shape of a thumb and engraved with symbolic lines. To learn her trade, each initiate is lightly touched on the head with it. The head of the society spills her blood over it in the case of a broken taboo affecting the society. But its principal function is to be the receptacle for the spiritual forces of the group: upon a member's death, this object, placed upon the corpse, gathers up the soul which escapes from the body.

[252] In certain villages, the pots with holes, ñintin, used for cooking couscous, are placed near the village upon the pile of ashes from the great hearth where the pots are fired (see Pl. IV, a); they also serve as altars at the time when the potters are consecrated.

323 561 575 Since her childhood the potter, following the example of her seniors, practices kneading and shaping little pots, bokofani (literally, little clay pots). After excision at the required age, she joins

1. The different techniques of pottery making were supposedly revealed to the village of Gwondougou (see p. 155) by the Soba spirits of the crossroads.

575 323 [561] the society during a public consecration which she receives with several others, the group forming an age grade.

After an apprenticeship of seven days, the potters decide upon the date of the ceremony which is celebrated at the firing spot near the altars. Each member provides a hairpin (bandigi), which represents her on this occasion, and the skin of a hedgehog. Disrobed in front of the assembled villages, each girl is seated in turn on the altar as an aged woman examines her genitals to verify her virginity and the proper execution of the excision.

/126/ If the young girl is no longer a virgin, she is publicly de- [831] clared dangade (literally, bastard) and finds herself automatically excluded from the society; she will never be able to receive the potter's title. Otherwise, a proclamation is made immediately to the great joy of the public. If the excision has not been judged [304] sufficient, the patient is given the title of potter after having submitted to a new operation performed in such a way that the blood runs over the pottery (1).

1. If excision is not possible, the operation takes the form of a wound inflicted with the hedgehog's skin (see p. 243).

575 323 867 An old woman then appears seated before members of the age grade and instructs them. She tells of the origin and history of pottery, apprising them of the difficulties of the craft such as fatigue, burns, etc. She teaches them patience towards the client and enumerates the rules which will have to be observed during their lifetime: to be pure in heart and to hate no one; not to undertake work shortly after having had sexual relations; to work in silence; to respect all taboos in general.

575 323 782 431 She then makes a libation of karite oil on the altar and rubs it on the bodies of the initiates who must run their tongues over the pottery, thus making an oath. Sheep, brought by the initiates' parents, are then killed by having their throat cut over the hearth in the name of the potters while the elders of the society present to the initiates gifts consisting of several pots which they will sell for profit while waiting for their first work. This gift is moreover a sign of adoption.

323 317 784 The utensils are made with clay, mbogo pasa, taken from the bottom of the watercourse or along the river's edge; they belong to

794 or Koma/, " Outremer, 1929; H. Labouret, Les Manding et leur langue.

794 The Komo
561 society, komo tyew (literally, men, people of the Komo) is composed of all circumcised men, with the exception of the griot who may under no condition become members, after an initiation performed according to the age grade, the members of which are called tonyaw. The hierarchy is rigorously respected: an earlier age grade will always be ahead of the one that follows it in all circumstances of secular or religious life. The Komo recognizes a chief, komotigi (literally, master or owner of the Komo) who preferably belongs to the caste of blacksmiths and whose function is hereditary. The son automatically assumes command of the age grade which follows that of his father. Upon the latter's death, he changes his age grade and becomes the head of his father's. In the case where the owner of the Komo dies [304] young and his eldest son, who is to inherit the office, is not yet circumcised, he is made to undergo the operation in the night following the death, and on the following day is proclaimed chief (1).

1. In La Religion Bambara, L. Tauxier points out that in some villages the chief of the Komo exercises his power only during a seven-year term. At the end of seven years an election takes place and the function is not hereditary.

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184 Because of the importance of his functions, the chief of the Komo is made to respect a great number of taboos. In particular he may not penetrate into the sanctuary if he has not been chaste during the past twenty-four hours. If the taboo is broken, he must warn the men of his age grade and sacrifice two roosters upon the altars to purify himself. His wife is initiated (for she is apt to see certain ritual [562] objects generally hidden from women because of her intimacy with the chief), but she is not present at any of the ceremonies to which only the members are /144/ admitted. If she commits adultery she [837] brings about her husband's exclusion from the society, not only as chief but also as member.

794
561 The chief is often assisted by two elders belonging to his age grade, whose advice he seeks in all cases concerning the community. In addition, he is always helped by young initiates. If one of these

794 561 distinguishes himself through diligence, obedience, and skill, he may occasionally, if the elders so decide, be promoted to a more advanced age grade than his own and thus find himself on an equal footing with his elders.

794 The responsibilities of the Komo chief are considerable. He is the guardian of the altars which, as we shall later see, contain all the spiritual forces of the society; he is the only one able to manipulate them and is in charge of all the rituals which depend upon them. He [426] manages the patrimony of the group (seeds and money) which is kept in the cowrie or millet granaries, and which he may tap, in case of necessity, in order to make interest loans to members of the society who request them. (1)

1. See S. de Ganay, "Un jardin d'essai et son autel chez les Bambara /A Sample Garden and Its Altar among the Bambara/," _Journal de la Société des Africanistes_, Vol. 17 (1947), pp. 57-63.

But this function, honorary and advantageous from many points of view, involves not only rights but, more important, duties from which the chief cannot be exemated. He must, under no circumstances, abuse his power; he can make no decision without the agreement of the members and may not act, even in the most insignificant case, without advising each and every one of them. Each person is kept up to date as regarding the smallest details concerning the general activity of the Komo and the entire age grade must be informed at the same moment. To break these rules would mean to become exposed to the greatest dangers. Just like the head of the total family whose power is far from being absolute (2), the responsible person

794 614 2. "The Mandingo _fa_," says Henri Labouret, in _Les Manding et leur langue_, "appears less free in his acts and decisions than the master of the ancient _taisible_ fraternity. Far from being the tyrannical and strong willed autocrat whom people have frequently taken pleasure in describing, he seems to me, rather, to fulfill therole of a delegated administrator,

794 the Komo's blessings, the Komo's blessing is with him; let him join
852 the men, let his light be with us" (1). The child is then presented in the same way to its grandmother.

These acts anticipate the initiation which later will make the new-
794 born an adolescent member of the Komo society.

794 In each village this society is composed of all initiated men, di-
561 vided into age grades, which are themselves composed, theoretically, of the men circumcised in the same year. Only the griot are not
[564] admitted. It is permissible for an individual who has not been initiated immediately after his circumcision to be admitted later if the society agrees. He will belong, regardless of his age, to the age grade with which he will have been initiated.

One age grade has precedence over the other which follows. This hierarchical order is followed strictly in daily life as well as during councils and ceremonies. To break these rules of seniority would mean to disturb the order even in the hereafter, since the Komo gathers together the sum total of both living and dead members.

794 The recruitment of members varies from one region to another because of the expenses involved in the admission ceremony and in participation in the ritual. Some villagers refrain from joining be-
[735] cause of poverty, and it also happens that some conversions to Islam are brought about by this fact.

/155/ The initiation is performed at night. The kotigi (2) presents to the future members, one by one, the ancestors' tools. He explains to them their origin, their history, their role, and their spiritual value. He teaches them the respect they owe the ancestors for their courage, their labors, and the technological inventions of which they were either initiators or guardians. The mask is removed from its shelter and dressed by a member; in front of the children the man who wears it unmasks himself and reveals to them the meaning of the different parts of the costume.

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1. De dyira la tyę gundo la; ani komo ye dukaw mine nuofe, komo ka barka bi a fe; ka fara tyew ka, ka yele kę an ta ye.

2. See p. 156.

852 304 "the unknown in creation" (see pp 23 and 24), recall man's existence in this state. Consequently he is conscious of the unknown and has the possibility of apprehending it. These scars act upon the tere of the child and give him at the same time strength, courage, virtue, as well as the strength to penetrate the knowledge of the invisible (1).

[842] 1. They may be redrawn at the root of the nose of an adult who has despaired of having any children, or on the thigh of a woman who wishes to be fertile. These scars, drawn at birth, are not the only ones which the Bambara wear. See S. de Ganay, "On a Form of Cicatrization among the Bambara."

852 553 326 In a blacksmith's family, the name is given near the paternal forge. In the presence of all the village artisans, the kotigi shaves the head of the newborn while an elder prepares seven small sticks, over each one of which he pronounces the name of an ancestor. The kotigi, whose eyes are blindfolded, pulls out in succession three sticks from the group; the third determines the name which he immediately proclaims. While the women chant, the father removes from his altar the kongobwona axe as well as the other ritual objects. The throat of a sheep is cut over all these objects while a prayer is recited. The newborn's head is rubbed first with the axe, then with shaved off hair saturated with sacrificial blood. This gesture introduces the child into the family group. Next he receives the scars of the blacksmiths.

Circumcision

304 561 Whereas in former times circumcision was mandatory and performed upon young men (about twenty years), it is now practiced at an early age if the parents are wealthy enough to afford the expenses involved. /180/ Because of this fact, a child of eight years may be circumcised with an adolescent of sixteen to eighteen years, whose parents are poor and have only slowly accumulated the articles necessary fot the ceremony. These two boys will belong to the same age grade (flã), and will be comrades (flani) all their lives, having the same rights and duties. Age thus has a restricted role in social relations.

304 561 The date of the circumcision alone makes a coherent whole of a heterogeneous group—an age grade within /181/ which all the members owe each other friendship, confidence, and help in all phases of social and private life.

304 292 Once the operation has been decided upon, the relatives proceed first to make the cap worn during the seclusion. The white cloth is presented to the Niger by a uterine brother who addresses a prayer to Faro requesting permission to draw with black earth the designs that will cover it. They will protect the child who is in a state of impurity

[531]

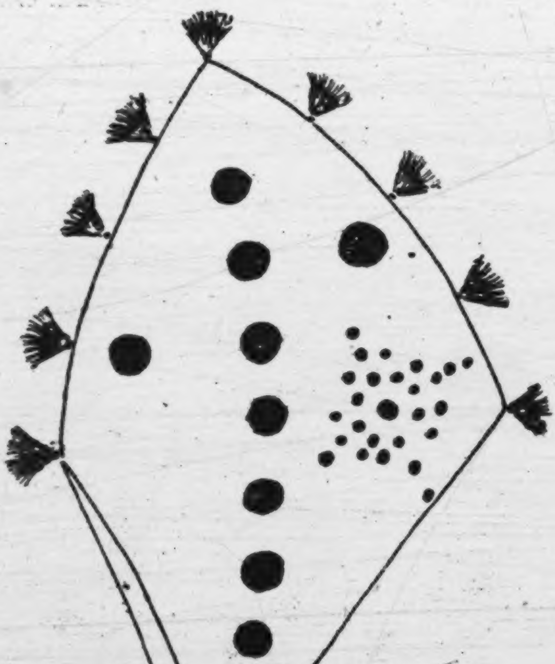

Fig. 14 — Cap of the circumcised Bambara. The nine black spots represent the child, his dya, and the cardinal points. The design at the right represents the sumangolo, or the coming of the twelve waters of the future. (See Fig. 3)

304 recovers part of his tere. The organ is then held up by means of a
326 small apparatus, mine naw, made of a millet stem split in two in the shape of a fork.

"Circumcision is a sacrifice" (1). It is only valid if blood has run,

> 1. Bolokoli ye saraka ye.

and any patient who has not wet the ground with his blood is wounded on the thigh by the circumciser. The same is true for a child born
[732 without a foreskin. This detail must, moreover, be kept secret by
582] the members of his age grade, since the revelation of a malformation might prevent the individual concerned from contracting a marriage (2).

> 2. A woman might believe that these malformations are the sign that the man who was operated upon has not lost his wanzo, a fact which would be a definite obstacle to marriage.

/186/ When all is finished, the operator, holding the foreskins in his hand, says these words before burying them:

"We have transferred the wanzo of the circumcised child, may the tere be well" (3).

> 3. Ãn ye dẽ bolokole wanzo fili la, tere ka ñe.

304 After this, the circumcised boys have their caps put first on their
292 napes and foreheads representing the east-west direction, and then on
561 the sides of their heads representing the north-south direction. All their strength resides from then on in the headpiece which they will wear night and day, without removing it, during the entire period of seclusion.

304 The approach to the site of the operation is formally forbidden to
784 women and uncircumcised males. The one who might go there out of
561 curiosity "would contract the wanzo" (wanzo ba nofe, "the wanzo follows him"). Any uncircumcised boy who might break this law would have to take the consequences at the time of his own operation

304 784 561 which would be a dangerous one (1). The same rule applies to the enclosure, consisting of several huts, where the newly circumcised boys remain under the surveillance of the *sema*. The enclosure is situated at a distance of several tens of meters from the village in order to isolate the age grade. For all that touches them, such as clothing, sticks, sistrums, dishes, and refuse, with the exception of the cap, is impregnated with their *wanzo*.

561 304 [431] The newly circumcised boys receive from their parents gifts of cowrie shells and food called *wanzo sababu yala*, "in honor of the *wanzo*," to speed their recovery.

[794] On the night which precedes the sixth day after the operation, a day called *daworo*, the children are initiated to the Komo (2).

The following day, the *sema* leads them to the edge of the river, where they wash their wounds for the first time. This act, which brings about direct intervention of the element in which Faro lives, has moreover a social meaning: it consecrates the age grade and from this moment on, the children belong for the rest of their lives to the same *flã*, exchanging jokes and insults which are suitable between *senãnku* (3). It must be noted that this very simple act of communal ablution constitutes the inauguration of an age grade of circumcised boys and sets off from that moment all the rights and obligations its members will have toward each other.

A meal, eaten in common and accompanied by songs and dances, ends the ceremonies of the *daworo*. Hereafter the ablutions are repeated daily until the wounds are healed.

304 561 881 /187/ On the last day, all that has been in contact with the newly circumcised boys is gathered together at a crossroad near the enclosure.

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1. The approach of the virulent *wanzo* of the uncircumcised boy acts upon those of the boys undergoing the operations and afflicts them in the genital organs.

2. See p. 203.

3. See p. 119.

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Sistrums, sticks, mats, as well as the wood from the huts and the refuse that has been carefully swept up, are put in a pile which is ignited. Each circumcised boy jumps over the fire three times and then runs to his home without looking back. In this way he finally loses the rest of the *wanzo* which he has kept after the operation. Only his cap is brought back and given his mother who keeps it until her death. On the next day, after putting on new clothes the boy is taught what he himself is in the following words: "the person is *yo* and *yo* is the person (1)" and in the circumstances of creation. He is

> 1. *Ma ye yo ye, yo ye ma ye.* On *yo* see pp. 18-26.

then admitted completely into the society of the male adults of his village.

Circumcision has a profound effect upon the person. At this moment, the child loses the physical support of the female sex which is the foreskin; he becomes a man (*vir*) ready to fulfill his role of a male capable of reproducing. Moreover, he "throws off his *wanzo*" which escapes from the body at the moment of the operation (2). In his

> 2. *Wanzo file la.* The wearing of clothing and ornaments assumes great importance in the loss of the *wanzo*. Among the Bozo, where the children are circumcised very young, they are not considered to have lost their *wanzo* until the moment these clothes are given to them.

[171]

leap above the fire this force joins, in the altars and the mask of the *ndomo*, the forces of both the uncircumcised and the circumcised of the preceding years (3).

> 3. See p. 227.

At the same time the circumcised boy improves his *tere*, for this latter force, diminished by the bloody operation, increases at the moment when the child dons his new clothing. Until his circumcision, the child only performed minor tasks; after circumcision he is considered a male adult and officially admitted to the rituals and labors of the community.

*173 several occasions and suspected the truth; so he used a trick. He pretended to take a bath and, while the water was running out, looked outside. He saw the child beneath the gutter and struck him with his iron-tipped stick.

Ngolo was terrified and ran off to tell his story to Danté Balo. The good woman interceded with Mamari and persuaded him to relent. Nevertheless, Mamari decided to separate from his favorite and summoned Kolé, the leader of the sofa, to whom he entrusted the child, saying: "Here's a bad boy; don't be afraid to make him work hard."

One day, when he had taken the bila-koro (1) in his charge to the field to cut fodder, Kolé sat down in a place called Sirani-n-tu (lit., forest of the little baobab tree) after the small baobab tree which grew there in the middle of a grove. The spirit of the place, who lived in the baobab tree, appeared to Kolé and said: "If you come tomorrow to this same spot and if you bring me a white ram, a white rooster and some rice, I will make it possible for you to become king of Ségou." Now Ngolo, who was wandering about nearby, had seen and heard everything. When he returned to Ségou he ran weeping to Danté Balo; when she asked what was the matter, he answered that a spirit had threatened to kill him unless he sacrificed a white ram, a white rooster and some rice. "Ah well," she said, "Cheer up, here's a white rooster and some rice, and you can take the ram from the master's flock. If anyone is surprised at seeing you with a ram, just say that I gave it to you." He followed her advice and arrived on time at the rendezvous, which Kolé, on the other hand, had forgotten.

After killing the rooster and the ram, in accordance with the rites with which he was familiar, and offering the rice, Ngolo saw the genie appear, while a distant voice said: "Ah, it's you, friend Kolé (2), I'm glad to see you obey my orders and, in return,

[56 / 291]

1. A young boy old enough to be circumcised and wearing a piece of cloth called bila between his legs, instead of trousers.

2. It is interesting to note that the genie

592 this well-built structure in the midst of the inextricable maze
[712] of surrounding huts which were themselves surrounded by a
solid wall of native masonry.

The people of a single household are classed in three
[565] categories: free men (*woro-u*), members of castes (*nya-maka-la*), and slaves (*dyon'-u*).

596 *The freemen.* Within the family, free persons are:
561 the men (*tye-u*), i.e., circumcised males; the *moso-u*, excised women; the *den'-u*, children of both sexes.

601 In accordance with their influence (*faya*) in the family, the men are called *koro-u*, old men, elders, or *kamalen'-u*, young masters. Among the old men the *bina* (uncles), brothers of the *fa*, hold the preponderant position; they form a kind of limited family council and generally work for the welfare of the community under the direction of the *fa*.

Among the women the following distinctions are made: the mothers, i.e., women under the control of a husband and who are actually mothers of children, *ba-u*; old women, *moso-koro-u*; grandmothers, *mama-u*; and finally unmarried girls, *moso-de-u*.

All children are called *de* unless they are specifically identified as *de-n-ke*, "boy," or *de-moso* or *deni*, "girl."

601 Furthermore, every male with any influence (*faya*) in the family, no matter to what extent, is called *fa* (1): [162]

1. In one way or another, therefore, every male is *fa*, since he exercises or will one day exercise *faya*. The word *fa* is jokingly applied even to very young boys just as *ba* is applied to little girls. These words may be used just like our familiar expressions when we say "Father X" or "Mother X" with no reference intended to any real state of fatherhood or motherhood.

In any case, the words *fa* and *ba* are also used as terms of respect, just as we

848
596 arise on the subject of legitimacy. During the fa's lifetime,
614 his authority imposes whatever solution pleases him, but when
578 he is gone, the disputes involving status are all the more violent
for having been suppressed or evaded for so long.

These disputes gain strength also from the difference in
614 rank which the members have within the community. The
596 totality of prerogatives of all kinds which raise the fa above
all others constitutes a kind of superior dignity whose essence
is the omnipotence covered by the word faya, from which
came the title fa [174] (master, lord). It is in reference to
the faya that the members of the community are ranked.

Only male members can advance claims to the faya,
[562] and because they can do this, they can all call themselves fa.
On the other hand, women can never hold this authority; they
are fantan'-u, "powerless."

Among the fa-u there are distinctions based on degree of
596 kinship and on age; those most closely related to the fa will be
614 the first to receive the honors about to be described. Male
601 descendants in the first degree form a sort of senate of which
561 the eldest is a kind of president-by-birth; he is truly the fa,
the actual representative of the deceased. The one immediately following him by rank in terms of age is his syere (follower), his heir presumptive at the head of the community. The other senators, usually brothers of the fa, are uncles (bina-u) to the descendants of the second degree and their children. By reason of the authority associated with the position of bina-u in the community, this kinship term has come to be a title of respect which is bestowed on men toward whom one wishes to show particular esteem (1). Because of their age, all the senators of the community are commonly called koro-u, "the elders," and the fa is first among them.

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1. It is worthy of note that in Uncle Tom's Cabin, Miss Stowe explains that among the slaves in America the word "uncle" had precisely this meaning as a title of respect and honor.

561 596 614 Among the rest of the men in the community, one distinguishes those who, being circumcised, are married and even fathers of families or who are about to become one or the other; these men are called *kamalen'-u*, literally, "the young masters." Finally there are the uncircumcised: first, the adolescent boys called *soli-ma-u*, "people of the *soli*," that is to say, who will soon be circumcised; the others are small boys (*den-tye-u*).

596 614 *The fa, his election and installation.* The personage in the community on whom all attention is concentrated is the *fa*.

Even if during the life of the *fa* his successor is known, it does not always happen that the replacement will follow as was intended. [175]

In the first place, the designated heir is free to refuse the *faya* for any reason he pleases, including solely that of personal convenience. The chronicle of Ségou relates that Biton's son, who lived at Oftala, refused the *faya* because of the excesses of the "people of Ségou."

More often, however, the *faya* eludes claimants for two main reasons.

No one can become *fa* if he does not belong to the community. Hence, anyone who ceases to be a member of the community, whether voluntarily or not, cannot attain the *faya*. One may cease to belong to the community either in fact or by law. The former condition would include prolonged absence, enslavement, settling abroad without hope of return, etc. This brings about a kind of suspension of the exercise of rights, but not their abrogation. On the other hand, when the member expressly renounces the community or when he is excluded by the decision of the *fa* (1) and the senate, he is

1. So it was that Ma-n-son decreed that his brothers Séri and Ba were excluded from the *faya*, because they merely looked on as spectators when he was struggling with Nyana-n-koro and had thus shown themselves hostile to the *fa*.

596 614 and property. On the other hand, he also has duties toward them, for it is the essence of the institution to support its members.

561 578 596 614 All the acts of the fa, even the arbitrary ones, are, according to law, under the control of the senate. It should not be forgotten that the members of the community are divided into two hostile groups: that of the "elders," which includes the fa, and that of the "young masters." The fa could hardly [184] keep the common property all to himself, so he shares it more or less as he pleases, and naturally, the elders are among the most generously treated. The young men seldom get any such favors, hence their resentment against the elders, due largely to envy of their favored position.

596 614 It is customary for a fa when he becomes the head of a patriarchy to leave the management of his own community to his eldest son (1). This separation of interests is essential in order to prevent the fa from despoiling the patriarchy to benefit his own community. The history of these countries shows how often this rule is broken by ambitious men who hope to profit by the general confusion to build up a considerable fortune. Among both the elders and the young men they find willing accomplices, and as their power increases, they extend their extortions. There are many signs, however, of the fragility of their despotism, which they themselves recognize. They usually, therefore, take pains to settle the question of succession in advance hoping to avoid the collapse of their achievements. Wasted effort! Custom, which they have ignored, regains its rights when they die and often does so during their lifetime. This is a logical explanation of the fact that

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[554 492] 1. The eldest son, or better, the first-born son, thus occupies a privileged position, and in Kaarta he is usually provided with a white horse to make him conspicuous. See p. 122 about the death of 98 first-born sons mounted on white horses.

421 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show
596 his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as
614 usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

466 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is
596 at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate
614 to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself, [186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them never return, either because they have managed to create an independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More often, however, the young man, having founded an independent family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and watches developments there in case he may one day be able to profit from them.

578 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue
● 561 which is forever at war with the *fa* and the senate. Their op-
885 position weakens, however, as they approach the age at which they too will participate in the *faya* to which they aspire. Gradually, as one changes from *kamalen'* to *bina*, he acquires the same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity of the new *kamalen'-u*.

562 In concluding this study of the members of the commun-
583 ity, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys, they belong completely to the community, which, as a result, has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So, since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

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881 being born; bolo-ko literally means "affair involving birth."

etymologically mean "birth."

Having entered the family through physical birth, a child enters a new phase of his life through the spiritual birth represented by the soli. Through this rite, a child in fact ceases to belong to sexless childhood and becomes: the boy, a man; the girl, a woman. Let us look at the stages of this change of status which is truly the principal event of a native's life.

857 Until he is about seven years old, a small boy lives in daily contact with his mother, only slipping away, as time goes on, to play nearby with his friends.

During this period, one can already observe the influence [235] of the native milieu on the development of his young soul. He has watched cult and magic practices, and he too plays at being a magician to kill or capture rats, lizards, and other small animals for his little feasts. He collects roots with simulated rites and attaches them to his toy bow so as to ensure the success of his hunting, believing that he has attracted a spirit by promising an offering of the blood of his victims. He is already a little hunter, seeking mysterious procedures through which game can be and ought to be put at his mercy without danger to himself.

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794 Around the age of seven, he is thinking about the crucial act of his life, the soli, one of whose rites is that of circumcision.

Observance of the soli, complete with public circumcision and preceded and followed by membership in a brotherhood, is not absolutely indispensable. When, by reason of circumstances, a child lives in an isolated situation, he undergoes the soli within the family circle, without fuss, and this in no way lessens the validity of the act.

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571 There is no doubt, however, that nothing but absolute necessity will make a Bambara do this; he loathes such wretched economy, which in any case seems inappropriate to such an important occasion (1). On the contrary, he loves to take part in

1. Besides, since no exact age limit is

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881 imposed and since there may be as
● 561 much as six or seven years' difference
571 in age between the oldest and youngest
794 children participating in the same soli, it is obviously possible for a candidate to arrange to be included at some point within this range of ages so as not to be an isolated case.

881 a noisy demonstration and to share in all of the rejoicing the
571 brotherhoods provide for their members. This is by no means the
794 least of the reasons for the spread of these brotherhoods, to which the n-Tomo (2) is really the front door, since no one is admitted to a brotherhood unless he is soli-ma, and the specific final object of the n-Tomo is the soli.

2. n-Tomo is the term used in the Ségou area; in Kaarta the term n-Tori is used.

n-Tomo

561 The n-Tomo is an association which, in preparation for
857 the soli, bands together boys (3) of about seven to fourteen years
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3. Little girls have no organized society to prepare them for the soli, but they have agreements among themselves and, in addition, are chosen as n-golo-moso-u by the n-Tomo-den'-u.

Each [236] n-Tomo normally includes all the boys due to be circumcised, without distinction by race or rank. Each member is called n-Tomo-den'; the eldest is the leader or n-Tomo-tigi, and he is assisted by a syere or "follower." New members are received every year at the time of the annual festival, and they must pay an entrance fee (a chicken) and a few cowries

561 857 and take an oath of secrecy. The boy leaves the n-Tomo after the soli. Girls are not admitted.

881 The n-Tomo-tigi and his syere organize the association so as to assure it some property which in principle is collective property. Through common abuse, however, they are the primary if not the sole beneficiaries of it. They persuade their comrades to cultivate a field whose produce will provide the food for their club feasts. The entrance fee is augmented by force, spontaneously or at the order of the n-Tomo-tigi: gifts, collections, theft, hunting, fishing, etc.; in short, anything may be collected by individual or collective effort to form a kind of common treasury.

857 793 There is no collectivity, however, without its spiritual patron. The n-Tomo meets out-of-doors, at the foot of a tree (1) believed to be the chosen home of a genie-protector.

> 1. The name "n-Tomo" comes from this. It has been thought that the term was simply the name of the tree where the genie-protector lives and that it was the tree which the Bambara call "n-Tomo." If this were true, why should people in Kaarta use the term "n-Tori" when the tree called n-Tomo does not change its name? It has been suggested that n-Tori is another word meaning "toad" and came from the peculiar "cry" characteristic of the society.
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> It is my belief that the two terms, "n-Tomo" and "n-Tori" designate the same grouping in different regions and have one and the same meaning: meeting, assembly.

The n-Tomo-tigi is the high priest of this genie; as such he receives the oaths of the neophytes and has a certain degree of authority over the whole band, which enables him to punish any misdeed committed by a n-Tomo-den'. He does not hesitate to use corporal punishment.

881 group is called kule. In the same way, the boys go about in a group headed by the sema-tye, called masa (king), followed by the masa-ma-kono, the masa-ma-kono-segere, etc.

In this way, the whole country learns which boys and girls have completed the soli.

The Fla-n-ton'

561 Those who have belonged to the same n-Tomo-ya and
572 have gone through the soli together remain bound together for
575 life; they are fula-ni ("peers," "twins") because they were born
on the same day to sexual and social life. Wherever they may
be and whatever their respective rank, two fula-ni consider themselves
equals even if one of them is a chief and the other a slave;
the latter in particular has the right to speak his mind without
fear (1). Theoretically, therefore, the fula-ni is the friend on
whom one may safely rely, and he is usually a member of the council, small but very powerful, which every fa likes to have around. It is to him that the fa confides his troubles, his joys, his plans, and his personal affairs. He is present at all the celebrations and mourning of the family. On serious or important occasions, he represents his friend who often entrusts him with the supervision of his household during an absence and appoints him guardian or trustee of his children after his death. He is a brother who may be loved more than agnate or uterine brothers. At the same time the fulani-ya does not necessarily produce a type of brotherhood analogous to that brought about by the blood pact. Rather, it engenders a kind of mutual assistance which is strengthened by the organization called fla-n-ton', "assemblage of people of the same age," i.e., thos[illegible]rn" at the same soli.

The young people from the same soli form a fla-m-bolo, literally, a band of persons of the same age.

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1. See in Chapter 7, "The Man with Three Braids." [Not translated.]

561 575 A fla-n-ton' usually includes the young people from three consecutive soli, so it is an assemblage of three fla-m-bolo. Thus, Bambara society is composed of a certain number of fla-n-ton', and all the people are distributed among them, from the most recent tye-kura (new men) to the tye-koro (elders) who are the most advanced in age. [249] Since the women also have their fla-n-ton', it is reasonable to say, from a certain point of view, that the soli is the basis of life and of the social organization.

571 Each fla-n-ton' is independent, but it maintains the best of relations with its immediate neighbors, the one preceding it, the one following it, and the one of the women of the same soli. Thus, the fla-n-ton' have a certain solidarity among them, which is shown by the custom of each fla-n-ton' honoring its immediate neighbors by offering them some of the food from its corporate meals. It should be noted, also, that whenever discord arises within a fla-n-ton', the neighboring fla-n-ton' intervene to make peace; a special arbiter may even be chosen to smooth out the difficulties involved in such an affair (1).

> 1. In this connection, note the difficulties between the ton' of Kassoum and Biton as reported in the chronicle of Ségou above.

Wherever he goes, a Bambara will look up people of his own age, i.e., those who went through the soli at the same time. He can always count on their friendly welcome and practical help.

In each fla-n-ton' there is a chief, ton-tigi, chosen in various ways depending on the place and the people. He may be the son of a notable; he may be a house slave. A syere (follower) assists him or replaces him. A dyala-tige, or assigner of shares, has the function of enforcing discipline and distributing the food at the group banquets; this is usually a house slave. Finally, a ton-dyeli serves as general factotum and herald; a person of caste has this role. From the point of view of the

561 575 association, each fula-ni is a ton'-den'.

The bachelors and some of the married men regard the fla-n-ton' simply as a means of having a good time in the company of boon companions. Anything brought by an individual member goes to swell the common fund which is most often used to organize feasts and drinking bouts. At these banquets, it is customary to comply with rules which appear curious at first sight and which must be obeyed unless the member wants to pay a fine into the common fund. Thus, anyone who acts on his own prior to or contrary to an order from the ton-tigi, anyone who comes or leaves, blows his nose, [250] spits, sneezes, and so on, without permission, is fined. Aside from the profit to the common fund, the procedure has its uses in making the ton-den' amenable to discipline.

In principle, the treasury of the fla-n-ton' is supposed to be used only to succor poor, embarrassed, or unfortunate members, who are expected to repay with interest insofar as they are able to do so. In theory, also, all of the ton-den' can count on moral and material aid from their fla-ni whenever there is need for it. It goes without saying that this fine spirit of altruism is rarely put into practice.

The fact of the matter is that the young masters (kamale-u) make use of the organization to resist the omnipotence of the elders (koro-u); malcontents of all sorts take refuge in it; adventurers find it useful in promoting their schemes. We shall see how the two most powerful Bambara empires were built on the fla-n-ton'.

2. General Considerations Concerning the Brotherhoods

Origin of the Brotherhoods

177 794 There is no reason to suppose that the Bambara brotherhoods are not purely native institutions; similar organizations are to be found all over Africa, particularly in areas untouched by Moslem influence. All of them follow similar principles made manifest in ways characteristic of African occultism.

177 794 There is no doubt, however, that in the case of the Bambara with whom we are here concerned this native foundation

173 631 Their people, [290] except for the payment of required tribute, lived as they pleased and followed their own customs as long as the latter did not offend the dominant clan.

2. Clan of the "People of Ségou"

Development of the Fla-n-ton' of Ségou-koro

575 561 According to the chronicle cited earlier, the origin of the clan of Ségou must be attributed to the development of a fla-n-ton'.

Those persons who have undergone the rite of soli together are united in a fla-n-bolo (band of peers); the fla-n-bolo of three consecutive soli form a fla-n-ton' (assemblage of peers). The members call themselves ton'-den' in relation to the association, and fla-ni in relation to one another.

In each fla-n-ton' there is a ton'-tigi (head of the assemblage) elected by the ton' den', who is just as likely to be a wolo-su (slave born in the house) as the son of a notable; a dyala-tigi (distributor), likewise elected by the ton'-den', is especially charged with the distribution of food for the group's banquets and with the enforcement of regulations; a ton' dyeli is a kind of beadle appointed by the ton'-tigi who has him make preparations for meetings, assemble the members, announce orders, etc., and he is usually a young person of caste. There are people of all races and of all ranks in the fla-n-ton', and in the association there is theoretically, complete equality among them. Indeed, this equality explains the term fla-ni-u (peers) which they use among themselves.

In principle the aim of the fla-n-ton' (1) is to establish

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1. As we have noted, there are fla-n-ton' for women as well as for men, but we are not considering them here; their role is insignificant from the present point of view.

575 561 a sense of solidarity among the ton'-den'. In reality, the bachelor ton'-den' are principally concerned with amassing as much food as possible for the sole purpose of treating themselves to copious and merry banquets from time to time; for this purpose, all means are acceptable. Each member brings to the group whatever he can lay his hands on; in addition, the society assesses its members for contributions to swell the common fund. [291] First, there are the entrance fees and assessments in kind, particularly of grain. Then there are fines for infractions of the rules, involving penalties whose purpose is simply the enrichment of the group's treasury. At certain meetings, for instance, the most ordinary acts may not be performed unless permission has been given by the ton'-tigi or the dyala-tigi. A member who squats, rises, speaks, sneezes, or laughs before being authorized to do so is fined. Finally, the society goes on organized hunts, and the game thus acquired is distributed among the members on the basis of strict equality.

[527] Ordinarily the ton'-den' meet twice a week, on Monday and Thursday; these are the free days allotted to the poor people (fantan'-u), that is, people who are wholly under control.

The ton'-tigi can make no important decision without the prior advice and agreement of the ton'-den', but this does not mean that his role is negligible. His initiative determines the orientation of acts, and he later sees to their execution. Therefore, if he is a clever man, he actually has almost sole command over an organization capable of exerting powerful pressure on the native milieu, which by nature is amorphous, because a fla-n-ton' is not an isolated group. It is linked with the one that preceded it and the one immediately following it by a kind of solidarity, so that native society, from this point of view, is made up of an uninterrupted series of fla-n-ton' closely bound to each other, since the same chain of relationship prevails for women and since every male fla-n-ton' has a brotherhood relationship with the corresponding female fla-n-ton'.

[627] If a difference arises between members of the same fla-n-ton', the "elders" of the preceding fla-n-ton', i.e., the one immediately older, intervene as conciliators to settle the quarrel.

575 561 [628] When differences arise between *fla-n-ton'*, an arbitrator is chosen by these *fla-n-ton'*; in some regions, there is even an arbitrator designated in advance.

Among all these *fla-n-ton'* the most conspicuous is the one having the largest number of young bachelors known as "the young masters" (*kamalen'-u*). Being much given to idleness, the *kamalen'-u* are troublemakers and rebels who seek all the [292] material pleasures and devote their talents to opposing the *fa*, the *bina*, and those who, as masters of the community, impose on the young the whole weight of an authority which is absolute and often niggling.

This explanation makes it plain that the post of *ton'-tigi* is no sinecure. In order to maintain his role honorably, the *ton'-tigi* must be capable of exerting his authority in subtle and shrewd ways, for the *ton'-den'* are touchy and undisciplined, and they are quick to claim the equality which is the basis of their association, even to the point of egalitarian mania or egalitarianism. Therefore, it is interesting to note that the regulations, fantastic at first glance, which inflict penalties for performing the most trivial acts are actually very effective; they correct in fun, but they represent a kind of restraint that encourages the development of discipline. Breaking with ordinary life, they tend through repetition to form habits which taken together make
[661] up what we call *esprit de corps*. In any event, the development which we are about to describe shows conclusively that to maintain and conserve his power the *ton'-tigi* must exert authority by dissimulation, by persuading those most easily offended that he is subordinating his own acts to their wishes and at the same time appearing to the faint-hearted as an imperious and audacious leader. Furthermore, he must render service to everyone and know how to turn projects and adventures, even the riskiest, into profit for the community.

Since he is the target of the hostility of the elders, who often suffer from the activities of the *ton'-den'*, and since he is constantly envied by some of these same *ton'-den'* for his success, he acquires the kind of experience which makes him a crafty and sly politician, completely devoid of scruples.

*173 We shall see how Mamari (called Biton) Kouloubali managed to prevail over the tyrannical egalitarianism of the

608 his ally had to try to ransom him. A sénanku often serves as inter-
621 mediary in arranging marriages, in land claims, in the collection of
648 debts. He is rewarded by gifts. He has the power to stop quarrels and to oppose acts of rage and violence by the man whose sénanku he is, no matter what his rank and no matter how important the decisions in question are. The sénanku of a Fama could prevent his declaring war or condemning to death one of his subjects. Moreover, he has certain limited privileges over his ally's possessions. (He may appropriate unimportant objects, food, and even sums of money.) Finally, he recruits the labor force which his ally may need.

c. Age Classes. -- But though these different ties exercise an
621 important influence on the political, social, and religious life of the
571 community they are generally too broad and too lax to permit organiza-
561 tion of a work community. In fact, we have seen how a large village may be formed of different communities relatively independent of each other, despite the authority of the founding community's fa. On the level of the canton, the geographical dispersion does not permit the Fama to intervene personally in the organization of the work community. The latter is founded essentially on the system of relations of the age classes.

561 From infancy until circumcision for the boys, until excision for the girls, the young Bambara belongs to a hierarchic society which prepares him or her for this ceremony and which provides an education complementary to that received in the family. Within this association all the children are divided into age classes: boys up to six years of age are bilakoro-dogomani (bila = short pants), from 6 to 10 years they are bilakoro-dogoma, from 10 to about 15 years, bilakoro-koroba. Similarly, the girls are, successively: sunkiri-dogomani, sunkuru-dogoma, and sunkuru-koroba. Each age class has a chief: ton-tigi for the boys, musso-tigi for the girls; each office is doubled by a deputy (syere). There is also a treasurer and a ton-dyeli who is the griot of the ton. All are elected by members of the society. A Bambara will be influenced all his life by his membership in a certain age class which groups all the children who underwent circumcision at the same time. In fact, up to the moment of circumcision the child's personality is not yet distinct. We have seen before how small children were

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considered as being in the same category as their grandparents; they are said to belong to the same age class.

561 857 [57] The relations between boys and girls before the ceremonies of circumcision and excision are governed by a sort of non-consummated marriage uniting the children of the different *ton*.

The little girl (*ton-musso*) must take care of the clothes and household of her infant husband (*tontié*); later she must decorate his house with designs he tells her to make. In return, her husband will give her gifts and will help cultivate her parents' field. When the girl marries in earnest, her *tontié* must himself give her to her husband. Throughout this false marriage, the young girl's virginity must be respected, and her *tontié* is held responsible for it.

561 Before their circumcision, all the children are affiliated according to their age classes to the brotherhood of the *n'Tomo* (see the chapter on religion). The oldest of the group will be the head of his class; all the little chiefs are subjects of the chief of the oldest group: the *n'tomo-tigi* and to his deputy, the *n'tomo-tigi-syere*. The brotherhood prepares the children for the circumcision initiation; it regulates the common work, the religious ceremonies, and the celebrations. It settles disputes that may arise between members.

561 796 The different ceremonies of the *n'Tomo*, which take place each year after the harvest, have been described by Monteil (1) and by Tauxier (2). They include offerings, sacrifices to the guardian spirit, a communion, and masked dances followed by a lash from the ritual whip, which marks the definitive acceptance of the neophytes.

561 Later, those who have belonged to the same *n'tomoya* and who have undergone the *soli* together are united for life. They are *fulani*, that is to say, twins (they are born the same day to the sexual, social,

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1. Monteil, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta* [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

2. Tauxier, *La religion bambara* [The Bambara Religion].

561 and religious life). The young men of the same soli form what is called a flambolo. Three consecutive classes of flambolo form a flanton. The women have a parallel organization. Each fulani is a ton-den (child of the ton), with a corresponding association.

561 241 476 The association's role, apart from the seasonal celebrations and the copious feasts, accompanied by a great deal of drinking, is that of a mutual aid society and of a veritable village work cooperative. It is organized, administered, and articulated with a view to the agricultural work. The chief, kariku, expedites current business, with the assistance of a syere (witness, deputy). He has a treasurer who receives offerings and makes payments, the femmaraba (he who preserves things), plus an honorary president and an adviser, chosen from among the notables and delegated by them; he must supervise the society and orient its activities.

This social organism rests, in the last analysis, on the exchanges of services initiated and supported by the kariku. He sees to it that help is forthcoming to a man making the customary work payments in the fields of his parents-in-law or future parents-in-law (in exchange for food and drink furnished by the parents-in-law to these ton-den). In like manner, a farmer asks the kariku for help in clearing a field of brush. This request is made through an intermediary or a sēnanku who [58] accompanies the request with ten kola nuts. The chief accepts the present and calls his council into session to study the affair technically and to fix the salary. The same procedure is followed for the winter weeding, which calls for rapid completion, as well as for building dams, irrigating canals, paths, roads suitable for carting, etc.

431 824

An analogous system exists for the female kari, for sowing the crops as well as for gathering the harvest, mutual domestic aid, etc. The two groups collaborate for the seasonal celebrations.

643 d. The Fama. -- We see that the canton is a grouping formed under the authority and influence of a dominant family. Its unity is determined by political, social, and religious laws which regulate it. The fa or head of the dominant family becomes the Fama, that is, the patriarch, chief of the canton. He then often renounces the administration of the faya, which he turns over to his second (syere),

562 When the husband dies, the wives are considered the principal
428 wealth of the heir. Among certain Bambara, the wives are divided
768 among the brothers; the eldest brother chooses and then has the other
587 brothers choose in order of age. Among others, the heritage goes to the children who must ally themselves with their father's wives. The wives who do not want to remain with the heir have the option of returning to their families, providing the settlement is returned.

The wife may have personal property given to her by her
428 parents at the time of marriage. Among certain Bambara, the
562 father of the bride must give her the settlement paid by the husband, and this becomes her personal property. When a widow dies, all of her goods go to her eldest son; if there is no son, half of her goods goes to her daughters, and the other half is divided among her father, her mother, and her brother. When a married woman dies without children, her goods are divided between her husband and her father; if she no longer has her father, half goes to her husband and the other half to her brothers and sisters.

On the other hand, we have seen how a woman may inherit all of the wealth of a family head, and even of a chief, in default of male heirs, and the Mali empire had a woman Keïta at its head, daughter of Naré, fa Maghan.

562 A woman must not take part in any political discussion or demonstration, which does not mean that her role in these matters
662 is nil. All the history of Mali is full of palace intrigues which reach their acute stage at the moment of a Fama's death and of the election of a new chief. It is at this moment that the women knew how to throw into the balance all the weight of their family's power to determine the new election.

Finally, we have seen that in a fashion parallel to the male
562 brotherhoods and societies, the women were organized into powerful
● 561 hierarchical societies according to their age classes and their degree
575 of initiation. These societies, where men do not enter, are still imperfectly known, but they are at least as formidable as the male brotherhoods.

562 The woman must pound the millet, draw water, and carry out all the household chores, but when the man kills an animal, the meat belongs to the wife, and the man must accept in turn what she will give him.

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881 The society of *n'Domo* has the task of preparing children for
794 circumcision; the *wanzo* of the child liberated by the operation goes in the mask of the *n'Domo.*

881 Formerly, circumcision took place between 18 and 20 years
304 of age, and the circumcised had to bear arms the following year.
At present, the children are circumcised between 8 and 16 years of
[561] age, but all those of the same promotion are considered to belong to
the same age class and are *flani* [sic] (twins) all their lives.

The ritual of circumcision has been described many times, in particular by Tauxier and G. Dieterlen. Therefore we will only report the essential phases.

The ceremony takes place during the dry season, in bountiful years after the harvest. The appearance of the constellation "*Sigi-lolo*" is watched for at a certain point in the sky, and when it is very brilliant, the date is fixed. The operation cannot take place except every three years.

The parents prepare for the ceremony long in advance: they make the child a bonnet of white cloth which they present to the Niger, and they make the signs representing the person of the child with earth from the river. Some days before the operation, the child enters into a period of seclusion; he is placed under the protection of the purifying light of Faro and receives gifts (cowries, food ....).

When the day arrives, his hair is shaved off. His mother washes his shaft with water in which an iron axe has been soaked, then has him eat a plate of rice.

The blacksmith prepares his knife, *boloko kumba moru*, which is enclosed in an iron sheath, this knife represents the circumcised and the prepuce which will be taken from him. The priest washes the handle and, symbolically, the penis. Then with coal or with millet paste he traces the blade with ritual designs symbolizing the three first circumcised men, the four first excised women, and the bird which is the avatar of the eight ancestral blacksmiths. Next, he ties the prepuce with a small cord (drawn on the middle of the blade) and places it on the *pembelé*. The cutting knife is hit with a small block of wood, and the blacksmith then traces the scarifications on the shaft. The circumcised bleed in a circle on the ground, in individual holes [92] dug between their legs. They thus deliver the *wanzo* to the impure earth, while the circumciser recites the prayers. Then they apply a dressing of bloody earth to the wound,

869 In addition to wearing the costume, which is white
794 (n'tomo djé) or yellow, black, etc. (n'tomo fign), the boy who
778 dances the dance of the genie hides his face in a frightful wooden
mask on top of which are five, seven, and sometimes eight
horns.

869 The n'tomo injects a whole organization into the world
794 of children. They quite naturally divide themselves into
561 small groups, each corresponding to a circumcision that is to take place, and are thus all of the same age, born in the same year, or very nearly so. The member of each group who is the oldest -- be it by only one day -- becomes its head, and all the younger heads obey the head of the oldest group, the n'tomotigi, and his aide, the n'tomotigi siéré (1), who is drawn from the group which will be circumcised after that

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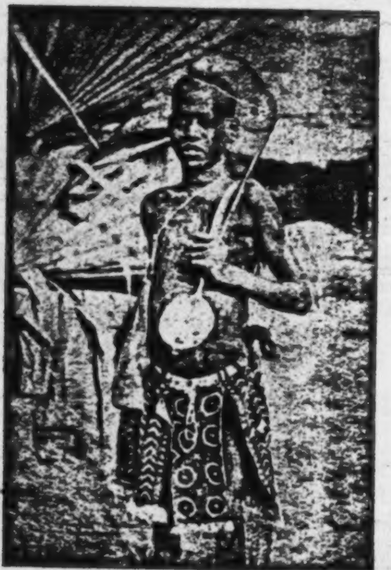

Child wearing the loincloth called yaba.

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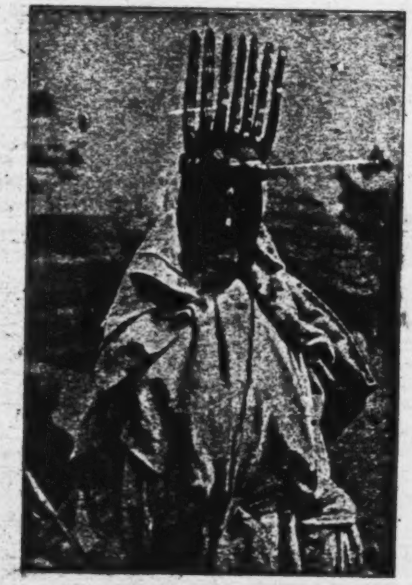
1. Siéré, "aide," "deputy."

869 of the n'tomotigi. /93/

794 These two children prepare the hunts for rats and lizards, organize the games and supervise them, and if an offence is committed
561 by the band, it is up to them to discover the culprit. When quarrels, arguments, and fights arise among the children, they intervene, judge each case, and, if the matter is worth the trouble, the mischief-maker, or the one who is declared responsible, is severely beaten. All this produces unity within the various groups and prevents them from coming to blows at every moment.



[778]

Mask of the n'tomo, the children's fetish.

The little girls also have an organization into groups; but it lacks cohesion; it would have to be religious in nature, since religion is the basis of all unity in the Bambara country. Only at the time of excision does all this change, and then there is real cohesion among them.

796 Every year children sacrifice to the n'tomo genie through the mediation of their head, the n'tomotigi. The day of the sacrifice is
857 a day of great rejoicing which ends in flagellation. The material for

583 of d'lo, or millet beer. The head of the village and his council,
584 friends, and the to-n-déou, or members of the association of the
fla-n-to (1), go at once to pay their respects to the happy father and
583 to tell the girl that her betrothal is being celebrated and cannot hence-
584 forth be broken without a grave and important reason. Soon the b'lon
of /sic/ the entry hut and the inner court are full of crouching men
who drink d'lo, or millet beer, and soon ramble in their talk. And

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1. The association of the fla-n-to, with a to-n-tigi at its head, is made up of several groups of to-n-déou, or members of the association. Every group corresponds to a circumcision. /sic/ When many are circumcised at the same time, they form a group, but if there are only one, two, or three, they join the group of those circumcised at the preceding occasion. The to-n-dé invites to his betrothal and his wedding the members of his group, who were circumcised with him, and the members of the older groups. As to the younger groups, he does not invite them. The women also form an association of fla-n-to similar to that of the men but separate from it. The woman who is at the head of the association, usually the oldest in the village, is called to-n-tigi, or massa fama, queen, and the to-n-dé mouso (the to-n-dé women) call her m'ba, mother. They are summoned only to the wedding.

794 or Koma/, " Outremer, 1929; H. Labouret, Les Manding et leur langue.

794 The Komo society, komo tyew (literally, men, people of the Komo) is composed
561 of all circumcised men, with the exception of the griot who may under no condition become members, after an initiation performed according to the age grade, the members of which are called tonyaw. The hierarchy is rigorously respected: an earlier age grade will always be ahead of the one that follows it in all circumstances of secular or religious life. The Komo recognizes a chief, komotigi (literally, master or owner of the Komo) who preferably belongs to the caste of blacksmiths and whose function is hereditary. The son automatically assumes command of the age grade which follows that of his father. Upon the latter's death, he changes his age grade and becomes the head of his father's. In the case where the owner of the Komo dies
[304] young and his eldest son, who is to inherit the office, is not yet circumcised, he is made to undergo the operation in the night following the death, and on the following day is proclaimed chief (1).

1. In La Religion Bambara, L. Tauxier points out that in some villages the chief of the Komo exercises his power only during a seven-year term. At the end of seven years an election takes place and the function is not hereditary.

794 Because of the importance of his functions, the chief of the Komo
784 is made to respect a great number of taboos. In particular he may not penetrate into the sanctuary if he has not been chaste during the past twenty-four hours. If the taboo is broken, he must warn the men of his age grade and sacrifice two roosters upon the altars to purify himself. His wife is initiated (for she is apt to see certain ritual
[562] objects generally hidden from women because of her intimacy with the chief), but she is not present at any of the ceremonies to which only the members are /144/ admitted. If she commits adultery she
[837] brings about her husband's exclusion from the society, not only as chief but also as member.

794 The chief is often assisted by two elders belonging to his age grade, whose advice he seeks in all cases concerning the community. In
561 addition, he is always helped by young initiates. If one of these

771 In any case, these are questions which he does not ask
or which, at least, he has not considered in any way that would
cause him to make logical, even if fragmentary, syntheses.
His words and his acts are indications and sometimes even guide-
posts for us, but how uncertain and misleading they can be! And,
in the observation of current facts, how many at least seeming
contradictions there are! However, in the main, the analysis
given in the paragraphs above represents the basis of Bambara
dogma, since everything happens in reality as if the Bambara
were living in accordance with these principles.

That being the case, life results from the union of the
761 two parts of the body, while death is a result of their separation.
772 Whence come these two elements and who it is that decides
upon their union? No answer is possible. The Bambara say,
merely, that certain persons are reincarnations. Precautions
[844] taken during pregnancy and delivery show that childbirth is one
of those mysteries against which taboos must be observed as a
protection. The frequent and readily believed stories about
[845] women giving birth to monsters -- usually animals -- bear wit-
ness to the affinities which, in the minds of the Bambara, exist
between all creatures. But nothing specific is said about what
precedes and determines the birth of a child.

● 562 This is a secret to which the Bambara are, of course,
not indifferent. It is evidenced in the fact that women, through
778 whom man comes into the world, are held to be doubtful
creatures, at the very least, partly because of menstruation,
which makes a woman impure, and partly because of the mys-
terious travail she endures during the delivery of a child (1).

[774] 1. Women are also susceptible of being
possessed continuously by a spirit (see
the story of the Déni-bo Ba, p. 123).
That is why, when a woman is several
times widowed, she is suspected of be-
ing possessed by a jealous spirit who
kills off her husbands. She is often even
thought to be herself a sorceress.

562 778 This suspicion readily degenerates into disrespect, scorn and hatred when a woman [123] is weak -- this being the usual state of affairs. On the contrary, the feeling changes to superstitious fear if she resorts to occult practices and shows herself [754] an adept at sorcery. Many old women are held to be very expert at such practices.

851 In the same connection, it should be noted that a newborn child is also subject to scrutiny. For seven days after birth it is not officially taken into the family, because it is thought that during this period the infant may undergo metamorphosis unless closely watched over by its mother.

We shall see, through a study of their institutions, how the Bambara conceive of life and organize it.

Funeral practices will show us how the Bambara regard the idea of death.

And after death?

775 769 The Romans distinguished among spirits: the manes or good gods (dii[1] manes) and the lemurs or evil spirits, both of whom take an interest in the family.

The Bambara have analogous concepts.

Once it has left the body, the soul of a patriarch goes to join the souls of his ancestors, where it finds a spiritual family which protects the earthly family.

The manes (fa su-u) always like to frequent the places where their bodies lived, and that is why one keeps the things that belong to the deceased, why he is buried near his house or sometimes even under the floor, and why some families piously keep the skull of the departed to do it honor.

[778] The entrance-hut (blon') is usually the site of the altar of the ancestors and of the family gods. The ancestral altar may be a small board with a human mask, called kara, or a mound of earth shaped vaguely like a human being. The manes are thought to enter into these objects to receive the offerings and sacrifices made to them.

It is sometimes thought that the world of the manes may be without light and heat but that otherwise they each continue the existence it had in life with the same passions, the same

[1] [dei ? —Analyst]

848
596 arise on the subject of legitimacy. During the fa's lifetime,
614 his authority imposes whatever solution pleases him, but when
578 he is gone, the disputes involving status are all the more violent
for having been suppressed or evaded for so long.

These disputes gain strength also from the difference in
614 rank which the members have within the community. The
596 totality of prerogatives of all kinds which raise the fa above
all others constitutes a kind of superior dignity whose essence
is the omnipotence covered by the word faya, from which
came the title fa [174] (master, lord). It is in reference to
the faya that the members of the community are ranked.

Only male members can advance claims to the faya,
● [562] and because they can do this, they can all call themselves fa.
On the other hand, women can never hold this authority; they
are fantan'-u, "powerless."

Among the fa-u there are distinctions based on degree of
596 kinship and on age; those most closely related to the fa will be
614 the first to receive the honors about to be described. Male
601 descendants in the first degree form a sort of senate of which
561 the eldest is a kind of president-by-birth; he is truly the fa,
the actual representative of the deceased. The one immediately following him by rank in terms of age is his syere (follower), his heir presumptive at the head of the community. The other senators, usually brothers of the fa, are uncles (bina-u) to the descendants of the second degree and their children. By reason of the authority associated with the position of bina-u in the community, this kinship term has come to be a title of respect which is bestowed on men toward whom one wishes to show particular esteem (1). Because of their age,

1. It is worthy of note that in Uncle Tom's Cabin, Miss Stowe explains that among the slaves in America the word "uncle" had precisely this meaning as a title of respect and honor.

all the senators of the community are commonly called koro-u, "the elders," and the fa is first among them.

421 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show
596 his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as
614 usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to
the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the
better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and
plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them
after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old
debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

466 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is
596 at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate
to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not
614 wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To
the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself,
[186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave
to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that
is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them
never return, either because they have managed to create an
independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More
often, however, the young man, having founded an independent
family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and
watches developments there in case he may one day be able to
profit from them.

578 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue
561 which is forever at war with the fa and the senate. Their opposition weakens, however, as they approach the age at which
885 they too will participate in the faya to which they aspire. Gradually, as one changes from kamalen' to bina, he acquires the
same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity
of the new kamalen'-u.

562 In concluding this study of the members of the community, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys,
583 they belong completely to the community, which, as a result,
has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So,
since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in
usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

562 inevitably leave the community, she can never claim any
583 authority. Thus condemned to perpetual powerlessness, a woman never has the right to any position other than an inferior one in native society. Motives based on interest or affection may modify her situation more or less to her advantage, but they will not change her basic rights, which are at the root of all disputes about women, between spouses or between communities.

II. The Community of Property

421 What is the property of which the patrimony is composed?

It is impossible to provide a detailed list, which would, in any case, be endless. Nor should we limit ourselves to the definitions of our legal system, which are too narrow. From the native point of view, patrimonial property [187] may be divided into three principal categories.

[776] First, there are the gods; the manes, or souls of the ancestral protectors of the family; and the nyana, the gods created by the magician. Some of them protect only the community, while others are also concerned with other collectivities. Finally, there are the innumerable magic weapons, which are gods of a sort. In the discussion of the duties of the fa, I spoke of these gods, and they are also mentioned in other parts of this work.

A second category of property is made up of the recipro-
421 cal rights of the community and its members, on the one hand,
424 and of the community and similar collectivities, on the other. I have just explained the first, and the second will be dealt with later in the chapter under the heading "Relations between Communities."

Finally, all the things that are particularly valued make
421 up the third category: gold; cattle and sheep; grain; agricul-
422 tural, industrial, and commercial products of all kinds; dwell-
423 ings; etc. Three points related to this last category require special consideration: agrarian usufruct, conjugal usufruct, and slaves.

582 It is not unusual for an old man to marry a very young girl; indeed, it is common. Although a young man rarely marries a very old woman, a woman may marry a man much younger than she is as a result of the customs involved with inheritance.

Kinship in the direct line is an obstacle, in infinitum.
Certain collateral relatives may not marry each other: uncle
and niece, aunt and nephew. Marriage is also an obstacle in
587 some cases: a man may not be the husband of two sisters simul-
taneously, although he may marry them successively; the same
restriction applies to a mother and daughter and an aunt and
niece.

A man may not marry the wife of his son, nephew, or younger brother.

No marriage can take place between free persons in good standing and people of caste or, still less, slaves.

584 Impediments. From the opening of negotiations to the moment when the woman is handed over, there is a very long interval [196] of time during which impediments may arise.

First marriages, with which we are here concerned, are community affairs. A young man who would undertake the matter on his own would be most imprudent for he is no more his own master than is the girl, and their wishes are not of the least importance; this is an occasion for the fa to bring off a profitable deal. The fa, therefore, opposes any match which does not suit his plans and, indeed, forces the young man to share his views. If the latter rebels, the refusal of the fa to recognize the marriage will deprive the wife and children of any claim to legitimacy in the eyes of the community which he heads. There is no legal recourse possible against such a decision, because each community is answerable only to itself for matters concerning it.

The girl is even more completely under the control of
562 the community than the young man. Destined to be given in
usufruct, she is entirely at the mercy of those holding this right
over her. If she rebels, she runs the risk of being brutally brought
to task through every means of coercion and, if in such circum-
851 stances she has children, they can be taken from her by the com-
munity, to which they will then belong. Custom gives her no
rights over them whatsoever.

583 768 Finally, if the union is still in effect at the time of the husband's death, the wife's community theoretically regains authority over her, provided that the bride price is paid back.

581 626 These three definite points show that lawful union, or marriage, legally speaking, is essentially a kind of usufruct of the woman to the advantage of the husband, and the price is the bride price. As a result, the woman's community is obliged to see to it that the husband enjoys his rights. Hence, when a wife misbehaves, no matter how, the husband reports it to her community which takes steps to bring the erring girl to terms for fear of having to refund the bride price. On the other hand, the husband is expected to treat his wife in a manner worthy of her, that is, with consideration for her origins, and if he fails to do so, he risks the consequences of breach of the marriage contract.

There are, therefore, reciprocal rights and duties required of the spouses. Based on the marriage contract, these rights and duties are reinforced, completed, or, more generally, influenced by ethics no less than by the feelings of the [207] couple in relation to each other and to their respective communities.

581 562 [554] This is why a girl from a great house with high standing (1) cannot be treated like a common concubine, even though the husband may prefer the concubine to the wife, because the free daughter of a powerful house, richly dowered, is virtually independent in the household. If she is sufficiently well off, she may even live in a house of her own, and since her only obligation is the sexual conjugal duty, she receives her husband as she would a lover.

On the other hand the free woman of modest circumstances and, even more, of lowly birth is her husband's companion in wretchedness. She does all kinds of work, even the hardest and most disagreeable, and she desires no rupture that would deprive her of the only affection that sustains her, the love of her children.

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1. Thus, in the western Sudan, the daughters of the Massa-si are treated with great deference.

562 581 595 . Between the omnipotence of the first and the humble lot of the second there is every possible gradation. This is all the more true in that, thanks to polygamy, lawful households may be found in association with the free unions and concubinage desired by the husband, in such a way that the position of each person in the family, already affected by all these contingencies, is, in the last analysis, dominated by the absolute authority of the fa. We shall see this clearly in connection with filiation, and it is no less apparent regarding wives, except for those already described who have sufficient influence and the means to live virtually independent of the rest of the family. Although in fact a wife who was not paid for has no regular position and her children legally do not belong to either of their parents, although a concubine does not even count as a person, according to custom, and her children are their genitor's slaves, merely by the will of the fa either of them may have an enviable pre-eminence in the family, especially envied by the lawful wives.

593 562 Under these circumstances, it may be admitted that conjugal duties, obedience, fidelity, and their counterparts, the rights to help and assistance, have nuances that vary from one situation to another. It is true that a wife must obey her husband and that he is allowed to resort to [208] corporal punishment to control her, which he does not fail to use. She is not completely at his mercy, however. For instance, he can require her to live in a given place; nevertheless, if it has been agreed that she is not to leave the tribal territory, and this usually tacitly understood, he may not take her away. He can force her to do household chores, but if she is free, he cannot require her to do servile tasks. In the same way, he cannot rent out her services, put her up as security, or sell her.

837 The duty of reciprocal fidelity is most often very vague. Admittedly, this is not expected of the husband, and indeed, the wife often encourages his lapses from virtue on the theory that this indulgence will attach him to her. As far as a wife's misbehavior is concerned, a husband does not always give it much importance and is sometimes not at all averse to profiting from it. If children result from her indiscretions, he is not distressed in the least about accepting or denying them. [848]

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● [562] Women are not admitted to the men's circle. Gathered near the mother's hut, they know that a name has been given, but do not know what it is. The woman who tied the cord then washes the baby three times in warm, soapy water and, taking water into her mouth, sprinkles the tiny body from neck to lower back three times. She then expresses her good wishes. Carrying the child, she goes to the door of the hut, where the father and family heads are waiting, and asks the name. Then she returns to the women and places the child on the lap of an old woman who blows into the baby's ears three times and then shouts in each ear: "Kuyo! Kuyo! i tua dara, "that is, "Kuyo! Kuyo! [854] your name is ...." The child is then wrapped in the narrow swaddling band which the mother will henceforth use to carry him on her back, and if it is a boy, the baby is rolled three times over the blade of an ax, or if a girl, over an iron implement for picking cotton. While this is going on, everyone is expressing best wishes.

[184] In Kaarta the ceremony is somewhat different. A beef or a sheep killed in front of the mother's hut, and dege [Ed., coarsely ground millet in water] is also prepared. The baby's [564] head is shaved, and the hair is placed on the dege. Each guest puts his right hand on the edge of the gourd and a griot expresses good wishes for the newborn child. Then the guests dance around the dish of dege; the hair is removed from it and given to the mother to keep. [213] Then if the occasion warrants it, the [304] three lines of tattooing peculiar to the Kouloubali are made on the baby's face with a dagger. Finally the griot takes the child, carries it around the crowd, and returns it to the father, who must then make known the chosen name. When the father has pronounced the name, the griot again takes the child and, making a trumpet of his hands, cries out to him three times: "your name is...."

551 In principle, the name (tua) recalls some circumstance surrounding the birth. A posthumous child is usually given his father's name, as though he were the reincarnation of the father, or more commonly, he is called Fa-n-ko, "posthumous" (literally, "the one who came after the fa"). If the baby shows some resemblance to a deceased person, he is named for the person or,

882 [836] in the [216] soli, the n-golo-moso, and with other girl friends are not merely platonic; indeed, sexual licentiousness is common.

As in everything else, a girl's life is more restricted. For her, the soli is merely a way of being presented to society, as we would say, that is, a means of attracting a prospective husband.

884 Coming-of-age, guardianship, deprivation of civil rights. It is obvious from the above that a Bambara has no way of knowing his age with any certainty. At best, he can estimate it by referring to some important event known to have occurred at about the time of his birth.

Since this is the case, we can see that coming-of-age has no correlation with chronological age. The individual's physical development and, still more, his intellectual maturity are signs that lead his family to grant a kamalen' the rights that distinguish a man from a boy. The most important of these rights is assuredly that of taking a wife and founding a family.

As a matter of fact, the soli marks the point after which
the young people of both sexes are deemed competent to contract
[582] marriages. Indeed, girls of 16 or 18 years of age and boys over
25 are rarely unmarried. It should further be understood that a
girl may be betrothed at birth or even when she is being carried
in the womb, as has been explained above.

429 Guardianship is intended to protect the individual from
the follies of inexperience and the natural weakness of the female
● 562 sex, a weakness to be understood here to include not only actual
lack of physical strength but also incompetence imposed by
custom which forbids a woman any power whatever over community rights or property. This is why young men are subject to guardianship until the fa, in council, recognizes their right to exercise the prerogatives of man's estate. In principle, women are subject to guardianship throughout their lives.

429 During his married life, the father is the legal administrator of any properties coming to his minor children, and he usually employs such property with discretion since he is legally bound to render an account when the children reach their majority.

614 575 [421] Within the clan, property is also held in common and administered by the fama who distributes it among the dyon'-kuntigi. The latter, in turn, make a further distribution as it is needed.

In the fla-n-ton' the important thing was provisions, material well-being. The same thing is true in the clan. The ton'-dyon' are interested in the profit to be derived from the association, and their feeling for the state is embodied in a very prosaic word, to-da, literally, "the pot of mush." Indeed, this is the principal item on the menue of any fraternal feast of the fla-n-ton'.

614 421 The property of the clan, as of the fla-n-ton', is theoretically jointly held by all the members, but since there is a large amount of it, some sort of sharing is necessary, first to consume it and then to reward zeal and fidelity and to encourage emulation and devotion. As a result, the basic egalitarianism is altered. From the clan's beginning it was conceded that a substantial part of the wealth should go to those [308] who had done most to acquire it. Thus, the leader of an expedition had a prior right because of his "luck," and he and his men further received the wherewithal "to repair the rents in their shirts," i.e., to indemnify them for damages suffered during the expedition.

[727] Each warrior kept his own loot, except for unusually valuable things which went to the clan and therefore to the fama who represented it. The part of the loot not taken by individuals was distributed by the fama after abstracting the best and largest part of it for himself.

Strictly speaking, no one actually owned any of this wealth, since all of them, even the fama, merely held it on very precarious terms. Through the caprice of the clan, anyone could [562] have everything taken away, and this applied to persons as well as to things, because the wives and children of the ton'-dyon' were, like himself, the "chattels" of the clan.

The passage of time softened the outward form of these principles; barring abuse or notorious misconduct, each individual had indefinite use of what was allotted to him and handed it on to his descendants. This usufruct, incidentally, was broader than that of our law. In addition, Mamari arrogated to himself a kind of eminent right: he appointed himself -- through usurpation facilitated by his power -- the dispenser of offices and wealth

695 [687] False testimony is punished by confiscation of all goods and arrest of the whole family; part of the goods goes to the victim. If the witness refuses to take the oath, his refusal is evidence against the party that called him. When the parties in a trial disagree, the Fama makes one swear on the Komo, on his platform, or on the tomb of the group's founding ancestor. When the oath has been pronounced, the adversary may efface it by taking the oath in his turn. Then judgment will be suspended; but before 40 days have passed the perjurer must die.

[687] Anyone who attempts to suborn a witness or a child will be punished in the same fashion as the false witness.

The Fama must assign to one or several notables the mission of examing the scene where the disputed incident took place; he may designate a notable to examine and evaluate the damages. Once their mission is accomplished, the notables are subject to the same obligations as the witnesses.

693 695 The role of defense attorney was taken by one of the Fama's advisors, a relative, a griot, a blacksmith, or a favorite of the Fama, he who "speaks best." The accused, or someone from his family, approached the prospective defender and offered him a gift, asking him to intervene in his favor. But the counselor had only the power to save the life of the condemned who had to pay a settlement; all punishments other than death were applied.

625 Police functions were carried out by the sofa and by members of the brotherhoods.

b. Punishments

681 The punishments were, in order of descending importance: death, being put in irons permanently or for a set time, the whip, the fine, confiscation of the family, confiscation of goods, sale to the slave traders.

Murderers and inveterate brigands had their heads cut off; spies had their heads shattered by an axe or were bludgeoned (like ● [562] dogs). A woman was never executed. The Fama who had a woman put to death would have seen his kingdom disappear.

All those condemned to irons were imprisoned in a hut, immobilized, the feet hobbled by a bar fixed to a ring; the patient

428 his oldest son. If there are only daughters, the goods are divided among them. Secondly, if there are no children, the heirs are the collateral males, or, in the absence of these, the collateral females. Third in line, if there are no collateral relatives, are relatives of preceding generations. In default of these, the fourth in line is the surviving spouse. If there is none, the estate is without heir, it goes to the head of the settlement (the dugu-tigi) when the settlement is an independent one, to the Fama in the contrary case (1)."

1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

In the Bougouni region, Aubert distinguishes two orders of
428 succession: "First, that which concerns disposition of the women,
587 second, that which concerns disposition of the privileges and wealth
562 of the faya ... as far as the disposition of women is concerned, the
men succeed each other in the following order: 1. the younger brother in order of primogeniture; 2. the men of the following generation in order of primogeniture; 3. the Fama ... And as far as wealth is concerned: 1. the oldest brother; 2. the son (always in order of primogeniture); 3. the father; 4. the younger brother in order of primogeniture; 5. the oldest relative; 6. the Fama." (2)

2. Aubert, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Bougouni Circle) [.

Women can neither inherit nor transmit.

428 For the Bamako circle, Ortoli sets forth the following rules of succession: " ... Only men, in the following order, have rights of succession: 1. full brothers of the deceased in order of primogeniture, 2. half-brothers on the father's side in the same order; 3. sons of the deceased in the same order; 4. nephews of the deceased in the same order and following the order of primogeniture of the full and half-brothers (on the father's side); 5. grandsons and grandnephews following the same rule of order; 6. the village; 7. the Fama ... But as concerns the personal patrimony, the order of inheritance is as follows: 1. younger full brothers in order of primogeniture; 2. younger half-brothers on the father's side in order of primogeniture;

D. Position of Women

562 Women's society has remained much more impenetrable to
European civilization. Women very rarely go to French schools, and
unlike the men, who, during their military service and otherwise,
are partly immersed in our system of civilization, they have few
contacts with the Whites and appear to be even more attached to cus-
tom than their husbands. Very few speak French, and for all these
[191] reasons their society has remained closed and very imperfectly known
to the Whites.

562 Reasoning from what is known of their juridicial situation, we
have deduced their inferior position. Perhaps a better knowledge of
858 their role and of their importance in the society will lead us to very
different conclusions. From the legal point of view, a woman is al-
ways a minor; she belongs first to her own community, to which she
owes obedience, then to her husband's community. When the mar-
riage is legal, that is to say, when the husband has paid the matri-
monial settlement, the children belong to the husband; if not, in
the case of concubinage, the woman's family can claim the child,
because it belongs to the family, as does everything of the mother's.

562 Her marriage is decided on by the fa; although in practice
the woman is often consulted indirectly beforehand, and she has a
582 certain liberty in her choice. Even a slave can refuse to marry her
583 master, despite gifts and promises. But a woman is forbidden to
marry someone she considers a relative, that is, someone who be-
longs to her paternal line and who bears the same name she does.
Exogamy is the rule.

562 Yet, when a woman marries, she keeps her paternal name and
her personal taboos; sometimes she adds her name to that of her son,
593 who normally bears the dyamu of his father. The woman remains
very attached [75] to her family and goes to stay with them often.
Among them she will find support in case of a difference of opinion
[586] with her husband. In case of divorce through the fault of the husband,
he loses all rights over the wife as well as the settlement he had paid.

595 In the system of polygamy, the first wife is mistress of the
house; the other wives gather at her place for meals. She distributes
[431] the husband's presents, but aside from these privileges, the rights
of the wives are equal as are those of their children.

562 When the husband dies, the wives are considered the principal
428 wealth of the heir. Among certain Bambara, the wives are divided
768 among the brothers; the eldest brother chooses and then has the other
587 brothers choose in order of age. Among others, the heritage goes to
the children who must ally themselves with their father's wives. The wives who do not want to remain with the heir have the option of returning to their families, providing the settlement is returned.

The wife may have personal property given to her by her
428 parents at the time of marriage. Among certain Bambara, the
562 father of the bride must give her the settlement paid by the husband,
and this becomes her personal property. When a widow dies, all of her goods go to her eldest son; if there is no son, half of her goods goes to her daughters, and the other half is divided among her father, her mother, and her brother. When a married woman dies without children, her goods are divided between her husband and her father; if she no longer has her father, half goes to her husband and the other half to her brothers and sisters.

On the other hand, we have seen how a woman may inherit all of the wealth of a family head, and even of a chief, in default of male heirs, and the Mali empire had a woman Keita at its head, daughter of Naré, fa Maghan.

A woman must not take part in any political discussion or
562 demonstration, which does not mean that her role in these matters
662 is nil. All the history of Mali is full of palace intrigues which reach
their acute stage at the moment of a Fama's death and of the election of a new chief. It is at this moment that the women knew how to throw into the balance all the weight of their family's power to determine the new election.

Finally, we have seen that in a fashion parallel to the male
562 brotherhoods and societies, the women were organized into powerful
561 hierarchical societies according to their age classes and their degree
575 of initiation. These societies, where men do not enter, are still
imperfectly known, but they are at least as formidable as the male brotherhoods.

The woman must pound the millet, draw water, and carry out
562 all the household chores, but when the man kills an animal, the meat
belongs to the wife, and the man must accept in turn what she will give him.

782 The *Komo* of Sioribougou has ordered us to do this; its mother, 778 *M'gouni Domba*, informed it that we owe this saraka to Death."

782 The *saraka*, a term derived from the Arabic word (صَدَقَة) meaning "alms," is no less than compulsory giving of alms to God, the *djiné* genii, or to ancestors upon orders of a sorcerer; it really is a tax, a tribute which cannot be avoided and which is offered and presented (1) to the invisible beings.

1. *Saraka di*, "to give a *saraka*," is the Bambara expression.

A *saraka* is in no way a sacrifice, even when it involves bloodshed. Cutting the throat of a hen, a dog, or a kid does not in itself constitute a sacrifice, for otherwise we would have to conclude that every butcher and every cook sacrifices. He who cuts the throats must have the intention of making a sacrifice, and this intention is so essential that it is always expressed by the Negroes: "*soni do*, this is a sacrifice," he says as he makes the knife thrust. In performing a *saraka*, it is important for the officiant to say that he is not sacrificing, so he expresses his intention in the words: "*saraka do*, this is a *saraka*," and all present repeat after him: "*saraka do*, this is a *saraka*."

In every sacrifice there is a priest, and the responsibility is especially entrusted to him, but in the *saraka* there is no priest strictly speaking. Doubtless when a *saraka* is given by a village or a family, the head of the village or of the family is asked to officiate, but this is done out of deference, or by necessity if the *saraka* involved is given indirectly through the mediation of a fetish. In the case of a direct *saraka* the sorcerer himself can designate the person who should give it, and anyone, man or woman, is eligible; they need only be either circumcised or excised. Obviously, a woman is /65/ never [562] chosen for a public *saraka*. Where a man is available, a woman must step aside, and in order to safeguard the principles of the hierarchy, a respected old man, an elder, is chosen in the absence of a priest.

At the end of a public sacrifice the sacrificer usually receives a choice morsel and the skin of the animal, and those present roast

772 more, to a brother, one of his people? It is more difficult for a Bambara to deserve hell than to avoid it; thus they need not think about it and never do think about it.

Paradise hardly absorbs their thoughts more. The thought that they are called upon to contemplate the Creator, to live near Him and rejoice in Him, has not touched them for a long time; they have evolved too far; they have reached the last runs of degradation, and to go lower they would have to be Moslems. Furthermore, the paradise of Mohammed seems absurd to them! That indecent corps of virgins with modest looks and beautiful black eyes, whose color makes them resemble ostrich eggs carefully hidden in the sand (2), leaves them indifferent. They still prefer the ones here below, undoubtedly on the principle /83/ that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" /literally: "one good thing that you have is worth 36 that you will have"/. Virginity is too beautiful for the Bambara to have a word
[83/] for it; it is the flower of a day which a girl of ten no longer has. And what does it matter to them whether a woman is young or somewhat
[562] mature, virgin or not, pretty or ugly; to them a woman, a real one, is a good servant, a good cook, and one who provides carnal pleasure at a man's will without ever tiring.

The pleasures and joys of this earth suffice for the Negro; he wishes for no others, and no doubt that is why he believes in a perpetual return. If, when barely in the grave, he already lives again in the womb of a woman, could the idea of judgment after death, the idea of the end of the world and a new judgment, make an impression on his mind? Can he who lives again and again conceive of the end of the world?

It is senseless to speak of their knowledge of Adam, father of
773 the human race, and of Eve, his wife. The Bambara meaning of the
829 words Adama (Adam) and Awa (Eve) are quite different from the one we give them. When a missionary, a Moslem, or any European introduces himself to them as the son of Adam and Eve, these words are to them generic terms denoting the first father and the first mother

2. Koran, Chap. XXXVII - v. 47.

778 before, whoever wants to own a boli must unite with it in as close a
182 bond as if he were contracting a fourou marriage. In order to seal this
union he must offer kola nuts, fourou gosi (1), to the village head and the elders, in short, have a wedding (konio).

Women, uncircumcised men, and the uninitiated are never
778 present at the sacrifices and festivals in honor of the fetishes of which
182 I speak. However, I have seen women summoned to clap their hands
562 and sing the praises of the Komo or the Kono. On the nights of the
festivals they stay inside the village, and paths leading to the square where they are gathered are closed with kara, or coarse mats. Near them they hear the roar of trumpets and horns, and from time to time, above the mats, the silhouette of a hideous mask appears in sight and freezes them with fear and terrifies them, but in the dark of the night they cannot see details and are not able to say what they have seen. When the Nama is brought out (2), the women are summoned at daybreak at the moment when the god is put back into his beehive, and

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1. The tribute which every man must pay if he wishes to enjoy his marriage legitimately.

2. The phrase "to bring out the Nama" is my translation for the Bambara expression, Nama bora, which means that a sacrifice to the idol has been made, and that the night is spent in shouting and dancing the sacred dances. The Negroes also have the expression, a djigina so, "he came to visit us at home," (a djigina, ("he visited us at"...; so, "our home"). These expressions are used in relation to all boli.

778 782 562 /152/ at the foot of the tree under which the initiates shouted and danced all night, they are shown the siri found by the djenfa tjéou (1) and the darotigi, or darotala (2). While these siri (3) are burned, the women dance and sing the praises of the idol.

778 782 The boli have two days of rest a week, Monday and Thursday (4). It is nevertheless permissible to sacrifice to them on these days,

1. Djenfa tjeou; those who run with heads of the Nama.

2. Darotigi, or darotala: he who rings the bell and precedes the djenfa tjéou with a lantern.

[754] 3. The siri are sacred objects which initiates of siri, the souba, throw here and there in the environs of the village in order to cast evil spells and sorcery on persons to whom they wish harm. Every time the Nama is brought out 20 to 40 siri are found. These small amulets /sic/, made of a little of everything, including trouser buttons, hooks, and belt buckles, tremble and moan while the women watch them. I have been present several times at this performance but have never perceived these tremblings and moanings, doubtless because I am not a Negro.

[304] 4. They rest in the sense that a festival at which they preside, e.g., a circumcision, never takes place on those days.

626 Every seducer who has paid the fine demanded by the fiancé can walk with head held high, for he has satisfied justice, cleansed his honor, and his shield is unstained. But let him not be careless enough to go to the village of the injured fiancé, for he will be /164/ beaten hard by the young people; his exclusion often lasts for years.

010 Now, there is no reason to be surprised at the Bambara attitude toward adultery and fornication. If it can all be reduced to a violated principle of justice and nothing more, that is because they have fallen so low that they believe they were created and put in the world by God in order to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh as much as possible.

Abortion

562 Monsieur Louis Barbier wrote in the "Quinzaine" (January 16, 1906) /"Étude sur les populations Bambaras de la Vallée du Niger (A Study of the Bambara Peoples of the Niger Valley)"/: "The Bambara woman is a machine to produce children and do heavy work." In this statement he expresses, I am sure, the belief of all Europeans who have stayed among the Negroes without mingling with them or living their life. If the Bambara woman "is a machine to produce children," [163] it is a slow machine. I know families where there are seven and eight children by the same wife, but that is unusual; the average remains two or three children per woman.

853
837 It is not through frequent childbearing or because they are prolific that Bambara women lose their charms and wither. They do not, and cannot, conceive but every two or three years; they cannot bear a child more than once every three or four years, since every mother nurses her child for at least two whole years, and quite often three, and during all that time she may not conceive. Does she remain continent during that time? What is to be thought of these utterances on the part of a husband:

A ye den soro a ti son toun.
She has had a child, she wants no more relations with me.
Né t'a don toun, ne tigouéré a la toun.
I do not know her any more, I no longer go near her.

765 Malakou, salakou
Fari ô, fari doun ka di." (2)

2. A song heard in Bani country. Since these songs are often improvised, they differ from one region to another.

Translation: "Ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans (fari) and to eat all one's fill, ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans!"

The excised daughters and grandaughters of the deceased wear mourning for about eight to ten days. During this time they stay in the b'lon, or entry hut, and spin cotton. The only noteworthy fact [513 is that they all sleep in the same hut and attend to the wants of nature 514] at set times, going to the bush evening and morning in Indian file with white veils on their heads. For the whole moon following the [292] death, the wife (the wives if the old man was polygamous) of the deceased wear sandals of goatskin and go out dressed only in white.

768 At the end of the moon, the wives of the deceased become the property of the head of the family, who makes them his own or gives 562 them to his circumcised children (3). Some freedom is left to them,
428

3. Brothers succeed brothers. If there are no brothers, the oldest son inherits. If the deceased is younger than the brother who inherits, the latter possesses the wives but may not enjoy them. If the heir is the son of the deceased, all the father's or grandfather's wives belong to him, and he may enjoy them all except his mother.

for they can ransom themselves if they wish, and for the old and worn, difficulties are soon smoothed away. If the new family head is without a brother and without children or if he is older than the deceased,

768 562 482 the women belong to him but he cannot make them his own. From then on they remain without husbands unless they ransom themselves, and they quickly become soungourou (4). /224/

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4. Soungourou, a woman who gives herself to the first comer.

Burials of the Second Category, Those of Heads of Families

764 . Having described the respects paid to old people, that is, to grandfathers, I now need only proceed by elimination and say which of the procedures listed are not included in the burials of other persons. The honors paid to the gouatigi, or head of the family, whether or not he is married, are identical, or almost identical, to those paid to old people. But if he is not a hunter and none of his children is an initiate of the sect, his death is not announced by gunshots. Moreover, there are no dances except for the djansa, held evening and morning for three days, nor does anyone come at the time when the body is removed to the cemetery to accuse or excuse himself for a lack of respect or consideration toward the deceased. Through the intermediary of the herald or of the person in charge of the funeral ceremonies, each pays his respects and his few cowrie shells, and, after a pardon is asked on behalf of all, the prayer is said.

If he dies childless or is laid in the grave on a Wednesday or Saturday, unlucky days, the deceased gouatigi receives a white pullet to pay the spirits for his welcome as he enters Lahara, and he receives it alive. If a wife of a gouatigi is buried on an unlucky day or dies without having given birth to a child (1), an egg of a brooding hen is

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1. If a woman dies after all her children, but has given birth to a child and nursed it, she does not fall into this category. It is a disgrace to receive a hen's egg because one has not had children. The rule is the same for men.

[558]

631 is highly variable, ranging from complete subjection to quasi-independence.

565 [563] The imperial clan, or, if one prefers, the dominant clan, most often prevails over people of races other than that of its own members; frequently this clan itself includes, at least originally, diverse ethnic elements. [158]

If such heterogeneous associates are to live side by side without clashing, they must have a large body of common customs, and this indeed is the case. Wherever one studies it, the native milieu resembles a compartmented area whose individual sections seem, at first glance, to be isolated. At the top of the social structure there is a kind of nobility composed of the head of the clan, his family, and then the families of the clan; next come the free men, simply free or members of castes; and finally the slaves. In actual fact, a continual reciprocal movement between these elements welds all of them together.

614 596 The fact is that the whole social body exists only through the severity of the life of the cells that compose it: the families. Among other characteristics, these families are very jealous of their respective independence; nevertheless, they are closely allied among themselves even as they freely absorb the foreign element constituted by the slaves.

It is, therefore, essential to concentrate our attention on the family cell in order to understand the essential element of native social life. This is all the more true in that all the native collectivities are, so to speak, modeled on the organization of the family.

The Bambara language has no word exactly equivalent to our word "family" in the legal sense (1). Different names are used to designate the collectivity under the authority of the

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1. This is why we prefer the term "community," but in view of the remarks made here, the use of the word "family" will not be ambiguous.

794 The ancestors are worshipped in various places: at the doors and
thresholds of houses, at the cemetery, and at stone altars placed at
769 the intersections of lanes and in public squares. These positive cults,
778 which are aimed at the acquisition of beneficial forces, have as a
counterpart, cults in which the villagers rid themselves of all their
unlucky and infectious elements; these take place, in particular, at
the corssroads, dangu, which are placed under the guardianship of the
earth Soba spirits.

It would be impossible to treat all of the cults of the Bambara villages. Among these, three have caught our attention; they concern the dasiri, the dangu, and the ancestral altar stones.

A. The dasiri

794 The word dasiri (literally, which binds the mouth) designates the
776 invisible spirit, Faro's representative entrusted with watching over
778 /138/ the village, as well as the seat of this spirit and, sometimes
too, the animal which accompanies it or symbolizes it.

The spirit haunts a rock, a thicket, or a tree situated near the village; the approaches to this spot are reserved for the elder in charge of the ritual (1).

[787 Generally the place is pointed out by the geomancer at the time
361] the village is founded, or else determined by an event which occurred
at that time. It is after this operation that the buildings are erected
to the west of the chosen spot.

If the dasiri is a tree, no one may burn or cut its branches. In
[822] many cases it cannot be approached by anyone dressed in black or
indigo, colors which represent obscurity. No Peul may sit in its
[563] shade (2). Any infraction of these taboos brings about the death of

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[824] 1. In Massala and Soroba it is a baobab tree; in Sama, a tamarind tree, etc. See the observations on the dasiri collected by Ch. Monteil, Monographie de Djenné /Monograph of Djenne/, pp. 137-138; L. Tauxier. La Religion Bambara, pp. 195-208.

2. The reasons for the taboo concerning the Peul have not yet been ascertained.

794 In some villages, the sacrificer never
776 consumes butter or milk, foods which
778 the Peul furnish the Bambara.
[563]

the culprit and deprives the villagers of their protector.

The spirit of the dasiri sometimes has as its compansion an animal
794 which seems to represent the group's ancestor. At Ségou, it is a
776 crocodile; at Ouélenguena, a she-ass; at Koulikoro, a monkey; in
825 other places it is a male goat which is replaced when it dies. At Konodimini there are a series of deep intercommunicating wells which would have served as homes for the ancestors. These holes are at present occupied by hyenas which are considered to be incarnations of the blacksmiths of former times and which are the dasiri of the place.

The dasiri's animal is free to enter homes and to eat what it finds. It is often fed by the inhabitants. No one may attack it and whoever breaks this taboo, set on by a vengeful nyama of which he cannot
[582 rid himself, risks being forbidden to marry, even being no longer
626] tolerated in his native village (1).

1. This was, at Soroba, the case of Dji Diara, who, after killing a hyena, could not marry as no woman was willing to link her destiny to his.

As its name indicates, the function of the dasiri is to maintain
794 the stability and integrity of the village. It is the "support of the
776 inhabitants' lives"; the numerous rituals (individual or collective),
782 of which it is the object, reveal the importance of its role as well as the diversity of the beings invoked. To Faro are addressed prayers for rain; to the ancestors prayers for questions /139/ concerning the family; and to the spirit of the tree when it is a matter of stopping an epidemic. But directly or indirectly, any sacrifice offered to the dasiri is offered to Faro. The victims (sheep or fowl) and the offerings (cotton bands, kola nuts) are always white (see Pl. 3, b).

When children reach the age of six or seven, they are led to the
794 tree; they sit on its roots upon which kola nut juice is spat, and are,
778 by this fact, introduced into the village cult. They are then presented
852 to all the allies senãnku and especially to the blacksmiths with whom they proceed to joke.

614 631 "the people (of the clan) of Massa"; the *Segu*-*n*-*ka*-*u* (2).

2. From another point of view, *Segu*-*n*-*ka*-*u* means "the people of the country of Ségou."

"the people (of the clan) of Ségou."

104 128 Since we are always obsessed by our own system of organization, these terms appear in our writings as village (*dugu*), canton or province (*kafu*), and empire (*ton'*, which is a clan).

Because of the convenience of expressions that are familiar to us, we shall use this terminology in this study, and it seems essential to define briefly the value of these terms in native society in order to avoid ambiguity which, to say the least, gives rise to distorted delusions.

173 •563 631 In Kaarta and the Ségou country before the time of the two great clans whose history we have given and whose development and operation we are about to describe, there were *dugu* which usually had no connections or at most were joined in some ephemeral *kafu*. These *kafu* were composed of a majority of Bambara mixed with Soninké and people of other races. The Soninké *dugu* were noted for their prosperity, sometimes even wealth, and this gave them a degree of pre-eminence over the Bambara *dugu*. This prosperity rested on the labor of a slave population that the Soninké had managed to acquire for the most part by commercial dealings.

This *de facto* hegemony usually had no corresponding political or administrative organization; its only outward sign was the scorn with which the Soninké regarded the less fortunate Bambara and, conversely, the sullen hostility of the Bambara toward the rich Marka (as they called the Soninké). As a consequence, local quarrels broke out from time to time which sometimes developed into bloody conflicts. The early history of the Massa-si clan is a good example of this state of affairs, to judge by the record in the chronicle cited above.

173 631 The Ségou-Kaarta regions, under the authority of Mandé and Songhaï clans, were in this state, in semiobscurity because they were outside the zone of direct administration by these clans.

614 all who exercise a calling, and that is why the Bambara call a
564 Peul "*fula fantan'* (weak Peul)" (1), to indicate that he is *in*
*173

potestate.

In order to ensure the greatest return from the clan's flocks, Mamari had recourse to the Peul, just as when he wanted to exploit the Niger, he had taken over the Somono. That is how Peul settlements came to be established, called *furu-ba fla-u*, "Peul of the *furu-ba*." These are free people, but they are required to serve the clan. The ranks of these first Peul were increased by the arbitrary assignment of some of the *furu-ba dyon'*; some pastoralists by choice joined them; and the children of both groups were *furu-ba fla-a* by birth. This went on until there were enough of them for Ngolo Dyara to set up twelve Peul encampments. Mamari divided them into two tribes: the Dyana (people of Dyan), and the Bonguéna (people of Bongué). The *furu-*
● [563] *ba fla-u* speak Bambara, and very few of them can claim to be Peul in ethnic origin.

In the case of the Somono and the Peul, we have seen how the clan exploits the populace, for any people on which the clan forces its authority is treated in the same way. The clan requires a contribution, according to the means of livelihood from each of the population groups it assimilates. The system used for the fishermen and the shepherds was likewise used for the agriculturalists. [325]

In this case, too, the *furu-ba dyon'* were blended with the rural peoples. Although they were relegated to special villages, this isolation never prevented them from maintaining close relations with the people in the surrounding areas.

Here again, there were agriculturalists by adoption. Through time heredity consolidated the close union between these people of the agricultural caste and the clan.

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1. See in Chapter 7 below [not translated] how this expression is used as an insult in the quarrel between Ma-n-son and Bacari Dyan.

144 Third group (southern): four peoples, the Diallonké [Dialonke], the Samo, the Samorho, and the Sia; plus four small tribes of doubtful classification, the Blé, the Natioro, the Ouara, and the Sembla.

More recent studies by Urvoy, Dr. Pales, and Mlle. Tassin de Saint-Péreuse involving very numerous measurements will soon permit determination of the racial characteristics of the Sudanese populations and the establishment of a new classification.

B. Geographical Distribution

131 In his study of the Bambara of Ségou, Charles Monteil tells us that it is impossible to determine what the precise boundaries of the Bambara empire were, because a frontier as we understand it has no meaning for the Black. The empires did not seek to dominate such and such a region; their goal was, above all, the exploitation of the greatest possible number of individuals, without regard to localities or races.

At the present time, the Encyclopédie coloniale et maritime
131 [Colonial and Maritime Encyclopedia] considers that [3] the Bambara
162 form a group of about a million individuals who extend west-east from the region of Siguirio as far as Macina along both sides of the Niger and the Bani rivers, and south-north from the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta to Sahel de Nioro. In addition, there are 40,000 in Senegal: peanut farmers near Kaolack, Thiès, and Diourbel, and captives at Fouta Toro, Saint-Louis, etc. But they are most numerous in the circles [a "circle" is an administrative division] of Bamako (310,000), Ségou (190,000), and Bougouni (110,000). To
● [563] these one may add 125,000 Métis [mixed bloods], Peul-Bambara, of whom 72,000 live in the Bougouni circle alone.

131 More precisely, the great mass of the Bambara is distributed in a region that may be delimited as follows.
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To the northwest, three tribes have been catalogued in the Kaarta: the Dianguirté in the circle of Nioro, the Niamassa at Nioro, and the Massassi to the south of Nioro.

To the north, in the Sahel, the region of Bakounou and Waghadou is inhabited by the Kalongo tribe.

To the northeast, the Bambara live in the Macina, the Issa Ber, the region of Goundam, and up to Timbuktu.

B. Population Movement

162 In 1912, Delafosse in Haut-Sénégal et Niger [Upper Senegal and Niger] gave a total of 538,450 [sic] Bambara in the following regions:

Bamako . . .	146,966	Bougouni . . .	104,216	Ségou . .	109,758
Sikasso . . .	30,000	Kita	2,339	Bafoulabé	2,100
Koutiala. . .	30,035	Goumbou.. . .	22,110	San . . .	20,103
Sokolo . . .	19,996	Djenné . . .	17,246	Niafunké..	16,000
Nioro . . .	9,355	Mopti . . .	7,277	Bandiagara	928

161 All of these figures are notably lower than current ones. However, one must not infer a population increase too hastily. The difference in population figures result of better census methods rather than of a real increase.

Moreover, current demographic information must be considered as still approximate. In fact, censuses may go on for several years in a single region, and those of certain cantons are not yet finished. A large part of the population still avoids the census in order to escape taxes and military service. In certain villages the clandestine population may be as large as the declared population.

167 A number of the Bambara who leave the country temporarily as migratory workers in Guinea, Senegal, the Ivory Coast, and the Gold Coast escape all registration.

161 563 Finally, as soon as we leave the purely Bambara region of the Ségou circle to go into the region of Bougouni, for example, a large part of the population counted as Bambara is in fact of mixed origin, Foula, Malinké, but follows Bambara custom, often no longer speaking the language.

563 This simple enumeration shows how rare it is to find a Bambara ethnic bloc which is not heavily mixed with other tribes. This dispersion is doubtless the result of a complicated historical evolution as we shall see further on.

But we can already point out that the link which unites the different peoples is the chefferie. The different peoples under a common chief little by little consider themselves to be of the same people as their chief. Sometimes the chief may have adopted the nationality of the country whose direction he has assumed.

As an indication, we give the following tables, furnished by the Bureau of Political Affairs of the Sudan. It has not yet been possible to evaluate the rates of births and deaths nor to establish

[text continues on p. 13]

463 554 326 The numu: blacksmiths, whose wives are generally potters. The smiths are the masters of fire, those who cook the sacred earth in order to extract the minerals or to fix the form of pottery.

The loro: coppersmiths.

The garanka: leatherworkers.

The kule: woodworkers, and sometimes saddlemakers.

The donso: hunters, who form powerful and feared associations.

The somono, or fishermen, who have a status a little less restricted than that of the artisans mentioned above.

The dyeli or griot, domestic factotums of a kind, who, although the most disdained of all these, are nevertheless the family archivists.

563 One may add two Peul shepherd tribes, identified by Manson: the Dyanna and the Bouguena (1).

1. See Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

463 564 All of these artisans are endogamous and fixed in caste, father to son. However, the fact that a man belongs to a caste does not obligate him to exercise the caste trade.

326 463 608 The most powerful guild is incontestably that of the blacksmiths. From their ranks are recruited all the priests, the Fama's interpreters, the well-diggers, the grave-diggers, the executioners, the circumcisers, etc. They are the sénanku of all the families and are in charge of all the purification rites.

554 The griot are equally feared, because of the power of their words and because they spread afar the renown of the chiefs.

564 The free man who marries a woman of caste marries beneath himself, and his children are looked down on.

326 527 The purest blacksmith families are those of the Fané Balo; the purest griot those of the Koniaté. People of caste always remain at liberty; when they are captured during a war, they make themselves known and keep their status.

463 326 [64] These different guilds are sufficient to maintain in the Bambara country a certain industry of a distinctly artisan and non-specialized type. Thus, the smiths work iron, copper, and wood to

551 576 778 4. This effect is already obtained by the simple repetition of the family name with which one greets a man upon meeting him. It is common to hear the Blacks greet each other by repeating their *dyamu* to each other several times.

its possessor's soul, *ni*. If, at this moment, the person flattered is in a normal state, his device causes his "soul to swell and his body to harden, inciting him to courageous action and joy." If the contrary is true, anger or emotion takes the place of contentment and calmness.

The reciter receives in return the strength of the beneficial word which, having contented the person it was addressed to, contents him also. There is an exchange of *nyama*: that which the reciter sends out and that which he receives in return and from which he benefits.

551 576 778 564 That is why the recitation of the device is not always left to the individual's discretion. Because of its importance, it has become a public function generally reserved for the *griot* (*dyeliw*) who form a caste practicing endogamy and who earn their living by getting paid to recite the devices and adulations in daily life as well as during public or religious ceremonies (1). But the fact that they earn a salary for this service affects their dignity: nobody else ever recites the devices because nobody wishes to be taken for a *griot*, and nobody ever marries him. The *griot* is at once indispensable, feared, and despised. The mechanism of forces put into motion by his action makes it possible to understand the ambivalence of feelings of which he is the object.

/78/ When the words come out of his mouth, the *griot's* *tere* is transformed into *nyama*, which becomes filled with a force called *kuma nyamu*, "*nyama* of words." This force goes from the head to the mouth of the speaker and reaches the person addressed. If a man is wealthy and powerful, it is said that he gets the "*nyama* from the mouth of those *griot* who flatter him." He is then forced to pay them for their encouragement. If he does not, they remain silent when

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1. The recitation given by anyone other than the *griot* would be far from producing the same effect.

551 576 778 564 passing before his door and thus empty him of his *nyama*. The man grows thin and poor. The *griot* may bring about his death with evil words, their *nyama* attacking the heart, the chest, then the entire body of the victim.

The *griot*'s power over the person he flatters becomes more involved and varies according to what he is reciting. If he recites the *burudyu* several times, if he speaks at length of the ancestors, their *nyama* enters his mouth and is added to his own, thus reinforcing the power of the word. Thus, when the *griot* recites a *barama* without receiving payment, his *nyama* attacks the person spoken to. If this offense is repeated and if the *burudyu* is recited, the man is forced to pay if he does not wish to be attacked by the much more formidable *nyama* of the ancestors.

In these various situations, the *tere* of the person flattered intervenes: if it is good, it fights to defend the person, but if it is weak or wicked, it joins the ancestral forces and the person is doubly threatened.

The recitation is always made by the *griot* before a witness so that his action will be more binding and make the miser lose face. On the other hand, a man who pays the *griot* generously is looked after by the latter who sings of his generosity on all occasions and announces the sum he has received; often he does not hesitate to exaggerate the total amount received if he can hope to profit by doing so (1).

[789] 1. If the *griot* knows that the wealthy man he is addressing is miserly, he rubs his teeth with roots which he knows has the power to make his words even more effective.

[554] Sometimes a man reaches a secret agreement with the *griot* in order to gain prestige. He publicly gives him a considerable sum, part of which the *griot* returns the following day as agreed upon. The gift is so generous that none can surpass it.

[585 561] This practice is particularly apparent at the time of marriage. The men of the same age grade as the groom outdo each other in their gifts to the *griot*. The one who has given most passes for the most generous. Sometimes the *griot* invents a new *barama* on the spot even though he does not know the device.

551 576 778 564 The device is recited on numerous occasions. After a birth, the griot proclaim it in the course of the name-giving ceremony, addressing themselves to the father, then to the newborn child /79/ who thus receives it for the first time. At a marriage the barama of the two partners are alternatly recited. In everyday life, the recitation is carried on most frequently during religious ceremonies or feasts. In the hunt or at war, it has the effect of helping the participants and increasing their courage (1). In a meeting it is used to greet people bearing the same name, and if one of the assistants is to be particularly honored, the first words of his device are recited.

551 755 In case of illness, the ally (senãnku) (2) comes to the patient's side and recites his barama to encourage him and help him get well. If he is dying, the recitation, which is then the equivalent of a prayer, may help his soul return. After death, the ally, the griot, and the [764] blacksmiths come near the corpse to recite his barama in order to honor him.

551 576 539 The devices pertaining to the various crafts are used when addressing the artisan with whom one has business. Thus the blacksmith to whom one brings work is greeted first by his name to which is then added:

"ini fara ani goni, you are with stone and fire."

A person crossing a field will say to the farmer bent over the earth: "i ni tye i ba ka kusebe daba, greeting to him who handles the hoe well," or simply: "i ni tye daba la, greeting to him who is with the hoe." To the shoemaker one would say: "bana ani ba golo, (you are) with the acacia (3) and the goat leather."

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[727] 1. If the griot recites it to a war chief and the town under attack is taken, he receives part of the loot.

2. See p. 119.

[386] 3. This refers to the bana or baina (Acacia arabica) used by the shoemaker to make a black dye.

551 576 The institution of the device, with all its elaborations, has the effect of confirming people in their bodies, their spiritual principles, and their social functions. Except for the cases of emigration mentioned above, the occasions are rare indeed when an individual is obliged to change his name or device during his life. A woman keeps her father's barama even after marriage.

551 848 ● 564 783 An illegitimate child receives neither the name nor the device of his family. They may be given him later if the father makes himself known. A Bambara who contracts a misalliance, for example, by marrying the daughter of a blacksmith or a griot, will bring into the world impure children who will never have a right to their father's baramà (1).

552 782 We must add that the prerogative of having a device is not limited to humans. All animate beings, many /80/ inanimate ones, the elements of nature, places, villages, plants, animals, and all the supernatural powers have theirs which men address during prayers.

The Taboo

784 [551] One or several eating taboos, tne or tana, are attached to the family name and are observed by all who bear the name. According to certain initiates, the taboos were decreed by Faro when he determined the food proper to each species (2) after having classified the beings of creation. For the common man, the origin of the taboo is always the subject of a tale or legend and justifies the bonds between an ancestor of the family and the animal or plant designated. Most frequently, the animal has helped the man, has saved his life, or the other way around; or else, following some serious events, the ancestor was transformed into an animal or plant. Numerous versions of the origins of such bonds are given.

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1. Such a child is said to be a sofali (literally, horse donkey), that is, a bastard.

2. See p. 52.

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1. These three plants are respectively: Andropogon (Hyparrhenia) hirtus, Digitaria debilis, Cenchrus catharticus.

before the cultivation of cotton and cereals was known to them, the Bambara worked the soil with wooden sticks around the base of those grasses whose seeds they then sowed. As their stock of tools developed, they began to make the first hoes and axes. In the case of the Mandé Bambara (2) the origin of these tools is linked with the history of the

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2. The names and the origin of tools of the Bambara of the Ségou region are different.

blacksmiths, numu, who form a kind of caste in this part of Africa as in many others. They practice endogamy, maintain joking relationships, senankuya, with other Blacks, and are in charge of certain cults dedicated to ancestors and to Faro (3).

3. On the myth of the divine origin of blacksmiths, see S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara." See also infra, p. 53 n. 1

Before the discovery of metal, ancestors of the present blacksmiths worked with wood, then stone. From then on they bore the name of numu, a term which today is reserved exclusively for the artisans of iron, jirifa numu or farafa numu, according to whether they worked with wood or stone (4).

4. L. Desplagnes mentions the historical aspect of the origin and role of the Sudanese blacksmiths (Le Plateau central nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, p. 110).

The peoples issued from the intermixture of the ou, shepherds (Getules), with the ar, sedentary tribes (Fari), have already been pointed out in earliest antiquity by writers, historians, and geographers who called them Numidians. Salluste tells us that "The Faronsû, in mixing with the

113 getules (gne-Toules), formed the nation
326 of Numidians.
564 But according to tradition, these half-breed Numidians, today called Noumous, were the first initiators among primitive peoples of the industrial arts; thereafter the title of Noumous was kept and applied to all blacksmiths."

And in the footnote on the same page: "But in Nigerian countries, this term for blacksmith, Noumou, does not necessarily contain the notion of a metallurgist."

/114/ All blacksmiths said to be of "pure blood," that is to say those who belong to the three families of Fané, Koumaré, and Balo, are descended from the Gwonna, who came from the underground village of Gwondougou and to whom goes the glory of having discovered iron.

According to informants, the word Gwonna comes from gwã, a name usually given to the hearth of the forge, which designates precisely the place from which the ore is extracted and where it is treated. The high furnace is called gwã so. The gwã tuku munu, extracting blacksmith, is the only one able to perform important rites. The word Fané derives from fã, which designates the forge in its entirety. Koumaré comes from kuma, word. It is the Koumaré who are charged [537] with the responsibility of debating in council meetings or in public gatherings. The word Balo recalls the fact that the bearers came to settle in former days on the shores of the Niger, ba.

The Gwonna are senãnku of the other blacksmiths. Moreover, in the villages where they live together with other artisans, they are by right the chiefs of the Komo and guardians of the sanctuaries where the ancestral tools are kept. Only if they fail in their obligation will the blacksmiths belonging to other families assume these duties.

The titles of the Gwonna are linked to the mythical origin of the forge which is under the domination of the Téliko spirits, masters of the air and wind, hence of the bellows and fire.

773 564 326 They inherited them from the eight ancestors who, before the appearance of death, were transformed into bee eaters (tatugu kononi) by the balanza and who received the power to activate or to extinguish fire (1).

1. See p. 43.

The Téliko spirits, jealous of the independence of these new beings, resolved to subdue them and waged war on them. The birds, who had no weapons, bewailed and a Gwonna blacksmith took pity on them; he requested axes, hoes, and arrows from the men of his family and gave them to the birds, receiving in return the promise of revelations which would be useful to him. Having made this arrangement, the birds, armed with weapons, went to meet Téliko at the place called gonya. They used their weapons in a gigantic conflict in which neither adversary could vanquish the other.

/115/ The birds then returned to earth and thanked the blacksmiths by teaching them three secrets necessary to the good progress of their work:

1. How to build their altars by mixing in a panther skin cold water, iron, and a stone, soul of the forge.
2. How to protect from the fire the hands of women potters.
3. How to make and consecrate the circumcision knife.

Since these revelations, the Gwonna venerate these teachers, thus raising the number of their ancestors to sixteen: the first eight transformed into birds who had not the use of speech, and the eight others who received the word from Faro.

564 326 In each village the patriarch of the Gwonna holds the title of kotigi (literally, owner of things). He guarantees the custody of the ancestral tools deposited in a sanctuary and of the ritual objects which belong to the blacksmiths of the village, and which are kept in his home. In addition, he is the only one who may perform the rituals concerning these tools and the purifications.

The important position of the Gwonna family is translated into ritual. Whereas an ordinary blacksmith, after breaking a taboo, must request the intervention of the kotigi to purify himself, a Gwonna simply asks the members of his own family.

● 564 Every blacksmith is regarded as the holder of an excellent *tere*.
326 He is well-intentioned, affable, and never hurts anyone. It is easy
774 to make friends with him, to joke with him, even if one knows him
but a short time. The *senankuya* relationships which he has with other
Blacks also contribute to the cordiality of these ties.

[304] The good *tere* of the blacksmith is brought into play particularly at circumcision which is preferably entrusted to a Gwonna. Being circumcised by a blacksmith causes the *wanzo* to diminish rapidly, hastens the healing, and improves the *tere*. A blacksmith is reputed to have the power of transforming himself at will into an animal or a plant. In those places where hyenas are venerated as the animal [825] protectors of a village (*dasiri*), they are always considered as the blacksmith's ancestors who have undergone metamorphosis. (1).

1. Particularly in the village of Konodimi, situated 21 km. to the southwest of Ségou.

773 564 326 412 The ritual paraphernalia now preserved in each village comprise models of all the tools manufactured by the blacksmiths since their first appearance.

a. *Wooden tools* The craftsmen first used wood, gradually changing the shape of the objects. From a simple stick /116/ (generally in *sunzun*) (2) or from a rough-hewn block, they gradually made more

2. *Diospyros mespiliformis*. The wood of this tree is very hard.

perfect tools, obtaining the shape desired by rubbing and polishing on rocks.

773 564 326 411 The first weapon used in hunting was a throwing instrument in the shape of a boar-spear, the *semenkala* (from *kala*, handle, Fig. 9, A). Hewn from one piece, it comprised three distinct parts: (1) the *bulonda*; (2) the *semenu*; and (3) the *koli* (literally, hook). Men threw the object with all their strength at the pursued animal or else they dug into the earth where their prey was hiding with the pointed end (*semena*) which was often poisoned with a viper's venom. The weapon was the object of blood sacrifices carried out on the *koli* and destined to increase its strength.

773 The first agricultural tool was the *yirewolo* (literally, noble, Fig.
564 9, B), thus named because of its antiquity, *mogokoroba* (literally, old
326 person, ancestor).

41? b. *Stone tools* Later, craftsmen learned to use stone. They used
[172] neolithic axes called "thunder stones" (1) which were used as scissors. Those of the Gwondougou were at all times famous for their solidity. The craftsmen worked together and when they had rough-hewn their models, certain individuals among them were delegated to sharpen these by rubbing them on a rock.

The *farakun* (literally, stone head) (Fig. 9, D) was the first axe the handle of which was invented by an artisan who, having poisoned the sharp edge of his tool, wished to try it out on a tree. He sank the stone into a young tree trunk with the idea that the leaves would dry up of themselves. But he died without having ascertained the result. Later a passerby, having tried in vain to remove the stone from the tree, cut the wood above and below it, and in handling this new tool, was surprised at its efficiency. The use of the hafted axe spread among men who utilized the fiber of the *nyama* to tie the stone to the wood. In addition, the stone could be separated quickly from the handle and used as a knife to cut meat or bones. The handle was used as a pointed stick with which to dig in the ground and to attack animals.

It is probable that hafting was also applied to wooden hoes made in two sections and used /117/ for a long time in areas where there was no hard stone. In fact, a myth concerning the discovery of the cultivation of cotton, which preceded that of cereal grains, mentions the fact that men used to take their handles home, but left the ends of their hoes at the crossroads each day in honor of the local spirit.

c. *Iron tools* Finally, the Gwonna discovered iron and developed the science of metallurgy (2).

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1. The Bambara, like other Blacks of the Sudan, attributed divine origin to certain neolithic axes (see p. 71. It would seem that a great many primitive tools had been found by them in the area at the time of their arrival.

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2. The Blacks consider that the discovery of iron and metallurgy are due to the Gwonna. It is, however, not impossible that this technology was imported by craftsmen who came from the Mediterranean.

At a time when the men had left the village of Gwondougou, taking their altars with them, two girls left their home and went to live with two artisans of the Fané and Koumaré families.

[532]

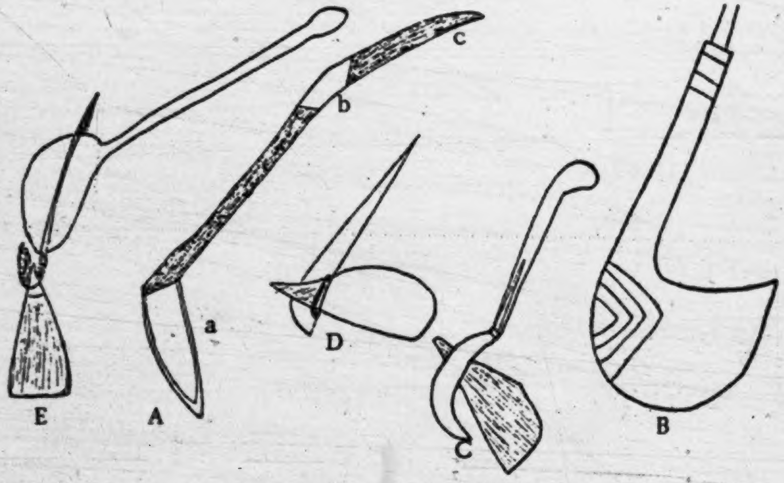

Fig. 9 —Weapons and tools of wood (A and B), of stone (C and D), of iron (E) of the ancient Bambara. (Drawing by an informant).

When the men returned to the village to get some hard stone which they would like to use, they were very much troubled not to find their girls. They dug the ground to search for them, thinking that they had been buried, since men in those days lived in laid-out underground holes. In the course of this work they discovered some rocks which were hitherto unknown to them and which are called farabele. The men thought these rocks beautiful and wished to use them. When placed in fire they were changed and became so hard /118/ that the hammers with which the men attempted to shape them split. The pieces of iron were then used as projectiles to replace the stones of the slings. But the blacksmiths, who had abducted the young girls and who had returned to the village with their wives, saw the new substance and suggested the idea of making axes out of it.

773 ● 564 The first forged tool, the kongobwona (literally, to abandon hunger), is still used by blacksmiths today as a ritual axe (Fig. 9, E).

326 412 It is made up of a wooden handle terminating in an enlargement which forms its bulk, and pierced by a bent iron rod which in turn holds the cutting edge (farabye) of the axe proper. The handle is very long, allowing the man to work without bending over.

The tool justifies its name for it brought prosperity to the craftsmen. The symbolism of the different sections shows this: the enlarged part of the consecrated model, which each blacksmith keeps on his altar and which is the object of regular rituals, is hollowed out and holds money, millet, and copper. The iron rod which pierces it represents at its lower extremity the tongue of the oldest of the Gwonna, and at its upper extremity that of the youngest, thus recalling the actions and the words of those who discovered the metal for the benefit of all.

... Later, blacksmiths manufactured other models of iron axes and hoes, copying those previously used, but reducing their size.

Each day the end piece of the wooden hoes was abandoned at the crossroads after they had been used in honor of the local spirit. The worker kept only the handle and carved a new tool for the following day. The handles of hoes and axes were considered to be people because they were impregnated with the vital force of those who held them. The farmer left the cutting edge (of stone or iron) in his field and brought home the handle which he placed on his mat at night.

[782] Weapons and tools were the objects of regular sacrifices. The handle was removed and the blood of victims would flow first into the hole used to secure it, then on the cutting edge, while the officiating person recited a prayer.

773 564 326 412 778 Today, the assemblages of ancient tools are called makorobaw ka minew (literally, tools of the great ancestor). Considered as the most respectable and precious /119/ testimony of their civilization, models of each object are kept in sanctuaries called makoroba so (literally, house of the ancestors) which are generally natural caves or holes dug in the ground, reminiscent of primitive habitations. These tools are identified with the ancestors who used them and who were, long before the organization of religious societies, the object of a regular cult. That is why, in deference to this fundamental hierarchy, they are presented to the circumcised in front of the family altars (1) at the time of the initiation of the Komo. Similarly, they

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1. Particularly in the village of Konodimini in the Ségou region.

773 564 are removed from the sanctuaries, honored, and replaced before the
326 Komo altars during the agricultural and funerary rituals; to fail to ob-
412 serve this rule would constitute the breaking of a taboo and entail
778 the most serious disorders.

In the course of the annual ceremony consecrating the dead, these tools are carried to the cemetery and receive as many victims as do the dead, for they represent the ancestors.

The *kotigi* brings them to the same place on two other occasions: during the agricultural ceremonies carried on after the growth of the ear of corn and after threshing the harvest. Axes and hoes are presented one by one at the tombs of the dead and then, reunited in the center of the cemetery, each of them is used once to cut a branch or to dig the soil. This ritual gesture recalls the use which the ancestors made of them.

The Forge

326 The blacksmith establishes his workshop under a shed, usually
826 located in one of the squares or at the entrance to the village. It is the simplest of its kind and involves a minimum of equipment. The forge represents the craftsman: the furnace his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red hot metal is beaten with the hammer, a replica of the *gosilãnde*, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and thunder bolts.

326 The altar of the forge, sometimes situated to the west of the hearth,
778 contains blackened hoe, pickaxe and axe handles, coal (*fininkoro*, literally, old coal) ashes kneaded with clay (*buguri*, literally, ashes of the hearth), all of which belonged to former owners, and finally an axe *kongobwona* called "mother of the altar, " a smaller replica of the ancestral axes.

The bulk of the wood which holds the iron hooks and the blade /120/ is hollowed out and forms a kind of storage divided into three compartments.

The upper one contains money so that whatever happens, the blacksmith will have means to live.

In the central compartment are placed copper and iron, metals which the blacksmith works, as well as water, basic element and preferred seat of Faro, master of the word.

794 852 the Komo's blessings, the Komo's blessing is with him; let him join the men, let his light be with us" (1). The child is then presented in the same way to its grandmother.

1. De dyira la tyę gundo la; ani komo ye dukaw mine nuofe, komo ka barka bi a fe; ka fara tyew ka, ka yele kę an ta ye.

794 These acts anticipate the initiation which later will make the newborn an adolescent member of the Komo society.

794 561 In each village this society is composed of all initiated men, divided into age grades, which are themselves composed, theoretically, of the men circumcised in the same year. Only the griot are not [564] admitted. It is permissible for an individual who has not been initiated immediately after his circumcision to be admitted later if the society agrees. He will belong, regardless of his age, to the age grade with which he will have been initiated.

One age grade has precedence over the other which follows. This hierarchical order is followed strictly in daily life as well as during councils and ceremonies. To break these rules of seniority would mean to disturb the order even in the hereafter, since the Komo gathers together the sum total of both living and dead members.

794 The recruitment of members varies from one region to another because of the expenses involved in the admission ceremony and in [735] participation in the ritual. Some villagers refrain from joining because of poverty, and it also happens that some conversions to Islam are brought about by this fact.

/155/ The initiation is performed at night. The kotigi (2) presents to the future members, one by one, the ancestors' tools. He explains to them their origin, their history, their role, and their spiritual value. He teaches them the respect they owe the ancestors for their courage, their labors, and the technological inventions of which they were either initiators or guardians. The mask is removed from its shelter and dressed by a member; in front of the children the man who wears it unmasks himself and reveals to them the meaning of the different parts of the costume.

2. See p. 156.

[103]

History of the Empire of Kaarta

The Descendants of Nya Ngolo

*173 Sounsan (1). When Sounsan and his people had crossed

[551] [845] 1. As we shall see, the given name marks some event connected with the person's birth. It is common practice, when the delivery is difficult, to hang a rabbit's foot at the mother's side, hence the name Sounsan ("rabbit" in Bambara). The name Péné, used elsewhere, has the same etymology.

*173 564 ● Sounsan is said to have practiced the saddle-maker's trade at Kounando. It is told how one day he went with a kulé (a native carpenter) into the country to get some wood needed for a saddle. At one point the two became separated. The kulé found some honey and ate it, only to be taken sick. He threw up the honey on some stones and then went away. Soon after, Sounsan passed the spot and, seeing the honey, picked it up and ate it. When, on his way back, he learned how the honey happened to be there, he was so disgusted and cursed the kulé so roundly that, since that time, none of his people can touch a kulé with impunity. All members of that caste are thus tne (taboo) for that branch of the Kouloubali.

*173 the Niger with the help of the poyon', they proceeded in the direction of Lamballaré (2). There, at the village of Darigo, Sounsan

[103] 2. In the Soninké language, this is the name of the region watered by a swamp

601 the household, they are *ba-u* (mothers), and the title *ba* is commonly used out of deference or respect. Very old women are addressed as *mama*, "grandmother" or "ancestress." [163]

564 *Members of castes*. These are free men who are destitute and form a kind of clientage of important families. We shall discuss them later on.

567 *Slaves*. Only slaves entrusted with special duties lived in the house. When a master discerned qualities in a new slave that might make him useful in the house, he kept him in his own service and often treated him well and generously. Custom gave the children of such a slave a privileged position; since they were "born in the house" (*wolo-so-u*, they could not be sold except in the case of extreme necessity. All confidential servants were recruited from the *wolo-so-u*, and the eldest, most experienced, and most favored often acquired great influence in family affairs. They knew more about the secrets and resources of the community than most of its members.

Another category of slaves is made up of those who after three generations were *ipso facto* freed (*dyongoron'-u*). They have played an important role in native society.

2. The Patriarchal Community or Patriarchy

769 *The ancestral spirit-god*. In order to view a custom from its most expressive aspect, it is necessary to observe it in its fullest development and, at the same time, to note anything adventitious or foreign that modifies its appearance and procedure or alters its basis.

The cult of the ancestors is the very essence of the family, and the most characteristic manifestation of this cult is the funeral ceremonies for the head of a family, the patriarch (*fa*). Here, one is present at the transformation of a man into an ancestral spirit-god within the span of 40 days.

This period is an interval during which a link between the past and the future is formed in the present, whereby

584 Thus, the fa of the two communities manage the entire transaction. Does this mean that the young people have no way of influencing the decision of the "elders"? No, because here, as elsewhere, all sorts of intrigue affect the decision of the fa. He must take account of the views of those around him; he is aware of their feelings, and he is just as likely to subordinate his interests to affection as to hatred. He is perfectly well aware, as is his entourage, that although he can impose his will, even though arbitrary, while he lives, all he has achieved may collapse at his death if his work was ill supported.

In short, the rigidity of the principles which put the "young" at the mercy of the "elders" is, in fact, more often [182] than not relaxed in favor of the young people's desires. The solidarity between members of the community makes them give heed to the opinions of others; it is this need to minimize differences of opinion that makes any family affair drag on endlessly. Discussions, agreements, and reciprocal gifts characterize the [197] bargaining and compromise which are so great a part of the transactions. From this it is apparent what an essential rôle is played by the numerous intermediaries who are called in to prevent clashes and to mitigate friction, but too often turn to exploiting community difficulties.

In any event, these discussions serve to publicize these transactions just as we achieve the same end through legal means.

● [564] The request and agreements. The request is made by an intermediary. In Kaarta this is a man of caste, usually a dyeli (griot), accompanied by a free man. Elsewhere, notably at Ségou, he is sometimes a middle-aged man, known for his experience in such matters, who in this role is called furu-bolo-ma-tigi, "marriage director."

The furu-bolo-ma-tigi goes to the house of the fa of the girl, states his mission, and if he is favorably received, offers him some kola nuts which he has brought with him. He returns home with a promise that the request will be considered.

The fa does in fact consult his entourage and especially his ancestors and gods. The furu-bolo-ma-tigi returns with offerings to be used in questioning the ancestors and gods; if the reply

553 Women are not admitted to the men's circle. Gathered
851 near the mother's hut, they know that a name has been given,
but do not know what it is. The woman who tied the cord then
[562] washes the baby three times in warm, soapy water and, taking
water into her mouth, sprinkles the tiny body from neck to lower
back three times. She then expresses her good wishes. Carrying
the child, she goes to the door of the hut, where the father
and family heads are waiting, and asks the name. Then she returns
to the women and places the child on the lap of an old
woman who blows into the baby's ears three times and then shouts
in each ear: "Kuyo! Kuyo! i tua dara, "that is, "Kuyo! Kuyo!
[854] your name is ...." The child is then wrapped in the narrow
swaddling band which the mother will henceforth use to carry
him on her back, and if it is a boy, the baby is rolled three
times over the blade of an ax, or if a girl, over an iron implement
for picking cotton. While this is going on, everyone is expressing
best wishes.

[184] In Kaarta the ceremony is somewhat different. A beef or
a sheep killed in front of the mother's hut, and dege [Ed.,
coarsely ground millet in water] is also prepared. The baby's
● [564] head is shaved, and the hair is placed on the dege. Each guest
puts his right hand on the edge of the gourd and a griot expresses
good wishes for the newborn child. Then the guests dance around
the dish of dege; the hair is removed from it and given to the
mother to keep. [213] Then if the occasion warrants it, the
[304] three lines of tattooing peculiar to the Kouloubali are made on
the baby's face with a dagger. Finally the griot takes the child,
carries it around the crowd, and returns it to the father, who must
then make known the chosen name. When the father has pronounced
the name, the griot again takes the child and, making
a trumpet of his hands, cries out to him three times: "your
name is...."

551 In principle, the name (tua) recalls some circumstance surrounding the birth. A posthumous child is usually given his father's name, as though he were the reincarnation of the father, or more commonly, he is called Fa-n-ko, "posthumous" (literally, "the one who came after the fa"). If the baby shows some resemblance to a deceased person, he is named for the person or,

428 596 614 2. If there are no children, the collateral males and, lacking them~~, the wives~~.

3. If there are no collateral relatives, the ascendants.

4. If there are no ascendants, the surviving spouse.

5. If there is no surviving spouse, escheat occurs: [220] the inheritance reverts to the head of the settlement, the *dugutigi*, when this settlement is independent; otherwise to the head of the clan, the *fama*.

596 614 *The community and the individual.* The result of the foregoing is that the individual, whoever he may be and whatever his situation, has no value except as a member of a community (1); it is the community that exists and has an identity, while the individual exists and is identified only through the community and for the community.

An individual who exists apart from any *faya* is, therefore, an anomaly, and this situation comes to an end as soon as the individual himself becomes *fa*.

596 614 There are cases, however, when an individual is put out of his community because of his own action or because of circumstances, and extraordinary changes of status result.

626 Anyone driven from his community for bad conduct loses his rights to the *faya* in that community.

564 558 If his disqualification results from the practice of a trade regarded as degrading, he falls into what the Bambara call *nyama-ka-la* and Europeans call "people of caste." Henceforth he is not only excluded from his community, but he lives apart from all persons not declassed; he is a free man of inferior standing. He usually lives under the protection of a community of persons not declassed, earning his living from it and deriving from it such consideration as may be sometimes given him.

564 463 Among the Bambara, the *nyama-ka-la* include: the *numu*, blacksmiths, whose wives are usually potters; the *loro*, who work with copper; the *garanke*, who work leather; and the *kule*, who work with wood and are sometimes saddlers.

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[567] 1. A slave has no rights because, as a person, he belongs to no community.

564 463 The hunters (donso), who form powerful and feared associations, and the somono [Somono] and bozo [Bozo], who are fishermen, have a less restricted status than the above-mentioned artisans.

The dyeli who has fallen to the level of a domestic factotum is the most scorned of all. He receives some consideration and, in exceptional cases, notable esteem only through his worth as family archivist.

564 [754] The term nyama-ka-la is derived from nyama [221] meaning "ordure" or "outcast," and these people are outcasts. They are scorned. Some are particularly feared: the blacksmiths and the dyeli. The former are reputed, not without cause, to be given to the practice of magic and even sorcery. The dyeli have a fancy for poisoning.

Since persons of caste are free, they may contract marriage, that is, a lawful union, and found families just as free, non-caste persons do. Their male children naturally inherit the father's status which, thus, is handed down indefinitely through the male line.

Ordinarily they intermarry within the caste although sometimes a member of one caste may marry a member of another.

558 564 Any non-caste individual who marries a member of a caste automatically loses status. A woman who does so is henceforth considered to be a person of caste, and her children necessarily have the status of their father. A man is less seriously affected, and it is not at all rare for a man of standing to have a wife of caste. This is indubitably a misalliance; children of such a union are not highly regarded, and this reflects on the father.

564 On the other hand, it is entirely normal and common to have persons of caste among one's friends. There is hardly a person of consequence who does not have several of them as boon companions.

Although the fact of belonging to a caste carries with it a definite status, the caste member is not necessarily expected to practice the traditional trade. A member of the numu caste may very well know nothing whatever about ironwork and may

● 564 engage only in agriculture. Furthermore, casual or temporary practice, in one's own home, for instance, of one of the reputedly menial trades is not considered degrading.

567 Theoretically, enslavement does not exclude an individ-
596 ual from his own community nor in any way demean him in
614 relation to it (1); if he returns, he recovers his rights just as though he had never been away.

On the other hand, at the place where he is a slave, an individual belongs to no community (as a person), and that is why he has no rights and is treated as a chattel.

567 We have shown earlier how, aided by time and circumstances, a slave may manage to escape some of the limitations of his status, but strictly speaking, [222] he can never escape this status. If in fact, as the chronicle says of Ngolo Dyara, a slave succeeds in attaining a position whose importance would seem to obliterate the stigma of servitude, the blemish of slavery nevertheless remains indelible.

4. Relations between Communities

596 The true social unit is the community. Even when no
614 special organization links them, communities are often linked
621 by numerous bonds. This involves no distinction by race, incidentally, since more often than not ethnically diverse peoples live together in the same region.

These bonds between communities may be classified under two heads: kinship and alliance.

Kinship

[602] The influence of kinship is very extensive. Thus, a single patriarchal community includes the familial communities

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1. For example, Déssé-Koro, taken in captivity to Ségou, returned to Kaarta where he exercised the faya of the Massa-si.

*173 we have just noted, would have formed an unbreakable bloc
614 if both elements had not been affected by the ferment of
dissociation referred to in the course of this study.

The to-da derived the larger portion of its prosperity from
[487] the Niger. Communication and transport could most easily be maintained along this artery, and it was the need to make the greatest possible use of the river that brought about the organization of the Somono.

[101] Etymologically, the word Somono simply means "fisherman." Like any trade practiced exclusively, professional fish-
● [564] ing involves a certain loss of standing, and that is why the
Somono are said to be people of caste. This status is especially due to the supremacy of the clan over the Somono, without whom it could not have exploited the river.

614 After using force to annex them, Mamari added to their
564 number by assigning some of the furu-ba dyon' to the group, so
*173 that the Somono were soon closely dependent on the furu-ba.
At the orders of the fama and his agents, they were required to
[505] maintain ferry service across the river, to provide river transport in both directions, and to pay a fee in kind on their catch, with the understanding that they could continue to live according to the traditional Somono customs.

In return, the Somono were under the protection of the clan and their leaders benefitted from the generosity of the fama. They would occasionally be given a share of booty. [324]

Little by little, the few original Somono families were lost in the flood of newcomers. These included: the furu-ba dyon' who had become Somono on orders from the fama; people of diverse origins who had adopted Somono status of their own accord because they found it better than their own; and finally, the children of both, who were Somono by birth.

It was likewise the exploitation of the property of the
[233] to-da that brought about a similar organization of the shepherds, or Peul. Let us first note that this term has no ethnic significance; it designates all who raise or watch over animals as a regular and professional occupation. Here, too, there is a kind of loss of standing, since a working shepherd could hardly do without a sponsor and must attach himself to a master. This is the case for

614 ● 564 *173 all who exercise a calling, and that is why the Bambara call a Peul "fula fantan' (weak Peul)" (1), to indicate that he is in potestate.

In order to ensure the greatest return from the clan's flocks, Mamari had recourse to the Peul, just as when he wanted to exploit the Niger, he had taken over the Somono. That is how Peul settlements came to be established, called furu-ba fla-u, "Peul of the furu-ba." These are free people, but they are required to serve the clan. The ranks of these first Peul were increased by the arbitrary assignment of some of the furu-ba dyon'; some pastoralists by choice joined them; and the children of both groups were furu-ba fla-a by birth. This went on until there were enough of them for Ngolo Dyara to set up twelve Peul encampments. Mamari divided them into two tribes: the Dyana (people of Dyan), and the Bonguéna (people of Bongué). [563] The furu-ba fla-u speak Bambara, and very few of them can claim to be Peul in ethnic origin.

In the case of the Somono and the Peul, we have seen how the clan exploits the populace, for any people on which the clan forces its authority is treated in the same way. The clan requires a contribution, according to the means of livelihood from each of the population groups it assimilates. The system used for the fishermen and the shepherds was likewise used for the agriculturalists. [325]

In this case, too, the furu-ba dyon' were blended with the rural peoples. Although they were relegated to special villages, this isolation never prevented them from maintaining close relations with the people in the surrounding areas.

Here again, there were agriculturalists by adoption. Through time heredity consolidated the close union between these people of the agricultural caste and the clan.

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1. See in Chapter 7 below [not translated] how this expression is used as an insult in the quarrel between Ma-n-son and Bacari Dyan.

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554 The numu: blacksmiths, whose wives are generally potters.
[326] The smiths are the masters of fire, those who cook the sacred earth
in order to extract the minerals or to fix the form of pottery.

The loro: coppersmiths.

The garanka: leatherworkers.

The kule: woodworkers, and sometimes saddlemakers.

The donso: hunters, who form powerful and feared associations.

The somono, or fishermen, who have a status a little less restricted than that of the artisans mentioned above.

The dyeli or griot, domestic factotums of a kind, who, although the most disdained of all these, are nevertheless the family archivists.

[563] One may add two Peul shepherd tribes, identified by Manson: the Dyanna and the Bouguena (1).

1. See Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

463 All of these artisans are endogamous and fixed in caste,
564 father to son. However, the fact that a man belongs to a caste does not obligate him to exercise the caste trade.

The most powerful guild is incontestably that of the black-
326
463 smiths. From their ranks are recruited all the priests, the Fama's
608 interpreters, the well-diggers, the grave-diggers, the executioners,
the circumcisers, etc. They are the sénanku of all the families and are in charge of all the purification rites.

554 The griot are equally feared, because of the power of their words and because they spread afar the renown of the chiefs.

564 The free man who marries a woman of caste marries beneath himself, and his children are looked down on.

The purest blacksmith families are those of the Fané Balo;
[326] the purest griot those of the Koniaté. People of caste always remain
[527] at liberty; when they are captured during a war, they make themselves known and keep their status.

[64] These different guilds are sufficient to maintain in the
463 Bambara country a certain industry of a distinctly artisan and non-
326 specialized type. Thus, the smiths work iron, copper, and wood to

794
796 that period; his body will not be buried but will be carried off by
766 members of the Komo, who will take it to a crossroads and crush it
with the aid of komo-se-w [sic]. The remains will be hidden in a secret place. The same treatment is accorded to the komo-tigi who dies during his seven-year term.

794 The cult is cantonal, and the various komo-tigi take their orders from their colleagues of the capital. The cult formerly was interlcan and intertribal. Labouret (Les Mandingues et leur langue [The Mandingo and Their Language]) has made a table of the seven categories of persons who make up the hierarchical society of the initiates.

794 After initiation into the Komo cult, a natural sequel to cir-
793 cumcision, the young man may, if he so desires, be initiated into
other cults. He then enters a powerful spiritual family which unites all its members by ties of brotherhood. This brotherhood is superimposed on the normal social hierarchy of the flã-tõ [this term is
[564 probably the same as flanton]. The chief of the brotherhood is en-
567] titled nyama-tigi; he is generally a man of caste or a slave. He acquires his position as chief either by inheriting it, by election, or
[778] by founding a new cult. To do this latter, he must buy an altar,
gna, from the village or from the brotherhood that already possesses this cult. Such a purchase is considered a marriage with the gna and is accompanied by drinking. The higher-ranking initiates (dyenfaw: masters of the truth) are auxiliaries of the nyama-tigi and participate in the oracle, wara-da. All the initiates are more or less divine. The clergy includes, in addition, a sacrificer, muru-kala-tigi, and a dyeli, herald of the god. To become one of the faithful, one must pay an entrance fee and swear an oath of secrecy, obedience, and fellowship. The clergy manages the cult's treasury which is fed by the entrance fees to the brotherhood, by fees levied for a class promotion, by contributions required for the major ceremonies, and by fines imposed on the members.

The brotherhood is a spiritual family which is organized in a fashion similar to the natural filiation of the community. The nyama-tigi plays the role of the fa; the dyen-fa-w and the notable members form a sort of council for settling, with the chief, all ques-
[527] tions. The cult does nothing on Mondays and Thursdays, the work holidays.

Ba
173 tools and the throwing weapon were made. Then, unfired pottery
and weaving were invented; and men finally came to know stone
tools, iron and the forge. The technique of making dwellings
seems to have developed more slowly.

a. Fishing

Ba
Bo
226 Side by side with populations who specialize in the art of fish-
463 ing, such as the Bozo or the Somono caste, all the Bambara fish in
564 the [96] rivers or watercourses in the neighborhood of their dwellings.
A detailed study has been made by J. Daget (1). The Somono, who
are the caste of Bambara fishermen, use traps and nets for fishing;
the Bozo remain faithful rather to harpoons and small nets. They are
Ba the ones who almost always make the pirogues, for they alone may
Bo enter in rapport with the spirit of the water, Faro. The nets are of
286 knotted mesh made with a weaver's shuttle, sia, and a cylindrical
227 mold, pako. The band of the net, as it is being made, is nearly
always attached to a wooden bridge especially conceived for this
purpose, the kale or dio soyo kala, a regular tetrahedron whose edges
Ba are about 20 centimeters long, one of which is prolonged by a handle
Bo 1. 50 meters long. The fisherman, seated on the ground, puts the
[283 bridge before him, keeping the handle close to his leg. The fibers
624] used in netmaking are da (Hibiscus cannabinus), kie (Figna unguiculata),
cotton, and now European thread.

Bo
226 The Bozo construct weirs from cut and joined tree branches;
the weirs assume several different forms according to the regions and
Bo the snares used. Fish are used for human consumption; they are eaten
Ba fresh, grilled, fried or boiled, or preserved by smoking or drying. Oil,
251 used for cooking and as a lubricant, is extracted from certain fish,
252 such as the tineni.

Ba Fishing in Bambara villages is done communally under the
226 direction of a fishing chief at the time the waters recede. Precise
rules of fishing rights and of rents due the masters of the waters are
respected everywhere.

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1. Jacques Daget, "La pêche dans le delta central du Niger" [Fishing in the Central Delta of the Niger], Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. XIX (1949), No. 1.

794 bolitigi, the latter have every interest in protecting them, for not
793 only do they pay /38/ their masters annual dues of 80 to 160 cowrie shells, which is little, but they also provide the meats and kola nuts for sacrifices and the d'lo, or beer, for the nocturnal drinking bouts and orgies, and thus are a real godsend.

3. Metamorphosis

776 The Negroes say that a djiné or a boli genie can pass from one
789 body into another. Today it may paddle in a pond, be enclosed in a tree, or sit on a rock; tomorrow, if it wishes, it will make its dwelling in a cow's tail, in a horn, in a dirty rag. Whatever its dwelling may be, it is never confined. The Negroes compare these spirits to the wind, to a breath which enters and penetrates into a space through the smallest crack and fills it. Yet they have bodies and are equipped with organs; they drink, eat, and procreate and differ from man only in their tenuity. Since the Negroes are convinced that certain people have become able to master and command the spirits, could they not come to believe that it was possible to attain, like them, a rarefied state? In any case, they do believe in metamorphosis, and it is by entering into an animal or plant, or changing himself into an animal, a plant, etc., that the wicked person succeeds most often in avenging himself, in appeasing his hatred, and even in doing evil for the mere pleasure of doing it.

789 A good number of sorcerers have this privilege, and sorcerers
564 are not the only ones! Entire castes have the power of metamorphosis; among others the Koulé, who dig out canoes and mend cracked gourds,
754 can all change themselves into hyenas. The sons of the Siri, who are members of the sect dedicated to the boli of this name and are called souba (1) because they commit their crimes during the night, change

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1. The name souba is derived from sou ("night") and ba ("great"), ma ("man"), being implied. It means "a man of the great night," "men

themselves into hyenas in order to dig up corpses and eat them, and into gingin ("owl," "screech owl") to drink the blood of sleeping men and women. It is said that the blood of young girls has an especially exquisite taste, /39/ and when the souba are unable to enter a dwelling in material form to obtain it, they change themselves into such a rarefied breath that they go through the walls and roofs.

753 789 754 All persons whose faces are disfigured with scars resulting from boils or canker sores are considered victims of a souba, as are those whose legs are rotted by syphilis; every person infected by erysipelas goes to the members of the Siri sect, the souba.

791 789 In addition to the souba there are the gné-fla (1), men with two eyes, with second sight, so called because they see the world of invisible beings and know the secret thoughts of men without having to undergo metamorphosis. Some of them are good and some evil; there are those who use their prerogatives to halt the blows of the souba and protect their fellows, and others who use them only to harm their neighbors. As the good as well as the evil can abuse their power, the Negroes keep them all together, and since the souba are almost always gné-fla as well, they are indiscriminately feared and hated.

789 When a person is metamorphosed into something else he keeps his intelligence and his reason, but he is dominated by an instinct, either good or evil, which destroys his will and anesthetizes him.

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789 564 754 who operate in the depth of night," but by no means refers to nocturnal sorcerers. Moreover, in the eyes of the Negroes it designates not a bugaboo, but a reality.

1, They are supposed to have the ability to make themselves invisible by means of grisgris hung on their belts. Deprived of these, they are powerless.

584

1. The Marriage Proposal (1)

1. The procedures described here apply to the marriage of a young girl. For widows or divorcées who remarry, there are consultations of diviners, sacrifices to the evil fetishes, etc., but the betrothal and wedding ceremonies are performed with a minimum of show.

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The Bambara are not unmoved by the beauty of a woman's form; they can distinguish a well-formed body from a malformed one, a pretty woman from an ugly one, and they find a coppery skin more attractive than one of ebony black. Similarly, a face pitted by smallpox or a bosom covered with scars displeases them, and a man talks to you about his fiancée or his wife, he is quite proud to be able to say: "sien si t'a la, she has a body without blemish," therefore she is beautiful. When it comes to marriage, however, he does not look too closely! He readily keeps silent about his tastes and seldom consults his heart, for a wife to him is primarily a source of pleasure and profit. /200/

581
What he sees in a woman above all is a being of a different sex than he, and if she is industrious, cooks well, and is good at business, he will know how to close his eyes to her defects in order to keep her and allow her to be an important person in his home who must be reckoned with.

584
When a Negro who wants a wife finds an unbetrothed girl, he quickly confides his secret, his fears and hopes, to his close friend, a man of mature age who enjoys some respect in the country (1). The

● 564
1. Some people have thought that the "storytellers /griots/" act as intermediaries in asking the hand of a child. Nothing is more

564 erroneous, for the Bambara despises this breed and would never entrust one with such a delicate mission. The Bambara dreads the storyteller in his private festivals. How many times they say as they invite us: "We came ourselves to invite you so that the news may not reach the ears of the storytellers." The to-n-tigi, head of the association of the fla-n-to, plays no important role in the marriage of a to-n-dé, or member. The to-n-déou, members of the association of the fla-n-to, are invited and enjoy themselves at the wedding of a fellow te-n-de, and that is all. Mr. Barbier Louis /sic/ makes a mistake; see page 527, Dec. 16, 1907, of the review La Quinzaine.

584 latter receives four kola nuts wrapped in green leaves and tied again and again so that they will not wither, and, spear in hand and his inseparable goatskin, or foroko, well fastened to his shoulder, he starts on his way, proud to be assigned such a pleasant mission and happy and pleased to be the fourouboloma tigi, guardian of the wedding gifts (2).

2. Fourouboloma, "engagement gift"; tigi, "master."

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576 At the end of his journey, on the public square, he extends a very friendly greeting to the old men who there devote themselves to laziness in the shade of a great tree with the apathy of lizards; he gives them all generously of the snuff that every stranger must offer, and if he has no friend or acquaintance in the village, he chooses from among them a man of good will who will introduce him to the family and smooth the way for him. When this man is found, he goes

631 is highly variable, ranging from complete subjection to quasi-independence.

565 [563] The imperial clan, or, if one prefers, the dominant clan, most often prevails over people of races other than that of its own members; frequently this clan itself includes, at least originally, diverse ethnic elements. [158]

If such heterogeneous associates are to live side by side without clashing, they must have a large body of common customs, and this indeed is the case. Wherever one studies it, the native milieu resembles a compartmented area whose individual sections seem, at first glance, to be isolated. At the top of the social structure there is a kind of nobility composed of the head of the clan, his family, and then the families of the clan; next come the free men, simply free or members of castes; and finally the slaves. In actual fact, a continual reciprocal movement between these elements welds all of them together.

614 596 The fact is that the whole social body exists only through the severity of the life of the cells that compose it: the families. Among other characteristics, these families are very jealous of their respective independence; nevertheless, they are closely allied among themselves even as they freely absorb the foreign element constituted by the slaves.

It is, therefore, essential to concentrate our attention on the family cell in order to understand the essential element of native social life. This is all the more true in that all the native collectivities are, so to speak, modeled on the organization of the family.

The Bambara language has no word exactly equivalent to our word "family" in the legal sense (1). Different names are used to designate the collectivity under the authority of the

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1. This is why we prefer the term "community," but in view of the remarks made here, the use of the word "family" will not be ambiguous.

592 [712] this well-built structure in the midst of the inextricable maze of surrounding huts which were themselves surrounded by a solid wall of native masonry.

[565] The people of a single household are classed in three categories: free men (woro-u), members of castes (nya-makala), and slaves (dyon'-u).

596 561 601 The freemen. Within the family, free persons are: the men (tye-u), i.e., circumcised males; the moso-u, excised women; the den'-u, children of both sexes.

In accordance with their influence (faya) in the family, the men are called koro-u, old men, elders, or kamalen'-u, young masters. Among the old men the bina (uncles), brothers of the fa, hold the preponderant position; they form a kind of limited family council and generally work for the welfare of the community under the direction of the fa.

Among the women the following distinctions are made: the mothers, i.e., women under the control of a husband and who are actually mothers of children, ba-u; old women, moso-koro-u; grandmothers, mama-u; and finally unmarried girls, moso-de-u.

All children are called de unless they are specifically identified as de-n-ke, "boy," or de-moso or deni, "girl."

601 Furthermore, every male with any influence (faya) in the family, no matter to what extent, is called fa (1): [162]

1. In one way or another, therefore, every male is fa, since he exercises or will one day exercise faya. The word fa is jokingly applied even to very young boys just as ba is applied to little girls. These words may be used just like our familiar expressions when we say "Father X" or "Mother X" with no reference intended to any real state of fatherhood or motherhood.

In any case, the words fa and ba are also used as terms of respect, just as we

608 [59] No one may oppose the Fama's will, except his sénanku
643 who has the power to stay the chief's decisions, particularly in case of acts dictated by anger: murders, wars, etc.

The Fama's resources came from the work of his familiars,
643 from a levy on wild foodstuffs, half of the war booty, all otherwise
651 unowned goods, from certain precious substances, such as gold and
652 ivory, from taking part of every animal killed in the hunt and the skins of all wild animals brought down, all receipts for the right to hold markets, for grazing, and for changing pastures, tolls for river crossings, fines, and from the sale of prisoners of the law. On the other hand, he had to meet the following expenses: to feed and clothe the members of the community in the case of need; to maintain the warriors (give them a groom, a wife, a rifle, a horse); bestow favors on people of caste, feed them, clothe them, arrange for their marriages if need be; make offerings to charity; receive strangers; feed prisoners detained for judgment or otherwise held.

643 The Fama ordered all work of common interest: construction
653 and maintenance of fortifications, clearing trails, preservation of springs, construction and upkeep of the mosque if one was needed, making pirogues for common use, setting up rest platforms.

These works were carried out through payments in labor. The work was divided up among the villages by the Fama, and the village chiefs in turn assigned it to family heads. He who did not carry it out in person could have it done by members of his family; he who refused could be obliged to comply by force.

642 Bambara society rarely achieved a systematic and centralized form of organization analogous to our European kingdoms. What has been dignified with the name of "empire" was scarcely more than an organization which reflected the attraction exercised by a family, by reason of its prestige or its power, on groupings which accepted its suzerainty. As Monteil has shown very well, a family's effort at domination has always been directed at groupings of people and not at territorial expansion.

642 The whole of these groupings constitutes the Ton. This in-
565 cludes:

1. a chief, the ton-tigi;
2. the local chiefs, fa;

642
565 3. the free men;
4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);
5. slaves.

567 e. Slavery. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by violence, by obligation, or by birth.

567 1. By violence. If a war captive is important, he may be
727 killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration.
554 A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama;
[608] if he is a sĕnanku of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious
[561] Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

567 2. By obligation. A free individual became a slave in
681 punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the
426 profit of the Fama. A fa could sell one of his children to meet his
858 debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was freed of his obligations.

567 3. By birth. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a wolo-so. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

567 As the number of slaves grew, their organization became
644 complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Sĕgou were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the dyon-kuru or dyon-futu (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Sĕgou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him, the submission of all the slaves.

241 After the men have cleared the big weeds, the women come
462 along to finish up. At harvest time, the women and children chase
[411] the birds from the fields with loud cries, sling shots, and by heating
bamboo on a hard rock to cause a detonation. All chase the spar-
[401] rows, partridges, guinea-fowls ... Harvesting is done together ...

In addition, by the side of the men's fields there are little women's fields where the women cultivate sorrel, okra, eggplant, tomatoes, beans, and all the condiments. The accessory crops of the women are the raro, bananas, manioc, sometimes rice or peanuts (1).

1. Labouret, Paysans noirs [Black Peasants].

241 Naturally, the work varies according to the social order. The
565 Bambara divide themselves into free men, people of caste, and,
567 formerly, slaves, all having a chief at their head. All members of the community must work the land; in fact, the poor work more than the slaves. The more fortunate do little work; they formerly directed and controlled the work of the slaves, today that of the agricultural workers.

C. Legal Procedure: Inheritance, Land Ownership

692 In Bambara country today, as in all of French West Africa, justice is dispensed by two tribunals: that presided over by a justice of the peace for important affairs, and that presided over by the administrator for other cases. The justice of the peace renders justice following the French code; the administrator according to local custom. A chamber of the Court of Appeals of Dakar is represented at Bamako, whose jurisdiction includes the Sudan and Niger territories. The Assize Court holds a session at Bamako, which also possesses an inferior court. Justices of the peace of wide jurisdiction are found at Kayes, Gao, Mopti, Ségou, Sikasso, Bougouni; other justices of the peace with wide jurisdiction have been created and will soon take up their functions.

One easily imagines the conflicts of principles and method which may arise between the two sorts of tribunals have just indicated.

B 101 614

Kaarta people are called Nya-Ngolo-la after Nya-Ngolo, an ancestor of the chiefs of the clan; and the Ségou people are called Barama-Ngolo-la after Barama-Ngolo, an ancestor of their clan.

● B S 101 [567] ●

Nicknames are also used between individuals of different tribes. The Soninké often call the Bambara Dyon-ko (slaves) because, having long been engaged in the slave trade, they sold many Bambara as slaves (1). The Bambara generally call the Soninké Marka (for Mara-ka). They still use the term Marka dialan'u (dry Marka people) to designate the Soninké who abandoned their own dialect in favor of the Bambara dialect. On the other hand, they use the term Marka kan'-fo-la-u (those who speak Marka) for those among the Soninké who have retained their own dialect.

In the Ségou region, the Bambara use the expression Bani-n-kono-u (birds of the Bani) for the Soninké,people who live along the banks of [11] that river; their more general term for the Soninké is the surname Dyeme-ka-u, from Dyeme (or Dyime) meaning "a long-legged water bird" of the marabou species. According to the interpretation given to me, the names Bani-n-kono-u and Dyeme-ka-u allude to periodic journeys made by the Soninké to the large commercial centers to the south, especially Ouorodougou [Ouagadougou?].

The Ségou country was called Dyeme-ka-u by the Bambara during the period of the Soninké rule (1). On the other hand, when

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1. See in the Kaarta chronicle which follows how Massa and others after him captured caravans of Bambara slaves belonging to Soninké owners.

B S 172 101

1. At this period, the Soninké chief, Souleiman-ba Kofta, lived at Sora, today a ruin, which the Bambara call Soro-toumou (ruins of Sora) and which is situated in the Ségou country between Massa-la and Kono-dimini.

inhabited by independent Bambara.

This clan or, as one is tempted to say, this empire of Keïta was formed in the thirteenth century after wars between Soumangourou Kanté and Soun Dyata Keïta and with the aid of various elements (3), including a group of Mandinké which [16] had been organized earlier by (1) a chief named Gourmandana.

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and Appellations among the Malinké...] in the Bulletin du Comité des études historiques et scientifiques de l'A.O.F. 1918, nos. 3 and 4.

● B
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● [567
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3. In the same way we shall see Biton forming furu-ba-dyon' from the ton-dyon', slaves captured from the chief of Dina, and from captives acquired elsewhere. In the same connection, see in the Tarikh el Fettach the curious story of the 24 slave tribes of the Songhaï clan which came from the Mandé clan.

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[617]
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1. Within the clan, the slaves, who always constitute the power of a clan, are divided into groups named in accordance with a particular aspect of organization. The Boula seem to have enjoyed a degree of consideration comparable to that attained by the Ton-dyon' at Ségou. Judging by the meaning of the word Bula, it would seem that they were "freedmen," and this is the meaning given by native traditionists. On the subject of the Boula, see the afore-mentioned work by Humblot. Boula women have the given name of Damba and they are addressed as Sakiliba, while the men are called Soussoro. This practice of giving a common name to a whole

*173 to be dug in the courtyard of his house and then summoned the recalcitrant elders, ostensibly for consultation on urgent matters. When they had arrived, Mamari told them that he wished to interview them two by two in order better to know their opinion concerning the questions under consideration. The elders refused. Then, at a sign from Mamari, [40] men who had been posted at hand for the purpose hurled themselves upon the elders, massacred them and threw their corpses into the well, which was then sealed up. It is said that there were 740 elders and also that, since that time, people from Doukounna and Banan-koroni who reach Ségou in the evening never spend the night there.

Now deprived of their rightful leaders, the people of Doukounna and Banan-koroni were henceforth at the mercy of Mamari. He recalled the column from Kirango and, as soon as it had arrived, he summoned the young men of Doukounna and [300 Banan-koroni. Without giving them any explanation, he ordered ● 567] them to wear their hair in the fashion of the ton-dyon', i.e., to have their hair shaved off except for two locks at the forehead and another at the nape of the neck. The young men protested that they were free men, but Mamari told them: "Your elders are buried here because they persisted in acting like free men, and there are now only women and slaves in your villages." When they were told what had happened in their absence, the young men realized that any resistance was out of the question; so they submitted and went to swell the numbers of the ton-dyon'.

This bold act gave Mamari a permanent army and he was so well aware of the extent of his success that his pride was already openly displayed. "The Dyémé-ka-dougou," he said, "extends from the Mindaka watercourse to that of Sitadougou. On the other bank of the Mindaka, the country belongs to the people of Doua. Let it be well understood that you are either on their side or on mine. We shall no longer eat groundnuts in the ton' together, nor drink our rounds of ton' millet beer. I am the son of Allah and henceforth shall drink only a king's beer in a royal cup. Let those who want to drink with me remain, and all others depart. From now on, the only free men are Nyé Tyétigi of Banan-koroni and Mansa of Banamba. All the rest are my slaves. Therefore, let each village send me 100 men to make up my personal guard."

*173 Déssé-koro (1789-1802). According to one tradition, Déssé was captured at the same time as Foro-koro and taken with him to Ségou where he is said to have been marked with the [115] tatoo (1) peculiar to the slaves of the Ségou branch of the Kouloubali. Authority would normally have passed to Déssé on the death of Séba Mana, but because Déssé's fate was uncertain it was offered instead to Sira Bo. The latter is said to have refused at first, but he accepted when his brother Mo-siré guaranteed that even if Déssé should return, the power would not be withdrawn. When Déssé returned ten years later, he respected the promise made by his brother Mo-siré and waited until the death of Sira Bo to take command.

Whatever may be the truth of the matter, Déssé took advantage of the quarrels that arose at Ségou upon Ngolo Dyara's death to capture Niamina. It is said that a small forest of baobab trees later arose on the spot where his troops had encamped.

When Ma-n-son had been relieved of the worst of his worries by his victory over Nyana-n-koro, he was anxious to avenge the capture of Niamina (2) and so turned his attention to

[304-567] 1. This well-known tatoo consists of three cuts on each side of the face running from the temples to the lower jaw in front of the ears.

2. The relations between Déssé and the people of Ségou are very obscure. Some say that, on being asked for help by Nyana-n-koro, Déssé stipulated that he would only agree to help if Foro-koro's skull were returned to him. When he had gained possession of the relic, he returned to Kaarta, promising to come back at the appropriate time. He did in fact return and encamped near Ségou after the defeat and death of Nyana-n-koro; he

601 the household, they are ba-u (mothers), and the title ba is commonly used out of deference or respect. Very old women are addressed as mama, "grandmother" or "ancestress." [163]

564 Members of castes. These are free men who are destitute and form a kind of clientage of important families. We shall discuss them later on.

567 Slaves. Only slaves entrusted with special duties lived in the house. When a master discerned qualities in a new slave that might make him useful in the house, he kept him in his own service and often treated him well and generously. Custom gave the children of such a slave a privileged position; since they were "born in the house" (wolo-so-u, they could not be sold except in the case of extreme necessity. All confidential servants were recruited from the wolo-so-u, and the eldest, most experienced, and most favored often acquired great influence in family affairs. They knew more about the secrets and resources of the community than most of its members.

Another category of slaves is made up of those who after three generations were ipso facto freed (dyongoron'-u). They have played an important role in native society.

2. The Patriarchal Community or Patriarchy

769 The ancestral spirit-god. In order to view a custom from its most expressive aspect, it is necessary to observe it in its fullest development and, at the same time, to note anything adventitious or foreign that modifies its appearance and procedure or alters its basis.

The cult of the ancestors is the very essence of the family, and the most characteristic manifestation of this cult is the funeral ceremonies for the head of a family, the patriarch (fa). Here, one is present at the transformation of a man into an ancestral spirit-god within the span of 40 days.

This period is an interval during which a link between the past and the future is formed in the present, whereby

763 A gunshot today most likely signals the death of a hunter or the father of a hunter. In any case, however, there are always cries and vociferations by [165] the women, who are joined by their friends, relatives, and neighbors.

Horsemen ride off to notify any of the sons of the deceased who are away.

● [567] Meanwhile, the chief of the slaves, the major-domo, the confidential agent, or a friend or neighbor of the deceased goes to inform the chief and the principal men in the village.

764 These personages come to the mortuary house at once, spear in hand. After being received by the man temporarily in charge of the house, they go to the deceased to discover his identity and at the same time express their condolences to the family represented by the person who received them; then they withdraw.

In the mortuary hut silence descends while the women prepare the body. They wash it with warm water usually [824] scented with basil, su-ko-la (Ocimum album and febrifugum); they dry it and wrap it in pieces of native white cotton material or else dress it in its own garments, likewise white. A mat [285] of coarse straw (tyekala, kara) is placed in the middle of the room. A fine, flexible mat made of iphène leaves is put on top of it, and the women lay out the corpse on the second mat. Sometimes they place a grindstone on the abdomen to keep it from swelling.

When these preparations are completed, the women, [352 516] dressed in white native cloth, sit down in the native fashion on tiny stools in the mortuary hut. Those who come in from outside give evidence of terrible grief: [152] they cry out, they weep, they cover their heads with a bit of cloth and hurry toward the mortuary hut. As soon as they enter, they become quiet and stop weeping.

152 764 767 Among the Bambara grief is never silent; it is customary to show it overtly. As soon as there is a crowd, the singing begins, in rhythm to the clapping of hands. One person or another will be inspired to sing of the achievements and virtues of the deceased. Professional weepers and mourners mingle with the crowd, guiding and gradually encouraging the noisy display.

596 614 Most often, however, the debates are concerned either with legitimacy or with primogeniture, and it is by no means rare for a fa, before his death, to insist that the one chosen be the one designated by custom and to threaten to call down curses on anyone who should try to bypass him or to reject his authority (1).

1. Ngolo and Ma-n-son both acted in this manner, according to the chronicle of Ségou.

In associations which have adopted a community organization analogous to that of the family, the election of a head is determined solely by these factors. It may be concluded that these are the bases consecrated by custom and that any other arrangements can only result in the worst kind of disagreement.

567 578 596 614 There is confirmation for this. Where slaves are numerous and well organized, they may refuse to recognize the new fa and choose another from among the members of the community. They may even decide to give themselves to a foreign master on the pretext that the fa imposed upon them *by custom does not meet with their approval. This is a* disaster which jeopardizes the wealth, strength, and even the unity of a family, for it can happen, in order to deal with the crisis, that a compromise is made which more or less ignores the regularly designated fa. This results in wrangling which usually ends with a schism in the community.

The history of these countries tells of many such cases, [177] because the slaves, upon becoming powerful, made the law in the families. The chronicle of Ségou thus relates that the slaves belonging to Dina Wara gave themselves to Biton upon the death of the former. It goes without saying that endless intrigues always precede such defections. The really successful fa, such as Biton, earned their reputations as able politicians and increased their fortunes precisely by their ability to avoid such disasters in their own communities, while stirring them up elsewhere. [662]

476 The patriarchal community draws its subsistence from
461 this agricultural exploitation, and as a result, a kind of work
organization has developed. Patriarchal communities or im-
567 portant families have agricultural land in various regions and
these tracts are often far apart. Some members of the com-
[361] munity or a group of slaves are therefore settled in each do-
main, sometimes on a permanent basis, sometimes for the
period of clearing and cultivating the soil, sometimes for the
period of harvest.

Theoretically, every member of the community and every slave must work for the community from dawn to around noon every day during the farming season. Two days, however, Monday and Thursday, are given to these persons for work in their own fields. Anyone who cannot or will not work has the right to provide a replacement from among his dependents.

There are, of course, many exceptions to these rules. In the first place, everyone works according to his position. Among the poor, the master works as hard as the slave, if not harder; among people in comfortable circumstances, the master merely controls and directs the work, sometimes reserving a particular job for himself. In important communities, field work [189] is almost exclusively the duty of the slaves, under the surveillance of their leaders and following the orders of the fa, who either supervises it himself or has a member of his entourage do so.

583 Conjugal usufruct. When she marries, a woman is given in
589 usufruct in exchange for the bride price. This usufruct is com-
768 munity property exactly like the things used for the bride price.

When a fa dies, the disposal of the conjugal usufruct included in the estate is a serious matter. Since the conjugal usufruct is of the same duration as the life of the woman, the death of the husband has no legal effect on the situation of his spouse. Since it is understood, however, that the widow has no sexual obligations to her husband's heirs, the usufruct is reduced in that respect. Such is the lot of widows when the heirs decide to keep them without marrying them and the women elect to remain.

583 Most often, however, the heirs either marry the widows
589 or send them home, or the women leave of their own volition.

768 An heir who marries a widow of the deceased must take
[587] her back to her family, obtain their consent, and pay them a
new bride price, required because a new usufruct is involved. The chronicle of Ségou shows us how this custom operates. Upon the death of Dina-Wara, his son escorted to Ségou his father's widow, Biton's sister, whom he wanted to marry. He made sumptuous gifts in order to obtain consent.

In the case of a widow who is sent home or who leaves of her own accord, responsibility for the bride price already paid rests with the party who broke the contract, i.e., with the person who sent the widow away or, if she left of her own accord, with her family. The question of responsibility for the bride price is an important one, since usually neither party has either the means or the desire to make it up. As a result, every effort is made to evade payment, and it is common practice to resort to the most shameless bargaining of the woman involved. A husband is sought who will agree to pay the bride price asked by the one having rights over her, but most often, partial payment will be made when the woman is returned, the creditor's impatience is calmed by gifts, and the balance of the bride price remains wholly or partly unpaid [190] at the time of the debtor's death. This obviously results in insolvable complications during and after the marriage (1).

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1. Concerning the lot of widows, see the discussions about the widows of Biton and Ngolo in the chronicle of Ségou.

567 Slaves. Enslavement comes about in many ways, but the
three principal ones are force, birth, and the result of obligations.

727 Force has perhaps been the primary cause of enslavement. A person who surrenders is the chattel of the conqueror, but the treatment given him varies in accordance with his previous situation. Was he a man of position? If he is violent, he is killed or sold; if it is thought that his relatives will pay a high ransom, he is kept. If he is clever enough to arouse sympathy, he often is

567 well treated; if his captivity continues for a long time, he may
727 even found a family and live like a free man on parole, required only to remain where he is. Time takes care of many things. Under the same circumstances, a woman of quality usually becomes the wife of the conqueror.

People belonging to a caste escape slavery by entering the service of the conqueror to perform their customary trades.

It is only humble people -- the majority -- whose lot is often terrible; dragged far away, sold and resold, they often fall into the hands of bad masters.

567 Theoretically, a female slave's children are always slaves. A child born in slavery belongs to the mother's master and shares her fate. If she is the master's concubine, the child is born free and thereby frees the mother.

A contract slave is not always master of his own fate. Since the fa has absolute authority over his people, it is he who makes the contract which binds them.

[681] A free individual may fall into slavery as a result of his crimes or misdemeanors (2); it is in this way that an incorrigible thief becomes the slave of the chief to whom he is sent for punishment.

Many poor people, attracted by the favored lot of the [191] wolo-so in large communities, go into voluntary slavery in hope of a comparable position. All the Sudanese empires had these voluntary slaves, who came in great numbers from all directions.

Where there are many slaves, they form what is called dyon'-kuru or dyon'-futu, depending on the place, that is, "an assembly of slaves," and their leader, who represents them with the master, is an important personage by virtue of their strength. When the community to which these slaves belong is an ancient one, they are divided into groups, each of which is named for the fa under whose authority it was organized. In theory, the leader of each group is its oldest member, and the leader of the

2. Nzan Fato became a slave for stealing a beehive (p. 49 above).

● 567 slaves (1). The master often keeps this paramount head near him as his confidential agent; otherwise, he buys a slave or selects a free man for this high post and thus better controls the situation. In such a case, the paramount leader recognized by the slaves is merely the spokesman for his congeners in their dealings with the master.

[304] Among the Kouloubali the wolo-so have a characteristic tattoo formed by three broad incisions from temple to lower jaw on both sides of the face. Far from feeling humiliated by this mark, every wolo-so is as proud of it as though it were a sign of noble origin. Many free men have adopted this tattoo in order to pose as members of the great Bambara family.

The status of a slave is not immutable, but generally includes three stages described by the following names: san'dyon', "a slave acquired through trade"; dyon'wolo-so, "slave born in the house"; and dyongoro, "freed."

A newly purchased slave is put under observation. If he appears to be intractable or vicious or is afflicted with a serious disease (epilepsy, Leprosy, sleeping sickness, nyctalopia), one gets rid of him as soon as possible.

If he proves to be docile, devoted, industrious, and a good worker, he is kept. He is given a job in the house or is [192] placed with an old servant to be trained or with an artisan to be taught a trade.

A female slave in the same circumstances who becomes a mother at once finds her situation improved (1). Her child is wolo-so, "born in the house," and she acquires the same

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1. This appears to be the application of a kind of right of seniority, analogous to that of primogeniture.

1. The father's identity is of no importance, since the children all belong by law to her master.

567 status (2). The *wolo-so* is not usually sold or, more accurately, he will be disposed of only in the most desperate circumstances. The master's wealth and prosperity are dependent on the *wolo-so.*

Indeed, the *wolo-so* is a kind of member of the community; nothing happens in the community without his knowing it and participating in accordance with his position. It is true that he is required to work for the community, but no more nor less than any of the "poor people," and he often succeeds in establishing for himself a position that is considerably better than that of a child of the house. He and all of his dependents belong to the master, but barring the most serious circumstances, the master will not take anything away from him. On the contrary, the master furnishes him an enviable lot: he provides for his marriage and sets him up; he entrusts him with the management of property, often very valuable; and he treats him with a degree of affection not always displayed toward his own family *because jealousy brings tensions and hatred* between members of the community. Thus, the *wolo-so* often profits by his status rather than suffers from it.

Like the members of the community, he may exempt himself from the labor of the community by sending one of his children as a substitute and paying an annual fee in addition to certain services (3). If he is really prosperous -- and this is

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2. It should be noted that there is an analogy here with the case of a concubine who becomes a mother; because her child by a free father is free, she becomes free *ipso facto.*

[352] 3. In general, the fee consists of a certain number of measures (*moudd*) of millet, approximately enough to feed an adult for a year. The services consist of work on the upkeep of buildings, repairs on the roofs and walls of the huts.

567 unlikely -- he may even own slaves himself and use them as substitutes.

Thus the relations between master and slave gradually become very different from what our European minds imagine. A master is bound to his wolo-so [193] by a thousand ties: he admits them to the cult; he marries their daughters; he circumcises their sons along with his own; and he allies himself with some of them by fraternization or an oath.

Even if he does not have such close contact, the wolo-so who is freed from labor, who perhaps lives at some distance or, if nearby, in virtual independence, is henceforth a dyongoro, that is, "freed." The link is not severed, and the freed man is a kind of relative. He is interested in everything that happens in his master's community and is present upon all important occasions, never coming with empty hands. Reciprocally, he is never treated like a stranger by the master. The master contributes to every event concerning him: he helps him get his sons married and established; on the occasion of the soli, he assembles his children along with his own, which gives them a degree of common solidarity.

The admission of the wolo-so to his master's community is shown publicly by the fact that the wolo-so bears the dyamu of his master.

It would be an exaggeration to claim that the house slave's situation is always so fortunate; it depends on many different factors (1).

1. A slave is seldom permitted to buy his freedom; the slave himself does not seek this redemption which would free only him and leave his family and most of his property in the hands of the master.

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614 The dyamu. This is the name given to himself by the native, bestowed upon him by others, or inherited from his ancestors, but in any case one that has become such an honor that merely to pronounce it is enough to bring forth a show of homage toward one who bears it, for example, Kouloubali, Dyara, Dembélé, etc.

428 Now let us say the deceased was a fantan', that is, he did not exercise a faya. [219]

A son who dies before becoming fa rarely leaves any property. If he should by chance do so, such wealth theoretically belongs to the community of which he was a member. The disposition of property from special sources must be settled according to the nature of the source. Thus, property which the deceased may have inherited from his mother would go to his uterine heirs.

What has just been said of a son applies all the more to a daughter, since, after all, she is nothing more than a kind of property belonging to the community.

428 567 The most hapless fantan' is the slave. In principle, he could hardly be expected to leave an inheritance since even his own person does not belong to him. In fact, however, the situation is quite different. A slave generally does have some property and may even be very rich. His fa allows him the use of his property for his lifetime, and it is current practice for him to leave it likewise to his children. As a result, everything transpires just as though the deceased were a free man, and what we have said about other communities applies to this type of community which, strictly speaking, has only a kind of de facto existence. The action of custom, in freeing the slave, gives him access to the position of a free man without depriving him of what his fa has allowed him to enjoy. In the end, this enjoyment of use is gradually transformed and strengthened by inheritance until it is the equivalent of similar rights to property which are accorded to men born free.

596 614 Order of succession. Patriarchal community. The fa is the eldest of the surviving males who are direct descendants in the male line of the fa who founded the community.

428 596 614 Familial community. 1. The eldest surviving son of the deceased; upon his death, succession follows the same pattern as for the patriarchal community.

If there are only daughters, the property is divided among them.

428 2. If there are no children, the collateral males and,
596 lacking them~~, the wives~~.
614 3. If there are no collateral relatives, the ascendants.

4. If there are no ascendants, the surviving spouse.

5. If there is no surviving spouse, escheat occurs: [220] the inheritance reverts to the head of the settlement, the dugutigi, when this settlement is independent; otherwise to the head of the clan, the fama.

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614 The community and the individual. The result of the foregoing is that the individual, whoever he may be and whatever his situation, has no value except as a member of a community (1); it is the community that exists and has an identity, while the individual exists and is identified only through the community and for the community.

An individual who exists apart from any faya is, therefore, an anomaly, and this situation comes to an end as soon as the individual himself becomes fa.

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614 There are cases, however, when an individual is put out of his community because of his own action or because of circumstances, and extraordinary changes of status result.

626 Anyone driven from his community for bad conduct loses his rights to the faya in that community.

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558 If his disqualification results from the practice of a trade regarded as degrading, he falls into what the Bambara call nyama-ka-la and Europeans call "people of caste." Henceforth he is not only excluded from his community, but he lives apart from all persons not declassed; he is a free man of inferior standing. He usually lives under the protection of a community of persons not declassed, earning his living from it and deriving from it such consideration as may be sometimes given him.

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463 Among the Bambara, the nyama-ka-la include: the numu, blacksmiths, whose wives are usually potters; the loro, who work with copper; the garanke, who work leather; and the kule, who work with wood and are sometimes saddlers.

●[567] 1. A slave has no rights because, as a person, he belongs to no community.

564 engage only in agriculture. Furthermore, casual or temporary practice, in one's own home, for instance, of one of the reputedly menial trades is not considered degrading.

567 596 614 Theoretically, enslavement does not exclude an individual from his own community nor in any way demean him in relation to it (1); if he returns, he recovers his rights just as though he had never been away.

On the other hand, at the place where he is a slave, an individual belongs to no community (as a person), and that is why he has no rights and is treated as a chattel.

567 We have shown earlier how, aided by time and circumstances, a slave may manage to escape some of the limitations of his status, but strictly speaking, [222] he can never escape this status. If in fact, as the chronicle says of Ngolo Dyara, a slave succeeds in attaining a position whose importance would seem to obliterate the stigma of servitude, the blemish of slavery nevertheless remains indelible.

4. Relations between Communities

596 614 621 The true social unit is the community. Even when no special organization links them, communities are often linked by numerous bonds. This involves no distinction by race, incidentally, since more often than not ethnically diverse peoples live together in the same region.

These bonds between communities may be classified under two heads: kinship and alliance.

Kinship

[602] The influence of kinship is very extensive. Thus, a single patriarchal community includes the familial communities

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1. For example, Déssé-Koro, taken in captivity to Ségou, returned to Kaarta where he exercised the faya of the Massa-si.

*173 Henceforth, the fama in the furu-ba was no more than primus inter pares, just like the ton'-tigi in the old fla-n-ton', taking into consideration the evolution by which the furu-ba developed from the fla-n-ton'.

Ngolo Dyara succeeded only in making the office of fama, thus understood, hereditary for his descendants, just as had been done with many positions of dyon'-kuntigi before his time.

This progressive consolidation of an ever increasing number of high offices and the de facto independence regained by most of the members of the clan resulted in the formation of a society whose members took pride in their ton'-dyon' origins, considered themselves free, and even regarded themselves as free men of rank. This is perhaps the essential role of slavery in these areas, as a channel of social renovation and ethnic fusion.

It is appropriate to close this survey by an analysis of the various components of the clan and an explanation of their functions.

Furu-ba dyon' and Ton'-dyon'

614 •567 In the course of time, the organization and function of the furu-ba created by Mamari underwent various modifications.

The essential element of the clan is the ton'-dyon', because after all everything depends on it. We have learned the origin of the ton'-dyon' above. The number of slaves of the furu-ba was increased by the many captives taken in the course of raids, pillaging, and warfare, but the ton'-dyon' is an aristocracy within the furu-ba-dyon' by virtue of seniority and also because some of the characteristics [300] of free men have somehow survived in those of the ton'-dyon' who were originally ton'-den'.

Undoubtedly one of the causes of the unrest that always stirs up the furu-ba is this deep yearning everyone has for freedom. They do not know how to attain it, however, first because they are dominated by an ancient atavism for servitude that burdens all the Sudanese, and also because each man who desires freedom for himself intends to use it to enslave his brothers. These are the confused feelings that give such an equivocal aspect to all the events related in the chronicle.

614 567 The ton'-dyon' of the furu-ba is a kind of person of caste: he cannot cease to be ton'-dyon', and his children will live and die as ton'-dyon'. He is subject to the despotic authority of the fama. For a free man, it is certainly a fall to become a ton'-dyon', but for a slave, on the contrary, it is an improvement in status. Among the ton'-dyon' there are all sorts of people; this was the case in the beginning and has continued to be so as time passed. 727 Although slaves obtained from armed forays were an important element in the totality of the ton'-dyon', there were undoubtedly many men, free but poor, who were glad to join the ton'-dyon' so as to protect themselves from the depredations of these hardly commendable persons and also to gain the right of using the same procedures themselves.

Among the ton'-dyon', therefore, there are people of all races and all conditions; indeed, this is so true that all the dyamu are mingled under this common label.

Within the furu-ba, the ton'-dyon' formed a category apart and always retained the prerogatives which in native society accompany seniority. The ton'-dyon' were the "elders." Prisoners reduced to slavery formed the furu-ba-dyon', properly speaking, and they were grouped in series, each taking its origin from the fama who organized it. There they followed the usual path. Barring favorable circumstances which might allow them to escape the wretchedness of the early days of captivity, they started out as members of the gang of slaves-of-all-work, often considered as a kind of medium of exchange and for that reason called san'-dyon'-u (slaves of exchange). Once they were adopted by a community, a woman acquired the status [301] of wolo-so when she bore a child, while a man might achieve comparable status by gaining the confidence of his masters.

The wolo-so became a dyongoron when he was in a position to send his children to work in his place and to pay an annual fee.

Once he reached the status of wolo-so, the slave became, in actual fact, a person of caste. In principle, he could not be sold, he had the right of ownership, and he could leave property to his children. Indeed, he was often better off than a man who was free but poor.

614 567 The status of this caste-slave carried over to his decendants *ad infinitum*, even in the case of those persons who rose to the highest positions. Thus, the Dyara of the family of Ngolo Dyara kept the stigma attached to the servile status of their ancestor (1). In practice, the wishes of an all-powerful master could change the status of those under his authority since, as we have seen, the *fa* made the law. However, this arbitrary will did not leave a man without recourse, as we saw in the chronicle in the case of the aforesaid Ngolo in his relations with Mamari. If one could appeal to the good offices of someone close to the *fa*, it was often possible to make him change his mind.

614 631 The *furu-ba dyon'* (*ton'-dyon'* or *furu-ba dyon'*, properly speaking) were under the orders of "chiefs of slaves" (*dyon'-kuntigi-u*). There are supposed to have been 120 of these chiefdoms under Ma-n-son, according to the words attributed to Tonmassa in the chronicle. According to the same source, the number rose to 140, and then Ma-n-son reduced the number to 60 hereditary posts with authority over a varying number of *furu-ba dyon'* who were scattered about in the various regions subject to the clan, the whole subservient to the decision of the *fama*. The chronicle shows us how the *fama* established or broke up these chiefdoms for the greatest variety of reasons. Whenever he had an enemy who needed watching, an attack to be prepared, a country to be exploited, or a service to be organized, he conscripted men wherever he liked, ordered whole populations to move, and appointed a chief to take command of the enterprise and to carry out his orders, whenever and however he wished.

Among the *dyon'-kuntigi* there was a hierarchy [302] based on seniority theoretically and also on the importance of the duties; as a result, some of them were great chiefs. One of these, called the *ton'-masa*, came to be the supreme chief over the *ton'-dyon* in particular and all the *furu-ba dyon'* in general. In the *fla-n-ton'* the *ton'-masa* had the duty of convening the *ton'-den'* and of watching the *ton'-dyon'* to see that they

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1. See Raffenel, Vol. 1, p. 371.

614 *173 dyon'-kuntigi should replace them; the dyon'-kuntigi always exercised an influence over the ton'-dyon' for whom they acted as spokesmen. Besides it was easy to convene the dyon'-kuntigi, and as their experience increased, they came to be competent and tried collaborators for the fama.

As time went on, however, the council was neglected. The extension of the to-da kept the important dyon'-kuntigi away from Ségou, and as a result the fama became increasingly despotic. He was always sensitive, however, to the influence of his immediate circle, that is, the people of his house (his mother, wives, children, brothers, and other relatives) and
● [567] especially his familiars (1). The latter constituted a kind of privy council in which the leader of the slaves, whether [310] or not he belonged to the ton'-dyon', played an important role. Ordinarily these familiars were of lowly birth: people of caste or domestic servants in the house of the fama. Deeply involved in their master's life, they were at the root of the intrigues surrounding him.

The fama realized that his authority was deprived of its strength when he lost contact with the ton'-dyon', because a clan languishes almost to the point of extinction when those who compose it lose touch with one another. Therefore, the fama would convene the assembly, not, as in the past, in order to learn its wishes, but rather to request or even require from it a solemn affirmation of loyalty before the idols. In any case, the assembly always met at least once a year to renew the oath of religious faith and to admit the "young men."

[578] The assembly took an effective role only at the election of a new fama, and it is plain that over the years this power of

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1. So it was that in his fratricidal quarrel with Nyana-n-Koro, it is clearly apparent that Ma-n-son was guided by the shrewd suggestions of Nzan-fato; in his quarrel with Souleyman, his intimates were his advisers.

614 701 religious and reciprocal oath. Their contribution entitled them to a share of the booty. Volunteers, who enlisted for an engagement or a whole campaign, came in under conditions settled in advance.

The fama furnished the allies, just as he did the volunteers, with whatever they needed and deducted the amount from their share of the loot. Sometimes a third party, not involved in the expedition, provided mounts, equipment, and weapons for the enterprise in exchange for a prearranged reward.

In short, armed pillage was a business directed by the fama, who could admit interested participants if he so desired. [727] If the operation were successful, the clan gained predominance over the conquered regions, which the fama then exploited as he saw fit. The booty was the first result of the enterprise, and it served both to pay the expenses incurred in the affair and to swell the treasury of the clan.

This explains why the clan's army, for a consideration, hired itself out to anyone who asked for support, as an ally, as a mercenary force, or in any other capacity. The army might simply intervene in a quarrel of its own accord when there seemed to be profit to be gained (1). [313]

1. See below how the fama of Ségou lent his support to a marabout of Sous. The Bambara also intervened on numerous occasions in the internal quarrels of Khasso, Boundou, Fouta, etc. Their role as mercenaries is clearly shown in the Tarikh es Soudan.

614 701 569 [302] The ton'-dyon' were distinguished by a special hair arrangement. Their heads were completely shaved except for three tufts of hair which formed two braids on the crown of the head and one at the nape of the neck.

The slaves of the household of the fama could be recognized by their well-known tattoo (1) which consisted of three

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1. In general, it is risky to depend

parallel cuts from temple to lower jaw on either side of the face. Furthermore, these people borrowed the dyamu of the fama (Kouloubali, Dyara, etc.), just as certain servants in some of the French provinces are called by their master's name because they are members of the household bearing that name.

614 701 411 The elite troops (sofa, ton'-dyon', etc.) were armed with axes (sukala) (2). Important chiefs also had axes, the insignia of command, sometimes made of precious metal, such as copper or silver. The axe carried by the fama was made of gold and enchased (3).

The spear (tama) was often regarded as a weapon of distinction also. The ordinary warriors were armed with bows (kala) and arrows (bimye), the latter usually poisoned.

[177] Guns (marfa) gradually came into use, imported by native traders (Dyula). The chronicle claims that the first firearms were introduced among "the people of Ségou" in Mamari's time by an army from Kong and that these guns were of the blunderbuss type.

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614 567 701 304 incautiously on tattooing as a distinguishing mark of race or even of rank; the tattoo described here has not only been used by people of various origins, but has even been appropriated by all kinds of people as a form of snobbishness.

2. An instrument's name derived from suka, a variant of sua, meaning "to pierce." The men armed with axes were, in fact, assigned the special task of "making a breach" in the wall inclosing the settlement under attack.

3. The chronicle relates that Tonmassa, after murdering Dékoro, carried off the golden axe, the symbol of supreme command.

766 White oxen are sacrificed on the tomb; their hides are
614 used to make new drumheads for the *tabala*, and the meat [328]
is offered to the manes of the deceased and then distributed
among members of the family, allies, familiars, etc. The
women wail, weep, and sing the praises of the deceased in com-
[782] pany with the people of caste who organize everything. Outside,
banquets and virtual orgies, complete with noisy dances and
songs, are organized in honor of the deceased.

This ceremony goes on for seven days.

614 At the close of this period, the new *fama* is publicly proclaimed. For this purpose, the leader of the slaves has the walled-up door of the *tata* reopened, and the whole company assembles in the large open area in front of the house of the *fama*. Those present include the newly elected *fama*, the members of the family of the Massa-si, allies, tributaries, heads of the *ton'*-*dyon'*, and the *sofa*.

[769] An ox has been sacrificed and offered to the manes of
[782] the defunct. Its hide is stretched in the center of an open area
surrounded by the crowd, and on it is spread out the sheepskin,
adorned with precious amulets, which has long served as a rug
for the *fama* of the Massa-si. Other precious family relics include
[301] the scarlet cap adorned with amulets, twists of gold for the ears,
and heavy silver bracelets.

The representative of the family of Kassi Konaré seats the newly elected *fama* on the sheepskin, puts the scarlet cap on his head, and adorns him with the gold earrings and silver bracelets. Then he makes a speech to the new *fama*, outlining the policies followed by his deceased predecessor and enumerating the desiderata of the people of the clan.

● [567] At this point the leader of the slaves prostrates himself before the new *fama* and places himself in his hands to show that all the *ton'*-*dyon'* are loyal to him. He then presents individually the principal groups of slaves, tributaries, etc.

Another ceremony brings the new *fama*, prominent Massa-si, their allies, the principal leaders of the slaves, and the tributaries to the wood sacred to the protective idol of the clan, where a reciprocal oath of loyalty is taken. A ritual communion follows.

771 Incidentally, this "manner" possesses, under some cir-
797 cumstances, advantages which encourage adhesion to Islam. Slaves belonging to true Moslem believers do well to give clear
● [567] evidence of their new faith if they wish to obtain their freedom. Ngolo made use of this means according to the chronicle of Ségou.

Women and, in general, the "weak people" often claim conversion -- only rarely deep or sincere -- in order to escape from the arbitrary and rigorous nature of the custom governing them.

2. The agents of Islam

797 As regards the people with whom we are here concerned, it can be said that the center, which directly or indirectly has [338] had the greatest influence in spreading Islam, is the city of Dia (1).

1. A city on the left bank of the Niger, in the present-day province of Macina..

Dia is certainly the oldest metropolis of Islam in western Sudan, but this was an accommodating kind of Islam, which compromised easily with native customs and gave a large role to magic.

"The characteristic of the marabouts of Dia is their scarcely disguised tendency to rely on Islamic magic. The city has always been considered the great center for the production of amulets in the valley of the Middle Niger" (Marty, *Études sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan* [Studies on Islam and the tribes of the Sudan] Vol. 4).

These marabouts belong to very diverse races, but those of the Marka are dominant and with them should be considered their confreres, the Bozó, on whose training the Marka have always exerted a preponderant influence. The Somono marabouts usually come from one or the other of these two races.

All of them are linked in one way or another with high priests from Moorish or Peul Islam and, through them or their emissaries, are allied with one or another of the brotherhoods.

175 at Ségou. Bénéfali had the wisdom to avoid a conflict, but his brother, Foulakoro, who took the throne in 1745, was less happily inspired and was crushed in 1754 by Mamari Koulibali.

[47] C. Mamari Koulibali

Here is the veritable creator of the kingdom of Ségou, one of those powerful personalities who crop up from time to time in the Black anarchy, such as a Soundiata or a Sonni Ali. He represents the moment of maximum expansion of the Peul-Bambara conglomerate which was formed in the seventeenth century by interbreeding of the Bambara mass with the feudal Peul from the east.

Mamari Koulibali was essentially a war leader, and the great events of his reign were military events. He subjugated local chiefs; with aid of the Peul he repulsed the assault launched against Ségou by the powerful king of Kong (1725); he liberated the country from the suzerainty of the Soninké Boaré and took their capital, Kirango (1740); finally, solicited by the Soninké of Mourdiah, he destroyed Sounsana, capital of the brother kingdom of the descendants of Niangolo. He killed their chief, Foulakoro (1754), and unified all the Bambara of the Niger Valley. Having assembled a redoubtable army, which he even endowed with a fleet and a corps of engineers, he was able to impose his sovereignty on the Peul kingdom of Macina and may even have menanced Timbuktu. It was during the course of his reign that one sees an important evolution in the structure of Bambara society.

D. Reforms of Mamari Koulibali

175 567 It was in taking into account the role of slaves in the army that Mamari Koulibali was to revolutionize the ancestral society (see the traditional social organization).

He managed, first of all, to take away the greatest number of men, free or slaves, from their family community, in order to make of them *Ton-dyon* (slaves of the *ton* [*ton* is the largest unit of social organization]. To do this, he used the following methods: when a criminal was condemned to a fine, Mamari paid it; if a man was condemned to death, Mamari pardoned him; when one of his subjects could not pay his taxes, Mamari freed him of his debt on condition that the man put himself or one of his sons at the disposition of the

175 sovereign. In all cases the man, although pardoned, was deprived
567 of his personal liberty and became the emperor's chattel.

Mamari next wished to assure himself of the personal fidelity
[576] of his Ton-dyon by enrolling them in cults dedicated to hisuperson. Thus, the old ton was transformed into a brotherhood with Mamari as both political and religious chief. In this way he was able to replace the political anarchy and social structure of the old Bambara regime by a new organization, despotic, very efficient militarily when fully controlled by the chief, but sometimes very dangerous to the stability of the country, as soon was seen.

E. Successors of Mamari

175 Mamari's son, Denkoro (1755-57), was to be the first victim of this all-powerful army. Exasperated by his cruelties, the military chiefs assassinated him and replaced him by his brother, Ali.[48] A Moslem, Ali wanted to propagate Islam and to forbid the use of fermented beverages and the worship of spirits. The Ton-dyon chiefs then massacred Ali and all of the Koulibali family, except two girls who were saved by one of the chiefs, N'Golo Diara. Different chiefs then contended for power: Ton-Mansa, then Kaniouba-Niouma, then Kafa-Diougou, who, all of them, reigned merely a short while before dying a violent death. Finally, N'Golo Diara, descendant of a great family who had become enslaved to Mamari and who, as we have seen, saved his daughters and then married one of them, re-established order, moved the capital to Ségou-Sikoro, and resumed the work of the great Tigi-ton.

In the course of his long reign, (1766-90), N'Golo knew how to make himself respected and loved by his subjects and how to impose his will elsewhere; he established his authority over the Macina region, the Sokolo region, at Diénné, and Timbuktu. He only failed against the Mossi of Yatenga.

Meanwhile, the elder branch of the Koulibali family, crushed by Mamari in 1754 and chased from Bélédougou, rose again. If the successors of the unfortunate Foulakoro, Sey Bamana and Deni Babo, were nothing more than pillaging chiefs raiding at Kaarta, Bélédougou, and Khasso, Sira Bo did establish a stable kingdom with Guémou as capital. His successor, Dessé Koulibali (1788-99) even believed himself strong enough to impose his suzerainty on the Bambara of Ségou.

596 The fa. -- The whole of this family obeys the same head: the fa. The fa is designated by a council of elders when he fulfills the following conditions: first, not to refuse the faya and to be a [567] member of the community, that is, actually to live within the community; next, he must never have been a slave, and he must not have settled abroad without hoping to return home. In addition, he [848] must be a legitimate child, that is to say, born in wedlock, and the firstborn. In principle, the faya passes from older to younger brother (in the classificatory sense of the term). Thus, the fa is always the member of each generation closest to the ancestor. Finally, the fa must be able, that is, healthy, active, and a good administrator. Often the fa designates his successor before his death. The successor may assume power only 40 days after the death of the last fa, and after being recognized as head of the family by the assembly of elders. From that moment on, he exercises his functions, come what may.

The fa has charge of, and the moral and physical responsibility for, the whole community. He directs and protects all the members of the family. These latter can escape his authority only by leaving the village for good; they are then considered to be dead members. (The descendants of the fa by his daughters are outside of the community; they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.)

The fa, head of the family, lives under the administrative dependence of the head of the village.

2. From Family to Community

621 The true social unit is the community. Ties of kinship and marriage unite groups without racial or ethnic unity.

622 a. Patriarchal Organization of the "Ton." -- All the family heads obey a village head: it is on him that the responsibility falls for the organization of the community territory, as well as the responsibility for administering justice when contention arises between followers of different faya. The village chief is generally master of the land: dugu-kolo-tigi; sometimes [54] he cedes his rights to a village administrative chief younger than himself, but in matters of religion he remains all-powerful, and each year he receives gifts from the different family heads for the needs of the common cult. He also

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565 3. the free men;

4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);

5. slaves.

567 e. Slavery. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by violence, by obligation, or by birth.

567 1. By violence. If a war captive is important, he may be
567 killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration.
727 A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in
554 the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no
case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared
captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama;
[608] if he is a sénanku of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing
him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious
[561] Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of
the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

567 2. By obligation. A free individual became a slave in
681 punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the
426 profit of the Fama. A fa could sell one of his children to meet his
858 debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was
freed of his obligations.

567 3. By birth. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a wolo-so. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

567 As the number of slaves grew, their organization became
644 complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Ségou
were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the dyon-kuru or dyon-futu (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Ségou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him, the submission of all the slaves.

him, the submission of all the slaves.

567 The fa particularly displays his confidence in the wolo-so. He arranges his marriage, establishes him in life, admits him to his cult, and assigns him important tasks. Sometimes he marries his daughter and unites himself to him by fraternization and the oath. Children of the wolo-so are often circumcised with those of the master. Finally, the wolo-so bears his master's name and may in turn have slaves. At the third generation, the wolo-so becomes a free man. We still have very incomplete knowledge of this whole question of slavery, which incontestably exists throughout the whole Sudan; politically, it seems to have been a rational method of assimilating and fusing into a single people men of the most diverse origins.

567 701 f. The Army. -- Since the slaves were not pariahs, but, because of their number and the roles they filled, are important members of the society, it is normal that they also participated in the defense of the society. They have, therefore, their place in the army.

[721] Each Fama had an army, whose object was pillage, to procure the greatest possible amount of material goods for his subjects. The Fama despoiled those captives whom he enslaved, while others paid him tribute according to consecutive agreement. Ranged in battle, the army included the following components.

1. A central mass, disi (chest), made up of the corps of sofa (etymologically: those in charge of the care of the horses). The sofa formed the personal guard of the Fama; they were often recruited [61] from among young prisoners of war. The Fama often presided over the ceremony of circumcision of the children of the conquered whom he mixed in with his own children; they were thus bound and devoted to each other all their lives. The young sofa played the role of pages and grooms; the older ones became the trusted aides of the Fama, who charged them with important missions.

2. Two masses flanked the disi, to right and left: the kini-n-bolo (right arm) and the numa-n-bolo (left arm). These bolo were composed of furuba-dyon (age class of slaves corresponding to the flan-ton of the free men), and commanded by the ton-dyon (a sort of aristocracy of the slaves recruited from among the war prisoners).

567 701 3. The ton-koro-bolo behind the disi is a special reserve formed entirely of pure ton-dyon.

4. The keli-tigi was the chief of the expedition, designated by the Fama. He might be a dyon-kuntigi (chief of the furuba-dyon), a member of the Fama's community, or the Fama himself.

708 534 Finally, the army was accompanied by a musical corps, composed essentially of drums which transmitted messages. There were armpit drums (dunkan), shoulder drums (taura), three-legged drums (dange), drums carried by two men (tabala), and coupled drums (denuba). Often horns (buru) were added, sometimes small horns made of ivory or horn, and sometimes xylophones (bada) and cowbells.

708 537 A dyeli (griot) follows the expedition to observe the exploits that he must retransmit; he must encourage the warriors and dispel panic by the power of his oratory.

B. Influence of Social Organization on Economic Life

a. The ton, Work Community

621 We have seen that the social unit among the Bambara is the community. The community is also the work unit and the economic unit. The independent individual is not conceived of. The community owns all the wealth which makes up the spiritual and material patrimony: the land, the agricultural, industrial, and commercial products, the habitations ...

423 621 622 609 [431] The community regulates the exploitation of the land. The dugu-tigi is the first occupant, master of the land, of which he distributes the lots to the different family heads. When a stranger, a family head, wants to enter into a community, he chooses an unoccupied field and asks the village chief for it. The request is accompanied by ten kola nuts and a chicken. Authorization cannot then be refused. The chief of the land sacrifices the chicken before the entire community and informs it of the installation of the newcomer. When the stranger wants to leave the land, he is given back his chicken and kola nuts.

423 621 622 Land assigned to a family head may always be taken back from him without justification by the dugu-tigi and his council.

241 After the men have cleared the big weeds, the women come
462 along to finish up. At harvest time, the women and children chase
411 the birds from the fields with loud cries, sling shots, and by heating
bamboo on a hard rock to cause a detonation. All chase the spar-
401 rows, partridges, guinea-fowls ... Harvesting is done together ...

In addition, by the side of the men's fields there are little women's fields where the women cultivate sorrel, okra, eggplant, tomatoes, beans, and all the condiments. The accessory crops of the women are the raro, bananas, manioc, sometimes rice or peanuts (1).

1. Labouret, Paysans noirs [Black Peasants].

241 Naturally, the work varies according to the social order. The
565 Bambara divide themselves into free men, people of caste, and,
567 formerly, slaves, all having a chief at their head. All members of
the community must work the land; in fact, the poor work more than the slaves. The more fortunate do little work; they formerly directed and controlled the work of the slaves, today that of the agricultural workers.

C. Legal Procedure: Inheritance, Land Ownership

692 In Bambara country today, as in all of French West Africa, justice is dispensed by two tribunals: that presided over by a justice of the peace for important affairs, and that presided over by the administrator for other cases. The justice of the peace renders justice following the French code; the administrator according to local custom. A chamber of the Court of Appeals of Dakar is represented at Bamako, whose jurisdiction includes the Sudan and Niger territories. The Assize Court holds a session at Bamako, which also possesses an inferior court. Justices of the peace of wide jurisdiction are found at Kayes, Gao, Mopti, Ségou, Sikasso, Bougouni; other justices of the peace with wide jurisdiction have been created and will soon take up their functions.

One easily imagines the conflicts of principles and method which may arise between the two sorts of tribunals have just indicated.

689 Public violation of decency is punished by death.

For adultery, the man is put in irons and pays a fine, the
684 woman is whipped by her husband, her brothers, or the Fama's police.
Relations with a woman in mourning draws public scorn on the guilty,
while a man who commits adultery with a pregnant woman is put to
death. A captive who is the lover of his master's wife is put to death.

689 Vagrant individuals are presumed to be escaped captives and are handed over to the Fama.

735 Finally, begging is authorized, because, say the Bambara, it is better to have begging than stealing.

d. Responsibility

[608] The Fama judges all his subjects, except his own *sénanku* whom
he has judged by his tribunal. The law is applicable to every cir-
672 cumcised man and excised woman recognized as sane. (The de-
mented are put in irons.) They are responsible for their acts, but
the family of the guilty is also responsible. The father of an un-
circumcised boy is responsible for the boy's acts, the husband for the
acts of his wife, and we have seen that a man's crime may lead to
the punishment of his whole family. Let us further remark that a
● 567 master was judge of his slave, but when a difference arose between
692 slaves of different houses, their case was referred to the tribunal.
The tribunal also weighed the death penalty [72] when a slave com-
[609] mitted a grave fault. Finally, the foreigner who lives in the Bam-
bara country is judged by Bambara laws.

We must also note that the penalties apply to all crimes
672 committed voluntarily; every infraction or damage involuntarily
committed is excusable on the condition that it be immediately
confessed. Thus it is that a hunter meeting a pair of lovers in the
[684] bush may kill them for outraging public decency, but must admit
his crime immediately upon returning to the village.

e. Inheritance

Monteil has noticed an order of succession in the Ségou re-
428 gion which does not correspond to that described by other authors,
such as Ortoli or Aubert. In fact, at the death of the *fa*, " ... every-
thing that belonged to him remains undivided under the new *faya* of

794
796 that period; his body will not be buried but will be carried off by
766 members of the Komo, who will take it to a crossroads and crush it
with the aid of *komo-se-w* [sic]. The remains will be hidden in
a secret place. The same treatment is accorded to the *komo-tigi*
who dies during his seven-year term.

794 The cult is cantonal, and the various *komo-tigi* take their
orders from their colleagues of the capital. The cult formerly was
interclan and intertribal. Labouret (*Les Mandingues et leur langue*
[The Mandingo and Their Language]) has made a table of the seven
categories of persons who make up the hierarchical society of the
initiates.

794 After initiation into the *Komo* cult, a natural sequel to circumcision,
793 the young man may, if he so desires, be initiated into
other cults. He then enters a powerful spiritual family which unites
all its members by ties of brotherhood. This brotherhood is superimposed
on the normal social hierarchy of the *flã-tõ* [this term is
[564 probably the same as *flanton*]. The chief of the brotherhood is entitled
● 567] *nyama-tigi*; he is generally a man of caste or a slave. He
acquires his position as chief either by inheriting it, by election, or
[778] by founding a new cult. To do this latter, he must buy an altar,
gna, from the village or from the brotherhood that already possesses
this cult. Such a purchase is considered a marriage with the *gna* and
is accompanied by drinking. The higher-ranking initiates (*dyenfaw*:
masters of the truth) are auxiliaries of the *nyama-tigi* and participate
in the oracle, *wara-da*. All the initiates are more or less divine.
The clergy includes, in addition, a sacrificer, *muru-kala-tigi*, and
a *dyeli*, herald of the god. To become one of the faithful, one must
pay an entrance fee and swear an oath of secrecy, obedience, and
fellowship. The clergy manages the cult's treasury which is fed by
the entrance fees to the brotherhood, by fees levied for a class promotion,
by contributions required for the major ceremonies, and by
fines imposed on the members.

The brotherhood is a spiritual family which is organized in a
fashion similar to the natural filiation of the community. The
nyama-tigi plays the role of the *fa*; the *dyen-fa-w* and the notable
members form a sort of council for settling, with the chief, all questions.
[527] The cult does nothing on Mondays and Thursdays, the work
holidays.

771 "believe or die" of the Moslems by taking up their spears, and when
798 they were conquered, reduced to servitude, and unable to continue
778 their worship openly, they remained true to the faith they received
from their ancestors. Severed heads became the prey of vultures, and spilled blood flowed, but those that survived only became hardened. The Moslem conquerors, tired of striking and in need of slaves and manpower, had to admit their defeat in the field of religion.

Some fell away from the idols (slaves, and some rich people seeking to safeguard their lives and possessions), but their apostasy was strictly external and a lie, for they shouted the formula but in secret devoted themselves to their bloody rites, imbuing their children with their own faith and not that of their masters. A lie has never
[517] been difficult for the Bambara; to know how to lie is for them more than half a virtue. Thus, when the right to freedom was proclaimed
[567] in 1907, I was not at all surprised to see that out of nearly 5,000 slaves who spontaneously set themselves free, the majority returned to their homes or to the land of their fathers, forgot the formula, and declared themselves to be fetishists. They did not get initiated then since they already had been (1).

1. Those who took back their own freedom in 1907 were all slaves of the Moslems. The "Peulls" /Fulani/, a shepherd people, saw almost all their slaves escape. The Bambara in slavery kept their traditions as well as they could; in the Negro village of Biskra I found sons of the Bambara who did not know their own language and were fanatical Moslems, yet kept their tattoos, sacrificed to the family boli handed down by their fathers, danced the dance of the korodouga, and used the Bambara formulas and songs although they no longer understood them.

684 however, because the Negroes say that although the betrothed girl
836 does not belong entirely to herself, neither does she belong entirely
to her fiancé; she still retains certain rights to her own person, "à ma
di ban, she has not yet been given."

When a girl becomes pregnant, she is arraigned before the
684 family council. After a goat has been slaughtered for the family boli,
627 she is asked the name of her partner, and if she refuses to disclose
it the council of the elders is called in. She has to yield, otherwise
she is tied to one of the forked sticks that support the flat terrace roof,
and blows rain thick on her back.

As soon as the guilty man is named, she swears on a powerful boli (1) that she has told the truth, and the man is summoned. Nothing is to be gained by being a perjurer; it is better to pay the fine and live. The stain on his honor is slight, and he confesses without much shame: "Tigné (that is true); né no do (it is my fault)."

The fine is between 15 and 20 francs and often between 25 and 30 francs (2), not including the sacrifice to the boli, which consists of two hens, two dogs, a goat, and two kola nuts. Quite often the injured fiancé has to be satisfied with the victims for the sacrifice and a small present, one to two kilos of salt, and 800 to 1,600 cowrie
shells, or 1 to 2 francs. As for the child of an unmarried mother, its
847 fate is in the hands of the grandmothers, and of the father and the
848 mother, and it quite often happens that it does not cry twice in this
● 567 world; to use the Bambara expression: "N'a kasira, a t'na foula ké, if
he has cried, he will not do it a second time." I am speaking here
of a free girl, for the child of an unmarried slave girl is welcome;
it is a gain for the house, and no attention is paid to the guilty man.
This is easy to understand, for is there a Negro who does not abuse his
slave?

1. It is almost always a Komo, a Nama, or a Kono.

[583] 2. The rule is that the culprit should pay the fiancé the entire bride price, or some 30 francs.

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1. Sometimes this exhibition is made before the arrival of the young bride.

The shoes with soles three fingers thick, the white blouse and the loincloth that the bride wears, together with the koundougou fini, a huge piece of cloth that can yield three or four loincloths, are a gift from the husband; the rest -- cloth, gourds, pottery, mortars for grinding millet, cotton to be carded and spun, all come to her from her family. The size of the trousseau depends a little on the family's fortune, but as a general rule it can be stated that at her marriage every young woman receives some ten tafé (pieces of cloth, one and a half to two meters long by one meter wide, which the women wind around their bodies), some 15 gourds, and for ornaments at least a bracelet and a bead necklace (2). One is sometimes présent at hilarious scenes, for among the crowd of the curious that press around, there are inevitably some rejected suitors. They have put aside hatred and rancour, for the boli of the village protects her. Yet they love her; deep in their hearts they keep all their love for her, and it is certainly they, the wounded ones, who take her free hand and pour onto her knees a few handfuls of cowrie shells.

When the vainglorious exhibition of the trousseau is finished, the fourouboloma tigi or the guardian of the wedding presents, gives the mistress of song 5 kémé, or 400 cowrie shells, and the guns are fired one last time. The young bride gets up at once, her platter of grass still over her face, and gliding with her heels on the ground, not lifting her feet, she goes into her dwelling followed by two or three matrons, and then she disappears in a light cloud of dust. The crowd withdraws, for to follow her or even to stay where they are would be indiscreet.

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2. Brides from rich families receive a slave called gouadani to do the cooking, as well as a cow, small chains for their feet, bracelets, a bead necklace with a piece of amber the size of a hen's egg, and two small gold earrings.

4: Henry--254 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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1. A bonded person works for his food, just like a slave. His condition is worse than that of the slave, for in addition to his food, the latter receives a bit of cloth to cover himself, but the bonded person does not. A slave can ransom himself for a sum varying between 100 and 200 francs, and at present he can escape without fear of being pursued and without paying anything at all. A bonded person must pay the amount of his bond to the last cowrie shell, whether he escapes or not. There are Negroes who, for a certain amount, will give you one of their children for one or two years. These children are not paid since the amount has already been paid, but besides food they get clothing and some gratuities beyond the payment for their work. Lacking the proper words, the Bambara call this also, "bonding" even though it is basically a real "domestic service." When the agreed time has passed, these young people go back to their homes without any payment being made. Even though the Negroes call this bonding, they make a distinction: a) slavery is a stigma which always remains; b) true bonding is a stigma that does not disappear unless the bonded person himself pays the price of his bonding; c) the bonding which is called "domestic service" does not involve any stigma; they are workers and not menial laborers.

183 181 The Bambara has a very highly developed sense of this idea of justice and there is nothing he resents more than injustice or a denial of justice. His resentment is stubborn and his vengeance, which may be deferred under a show of indifference, is implacable. The chronicle of Ségou is rich in pertinent examples. There was Ngolo Dyara, bringing murder and disaster on his own relatives in order to satisfy his hatred for having been sold into slavery by his uncle and not ransomed by any of his relatives. There was Kégné Mari who, watching the murder of Touro-koro in the Komo wood, expressed his vengeance finally fulfilled by saying: "Remember how, falsely accusing me of adultery with one of your wives, you had me lashed? And how on that day I told you that even though I were lying on the ground, if I could touch you with my foot, I would lay you low? Here at last is the day of my vengeance!" Similar examples are innumerable.

If he is powerless against injustice, the Bambara will wait patiently and, each time he has to speak, will dissimulate his weakness in formulas which have a double meaning, such as [195] O do!, meaning "That's it!" O nya-na, meaning "Oh well!" Tigi!, meaning "That's true"; and other similar expressions. At the same time, he is repeating to himself his proverb: don' m'i fantan', a bla k'a teme, meaning "Don't pay attention while you are weak," that is, "Wait until I am strong enough to take vengeance (lit., to pay you back)."

181 571 626 This instinctive feeling for justice accounts, in a certain measure, for the family bonds made up of reciprocal rights [131] and duties between parents and between them and their children and, by an analogy of which we shall see other examples, between master and slave and between chief and subject. The obligation to respect all pacts concluded in the form of vows, oaths or fraternal alliance rests on the same basis. And it is the same notion that inspires the repression of acts which are almost universally condemned: perjury, treason, false witness, slander, [691] theft and murder. It sustains the tireless persistence of the pleader who will go through endless lawsuits to obtain redress for a wrong done to him or to one of his people. And it gives strength to public vengeance against the sorcerer.

183 784 Thus used, taboo has organized and transformed the native milieu; it has established a line of demarcation between the sacred and the profane by removing from ordinary intercourse persons, places and objects connected with the invisible and considered to be impregnated by it. However, since by its very nature it forms an incontestable and nonappealable law, it has been the favorite means of anyone in authority wishing to impose his will without fear of protest. Thus the laity has, so to speak, had to submit to a arbitrary system of law that is essentially religious. Social regulations, rules of hygiene, medical prescriptions, culinary preparations, forms of courtesy -- all these are surrounded with taboos and all have absorbed from the *tne* the very essence of its vitality and its constraining force.

784 593 Within the family, which is the generating force of any collective group, the individual finds himself surrounded by taboos throughout his life. They are what establish and maintain the authority of the elders (*koro-u*) and especially of their head (*fa*). Taboos impose ancestral traditions which have developed separately and become gradually superimposition from earliest times to the present, the whole of which consti[illegible]e, in fact, family custom.

784 [571] Patriarchy, brotherhood, the state, and all Bambara collectivities operate in the same way, since all collectivities are in a sense modeled on the natural family.

Religion, family, and society as a whole, in short the whole of Bambara civilization, have been and continue to be largely dependent on the *tne*.

## [133] 3. Mantic, Religion and Magic

787 *Mantic*. Among the Bambara, as among all the Sudanese, religion and magic are both based on a belief in a permanent revelation which the manes, the spirits and the gods give to men with regard to the events of their lives.

The various means by which man can come to know this revelation on the part of invisible beings are what is called divination or mantic. This is extra-rational knowledge since it makes known things which could not be learned through reason

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789 emanating from the person or object impregnated with magic
force acts as if it were a part of that person or object. Often
[788] the magician or [154] ritual officiant spits on the person or
object involved in the rites. This is a means of transferring
one person's fluid to another.

Conversely, it is vital to know how to avoid contact
751 with, or even emanations from, a maleficent magic force.
789 That is the reason for the great number of mysterious magic
754 practices and the secret of the innumerable amulets that form
so many shields, to be placed presumably where they will best
protect against any blow. Therefore it is the magician's
prerogative to make amulets and to prescribe the conduct
necessary to preserve their efficacy.

It should be noted that protection set up against a given person is good only for him and is useless against a successor, for instance. The chronicle tells us that Bani, chief of Samba-Nyana, was successful in using certain artifices to prevent Ma-n-son from conquering him. But, kept in ignorance of Ma-n-son's death and having taken no precautions against Da, Ma-n-son's son and successor, Bani was conquered by Da, against whom his artifices availed nothing.

If one is caught in spite of precautions, what is to be done? Everyone is afflicted in one way or another in any event. A Bambara is always inclined to believe in some sort of supernatural intervention. He has on hand some sort of remedy, but more often he resorts to a "seer" for guidance or, if the case requires, to a magician's skill.

Native medicine is a mass of magic formulas and of remedies strikingly reminiscent of the pharmacopeia of the Middle Ages (see, in the foregoing, father Niany's operations).

[571] The individual does not live as an isolated unit but
789 rather as an integral part of a community. In the society in
which he lives, however restricted it may be, he progressively
783 occupies various situations. On both physical and moral levels,
he undergoes changes and, depending on circumstances, whether
fortunate or unfortunate happenings, changes take place within
him. In short, his magic potential varies. These variations
are always believed to concern the entire milieu, upon which
they may (in the case of illness or death) have disastrous effects.

789 The individual is therefore required to [155] undergo proper
783 treatment to return him to his normal, harmless state.

789 From this point of view, social life seems to give rise
to a series of rites involving the disintegration and reintegra-
788 tion or the aggregation of the individual in relation to the group
182 in which he lives. Birth, circumcision, marriage, illness, death and the performance of certain trades are all modes of existence, whose beginning and end usually involve three stages: separation from the common milieu, accomplishment of the act, and reintegration into the former milieu or aggregation in a new milieu. Between the first and the second state as well as between the third and the fourth there exists usually a kind of negative interval which we call marginal. This system, which comes to light upon an analysis of multiple facts, is actually subject to modifications or alterations which can change its physiognomy. Nevertheless, the basis of these ritual sequences is so well established that by comparing external manifestations with the theoretical system it is possible to understand them better and to restore to some of them, which have become badly mutilated, their real meaning, which the native is usually, if not always, unable to explain or to define precisely.

A detailed study of institutions will give an opportunity for concrete analysis of these ritual sequences, which a kind of age-old empiricism has transformed into laws of a sort. They have come to represent that part of custom which has acquired a kind of permanence by virtue of public acceptance.

It is apparent everywhere among the Blacks that events of a general character (birth, coming-of-age, marriage, illness and death) are surrounded by ritual practices that vary outwardly from place to place but may all fit our theoretical system of three stages with marginal periods. All denote a common basis of magic and all derive from a long-tried empiricism which has given them a peculiar and relatively stable physiognomy in terms of the milieu with which the rites are connected.

571 What we have just said about individuals must also ap-
182 ply to collective groups: the latter deal with each other or

571 182 with individuals in the same way as individuals deal with each other. They are not only moral persons, as we put it, but they are truly persons, [156] as evidenced by the Blacks' impulsive need for anthropomorphism.

812 Let us note, finally, that a Black does not abstract himself from surrounding nature; nor has he reached the stage of development at which man regards himself as a kind of intermediary between the natural and the supernatural. The Black is an integral part of nature and that is why he treats it like himself. Therefore, natural phenomena are subjected on his behalf to the same kind of ritual sequences as those followed in his own behavior.

Chapter 3

Communities

1. General Considerations

114 631 Native society is not simple, and Europeans studying these countries have used terminology which, not being defined, has obscured reality.

In particular, they have used the terms "kingdom" and "empire" to describe Sudanese states, and both authors and readers have taken these expressions to imply a social organization more or less analogous to those meant by these words in our country.

631 These empires or kingdoms, however, are simply clans, i.e., political groups that have imposed their authority on other groups whose members then become their tributaries, members of a caste, or slaves. Such an empire, if one wishes to use this term, has no exact geographical boundaries or, if one prefers, its boundaries are constantly changing. Furthermore, the country embraced by this term has two parts: territories which may be said to be under direct administration, in which the authority of the clan is directly imposed; and those territories whose position with respect to the ruling clan

614 596 fa (2), according to whether the group itself is meant or the place which this collectivity occupies.

571 575 Let us note at the start that any collectivity forming an association is a ton'; thus, this is the case for all persons under the authority of one fa, and from this point of view, each of them is a ton'-den', literally, "a child of the ton'," i.e., member of the ton'. The word ton'-denya derives from the same word and is commonly used as a collective designation for all the members of the same ton'. This is the equivalent of the French word [159] société [Ed., society, association] or confrérie [Ed., brotherhood, confraternity]. The head of the ton' is the ton'-tigi, a term by which honor is paid to the head of an important family, and which, in some respects, is the equivalent of our [Ed., French] words notable [Ed., person of note, dignitary] and notabilité [Ed., notability, principal person].

614 596 If one considers the family as an association of the issue of the same parents, the term ba-denya is used, derived from ba-den'. Since the word ba means "mother" and, in the broad sense, "progenitor," mother or father, the word ba-den' is used for any of their issue, hence "children," "brothers," and "relatives," while ba-denya means "fraternity" "kinship."

Although, in the restricted sense in which we shall use it, the word ton' refers to anyone living under the authority of the ton'-tigi, whether or not he is connected by descent, the more exact term, ba-denya, refers only to those whose

2. Fa means "lord," "master," "patriarch," or "father," depending on the circumstances. Within the family, it corresponds very closely to the titular incumbent of such rank and high office who led Mistral [Ed., a French poet] to call his father: "my lord father," or "the master."

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881 being born; *bolo-ko* literally means "affair involving birth."

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etymologically mean "birth."

Having entered the family through physical birth, a child enters a new phase of his life through the spiritual birth represented by the *soli*. Through this rite, a child in fact ceases to belong to sexless childhood and becomes: the boy, a man; the girl, a woman. Let us look at the stages of this change of status which is truly the principal event of a native's life.

857 Until he is about seven years old, a small boy lives in daily contact with his mother, only slipping away, as time goes on, to play nearby with his friends.

During this period, one can already observe the influence [235] of the native milieu on the development of his young soul. He has watched cult and magic practices, and he too plays at being a magician to kill or capture rats, lizards, and other small animals for his little feasts. He collects roots with simulated rites and attaches them to his toy bow so as to ensure the success of his hunting, believing that he has attracted a spirit by promising an offering of the blood of his victims. He is already a little hunter, seeking mysterious procedures through which game can be and ought to be put at his mercy without danger to himself.

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794 Around the age of seven, he is thinking about the crucial act of his life, the *soli*, one of whose rites is that of circumcision.

Observance of the *soli*, complete with public circumcision and preceded and followed by membership in a brotherhood, is not absolutely indispensable. When, by reason of circumstances, a child lives in an isolated situation, he undergoes the *soli* within the family circle, without fuss, and this in no way lessens the validity of the act.

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571 There is no doubt, however, that nothing but absolute necessity will make a Bambara do this; he loathes such wretched economy, which in any case seems inappropriate to such an important occasion (1). On the contrary, he loves to take part in

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1. Besides, since no exact age limit is

881 imposed and since there may be as
561 much as six or seven years' difference
●571 in age between the oldest and youngest
794 children participating in the same *soli*,
it is obviously possible for a candidate to arrange to be included at some point within this range of ages so as not to be an isolated case.

881 a noisy demonstration and to share in all of the rejoicing the
571 brotherhoods provide for their members. This is by no means the
794 least of the reasons for the spread of these brotherhoods, to
which the n-Tomo (2) is really the front door, since no one is

2. n-Tomo is the term used in the Ségou area; in Kaarta the term n-Tori is used.

admitted to a brotherhood unless he is *soli-ma*, and the specific final object of the n-Tomo is the *soli*.

n-Tomo

561 The n-Tomo is an association which, in preparation for
857 the *soli*, bands together boys (3) of about seven to fourteen years
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3. Little girls have no organized society to prepare them for the *soli*, but they have agreements among themselves and, in addition, are chosen as *n-golo-moso-u* by the *n-Tomo-den'-u*.

Each [236] n-Tomo normally includes all the boys due to be circumcised, without distinction by race or rank. Each member is called *n-Tomo-den'*; the eldest is the leader or *n-Tomo-tigi*, and he is assisted by a *syere* or "follower." New members are received every year at the time of the annual festival, and they must pay an entrance fee (a chicken) and a few cowries

561 575 A fla-n-ton' usually includes the young people from three consecutive soli, so it is an assemblage of three fla-m-bolo. Thus, Bambara society is composed of a certain number of fla-n-ton', and all the people are distributed among them, from the most recent tye-kura (new men) to the tye-koro (elders) who are the most advanced in age. [249] Since the women also have their fla-n-ton', it is reasonable to say, from a certain point of view, that the soli is the basis of life and of the social organization.

● 571 Each fla-n-ton' is independent, but it maintains the best of relations with its immediate neighbors, the one preceding it, the one following it, and the one of the women of the same soli. Thus, the fla-n-ton' have a certain solidarity among them, which is shown by the custom of each fla-n-ton' honoring its immediate neighbors by offering them some of the food from its corporate meals. It should be noted, also, that whenever discord arises within a fla-n-ton', the neighboring fla-n-ton' intervene to make peace; a special arbiter may even be chosen to smooth out the difficulties involved in such an affair (1).

1. In this connection, note the difficulties between the ton' of Kassoum and Biton as reported in the chronicle of Ségou above.

Wherever he goes, a Bambara will look up people of his own age, i.e., those who went through the soli at the same time. He can always count on their friendly welcome and practical help.

In each fla-n-ton' there is a chief, ton-tigi, chosen in various ways depending on the place and the people. He may be the son of a notable; he may be a house slave. A syere (follower) assists him or replaces him. A dyala-tige, or assigner of shares, has the function of enforcing discipline and distributing the food at the group banquets; this is usually a house slave. Finally, a ton-dyeli serves as general factotum and herald; a person of caste has this role. From the point of view of the

608 his ally had to try to ransom him. A sénanku often serves as inter-
621 mediary in arranging marriages, in land claims, in the collection of
648 debts. He is rewarded by gifts. He has the power to stop quarrels
and to oppose acts of rage and violence by the man whose sénanku
he is, no matter what his rank and no matter how important the
decisions in question are. The sénanku of a Fama could prevent his
declaring war or condemning to death one of his subjects. Moreover,
he has certain limited privileges over his ally's possessions. (He
may appropriate unimportant objects, food, and even sums of
money.) Finally, he recruits the labor force which his ally may
need.

c. Age Classes. -- But though these different ties exercise an
621 important influence on the political, social, and religious life of the
●571 community they are generally too broad and too lax to permit organiza-
561 tion of a work community. In fact, we have seen how a large village
may be formed of different communities relatively independent of
each other, despite the authority of the founding community's fa. On
the level of the canton, the geographical dispersion does not permit
the Fama to intervene personally in the organization of the work com-
munity. The latter is founded essentially on the system of relations
of the age classes.

561 From infancy until circumcision for the boys, until excision for the girls, the young Bambara belongs to a hierarchic society which prepares him or her for this ceremony and which provides an education complementary to that received in the family. Within this association all the children are divided into age classes: boys up to six years of age are bilakoro-dogomani (bila = short pants), from 6 to 10 years they are bilakoro-dogoma, from 10 to about 15 years, bilakoro-koroba. Similarly, the girls are, successively: sunkiri-dogomani, sunkuru-dogoma, and sunkuru-koroba. Each age class has a chief: ton-tigi for the boys, musso-tigi for the girls; each office is doubled by a deputy (syere). There is also a treasurer and a ton-dyeli who is the griot of the ton. All are elected by members of the society. A Bambara will be influenced all his life by his membership in a certain age class which groups all the children who underwent circumcision at the same time. In fact, up to the moment of circumcision the child's personality is not yet distinct. We have seen before how small children were

857 and his syere at the head. There, the n-Tomo-den' squat at
796 a little distance from the n-Tomo-tigi, who takes his place in
782 front of them, facing the tree where the guardian genie dwells,
in order to perform the libations and sacrifices. First he takes
a small gourd and pours the dege it contains against the trunk of
the tree; he cuts the throat of a chicken and dribbles its blood
on the tree in the same way; next, in a jet of saliva, he spits
on it the juice and particles of kola nuts which he has chewed
for the purpose; finally, he fastens a few of the chicken's
feathers in the smear of blood. As he makes each of these offerings,
he says to the genie: "Look here, I offer you this chicken,
protect us, defend us against the wicked and against evil genii.
Give us enough to live well. Save us from illness. Give us
rain to make our fields fruitful and be propitious to our families."

He speaks thus for everybody, after which each one
comes in turn to offer his sacrifice and to make personal requests
through him as intermediary.

The admission of new members follows. Each of them
857 pays his entrance fee and then, prostrate before the genie,
796 swears never to reveal anything to the uninitiated, [239] above
all to the women." If you betray your brothers," says the n-Tomo-
tigi, "may the genie kill you!" The new member repeats:
"May he kill me!"

At this point the victims are cooked, and while they are
[535] being prepared, the n-Tomo-den' dance in turn, dressed in the
ceremonial regalia. Their steps are accompanied by the beating
of drums, and they twirl a flexible stick as they dance. When
the victims are cooked, the banquet begins. Everyone eats and
drinks as much as he can; a special treat of kola nuts brings the
banquet to a close.

857 On this day each n-Tomo-den' is expected to take one of
796 his gifts or some other personal possession and make a present of
572 it to his n-golo-moso (1). This is how one names the young
[431]

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1. N-golo-moso, literally, "woman of the birth," is the companion associated with the rite which he is to undergo.

857 companion whom each n-Tomo-den' is required to choose upon
796 his admission into the sect; she is his special girl friend and
[572] his relations with her are not merely platonic.

The meal is over by mid-afternoon, and the band re-
857 turns to the village for a public performance during which the
796 members beat one another. First, the n-Tomo-tigi and his
785 syere advance to the middle of a circle of onlookers, relatives, friends, and others; the mothers wrap cloths or scarves around their hips and stomachs to protect them from serious injury. Onlookers sing and clap their hands. The n-Tomo-tigi holds his whip aloft with his arms outstretched, and the syere immediately flogs his head and shoulders, front and back, his thighs, legs, and feet; he keeps this up, the victim uttering not a single cry of pain, until he can strike no longer, either because he is exhausted or because his whip is broken.

Then it is the turn of the syere to be flogged in the same way. Following this, the n-Tomo-den' in pairs flog each other until it is the turn of the very youngest who, being less hardened, weep and scream and run away at the first blow. This naturally gives rise to laughter and mockery among the onlookers, who had greatly admired the stamina of the others.

In some places each n-Tomo-den' flagellates himself.

What is the meaning of this practice? It seems likely that originally its purpose was to emphasize the secrecy required of the n-Tomo-den' by giving them a chance to show that they would not violate [240] their oaths even under blows. It should be recalled that flogging was the common method of obtaining confessions, always considered the best proof of guilt. Thus, the practice of flagellation would to some extent enable the adepts not to confess under blows (1). The practice is also a means of preparing the boys to undergo circumcision without flinching, since it is a signal disgrace to show or expose pain at that time.

1. Flagellation is also practiced in certain brotherhoods for no apparent reason except that of hardening one against pain. See "The Koré" below.

881 group is called kule. In the same way, the boys go about in a group headed by the sema-tye, called masa (king), followed by the masa-ma-kono, the masa-ma-kono-segere, etc.

In this way, the whole country learns which boys and girls have completed the soli.

The Fla-n-ton'

561 Those who have belonged to the same n-Tomo-ya and
572 have gone through the soli together remain bound together for
life; they are fula-ni ("peers," "twins") because they were born
575 on the same day to sexual and social life. Wherever they may
be and whatever their respective rank, two fula-ni consider themselves equals even if one of them is a chief and the other a slave; the latter in particular has the right to speak his mind without fear (1). Theoretically, therefore, the fula-ni is the friend on whom one may safely rely, and he is usually a member of the council, small but very powerful, which every fa likes to have around. It is to him that the fa confides his troubles, his joys, his plans, and his personal affairs. He is present at all the celebrations and mourning of the family. On serious or important occasions, he represents his friend who often entrusts him with the supervision of his household during an absence and appoints him guardian or trustee of his children after his death. He is a brother who may be loved more than agnate or uterine brothers. At the same time the fulani-ya does not necessarily produce a type of brotherhood analogous to that brought about by the blood pact. Rather, it engenders a kind of mutual assistance which is strengthened by the organization called fla-n-ton', "assemblage of people of the same age," i.e., those "born" at the same soli.

The young people from the same soli form a fla-m-bolo, literally, a band of persons of the same age.

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1. See in Chapter 7, "The Man with Three Braids." [Not translated.]

778
551 Children dedicated to the Nia: Nia-gné foula, Nia-n-ti, Nia-n-nkoro, Nia.

Children dedicated to the Kono: Nièlé, Tjétjélé, Djonké (2).

[576] 2. Djonke, a respectful appellation often applied to the master of the Kono. Tjétjélé, the password of the initiates of the Kono and its family name, or diamou. When a stranger appears at the sacrifice, he is asked the question: "E b'a la wa Wélema djonké? Are you of the sect of Wélema djonké?" Only a brother can answer: "Tjétjélé, ne b'a la. Tjétjélé, I am."

Children dedicated to the Magna: Ma-n-djé, Magna, Magné.
Children dedicated to the Djo: Djo, Djokoro, Djoméné.
Children dedicated to the Douga: Dougakoro, Douga-n-tjé.
Children dedicated to the Da: Dakoro, Da-n-son, Da-n-wélé.
Children dedicated to the Bala: Bala, Balake, Mousa and Misa (3).

3. Mousa and Misa are synonyms of Bala and not a translation of the name Moses.

778
572 It is also on a powerful boli, or rather in its presence, that the Bambara swear to an indissoluble friendship, a friendship so close that it finds the two persons and their children like a kinship tie. This is the sinnakoun! No Negro has ever been able to talk to me about it with any clarity or precision, so that I am unable to give it a very exact definition. Basing my interpretation on the custom -- widespread among the Bambara -- of a woman showing her breast in order to indicate clearly that she is the mother of a child (a wolo ba, "his

778 mother who bore him"), and on the phrase sinna dé meaning "a child
572 at the breast," I believe I can give this meaning to the word sinnakoun ("head," "tip of the breast": or again, "because of the breast"): "Between us it is as if we had sucked the same breast; therefore, we are like brothers." And /155/the persons bound by this type of friendship regard themselves as such, exchanging witticisms and light jokes without ever quarreling. Yet the Negroes are very sensitive and hardly ever allow joking. Seing such friends one would take them for kanémé, and the latter are relatives since they are maternal cousins (1).

> 1. A woman's children and the children of her brothers are kanémé to each other. Sinnakoun and kanémé are not impediments to marriage.

The sinnakoun between families dates from time immemorial; it appears to have no history, or at least I was unable to persuade anyone to tell me what it is. In any case, one can believe that it is a friendship sworn on a boli, or in its presence if you like, since nowadays two heads of families who wish to be united, to be sinnakoun, together redden a powerful fetish.

6. Talking Boli

778 These are supposed to bring death to anyone who scorns them.
[761] Nevertheless, they are seldom blamed for death, and they bring chiefly evil spells, sorcery, and sickness. They are in the hands of so-called sorcerers, real leeches who go through villages in the dry season, always holding out their hands and begging.

A talking boli is usually the tail of an animal and the sacrifices
778 are made on this tail. The owner always has his instrument in an
791 unusual skin, often the hide of a small wild animal, and he lets an end protrude. That, I believe, is his insignia, his mark of identification, unless it be the small bell he hangs on the paws of the hide and which he knows so well how to [redacted] to notify people of his arrival.

794 19. pembele. This sign represents both the society's pembele and 869 the board of the same name used for circumcision.

20. gosilãnde. The sign designates the primitive club and the small 532 mallet used in circumcising.

The ensemble of these figures, representing a summary of the universe in its arrangement and its movement, forms the scene upon which the actors in the ceremony take their places. The latter are in a way the living embodiment of these drawings as well as the movements which change the order of presentation and must be executed with special precautions. In effect, any change made in the arrangement of the actors in the scene is felt to have repercussions in the universal organization. This is why the movements of each one give rise to rituals of forgiveness and purification concerning the sign corresponding to him (1).

1. See below.

F. Ceremonies of the Komo

794 796 The ceremonies in which the mask participates take place several times a year according to the decision of the members. Their purpose is to discuss the interests of the society, to make joint decisions assuring the prosperity of its members, to promote harvesting, and to commemorate the organization of the Komo.

Three principal ceremonies are celebrated: the first, called /160/ "anniversary of the Komo" (komo sanyelema), at the end of the dry season; the second after the harvest, for offering of the first produce, as the mask is never taken into the fields at the time of cultivation; the third during the cold season at the time of circumcision. They involve sacrifices offered in the cemetery in honor of the dead as well as divining rites. Occasional ceremonies may also take place inbetween upon the membership's decision; the mask is taken out for purifications. The neighboring societies are generally invited to [574] attend the reunions and the drinking which follow (2).

2. The important Komo chiefs are thus consulted by strangers in the village, who sometimes travel considerable distances.

794 No one may remain a member of the ndomo after his circumcision. It is said that an individual who would continue his activity in the ndomo would acquire a double wanzo.

/176/ Chapter 7

RITES

771 The rites of the Bambara are very complex and often involve several institutions. The following descriptions are not of a general character as the rites admit perceptible variations from one village to the next, variations of which the individuals concerned are aware, for there is no absolute rule for any institution or ceremony.

Nevertheless, their various manifestations, which adhere to this flexibility of thought, testify to the unity of the cosmological and religious representations. When a Bambara is invited to be a spectator ●[574] to the ceremonies of neighboring villages, he is frequently informed about this or that aspect of the ritual which is unfamiliar to him during the drinking parties which follow. In fact, tradition demands that the preceding ceremony be commented upon and explained in front of the beer jars. But the unity of the representations is such that, according to the declaration of a qualified informant, "whoever knows the principles and mechanisms may deduce from them, without explanations, the meaning and symbolism of a ritual which has not been commented upon."

On the other hand, the rites are symbolic even in their most insignificant manifestations: time and place, form of the ritual objects, aspect of the victims, repetition of formulas or prayers, mimicry of the participants, the wearing of certain secular or priestly garments, etc. A very great subtlety presides over the choice of details. It is thus that, during the stages of creation, the supernatural powers have established, organized, and reorganized the universe (skies, spaces, lands) following the itineraries which include "the cardinal directions and angles." The rites in which the cardinal points occur include gesticulation which, depending upon the power

764 574 Theoretically, all of this is supposed to be used to honor the dead, which is done in several ways. In the first place, it is obligatory to serve food and particularly drink to anyone who comes to present condolences. These meals and drinking bouts are a kind of communion since from everything consumed an offering is first made to the deceased and also [769] to the ancestors whom he has gone to join; it is a kind of communion with the departed members of the family.

These repasts and drinking bouts tend to develop into orgies, and the inexperienced or casual observer may think that they are carousals at the expense of the deceased. As a matter of fact, however, far from suffering a loss, the family of important persons receives more than it spends, at least for the time being (2). The more lavish the celebration, the more, it is supposed to please the deceased and cause him to look favorably on his survivors.

764 735 In principle, everything not consumed is supposed to be given away as alms to the poor and not added to the family property. It is quite natural, therefore, that the poor of the village come to partake of the feast, and indeed, they are invited. They must be treated with much cordiality if the sentiment governing the feast conforms to the spirit of the custom. That is why the [171] chronicle tells of Nyana-n-koro, upon the death of Ngolo, claiming that the cowries given should be distributed to the poor, to travelers, and to all the needy; that is the true spirit of the custom, and that type of alms is particularly pleasing to the dead.

The funeral feasting continues for seven days, which are called dyansa, "alms." It is a time especially devoted to [537] condolences, called sanga-fo (1) "funerary discourse." The

2. The family will have to behave reciprocally toward the families who have thus shown their respect when deaths later occur among them.

1. Literally, "sayings (for the sake) of the dead."

778 596 782 At the annual sacrifice the gouatigi, or head of the family, offers a goat and at least a hen and a kola nut for each male child no matter how strained his circumstances or how slight his self-respect. He also offers d'lo, or millet beer, and all his family make merry. [574] Some even do things in a big way, and although the whole village does not take part in the drinking bout, all the old men are invited, and many close friends come from everywhere.

778 596 The family boli take the interests of the head of the family in their hands; they are responsible for driving away illness and reverses of fortune. /138/ Through them one gains many descendants, wealth, wives, a happy and lively old age, honor and respect. They are also appealed to on all occasions in life that are of the slightest importance. Before a long journey is undertaken or a business venture is entered into, when a disaster threatens or there is a possibility of a piece of unhoped-for good fortune, they are reddened with a trickle of blood. Sacrifice is also made to them at harvest time (many are even called by the generic name of gno four, "millet medicine"), but especially at circumcisions and excisions, at betrothals, marriages, and funerals. The tne, or "taboo," of these fetishes (see above, p. 5ff.), is taboo for each wife's eldest son, and sometimes the whole family makes it its own.

4. Boli whose Power is Great

778 782 796 I call powerful boli all those gnâ of every shape and size whose worship is secret and in whose mysteries only those participate who have been initiated into the rites, after having sworn on their lives never to reveal them. Countless victims are offered to these boli; some of them are always warm and are ceaselessly reddened with blood. At the annual festivals not only is there a hecatomb of roosters and hens, but dogs and goats by the dozen also die, and in Bani country I have seen as many as five or six sacrificers working at the same time. This is the great and true Bambara worship, and it gives rise to orgies of four to eight days; it eclipses the ancient worship, that

852 *Alla m'i balola, kouyo kouyo,* you are called (. . .), may God make
533 you live!" Two women take up the corners of the rectangular cloth which will hold the child cradled on its mother's back, and the little one is rolled three times on an ax head if it is a boy or on the iron stick used to clean cotton if it is a girl, as if to say: "Be strong and vigorous, be a help and a support to your family!"

The child is placed astride on the back of a young girl and knotted into the rectangular piece of cloth, its mother's *tafé,* or loincloth. An old woman sticks a pinch of chewed kola nut on its forehead, on each side of its cranium above the ears, and on top of its head, and she knots a white cloth band a finger wide around its forehead. The girl receives a handful of millet, goes to the public square to pound it, and, with the child still on her back, prepares *dégé* (millet flour mixed with water). When she has prepared the gruel, she goes and offers it to the mother, who puts a pinch of it into the little one's moth, and the ceremony is finished. Not entirely, however, for a few old women run around the village with a gourd of *dégé* in their hands. They look for sterile women, who shut themselves in their huts and hide. Some are always caught, and they are covered with *dégé*; the more they cry out and the more they struggle, the more they get whitewashed.

846 After her child is shaved, a Bambara woman goes about the
852 village and attends to her work. But she does not braid her hair for
three months if she has given birth to a boy and for four months if
302 she has had a girl (1), /172/ nor does she go to neighboring villages.

1. Women who braid their hair are not of pure stock.

When this period is over, she braids her hair, covers herself with beads, with bits of amber and bracelets, dresses in her best, makes herself beautiful, and goes to present her baby, all running with butter, to
574 the headman and elders. Her husband grants her several days' leave (1), and she immediately goes to her family.

1. About 8 to 15 days.

881 onto the platters of the excised girls. With the last kola nut all leap-
431 ing stops, and the festival ends. Slowly the crowd withdraws and goes home, for it has only too much need of a little rest.

881 On the days following this "coming out of the circumcised"
(the name given to this occasion by the Bambara), the youths and
574 maids run around the country dressed up, and go to thank those who were at the *da woro*, or festival of the sixth day. Boys and girls, in two groups, under the /198/ direction of their old woman guardian, walk along the paths one after another, Indian file. At the head of the column is the *massa*, or queen; the *massa ma Kono*, her deputy, comes next, and she is followed by the *massa ma Kono ségére*, who again is the deputy of the one in front of her. All the others' are girls that are healed, and the last, the youngest of all, is called *koulé*. The boys march in the same order and bear the same titles. This way of thanking people is very Bambara; although they insist on showing themselves so that people will know that they are circumcised,
[431] they want especially that alms be given them, and they go to ask a gift and hold out both hands. The Bambara people are a beggar people!

Chapter 10

Bambara Marriage

584 Little Bambara girls are betrothed when they are very young, generally between the ages of four to ten, and girls of twelve, fourteen, and sixteen years who still await a suitor are very unusual. Yet age matters little, for there are three stages in marriage: the proposal, the betrothal, and the wedding, and whoever wants to take a wife, whether he is young, mature, or an old man, married, widower, or unmarried, must obey this law.

583 the fiancée has time to reflect and to open her heart to love, for her
584 wedding will not take place until one, two, or often three years after excision; once this has been performed she will be qualified to be a mother.

584 From the time of the engagement the two families draw together, establish friendly relations, and visit each other. After the girl has
574 grown up, during the year or two that elapse between the excision and the wedding, she spends two weeks to a month each year with her parents-in-law. One might say that in Bani country, this is the general custom (2). When the young men sent to bring her arrives, she /205/ hides in the hut of friends, and the little band runs right and left looking for her. They soon find her, members of her family--

2. In the environs of Ségou this custom is less comon. Often the two families come to an agreement, and on the appointed day the fiancée goes to the home of her fiancé, accompanied by a young man appointed by the council of elders. After the last festival of the circumcision (baloko déou don bo, "the coming out of the circumcised"), some, even many villages hold a festival for the fiancée. She goes to the home of her fiancé all loaded with beads and necklaces and escorted by all the young girls of the village. The fiancé bears all the cost of this festival, called mousodjira, "to show
[431] the wife." All the youths of the village and of neighboring villages give 80 to 160 cowrie shells to help the fiancé cover the expenses.

584 574 her mother, step-mothers, and sisters -- join them, and the little procession goes to the religious head, the gnéna-sonnaba, priest of the dasiri, genie protector of the village, who gives some advice to the child and sets the day of her return. On leaving the village, the girl stops and refuses to go on; the youths take hold of her and carry her in their arms, and she abandons herself to cries and shouts that must not cease before she reaches the edge of the fields that surround the village.

584 431 Although the bride price is set, it is more difficult to determine the value of the fiancé's presents of millet, hens, salt, kola, and d'lo, or millet beer. The size of these presents, given gratuitously over four, five, or six years and often more, depends largely on the fortune of each man and the prestige of the fiancée's family. At harvest time he supplies one or two baskets of millet /each/ weighing 20 to 40 kilograms; at the great annual sacrifice offered to the family boli he provides a hen, salt, kola nuts, and dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water. From time to time he gives his prospective father-in-law some well-filled jugs of d'lo containing at least 20 to 30 liters /each/, and if there is a festival at his home, he is careful not to forget the latter. He shows his generosity at the festival on the occasion of his fiancée's excision (1); at the da woro, or festival of the sixth day, he shows himself to be generous, and the guardian of the wedding gifts takes her the required present, a loincloth in black stripes on a yellow background, four to five pounds /the French livre equals one half a kilogram, a little more than a pound avoirdupois/ of butter, two to three kilograms of salt, 20 to 30 liters of d'lo, or millet beer, an equal amount of dégé, or flour mixed with honey water, and finally some decorative ornaments -- a bead necklace, a piece of amber, a bracelet. These last gifts are in no way required; they are given purely out of amiable courtesy.

584 606 One little fact without importance, remains to be noted. From the time of the engagement, the fiancée may not eat in the presence

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1. A Bambara man is not present at the festival which takes place at the excision of his fiancée.

585

3. Even those who have known their husbands before this day are honored in this fashion, for the family will have kept this cloth faithfully, and if there is occasion to unfold it, they are very proud.

[831] before all. In a word, everybody praises the bride for having been able to remain a virgin, but they praise her in Bambara, which means they do so in coarse terms, and in order to emphasize her virtue they present her with a bouquet of roses rolled in filth.

When the bride leaves the court, her maids of honor come to fetch her, and while the men stay and get drunk and the women continue to clap their hands, to sing at the top /211/ of their lungs, and to dance to the sound of the drums, trumpets, and guitars, she herself goes into the hut of friends to end the first night of her wedding in sleep. She may not go out for eight days; she takes her meals in the hut and spends her days sitting on a mat with a white veil on her head, spinning cotton in the company of her maids of honor (1).

[178 574]

1. Many have freed themselves from this custom. Those who submit to it -- and they are in the majority -- can see their families again after these eight days of imprisonment and stay with them for two weeks. The bride's trip to her family at this time is called bina kounna sagó. A few weeks later she again spends four days -- sou nani yé -- with her parents, and a little later she stays with them for one night, sou kélen si.

The groom stays in his hut for the whole day following the first night, and just about everybody, men and women, come to pay him

Pottery

323 113 The ancient Bambara did not know about pottery. At the time they lived in caverns, they let their meat dry in the sun on the rocks. Next, they manufactured receptacles by hollowing out stones, of which certain unused millstones /125/ seen today are copies. When they had invented fire, they cooked meat by spitting it with skewers of green sunzun wood and by exposing it to flames and live coals.

Later, they shaped and dried vessels of coarse clay, imitating the hollowed-out stones. One of these vessels, which was exposed to the fire in order to cook the food it contained, was observed to have changed color, hardened, and become more resistant. In this way they developed the technology of making pottery at a time when they still had only wooden tools.

323 326 118 515 Since this technology is related to the invention of fire, the wives of the blacksmiths were the first to practice it (1). Today they form a society (tõ) in each village and own many altars entrusted to the care of the head of the society.

The principal altar, the dyo kala, which represents the thumb of the potters, is made of wood carved in the shape of a thumb and engraved with symbolic lines. To learn her trade, each initiate is lightly touched on the head with it. The head of the society spills her blood over it in the case of a broken taboo affecting the society. But its principal function is to be the receptacle for the spiritual forces of the group: upon a member's death, this object, placed upon the corpse, gathers up the soul which escapes from the body.

[252] In certain villages, the pots with holes, ñintin, used for cooking couscous, are placed near the village upon the pile of ashes from the great hearth where the pots are fired (see Pl. IV, a); they also serve as altars at the time when the potters are consecrated.

323 561 515 Since her childhood the potter, following the example of her seniors, practices kneading and shaping little pots, bokofani (literally, little clay pots). After excision at the required age, she joins

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1. The different techniques of pottery making were supposedly revealed to the village of Gwondougou (see p. 155) by the Soba spirits of the crossroads.

575 323 [561] the society during a public consecration which she receives with several others, the group forming an age grade.

After an apprenticeship of seven days, the potters decide upon the date of the ceremony which is celebrated at the firing spot near the altars. Each member provides a hairpin (bandigi), which represents her on this occasion, and the skin of a hedgehog. Disrobed in front of the assembled villages, each girl is seated in turn on the altar as an aged woman examines her genitals to verify her virginity and the proper execution of the excision.

[831] /126/ If the young girl is no longer a virgin, she is publicly declared dangadẽ (literally, bastard) and finds herself automatically excluded from the society; she will never be able to receive the potter's title. Otherwise, a proclamation is made immediately to the great joy of the public. If the excision has not been judged [304] sufficient, the patient is given the title of potter after having submitted to a new operation performed in such a way that the blood runs over the pottery (1).

1. If excision is not possible, the operation takes the form of a wound inflicted with the hedgehog's skin (see p. 243).

575 323 867 An old woman then appears seated before members of the age grade and instructs them. She tells of the origin and history of pottery, apprising them of the difficulties of the craft such as fatigue, burns, etc. She teaches them patience towards the client and enumerates the rules which will have to be observed during their lifetime: to be pure in heart and to hate no one; not to undertake work shortly after having had sexual relations; to work in silence; to respect all taboos in general.

575 323 782 431 She then makes a libation of karite oil on the altar and rubs it on the bodies of the initiates who must run their tongues over the pottery, thus making an oath. Sheep, brought by the initiates' parents, are then killed by having their throat cut over the hearth in the name of the potters while the elders of the society present to the initiates gifts consisting of several pots which they will sell for profit while waiting for their first work. This gift is moreover a sign of adoption.

323 317 784 The utensils are made with clay, mbogo pasa, taken from the bottom of the watercourse or along the river's edge; they belong to

788 as it returned to its point of departure. This was presumably because the operator had not done what was necessary to assure the reintegration of the supernatural power.

[778] There are thus rites that set in motion this universal energy, whether diffuse or personified -- rites that channel, direct and orientate this energy so that not only it will reach the goal sought, but also it will be kept from straying from the desired route, thus harming the very person it is supposed to aid. Similar means are used to forestall the misdeeds which may be committed by an agent mistakenly invoked. When Ngolo had aroused his son Ntyi's ambition, he thought he could conjure away its effects by sacrificing his two grandsons, Ntyi's own children.

Those actions that call upon, guide and reintegrate this universal energy, whether diffuse or personified, are what we call rites.

788 754 During the oath using kola, the operator has in his hand a sharp object (pin, thorn, etc.) with which he pricks or stabs through the nut, saying, for instance: "Take my heart and my liver and kill me, if...." (i ka ne son' ni m bien' ta, ni ...). These pricks indicate to the "power" with which the operator is concerned that, if necessary, it should take vengeance by piercing the guilty person, just as the kola is pierced by the pin (1).

1. The shirt sent by Ma-n-son to Forokoro was first pricked with a needle (p. 120).

In curses, all the imprecations used are so many indications, indeed sometimes instructions (2), as to how the [153] spirit invoked is requested to act.

● [575] 2. At the time of admission to the brotherhoods, the most frightful threats are made against the traitor or perjuror in the form of curses indicating to the avenging spirit how he should punish: "May it enter through your anus and come out through your mouth, etc."

614 596 fa (2), according to whether the group itself is meant or the place which this collectivity occupies.

571 575 Let us note at the start that any collectivity forming an association is a ton'; thus, this is the case for all persons under the authority of one fa, and from this point of view, each of them is a ton'-den', literally, "a child of the ton'," i.e., member of the ton'. The word ton'-denya derives from the same word and is commonly used as a collective designation for all the members of the same ton'. This is the equivalent of the French word [159] société [Ed., society, association] or confrérie [Ed., brotherhood, confraternity]. The head of the ton' is the ton'-tigi, a term by which honor is paid to the head of an important family, and which, in some respects, is the equivalent of our [Ed., French] words notable [Ed., person of note, dignitary] and notabilité [Ed., notability, principal person].

614 596 If one considers the family as an association of the issue of the same parents, the term ba-denya is used, derived from ba-den'. Since the word ba means "mother" and, in the broad sense, "progenitor," mother or father, the word ba-den' is used for any of their issue, hence "children," "brothers," and "relatives," while ba-denya means "fraternity" "kinship."

Although, in the restricted sense in which we shall use it, the word ton' refers to anyone living under the authority of the ton'-tigi, whether or not he is connected by descent, the more exact term, ba-denya, refers only to those whose

2. Fa means "lord," "master," "patriarch," or "father," depending on the circumstances. Within the family, it corresponds very closely to the titular incumbent of such rank and high office who led Mistral [Ed., a French poet] to call his father: "my lord father," or "the master."

881 group is called *kule*. In the same way, the boys go about in a group headed by the *sema-tye*, called *masa* (king), followed by the *masa-ma-kono*, the *masa-ma-kono-segere*, etc.

In this way, the whole country learns which boys and girls have completed the *soli*.

The Fla-n-ton'

561 Those who have belonged to the same *n-Tomo-ya* and
572 have gone through the *soli* together remain bound together for
575 life; they are *fula-ni* ("peers," "twins") because they were born on the same day to sexual and social life. Wherever they may be and whatever their respective rank, two *fula-ni* consider themselves equals even if one of them is a chief and the other a slave; the latter in particular has the right to speak his mind without fear (1). Theoretically, therefore, the *fula-ni* is the friend on whom one may safely rely, and he is usually a member of the council, small but very powerful, which every *fa* likes to have around. It is to him that the *fa* confides his troubles, his joys, his plans, and his personal affairs. He is present at all the celebrations and mourning of the family. On serious or important occasions, he represents his friend who often entrusts him with the supervision of his household during an absence and appoints him guardian or trustee of his children after his death. He is a brother who may be loved more than agnate or uterine brothers. At the same time the *fulani-ya* does not necessarily produce a type of brotherhood analogous to that brought about by the blood pact. Rather, it engenders a kind of mutual assistance which is strengthened by the organization called *fla-n-ton'*, "assemblage of people of the same age," i.e., those "born" at the same *soli*.

The young people from the same *soli* form a *fla-m-bolo*, literally, a band of persons of the same age.

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1. See in Chapter 7, "The Man with Three Braids." [Not translated.]

561 575 "A fla-n-ton' usually includes the young people from three consecutive soli, so it is an assemblage of three fla-m-bolo. Thus, Bambara society is composed of a certain number of fla-n-ton', and all the people are distributed among them, from the most recent tye-kura (new men) to the tye-koro (elders) who are the most advanced in age. [249] Since the women also have their fla-n-ton', it is reasonable to say, from a certain point of view, that the soli is the basis of life and of the social organization.

571 Each fla-n-ton' is independent, but it maintains the best of relations with its immediate neighbors, the one preceding it, the one following it, and the one of the women of the same soli. Thus, the fla-n-ton' have a certain solidarity among them, which is shown by the custom of each fla-n-ton' honoring its immediate neighbors by offering them some of the food from its corporate meals. It should be noted, also, that whenever discord arises within a fla-n-ton', the neighboring fla-n-ton' intervene to make peace; a special arbiter may even be chosen to smooth out the difficulties involved in such an affair (1).

1. In this connection, note the difficulties between the ton' of Kassoum and Biton as reported in the chronicle of Ségou above.

Wherever he goes, a Bambara will look up people of his own age, i.e., those who went through the soli at the same time. He can always count on their friendly welcome and practical help.

In each fla-n-ton' there is a chief, ton-tigi, chosen in various ways depending on the place and the people. He may be the son of a notable; he may be a house slave. A syere (follower) assists him or replaces him. A dyala-tige, or assigner of shares, has the function of enforcing discipline and distributing the food at the group banquets; this is usually a house slave. Finally, a ton-dyeli serves as general factotum and herald; a person of caste has this role. From the point of view of the

561 575 association, each fula-ni is a ton'-den'.

The bachelors and some of the married men regard the fla-n-ton' simply as a means of having a good time in the company of boon companions. Anything brought by an individual member goes to swell the common fund which is most often used to organize feasts and drinking bouts. At these banquets, it is customary to comply with rules which appear curious at first sight and which must be obeyed unless the member wants to pay a fine into the common fund. Thus, anyone who acts on his own prior to or contrary to an order from the ton-tigi, anyone who comes or leaves, blows his nose, [250] spits, sneezes, and so on, without permission, is fined. Aside from the profit to the common fund, the procedure has its uses in making the ton-den' amenable to discipline.

In principle, the treasury of the fla-n-ton' is supposed to be used only to succor poor, embarrassed, or unfortunate members, who are expected to repay with interest insofar as they are able to do so. In theory, also, all of the ton-den' can count on moral and material aid from their fla-ni whenever there is need for it. It goes without saying that this fine spirit of altruism is rarely put into practice.

The fact of the matter is that the young masters (kamale-u) make use of the organization to resist the omnipotence of the elders (koro-u); malcontents of all sorts take refuge in it; adventurers find it useful in promoting their schemes. We shall see how the two most powerful Bambara empires were built on the fla-n-ton'.

2. General Considerations Concerning the Brotherhoods

Origin of the Brotherhoods

171 794 There is no reason to suppose that the Bambara brotherhoods are not purely native institutions; similar organizations are to be found all over Africa, particularly in areas untouched by Moslem influence. All of them follow similar principles made manifest in ways characteristic of African occultism.

177 794 There is no doubt, however, that in the case of the Bambara with whom we are here concerned this native foundation

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Their people, [290] except for the payment of required tribute, lived as they pleased and followed their own customs as long as the latter did not offend the dominant clan.

2. Clan of the "People of Ségou"

Development of the Fla-n-ton' of Ségou-koro

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According to the chronicle cited earlier, the origin of the clan of Ségou must be attributed to the development of a fla-n-ton'.

Those persons who have undergone the rite of soli together are united in a fla-n-bolo (band of peers); the fla-n-bolo of three consecutive soli form a fla-n-ton' (assemblage of peers). The members call themselves ton'-den' in relation to the association, and fla-ni in relation to one another.

In each fla-n-ton' there is a ton'-tigi (head of the assemblage) elected by the ton' den', who is just as likely to be a wolo-su (slave born in the house) as the son of a notable; a dyala-tigi (distributor), likewise elected by the ton'-den', is especially charged with the distribution of food for the group's banquets and with the enforcement of regulations; a ton' dyeli is a kind of beadle appointed by the ton'-tigi who has him make preparations for meetings, assemble the members, announce orders, etc., and he is usually a young person of caste. There are people of all races and of all ranks in the fla-n-ton', and in the association there is theoretically, complete equality among them. Indeed, this equality explains the term fla-ni-u (peers) which they use among themselves.

In principle the aim of the fla-n-ton' (1) is to establish

1. As we have noted, there are fla-n-ton' for women as well as for men, but we are not considering them here; their role is insignificant from the present point of view.

● 575 561 a sense of solidarity among the ton'-den'. In reality, the bachelor ton'-den' are principally concerned with amassing as much food as possible for the sole purpose of treating themselves to copious and merry banquets from time to time; for this purpose all means are acceptable. . Each member brings to the group whatever he can lay his hands on; in addition, the society assesses its members for contributions to swell the common fund. [291] First, there are the entrance fees and assessments in kind, particularly of grain. Then there are fines for infractions of the rules, involving penalties whose purpose is simply the enrichment of the group's treasury. At certain meetings, for instance, the most ordinary acts may not be performed unless permission has been given by the ton'-tigi or the dyala-tigi. A member who squats, rises, speaks, sneezes, or laughs before being authorized to do so is fined. Finally, the society goes on organized hunts, and the game thus acquired is distributed among the members on the basis of strict equality.

[527] Ordinarily the ton'-den' meet twice a week, on Monday and Thursday; these are the free days allotted to the poor people (fantan'-u), that is, people who are wholly under control.

The ton'-tigi can make no important decision without the prior advice and agreement of the ton'-den', but this does not mean that his role is negligible. His initiative determines the orientation of acts, and he later sees to their execution. Therefore, if he is a clever man, he actually has almost sole command over an organization capable of exerting powerful pressure on the native milieu, which by nature is amorphous, because a fla-n-ton' is not an isolated group. It is linked with the one that preceded it and the one immediately following it by a kind of solidarity, so that native society, from this point of view, is made up of an uninterrupted series of fla-n-ton' closely bound to each other, since the same chain of relationship prevails for women and since every male fla-n-ton' has a brotherhood relationship with the corresponding female fla-n-ton'.

[627] If a difference arises between members of the same fla-n-ton', the "elders" of the preceding fla-n-ton', i.e., the one immediately older, intervene as conciliators to settle the quarrel.

575 561 [628] When differences arise between fla-n-ton', an arbitrator is chosen by these fla-n-ton'; in some regions, there is even an arbitrator designated in advance.

Among all these fla-n-ton' the most conspicuous is the one having the largest number of young bachelors known as "the young masters" (kamalen'-u). Being much given to idleness, the kamalen'-u are troublemakers and rebels who seek all the [292] material pleasures and devote their talents to opposing the fa, the bina, and those who, as masters of the community, impose on the young the whole weight of an authority which is absolute and often niggling.

This explanation makes it plain that the post of ton'-tigi is no sinecure. In order to maintain his role honorably, the ton'-tigi must be capable of exerting his authority in subtle and shrewd ways, for the ton'-den' are touchy and undisciplined, and they are quick to claim the equality which is the basis of their association, even to the point of egalitarian mania or egalitarianism. Therefore, it is interesting to note that the regulations, fantastic at first glance, which inflict penalties for performing the most trivial acts are actually very effective; they correct in fun, but they represent a kind of restraint that encourages the development of discipline. Breaking with ordinary life, they tend through repetition to form habits which taken together make [661] up what we call esprit de corps. In any event, the development which we are about to describe shows conclusively that to maintain and conserve his power the ton'-tigi must exert authority by dissimulation, by persuading those most easily offended that he is subordinating his own acts to their wishes and at the same time appearing to the faint-hearted as an imperious and audacious leader. Furthermore, he must render service to everyone and know how to turn projects and adventures, even the riskiest, into profit for the community.

Since he is the target of the hostility of the elders, who often suffer from the activities of the ton'-den', and since he is constantly envied by some of these same ton'-den' for his success, he acquires the kind of experience which makes him a crafty and sly politician, completely devoid of scruples.

*173 We shall see how Mamari (called Biton) Kouloubali managed to prevail over the tyrannical egalitarianism of the

614/and from that moment on everyone seeks to enjoy his freedom and his property for his own profit. The end result is complete disorganization, and only the emergence of a new and enterprising despot can stop it.

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575 Fundamentally -- and this is a new aspect of the question -- the clan retains the ineradicable imprint of the *fla-n-ton'* from which it took its origin. The aim has not changed: to assure to each member the [307] largest possible number of those material satisfactions which are so dear to the Bambara. The means likewise remain the same: in spite of appearances to the contrary, it is a type of solidarity based on a strictly egalitarian communalism (1).

The resources of the clan are in every respect analogous to those of the *fla-n-ton*. Just as the latter profited from the [579] thievery, banditry, and raids of its members, so the clan derives its main resources from successful raids and pillage.

The *fla-n-ton'* provided for its drinking bouts by means of the *di-songo* and the crops of its *ton'-den'* or *ton'-dyon'*. In the clan, the *di-songo* persisted for a time and then was replaced by a similar fee, the *nyon'-dyu*. The work required of the *ton'-dyon'* was minimal at first during the period of active warfare, but then Dékoro peremptorily sent them into agriculture. Ultimately the *furu-ba dyon'* came to be primarily agriculturalists.

The foodstuffs of the *fla-n-ton'* were equally distributed among the *ton'-den'* by the *dyala-tige*, under the direction of the *ton'-tigi*. Within the clan, property is also held in common and

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1. The innate penchant of the Black for this sort of egalitarian justice is affirmed by legendary episodes wherein an individual is honored and proclaimed chief because he was able to make strictly equal shares. Cf. the legend of Ndyadyane Ndyaye, in *Legendes et coutumes sénégalaises* [Senegalese Legends and Customs] by Henri Gaden, and the Djide of Djenné, in *Contes du Sénégal et du Niger* [Tales of the Senegal and Niger] by Zeltner.

614 Within the clan, property is also held in common and
575 administered by the fama who distributes it among the dyon'-
[421] kuntigi. The latter, in turn, make a further distribution as it is needed.

In the fla-n-ton' the important thing was provisions, material well-being. The same thing is true in the clan. The ton'-dyon' are interested in the profit to be derived from the association, and their feeling for the state is embodied in a very prosaic word, to-da, literally, "the pot of mush." Indeed, this is the principal item on the menue of any fraternal feast of the fla-n-ton'.

614 421 The property of the clan, as of the fla-n-ton', is theoretically jointly held by all the members, but since there is a large amount of it, some sort of sharing is necessary, first to consume it and then to reward zeal and fidelity and to encourage emulation and devotion. As a result, the basic egalitarianism is altered. From the clan's beginning it was conceded that a substantial part of the wealth should go to those [308] who had done most to acquire it. Thus, the leader of an expedition had a prior right because of his "luck," and he and his men further received the wherewithal "to repair the rents in their shirts," i.e., to indemnify them for damages suffered during the expedition.

[727] Each warrior kept his own loot, except for unusually valuable things which went to the clan and therefore to the fama who represented it. The part of the loot not taken by individuals was distributed by the fama after abstracting the best and largest part of it for himself.

[562] Strictly speaking, no one actually owned any of this wealth, since all of them, even the fama, merely held it on very precarious terms. Through the caprice of the clan, anyone could have everything taken away, and this applied to persons as well as to things, because the wives and children of the ton'-dyon' were, like himself, the "chattels" of the clan.

The passage of time softened the outward form of these principles; barring abuse or notorious misconduct, each individual had indefinite use of what was allotted to him and handed it on to his descendants. This usufruct, incidentally, was broader than that of our law. In addition, Mamari arrogated to himself a kind of eminent right: he appointed himself -- through usurpation facilitated by his power -- the dispenser of offices and wealth

175 567 sovereign. In all cases the man, although pardoned, was deprived of his personal liberty and became the emperor's chattel.

Mamari next wished to assure himself of the personal fidelity [575] of his Ton-dyon by enrolling them in cults dedicated to his person. Thus, the old ton was transformed into a brotherhood with Mamari as both political and religious chief. In this way he was able to replace the political anarchy and social structure of the old Bambara regime by a new organization, despotic, very efficient militarily when fully controlled by the chief, but sometimes very dangerous to the stability of the country, as soon was seen.

E. Successors of Mamari

175 Mamari's son, Denkoro (1755-57), was to be the first victim of this all-powerful army. Exasperated by his cruelties, the military chiefs assassinated him and replaced him by his brother, Ali.[48] A Moslem, Ali wanted to propagate Islam and to forbid the use of fermented beverages and the worship of spirits. The Ton-dyon chiefs then massacred Ali and all of the Koulibali family, except two girls who were saved by one of the chiefs, N'Golo Diara. Different chiefs then contended for power: Ton-Mansa, then Kaniouba-Niouma, then Kafa-Diougou, who, all of them, reigned merely a short while before dying a violent death. Finally, N'Golo Diara, descendant of a great family who had become enslaved to Mamari and who, as we have seen, saved his daughters and then married one of them, re-established order, moved the capital to Ségou-Sikoro, and resumed the work of the great Tigi-ton.

In the course of his long reign, (1766-90), N'Golo knew how to make himself respected and loved by his subjects and how to impose his will elsewhere; he established his authority over the Macina region, the Sokolo region, at Diénné, and Timbuktu. He only failed against the Mossi of Yatenga.

Meanwhile, the elder branch of the Koulibali family, crushed by Mamari in 1754 and chased from Bélédougou, rose again. If the successors of the unfortunate Foulakoro, Sey Bamana and Deni Babo, were nothing more than pillaging chiefs raiding at Kaarta, Bélédougou, and Khasso, Sira Bo did establish a stable kingdom with Guémou as capital. His successor, Dessé Koulibali (1788-99) even believed himself strong enough to impose his suzerainty on the Bambara of Ségou.

562 When the husband dies, the wives are considered the principal
428 wealth of the heir. Among certain Bambara, the wives are divided
768 among the brothers; the eldest brother chooses and then has the other
587 brothers choose in order of age. Among others, the heritage goes to the children who must ally themselves with their father's wives. The wives who do not want to remain with the heir have the option of returning to their families, providing the settlement is returned.

The wife may have personal property given to her by her
428 parents at the time of marriage. Among certain Bambara, the
562 father of the bride must give her the settlement paid by the husband, and this becomes her personal property. When a widow dies, all of her goods go to her eldest son; if there is no son, half of her goods goes to her daughters, and the other half is divided among her father, her mother, and her brother. When a married woman dies without children, her goods are divided between her husband and her father; if she no longer has her father, half goes to her husband and the other half to her brothers and sisters.

On the other hand, we have seen how a woman may inherit all of the wealth of a family head, and even of a chief, in default of male heirs, and the Mali empire had a woman Keïta at its head, daughter of Naré, fa Maghan.

A woman must not take part in any political discussion or
562 demonstration, which does not mean that her role in these matters
662 is nil. All the history of Mali is full of palace intrigues which reach their acute stage at the moment of a Fama's death and of the election of a new chief. It is at this moment that the women knew how to throw into the balance all the weight of their family's power to determine the new election.

Finally, we have seen that in a fashion parallel to the male
562 brotherhoods and societies, the women were organized into powerful
561 hierarchical societies according to their age classes and their degree
575 of initiation. These societies, where men do not enter, are still imperfectly known, but they are at least as formidable as the male brotherhoods.

The woman must pound the millet, draw water, and carry out
562 all the household chores, but when the man kills an animal, the meat belongs to the wife, and the man must accept in turn what she will give him.

583 of d'lo, or millet beer. The head of the village and his council,
584 friends, and the to-n-déou, or members of the association of the
fla-n-to (1), go at once to pay their respects to the happy father and
583 to tell the girl that her betrothal is being celebrated and cannot hence-
584 forth be broken without a grave and important reason. Soon the b'lon
of /sic/ the entry hut and the inner court are full of crouching men
who drink d'lo, or millet beer, and soon ramble in their talk. And

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1. The association of the fla-n-to, with a to-n-tigi at its head, is made up of several groups of to-n-déou, or members of the association. Every group corresponds to a circumcision. /sic/ When many are circumcised at the same time, they form a group, but if there are only one, two, or three, they join the group of those circumcised at the preceding occasion. The to-n-dé invites to his betrothal and his wedding the members of his group, who were circumcised with him, and the members of the older groups. As to the younger groups, he does not invite them. The women also form an association of fla-n-to similar to that of the men but separate from it. The woman who is at the head of the association, usually the oldest in the village, is called to-n-tigi, or massa fama, queen, and the to-n-dé mouso (the to-n-dé women) call her m'ba, mother. They are summoned only to the wedding.

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4. Burials of the Circumcised, Old People, Heads of Families, Married and Unmarried Persons, Pregnant Women

Burials of the First Category, Those of Old People

[888] When I speak of old people I mean every Bambara (man or woman) who has grandchildren and so is a grandfather or grandmother. [224 When such an old person dies, gunpowder speaks and the shooting is even quite heavy if the deceased belongs to the association of hunters 575] or there is an initiate of that sect (2) among his children. The chief 764 202 slave or, if there is none, a trusted man runs to notify the headman and his council, and all these dignitaries, spear in hand, come to verify the death and offer the /218/ first condolences to the family. Couriers at once go off in all directions to notify members of the family and friends. The person sent to married children is usually the one who was best man and sometimes the fourouboloma tigi (guardian of the wedding gifts) -- at the marriage. He carries out his mission with tact and delicacy. He first notifies the husband /of a daughter/ who summons his legal wife and orders her to go and take care of her father, who is seriously ill. So she leaves her house knowing nothing, and at least keeping a remnant of hope in her heart. It is only when she is on the way that she learns the [illegible] news.

764 [844] While everyone is running right and left, the women wash the body with an aromatic plant called sou kola (1). They dress it in

2. Hunters (douzo) all belong to a special sect. In order to enter it, a man must have passed his tests and killed a deer. The hunter has a special costume. See pp. 140 ff.

1. Basil, a labiata, ocymum album and febrifugum.

4: Henry--271 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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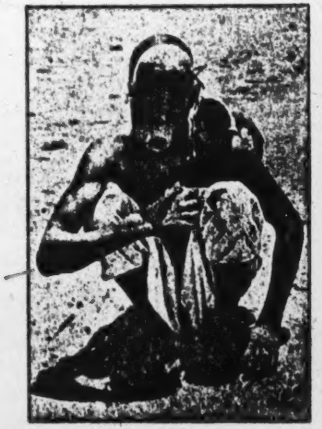

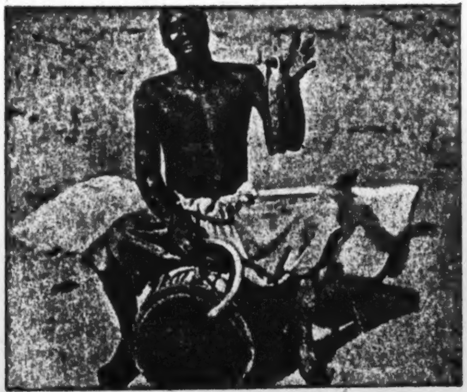

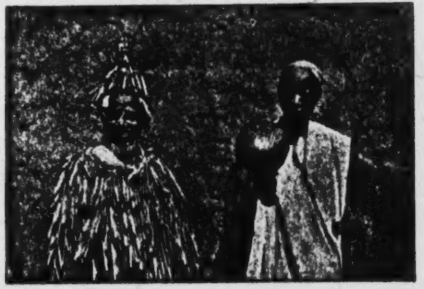

Left: Souba (monkey), society of the Koré. Above: Denouba (the big drum) and kinge (a triangle), society of the Koré. Center: Head korodouga and his herald, society of the Koré.
Right: Souroukou (hyena), society of the Koré.

774 is the object of constant concern during agrarian rituals. The role of the soul of plants is particularly noticeable in their medicinal uses. Drawing a remedy from a plant may cause its death, liberating its spiritual principles for the benefit of the sick man. Because of this, such an act is equated with a blood sacrifice.

With the exception of the ngovo tomato, plants have no dya. The shadow (suma) of a plant is not independent like that of a man or an animal. It exists only through light effects and its movements are caused by the air and the wind moving its leaves and branches. This is what the Bambara means when he says that the dya has a life of its own and depends on Faro, whereas the plant's suma depends on the spirit Téliko, master of the air.

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An individual's dya can be known and his temperament and life possibilities assessed by measuring his shadow on the earth at noon. The unit employed is the little finger, which is a corporeal symbol of the person. If a pregnant woman is thus measured, the sex of the child may be predicted.

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When a boy or a girl gets married, it is said of them: a ye a dya furu: "he (or she) has married his dya." For it is impolite to say that a person married anyone but his spiritual double. Besides, the union of the couple is repeated by the union of their dya which like themselves are of opposite sex. In olden times, male twins married the same woman and the latter's dya was taken over by Faro in the Niger. The child she conceived was the son of both husbands.

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Some men do not marry. This is true of the Soma, the religious diviner attached to the major Bambara societies. Initiated in the course of a solitary sojourn in the bush, he left his dya with the invisible spirits. This is a prerequisite to the gift of double sight with which he is endowed as well as a protection against possible dangers to the dya when it remains in contact with the earth, or when it approaches other humans. The true spouse of the Soma is his dya: he may mate only with it on a fixed date when the spirits return it to him for this purpose. /61/

The tere

774 The tere was inflicted by Pemba on Mousso Koroni in order to diminish her power at the time he was pursuing her. This explains its complexity: it is at once the character of a man, his strength,

826 immortal with smooth limbs, he became mortal and hard working.
As seats of the male semen, they transmit this condition to the embryo,
formed in the maternal womb by Faro. The weariness felt in the
limbs after the sexual act is proof of this transmission. As Locus of
[829] the virile semen, framework of the man, and a mechanism suitable
for physical labor, the articulations are also the symbol of society.
The chief's throne, in the shape of a knee, is the image of its owner's
articulated body as well as that of the armature of the social body
and of the grouping of individuals under his jurisdiction (1).

1. See p. 178.

826 The limbs represent the right and the left. Rectitude, firmness,
823 and directed action are "right"; incertitude, the spirit of indecision,
and inconsistency in behavior are "left." The right is male and
201 symbolizes man's labor; the other is female. All gestures, profane
and religious, and all representations of objects bear witness to this.
Performing his first task in the fields before the rain, the farmer gives
three blows with his hoe held in his left hand in order to absorb the
impurity of the earth. After this, he works until the harvest with his
right hand. To cross one's hands means supplication, to put them
behind one's back means humiliation.

826 Each finger has its value. The little finger, bolokoni lakare, is
"the son of the other fingers" and in it is concealed the entire
201 strength of the hand; it "carries the nyama of the fingers." Hence
576 its use as a measure of divinations. To point to someone with one's
little finger means to belittle him with respect to those present.
Thus one casts a spell (korti) against an enemy or an undesirable
person with the little finger.

826 The index finger and the thumb of a chief, formerly those of a
622 king, are marked on certain occasions with signs called bolo ti doniya,
"knowledge of the signs of the hand." On the index are drawn three
"acts of the world today" (bi dyẽ walew) and on the thumb, two
"things of the interior of the secret world" (dyẽ gundo kono fẽw),
for it is said that "the knowledge of the signs of the hand /70/ is the
road of the creation 5, the index is the world in 3 and the thumb is
the new world" (1). The whole represents the worlds thought out by

551 course within the individual who hears it, its effect on him, and the return effect on the individual reciting it are all developed according to a known mechanism.

The barama, a word which may be translated as "encouragement," "compliment," or "flattery," is a narrative, usually in poetic form, relating the origin of the name and the exploits of the ancestors (1).

[576] 1. The device, in its entirety, is generally known only to the griot, but certain parts of it, certain traditional phrases known to all, are used as a greeting to its owner.

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539 Thus one of the elements of the Diara device bears witness to the role of their ancestors:

"Diara, Zan of Nyaola, Yayiri of Nyaola, your grandfather curved the world like a sickle, straightened it out like a straight road; grandson of God on earth, Diara!" (2)

2. Dyara, nyaola za, nyaola yayiri, i moke ye ka dye kuru i ko woloso ka foni i-ko sira tike nin dye; duguma ngala modẽ, dyara. Nyaola is a village. The name of Zan is always given to the eldest son in a family. The word dyara also means lion.

Another element exalts their courage in battle:

"Diara, Koné: if there is not a Koné among the warriors who will fight, the troop will be beaten (in advance). The lion has broken a great bone" (3).

3. Dyara, kone, kone če kele te kele min oye fele ye; dyara ye kolo ba kari. Koné is another of the Diara's dyamu; fele describes a group of men gathered together for the hunt or for war.

The Tangara device also recalls their history and their victories:

"Descendants of Falé, Kwonda, Méné: other brave men purchased their right to sit in the village; we, brave men, won it with our bow and arrows" (4).

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4. *Fale kwonda mene šiw, tow bomaw ye dugu sã ka sigi, aw bemaw ya soro ni to ani kala.* Falé, Kwonda, and Méné are the names of ancestors. The device is that of the Tangara of the village of Barbé.

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Moreover, the device also carries a statement of the bearer's genealogy, *burudyu* (1). To say this genealogy is equivalent to

1. The word *ši*, meaning race, is used to indicate the *burudyu*, which is comparable to the *dambe* of the Peul of Mopti.

"attacking the /77/ ancestors." To speak of them, to quote them, and to tell their exploits honors them and pacifies them. In the course of the recitation "the air emitted by the speaker" is transformed by the power of the spirit, Teliko, into coolness which penetrates the ancestors (2). The same is true for supernatural powers. As soon as

2. *Teliko ba sumaya se u ma.* "Téliko makes coolness come to them."

the Komo chief recites Faro's *burudyu*, "the air coming out of the chief's mouth is transformed into good *nyama* which penetrates Faro's body through his pupils and ears."

To tell a man his *burudyu* is to honor him greatly. He thinks of his ancestors, their fortune, and their glory; he is proud to be descended from them and is incited to do as well or better than they. The effect of the "good word" described above is due to the indirect but powerful action of the ancestors (3). The recitation by a third

3. However the soul (*ni*) of the cited ancestors is neither called upon nor displaced by the recitation. It is the vital force, *nyama*, which is put into motion here.

party has the effect of maintaining the individual in his being, of making him persevere by affirming it (4), for the device appeals to its possessor's soul, ni. If, at this moment, the person flattered is in a normal state, his device causes his "soul to swell and his body to harden, inciting him to courageous action and joy." If the contrary is true, anger or emotion takes the place of contentment and calmness.

The reciter receives in return the strength of the beneficial word which, having contented the person it was addressed to, contents him also. There is an exchange of nyama: that which the reciter sends out and that which he receives in return and from which he benefits.

551 576 778 564 That is why the recitation of the device is not always left to the individual's discretion. Because of its importance, it has become a public function generally reserved for the griot (dyeliw) who form a caste practicing endogamy and who earn their living by getting paid to recite the devices and adulations in daily life as well as during public or religious ceremonies (1). But the fact that they earn a salary for this service affects their dignity: nobody else ever recites the devices because nobody wishes to be taken for a griot, and nobody ever marries him. The griot is at once indispensable, feared, and despised. The mechanism of forces put into motion by his action makes it possible to understand the ambivalence of feelings of which he is the object.

/78/ When the words come out of his mouth, the griot's tere is transformed into nyama, which becomes filled with a force called kuma nyamu, "nyama of words." This force goes from the head to the mouth of the speaker and reaches the person addressed. If a man is wealthy and powerful, it is said that he gets the "nyama from the mouth of those griot who flatter him." He is then forced to pay them for their encouragement. If he does not, they remain silent when

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551 •576 778 4. This effect is already obtained by the simple repetition of the family name with which one greets a man upon meeting him. It is common to hear the Blacks greet each other by repeating their dyamu to each other several times.

1. The recitation given by anyone other than the griot would be far from producing the same effect.

551 passing before his door and thus empty him of his *nyama*. The man
576 grows thin and poor. The *griot* may bring about his death with evil
778 words, their *nyama* attacking the heart, the chest, then the entire
564 body of the victim.

The *griot*'s power over the person he flatters becomes more involved and varies according to what he is reciting. If he recites the *burudyu* several times, if he speaks at length of the ancestors, their *nyama* enters his mouth and is added to his own, thus reinforcing the power of the word. Thus, when the *griot* recites a *barama* without receiving payment, his *nyama* attacks the person spoken to. If this offense is repeated and if the *burudyu* is recited, the man is forced to pay if he does not wish to be attacked by the much more formidable *nyama* of the ancestors.

In these various situations, the *tere* of the person flattered intervenes: if it is good, it fights to defend the person, but if it is weak or wicked, it joins the ancestral forces and the person is doubly threatened.

The recitation is always made by the *griot* before a witness so that his action will be more binding and make the miser lose face. On the other hand, a man who pays the *griot* generously is looked after by the latter who sings of his generosity on all occasions and announces the sum he has received; often he does not hesitate to exaggerate the total amount received if he can hope to profit by doing so (1).

[784] 1. If the *griot* knows that the wealthy man he is addressing is miserly, he rubs his teeth with roots which he knows has the power to make his words even more effective.

[554] Sometimes a man reaches a secret agreement with the *griot* in order to gain prestige. He publicly gives him a considerable sum, part of which the *griot* returns the following day as agreed upon. The gift is so generous that none can surpass it.

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561] This practice is particularly apparent at the time of marriage. The men of the same age grade as the groom outdo each other in their gifts to the *griot*. The one who has given most passes for the most generous. Sometimes the *griot* invents a new *barama* on the spot even though he does not know the device.

551 576 778 564 The device is recited on numerous occasions. After a birth, the griot proclaim it in the course of the name-giving ceremony, addressing themselves to the father, then to the newborn child /79/ who thus receives it for the first time. At a marriage the barama of the two partners are alternatly recited. In everyday life, the recitation is carried on most frequently during religious ceremonies or feasts. In the hunt or at war, it has the effect of helping the participants and increasing their courage (1). In a meeting it is used to greet people bearing the same name, and if one of the assistants is to be particularly honored, the first words of his device are recited.

551 155 In case of illness, the ally (senãnku) (2) comes to the patient's side and recites his barama to encourage him and help him get well. If he is dying, the recitation, which is then the equivalent of a prayer, may help his soul return. After death, the ally, the griot, and the [764] blacksmiths come near the corpse to recite his barama in order to honor him.

551 576 539 The devices pertaining to the various crafts are used when addressing the artisan with whom one has business. Thus the blacksmith to whom one brings work is greeted first by his name to which is then added:

"ini fara ani goni, you are with stone and fire."

A person crossing a field will say to the farmer bent over the earth: "i ni tye i ba ka kusebe daba, greeting to him who handles the hoe well," or simply: "i ni tye daba la, greeting to him who is with the hoe." To the shoemaker one would say: "bana ani ba golo, (you are) with the acacia (3) and the goat leather."

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[727] 1. If the griot recites it to a war chief and the town under attack is taken, he receives part of the loot.

2. See p. 119.

[386] 3. This refers to the bana or boina (Acacia arabica) used by the shoemaker to make a black dye.

551 The institution of the device, with all its elaborations, has the
576 effect of confirming people in their bodies, their spiritual principles,
and their social functions. Except for the cases of emigration mentioned above, the occasions are rare indeed when an individual is obliged to change his name or device during his life. A woman keeps her father's barama even after marriage.

551 An illegitimate child receives neither the name nor the device of
848 his family. They may be given him later if the father makes himself
known. A Bambara who contracts a misalliance, for example, by
564 marrying the daughter of a blacksmith or a griot, will bring into the
783 world impure children who will never have a right to their father's
barama (1).

1. Such a child is said to be a sofali (literally, horse donkey), that is, a bastard.

552 We must add that the prerogative of having a device is not limited
782 to humans. All animate beings, many /80/ inanimate ones, the elements of nature, places, villages, plants, animals, and all the supernatural powers have theirs which men address during prayers.

The Taboo

784 One or several eating taboos, tne or tana, are attached to the
[551] family name and are observed by all who bear the name. According to certain initiates, the taboos were decreed by Faro when he determined the food proper to each species (2) after having classified the

2. See p. 52.

beings of creation. For the common man, the origin of the taboo is always the subject of a tale or legend and justifies the bonds between an ancestor of the family and the animal or plant designated. Most frequently, the animal has helped the man, has saved his life, or the other way around; or else, following some serious events, the ancestor was transformed into an animal or plant. Numerous versions of the origins of such bonds are given.

764 The corpse is the object of particular care. In the case of a blacksmith or a Soma, two stalks of millet are placed for a few moments on either side "for the nostalgia of the body" (1). This custom indicates that the soul, temporarily in the Komo altar, and the exuvia which will later replace it, feel sad for the animate body that will become the prey of the termites. These stalks symbolize the two ancestors who accompanied Koumabana into the great beyond, the death in this case repeating in some way the story of the appearance of death on the world (2).

The combination of the body and the two symbols adds up to the number three, the male number, and recalls the three taps given to the newborn of male sex at his birth. A few moments later a kinsman places the stalks on each side of the door to the dead man's house. The mourners who come to convey their condolences crouch before [576] them, putting cowrie shells at their feet in the greatest silence, for "to talk and to cry increases the sins of the dead man, and tears increase his burden."

764 554 If the deceased is an important personage, especially if he is chief of the village or head of a family, the signs of the actual world and the future world (bolo ti doniya, Fig. 1) are sometimes drawn upon his index finger and thumb. The senãnku, the blacksmiths, and the griot come to recite his device (barama) and receive in thanks the clothes which belonged to him.

764 The eldest son of the Komo chief, who is first advised of the death, brings the news to his father who asks him to announce it to the men of his age grade. Each of the subsequent age grade is notified by a delegate from the preceding one. Finally, the young circumcised men, recently admitted to the society, go to tell the women and the uncircumcised the hour when the mask is to come out. However, only the funeral of an elder, a village or district chief, obligates all the members to move about.

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1. Fari nana fi, literally, "body of the black face."

2. See pp. 45, 46.

787 to know the sex of the child a woman is carrying and the character
826 which will be attributed to him by the spirit.

[843] Without further elaboration on this method of divination which implies a series of interpretations, it suffices to note that it is integrated into the system of Bambara thought and inspired by the conception he has of man's place in the universe.

Divination by the Kola Nut

787 The kola nuts which the Bambara eat and use in their sacrificial or divinatory rituals are classified into seven categories according to their form and color.

1. dangoro, red nut.
2. yeleworo, white nut.
3. sosokuworo (literally, mosquito head), a red nut pointed at one of its extremities.

/217/ 4. flaniworo (literally, twin kola), a white nut with the same signs on both its halves.

5. worodanda (literally, kola without a mouth), a nut of two colors without an apparent crack permitting it to be divided.
6. bassiworo, a dark red and very bitter nut.
7. nyeworo, a nut of light and indeterminate color.

The kola nut, "created for Faro's twin girls," is itself a symbol of duality, for both its adhering halves are easily separated. In daily life, unless the diviner has ordered it as a purification, a kola nut is not eaten by one person alone; it is divided and one of the halves given to a third person. This gesture of politeness and friendship is also the expression of the duality of man, comparable to that of the fruit itself.

● [576] To give kola nuts is always a sign of deference, respect, or affection. To eat a white nut "chases away sorrow and worry." The nut without a crack is rarely eaten. As it appears to be of one piece, it has an inauspicious character. In religious ceremonies the bassiworo nuts are preferred for the boli; the ordinary red nuts, dangoro, for the other altars. The pointed nut, sosokuworo, is offered by one who wants a child. The officiator chews half the nut and spits it onto the altar before eating the other half.

*172 interview with his father, asked them to help him build a house where he could live independently. They set to work, and Mamari's house was soon built at Ségou-koro on the site of the future Biton-blon-da, the place where the ton' had been meeting up to that time. On Mondays and Thursdays, after a hunt to provide game, the members met there and had a feast. Each brought some sort of utensil and they prepared their own meals.

An old slave belonging to fa Siné, named bina (1) Bilali, had been attracted by the fine food and asked to be taken in as a "slave of the ton' " (ton-dyon'). He was admitted on that basis and became a sort of general factotum. A Soninké slave followed his example and was likewise admitted and given the important role of trumpeter. Using a horn which he sounded three times, he called together the members of the ton' when ordered to do so by Mamari. He was called ton-masa, "master of the ton'," because his summons was not to be disobeyed on pain of [32] a fine of ten jugs of millet beer for recalcitrants.

A Somono slave named Allah-doungo (lit., Allah's pleasure) also offered his services to the ton', and the organization increasingly became the refuge of men seeking to evade any authority they deemed excessive.

These recruits were the first ton-dyon'; all were slaves in quest of freedom. Soon, however, the movement they had started was extended, thanks to the influence of the ton-tigi's diplomacy.

One day Mamari's mother gave (1) a free gift of twenty jugs of beer to the ton', and Mamari used the occasion to tell the

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1. Bina, whose literal meaning is "uncle," is here used as a title of respect.

[431]

1. It is entirely typical of native custom to give ostensibly free gifts in this way, when it is actually intended that the giver receive more than he gives. This is an example.

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exogamy, saying: "No one shall marry one of my daughters unless he is an inhabitant of the town." Then he charged his children never to take spouses from the Massa-si clan (Traditions historiques et légendaires, Delafosse, p. 53).

Béni Fali-Sékolo (1690-1700). Since Massa was by now a very old man, he abandoned active authority to his son, Béni Fali, called Sékoro, who was as strong and brave as his father. He continued his father's practice of armed pillage, assisted by his many brothers, the best-known of whom included: Gran, called Foro-koro; Séba, called Mana; Tyema, the son of Nyanilé; Bo, son of Déni-ba; Massa, called [109] Bakari; Séri-ba and Allahi, who were twins; and Mo-siré-bilé.

Gran, called Foro-koro (1700-1709). Some say that intrigues by the Soninké and the people of Niamala were what persuaded the fama of Ségou, Mamari called Biton Kouloubali, to attack the Massa-si. After a siege that lasted for three years, Sounsan-na had to surrender. Foro-koro was taken prisoner and sent to Ségou, where he was put to death. His skull (1) was kept as a talisman by Biton.

Others, more explicit, tell how and why the attack was carried out against Sounsan-na. Mamari called Biton Kouloubali had given his daughter ba (2) Sana in marriage to Sana-ba Mamari (3) Kouloubali of Mourdia. When the wedding party that

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1. Mamari made it into a box for his amulets and it was the basis of his magic.

2. The word ba, which literally means "mother," is here used as a title of respect.

3. Sana-ba Mamari means "Mamari, son of the woman named Sana-ba."

881 On the same day the young girls in certain localities
302 have a characteristic ceremony. One of them whitens her face,
breast, and back with a mixture of milk and ashes. Thus
daubed, she dashes out of the village brandishing the spatula
(to-n-galama) which is used to stir mush (to) in the pot; her
companions follow her, shouting. The band goes around the
village four times in this fashion, each time stopping at the
crossroads. At these points the girl who is bedaubed throws
handfuls of food (1), provided by her companions, to the spirits,

[262] 1. Usually basi (couscous) made with fish.

crying: "Dege dule (2)." Her companions reply: "Naloma (3)."

2. Literally, "thick mush."

3. That is, "fool."

881 The eve of the soli (soli-si). During the evening pre-
ceding the soli, the families concerned enjoy an ample meal,
527 accompanied by innumerable jugs of beer (dlo) as is the custom
[273] at all festivals among the Bambara. This is a time of special
merriment, of shining faces and greasy hands, and it is good
[576] form for the men and boys to belch noisily, saying repeatedly:
"ne ne fa," literally, "I am full," that is, "I am replete." The
[301] women wander about the lanes, wrapped in their best skirts,
with balls of amber in their hair and small silver or even gold
rings in their ears and nostrils and rather heavy bracelets on their
[482] arms and ankles. Some carry jars of dlo on their heads, while
others carry gourds full of couscous, dege, or hot sauces which
are often nauseous with smoked or spoiled fish. After the meal
everyone gathers on the public square, forming a wide circle
whose center is reserved for the dancers; piles of dried millet
[373] stalks are used to make bright fires which illuminate the scene
and warm the audience.

881 The "boys of the soli" (soli-ma-tye-u), their heads
302 freshly

844 Before delivery of her child, a woman is advised to pound grain.
When the labor pains come, the woman retires to her hut with several
matrons (men are not allowed access). If the child is poorly presented,
the priest is called. He performs outside the hut, simulating the delivery
and chanting the formulas that ease labor. To deliver the
infant, the woman kneels with her hands thrown behind her, while
the midwife supports the small of her back. At birth the infant's
shoulders must touch the ground; this is the moment when he receives
his spiritual principles. The infant is washed several times and
smeared with karite butter.

846 The mother must not go out during the first eight days after the
853 birth; she must devote herself entirely to the new-born. She massages
854 his head daily in order to give it a more rounded form, and she
pinches his nose. She nurses the infant for the first two years, then
the weaned child passes directly to the communal calabash. Until
the child can walk, the mother carries it astraddle on her back with
the aid of a loincloth knotted at her chest. In this manner the infant
accompanies the mother everywhere, to work as well as to the dance.
868 It is during these intimate contacts that the mother teaches her child
to talk. Later, the little girls stay with their mothers who teach them
all the domestic arts, while the boys are educated in outside work.
[867] During their childhook they are taught the usages and rules of deportment:
a woman knows she must never shake the hand of a man to
201 greet him, and, if he extends his hand, she flings up her arm "as a
576 sign of not being interested." A man will salute his superior by extending
his hand palm upwards, and the superior will put his over it;
inversely, when a man greets an inferior he extends his hand with the
palm down, while for an equal his hand will be perpendicular to the
ground. If a man must ask someone's pardon, he puts his hands behind
his back to simulate the tail of an animal (for he has acted like
an animal). Crossing the hands in front of or upon the head is a sign
of sadness. To mark his submission to a king, a man puts his right
elbow to the ground. To pray to God, the two hands are extended
with the palms turned [89] outward. A woman learns that it is impudent
576 to question her husband during the day, and when she speaks
593 of him, she says *koke*, that is, big brother, for she cannot pronounce
833 his name or in any way recall the bonds which exist between them.
It is only during the two consecutive nights that she couples with him

576 that she may speak to him freely. When the day of union comes, the
593 wife herself prepares her husband's food; then she lies on the left side
833 (the feminine side) and her husband on the right side, and she cannot
[842] be impregnated except by a union twice repeated.

771 These corporal techniques[1] are dictated and ordered by the religious imperatives which pervade the life of the Bambara from before his birth until after his death.

761 What we have said of the Bambara's religion and of his conception of the world enables us to understand that there cannot be for him a complete break between life and death: birth is a reincarnation; death is not destruction. This is why a man's life does not present one substantial unity but is divided into a certain number of distinct periods, each of which is inaugurated by a rite of transition that marks the death of an anterior state and the rebirth to a new life.

a. Before Birth

843 From the first month after his conception, the infant consti-
761 tutes a person who receives a series of spiritual forces emanating
from his father's side of the family and especially from the recently
858 deceased ancestor whose name he will receive. At the same time, he inherits all of the paternal taboos, which the mother must respect during her pregnancy. It is only after his birth, at the time he receives his name, that the infant receives the spiritual forces coming from his mother's side. These forces are transmitted through the medium of the priest and the ancestors of the priest.

761 From then on, the infant is required to observe all the taboos of the beings who have had a part in the composition of his personality;
858 he thus finds himself tightly bound to the society in which he will live.

b. Birth Rites

852 At birth the baby is washed with millet beer (1) (to purify him)

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1. For all these rites, see G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

[1] [i.e., sexual reproduction and childbearing, see pp. 117-119. -Analyst]

881 physical male factor residing in the clitoris. The operation takes 304 place, moreover, during the same period as the circumcision. It is carried out by the potteress, wife of the blacksmith, in full daylight before the assembled kin. During their seclusion the girls wear a white veil which plays the same role as the bonnet of the circumcised. 534 Instead of the sistrum, the girls shake a gourd which contains eight millet seeds and cotton fibers which their fiancés have given them. A goat is sacrificed for the ceremony. The collected blood is given to the fiancé in honor of his ancestors who become those of the girl.

[93] On the last day of the ceremony the girls definitively rid themselves of their wanzo by jumping over a pyre composed of the clothes and scraps of the excised.

e. Marriage

582 It is only after having been circumcised or excised that young 584 people may marry. The institution of marriage is regulated by a ritual which has often been described, particularly by Amar, Monteil, Tauxier, Aubert . . .

The marriage arrangements are made by the respective fa of the two betrothed, after the young people have been consulted. The request is officially made to the parents by an intermediary, a man of caste or a sénanku. It is accompanied by ritual gifts offered to the fa of the girl. In the Bougouni region the request is accompanied by ten kola nuts, because ten is a complete number that 801 designates good events and future births. (Nine kola nuts are offered ● 576 to present condolences, four as a sign of greeting. To send three 431 nuts would be insulting, and 19 nuts, marking incompleteness, would be a sign of lack of confidence.) The first kola nuts to be offered 824 are always wrapped in one or two karite leaves, symbol of life and of fecundity. If the ten kola nuts are accepted, it means that the father has opened the way to the marriage. The intermediary then make a second trip the following week, bringing a cock for sacrifice to the ancestors and ten more kola nuts; during a third trip he offers another cock and ten more kola nuts before the entire assembled family of the young girl, witnessing that the girl may meet her fiancé. In the course of the fourth trip, the intermediary leads the girl to the fiancé's family, where she will be confided to the wife of the head of the family who will undertake her education.

784 One might perhaps think that it would be very difficult not to
602 see one's tné....? In the Sudan good manners require that people
576 discipline their glances from their earliest years. A son-in-law lowers his eyes in the presence of his mother-in-law, a daughter-in-law turns her back at a three-quarters angle out of modesty in the presence of her father-in-law, and when a lover goes to win over the father of his fiancée, she runs away and hides. Any Negro, however poor his manners, will direct his look no one knows where, into space or upon his toes, every time he greets anyone and hears his news, and will chat with a person for a quarter hour without ever looking at him. No more is asked for the tné. Undoubtedly a Bambara shields himself with both hands in its presence... and he plays the young daughter-in-law; he knows well how to differentiate between seeing and looking, and he knows how to tell you at the time, however little he is accused: "Né y'a yé tigné, n'ka, nè gné tount'a la, né m'a flè. I saw it certainly, but I did not leave my eyes on it, I did not look at it."

3. The Gnâma

789 The tné are rendered sacred, above all, by the curse of the
778 ancestor. Nothing is so much feared by the Bambara. To be cursed,
626 and cursed by his father, is the greatest evil that can befall a man; his wives would run away from him, his children would blush to call him "father," his /27/ friends would abandon him, the people of the village would be terrified to speak to him; he would have to flee. And where would he go? The gnâma of his father, of his ancestor, of his fetish's tné, would cling to his steps and follow him everywhere. Only suffering would be left for him; sickness, hunger, poverty, and humiliation would be his lot and, rejected by humanity, he would die in despair.

789 The word gnâma is very difficult to translate. Does its equivalent
778 exist in our French language? Gnâma is a force, a power, or also perhaps a /kind of/ energy, a fluid possessed by every man, every animal, every living being; it never disappears and continues to exist even

3. The Reincarnation of Souls

775 It is a great surprise that the Bambara believe in the reincarna-
769 tion of souls. Some do not dare to believe in it because they sacrifice to the shades of their ancestors, and others, "cultivated minds, nourished by the sanest philosophy," reject this belief as illogical, since the religion of the Negro is the worship of the dead! They do, in fact, worship the dead, but in the Bambara religion this worship, extensive as it is, remains a detail, and not the foundation. To honor the shades of his ancestors (but only of those who were heads of families, so that the worship of the dead is already somewhat limited -- with all due respect to those who see nothing but it), the Bambara family head throws a big blot of chicken blood and a mouthful of chewed kola nut onto the dégé, or millet flour mixed with water, and pours it onto the wall at the entrance of his hut. He does so to implore the help and protection of that power or authority which his predecessors possessed in their position as family head, an authority exactly the same as that which he himself possesses. He believes, nonetheless, in the reincarnation of souls! This belief is general and universal among fetishists, and if some do not dare admit it before Europeans and
● [576] Moslems, their reticence is due to simple human respect, to a fear of contradicting beliefs which they know to be contrary to their own, a wish not to offend anyone and not to be the butt of laughter and ridicule.

Infants who die at the breast before having achieved the use of
766 reason are buried in a corner of the inner courtyard and sometimes
775 even in the hut where they were born. Before such a child is buried, one of its limbs, usually the big toe of the right foot, is broken, and sometimes the father marks it with a knife on /57/ the shoulder, the arm, or the chest. He thinks that the child who will come after it will be animated by the soul of the dead one, and he neglects nothing that might possibly enable him to ascertain whether it is. This stupid and ridiculous operation is commonly performed under the eyes of the mother, and some strange events occur. Since she must submit
775 to the will of her husband as soon as possible and have marital relations
826 with him, she soon conceives. During her pregnancy her imagination

775 walking in the direction of Kita. They stopped in a village near this city and were lodged by a Malinke (2). On entering the courtyard,

2. A Mandingo tribe whose group "taboo" is the Mali or Mani, the hippopotamus.

they stopped dumfounded, for they found sitting on a mat an elderly man whose features were familiar to them, -- wasn't he the old man of Fobougou? It was he, for he greeted them and asked them news of the old men of the village and of the members of his family. After supper they returned to the courtyard, wanting to sit near their old man, whom they had found again so far from his native land, but he was no longer there, and their host told them that he had fled, refusing to tell what direction he was taking.... "That was our old man," say the people of Fobougou with great conviction, for they believe in this as in the capture of Ségou. "Our young people saw him, talked with him, and some had known him before his death. Without doubt," they add, "he must have suffered in his family while he was alive, so he did not dare come back to life in our midst." This story, which I heard in Fobougou itself, is told more or less everywhere with a few variations; in September, 1908, between Ségou and Koulikoro on the Niger, one of the laptot (3) told it to his colleagues as they squatted

505 3. Negroes who serve as sailors on the river are called laptot.

around him in a circle.

775 551 576 In Ouentja, a village an hour and a half or two hours at the most from the Bani, on the road between Ségou and Koutiala, the people have such great respect for one of their deceased former chiefs, the old sagi, that they avoid saying his name. They have even changed or rather abbreviated one of their greetings, and while almost everywhere else strangers are greeted with the words: "i dangha sagi," here they say to you only: "i danghana (4)." According to the /60/

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4. I dangha sagi, "may you be blessed on your arrival, on your return into our midst." -- (Your return to us is a blessing.) -- The Negroes abbreviate, saying, i dana sagi; it is only old men and those who pride themselves on speaking their language well, who articulate clearly and say i dangha sagi.

legend, this sagi whose name one avoids taking in vain, was chief of the village and influential in its environs. He died very old, took on flesh again in the womb of a woman of the family, and recommenced the cycle of his existence. He again became village chief, and again died in extreme old age, and returned to the flesh again a third time. As always he was chief, passed from life to death in extreme old age, was honored and respected by everyone, and received funeral honors such as have never been awarded to any Negro prince.

775 At the time of death the soul goes into Lahara, a vague word, so vague that a Bambara cannot define it or give you any idea of it. It is the place where the invisible beings live and where everything becomes invisible. Children and those who have not completely fulfilled the cycle of their existence, only pass through and hasten to return to the wombs of their mothers, or at least to those of women of their families.

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769 A secret force urges old men to return to the flesh again in their own family, but sometimes they refuse and seek limbs elsewhere. They spend a longer time in Lahara and, doubtless matured by experience, they are not always in a hurry to reappear. Many remain there for a number of years, awaiting a favorable moment, and this uncertainty hovering over the fate of the old men, may be a reason for sacrifices to the dead. One definite fact is that these sacrifices are directed only to the dead who have had authority in the country, the village, or the family, and the honors rendered them seem to be

775 769 directed more to the authority which they had in their lifetimes than to the persons themselves.

775 A good number of Bambara believe in hell and assert that the souls of the wicked are condemned by God to eternal torment. It is clear that they are changed into demons and do not come back to life, but it is so difficult to deserve hell that not one Bambara goes there, and they live without any fear, just as if it did not exist. This belief in hell perhaps indicates an exception to my statement on the reincarnation of souls but does not destroy its validity, and it can be stated that the majority of Negroes believe in such a reincarnation. /61/

Chapter 4

Bambara Ideas concerning God, Invisible Beings, and Adam and Eve

1. Belief in God

776 The Bambara believe in the existence of a Supreme Being who is Creator and Master of all things; they believe in God, in a recompensing God who can punish and reward. Their most polished formulas are those in which they testify to their belief in Him, and His name is on their lips at every moment without any special reason.

776 ● 576 To a young married couple, a Bambara hastens to say: "May your union be happy, may God give you peace and many children," and when a family is in sorrow, for instance because they have lost one of the members, it is in God that they seek consolation and in invoking Him that they give comfort: "May God have pity on him and grant him a happy sojourn in Lahara," "may He not separate him from good people and may He add to your days those of which he has been deprived." (1)

776 775 1. These last phrases have been taken by some as a reason to doubt that the

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Bambara believe in the reincarnation of souls. But the Negroes say that a soul separated from the body lacks something, it is not complete. Since a soul stays in Lahara for a fairly long time, until it finds the opportunity to be reincarnated and decides to do so, the wish is expressed that during this period that it may live with the souls of good people and not suffer too much from the loss of its body -- and nothing more. These comforting expressions are heard at every death, whether of a child, a man, or an old man.

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842 The sterility of a woman is obviously not natural; it is attributed to fetishes, to the evil spells of a malicious person, and quite often /62/ also to God. "Alla b'a kégné dén-na --, God is placing an obstacle to /against/ her having children." As the Bambara gives small gifts of honey, cotton, butter, sugar, or cowrie shells to a woman who has just given birth, they say, "May God soothe your back (your pains); may He preserve your child." Upon receiving the slightest favor, the recipient commends the one who performed it to the protection of the Almighty, and the wishes at festivals and drinking bouts are an endless litany a large part of which refers to God.

776 The Bambara speak the name of God apropos of a trifle and always -- except in certain sacrifices to the boli fetishes where they use it blasphemously -- with some respect. I confess that (if I did not know through being somewhat acquainted with them that in their mouths this name is a word and no more, a commonplace into which enters neither affection nor love) it would sometimes seem that they have deep and tender feelings of piety. In fact there is nothing more touching than to hear a pagan Negro, a Bambara, answer whoever

[576] asks after his health: "Nébi Alla tanoun, I praise God, I glorify God."

177 181 avoided the stroke of the sword or slavery, kept their faith in fetishes intact, and shielded both themselves and their /68/ children from all religious propaganda -- for what was there to teach them, what could they be taught that they did not know already?

177 192 The terms from the Koran have become familiar to them in present-day language. Since they do not come from them and express primarily a concept rather than the thing itself, they have been able to use them with complete freedom, without failing in the respect due to the superior beings, their lords and gods, whose names are never spoken in vain or in an unsuitable name. Nowadays the words have become so Bambara that the people do not even suspect that they are foreign to their language, and have no cause to be surprised at them. The Bambara make anything their own that they feel translates their thought precisely, without giving much attention to the original meaning of the word, which they often do not know. Having [576] heard the Moslem repeatedly cry out bismilahi, they thought it in good taste to make this exclamation in the anecdotes and stories that they tell, and for two or three years this has been the super-polite expression in "smart" society for inviting a guest to enter a hut and squat on the mat. In twenty years this word bismilahi بسم الله, will have no other meaning! Even though it means "in the name of God," you would be laughed at if you were heard to say that it is an Arabic word with quite another meaning, just as you would waste your time telling a Negro that the expression "fou moi le camp" /"get out of here," literally "give me the camp."/ is plain /French/ slang. When a slave escapes, does one not say, "a bi fou moi (1) le camp?"

1. a: "he," bi: "is," fou moi le camp; the whole expression: "to desert."

It is a widely used expression known by everyone and is teamed with this other: ze ma fo, about which I pondered for several days, seeking to find its meaning. Yet nothing could be simpler; it is "I don't give a rap." /From the French je m'en fous/.

576 in this respect they are far superior to
551 any of the Arabs of Algeria, for ex-
595 ample. Family life is more open and
cordial among them.

children do not speak the name of their father, especially if he is a gouatigi, or family head, and when a swarm of children are enjoying themselves around their old daddy, only one word is on all the little lips to awaken his attention, avoid his reprimand, call for his caress, and bring forth his smile: Koké-yo -- koké-wé! (2)

2. I use the word Koké-yo -- (Né koké) koké we (koké, "I beg you, Koké") -- because it is the most common; there are obviously other similar terms. Favorite wives also like to call their husbands by this name. For everyone it is a term of respect and at the same time it is tender, affectionate, and coaxing.

[888] Old men are given borrowed names, bougna toua, out of respect
576 and veneration, and the reason for this practice is to avoid having to
551 speak their names in vain and unsuitably. The practice is current,
and it is even carried to an extreme, for although a child is given a
respect name within his family, he is never called by that name. How
many people there are whose real name is not known except by close
[553] relatives and friends! All the Dougoutigi, To-n-tigi, Ba-koroba, and
Moké-touama received a name on the eighth day after their birth,
and the names used to designate them are borrowed names. /80/

888 In the environs of Ségou, where Islam is widespread and spreads
793 farther every day, the sacrificers to the protecting genii of the villages,
576 the gnéna-n-sonna ba, or dougoutigi, have lost some of their prestige,
551 but anyone who respects them, even if he be a Moslem, never speaks
their names. At the present time in Bani country, where the old
customs and traditions are preserved with jealous care, there is not a

888 child, woman, or young man that can tell you the name of the great
793 sacrificer of the village if the latter is in the least old. Out of respect
576 and veneration his name is never spoken; he is the head, and if they
551 are questioned all will answer: "Toua si t'a la dougoutigi ko, he has
no other name than that of dougoutigi, head of the village." And, in
fact, most of the people know no other name for him.

551 This need to avoid speaking the name of whosoever is respected,
576 venerated, or feared goes so far as to bring about the abbreviation of
778 phrases customarily used in salutations (1), so it can easily be imagined
that the name of the fetishes is not known except by their masters and their initiates. Of course, a Moslem, a woman, an uncircumcised man, or an unexcised woman can tell you the number of the gnéna and gnâ owned by the village, and they also know whether the gnéna (djiné) include a Dasiri, Ngolo, Koté, Ntomo, Tauri, etc., and whether the gnâ (boli, sétané) include a Komo, Nia, Douga, Kono, Nama, Bala, etc. But except for the initiates, who could tell you that a certain boli is called Sélé, Magné, Toroba, Dono, or Nono, or that the Magna is also called Tjarofign and the Nama, Sirima-n-fign? Only the generic name is known, and it is in good taste not to pronounce even that when extending an invitation to a festival in its honor. The Nama is enclosed in a beehive in the shade of a tamarind tree, which in turn are enclosed in coarse mats, and when an invitation is given to the sacrifice, the most stylish formula is: "Come and see us, an bi djasé (2) son, we are sacrificing to the /81/ palisade." The trumpet

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1. See what I said in this connection in the preceding chapter, /section on/ "Reincarnation of Souls," pertaining to Ouentja.

2. Djasé, name of a palisade composed of large mats. Children born at the time of the sacrifices to the Nama, who are dedicated to the fetish, are frequently given the name

776 sees everything. The old men explain
196 this to you with an intensity that proves
192 their good faith, and children recite
the sayings of the old men with a
frankness so naive that one cannot
misunderstand it.

a Being endowed with reason and all powerful. The term is the translation of the word sa.

It is apparent that in the beginning the word Alla in no way meant a Being or an Individual; it simply expressed a concept, an idea already known, accepted and translated by the word sa, and the Bambara simply adopted a foreign word corresponding to their own concept.

776 If to the Bambara the word Alla had meant the Divinity Himself,
196 the Supreme Being, would they ever have dared to speak it, to make
192 it their own? I cannot bring myself to believe that they would, among
551 them the name of a powerful person, a religious chief, or venerated
576 being is never spoken in vain or in an unsuitable manner. If some of
[687] their kings, among them /79/ N'golo, not to mention others, punished
anyone caught speaking his /the royal/ name by fines and prison, cast them into slavery, and even beheaded them as guilty of the crime of lese majesty, what would they not have to fear from the Creator if they spoke His name in vain and inappropriately! Furthermore, it is a widespread custom to avoid speaking the name of one who is feared or venerated.

576 No well-bred and self-respecting woman ever speaks the name
551 of her husband. She speaks of him as né tigi ("my master"), so tigi
595 ("the master of the house"). Most frequently she adorns him with a
borrowed name, a bougna toua, or name of respect, and a polygamist has several such names, each wife giving him one of her own invention.

In well-brought-up families -- and most of them are (1) -- the

1. Our Bambara Negroes have great respect for the members of their families and are considerate of them;

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Djasé instead of Nama or Namakoro. The Nama is sometimes surrounded by a wall instead of mats. This is extremely unusual, and I have seen only one sanctuary of this kind, at Dougoutigila in the Bani /region/.

of the Komo is of iron, so one says: "An bi négé son, we are sacrificing to the iron." A fetish can give health in the sense that it can refrain from causing sickness if it is a gnâ, or it can actually give health and well-being if it is a gnéna; thus the expression used most frequently is: "An ta foura bi son, we are sacrificing to our cure," or again: "An ta foura bi djigi so, our cure is paying us the honor of a visit."

776 Are we here dealing with a recent custom, which dates from the arrival of the Moslem? I cannot accept this idea, for all the evidence indicates that it antedates presence, I believe without hesitation that the name of the Divinity or Supreme Being was never spoken by the Bambara, that they were not permitted to pronounce it. It is not surprising, then, that the name should gradually have been lost, erased from their memories so that it is unknown at present.

Moreover, since the Bambara God was without priest, altar, or sacrifice, was there any need to speak His name? According to their ideas, the gnéna or djiné are beings intermediate between men and angels, put in charge of the elements by the Divinity and delegated by Him to distribute His favors and His punishments to human beings; would it then be foolish and presumptuous to believe that since the beginning he only addressed God through the mediation of the gnéna or djiné? I cannot doubt that the Bambara implored the djiné to present their homage and worship to their Lord, the Lord of the whole universe, to their Tigi ani fen bê tigi yé, as the sorcerers always say in their liturgical ceremonies. The latter are the watchful guardians of the ancient formulas and customs; that is the source of all their prestige.

Moreover, the worship of the gnéna, or djiné, antedates that of the gnâ (boli or sétané). It has no history; its origin is lost in the darkness of the ages, and in this fact I see a new reason to believe that they were the first intermediaries between man and God.

778 551 Children dedicated to the Nia: Nia-gné foula, Nia-n-ti, Nia-n-nkoro, Nia.

Children dedicated to the Kono: Nièlé, Tjétjélé, Djonké (2).

[576] 2. Djonke, a respectful appellation often applied to the master of the Kono. Tjétjélé, the password of the initiates of the Kono and its family name, or diamou. When a stranger appears at the sacrifice, he is asked the question: "E b'a la wa Wélema djonké? Are you of the sect of Wélema djonké?" Only a brother can answer: "Tjétjélé, ne b'a la. Tjétjélé, I am."

Children dedicated to the Magna: Ma-n-djé, Magna, Magné.
Children dedicated to the Djo: Djo, Djokoro, Djoméné.
Children dedicated to the Douga: Dougakoro, Douga-n-tjé.
Children dedicated to the Da: Dakoro, Da-n-son, Da-n-wélé.
Children dedicated to the Bala: Bala, Balake, Mousa and Misa (3).

3. Mousa and Misa are synonyms of Bala and not a translation of the name Moses.

778 572 It is also on a powerful boli, or rather in its presence, that the Bambara swear to an indissoluble friendship, a friendship so close that it finds the two persons and their children like a kinship tie. This is the sinnakoun! No Negro has ever been able to talk to me about it with any clarity or precision, so that I am unable to give it a very exact definition. Basing my interpretation on the custom -- widespread among the Bambara -- of a woman showing her breast in order to indicate clearly that she is the mother of a child (a wolo ba, "his

521 831 one's eyes, the answer is almost always: "A flé bani, mousoni do, ne na d'ima, ka ké i soungourou yé. But look here, this is a girl; I will give her to you, she will be your soungourou."

521 831 576 836 And all this carelessness from the moral standpoint should not surprise us in a country where a crowd of young men greet each other even in the presence of their mothers: "I sounna ko? About the affair of your sleep? And your lovemaking at night?" "I soungourou ka kendé? How is your soungourou?"

And where young girls do not blush to say to young men: "Do me the favor that I am asking you."

"Ne na ko doumani fo i ye.

I will tell you of a sweet affair (or: conversation, shameful embraces).

"Né na ne ko doumani d'i ma.

I will give you my sweet affair (or: I give myself to you).

In short, every Bambara who awards himself the prize of virtue, avoids saying that he has respected foreign women and girls temporarily under his roof. The statement would be received with a shrug of the shoulders and a smile. He merely says: "I have respected the women and girls of the village," and he does not shout this very loud nor before everybody.

2. Concerning Adultery and Fornication

684 Adultery is a crime in the eyes of every Negro, and the guilty one caught in the act is brought before the council of elders and severely punished. I must state, however, that although adultery seems a serious offence to all, the crime does not lie in the satisfaction obtained. There has been a lack of fairness, the rights of a third party have been violated, and in this lies all the wrongdoing.

Caught in the act, red handed, the guilty party makes a friendly deal with the husband, who rarely asks him for more than 16,000 cowrie shells (from 15 to 20 francs) and the material for a sacrifice to the family boli, comprising perhaps two hens, a goat, two kola nuts, and between 5 to 800 cowrie shells for the sacrificer's bonus.

564 erroneous, for the Bambara despises this breed and would never entrust one with such a delicate mission. The Bambara dreads the storyteller in his private festivals. How many times they say as they invite us: "We came ourselves to invite you so that the news may not reach the ears of the storytellers." The *to-n-tigi*, head of the association of the *fla*-n-to, plays no important role in the marriage of a *to-n-dé*, or member. The *to-n-déou*, members of the association of the *fla-n-to*, are invited and enjoy themselves at the wedding of a fellow *te-n-de*, and that is all. Mr. Barbier Louis /sic/ makes a mistake; see page 527, Dec. 16, 1907, of the review *La Quinzaine*.

584 latter receives four kola nuts wrapped in green leaves and tied again and again so that they will not wither, and, spear in hand and his inseparable goatskin, or *foroko*, well fastened to his shoulder, he starts on his way, proud to be assigned such a pleasant mission and happy and pleased to be the *fourouboloma tigi*, guardian of the wedding gifts (2).

2. *Fourouboloma*, "engagement gift"; *tigi*, "master."

584 887 576 At the end of his journey, on the public square, he extends a very friendly greeting to the old men who there devote themselves to laziness in the shade of a great tree with the apathy of lizards; he gives them all generously of the snuff that every stranger must offer, and if he has no friend or acquaintance in the village, he chooses from among them a man of good will who will introduce him to the family and smooth the way for him. When this man is found, he goes

776 He takes on many forms. He can be seen in the brush as a gazelle feeding on wild tomatoes and onions. As a ram with golden fleece and wearing ear ornaments, he travels underground along gold veins. As a young and seductive woman he goes to the villages to seduce the boys and take them away with him. He is the head of the fleeting torrent that runs after a rainfall; he is the seething and swelling of the currents. He can be recognized in the bluish haze that floats above the ponds. A stream that dries up is a sign of his anger.

Faro's Realm

776 821 At the beginning, the waters that originated in the "central springs of the sky" and streamed over the earth, were pure, clear, beneficial and "easy." But after Mousso Koroni's betrayal and that of the beings who listened to her, impurity was communicated to the earth /45/: the water that covered the earth clouded, changed color, and became "difficult." It either dried up or, on the contrary, flooded the land, drowning living beings.

[783] Today only the streaming rain water has preserved its character, more especially the first rain that falls at the beginning of winter. It is considered a purifying agent par excellence and is called dane sandyi, "water that sows, " for it brings to the grains their soul, ni; the earth, sterile and "empty, " becomes full and fertile, plants are reborn, animals and insects multiply (1).

[577] 1. A person who is generous and good is referred to as being like this first rain. It is also said of the spirit: "the spirit [is good like] the first rain" (miri dane sandyi).

The terrestrial waters, Faro's kingdom, are classified into seven distinct realms. They are in layers which correspond to the seven parts of the sky and earth.

[783] The first, dyi woyo "seething water, " is surface water: it seethes when Faro makes himself known, and overflows in floods, as the heads of streams are swelled by the storm. It is also the lustral water used for purification and the water drawn for drinking.

776 precision of which the native substratum seems unaware. In any event, there is no Bambara word for "God" except the one [177] brought by the Moslems -- "Allah," pronounced as Ngala. This lack of a Bambara word may be explained by their custom of avoiding pronouncing the name of powerful people for fear of incurring their wrath.

There is no superior spirit of evil: Seĩtane [Satan] is [177] likewise a Moslem introduction. The Bambara does not visualize a hierarchy of spirits.

Finally, it must be concluded, from the existence of 776 many magic practices, that there is a belief in a kind of uni- 778 versal energy, which is diffuse by nature and which, by appropriate 789 means, one can capture and use as one likes. Certain genii or gods are merely emanations of this invisible, imponderable and active force, which no obstacle can stop and which can instantly overcome space and strike at a distance. This is the basis of all native magic.

## [129] 2. Morality and Customs

776 When, as among Catholics and Moslems, the after-life is believed to be influenced by one's conduct in this life, there •577 is a rule which determines what is and what is not proper if one wishes to earn the greatest possible rewards in the life to come. The saints and pious men have shown the way to this end.

For the Bambara, however, the next life is merely a continuation of this one and he does not think that he can, by conduct, improve his chances in the next life since it offers no rewards or punishments for his day-by-day actions. Neither his manes nor his genii give him an example of conduct to guide him. Therefore, without thought of the future, he goes along solely concerned with the present; he seeks what will give him pleasure, tries to avoid what seems harmful, and all this in a groping way, as one walks in the dark.

577 Sometimes, it is true, he is led to behave with a degree 626 of decency and to avoid certain too shocking lapses, which would expose him to reproach, alienate his friends and create for him

577 an uncomfortable situation among his own family; but under-
626 neath this surface, the evil shows through. It is not unusual to
577 be faced with a disconcerting absence of moral sense, ferocious
157 egotism, deep-seated duplicity, impudent treachery and cold,
unperturbed cruelty (1). And one can see, perhaps in all of them, the scorn and even hatred felt for anyone who is unfortunate, weak, ill or abandoned. However, it should certainly be noted that there are also Bambara who display the most disinterested devotion, generous hospitality and remarkable courage; some even give evidence of that kind of inborn distinction which is to be found among even the most primitive peoples and which is the mark of superior people.

183 Thus, no code organizes Bambara rules of life. Everything depends upon custom, that mysterious thread, at once fragile and strong, which links the generations one with another [130] and which sustains the individual, though he is unaware of it, to such an extent that he is completely lost without it. Handed down by earlier generations, superstitiously preserved, it is imposed through fear of the punishment which will follow transgression. At first glance, custom appears to be an amalgam of the most heterogeneous elements and that is why we Europeans find it at once respectable and ridiculous, good and bad, useful and futile, sometimes atrocious and then again excellent. On closer study it is seen to exhibit, on the basis of feelings common to all humanity, an efflorescence peculiar to the native milieu, a natural morality which duplicates positive laws.

It is the nature of man to observe certain laws, to see the good and the bad in what surrounds him and, in his conduct, to display a leaning toward the good and an aversion to the bad. He recognizes within himself something which criticizes his actions from a similar point of view and, which, in fact, judges them.

1. The chronicle of Ségou, especially, attests this tradition of trickery and hypocrisy (see especially the tales about Ma-n-son, p. 93, and about Da, p. 101).

596 614 787 It is the duty of the fa to see to the cult. He projects everything that happens to him personally to the supernatural plane so as to come to conclusions that will guide his own conduct. He discerns in the most ordinary dreams indications of what will please the dead. Furthermore, the people around him point out the signs of divine will that they have observed. If, as happens in great houses, the fa is obliged to turn over part of his responsibility to the family gods to one of his confidantes, the latter will not fail to keep him informed of anything significant that may be revealed.

[577] Thus, daily life is unceasingly dominated by the supernatural, and every important event is conditioned by these beliefs. This is readily seen in all the family institutions: birth, circumcision, marriage, and death.

[577] It follows that the moral behavior of the family is a concern of the fa. Whenever something abnormal or painful occurs, the fa looks into it. Do the dead perhaps have reason to be dissatisfied? Have they been neglected or offended? He questions them, and if he finds confirmation for his suspicions, he at once seeks to appease the manes in whatever way they desire. If the trouble persists, he investigates further, and sometimes everyone in the house is questioned or, if one prefers, made to confess, even infants. Could one of them, moved by ill feeling, have uttered maledictions when invoking the dead?

614 596 783 [578] When the fa himself is ill, this general confession is virtually obligatory. This is because the absolute authority of a fa can hardly fail to arouse hatred, and hatred, a bad counselor, makes people resort to magic to rob the more powerful of life. Fear that the elder's "clairvoyance" will discover the wickedness in the depths of one's soul and punish it usually induces the guilty person to obtain a pardon for his wrongdoing by confessing it, and then everything returns to normal.

596 614 Upon the death of the fa, it is the first duty of his successor to try to discover, by any means, the causes of death and to avenge it if need be.

[763] Everything which the old fa was wont to honor, which forms the spiritual treasure [180] of the family, must also be

771 "believe or die" of the Moslems by taking up their spears, and when
798 they were conquered, reduced to servitude, and unable to continue
778 their worship openly, they remained true to the faith they received
from their ancestors. Severed heads became the prey of vultures,
and spilled blood flowed, but those that survived only became hardened.
The Moslem conquerors, tired of striking and in need of slaves and
manpower, had to admit their defeat in the field of religion.

Some fell away from the idols (slaves, and some rich people
seeking to safeguard their lives and possessions), but their apostasy
was strictly external and a lie, for they shouted the formula but in
secret devoted themselves to their bloody rites, imbuing their children
with their own faith and not that of their masters. A lie has never
[577] been difficult for the Bambara; to know how to lie is for them more
than half a virtue. Thus, when the right to freedom was proclaimed
[567] in 1907, I was not at all surprised to see that out of nearly 5,000
slaves who spontaneously set themselves free, the majority returned to
their homes or to the land of their fathers, forgot the formula, and
declared themselves to be fetishists. They did not get initiated then
since they already had been (1).

1. Those who took back their own freedom in 1907 were all slaves of the Moslems. The "Peulls" /Fulani/, a shepherd people, saw almost all their slaves escape. The Bambara in slavery kept their traditions as well as they could; in the Negro village of Biskra I found sons of the Bambara who did not know their own language and were fanatical Moslems, yet kept their tattoos, sacrificed to the family *boli* handed down by their fathers, danced the dance of the *korodouga*, and used the Bambara formulas and songs although they no longer understood them.

101 It is interesting to compare these two monosyllables with the Peul [Fulani] word bal, which also means "black" and which can also be spelled ba since its final l, like the n' in ban', is merely euphonious. The comparison is valid because Peul is by origin a Negro language native to the area and, further, because a comparative study of the Sudanese dialects has shown much mutual borrowing of words.

From all this I conclude that the term Bambara and its variants likewise signify "black men."

Further, foreigners and their half-caste or naturalized offspring, all of whom we include under the name Peul, ruled over western Sudan in early times, and it is reasonable to suppose that the name Bambara dates from that period and represents the name by which the Peul rulers designated the natives. [9] Or, it may be safer to say that the word Bambara and its variants derive from the same root ba, meaning "black," which came from an ancient dialect of which the modern Peul language is also an offshoot.

However that may be, the designation Bambara, which is used generally throughout western Sudan, has many meanings today. For the Moslem, the Bambara is the infidel, the pagan, the drinker of alcohol; for the pastoral peoples (Moors and Peuls), he is the farmer and also the Negro. For Semites and those who claim to be Semites, he is principally the Negro. For those who were or are rulers, he is the slave; and for all he is the primitive man who is socially inferior.

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578 The word Bambara has shared the same fate as the word Peul in that it is used simply as an epithet: the name Bambara is applied to all pagans (1), farmers, slaves and black men. Indeed

1. "... It is absolutely certain that in the minds of Sudanese Moslems in general and of those living at the mouth of the Niger in particular, the word Bambara is applied, not to any particular people, nor to a specific tribe, but rather to all Sudanese who have remained faithful to the native religion." (Delafosse, Vol. 1, p. 126).

101 the word has so thoroughly taken on a pejorative sense that its
● 578 use may be a grave insult. What an insult it would be for a
Moslem to be called a Bambara, i.e., an infidel, a pagan and
an alcoholic!

101 In the strictest sense, however, the word Bambara is applied by the Malinké and, following their lead, by the French only to natives who speak the Bambara dialect and who call themselves Banmana or Bamana. Barring specific exceptions, we shall henceforth use the word in this limited sense in the present work.

x173 It is evident from the foregoing remarks that the Bambara belong to very ancient indigenous families; indeed, they themselves consider this to be so, and they are so considered by others.

Native informants are likely to say that the Bambara are former slaves of the Malinké; but they also say that the Somono are former slaves of the "Ségou people." Later on (see Chapter 4), we shall see in what sense [10] this slavery should be understood. It was a characteristic result of the political form of the native governments.

101 In addition to the general name given to them or accepted by them, which applies to one or another group, the Bambara are designated by terms expressing their geographic distribution. There are, for instance, those who live at Bélédougou (called Beledugu-ka-u); those in the Kaarta area (Karta-n-ka-u); those at Ségou (Segu-n-ka-u); those around Bani-n-ko (Bani-n-ko-ka-u). Each of these expressions also has a political connotation; Ségu-n-ka-u is often used for members of the ruling party, which holds power at and operates from Ségou, and only the context or the drift of the conversation will make it possible to know what people are actually being discussed.

Among themselves the various Bambara groups often de-
scribe one another by nicknames. The "Kaarta people" ironi-
[302] cally call the "Ségou people" Tlu-kene-u, "those with a single
braid," because of a peculiar way of doing their hair, or Nya-ni-
Nyéle-u, because Nya and Nyélé are popular names for women
among the people around Ségou.

101 It is common, too, to call all the members of a clan by a
614 name derived from that of a clan founder or ancestor. Thus, the

The Patriarchal Community

When the fa is dead, all his property remains jointly
428 among his legal heirs, thus constituting a patriarchal community whose investigation has two parts: the community of persons and the community of property. [173]

I. The Community of Persons

596 Members of the community. The patriarchal community is made up solely of the legitimate descendants of the de-
614 ceased fa: immediate descendants (sons and daughters), or his descendants exclusively in the male line (descendants of his sons and grandsons).

The descendants of the fa through his daughters are outside the community since they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.

428 If, at his death, the fa leaves no male heirs, there can be no patriarchal community; his property is divided among
596 his daughters or, if there are none, among his brothers. If only
614 a father or mother or some other ascendant were left, his property would go to them, or if he leaves only daughters, his property goes to them, but in either case there will no longer be a community.

848 Legitimacy is the necessary and sufficient condition for inclusion as a member of the community. A legitimate child
596 is one born of a marriage, that is, of a union between two free
614 individuals that conforms to custom. When slavery introduced
578 concubinage into the household, however, the rule was relaxed because a free man was unwilling to have his sons slaves. In practice, therefore, maternity resulting from intercourse with a free man frees his concubine from slavery, and the children of the union become members of the community. This dangerous privilege is often contested by agnate brothers born of free mothers.

Given the diversity of conjugal bonds, ranging from marriage to free union, it is easy to imagine the discussions that

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596 arise on the subject of legitimacy. During the *fa*'s lifetime,
614 his authority imposes whatever solution pleases him, but when
578 he is gone, the disputes involving status are all the more violent
for having been suppressed or evaded for so long.

These disputes gain strength also from the difference in
614 rank which the members have within the community. The
596 totality of prerogatives of all kinds which raise the *fa* above
all others constitutes a kind of superior dignity whose essence
is the omnipotence covered by the word *faya*, from which
came the title *fa* [174] (master, lord). It is in reference to
the *faya* that the members of the community are ranked.

Only male members can advance claims to the *faya*,
[562] and because they can do this, they can all call themselves *fa*.
On the other hand, women can never hold this authority; they
are *fantan'-u*, "powerless."

Among the *fa-u* there are distinctions based on degree of
596 kinship and on age; those most closely related to the *fa* will be
614 the first to receive the honors about to be described. Male
601 descendants in the first degree form a sort of senate of which
561 the eldest is a kind of president-by-birth; he is truly the *fa*,
the actual representative of the deceased. The one immediately following him by rank in terms of age is his *syere* (follower), his heir presumptive at the head of the community. The other senators, usually brothers of the *fa*, are uncles (*bina-u*) to the descendants of the second degree and their children. By reason of the authority associated with the position of *bina-u* in the community, this kinship term has come to be a title of respect which is bestowed on men toward whom one wishes to show particular esteem (1). Because of their age, all the senators of the community are commonly called *koro-u*, "the elders," and the *fa* is first among them.

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1. It is worthy of note that in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Miss Stowe explains that among the slaves in America the word "uncle" had precisely this meaning as a title of respect and honor.

596 614 deprived of his rights, he and subsequently those who would represent him; the branch of the family of which he is head is henceforth dead so far as the family is concerned.

[848] In the second place, no member of the community attains the faya unless he fulfills certain conditions, of which the first are legitimacy and primogeniture.

[578] The fact that the claimant is a member of the community implies that he is legitimate. Since it does happen, however, that the question may not have actually been investigated or, by the wish of the fa, not even been raised, the legal heirs who would be injured and intriguers who seek any pretext -- and there are always some of these persons -- raise the question, and infinite complications often follow.

[595] Primogeniture is equally subject to challenge, and the opposition everywhere finds it a convenient motive for their machinations. It is, indeed, understandable that in polygamous households, with the wives sometimes residing in various places apart from the husband, simultaneous or at least close births give rise to disagreements as to which son was in fact the first-born.

Finally, even though he may actually be the eldest legitimate son, the claimant may find himself passed over because of measures taken [176] against him by the late fa. It appears that although custom favors the eldest legitimate son, it yields to the expressed wishes of the fa if the senate agrees to his rejecting the candidate. This is a grave step and one which may lead to the most violent reactions.

This raises the question of whether special talents or aptitudes should be required of the claimant, over and above those of legitimacy and primogeniture. For example, can he be required to be healthy, active, and a good administrator? It appears that the senate may choose to eliminate a person it deems unworthy. This applies particularly to a free man who has voluntarily fallen from that state by living like a caste member or a slave. By this behavior he has already excluded himself from the community, but it sometimes happens that his actual exclusion has not been noted or announced before the question of accession to the faya arises.

596 614 Most often, however, the debates are concerned either with legitimacy or with primogeniture, and it is by no means rare for a fa, before his death, to insist that the one chosen be the one designated by custom and to threaten to call down curses on anyone who should try to bypass him or to reject his authority (1).

> 1. Ngolo and Ma-n-son both acted in this manner, according to the chronicle of Ségou.

In associations which have adopted a community organization analogous to that of the family, the election of a head is determined solely by these factors. It may be concluded that these are the bases consecrated by custom and that any other arrangements can only result in the worst kind of disagreement.

567 ● 578 596 614 There is confirmation for this. Where slaves are numerous and well organized, they may refuse to recognize the new fa and choose another from among the members of the community. They may even decide to give themselves to a foreign master on the pretext that the fa imposed upon them by custom does not meet with their approval. This is a disaster which jeopardizes the wealth, strength, and even the unity of a family, for it can happen, in order to deal with the crisis, that a compromise is made which more or less ignores the regularly designated fa. This results in wrangling which usually ends with a schism in the community.

The history of these countries tells of many such cases, [177] because the slaves, upon becoming powerful, made the law in the families. The chronicle of Ségou thus relates that the slaves belonging to Dina Wara gave themselves to Biton upon the death of the former. It goes without saying that endless intrigues always precede such defections. The really successful fa, such as Biton, earned their reputations as able politicians and increased their fortunes precisely by their
662 ability to avoid such disasters in their own communities, while stirring them up elsewhere.

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614 everything that happens to him personally to the supernatural
plane so as to come to conclusions that will guide his own
787 conduct. He discerns in the most ordinary dreams indications
of what will please the dead. Furthermore, the people around
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783 makes people resort to magic to rob the more powerful of life.
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614 to try to discover, by any means, the causes of death
and to avenge it if need be.

[763] Everything which the old fa was wont to honor, which
forms the spiritual treasure [180] of the family, must also be

596 614 and property. On the other hand, he also has duties toward them, for it is the essence of the institution to support its members.

561 578 596 614 All the acts of the fa, even the arbitrary ones, are, according to law, under the control of the senate. It should not be forgotten that the members of the community are divided into two hostile groups: that of the "elders," which includes the fa, and that of the "young masters." The fa could hardly [184] keep the common property all to himself, so he shares it more or less as he pleases, and naturally, the elders are among the most generously treated. The young men seldom get any such favors, hence their resentment against the elders, due largely to envy of their favored position.

596 614 It is customary for a fa when he becomes the head of a patriarchy to leave the management of his own community to his eldest son (1). This separation of interests is essential in order to prevent the fa from despoiling the patriarchy to benefit his own community. The history of these countries shows how often this rule is broken by ambitious men who hope to profit by the general confusion to build up a considerable fortune. Among both the elders and the young men they find willing accomplices, and as their power increases, they extend their extortions. There are many signs, however, of the fragility of their despotism, which they themselves recognize. They usually, therefore, take pains to settle the question of succession in advance hoping to avoid the collapse of their achievements. Wasted effort! Custom, which they have ignored, regains its rights when they die and often does so during their lifetime. This is a logical explanation of the fact that

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[554 492] 1. The eldest son, or better, the first-born son, thus occupies a privileged position, and in Kaarta he is usually provided with a white horse to make him conspicuous. See p. 122 about the death of 98 first-born sons mounted on white horses.

421 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show
596 his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as
614 usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to
the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

466 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is
596 at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate
614 to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not
wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself, [186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave
to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them never return, either because they have managed to create an independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More often, however, the young man, having founded an independent family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and watches developments there in case he may one day be able to profit from them.

578 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue
561 which is forever at war with the fa and the senate. Their op-
885 position weakens, however, as they approach the age at which
they too will participate in the faya to which they aspire. Gradually, as one changes from kamalen' to bina, he acquires the same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity of the new kamalen'-u.

562 In concluding this study of the members of the commun-
583 ity, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys,
they belong completely to the community, which, as a result, has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So, since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

595 she herself urges her husband to take another wife who will share some of the housework and relieve the situation. As a result, polygamy in this form resembles an association in which, through division of labor, each person seeks to provide his own support and to contribute to the general welfare.

Second marriages are identical with first marriages except that they are celebrated with somewhat less ostentation. Furthermore, a married man is more independent of his community in the material sense, and sometimes he is likewise more independent of the wife.

II. Other Types of Conjugal Union

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595 Besides marriage there are innumerable kinds of conjugal unions, such as agreements between capable individuals, that at times have legal consequences, some of which are even extensive. All these kinds may be grouped as two types: concubinage and free union.

595 Concubinage. This is a union in which at least one of the parties is a slave. It is very common for a master to treat one or more of his slaves like wives. Some men like the arrangement because it does away with all the difficulties arising from the bride price and the often exasperating involvements with an affinal family. Concubinage practiced by a free man has the disadvantage, however, of [205] his children being his slaves, since children retain their mother's status. It is true that this custom has been circumvented. It is accepted that the female slave is regarded as free once she has borne a child to a free husband and he has recognized it. This, however, does not erase the original stigma; children borne of free wives always
● [578] consider themselves superior to their siblings whose mother was a slave. Family tensions arise out of this, which become acute upon the death of the fa.

Concubinage, practiced on a large scale by free men, has, indeed, perverted all the communities. Polygamous households have had grave difficulties because the wives, being different in rank and yet forced to live side by side, have sacrificed everything to their resentments and hatreds.

881 301 and friends have kindly lent for the occasion, they advance shyly. In some areas, notably in the Bani region, they wear bundles of cowries, from the bride price already paid for them, around the hips and hanging on each side of the head (1).

[302 171] 1. Bambara girls who have gone through the soli have their heads shaved. Among other peoples, on the contrary, girls have their hair braided like women for the first time, but to the braid is added a tuft of the hair shaved off seven days after birth; this hair has usually been lost, but a small tuft is made to simulate it.

881 [535] Boys and girls, following the old women who lead them, dance around the orchestra, and then all sit down in a circle. The nyana-n-son-na-ba takes the floor. He speaks in a low voice, and, as is proper, his words are repeated in a loud voice by a herald. He proclaims the end of the soli, recalls its principal events, and indicates clearly which children have participated in the rite; each boy and girl is specifically named. He will also be sure to point out that the soli is an immemorial custom among the Bambara and that there is no worse insult than to treat a Bambara as uncircumcised. He closes by inviting everyone to eat, drink, and celebrate in the joy and harmony appropriate to such a festival. ●[578]

[535] Dancing is resumed, and the boys and girls of the soli take part. The festivities continue as long as the refreshments last, usually several days.

To end it all, no one leaves without giving at least a few kola nuts to the heroes of the festival, the boys and girls.

The last phase is the thanks given by the soli-ma to those who assisted at the da-woro. In noisy bands, boys and girls dash about the village in two distinct groups. The girls' group is headed by the soma-moso who is called masa (queen), followed by the masa-ma-kono (vice-queen) and the masa-ma-kono-segere [248] (follower of the vice-queen); the last girl in the

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goat," and, indeed, that describes the appearance of the little bunch of roots. It is possible that the word Ba-ku is merely the profane name and that the real name of the nyana is kept secret.

claims eminent rights over every person or thing it touches, as a consequence of the supernatural power of the nyana protecting them. [268]

So it is that the brotherhood, by what might be called divine right, comes to play a political role which is inconsistent only because it was not designed to play such a role. Let an ambitious man come forth, one who knows how to make use of the organization and its redoubtable power for his own ends, and the brotherhood then becomes the cradle of a veritable political state.

So it is that when the regular authority cannot firmly resist its encroachments, the brotherhood becomes a kind of high judge and uses that high office to establish a reign of terror which exploits the defections due to hatreds its own machinations have aroused and encouraged. This wretched [578] game naturally brings repercussions within the brotherhood itself: the nyana-den' are at each other's throats, and the grimmest dramas accompany the indulgence of the lowest instincts. The chronicle of Ségou bears witness to these facts.

It is, unfortunately, by no means unusual for the established authority to condone these crimes through weakness, interest, or membership in the brotherhood. As a result, innumerable regions have fallen into anarchy.

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That is why and how the brotherhoods have been the cause of a great deal of unrest in the native milieu. As a refuge for escaped slaves, malcontents, vagabonds, intriguers, in a word, for all enemies of public order, the brotherhoods everywhere set themselves up in opposition to regularly constituted authority, and when they are unable to take it over, seek to thwart it by taking the head into partnership.

The dynastic convulsions of most of the Sudanese empires, especially that of Ségou, are in large part explained by the usurpations of these great brotherhoods of nyana.

794 The family, too, has been assailed, perverted, [269]
182 and disorganized, because dissident elements found support in
578 the brotherhoods that made it possible for them to combat their "own people" in the communities and sometimes even to bring about their downfall.

Moreover, within the community, they set up the cult of *nyana* of the *boli* in opposition to the cult of the manes. In associations of communities, the *nyana dugu-da-siri* has been gradually abandoned in favor of these imperious and jealous *nyana* of the *boli*. Although the latter could not entirely eliminate the former because of their failure to appropriate the rights over the land, they have nevertheless eclipsed it by their all-encompassing authority. So it has come about that *nyana* of the *boli* have been created who are honored as protectors of the citizens, although they do not own the soil.

It is remarkable that these destroyers of the natural family always seek to organize themselves as artificial families by taking on certain characteristics of the family: communities of inalienable spiritual and temporal property; communities of the dead and the living; the cult of the manes of the high priests, etc.

It is the secular action of these laboratories of magic that has most strongly shaken the foundations of native society. Only a strong power could contend with them effectively, and such a power has seldom presented itself. Islam has often been their implacable enemy and yet has actually strengthened them by introducing a knowledge of oriental occultism.

3. Some Important Brotherhoods

794 The cult is the essential framework of all the brotherhoods. One must know its principal characteristics in order to understand the organization and operation of any brotherhood. Each *nyana* has its special cult, characterized by particular traits, of course, but these differences do not change the basic elements in which all cults of *nyana* resemble each other.

Therefore, although descriptions of all the different cults would no doubt bring out an interesting variety of details,

614 and kept considerable property for himself. For their part, the
421 ton'-dyon', pleased with their lot, carefully kept out of sight so as to be able to enjoy what they had been given and what they had managed to add to it.

These usurpations tended to become stabilized through inheritance, although not without dreadful disturbances.

After Mamari, the office of fama was handed down within
614 his family until the day when the assembly of the ton'-dyon',
*173 dissatisfied with Dékoro's regime, decided to "change the seed," a quaint metaphor for the clan's determination to have a more amenable fama.

The ease with which Dékoro was eliminated (and others after him) also shows that the fama was, and after all could only be, what the ton'-dyon' allowed him to be. This makes it clear that the spirit [309] of the fla-n-ton' never died; the fama merely appeared to be more than primus inter pares at times when his personal influence temporarily made him master of the situation.

At such times, then, he may have governed without the opposition of the majority, but such a period of dominance has always been personal and temporary. In reality, dissension was
● [578] ever present and was made manifest in fratricidal quarrels, during which the fama seemed to be principally concerned with gratifying personal grudges.

The chronicle shows us that the fama was at the mercy of the ton'-dyon'; without them he could do nothing. The Monday and Thursday meetings, which were a condition of his authority, continued for a long period of time. In any event, this assembly (furu-ba) was the whole of the clan. In ordinary times, the assembly was stimulated by the pleasure of drinking the beer which the fama, like the ton'-tigi before him, always provided. Worship of the clan idols was also the occasion for some of these meetings, accompanied by eating and drinking. The fama invariably made every effort to use these gatherings, usually disorganized, to further his own interests as well as those of the clan.

When Mamari's authority was well established, these meetings no longer played any deliberative or even consultative role, except in the gravest circumstances when the very existence of the clan was at stake. It was logical that the council of the

614 dyon'-kuntigi should replace them; the dyon'-kuntigi always
*173 exercised an influence over the ton'-dyon' for whom they acted
as spokesmen. Besides it was easy to convene the dyon'-kuntigi,
and as their experience increased, they came to be competent
and tried collaborators for the fama.

As time went on, however, the council was neglected.
The extension of the to-da kept the important dyon'-kuntigi away
from Ségou, and as a result the fama became increasingly
despotic. He was always sensitive, however, to the influence
of his immediate circle, that is, the people of his house (his
mother, wives, children, brothers, and other relatives) and
[567] especially his familiars (1). The latter constituted a kind of
privy council in which the leader of the slaves, whether [310]
or not he belonged to the ton'-dyon', played an important role.
Ordinarily these familiars were of lowly birth: people of caste
or domestic servants in the house of the fama. Deeply involved
in their master's life, they were at the root of the intrigues surrounding him.

The fama realized that his authority was deprived of its strength when he lost contact with the ton'-dyon', because a clan languishes almost to the point of extinction when those who compose it lose touch with one another. Therefore, the fama would convene the assembly, not, as in the past, in order to learn its wishes, but rather to request or even require from it a solemn affirmation of loyalty before the idols. In any case, the assembly always met at least once a year to renew the oath of religious faith and to admit the "young men."

The assembly took an effective role only at the election
[578] of a new fama, and it is plain that over the years this power of

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1. So it was that in his fratricidal quarrel with Nyana-n-Koro, it is clearly apparent that Ma-n-son was guided by the shrewd suggestions of Nzan-fato; in his quarrel with Souleyman, his intimates were his advisers.

614 *173 ● 578 consultation likewise underwent changes. In the beginning there was no great amount of dissension within the furu-ba, but gradually, as the importance of the clan grew and the wealth of influential members increased, divergent opinions arose, held by strong and determined partisans. Then the dyon'-kuntigi were opposed among themselves, and the recurrent periods of anarchy bear witness to the consequences of these internal quarrels.

Organization of the Clan

614 721 The army. The office of fama is dominated by the need to ensure the prosperity of the clan since, in theory, the clan's only reason for existence is that of procuring for its members as many material satisfactions as possible.

The usual way to make a fortune among these people was through armed pillage. When a fama was elected, the bow and quiver symbolized the clan's activity, and according to the reasoning of Kanou-ba-nyouma, it was essential that the arrows should hit someone. Thus, it was necessary to go to war. That was the way to acquire slaves, by means of which the great -- and everyone aspired to be such -- satisfied their desires. That is why the essential organization in the clan was the armed force. [311]

614 701 This organization was based on the distribution of the slaves among chiefdoms (dyon'-kuntigi-ya). Observed as a whole, the army was composed of a certain number of sections called sen' (literally, "foot"). This was not a specific unit, but merely the name used to designate an organized group under the leadership of a chief. Each sen' had a variable number of men. The bolo (literally, "arm") was a "band" made up of a likewise variable number of sen' and commanded by an important chief.

614 726 When the army was drawn up for battle, it faced the enemy with a central mass called disi (literally, "chest") made up of the corps of sofa, flanked on the right and the left by bolo called, respectively, kini-n-bolo (right arm) and numa-n-bolo (left arm) (1). Each of these bolo were made up of furu-ba dyon'

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1. Note this anthropomorphism applied to the army, which thus included head, arm, feet, chest.

422 The idea of transferable property is complex in native law. 423 The distinction between movable and immovable goods is often difficult to establish; the huts of uncertain durability are easily moved, while a Fama's throne is attached to a fixed site and cannot be considered movable.

Land ownership poses problems still more complex. We have 423 seen that land is never sold. The lands have a primary owner who is the spirit of the bush or a mythical ancestor, a possessor who is the first occupant having concluded a pact with the master of the soil, and, finally, a detainer who has received the land in usufruct from the possessor. The detainer is a family head, and the field he has received belongs to his community which exploits it. But after long years of working the land, the detainer tends to consider himself the owner of it, and when he leaves it during a cycle of crop rotation, it sometimes happens that the land's possessor bestows the 578 detainer's old vacant field on a newcomer, which gives birth to interminable disputes between the old and new cultivators. We have seen elsewhere how certain plots of land particularly well-placed on river banks or near huts were meticulously [74] cultivated. These tend to become veritable private property which families hand down from one generation to the next. In addition to the family fields, there exist fields reserved to certain brotherhoods, such as the n'Domo or the Gna, the members of which work the fields to meet the needs of the cult. Finally, two days each week each community member has the right to cultivate his own personal field which is outside the control of the family. These fields take on more and more importance with the development of a sense of individualism and with it a sense of individual property.

We see, then, that land may be meted out for the benefit of family, religious, or interfamily groups, or for the benefit of individuals. Although none of the parties holding the land are acknowledged as owners, they make use of it as if they were the masters and go so far as to transmit it to their heirs.

It must be noted that a special law exists to regulate the possession of trees and the gathering of their fruits, and the trees are not necessarily connected legally to the fields where they grow. Certain trees, the home of spirits, belong to a certain family, while others, such as the karite, are common property, and their fruits belong to the collectivity.

614 825 784 given moment into a doe, toad, ant, or rabbit -- a singular evolution if ever there was one, one may suppose that at the moment of the metamorphosis these animals did not exist and they are all, men and animals, of the same flesh and the same blood; or, more plausibly, the ancestors changed themselves into already existing animals, procreating among them does, toads, ants, or rabbits as they had formerly reproduced human beings, so that in killing one of these totem animals a Redskin must always be afraid that he is killing a son or grandson of the ancestor, or some other of the latter's descendants, and therefore of his own flesh and blood (1).

> 1. /sic/ A. Lang does not seem to doubt that the people of whom he speaks -- Redskins, Tahitians, and Africans -- give a very broad meaning to the words "father," "mother," "brother," "wife," "son," and that they customarily use them to refer to persons with whom they have no bond of kinship.

[578] There is nothing like this for a Bambara. To call someone a wild animal is in his eyes an insult, and to call a man the son of a dog (*oulou den*) is enough to make him angry, to throw him into a fit of anger; even if he has a dog for a *tné*, that is a wrong which will sooner or later be avenged. He does not number among his ancestors a dog, or a panther, a lion or a snake. A *Kouloubali* would be much surprised to learn that a doe gave birth to him, and there is not a Tankara who thinks he has /18/ the sap of the *dondol* or the juice of its fruit in his veins. When a *Djara* calls himself the son of a lion, or a *Dambélé* the son of a big black monkey, what they say must be understood in a very broad sense, as an analogy. We ourselves say of a special benefactor: "He is my father," "he is my mother," "he is my all."

171 614 825 784 Here the Bambara is akin to the Christian Quichés of Guatemala of whom D. G. Brinton speaks in his "Nagualism," 1294, -- O. Stoll

761 "Koroya do, it is old age, " but let us allow them to finish their
sentences and continue their thoughts "a ko toun kadi Komo yé, he
was beloved by the Komo, " -- "à ko toun kadi Kono yé, 'Nama yé,
Douga ye, he was beloved by the Kono, the Nama, the Douga, " etc.

When people pass by holding a rooster or hen by the feet one
761 may wonder where they are going; if one follows, one finds that they
782 are going to the temple of a fetish, there to sacrifice and to redden
776 their god with blood. "A toun koromé Alla sérà à ma, he was old
and God came to him, " is an expression which is rarely on Bambara
lips. When it is heard, it is used with a very special meaning; it
signifies that the old man in question was a good man, beloved by all,
even by God, but by no means that God killed him. The sacrifices
made on this occasion clearly demonstrate this, for they are all directed
to a fetish. If God alone were the cause and not the fetishes, the
family of the deceased would refrain from all sacrifice; at the very
most, it would offer a saraka by order of a sorcerer, but even the
saraka offered to God -- and they are offered to Him -- is not a sacrifice,
as we shall see later.

761 The priests of a djiné fetish and the owners and priests of a boli
778 fetish have the consolation that they always fall under the blows of
the genie which they hold and to which they sacrifice. As for other
mortals, 80 times out of 100, and one might say even more without
exaggerating, they are killed by a boli fetish. The Komo, Kono,
Nia, Nama, and Douga fetishes etc., are the chief murderers, and
entire villages are often decimated by them.

761 Although they are able to deliver blows on their own initiative,
●578 they are often only intermediaries, the agents of a depraved will to
which they have offered their services; almost always there is either
674 a thrown poison, korti, or a poison that is poured, dounkono. Thus
754 sorcerors are consulted at every death; one is sought through their
mediation. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the great
maxim for the Bambara as for the Jews, and vengeance must be taken
on the one who was able to win over the good graces of a fetish and
force it to bring suffering or mourning into the bosom of a family.
This vengeance is obtained through the intermediary of a fetish, and

761 therefore secretly, and good relations between the actual /50/ or sup-
● 518 posed culprit and the unfortunate family are not broken in anyway.
674 The strange fact that has always surprised me is that all these people
754 converse amicably, do each other small favors, invite each other to
drink and eat, while in their hatred they maintain a constant guard. They watch each other as they smile -- one party to protect their lives and their interests, the other to obtain vengeance. And on the day when it is least expected, that vengeance explodes inexorably. Cases of poisoning are not unusual in the Sudan, and it is not without reason that almost every death is blamed on the korti and the dounkono. I know that many die a perfectly natural death, and I have seen dropsy brought on by syphilitic consumption stupidly attributed to poisoning by the Komo, acute peritonitis to poisoning by the Kono, dysentery to poisoning by the Nama, undue swelling of the testicles with purulent abscesses, which were consequences of misconduct, to poisoning by the Nia, an abscess in the bladder to the Douga or the Nama. But it is a definite fact which I have noted many times in the course of seven years, and which any European living among the Negores can observe, however little he knows the language, the diseases which kills the natives is contracted when they return from a market, from a festival in honor of a fetish, or from a drinking bout where d'lo flows freely. The person's kidneys are hard and painful, his stomach causes him horrible suffering, his intestines seem to be torn by thorns, and there is complete anuria. In three or four days at the most his time is up.

The administrators at the head of a circle have all had to settle these cases which touch on the question of poisoning, and I doubt if there is one who has seen the matter clearly, so difficult it is to establish poisoning by korti and by dounkono. Let us refrain from throwing a stone at them; in a similar situation we would all be at a loss, for here there are always as many guilty persons as there are innocent, and all of them deserve the rope even while able openly to claim peace, liberty, and life. Since in the eyes of the Negro the fetish alone is guilty, there is a very simple means of stopping the decimation of the population and of allowing it to grow!

881 sentence, for the headman only talks in a low voice, as is in good taste. /197/ The speech is short; he calls by name each circumcised boy and excised girl and reminds everybody that among them circumcision is as old as the world, that is to say, as old as the Bambara people. "Yes," he exclaims, "our circumcised children are on the path of their fathers; they are Bambara. Youths, young girls, men and women, old men and old women, our circumcised ones can henceforth take part in palavers, sit with their elder brothers around the gourds of d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer, and take part in our games, our merry-making, and our rites. May everyone know it and no one forget, or ever treat them as if they were uncircumcised (1) -- that is the deepest insult! Everyone will know how to avenge an insult to his child, and I will know how to avenge an insult to mine." He ends by saying: "Truce to disputes; let us eat, drink, dance, and enjoy ourselves, and /leave/ serious matters (2) /until/ after the festival."

From then on, d'lo flows in streams and throats are cleansed.
Everybody, young and old, men and women, dances in honor of the
young "citizens," and as long as the sparkling, foaming liquor lasts,
there are songs, dances, cries and shouts without end on the public
square, day and night. And when the beer reaches its end, each
circumcised boy and excised girl, in order of age, stretches his or
her muscles before the public, accompanied by father, mother, and
all his family and that of his fiancée or her finacé. This is the
climax of the festival. At this point the cries and shouts redouble,
881 and the drinkers, jug in hand, foam on their lips, gazing into space
431 and wavering on their legs, place beads, cowrie shells, and a kola
nut in the large pockets of the blouses of the circumcised youths and

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[578] 1. To call someone blakoro ("uncircumcised") is the insult of insults.

2. All disputes, all litigation, everything that disunites.

614 and from that moment on everyone seeks to enjoy his freedom and his property for his own profit. The end result is complete disorganization, and only the emergence of a new and enterprising despot can stop it.

614 575 Fundamentally -- and this is a new aspect of the question -- the clan retains the ineradicable imprint of the *fla-n-ton'* from which it took its origin. The aim has not changed: to assure to each member the [307] largest possible number of those material satisfactions which are so dear to the Bambara. The means likewise remain the same: in spite of appearances to the contrary, it is a type of solidarity based on a strictly egalitarian communalism (1).

The resources of the clan are in every respect analogous to those of the *fla-n-ton*. Just as the latter profited from the [579] thievery, banditry, and raids of its members, so the clan derives its main resources from successful raids and pillage.

The *fla-n-ton'* provided for its drinking bouts by means of the *di-songo* and the crops of its *ton'-den'* or *ton'-dyon'*. In the clan, the *di-songo* persisted for a time and then was replaced by a similar fee, the *nyon'-dyu*. The work required of the *ton'-dyon'* was minimal at first during the period of active warfare, but then Dékoro peremptorily sent them into agriculture. Ultimately the *furu-ba dyon'* came to be primarily agriculturalists.

The foodstuffs of the *fla-n-ton'* were equally distributed among the *ton'-den'* by the *dyala-tige*, under the direction of the *ton'-tigi*. Within the clan, property is also held in common and

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1. The innate penchant of the Black for this sort of egalitarian justice is affirmed by legendary episodes wherein an individual is honored and proclaimed chief because he was able to make strictly equal shares. Cf. the legend of Ndyadyane Ndyaye, in *Legendes et coutumes sénégalaises* [Senegalese Legends and Customs] by Henri Gaden, and the Djide of Djenné, in *Contes du Sénégal et du Niger* [Tales of the Senegal and Niger] by Zeltner.

826 is also through the feet that a part of man's strength is deposited in the sweepings and rubbish upon which he treads. Their role as receptacles appears in the rituals concerning household refuse and the dirt on roads and paths.

Like the little finger, the small toe symbolizes the whole person. [301] It is sometimes adorned with a silver ring, symbol of the word, which recalls that man's body is the seat of the word extended within him from head to feet (1).

1. In olden times the ring on the small toe was made of red nyama fiber (nyama fu), which played the same role as metal.

831 826 The notion of the bisexuality of human beings is fundamental: the spiritual principles are sexed like the body, whose ambivalence /71/ is evident during childhood: the boy is feminine in his foreskin; the girl is masculine in her clitoris. One of the aims of circumcision [304] and excision is to help the child attain the sex to which it is apparently destined by removing the organ of the opposite sex. (2). But the

[171] 2. The same conception is found among the Dogon; see M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau, p. 185.

initial duality of the soul and body is the very foundation of the human being. He is complete only if he originally received it, and he retains it even after the operation imposed by physical and social life, [774] for the soul of the opposite sex, though diminished in the body, remains present in the shadow, the dya. He also rediscovers his dual unity when he marries. A married couple are a unit for their dya ● [581] join as do their bodies in an act which is not merely physical and which realizes the ideal union of twins.

831 801 The sex to which one belongs dominates one's whole existence on earth. Objects and tools bear masculine or feminine marks, according to the rules of the division of labor. The numbers three (man) and four (woman) are abridged forms of the sex. "Primitive men" who, according to the Bambara expressed themselves mostly by gestures and signs, engraved their rare objects with the number of

3. The Family Community or the Family

Conjugal Union (furu)

●581 One of the most essential elements of the community based on descent is legitimacy, and one of its sources is in the lawful conjugal union which we call marriage. There are other kinds of conjugal union, but none has such definite effects.

Custom as it concerns marriage has its fullest expression at the time of the first marriage, when the spouses are brought under community control. We shall study all the details of custom in such a case, which will facilitate relating it to the various other situations. [195]

I. Marriage

First Marriage

Marriage is the union of two free individuals of the opposite sex for the purpose of founding a family. Certain conditions and formalities are required prior to the union of the spouses.

582 Conditions. Since there is no native institution that enables a Black to know for certain how old he is, there is no definite age requirement, as there is in our legislation. On the other hand, since marriage involves sexual union, capability for this union is theoretically required of the future spouses. Nevertheless, although a male is considered marriageable only if he has reached puberty and is circumcised, a female is often married even before her first menses. Furthermore, there is nothing to prevent the marriage of an old man, however old and decrepit he may be (1).

1. Although we are giving facts here that are not always relevant to the first marriage, we do so in order to avoid having to return to them later on when they will be out of their natural context.

583 Finally, if the union is still in effect at the time of the
768 husband's death, the wife's community theoretically regains authority over her, provided that the bride price is paid back.

These three definite points show that lawful union, or
581 marriage, legally speaking, is essentially a kind of usufruct of the
626 woman to the advantage of the husband, and the price is the bride price. As a result, the woman's community is obliged to see to it that the husband enjoys his rights. Hence, when a wife misbehaves, no matter how, the husband reports it to her community which takes steps to bring the erring girl to terms for fear of having to refund the bride price. On the other hand, the husband is expected to treat his wife in a manner worthy of her, that is, with consideration for her origins, and if he fails to do so, he risks the consequences of breach of the marriage contract.

There are, therefore, reciprocal rights and duties required of the spouses. Based on the marriage contract, these rights and duties are reinforced, completed, or, more generally, influenced by ethics no less than by the feelings of the [207] couple in relation to each other and to their respective communities.

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[554] This is why a girl from a great house with high standing (1) cannot be treated like a common concubine, even though the husband may prefer the concubine to the wife, because the free daughter of a powerful house, richly dowered, is virtually independent in the household. If she is sufficiently well off, she may even live in a house of her own, and since her only obligation is the sexual conjugal duty, she receives her husband as she would a lover.

On the other hand the free woman of modest circumstances and, even more, of lowly birth is her husband's companion in wretchedness. She does all kinds of work, even the hardest and most disagreeable, and she desires no rupture that would deprive her of the only affection that sustains her, the love of her children.

1. Thus, in the western Sudan, the daughters of the Massa-si are treated with great deference.

562 Between the omnipotence of the first and the humble lot of the second there is every possible gradation. This is all
● 581 the more true in that, thanks to polygamy, lawful households
595 may be found in association with the free unions and concubinage desired by the husband, in such a way that the position of each person in the family, already affected by all these contingencies, is, in the last analysis, dominated by the absolute authority of the fa. We shall see this clearly in connection with filiation, and it is no less apparent regarding wives, except for those already described who have sufficient influence and the means to live virtually independent of the rest of the family. Although in fact a wife who was not paid for has no regular position and her children legally do not belong to either of their parents, although a concubine does not even count as a person, according to custom, and her children are their genitor's slaves, merely by the will of the fa either of them may have an enviable pre-eminence in the family, especially envied by the lawful wives.

593 Under these circumstances, it may be admitted that conjugal duties, obedience, fidelity, and their counterparts, the
562 rights to help and assistance, have nuances that vary from one situation to another. It is true that a wife must obey her husband and that he is allowed to resort to [208] corporal punishment to control her, which he does not fail to use. She is not completely at his mercy, however. For instance, he can require her to live in a given place; nevertheless, if it has been agreed that she is not to leave the tribal territory, and this usually tacitly understood, he may not take her away. He can force her to do household chores, but if she is free, he cannot require her to do servile tasks. In the same way, he cannot rent out her services, put her up as security, or sell her.

837 The duty of reciprocal fidelity is most often very vague. Admittedly, this is not expected of the husband, and indeed, the wife often encourages his lapses from virtue on the theory that this indulgence will attach him to her. As far as a wife's misbehavior is concerned, a husband does not always give it much importance and is sometimes not at all averse to profiting
848 from it. If children result from her indiscretions, he is not distressed in the least about accepting or denying them.

621 The cluster of all these villages forms a kafo or kafu (canton) which
631 includes the original family, its oldest neighbors, the inhabitants of other villages, and, finally, the outsiders. All these people acknowledge common interests, and the villages of the same canton send representatives to the assembly which meets at the chief's residence. Thus, the large family grows into a patriarchy to form the dugu (village) and spreads out into a kafu. Sometimes, after these branchings out, certain offshoot communities adopt a special dyamu and other taboos. The new dyamu is joined to the old, and little by little supplants it. The principal characteristics of the mother community exist, to which are added [55] various new traits, but the relationship between the two communities is never extinguished. Inversely, natives even of different races but having the same dyamu consider themselves related, which for them implies respect for the ancestral traditions concerning the cult, the practice of mutual aid, respect for the authority of the fa, who must protect all his relatives no matter how remote the connection, and fidelity to all pacts between the communities. Finally, between individuals of different races, certain dyamu, although dissimilar, are considered equivalent and may be interchanged.

621 b. Alliances. -- The unity of a community is founded not only upon common interests, which we ~~will~~ examine later, but also upon a whole system of alliances.

Monteil distinguishs four types of alliance: the common cult (see the chapter on religion), marriage, the tné, and the oath.

Marriage: this is the most common form of alliance. When
621 a Bambara seeks an alliance with a family, he gives his daughter in
● 581 marriage to one of the members of that family, after providing her
583 with a large dowry. Some interesting information on this subject is furnished us by Monteil (1). The alliance between two families is reinforced still further when they establish the custom of exchanging women. In this way the Soninké family Niakaté allied itself to the

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1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta. Les Empires du Mali [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta. The Mali Empires.]

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● 581 Koulibali of Ségou, founded Bamako, and changed its name to Niaré
583 in becoming Bambara.

The tné: the taboo concerning an animal or some object.
621 The basis of this alliance is the oath of the fa not to kill or eat the
784 object of the taboo. All the generations following this ancestor must
respect the taboo ad infinitum.

Thus, the Kéita have the hippopotamus for tné; the Traoré, the Dambélé, and the Warata have the panther; the Samaké, the elephant; the Koubilali of Ségou, the hippopotamus; those of Issa Ber, the m'polio [a fish]; others have the mole cricket (n'gere) and the striped mouse (n'kelika); the Niaré, Sissé, Silla, Doukouré, and the Daramé, the python, etc.

The oath: this seals a pact of dyonge fraternization. Each
621 party to the contract extracts some drops of blood from his forearm
608 which is mixed with goat's milk. Swearing by his ancestors, he
states the conditions of the alliance and drinks part of the beverage.
This alliance binds the parties to it and all their descendants ad
[582] infinitum. It entails a prohibition or, contrariwise, a recommendation
of marriage between members of the two communities, and establishes
solidarity between the two communities which owe each other mutual
assistance. In the framework of this alliance is the cathartic alliance
termed sénankuya, which, besides the preceding obligations, governs
the system of purifications.

The sénankuya: unites certain specific groups bearing differ-
621 names within the same village, but can also have an intertribal
608 character; ex.: Mandingue-Peul. Humblot observed the following
648 alliances at Kankan: Kéita-Fofana; Kondé-Traoré; Kéita-Bérété-
Sérigou-Sissé; [56] Kala-Kéita-Kouyaté; Kourouma-Koma;
Kourouma-Dabo; Kourouba-Konaté-Kamara-Bagayoko; Konaté-
Dougoumoko; Konaté-Sidibé. This system of alliance in which
[783] the two allies are equal and complementary governs the mechanism
of the purifications, notably by the insult, and the duties of reciprocal
assistance (1). Formerly, when a sénanku was reduced to slavery,

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1. M. Griaule, "L'alliance cathartique" [The Cathartic Alliance], Africa, Vol. XVIII, 1948.

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1. The Marriage Proposal (1)

832 581 The Bambara are not unmoved by the beauty of a woman's form; they can distinguish a well-formed body from a malformed one, a pretty woman from an ugly one, and they find a coppery skin more attractive than one of ebony black. Similarly, a face pitted by smallpox or a bosom covered with scars displeases them, and a man talks to you about his fiancée or his wife, he is quite proud to be able to say: "*sien si t'a la*, she has a body without blemish, " therefore she is beautiful. When it comes to marriage, however, he does not look too closely! He readily keeps silent about his tastes and seldom consults his heart, for a wife to him is primarily a source of pleasure and profit. /200/

581 What he sees in a woman above all is a being of a different sex than he, and if she is industrious, cooks well, and is good at business, he will know how to close his eyes to her defects in order to keep her and allow her to be an important person in his home who must be reckoned with.

584 When a Negro who wants a wife finds an unbetrothed girl, he quickly confides his secret, his fears and hopes, to his close friend, a man of mature age who enjoys some respect in the country (1). The

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1. The procedures described here apply to the marriage of a young girl. For widows or divorcées who remarry, there are consultations of diviners, sacrifices to the evil fetishes, etc., but the betrothal and wedding ceremonies are performed with a minimum of show.

584 1. Some people have thought that the "storytellers /*griots*/" act as intermediaries in asking the hand of a child. Nothing is more

778 wanzo and directing it into the mask to prevent it from doing harm
304 (1). Thus, nothing of the individual forces is lost. The wanzo itself, harmful at the beginning, when properly channeled and directed, serves to consolidate the collective energies of the infantile societies based on it.

[582] Only when an adolescent has lost his wanzo is he permitted to marry; any individual would refuse to marry a partner who is not completely rid of it.

The Body

826 The Bambara have a notion of their bodies and the role of the different parts and organs. This notion is all the deeper because it is linked to that of the spiritual principles that animate it.

Indeed, the tere is determined by certain visible aspects of the body, while the ni and the dya also have sexes like the body. Therefore any study should include the links that unite the spiritual elements to the physical body in order to understand properly its state and function.

Blood, which together with breath is the seat of life, is also the vehicle of physical and spiritual forces that circulate with it in the veins and arteries. The blood sacrifice liberates these forces which sustain the altars, the soil, and the beings who receive them. Certain alliances are consecrated by an exchange of blood. The clear color of blood is proof of its purity: all infractions bring about a
[841] change and cause it to become pale. Menstrual blood, testimony to Mousso Koroni's impurity and of the momentary sterility of women, is the principal taboo of the supernatural powers that create and protect life.

826
828
827 The head, which contains thought, is an essential part of the individual and his symbol: "the head of the members of society" is represented by a stroke in the course of the rituals performed by members of the Komo or the Kworé. Man grows through his head just as a plant "grows through its head bud" (2). Man's head is protected

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1. See p. 256.

2. The myth mentions the "head of the balanza" at the time that men broke the

794 In some villages, the sacrificer never
776 consumes butter or milk, foods which
778 the Peul furnish the Bambara.
[563]

the culprit and deprives the villagers of their protector.

The spirit of the dasiri sometimes has as its compansion an animal
794 which seems to represent the group's ancestor. At Ségou, it is a
776 crocodile; at Ouélenguena, a she-ass; at Koulikoro, a monkey; in
825 other places it is a male goat which is replaced when it dies. At
Konodimini there are a series of deep intercommunicating wells which would have served as homes for the ancestors. These holes are at present occupied by hyenas which are considered to be incarnations of the blacksmiths of former times and which are the dasiri of the place.

The dasiri's animal is free to enter homes and to eat what it finds. It is often fed by the inhabitants. No one may attack it and whoever breaks this taboo, set on by a vengeful nyama of which he cannot
[582 rid himself, risks being forbidden to marry, even being no longer
626] tolerated in his native village (1).

1. This was, at Soroba, the case of Dji Diara, who, after killing a hyena, could not marry as no woman was willing to link her destiny to his.

As its name indicates, the function of the dasiri is to maintain
794 the stability and integrity of the village. It is the "support of the
776 inhabitants' lives"; the numerous rituals (individual or collective),
782 of which it is the object, reveal the importance of its role as well as the diversity of the beings invoked. To Faro are addressed prayers for rain; to the ancestors prayers for questions /139/ concerning the family; and to the spirit of the tree when it is a matter of stopping an epidemic. But directly or indirectly, any sacrifice offered to the dasiri is offered to Faro. The victims (sheep or fowl) and the offerings (cotton bands, kola nuts) are always white (see Pl. 3, b).

When children reach the age of six or seven, they are led to the
794 tree; they sit on its roots upon which kola nut juice is spat, and are,
778 by this fact, introduced into the village cult. They are then presented
852 to all the allies senǎnku and especially to the blacksmiths with whom they proceed to joke.

304 throughout the seclusion, the cap itself guaranteeing protection of his
292 head against the rays of fire from the fifth sky, koblẽnkaba (see Fig.
14).

Seven large black dots, vertically disposed, represent the child, 3,
304 and his dya, 4, as well as the man, 3, which he will later become, and
292 his future wife, 4. They also insure his protection from east to west.
531 The two other dots insure it from north to south. The cross of small
dots recalls the sumangolos, the "realization of the world" (1) and the
purification obtained after the operation and the loss of the wanzo. Eight tassels (Faro's number) are placed on the cap, whose fringes were spun by a grandmother and are sewn on to "attract the forces of space." A ninth at the top is blackened with the spirit's earth. With his head thus covered, the circumcised boy is placed in the protective and purifying light of Faro. To operate upon a child without putting the cap on him would in fact amount to "bowing down before the acts of Mousso Koroni."

On his part, the blacksmith-circumciser makes preparations for the
304 operation, the essential instrument of which is a knife called boloko
326 kumba moru (literally, knife head, mother of the circumcision).
413 He himself has forged it and carries it in a small leather sheath hung
from his hip (see Fig. 15) (2).

The handle is slipped into a sort of iron sheath closed at one extremity called kurukun (literally, ball head) and open at the other called sukala (literally, sorcerer's handle). It is forged from one piece with the blade dyomuru fala (literally, orphan of the knife) and called "without pity" in archaic language.

The knife and its handle on the one hand, together with the metal sheath on the other, symbolize the person of the circumcised boy and the foreskin which is to be removed.

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1. See p. 56, Fig. 4.

[582] 2. The endogamy among blacksmiths is attributed to their role in circumcision and to the fact that their tools, especially this knife, are impregnated with the wanzo of the adolescents.

304 326 recovers part of his tere. The organ is then held up by means of a small apparatus, mine naw, made of a millet stem split in two in the shape of a fork.

"Circumcision is a sacrifice" (1). It is only valid if blood has run,

> 1. Bolokoli ye saraka ye.

and any patient who has not wet the ground with his blood is wounded on the thigh by the circumciser. The same is true for a child born [732 582] without a foreskin. This detail must, moreover, be kept secret by the members of his age grade, since the revelation of a malformation might prevent the individual concerned from contracting a marriage (2).

> 2. A woman might believe that these malformations are the sign that the man who was operated upon has not lost his wanzo, a fact which would be a definite obstacle to marriage.

/186/ When all is finished, the operator, holding the foreskins in his hand, says these words before burying them:

"We have transferred the wanzo of the circumcised child, may the tere be well" (3).

> 3. Ãn ye dẽ bolokole wanzo fili la,
> tere ka ñe.

304 292 561 After this, the circumcised boys have their caps put first on their napes and foreheads representing the east-west direction, and then on the sides of their heads representing the north-south direction. All their strength resides from then on in the headpiece which they will wear night and day, without removing it, during the entire period of seclusion.

304 784 561 The approach to the site of the operation is formally forbidden to women and uncircumcised males. The one who might go there out of curiosity "would contract the wanzo" (wanzo ba nofe, "the wanzo follows him"). Any uncircumcised boy who might break this law would have to take the consequences at the time of his own operation

3. The Family Community or the Family

Conjugal Union (furu)

581 One of the most essential elements of the community based on descent is legitimacy, and one of its sources is in the lawful conjugal union which we call marriage. There are other kinds of conjugal union, but none has such definite effects.

Custom as it concerns marriage has its fullest expression at the time of the first marriage, when the spouses are brought under community control. We shall study all the details of custom in such a case, which will facilitate relating it to the various other situations. [195]

I. Marriage

First Marriage

Marriage is the union of two free individuals of the opposite sex for the purpose of founding a family. Certain conditions and formalities are required prior to the union of the spouses.

582 Conditions. Since there is no native institution that enables a Black to know for certain how old he is, there is no definite age requirement, as there is in our legislation. On the other hand, since marriage involves sexual union, capability for this union is theoretically required of the future spouses. Nevertheless, although a male is considered marriageable only if he has reached puberty and is circumcised, a female is often married even before her first menses. Furthermore, there is nothing to prevent the marriage of an old man, however old and decrepit he may be (1).

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1. Although we are giving facts here that are not always relevant to the first marriage, we do so in order to avoid having to return to them later on when they will be out of their natural context.

●582 It is not unusual for an old man to marry a very young girl; indeed, it is common. Although a young man rarely marries a very old woman, a woman may marry a man much younger than she is as a result of the customs involved with inheritance.

Kinship in the direct line is an obstacle, in infinitum. Certain collateral relatives may not marry each other: uncle and niece, aunt and nephew. Marriage is also an obstacle in some cases: a man may not be the husband of two sisters simultaneously, although he may marry them successively; the same restriction applies to a mother and daughter and an aunt and niece. 587

A man may not marry the wife of his son, nephew, or younger brother.

No marriage can take place between free persons in good standing and people of caste or, still less, slaves.

584 Impediments. From the opening of negotiations to the moment when the woman is handed over, there is a very long interval [196] of time during which impediments may arise.

First marriages, with which we are here concerned, are community affairs. A young man who would undertake the matter on his own would be most imprudent for he is no more his own master than is the girl, and their wishes are not of the least importance; this is an occasion for the fa to bring off a profitable deal. The fa, therefore, opposes any match which does not suit his plans and, indeed, forces the young man to share his views. If the latter rebels, the refusal of the fa to recognize the marriage will deprive the wife and children of any claim to legitimacy in the eyes of the community which he heads. There is no legal recourse possible against such a decision, because each community is answerable only to itself for matters concerning it.

The girl is even more completely under the control of the community than the young man. Destined to be given in usufruct, she is entirely at the mercy of those holding this right over her. 562 If she rebels, she runs the risk of being brutally brought to task through every means of coercion and, if in such circumstances she has children, they can be taken from her by the community, to which they will then belong. Custom gives her no rights over them whatsoever. 851

882 [836] in the [216] soli, the n-golo-moso, and with other girl friends are not merely platonic; indeed, sexual licentiousness is common.

As in everything else, a girl's life is more restricted. For her, the soli is merely a way of being presented to society, as we would say, that is, a means of attracting a prospective husband.

884 Coming-of-age, guardianship, deprivation of civil rights. It is obvious from the above that a Bambara has no way of knowing his age with any certainty. At best, he can estimate it by referring to some important event known to have occurred at about the time of his birth.

Since this is the case, we can see that coming-of-age has no correlation with chronological age. The individual's physical development and, still more, his intellectual maturity are signs that lead his family to grant a kamalen' the rights that distinguish a man from a boy. The most important of these rights is assuredly that of taking a wife and founding a family.

As a matter of fact, the soli marks the point after which the young people of both sexes are deemed competent to contract ●[582] marriages. Indeed, girls of 16 or 18 years of age and boys over 25 are rarely unmarried. It should further be understood that a girl may be betrothed at birth or even when she is being carried in the womb, as has been explained above.

429 562 Guardianship is intended to protect the individual from the follies of inexperience and the natural weakness of the female sex, a weakness to be understood here to include not only actual lack of physical strength but also incompetence imposed by custom which forbids a woman any power whatever over community rights or property. This is why young men are subject to guardianship until the fa, in council, recognizes their right to exercise the prerogatives of man's estate. In principle, women are subject to guardianship throughout their lives.

429 During his married life, the father is the legal administrator of any properties coming to his minor children, and he usually employs such property with discretion since he is legally bound to render an account when the children reach their majority.

603 alliance]. (It is also customary for grandfathers and grandsons to eat together, while the sons eat apart.)

612 601 c. By Marriage: T'ɛ, K'ɛ, Kɛ = husband's name, corresponding to muso (muso, term for spouse [female?]).

Bira nk'ɛ = father-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and all the male relatives of the husband or wife, corresponding to bira-muso = mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, and all female relatives of the husband or wife.

587 When a man dies, his wives go to his younger brother; and if a man's wife dies, he may marry her younger sister . . .

● 582 611 This patrilineal and patrilocal family must have grafted itself onto an ancient matrilineal system (see the chapter on inheritance and position of women). The systems of clan exogamy and endogamy are united: two pairs of brothers and sisters marry among themselves; sons must take their wives from their mother's family, and marriages take place between cross-cousins; children never belong to their parents' category, while grandchildren and grandparents always are in the same category.

583 [53] We shall see that alongside this matrimonial system in which wives are exchanged there exists a system in which payments are made to the fa of the young girl.

596 The size of the united family varies, but it may include more than 80 persons. Labouret (1) gives us, as an example, the composition of the blõ of Ngolo Traoré at Mpiéla, Kolokani subdivision:

	Men	Women	Children
1. Household of Ngolo	1	8	15
2. Household of Samba, Ngolo's brother	1	2	4
3. Household of Dotné, Samba's son	1	2	3
4. Household of Denkoro, son of deceased Bakoro	1	3	1
5. Household of Fabugai, Ngolo's son .	1	2	4
6. Quarters of unmarried males, all sons of Ngolo and Samba . . .	5		
	10	17	19 [sic]
		46	

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1. Op. cit.

621
581 Koulibali of Ségou, founded Bamako, and changed its name to Niaré
583 in becoming Bambara.

The tné: the taboo concerning an animal or some object.
621 The basis of this alliance is the oath of the fa not to kill or eat the
784 object of the taboo. All the generations following this ancestor must
respect the taboo ad infinitum.

Thus, the Kéita have the hippopotamus for tné; the Traoré, the Dambélé, and the Warata have the panther; the Samaké, the elephant; the Koubilali of Ségou, the hippopotamus; those of Issa Ber, the m'polio [a fish]; others have the mole cricket (n'gere) and the striped mouse (n'kelika); the Niaré, Sisé, Silla, Doukouré, and the Daramé, the python, etc.

The oath: this seals a pact of dyonge fraternization. Each
621 party to the contract extracts some drops of blood from his forearm
608 which is mixed with goat's milk. Swearing by his ancestors, he
states the conditions of the alliance and drinks part of the beverage.
This alliance binds the parties to it and all their descendants ad
[582] infinitum. It entails a prohibition or, contrariwise, a recommendation
of marriage between members of the two communities, and establishes
solidarity between the two communities which owe each other mutual assistance. In the framework of this alliance is the cathartic alliance termed sénankuya, which, besides the preceding obligations, governs the system of purifications.

621 The sénankuya: unites certain specific groups bearing differ-
names within the same village, but can also have an intertribal
608 character; ex.: Mandingue-Peul. Humblot observed the following
648 alliances at Kankan: Kéita-Fofana; Kondé-Traoré; Kéita-Béreté-
Sérigou-Sissé; [56] Kala-Kéita-Kouyaté; Kourouma-Koma; Kourouma-Dabo; Kourouba-Konaté-Kamara-Bagayoko; Konaté-
[783] Dougoumoko; Konaté-Sidibé. This system of alliance in which
the two allies are equal and complementary governs the mechanism
of the purifications, notably by the insult, and the duties of reciprocal assistance (1). Formerly, when a sénanku was reduced to slavery,

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1. M. Griaule, "L'alliance cathartique" [The Cathartic Alliance], Africa, Vol. XVIII, 1948.

D. Position of Women

562 Women's society has remained much more impenetrable to European civilization. Women very rarely go to French schools, and unlike the men, who, during their military service and otherwise, are partly immersed in our system of civilization, they have few contacts with the Whites and appear to be even more attached to custom than their husbands. Very few speak French, and for all these [191] reasons their society has remained closed and very imperfectly known to the Whites.

562 Reasoning from what is known of their juridicial situation, we have deduced their inferior position. Perhaps a better knowledge of 858 their role and of their importance in the society will lead us to very different conclusions. From the legal point of view, a woman is always a minor; she belongs first to her own community, to which she owes obedience, then to her husband's community. When the marriage is legal, that is to say, when the husband has paid the matrimonial settlement, the children belong to the husband; if not, in the case of concubinage, the woman's family can claim the child, because it belongs to the family, as does everything of the mother's.

562 Her marriage is decided on by the *fa*; although in practice the woman is often consulted indirectly beforehand, and she has a 582 certain liberty in her choice. Even a slave can refuse to marry her 583 master, despite gifts and promises. But a woman is forbidden to marry someone she considers a relative, that is, someone who belongs to her paternal line and who bears the same name she does. Exogamy is the rule.

Yet, when a woman marries, she keeps her paternal name and 562 her personal taboos; sometimes she adds her name to that of her son, 593 who normally bears the *dyamu* of his father. The woman remains very attached [75] to her family and goes to stay with them often. Among them she will find support in case of a difference of opinion [586] with her husband. In case of divorce through the fault of the husband, he loses all rights over the wife as well as the settlement he had paid.

595 In the system of polygamy, the first wife is mistress of the house; the other wives gather at her place for meals. She distributes [431] the husband's presents, but aside from these privileges, the rights of the wives are equal as are those of their children.

881 physical male factor residing in the clitoris. The operation takes
304 place, moreover, during the same period as the circumcision. It is
carried out by the potteress, wife of the blacksmith, in full daylight
before the assembled kin. During their seclusion the girls wear a
white veil which plays the same role as the bonnet of the circumcised.
[534] Instead of the sistrum, the girls shake a gourd which contains eight
millet seeds and cotton fibers which their fiancés have given them.
A goat is sacrificed for the ceremony. The collected blood is given
to the fiancé in honor of his ancestors who become those of the girl.

[93] On the last day of the ceremony the girls definitively rid themselves of their wanzo by jumping over a pyre composed of the clothes and scraps of the excised.

e. Marriage

[582] It is only after having been circumcised or excised that young
584 people may marry. The institution of marriage is regulated by a
ritual which has often been described, particularly by Amar, Monteil,
Tauxier, Aubert . . .

The marriage arrangements are made by the respective fa
of the two betrothed, after the young people have been consulted.
The request is officially made to the parents by an intermediary, a
man of caste or a sénanku. It is accompanied by ritual gifts offered
to the fa of the girl. In the Bougouni region the request is accom-
panied by ten kola nuts, because ten is a complete number that
[80] designates good events and future births. (Nine kola nuts are offered
576 to present condolences, four as a sign of greeting. To send three
[431] nuts would be insulting, and 19 nuts, marking incompleteness, would
be a sign of lack of confidence.) The first kola nuts to be offered
[824] are always wrapped in one or two karite leaves, symbol of life and
of fecundity. If the ten kola nuts are accepted, it means that the
father has opened the way to the marriage. The intermediary then
make a second trip the following week, bringing a cock for sacrifice
to the ancestors and ten more kola nuts; during a third trip he offers
another cock and ten more kola nuts before the entire assembled
family of the young girl, witnessing that the girl may meet her
fiancé. In the course of the fourth trip, the intermediary leads the
girl to the fiancé's family, where she will be confided to the wife
of the head of the family who will undertake her education.

582 614 The Bambara tné differs further from the totem of the Redskin and the Australian: it creates no obstacle to marriage between lineages of the same tne or of different tne. Each man takes a wife wherever he finds her and where he thinks best, and through these alliances the lineages mingle, cross, and recross. They do not merge, however, [551] since the husband keeps his name, or diamou, and with it his tné; he does not take that of his wife. As to the children, they have their father's tné, and his only, and it is his name, or diamou, they bear. /22/

184 The Bambara tné is nothing less than a taboo /sic/. The word itself is very vague and difficult to translate into our French language. It implies primarily a prohibitive command, an order not to do, not to act. Whenever a competent authority -- an alleged genie, such as a boli (who speaks and gives his oracles through the mouth of a herald or interpreter, the djélimac) or a priest of the genii (djiné) believed to preside over the elements, the dougoutigi (who actually does nothing without consulting his council and the sorcerers) whenever the sorcerer (the intermediary between man and the invisible world) or a priest of the shades of the ancestors' (1) --, that is, an authority of a religious character, forbids eating, killing, or looking at an animal; cutting, breaking, or using an object; drinking such-

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[596] 1. This term seems to me the most accurate. Undoubtedly, the gouatigi, or head of the family makes the sacrifices, but his position does not always correspond to what we call in French the father of the family. He is not always married; although all the family except his mother, brothers, and sisters call him m'fa, "my father," the word "father" should be taken in a very broad sense, as he is quite often only a grand-uncle, an uncle, or a cousin.

773 of a race, but not words that denote the first father and mother of the
829 human species. A pure Bambara does not believe in the unity of mankind; God created the white man white and the black man black, to use his expression, and to each He has given a father and a mother of his own color.

829 Nor has the arrival of the Europeans and the Moslems changed any of his ideas in this respect. For many, each tribe and each caste
582 had a first father and a first mother, and if there are castes which cannot be united by marriage, this seems to me to be the reason. "An té sé, a yé noumoy yé an yé Bamana déou yé an té si (1) kélé-n-yé, we cannot marry each other, he is noumou (blacksmith) and we are not of the same people, the same blood, the same stock, the same father." Some seem to me very explicit when they say: "Án té fa kélé-n-yé, we are not of the same father." /84/

1. Si: "similar" or "like nature;" "of the same race, descent, origin, people, nature."

Chapter 5

000 Fetishism among the Bambara; The Worship of the Gnéna Classification of the Gnéna, Who are Identical with the Arab Djiné

1. What is Meant by Gnéna or Djiné

776 The Supreme Being, the Bambara God, lives up above behind the blue sky, gliding through happy and quiet days with his celestial band, the good angels (méléké) that form His court, and, omnipotent though He is, He is without priest or sacrifice. For He concerns Himself very little with men. He has divided the dominion of creation with the djiné, His laws, which are immutable, He has decreed once

421 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show
596 his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as
614 usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

466 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is
596 at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate
614 to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself, [186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them never return, either because they have managed to create an independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More often, however, the young man, having founded an independent family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and watches developments there in case he may one day be able to profit from them.

578 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue
561 which is forever at war with the fa and the senate. Their op-
885 position weakens, however, as they approach the age at which they too will participate in the faya to which they aspire. Gradually, as one changes from kamalen' to bina, he acquires the same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity of the new kamalen'-u.

562 In concluding this study of the members of the commun-
583 ity, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys, they belong completely to the community, which, as a result, has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So, since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

562 inevitably leave the community, she can never claim any
583 authority. Thus condemned to perpetual powerlessness, a
woman never has the right to any position other than an inferior
one in native society. Motives based on interest or affection
may modify her situation more or less to her advantage, but they
will not change her basic rights, which are at the root of all
disputes about women, between spouses or between communities.

II. The Community of Property

421 What is the property of which the patrimony is composed?

It is impossible to provide a detailed list, which would, in any case, be endless. Nor should we limit ourselves to the definitions of our legal system, which are too narrow. From the native point of view, patrimonial property [187] may be divided into three principal categories.

[776] First, there are the gods; the manes, or souls of the ancestral protectors of the family; and the nyana, the gods created by the magician. Some of them protect only the community, while others are also concerned with other collectivities. Finally, there are the innumerable magic weapons, which are gods of a sort. In the discussion of the duties of the fa, I spoke of these gods, and they are also mentioned in other parts of this work.

A second category of property is made up of the recipro-
421 cal rights of the community and its members, on the one hand,
424 and of the community and similar collectivities, on the other.
I have just explained the first, and the second will be dealt with
later in the chapter under the heading "Relations between Com-
munities."

Finally, all the things that are particularly valued make
421 up the third category: gold; cattle and sheep; grain; agricul-
422 tural, industrial, and commercial products of all kinds; dwell-
423 ings; etc. Three points related to this last category require
special consideration: agrarian usufruct, conjugal usufruct, and
slaves.

476 461 567 [361] The patriarchal community draws its subsistence from this agricultural exploitation, and as a result, a kind of work organization has developed. Patriarchal communities or important families have agricultural land in various regions and these tracts are often far apart. Some members of the community or a group of slaves are therefore settled in each domain, sometimes on a permanent basis, sometimes for the period of clearing and cultivating the soil, sometimes for the period of harvest.

Theoretically, every member of the community and every slave must work for the community from dawn to around noon every day during the farming season. Two days, however, Monday and Thursday, are given to these persons for work in their own fields. Anyone who cannot or will not work has the right to provide a replacement from among his dependents.

There are, of course, many exceptions to these rules. In the first place, everyone works according to his position. Among the poor, the master works as hard as the slave, if not harder; among people in comfortable circumstances, the master merely controls and directs the work, sometimes reserving a particular job for himself. In important communities, field work [189] is almost exclusively the duty of the slaves, under the surveillance of their leaders and following the orders of the fa, who either supervises it himself or has a member of his entourage do so.

● 583 589 768 Conjugal usufruct. When she marries, a woman is given in usufruct in exchange for the bride price. This usufruct is community property exactly like the things used for the bride price.

When a fa dies, the disposal of the conjugal usufruct included in the estate is a serious matter. Since the conjugal usufruct is of the same duration as the life of the woman, the death of the husband has no legal effect on the situation of his spouse. Since it is understood, however, that the widow has no sexual obligations to her husband's heirs, the usufruct is reduced in that respect. Such is the lot of widows when the heirs decide to keep them without marrying them and the women elect to remain.

583 587 Most often, however, the heirs either/marry the widows or send them home, or the women leave of their own volition.

768 [587] An heir who marries a widow of the deceased must take her back to her family, obtain their consent, and pay them a new bride price, required because a new usufruct is involved. The chronicle of Ségou shows us how this custom operates. Upon the death of Dina Wara, his son escorted to Ségou his father's widow, Biton's sister, whom he wanted to marry. He made sumptuous gifts in order to obtain consent.

In the case of a widow who is sent home or who leaves of her own accord, responsibility for the bride price already paid rests with the party who broke the contract, i.e., with the person who sent the widow away or, if she left of her own accord, with her family. The question of responsibility for the bride price is an important one, since usually neither party has either the means or the desire to make it up. As a result, every effort is made to evade payment, and it is common practice to resort to the most shameless bargaining of the woman involved. A husband is sought who will agree to pay the bride price asked by the one having rights over her, but most often, partial payment will be made when the woman is returned, the creditor's impatience is calmed by gifts, and the balance of the bride price remains wholly or partly unpaid [190] at the time of the debtor's death. This obviously results in insolvable complications during and after the marriage (1).

1. Concerning the lot of widows, see the discussions about the widows of Biton and Ngolo in the chronicle of Ségou.

567 727 Slaves. Enslavement comes about in many ways, but the three principal ones are force, birth, and the result of obligations.

Force has perhaps been the primary cause of enslavement. A person who surrenders is the chattel of the conqueror, but the treatment given him varies in accordance with his previous situation. Was he a man of position? If he is violent, he is killed or sold; if it is thought that his relatives will pay a high ransom, he is kept. If he is clever enough to arouse sympathy, he often is

584 is unfavorable, that is by no means the end of the matter, for both ancestors and gods usually allow themselves to be persuaded, for a price. When the reply is, or becomes, favorable, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives customary presents to the fa and to the girl's family. Henceforth, the two communities, that of the young man and that of the girl, are united by a bond that can be broken only for the gravest reasons, and even then a rupture will usually give rise to serious disagreements.

583 It is at this point that the parties agree, not without much argument and bargaining, on the amount, type, and mode of payment of the bride price and the date on which the girl will be handed over.

Between the time of the agreement and the release of the woman, there is a period which is often very long and in some cases several years. This interval is used by the girl's mother to prepare the things she will give her daughter (clothing, household utensils, etc.). [198] The fiancé, meanwhile, needs the time to accumulate what he has promised to pay when the girl is given to him.

584
602 From this moment on, the relations between the two communities are very strictly governed. Native etiquette forbids the fiancée henceforth to meet or to take meals with her future brother-in-law unless a third party is present. The same applies to the young man and his future mother-in-law. The fiancé must constantly show that he takes an interest in anything that concerns his future affinal family. He must attend funerals and festivals or at least send a material contribution consistent with his wealth and social standing. When field work is in progress, it is customary for the fiancé's fula-ni to appear in a body and ceremoniously share the work. This demonstration of solidarity is mostly more noisy than helpful; the work is wholly simulated, but the proceedings always end in dancing and copious drinking.

583
184 Bride price (1) and gifts. The woman is not turned over

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1. In certain regions (Bougouni, Sikasso, Koutiala, San) there is no regularly constituted bride price; the bridegroom's

583
[184]

family gives the bride's family a young girl to replace the one taken away.

until all or a portion of the agreed bride price has been paid and especially not before the customary gifts have been received.

The nature and value of the bride price and gifts vary since they depend on the wealth of the future husband, the rank of the woman and family customs. Among the poor, the bride price is small: a few handfuls of cowries, a chicken, a few [435] kola nuts, a few lengths of native cotton. An average bride price is worth, in all, 25,000 to 30,000 cowries (about 25 to 30 francs). Among the rich, the bride price may include one or more slaves, gold jewelry, silver, fabrics, clothing, etc.

The same is true of the gifts; everything depends on the families involved. It is customary around Ségou, however, for the fiancé to give his bride a large piece of native material called kundugu fini, a dloké (a kind of blouse), and a pair of sandals with very thick soles. He must also, if he can afford to, give her a slave to do the kitchen work, a cow, jewelry, etc. [199]

He must also give presents to the girl's parents in accordance with his means.

The totality of the bride price and gifts is called furu-fen', literally, "the property of the marriage." As soon as part of this furu-fen' is handed over to the furu-bolo-ma-tigi, he takes it, [273] escorted by some of the fiancé's friends, to the girl's fa. All of these proceedings, of course, involve jugs of native beer (dlo). The notables of the place, the dugu-tigi, the "elders," and even the kamalen', come at once to congratulate the family, to share in the drinking, and to receive a share of the furu-fen'.

The fiancée is often a little girl, and in that case the duties of the young man and his family go on for several years. The giving of gifts is repeated, to an extent commensurate with the young man's wealth and the standing of the girl's family. 431 583 At the time of harvest it is customary for the fiancé to send one or more baskets of millet, each weighing 20 to 40 kilos, and from time to time, a jug of beer, 20 to 30 liters. On the

583 431 occasion of funerals or religious ceremonies, he brings offerings (fowl, kola nuts, millet, salt, etc.). The ceremony at which his contribution is indispensable is the da woro (1). On this occasion the furu-bolo-ma-tigi is entrusted with important gifts for the girl (clothing and jewelry) as well as for the relatives assembled (food of all kinds).

583 Just as the amount and nature of the furu-fen' vary, the manner of payment and the time set for the payment of the bride price are likewise left to the discretion of the parties. There may be a single payment or there may be installments, either before or partly before and partly after the bride is handed over. From the material point of view, the persons of the bride and groom are actually of no importance. The fa who gives the bride price wants a girl from the family with which he wishes an alliance, and all that matters is that the girl be marriageable at the date agreed upon, provided that she is handed over in accordance with the agreement. In the same connection, the person giving the bride price is not required to have the whole amount needed at the time of [200] the agreement; it is sufficient that he be in a position to pay when the amount falls due. This explains certain usages which might otherwise seem odd.

[584] It often happens that a fa arranging a marriage speaks for a very young girl or even for one not yet born. If the child is handed over before nubility, the marriage is not consummated until after the first menses. We have mentioned above that in such cases the marriage payment involves repeated gifts for years.

583 231 Another very curious method of paying the bride price is to follow a custom called "the mare's foot." Its essential features are as follows.

A person giving bride price has a mare that he could sell to pay off the obligation, but he prefers to promise one or more of the foals or, as the natives say, one or more of "feet." This method of turning a brood mare to account without selling it is common among the natives of western Sudan.

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1. See p. 264 below.

583 231 If the payer has promised "a foot," he turns the mare over to the recipient, who will have to feed it and breed it. The latter keeps the foal and returns the mare after the foal is weaned; the risk is his, unless a major catastrophe occurs, and he must prove that such was the case.

If two "feet" are called for, the mare is as it were, jointly owned, each person alternately taking care of the animal and exploiting it for an agreed period. The first foal is jointly held, and after it is weaned, the contracting parties equalize the costs by alternately caring for the mare and the foal. This continues until three foals have been born and weaned. Then the mare and one of the foals goes into one share and the other two foals in another; the share allotted to each party is determined by drawing lots.

When he has completed the payment of "feet," the payer can obtain the woman without having paid any of the bride price since her family has the mare as security.

584 It may happen that one or the other of the fiancés dies. In principle, it is well to bear in mind the material standpoint involved: persons are secondary in concluding the affair; the two fa look out for their respective interests while finding a solution to the difficulties that [201] arise during the period of betrothal, often a very long one. The dead fiancé is not uncommonly replaced by one of his brothers (1), and the girl by one of her sisters (2); nothing changes in either case. If the fiancé or fiancée cannot be replaced in this way, the disposition of the furu-fen' already received by the girl's family is decided by agreement between the parties. Sometimes the proceeds are divided, with half going to each community; at other times they may be returned to the groom's family, or conversely, they may be left with the bride's family.

1. More commonly by one of the sons of the fiancé's community.

2. More commonly by one of the daughters of the fiancée's community.

584 Though disrupted marriage arrangements are rare, this may happen through a variety of causes and is settled by agreement or, in case of conflict, by arbitrators.

585 Delivery of the bride. Because this act involves a change of status for the parties concerned, it requires the ritual practices of a magical character of which we saw an example in connection with the funeral of a fa. Their purpose is to make sure that change takes place without harm to anyone.

When the payer has fulfilled his obligations and behaved according to custom, the girl must be given to him on the date agreed upon. On that day, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and the fiancé's friends, accompanied by musicians, appear at the home of the girl's parents to receive and lead away the bride. The parents agree, but the girl has disappeared. The newcomers start at once to look for her, but she cannot be found because her relatives and friends help her to hide. The hunt arouses both sides and leads to brawls; as the excitement reaches its height, the girl is found. Only the intervention of the dugu-tigi himself can put an end to the conflict. He gives his permission to the furu-bolo-ma-tigi to take the girl away and advises her to follow.

Then the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and his companions, acting as an escort, [202] take the girl toward the exit from the village. Just as she is about to leave the enclosure, however, she refuses *to go a step farther, and the young men pretend to do violence* to her in order to force her to accompany them in spite of her cries. She fights and screams until she is beyond the limits of the village territory. Then she suddenly becomes calm, wraps herself in the large piece of cloth given by her fiancé, and gaily follows her companions, who carry her furu-fen' and have by now joined the group of the furu-bolo-ma-tigi. The troop of young men bring up the rear and make a great racket with drums and trumpets and from time to time give the traditional [583] marriage cry: "kuyo! kuyo! (1)."

1. This simulated abduction must be interpreted as a separation rite.

588 583 Free union. This type of union rests on simple consent by the two parties without any bride price.

In principle a woman who has ceased to belong to a husband belongs to her original community, and she can make no decisions concerning her future without its consent. If she ignores this, the community can always intervene to force her to break off any engagement she may have made, and to this end it may use any means of absolute control.

This suffices to explain why a man who agrees to a union of this kind usually finds himself in the most serious difficulties. [672] Not only can his wife and children be taken from him without redress, but he can be sued for damages by the community to which the woman belongs.

It does sometimes happen, however, that certain women are released from the authority of their communities. These include women who are sole survivors of a community and, more commonly, those who have bought their freedom by dubious means. A free man who lives with such women achieves a union that to a great extent has the same effect as marriage. [206]

The Family

592 583 The household. The lawful household is based on marriage. In order to grasp its essence, account must be taken of the interplay of two elements which are perfectly distinct but always closely involved in all human affairs: interest and sentiment. In a lawful household the essential interest is the bride price whose nature must be defined in order to understand its overwhelming importance.

583 Bride price is what is paid in exchange for a wife. It is understood that the status of the woman thus handed over does not change; if she was free before the event, she is still free after the payment of the bride price.

586 The marriage tie is such that it can always be broken by one or the other party; the one breaking the contract simply loses the bride price in the sense that if the husband initiated the rupture he cannot expect anything already paid to be returned. If the initiative was taken by the wife (or her community), then she must return what has been paid. Whatever the cause of rupture, however, the children always belong to the husband.

583 Finally, if the union is still in effect at the time of the
768 husband's death, the wife's community theoretically regains
authority over her, provided that the bride price is paid back.

These three definite points show that lawful union, or
581 marriage, legally speaking, is essentially a kind of usufruct of the
626 woman to the advantage of the husband, and the price is the
bride price. As a result, the woman's community is obliged to see to it that the husband enjoys his rights. Hence, when a wife misbehaves, no matter how, the husband reports it to her community which takes steps to bring the erring girl to terms for fear of having to refund the bride price. On the other hand, the husband is expected to treat his wife in a manner worthy of her, that is, with consideration for her origins, and if he fails to do so, he risks the consequences of breach of the marriage contract.

There are, therefore, reciprocal rights and duties required of the spouses. Based on the marriage contract, these rights and duties are reinforced, completed, or, more generally, influenced by ethics no less than by the feelings of the [207] couple in relation to each other and to their respective communities.

581 562 [554] This is why a girl from a great house with high standing (1) cannot be treated like a common concubine, even though the husband may prefer the concubine to the wife, because the free daughter of a powerful house, richly dowered, is virtually independent in the household. If she is sufficiently well off, she may even live in a house of her own, and since her only obligation is the sexual conjugal duty, she receives her husband as she would a lover.

On the other hand the free woman of modest circumstances and, even more, of lowly birth is her husband's companion in wretchedness. She does all kinds of work, even the hardest and most disagreeable, and she desires no rupture that would deprive her of the only affection that sustains her, the love of her children.

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1. Thus, in the western Sudan, the daughters of the Massa-si are treated with great deference.

596
614 between Deni-ba-Bo for the Massa-si
621 of Kaarta and Suleyman Ba for the
608 people of Fouta.

belonging to the other's community, at least virgins or women reputed to be such. This is because a first sexual contact is likely to result in some flow of blood, and brotherhood imposes a terrible punishment on anyone who sheds the blood of a blood-brother or one of his people. As is apparent, the obligation undertaken by the contracting parties holds for all their descendants, regardless of sex and in infinitum. Henceforth there is a very close solidarity between the two communities, who are so bound to mutual aid that, in practice, anything (including lies, slander, and perjury) is permissible to overcome a common enemy or, in any event, to help the ally in trouble.

596 In place of the brotherhood oath, many other forms of
614 oath can be used. Thus, the chronicles tell of Sounsan and Fa Siné forming an alliance with an oath which was undoubtedly
621 binding, because the anvil on which it was sworn was afterwards
695 cast into a well. Nko, Sounsan's god, received the oath under which the "young men" who were Massa's companions allied themselves to the latter's fate. At Ségou, the tondyon' likewise swore loyalty on the idols.

These sacramental agreements are endlessly varied, but they bind the parties only under the stipulated conditions, especially as regards the respective communities of the fa who take the oath.

596 III. Marriage. There is no better way for a Bambara to
614 show his attachment to someone whose alliance or friendship he
621 desires than by giving him as a wife one of the girls of his own community and providing her with a generous dowry. This is one
583 of the most solemn forms of alliance between communities (2).

2. People united by marriage are called furu-nyuan' (spouses) and biran' (allies).

576 This conjugal union differs clearly from [227] ordinary
614 forms of marriage. In view of the fact that the husband gets a
621 wife without paying a bride price for her, the wife is not given
in usufruct, and therefore she must be treated with the greatest
583 consideration or she may be taken back. The situation can only
be normalized if the husband is rich enough to present to the
donor a gift equal to or preferably, if possible, greater than the
dowry brought by the wife, or he may give a similar gift to the
wife (1).

1. Such property is the wife's paraphernalia.

In these situations also, the procedure varies a great deal. The donor may offer a girl from another community and provide her with a dowry. This is what Biton did in order to bind Ngolo to him: Biton gave him a girl designated by the marabouts as one of the elect, and he also provided the girl with a rich dowry.

The significance of such alliances can be estimated only when one has some knowledge of the intentions of the parties involved, especially those of the donor. We shall see one important type in the chapter on Islam, the marriage of Allah.

IV. The common cult (2). The territorial community.

311 2. Communities may be united under the
621 protection of the same god. Here we shall
776 study only their union under the protection
794 of the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana
dugu-da-siri). Other common cults will be
studied in the following chapter, "Brotherhoods."

In the mind of the Bambara, the earth, together with everything in it, is the property of the spirits. As a result, no one may make use of it or presume to settle on or cultivate an unused field without first going through certain ceremonies.

For this purpose, either on his own responsibility or, more often, with the aid of "the one who knows" (don-na-ba), a

603 alliance]. (It is also customary for grandfathers and grandsons to eat together, while the sons eat apart.)

612 c. By Marriage: T'ɛ, K'ɛ, Kɛ = husband's name, corresponding
601 to muso (muso, term for spouse [female?]).

Bira nk'ɛ = father-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and all the male relatives of the husband or wife, corresponding to bira-muso = mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, and all female relatives of the husband or wife.

587 When a man dies, his wives go to his younger brother; and if a man's wife dies, he may marry her younger sister ...

582 This patrilineal and patrilocal family must have grafted itself
611 onto an ancient matrilineal system (see the chapter on inheritance and position of women). The systems of clan exogamy and endogamy are united: two pairs of brothers and sisters marry among themselves; sons must take their wives from their mother's family, and marriages take place between cross-cousins; children never belong to their parents' category, while grandchildren and grandparents always are in the same category.

583 [53] We shall see that alongside this matrimonial system in which wives are exchanged there exists a system in which payments are made to the fa of the young girl.

596 The size of the united family varies, but it may include more than 80 persons. Labouret (1) gives us, as an example, the composition of the blõ of Ngolo Traoré at Mpiéla, Kolokani subdivision:

	Men	Women	Children
1. Household of Ngolo	1	8	15
2. Household of Samba, Ngolo's brother	1	2	4
3. Household of Dotné, Samba's son	1	2	3
4. Household of Denkoro, son of deceased Bakoro	1	3	1
5. Household of Fabugai, Ngolo's son .	1	2	4
6. Quarters of unmarried males, all sons of Ngolo and Samba . . .	5		
	10	17	19 [sic]
	46		

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1. Op. cit.

621 The cluster of all these villages forms a *kafo* or *kafu* (canton) which
631 includes the original family, its oldest neighbors, the inhabitants of other villages, and, finally, the outsiders. All these people acknowledge common interests, and the villages of the same canton send representatives to the assembly which meets at the chief's residence. Thus, the large family grows into a patriarchy to form the *dugu* (village) and spreads out into a *kafu*. Sometimes, after these branchings out, certain offshoot communities adopt a special *dyamu* and other taboos. The new *dyamu* is joined to the old, and little by little supplants it. The principal characteristics of the mother community exist, to which are added [55] various new traits, but the relationship between the two communities is never extinguished. Inversely, natives even of different races but having the same *dyamu* consider themselves related, which for them implies respect for the ancestral traditions concerning the cult, the practice of mutual aid, respect for the authority of the *fa*, who must protect all his relatives no matter how remote the connection, and fidelity to all pacts between the communities. Finally, between individuals of different races, certain *dyamu*, although dissimilar, are considered equivalent and may be interchanged.

621 b. *Alliances*. -- The unity of a community is founded not only upon common interests, which we will examine later, but also upon a whole system of alliances.

Monteil distinguishs four types of alliance: the common cult (see the chapter on religion), marriage, the *tné*, and the oath.

Marriage: this is the most common form of alliance. When
621 a Bambara seeks an alliance with a family, he gives his daughter in
581 marriage to one of the members of that family, after providing her
583 with a large dowry. Some interesting information on this subject is furnished us by Monteil (1). The alliance between two families is reinforced still further when they establish the custom of exchanging women. In this way the Soninké family Niakaté allied itself to the

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1. Monteil, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta. Les Empires du Mali* [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta. The Mali Empires.]

621
581 Koulibali of Ségou, founded Bamako, and changed its name to Niaré
583 in becoming Bambara.

The tné: the taboo concerning an animal or some object.
621 The basis of this alliance is the oath of the *fa* not to kill or eat the
784 object of the taboo. All the generations following this ancestor must respect the taboo *ad infinitum*.

Thus, the Kéita have the hippopotamus for *tné*; the Traoré, the Dambélé, and the Warata have the panther; the Samaké, the elephant; the Koubilali of Ségou, the hippopotamus; those of Issa Ber, the *m'polio* [a fish]; others have the mole cricket (*n'gere*) and the striped mouse (*n'kelika*); the Niaré, Sisé, Silla, Doukouré, and the Daramé, the python, etc.

The oath: this seals a pact of *dyonge* fraternization. Each
621 party to the contract extracts some drops of blood from his forearm
608 which is mixed with goat's milk. Swearing by his ancestors, he states the conditions of the alliance and drinks part of the beverage. This alliance binds the parties to it and all their descendants *ad*
582 *infinitum*. It entails a prohibition or, contrariwise, a recommendation of marriage between members of the two communities, and establishes solidarity between the two communities which owe each other mutual assistance. In the framework of this alliance is the cathartic alliance termed *sénankuya*, which, besides the preceding obligations, governs the system of purifications.

The *sénankuya*: unites certain specific groups bearing differ-
621 names within the same village, but can also have an intertribal
608 character; ex.: Mandingue-Peul. Humblot observed the following
648 alliances at Kankan: Kéita-Fofana; Kondé-Traoré; Kéita-Bérete-Sérigou-Sissé; [56] Kala-Kéita-Kouyaté; Kourouma-Koma; Kourouma-Dabo; Kourouba-Konaté-Kamara-Bagayoko; Konaté-Dougoumoko; Konaté-Sidibé. This system of alliance in which
783 the two allies are equal and complementary governs the mechanism of the purifications, notably by the insult, and the duties of reciprocal assistance (1). Formerly, when a *sénanku* was reduced to slavery,

1. M. Griaule, "L'alliance cathartique" [The Cathartic Alliance], *Africa*, Vol. XVIII, 1948.

D. Position of Women

562 Women's society has remained much more impenetrable to European civilization. Women very rarely go to French schools, and unlike the men, who, during their military service and otherwise, are partly immersed in our system of civilization, they have few contacts with the Whites and appear to be even more attached to custom than their husbands. Very few speak French, and for all these [191] reasons their society has remained closed and very imperfectly known to the Whites.

562 858 Reasoning from what is known of their juridicial situation, we have deduced their inferior position. Perhaps a better knowledge of their role and of their importance in the society will lead us to very different conclusions. From the legal point of view, a woman is always a minor; she belongs first to her own community, to which she owes obedience, then to her husband's community. When the marriage is legal, that is to say, when the husband has paid the matrimonial settlement, the children belong to the husband; if not, in the case of concubinage, the woman's family can claim the child, because it belongs to the family, as does everything of the mother's.

562 582 583 Her marriage is decided on by the fa; although in practice the woman is often consulted indirectly beforehand, and she has a certain liberty in her choice. Even a slave can refuse to marry her master, despite gifts and promises. But a woman is forbidden to marry someone she considers a relative, that is, someone who belongs to her paternal line and who bears the same name she does. Exogamy is the rule.

562 593 Yet, when a woman marries, she keeps her paternal name and her personal taboos; sometimes she adds her name to that of her son, who normally bears the dyamu of his father. The woman remains very attached [75] to her family and goes to stay with them often. Among them she will find support in case of a difference of opinion [586] with her husband. In case of divorce through the fault of the husband, he loses all rights over the wife as well as the settlement he had paid.

595 [431] In the system of polygamy, the first wife is mistress of the house; the other wives gather at her place for meals. She distributes the husband's presents, but aside from these privileges, the rights of the wives are equal as are those of their children.

584 She returns to her own family every year at the beginning of the rainy season and goes back to her future in-laws at the start of the dry season.

583 Every year she takes home 30 kola nuts and three cocks, and
584 the young man's fa begins to pay the bride price which traditionally
came to eight oxen and five sheep. The girl returns at the dry
season bringing fonio, fruits of the karite, and sumbalé (for making
sauces), and other products.

583 She is married after the appearance of the first menses, and
585 her husband continues to pay the bride price in the following order:
a cow, a bull, a heifer ...

583 Throughout the engagement period, the young man must
584 cultivate the field of his future parents-in-law.

583 Among the Bambara who currently practice the exchange of young girls between two families for marriage purposes, the compensation is no longer paid, although gifts and contributions are still given.

584 On the day of the marriage the girl is accompanied by an
585 attendant who represents her twin, while the young man also is aided
by an attendant, and the two couples symbolize the union of the two
couples of [94] primordial twins. Finally, the young girl is carried
up to the abode constructed for her by her husband. She is followed
by a cortege of seven women, each carrying part of the bride's gifts.
The investigation being carried out by Mme. Dieterlen in the Bam-
bara country indicates that the seven women represent the seven
[826] seeds that each man possesses in his clavicles; the bride is the fonio
seed that is brought to the husband's village, for marriage is con-
sidered to be a cultivation.

The marriage of twins requires slightly different rites. When the twins are not of the same sex, the boy must deflower the girl before she marries (there is only one intercourse). If the twins are two boys, the first to marry must let his wife have relations with his twin. If the twins are girls, the husband of the first to be married must also unite with the second.

f. Death and Funerals

761 Death dissociates the different elements which make up the
764 person. The purpose of the funeral rites is to gather the spiritual

inheritance, and rarely by purchase. The gnâ pass from father to son by inheritance, but it is always possible to obtain one by purchase; all that is necessary is to find in the village the number of people needed to make up the staff of the idol, provided one is not opposed by the sorcerer's veto.

Every purchase of a powerful boli occasions celebrations, festivals, and drinking bouts that last from three to eight days. These festivals are like marriage celebrations. Surrounded by his staff, the new fetish owner spends the day offering d'lo, or millet beer, to the many friends who come to congratulate him and give him their gifts. It is not until evening that he leaves his b'lon, or entry hut, and, followed by initiates carrying the idol, goes to the sacred grove or under the trees chosen to be the meeting place henceforth. The night is spent in dancing and shouting hymns.

In the eyes of the Negro to buy a gnâ is to become united with it in a firm and indissoluble way. It is equivalent to marrying the fetish, and they have no other phrase to express their idea, their notion of the matter: "A yé boli fourou, he got married"; "ayé boli fourou gosi, he has stamped and sealed his marriage with the boli" (2); "ne ka fourouboloma faro (3) flé, here is my wedding present";

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1. The sinsin, the gnéna of twins, is an exception, as it may also be bought.

● [583]

2. Fourou gosi. In order to enjoy the marriage lawfully, whoever marries must, in the presence of the head of the village, pay his wife's parents a handful of kola nuts -- usually eleven, one more than the required ten.

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585

3. Fourouboloma fara: This is the name of the small present of cowrie shells given to a

684 however, because the Negroes say that although the betrothed girl
836 does not belong entirely to herself, neither does she belong entirely
to her fiancé; she still retains certain rights to her own person, "*à ma
di ban*, she has not yet been given."

684 When a girl becomes pregnant, she is arraigned before the
family council. After a goat has been slaughtered for the family *boli*,
627 she is asked the name of her partner, and if she refuses to disclose
it the council of the elders is called in. She has to yield, otherwise
she is tied to one of the forked sticks that support the flat terrace roof,
and blows rain thick on her back.

As soon as the guilty man is named, she swears on a powerful *boli* (1) that she has told the truth, and the man is summoned. Nothing is to be gained by being a perjurer; it is better to pay the fine and live. The stain on his honor is slight, and he confesses without much shame: "*Tigné* (that is true); *né no do* (it is my fault)."

The fine is between 15 and 20 francs and often between 25 and 30 francs (2), not including the sacrifice to the boli, which consists of two hens, two dogs, a goat, and two kola nuts. Quite often the injured fiancé has to be satisfied with the victims for the sacrifice and a small present, one to two kilos of salt, and 800 to 1,600 cowrie
shells, or 1 to 2 francs. As for the child of an unmarried mother, its
847 fate is in the hands of the grandmothers, and of the father and the
848 mother, and it quite often happens that it does not cry twice in this
567 world; to use the Bambara expression: "*N'a kasira, a t'na foula ké*, if
he has cried, he will not do it a second time." I am speaking here
of a free girl, for the child of an unmarried slave girl is welcome;
it is a gain for the house, and no attention is paid to the guilty man.
This is easy to understand, for is there a Negro who does not abuse his
slave?

1. It is almost always a *Komo*, a *Nama*, or a *Kono*.

● [583] 2. The rule is that the culprit should pay the fiancé the entire bride price, or some 30 francs.

881 302

881 mother provides some of hers. The dress-up outfit of our excised girls
881 is a regular harness; two or three loincloths in layers encircle their
292 waists, and of the actual costume, the band of cloth which shakes
behind in limp and loose trains, the big pompom is all that shows.
At least one can look at them and see them, as for once pretty white
blouses clothe them; the long cloth slings required in the dances are
thrown over their shoulders and brought to the front and create quite a
881 pretty effect. In Bani country the girls wear a wide belt of cowrie
881 shells around the hips and over the loincloths, and on each side two
301 bundles of cowrie shells hang from leather thongs that pass over the
● 583 shoulders and are crossed on the chest. This *dousou ko* (2), as it is
called, is the remaining portion of the bride price given by the fiancé,
and is worth 5, 000 to 6, 000 cowrie shells.

881 Around the drums that rage in the square, behind the old women who scrape their pieces of scrap iron, and behind the female story-tellers /*griottes*/ who sing of their charms, their strength and their beauty, the circumcised boys and excised girls circle for a few moments and go and sit on the mats that have been prepared for them.

Kola nuts are distributed to the new citizens; gourds of *dégé*, millet flour mixed with honey water and milk, are placed at the feet of the girls, queens of the day, and the head of the village makes the speech that is required at the beginning of every festival. His herald, standing beside him, repeats it word by word, sentence by

1. Newborn infants have their heads shaved six to eight days after birth; they cannot go out of their homes before being shorn of the hair of the womb (*ou ba*, "their mothers"; *kono*, "womb"; *si*, hair).

2. *Dousou*, "soul," "heart," "seat of love"; *ko*, "affair," "pledge of love."

3. The Betrothal

584 583 I have often heard it said that a Bambara marriage is nothing less than a sale and a purchase: the woman goes to the highest bidder. I cannot share such an opinion. The suitor gives a bride price, I know, but this bride price is a present to the fiancée, and its entire value is returned to him. When the fiancée's father receives it, he treats himself to trousers, a cap with three points, a new blouse, a few jugs of d'lo, or millet beer, and many kola nuts; but when the wedding comes, it is the father who provides his child with loincloths, gourds, pottery, in fact her whole trousseau, and however slight his vanity -- and what Bambara is not vain! -- he will spend the bride price and even more.

When the suitor has been able to gather two to three kilograms of salt, a few bits of cloth for the little girl and her mother, and a portion of the bride price (1), which varies between 25 and 30 francs, he pays his respects to the family through his intermediary, the fouroubolomа tigi, or guardian of the wedding gifts. The latter goes to the father-in-law, escorted /204/ by a few young girls who carry the fouroufen, or bride price, the gifts of cloth and salt, and a few jugs

[436] 1. The bride price is set at ba mougan ni tan, about 24, 000 cowrie shells. Each ba equals 10 kémé. The kémé is worth 80 cowrie shells, the ba 800 cowrie shells. In ordinary times a 5-franc piece is exchanged for ba dourou ni kémé dourou, or 4, 400 cowrie shells. The value of the cowries is subject to rise and fall, so that the 5-franc piece is sometimes worth 4, 400 cowrie shells; at other times the cowries drop and the 5-franc piece is worth ba woro ni kémé dourou, or 6 ba and 5 kémé, or ba wolonouia, 7 ba.

583 584 of d'lo, or millet beer. The head of the village and his council, friends, and the to-n-déou, or members of the association of the fla-n-to (1), go at once to pay their respects to the happy father and

561 575 1. The association of the fla-n-to, with a to-n-tigi at its head, is made up of several groups of to-n-déou, or members of the association. Every group corresponds to a circumcision. /sic/ When many are circumcised at the same time, they form a group, but if there are only one, two, or three, they join the group of those circumcised at the preceding occasion. The to-n-dé invites to his betrothal and his wedding the members of his group, who were circumcised with him, and the members of the older groups. As to the younger groups, he does not invite them. The women also form an association of fla-n-to similar to that of the men but separate from it. The woman who is at the head of the association, usually the oldest in the village, is called to-n-tigi, or massa fama, queen, and the to-n-dé mouso (the to-n-dé women) call her m'ba, mother. They are summoned only to the wedding.

583 584 to tell the girl that her betrothal is being celebrated and cannot henceforth be broken without a grave and important reason. Soon the b'lon of /sic/ the entry hut and the inner court are full of crouching men who drink d'lo, or millet beer, and soon ramble in their talk. And

583 the fiancée has time to reflect and to open her heart to love, for her
584 wedding will not take place until one, two, or often three years after excision; once this has been performed she will be qualified to be a mother.

584 From the time of the engagement the two families draw together,
574 establish friendly relations, and visit each other. After the girl has grown up, during the year or two that elapse between the excision and the wedding, she spends two weeks to a month each year with her parents-in-law. One might say that in Bani country, this is the general custom (2). When the young men sent to bring her arrives, she /205/ hides in the hut of friends, and the little band runs right and left looking for her. They soon find her, members of her family--

2. In the environs of Ségou this custom is less comon. Often the two families come to an agreement, and on the appointed day the fiancée goes to the home of her fiancé, accompanied by a young man appointed by the council of elders. After the last festival of the circumcision (baloko déou don bo, "the coming out of the circumcised"), some, even many villages hold a festival for the fiancée. She goes to the home of her fiancé all loaded with beads and necklaces and escorted by all the young girls of the village. The fiancé bears all the cost of this festival, called mousodjira, "to show the wife."
[431] All the youths of the village and of neighboring villages
give 80 to 160 cowrie shells to help the fiancé cover the expenses.

584 606 of her father-in-law nor linger with him in endless conversations, especially when no witnesses are present, and the fiancé is subject to the same rules with regard to his mother-in-law. /206/

583 584 In a word, they may no longer even look at each other! If the fiancé dies before the wedding, it is in good taste for the girl to become the fiancée of a younger brother, but if there is no brother she regains her liberty and keeps her bride price. If the fiancée dies, the family usually keeps the bride price they have received; custom permits the fiancé to demand the return of half the bride price but, in the eyes of everyone, to do so would indicate a lack of tact and delicacy. But if for one reason or another the engagement is broken, the bride price and small presents are returned to the fiancé in their entirety.

4. The Wedding of a Young Bambara Girl

584 585 The fiancé asks for the girl (1). -- The *fourou fen* (the bride price and small presents) have been paid, the fiancée is a grown young lady who has long been excised, and only rags remain of the beautiful yellow loincloth with black stripes which was received at the *da woro*, or festival that follows the sixth day after the circumcision. *A kouara* -- she has reached her full development and henceforth can only decline in grace and beauty, and her fiancé desires her. The

1. It happens sometimes that the family cannot refuse the suitor's request for the girl, although she does not have all her trousseau. In that case the wedding festival is put off, but she is led to her husband, and a little private celebration takes place on that day. When she has her trousseau she goes back to her family, and the big festival is held.

582 It is not unusual for an old man to marry a very young girl; indeed, it is common. Although a young man rarely marries a very old woman, a woman may marry a man much younger than she is as a result of the customs involved with inheritance.

Kinship in the direct line is an obstacle, in infinitum. Certain collateral relatives may not marry each other: uncle and niece, aunt and nephew. Marriage is also an obstacle in [587] some cases: a man may not be the husband of two sisters simultaneously, although he may marry them successively; the same restriction applies to a mother and daughter and an aunt and niece.

A man may not marry the wife of his son, nephew, or younger brother.

No marriage can take place between free persons in good standing and people of caste or, still less, slaves.

●584 Impediments. From the opening of negotiations to the moment when the woman is handed over, there is a very long interval [196] of time during which impediments may arise.

First marriages, with which we are here concerned, are community affairs. A young man who would undertake the matter on his own would be most imprudent for he is no more his own master than is the girl, and their wishes are not of the least importance; this is an occasion for the fa to bring off a profitable deal. The fa, therefore, opposes any match which does not suit his plans and, indeed, forces the young man to share his views. If the latter rebels, the refusal of the fa to recognize the marriage will deprive the wife and children of any claim to legitimacy in the eyes of the community which he heads. There is no legal recourse possible against such a decision, because each community is answerable only to itself for matters concerning it.

The girl is even more completely under the control of [562] the community than the young man. Destined to be given in usufruct, she is entirely at the mercy of those holding this right over her. If she rebels, she runs the risk of being brutally brought to task through every means of coercion and, if in such circum- [851] stances she has children, they can be taken from her by the community, to which they will then belong. Custom gives her no rights over them whatsoever.

● 584 Thus, the fa of the two communities manage the entire transaction. Does this mean that the young people have no way of influencing the decision of the "elders"? No, because here, as elsewhere, all sorts of intrigue affect the decision of the fa. He must take account of the views of those around him; he is aware of their feelings, and he is just as likely to subordinate his interests to affection as to hatred. He is perfectly well aware, as is his entourage, that although he can impose his will, even though arbitrary, while he lives, all he has achieved may collapse at his death if his work was ill supported.

In short, the rigidity of the principles which put the "young" at the mercy of the "elders" is, in fact, more often [182] than not relaxed in favor of the young people's desires. The solidarity between members of the community makes them give heed to the opinions of others; it is this need to minimize differences of opinion that makes any family affair drag on endlessly. Discussions, agreements, and reciprocal gifts characterize the [197] bargaining and compromise which are so great a part of the transactions. From this it is apparent what an essential role is played by the numerous intermediaries who are called in to prevent clashes and to mitigate friction, but too often turn to exploiting community difficulties.

In any event, these discussions serve to publicize these transactions just as we achieve the same end through legal means.

The request and agreements. The request is made by an [564] intermediary. In Kaarta this is a man of caste, usually a dyeli (griot), accompanied by a free man. Elsewhere, notably at Ségou, he is sometimes a middle-aged man, known for his experience in such matters, who in this role is called furu-bolo-ma-tigi, "marriage director."

The furu-bolo-ma-tigi goes to the house of the fa of the girl, states his mission, and if he is favorably received, offers him some kola nuts which he has brought with him. He returns home with a promise that the request will be considered.

The fa does in fact consult his entourage and especially his ancestors and gods. The furu-bolo-ma-tigi returns with offerings to be used in questioning the ancestors and gods; if the reply

584 is unfavorable, that is by no means the end of the matter, for both ancestors and gods usually allow themselves to be persuaded, for a price. When the reply is, or becomes, favorable, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives customary presents to the fa and to the girl's family. Henceforth, the two communities, that of the young man and that of the girl, are united by a bond that can be broken only for the gravest reasons, and even then a rupture will usually give rise to serious disagreements.

583 It is at this point that the parties agree, not without much argument and bargaining, on the amount, type, and mode of payment of the bride price and the date on which the girl will be handed over.

Between the time of the agreement and the release of the woman, there is a period which is often very long and in some cases several years. This interval is used by the girl's mother to prepare the things she will give her daughter (clothing, household utensils, etc.). [198] The fiancé, meanwhile, needs the time to accumulate what he has promised to pay when the girl is given to him.

584
602 From this moment on, the relations between the two communities are very strictly governed. Native etiquette forbids the fiancée henceforth to meet or to take meals with her future brother-in-law unless a third party is present. The same applies to the young man and his future mother-in-law. The fiancé must constantly show that he takes an interest in anything that concerns his future affinal family. He must attend funerals and festivals or at least send a material contribution consistent with his wealth and social standing. When field work is in progress, it is customary for the fiancé's fula-ni to appear in a body and ceremoniously share the work. This demonstration of solidarity is mostly more noisy than helpful; the work is wholly simulated, but the proceedings always end in dancing and copious drinking.

583
184 Bride price (1) and gifts. The woman is not turned over

1. In certain regions (Bougouni, Sikasso, Koutiala, San) there is no regularly constituted bride price; the bridegroom's

583 431 occasion of funerals or religious ceremonies, he brings offerings (fowl, kola nuts, millet, salt, etc.). The ceremony at which his contribution is indispensable is the da woro (1). On this occasion the furu-bolo-ma-tigi is entrusted with important gifts for the girl (clothing and jewelry) as well as for the relatives assembled (food of all kinds).

583 Just as the amount and nature of the furu-fen' vary, the manner of payment and the time set for the payment of the bride price are likewise left to the discretion of the parties. There may be a single payment or there may be installments, either before or partly before and partly after the bride is handed over. From the material point of view, the persons of the bride and groom are actually of no importance. The fa who gives the bride price wants a girl from the family with which he wishes an alliance, and all that matters is that the girl be marriageable at the date agreed upon, provided that she is handed over in accordance with the agreement. In the same connection, the person giving the bride price is not required to have the whole amount needed at the time of [200] the agreement; it is sufficient that he be in a position to pay when the amount falls due. This explains certain usages which might otherwise seem odd.

● [584] It often happens that a fa arranging a marriage speaks for a very young girl or even for one not yet born. If the child is handed over before nubility, the marriage is not consummated until after the first menses. We have mentioned above that in such cases the marriage payment involves repeated gifts for years.

583 231 Another very curious method of paying the bride price is to follow a custom called "the mare's foot." Its essential features are as follows.

A person giving bride price has a mare that he could sell to pay off the obligation, but he prefers to promise one or more of the foals or, as the natives say, one or more of "feet." This method of turning a brood mare to account without selling it is common among the natives of western Sudan.

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1. See p. 264 below.

583
231 If the payer has promised "a foot," he turns the mare over to the recipient, who will have to feed it and breed it. The latter keeps the foal and returns the mare after the foal is weaned; the risk is his, unless a major catastrophe occurs, and he must prove that such was the case.

If two "feet" are called for, the mare is as it were, jointly owned, each person alternately taking care of the animal and exploiting it for an agreed period. The first foal is jointly held, and after it is weaned, the contracting parties equalize the costs by alternately caring for the mare and the foal. This continues until three foals have been born and weaned. Then the mare and one of the foals goes into one share and the other two foals in another; the share allotted to each party is determined by drawing lots.

When he has completed the payment of "feet," the payer can obtain the woman without having paid any of the bride price since her family has the mare as security.

● 584 It may happen that one or the other of the fiancés dies. In principle, it is well to bear in mind the material standpoint involved: persons are secondary in concluding the affair; the two fa look out for their respective interests while finding a solution to the difficulties that [201] arise during the period of betrothal, often a very long one. The dead fiancé is not uncommonly replaced by one of his brothers (1), and the girl by one of her sisters (2); nothing changes in either case. If the fiancé or fiancée cannot be replaced in this way, the disposition of the furu-fen' already received by the girl's family is decided by agreement between the parties. Sometimes the proceeds are divided, with half going to each community; at other times they may be returned to the groom's family, or conversely, they may be left with the bride's family.

1. More commonly by one of the sons of the fiancé's community.

2. More commonly by one of the daughters of the fiancée's community.

584 Though disrupted marriage arrangements are rare, this may happen through a variety of causes and is settled by agreement or, in case of conflict, by arbitrators.

585 Delivery of the bride. Because this act involves a change of status for the parties concerned, it requires the ritual practices of a magical character of which we saw an example in connection with the funeral of a fa. Their purpose is to make sure that change takes place without harm to anyone.

When the payer has fulfilled his obligations and behaved according to custom, the girl must be given to him on the date agreed upon. On that day, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and the fiancé's friends, accompanied by musicians, appear at the home of the girl's parents to receive and lead away the bride. The parents agree, but the girl has disappeared. The newcomers start at once to look for her, but she cannot be found because her relatives and friends help her to hide. The hunt arouses both sides and leads to brawls; as the excitement reaches its height, the girl is found. Only the intervention of the dugu-tigi himself can put an end to the conflict. He gives his permission to the furu-bolo-ma-tigi to take the girl away and advises her to follow.

Then the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and his companions, acting as an escort, [202] take the girl toward the exit from the village. Just as she is about to leave the enclosure, however, she refuses to go a step farther, and the young men pretend to do violence to her in order to force her to accompany them in spite of her cries. She fights and screams until she is beyond the limits of the village territory. Then she suddenly becomes calm, wraps herself in the large piece of cloth given by her fiancé, and gaily follows her companions, who carry her furu-fen' and have by now joined the group of the furu-bolo-ma-tigi. The troop of young men bring up the rear and make a great racket with drums and trumpets and from time to time give the traditional [583] marriage cry: "kuyo! kuyo! (1)."

1. This simulated abduction must be interpreted as a separation rite.

881 physical male factor residing in the clitoris. The operation takes 304 place, moreover, during the same period as the circumcision. It is carried out by the potteress, wife of the blacksmith, in full daylight before the assembled kin. During their seclusion the girls wear a white veil which plays the same role as the bonnet of the circumcised. [534] Instead of the sistrum, the girls shake a gourd which contains eight millet seeds and cotton fibers which their fiancés have given them. A goat is sacrificed for the ceremony. The collected blood is given to the fiancé in honor of his ancestors who become those of the girl.

[93] On the last day of the ceremony the girls definitively rid themselves of their wanzo by jumping over a pyre composed of the clothes and scraps of the excised.

e. Marriage

[582] It is only after having been circumcised or excised that young 584 people may marry. The institution of marriage is regulated by a ritual which has often been described, particularly by Amar, Monteil, Tauxier, Aubert . . .

The marriage arrangements are made by the respective fa of the two betrothed, after the young people have been consulted. The request is officially made to the parents by an intermediary, a man of caste or a sénanku. It is accompanied by ritual gifts offered to the fa of the girl. In the Bougouni region the request is accompanied by ten kola nuts, because ten is a complete number that [801] designates good events and future births. (Nine kola nuts are offered 576 to present condolences, four as a sign of greeting. To send three [431] nuts would be insulting, and 19 nuts, marking incompleteness, would be a sign of lack of confidence.) The first kola nuts to be offered [824] are always wrapped in one or two karite leaves, symbol of life and of fecundity. If the ten kola nuts are accepted, it means that the father has opened the way to the marriage. The intermediary then make a second trip the following week, bringing a cock for sacrifice to the ancestors and ten more kola nuts; during a third trip he offers another cock and ten more kola nuts before the entire assembled family of the young girl, witnessing that the girl may meet her fiancé. In the course of the fourth trip, the intermediary leads the girl to the fiancé's family, where she will be confided to the wife of the head of the family who will undertake her education.

584 She returns to her own family every year at the beginning of the rainy season and goes back to her future in-laws at the start of the dry season.

583 Every year she takes home 30 kola nuts and three cocks, and
584 the young man's fa begins to pay the bride price which traditionally came to eight oxen and five sheep. The girl returns at the dry season bringing fonio, fruits of the karite, and sumbalé (for making sauces), and other products.

583 She is married after the appearance of the first menses, and
585 her husband continues to pay the bride price in the following order: a cow, a bull, a heifer ...

583 Throughout the engagement period, the young man must
584 cultivate the field of his future parents-in-law.

583 Among the Bambara who currently practice the exchange of young girls between two families for marriage purposes, the compensation is no longer paid, although gifts and contributions are still given.

584 On the day of the marriage the girl is accompanied by an
585 attendant who represents her twin, while the young man also is aided by an attendant, and the two couples symbolize the union of the two couples of [94] primordial twins. Finally, the young girl is carried up to the abode constructed for her by her husband. She is followed by a cortege of seven women, each carrying part of the bride's gifts. The investigation being carried out by Mme. Dieterlen in the Bambara country indicates that the seven women represent the seven
[826] seeds that each man possesses in his clavicles; the bride is the fonio seed that is brought to the husband's village, for marriage is considered to be a cultivation.

The marriage of twins requires slightly different rites. When the twins are not of the same sex, the boy must deflower the girl before she marries (there is only one intercourse). If the twins are two boys, the first to marry must let his wife have relations with his twin. If the twins are girls, the husband of the first to be married must also unite with the second.

f. Death and Funerals

761 Death dissociates the different elements which make up the
764 person. The purpose of the funeral rites is to gather the spiritual

881 onto the platters of the excised girls. With the last kola nut all leap-
431 ing stops, and the festival ends. Slowly the crowd withdraws and
goes home, for it has only too much need of a little rest.

881 On the days following this "coming out of the circumcised"
(the name given to this occasion by the Bambara), the youths and
574 maids run around the country dressed up, and go to thank those who
were at the *da woro*, or festival of the sixth day. Boys and girls, in
two groups, under the /198/ direction of their old woman guardian,
walk along the paths one after another, Indian file. At the head of
the column is the *massa*, or queen; the *massa ma Kono*, her deputy,
comes next, and she is followed by the *massa ma Kono ségére*, who
again is the deputy of the one in front of her. All the others' are girls
that are healed, and the last, the youngest of all, is called *koulé*.
The boys march in the same order and bear the same titles. This
way of thanking people is very Bambara; although they insist on show-
ing themselves so that people will know that they are circumcised,
[431] they want especially that alms be given them, and they go to ask a
gift and hold out both hands. The Bambara people are a beggar people!

Chapter 10

Bambara Marriage

584 Little Bambara girls are betrothed when they are very young, generally between the ages of four to ten, and girls of twelve, fourteen, and sixteen years who still await a suitor are very unusual. Yet age matters little, for there are three stages in marriage: the proposal, the betrothal, and the wedding, and whoever wants to take a wife, whether he is young, mature, or an old man, married, widower, or unmarried, must obey this law.

584

1. The Marriage Proposal (1)

1. The procedures described here apply to the marriage of a young girl. For widows or divorcées who remarry, there are consultations of diviners, sacrifices to the evil fetishes, etc., but the betrothal and wedding ceremonies are performed with a minimum of show.

832-581 The Bambara are not unmoved by the beauty of a woman's form; they can distinguish a well-formed body from a malformed one, a pretty woman from an ugly one, and they find a coppery skin more attractive than one of ebony black. Similarly, a face pitted by smallpox or a bosom covered with scars displeases them, and a man talks to you about his fiancée or his wife, he is quite proud to be able to say: "sien si t'a la, she has a body without blemish, " therefore she is beautiful. When it comes to marriage, however, he does not look too closely! He readily keeps silent about his tastes and seldom consults his heart, for a wife to him is primarily a source of pleasure and profit. /200/

581 What he sees in a woman above all is a being of a different sex than he, and if she is industrious, cooks well, and is good at business, he will know how to close his eyes to her defects in order to keep her and allow her to be an important person in his home who must be reckoned with.

584 When a Negro who wants a wife finds an unbetrothed girl, he quickly confides his secret, his fears and hopes, to his close friend, a man of mature age who enjoys some respect in the country (1). The

564 1. Some people have thought that the "storytellers /griots/" act as intermediaries in asking the hand of a child. Nothing is more

564 erroneous, for the Bambara despises this breed and would never entrust one with such a delicate mission. The Bambara dreads the storyteller in his private festivals. How many times they say as they invite us: "We came ourselves to invite you so that the news may not reach the ears of the storytellers." The *to-n-tigi*, head of the association of the *fla*-n-to, plays no important role in the marriage of a *to-n-dé*, or member. The *to-n-déou*, members of the association of the *fla-n-to*, are invited and enjoy themselves at the wedding of a fellow *te-n-de*, and that is all. Mr. Barbier Louis /sic/ makes a mistake; see page 527, Dec. 16, 1907, of the review *La Quinzaine*.

584 latter receives four kola nuts wrapped in green leaves and tied again and again so that they will not wither, and, spear in hand and his inseparable goatskin, or *foroko*, well fastened to his shoulder, he starts on his way, proud to be assigned such a pleasant mission and happy and pleased to be the *fourouboloma tigi*, guardian of the wedding gifts (2).

2. *Fourouboloma*, "engagement gift"; *tigi*, "master."

584 887 576 At the end of his journey, on the public square, he extends a very friendly greeting to the old men who there devote themselves to laziness in the shade of a great tree with the apathy of lizards; he gives them all generously of the snuff that every stranger must offer, and if he has no friend or acquaintance in the village, he chooses from among them a man of good will who will introduce him to the family and smooth the way for him. When this man is found, he goes

584 887 there without further delay and makes his request, which the man who introduced him repeats word by word and sentence by sentence.

584 The father of the girl ponders a moment, and if the suit pleases him he answers in a word: "A gnéna, that's good." The little package of four kola nuts is then offered him, he summons his daughter and her mother, and the fourouboloma tigi again explains the reason for his /201/ coming. Everything is settled with the following words: "Give my greetings to the one who sent you and all his family, tell him that I am happy he is asking for my daughter. A diara an ye hali (1), it is a great joy for us, but this, you know, needs reflection! I will speak to my friends soon, and in a few days you will know my decision." The emissary has not been refused and, satisfied with himself and the good prospects of the matter, he leaves to carry to the suitor the words of the girl's father, which should open the door of hope to his heart.

2. The Diviners and Fetishes Accept or Reject the Suitor

584 593 To marry their daughter and marry her well is a nightmare to every father and mother, and both remain anxious when a suitor presents himself. The Bambara know anguish! A daughter may not be beautiful; often she is even ugly, with a large navel, an umbilical hernia, or blood blister due to the clumsiness of the midwife, but her father lives in her large, white eyes marked with a black spot that is full of life and shining, in her broadly slit mouth and puffy lips; he recognizes his own, and his whole inner being cries to him: "This is your daughter, this is your blood."

Frightful thoughts come to torment him: "If the suitor should have the character of a villain and the brutality of a beast, will he not beat my child mercilessly? Might he have one of those shameful diseases that people hide and do not name, so that my daughter will commit adultery in order to avoid the embarrassment of being

1. A, "that"; diara, "is happy";
an ye, "for us"; hali, "much."

584 sterile? And if he should be one of those sensualists so numerous
593 among us, and, bored after having enjoyed her, should drive her away
and reject her?" He trembles and wants to know what the future holds
both for him and for her, and goes to consult the diviners.

Two and often three diviners are consulted. If they all agree in
584 testifying that the suitor is of good character, that divorce is not to
593 be feared, and that the child will become the mother of healthy, strong,
787 and vigorous children who will perpetuate her people and her blood,
he finds joy again. He tells the verdict to both his wife and his
daughter, he imparts his decision to the head of the village and the
council of elders, and /202/ without any delay, freed as he is from
all fear, he notifies the suitor that the doors of his home are open
to him.

At this announcement the suitor chooses a fat hen from his hen
584 house, takes one or two kola nuts from his store, and again the
787 fourouboloma tigi, the guardian of the wedding gifts, starts on his way,
for this time he must find out whether the family boli, and sometimes
the shades of its ancestors, are opposed to the proposed union (1).

> 1. If some occurrence later causes the engagement to be broken, or if there is a marriage followed by divorce, it does not enter his mind that the diviners were mistaken. The whole responsibility falls on the head of an enemy, who through hatred or jealousy has found a way to disrupt everything. It is almost always someone unknown, which is fortunate.

584 The father of the little girl takes down his goatskin, or often the
skin of a wild animal, a frightful, dirty foroko, the tabernacle of the
787 family boli; he sprinkles them with the blood of the hen and then spits
178 a piece of chewed kola nut on them. If he does not have family boli
-- an unusual situation -- he sacrifices to his ancestors on the doorsill
of the entry hut, or b'lon, and on the kârâ, if he owns one.

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A kârâ is an earthern bas-relief inside the b'lon, or entry hut, which very crudely depicts a woman and a man and is used as an altar.

When the sacrifice is accepted -- that is, if the feathered biped has the fortunate idea of not dying with its wings spread and its breast on the ground, and if the pieces of kola nut, cut in two, which are thrown on the boli or the kârâ, fall with the rounded part on the ground and the pulp on top (2) -- there is an unequivocal "yes" on the part of the family, and all hearts rejoice. As to the fourouboloma tigi, he delightedly sucks his piece of kola nut, he savors his piece of the hen, and the scene of the sacrifice is far from his memory. Yet he trembled when, crouched before his boli or the kârâ, altar of his ancestors, the father-in-law cut the throat of the victim and threw down the kola nut, saying in a solemn and cavernous voice: "We have consulted the diviners, and they all agree in praising the suitor; if they are to be believed, he is worthy of our daughter. But you, what do you think of this union? If it is to be /203/ happy, if divorce is not to be feared, if it is to be fertile, accept my sacrifice, I pray you. In that case, grant them wealth, long life, many children, and peace. This hen and the kolas are indeed for the sacrifice, and it is a true sacrifice which the suitor offers you through my mediation."

This manner of accepting or rejecting a suitor is most ingenious! Since everything is referred to the decision of the diviners, the boli, and the shades of ancestors, any dispute on the part of a rejected man is impossible, no quarrel arises between the two families, and when a more fortunate suitor obtains the little girl's hand, he need not fear the hate, rancor, or vengeance of his predecessor for he has nothing to do with the latter's misfortune.

2. A procedure which is repeated up to three times in case of failure.

3. The Betrothal

584 583 I have often heard it said that a Bambara marriage is nothing less than a sale and a purchase: the woman goes to the highest bidder. I cannot share such an opinion. The suitor gives a bride price, I know, but this bride price is a present to the fiancée, and its entire value is returned to him. When the fiancée's father receives it, he treats himself to trousers, a cap with three points, a new blouse, a few jugs of d'lo, or millet beer, and many kola nuts; but when the wedding comes, it is the father who provides his child with loincloths, gourds, pottery, in fact her whole trousseau, and however slight his vanity -- and what Bambara is not vain! -- he will spend the bride price and even more.

When the suitor has been able to gather two to three kilograms of salt, a few bits of cloth for the little girl and her mother, and a portion of the bride price (1), which varies between 25 and 30 francs, he pays his respects to the family through his intermediary, the fourouboloma tigi, or guardian of the wedding gifts. The latter goes to the father-in-law, escorted /204/ by a few young girls who carry the fouroufen, or bride price, the gifts of cloth and salt, and a few jugs

[436] 1. The bride price is set at ba mougan ni tan, about 24, 000 cowrie shells. Each ba equals 10 kémé. The kémé is worth 80 cowrie shells, the ba 800 cowrie shells. In ordinary times a 5-franc piece is exchanged for ba dourou ni kémé dourou, or 4, 400 cowrie shells. The value of the cowries is subject to rise and fall, so that the 5-franc piece is sometimes worth 4, 400 cowrie shells; at other times the cowries drop and the 5-franc piece is worth ba woro ni kémé dourou, or 6 ba and 5 kémé, or ba wolonouia, 7 ba.

583 of d'lo, or millet beer. The head of the village and his council,
584 friends, and the to-n-déou, or members of the association of the
fla-n-to (1), go at once to pay their respects to the happy father and
583 to tell the girl that her betrothal is being celebrated and cannot hence-
584 forth be broken without a grave and important reason. Soon the b'lon
of /sic/ the entry hut and the inner court are full of crouching men
who drink d'lo, or millet beer, and soon ramble in their talk. And

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1. The association of the fla-n-to, with a to-n-tigi at its head, is made up of several groups of to-n-déou, or members of the association. Every group corresponds to a circumcision. /sic/ When many are circumcised at the same time, they form a group, but if there are only one, two, or three, they join the group of those circumcised at the preceding occasion. The to-n-dé invites to his betrothal and his wedding the members of his group, who were circumcised with him, and the members of the older groups. As to the younger groups, he does not invite them. The women also form an association of fla-n-to similar to that of the men but separate from it. The woman who is at the head of the association, usually the oldest in the village, is called to-n-tigi, or massa fama, queen, and the to-n-dé mouso (the to-n-dé women) call her m'ba, mother. They are summoned only to the wedding.

583 the fiancée has time to reflect and to open her heart to love, for her
584 wedding will not take place until one, two, or often three years after
excision; once this has been performed she will be qualified to be a
mother.

584 From the time of the engagement the two families draw together,
establish friendly relations, and visit each other. After the girl has
594 grown up, during the year or two that elapse between the excision
and the wedding, she spends two weeks to a month each year with her
parents-in-law. One might say that in Bani country, this is the
general custom (2). When the young men sent to bring her arrives,
she /205/ hides in the hut of friends, and the little band runs right
and left looking for her. They soon find her, members of her family--

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2. In the environs of Ségou this custom is less comon. Often the two families come to an agreement, and on the appointed day the fiancée goes to the home of her fiancé, accompanied by a young man appointed by the council of elders. After the last festival of the circumcision (*baloko déou don bo*, "the coming out of the circumcised"), some, even many villages hold a festival for the fiancée. She goes to the home of her fiancé all loaded with beads and necklaces and escorted by all the young girls of the village. The fiancé bears all the cost of this festival, called *mousodjira*, "to show the wife." All the youths of the village and of neighboring villages give 80 to 160 cowrie shells to help the fiancé cover the expenses. [43]

584 574 her mother, step-mothers, and sisters -- join them, and the little procession goes to the religious head, the *gnéna-sonnaba*, priest of the *dasiri*, genie protector of the village, who gives some advice to the child and sets the day of her return. On leaving the village, the girl stops and refuses to go on; the youths take hold of her and carry her in their arms, and she abandons herself to cries and shouts that must not cease before she reaches the edge of the fields that surround the village.

584 431 Although the bride price is set, it is more difficult to determine the value of the fiancé's presents of millet, hens, salt, kola, and *d'lo*, or millet beer. The size of these presents, given gratuitously over four, five, or six years and often more, depends largely on the fortune of each man and the prestige of the fiancée's family. At harvest time he supplies one or two baskets of millet /each/ weighing 20 to 40 kilograms; at the great annual sacrifice offered to the family *boli* he provides a hen, salt, kola nuts, and *dégé*, or millet flour mixed with honey water. From time to time he gives his prospective father-in-law some well-filled jugs of *d'lo* containing at least 20 to 30 liters /each/, and if there is a festival at his home, he is careful not to forget the latter. He shows his generosity at the festival on the occasion of his fiancée's excision (1); at the *da woro*, or festival of the sixth day, he shows himself to be generous, and the guardian of the wedding gifts takes her the required present, a loincloth in black stripes on a yellow background, four to five pounds /the French *livre* equals one half a kilogram, a little more than a pound avoirdupois/ of butter, two to three kilograms of salt, 20 to 30 liters of *d'lo*, or millet beer, an equal amount of *dégé*, or flour mixed with honey water, and finally some decorative ornaments -- a bead necklace, a piece of amber, a bracelet. These last gifts are in no way required; they are given purely out of amiable courtesy.

584 606 One little fact without importance, remains to be noted. From the time of the engagement, the fiancée may not eat in the presence

(1) A Bambara man is not present at the festival which takes place at the excision of his fiancée.

584 606 of her father-in-law nor linger with him in endless conversations, especially when no witnesses are present, and the fiancé is subject to the same rules with regard to his mother-in-law. /206/

583 584 In a word, they may no longer even look at each other! If the fiancé dies before the wedding, it is in good taste for the girl to become the fiancée of a younger brother, but if there is no brother she regains her liberty and keeps her bride price. If the fiancée dies, the family usually keeps the bride price they have received; custom permits the fiancé to demand the return of half the bride price but, in the eyes of everyone, to do so would indicate a lack of tact and delicacy. But if for one reason or another the engagement is broken, the bride price and small presents are returned to the fiancé in their entirety.

4. The Wedding of a Young Bambara Girl

584 585 The fiancé asks for the girl (1). -- The fourou fen (the bride price and small presents) have been paid, the fiancée is a grown young lady who has long been excised, and only rags remain of the beautiful yellow loincloth with black stripes which was received at the da woro, or festival that follows the sixth day after the circumcision. A kouara -- she has reached her full development and henceforth can only decline in grace and beauty, and her fiancé desires her. The

1. It happens sometimes that the family cannot refuse the suitor's request for the girl, although she does not have all her trousseau. In that case the wedding festival is put off, but she is led to her husband, and a little private celebration takes place on that day. When she has her trousseau she goes back to her family, and the big festival is held.

574 fourouboloma tigi, or guardian of the wedding gifts, puts on his festive 575 clothes and takes 5 kémé, or 400 cowrie shells, to the father-in-law. The gesture is understood by everyone and means: "When will the wedding be?" A Negro has only one love: his interests; only one affect of affection: himself. In his egotism he thinks only of himself and of receiving cowrie shells; his heart is not unduly stirred. He thinks of his fields, his business, and his stomach. The members of the family, from the oldest to the youngest, have only these words on their lips: "How she handles the hoe! What a good tongue for praising merchandise and selling it; how well she cooks!" And it all stops there, for no one pays heed to her feelings. In vain will she cry that she detests her fiancé, that she does not love him ~~at all~~, never could love him, and that she prefers another; in vain will she flee the /207/ paternal roof and take refuge with a sympathetic relative; she must obey! Her father and mother have received the oracle of the diviners; in accepting the sacrifice, the family boli have accepted the suitor, and they /the family/ cannot oppose the orders of their gods or, if one prefers the other term, their family fetishes (1).

[836] 1. Custom decrees that the girl spend one night with her fiancé 10 or 15 days before the wedding. Some families dispense with this practice. The whole procedure is carried out in privacy: the girl arrives at night, brought by a member of her family, and withdraws at dawn. The two following expressions denote this procedure: Ou tara di à tjéma ("they have gone to give her to her husband").

Moreover, I must admit that there are very few Bambara women who openly show their antipathy. They cannot resist paternal authority and freely give themselves to the man to whom they have been betrothed; "an ka lada do, it is our custom," they say, and the idea does not occur to them that there could be another.

551 passing before his door and thus empty him of his nyama. The man
576 grows thin and poor. The griot may bring about his death with evil
778 words, their nyama attacking the heart, the chest, then the entire
564 body of the victim.

The griot's power over the person he flatters becomes more involved and varies according to what he is reciting. If he recites the burudyu several times, if he speaks at length of the ancestors, their nyama enters his mouth and is added to his own, thus reinforcing the power of the word. Thus, when the griot recites a barama without receiving payment, his nyama attacks the person spoken to. If this offense is repeated and if the burudyu is recited, the man is forced to pay if he does not wish to be attacked by the much more formidable nyama of the ancestors.

In these various situations, the tere of the person flattered intervenes: if it is good, it fights to defend the person, but if it is weak or wicked, it joins the ancestral forces and the person is doubly threatened.

The recitation is always made by the griot before a witness so that his action will be more binding and make the miser lose face. On the other hand, a man who pays the griot generously is looked after by the latter who sings of his generosity on all occasions and announces the sum he has received; often he does not hesitate to exaggerate the total amount received if he can hope to profit by doing so (1).

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[789] 1. If the griot knows that the wealthy man he is addressing is miserly, he rubs his teeth with roots which he knows has the power to make his words even more effective.

[554] Sometimes a man reaches a secret agreement with the griot in order to gain prestige. He publicly gives him a considerable sum, part of which the griot returns the following day as agreed upon. The gift is so generous that none can surpass it.

● [585 561] This practice is particularly apparent at the time of marriage. The men of the same age grade as the groom outdo each other in their gifts to the griot. The one who has given most passes for the most generous. Sometimes the griot invents a new barama on the spot even though he does not know the device.

584 Though disrupted marriage arrangements are rare, this may happen through a variety of causes and is settled by agreement or, in case of conflict, by arbitrators.

● 585 Delivery of the bride. Because this act involves a change of status for the parties concerned, it requires the ritual practices of a magical character of which we saw an example in connection with the funeral of a fa. Their purpose is to make sure that change takes place without harm to anyone.

When the payer has fulfilled his obligations and behaved according to custom, the girl must be given to him on the date agreed upon. On that day, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and the fiancé's friends, accompanied by musicians, appear at the home of the girl's parents to receive and lead away the bride. The parents agree, but the girl has disappeared. The newcomers start at once to look for her, but she cannot be found because her relatives and friends help her to hide. The hunt arouses both sides and leads to brawls; as the excitement reaches its height, the girl is found. Only the intervention of the dugu-tigi himself can put an end to the conflict. He gives his permission to the furu-bolo-ma-tigi to take the girl away and advises her to follow.

Then the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and his companions, acting as an escort, [202] take the girl toward the exit from the village. Just as she is about to leave the enclosure, however, she refuses to go a step farther, and the young men pretend to do violence to her in order to force her to accompany them in spite of her cries. She fights and screams until she is beyond the limits of the village territory. Then she suddenly becomes calm, wraps herself in the large piece of cloth given by her fiancé, and gaily follows her companions, who carry her furu-fen' and have by now joined the group of the furu-bolo-ma-tigi. The troop of young men bring up the rear and make a great racket with drums and trumpets and from time to time give the traditional [583] marriage cry: "kuyo! kuyo! (1)."

1. This simulated abduction must be interpreted as a separation rite.

● 525 The well-known cry of the wara-mina-den' of the fiancé's brotherhood is heard at various points along the way; the god is watching over his disciple's fiancée and chasing evil spirits from her path.

When they approach the fiancé's village, the young men go to the head of the procession, while the fiancée's companions take their places behind her. The whole troop begins to dance to the rhythm of the drums and trumpets. The women seem to hold back and take a long time to reach the entrance to the village a few hundred meters away.

At this moment, the wara-mina-den' utters a loud and final cry; his mission is accomplished.

The women of the village welcome the newcomers and lead the girl to her husband's house. Other women join the procession. Several groups of singers are formed, and the dancers proceed slowly to the couple's house. There, in an inner court, the crowd settles down; everyone drinks, eats, dances, or sings as the spirit moves him.

The dressing of the bride begins as soon as she arrives. Her hair is taken down; the string and the beads she wears about her hips are removed; and she is helped with her bath. Then, wrapped in a white skirt cloth, she lies down on the nuptial couch.

Her husband joins her after escaping from his roistering friends.

At daybreak there is a sudden shot. Loud and frequent shouts of "kuyo! kuyo!" rise above singing [203] and the noise of an orchestra. The old women burst into the nuptial hut, carrying warm water for the ablutions. The husband comes out and goes off to sit on a mat in the courtyard with the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and his friends.

The bride appears wrapped in her marriage skirt; behind her the old women wave a piece of linen that gives visible evidence
[533] of the accomplishment of intercourse, and dyeli-moso (griot [Ed., feminine]) sing of love. The young girls who accompanied the bride surround her at the exit from the courtyard and lead her to a hut arranged so that she may rest there. For eight days she has all her meals there, and seated on a mat, with a white veil on her head, she spends the days spinning with her companions.

585 The husband spends the whole day after the wedding night in his hut, where relatives, friends, and neighbors come to congratulate him and present minor gifts of food. He invites them to eat and drink. The wedding is thus prolonged for several days, depending on the husband's wealth, during which time the couple is at the disposal of the guests.

[556] Rich families like to show off the trousseau, jewels, and gifts bestowed on the bride, so during the whole day after the wedding night everything is paraded with great pomp through the village by people of caste who proclaim the items and exaggerate their value. Toward evening the presents are shown one last time to the bride, who sits on a low bench with her face hidden behind a kind of tray, woven with grass, which she holds in her hand. [533] Drums and other instruments make a great uproar, while a female griot, standing behind the bride, sings love songs. Every- [302] one admires the bride's hair, which is artistically braided in a flat crest with two small braids on each side of the face hanging in front and behind the ears. The women finger her jewels as they admire them and her thick-soled sandals.

To conclude the ceremony, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives cowries to the leader of the singing, and guns are fired for the [481] last time. Then the bride gets up, glides over the ground without lifting her feet, and enters the hut with her companions, while the guests retire. [204]

Second Marriage

595 The number of wives is limited only by the necessity of providing each one with a suitable living. This means that, theoretically, polygamy is a privilege of the rich. Some men practice it in order to pass as rich men, which flatters their pride, while others use it to gratify a sensual temperament. Most often, however, people in modest circumstances have several wives solely for economic reasons.

When an only wife has young children and no servant to help her, she is extremely overworked. When this is the case,

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the blacksmith. The doll is given the name of the dead infant, the
[304 child carries it with him to the circumcision, and, when he marries,
589] he buries the doll with a piece of wood representing the wife of the
deceased.

845 Twins are replicas of Faro, their presence is beneficial, and
they are considered invulnerable.

The albino is supposed to be the issue of sexual relations held
826 833 in sunlight, a breach of taboo. He, too, is a new being. His wanzo
304 is so active that the circumciser must take great precautions before
operating on it.

826 He is considered to be endowed with special powers which
782 make him a choice victim for the sacrifices offered to the spirit of
the water.

To the children of blacksmiths, the name is given near the
553 paternal forge in the presence of all the artisans. An old man pre-
326 pares seven little sticks, giving each the name of an ancestor. Three
of these are drawn at random from the group, and the third gives
the name of the baby. The head of the baby is rubbed with the axe
Kongobwona, and his shaved hair is soaked in sacrificial blood.

In the Bamako region two chickens or a sheep are sacrificed
553 to celebrate the name-giving. The distribution of the meat is made
782 according to established custom. If it is a chicken, the patriarch
receives the head and the gizzard, while the wing and white meat go
to the old woman who washed the baby during the first eight days.
If it is a sheep, the patriarch receives [91] the ribs (because they are
a bulwark, and the patriarch is the defender of the village) and the
heart; the blacksmith receives the shoulder; the infant's family gets
the head (so that the infant will go ahead), the back (symbol of
prosperity), and the limbs (supports one wishes the new-born to have);
the blood which runs on the ground is destined for the infant's protective
ancestors. Then the family divides the raw meat with the heads
of family, and the old woman thus receives her part indirectly.

c. Circumcision

881 A male infant is born, but he still keeps (because of the
304 primordial twinship) the prepuce as the physical support of the female
831 sex. He will only be freed of this by circumcision. It is this operation
that definitively determines his sexual qualification and renders
him fit to contract marriage.

[ie., the surviving child of twins. -Analyst]

584 She returns to her own family every year at the beginning of the rainy season and goes back to her future in-laws at the start of the dry season.

583 Every year she takes home 30 kola nuts and three cocks, and
584 the young man's *fa* begins to pay the bride price which traditionally came to eight oxen and five sheep. The girl returns at the dry season bringing *fonio*, fruits of the karite, and *sumbalé* (for making sauces), and other products.

583 She is married after the appearance of the first menses, and
585 her husband continues to pay the bride price in the following order: a cow, a bull, a heifer ...

583 Throughout the engagement period, the young man must
584 cultivate the field of his future parents-in-law.

583 Among the Bambara who currently practice the exchange of young girls between two families for marriage purposes, the compensation is no longer paid, although gifts and contributions are still given.

584 On the day of the marriage the girl is accompanied by an
585 attendant who represents her twin, while the young man also is aided by an attendant, and the two couples symbolize the union of the two couples of [94] primordial twins. Finally, the young girl is carried up to the abode constructed for her by her husband. She is followed by a cortege of seven women, each carrying part of the bride's gifts. The investigation being carried out by Mme. Dieterlen in the Bambara country indicates that the seven women represent the seven
[826] seeds that each man possesses in his clavicles; the bride is the *fonio* seed that is brought to the husband's village, for marriage is considered to be a cultivation.

The marriage of twins requires slightly different rites. When the twins are not of the same sex, the boy must deflower the girl before she marries (there is only one intercourse). If the twins are two boys, the first to marry must let his wife have relations with his twin. If the twins are girls, the husband of the first to be married must also unite with the second.

f. Death and Funerals

761 Death dissociates the different elements which make up the
764 person. The purpose of the funeral rites is to gather the spiritual

291 [177] designs. European influence has naturally made itself felt in the fashions, and European thread is replacing native cotton thread, but the color symbolism in the bands is retained. Even though European fabrics invade the markets more and more, the traditional clothes remain the most sought after, although they have undergone certain modifications inspired by European fashions even while remaining very original.

291 531 585 Although the Bambara go barefoot, in certain circumstances they make ornamented clogs to give to the new bride. These sandals are decorated with geometric designs, engraved with a hot iron by the blacksmith, that symbolize the twinship, the multiplication of children, the parents, the husband's family, the couple's language, and the sealing of the association. These signs are encircled by the sign of the union of the whole. Also, the whole ritual of taking possession lasts for several days.

302 Coiffure. At the present time, the adult males no longer wear the traditional coiffure consisting of two plaits at the side, but the children still have their hair shaved and braided according to custom. Thus, the uncircumcised boys wear a crest of hair going from the forehead to the nape of the neck, while the rest of the head is shaved. The crest symbolizes the [99] divine serpent. The children of blacksmiths also wear, at the sides of the head, two circles of hair which are cut by lines representing the forge. When a child is born after the death of several brothers and sisters, only half of his head is shaved in mockery, so that the dya subject to this pretended neglect will decide to stay in the child. The children of Marabouts have their hair shaved in such a manner that it forms a spiral which starts in the middle of the skull and covers the whole head. Afterwards, bands of hair are shaved in a manner to trace a cross on this spiral. The little girls wear a small braid across the forehead, falling on the left side, while married women wear a braid at each side of the head. These braids are made by adding fibers of the da, shining with karite, plaited with the hair. Finally, the women wear
301 22 gold rings at the ears, images of the 22 primordial elements, or sometimes a single large ring in the form of a crescent closed by threads of red cotton, which is a résumé of the 22 others. These rings keep impure words from the ear, which plays an important
[776] role in generation; it is through the ornamentation that the spirits hear what is said to man.

inheritance, and rarely by purchase. The gnâ pass from father to son by inheritance, but it is always possible to obtain one by purchase; all that is necessary is to find in the village the number of people needed to make up the staff of the idol, provided one is not opposed by the sorcerer's veto.

Every purchase of a powerful boli occasions celebrations, festivals, and drinking bouts that last from three to eight days. These festivals are like marriage celebrations. Surrounded by his staff, the new fetish owner spends the day offering d'lo, or millet beer, to the many friends who come to congratulate him and give him their gifts. It is not until evening that he leaves his b'lon, or entry hut, and, followed by initiates carrying the idol, goes to the sacred grove or under the trees chosen to be the meeting place henceforth. The night is spent in dancing and shouting hymns.

In the eyes of the Negro to buy a gnâ is to become united with it in a firm and indissoluble way. It is equivalent to marrying the fetish, and they have no other phrase to express their idea, their notion of the matter: "A yé boli fourou, he got married"; "ayé boli fourou gosi, he has stamped and sealed his marriage with the boli" (2); "ne ka fourouboloma faro (3) flé, here is my wedding present";

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1. The sinsin, the gnéna of twins, is an exception, as it may also be bought.

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2. Fourou gosi: In order to enjoy the marriage lawfully, whoever marries must, in the presence of the head of the village, pay his wife's parents a handful of kola nuts -- usually eleven, one more than the required ten.

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3. Fourouboloma fara: This is the name of the small present of cowrie shells given to a

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585 /newly married/ couple by their friends. It varies from 40 cowrie shells to 2 *kémés*, or 160 cowrie shells.

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425 "*à taboli konio kera*, the marriage of his *boli* has taken place."

435 The value of a *gnâ* varies between 30 and 40 francs, and whoever owns one can from then on make them. If one counts the presents given to the maker and to his staff, the dogs, goats, and kola nuts offered in sacrifice on the day of his reception, and finally the beer of the wedding, its value is undoubtedly more than 100 francs.

5. Differences among the Powerful *Boli*

778 I class all the powerful *boli* into three main groups. In the first I place those which formerly were the prerogative of kings, princes, and ministers; in the second, those which have neither temple nor sacred grove; and in the third, those which have a temple and a sacred grove, or at least one or the other.

Those of the first group are not at all numerous, and the most popular are the *Safolo*, the *Kongoba*, the *Nan-Woloko*, and the *Kouantara*. They are usually found in villages which were formerly capitals of cantons or provinces and are in the hands of people whose families have included a *kafotigi* (head of a canton) or a *fama* (king or petty king), i.e., a head of a province, a minister of the king on whom the title of ruler (*fama*) was bestowed.

Everything leads me to think that in the beginning these were merely fetishes responsible for watching over the king and the people of his court, analogous to what above I have called the family *boli*. At present they have become *boli* of sects. But although all circumcised men can enter the ranks of those who pay them respect, only married men become initiated, and the orgies in their honor are private orgies whose entire cost is borne by graybeards.

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782 According to legend, slaves were sacrificed to these *boli* in the time of the Bambara kings. Since then the worshippers have been content to offer them millet beer, hens, and goats in addition to the

584 606 of her father-in-law nor linger with him in endless conversations, especially when no witnesses are present, and the fiancé is subject to the same rules with regard to his mother-in-law. /206/

583 584 In a word, they may no longer even look at each other! If the fiancé dies before the wedding, it is in good taste for the girl to become the fiancée of a younger brother, but if there is no brother she regains her liberty and keeps her bride price. If the fiancée dies, the family usually keeps the bride price they have received; custom permits the fiancé to demand the return of half the bride price but, in the eyes of everyone, to do so would indicate a lack of tact and delicacy. But if for one reason or another the engagement is broken, the bride price and small presents are returned to the fiancé in their entirety.

4. The Wedding of a Young Bambara Girl

584 585 The fiancé asks for the girl (1). -- The *fourou fen* (the bride price and small presents) have been paid, the fiancée is a grown young lady who has long been excised, and only rags remain of the beautiful yellow loincloth with black stripes which was received at the *da woro*, or festival that follows the sixth day after the circumcision. *A kouara* -- she has reached her full development and henceforth can only decline in grace and beauty, and her fiancé desires her. The

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(1) It happens sometimes that the family cannot refuse the suitor's request for the girl, although she does not have all her trousseau. In that case the wedding festival is put off, but she is led to her husband, and a little private celebration takes place on that day. When she has her trousseau she goes back to her family, and the big festival is held.

584 fourouboloma tigi, or guardian of the wedding gifts, puts on his festive
585 clothes and takes 5 kémé, or 400 cowrie shells, to the father-in-law. The gesture is understood by everyone and means: "When will the wedding be?" A Negro has only one love: his interests; only one affect of affection: himself. In his egotism he thinks only of himself and of receiving cowrie shells; his heart is not unduly stirred. He thinks of his fields, his business, and his stomach. The members of the family, from the oldest to the youngest, have only these words on their lips: "How she handles the hoe! What a good tongue for praising merchandise and selling it; how well she cooks!" And it all stops there, for no one pays heed to her feelings. In vain will she cry that she detests her fiancé, that she does not love him at all, never could love him, and that she prefers another; in vain will she flee the /207/ paternal roof and take refuge with a sympathetic relative; she must obey! Her father and mother have received the oracle of the diviners; in accepting the sacrifice, the family boli have accepted the suitor, and they /the family/ cannot oppose the orders of their gods or, if one prefers the other term, their family fetishes (1).

[836] 1. Custom decrees that the girl spend one night with her fiancé 10 or 15 days before the wedding. Some families dispense with this practice. The whole procedure is carried out in privacy: the girl arrives at night, brought by a member of her family, and withdraws at dawn. The two following expressions denote this procedure: Ou tara di à tjéma ("they have gone to give her to her husband").

Moreover, I must admit that there are very few Bambara women who openly show their antipathy. They cannot resist paternal authority and freely give themselves to the man to whom they have been betrothed; "an ka lada do, it is our custom," they say, and the idea does not occur to them that there could be another.

585 Departure of the bride. Exorcism of her hut by the boli of the village. Her entrance into the village. The first night. -- It is night, the hour when families crouch in a circle around the gourds of to, or millet gruel, stuff themselves with food, and noisily suck their fingers. Why is it, then, that this evening the women hurry in such numbers to the public square with gourds on their heads? At every turning of the streets there are people who are cleaning their long flintlocks, and in the b'lon, or entry huts, there is the deafening noise of drums as the skins are stretched and they are tuned. And the cries that fill the village crack your ears and jar your nerves. What is it then? A young woman, a fiancée, who is struggling in the arms of two husky fellows and shrieking -- for appearances, since as soon as she is outside the walls her cries cease and she places on her head the long cloth (a present from her husband) from which she can make herself three loincloths and in very lively fashion follows the women and girls who are carrying her trousseau. The band of young men, with drums, trumpets, and guns, hurries after her, and there are songs of joy and hand clappings, and from time to time the long-drawn-out cry, "kouyo, kouyo," uttered by an old woman, tears the peace and silence of the night. /208/

585 189 118 And while the bride, in short steps, continues her triumphal march, a strange scene takes place in the village where she is going. The chief boli of the village has left its putrid hiding place, and while women, children, and the uninitiated, huddled in their huts, tremble at each roar given forth by its herald, it runs about the alleys in the hands of its initiates (1). This is not all; it goes into the husband's

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1. Ou tara djira à tjéma k'a d'a ma: "They have gone to show her to her husband in order to give her to him." The real expression is as follows: A wéléla k'a se-n-don, A se-n-donna; "Her husband has summoned her in order to sleep with her. She has slept with her husband." The answer is: Fourou kera: "They got married."

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585 court and enters the hut of the bride. At that instant the *boli déou,* 789 sons of the *boli,* sing the sacred hymn and abandon themselves to 778 their dances, and the god itself lies on the white cloth spread on the bed, on the mat where the poor girl soon will rest. Like every rite of this kind, this ceremony is called *kéné salo,* "to exorcise the place (2)," and its purpose is to drive out the harmful spirits who might have evil intentions against the woman and her husband. For the husband it is also a means of publicly bearing witness to his faith in the *boli* and his love and his attachment for it, in short, a means of obtaining its favor and attaining a happy and fertile marriage.

585 The young woman and her retinue continue to walk very slowly along the winding paths, and in the distance, here and there, a gunshot, a clapping of hands, and the famous cry of "*kouyo kouyo*" can be heard; the cry comes near and again draws away, depending on the bends of the path, only to draw near again with a stronger burst. Finally they arrive at the edge of the fields, 200 to 300 meters at most from the village. The young men run to place themselves at the head of the procession, the bearers of the trousseau pass to the rear, the drums roll, and the horns of the band roar loudly, for this is the dance. But what a dance! The women, bent double, move [535] their torsos back and forth in a manner which might best be compared with that of a worm that draws back and slowly stretches out; they glide over the ground without lifting /209/ their feet, leaving on the sand behind them a long trail as if a boa had passed by. With discouraging slowness, they go like this to the gate of the village, taking an hour, and often two, to cover these few hundred meters.

Covered with sweat and white with dust, the procession moves along the walls; here it is at the gate, firing guns, clapping hands,

2. *Kéné,* "surface," "plane," "floor," "court"; *salo,* "stroke gently with the hand"; this term denotes a movement of the hands that the sorcerers use when they are treating an invalid, "to make /ritual/ gestures."

585 shouting songs that partly drown out the rolling of the drums and the roaring of the horns of the band. The boli gives a last roar, and its priest carries it to its foul temple where the air breathed is warmed by the steam of hot blood and never cooled. The huts open their doors, and a stream of women, children, and young girls rush along the alleys and mingle their voices with those that are arriving. The [535] crowd of women divides into several groups, and again they bend double in unimaginable contorsions that a pen cannot describe; all parts of their bodies shake and move, as in a gentle wave that goes forward and folds back on itself. They glide over the ground raising a cloud of dust and, preceded by drums and in a blast of guns, they arrive thus slowly in the couple's inner court. Here everybody flinds food ready. The middle of the court is full of huge gourds of to, or gruel, dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water, and jugs full of d'lo, or millet beer, and while the newlyweds are enjoying their first love-making, drinking, eating, dancing, and shouting is going on near them. For I forgot to say that the young bride will long since have left her frenzied, howling mob. As soon as the boli has been put away, the women come to lead her to her dwelling (1). Before taking her into the marital sanctuary, where her husband is already

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[595 592] 1. Every Bambara woman has her own hut separate from her husband's. A Bambara man who has only one wife sleeps in his wife's hut; if he has several, on the contrary, the woman who is summoned goes to lie in that of her husband. Some rich men provide each wife with a hut, an inner court, and a b'lon, or entry hut. In that case the first wife does not have a hut separate from that of her husband, and the husband goes to spend his nights with one or another as he chooses.

● 585 awaiting her, they undo her young girl's hair; they take off the cloth ribbon three /210/ fingers wide which is fastened in front at her waist and passes between the legs to fall behind in a loose, soft train; they unknot her belt of beads and bells; they help her to take her bath and lay her on the couch, rolled in a loincloth (1).

> 1. This ceremony terminating the wearing of a young girl's attire is often carried out in the village before leaving, especially if the village to which the bride is going is far away and will not be reached until late at night.

Suddenly all the guns are fired and many loud "kouyo kouyo" ring out, overpowering the songs, the noise of the drums, and that of feet beating on the ground in rhythm, and old women with wrinkled, parchment-like skin rush into the hut with warm water for ablutions(2).

> 2. This whole scene takes place in the morning, a few moments before sunrise.

Dressed in his new blouse, the groom leaves the dwelling of his bride, greets the strangers who fill his court, and sits down on the mat with the fourouboloma tigi and his close friends. The bride also quickly appears and walks across the court. She is dressed in [291] the loincloth of married women which is held at the waist by a thin cord while graceful red and white pompons, often marked with yellow and green lines, hang discreetly at the sides along her thighs. She walks with timid eyes, her head bowed, and a band of women story-tellers /griottes/ (singers) follow her with their songs of love; they tell of the delicacy of her skin, the elegance of her form, the breadth of her torso, the firmness of her breasts. There is still more -- and at the very least one would blush; the old women in back shake a large, bloody white cloth (3), which bears witness to her virginity

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3. Even those who have known their husbands before this day are honored in this fashion, for the family will have kept this cloth faithfully, and if there is occasion to unfold it, they are very proud.

before all. In a word, everybody praises the bride for having been [831] able to remain a virgin, but they praise her in Bambara, which means they do so in coarse terms, and in order to emphasize her virtue they present her with a bouquet of roses rolled in filth.

When the bride leaves the court, her maids of honor come to fetch her, and while the men stay and get drunk and the women continue to clap their hands, to sing at the top /211/ of their lungs, and to dance to the sound of the drums, trumpets, and guitars, she herself goes into the hut of friends to end the first night of her wedding in sleep. She may not go out for eight days; she takes her meals in the hut and spends her days sitting on a mat with a white veil on her head, spinning cotton in the company of her maids of honor (1).

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1. Many have freed themselves from this custom. Those who submit to it -- and they are in the majority -- can see their families again after these eight days of imprisonment and stay with them for two weeks. The bride's trip to her family at this time is called bina kounna sago. A few weeks later she again spends four days -- sou nani yé -- with her parents, and a little later she stays with them for one night, sou kélen si.

The groom stays in his hut for the whole day following the first night, and just about everybody, men and women, come to pay him

585 their respects. It is chiefly the d'lo, or millet beer, that attracts them, but under these circumstances the Bambara forget that they are beggars always holding out their hands. Although the visitors eat, drink, and get drunk, they pay for at least a part of what they consume.

585 431 Through the intermediary of the fourouboloma tigi, each guest and visitor, man or woman, gives the couple a fourouboloma fara, or wedding present, in kind or in money. They know, after all, that this is a means -- and the best-- by which they can empty a jug of d'lo, then a second, and finally several.

585 I know nothing more taxing than a Bambara wedding, which lasts two, three days, and often eight, if the husband is rich or wants to appear so. As long as the festivities last, the bride and groom are in their respective huts, surrounded by people who are sweating from having eaten or drunk too much, in an atmosphere warmed by foul breaths, and where there is never any fresh air. They do not have a minute, not an instant, of peace, and they cannot even attend to [514] the wants of nature without being escorted by a numerous band. After each meal there is in their courts a deafening noise of drums, horns, and songs shouted by voices never in harmony, and their ears hear nothing but these sentences, which must be a torture to them in the long run: "May your marriage be happy, may hands and feet spring from it (may you have many children), may God preserve your /212/ health, may He grant you a long and vigorous old age. Thank you, thank you, you have received us well, you have not been sparing of the d'lo, I am full (nzé dé fara -- or again -- né fara dérén) (1)."

1. On the day of her wedding, a young woman talks only with the many women who have come to keep her company and with her maids of honor. When the time has come when she can talk, she is offered a hen.

5. Exhibition of the Bride's Trousseau on the Evening of the First Day

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Although the sun is high above the horizon, it is already without strength and life, and at the door of the entry hut to the couple's dwelling, drums and trumpetings rage and give honor to the young woman who is seated in the midst of them on a tiny stool. She allows people to admire her adornment, her beads and her jewels, her rings of copper and tin and sometimes also of gold and silver; she allows them to rave about the shoes with soles three fingers thick, which are a gift of the groom, and about her artistic, finely braided coiffure, [302] a mountain of hair forming a crest across her head which ends in two thin locks in front of and behind each ear -- cavalryman's helmet with a broken chin strap, one might say, all ebony and thrown on its side. But she has given her heart and her promise, and she covers her face with the platter of braided grass that she holds in her right hand.

[534] The horns of antelopes, cows, and bulls, which are the Bambara trumpets, cease to roar, the drums stop booming, and a group of women (usually storytellers /griottes/, for they sniff out festivals and orgies with the scent of a vulture who smells carrion for 20 leagues) place themselves behind her and sing songs of love.

Preceded by a band of singers and a group of drums (2), the file djiralaou (the women who show the gourds) have run through the village all morning, going from hut to hut to display the trousseau. That is not enough; under the eyes of the bride it is displayed again, exhibited one last time, and without fail the connoisseurs /213/ assess it and, without any embarrassment whatsoever, set an accurate value on it (1).

[556] 2. This parade of the trousseau across the village only occurs at rich weddings when the trousseau is really worth the trouble. Most frequently only one exhibition takes place, the one in the evening.

The shoes with soles three fingers thick, the white blouse and the loincloth that the bride wears, together with the koundougou fini, a huge piece of cloth that can yield three or four loincloths, are a gift from the husband; the rest -- cloth, gourds, pottery, mortars for grinding millet, cotton to be carded and spun, all come to her from her family. The size of the trousseau depends a little on the family's fortune, but as a general rule it can be stated that at her marriage every young woman receives some ten tafé (pieces of cloth, one and a half to two meters long by one meter wide, which the women wind around their bodies), some 15 gourds, and for ornaments at least a bracelet and a bead necklace (2). One is sometimes present at hilarious scenes, for among the crowd of the curious that press around, there are inevitably some rejected suitors. They have put aside hatred and rancour, for the boli of the village protects her. Yet they love her; deep in their hearts they keep all their love for her, and it is certainly they, the wounded ones, who take her free hand and pour onto her knees a few handfuls of cowrie shells.

When the vainglorious exhibition of the trousseau is finished, the fourouboloma tigi or the guardian of the wedding presents, gives the mistress of song 5 kémé, or 400 cowrie shells, and the guns are fired one last time. The young bride gets up at once, her platter of grass still over her face, and gliding with her heels on the ground, not lifting her feet, she goes into her dwelling followed by two or three matrons, and then she disappears in a light cloud of dust. The crowd withdraws, for to follow her or even to stay where they are would be indiscreet.

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1. Sometimes this exhibition is made before the arrival of the young bride.

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2. Brides from rich families receive a slave called gouadani to do the cooking, as well as a cow, small chains for their feet, bracelets, a bead necklace with a piece of amber the size of a hen's egg, and two small gold earrings.

4: Henry--284 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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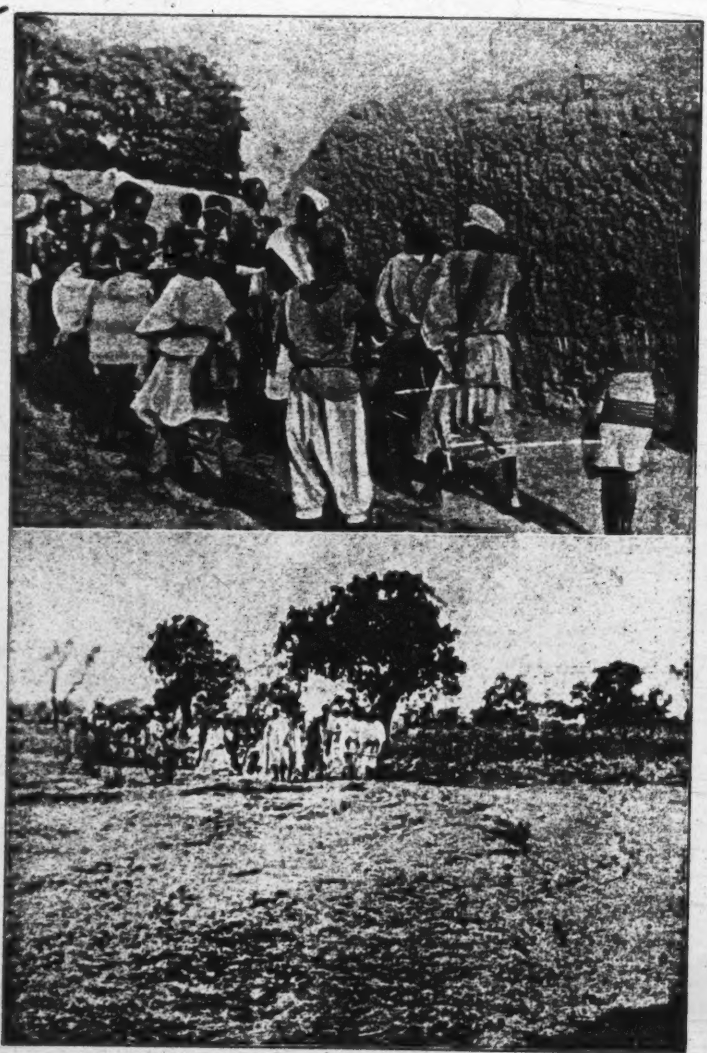

Bambara wedding: the guests go to thank the young bride after the meal. Above: Bambara wedding: procession of a young bride going to the home of her groom.

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583 Free union. This type of union rests on simple consent by the two parties without any bride price.

In principle a woman who has ceased to belong to a husband belongs to her original community, and she can make no decisions concerning her future without its consent. If she ignores this, the community can always intervene to force her to break off any engagement she may have made, and to this end it may use any means of absolute control.

This suffices to explain why a man who agrees to a union of this kind usually finds himself in the most serious difficulties. Not only can his wife and children be taken from him without [672] redress, but he can be sued for damages by the community to which the woman belongs.

It does sometimes happen, however, that certain women are released from the authority of their communities. These include women who are sole survivors of a community and, more commonly, those who have bought their freedom by dubious means. A free man who lives with such women achieves a union that to a great extent has the same effect as marriage. [206]

The Family

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583 The household. The lawful household is based on marriage. In order to grasp its essence, account must be taken of the interplay of two elements which are perfectly distinct but always closely involved in all human affairs: interest and sentiment. In a lawful household the essential interest is the bride price whose nature must be defined in order to understand its overwhelming importance.

583 Bride price is what is paid in exchange for a wife. It is understood that the status of the woman thus handed over does not change; if she was free before the event, she is still free after the payment of the bride price.

● 586 The marriage tie is such that it can always be broken by one or the other party; the one breaking the contract simply loses the bride price in the sense that if the husband initiated the rupture he cannot expect anything already paid to be returned. If the initiative was taken by the wife (or her community), then she must return what has been paid. Whatever the cause of rupture, however, the children always belong to the husband.

429 A person who is away for a long or indefinite period [217] delegates the direction of the family community for as long as necessary to a friend or relative. This substitute, however, is expected to act only in accordance with the customary counsel and the family of the absent person.

●[586] In case of divorce, the children always remain with the father. A divorced woman again comes under the guardianship of her own community.

768 429 When the mother dies, the father retains the administration of her property which belongs jointly to her children. If, however, one of her sons is married or of marriageable age and is competent, all such property is supposed to be handed over to him to administer in his capacity as fa of the uterine community.

When a father dies, his minor children are placed under the guardianship of the patriarch under whose authority the deceased was living. If he was independent, guardianship would be set up in accordance with his wishes which he would not have failed to make known.

In any event, if one of his sons is married or of marriageable age and sufficiently competent, he becomes fa of the familial community which gradually, as the younger sons grow up and establish families of their own, becomes a patriarchy such as we have described above.

[641] According to native law, deprivation of civil rights does not exist. In fact, however, persons who by reason of ill-health or senility are unable to comply with custom in carrying out their functions are supplanted by such persons as are designated by custom to replace them at the time of death.

596 614 Faya. The faya is the authority and power of the fa over all his dependents. It has the same character, differing only in extent, whether it concerns a familial or a patriarchal community.

Familial faya. Within the family, the fa theoretically has complete authority over everything that constitutes this community. It makes little difference whether he acts on his own initiative or whether he allows himself to be swayed by the

D. Position of Women

562 Women's society has remained much more impenetrable to European civilization. Women very rarely go to French schools, and unlike the men, who, during their military service and otherwise, are partly immersed in our system of civilization, they have few contacts with the Whites and appear to be even more attached to custom than their husbands. Very few speak French, and for all these [191] reasons their society has remained closed and very imperfectly known to the Whites.

562 858 Reasoning from what is known of their juridicial situation, we have deduced their inferior position. Perhaps a better knowledge of their role and of their importance in the society will lead us to very different conclusions. From the legal point of view, a woman is always a minor; she belongs first to her own community, to which she owes obedience, then to her husband's community. When the marriage is legal, that is to say, when the husband has paid the matrimonial settlement, the children belong to the husband; if not, in the case of concubinage, the woman's family can claim the child, because it belongs to the family, as does everything of the mother's.

562 582 583 Her marriage is decided on by the fa; although in practice the woman is often consulted indirectly beforehand, and she has a certain liberty in her choice. Even a slave can refuse to marry her master, despite gifts and promises. But a woman is forbidden to marry someone she considers a relative, that is, someone who belongs to her paternal line and who bears the same name she does. Exogamy is the rule.

562 593 Yet, when a woman marries, she keeps her paternal name and her personal taboos; sometimes she adds her name to that of her son, who normally bears the dyamu of his father. The woman remains very attached [75] to her family and goes to stay with them often. Among them she will find support in case of a difference of opinion [586] with her husband. In case of divorce through the fault of the husband, he loses all rights over the wife as well as the settlement he had paid.

595 [431] In the system of polygamy, the first wife is mistress of the house; the other wives gather at her place for meals. She distributes the husband's presents, but aside from these privileges, the rights of the wives are equal as are those of their children.

*173 On the following Monday all meant to arrive promptly at the meeting; however, out of habit, instead of coming to Ségou-Sikoro [69] they went to Ségou-koro (1). Ngolo went there too, [778] bringing with him the four principal idols: ba Koungo-ba, Nyédingué-dou, na Ngolo-ko and Kolokoloni. Addressing the throng, he cried: "Someone must be chosen to look after these idols, for they are languishing in neglect. As for me, I shall keep the sacrificial knife."

"If the idols are languishing," interrupted Ngolo Ké-ba, "it's your fault, because our master has entrusted them to you. That's your duty, quite as much as guarding our master's houses at Ségou-Sikoro. For our part, all we want are guns and gunpowder."

"I can't give you guns and powder," answered Ngolo Dyara, "but I will give you all of Ton-massa's wives as well as the wives of Kanou-ba-nyouma and Kafa-dyougou. I can't marry them myself because I've married Mamari's daughter. The powder and the guns remain my share."

"That's nothing but trickery," replied Ngolo Ké-ba. "Why should we need these women when we all have our own!"

"I'm not playing any trick," said Ngolo Dyara, "I'm [587] offering you these women because it is customary among us for brothers to marry the wives of their deceased brothers and, if I were to keep them for myself, you would certainly cry scandal and injustice."

"No, we shan't say anything, for we're at your mercy and very uneasy. We're caught like a rat in the claws of a cat."

"Well, I'll do you no harm, provided that you swear to leave me as the guardian of everything up to the time when we once more have a master."

He dismissed them and called a meeting of the chiefs for the following Saturday at Ba-dyi-soumalén-ba, on the left bank of the Niger. Each chief was expressly ordered to bring with him only his kasa-bearer (2).

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1. Which was, for all practical purposes, their holy place.

2. The kasa is a kind of woolen coverlet

583 Most often, however, the heirs either marry the widows
589 or send them home, or the women leave of their own volition.

768 An heir who marries a widow of the deceased must take
● [587] her back to her family, obtain their consent, and pay them a new bride price, required because a new usufruct is involved. The chronicle of Ségou shows us how this custom operates. Upon the death of Dina Wara, his son escorted to Ségou his father's widow, Biton's sister, whom he wanted to marry. He made sumptuous gifts in order to obtain consent.

In the case of a widow who is sent home or who leaves of her own accord, responsibility for the bride price already paid rests with the party who broke the contract, i.e., with the person who sent the widow away or, if she left of her own accord, with her family. The question of responsibility for the bride price is an important one, since usually neither party has either the means or the desire to make it up. As a result, every effort is made to evade payment, and it is common practice to resort to the most shameless bargaining of the woman involved. A husband is sought who will agree to pay the bride price asked by the one having rights over her, but most often, partial payment will be made when the woman is returned, the creditor's impatience is calmed by gifts, and the balance of the bride price remains wholly or partly unpaid [190] at the time of the debtor's death. This obviously results in insolvable complications during and after the marriage (1).

1. Concerning the lot of widows, see the discussions about the widows of Biton and Ngolo in the chronicle of Ségou.

567 Slaves. Enslavement comes about in many ways, but the
727 three principal ones are force, birth, and the result of obligations.

Force has perhaps been the primary cause of enslavement. A person who surrenders is the chattel of the conqueror, but the treatment given him varies in accordance with his previous situation. Was he a man of position? If he is violent, he is killed or sold; if it is thought that his relatives will pay a high ransom, he is kept. If he is clever enough to arouse sympathy, he often is

582 It is not unusual for an old man to marry a very young girl; indeed, it is common. Although a young man rarely marries a very old woman, a woman may marry a man much younger than she is as a result of the customs involved with inheritance.

Kinship in the direct line is an obstacle, *in infinitum*. Certain collateral relatives may not marry each other: uncle and niece, aunt and nephew. Marriage is also an obstacle in 587 some cases: a man may not be the husband of two sisters simultaneously, although he may marry them successively; the same restriction applies to a mother and daughter and an aunt and niece.

A man may not marry the wife of his son, nephew, or younger brother.

No marriage can take place between free persons in good standing and people of caste or, still less, slaves.

584 *Impediments*. From the opening of negotiations to the moment when the woman is handed over, there is a very long interval [196] of time during which impediments may arise.

First marriages, with which we are here concerned, are community affairs. A young man who would undertake the matter on his own would be most imprudent for he is no more his own master than is the girl, and their wishes are not of the least importance; this is an occasion for the *fa* to bring off a profitable deal. The *fa*, therefore, opposes any match which does not suit his plans and, indeed, forces the young man to share his views. If the latter rebels, the refusal of the *fa* to recognize the marriage will deprive the wife and children of any claim to legitimacy in the eyes of the community which he heads. There is no legal recourse possible against such a decision, because each community is answerable only to itself for matters concerning it.

The girl is even more completely under the control of [562] the community than the young man. Destined to be given in usufruct, she is entirely at the mercy of those holding this right over her. If she rebels, she runs the risk of being brutally brought to task through every means of coercion and, if in such circum- [851] stances she has children, they can be taken from her by the community, to which they will then belong. Custom gives her no rights over them whatsoever.

603 alliance]. (It is also customary for grandfathers and grandsons to eat together, while the sons eat apart.)

612 c. By Marriage: T'ɛ, K'ɛ, Kɛ = husband's name, corresponding
601 to *muso* (*muso*, term for spouse [female?]).

Bira nk'ɛ = father-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and all the male relatives of the husband or wife, corresponding to *bira-muso* = mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, and all female relatives of the husband or wife.

587 When a man dies, his wives go to his younger brother; and if a man's wife dies, he may marry her younger sister . . .

582 This patrilineal and patrilocal family must have grafted itself
611 onto an ancient matrilineal system (see the chapter on inheritance and position of women). The systems of clan exogamy and endogamy are united: two pairs of brothers and sisters marry among themselves; sons must take their wives from their mother's family, and marriages take place between cross-cousins; children never belong to their parents' category, while grandchildren and grandparents always are in the same category.

583 [53] We shall see that alongside this matrimonial system in which wives are exchanged there exists a system in which payments are made to the *fa* of the young girl.

596 The size of the united family varies, but it may include more than 80 persons. Labouret (1) gives us, as an example, the composition

1. *Op. cit.*

of the *blõ* of Ngolo Traoré at Mpiéla, Kolokani subdivision:

	Men	Women	Children
1. Household of Ngolo	1	8	15
2. Household of Samba, Ngolo's brother	1	2	4
3. Household of Dotné, Samba's son	1	2	3
4. Household of Denkoro, son of deceased Bakoro	1	3	1
5. Household of Fabugai, Ngolo's son .	1	2	4
6. Quarters of unmarried males, all sons of Ngolo and Samba . . .	5		
	10	17	19 [sic]
		46	

428 his oldest son. If there are only daughters, the goods are divided among them. Secondly, if there are no children, the heirs are the collateral males, or, in the absence of these, the collateral females. Third in line, if there are no collateral relatives, are relatives of preceding generations. In default of these, the fourth in line is the surviving spouse. If there is none, the estate is without heir, it goes to the head of the settlement (the dugu-tigi) when the settlement is an independent one, to the Fama in the contrary case (1)."

1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

428 587 562 In the Bougouni region, Aubert distinguishes two orders of succession: "First, that which concerns disposition of the women, second, that which concerns disposition of the privileges and wealth of the faya ... as far as the disposition of women is concerned, the men succeed each other in the following order: 1. the younger brother in order of primogeniture; 2. the men of the following generation in order of primogeniture; 3. the Fama ... And as far as wealth is concerned: 1. the oldest brother; 2. the son (always in order of primogeniture); 3. the father; 4. the younger brother in order of primogeniture; 5. the oldest relative; 6. the Fama." (2)

2. Aubert, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Bougouni Circle)[.

Women can neither inherit nor transmit.

428 For the Bamako circle, Ortoli sets forth the following rules of succession: "... Only men, in the following order, have rights of succession: 1. full brothers of the deceased in order of primogeniture, 2. half-brothers on the father's side in the same order; 3. sons of the deceased in the same order; 4. nephews of the deceased in the same order and following the order of primogeniture of the full and half-brothers (on the father's side); 5. grandsons and grandnephews following the same rule of order; 6. the village; 7. the Fama ... But as concerns the personal patrimony, the order of inheritance is as follows: 1. younger full brothers in order of primogeniture; 2. younger half-brothers on the father's side in order of primogeniture;

428 3. and 4. as above for the head of the family; 5. oldest full brother; 6. oldest half-brother on father's side; 7. the family; 8. the village; 9. the Fama ... Married women may transmit personal property in the following order: 1. her oldest son; 2. her husband's oldest son by another wife; 3. the husband; 4. the woman's family ... [587] At the death of her [73] husband, a woman is not required to marry his heir ." (1)

1. Ortoli, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bamako) [Bambara Customs (Bamako Circle)].

851 We should explain here the notion of seniority which is not always easy to distinguish in a polygamous society. As a matter of fact, when two wives of the same husband bear children at roughly the same time, an intermediary announces the births to the fa, and the first baby to be announced is considered to be the oldest. It may even happen that the first one to be announced is in fact the last-born; he nevertheless remains the senior. In the case of twins, the senior [845] is the one brought forth last, for it is thought that twins are not conceived at the same time, and that the last-born is the one first con- [551] ceived. Certain special names are used for the oldest children: N'tyi for boys, Nya or Nyélé for girls.

643 At the Fama's death, several lines of succession are involved: that of his own family, that of the family community, and that of the patriarchy.

As far as election to the title of Fama is concerned, we have seen how the new Fama was the senior male of the same generation and same family as the deceased Fama, or the eldest of the following generation. It is noteworthy that in the case of no male heir, the succession passes to the Fama's daughter whose husband governs in her name; but that is an exceptional case.

643 644 When the new Fama is designated by the notables, he occupies the fortified residence of the previous Fama, where the founding ancestor is buried; the women and children of the deceased Fama must leave these premises. While his father lived, the Fama's eldest son led a luxurious and independent life; he often commanded an important dugu, sometimes founded by himself. At his father's death, he is a very important person for the new Fama.

562 When the husband dies, the wives are considered the principal
428 wealth of the heir. Among certain Bambara, the wives are divided
768 among the brothers; the eldest brother chooses and then has the other
587 brothers choose in order of age. Among others, the heritage goes to
the children who must ally themselves with their father's wives. The
wives who do not want to remain with the heir have the option of returning to their families, providing the settlement is returned.

The wife may have personal property given to her by her
428 parents at the time of marriage. Among certain Bambara, the
562 father of the bride must give her the settlement paid by the husband,
and this becomes her personal property. When a widow dies, all of her goods go to her eldest son; if there is no son, half of her goods goes to her daughters, and the other half is divided among her father, her mother, and her brother. When a married woman dies without children, her goods are divided between her husband and her father; if she no longer has her father, half goes to her husband and the other half to her brothers and sisters.

On the other hand, we have seen how a woman may inherit all of the wealth of a family head, and even of a chief, in default of male heirs, and the Mali empire had a woman Keita at its head, daughter of Naré, fa Maghan.

A woman must not take part in any political discussion or
562 demonstration, which does not mean that her role in these matters
662 is nil. All the history of Mali is full of palace intrigues which reach their acute stage at the moment of a Fama's death and of the election of a new chief. It is at this moment that the women knew how to throw into the balance all the weight of their family's power to determine the new election.

Finally, we have seen that in a fashion parallel to the male
562 brotherhoods and societies, the women were organized into powerful
561 hierarchical societies according to their age classes and their degree
575 of initiation. These societies, where men do not enter, are still imperfectly known, but they are at least as formidable as the male brotherhoods.

The woman must pound the millet, draw water, and carry out
562 all the household chores, but when the man kills an animal, the meat belongs to the wife, and the man must accept in turn what she will give him.

595 she herself urges her husband to take another wife who will share some of the housework and relieve the situation. As a result, polygamy in this form resembles an association in which, through division of labor, each person seeks to provide his own support and to contribute to the general welfare.

Second marriages are identical with first marriages except that they are celebrated with somewhat less ostentation. Furthermore, a married man is more independent of his community in the material sense, and sometimes he is likewise more independent of the wife.

II. Other Types of Conjugal Union

● 588 Besides marriage there are innumerable kinds of conjugal
595 unions, such as agreements between capable individuals, that at times have legal consequences, some of which are even extensive. All these kinds may be grouped as two types: concubinage and free union.

595 Concubinage. This is a union in which at least one of the parties is a slave. It is very common for a master to treat one or more of his slaves like wives. Some men like the arrangement because it does away with all the difficulties arising from the bride price and the often exasperating involvements with an affinal family. Concubinage practiced by a free man has the disadvantage, however, of [205] his children being his slaves, since children retain their mother's status. It is true that this custom has been circumvented. It is accepted that the female slave is regarded as free once she has borne a child to a free husband and he has recognized it. This, however, does not erase the original stigma; children borne of free wives always
[578] consider themselves superior to their siblings whose mother was a slave. Family tensions arise out of this, which become acute upon the death of the fa.

Concubinage, practiced on a large scale by free men, has, indeed, perverted all the communities. Polygamous households have had grave difficulties because the wives, being different in rank and yet forced to live side by side, have sacrificed everything to their resentments and hatreds.

588 583 Free union. This type of union rests on simple consent by the two parties without any bride price.

In principle a woman who has ceased to belong to a husband belongs to her original community, and she can make no decisions concerning her future without its consent. If she ignores this, the community can always intervene to force her to break off any engagement she may have made, and to this end it may use any means of absolute control.

This suffices to explain why a man who agrees to a union of this kind usually finds himself in the most serious difficulties. 672 Not only can his wife and children be taken from him without redress, but he can be sued for damages by the community to which the woman belongs.

It does sometimes happen, however, that certain women are released from the authority of their communities. These include women who are sole survivors of a community and, more commonly, those who have bought their freedom by dubious means. A free man who lives with such women achieves a union that to a great extent has the same effect as marriage. [206]

The Family

592 583 The household. The lawful household is based on marriage. In order to grasp its essence, account must be taken of the interplay of two elements which are perfectly distinct but always closely involved in all human affairs: interest and sentiment. In a lawful household the essential interest is the bride price whose nature must be defined in order to understand its overwhelming importance.

583 Bride price is what is paid in exchange for a wife. It is understood that the status of the woman thus handed over does not change; if she was free before the event, she is still free after the payment of the bride price.

586 The marriage tie is such that it can always be broken by one or the other party; the one breaking the contract simply loses the bride price in the sense that if the husband initiated the rupture he cannot expect anything already paid to be returned. If the initiative was taken by the wife (or her community), then she must return what has been paid. Whatever the cause of rupture, however, the children always belong to the husband.

774 is the object of constant concern during agrarian rituals. The role of
the soul of plants is particularly noticeable in their medicinal uses.
Drawing a remedy from a plant may cause its death, liberating its
spiritual principles for the benefit of the sick man. Because of this,
such an act is equated with a blood sacrifice.

With the exception of the ngovo tomato, plants have no dya. The shadow (suma) of a plant is not independent like that of a man or an animal. It exists only through light effects and its movements are caused by the air and the wind moving its leaves and branches. This is what the Bambara means when he says that the dya has a life of its own and depends on Faro, whereas the plant's suma depends on the spirit Téliko, master of the air.

774 An individual's dya can be known and his temperament and life
787 possibilities assessed by measuring his shadow on the earth at noon.
804 The unit employed is the little finger, which is a corporeal symbol
843 of the person. If a pregnant woman is thus measured, the sex of the
child may be predicted.

When a boy or a girl gets married, it is said of them: a ye a dya
774 furu: "he (or she) has married his dya." For it is impolite to say that
[579] a person married anyone but his spiritual double. Besides, the union
of the couple is repeated by the union of their dya which like them-
[595 selves are of opposite sex. In olden times, male twins married the
851] same woman and the latter's dya was taken over by Faro in the Niger.
The child she conceived was the son of both husbands.

● 589 Some men do not marry. This is true of the Soma, the religious
diviner attached to the major Bambara societies. Initiated in the
791 course of a solitary sojourn in the bush, he left his dya with the in-
visible spirits. This is a prerequisite to the gift of double sight with
which he is endowed as well as a protection against possible dangers
to the dya when it remains in contact with the earth, or when it
approaches other humans. The true spouse of the Soma is his dya:
he may mate only with it on a fixed date when the spirits return it
to him for this purpose. /61/

The tere

774 The tere was inflicted by Pemba on Mousso Koroni in order to diminish her power at the time he was pursuing her. This explains its complexity: it is at once the character of a man, his strength,

791 589 The gifts he has received and the position of his *dya* compel /221/ the Soma to remain unmarried and to observe a certain chastity. "The wife of the Soma lives with the spirits," says the informant who adds that every forty-nine days (7 x 7) his *dya* is returned to him during the night for the purpose of a sexual union.

From the moment the Soma begins to exercise his art regularly, he visits the bush from time to time to consult the spirits and make offerings to them. Moreover, the latter visit him in his home where he attracts them by burning a powder that gives off a smell of which they are fond.

Like the *griot*, the Soma has a mouth full of *nyama*: his own to which is added that of the spirits who help him and control him. His word is so powerful that he rarely announces a death, for this would contribute to the propagation of death.

The Soma must be rigorously clean, wear simple clothes, and even dress as an indigent. During ceremonies he hangs the stone *ǰineworo* around his neck with a string and must always carry this stone in a pocket of his tunic. He generally belongs to the Komo society and may become its chief. In this case he is the recognized diviner of the village.

791 766 The Soma keeps in his home his stone of alliance and his harp with its accessories. When he dies, his body is left for some time alone in the house; the spirits are supposed to come and reclaim these objects which no one must touch and which no one will inherit. The burial of the body and the funeral ceremonies are performed only after this delay. His soul is never kept in the Komo altars and goes to join the *dya* in the domains of Tɛliko; the spiritual principles of the Soma are not reincarnated and the gift which he has received is not hereditary.

791 534 The Soma's harp (Fig. 17) (1) is made of a rectangular chest (*bara*) pierced through longitudinally by a long piece of wood (*ngoni kala*, literally, stalk of the *ngoni*) surrounded by little leather thongs in the shape of rings (*ǰiri wolo*, literally, skin of wood). These hold

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1. See G. Dieterlen, *Morphologie et symbolique de deux instruments de musique bambara* /The Morphology and Symbolism of Two Instruments of Bambara Music/.

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[361]
The patriarchal community draws its subsistence from this agricultural exploitation, and as a result, a kind of work organization has developed. Patriarchal communities or important families have agricultural land in various regions and these tracts are often far apart. Some members of the community or a group of slaves are therefore settled in each domain, sometimes on a permanent basis, sometimes for the period of clearing and cultivating the soil, sometimes for the period of harvest.

Theoretically, every member of the community and every slave must work for the community from dawn to around noon every day during the farming season. Two days, however, Monday and Thursday, are given to these persons for work in their own fields. Anyone who cannot or will not work has the right to provide a replacement from among his dependents.

There are, of course, many exceptions to these rules. In the first place, everyone works according to his position. Among the poor, the master works as hard as the slave, if not harder; among people in comfortable circumstances, the master merely controls and directs the work, sometimes reserving a particular job for himself. In important communities, field work [189] is almost exclusively the duty of the slaves, under the surveillance of their leaders and following the orders of the fa, who either supervises it himself or has a member of his entourage do so.

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● 589
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Conjugal usufruct. When she marries, a woman is given in usufruct in exchange for the bride price. This usufruct is community property exactly like the things used for the bride price.

When a fa dies, the disposal of the conjugal usufruct included in the estate is a serious matter. Since the conjugal usufruct is of the same duration as the life of the woman, the death of the husband has no legal effect on the situation of his spouse. Since it is understood, however, that the widow has no sexual obligations to her husband's heirs, the usufruct is reduced in that respect. Such is the lot of widows when the heirs decide to keep them without marrying them and the women elect to remain.

583 Most often, however, the heirs either marry the widows
589 or send them home, or the women leave of their own volition.

768 An heir who marries a widow of the deceased must take
[587] her back to her family, obtain their consent, and pay them a new bride price, required because a new usufruct is involved. The chronicle of Ségou shows us how this custom operates. Upon the death of Dina Wara, his son escorted to Ségou his father's widow, Biton's sister, whom he wanted to marry. He made sumptuous gifts in order to obtain consent.

In the case of a widow who is sent home or who leaves of her own accord, responsibility for the bride price already paid rests with the party who broke the contract, i.e., with the person who sent the widow away or, if she left of her own accord, with her family. The question of responsibility for the bride price is an important one, since usually neither party has either the means or the desire to make it up. As a result, every effort is made to evade payment, and it is common practice to resort to the most shameless bargaining of the woman involved. A husband is sought who will agree to pay the bride price asked by the one having rights over her, but most often, partial payment will be made when the woman is returned, the creditor's impatience is calmed by gifts, and the balance of the bride price remains wholly or partly unpaid [190] at the time of the debtor's death. This obviously results in insolvable complications during and after the marriage (1).

567 Slaves. Enslavement comes about in many ways, but the
three principal ones are force, birth, and the result of obligations.

727 Force has perhaps been the primary cause of enslavement.
A person who surrenders is the chattel of the conqueror, but the treatment given him varies in accordance with his previous situation. Was he a man of position? If he is violent, he is killed or sold; if it is thought that his relatives will pay a high ransom, he is kept. If he is clever enough to arouse sympathy, he often is

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1. Concerning the lot of widows, see the discussions about the widows of Biton and Ngolo in the chronicle of Ségou.

521 and before little girls, and it is not unusual to see a big girl leaning
831 against the door of the hut with ears wide open so as not to miss a
864 word, and finding cause to burst into gales of laughter. Are all these people capable of being shocked? I doubt it, even as far as the young girls are concerned, for all or almost all of them have their favorite nooks in the bush. Moreover, they can tell each other vulgar stories, and one should hear them as they clean and spin cotton, or when in the evening, shut in a communal hut (1), they play, laugh, and chatter before going to sleep. Could it be otherwise? Since all the men have soungourou, they know that their fathers and brothers each have one, and they are not unaware that their mothers see no /160/ wrong in giving themselves to their men friends. The great crime is allowing oneself to be caught.

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831 You may think I exaggerate, yet when two women, each with a nursing infant in her arms, are crouched in the court by their pots in which tô (gruel) is simmering, it is very unusual for them not to be gossiping about the marital infidelities of their neighbors and sometimes even their own. I am saying nothing about the old women with turned-up chins and toothless jaws; they are experienced midwives and talk mainly about abortions.

They are all the same, and more than one mother has made me blush as she gave the breast to her last born and smiled sweetly at the rest of the brood frolicking near her. In wishing health and prosperity to a child that a woman is nursing, one sometimes makes a mistake about its sex, and without respect for one's ears nor pity for

[591
882] 1. In the evening all young girls are shut in a communal hut or dormitory under the supervision of an old woman. The woman's duty is to prevent young men from coming in and to see that the girls do not go out and seek a boy friend's hospitality. There is a dormitory in each quarter.

614 596 descent is in the male line from a common male ancestor or, even more narrowly, to uterine brothers and sisters. The two terms, ton' and ba-denya, have a meaning which differs from that of our word "family," which is defined in our legal terminology as "the totality of persons united by ties of kinship or affinity."

592 The Bambara family lives in huts which are connected by an enclosure or completely surrounded by the enclosure when its two extremities are supported on a kind of vestibule (blon'). The enclosure is called gwa in some dialects, whence the name gwa-tigi, a term of respect for the fa, master of the house.

Gwa, therefore, means "family" only indirectly, and it is very difficult to reconcile this word with the word "family," since the gwa houses people who are not members of the family and, on the other hand, does not house all the members of the family.

Besides, it should be noted that the word gwa in its meaning of "enclosure" is used to designate all sorts of agglomerations likewise enclosed, notably livestock folds. The variants wore and gore, which are more specifically applied to these folds, may also be used, and actually are in some regions, in forming the names of settlements. The form kore or kori, common in expressions of courtesy, has the same meaning; kori ka kende? means literally, "Is all the house well?" [160]

In some Bambara dialects, the word so is used instead of gwa. The primary meaning of the word so is also "enclosure" and, more especially, "hedge of thorns," by which all primitive establishments are protected; so-tigi has the same meaning as gwa-tigi. The word so also means "household," i.e., the contents of a house, including all within it, whether on a permanent or temporary basis and whether or not belonging to the family.

It is common practice, however, to use so and gwa in the narrow sense of "people of the family," i.e., those living under the authority of the same fa.

592 601 596 It may be said, in short, that there is no exact term for designating expressly and exclusively a collectivity

592 comparable to what our law defines as a family. In fact, the
601 four terms just discussed, ton', ba-denya, gwa, and so, are
596 all used for the purpose. It is what is intended by their use
that gives them their meaning, and depending on the region,
each term has a meaning made precise by usage.

The dwelling of the Bambara family usually includes
592 a fairly large number of huts of various kinds. Some are
342 cylindrical and built of native masonry with a conical straw
roof and, for a door, a slit or opening which does not extend
all the way to the ground. Others are parallelepiped, made of
native masonry, and ordinarily also provided with no opening
except the door.

Shelters (gwa), consisting of flat straw roofs supported
on forked sticks, are usually placed haphazardly or wherever
the master of the house wants them and are certainly not governed by any traditional rules or fixed orientation. All these
dwellings or out-buildings are enclosed by either a clay wall
or an unbroken hedge whose two ends are supported by the walls
[343] of the hut called blon' which serves as a vestibule for the establishment.

[178] The altar of the ancestors and of the household gods is
found in the blon'.

The houses of notables are somewhat more elaborately
arranged; instead of a single inner court, there are two, three,
or even more, sometimes graduated in extent. The master arranges his people in such a way as to divide into sections the
heterogeneous elements gathered together under his protection.
592 The domestic servants and the young [161] men, the women,
girls, and small children, and finally the eventual successor
are, as it were, fenced apart in their own blocks of dwellings,
while the fa himself is to be found in impressive isolation,
which lends weight to his authority.

Among great personages, especially among heads of
592 clans, this arrangement is the rule, and their isolation deep in
712 the interior is virtually a security measure. In the old days a
kind of fortress or redoubt, the tata, was built in the center of
the royal residence. Gunpowder, weapons, and all the means
of defense were kept there, and it was no easy matter to capture

592 [712] this well-built structure in the midst of the inextricable maze of surrounding huts which were themselves surrounded by a solid wall of native masonry.

[565] The people of a single household are classed in three categories: free men (woro-u), members of castes (nya-makala), and slaves (dyon'-u).

596 561 The freemen. Within the family, free persons are: the men (tye-u), i.e., circumcised males; the moso-u, excised women; the den'-u, children of both sexes.

601 In accordance with their influence (faya) in the family, the men are called koro-u, old men, elders, or kamalen'-u, young masters. Among the old men the bina (uncles), brothers of the fa, hold the preponderant position; they form a kind of limited family council and generally work for the welfare of the community under the direction of the fa.

Among the women the following distinctions are made: the mothers, i.e., women under the control of a husband and who are actually mothers of children, ba-u; old women, moso-koro-u; grandmothers, mama-u; and finally unmarried girls, moso-de-u.

All children are called de unless they are specifically identified as de-n-ke, "boy," or de-moso or deni, "girl."

601 Furthermore, every male with any influence (faya) in the family, no matter to what extent, is called fa (1): [162]

1. In one way or another, therefore, every male is fa, since he exercises or will one day exercise faya. The word fa is jokingly applied even to very young boys just as ba is applied to little girls. These words may be used just like our familiar expressions when we say "Father X" or "Mother X" with no reference intended to any real state of fatherhood or motherhood.

In any case, the words fa and ba are also used as terms of respect, just as we

596 honored by the new *fa*, and there is nothing to prevent him
614 from adding to the treasure.

The basic cult of the family is the cult of the ancestors.
769 Although the dead are frequently buried outside the family residence,
their souls are thought to live in the *blon'* of the dwelling.
[343 The *blon'* is a hut with two openings on opposite sides, one
592] to the street and the other to the interior, usually the courtyard.
It is impossible to enter or leave a house without going
through the *blon'*, where there is always a guard, at least in
778 important houses. The ancestors are usually represented in the
blon' by a group of crude, conical clay figures of a man and
769 woman, the latter identifiable by the exaggerated breasts.
Sometimes the symbol of the dead is a small board about a
meter long, twenty centimeters wide, and a little more than
a centimeter thick; at one of its extremities a slight protuberance
vaguely suggests a head, a kind of ellipsoidal cylinder
with eyes, nose, mouth, and chin faintly carved on one side.
On the side with the face, the board has a checkerboard pattern,
often of alternating black and red squares, probably to
indicate the material of a loincloth. The lower extremity of
the figure has a semicircular portion cut away to give the effect
of legs spread apart when the effigy is set up.

769 Whatever form it may have, the representation of the
dead is called *kara* (1) and serves in some manner as an altar
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778 on which libations are poured and to which are attached the
remains of the sacrifices made to the dead (*su-u*). Nevertheless,
it is also a very widespread practice to make libations and
sacrifices before the door of the *blon'* and, more rarely, before
the door of an inner hut. In this case the liquid is poured and
[775] the remains smeared on the vertical edge of the opening. This
practice is based on the belief that the souls of the dead ancestors
like to return to the place where the *fa* liked to sit during
his lifetime. Undoubtedly, the ancestors are regarded as guardians
of the threshold; they are [181] honored as such because it is
believed that they prefer to be honored in this way.

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1. In Soninké, *kara* means "to die" and "death."

588 583 Free union. This type of union rests on simple consent by the two parties without any bride price.

In principle a woman who has ceased to belong to a husband belongs to her original community, and she can make no decisions concerning her future without its consent. If she ignores this, the community can always intervene to force her to break off any engagement she may have made, and to this end it may use any means of absolute control.

This suffices to explain why a man who agrees to a union of this kind usually finds himself in the most serious difficulties. Not only can his wife and children be taken from him without 672 redress, but he can be sued for damages by the community to which the woman belongs.

It does sometimes happen, however, that certain women are released from the authority of their communities. These include women who are sole survivors of a community and, more commonly, those who have bought their freedom by dubious means. A free man who lives with such women achieves a union that to a great extent has the same effect as marriage. [206]

The Family

592 583 The household. The lawful household is based on marriage. In order to grasp its essence, account must be taken of the interplay of two elements which are perfectly distinct but always closely involved in all human affairs: interest and sentiment. In a lawful household the essential interest is the bride price whose nature must be defined in order to understand its overwhelming importance.

583 Bride price is what is paid in exchange for a wife. It is understood that the status of the woman thus handed over does not change; if she was free before the event, she is still free after the payment of the bride price.

586 The marriage tie is such that it can always be broken by one or the other party; the one breaking the contract simply loses the bride price in the sense that if the husband initiated the rupture he cannot expect anything already paid to be returned. If the initiative was taken by the wife (or her community), then she must return what has been paid. Whatever the cause of rupture, however, the children always belong to the husband.

585 shouting songs that partly drown out the rolling of the drums and the roaring of the horns of the band. The boli gives a last roar, and its priest carries it to its foul temple where the air breathed is warmed by the steam of hot blood and never cooled. The huts open their doors, and a stream of women, children, and young girls rush along the alleys and mingle their voices with those that are arriving. The [535] crowd of women divides into several groups, and again they bend double in unimaginable contorsions that a pen cannot describe; all parts of their bodies shake and move, as in a gentle wave that goes forward and folds back on itself. They glide over the ground raising a cloud of dust and, preceded by drums and in a blast of guns, they arrive thus slowly in the couple's inner court. Here everybody finds food ready. The middle of the court is full of huge gourds of to, or gruel, dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water, and jugs full of d'lo, or millet beer, and while the newlyweds are enjoying their first love-making, drinking, eating, dancing, and shouting is going on near them. For I forgot to say that the young bride will long since have left her frenzied, howling mob. As soon as the boli has been put away, the women come to lead her to her dwelling (1). Before

[595 •592] 1. Every Bambara woman has her own hut separate from her husband's. A Bambara man who has only one wife sleeps in his wife's hut; if he has several, on the contrary, the woman who is summoned goes to lie in that of her husband. Some rich men provide each wife with a hut, an inner court, and a b'lon, or entry hut. In that case the first wife does not have a hut separate from that of her husband, and the husband goes to spend his nights with one or another as he chooses.

taking her into the marital sanctuary, where her husband is already

183 784 Thus used, taboo has organized and transformed the native milieu; it has established a line of demarcation between the sacred and the profane by removing from ordinary intercourse persons, places and objects connected with the invisible and considered to be impregnated by it. However, since by its very nature it forms an incontestable and nonappealable law, it has been the favorite means of anyone in authority wishing to impose his will without fear of protest. Thus the laity has, so to speak, had to submit to a arbitrary system of law that is essentially religious. Social règulations, rules of hygiene, medical prescriptions, culinary preparations, forms of courtesy -- all these are surrounded with taboos and all have absorbed from the tne the very essence of its vitality and its constraining force.

784 593 Within the family, which is the generating force of any collective group, the individual finds himself surrounded by taboos throughout his life. They are what establish and maintain the authority of the elders (koro-u) and especially of their head (fa). Taboos impose ancestral traditions which have developed separately and become gradually superimposition from earliest times to the present, the whole of which constitute, in fact, family custom.

784 [571] Patriarchy, brotherhood, the state, and all Bambara collectivities operate in the same way, since all collectivities are in a sense modeled on the natural family.

Religion, family, and society as a whole, in short the whole of Bambara civilization, have been and continue to be largely dependent on the tne.

## [133] 3. Mantic, Religion and Magic

787 Mantic. Among the Bambara, as among all the Sudanese, religion and magic are both based on a belief in a permanent revelation which the manes, the spirits and the gods give to men with regard to the events of their lives.

The various means by which man can come to know this revelation on the part of invisible beings are what is called divination or mantic. This is extra-rational knowledge since it makes known things which could not be learned through reason

562 581 595 Between the omnipotence of the first and the humble lot of the second there is every possible gradation. This is all the more true in that, thanks to polygamy, lawful households may be found in association with the free unions and concubinage desired by the husband, in such a way that the position of each person in the family, already affected by all these contingencies, is, in the last analysis, dominated by the absolute authority of the fa. We shall see this clearly in connection with filiation, and it is no less apparent regarding wives, except for those already described who have sufficient influence and the means to live virtually independent of the rest of the family. Although in fact a wife who was not paid for has no regular position and her children legally do not belong to either of their parents, although a concubine does not even count as a person, according to custom, and her children are their genitor's slaves, merely by the will of the fa either of them may have an enviable pre-eminence in the family, especially envied by the lawful wives.

593 562 Under these circumstances, it may be admitted that conjugal duties, obedience, fidelity, and their counterparts, the rights to help and assistance, have nuances that vary from one situation to another. It is true that a wife must obey her husband and that he is allowed to resort to [208] corporal punishment to control her, which he does not fail to use. She is not completely at his mercy, however. For instance, he can require her to live in a given place; nevertheless, if it has been agreed that she is not to leave the tribal territory, and this usually tacitly understood, he may not take her away. He can force her to do household chores, but if she is free, he cannot require her to do servile tasks. In the same way, he cannot rent out her services, put her up as security, or sell her.

837 The duty of reciprocal fidelity is most often very vague. Admittedly, this is not expected of the husband, and indeed, the wife often encourages his lapses from virtue on the theory that this indulgence will attach him to her. As far as a wife's misbehavior is concerned, a husband does not always give it much importance and is sometimes not at all averse to profiting from it. 848 If children result from her indiscretions, he is not distressed in the least about accepting or denying them.

D. Position of Women

562 Women's society has remained much more impenetrable to European civilization. Women very rarely go to French schools, and unlike the men, who, during their military service and otherwise, are partly immersed in our system of civilization, they have few contacts with the Whites and appear to be even more attached to custom than their husbands. Very few speak French, and for all these reasons their society has remained closed and very imperfectly known to the Whites. 191

562 858 Reasoning from what is known of their juridicial situation, we have deduced their inferior position. Perhaps a better knowledge of their role and of their importance in the society will lead us to very different conclusions. From the legal point of view, a woman is always a minor; she belongs first to her own community, to which she owes obedience, then to her husband's community. When the marriage is legal, that is to say, when the husband has paid the matrimonial settlement, the children belong to the husband; if not, in the case of concubinage, the woman's family can claim the child, because it belongs to the family, as does everything of the mother's.

562 582 583 Her marriage is decided on by the fa; although in practice the woman is often consulted indirectly beforehand, and she has a certain liberty in her choice. Even a slave can refuse to marry her master, despite gifts and promises. But a woman is forbidden to marry someone she considers a relative, that is, someone who belongs to her paternal line and who bears the same name she does. Exogamy is the rule.

562 593 Yet, when a woman marries, she keeps her paternal name and her personal taboos; sometimes she adds her name to that of her son, who normally bears the dyamu of his father. The woman remains very attached [75] to her family and goes to stay with them often. Among them she will find support in case of a difference of opinion with her husband. In case of divorce through the fault of the husband, he loses all rights over the wife as well as the settlement he had paid. 586

595 In the system of polygamy, the first wife is mistress of the house; the other wives gather at her place for meals. She distributes the husband's presents, but aside from these privileges, the rights of the wives are equal as are those of their children. 431

844 Before delivery of her child, a woman is advised to pound grain.
When the labor pains come, the woman retires to her hut with several
matrons (men are not allowed access). If the child is poorly presented,
the priest is called. He performs outside the hut, simulating the de-
livery and chanting the formulas that ease labor. To deliver the
infant, the woman kneels with her hands thrown behind her, while
the midwife supports the small of her back. At birth the infant's
shoulders must touch the ground; this is the moment when he receives
his spiritual principles. The infant is washed several times and
smeared with karite butter.

846 The mother must not go out during the first eight days after the
853 birth; she must devote herself entirely to the new-born. She massages
854 his head daily in order to give it a more rounded form, and she
pinches his nose. She nurses the infant for the first two years, then
the weaned child passes directly to the communal calabash. Until
the child can walk, the mother carries it astraddle on her back with
the aid of a loincloth knotted at her chest. In this manner the infant
accompanies the mother everywhere, to work as well as to the dance.
868 It is during these intimate contacts that the mother teaches her child
to talk. Later, the little girls stay with their mothers who teach them
all the domestic arts, while the boys are educated in outside work.
[867] During their childhook they are taught the usages and rules of deport-
ment: a woman knows she must never shake the hand of a man to
201 greet him, and, if he extends his hand, she flings up her arm "as a
576 sign of not being interested." A man will salute his superior by ex-
tending his hand palm upwards, and the superior will put his over it;
inversely, when a man greets an inferior he extends his hand with the
palm down, while for an equal his hand will be perpendicular to the
ground. If a man must ask someone's pardon, he puts his hands be-
hind his back to simulate the tail of an animal (for he has acted like
an animal). Crossing the hands in front of or upon the head is a sign
of sadness. To mark his submission to a king, a man puts his right
elbow to the ground. To pray to God, the two hands are extended
with the palms turned [89] outward. A woman learns that it is im-
576 pudent to question her husband during the day, and when she speaks
593 of him, she says koke, that is, big brother, for she cannot pronounce
833 his name or in any way recall the bonds which exist between them.
It is only during the two consecutive nights that she couples with him

576 that she may speak to him freely. When the day of union comes, the
593 wife herself prepares her husband's food; then she lies on the left side
833 (the feminine side) and her husband on the right side, and she cannot
[842] be impregnated except by a union twice repeated.

771 These corporal techniques[1] are dictated and ordered by the religious imperatives which pervade the life of the Bambara from before his birth until after his death.

761 What we have said of the Bambara's religion and of his conception of the world enables us to understand that there cannot be for him a complete break between life and death: birth is a reincarnation; death is not destruction. This is why a man's life does not present one substantial unity but is divided into a certain number of distinct periods, each of which is inaugurated by a rite of transition that marks the death of an anterior state and the rebirth to a new life.

a. Before Birth

843 From the first month after his conception, the infant consti-
761 tutes a person who receives a series of spiritual forces emanating
858 from his father's side of the family and especially from the recently
deceased ancestor whose name he will receive. At the same time, he inherits all of the paternal taboos, which the mother must respect during her pregnancy. It is only after his birth, at the time he receives his name, that the infant receives the spiritual forces coming from his mother's side. These forces are transmitted through the medium of the priest and the ancestors of the priest.

761 From then on, the infant is required to observe all the taboos
858 of the beings who have had a part in the composition of his personality; he thus finds himself tightly bound to the society in which he will live.

b. Birth Rites

852 At birth the baby is washed with millet beer (1) (to purify him)

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1. For all these rites, see G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

[1] [i.e., sexual reproduction and childrearing, see pp. 117-119. -Analyst]

584 887 there without further delay and makes his request, which the man who introduced him repeats word by word and sentence by sentence.

584 The father of the girl ponders a moment, and if the suit pleases him he answers in a word: "A gnéna, that's good." The little package of four kola nuts is then offered him, he summons his daughter and her mother, and the fourouboloma tigi again explains the reason for his /201/ coming. Everything is settled with the following words: "Give my greetings to the one who sent you and all his family, tell him that I am happy he is asking for my daughter. A diara an ye hali (1), it is a great joy for us, but this, you know, needs reflection! I will speak to my friends soon, and in a few days you will know my decision." The emissary has not been refused and, satisfied with himself and the good prospects of the matter, he leaves to carry to the suitor the words of the girl's father, which should open the door of hope to his heart.

2. The Diviners and Fetishes Accept or Reject the Suitor

584 593 To marry their daughter and marry her well is a nightmare to every father and mother, and both remain anxious when a suitor presents himself. The Bambara know anguish! A daughter may not be beautiful; often she is even ugly, with a large navel, an umbilical hernia, or blood blister due to the clumsiness of the midwife, but her father lives in her large, white eyes marked with a black spot that is full of life and shining, in her broadly slit mouth and puffy lips; he recognizes his own, and his whole inner being cries to him: "This is your daughter, this is your blood."

Frightful thoughts come to torment him: "If the suitor should have the character of a villain and the brutality of a beast, will he not beat my child mercilessly? Might he have one of those shameful diseases that people hide and do not name, so that my daughter will commit adultery in order to avoid the embarrassment of being

1. A, "that"; diara, "is happy"; an ye, "for us"; hali, "much."

584 593 sterile? And if he should be one of those sensualists so numerous among us, and, bored after having enjoyed her, should drive her away and reject her?" He trembles and wants to know what the future holds both for him and for her, and goes to consult the diviners.

584 593 787 Two and often three diviners are consulted. If they all agree in testifying that the suitor is of good character, that divorce is not to be feared, and that the child will become the mother of healthy, strong, and vigorous children who will perpetuate her people and her blood, he finds joy again. He tells the verdict to both his wife and his daughter, he imparts his decision to the head of the village and the council of elders, and /202/ without any delay, freed as he is from all fear, he notifies the suitor that the doors of his home are open to him.

584 787 At this announcement the suitor chooses a fat hen from his hen house, takes one or two kola nuts from his store, and again the fourouboloma tigi, the guardian of the wedding gifts, starts on his way, for this time he must find out whether the family boli, and sometimes the shades of its ancestors, are opposed to the proposed union (1).

> 1. If some occurrence later causes the engagement to be broken, or if there is a marriage followed by divorce, it does not enter his mind that the diviners were mistaken. The whole responsibility falls on the head of an enemy, who through hatred or jealousy has found a way to disrupt everything. It is almost always someone unknown, which is fortunate.

584 787 778 The father of the little girl takes down his goatskin, or often the skin of a wild animal, a frightful, dirty foroko, the tabernacle of the family boli; he sprinkles them with the blood of the hen and then spits a piece of chewed kola nut on them. If he does not have family boli -- an unusual situation -- he sacrifices to his ancestors on the doorsill of the entry hut, or b'lon, and on the kârâ, if he owns one.

114 3. Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal et Niger* [Upper Senegal and Niger].

4. Labouret, *Les Mandingues et leur langue* [The Mandingo and Their Language].

etc., but these are still very fragmentary and incomplete. In addition, this society was completely disrupted by the French conquest, either by such radical measures as the suppression of slavery or by a natural evolution as a result of contact with European societies. Nevertheless, traditional structures retain their vitality, despite the effort to adapt them to European formulas.

177

178 The society seems to have oscillated between familial anarchy and the clan stage, according to alternating ranges of groupings, disassociation, and regroupings.

1. The Family

594 596 Concerning the Sudanese, Delafosse has already made the distinction between "the restricted family" and the "extended family." The restricted family is composed of the parents and children who live in the "hut." Taken alone, it does not represent a social unit. The true social cell is the extended family. This is the large united family made up of a group of restricted families whose heads recognize a common ancestor. This group, composed of agnates in principle, is the *ba-denya*, whose members live in huts within an enclosure: *gwa* or *so*. The two ends of this [51] enclosure rest on a *blõ* (vestibule) where the ancestors' altar is found.

601 612 According to Labouret, the Bambara distinguish three categories of family ties: the paternal line, the maternal line, and relationship by marriage. The child takes the *dyamu* (honorable name) of his father's group, but the terms applied to ancestors and descendants are the same as those of the maternal line.

"... Kinship includes the following generations: *tolo-mina*... *tolo-sama*... *tolo-ma-sama*: who seizes or pulls ears (a belief has it that if a great grandson pulls the ear of his great grandfather, the latter becomes deaf);

825

774 is the object of constant concern during agrarian rituals. The role of the soul of plants is particularly noticeable in their medicinal uses. Drawing a remedy from a plant may cause its death, liberating its spiritual principles for the benefit of the sick man. Because of this, such an act is equated with a blood sacrifice.

With the exception of the ngovo tomato, plants have no dya. The shadow (suma) of a plant is not independent like that of a man or an animal. It exists only through light effects and its movements are caused by the air and the wind moving its leaves and branches. This is what the Bambara means when he says that the dya has a life of its own and depends on Faro, whereas the plant's suma depends on the spirit Téliko, master of the air.

774 An individual's dya can be known and his temperament and life
787 possibilities assessed by measuring his shadow on the earth at noon.
804 The unit employed is the little finger, which is a corporeal symbol of the person. If a pregnant woman is thus measured, the sex of the
843 child may be predicted.

When a boy or a girl gets married, it is said of them: a ye a dya
774 furu: "he (or she) has married his dya." For it is impolite to say that
[576] a person married anyone but his spiritual double. Besides, the union of the couple is repeated by the union of their dya which like them-
●[595 selves are of opposite sex. In olden times, male twins married the
851] same woman and the latter's dya was taken over by Faro in the Niger. The child she conceived was the son of both husbands.

589 Some men do not marry. This is true of the Soma, the religious diviner attached to the major Bambara societies. Initiated in the
791 course of a solitary sojourn in the bush, he left his dya with the invisible spirits. This is a prerequisite to the gift of double sight with which he is endowed as well as a protection against possible dangers to the dya when it remains in contact with the earth, or when it approaches other humans. The true spouse of the Soma is his dya: he may mate only with it on a fixed date when the spirits return it to him for this purpose. /61/

The tere

774 The tere was inflicted by Pemba on Mousso Koroni in order to diminish her power at the time he was pursuing her. This explains its complexity: it is at once the character of a man, his strength,

778 Niger after which the reconstitution of the altar is carried on and is
794 equivalent to "the taking on a new soul." Each family member comes to the aid of the party concerned: the father gives copper, the women, peppers, the children, charcoal; a new cowrie is removed from Faro's granary.

778 The mbendyugukã (literally, I am on the enemy) is an individual
794 altar which permits its owner to overcome his adversaries and even to
754 attack their life.

The person who wishes to own one makes it after the death of an enemy. He goes secretly to unearth the corpse, shaves off its hair, cuts off its tongue and nails, and removes the eyes.

An elderly owner of such an altar takes it with him to the person who wishes to make one. The latter prepares and mixes the ingredients according to a special ritual and ties them to a hyena's tail. Before a witness who belongs to his age grade, the elder rubs the new altar on the old one seven times while reciting a prayer to consecrate it; he then returns it to its owner (1).

1. Because of its evil powers, the altar may not be made and entrusted to its owner except in the presence of a known witness.

The symbolism of the various parts composing it explain the use to which this altar will later be put. The tongue of the dead man contains his voice and gives to that of the owner the strength to convince those who contradict him in arguments as well as in council meetings. The eyes of the dead man permit him to see what others may not see, or even to blind his enemies by poisoning them with his nails. The hair, evidence of the other parts /134/ of the corpse, contains the nyama of the deceased and is an essential part of the mbendyugukã.

[595] The owner of this altar, which excludes the number four, marries only three wives. Moreover, he cannot mix his own hair with that of another without risking death.

[782] Because of its aggressive character, the mbendyugukã demands victims, dogs or roosters, of red coloring. It gives to whomever owns it a strength which will always be greater than that of his competitors in whatever he may undertake.

596 614 deprived of his rights, he and subsequently those who would represent him; the branch of the family of which he is head is henceforth dead so far as the family is concerned.

In the second place, no member of the community [848] attains the faya unless he fulfills certain conditions, of which the first are legitimacy and primogeniture.

The fact that the claimant is a member of the community implies that he is legitimate. [578] Since it does happen, however, that the question may not have actually been investigated or, by the wish of the fa, not even been raised, the legal heirs who would be injured and intriguers who seek any pretext -- and there are always some of these persons -- raise the question, and infinite complications often follow.

Primogeniture is equally subject to challenge, and the opposition everywhere finds it a convenient motive for their [595] machinations. It is, indeed, understandable that in polygamous households, with the wives sometimes residing in various places apart from the husband, simultaneous or at least close births give rise to disagreements as to which son was in fact the first-born.

Finally, even though he may actually be the eldest legitimate son, the claimant may find himself passed over because of measures taken [176] against him by the late fa. It appears that although custom favors the eldest legitimate son, it yields to the expressed wishes of the fa if the senate agrees to his rejecting the candidate. This is a grave step and one which may lead to the most violent reactions.

This raises the question of whether special talents or aptitudes should be required of the claimant, over and above those of legitimacy and primogeniture. For example, can he be required to be healthy, active, and a good administrator? It appears that the senate may choose to eliminate a person it deems unworthy. This applies particularly to a free man who has voluntarily fallen from that state by living like a caste member or a slave. By this behavior he has already excluded himself from the community, but it sometimes happens that his actual exclusion has not been noted or announced before the question of accession to the faya arises.

585 The husband spends the whole day after the wedding night in his hut, where relatives, friends, and neighbors come to congratulate him and present minor gifts of food. He invites them to eat and drink. The wedding is thus prolonged for several days, depending on the husband's wealth, during which time the couple is at the disposal of the guests.

[556] Rich families like to show off the trousseau, jewels, and
gifts bestowed on the bride, so during the whole day after the
wedding night everything is paraded with great pomp through the
village by people of caste who proclaim the items and exaggerate
their value. Toward evening the presents are shown one last
time to the bride, who sits on a low bench with her face hidden
behind a kind of tray, woven with grass, which she holds in her
[533] hand. Drums and other instruments make a great uproar, while a
female *griot*, standing behind the bride, sings love songs. Every-
[302] one admires the bride's hair, which is artistically braided in a
flat crest with two small braids on each side of the face hanging
in front and behind the ears. The women finger her jewels as
they admire them and her thick-soled sandals.

To conclude the ceremony, the *furu-bolo-ma-tigi* gives
cowries to the leader of the singing, and guns are fired for the
[481] last time. Then the bride gets up, glides over the ground without
lifting her feet, and enters the hut with her companions, while
the guests retire. [204]

Second Marriage

• 595 The number of wives is limited only by the necessity of providing each one with a suitable living. This means that, theoretically, polygamy is a privilege of the rich. Some men practice it in order to pass as rich men, which flatters their pride, while others use it to gratify a sensual temperament. Most often, however, people in modest circumstances have several wives solely for economic reasons.

When an only wife has young children and no servant to help her, she is extremely overworked. When this is the case,

595 she herself urges her husband to take another wife who will share some of the housework and relieve the situation. As a result, polygamy in this form resembles an association in which, through division of labor, each person seeks to provide his own support and to contribute to the general welfare.

Second marriages are identical with first marriages except that they are celebrated with somewhat less ostentation. Furthermore, a married man is more independent of his community in the material sense, and sometimes he is likewise more independent of the wife.

II. Other Types of Conjugal Union

588 595 Besides marriage there are innumerable kinds of conjugal unions, such as agreements between capable individuals, that at times have legal consequences, some of which are even extensive. All these kinds may be grouped as two types: concubinage and free union.

595 Concubinage. This is a union in which at least one of the parties is a slave. It is very common for a master to treat one or more of his slaves like wives. Some men like the arrangement because it does away with all the difficulties arising from the bride price and the often exasperating involvements with an affinal family. Concubinage practiced by a free man has the disadvantage, however, of [205] his children being his slaves, since children retain their mother's status. It is true that this custom has been circumvented. It is accepted that the female slave is regarded as free once she has borne a child to a free husband and he has recognized it. This, however, does not erase the original stigma; children borne of free wives always [578] consider themselves superior to their siblings whose mother was a slave. Family tensions arise out of this, which become acute upon the death of the fa.

Concubinage, practiced on a large scale by free men, has, indeed, perverted all the communities. Polygamous households have had grave difficulties because the wives, being different in rank and yet forced to live side by side, have sacrificed everything to their resentments and hatreds.

562 581 595 Between the omnipotence of the first and the humble lot of the second there is every possible gradation. This is all the more true in that, thanks to polygamy, lawful households may be found in association with the free unions and concubinage desired by the husband, in such a way that the position of each person in the family, already affected by all these contingencies, is, in the last analysis, dominated by the absolute authority of the fa. We shall see this clearly in connection with filiation, and it is no less apparent regarding wives, except for those already described who have sufficient influence and the means to live virtually independent of the rest of the family. Although in fact a wife who was not paid for has no regular position and her children legally do not belong to either of their parents, although a concubine does not even count as a person, according to custom, and her children are their genitor's slaves, merely by the will of the fa either of them may have an enviable pre-eminence in the family, especially envied by the lawful wives.

593 562 Under these circumstances, it may be admitted that conjugal duties, obedience, fidelity, and their counterparts, the rights to help and assistance, have nuances that vary from one situation to another. It is true that a wife must obey her husband and that he is allowed to resort to [208] corporal punishment to control her, which he does not fail to use. She is not completely at his mercy, however. For instance, he can require her to live in a given place; nevertheless, if it has been agreed that she is not to leave the tribal territory, and this usually tacitly understood, he may not take her away. He can force her to do household chores, but if she is free, he cannot require her to do servile tasks. In the same way, he cannot rent out her services, put her up as security, or sell her.

837 The duty of reciprocal fidelity is most often very vague. Admittedly, this is not expected of the husband, and indeed, the wife often encourages his lapses from virtue on the theory that this indulgence will attach him to her. As far as a wife's misbehavior is concerned, a husband does not always give it much importance and is sometimes not at all averse to profiting from it. If children result from her indiscretions, he is not distressed in the least about accepting or denying them. 848

● 595 A husband owes his wife food, clothing, and lodging within his means, and unless he has imprudently acquired too many wives, everything will be kept within the proper limits. In any event, he must be impartial toward all his wives on one particular point if he wants domestic tranquillity: he must honor each of them in turn with his favors.

In theory, a husband is supposed to treat his wives alike in all things, although it is apparent from the foregoing that this is practically impossible. Besides, it is usually agreed that the first wife, no matter who she is, whether slave or free, has certain prerogatives. She acts as a kind of mother to her co-wives, supervises their work and their pursuits, and issues all the supplies. With reference to her husband, she acts as confidante and adviser.

851 Filiation. This is to be regarded as the totality of facts which, for the sake of clarity, we shall divide into two groups: birth, and giving a name. [209]

843 Birth. A pregnant woman, by virtue of her condition, is subject to a kind of special regime whose special features are the following.

In principle, she must forego sexual relations from the moment she feels the child move until two or three months after its birth. This is not done for reasons of hygiene, but rather because the child is thought to require it as a kind of deference, without which it will die.

From the standpoint of diet, the expectant mother should
be well and even abundantly fed. When possible she is given the
[262] heart and liver of slaughtered wild animals; these are centers of
life which, if eaten, will strengthen the child's soul and make the
child a courageous individual. A pregnant woman often wants some
[261] of the yellow or red clay which is sold in the markets, which
[443] for some unknown reason she will eat as if it were chocolate.

She must refrain from visiting dying people, attending funerals, going into mourning, or mingling with crowds, all this in order to avoid any contact that might injure the fragile soul she is carrying.

D. Position of Women

562 Women's society has remained much more impenetrable to
European civilization. Women very rarely go to French schools, and
unlike the men, who, during their military service and otherwise,
are partly immersed in our system of civilization, they have few
contacts with the Whites and appear to be even more attached to custom
than their husbands. Very few speak French, and for all these
[191] reasons their society has remained closed and very imperfectly known
to the Whites.

562 Reasoning from what is known of their juridicial situation, we
have deduced their inferior position. Perhaps a better knowledge of
858 their role and of their importance in the society will lead us to very
different conclusions. From the legal point of view, a woman is always
a minor; she belongs first to her own community, to which she
owes obedience, then to her husband's community. When the marriage
is legal, that is to say, when the husband has paid the matrimonial
settlement, the children belong to the husband; if not, in
the case of concubinage, the woman's family can claim the child,
because it belongs to the family, as does everything of the mother's.

562 Her marriage is decided on by the fa; although in practice
the woman is often consulted indirectly beforehand, and she has a
582 certain liberty in her choice. Even a slave can refuse to marry her
583 master, despite gifts and promises. But a woman is forbidden to
marry someone she considers a relative, that is, someone who belongs
to her paternal line and who bears the same name she does.
Exogamy is the rule.

Yet, when a woman marries, she keeps her paternal name and
562 her personal taboos; sometimes she adds her name to that of her son,
593 who normally bears the dyamu of his father. The woman remains
very attached [75] to her family and goes to stay with them often.
Among them she will find support in case of a difference of opinion
[586] with her husband. In case of divorce through the fault of the husband,
he loses all rights over the wife as well as the settlement he had paid.

● 595 In the system of polygamy, the first wife is mistress of the
house; the other wives gather at her place for meals. She distributes
[431] the husband's presents, but aside from these privileges, the rights
of the wives are equal as are those of their children.

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sees everything. The old men explain this to you with an intensity that proves their good faith, and children recite the sayings of the old men with a frankness so naive that one cannot misunderstand it.

a Being endowed with reason and all powerful. The term is the translation of the word sa.

It is apparent that in the beginning the word Alla in no way meant a Being or an Individual; it simply expressed a concept, an idea already known, accepted and translated by the word sa, and the Bambara simply adopted a foreign word corresponding to their own concept.

776 If to the Bambara the word Alla had meant the Divinity Himself,
196 the Supreme Being, would they ever have dared to speak it, to make
192 it their own? I cannot bring myself to believe that they would, among
551 them the name of a powerful person, a religious chief, or venerated
576 being is never spoken in vain or in an unsuitable manner. If some of
[687] their kings, among them /79/ N'golo, not to mention others, punished
anyone caught speaking his /the royal/ name by fines and prison,
cast them into slavery, and even beheaded them as guilty of the
crime of lese majesty, what would they not have to fear from the
Creator if they spoke His name in vain and inappropriately! Furthermore, it is a widespread custom to avoid speaking the name of one
who is feared or venerated.

576 No well-bred and self-respecting woman ever speaks the name
551 of her husband. She speaks of him as né tigi ("my master"), so tigi
("the master of the house"). Most frequently she adorns him with a
● 595 borrowed name, a bougna toua, or name of respect, and a polygamist
has several such names, each wife giving him one of her own invention.

In well-brought-up families -- and most of them are (1) -- the

1. Our Bambara Negroes have great respect for the members of their families and are considerate of them;

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595 in this respect they are far superior to any of the Arabs of Algeria, for example. Family life is more open and cordial among them.

children do not speak the name of their father, especially if he is a gouatigi, or family head, and when a swarm of children are enjoying themselves around their old daddy, only one word is on all the little lips to awaken his attention, avoid his reprimand, call for his caress, and bring forth his smile: Koké-yo -- koké-wé! (2)

2. I use the word Koké-yo -- (Né koké) koké we (koké, "I beg you, Koké") -- because it is the most common; there are obviously other similar terms. Favorite wives also like to call their husbands by this name. For everyone it is a term of respect and at the same time it is tender, affectionate, and coaxing.

[888] 576 551 Old men are given borrowed names, bougna toua, out of respect and veneration, and the reason for this practice is to avoid having to speak their names in vain and unsuitably. The practice is current, and it is even carried to an extreme, for although a child is given a respect name within his family, he is never called by that name. How many people there are whose real name is not known except by close relatives and friends! [553] All the Dougoutigi, To-n-tigi, Ba-koroba, and Moké-touama received a name on the eighth day after their birth, and the names used to designate them are borrowed names. /80/

888 793 576 551 In the environs of Ségou, where Islam is widespread and spreads farther every day, the sacrificers to the protecting genii of the villages, the gnéna-n-sonna ba, or dougoutigi, have lost some of their prestige, but anyone who respects them, even if he be a Moslem, never speaks their names. At the present time in Bani country, where the old customs and traditions are preserved with jealous care, there is not a

585 shouting songs that partly drown out the rolling of the drums and the roaring of the horns of the band. The *boli* gives a last roar, and its priest carries it to its foul temple where the air breathed is warmed by the steam of hot blood and never cooled. The huts open their doors, and a stream of women, children, and young girls rush along the alleys and mingle their voices with those that are arriving. The [535] crowd of women divides into several groups, and again they bend double in unimaginable contorsions that a pen cannot describe; all parts of their bodies shake and move, as in a gentle wave that goes forward and folds back on itself. They glide over the ground raising a cloud of dust and, preceded by drums and in a blast of guns, they arrive thus slowly in the couple's inner court. Here everybody flinds food ready. The middle of the court is full of huge gourds of *to*, or gruel, *dégé*, or millet flour mixed with honey water, and jugs full of *d'lo*, or millet beer, and while the newlyweds are enjoying their first love-making, drinking, eating, dancing, and shouting is going on near them. For I forgot to say that the young bride will long since have left her frenzied, howling mob. As soon as the *boli* has been put away, the women come to lead her to her dwelling (1). Before taking her into the marital sanctuary, where her husband is already

[595 592] 1. Every Bambara woman has her own hut separate from her husband's. A Bambara man who has only one wife sleeps in his wife's hut; if he has several, on the contrary, the woman who is summoned goes to lie in that of her husband. Some rich men provide each wife with a hut, an inner court, and a *b'lon*, or entry hut. In that case the first wife does not have a hut separate from that of her husband, and the husband goes to spend his nights with one or another as he chooses.

631 is highly variable, ranging from complete subjection to quasi-independence.

565 [563] The imperial clan, or, if one prefers, the dominant clan, most often prevails over people of races other than that of its own members; frequently this clan itself includes, at least originally, diverse ethnic elements. [158]

If such heterogeneous associates are to live side by side without clashing, they must have a large body of common customs, and this indeed is the case. Wherever one studies it, the native milieu resembles a compartmented area whose individual sections seem, at first glance, to be isolated. At the top of the social structure there is a kind of nobility composed of the head of the clan, his family, and then the families of the clan; next come the free men, simply free or members of castes; and finally the slaves. In actual fact, a continual reciprocal movement between these elements welds all of them together.

614 596 The fact is that the whole social body exists only through the severity of the life of the cells that compose it: the families. Among other characteristics, these families are very jealous of their respective independence; nevertheless, they are closely allied among themselves even as they freely absorb the foreign element constituted by the slaves.

It is, therefore, essential to concentrate our attention on the family cell in order to understand the essential element of native social life. This is all the more true in that all the native collectivities are, so to speak, modeled on the organization of the family.

The Bambara language has no word exactly equivalent to our word "family" in the legal sense (1). Different names are used to designate the collectivity under the authority of the

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1. This is why we prefer the term "community," but in view of the remarks made here, the use of the word "family" will not be ambiguous.

614 596 fa (2), according to whether the group itself is meant or the place which this collectivity occupies.

571 575 Let us note at the start that any collectivity forming an association is a ton'; thus, this is the case for all persons under the authority of one fa, and from this point of view, each of them is a ton'-den', literally, "a child of the ton'," i.e., member of the ton'. The word ton'-denya derives from the same word and is commonly used as a collective designation for all the members of the same ton'. This is the equivalent of the French word [159] société [Ed., society, association] or confrérie [Ed., brotherhood, confraternity]. The head of the ton' is the ton'-tigi, a term by which honor is paid to the head of an important family, and which, in some respects, is the equivalent of our [Ed., French] words notable [Ed., person of note, dignitary] and notabilité [Ed., notability, principal person].

614 596 If one considers the family as an association of the issue of the same parents, the term ba-denya is used, derived from ba-den'. Since the word ba means "mother" and, in the broad sense, "progenitor," mother or father, the word ba-den' is used for any of their issue, hence "children," "brothers," and "relatives," while ba-denya means "fraternity" "kinship."

Although, in the restricted sense in which we shall use it, the word ton' refers to anyone living under the authority of the ton'-tigi, whether or not he is connected by descent, the more exact term, ba-denya, refers only to those whose

2. Fa means "lord," "master," "patriarch," or "father," depending on the circumstances. Within the family, it corresponds very closely to the titular incumbent of such rank and high office who led Mistral [Ed., a French poet] to call his father: "my lord father," or "the master."

614 descent is in the male line from a common male ancestor or,
596 even more narrowly, to uterine brothers and sisters. The two terms, ton' and ba-denya, have a meaning which differs from that of our word "family," which is defined in our legal terminology as "the totality of persons united by ties of kinship or affinity."

592 The Bambara family lives in huts which are connected by an enclosure or completely surrounded by the enclosure when its two extremities are supported on a kind of vestibule (blon'). The enclosure is called gwa in some dialects, whence the name gwa-tigi, a term of respect for the fa, master of the house.

Gwa, therefore, means "family" only indirectly, and it is very difficult to reconcile this word with the word "family," since the gwa houses people who are not members of the family and, on the other hand, does not house all the members of the family.

Besides, it should be noted that the word gwa in its meaning of "enclosure" is used to designate all sorts of agglomerations likewise enclosed, notably livestock folds. The variants wore and gore, which are more specifically applied to these folds, may also be used, and actually are in some regions, in forming the names of settlements. The form kore or kori, common in expressions of courtesy, has the same meaning; kori ka kende? means literally, "Is all the house well?" [160]

In some Bambara dialects, the word so is used instead of gwa. The primary meaning of the word so is also "enclosure" and, more especially, "hedge of thorns," by which all primitive establishments are protected; so-tigi has the same meaning as gwa-tigi. The word so also means "household," i.e., the contents of a house, including all within it, whether on a permanent or temporary basis and whether or not belonging to the family.

It is common practice, however, to use so and gwa in the narrow sense of "people of the family," i.e., those living under the authority of the same fa.

592 It may be said, in short, that there is no exact term
601 for designating expressly and exclusively a collectivity
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592 comparable to what our law defines as a family. In fact, the
601 four terms just discussed, ton', ba-denya, gwa, and so, are
596 all used for the purpose. It is what is intended by their use
that gives them their meaning, and depending on the region,
each term has a meaning made precise by usage.

592 The dwelling of the Bambara family usually includes
a fairly large number of huts of various kinds. Some are
342 cylindrical and built of native masonry with a conical straw
roof and, for a door, a slit or opening which does not extend
all the way to the ground. Others are parallelepiped, made of
native masonry, and ordinarily also provided with no opening
except the door.

Shelters (gwa), consisting of flat straw roofs supported
on forked sticks, are usually placed haphazardly or wherever
the master of the house wants them and are certainly not governed by any traditional rules or fixed orientation. All these
dwellings or out-buildings are enclosed by either a clay wall
[343] or an unbroken hedge whose two ends are supported by the walls
of the hut called blon' which serves as a vestibule for the establishment.

[178] The altar of the ancestors and of the household gods is
found in the blon'.

The houses of notables are somewhat more elaborately
arranged: instead of a single inner court, there are two, three,
or even more, sometimes graduated in extent. The master arranges his people in such a way as to divide into sections the
heterogeneous elements gathered together under his protection.
592 The domestic servants and the young [161] men, the women,
girls, and small children, and finally the eventual successor
are, as it were, fenced apart in their own blocks of dwellings,
while the fa himself is to be found in impressive isolation,
which lends weight to his authority.

592 Among great personages, especially among heads of
clans, this arrangement is the rule, and their isolation deep in
712 the interior is virtually a security measure. In the old days a
kind of fortress or redoubt, the tata, was built in the center of
the royal residence. Gunpowder, weapons, and all the means
of defense were kept there, and it was no easy matter to capture

592 [712] this well-built structure in the midst of the inextricable maze of surrounding huts which were themselves surrounded by a solid wall of native masonry.

[565] The people of a single household are classed in three categories: free men (woro-u), members of castes (nya-makala), and slaves (dyon'-u).

● 596 561 601 The freemen. Within the family, free persons are: the men (tye-u), i.e., circumcised males; the moso-u, excised women; the den'-u, children of both sexes.

In accordance with their influence (faya) in the family, the men are called koro-u, old men, elders, or kamalen'-u, young masters. Among the old men the bina (uncles), brothers of the fa, hold the preponderant position; they form a kind of limited family council and generally work for the welfare of the community under the direction of the fa.

Among the women the following distinctions are made: the mothers, i.e., women under the control of a husband and who are actually mothers of children, ba-u; old women, moso-koro-u; grandmothers, mama-u; and finally unmarried girls, moso-de-u.

All children are called de unless they are specifically identified as de-n-ke, "boy," or de-moso or deni, "girl."

601 Furthermore, every male with any influence (faya) in the family, no matter to what extent, is called fa (1): [162]

1. In one way or another, therefore, every male is fa, since he exercises or will one day exercise faya. The word fa is jokingly applied even to very young boys just as ba is applied to little girls. These words may be used just like our familiar expressions when we say "Father X" or "Mother X" with no reference intended to any real state of fatherhood or motherhood.

In any case, the words fa and ba are also used as terms of respect, just as we

The Patriarchal Community

When the *fa* is dead, all his property remains jointly
428 among his legal heirs, thus constituting a patriarchal community whose investigation has two parts: the community of persons and the community of property. [173]

I. The Community of Persons

596 *Members of the community*. The patriarchal community is made up solely of the legitimate descendants of the de-
614 ceased *fa*: immediate descendants (sons and daughters), or his descendants exclusively in the male line (descendants of his sons and grandsons).

The descendants of the *fa* through his daughters are outside the community since they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.

428 If, at his death, the *fa* leaves no male heirs, there can
be no patriarchal community; his property is divided among
596 his daughters or, if there are none, among his brothers. If only
614 a father or mother or some other ascendant were left, his property would go to them, or if he leaves only daughters, his property goes to them, but in either case there will no longer be a community.

848 Legitimacy is the necessary and sufficient condition for inclusion as a member of the community. A legitimate child
596 is one born of a marriage, that is, of a union between two free
614 individuals that conforms to custom. When slavery introduced
578 concubinage into the household, however, the rule was relaxed because a free man was unwilling to have his sons slaves. In practice, therefore, maternity resulting from intercourse with a free man frees his concubine from slavery, and the children of the union become members of the community. This dangerous privilege is often contested by agnate brothers born of free mothers.

Given the diversity of conjugal bonds, ranging from marriage to free union, it is easy to imagine the discussions that

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596 arise on the subject of legitimacy. During the fa's lifetime,
614 his authority imposes whatever solution pleases him, but when
578 he is gone, the disputes involving status are all the more violent
for having been suppressed or evaded for so long.

These disputes gain strength also from the difference in
614 rank which the members have within the community. The
596 totality of prerogatives of all kinds which raise the fa above
all others constitutes a kind of superior dignity whose essence
is the omnipotence covered by the word faya, from which
came the title fa [174] (master, lord). It is in reference to
the faya that the members of the community are ranked.

[562] Only male members can advance claims to the faya,
and because they can do this, they can all call themselves fa.
On the other hand, women can never hold this authority; they
are fantan'-u, "powerless."

Among the fa-u there are distinctions based on degree of
596 kinship and on age; those most closely related to the fa will be
614 the first to receive the honors about to be described. Male
601 descendants in the first degree form a sort of senate of which
561 the eldest is a kind of president-by-birth; he is truly the fa,
the actual representative of the deceased. The one immediately following him by rank in terms of age is his syere (follower), his heir presumptive at the head of the community. The other senators, usually brothers of the fa, are uncles (bina-u) to the descendants of the second degree and their children. By reason of the authority associated with the position of bina-u in the community, this kinship term has come to be a title of respect which is bestowed on men toward whom one wishes to show particular esteem (1). Because of their age, all the senators of the community are commonly called koro-u, "the elders," and the fa is first among them.

(1). It is worthy of note that in Uncle Tom's Cabin, Miss Stowe explains that among the slaves in America the word "uncle" had precisely this meaning as a title of respect and honor.

561 ● 596 614 Among the rest of the men in the community, one distinguishes those who, being circumcised, are married and even fathers of families or who are about to become one or the other; these men are called kamalen'-u, literally, "the young masters." Finally there are the uncircumcised: first, the adolescent boys called soli-ma-u, "people of the soli," that is to say, who will soon be circumcised; the others are small boys (den-tye-u).

596 614 The fa, his election and installation. The personage in the community on whom all attention is concentrated is the fa.

Even if during the life of the fa his successor is known, it does not always happen that the replacement will follow as was intended. [175]

In the first place, the designated heir is free to refuse the faya for any reason he pleases, including solely that of personal convenience. The chronicle of Ségou relates that Biton's son, who lived at Oïtala, refused the faya because of the excesses of the "people of Ségou."

More often, however, the faya eludes claimants for two main reasons.

No one can become fa if he does not belong to the community. Hence, anyone who ceases to be a member of the community, whether voluntarily or not, cannot attain the faya. One may cease to belong to the community either in fact or by law. The former condition would include prolonged absence, enslavement, settling abroad without hope of return, etc. This brings about a kind of suspension of the exercise of rights, but not their abrogation. On the other hand, when the member expressly renounces the community or when he is excluded by the decision of the fa (1) and the senate, he is

1. So it was that Ma-n-son decreed that his brothers Séri and Ba were excluded from the faya, because they merely looked on as spectators when he was struggling with Nyana-n-koro and had thus shown themselves hostile to the fa.

596 deprived of his rights, he and subsequently those who would
614 represent him; the branch of the family of which he is head is henceforth dead so far as the family is concerned.

In the second place, no member of the community
848 attains the faya unless he fulfills certain conditions, of which the first are legitimacy and primogeniture.

The fact that the claimant is a member of the com-
578 munity implies that he is legitimate. Since it does happen, however, that the question may not have actually been investigated or, by the wish of the fa, not even been raised, the legal heirs who would be injured and intriguers who seek any pretext -- and there are always some of these persons -- raise the question, and infinite complications often follow.

Primogeniture is equally subject to challenge, and the opposition everywhere finds it a convenient motive for their
595 machinations. It is, indeed, understandable that in polygamous households, with the wives sometimes residing in various places apart from the husband, simultaneous or at least close births give rise to disagreements as to which son was in fact the first-born.

Finally, even though he may actually be the eldest legitimate son, the claimant may find himself passed over because of measures taken [176] against him by the late fa. It appears that although custom favors the eldest legitimate son, it yields to the expressed wishes of the fa if the senate agrees to his rejecting the candidate. This is a grave step and one which may lead to the most violent reactions.

This raises the question of whether special talents or aptitudes should be required of the claimant, over and above those of legitimacy and primogeniture. For example, can he be required to be healthy, active, and a good administrator? It appears that the senate may choose to eliminate a person it deems unworthy. This applies particularly to a free man who has voluntarily fallen from that state by living like a caste member or a slave. By this behavior he has already excluded himself from the community, but it sometimes happens that his actual exclusion has not been noted or announced before the question of accession to the faya arises.

● 596 614 Most often, however, the debates are concerned either with legitimacy or with primogeniture, and it is by no means rare for a fa, before his death, to insist that the one chosen be the one designated by custom and to threaten to call down curses on anyone who should try to bypass him or to reject his authority (1).

> 1. Ngolo and Ma-n-son both acted in this manner, according to the chronicle of Ségou.

In associations which have adopted a community organization analogous to that of the family, the election of a head is determined solely by these factors. It may be concluded that these are the bases consecrated by custom and that any other arrangements can only result in the worst kind of disagreement.

567 578 596 614 There is confirmation for this. Where slaves are numerous and well organized, they may refuse to recognize the new fa and choose another from among the members of the community. They may even decide to give themselves to a foreign master on the pretext that the fa imposed upon them by custom does not meet with their approval. This is a disaster which jeopardizes the wealth, strength, and even the unity of a family, for it can happen, in order to deal with the crisis, that a compromise is made which more or less ignores the regularly designated fa. This results in wrangling which usually ends with a schism in the community.

The history of these countries tells of many such cases, [177] because the slaves, upon becoming powerful, made the law in the families. The chronicle of Ségou thus relates that the slaves belonging to Dina Wara gave themselves to Biton upon the death of the former. It goes without saying that endless intrigues always precede such defections. The really successful fa, such as Biton, earned their reputations as able politicians and increased their fortunes precisely by their [662] ability to avoid such disasters in their own communities, while stirring them up elsewhere.

596 In principle, even a duly recognized *fa* is not installed
614 until 40 days after the death of his predecessor. When there is no dispute, he in fact functions as *fa* at once; when, on the other hand, there is disagreement, the period may be extended.

The 40 days do not create an hiatus between the two administrations. When the new *fa* is installed, however long a time may have passed since the death of the predecessor, his *faya* is considered to date from the day of the latter's death. That is why the temporary official makes an inventory accounting for everything, if possible in the presence of the new *fa,* so that there will be no question when he turns over the inheritance.

Thus, this delay imposed by beliefs (ascribable, apparently, to magic) governed by respect for the mysterious workings of nature, has given rise to a kind of suspension of civil affairs, which allows the community to accept only a chief whom it recognizes because he fulfills the conditions required by custom.

Once he is recognized and installed, the *fa* continues in office no matter what befalls him; he cannot be removed for any reason whatsoever. When he is physically and morally unable to act, however, he is replaced by his eventual successor. So it was that when Sounsan was very old, he relinquished the *faya* to Massa who, in turn, did the same thing with respect to Béni-Fali.

It may even come about that the chosen *fa* is absent for an indefinite period. This happened, as we have seen, in the case of Dessé-koro, who was a prisoner at Ségou. He was not superceded, but in order to avoid the difficulties of an indefinite interregnum, Sira Bo was asked to take over the *faya*. He agreed only on condition that he would not be dispossessed if Dessé-koro should return. Mo-Siré, "little brother" (*duani*), i.e., uterine younger brother of Dessé, [178] promised in Dessé's name that Sira Bo would remain *fa* as long as he lived. When Dessé returned, he respected the promise made in his name by his *duani.* This is a typical example of the manner in which compromises can be made with custom.

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614 The functions of the "fa." The duties of the fa are many and complex; for the sake of clarity, we shall study them under three headings: cult; relations between communities; administration of property (which will be studied in connection with community property).

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782 Cult. Religion gives considerable strength to the family since nothing is decided without consulting the manes and the gods. Raffenel has given us a picture of old Niany praying to his manes on behalf of his absent son: "O my God, I command my son to your case since he has gone away on a mission important to all of us. Be with him on his journey. Preserve him from the wicked and from all misfortune so that he may once again enter by this door through which he departed and before which I am now kneeling. I implore you, O my God, to restore him to my love and to that of his mother, his brothers and his sisters (1)."

[114] 1. In spite of deviations due to Raffenel's desire to give a personal and literary touch to what he reports, the essential points of this prayer are accurate, and that is why I quote it.

[787] The chronicle of Kaarta tells us that old Sounson begged for early death as a sign that his lineage would be powerful in the future. Also, in order to make a prophecy come true, Deniba Bo submitted to the fatal blows of the Khassonké to make sure that his people would conquer the country.

After all, no one is free of fear of the gods, not even those whom one would take for brave spirits. Raffenel tells us that Bouo, his informant, feared the wrath of the god whose secrets he had revealed. The chronicle of Ségou tells that Ngolo, thinking he had aroused the wrath of his manes by encouraging evil desires in his eldest son, Ntyi, did not hesitate to sacrifice his [179] own grandson, the son of the aforesaid Ntyi, an atrocity which bears witness to a faith that was as profound as it was barbarous.

● 596 It is the duty of the fa to see to the cult. He projects
614 everything that happens to him personally to the supernatural
plane so as to come to conclusions that will guide his own
787 conduct. He discerns in the most ordinary dreams indications
of what will please the dead. Furthermore, the people around
him point out the signs of divine will that they have observed.
If, as happens in great houses, the fa is obliged to turn over
part of his responsibility to the family gods to one of his
confidantes, the latter will not fail to keep him informed of
anything significant that may be revealed.

[771] Thus, daily life is unceasingly dominated by the supernatural, and every important event is conditioned by these beliefs. This is readily seen in all the family institutions: birth, circumcision, marriage, and death.

[577] It follows that the moral behavior of the family is a concern of the fa. Whenever something abnormal or painful occurs, the fa looks into it. Do the dead perhaps have reason to be dissatisfied? Have they been neglected or offended? He questions them, and if he finds confirmation for his suspicions, he at once seeks to appease the manes in whatever way they desire. If the trouble persists, he investigates further, and sometimes everyone in the house is questioned or, if one prefers, made to confess, even infants. Could one of them, moved by ill feeling, have uttered maledictions when invoking the dead?

614 When the fa himself is ill, this general confession is
596 virtually obligatory. This is because the absolute authority of
a fa can hardly fail to arouse hatred, and hatred, a bad counselor,
783 makes people resort to magic to rob the more powerful of life.
[578] Fear that the elder's "clairvoyance" will discover the wickedness in the depths of one's soul and punish it usually induces the guilty person to obtain a pardon for his wrongdoing by confessing it, and then everything returns to normal.

596 Upon the death of the fa, it is the first duty of his suc-
614 cessor to try to discover, by any means, the causes of death
and to avenge it if need be.

[763] Everything which the old fa was wont to honor, which forms the spiritual treasure [180] of the family, must also be

596 honored by the new *fa*, and there is nothing to prevent him
614 from adding to the treasure.

The basic cult of the family is the cult of the ancestors.
769 Although the dead are frequently buried outside the family residence,
their souls are thought to live in the *blon'* of the dwelling.
[343 The *blon'* is a hut with two openings on opposite sides, one
592] to the street and the other to the interior, usually the courtyard.
It is impossible to enter or leave a house without going
through the *blon'*, where there is always a guard, at least in
778 important houses. The ancestors are usually represented in the
blon' by a group of crude, conical clay figures of a man and
769 woman, the latter identifiable by the exaggerated breasts.
Sometimes the symbol of the dead is a small board about a meter long, twenty centimeters wide, and a little more than a centimeter thick; at one of its extremities a slight protuberance vaguely suggests a head, a kind of ellipsoidal cylinder with eyes, nose, mouth, and chin faintly carved on one side. On the side with the face, the board has a checkerboard pattern, often of alternating black and red squares, probably to indicate the material of a loincloth. The lower extremity of the figure has a semicircular portion cut away to give the effect of legs spread apart when the effigy is set up.

769 Whatever form it may have, the representation of the
dead is called *kara* (1) and serves in some manner as an altar
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on which libations are poured and to which are attached the remains of the sacrifices made to the dead (*su-u*). Nevertheless, it is also a very widespread practice to make libations and sacrifices before the door of the *blon'* and, more rarely, before
[775] the door of an inner hut. In this case the liquid is poured and
the remains smeared on the vertical edge of the opening. This
practice is based on the belief that the souls of the dead ancestors like to return to the place where the *fa* liked to sit during his lifetime. Undoubtedly, the ancestors are regarded as guardians of the threshold; they are [181] honored as such because it is believed that they prefer to be honored in this way.

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1. In Soninké, *kara* means "to die" and "death."

769 794 It has the same base: request, offering, communion. In addition, there is a liturgy appropriate to each *nyana*, in particular, the mysterious sayings that attract the god and make him [183], the actual servitor of the person uttering these sayings, rather than a benevolent protector. This shows the antithesis as to final ends between religion and magic, as was set forth in Chapter 2 of the present work.

596 614 778 The *fa* also has the responsibility of maintaining the efficacy of magic weapons; he must fulfill all the obligations required by each of them. Among them there are true *nyana*, sometimes independent, sometimes a part of the great *nyana*. Mostly they are amulets or talismans whose virtue depends on certain rites or simply on the observance of certain interdicts.

596 614 778 Finally, the *fa* is the guardian of custom and family relics, which likewise have a religious basis since custom, after all, is the continuing will of the generations, the imperious mandate of the ancestors, the table of law of the manes. Any transgression of custom is certain to bring the worst disasters. The relics are ordinary or ceremonial objects left by the successive *fa*. Some of them are so strongly associated with the patriarchal office that on special occasions or in certain circumstances the *fa* is forced by custom to wear these objects impregnated with the virtue of the ancestors. The cap and weapons of Biton at Ségou were of this nature, and such is the case among the Massa-si.

596 614 *Relations between members of the community*. Theoretically, the powers of the *fa* over the members of the community are absolute. He can hire them out, offer them as security, sell them, and even put them to death (1). He also has the right to use whatever belongs to them,(2) both persons

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1. Note how Ma-n-son got rid of some of his brothers.

2. Ngolo sacrificed his son's son.

596 and property. On the other hand, he also has duties toward
614 them, for it is the essence of the institution to support its
members.

561 All the acts of the fa, even the arbitrary ones, are,
according to law, under the control of the senate. It should
578 not be forgotten that the members of the community are di-
596 vided into two hostile groups: that of the "elders," which in-
614 cludes the fa, and that of the "young masters." The fa could
hardly [184] keep the common property all to himself, so he shares it more or less as he pleases, and naturally, the elders are among the most generously treated. The young men seldom get any such favors, hence their resentment against the elders, due largely to envy of their favored position.

596 It is customary for a fa when he becomes the head of a
614 patriarchy to leave the management of his own community to
his eldest son (1). This separation of interests is essential in order to prevent the fa from despoiling the patriarchy to benefit his own community. The history of these countries shows how often this rule is broken by ambitious men who hope to profit by the general confusion to build up a considerable fortune. Among both the elders and the young men they find willing accomplices, and as their power increases, they extend their extortions. There are many signs, however, of the fragility of their despotism, which they themselves recognize. They usually, therefore, take pains to settle the question of succession in advance hoping to avoid the collapse of their achievements. Wasted effort! Custom, which they have ignored, regains its rights when they die and often does so during their lifetime. This is a logical explanation of the fact that

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492] 1. The eldest son, or better, the first-born son, thus occupies a privileged position, and in Kaarta he is usually provided with a white horse to make him conspicuous. See p. 122 about the death of 98 first-born sons mounted on white horses.

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most of the great empires have survived their founders for only a short time.

More often than not, a "young master" has a position in the community which is considerably less pleasant than that of a domestic slave wholives alongside him and ostensibly under his command. A domestic slave can escape or stir up all sorts of difficulties that result in the diminution of the patrimony. There is no such thing to be feared from a member of the community; should he be punished, banished, or leave, the common property does not suffer. If he goes away and is successful, he will not fail to share his good fortune with the community. Indeed, anyone who loses interest in the welfare of his community runs the risk of being cut off from it. He must actually live with the community; if not, he is treated as a dead member. [185] He must be present for anything that transpires. The chronicle of Ségou gives an example. Quarrels broke out among Ngolo's sons when he died. Nyana-n-koro, who had been favored by his father, thought that this affection designated him as the successor to the deceased. Ngolo, however, had expressly chosen Ma-n-son in conformity with custom. Nevertheless, confident of winning, Nyana-n-koro tried to oust Ma-n-son by force, but in vain. In the course of these fratricidal struggles, certain members of the community remained neutral, hoping in this way to retain the good will of the victor. They gained nothing, however, because Ma-n-son was the winner and turned against them. He sentenced his brothers Séri and Ba to a sort of exile from the community, giving each of them a token share of the estate and ordering them not to increase it.

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Since property is held in common, the _fa_ is obliged to give some benefits to all the members of the community. This is why, when necessary, he provides the marriage payment that enables a young man to found a family; he ransoms persons who have been enslaved; he provides for the sick when their expenses are high; he pays civil, judicial, or other debts when the debtor is forced to pay and the community is responsible. These payments, however, which are made with the approval of the senate, are regarded as loans to the recipient with his consent, he is henceforth in debt to the community. He will not only have to repay

421 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show
● 546 his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as
614 usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

466 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is
596 at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate
614 to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself, [186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them never return, either because they have managed to create an independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More often, however, the young man, having founded an independent family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and watches developments there in case he may one day be able to profit from them.

578 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue
561 which is forever at war with the fa and the senate. Their op-
885 position weakens, however, as they approach the age at which they too will participate in the faya to which they aspire. Gradually, as one changes from kamalen' to bina, he acquires the same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity of the new kamalen'-u.

562 In concluding this study of the members of the commun-
583 ity, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys, they belong completely to the community, which, as a result, has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So, since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

421 Finally, the status of a community is, as it were, syn-
424 thesized and symbolized by the "honorable name" (dyamu), by
596 which this collectivity titles itself and which it considers one of
614 its most precious possessions.

Agrarian usufruct. Ownership of land does not exist.
423 Each family has a right of use, uncertain in principle but permanent in fact, over the lands assigned to it in the domain of the genie-protector (nyana dugu-da-siri).

It may happen that a single family is the sole beneficiary of a given domain because it is the only one linked to the genie protecting the place.

More generally, various families are under the protection of the same local genie, whose domain in that case includes the parts exploited in common as well as the fields expressly assigned to individual families under its protection. The agrarian usufruct which is included as part of the community property exists with respect to these individual fields.

This usufruct differs from that recognized by our law. It is the dugu-tigi and his council who allot the common lands, and the process always involves wrangling and [187] deals. In principle, the plot assigned remains indefinitely with the family benefited if it is continuously farmed and an annual fee is paid. Following the land for several years is permitted. The family exploiting the land may use it in any way, and its right is as complete as possible, short only of alienating it. The family may lease, cede, or pawn its usufruct. If a transaction involves a foreigner, however, it may not be concluded without the consent of the dugu-tigi, who consults his council. In general, any action which might conceivably injure the welfare of the community as a whole must be submitted to the dugu-tigi for approval before being undertaken.

The usufruct comes to an end under the following circumstances: when a family permanently leaves the community governing the fields; when the dugu-tigi and his council decide to dispose of the land for reasons which they are not required to give; when a family gives the land up voluntarily or has been deprived of it because it has been used in a manner contrary to the interests of the agrarian community.

567 unlikely -- he may even own slaves himself and use them as substitutes.

Thus the relations between master and slave gradually become very different from what our European minds imagine. A master is bound to his *wolo-so* [193] by a thousand ties: he admits them to the cult; he marries their daughters; he circumcises their sons along with his own; and he allies himself with some of them by fraternization or an oath.

Even if he does not have such close contact, the *wolo-so* who is freed from labor, who perhaps lives at some distance or, if nearby, in virtual independence, is henceforth a *dyongoro*, that is, "freed." The link is not severed, and the freed man is a kind of relative. He is interested in everything that happens in his master's community and is present upon all important occasions, never coming with empty hands. Reciprocally, he is never treated like a stranger by the master. The master contributes to every event concerning him: he helps him get his sons married and established; on the occasion of the *soli*, he assembles his children along with his own, which gives them a degree of common solidarity.

The admission of the *wolo-so* to his master's community is shown publicly by the fact that the *wolo-so* bears the *dyamu* of his master.

It would be an exaggeration to claim that the house slave's situation is always so fortunate; it depends on many different factors (1).

1. A slave is seldom permitted to buy his freedom; the slave himself does not seek this redemption which would free only him and leave his family and most of his property in the hands of the master.

551 *The dyamu*. This is the name given to himself by the
•596 native, bestowed upon him by others, or inherited from his ancestors, but in any case one that has become such an honor that
614 merely to pronounce it is enough to bring forth a show of homage toward one who bears it, for example, Kouloubali, Dyara, Dembélé, etc.

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This is because the dyamu in itself sums up the history of the community that bears it; it implies everything involving the ancestors, as well as the achievements of present members, their ignominies, and even their fraternal, conjugal, political, and supernatural alliances.

One might imagine that one or another of the characteristic aspects covered by the dyamu would serve to identify the bearers of the same name, but the Europeans who study the native milieu have long been accustomed to identifying those who bear the same dyamu by means of [194] their respective tne (interdicts), and the natives do the same (1).

> 1. When this was first being done, there was an error of interpretation and hasty generalization which falsified the results. The tne which accompanies the dyamu was made analogous with totem, and it was stated that the dyamu and the name of the tne object were one and the same. Careful study has established that there is nothing to the alleged correspondence.

For the Black, any of his fellows who bears the same dyamu as his and shares with him one or more tne is regarded as a relative, even though he may belong to a different people.

Among individuals of different peoples, certain dyamu, although dissimilar, are regarded as equivalent and are interchanged, because those who bear them have common tne (interdicts).

As a result of one of the alliances that will be described later under "Relations between Communities," the tne of one party henceforth become the tne of the other, and vice versa, and this leads to the equivalence of dyamu. Marriage sometimes has the same effect when the union is an important one, greatly, desired, or even more, is the sort of marriage that forms indissoluble bonds and an unshakable solidarity between families.

429 A person who is away for a long or indefinite period [217] delegates the direction of the family community for as long as necessary to a friend or relative. This substitute, however, is expected to act only in accordance with the customary counsel and the family of the absent person.

[586] In case of divorce, the children always remain with the father. A divorced woman again comes under the guardianship of her own community.

768 429 When the mother dies, the father retains the administration of her property which belongs jointly to her children. If, however, one of her sons is married or of marriageable age and is competent, all such property is supposed to be handed over to him to administer in his capacity as fa of the uterine community.

When a father dies, his minor children are placed under the guardianship of the patriarch under whose authority the deceased was living. If he was independent, guardianship would be set up in accordance with his wishes which he would not have failed to make known.

In any event, if one of his sons is married or of marriageable age and sufficiently competent, he becomes fa of the familial community which gradually, as the younger sons grow up and establish families of their own, becomes a patriarchy such as we have described above.

[641] According to native law, deprivation of civil rights does not exist. In fact, however, persons who by reason of ill-health or senility are unable to comply with custom in carrying out their functions are supplanted by such persons as are designated by custom to replace them at the time of death.

596 614 Faya. The faya is the authority and power of the fa over all his dependents. It has the same character, differing only in extent, whether it concerns a familial or a patriarchal community.

Familial faya. Within the family, the fa theoretically has complete authority over everything that constitutes this community. It makes little difference whether he acts on his own initiative or whether he allows himself to be swayed by the

596 614 opinion of those around him, his intimates and friends. He exercises the right of agrarian usufruct over the lands under cultivation, and he may dispose of movable property without restriction. As regards persons, his own issue [218] are at his mercy, and he profits from their labor. He can hire them out, put them up for security, sell them, and even put them to death. He has the right of conjugal usufruct over his wives, and his slaves are merely chattels.

Patriarchal faya. This differs in extent from the foregoing. Anything connected in whatever way to the patriarchal community itself or to the family communities under its authority comes under the patriarchal faya.

Though the maintenance of this power presents no problems in theory, practice is quite another matter.

The fact is that the fa of a familial community is completely subject to a patriarch only if, being connected through the male line, he has some property in the patriarchy or intends to claim rights in it.

If this is not the case, the familial fa acts as though he did not belong to the patriarchy, and the latter can only treat him accordingly. This is what happens when a "son" goes off, establishes himself far away, and prospers there by his own efforts and at his own risk. Breaking all agnatic ties, he in fact frees himself from any authority that his patriarchy might seek to impose upon him.

This has produced innumerable dissident branches which have the same dyamu but which can only hypothetically trace their descent through the males back to a common male ancestor.

428 Inheritance. It is necessary, first, to know whether the deceased was a fa or a fantan', that is, whether he exercised the authority of a fa or was under the authority of a fa.

Let us say the deceased was a fa.

In principle, if he was fa of a family, everything belonging to him remains undivided under the new faya of his eldest son.

If he was fa of a patriarchy, a new patriarch succeeds him.

It is unnecessary to belabor these points or the consequences of the variations in view of the details given above.

428 Now let us say the deceased was a *fantan'*, that is, he did not exercise a *faya*. [219]

A son who dies before becoming *fa* rarely leaves any property. If he should by chance do so, such wealth theoretically belongs to the community of which he was a member. The disposition of property from special sources must be settled according to the nature of the source. Thus, property which the deceased may have inherited from his mother would go to his uterine heirs.

What has just been said of a son applies all the more to a daughter, since, after all, she is nothing more than a kind of property belonging to the community.

428 567 The most hapless *fantan'* is the slave. In principle, he could hardly be expected to leave an inheritance since even his own person does not belong to him. In fact, however, the situation is quite different. A slave generally does have some property and may even be very rich. His *fa* allows him the use of his property for his lifetime, and it is current practice for him to leave it likewise to his children. As a result, everything transpires just as though the deceased were a free man, and what we have said about other communities applies to this type of community which, strictly speaking, has only a kind of *de facto* existence. The action of custom, in freeing the slave, gives him access to the position of a free man without depriving him of what his *fa* has allowed him to enjoy. In the end, this enjoyment of use is gradually transformed and strengthened by inheritance until it is the equivalent of similar rights to property which are accorded to men born free.

●596 614 *Order of succession. Patriarchal community*. The *fa* is the eldest of the surviving males who are direct descendants in the male line of the *fa* who founded the community.

428 596 614 *Familial community*. 1. The eldest surviving son of the deceased; upon his death, succession follows the same pattern as for the patriarchal community.

If there are only daughters, the property is divided among them.

428 2. If there are no children, the collateral males and, lacking them, ~~the~~ wives.

•596 614 3. If there are no collateral relatives, the ascendants.

4. If there are no ascendants, the surviving spouse.

5. If there is no surviving spouse, escheat occurs: [220] the inheritance reverts to the head of the settlement, the dugutigi, when this settlement is independent; otherwise to the head of the clan, the fama.

596 614 The community and the individual. The result of the foregoing is that the individual, whoever he may be and whatever his situation, has no value except as a member of a community (1); it is the community that exists and has an identity, while the individual exists and is identified only through the community and for the community.

An individual who exists apart from any faya is, therefore, an anomaly, and this situation comes to an end as soon as the individual himself becomes fa.

596 614 There are cases, however, when an individual is put out of his community because of his own action or because of circumstances, and extraordinary changes of status result.

626 Anyone driven from his community for bad conduct loses his rights to the faya in that community.

564 558 If his disqualification results from the practice of a trade regarded as degrading, he falls into what the Bambara call nyama-ka-la and Europeans call "people of caste." Henceforth he is not only excluded from his community, but he lives apart from all persons not declassed; he is a free man of inferior standing. He usually lives under the protection of a community of persons not declassed, earning his living from it and deriving from it such consideration as may be sometimes given him.

564 463 Among the Bambara, the nyama-ka-la include: the numu, blacksmiths, whose wives are usually potters; the loro, who work with copper; the garanke, who work leather; and the kule, who work with wood and are sometimes saddlers.

[567] 1. A slave has no rights because, as a person, he belongs to no community.

564 engage only in agriculture. Furthermore, casual or temporary practice, in one's own home, for instance, of one of the reputedly menial trades is not considered degrading.

567 Theoretically, enslavement does not exclude an individ-
596 ual from his own community nor in any way demean him in
614 relation to it (1); if he returns, he recovers his rights just as
though he had never been away.

On the other hand, at the place where he is a slave, an individual belongs to no community (as a person), and that is why he has no rights and is treated as a chattel.

567 We have shown earlier how, aided by time and circumstances, a slave may manage to escape some of the limitations of his status, but strictly speaking, [222] he can never escape this status. If in fact, as the chronicle says of Ngolo Dyara, a slave succeeds in attaining a position whose importance would seem to obliterate the stigma of servitude, the blemish of slavery nevertheless remains indelible.

4. Relations between Communities

596 The true social unit is the community. Even when no
614 special organization links them, communities are often linked
621 by numerous bonds. This involves no distinction by race, incidentally, since more often than not ethnically diverse peoples live together in the same region.

These bonds between communities may be classified under two heads: kinship and alliance.

Kinship

[602] The influence of kinship is very extensive. Thus, a single patriarchal community includes the familial communities

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1. For example, Déssé-Koro, taken in captivity to Ségou, returned to Kaarta where he exercised the faya of the Massa-si.

596 of all the male members of the community, and agnate and
614 uterine communities coexist in each familial community.
621 Furthermore, every familial community automatically becomes
602 a patriarchal community upon the death of its head, and it is
then composed of its own familial communities.

What actually happens, then, is that under the original patriarchal community are grouped an ever increasing number of other patriarchies or families, each of which includes its agnate or uterine communities. When the original patriarchy is an old one, it is obvious that a large number of persons will be living under its aegis, all of whom have *dyamu* and *tne* in common.

It may happen, however, that through time and a variety of circumstances branches become separated from the trunk, and to mark their new status, to perpetuate the memorable achievement of their founder, some of these groups have adopted a special *dyamu* and particular *tne*. At first the new *dyamu* is simply added to the original one, but later on the new one comes to be the only one used. However that may be, the principal characteristics [223] of the original community still persist, with a few new traits merely superimposed.

Since every secondary community in turn generates like communities, it goes without saying that the communities most distant from the original one have only a few traits in common with it, but their kinship never becomes extinct.

What are the effects of this kinship? On the one hand, it requires all concerned to observe their common duties to the community: in particular to respect ancestral traditions relative to the cult; to give mutual aid; to recognize the authority of the current *fa* who, for his part, is obliged to protect all his relatives, no matter how remote the connection.

As far as outsiders are concerned, kinship requires everyone to respect all pacts between communities. One can often observe fidelity to these alliances which may be hundreds of years old. If by chance people who have previously never seen each other learn of their respective *dyamu* and the attendant obligations, they will at once assume the reciprocal obligations contracted by their ancestors.

Alliance

596 "The types of alliance between communities appear to
614 differ widely, but in actual fact all alliances are based on a
621 religious or magic rite and, more generally, on an oath.

Four forms of alliance particularly deserve attention:
784 the *tne* or interdict, the oath, marriage, and the common cult.

I. *The tne*. The native regards the invisible world as a duplicate of the visible world, complete with communities. He carries the analogy even to those things which we call inanimate objects. That is why, when a native binds himself to an interdict, he is not promising to respect such and such a person or thing but, rather, the community of which he believes the person or thing to be a representative. Besides, just as the interdict applies to the whole community to which the object of the interdict belongs, it also binds all the members of the community whose *fa* instituted it. [224]

The basis of the alliance is the oath of the *fa*, any infraction of which automatically brings the most dreadful calamities upon the guilty party. It is like a sacrament, which the descendants of the *fa* must respect *in infinitum*.

The chronicle of Ségou shows us how such an oath happens to be made. Upon reaching the Niger, and having no means of crossing it, Ntchi in his peril called upon his ancestors for help. His prayer was answered: a *poyon'* appeared and ferried him and his people to the opposite shore. In gratitude for this service, Ntchi swore that the fish would henceforth be sacred to him and to his descendants. By this act, all *poyon'* became *tne* for Ntchi and his descendants, although this does not mean that there was a cult of the fish. It was a kind of alliance or covenant, analogous to one between human communities and with similar effects; it entailed some sort of reciprocal brotherly mutual aid. In practice, a Kouloubali descended from Ntchi must never, under any circumstances whatsoever, voluntarily harm a *poyon'*, his *tne*, on pain of the most disastrous consequences. If he has done so inadvertently, he can atone with sacrifices or appropriate penance, which his own intuition or a diviner suggests. He must always, in so far as the need arises,

596 assist his tne, while showing it the greatest respect. The mysti-
614 cal basis of this alliance sometimes causes the native to behave
621 in a particular way toward his tne: he will not look straight at
784 it; he will not touch it, unless absolutely forced to do so, and
then he will apologize and ask forgiveness.

Anything may be the object of a tne, but there is probably not a single Bambara family which does not have some animal as tne. Expressions which the natives in general and the Bambara in particular use to make foreigners understand their relations with this animal tne have made many Europeans think that the native regards the animal as a relative in the literal sense of the word. This is not the case, as we have just seen, and consequently Bambara totem is a purely European invention (1). [225]

1. It should be understood that the tne has many sources besides one mentioned here, which is the only one pertinent to this chapter. Thus, Bala refused to pronounce any word having the syllable da (p.); Sounsan abstained from the kulé (p. . . footnote 1).

596 II. The oath. In native society, a man who is ambitious
614 or merely anxious to establish a powerful community can do so
621 only with the support of faithful allies. Massa and Biton not only
608 succeeded in dominating their young companions, but they also
bound them closely through the oath and the cult.

Undoubtedly all the founders of powerful communities have not proceeded in exactly the same way, but all of them have employed analogous methods. An isolated individual can accomplish nothing in this social milieu where everything rests on these strongly organized collectivities, the communities. Any Bambara eager for well-being and peace will seek out and attach himself to a "powerful protector" (dyigi seme) capable of providing him with this security, even if it means the loss of his own

●596 freedom. That is why any important fa is invariably surrounded
614 by a small group of intimates who are bound to his fate, often
621 by a reciprocal agreement based on an oath.

One of these sacramental alliances is particularly
608 solemn; its purpose is to create a kind of kinship analogous to that which links blood brothers. There is always a profound difference between natural and contractual brotherhood, since the former exists and produces its effects independently of the will of those involved, whereas the latter exists and is valid only within the limits agreed upon by the contracting parties (1).

For a pact of brotherhood (dyonge) (2), the contracting parties, whether two or several, proceed as they see fit, either in public or privately in the presence of only close relatives and intimates. Each party to the agreement pricks his forearm and extracts a few drops of blood. The blood thus obtained is mixed with a small quantity of goat's milk in a receptacle. Calling upon the ancestors or some god chosen for the occasion to bear witness, each party in turn promises with a solemn oath to consider the others as his brothers. At the same time, he repeats the [22[illegible]] conditions of the pact and finally sips some of the liquid.

This is the closest alliance that two Bambara can contract (1). Among other things, it forbids one to marry women

1. It should be noted that fraternization in its symbolic form has a necessary consequence which is not obligatory for other types of alliance by oath: it obligates the descendants of the contracting parties just as much as those undertaking the contract.

2. This term unquestionably derives from the verb siri, "to link, to unite."

1. Blood-brotherhood was contracted

596 614 621 608 between Deni-ba Bo for the Massa-si of Kaarta and Suleyman Ba for the people of Fouta.

belonging to the other's community, at least virgins or women reputed to be such. This is because a first sexual contact is likely to result in some flow of blood, and brotherhood imposes a terrible punishment on anyone who sheds the blood of a blood-brother or one of his people. As is apparent, the obligation undertaken by the contracting parties holds for all their descendants, regardless of sex and in infinitum. Henceforth there is a very close solidarity between the two communities, who are so bound to mutual aid that, in practice, anything (including lies, slander, and perjury) is permissible to overcome a common enemy or, in any event, to help the ally in trouble.

596 614 621 695 In place of the brotherhood oath, many other forms of oath can be used. Thus, the chronicles tell of Sounsan and Fa Siné forming an alliance with an oath which was undoubtedly binding, because the anvil on which it was sworn was afterwards cast into a well. Nko, Sounsan's god, received the oath under which the "young men" who were Massa's companions allied themselves to the latter's fate. At Ségou, the tondyon' likewise swore loyalty on the idols.

These sacramental agreements are endlessly varied, but they bind the parties only under the stipulated conditions, especially as regards the respective communities of the fa who take the oath.

596 614 621 583 III. Marriage. There is no better way for a Bambara to show his attachment to someone whose alliance or friendship he desires than by giving him as a wife one of the girls of his own community and providing her with a generous dowry. This is one of the most solemn forms of alliance between communities (2).

2. People united by marriage are called furu-nyuan' (spouses) and biran' (allies).

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This conjugal union differs clearly from [227] ordinary forms of marriage. In view of the fact that the husband gets a wife without paying a bride price for her, the wife is not given in usufruct, and therefore she must be treated with the greatest consideration or she may be taken back. The situation can only be normalized if the husband is rich enough to present to the donor a gift equal to or preferably, if possible, greater than the dowry brought by the wife, or he may give a similar gift to the wife (1).

1. Such property is the wife's paraphernalia.

In these situations also, the procedure varies a great deal. The donor may offer a girl from another community and provide her with a dowry. This is what Biton did in order to bind Ngolo to him: Biton gave him a girl designated by the marabouts as one of the elect, and he also provided the girl with a rich dowry.

The significance of such alliances can be estimated only when one has some knowledge of the intentions of the parties involved, especially those of the donor. We shall see one important type in the chapter on Islam, the marriage of Allah.

IV. The common cult (2). The territorial community.

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2. Communities may be united under the protection of the same god. Here we shall study only their union under the protection of the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-siri). Other common cults will be studied in the following chapter, "Brotherhoods."

In the mind of the Bambara, the earth, together with everything in it, is the property of the spirits. As a result, no one may make use of it or presume to settle on or cultivate an unused field without first going through certain ceremonies.

For this purpose, either on his own responsibility or, more often, with the aid of "the one who knows" (don-na-ba), a

Relations between the Elements of the Clan

614 596 A study of the clan of Ségou is fortunately clarified by comparison with the organizations which we have discussed earlier: communities and brotherhoods. [306]

The influence of the community and the brotherhood on the clan is clearly shown by the two traits which reveal the consistent effort made by the *fama* to fuse the clan with his own patriarchy. First, there is the connection of the important *ton'-dyon'* chiefs and, through them, of all of the *furu-dyon'* to the *fama*. This is achieved by placing each of these *dyon'-kuntigi* under the patronage of an influential member of that patriarchy. Under Mamari and Ngolo, for instance, each of these *dyon'-kuntigi* was attached to the mother, wife, son, or brother of the *fama*. The *ton'-masa* himself asked to be put under the protection of Bakari, son of Mamari.

[794] From another viewpoint, the liaison between the clan and the patriarchy of the *fama* is made even closer by the participation of the *ton'-dyon'* in the personal cults of Mamari. Some of them were leading officients of the cults; it was precisely this circumstance that enabled Ngolo to dominate his companions.

It is therefore not too rash to state that under these conditions the clan is merely a kind of extension of the patriarchy of the *fama*. Besides, the *ton'-dyon'* always made a point of the bonds which in so many ways linked them to Mamari and which established a real brotherhood between them. That is why, first of all, their cult honored Mamari as though he were an ancestor. Secondly, it was the reason for the mode of succession which was imposed during periods of anarchy, bringing to power the man longest in Mamari's service. Finally, for the same reason, when the *fama* dies, the ceremonies are exactly like those for a patriarch.

614 There is another consequence: the prosperity, the power, and even the existence of the clan depend essentially on the personal qualities of the *fama*. When he is equal to the task, the clan is rich and powerful. If he lacks authority or is unable to assign each member a position and a role and keep him there, opposition will at once arise. By its very nature, such opposition inevitably separates the elements that go to make up the clan,

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3. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal et Niger [Upper Senegal and Niger].

4. Labouret, Les Mandingues et leur langue [The Mandingo and Their Language].

etc., but these are still very fragmentary and incomplete. In addition, 177 this society was completely disrupted by the French conquest, either by such radical measures as the suppression of slavery or by a natural evolution as a result of contact with European societies. Nevertheless, traditional structures retain their vitality, despite the effort to adapt them to European formulas.

178 The society seems to have oscillated between familial anarchy and the clan stage, according to alternating ranges of groupings, disassociation, and regroupings.

1. The Family

594 596 Concerning the Sudanese, Delafosse has already made the distinction between "the restricted family" and the "extended family." The restricted family is composed of the parents and children who live in the "hut." Taken alone, it does not represent a social unit. The true social cell is the extended family. This is the large united family made up of a group of restricted families whose heads recognize a common ancestor. This group, composed of agnates in principle, is the ba-denya, whose members live in huts within an enclosure: gwa or so. The two ends of this [51] enclosure rest on a blõ (vestibule) where the ancestors' altar is found.

601 612 According to Labouret, the Bambara distinguish three categories of family ties: the paternal line, the maternal line, and relationship by marriage. The child takes the dyamu (honorable name) of his father's group, but the terms applied to ancestors and descendants are the same as those of the maternal line.

"... Kinship includes the following generations: tolo-mina... tolo-sama... tolo-ma-sama: who seizes or pulls ears (a belief has it that if a great grandson pulls the ear of his great grandfather, the latter becomes deaf); [829]

603 alliance]. (It is also customary for grandfathers and grandsons to eat together, while the sons eat apart.)

612 c. By Marriage: T'ɛ, K'ɛ. Kɛ = husband's name, corresponding
601 to muso (muso, term for spouse [female?]).

Bira nk'ɛ = father-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and all the male relatives of the husband or wife, corresponding to bira-muso = mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, and all female relatives of the husband or wife.

587 When a man dies, his wives go to his younger brother; and if a man's wife dies, he may marry her younger sister . . .

582 This patrilineal and patrilocal family must have grafted itself
611 onto an ancient matrilineal system (see the chapter on inheritance and position of women). The systems of clan exogamy and endogamy are united: two pairs of brothers and sisters marry among themselves; sons must take their wives from their mother's family, and marriages take place between cross-cousins; children never belong to their parents' category, while grandchildren and grandparents always are in the same category.

583 [53] We shall see that alongside this matrimonial system in which wives are exchanged there exists a system in which payments are made to the fa of the young girl.

●596 The size of the united family varies, but it may include more than 80 persons. Labouret (1) gives us, as an example, the composition

1. Op. cit.

of the blõ of Ngolo Traoré at Mpiéla, Kolokani subdivision:

	Men	Women	Children
1. Household of Ngolo	1	8	15
2. Household of Samba, Ngolo's brother	1	2	4
3. Household of Dotné, Samba's son	1	2	3
4. Household of Denkoro, son of deceased Bakoro	1	3	1
5. Household of Fabugai, Ngolo's son .	1	2	4
6. Quarters of unmarried males, all sons of Ngolo and Samba . . .	5		
	10	17	19 [sic]

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596 The *fa*. -- The whole of this family obeys the same head: the *fa*. The *fa* is designated by a council of elders when he fulfills the following conditions: first, not to refuse the *faya* and to be a [567] member of the community, that is, actually to live within the community; next, he must never have been a slave, and he must not have settled abroad without hoping to return home. In addition, he [848] must be a legitimate child, that is to say, born in wedlock, and the firstborn. In principle, the *faya* passes from older to younger brother (in the classificatory sense of the term). Thus, the *fa* is always the member of each generation closest to the ancestor. Finally, the *fa* must be able, that is, healthy, active, and a good administrator. Often the *fa* designates his successor before his death. The successor may assume power only 40 days after the death of the last *fa*, and after being recognized as head of the family by the assembly of elders. From that moment on, he exercises his functions, come what may.

The *fa* has charge of, and the moral and physical responsibility for, the whole community. He directs and protects all the members of the family. These latter can escape his authority only by leaving the village for good; they are then considered to be dead members. (The descendants of the *fa* by his daughters are outside of the community; they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.)

The *fa*, head of the family, lives under the administrative dependence of the head of the village.

2. From Family to Community

621 The true social unit is the community. Ties of kinship and marriage unite groups without racial or ethnic unity.

622 a. *Patriarchal Organization of the "Ton."* -- All the family heads obey a village head: it is on him that the responsibility falls for the organization of the community territory, as well as the responsibility for administering justice when contention arises between followers of different *faya*. The village chief is generally master of the land: *dugu-kolo-tigi*; sometimes [54] he cedes his rights to a village administrative chief younger than himself, but in matters of religion he remains all-powerful, and each year he receives gifts from the different family heads for the needs of the common cult. He also

423 621 622 Thus, the man holding the land can neither sell it nor take any action regarding it which would involve the interests of the whole community; but he can rent it out, pledge it, or [62] cede it, which leads to manifold disputes at the time of redistribution of the land in the case of cyclical cultures.

621 622 652 The dugu-tigi also prepares the community's budget. The resources include: gifts made to the gods, thanksgiving offerings for the hunt, for the fishing catch, and for the millet harvest, payments for concession of land or for services rendered, rent of community goods (fixed revenues or exceptional tribute), receipts from fines, confiscations, escheatage, and finally, the extraordinary aid formerly obtained for war, constructions, etc.

[651 746] Among the expenditures are included the cost of supporting members of the community if need be, of maintaining the proper appearance, assistance to the sick, and, especially, the tax or tribute formerly paid to the sovereign, legitimate or not, and today paid to the French administration.

● 596 The family patrimony (tien) is administered by the fa, head of the family. A. Aubert (1) gives us the composition of this patrimony which includes: "Rights on the lands cultivated by the community; animals; serfs; money owed and money owing; the dowries of the daughters and women who are issue of members of the settlement; the inheritances; the dwellings of the settlement and their furnishings; the foodstuffs of the communal granaries (foro-ba), and, in general, all wealth resulting from the communal work of the family members."

Moreover, the fa must: "see to the material life of all the members of the family; provide dowries for the women of the community; pay back the dowries of the women of the community who are to be divorced; ransom members of the family who are taken prisoner or are sold, and pay taxes in goods or in money."

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1. A. Aubert, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Bougouni Circle)].

b. Organization of Work

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621 Work on the land is the only kind of work suitable for free men, for to work the land is to purify it. All agricultural operations
[622 are set in motion by the *dugu-tigi* and are regulated by the *fa* who
591[assigns tasks by age classes. Each member of the community must work for it every day, except Monday and Thursday, from dawn to about 4:30 p.m. He may be helped, or even replaced, by his children and his captives. The rest of the time he may work for himself in his personal field or in the little fields situated along the water courses and the rivers, which are not periodically redistributed and are considered almost as personal and hereditary property. The fruit of this labor constitutes the personal savings of the community member.

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423 The exploitation of the subsoil is governed by other rules which we still know only imperfectly. Like the soil, the subsoil belongs to the master of the land. Iron ore was extracted solely by the
[326] blacksmith who paid the master of the land a rent in the form of hoes or axes. To exploit the gold mines, thousands of natives went in family groups to the placers at the beginning of the dry season. [63] The location of the placers was determined by the priests and changed every year. The men dig multiple small holes very close to each other, which may go very deep depending on the depth of the barren layer. When the calabashes of gold-bearing earth are brought up, the women wash the earth. The placers are abandoned at the beginning of the rains after three or four months of exploitation. Before the French occupation, gold was the exclusive property of the Fama and could in no case be the object of commerce. To-
[439] day, gold is generally sold at the placers to Syrian, native, or European merchants, who have established veritable shops at the mining centers, shops which contain everything necessary for the miner's life.

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554 The exercise of a profession other than the cultivation of the land is reserved to artisans who are accorded the insulting name of *nyaman-kala*, for only work on the land is noble work. These artisans form separate families in every Sudanese society, which has caused Europeans to call them, improperly, people of caste. They are divided into independent guilds.

177 order to cultivate peanuts, sunflowers, millet, and cotton. Every
241 three years, the company distributes green manure crops in order to
473 reconstitute the soil's humus. Moreover, the company has created veritable villages to house its technicians and the colonists.

177 Other organizations, such as the Niger Office, have charge
241 of the basic water control of the central delta (dams, large canals).
312 Thanks to the creation of a network of waterways, to the clearing
433 and de-stumping of lands, and to the development of general equipment (processing factories, workshops, stores, dwellings, road network), the end of 1949 saw 11,000 hectares of rice fields, with a yield of 18 quintals of paddy and a commercial production of 8,000 metric tons of husked rice. Six thousand hectares have been prepared either for growing cotton (2,000 hectares), for growing rice for food (1,000 hectares), or for lying fallow (3,000 hectares). These fields
[166] permit the exportation of 360 metric tons of cotton fiber. Twenty-two thousand persons have been settled as colonists. Finally, let us note that the F.I.D.E.S. by its financial support has permitted the development of peanut cultivation in Senegal, of rice in Guinea and the Sudan, of karite in Upper Volta, as well as the creation of several technical schools.

c. Social Consequences

177 This technical evolution has profound repercussions on the
596 native way of life. We notice the same change in the Bambara
● peasant as in the Bambara artisan. The large united family which
241 was [78] the cornerstone of agricultural technique tends to split up more and more, even in the regions where the traditional farming methods are still used. The family field, a great deal less carefully tended than in the past, gives way in importance to the individual's field. Moreover, the family field traditionally was at the end of a path bordered by small individual fields where each peasant went to work for himself before and after the collective labor. Today, we see the creation of individual fields in the brush far from the path which leads from the village to the family field, clearly indicating the desire of the individual to separate himself from the large family and to escape the control of the farming chief in order to realize personal benefits for himself, not subject to family inspection.

177 Finally, the breaking up of the family cell is manifest in the in-
596 creasing number of children who prefer to work as farm laborers far
241 from their home country rather than submit to the tutelage of the
farming chief.

177 The economic transformation proceeds due to electrification
(regulation of the great falls near Conakry and those of Sotuba near
377 Bamako) and the creation, alongside the old strategic roads, of com-
489 mercial roads and bridges to facilitate shipping peanuts, rice, cotton,
and millet. The ports and wharfs are being put in order, the railroad network being modernized (increasing the matériel, transforming beds and embankments, repairing the tracks, installing and extending yards, improving the depots, constructing stations, buffets, hotels, cheap housing for the employees). On the Niger, improvements are being made in the river ports of Koulikoro, Ségou, Mopti, Bamako, and Gao, and, on the Senegal, of Kayes and Saint-Louis.

177 Finally, the new economy is accompanied by social accomplishments in the fields of health, education, and urbanization.

d. Chambers of Commerce

Thus, two forms of economic organization exist side by side in Bambara country: on the one hand, the traditional and artisan native organization, and, on the other, the European organization which has shattered the ancient society and has put the local economy of the country within the framework of international economy.

177 But it is perhaps in the realm of commerce that the influence
441 of European methods has been most felt, particularly in the creation
of Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry.

The creation of Chambers of Commerce dates from a decree of the Governor General in 1906. Members are elected for four years and are re-eligible. They are elected by an electoral college made up of the chiefs of French or African commercial establishments. The function of these Chambers is to give the administration advice and information when requested on any question of an economic nature.

The Chambers of Agriculture and Industry have substantially the same organization as the Chambers of Commerce, but in addition they are called on by the governors to group and codify the local customs [79] and usages of an agricultural character. These reports serve as the

582 614 The Bambara *tné* differs further from the *totem* of the Redskin and the Australian: it creates no obstacle to marriage between lineages of the same *tne* or of different *tne*. Each man takes a wife wherever he finds her and where he thinks best, and through these alliances the lineages mingle, cross, and recross. They do not merge, however, [557] since the husband keeps his name, or *diamou*, and with it his *tné*; he does not take that of his wife. As to the children, they have their father's *tné*, and his only, and it is his name, or *diamou*, they bear. /22/

184 The Bambara *tné* is nothing less than a *taboo* /sic/. The word itself is very vague and difficult to translate into our French language. It implies primarily a prohibitive command, an order not to do, not to act. Whenever a competent authority -- an alleged genie, such as a *boli* (who speaks and gives his oracles through the mouth of a herald or interpreter, the *djélimac*) or a priest of the genii (*djiné*) believed to preside over the elements, the *dougoutigi* (who actually does nothing without consulting his council and the sorcerers) whenever the sorcerer (the intermediary between man and the invisible world) or a priest of the shades of the ancestors' (1) --, that is, an authority of a religious character, forbids eating, killing, or looking at an animal; cutting, breaking, or using an object; drinking such-

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[596] 1. This term seems to me the most accurate. Undoubtedly, the *gouatigi*, or head of the family makes the sacrifices, but his position does not always correspond to what we call in French the father of the family. He is not always married; although all the family except his mother, brothers, and sisters call him *m'fa*, "my father," the word "father" should be taken in a very broad sense, as he is quite often only a grand-uncle, an uncle, or a cousin.

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782 this boli from the belt and hanging
it at the side along the thigh.

three most famous sorcerers, whose names -- Makono, Tjewolo, and Tjéba -- have been preserved, but whose origin is lost in the dark of ages, sacrificed to it by preference. This is the formula:

"Touafé Bla, Touafé Bla, the mountain of Touafé Bla is known, the trees of this mountain are known, I want to speak of the fire of its mountain. Touafé Bla, spare some houses (meaning: 'those of my friends') and go and kindle (your fire) in others (meaning: 'cast ruin and desolation among my enemies, among those who wish me ill'). Touafé Bla, favor me, and if I cannot see your fire, Touafé Bla, let me at least see the tip of its long column of smoke (meaning: 'you live in the fire; I cannot see your dwelling, but I can still know your power through the smoke of your fire, that is to say, /I shall know it/ if I am a witness of the misfortunes which you will cause to fall on my enemies and those whom I hate')." /73/

This formula shows us clearly that the boli, or gnâ, live in fire. The Negroes sacrificed to them before the arrival of the Moslems, and gave concrete form to their concept of the infernal spirit, just as they do today, by decking themselves out in a hideous horned mask and a cloak of feathers. Their blowing and shouting in the sacred woods on the days of great orgies have remained the same, and al-
[192] though they have taken the words sétané شَيْطَان, and djahanéma جَهَنَّم, from the Moslems, they have had the concept for a long time.

776 Now then, as to the Bambaras' knowledge of the Supreme Being,
181 God the Creator and Ruler, Lord of all, do they owe it to the Moslems?

•596 The Bambara have too hierarchical a nature to need a master here! The youngest child is always the slave of the next older brother, who is the slave of an older one, and so the progression moves up invariably without ever changing, to the grey beard, the elder, the tjekoroba, a real fetish whom everyone obeys, whatever his stupidity, his narrowness of mind, or his lack of judgment.

In every family there is the same progression: the immediate lord of the children is their father, while he in turn bows before his

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776 181 elders; and above them, as undisputed lord, soars the eldest, the gouatigi, or head of the family.

776 181 631 All the gouatigi are subject to heads of quarters, led by the dougoutigi, (1) or village heads; these obey the kafotigi, or heads of the canton, who in turn are governed by the fama déou, sons of the king or ministers. Such was the original organization of the Bambara, and all these petty chiefs, were absolute and uncontested lords, each in his own sphere.

1. The dougoutigi, or religious head of the village, takes precedence over the sotigi, or civil head. I believe that since the time of Carrier, administrator of the circle in 1901, this hierarchy as such has been officially done away with. It persists nevertheless, and the kafotigi and fama déou, priestly in character, secretly retain their prestige.

776 181 631 643 Above them all there was the king, Fama or Massa (2), whose chief function was to allow himself to live in affluence and /74/ sweet idleness. He held all his subjects in his hands; all were his slaves, from the least to the highest, and he had the power of life and death over each and every one.

2. The word Massa, used to designate the king, also means "great and powerful sorcerer." In the beginning the king really had absolute power, both civil and religious, and was really the prince or pope of fetishism. If he were not, would he have been given the title of Massa, "great priest," "great sorcerer?"

224 778 These little hunters' fetishes have no festival or formal sacrifice. Some ultimately gain great renown in the ranks of our "Nimrods," however, and then they come in large numbers bringing black pullets. The master of the idol then chooses a day for a strictly private drinking bout at which only initiates of the hunter sect are present.

778 596 The most powerful of all the *boli* whose influence is slight are the *boli* of the hut or the family, the familial *boli* to which the heads of families, the *gouatigi*, sacrifice. These take practically all shapes: they are horns, balls coated with blood resembling all the tubers of creation, all kinds of tomatoes and eggplants, napkin rings, etc. -- in sum, horrors, each wrapped in a very dirty, filthy goatskin. They are to be found hung in the *b'lon*, or entry hut, together with the *ex voto*, a package of goat skulls carefully emptied and stripped of flesh. The family *boli* are legion, and it is impossible to know them all. The most widespread and the most highly valued are the *ma bara*, the *sirini*, the *bala*, the *bara*, the *baga* (1), and the *bama-n-djigi*.

1. A *boli* is always made of several pieces, each with a special name. All these pieces are called *boli dé*. Among the *boli dé* there is one which is called *boli dén fa*. One piece of the *baga* is a thong which forms a belt that the sacrificer puts around his thighs, all covered with blood, before proceeding with the individual sacrifices. The *baga* protects against bullets, arrows, and spears. Some *baga* are famous, and Negroes go to find the masters of these fetishes and receive from them a small facsimile of the *baga* belt.

778 596 782 [574] At the annual sacrifice the gouatigi, or head of the family, offers a goat and at least a hen and a kola nut for each male child no matter how strained his circumstances or how slight his self-respect. He also offers d'lo, or millet beer, and all his family make merry. Some even do things in a big way, and although the whole village does not take part in the drinking bout, all the old men are invited, and many close friends come from everywhere.

778 596 The family boli take the interests of the head of the family in their hands; they are responsible for driving away illness and reverses of fortune. /138/ Through them one gains many descendants, wealth, wives, a happy and lively old age, honor and respect. They are also appealed to on all occasions in life that are of the slightest importance. Before a long journey is undertaken or a business venture is entered into, when a disaster threatens or there is a possibility of a piece of unhoped-for good fortune, they are reddened with a trickle of blood. Sacrifice is also made to them at harvest time (many are even called by the generic name of gno four, "millet medicine"), but especially at circumcisions and excisions, at betrothals, marriages, and funerals. The tne, or "taboo," of these fetishes (see above, p. 5ff.), is taboo for each wife's eldest son, and sometimes the whole family makes it its own.

4. Boli whose Power is Great

778 782 796 I call powerful boli all those gnâ of every shape and size whose worship is secret and in whose mysteries only those participate who have been initiated into the rites, after having sworn on their lives never to reveal them. Countless victims are offered to these boli; some of them are always warm and are ceaselessly reddened with blood. At the annual festivals not only is there a hecatomb of roosters and hens, but dogs and goats by the dozen also die, and in Bani country I have seen as many as five or six sacrificers working at the same time. This is the great and true Bambara worship, and it gives rise to orgies of four to eight days; it eclipses the ancient worship, that

614 596 descent is in the male line from a common male ancestor or, even more narrowly, to uterine brothers and sisters. The two terms, ton' and ba-denya, have a meaning which differs from that of our word "family," which is defined in our legal terminology as "the totality of persons united by ties of kinship or affinity."

592 The Bambara family lives in huts which are connected by an enclosure or completely surrounded by the enclosure when its two extremities are supported on a kind of vestibule (blon'). The enclosure is called gwa in some dialects, whence the name gwa-tigi, a term of respect for the fa, master of the house.

Gwa, therefore, means "family" only indirectly, and it is very difficult to reconcile this word with the word "family," since the gwa houses people who are not members of the family and, on the other hand, does not house all the members of the family.

Besides, it should be noted that the word gwa in its meaning of "enclosure" is used to designate all sorts of agglomerations likewise enclosed, notably livestock folds. The variants wore and gore, which are more specifically applied to these folds, may also be used, and actually are in some regions, in forming the names of settlements. The form kore or kori, common in expressions of courtesy, has the same meaning; kori ka kende? means literally, "Is all the house well?" [160]

In some Bambara dialects, the word so is used instead of gwa. The primary meaning of the word so is also "enclosure" and, more especially, "hedge of thorns," by which all primitive establishments are protected; so-tigi has the same meaning as gwa-tigi. The word so also means "household," i.e., the contents of a house, including all within it, whether on a permanent or temporary basis and whether or not belonging to the family.

It is common practice, however, to use so and gwa in the narrow sense of "people of the family," i.e., those living under the authority of the same fa.

592 601 596 It may be said, in short, that there is no exact term for designating expressly and exclusively a collectivity

592 comparable to what our law defines as a family. In fact, the
601 four terms just discussed, ton', ba-denya, gwa, and so, are
596 all used for the purpose. It is what is intended by their use
that gives them their meaning, and depending on the region,
each term has a meaning made precise by usage.

The dwelling of the Bambara family usually includes
592 a fairly large number of huts of various kinds. Some are
342 cylindrical and built of native masonry with a conical straw
roof and, for a door, a slit or opening which does not extend
all the way to the ground. Others are parallelepiped, made of
native masonry, and ordinarily also provided with no opening
except the door.

Shelters (gwa), consisting of flat straw roofs supported
on forked sticks, are usually placed haphazardly or wherever
the master of the house wants them and are certainly not governed by any traditional rules or fixed orientation. All these
dwellings or out-buildings are enclosed by either a clay wall
[343] or an unbroken hedge whose two ends are supported by the walls
of the hut called blon' which serves as a vestibule for the establishment.

[778] The altar of the ancestors and of the household gods is
found in the blon'.

The houses of notables are somewhat more elaborately
arranged: instead of a single inner court, there are two, three,
or even more, sometimes graduated in extent. The master arranges his people in such a way as to divide into sections the
heterogeneous elements gathered together under his protection.
592 The domestic servants and the young [161] men, the women,
girls, and small children, and finally the eventual successor
are, as it were, fenced apart in their own blocks of dwellings,
while the fa himself is to be found in impressive isolation,
which lends weight to his authority.

Among great personages, especially among heads of
592 clans, this arrangement is the rule, and their isolation deep in
712 the interior is virtually a security measure. In the old days a
kind of fortress or redoubt, the tata, was built in the center of
the royal residence. Gunpowder, weapons, and all the means
of defense were kept there, and it was no easy matter to capture

592 [712] this well-built structure in the midst of the inextricable maze of surrounding huts which were themselves surrounded by a solid wall of native masonry.

[565] The people of a single household are classed in three categories: free men (woro-u), members of castes (nya-makala), and slaves (dyon'-u).

596 561 The freemen. Within the family, free persons are: the men (tye-u), i.e., circumcised males; the moso-u, excised women; the den'-u, children of both sexes.

601 In accordance with their influence (faya) in the family, the men are called koro-u, old men, elders, or kamalen'-u, young masters. Among the old men the bina (uncles), brothers of the fa, hold the preponderant position; they form a kind of limited family council and generally work for the welfare of the community under the direction of the fa.

Among the women the following distinctions are made: the mothers, i.e., women under the control of a husband and who are actually mothers of children, ba-u; old women, moso-koro-u; grandmothers, mama-u; and finally unmarried girls, moso-de-u.

All children are called de unless they are specifically identified as de-n-ke, "boy," or de-moso or deni, "girl."

601 Furthermore, every male with any influence (faya) in the family, no matter to what extent, is called fa (1): [162]

> 1. In one way or another, therefore, every male is fa, since he exercises or will one day exercise faya. The word fa is jokingly applied even to very young boys just as ba is applied to little girls. These words may be used just like our familiar expressions when we say "Father X" or "Mother X" with no reference intended to any real state of fatherhood or motherhood.
>
> In any case, the words fa and ba are also used as terms of respect, just as we

601 say "master" or "mistress." One may even say that in ordinary usage fa and ba are equivalent to our "Monsieur" and "Madame," with all the shades of meaning these entail.

father by his children; husband by his wives; grandfather by all his descendants; and uncle by those who have claims on the family property.

The genitor, procreator, father is the wolo-fa, and all his descendants alike are called de in relation to him.

There is, properly speaking, no term meaning brother or sister, but one can say baden'-ma-ke or baden'-ma-moso. Children of the same father call each other koro (old man) or dua, duani (young), respectively, in order to indicate the eldest and the youngest and to designate agnate or uterine relationship. Strictly speaking, duani is the younger uterine brother.

There is no special term for nephew; brother's sons are de because they are under their uncle's authority, just as his own children ~~are~~. Sister's sons do not belong to their mother's family, and they are de to their father's family.

Cousins, insofar as they are the issue of brothers, are also de in that they are all under the authority of the same fa, and since they consider themselves brothers, they call each other koro or duani, respectively.

601 602 There is a kind of cousin relationship between the children of a brother and a sister, with some precedence accorded to the former.

A kind of kinship likewise exists between the children of two sisters.

In short, true kinship exists only between persons who are dependent on the same fa.

601 As for affinals, they are all covered by the single term biran', literally, "one with whom we are in agreement."

The women, moso-u, as co-wives, call one another sina-u. With respect to their children and the other children in

601 the household, they are *ba-u* (mothers), and the title *ba* is commonly used out of deference or respect. Very old women are addressed as *mama*, "grandmother" or "ancestress." [163]

564 *Members of castes*. These are free men who are destitute and form a kind of clientage of important families. We shall discuss them later on.

567 *Slaves*. Only slaves entrusted with special duties lived in the house. When a master discerned qualities in a new slave that might make him useful in the house, he kept him in his own service and often treated him well and generously. Custom gave the children of such a slave a privileged position; since they were "born in the house" (*wolo-so-u*, they could not be sold except in the case of extreme necessity. All confidential servants were recruited from the *wolo-so-u*, and the eldest, most experienced, and most favored often acquired great influence in family affairs. They knew more about the secrets and resources of the community than most of its members.

Another category of slaves is made up of those who after three generations were *ipso facto* freed (*dyongoron'-u*). They have played an important role in native society.

2. The Patriarchal Community or Patriarchy

769 *The ancestral spirit-god*. In order to view a custom from its most expressive aspect, it is necessary to observe it in its fullest development and, at the same time, to note anything adventitious or foreign that modifies its appearance and procedure or alters its basis.

The cult of the ancestors is the very essence of the family, and the most characteristic manifestation of this cult is the funeral ceremonies for the head of a family, the patriarch (*fa*). Here, one is present at the transformation of a man into an ancestral spirit-god within the span of 40 days.

This period is an interval during which a link between the past and the future is formed in the present, whereby

848
596 arise on the subject of legitimacy. During the *fa*'s lifetime,
614 his authority imposes whatever solution pleases him, but when
578 he is gone, the disputes involving status are all the more violent
for having been suppressed or evaded for so long.

These disputes gain strength also from the difference in
614 rank which the members have within the community. The
596 totality of prerogatives of all kinds which raise the *fa* above
all others constitutes a kind of superior dignity whose essence
is the omnipotence covered by the word *faya*, from which
came the title *fa* [174] (master, lord). It is in reference to
the *faya* that the members of the community are ranked.

[562] Only male members can advance claims to the *faya*,
and because they can do this, they can all call themselves *fa*.
On the other hand, women can never hold this authority; they
are *fantan'-u*, "powerless."

Among the *fa-u* there are distinctions based on degree of
596 kinship and on age; those most closely related to the *fa* will be
614 the first to receive the honors about to be described. Male
601 descendants in the first degree form a sort of senate of which
561 the eldest is a kind of president-by-birth; he is truly the *fa*,
the actual representative of the deceased. The one immediately following him by rank in terms of age is his *syere* (follower), his heir presumptive at the head of the community. The other senators, usually brothers of the *fa*, are uncles (*bina-u*) to the descendants of the second degree and their children. By reason of the authority associated with the position of *bina-u* in the community, this kinship term has come to be a title of respect which is bestowed on men toward whom one wishes to show particular esteem (1). Because of their age,

1. It is worthy of note that in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Miss Stowe explains that among the slaves in America the word "uncle" had precisely this meaning as a title of respect and honor.

all the senators of the community are commonly called *koro-u*, "the elders," and the *fa* is first among them.

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3. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal et Niger [Upper Senegal and Niger].

4. Labouret, Les Mandingues et leur langue [The Mandingo and Their Language].

etc., but these are still very fragmentary and incomplete. In addi-
177 tion, this society was completely disrupted by the French conquest, either by such radical measures as the suppression of slavery or by a natural evolution as a result of contact with European societies. Nevertheless, traditional structures retain their vitality, despite the effort to adapt them to European formulas.

178 The society seems to have oscillated between familial anarchy and the clan stage, according to alternating ranges of groupings, disassociation, and regroupings.

1. The Family

594 596 Concerning the Sudanese, Delafosse has already made the distinction between "the restricted family" and the "extended family." The restricted family is composed of the parents and children who live in the "hut." Taken alone, it does not represent a social unit. The true social cell is the extended family. This is the large united family made up of a group of restricted families whose heads recognize a common ancestor. This group, composed of agnates in principle, is the ba-denya, whose members live in huts within an enclosure: gwa or so. The two ends of this [51] enclosure rest on a blõ (vestibule) where the ancestors' altar is found.

601 612 According to Labouret, the Bambara distinguish three categories of family ties: the paternal line, the maternal line, and relationship by marriage. The child takes the dyamu (honorable name) of his father's group, but the terms applied to ancestors and descendants are the same as those of the maternal line.

"... Kinship includes the following generations: tolo-mina... tolo-sama... tolo-ma-sama: who seizes or pulls ears (a belief has it that if a great grandson pulls the ear of his great
[825] grandfather, the latter becomes deaf);

601 mo-kɛ (1) = grandfather; mo-muso = grandmother;
612

1. ɛ = è as in the French mère.

fa = father;
dẽ = son, daughter;
modẽ = grandson, granddaughter;
tolo-mina, etc., as above;
fu... fuy..., as above.

a. In the Paternal Line:

fa = father	dẽ, de, di = son, daughter
ba, ma, na = wives of the father	dẽ = son, daughter
binã, baba-ndi;	dẽ = son, daughter
benoro + the father's brother; ba – the name = wives of father's brothers	de = son, daughter
ntene; bingi-musu = father's sister	dẽ; bingilingo = son, daughter, nephew, niece.
o or ben-kɛ = husband of father's sister; ben-kɛ is a polite term	the name
kɛrɛ = older brother, son of father's brother older than speaker	*doro = younger brother, son of* father's brother younger than speaker
kalame = child of father's sister	kalame = child of mother's brother
mokɛ = father's father	mo-dẽ, or the name = son's son
mo-muso = father's mother	mo-dẽ, or the name = son's son

604 Ntene = father's sister (term derived from a root ta which has also given tana, tene, interdiction). The maternal aunt is the forbidden woman of this generation. The same is true for the father's wives and those women they consider as sisters. This relative wields a great influence in the family, and her curse is greatly feared. The children of the ntene-muso are called kalame, and they call the

604 children of their mother's brother *kalame*. The *kalame-w* joke and insult each other when they meet. Marriages between them are sometimes permitted, sometimes forbidden.

● 601 [52] b. *In the Maternal Line:*
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ba; *ma*; *na* = mother	*dẽ* = son, daughter
ben-nkɔ *bele-nkɔ* *bari-nkɔ* } mother's brother	*be-ni*; *bare-ndi* = sister's son
ba + the name = wife of mother's brother	*dẽ* = son, daughter
ba-ko . . . . (after mother) *ba* + the name } mother's sister *ba-ni-t'ɔ-ni* .	*dẽ* = son, daughter
o or *fa* = husband of mother's sister	*o* or *de* = son of wife's sister
kɔrɔ = child of mother's brother or sister, if older than speaker	*doro* - child of mother's brother or sister, if younger than speaker
de = child of *kɔrɔ* or *doto*	*kɔrɔ* or *doro* of the brother
mo-kɔ = mother's father	*o* or *dẽ* = daughter's son
mo-muso = mother's mother	*o* or *dẽ* = daughter's son (1)

1. Labouret, *Les Mandingues et leur langue* [The Mandingo and Their Language].

604 The maternal uncle plays a very important role; he must arrange the marriage of his *be-ni*. He owes him a wife taken from among the daughters of one of his brothers. In exchange, the *be-ni* owes payment in labor.

The mother's sister is just barely considered a relation.

603 Sexual rivalry exists between grandfather and grandson, grandmother and granddaughter; this is why they defy and insult each other when they meet. When the grandparents die, the grandchildren have the same privileges as the *sẽnanku* [parties to a special kind of

603 alliance]. (It is also customary for grandfathers and grandsons to eat together, while the sons eat apart.)

612 c. By Marriage: T'ɛ, K'ɛ, Kɛ = husband's name, corresponding
601 to *muso* (*muso*, term for spouse [female?]).

Bira nk'ɛ = father-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and all the male relatives of the husband or wife, corresponding to *bira-muso* = mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, and all female relatives of the husband or wife.

587 When a man dies, his wives go to his younger brother; and if a man's wife dies, he may marry her younger sister . . .

582 This patrilineal and patrilocal family must have grafted itself
611 onto an ancient matrilineal system (see the chapter on inheritance and position of women). The systems of clan exogamy and endogamy are united: two pairs of brothers and sisters marry among themselves; sons must take their wives from their mother's family, and marriages take place between cross-cousins; children never belong to their parents' category, while grandchildren and grandparents always are in the same category.

583 [53] We shall see that alongside this matrimonial system in which wives are exchanged there exists a system in which payments are made to the *fa* of the young girl.

596 The size of the united family varies, but it may include more than 80 persons. Labouret (1) gives us, as an example, the composition of the *blõ* of Ngolo Traoré at Mpiéla, Kolokani subdivision:

	Men	Women	Children
1. Household of Ngolo	1	8	15
2. Household of Samba, Ngolo's brother	1	2	4
3. Household of Dotné, Samba's son	1	2	3
4. Household of Denkoro, son of deceased Bakoro	1	3	1
5. Household of Fabugai, Ngolo's son .	1	2	4
6. Quarters of unmarried males, all sons of Ngolo and Samba . . .	5		
	10	17	19 [sic]
		46	

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1. *Op. cit.*

551 Bearing a name confers on the bearer the obligation of respecting a taboo (*tne* or *tana*). He may neither kill nor, more especially, eat the animal or the plant that represents his name; any infraction of this rule affects his physical and spiritual integrity.

551/602 On the other hand, relationships commonly known as "joking relationships" are established between families respecting different taboos and bearing different names. One of the characteristic aspects of this kind of alliance is the fact that members of one family are in the habit of carrying out purification rites for members of the other in case a taboo is broken.

551/173 Stories relating the origin of family names are well known and there are several versions that have been published for the principal families (1). Some of these bring out not only the history of the head of the family, the first-named, but at the same time the origin of the taboo /75/ attached to the name or the origin of the kinship ties observed by the bearers of the name with members of another family.

In this respect, one of the versions concerning the Kouloubali is most suggestive:

"The Kouloubali are descended from a family called *kuludyu* which lived in an underground village in a place called *kuluba* (literally, big mountain) in Mandé. A famine which lasted for fifty-two years hit the region; the people did not know what to do and ate the leaves of trees in order to survive.

Two friends, called *Kónyo* (literally, marriage) and *Mbadun* (literally, I eat), left their homes and set out on a trip to find food. They met three men and decided to join forces with them in order to escape this painful situation. Upon returning to the village, the newcomers, noticing the excrement of a hyena, joked about its white color: "You have only been eating bones, " they said. "But no, " laughingly answered the other two, " it is hyena excrement. " And they asked their new friends their names, adding that they themselves had none. Then together, they tried to make a fire. One night they noticed a flame apparently coming out of the branches of a kapok tree. The tree grew near a rock and the wind, by making

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1. See among others L. Tauxier. *La Religion bambara*, pp. 119ff.

784 783 acts more energetically. But it is even more serious to eat one's taboo than to ill it, for then the person cannot get rid of his victim's *nyama* and must suffer all the consequences.

The guilty person goes to the shore of the Niger and in a loud voice, discloses the facts to Faro while making him an offering (millet mash, copper, etc.), then he drinks a little water and goes home. If he lives too far from the river, he goes to a remote place and acts in the same way by spilling a little of his own blood as a sign of expiation. These acts have the effect of rectifying everything with Faro whom he has offended by breaking the established order. Next, he undergoes the purification rites. Their agent is his ally *senanku* and the rites are carried out at an intersection, dangu (1). The effect of such rites is to rid him of his victim's *nyama*, and then to reinstate the symbol of the eight life-giving cereal seeds in his collarbone: thus he recovers his lost strength. After his recovery, the old men of his family summon him and give him some stern advice for another breaking of the taboo cannot be atoned by any purification: the animal's *nyama* will no no longer leave the repeating offender who may die of it.

784 Voluntary infractions, which are very rare, of course bring about far more serious consequences for the person in question since his responsibility is involved. This is not so in the opposite case. If a man has eaten his taboo without knowing it during a meal taken at the home of another, the animal's *nyama* may attack those responsible: either the host or his wife becomes ill. The guilty woman must then
[201] ask the man's forgiveness. On her knee and with her hands at the back, she discloses the facts to the person she has injured who may ask for time to think and make her wait in order to punish her. Otherwise he demands three kola nuts with which he carried out the *dyanzani* or "replacement." He throws them in the bush or gives them to the first poor person he meets. A few days later the responsible person is liberated.

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[602] 1. See p. 183. In certain cases the purification may be carried out by a kinsman of an ascending generation and may include ablutions with water consecrated by a prayer addressed to Faro.

/83/ Joking Relationship

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A very important institution is also linked to the family name. It concerns the ties called "joking relationship," *dyo benatye* (literally, agreement between us), which is integrated with the general kinship relationships designated in the Mandingo country by the term *senãnkuya*. But family relationships in the strict sense, called *sindyi benatye* (literally, breast milk between us), are to be distinguished from *dyo benatye* which, on the contrary, involves the members of two families, or even of two different peoples.

Thus, a Koulibali is a Kéita's *senãnku* among the Bambara; Bozo and Dogon as well as Bozo and Somono are also *senãnku* (1). To the

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1. Joking relationship called *senãnkuya* among the Bambara is termed *măgu* among the Dogon, *dagana* among the Bozo, etc. This important institution, which embraces all the tribes of the French Sudan, has already been the object of a number of studies. See especially M. Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal Niger* /The Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. 3, p. 206; H. Labouret, "La Parenté à plaisanteries en Afrique occidentale /Joking Relationship in West Africa/"; D. Paulme, *Parenté à plaisanteries et alliance par le sang en Afrique occidentale* /Joking Relationship and Blood Alliance in West Africa/; R. Radcliffe-Brown, *On Joking Relationships*.

In the "Alliance cathartique /The Cathartic Alliance/," M. Griaule throws light on the Dogon-Bozo relations which are at the origin of the institution in the Sudan. This brings out the fundamental notion of the duality of beings and the principles that animate them. A Dogon and a Bozo are twins, each carrying a particle of the other in his body and soul. When he insults or purifies, he appeals to that part of himself in the other and the powers he communicates in this way come to the help of his partner.

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The latest investigations on this subject have brought to light the following facts: Dogon and Bozo have, respectively, eight seeds and eight fish in their collarbones and thus they realize the distribution of the heavenly sustenance (see p. 53). This latter is evidence of their spiritual integrity and any breaking of taboos results first in depriving the person of his seeds or his fish. The purpose of the institution is to enable the ally to intervene in order to reinstate the nourishing substance in the body of the guilty person.

It should be stated here that in instances in which they are described by the same term (senãnkuya), kin relationships, which also involve joking exchanges, must not be confused with relationships between families (more exactly between names) or between tribes.

Moreover, within this last group, several types of alliances can be observed: some involve exogamy (Dogon and Bozo: Bozo and Peul, etc...); others exclude the possibility of carrying out purification rites. It will therefore be necessary to examine as many cases as possible before establishing any rules for this type of alliance.

Mandé, a Koulibali and a Tangara, bound by a long and durable friendship, decided to seal it in a lasting way. They opened their veins and put a little blood from one wound into the other, thus realizing the alliance through this exchange. They next prepared a meal which they ate /84/ together while pronouncing their oaths never to spill each other's blood.

In this way the dyo benatye (1) was consecrated between them and

1. Because of this alliance, members of the Kouloubali family were authorized by the Tangara of the village of Barbé (region of Mopti) to settle in the village. The

602 608 Tangara chief gave them land to build their houses and set up their fields. The two groups live in perfect understanding.

their descendants. Such an alliance is equivalent to kinship. It involves the absolute obligation never to covet the life or possessions of the senãnku. The two parties are obligated to mutual assistance in many cases: food, housing, material aid; help in case of war or lawsuit; obligatory presence at religious ceremonies; purifications in case a taboo is broken.

These rules imply that the alliance affects the individual not only in his social roles, but also in his spiritual principles. The senãnku is a kind of twin to each individual belonging to the other family. He has within himself a part of his partner and vice versa.

602 Because of this fact, the reactions set off by insult or by joking are singular: the senãnku will accept from the mouth of the other, without becoming angry, mockery which he would not normally tolerate. He cannot be affected by them since the words are addressed to that part of his being which comes from the person insulting him. Moreover, the joke or the insult, without touching his spiritual integrity, has the effect of confirming him in his position relative to the person addressing him and of affirming the state of both parties, thereby increasing their vitality. It determines movements of forces from which the two speakers reciprocally benefit, as from a kind word.

This proceeding is used on numerous occasions, particularly at the time a person achieves a new social status or a new grade. The senãnku jokes with a newborn child as soon as his name is given and, later, on the day he wears his first piece of clothing. The circumcised boys become allies and joke between themselves the day of the daworo which consecrates the age grade (1). On the evening of marriage, the young woman is the object of ritual sarcasm which marks her final introduction into the husband's family group.

602 783 The senãnku is the only one who, in certain cases, is able to carry out the purification rites made necessary by a broken taboo (tne). It is true that he carries in his collarbone—but only /85/ where his partner is concerned—twice the number of symbolic seeds,

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1. See p. 241.

602 183 that is, sixteen. This fact qualifies him, by his gesture of purification and through his essential role as provider of sustenance, to restore the seeds that had left the guilty man's collarbone. If the offense is slight, the offender gives him millet, money, or an object. The wounded animal's nyama settles on the object, and the senãnku who receives it rids him of it without being affected himself. If the offense is more serious, the two allies go off together to a road intersection, dangu; then the senãnku takes a straw torch in the shape of a cross and circles the guilty man's head with it from left to right. The being who has been offended by the broken taboo can refuse nothing when confronted with this procedure. He removes the nyama he had inflicted and the man, powerfully aided by the forces of the purifying agent, recovers those he had lost, as symbolized by the seeds in his collarbone.

This cathartic role of reinstating subsistence forces into the human body is illustrated in daily life by the food prestations to which the partners are held. This is like the secular and materialistic representation of an invisible operation of purification.

The Person: Exceptional Cases

000 Certain physical peculiarities constitute the manifest evidence of a modification of the elements making up the person. It is appropriate here to examine the cases of individuals who are thus affected.

Twins

845 Twins, flani (literally, two little ones), are two new beings given to men by Faro and considered as his offspring alone. Because of this fact, twins inherit neither the ni nor the dya of a dead person, but they inherit new principles which come to them from the spirit. Moreover, their dya never leaves the water for the shadow, but remains in the hands of the spirit throughout their entire life. Because of this they are protected from all danger and from all impurity.

Such a birth is considered a blessing and is granted only to certain privileged people called kunandi. It is announced by holding up the [201] right and left forefingers without uttering a word, for its announcement would be so powerful that it would harm the newborn. Their mother wraps a white cotton band called dyala about her forehead to indicate the presence of the children's dya /86/ in Faro's hands.

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> say "master" or "mistress." One may even say that in ordinary usage fa and ba are equivalent to our "Monsieur" and "Madame," with all the shades of meaning these entail.

father by his children; husband by his wives; grandfather by all his descendants; and uncle by those who have claims on the family property.

The genitor, procreator, father is the wolo-fa, and all his descendants alike are called de in relation to him.

There is, properly speaking, no term meaning brother or sister, but one can say baden'-ma-ke or baden'-ma-moso. Children of the same father call each other koro (old man) or dua, duani (young), respectively, in order to indicate the eldest and the youngest and to designate agnate or uterine relationship. Strictly speaking, duani is the younger uterine brother.

There is no special term for nephew; brother's sons are de because they are under their uncle's authority, just as his own children are. Sister's sons do not belong to their mother's family, and they are de to their father's family.

Cousins, insofar as they are the issue of brothers, are also de in that they are all under the authority of the same fa, and since they consider themselves brothers, they call each other koro or duani, respectively.

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There is a kind of cousin relationship between the children of a brother and a sister, with some precedence accorded to the former.

A kind of kinship likewise exists between the children of two sisters.

In short, true kinship exists only between persons who are dependent on the same fa.

601
As for affinals, they are all covered by the single term biran', literally, "one with whom we are in agreement."

The women, moso-u, as co-wives, call one another sina-u. With respect to their children and the other children in

584 is unfavorable, that is by no means the end of the matter, for both ancestors and gods usually allow themselves to be persuaded, for a price. When the reply is, or becomes, favorable, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives customary presents to the fa and to the girl's family. Henceforth, the two communities, that of the young man and that of the girl, are united by a bond that can be broken only for the gravest reasons, and even then a rupture will usually give rise to serious disagreements.

[583] It is at this point that the parties agree, not without much argument and bargaining, on the amount, type, and mode of payment of the bride price and the date on which the girl will be handed over.

Between the time of the agreement and the release of the woman, there is a period which is often very long and in some cases several years. This interval is used by the girl's mother to prepare the things she will give her daughter (clothing, household utensils, etc.). [198] The fiancé, meanwhile, needs the time to accumulate what he has promised to pay when the girl is given to him.

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● 602 From this moment on, the relations between the two communities are very strictly governed. Native etiquette forbids the fiancée henceforth to meet or to take meals with her future brother-in-law unless a third party is present. The same applies to the young man and his future mother-in-law. The fiancé must constantly show that he takes an interest in anything that concerns his future affinal family. He must attend funerals and festivals or at least send a material contribution consistent with his wealth and social standing. When field work is in progress, it is customary for the fiancé's fula-ni to appear in a body and ceremoniously share the work. This demonstration of solidarity is mostly more noisy than helpful; the work is wholly simulated, but the proceedings always end in dancing and copious drinking.

583
184 Bride price (1) and gifts. The woman is not turned over

1. In certain regions (Bougouni, Sikasso, Koutiala, San) there is no regularly constituted bride price; the bridegroom's

564 engage only in agriculture. Furthermore, casual or temporary practice, in one's own home, for instance, of one of the reputedly menial trades is not considered degrading.

567 596 614 Theoretically, enslavement does not exclude an individual from his own community nor in any way demean him in relation to it (1); if he returns, he recovers his rights just as though he had never been away.

On the other hand, at the place where he is a slave, an individual belongs to no community (as a person), and that is why he has no rights and is treated as a chattel.

567 We have shown earlier how, aided by time and circumstances, a slave may manage to escape some of the limitations of his status, but strictly speaking, [222] he can never escape this status. If in fact, as the chronicle says of Ngolo Dyara, a slave succeeds in attaining a position whose importance would seem to obliterate the stigma of servitude, the blemish of slavery nevertheless remains indelible.

4. Relations between Communities

596 614 621 The true social unit is the community. Even when no special organization links them, communities are often linked by numerous bonds. This involves no distinction by race, incidentally, since more often than not ethnically diverse peoples live together in the same region.

These bonds between communities may be classified under two heads: kinship and alliance.

Kinship

● [602] The influence of kinship is very extensive. Thus, a single patriarchal community includes the familial communities

1. For example, Déssé-Koro, taken in captivity to Ségou, returned to Kaarta where he exercised the faya of the Massa-si.

596 of all the male members of the community, and agnate and
614 uterine communities coexist in each familial community.
621 Furthermore, every familial community automatically becomes
602 a patriarchal community upon the death of its head, and it is
then composed of its own familial communities.

What actually happens, then, is that under the original patriarchal community are grouped an ever increasing number of other patriarchies or families, each of which includes its agnate or uterine communities. When the original patriarchy is an old one, it is obvious that a large number of persons will be living under its aegis, all of whom have *dyamu* and *tne* in common.

It may happen, however, that through time and a variety of circumstances branches become separated from the trunk, and to mark their new status, to perpetuate the memorable achievement of their founder, some of these groups have adopted a special *dyamu* and particular *tne*. At first the new *dyamu* is simply added to the original one, but later on the new one comes to be the only one used. However that may be, the principal characteristics [223] of the original community still persist, with a few new traits merely superimposed.

Since every secondary community in turn generates like communities, it goes without saying that the communities most distant from the original one have only a few traits in common with it, but their kinship never becomes extinct.

What are the effects of this kinship? On the one hand, it requires all concerned to observe their common duties to the community: in particular to respect ancestral traditions relative to the cult; to give mutual aid; to recognize the authority of the current *fa* who, for his part, is obliged to protect all his relatives, no matter how remote the connection.

As far as outsiders are concerned, kinship requires everyone to respect all pacts between communities. One can often observe fidelity to these alliances which may be hundreds of years old. If by chance people who have previously never seen each other learn of their respective *dyamu* and the attendant obligations, they will at once assume the reciprocal obligations contracted by their ancestors.

784 One might perhaps think that it would be very difficult not to
602 see one's tné....? In the Sudan good manners require that people
576 discipline their glances from their earliest years. A son-in-law lowers
his eyes in the presence of his mother-in-law, a daughter-in-law turns her back at a three-quarters angle out of modesty in the presence of her father-in-law, and when a lover goes to win over the father of his fiancée, she runs away and hides. Any Negro, however poor his manners, will direct his look no one knows where, into space or upon his toes, every time he greets anyone and hears his news, and will chat with a person for a quarter hour without ever looking at him. No more is asked for the tné. Undoubtedly a Bambara shields himself with both hands in its presence... and he plays the young daughter-in-law; he knows well how to differentiate between seeing and looking, and he knows how to tell you at the time, however little he is accused: "Né y'a yé tigné, n'ka, nè gné tount'a la, né m'a flè. I saw it certainly, but I did not leave my eyes on it, I did not look at it."

3. The Gnâma

789 The tné are rendered sacred, above all, by the curse of the
ancestor. Nothing is so much feared by the Bambara. To be cursed,
778 and cursed by his father, is the greatest evil that can befall a man;
626 his wives would run away from him, his children would blush to call
him "father," his /27/ friends would abandon him, the people of the village would be terrified to speak to him; he would have to flee. And where would he go? The gnâma of his father, of his ancestor, of his fetish's tné, would cling to his steps and follow him everywhere. Only suffering would be left for him; sickness, hunger, poverty, and humiliation would be his lot and, rejected by humanity, he would die in despair.

789 The word gnâma is very difficult to translate. Does its equivalent
exist in our French language? Gnâma is a force, a power, or also per-
778 haps a /kind of/ energy, a fluid possessed by every man, every animal, every living being; it never disappears and continues to exist even

604 children of their mother's brother kalame. The kalame-w joke and insult each other when they meet. Marriages between them are sometimes permitted, sometimes forbidden.

601 [52] b. In the Maternal Line:

612 ba: ma; na = mother	dẽ = son, daughter
ben-nkɔ bele-nkɔ } mother's brother bari-nkɔ	be-ni; bare-ndi = sister's son
ba + the name = wife of mother's brother	dẽ = son, daughter
ba-ko . . . . (after mother) ba + the name } mother's sister ba-ni-t'ɔ-ni .	dẽ = son, daughter
o or fa = husband of mother's sister	o or de = son of wife's sister
kɔrɔ = child of mother's brother or sister, if older than speaker	doŕo - child of mother's brother or sister, if younger than speaker
de = child of kɔrɔ or doto	kɔrɔ or doŕo of the brother
mo-kɔ = mother's father	o or dẽ = daughter's son
mo-muso = mother's mother	o or dẽ = daughter's son (1)

1. Labouret, Les Mandingues et leur langue [The Mandingo and Their Language].

604 The maternal uncle plays a very important role; he must arrange the marriage of his be-ni. He owes him a wife taken from among the daughters of one of his brothers. In exchange, the be-ni owes payment in labor.

The mother's sister is just barely considered a relation.

603 Sexual rivalry exists between grandfather and grandson, grandmother and granddaughter; this is why they defy and insult each other when they meet. When the grandparents die, the grandchildren have the same privileges as the sẽnanku [parties to a special kind of

603 alliance]. (It is also customary for grandfathers and grandsons to eat together, while the sons eat apart.)

612 601 c. By Marriage: T'ɛ, K'ɛ, Kɛ = husband's name, corresponding to *muso* (*muso*, term for spouse [female?]).

Bira nk'ɛ = father-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and all the male relatives of the husband or wife, corresponding to *bira-muso* = mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, and all female relatives of the husband or wife.

587 When a man dies, his wives go to his younger brother; and if a man's wife dies, he may marry her younger sister . . . .

582 611 This patrilineal and patrilocal family must have grafted itself onto an ancient matrilineal system (see the chapter on inheritance and position of women). The systems of clan exogamy and endogamy are united: two pairs of brothers and sisters marry among themselves; sons must take their wives from their mother's family, and marriages take place between cross-cousins; children never belong to their parents' category, while grandchildren and grandparents always are in the same category.

583 [53] We shall see that alongside this matrimonial system in which wives are exchanged there exists a system in which payments are made to the *fa* of the young girl.

596 The size of the united family varies, but it may include more than 80 persons. Labouret (1) gives us, as an example, the composition

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1. *Op. cit.*

of the *blõ* of Ngolo Traorɛ at Mpiɛla, Kolokani subdivision:

	Men	Women	Children
1. Household of Ngolo	1	8	15
2. Household of Samba, Ngolo's brother	1	2	4
3. Household of Dotnɛ, Samba's son	1	2	3
4. Household of Denkoro, son of deceased Bakoro	1	3	1
5. Household of Fabugai, Ngolo's son .	1	2	4
6. Quarters of unmarried males, all sons of Ngolo and Samba . . .	5		
	10	17	19 [sic]

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601 mo-kɛ (1) = grandfather; mo-muso = grandmother;
612

1. ɛ = è as in the French mère.

fa = father;
dẽ = son, daughter;
modẽ = grandson, granddaughter;
tolo-mina, etc., as above;
fu... fuy...., as above.

a. In the Paternal Line:

fa = father	dẽ, de, di = son, daughter
ba, ma, na = wives of the father	dẽ = son, daughter
binã, baba-ndi;	dẽ = son, daughter
benoro + the father's brother; ba – the name = wives of father's brothers	de = son, daughter
ntene; bingi-musu = father's sister	dẽ; bingilingo = son, daughter, nephew, niece.
o or ben-kɛ = husband of father's sister; ben-kɛ is a polite term	the name
kɛrɛ = older brother, son of father's brother older than speaker	doro = younger brother, son of father's brother younger than speaker
kalame = child of father's sister	kalame = child of mother's brother
mokɛ = father's father	mo-dẽ, or the name = son's son
mo-muso = father's mother	mo-dẽ, or the name = son's son

604 Ntene = father's sister (term derived from a root ta which has also given tana, tene, interdiction). The maternal aunt is the forbidden woman of this generation. The same is true for the father's wives and those women they consider as sisters. This relative wields a great influence in the family, and her curse is greatly feared. The children of the ntene-muso are called kalame, and they call the

604 children of their mother's brother *kalame*. The *kalame-w* joke and insult each other when they meet. Marriages between them are sometimes permitted, sometimes forbidden.

601 [52] b. *In the Maternal Line:*

612 *ba*: *ma*; *na* = mother	*dẽ* = son, daughter
ben-nkɔ *bele-nkɔ* *bari-nkɔ* } mother's brother	*be-ni*; *bare-ndi* = sister's son
ba + the name = wife of mother's brother	*dẽ* = son, daughter
ba-ko . . . . *ba* + the name *ba-ni-t'ɔ-ni* . } (after mother) mother's sister	*dẽ* = son, daughter
o or *fa* = husband of mother's sister	*o* or *de* = son of wife's sister
kɔrɔ = child of mother's brother or sister, if older than speaker	*doṙo* - child of mother's brother or sister, if younger than speaker
de = child of *kɔrɔ* or *doto*	*kɔrɔ* or *doṙo* of the brother
mo-kɔ = mother's father	*o* or *dẽ* = daughter's son
mo-muso = mother's mother	*o* or *dẽ* = daughter's son (1)

1. Labouret, *Les Mandingues et leur langue* [The Mandingo and Their Language].

604 The maternal uncle plays a very important role; he must arrange the marriage of his *be-ni*. He owes him a wife taken from among the daughters of one of his brothers. In exchange, the *be-ni* owes payment in labor.

The mother's sister is just barely considered a relation.

603 Sexual rivalry exists between grandfather and grandson, grandmother and granddaughter; this is why they defy and insult each other when they meet. When the grandparents die, the grandchildren have the same privileges as the *sénanku* [parties to a special kind of

551 the tua Ngolo, from which come Nyana Ngolo, Barama Ngolo, Solo-Ngolo, etc. In the family of the Bambara chiefs of Femay (2) (a canton in the circle of Djeimé), the eldest son was given the name of the paternal grandfather; the second son was called Moussa; the third, Abdoullah; the fourth, Ngizi; and the fifth, Souleyman. The girls were called, in order of age: first, Fatouma; second, Awa; third, Nyele-ba or Nye-ba; fourth, Dyomene; fifth, Kounadi; and the sixth, Aminata (2) [Ed., footnote 2 above].

There are other names very commonly used for the eldest child: Ntyi and its endless variants for boys; Nya or Nyele for eldest daughters. The last two are so common in the Ségou region that the Soninké derisively designate the Bambara of that area with the expression, Nya ni Nyele-u, "the people of Nya and [606] Nyele." Since husband and wife are forbidden by custom to pronounce the names of their respective parents-in-law, complications arise when, as often happens, a child is named for them. Respect for the interdict is preserved by using a paronym: for a boy, Tye-koro, "the old man"; for a girl, Moso-koro, "the old woman." To satisfy this same interdict, there are true synonyms locally: thus, for Mussa the name Dyigi is used; for Mori-ba, Bo-dyan. Individuals are often designated by these double names whose two parts are synonymous; thus, there are the Mussa-Dyigi or Dyigi-Moussa, the Bodyan-Moriba, and so forth.

The foregoing are some of the characteristic traits that show how individuals are named among the Bambara, but actually the subject is inexhaustible.

846 After the name-giving ceremony, the mother resumes her normal life, although she must still observe certain prohibitions: notably, there must be no sexual intercourse for the first three months; and during the same period she must not change her coiffure nor leave the village. Once this period is over, she covers herself with jewelry, [215] beads and pieces of amber -- borrowed from neighbors or relatives, if need be -- rubs the baby with butter, and goes to present him to the local notables.

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2. See Humblot.

584 574 her mother, step-mothers, and sisters -- join them, and the little procession goes to the religious head, the gnéna-sonnaba, priest of the dasiri, genie protector of the village, who gives some advice to the child and sets the day of her return. On leaving the village, the girl stops and refuses to go on; the youths take hold of her and carry her in their arms, and she abandons herself to cries and shouts that must not cease before she reaches the edge of the fields that surround the village.

584 431 Although the bride price is set, it is more difficult to determine the value of the fiancé's presents of millet, hens, salt, kola, and d'lo, or millet beer. The size of these presents, given gratuitously over four, five, or six years and often more, depends largely on the fortune of each man and the prestige of the fiancée's family. At harvest time he supplies one or two baskets of millet /each/ weighing 20 to 40 kilograms; at the great annual sacrifice offered to the family boli he provides a hen, salt, kola nuts, and dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water. From time to time he gives his prospective father-in-law some well-filled jugs of d'lo containing at least 20 to 30 liters /each/, and if there is a festival at his home, he is careful not to forget the latter. He shows his generosity at the festival on the occasion of his fiancée's excision (1); at the da woro, or festival of the sixth day, he shows himself to be generous, and the guardian of the wedding gifts takes her the required present, a loincloth in black stripes on a yellow background, four to five pounds /the French livre equals one half a kilogram, a little more than a pound avoirdupois/ of butter, two to three kilograms of salt, 20 to 30 liters of d'lo, or millet beer, an equal amount of dégé, or flour mixed with honey water, and finally some decorative ornaments -- a bead necklace, a piece of amber, a bracelet. These last gifts are in no way required; they are given purely out of amiable courtesy.

584 [illegible] One little fact without importance, remains to be noted. From the time of the engagement, the fiancée may not eat in the presence

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1. A Bambara man is not present at the festival which takes place at the excision of his fiancée.

584 of her father-in-law nor linger with him in endless conversations, es-
606 pecially when no witnesses are present, and the fiancé is subject to the same rules with regard to his mother-in-law. /206/

583 In a word, they may no longer even look at each other! If the fiancé dies before the wedding, it is in good taste for the girl to be-
584 come the fiancée of a younger brother, but if there is no brother she regains her liberty and keeps her bride price. If the fiancée dies, the family usually keeps the bride price they have received; custom permits the fiancé to demand the return of half the bride price but, in the eyes of everyone, to do so would indicate a lack of tact and delicacy. But if for one reason or another the engagement is broken, the bride price and small presents are returned to the fiancé in their entirety.

4. The Wedding of a Young Bambara Girl

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585 The fiancé asks for the girl (1). -- The *fourou fen* (the bride price and small presents) have been paid, the fiancée is a grown young lady who has long been excised, and only rags remain of the beautiful yellow loincloth with black stripes which was received at the *da woro*, or festival that follows the sixth day after the circumcision. *A kouara* -- she has reached her full development and henceforth can only decline in grace and beauty, and her fiancé desires her. The

1. It happens sometimes that the family cannot refuse the suitor's request for the girl, although she does not have all her trousseau. In that case the wedding festival is put off, but she is led to her husband, and a little private celebration takes place on that day. When she has her trousseau she goes back to her family, and the big festival is held.

/83/ Joking Relationship

602 608 A very important institution is also linked to the family name. It concerns the ties called "joking relationship," *dyo benatye* (literally, agreement between us), which is integrated with the general kinship relationships designated in the Mandingo country by the term *senãnkuya*. But family relationships in the strict sense, called *sindyi benatye* (literally, breast milk between us), are to be distinguished from *dyo benatye* which, on the contrary, involves the members of two families, or even of two different peoples.

Thus, a Koulibali is a Kéita's *senãnku* among the Bambara; Bozo and Dogon as well as Bozo and Somono are also *senãnku* (1). To the

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(1). Joking relationship called *senãnkuya* among the Bambara is termed *măgu* among the Dogon, *dagana* among the Bozo, etc. This important institution, which embraces all the tribes of the French Sudan, has already been the object of a number of studies. See especially M. Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal Niger* /The Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. 3, p. 206; H. Labouret, "La Parenté à plaisanteries en Afrique occidentale /Joking Relationship in West Africa/"; D. Paulme, *Parenté à plaisanteries et alliance par le sang en Afrique occidentale* /Joking Relationship and Blood Alliance in West Africa/; R. Radcliffe-Brown, *On Joking Relationships*.

In the "Alliance cathartique /The Cathartic Alliance/," M. Griaule throws light on the Dogon-Bozo relations which are at the origin of the institution in the Sudan. This brings out the fundamental notion of the duality of beings and the principles that animate them. A Dogon and a Bozo are twins, each carrying a particle of the other in his body and soul. When he insults or purifies, he appeals to that part of himself in the other and the powers he communicates in this way come to the help of his partner.

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The latest investigations on this subject have brought to light the following facts: Dogon and Bozo have, respectively, eight seeds and eight fish in their collarbones and thus they realize the distribution of the heavenly sustenance (see p. 53). This latter is evidence of their spiritual integrity and any breaking of taboos results first in depriving the person of his seeds or his fish. The purpose of the institution is to enable the ally to intervene in order to reinstate the nourishing substance in the body of the guilty person.

It should be stated here that in instances in which they are described by the same term (senãnkuya), kin relationships, which also involve joking exchanges, must not be confused with relationships between families (more exactly between names) or between tribes.

Moreover, within this last group, several types of alliances can be observed: some involve exogamy (Dogon and Bozo: Bozo and Peul, etc...); others exclude the possibility of carrying out purification rites. It will therefore be necessary to examine as many cases as possible before establishing any rules for this type of alliance.

Mandé, a Koulibali and a Tangara, bound by a long and durable friendship, decided to seal it in a lasting way. They opened their veins and put a little blood from one wound into the other, thus realizing the alliance through this exchange. They next prepared a meal which they ate /84/ together while pronouncing their oaths never to spill each other's blood.

In this way the dyo benatye (1) was consecrated between them and

1. Because of this alliance, members of the Kouloubali family were authorized by the Tangara of the village of Barbé (region of Mopti) to settle in the village. The

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Tangara chief gave them land to build their houses and set up their fields. The two groups live in perfect understanding.

their descendants. Such an alliance is equivalent to kinship. It involves the absolute obligation never to covet the life or possessions of the senãnku. The two parties are obligated to mutual assistance in many cases: food, housing, material aid; help in case of war or lawsuit; obligatory presence at religious ceremonies; purifications in case a taboo is broken.

These rules imply that the alliance affects the individual not only in his social roles, but also in his spiritual principles. The senãnku is a kind of twin to each individual belonging to the other family. He has within himself a part of his partner and vice versa.

602 Because of this fact, the reactions set off by insult or by joking are singular: the senãnku will accept from the mouth of the other, without becoming angry, mockery which he would not normally tolerate. He cannot be affected by them since the words are addressed to that part of his being which comes from the person insulting him. Moreover, the joke or the insult, without touching his spiritual integrity, has the effect of confirming him in his position relative to the person addressing him and of affirming the state of both parties, thereby increasing their vitality. It determines movements of forces from which the two speakers reciprocally benefit, as from a kind word.

This proceeding is used on numerous occasions, particularly at the time a person achieves a new social status or a new grade. The senãnku jokes with a newborn child as soon as his name is given and, later, on the day he wears his first piece of clothing. The circumcised boys become allies and joke between themselves the day of the daworo which consecrates the age grade (1). On the evening of marriage, the young woman is the object of ritual sarcasm which marks her final introduction into the husband's family group.

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783 The senãnku is the only one who, in certain cases, is able to carry out the purification rites made necessary by a broken taboo (tne). It is true that he carries in his collarbone—but only /85/ where his partner is concerned—twice the number of symbolic seeds,

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1. See p. 241.

596 assist his *tne,* while showing it the greatest respect. The mysti-
614 cal basis of this alliance sometimes causes the native to behave
621 in a particular way toward his *tne:* he will not look straight at
784 it; he will not touch it, unless absolutely forced to do so, and
then he will apologize and ask forgiveness.

Anything may be the object of a *tne,* but there is probably not a single Bambara family which does not have some animal as *tne.* Expressions which the natives in general and the Bambara in particular use to make foreigners understand their relations with this animal *tne* have made many Europeans think that the native regards the animal as a relative in the literal sense of the word. This is not the case, as we have just seen, and consequently Bambara totem is a purely European invention (1). [225]

1. It should be understood that the *tne* has many sources besides one mentioned here, which is the only one pertinent to this chapter. Thus, Bala refused to pronounce any word having the syllable *da* (p.); Sounsan abstained from the *kulẽ* (p. , footnote 1).

596 II. *The oath.* In native society, a man who is ambitious
614 or merely anxious to establish a powerful community can do so
621 only with the support of faithful allies. Massa and Biton not only
608 succeeded in dominating their young companions, but they also
bound them closely through the oath and the cult.

Undoubtedly all the founders of powerful communities have not proceeded in exactly the same way, but all of them have employed analogous methods. An isolated individual can accomplish nothing in this social milieu where everything rests on these strongly organized collectivities, the communities. Any Bambara eager for well-being and peace will seek out and attach himself to a "powerful protector" (*dyigi seme*) capable of providing him with this security, even if it means the loss of his own

596 freedom. That is why any important fa is invariably surrounded
614 by a small group of intimates who are bound to his fate, often
621 by a reciprocal agreement based on an oath.

One of these sacramental alliances is particularly
608 solemn; its purpose is to create a kind of kinship analogous to that which links blood brothers. There is always a profound difference between natural and contractual brotherhood, since the former exists and produces its effects independently of the will of those involved, whereas the latter exists and is valid only within the limits agreed upon by the contracting parties (1).

1. It should be noted that fraternization in its symbolic form has a necessary consequence which is not obligatory for other types of alliance by oath: it obligates the descendants of the contracting parties just as much as those undertaking the contract.

For a pact of brotherhood (dyonge) (2), the contracting parties, whether two or several, proceed as they see fit, either in public or privately in the presence of only close relatives and intimates. Each party to the agreement pricks his forearm and extracts a few drops of blood. The blood thus obtained is mixed with a small quantity of goat's milk in a receptacle. Calling upon the ancestors or some god chosen for the occasion to bear witness, each party in turn promises with a solemn oath to consider the others as his brothers. At the same time, he repeats the [226] conditions of the pact and finally sips some of the liquid.

2. This term unquestionably derives from the verb siri, "to link, to unite."

This is the closest alliance that two Bombara can contract (1). Among other things, it forbids one to marry women

1. Blood-brotherhood was contracted

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* between Deni-ba Bo for the Massa-si of Kaarta and Suleyman Ba for the people of Fouta.

belonging to the other's community, at least virgins or women reputed to be such. This is because a first sexual contact is likely to result in some flow of blood, and brotherhood imposes a terrible punishment on anyone who sheds the blood of a blood-brother or one of his people. As is apparent, the obligation undertaken by the contracting parties holds for all their descendants, regardless of sex and in infinitum. Henceforth there is a very close solidarity between the two communities, who are so bound to mutual aid that, in practice, anything (including lies, slander, and perjury) is permissible to overcome a common enemy or, in any event, to help the ally in trouble.

596 614 621 695 In place of the brotherhood oath, many other forms of oath can be used. Thus, the chronicles tell of Sounsan and Fa Siné forming an alliance with an oath which was undoubtedly binding, because the anvil on which it was sworn was afterwards cast into a well. Nko, Sounsan's god, received the oath under which the "young men" who were Massa's companions allied themselves to the latter's fate. At Ségou, the tondyon' likewise swore loyalty on the idols.

These sacramental agreements are endlessly varied, but they bind the parties only under the stipulated conditions, especially as regards the respective communities of the fa who take the oath.

596 614 621 583 III. Marriage.- There is no better way for a Bambara to show his attachment to someone whose alliance or friendship he desires than by giving him as a wife one of the girls of his own community and providing her with a generous dowry. This is one of the most solemn forms of alliance between communities (2).

2. People united by marriage are called furu-nyuan' (spouses) and biran' (allies).

621 581 Koulibali of Ségou, founded Bamako, and changed its name to Niaré 583 in becoming Bambara.

The tné: the taboo concerning an animal or some object. 621 The basis of this alliance is the oath of the *fa* not to kill or eat the 784 object of the taboo. All the generations following this ancestor must respect the taboo *ad infinitum*.

Thus, the Kéita have the hippopotamus for *tné*; the Traoré, the Dambélé, and the Warata have the panther; the Samaké, the elephant; the Koubilali of Ségou, the hippopotamus; those of Issa Ber, the *m'polio* [a fish]; others have the mole cricket (*n'gere*) and the striped mouse (*n'kelika*); the Niaré, Sissé, Silla, Doukouré, and the Daramé, the python, etc.

The oath: this seals a pact of *dyonge* fraternization. Each 621 party to the contract extracts some drops of blood from his forearm 608 which is mixed with goat's milk. Swearing by his ancestors, he states the conditions of the alliance and drinks part of the beverage. This alliance binds the parties to it and all their descendants *ad* [582] *infinitum*. It entails a prohibition or, contrariwise, a recommendation of marriage between members of the two communities, and establishes solidarity between the two communities which owe each other mutual assistance. In the framework of this alliance is the cathartic alliance termed *sénankuya*, which, besides the preceding obligations, governs the system of purifications.

The *sénankuya*: unites certain specific groups bearing differ- 621 names within the same village, but can also have an intertribal 608 character; ex.: Mandingue-Peul. Humblot observed the following 648 alliances at Kankan: Kéita-Fofana; Kondé-Traoré; Kéita-Béreté-Sérigou-Sissé; [56] Kala-Kéita-Kouyaté; Kourouma-Koma; Kourouma-Dabo; Kourouba-Konaté-Kamara-Bagayoko; Konaté-Dougoumoko; Konaté-Sidibé. This system of alliance in which [783] the two allies are equal and complementary governs the mechanism of the purifications, notably by the insult, and the duties of reciprocal assistance (1). Formerly, when a *sénanku* was reduced to slavery,

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1. M. Griaule, "L'alliance cathartique" [The Cathartic Alliance], *Africa*, Vol. XVIII, 1948.

608 his ally had to try to ransom him. A sénanku often serves as inter-
621 mediary in arranging marriages, in land claims, in the collection of
648 debts. He is rewarded by gifts. He has the power to stop quarrels and to oppose acts of rage and violence by the man whose sénanku he is, no matter what his rank and no matter how important the decisions in question are. The sénanku of a Fama could prevent his declaring war or condemning to death one of his subjects. Moreover, he has certain limited privileges over his ally's possessions. (He may appropriate unimportant objects, food, and even sums of money.) Finally, he recruits the labor force which his ally may need.

621 c. Age Classes. -- But though these different ties exercise an important influence on the political, social, and religious life of the
571 community they are generally too broad and too lax to permit organiza-
561 tion of a work community. In fact, we have seen how a large village may be formed of different communities relatively independent of each other, despite the authority of the founding community's fa. On the level of the canton, the geographical dispersion does not permit the Fama to intervene personally in the organization of the work community. The latter is founded essentially on the system of relations of the age classes.

561 From infancy until circumcision for the boys, until excision for the girls, the young Bambara belongs to a hierarchic society which prepares him or her for this ceremony and which provides an education complementary to that received in the family. Within this association all the children are divided into age classes: boys up to six years of age are bilakoro-dogomani (bila = short pants), from 6 to 10 years they are bilakoro-dogoma, from 10 to about 15 years, bilakoro-koroba. Similarly, the girls are, successively: sunkiri-dogomani, sunkuru-dogoma, and sunkuru-koroba. Each age class has a chief: ton-tigi for the boys, musso-tigi for the girls; each office is doubled by a deputy (syere). There is also a treasurer and a ton-dyeli who is the griot of the ton. All are elected by members of the society. A Bambara will be influenced all his life by his membership in a certain age class which groups all the children who underwent circumcision at the same time. In fact, up to the moment of circumcision the child's personality is not yet distinct. We have seen before how small children were

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643 [59] No one may oppose the Fama's will, except his sênanku who has the power to stay the chief's decisions, particularly in case of acts dictated by anger: murders, wars, etc.

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652 The Fama's resources came from the work of his familiars, from a levy on wild foodstuffs, half of the war booty, all otherwise unowned goods, from certain precious substances, such as gold and ivory, from taking part of every animal killed in the hunt and the skins of all wild animals brought down, all receipts for the right to hold markets, for grazing, and for changing pastures, tolls for river crossings, fines, and from the sale of prisoners of the law. On the other hand, he had to meet the following expenses: to feed and clothe the members of the community in the case of need; to maintain the warriors (give them a groom, a wife, a rifle, a horse); bestow favors on people of caste, feed them, clothe them, arrange for their marriages if need be; make offerings to charity; receive strangers; feed prisoners detained for judgment or otherwise held.

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653 The Fama ordered all work of common interest: construction and maintenance of fortifications, clearing trails, preservation of springs, construction and upkeep of the mosque if one was needed, making pirogues for common use, setting up rest platforms.

These works were carried out through payments in labor. The work was divided up among the villages by the Fama, and the village chiefs in turn assigned it to family heads. He who did not carry it out in person could have it done by members of his family; he who refused could be obliged to comply by force.

642 Bambara society rarely achieved a systematic and centralized form of organization analogous to our European kingdoms. What has been dignified with the name of "empire" was scarcely more than an organization which reflected the attraction exercised by a family, by reason of its prestige or its power, on groupings which accepted its suzerainty. As Monteil has shown very well, a family's effort at domination has always been directed at groupings of people and not at territorial expansion.

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565 The whole of these groupings constitutes the Ton. This includes:

1. a chief, the ton-tigi;
2. the local chiefs, fa;

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565 3. the free men;

4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);

5. slaves.

567 e. Slavery. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by violence, by obligation, or by birth.

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554 1. By violence. If a war captive is important, he may be killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration. A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama; ● [608] if he is a sénanku of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious [551] Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

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858 2. By obligation. A free individual became a slave in punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the profit of the Fama. A fa could sell one of his children to meet his debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was freed of his obligations.

567 3. By birth. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a wolo-so. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

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644 As the number of slaves grew, their organization became complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Ségou were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the dyon-kuru or dyon-futu (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Ségou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him, the submission of all the slaves.

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554 The *numu*: blacksmiths, whose wives are generally potters.
[326] The smiths are the masters of fire, those who cook the sacred earth in order to extract the minerals or to fix the form of pottery.

The *loro*: coppersmiths.

The *garanka*: leatherworkers.

The *kule*: woodworkers, and sometimes saddlemakers.

The *donso*: hunters, who form powerful and feared associations.

The *somono*, or fishermen, who have a status a little less restricted than that of the artisans mentioned above.

The *dyeli* or *griot*, domestic factotums of a kind, who, although the most disdained of all these, are nevertheless the family archivists.

[563] One may add two Peul shepherd tribes, identified by Manson: the *Dyanna* and the *Bouguena* (1).

1. See Monteil, *Les Bamba[illegible] du Ségou et du Kaarta* [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

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564 All of these artisans are endogamous and fixed in caste, father to son. However, the fact that a man belongs to a caste does not obligate him to exercise the caste trade.

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608 The most powerful guild is incontestably that of the blacksmiths. From their ranks are recruited all the priests, the Fama's interpreters, the well-diggers, the grave-diggers, the executioners, the circumcisers, etc. They are the *sénanku* of all the families and are in charge of all the purification rites.

554 The *griot* are equally feared, because of the power of their words and because they spread afar the renown of the chiefs.

564 The free man who marries a woman of caste marries beneath himself, and his children are looked down on.

[326]
[527] The purest blacksmith families are those of the Fané Balo; the purest *griot* those of the Koniaté. People of caste always remain at liberty; when they are captured during a war, they make themselves known and keep their status.

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326 [64] These different guilds are sufficient to maintain in the Bambara country a certain industry of a distinctly artisan and non-specialized type. Thus, the smiths work iron, copper, and wood to

695 or in the chief's vestibule, that is to say, under the light of a certain
643 constellation and witnessed by the founding ancestors who link the judge with the supernatural powers. The Fama was seated on a throne perched on a platform; at his right were the notables, at his left the *griot*, the priests, and the old captives; behind him stood the
[195] *sofa*. The blacksmith or a captive repeated aloud what the Fama whispered, for the Fama should not raise his voice. Neither women nor children could attend the public sessions. Formerly, the mere view of the Fama filled the accused with terror, and he prostrated himself in the Fama's presence. The Fama could put the accused in irons until he was judged (1).

1. V. Paques, "L'estrade royale des Niare" [The Royal Platform of the Niaré] *Bull. de l'Ifan*, Vol. XV (1953), No. 4.

671 Bambara law sought above all to make reparation, to restore order, and only after that to punish.

a. Proofs (2)

2. Passim. *Coutumier juridique de l'A.O.F.* [French West African Common Law].

695 The plaintiff must prove his case, and the accused must prove his innocence. Elements of proof may be confession, testimony by witnesses, oath taking, expert opinion, and examination of the scene.

If indications of guilt are strong enough, the Fama may force the accused to confess by having him whipped.

Each party may call witnesses in the following order: circumcised men, married women, unmarried girls (who, however, cannot [70] take the oath), and, lastly, children if there are no
[608] other witnesses. The *sênanku* are exempted from bearing witness against each other.

689 Public violation of decency is punished by death.

684 For adultery, the man is put in irons and pays a fine, the woman is whipped by her husband, her brothers, or the Fama's police. Relations with a woman in mourning draws public scorn on the guilty, while a man who commits adultery with a pregnant woman is put to death. A captive who is the lover of his master's wife is put to death.

689 Vagrant individuals are presumed to be escaped captives and are handed over to the Fama.

735 Finally, begging is authorized, because, say the Bambara, it is better to have begging than stealing.

d. Responsibility

[608] The Fama judges all his subjects, except his own sénanku whom he has judged by his tribunal. The law is applicable to every circumcised man and excised woman recognized as sane. (The demented are put in irons.) They are responsible for their acts, but the family of the guilty is also responsible. The father of an uncircumcised boy is responsible for the boy's acts, the husband for the acts of his wife, and we have seen that a man's crime may lead to the punishment of his whole family. Let us further remark that a master was judge of his slave, but when a difference arose between slaves of different houses, their case was referred to the tribunal. The tribunal also weighed the death penalty [72] when a slave committed a grave fault. Finally, the foreigner who lives in the Bambara country is judged by Bambara laws.

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[609]

672 We must also note that the penalties apply to all crimes committed voluntarily; every infraction or damage involuntarily committed is excusable on the condition that it be immediately confessed. Thus it is that a hunter meeting a pair of lovers in the bush may kill them for outraging public decency, but must admit his crime immediately upon returning to the village.

[684]

e. Inheritance

428 Monteil has noticed an order of succession in the Ségou region which does not correspond to that described by other authors, such as Ortoli or Aubert. In fact, at the death of the fa, "... everything that belonged to him remains undivided under the new faya of

177 substratum on which each tribe has grafted its original system. The
121 study of this substratum would help define the problem of origins and
influences.

After this, we have at our disposal the support of philology and above all the advantage of seeing the Bambara live their beliefs and of discovering their myths in a crude but expressive material as well as in numerous rites. The observations made over a wide field of inquiry serve as the basis for the presentation of this religious system.

114 The Bambara have been for a long time the subject of articles and
121 works, of which we will give below a concise bibliography. The only
author who, until now, has attempted to describe their beliefs as a system is L. Tauxier whose study of *La Religion Bambara* /Bambara religion/ takes into account to a large extent the works of the Abbé Henry and Ch. Monteil. However, through the descriptions of these different observers which are certainly conscientious, this religion appears as a composite of diverse and even inconsistent elements with no apparent link between them. Despite a uniform plan and a laudable absence of preconceived ideas, L. Tauxier has been unable to bring out the fundamental concepts of the people he observed.

In fact, the study of a present-day Negro religion runs into difficulties of various kinds stemming on the one hand from the necessity of going into the field and on the other hand from the largely esoteric character of the doctrine. These circumstances make this study essentially a work of discovery.

Indeed, Bambara religion, like all Sudanese religions, has an exoteric part, quite easily accessible, which observation conducted along scientific lines may reveal in detail. Rules of life admitted by all, beliefs openly professed, and public or private practices may be the object of detailed work. But this religion, like that of the neighboring peoples, rests upon a doctrine whose fundamental principles
[609] are known to elders and initiates who show considerable aversion to con-
fiding in strangers, particularly whites. Such a situation explains the ignorance in which scholarship has remained for so long concerning the religious way of thinking of this people (1).

812 1. The Bambara themselves distinguish between two kinds of knowledge. The first, called *doni fyɛ̃ma* "knowledge (which has) wind" /xviii/ is superficial

755 "(1) I have stated elsewhere that among Negro beliefs

1. Raffenel, op. cit., p. 463.

the tradition of the state of possession was carefully preserved. One evening I was present at a ceremony designed to drive a devil out of a woman's body. Father Niany, the universal man of Foutobi, was the exorcist. At the first rumor of this event, a throng converged on the woman's hut and I joined the crowd, curious to see what was going to happen. I saw a wretched woman rolling about on the ground in terrible convulsions in the midst of a circle of onlookers who let her thrash about without trying to help and merely watched her movements. There was great excitement when Niany appeared, and the circle opened to let him pass. He approached the woman, touched her, said a few words in a low voice, lifted her and placed her on a mat.

"The woman at once became calm, and father Niany, who seemed not at all impressed by his triumph, withdrew after speaking a few words in her ear. The crowd melted away, also without showing the least surprise at such complete and prompt success. I conclude that such happenings were not at all infrequent and that Niany had a special talent for driving devils out of women's bodies. I cannot [146] say what her trouble was, but when I saw her I thought that she was simply having an attack of epilepsy and I did not recognize the usual symptoms of that dreadful malady in the sort of convulsions she was having."

791 609 Though he was sure of his art, Niany nevertheless recognized its hazards. There is no magician who does not find another who is more powerful. A foreigner, that unknown creature, is a danger, because he may chance to possess secrets which might invalidate the cleverest methods. That is why Niany fears Islam. He has an idea, which to us seems strange, of what Allah may be, as compared to a miscreant like himself and, being persuaded of the continuity of matter, he applies it in a manner that we shall describe in the chapter on Islam.

791 609 821 Though he may have his doubts about Islam, Niany is no less suspicious of the manœuvers of the foreigner, Raffenel, who is staying with him.

791 "(1) One morning he came and complained bitterly that

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821 1. Raffenel, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

I was preventing the rain from falling and that I was causing a lot of trouble to the villagers. I could not imagine, at first, why he was thus berating me, but he explained. It was his considered opinion that the rain was very much annoyed with me for being too much interested in it. I was watching the raindrops and examining the clouds, and so the rain was getting its vengeance by refusing to fall. Father Niany resented my thermometers too, but his principal target was my barometer, to which he attributed all sorts of evil designs.

"On the following day he returned to the charge, accompanied by a deputation of farmers carrying their agricultural tools on their shoulders.

"'We've thought it all over,' said Niany, 'and we have decided that since you can stop the rain, you can also make it fall again. Therefore we have come to ask you to speak to the rain in our name.'" ....

"Two days later there came another deputation, but one which, this time, looked threatening. Among them were some [147] new faces.

"'We want you to make it rain,' said the leaders, with an angry glance at my barometer, 'for we have already waited too long. You will never convince us that what you do with your machines (they pointed at my instruments), while you look up into the air and write down the grigri, is innocent. Never before in this country, has the rain held off so long from falling and no one has ever before done what you're doing. Manage it as you will, but we must have rain by tonight.'

"The sky was filled with heavy black clouds which reassured me. ..... An hour later the rain fell, but those wretches, no doubt fearing that my presence would interfere with its good intentions, pushed me unceremoniously into my hut and shut the door. By this ridiculous step they prevented me from watching the progress of a wonderful storm and noting the barometric pressure changes.

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609 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that
821 was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and
show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the
Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are
inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
224 start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his
equipment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well
as an arsenal of magic weapons.

825 The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of
778 this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at
some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of
respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The
animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[552] *wara-ba* means lion; *sa-ma*, elephant; *ma-li*, hippopotamus;
bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names
indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief
that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The
attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an
application of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual
and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a
small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
231 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
552 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of
825 their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once
held and which is still shown on occasion: *fa-li* meaning "donkey"
derives from *fa* meaning "powerful," just as *nya-ri* meaning "cat"
derives from *nya* and has the same meaning, along with *ba*
Meaning "goat."

771 797 as *sila*, also gather at Keghé (2) and address prayers to heaven for the preservation of the king's life and the glory of his reign. Custom requires the king to make rich presents to the *sila* on this occasion."

[336] This dualism, which appears strange and which has sometimes been interpreted as a result of Islamic influence during an earlier period of Moslem supremacy, is, on the contrary and without any doubt whatever, an essential characteristic of the native milieu. In this milieu, in theory, all religions can flourish without hindrance and even with the benevolent assent of the faithful believers of the various sects, if one may so describe the adepts in these innumerable *nyana*. It is certain that all religions, *a priori* and by their very nature, enjoy particular esteem among the Blacks.

609 In the mind of the native, a foreigner is particularly dangerous because he is assumed to possess mysterious magic powers. Many Sudanese legends bear witness to the Black's belief that encounters with foreigners are accompanied by combats whose outcome depends entirely on magic. As a result of this state of mind, as soon as it is apparent that the stranger's cult brings no calamities in its wake, not only is the cult tolerated, but some of the natives even adopt it, at first as a kind of addition to their own cults and then gradually they become converts.

Islam has also profited from this state of mind. With the external and public manifestations of his cult the Moslem easily impresses the Bambara who, as we have seen, are constantly obsessed with the supernatural. How could they fail to be struck by this divinity called Allah, who is endlessly proclaimed all day long, and by religious observances which are displayed before the public: ablutions, prayers pronounced aloud in as strange language, rosaries, mosques which are often monumental, great and impressive ceremonies?

Further, the fact that Islam is supported by the written word of its books gives it an element of certainty that is lacking in the native cults.

2. Then the royal residence of the Massa-si chiefs.

567 701 3. The ton-koro-bolo behind the disi is a special reserve formed entirely of pure ton-dyon.

4. The keli-tigi was the chief of the expedition, designated by the Fama. He might be a dyon-kuntigi (chief of the furuba-dyon), a member of the Fama's community, or the Fama himself.

708 534 Finally, the army was accompanied by a musical corps, composed essentially of drums which transmitted messages. There were armpit drums (dunkan), shoulder drums (taura), three-legged drums (dange), drums carried by two men (tabala), and coupled drums (denuba). Often horns (buru) were added, sometimes small horns made of ivory or horn, and sometimes xylophones (bada) and cowbells.

708 537 A dyeli (griot) follows the expedition to observe the exploits that he must retransmit; he must encourage the warriors and dispel panic by the power of his oratory.

B. Influence of Social Organization on Economic Life

a. The ton, Work Community

621 We have seen that the social unit among the Bambara is the community. The community is also the work unit and the economic unit. The independent individual is not conceived of. The community owns all the wealth which makes up the spiritual and material patrimony: the land, the agricultural, industrial, and commercial products, the habitations ...

423 621 622 609 [431] The community regulates the exploitation of the land. The dugu-tigi is the first occupant, master of the land, of which he distributes the lots to the different family heads. When a stranger, a family head, wants to enter into a community, he chooses an unoccupied field and asks the village chief for it. The request is accompanied by ten kola nuts and a chicken. Authorization cannot then be refused. The chief of the land sacrifices the chicken before the entire community and informs it of the installation of the newcomer. When the stranger wants to leave the land, he is given back his chicken and kola nuts.

423 621 622 Land assigned to a family head may always be taken back from him without justification by the dugu-tigi and his council.

689 Public violation of decency is punished by death.

684 For adultery, the man is put in irons and pays a fine, the
woman is whipped by her husband, her brothers, or the Fama's police.
Relations with a woman in mourning draws public scorn on the guilty,
while a man who commits adultery with a pregnant woman is put to
death. A captive who is the lover of his master's wife is put to death.

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he has judged by his tribunal. The law is applicable to every cir-
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the family of the guilty is also responsible. The father of an un-
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the punishment of his whole family. Let us further remark that a
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692 slaves of different houses, their case was referred to the tribunal.
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mitted a grave fault. Finally, the foreigner who lives in the Bam-
[609] bara country is judged by Bambara laws.

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committed voluntarily; every infraction or damage involuntarily
committed is excusable on the condition that it be immediately
confessed. Thus it is that a hunter meeting a pair of lovers in the
[684] bush may kill them for outraging public decency, but must admit
his crime immediately upon returning to the village.

e. Inheritance

428 Monteil has noticed an order of succession in the Ségou re-
gion which does not correspond to that described by other authors,
such as Ortoli or Aubert. In fact, at the death of the fa, " ... every-
thing that belonged to him remains undivided under the new faya of

603 alliance]. (It is also customary for grandfathers and grandsons to eat together, while the sons eat apart.)

612 c. By Marriage: T'ɛ, K'ɛ, Kɛ = husband's name, corresponding
601 to *muso* (*muso*, term for spouse [female?]).

Bira nk'ɛ = father-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and all the male relatives of the husband or wife, corresponding to *bira-muso* = mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, and all female relatives of the husband or wife.

587 When a man dies, his wives go to his younger brother; and if a man's wife dies, he may marry her younger sister . . .

582 This patrilineal and patrilocal family must have grafted itself
611 onto an ancient matrilineal system (see the chapter on inheritance and position of women). The systems of clan exogamy and endogamy are united: two pairs of brothers and sisters marry among themselves; sons must take their wives from their mother's family, and marriages take place between cross-cousins; children never belong to their parents' category, while grandchildren and grandparents always are in the same category.

583 [53] We shall see that alongside this matrimonial system in which wives are exchanged there exists a system in which payments are made to the *fa* of the young girl.

596 The size of the united family varies, but it may include more than 80 persons. Labouret (1) gives us, as an example, the composition of the *blõ* of Ngolo Traoré at Mpiéla, Kolokani subdivision:

	Men	Women	Children
1. Household of Ngolo	1	8	15
2. Household of Samba, Ngolo's brother	1	2	4
3. Household of Dotné, Samba's son	1	2	3
4. Household of Denkoro, son of deceased Bakoro	1	3	1
5. Household of Fabugai, Ngolo's son .	1	2	4
6. Quarters of unmarried males, all sons of Ngolo and Samba . . .	5		
	10	17	19 [sic]

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1. *Op. cit.*

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3. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal et Niger [Upper Senegal and Niger].

4. Labouret, Les Mandingues et leur langue [The Mandingo and Their Language].

etc., but these are still very fragmentary and incomplete. In addi- 177 tion, this society was completely disrupted by the French conquest, either by such radical measures as the suppression of slavery or by a natural evolution as a result of contact with European societies. Nevertheless, traditional structures retain their vitality, despite the effort to adapt them to European formulas.

178 The society seems to have oscillated between familial anarchy and the clan stage, according to alternating ranges of groupings, disassociation, and regroupings.

1. The Family

594 596 Concerning the Sudanese, Delafosse has already made the distinction between "the restricted family" and the "extended family." The restricted family is composed of the parents and children who live in the "hut." Taken alone, it does not represent a social unit. The true social cell is the extended family. This is the large united family made up of a group of restricted families whose heads recognize a common ancestor. This group, composed of agnates in principle, is the ba-denya, whose members live in huts within an enclosure: gwa or so. The two ends of this [51] enclosure rest on a blõ (vestibule) where the ancestors' altar is found.

601 612 According to Labouret, the Bambara distinguish three categories of family ties: the paternal line, the maternal line, and relationship by marriage. The child takes the dyamu (honorable name) of his father's group, but the terms applied to ancestors and descendants are the same as those of the maternal line.

"... Kinship includes the following generations: tolo-mina... tolo-sama... tolo-ma-sama: who seizes or pulls ears (a belief has it that if a great grandson pulls the ear of his great [622] grandfather, the latter becomes deaf);

601 mo-kɔ (1) = grandfather; mo-muso = grandmother;
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1. ɔ = è as in the French mère.

fa = father;
dẽ = son, daughter;
modẽ = grandson, granddaughter;
tolo-mina, etc., as above;
fu... fuy..., as above.

a. In the Paternal Line:

fa = father	dẽ, de, di = son, daughter
ba, ma, na = wives of the father	dẽ = son, daughter
binã, baba-ndi;	dẽ = son, daughter
benoro + the father's brother; ba – the name = wives of father's brothers	de = son, daughter
ntene; bingi-musu = father's sister	dẽ; bingilingo = son, daughter, nephew, niece.
o or ben-kɔ = husband of father's sister; ben-kɔ is a polite term	the name
kɔrɔ = older brother, son of father's brother older than speaker	doro = younger brother, son of father's brother younger than speaker
kalame = child of father's sister	kalame = child of mother's brother
mokɔ = father's father	mo-dẽ, or the name = son's son
mo-muso = father's mother	mo-dẽ, or the name = son's son

604 Ntene = father's sister (term derived from a root ta which has also given tana, tene, interdiction). The maternal aunt is the forbidden woman of this generation. The same is true for the father's wives and those women they consider as sisters. This relative wields a great influence in the family, and her curse is greatly feared. The children of the ntene-muso are called kalame, and they call the

604 children of their mother's brother *kalame*. The *kalame-w* joke and insult each other when they meet. Marriages between them are sometimes permitted, sometimes forbidden.

601 [52] b. *In the Maternal Line:*

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ba: *ma*; *na* = mother	*dẽ* = son, daughter
ben-nkɔ *bele-nkɔ* *bari-nkɔ* } mother's brother	*be-ni*; *bare-ndi* = sister's son
ba + the name = wife of mother's brother	*dẽ* = son, daughter
ba-ko . . . . (after mother) *ba* + the name mother's sister *ba-ni-t'ɔ-ni* .	*dẽ* = son, daughter
o or *fa* = husband of mother's sister	*o* or *de* = son of wife's sister
kɔrɔ = child of mother's brother or sister, if older than speaker	*doṙo* - child of mother's brother or sister, if younger than speaker
de = child of *kɔrɔ* or *doto*	*kɔrɔ* or *doṙo* of the brother
mo-kɔ = mother's father	*o* or *dẽ* = daughter's son
mo-muso = mother's mother	*o* or *dẽ* = daughter's son (1)

1. Labouret, *Les Mandingues et leur langue* [The Mandingo and Their Language].

604 The maternal uncle plays a very important role; he must arrange the marriage of his *be-ni*. He owes him a wife taken from among the daughters of one of his brothers. In exchange, the *be-ni* owes payment in labor.

The mother's sister is just barely considered a relation.

603 Sexual rivalry exists between grandfather and grandson, grandmother and granddaughter; this is why they defy and insult each other when they meet. When the grandparents die, the grandchildren have the same privileges as the *sẽnanku* [parties to a special kind of

603 alliance]. (It is also customary for grandfathers and grandsons to eat together, while the sons eat apart.)

612 c. By Marriage: T'ɛ, K'ɛ, Kɛ = husband's name, corresponding
601 to muso (muso, term for spouse [female?]).

Bira nk'ɛ = father-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and all the male relatives of the husband or wife, corresponding to bira-muso = mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, and all female relatives of the husband or wife.

587 When a man dies, his wives go to his younger brother; and if a man's wife dies, he may marry her younger sister ...

582 This patrilineal and patrilocal family must have grafted itself
611 onto an ancient matrilineal system (see the chapter on inheritance and position of women). The systems of clan exogamy and endogamy are united: two pairs of brothers and sisters marry among themselves; sons must take their wives from their mother's family, and marriages take place between cross-cousins; children never belong to their parents' category, while grandchildren and grandparents always are in the same category.

583 [53] We shall see that alongside this matrimonial system in which wives are exchanged there exists a system in which payments are made to the fa of the young girl.

596 The size of the united family varies, but it may include more than 80 persons. Labouret (1) gives us, as an example, the composition of the blo of Ngolo Traoré at Mpiéla, Kolokani subdivision:

	Men	Women	Children
1. Household of Ngolo	1	8	15
2. Household of Samba, Ngolo's brother	1	2	4
3. Household of Dotné, Samba's son	1	2	3
4. Household of Denkoro, son of deceased Bakoro	1	3	1
5. Household of Fabugai, Ngolo's son .	1	2	4
6. Quarters of unmarried males, all sons of Ngolo and Samba . . .	5		
	10	17	19 [sic]
		46	

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1. Op. cit.

794 561 distinguishes himself through diligence, obedience, and skill, he may occasionally, if the elders so decide, be promoted to a more advanced age grade than his own and thus find himself on an equal footing with his elders.

794 The responsibilities of the Komo chief are considerable. He is the guardian of the altars which, as we shall later see, contain all the spiritual forces of the society; he is the only one able to manipulate them and is in charge of all the rituals which depend upon them. He [429] manages the patrimony of the group (seeds and money) which is kept in the cowrie or millet granaries, and which he may tap, in case of necessity, in order to make interest loans to members of the society who request them. (1)

But this function, honorary and advantageous from many points of view, involves not only rights but, more important, duties from which the chief cannot be exemated. He must, under no circumstances, abuse his power; he can make no decision without the agreement of the members and may not act, even in the most insignificant case, without advising each and every one of them. Each person is kept up to date as regarding the smallest details concerning the general activity of the Komo and the entire age grade must be informed at the same moment. To break these rules would mean to become exposed to the greatest dangers. Just like the head of the total family whose power is far from being absolute (2), the responsible person

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1. See S. de Ganay, "Un jardin d'essai et son autel chez les Bambara /A Sample Garden and Its Altar among the Bambara/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 17 (1947), pp. 57-63.

794 ● 614 2. "The Mandingo fa," says Henri Labouret, in Les Manding et leur langue, "appears less free in his acts and decisions than the master of the ancient taisible fraternity. Far from being the tyrannical and strong willed autocrat whom people have frequently taken pleasure in describing, he seems to me, rather, to fulfill therole of a delegated administrator,

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> an enforcement agent, expected to conform to the directives decided upon by the domestic council composed of elders and family heads (pp. 54 and 55). The aim pursued by the chief is to administer wisely a patrimony which will always remain undivided" (p. 57).

794 must exercise his office with strictness, honesty, and thoughtfulness.

A. Creation and Consecration of the Komo

The few villages not possessing a Komo are linked to the Komo in a neighboring village. If a village decides to create /145/ an independent society, it delegates its elders to an important Komo (tro ba) whose chief, after the performance of divinatory rites, makes them swear submission to the altars which he will entrust to them after consecrating them; they promise never to drop the cult, never to omit a sacrifice or offering. After the sacs brought by the petitioners have been filled with necessary products (honey, pepper, charcoal, gold, copper, etc.), they are overflowed with the blood of victims provided by those about to take office and then rubbed on the altars of the tro. The new Komo becomes the trodeni of the one from which it thus receives part of its power. In the course of the night following the consecration and the daytime transfer of the boli (1),

> 1. The boli, as indicated on p. 130, are linked to a category including day and sun.

a member of the society brings to his village a pembelé similarly consecrated by the donors. This shift at night recalls the period of Pemba's reign preceding the apparition of light and the regular succession of days and nights.

Once back in the village, the society, gathered around the chief, organizes its ritual, chooses its officers, obtains the necessary masks, builds the sanctuary, and places on it the altars upon which blood sacrifices will be performed daily during this first period.

101 word which we write and pronounce Kaarta means "country of
103 the Karé" or, more accurately, "the group of the Karé." Wher-
131 ever there are Karé people they are called, in the Soninké lan-
guage, Karu-ta, [5] which is contracted to Karta. From this we made Kaarta because we misheard the long first "a." The word Kaarta designates a particular area only because of the people who inhabit it, and its value as a geographical expression is acquired only by extension. Among the natives the term is used for various areas within the region which extends from Goumbou to Koniakari and from Nioro to the Senegal River. On our maps, Kaarta is bounded by Kingui on the north, Diomboko on the west, Senegal and Bélédougou on the south, and Kaniaga on the east. However, all of these names of cantons themselves have very vague meanings.

101 For the purpose of the present work, the word Kaarta takes
103 on a special meaning. The Bambara who founded a clan at
131 Sounsan-na in the Karé country are called Karta-n-ko in the
614 Soninké language and Karta-n-ka-u (the Kaarta people) in the
Bambara language. As a result, Kaarta has become the name of the areas occupied by the clan in its various peregrinations.

The "people of Ségou" acquired their name in quite a different manner, since they were named for Ségou, the capital of the clan. The country of Ségou should be understood strictly to allude to the to-da which, to be described in chapter 5, was, by and large the area surrounding Ségou and occupied by the chief and his family and followers. In a wider sense, the country of Ségou referred to all the territory under the authority of the Ségou clan. At the height of the clan's power, "the country of Ségou" occupied both banks of the Niger, following the axis of the river from Kangaba to Timbuktu.

Our European need to have things clearly defined may be
101 satisfied by having the territorial limits of Kaarta and Ségou set
131 forth on a map, but on the native level, with which this book is
631 primarily concerned, such local definition has little relevance.
These empires did not aim to dominate any given area but rather sought to exploit as large a number of individuals as possible without regard to country or race.

101 the word has so thoroughly taken on a pejorative sense that its
578 use may be a grave insult. What an insult it would be for a
Moslem to be called a Bambara, i.e., an infidel, a pagan and
an alcoholic!

101 In the strictest sense, however, the word Bambara is applied by the Malinké and, following their lead, by the French only to natives who speak the Bambara dialect and who call themselves Banmana or Bamana. Barring specific exceptions, we shall henceforth use the word in this limited sense in the present work.

x173 It is evident from the foregoing remarks that the Bambara belong to very ancient indigenous families; indeed, they themselves consider this to be so, and they are so considered by others.

Native informants are likely to say that the Bambara are former slaves of the Malinké; but they also say that the Somono are former slaves of the "Ségou people." Later on (see Chapter 4), we shall see in what sense [10] this slavery should be understood. It was a characteristic result of the political form of the native governments.

101 In addition to the general name given to them or accepted by them, which applies to one or another group, the Bambara are designated by terms expressing their geographic distribution. There are, for instance, those who live at Bélédougou (called Beledugu-ka-u); those in the Kaarta area (Karta-n-ka-u); those at Ségou (Segu-n-ka-u); those around Bani-n-ko (Bani-n-ko-ka-u). Each of these expressions also has a political connotation; Ségu-n-ka-u is often used for members of the ruling party, which holds power at and operates from Ségou, and only the context or the drift of the conversation will make it possible to know what people are actually being discussed.

Among themselves the various Bambara groups often de-
scribe one another by nicknames. The "Kaarta people" ironi-
[302] cally call the "Ségou people" Tlu-kene-u, "those with a single
braid," because of a peculiar way of doing their hair, or Nya-ni-
Nyéle-u, because Nya and Nyélé are popular names for women
among the people around Ségou.

101 It is common, too, to call all the members of a clan by a
● 614 name derived from that of a clan founder or ancestor. Thus, the

B 101 614 Kaarta people are called Nya-Ngolo-la after Nya-Ngolo, an ancestor of the chiefs of the clan; and the Ségou people are called Barama-Ngolo-la after Barama-Ngolo, an ancestor of their clan.

B S 101 [567] Nicknames are also used between individuals of different tribes. The Soninké often call the Bambara Dyon-ko (slaves) because, having long been engaged in the slave trade, they sold many Bambara as slaves (1). The Bambara generally call the Soninké Marka (for Mara-ka). They still use the term Marka dialan'u (dry Marka people) to designate the Soninké who abandoned their own dialect in favor of the Bambara dialect. On the other hand, they use the term Marka kan'-fo-la-u (those who speak Marka) for those among the Soninké who have retained their own dialect.

In the Ségou region, the Bambara use the expression Bani-n-kono-u (birds of the Bani) for the Soninké,people who live along the banks of [11] that river; their more general term for the Soninké is the surname Dyeme-ka-u, from Dyeme (or Dyime) meaning "a long-legged water bird" of the marabou species. According to the interpretation given to me, the names Bani-n-kono-u and Dyeme-ka-u allude to periodic journeys made by the Soninké to the large commercial centers to the south, especially Ouorodougou [Ouagadougou?].

The Ségou country was called Dyeme-ka-u by the Bambara during the period of the Soninké rule (1). On the other hand, when

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1. See in the Kaarta chronicle which follows how Massa and others after him captured caravans of Bambara slaves belonging to Soninké owners.

B S 172 101

1. At this period, the Soninké chief, Souleiman-ba Kofta, lived at Sora, today a ruin, which the Bambara call Soro-toumou (ruins of Sora) and which is situated in the Ségou country between Massa-la and Kono-dimini.

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double meaning is no less evident in the Tarikh-es-Soudan, especially on p. 161 of the French translation. The same double usage is evident in oral traditions.

Thus it is understandable that the word Mandé has come to be considered as an equivalent of our words "empire" and "kingdom" when they are used in a geographical sense, and that, as a result, the term has varied in application because it depended on an ever-changing territorial domain subject to the domination of successive ma.

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However, it is not only from the geographical point of view that the term Mandé has remained indefinite or vaguely defined; the same uncertainty prevails on the political level. In a general way, Mandé is considered to be exclusively the empire of the Mandingue people, who are one of the subdivisions of the group called Mandé by the Europeans (1). In order to understand the meaning attached to the word "empire" in western Sudan, it is essential to place oneself on the native level and not on that of our European civilization from which the term is borrowed.

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● [614]
Briefly, the Sudanese empire is a system of clans. It is formed by bringing together of elements taken over from clans that have either disintegrated or are in the process of doing so. It acquires power and extension through the influence of the founder or, less frequently, of one of his successors, and then falls into decline at the hands of enemies or as a result of schisms which arise at the death of the ruler on whose success and "flair" its fortunes have depended.

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It is this constantly repeated process of grouping, separation and regrouping which dominates the entire [15] history of the Sudanese empires and dynasties and which makes any study of the people so very difficult. The geographical nomenclature is,

1. Mandé, as the name for a group of peoples or of native languages, is unknown to the Sudanese; in this sense it is used exclusively by the Europeans.

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and Appellations among the Malinké...] in the Bulletin du Comité des études historiques et scientifiques de l'A.O.F. 1918, nos. 3 and 4.

inhabited by independent Bambara.

This clan or, as one is tempted to say, this empire of Kelta was formed in the thirteenth century after wars between Soumangourou Kanté and Soun Dyata Kelta and with the aid of various elements (3), including a group of Mandinké which

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3. In the same way we shall see Biton forming furu-ba-dyon' from the ton-dyon', slaves captured from the chief of Dina, and from captives acquired elsewhere. In the same connection, see in the Tarikh el Fettach the curious story of the 24 slave tribes of the Songhaï clan which came from the Mandé clan.

[16] had been organized earlier by (1) a chief named Gourmandana.

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1. Within the clan, the slaves, who always constitute the power of a clan, are divided into groups named in accordance with a particular aspect of organization. The Boula seem to have enjoyed a degree of consideration comparable to that attained by the Ton-dyon' at Ségou. Judging by the meaning of the word Bula, it would seem that they were "freedmen," and this is the meaning given by native traditionists. On the subject of the Boula, see the afore-mentioned work by Humblot. Boula women have the given name of Damba and they are addressed as Sakiliba, while the men are called Soussoro. This practice of giving a common name to a whole

*173 is known as the solo (1); they sought [19] a remedy to this

[551] 1. Solo is a woman's surname.

calamity by emigrating. Some went to Dia-bolo near Djenné; others went to Nya Ngolo-la in Kaminiadougou.

Is there a relationship between the origin of the Kouloubali family just discussed and that of the Kouloubali founders of Ségou and Kaarta? I have no doubt that there is, because all the Kouloubali go back to a common ancestor prior to the thirteenth century, one of whose descendants, allying himself by marriage to the Kefta clan, founded the branch of Kouloubali composed of the so-called masa-rin' families (1).

•[614] 1. By the term masa-rin', the traditionists mean, in addition to the ruling Kefta and their followers, various families who are closely connected with them. The following are prominently mentioned: the Kouloubali, the Konaté and the Kourouma. Not all the members of these dyamu, even the Kefta, are masa-rin'; only certain branches are.

The Bambara of the Tarikh-es-Soudan

175 The Bambara, established in the area with which we are concerned before or after the Kouloubali, whose traditions we have just discussed, have no precise traditions - at least none which give any detail. The general history of all of these peoples is doubtful.

To be sure, the Tarikh-es-Soudan does allude to the Bambara, but it is difficult to tell in what sense the term is used, since it often simply means "pagans." However, in the following citations, it seems to me that the Tarikh does refer to the Bambara here studied, all the more so because in this chronicle,

631 is highly variable, ranging from complete subjection to quasi-independence.

565 [563] The imperial clan, or, if one prefers, the dominant clan, most often prevails over people of races other than that of its own members; frequently this clan itself includes, at least originally, diverse ethnic elements. [158]

If such heterogeneous associates are to live side by side without clashing, they must have a large body of common customs, and this indeed is the case. Wherever one studies it, the native milieu resembles a compartmented area whose individual sections seem, at first glance, to be isolated. At the top of the social structure there is a kind of nobility composed of the head of the clan, his family, and then the families of the clan; next come the free men, simply free or members of castes; and finally the slaves. In actual fact, a continual reciprocal movement between these elements welds all of them together.

● 614 596 The fact is that the whole social body exists only through the severity of the life of the cells that compose it: the families. Among other characteristics, these families are very jealous of their respective independence; nevertheless, they are closely allied among themselves even as they freely absorb the foreign element constituted by the slaves.

It is, therefore, essential to concentrate our attention on the family cell in order to understand the essential element of native social life. This is all the more true in that all the native collectivities are, so to speak, modeled on the organization of the family.

The Bambara language has no word exactly equivalent to our word "family" in the legal sense (1). Different names

1. This is why we prefer the term "community," but in view of the remarks made here, the use of the word "family" will not be ambiguous.

are used to designate the collectivity under the authority of the

614 596 fa (2), according to whether the group itself is meant or the place which this collectivity occupies.

2. Fa means "lord," "master," "patriarch," or "father," depending on the circumstances. Within the family, it corresponds very closely to the titular incumbent of such rank and high office who led Mistral [Ed., a French poet] to call his father: "my lord father," or "the master."

571 575 Let us note at the start that any collectivity forming an association is a ton'; thus, this is the case for all persons under the authority of one fa, and from this point of view, each of them is a ton'-den', literally, "a child of the ton'," i.e., member of the ton'. The word ton'-denya derives from the same word and is commonly used as a collective designation for all the members of the same ton'. This is the equivalent of the French word [159] société [Ed., society, association] or confrérie [Ed., brotherhood, confraternity]. The head of the ton' is the ton'-tigi, a term by which honor is paid to the head of an important family, and which, in some respects, is the equivalent of our [Ed., French] words notable [Ed., person of note, dignitary] and notabilité [Ed., notability, principal person].

614 596 If one considers the family as an association of the issue of the same parents, the term ba-denya is used, derived from ba-den'. Since the word ba means "mother" and, in the broad sense, "progenitor," mother or father, the word ba-den' is used for any of their issue, hence "children," "brothers," and "relatives," while ba-denya means "fraternity" "kinship."

Although, in the restricted sense in which we shall use it, the word ton' refers to anyone living under the authority of the ton'-tigi, whether or not he is connected by descent, the more exact term, ba-denya, refers only to those whose

614 descent is in the male line from a common male ancestor or,
596 even more narrowly, to uterine brothers and sisters. The two terms, ton' and ba-denya, have a meaning which differs from that of our word "family," which is defined in our legal terminology as "the totality of persons united by ties of kinship or affinity."

592 The Bambara family lives in huts which are connected by an enclosure or completely surrounded by the enclosure when its two extremities are supported on a kind of vestibule (blon'). The enclosure is called gwa in some dialects, whence the name gwa-tigi, a term of respect for the fa, master of the house.

Gwa, therefore, means "family" only indirectly, and it is very difficult to reconcile this word with the word "family," since the gwa houses people who are not members of the family and, on the other hand, does not house all the members of the family.

Besides, it should be noted that the word gwa in its meaning of "enclosure" is used to designate all sorts of agglomerations likewise enclosed, notably livestock folds. The variants wore and gore, which are more specifically applied to these folds, may also be used, and actually are in some regions, in forming the names of settlements. The form kore or kori, common in expressions of courtesy, has the same meaning; kori ka kende? means literally, "Is all the house well?" [160]

In some Bambara dialects, the word so is used instead of gwa. The primary meaning of the word so is also "enclosure" and, more especially, "hedge of thorns," by which all primitive establishments are protected; so-tigi has the same meaning as gwa-tigi. The word so also means "household," i.e., the contents of a house, including all within it, whether on a permanent or temporary basis and whether or not belonging to the family.

It is common practice, however, to use so and gwa in the narrow sense of "people of the family," i.e., those living under the authority of the same fa.

592 It may be said, in short, that there is no exact term
601 for designating expressly and exclusively a collectivity
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The Patriarchal Community

428 When the *fa* is dead, all his property remains jointly among his legal heirs, thus constituting a patriarchal community whose investigation has two parts: the community of persons and the community of property. [173]

I. The Community of Persons

596 614 *Members of the community*. The patriarchal community is made up solely of the legitimate descendants of the deceased *fa*: immediate descendants (sons and daughters), or his descendants exclusively in the male line (descendants of his sons and grandsons).

The descendants of the *fa* through his daughters are outside the community since they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.

428 596 614 If, at his death, the *fa* leaves no male heirs, there can be no patriarchal community; his property is divided among his daughters or, if there are none, among his brothers. If only a father or mother or some other ascendant were left, his property would go to them, or if he leaves only daughters, his property goes to them, but in either case there will no longer be a community.

848 596 614 578 Legitimacy is the necessary and sufficient condition for inclusion as a member of the community. A legitimate child is one born of a marriage, that is, of a union between two free individuals that conforms to custom. When slavery introduced concubinage into the household, however, the rule was relaxed because a free man was unwilling to have his sons slaves. In practice, therefore, maternity resulting from intercourse with a free man frees his concubine from slavery, and the children of the union become members of the community. This dangerous privilege is often contested by agnate brothers born of free mothers.

Given the diversity of conjugal bonds, ranging from marriage to free union, it is easy to imagine the discussions that

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596 arise on the subject of legitimacy. During the fa's lifetime,
614 his authority imposes whatever solution pleases him, but when
578 he is gone, the disputes involving status are all the more violent
for having been suppressed or evaded for so long.

These disputes gain strength also from the difference in
614 rank which the members have within the community. The
596 totality of prerogatives of all kinds which raise the fa above
all others constitutes a kind of superior dignity whose essence
is the omnipotence covered by the word faya, from which
came the title fa [174] (master, lord). It is in reference to
the faya that the members of the community are ranked.

Only male members can advance claims to the faya,
[562] and because they can do this, they can all call themselves fa.
On the other hand, women can never hold this authority; they
are fantan'-u, "powerless."

Among the fa-u there are distinctions based on degree of
596 kinship and on age; those most closely related to the fa will be
614 the first to receive the honors about to be described. Male
601 descendants in the first degree form a sort of senate of which
561 the eldest is a kind of president-by-birth; he is truly the fa,
the actual representative of the deceased. The one immediately following him by rank in terms of age is his syere (follower), his heir presumptive at the head of the community. The other senators, usually brothers of the fa, are uncles (bina-u) to the descendants of the second degree and their children. By reason of the authority associated with the position of bina-u in the community, this kinship term has come to be a title of respect which is bestowed on men toward whom one wishes to show particular esteem (1). Because of their age, all the senators of the community are commonly called koro-u, "the elders," and the fa is first among them.

1. It is worthy of note that in Uncle Tom's Cabin, Miss Stowe explains that among the slaves in America the word "uncle" had precisely this meaning as a title of respect and honor.

561 596 614 Among the rest of the men in the community, one distinguishes those who, being circumcised, are married and even fathers of families or who are about to become one or the other; these men are called kamalen'-u, literally, "the young masters." Finally there are the uncircumcised: first, the adolescent boys called soli-ma-u, "people of the soli," that is to say, who will soon be circumcised; the others are small boys (den-tye-u).

596 614 The fa, his election and installation. The personage in the community on whom all attention is concentrated is the fa.

Even if during the life of the fa his successor is known, it does not always happen that the replacement will follow as was intended. [175]

In the first place, the designated heir is free to refuse the faya for any reason he pleases, including solely that of personal convenience. The chronicle of Ségou relates that Biton's son, who lived at Oftala, refused the faya because of the excesses of the "people of Ségou."

More often, however, the faya eludes claimants for two main reasons.

No one can become fa if he does not belong to the community. Hence, anyone who ceases to be a member of the community, whether voluntarily or not, cannot attain the faya. One may cease to belong to the community either in fact or by law. The former condition would include prolonged absence, enslavement, settling abroad without hope of return, etc. This brings about a kind of suspension of the exercise of rights, but not their abrogation. On the other hand, when the member expressly renounces the community or when he is excluded by the decision of the fa (1) and the senate, he is

1. So it was that Ma-n-son decreed that his brothers Séri and Ba were excluded from the faya, because they merely looked on as spectators when he was struggling with Nyana-n-koro and had thus shown themselves hostile to the fa.

596 614 deprived of his rights, he and subsequently those who would represent him; the branch of the family of which he is head is henceforth dead so far as the family is concerned.

[848] In the second place, no member of the community attains the faya unless he fulfills certain conditions, of which the first are legitimacy and primogeniture.

[578] The fact that the claimant is a member of the community implies that he is legitimate. Since it does happen, however, that the question may not have actually been investigated or, by the wish of the fa, not even been raised, the legal heirs who would be injured and intriguers who seek any pretext -- and there are always some of these persons -- raise the question, and infinite complications often follow.

[595] Primogeniture is equally subject to challenge, and the opposition everywhere finds it a convenient motive for their machinations. It is, indeed, understandable that in polygamous households, with the wives sometimes residing in various places apart from the husband, simultaneous or at least close births give rise to disagreements as to which son was in fact the first-born.

Finally, even though he may actually be the eldest legitimate son, the claimant may find himself passed over because of measures taken [176] against him by the late fa. It appears that although custom favors the eldest legitimate son, it yields to the expressed wishes of the fa if the senate agrees to his rejecting the candidate. This is a grave step and one which may lead to the most violent reactions.

This raises the question of whether special talents or aptitudes should be required of the claimant, over and above those of legitimacy and primogeniture. For example, can he be required to be healthy, active, and a good administrator? It appears that the senate may choose to eliminate a person it deems unworthy. This applies particularly to a free man who has voluntarily fallen from that state by living like a caste member or a slave. By this behavior he has already excluded himself from the community, but it sometimes happens that his actual exclusion has not been noted or announced before the question of accession to the faya arises.

596 614 Most often, however, the debates are concerned either with legitimacy or with primogeniture, and it is by no means rare for a fa, before his death, to insist that the one chosen be the one designated by custom and to threaten to call down curses on anyone who should try to bypass him or to reject his authority (1).

1. Ngolo and Ma-n-son both acted in this manner, according to the chronicle of Ségou.

In associations which have adopted a community organization analogous to that of the family, the election of a head is determined solely by these factors. It may be concluded that these are the bases consecrated by custom and that any other arrangements can only result in the worst kind of disagreement.

567 578 596 614 There is confirmation for this. Where slaves are numerous and well organized, they may refuse to recognize the new fa and choose another from among the members of the community. They may even decide to give themselves to a foreign master on the pretext that the fa imposed upon them by custom does not meet with their approval. This is a disaster which jeopardizes the wealth, strength, and even the unity of a family, for it can happen, in order to deal with the crisis, that a compromise is made which more or less ignores the regularly designated fa. This results in wrangling which usually ends with a schism in the community.

The history of these countries tells of many such cases, [177] because the slaves, upon becoming powerful, made the law in the families. The chronicle of Ségou thus relates that the slaves belonging to Dina Wara gave themselves to Biton upon the death of the former. It goes without saying that endless intrigues always precede such defections. The really successful fa, such as Biton, earned their reputations as able politicians and increased their fortunes precisely by their ability to avoid such disasters in their own communities, while stirring them up elsewhere. [662]

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614 In principle, even a duly recognized fa is not installed until 40 days after the death of his predecessor. When there is no dispute, he in fact functions as fa at once; when, on the other hand, there is disagreement, the period may be extended.

The 40 days do not create an hiatus between the two administrations. When the new fa is installed, however long a time may have passed since the death of the predecessor, his faya is considered to date from the day of the latter's death. That is why the temporary official makes an inventory accounting for everything, if possible in the presence of the new fa, so that there will be no question when he turns over the inheritance.

Thus, this delay imposed by beliefs (ascribable, apparently, to magic) governed by respect for the mysterious workings of nature, has given rise to a kind of suspension of civil affairs, which allows the community to accept only a chief whom it recognizes because he fulfills the conditions required by custom.

Once he is recognized and installed, the fa continues in office no matter what befalls him; he cannot be removed for any reason whatsoever. When he is physically and morally unable to act, however, he is replaced by his eventual successor. So it was that when Sounsan was very old, he relinquished the faya to Massa who, in turn, did the same thing with respect to Béni-Fali.

It may even come about that the chosen fa is absent for an indefinite period. This happened, as we have seen, in the case of Dessé-koro, who was a prisoner at Ségou. He was not superceded, but in order to avoid the difficulties of an indefinite interregnum, Sira Bo was asked to take over the faya. He agreed only on condition that he would not be dispossessed if Dessé-koro should return. Mo-Siré, "little brother" (duani), i.e., uterine younger brother of Dessé, [178] promised in Dessé's name that Sira Bo would remain fa as long as he lived. When Dessé returned, he respected the promise made in his name by his duani. This is a typical example of the manner in which compromises can be made with custom.

596 614 The functions of the "fa." The duties of the fa are many and complex; for the sake of clarity, we shall study them under three headings: cult; relations between communities; administration of property (which will be studied in connection with community property).

596 614 782 Cult. Religion gives considerable strength to the family since nothing is decided without consulting the manes and the gods. Raffenel has given us a picture of old Niany praying to his manes on behalf of his absent son: "O my God, I command my son to your case since he has gone away on a mission important to all of us. Be with him on his journey. Preserve him from the wicked and from all misfortune so that he may once again enter by this door through which he departed and before which I am now kneeling. I implore you, O my God, to restore him to my love and to that of his mother, his brothers and his sisters (1)."

[114] 1. In spite of deviations due to Raffenel's desire to give a personal and literary touch to what he reports, the essential points of this prayer are accurate, and that is why I quote it.

[787] The chronicle of Kaarta tells us that old Sounson begged for early death as a sign that his lineage would be powerful in the future. Also, in order to make a prophecy come true, Deniba Bo submitted to the fatal blows of the Khassonké to make sure that his people would conquer the country.

After all, no one is free of fear of the gods, not even those whom one would take for brave spirits. Raffenel tells us that Bouo, his informant, feared the wrath of the god whose secrets he had revealed. The chronicle of Ségou tells that Ngolo, thinking he had aroused the wrath of his manes by encouraging evil desires in his eldest son, Ntyi, did not hesitate to sacrifice his [179] own grandson, the son of the aforesaid Ntyi, an atrocity which bears witness to a faith that was as profound as it was barbarous.

596 It is the duty of the *fa* to see to the cult. He projects
● 614 everything that happens to him personally to the supernatural
plane so as to come to conclusions that will guide his own
787 conduct. He discerns in the most ordinary dreams indications
of what will please the dead. Furthermore, the people around him point out the signs of divine will that they have observed. If, as happens in great houses, the *fa* is obliged to turn over part of his responsibility to the family gods to one of his confidantes, the latter will not fail to keep him informed of anything significant that may be revealed.

[771] Thus, daily life is unceasingly dominated by the super-
natural, and every important event is conditioned by these beliefs. This is readily seen in all the family institutions: birth, circumcision, marriage, and death.

[577] It follows that the moral behavior of the family is a
concern of the *fa*. Whenever something abnormal or painful occurs, the *fa* looks into it. Do the dead perhaps have reason to be dissatisfied? Have they been neglected or offended? He questions them, and if he finds confirmation for his suspicions, he at once seeks to appease the manes in whatever way they desire. If the trouble persists, he investigates further, and sometimes everyone in the house is questioned or, if one prefers, made to confess, even infants. Could one of them, moved by ill feeling, have uttered maledictions when invoking the dead?

614 When the *fa* himself is ill, this general confession is
virtually obligatory. This is because the absolute authority of
596 a *fa* can hardly fail to arouse hatred, and hatred, a bad counselor,
783 makes people resort to magic to rob the more powerful of life.
[578] Fear that the elder's "clairvoyance" will discover the wicked-
ness in the depths of one's soul and punish it usually induces the guilty person to obtain a pardon for his wrongdoing by confessing it, and then everything returns to normal.

596 Upon the death of the *fa*, it is the first duty of his suc-
614 cessor to try to discover, by any means, the causes of death
and to avenge it if need be.

[763] Everything which the old *fa* was wont to honor, which
forms the spiritual treasure [180] of the family, must also be

596 honored by the new fa, and there is nothing to prevent him
614 from adding to the treasure.

769 The basic cult of the family is the cult of the ancestors. Although the dead are frequently buried outside the family residence, their souls are thought to live in the blon' of the dwelling. [343 The blon' is a hut with two openings on opposite sides, one to the street and the other to the interior, usually the court-
592] yard. It is impossible to enter or leave a house without going through the blon', where there is always a guard, at least in important houses.
778 The ancestors are usually represented in the blon' by a group of crude, conical clay figures of a man and
769 woman, the latter identifiable by the exaggerated breasts. Sometimes the symbol of the dead is a small board about a meter long, twenty centimeters wide, and a little more than a centimeter thick; at one of its extremities a slight protuberance vaguely suggests a head, a kind of ellipsoidal cylinder with eyes, nose, mouth, and chin faintly carved on one side. On the side with the face, the board has a checkerboard pattern, often of alternating black and red squares, probably to indicate the material of a loincloth. The lower extremity of the figure has a semicircular portion cut away to give the effect of legs spread apart when the effigy is set up.

769 Whatever form it may have, the representation of the
782 dead is called kara (1) and serves in some manner as an altar
778 on which libations are poured and to which are attached the remains of the sacrifices made to the dead (su-u). Nevertheless, it is also a very widespread practice to make libations and sacrifices before the door of the blon' and, more rarely, before the door of an inner hut. [775] In this case the liquid is poured and the remains smeared on the vertical edge of the opening. This practice is based on the belief that the souls of the dead ancestors like to return to the place where the fa liked to sit during his lifetime. Undoubtedly, the ancestors are regarded as guardians of the threshold; they are [181] honored as such because it is believed that they prefer to be honored in this way.

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1. In Soninké, kara means "to die" and "death."

769 794 It has the same base: request, offering, communion. In addition, there is a liturgy appropriate to each nyana, in particular, the mysterious sayings that attract the god and make him [183], the actual servitor of the person uttering these sayings, rather than a benevolent protector. This shows the antithesis as to final ends between religion and magic, as was set forth in Chapter 2 of the present work.

596 614 778 The fa also has the responsibility of maintaining the efficacy of magic weapons; he must fulfill all the obligations required by each of them. Among them there are true nyana, sometimes independent, sometimes a part of the great nyana. Mostly they are amulets or talismans whose virtue depends on certain rites or simply on the observance of certain interdicts.

596 614 778 Finally, the fa is the guardian of custom and family relics, which likewise have a religious basis since custom, after all, is the continuing will of the generations, the imperious mandate of the ancestors, the table of law of the manes. Any transgression of custom is certain to bring the worst disasters. The relics are ordinary or ceremonial objects left by the successive fa. Some of them are so strongly associated with the patriarchal office that on special occasions or in certain circumstances the fa is forced by custom to wear these objects impregnated with the virtue of the ancestors. The cap and weapons of Biton at Ségou were of this nature, and such is the case among the Massa-si.

596 614 Relations between members of the community. Theoretically, the powers of the fa over the members of the community are absolute. He can hire them out, offer them as security, sell them, and even put them to death (1). He also has the right to use whatever belongs to them, (2) both persons

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1. Note how Ma-n-son got rid of some of his brothers.

2. Ngolo sacrificed his son's son.

596 and property. On the other hand, he also has duties toward
614 them, for it is the essence of the institution to support its
members.

561 All the acts of the *fa*, even the arbitrary ones, are,
according to law, under the control of the senate. It should
578 not be forgotten that the members of the community are di-
596 vided into two hostile groups: that of the "elders," which in-
614 cludes the *fa*, and that of the "young masters." The *fa* could
hardly [184] keep the common property all to himself, so he shares it more or less as he pleases, and naturally, the elders are among the most generously treated. The young men seldom get any such favors, hence their resentment against the elders, due largely to envy of their favored position.

596 It is customary for a *fa* when he becomes the head of a
614 patriarchy to leave the management of his own community to
his eldest son (1). This separation of interests is essential in order to prevent the *fa* from despoiling the patriarchy to benefit his own community. The history of these countries shows how often this rule is broken by ambitious men who hope to profit by the general confusion to build up a considerable fortune. Among both the elders and the young men they find willing accomplices, and as their power increases, they extend their extortions. There are many signs, however, of the fragility of their despotism, which they themselves recognize. They usually, therefore, take pains to settle the question of succession in advance hoping to avoid the collapse of their achievements. Wasted effort! Custom, which they have ignored, regains its rights when they die and often does so during their lifetime. This is a logical explanation of the fact that

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492] 1. The eldest son, or better, the first-born son, thus occupies a privileged position, and in Kaarta he is usually provided with a white horse to make him conspicuous. See p. 122 about the death of 98 first-born sons mounted on white horses.

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614 most of the great empires have survived their founders for only a short time.

More often than not, a "young master" has a position in the community which is considerably less pleasant than that of a domestic slave who lives alongside him and ostensibly under his command. A domestic slave can escape or stir up all sorts of difficulties that result in the diminution of the patrimony. There is no such thing to be feared from a member of the community; should he be punished, banished, or leave, the common property does not suffer. If he goes away and is successful, he will not fail to share his good fortune with the community. Indeed, anyone who loses interest in the welfare of his community runs the risk of being cut off from it. He must actually live with the community; if not, he is treated as a dead member. [185] He must be present for anything that transpires. The chronicle of Ségou gives an example. Quarrels broke out among Ngolo's sons when he died. Nyana-n-koro, who had been favored by his father, thought that this affection designated him as the successor to the deceased. Ngolo, however, had expressly chosen Ma-n-son in conformity with custom. Nevertheless, confident of winning, Nyana-n-koro tried to oust Ma-n-son by force, but in vain. In the course of these fratricidal struggles, certain members of the community remained neutral, hoping in this way to retain the good will of the victor. They gained nothing, however, because Ma-n-son was the winner and turned against them. He sentenced his brothers Séri and Ba to a sort of exile from the community, giving each of them a token share of the estate and ordering them not to increase it.

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614 Since property is held in common, the fa is obliged to give some benefits to all the members of the community. This is why, when necessary, he provides the marriage payment that enables a young man to found a family; he ransoms persons who have been enslaved; he provides for the sick when their expenses are high; he pays civil, judicial, or other debts when the debtor is forced to pay and the community is responsible. These payments, however, which are made with the approval of the senate, are regarded as loans to the recipient with his consent, he is henceforth in debt to the community. He will not only have to repay

421 596 614 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

466 596 614 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself, [186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them never return, either because they have managed to create an independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More often, however, the young man, having founded an independent family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and watches developments there in case he may one day be able to profit from them.

578 561 885 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue which is forever at war with the fa and the senate. Their opposition weakens, however, as they approach the age at which they too will participate in the faya to which they aspire. Gradually, as one changes from kamalen' to bina, he acquires the same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity of the new kamalen'-u.

562 583 In concluding this study of the members of the community, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys, they belong completely to the community, which, as a result, has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So, since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

421 Finally, the status of a community is, as it were, syn-
424 thesized and symbolized by the "honorable name" (dyamu), by
596 which this collectivity titles itself and which it considers one of
614 its most precious possessions.

Agrarian usufruct. Ownership of land does not exist.
423 Each family has a right of use, uncertain in principle but permanent in fact, over the lands assigned to it in the domain of the genie-protector (nyana dugu-da-siri).

It may happen that a single family is the sole beneficiary of a given domain because it is the only one linked to the genie protecting the place.

More generally, various families are under the protection of the same local genie, whose domain in that case includes the parts exploited in common as well as the fields expressly assigned to individual families under its protection. The agrarian usufruct which is included as part of the community property exists with respect to these individual fields.

This usufruct differs from that recognized by our law. It is the dugu-tigi and his council who allot the common lands, and the process always involves wrangling and [187] deals. In principle, the plot assigned remains indefinitely with the family benefited if it is continuously farmed and an annual fee is paid. Fallowing the land for several years is permitted. The family exploiting the land may use it in any way, and its right is as complete as possible, short only of alienating it. The family may lease, cede, or pawn its usufruct. If a transaction involves a foreigner, however, it may not be concluded without the consent of the dugu-tigi, who consults his council. In general, any action which might conceivably injure the welfare of the community as a whole must be submitted to the dugu-tigi for approval before being undertaken.

The usufruct comes to an end under the following circumstances: when a family permanently leaves the community governing the fields; when the dugu-tigi and his council decide to dispose of the land for reasons which they are not required to give; when a family gives the land up voluntarily or has been deprived of it because it has been used in a manner contrary to the interests of the agrarian community.

567 unlikely -- he may even own slaves himself and use them as substitutes.

Thus the relations between master and slave gradually become very different from what our European minds imagine. A master is bound to his wolo-so [193] by a thousand ties: he admits them to the cult; he marries their daughters; he circumcises their sons along with his own; and he allies himself with some of them by fraternization or an oath.

Even if he does not have such close contact, the wolo-so who is freed from labor, who perhaps lives at some distance or, if nearby, in virtual independence, is henceforth a dyongoro, that is, "freed." The link is not severed, and the freed man is a kind of relative. He is interested in everything that happens in his master's community and is present upon all important occasions, never coming with empty hands. Reciprocally, he is never treated like a stranger by the master. The master contributes to every event concerning him: he helps him get his sons married and established; on the occasion of the soli, he assembles his children along with his own, which gives them a degree of common solidarity.

The admission of the wolo-so to his master's community is shown publicly by the fact that the wolo-so bears the dyamu of his master.

It would be an exaggeration to claim that the house slave's situation is always so fortunate; it depends on many different factors (1).

1. A slave is seldom permitted to buy his freedom; the slave himself does not seek this redemption which would free only him and leave his family and most of his property in the hands of the master.

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The dyamu. This is the name given to himself by the native, bestowed upon him by others, or inherited from his ancestors, but in any case one that has become such an honor that merely to pronounce it is enough to bring forth a show of homage toward one who bears it, for example, Kouloubali, Dyara, Dembélé, etc.

551 596 614 This is because the *dyamu* in itself sums up the history of the community that bears it; it implies everything involving the ancestors, as well as the achievements of present members, their ignominies, and even their fraternal, conjugal, political, and supernatural alliances.

One might imagine that one or another of the characteristic aspects covered by the *dyamu* would serve to identify the bearers of the same name, but the Europeans who study the native milieu have long been accustomed to identifying those who bear the same *dyamu* by means of [194] their respective *tne* (interdicts), and the natives do the same (1).

For the Black, any of his fellows who bears the same *dyamu* as his and shares with him one or more *tne* is regarded as a relative, even though he may belong to a different people.

Among individuals of different peoples, certain *dyamu*, although dissimilar, are regarded as equivalent and are interchanged, because those who bear them have common *tne* (interdicts).

As a result of one of the alliances that will be described later under "Relations between Communities," the *tne* of one party henceforth become the *tne* of the other, and vice versa, and this leads to the equivalence of *dyamu*. Marriage sometimes has the same effect when the union is an important one, greatly, desired, or even more, is the sort of marriage that forms indissoluble bonds and an unshakable solidarity between families.

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1. When this was first being done, there was an error of interpretation and hasty generalization which falsified the results. The *tne* which accompanies the *dyamu* was made analogous with totem, and it was stated that the *dyamu* and the name of the *tne* object were one and the same. Careful study has established that there is nothing to the alleged correspondence.

429 A person who is away for a long or indefinite period [217] delegates the direction of the family community for as long as necessary to a friend or relative. This substitute, however, is expected to act only in accordance with the customary counsel and the family of the absent person.

[586] In case of divorce, the children always remain with the father. A divorced woman again comes under the guardianship of her own community.

768 429 When the mother dies, the father retains the administration of her property which belongs jointly to her children. If, however, one of her sons is married or of marriageable age and is competent, all such property is supposed to be handed over to him to administer in his capacity as fa of the uterine community.

When a father dies, his minor children are placed under the guardianship of the patriarch under whose authority the deceased was living. If he was independent, guardianship would be set up in accordance with his wishes which he would not have failed to make known.

In any event, if one of his sons is married or of marriageable age and sufficiently competent, he becomes fa of the familial community which gradually, as the younger sons grow up and establish families of their own, becomes a patriarchy such as we have described above.

[641] According to native law, deprivation of civil rights does not exist. In fact, however, persons who by reason of ill-health or senility are unable to comply with custom in carrying out their functions are supplanted by such persons as are designated by custom to replace them at the time of death.

596 •614 Faya. The faya is the authority and power of the fa over all his dependents. It has the same character, differing only in extent, whether it concerns a familial or a patriarchal community.

Familial faya. Within the family, the fa theoretically has complete authority over everything that constitutes this community. It makes little difference whether he acts on his own initiative or whether he allows himself to be swayed by the

596 opinion of those around him, his intimates and friends. He
614 exercises the right of agrarian usufruct over the lands under cultivation, and he may dispose of movable property without restriction. As regards persons, his own issue [218] are at his mercy, and he profits from their labor. He can hire them out, put them up for security, sell them, and even put them to death. He has the right of conjugal usufruct over his wives, and his slaves are merely chattels.

Patriarchal faya. This differs in extent from the foregoing. Anything connected in whatever way to the patriarchal community itself or to the family communities under its authority comes under the patriarchal faya.

Though the maintenance of this power presents no problems in theory, practice is quite another matter.

The fact is that the fa of a familial community is completely subject to a patriarch only if, being connected through the male line, he has some property in the patriarchy or intends to claim rights in it.

If this is not the case, the familial fa acts as though he did not belong to the patriarchy, and the latter can only treat him accordingly. This is what happens when a "son" goes off, establishes himself far away, and prospers there by his own efforts and at his own risk. Breaking all agnatic ties, he in fact frees himself from any authority that his patriarchy might seek to impose upon him.

This has produced innumerable dissident branches which have the same dyamu but which can only hypothetically trace their descent through the males back to a common male ancestor.

428 Inheritance. It is necessary, first, to know whether the deceased was a fa or a fantan', that is, whether he exercised the authority of a fa or was under the authority of a fa.

Let us say the deceased was a fa.

In principle, if he was fa of a family, everything belonging to him remains undivided under the new faya of his eldest son.

If he was fa of a patriarchy, a new patriarch succeeds him.

It is unnecessary to belabor these points or the consequences of the variations in view of the details given above.

428 Now let us say the deceased was a *fantan'*, that is, he did not exercise a *faya*. [219]

A son who dies before becoming *fa* rarely leaves any property. If he should by chance do so, such wealth theoretically belongs to the community of which he was a member. The disposition of property from special sources must be settled according to the nature of the source. Thus, property which the deceased may have inherited from his mother would go to his uterine heirs.

What has just been said of a son applies all the more to a daughter, since, after all, she is nothing more than a kind of property belonging to the community.

428 567 The most hapless *fantan'* is the slave. In principle, he could hardly be expected to leave an inheritance since even his own person does not belong to him. In fact, however, the situation is quite different. A slave generally does have some property and may even be very rich. His *fa* allows him the use of his property for his lifetime, and it is current practice for him to leave it likewise to his children. As a result, everything transpires just as though the deceased were a free man, and what we have said about other communities applies to this type of community which, strictly speaking, has only a kind of *de facto* existence. The action of custom, in freeing the slave, gives him access to the position of a free man without depriving him of what his *fa* has allowed him to enjoy. In the end, this enjoyment of use is gradually transformed and strengthened by inheritance until it is the equivalent of similar rights to property which are accorded to men born free.

596 614 *Order of succession. Patriarchal community*. The *fa* is the eldest of the surviving males who are direct descendants in the male line of the *fa* who founded the community.

428 596 *Familial community*. 1. The eldest surviving son of the deceased; upon his death, succession follows the same pattern as for the patriarchal community.

614 If there are only daughters, the property is divided among them.

428 2. If there are no children, the collateral males and,
596 lacking the~~m, the wives~~.
614 3. If there are no collateral relatives, the ascendants.

4. If there are no ascendants, the surviving spouse.

5. If there is no surviving spouse, escheat occurs: [220] the inheritance reverts to the head of the settlement, the dugutigi, when this settlement is independent; otherwise to the head of the clan, the fama.

596 614 The community and the individual. The result of the foregoing is that the individual, whoever he may be and whatever his situation, has no value except as a member of a community (1); it is the community that exists and has an identity, while the individual exists and is identified only through the community and for the community.

An individual who exists apart from any faya is, therefore, an anomaly, and this situation comes to an end as soon as the individual himself becomes fa.

596 614 There are cases, however, when an individual is put out of his community because of his own action or because of circumstances, and extraordinary changes of status result.

626 Anyone driven from his community for bad conduct loses his rights to the faya in that community.

564 558 If his disqualification results from the practice of a trade regarded as degrading, he falls into what the Bambara call nyama-ka-la and Europeans call "people of caste." Henceforth he is not only excluded from his community, but he lives apart from all persons not declassed; he is a free man of inferior standing. He usually lives under the protection of a community of persons not declassed, earning his living from it and deriving from it such consideration as may be sometimes given him.

564 463 Among the Bambara, the nyama-ka-la include: the numu, blacksmiths, whose wives are usually potters; the loro, who work with copper; the garanke, who work leather; and the kule, who work with wood and are sometimes saddlers.

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[567] 1. A slave has no rights because, as a person, he belongs to no community.

564 engage only in agriculture. Furthermore, casual or temporary practice, in one's own home, for instance, of one of the reputedly menial trades is not considered degrading.

567 596 614 Theoretically, enslavement does not exclude an individual from his own community nor in any way demean him in relation to it (1); if he returns, he recovers his rights just as though he had never been away.

On the other hand, at the place where he is a slave, an individual belongs to no community (as a person), and that is why he has no rights and is treated as a chattel.

567 We have shown earlier how, aided by time and circumstances, a slave may manage to escape some of the limitations of his status, but strictly speaking, [222] he can never escape this status. If in fact, as the chronicle says of Ngolo Dyara, a slave succeeds in attaining a position whose importance would seem to obliterate the stigma of servitude, the blemish of slavery nevertheless remains indelible.

4. Relations between Communities

596 614 621 The true social unit is the community. Even when no special organization links them, communities are often linked by numerous bonds. This involves no distinction by race, incidentally, since more often than not ethnically diverse peoples live together in the same region.

These bonds between communities may be classified under two heads: kinship and alliance.

Kinship

[602] The influence of kinship is very extensive. Thus, a single patriarchal community includes the familial communities

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1. For example, Déssé-Koro, taken in captivity to Ségou, returned to Kaarta where he exercised the faya of the Massa-si.

596 of all the male members of the community, and agnate and
614 uterine communities coexist in each familial community.
621 Furthermore, every familial community automatically becomes
602 a patriarchal community upon the death of its head, and it is
then composed of its own familial communities.

What actually happens, then, is that under the original patriarchal community are grouped an ever increasing number of other patriarchies or families, each of which includes its agnate or uterine communities. When the original patriarchy is an old one, it is obvious that a large number of persons will be living under its aegis, all of whom have *dyamu* and *tne* in common.

It may happen, however, that through time and a variety of circumstances branches become separated from the trunk, and to mark their new status, to perpetuate the memorable achievement of their founder, some of these groups have adopted a special *dyamu* and particular *tne*. At first the new *dyamu* is simply added to the original one, but later on the new one comes to be the only one used. However that may be, the principal characteristics [223] of the original community still persist, with a few new traits merely superimposed.

Since every secondary community in turn generates like communities, it goes without saying that the communities most distant from the original one have only a few traits in common with it, but their kinship never becomes extinct.

What are the effects of this kinship? On the one hand, it requires all concerned to observe their common duties to the community: in particular to respect ancestral traditions relative to the cult; to give mutual aid; to recognize the authority of the current *fa* who, for his part, is obliged to protect all his relatives, no matter how remote the connection.

As far as outsiders are concerned, kinship requires everyone to respect all pacts between communities. One can often observe fidelity to these alliances which may be hundreds of years old. If by chance people who have previously never seen each other learn of their respective *dyamu* and the attendant obligations, they will at once assume the reciprocal obligations contracted by their ancestors.

Alliance

The types of alliance between communities appear to
596 differ widely, but in actual fact all alliances are based on a
614 religious or magic rite and, more generally, on an oath.

621 Four forms of alliance particularly deserve attention:
784 the *tne* or interdict, the oath, marriage, and the common cult.

I. *The tne*. The native regards the invisible world as a duplicate of the visible world, complete with communities. He carries the analogy even to those things which we call inanimate objects. That is why, when a native binds himself to an interdict, he is not promising to respect such and such a person or thing but, rather, the community of which he believes the person or thing to be a representative. Besides, just as the interdict applies to the whole community to which the object of the interdict belongs, it also binds all the members of the community whose *fa* instituted it. [224]

The basis of the alliance is the oath of the *fa*, any infraction of which automatically brings the most dreadful calamities upon the guilty party. It is like a sacrament, which the descendants of the *fa* must respect *in infinitum*.

The chronicle of Ségou shows us how such an oath happens to be made. Upon reaching the Niger, and having no means of crossing it, Ntchi in his peril called upon his ancestors for help. His prayer was answered: a *poyon'* appeared and ferried him and his people to the opposite shore. In gratitude for this service, Ntchi swore that the fish would henceforth be sacred to him and to his descendants. By this act, all *poyon'* became *tne* for Ntchi and his descendants, although this does not mean that there was a cult of the fish. It was a kind of alliance or covenant, analogous to one between human communities and with similar effects; it entailed some sort of reciprocal brotherly mutual aid. In practice, a Kouloubali descended from Ntchi must never, under any circumstances whatsoever, voluntarily harm a *poyon'*, his *tne*, on pain of the most disastrous consequences. If he has done so inadvertently, he can atone with sacrifices or appropriate penance, which his own intuition or a diviner suggests. He must always, in so far as the need arises,

596 614 621 784 assist his tne, while showing it the greatest respect. The mystical basis of this alliance sometimes causes the native to behave in a particular way toward his tne: he will not look straight at it; he will not touch it, unless absolutely forced to do so, and then he will apologize and ask forgiveness.

Anything may be the object of a tne, but there is probably not a single Bambara family which does not have some animal as tne. Expressions which the natives in general and the Bambara in particular use to make foreigners understand their relations with this animal tne have made many Europeans think that the native regards the animal as a relative in the literal sense of the word. This is not the case, as we have just seen, and consequently Bambara totem is a purely European invention (1). [225]

1. It should be understood that the tne has many sources besides one mentioned here, which is the only one pertinent to this chapter. Thus, Bala refused to pronounce any word having the syllable da (p.); Sounsan abstained from the kulé (p. , footnote 1).

596 614 621 608 II. The oath. In native society, a man who is ambitious or merely anxious to establish a powerful community can do so only with the support of faithful allies. Massa and Biton not only succeeded in dominating their young companions, but they also bound them closely through the oath and the cult.

Undoubtedly all the founders of powerful communities have not proceeded in exactly the same way, but all of them have employed analogous methods. An isolated individual can accomplish nothing in this social milieu where everything rests on these strongly organized collectivities, the communities. Any Bambara eager for well-being and peace will seek out and attach himself to a "powerful protector" (dyigi seme) capable of providing him with this security, even if it means the loss of his own

596 freedom. That is why any important *fa* is invariably surrounded
614 by a small group of intimates who are bound to his fate, often
621 by a reciprocal agreement based on an oath.

608 One of these sacramental alliances is particularly solemn; its purpose is to create a kind of kinship analogous to that which links blood brothers. There is always a profound difference between natural and contractual brotherhood, since the former exists and produces its effects independently of the will of those involved, whereas the latter exists and is valid only within the limits agreed upon by the contracting parties (1).

For a pact of brotherhood (*dyonge*) (2), the contracting parties, whether two or several, proceed as they see fit, either in public or privately in the presence of only close relatives and intimates. Each party to the agreement pricks his forearm and extracts a few drops of blood. The blood thus obtained is mixed with a small quantity of goat's milk in a receptacle. Calling upon the ancestors or some god chosen for the occasion to bear witness, each party in turn promises with a solemn oath to consider the others as his brothers. At the same time, he repeats the [22[illegible]] conditions of the pact and finally sips some of the liquid.

This is the closest alliance that two Bombara can contract (1). Among other things, it forbids one to marry women

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1. It should be noted that fraternization in its symbolic form has a necessary consequence which is not obligatory for other types of alliance by oath: it obligates the descendants of the contracting parties just as much as those undertaking the contract.

2. This term unquestionably derives from the verb *siri*, "to link, to unite."

1. Blood-brotherhood was contracted

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614 between Deni-ba Bo for the Massa-si
621 of Kaarta and Suleyman Ba for the
608 people of Fouta.

belonging to the other's community, at least virgins or women reputed to be such. This is because a first sexual contact is likely to result in some flow of blood, and brotherhood imposes a terrible punishment on anyone who sheds the blood of a blood-brother or one of his people. As is apparent, the obligation undertaken by the contracting parties holds for all their descendants, regardless of sex and *in infinitum*. Henceforth there is a very close solidarity between the two communities, who are so bound to mutual aid that, in practice, anything (including lies, slander, and perjury) is permissible to overcome a common enemy or, in any event, to help the ally in trouble.

596 In place of the brotherhood oath, many other forms of
oath can be used. Thus, the chronicles tell of Sounsan and Fa
614 Siné forming an alliance with an oath which was undoubtedly
621 binding, because the anvil on which it was sworn was afterwards
695 cast into a well. Nko, Sounsan's god, received the oath under
which the "young men" who were Massa's companions allied
themselves to the latter's fate. At Ségou, the *tondyon'* likewise
swore loyalty on the idols.

These sacramental agreements are endlessly varied, but they bind the parties only under the stipulated conditions, especially as regards the respective communities of the *fa* who take the oath.

596 III. *Marriage*. There is no better way for a Bambara to
614 show his attachment to someone whose alliance or friendship he
621 desires than by giving him as a wife one of the girls of his own
community and providing her with a generous dowry. This is one
583 of the most solemn forms of alliance between communities (2).

2. People united by marriage are called *furu-nyuan'* (spouses) and *biran'* (allies).

596 This conjugal union differs clearly from [227] ordinary
●614 forms of marriage. In view of the fact that the husband gets a
wife without paying a bride price for her, the wife is not given
621 in usufruct, and therefore she must be treated with the greatest
583 consideration or she may be taken back. The situation can only
be normalized if the husband is rich enough to present to the
donor a gift equal to or preferably, if possible, greater than the
dowry brought by the wife, or he may give a similar gift to the
wife (1).

1. Such property is the wife's paraphernalia.

In these situations also, the procedure varies a great deal. The donor may offer a girl from another community and provide her with a dowry. This is what Biton did in order to bind Ngolo to him: Biton gave him a girl designated by the marabouts as one of the elect, and he also provided the girl with a rich dowry.

The significance of such alliances can be estimated only when one has some knowledge of the intentions of the parties involved, especially those of the donor. We shall see one important type in the chapter on Islam, the marriage of Allah.

IV. The common cult (2). The territorial community.

311 2. Communities may be united under the
621 protection of the same god. Here we shall
776 study only their union under the protection
794 of the "genie, master of the earth" (*nyana
dugu-da-siri*). Other common cults will be
studied in the following chapter, "Brotherhoods."

In the mind of the Bambara, the earth, together with everything in it, is the property of the spirits. As a result, no one may make use of it or presume to settle on or cultivate an unused field without first going through certain ceremonies.

For this purpose, either on his own responsibility or, more often, with the aid of "the one who knows" (*don-na-ba*), a

631 Bambara, with whom we are here concerned. Each writer, however, uses these terms to refer to an ill-defined type of authority, sometimes without even attempting a critical comparison with similar institutions in our own countries.

This uncertainty is accompanied by other such doubtful similarities, which result in confused conceptions. Is it not common to speak of feudalism, of a feudal system, to describe the kind of hierarchy among various native chiefs? In the Sudan, however, there is no connection between man and the land com- 423 parable to that which was the basis of the feudal system. Indeed, no such meaning is possible, since the Sudanese does not recognize any right of ownership of land. Therefore, political ties between native chiefs are never based on land; how then can one speak of a feudal system?

614 621 631 As a matter of fact, the social unit is the community based on the family; it develops into a patriarchy and expands into a tribe and a people. Its members are united by blood ties, which are confirmed by the ancestor cult. [288]

Since they are proud and jealous of their freedom, communities seek to remain independent. Their relationships, however, determined especially the occupation and exploitation of a common territory, force them to give up this independence, and joining together in the same cult, the sign of their spiritual solidarity, they form a dugu (1).

(1). This word is not without ambiguity. On the one hand, it means "that which is below," hence, "the soil"; on the other hand, it means "place," "residence," or "at the home of." It is understood to mean "territory" or "country" occupied by a human collectivity, and by an easily understandable deviation, it likewise designates the organization which governs this collectivity in relation to this territory.

●614 621 631 The dugu have definite territorial domains, and they, too, prefer to live without the subordination of any one of them to the others. There are relationships between some of them, such as some being offshoots of others and, due to proximity, many matrimonial unions have bound them together.

Unavoidable necessity also often forces the dugu to form leagues, coalitions, or more often associations called kafu' (literally, "union"). Depending on the circumstances, a chief is elected by the association or he usurps the authority over it. This sometimes results in the creation of a political or administrative organization. The Ségala area, also called Sénébala, is an example. "It has a local history of several centuries, hereditary chiefs of several dynasties, social and matrimonial bonds and customary institutions which have persisted for generations; it is a nation and a fatherland" (2).

2. In Marty, Etudes sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan [Studies on Islam and the Tribes of the Sudan], Vol. 4, p. 105.

614 631 [661] It also may happen that someone who becomes a chief will be so enamored with the exercise and the profits of power that with the support of his followers -- relatives or others -- he will manage to retain permanent control. This association is what we here call a clan; the Bambara designate it by the word ton', applicable to any association.

As an organism of authority, this clan may be defined as an oligarchic government founded for the sole purpose of subjugating, by any means, the individuals it can reach for the sake of exploiting them. Those who are enfeoffed to this government are called "the people of So-and-So" or "the people of such and such place" by the Bambara, as by other natives, [289] for example: the Massa-si-u (1),

1. From another point of view, Massa-si-u means "descendants of Massa," and hence, "the tribe of Massa."

614 631 "the people (of the clan) of Massa"; the *Segu-n-ka-u* (2),

2. From another point of view, *Segu-n-ka-u* means "the people of the country of Ségou."

"the people (of the clan) of Ségou."

104 128 Since we are always obsessed by our own system of organization, these terms appear in our writings as village (*dugu*), canton or province (*kafu*), and empire (*ton'*, which is a clan).

Because of the convenience of expressions that are familiar to us, we shall use this terminology in this study, and it seems essential to define briefly the value of these terms in native society in order to avoid ambiguity which, to say the least, gives rise to distorted delusions.

173 563 631 In Kaarta and the Ségou country before the time of the two great clans whose history we have given and whose development and operation we are about to describe, there were *dugu* which usually had no connections or at most were joined in some ephemeral *kafu*. These *kafu* were composed of a majority of Bambara mixed with Soninké and people of other races. The Soninké *dugu* were noted for their prosperity, sometimes even wealth, and this gave them a degree of pre-eminence over the Bambara *dugu*. This prosperity rested on the labor of a slave population that the Soninké had managed to acquire for the most part by commercial dealings.

This *de facto* hegemony usually had no corresponding political or administrative organization; its only outward sign was the scorn with which the Soninké regarded the less fortunate Bambara and, conversely, the sullen hostility of the Bambara toward the rich Marka (as they called the Soninké). As a consequence, local quarrels broke out from time to time which sometimes developed into bloody conflicts. The early history of the Massa-si clan is a good example of this state of affairs, to judge by the record in the chronicle cited above.

173 631 The Ségou-Kaarta regions, under the authority of Mandé and Songhaï clans, were in this state, in semiobscurity because they were outside the zone of direct administration by these clans.

*173 Henceforth, the fama in the furu-ba was no more than primus inter pares, just like the ton'-tigi in the old fla-n-ton', taking into consideration the evolution by which the furu-ba developed from the fla-n-ton'.

Ngolo Dyara succeeded only in making the office of fama, thus understood, hereditary for his descendants, just as had been done with many positions of dyon'-kuntigi before his time.

This progressive consolidation of an ever increasing number of high offices and the de facto independence regained by most of the members of the clan resulted in the formation of a society whose members took pride in their ton'-dyon' origins, considered themselves free, and even regarded themselves as free men of rank. This is perhaps the essential role of slavery in these areas, as a channel of social renovation and ethnic fusion.

It is appropriate to close this survey by an analysis of the various components of the clan and an explanation of their functions.

Furu-ba dyon' and Ton'-dyon'

614 567 In the course of time, the organization and function of the furu-ba created by Mamari underwent various modifications.

The essential element of the clan is the ton'-dyon', because after all everything depends on it. We have learned the origin of the ton'-dyon' above. The number of slaves of the furu-ba was increased by the many captives taken in the course of raids, pillaging, and warfare, but the ton'-dyon' is an aristocracy within the furu-ba-dyon' by virtue of seniority and also because some of the characteristics [300] of free men have somehow survived in those of the ton'-dyon' who were originally ton'-den'.

Undoubtedly one of the causes of the unrest that always stirs up the furu-ba is this deep yearning everyone has for freedom. They do not know how to attain it, however, first because they are dominated by an ancient atavism for servitude that burdens all the Sudanese, and also because each man who desires freedom for himself intends to use it to enslave his brothers. These are the confused feelings that give such an equivocal aspect to all the events related in the chronicle.

614 567 The ton'-dyon' of the furu-ba is a kind of person of caste: he cannot cease to be ton'-dyon', and his children will live and die as ton'-dyon'. He is subject to the despotic authority of the fama. For a free man, it is certainly a fall to become a ton'-dyon', but for a slave, on the contrary, it is an improvement in status. Among the ton'-dyon' there are all sorts of people; this was the case in the beginning and has continued to be so as time passed. [727] Although slaves obtained from armed forays were an important element in the totality of the ton'-dyon', there were undoubtedly many men, free but poor, who were glad to join the ton'-dyon' so as to protect themselves from the depredations of these hardly commendable persons and also to gain the right of using the same procedures themselves.

Among the ton'-dyon', therefore, there are people of all races and all conditions; indeed, this is so true that all the dyamu are mingled under this common label.

Within the furu-ba, the ton'-dyon' formed a category apart and always retained the prerogatives which in native society accompany seniority. The ton'-dyon' were the "elders." Prisoners reduced to slavery formed the furu-ba-dyon', properly speaking, and they were grouped in series, each taking its origin from the fama who organized it. There they followed the usual path. Barring favorable circumstances which might allow them to escape the wretchedness of the early days of captivity, they started out as members of the gang of slaves-of-all-work, often considered as a kind of medium of exchange and for that reason called san'-dyon'-u (slaves of exchange). Once they were adopted by a community, a woman acquired the status [301] of wolo-so when she bore a child, while a man might achieve comparable status by gaining the confidence of his masters.

The wolo-so became a dyongoron when he was in a position to send his children to work in his place and to pay an annual fee.

Once he reached the status of wolo-so, the slave became, in actual fact, a person of caste. In principle, he could not be sold, he had the right of ownership, and he could leave property to his children. Indeed, he was often better off than a man who was free but poor.

614 567 The status of this caste-slave carried over to his decendants ad infinitum, even in the case of those persons who rose to the highest positions. Thus, the Dyara of the family of Ngolo Dyara kept the stigma attached to the servile status of their ancestor (1). In practice, the wishes of an all-powerful master could change the status of those under his authority since, as we have seen, the fa made the law. However, this arbitrary will did not leave a man without recourse, as we saw in the chronicle in the case of the aforesaid Ngolo in his relations with Mamari. If one could appeal to the good offices of someone close to the fa, it was often possible to make him change his mind.

614 631 The furu-ba dyon' (ton'-dyon' or furu-ba dyon', properly speaking) were under the orders of "chiefs of slaves" (dyon'-kuntigi-u). There are supposed to have been 120 of these chiefdoms under Ma-n-son, according to the words attributed to Ton-massa in the chronicle. According to the same source, the number rose to 140, and then Ma-n-son reduced the number to 60 hereditary posts with authority over a varying number of furu-ba dyon' who were scattered about in the various regions subject to the clan, the whole subservient to the decision of the fama. The chronicle shows us how the fama established or broke up these chiefdoms for the greatest variety of reasons. Whenever he had an enemy who needed watching, an attack to be prepared, a country to be exploited, or a service to be organized, he conscripted men wherever he liked, ordered whole populations to move, and appointed a chief to take command of the enterprise and to carry out his orders, whenever and however he wished.

Among the dyon'-kuntigi there was a hierarchy [302] based on seniority theoretically and also on the importance of the duties; as a result, some of them were great chiefs. One of these, called the ton'-masa, came to be the supreme chief over the ton'-dyon in particular and all the furu-ba dyon' in general. In the fla-n-ton' the ton'-masa had the duty of convening the ton'-den' and of watching the ton'-dyon' to see that they

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1. See Raffenel, Vol. 1, p. 371.

614 631 performed the work ordered by the ton'-tigi. The ton'-masa had the same duties in the furu-ba: he made sure that the furu-ba dyon' executed the orders of the fama while acting as intermediary of the dyon'-kuntigi. Since, in short, he represented all the furu-ba dyon', his office gradually tended to put him in opposition to the fama. In the last analysis, what can a fama accomplish if he is opposed by a ton'-masa with all the force of the furu-ba dyon' behind him? That is why Mamari thought he would be able to rely on the devotion of the holder of this high office if he chose him, not from among the furu-ba dyon', but from among his personal slaves. He bought a slave and made him a ton'-masa.

*173 614 631 The furu-ba dyon' were first used, though not exclusively as might be thought, for armed forays, variable in scope, from which everyone profited: Mamari, first of all, by increasing prestige and by extending the areas under his sway; the furu-ba dyon', and Mamari too, by adding to their fortunes. The sons of Mamari, obviously anxious to perpetuate their acquired position and not run the risks of brigandage, decided to turn the activity of the furu-ba dyon' toward agriculture. This new orientation gave rise to a crisis, since it was not at all to the taste of one faction which included a large number of furu-ba dyon'; hence there arose internal quarrels, in which one episode was the murder of Dé-koro.

It was during these disturbances that many of the ton'-dyon' and dyon'-kuntigi conceived the idea of dropping out of sight to live independently on the proceeds of the property of the furu-ba entrusted to their case. Successive fama naturally tried, by terrible examples, to bring the rebels to terms, but they succeeded only temporarily by means of force, and when their power declined, these usurpations multiplied. Some of them were sanctioned definitively by the hereditary rights accorded to the 60 posts. [303]

The Fama

614 The second element in the clan was the power of direction, organization, and surveillance, and the holder of this power

614 was called fama (1) (lord).

1. Etymologically, fama or fa-ma, "the powerful," from fa, "power, authority."

Mamari played a dual role: fa of his patriarchal community and at the same time fama of the clan. His successors followed the same practice. However, in order that his duties as fama may be carried out honestly, custom requires the incumbent to turn over the authority and the property of his patriarchal community to his eventual successor, thus retaining a merely honorary fa-ya, so as to avoid confusion whose origin and consequences are easy to imagine.

421 614 In reality, all the property of the furu-ba which the fama held for his use and exploitation always belonged to the clan, and consequently, in principle, was supposed to profit only the clan. When the fama retained his duties as fa, the property of the furu-ba and that of the patriarchal community were likely to be inextricably intermingled, and in the process a considerable fortune would be built up for the community. This wealth, dishonestly acquired, so aroused envy and criticism among the furu-ba dyon' that many of them tried -- sometimes successfully -- to enrich themselves in no less questionable a manner and also sought to lay hands on the estate of the fama because of the clan property taken into it.

In the last analysis, indeed, the only reason for belonging to a clan -- and this is its essential trait in common with the fla-n-ton' -- the possibility of enriching oneself in every way possible; each member of the clan hopes to appropriate as much of the property as possible. On the other hand, each member tries to prevent his brothers from doing likewise, on the pretext of that equality which legally is the basis of the relations between clan members. This hypocrisy dominates the whole life of the clan. It inspires all the acts of the fama in the course of his duties, and it also animates each furu-ba dyon' to such a degree that every one of them aspires to become fama. [304]

614 The fama receives his powers by election, the form of which has changed very little since Mamari's time.

614 *173 Mamari had been elected by the *ton'-den'*; by means of successive usurpations, whose progress we have shown, he achieved a kind of despotism whose entire gain he was unable to hand down to his descendants, in spite of his wishes.

For his descendants, election followed their installation in office by the *ton'-masa*, who at the same time publicly announced the assent of the *furu-ba-dyon'* by a symbolic gesture in which he presented himself to the new *fama* wearing a loincloth around his neck and put its two ends into the hands of the *fama*. Under the protection of the deity called *ba Kongo-ba*, which Mamari had bought in Bendougou, an oath was taken which formed an unbreakable bond between the two elements of the clan.

The election of Tonmassa Dembélé as *fama* was the result of discussions following the *coup d'état* which he himself carried out, and it is probable that this election, too, was followed by an oath of loyalty on the part of the *dyon'-kuntigi* in one or another of the ways already described.

In the case of the successors of Tonmassa Dembélé, the choice of a new chief was preceded by gatherings at which it was announced that the place was vacant and open to the person who could take over Mamari's bow and quiver. Then the election was held, and it was followed by a ritual banquet.

614 *173 782 [776] For this banquet, an ox and a slave were ritually slaughtered in the hut used as a temple for *ba Kongo-ba* (1), to whom the victims were sacrificed. The corpses were then cut into pieces, cooked together, and stirred frequently to make sure that they would be well mixed. A part of this macabre dish was served in the same hut and in the same gourd to the

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1. A literal translation of the name was given to me, "Mother of the Great Bush," wherein "mother" is equivalent to goddess." There is an allusion to the ceremony described here in the journal of Isaac (second voyage of Mungo Park), which uses the name *Kogno-ba*, a variant of *Kongo-ba*.

614 *dyon*'-*kuntigi* who had acted as electors. When it was time to
782 eat, they squatted on the ground around the gourd with their
*173 backs to it, and in this position and without turning their heads
to make a choice, [305] they dipped into the dish and took a piece which might be animal or human. This meal constituted a communion by which those partaking of it were so closely linked that *ba Kongo-ba* was supposed to kill any one of them who should commit perjury by failing in the loyalty he owed to the man elected.

614 The choice made was then definitive, and the man elected
was put through a test intended to indicate the length of his
*173 reign. To make this test, the newly elected chief's throat was wrapped in one of the cotton bands used to make native loin-cloths; two of the bystanders pulled the two ends in opposite directions while the victim feverishly plunged his hands into a gourd containing a mixture of small pebbles and ground baobab leaves. The number of pebbles he managed to pick out in one try was the number of years in his reign. When this number of years had passed, the *fama* was strangled with the strip of cotton. If his rule had been popular, however, he was left in office until the first complaint was lodged against him.

Such is the tradition. Though it is acceptable in essentials, it is less so in certain details when comparison is made with the chronicle which makes no reference to this uniform death by strangulation or to determining in advance the length of the reign.

One thing that is certain is the oath of loyalty which followed every election and which was also often demanded by the *fama* during the course of his reign. This oath unquestionably had a sacramental form, characterized by a communion under the patronage of the idol. What the chronicle has to say about the election of Ngolo Dyara shows that the man elected was also
required to participate in the oath, thus making it reciprocal.
[661] Ngolo managed to avoid taking the oath, and so his electors bore
the whole burden of it; this is one of the means by which despots of all lands pave the way for their tyranny.

Relations between the Elements of the Clan

614 596 A study of the clan of Ségou is fortunately clarified by comparison with the organizations which we have discussed earlier: communities and brotherhoods. [306]

The influence of the community and the brotherhood on the clan is clearly shown by the two traits which reveal the consistent effort made by the *fama* to fuse the clan with his own patriarchy. First, there is the connection of the important *ton'-dyon'* chiefs and, through them, of all of the *furu-dyon'* to the *fama*. This is achieved by placing each of these *dyon'-kuntigi* under the patronage of an influential member of that patriarchy. Under Mamari and Ngolo, for instance, each of these *dyon'-kuntigi* was attached to the mother, wife, son, or brother of the *fama*. The *ton'-masa* himself asked to be put under the protection of Bakari, son of Mamari.

794 From another viewpoint, the liaison between the clan and the patriarchy of the *fama* is made even closer by the participation of the *ton'-dyon'* in the personal cults of Mamari. Some of them were leading officients of the cults; it was precisely this circumstance that enabled Ngolo to dominate his companions.

It is therefore not too rash to state that under these conditions the clan is merely a kind of extension of the patriarchy of the *fama*. Besides, the *ton'-dyon'* always made a point of the bonds which in so many ways linked them to Mamari and which established a real brotherhood between them. That is why, first of all, their cult honored Mamari as though he were an ancestor. Secondly, it was the reason for the mode of succession which was imposed during periods of anarchy, bringing to power the man longest in Mamari's service. Finally, for the same reason, when the *fama* dies, the ceremonies are exactly like those for a patriarch.

614 There is another consequence: the prosperity, the power, and even the existence of the clan depend essentially on the personal qualities of the *fama*. When he is equal to the task, the clan is rich and powerful. If he lacks authority or is unable to assign each member a position and a role and keep him there, opposition will at once arise. By its very nature, such opposition inevitably separates the elements that go to make up the clan,

614 and from that moment on everyone seeks to enjoy his freedom and his property for his own profit. The end result is complete disorganization, and only the emergence of a new and enterprising despot can stop it.

614 575 Fundamentally -- and this is a new aspect of the question -- the clan retains the ineradicable imprint of the *fla-n-ton'* from which it took its origin. The aim has not changed: to assure to each member the [307] largest possible number of those material satisfactions which are so dear to the Bambara. The means likewise remain the same: in spite of appearances to the contrary, it is a type of solidarity based on a strictly egalitarian communalism (1).

> 1. The innate penchant of the Black for this sort of egalitarian justice is affirmed by legendary episodes wherein an individual is honored and proclaimed chief because he was able to make strictly equal shares. Cf. the legend of Ndyadyane Ndyaye, in *Legendes et coutumes sénégalaises* [Senegalese Legends and Customs] by Henri Gaden, and the Djide of Djenné, in *Contes du Sénégal et du Niger* [Tales of the Senegal and Niger] by Zeltner.

579 The resources of the clan are in every respect analogous to those of the *fla-n-ton*. Just as the latter profited from the thievery, banditry, and raids of its members, so the clan derives its main resources from successful raids and pillage.

The *fla-n-ton'* provided for its drinking bouts by means of the *di-songo* and the crops of its *ton'-den'* or *ton'-dyon'*. In the clan, the *di-songo* persisted for a time and then was replaced by a similar fee, the *nyon'-dyu*. The work required of the *ton'-dyon'* was minimal at first during the period of active warfare, but then Dékoro peremptorily sent them into agriculture. Ultimately the *furu-ba dyon'* came to be primarily agriculturalists.

The foodstuffs of the *fla-n-ton'* were equally distributed among the *ton'-den'* by the *dyala-tige*, under the direction of the *ton'-tigi*. Within the clan, property is also held in common and

614 Within the clan, property is also held in common and 575 administered by the fama who distributes it among the dyon'- [421] kuntigi. The latter, in turn, make a further distribution as it is needed.

In the fla-n-ton' the important thing was provisions, material well-being. The same thing is true in the clan. The ton'-dyon' are interested in the profit to be derived from the association, and their feeling for the state is embodied in a very prosaic word, to-da, literally, "the pot of mush." Indeed, this is the principal item on the menue of any fraternal feast of the fla-n-ton'.

The property of the clan, as of the fla-n-ton', is theo- 614 retically jointly held by all the members, but since there is a 421 large amount of it, some sort of sharing is necessary, first to consume it and then to reward zeal and fidelity and to encourage emulation and devotion. As a result, the basic egalitarianism is altered. From the clan's beginning it was conceded that a substantial part of the wealth should go to those [308] who had done most to acquire it. Thus, the leader of an expedition had a prior right because of his "luck," and he and his men further received the wherewithal "to repair the rents in their shirts," i.e., to indemnify them for damages suffered during the expedition.

Each warrior kept his own loot, except for unusually [727] valuable things which went to the clan and therefore to the fama who represented it. The part of the loot not taken by individuals was distributed by the fama after abstracting the best and largest part of it for himself.

Strictly speaking, no one actually owned any of this wealth, since all of them, even the fama, merely held it on very precarious terms. Through the caprice of the clan, anyone could [562] have everything taken away, and this applied to persons as well as to things, because the wives and children of the ton'-dyon' were, like himself, the "chattels" of the clan.

The passage of time softened the outward form of these principles; barring abuse or notorious misconduct, each individual had indefinite use of what was allotted to him and handed it on to his descendants. This usufruct, incidentally, was broader than that of our law. In addition, Mamari arrogated to himself a kind of eminent right: he appointed himself -- through usurpation facilitated by his power -- the dispenser of offices and wealth

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and kept considerable property for himself. For their part, the ton'-dyon', pleased with their lot, carefully kept out of sight so as to be able to enjoy what they had been given and what they had managed to add to it.

These usurpations tended to become stabilized through inheritance, although not without dreadful disturbances.

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After Mamari, the office of fama was handed down within his family until the day when the assembly of the ton'-dyon', dissatisfied with Dékoro's regime, decided to "change the seed," a quaint metaphor for the clan's determination to have a more amenable fama.

The ease with which Dékoro was eliminated (and others after him) also shows that the fama was, and after all could only be, what the ton'-dyon' allowed him to be. This makes it clear that the spirit [309] of the fla-n-ton' never died; the fama merely appeared to be more than primus inter pares at times when his personal influence temporarily made him master of the situation.

At such times, then, he may have governed without the opposition of the majority, but such a period of dominance has always been personal and temporary. In reality, dissension was [578] ever present and was made manifest in fratricidal quarrels, during which the fama seemed to be principally concerned with gratifying personal grudges.

The chronicle shows us that the fama was at the mercy of the ton'-dyon'; without them he could do nothing. The Monday and Thursday meetings, which were a condition of his authority, continued for a long period of time. In any event, this assembly (furu-ba) was the whole of the clan. In ordinary times, the assembly was stimulated by the pleasure of drinking the beer which the fama, like the ton'-tigi before him, always provided. Worship of the clan idols was also the occasion for some of these meetings, accompanied by eating and drinking. The fama invariably made every effort to use these gatherings, usually disorganized, to further his own interests as well as those of the clan.

When Mamari's authority was well established, these meetings no longer played any deliberative or even consultative role, except in the gravest circumstances when the very existence of the clan was at stake. It was logical that the council of the

614 *dyon'-kuntigi* should replace them; the *dyon'-kuntigi* always *173 exercised an influence over the *ton'-dyon'* for whom they acted as spokesmen. Besides it was easy to convene the *dyon'-kuntigi*, and as their experience increased, they came to be competent and tried collaborators for the *fama*.

As time went on, however, the council was neglected. The extension of the *to-da* kept the important *dyon'-kuntigi* away from Ségou, and as a result the *fama* became increasingly despotic. He was always sensitive, however, to the influence of his immediate circle, that is, the people of his house (his mother, wives, children, brothers, and other relatives) and 567 especially his familiars (1). The latter constituted a kind of privy council in which the leader of the slaves, whether [310] or not he belonged to the *ton'-dyon'*, played an important role. Ordinarily these familiars were of lowly birth: people of caste or domestic servants in the house of the *fama*. Deeply involved in their master's life, they were at the root of the intrigues surrounding him.

The *fama* realized that his authority was deprived of its strength when he lost contact with the *ton'-dyon'*, because a clan languishes almost to the point of extinction when those who compose it lose touch with one another. Therefore, the *fama* would convene the assembly, not, as in the past, in order to learn its wishes, but rather to request or even require from it a solemn affirmation of loyalty before the idols. In any case, the assembly always met at least once a year to renew the oath of religious faith and to admit the "young men."

The assembly took an effective role only at the election 578 of a new *fama*, and it is plain that over the years this power of

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1. So it was that in his fratricidal quarrel with Nyana-n-Koro, it is clearly apparent that Ma-n-son was guided by the shrewd suggestions of Nzan-fato; in his quarrel with Souleyman, his intimates were his advisers.

614 *173 578 consultation likewise underwent changes. In the beginning there was no great amount of dissension within the furu-ba, but gradually, as the importance of the clan grew and the wealth of influential members increased, divergent opinions arose, held by strong and determined partisans. Then the dyon'-kuntigi were opposed among themselves, and the recurrent periods of anarchy bear witness to the consequences of these internal quarrels.

Organization of the Clan

614 721 The army. The office of fama is dominated by the need to ensure the prosperity of the clan since, in theory, the clan's only reason for existence is that of procuring for its members as many material satisfactions as possible.

The usual way to make a fortune among these people was through armed pillage. When a fama was elected, the bow and quiver symbolized the clan's activity, and according to the reasoning of Kanou-ba-nyouma, it was essential that the arrows should hit someone. Thus, it was necessary to go to war. That was the way to acquire slaves, by means of which the great -- and everyone aspired to be such -- satisfied their desires. That is why the essential organization in the clan was the armed force. [311]

614 701 This organization was based on the distribution of the slaves among chiefdoms (dyon'-kuntigi-ya). Observed as a whole, the army was composed of a certain number of sections called sen' (literally, "foot"). This was not a specific unit, but merely the name used to designate an organized group under the leadership of a chief. Each sen' had a variable number of men. The bolo (literally, "arm") was a "band" made up of a likewise variable number of sen' and commanded by an important chief.

614 726 When the army was drawn up for battle, it faced the enemy with a central mass called disi (literally, "chest") made up of the corps of sofa, flanked on the right and the left by bolo called, respectively, kini-n-bolo (right arm) and numa-n-bolo (left arm) (1). Each of these bolo were made up of furu-ba dyon'

1. Note this anthropomorphism applied to the army, which thus included head, arm, feet, chest.

614 surrounded by ton'-dyon'. Behind the disi there was a special
726 reserve composed only of ton'-dyon'; this was the ton'-koro-bolo.

The fama himself designated the leader (keli-tigi) of all
614 the expeditions of war. This might be one of the dyon'-kuntigi or
701 some member of the community of the fama; sometimes the fama himself might take command.

The personal protection of the fama was the duty of the corps of sofa. In principle, considering the etymology of the name, the sofa were supposed to take care of the horses; this does not mean that they were necessarily horsemen or even grooms. The youngest served as pages and sometimes as grooms; the older ones were confidential aides to whom the fama entrusted missions. The sofa constituted one part -- and by no means the least important -- of what might be called the household of the fama: an assemblage of persons employed for various duties under the immediate authority of the fama.

[727] They were recruited from young prisoners taken in raids and other operations of war.

When the fama led an expedition which was engaged for some time or when he took part in some important affair, he liked to arrange and to preside over the soli of the boys of the conquered people and to have one or more of his many children take part. [312] This was a means of assuring himself of the devotion, generally regarded as unfailing, of these soli-ma whose "birth" into man's estate he had honored and who, by virtue of the ceremony itself, were thus linked to some of his own children. Mostly these young men would then swell the ranks of the sofa.

This army, which might be said to be a regular army, theoretically received everything it needed from the fama: mounts, equipment, weapons, ammunition, etc. This justified the very considerable share of booty kept by the fama himself; he was thus repaid for what he had furnished, was provided with resources needed to replace what had been destroyed, and finally, was able to add to the store of equipment needed to make war. There was also the special need to increase the clan's treasury with a view to all possible eventualities.

The army was augmented by allied or volunteer contingents. The allies had a solemn agreement with the clan, based on a

614 701 religious and reciprocal oath. Their contribution entitled them to a share of the booty. Volunteers, who enlisted for an engagement or a whole campaign, came in under conditions settled in advance.

The fama furnished the allies, just as he did the volunteers, with whatever they needed and deducted the amount from their share of the loot. Sometimes a third party, not involved in the expedition, provided mounts, equipment, and weapons for the enterprise in exchange for a prearranged reward.

In short, armed pillage was a business directed by the fama, who could admit interested participants if he so desired. If the operation were successful, the clan gained predominance over [727] the conquered regions, which the fama then exploited as he saw fit. The booty was the first result of the enterprise, and it served both to pay the expenses incurred in the affair and to swell the treasury of the clan.

This explains why the clan's army, for a consideration, hired itself out to anyone who asked for support, as an ally, as a mercenary force, or in any other capacity. The army might simply intervene in a quarrel of its own accord when there seemed to be profit to be gained (1). [313]

1. See below how the fama of Ségou lent his support to a marabout of Sous. The Bambara also intervened on numerous occasions in the internal quarrels of Khasso, Boundou, Fouta, etc. Their role as mercenaries is clearly shown in the Tarikh es Soudan.

614 701 569 [302] The ton'-dyon' were distinguished by a special hair arrangement. Their heads were completely shaved except for three tufts of hair which formed two braids on the crown of the head and one at the nape of the neck.

The slaves of the household of the fama could be recognized by their well-known tattoo (1) which consisted of three

[304] 1. In general, it is risky to depend

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> incautiously on tattooing as a distinguishing mark of race or even of rank; the tattoo described here has not only been used by people of various origins, but has even been appropriated by all kinds of people as a form of snobbishness.

parallel cuts from temple to lower jaw on either side of the face. Furthermore, these people borrowed the dyamu of the fama (Kouloubali, Dyara, etc.), just as certain servants in some of the French provinces are called by their master's name because they are members of the household bearing that name.

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The elite troops (sofa, ton'-dyon', etc.) were armed with axes (sukala) (2). Important chiefs also had axes, the insignia of

> 2. An instrument's name derived from suka, a variant of sua, meaning "to pierce." The men armed with axes were, in fact, assigned the special task of "making a breach" in the wall inclosing the settlement under attack.

command, sometimes made of precious metal, such as copper or silver. The axe carried by the fama was made of gold and enchased (3).

> 3. The chronicle relates that Tonmassa, after murdering Dékoro, carried off the golden axe, the symbol of supreme command.

The spear (tama) was often regarded as a weapon of distinction also. The ordinary warriors were armed with bows (kala) and arrows (bimye), the latter usually poisoned.

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Guns (marfa) gradually came into use, imported by native traders (Dyula). The chronicle claims that the first firearms were introduced among "the people of Ségou" in Mamari's time by an army from Kong and that these guns were of the blunderbuss type.

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701 Chiefs and other notables carried a short sabre (m-pan)
411 slung from their shoulders. These were probably Turkish in
origin and were largely ceremonial weapons.

The troops wore no specific uniform. Only a few of the
614 more important personages were recognizable by certain insignia,
714 and it sometimes happened that certain individuals were honored
by distinguishing marks. The chronicle tells us that Mamari
[314] had Ngolo Dyara outfitted in red, a uniform particularly
desired. Likewise, he gave Tonmassa a pair of trousers that
were unusually wide and consequently attracted everyone's attention.

534 Drummers (dunu) and trumpeters (buru) made up a mili-
614 tary clique which also included men who played xylophones (bala)
701 and various accessory instruments, especially bells (tana, veleni,
etc.), and gourds half-filled with pebbles or grain.

The drum beaten to sound a rally, which was, therefore,
in a manner of speaking, the announcer of war, was the tabala.
The cylinder, bowl-shaped and usually made of wood or some-
times pottery, was covered with an ox-hide, often untanned,
which was stretched by thongs tied under the drum. In theory,
766 this drumhead was always changed at the death of a fama, when
the skin was broken as a sign of mourning (1), and was replaced
by the hide of the ox sacrificed in honor of the deceased. The
tabala was carried horizontally between two men by means of
leather grips and a third individual beat it by means of a ball
attached to his wrist by a leather thong.

Other drums were of varying sizes and shapes. Some were carried under the arm (dunkan') or slung from the shoulder (tama); others, mounted on three feet (dange), presented a horizontal

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1. It should be noted that the destruction of the drumhead is comparable with the killing of the dead chief's dog and the presentation of a dead chicken to his relatives. All these are obviously "intentional breaks."

534 beating surface. The most highly regarded was the denu-ba;
614 made of a hollowed cylindrical trunk with fairly thick walls,
701 the denu-ba is sometimes more than a meter high, with its
lower third often slightly tapered with an adze. The drumhead
is made of strong hide, reinforced in the center by a patch of
leather sewed to it and stretched on pegs driven into the sides of
the drum a few centimeters below the upper edge. When it is to
be played, the drum is inclined on a fork that supports it. The
drummer uses a kind of wooden hook, cleverly curved for
elasticity and provided at one end [315] with a rounded part,
often formed by a swelling contrived for the purpose or at other
times made of a leather ball. The drummer's free hand provides
the syncopation.

In certain cases, two denu-ba are used together; the
drummer strikes them in such a way as to obtain a variety of
sounds to form the basis for conventional harmony. Thus, the
soldiers not only were trained to obey appropriate flourishes, but
also were kept in touch with distant battalions by means of the
[202] drums. When it was skillfully played, the denu-ba made it possi-
ble to transmit information for considerable distances, because
other drummers would retransmit it in turn. That is why it has
[778] been said that the denu-ba can talk and no doubt why it was so
highly regarded by the ton'-dyon' that they considered it an
oracle and honored the god who spoke through the drum by making
the denu-ba the boli of this god. Hence, human victims came to
[782] be sacrificed to the drums of the ton'-dyon', especially under
Ngolo, according to the chronicle.

[237] Trumpets (buru) were formerly made of ivory. The
Tedzkiret speaks of the ivory trumpets used by a certain Bambara
named Maro, and Mage relates that Ahmadou, Sultan of Ségou,
gave the Bambara their ivory trumpets on the occasion of the
Moslem festival.

[237] These ivory trumpets, however, have disappeared, no
doubt carried off by traders. Trumpets made of horn, which were
used concurrently with the ivory instruments, have been substituted for them. The horns of the large antelope are much in demand for this purpose. An opening is made a few centimeters
from the pointed end, and the trumpeter makes the sound through
this opening. The only result is a loud but monotonous noise.

534 The xylophone (bala) consists of a table made of strips
of hardwood, with a gourd under each strip, like a resonator;
● 614 the size of each gourd depends on the note desired. A section
701 of the gourd is stopped by the vibrating surface which is a white
material very closely woven like a cobweb. When it is played
well, the bala produces various tunes, but they seem very thin
compared to the noise of the drums and the shrieking of the
trumpets. [316]

The accessory bells are of no particular interest.

538 No expedition of any consequence ever set out without a
701 griot (dyeli) (1). The griot has acquired a deplorable reputation
because of the fact that too often he uses his fluency to exploit the
rich and powerful. This should not hide the fact, however, that
the griot has often played a role not lacking in grandeur. In addition to being the official archivist of one or more families, he
was also, in the native sense, a kind of epic bard who told his
[534] tales in song, accompanying himself on a stringed instrument
similar to a guitar or a rudimentary harp. When told by him,
the traditions, involved with those miracles so dear to the native,
had something of the quality of our medieval epics. In that
respect, at least, the griot truly deserved his title of dyeli (master).

Unfortunately, however, being reduced to earning his keep by making use of his information, he resorted to slander and calumny. This made him so much to be feared that in order to buy his silence the victims despoiled themselves for his benefit, as did those whom he intoxicated with base flattery.

538 In the army the griot stirred and encouraged the brave
701 men. On the eve of an important engagement or shortly before it,
726 a large assembly customarily was held, and roused by the epic
poems of the griot no less than by the war ~~dances~~ and copious
libations, the warriors promised under oath to perform such and
such acts of great courage. It was then the duty of the griot to
take public note, so to speak, of this commitment and later,

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1. See above, pp. et seq., on the dyeli.

538 that the griot is often a wretched character, an insignificant
814 parasite living at the expense of everyone. There are those among them, however, who carry out their duties as archivist very faithfully and who are sincerely devoted to their masters, great and generous lords in the native fashion whose interests and reputations such griot ably defend.

It is griot of this last type who transmit the reliable historical tradition from which we have borrowed the foregoing accounts. There [318] is no doubt that these griot, true "masters" (dyeli) of historical traditions, have played a considerable role in native society. Therefore their words should never be passed over lightly, although obviously they should be subjected to judicious criticism.

The To-da

614 In origin, evolution, and contingencies, the clan de-
631 veloped from the social bases already studied, community and brotherhood, of which it is, in the last analysis, only an amalgamation. As a result, its various manifestations are similar to those of these institutions, even though possessing its own peculiarities.

One of the most characteristic features of the clan is the to-da, which was the familiar term used by members of the clan for the region in which they lived. The word literally means "the pot of mush" and alludes to the essential element in the corporate
[539] banquets of the fla-n-ton'. As the saying goes: "furu-ba to, to kadi, na ka ko, (at the corporate meal the mush is good and the sauce is bad.")

The to-da originally was limited to Ségou-koro and its immediate environs, i.e., the small number of villages affiliated with the ton' either voluntarily or by force. It progressively extended its sway along the Niger: first on the right bank as far as Kirango; later almost to Dina; finally it extended its influence over a broad area on both sides of the river from Kan ga-ba to Timbuktu.

This territory was organized in various ways. The key region ran along the Niger from Dina to Kirango, and the sector

614 between Ségou-koro and Kirango was the area under what we
631 would call direct administration, because this zone was occupied
substantially by the fama, his community, and his ton'-dyon'.

Ségou-koro, which had witnessed the birth and the
614 development of the clan, had remained Mamari's capital; he
794 preferred to live there, and he had installed the protective idols of
the clan there. Thus it was, so to speak, the seat of the brother-
[778] hood, whose four principal idols continued to be known under the
names of ba Kongo-ba, na n-Golo ko, Nye-dinge-dun', and
[776] Kolo-koloni. [319]

The fama was the high priest, and the other officiants of the cult were chosen from among the ton'-dyon'; that is why Ngolo Dyara was dye-n-fa. Any follower of Mamari or his successors was affiliated with the cult of these idols. The adepts who lived far from Ségou-koro founded branches which in certain ways were so dependent on the capital that Ségou-koro was for a long time regarded as a holy city.

We have no detailed knowledge concerning the cult of
these important idols; we only know that in general they did not
differ greatly from what we have already said about the nyana of
the boli. The annual festival was exceptionally solemn and
brought the faithful from even quite distant regions. The fama,
of course, presided over the ceremony which involved certain essential rites: a renewal of religious faith, the reception of new
614 members, and an oath of loyalty to the fama.

794 The four deities mentioned above were not the only ones
776 in the Bambara pantheon at Ségou (1); others were added, some bought and others invented out of the extravagant faith of the ton'-dyon'. Among the latter should no doubt be included the drums of the ton'-dyon', which are mentioned several times in the accounts and which are presented always in a very bloodthirsty light. Ngolo sacrificed his most hated enemies to the drum-idols,

1. In Les Bambara [The Bambara], Father Henry mentions, in addition to ba Kongo-ba and na-n-Golo-ko, two other idols, Kuantara and Safolo.

614 beginning with his relatives, to avenge his hatred toward them
794 for selling him into slavery. It seems likely that the establish-
776 ment of these ferocious deities may well date from the time of
this despot and perhaps was due to his personal initiative.

The "people of Ségou" also held in high esteem the deities of the people they conquered. Indeed, there is no doubt that they constituted the most precious part of the booty of war. The Toucouleur [Tukolor] relate that when they entered Ségou-Sikoro they found an idol in chains; it was the protective deity of a group of the Nono-n-kobe people of the cliff of Bandiagara. With the evident intention of keeping this conquered people forever enslaved, the Bambara had captured their god and were having its cult observed by its own priest, kept captive likewise for the purpose (2). [320]

2. See Desplagnes, *Le plateau central nigérien* [The Nigerian Central Plateau], p. 175.

The chronicle shows that the Komo also figured in the Ségou pantheon, and if one refers to what we have said ~~about~~ this brotherhood, he will understand the important role it played in the *to-da* since the *fama* himself acted as *Komo-tigi*.

614 There is absolutely no doubt that cannibalism was in
794 favor on certain definite occasions and, according to appropriate,
761 ritual, especially, at the time of the election of a *fama*. It is
obvious, in any case, that under the despotic rule of the clan
[266] human life had little value. The atrocities of Dékoro, the
passiveness of his victims, the help given him in the execution
of his worst crimes by the very people who were directly
threatened -- these are not isolated cases. They are indicative
of the basic Sudanese temperament in general, which, if not
innate, at least is affected by a very ancient atavism. It is
because this kind of arbitrary command over the lives of individ-
uals has been practiced for so many centuries that the Bambara
often remain impassive in the face of death. They consider its
unforeseen occurrence, even when sudden and the result of man's

614 own action, as a possible daily eventuality which should cause
794 no surprise.

761 The practice of this implacable ferocity must also be considered the natural source of that kind of burning faith, as intransigent as it is horrible in our eyes, which is capable of nullifying all the feelings of affection that we regard as natural. When Ngolo realized that he had aroused dangerous ambitions in his son Ntyi, he decided that he could not escape the danger he himself had created except by a sacrifice in keeping with the contingency, and with his own hand and without hesitation, he sacrificed Ntyi's son, his own grandson.

Stubborn Bambara are often heard to say: "You may kill me; I will not yield." Tityya's resistance shows that this is no idle boast; this same affair also shows the aspiration toward equality, so basic in the Bambara, which makes it impossible for him to bow before his fellows. Another example of the same quality is to be seen in the resistance of the "elders" whom Mamari, even he, could subdue only by murder.

To complete the description of the somewhat mystical
794 features of the clan of "those of Ségou," let us recall that after
614 [321] Mamari's death he was honored by a cult: on the part of his
769 natural descendants because he had been their *fa*; on the part of the people of the clan because he had been *fama*; and finally, on the part of the faithful of the idols' cult because he had been the high priest. Under this aegis there was a fusion of sorts of all the people who recognized mutual bonds because they were all spiritual sons of Mamari. This relationship was the excuse used by the *ton'-dyon'* when they usurped supreme power, and the right of the leaders of the *ton'-dyon'* to succeed to the office of *fama* was in fact settled by the expedient of treating this relationship as though it were true descent. This cult took its characteristics from the cult of the idols. When Tonmassa began his duties
[782] as high priest, his first act was to honor the manes of Mamari, and the offering was the same as that always made to *ba Kongo-ba* when a new *fama* was elected: a man and an ox.

Such are some of the characteristics of the faith that
614 united the "people of Ségou" by ties which, without metaphor,
794 can be called bloody. It is true, of course, that the clan's

614 leading men made use of the cults to realize their ambitious 794 designs and to gratify their personal hatreds. From that point of view it can indeed be said that religion was a means of domination. It would be altogether too simple, however, to say that these cults had no other reason for existence than to maintain terror as the basis of the power of the fama. Any such facile opinion should be discarded, because the facts should be evaluated, not from the outside, but rather in the native milieu. It then certainly appears possible that they are of the same order as the many phenomena already examined.

This powerful religious focus animated the whole clan. Impetus, direction and control belonged to the fama, whose role was conditioned, as we have seen, by the attitudes of the furu-ba dyon' and especially of the ton'-dyon', both of which were represented by the dyon'-kuntigi who were, in a sense, their agents. Was it not inevitable that there should be a kind of spiritual current, supposedly emanating from the idols, which inspired the fama and the furu-ba dyon' and then returned to the idols in the form of a cult? How could such a constant preoccupation with the supernatural not make a deep impression? This preoccupation haunts the natives everywhere and always, [322] and they express it in ways that are in perfect harmony with their world, however ridiculous they may appear to European logic and reason.

614 621 The Ségou area acquired special importance because of the presence of the community of the fama, which settled there under remarkable circumstances.

It is usual in any important community for the first-born son to be set apart. Destined to succeed the fa upon his death, he is prepared for his future responsibilities by being given the management of a portion of the joint property. As the fa grows older, the role and the importance of this eldest son increase.

*173 614 When a community is sufficiently wealthy, a privileged position is likewise given to the eldest sons of the other wives of the fa, because he is always forced to distribute favors equally among his various wives whose jealousy may have far-reaching effects. Upon the death of a fa, many difficulties arise, stemming from his all too obvious preferences. An example of this was the

*173 • 614 fratricidal warfare that broke out when Ngolo Dyara died. Nyana-n-koro, the son of a wife who was free and also a favorite, had been favored by the *fa* during his lifetime. He therefore was not willing to take second place to Ma-n-son, whose mother was the eldest wife but had been a slave.

Since the community of Ségou had become exceedingly rich by appropriating the property of the clan, which the *fama* legally was supposed only to manage all the first-born sons of the successive *fama* were generously endowed, and their private residences were to be found, one after the other, along the banks of the Niger or near it.

So it was that, of Ngolo Dyara's sons, Ntyi lived at Bamabougou, Ma-n-son at Pébala, Nyana-n-koro at Ségou-koro, Péné Mamourou at Ségou-bougou, Ba at Bia, Séri at Sofinna, Dyon-kelé at Kirango, etc.

Ma-n-son's sons lived as follows: Da at Pébala, then at Bamabougou; Tyéfolo at Koké; Ben at Kirango; Nyéné-mba at Oftala; Sibiri at Diani; Fissa at Nango, etc.

A further result of these usurpations was that appanages were set up to benefit other relatives of the *fama*, for instance, Dyidi, a brother of the *fama* Ngolo Dyara, was granted [323] all the territory between Dougou-fin and Dyam-bougou (more than 600 villages) (1).

1. According to the chronicle.

Finally, Mamari and the other *fama* after him were shrewd enough to place the principal *dyon'-kuntigi* under the control of various members of their respective communities: mothers, wives, sons, brothers, etc. Mamari's mother, Sanou Saro, had authority over the *dyon'-kuntigi* Na-n-koro-ba-n-Zangné; the head of the *sofa*, Kolé, and Allah-n-siré were dependents of Mamari's wife, the mother of his eldest son, Badyi; Tonmassa was a dependent of his son Bakari.

By this means, the closest and deepest kind of solidarity developed between the family of the *fama* and the people of the clan. This fact, added to the spiritual solidarity which

*173 we have just noted, would have formed an unbreakable bloc
● 614 if both elements had not been affected by the ferment of
dissociation referred to in the course of this study.

The *to-da* derived the larger portion of its prosperity from
[487] the Niger. Communication and transport could most easily be
maintained along this artery, and it was the need to make the
greatest possible use of the river that brought about the organization of the Somono.

Etymologically, the word Somono simply means "fisher-
[101] man." Like any trade practiced exclusively, professional fish-
[564] ing involves a certain loss of standing, and that is why the
Somono are said to be people of caste. This status is especially
due to the supremacy of the clan over the Somono, without whom
it could not have exploited the river.

614 After using force to annex them, Mamari added to their
564 number by assigning some of the *furu-ba dyon'* to the group, so
*173 that the Somono were soon closely dependent on the *furu-ba*.
At the orders of the *fama* and his agents, they were required to
[505] maintain ferry service across the river, to provide river transport
in both directions, and to pay a fee in kind on their catch, with
the understanding that they could continue to live according to
the traditional Somono customs.

In return, the Somono were under the protection of the clan and their leaders benefitted from the generosity of the *fama*. They would occasionally be given a share of booty. [324]

Little by little, the few original Somono families were lost in the flood of newcomers. These included: the *furu-ba dyon'* who had become Somono on orders from the *fama*; people of diverse origins who had adopted Somono status of their own accord because they found it better than their own; and finally, the children of both, who were Somono by birth.

It was likewise the exploitation of the property of the
[233] *to-da* that brought about a similar organization of the shepherds,
or Peul. Let us first note that this term has no ethnic significance;
it designates all who raise or watch over animals as a regular and
professional occupation. Here, too, there is a kind of loss of
standing, since a working shepherd could hardly do without a
sponsor and must attach himself to a master. This is the case for

● 614 all who exercise a calling, and that is why the Bambara call a
564 Peul "*fula fantan'* (weak Peul)" (1), to indicate that he is *in*
*173 *potestate*.

In order to ensure the greatest return from the clan's flocks, Mamari had recourse to the Peul, just as when he wanted to exploit the Niger, he had taken over the Somono. That is how Peul settlements came to be established, called *furu-ba fla-u*, "Peul of the *furu-ba*.". These are free people, but they are required to serve the clan. The ranks of these first Peul were increased by the arbitrary assignment of some of the *furu-ba dyon'*; some pastoralists by choice joined them; and the children of both groups were *furu-ba fla-a* by birth. This went on until there were enough of them for Ngolo Dyara to set up twelve Peul encampments. Mamari divided them into two tribes: the Dyana (people of Dyan), and the Bonguéna (people of Bongué). The *furu-*
[563] *ba fla-u* speak Bambara, and very few of them can claim to be Peul in ethnic origin.

In the case of the Somono and the Peul, we have seen how the clan exploits the populace, for any people on which the clan forces its authority is treated in the same way. The clan requires a contribution, according to the means of livelihood from each of the population groups it assimilates. The system used for the fishermen and the shepherds was likewise used for the agriculturalists. [325]

In this case, too, the *furu-ba dyon'* were blended with the rural peoples. Although they were relegated to special villages, this isolation never prevented them from maintaining close relations with the people in the surrounding areas.

Here again, there were agriculturalists by adoption. Through time heredity consolidated the close union between these people of the agricultural caste and the clan.

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1. See in Chapter 7 below [not translated] how this expression is used as an insult in the quarrel between Ma-n-son and Bacari Dyan.

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Wherever there was need for it, the clan was represented by agents to guard its interests. Theoretically, these agents did not interfere in purely local matters; their duty was to avert or repress hostile acts, to ensure the payment of fees, and to see that the orders of the _fama_ were carried out. Actually, however, claiming that the fulfillment of their mission required it, they modified everything to the advantage of the clan since they had the authority to do so.

They brought the weak under the aegis of the clan and also people of caste who were always in search of a powerful and generous master. They furthered the projects of the ambitious so long as they were in harmony with the policy of the clan. They transformed tributaries into allies and, in short, at all times assisted in furnishing large contingents for the clan.

Furthermore, many villages chose the "people of Ségou" as their chiefs, either of their own volition in order to acquire the good will of the _fama_ or under open or dissimulated pressure. In this way, extensive regions near Ségou and even at some distance were incorporated.

Thus one can see how the fame of the power and strength of the _fama_ spread far and wide, carried also by the Dyula, who were emissaries constantly on the move, and more generally by traders of every race and origin who came to Ségou to do business.

That is why a marabout of Sous, Ali ben Haidara, requested Mamari's aid when he was attacked in his mosque by Sultan Er Rechid. After Mamari had received two Spanish or Portuguese women from Ali, he permitted him to settle at Timbuktu and refused to turn him over to Er Rechid, who had dispatched troops to capture him (1). [326]

1. Tradition has it that, after a stay of several months, Ali returned to Sous, taking several thousand Blacks with him to attack Er Rechid. The latter had died in the meantime, so Ali released his mercenaries and they were rehired by Ismail, the new sultan. They are said to have formed the corps of the Abid, Negro soldiers especially assigned to guard the Sultan of Morocco.

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Ngolo Dyara's fame spread in the same way, even reaching Morocco. Jackson, the English consul at Mogador in 1800, speaks of him, under the corrupted name of Wooloo, as ruling over Djenné and Timbuktu.

3. Clan of the Massa-si or the "People of Kaarta"

In sum, this clan does not differ essentially from that of the people of Ségou, whose origin, development, and organization we have just described. Some of the characteristics peculiar to it are as follows.

Its origin is marked by some alliances, by fraternization, and oath or marriage, which involved Sounsan or Massa Kouloubali and Fa Siné Dyara, some Taraoré, and some Konaré. This small nucleus existed and prospered through banditry, and the proceeds were distributed in accordance with agreements among the participants.

Then the Kouloubali acquired a superior position by confiscating a caravan of slaves. They bound these slaves by oath and thus founded a kind of association (ton') in which the following elements can be discerned.

1. The fama, chosen from the Kouloubali-Massa-si family; the members of that family and their allies, among whom Fa Siné Dyara and his descendants held the highest position: Kassi Konaré and his descendants.

2. The ton'-dyon', that group of people who gave up their freedom to benefit the clan.

3. The clan does not seek territorial conquests, but rather seeks to subjugate peoples so as to derive the greatest possible profit from them, either by enslaving them or by forcing them to make various kinds of payments, hence the other element of the clan, the tributaries.

The historical account tells us that the region occupied or controlled by the members of the clan of the Massa-si was virtually always undergoing change and that the capital, too, was moved as circumstances required. [327] All of this shows the true nature of this organism; it was a parasite.

*173 In principle, it did not interfere with anything that was
●614 not contrary to its own interests, and within those limits it allowed the conquered peoples to live as they pleased. In regions under its control, however, its operations were not without influence, and it employed measures analogous in every way to those applied by the clan of Ségou.

Organization and Operation

766 The following description of the funeral of a Massa-si
614 *fama* and the installation ceremonies for his successor will show us the principal customs and important personages in action.

When the *fama* dies, the leader of the slaves assumes
[768] command of the royal household; he has all the doors watched and summons the wives of the deceased and takes their jewels and any other objects of value. He places all the valuables in a hut, and he himself keeps the key.

While this is going on, the war drums (*tabala*) are broken, and the *sofa* are dispatched to inform members of the family.

When the heir presumptive arrives, the leader of the slaves shows him the body of the deceased, so he can officially identify it, and the collection of valuables so he will know that they have not disappeared. The *sofa* are then sent to the capital to announce the death of the *fama* in order that everyone will bring an offering for the funeral ceremonies. The gifts of food will be used for the funeral banquets, and the other gifts (silver, horses, fabrics, etc.) will become part of the royal treasure, even though they are theoretically supposed to be used as alms for the poor.

The body is washed, wrapped in a shroud, and then buried. Burial usually takes place within the royal house, at the place where the deceased liked to sit. If he is interred in the floor of a hut, the hut is abandoned after its door has been walled up.

The door of the central redoubt (*tata*) is also walled up, and a new opening is made.

766 White oxen are sacrificed on the tomb; their hides are
● 614 used to make new drumheads for the *tabala*, and the meat [328] is offered to the manes of the deceased and then distributed among members of the family, allies, familiars, etc. The women wail, weep, and sing the praises of the deceased in company with the people of caste who organize everything. Outside,
786 banquets and virtual orgies, complete with noisy dances and songs, are organized in honor of the deceased.

This ceremony goes on for seven days.

614 At the close of this period, the new *fama* is publicly proclaimed. For this purpose, the leader of the slaves has the walled-up door of the *tata* reopened, and the whole company assembles in the large open area in front of the house of the *fama*. Those present include the newly elected *fama*, the members of the family of the Massa-si, allies, tributaries, heads of the *ton'-dyon'*, and the *sofa*.

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782 An ox has been sacrificed and offered to the manes of the defunct. Its hide is stretched in the center of an open area surrounded by the crowd, and on it is spread out the sheepskin, adorned with precious amulets, which has long served as a rug for the *fama* of the Massa-si. Other precious family relics include
301 the scarlet cap adorned with amulets, twists of gold for the ears, and heavy silver bracelets.

The representative of the family of Kassi Konaré seats the newly elected *fama* on the sheepskin, puts the scarlet cap on his head, and adorns him with the gold earrings and silver bracelets. Then he makes a speech to the new *fama*, outlining the policies followed by his deceased predecessor and enumerating the desiderata of the people of the clan.

At this point the leader of the slaves prostrates himself
567 before the new *fama* and places himself in his hands to show that all the *ton'-dyon'* are loyal to him. He then presents individually the principal groups of slaves, tributaries, etc.

Another ceremony brings the new *fama*, prominent Massa-si, their allies, the principal leaders of the slaves, and the tributaries to the wood sacred to the protective idol of the clan, where a reciprocal oath of loyalty is taken. A ritual communion follows.

614 Lengthy and noisy festivities, where *dlo* (millet beer) flows freely, food is abundant, and songs and dances are performed, [329] mark the general rejoicing. They last for seven days, but forty days must elapse before the new *fama* is deemed definitively installed.

In theory, the new *fama* must turn over the management
of his own community to his heir presumptive. In fact, however,
this retirement is usually fictitious. The *fama* intermingles his
421 own property and the property he administers for the clan to such
an extent that, in the last analysis, the Massa-si and everything
dependent on them -- persons and things -- are an inherent and
inseparable part of the clan. Under the cover of this confusion,
the general and determined tendency of all the *fama* was to work
unceasingly at confiscation from the clan for the benefit of the
community of the Massa-si. At least they have managed to
make their office absolutely hereditary, with no possibility of
competition, and as a result the election is merely the public
recognition as *fama* of whatever individual is considered by the
Massa-si to be *fa* of their community.

This accounts for the superior role of the Massa-si. They are the provincial governors, heads of army corps, etc., thus confirming the seizure of all sorts of clan property by the Massa-si community.

The corps of *sofa* is particularly powerful, and through it the *fama* is easily able to counterbalance any attempted insubordination which sometimes shows itself among the heads of the *ton'-dyon'*. The leader of the slaves is, in any case, the personal tool of the *fama*.

184 These measures emphasize the close connection between
the *fama* and the *ton'-dyon'*. On examination, this appears to be
614 much closer than at Ségou, because from the very beginning in
Kaarta the *fama* assured himself of unquestioned pre-eminence over
the *ton'-dyon'*, and later he was able to remain free of the influence
of the *ton'* and even to impose his authority by relying on the
loyalty of the *sofa*.

There was another peculiarity in the fact that the principal allies of the Massa-si, the Konaré, called *Kala-n-ka-u* (people

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from Kala), are priests of the protective idol of the clan. This clan brotherhood is likewise very strong and gives valuable support to the fama by guaranteeing everyone's loyalty to him. Each army corps, each segment of the clan of whatever sort, is organized as a branch of this brotherhood, so that not only everything [330] that belongs to the clan but actually everything that touches it in any way is subject to the same religious guardianship.

In Kaarta, as in Ségou, the ton'-dyon' are divided into chiefdoms of varying importance. With the fama, the principal chiefs of the ton'-dyon' form a kind of permanent council of the clan. On the other hand, the familiars of the fama, chosen at his pleasure, constitute a privy council whose influence is often in conflict with the decisions and desires of the council of the dyon'-kuntigi.

As at Ségou, the supreme leader of the slaves has a very important position, but aside from the fact that he is a tool of the fama, the homogeneity of the ton' prevents him from developing into as dangerous an antagonist as the ton'-masa at Ségou.

The general assemblies are also somewhat different from those at Ségou. They are made up of other elements; in addition to the fama and his people, the dyon'-kuntigi, and the ton'-dyon, there are the allies, whose role is not insignificant, and also some important tributaries, Diawara and Kagoro, who make their importance felt and thus influence the fama. Hence, especially when grave situations arise, these assemblies have a certain amount of independence which imposes decisions on the fama.

The revenue of the clan, generally speaking, does not differ from that at Ségou.

In conclusion and by way of comparison with the people of Ségou, the clan of the Massa-si appears to be more homogeneous because in the beginning it was not restricted by the framework of a pre-existent native institution. It was formed and developed freely through the initiative of the Massa-si family, which always jealously safeguarded its management.

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614 On the other hand, it closely resembles the clan of the Khasso region, on which we have published a detailed study (1). [331]

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1. See Les Khassonké in the series Revue du Monde musulman.

Chapter 6

Islam

1. Islamism and Paganism

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797 It is a commonplace to say that the Bambara are implacable enemies of Islam.

However, history shows that for centuries the Bambara have been living in contact with Islam, that they maintain close relations with native communities of Islamic converts, and that they are willing to seek the good offices of marabouts of all races and ranks.

Are they, besides, as refractory to conversion as they are said to be? The chiefs of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta and some of their near connections and intimates, as well as other notables, have been practicing Islam. The Somono, who are of Bambara extraction, are faithful believers and, what is even more significant, they are fervent propagandists for Islam.

Actually, paganism and Islamism are not mutually antagonistic dogmas in the minds of the Bambara or of the Sudanese people in general, as many Europeans believe and state it to be. In these regions, Islamization has a counterpart which prepares the way for it and explains it, and that is the "sudanization" of Islam.

During his sojourn in Kaarta Raffenel tells of an interesting incident: "I had as a landlord a blacksmith named Niany, a grotesque personage, excessively naive and with a corresponding sense of logic, but a good fellow and very amusing. One day he

613 reputation for integrity and impartiality than for his knowledge of the books. In other matters, however, his Moslem esoterism is the quality most highly valued.

771 797 It is assumed, besides, that the high priests and other persons of note should be initiated into Islamic matters, which seem to be regarded simply as a branch of occultism to which such persons are especially addicted. The Kouloubali, the Dyara, and other lords of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta have practiced Islamism (1) without betraying paganism; on the contrary, by adding to it the luster of these foreign mysteries, it can be said that they have "Sudanized" Islam as completely as possible. Neither Mamari nor Ngolo, for example, was in the least embarrassed by his Moslem practices. Both remained high priests of their tutelary idols and simply borrowed (2) the external "manner" of Islam.

The bloodthirsty Dékoro was a Moslem of the same type. He was preparing to perform his ablutions, followed by his faithful blacksmith, at the very moment when he was assassinated by Tonmassa. And the blacksmith was actually carrying one of the satala which father Niany regarded as so compromising.

614 797 Naturally, the adoption of Islam was never allowed to create any political deviation which might compromise the interests of the clan. That would be treason, and such was the case for Touro-koro Mari. He was put to death not because he was converted to Islam, but because he had enfeoffed himself to El Hadj Omar to such an extent that the clan's independence was threatened.

1. In the Sudanese manner, of course.

2. This borrowing is done with the same awkwardness as that seen when a Black puts on a suit of European clothes which happens to come into his possession. The ease with which an occasional native can adapt it is exceptional.

175 When Omar left Ségou in April, 1862, [343] to march
797 against Handallahi, he left his son Ahmadou in command, backed by a guard of 1,500 tabilés and the support of the Bambara chiefs who had sworn loyalty to him.

3. The Results

175 It is usual to consider Omar's warlike enterprises solely from the point of view of Islam and to attribute their purpose
● 614 and result to Peul proselytism. Such an explanation is dubious
797 at best and in any case is very ambiguous. This question, however, involves a detailed study which is beyond the scope of this work, so we shall limit ourselves here to the subject at hand.

Omar replaced the clans of Kaarta and Ségou with the clan of the "people of Fouta," claiming that his conquests were due to a desire to convert the Bambara to Islam. In reality, this Moslem label did not change the native customs in the least; the clan of the people of Fouta proved to be conditioned and dominated by the same principles as the clans of Kaarta and Ségou.

The composition of this clan is a proof of this similarity. Omar and his community are at the head of an association made up of the tabilés, the people of Fouta, the usual sofa and ton'dyon', and the tuburu, who are people converted to Islam by force. All these people, linked by material interests, are brought together by a common faith. Leaders of the slaves hold important military or political posts. What is there in all this that is not already to be found in what we have discussed before? The means used to gain power are identical, and the only thing that differs is the label. It is claimed that Islam instead of paganism constitutes the motivating force.

In general, the evolution of this clan differs not at all from that of the clans already discussed; it can be described in the same terms.

175 A man of remarkable intelligence and powers of leader-
797 ship, Omar would probably have given his achievements the cohesion and stability needed to make them endure if he had lived long enough. However, he died too soon before he had

2. Taboos

114 825 184 The Bambara people are divided into several families or lineages each of which bears a special name, or diamou, and sees at its head /16/ certain plants or animals as protectors and patrons. The Djara lineage claims kinship with the lion, the kana, or iguana (1), the boumou, or dondol; the Dambélé with a large black monkey called Ngoba; the Tankara with a spiney silk-cotton tree, the dondol; the Kouloubali with the wild pig /biche cochon?/, the Mpolio (2), and the panther. There is not a lineage that does not have one or even several tné, or taboos. As will be seen below, lineages of the same name often regard themselves as bound by a tie of fraternity and friendship, while a difference in the tné shows, that a division occurred at some particular time.

[136] 1. A kind of large lizard resembling a small alligator. It lives on river banks and near ponds, and though it prefers the land and climbs trees, it likes to play in the water. The French commonly call it gueule tapée /"smart jaw"/.

2. A slimy and spined fish.

Europeans, churchmen, military men, and civilians, usually call the Bambara tné "totems." Since Long, the one to speak first of "totemism" and "totems," this question has been treated at length by serious and distinguished authors, by competent authorities. Their definitions cannot be applied to the Bambara tné. Striking as is the resemblance of some of them to the totems of the Redskins and the Australians, I cannot apply to them the definition given by Nicolay in speaking of the Redskins: "The Redskins also believe in the existence of spirits peculiar to individuals (as fetishes are to Africans) and which, in animal form, bear the names of totems." (3) The

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3. /Fernand/ Nicolay, /*Curiosités des lois et coutumes.*/ *Histoire des croyances*, /*superstitions*, / *moeurs*, /*usages et*/ *coutumes* /(*selon le plan du Décalogue*) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. The History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Manners, Ways, and Customs (according to the outline of the Decalogue)/. / Vol. 1, Book 1, Chap. 1. /Paris, 1901.?

Bambara *tné* are completely different from fetishes and have nothing in common with the latter. In a chapter (1901, p. 61) of his work, "myths, cultes et religions /Myths, Cults, and Religions/, A. Lang defines totemism for us thus:" The word "totemism" or "totamism" was applied for the first time by Long... to the customs of the Indians.. which acknowledges kinship with animals.... Totemists spare animals which are of their flesh and blood...." According to A. Lang, the Redskins and Australians believe themselves to be truly and physically related to the animal-totem, and they number among their grandparents /17/ a doe, a toad, an ant, a rabbit, etc. All actual physical kinship is of course communicated by means of blood, and two beings who have in their veins the blood of the same individual are related. In order to be of the same flesh and blood as their totems, the Redskins and Australians thus believe themselves to be actual sons of an ancestor who formerly was a doe, toad, ant, rabbit.... In Chapter II of his work *Histoire des croyances*, *moeurs et coutumes*, Nicolay gives one to understand that the Redskins believe that at the moment of death the spirit of their ancestor found shelter in the body of the animal which serves as totem; is it possible that Lang, who is silent on this point, is unaware of Indian beliefs in metamorphosis and metempsychosis? He does not report the fact anywhere in his work *Myths*, *cultes et religions*, but whatever hypothesis one may make on this point, the fact remains that according to him Indian beliefs imply a real physical kinship. If one assumes that the first ancestors of the Indian were changed or metamorphosed at some

614 825 784 given moment into a doe, toad, ant, or rabbit -- a singular evolution if ever there was one, one may suppose that at the moment of the metamorphosis these animals did not exist and they are all, men and animals, of the same flesh and the same blood; or, more plausibly, the ancestors changed themselves into already existing animals, procreating among them does, toads, ants, or rabbits as they had formerly reproduced human beings, so that in killing one of these totem animals a Redskin must always be afraid that he is killing a son or grandson of the ancestor, or some other of the latter's descendants, and therefore of his own flesh and blood (1).

1. /sic/ A. Lang does not seem to doubt that the people of whom he speaks -- Redskins, Tahitians, and Africans -- give a very broad meaning to the words "father," "mother," "brother," "wife," "son," and that they customarily use them to refer to persons with whom they have no bond of kinship.

[578] There is nothing like this for a Bambara. To call someone a wild animal is in his eyes an insult, and to call a man the son of a dog (oulou den) is enough to make him angry, to throw him into a fit of anger; even if he has a dog for a tné, that is a wrong which will sooner or later be avenged. He does not number among his ancestors a dog, or a panther, a lion or a snake. A Kouloubali would be much surprised to learn that a doe gave birth to him, and there is not a Tankara who thinks he has /18/ the sap of the dondol or the juice of its fruit in his veins. When a Djara calls himself the son of a lion, or a Dambélé the son of a big black monkey, what they say must be understood in a very broad sense, as an analogy. We ourselves say of a special benefactor: "He is my father," "he is my mother," "he is my all."

171 614 825 784 Here the Bambara is akin to the Christian Quichés of Guatemala of whom D. G. Brinton speaks in his "Nagualism," 1294, -- O. Stoll

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in his Die Ethnologie der Indianerstämme von Guatemala /The Ethnology of the Indian Tribes of Guatemala/, Leyden, 1882. This work is cited by Lang in Chap. III of Mythes, cultes et religions. His tné is a friend, a protector, and may be defined as follows: it is an animate or inanimate being entitled to the respect and veneration of an entire lineage, family, or clan, in recognition of an outstanding service which has prevented the lineage, family, or clan from disappearing or becoming extinct, or has preserved them from a misfortune.

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Every tne has its legend. Although in the mouth of the black man the tale may be embellished and decorated a little so that it varies somewhat, the substance remains the same. I will translate a few of these legends, preserving both their form and their substance.

Legend of the Two Kouloubali

The people were at war; everywhere there were only fugitives. The Kouloubali lineage had been cruelly stricken and reduced to two members, two brothers lost in the bush with their wives and children. The elder who followed /sic/ his brother at a distance, (since for fear of being surprised, they avoided camping in the same place). He arrived at the bank of a swollen river and saw he could not cross, there being no boats. "Where can I flee now?" he lamented. "I am in the hands of my enemies! For me and my family it is death or slavery." A mpolio was passing by; it heard, was touched by compassion, and, raising its big, bearded head out of the water, called to him: "I can take you over, have no fear!" The elder of the Kouloubali and his family, with their weapons and baggage, settled themselves on the slimy back of the strange fish and crossed the river. Then he said to the fish: "Listen, good mpolio, my brother and his family are over there on the bank. Do not render them the /19/ service that you rendered me, for he is an ingrate, one without a heart, and he might kill you." -- "Kill me? Come now!" and the fish dove, disappeared, and emerged far over near the other bank, at the moment when the young Kouloubali was wondering how his older brother had been able to cross such a wide

773 and deep river when there were no boats. "It is thanks to me," said
614 the mpolio, "place yourself on my spine as he did." And so the
539 younger brother and his wives crossed the river.

784 The young Kouloubali was heartless. When the women had put
down their gourds and baskets on the bank, at the moment when the
825 mpolio leaped up and raised the full height of its body out of the
water in order to dive and disappear, he threw his spear at it. The fish struggled for an instant, the water foamed, reddened, and then there was quiet: it was dead.

The family of the young Kouloubali cut up the animal and, without shame or remorse, invited the family of the elder brother to come to the feast. "Eat the mpolio," cried the latter, "never! And may there be a curse on any of mine that dares to eat it." Since that day, the mpolio has been the tné of the descendants of the elder Kouloubali.

To some extent it is also the tné of the descendants of the younger brother, but they eat it except for the head.

Legend of a Branch of the Taraoulé

A woman saw all her children die, and so she trembled for her last born, a sickly, puny little boy whom her milk did not help. One day she was alone in her hut crouched on her mat with the child on her knees, spinning cotton when she began to cry and moan: "You will not live, you will join your elder brothers, you will go away and leave me alone." A spitting snake was passing by; he came in and gently coiled himself around the body of the child. The mother let out a cry, and the neighbors came running.... The snake slowly uncoiled and left the dwelling while the child held his arms out to it and smiled. He did not die but became strong and healthy, for the snake had drunk all the gnâma, all elements of illness that were in him. From that day on the Taraoulé branch of which this child is the father does not eat the spitting snake, or n'gorono, for the curse of the ancestor would descend on them: that is, the spitting snake is their tné. /20/

Legend of Another *Taraoulé* Branch

773 A woman was fetching wood in the forest when she was seized
● 614 with the pains of childbirth. "All alone, what will become of me?"
539 she cried. "I have no one to help me; who will wash my child? Oh!
784 I will take a corpse home with me." She knelt by her load of wood,
825 gave birth to her child, collapsed, and lost consciousness. A big black monkey was munching fruit in a near-by tree; it saw her and was moved.... It played midwife, washed the little creature, rocked him in its arms, and when the mother came to herself it gave her back her little boy. From that day on no descendant of this *Taraoulé* branch eats *ngoba*; this big black monkey is their *tné*, and the ancestor would curse anyone who did so.

Legend of the Two *Djara*

Two *Djara* brothers with wives and children were fleeing before their enemies. Overcome with fatigue they sat down in the shade of a *dondol* determined to go no farther. Actually, they were so plagued by thirst that they could not go on. An iguana was wandering in the vicinity; it had pity on the two *Djara*, so it climbed the *dondol* and, working with its tail and feet, succeeded in producing a gentle dew under the tree. All were able to quench their thirst with the sap held in the calyxes of this tree's blossoms. "The *kana* (iguana) shall from now on be my *tné*," said the elder, "and I curse any one of my descendants who kills or eats it." -- "Think it over," said the younger, "is it not to the *dondol* that we owe our lives? Is it not its sap that quenched our thirst? Would it not be better to take this tree as *tné*?" The two *Djara* argued, could never agree, and separated. The *kana* became the *tné* of the older branch, and the *boumou*, or *dondol*, that of the younger branch.

Legend of the *Samaké*

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614 My grandfather has often told it to me; he himself got it from
539 his ancestors.... A *Samaké* -- I cannot tell whether he had been
784 fording the river or driving the stakes to which fishing mats are fastened
825 -- was seized by an alligator which dragged him to the depths of its den. The alligator did not kill him, /21/ for it had fed.... Leaving the unhappy man to his sad thoughts, it withdrew.... It did not go away, however, and from time to time it hit the water with its tail at the entrance of the hole, making it quite clear that there was only one way out and that this was the door. Stretched out in the ooze, the unhappy *Samaké* moaned: "Who will save me from those terrible claws and those powerful teeth?" An ant lion at the top of the den was watching for flies and ants in the bottom of its pit; it had pity on the man and, working with its two horns, succeeded in bringing in a ray of sunlight to revive the hopes of the *Samaké*. "Will I be saved?" he asked the ant lion. Two pinches of sand were the answer, and he understood. Working with both hands, he helped the ant lion; the hole grew and he was able to get through. He escaped. When the alligator re-entered its den, exhausted with hunger, it was disappointed not to find its prey there. So as not to invite the curse of their ancestor, the descendants of this *Samaké* respect and venerate the *géré*, or ant lion, and it is their *tné*. Other *Samaké* have the elephant *(sama)* for their *tné*.

773 These few legends are sufficient; they all show us that although
825 the Bambara believes that the bond with the *tné* is simply one of
811 fraternity, friendship, and gratitude and not a bond of real and
772 physical kinship, he nonetheless does not fail to attribute reason and emotion to everything around him, to animals and to plants. In nature he does not find pure matter; rather he attributes human feelings in some degree to everything, and throughout he sees a force, a power, an intangible, which he does not know how to define and which thinks, loves, laments, and weeps.

582 The Bambara tné differs further from the totem of the Redskin
614 and the Australian: it creates no obstacle to marriage between lineages of the same tne or of different tne. Each man takes a wife wherever he finds her and where he thinks best, and through these alliances the lineages mingle, cross, and recross. They do not merge, however,
[531] since the husband keeps his name, or diamou, and with it his tné; he does not take that of his wife. As to the children, they have their father's tné, and his only. And it is his name, or diamou, they bear. /22/

184 The Bambara tné is nothing less than a taboo /sic/. The word itself is very vague and difficult to translate into our French language. It implies primarily a prohibitive command, an order not to do, not to act. Whenever a competent authority -- an alleged genie, such as a boli (who speaks and gives his oracles through the mouth of a herald or interpreter, the djélimac) or a priest of the genii (djiné) believed to preside over the elements, the dougoutigi (who actually does nothing without consulting his council and the sorcerers) whenever the sorcerer (the intermediary between man and the invisible world) or a priest of the shades of the ancestors' (1) --, that is, an authority of a religious character, forbids eating, killing, or looking at an animal; cutting, breaking, or using an object; drinking such-

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[596] 1. This term seems to me the most accurate. Undoubtedly, the gouatigi, or head of the family makes the sacrifices, but his position does not always correspond to what we call in French the father of the family. He is not always married; although all the family except his mother, brothers, and sisters call him m'fa, "my father," the word "father" should be taken in a very broad sense, as he is quite often only a grand-uncle, an uncle, or a cousin.

144 Third group (southern): four peoples, the Diallonké [Dialonke], the Samo, the Samorho, and the Sia; plus four small tribes of doubtful classification, the Blé, the Natioro, the Ouara, and the Sembla.

More recent studies by Urvoy, Dr. Pales, and Mlle. Tassin de Saint-Péreuse involving very numerous measurements will soon permit determination of the racial characteristics of the Sudanese populations and the establishment of a new classification.

B. Geographical Distribution

131 In his study of the Bambara of Ségou, Charles Monteil tells us that it is impossible to determine what the precise boundaries of the Bambara empire were, because a frontier as we understand it has no meaning for the Black. The empires did not seek to dominate such and such a region; their goal was, above all, the exploitation of the greatest possible number of individuals, without regard to localities or races.

At the present time, the Encyclopédie coloniale et maritime
131 [Colonial and Maritime Encyclopedia] considers that [3] the Bambara
162 form a group of about a million individuals who extend west-east from the region of Siguirio as far as Macina along both sides of the Niger and the Bani rivers, and south-north from the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta to Sahel de Nioro. In addition, there are 40,000 in Senegal: peanut farmers near Kaolack, Thiès, and Diourbel, and captives at Fouta Toro, Saint-Louis, etc. But they are most numerous in the circles [a "circle" is an administrative division] of Bamako (310,000), Ségou (190,000), and Bougouni (110,000). To
[563] these one may add 125,000 Métis [mixed bloods], Peul-Bambara, of whom 72,000 live in the Bougouni circle alone.

131 More precisely, the great mass of the Bambara is distributed in a region that may be delimited as follows.

619 To the northwest, three tribes have been catalogued in the Kaarta: the Dianguirté in the circle of Nioro, the Niamassa at Nioro, and the Massassi to the south of Nioro.

To the north, in the Sahel, the region of Bakounou and Waghadou is inhabited by the Kalongo tribe.

To the northeast, the Bambara live in the Macina, the Issa Ber, the region of Goundam, and up to Timbuktu.

|3| To the east, they are found in the Bendougou, Minianka
619 (the banks of the Niger and the Bani to the south of San and Ségou being occupied by the caste of Somono fishermen), and Kénédougou regions.

To the south, in the Ouassoulou.

To the southwest, in the Manding, the Bélédougou, and Fouladougou regions.

To the west, in the Kangaran, the Bambouk, and the Guidimaka regions on the banks of the Senegal.

In short, the habitat of the Bambara lies within a large V formed by the upper Senegal and the upper Niger.

C. Neighboring Tribes

|10| The Bambara are the most important people of the western Sudan and of the southern circles. Nevertheless, they are very mingled with other populations according to the regions we shall further define.

Among these other populations the principal ones are:

The Peul (Foula [Fulah], Foulbé [Fulbe], Fellata [Felata], a nomadic population found throughout West Africa from Senegal to the Egyptian Sudan. They speak the same language as the Toucouleur [Tukolor] Popular.

The Malinké, an important Mandingue people who speak a dialect close to Banmana and who are found in Guinea and in the Sudan (Satadougou, Nioro, Kayes, Bafoulabé, Kita, Bamako, Bougouni).

The Kassonké, who live in the Senegal Valley upriver from Kayes, are of mixed Malinké and Toucouleur origin; they speak a dialect close to Malinké.

The Sarakolé, Soninké or Marka, are an ancient people linked to the history of the empire of Ghana; they speak a Mandingue dialect related to Bambara. Those of Kouroumari speak Bambara and are of mixed Bambara blood.

[4] In Mourdiah, out of 14,000 Marka, a large proportion is Bambarized.

The Songhaï, a people of the middle Niger, have swarmed from the region of Niamey up to Lake Débo and Djenné.

564 engage only in agriculture. Furthermore, casual or temporary practice, in one's own home, for instance, of one of the reputedly menial trades is not considered degrading.

567 596 614 Theoretically, enslavement does not exclude an individual from his own community nor in any way demean him in relation to it (1); if he returns, he recovers his rights just as though he had never been away.

On the other hand, at the place where he is a slave, an individual belongs to no community (as a person), and that is why he has no rights and is treated as a chattel.

567 We have shown earlier how, aided by time and circumstances, a slave may manage to escape some of the limitations of his status, but strictly speaking, [222] he can never escape this status. If in fact, as the chronicle says of Ngolo Dyara, a slave succeeds in attaining a position whose importance would seem to obliterate the stigma of servitude, the blemish of slavery nevertheless remains indelible.

4. Relations between Communities

596 614 621 The true social unit is the community. Even when no special organization links them, communities are often linked by numerous bonds. This involves no distinction by race, incidentally, since more often than not ethnically diverse peoples live together in the same region.

These bonds between communities may be classified under two heads: kinship and alliance.

Kinship

[602] The influence of kinship is very extensive. Thus, a single patriarchal community includes the familial communities

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1. For example, Déssé-Koro, taken in captivity to Ségou, returned to Kaarta where he exercised the faya of the Massa-si.

596 of all the male members of the community, and agnate and
614 uterine communities coexist in each familial community.
● 621 Furthermore, every familial community automatically becomes
602 a patriarchal community upon the death of its head, and it is
then composed of its own familial communities.

What actually happens, then, is that under the original patriarchal community are grouped an ever increasing number of other patriarchies or families, each of which includes its agnate or uterine communities. When the original patriarchy is an old one, it is obvious that a large number of persons will be living under its aegis, all of whom have dyamu and tne in common.

It may happen, however, that through time and a variety of circumstances branches become separated from the trunk, and to mark their new status, to perpetuate the memorable achievement of their founder, some of these groups have adopted a special dyamu and particular tne. At first the new dyamu is simply added to the original one, but later on the new one comes to be the only one used. However that may be, the principal characteristics [223] of the original community still persist, with a few new traits merely superimposed.

Since every secondary community in turn generates like communities, it goes without saying that the communities most distant from the original one have only a few traits in common with it, but their kinship never becomes extinct.

What are the effects of this kinship? On the one hand, it requires all concerned to observe their common duties to the community: in particular to respect ancestral traditions relative to the cult; to give mutual aid; to recognize the authority of the current fa who, for his part, is obliged to protect all his relatives, no matter how remote the connection.

As far as outsiders are concerned, kinship requires everyone to respect all pacts between communities. One can often observe fidelity to these alliances which may be hundreds of years old. If by chance people who have previously never seen each other learn of their respective dyamu and the attendant obligations, they will at once assume the reciprocal obligations contracted by their ancestors.

Alliance

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The types of alliance between communities appear to differ widely, but in actual fact all alliances are based on a religious or magic rite and, more generally, on an oath.

Four forms of alliance particularly deserve attention: the *tne* or interdict, the oath, marriage, and the common cult.

I. *The tne*. The native regards the invisible world as a duplicate of the visible world, complete with communities. He carries the analogy even to those things which we call inanimate objects. That is why, when a native binds himself to an interdict, he is not promising to respect such and such a person or thing but, rather, the community of which he believes the person or thing to be a representative. Besides, just as the interdict applies to the whole community to which the object of the interdict belongs, it also binds all the members of the community whose *fa* instituted it. [224]

The basis of the alliance is the oath of the *fa*, any infraction of which automatically brings the most dreadful calamities upon the guilty party. It is like a sacrament, which the descendants of the *fa* must respect *in infinitum*.

The chronicle of Ségou shows us how such an oath happens to be made. Upon reaching the Niger, and having no means of crossing it, Ntchi in his peril called upon his ancestors for help. His prayer was answered: a *poyon'* appeared and ferried him and his people to the opposite shore. In gratitude for this service, Ntchi swore that the fish would henceforth be sacred to him and to his descendants. By this act, all *poyon'* became *tne* for Ntchi and his descendants, although this does not mean that there was a cult of the fish. It was a kind of alliance or covenant, analogous to one between human communities and with similar effects; it entailed some sort of reciprocal brotherly mutual aid. In practice, a Kouloubali descended from Ntchi must never, under any circumstances whatsoever, voluntarily harm a *poyon'*, his *tne*, on pain of the most disastrous consequences. If he has done so inadvertently, he can atone with sacrifices or appropriate penance, which his own intuition or a diviner suggests. He must always, in so far as the need arises,

596 assist his tne, while showing it the greatest respect. The mysti-
614 cal basis of this alliance sometimes causes the native to behave
● 621 in a particular way toward his tne: he will not look straight at
784 it; he will not touch it, unless absolutely forced to do so, and
then he will apologize and ask forgiveness.

Anything may be the object of a tne, but there is probably not a single Bambara family which does not have some animal as tne. Expressions which the natives in general and the Bambara in particular use to make foreigners understand their relations with this animal tne have made many Europeans think that the native regards the animal as a relative in the literal sense of the word. This is not the case, as we have just seen, and consequently Bambara totem is a purely European invention (1). [225]

1. It should be understood that the tne has many sources besides one mentioned here, which is the only one pertinent to this chapter. Thus, Bala refused to pronounce any word having the syllable da (p.); Sounsan abstained from the kulé (p. , footnote 1).

596 II. The oath. In native society, a man who is ambitious
614 or merely anxious to establish a powerful community can do so
621 only with the support of faithful allies. Massa and Biton not only
608 succeeded in dominating their young companions, but they also
bound them closely through the oath and the cult.

Undoubtedly all the founders of powerful communities have not proceeded in exactly the same way, but all of them have employed analogous methods. An isolated individual can accomplish nothing in this social milieu where everything rests on these strongly organized collectivities, the communities. Any Bambara eager for well-being and peace will seek out and attach himself to a "powerful protector" (dyigi seme) capable of providing him with this security, even if it means the loss of his own

596 freedom. That is why any important fa is invariably surrounded
614 by a small group of intimates who are bound to his fate, often
●621 by a reciprocal agreement based on an oath.

608 One of these sacramental alliances is particularly solemn; its purpose is to create a kind of kinship analogous to that which links blood brothers. There is always a profound difference between natural and contractual brotherhood, since the former exists and produces its effects independently of the will of those involved, whereas the latter exists and is valid only within the limits agreed upon by the contracting parties (1).

For a pact of brotherhood (dyonge) (2), the contracting parties, whether two or several, proceed as they see fit, either in public or privately in the presence of only close relatives and intimates. Each party to the agreement pricks his forearm and extracts a few drops of blood. The blood thus obtained is mixed with a small quantity of goat's milk in a receptacle. Calling upon the ancestors or some god chosen for the occasion to bear witness, each party in turn promises with a solemn oath to consider the others as his brothers. At the same time, he repeats the [228] conditions of the pact and finally sips some of the liquid.

This is the closest alliance that two Bombara can contract (1). Among other things, it forbids one to marry women

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1. It should be noted that fraternization in its symbolic form has a necessary consequence which is not obligatory for other types of alliance by oath: it obligates the descendants of the contracting parties just as much as those undertaking the contract.

2. This term unquestionably derives from the verb siri, "to link, to unite."

1. Blood-brotherhood was contracted

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* between Deni-ba Bo for the Massa-si of Kaarta and Suleyman Ba for the people of Fouta.

belonging to the other's community, at least virgins or women reputed to be such. This is because a first sexual contact is likely to result in some flow of blood, and brotherhood imposes a terrible punishment on anyone who sheds the blood of a blood-brother or one of his people. As is apparent, the obligation undertaken by the contracting parties holds for all their descendants, regardless of sex and in infinitum. Henceforth there is a very close solidarity between the two communities, who are so bound to mutual aid that, in practice, anything (including lies, slander, and perjury) is permissible to overcome a common enemy or, in any event, to help the ally in trouble.

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In place of the brotherhood oath, many other forms of oath can be used. Thus, the chronicles tell of Sounsan and Fa Siné forming an alliance with an oath which was undoubtedly binding, because the anvil on which it was sworn was afterwards cast into a well. Nko, Sounsan's god, received the oath under which the "young men" who were Massa's companions allied themselves to the latter's fate. At Ségou, the tondyon' likewise swore loyalty on the idols.

These sacramental agreements are endlessly varied, but they bind the parties only under the stipulated conditions, especially as regards the respective communities of the fa who take the oath.

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III. Marriage. There is no better way for a Bambara to show his attachment to someone whose alliance or friendship he desires than by giving him as a wife one of the girls of his own community and providing her with a generous dowry. This is one of the most solemn forms of alliance between communities (2).

2. People united by marriage are called furu-nyuan' (spouses) and biran' (allies).

596 This conjugal union differs clearly from [227] ordinary
614 forms of marriage. In view of the fact that the husband gets a
wife without paying a bride price for her, the wife is not given
●621 in usufruct, and therefore she must be treated with the greatest
583 consideration or she may be taken back. The situation can only
be normalized if the husband is rich enough to present to the
donor a gift equal to or preferably, if possible, greater than the
dowry brought by the wife, or he may give a similar gift to the
wife (1).

1. Such property is the wife's paraphernalia.

In these situations also, the procedure varies a great deal. The donor may offer a girl from another community and provide her with a dowry. This is what Biton did in order to bind Ngolo to him: Biton gave him a girl designated by the marabouts as one of the elect, and he also provided the girl with a rich dowry.

The significance of such alliances can be estimated only when one has some knowledge of the intentions of the parties involved, especially those of the donor. We shall see one important type in the chapter on Islam, the marriage of Allah.

IV. The common cult (2). The territorial community.

311 2. Communities may be united under the
621 protection of the same god. Here we shall
776 study only their union under the protection
794 of the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana
dugu-da-siri). Other common cults will be
studied in the following chapter, "Brotherhoods."

In the mind of the Bambara, the earth, together with everything in it, is the property of the spirits. As a result, no one may make use of it or presume to settle on or cultivate an unused field without first going through certain ceremonies.

For this purpose, either on his own responsibility or, more often, with the aid of "the one who knows" (don-na-ba), a

311 Bambara seeks the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-
621 siri) or, more exactly, determines where this genie dwells. It
776 may be a spring, a hill, or a rock; often it is a fine tree, in-
794 variably surrounded by a grove or at least with a grove nearby.
Then, always following the same procedure, he finds out the conditions under which the genie will allow someone to settle in his domain in order to live there and cultivate the lands. Thus, a contract is worked out which governs the man's exploitation of the genie's territorial domain. As a result, provided he worships the genie in the manner required, the man [228] will be able to work under the protection of the god. Anyone who has had a share in the contract, even if only through representatives, will likewise profit if he scrupulously observes the conditions.

621 The establishment of a village requires the cooperation of
several communities, each represented by its fa. One of these fa
622 will either appropriate the leadership or be chosen as the rep-
793 resentative or chief of the others. Sometimes he may be merely
794 primus inter pares; otherwise he may have managed to have his
primacy conceded by the rest. It is this chief who treats with the genie in the name of the whole village; thus, he becomes the "high priest of the genie" (nyana-n-son-na-ba) with the essential function of "making the offerings" (son') required by the cult. Furthermore, he administers the earthly domain of the genie and is therefore called dugu-tigi (master of the earth).

To the nyana dugu-da-siri is usually attributed the same dyamu as that of its high priest, just as though the genie belonged to the spiritual family of the priest. This is a result consistent with the mentality of the Bambara.

621 The same mental state accounts for the custom in certain
villages of dedicating a living animal, often a ram, to the
776 nyana dugu-da-siri and believing it to be the god's mount. The
778 animal is allowed to wander freely about the village, and its
[825] mischief is never punished; indeed, the people enjoy caressing
and indulging it. The animal takes on some of the attributes of the genie and is, as it were, endowed with certain supernatural virtues, so only good can come from contact with it.

621 Theoretically, each settlement has only one genie, but
776 actually it may have several, especially if it has been settled by

621 successive groups, each recognizing a genie-protector. In that
776 case, the genie first recognized and worshiped takes precedence
over the others. In any case, social life requires each segment
to respect the gods of its neighbors, and this respect carries with
it a certain amount of superstitious fear.

311 It is evident from the foregoing that occupying and
cultivating land poses certain problems for the settlement bene-
621 fited, and these may be grouped under three heads: the cult of
794 the genie-protector; the exploitation of the land; and the or-
ganization of the territorial community.

793 The cult. This is mainly supported by the high priest,
whose principal duty is to "make the offerings" (son') to the
794 "genie" [229] (nyana), hence his title nyana-son-na-ba. He
is assisted by the council of fa, one of whom, the syere (follower), may replace him in case of need. The office of high priest is for life and is inherited in the same way as his faya. This continuity shows that the genie is actually regarded as a kind of spiritual ancestor of the priest, as we have seen from the fact that it is given the same dyamu as its high priest.

794 The cult ceremonies are very simple. They consist of
offerings made by the high priest, who at the same time indi-
796 cates to the genie the purpose for which they are being made.
The most solemn ceremonies take place when millet is sown and harvested. For these occasions, every worshiper is expected to bring a contribution in proportion to his resources. The kind of gift is not specified; everyone brings whatever he can or whatever he wishes, usually animals (sheep, beef, fowl, etc.), grain, and especially millet beer (dlo).

782 During these general gatherings, from which no one is
excluded, only the high priest and the members of the council
796 enter the sacred grove or approach the genie's abode. There,
778 the high priest makes known the purpose of the sacrifice: to
+ thank the genie for his past favors; to offer him the gifts brought
by everyone; and to ask him to continue to protect the community so that its prosperity may be assured. Then the victims are sacrificed, and their blood is sprinkled on the tree trunk or whatever object or place is reputed to be the home of the genie.

782 genie. The same is done with libations of *dlo* or the juice of
796 kola nuts. Since anything offered to the genie is supposed to be
784 consumed on the spot, an orgy lasting for several days usually
follows.

782 In addition to these two great obligatory ceremonies especially concerned with the exploitation of the land, the god's protection is sought by similar, but much simplified means in all affairs whether they concern the entire settlement (wars, disasters), a particular patriarchal or familial community, or even a single individual. Through the high priest as intermediary, the offering and the request are made for the purpose indicated by the petitioner, who often promises to make a further gift to the genie when his wish has been granted. Vows of this type are made very frequently.

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769 The cult of his high [230] priests and of all the important men of the settlement is tied in with the cult of the genie, obviously a consequence of the fact that the genie is the spiritual patron of the community which honors him; its members are his children and with him form what amounts to a family. So, in line with what happens in a patriarchal or familial community, the territorial community also holds an annual festival for the dead, during which special honor is paid to noted personages, among whom deceased high priests have first place.

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793 *Exploitation of the land.* The high priest in charge of the cult likewise regulates everything concerning the exploitation of the terrestrial domain of the genie, and in this capacity he is known as the *dugu-tigi* (1), master of the earth. In this office he has the help of the council of *fa*, and in important matters he must follow their advice.

With the help of this council, he allots the land when

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1. In line with common practice, I shall henceforth use this title to designate both capacities, the high priest and the master of the earth.

311 the community is founded. His permission is required before
621 anyone may build a dwelling in the portion reserved as the seat
423 of the community; the village is therefore kept within precise
793 limits. In practice, however, everyone builds wherever he
pleases if there is no objection. If there is an objection, the
dispute is settled by the *dugu-tigi* and his council.

Outside the village proper, the terrain includes fields
423 which, either at the start or during the course of settlement,
621 are allotted in perpetuity to the various *fa* of the community
by the *dugu-tigi* in council. Each *fa* and his dependents have
indefinite use of the same fields, although by law the authority
which assigned them may take them away without being
required to justify the act. This use is a kind of usufruct that is
more extensive than that of our law, since the beneficiary may
[425] use the land without restriction, except that he may not alienate
it. The tenant, however, may not use the land in any way that
might be prejudicial to the community as a whole without the
consent of the *dugu-tigi* and council. For example, such would
be the case if he proposed to give his right of use to an outsider.

Any land not specifically allotted [231] and anything it
produces or contains belongs, theoretically, to the member of
the community who cultivates it. Certain fruits or produce,
however, are sometimes reserved for the community as a whole:
the leaves or fruit of the baobab, karite, *nété*, tamarind trees,
etc.; the fish in certain ponds, watercourses, fluvial zones,
[476] etc.; the game in certain cantons, etc. On the dates set for
these collective enterprises by the *dugu-tigi* and his council,
the people proceed in a body to gather fruit, harvest the crop,
fish, or hunt. Sometimes each person is allowed to keep what
he has gathered; sometimes all the proceeds are collected for
the *dugu-tigi* to distribute according to custom. There are also
special regulations governing the extraction of matter or
materials from the ground.

621 *Organization of the territorial community*. The duties
of the *dugu-tigi* and his council are not limited to directing the
622 cult and regulating the use of land. Anything that happens
within the territorial community concerns the *nyana-dugu-da-siri*,
because the members of the community are his children

●621 622 (den'). Proof of this is seen in the fact that any important happening in a native's life is supposed to be reported to the dugu-tigi and in certain cases requires an offering or, as it is called, homage (bunya). We have seen this in the case of birth, giving a name, circumcision, marriage, and death. It is no less essential in cases of public disaster (epidemic, persistent drought, invasion, war).

621 622 692 In theory, the dugu-tigi does not intervene of his own accord in the private affairs of the patriarchal or familial communities which, when taken together, constitute the territorial unit we usually call a village (1). When a quarrel between relatives cannot be settled by the fa concerned, however, he asks for the intervention of the dugu-tigi and his council. If dissension arises between the people of different communities, the same arbitration is usually requested. As a result, a kind of tribunal of conciliation has evolved, which can only suggest what the parties should do or refrain from doing in order to put an end to the dispute. Theoretically, the dugu-tigi has no right to enforce the [232] verdict (1), because the communities are extremely jealous of their independence. As a consequence, they yield only to the extent that is in their best interests.

It may happen, however, that the dugu-tigi, supported by his council, does exert authority when he has the power and is seconded by notables who make common cause with him for

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1. The territorial community among the Bambara is called dugu, a term which at the same time means "land" and "among," "to," "within," etc., and which is preceded by a name recalling some circumstance involved with the founding of the village.

1. That is why litigation may be indefinitely prolonged.

● 621 various reasons. Thus, the dugu-tigi in council can invoke
622 police powers to maintain order in the community and even act
692 as a tribunal to punish those whose misdeeds in any way endanger the persons or property of members of the community.

621 Since the genie is expected to ensure the prosperity of
622 the faithful, it is the duty of the dugu-tigi to come to the assist-
[735] ance of members of the community who are unfortunate or indigent.

He must also maintain the relations of his community with the outside world, that is, with neighboring territorial communities and all other groupings, analogous or otherwise. He can act independently only in matters which we call purely administrative; for other matters he must have the assent of the council of fa, above all for any matter involving the disposal of community property.

621 It is obvious that all the roles of the dugu-tigi involve
622 expenses that are often considerable, but for this purpose he has
651 access to goods from many sources. In the first place, offerings made to the nyana are of various kinds; they are not always consumable, and even if they are, they are usually consumed only in part. The remainder belongs to the dugu-tigi. It is customary to give bunya (gifts of homage) to the dugu-tigi on many occasions: a hunt, a fishing expedition, millet harvest, etc.; to thank him for an allotment of land, or for some other service. Community property is farmed out for fees payable at fixed times, and tribute is paid in the same way. Most of the various kinds of infractions committed within the community are punished by fines received by the dugu-tigi. Incorrigible malefactors become slaves of the community, and the produce of their labors [233] goes to the dugu-tigi. Anything found abandoned on land belonging to the community is turned over to the dugu-tigi, in whole or in part.

In case of need arising through some exceptional emergency (war, an expedition, public works of various kinds, etc.), the dugu-tigi may have recourse to what we should call an emergency assessment, i.e., he may ask the members of the community for special contributions for the purpose.

621 622 651 652 These are the principal resources of the community treasury, which is held and administered by the dugu-tigi with the help and under the control of the fa. The dugu-tigi may use the treasury to help him perform his duties honorably, to assist unfortunate or indigent members of the community, to receive the guests of the community in a suitable manner, and to meet emergencies.

661 Under no circumstances does this treasury constitute any part of the personal fortune of the dugu-tigi. Only usurpation, which is fairly common under various guises, alters this state of affairs. In the same way, it is not uncommon for this wealth to be divided in some measure among the members of the council, who in one way or another appropriate it. Such abuses, no matter how common, do not in the least alter the principle that legally such wealth is and remains exclusively the property of the community. [234]

Chapter 4

Brotherhoods

1. The End of Childhood

794 881 General considerations. The cult of the ancestors and of the nyana dugu-da-siri are not enough for the Bambara in his efforts to make sure of the protection, help, and services of the invisible world. The magician has created for him some renowned protectors or servitors which are powerful and formidable: the nyana of the boli.

The cult of these gods gives rise to spiritual families whose members are so closely linked by the bonds of fraternity that we may safely say that these groupings are brotherhoods. All these brotherhoods share the common characteristic that no one can be received into them before having submitted to a certain rite called soli (1) or bolo-ko (1), terms which

1. Soli is the word for the action of piercing, emerging, laying an egg, or

794 clergy. On the other hand, an innocent man will be over-
696 whelmed by mental and physical torture if he is unable to give his executioners what they demand.

681 Corporal punishment includes flogging, chains, starvation, torture, and death by all imaginable methods. Pecuniary punishment includes fines, confiscation, and pillage. The condemned man is also sometimes forced to labor for the clergy or is even enslaved by them.

Social and Political Role of the Brotherhoods

794 By its actions, the brotherhood, an artificial family,
776 tends to take the place of the natural family whose organization it has borrowed and whose cult it has banished. It is easy to ac-
769 count for this.

The cult of the manes is the framework of the family and of the communities derived from it. The brotherhood has cleverly managed to set up such a cult by specially honoring the manes of its high priests, its famous members, and its eminent worshipers. [267]

Gradually, the nyana dugu-da-siri, protector of the territorial community, has given way to the nyana of the boli, a more powerful god since his territory is unlimited.

It is true that in spite of everything the tradition remains, and even though they are largely over-shadowed by the nyana of the boli, the manes of the ancestors and the nyana dugu-da-siri are still venerated. Though sowing and harvesting are celebrated
731 with great pomp by the brotherhoods, still, when a disaster, epidemic, or terrible drought occurs, sacrifices are promptly of-
782 fered to the manes and the gods of the place. People may fear their anger, but they also have confidence in their good will, and it is felt that their severity can always be tempered. On the other hand, the nyana of the boli are supposed to be basically evil, and their worship seems intended to ward off their malignity rather than to obtain their favor.

794 This duality in religion brings about extremely compli-
● 621 cated interrelationships which bind the communities and

794 621 brotherhoods together, although the latter seem to dominate the former. These brotherhoods hem in the communities they dominate by abusively extending their jurisdiction far beyond its proper limits. Indeed, the faithful are not the only ones who are subject to the judgments handed down by the brotherhoods, whose clergy make decisions affecting not only members involved but often also third parties in the neighborhood or even people from neighboring or distant regions. The brotherhoods are tyrannical toward their own members and no less so to strangers, who often see no way of escaping persecution short of asking to be received into the ranks.

794 661 182 Thus, it is apparent how a brotherhood increases in size and in power as time passes. Each year it takes in the young people at the end of the soli, and as a result all the communities are at length absorbed by it live in it and for it (1). It

[778] 1. The following is a typical example.

In the village of Marenna (Fouladougou Arbala), the natives belong to the cult of Ba-ku. This boli consists of a small sheaf of roots of the indigo tree. For every newborn child the nyana-tigi makes and consecrates a small Ba-ku, which he places in a gourd and puts in the temple of this nyana. At the time of the soli, the child becomes affiliated with the cult, takes the boli placed in the gourd for him at birth and henceforth wears it on his person. All the families in Marenna are thus closely involved in the cult of Ba-ku, being, as it were, engendered by this god to whom each person owes both physical and spiritual birth. Ba-ku comes from Sangaran, and his high priest is a Dyara; that is why he is invoked and called by the expression Ba-ku Dyara Sangaran-ka. The word ba-ku literally means "tail of a

631 Bambara, with whom we are here concerned. Each writer, however, uses these terms to refer to an ill-defined type of authority, sometimes without even attempting a critical comparison with similar institutions in our own countries.

This uncertainty is accompanied by other such doubtful similarities, which result in confused conceptions. Is it not common to speak of feudalism, of a feudal system, to describe the kind of hierarchy among various native chiefs? In the Sudan, 423 however, there is no connection between man and the land comparable to that which was the basis of the feudal system. Indeed, no such meaning is possible, since the Sudanese does not recognize any right of ownership of land. Therefore, political ties between native chiefs are never based on land; how then can one speak of a feudal system?

614 As a matter of fact, the social unit is the community based
621 on the family; it develops into a patriarchy and expands into a
631 tribe and a people. Its members are united by blood ties, which
are confirmed by the ancestor cult. [288]

Since they are proud and jealous of their freedom, communities seek to remain independent. Their relationships, however, determined especially the occupation and exploitation of a common territory, force them to give up this independence, and joining together in the same cult, the sign of their spiritual solidarity, they form a dugu (1).

1. This word is not without ambiguity. On the one hand, it means "that which is below," hence, "the soil"; on the other hand, it means "place," "residence," or "at the home of." It is understood to mean "territory" or "country" occupied by a human collectivity, and by an easily understandable deviation, it likewise designates the organization which governs this collectivity in relation to this territory.

614 621 631 The dugu have definite territorial domains, and they, too, prefer to live without the subordination of any one of them to the others, There are relationships between some of them, such as some being offshoots of others and, due to proximity, many matrimonial unions have bound them together.

Unavoidable necessity also often forces the dugu to form leagues, coalitions, or more often associations called kafu' (literally, "union"). Depending on the circumstances, a chief is elected by the association or he usurps the authority over it. This sometimes results in the creation of a political or administrative organization. The Ségala area, also called Sénébala, is an example. "It has a local history of several centuries, hereditary chiefs of several dynasties, social and matrimonial bonds and customary institutions which have persisted for generations; it is a nation and a fatherland" (2).

2. In Marty, Etudes sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan [Studies on Islam and the Tribes of the Sudan], Vol. 4, p. 105.

614 631 661 It also may happen that someone who becomes a chief will be so enamored with the exercise and the profits of power that with the support of his followers -- relatives or others -- he will manage to retain permanent control. This association is what we here call a clan; the Bambara designate it by the word ton', applicable to any association.

As an organism of authority, this clan may be defined as an oligarchic government founded for the sole purpose of subjugating, by any means, the individuals it can reach for the sake of exploiting them. Those who are enfeoffed to this government are called "the people of So-and-So" or "the people of such and such place" by the Bambara, as by other natives, [289] for example: the Massa-si-u (1),

1. From another point of view, Massa-si-u means "descendants of Massa," and hence, "the tribe of Massa."

614 794 leading men made use of the cults to realize their ambitious designs and to gratify their personal hatreds. From that point of view it can indeed be said that religion was a means of domination. It would be altogether too simple, however, to say that these cults had no other reason for existence than to maintain terror as the basis of the power of the fama. Any such facile opinion should be discarded, because the facts should be evaluated, not from the outside, but rather in the native milieu. It then certainly appears possible that they are of the same order as the many phenomena already examined.

This powerful religious focus animated the whole clan. Impetus, direction and control belonged to the fama, whose role was conditioned, as we have seen, by the attitudes of the furu-ba dyon' and especially of the ton'-dyon', both of which were represented by the dyon'-kuntigi who were, in a sense, their agents. Was it not inevitable that there should be a kind of spiritual current, supposedly emanating from the idols, which inspired the fama and the furu-ba dyon' and then returned to the idols in the form of a cult? How could such a constant preoccupation with the supernatural not make a deep impression? This preoccupation haunts the natives everywhere and always, [322] and they express it in ways that are in perfect harmony with their world, however ridiculous they may appear to European logic and reason.

614 621 The Ségou area acquired special importance because of the presence of the community of the fama, which settled there under remarkable circumstances.

It is usual in any important community for the first-born son to be set apart. Destined to succeed the fa upon his death, he is prepared for his future responsibilities by being given the management of a portion of the joint property. As the fa grows older, the role and the importance of this eldest son increase.

*173 614 When a community is sufficiently wealthy, a privileged position is likewise given to the eldest sons of the other wives of the fa, because he is always forced to distribute favors equally among his various wives whose jealousy may have far-reaching effects. Upon the death of a fa, many difficulties arise, stemming from his all too obvious preferences. An example of this was the

596 The fa. -- The whole of this family obeys the same head: the fa. The fa is designated by a council of elders when he fulfills the following conditions: first, not to refuse the faya and to be a member of the community, that is, actually to live within the community; next, he must never have been a slave, and he must not have settled abroad without hoping to return home. In addition, he must be a legitimate child, that is to say, born in wedlock, and the firstborn. In principle, the faya passes from older to younger brother (in the classificatory sense of the term). Thus, the fa is always the member of each generation closest to the ancestor. Finally, the fa must be able, that is, healthy, active, and a good administrator. Often the fa designates his successor before his death. The successor may assume power only 40 days after the death of the last fa, and after being recognized as head of the family by the assembly of elders. From that moment on, he exercises his functions, come what may. [567] [848]

The fa has charge of, and the moral and physical responsibility for, the whole community. He directs and protects all the members of the family. These latter can escape his authority only by leaving the village for good; they are then considered to be dead members. (The descendants of the fa by his daughters are outside of the community; they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.)

The fa, head of the family, lives under the administrative dependence of the head of the village.

2. From Family to Community

621 The true social unit is the community. Ties of kinship and marriage unite groups without racial or ethnic unity.

622 a. Patriarchal Organization of the "Ton." -- All the family heads obey a village head: it is on him that the responsibility falls for the organization of the community territory, as well as the responsibility for administering justice when contention arises between followers of different faya. The village chief is generally master of the land: dugu-kolo-tigi; sometimes [54] he cedes his rights to a village administrative chief younger than himself, but in matters of religion he remains all-powerful, and each year he receives gifts from the different family heads for the needs of the common cult. He also

622 gives the orders concerning local celebrations and initiations.

In fact, the land originally belongs to spirits, and the chief
622 who succeeds the founder of the village is the only one who is able
776 to establish contact with the chief of the spirits and negotiate with
him. He is the earthly administrator of the spirit; he assures his
worship, the exploitation of the land, and the organization of the
community territory.

621 The first chief of the land was the first occupant; the suc-
622 ceeding chiefs are his heirs, following the order of succession. To
found a new village, a chief chooses a place in unoccupied terri-
tory, usually at a crossroads, near a water source, near a baobab,
778 a *doubalé*, or other sacred tree. He offers sacrifices to the spirits
824 and receives in exchange their authorization to settle. If his group
prospers, and less fortunate families want to establish themselves
in this well-favored location, they ask the chief for authorization.
However, as Monteil (1) remarks: "... The *fa* of a familial community depends strictly on the patriarchy only if, attached to it by the male line, he holds some goods of the patriarchy or if he claims rights in this patriarchy. In the contrary case, the family *fa* conducts himself as a stranger in relation to the patriarchy, which can only treat him in like fashion ..." Every familial community becomes patriarchal at the death of the family head when he has no heirs (see the chapter on inheritance); the community then groups around itself familial communities which themselves include paternally related groups and maternally related groups. When the patriarchy is an old one, a considerable number of persons live under its aegis. All recognize *dyamu* and taboos (see below) in common.

621 When the settlement becomes too populous, a *fa* gathers a
631 group and founds another village. Afterwards, the people of neigh-
boring districts may solicit the patronage of the first village, by
participating in its *djo* (2) and by sacrificing to its guardian spirits.

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1. Monteil, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta* [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

2. See the chapter on religion.

621
631 The cluster of all these villages forms a kafo or kafu (canton) which includes the original family, its oldest neighbors, the inhabitants of other villages, and, finally, the outsiders. All these people acknowledge common interests, and the villages of the same canton send representatives to the assembly which meets at the chief's residence. Thus, the large family grows into a patriarchy to form the dugu (village) and spreads out into a kafu. Sometimes, after these branchings out, certain offshoot communities adopt a special dyamu and other taboos. The new dyamu is joined to the old, and little by little supplants it. The principal characteristics of the mother community exist, to which are added [55] various new traits, but the relationship between the two communities is never extinguished. Inversely, natives even of different races but having the same dyamu consider themselves related, which for them implies respect for the ancestral traditions concerning the cult, the practice of mutual aid, respect for the authority of the fa, who must protect all his relatives no matter how remote the connection, and fidelity to all pacts between the communities. Finally, between individuals of different races, certain dyamu, although dissimilar, are considered equivalent and may be interchanged.

621 b. Alliances. -- The unity of a community is founded not only upon common interests, which we will examine later, but also upon a whole system of alliances.

Monteil distinguishs four types of alliance: the common cult (see the chapter on religion), marriage, the tnɛ, and the oath.

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581
583 Marriage: this is the most common form of alliance. When a Bambara seeks an alliance with a family, he gives his daughter in marriage to one of the members of that family, after providing her with a large dowry. Some interesting information on this subject is furnished us by Monteil (1). The alliance between two families is reinforced still further when they establish the custom of exchanging women. In this way the Soninkɛ family Niakatɛ allied itself to the

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1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta. Les Empires du Mali [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta. The Mali Empires.]

621
581 Koulibali of Ségou, founded Bamako, and changed its name to Niaré
583 in becoming Bambara.

The tné: the taboo concerning an animal or some object.
621 The basis of this alliance is the oath of the fa not to kill or eat the
784 object of the taboo. All the generations following this ancestor must
respect the taboo ad infinitum.

Thus, the Kéita have the hippopotamus for tné; the Traoré, the Dambélé, and the Warata have the panther; the Samaké, the elephant; the Koubilali of Ségou, the hippopotamus; those of Issa Ber, the m'polio [a fish]; others have the mole cricket (n'gere) and the striped mouse (n'kelika); the Niaré, Sissé, Silla, Doukouré, and the Daramé, the python, etc.

The oath: this seals a pact of dyonge fraternization. Each
621 party to the contract extracts some drops of blood from his forearm
608 which is mixed with goat's milk. Swearing by his ancestors, he
states the conditions of the alliance and drinks part of the beverage.
This alliance binds the parties to it and all their descendants ad
[582] infinitum. It entails a prohibition or, contrariwise, a recommendation
of marriage between members of the two communities, and establishes solidarity between the two communities which owe each other mutual assistance. In the framework of this alliance is the cathartic alliance termed sénankuya, which, besides the preceding obligations, governs the system of purifications.

The sénankuya: unites certain specific groups bearing differ-
621 names within the same village, but can also have an intertribal
608 character; ex.: Mandingue-Peul. Humblot observed the following
648 alliances at Kankan: Kéita-Fofana; Kondé-Traoré; Kéita-Béreté-
Sérigou-Sissé; [56] Kala-Kéita-Kouyaté; Kourouma-Koma; Kourouma-Dabo; Kourouba-Konaté-Kamara-Bagayoko; Konaté-
Dougoumoko; Konaté-Sidibé. This system of alliance in which
[783] the two allies are equal and complementary governs the mechanism
of the purifications, notably by the insult, and the duties of reciprocal assistance (1). Formerly, when a sénanku was reduced to slavery,

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1. M. Griaule, "L'alliance cathartique" [The Cathartic Alliance], Africa, Vol. XVIII, 1948.

608 621 648 his ally had to try to ransom him. A sĕnanku often serves as intermediary in arranging marriages, in land claims, in the collection of debts. He is rewarded by gifts. He has the power to stop quarrels and to oppose acts of rage and violence by the man whose sĕnanku he is, no matter what his rank and no matter how important the decisions in question are. The sĕnanku of a Fama could prevent his declaring war or condemning to death one of his subjects. Moreover, he has certain limited privileges over his ally's possessions. (He may appropriate unimportant objects, food, and even sums of money.) Finally, he recruits the labor force which his ally may need.

621 571 561 c. Age Classes. -- But though these different ties exercise an important influence on the political, social, and religious life of the community they are generally too broad and too lax to permit organization of a work community. In fact, we have seen how a large village may be formed of different communities relatively independent of each other, despite the authority of the founding community's fa. On the level of the canton, the geographical dispersion does not permit the Fama to intervene personally in the organization of the work community. The latter is founded essentially on the system of relations of the age classes.

561 From infancy until circumcision for the boys, until excision for the girls, the young Bambara belongs to a hierarchic society which prepares him or her for this ceremony and which provides an education complementary to that received in the family. Within this association all the children are divided into age classes: boys up to six years of age are bilakoro-dogomani (bila = short pants), from 6 to 10 years they are bilakoro-dogoma, from 10 to about 15 years, bilakoro-koroba. Similarly, the girls are, successively: sunkiri-dogomani, sunkuru-dogoma, and sunkuru-koroba. Each age class has a chief: ton-tigi for the boys, musso-tigi for the girls; each office is doubled by a deputy (syere). There is also a treasurer and a ton-dyeli who is the griot of the ton. All are elected by members of the society. A Bambara will be influenced all his life by his membership in a certain age class which groups all the children who underwent circumcision at the same time. In fact, up to the moment of circumcision the child's personality is not yet distinct. We have seen before how small children were

567 3. The ton-koro-bolo behind the disi is a special reserve formed
701 entirely of pure ton-dyon.

4. The keli-tigi was the chief of the expedition, designated by the Fama. He might be a dyon-kuntigi (chief of the furuba-dyon), a member of the Fama's community, or the Fama himself.

708 Finally, the army was accompanied by a musical corps, com-
534 posed essentially of drums which transmitted messages. There were
armpit drums (dunkan'), shoulder drums (taura), three-legged drums (dange), drums carried by two men (tabala), and coupled drums (denuba). Often horns (buru) were added, sometimes small horns made of ivory or horn, and sometimes xylophones (bada) and cowbells.

708 A dyeli (griot) follows the expedition to observe the exploits
537 that he must retransmit; he must encourage the warriors and dispel
panic by the power of his oratory.

B. Influence of Social Organization on Economic Life

a. The ton, Work Community

621 We have seen that the social unit among the Bambara is the community. The community is also the work unit and the economic unit. The independent individual is not conceived of. The community owns all the wealth which makes up the spiritual and material patrimony: the land, the agricultural, industrial, and commercial products, the habitations ...

423 The community regulates the exploitation of the land. The
621 dugu-tigi is the first occupant, master of the land, of which he dis-
622 tributes the lots to the different family heads. When a stranger, a
family head, wants to enter into a community, he chooses an unoc-
609 cupied field and asks the village chief for it. The request is accom-
[431] panied by ten kola nuts and a chicken. Authorization cannot then be
refused. The chief of the land sacrifices the chicken before the entire community and informs it of the installation of the newcomer. When the stranger wants to leave the land, he is given back his chicken and kola nuts.

423 Land assigned to a family head may always be taken back
621 from him without justification by the dugu-tigi and his council.
622

423 621 622 Thus, the man holding the land can neither sell it nor take any action regarding it which would involve the interests of the whole community; but he can rent it out, pledge it, or [62] cede it, which leads to manifold disputes at the time of redistribution of the land in the case of cyclical cultures.

621 622 652 The *dugu-tigi* also prepares the community's budget. The resources include: gifts made to the gods, thanksgiving offerings for the hunt, for the fishing catch, and for the millet harvest, payments for concession of land or for services rendered, rent of community goods (fixed revenues or exceptional tribute), receipts from fines, confiscations, escheatage, and finally, the extraordinary aid formerly obtained for war, constructions, etc.

[651 746] Among the expenditures are included the cost of supporting members of the community if need be, of maintaining the proper appearance, assistance to the sick, and, especially, the tax or tribute formerly paid to the sovereign, legitimate or not, and today paid to the French administration.

596 The family patrimony (*tien*) is administered by the *fa*, head of the family. A. Aubert (1) gives us the composition of this patrimony which includes: "Rights on the lands cultivated by the community; animals; serfs; money owed and money owing; the dowries of the daughters and women who are issue of members of the settlement; the inheritances; the dwellings of the settlement and their furnishings; the foodstuffs of the communal granaries (*foro-ba*), and, in general, all wealth resulting from the communal work of the family members."

Moreover, the *fa* must: "see to the material life of all the members of the family; provide dowries for the women of the community; pay back the dowries of the women of the community who are to be divorced; ransom members of the family who are taken prisoner or are sold, and pay taxes in goods or in money."

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1. A. Aubert, *Coutume bambara* (cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Bougouni Circle)].

b. Organization of Work

241 621 Work on the land is the only kind of work suitable for free men, for to work the land is to purify it. All agricultural operations [622 are set in motion by the dugu-tigi and are regulated by the fa who 591[assigns tasks by age classes. Each member of the community must work for it every day, except Monday and Thursday, from dawn to about 4:30 p.m. He may be helped, or even replaced, by his children and his captives. The rest of the time he may work for himself in his personal field or in the little fields situated along the water courses and the rivers, which are not periodically redistributed and are considered almost as personal and hereditary property. The fruit of this labor constitutes the personal savings of the community member.

316 423 The exploitation of the subsoil is governed by other rules which we still know only imperfectly. Like the soil, the subsoil belongs to the master of the land. Iron ore was extracted solely by the [324 blacksmith who paid the master of the land a rent in the form of hoes or axes. To exploit the gold mines, thousands of natives went in family groups to the placers at the beginning of the dry season. [63] The location of the placers was determined by the priests and changed every year. The men dig multiple small holes very close to each other, which may go very deep depending on the depth of the barren layer. When the calabashes of gold-bearing earth are brought up, the women wash the earth. The placers are abandoned at the beginning of the rains after three or four months of exploitation. Before the French occupation, gold was the exclusive property of the Fama and could in no case be the object of commerce. To- [439] day, gold is generally sold at the placers to Syrian, native, or European merchants, who have established veritable shops at the mining centers, shops which contain everything necessary for the miner's life.

463 554 The exercise of a profession other than the cultivation of the land is reserved to artisans who are accorded the insulting name of nyaman-kala, for only work on the land is noble work. These artisans form separate families in every Sudanese society, which has caused Europeans to call them, improperly, people of caste. They are divided into independent guilds.

845 If one of the twins dies early in life, as usually happens, the
778 survivor receives a statuette which he keeps all his life with jealous
431 care and to which he gives the name of the deceased. He dresses it to the best of his ability, often covers it with glass trinkets, such as bangles, beads, bits of amber, rings, etc., and well-bred people never give him a gift without adding at least 5 cowrie shells for the statuette.

845 The sinsin also grants twins a curious privilege. A scorpion not
778 only cannot bite them, it is even at their service, and on their order
825 will bite a fellow who has displeased them.

845
778

A twins' doll.

845 It is easy to recognize twins (flani in Bambara) as they have
551 special names, the commonest being Sinna, Maféné, Gno, and Ouassa. /99/

10. The Genie Protector of Villages

776 The genie protector of a village lives on a knoll or a rock;
621 almost always, if not invariably, its home is a baobab or false cedar near the walls, in a little grove intersected by neat paths, well kept and often raked.

776 621 193 Such a spirit is the exclusive property of one family, and even bears its name, or diamou. Its sacrificer, called gnéna-n-sonnaba, also bears the name of dougoutigi (1); he is, in fact, the real head of the village. Although at present the civil and religious authorities [554] are separate in many places, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or religious priest, always holds precedence, and self-respecting people call him dougoutigi (head of the village), giving the title of sotigi (2) to the one who has only civil authority. Here we have further evidence that the organization of the Bambara nation was, at its origin purely religious. The separation of the two authorities in certain hamlets can easily be understood.

[291 576]

Typical Bambara headman.

631 Under the Bambara dynasty the kingdom of Ségou was divided into provinces, cantons, and villages. The king, Fama or Massa

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1. Gnena, "fetish," "genie"; sonnaba, "great sacrificer"; dougou, "village"; tigi, "head," "master."

2. So, "hut," "house"; tigi, "head."

631 ("great sorcerer who has communication with the invisible beings"), lived at Ségou with his court. At the head of each of his provinces he had a minister responsible for levying the tax (/this man was/ his tool, often one of his children, to whom -- doubtless for this reason -- was given the title of Fama, petty king. The minister did his work through the intermediary of the heads of cantons, or kafotigi, under who, with respect to civil matters, were all the heads of villages, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi. /100/

The levying of the tax often gave rise to disputes between the kafotigi and the dougoutigi, and the latter would resign from his functions or be relieved of them. After that he lost all civil powers but none of his religious or priestly authority, and since the religious sphere had precedence over the civil, he kept his title of dougoutigi in his role as gnéna-n-sonnaba. The one who replaced him /in the civil sphere/ was never anything but an upstart and worthy only of the name sotigi ("head of houses"), although his responsibility became hereditary.

798 793 624 Under Moslem domination the worship of the gnéna, or djiné, was forbidden and punished by very severe penalties (slavery or death). It can thus be believed that it was to the advantage of the gnena-n-sonnaba to keep their position quiet, to refuse the title of dougoutigi, and even to forbid their people to bestow it on them. In Bani country and among the Bambara of Sikasso and Koutiala, where Moslem domination was never solidly established, there was no cause for similar fears, and it is understandable that the custom of calling the religious head dougoutigi and the civil head sotigi has been retained.

621 793 The gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, is helped in his duties by a siéré (aide, deputy); the heads of quarters (sotigi) and the heads of families (gouatigi) make up his council. Nothing important is done in the village without consulting its head, who calls all his elders together and decides nothing without them. All of them are also present at any sacrifice if it is offered by a family, and it is not unusual to see them going single file, evening or morning, to the sacred grove of the fetish. On the morning of a marriage, they always go there.

776 The fetish protects the village by causing the evil spells and
778 sorcery cast on it to misfire. It defends the village against wicked
•621 people and against its enemies, and thanks to it the inhabitants can
793 peacefully devote themselves to their work in the fields. While averting plagues and diseases which decimate the population, it gives strength, health, and vigor to all, and finally it populates the village by making the women fertile. Above all, it is the source of unity among families for it brings them all together under the authority of a single head; the friends of the head of the family whose name, or diamou, it bears, are its friends, and his enemies are also its own. To fail the priest, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, the dougoutigi, is to fail the fetish, so close and intimate is the union between the two.

11. The Koté, or Koré, Genie

794 Since it is the fundamental basis of power and authority, the
776 worship of the dasiri can, with some justice, be regarded as the first
778 and oldest of all Bambara religious practices. That of the koté, or
koré, likewise seems to me quite respectable from this standpoint and
just as old. As a matter of fact, this spirit, like the dasiri, lives in
[824] a little grove near the village, and the three trees it likes to inhabit
are the baobab, the false cedar, and the nettle tree.

794 The worship of the koré is especially popular in Bani country. Today not all the villages have the fetish, but all have at /103/ least a few initiates belonging to this semioccult sect. The sect includes women among its members; it is divided into eight groups, each ruled by its oldest member, who in turn is under the authority of the koretigi, the supreme head of the association.

794 At the time of the annual sacrifices, and especially at the
778 sacrifices made every seven years on the days of admission (for it is
necessary to be a koré dé (1) in order to participate in the secret part

1. Koré, the fetish bearing this name; dé, "son."

845 778 old men and important people of the village, as well as friends, are 852 invited to squat before the jugs and partake of the liquid refreshment.

The Dasiri Fetish, Protector of Villages

776 •621 The dasiri is the chief of all the gnena, or djine. In order that its worship may be better understood and that the reader may have an idea of the power of its priest, I must go into a few details which cannot help but throw some light on Bambara organization. Let us, for example, take a village that is being founded: we are present at the election of the priest of the dasiri, the gnéna-n-sonnaba; at the choice of the fetish tree and of the sacred animal, the genie's mount; at the enthroning of the sacrificer; and finally at the sacrifices.

Election of the priest

776 621 793 482 The population has grown, the surrounding land is exhausted, and a group of families must move out. The old men who are still lively and the youths full of strength and life take up their arms and fasten a dirty goatskin, a foroko of provisions, on their shoulders and scatter in the bush in search of less ungrateful soil. When they have found it they go back to their homes, and the council of family heads meets to choose a leader. This leader is really a priest, for his chief function is to sacrifice in a public and formal manner to the blonda ba sou (1), the shades of the great entry hut /116/, that is, to leaders and priests who, just like him, held the reins of power, and to the gnéna, genii, spirits, and fetishes, whence come his names of gnéna-n-sonna ("he who sacrifices to the gnéna fetishes") and gnéna-n-sonnaba ("great sacrificer of the gnéna fetishes"). He alone has the authority to sacrifice to all /these spirits/ in the name of all /the people/.

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1. Blon, "entry hut"; da, "door," "doorsill"; ba, "great"; sou, "corpses," "shades."

621 The palavers and deliberations are long, but the choice is a
793 happy one; the old man chosen as gnéna-n-sonnaba always has the
555 slyness and guile characteristic of the Bambara type. Patient and
likeable, he will know how to be just and impartial in disputes, diplomatic and sufficiently master of himself to say only what he intends to. He will know how to acquire the reputation of an upright man who does not know theft or falsehood.

Elected for life to hold both civil and religious power, he is
621 truly the head of the village, the dougoutigi. His position is hereditary;
793 it passes from brother to brother and, when there are none, goes by
right to his oldest son. The one who is to succeed him becomes his aide (siéré), and the heads of families (gouatigi-ou) compose his council; they are always summoned when a question is to be handled or a decision made.

The Choice of the dasiri fetish and its sacred mount

776 The new village has a head, his aide, and its council; it is
778 organized. Now they must find out the whereabouts of the spring,
787 rock, or tree where lives the protecting spirit, the dougou dasiri (1), who fastens the entrance to the village and watches over it. For this knowledge the people appeal to a sorcerer; he has intimate contact with the spirits, knows their ways and customs, and understands their language.

1. Dougou dasiri: /dougou/, "village"; da, "mouth," "entrance"; siri, "bind."

There are many sorcerers, and they do not all work in the same way. One discovers his oracles in the entrails of a hen, a second traces cabalistic signs on ashes, a third endlessly moves little stones, bones, and cowrie shells, counting them again and again. To locate the dasiri, people have recourse to the flélikéla (2) diviner, who

2. Flélike, "to look attentively, curiously."

776 works with a gourd three quarters full of water.

778 When he has received his honorarium of 40 cowrie shells, which
he takes in both hands, he places beside him in the dust his little
787 /117/ gift, consisting of two kola nuts, a few hens, or better, a small billy goat. He asks about the place chosen for the new village and has it described to him down to the smallest detail. Then he takes down a dirty *n'go* (1) on which he places a gourd which he tips slowly right and left, forward and backward, to give it a firm position on its stand. Having done this, he sums up for the spirits the conversation which he has had, and then, with eyes afire and holding his breath, he gives the gourd three flicks with the middle finger of his right hand. They say that a soft murmur, a murmur which is none other than the voices of the genii, is noticed by all present. They hear without understanding, but the sorcerer knows these voices and when he rises it is with a tone of authority that he names the *dasiri* and the animal which will be its mount.

In the province of Ségou the *dasiri* is a tree; the tamarind, the false cedar, and the baobab are the preferred trees. The sacred mount, also called *dasiri*, is a snake, an iguana, a rat, a donkey, etc., but most frequently it is a billy goat.

778 Enthronement of the *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, priest of the *dasiri* and *dougoutigi*, head of the village
•621

Our Blacks establish the new village and build their huts. Near the fetish tree each family sets up its mortars for grinding sorghum, places its hearths, and installs its kitchens. Bows, guns, and farming implements are hung on the branches of the *dasiri*, and while the work of settling continues, meals are eaten and dances held in its shade, and in the evening when the moon is shining it is near the tree that they finally stretch out to sleep.

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1. A ring made of braided roots
bound with cotton thread, which
is covered with a thick layer of blood.

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793 The gnéna-n-sonnaba, the dougoutigi, assumes office from the
782 first day and offers a sacrifice in the name of his people. On the trunk
621 of the tree, about a meter from the ground, he pours d'lo, or millet
beer, and dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with water, and causes a
778 flow of blood from hens, roosters, goats, and sometimes from a young
bull. After this general sacrifice, individual ones follow, for, in
order to /118/ place himself under the protection of the genie, each
family head in order of seniority offers it a little dégé and a little
blood, through the intermediary of his leader, the priest. And on the
trunk of the tree there is nothing but great blood stains with feathers,
hairs, and shreds of skin stuck in their midst with the remains of
chewed kola nuts. Then come the dances, and men, women, and
children go into a frenzy at the sound of drums; and the tumult is
indescribable.

Sacrifices offered to the dasiri

778 A path a meter wide leads from the village to the fetish tree
782 which is always located in the middle of a small grove if possible.
796 Heads of families sacrifice to it several times a year -- on the morning
after the konio, or first night of marriage, for example, but the
festival in which the whole village takes part is annual. The ceremony has greater importance every second year, and every seventh
year it degenerates into an orgy.

During the sacrifice the women stay at the edge of the sacred
grove, and only the men and boys go inside and surround the fetish.
After an offering of dégé and a little d'lo, the throat of a sheep or goat
is cut in the name of the whole village, and the head of each family,
comes with hens, sheep, goats, etc., according to the family's means
and the number of members; the meat piles up. The hens are plucked
on the spot, the large pieces are cut up, and the women carry it all
back to the village. Each family head is given a piece as big as a fist
from the first sacrifice offered in the name of all, and this, too, is
[252] taken back to the village; the rest is roasted and then grilled on the
spot and eaten by the men, without salt, pepper, or any kind of
seasoning. The dégé and d'lo of the main sacrifice are drunk under

881 until they are completely healed; for it is not until evening, when
the setting sun reddens the horizon and takes on its bloody hue that
[292] they re-enter the village. From this day on they wear a costume (all
yellow if they are Bambara) of trousers, a blouse, and on their heads
a kind of handkerchief tied under the chin (4). They pass the time in
making mats, singing, striking together gourd disks strung on a stick,
and especially in eating, "for they are being stuffed," and in sleeping. /181/

881 But in speaking of the boys, I forgot the little girls! They
undress under the tree nearest to the sacred karité. Naked as a worm,
304 each one when her turn comes runs at top speed with her abdomen
to the ground and throws herself into the arms of a woman, also of the
blacksmith caste, who immediately cuts her. On a braided platter,
[285 made of fine, pliable grass, the mother or her substitute receives the
415 bloody fragment which will be a grigri, a talisman or good-luck
189] charm for the house, and while the gunpowder speaks, the disabled
girl, pretending not to be suffering at all from the loss of her clitoris,
goes back to her place, and another replaces her.

881 The session ends with the last girl, and the crowd breaks out
in a song of joy and triumph. The mother, the eldest sister, or a
[482] serving woman wraps the excised girl in a big white cloth and carries
her astride her back to the village to the hut which has been prepared
for her (1). This carrying, so laughable in itself (they can walk, even

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4. In some villages, instead of the yellow handkerchief the circumcised have a cap with two points. In Bani country the circumcised wear the blouse and handkerchief, or cap, and nothing more.

[621
346] 1. Each village is divided into quarters. The excised girls of each quarter have their hut in that quarter.

826 immortal with smooth limbs, he became mortal and hard working. As seats of the male semen, they transmit this condition to the embryo, formed in the maternal womb by Faro. The weariness felt in the limbs after the sexual act is proof of this transmission. As Locus of [829] the virile semen, framework of the man, and a mechanism suitable for physical labor, the articulations are also the symbol of society. The chief's throne, in the shape of a knee, is the image of its owner's articulated body as well as that of the armature of the social body and of the grouping of individuals under his jurisdiction (1).

1. See p. 178.

826 823 201 The limbs represent the right and the left. Rectitude, firmness, and directed action are "right"; incertitude, the spirit of indecision, and inconsistency in behavior are "left." The right is male and symbolizes man's labor; the other is female. All gestures, profane and religious, and all representations of objects bear witness to this. Performing his first task in the fields before the rain, the farmer gives three blows with his hoe held in his left hand in order to absorb the impurity of the earth. After this, he works until the harvest with his right hand. To cross one's hands means supplication, to put them behind one's back means humiliation.

826 201 576 Each finger has its value. The little finger, bolokoni lakare, is "the son of the other fingers" and in it is concealed the entire strength of the hand; it "carries the nyama of the fingers." Hence its use as a measure of divinations. To point to someone with one's little finger means to belittle him with respect to those present. Thus one casts a spell (korti) against an enemy or an undesirable person with the little finger.

826 622 The index finger and the thumb of a chief, formerly those of a king, are marked on certain occasions with signs called bolo ti doniya, "knowledge of the signs of the hand." On the index are drawn three "acts of the world today" (bi dyẽ walew) and on the thumb, two "things of the interior of the secret world" (dyẽ gundo kono fẽw), for it is said that "the knowledge of the signs of the hand /70/ is the road of the creation 5, the index is the world in 3 and the thumb is the new world" (1). The whole represents the worlds thought out by

826
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1. Bolo ti doniya ye dali duru sira ye, bolokoni kumba dãga ye dyɛ̃ saba gundo ye, tyemasa bolokoni ye dyɛ̃ dura ye.

yo, of which only the first is realized (2).

2. On the worlds thought out by yo, see pp. 23-26.

826
643 On another level, the signs of the thumb are related to powers and those of the index to royal domains (fig. 1, nos. 8-12):*

1. Sign zero (fu) represents the beginning of creation, the origin of all things. A curved segment extended from left to right denotes the dynamic quality of the universe. It is intersected by a multiplication sign expressing the infinite development of beings and things. But the vertical stroke crossing it on the left indicates both the cessation and the suppression of the whole (no. 11).

2. Sign of lightning. It expresses royal power and justice and is traced under the thumb ring of the king. The latter, when giving an order, would swing his hand, which means he is swinging lightning before those he addresses (no. 12).

3. Sign of the royal domain. The opening asserts the possible extension of the kingdom; the transversal bar is a protection of this kingdom from all destruction (no. 8).

4. Sign of the extension of this domain at the tree cardinal sides: east, west, and south (no. 9).

5. Sign of union. The oval represents the whole group of functionaries called tɔ̃dyɔ̃ and barodɛ̃, officers and councilors who administer the kingdom under the king's authority (no. 10).

826
[783] As the feet are constantly in touch with the soil, they take on its impurity. An individual who has gone through severe purifications will need to avoid putting his feet on the ground during a period of time occasionally quite prolonged, for "to place one's toes on the ground is to put one's soul in contact with the impure earth" (1). It

[291] 1. The invention of the shoe is mythically linked to the notion of the earth's impurity; the wearer must therefore avoid this contact.

*[p. 22, category 116—Analyst]

782 826 "To see the king is to see gold" (1).

789 1. Fama yele ye sanu yele ye.

He gave some of it to his wives and children who put it in their drinks in order "to inherit his place and his goods." This powder was offered at each sacrifice to Faro in order to fertilize the kingdom.

782 826 266 3. When a family was plagued by numerous deaths, they asked the king to authorize the sacrifice of an albino whom he furnished himself. The victim's tongue was dried, pounded to powder, seasoned with pepper, and eaten by the father of the family to permit him to "reclaim the words and the nyama of the deceased." The nose was swallowed by the mother so that she might "reclaim the breath of the dead children." The father then ate the broiled eyes to "preserve lost sights." The dried ears were hung above the sill of the entrance "so that death, upon hearing the funeral wails, might not return." The skull was retained as a token and buried in the courtyard; a wooden stick marked the burial place. The rest of the body was thrown into the Niger, "for an ordinary man does not have the right to keep that which is reserved for the king."

782 826 622 If the king permitted it, chiefs of the important villages /97/ also placed the body of an albino under their seats "in order that their authority be solid and enduring" (2).

2. Sometimes the sum total of the taxes raised in a village were given the parents of an albino in exchange for the child. Those who could not obtain a victim used an animal bone as a substitute and performed the ritual as though it were an albino. Regarding the chief's seat, see p. 178.

782 826 In certain serious cases, the albino was sacrificed on the altar of Komo. This sacrifice was accomplished in silence for "a prayer unknown to the person sacrificing is in the blood of the albino" who is powerful enough to act without words.

778 784 754 For this reason it receives sacrifices at the time when the fields are being worked, for trade, marriage, war, and hunting where the person risks his life; it helps to fight illness and death. Immediately after the first sacrifice, it captures the personality and aggressiveness of the dead man and puts them on its owner, making him doubly dangerous to those with whom he is in conflict. But on the other hand, the danger may turn against him and, to a greater extent than anyone else, he risks his life at the slightest broken taboo.

Furthermore, the Komo who disapproves of such operations may, if he considers it useful, loosen the dead man's nyama on the person who is using his spiritual forces and put him in danger of death. Thus a Bambara will hesitate a long time before owning such an altar; in fact very few individuals assume this heavy responsibility.

C. The Chief's Seat

778 622 In the courtyard of the home of a family head or village chief can be found a pile of wood stuck on the ground and called dyamana tigi ǰigi (literally, support of the owner of the world) (Fig. 11). This seat symbolizes at once the chief, his power, his social and religious role of supporting the group (1).

1. The seat described below was observed at Banankoroni in the courtyard of the village chief. A similar one is found at Soroba.

The pieces of bent wood which compose it are planted rather deep into the earth above a series of objects. One of these pieces, with a simple bend (in a) is called sinzin, support; the two others, shaped like a T, are called ǰigi ba ǰigi (in b) (literally, support of the big support).

782 766 The whole lies over the body of an albino (c) buried in a tomb having a ritual form, covered with ancient clothing dyed in wolo and speckled with small black spots made of /135/ bone ash (kolofin), which represent at the same time the embryo in the womb of women and Faro. The head is covered with the cap of primitive men (e).

In (d), three pickets, symbols of man, are stuck through the skin of the albino's forehead; this skin had been removed and seven ritual

622
178

scars symbolizing the person (three and four) are made on it. At the moment the skin is buried under the seat, the following prayer is recited:

"I have sworn in your names by striking on the siriku of Yamba by (burying) the skin from the right and left sides of the forehead; the skin from the forehead (seven times)" (1).

[532]

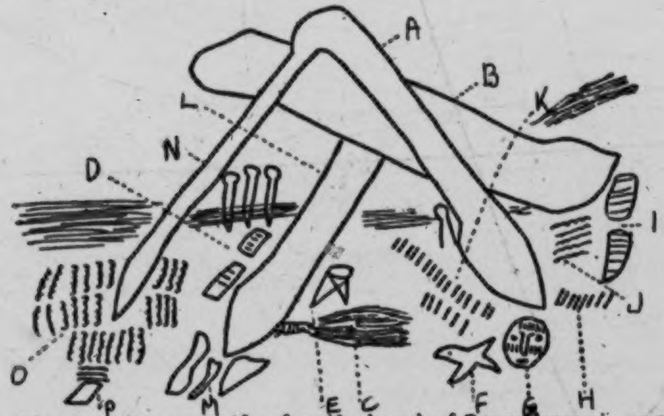

Fig. 11 — The wooden seat of a family head of Banankoroni, representing his joints. It is inserted into the ground in the courtyard above the bones of an albino, those of a child, and various symbolic objects. (Drawing by an informant.)

In (m) are placed the three principal bones of the albino; the two femurs and the right humerus, "so that the chief may have white

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1. Tena wolo fla kini ani numa yamba ka siriku nye di ka fo ani aw čua ye kena, tena wolo.

The prayer recalls here the acts of the fourth ancestor Yamba, who inaugurated the sacrifices of albinos to Faro, and his role as a chief beginnihg with this mythical period (see p. 46), a role which the present chief must fulfill with the same righteousness. The siriku is a small protective altar usually made from a hyena tail.

622 bones, " that is to say, that he may live to be so old that his bones
118 will be visible through his skin which is transparent.

In (n) the bent part of the wood, called kuntigi tigiya Yigi (literally, /136/ support of the chief's deed), is planted over the hair of the previously shaved albino (in o) from which it takes its strength.

[801] In (k), twenty-two small sticks are the symbol of the number 22, representing "the ensemble of words received by the ancestor Koumabana who was never caught unawares by anyone." In depositing these sticks, the officiator expresses the wish that the chief may become unbeatable like the ancestor.

[801] In (h), eight small sticks of zekene wood (1) represent the eight ancestors; they signify that man must be, like Koumabana, master of words and that he must be "true to his word."

In (f), the bird tatugu kononi, master of fire, is buried. The prayer recited states that it must be able to penetrate into the earth and come out freely, for since mythical times it has played a decisive role in combats (2).

In (g) is buried the head of the first child to die in the chief's family, in order to recall the loss suffered and to avoid its recurrence. On the skull are marked the signs of the person: two times 3 and 7, or two times 4 and 7, depending upon the sex of the deceased. In (j) the hair is buried, a testimony to the misfortune and the loss which should be compensated for. In (e) is placed the skin of the forehead, divided into two pieces; the piece on the right signifies that Faro is free to give the child for as long as he chooses; on the piece on the left are engraved the eight signs of the word, recalling that Faro, master of the word, is also master of the destiny of the deceased, whose number has been reckoned among the dead. In (p) a small

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[824] 1. Balanites aegyptica. This bush, according to popular belief, grows over the tomb of a man who died "with rancor and bitterness, as did Koumabana."

2. See p. 155. The chief, who is sometimes obligated to declare war, must be able to win it.

622 778 of polished stone called fara yele, "stone that rejoices," expresses the wish that the chief's rule prosper.

The seat, taken as a whole, represents the chief's skeleton and his joints. It is erected upon various elements which sum up his ties to the ancestors and the supernatural powers, indicating his responsibility and contributing to the maintenance of his strength. It is situated in such a way that all the events in the courtyard take place around it and that nothing which is said is out of earshot. As a center of the family household, as the symbol of the industrious and responsible man, it is the framework of the community which it upholds, just as the chief does through his physical endurance and moral firmness. The whole village "leans upon the chief's joint."

Each morning and evening, the ǰigi ba ǰigi and the ba ǰigi /137/ are greeted so that the chief may be strong, that his family may increase, that he may foster the ancestral beliefs. Offerings and [782] libations are made upon the seat and upon the body of the chief when his authority is questioned. In (b) tomato juice is being poured; in (a), representing the elbow or the knee, the water which has been used for ritual bathing of these same joints; at the foot, in (n), the fowls' throats are cut while the officiator, before pouring down the blood of the sacrifice, blows into a small hole dug in the ground; finally, in (l) the water which was used to wash the chief's whole body is poured in.

[826] In this way the chief's joints, which are the seat of his strength and his procreative seed, are purified and fortified.

II. Village Cults

794 The village, as a physical entity, and its inhabitants are placed under the protection of the supernatural powers and of the ancestors. Faro is directly invoked at all water spots.

If the village is situated at the river's edge, the rituals are addressed to the Faro tyin. If it is not too far from the bank, the inhabitants go out to make their offerings to the spirit. Frequently, the stream, pond, or natural well, which often determined the site chosen by the founders, is though to be inhabited by an incarnation of Faro whose name is revered and to whom all offer a cult.

On the other hand, each village is placed under the protection of the dasiri, a special spirit delegated by Faro.

*173 [172] consisting of a rectangular pillar worn away by the rains.

[765] According to custom, the members of the ton' settled down in front of the deceased's house for a week, singing, dancing and generally carousing in the usual way.

When this traditional period was over, Mamari asked them to enclose his father's and his mother's houses within a single wall. They set to work and built a wall with only one door, ● [622] over which they placed the pyramidal ornaments used only for chiefs' doorways. Within the enclosure they left the existing division in two parts, and it was henceforth understood that the part formerly occupied by Mamari's father would be reserved for people from Doukoumna when they wished to stay in Ségou.

Kassoum was determined to show that he had been properly brought up and knew how to return courtesy; so, one day, he invited Mamari to a drinking party, planned especially in his honor. Mamari accepted and, on arriving, found that Kassoum, from impatience no doubt, had started the celebration so far ahead that he was already dead drunk.

According to the usual custom, Mamari ordered one of the [273] ton-den', as it was his duty, to taste the dlo first (2). Lacking a utensil in which to pour a small quantity of the beer, the taster sipped from the crock itself. Kassoum jumped up in a fury, crying out that the ton-den' was a disgusting person, and [37] broke a gourd full of beer over the fellow's head. In turn, Mamari became angry at Kassoum, whose manners struck him as coarse and intolerable. Then, after much invective on both sides, Mamari left the place to return home. Kassoum took up his bow and arrows and set out after Mamari. However, since he was slowed down by his drunkenness, he could not go far and his arrows missed their mark. Mamari returned to Ségou and, for the first time, installed himself in his father's house.

2. A precautionary measure to guard against poison.

311 Bambara seeks the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-
621 siri) or, more exactly, determines where this genie dwells. It
776 may be a spring, a hill, or a rock; often it is a fine tree, in-
794 variably surrounded by a grove or at least with a grove nearby.
Then, always following the same procedure, he finds out the conditions under which the genie will allow someone to settle in his domain in order to live there and cultivate the lands. Thus, a contract is worked out which governs the man's exploitation of the genie's territorial domain. As a result, provided he worships the genie in the manner required, the man [228] will be able to work under the protection of the god. Anyone who has had a share in the contract, even if only through representatives, will likewise profit if he scrupulously observes the conditions.

621 The establishment of a village requires the cooperation of
several communities, each represented by its fa. One of these fa
622 will either appropriate the leadership or be chosen as the rep-
793 resentative or chief of the others. Sometimes he may be merely
794 primus inter pares; otherwise he may have managed to have his
primacy conceded by the rest. It is this chief who treats with the genie in the name of the whole village; thus, he becomes the "high priest of the genie" (nyana-n-son-na-ba) with the essential function of "making the offerings" (son') required by the cult. Furthermore, he administers the earthly domain of the genie and is therefore called dugu-tigi (master of the earth).

To the nyana dugu-da-siri is usually attributed the same dyamu as that of its high priest, just as though the genie belonged to the spiritual family of the priest. This is a result consistent with the mentality of the Bambara.

The same mental state accounts for the custom in certain
621 villages of dedicating a living animal, often a ram, to the
776 nyana dugu-da-siri and believing it to be the god's mount. The
778 animal is allowed to wander freely about the village, and its
[825] mischief is never punished; indeed, the people enjoy caressing
and indulging it. The animal takes on some of the attributes of the genie and is, as it were, endowed with certain supernatural virtues, so only good can come from contact with it.

621 Theoretically, each settlement has only one genie, but
776 actually it may have several, especially if it has been settled by

621 622 (den'). Proof of this is seen in the fact that any important happening in a native's life is supposed to be reported to the dugu-tigi and in certain cases requires an offering or, as it is called, homage (bunya). We have seen this in the case of birth, giving a name, circumcision, marriage, and death. It is no less essential in cases of public disaster (epidemic, persistent drought, invasion, war).

621 622 692 In theory, the dugu-tigi does not intervene of his own accord in the private affairs of the patriarchal or familial communities which, when taken together, constitute the territorial unit we usually call a village (1). When a quarrel between relatives cannot be settled by the fa concerned, however, he asks for the intervention of the dugu-tigi and his council. If dissension arises between the people of different communities, the same arbitration is usually requested. As a result, a kind of tribunal of conciliation has evolved, which can only suggest what the parties should do or refrain from doing in order to put an end to the dispute. Theoretically, the dugu-tigi has no right to enforce the [232] verdict (1), because the communities are extremely jealous of their independence. As a consequence, they yield only to the extent that is in their best interests.

It may happen, however, that the dugu-tigi, supported by his council, does exert authority when he has the power and is seconded by notables who make common cause with him for

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1. The territorial community among the Bambara is called dugu, a term which at the same time means "land" and "among," "to," "within," etc., and which is preceded by a name recalling some circumstance involved with the founding of the village.

1. That is why litigation may be indefinitely prolonged.

311 the community is founded. His permission is required before
621 anyone may build a dwelling in the portion reserved as the seat
423 of the community; the village is therefore kept within precise
793 limits. In practice, however, everyone builds wherever he
pleases if there is no objection. If there is an objection, the
dispute is settled by the dugu-tigi and his council.

Outside the village proper, the terrain includes fields
423 which, either at the start or during the course of settlement,
621 are allotted in perpetuity to the various fa of the community
by the dugu-tigi in council. Each fa and his dependents have
indefinite use of the same fields, although by law the authority
which assigned them may take them away without being required to justify the act. This use is a kind of usufruct that is
more extensive than that of our law, since the beneficiary may
[425] use the land without restriction, except that he may not alienate
it. The tenant, however, may not use the land in any way that
might be prejudicial to the community as a whole without the
consent of the dugu-tigi and council. For example, such would
be the case if he proposed to give his right of use to an outsider.

Any land not specifically allotted [231] and anything it
produces or contains belongs, theoretically, to the member of
the community who cultivates it. Certain fruits or produce, however, are sometimes reserved for the community as a whole:
the leaves or fruit of the baobab, karite, nété, tamarind trees,
etc.; the fish in certain ponds, watercourses, fluvial zones,
[476] etc.; the game in certain cantons, etc. On the dates set for
these collective enterprises by the dugu-tigi and his council,
the people proceed in a body to gather fruit, harvest the crop,
fish, or hunt. Sometimes each person is allowed to keep what
he has gathered; sometimes all the proceeds are collected for
the dugu-tigi to distribute according to custom. There are also
special regulations governing the extraction of matter or materials from the ground.

621 Organization of the territorial community. The duties
of the dugu-tigi and his council are not limited to directing the
622 cult and regulating the use of land. Anything that happens
within the territorial community concerns the nyana-dugu-dasiri, because the members of the community are his children

621 various reasons. Thus, the dugu-tigi in council can invoke
●622 police powers to maintain order in the community and even act
692 as a tribunal to punish those whose misdeeds in any way endanger
the persons or property of members of the community.

621 Since the genie is expected to ensure the prosperity of
622 the faithful, it is the duty of the dugu-tigi to come to the assistance
[735] of members of the community who are unfortunate or indigent.

He must also maintain the relations of his community with the outside world, that is, with neighboring territorial communities and all other groupings, analogous or otherwise. He can act independently only in matters which we call purely administrative; for other matters he must have the assent of the council of fa, above all for any matter involving the disposal of community property.

621 It is obvious that all the roles of the dugu-tigi involve
expenses that are often considerable, but for this purpose he has
622 access to goods from many sources. In the first place, offerings
651 made to the nyana are of various kinds; they are not always consumable, and even if they are, they are usually consumed only in part. The remainder belongs to the dugu-tigi. It is customary to give bunya (gifts of homage) to the dugu-tigi on many occasions: a hunt, a fishing expedition, millet harvest, etc.; to thank him for an allotment of land, or for some other service. Community property is farmed out for fees payable at fixed times, and tribute is paid in the same way. Most of the various kinds of infractions committed within the community are punished by fines received by the dugu-tigi. Incorrigible malefactors become slaves of the community, and the produce of their labors [233] goes to the dugu-tigi. Anything found abandoned on land belonging to the community is turned over to the dugu-tigi, in whole or in part.

In case of need arising through some exceptional emergency (war, an expedition, public works of various kinds, etc.), the dugu-tigi may have recourse to what we should call an emergency assessment, i.e., he may ask the members of the community for special contributions for the purpose.

621 These are the principal resources of the community
● 622 treasury, which is held and administered by the dugu-tigi with
651 the help and under the control of the fa. The dugu-tigi may
652 use the treasury to help him perform his duties honorably, to
assist unfortunate or indigent members of the community, to
receive the guests of the community in a suitable manner, and
to meet emergencies.

[661] Under no circumstances does this treasury constitute any part of the personal fortune of the dugu-tigi. Only usurpation, which is fairly common under various guises, alters this state of affairs. In the same way, it is not uncommon for this wealth to be divided in some measure among the members of the council, who in one way or another appropriate it. Such abuses, no matter how common, do not in the least alter the principle that legally such wealth is and remains exclusively the property of the community. [234]

Chapter 4

Brotherhoods

1. The End of Childhood

794 General considerations. The cult of the ancestors and of
881 the nyana dugu-da-siri are not enough for the Bambara in his efforts to make sure of the protection, help, and services of the invisible world. The magician has created for him some renowned protectors or servitors which are powerful and formidable: the nyana of the boli.

The cult of these gods gives rise to spiritual families whose members are so closely linked by the bonds of fraternity that we may safely say that these groupings are brotherhoods. All these brotherhoods share the common characteristic that no one can be received into them before having submitted to a certain rite called soli (1) or bolo-ko (1), terms which

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1. Soli is the word for the action of piercing, emerging, laying an egg, or

596 The *fa*. -- The whole of this family obeys the same head: the *fa*. The *fa* is designated by a council of elders when he fulfills the following conditions: first, not to refuse the *faya* and to be a [567] member of the community, that is, actually to live within the community; next, he must never have been a slave, and he must not have settled abroad without hoping to return home. In addition, he [84] must be a legitimate child, that is to say, born in wedlock, and the firstborn. In principle, the *faya* passes from older to younger brother (in the classificatory sense of the term). Thus, the *fa* is always the member of each generation closest to the ancestor. Finally, the *fa* must be able, that is, healthy, active, and a good administrator. Often the *fa* designates his successor before his death. The successor may assume power only 40 days after the death of the last *fa*, and after being recognized as head of the family by the assembly of elders. From that moment on, he exercises his functions, come what may.

The *fa* has charge of, and the moral and physical responsibility for, the whole community. He directs and protects all the members of the family. These latter can escape his authority only by leaving the village for good; they are then considered to be dead members. (The descendants of the *fa* by his daughters are outside of the community; they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.)

The *fa*, head of the family, lives under the administrative dependence of the head of the village.

2. From Family to Community

621 The true social unit is the community. Ties of kinship and marriage unite groups without racial or ethnic unity.

a. *Patriarchal Organization of the "Ton."* -- All the family 622 heads obey a village head: it is on him that the responsibility falls for the organization of the community territory, as well as the responsibility for administering justice when contention arises between followers of different *faya*. The village chief is generally master of the land: *dugu-kolo-tigi*; sometimes [54] he cedes his rights to a village administrative chief younger than himself, but in matters of religion he remains all-powerful, and each year he receives gifts from the different family heads for the needs of the common cult. He also

622 gives the orders concerning local celebrations and initiations.

In fact, the land originally belongs to spirits, and the chief
622 who succeeds the founder of the village is the only one who is able
776 to establish contact with the chief of the spirits and negotiate with
him. He is the earthly administrator of the spirit; he assures his
worship, the exploitation of the land, and the organization of the
community territory.

621 The first chief of the land was the first occupant; the suc-
622 ceeding chiefs are his heirs, following the order of succession. To
found a new village, a chief chooses a place in unoccupied terri-
[778 tory, usually at a crossroads, near a water source, near a baobab,
a doubalé, or other sacred tree. He offers sacrifices to the spirits
824] and receives in exchange their authorization to settle. If his group
prospers, and less fortunate families want to establish themselves
in this well-favored location, they ask the chief for authorization.
However, as Monteil (1) remarks: "... The fa of a familial community depends strictly on the patriarchy only if, attached to it by the male line, he holds some goods of the patriarchy or if he claims rights in this patriarchy. In the contrary case, the family fa conducts himself as a stranger in relation to the patriarchy, which can only treat him in like fashion ..." Every familial community becomes patriarchal at the death of the family head when he has no heirs (see the chapter on inheritance); the community then groups around itself familial communities which themselves include paternally related groups and maternally related groups. When the patriarchy is an old one, a considerable number of persons live under its aegis. All recognize dyamu and taboos (see below) in common.

621 When the settlement becomes too populous, a fa gathers a
631 group and founds another village. Afterwards, the people of neigh-
boring districts may solicit the patronage of the first village, by
participating in its djo (2) and by sacrificing to its guardian spirits.

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1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

2. See the chapter on religion.

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701 3. The ton-koro-bolo behind the disi is a special reserve formed entirely of pure ton-dyon.

4. The keli-tigi was the chief of the expedition, designated by the Fama. He might be a dyon-kuntigi (chief of the furuba-dyon), a member of the Fama's community, or the Fama himself.

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534 Finally, the army was accompanied by a musical corps, composed essentially of drums which transmitted messages. There were armpit drums (dunkan'), shoulder drums (taura), three-legged drums (dange), drums carried by two men (tabala), and coupled drums (denuba). Often horns (buru) were added, sometimes small horns made of ivory or horn, and sometimes xylophones (bada) and cowbells.

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537 A dyeli (griot) follows the expedition to observe the exploits that he must retransmit; he must encourage the warriors and dispel panic by the power of his oratory.

B. Influence of Social Organization on Economic Life

a. The ton, Work Community

621 We have seen that the social unit among the Bambara is the community. The community is also the work unit and the economic unit. The independent individual is not conceived of. The community owns all the wealth which makes up the spiritual and material patrimony: the land, the agricultural, industrial, and commercial products, the habitations ...

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[431] The community regulates the exploitation of the land. The dugu-tigi is the first occupant, master of the land, of which he distributes the lots to the different family heads. When a stranger, a family head, wants to enter into a community, he chooses an unoccupied field and asks the village chief for it. The request is accompanied by ten kola nuts and a chicken. Authorization cannot then be refused. The chief of the land sacrifices the chicken before the entire community and informs it of the installation of the newcomer. When the stranger wants to leave the land, he is given back his chicken and kola nuts.

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622 Land assigned to a family head may always be taken back from him without justification by the dugu-tigi and his council.

423 Thus, the man holding the land can neither sell it nor take any ac-
621 tion regarding it which would involve the interests of the whole com-
622 munity; but he can rent it out, pledge it, or [62] cede it, which
leads to manifold disputes at the time of redistribution of the land
in the case of cyclical cultures.

621 The dugu-tigi also prepares the community's budget. The
622 resources include: gifts made to the gods, thanksgiving offerings
652 for the hunt, for the fishing catch, and for the millet harvest, pay-
ments for concession of land or for services rendered, rent of com-
munity goods (fixed revenues or exceptional tribute), receipts from
fines, confiscations, escheatage, and finally, the extraordinary aid
formerly obtained for war, constructions, etc.

Among the expenditures are included the cost of supporting
[651 members of the community if need be, of maintaining the proper
746] appearance, assistance to the sick, and, especially, the tax or
tribute formerly paid to the sovereign, legitimate or not, and today
paid to the French administration.

596 The family patrimony (tien) is administered by the fa, head
of the family. A. Aubert (1) gives us the composition of this patrimony which includes: "Rights on the lands cultivated by the community; animals; serfs; money owed and money owing; the dowries of the daughters and women who are issue of members of the settlement; the inheritances; the dwellings of the settlement and their furnishings; the foodstuffs of the communal granaries (foro-ba), and, in general, all wealth resulting from the communal work of the family members."

Moreover, the fa must: "see to the material life of all the members of the family; provide dowries for the women of the community; pay back the dowries of the women of the community who are to be divorced; ransom members of the family who are taken prisoner or are sold, and pay taxes in goods or in money."

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1. A. Aubert, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Bougouni Circle)].

b. Organization of Work

241 Work on the land is the only kind of work suitable for free
621 men, for to work the land is to purify it. All agricultural operations
[622 are set in motion by the *dugu-tigi* and are regulated by the *fa* who
516] assigns tasks by age classes. Each member of the community must
work for it every day, except Monday and Thursday, from dawn to
about 4:30 p.m. He may be helped, or even replaced, by his children
and his captives. The rest of the time he may work for himself
in his personal field or in the little fields situated along the
water courses and the rivers, which are not periodically redistributed
and are considered almost as personal and hereditary property. The
fruit of this labor constitutes the personal savings of the community
member.

316 The exploitation of the subsoil is governed by other rules
which we still know only imperfectly. Like the soil, the subsoil belongs
423 to the master of the land. Iron ore was extracted solely by the
[326] blacksmith who paid the master of the land a rent in the form of hoes
or axes. To exploit the gold mines, thousands of natives went in
family groups to the placers at the beginning of the dry season. [63]
The location of the placers was determined by the priests and
changed every year. The men dig multiple small holes very close
to each other, which may go very deep depending on the depth of
the barren layer. When the calabashes of gold-bearing earth are
brought up, the women wash the earth. The placers are abandoned
at the beginning of the rains after three or four months of exploitation.
Before the French occupation, gold was the exclusive property
of the Fama and could in no case be the object of commerce. Today,
[439] gold is generally sold at the placers to Syrian, native, or
European merchants, who have established veritable shops at the
mining centers, shops which contain everything necessary for the
miner's life.

463 The exercise of a profession other than the cultivation of the
554 land is reserved to artisans who are accorded the insulting name of
nyaman-kala, for only work on the land is noble work. These artisans
form separate families in every Sudanese society, which has caused
Europeans to call them, improperly, people of caste. They are
divided into independent guilds.

692 In matters of justice, the Bambara frequently continue to consult
their old tribal judges. It must be noted, however, that in taking
[177 away the judicial competence of the old chiefs, the French ad-
ministration has contributed to diminishing, and almost to com-
622] pletely destroying, their power.

The Bambara had a judicial organization quite as precise and
671 regulated as their religious organization, although there was no
codified law, such as the Koran or the Hebrew tables of law. Justice
was rendered according to rules which each community passed on
from generation to generation. These rules are not of divine origin,
but they [69] are sacred nevertheless, for custom is the legacy of
[643 the ancestors. The Fama and his council of notables could promul-
645] gate new laws, but, before deciding on a new rule, they consult the
Komo and the Nyama [an altar]. Then, in the presence of a priest,
each one swears on the altar to obey the law which becomes sacred.
Moreover, the customary rules cannot be separated from the moral
code and the religion to which they are linked. They are not uni-
[184] form; each canton has its own, and often each village, and within
each of these there are observances peculiar to certain families or to
certain castes. Nevertheless, the sentiment of fair play is very strong
[181] among the Blacks, but they do not admit the equality of men, who
are naturally different one from another according to their aptitudes,
means, and condition.

Custom regulates all relations between individuals and between individuals and the collectivity.

692 Two sorts of native tribunals existed in the Bambara country: a tribunal of conciliation, presided over by the village chief, who assembled a council of notables; and a high tribunal presided over by the Fama, to whom were submitted the matters which the first tribunal had been unable to settle. In addition, the Fama could call before his tribunal the civil or penal matters which seemed to him to be of importance to the public order.

695 Justice was without charge and rendered day and night by the
643 Fama as one of his essential functions, for the judge is the one who
repairs the disorders that shake society. The hearings were solemnly
conducted and took place under the silk-cotton tree (Ceiba pentandra)

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[687] False testimony is punished by confiscation of all goods and arrest of the whole family; part of the goods goes to the victim. If the witness refuses to take the oath, his refusal is evidence against the party that called him. When the parties in a trial disagree, the Fama makes one swear on the Komo, on his platform, or on the tomb of the group's founding ancestor. When the oath has been pronounced, the adversary may efface it by taking the oath in his turn. Then judgment will be suspended; but before 40 days have passed the perjurer must die.

[687] Anyone who attempts to suborn a witness or a child will be punished in the same fashion as the false witness.

The Fama must assign to one or several notables the mission of examing the scene where the disputed incident took place; he may designate a notable to examine and evaluate the damages. Once their mission is accomplished, the notables are subject to the same obligations as the witnesses.

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695 The role of defense attorney was taken by one of the Fama's advisors, a relative, a griot, a blacksmith, or a favorite of the Fama, he who "speaks best." The accused, or someone from his family, approached the prospective defender and offered him a gift, asking him to intervene in his favor. But the counselor had only the power to save the life of the condemned who had to pay a settlement; all punishments other than death were applied.

625 Police functions were carried out by the sofa and by members of the brotherhoods.

b. Punishments

681 The punishments were, in order of descending importance: death, being put in irons permanently or for a set time, the whip, the fine, confiscation of the family, confiscation of goods, sale to the slave traders.

[562] Murderers and inveterate brigands had their heads cut off; spies had their heads shattered by an axe or were bludgeoned (like dogs). A woman was never executed. The Fama who had a woman put to death would have seen his kingdom disappear.

All those condemned to irons were imprisoned in a hut, immobilized, the feet hobbled by a bar fixed to a ring; the patient

794 776 778 [563] In some villages, the sacrificer never consumes butter or milk, foods which the Peul furnish the Bambara.

the culprit and deprives the villagers of their protector.

794 776 825 The spirit of the dasiri sometimes has as its compansion an animal which seems to represent the group's ancestor. At Ségou, it is a crocodile; at Ouélenguena, a she-ass; at Koulikoro, a monkey; in other places it is a male goat which is replaced when it dies. At Konodimini there are a series of deep intercommunicating wells which would have served as homes for the ancestors. These holes are at present occupied by hyenas which are considered to be incarnations of the blacksmiths of former times and which are the dasiri of the place.

[582 626] The dasiri's animal is free to enter homes and to eat what it finds. It is often fed by the inhabitants. No one may attack it and whoever breaks this taboo, set on by a vengeful nyama of which he cannot rid himself, risks being forbidden to marry, even being no longer tolerated in his native village (1).

1. This was, at Soroba, the case of Dji Diara, who, after killing a hyena, could not marry as no woman was willing to link her destiny to his.

794 776 782 As its name indicates, the function of the dasiri is to maintain the stability and integrity of the village. It is the "support of the inhabitants' lives"; the numerous rituals (individual or collective), of which it is the object, reveal the importance of its role as well as the diversity of the beings invoked. To Faro are addressed prayers for rain; to the ancestors prayers for questions /139/ concerning the family; and to the spirit of the tree when it is a matter of stopping an epidemic. But directly or indirectly, any sacrifice offered to the dasiri is offered to Faro. The victims (sheep or fowl) and the offerings (cotton bands, kola nuts) are always white (see Pl. 3, b).

794 778 852 When children reach the age of six or seven, they are led to the tree; they sit on its roots upon which kola nut juice is spat, and are, by this fact, introduced into the village cult. They are then presented to all the allies senanku and especially to the blacksmiths with whom they proceed to joke.

776 precision of which the native substratum seems unaware. In any event, there is no Bambara word for "God" except the one [777] brought by the Moslems -- "Allah," pronounced as Ngala. This lack of a Bambara word may be explained by their custom of avoiding pronouncing the name of powerful people for fear of incurring their wrath.

There is no superior spirit of evil: Seĩtane [Satan] is [777] likewise a Moslem introduction. The Bambara does not visualize a hierarchy of spirits.

Finally, it must be concluded, from the existence of 776 many magic practices, that there is a belief in a kind of uni-
778 versal energy, which is diffuse by nature and which, by appropriate
789 means, one can capture and use as one likes. Certain genii or gods are merely emanations of this invisible, imponderable and active force, which no obstacle can stop and which can instantly overcome space and strike at a distance. This is the basis of all native magic.

## [129] 2. Morality and Customs

776 When, as among Catholics and Moslems, the after-life is believed to be influenced by one's conduct in this life, there
577 is a rule which determines what is and what is not proper if one wishes to earn the greatest possible rewards in the life to come. The saints and pious men have shown the way to this end.

For the Bambara, however, the next life is merely a continuation of this one and he does not think that he can, by conduct, improve his chances in the next life since it offers no rewards or punishments for his day-by-day actions. Neither his manes nor his genii give him an example of conduct to guide him. Therefore, without thought of the future, he goes along solely concerned with the present; he seeks what will give him pleasure, tries to avoid what seems harmful, and all this in a groping way, as one walks in the dark.

577 Sometimes, it is true, he is led to behave with a degree
626 of decency and to avoid certain too shocking lapses, which would expose him to reproach, alienate his friends and create for him

577 an uncomfortable situation among his own family; but under-
626 neath this surface, the evil shows through. It is not unusual to
577 be faced with a disconcerting absence of moral sense, ferocious
157 egotism, deep-seated duplicity, impudent treachery and cold,
unperturbed cruelty (1). And one can see, perhaps in all of them, the scorn and even hatred felt for anyone who is unfortunate, weak, ill or abandoned. However, it should certainly be noted that there are also Bambara who display the most disinterested devotion, generous hospitality and remarkable courage; some even give evidence of that kind of inborn distinction which is to be found among even the most primitive peoples and which is the mark of superior people.

183 Thus, no code organizes Bambara rules of life. Everything depends upon custom, that mysterious thread, at once fragile and strong, which links the generations one with another [130] and which sustains the individual, though he is unaware of it, to such an extent that he is completely lost without it. Handed down by earlier generations, superstitiously preserved, it is imposed through fear of the punishment which will follow transgression. At first glance, custom appears to be an amalgam of the most heterogeneous elements and that is why we Europeans find it at once respectable and ridiculous, good and bad, useful and futile, sometimes atrocious and then again excellent. On closer study it is seen to exhibit, on the basis of feelings common to all humanity, an efflorescence peculiar to the native milieu, a natural morality which duplicates positive laws.

It is the nature of man to observe certain laws, to see the good and the bad in what surrounds him and, in his conduct, to display a leaning toward the good and an aversion to the bad. He recognizes within himself something which criticizes his actions from a similar point of view and, which, in fact, judges them.

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1. The chronicle of Ségou, especially, attests this tradition of trickery and hypocrisy (see especially the tales about Ma-n-son, p. 93, and about Da, p. 101).

183 The Bambara has a very highly developed sense of this
181 idea of justice and there is nothing he resents more than injustice or a denial of justice. His resentment is stubborn and his vengeance, which may be deferred under a show of indifference, is implacable. The chronicle of Ségou is rich in pertinent examples. There was Ngolo Dyara, bringing murder and disaster on his own relatives in order to satisfy his hatred for having been sold into slavery by his uncle and not ransomed by any of his relatives. There was Kégné Mari who, watching the murder of Touro-koro in the Komo wood, expressed his vengeance finally fulfilled by saying: "Remember how, falsely accusing me of adultery with one of your wives, you had me lashed? And how on that day I told you that even though I were lying on the ground, if I could touch you with my foot, I would lay you low? Here at last is the day of my vengeance!" Similar examples are innumerable.

If he is powerless against injustice, the Bambara will wait patiently and, each time he has to speak, will dissimulate his weakness in formulas which have a double meaning, such as
195 O do!, meaning "That's it!" O nya-na, meaning "Oh well!" Tigi!, meaning "That's true"; and other similar expressions. At the same time, he is repeating to himself his proverb: don' m'i fantan', a bla k'a teme, meaning "Don't pay attention while you are weak," that is, "Wait until I am strong enough to take vengeance (lit., to pay you back)."

This instinctive feeling for justice accounts, in a certain
181 measure, for the family bonds made up of reciprocal rights [131]
571 and duties between parents and between them and their children
626 and, by an analogy of which we shall see other examples, between master and slave and between chief and subject. The obligation to respect all pacts concluded in the form of vows, oaths or fraternal alliance rests on the same basis. And it is the same notion that inspires the repression of acts which are almost universally condemned: perjury, treason, false witness, slander,
691 theft and murder. It sustains the tireless persistence of the pleader who will go through endless lawsuits to obtain redress for a wrong done to him or to one of his people. And it gives strength to public vengeance against the sorcerer.

583 768 Finally, if the union is still in effect at the time of the husband's death, the wife's community theoretically regains authority over her, provided that the bride price is paid back.

581 626 These three definite points show that lawful union, or marriage, legally speaking, is essentially a kind of usufruct of the woman to the advantage of the husband, and the price is the bride price. As a result, the woman's community is obliged to see to it that the husband enjoys his rights. Hence, when a wife misbehaves, no matter how, the husband reports it to her community which takes steps to bring the erring girl to terms for fear of having to refund the bride price. On the other hand, the husband is expected to treat his wife in a manner worthy of her, that is, with consideration for her origins, and if he fails to do so, he risks the consequences of breach of the marriage contract.

There are, therefore, reciprocal rights and duties required of the spouses. Based on the marriage contract, these rights and duties are reinforced, completed, or, more generally, influenced by ethics no less than by the feelings of the [207] couple in relation to each other and to their respective communities.

581 562 [554] This is why a girl from a great house with high standing (1) cannot be treated like a common concubine, even though the husband may prefer the concubine to the wife, because the free daughter of a powerful house, richly dowered, is virtually independent in the household. If she is sufficiently well off, she may even live in a house of her own, and since her only obligation is the sexual conjugal duty, she receives her husband as she would a lover.

On the other hand the free woman of modest circumstances and, even more, of lowly birth is her husband's companion in wretchedness. She does all kinds of work, even the hardest and most disagreeable, and she desires no rupture that would deprive her of the only affection that sustains her, the love of her children.

1. Thus, in the western Sudan, the daughters of the Massa-si are treated with great deference.

428 2. If there are no children, the collateral males and,
596 lacking the~~m, the wives~~.

3. If there are no collateral relatives, the ascendants.
614 4. If there are no ascendants, the surviving spouse.

5. If there is no surviving spouse, escheat occurs: [220] the inheritance reverts to the head of the settlement, the dugutigi, when this settlement is independent; otherwise to the head of the clan, the fama.

596 614 The community and the individual. The result of the foregoing is that the individual, whoever he may be and whatever his situation, has no value except as a member of a community (1); it is the community that exists and has an identity, while the individual exists and is identified only through the community and for the community.

An individual who exists apart from any faya is, therefore, an anomaly, and this situation comes to an end as soon as the individual himself becomes fa.

596 614 There are cases, however, when an individual is put out of his community because of his own action or because of circumstances, and extraordinary changes of status result.

●626 Anyone driven from his community for bad conduct loses his rights to the faya in that community.

564 558 If his disqualification results from the practice of a trade regarded as degrading, he falls into what the Bambara call nyama-ka-la and Europeans call "people of caste." Henceforth he is not only excluded from his community, but he lives apart from all persons not declassed; he is a free man of inferior standing. He usually lives under the protection of a community of persons not declassed, earning his living from it and deriving from it such consideration as may be sometimes given him.

564 463 Among the Bambara, the nyama-ka-la include: the numu, blacksmiths, whose wives are usually potters; the loro, who work with copper; the garanke, who work leather; and the kule, who work with wood and are sometimes saddlers.

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[567] 1. A slave has no rights because, as a person, he belongs to no community.

784 One might perhaps think that it would be very difficult not to
602 see one's tné....? In the Sudan good manners require that people
576 discipline their glances from their earliest years. A son-in-law lowers his eyes in the presence of his mother-in-law, a daughter-in-law turns her back at a three-quarters angle out of modesty in the presence of her father-in-law, and when a lover goes to win over the father of his fiancée, she runs away and hides. Any Negro, however poor his manners, will direct his look no one knows where, into space or upon his toes, every time he greets anyone and hears his news, and will chat with a person for a quarter hour without ever looking at him. No more is asked for the tné. Undoubtedly a Bambara shields himself with both hands in its presence... and he plays the young daughter-in-law; he knows well how to differentiate between seeing and looking, and he knows how to tell you at the time, however little he is accused: "Né y'a yé tigné, n'ka, nè gné tount'a la, né m'a flè. I saw it certainly, but I did not leave my eyes on it, I did not look at it."

3. The Gnâma

789 The tné are rendered sacred, above all, by the curse of the
778 ancestor. Nothing is so much feared by the Bambara. To be cursed,
626 and cursed by his father, is the greatest evil that can befall a man; his wives would run away from him, his children would blush to call him "father," his /27/ friends would abandon him, the people of the village would be terrified to speak to him; he would have to flee. And where would he go? The gnâma of his father, of his ancestor, of his fetish's tné, would cling to his steps and follow him everywhere. Only suffering would be left for him; sickness, hunger, poverty, and humiliation would be his lot and, rejected by humanity, he would die in despair.

789 The word gnâma is very difficult to translate. Does its equivalent
778 exist in our French language? Gnâma is a force, a power, or also perhaps a /kind of/ energy, a fluid possessed by every man, every animal, every living being; it never disappears and continues to exist even

794 776 The koré fetish watches over the crops and gives its initiates the only pleasures that they know and desire -- to drink, to eat, and to enjoy /104/ a woman -- and, as will later be demonstrated, all this comes out in their dances and orgies. In spite of its great power, the poor genie cannot handle its many concerns; the Bambara, who judge everything according to themselves to such an extent that they inject their own organization into the world of invisible beings, have therefore given it eight groups of spirits who carry out its orders and make up its court. Some watch over the insignia and preserve the names of the initiates, and others render powerless anyone who would harm the crops. Just like a distinguished, powerful, and rich man here, the koré has its storyteller /griots/ or heralds, the korodouga, who sing its praises, transmit to it the petitions and prayers of the initiates, and dance its dances. The eight groups of the sect are simply the representation of this court, the concrete expression of the Negroes' concept of it.

794 The initiation into, or affiliation with, the koré sect takes place only every seven years. It is long and painful; for fifteen days the young initiates live in the sacred grove and cannot go into the village. Since they need some training for future dances, the old men come to torment them every noon in the worst heat, and each initiate, according to the group to which he belongs, suffers for some moments the torment of fire, thorns, or the rod.

[626] The rigor of the admission in no way alienates the Bambara, and in Bani it is a disgrace to refuse the hen for the sacrifice and the /payment of/ 120 cowrie shells, and not to join. It is true that everything is repaid, for the sect has many festivals and d'lo, or millet beer, is never lacking.

In addition to the annual sacrifice, a sacrifice is made to the genie every time an initiate dies. There is another sacrifice on the anniversary of his death, and during the dry season the kore dé go from one festival to another, spending their nights in nameless drinking bouts and orgies. /105/

684 626 As long as he has not received the entire indemnity, the injured husband shouts, threatens, and attacks the guilty woman and man with his fists, but then the last cowrie shell is paid and all is quiet. Furthermore, should he be slow in calming down, his wife would most certainly run away and everyone would treat him as a boor. In fact, after having harshly rebuked the culprit and his accomplice and made them promise never to repeat the offense, the headman and elders go to the hut of the husband and say to him: "Your wife has promised not to default on her honor again, her seducer has paid the fine, so come, pardon them!" When the elders, the headman in the lead, put themselves out like this, they impose their will, and whoever does not say with them: "Kouma banna (1), the matter is settled, let us speak no more of it," is no less than a cad.

684 695 If adultery is established but the seducer and his accomplice have not been caught, the case becomes complicated, for the accused will deny the crime. The matter is brought before the court of elders, and, the powerful boli come out of their sanctuaries and for a moment leave the goatskins which they use as tabernacles. The accusers swear on the fetish (kali, "to swear," boli la) (2), and on the basis of the verbal proofs that they bring testify that there has been adultery. The accused are summoned, and if they persist in denying the charge, they are commanded to swear on the fetish to attest their innocence. Quite often they refuse, /162/ and matters drag on. The suit must finally be settled, so the husband and the accusers call on the most popular fetish with the words: "An ta boli sien (1) let us sacrifice to

1. Kouma, "word," "talk"; banna, "is finished."

2. Kali boli la, " may the boli kill me if I am lying."

1. The boli sien consists of oaths by both the accusers and the accused.

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The accusers swear: "If we are accusing falsely, may the boli kill us." The accused swear: "We are not guilty, and if we are may the boli kill us."

the boli, and may he take the life of the liar." When the council of elders has decided on the boli sien, it must be carried out. If the accused is guilty he will admit it, for to call on an idol to bear witness to a lie is to doom oneself to death, to decree one's own death. For a boli has no pity for a perjurer, and legends tell of more than one case identical to that of Ananias and Sapphira.

626 688 688 Some Negroes nevertheless perjure themselves. From then on they lose all peace; one fine day they can hold out no longer, and they go to find the master of the idol, and to him they confess their crime and their transgression. In order to save their lives they make a gnénama fani (2), and when they have paid the fani-n-kolo (3), the staff of the fetish denounces the culprit (4).

2. Gnénama, "living thing," "one who lives"; fani, "throat cutting"; gnénama fani, "throat cutting for one's life."

3. Fani, "throat cutting," "sacrifice"; kolo, "cowrie shells," "price"; fani-n-kolo, "price of the sacrifice."

4. A Negro who perjures himself in the presence of a fetish believes himself lost. Moreover, the boli taken as witness is the one most famous for its power in that circle, for instance, the Komo of Tigini,

626 Every seducer who has paid the fine demanded by the fiancé can walk with head held high, for he has satisfied justice, cleansed his honor, and his shield is unstained. But let him not be careless enough to go to the village of the injured fiancé, for he will be /164/ beaten hard by the young people; his exclusion often lasts for years.

010 Now, there is no reason to be surprised at the Bambara attitude toward adultery and fornication. If it can all be reduced to a violated principle of justice and nothing more, that is because they have fallen so low that they believe they were created and put in the world by God in order to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh as much as possible.

Abortion

562 Monsieur Louis Barbier wrote in the "Quinzaine" (January 16, 1906) /"Étude sur les populations Bambaras de la Vallée du Niger (A Study of the Bambara Peoples of the Niger Valley)"/: "The Bambara woman is a machine to produce children and do heavy work." In this statement he expresses, I am sure, the belief of all Europeans who have stayed among the Negroes without mingling with them or living their life. If the Bambara woman "is a machine to produce children," [163] it is a slow machine. I know families where there are seven and eight children by the same wife, but that is unusual; the average remains two or three children per woman.

853 837 It is not through frequent childbearing or because they are prolific that Bambara women lose their charms and wither. They do not, and cannot, conceive but every two or three years; they cannot bear a child more than once every three or four years, since every mother nurses her child for at least two whole years, and quite often three, and during all that time she may not conceive. Does she remain continent during that time? What is to be thought of these utterances on the part of a husband:

A ye den soro a ti son toun.
She has had a child, she wants no more relations with me.
Né t'à don toun, ne tigouéré a là toun.
I do not know her any more, I no longer go near her.

575 561 a sense of solidarity among the ton'-den'. In reality, the bachelor ton'-den' are principally concerned with amassing as much food as possible for the sole purpose of treating themselves to copious and merry banquets from time to time; for this purpose, all means are acceptable. Each member brings to the group whatever he can lay his hands on; in addition, the society assesses its members for contributions to swell the common fund. [291] First, there are the entrance fees and assessments in kind, particularly of grain. Then there are fines for infractions of the rules, involving penalties whose purpose is simply the enrichment of the group's treasury. At certain meetings, for instance, the most ordinary acts may not be performed unless permission has been given by the ton'-tigi or the dyala-tigi. A member who squats, rises, speaks, sneezes, or laughs before being authorized to do so is fined. Finally, the society goes on organized hunts, and the game thus acquired is distributed among the members on the basis of strict equality.

[527] Ordinarily the ton'-den' meet twice a week, on Monday and Thursday; these are the free days allotted to the poor people (fantan'-u), that is, people who are wholly under control.

The ton'-tigi can make no important decision without the prior advice and agreement of the ton'-den', but this does not mean that his role is negligible. His initiative determines the orientation of acts, and he later sees to their execution. Therefore, if he is a clever man, he actually has almost sole command over an organization capable of exerting powerful pressure on the native milieu, which by nature is amorphous, because a fla-n-ton' is not an isolated group. It is linked with the one that preceded it and the one immediately following it by a kind of solidarity, so that native society, from this point of view, is made up of an uninterrupted series of fla-n-ton' closely bound to each other, since the same chain of relationship prevails for women and since every male fla-n-ton' has a brotherhood relationship with the corresponding female fla-n-ton'.

[627] If a difference arises between members of the same fla-n-ton', the "elders" of the preceding fla-n-ton', i.e., the one immediately older, intervene as conciliators to settle the quarrel.

684 836 however, because the Negroes say that although the betrothed girl does not belong entirely to herself, neither does she belong entirely to her fiancé; she still retains certain rights to her own person, "à ma di ban, she has not yet been given."

684 627 When a girl becomes pregnant, she is arraigned before the family council. After a goat has been slaughtered for the family boli, she is asked the name of her partner, and if she refuses to disclose it the council of the elders is called in. She has to yield, otherwise she is tied to one of the forked sticks that support the flat terrace roof, and blows rain thick on her back.

As soon as the guilty man is named, she swears on a powerful boli (1) that she has told the truth, and the man is summoned.

Nothing is to be gained by being a perjurer; it is better to pay the fine and live. The stain on his honor is slight, and he confesses without much shame: "Tigné (that is true); né no do (it is my fault)."

The fine is between 15 and 20 francs and often between 25 and 30 francs (2), not including the sacrifice to the boli, which consists of two hens, two dogs, a goat, and two kola nuts. Quite often the injured fiancé has to be satisfied with the victims for the sacrifice and a small present, one to two kilos of salt, and 800 to 1,600 cowrie shells, or 1 to 2 francs. As for the child of an unmarried mother, its fate is in the hands of the grandmothers, and of the father and the mother, and it quite often happens that it does not cry twice in this world; to use the Bambara expression: "N'a kasira, a t'na [illegible]oula ké, if he has cried, he will not do it a second time." I am speaking here of a free girl, for the child of an unmarried slave girl is welcome; it is a gain for the house, and no attention is paid to the guilty man. This is easy to understand, for is there a Negro who does not abuse his slave? 847 848 567

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1. It is almost always a Komo, a Nama, or a Kono.

[583] 2. The rule is that the culprit should pay the fiancé the entire bride price, or some 30 francs.

575 561 [628] When differences arise between fla-n-ton', an arbitrator is chosen by these fla-n-ton'; in some regions, there is even an arbitrator designated in advance.

Among all these fla-n-ton' the most conspicuous is the one having the largest number of young bachelors known as "the young masters" (kamalen'-u). Being much given to idleness, the kamalen'-u are troublemakers and rebels who seek all the [292] material pleasures and devote their talents to opposing the fa, the bina, and those who, as masters of the community, impose on the young the whole weight of an authority which is absolute and often niggling.

This explanation makes it plain that the post of ton'-tigi is no sinecure. In order to maintain his role honorably, the ton'-tigi must be capable of exerting his authority in subtle and shrewd ways, for the ton'-den' are touchy and undisciplined, and they are quick to claim the equality which is the basis of their association, even to the point of egalitarian mania or egalitarianism. Therefore, it is interesting to note that the regulations, fantastic at first glance, which inflict penalties for performing the most trivial acts are actually very effective; they correct in fun, but they represent a kind of restraint that encourages the development of discipline. Breaking with ordinary life, they tend through repetition to form habits which taken together make [661] up what we call esprit de corps. In any event, the development which we are about to describe shows conclusively that to maintain and conserve his power the ton'-tigi must exert authority by dissimulation, by persuading those most easily offended that he is subordinating his own acts to their wishes and at the same time appearing to the faint-hearted as an imperious and audacious leader. Furthermore, he must render service to everyone and know how to turn projects and adventures, even the riskiest, into profit for the community.

Since he is the target of the hostility of the elders, who often suffer from the activities of the ton'-den', and since he is constantly envied by some of these same ton'-den' for his success, he acquires the kind of experience which makes him a crafty and sly politician, completely devoid of scruples.

*173 We shall see how Mamari (called Biton) Kouloubali managed to prevail over the tyrannical egalitarianism of the

101 103 131 word which we write and pronounce Kaarta means "country of the Karé" or, more accurately, "the group of the Karé." Wherever there are Karé people they are called, in the Soninké language, Karu-ta, [5] which is contracted to Karta. From this we made Kaarta because we misheard the long first "a." The word Kaarta designates a particular area only because of the people who inhabit it, and its value as a geographical expression is acquired only by extension. Among the natives the term is used for various areas within the region which extends from Goumbou to Koniakari and from Nioro to the Senegal River. On our maps, Kaarta is bounded by Kingui on the north, Diomboko on the west, Senegal and Bélédougou on the south, and Kaniaga on the east. However, all of these names of cantons themselves have very vague meanings.

101 103 131 614 For the purpose of the present work, the word Kaarta takes on a special meaning. The Bambara who founded a clan at Sounsan-na in the Karé country are called Karta-n-ko in the Soninké language and Karta-n-ka-u (the Kaarta people) in the Bambara language. As a result, Kaarta has become the name of the areas occupied by the clan in its various peregrinations.

The "people of Ségou" acquired their name in quite a different manner, since they were named for Ségou, the capital of the clan. The country of Ségou should be understood strictly to allude to the to-da which, to be described in chapter 5, was, by and large the area surrounding Ségou and occupied by the chief and his family and followers. In a wider sense, the country of Ségou referred to all the territory under the authority of the Ségou clan. At the height of the clan's power, "the country of Ségou" occupied both banks of the Niger, following the axis of the river from Kangaba to Timbuktu.

101 131 631 Our European need to have things clearly defined may be satisfied by having the territorial limits of Kaarta and Ségou set forth on a map, but on the native level, with which this book is primarily concerned, such local definition has little relevance. These empires did not aim to dominate any given area but rather sought to exploit as large a number of individuals as possible without regard to country or race.

571 182 with individuals in the same way as individuals deal with each other. They are not only moral persons, as we put it, but they are truly persons, [156] as evidenced by the Blacks' impulsive need for anthropomorphism.

812 Let us note, finally, that a Black does not abstract himself from surrounding nature; nor has he reached the stage of development at which man regards himself as a kind of intermediary between the natural and the supernatural. The Black is an integral part of nature and that is why he treats it like himself. Therefore, natural phenomena are subjected on his behalf to the same kind of ritual sequences as those followed in his own behavior.

Chapter 3

Communities

1. General Considerations

114 631 Native society is not simple, and Europeans studying these countries have used terminology which, not being defined, has obscured reality.

In particular, they have used the terms "kingdom" and "empire" to describe Sudanese states, and both authors and readers have taken these expressions to imply a social organization more or less analogous to those meant by these words in our country.

631 These empires or kingdoms, however, are simply clans, i.e., political groups that have imposed their authority on other groups whose members then become their tributaries, members of a caste, or slaves. Such an empire, if one wishes to use this term, has no exact geographical boundaries or, if one prefers, its boundaries are constantly changing. Furthermore, the country embraced by this term has two parts: territories which may be said to be under direct administration, in which the authority of the clan is directly imposed; and those territories whose position with respect to the ruling clan

631 is highly variable, ranging from complete subjection to quasi-independence.

565 [563] The imperial clan, or, if one prefers, the dominant clan, most often prevails over people of races other than that of its own members; frequently this clan itself includes, at least originally, diverse ethnic elements. [158]

If such heterogeneous associates are to live side by side without clashing, they must have a large body of common customs, and this indeed is the case. Wherever one studies it, the native milieu resembles a compartmented area whose individual sections seem, at first glance, to be isolated. At the top of the social structure there is a kind of nobility composed of the head of the clan, his family; and then the families of the clan; next come the free men, simply free or members of castes; and finally the slaves. In actual fact, a continual reciprocal movement between these elements welds all of them together.

614 596 The fact is that the whole social body exists only through the severity of the life of the cells that compose it: the families. Among other characteristics, these families are very jealous of their respective independence; nevertheless, they are closely allied among themselves even as they freely absorb the foreign element constituted by the slaves.

It is, therefore, essential to concentrate our attention on the family cell in order to understand the essential element of native social life. This is all the more true in that all the native collectivities are, so to speak, modeled on the organization of the family.

The Bambara language has no word exactly equivalent to our word "family" in the legal sense (1). Different names are used to designate the collectivity under the authority of the

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(1) This is why we prefer the term "community," but in view of the remarks made here, the use of the word "family" will not be ambiguous.

794 796 273 [691]

> near Djenné. The son of the chief of that village drank the special liquid, in spite of the fact that the *wara-mina-den'* had told him not to do so, and died. The latter was accused of having poisoned him, but when he explained the circumstances before the native tribunal, he was acquitted.

It is said that this drink is made by soaking any sort of root found while digging graves and seasoning it with pepper, salt, and red peppers. The beverage, which is highly intoxicating, is ritually consecrated.

794 796 Excited by this beverage and by the songs and dances of a crowd which is itself warmed with drink, the *wara-mina-den'* during major festivals acts as a visionary who freely reveals the will and desires of the god. On the evening before these important ceremonies and for several evenings before that, all the clergy and their aides meet for a kind of rehearsal of the dances and songs. It is then that the young men prepare for the major roles they will later play. The [286] *wara-mina-den'* is particularly concerned with the training of the man who will replace him in case of need.

There is nothing of special interest to note about the brotherhood's treasury, which is acquired and appropriated just as in other brotherhoods. The political action of the Nya and its relations with the communities are also such that they require no special attention. [287]

Chapter 5

The Clans

1. General Considerations

631 It is usual to use the word "empire" or "kingdom" to describe the form of government of most of the Sudanese states and particularly those founded in Kaarta and Ségou by the

● 631 Bambara, with whom we are here concerned. Each writer, however, uses these terms to refer to an ill-defined type of authority, sometimes without even attempting a critical comparison with similar institutions in our own countries.

This uncertainty is accompanied by other such doubtful similarities, which result in confused conceptions. Is it not common to speak of feudalism, of a feudal system, to describe the kind of hierarchy among various native chiefs? In the Sudan, however, there is no connection between man and the land comparable to that which was the basis of the feudal system. [423] Indeed, no such meaning is possible, since the Sudanese does not recognize any right of ownership of land. Therefore, political ties between native chiefs are never based on land; how then can one speak of a feudal system?

614 621 631 As a matter of fact, the social unit is the community based on the family; it develops into a patriarchy and expands into a tribe and a people. Its members are united by blood ties, which are confirmed by the ancestor cult. [288]

Since they are proud and jealous of their freedom, communities seek to remain independent. Their relationships, however, determined especially the occupation and exploitation of a common territory, force them to give up this independence, and joining together in the same cult, the sign of their spiritual solidarity, they form a dugu (1).

1. This word is not without ambiguity. On the one hand, it means "that which is below," hence, "the soil"; on the other hand, it means "place," "residence," or "at the home of." It is understood to mean "territory" or "country" occupied by a human collectivity, and by an easily understandable deviation, it likewise designates the organization which governs this collectivity in relation to this territory.

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● 631 The dugu have definite territorial domains, and they, too, prefer to live without the subordination of any one of them to the others. There are relationships between some of them, such as some being offshoots of others and, due to proximity, many matrimonial unions have bound them together.

Unavoidable necessity also often forces the dugu to form leagues, coalitions, or more often associations called kafu' (literally, "union"). Depending on the circumstances, a chief is elected by the association or he usurps the authority over it. This sometimes results in the creation of a political or administrative organization. The Ségala area, also called Sénébala, is an example. "It has a local history of several centuries, hereditary chiefs of several dynasties, social and matrimonial bonds and customary institutions which have persisted for generations; it is a nation and a fatherland" (2).

2. In Marty, Etudes sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan [Studies on Islam and the Tribes of the Sudan], Vol. 4, p. 105.

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[661] It also may happen that someone who becomes a chief will be so enamored with the exercise and the profits of power that with the support of his followers -- relatives or others -- he will manage to retain permanent control. This association is what we here call a clan; the Bambara designate it by the word ton', applicable to any association.

As an organism of authority, this clan may be defined as an oligarchic government founded for the sole purpose of subjugating, by any means, the individuals it can reach for the sake of exploiting them. Those who are enfeoffed to this government are called "the people of So-and-So" or "the people of such and such place" by the Bambara, as by other natives, [289] for example: the Massa-si-u (1),

1. From another point of view, Massa-si-u means "descendants of Massa," and hence, "the tribe of Massa."

614 "the people (of the clan) of Massa"; the Segu-n-ka-u (2),
• 631

2. From another point of view, Segu-n-ka-u means "the people of the country of Ségou."

"the people (of the clan) of Ségou."

104 Since we are always obsessed by our own system of or-
128 ganization, these terms appear in our writings as village (dugu),
canton or province (kafu), and empire (ton', which is a clan).

Because of the convenience of expressions that are familiar to us, we shall use this terminology in this study, and it seems essential to define briefly the value of these terms in native society in order to avoid ambiguity which, to say the least, gives rise to distorted delusions.

In Kaarta and the Ségou country before the time of the
173 two great clans whose history we have given and whose develop-
563 ment and operation we are about to describe, there were dugu
631 which usually had no connections or at most were joined in some
ephemeral kafu. These kafu were composed of a majority of Bambara mixed with Soninké and people of other races. The Soninké dugu were noted for their prosperity, sometimes even wealth, and this gave them a degree of pre-eminence over the Bambara dugu. This prosperity rested on the labor of a slave population that the Soninké had managed to acquire for the most part by commercial dealings.

This de facto hegemony usually had no corresponding political or administrative organization; its only outward sign was the scorn with which the Soninké regarded the less fortunate Bambara and, conversely, the sullen hostility of the Bambara toward the rich Marka (as they called the Soninké). As a consequence, local quarrels broke out from time to time which sometimes developed into bloody conflicts. The early history of the Massa-si clan is a good example of this state of affairs, to judge by the record in the chronicle cited above.

173 The Ségou-Kaarta regions, under the authority of Mandé
and Songhaï clans, were in this state, in semiobscurity because
631 they were outside the zone of direct administration by these clans.

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631 Their people, [290] except for the payment of required tribute, lived as they pleased and followed their own customs as long as the latter did not offend the dominant clan.

2. Clan of the "People of Ségou"

Development of the Fla-n-ton' of Ségou-koro

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561 According to the chronicle cited earlier, the origin of the clan of Ségou must be attributed to the development of a fla-n-ton'.

Those persons who have undergone the rite of soli together are united in a fla-n-bolo (band of peers); the fla-n-bolo of three consecutive soli form a fla-n-ton' (assemblage of peers). The members call themselves ton'-den' in relation to the association, and fla-ni in relation to one another.

In each fla-n-ton' there is a ton'-tigi (head of the assemblage) elected by the ton' den', who is just as likely to be a wolosu (slave born in the house) as the son of a notable; a dyala-tigi (distributor), likewise elected by the ton'-den', is especially charged with the distribution of food for the group's banquets and with the enforcement of regulations; a ton' dyeli is a kind of beadle appointed by the ton'-tigi who has him make preparations for meetings, assemble the members, announce orders, etc., and he is usually a young person of caste. There are people of all races and of all ranks in the fla-n-ton', and in the association there is theoretically, complete equality among them. Indeed, this equality explains the term fla-ni-u (peers) which they use among themselves.

In principle the aim of the fla-n-ton' (1) is to establish

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1. As we have noted, there are fla-n-ton' for women as well as for men, but we are not considering them here; their role is insignificant from the present point of view.

614 567 The status of this caste-slave carried over to his decendants ad infinitum, even in the case of those persons who rose to the highest positions. Thus, the Dyara of the family of Ngolo Dyara kept the stigma attached to the servile status of their ancestor (1). In practice, the wishes of an all-powerful master could change the status of those under his authority since, as we have seen, the fa made the law. However, this arbitrary will did not leave a man without recourse, as we saw in the chronicle in the case of the aforesaid Ngolo in his relations with Mamari. If one could appeal to the good offices of someone close to the fa, it was often possible to make him change his mind.

614 ● 631 The furu-ba dyon' (ton'-dyon' or furu-ba dyon', properly speaking) were under the orders of "chiefs of slaves" (dyon'-kuntigi-u). There are supposed to have been 120 of these chiefdoms under Ma-n-son, according to the words attributed to Tonmassa in the chronicle. According to the same source, the number rose to 140, and then Ma-n-son reduced the number to 60 hereditary posts with authority over a varying number of furu-ba dyon' who were scattered about in the various regions subject to the clan, the whole subservient to the decision of the fama. The chronicle shows us how the fama established or broke up these chiefdoms for the greatest variety of reasons. Whenever he had an enemy who needed watching, an attack to be prepared, a country to be exploited, or a service to be organized, he conscripted men wherever he liked, ordered whole populations to move, and appointed a chief to take command of the enterprise and to carry out his orders, whenever and however he wished.

Among the dyon'-kuntigi there was a hierarchy [302] based on seniority theoretically and also on the importance of the duties; as a result, some of them were great chiefs. One of these, called the ton'-masa, came to be the supreme chief over the ton'-dyon in particular and all the furu-ba dyon' in general. In the fla-n-ton' the ton'-masa had the duty of convening the ton'-den' and of watching the ton'-dyon' to see that they

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1. See Raffenel, Vol. 1, p. 371.

614 performed the work ordered by the ton'-tigi. The ton'-masa had
•631 the same duties in the furu-ba: he made sure that the furu-ba
dyon' executed the orders of the fama while acting as inter-
mediary of the dyon'-kuntigi. Since, in short, he represented
all the furu-ba dyon', his office gradually tended to put him in
opposition to the fama. In the last analysis, what can a fama
accomplish if he is opposed by a ton'-masa with all the force of
the furu-ba dyon' behind him? That is why Mamari thought he
would be able to rely on the devotion of the holder of this high
office if he chose him, not from among the furu-ba dyon', but
from among his personal slaves. He bought a slave and made him
a ton'-masa.

The furu-ba dyon' were first used, though not exclusively
*173 as might be thought, for armed forays, variable in scope, from
614 which everyone profited: Mamari, first of all, by increasing
631 prestige and by extending the areas under his sway; the furu-ba
dyon', and Mamari too, by adding to their fortunes. The sons of
Mamari, obviously anxious to perpetuate their acquired position
and not run the risks of brigandage, decided to turn the activity
of the furu-ba dyon' toward agriculture. This new orientation
gave rise to a crisis, since it was not at all to the taste of one
faction which included a large number of furu-ba dyon'; hence
there arose internal quarrels, in which one episode was the
murder of Dé-koro.

It was during these disturbances that many of the ton'-dyon' and dyon'-kuntigi conceived the idea of dropping out of sight to live independently on the proceeds of the property of the furu-ba entrusted to their case. Successive fama naturally tried, by terrible examples, to bring the rebels to terms, but they succeeded only temporarily by means of force, and when their power declined, these usurpations multiplied. Some of them were sanctioned definitively by the hereditary rights accorded to the 60 posts. [303]

The Fama

614 The second element in the clan was the power of direction, organization, and surveillance, and the holder of this power

538 814 that the griot is often a wretched character, an insignificant parasite living at the expense of everyone. There are those among them, however, who carry out their duties as archivist very faithfully and who are sincerely devoted to their masters, great and generous lords in the native fashion whose interests and reputations such griot ably defend.

It is griot of this last type who transmit the reliable historical tradition from which we have borrowed the foregoing accounts. There [318] is no doubt that these griot, true "masters" (dyeli) of historical traditions, have played a considerable role in native society. Therefore their words should never be passed over lightly, although obviously they should be subjected to judicious criticism.

The To-da

614 ● 631 In origin, evolution, and contingencies, the clan developed from the social bases already studied, community and brotherhood, of which it is, in the last analysis, only an amalgamation. As a result, its various manifestations are similar to those of these institutions, even though possessing its own peculiarities.

One of the most characteristic features of the clan is the to-da, which was the familiar term used by members of the clan for the region in which they lived. The word literally means "the pot of mush" and alludes to the essential element in the corporate banquets of the fla-n-ton'. As the saying goes: "furu-ba to, to kadi, na ka ko, (at the corporate meal the mush is good and the sauce is bad.") [539]

The to-da originally was limited to Ségou-koro and its immediate environs, i.e., the small number of villages affiliated with the ton' either voluntarily or by force. It progressively extended its sway along the Niger: first on the right bank as far as Kirango; later almost to Dina; finally it extended its influence over a broad area on both sides of the river from Kan ga-ba to Timbuktu.

This territory was organized in various ways. The key region ran along the Niger from Dina to Kirango, and the sector

614 631 between Ségou-koro and Kirango was the area under what we would call direct administration, because this zone was occupied substantially by the fama, his community, and his ton'-dyon'.

614 794 Ségou-koro, which had witnessed the birth and the development of the clan, had remained Mamari's capital; he preferred to live there, and he had installed the protective idols of the clan there. Thus it was, so to speak, the seat of the brotherhood, whose four principal idols continued to be known under the names of ba Kongo-ba, na n-Golo ko, Nye-dinge-dun', and Kolo-koloni. [319] 778 776

The fama was the high priest, and the other officiants of the cult were chosen from among the ton'-dyon'; that is why Ngolo Dyara was dye-n-fa. Any follower of Mamari or his successors was affiliated with the cult of these idols. The adepts who lived far from Ségou-koro founded branches which in certain ways were so dependent on the capital that Ségou-koro was for a long time regarded as a holy city.

We have no detailed knowledge concerning the cult of these important idols; we only know that in general they did not differ greatly from what we have already said about the nyana of the boli. The annual festival was exceptionally solemn and brought the faithful from even quite distant regions. The fama, of course, presided over the ceremony which involved certain essential rites: a renewal of religious faith, the reception of new members, and an oath of loyalty to the fama. 614

794 776 The four deities mentioned above were not the only ones in the Bambara pantheon at Ségou (1); others were added, some bought and others invented out of the extravagant faith of the ton'-dyon'. Among the latter should no doubt be included the drums of the ton'-dyon', which are mentioned several times in the accounts and which are presented always in a very bloodthirsty light. Ngolo sacrificed his most hated enemies to the drum-idols,

1. In Les Bambara [The Bambara], Father Henry mentions, in addition to ba Kongo-ba and na-n-Golo-ko, two other idols, Kuantara and Safolo.

622 gives the orders concerning local celebrations and initiations.

In fact, the land originally belongs to spirits, and the chief 622 776 who succeeds the founder of the village is the only one who is able to establish contact with the chief of the spirits and negotiate with him. He is the earthly administrator of the spirit; he assures his worship, the exploitation of the land, and the organization of the community territory.

621 622 The first chief of the land was the first occupant; the succeeding chiefs are his heirs, following the order of succession. To found a new village, a chief chooses a place in unoccupied territory, usually at a crossroads, near a water source, near a baobab, [778 824] a doubalé, or other sacred tree. He offers sacrifices to the spirits and receives in exchange their authorization to settle. If his group prospers, and less fortunate families want to establish themselves in this well-favored location, they ask the chief for authorization. However, as Monteil (1) remarks: "... The fa of a familial community depends strictly on the patriarchy only if, attached to it by the male line, he holds some goods of the patriarchy or if he claims rights in this patriarchy. In the contrary case, the family fa conducts himself as a stranger in relation to the patriarchy, which can only treat him in like fashion ..." Every familial community becomes patriarchal at the death of the family head when he has no heirs (see the chapter on inheritance); the community then groups around itself familial communities which themselves include paternally related groups and maternally related groups. When the patriarchy is an old one, a considerable number of persons live under its aegis. All recognize dyamu and taboos (see below) in common.

621 631 When the settlement becomes too populous, a fa gathers a group and founds another village. Afterwards, the people of neighboring districts may solicit the patronage of the first village, by participating in its djo (2) and by sacrificing to its guardian spirits.

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1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

2. See the chapter on religion.

621 631 The cluster of all these villages forms a kafo or kafu (canton) which includes the original family, its oldest neighbors, the inhabitants of other villages, and, finally, the outsiders. All these people acknowledge common interests, and the villages of the same canton send representatives to the assembly which meets at the chief's residence. Thus, the large family grows into a patriarchy to form the dugu (village) and spreads out into a kafu. Sometimes, after these branchings out, certain offshoot communities adopt a special dyamu and other taboos. The new dyamu is joined to the old, and little by little supplants it. The principal characteristics of the mother community exist, to which are added [55] various new traits, but the relationship between the two communities is never extinguished. Inversely, natives even of different races but having the same dyamu consider themselves related, which for them implies respect for the ancestral traditions concerning the cult, the practice of mutual aid, respect for the authority of the fa, who must protect all his relatives no matter how remote the connection, and fidelity to all pacts between the communities. Finally, between individuals of different races, certain dyamu, although dissimilar, are considered equivalent and may be interchanged.

621 b. Alliances. -- The unity of a community is founded not only upon common interests, which we will examine later, but also upon a whole system of alliances.

Monteil distinguishs four types of alliance: the common cult (see the chapter on religion), marriage, the tnế, and the oath.

621 581 583 Marriage: this is the most common form of alliance. When a Bambara seeks an alliance with a family, he gives his daughter in marriage to one of the members of that family, after providing her with a large dowry. Some interesting information on this subject is furnished us by Monteil (1). The alliance between two families is reinforced still further when they establish the custom of exchanging women. In this way the Soninké family Niakaté allied itself to the

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1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta. Les Empires du Mali [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta. The Mali Empires.]

591 776 181 elders; and above them, as undisputed lord, soars the eldest, the gouatigi, or head of the family.

776 181 All the gouatigi are subject to heads of quarters, led by the dougoutigi, (1) or village heads; these obey the kafotigi, or heads of the canton, who in turn are governed by the fama déou, sons of the king or ministers. Such was the original organization of the Bambara, and all these petty chiefs, were absolute and uncontested lords, each in his own sphere.

776 181 631 643 Above them all there was the king, Fama or Massa (2), whose chief function was to allow himself to live in affluence and /74/ sweet idleness. He held all his subjects in his hands; all were his slaves, from the least to the highest, and he had the power of life and death over each and every one.

631 1. The dougoutigi, or religious head of the village, takes precedence over the sotigi, or civil head. I believe that since the time of Carrier, administrator of the circle in 1901, this hierarchy as such has been officially done away with. It persists nevertheless, and the kafotigi and fama déou, priestly in character, secretly retain their prestige.

2. The word Massa, used to designate the king, also means "great and powerful sorcerer." In the beginning the king really had absolute power, both civil and religious, and was really the prince or pope of fetishism. If he were not, would he have been given the title of Massa, "great priest," "great sorcerer?"

776 Such a spirit is the exclusive property of one family, and even 621 bears its name, or diamou. Its sacrificer, called gnéna-n-sonnaba, 193 also bears the name of dougoutigi (1); he is, in fact, the real head of the village. Although at present the civil and religious authorities [554] are separate in many places, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or religious priest, always holds precedence, and self-respecting people call him dougoutigi (head of the village), giving the title of sotigi (2) to the one who has only civil authority. Here we have further evidence that the organization of the Bambara nation was, at its origin purely religious. The separation of the two authorities in certain hamlets can easily be understood.

[291 516]

Typical Bambara headman.

631 Under the Bambara dynasty the kingdom of Ségou was divided into provinces, cantons, and villages. The king, Fama or Massa

1. Gnena, "fetish," "genie"; sonnaba, "great sacrificer"; dougou, "village"; tigi, "head," "master."

2. So, "hut," "house"; tigi, "head."

631 ("great sorcerer who has communication with the invisible beings"), lived at Ségou with his court. At the head of each of his provinces he had a minister responsible for levying the tax (/this man was/ his tool, often one of his children, to whom -- doubtless for this reason -- was given the title of Fama, petty king. The minister did his work through the intermediary of the heads of cantons, or kafotigi, under who, with respect to civil matters, were all the heads of villages, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi. /100/

The levying of the tax often gave rise to disputes between the kafotigi and the dougoutigi, and the latter would resign from his functions or be relieved of them. After that he lost all civil powers but none of his religious or priestly authority, and since the religious sphere had precedence over the civil, he kept his title of dougoutigi in his role as gnéna-n-sonnaba. The one who replaced him /in the civil sphere/ was never anything but an upstart and worthy only of the name sotigi ("head of houses"), although his responsibility became hereditary.

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Under Moslem domination the worship of the gnéna, or djiné, was forbidden and punished by very severe penalties (slavery or death). It can thus be believed that it was to the advantage of the gnena-n-sonnaba to keep their position quiet, to refuse the title of dougoutigi, and even to forbid their people to bestow it on them. In Bani country and among the Bambara of Sikasso and Koutiala, where Moslem domination was never solidly established, there was no cause for similar fears, and it is understandable that the custom of calling the religious head dougoutigi and the civil head sotigi has been retained.

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The gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, is helped in his duties by a sieré (aide, deputy); the heads of quarters (sotigi) and the heads of families (gouatigi) make up his council. Nothing important is done in the village without consulting its head, who calls all his elders together and decides nothing without them. All of them are also present at any sacrifice if it is offered by a family, and it is not unusual to see them going single file, evening or morning, to the sacred grove of the fetish. On the morning of a marriage, they always go there.

[76] II. Present Evolution of Bambara Society

A. Political Evolution

648 636 At the present time, all the territory of the Sudan is unified and endowed with a political organization permitting it to play an active role within the framework of the French Union. The Sudan, like each of the eight territories of French West Africa, is represented in the National Assembly, in the Senate [Conseil de la République], and in the Assembly of the French Union by elected members. These members have been chosen from among the sons of former slaves or people of caste as well as from among the sons of former chiefs.

The administrative organization is placed under the authority of a governor general, seconded by two councils: the High Council of West Africa and the Government Council. At the head of the territory is a governor who is the administrative chief of the territory; he is assisted by a secretary general, named, like the governor, by decree, and by a civil and military cabinet which transmits the governor's orders.

Finally, the circles are directed by colonial administrators directly responsible to the governor. The circles are divided into subdivisions headed by assistant administrators who are directly responsible to the circle administrators. They are charged with the general administration and control of all the civil and financial functions of the circle.

Each circle is divided into cantons based on the territorial divisions of the old military districts. A canton has a head sometimes named by the administration but generally elected according to the traditional custom of the old Fama. The canton head is charged with representing the interests of the natives before the administration.

B. Tendency to Economic Change

177 The principal transformation in the Bambara economy stems from the French pacification and from the contributions of the European social and economic organization.

2: Monteil
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Bambara FA8

/Because of the equivalence of the extended kinship group with governmental authority among the Bambara, most information on organization and activities of a political nature has been assigned to category 614. --Analyst/

429 A person who is away for a long or indefinite period [217] delegates the direction of the family community for as long as necessary to a friend or relative. This substitute, however, is expected to act only in accordance with the customary counsel and the family of the absent person.

[586] In case of divorce, the children always remain with the father. A divorced woman again comes under the guardianship of her own community.

768 429 When the mother dies, the father retains the administration of her property which belongs jointly to her children. If, however, one of her sons is married or of marriageable age and is competent, all such property is supposed to be handed over to him to administer in his capacity as fa of the uterine community.

When a father dies, his minor children are placed under the guardianship of the patriarch under whose authority the deceased was living. If he was independent, guardianship would be set up in accordance with his wishes which he would not have failed to make known.

In any event, if one of his sons is married or of marriageable age and sufficiently competent, he becomes fa of the familial community which gradually, as the younger sons grow up and establish families of their own, becomes a patriarchy such as we have described above.

[641] According to native law, deprivation of civil rights does not exist. In fact, however, persons who by reason of ill-health or senility are unable to comply with custom in carrying out their functions are supplanted by such persons as are designated by custom to replace them at the time of death.

596 614 Faya. The faya is the authority and power of the fa over all his dependents. It has the same character, differing only in extent, whether it concerns a familial or a patriarchal community.

Familial faya. Within the family, the fa theoretically has complete authority over everything that constitutes this community. It makes little difference whether he acts on his own initiative or whether he allows himself to be swayed by the

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double meaning is no less evident in the Tarikh-es-Soudan, especially on p. 161 of the French translation. The same double usage is evident in oral traditions.

Thus it is understandable that the word Mandé has come to be considered as an equivalent of our words "empire" and "kingdom" when they are used in a geographical sense, and that, as a result, the term has varied in application because it depended on an ever-changing territorial domain subject to the domination of successive ma.

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However, it is not only from the geographical point of view that the term Mandé has remained indefinite or vaguely defined; the same uncertainty prevails on the political level. In a general way, Mandé is considered to be exclusively the empire of the Mandingue people, who are one of the subdivisions of the group called Mandé by the Europeans (1). In order to understand the meaning attached to the word "empire" in western Sudan, it is essential to place oneself on the native level and not on that of our European civilization from which the term is borrowed.

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[614]
Briefly, the Sudanese empire is a system of clans. It is formed by bringing together of elements taken over from clans that have either disintegrated or are in the process of doing so. It acquires power and extension through the influence of the founder or, less frequently, of one of his successors, and then falls into decline at the hands of enemies or as a result of schisms which arise at the death of the ruler on whose success and "flair" its fortunes have depended.

It is this constantly repeated process of grouping, separation and regrouping which dominates the entire [15] history of the Sudanese empires and dynasties and which makes any study of the people so very difficult. The geographical nomenclature is,
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1. Mandé, as the name for a group of peoples or of native languages, is unknown to the Sudanese; in this sense it is used exclusively by the Europeans.

608 643 [59] No one may oppose the Fama's will, except his sênanku who has the power to stay the chief's decisions, particularly in case of acts dictated by anger: murders, wars, etc.

643 651 652 The Fama's resources came from the work of his familiars, from a levy on wild foodstuffs, half of the war booty, all otherwise unowned goods, from certain precious substances, such as gold and ivory, from taking part of every animal killed in the hunt and the skins of all wild animals brought down, all receipts for the right to hold markets, for grazing, and for changing pastures, tolls for river crossings, fines, and from the sale of prisoners of the law. On the other hand, he had to meet the following expenses: to feed and clothe the members of the community in the case of need;to maintain the warriors (give them a groom, a wife, a rifle, a horse); bestow favors on people of caste, feed them, clothe them, arrange for their marriages if need be; make offerings to charity; receive strangers; feed prisoners detained for judgment or otherwise held.

643 653 The Fama ordered all work of common interest: construction and maintenance of fortifications, clearing trails, preservation of springs, construction and upkeep of the mosque if one was needed, making pirogues for common use, setting up rest platforms.

These works were carried out through payments in labor. The work was divided up among the villages by the Fama, and the village chiefs in turn assigned it to family heads. He who did not carry it out in person could have it done by members of his family; he who refused could be obliged to comply by force.

642 Bambara society rarely achieved a systematic and centralized form of organization analogous to our European kingdoms. What has been dignified with the name of "empire" was scarcely more than an organization which reflected the attraction exercised by a family, by reason of its prestige or its power, on groupings which accepted its suzerainty. As Monteil has shown very well, a family's effort at domination has always been directed at groupings of people and not at territorial expansion.

642 565 The whole of these groupings constitutes the Ton. This includes:

1. a chief, the ton-tigi;
2. the local chiefs, fa;

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565 3. the free men;
4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);
5. slaves.

567 e. *Slavery*. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by
violence, by obligation, or by birth.

567 1. *By violence*. If a war captive is important, he may be
727 killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration.
554 A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in
the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no
case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared
captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama;
[608] if he is a *sénanku* of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing
him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious
[561] Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of
the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

567 2. *By obligation*. A free individual became a slave in
681 punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the
426 profit of the Fama. A *fa* could sell one of his children to meet his
858 debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was
freed of his obligations.

567 3. *By birth*. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a *wolo-so*. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

567 As the number of slaves grew, their organization became
644 complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Ségou
were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the *dyon-kuru* or *dyon-futu* (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Ségou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him, the submission of all the slaves.

776 292 the daily movement of the sun "which unfolds until evening." The regularity of the rays symbolizes order and the classification of beings and things by Faro. The /41/ ends of the straw sprigs forming the spiral must remain free: they represent the infinite extension of Faro's realm and power. The hat is also a mask "which hides Faro's invisible face and through which he watches over the world" (1).

1. Today, a basket of considerably higher dimensions is made and used by women (See pl. I, b).

[643] The headgear yugu was formerly reserved for the king, who wore it under a turban. Certain deserving old men were also permitted to keep it. The rituals of making and wearing this headdress attest to the importance attributed to it. In particular, when an old man was [695] suspected of having committed a serious offense, his hat was pierced with four holes representing the four cardinal points. He was then made to wear it, thus submitting him to Faro's judgment; if found guilty, he died.

776 As the spirit of the waters, Faro is supposed to belong to the white race and his body to be half albino flesh and half copper (pl. I, c).

776 773 A myth relates how his physical being was formed.

When Faro caused the streaming waters to descend on earth, he manifested himself for a long time only by his voice. He had no body, and since he needed appropriate matter to achieve one, he bided his time in the waters of the sea.

The winged spirit Téliko, who had the body of an albino, wished one day, in his arrogance and jealousy, to cross the world in order to know it and to dominate it. Faro, warned by the dogfish, decided to seize his enemy's body to complete his own. The albino, who always flew, fed on his own substance. He chewed his own flesh and his bones were soon bare; the marrow came out of them. It turned into red copper which fell into the sea and nourished Faro.

While Téliko descended to the water level, the dogfish that was watching him sang in order to attract him. The albino, aware of the danger, climbed back to the highest heaven, attempting to continue his flight and to reach the ends of the world. But he quickly lost strength and after his dya had fallen into the waters, his body was

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> 1. *Bolo ti doniya ye dali duru sira ye, bolokoni kumba dãga ye dyẽ saba gundo ye, tyemasa, bolokoni ye dyẽ dura ye.*

yo, of which only the first is realized (2).

> 2. On the worlds thought out by *yo,* see pp. 23-26.

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643 On another level, the signs of the thumb are related to powers and those of the index to royal domains (fig. 1, nos. 8-12):*

1. Sign zero (*fu*) represents the beginning of creation, the origin of all things. A curved segment extended from left to right denotes the dynamic quality of the universe. It is intersected by a multiplication sign expressing the infinite development of beings and things. But the vertical stroke crossing it on the left indicates both the cessation and the suppression of the whole (no. 11).

2. Sign of lightning. It expresses royal power and justice and is traced under the thumb ring of the king. The latter, when giving an order, would swing his hand, which means he is swinging lightning before those he addresses (no. 12).

3. Sign of the royal domain. The opening asserts the possible extension of the kingdom; the transversal bar is a protection of this kingdom from all destruction (no. 8).

4. Sign of the extension of this domain at the tree cardinal sides: east, west, and south (no. 9).

5. Sign of union. The oval represents the whole group of functionaries called *tõdyɔ̃* and *barodẽ,* officers and councilors who administer the kingdom under the king's authority (no. 10).

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[783] As the feet are constantly in touch with the soil, they take on its impurity. An individual who has gone through severe purifications will need to avoid putting his feet on the ground during a period of time occasionally quite prolonged, for "to place one's toes on the ground is to put one's soul in contact with the impure earth" (1). It

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> 1. The invention of the shoe is mythically linked to the notion of the earth's impurity; the wearer must therefore avoid this contact.

*[p.22, category 116—Analyst.]

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175 came, everyone was astounded to see him leave everything for the birds.

The oracle was fulfilled at once. Biton ruled from Timbuktu to the Atlantic. And the dyeli, Karé Tammoura, who told me the legend, adds that thereafter there was a very strange thing at Ségou: a combination animal and plant which the Bambara called Sanu-so or "golden horse." Ahmadou, the son of Omar, had a mosque erected on the spot where Sanu-so was wont to appear but, all the same, it did not disappear until the arrival of the French. Even since then, there are those who say that on certain days strange lights appear at the spot on the Niger where Monseigneur Hacquart died and where the genie appeared to Mamari.

[171] This fable about a local genie is not in itself remarkable, but when compared to the legend about Ngolo Dyara (see later, p. 51) and to many other similar ones current in the Sudan (2), what it really is becomes clear: the figurative expression of a native mentality about which the European is usually very ill-informed and which deserves to be noted here briefly.

778 [23] Anything that departs from the average, the ordinary, or the normal -- power, wealth, success, ... illness, poverty, misfortune -- to any extraordinary degree or in a suspicious way, is, for the Bambara in particular and for the Black in general, the manifestation of an occult force acting either spontaneously or after provocation.

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778 That is why, in the eyes of a native, a chief (a paramount chief, of course) is out of the common run, not so much because of the position he occupies as because of the magic powers attributed to him (1). Power is merely the reflection of his

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2. See, especially, the legend of Ndyadyane Ndyaye in "Légendes et coutumes sénégalaises [Senegalese Legends and Customs] by H. Gaden, 1912, and the "Dyide de Djenné" in Contes du Sénégal et du Niger, by Zeltner.

efficacies in magic and he himself is convinced that this is true. Everything he does is accepted without protest because his acts have a supernatural character. The only ones who can resist him are those who, like him, have special powers (2). Therefore he makes a point of seeking the company and advice of initiates in matters that are hidden from the common herd. These are the sorcerers, magicians and marabouts, all of whom believe that they possess -- or appear to possess -- a share in the knowledge that allows its practitioners to influence the unseen. Sometimes he is one of them or becomes one, and in any event he is always, willingly or not, dependent upon them.

791 778 This is an age-old state of mind, which Islam has merely strengthened, for the Black man, whether Moslem or not, always regards the marabout as a diviner, a performer of miracles, a maker of philters, talismans and amulets, and a caster of spells. Many facts attest the truth of this observation, and the tales which follow will afford examples.

*173 It is understandable that with such beliefs[1] the Black man could hardly be expected to admit that the life of an important person, a powerful chief or a founder of an empire, could possibly be or have been banal, ordinary or simple. That is why supernatural, fictitious deeds make up such a large part of the native historical traditions that one may look in vain for any trace of the actions we see performed around us day after day. One must be very thoroughly accustomed to this delusion in order not to give way to discouragement at being unable to grasp

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643 778 1. Compare, on p. 31 and p. 49, the conduct of Dina Wara and of Biton.

[*173] 2. Legendary traditions abound in magic combats; see especially the tradition concerning Dinga, the ancestor of the Wagadou people, and that concerning Samba Guéladio Diégui, the hero of Fouta.

[1] [i.e., in magical and occult power with influence over the supernatural. - Analyst]

*173 Dé-koro summoned the ton-masa and ordered him to assemble the ton-dyon' on a certain day, but on that day no one appeared. Thereupon, Dé-koro dispatched a Samaké to warn the slave leaders individually to turn up. They came and he asked them: "Why has no one been coming to the Monday and Thursday meetings for the last three months?" They replied: "You threatened us and we were afraid." He made an appointment with them a week from that day when they were to take an oath with him.

The general assembly desired by Dé-koro took place, but it did not result in the agreement for which he had hoped. The slaves decided among themselves to meet a fortnight later and to take matters into their own hands.

On the fifteenth day at dawn, the ton-masa entered Ségou bougou, Dé-koro's official residence. He went to the master's house and entered. There he met Dé-koro who, escorted by his blacksmith carrying a basin of hot water, was about to make his ablutions. Dé-koro had long since ceased to feel secure because the enmity and hatred which he sensed around him gave him no rest. He was afraid to be alone and his blacksmith was always with him. When he saw the ton-masa armed, he knew that something extraordinary was afoot and challenged him: "What are you doing in my house at this hour?" The ton-masa replied: "I have come to warn you that the hour has come to settle our accounts, for I have not forgotten the lashing you inflicted upon me." Turning to the blacksmith, Dé-koro told him to go and fetch spears. The latter obeyed, but at that very moment the ton-masa shot Dé-koro and, when the blacksmith reappeared, he killed him too beside his master. A griot named Koun-bilé, attracted by the noise, appeared just as the ton-masa was unfastening the piece of goat-skin which contained the chief's
643 amulets and talismans and appropriating the golden axe which was the insignia of command. Koun-bilé cried out and called for help; the sofa came up without hurrying. [58] The griot identified the ton-masa as the murderer, but they listened in silence and then helped him to hide in their ranks, whence he fled to So-finna.

*173 was taken, but, in the course of the attack, Ton-massa was [65] wounded in the ear by an arrow which could only have been shot by someone behind him and by one of his own people. The wound festered so rapidly that it was necessary to put Ton-massa on a litter to carry him back to Kohin. There he died, almost completely alone.

He had ruled for four years and was interred at Kohin.

*173 643 Kanou-ba-nyouma (1740-1744). As was customary, the ton-dyon' came to Ségou-koro for seven days. On the eighth day, when all were about to return to their villages, Kanou-ba-nyouma sent forth a griot, preceded by a boy carrying the bow and quiver of Mamari, the founder of the clan. The crier announced throughout the town: "The royal post (1) is now vacant. Our master lived out his time and died; then followed the crime of the one who has just died. Now, let the man who feels strong enough to assume the vacant place take this bow and this quiver."

When the griot had covered the whole town, he returned to where the ton-dyon' were assembled and put down the bow and quiver in the midst of the group. Kanou-ba-nyouma then said: "Let the man who feels strong enough take these relics and the place of Mamari."

Ndyan, who was a Peul as was Kanou-ba-nyouma, then stated: "We Peul who guarded Mamari's sheep will also guard those of his successor. May the people of Ségou, therefore, pardon me for what I am about to say, for I speak in all sincerity and, I think, in conformity with the sentiments of this assembly. You are the only one, Kanou-ba-nyouma, who can take this place; it is your right as the oldest man after Ton-massa, who has just died."

These words were unanimously approved.

*173 "Very well," said Kanou-ba-nyouma, "I accept this bow and quiver, but the arrows must find their mark: we shall go to war." So, on the spot, he demanded a column and it was granted him. He attacked and took Niamina, then Sambon-na. Enriched by the spoils of the vanquished, he returned to Ségou-koro and rested there for a year. Then he summoned Da-son, Ton-massa's son, from Kohin and ordered him to return the gold which

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1. That is, the supreme command.

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Massa and His Descendants (Massa-si-ou) (3)

3. "Native traditions often make out that Sonsa and Sounsa-Massa are one and the same person, to whom they give the title of massa or mansa, meaning 'king' in Banmana, so it is that the word massa-si or mansa-si should be interpreted to mean 'descendant of the king' and not 'descendant of a man named Massa' " (Delafosse, in Traditions historiques et légendaires, p. 52, note 4).

"The Kouloubali who were descended from Niangolo, the elder brother of Baramangolo, had adopted the title of Massa-si (descendants of the king) because they belonged to the senior branch."

It is evident that this interpretation does not correspond with my text. However, I have often been told by native traditionists that Massa-si meant "descendant of a man named Massa." It might be that Sounsan-Massa was a double name applied to a single person, as was the case for several Massa-si chiefs, including Seba-Mana, Gran-Forokoro, and Massa-Bakari. Even though a single person is meant, that would still be no obstacle to the assumption that the word Massa-si means "descendant of Massa" by an abbreviation of Soun-san-Massa, since we have analogous examples: Biton-si and Ngolo-si are used to designate respectively the descendants of Mamari-Biton Kouloubali and Ngolo Dyara. It is true that Massa-si, composed of massa meaning "king," may refer to a whole royal lineage, but it should be noted that among

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the Bambara with whom we are concerned, the expression Massa-si is only used when referring to the royal lineage of Kaarta.

Massa (1670-1690). In order to combat Massa, the Marka people of Darigo summoned the Bambara who were [108] under their authority and whose principal chiefs were the following: Tonnéguéla Mari-dyan Dembélé; Konikoni Tiénégué Dyara; Tiéma Dyara; and Sanou-ba-Mamari Dyara of Fala-da-la.

The siege of Sounsan-na began. Thanks to preparations made in advance, Massa was able to hold out for many months, while making sorties against the attackers.

However, neither side had prevailed when, in the eleventh month, Massa managed to escape during the night. Followed by the boldest of his followers, he fell on the village of Mari-dyan Dembélé, sacked it and, loaded with booty, managed to return to his tata. He appeared next day on the roof to taunt Mari-dyan and showed him his favorite wife and her finest embroidered blouse.

Such audacity gave the other chiefs food for thought; each of them reflected that Mari-dyan's fate might be in store for himself and so, the Bambara chiefs took counsel. However, just as the discussion was about to get started, one of those present, Sanou-ba Mamari Dyara, withdrew, saying that he did not want to take part in any deliberations along with a one-eyed man, because the only result would be a disaster. He was referring to Konikoni Tiénégué Dyara who, indeed, had only one eye.

Upset by these circumstances, the allies parted to return home; so Massa was saved. However, at the instigation of the Marka people, the Bambara chiefs made all the trouble they could for Massa. They sent word to Ségou to the descendants of Barama-Ngolo that the fugitives vainly sought by their ancestor were still in their country and they offered to help in any undertaking against them (1).

1. Massa is reputed to have had 67 sons and 76 daughters. In principle, he imposed

439 By the south -- Guinea: rubber, ivory, gold, livestock, rice, millet. Ivory Coast: Sahel salt, livestock, wax, karite, native cotton and wool cloth and blankets. Gold Coast: livestock, native cloth.

443 In addition, all centers of any importance had a large periodic market which was a sort of regional fair, plus a small daily market which permitted the inhabitants of the locality to obtain provisions as needed.

b. Caravan Commerce

443 484 Over and above these markets, a long-distance caravan trade is carried on by the Haoussa and the Dioula, who transport their merchandise in the north with beasts of burdens, in the south by human bearers. These movements continue a commercial tradition and have been altered only by legislation. Before the conquest, any man who wished could enter this commerce on the condition of paying his "Fama" the usual sum. The traders, to protect themselves against brigands, traveled [42] in caravans. [787] Practice had it that the traders consulted a priest before leaving to find out if their undertaking would succeed. After the usual sacrifices, the priest revealed the name of the one who would direct the group. The caravan chief could even be a captive, but everyone owed him obedience because a divine force inhabited him. [651] To each state which is crossed, the caravan paid a customs fee on entering and asked the Fama for permission to cross, indicating the extent of their route and making propitiatory sacrifices in each region. Sometimes certain districts, such as the region of Bougouni, forbade blood sacrifices for fear of bringing down evil forces on themselves. The caravans then let loose an animal secretly at night.

c. Commercial Practices

438 643 Everything could be sold except gold, which was the property of the Fama. No one was supposed to possess gold. If the gold miners of Bouré could sell the gold extracted from the mines, when the buyers entered the Bambara country, they had to present it to the Fama. If he did not wish to buy it, he authorized certain rich people permanently settled in the district (that is, who would be unlikely to leave) to buy

438 the gold. But they, in turn, could in no case resell the gold to any-
443 body other than the Fama. Aside from certain sacrificial uses and the
[648] making of jewels for the Fama's wives, gold served to ransom cap-
tives or to negotiate royal alliances.

The price of the commodities was set by agreement between
435 buyer and seller, except for cloth which had a fixed price, 100 cowrie
shells per cubit in the Bamako region. As a matter of fact, the cot-
[286] ton gathered in the fields of the community was woven by captives
who were not paid.

426 Loans were made without interest. Interest, *korko*, is still
686 forbidden today. Loans are guaranteed by labor. The debtor who
could not repay his debt on time and whose family head refused to
pay it for him was seized by the Fama and held as security until such
time as he had reimbursed his debt.

804 Side by side with French units of measurement, the natives
use their own for trade. Their measures of length: the cubit (elbow
to tip of middle finger), the span, the foot, the length of both arms
extended, the pace, the *diare*, and the *kala* . . . ; their measures of
capacity: the *sawel* or *mouré*, the *mud*; their weights: the *moutkhal*,
the *catal*, the large and little *karoni*, the *wakie*, the pellet of *tali*,
of *tomi*, of *bagana*, of *gelen*. Cotton is weighed on rough scales
whose pointer is a wooden rod and the balances large gourds hung by
strings. For weights, large rocks, *kulu*, from 800 to 1,200 grams are
[436] used. Finally, the Bambara use French money almost exclusively:
one franc of metropolitan France is equivalent to 0.50 francs C.F.A.
Nevertheless, the use of cowrie shells is still frequent.

d. Banks

453 One bank of issue exists in French West Africa: the Bank of French West Africa. There are also private banks, the number of which has increased during the past few years.

The Bank of French West Africa, which has a branch at Bamako, carries out the following operations: [43]

1. discounts notes or bills of two or several signatures due in not more than 180 days;
2. creates, negotiates, or buys drafts;

561 and religious life). The young men of the same soli form what is called a flambolo. Three consecutive classes of flambolo form a flanton. The women have a parallel organization. Each fulani is a ton-den (child of the ton), with a corresponding association.

561 241 476 The association's role, apart from the seasonal celebrations and the copious feasts, accompanied by a great deal of drinking, is that of a mutual aid society and of a veritable village work cooperative. It is organized, administered, and articulated with a view to the agricultural work. The chief, kariku, expedites current business, with the assistance of a syere (witness, deputy). He has a treasurer who receives offerings and makes payments, the femmaraba (he who preserves things), plus an honorary president and an adviser, chosen from among the notables and delegated by them; he must supervise the society and orient its activities.

This social organism rests, in the last analysis, on the exchanges of services initiated and supported by the kariku. He sees to it that help is forthcoming to a man making the customary work payments in the fields of his parents-in-law or future parents-in-law (in exchange for food and drink furnished by the parents-in-law to these ton-den). In like manner, a farmer asks the kariku for help in clearing a field of brush. This request is made through an inter-
431 824 mediary or a sènanku who [58] accompanies the request with ten kola nuts. The chief accepts the present and calls his council into session to study the affair technically and to fix the salary. The same procedure is followed for the winter weeding, which calls for rapid completion, as well as for building dams, irrigating canals, paths, roads suitable for carting, etc.

An analogous system exists for the female kari, for sowing the crops as well as for gathering the harvest, mutual domestic aid, etc. The two groups collaborate for the seasonal celebrations.

● 643 d. The Fama. -- We see that the canton is a grouping formed under the authority and influence of a dominant family. Its unity is determined by political, social, and religious laws which regulate it. The fa or head of the dominant family becomes the Fama, that is, the patriarch, chief of the canton. He then often renounces the administration of the faya, which he turns over to his second (syere),

643 so that he may keep separate the interests of his house and those of the country.

Nomination of the Fama. The title of Fama remains in the family around which the canton has grown. Power passes from older to younger brother until a generation dies out, then goes to the oldest brother in the next generation, for, as a general rule, the living male nearest to the original ancestor should reign. However, the history of Ségou shows us how certain Fama have tried to establish direct succession from themselves to their eldest son. But the
643 accession of the Fama is submitted to the ratification of a council
645 of notables which includes the following persons.

a. The young chiefs, male descendants in the first degree of the Fama; they are directed by the eldest among them, with the second eldest being his syere or heir presumptive.

b. The old masters who are the Fama's brothers.

c. Their sons and all circumcised fathers of families.

643 Power of the Fama. The power of the Fama is founded on custom and religion. He is the earthly representative of all the ancestors; he is the radiating center which gives life to all the society; he is the Word of his people. He decides the crops, regulates commerce, concludes alliances, declares wars, renders justice, imposes taxes. He is the guardian of custom and the legislator of new laws, the organizer of the time and space he governs. His word
[326] is very powerful and dangerous; his decisions are whispered in the ear of a blacksmith, who repeats them aloud to the assembly. His very glance makes his subjects tremble, and they approach him grovelling, forehead in the dust. No quarrel may break out in his presence, no violence committed; his power over men and goods is
[645 absolute. Nevertheless, all his decisions are taken after consultation
646] with the notables and with the assembly of delegates from each village. If one of the members of the assembly disagrees with the Fama about a point of law, he gets up and leaves the meeting without saying anything, marking his disapprobation in this manner. When a law is
[695] passed by all the assembly, each member swears an oath, on the tomb of an ancestor or the altar of the komo [one of the mens' societies], in behalf of himself and his descendants.

608 [59] No one may oppose the Fama's will, except his sénanku
643 who has the power to stay the chief's decisions, particularly in case of
acts dictated by anger: murders, wars, etc.

The Fama's resources came from the work of his familiars,
643 from a levy on wild foodstuffs, half of the war booty, all otherwise
651 unowned goods, from certain precious substances, such as gold and
652 ivory, from taking part of every animal killed in the hunt and the skins of all wild animals brought down, all receipts for the right to hold markets, for grazing, and for changing pastures, tolls for river crossings, fines, and from the sale of prisoners of the law. On the other hand, he had to meet the following expenses: to feed and clothe the members of the community in the case of need;to maintain the warriors (give them a groom, a wife, a rifle, a horse); bestow favors on people of caste, feed them, clothe them, arrange for their marriages if need be; make offerings to charity; receive strangers; feed prisoners detained for judgment or otherwise held.

643 The Fama ordered all work of common interest: construction
653 and maintenance of fortifications, clearing trails, preservation of springs, construction and upkeep of the mosque if one was needed, making pirogues for common use, setting up rest platforms.

These works were carried out through payments in labor. The work was divided up among the villages by the Fama, and the village chiefs in turn assigned it to family heads. He who did not carry it out in person could have it done by members of his family; he who refused could be obliged to comply by force.

642 Bambara society rarely achieved a systematic and centralized form of organization analogous to our European kingdoms. What has been dignified with the name of "empire" was scarcely more than an organization which reflected the attraction exercised by a family, by reason of its prestige or its power, on groupings which accepted its suzerainty. As Monteil has shown very well, a family's effort at domination has always been directed at groupings of people and not at territorial expansion.

642 The whole of these groupings constitutes the Ton. This in-
565 cludes:

1. a chief, the ton-tigi;
2. the local chiefs, fa;

692 In matters of justice, the Bambara frequently continue to consult
their old tribal judges. It must be noted, however, that in taking
[177 away the judicial competence of the old chiefs, the French administration
has contributed to diminishing, and almost to completely
622] destroying, their power.

671 The Bambara had a judicial organization quite as precise and
regulated as their religious organization, although there was no
codified law, such as the Koran or the Hebrew tables of law. Justice
was rendered according to rules which each community passed on
from generation to generation. These rules are not of divine origin,
but they [69] are sacred nevertheless, for custom is the legacy of
[643 the ancestors. The Fama and his council of notables could promulgate
645] new laws, but, before deciding on a new rule, they consult the
Komo and the Nyama [an altar]. Then, in the presence of a priest,
each one swears on the altar to obey the law which becomes sacred.
Moreover, the customary rules cannot be separated from the moral
[184] code and the religion to which they are linked. They are not uniform;
each canton has its own, and often each village, and within
each of these there are observances peculiar to certain families or to
certain castes. Nevertheless, the sentiment of fair play is very strong
[181] among the Blacks, but they do not admit the equality of men, who
are naturally different one from another according to their aptitudes,
means, and condition.

Custom regulates all relations between individuals and between
individuals and the collectivity.

692 Two sorts of native tribunals existed in the Bambara country:
a tribunal of conciliation, presided over by the village chief,
who assembled a council of notables; and a high tribunal presided
over by the Fama, to whom were submitted the matters which the
first tribunal had been unable to settle. In addition, the Fama could
call before his tribunal the civil or penal matters which seemed to
him to be of importance to the public order.

695 Justice was without charge and rendered day and night by the
643 Fama as one of his essential functions, for the judge is the one who
repairs the disorders that shake society. The hearings were solemnly
conducted and took place under the silk-cotton tree (Ceiba pentandra)

695 643 or in the chief's vestibule, that is to say, under the light of a certain constellation and witnessed by the founding ancestors who link the judge with the supernatural powers. The Fama was seated on a throne perched on a platform; at his right were the notables, at his left the griot, the priests, and the old captives; behind him stood the [195] sofa. The blacksmith or a captive repeated aloud what the Fama whispered, for the Fama should not raise his voice. Neither women nor children could attend the public sessions. Formerly, the mere view of the Fama filled the accused with terror, and he prostrated himself in the Fama's presence. The Fama could put the accused in irons until he was judged (1).

1. V. Paques, "L'estrade royale des Niare" [The Royal Platform of the Niaré] Bull. de l'Ifan, Vol. XV (1953), No. 4.

671 Bambara law sought above all to make reparation, to restore order, and only after that to punish.

a. Proofs (2)

2. Passim. Coutumier juridique de l'A.O.F. [French West African Common Law].

695 The plaintiff must prove his case, and the accused must prove his innocence. Elements of proof may be confession, testimony by witnesses, oath taking, expert opinion, and examination of the scene.

If indications of guilt are strong enough, the Fama may force the accused to confess by having him whipped.

Each party may call witnesses in the following order: circumcised men, married women, unmarried girls (who, however, cannot [70] take the oath), and, lastly, children if there are no [608] other witnesses. The sénanku are exempted from bearing witness against each other.

428 3. and 4. as above for the head of the family; 5. oldest full brother; 6. oldest half-brother on father's side; 7. the family; 8. the village; 9. the Fama ... Married women may transmit personal property in the following order: 1. her oldest son; 2. her husband's oldest son by another wife; 3. the husband; 4. the woman's family ... [587] At the death of her [73] husband, a woman is not required to marry his heir." (1)

1. Ortoli, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bamako) [Bambara Customs (Bamako Circle)].

851 We should explain here the notion of seniority which is not always easy to distinguish in a polygamous society. As a matter of fact, when two wives of the same husband bear children at roughly the same time, an intermediary announces the births to the fa, and the first baby to be announced is considered to be the oldest. It may even happen that the first one to be announced is in fact the last-born; he nevertheless remains the senior. [845] In the case of twins, the senior is the one brought forth last, for it is thought that twins are not conceived at the same time, and that the last-born is the one first conceived. [551] Certain special names are used for the oldest children: N'tyi for boys, Nya or Nyélé for girls.

643 At the Fama's death, several lines of succession are involved: that of his own family, that of the family community, and that of the patriarchy.

As far as election to the title of Fama is concerned, we have seen how the new Fama was the senior male of the same generation and same family as the deceased Fama, or the eldest of the following generation. It is noteworthy that in the case of no male heir, the succession passes to the Fama's daughter whose husband governs in her name; but that is an exceptional case.

643 644 When the new Fama is designated by the notables, he occupies the fortified residence of the previous Fama, where the founding ancestor is buried; the women and children of the deceased Fama must leave these premises. While his father lived, the Fama's eldest son led a luxurious and independent life; he often commanded an important dugu, sometimes founded by himself. At his father's death, he is a very important person for the new Fama.

591 776 181 elders; and above them, as undisputed lord, soars the eldest, the gouatigi, or head of the family.

776 181 All the gouatigi are subject to heads of quarters, led by the dougoutigi, (1) or village heads; these obey the kafotigi, or heads of the canton, who in turn are governed by the fama déou, sons of the king or ministers. Such was the original organization of the Bambara, and all these petty chiefs, were absolute and uncontested lords, each in his own sphere.

776 Above them all there was the king, Fama or Massa (2), whose chief function was to allow himself to live in affluence and /74/ sweet idleness. He held all his subjects in his hands; all were his slaves, from the least to the highest, and he had the power of life and death over each and every one.

631 1. The dougoutigi, or religious head of the village, takes precedence over the sotigi, or civil head. I believe that since the time of Carrier, administrator of the circle in 1901, this hierarchy as such has been officially done away with. It persists nevertheless, and the kafotigi and fama déou, priestly in character, secretly retain their prestige.

181 631 •643 2. The word Massa, used to designate the king, also means "great and powerful sorcerer." In the beginning the king really had absolute power, both civil and religious, and was really the prince or pope of fetishism. If he were not, would he have been given the title of Massa, "great priest," "great sorcerer?"

642
565 3. the free men;
4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);
5. slaves.

567 e. *Slavery*. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by violence, by obligation, or by birth.

567 727 554 1. *By violence*. If a war captive is important, he may be killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration. A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[608] [551] [60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama; if he is a *sénanku* of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

567 681 426 858 2. *By obligation*. A free individual became a slave in punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the profit of the Fama. A *fa* could sell one of his children to meet his debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was freed of his obligations.

567 3. *By birth*. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a *wolo-so*. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

567 644 As the number of slaves grew, their organization became complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Ségou were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the *dyon-kuru* or *dyon-futu* (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Ségou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him, the submission of all the slaves.

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643 so that he may keep separate the interests of his house and those of the country.

Nomination of the Fama. The title of Fama remains in the family around which the canton has grown. Power passes from older to younger brother until a generation dies out, then goes to the oldest brother in the next generation, for, as a general rule, the living male nearest to the original ancestor should reign. However, the history of Ségou shows us how certain Fama have tried to establish direct succession from themselves to their eldest son. But the
643 accession of the Fama is submitted to the ratification of a council
645 of notables which includes the following persons.

a. The young chiefs, male descendants in the first degree of the Fama; they are directed by the eldest among them, with the second eldest being his syere or heir presumptive.

b. The old masters who are the Fama's brothers.

c. Their sons and all circumcised fathers of families.

643 Power of the Fama. The power of the Fama is founded on custom and religion. He is the earthly representative of all the ancestors; he is the radiating center which gives life to all the society; he is the Word of his people. He decides the crops, regulates commerce, concludes alliances, declares wars, renders justice, imposes taxes. He is the guardian of custom and the legislator of new laws, the organizer of the time and space he governs. His word
[326] is very powerful and dangerous; his decisions are whispered in the ear of a blacksmith, who repeats them aloud to the assembly. His very glance makes his subjects tremble, and they approach him grovelling, forehead in the dust. No quarrel may break out in his presence, no violence committed; his power over men and goods is
[645 absolute. Nevertheless, all his decisions are taken after consultation
646] with the notables and with the assembly of delegates from each village. If one of the members of the assembly disagrees with the Fama about a point of law, he gets up and leaves the meeting without saying anything, marking his disapprobation in this manner. When a law is
[695] passed by all the assembly, each member swears an oath, on the tomb of an ancestor or the altar of the komo [one of the mens' societies], in behalf of himself and his descendants.

692 In matters of justice, the Bambara frequently continue to consult their old tribal judges. It must be noted, however, that in taking [177 away the judicial competence of the old chiefs, the French administration has contributed to diminishing, and almost to com- 622] pletely destroying, their power.

The Bambara had a judicial organization quite as precise and 671 regulated as their religious organization, although there was no codified law, such as the Koran or the Hebrew tables of law. Justice was rendered according to rules which each community passed on from generation to generation. These rules are not of divine origin, but they [69] are sacred nevertheless, for custom is the legacy of [643 the ancestors. The Fama and his council of notables could promul- 645] gate new laws, but, before deciding on a new rule, they consult the Komo and the Nyama [an altar]. Then, in the presence of a priest, each one swears on the altar to obey the law which becomes sacred. Moreover, the customary rules cannot be separated from the moral code and the religion to which they are linked. They are not uni- [184] form; each canton has its own, and often each village, and within each of these there are observances peculiar to certain families or to certain castes. Nevertheless, the sentiment of fair play is very strong [181] among the Blacks, but they do not admit the equality of men, who are naturally different one from another according to their aptitudes, means, and condition.

Custom regulates all relations between individuals and between individuals and the collectivity.

692 Two sorts of native tribunals existed in the Bambara country: a tribunal of conciliation, presided over by the village chief, who assembled a council of notables; and a high tribunal presided over by the Fama, to whom were submitted the matters which the first tribunal had been unable to settle. In addition, the Fama could call before his tribunal the civil or penal matters which seemed to him to be of importance to the public order.

695 643 Justice was without charge and rendered day and night by the Fama as one of his essential functions, for the judge is the one who repairs the disorders that shake society. The hearings were solemnly conducted and took place under the silk-cotton tree (Ceiba pentandra)

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438 643 [648] the gold. But they, in turn, could in no case resell the gold to anybody other than the Fama. Aside from certain sacrificial uses and the making of jewels for the Fama's wives, gold served to ransom captives or to negotiate royal alliances.

435 [286] The price of the commodities was set by agreement between buyer and seller, except for cloth which had a fixed price, 100 cowrie shells per cubit in the Bamako region. As a matter of fact, the cotton gathered in the fields of the community was woven by captives who were not paid.

426 686 Loans were made without interest. Interest, korko, is still forbidden today. Loans are guaranteed by labor. The debtor who could not repay his debt on time and whose family head refused to pay it for him was seized by the Fama and held as security until such time as he had reimbursed his debt.

804 Side by side with French units of measurement, the natives use their own for trade. Their measures of length: the cubit (elbow to tip of middle finger), the span, the foot, the length of both arms extended, the pace, the diare, and the kala . . . ; their measures of capacity: the sawel or mouré, the mud; their weights: the moutkhal, the catal, the large and little karoni, the wakie, the pellet of tali, of tomi, of bagana, of gelen. Cotton is weighed on rough scales whose pointer is a wooden rod and the balances large gourds hung by strings. For weights, large rocks, kulu, from 800 to 1,200 grams are [436] used. Finally, the Bambara use French money almost exclusively: one franc of metropolitan France is equivalent to 0.50 francs C.F.A. Nevertheless, the use of cowrie shells is still frequent.

d. Banks

453 One bank of issue exists in French West Africa: the Bank of French West Africa. There are also private banks, the number of which has increased during the past few years.

The Bank of French West Africa, which has a branch at Bamako, carries out the following operations: [43]

1. discounts notes or bills of two or several signatures due in not more than 180 days;
2. creates, negotiates, or buys drafts;

621
581 Koulibali of Ségou, founded Bamako, and changed its name to Niaré
583 in becoming Bambara.

The tné: the taboo concerning an animal or some object.
621 The basis of this alliance is the oath of the fa not to kill or eat the
784 object of the taboo. All the generations following this ancestor must respect the taboo ad infinitum.

Thus, the Kéita have the hippopotamus for tné; the Traoré, the Dambélé, and the Warata have the panther; the Samaké, the elephant; the Koubilali of Ségou, the hippopotamus; those of Issa Ber, the m'polio [a fish]; others have the mole cricket (n'gere) and the striped mouse (n'kelika); the Niaré, Sissé, Silla, Doukouré, and the Daramé, the python, etc.

The oath: this seals a pact of dyonge fraternization. Each
621 party to the contract extracts some drops of blood from his forearm
608 which is mixed with goat's milk. Swearing by his ancestors, he states the conditions of the alliance and drinks part of the beverage. This alliance binds the parties to it and all their descendants ad
[582] infinitum. It entails a prohibition or, contrariwise, a recommendation of marriage between members of the two communities, and establishes solidarity between the two communities which owe each other mutual assistance. In the framework of this alliance is the cathartic alliance termed sénankuya, which, besides the preceding obligations, governs the system of purifications.

The sénankuya: unites certain specific groups bearing differ-
621 names within the same village, but can also have an intertribal
608 character; ex.: Mandingue-Peul. Humblot observed the following
648 alliances at Kankan: Kéita-Fofana; Kondé-Traoré; Kéita-Bérété-Sérigou-Sissé; [56] Kala-Kéita-Kouyaté; Kourouma-Koma; Kourouma-Dabo; Kourouba-Konaté-Kamara-Bagayoko; Konaté-Dougoumoko; Konaté-Sidibé. This system of alliance in which
[783] the two allies are equal and complementary governs the mechanism of the purifications, notably by the insult, and the duties of reciprocal assistance (1). Formerly, when a sénanku was reduced to slavery,

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1. M. Griaule, "L'alliance cathartique" [The Cathartic Alliance], Africa, Vol. XVIII, 1948.

608 his ally had to try to ransom him. A *sénanku* often serves as inter-
621 mediary in arranging marriages, in land claims, in the collection of
648 debts. He is rewarded by gifts. He has the power to stop quarrels
and to oppose acts of rage and violence by the man whose *sénanku* he is, no matter what his rank and no matter how important the decisions in question are. The *sénanku* of a Fama could prevent his declaring war or condemning to death one of his subjects. Moreover, he has certain limited privileges over his ally's possessions. (He may appropriate unimportant objects, food, and even sums of money.) Finally, he recruits the labor force which his ally may need.

c. *Age Classes.* -- But though these different ties exercise an
621 important influence on the political, social, and religious life of the
571 community they are generally too broad and too lax to permit organiza-
561 tion of a work community. In fact, we have seen how a large village
may be formed of different communities relatively independent of each other, despite the authority of the founding community's *fa.* On the level of the canton, the geographical dispersion does not permit the Fama to intervene personally in the organization of the work community. The latter is founded essentially on the system of relations of the age classes.

561 From infancy until circumcision for the boys, until excision for the girls, the young Bambara belongs to a hierarchic society which prepares him or her for this ceremony and which provides an education complementary to that received in the family. Within this association all the children are divided into age classes: boys up to six years of age are *bilakoro-dogomani* (*bila* = short pants), from 6 to 10 years they are *bilakoro-dogor*[illegible] from 10 to about 15 years, *bilakoro-koroba.* Similarly, the girls are, successively: *sunkiri-dogomani*, *sunkuru-dogoma*, and *sunkuru-koroba.* Each age class has a chief: *ton-tigi* for the boys, *musso-tigi* for the girls; each office is doubled by a deputy (*syere*). There is also a treasurer and a *ton-dyeli* who is the *griot* of the *ton.* All are elected by members of the society. A Bambara will be influenced all his life by his membership in a certain age class which groups all the children who underwent circumcision at the same time. In fact, up to the moment of circumcision the child's personality is not yet distinct. We have seen before how small children were

[76] II. Present Evolution of Bambara Society

A. Political Evolution

648 636 At the present time, all the territory of the Sudan is unified and endowed with a political organization permitting it to play an active role within the framework of the French Union. The Sudan, like each of the eight territories of French West Africa, is represented in the National Assembly, in the Senate [Conseil de la République], and in the Assembly of the French Union by elected members. These members have been chosen from among the sons of former slaves or people of caste as well as from among the sons of former chiefs.

The administrative organization is placed under the authority of a governor general, seconded by two councils: the High Council of West Africa and the Government Council. At the head of the territory is a governor who is the administrative chief of the territory; he is assisted by a secretary general, named, like the governor, by decree, and by a civil and military cabinet which transmits the governor's orders.

Finally, the circles are directed by colonial administrators directly responsible to the governor. The circles are divided into subdivisions headed by assistant administrators who are directly responsible to the circle administrators. They are charged with the general administration and control of all the civil and financial functions of the circle.

Each circle is divided into cantons based on the territorial divisions of the old military districts. A canton has a head sometimes named by the administration but generally elected according to the traditional custom of the old Fama. The canton head is charged with representing the interests of the natives before the administration.

B. Tendency to Economic Change

177 The principal transformation in the Bambara economy stems from the French pacification and from the contributions of the European social and economic organization.

791 people in their hands; it is they who guide them and force them into
obedience by predicting that those who resist will be afflicted with sick-
ness, all kinds of calamities, and death. They are capable of all
sorts of actions to preserve their prestige. They compound love
philters, talismans, amulets, etc., but they are even better at com-
[278] pounding poisons: they are familiar with Strophanthus and their mix-
tures of hyena intestines, excrements of human corpses, and saliva
taken from their mouths have terrible effects.

791 648 These makers of rain and fair weather, who predict the future, cast lots, and cure the sick are all jealous of one another; there is no unity among them, and since cowardice is each one's chief virtue, there is no fear for the moment that they will press toward revolt. However, one should have no illusions, for that good-fellow smile on the lips of the Bambara in no way gives a true picture of their feelings. They hate the French because they are conquerors, and especially because the French have forbidden them to take slaves, sell, or even own them, and because they cannot administer justice as they please. The elders, who were formerly so powerful, feel their authority decreasing little by little, and there is fury in their hearts. They tremble and are afraid, they dread our rifles and cannons, whose rumblings still ring in their ears; they believe France to be even greater and more powerful than she is. But if some day a bold, enterprising, and audacious sorcerer should appear, he would succeed in creating a temporary union between these divergent groups no matter how slight a control he achieves. Then, without any doubt, we would see partial uprisings like those so frequent among the Moslems. The latter have deep in their hearts a hatred of everything that is not Islam and are never so happy as when they can march behind a fanatical Marabout; certain Frenchmen, well intentioned I like to believe, who refuse to admit thousands upon thousands of conclusive facts, continue nevertheless to help and pamper them, because they do not know the Koran and its teachings. Urged by I know not what naive philanthropy, they warm a snake which will turn against us every time it feels strong enough /37/ to raise its head, and they are preparing bloody days for our colonies in the fairly near future.

621 various reasons. Thus, the *dugu-tigi* in council can invoke
622 police powers to maintain order in the community and even act
692 as a tribunal to punish those whose misdeeds in any way en-
danger the persons or property of members of the community.

621 Since the genie is expected to ensure the prosperity of
622 the faithful, it is the duty of the *dugu-tigi* to come to the assist-
[735] ance of members of the community who are unfortunate or indigent.

He must also maintain the relations of his community with the outside world, that is, with neighboring territorial communities and all other groupings, analogous or otherwise. He can act independently only in matters which we call purely administrative; for other matters he must have the assent of the council of *fa*, above all for any matter involving the disposal of community property.

621 It is obvious that all the roles of the *dugu-tigi* involve
622 expenses that are often considerable, but for this purpose he has
access to goods from many sources. In the first place, offerings
651 made to the *nyana* are of various kinds; they are not always consumable, and even if they are, they are usually consumed only in part. The remainder belongs to the *dugu-tigi*. It is customary to give *bunya* (gifts of homage) to the *dugu-tigi* on many occasions: a hunt, a fishing expedition, millet harvest, etc.; to thank him for an allotment of land, or for some other service. Community property is farmed out for fees payable at fixed times, and tribute is paid in the same way. Most of the various kinds of infractions committed within the community are punished by fines received by the *dugu-tigi*. Incorrigible malefactors become slaves of the community, and the produce of their labors [233] goes to the *dugu-tigi*. Anything found abandoned on land belonging to the community is turned over to the *dugu-tigi*, in whole or in part.

In case of need arising through some exceptional emergency (war, an expedition, public works of various kinds, etc.), the *dugu-tigi* may have recourse to what we should call an emergency assessment, i.e., he may ask the members of the community for special contributions for the purpose.

621 These are the principal resources of the community
622 treasury, which is held and administered by the dugu-tigi with
651 the help and under the control of the fa. The dugu-tigi may
652 use the treasury to help him perform his duties honorably, to assist unfortunate or indigent members of the community, to receive the guests of the community in a suitable manner, and to meet emergencies.

Under no circumstances does this treasury constitute any
[661] part of the personal fortune of the dugu-tigi. Only usurpation, which is fairly common under various guises, alters this state of affairs. In the same way, it is not uncommon for this wealth to be divided in some measure among the members of the council, who in one way or another appropriate it. Such abuses, no matter how common, do not in the least alter the principle that legally such wealth is and remains exclusively the property of the community. [234]

Chapter 4

Brotherhoods

1. The End of Childhood

794 General considerations. The cult of the ancestors and of
881 the nyana dugu-da-siri are not enough for the Bambara in his efforts to make sure of the protection, help, and services of the invisible world. The magician has created for him some renowned protectors or servitors which are powerful and formidable: the nyana of the boli.

The cult of these gods gives rise to spiritual families whose members are so closely linked by the bonds of fraternity that we may safely say that these groupings are brotherhoods. All these brotherhoods share the common characteristic that no one can be received into them before having submitted to a certain rite called soli (1) or bolo-ko (1), terms which

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1. Soli is the word for the action of piercing, emerging,, laying an egg, or

A great effort has been

654 made to improve the exploitation of livestock; in this regard [38] 232 one must mention the stock-raising experimental center of the Service Zootechnique, the Serotherapy Center and the Farm School of Sotuba, near Bamako; the sheepfolds at El Oualadji, Nioro, and Nara; and the stallion corrals at Nioro, Ouahigouya, Mopti, Bandiagara, Gao, Bamako, and Goundam.

III. Commerce

651 441 The Bambara region follows the commercial regulations of French West Africa. It is, in particular, subject to the customs regulations put into force November 30, 1950 (Journal officiel A.O.F., No. 2507 [French West African Official Journal]), which include a tax on merchandise of whatever origin and a customs surtax on each product coming within the framework of the international conventions to which France has subscribed.

Customs receipts for 1950 were 131,000,000 francs for the whole of the Sudan. They reveal a rather mediocre commercial traffic, definitely inferior to that of Senegal for example (3,325,000,000 francs). This is partly due to the geographic situation of the country and to the state of the means of communication, and partly to the limited resources of the region.

A. External Commerce

a. Means of Communication

439 External commerce has three outlets: Dakar, Conakry, Abidjan. It is through these outposts that the Bambara world communicates with Europe and the United States. This is why the continental isolation of the country remains a formidable impediment to outside commerce.

505 The means of communication remain very mediocre across this country so inordinately spread out. Navigable waterways are irregular. Commercial navigation is possible as follows: on the Senegal from Saint-Louis to Kayes from July to October, and up to Podor during the rest of the year; on the Niger, by steamer during the flood period and by barge the rest of the year, between Koulikoro

439 By the south -- Guinea: rubber, ivory, gold, livestock, rice, millet. Ivory Coast: Sahel salt, livestock, wax, karite, native cotton and wool cloth and blankets. Gold Coast: livestock, native cloth.

443 In addition, all centers of any importance had a large periodic market which was a sort of regional fair, plus a small daily market which permitted the inhabitants of the locality to obtain provisions as needed.

b. Caravan Commerce

443 484 Over and above these markets, a long-distance caravan trade is carried on by the Haoussa and the Dioula, who transport their merchandise in the north with beasts of burdens, in the south by human bearers. These movements continue a commercial tradition and have been altered only by legislation. Before the conquest, any man who wished could enter this commerce on the condition of paying his "Fama" the usual sum. The traders, to protect themselves against brigands, traveled [42] in caravans. [787] Practice had it that the traders consulted a priest before leaving to find out if their undertaking would succeed. After the usual sacrifices, the priest revealed the name of the one who would direct the group. The caravan chief could even be a captive, but everyone owed him obedience because a divine force inhabited him. [654] To each state which is crossed, the caravan paid a customs fee on entering and asked the Fama for permission to cross, indicating the extent of their route and making propitiatory sacrifices in each region. Sometimes certain districts, such as the region of Bougouni, forbade blood sacrifices for fear of bringing down evil forces on themselves. The caravans then let loose an animal secretly at night.

c. Commercial Practices

438 643 Everything could be sold except gold, which was the property of the Fama. No one was supposed to possess gold. If the gold miners of Bouré could sell the gold extracted from the mines, when the buyers entered the Bambara country, they had to present it to the Fama. If he did not wish to buy it, he authorized certain rich people permanently settled in the district (that is, who would be unlikely to leave) to buy

608 [59] No one may oppose the Fama's will, except his sénanku
643 who has the power to stay the chief's decisions, particularly in case of acts dictated by anger: murders, wars, etc.

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Moreover, the fa must: "see to the material life of all the members of the family; provide dowries for the women of the community; pay back the dowries of the women of the community who are to be divorced; ransom members of the family who are taken prisoner or are sold, and pay taxes in goods or in money."

1. A. Aubert, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Bougouni Circle)].

776 829 contact with the genii and know their family names, or diamou; however little they may be at ease with a Frenchman they will beg him to show them the place where a well should be dug, convinced that we know where live the spirits who are appointed to watch over water. Do we not bear them a certain resemblance?

776 The gnâ, or boli, also are sexed; they reproduce and found families. They are superior to the genii in power and wickedness, and, except indirectly, capable only of evil. They are at open war with God who, without taking away any of their intelligence or liberty, has condemned them tosuffer and to undergo the punishment of fire. They continually set up ambushes against the djiné to make their plans, good or evil, miscarry; they take pleasure in tormenting men, and the Bambara fears them greatly. The worship of the djiné is nothing compared to what is accorded them. Those considered most powerful have an entire retinue to serve them and to render them [651] honors and, as will be seen later, the head tax of 3.50 francs per head is nothing compared to the sums the Blacks spend to ward off the blows of the boli and avoid their wrath.

Like the djiné, the boli appears in human form, but it is disgusting and hideous to behold. All those upon whom the favor of an appearance is bestowed are frozen with terror; the body of the boli is terrifyingly black, and its face disappears in a flame above which rise horns.

[782 822] In the sacrifices to the boli the liturgical colors are black and red, and a white victim is never offered except in an indirect sacrifice necessitated by an offering called saraka, which is quite rare. /33/

2. Sorcery and Priesthood

152 Surrounded by spirits, by genii always seeking to harm him, a Bambara is quick to believe that he is the victim of one. This attitude contributes more than a little to give him a certain endurance manifested in the face of suffering. I would even say that he usually bears suffering, not with stoicism but with the torpor of an animal.

761 on the branches of the sacred tree under which the fetish dwells and
782 at the door of its temple, and the members of its staff know how to
764 extol their god. Under these conditions they are without pity; they
764 bleed the bereaved family white, so that the tax demanded by our
778 circle officers (2) is nothing compared to the tax that they have to
pay. /227/

782 What do they not have to give for a sacrifice to the Komo, for
764 example? The whole house is turned upside down to find goats, dogs,
[824] kola nuts, roosters, and hens, gnâma-n-kou (Amormum melegueta),
and djalakouma (a plant whose name I do not know). The family needs all this, cost what it may, and if they have to buy it all they have to pay double or triple the value of the objects, for others make profits from their necessity. First a dog or a goat is sacrificed to appease the fetish and pay respects to it. Then to find out whether it is satisfied and its hatred assuaged, two red roosters and two hens with golden necks bite the dust. A bara (1) (gourd) full of gnâma-n-kou fruit and another full of djalakouma are offered. One portion of these fruits is used for holy water (2); the other is sold for the benefit

● [651] 2. The head tax is 3. 50 francs per person and 5 francs for the servants of Europeans. Here France is surely not a "tyrant, " but a tender mother.

[415 854] 1. This bara (a large pumpkin /courge/ with a small opening at the top) can hold from 18 to 20 liters of liquid. The true gourd is half of a pumpkin.

782 764 824 2. The holy water of the Komo is made of roots and leaves of the djalakouma and the fruit of the

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Chapter 4

Brotherhoods

1. The End of Childhood

794 General considerations. The cult of the ancestors and of
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248 286 into narrow bands by weavers [men] who make clothes from it in unbleached, indigo-blue, yellow, or black fabrics. At the present time, after numerous attempts at improvement since the occupation, [654] seeds selected according to the zones of cultivation are distributed to the farmers, and the administration encourages industrial cotton cultivation in irrigated regions, as well as mechanical spinning and weaving.

248 [177] Sisal is an agave of Mexican origin. The long, thick, pointed leaves, after undergoing a series of industrial operations including mechanical extraction of the fibers, yields very strong textile fibers suitable for cordage, rope making, rug manufacture, canopies, etc.

Kapok (Eriodendron anfractuosum) until a few years ago was merely gathered, but now plantations have been created. The fruit is in the form of capsules containing seeds enveloped in a vegetal wadding. In one year the kapok tree can furnish 30 kilograms of fibers used in mattress-making, hat-making ...

D. Agricultural Tools

241 Bambara farming tools are very simple. The hoe is almost the only agricultural instrument used. There are several kinds of hoe, particularly in the Bougouni region: the tyerengu, 0.50 meters wide, with a straight handle (chiefly used by the Sénoufo); the n'gu kala, 0.30 meters wide, with a curved handle. These two are used for digging, scraping, and banking. The flotton, from 0.10 to 0.20 meters wide and with a handle made from a forked branch, is used for the second dressing of the earth and for weeding. (When the weeds are too big, the weeding is done by hand). These hoes oblige the peasant to work stopped over. Let us also mention the axe, dyeli, which serves to cut shrubs and the branches of trees in clearing land, the machete, and a small pickaxe with a hoe handle, the yalo.

[33] Millet spikes are harvested with the aid of a special small knife to cut the stalk into pieces. Finally, the threshing of the ears is done with large bent sticks having round handles and flat ends.

[533 461] Agricultural labors, tillage and threshing, are undertaken collectively following the cadence indicated by an instrumentalist. Work in the fields is generally done by starting at the bottom of a slope and working up, so the rain will wash off the weeds. The

A great effort has been
654 made to improve the exploitation of livestock; in this regard [38]
232 one must mention the stock-raising experimental center of the
Service Zootechnique, the Serotherapy Center and the Farm School
of Sotuba, near Bamako; the sheepfolds at El Oualadji, Nioro, and
Nara; and the stallion corrals at Nioro, Ouahigouya, Mopti,
Bandiagara, Gao, Bamako, and Goundam.

III. Commerce

651 The Bambara region follows the commercial regulations of
441 French West Africa. It is, in particular, subject to the customs regu-
lations put into force November 30, 1950 (*Journal officiel A.O.F., No. 2507* [French West African Official Journal]), which include a tax on merchandise of whatever origin and a customs surtax on each product coming within the framework of the international conventions to which France has subscribed.

Customs receipts for 1950 were 131,000,000 francs for the whole of the Sudan. They reveal a rather mediocre commercial traffic, definitely inferior to that of Senegal for example (3,325,000,000 francs). This is partly due to the geographic situation of the country and to the state of the means of communication, and partly to the limited resources of the region.

A. External Commerce

a. Means of Communication

439 External commerce has three outlets: Dakar, Conakry, Abidjan. It is through these outposts that the Bambara world communicates with Europe and the United States. This is why the continental isolation of the country remains a formidable impediment to outside commerce.

505 The means of communication remain very mediocre across this country so inordinately spread out. Navigable waterways are irregular. Commercial navigation is possible as follows: on the Senegal from Saint-Louis to Kayes from July to October, and up to Podor during the rest of the year; on the Niger, by steamer during the flood period and by barge the rest of the year, between Koulikoro

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794 621 brotherhoods together, although the latter seem to dominate the former. These brotherhoods hem in the communities they dominate by abusively extending their jurisdiction far beyond its proper limits. Indeed, the faithful are not the only ones who are subject to the judgments handed down by the brotherhoods, whose clergy make decisions affecting not only members involved but often also third parties in the neighborhood or even people from neighboring or distant regions. The brotherhoods are tyrannical toward their own members and no less so to strangers, who often see no way of escaping persecution short of asking to be received into the ranks.

794 ● 661 182 Thus, it is apparent how a brotherhood increases in size and in power as time passes. Each year it takes in the young people at the end of the soli, and as a result all the communities are at length absorbed by it live in it and for it (1). It

[778] 1. The following is a typical example.

In the village of Marenna (Fouladougou Arbala), the natives belong to the cult of Ba-ku. This boli consists of a small sheaf of roots of the indigo tree. For every newborn child the nyana-tigi makes and consecrates a small Ba-ku, which he places in a gourd and puts in the temple of this nyana. At the time of the soli, the child becomes affiliated with the cult, takes the boli placed in the gourd for him at birth and henceforth wears it on his person. All the families in Marenna are thus closely involved in the cult of Ba-ku, being, as it were, engendered by this god to whom each person owes both physical and spiritual birth. Ba-ku comes from Sangaran, and his high priest is a Dyara; that is why he is invoked and called by the expression Ba-ku Dyara Sangaran-ka. The word ba-ku literally means "tail of a

794
● 661
182

> goat," and, indeed, that describes the appearance of the little bunch of roots. It is possible that the word Ba-ku is merely the profane name and that the real name of the nyana is kept secret.

claims eminent rights over every person or thing it touches, as a consequence of the supernatural power of the nyana protecting them. [268]

So it is that the brotherhood, by what might be called divine right, comes to play a political role which is inconsistent only because it was not designed to play such a role. Let an ambitious man come forth, one who knows how to make use of the organization and its redoubtable power for his own ends, and the brotherhood then becomes the cradle of a veritable political state.

So it is that when the regular authority cannot firmly resist its encroachments, the brotherhood becomes a kind of high judge and uses that high office to establish a reign of terror which exploits the defections due to hatreds its own [578] machinations have aroused and encouraged. This wretched game naturally brings repercussions within the brotherhood itself: the nyana-den' are at each other's throats, and the grimmest dramas accompany the indulgence of the lowest instincts. The chronicle of Ségou bears witness to these facts.

It is, unfortunately, by no means unusual for the established authority to condone these crimes through weakness, interest, or membership in the brotherhood. As a result, innumerable regions have fallen into anarchy.

794 182 578 That is why and how the brotherhoods have been the cause of a great deal of unrest in the native milieu. As a refuge for escaped slaves, malcontents, vagabonds, intriguers, in a word, for all enemies of public order, the brotherhoods everywhere set themselves up in opposition to regularly constituted authority, and when they are unable to take it over, seek to thwart it by taking the head into partnership.

The dynastic convulsions of most of the Sudanese empires, especially that of Ségou, are in large part explained by the usurpations of these great brotherhoods of nyana.

614 The dugu have definite territorial domains, and they,
621 too, prefer to live without the subordination of any one of them
631 to the others. There are relationships between some of them,
such as some being offshoots of others and, due to proximity, many matrimonial unions have bound them together.

Unavoidable necessity also often forces the dugu to form leagues, coalitions, or more often associations called kafu' (literally, "union"). Depending on the circumstances, a chief is elected by the association or he usurps the authority over it. This sometimes results in the creation of a political or administrative organization. The Ségala area, also called Sénébala, is an example. "It has a local history of several centuries, hereditary chiefs of several dynasties, social and matrimonial bonds and customary institutions which have persisted for generations; it is a nation and a fatherland" (2).

2. In Marty, Etudes sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan [Studies on Islam and the Tribes of the Sudan], Vol. 4, p. 105.

614 It also may happen that someone who becomes a chief
631 will be so enamored with the exercise and the profits of
● 661 power that with the support of his followers -- relatives or
others -- he will manage to retain permanent control. This association is what we here call a clan; the Bambara designate it by the word ton', applicable to any association.

As an organism of authority, this clan may be defined as an oligarchic government founded for the sole purpose of subjugating, by any means, the individuals it can reach for the sake of exploiting them. Those who are enfeoffed to this government are called "the people of So-and-So" or "the people of such and such place" by the Bambara, as by other natives, [289] for example: the Massa-si-u (1),

1. From another point of view, Massa-si-u means "descendants of Massa," and hence, "the tribe of Massa."

575 561 [628] When differences arise between fla-n-ton', an arbitrator is chosen by these fla-n-ton'; in some regions, there is even an arbitrator designated in advance.

Among all these fla-n-ton' the most conspicuous is the one having the largest number of young bachelors known as "the young masters" (kamalen'-u). Being much given to idleness, the kamalen'-u are troublemakers and rebels who seek all the [292] material pleasures and devote their talents to opposing the fa, the bina, and those who, as masters of the community, impose on the young the whole weight of an authority which is absolute and often niggling.

This explanation makes it plain that the post of ton'-tigi is no sinecure. In order to maintain his role honorably, the ton'-tigi must be capable of exerting his authority in subtle and shrewd ways, for the ton'-den' are touchy and undisciplined, and they are quick to claim the equality which is the basis of their association, even to the point of egalitarian mania or egalitarianism. Therefore, it is interesting to note that the regulations, fantastic at first glance, which inflict penalties for performing the most trivial acts are actually very effective; they correct in fun, but they represent a kind of restraint that encourages the development of discipline. Breaking with ordinary life, they tend through repetition to form habits which taken together make
● [661] up what we call esprit de corps. In any event, the development which we are about to describe shows conclusively that to maintain and conserve his power the ton'-tigi must exert authority by dissimulation, by persuading those most easily offended that he is subordinating his own acts to their wishes and at the same time appearing to the faint-hearted as an imperious and audacious leader. Furthermore, he must render service to everyone and know how to turn projects and adventures, even the riskiest, into profit for the community.

Since he is the target of the hostility of the elders, who often suffer from the activities of the ton'-den', and since he is constantly envied by some of these same ton'-den' for his success, he acquires the kind of experience which makes him a crafty and sly politician, completely devoid of scruples.

*173 We shall see how Mamari (called Biton) Kouloubali managed to prevail over the tyrannical egalitarianism of the

614 782 *173 *dyon'-kuntigi* who had acted as electors. When it was time to eat, they squatted on the ground around the gourd with their backs to it, and in this position and without turning their heads to make a choice, [305] they dipped into the dish and took a piece which might be animal or human. This meal constituted a communion by which those partaking of it were so closely linked that *ba Kongo-ba* was supposed to kill any one of them who should commit perjury by failing in the loyalty he owed to the man elected.

614 *173 The choice made was then definitive, and the man elected was put through a test intended to indicate the length of his reign. To make this test, the newly elected chief's throat was wrapped in one of the cotton bands used to make native loincloths; two of the bystanders pulled the two ends in opposite directions while the victim feverishly plunged his hands into a gourd containing a mixture of small pebbles and ground baobab leaves. The number of pebbles he managed to pick out in one try was the number of years in his reign. When this number of years had passed, the *fama* was strangled with the strip of cotton. If his rule had been popular, however, he was left in office until the first complaint was lodged against him.

Such is the tradition. Though it is acceptable in essentials, it is less so in certain details when comparison is made with the chronicle which makes no reference to this uniform death by strangulation or to determining in advance the length of the reign.

One thing that is certain is the oath of loyalty which followed every election and which was also often demanded by the *fama* during the course of his reign. This oath unquestionably had a sacramental form, characterized by a communion under the patronage of the idol. What the chronicle has to say about the election of Ngolo Dyara shows that the man elected was also required to participate in the oath, thus making it reciprocal. [661] Ngolo managed to avoid taking the oath, and so his electors bore the whole burden of it; this is one of the means by which despots of all lands pave the way for their tyranny.

596 614 Most often, however, the debates are concerned either with legitimacy or with primogeniture, and it is by no means rare for a fa, before his death, to insist that the one chosen be the one designated by custom and to threaten to call down curses on anyone who should try to bypass him or to reject his authority (1).

1. Ngolo and Ma-n-son both acted in this manner, according to the chronicle of Ségou.

In associations which have adopted a community organization analogous to that of the family, the election of a head is determined solely by these factors. It may be concluded that these are the bases consecrated by custom and that any other arrangements can only result in the worst kind of disagreement.

567 578 596 614 There is confirmation for this. Where slaves are numerous and well organized, they may refuse to recognize the new fa and choose another from among the members of the community. They may even decide to give themselves to a foreign master on the pretext that the fa imposed upon them by custom does not meet with their approval. This is a disaster which jeopardizes the wealth, strength, and even the unity of a family, for it can happen, in order to deal with the crisis, that a compromise is made which more or less ignores the regularly designated fa. This results in wrangling which usually ends with a schism in the community.

The history of these countries tells of many such cases, [177] because the slaves, upon becoming powerful, made the law in the families. The chronicle of Ségou thus relates that the slaves belonging to Dina Wara gave themselves to Biton upon the death of the former. It goes without saying that endless intrigues always precede such defections. The really successful fa, such as Biton, earned their reputations as able politicians and increased their fortunes precisely by their ability to avoid such disasters in their own communities, while stirring them up elsewhere. [662]

562 When the husband dies, the wives are considered the principal
428 wealth of the heir. Among certain Bambara, the wives are divided
768 among the brothers; the eldest brother chooses and then has the other
587 brothers choose in order of age. Among others, the heritage goes to
the children who must ally themselves with their father's wives. The
wives who do not want to remain with the heir have the option of returning to their families, providing the settlement is returned.

428 The wife may have personal property given to her by her
parents at the time of marriage. Among certain Bambara, the
562 father of the bride must give her the settlement paid by the husband,
and this becomes her personal property. When a widow dies, all of her goods go to her eldest son; if there is no son, half of her goods goes to her daughters, and the other half is divided among her father, her mother, and her brother. When a married woman dies without children, her goods are divided between her husband and her father; if she no longer has her father, half goes to her husband and the other half to her brothers and sisters.

On the other hand, we have seen how a woman may inherit all of the wealth of a family head, and even of a chief, in default of male heirs, and the Mali empire had a woman Keita at its head, daughter of Naré, fa Maghan.

562 A woman must not take part in any political discussion or
demonstration, which does not mean that her role in these matters
662 is nil. All the history of Mali is full of palace intrigues which reach their acute stage at the moment of a Fama's death and of the election of a new chief. It is at this moment that the women knew how to throw into the balance all the weight of their family's power to determine the new election.

Finally, we have seen that in a fashion parallel to the male
562 brotherhoods and societies, the women were organized into powerful
561 hierarchical societies according to their age classes and their degree
575 of initiation. These societies, where men do not enter, are still imperfectly known, but they are at least as formidable as the male brotherhoods.

The woman must pound the millet, draw water, and carry out
562 all the household chores, but when the man kills an animal, the meat belongs to the wife, and the man must accept in turn what she will give him.

692 In matters of justice, the Bambara frequently continue to consult
their old tribal judges. It must be noted, however, that in taking
[177 away the judicial competence of the old chiefs, the French ad-
ministration has contributed to diminishing, and almost to com-
622] pletely destroying, their power.

The Bambara had a judicial organization quite as precise and
671 regulated as their religious organization, although there was no
codified law, such as the Koran or the Hebrew tables of law. Justice
was rendered according to rules which each community passed on
from generation to generation. These rules are not of divine origin,
but they [69] are sacred nevertheless, for custom is the legacy of
[643 the ancestors. The Fama and his council of notables could promul-
645] gate new laws, but, before deciding on a new rule, they consult the
Komo and the *Nyama* [an altar]. Then, in the presence of a priest,
each one swears on the altar to obey the law which becomes sacred.
Moreover, the customary rules cannot be separated from the moral
code and the religion to which they are linked. They are not uni-
[184] form; each canton has its own, and often each village, and within
each of these there are observances peculiar to certain families or to
certain castes. Nevertheless, the sentiment of fair play is very strong
[181] among the Blacks, but they do not admit the equality of men, who
are naturally different one from another according to their aptitudes,
means, and condition.

Custom regulates all relations between individuals and between individuals and the collectivity.

692 Two sorts of native tribunals existed in the Bambara country: a tribunal of conciliation, presided over by the village chief, who assembled a council of notables; and a high tribunal presided over by the Fama, to whom were submitted the matters which the first tribunal had been unable to settle. In addition, the Fama could call before his tribunal the civil or penal matters which seemed to him to be of importance to the public order.

695 Justice was without charge and rendered day and night by the
643 Fama as one of his essential functions, for the judge is the one who
repairs the disorders that shake society. The hearings were solemnly
conducted and took place under the silk-cotton tree (*Ceiba pentandra*)

695 or in the chief's vestibule, that is to say, under the light of a certain 643 constellation and witnessed by the founding ancestors who link the judge with the supernatural powers. The Fama was seated on a throne perched on a platform; at his right were the notables, at his left the griot, the priests, and the old captives; behind him stood the [195] sofa. The blacksmith or a captive repeated aloud what the Fama whispered, for the Fama should not raise his voice. Neither women nor children could attend the public sessions. Formerly, the mere view of the Fama filled the accused with terror, and he prostrated himself in the Fama's presence. The Fama could put the accused in irons until he was judged (1).

1. V. Paques, "L'estrade royale des Niare" [The Royal Platform of the Niaré] Bull. de l'Ifan, Vol. XV (1953), No. 4.

671 Bambara law sought above all to make reparation, to restore order, and only after that to punish.

a. Proofs (2)

2. Passim. Coutumier juridique de l'A.O.F. [French West African Common Law].

695 The plaintiff must prove his case, and the accused must prove his innocence. Elements of proof may be confession, testimony by witnesses, oath taking, expert opinion, and examination of the scene.

If indications of guilt are strong enough, the Fama may force the accused to confess by having him whipped.

Each party may call witnesses in the following order: circumcised men, married women, unmarried girls (who, however, cannot [70] take the oath), and, lastly, children if there are no [608] other witnesses. The sénanku are exempted from bearing witness against each other.

588 583 Free union. This type of union rests on simple consent by the two parties without any bride price.

In principle a woman who has ceased to belong to a husband belongs to her original community, and she can make no decisions concerning her future without its consent. If she ignores this, the community can always intervene to force her to break off any engagement she may have made, and to this end it may use any means of absolute control.

This suffices to explain why a man who agrees to a union of this kind usually finds himself in the most serious difficulties. Not only can his wife and children be taken from him without
672 redress, but he can be sued for damages by the community to which the woman belongs.

It does sometimes happen, however, that certain women are released from the authority of their communities. These include women who are sole survivors of a community and, more commonly, those who have bought their freedom by dubious means. A free man who lives with such women achieves a union that to a great extent has the same effect as marriage. [206]

The Family

592 583 The household. The lawful household is based on marriage. In order to grasp its essence, account must be taken of the interplay of two elements which are perfectly distinct but always closely involved in all human affairs: interest and sentiment. In a lawful household the essential interest is the bride price whose nature must be defined in order to understand its overwhelming importance.

583 Bride price is what is paid in exchange for a wife. It is understood that the status of the woman thus handed over does not change; if she was free before the event, she is still free after the payment of the bride price.

586 The marriage tie is such that it can always be broken by one or the other party; the one breaking the contract simply loses the bride price in the sense that if the husband initiated the rupture he cannot expect anything already paid to be returned. If the initiative was taken by the wife (or her community), then she must return what has been paid. Whatever the cause of rupture, however, the children always belong to the husband.

681 survived hardly more than 15 days of this punishment. The whip was applied publicly; the lashes, whose number was fixed by the Fama, were given with either a full swing of the arm or by the fore-arm only. Fines had to be paid immediately, or else the condemned was held for security until his family liquidated the debt.

●672 681 The family of a man who had committed a crime or fault was held responsible and could be confiscated and sold; the confiscation of persons involved the confiscation of goods. All those who worked together under the authority of the same head could be confiscated, but not maternal uncles, paternal and maternal aunts of the culprit, nor his married relatives or those on the point of marrying. The confiscation was to the profit of the Fama who compensated the victims. Confiscation [71] of goods includes all furnishings, but not lands or dwellings.

681 Whoever was condemned to slavery had to be sold outside of the country, to the profit of the Fama. It was a practical method of ridding the land of all undesirables.

Finally, any second offender had his punishment doubled.

c. Examples of Condemnations

682 684 685 847 Homicides are condemned to death, but involuntary homicides or cases of legitimate self-defense are excused. A murderer's accomplice is subject to the same penalty as the murderer. One who receives a criminal or stolen goods is punished in the same fashion as the culprit. Rape of a child is punished by death, of a young girl by being put into irons after having paid reparations to her fiance. A woman who puts her bastard to death will be excused, for her husband may have required her to do it; if she kills her legitimate child, she is punished by death, but not executed. A woman who has an abortion is publicly whipped; when she causes an abortion in another woman, she is condemned to death. [683 689] A man who usurps the title of a function to which he is not entitled is put to death, as is the charlatan and the sorcerer. Theft of gold is punishable by death; theft of household objects is compensated for by a fine. If, during a brawl between two villages, a member of one village is killed, the aggrieved village designates an individual in the other village to be put to death. If there are several deaths on both side, the number of deaths in the two villages is equalized.

689 Public violation of decency is punished by death.

For adultery, the man is put in irons and pays a fine, the
684 woman is whipped by her husband, her brothers, or the Fama's police.
Relations with a woman in mourning draws public scorn on the guilty,
while a man who commits adultery with a pregnant woman is put to
death. A captive who is the lover of his master's wife is put to death.

689 Vagrant individuals are presumed to be escaped captives and are handed over to the Fama.

735 Finally, begging is authorized, because, say the Bambara, it is better to have begging than stealing.

d. Responsibility

[608] The Fama judges all his subjects, except his own sénanku whom
he has judged by his tribunal. The law is applicable to every cir-
672 cumcised man and excised woman recognized as sane. (The de-
mented are put in irons.) They are responsible for their acts, but
the family of the guilty is also responsible. The father of an un-
circumcised boy is responsible for the boy's acts, the husband for the
acts of his wife, and we have seen that a man's crime may lead to
the punishment of his whole family. Let us further remark that a
567 master was judge of his slave, but when a difference arose between
692 slaves of different houses, their case was referred to the tribunal.
The tribunal also weighed the death penalty [72] when a slave com-
[609] mitted a grave fault. Finally, the foreigner who lives in the Bam-
bara country is judged by Bambara laws.

We must also note that the penalties apply to all crimes
672 committed voluntarily; every infraction or damage involuntarily
committed is excusable on the condition that it be immediately
confessed. Thus it is that a hunter meeting a pair of lovers in the
[684] bush may kill them for outraging public decency, but must admit
his crime immediately upon returning to the village.

e. Inheritance

428 Monteil has noticed an order of succession in the Ségou region which does not correspond to that described by other authors, such as Ortoli or Aubert. In fact, at the death of the fa, " . . . everything that belonged to him remains undivided under the new faya of

754 become detached and fall of their own accord "if they are well made
674 and have lost none of their complete power"; he also has a mass of antidotes. Almost always he escapes with nothing more than a few days on his mat and a good stomach-ache, and although his convalescence may be long and can sometimes go on indefintely, at least he is shown sympathy; he gets a big share in the sacrifices offered by his friends, and his broth improves.

754 If the *korti* are many and cannot be numbered -- "each fetish has its own" -- the *dounkono* are still more numerous, for in addition
278 to the fetishes, the sorcerers, elders, men, and women, all know how to prepare a poison and give it whatever strength and power is desired. Every poison produces a special disorder in the body depending on the hand that throws or pours it. When in doubt, the Bambara consult the being who never deceives and cannot be mistaken: the sorcerer! And it is usually he who prescribes the antidote.

In the eyes of the Bambara, pouring poison (*dounkono di*) or
754 throwing it (*korti sou*) is a blameworthy act, and those who are guilty
673 of it have a dismal reputation among their fellows. One should not be surprised to see this crime remain unpunished, however, for in their eyes it does not bear the same odium as an overt or concealed murder by main force. I might even say, without fear of error, that this way of taking revenge is for them not a crime in the strict sense of the word. They so often have recourse to fetishes to settle a dispute and so readily threaten an enemy with the wrath of the gods, that taking vengeance through their intermediary leaves them calm and without any remorse. Besides, with what reproach should we reproach one who does so? It is true that he is cruel and without pity, /56/ but who gives power to the powder that he pours and the powder that he throws? It is the god, the fetish, and it alone is guilty! So let the enemy obtain the fetish's good graces and ward off its blows by sacrificing, let him set a more powerful god against it.

761 As one can see to the Bambara there is nothing natural about
153 physical and mental suffering and death; there is always an intermediary, and suffering and death are caused by an enemy who is taking vengeance, by a wicked person, by a sorcerer, or by a fetish.

761 "Koroya do, it is old age," but let us allow them to finish their
sentences and continue their thoughts "a ko toun kadi Komo yé, he
was beloved by the Komo," -- "à ko toun kadi Kono yé, Nama yé,
Douga ye, he was beloved by the Kono, the Nama, the Douga," etc.

When people pass by holding a rooster or hen by the feet one
761 may wonder where they are going; if one follows, one finds that they
782 are going to the temple of a fetish, there to sacrifice and to redden
776 their god with blood. "A toun koromé Alla sérà à ma, he was old
and God came to him," is an expression which is rarely on Bambara
lips. When it is heard, it is used with a very special meaning; it
signifies that the old man in question was a good man, beloved by all,
even by God, but by no means that God killed him. The sacrifices
made on this occasion clearly demonstrate this, for they are all directed
to a fetish. If God alone were the cause and not the fetishes, the
family of the deceased would refrain from all sacrifice; at the very
most, it would offer a saraka by order of a sorcerer, but even the
saraka offered to God -- and they are offered to Him -- is not a sacrifice, as we shall see later.

The priests of a djiné fetish and the owners and priests of a boli
761 fetish have the consolation that they always fall under the blows of
778 the genie which they hold and to which they sacrifice. As for other
mortals, 80 times out of 100, and one might say even more without
exaggerating, they are killed by a boli fetish. The Komo, Kono,
Nia, Nama, and Douga fetishes etc., are the chief murderers, and
entire villages are often decimated by them.

Although they are able to deliver blows on their own initiative,
761 they are often only intermediaries, the agents of a depraved will to
578 which they have offered their services; almost always there is either
674 a thrown poison, korti, or a poison that is poured, dounkono. Thus
754 sorcerors are consulted at every death; one is sought through their
mediation. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the great
maxim for the Bambara as for the Jews, and vengeance must be taken
on the one who was able to win over the good graces of a fetish and
force it to bring suffering or mourning into the bosom of a family.
This vengeance is obtained through the intermediary of a fetish, and

761 therefore secretly, and good relations between the actual /50/ or sup-
518 posed culprit and the unfortunate family are not broken in anyway.
● 674 The strange fact that has always surprised me is that all these people
754 converse amicably, do each other small favors, invite each other to drink and eat, while in their hatred they maintain a constant guard. They watch each other as they smile -- one party to protect their lives and their interests, the other to obtain vengeance. And on the day when it is least expected, that vengeance explodes inexorably. Cases of poisoning are not unusual in the Sudan, and it is not without reason that almost every death is blamed on the korti and the dounkono. I know that many die a perfectly natural death, and I have seen dropsy brought on by syphilitic consumption stupidly attributed to poisoning by the Komo, acute peritonitis to poisoning by the Kono, dysentery to poisoning by the Nama, undue swelling of the testicles with purulent abscesses, which were consequences of misconduct, to poisoning by the Nia, an abscess in the bladder to the Douga or the Nama. But it is a definite fact which I have noted many times in the course of seven years, and which any European living among the Negores can observe, however little he knows the language, the diseases which kills the natives is contracted when they return from a market, from a festival in honor of a fetish, or from a drinking bout where d'lo flows freely. The person's kidneys are hard and painful, his stomach causes him horrible suffering, his intestines seem to be torn by thorns, and there is complete anuria. In three or four days at the most his time is up.

The administrators at the head of a circle have all had to settle these cases which touch on the question of poisoning, and I doubt if there is one who has seen the matter clearly, so difficult it is to establish poisoning by korti and by dounkono. Let us refrain from throwing a stone at them; in a similar situation we would all be at a loss, for here there are always as many guilty persons as there are innocent, and all of them deserve the rope even while able openly to claim peace, liberty, and life. Since in the eyes of the Negro the fetish alone is guilty, there is a very simple means of stopping the decimation of the population and of allowing it to grow!

066 I pass over and do not dare to give this means: it is too radical, especially in our era; it is not anticlerical; it lacks breadth /51/ of mind. The fetish trees would have to be cut and burned, the boli confiscated, and their priests and owners employed in colonial works. Nor should the sorcerers be forgotten -- these men who spend their lives cheating people and stealing from them, who know only one kind of cultivation, the cultivation of laziness; finally, many schools would have to be opened. Paganism and barbarism would soon come to an end. The missionaries are there, ready to devote themselves, and they would ask no sacrifice from the treasury of the colony to do so; but the missionary has a morality which is too elevated, too noble, to be given to savages.... With what, then, is paganism to be replaced? With Islamism no doubt! Islam soils everything it touches, it abases a man more than it raises him. It is better to let the Negro redden the trees of his bush with blood, for he would gain nothing by the change. Every médersa (1), even that of djenné, is useless, nonsensical, and absurd; Arabic is not spoken in the Sudan, so what good is it to give the natives a language which is neither theirs nor French? Why should we want Islam in the Sudan? The villages are happy, full of zest; let us not try to make them sad and silent, let us not make them Arab villages, where one finds a human lizard on the street corner, lazily hidden in his burnoose and a hoarse dog barking on the walls, and where all the gates are shut. These Arab villages give the feeling of a prison, the chill of the tomb, and there is no liberty there except for vermin and lice.

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●674 If it is difficult to ascertain a poisoning by korti and by dounkona, here is the reason. When a Negro wants to take revenge, he goes to find a sorcerer to whom he confides his plan and gives his reasons. He is more interested in seeing his enemy suffer than in seeing him dead, and if he succeeds in injuring him and his family, harming his body and his possessions, he declares himself satisfied.

Sometimes the sorcerer undertakes the task, but he is cautious, knows how to contrive matters to suit the occasion. He can assume

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1. A médersa is an Arab school.

754 all functions to some degree, and it is to his own advantage to be content,
674 in such an instance, with the position of solicitor; to whoever
/52/ consults him, he indicates a celebrated fetish in the hands of one
of his friends. The Bambara runs there without delay, and the master
of the fetish, generously and heavily paid, takes the god out of its
dirty goatskin. Onto one of its instruments (for a *boli* is manifold, and
[778] horns of cattle and antelopes, varnished with blood and brownish in
color, are mingled with other objects in the shape of an eggplant, a
turnip, a beetroot, a napkin ring, horse dung, etc., etc.), onto the
sirikoun, which is almost always wrapped in a red shirt front, he ties
firmly with a cotton thread seven straws five to seven centimeters
long. The petitioner explains his visit, names the enemy on whom
he wants to take vengeance, gives the reasons that compel him, and
the master of the fetish recites his formulas, reddens his *sirikoun* with
blood, and plasters onto its sides some spittle containing chewed kola
nut.

754 If the sacrificial hen dies with spread wings and breast on the
674 ground and if when split in half the kola nut falls with the pulp down
787 and the round side up, the contemplated revenge is put off until later,
for it is believed that the sacrifice has not been accepted. Our
Bambara then goes away, relieved of a hen, two kola nuts, and at
least 160 *cauri*, but nowise defeated; eight or ten days later he returns
to the charge, unless he is too impatient to wait and consults a new
sorcerer, who gives him orders to appeal to a fetish that shows a greater
interest and has a more enterprising and less timid disposition.

If the hen dies on its side or on its back with its feet in the air,
and if the pieces of kola nut fall on the round side with the pulp on
top, the sacrifice is accepted, and this is the god's answer to the
effect that he is taking his client's side. The enemy is thenceforth
754 placed under the *boli a blara boli koro*, the sanctioned expression;
674 he is placed under the avenging power of the fetish and is in its hands,
278 and the master of the idol, the sacrificer, and the people in his retinue
plot to make him disappear at once. They undertake the task themselves
as seldom as possible, however; they prescribe sacrifices and
offerings to the client and give him a deer horn carefully tied up,
telling him how to use it. This deer horn is nothing less than a horn

754 of poison, and the brown powder concealed in it is usually Strophanthus
●674 seed /53/ crushed and kneaded into excreta of human corpses and
278 saliva taken from their mouths. This mixture is dried in the shade and then wrapped in a piece of hyena intestine, and to render the effects more immediate and certain, the fetish is brought out and placed on this meal and a sacrifice made. These sacrosanct preparations are made at night, if possible in the first quarter of the moon, and never on a Monday or Thursday, which are days of rest for the boli gods (1).

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776 1. The boli have two days' leave per week, and the Negroes also take this rest. However, they are broad-minded on this point even though for certain labors they ask the religious chief or a sorcerer to be allowed to work. As a rule a boli may not go out Sunday or Monday night nor on Wednesday or Thursday. They quite often do go out, however, but only by command of the fetish or a sorcerer. To bring out a fetish is to spend the night dancing the dance of the fetish, and when the initiates want to dance they always manage to do so. The boli are also sacrificed to on Monday and Thursday even though they are at rest. In theory there is rest for the fetishes; actually, the idea is loosely applied.

754 To succeed and to keep from displeasing the fetish, who would
674 then abandon your cause and turn against you, you must follow the prescriptions of the priest and members of his council to the letter; the omission of one rite, one sign, one formula, one imprecation, destroys the power of the poison contained in the horn, or at least renders it ineffective. Sometimes this powder is thrown and is called korti sou, and at other times it is poured and is called dounkono di.

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674 The dounkono is administered or poured by sliding a pinch of it under the nail of the middle finger of the left hand and throwing it with a skillfully concealed flick into the food or drink of the enemy. Food sauce, dégé (millet flour mixed with water), millet beer (d'lo), and di kolé (hydromel) are suitable and without doubt easily poisoned.

Throwing poison, korti sou, remains the prerogative of the sorcerers, priests, and masters of the fetishes, and one must be somebody in order to use it (2). As with the dounkono, a pinch is slid under /54/ the nail of the middle finger, and with a strong flick it is thrown onto the enemy or merely toward him or onto an object which has belonged to him, and it is ordered to be effective, to kill him if possible, or at least to reward him with a sickness which he will long remember.

The Bambara fear the korti far more than the dounkono and if an enemy seriously threatens him with it they tremble. For a person so threatened is no longer dealing with a man, a power equal to his own; he must be on guard against an all-powerful god who places his strength and power at the service of the man. The force is submissive and obedient, triumphant and vengeful; it delivers its blows blindly where it is ordered and onto any person against whom it is aroused and against whom it is hurled. That, in my opinion, is the exact translation of the expression, korti sou ma la. As a dog is set on a person (oulou sou ma la), so korti poison is thrown at him (korti sou ma la).

The Negroes say that korti has a crushing effect: when it strikes you, you feel a violent upheaval throughout your body, your limbs stiffen, and you fall backward. You may die of the attack, but

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2. There are many old Bambara who, after a meal with a neighbor or friend, mutter a prayer while washing their hands and make the motion of throwing korti poison. This is a curse which they throw against the enemies of the family that has received them.

754 usually you come back to life and get off with a fainting spell followed
674 by violent hiccups and vomiting (1). For several days afterwards, and sometimes several months, a malignant fever confines you to your mat, your limbs swell, deep and purulent sores cut into your body, and so you will drag on for months and months, incurable, and a burden to everyone and to yourself.

The korti sometimes strikes you in such an unobtrusive way that you do not feel it entering. You notice it later when sickness comes, and its nature is declared by the sorcerer, that infallible being who is never mistaken. /55/

754 The Negro is almost without defense against the korti. A person
755 poisoned by it must have recourse to a more powerful fetish, and he kills hens and goats in vain, for he seldom finds one. He covers himself with grigris, surrounds himself with talismans, and nothing does any good. Even the two little deer horns hung around his neck remain ineffectual and unable to defend him, holy as may be the powder they contain.

754 Against the dounkono, or poison that is poured into food and
674 drink, a victim not only has recourse to his gods and his grigris, which

1. Were I not afraid of provoking a smile, I would admit that in February, 1908, having gone to a Da woro, a celebration which takes place six days after circumcision, I was called by the master of the Komo and, when we were alone, he threw korti at me with the usual curses and left. Without doubt emotion as well as the fatigue of the journey and of the previous day had much to do with my reaction, but I immediately felt stomach cramps and held onto the wall so as not to fall. My discomfort lasted from five to ten minutes.

754 674 become detached and fall of their own accord "if they are well made and have lost none of their complete power"; he also has a mass of antidotes. Almost always he escapes with nothing more than a few days on his mat and a good stomach-ache, and although his convalescence may be long and can sometimes go on indefintely, at least he is shown sympathy; he gets a big share in the sacrifices offered by his friends, and his broth improves.

754 278 If the korti are many and cannot be numbered -- "each fetish has its own" -- the dounkono are still more numerous, for in addition to the fetishes, the sorcerers, elders, men, and women, all know how to prepare a poison and give it whatever strength and power is desired. Every poison produces a special disorder in the body depending on the hand that throws or pours it. When in doubt, the Bambara consult the being who never deceives and cannot be mistaken: the sorcerer! And it is usually he who prescribes the antidote.

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761 153 As one can see to the Bambara there is nothing natural about physical and mental suffering and death; there is always an intermediary, and suffering and death are caused by an enemy who is taking vengeance, by a wicked person, by a sorcerer, or by a fetish.

181 me, and it seems to me that the Bambara might describe himself as: "A man sufficiently master of himself to be able always to agree with you without ever revealing his inner thoughts."

Their character is not made up entirely of vices, however, and I have been told by earnest men that the Bambara never, at least in public, practice those familiarities with women which shock and wound every person of high principles. They have added that the two ● [674] crimes of adultery and fornication are unusual with them, and this, one may be sure, is less on account of the severe penalties which they incur (it seems that before the French conquest the punishment was death without reprieve), than because they are without feelings, that 181 is, strong passions. Their women can without any difficulty go around 291 with bare bosoms, breasts exposed, hips girded with a paltry rag knotted under the navel, and their young girls are satisfied with their small strip of cloth, three fingers wide, which is knotted in front at the waist, slides between the legs, and is caught up in back by the cord, to fall in a long train decorated by a gorgeous pompon the size of a fist. They did not tell me, of course, but /158/ they gave me to understand quite well that if it were absolutely necessary the girls could without blushing go around in the scant garb of children who roll in the dust dressed as on the day they were born, quite naked. Nakedness cannot stir a Negro; beauty does not excite his eyes, for he does not have the feeling for it. And for a long time I believed the Bambara to be endowed with an angelic nature.

181 All these beautiful thoughts have left me, and I must admit 831 that the Bambara are hideously degraded! Every day has made the matter clearer to me, for when I have left the mission to go to the surrounding villages, as the duties of my office oblige me to do several times a week, I have seen the same scenes again and again, heard the same songs and the same conversations, and I have found nothing very angelic in any of them. If I went into a field, I saw young men bent over their hoes, backs running with sweat, who got up and jumped, shouted the most raucous "you you," and made an obscene gesture. If a little girl, a child, came to give them a jug of cool water, she would get a coarse word as thanks and payment, and often, not to say almost always, a rough hand would remind her

776 On market day, a gourd filled with river water, called fle ndinye
823 faro, is placed close to the shore where the canoes land. To drink a
mouthful of this water is equivalent to a sacrifice to the spirit. The
782 drinker gives a cowrie as alms to the beggar who drew the water, for
"never can [Faro's] water be bought or sold" (1).

1. Ma ti dyi fere ma ti dyi sã.
See pl. II, b.

At Sama, the faro tyin is a kind of natural corridor located amidst the rocks bordering and overhanging the left bank of the river.

[825] The finches nesting there warn the boatmen of the place's sanctity by flying off; the boatmen then stop to pray. In passing, they throw an offering and those who have broken taboos purify themselves by washing. Each shows the spirit all that he carries with him. Two nearby trees, faro sõndyiri or "trees of Faro's sacrifice," are used to tie up the white bulls at twilight. The following day, they are thrown alive into the river with millet mash and cola nuts. At the bottom of the passage, on a fairly smooth surface, the image of Faro described above was drawn each year in the course of the ceremony celebrated by the society of the Komo.

/47/ Faro also haunts ponds and wells. In the village of Nango a natural well was revealed to a hunter by a white ram which appeared out of a thicket. The village was built after the discovery of the water hole where the inhabitants now worship the spirit.

In the village of Siyango, the water of the well in which Faro
resides is tabooed, the site of the well being the seat of all the re-
ligious ceremonies of the villagers. There the newborn are presented,
[755] and deaths and marriages announced. The sick are treated by being
made to drink the well water and wash in it. From his herd, each
person offers every year an animal which is thrown alive into the pit.
[681] Finally, those condemned to death are executed by drowning in the
same spot.

Faro's Auxiliaries

776 Faro has placed spirits as his representatives in the skies, in space,
773 on earth, in the trees, and in the rocks of the mountains. They see

567 727 well treated; if his captivity continues for a long time, he may even found a family and live like a free man on parole, required only to remain where he is. Time takes care of many things. Under the same circumstances, a woman of quality usually becomes the wife of the conqueror.

People belonging to a caste escape slavery by entering the service of the conqueror to perform their customary trades.

It is only humble people -- the majority -- whose lot is often terrible; dragged far away, sold and resold, they often fall into the hands of bad masters.

567 Theoretically, a female slave's children are always slaves. A child born in slavery belongs to the mother's master and shares her fate. If she is the master's concubine, the child is born free and thereby frees the mother.

A contract slave is not always master of his own fate. Since the *fa* has absolute authority over his people, it is he who makes the contract which binds them.

● [681] A free individual may fall into slavery as a result of his crimes or misdemeanors (2); it is in this way that an incorrigible thief becomes the slave of the chief to whom he is sent for punishment.

Many poor people, attracted by the favored lot of the [191] *wolo-so* in large communities, go into voluntary slavery in hope of a comparable position. All the Sudanese empires had these voluntary slaves, who came in great numbers from all directions.

Where there are many slaves, they form what is called *dyon'-kuru* or *dyon'-futu*, depending on the place, that is, "an assembly of slaves," and their leader, who represents them with the master, is an important personage by virtue of their strength. When the community to which these slaves belong is an ancient one, they are divided into groups, each of which is named for the *fa* under whose authority it was organized. In theory, the leader of each group is its oldest member, and the leader of the

2. Nzan Fato became a slave for stealing a beehive (p. 49 above).

793 provide instruction in deductive divination, which usually requires two years of study.

This clergy is recruited and formed by co-optation, and it includes, besides the persons already mentioned, the *muru-kala-tigi* (3) or "sacrificer," who kills the victims, and a *dyeli* or "herald" of the god.

794 The rank and file of the faithful are called *nyana-den u*, sons of the *nyana* (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above]. In order to be accepted as *nyana-den'*, it is necessary [260] to take an oath and to pay an entrance fee. The terms of the oath used in the brotherhoods reveal that, in sum, the *nyana-den'* promises secrecy, obedience, and solidarity, as we shall show in what follows. Certain aides of the clergy are selected from among the common run of the faithful, for instance, the *da-ro-tigi* or *da-ro-ta-la*, who is a kind of beadle.

The Treasury

The performance of liturgical ceremonies is not the only function of the clergy; it also constitutes a kind of council to administer the property of the brotherhood, for the cult is not gratuitous. First, admission to the brotherhood requires the payment of a fee, and the same is true whenever an individual is nominated or promoted to an office. Furthermore, an important contribution, in proportion to the individual's resources, is required for any important ceremony. Finally, fines are imposed on the faithful and even on outsiders as punishment for wrong doings.

794
681 Fines assume many forms, whether they are to atone for a wrong committed by one of the faithful against the brotherhood or the god, whether an outsider is to be punished similarly for arousing the wrath of the *nyana*, or for reasons sometimes known only to the clergy who levies them. The *nyana-tigi* and

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3. Literally, "he who holds the handle of the knife."

794 his acolytes are exceedingly zealous in discovering wrong-
● 681 doings and the guilty parties and in requiring material proof of repentance, which they determine and try to multiply since they appropriate the whole profit, albeit abusively. Theoretically, these fines are not very heavy and are paid in kind (fowl, a goat, a dog, some kola nuts, millet, beer), but, when multiplied, they become a heavy burden for the debtor. He cannot evade this method of extortion, because his persecutors, in league against him, use every means, even criminal, to force him to pay.

794 Strictly speaking, all the property belongs to the nyana;
it is by rights the common property of the nyana-den' and in
421 principle is not to be privately appropriated nor alienated. It
426 is to be used only for the needs of the cult, for assisting needy members, and in exceptional cases for loans to outsiders at exorbitant interest. For that matter, the nyana-den' who gets a loan from the common fund must repay it [261] as soon as his affairs take a turn for the better and, insofar as possible, add a certain amount in order to show his gratitude. It sometimes happens that an outsider is aided out of the common fund; this is a kind of charity which is both a good advertisement and extremely profitable.

794 The common property is not to be appropriated by any
dignitary or member of the brotherhood for his own benefit.
421 Although there is certainly not a single native who is unaware of this regulation (1), it is all too evident that abuses have led to extraordinary perversions. The clergy regularly appropriates the property of the nyana to its own use, and in order to increase the profit, they do not hesitate to commit actual crimes that enable them to exploit the terror they inspire, which they are careful to nurture and to reinforce.

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1. Raffenel writes (op. cit., p. 239): "The victims' flesh and other objects become the property of the poor."

794 clergy. On the other hand, an innocent man will be over-
696 whelmed by mental and physical torture if he is unable to give
his executioners what they demand.

681 Corporal punishment includes flogging, chains, starvation, torture, and death by all imaginable methods. Pecuniary punishment includes fines, confiscation, and pillage. The condemned man is also sometimes forced to labor for the clergy or is even enslaved by them.

Social and Political Role of the Brotherhoods

794 By its actions, the brotherhood, an artificial family,
776 tends to take the place of the natural family whose organization
it has borrowed and whose cult it has banished. It is easy to ac-
769 count for this.

The cult of the manes is the framework of the family and of the communities derived from it. The brotherhood has cleverly managed to set up such a cult by specially honoring the manes of its high priests, its famous members, and its eminent worshipers. [267]

Gradually, the nyana dugu-da-siri, protector of the territorial community, has given way to the nyana of the boli, a more powerful god since his territory is unlimited.

It is true that in spite of everything the tradition remains,
and even though they are largely over-shadowed by the nyana of
the boli, the manes of the ancestors and the nyana dugu-da-siri are
still venerated. Though sowing and harvesting are celebrated
[731] with great pomp by the brotherhoods, still, when a disaster,
epidemic, or terrible drought occurs, sacrifices are promptly of-
[782] fered to the manes and the gods of the place. People may fear
their anger, but they also have confidence in their good will,
and it is felt that their severity can always be tempered. On the
other hand, the nyana of the boli are supposed to be basically
evil, and their worship seems intended to ward off their malignity
rather than to obtain their favor.

794 This duality in religion brings about extremely compli-
621 cated interrelationships which bind the communities and

642
565 3. the free men;

4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);

5. slaves.

567 e. Slavery. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by violence, by obligation, or by birth.

567 727 554 1. By violence. If a war captive is important, he may be killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration. A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama; [608] if he is a sénanku of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious [561] Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

567 681 426 858 2. By obligation. A free individual became a slave in punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the profit of the Fama. A fa could sell one of his children to meet his debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was freed of his obligations.

567 3. By birth. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a wolo-so. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

567 644 As the number of slaves grew, their organization became complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Ségou were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the dyon-kuru or dyon-futu (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Ségou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him, the submission of all the slaves.

695 [687] False testimony is punished by confiscation of all goods and arrest of the whole family; part of the goods goes to the victim. If the witness refuses to take the oath, his refusal is evidence against the party that called him. When the parties in a trial disagree, the Fama makes one swear on the Komo, on his platform, or on the tomb of the group's founding ancestor. When the oath has been pronounced, the adversary may efface it by taking the oath in his turn. Then judgment will be suspended; but before 40 days have passed the perjurer must die.

[687] Anyone who attempts to suborn a witness or a child will be punished in the same fashion as the false witness.

The Fama must assign to one or several notables the mission of examing the scene where the disputed incident took place; he may designate a notable to examine and evaluate the damages. Once their mission is accomplished, the notables are subject to the same obligations as the witnesses.

693 695 The role of defense attorney was taken by one of the Fama's advisors, a relative, a griot, a blacksmith, or a favorite of the Fama, he who "speaks best." The accused, or someone from his family, approached the prospective defender and offered him a gift, asking him to intervene in his favor. But the counselor had only the power to save the life of the condemned who had to pay a settlement; all punishments other than death were applied.

625 Police functions were carried-out by the sofa and by members of the brotherhoods.

b. Punishments

681 The punishments were, in order of descending importance: death, being put in irons permanently or for a set time, the whip, the fine, confiscation of the family, confiscation of goods, sale to the slave traders.

[562] Murderers and inveterate brigands had their heads cut off; spies had their heads shattered by an axe or were bludgeoned (like dogs). A woman was never executed. The Fama who had a woman put to death would have seen his kingdom disappear.

All those condemned to irons were imprisoned in a hut, immobilized, the feet hobbled by a bar fixed to a ring; the patient

681 survived hardly more than 15 days of this punishment. The whip
was applied publicly; the lashes, whose number was fixed by the
Fama, were given with either a full swing of the arm or by the fore-
arm only. Fines had to be paid immediately, or else the condemned
was held for security until his family liquidated the debt.

672 The family of a man who had committed a crime or fault was
681 held responsible and could be confiscated and sold; the confiscation
of persons involved the confiscation of goods. All those who worked
together under the authority of the same head could be confiscated,
but not maternal uncles, paternal and maternal aunts of the culprit,
nor his married relatives or those on the point of marrying. The
confiscation was to the profit of the Fama who compensated the
victims. Confiscation [71] of goods includes all furnishings, but
not lands or dwellings.

681 Whoever was condemned to slavery had to be sold outside of
the country, to the profit of the Fama. It was a practical method of
ridding the land of all undesirables.

Finally, any second offender had his punishment doubled.

c. Examples of Condemnations

682 Homicides are condemned to death, but involuntary homicides
684 or cases of legitimate self-defense are excused. A murderer's ac-
685 complice is subject to the same penalty as the murderer. One who
receives a criminal or stolen goods is punished in the same fashion
847 as the culprit. Rape of a child is punished by death, of a young girl
by being put into irons after having paid reparations to her fiancé.
A woman who puts her bastard to death will be excused, for her hus-
band may have required her to do it; if she kills her legitimate
child, she is punished by death, but not executed. A woman who has
an abortion is publicly whipped; when she causes an abortion in
[683 another woman, she is condemned to death. A man who usurps the
title of a function to which he is not entitled is put to death, as
689] is the charlatan and the sorcerer. Theft of gold is punishable by
death; theft of household objects is compensated for by a fine.
If, during a brawl between two villages, a member of one village
is killed, the aggrieved village designates an individual in the
other village to be put to death. If there are several deaths on
both side, the number of deaths in the two villages is equalized.

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776 the word, is offered as clothing, and the eggs are offered as purification.
778 As for the ashes, it is the ideal pure element since fire has "removed"
823 its tere from the wood; here it represents the man from whom "the bad
783 force acting on his tere has been removed" (1). Whoever murders an animal proceeds in the samw way with the animal's hide upon which he throws cowrie shells. In both cases, the spirits absorb the tere and nyama, which add to their own forces and free the culprit.

Collective purifications are carried out on the dangu when sexual taboos regarding cultivated fields and bush are broken. The impurity
[833] resulting from copulation performed outdoors is communicated to all the land belonging to the village; the trees in the bush will no longer bear fruit; the harvests will deteriorate. Formerly the two lovers
[684] taken by surprise were deprived of their clothing which was burned on the dangu after they had circled the village three times starting at the left. The culprits were then banished. At present, if the plight of the fields suggests that such an act has been committed, all varieties of cultivated seeds are gathered in a basket which is placed at the crossroads. Then, all the villagers and their domestic animals circle the village three times while sham battles take place between men mounted on horseback. After a sacrifice offered at the dangu, the seeds, thus purified, are sown.

776 Offerings are made to the spirits of the crossroads at the time of
778 sowing to invoke their protection. This ritual is obligatory for whom-
ever sows cotton, since this seed was given to men by these spirits.
823 The farmer places the seeds, sits down facing west, and cries out three
241 times the name of the dangu above the seeds. He leaves three small piles in homage to the spirit along with fibers from the plant, and kills a victim before proceeding to sow his field. When the stalks are up, he cuts some boughs and returns to the place of sacrifice to sweep up the seeds, thus impregnating them with the nyama of the dangu. He then dries them, grinds, sifts, and mixes them with earth picked up on the same spot. In his field, he shouts /141/ the name of the dangu and throws the mixture with all his strength in the direction of the cardinal points, the zenith, and the ground. When the plants are mature he picks the first seven ripe seeds, brings them to the same place, and offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

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1. See pp. 90 ff.

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both side, the number of deaths in the two villages is equalized.

689 Public violation of decency is punished by death.

684 For adultery, the man is put in irons and pays a fine, the woman is whipped by her husband, her brothers, or the Fama's police. Relations with a woman in mourning draws public scorn on the guilty, while a man who commits adultery with a pregnant woman is put to death. A captive who is the lover of his master's wife is put to death.

689 Vagrant individuals are presumed to be escaped captives and are handed over to the Fama.

735 Finally, begging is authorized, because, say the Bambara, it is better to have begging than stealing.

d. Responsibility

[608] The Fama judges all his subjects, except his own *sénanku* whom
he has judged by his tribunal. The law is applicable to every cir-
672 cumcised man and excised woman recognized as sane. (The de-
mented are put in irons.) They are responsible for their acts, but
the family of the guilty is also responsible. The father of an un-
circumcised boy is responsible for the boy's acts, the husband for the
acts of his wife, and we have seen that a man's crime may lead to
the punishment of his whole family. Let us further remark that a
567 master was judge of his slave, but when a difference arose between
692 slaves of different houses, their case was referred to the tribunal.
The tribunal also weighed the death penalty [72] when a slave com-
[609] mitted a grave fault. Finally, the foreigner who lives in the Bam-
bara country is judged by Bambara laws.

672 We must also note that the penalties apply to all crimes
committed voluntarily; every infraction or damage involuntarily
committed is excusable on the condition that it be immediately
confessed. Thus it is that a hunter meeting a pair of lovers in the
[684] bush may kill them for outraging public decency, but must admit
his crime immediately upon returning to the village.

e. Inheritance

428 Monteil has noticed an order of succession in the Ségou region which does not correspond to that described by other authors, such as Ortoli or Aubert. In fact, at the death of the *fa*, "... everything that belonged to him remains undivided under the new *faya* of

521 831 one's eyes, the answer is almost always: "A flé bani, mousoni do, ne na d'ima, ka ké i soungourou yé. But look here, this is a girl; I will give her to you, she will be your soungourou."

521 831 576 836 And all this carelessness from the moral standpoint should not surprise us in a country where a crowd of young men greet each other even in the presence of their mothers: "I sounna ko? About the affair of your sleep? And your lovemaking at night?" "I soungourou ka kendé? How is your soungourou?"

And where young girls do not blush to say to young men: "Do me the favor that I am asking you."

"Ne na ko doumani fo i ye.

I will tell you of a sweet affair (or: conversation, shameful embraces).

"Né na ne ko doumani d'i ma.

I will give you my sweet affair (or: I give myself to you).

In short, every Bambara who awards himself the prize of virtue, avoids saying that he has respected foreign women and girls temporarily under his roof. The statement would be received with a shrug of the shoulders and a smile. He merely says: "I have respected the women and girls of the village," and he does not shout this very loud nor before everybody.

2. Concerning Adultery and Fornication

● 684 Adultery is a crime in the eyes of every Negro, and the guilty one caught in the act is brought before the council of elders and severely punished. I must state, however, that although adultery seems a serious offence to all, the crime does not lie in the satisfaction obtained. There has been a lack of fairness, the rights of a third party have been violated, and in this lies all the wrongdoing.

Caught in the act, red handed, the guilty party makes a friendly deal with the husband, who rarely asks him for more than 16,000 cowrie shells (from 15 to 20 francs) and the material for a sacrifice to the family boli, comprising perhaps two hens, a goat, two kola nuts, and between 5 to 800 cowrie shells for the sacrificer's bonus.

684 626 As long as he has not received the entire indemnity, the injured husband shouts, threatens, and attacks the guilty woman and man with his fists, but then the last cowrie shell is paid and all is quiet. Furthermore, should he be slow in calming down, his wife would most certainly run away and everyone would treat him as a boor. In fact, after having harshly rebuked the culprit and his accomplice and made them promise never to repeat the offense, the headman and elders go to the hut of the husband and say to him: "Your wife has promised not to default on her honor again, her seducer has paid the fine, so come, pardon them!" When the elders, the headman in the lead, put themselves out like this, they impose their will, and whoever does not say with them: "Kouma banna (1), the matter is settled, let us speak no more of it," is no less than a cad.

684 695 If adultery is established but the seducer and his accomplice have not been caught, the case becomes complicated, for the accused will deny the crime. The matter is brought before the court of elders, and, the powerful boli come out of their sanctuaries and for a moment leave the goatskins which they use as tabernacles. The accusers swear on the fetish (kali, "to swear," boli la) (2), and on the basis of the verbal proofs that they bring testify that there has been adultery. The accused are summoned, and if they persist in denying the charge, they are commanded to swear on the fetish to attest their innocence. Quite often they refuse, /162/ and matters drag on. The suit must finally be settled, so the husband and the accusers call on the most popular fetish with the words: "An ta boli sien (1) let us sacrifice to

1. Kouma, "word," "talk"; banna, "is finished."

2. Kali boli la, " may the boli kill me if I am lying."

1. The boli sien consists of oaths by both the accusers and the accused.

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> The accusers swear: "If we are accusing falsely, may the boli kill us." The accused swear: "We are not guilty, and if we are may the boli kill us."

the boli, and may he take the life of the liar." When the council of elders has decided on the boli sien, it must be carried out. If the accused is guilty he will admit it, for to call on an idol to bear witness to a lie is to doom oneself to death, to decree one's own death. For a boli has no pity for a perjurer, and legends tell of more than one case identical to that of Ananias and Sapphira.

626 688 Some Negroes nevertheless perjure themselves. From then on they lose all peace; one fine day they can hold out no longer, and they go to find the master of the idol, and to him they confess their crime and their transgression. In order to save their lives they make 688 a gnénama fani (2), and when they have paid the fani-n-kolo (3),

> 2. Gnénama, "living thing," "one who lives"; fani, "throat cutting"; gnénama fani, "throat cutting for one's life."

> 3. Fani, "throat cutting," "sacrifice"; kolo, "cowrie shells," "price"; fani-n-kolo, "price of the sacrifice."

the staff of the fetish denounces the culprit (4).

> 4. A Negro who perjures himself in the presence of a fetish believes himself lost. Moreover, the boli taken as witness is the one most famous for its power in that circle, for instance, the Komo of Tigini,

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Tjoïna, or Kégné, and the Nama of Misango, Kokodjan, or Guendo. The Djara of Tjikoumela is very popular in Bani country. A perjured Negro offers a gnénama fani, and the fani-n-kolo is costly. For the Komo it consists of two red roosters, two goats, a dog, two red kola nuts, a basket of millet (between 18 and 20 kilograms) and three times 8 kémé (the kémé is worth 80 cowrie shells) if the culprit is a man, or four times 8 kémé if it is a woman. For the Nama the price includes a gourd of honey, two gourds of karité butter, a red hen, two red kola nuts, a basket of millet, and 8 ba (the ba is worth 800 cowrie shells, or one franc), a kémé, and a débé (120 cowrie shells). In addition these are one to two kilograms of salt and a gourd of gnama-n-kou (malagueta pepper: amomum melegueta) for the sacrificer. For the Nia the cost is 12 ba, four chickens, two dogs, and two hens.

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837 Adultery is frequent; it occurs daily and is the source of most of the disputes that arise. Some husbands are tolerant, however, and many are satisfied with 2 to 3 ba (between 1, 600 and 2, 400 cowrie shells, or 2 to 3 francs) and victims for a sacrifice to the family boli, such as a hen, a dog, a kid, or two kola nuts.

684
836 Like adultery, fornication is a serious offence because it violates the rights of third parties. It is less serious /163/ than adultery,

684 836 however, because the Negroes say that although the betrothed girl does not belong entirely to herself, neither does she belong entirely to her fiancé; she still retains certain rights to her own person, "*à ma di ban*, she has not yet been given."

684 627 When a girl becomes pregnant, she is arraigned before the family council. After a goat has been slaughtered for the family *boli*, she is asked the name of her partner, and if she refuses to disclose it the council of the elders is called in. She has to yield, otherwise she is tied to one of the forked sticks that support the flat terrace roof, and blows rain thick on her back.

As soon as the guilty man is named, she swears on a powerful *boli* (1) that she has told the truth, and the man is summoned. Nothing is to be gained by being a perjurer; it is better to pay the fine and live. The stain on his honor is slight, and he confesses without much shame: "*Tigné* (that is true); *né no do* (it is my fault)."

The fine is between 15 and 20 francs and often between 25 and 30 francs (2), not including the sacrifice to the boli, which consists of two hens, two dogs, a goat, and two kola nuts. Quite often the injured fiancé has to be satisfied with the victims for the sacrifice and a small present, one to two kilos of salt, and 800 to 1,600 cowrie shells, or 1 to 2 francs. As for the child of an unmarried mother, its 847 848 567 fate is in the hands of the grandmothers, and of the father and the mother, and it quite often happens that it does not cry twice in this world; to use the Bambara expression: "*N'a kasira, a t'na foula ké*, if he has cried, he will not do it a second time." I am speaking here of a free girl, for the child of an unmarried slave girl is welcome; it is a gain for the house, and no attention is paid to the guilty man. This is easy to understand, for is there a Negro who does not abuse his slave?

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1. It is almost always a *Komo*, a *Nama*, or a *Kono*.

[583] 2. The rule is that the culprit should pay the fiancé the entire bride price, or some 30 francs.

681 survived hardly more than 15 days of this punishment. The whip was applied publicly; the lashes, whose number was fixed by the Fama, were given with either a full swing of the arm or by the forearm only. Fines had to be paid immediately, or else the condemned was held for security until his family liquidated the debt.

672 681 The family of a man who had committed a crime or fault was held responsible and could be confiscated and sold; the confiscation of persons involved the confiscation of goods. All those who worked together under the authority of the same head could be confiscated, but not maternal uncles, paternal and maternal aunts of the culprit, nor his married relatives or those on the point of marrying. The confiscation was to the profit of the Fama who compensated the victims. Confiscation [71] of goods includes all furnishings, but not lands or dwellings.

681 Whoever was condemned to slavery had to be sold outside of the country, to the profit of the Fama. It was a practical method of ridding the land of all undesirables.

Finally, any second offender had his punishment doubled.

c. Examples of Condemnations

682 684 685 847 Homicides are condemned to death, but involuntary homicides or cases of legitimate self-defense are excused. A murderer's accomplice is subject to the same penalty as the murderer. One who receives a criminal or stolen goods is punished in the same fashion as the culprit. Rape of a child is punished by death, of a young girl by being put into irons after having paid reparations to her fiancé. A woman who puts her bastard to death will be excused, for her husband may have required her to do it; if she kills her legitimate child, she is punished by death, but not executed. A woman who has an abortion is publicly whipped; when she causes an abortion in another woman, she is condemned to death. [683 689] A man who usurps the title of a function to which he is not entitled is put to death, as is the charlatan and the sorcerer. Theft of gold is punishable by death; theft of household objects is compensated for by a fine. If, during a brawl between two villages, a member of one village is killed, the aggrieved village designates an individual in the other village to be put to death. If there are several deaths on both side, the number of deaths in the two villages is equalized.

438 643 the gold. But they, in turn, could in no case resell the gold to anybody other than the Fama. Aside from certain sacrificial uses and the [648] making of jewels for the Fama's wives, gold served to ransom captives or to negotiate royal alliances.

435 The price of the commodities was set by agreement between buyer and seller, except for cloth which had a fixed price, 100 cowrie shells per cubit in the Bamako region. As a matter of fact, the cot- [286] ton gathered in the fields of the community was woven by captives who were not paid.

426 686 Loans were made without interest. Interest, *korko*, is still forbidden today. Loans are guaranteed by labor. The debtor who could not repay his debt on time and whose family head refused to pay it for him was seized by the Fama and held as security until such time as he had reimbursed his debt.

804 Side by side with French units of measurement, the natives use their own for trade. Their measures of length: the cubit (elbow to tip of middle finger), the span, the foot, the length of both arms extended, the pace, the *diare*, and the *kala*...; their measures of capacity: the *sawel* or *mouré*, the *mud*; their weights: the *moutkhal*, the *catal*, the large and little *karoni*, the *wakie*, the pellet of *tali*, of *tomi*, of *bagana*, of *gelen*. Cotton is weighed on rough scales whose pointer is a wooden rod and the balances large gourds hung by strings. For weights, large rocks, *kulu*, from 800 to 1,200 grams are [436] used. Finally, the Bambara use French money almost exclusively: one franc of metropolitan France is equivalent to 0.50 francs C.F.A. Nevertheless, the use of cowrie shells is still frequent.

d. Banks

453 One bank of issue exists in French West Africa: the Bank of French West Africa. There are also private banks, the number of which has increased during the past few years.

The Bank of French West Africa, which has a branch at Bamako, carries out the following operations: [43]

1. discounts notes or bills of two or several signatures due in not more than 180 days;
2. creates, negotiates, or buys drafts;

695 [687] False testimony is punished by confiscation of all goods and arrest of the whole family; part of the goods goes to the victim. If the witness refuses to take the oath, his refusal is evidence against the party that called him. When the parties in a trial disagree, the Fama makes one swear on the Komo, on his platform, or on the tomb of the group's founding ancestor. When the oath has been pronounced, the adversary may efface it by taking the oath in his turn. Then judgment will be suspended; but before 40 days have passed the perjurer must die.

[687] Anyone who attempts to suborn a witness or a child will be punished in the same fashion as the false witness.

The Fama must assign to one or several notables the mission of examing the scene where the disputed incident took place; he may designate a notable to examine and evaluate the damages. Once their mission is accomplished, the notables are subject to the same obligations as the witnesses.

693 695 The role of defense attorney was taken by one of the Fama's advisors, a relative, a griot, a blacksmith, or a favorite of the Fama, he who "speaks best." The accused, or someone from his family, approached the prospective defender and offered him a gift, asking him to intervene in his favor. But the counselor had only the power to save the life of the condemned who had to pay a settlement; all punishments other than death were applied.

625 Police functions were carried out by the sofa and by members of the brotherhoods.

b. Punishments

681 The punishments were, in order of descending importance: death, being put in irons permanently or for a set time, the whip, the fine, confiscation of the family, confiscation of goods, sale to the slave traders.

Murderers and inveterate brigands had their heads cut off; [562] spies had their heads shattered by an axe or were bludgeoned (like dogs). A woman was never executed. The Fama who had a woman put to death would have seen his kingdom disappear.

All those condemned to irons were imprisoned in a hut, immobilized, the feet hobbled by a bar fixed to a ring; the patient

776
196 sees everything. The old men explain
192 this to you with an intensity that proves
their good faith, and children recite
the sayings of the old men with a
frankness so naive that one cannot
misunderstand it.

a Being endowed with reason and all powerful. The term is the translation of the word sa.

It is apparent that in the beginning the word Alla in no way meant a Being or an Individual; it simply expressed a concept, an idea already known, accepted and translated by the word sa, and the Bambara simply adopted a foreign word corresponding to their own concept.

776 If to the Bambara the word Alla had meant the Divinity Himself,
196 the Supreme Being, would they ever have dared to speak it, to make
192 it their own? I cannot bring myself to believe that they would, among
551 them the name of a powerful person, a religious chief, or venerated
576 being is never spoken in vain or in an unsuitable manner. If some of
[687] their kings, among them /79/ N'golo, not to mention others, punished
● anyone caught speaking his /the royal/ name by fines and prison,
cast them into slavery, and even beheaded them as guilty of the
crime of lese majesty, what would they not have to fear from the
Creator if they spoke His name in vain and inappropriately! Furthermore, it is a widespread custom to avoid speaking the name of one who is feared or venerated.

576 No well-bred and self-respecting woman ever speaks the name
551 of her husband. She speaks of him as né tigi ("my master"), so tigi
595 ("the master of the house"). Most frequently she adorns him with a
borrowed name, a bougna toua, or name of respect, and a polygamist
has several such names, each wife giving him one of her own invention.

In well-brought-up families -- and most of them are (1) -- the

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1. Our Bambara Negroes have great respect for the members of their families and are considerate of them;

794 jigi la, e komo fare ma e bwora dyeni ma, e
796 bwora soma moriba, o ya di dyeni ma, oy a di
numu dew ma dyenuye komo tigiw ye, makanta
jigi, soma moriba, numu dew; oluw ma malo,
aw kana malo, oluw ma lebu, aw kana lebu.

E komo ni nyenama biribalyuw dyugu, birilew nyima i dyugu son ta i la ka bye ta mbi ko nti nye.

E komo, i šu klo la faba, nyenemaw kasange, minya kila a ko la, mi ma kila a ko la.

When the drums beat and the dances are animated, and when the masker cries, it is said that "the bara of the komo is hot" (komo bara wušule do). The ceremony is in full swing.

Diverse incidents may occur in the course of the masked dances which give rise to interpretations and interventions by the members.

794 When one of the arrows attached to the mask trembles, it indicates
796 the presence of a sorcerer in the assembly. The elders remove the
arrow and immediately order /163/ the ceremony to stop. After the
787 drums have been silenced, they request the culprit to present himself, which he immediately does. These words are spoken to him: "Your arrow attacks you" (1). He then offers a ram and beer in sacrifice, while the arrow is replaced and the dances resume. If an arrow falls in the course of the dance it indicates the presence of a sorcerer in the village.

794 If a part of the costume falls off, it is picked up by three members
796 and kept to be burned with the refuse that is later swept up (2).

794 If one of the participants has broken the taboo and revealed the
secrets of the Komo during the past year, the masker whistles, asks
796 the drummers to stop playing, and says: "Here is a grasshopper for
688 me." These words express the contempt in which he holds the culprit. Next he adds: "There is the smell of a corpse here" (3).

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1. Komo bye bila.

2. See p. 259.

794 3. Šu kasa be.

796 The man lowers his head and all move away from him. The masker
688 wounds him with the right hook. He is banished from the circle of
766 dancers and probably will die several days later. His funeral rites are not solemnized. The corpse is tied by the feet and removed from his home through a hole made in the wall to prevent his evil nyama from returning to the family. The body is beaten with switches so that the soul may leave the village forever, and is thrown into the common grave or placed in the cleft of a tree, which is then closed up with thorny bushes. In this case it is often devoured by the hyenas. The clothing which belonged to him is hung on the hook placed on the outside wall of the sanctuary. No one has the right to weep for his death and no one ever mentions him again. To do so would be an offense to the Komo.

794 It may also happen that the emergence of the Komo occurs without
796 the village being warned. In this case, if a young girl imprudently approaches the place where the dance is being held, the masker may
688 kill her with one blow of its hook directly upon her head. A little
782 of her blood is then placed as an offering on the nya and her jewelry thrown into the river where her soul goes to replace the virgin who, in former times, was annually offered to Faro.

G. Effects of Broken Taboos

794 The breaking of the taboos attached to the altars or to the mask
783 reacts upon each of the parts affected as it does upon the whole and brings about a diminishing of the Komo's power, which is abandoned by Faro and the ancestors. A purification may be performed /164/ in certain cases. The error is then corrected and the spiritual forces reenter the altars.

If a woman or a noninitiate catches a glimpse of the nya, the komo tigi and his age grade go down to the river bank and, to the sound of drums, present the culprit's apologies to the spirit:

"I have not come for someone else, I have come for myself, I have come to reestablish the race of our fathers" (1).

1. Ne mana ma nyini; ne mana nyere nyini, ne ma na m fa šia tuku ko la.

794 in France. The question is too complex, however, to be treated here.

794 782 For important ceremonies, the faithful bring the nyana-tigi a contribution in proportion to their means; each of them brings grain, livestock, fowl, cowries, cloth, etc., and no one is so poor that he cannot furnish one or more jugs of beer (dlo). Everything thus collected is offered to the nyana at the general meeting of the faithful through the intermediary, the nyana-tigi. In accordance with [264] established ritual, the victims are slaughtered and libations made. Then the nyana-tigi gives thanks to the god and asks him to continue to protect his worshipers. Finally, all or part of the food is eaten at a joint banquet. This is a true communion, by means of which the god and his worshipers on the one hand, and the worshipers among themselves on the other, are closely bound together. These banquets, [786] which often last for several days, degenerate into orgies.

Internal Discipline

794 A result of the cult is that the brotherhood forms an organized body in which each member is subject to a discipline that may be summarized under these three terms: secrecy, obedience, solidarity.

Secrecy is obligatory, especially for anything having to do with the cult. Divulging the mysteries carries with it a punishment which, depending on circumstances, may vary from [688] a simple reprimand to condemnation to death, with fines, flogging, etc., as intermediate forms. People who are known to be unable to keep a secret are, on that account, excluded from the brotherhoods of nyana; this excludes women, children, certain people of caste, etc.

The obedience required of the faithful is shown by the seemingly fantastic rules enforced during the official banquets of certain brotherhoods. Members are fined for very odd infractions: sitting down, getting up, spitting, etc., before being given permission or being asked to do so. This is obviously a means of swelling the common fund, but it is also a means of making the adept realize that he is subservient to the sect.

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3. *Fani*, "throat cutting," "sacrifice"; *kolo*, "cowrie shells," "price"; *fani-n-kolo*, "price of the sacrifice."

4. A Negro who perjures himself in the presence of a fetish believes himself lost. Moreover, the *boli* taken as witness is the one most famous for its power in that circle, for instance, the *Komo* of Tigini,

688 Tjoïna, or Kégné, and the *Nama* of Misango, Kokodjan, or Guendo. The *Djara* of Tjikoumela is very popular in Bani country. A perjured Negro offers a *gnénama fani*, and the *fani-n-kolo* is costly. For the *Komo* it consists of two red roosters, two goats, a dog, two red kola nuts, a basket of millet (between 18 and 20 kilograms) and three times 8 *kémé* (the *kémé* is worth 80 cowrie shells) if the culprit is a man, or four times 8 *kémé* if it is a woman. [804 436] For the *Nama* the price includes a gourd of honey, two gourds of karité butter, a red hen, two red kola nuts, a basket of millet, and 8 *ba* (the *ba* is worth 800 cowrie shells, or one franc), a *kémé*, and a *débé* (120 cowrie shells). [804 436] In addition these are one to two kilograms of salt and a gourd of *gnama-n-kou* (malagueta pepper: *amomum melegueta*) for the sacrificer. For the *Nia* the cost is 12 *ba*, four chickens, two dogs, and two hens.

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684 836 Like adultery, fornication is a serious offence because it violates the rights of third parties. It is less serious /163/ than adultery,

764 The provisional master takes his place at the door or inside the blon', the vestibule of the house, and receives the condolences. [166]

Several days elapse between death and burial in order to give distant or absent relatives time to arrive. During this period the funeral songs become more and more elaborate and [533] are left to professional singers who are accompanied by various instruments: tom-toms, xylophones (bala), guitars. The singers, dancers, and mourners exert themselves all the more if they think there will be substantial rewards.

The children of the house (den'-u, de-u) are allowed a good deal of freedom during this period, as though the authority which had curbed them had ended with the life of the deceased. They are allowed to take hens and goats, to eat lavishly, sing, dance, and generally rejoice.

On the night preceding the burial, the deceased is placed outside under a shelter (gwa); the songs and dances [857] continue. It is customary for the children (de-u) of the house, led by the professional members of the funeral orchestra, to take part in the singing and dancing.

Relatives, friends, neighbors, and persons obligated to the family are expected to bring offerings in proportion to their rank or indebtedness so as to contribute to the meals and to [689] the funeral alms. This is a very strict obligation; any failure to comply not only shows a lack of respect for the dead, but is also an offense which the family must avenge. The chronicle of Ségou bears witness to this fact.

763 764 Along with the religious ceremonies, events of an entirely different nature take place. If the death should seem in any way suspicious, it is the duty of the family to investigate the matter without delay. It is particularly the heir presumptive, if he is present, who is required to take steps at once to clarify the matter; he questions the ancestors and consults seers and magicians. The funeral ceremonies are sometimes dominated and even conditioned by the results of these investigations and consultations. At the very least, it would be essential to obtain the lifting of the interdict imposed on the

*173 strict limitations of native society. First of all there were poor wretches and slaves. Drawn by the good food and the certainty of escaping from the authority of their masters, they abandoned themselves completely to the fla-n-ton' and became its slaves; these were the first ton'-dyon' (slaves of the ton') (2). As is

2. The word ton' will henceforth be used as an abbreviation of fla-n-ton'.

the case with everything that had to do with the ton', Mamari had absolute authority over them. He chose one of them to call the ton'-den' to meetings by blowing a trumpet; this person was called ton'-masa (master of the ton') because his summons was
●[687] so imperative that anyone who failed to obey was liable to a fine of 20 jugs of beer (dlo). Furthermore, the ton'-masa was a kind of head over his congeners; he transmitted Mamari's orders to them and supervised the execution of them.

The ton'-dyon' were not the only ones who worked for the ton'. Just as the ton'-den' had built a dwelling as ordered by Mamari, they likewise undertook the cultivation of a field of millet.

In short, organized and disciplined, Mamari's ton' prospered. This prosperity aroused the envy and hatred of the [295] fla-n-ton' of the people of Doua, who slyly tried to bring about its downfall. Kassoum first tried to bring about a reconciliation in order to reunite the two ton', but he ran up against the opposition of Mamari, who wanted nothing further to do with these dangerous confreres.

Kassoum changed tactics and encouraged a series of reciprocal invitations between the two ton', which narrowly missed causing serious fights. Mamari, however, managed to keep the situation in hand.

The fields of the ton' produced a fine crop, and Mamari gave half of it to his father, advising him to use it for generous gifts to the fla-n-ton' so as to strengthen his son's influence over his followers. The old man was deeply touched by his son's behavior; he died soon afterward. The chronicler notes that on this occasion Mamari once again managed to extricate himself

681 survived hardly more than 15 days of this punishment. The whip was applied publicly; the lashes, whose number was fixed by the Fama, were given with either a full swing of the arm or by the forearm only. Fines had to be paid immediately, or else the condemned was held for security until his family liquidated the debt.

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title of a function to which he is not entitled is put to death, as
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death; theft of household objects is compensated for by a fine.
If, during a brawl between two villages, a member of one village is killed, the aggrieved village designates an individual in the other village to be put to death. If there are several deaths on both side, the number of deaths in the two villages is equalized.

689 Public violation of decency is punished by death.

For adultery, the man is put in irons and pays a fine, the
684 woman is whipped by her husband, her brothers, or the Fama's police. Relations with a woman in mourning draws public scorn on the guilty, while a man who commits adultery with a pregnant woman is put to death. A captive who is the lover of his master's wife is put to death.

689 Vagrant individuals are presumed to be escaped captives and are handed over to the Fama.

735 Finally, begging is authorized, because, say the Bambara, it is better to have begging than stealing.

d. Responsibility

[608] The Fama judges all his subjects, except his own sénanku whom he has judged by his tribunal. The law is applicable to every cir-
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428 Monteil has noticed an order of succession in the Ségou region which does not correspond to that described by other authors, such as Ortoli or Aubert. In fact, at the death of the fa, " ... everything that belonged to him remains undivided under the new faya of

183 The Bambara has a very highly developed sense of this
181 idea of justice and there is nothing he resents more than injustice
or a denial of justice. His resentment is stubborn and his
vengeance, which may be deferred under a show of indifference,
is implacable. The chronicle of Ségou is rich in pertinent examples. There was Ngolo Dyara, bringing murder and disaster on his own relatives in order to satisfy his hatred for having been sold into slavery by his uncle and not ransomed by any of his relatives. There was Kégné Mari who, watching the murder of Touro-koro in the *Komo* wood, expressed his vengeance finally fulfilled by saying: "Remember how, falsely accusing me of adultery with one of your wives, you had me lashed? And how on that day I told you that even though I were lying on the ground, if I could touch you with my foot, I would lay you low? Here at last is the day of my vengeance!" Similar examples are innumerable.

If he is powerless against injustice, the Bambara will
wait patiently and, each time he has to speak, will dissimulate
his weakness in formulas which have a double meaning, such as
195 *O do!*, meaning "That's it!" *O nya-na*, meaning "Oh well!"
Tigi!, meaning "That's true"; and other similar expressions.
At the same time, he is repeating to himself his proverb: *don' m'i fantan', a bla k'a teme*, meaning "Don't pay attention while you are weak," that is, "Wait until I am strong enough to take vengeance (lit., to pay you back)."

This instinctive feeling for justice accounts, in a certain
181 measure, for the family bonds made up of reciprocal rights [131]
571 and duties between parents and between them and their children
626 and, by an analogy of which we shall see other examples, between
master and slave and between chief and subject. The obligation
to respect all pacts concluded in the form of vows, oaths or
fraternal alliance rests on the same basis. And it is the same
notion that inspires the repression of acts which are almost universally condemned: perjury, treason, false witness, slander,
691 theft and murder. It sustains the tireless persistence of the pleader
who will go through endless lawsuits to obtain redress for a wrong
done to him, or to one of his people. And it gives strength to public vengeance against the sorcerer.

794 [787] Furthermore, every *wara*-*mina*-*den'* is able to read the will of the Nya and, more generally, to reveal the acts of the invisible by means of the divination practices which we have already mentioned.

[782] The sacrifices are performed by the *muru*-*kala*-*tigi*, and a *dyeli* (herald) serves as factotum, just as in the other brotherhoods. [285]

794 796 The faithful are initiated and called to participate in the cult to an extent determined by the clergy; they are called *Nya*-*ko*-*den'*-*u*, literally, "those who follow the Nya." In order to be admitted, an individual must give a chicken and 120 cowries. The next day, in the presence of the *Nya*-*tigi* and the *wara*-*mina*-*den'*, the chicken is sacrificed on the *boli* by the *muru*-*kala*-*tigi*. The candidate is present, and in his behalf the *Nya*-*tigi* asks the Nya for protection against the *suba*, snakes, *korti*, and the evil eye. Then the neophyte is led to the sacred grove to be ritually purified with consecrated water contained in a vessel used exclusively for this purpose (1).

[783] 1. Every year at the time of harvest, the clergy undergoes ritual purification by washing in the sacred water. When a Nya is inaugurated, this purification takes place at the first harvest after the installation.

[731] The two great annual festivals are celebrated at the times of planting and harvesting. Similar ceremonies take place in connection with important events (epidemics, public catastrophes, etc.). For these ceremonies, during which the Nya is supposed to give revelations about the event in question and to answer various other questions troubling the faithful, the *wara*-*mina*-*den'* [273] undergo special preparation and at the proper time drink a very heady beverage (2) which, they say, brings on their extra-lucidity.

[691] 2. I learned most of these details about the Nya during a criminal trial brought against the *wara*-*mina*-*den'* of Soun-Bambara,

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● [691]

> near Djenné. The son of the chief of that village drank the special liquid, in spite of the fact that the wara-mina-den' had told him not to do so, and died. The latter was accused of having poisoned him, but when he explained the circumstances before the native tribunal, he was acquitted.

It is said that this drink is made by soaking any sort of root found while digging graves and seasoning it with pepper, salt, and red peppers. The beverage, which is highly intoxicating, is ritually consecrated.

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796 Excited by this beverage and by the songs and dances of a crowd which is itself warmed with drink, the wara-mina-den' during major festivals acts as a visionary who freely reveals the will and desires of the god. On the evening before these important ceremonies and for several evenings before that, all the clergy and their aides meet for a kind of rehearsal of the dances and songs. It is then that the young men prepare for the major roles they will later play. The [286] wara-mina-den' is particularly concerned with the training of the man who will replace him in case of need.

There is nothing of special interest to note about the brotherhood's treasury, which is acquired and appropriated just as in other brotherhoods. The political action of the Nya and its relations with the communities are also such that they require no special attention. [287]

Chapter 5

The Clans

1. General Considerations

631 ~~It is~~ usual to use the word "empire" or "kingdom" to describe the form of government of most of the Sudanese states and particularly those founded in Kaarta and Ségou by the

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692 JUDICIAL AUTHORITY--extent to which the settlement of disputes, redress of injuries, and application of sanctions is withdrawn from the parties concerned and vested in some constituted authority; degree of identification or separation of judicial and executive authority; specialized judges and courts; judicial system (e.g., courts of original and appellate jurisdiction, courts of law and equity, civil and criminal courts); jurisdiction of each type of court; judicial powers and prerogatives; etc. See also:

Judicial authority of executive and administrative officials	63, 64	Constitution	642
Concept of justice	577	Legal norms	671
Informal justice within the community	627	Special courts	698

621 622 (den'). Proof of this is seen in the fact that any important happening in a native's life is supposed to be reported to the dugu-tigi and in certain cases requires an offering or, as it is called, homage (bunya). We have seen this in the case of birth, giving a name, circumcision, marriage, and death. It is no less essential in cases of public disaster (epidemic, persistent drought, invasion, war).

621 622 692 In theory, the dugu-tigi does not intervene of his own accord in the private affairs of the patriarchal or familial communities which, when taken together, constitute the territorial unit we usually call a village (1). When a quarrel between relatives cannot be settled by the fa concerned, however, he asks for the intervention of the dugu-tigi and his council. If dissension arises between the people of different communities, the same arbitration is usually requested. As a result, a kind of tribunal of conciliation has evolved, which can only suggest what the parties should do or refrain from doing in order to put an end to the dispute. Theoretically, the dugu-tigi has no right to enforce the [232] verdict (1), because the communities are extremely jealous of their independence. As a consequence, they yield only to the extent that is in their best interests.

It may happen, however, that the dugu-tigi, supported by his council, does exert authority when he has the power and is seconded by notables who make common cause with him for

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1. The territorial community among the Bambara is called dugu, a term which at the same time means "land" and "among," "to," "within," etc., and which is preceded by a name recalling some circumstance involved with the founding of the village.

1. That is why litigation may be indefinitely prolonged.

621 various reasons. Thus, the dugu-tigi in council can invoke
622 police powers to maintain order in the community and even act
692 as a tribunal to punish those whose misdeeds in any way en-
danger the persons or property of members of the community.

621 Since the genie is expected to ensure the prosperity of
622 the faithful, it is the duty of the dugu-tigi to come to the assist-
[735] ance of members of the community who are unfortunate or indigent.

He must also maintain the relations of his community with the outside world, that is, with neighboring territorial communities and all other groupings, analogous or otherwise. He can act independently only in matters which we call purely administrative; for other matters he must have the assent of the council of fa, above all for any matter involving the disposal of community property.

621 It is obvious that all the roles of the dugu-tigi involve
622 expenses that are often considerable, but for this purpose he has
651 access to goods from many sources. In the first place, offerings
made to the nyana are of various kinds; they are not always consumable, and even if they are, they are usually consumed only in part. The remainder belongs to the dugu-tigi. It is customary to give bunya (gifts of homage) to the dugu-tigi on many occasions: a hunt, a fishing expedition, millet harvest, etc.; to thank him for an allotment of land, or for some other service. Community property is farmed out for fees payable at fixed times, and tribute is paid in the same way. Most of the various kinds of infractions committed within the community are punished by fines received by the dugu-tigi. Incorrigible malefactors become slaves of the community, and the produce of their labors [233] goes to the dugu-tigi. Anything found abandoned on land belonging to the community is turned over to the dugu-tigi, in whole or in part.

In case of need arising through some exceptional emergency (war, an expedition, public works of various kinds, etc.), the dugu-tigi may have recourse to what we should call an emergency assessment, i.e., he may ask the members of the community for special contributions for the purpose.

241 After the men have cleared the big weeds, the women come
462 along to finish up. At harvest time, the women and children chase
[411] the birds from the fields with loud cries, sling shots, and by heating
bamboo on a hard rock to cause a detonation. All chase the spar-
[401] rows, partridges, guinea-fowls . . . Harvesting is done together . . .

In addition, by the side of the men's fields there are little women's fields where the women cultivate sorrel, okra, eggplant, tomatoes, beans, and all the condiments. The accessory crops of the women are the raro, bananas, manioc, sometimes rice or peanuts (1).

1. Labouret, *Paysans noirs* [Black Peasants].

241 Naturally, the work varies according to the social order. The
565 Bambara divide themselves into free men, people of caste, and,
567 formerly, slaves, all having a chief at their head. All members of the community must work the land; in fact, the poor work more than the slaves. The more fortunate do little work; they formerly directed and controlled the work of the slaves, today that of the agricultural workers.

C. Legal Procedure: Inheritance, Land Ownership

692 In Bambara country today, as in all of French West Africa, justice is dispensed by two tribunals: that presided over by a justice of the peace for important affairs, and that presided over by the administrator for other cases. The justice of the peace renders justice following the French code; the administrator according to local custom. A chamber of the Court of Appeals of Dakar is represented at Bamako, whose jurisdiction includes the Sudan and Niger territories. The Assize Court holds a session at Bamako, which also possesses an inferior court. Justices of the peace of wide jurisdiction are found at Kayes, Gao, Mopti, Ségou, Sikasso, Bougouni; other justices of the peace with wide jurisdiction have been created and will soon take up their functions.

One easily imagines the conflicts of principles and method which may arise between the two sorts of tribunals have just indicated.

692 In matters of justice, the Bambara frequently continue to consult
their old tribal judges. It must be noted, however, that in taking
[177 away the judicial competence of the old chiefs, the French ad-
ministration has contributed to diminishing, and almost to com-
622] pletely destroying, their power.

The Bambara had a judicial organization quite as precise and
671 regulated as their religious organization, although there was no
codified law, such as the Koran or the Hebrew tables of law. Justice
was rendered according to rules which each community passed on
from generation to generation. These rules are not of divine origin,
but they [69] are sacred nevertheless, for custom is the legacy of
[643 the ancestors. The Fama and his council of notables could promul-
645] gate new laws, but, before deciding on a new rule, they consult the
Komo and the Nyama [an altar]. Then, in the presence of a priest,
each one swears on the altar to obey the law which becomes sacred.
Moreover, the customary rules cannot be separated from the moral
code and the religion to which they are linked. They are not uni-
[184] form; each canton has its own, and often each village, and within
each of these there are observances peculiar to certain families or to
certain castes. Nevertheless, the sentiment of fair play is very strong
[181] among the Blacks, but they do not admit the equality of men, who
are naturally different one from another according to their aptitudes,
means, and condition.

Custom regulates all relations between individuals and between individuals and the collectivity.

692 Two sorts of native tribunals existed in the Bambara country: a tribunal of conciliation, presided over by the village chief, who assembled a council of notables; and a high tribunal presided over by the Fama, to whom were submitted the matters which the first tribunal had been unable to settle. In addition, the Fama could call before his tribunal the civil or penal matters which seemed to him to be of importance to the public order.

695 Justice was without charge and rendered day and night by the
643 Fama as one of his essential functions, for the judge is the one who
repairs the disorders that shake society. The hearings were solemnly
conducted and took place under the silk-cotton tree (Ceiba pentandra)

689 Public violation of decency is punished by death.

For adultery, the man is put in irons and pays a fine, the
684 woman is whipped by her husband, her brothers, or the Fama's police.
Relations with a woman in mourning draws public scorn on the guilty,
while a man who commits adultery with a pregnant woman is put to
death. A captive who is the lover of his master's wife is put to death.

689 Vagrant individuals are presumed to be escaped captives and
are handed over to the Fama.

735 Finally, begging is authorized, because, say the Bambara,
it is better to have begging than stealing.

d. Responsibility

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672 man and excised woman recognized as sane. (The demented
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787 177 bugurigala (2). These three words are sufficient in themselves to illustrate the process of Sudanization. Although the first comes from a corruption of the Arabic word el tereb (earth), the other two are strictly Bambara in all respects. Besides, the manner in which the natives have altered the practice of geomancy is an illustration of the same process.

771 797 It may therefore be concluded that, in certain respects, Islam has strengthened paganism. For example, the pagans commonly believe that an illiterate geomancer, who is nevertheless an expert in this type of divination, will obtain the same results as a learned marabout who is guided by the book of Er Zenati. As a result, a well-known laturadala enjoys special prestige because of the fact that his prognostications are corroborated by a book, and the same fact accounts in part for the influence of the priests of the brotherhoods.

We are thus able to verify the contacts between Islam and the paganism of the Bambara who are the subject of this study.

693 The historical tales related in the foregoing show the continuous relations which existed between the native chiefs and the pious and renowned marabouts. Whenever a legal dispute arose which could not be settled by pagan arbitration, the last recourse was an appeal for judgment or conciliation to a marabout, who was always sought out and greeted with deference. Mamari, Tonmassa, Ngolo and Ma-n-son's sons all had occasion to make such appeals in some most embarrassing situations.

[334] Further, on occasions when they hoped to bring off some questionable deal or to improve their prospects, the chiefs were also wont to call on a marabout. Mamari did so against the Massa-si Foro-koro and so did Ngolo when he was anxious to make sure that his fame would survive him.

In matters of judicial arbitration, it appears that the marabout derives his authority rather more, perhaps, from his

2. Derived from buguri meaning "dust," and da meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the dust."

613 reputation for integrity and impartiality than for his knowledge of the books. In other matters, however, his Moslem esoterism is the quality most highly valued.

771 797 It is assumed, besides, that the high priests and other persons of note should be initiated into Islamic matters, which seem to be regarded simply as a branch of occultism to which such persons are especially addicted. The Kouloubali, the Dyara, and other lords of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta have practiced Islamism (1) without betraying paganism; on the contrary, by adding to it the luster of these foreign mysteries, it can be said that they have "Sudanized" Islam as completely as possible. Neither Mamari nor Ngolo, for example, was in the least embarrassed by his Moslem practices. Both remained high priests of their tutelary idols and simply borrowed (2) the external "manner" of Islam.

The bloodthirsty Dékoro was a Moslem of the same type. He was preparing to perform his ablutions, followed by his faithful blacksmith, at the very moment when he was assassinated by Tonmassa. And the blacksmith was actually carrying one of the satala which father Niany regarded as so compromising.

614 797 Naturally, the adoption of Islam was never allowed to create any political deviation which might compromise the interests of the clan. That would be treason, and such was the case for Touro-koro Mari. He was put to death not because he was converted to Islam, but because he had enfeoffed himself to El Hadj Omar to such an extent that the clan's independence was threatened.

1. In the Sudanese manner, of course.

2. This borrowing is done with the same awkwardness as that seen when a Black puts on a suit of European clothes which happens to come into his possession. The ease with which an occasional native can adapt it is exceptional.

695 [687] False testimony is punished by confiscation of all goods and arrest of the whole family; part of the goods goes to the victim. If the witness refuses to take the oath, his refusal is evidence against the party that called him. When the parties in a trial disagree, the Fama makes one swear on the Komo, on his platform, or on the tomb of the group's founding ancestor. When the oath has been pronounced, the adversary may efface it by taking the oath in his turn. Then judgment will be suspended; but before 40 days have passed the perjurer must die.

[687] Anyone who attempts to suborn a witness or a child will be punished in the same fashion as the false witness.

The Fama must assign to one or several notables the mission of examing the scene where the disputed incident took place; he may designate a notable to examine and evaluate the damages. Once their mission is accomplished, the notables are subject to the same obligations as the witnesses.

693 695 The role of defense attorney was taken by one of the Fama's advisors, a relative, a griot, a blacksmith, or a favorite of the Fama, he who "speaks best." The accused, or someone from his family, approached the prospective defender and offered him a gift, asking him to intervene in his favor. But the counselor had only the power to save the life of the condemned who had to pay a settlement; all punishments other than death were applied.

625 Police functions were carried out by the sofa and by members of the brotherhoods.

b. Punishments

681 The punishments were, in order of descending importance: death, being put in irons permanently or for a set time, the whip, the fine, confiscation of the family, confiscation of goods, sale to the slave traders.

Murderers and inveterate brigands had their heads cut off;
[562] spies had their heads shattered by an axe or were bludgeoned (like
dogs). A woman was never executed. The Fama who had a woman
put to death would have seen his kingdom disappear.

All those condemned to irons were imprisoned in a hut, immobilized, the feet hobbled by a bar fixed to a ring; the patient

776 the daily movement of the sun "which unfolds until evening." The
292 regularity of the rays symbolizes order and the classification of beings and things by Faro. The /41/ ends of the straw sprigs forming the spiral must remain free: they represent the infinite extension of Faro's realm and power. The hat is also a mask "which hides Faro's invisible face and through which he watches over the world" (1).

1. Today, a basket of considerably higher dimensions is made and used by women (See pl. I, b).

643 The headgear yugu was formerly reserved for the king, who wore it under a turban. Certain deserving old men were also permitted to keep it. The rituals of making and wearing this headdress attest to the importance attributed to it. In particular, when an old man was
[695] suspected of having committed a serious offense, his hat was pierced with four holes representing the four cardinal points. He was then made to wear it, thus submitting him to Faro's judgment; if found guilty, he died.

776 As the spirit of the waters, Faro is supposed to belong to the white race and his body to be half albino flesh and half copper (pl. I, c).

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113 A myth relates how his physical being was formed.

When Faro caused the streaming waters to descend on earth, he manifested himself for a long time only by his voice. He had no body, and since he needed appropriate matter to achieve one, he bided his time in the waters of the sea.

The winged spirit Téliko, who had the body of an albino, wished one day, in his arrogance and jealousy, to cross the world in order to know it and to dominate it. Faro, warned by the dogfish, decided to seize his enemy's body to complete his own. The albino, who always flew, fed on his own substance. He chewed his own flesh and his bones were soon bare; the marrow came out of them. It turned into red copper which fell into the sea and nourished Faro.

While Téliko descended to the water level, the dogfish that was watching him sang in order to attract him. The albino, aware of the danger, climbed back to the highest heaven, attempting to continue his flight and to reach the ends of the world. But he quickly lost strength and after his dya had fallen into the waters, his body was

*173 members: "Sowing-time is at hand, and it would be a good thing if we were to cultivate for my mother and for Sibiri's mother." The ton-den' replied: "Since you ask us to work for Sibiri's mother too, we shall do so; if you had asked only for your own mother, we should have refused. We are not your slaves but are and intend to remain free men."

They worked for a fortnight in Mamari's mother's field and then for another fortnight in the field belonging to Sibiri's mother. Then, to express his gratitude, Sibiri's father, old Ménkoro, presented them with a wild ox and expressed a wish to join the ton'. Mamari slyly replied: "Ask my father." "Yes, yes, I know," said Ménkoro, "I was mistaken and I ask your pardon." He was accepted and brought with him Mya-Ngue Dembélé of Dina.

So it was that Mamari's ton' continued to acquire slaves; the slaves came in order to have an illusion of freedom, and the weak in order to have protection.

Rivalry between the fla-n-ton' of Ségou and Doua

The people of Doua could hardly fail to take umbrage at this prosperity, which was more and more a threat to [33] their domination. Therefore, Kassoum's ton' used all possible means to combat its rival, Mamari's ton'.

One day Kassoum and his followers sought out Mamari and insisted on an eventual reconciliation between the two groups. Mamari refused. Kassoum tried to stem the current of enmity and offered to take an oath as a guarantee of his good intentions. Mamari stopped him, however, saying: "No, let us not swear. In the first place, I can do nothing without the members of my ton' and, secondly, since you are strong and I am weak, an oath between us would have no meaning." Kassoum was insistent, 695 however; while they were talking, they came to a stone well and Kassoum pronounced the sacramental words, ate one half of a kola nut and let the other half fall to the bottom of the well. "That's all very well," said Mamari, "but that only binds you.

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(lambe, in the local dialect) which, south of Ouossébougou, has its source near Dongué and ends in a pool at Ouaha. In Soninké, "Lamballaré" means literally "on the edge of a watercourse," and the Bambara use "Kodala" in the same sense. In Sounsan's day, this was a small canton ruled by the Soninké of Darigo, a village called Douabougou (market) by the Bambara and situated on one of the branches of the Segabala (of the maps), a tributary of the Baoulé.

According to Raffenel (Vol. I, p. 365), the Soninké village was called Baiko, a name unknown to me and one which seems likely to have resulted from a mishearing of the name Darigo. In any case, its identification with Bammako, as proposed by Raffenel, is unacceptable.

*173 accepted the hospitality of a blacksmith, fa Siné Dyara, asking the latter's protection from probable pursuit by Barama Ngolo. Fa Siné was poor but he is said to have understood the language of the birds and, at the very moment when he was talking to Sounsan, a passing bird told him that powerful chiefs would descend from his guest. That is why he said to Sounsan: "I'm a poor man, but I'll do all I can for you and your descendants. In return, I ask that you promise -- for yourself and for them -- these things: first, that you never kill nor imprison any of my people; then [104] that, every time the head of your family changes, a wife and a horse belonging to the dead man be given to the head of my family."

● [695] They swore on a copper anvil which was thrown into a well, and after that fa Siné told Sounsan where he was to settle.

Sounsan was still closely allied to some of the Taraoré, whose descendants now live in the Diangounté area. They gave him a wife named Dougo (1), who was the mother of his son Massa.

1. According to another version, Dougo

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between Deni-ba Bo for the Massa-si of Kaarta and Suleyman Ba for the people of Fouta.

belonging to the other's community, at least virgins or women reputed to be such. This is because a first sexual contact is likely to result in some flow of blood, and brotherhood imposes a terrible punishment on anyone who sheds the blood of a blood-brother or one of his people. As is apparent, the obligation undertaken by the contracting parties holds for all their descendants, regardless of sex and in infinitum. Henceforth there is a very close solidarity between the two communities, who are so bound to mutual aid that, in practice, anything (including lies, slander, and perjury) is permissible to overcome a common enemy or, in any event, to help the ally in trouble.

596 614 621 ● 695 In place of the brotherhood oath, many other forms of oath can be used. Thus, the chronicles tell of Sounsan and Fa Siné forming an alliance with an oath which was undoubtedly binding, because the anvil on which it was sworn was afterwards cast into a well. Nko, Sounsan's god, received the oath under which the "young men" who were Massa's companions allied themselves to the latter's fate. At Ségou, the tondyon' likewise swore loyalty on the idols.

These sacramental agreements are endlessly varied, but they bind the parties only under the stipulated conditions, especially as regards the respective communities of the fa who take the oath.

596 614 621 583 III. Marriage. There is no better way for a Bambara to show his attachment to someone whose alliance or friendship he desires than by giving him as a wife one of the girls of his own community and providing her with a generous dowry. This is one of the most solemn forms of alliance between communities (2).

2. People united by marriage are called furu-nyuan' (spouses) and biran' (allies).

794 Besides, this submission, if one may call it that, is merely a corollary of the solidarity existing between *nyana*-*den*'. This solidarity is shown to the profane whenever litigation arises outside the sphere of the brotherhood; *nyana*-*den*' do not hesitate to bear false witness for the sole purpose of helping a guilty co-member evade the sanctions of profane jurisdiction. [696]

For failure to fulfill his obligations or for any other wrong considered reprehensible by the brotherhood, the *nyana*-*den*' comes under the jurisdiction of this brotherhood.

Fearing the supernatural retribution which his misdeeds [783] [265] may provoke and seeing portents of it in apparently inexplicable things that cause him pain and surprise, the *nyana*-*den*' himself seeks pardon through some kind of expiation, determined by his own intuition alone or by one of the clergy.

On other occasions, the guilty person fails to denounce himself, not merely by deliberate design but sometimes because [787] he is not aware of his wrongdoing and its consequences. In that case it is the *wara*-*da* (oracle) who reveals it in a trance.

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● 695 are decided by the clergy.

Torture includes the most diverse types of moral and physical constraint thought to be efficacious in getting a confession: usually flogging, imprisonment, starvation, mutilation, and other tortures, often horrible. A method that often succeeds and that is commonly used is to offer up the unknown guilty party to the wrath of the nyana; it is not at all rare for the guilty person to confess at the first signs of discomfort due to auto-suggestion. It is so firmly established that the wrath of the nyana is always implacable and terrible that innocent persons, accused only for the sake of exploiting them, have been known to confess abominable crimes which they [266] never committed, for instance, in cases of accusation of sorcery.

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696 The penalties are varied and arbitrary; the importance of a misdemeanor is not determined in advance on the basis of specific characteristics. Rather, everything depends on the clergy's interest in the case, and this interest is influenced by the most appalling intrigues. Therefore, even though the accused is guilty of the most terrible crimes, he may escape punishment entirely provided he can satisfy the demands of the

643 so that he may keep separate the interests of his house and those of the country.

Nomination of the Fama. The title of Fama remains in the family around which the canton has grown. Power passes from older to younger brother until a generation dies out, then goes to the oldest brother in the next generation, for, as a general rule, the living male nearest to the original ancestor should reign. However, the history of Ségou shows us how certain Fama have tried to establish direct succession from themselves to their eldest son. But the
643 accession of the Fama is submitted to the ratification of a council
645 of notables which includes the following persons.

a. The young chiefs, male descendants in the first degree of the Fama; they are directed by the eldest among them, with the second eldest being his syere or heir presumptive.

b. The old masters who are the Fama's brothers.

c. Their sons and all circumcised fathers of families.

643 Power of the Fama. The power of the Fama is founded on custom and religion. He is the earthly representative of all the ancestors; he is the radiating center which gives life to all the society; he is the Word of his people. He decides the crops, regulates commerce, concludes alliances, declares wars, renders justice, imposes taxes. He is the guardian of custom and the legislator of new laws, the organizer of the time and space he governs. His word is very powerful and dangerous; his decisions are whispered in the
[326] ear of a blacksmith, who repeats them aloud to the assembly. His very glance makes his subjects tremble, and they approach him grovelling, forehead in the dust. No quarrel may break out in his presence, no violence committed; his power over men and goods is
[645
646] absolute. Nevertheless, all his decisions are taken after consultation with the notables and with the assembly of delegates from each village. If one of the members of the assembly disagrees with the Fama about a point of law, he gets up and leaves the meeting without saying anything, marking his disapprobation in this manner. When a law is
[695] passed by all the assembly, each member swears an oath, on the tomb of an ancestor or the altar of the komo [one of the mens' societies], in behalf of himself and his descendants.

692 In matters of justice, the Bambara frequently continue to consult their old tribal judges. It must be noted, however, that in taking [177 622] away the judicial competence of the old chiefs, the French administration has contributed to diminishing, and almost to completely destroying, their power.

671 The Bambara had a judicial organization quite as precise and regulated as their religious organization, although there was no codified law, such as the Koran or the Hebrew tables of law. Justice was rendered according to rules which each community passed on from generation to generation. These rules are not of divine origin, but they [69] are sacred nevertheless, for custom is the legacy of [643 645] the ancestors. The Fama and his council of notables could promulgate new laws, but, before deciding on a new rule, they consult the Komo and the Nyama [an altar]. Then, in the presence of a priest, each one swears on the altar to obey the law which becomes sacred. Moreover, the customary rules cannot be separated from the moral [184] code and the religion to which they are linked. They are not uniform; each canton has its own, and often each village, and within each of these there are observances peculiar to certain families or to [181] certain castes. Nevertheless, the sentiment of fair play is very strong among the Blacks, but they do not admit the equality of men, who are naturally different one from another according to their aptitudes, means, and condition.

Custom regulates all relations between individuals and between individuals and the collectivity.

692 Two sorts of native tribunals existed in the Bambara country: a tribunal of conciliation, presided over by the village chief, who assembled a council of notables; and a high tribunal presided over by the Fama, to whom were submitted the matters which the first tribunal had been unable to settle. In addition, the Fama could call before his tribunal the civil or penal matters which seemed to him to be of importance to the public order.

● 695 643 Justice was without charge and rendered day and night by the Fama as one of his essential functions, for the judge is the one who repairs the disorders that shake society. The hearings were solemnly conducted and took place under the silk-cotton tree (Ceiba pentandra)

695 643 or in the chief's vestibule, that is to say, under the light of a certain constellation and witnessed by the founding ancestors who link the judge with the supernatural powers. The Fama was seated on a throne perched on a platform; at his right were the notables, at his left the griot, the priests, and the old captives; behind him stood the sofa. [195] The blacksmith or a captive repeated aloud what the Fama whispered, for the Fama should not raise his voice. Neither women nor children could attend the public sessions. Formerly, the mere view of the Fama filled the accused with terror, and he prostrated himself in the Fama's presence. The Fama could put the accused in irons until he was judged (1).

1. V. Paques, "L'estrade royale des Niare" [The Royal Platform of the Niaré] Bull. de l'Ifan, Vol. XV (1953), No. 4.

671 Bambara law sought above all to make reparation, to restore order, and only after that to punish.

a. Proofs (2)

2. Passim. Coutumier juridique de l'A.O.F. [French West African Common Law].

695 The plaintiff must prove his case, and the accused must prove his innocence. Elements of proof may be confession, testimony by witnesses, oath taking, expert opinion, and examination of the scene.

If indications of guilt are strong enough, the Fama may force the accused to confess by having him whipped.

Each party may call witnesses in the following order: circumcised men, married women, unmarried girls (who, however, cannot [70] take the oath), and, lastly, children if there are no other witnesses. [608] The sénanku are exempted from bearing witness against each other.

695 False testimony is punished by confiscation of all goods and
[687] arrest of the whole family; part of the goods goes to the victim. If the witness refuses to take the oath, his refusal is evidence against the party that called him. When the parties in a trial disagree, the Fama makes one swear on the Komo, on his platform, or on the tomb of the group's founding ancestor. When the oath has been pronounced, the adversary may efface it by taking the oath in his turn. Then judgment will be suspended; but before 40 days have passed the perjurer must die.

[687] Anyone who attempts to suborn a witness or a child will be punished in the same fashion as the false witness.

The Fama must assign to one or several notables the mission of examing the scene where the disputed incident took place; he may designate a notable to examine and evaluate the damages. Once their mission is accomplished, the notables are subject to the same obligations as the witnesses.

693 The role of defense attorney was taken by one of the Fama's
695 advisors, a relative, a griot, a blacksmith, or a favorite of the Fama, he who "speaks best." The accused, or someone from his family, approached the prospective defender and offered him a gift, asking him to intervene in his favor. But the counselor had only the power to save the life of the condemned who had to pay a settlement; all punishments other than death were applied.

625 Police functions were carried out by the sofa and by members of the brotherhoods.

b. Punishments

681 The punishments were, in order of descending importance: death, being put in irons permanently or for a set time, the whip, the fine, confiscation ~~of~~ the family, confiscation of goods, sale to the slave traders.

Murderers and inveterate brigands had their heads cut off;
[562] spies had their heads shattered by an axe or were bludgeoned (like dogs). A woman was never executed. The Fama who had a woman put to death would have seen his kingdom disappear.

All those condemned to irons were imprisoned in a hut, immobilized, the feet hobbled by a bar fixed to a ring; the patient

778 782 and on Sunday evening (*tné sou*, "the night of Monday"), the initiates of the *Komo* like to go out or, if you like, dance their dances and shout their sacred hymns. Since the *boli* preside at all important events of life, circumcisions, marriages, deaths, etc., I will speak of the admission to the sects of these fetishes and the sacrifices offered to them when I discuss these matters. I will say, however, before closing this paragraph, that at no time or season does a village let a week go by without offering a sacrifice to the great *boli* which they own or dancing their dances. The staff of these fetishes is feared, dreaded, respected, and honored, and on days of celebration their owners are in the place of honor and sit next to the *gnéna-n-sonnaba* (religious head of a village), or at least next to the *sotigi* (civil head).

778 782 ● 695 In addition to the formal sacrifices at which the initiates are present, the great *boli* receive homage, tribute, and great streams of blood from individuals: appeals for their intervention are made constantly. Over a mere nothing an oath on such a fetish -- called *kali boli la* (5) is required, and if a dispute arises between two families,

5. There is a slight difference between *kali boli la* and *boli sien*. To take the oath called *kali boli la* is to swear on the fetish that one is telling the truth, that one is innocent. Only the accuser sacrifices. Seven straws must be fastened onto the object called *sirikoun*, and the accused, *blara boli koro*, is placed under the *boli* -- his life is placed in its hands -- and is to die if he has lied. In performing the *boli sien*, the accuser and the accused both sacrifice. Here again seven straws are fastened onto the *sirikoun*, and the accused is placed in the fetish's power twice:

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•695 first by the accuser and a second time of his own accord (a blara boli koro, "the accuser places him under the boli"; a y'i bla boli koro, "the accused has placed himself under the fetish").

a boli sien (5) is needed, for the fetish must again be called on to be

/See footnote 5 immediately preceding./

a witness. /153/ These oaths entail heavy expenses, for one hen is seldom enough and a goat is very often necessary. I have seen four or five dogs, equal to an expenditure of 20 to 30 francs, sacrificed over a trivial matter.

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782 The three chief sacrifices offered by individuals are the fani-nké (1), the gnénama fani (2), and the sou fani (3). The first is made

1. Fani, "small throat cutting"; ké, "to make."

2. Gnénama, "one who has life," "alive."

3. Sou, "corpse."

to obtain a favor, to place oneself in the good graces of the fetish; the second, to preserve one's life, to escape a death already decreed; and the third is offered to appease a fetish whom one blames for the death of a relative (4) and to entreat it to spare the survivors of the

[761]

4. Eighty times out of 100, without exaggeration, death is blamed on a boli fetish.

684 626 As long as he has not received the entire indemnity, the injured husband shouts, threatens, and attacks the guilty woman and man with his fists, but then the last cowrie shell is paid and all is quiet. Furthermore, should he be slow in calming down, his wife would most certainly run away and everyone would treat him as a boor. In fact, after having harshly rebuked the culprit and his accomplice and made them promise never to repeat the offense, the headman and elders go to the hut of the husband and say to him: "Your wife has promised not to default on her honor again, her seducer has paid the fine, so come, pardon them!" When the elders, the headman in the lead, put themselves out like this, they impose their will, and whoever does not say with them: "Kouma banna (1), the matter is settled, let us speak no more of it," is no less than a cad.

1. Kouma, "word," "talk"; banna, "is finished."

684 695 If adultery is established but the seducer and his accomplice have not been caught, the case becomes complicated, for the accused will deny the crime. The matter is brought before the court of elders, and, the powerful boli come out of their sanctuaries and for a moment leave the goatskins which they use as tabernacles. The accusers swear on the fetish (kali, "to swear," boli la) (2), and on the basis of the verbal proofs that they bring testify that there has been adultery. The accused are summoned, and if they persist in denying the charge, they are commanded to swear on the fetish to attest their innocence. Quite often they refuse, /162/ and matters drag on. The suit must finally be settled, so the husband and the accusers call on the most popular fetish with the words: "An ta boli sien (1) let us sacrifice to

2. Kali boli la, " may the boli kill me if I am lying."

1. The boli sien consists of oaths by both the accusers and the accused.

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The accusers swear: "If we are accusing falsely, may the boli kill us." The accused swear: "We are not guilty, and if we are may the boli kill us."

the boli, and may he take the life of the liar." When the council of elders has decided on the boli sien, it must be carried out. If the accused is guilty he will admit it, for to call on an idol to bear witness to a lie is to doom oneself to death, to decree one's own death. For a boli has no pity for a perjurer, and legends tell of more than one case identical to that of Ananias and Sapphira.

626 Some Negroes nevertheless perjure themselves. From then on they lose all peace; one fine day they can hold out no longer, and
688 they go to find the master of the idol, and to him they confess their crime and their transgression. In order to save their lives they make
688 a gnénama fani (2), and when they have paid the fani-n-kolo (3),

2. Gnénama, "living thing," "one who lives"; fani, "throat cutting"; gnénama fani, "throat cutting for one's life."

3. Fani, "throat cutting," "sacrifice"; kolo, "cowrie shells," "price"; fani-n-kolo, "price of the sacrifice."

the staff of the fetish denounces the culprit (4).

4. A Negro who perjures himself in the presence of a fetish believes himself lost. Moreover, the boli taken as witness is the one most famous for its power in that circle, for instance, the Komo of Tigini,

794 Besides, this submission, if one may call it that, is merely a corollary of the solidarity existing between nyana-den'. This solidarity is shown to the profane whenever litigation arises outside the sphere of the brotherhood; nyana-den' do not [696] hesitate to bear false witness for the sole purpose of helping a guilty co-member evade the sanctions of profane jurisdiction.

For failure to fulfill his obligations or for any other wrong considered reprehensible by the brotherhood, the nyana-den' comes under the jurisdiction of this brotherhood.

Fearing the supernatural retribution which his misdeeds [783] [265] may provoke and seeing portents of it in apparently inexplicable things that cause him pain and surprise, the nyana-den' himself seeks pardon through some kind of expiation, determined by his own intuition alone or by one of the clergy.

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794 clergy. On the other hand, an innocent man will be overwhelmed
696 by mental and physical torture if he is unable to give
his executioners what they demand.

681 Corporal punishment includes flogging, chains, starvation, torture, and death by all imaginable methods. Pecuniary punishment includes fines, confiscation, and pillage. The condemned man is also sometimes forced to labor for the clergy or is even enslaved by them.

Social and Political Role of the Brotherhoods

794 By its actions, the brotherhood, an artificial family,
776 tends to take the place of the natural family whose organization
it has borrowed and whose cult it has banished. It is easy to account
769 for this.

The cult of the manes is the framework of the family and of the communities derived from it. The brotherhood has cleverly managed to set up such a cult by specially honoring the manes of its high priests, its famous members, and its eminent worshipers. [267]

Gradually, the nyana dugu-da-siri, protector of the territorial community, has given way to the nyana of the boli, a more powerful god since his territory is unlimited.

It is true that in spite of everything the tradition remains,
and even though they are largely over-shadowed by the nyana of
the boli, the manes of the ancestors and the nyana dugu-da-siri are
still venerated. Though sowing and harvesting are celebrated
731 with great pomp by the brotherhoods, still, when a disaster,
epidemic, or terrible drought occurs, sacrifices are promptly offered
782 to the manes and the gods of the place. People may fear
their anger, but they also have confidence in their good will,
and it is felt that their severity can always be tempered. On the
other hand, the nyana of the boli are supposed to be basically
evil, and their worship seems intended to ward off their malignity
rather than to obtain their favor.

794 This duality in religion brings about extremely complicated
621 interrelationships which bind the communities and

614 *173 578 consultation likewise underwent changes. In the beginning there was no great amount of dissension within the furu-ba, but gradually, as the importance of the clan grew and the wealth of influential members increased, divergent opinions arose, held by strong and determined partisans. Then the dyon'-kuntigi were opposed among themselves, and the recurrent periods of anarchy bear witness to the consequences of these internal quarrels.

Organization of the Clan

614 721 The army. The office of fama is dominated by the need to ensure the prosperity of the clan since, in theory, the clan's only reason for existence is that of procuring for its members as many material satisfactions as possible.

The usual way to make a fortune among these people was through armed pillage. When a fama was elected, the bow and quiver symbolized the clan's activity, and according to the reasoning of Kanou-ba-nyouma, it was essential that the arrows should hit someone. Thus, it was necessary to go to war. That was the way to acquire slaves, by means of which the great -- and everyone aspired to be such -- satisfied their desires. That is why the essential organization in the clan was the armed force. [311]

614 ●701 This organization was based on the distribution of the slaves among chiefdoms (dyon'-kuntigi-ya). Observed as a whole, the army was composed of a certain number of sections called sen' (literally, "foot"). This was not a specific unit, but merely the name used to designate an organized group under the leadership of a chief. Each sen' had a variable number of men. The bolo (literally, "arm") was a "band" made up of a likewise variable number of sen' and commanded by an important chief.

614 726 When the army was drawn up for battle, it faced the enemy with a central mass called disi (literally, "chest") made up of the corps of sofa, flanked on the right and the left by bolo called, respectively, kini-n-bolo (right arm) and numa-n-bolo (left arm) (1). Each of these bolo were made up of furu-ba dyon'

1. Note this anthropomorphism applied to the army, which thus included head, arm, feet, chest.

614 surrounded by ton'-dyon'. Behind the disi there was a special
726 reserve composed only of ton'-dyon'; this was the ton'-koro-bolo.

The fama himself designated the leader (keli-tigi) of all
614 the expeditions of war. This might be one of the dyon'-kuntigi or
701 some member of the community of the fama; sometimes the
fama himself might take command.

The personal protection of the fama was the duty of the corps of sofa. In principle, considering the etymology of the name, the sofa were supposed to take care of the horses; this does not mean that they were necessarily horsemen or even grooms. The youngest served as pages and sometimes as grooms; the older ones were confidential aides to whom the fama entrusted missions. The sofa constituted one part -- and by no means the least important -- of what might be called the household of the fama: an assemblage of persons employed for various duties under the immediate authority of the fama.

727 They were recruited from young prisoners taken in raids and other operations of war.

When the fama led an expedition which was engaged for some time or when he took part in some important affair, he liked to arrange and to preside over the soli of the boys of the conquered people and to have one or more of his many children take part. [312] This was a means of assuring himself of the devotion, generally regarded as unfailing, of these soli-ma whose "birth" into man's estate he had honored and who, by virtue of the ceremony itself, were thus linked to some of his own children. Mostly these young men would then swell the ranks of the sofa.

This army, which might be said to be a regular army, theoretically received everything it needed from the fama: mounts, equipment, weapons, ammunition, etc. This justified the very considerable share of booty kept by the fama himself; he was thus repaid for what he had furnished, was provided with resources needed to replace what had been destroyed, and finally, was able to add to the store of equipment needed to make war. There was also the special need to increase the clan's treasury with a view to all possible eventualities.

The army was augmented by allied or volunteer contingents. The allies had a solemn agreement with the clan, based on a

614 ●701 religious and reciprocal oath. Their contribution entitled them to a share of the booty. Volunteers, who enlisted for an engagement or a whole campaign, came in under conditions settled in advance.

The fama furnished the allies, just as he did the volunteers, with whatever they needed and deducted the amount from their share of the loot. Sometimes a third party, not involved in the expedition, provided mounts, equipment, and weapons for the enterprise in exchange for a prearranged reward.

In short, armed pillage was a business directed by the fama, who could admit interested participants if he so desired. If the operation were successful, the clan gained predominance over [727] the conquered regions, which the fama then exploited as he saw fit. The booty was the first result of the enterprise, and it served both to pay the expenses incurred in the affair and to swell the treasury of the clan.

This explains why the clan's army, for a consideration, hired itself out to anyone who asked for support, as an ally, as a mercenary force, or in any other capacity. The army might simply intervene in a quarrel of its own accord when there seemed to be profit to be gained (1). [313]

1. See below how the fama of Ségou lent his support to a marabout of Sous. The Bambara also intervened on numerous occasions in the internal quarrels of Khasso, Boundou, Fouta, etc. Their role as mercenaries is clearly shown in the Tarikh es Soudan.

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567 The ton'-dyon' were distinguished by a special hair arrangement. Their heads were completely shaved except for three [302] tufts of hair which formed two braids on the crown of the head and one at the nape of the neck.

The slaves of the household of the fama could be recognized by their well-known tattoo (1) which consisted of three

[304]

1. In general, it is risky to depend

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● 701
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incautiously on tattooing as a distinguishing mark of race or even of rank; the tattoo described here has not only been used by people of various origins, but has even been appropriated by all kinds of people as a form of snobbishness.

parallel cuts from temple to lower jaw on either side of the face. Furthermore, these people borrowed the dyamu of the fama (Kouloubali, Dyara, etc.), just as certain servants in some of the French provinces are called by their master's name because they are members of the household bearing that name.

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The elite troops (sofa, ton'-dyon', etc.) were armed with axes (sukala) (2). Important chiefs also had axes, the insignia of

2. An instrument's name derived from suka, a variant of sua, meaning "to pierce." The men armed with axes were, in fact, assigned the special task of "making a breach" in the wall inclosing the settlement under attack.

command, sometimes made of precious metal, such as copper or silver. The axe carried by the fama was made of gold and enchased (3).

3. The chronicle relates that Tonmassa, after murdering Dékoro, carried off the golden axe, the symbol of supreme command.

The spear (tama) was often regarded as a weapon of distinction also. The ordinary warriors were armed with bows (kala) and arrows (bimye), the latter usually poisoned.

[177] Guns (marfa) gradually came into use, imported by native traders (Dyula). The chronicle claims that the first firearms were introduced among "the people of Ségou" in Mamari's time by an army from Kong and that these guns were of the blunderbuss type.

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701 Chiefs and other notables carried a short sabre (m-pan)
slung from their shoulders. These were probably Turkish in
411 origin and were largely ceremonial weapons.

The troops wore no specific uniform. Only a few of the
614 more important personages were recognizable by certain insignia,
714 and it sometimes happened that certain individuals were honored
by distinguishing marks. The chronicle tells us that Mamari [314] had Ngolo Dyara outfitted in red, a uniform particularly desired. Likewise, he gave Tonmassa a pair of trousers that were unusually wide and consequently attracted everyone's attention.

534 Drummers (dunu) and trumpeters (buru) made up a mili-
614 tary clique which also included men who played xylophones (bala)
701 and various accessory instruments, especially bells (tana, veleni,
etc.), and gourds half-filled with pebbles or grain.

The drum beaten to sound a rally, which was, therefore, in a manner of speaking, the announcer of war, was the tabala. The cylinder, bowl-shaped and usually made of wood or sometimes pottery, was covered with an ox-hide, often untanned,
which was stretched by thongs tied under the drum. In theory,
[766] this drumhead was always changed at the death of a fama, when
the skin was broken as a sign of mourning (1), and was replaced by the hide of the ox sacrificed in honor of the deceased. The tabala was carried horizontally between two men by means of leather grips and a third individual beat it by means of a ball attached to his wrist by a leather thong.

Other drums were of varying sizes and shapes. Some were carried under the arm (dunkan') or slung from the shoulder (tama); others, mounted on three feet (dange), presented a horizontal

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1. It should be noted that the destruction of the drumhead is comparable with the killing of the dead chief's dog and the presentation of a dead chicken to his relatives. All these are obviously "intentional breaks."

534 beating surface. The most highly regarded was the denu-ba;
614 made of a hollowed cylindrical trunk with fairly thick walls,
701 the denu-ba is sometimes more than a meter high, with its
lower third often slightly tapered with an adze. The drumhead is made of strong hide, reinforced in the center by a patch of leather sewed to it and stretched on pegs driven into the sides of the drum a few centimeters below the upper edge. When it is to be played, the drum is inclined on a fork that supports it. The drummer uses a kind of wooden hook, cleverly curved for elasticity and provided at one end [315] with a rounded part, often formed by a swelling contrived for the purpose or at other times made of a leather ball. The drummer's free hand provides the syncopation.

In certain cases, two denu-ba are used together; the drummer strikes them in such a way as to obtain a variety of sounds to form the basis for conventional harmony. Thus, the soldiers not only were trained to obey appropriate flourishes, but also were kept in touch with distant battalions by means of the drums. When it was skillfully played, the denu-ba made it possible
[202] to transmit information for considerable distances, because other drummers would retransmit it in turn. That is why it has
[778] been said that the denu-ba can talk and no doubt why it was so highly regarded by the ton'-dyon' that they considered it an oracle and honored the god who spoke through the drum by making the denu-ba the boli of this god. Hence, human victims came to
[782] be sacrificed to the drums of the ton'-dyon', especially under Ngolo, according to the chronicle.

[237] Trumpets (buru) were formerly made of ivory. The Tedzkiret speaks of the ivory trumpets used by a certain Bambara named Maro, and Mage relates that Ahmadou, Sultan of Ségou, gave the Bambara their ivory trumpets on the occasion of the Moslem festival.

[237] These ivory trumpets, however, have disappeared, no doubt carried off by traders. Trumpets made of horn, which were used concurrently with the ivory instruments, have been substituted for them. The horns of the large antelope are much in demand for this purpose. An opening is made a few centimeters from the pointed end, and the trumpeter makes the sound through this opening. The only result is a loud but monotonous noise.

534 614 701 The xylophone (*bala*) consists of a table made of strips of hardwood, with a gourd under each strip, like a resonator; the size of each gourd depends on the note desired. A section of the gourd is stopped by the vibrating surface which is a white material very closely woven like a cobweb. When it is played well, the *bala* produces various tunes, but they seem very thin compared to the noise of the drums and the shrieking of the trumpets. [316]

The accessory bells are of no particular interest.

538 701 No expedition of any consequence ever set out without a *griot* (*dyeli*) (1). The *griot* has acquired a deplorable reputation because of the fact that too often he uses his fluency to exploit the rich and powerful. This should not hide the fact, however, that the *griot* has often played a role not lacking in grandeur. In addition to being the official archivist of one or more families, he was also, in the native sense, a kind of epic bard who told his [534] tales in song, accompanying himself on a stringed instrument similar to a guitar or a rudimentary harp. When told by him, the traditions, involved with those miracles so dear to the native, had something of the quality of our medieval epics. In that respect, at least, the *griot* truly deserved his title of *dyeli* (master).

Unfortunately, however, being reduced to earning his keep by making use of his information, he resorted to slander and calumny. This made him so much to be feared that in order to buy his silence the victims despoiled themselves for his benefit, as did those whom he intoxicated with base flattery.

538 701 726 In the army the *griot* stirred and encouraged the brave men. On the eve of an important engagement or shortly before it, a large assembly customarily was held, and roused by the epic poems of the *griot* no less than by the war dances and copious libations, the warriors promised under oath to perform such and such acts of great courage. It was then the duty of the *griot* to take public note, so to speak, of this commitment and later,

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1. See above, pp. *et seq.*, on the *dyeli*.

538 701 726 when the action had occurred, to celebrate the glory of its author. If, however, events showed that there had been mere bravado, the griot was then expected to stigmatize the braggart's cowardice -- something he never failed to do, since he found it just as profitable as to celebrate the glory of a hero.

At a critical hour when the army threatened to yield to the baser instincts engendered by rout, panic, and defeat, the griot often had the fortunate ability to arouse failing courage, sometimes [317] with cutting sarcasm, sometimes by exalting the lofty achievements of the ancestors, sometimes by setting forth in a tragic light the lot of the defeated. The chronicle shows him in this role when Ma-n-son, held in check by the stubborn resistance of Tyitya, sees himself -- final disgrace -- abandoned by his wives who have decided to return to Ségou. All through the night the griot sang battle songs, and at dawn the terrible assault proved that the army had recovered its spirit.

This handler of words was undoubtedly a formidable "master." He was said to know words that kill, since he was aware of the actions dominating every person's life. When Ma-n-son's twelve wives came in a body and told him that they had resolved to return without him to Ségou because they were all the more homesick when they felt that defeat was at hand, he ordered them to repeat their words before the griot whom he had summoned. With their action thus publicly noted, he gave them leave to depart, knowing that he would be able to avenge himself for their desertion whenever he decided to do so.

The songs of the griot, retold and repeated by the warriors and the people, gave memorable actions ineffaceable lineaments. The chronicle tells us that when the expedition against Dina was undertaken, the griot improvised the song which begins: "In the shade of the bushy kaminya tree, the hen cannot tell a grain of millet from a grain of sand." This meant that, in the confusion of battle, a warrior can make no distinctions. In fact, the country was completely laid waste during this expedition, and the booty was so abundant that forever after the griot had only to sing this song to arouse the warlike ardor of the ton'-dyon'.

538 814 A man of high rank is always accompanied by his griot, who is both a confidant and a mere factotum. It is true, of course,

him, the submission of all the slaves.

567 The fa particularly displays his confidence in the wolo-so. He arranges his marriage, establishes him in life, admits him to his cult, and assigns him important tasks. Sometimes he marries his daughter and unites himself to him by fraternization and the oath. Children of the wolo-so are often circumcised with those of the master. Finally, the wolo-so bears his master's name and may in turn have slaves. At the third generation, the wolo-so becomes a free man. We still have very incomplete knowledge of this whole question of slavery, which incontestably exists throughout the whole Sudan; politically, it seems to have been a rational method of assimilating and fusing into a single people men of the most diverse origins.

567
701 f. The Army. -- Since the slaves were not pariahs, but, because of their number and the roles they filled, are important members of the society, it is normal that they also participated in the defense of the society. They have, therefore, their place in the army.

[721] Each Fama had an army, whose object was pillage, to procure the greatest possible amount of material goods for his subjects. The Fama despoiled those captives whom he enslaved, while others paid him tribute according to consecutive agreement. Ranged in battle, the army included the following components.

1. A central mass, disi (chest), made up of the corps of sofa (etymologically: those in charge of the care of the horses). The sofa formed the personal guard of the Fama; they were often recruited [61] from among young prisoners of war. The Fama often presided over the ceremony of circumcision of the children of the conquered whom he mixed in with his own children; they were thus bound and devoted to each other all their lives. The young sofa played the role of pages and grooms; the older ones became the trusted aides of the Fama, who charged them with important missions.

2. Two masses flanked the disi, to right and left: the kini-n-bolo (right arm) and the numa-n-bolo (left arm). These bolo were composed of furuba-dyon (age class of slaves corresponding to the flanton of the free men), and commanded by the ton-dyon (a sort of aristocracy of the slaves recruited from among the war prisoners).

567 3. The ton-koro-bolo behind the disi is a special reserve formed
●701 entirely of pure ton-dyon.

4. The keli-tigi was the chief of the expedition, designated by the Fama. He might be a dyon-kuntigi (chief of the furuba-dyon), a member of the Fama's community, or the Fama himself.

708 Finally, the army was accompanied by a musical corps, com-
534 posed essentially of drums which transmitted messages. There were armpit drums (dunkan'), shoulder drums (taura), three-legged drums (dange), drums carried by two men (tabala), and coupled drums (denuba). Often horns (buru) were added, sometimes small horns made of ivory or horn, and sometimes xylophones (bada) and cowbells.

708 A dyeli (griot) follows the expedition to observe the exploits
537 that he must retransmit; he must encourage the warriors and dispel panic by the power of his oratory.

B. Influence of Social Organization on Economic Life

a. The ton, Work Community

621 We have seen that the social unit among the Bambara is the community. The community is also the work unit and the economic unit. The independent individual is not conceived of. The community owns all the wealth which makes up the spiritual and material patrimony: the land, the agricultural, industrial, and commercial products, the habitations ...

The community regulates the exploitation of the land. The
423 dugu-tigi is the first occupant, master of the land, of which he dis-
621 tributes the lots to the different family heads. When a stranger, a
622 family head, wants to enter into a community, he chooses an unoc-
609 cupied field and asks the village chief for it. The request is accom-
[431] panied by ten kola nuts and a chicken. Authorization cannot then be refused. The chief of the land sacrifices the chicken before the entire community and informs it of the installation of the newcomer. When the stranger wants to leave the land, he is given back his chicken and kola nuts.

423 Land assigned to a family head may always be taken back
621 from him without justification by the dugu-tigi and his council.
622

592 comparable to what our law defines as a family. In fact, the
601 four terms just discussed, ton', ba-denya, gwa, and so, are
596 all used for the purpose. It is what is intended by their use
that gives them their meaning, and depending on the region,
each term has a meaning made precise by usage.

The dwelling of the Bambara family usually includes
592 a fairly large number of huts of various kinds. Some are
342 cylindrical and built of native masonry with a conical straw
roof and, for a door, a slit or opening which does not extend
all the way to the ground. Others are parallelepiped, made of
native masonry, and ordinarily also provided with no opening
except the door.

Shelters (gwa), consisting of flat straw roofs supported
on forked sticks, are usually placed haphazardly or wherever
the master of the house wants them and are certainly not governed by any traditional rules or fixed orientation. All these
dwellings or out-buildings are enclosed by either a clay wall
[343] or an unbroken hedge whose two ends are supported by the walls
of the hut called blon' which serves as a vestibule for the establishment.

[178] The altar of the ancestors and of the household gods is
found in the blon'.

The houses of notables are somewhat more elaborately
arranged: instead of a single inner court, there are two, three,
or even more, sometimes graduated in extent. The master arranges his people in such a way as to divide into sections the
heterogeneous elements gathered together under his protection.
592 The domestic servants and the young [161] men, the women,
girls, and small children, and finally the eventual successor
are, as it were, fenced apart in their own blocks of dwellings,
while the fa himself is to be found in impressive isolation,
which lends weight to his authority.

Among great personages, especially among heads of
592 clans, this arrangement is the rule, and their isolation deep in
712 the interior is virtually a security measure. In the old days a
kind of fortress or redoubt, the tata, was built in the center of
the royal residence. Gunpowder, weapons, and all the means
of defense were kept there, and it was no easy matter to capture

592 this well-built structure in the midst of the inextricable maze
[712] of surrounding huts which were themselves surrounded by a
solid wall of native masonry.

The people of a single household are classed in three
[565] categories: free men (woro-u), members of castes (nya-maka-
la), and slaves (dyon'-u).

The freemen. Within the family, free persons are:
596 the men (tye-u), i.e., circumcised males; the moso-u, ex-
561 cised women; the den'-u, children of both sexes.

601 In accordance with their influence (faya) in the family, the men are called koro-u, old men, elders, or kamalen'-u, young masters. Among the old men the bina (uncles), brothers of the fa, hold the preponderant position; they form a kind of limited family council and generally work for the welfare of the community under the direction of the fa.

Among the women the following distinctions are made: the mothers, i.e., women under the control of a husband and who are actually mothers of children, ba-u; old women, moso-koro-u; grandmothers, mama-u; and finally unmarried girls, moso-de-u.

All children are called de unless they are specifically identified as de-n-ke, "boy," or de-moso or deni, "girl."

601 Furthermore, every male with any influence (faya) in the family, no matter to what extent, is called fa (1): [162]

1. In one way or another, therefore, every male is fa, since he exercises or will one day exercise faya. The word fa is jokingly applied even to very young boys just as ba is applied to little girls. These words may be used just like our familiar expressions when we say "Father X" or "Mother X" with no reference intended to any real state of fatherhood or motherhood.

In any case, the words fa and ba are also used as terms of respect, just as we

Before the French conquest,

712 Bambara villages were fortified. They were protected by a triple enclosure of clay blocks following a line of beams that sheltered the sentinels. The first wall enclosed the village and the surrounding gardens, the second circled the interior of the village, and the third surrounded the chief's houses. These walls could be as high as five meters and as wide as two meters at the base. They had a ditch in front of them and were re-inforced by steps. Considerable ruins of these fortifications may still be seen in the Kourolamini at Ténintu (Bougouni circle).

342 House construction. (1) Throughout the Sudan, house construction is carried out during the dry season. The same is true for repairs, except for the most urgent caused by damage from rains, streaming waters, violent winds, or by the ravages of termites.

342 361 787 778 Choice of the site. The choice is often made near a temporary or permanent watercourse where wells may be sunk. A soothsayer or Marabout is next consulted, who reveals the existence of a spirit whose favorite place is the cailcedra; if the spirit is benevolent, the installation is authorized, and the sacred tree becomes the altar of the collectivity. It is bathed with periodic sacrifices.

342 Types of habitation. 1. The round hut with thatched roof (tuba bo); 2 the square or rectangular hut (bili) with flat roof.

Round hut. The man drives a stake to which he attaches a cord 1.50 meters long at the most, which is also tied to the head of 401 a hoe. The man circles the stake and traces a circumference that will be the scheme of the house. No foundation is laid. A series of double pickets (kassassin) is set up around the circumference. A bamboo strip is passed in and out between the double stakes, and this basketwork is raised from the ground up to a height of about two meters.

When the cylinder forming the walls of the base is finished, a door is cut, facing south, 25 centimeters from the ground and 1.50 meters high. One then plasters with banco, that is, with earth dug not far from the hut by the young people and made into a paste with a mixture of fonio straw, cow dung, and water drawn by the women. The roof is constructed on the ground. A circumference equal to that

1. Information, in part, given by Moussa Traoré, from the village of Gouani (Diemandougou canton), Bamako circle.

614 Chiefs and other notables carried a short sabre (m-pan)
701 slung from their shoulders. These were probably Turkish in
411 origin and were largely ceremonial weapons.

The troops wore no specific uniform. Only a few of the
614 more important personages were recognizable by certain insignia,
714 and it sometimes happened that certain individuals were honored
by distinguishing marks. The chronicle tells us that Mamari [314] had Ngolo Dyara outfitted in red, a uniform particularly desired. Likewise, he gave Tonmassa a pair of trousers that were unusually wide and consequently attracted everyone's attention.

534 Drummers (dunu) and trumpeters (buru) made up a mili-
614 tary clique which also included men who played xylophones (bala)
701 and various accessory instruments, especially bells (tana, veleni,
etc.), and gourds half-filled with pebbles or grain.

The drum beaten to sound a rally, which was, therefore, in a manner of speaking, the announcer of war, was the tabala. The cylinder, bowl-shaped and usually made of wood or sometimes pottery, was covered with an ox-hide, often untanned,
which was stretched by thongs tied under the drum. In theory,
[766] this drumhead was always changed at the death of a fama, when
the skin was broken as a sign of mourning (1), and was replaced by the hide of the ox sacrificed in honor of the deceased. The tabala was carried horizontally between two men by means of leather grips and a third individual beat it by means of a ball attached to his wrist by a leather thong.

Other drums were of varying sizes and shapes. Some were carried under the arm (dunkan') or slung from the shoulder (tama); others, mounted on three feet (dange), presented a horizontal

1. It should be noted that the destruction of the drumhead is comparable with the killing of the dead chief's dog and the presentation of a dead chicken to his relatives. All these are obviously "intentional breaks."

614 *173 578 consultation likewise underwent changes. In the beginning there was no great amount of dissension within the furu-ba, but gradually, as the importance of the clan grew and the wealth of influential members increased, divergent opinions arose, held by strong and determined partisans. Then the dyon'-kuntigi were opposed among themselves, and the recurrent periods of anarchy bear witness to the consequences of these internal quarrels.

Organization of the Clan

614 721 The army. The office of fama is dominated by the need to ensure the prosperity of the clan since, in theory, the clan's only reason for existence is that of procuring for its members as many material satisfactions as possible.

The usual way to make a fortune among these people was through armed pillage. When a fama was elected, the bow and quiver symbolized the clan's activity, and according to the reasoning of Kanou-ba-nyouma, it was essential that the arrows should hit someone. Thus, it was necessary to go to war. That was the way to acquire slaves, by means of which the great -- and everyone aspired to be such -- satisfied their desires. That is why the essential organization in the clan was the armed force. [311]

614 701 This organization was based on the distribution of the slaves among chiefdoms (dyon'-kuntigi-ya). Observed as a whole, the army was composed of a certain number of sections called sen' (literally, "foot"). This was not a specific unit, but merely the name used to designate an organized group under the leadership of a chief. Each sen' had a variable number of men. The bolo (literally, "arm") was a "band" made up of a likewise variable number of sen' and commanded by an important chief.

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782 826 While keeping his eyes and his left hand closed, he walked without touching the ground with his toes in order to respect "the soul of that which he carried (1). At the edge of the river, the joints were broken,

1. To touch the ground with one's toes amounted to putting the soul of the victim's body in contact with the earth's impurity (see p. 102).

the marrow extracted and poured into the water. After placing their toes on the body, to "give a part of their soul to Faro," the men deposited it gently in the river, into which it sank while they loudly proclaimed the reason for their action. When they returned to their master, they brought him the spirit's gratitude and a little water from the river, which was poured over the royal seat (2).

2. This offering was called nasi, "well-being."

/96/ The upper part of the victim's body was the king's and used for the needs of the state. The tõdyõ first blew into the mouth of the tortured victim so that the "air, in coming out, would take all his words to Faro." Then they buried his head under the king's throne and danced to the rhythm of drums.

● [726 789] In case of war, the blood which had spilled during the sacrifice was collected by the tõdyõ and dried in the sun; then the residue was carried away and before the assault was thrown in the direction of the town to be attacked. The king who advanced with his army found, according to the formula, "his sacrifice before him" (saraka bla ñe).

782 826 789 2. In case the king was short of funds, the killing took place towards the west and was performed by sticking a bamboo stick into the throat of the victim so that blood would run over the cowrie shells which the king had earned himself "with his own sweat." Thus consecrated, the cowries "attracted gold, silver, and copper to the royal treasury."

The head was placed under the throne. The chest and lungs were dried, reduced to powder, and preserved in a bag which the king kept. When he received his tax-payers, he smeared his face and mouth with this powder, thus forcing the visitor to give. He rubbed his body with it before going to war, causing the warriors to say:

794 the rain necessary for cultivation (see p. 217).
778 The agricultural role of the Komo will be
described by S. de Ganay in *Techniques et
rites de l'agriculture*.

794 The main taboo of the *ñõ boli* is the loss or waste of food. If even
778 a grain of cereal drops to the ground, or into the fire, the members of
784 the millet society are responsible for picking it up and eating it;
otherwise the Komo will punish for the failure to do so and the harvest
suffers.

The third floor contains the *nyama boli*, a repository of the forces
794 (*nyama*) of individuals who have died a violent death (murder, war,
778 execution). The *nyama boli* used to contain in former times a stone
726 called *gõgoro kurube*, considered to be the "mother" of the stones
thrown by the warriors' sling. It was removed from the sac in case
of war and carried to the battlefield by a twin walking at the head of
the troops. On its surface were engraved a series of lines representing
the king, the warriors, and their wives. It gathered all the souls of
those dead in combat and received their blood as an offering.

794 The *nyama boli* is, moreover, responsible for the soul of the crops
778 and a repository for the souls of sacrificed animals; it also receives
the "*nyama* of the words" of the members. It shares with the *ñõ boli*
the responsibility for the cultivations and confers in this way great
power to the society.

The sac contains in its lower part a mixture of coagulated blood
and gold, and in its upper part a mixture of charcoal powder, pepper,
and honey, which gives power to the *nyama* with which the sac is
[782] loaded. The taboo of the *nyama boli* is the rapid death of victims
which are sacrificed to it; only slow death confers effective *nyama*.

Upon the ground of the sanctuary, along with the dance costume of the mask, *nya*, are placed small altars intended either for sale, or for the creation of the new Komo, or for individual purposes. Animal horns, both *byẽ ba* (literally, big horn) and *byẽ ni* (literally, little horn), are also placed there; they contain powder for ritual usage, *korti*, whose dangerous action takes place during the times the mask is taken out (1).

1. The various mixtures used for the
religious practices of the Bambara

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614 surrounded by ton'-dyon'. Behind the disi there was a special
●726 reserve composed only of ton'-dyon'; this was the ton'-koro-bolo.

The fama himself designated the leader (keli-tigi) of all
614 the expeditions of war. This might be one of the dyon'-kuntigi or
701 some member of the community of the fama; sometimes the fama himself might take command.

The personal protection of the fama was the duty of the corps of sofa. In principle, considering the etymology of the name, the sofa were supposed to take care of the horses; this does not mean that they were necessarily horsemen or even grooms. The youngest served as pages and sometimes as grooms; the older ones were confidential aides to whom the fama entrusted missions. The sofa constituted one part -- and by no means the least important -- of what might be called the household of the fama: an assemblage of persons employed for various duties under the immediate authority of the fama.

727 They were recruited from young prisoners taken in raids and other operations of war.

When the fama led an expedition which was engaged for some time or when he took part in some important affair, he liked to arrange and to preside over the soli of the boys of the conquered people and to have one or more of his many children take part. [312] This was a means of assuring himself of the devotion, generally regarded as unfailing, of these soli-ma whose "birth" into man's estate he had honored and who, by virtue of the ceremony itself, were thus linked to some of his own children. Mostly these young men would then swell the ranks of the sofa.

This army, which might be said to be a regular army, theoretically received everything it needed from the fama: mounts, equipment, weapons, ammunition, etc. This justified the very considerable share of booty kept by the fama himself; he was thus repaid for what he had furnished, was provided with resources needed to replace what had been destroyed, and finally, was able to add to the store of equipment needed to make war. There was also the special need to increase the clan's treasury with a view to all possible eventualities.

The army was augmented by allied or volunteer contingents. The allies had a solemn agreement with the clan, based on a

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The accessory bells are of no particular interest.

538 No expedition of any consequence ever set out without a
701 *griot* (*dyeli*) (1). The *griot* has acquired a deplorable reputation because of the fact that too often he uses his fluency to exploit the rich and powerful. This should not hide the fact, however, that the *griot* has often played a role not lacking in grandeur. In addition to being the official archivist of one or more families, he was also, in the native sense, a kind of epic bard who told his [534] tales in song, accompanying himself on a stringed instrument similar to a guitar or a rudimentary harp. When told by him, the traditions, involved with those miracles so dear to the native, had something of the quality of our medieval epics. In that respect, at least, the *griot* truly deserved his title of *dyeli* (master).

Unfortunately, however, being reduced to earning his keep by making use of his information, he resorted to slander and calumny. This made him so much to be feared that in order to buy his silence the victims despoiled themselves for his benefit, as did those whom he intoxicated with base flattery.

538 In the army the *griot* stirred and encouraged the brave
701 men. On the eve of an important engagement or shortly before it,
726 a large assembly customarily was held, and roused by the epic poems of the *griot* no less than by the war ~~dances~~ and copious libations, the warriors promised under oath to perform such and such acts of great courage. It was then the duty of the *griot* to take public note, so to speak, of this commitment and later,

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1. See above, pp. *et seq.*, on the *dyeli*.

538 when the action had occurred, to celebrate the glory of its
701 author. If, however, events showed that there had been mere
726 bravado, the griot was then expected to stigmatize the braggart's
cowardice -- something he never failed to do, since he found it just as profitable as to celebrate the glory of a hero.

At a critical hour when the army threatened to yield to the baser instincts engendered by rout, panic, and defeat, the griot often had the fortunate ability to arouse failing courage, sometimes [317] with cutting sarcasm, sometimes by exalting the lofty achievements of the ancestors, sometimes by setting forth in a tragic light the lot of the defeated. The chronicle shows him in this role when Ma-n-son, held in check by the stubborn resistance of Tyitya, sees himself -- final disgrace -- abandoned by his wives who have decided to return to Ségou. All through the night the griot sang battle songs, and at dawn the terrible assault proved that the army had recovered its spirit.

This handler of words was undoubtedly a formidable "master." He was said to know words that kill, since he was aware of the actions dominating every person's life. When Ma-n-son's twelve wives came in a body and told him that they had resolved to return without him to Ségou because they were all the more homesick when they felt that defeat was at hand, he ordered them to repeat their words before the griot whom he had summoned. With their action thus publicly noted, he gave them leave to depart, knowing that he would be able to avenge himself for their desertion whenever he decided to do so.

The songs of the griot, retold and repeated by the warriors and the people, gave memorable actions ineffaceable lineaments. The chronicle tells us that when the expedition against Dina was undertaken, the griot improvised the song which begins: "In the shade of the bushy kaminya tree, the hen cannot tell a grain of millet from a grain of sand." This meant that, in the confusion of battle, a warrior can make no distinctions. In fact, the country was completely laid waste during this expedition, and the booty was so abundant that forever after the griot had only to sing this song to arouse the warlike ardor of the ton'-dyon'.

538 A man of high rank is always accompanied by his griot,
814 who is both a confidant and a mere factotum. It is true, of course,

551 The device is recited on numerous occasions. After a birth, the
576 griot proclaim it in the course of the name-giving ceremony, address-
778 ing themselves to the father, then to the newborn child /79/ who thus
564 receives it for the first time. At a marriage the barama of the two
partners are alternatly recited. In everyday life, the recitation is carried on most frequently during religious ceremonies or feasts. In the hunt or at war, it has the effect of helping the participants and increasing their courage (1). In a meeting it is used to greet people bearing the same name, and if one of the assistants is to be particularly honored, the first words of his device are recited.

551 In case of illness, the ally (senãnku) (2) comes to the patient's
155 side and recites his baráma to encourage him and help him get well. If he is dying, the recitation, which is then the equivalent of a prayer, may help his soul return. After death, the ally, the griot, and the
[764] blacksmiths come near the corpse to recite his barama in order to
honor him.

551 The devices pertaining to the various crafts are used when address-
576 ing the artisan with whom one has business. Thus the blacksmith to
539 whom one brings work is greeted first by his name to which is then
added:

"ini fara ani goni, you are with stone and fire."

A person crossing a field will say to the farmer bent over the earth: "i ni tye i ba ka kusebe daba, greeting to him who handles the hoe well," or simply: "i ni tye daba la; greeting to him who is with the hoe." To the shoemaker one would say: "bana ani ba golo, (you are) with the acacia (3) and the goat leather."

[727] 1. If the griot recites it to a war chief and the town under attack is taken, he receives part of the loot.

2. See p. 119.

[386] 3. This refers to the bana or boina (Acacia arabica) used by the shoemaker to make a black dye.

Death at War

727 When a warrior returns home in good health after a battle, the sacrificer or the village chief orders the performance of the ni yere klo, "game of the vibration of the soul, " to celebrate his return. Men and women gather in the village square to sing: "The soul is come, the light of the soul is come, the drum of the soul will be played for it" (1). Next they form a circle and turning first in one direction and then

1. Ni nana, ni yelengu nana, ni dunu na fo o la.

in the other, throw a little water on the head of the individual concerned, thus "refreshing his soul."

766 When a man dies at war, the rituals whose object he becomes bring into play the nyama boli of the Komo, the altar dedicated to the conservation of the souls of those who die a vilent death.

In former times the stone which had mortally hit a warrior was carefully kept. The corpse was washed /200/ on cowries and on stones used for slings because its nyama, which impregnated them, made them more efficient in killing. The body was also transported to the exit of the village where each villager offered cowrie shells while he pronounced the name of the victim. Then it was swung three times in the direction of the village, first feet forward and next head forward. After all the villagers had retired to their homes, the Ko[illegible] was brought out. The stone that had killed the man was struck to call forth his soul; then it was rubbed on the nyama boli to make the soul penetrate the altar. A dance was held with the altar, and the body [824] was buried and covered with fresh branches of ngamyã (2). The grave was watered to "refresh the dead man" while the chief

2. Celtis integrifolia.

was watered to "refresh the dead man" while the chief of the Komo made sacrifices over the nyama and the nimara boli.

Death Away from Home

766 767 The necessity of performing the rituals as well as their detailed quality are such that a Bambara is always advised against expatriation.

Malinke FA27

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and Appellations among the Malinké...] in the Bulletin du Comité des études historiques et scientifiques de l'A.O.F. 1918, nos. 3 and 4.

inhabited by independent Bambara.

This clan or, as one is tempted to say, this empire of Keïta was formed in the thirteenth century after wars between Soumangourou Kanté and Soun Dyata Keïta and with the aid of various elements (3), including a group of Mandinké which [16] had been organized earlier by (1) a chief named Gourmandana.

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[567
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3. In the same way we shall see Biton forming furu-ba-dyon' from the ton-dyon', slaves captured from the chief of Dina, and from captives acquired elsewhere. In the same connection, see in the Tarikh el Fettach the curious story of the 24 slave tribes of the Songhaï clan which came from the Mandé clan.

B
[614]
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1. Within the clan, the slaves, who always constitute the power of a clan, are divided into groups named in accordance with a particular aspect of organization. The Boula seem to have enjoyed a degree of consideration comparable to that attained by the Ton-dyon' at Ségou. Judging by the meaning of the word Bula, it would seem that they were "freedmen," and this is the meaning given by native traditionists. On the subject of the Boula, see the afore-mentioned work by Humblot. Boula women have the given name of Damba and they are addressed as Sakiliba, while the men are called Soussoro. This practice of giving a common name to a whole

583 Most often, however, the heirs either marry the widows
589 or send them home, or the women leave of their own volition.

768 An heir who marries a widow of the deceased must take
[587] her back to her family, obtain their consent, and pay them a
new bride price, required because a new usufruct is involved. The chronicle of Ségou shows us how this custom operates. Upon the death of Dina Wara, his son escorted to Ségou his father's widow, Biton's sister, whom he wanted to marry. He made sumptuous gifts in order to obtain consent.

In the case of a widow who is sent home or who leaves of her own accord, responsibility for the bride price already paid rests with the party who broke the contract, i.e., with the person who sent the widow away or, if she left of her own accord, with her family. The question of responsibility for the bride price is an important one, since usually neither party has either the means or the desire to make it up. As a result, every effort is made to evade payment, and it is common practice to resort to the most shameless bargaining of the woman involved. A husband is sought who will agree to pay the bride price asked by the one having rights over her, but most often, partial payment will be made when the woman is returned, the creditor's impatience is calmed by gifts, and the balance of the bride price remains wholly or partly unpaid [190] at the time of the debtor's death. This obviously results in insolvable complications during and after the marriage (1).

(1). Concerning the lot of widows, see the discussions about the widows of Biton and Ngolo in the chronicle of Ségou.

567 Slaves. Enslavement comes about in many ways, but the
three principal ones are force, birth, and the result of obligations.

727 Force has perhaps been the primary cause of enslavement.
A person who surrenders is the chattel of the conqueror, but the treatment given him varies in accordance with his previous situation. Was he a man of position? If he is violent, he is killed or sold; if it is thought that his relatives will pay a high ransom, he is kept. If he is clever enough to arouse sympathy, he often is

567 well treated; if his captivity continues for a long time, he may
727 even found a family and live like a free man on parole, required only to remain where he is. Time takes care of many things. Under the same circumstances, a woman of quality usually becomes the wife of the conqueror.

People belonging to a caste escape slavery by entering the service of the conqueror to perform their customary trades.

It is only humble people -- the majority -- whose lot is often terrible; dragged far away, sold and resold, they often fall into the hands of bad masters.

567 Theoretically, a female slave's children are always slaves. A child born in slavery belongs to the mother's master and shares her fate. If she is the master's concubine, the child is born free and thereby frees the mother.

A contract slave is not always master of his own fate. Since the fa has absolute authority over his people, it is he who makes the contract which binds them.

681 A free individual may fall into slavery as a result of his crimes or misdemeanors (2); it is in this way that an incorrigible thief becomes the slave of the chief to whom he is sent for punishment.

Many poor people, attracted by the favored lot of the [191] wolo-so in large communities, go into voluntary slavery in hope of a comparable position. All the Sudanese empires had these voluntary slaves, who came in great numbers from all directions.

Where there are many slaves, they form what is called dyon'-kuru or dyon'-futu, depending on the place, that is, "an assembly of slaves," and their leader, who represents them with the master, is an important personage by virtue of their strength. When the community to which these slaves belong is an ancient one, they are divided into groups, each of which is named for the fa under whose authority it was organized. In theory, the leader of each group is its oldest member, and the leader of the

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2. Nzan Fato became a slave for stealing a beehive (p. 49 above).

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778 terms *nyana* and *boli* are used interchangeably. This is natural enough since the latter is merely the symbol of the former.

Each *nyana* has a *boli* which in form and substance is peculiar to it. Anything may be used to make *boli*: horn or hair of the hare, hind, or cattle; nails or claws; animal venom or excretions. It is not unusual to find parts of a human body put to use. As the chronicle tells, the war drums of the *ton-dyon'* were elevated to the rank of *boli* and were then adorned with the craniums and jaws of human beings sacrificed to them. Often the ball tied to the end of a piece of rope or leather and used to beat the *tabala* [Tr., big drum] is a human hand which has been severed and wrapped in a leather cover. ● [727 782]

Certain of the *boli*, particularly those of the Komo and the Kono, are said to be made of a child's torso; those of the Tyi-wara and Nama are made of wood, and those of the Duga of horn.

All sorts of shapes are employed: men, animals, doll-like figures, balls, small crowns, etc. The principal *boli*, called *boli-de-n-fa*, is accompanied by subsidiary ones called *boli-de*.

The *boli* is also given sex: one is male, another female; and it is said that there is a kind of mystical copulation [254] from which at the time of initiation are born the spiritual sons of the *nyana*.

Among *boli* should be noted those made of forked sticks, such as the n-Golo and the Tyi-wara, both patrons of brotherhoods of young men (1).

171 1. If one makes certain comparisons, the forked stick seems to deserve special attention. Among the Khassonké, for instance, the *soli-ma* always build their seclusion hut (*bire*) with a forked post in the center. This post, called *biri-makho* (master of the hut), is a tree trunk chosen

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567 The ton'-dyon' of the furu-ba is a kind of person of caste: he cannot cease to be ton'-dyon', and his children will live and die as ton'-dyon'. He is subject to the despotic authority of the fama. For a free man, it is certainly a fall to become a ton'-dyon', but for a slave, on the contrary, it is an improvement in status. Among the ton'-dyon' there are all sorts of people; this was the case in the beginning and has continued to be so as time passed. Although slaves obtained from armed forays were an ● [727] important element in the totality of the ton'-dyon', there were undoubtedly many men, free but poor, who were glad to join the ton'-dyon' so as to protect themselves from the depredations of these hardly commendable persons and also to gain the right of using the same procedures themselves.

Among the ton'-dyon', therefore, there are people of all races and all conditions; indeed, this is so true that all the dyamu are mingled under this common label.

Within the furu-ba, the ton'-dyon' formed a category apart and always retained the prerogatives which in native society accompany seniority. The ton'-dyon' were the "elders." Prisoners reduced to slavery formed the furu-ba-dyon', properly speaking, and they were grouped in series, each taking its origin from the fama who organized it. There they followed the usual path. Barring favorable circumstances which might allow them to escape the wretchedness of the early days of captivity, they started out as members of the gang of slaves-of-all-work, often considered as a kind of medium of exchange and for that reason called san'-dyon'-u (slaves of exchange). Once they were adopted by a community, a woman acquired the status [301] of wolo-so when she bore a child, while a man might achieve comparable status by gaining the confidence of his masters.

The wolo-so became a dyongoron when he was in a position to send his children to work in his place and to pay an annual fee.

Once he reached the status of wolo-so, the slave became, in actual fact, a person of caste. In principle, he could not be sold, he had the right of ownership, and he could leave property to his children. Indeed, he was often better off than a man who was free but poor.

614 Within the clan, property is also held in common and
575 administered by the fama who distributes it among the dyon'-
[421] kuntigi. The latter, in turn, make a further distribution as it is needed.

In the fla-n-ton' the important thing was provisions, material well-being. The same thing is true in the clan. The ton'-dyon' are interested in the profit to be derived from the association, and their feeling for the state is embodied in a very prosaic word, to-da, literally, "the pot of mush." Indeed, this is the principal item on the menue of any fraternal feast of the fla-n-ton'.

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The property of the clan, as of the fla-n-ton', is theoretically jointly held by all the members, but since there is a large amount of it, some sort of sharing is necessary, first to consume it and then to reward zeal and fidelity and to encourage emulation and devotion. As a result, the basic egalitarianism is altered. From the clan's beginning it was conceded that a substantial part of the wealth should go to those [308] who had done most to acquire it. Thus, the leader of an expedition had a prior right because of his "luck," and he and his men further received the wherewithal "to repair the rents in their shirts," i.e., to indemnify them for damages suffered during the expedition.

e[727] Each warrior kept his own loot, except for unusually valuable things which went to the clan and therefore to the fama who represented it. The part of the loot not taken ~~by indi~~viduals was distributed by the fama after abstracting the best and largest part of it for himself.

[562] Strictly speaking, no one actually owned any of this wealth, since all of them, even the fama, merely held it on very precarious terms. Through the caprice of the clan, anyone could have everything taken away, and this applied to persons as well as to things, because the wives and children of the ton'-dyon' were, like himself, the "chattels" of the clan.

The passage of time softened the outward form of these principles; barring abuse or notorious misconduct, each individual had indefinite use of what was allotted to him and handed it on to his descendants. This usufruct, incidentally, was broader than that of our law. In addition, Mamari arrogated to himself a kind of eminent right: he appointed himself -- through usurpation facilitated by his power -- the dispenser of offices and wealth

614 surrounded by ton'-dyon'. Behind the disi there was a special
726 reserve composed only of ton'-dyon'; this was the ton'-koro-bolo.

The fama himself designated the leader (keli-tigi) of all
614 the expeditions of war. This might be one of the dyon'-kuntigi or
701 some member of the community of the fama; sometimes the
fama himself might take command.

The personal protection of the fama was the duty of the corps of sofa. In principle, considering the etymology of the name, the sofa were supposed to take care of the horses; this does not mean that they were necessarily horsemen or even grooms. The youngest served as pages and sometimes as grooms; the older ones were confidential aides to whom the fama entrusted missions. The sofa constituted one part -- and by no means the least important -- of what might be called the household of the fama: an assemblage of persons employed for various duties under the immediate authority of the fama.

● [727] They were recruited from young prisoners taken in raids and other operations of war.

When the fama led an expedition which was engaged for some time or when he took part in some important affair, he liked to arrange and to preside over the soli of the boys of the conquered people and to have one or more of his many children take part. [312] This was a means of assuring himself of the devotion, generally regarded as unfailing, of these soli-ma whose "birth" into man's estate he had honored and who, by virtue of the ceremony itself, were thus linked to some of his own children. Mostly these young men would then swell the ranks of the sofa.

This army, which might be said to be a regular army, theoretically received everything it needed from the fama: mounts, equipment, weapons, ammunition, etc. This justified the very considerable share of booty kept by the fama himself; he was thus repaid for what he had furnished, was provided with resources needed to replace what had been destroyed, and finally, was able to add to the store of equipment needed to make war. There was also the special need to increase the clan's treasury with a view to all possible eventualities.

The army was augmented by allied or volunteer contingents. The allies had a solemn agreement with the clan, based on a

614 701 religious and reciprocal oath. Their contribution entitled them to a share of the booty. Volunteers, who enlisted for an engagement or a whole campaign, came in under conditions settled in advance.

The fama furnished the allies, just as he did the volunteers, with whatever they needed and deducted the amount from their share of the loot. Sometimes a third party, not involved in the expedition, provided mounts, equipment, and weapons for the enterprise in exchange for a prearranged reward.

[727] In short, armed pillage was a business directed by the fama, who could admit interested participants if he so desired. If the operation were successful, the clan gained predominance over the conquered regions, which the fama then exploited as he saw fit. The booty was the first result of the enterprise, and it served both to pay the expenses incurred in the affair and to swell the treasury of the clan.

This explains why the clan's army, for a consideration, hired itself out to anyone who asked for support, as an ally, as a mercenary force, or in any other capacity. The army might simply intervene in a quarrel of its own accord when there seemed to be profit to be gained (1). [313]

1. See below how the fama of Ségou lent his support to a marabout of Sous. The Bambara also intervened on numerous occasions in the internal quarrels of Khasso, Boundou, Fouta, etc. Their role as mercenaries is clearly shown in the Tarikh es Soudan.

614 701 569 [302] The ton'-dyon' were distinguished by a special hair arrangement. Their heads were completely shaved except for three tufts of hair which formed two braids on the crown of the head and one at the nape of the neck.

The slaves of the household of the fama could be recognized by their well-known tattoo (1) which consisted of three

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1. In general, it is risky to depend

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565 3. the free men;
4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);
5. slaves.

567 e. Slavery. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by
violence, by obligation, or by birth.

567 1. By violence. If a war captive is important, he may be
killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration.
727 A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in
554 the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no
case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared
captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama;
[608] if he is a sénanku of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing
him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious
[551] Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of
the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

567 2. By obligation. A free individual became a slave in
681 punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the
426 profit of the Fama. A fa could sell one of his children to meet his
858 debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was
freed of his obligations.

567 3. By birth. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a wolo-so. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

567 As the number of slaves grew, their organization became
644 complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Ségou
were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the dyon-kuru or dyon-futu (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Ségou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him, the submission of all the slaves.

463 554 The numu: blacksmiths, whose wives are generally potters.
[326] The smiths are the masters of fire, those who cook the sacred earth in order to extract the minerals or to fix the form of pottery.

The loro: coppersmiths.

The garanka: leatherworkers.

The kule: woodworkers, and sometimes saddlemakers.

The donso: hunters, who form powerful and feared associations.

The somono, or fishermen, who have a status a little less restricted than that of the artisans mentioned above.

The dyeli or griot, domestic factotums of a kind, who, although the most disdained of all these, are nevertheless the family archivists.

[563] One may add two Peul shepherd tribes, identified by Manson: the Dyanna and the Bouguena (1).

463 564 All of these artisans are endogamous and fixed in caste, father to son. However, the fact that a man belongs to a caste does not obligate him to exercise the caste trade.

326 463 608 The most powerful guild is incontestably that of the blacksmiths. From their ranks are recruited all the priests, the Fama's interpreters, the well-diggers, the grave-diggers, the executioners, the circumcisers, etc. They are the sénanku of all the families and are in charge of all the purification rites.

554 The griot are equally feared, because of the power of their words and because they spread afar the renown of the chiefs.

564 The free man who marries a woman of caste marries beneath himself, and his children are looked down on.

[326] The purest blacksmith families are those of the Fané Balo; the purest griot those of the Koniaté. People of caste always remain
[527] at liberty; when they are captured during a war, they make themselves known and keep their status.

463 326 [64] These different guilds are sufficient to maintain in the Bambara country a certain industry of a distinctly artisan and non-specialized type. Thus, the smiths work iron, copper, and wood to

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1. See Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

845 Up to the time they are twelve, the children bathe themselves preferably in the Niger. They supposedly can walk on water and never run the risk of drowning.

The twins do not become separated from each other any more than the dya is separated from the living being to which it is attached. They wear the same clothes and eat the same food simultaneously. Formerly male twins married the same woman. If one of them dies
845 at an early age, the blacksmith carves a small wooden doll called
778 flanitokele, which takes the name of the deceased and which the mother puts on the mat next to the living child. The latter takes this doll with him at the time of his circumcision and keeps it during the period of his seclusion in order to bring it back to the parental home whence it is never removed. When he marries, he sticks the doll into the earth along with another piece of wood symbolizing the wife of the deceased. Since twins are in a sense a living replica of Faro, none can bother them without showing disrespect to him. On the other hand, they are the object of attention and precaution on the part of their family as well as their neighbors. Their presence is always beneficial. Considered invulnerable, twins used to march ahead of
●[728] troups in times of war and would serve as inviolable intermediaries between the warring parties during truce.

The Hermaphrodite

826 The hermaphrodite, being both male and female, is to all extent and purpose his own twin. Consequently, he has no dya (1).

[825 304] 1. The hyena is considered a hermaphrodite; it can engender or conceive, depending on its size and strength; "the stronger impregnating the weaker." A tattooing system is based upon this belief.

/88/ The Albino

[143] Albinos of light or reddish skin and red hair are called gombele or yepege, this latter term being reserved for those who show the most accentuated characteristics.

826 833 The albino is supposedly born of sexual relations which took place in the middle of the day when the sun is in the koblenkaba, sky of

794 clergy. On the other hand, an innocent man will be overwhelmed by mental and physical torture if he is unable to give his executioners what they demand.
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681 Corporal punishment includes flogging, chains, starvation, torture, and death by all imaginable methods. Pecuniary punishment includes fines, confiscation, and pillage. The condemned man is also sometimes forced to labor for the clergy or is even enslaved by them.

Social and Political Role of the Brotherhoods

794 By its actions, the brotherhood, an artificial family, tends to take the place of the natural family whose organization it has borrowed and whose cult it has banished. It is easy to account for this.
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The cult of the manes is the framework of the family and of the communities derived from it. The brotherhood has cleverly managed to set up such a cult by specially honoring the manes of its high priests, its famous members, and its eminent worshipers. [267]

Gradually, the nyana dugu-da-siri, protector of the territorial community, has given way to the nyana of the boli, a more powerful god since his territory is unlimited.

It is true that in spite of everything the tradition remains, and even though they are largely over-shadowed by the nyana of the boli, the manes of the ancestors and the nyana dugu-da-siri are still venerated. Though sowing and harvesting are celebrated with great pomp by the brotherhoods, still, when a disaster, epidemic, or terrible drought occurs, sacrifices are promptly offered to the manes and the gods of the place. People may fear their anger, but they also have confidence in their good will, and it is felt that their severity can always be tempered. On the other hand, the nyana of the boli are supposed to be basically evil, and their worship seems intended to ward off their malignity rather than to obtain their favor.
● 731
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794 This duality in religion brings about extremely complicated interrelationships which bind the communities and
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794 [787] Furthermore, every *wara-mina-den'* is able to read the will of the Nya and, more generally, to reveal the acts of the invisible by means of the divination practices which we have already mentioned.

[782] The sacrifices are performed by the *muru-kala-tigi*, and a *dyeli* (herald) serves as factotum, just as in the other brotherhoods. [285]

794 796 The faithful are initiated and called to participate in the cult to an extent determined by the clergy; they are called *Nya-ko-den'-u*, literally, "those who follow the Nya." In order to be admitted, an individual must give a chicken and 120 cowries. The next day, in the presence of the *Nya-tigi* and the *wara-mina-den'*, the chicken is sacrificed on the *boli* by the *muru-kala-tigi*. The candidate is present, and in his behalf the *Nya-tigi* asks the Nya for protection against the *suba*, snakes, *korti*, and the evil eye. Then the neophyte is led to the sacred grove to be ritually purified with consecrated water contained in a vessel used exclusively for this purpose (1).

[783] 1. Every year at the time of harvest, the clergy undergoes ritual purification by washing in the sacred water. When a Nya is inaugurated, this purification takes place at the first harvest after the installation.

[731] [273] The two great annual festivals are celebrated at the times of planting and harvesting. Similar ceremonies take place in connection with important events (epidemics, public catastrophes, etc.). For these ceremonies, during which the Nya is supposed to give revelations about the event in question and to answer various other questions troubling the faithful, the *wara-mina-den'* undergo special preparation and at the proper time drink a very heady beverage (2) which, they say, brings on their extra-lucidity.

[691] 2. I learned most of these details about the Nya during a criminal trial brought against the *wara-mina-den'* of Soun-Bambara,

181 the kingdoms from each other; for him a mineral is not a vegetable
811 nor a vegetable an animal. He differentiates between the animate
772 and the inanimate and does not confuse the genera and species. But
has he known how to establish a definite, clear, and well-demarcated line of distinction between man and the rest of creation? No, he bases his ideas of all things on himself or, to be more definite, on what he feels and believes himself to be. In addition to genii and spirits, he sees conscious forces and energies everywhere in nature. He cannot define these forces; his ideas on the subject are confused and indefinite. But, nevertheless, it is true, that he attributes a glimmer of reason and feeling to everything. Obviously the black man does not attribute a soul -- in the sense that we understand it -- to everything; nor does he say that everything is the home of a genie or a spirit; yet he cannot conceive of pure matter. He finds instinct in animals and special virtues and properties in plants. In inert matter he encounters phenomena which he cannot explain, and since he always uses himself and his reasoning as the basis of comparisons, he endows everything with the immaterial, invisible, imperceptible attributes of reason and feeling. In his mind I repeat, matter is not a soul, or a genie as he conceives of one; yet it is a being, a force, a power that has its own existence and the ability to act of its own accord. Here are a few examples taken from a thousand:

811 In July, 1908 at the time when the crops were sprouting, cer-
731 tain regions of the Ségou circle were invaded by tiny caterpillars
measuring barely 0.025 meters in length. They were a beautiful
782 velvety black with pale green lines on their sides; they came from the
825 east out of no one knows where and myriads of them proceeded to-
ward the west in serried ranks. Wherever they passed everything was eaten, and the eleusine /African millet/, corn, and sorghum had to be resown.

While these creatures were devouring the crops, the Moslem cried his insignificant formula toward the east and repeated, "God is great." He prostrated himself, crouched on his heels, devoutly shaking his forefinger, but all was in vain, for the quivering black wave continued to draw back on itself, to hump its back, and then to grow longer /14/; it continued to advance and to grow. The pagan

821 whitened the front of his dwelling with a mixture of millet flour and water that had been offered to the shades of his ancestors, and poured 131 chicken blood here and there; then he thought it best to meet in 182 council and consult his sorcerers. The same orders were given every- 825 where: a potentate, perhaps a prince, doubtless of the caterpillar people, was celebrating his wedding and respects must be paid to him. All the pagan villages did so, and the marriage of the caterpillars took place one fine morning at daybreak. Two or three caterpillars were placed at the bottom of old worn-out gourds and carried far up a path on the west side and out of the village by a procession of women and girls, singing and dancing, and preceded by furiously beating drums. They placed the little creatures on a spot determined by the elders and, after a wild dance they made their farewells, foolish farewells, stupid perhaps and yet nevertheless touching. For if the young people called to them with a long burst of laughter: "I na somaon fo (you will greet your people)," and some old shrews in a tone of command cried: "Ta so! (Go home!)," there were more who said to them: "Toumouni (little caterpillar), an bi déli (we implore you) have pity on us, go back now to your kingdoms; everything is eaten, and there is nothing left. Go, bring greetings to the people of your family, greet them all and greet them well."

They continued to come through for at least eight days, but their number decreased and a storm came and swept them away. Every Bambara will tell you that these caterpillars do not talk, that they have no soul. And yet if you try to make him understand that he has rendered them futile, useless, childish honors and that they could neither enjoy his music and songs nor understand his prayers and supplications, he will shrug his shoulders: "Tigné o (you are right)," he will tell you with a mocking air, and cutting your talk short will add: "Ou tara!", and one who knows the Bambara will guess the full implication: "Nevertheless, they left."

In August, 1908 a large part of the population of the villages 825 located in the environs of Ségou spent the day of Friday the twenty- 187 eighth in sweet idleness. Since I knew that a Kono fetish brought by its masters to recruit initiates was going from village /15/ to

304 326 recovers part of his tere. The organ is then held up by means of a small apparatus, mine naw, made of a millet stem split in two in the shape of a fork.

"Circumcision is a sacrifice" (1). It is only valid if blood has run,

1. Bolokoli ye saraka ye.

and any patient who has not wet the ground with his blood is wounded on the thigh by the circumciser. The same is true for a child born [732 582] without a foreskin. This detail must, moreover, be kept secret by the members of his age grade, since the revelation of a malformation might prevent the individual concerned from contracting a marriage (2).

2. A woman might believe that these malformations are the sign that the man who was operated upon has not lost his wanzo, a fact which would be a definite obstacle to marriage.

/186/ When all is finished, the operator, holding the foreskins in his hand, says these words before burying them:

"We have transferred the wanzo of the circumcised child, may the tere be well" (3).

3. Ãn ye dẽ bolokole wanzo fili la, tere ka ñe.

304 292 561 After this, the circumcised boys have their caps put first on their napes and foreheads representing the east-west direction, and then on the sides of their heads representing the north-south direction. All their strength resides from then on in the headpiece which they will wear night and day, without removing it, during the entire period of seclusion.

304 784 561 The approach to the site of the operation is formally forbidden to women and uncircumcised males. The one who might go there out of curiosity "would contract the wanzo" (wanzo ba nofe, "the wanzo follows him"). Any uncircumcised boy who might break this law would have to take the consequences at the time of his own operation

794 852 the Komo's blessings, the Komo's blessing is with him; let him join the men, let his light be with us" (1). The child is then presented in the same way to its grandmother.

794 These acts anticipate the initiation which later will make the newborn an adolescent member of the Komo society.

794 561 In each village this society is composed of all initiated men, divided into age grades, which are themselves composed, theoretically, of the men circumcised in the same year. Only the griot are not [564] admitted. It is permissible for an individual who has not been initiated immediately after his circumcision to be admitted later if the society agrees. He will belong, regardless of his age, to the age grade with which he will have been initiated.

One age grade has precedence over the other which follows. This hierarchical order is followed strictly in daily life as well as during councils and ceremonies. To break these rules of seniority would mean to disturb the order even in the hereafter, since the Komo gathers together the sum total of both living and dead members.

794 The recruitment of members varies from one region to another because of the expenses involved in the admission ceremony and in participation in the ritual. Some villagers refrain from joining be- [735] cause of poverty, and it also happens that some conversions to Islam are brought about by this fact.

/155/ The initiation is performed at night. The kotigi (2) presents to the future members, one by one, the ancestors' tools. He explains to them their origin, their history, their role, and their spiritual value. He teaches them the respect they owe the ancestors for their courage, their labors, and the technological inventions of which they were either initiators or guardians. The mask is removed from its shelter and dressed by a member; in front of the children the man who wears it unmasks himself and reveals to them the meaning of the different parts of the costume.

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1. De dyira la tyę gundo la; ani komo ye
dukaw mine nuofe, komo ka barka bi a fe;
ka fara tyew ka, ka yele kę an ta ye.

2. See p. 156.

763 764 deceased in case he had been killed by a genie (nyana). Sacrifices, alms, or the payment of a fine are necessary in that event, along with intervention by the priest of the nyana in question.

764 Most often, the body is turned over to a priest (nyana-n-tigi) [167] if the deceased was a member of a brotherhood.

● [735] In any event, it is customary to give alms at the crossroads near the village.

768 Further, the death of the fa puts an end (1) to the authority held by him, and this may have serious consequences, since for the moment everyone is virtually independent. That is why the servitor who had the master's confidence and who actually ran the establishment retains his role after taking certain precautions (2). In particular he must make sure that the movable property of the deceased is not carried off. He is familiar with these things, and he is the guardian responsible for them. He makes the women return the gold jewelry and valuable fabrics, puts everything in a safe place, and makes an inventory in the presence of the heir presumptive.

764 (b) Burial. The deceased may be buried in the ground within his hut or at least in a corner of his establishment. In former times there was a cemetery outside the village, often near the grove of the nyana dugu-da-siri (guardian genie of the village), and in such cases it was apparent that the more important the deceased, the nearer his tomb to the sacred place.

766 764 For persons of distinction there is usually a special kind of grave. It is about two meters long, and while the opening

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357 1. When a king of Kaarta died, the interruption in sovereignty often gave rise to serious anarchic disturbances.

2. This was the role that Ngolo Dyâra was seeking when he asked to be placed as "guard at the master's door."

764 574 Theoretically, all of this is supposed to be used to honor the dead, which is done in several ways. In the first place, it is obligatory to serve food and particularly drink to anyone who comes to present condolences. These meals and drinking bouts are a kind of communion since from everything consumed an offering is first made to the deceased and also [769] to the ancestors whom he has gone to join; it is a kind of communion with the departed members of the family.

These repasts and drinking bouts tend to develop into orgies, and the inexperienced or casual observer may think that they are carousals at the expense of the deceased. As a matter of fact, however, far from suffering a loss, the family of important persons receives more than it spends, at least for the time being (2). The more lavish the celebration, the more it is supposed to please the deceased and cause him to look favorably on his survivors.

764 735 In principle, everything not consumed is supposed to be given away as alms to the poor and not added to the family property. It is quite natural, therefore, that the poor of the village come to partake of the feast, and indeed, they are invited. They must be treated with much cordiality if the sentiment governing the feast conforms to the spirit of the custom. That is why the [171] chronicle tells of Nyana-n-koro, upon the death of Ngolo, claiming that the cowries given should be distributed to the poor, to travelers, and to all the needy; that is the true spirit of the custom, and that type of alms is particularly pleasing to the dead.

The funeral feasting continues for seven days, which are called dyansa, "alms." It is a time especially devoted to [537] condolences, called sanga-fo (1) "funerary discourse." The

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2. The family will have to behave reciprocally toward the families who have thus shown their respect when deaths later occur among them.

1. Literally, "sayings (for the sake) of the dead."

621 various reasons. Thus, the dugu-tigi in council can invoke
622 police powers to maintain order in the community and even act
692 as a tribunal to punish those whose misdeeds in any way en-
danger the persons or property of members of the community.

621 Since the genie is expected to ensure the prosperity of
622 the faithful, it is the duty of the dugu-tigi to come to the assist-
● [735] ance of members of the community who are unfortunate or in-
digent.

He must also maintain the relations of his community with the outside world, that is, with neighboring territorial communities and all other groupings, analogous or otherwise. He can act independently only in matters which we call purely administrative; for other matters he must have the assent of the council of fa, above all for any matter involving the disposal of community property.

621 It is obvious that all the roles of the dugu-tigi involve
622 expenses that are often considerable, but for this purpose he has
651 access to goods from many sources. In the first place, offerings
made to the nyana are of various kinds; they are not always
consumable, and even if they are, they are usually consumed
only in part. The remainder belongs to the dugu-tigi. It is
customary to give bunya (gifts of homage) to the dugu-tigi on
many occasions: a hunt, a fishing expedition, millet harvest,
etc.; to thank him for an allotment of land, or for some other
service. Community property is farmed out for fees payable at
fixed times, and tribute is paid in the same way. Most of the
various kinds of infractions committed within the community are
punished by fines received by the dugu-tigi. Incorrigible
malefactors become slaves of the community, and the produce
of their labors [233] goes to the dugu-tigi. Anything found
abandoned on land belonging to the community is turned over to
the dugu-tigi, in whole or in part.

In case of need arising through some exceptional emergency (war, an expedition, public works of various kinds, etc.), the dugu-tigi may have recourse to what we should call an emergency assessment, i.e., he may ask the members of the community for special contributions for the purpose.

689 Public violation of decency is punished by death.

684 For adultery, the man is put in irons and pays a fine, the woman is whipped by her husband, her brothers, or the Fama's police. Relations with a woman in mourning draws public scorn on the guilty, while a man who commits adultery with a pregnant woman is put to death. A captive who is the lover of his master's wife is put to death.

689 Vagrant individuals are presumed to be escaped captives and are handed over to the Fama.

735 Finally, begging is authorized, because, say the Bambara, it is better to have begging than stealing.

d. Responsibility

[608] The Fama judges all his subjects, except his own sénanku whom he has judged by his tribunal. The law is applicable to every circumcised man and excised woman recognized as sane. (The demented are put in irons.) They are responsible for their acts, but the family of the guilty is also responsible. The father of an uncircumcised boy is responsible for the boy's acts, the husband for the acts of his wife, and we have seen that a man's crime may lead to the punishment of his whole family. Let us further remark that a master was judge of his slave, but when a difference arose between slaves of different houses, their case was referred to the tribunal. The tribunal also weighed the death penalty [72] when a slave committed a grave fault. Finally, the foreigner who lives in the Bambara country is judged by Bambara laws.

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[609]

672 We must also note that the penalties apply to all crimes committed voluntarily; every infraction or damage involuntarily committed is excusable on the condition that it be immediately confessed. Thus it is that a hunter meeting a pair of lovers in the bush may kill them for outraging public decency, but must admit his crime immediately upon returning to the village.

[684]

e. Inheritance

428 Monteil has noticed an order of succession in the Ségou region which does not correspond to that described by other authors, such as Ortoli or Aubert. In fact, at the death of the fa, " . . . everything that belonged to him remains undivided under the new faya of

Chapter 6

Worship, Celebrations, Saraka, Sacrifices, and Dances in Honor of the Gnéna

1. The First Two Groups of Gnéna

781 The fundamental bases of all Bambara devotions are first, and
776 above all, fear and secondly, the desire to have everything without effort or work. The Bambara respect a strong, powerful being because it can punish and reward, and since their fetishes are not equal in power, they take care not to honor all equally.

776 The genii of the first two groups have no priest or official minister, and public, solemn sacrifices are offered them very rarely.
782 In the dry season, however, some festivals are held in their honor.
852 The chief participants are children, who on these days stuff themselves with /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, and with sorghum cakes. When they are full they take the leftovers outside the village to a place where paths cross, and many hens, dogs, and other animals come for the booty. The poor and unfortunate also come, for
● [735] they, too, may take their share; every saraka (1) belongs to them.

776 Little girls and boys take part in these festivals, but there is a
852 special one for unexcised girls, and those who are soon to be excised and are getting ready for this great event in Bambara life bear /106/ all the expenses. It is the celebration of soli basi k'li (1), of which I will speak at greater length in my chapter on circumcision,

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1. Tax, tribute, alms.

1. Soli, "young firls who will soon be excised"; basi, a kind of couscous with very small grains which distantly resembles semolina; k'li, "obtained by singing and clapping hands."

423 621 622 Thus, the man holding the land can neither sell it nor take any action regarding it which would involve the interests of the whole community; but he can rent it out, pledge it, or [62] cede it, which leads to manifold disputes at the time of redistribution of the land in the case of cyclical cultures.

621 622 652 The dugu-tigi also prepares the community's budget. The resources include: gifts made to the gods, thanksgiving offerings for the hunt, for the fishing catch, and for the millet harvest, payments for concession of land or for services rendered, rent of community goods (fixed revenues or exceptional tribute), receipts from fines, confiscations, escheatage, and finally, the extraordinary aid formerly obtained for war, constructions, etc.

[651 746] Among the expenditures are included the cost of supporting members of the community if need be, of maintaining the proper appearance, assistance to the sick, and, especially, the tax or tribute formerly paid to the sovereign, legitimate or not, and today paid to the French administration.

596 The family patrimony (tien) is administered by the fa, head of the family. A. Aubert (1) gives us the composition of this patrimony which includes: "Rights on the lands cultivated by the community; animals; serfs; money owed and money owing; the dowries of the daughters and women who are issue of members of the settlement; the inheritances; the dwellings of the settlement and their furnishings; the foodstuffs of the communal granaries (foro-ba), and, in general, all wealth resulting from the communal work of the family members."

Moreover, the fa must: "see to the material life of all the members of the family; provide dowries for the women of the community; pay back the dowries of the women of the community who are to be divorced; ransom members of the family who are taken prisoner or are sold, and pay taxes in goods or in money."

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1. A. Aubert, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Bougouni Circle)].

844 273 271 contact with water which symbolizes "the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni in the matter of family names" is a prefiguration of name-giving.

851 As soon as the patriarch hears of the birth, he comes and shakes the family pembele over the child's head, three or four times according to the sex, in order to pass on to him the nyama and the qualities of the deceased person from whom he has inherited the ni and the dya. Then, he brings the family altar kere la boli ni into the house of the woman who has just given birth and places it before him. Crouching upon the ground, with fingers spread over the object, he pronounces the following prayer: "You, boli, make me a chief, so that my family prospers, a child is /178/ born, his soul is entrusted to you; I invoke you, boli, night and day" (1).

1. Boli tigi i ka masaya kanu ñe, de wolo la, a ni kalifa be i la, ngo boli šu ani kle.

Holding the child on his knees, he places the object on its chest for three consecutive times. Repeating the prayer, he next cuts the throat of a red rooster over the open sac, dips the right index into the blood, and, depending upon whether it is a boy or a girl, makes three or four crosses on the forehead of the newborn who thus becomes the "son of the boli," boli dẽ.

A white sea shell, krokrodya (2), is placed before the newborn

2. Cardita vingens.

and gently moved about to "condense his dya within him." Then it is tied to the child's foot for three or four days according to its sex.

846 824 751 At the same time, the mother who is entrusted with the child's dya until the name-giving ritual, adorns herself during the eight days following the birth with a collar (madya, "dya of the person") made from the odoriferous root of the tree bearing the same name.* She will wear it until the child takes its first steps so as to protect it and to recall that she herself carried the soul of the newborn.

553 852 The name is given on the eighth day by the chief of the Komo. Under the dubale, a tree which shelters the village meetings, the elders assemble around the Komo altars which have been carried to the spot (3). If it is a first son, the father gives one hundred kola nuts,

778 emanating from the person or object impregnated with magic
789 force acts as if it were a part of that person or object. Often
[788] the magician or [154] ritual officiant spits on the person or
object involved in the rites. This is a means of transferring
one person's fluid to another.

Conversely, it is vital to know how to avoid contact
751 with, or even emanations from, a maleficent magic force.
789 That is the reason for the great number of mysterious magic
754 practices and the secret of the innumerable amulets that form
so many shields, to be placed presumably where they will best
protect against any blow. Therefore it is the magician's
prerogative to make amulets and to prescribe the conduct
necessary to preserve their efficacy.

It should be noted that protection set up against a given person is good only for him and is useless against a successor, for instance. The chronicle tells us that Bani, chief of Samba-Nyana, was successful in using certain artifices to prevent Ma-n-son from conquering him. But, kept in ignorance of Ma-n-son's death and having taken no precautions against Da, Ma-n-son's son and successor, Bani was conquered by Da, against whom his artifices availed nothing.

If one is caught in spite of precautions, what is to be done? Everyone is afflicted in one way or another in any event. A Bambara is always inclined to believe in some sort of supernatural intervention. He has on hand some sort of remedy, but more often he resorts to a "seer" for guidance or, if the case requires, to a magician's skill.

Native medicine is a mass of magic formulas and of remedies strikingly reminiscent of the pharmacopeia of the Middle Ages (see, in the foregoing, father Niany's operations).

[571] The individual does not live as an isolated unit but
789 rather as an integral part of a community. In the society in
which he lives, however restricted it may be, he progressively
783 occupies various situations. On both physical and moral levels,
he undergoes changes and, depending on circumstances, whether
fortunate or unfortunate happenings, changes take place within
him. In short, his magic potential varies. These variations
are always believed to concern the entire milieu, upon which
they may (in the case of illness or death) have disastrous effects.

844 good taste. The placenta is buried outdoors near the hut or sometimes in the floor of the hut itself. The mother is washed and often given an infusion to drink which is alleged to stop bleeding.

The baby is washed several times and then anointed with vegetable fat (1) (se tlu) or butter made from cow's milk. Its head is massaged to give it a nice shape, and then the baby is wrapped in a white cloth.

The child is usually not fed for the first 24 hours, although it is sometimes given a few drops of goat's milk, a beverage with mystical qualities. It is then given the breast.

851 At the earliest possible moment the father must be informed of the birth and sex of the child. Indeed, he is brought in by the woman who cut the cord, and the mother shows him the baby, pointing out any body characteristic which seems to her a manifest sign that the child is a reincarnation [211] of a deceased member of the family or other evidence that there has been some influence from the invisible world.

[203] The same woman informs the local authorities (dugu-tigi, nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc.) and the people in the vicinity; the news spreads rapidly.

846 The mother resumes her normal activities as soon as possible and is often on her feet within 24 hours. In any event, she never remains in bed for more than a week, unless it is absolutely impossible for her to get up. For seven or eight days, however, she remains in seclusion. Furthermore, particularly in Kaarta, her food is prepared exclusively by girl friends of her choice.

The detachment of the umbilical cord marks the end of [751] this period of seclusion. In Kaarta the cord is preserved and placed in a small bag which is tied around the baby's neck; later on it will be made into a precious talisman. It is only after the detachment of the cord that the child is considered to be definitely

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1. Known to Europeans as karite, originally a Soninké word.

789 Animals also have gnâma, and the gnâma of birds are among
778 those most feared. By preference, they attack little children, who
825 die in convulsions as a result; it is impossible to mistake the cause
of their illness and death, since the hands and feet of the child curl
153 up like a bird's claws. Birds are thought to be especially wicked in
winter time, undoubtedly because they nest, find plenty of food, and
● [751] are big, fat, and vigorous. During that season mothers tie around
the necks of nursing infants a string that has nine knots in it, which
places them under the protection of their gnâma. Birds keep their
gnâma even when dead, and I remember that in November or December,
1907, all the village of Songhobougou attributed a small influenza
epidemic to the death of a big black bird (the djougo), which a
European killed in one of their fields. "We have pains in our kidneys,
we have pains in our throats, and we cough," they said dismally,
"and the hunter is to blame for it all. Toubabou ko té vva? A ye
djougo do fa en ka forola, djougo gnâma dó.... It is the European's
fault, he killed a djougo in our fields and we are weighed down with
gnâma." /29/

Chapter 2

Animism and Its Consequences

1. The Beliefs about Spirits

776 The Bambara has not deified the forces of nature. Although in some instances he shows them respect and fears them, he leaves them without priest, /sacrificial/ victim, or altar: he is not a "nature worshipper" in the strict sense of the word; his true religion is animism. His spiritualism knows no bounds and he sees genii just about everywhere. The bush is full of these spirits; they lodge in the trees or lounge astride branches; they run around the outskirts of villages; splash in ponds and wells; they pull themselves onto high rocks,

152 After all, what can one do about an evil that cannot be exorcised
except to bear it? What can one do against a powerful being that
cannot be disarmed? Nevertheless, in the depth of his being he feels
a need to enjoy himself (and enjoyment for him consists in drinking,
eating, sleeping, and procreating); therefore he feels a horror of all
suffering and neglects nothing that can protect him from it. In order
751 to live in peace, he reddens everything a little with blood and covers
789 his body with grigris or good-luck charms, with talismans that change
the course of things and even of nature, and lastly amulets which will
forearm him against poison, help him avoid an accident, cause the
sorcery of the malicious to miscarry, send away the gnâma of the
genii, of the living and the dead, and prevent the unknown forces
which are found more or less everywhere in nature from taking hold of
the wearer. For this protection they address themselves to the priests
of the djiné and the boli, and especially to the sorcerers who have
close contacts with the genii and are the mediators between man and
the entire invisible world.

776 782 Since the Bambara conceived the visible and invisible world as similar to what he believes himself to be, he has come to believe quite naturally and without any effort that the genii can be seen and conversed with their language understood and, finally, that it is possible to subjugate the forces of nature and hold them in one's power. By making offerings and sacrifices or causing them to be made through the intermediary of a priest, he can win a spirit's favor and thus lessen his fears and terrors. But if the spirit is weak, they will be ready to withdraw their attentions; it must be equal to the one feared and if possible outdo it.

778 791 It is force, or, to use their term, fanga, that governs each person's conduct toward his neighbor; to be obeyed, a man must first cause himself to be feared, and only a powerful man will succeed and see everything yield before him. /34/

The Negroes have seen people of low birth and poor family succeed in increasing their property and become rich to the point of where they have servants and slaves and dominate a whole village, a whole tribe, or a whole people. Since they like to reason from

755 hoof or in an ox's horn; these horns and hoofs /46/ are often decorated
with *cauri*, and from time to time the blood of a victim is poured on
them. If a disease is a force, a power which torments human beings,
the remedy is another force, another power which is opposed to the
first and fights against it. In order to obtain the good graces of this
second force as well as its efficacy, people feed it with blood. The
kana is of general use; it cures all ills a little, and just as each *boli*
fetish possesses a *korti*, or harmful powder, enclosed in a horn, so also
it possesses its *kana*, or healing remedy. Since there are as many
different *kana* as there are fetishes, and since, independent of these,
the sorcerers also have theirs, the *kana* are legion and cannot be counted.
It is impossible to say what goes into the making of a *kana*, and the
Negroes themselves do not know; they know that charcoal powder
goes into it, and that is all. A sorcerer of *Kolo*. *n*. *kolona*, much
consulted for orchitis, varicocele, etc., etc., uses glow worms dried
in the sun and crushed with a handful of wood charcoal.

[752] Wounds resulting from a bruise caused by a blow or a fall are
treated by throwing a handful of ashes into them. The ashes are obtained
from dry leaves gathered in the evening in complete darkness
under trees deep within thickets, and at random and without looking.

To cure a malady called "strained back," one or several snake
sinews are worn as a belt. A hen's craw, exposed to the sun for three
days and then cut into thin slices and swallowed with all its contents,
will develop an appetite for you for the rest of your days, to the point
[752] of insatiability. For burns a poultice of rabbit fur and barbs of guinea-fowl
feathers is the sovereign remedy.

To treat rabies, the Bambara have no need of the Pasteur Institute
or serum. A person who has been bitten by a rabid dog climbs on
a nearby bush, a friend comes and cuts it down, the whole thing falls
and rolls on the ground, and rabies are no longer to be feared; they
are entirely exorcised. A thread on which a *cauri* is strung, knotted
[751] around the loins, protects a child from blackwater fever, and a string
with seven or nine knots, called the *tafo*, when knotted around the
neck, will save you from goiter, croup, laryngitis, a persistent cough,
etc. The *tafo* is used in a general way, just /47/ like the *kana*; it is
employed for almost all illnesses, and there is no malady that it

776 and for all, and since then He has simply lived, resting in sweet "idleness" .... Let us not think, however, that the Negro is without religion; he is excessively religious and he spends his life sacrificing, squandering flour, and scattering the blood of victims uselessly, for the sole benefit of vultures.

Believing that he can expect nothing from God, he calls upon the djiné or gnéna who are in charge of the elements, each having absolute power in its sphere. Doubtless the latter are unable to change the whole universal order established by the Creator and Soverign Lord of all things -- au tigi ("our Lord") ani fen /85/ bê tigi yé ("and Lord of all things") --, but they can grant a material (1) blessing, turn away a misfortune, and reward or punish.

The gnéna is reminiscent of the djin of the Koran (Chap. VI, XXX, VIII, XLI). It is a being intermediate between men and angels. "Ma si fa do do, it is a kind of man," say the Negroes, and in fact it does resemble a man since it eats, drinks, amuses itself, marries, and has children. /2/ Many even believe them /gnéna/ to be clothed, and in the late evening it is not unusual to hear a storyteller /conteur/ say of them: "Sanou b'oufé. Wari b'oufé. Bagi fana b'oufé. They have gold. They have silver. They also have fabrics." Above all they have might!. They are powerful, and although some people wear
776 little bags of cloth or leather and strings with seven and nine knots --
751 as amulets --, and claws of wild animals, deer and goats horns, tafo

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[782] 1. A Negro does not have the idea of asking a supernatural blessing.

2. In the sacrifices it is called ma, "man," and the name of the object in which it is found is added to this word. Thus ma djala ba, "great false-cedar man," etc. /No text reference to this footnote. Tr./

776 of leather wrapped in the hide of an anteater or monkey, etc. -- as
751 talismans -- which protect them from their blows; although there are diviners, sorcerers, and certain hunters and blacksmiths (*noumou*), etc., on whom these invisible beings have no hold, it is nonetheless true that they are feared, held in awe by all, that they are honored and their
776 good graces sought. Moreover, they give good luck, good fortune, and success to their friends and preserve them from a host of evils -- spells, sorcery, poverty, sickness, etc. -- springing from an enemy's rancor.

The worship of the *gnéna*, beings intermediate between angels and men, is among the oldest. Its origin is lost in the dark of the ages, and, unlike that of the *boli* or *gnâ*, of which I will speak later, it has no history. Since they are not all equally strong and powerful, I have divided them into three main groups: those that live in the bush, those that roam in the villages and their environs, and finally those that are really interested in the Bambara and actually protect them. /3/ /86/

3. See *Anthropos*, Vol. III (1908), part 4 /J. M. Henry, "Le Culte des esprits chez les Bambara (Spirit Worship among the Bambara). There is no text reference to this footnote which appears on text page 85. Tr./

2. *Gnéna* Who Dwell in the Bush

These /*gnéna*/ hide in thickets and perch on trees, and they are terrible only during the day, at high noon and in ~~the~~ greatest heat. Woe to him who at that time disturbs them in their walks, climbs on the trees they have chosen for a home, or tries to prune the branches on which they are frolicking or resting. They do not like children at all! For these little vandals, always running and climbing to catch lizards, rob nests, and stuff themselves with fruit, they have reserved violent headaches and stomach-aches. Often, too, they make them lame, blind, deaf and dumb, crazy, etc., and there is no village where one is not shown some of their victims (1).

778 791 The Bambara consult these sorcerers to find out the future and to draw their horoscopes or good luck. The fee for a seance is not at all unreasonable; it seldom exceeds the moderate sum of 40 cowrie shells, or one sou.

Concerning the Sirikoun

778 754 Every great boli includes an object called sirikoun. There are other sirikoun which are no longer parts of boli, but have become actual boli. The latter are hung at the waist and are always /156/ covered with a red cloth. Almost everyone owns them, although they are most frequently in the hands of the owners and sacrificers of great fetishes. They are usually ends of the tails of cows, horses, wild pigs, etc., and are often sprinkled with blood. They are sought in order to cast a spell or sorcery on an enemy, to make him sick, and even cause him to die, or again to protect oneself from a spell, sorcery, sickness, or death. [751]

The sirikoun and the talking boli are fetishes belonging to individuals; they have neither festivals nor formal sacrifices, and they are not publically worshipped.

Chapter 8

The First Years in the Life of a Bambara

1. The Sexual Morality of the Bambara

181 Those who have seen the Bambara and have the slightest acquaintance with them will not hesitate to tell you: "They are liars and thieves." They certainly never pass up a chance to take the property of another, and they lie boldly and with such complete calm that not a muscle in their bodies flinches. This has always surprised

881 796 festival lasts as long as there is d'lo. After a few hours of sleep, before the noon meal, the excised girls come back, and around the well there is an endless babel punctuated by joyous laughter as they wash their loincloths, the cloths soiled by the dust of the night, and as they mend gourds, the dishes of this country. The pure Bambara girls, those who are not of the blacksmith caste nor of the "Marka" people of more or less mixed stock, have lost their grace and beauty and seem quite comical with their shaved heads. Just as at six to eight days [300] after birth the head of the village, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, priest of the dasiri fetish, made motions over their heads and cut their hair, since the "hair of the womb" is not allowed to be seen in public, so at the da woro, six days after circumcision, they lose it again, since they cannot enter life with the hair of childhood; a dirty handkerchief replaces the locks of which they were so proud, they are without bead or jewel, and on their foreheads, in place of the multicolored crown, ● [751] is the string with nine knots called the tafo, and it is fastened in back at the nape of the neck to the string called the djo, which is intended to protect them from sore throat, mumps, headache, and just about all illnesses.

4. The Festival of the Boloko Déou Don Bo, The Coming Out of the Circumcised and the Excised, The Real Entry into Civil and Religious Life

881 883 After the da woro, the festival of the sixth day, the circumcised boys go back under the sacred tree outside the village, and the excised girls return to their huts. They take up again their life of "sweet idleness," and their little excursions in a group, at specified hours, to satisfy the wants of nature. They also have their days of big excursions. When the markets take place, they go to cut thorns at some 100 meters from the village. They bar the paths, set up /193/ a barricade, and ask every passer-by for a doua-mo, a share of the market. From habit, and especially from fear of the cuffings that are readily given out and of the spirits that watch over and protect the young people, everybody obeys and pays the toll. In addition to fish tails they also take in enough cowrie shells to buy a bit of meat and make themselves a treat.

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[823]

1. In the eyes of the Negroes this ceremony is not a bloodless sacrifice but a simple prayer; and the water is poured to give the words greater emphasis, since in their eyes it is the element without which nothing lives nor can live.

the wind blows from the west or the east, from the north or the south, may it be favorable to us. Give us a long life, many descendants, wives and prosperity." The audience answers, "Amina -- o dé ka ké (let it be so)," and, using hoes hafted in reverse so that the curve of the blade is on the outside, the youths fill the grave. The drums beat again, and the women clap their hands and improvise a song whose words usually can be reduced to these: "Our father is dead, we have been told he is dead. But he will come back! Young men, fill the grave well, so that no souba, no hyena, nor any wild animal can take away the corpse."

764 When the grave is filled, the one who is holding the strip of cloth attached to the blouse, or the shroud, of the deceased pulls it toward him until it tears and remains in his hands. This ribbon is a ●[151] precious relic of which tafo are made; they are a protection from a host of evils, especially throat ailments and gnâma. The coarse mat (tjékala or kara) which was the bed or the seat of the deceased, quite often together with his shoes and the small earthen pot that was his wash basin, are laid on the tomb. If the deceased was a woman, pieces of a gourd, fragments of a hearth, or the stick for stirring gruel (to-n-galama) are thrown onto the tomb instead of the wash basin. The pliant mat in which the corpse was wrapped is often given to a friend. The latter goes and burns it outside the village, or before entering his own village if he is a foreigner; he says: "Here is a mat on which no one will die from now on."

[777] 764 782 Wednesday and Saturday are two unlucky days. On these days strangers never present their condolences to the bereaved family, and if a burial takes place, a small white chicken is killed and given to the deceased so that he can placate the spirits as soon as the grave

194 196 attacked /206/ the fighters. Between dances the participants drink beer brought to the spot for the occasion in order to nourish the invisible beings which they represent.

[262] All the participants also eat a dish made up of peas, beans, groundnuts, rice, manioc, millet, fonio, cooked with baobab leaves and karite oil. This mixture is identified with the spirits' struggle with the clouds which they supposedly swallow at the height of the battle. When the ceremony draws to an end, the chief sends the women and children home and fetches the kwore boli which he swings eighteen times over the square.

In a file, the members of the society return to the tree to "bring back" the Kworè which, while invisible, has been present at all the ceremonies. They circle around the tree singing to the rhythm of the drums. Then they put out their torches and throw them at the foot of the tree along with the whips before returning to their homes. [752] Their wounds and burns are cared for by their wives with water from the Kworè altar, this medication bearing the name of kworɛ kane (remedy of the Kworè).

The same dances and the comings out of the mask take place three days in succession. On the fourth day the chief and the elders, all undressed, crawl to the sanctuary for the annual sacrifice offered inside it. The chief gathers the thunder stones collected during the past year and places them in the sack containing the altars which are to be sold.

To "clarify" the mirrors, he pours millet mash over them; he cut the throat of fowls and places kola nut juice over the snake and the ñõ boli; he next fills the ñõ boli with millet previously taken from that of the Komo. With the remaining seeds he makes a mash with which to pour a libation over the sack. He next passes a burning twig of straw over the snake while saying:

"You, snake, you do not fear the fire; you must not fear fire and rain" (1).

1. E ngorongo e ma sira tasuma ne e kana sira sandyi tasuma ñe.

The effect of this action is to prepare the snake by means of these burns and to attract lightning whose effects it must not fear.

326 791 Raffenel has given us an interesting portrait of one of these Bambara blacksmiths, whom he called father Niany, whose guest he was at Foutobi (Kaarta). He saw him act successively as fa, as priest of the manes and of the guardian spirits of the family, as doctor, and as exorcist. He was always alert, always excited and ever watching for the thousand manifestations of the invisible and hastening either to cooperate with them or to force them to do his will.

Here are some excerpts concerning the highly characteristic personage, father Niany: 752

"I saw a small child die of a snake-bite," reports Raffenel (2): "the poor creature was hideous and swollen up like a balloon. Its mother had laid it [144] down in a field of millet which she was hoeing. A snake appeared (1) and bit the child. The mother misinterpreted its cries and offered her breast. Soon, however, the swelling became evident and the child had died within 24 hours." ....

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2. In Nouveau voyage au pays des nègres [A New Journey to the Land of the Negroes], Vol. 1, p. 417.

[137] 1. "These snakes are 50 centimeters long and about 4 centimeters in diameter. Their back is gray, with very conspicuous black rings around the body. They have white bellies and a flat head rounded at the end. The part nearest the tail is covered on the upper surface by a series of vertical scales covering about a quarter of the length of the body. The tail is much smaller in diameter than the body. They like the outskirts of villages and are markedly fond of the roofs of houses." (Raffenel)

752 "A few days after the child's death, a woman in the house was also bitten, just a step from my hut and by a similar snake. Old Niany was summoned and came at once. I was not aware that he had any knowledge of medical matters but, on seeing the confidence shown him, I realized that this was not a new experience for him.

"His medication consisted, first, of ridiculous gestures and a spate of incoherent words spoken very rapidly. Then he brought out from under his boubou [robe] a small horn containing a black and oily ointment. The injured woman, who seemed very calm, prepared her own bandage and placed the ointment on the wound, adding some ground root which the old man took from another horn. When she had finished, it was Niany's turn. He muttered some more words, put his finger into his ears and took out some stuff, which was apparently there in quantity, and carefully spread it over the ointment. The woman then arose and returned to her work.

"I watched this treatment with a lively interest since I knew that I myself might have need of it at any time. For the same reason I often asked after the woman and was always told that she was getting on well. On the third day, I was told that she was completely cured and that there had been no swelling or pain to keep her from performing her usual chores.

"The snake that had bitten her was nevertheless of [145] the same type as the one that had caused the child's death. I saw and held in my hands both snakes; I saw the remedy applied and I have faithfully described it. Are we to believe in the virtue of grigri and in the omniscience of the Aesculapius of Foutobi, or must we give an unorthodox twist to the aphorism which says that faith conquers all?

"In any case, I firmly resolved to trust myself to the learned hands of Niany if the need should arise.

"When I went to Niany to congratulate him on his remarkable cure, I reminded him of the death of the child who had been treated in the same way. The singular logic of the blacksmith's reply has no doubt been encountered before: 'that's not 811 at all strange,' he told me, 'since my remedy cures only those who believe in it and the little child did not believe.' "....

755 hoof or in an ox's horn; these horns and hoofs /46/ are often decorated with cauri, and from time to time the blood of a victim is poured on them. If a disease is a force, a power which torments human beings, the remedy is another force, another power which is opposed to the first and fights against it. In order to obtain the good graces of this second force as well as its efficacy, people feed it with blood. The kana is of general use; it cures all ills a little, and just as each boli fetish possesses a korti, or harmful powder, enclosed in a horn, so also it possesses its kana, or healing remedy. Since there are as many different kana as there are fetishes, and since, independent of these, the sorcerers also have theirs, the kana are legion and cannot be counted. It is impossible to say what goes into the making of a kana, and the Negroes themselves do not know; they know that charcoal powder goes into it, and that is all. A sorcerer of Kolo, n. kolona, much consulted for orchitis, varicocele, etc., etc., uses glow worms dried in the sun and crushed with a handful of wood charcoal.

● [752] Wounds resulting from a bruise caused by a blow or a fall are treated by throwing a handful of ashes into them. The ashes are obtained from dry leaves gathered in the evening in complete darkness under trees deep within thickets, and at random and without looking.

To cure a malady called "strained back, " one or several snake sinews are worn as a belt. A hen's craw, exposed to the sun for three days and then cut into thin slices and swallowed with all its contents, will develop an appetite for you for the rest of your days, to the point [752] of insatiability. For burns a poultice of rabbit fur and barbs of guinea-fowl feathers is the sovereign remedy.

To treat rabies, the Bambara have no need of the Pasteur Institute or serum. A person who has been bitten by a rabid dog climbs on a nearby bush, a friend comes and cuts it down, the whole thing falls and rolls on the ground, and rabies are no longer to be feared; they are entirely exorcised. A thread on which a cauri is strung, knotted [751] around the loins, protects a child from blackwater fever, and a string with seven or nine knots, called the tafo, when knotted around the neck, will save you from goiter, croup, laryngitis, a persistent cough, etc. The tafo is used in a general way, just /47/ like the kana; it is employed for almost all illnesses, and there is no malady that it

776 woman carries within her. (1) Deprived of Faro's essentially im-
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1. See G. Dieterlen, "Mécanisme de l'impureté chez les Dogon" /The Mechanism of Impurity Among the Dogon/ Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 17 (1947), pp. 82 ff.

pregnating power and contrary to its generating action, this blood is considered evil, and all that recalls it or comes near it is excluded from the ritual.

Faro's Character, Role, and Deed

776 The principal characteristics of Faro's deed in creation are: omnipotence, omnipresence, and benevolence. Everything, whether animate or inanimate, depends on him in time and space.

The Bambara are extremely sensitive to Faro's power over the universe. They say: "Neither by day nor by night does Faro stop his incessant work." He sees to the efficient workings of the order which he inaugurated and which requires constant attention. His time is divided: from dawn until evening he occupies himself with the earth and its inhabitants; the next twelve hours' work is devoted to aquatic animals and members of his own family. Procreation depends on his will; it is he who, in the sky and in the water, controls the physical and spiritual life of all beings: the soul and vital force. In due order, with which the humans cooperate by observing his laws, he maintains life and makes the new bodies participate in the functioning of the universe according to a regular rhythm. Souls are reincarnated, assuring the continuity of spiritual forces in the world. The same power directs all acts of individual and social life: birth, circumcision, excision, initiation, marriage, agricultural work, voyages, war or peace.

Throughout the development of individual life, it is Faro who maintains man's physical integrity: he gives him health, necessary to action. Sickness is always /53/ considered a loss of strength which the individual must ask Faro to restore. The sovereign master of man's life, he has the power to take it away from him.

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825 village. I thought at first that here lay the reason for this rest, extraordinary
781 during the time of the most intensive hoeing. Not at all; the
pagan Bambara were resting, and the women were giving their husbands
[262] and children dégé (millet flour mixed with milk and honey
water) in obedience to a hyena's command. The hyena, it was said
-- and all the sorcerers confirmed this -- had emerged from its dumbness,
its tongue had been loosed, and it had predicted to the people
of the west that a plague even more terrible than that of the caterpillars
would descend on the country. Only one means to avert it
remained: to refrain from going to the fields on Friday and to treat
themselves to dégé, the food so dear to Moslems.

482 On my excursions I have often met men and women carrying
751 on their heads a gourd or a basket containing a handful of leaves or
824 some bundles of roots, and apart from the customary greetings it
784 has been impossible for me to get a word out of them. And why this
silence? They were carrying a medicinal plant, a remedy which
would lose all its virtue and all its efficacy if they conversed on the
way, and they had to take care not to trample such-and-such a plant
that grew on the edge of the path.

757 The Bambara quite readily names the plants and herbs whose
753 curative powers are known to him, and yet in the presence of a sick
784 person he will very seldom give you the name of the remedy the
latter is taking, or the names of the roots and leaves that make up
his poultices. Sickness, he believes is a force, a power which tortures
our bodies. He is afraid that in naming the remedy he would provide
this power with a weapon against its healing virtue, which is
another force or power. He sets the second power against the first
to make it leave.

811 It is evident that he attributes bits of reason and emotion to
784 everything, that he attributes human feelings to all that is animate
and inanimate. The "taboos" are not merely one piece of evidence
of this, they are an irrefutable proof of this attitude.

789 Animals also have gnâma, and the gnâma of birds are among
778 those most feared. By preference, they attack little children, who
825 die in convulsions as a result; it is impossible to mistake the cause
of their illness and death, since the hands and feet of the child curl
●153 up like a bird's claws. Birds are thought to be especially wicked in
winter time, undoubtedly because they nest, find plenty of food, and
[751] are big, fat, and vigorous. During that season mothers tie around
the necks of nursing infants a string that has nine knots in it, which
places them under the protection of their gnâma. Birds keep their
gnâma even when dead, and I remember that in November or December,
1907, all the village of Songhobougou attributed a small influenza
epidemic to the death of a big black bird (the djougo), which a
European killed in one of their fields. "We have pains in our kidneys,
we have pains in our throats, and we cough," they said dismally,
"and the hunter is to blame for it all. Toubabou ko té vva? A ye
djougo do fa en ka forola, djougo gnâma do.... It is the European's
fault, he killed a djougo in our fields and we are weighed down with
gnâma." /29/

Chapter 2

Animism and Its Consequences

1. The Beliefs about Spirits

776 The Bambara has not deified the forces of nature. Although in some instances he shows them respect and fears them, he leaves them without priest, /sacrificial/ victim, or altar: he is not a "nature worshipper" in the strict sense of the word; his true religion is animism. His spiritualism knows no bounds and he sees genii just about everywhere. The bush is full of these spirits; they lodge in the trees or lounge astride branches; they run around the outskirts of villages; splash in ponds and wells; they pull themselves onto high rocks,

789 564 754 who operate in the depth of night, " but by no means refers to nocturnal sorcerers. Moreover, in the eyes of the Negroes it designates not a bugaboo, but a reality.

themselves into hyenas in order to dig up corpses and eat them, and into *gingin* ("owl, " "screech owl") to drink the blood of sleeping men and women. It is said that the blood of young girls has an especially exquisite taste, /39/ and when the *souba* are unable to enter a dwelling in material form to obtain it, they change themselves into such a rarefied breath that they go through the walls and roofs.

753 789 754 All persons whose faces are disfigured with scars resulting from boils or canker sores are considered victims of a *souba*, as are those whose legs are rotted by syphilis; every person infected by erysipelas goes to the members of the *Siri* sect, the *souba*.

791 789 In addition to the *souba* there are the *gné-fla* (1), men with two eyes, with second sight, so called because they see the world of invisible beings and know the secret thoughts of men without having to undergo metamorphosis. Some of them are good and some evil; there are those who use their prerogatives to halt the blows of the *souba* and protect their fellows, and others who use them only to harm their neighbors. As the good as well as the evil can abuse their power, the Negroes keep them all together, and since the *souba* are almost always *gné-fla* as well, they are indiscriminately feared and hated.

1, They are supposed to have the ability to make themselves invisible by means of grisgris hung on their belts. Deprived of these, they are powerless.

789 When a person is metamorphosed into something else he keeps his intelligence and his reason, but he is dominated by an instinct, either good or evil, which destroys his will and anesthetizes him.

Chapter 3

The Bambara's General Ideas on Human Life

1. Sickness

152 753 In his innermost being the Bambara feels an ever unassuaged thirst for happiness, an intense and pressing need to live for enjoyment; therefore he revolts against all suffering, both physical and mental. It seems unnatural to him, and at the least discomfort a person will state and believe that he is the victim of malice, of an enemy who is taking vengeance, and he immediately blames the world of invisible beings and those who have intimate relations with it.

753 Not only do the Bambara consider sickness unnatural, they consider it a more or less conscious force which comes to torture them. For fear of displeasing it or of displeasing the genie, the superior force which has taken it into its service and is using it as it pleases, they surround themselves with precautions against announcing the sickness of one of their people. When one asks a Negro for news of his health, his first answer will be that he is well, and if a member of his family is confined to his mat in agony, he will still tell you: "Toro si t'âla (1), he is suffering no pain."

1. Toro, "suffering" ; si, "not any"; te, "is not"; â la, "on him" (la, "on").

755 The sick have unlimited confidence in their sorcerers, who are all doctors and apothecaries, and they submit blindly and without any argument to their orders and prescriptions. From them they receive herbs and leaves, and the infusions or brews made from these are prescribed as beverages or lotions, but most /45/ frequently the sorcerers rub their clients' bodies and gently stroke them, anoint them with oil and grease and spit on the affected part while reciting a formula. And always, of course, the number of grigris and talismans in the possession of the patient is increased by several items.

754 674 become detached and fall of their own accord "if they are well made and have lost none of their complete power"; he also has a mass of antidotes. Almost always he escapes with nothing more than a few days on his mat and a good stomach-ache, and although his convalescence may be long and can sometimes go on indefintely, at least he is shown sympathy; he gets a big share in the sacrifices offered by his friends, and his broth improves.

754 278 If the korti are many and cannot be numbered -- "each fetish has its own" -- the dounkono are still more numerous, for in addition to the fetishes, the sorcerers, elders, men, and women, all know how to prepare a poison and give it whatever strength and power is desired. Every poison produces a special disorder in the body depending on the hand that throws or pours it. When in doubt, the Bambara consult the being who never deceives and cannot be mistaken: the sorcerer! And it is usually he who prescribes the antidote.

754 673 In the eyes of the Bambara, pouring poison (dounkono di) or throwing it (korti sou) is a blameworthy act, and those who are guilty of it have a dismal reputation among their fellows. One should not be surprised to see this crime remain unpunished, however, for in their eyes it does not bear the same odium as an overt or concealed murder by main force. I might even say, without fear of error, that this way of taking revenge is for them not a crime in the strict sense of the word. They so often have recourse to fetishes to settle a dispute and so readily threaten an enemy with the wrath of the gods, that taking vengeance through their intermediary leaves them calm and without any remorse. Besides, with what reproach should we reproach one who does so? It is true that he is cruel and without pity, /56/ but who gives power to the powder that he pours and the powder that he throws? It is the god, the fetish, and it alone is guilty! So let the enemy obtain the fetish's good graces and ward off its blows by sacrificing, let him set a more powerful god against it.

761 153 As one can see to the Bambara there is nothing natural about physical and mental suffering and death; there is always an intermediary, and suffering and death are caused by an enemy who is taking vengeance, by a wicked person, by a sorcerer, or by a fetish.

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1. To understand this belief of the Negro, read the chapter on sickness and death.

The most famous and terrible of all these invisible little beings of the bush, who are without official minister or priest but to whom many offerings nevertheless are made, is the wokolo. It is black as soot, with a skin like a monkey's, and no larger than an infant of one or two months. It likes to appear, and one can say that no Negro reaches thirty without having seen it. Although sometimes during the most severe heat or in the evening by the light of the moon, it runs along the banks of the river, throwing into the stream its tiny line, almost invisible and finer than a hair, it prefers the bush and the butter tree; the karité (Bassia parkii) is its prime favorite. With quiver slung over its shoulder and bow always strung, it lies in wait, and woe betide anyone who comes by and disturbs it. To defeat it and force it to beat a retreat, the one who comes upon it must greet it as soon as he sees it, but usually it is invisible and shoots him with its arrow, an arrow so small that he does not even feel it penetrate the flesh. It is this [753] arrow that causes the deep pussy abscesses (2) from which our Negroes suffer.

2. Like all superstitious and weak-minded people, the Negro believes that he has actually seen what are but imaginary dreams and wishes.

Many of these invisible beings have no name. The least sociable are those that live in the false cedars, for to subdue them /87/ one must be a noumou (blacksmith), a koulé (digger of canoes, mender of gourds), etc. Only such persons dare to deal the first stroke of the ax to these trees and cut them down (1).

[788]

1. Before doing so they recite a formula, and the first stroke of the ax is dealt by the chief of the blacksmiths, etc., or his deputy.

178 194 Niger after which the reconstitution of the altar is carried on and is equivalent to "the taking on a new soul." Each family member comes to the aid of the party concerned: the father gives copper, the women, peppers, the children, charcoal; a new cowrie is removed from Faro's granary.

178 194 154 The mbendyugukã (literally, I am on the enemy) is an individual altar which permits its owner to overcome his adversaries and even to attack their life.

The person who wishes to own one makes it after the death of an enemy. He goes secretly to unearth the corpse, shaves off its hair, cuts off its tongue and nails, and removes the eyes.

An elderly owner of such an altar takes it with him to the person who wishes to make one. The latter prepares and mixes the ingredients according to a special ritual and ties them to a hyena's tail. Before a witness who belongs to his age grade, the elder rubs the new altar on the old one seven times while reciting a prayer to consecrate it; he then returns it to its owner (1).

1. Because of its evil powers, the altar may not be made and entrusted to its owner except in the presence of a known witness.

The symbolism of the various parts composing it explain the use to which this altar will later be put. The tongue of the dead man contains his voice and gives to that of the owner the strength to convince those who contradict him in arguments as well as in council meetings. The eyes of the dead man permit him to see what others may not see, or even to blind his enemies by poisoning them with his nails. The hair, evidence of the other parts /134/ of the corpse, contains the nyama of the deceased and is an essential part of the mbendyugukã.

[595] The owner of this altar, which excludes the number four, marries only three wives. Moreover, he cannot mix his own hair with that of another without risking death.

[782] Because of its aggressive character, the mbendyugukã demands victims, dogs or roosters, of red coloring. It gives to whomever owns it a strength which will always be greater than that of his competitors in whatever he may undertake.

778 794 754 For this reason it receives sacrifices at the time when the fields are being worked, for trade, marriage, war, and hunting where the person risks his life; it helps to fight illness and death. Immediately after the first sacrifice, it captures the personality and aggressiveness of the dead man and puts them on its owner, making him doubly dangerous to those with whom he is in conflict. But on the other hand, the danger may turn against him and, to a greater extent than anyone else, he risks his life at the slightest broken taboo.

Furthermore, the Komo who disapproves of such operations may, if he considers it useful, loosen the dead man's nyama on the person who is using his spiritual forces and put him in danger of death. Thus a Bambara will hesitate a long time before owning such an altar; in fact very few individuals assume this heavy responsibility.

C. The Chief's Seat

778 622 In the courtyard of the home of a family head or village chief can be found a pile of wood stuck on the ground and called dyamana tigi ǰigi (literally, support of the owner of the world) (Fig. 11). This seat symbolizes at once the chief, his power, his social and religious role of supporting the group (1).

1. The seat described below was observed at Banankoroni in the courtyard of the village chief. A similar one is found at Soroba.

The pieces of bent wood which compose it are planted rather deep into the earth above a series of objects. One of these pieces, with a simple bend (in a) is called sinzin, support; the two others, shaped like a T, are called ǰigi ba ǰigi (in b) (literally, support of the big support).

782 766 The whole lies over the body of an albino (c) buried in a tomb having a ritual form, covered with ancient clothing dyed in wolo and speckled with small black spots made of /135/ bone ash (kolofin), which represent at the same time the embryo in the womb of women and Faro. The head is covered with the cap of primitive men (e).

In (d), three pickets, symbols of man, are stuck through the skin of the albino's forehead; this skin had been removed and seven ritual

562 778 This suspicion readily degenerates into disrespect, scorn and hatred when a woman [123] is weak -- this being the usual state of affairs. On the contrary, the feeling changes to superstitious fear if she resorts to occult practices and shows herself [754] an adept at sorcery. Many old women are held to be very expert at such practices.

851 In the same connection, it should be noted that a newborn child is also subject to scrutiny. For seven days after birth it is not officially taken into the family, because it is thought that during this period the infant may undergo metamorphosis unless closely watched over by its mother.

We shall see, through a study of their institutions, how the Bambara conceive of life and organize it.

Funeral practices will show us how the Bambara regard the idea of death.

And after death?

775 769 The Romans distinguished among spirits: the manes or good gods (dii[1] manes) and the lemurs or evil spirits, both of whom take an interest in the family.

The Bambara have analogous concepts.

Once it has left the body, the soul of a patriarch goes to join the souls of his ancestors, where it finds a spiritual family which protects the earthly family.

The manes (fa su-u) always like to frequent the places where their bodies lived, and that is why one keeps the things that belong to the deceased, why he is buried near his house or sometimes even under the floor, and why some families piously keep the skull of the departed to do it honor.

[778] The entrance-hut (blon') is usually the site of the altar of the ancestors and of the family gods. The ancestral altar may be a small board with a human mask, called kara, or a mound of earth shaped vaguely like a human being. The manes are thought to enter into these objects to receive the offerings and sacrifices made to them.

It is sometimes thought that the world of the manes may be without light and heat but that otherwise they each continue the existence it had in life with the same passions, the same

[1] [dei ? —Analyst]

231 825 meaning "goat." In the case of the goat, there remain some customs that are very suggestive. Its milk is the basis of the most solemn of all oaths, that of fraternization; milk is also used to put out fires started by lightning and the hide is used to make sandals worn by widows during the period of mourning. The chronicle tells us that a certain dish made of a goat's head gives rise to the chief's power and sustains it (1). In spite of all this, the goat shares with the donkey a general scorn and they are considered to be the born companions of slaves. This is perhaps why some people refuse to allow either animal to come into the house. Indeed, it is believed that a rich and powerful man can be ruined if either of these animals enters his house or, even worse, if he touches them.

778 791 754 ● Magician's work. So it is that man is immersed in a strange fluid. In the final analysis, everything, man included, [149] is merely a manifestation of this fluid. Currents and eddies have all forms of life at their mercy, and only the strongest are able to resist, control and even acquire in the struggle greater power than they would otherwise display. "The one who knows" can avoid or follow this chaotic movement; he can control himself and others. He is the real "master" (soma) and he alone can utilize this ever present and ever powerful invisible world.

754 What makes a magician can be described by a single term: the magic weapon, to be used for defense as well as for attack, and indeed for anything else, by one who knows how to use it. Let us consider some of the examples in the Bambara arsenal.

For anyone who wants to destroy an enemy, the so ma sama (lit., "bundle of the person of the house") is a valuable weapon. It is a mysterious powder, kept in the horn of a hind, in which is placed a small stick. It is used in the following manner: let us suppose that a Bambara wishes to harm a person who is passing through the village. The Bambara secretly takes

1. See p. 31, in connection with Dina Wara.

754 the tiny horn in his hand, grasps the stick, and, after uttering maledictions against the person in question and saying his name, places the stick on his tongue, first lengthwise and then crosswise. After this manipulation in the pattern of a cross, he replaces the stick in the horn. When the traveler returns to his own village, the charm will take effect. If, on arriving, he is so careless as to sit down anywhere but on the bare ground, he will die. If he does sit on the bare ground, he will be safe.

If it is not the traveler whom our man wishes to harm, but someone in the traveler's village, the Bambara, after having gone through the afore-mentioned ritual proceedings against the enemy, will then seek out the traveler and engage him in polite conversation. Just as the traveler is about to take his leave, he will say to him: "Give my regards to So-and-So." When the returned traveler delivers the message, the person receiving it will suffer no harm if he repays in exactly the same way the compliments that have been conveyed to him; however, if he merely says "maraba" (thank you), he will die at once.

The so ma sama belongs to a category of magic weapons, which are especially and deservedly feared and which [150] the Bambara include under the general name, korti. There are endless korti, usually powders made of every imaginable and often repugnant ingredient (snake venom, the dung of wild animals, putrefied entrails from all kinds of corpses, etc.).

[278] Here, for instance, is the procedure used to make su-mugu. A very dry stalk of millet is inserted into the intestine of a dead animal through the anus and is left there long enough for it to become impregnated with the toxins produced by cadavers; it is then withdrawn and thoroughly dried before being pulverized. The resulting powder is kept in horns or boxes, either as it is or mixed with an ointment.

Many of these powders are put into the food or drink to be consumed by the victim. Various methods are employed for this purpose. A ready method is for the harmful powder -- notably su-mugu -- to be placed under a fingernail; then the

754 operator can drop it into the food or drink unobtrusively while serving the victim.

Some of the powders are tossed at the victim with a quick fillip and enter the skin through the tiniest abrasions.

All this is accompanied by the direst curses and constitutes what is known as korti su. These poisons act in various ways, some quickly and others slowly. It is said that the su-mugu only takes effect gradually. Its action is to be seen in a certain amount of swelling of the abdomen, which causes death within a few months.. There is not a single native who is not terrified of the korti, and there are Europeans who have experienced the dangerous effects.

Some korti are not the effect of manipulations but rather of true spirits of evil set in motion by magic practices. The following is an example of the type called donna, which includes also the so ma sama and su-mugu. The symbol or material representation (boli) of this donna is a kind of ball, not very large. In order to use it, the operator places it on the blade of one of the native mattocks called daba. The spell is worked at night. The spirit is attracted by the sacrifice of a chicken and offerings of kola. The operator utters his curses against the people -- often far away -- and asks the spirit [151] to undertake vengeance. If the spirit agrees, a sound is heard which resembles the noise made by the flight of a dung bettle (1).

[825]

This is the genie starting off on its mission. He will fatally sting the enemy during sleep and then return, announced by the same noise of flight as was heard on his departure. If the imitator should go to sleep while the spirit is away, he will himself be killed in the same way as the victim. He must stay awake for the spirit's return and again sacrifice chicken and kola to him.

754 The korti are counteracted by the kana, which are de-
755 fensive weapons, more particularly, curative. Based on the same principles and using similar ingredients, they are essentially

1. I have been told that this is the reason for the fear certain Bambara have of this insect.

754
[755] designed to neutralize the effects of the korti. It was a kana' that father Niany used against the snake bites (2).

2. See above, pp. 157-159.

A third category of magic weapons is that of the siri-kun' or "knots." Though not itself a genie, the siri-kun' is at least dependent on a genie, and it is by addressing a vow or an oath to the genie that one succeeds in obtaining revenge or avoiding the vengeance of another.

As its name would suggest, the siri-kun' is something that binds, that is, something that forces or paralyzes. It receives the obligations undertaken and sworn to by individuals in its presence and it will punish perjury. It renders helpless and paralyzes anyone against whom its intervention has been asked.

I have myself seen Bambara clutching a few bits of straw when they came to me to settle some lawsuit or other. They were following instructions and trying to make me submit to the siri-kun', that is, to paralyze my capacity to take action against them (3).

3. The chronicle of Ségou tells of a similar action by Ngolo against Mamari (see p. 53).

All these dealings in criminal magic are performed in an atmosphere of the most disconcerting trickery and hypocrisy; often the most fawning neighbors are the most to be feared. That is why a Bambara [152] likes to have the assurance of a "powerful protector" (dyigi seme). He seeks him and often thinks that he has found him in the brotherhood of one of those all-powerful genii of which we shall have occasion to speak.

788 Rites. There is no magic without appropriate rites, which must be strictly observed. Any negligence makes the operation useless, even dangerous, for the performer. We saw how the initiator who went to sleep while awaiting the return of the spirit he had invoked was promptly killed by the spirit

788 as it returned to its point of departure. This was presumably because the operator had not done what was necessary to assure the reintegration of the supernatural power.

[778] There are thus rites that set in motion this universal energy, whether diffuse or personified -- rites that channel, direct and orientate this energy so that not only it will reach the goal sought, but also it will be kept from straying from the desired route, thus harming the very person it is supposed to aid. Similar means are used to forestall the misdeeds which may be committed by an agent mistakenly invoked. When Ngolo had aroused his son Ntyi's ambition, he thought he could conjure away its effects by sacrificing his two grandsons, Ntyi's own children.

Those actions that call upon, guide and reintegrate this universal energy, whether diffuse or personified, are what we call rites.

788 754 During the oath using kola, the operator has in his hand a sharp object (pin, thorn, etc.) with which he pricks or stabs through the nut, saying, for instance: "Take my heart and my liver and kill me, if...." (i ka ne son' ni m bien' ta, ni ...). These pricks indicate to the "power" with which the operator is concerned that, if necessary, it should take vengeance by piercing the guilty person, just as the kola is pierced by the pin (1).

1. The shirt sent by Ma-n-son to Forokoro was first pricked with a needle (p. 120).

In curses, all the imprecations used are so many indications, indeed sometimes instructions (2), as to how the [153] spirit Invoked is Requested to act.

[575] 2. At the time of admission to the brotherhoods, the most frightful threats are made against the traitor or perjuror in the form of curses indicating to the avenging spirit how he should punish: "may it enter through your anus and come out through your mouth, etc."

778
789 emanating from the person or object impregnated with magic
force acts as if it were a part of that person or object. Often
[788] the magician or [154] ritual officiant spits on the person or
object involved in the rites. This is a means of transferring
one person's fluid to another.

Conversely, it is vital to know how to avoid contact
751 with, or even emanations from, a maleficent magic force.
789 That is the reason for the great number of mysterious magic
754 practices and the secret of the innumerable amulets that form
so many shields, to be placed presumably where they will best
protect against any blow. Therefore it is the magician's
prerogative to make amulets and to prescribe the conduct
necessary to preserve their efficacy.

It should be noted that protection set up against a given person is good only for him and is useless against a successor, for instance. The chronicle tells us that Bani, chief of Samba-Nyana, was successful in using certain artifices to prevent Ma-n-son from conquering him. But, kept in ignorance of Ma-n-son's death and having taken no precautions against Da, Ma-n-son's son and successor, Bani was conquered by Da, against whom his artifices availed nothing.

If one is caught in spite of precautions, what is to be done? Everyone is afflicted in one way or another in any event. A Bambara is always inclined to believe in some sort of supernatural intervention. He has on hand some sort of remedy, but more often he resorts to a "seer" for guidance or, if the case requires, to a magician's skill.

Native medicine is a mass of magic formulas and of remedies strikingly reminiscent of the pharmacopeia of the Middle Ages (see, in the foregoing, father Niany's operations).

[571] The individual does not live as an isolated unit but
789 rather as an integral part of a community. In the society in
which he lives, however restricted it may be, he progressively
783 occupies various situations. On both physical and moral levels,
he undergoes changes and, depending on circumstances, whether
fortunate or unfortunate happenings, changes take place within
him. In short, his magic potential varies. These variations
are always believed to concern the entire milieu, upon which
they may (in the case of illness or death) have disastrous effects.

564 The hunters (donso), who form powerful and feared asso-
463 ciations, and the somono [Somono] and bozo [Bozo], who are fishermen, have a less restricted status than the above-mentioned artisans.

The dyeli who has fallen to the level of a domestic factotum is the most scorned of all. He receives some consideration and, in exceptional cases, notable esteem only through his worth as family archivist.

564 The term nyama-ka-la is derived from nyama [221] meaning "ordure" or "outcast," and these people are outcasts. They are scorned. Some are particularly feared: the black-
● 754 smiths and the dyeli. The former are reputed, not without cause, to be given to the practice of magic and even sorcery. The dyeli have a fancy for poisoning.

Since persons of caste are free, they may contract marriage, that is, a lawful union, and found families just as free, non-caste persons do. Their male children naturally inherit the father's status which, thus, is handed down indefinitely through the male line.

Ordinarily they intermarry within the caste although sometimes a member of one caste may marry a member of another.

558 Any non-caste individual who marries a member of a
564 caste automatically loses status. A woman who does so is henceforth considered to be a person of caste, and her children necessarily have the status of their father. A man is less seriously affected, and it is not at all rare for a man of standing to have a wife of caste. This is indubitably a misalliance; children of such a union are not highly regarded, and this reflects on the father.

564 On the other hand, it is entirely normal and common to have persons of caste among one's friends. There is hardly a person of consequence who does not have several of them as boon companions.

Although the fact of belonging to a caste carries with it a definite status, the caste member is not necessarily expected to practice the traditional trade. A member of the numu caste may very well know nothing whatever about ironwork and may

794 bolitigi, the latter have every interest in protecting them, for not
793 only do they pay /38/ their masters annual dues of 80 to 160 cowrie
shells, which is little, but they also provide the meats and kola nuts for sacrifices and the d'lo, or beer, for the nocturnal drinking bouts and orgies, and thus are a real godsend.

3. Metamorphosis

776 The Negroes say that a djiné or a boli genie can pass from one
789 body into another. Today it may paddle in a pond, be enclosed in a
tree, or sit on a rock; tomorrow, if it wishes, it will make its dwelling in a cow's tail, in a horn, in a dirty rag. Whatever its dwelling may be, it is never confined. The Negroes compare these spirits to the wind, to a breath which enters and penetrates into a space through the smallest crack and fills it. Yet they have bodies and are equipped with organs; they drink, eat, and procreate and differ from man only in their tenuity. Since the Negroes are convinced that certain people have become able to master and command the spirits, could they not come to believe that it was possible to attain, like them, a rarefied state? In any case, they do believe in metamorphosis, and it is by entering into an animal or plant, or changing himself into an animal, a plant, etc., that the wicked person succeeds most often in avenging himself, in appeasing his hatred, and even in doing evil for the mere pleasure of doing it.

789 A good number of sorcerers have this privilege, and sorcerers
are not the only ones! Entire castes have the power of metamorphosis;
564 among others the Koulé, who dig out canoes and mend cracked gourds,
754 can all change themselves into hyenas. The sons of the Siri, who are
members of the sect dedicated to the boli of this name and are called souba (1) because they commit their crimes during the night, change

1. The name souba is derived from sou ("night") and ba ("great"), ma ("man"), being implied. It means "a man of the great night," "men

themselves into hyenas in order to dig up corpses and eat them, and into *gingin* ("owl," "screech owl") to drink the blood of sleeping men and women. It is said that the blood of young girls has an especially exquisite taste, /39/ and when the *souba* are unable to enter a dwelling in material form to obtain it, they change themselves into such a rarefied breath that they go through the walls and roofs.

753 789 754 All persons whose faces are disfigured with scars resulting from boils or canker sores are considered victims of a *souba*, as are those whose legs are rotted by syphilis; every person infected by erysipelas goes to the members of the *Siri* sect, the *souba*.

791 789 In addition to the *souba* there are the *gné-fla* (1), men with two eyes, with second sight, so called because they see the world of invisible beings and know the secret thoughts of men without having to undergo metamorphosis. Some of them are good and some evil; there are those who use their prerogatives to halt the blows of the *souba* and protect their fellows, and others who use them only to harm their neighbors. As the good as well as the evil can abuse their power, the Negroes keep them all together, and since the *souba* are almost always *gné-fla* as well, they are indiscriminately feared and hated.

789 When a person is metamorphosed into something else he keeps his intelligence and his reason, but he is dominated by an instinct, either good or evil, which destroys his will and anesthetizes him.

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789 564 ● 754 who operate in the depth of night," but by no means refers to nocturnal sorcerers. Moreover, in the eyes of the Negroes it designates not a bugaboo, but a reality.

1. They are supposed to have the ability to make themselves invisible by means of grisgris hung on their belts. Deprived of these, they are powerless.

761 "Koroya do, it is old age," but let us allow them to finish their sentences and continue their thoughts "a ko toun kadi Komo yé, he was beloved by the Komo," -- "à ko toun kadi Kono yé, Nama yé, Douga ye, he was beloved by the Kono, the Nama, the Douga," etc.

When people pass by holding a rooster or hen by the feet one
761 may wonder where they are going; if one follows, one finds that they
782 are going to the temple of a fetish, there to sacrifice and to redden
776 their god with blood. "A toun koromé Alla sérà à ma, he was old and God came to him," is an expression which is rarely on Bambara lips. When it is heard, it is used with a very special meaning; it signifies that the old man in question was a good man, beloved by all, even by God, but by no means that God killed him. The sacrifices made on this occasion clearly demonstrate this, for they are all directed to a fetish. If God alone were the cause and not the fetishes, the family of the deceased would refrain from all sacrifice; at the very most, it would offer a saraka by order of a sorcerer, but even the saraka offered to God -- and they are offered to Him -- is not a sacrifice, as we shall see later.

761 The priests of a djiné fetish and the owners and priests of a boli
778 fetish have the consolation that they always fall under the blows of the genie which they hold and to which they sacrifice. As for other mortals, 80 times out of 100, and one might say even more without exaggerating, they are killed by a boli fetish. The Komo, Kono, Nia, Nama, and Douga fetishes etc., are the chief murderers, and entire villages are often decimated by them.

761 Although they are able to deliver blows on their own initiative,
578 they are often only intermediaries, the agents of a depraved will to
674 which they have offered their services; almost always there is either
754 a thrown poison, korti, or a poison that is poured, dounkono. Thus sorcerors are consulted at every death; one is sought through their mediation. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the great maxim for the Bambara as for the Jews, and vengeance must be taken on the one who was able to win over the good graces of a fetish and force it to bring suffering or mourning into the bosom of a family. This vengeance is obtained through the intermediary of a fetish, and

761 518 674 754 therefore secretly, and good relations between the actual /50/ or supposed culprit and the unfortunate family are not broken in anyway. The strange fact that has always surprised me is that all these people converse amicably, do each other small favors, invite each other to drink and eat, while in their hatred they maintain a constant guard. They watch each other as they smile -- one party to protect their lives and their interests, the other to obtain vengeance. And on the day when it is least expected, that vengeance explodes inexorably. Cases of poisoning are not unusual in the Sudan, and it is not without reason that almost every death is blamed on the *korti* and the *dounkono*. I know that many die a perfectly natural death, and I have seen dropsy brought on by syphilitic consumption stupidly attributed to poisoning by the *Komo*, acute peritonitis to poisoning by the *Kono*, dysentery to poisoning by the *Nama*, undue swelling of the testicles with purulent abscesses, which were consequences of misconduct, to poisoning by the *Nia*, an abscess in the bladder to the *Douga* or the *Nama*. But it is a definite fact which I have noted many times in the course of seven years, and which any European living among the Negores can observe, however little he knows the language, the diseases which kills the natives is contracted when they return from a market, from a festival in honor of a fetish, or from a drinking bout where *d'lo* flows freely. The person's kidneys are hard and painful; his stomach causes him horrible suffering, his intestines seem to be torn by thorns, and there is complete anuria. In three or four days at the most his time is up.

The administrators at the head of a circle have all had to settle these cases which touch on the question of poisoning, and I doubt if there is one who has seen the matter clearly, so difficult it is to establish poisoning by *korti* and by *dounkono*. Let us refrain from throwing a stone at them; in a similar situation we would all be at a loss, for here there are always as many guilty persons as there are innocent, and all of them deserve the rope even while able openly to claim peace, liberty, and life. Since in the eyes of the Negro the fetish alone is guilty, there is a very simple means of stopping the decimation of the population and of allowing it to grow!

888 I pass over and do not dare to give this means: it is too radical, especially in our era; it is not anticlerical; it lacks breadth /51/ of mind. The fetish trees would have to be cut and burned, the boli confiscated, and their priests and owners employed in colonial works. Nor should the sorcerers be forgotten -- these men who spend their lives cheating people and stealing from them, who know only one kind of cultivation, the cultivation of laziness; finally, many schools would have to be opened. Paganism and barbarism would soon come to an end. The missionaries are there, ready to devote themselves, and they would ask no sacrifice from the treasury of the colony to do so; but the missionary has a morality which is too elevated, too noble, to be given to savages.... With what, then, is paganism to be replaced? With Islamism no doubt! Islam soils everything it touches, it abases a man more than it raises him. It is better to let the Negro redden the trees of his bush with blood, for he would gain nothing by the change. Every médersa (1), even that of djenné, is useless, nonsensical, and absurd; Arabic is not spoken in the Sudan, so what good is it to give the natives a language which is neither theirs nor French? Why should we want Islam in the Sudan? The villages are happy, full of zest; let us not try to make them sad and silent, let us not make them Arab villages, where one finds a human lizard on the street corner, lazily hidden in his burnoose and a hoarse dog barking on the walls, and where all the gates are shut. These Arab villages give the feeling of a prison, the chill of the tomb, and there is no liberty there except for vermin and lice.

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674 If it is difficult to ascertain a poisoning by korti and by dounkona, here is the reason. When a Negro wants to take revenge, he goes to find a sorcerer to whom he confides his plan and gives his reasons. He is more interested in seeing his enemy suffer than in seeing him dead, and if he succeeds in injuring him and his family, harming his body and his possessions, he declares himself satisfied.

Sometimes the sorcerer undertakes the task, but he is cautious, knows how to contrive matters to suit the occasion. He can assume

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1. A médersa is an Arab school.

754 all functions to some degree, and it is to his own advantage to be content,
674 in such an instance, with the position of solicitor; to whoever
/52/ consults him, he indicates a celebrated fetish in the hands of one
of his friends. The Bambara runs there without delay, and the master
of the fetish, generously and heavily paid, takes the god out of its
[778] dirty goatskin. Onto one of its instruments (for a boli is manifold, and
horns of cattle and antelopes, varnished with blood and brownish in
color, are mingled with other objects in the shape of an eggplant, a
turnip, a beetroot, a napkin ring, horse dung, etc., etc.), onto the
sirikoun, which is almost always wrapped in a red shirt front, he ties
firmly with a cotton thread seven straws five to seven centimeters
long. The petitioner explains his visit, names the enemy on whom
he wants to take vengeance, gives the reasons that compel him, and
the master of the fetish recites his formulas, reddens his sirikoun with
blood, and plasters onto its sides some spittle containing chewed kola
nut.

754 If the sacrificial hen dies with spread wings and breast on the
674 ground and if when split in half the kola nut falls with the pulp down
787 and the round side up, the contemplated revenge is put off until later,
for it is believed that the sacrifice has not been accepted. Our
Bambara then goes away, relieved of a hen, two kola nuts, and at
least 160 cauri, but nowise defeated; eight or ten days later he returns
to the charge, unless he is too impatient to wait and consults a new
sorcerer, who gives him orders to appeal to a fetish that shows a greater
interest and has a more enterprising and less timid disposition.

If the hen dies on its side or on its back with its feet in the air,
and if the pieces of kola nut fall on the round side with the pulp on
top, the sacrifice is accepted, and this is the god's answer to the
effect that he is taking his client's side. The enemy is thenceforth
754 placed under the boli a blara boli koro, the sanctioned expression;
674 he is placed under the avenging power of the fetish and is in its hands,
278 and the master of the idol, the sacrificer, and the people in his retinue
plot to make him disappear at once. They undertake the task themselves
as seldom as possible, however; they prescribe sacrifices and
offerings to the client and give him a deer horn carefully tied up,
telling him how to use it. This deer horn is nothing less than a horn

754 674 278 of poison, and the brown powder concealed in it is usually Strophanthus seed /53/ crushed and kneaded into excreta of human corpses and saliva taken from their mouths. This mixture is dried in the shade and then wrapped in a piece of hyena intestine, and to render the effects more immediate and certain, the fetish is brought out and placed on this meal and a sacrifice made. These sacrosanct preparations are made at night, if possible in the first quarter of the moon, and never on a Monday or Thursday, which are days of rest for the boli gods (1).

527 776 1. The boli have two days' leave per week, and the Negroes also take this rest. However, they are broad-minded on this point even though for certain labors they ask the religious chief or a sorcerer to be allowed to work. As a rule a boli may not go out Sunday or Monday night nor on Wednesday or Thursday. They quite often do go out, however, but only by command of the fetish or a sorcerer. To bring out a fetish is to spend the night dancing the dance of the fetish, and when the initiates want to dance they always manage to do so. The boli are also sacrificed to on Monday and Thursday even though they are at rest. In theory there is rest for the fetishes; actually, the idea is loosely applied.

754 674 To succeed and to keep from displeasing the fetish, who would then abandon your cause and turn against you, you must follow the prescriptions of the priest and members of his council to the letter; the omission of one rite, one sign, one formula, one imprecation, destroys the power of the poison contained in the horn, or at least renders it ineffective. Sometimes this powder is thrown and is called korti sou, and at other times it is poured and is called dounkono di.

754 674 The dounkono is administered or poured by sliding a pinch of it under the nail of the middle finger of the left hand and throwing it with a skillfully concealed flick into the food or drink of the enemy. Food sauce, dégé (millet flour mixed with water), millet beer (d'lo), and di kolé (hydromel) are suitable and without doubt easily poisoned.

Throwing poison, korti sou, remains the prerogative of the sorcerers, priests, and masters of the fetishes, and one must be somebody in order to use it (2). As with the dounkono, a pinch is slid under /54/ the nail of the middle finger, and with a strong flick it is thrown onto the enemy or merely toward him or onto an object which has belonged to him, and it is ordered to be effective, to kill him if possible, or at least to reward him with a sickness which he will long remember.

The Bambara fear the korti far more than the dounkono and if an enemy seriously threatens him with it they tremble. For a person so threatened is no longer dealing with a man, a power equal to his own; he must be on guard against an all-powerful god who places his strength and power at the service of the man. The force is submissive and obedient, triumphant and vengeful; it delivers its blows blindly where it is ordered and onto any person against whom it is aroused and against whom it is hurled. That, in my opinion, is the exact translation of the expression, korti sou ma la. As a dog is set on a person (oulou sou ma la), so korti poison is thrown at him (korti sou ma la).

The Negroes say that korti has a crushing effect: when it strikes you, you feel a violent upheaval throughout your body, your limbs stiffen, and you fall backward. You may die of the attack, but

[264 789] 2. There are many old Bambara who, after a meal with a neighbor or friend, mutter a prayer while washing their hands and make the motion of throwing korti poison. This is a curse which they throw against the enemies of the family that has received them.

754
674 usually you come back to life and get off with a fainting spell followed by violent hiccups and vomiting (1). For several days afterwards, and sometimes several months, a malignant fever confines you to your mat, your limbs swell, deep and purulent sores cut into your body, and so you will drag on for months and months, incurable, and a burden to everyone and to yourself.

The korti sometimes strikes you in such an unobtrusive way that you do not feel it entering. You notice it later when sickness comes, and its nature is declared by the sorcerer, that infallible being who is never mistaken. /55/

754
755 The Negro is almost without defense against the korti. A person poisoned by it must have recourse to a more powerful fetish, and he kills hens and goats in vain, for he seldom finds one. He covers himself with grigris, surrounds himself with talismans, and nothing does any good. Even the two little deer horns hung around his neck remain ineffectual and unable to defend him, holy as may be the powder they contain.

754
674 Against the dounkono, or poison that is poured into food and drink, a victim not only has recourse to his gods and his grigris, which

1. Were I not afraid of provoking a smile, I would admit that in February, 1908, having gone to a Da woro, a celebration which takes place six days after circumcision, I was called by the master of the Komo and, when we were alone, he threw korti at me with the usual curses and left. Without doubt emotion as well as the fatigue of the journey and of the previous day had much to do with my reaction, but I immediately felt stomach cramps and held onto the wall so as not to fall. My discomfort lasted from five to ten minutes.

754 become detached and fall of their own accord "if they are well made
674 and have lost none of their complete power"; he also has a mass of antidotes. Almost always he escapes with nothing more than a few days on his mat and a good stomach-ache, and although his convalescence may be long and can sometimes go on indefintely, at least he is shown sympathy; he gets a big share in the sacrifices offered by his friends, and his broth improves.

754 If the korti are many and cannot be numbered -- "each fetish
278 has its own" -- the dounkono are still more numerous, for in addition to the fetishes, the sorcerers, elders, men, and women, all know how to prepare a poison and give it whatever strength and power is desired. Every poison produces a special disorder in the body depending on the hand that throws or pours it. When in doubt, the Bambara consult the being who never deceives and cannot be mistaken: the sorcerer! And it is usually he who prescribes the antidote.

In the eyes of the Bambara, pouring poison (dounkono di) or
754 throwing it (korti sou) is a blameworthy act, and those who are guilty
673 of it have a dismal reputation among their fellows. One should not be surprised to see this crime remain unpunished, however, for in their eyes it does not bear the same odium as an overt or concealed murder by main force. I might even say, without fear of error, that this way of taking revenge is for them not a crime in the strict sense of the word. They so often have recourse to fetishes to settle a dispute and so readily threaten an enemy with the wrath of the gods, that taking vengeance through their intermediary leaves them calm and without any remorse. Besides, with what reproach should we reproach one who does so? It is true that he is cruel and without pity, /56/ but who gives power to the powder that he pours and the powder that he throws? It is the god, the fetish, and it alone is guilty! So let the enemy obtain the fetish's good graces and ward off its blows by sacrificing, let him set a more powerful god against it.

761 As one can see to the Bambara there is nothing natural about
153 physical and mental suffering and death; there is always an intermediary, and suffering and death are caused by an enemy who is taking vengeance, by a wicked person, by a sorcerer, or by a fetish.

782 alms, an obligatory gift, and consequently a tribute or tax paid to the genii in order to consecrate to them an object, an animal, a person for the purpose of protecting oneself, of avoiding the risk of any disfavor or of receiving a blessing. That is its nature whether it is individual or village-wide, regardless of whether it does or does not involve bloodshed. The Bambara call this kind of offering *saraka bo*, *saraka di* (1).

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● 754 *Saraka* are also offered to consecrate an object, an animal, or a person to the genii for the purpose of harming a neighbor. There is always a little magic involved in these offerings, and it is not unusual, at a short distance from the corner of land fromed by paths that join or cross, to find on the path a wad of hair, a bit of a horn, a box full of ashes, etc.

The Bambara performs this magic to help the fulfillment of his *saraka*, his entreaty; he is convinced that if his enemy touches the magic object thus thrown out at random, his vengeance will be more certain, prompt, and drastic. There is more to this symbolic magic: how many times have I seen, at these corners of land where the *gnâma* (2) stay and the *saraka* are held, a chicken heart fastened to the ground by a bamboo spike! Often someone will crucify a little animal, usually a lizard, on the ground, and a nail will be driven into the part where he wants his enemy to be stricken. For this kind of *saraka* the Bambara have a standard term, *saraka da ma kan* (3), ("to make a *saraka* against someone").

1. *Bo*, "go out"; *di*, "give."

2. Fluids, conscious forces which cause death and sickness. See my chapter on the *gnâma*.

3. *Saraka*, "obligatory alms," "tribute," "tax"; *da*, "to place," "to put"; *ma-kan*, "on a man."

776 It rarely leaves its tree; it likes its little grove and shady park, and
778 in many places it is satisfied with a stump that is all blackened, worm eaten, rotten, and falling to pieces.

The formula of the sacrifice

782 When one is present at a sacrifice to the dasiri and sees the
781 gnéna-n-sonnaba uncover his head, take off his large blouse, and crouch at the feet of the fetish, one expects something imposing and grand. Nothing of the sort occurs, and one is quite surprised to find so little gravity /120/ in such an important act. People enjoy themselves and chat; the priest, red with blood, tosses off witticisms and coarse jokes, and while feet and wings of the victims -- goats, sheep, and hens -- twitch in the agonies of death, nothing passes from one group to another but bursts of laughter that finally disappear far off at the edge of the grove where the women are.

782 The words in the sacrificial formula vary a little from one village to another, all depending on the volubility of the sacrificer. Nevertheless, it remains basically the same everywhere. After having greeted the fetish in his own name and the name of his subjects, he implores it to forgive them all the insults, offenses, and disrespect toward it, of which they have been guilty, voluntarily or involuntarily, during the entire year. He then calls it by a name related to the type of tree in which it is located -- e. g., ma ziraba ("great baobab man"), ma djala ba ("great false-cedar man"), -- and announces that he is going to sacrifice. While offering the dégé and d'lo, he implores it to protect them against the evils of the sons of the fetish siri, the souba (1), to preserve them from the souya maou (2), the

● [754] 1. Sou, "night"; ba, "great." The souba are masters of the night who change themselves into hyenas or owls, dig up corpses, and eat human flesh.

2. Souyaké, "to prowl at night."

778 782 562 /152/ at the foot of the tree under which the initiates shouted and danced all night, they are shown the *siri* found by the *djenfa tjéou* (1) and the *darotigi*, or *darotala* (2). While these *siri* (3) are burned, the women dance and sing the praises of the idol.

778 782 The *boli* have two days of rest a week, Monday and Thursday (4). It is nevertheless permissible to sacrifice to them on these days,

1. *Djenfa tjeou*; those who run with heads of the *Nama*.

2. *Darotigi*, or *darotala*: he who rings the bell and precedes the *djenfa tjéou* with a lantern.

● [754] 3. The *siri* are sacred objects which initiates of *siri*, the *souba*, throw here and there in the environs of the village in order to cast evil spells and sorcery on persons to whom they wish harm. Every time the *Nama* is brought out 20 to 40 *siri* are found. These small amulets /sic/, made of a little of everything, including trouser buttons, hooks, and belt buckles, tremble and moan while the women watch them. I have been present several times at this performance but have never perceived these tremblings and moanings, doubtless because I am not a Negro.

[304] 4. They rest in the sense that a festival at which they preside, e. g., a circumcision, never takes place on those days.

778 791 The Bambara consult these sorcerers to find out the future and to draw their horoscopes or good luck. The fee for a seance is not at all unreasonable; it seldom exceeds the moderate sum of 40 cowrie shells, or one sou.

Concerning the *Sirikoun*

778 754 Every great *boli* includes an object called *sirikoun*. There are other *sirikoun* which are no longer parts of *boli*, but have become actual *boli*. The latter are hung at the waist and are always /156/ covered with a red cloth. Almost everyone owns them, although they are most frequently in the hands of the owners and sacrificers of great fetishes. They are usually ends of the tails of cows, horses, wild pigs, etc., and are often sprinkled with blood. They are sought in order to cast a spell or sorcery on an enemy, to make him sick, and even [151] cause him to die, or again to protect oneself from a spell, sorcery, sickness, or death.

The *sirikoun* and the talking *boli* are fetishes belonging to individuals; they have neither festivals nor formal sacrifices, and they are not publically worshipped.

Chapter 8

The First Years in the Life of a Bambara

1. The Sexual Morality of the Bambara

181 Those who have seen the Bambara and have the slightest acquaintance with them will not hesitate to tell you: "They are liars and thieves." They certainly never pass up a chance to take the property of another, and they lie boldly and with such complete calm that not a muscle in their bodies flinches. This has always surprised

776 On market day, a gourd filled with river water, called fle ndinye
823 faro, is placed close to the shore where the canoes land. To drink a
mouthful of this water is equivalent to a sacrifice to the spirit. The
782 drinker gives a cowrie as alms to the beggar who drew the water, for
"never can [Faro's] water be bought or sold" (1).

1. Ma ti dyi fere ma ti dyi sã.
See pl. II, b.

At Sama, the faro tyin is a kind of natural corridor located amidst the rocks bordering and overhanging the left bank of the river.

[825] The finches nesting there warn the boatmen of the place's sanctity by flying off; the boatmen then stop to pray. In passing, they throw an offering and those who have broken taboos purify themselves by washing. Each shows the spirit all that he carries with him. Two nearby trees, faro sõndyiri or "trees of Faro's sacrifice," are used to tie up the white bulls at twilight. The following day, they are thrown alive into the river with millet mash and cola nuts. At the bottom of the passage, on a fairly smooth surface, the image of Faro described above was drawn each year in the course of the ceremony celebrated by the society of the Komo.

/47/ Faro also haunts ponds and wells. In the village of Nango a natural well was revealed to a hunter by a white ram which appeared out of a thicket. The village was built after the discovery of the water hole where the inhabitants now worship the spirit.

In the village of Siyango, the water of the well in which Faro resides is tabooed, the site of the well being the seat of all the religious ceremonies of the villagers. There the newborn are presented,
and deaths and marriages announced. The sick are treated by being
[755] made to drink the well water and wash in it. From his herd, each
person offers every year an animal which is thrown alive into the pit.
[681] Finally, those condemned to death are executed by drowning in the
same spot.

Faro's Auxiliaries

776 Faro has placed spirits as his representatives in the skies, in space,
778 on earth, in the trees, and in the rocks of the mountains. They see

551 576 778 564 The device is recited on numerous occasions. After a birth, the griot proclaim it in the course of the name-giving ceremony, addressing themselves to the father, then to the newborn child /79/ who thus receives it for the first time. At a marriage the barama of the two partners are alternatly recited. In everyday life, the recitation is carried on most frequently during religious ceremonies or feasts. In the hunt or at war, it has the effect of helping the participants and increasing their courage (1). In a meeting it is used to greet people bearing the same name, and if one of the assistants is to be particularly honored, the first words of his device are recited.

551 755 In case of illness, the ally (senanku) (2) comes to the patient's side and recites his barama to encourage him and help him get well. If he is dying, the recitation, which is then the equivalent of a prayer, may help his soul return. After death, the ally, the griot, and the [764] blacksmiths come near the corpse to recite his barama in order to honor him.

551 576 539 The devices pertaining to the various crafts are used when addressing the artisan with whom one has business. Thus the blacksmith to whom one brings work is greeted first by his name to which is then added:

"ini fara ani goni, you are with stone and fire."

A person crossing a field will say to the farmer bent over the earth: "i ni tye i ba ka kusebe daba, greeting to him who handles the hoe well," or simply: "i ni tye daba la, greeting to him who is with the hoe." To the shoemaker one would say: "bana ani ba golo, (you are) with the acacia (3) and the goat leather."

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[727] 1. If the griot recites it to a war chief and the town under attack is taken, he receives part of the loot.

2. See p. 119.

[386] 3. This refers to the bana or boina (Acacia arabica) used by the shoemaker to make a black dye.

291 him and joke with him, indicating by semi-ritual jokes his accession to a new status.

291 773 Men's first garment was the skirt of nyama fibers (Fig. 8, A). The bark was beaten and prepared by means of a club, a wooden club, gosilande or kuruninde, which is /106/ supposed "to contain potentially all human technology invented as the need arose." It is said of this club that it is "the mold of perfection and the place from which all useful things issue." The club was also originally a primitive instrument of rhythm (1); the hammering of blows "chased away the evil

[783] 1. kow dyele bwo yoro. On certain occasion when the Komo masks are brought out, the chief carries on his head the gosilande which represents the universe. Certain collective purifications are also executed with this instrument at the crossroads (see p. 186).

[755] sounds emitted by Téliko at the time of his revolt." Even today, a deafmute is seated near the gosilande which is prayed to so that he may be rid of his infirmity. [844] The clothing of a woman in labor, in order to purify it, is beaten with the gosilande at the same time the infant utters its first cry. Dyed clothing is beaten not only to make the color penetrate, but also to chase out any impurity.

When they first learned about cotton, and after the invention of weaving, the Bambara made garments which are in disuse today but of which they still make specimens for ritual purposes. In fact, with the exception of the loincloth, these ancient garments are worn only during religious ceremonies and their principal function is to represent the ancestors who were their progenitors.

291 773 386 The first garment woven was an imitation of the fiber skirt. The men made loincloth (mboko nimba) still worn today by the uncircumcised and dyed it yellow, wolo (2) (Fig. 8, B), a color which

[824] 2. This dye is made with the leaves of the ngalama (Angeissus leiocarpus), which are boiled, dried, and pulverized. The powder is put in water.

represents that which a certain disease gives to the black's skin,

291 for his great earthly labors." When clouds form, it is said that Faro
773 "is showing the buguni in the sky" and the diviners advise each person
821 to wear a strip in homage to the spirit and to facilitate the coming of
531 rain. The geomaneer gently rubs the earth, where he is going to draw signs, with a cloth of this design. It is as though he has injected sun, light, and truth into the work he must execute on the impure soil.

291 This band is also called kolõso mako, "necessity of the mixture,"
773 or kami, guinea hen, whose plumage as well as whose fragility the band betokens. In this respect, the buguni symbolizes man's weakness and incompleteness. When placed on a convalescent's clothing,
[155] it signifies that the latter has lost some of his vitality during his illness. Dressed in this fashion, he goes to the Niger and bathes so that Faro might heal him. A man who has suffered severe financial losses also wears the buguni. At the market, in public meetings, he will not be made to pay his share of beer because of the band's silent language which is clearer than words. If a widower remarries, he sews a piece of it on his cap in memory of his first wife. The knife of the person offering a sacrifice is wrapped in the buguni, for it "never has enough blood," also in certain boli which continually crave it.

/111/ In conclusion, the squares of indigo cloth represent the void and darkness; the white ones, fulfillment and light. To wear the buguni signifies hope, the impure or weak man hoping to become pure, strong, and fulfilled.

The bugunimba (literally, large buguni) or nyedẽ (literally, threads of the eye) has the same symbolism. A wound is bandaged with it. A man who has broken a taboo wears a cap of this material; an illegitimate child also wears it. The buguni tyekorole which symbolizes the impurity of Mousso Koroni is used to implore Faro's help in great calamities and for misfortunes without remedy. Thus, the body of a stillborn child is covered with it.

291 The buguni nyama (Pl. III, a, 4), made of twenty-two alternating
773 indigo and white squares, symbolizes creation in its harmonious and
822 orderly entirety. Its separation into two layers recalls the duality of
801 nature, represented by a thin stripe through the middle. A happy man sews an entire strip into his tunic. The man who has difficulties of any kind divides it lengthwise and pins a small piece at the bottom of his garment.

791 The box is transpierced by two wooden sticks, če kala (literally,
534 man-stalk), recalling the two millet stalks which accompany every
dead man into his grave and which are in themselves symbols of the
two elders.

When the Soma falls ill, he removes the two sticks from his instru-
791 ment and places them beside him on his mat, anticipating the position
534 he will lie in the grave. Thus stretched out, "he is in the grave and
755 walks with the two ancestors"; if his condition improves the sticks have
liberated him from his illness. He replaces them in the harp only after
his recovery.

The box contains seven pebbles, the number of man (3 + 4) and a
791 piece of copper in the shape of a star symbolizing the word. The
534 Soma may look into the harp through an opening on its side, called
šu wo (sorcery hole) or bara dinge (hole of the box), which "permits
him to breathe, " to see "the ancestor Koumabana, master of the word,
and to know the deepest secrets. " At the bottom of the instrument
another opening, considered the anus, permits the release of all that
is harmful.

/224/ A red stain placed on one of the faces, sindera ble (literally, red belt), expresses the fact that the instrument is the object of blood sacrifices like the stone ǰineworo.

The case is the image, the mask of Koumabana; the two faces, called respectively kini nye, "right eye, " and numa nye, "left eye, " represent his eyes; the comb, his mouth; the opening, his nose and respiration; the strings, his words. It is also the replica of the tomb and of the first three of the eight ancestors who knew death. Finally, it is the face of the Soma and his tomb.

The instrument must never be touched by a woman; moreover, no one must play it if his intentions are not pure, "if his heart is not clean. "

791 When the Soma plays in response to requests from those who consult
him, each sound is a prayer. With his free hand he holds a twig with
533 which he strikes the base. Each stroke is a word. As he plays, images
781 form before his eyes and within him. He touches the cords separately
according to their position and in relation to the importance of the
question that is being asked. Thus, he pinches modẽ for subjects of
little importance: hunt, journey, etc.; fadẽ for that which is concerned
with health, procreation, the physical or moral life of the individual;
fa for the future, destiny, the private and public life of a man, his

755 "(1) I have stated elsewhere that among Negro beliefs the tradition of the state of possession was carefully preserved. One evening I was present at a ceremony designed to drive a devil out of a woman's body. Father Niany, the universal man of Foutobi, was the exorcist. At the first rumor of this event, a throng converged on the woman's hut and I joined the crowd, curious to see what was going to happen. I saw a wretched woman rolling about on the ground in terrible convulsions in the midst of a circle of onlookers who let her thrash about without trying to help and merely watched her movements. There was great excitement when Niany appeared, and the circle opened to let him pass. He approached the woman, touched her, said a few words in a low voice, lifted her and placed her on a mat.

"The woman at once became calm, and father Niany, who seemed not at all impressed by his triumph, withdrew after speaking a few words in her ear. The crowd melted away, also without showing the least surprise [illegible] such complete and prompt success. I conclude that such happenings were not at all infrequent and that Niany had a special talent for driving devils out of women's bodies. I cannot [146] say what her trouble was, but when I saw her I thought that she was simply having an attack of epilepsy and I did not recognize the usual symptoms of that dreadful malady in the sort of convulsions she was having."

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609 Though he was sure of his art, Niany nevertheless recognized its hazards. There is no magician who does not find another who is more powerful. A foreigner, that unknown creature, is a danger, because he may chance to possess secrets which might invalidate the cleverest methods. That is why Niany fears Islam. He has an idea, which to us seems strange, of what Allah may be, as compared to a miscreant like himself and, being persuaded of the continuity of matter, he applies it in a manner that we shall describe in the chapter on Islam.

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821 Though he may have his doubts about Islam, Niany is no less suspicious of the maneuvers of the foreigner, Raffenel, who is staying with him.

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1. Raffenel, *op. cit.*, p. 463.

754 operator can drop it into the food or drink unobtrusively while serving the victim.

Some of the powders are tossed at the victim with a quick fillip and enter the skin through the tiniest abrasions.

All this is accompanied by the direst curses and constitutes what is known as korti su. These poisons act in various ways, some quickly and others slowly. It is said that the su-mugu only takes effect gradually. Its action is to be seen in a certain amount of swelling of the abdomen, which causes death within a few months. There is not a single native who is not terrified of the korti, and there are Europeans who have experienced the dangerous effects.

Some korti are not the effect of manipulations but rather of true spirits of evil set in motion by magic practices. The following is an example of the type called donna, which includes also the so ma sama and su-mugu. The symbol or material representation (boli) of this donna is a kind of ball, not very large. In order to use it, the operator places it on the blade of one of the native mattocks called daba. The spell is worked at night. The spirit is attracted by the sacrifice of a chicken and offerings of kola. The operator utters his curses against the people -- often far away -- and asks the spirit [151] to undertake vengeance. If the spirit agrees, a sound is heard 825 which resembles the noise made by the flight of a dung bettle (1). This is the genie starting off on its mission. He will fatally sting the enemy during sleep and then return, announced by the same noise of flight as was heard on his departure. If the imitator should go to sleep while the spirit is away, he will himself be killed in the same way as the victim. He must stay awake for the spirit's return and again sacrifice chicken and kola to him.

754 The korti are counteracted by the kana, which are de-
755 fensive weapons, more particularly, curative. Based on the same principles and using similar ingredients, they are essentially

1. I have been told that this is the reason for the fear certain Bambara have of this insect.

754 [755] designed to neutralize the effects of the korti. It was a kana' that father Niany used against the snake bites (2).

2. See above, pp. 157-159.

A third category of magic weapons is that of the siri-kun' or "knots." Though not itself a genie, the siri-kun' is at least dependent on a genie, and it is by addressing a vow or an oath to the genie that one succeeds in obtaining revenge or avoiding the vengeance of another.

As its name would suggest, the siri-kun' is something that binds, that is, something that forces or paralyzes. It receives the obligations undertaken and sworn to by individuals in its presence and it will punish perjury. It renders helpless and paralyzes anyone against whom its intervention has been asked.

I have myself seen Bambara clutching a few bits of straw when they came to me to settle some lawsuit or other. They were following instructions and trying to make me submit to the siri-kun', that is, to paralyze my capacity to take action against them (3).

3. The chronicle of Ségou tells of a similar action by Ngolo against Mamari (see p. 53).

All these dealings in criminal magic are performed in an atmosphere of the most disconcerting trickery and hypocrisy; often the most fawning neighbors are the most to be feared. That is why a Bambara [152] likes to have the assurance of a "powerful protector" (dyigi seme). He seeks him and often thinks that he has found him in the brotherhood of one of those all-powerful genii of which we shall have occasion to speak.

788 Rites. There is no magic without appropriate rites, which must be strictly observed. Any negligence makes the operation useless, even dangerous, for the performer. We saw how the initiator who went to sleep while awaiting the return of the spirit he had invoked was promptly killed by the spirit

Chapter 3

The Bambara's General Ideas on Human Life

1. Sickness

152 In his innermost being the Bambara feels an ever unassuaged 753 thirst for happiness, an intense and pressing need to live for enjoyment; therefore he revolts against all suffering, both physical and mental. It seems unnatural to him, and at the least discomfort a person will state and believe that he is the victim of malice, of an enemy who is taking vengeance, and he immediately blames the world of invisible beings and those who have intimate relations with it.

753 Not only do the Bambara consider sickness unnatural, they consider it a more or less conscious force which comes to torture them. For fear of displeasing it or of displeasing the genie, the superior force which has taken it into its service and is using it as it pleases, they surround themselves with precautions against announcing the sickness of one of their people. When one asks a Negro for news of his health, his first answer will be that he is well, and if a member of his family is confined to his mat in agony, he will still tell you: "Toro si t'âla (1), he is suffering no pain."

1. Toro, "suffering" ; si, "not any"; te, "is not"; â la, "on him" (la, "on").

755 The sick have unlimited confidence in their sorcerers, who are all doctors and apothecaries, and they submit blindly and without any argument to their orders and prescriptions. From them they receive herbs and leaves, and the infusions or brews made from these are prescribed as beverages or lotions, but most /45/ frequently the sorcerers rub their clients' bodies and gently stroke them, anoint them with oil and grease and spit on the affected part while reciting a formula. And always, of course, the number of grigris and talismans in the possession of the patient is increased by several items.

●755 The sorcerer consulted by a sick person explains to him the nature of his illness, tells him whether he is the victim of the hatred of a fetish in the service of some one malicious or envious, or of an enemy who is taking his own vengeance; or whether he is the victim of a gnâma, that fluid, that avenging force which every genie, every man, every animal, and both the living and dead possesses. In serious cases the patient is ordered to sacrifice many hens and quite often nanny goats and billy goats, but in cases that are mild or considered so, the remedies are more childish: should I mention a few?

To cure a headache, the sorcerer sticks the blade of his knife into the ground and places a cauri (1) at the base of the handle. After having spit on the cauri and the knife handle, he lays his hands on the patient, who gazes at him; he recites a formula, and, if the sick person is not cured when the prayer is finished, he must at least feel an appreciable improvement, and he always says he does: "A kaf'sa san, I feel better now.

The sovereign cure for leucoma, they say, is a pinch of powdered hyena dung placed in the eye. Because it is rare and costly, the remedy cannot be bought by all, and powder of cauri shells is substituted for it. This powder is obtained by rubbing a cauri on the stone for grinding millet, a very long process. In order to apply oneself to the task as the old women do, more than training is needed; it calls for patience, or rather, a passivity which cannot be defined.

In cases of ophthalmia and other eye diseases, the temples, the eyebrows, and the tops of the cheeks are greased with kana mixed with a little karite (2) butter. The kana is always enclosed in a bull's

[436] 1. A small white shell used as small change; at least 40 are needed to make a sou, or 0.05 francs.

[137] 2. Karite, or butter tree, Bassia parkii, genus of the Sapotaceae.

755 hoof or in an ox's horn; these horns and hoofs /46/ are often decorated with *cauri*, and from time to time the blood of a victim is poured on them. If a disease is a force, a power which torments human beings, the remedy is another force, another power which is opposed to the first and fights against it. In order to obtain the good graces of this second force as well as its efficacy, people feed it with blood. The *kana* is of general use; it cures all ills a little, and just as each *boli* fetish possesses a *korti*, or harmful powder, enclosed in a horn, so also it possesses its *kana*, or healing remedy. Since there are as many different *kana* as there are fetishes, and since, independent of these, the sorcerers also have theirs, the *kana* are legion and cannot be counted. It is impossible to say what goes into the making of a *kana*, and the Negroes themselves do not know; they know that charcoal powder goes into it, and that is all. A sorcerer of *Kolo*. *n*. *kolona*, much consulted for orchitis, varicocele, etc., etc., uses glow worms dried in the sun and crushed with a handful of wood charcoal.

[752] Wounds resulting from a bruise caused by a blow or a fall are treated by throwing a handful of ashes into them. The ashes are obtained from dry leaves gathered in the evening in complete darkness under trees deep within thickets, and at random and without looking.

To cure a malady called "strained back," one or several snake sinews are worn as a belt. A hen's craw, exposed to the sun for three days and then cut into thin slices and swallowed with all its contents, will develop an appetite for you for the rest of your days, to the point [752] of insatiability. For burns a poultice of rabbit fur and barbs of guinea-fowl feathers is the sovereign remedy.

To treat rabies, the Bambara have no need of the Pasteur Institute or serum. A person who has been bitten by a rabid dog climbs on a nearby bush, a friend comes and cuts it down, the whole thing falls and rolls on the ground, and rabies are no longer to be feared; they are entirely exorcised. A thread on which a *cauri* is strung, knotted [751] around the loins, protects a child from blackwater fever, and a string with seven or nine knots, called the *tafo*, when knotted around the neck, will save you from goiter, croup, laryngitis, a persistent cough, etc. The *tafo* is used in a general way, just /47/ like the *kana*; it is employed for almost all illnesses, and there is no malady that it

755 [842] cannot cure. In order to become fertile, a sterile woman knots one[1] around her wrist or biceps, and a strange *tafo* it is, taken from the skin of a monkey's hand.

Syphilitic children, covered with pimples and pustules of *magnan* -- the name with which they adorn this disease -- have chicken droppings for their *crême Simon*, and this is the ointment of ointments.

[843] Chalk is the specific for pregnant women; to ease the mild discomforts which generally precede maternity, they draw pretty white crosses on the abdomen or on the chest, between the breasts.

2. Death

761 195 If sickness is not natural, there is all the more reason why death should not be. In the eyes of the Bambara there is no evil comparable to it. They fear it and its very name makes them tremble. When it is necessary for someone to announce a death or refer to it, he quite often uses a circumlocution in the presence of a member of the family. At the death of a child it is in good taste to say: "*A sagira a ko*, he has gone backwards," and if the deceased was a grown woman: "She is no more, she has ended her career, she has been buried." The politest of all the expressions concerning married men who have passed from life to death is: "*A so yélémana*, he has changed his dwelling." The initiates of certain sects cannot bear to be spoken to about death, and the *korodouga*, of the *kouéré* or *koté* sects, for example, get up and leave in displeasure, no matter how little this subject is dwelt upon in their presence.

761 The Bambara are not unaware that Moslems, missionaries, and all Europeans make light of their fetishes and scorn them; therefore in the presence of any of these they direct to God the accusation that He has caused the death of one of their people. This procedure is only a courtesy, an indirect way of respecting the belief of those to whom they speak, whose life they share, and whom they fear. They know that God has the power of life and death over human beings, but they attribute death to Him so seldom, that during seven consecutive years spent in the Sudan I did not encounter a single instance. /48/ Death is always caused by a wicked person, by an enemy who

[1] [i.e. A *tafo*, a string with seven or nine knots. —Analyst]

754 674 usually you come back to life and get off with a fainting spell followed by violent hiccups and vomiting (1). For several days afterwards, and sometimes several months, a malignant fever confines you to your mat, your limbs swell, deep and purulent sores cut into your body, and so you will drag on for months and months, incurable, and a burden to everyone and to yourself.

The korti sometimes strikes you in such an unobtrusive way that you do not feel it entering. You notice it later, when sickness comes, and its nature is declared by the sorcerer, that infallible being who is never mistaken. /55/

754 755 The Negro is almost without defense against the korti. A person poisoned by it must have recourse to a more powerful fetish, and he kills hens and goats in vain, for he seldom finds one. He covers himself with grigris, surrounds himself with talismans, and nothing does any good. Even the two little deer horns hung around his neck remain ineffectual and unable to defend him, holy as may be the powder they contain.

754 674 Against the dounkono, or poison that is poured into food and drink, a victim not only has recourse to his gods and his grigris, which

1. Were I not afraid of provoking a smile, I would admit that in February, 1908, having gone to a Da woro, a celebration which takes place six days after circumcision, I was called by the master of the Komo and, when we were alone, he threw korti at me with the usual curses and left. Without doubt emotion as well as the fatigue of the journey and of the previous day had much to do with my reaction, but I immediately felt stomach cramps and held onto the wall so as not to fall. My discomfort lasted from five to ten minutes.

825 village, I thought at first that here lay the reason for this rest, extraor-
787 dinary during the time of the most intensive hoeing. Not at all; the
pagan Bambara were resting, and the women were giving their hus-
[262] bands and children dégé (millet flour mixed with milk and honey
water) in obedience to a hyena's command. The hyena, it was said
-- and all the sorcerers confirmed this -- had emerged from its dumb-
ness, its tongue had been loosed, and it had predicted to the people
of the west that a plague even more terrible than that of the cater-
pillars would descend on the country. Only one means to avert it
remained: to refrain from going to the fields on Friday and to treat
themselves to dégé, the food so dear to Moslems.

482 On my excursions I have often met men and women carrying
● 757 on their heads a gourd or a basket containing a handful of leaves or
824 some bundles of roots, and apart from the customary greetings it
784 has been impossible for me to get a word out of them. And why this
silence? They were carrying a medicinal plant, a remedy which
would lose all its virtue and all its efficacy if they conversed on the
way, and they had to take care not to trample such-and-such a plant
that grew on the edge of the path.

757 The Bambara quite readily names the plants and herbs whose
753 curative powers are known to him, and yet in the presence of a sick
784 person he will very seldom give you the name of the remedy the
latter is taking, or the names of the roots and leaves that make up
his poultices. Sickness, he believes is a force, a power which tortures
our bodies. He is afraid that in naming the remedy he would pro-
vide this power with a weapon against its healing virtue, which is
another force or power. He sets the second power against the first
to make it leave.

811 It is evident that he attributes bits of reason and emotion to
784 everything, that he attributes human feelings to all that is animate
and inanimate. The "taboos" are not merely one piece of evidence
of this, they are an irrefutable proof of this attitude.

113 the slow evolution of consciousness (concept of pain), judgment (concept of responsibility and guilt), will (concept of the creative effort and work), all of which develop in man with the advent of suffering [761] and death. Death is felt to be an accident in the working out of the universal order, an accident compensated for in part by the conservation of spiritual principles and their reincarnation in accordance with the fundamental belief in the eternal resurrection of all things. The myth describes the first ritual, the rejuvenation, which ceases with the advent of death but is replaced by blood sacrifice which today is still the central practice of the rites (1).

> 1. Wherever possible the writer has avoided discussion of the details of myths so as not to distract the reader from the general line of the Bambara world view. But the scholar, in attempting to better understand the collective psychological processes of this people, may profitably study the numerous variant themes found among them.

The myths described below are the framework of the present-day Bambara religion and of the general cults to Pemba and Faro maintained by the people.

Preliminaries of Creation

1. The glã glã zo

112 The Bambara creation myths imply a philosophy of being and of the universe developed from the void, from nothing, fu (2).

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> 2. This concept is expressed by a sign with the same name which can also be translated by "nothingness" or "zero" and is a part of the Bambara number system. See Fig. 1, No. 11. For a discussion of this sign denoting the continuity and proliferation of creation, see p. 102.

778 understandable that the strength of the large pembele should be preserved intact since it represents the world. No ritual concerning it is celebrated alone by the man in charge without the presence of a council of elders. Its four corners can be scraped only under worthwhile circumstances for, according to the informant, the god pembele will not tolerate his being used for trifles. As the corners are gradually scraped off and consequently the nyama contained in these corners is reduced, the earth becomes worn out. And if the earth should lose its nyama, all would be empty of its substance; the millet would still grow but its stalk would yield no grain. . . women would bear no children, no longer having any nyama. Bereft of strength, people would no longer be able to fight. The earth would subsist, but would be sterile" (1).

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1. S. de Ganay, op. cit., p. 200.

The Balanza

824 The tree balanza, the plant form of Pemba's metamorphosis, vanquished by Faro, is no longer worshipped by men. However, the Bambara's attitude towards it and certain ritual gestures of which it is /38/ sometimes the object, recall the time when, after having spread its domination over all creation, it introduced death to the human species.

[761] In certain settlements, the belief is that whoever rests in its shade dies, the tree having taken his dya. In others, women still make it [782] offerings of karite oil, despite advice from men who have informed them of its inefficacy. They lie at its base, simulating illness, agony, and then death to recall the painful events that have brought them to men; finally they touch the ground successively with each of their four principal articulations as a sign of submission, before smearing the tree trunk with the oil they have brought. In still others, [843] in order to recall that births used to take place near the tree, pregnant women are presented by their husbands to the tree to each childbirth.

The fields surrounding the settlements in the region of Ségou are covered profusely with balanza. The device of Ségou, which tells of the history of the town, enumerates the names of the trees planted at the time of its founding. This device also mentions kokuruni (literally, little humped back), the balanza of Banankoroni (pl. I, a),

Spiritual Principles (1)

114 1. A few comments on the spiritual principles of the Bambara (in particular on the dya and the nyama) have been collected in the chapter entitled "Théorie des âmes" by Tauxier, La Religion bambara (pp. 14-25), in which the author appraises the works of the Abbé Henry and of Ch. Monteil. Some of the observations made in the following chapter have been summarized by the author in "La Personne chez les Bambara" and in "Note sur le tere chez les Bambara /Note on the Tere among the Bambara/."
It will be useful to compare this study of spiritual principles with the studies made among the Dogon and presented respectively by M. Griaule, S. de Ganay, and the author in Masques Dogon, Les Devises des Dogon, and Les Âmes des Dogon.

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The Soul, ni, and the Double, dya:

[826] Faro controls the principle of life in water, which is his realm as well as the life-giving element par excellence. In the bodies of living beings, this principle has its seat in the blood. The blood of the sacrifices offered to the spirit (or failing that, the juice of the tomato, a transformation of blood) is a contribution to the reservoir of life controlled by Faro—life which he redistributes in all its forms throughout the universe. Water is the privileged element in which life may persevere indefinitely. Elsewhere, life is maintained only if water comes to nourish it.

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Faro's creative function is materialized by each marital partner eating a tomato before sexual relations. This act is accompanied by the recital of a prayer. The juice of the fruit, which contains the body of the future child, transmits life according to the following mechanism:

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Faro receives the offerings of tomatoes grown ritually in the consecrated fields, as well as the blood of victims slain in his name above the waters. Blood and juice, spreading over water, the fertilizing agent, are collected by the swallow, Faro's airborne messenger. Liberated in space, they return to the soil with fertilizing rain and penetrate the tomato seeds which thus contain a particle of generative power.

761 776 842 After the marital couple has absorbed the fruit, a smooth-bodied embryo with nonarticulated limbs is formed in the maternal womb. /58/ It is at this moment that the couple consummate the sexual act in the course of which the woman "takes into herself the entire body of her husband": the upper part through the eyes, the lower part through the genital organs. The masculine seed located in the seven principal articulations (knees, elbows, ankles, and spine) transmits them to the embryo. The body, originally similar to the body of the spirit, thus becomes that of a human being.

The spirit restows the spiritual forces after the man has mated for the second time with his wife. If the woman bears a single child it means that the man, in the course of the second union, formed the double of the first germ, but was not permitted to procreate twins.

761 776 843 774 Faro disposes of the child's life and nature. He decides all that the child will be and will do, and determines his destiny from the moment the seed is placed by him in the womb. The foetus then develops with no further modifications until parturition, at which time it receives the spiritual principles, the soul, ni, and the double, dya, which will be his throughout his life. It is at this time that the inner relations of the individual to the social group to which he belongs intervene. Although Faro gives each child a new body, he animates this body with spiritual forces drawn from the family reservoir. The [775] newborn child is the direct heir to the ni and the dya of a deceased member of the family, actually of the one, whatever one's sex, who died shortly before the birth of the child (1).

1. The reincarnation of the deceased's spiritual principles, however, is not an absolute rule. Faro is the master of an infinite reserve of souls. Twins, albinos, and certain other children are born with the ni and dya as yet undetermined. They originate respectively in the second sky (kaba dye) and in water (dyi sumale). Further study on this particular point is necessary to complete this investigation.

761 776 774 775 The consequence of death was, in effect, to separate the corpse from the forces that animated it. The ni, by appropriate ritual, had been preserved on the altar of the ancestors (2), and the dya had left

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2. Grouped hierarchally, children, male adults, and women form religious societies or institutions, dyo. Each dyo is charged with the upkeep of altars which serve to preserve the spiritual forces of the group. (See p.

the dying man to go into the water and place itself under Faro's protection. At the moment of delivery, both ni and dya return to the body of the newborn child who replaces the dead man, but they return in reversed order: the dya is returned to the body of the child and becomes his ni; the ni of the deceased mixes with the birth water spread on the ground which forms the shadow (suma) and will be his double, the twin (1). In the case of a boy, the dya will be female; in the

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1. The blood of childbirth represents the excess tomato juice absorbed by the woman, that which remains in the womb after the formation of the embryo. On the eighth day after birth, the mother of the parturient woman squeezes three or four tomatoes (depending on the sex of the newborn) into a gourd which she then gives to the child's father. The latter makes his wife drink the juice to replace the blood which she has lost and which is considered impure.

case /59/ of a girl, it will be male. These movements are independent of the sex of the deceased as the spirit reverses the sexes when necessary. Each human being is thus both male and female [828] through his soul and his double. This conception of human nature, which is fundamental to the Bambara, is expressed in the symbolism [801] of numbers. The number seven is formed of three (male sexual symbol) and four (female sexual symbol) and represents the complete man. In addition, on another level, the number six is that of male twins, seven that of mixed twins (and the hermaphrodite), and eight that of female twins. The body of the newborn child is gently tapped [844] by the number of strokes representing the above figures in order to call the child's ni according to its sex.

774 pale. It is manifested by a loss of strength and by illnesses affecting
784 the body openings: the man becomes blind and deaf-mute. He may
827 also become paralyzed. Generally he does not die but is pursued by
ills until he purifies himself.

774 In addition, the *tere* changes when it is detached from its normal
support; it then becomes *nyama*, a force which acts outside the body.
Manifest in action, the fact can already be sensed in the spoken word,
the bearer of *nyama* which immediately affects /63/ the person to
whom it is addressed. The consequences of this action of the word
are manifold.

● 761 At the time of death, the *tere* is completely liberated. Transformed
774 into *nyama* which leaves the body, it then becomes a very active
form which, in certain cases, can attack whomever it considers
778 responsible for the death (1).

774 Sacrificial beings, men or animals, or plants for ritual use never
778 release a dangerous *nyama*. Their spiritual principles and forces
are channeled in the course of the ritual and directed toward the
benefit of a supernatural power through the altar. The same is true
of domestic animals immolated for consumption, in which case their
forces are used over again and their death causes no disorder since
it was foreseen by Faro's law concerning food.

On the other hand, the *nyama* of the bush animals (*nyama bakâ*) leave their dead bodies and pursue the hunter (2). To protect himself

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1. This very visible but incomplete aspect of the *nyama* is the one that has been most studied heretofore. On this subject, see the works of the Abbé Henry, Ch. Monteil, H. Labouret, L. Tauxier. Furthermore, in the sky, in space, and on earth, there is a *nyama* independent of the *tere*. The nature of this general and vital element has not been completely clarified by investigation.

2. The sick man may be treated in the following manner: seven (or a multiple of seven) cowrie shells are thrown upon the hide of the animal

812 561 man's life passes through seven successive ages corresponding to the seven skies, the seven earths, the seven waters, and the seven stages of millet growth. The seven ages are: *bilakoro*, "an uncircumcised person"; *kemẽkoro* "a circumcised person of the last age grade"; *tyebalẽ*, literally, a big man; *maselẽ*, literally, a successful person; *makoroba*, literally, an elderly person; *madeselẽ*, literally, a person who cannot succeed, an old man; *mabalẽ*, an impotent old man.

812 561 796 These bonds are also confirmed annually for everybody in the course of the ritual called "the renewal of the year." By renewing the cardinal points, the Bambara add to the strength of these poles of attraction which are responsible for maintaining things within themselves and with respect to each other. At the same time they proceed to a "revival of the body and soul," including all from the youngest to the oldest. For the year to come, they take a fresh breath, a new life, and submit the body to internal and external purifications, making it adequate to fulfill its role.

Effects of Death on the Person

761 The first effect of death is to dissociate the elements that make up the person. The religious practices, imbued with respect for these elements, aim at organizing their preservation in order that they may not be lost to the deceased, to society, and finally, to Faro who controls life and assures the survival of souls.

The *dya* remains in the water where it will be kept until the birth of a child. But the *ni*, which escapes from the body with the last breath, is watched for by the head of the family who catches it and carries it to an altar. As we have seen above, it will return to animate the *dya* of the child who will inherit the deceased's spiritual principles, leaving behind it on the altar, a kind of exuvia, *mana* or *folo*, as a sign of the deceased's sojourn on earth.

The *tere* becomes transformed at death; liberated from the body, it becomes *nyama* which escapes and which may sometimes attack the living. Proof of this is the fear aroused by the sight of a corpse. /73/ It would seem that the *tere*'s combination of strength and character is expressed by the activity of the *nyama*; but it is really dangerous only in the case of violent death (the murder of a man or an animal). In this case the *nyama* attacks the responsible party. If death is natural, the *nyama*, like the *ni*, is directed by the relatives and placed on the family altar (*pembele*) in the course of the

761 funeral rites. There it joins the ancestral forces, the aggregate of which forms a whole whose power is used by the descendants during the seasonal rituals for beneficial purposes.

764 761 The body is buried; it "belongs to the termites" and in the end only the bones will remain and be honored as a testimony of the physical life. Sometimes they are removed from the tomb, examined, and prayed to before being replaced.

761 844 When a birth occurs in the family the newborn child, having inherited the ni and the dya of the deceased, receives his nyama preserved in the pembele and his given name, toko; thus one being replaces another, using the same forces which are used over again and again. Life transmits itself intact. Not only is it undiminished by death, but the dya's sojourn in Faro's residence is thought to be a "reviving, " a desirable and beneficial purification. Similarly, the passing of the ni onto the family altars brings about a rejuvenation.

761 On the altars and in the tombs, the "exuviae and bones counted and classified by Faro, " are a valid testimony for eternity and serve to maintain the integrity of the whole world of living and dead until the final resurrection.

Attributes of the Person

The Name

551 The organization of the total family /famille indivise/ of the Bambara has already been the object of descriptive works (1). It is however, appropriate to mention it since certain elements such as family names, devices, taboos, and kinship relationships described as "joking" are related to the components of the person.

Socially, the person is first placed by his given name, toko, that of the ancestor who gave him his ni and his dya, or any other in the paternal or maternal line. The given name indicates the relation to a family group as well as /74/ the person's individuality. It is accompanied by the father's family name (dyamu), whose origin and

1. In particular Ch. Monteil, Les Empires du Mali; H. Labouret, Les Manding et leur langue /The Malinke and their Language/.

304 [292 534] During the seclusion, they wear about their head a piece of white cloth, Faro's color, which has the same function as the cap of the circumcised boy. They shake a gourd bolokode barani, filled with eight grains or small pebbles, whose sound keeps passers-by away. The leaps, which they perform over the fire made of clothes, gourds, and refuse that have been ignited, end the seclusion and rid them of their wanzo, which goes to settle in the altars of the ndomo.

It is said of a young girl who was well excised that she is well behaved and carries herself with dignity. On the contrary, it is said of a girl of light morals "that her hands were not washed clean" (1),

1. A bolo ma ko ka dye ya.

which means that she was improperly excised.

Funerals

761 764 115 The effect of death is to dissociate the elements composing the person. The body becomes a corpse (šu) from which the /189/ ni and the dya escape to follow their particular destinies, while the tere is transformed into nyama, an active and dangerous force which wanders about the deceased. The funeral rites aim first to channel the deceased's spiritual elements which must be conserved in the interest of the deceased as well as that of the community. Moreover, through the care given to the body and to these elements, the memory of the dead person is piously kept up. The notion of a final resurrection, promised to all who have lived, inspires these preparations. The bones of the deceased, which are like the exuvia of his physical body, its solid and durable framework, join the exuvia of his soul which is kept in the altars of the Komo. Thus, at the end of time, the dead man "will rise and, to everyone's joy, join his family."

764 The funeral rites, which the Bambara have always celebrated, have evolved along with their beliefs. At the time when the cult of the balanza was flourishing, the dead bodies were hung from trees until they rotted, their bones picked up and kept by their descendants. [532] The ancestors of the Gwonna then carved pieces of sunzun wood called mani (literally, little person) in the image of the dead. The length of the wood was proportionate to the length of the body; the head, arms, legs, and genitals were carefully reproduced. The mani

766 167 In fact, if he dies far away his breath cannot be captured nor can the successive transfers be made. For this reason the family head disclaims all responsibility in such a case by warning those who are about to leave for along time of the impossibility of fulfilling his duties toward them.

766 Nevertheless, a ritual has been instituted for the young men obliged to leave the family groups because of military service. The case is submitted to the chief of the Komo and the party concerned has two goats sacrificed over the altars. While the blood runs, the chief asks the Komo to watch over the soul and to be willing to reclaim it as it would if the person died among his family.

[187] If the news of the death of an absent person spreads, the family questions the Komo through divining procedures to find out if the soul has returned and if, by this fact, order has been reestablished.

Death by Lightning and Drowning

● 761 766 Death which occurs in certain ways considered abnormal and a proof of Faro's wrath does not permit the reincarnation of the spiritual principles. This is true of men killed by the Komo for sorcery, and of people struck by lightning for having broken a taboo of Faro's. Their /201/ soul and their double are lost forever to their descendants, and their bodies thrown into the common grave.

Drowning is either accidental or due to Faro's wrath, in which case the corpse is returned with the nose and navel cut. In both instances, the double preserved in the water is not lost, but sacrifices are necessary for the return of the soul and of the double to a child in the family.

If the body has not risen to the surface, the father of the drowned person has the right to mourn him only when all the rituals have been performed. He asks the chief of the Komo to intercede with Faro to obtain his permission to search for the body in the water. He offers seven tomatoes which the chief throws into the water in exchange for the corpse in the presence of seven elders of his age grade. Some Bozo mobilized for this purpose dive in to bring back the body. The chief cuts the nose and the navel which he throws into the water as an offering. Then the corpse is placed flat on its stomach and pressed [821] vigorously to extract the water, for to bury it full of water is equivalent to "burying rain" and dooming the countryside to drought.

774 it is a fluid emanated from the body itself and made manifest as much by the shadow, which may be seen in sunlight or in a bright light, as by the image which appears when the body is placed in front of a reflecting surface. This fluid is called *dya*.

774 787 The *dya* has the faculty of leaving the body when it is asleep to wander wherever it wishes; the sight of its wanderings, which the body can witness, constitutes a dream (*sugo*). Dream is a kind of reality; it is in a sense the private life of the *dya* in company with its fellow-*dya*. During waking hours, the *dya* accompanies the actions of the body; during sleep, the body must endure the *dya's* peregrinations, for there is no doubt but that the *dya* rules the body it inhabits. Thus, waking a person abruptly is virtually a criminal act because, if the *dya* is away [761] at the time, a too abrupt summons may break the link between the *dya* and the body, and such a rupture (*sa*) is death (*sa*). Besides,the body has only a vague memory of the wanderings of its *dya*, it experiences the consequences of this action. On awaking, the body is exhausted by all these mad rushing about and fantastic escapades, and it feels the effects of the *dya's* actions, either good or bad.

In short, this *dya* is comparable to what some Europeans call a "double."

775 Further, it appears that the *dya* plays a crucial role in the "return" (*sagi*) to life, that is, rebirth, which is one of the most strongly held beliefs of the Bambara. After death, the *dya* is reincarnated in the same families; the Bambara even claim to have positive proof of this fact. Such and such a newborn child has such and such anatomical peculiarity of the deceased -- is this not a proof that the deceased wanted to show thereby that he was re-embodied? If a child dies very young, the body is mutilated in some agreed manner -- a finger is broken, for instance -- [121] and if later a child is born in the family with a similar deformity, everyone is convinced that the dead child has "returned": *a sagira*, "he has returned."

It is also believed possible for a dead person to be reincarnated far from his own people. All over Bambara country stories are retold of dead people who, more or less long after

771 In any case, these are questions which he does not ask or which, at least, he has not considered in any way that would cause him to make logical, even if fragmentary, syntheses. His words and his acts are indications and sometimes even guideposts for us, but how uncertain and misleading they can be! And, in the observation of current facts, how many at least seeming contradictions there are! However, in the main, the analysis given in the paragraphs above represents the basis of Bambara dogma, since everything happens in reality as if the Bambara were living in accordance with these principles.

761 That being the case, life results from the union of the two parts of the body, while death is a result of their separation. 772 Whence come these two elements and who it is that decides upon their union? No answer is possible. The Bambara say, merely, that certain persons are reincarnations. Precautions [844] taken during pregnancy and delivery show that childbirth is one of those mysteries against which taboos must be observed as a protection. The frequent and readily believed stories about [845] women giving birth to monsters -- usually animals -- bear witness to the affinities which, in the minds of the Bambara, exist between all creatures. But nothing specific is said about what precedes and determines the birth of a child.

562 778 This is a secret to which the Bambara are, of course, not indifferent. It is evidenced in the fact that women, through whom man comes into the world, are held to be doubtful creatures, at the very least, partly because of menstruation, which makes a woman impure, and partly because of the mysterious travail she endures during the delivery of a child (1).

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[774] 1. Women are also susceptible of being possessed continuously by a spirit (see the story of the Déni-bo Ba, p. 123). That is why, when a woman is several times widowed, she is suspected of being possessed by a jealous spirit who kills off her husbands. She is often even thought to be herself a sorceress.

614 beginning with his relatives, to avenge his hatred toward them
794 for selling him into slavery. It seems likely that the establish-
776 ment of these ferocious deities may well date from the time of
this despot and perhaps was due to his personal initiative.

The "people of Ségou" also held in high esteem the deities of the people they conquered. Indeed, there is no doubt that they constituted the most precious part of the booty of war. The Toucouleur [Tukolor] relate that when they entered Ségou-Sikoro they found an idol in chains; it was the protective deity of a group of the Nono-n-kobe people of the cliff of Bandiagara. With the evident intention of keeping this conquered people forever enslaved, the Bambara had captured their god and were having its cult observed by its own priest, kept captive likewise for the purpose (2). [320]

The chronicle shows that the Komo also figured in the Ségou pantheon, and if one refers to what we have said about this brotherhood, he will understand the important role it played in the *to-da* since the *fama* himself acted as *Komo-tigi*.

614 There is absolutely no doubt that cannibalism was in
794 favor on certain definite occasions and, according to appropriate,
ritual, especially, at the time of the election of a *fama*. It is
761 obvious, in any case, that under the despotic rule of the clan
[266] human life had little value. The atrocities of Dékoro, the passiveness of his victims, the help given him in the execution of his worst crimes by the very people who were directly threatened -- these are not isolated cases. They are indicative of the basic Sudanese temperament in general, which, if not innate, at least is affected by a very ancient atavism. It is because this kind of arbitrary command over the lives of individuals has been practiced for so many centuries that the Bambara often remain impassive in the face of death. They consider its unforeseen occurrence, even when sudden and the result of man's

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2. See Desplagnes, *Le plateau central nigérien* [The Nigerian Central Plateau], p. 175.

614 own action, as a possible daily eventuality which should cause
794 no surprise.

761 The practice of this implacable ferocity must also be considered the natural source of that kind of burning faith, as intransigent as it is horrible in our eyes, which is capable of nullifying all the feelings of affection that we regard as natural. When Ngolo realized that he had aroused dangerous ambitions in his son Ntyi, he decided that he could not escape the danger he himself had created except by a sacrifice in keeping with the contingency, and with his own hand and without hesitation, he sacrificed Ntyi's son, his own grandson.

Stubborn Bambara are often heard to say: "You may kill me; I will not yield." Tyitya's resistance shows that this is no idle boast; this same affair also shows the aspiration toward equality, so basic in the Bambara, which makes it impossible for him to bow before his fellows. Another example of the same quality is to be seen in the resistance of the "elders" whom Mamari, even he, could subdue only by murder.

794 To complete the description of the somewhat mystical
features of the clan of "those of Ségou," let us recall that after
614 [321] Mamari's death he was honored by a cult: on the part of his
769 natural descendants because he had been their *fa*; on the part of the people of the clan because he had been *fama*; and finally, on the part of the faithful of the idols' cult because he had been the high priest. Under this aegis there was a fusion of sorts of all the people who recognized mutual bonds because they were all spiritual sons of Mamari. This relationship was the excuse used by the *ton'-dyon'* when they usurped supreme power, and the right of the leaders of the *ton'-dyon'* to succeed to the office of *fama* was in fact settled by the expedient of treating this relationship as though it were true descent. This cult took its characteristics from the cult of the idols. When Tonmassa began his duties
782 as high priest, his first act was to honor the manes of Mamari, and the offering was the same as that always made to *ba Kongo-ba* when a new *fama* was elected: a man and an ox.

614 Such are some of the characteristics of the faith that
794 united the "people of Ségou" by ties which, without metaphor, can be called bloody. It is true, of course, that the clan's

776 time; it is the noblest work, and one to which every member of the
Bambara race must be subject. Faro is represented by a spiral, munu;
the vibrating movements of the spiral are the same that animate the daily
movements of the sun. These movements are materialized in a basket-
work headdress, yugu, which has eight whorls and which formerly was
reserved for kings. Faro's face is white, because he took it from the
spirit of the air, Teliko, who was an albino. His ears are protected
by two fins; his hands are of different sex; his tail is palmate, and
his breast is of copper. Albinos and copper are the spirit's preferred
sacrifices. All atmospheric manifestations denote his presence; his
principal seat is the Niger River, but he has the gift of ubiquity and
haunts all waters. Faro is accompanied by helpers, the most rep-
resentative of whom is the bolokuruni, one-armed blacksmith of a
black race. His air messenger is the swallow, who carries the
[824] fertilizing word. Certain plants are in permanent rapport with him:
the Yayalẽ, the Ngoyõ (tomato), which is compared to blood. Thus,
small fields of tomatoes reserved for the cult of Faro are cultivated
in each village. All metals are reserved for Faro. The Bozo, born
of Faro's first twins, enjoy a privileged position because they were
not subject to the defilement caused by Mousso Koroni and can enter
into direct communication with the spirit. In addition, they are the
masters of the water.

776 The cult of Faro includes a whole series of taboos, such as the
784 black earth of the river which may not be used by the potters and
841 butter which may not be kept in water. But the principal taboo is
menstrual blood, originally provoked by the disorders of Mousso Koroni.

B. Conception of Man

774 The Bambara conceive man as a microcosm, a resumé of the
761 totality of beings and things. The principle of duality contained in
the original creative thought is realized in man by his twin souls
which compensate for the separation of the sexes. In man, Faro is
represented by the ni (soul) and the dya (double). Pemba is rep-
resented by the téré (the character, force, and conscience) and the
nyama (which is the téré when it leaves its corporeal support after
[826] death). Mousso Koroni is represented by the Wanzo (evil force with

[826]
774 its seat in the prepuce and the clitoris, necessitating circumcision
761 and excision). The body is conceived as being the support of all
spiritual forces; each part is distinctly known [84] for its particular
role. The body, like the spiritual principles, is bisexual; the boy
[304 is feminine in his prepuce, the girl masculine in her clitoris, and it
831] is only after circumcision and excision that the man and woman can
unite and realize the original fruitful twinship. On the metaphysical
plane, there is identity between man, "seed of the world," and the
cereal seed; the basic nutriments that are made up of the eight
principal cereals are represented symbolically in men's clavicles.
775 Finally, death separates all of these elements composing the person.
761 The dya remains in the water where it will become the ni of the
new-born in the family of the deceased; the ni is caught by the family
head and transported to the altar where it will animate the dya of the
new-born; the téré becomes nyama, a dangerous and vengeful force;
it is deposited on the pembele, where it rejoins the ancestral forces.
The body is buried and belongs to the termites. At birth, all the
spiritual forces are transmitted again, whole, "refreshed," and
purified. One being replaces another until the final resurrection.

C. Ritual, Sacrifice, and Cults

782 To appeal to and influence the spiritual forces, the Bambara
use prayer, offerings, and sacrifices. Oral rites are used everywhere
and at any time. "They pray to the sky, the cardinal points, the
spirits; they sacrifice on stones, on the ground, on trees, by water
holes, just as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries or situated in
public or private places. Every circumcized adult, father of a family,
owner of a home and cultivatable land, is a sacrificer, a capacity
[531 emphasized by the red spot which sometimes is an ornament of the
walls of the principal room in the man's residence." (1)

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1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

576 593 833 [842] that she may speak to him freely. When the day of union comes, the wife herself prepares her husband's food; then she lies on the left side (the feminine side) and her husband on the right side, and she cannot be impregnated except by a union twice repeated.

771 These corporal techniques[1] are dictated and ordered by the religious imperatives which pervade the life of the Bambara from before his birth until after his death.

761 What we have said of the Bambara's religion and of his conception of the world enables us to understand that there cannot be for him a complete break between life and death: birth is a reincarnation; death is not destruction. This is why a man's life does not present one substantial unity but is divided into a certain number of distinct periods, each of which is inaugurated by a rite of transition that marks the death of an anterior state and the rebirth to a new life.

a. Before Birth

843 761 858 From the first month after his conception, the infant constitutes a person who receives a series of spiritual forces emanating from his father's side of the family and especially from the recently deceased ancestor whose name he will receive. At the same time, he inherits all of the paternal taboos, which the mother must respect during her pregnancy. It is only after his birth, at the time he receives his name, that the infant receives the spiritual forces coming from his mother's side. These forces are transmitted through the medium of the priest and the ancestors of the priest.

761 858 From then on, the infant is required to observe all the taboos of the beings who have had a part in the composition of his personality; he thus finds himself tightly bound to the society in which he will live.

b. Birth Rites

852 At birth the baby is washed with millet beer (1) (to purify him)

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1. For all these rites, see G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

[1] [i.e., sexual reproduction and childrearing] see pp. 117-119. -Analyst]

584 She returns to her own family every year at the beginning of the rainy season and goes back to her future in-laws at the start of the dry season.

583 Every year she takes home 30 kola nuts and three cocks, and
584 the young man's *fa* begins to pay the bride price which traditionally came to eight oxen and five sheep. The girl returns at the dry season bringing *fonio*, fruits of the karite, and *sumbalé* (for making sauces), and other products.

583 She is married after the appearance of the first menses, and
585 her husband continues to pay the bride price in the following order: a cow, a bull, a heifer . . .

583 Throughout the engagement period, the young man must
584 cultivate the field of his future parents-in-law.

583 Among the Bambara who currently practice the exchange of young girls between two families for marriage purposes, the compensation is no longer paid, although gifts and contributions are still given.

584 On the day of the marriage the girl is accompanied by an
585 attendant who represents her twin, while the young man also is aided by an attendant, and the two couples symbolize the union of the two couples of [94] primordial twins. Finally, the young girl is carried up to the abode constructed for her by her husband. She is followed by a cortege of seven women, each carrying part of the bride's gifts. The investigation being carried out by Mme. Dieterlen in the Bambara country indicates that the seven women represent the seven
[826] seeds that each man possesses in his clavicles; the bride is the *fonio* seed that is brought to the husband's village, for marriage is considered to be a cultivation.

The marriage of twins requires slightly different rites. When the twins are not of the same sex, the boy must deflower the girl before she marries (there is only one intercourse). If the twins are two boys, the first to marry must let his wife have relations with his twin. If the twins are girls, the husband of the first to be married must also unite with the second.

f. Death and Funerals

761 Death dissociates the different elements which make up the
764 person. The purpose of the funeral rites is to gather the spiritual

761 principles of the cadaver on altars or masks in order to preserve them
764 for the community.

The rites have undergone an evolution. Formerly the bodies
764 were hung from trees until they rotted, while the bones were kept.
At present the bodies are buried. Only a band of cotton symbolizing
the tongue of the deceased, that is, his word, is attached to the
[774] branch of a tree. If the deceased was an initiate of the Komo, the
society plays an important role in the funeral rites.

All these rites have been studied by G. Dieterlen and Tauxier.
766 Monteil has described at great length the funeral ceremonies of a
chief: the three rifle shots recalling his combats, the lamentations
of the women, the notification of the village notables, the offerings
of relatives and friends, the alms at the crossroads, and finally, the
inhumation. The body is prepared, the head shaved, the interior
cleaned with water and salt. A paste of water and ground cowry is
put into the body openings (the ground cowries possess a divine spirit
assuring the preservation of the cadaver). The body, and particularly
the head, is daubed with this same paste, then the body is laid on its
right side, feet to the north (a woman would be laid on her left side).
Finally, the funeral celebration takes place, with the ritual feast
765 and the purifications. Seven days later the celebration of commemoration (Sangha) takes place, followed by the mourning of the women
for forty days. After this time the deceased is transformed into a
living ancestor.

763 The Bambara receive omens of their death or of a chief's death from certain signs given them in the bush, such as coming across a chameleon on a red anthill, the cry of a certain mythical hyena, the passing of certain crying monkeys or certain birds.

Certain gifted beings have the ability to perceive the departure of a person's spiritual forces and his imminent death. Sometimes they are able to bring back these forces and reinstate them in the body to save the man in danger.

[95] g. Ancestor Worship

769 After his death a man is transformed into a living ancestor
775 and is the object of a cult. The cult is closely connected to the
agricultural cults; the ancestors are efficient vital forces which

755 cannot cure. In order to become fertile, a sterile woman knots one[7]
[842] around her wrist or biceps, and a strange tafo it is, taken from the skin of a monkey's hand.

Syphilitic children, covered with pimples and pustules of magnan -- the name with which they adorn this disease -- have chicken droppings for their crême Simon, and this is the ointment of ointments.

[843] Chalk is the specific for pregnant women; to ease the mild discomforts which generally precede maternity, they draw pretty white crosses on the abdomen or on the chest, between the breasts.

2. Death

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195 If sickness is not natural, there is all the more reason why death should not be. In the eyes of the Bambara there is no evil comparable to it. They fear it and its very name makes them tremble. When it is necessary for someone to announce a death or refer to it, he quite often uses a circumlocution in the presence of a member of the family. At the death of a child it is in good taste to say: "A sagira a ko, he has gone backwards," and if the deceased was a grown woman: "She is no more, she has ended her career, she has been buried." The politest of all the expressions concerning married men who have passed from life to death is: "A so yélémana, he has changed his dwelling." The initiates of certain sects cannot bear to be spoken to about death, and the korodouga, of the kouéré or koté sects, for example, get up and leave in displeasure, no matter how little this subject is dwelt upon in their presence.

761 The Bambara are not unaware that Moslems, missionaries, and all Europeans make light of their fetishes and scorn them; therefore in the presence of any of these they direct to God the accusation that He has caused the death of one of their people. This procedure is only a courtesy, an indirect way of respecting the belief of those to whom they speak, whose life they share, and whom they fear. They know that God has the power of life and death over human beings, but they attribute death to Him so seldom, that during seven consecutive years spent in the Sudan I did not encounter a single instance. /48/ Death is always caused by a wicked person, by an enemy who

[7] [i.e. A tafo, a string with seven or nine knots. —Analyst]

is taking vengeance, or by a djiné fetish also known as gnéna, by a boli fetish also called gnâ, by a souba or initiate of the Siri fetish who does evil for pleasure, or finally, by a gnâma, a force about which I have already said so much. Although they may assert that one can die of old age, their whole pattern of behavior and expression clearly shows that for them old age alone cannot cut the thread of a man's days; it is a grateful genie, the fetish of his favorite sect, and his family fetishes, if he has any, that come and take away his soul.

When a child has died expressions such as the following flow from all lips: "A fa gnâma do, it is his father's gnâma." -- "Souba do, it is a souba." -- "Kono gnâma do, it is the gnâma of a bird." -- "Djiné ou ta no do, it is the way the djiné genii behave." -- Since the djiné readily find homes in and on trees, the Bambara also have this easily understood metaphor: "A yélêla djiri djougou kan, he has climbed an evil tree," that is to say, he has displeased a spirit of the bush, either because he has climbed the tree which it uses as a dwelling or because he has broken its branches or picked its fruit. At the death of a young man, a young girl, or any adult, all the people of the village are plunged in sorrow, and one hears them repeating to each other: "Souba ta no do, that is the way the souba behave"; "ou yé korti sou a la, the poison of a fetish, the korti has been thrown at him," korti is the name of the poison; "doukono dir'à ma, poison has been poured for him"; "boli no do, that is how the boli fetishes behave," "Komo y'a fa, Kono (1) y'a fa, Nia y'a fa, Douga y a fa, etc.; it is Komo that has killed him, it is Kono, Nia, Nama, or Douga, etc., that has killed him." -- At the death of an old man who owned either djiné or boli fetishes, they say: "A gnénaou -- or -- a gnâou séra a ma, his djiné genii or boli fetishes have got to him; they have come to take him." If he did not have a fetish, his death is ostensibly attributed to old age, but one is given to understand that he was very specially devoted to such-and-such a fetish, which therefore is not unconnected with his death. I know the /49/ Bambara say to Europeans,

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1. Note that Komo and Kono are two different fetishes.

761 "Koroya do, it is old age," but let us allow them to finish their sentences and continue their thoughts "a ko toun kadi Komo yé, he was beloved by the Komo," -- "à ko toun kadi Kono yé, Nama yé, Douga ye, he was beloved by the Kono, the Nama, the Douga," etc.

761 782 776 When people pass by holding a rooster or hen by the feet one may wonder where they are going; if one follows, one finds that they are going to the temple of a fetish, there to sacrifice and to redden their god with blood. "A toun koromé Alla sérà à ma, he was old and God came to him," is an expression which is rarely on Bambara lips. When it is heard, it is used with a very special meaning; it signifies that the old man in question was a good man, beloved by all even by God, but by no means that God killed him. The sacrifices made on this occasion clearly demonstrate this, for they are all directed to a fetish. If God alone were the cause and not the fetishes, the family of the deceased would refrain from all sacrifice; at the very most, it would offer a saraka by order of a sorcerer, but even the saraka offered to God -- and they are offered to Him -- is not a sacrifice, as we shall see later.

761 778 The priests of a djiné fetish and the owners and priests of a boli fetish have the consolation that they always fall under the blows of the genie which they hold and to which they sacrifice. As for other mortals, 80 times out of 100, and one might say even more without exaggerating, they are killed by a boli fetish. The Komo, Kono, Nia, Nama, and Douga fetishes etc., are the chief murderers, and entire villages are often decimated by them.

761 578 674 754 Although they are able to deliver blows on their own initiative, they are often only intermediaries, the agents of a depraved will to which they have offered their services; almost always there is either a thrown poison, korti, or a poison that is poured, dounkono. Thus sorcerors are consulted at every death; one is sought through their mediation. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the great maxim for the Bambara as for the Jews, and vengeance must be taken on the one who was able to win over the good graces of a fetish and force it to bring suffering or mourning into the bosom of a family. This vengeance is obtained through the intermediary of a fetish, and

761 therefore secretly, and good relations between the actual /50/ or sup-
518 posed culprit and the unfortunate family are not broken in anyway.
674 The strange fact that has always surprised me is that all these people
754 converse amicably, do each other small favors, invite each other to drink and eat, while in their hatred they maintain a constant guard. They watch each other as they smile -- one party to protect their lives and their interests, the other to obtain vengeance. And on the day when it is least expected, that vengeance explodes inexorably. Cases of poisoning are not unusual in the Sudan, and it is not without reason that almost every death is blamed on the *korti* and the *dounkono*. I know that many die a perfectly natural death, and I have seen dropsy brought on by syphilitic consumption stupidly attributed to poisoning by the *Komo,* acute peritonitis to poisoning by the *Kono,* dysentery to poisoning by the *Nama,* undue swelling of the testicles with purulent abscesses, which were consequences of misconduct, to poisoning by the *Nia,* an abscess in the bladder to the *Douga* or the *Nama*. But it is a definite fact which I have noted many times in the course of seven years, and which any European living among the Negores can observe, however little he knows the language, the diseases which kills the natives is contracted when they return from a market, from a festival in honor of a fetish, or from a drinking bout where *d'lo* flows freely. The person's kidneys are hard and painful; his stomach causes him horrible suffering, his intestines seem to be torn by thorns, and there is complete anuria. In three or four days at the most his time is up.

The administrators at the head of a circle have all had to settle these cases which touch on the question of poisoning, and I doubt if there is one who has seen the matter clearly, so difficult it is to establish poisoning by *korti* and by *dounkono*. Let us refrain from throwing a stone at them; in a similar situation we would all be at a loss, for here there are always as many guilty persons as there are innocent, and all of them deserve the rope even while able openly to claim peace, liberty, and life. Since in the eyes of the Negro the fetish alone is guilty, there is a very simple means of stopping the decimation of the population and of allowing it to grow!

754 674 become detached and fall of their own accord "if they are well made and have lost none of their complete power"; he also has a mass of antidotes. Almost always he escapes with nothing more than a few days on his mat and a good stomach-ache, and although his convalescence may be long and can sometimes go on indefintely, at least he is shown sympathy; he gets a big share in the sacrifices offered by his friends, and his broth improves.

754 278 If the *korti* are many and cannot be numbered -- "each fetish has its own" -- the *dounkono* are still more numerous, for in addition to the fetishes, the sorcerers, elders, men, and women, all know how to prepare a poison and give it whatever strength and power is desired. Every poison produces a special disorder in the body depending on the hand that throws or pours it. When in doubt, the Bambara consult the being who never deceives and cannot be mistaken: the sorcerer! And it is usually he who prescribes the antidote.

754 673 In the eyes of the Bambara, pouring poison (*dounkono di*) or throwing it (*korti sou*) is a blameworthy act, and those who are guilty of it have a dismal reputation among their fellows. One should not be surprised to see this crime remain unpunished, however, for in their eyes it does not bear the same odium as an overt or concealed murder by main force. I might even say, without fear of error, that this way of taking revenge is for them not a crime in the strict sense of the word. They so often have recourse to fetishes to settle a dispute and so readily threaten an enemy with the wrath of the gods, that taking vengeance through their intermediary leaves them calm and without any remorse. Besides, with what reproach should we reproach one who does so? It is true that he is cruel and without pity, /56/ but who gives power to the powder that he pours and the powder that he throws? It is the god, the fetish, and it alone is guilty! So let the enemy obtain the fetish's good graces and ward off its blows by sacrificing, let him set a more powerful god against it.

761 153 As one can see to the Bambara there is nothing natural about physical and mental suffering and death; there is always an intermediary, and suffering and death are caused by an enemy who is taking vengeance, by a wicked person, by a sorcerer, or by a fetish.

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first by the accuser and a second time of his own accord (*a blara boli koro,* "the accuser places him under the boli"; *a y'i bla boli koro,* "the accused has placed himself under the fetish").

a *boli sien* (5) is needed, for the fetish must again be called on to be a witness. /153/ These oaths entail heavy expenses, for one hen is seldom enough and a goat is very often necessary. I have seen four or five dogs, equal to an expenditure of 20 to 30 francs, sacrificed over a trivial matter.

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The three chief sacrifices offered by individuals are the *fani-nké* (1), the *gnénama fani* (2), and the *sou fani* (3). The first is made to obtain a favor, to place oneself in the good graces of the fetish; the second, to preserve one's life, to escape a death already decreed; and the third is offered to appease a fetish whom one blames for the death of a relative (4) and to entreat it to spare the survivors of the

/See footnote 5 immediately preceding./

1. *Fani,* "small throat cutting"; *ké,* "to make."

2. *Gnénama,* "one who has life," "alive."

3. *Sou,* "corpse."

[761] 4. Eighty times out of 100, without exaggeration, death is blamed on a *boli* fetish.

778 572 mother who bore him"), and on the phrase sinna dé meaning "a child at the breast, " I believe I can give this meaning to the word sinnakoun ("head, " "tip of the breast": or again, "because of the breast"): "Between us it is as if we had sucked the same breast; therefore, we are like brothers. " And /155/the persons bound by this type of friendship regard themselves as such, exchanging witticisms and light jokes without ever quarreling. Yet the Negroes are very sensitive and hardly ever allow joking. Seing such friends one would take them for kanémé, and the latter are relatives since they are maternal cousins (1).

1. A woman's children and the children of her brothers are kanémé to each other. Sinnakoun and kanémé are not impediments to marriage.

The sinnakoun between families dates from time immemorial; it appears to have no history, or at least I was unable to persuade anyone to tell me what it is. In any case, one can believe that it is a friendship sworn on a boli, or in its presence if you like, since nowadays two heads of families who wish to be united, to be sinnakoun, together redden a powerful fetish.

6. Talking Boli

778 [761] These are supposed to bring death to anyone who scorns them. Nevertheless, they are seldom blamed for death, and they bring chiefly evil spells, sorcery, and sickness. They are in the hands of so-called sorcerers, real leeches who go through villages in the dry season, always holding out their hands and begging.

778 791 A talking boli is usually the tail of an animal and the sacrifices are made on this tail. The owner always has his instrument in an unusual skin, often the hide of a small wild animal, and he lets an end protrude. That, I believe, is his insignia, his mark of identification, unless it be the small bell he hangs on the paws of the hide and which he knows so well how to shake in order to notify people of his arrival.

2. No Sacrifice to the Shades of the Dead

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At every death the blood of hens, goats, and dogs flows in streams. I would like to be able to think and say with some Europeans that all these sacrifices are an honor paid to the shades of the deceased and the ancestors, but that is impossible for me. Not the slightest sacrifice is offered to a person's soul on the day of death or the day of burial. The Negroes are logical in their beliefs; the soul does not leave the body until after burial, and a dead person has no right to a sacrifice until he is in Lahara, or the world of spirits. Prayers are undoubtedly said. Objects which belonged to the deceased or were used in paying the final respects to him are destroyed and placed as saraka at the corner of land formed by paths that cross. But nothing in all this would be a sacrifice, bloody or bloodless in Bambara eyes (1).

● [761]
1. Very rarely, a dead person is thought to have caused a Negro's death. If the sorcerer asserts that a deceased individual is the cause of a death, a sacrifice is made to him, but it is made to quiet him because he is a murderer, and not at all because he is dead.

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And to whom are they directed, all these hecatombs and streams of blood? I already said, in the chapter where I discussed sickness and death, that a Bambara never dies a natural death. Always he is the victim of poison, of a gnâma or of a djiné, or -- 80 times out of 100 -- a powerful fetish, such as a Komo, Kono, Nama, Nia, or Douga, has caused him to perish. At every death one or another of the following expressions is on all lips: "Souba ta no do, that is the way the souba act"; -- "keroti kér'a la, the poison of the fetishes was thrown at him"; -- "dounkono dir'a ma, he has been given poison"; -- "Komo, Kono, or Nama, etc., sera a ma, the Komo, Kono, or /216/ Nama

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782 has reached him"; -- "djinéou no do, the djiné are the cause of it";
761 -- "a fa gnâma do, it is his father's gnâma"; -- "boli y'a fa, a boli killed him."

Thus, all the sacrifices which are made on the occasion of a death are directed to the fetishes which are thought to be murderers, and if a deceased member of the family or of a family of strangers gets a slight trickle of blood, that is because on the word of a sorcerer he is guilty. When it is thought that the deceased was the victim of poured poison (dounkono) or korti (poison of the fetishes), thrown sorcery, there is recourse to the diviners and sorcerers to ascertain what invisible being must be soothed and what sacrifice should be uttered. If a gnâma is involved, a sacrifice to a fetish is often prescribed to ensure its protection, but to the gnâma itself a plain saraka, with or without bloodshed, is offered. These saraka are seldom made to the Supreme Being Alla; they are offered to the lesser djiné genii that run around the village and like to rest in the da-n-koun in among the gnâma.

3. Respects Paid to the Uncircumcised

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[304] Few honors are rendered at death to the uncircumcised and unexcised; such persons are not really Bambara, for they lack the tribal mark. The head of the village and his council ascertain that the death has occurred and, depending on the order received from the diviners, a sacrifice is offered or a saraka placed. The people of the village come to offer their condolences to the bereaved family, and when the grave has been dug, two or three youths bury the corpse without further ceremony.

The father wears mourning for a whole day, and for at least three days the mother grieves in her hut with a few women friends, her neighbors. A barbaric custom also decrees that if the deceased is an unweaned infant its big toe must be broken, in the presence of its mother, and many fathers do more. They mark it with a knife on the forehead, the nape of the neck, the shoulders, the arms; they cut the upper lip or the lobe of an ear. This procedure always makes a deep impression on a mother, especially if she has given birth when

764 white clothes or wrap it in a shroud, and when they have finished preparing it, they lay it in the middle of the dwelling on a coarse mat (called tjékala or sometimes kara) which is covered with a fine mat in which it will be wrapped to be carried to the grave. Many times, too, a heavy stone, used to grind sorghum, is laid on the abdomen of the corpse, doubtless to keep it from swelling. The women then cover themselves with white cloths, bed covers if nothing else is available; then they sit on their tiny stools and mourn and weep.

The eldest in the family, the new gouatigi (head of the family) also has much to do. /Note the assumption throughout that the old person deceased was also a family head. - Ed./ He consults the sorcerers, places saraka or has them placed, sacrifices, and he does not rest until the diviners have indicated to him the guilty one, the fetish who is the assassin. Dressed in white, he then goes to sit in the b'lon or at the door of the b'lon (the entry hut), and the headman and his council as well as neighbors and friends from the village and from neighboring villages come to pay their respects and express their sympathy.

All these people behave correctly; they talk in low tones and avoid laughter, and the monotony of the silence is broken by the cries of the women. As soon as they come in sight of the village, they throw white cloths over their heads and their cries grow ever louder until at last they are in the hut /219/ of the deceased. There they stop crying, dry their tears, and immediately begin to clap their hands, beat a gourd inverted in a conari full of water, and sing of the honors and achievements of the deceased.

[761] Indeed, there is nothing sad about the death of an old man; he has finished to the end the cycle of his existence, and it is in good taste to rejoice. The grandchildren of the deceased are full of joy, for their great-uncles and uncles give them a ba (800 cowrie shells); they are allowed to take a fat hen from the hen house (often even a billy or nanny goat from the grandfather's stable), and they are made [534] to dance to the sound of xylophones, drums, and triangles (kingé). This dance of the grandchildren is held before the first djansa (1).

1. A kind of alms given to the players of instruments and to the children.

766 causing her own child to die. A
845 mother who has lost her child may
847 adopt an orphan and give it her
breast.

766 crowd /226/ always withdraws, and the blacksmith remains alone
845 with his assistant. When the work is done, they wash their hands on
the grave itself, and the operator makes the customary prayer:
"Whether the wind comes from the east or the west, from the north or
the south, etc., " (see above, p. 244).

5. Sacrifices to Fetishes on the Occasion of a Death

782 Although at the time of death there is no sacrifice to the soul
764 of the deceased nor to the shades of ancestors, blood flows neverthe-
778 less. It even flows in torrents for the Bambara are not satisfied with
reddening the family *boli*; they stain with blood all the *boli* fetishes they believe to be guilty. Nor do initiates of the sects forget their deceased brothers, and for a friend who was initiated the same day as they themselves, they cannot refuse the *boli* a hen and a kola nut. If the deceased is the master of a fetish, its priest, or an influential person on its staff, all the initiates comply, and the sacrifice becomes general. The initiates do more; in the evening they take the god out of its temple, and all night long they mingle their wild animal shouts with the blasts of sacred horns and trumpets blown by heralds. The latter very often wear hideous horned masks on their heads and are dressed in cloaks of feathers.

761 Eighty times out of a hundred, death is attributed to a powerful
782 *boli* which is taking vengeance, punishing or rewarding, and in the
764 environs of Ségou the *Komo*, *Nia*, *Kono*, *Nama*, and *Douga* are the
778 ones who have the most deaths to their credit. When the murdering
boli is known, the entire village is notified; the trousers, blouse and bed cover of the deceased, or the *tafé* (1) if it is a woman, are hung

1. *Tafé*: a rectangular piece of cloth which women wind around their bodies to cover themselves.

761 on the branches of the sacred tree under which the fetish dwells and
782 at the door of its temple, and the members of its staff know how to
764 extol their god. Under these conditions they are without pity; they
778 bleed the bereaved family white, so that the tax demanded by our
circle officers (2) is nothing compared to the tax that they have to
pay. /227/

782 What do they not have to give for a sacrifice to the Komo, for
764 example? The whole house is turned upside down to find goats, dogs,
[824] kola nuts, roosters, and hens, gnâma-n-kou (Amormum melegueta),
and djalakouma (a plant whose name I do not know). The family
needs all this, cost what it may, and if they have to buy it all they
have to pay double or triple the value of the objects, for others make
profits from their necessity. First a dog or a goat is sacrificed to
appease the fetish and pay respects to it. Then to find out whether
it is satisfied and its hatred assuaged, two red roosters and two hens
with golden necks bite the dust. A bara (1) (gourd) full of gnâma-n-kou fruit and another full of djalakouma are offered. One portion of
these fruits is used for holy water (2); the other is sold for the benefit

[651] 2. The head tax is 3.50 francs per person and 5 francs for the servants of Europeans. Here France is surely not a "tyrant," but a tender mother.

[415 854] 1. This bara (a large pumpkin /courge/ with a small opening at the top) can hold from 18 to 20 liters of liquid. The true gourd is half of a pumpkin.

782 764 824 2. The holy water of the Komo is made of roots and leaves of the djalakouma and the fruit of the

B. The Altars

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Each family head wears a small altar, called kere la boli ni (literally, little side altar), which maintains relations with the souls of the members of the family for which he is, in part, responsible. /132/ In case of illness he offers sacrifices on this boli for the recovery of the patient. In case of death, he keeps the soul in it temporarily before carrying it to the collective altar of the Komo (1). He also sacrifices on this altar at the time of sowing.

[763] If the family head is himself very ill, the altar is placed on his head in an effort to replace the soul which is escaping with that which the altar contains. If he dies, it is placed on his chest to take in the [764] soul which is then transported to the sanctuary of the Komo. At the end of seven days, the object is given to the deceased's eldest son who, upon becoming family head, sacrifices two goats to the Komo on this occasion.

The čuafebla (literally, worn at the hip) is made by a father for his son when the latter attains maturity and is on the point of leading a man's life, farming his own field and founding a family.

If there is no Komo in the village, the father may make it earlier, right after the name-giving ceremony.

The altar is made of hyena tails, scorpion tails, and whole peppers tied with a little stick; it represents the owner's flesh and blood.

It receives an annual sacrifice at the time of sowing after the collective offering tothe Komo. This takes place in the family courtyard in the presence of all the members of the family (2). Moreover,

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1. The society, the altars, and the role of the Komo are described on pages ff.

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2. The cult rendered on this altar brings the intervention of the Sago spirit whose agricultural role is still obscure at the present stage of the inquiry. He taught men how to water their fields.

"Two birds konodyanfi began to circle and sing above the workers in the fields;

764 were kept by the village patriarch and the cult of the ancestors was
celebrated upon these altars.

At the present time, the body is buried during rites in which the
Komo plays an important role for the initiates. As soon as a member
763 is seriously ill, the family head places upon the dying man's chest
778 the portable altar, *kere la boli ni*, which belongs to the community.
He does not leave the bedside in order to catch the last breath. Immediately after death, without turning back or saying a word to anyone, he goes to the chief of the Komo who places the object in the
[775] sanctuary where the altars are kept. The soul is introduced into the
nimara boli (1).

[843] 1. See p. 192. In former times, the soul of the dead man was caught between two gourds which were then joined together and hung on the conjugal bed. When the woman became pregnant, the gourds were broken over her abdomen in order to make the soul penetrate the foetus. Later on this method of transmission of the soul was no longer possible because of the impurity brought about by "frivolous discussions regarding the arrangements and situations of creation."

764 Upon his return to the house of the deceased, the family head
brushes his hand over the dead man's face to gather his *nyama* which
he then entrusts to Pemba by rubbing the cavity in the family *pembele*
"so that the total of the work he has accomplished during his life will
not be dissolved by death, but will be like /190/ an accumulated
force serving the community, and so that his intelligence, his qualities,
and his skill in different kinds of work, especially in agriculture, will
not be lost but will be found in other members of the family. The
[778] block of wood, acting as an altar for storing the forces, preserves this
nyama until a new birth occurs in the family" (2).

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2. S. De Ganay, "*Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara*," p. 199.

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783 2. Ni nya ke šyẽ fla i ka n fa; ka kadi ka
kago, gariseke bo fá ka čã; faro (ter).

The water swallowed after these words constitutes a solemn promise to Faro not to repeat the fault.

Next, they are carried home, the man by two members of the society and the woman by three of her companions, so that their toes, [826] the temporary lodging places of the spiritual principles which have returned to them, may not touch the impure earth. They remain three and four days, respectively, on their mats without making a movement. On the seventeenth day, with a thousand precautions, they may resume a more normal life, but they will be entirely free only when a birth occurring in the family will eliminate from their bodies the soul and the double of the dead child by transferring these to the newborn.

/199/ Death of an Uncircumcised Boy

763 When an uncircumcised boy is seriously ill the chief of the ndomo (1) has a rooster sacrificed in order to find out if recovery is possible.

1. See p. 222.

In the case of a negative response the children, taking turns night and day, go into the bush and sound off the ritual objects under the leadership of an initiate. In this way the soul of the dying boy is certain to be captured at the moment of death and channeled by the sound wave and led into the ritual objects themselves. Two initiates are posted near the home of the sick and, as soon as they learn of his death, they go to warn the children in the bush to make them stop playing. The chief sits down facing the west and recites a prayer; then he sacrifices the victims offered by the family.

766 Before the corpse is buried, it is circumcised, and the wanzo goes [304] to settle in the mask of the ndomo. During the night following the burial the members go to the fresh grave and sound the ritual instruments which contain the soul. Each year they repeat this action above the children's graves following the threshing of the harvest to "awaken the dead and to tell them that their souls are not lost."

787 With the same equipment the diviner sometimes operates differently. Setting the gourd firmly on the crown that supports it, he then taps it two or three times with his middle finger. Then, it is claimed, he can hear special sounds, which are revelations by the water-spirit and which he alone can understand.

In short, there is an endless number of divining practices and here, if anywhere, the old saw which says that the spirit blows where, when and how it listeth, is singularly appropriate. And nothing is more accommodating than human credulity. [198] It goes without saying that there are some remarkable ventriloquists among the Bambara, who give such talented support to inanimate objects that the latter become veritable oracles. A piece of horn stuck into the ground or a mute block of wood are thus transformed through such artifice into mediums that answer anyone on any subject.

[828] [154] There are also many highly suggestible individuals who readily fall into wakeful or hypnotic states, during which they reveal hidden things.

787 763 Another practice among the Bambara is the use of the kolon' kala (1) which is specially amenable to hypnotic suggestion. When a suspicious death requires search for a murderer, the corpse is often used for the discovery. It is carried on the heads of [138] two impressionable young men, who are then assumed to be possessed by the soul of the deceased. The lugubrious remains are rapidly borne through the settlement or the countryside, disregarding obstacles, until it finally stops of itself at a spot where the murderer or some revelatory sign is to be found.

787 A kind of effigy is often used instead of a corpse. This is made of a kolon' kala to which is tied a little bag containing bits of the body (finger-nails, hair, etc.) and which is wrapped in a cloth. The effigy plays the role of the corpse.

[412] 1. This is the wooden pestle used in all native kitchens to crush grain and condiments.

769 continuity is established between the living and the dead, with the deceased acting as intermediary. Religious customs, magic, and civil law, all are intermingled in apparent disorder, and the casual or inexperienced observer is all the more confused inasmuch as diverse accessory or circumstantial features mask the essentials in being more obvious. [164]

Does not the same sort of confusion confront a foreigner in France who sees the funeral of a prominent citizen? If he is uninformed, how is he to recognize the religious rites and civil requirements which form the common basis of all funeral ceremonies, for the great and for the humble, brought to their highest development for the one, reduced to their absolute minimum for the other.

764 Therefore, the important thing to show here is the substratum on which all funeral observances rest. For the sake of clarity, we shall divide the period of 40 days into four phases: (a) from death to burial; (b) burial; (c) the funeral celebration; (d) the period of mourning.

763 (a) From death to burial. As soon as death occurs, the fact is announced to everyone by appropriate means.

The lamentations of the women burst forth, and this spreads the news in the immediate vicinity, while gunshots inform the whole settlement. These acts have something of the ritual that was carried out when a Bambara died in war. Raffenel has given us a remarkable picture of it.

763 152 "When a Bambara died in battle, three gunshots, fired near the door of his hut by one of his companions-at-arms, announced his death to the family. Wailings answered this announcement, and the weeping women of the village came out of all the huts to run to the house from where the signal had been heard. Everything was abandoned in order to share in this sorrow. First they wept, and then they ran to find out where the mourning was...

763 "The warrior charged with this mission arrived at the door at a gallop. He pulled up his horse, slowly loaded his gun, shot it, reloaded it again, then again... , and when the third shot had rung out, he rode off with equal speed, without uttering a word, without giving a single detail... Two shots announced enslavement."

763 A gunshot today most likely signals the death of a hunter or the father of a hunter. In any case, however, there are always cries and vociferations by [165] the women, who are joined by their friends, relatives, and neighbors.

Horsemen ride off to notify any of the sons of the deceased who are away.

[567] Meanwhile, the chief of the slaves, the major-domo, the confidential agent, or a friend or neighbor of the deceased goes to inform the chief and the principal men in the village.

These personages come to the mortuary house at once, 764 spear in hand. After being received by the man temporarily in charge of the house, they go to the deceased to discover his identity and at the same time express their condolences to the family represented by the person who received them; then they withdraw.

In the mortuary hut silence descends while the women prepare the body. They wash it with warm water usually [824] scented with basil, su-ko-la (Ocimum album and febrifugum); they dry it and wrap it in pieces of native white cotton material or else dress it in its own garments, likewise white. A mat [285] of coarse straw (tyekala, kara) is placed in the middle of the room. A fine, flexible mat made of iphène leaves is put on top of it, and the women lay out the corpse on the second mat. Sometimes they place a grindstone on the abdomen to keep it from swelling.

When these preparations are completed, the women, [352 dressed in white native cloth, sit down in the native fashion on 516] tiny stools in the mortuary hut. Those who come in from outside give evidence of terrible grief: they cry out, they weep, [152] they cover their heads with a bit of cloth and hurry toward the mortuary hut. As soon as they enter, they become quiet and stop weeping.

152 764 767 Among the Bambara grief is never silent; it is customary to show it overtly. As soon as there is a crowd, the singing begins, in rhythm to the clapping of hands. One person or another will be inspired to sing of the achievements and virtues of the deceased. Professional weepers and mourners mingle with the crowd, guiding and gradually encouraging the noisy display.

764 The provisional master takes his place at the door or inside the blon', the vestibule of the house, and receives the condolences. [166]

Several days elapse between death and burial in order to give distant or absent relatives time to arrive. During this period the funeral songs become more and more elaborate and [533] are left to professional singers who are accompanied by various instruments: tom-toms, xylophones (bala), guitars. The singers, dancers, and mourners exert themselves all the more if they think there will be substantial rewards.

The children of the house (den'-u, de-u) are allowed a good deal of freedom during this period, as though the authority which had curbed them had ended with the life of the deceased. They are allowed to take hens and goats, to eat lavishly, sing, dance, and generally rejoice.

On the night preceding the burial, the deceased is placed outside under a shelter (gwa); the songs and dances [857] continue. It is customary for the children (de-u) of the house, led by the professional members of the funeral orchestra, to take part in the singing and dancing.

Relatives, friends, neighbors, and persons obligated to the family are expected to bring offerings in proportion to their rank or indebtedness so as to contribute to the meals and to [689] the funeral alms. This is a very strict obligation; any failure to comply not only shows a lack of respect for the dead, but is also an offense which the family must avenge. The chronicle of Ségou bears witness to this fact.

● 763 764 Along with the religious ceremonies, events of an entirely different nature take place. If the death should seem in any way suspicious, it is the duty of the family to investigate the matter without delay. It is particularly the heir presumptive, if he is present, who is required to take steps at once to clarify the matter; he questions the ancestors and consults seers and magicians. The funeral ceremonies are sometimes dominated and even conditioned by the results of these investigations and consultations. At the very least, it would be essential to obtain the lifting of the interdict imposed on the

763 deceased in case he had been killed by a genie (*nyana*). Sacrifices,
764 alms, or the payment of a fine are necessary in that
event, along with intervention by the priest of the *nyana* in
question.

764 Most often, the body is turned over to a priest (*nyana-n-tigi*) [167] if the deceased was a member of a brotherhood.

[735] In any event, it is customary to give alms at the crossroads near the village.

768 Further, the death of the *fa* puts an end (1) to the authority held by him, and this may have serious consequences, since for the moment everyone is virtually independent. That is why the servitor who had the master's confidence and who actually ran the establishment retains his role after taking certain precautions (2). In particular he must make sure that the movable property of the deceased is not carried off. He is familiar with these things, and he is the guardian responsible for them. He makes the women return the gold jewelry and valuable fabrics, puts everything in a safe place, and makes an inventory in the presence of the heir presumptive.

764 (b) *Burial*. The deceased may be buried in the ground
within his hut or at least in a corner of his establishment. In
former times there was a cemetery outside the village, often
near the grove of the *nyana dugu-da-siri* (guardian genie of the
village), and in such cases it was apparent that the more important
the deceased, the nearer his tomb to the sacred place.

766 For persons of distinction there is usually a special kind
764 of grave. It is about two meters long, and while the opening

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357 1. When a king of Kaarta died, the interruption in sovereignty often gave rise to serious anarchic disturbances.

2. This was the role that Ngolo Dyâra was seeking when he asked to be placed as "guard at the master's door."

596 614 787 It is the duty of the fa to see to the cult. He projects everything that happens to him personally to the supernatural plane so as to come to conclusions that will guide his own conduct. He discerns in the most ordinary dreams indications of what will please the dead. Furthermore, the people around him point out the signs of divine will that they have observed. If, as happens in great houses, the fa is obliged to turn over part of his responsibility to the family gods to one of his confidantes, the latter will not fail to keep him informed of anything significant that may be revealed.

[577] Thus, daily life is unceasingly dominated by the supernatural, and every important event is conditioned by these beliefs. This is readily seen in all the family institutions: birth, circumcision, marriage, and death.

[577] It follows that the moral behavior of the family is a concern of the fa. Whenever something abnormal or painful occurs, the fa looks into it. Do the dead perhaps have reason to be dissatisfied? Have they been neglected or offended? He questions them, and if he finds confirmation for his suspicions, he at once seeks to appease the manes in whatever way they desire. If the trouble persists, he investigates further, and sometimes everyone in the house is questioned or, if one prefers, made to confess, even infants. Could one of them, moved by ill feeling, have uttered maledictions when invoking the dead?

614 596 783 [578] When the fa himself is ill, this general confession is virtually obligatory. This is because the absolute authority of a fa can hardly fail to arouse hatred, and hatred, a bad counselor, makes people resort to magic to rob the more powerful of life. Fear that the elder's "clairvoyance" will discover the wickedness in the depths of one's soul and punish it usually induces the guilty person to obtain a pardon for his wrongdoing by confessing it, and then everything returns to normal.

596 614 Upon the death of the fa, it is the first duty of his successor to try to discover, by any means, the causes of death and to avenge it if need be.

[763] Everything which the old fa was wont to honor, which forms the spiritual treasure [180] of the family, must also be

761 764 principles of the cadaver on altars or masks in order to preserve them for the community.

The rites have undergone an evolution. Formerly the bodies 764 were hung from trees until they rotted, while the bones were kept. At present the bodies are buried. Only a band of cotton symbolizing the tongue of the deceased, that is, his word, is attached to the [794] branch of a tree. If the deceased was an initiate of the Komo, the society plays an important role in the funeral rites.

All these rites have been studied by G. Dieterlen and Tauxier. 766 Monteil has described at great length the funeral ceremonies of a chief: the three rifle shots recalling his combats, the lamentations of the women, the notification of the village notables, the offerings of relatives and friends, the alms at the crossroads, and finally, the inhumation. The body is prepared, the head shaved, the interior cleaned with water and salt. A paste of water and ground cowry is put into the body openings (the ground cowries possess a divine spirit assuring the preservation of the cadaver). The body, and particularly the head, is daubed with this same paste, then the body is laid on its right side, feet to the north (a woman would be laid on her left side). Finally, the funeral celebration takes place, with the ritual feast 765 and the purifications. Seven days later the celebration of commemoration (Sangha) takes place, followed by the mourning of the women for forty days. After this time the deceased is transformed into a living ancestor.

763 The Bambara receive omens of their death or of a chief's death from certain signs given them in the bush, such as coming across a chameleon on a red anthill, the cry of a certain mythical hyena, the passing of certain crying monkeys or certain birds.

Certain gifted beings have the ability to perceive the departure of a person's spiritual forces and his imminent death. Sometimes they are able to bring back these forces and reinstate them in the body to save the man in danger.

[95] g. Ancestor Worship

769 775 After his death a man is transformed into a living ancestor and is the object of a cult. The cult is closely connected to the agricultural cults; the ancestors are efficient vital forces which

776 strength (nyama) of the divinity it represents (1).

778

1. That strength is particularly active at the angles of the plank and thus takes on the name boy nyama, "venomous nyama."

778 The pembele is an altar, a guarantee of prosperity, life, and the spiritual and material patrimony of the group to which it belongs. There are different types of pembele: those belonging strictly to families, on which the meat eaten by the family is carved, and those belonging to sanctuaries, which must be engraved with symbolic marks. The small board used for circumcisions bears the same name; it /37/ recalls Mousso Koroni's mutilation on the pembele and the origin of the removal of foreskin and clitoris from the human body (2).

2. See p. 38.

The role of Pemba, as promoter of the force, nyama, which activates all beings, and as the hypostasis of the earth, is illustrated by the ritual use the Bambara made of the pembele which represents Pemba.

[764] After each death, the head of the family gathers the force, nyama, which emanates from the corpse, and entrusts it to the pembele, "which preserves it until a birth occurs in the family." A parallel ritual bestows the force of the dead ancestor on the newborn child (3).

3. See p. 253.

At the time of the ceremonies relating to the large pembele, "all the participants bring a small piece of meat which, after having been placed on the plank, is eaten raw so that fire may not destroy the beneficial nyama emanating from the divinity itself" (4).

4. S. de Ganay, op. cit., p. 199.

Finally, "in cases where it is necessary to obtain a maximum of nyama, infinitesimal slivers of wood are taken from the corners of the board, where its force is concentrated... However, if this practice is abused, the nyama of the earth becomes diminished. It is

826 827 The mouth and tongue, ejectors of the word, can be compared in importance to the ear, a receptive organ. It is through the ear that man receives and remembers the word. Its role is comparable to that of the sex organs which eject life and receive it. The ear in itself has both sexes: male by its auricle, female by its orifice. This duality expresses the basic duality of man. That is why the corpse of [764] an uncircumcised man is sometimes amputated at the ear rather than at the foreskin.

826 301 Because of the symbolism of its shape and because of its function, the ear is adorned. Men formerly wore three copper rings on the right ear and four on the left, the number seven representing the complete being, male and female, ni and dya. Women wear four rings on each auricle or, if they can, twenty-two, which represent the twenty-two stages of creation, or the twenty-two generative categories. Sometimes, for both men and women, a single ring attached to the earlobe represents the mother of the other rings (1).

[178] 1. In olden times, men and women wore cowrie shells on their ears in the place of copper rings, a custom which would seem to be still respected in certain villages today. These shells played the same part as copper.

827 191 301 776 But the role of this adornment goes much further. As symbol of the word, it is through the ornaments that the spirit Téliko, master of sound, hears what /68/ is said to man. They attract sound and send it back to Téliko and Faro, who thus judge the acts and words of men. To wear earrings did not originally mean to adorn oneself, but to hear the spirits as well as to force them to hear what was said (2). Its second effect is to embarass the liar, the bearer of false news or evil words, by putting him in the position of being understood by the invisible, therefore of being judged by them. A pleasant or well-intentioned word benefits the one to whom it is addressed and this

2. Rings placed on musical instruments have the same purpose and also symbolize those worn by men. See p. 282.

761 funeral rites. There it joins the ancestral forces, the aggregate of which forms a whole whose power is used by the descendants during the seasonal rituals for beneficial purposes.

The body is buried; it "belongs to the termites" and in the end only
764 the bones will remain and be honored as a testimony of the physical
761 life. Sometimes they are removed from the tomb, examined, and
prayed to before being replaced.

761 When a birth occurs in the family the newborn child, having in-
herited the ni and the dya of the deceased, receives his nyama pre-
844 served in the pembele and his given name, toko; thus one being replaces
another, using the same forces which are used over again and again. Life transmits itself intact. Not only is it undiminished by death, but the dya's sojourn in Faro's residence is thought to be a "reviving," a desirable and beneficial purification. Similarly, the passing of the ni onto the family altars brings about a rejuvenation.

761 On the altars and in the tombs, the "exuviae and bones counted and classified by Faro," are a valid testimony for eternity and serve to maintain the integrity of the whole world of living and dead until the final resurrection.

Attributes of the Person

The Name

551 The organization of the total family /famille indivise/ of the Bambara has already been the object of descriptive works (1). It is however, appropriate to mention it since certain elements such as family names, devices, taboos, and kinship relationships described as "joking" are related to the components of the person.

Socially, the person is first placed by his given name, toko, that of the ancestor who gave him his ni and his dya, or any other in the paternal or maternal line. The given name indicates the relation to a family group as well as /74/ the person's individuality. It is accompanied by the father's family name (dyamu), whose origin and

1. In particular Ch. Monteil, Les Empires du Mali; H. Labouret, Les Manding et leur langue /The Malinke and their Language/.

551 576 778 564 The device is recited on numerous occasions. After a birth, the griot proclaim it in the course of the name-giving ceremony, addressing themselves to the father, then to the newborn child /79/ who thus receives it for the first time. At a marriage the barama of the two partners are alternatly recited. In everyday life, the recitation is carried on most frequently during religious ceremonies or feasts. In the hunt or at war, it has the effect of helping the participants and increasing their courage (1). In a meeting it is used to greet people bearing the same name, and if one of the assistants is to be particularly honored, the first words of his device are recited.

551 755 In case of illness, the ally (senãnku) (2) comes to the patient's side and recites his barama to encourage him and help him get well. If he is dying, the recitation, which is then the equivalent of a prayer, may help his soul return. After death, the ally, the griot, and the [764] blacksmiths come near the corpse to recite his barama in order to honor him.

551 576 539 The devices pertaining to the various crafts are used when addressing the artisan with whom one has business. Thus the blacksmith to whom one brings work is greeted first by his name to which is then added:

"ini fara ani goni, you are with stone and fire."

A person crossing a field will say to the farmer bent over the earth: "i ni tye i ba ka kusebe daba, greeting to him who handles the hoe well," or simply: "i ni tye daba la, greeting to him who is with the hoe." To the shoemaker one would say: "bana ani ba golo, (you are) with the acacia (3) and the goat leather."

[727] 1. If the griot recites it to a war chief and the town under attack is taken, he receives part of the loot.

2. See p. 119.

[386] 3. This refers to the bana or boina (Acacia arabica) used by the shoemaker to make a black dye.

291 activity is not involved. Nevertheless, a woman puts on an indigo
773 loincloth the day she resumes sexual relations with her husband after
822 the end of her menses; she retains it until pregnancy. When she is sure
531 of her condition, she puts the loincloth in the sun to purify it and will
place the newborn child in it to remind him later that he owes his
life to his parents. A dead person who has broken a taboo is buried
[764 in an indigo shroud, the only reminder of light being a white cotton
784] thread which is placed on the corpse as an expression of apology and
forgiveness. Since indigo is taboo in most of Faro's sacred places, no
one wears it during sacrifices or religious ceremonies.

White and indigo complement each other. To twist a white and
[789] an indigo thread together to make a string used for holding an amulet
is to "roll together happiness and unhappiness, as in life."

The dye wolo is the color of yellow copper. It is in this color that the newly circumcised are dressed after the operation and until they are healed. Red, mbegu, is the color of copper and of blood. Hunters who wear a tunic of mbegu are "covered with a garment of blood." The band kayo (Pl. III, a, 1), in which are found these two colors, indigo and white, reproduces the rainbow: the white intervals are symbols of the word and of purity. /110/ A person making a sacrifice sews a piece of this band on his clothing to indicate that he is circumcised, that he is a hunter, and that he is truthful in his actions and words. A band is hung at the gate of the northern entry to the village in order to protect its inhabitants from dangers coming from outside. A man wears it when he has been ill or has suffered serious financial or family difficulties. On the altars, on the doorways, the colors are represented by millet mash, blood, and kola nut extract.
[821 As the rainbow keeps away the rain and dries up water, the kayo
784] strip may not be worn near the river or during sexual intercourse, for
it is Faro's taboo.

The band sirakele (literally, a road) (Pl. III, a, 2) represents Faro's descent from the seventh part of the sky down to the seventh part of the earth, the indigo stripe being the dyi fi, "black water," the spirit's earth seat. When put on the loincloth of a married woman, it expresses her rectitude and the good behavior she intends to maintain towards her husband. When worn by a traveler, it prevents him from losing his way.

291 The buguni (1) (Pl. III, a, 3) is "the sun ray Faro gave to Pemba
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1. The word designates the band's place of origin, Bougouni.

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The nyeba, "big eye," or koloso tyema, "mixed masculinity" (with femininity), (Pl. III, a, 11) also represents creation, here symbolized by the double layer of five indigo and white bands (1). At the same time the cloth also symbolizes the complete man, said to be both masculine and feminine. A newborn child, but never an illegitimate one, is clothed in it.

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The band soli (Pl. III, a, 5) represents the good conduct of Mousso Koroni at the beginning of her life as well as her betrayal which brought disorder on earth.

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[764]
In olden times, people who had committed bad deeds were obliged to wear it. Today it is used as the shroud for a child who dies immediately after birth; a strip is sewn to the garment of a recently excised girl or to the loincloth of a woman insured in childbirth. When differences or conflicts arise within a family, a fragment is placed in amulets which the women must then wear.

[828]
The wutu nyekorotike (Pl. III, a, 6) pictures the disorderly voyage of Mousso Koroni, her despair and her madness. This pattern is reserved for insane people in order to warn others of their condition.

The band gombo (Pl. III, a, 7) recalls the pursuit of Mousso /112/ Koroni by the god Pemba into the depths of the sky and the earth.

The band tyatyeli (Pl. III, a, 8) a picture of Mousso Koroni's defeat, symbolizes human work. It is given to a courageous and energetic woman. It is circulated among those present at religious ceremonies and its mere presence indicates that nothing here below is obtained without work and that all stems from work. To wear this band strengthens the man who is entering upon a task in a village other than his own.

[844]
The band saki is the koblenkaba, "red sky." It symbolizes heat, anger, difficulties, and sorrows. It is woven at the time of marriage negotiations for the purpose of resolving any differences of opinion. A piece of it is dipped into the blood after birth and then thrown away in order to purify everything.

[822]
The blue stripes of dyitala represent impurity, and the red stripes, purification by sacrifice. Whoever has broken a taboo wears the blue, and the red when he is purified. A piece of red cloth may be inserted into the vagina of a young woman, after she has lost her virginity or

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1. On the value of number 5, see pp. 24, 25.

B. The Altars

778 Each family head wears a small altar called *kere la boli ni* (literally,
794 little side altar), which maintains relations with the souls of the members of the family for which he is, in part, responsible. /132/ In case of illness he offers sacrifices on this *boli* for the recovery of the patient. In case of death, he keeps the soul in it temporarily before carrying it to the collective altar of the Komo (1). He also sacrifices on this altar at the time of sowing.

If the family head is himself very ill, the altar is placed on his
[763] head in an effort to replace the soul which is escaping with that which
the altar contains. If he dies, it is placed on his chest to take in the
[764] soul which is then transported to the sanctuary of the Komo. At the
end of seven days, the object is given to the deceased's eldest son
who, upon becoming family head, sacrifices two goats to the Komo
on this occasion.

The *Čuafebla* (literally, worn at the hip) is made by a father for his son when the latter attains maturity and is on the point of leading a man's life, farming his own field and founding a family.

If there is no Komo in the village, the father may make it earlier, right after the name-giving ceremony.

The altar is made of hyena tails, scorpion tails, and whole peppers tied with a little stick; it represents the owner's flesh and blood.

It receives an annual sacrifice at the time of sowing after the collective offering tothe Komo. This takes place in the family courtyard in the presence of all the members of the family (2). Moreover,

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1. The society, the altars, and the role of the Komo are described on pages ff.

778 2. The cult rendered on this altar brings the
794 intervention of the Sago spirit whose agri-
773 cultural role is still obscure at the present
241 stage of the inquiry. He taught men how to
water their fields.

"Two birds *konodyanfi* began to circle and sing above the workers in the fields;

304 [292 534] During the seclusion, they wear about their head a piece of white cloth, Faro's color, which has the same function as the cap of the circumcised boy. They shake a gourd bolokode barani, filled with eight grains or small pebbles, whose sound keeps passers-by away. The leaps, which they perform over the fire made of clothes, gourds, and refuse that have been ignited, end the seclusion and rid them of their wanzo, which goes to settle in the altars of the ndomo.

It is said of a young girl who was well excised that she is well behaved and carries herself with dignity. On the contrary, it is said of a girl of light morals "that her hands were not washed clean" (1),

1. A bolo ma ko ka dye ya.

which means that she was improperly excised.

Funerals

761 764 775 The effect of death is to dissociate the elements composing the person. The body becomes a corpse (šu) from which the /189/ ni and the dya escape to follow their particular destinies, while the tere is transformed into nyama, an active and dangerous force which wanders about the deceased. The funeral rites aim first to channel the deceased's spiritual elements which must be conserved in the interest of the deceased as well as that of the community. Moreover, through the care given to the body and to these elements, the memory of the dead person is piously kept up. The notion of a final resurrection, promised to all who have lived, inspires these preparations. The bones of the deceased, which are like the exuvia of his physical body, its solid and durable framework, join the exuvia of his soul which is kept in the altars of the Komo. Thus, at the end of time, the dead man "will rise and, to everyone's joy, join his family."

764 The funeral rites, which the Bambara have always celebrated, have evolved along with their beliefs. At the time when the cult of the balanza was flourishing, the dead bodies were hung from trees until they rotted, their bones picked up and kept by their descendants. [532] The ancestors of the Gwonna then carved pieces of sunzun wood called mani (literally, little person) in the image of the dead. The length of the wood was proportionate to the length of the body; the head, arms, legs, and genitals were carefully reproduced. The mani

●764 were kept by the village patriarch and the cult of the ancestors was
celebrated upon these altars.

At the present time, the body is buried during rites in which the
Komo plays an important role for the initiates. As soon as a member
763 is seriously ill, the family head places upon the dying man's chest
778 the portable altar, *kere la boli ni*, which belongs to the community.
He does not leave the bedside in order to catch the last breath. Immediately after death, without turning back or saying a word to anyone, he goes to the chief of the Komo who places the object in the
[775] sanctuary where the altars are kept. The soul is introduced into the
nimara boli (1).

764 Upon his return to the house of the deceased, the family head
brushes his hand over the dead man's face to gather his *nyama* which
he then entrusts to Pemba by rubbing the cavity in the family *pembele*
"so that the total of the work he has accomplished during his life will
not be dissolved by death, but will be like /190/ an accumulated
force serving the community, and so that his intelligence, his qualities,
and his skill in different kinds of work, especially in agriculture, will
not be lost but will be found in other members of the family. The
[778] block of wood, acting as an altar for storing the forces, preserves this
nyama until a new birth occurs in the family" (2).

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[843] 1. See p. 192. In former times, the soul of the dead man was caught between two gourds which were then joined together and hung on the conjugal bed. When the woman became pregnant, the gourds were broken over her abdomen in order to make the soul penetrate the foetus. Later on this method of transmission of the soul was no longer possible because of the impurity brought about by "frivolous discussions regarding the arrangements and situations of creation."

2. S. De Ganây, "*Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara*," p. 199.

764 The corpse is the object of particular care. In the case of a blacksmith or a Soma, two stalks of millet are placed for a few moments on either side "for the nostalgia of the body" (1). This custom indicates

1. Fari nana fi, literally, "body of the black face."

that the soul, temporarily in the Komo altar, and the exuvia which will later replace it, feel sad for the animate body that will become the prey of the termites. These stalks symbolize the two ancestors who accompanied Koumabana into the great beyond, the death in this case repeating in some way the story of the appearance of death on the world (2).

2. See pp. 45, 46.

The combination of the body and the two symbols adds up to the number three, the male number, and recalls the three taps given to the newborn of male sex at his birth. A few moments later a kinsman places the stalks on each side of the door to the dead man's house. The mourners who come to convey their condolences crouch before [576] them, putting cowrie shells at their feet in the greatest silence, for "to talk and to cry increases the sins of the dead man, and tears increase his burden."

If the deceased is an important personage, especially if he is chief 764 of the village or head of a family, the signs of the actual world and 554 the future world (bolo ti doniya, Fig. 1) are sometimes drawn upon his index finger and thumb. The senãnku, the blacksmiths, and the griot come to recite his device (barama) and receive in thanks the clothes which belonged to him.

764 The eldest son of the Komo chief, who is first advised of the death, brings the news to his father who asks him to announce it to the men of his age grade. Each of the subsequent age grade is notified by a delegate from the preceding one. Finally, the young circumcised men, recently admitted to the society, go to tell the women and the uncircumcised the hour when the mask is to come out. However, only the funeral of an elder, a village or district chief, obligates all the members to move about.

764 The members of the oldest age grade go to the home of the deceased. The eldest son of the Komo chief, holding /191/ the ritual whistle between his teeth, whistles alternatively in the right and left ears, then into the eyes of the dead man, which he closes while pulling his two toes. He then says: "So and so has not answered."

The chief of the Komo next comes to "touch the corpse while it is still warm in order to return to Faro that which belongs to him." He then draws a line upon the body (see Fig. 16) with his little finger dipped in boiled millet mash. In 1 and 2, the strength of the little finger acts by sending away the semen which is in the blood. In 4, it suppresses the voice (for the dead man will talk no more) as well as "the tastes, savors, and appetites of his tongue, the power of his jaws, and the air in his mouth." In 5 it returns all that was in his head, such as ideas, experiences, opinions, folly, and wisdom, through the left ear, removing all the sounds it has heard, the good as well as the bad. Next the ear is plugged. Whatever it has heard will return to the one who will inherit his soul and his double, as the dead man in the grave must hear only with his right ear the whistle of the Komo and all that will be communicated to him. In 6 it removes "the will power and stubbornness" so that the dead may submit to Faro even in the grave. It next touches the navel, 3, and all the joints to send back the semen which lies in man's marrow.

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764 The corpse is then transported into a contiguous chamber for an ablution performed by a member of the society who wears over his shoulder the sack containing the Komo altars and who drones out a song celebrating the Soma Moriba Sidibé (1). The two millet stalks are placed upon the body during the ablutions "which purify and calm his soul."

764 Dressed in its finest clothes, the body is brought back to the main room where its hair is shaved. The deceased's own individual altar is given to the chief of the Komo who places it near the nimara boli. It is at this time that the bell bearer (grindavo) goes to the village

1. The ablution is performed with the contents of a large gourd (dyuru fle nyẽ) to which are added the contents of a small gourd (dye fle nyẽ) which represents the "last water of the dead man."

764 and announces that the mask is about to be brought out so that people would go back to their home. At noon, a member of the society puts on the paraphernalia of the Komo society and walks forth, preceded by the son of the chief, who whistles a funeral tune. He wears on his shoulder the sack containing the altars and carries in his right hand the axe and the dagger. The two men are followed by the newly circumcised boys carrying the body and by the members who are present. At the burial ground (šudoyoro) the procession places the corpse on its back near the grave freshly dug by the young /192, Fig. 16 appears here in original text/ /193/ men of the most recent age grade (1). [535] To the rhythm beaten out by three blacksmith drummers, the son of the deceased and later all the participants dance in turn, kicking up with their feet a little earth over the corpse at the end of each musical phrase.

1. In the vicinity of Ségou the dead are most frequently buried in the fields; a ronier is planted over the grave.

A female goat (or a male one) brought by the family is sacrificed and the blood runs in part over the altars and in part into the grave, while the chief of the Komo recites the following prayer:

"Let (your family) rest in peace; let our harvests be blessed; let your happiness come to us later; your sacrifices are performed" (2).

2. I ka du to; ana senefẽ ka barka;
i ka here ka na an ye; i ka saraka be bwora.

The sacrifice performed over the altars is a repetition of that which has already been accomplished in the sanctuary at the time the deceased's soul is deposited. But, to the young initiates who do not know it, it is at this moment only that the transfer of the soul to the nimara boli is effected through the vehicle of the sacrificial blood.

The eldest man of the age grade sucks up with the whistle of the Komo a little blood from the slit throat of the animal and blows on the corpse; another elder sucks up some blood in turn and blows it into the grave. A third does the same and whistles into the right ear of the corpse "so that the deceased, having received a complete sacrifice, may not ask for anything else." A griot next takes the whistles and

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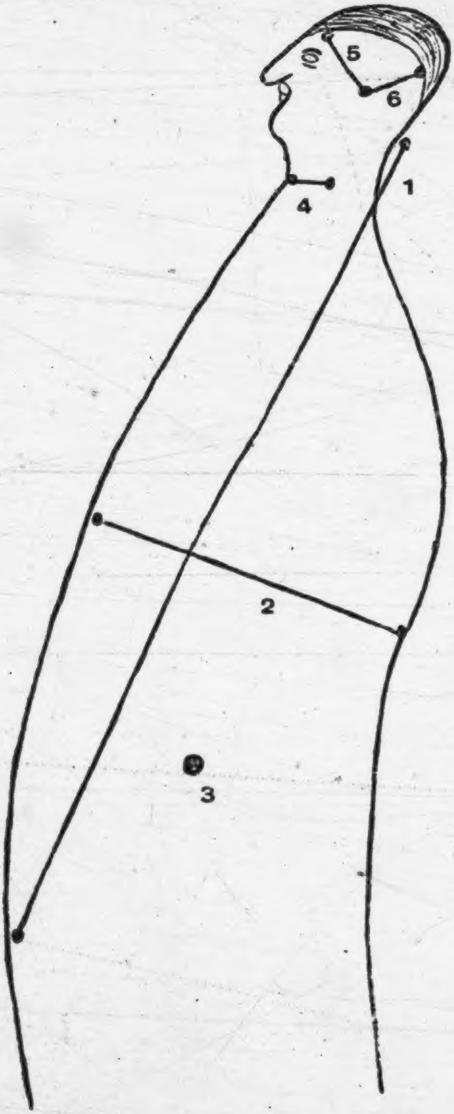

Fig. 16 — Drawing made with millet mash by the chief of the Komo on a cadaver. (Drawing by an informant.)

764 inserts them into the deceased's throat; he fills his own mouth with food previously brought forth by a woman and blows until the stomach of the deceased is filled. The rest of the food is placed near the dead man who is lowered into the grave by his sons and daughters. He is laid down on his right side, facing east, in the hole, *sele dẽ*, dug at the bottom of the grave. The two stalks of millet are placed next to him; they are more powerful than the forces of decay and destruction, and affirm the immortality of the ancestors. Together with the corpse, they are the image of the first three who died and the whole expresses the hope of resurrection promised to men.

While songs burst forth in honor of the deceased, the young men cover him with fresh branches before closing the grave; above the grave the masker whistles to proclaim that hereafter it is he who will settle the problems of the dead.

[768] The objects formerly belonging to the deceased, such as bed, mat, pipe, and razor, are then put into a pile with a little bag containing his hair. Fire is set to the pile while the chief of the Komo recites the following prayer: "Let your burned possessions leave to wait /194 before you, let them leave in smoke. We are behind, we are not in front of you; ask happiness for us. Let all the *dyo* with the pincers and the anvil come, let peace come" (1).

1. *I ka fẽ maralew dyenina, n ka ta i*
kono i nye, m bita šiši fe, an bi ko an ti
nye, i ka here nyini ã nye; ka dyow ani
bala ani kula, dũ ka na.

The masker dances about the hearth, whistling and throwing up dust. The children of the deceased who are impregnated with his *nyama* leap three times over the flame; the force, absorbed by the smoke, is dissipated with it.

The meat of the sacrificed animal is cooked, eaten by the participants, and the containers are broken.

769 Three days after the death, the family goes down to the river bank and throws in the clothing of the deceased as well as a plate of food; both will serve to clothe and feed the double. They then recite the following prayer:

"My father Faro, a person of my family has died, here is his offering of the three days; make him return again in a woman's womb" (2).

776 787 attend his burial despite the fact that the rituals have not been performed. If not, he is abandoned to the care of his family.

764 775 To neglect the rituals assuring life in the beyond and the security of the living causes the shadow *šu dya*, or the ghost *šu kere dye* (literally, white side of the dead man), to arise and present itself under the same which the dead man had on earth, to claim his due from his descendants.

Ancestor Cult

769 778 In the entryway of some residences a supporting stake (*čẽ dloma*), sometimes marked by seven notches, represents the founding ancestor of the family. On the anniversary of his death the stake is oiled "to refresh his soul." In addition, each year the owner of the house sacrifices to all the ancestors on the family altar, on the stake, and on the threshold of the door. In some villages the ancestors are called upon by tapping the threshold with a little wooden hammer, *dyele kala ni*, which represents them.

In the courtyards, pieces of wood stuck in the ground (*ǰigi semen dloma*) represent the paternal uncle, the brother of the founder, and are used as seats for the heads of families who lean against them "in order to lean well upon the traditions." Farmers, before leaving for the fields, rub their hoes on them to show them to the ancestors.

769 241 Before planting the women give the head of the family a ball of raw millet, which he lines up to represent the dead according to age and rank. Then he gives them a pinch of the seed beginning with the one representing the most recent deceased and calling successively all the dead by name. The paste and the seeds are then put in water and the mash thus obtained is poured on the /196/ doorposts to the entryway of the family house upon which the blood of a sacrificial victim also is poured. When the planting time comes, the chief who has prepared the mash made with a few grains taken from the seeds distributes this to the women, beginning with the one who represents the oldest deceased. He asks the ancestors to watch over, during the germination period, the soul of the millet which will descend into the seed with the first rainfall. When the millet has reached maturity, the first seeds harvested are placed in a pot on the threshing floor where the grain will be threshed later, and are distributed to the women in the same manner as the time of planting, the oldest of the deceased having to receive the first of the seed.

769 continuity is established between the living and the dead, with the deceased acting as intermediary. Religious customs, magic, and civil law, all are intermingled in apparent disorder, and the casual or inexperienced observer is all the more confused inasmuch as diverse accessory or circumstantial features mask the essentials in being more obvious. [164]

Does not the same sort of confusion confront a foreigner in France who sees the funeral of a prominent citizen? If he is uninformed, how is he to recognize the religious rites and civil requirements which form the common basis of all funeral ceremonies, for the great and for the humble, brought to their highest development for the one, reduced to their absolute minimum for the other.

Therefore, the important thing to show here is the sub-
●764 stratum on which all funeral observances rest. For the sake of clarity, we shall divide the period of 40 days into four phases: (a) from death to burial; (b) burial; (c) the funeral celebration; (d) the period of mourning.

(a) From death to burial. As soon as death occurs, the
763 fact is announced to everyone by appropriate means.

The lamentations of the women burst forth, and this spreads the news in the immediate vicinity, while gunshots inform the whole settlement. These acts have something of the ritual that was carried out when a Bambara died in war. Raffenel has given us a remarkable picture of it.

"When a Bambara died in battle, three gunshots, fired
763 near the door of his hut by one of his companions-at-arms, an-
152 nounced his death to the family. Wailings answered this announcement, and the weeping women of the village came out of all the huts to run to the house from where the signal had been heard. Everything was abandoned in order to share in this sorrow. First they wept, and then they ran to find out where the mourning was...

763 "The warrior charged with this mission arrived at the door at a gallop. He pulled up his horse, slowly loaded his gun, shot it, reloaded it again, then again... , and when the third shot had rung out, he rode off with equal speed, without uttering a word, without giving a single detail... Two shots announced enslavement."

763 A gunshot today most likely signals the death of a hunter or the father of a hunter. In any case, however, there are always cries and vociferations by [165] the women, who are joined by their friends, relatives, and neighbors.

Horsemen ride off to notify any of the sons of the deceased who are away.

[567] Meanwhile, the chief of the slaves, the major-domo, the confidential agent, or a friend or neighbor of the deceased goes to inform the chief and the principal men in the village.

764 These personages come to the mortuary house at once, spear in hand. After being received by the man temporarily in charge of the house, they go to the deceased to discover his identity and at the same time express their condolences to the family represented by the person who received them; then they withdraw.

In the mortuary hut silence descends while the women prepare the body. They wash it with warm water usually [824] scented with basil, *su-ko-la* (*Ocimum album* and *febrifugum*); they dry it and wrap it in pieces of native white cotton material or else dress it in its own garments, likewise white. A mat [285] of coarse straw (*tyekala*, *kara*) is placed in the middle of the room. A fine, flexible mat made of *iphène* leaves is put on top of it, and the women lay out the corpse on the second mat. Sometimes they place a grindstone on the abdomen to keep it from swelling.

When these preparations are completed, the women, [352 516] dressed in white native cloth, sit down in the native fashion on tiny stools in the mortuary hut. Those who come in from outside give evidence of terrible grief: [152] they cry out, they weep, they cover their heads with a bit of cloth and hurry toward the mortuary hut. As soon as they enter, they become quiet and stop weeping.

152 764 767 Among the Bambara grief is never silent; it is customary to show it overtly. As soon as there is a crowd, the singing begins, in rhythm to the clapping of hands. One person or another will be inspired to sing of the achievements and virtues of the deceased. Professional weepers and mourners mingle with the crowd, guiding and gradually encouraging the noisy display.

● 764 The provisional master takes his place at the door or inside the blon', the vestibule of the house, and receives the condolences. [166]

Several days elapse between death and burial in order to give distant or absent relatives time to arrive. During this period the funeral songs become more and more elaborate and [533] are left to professional singers who are accompanied by various instruments: tom-toms, xylophones (bala), guitars. The singers, dancers, and mourners exert themselves all the more if they think there will be substantial rewards.

The children of the house (den'-u, de-u) are allowed a good deal of freedom during this period, as though the authority which had curbed them had ended with the life of the deceased. They are allowed to take hens and goats, to eat lavishly, sing, dance, and generally rejoice.

On the night preceding the burial, the deceased is placed outside under a shelter (gwa); the songs and dances [857] continue. It is customary for the children (de-u) of the house, led by the professional members of the funeral orchestra, to take part in the singing and dancing.

Relatives, friends, neighbors, and persons obligated to the family are expected to bring offerings in proportion to their rank or indebtedness so as to contribute to the meals and to [689] the funeral alms. This is a very strict obligation; any failure to comply not only shows a lack of respect for the dead, but is also an offense which the family must avenge. The chronicle of Ségou bears witness to this fact.

763 764 Along with the religious ceremonies, events of an entirely different nature take place. If the death should seem in any way suspicious, it is the duty of the family to investigate the matter without delay. It is particularly the heir presumptive, if he is present, who is required to take steps at once to clarify the matter; he questions the ancestors and consults seers and magicians. The funeral ceremonies are sometimes dominated and even conditioned by the results of these investigations and consultations. At the very least, it would be essential to obtain the lifting of the interdict imposed on the

763 deceased in case he had been killed by a genie (*nyana*). Sacri-
764 fices, alms, or the payment of a fine are necessary in that
event, along with intervention by the priest of the *nyana* in
question.

764 Most often, the body is turned over to a priest (*nyana-n-tigi*) [167] if the deceased was a member of a brotherhood.

In any event, it is customary to give alms at the cross-
[735] roads near the village.

Further, the death of the *fa* puts an end (1) to the au-
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thority held by him, and this may have serious consequences, since for the moment everyone is virtually independent. That is why the servitor who had the master's confidence and who actually ran the establishment retains his role after taking certain precautions (2). In particular he must make sure that the movable property of the deceased is not carried off. He is familiar with these things, and he is the guardian responsible for them. He makes the women return the gold jewelry and valuable fabrics, puts everything in a safe place, and makes an inventory in the presence of the heir presumptive.

764 (b) *Burial*. The deceased may be buried in the ground within his hut or at least in a corner of his establishment. In former times there was a cemetery outside the village, often near the grove of the *nyana dugu-da-siri* (guardian genie of the village), and in such cases it was apparent that the more important the deceased, the nearer his romb to the sacred place.

766 For persons of distinction there is usually a special kind
764 of grave. It is about two meters long, and while the opening

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357 1. When a king of Kaarta died, the interruption in sovereignty often gave rise to serious anarchic disturbances.

2. This was the role that Ngolo Dyâra was seeking when he asked to be placed as "guard at the master's door."

764 766 is two or three meters wide at the surface of the ground, it is barely a meter wide at a depth of a meter and a half. Three of its walls are vertical, and the fourth is sloping. At the bottom and along the whole length of this fourth side, a hollow is prepared to receive the body, which is placed on its right side with the head toward the south if the deceased is a man, and to the north in the case of a woman.

764 It is usual for the priests of the brotherhoods to dig the grave. In the course of their work, following a special ritual, they collect various elements for [168] their magic. In any case, it is regarded as dangerous to handle anything having to do with death, and only a priest can do it with impunity.

When the time for burial is at hand, the touching ceremony of farewell to the dead takes place under the direction of the principal gravedigger. Wrapped in the mats on which it lay in the house, the body is placed under a shelter (geva) in the courtyard of the house. Everyone in turn pays his respects to the deceased and asks pardon. Everyone in turn, from the eldest to the youngest, comes forward, accusing himself of failings and faults and begging the deceased to grant him protection. All this is done through the mediation of the principal gravedigger who ceaselessly intones: "Pardon us! Do not be angry; we loved you and respected you; be happy and protect us!" Then everyone chants in unison: "Give us rain in the winter, make our harvests abundant; bring prosperity to our houses, and give us many children, wives, and wealth."

When this ceremony has come to an end, the gravediggers lift the corpse to their shoulders and, preceded by the weeping and lamenting children (de-u) and followed by the [482] crowd of relatives, friends, and neighbors, they set off at a fast pace, almost on the run, toward the tomb. There, the body is put down beside the grave; the men stand around it with the women behind them. The sons of the deceased go down into the grave, open the mat, take hold of the body, and place it in the niche. They tear loose a corner of the shroud or shirt and hand the end of this torn fragment to someone present who holds it outside the grave. With wooden scoops or sun-dried tiles they

764 close the opening of the niche and carefully fill any cracks with earth moistened and kneaded on the spot.

During all this the women sing in a low voice and clap their hands, accompanied by muffled drums.

When all is done, the sons of the deceased come out of the excavation, and the principal gravedigger comes forward with his spade upside down on his shoulder and holding a gourd full of water in his hand. Silence falls, and the women and drummers are still. He pours some water at the head of the grave, saying: "See this water. Do not be angry, pardon [169] us, give us rain in the winter and an abundant harvest. May the wind blow from the east or from the west, from the north or from the south, as is best for us. Give us long life, many descendants, wives, and wealth." And the throng replies: "So be it (o de ka ke)."

With the back side of their spades the gravediggers then fill in the excavation. The women resume their singing in rhythm with the clapping of hands, and accompanied by subdued drums, they say: "Our fa is dead, but he will return! Young men, fill in the grave well so that no sorcerer (suba), no hyena, no wild beast can carry away the corpse."

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789 When the grave is filled in, the person holding the strip of material still attached to the shroud pulls it so that it breaks. This bit of cloth is a precious relic for use in various magical performances. The magical bands called tafo are made from it and are tied around the waist to protect one from back ailments and spectral apparitions (1).

(1) These are a few of the innumerable examples of magic practices which in the most diverse forms accompany all important activities.

The coarse mat which had served as a bed for the deceased is put upon the grave, along with a pair of his old sandals and his water jug. The finer mat is usually given to a friend or to a family, and it is then burned outside the village (1) [Ed., see footnote above].

● 764 789 Burials are never willingly held on either Wednesday or Saturday (1) [Ed., see footnote above].

Finally, a small white chicken (2) to ward off bad luck

2. If the corpse is a woman, a fertilized egg is used.

is sometimes put into the niche just before it is closed off (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above].

Upon returning from the burial, someone clubs the dead man's dog (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above], unless he left express orders to the contrary. [554] Some Bambara even go so far as to buy a dog with this posthumous honor in mind. This seems to be another magic practice to exorcise the ghost of the deceased (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above].

When they have returned to the house, the brothers-in-law of the deceased eat the national dish, millet mush (to). When they leave for their homes, each is given a rooster or a hen in the name of the deceased, which they must eat en route before they reach home. If the fowl [170] were not eaten until they reached their villages, it would arouse the dead man's vengeance; his ghost (nyama) would haunt these impious persons. This too seems to be another magic practice to counteract the evil effects of death.

764 764 431 (c) The funeral celebration. As soon as the death has been announced, it is the duty of every relative, neighbor, friend, or anyone under any sort of obligation to the deceased to bring an offering in proportion to his rank or degree of obligation for the purpose of honoring the dead (1).

1. We noted earlier the sanctions applied at the funerals of Biton and Ngolo.

In certain cases, the total of these offerings is very large. The chronicle of Ségou tells us that when Ngolo died the cowries contributed filled seven huts, representing several thousand francs. Besides, people give whatever they wish or can afford: a horse, a cow, a sheep, fowl, cowries, gold, strips of native cotton, fabrics, grain, etc.

764 574 Theoretically, all of this is supposed to be used to honor the dead, which is done in several ways. In the first place, it is obligatory to serve food and particularly drink to anyone who comes to present condolences. These meals and drinking bouts are a kind of communion since from everything consumed an offering is first made to the deceased and also [769] to the ancestors whom he has gone to join; it is a kind of communion with the departed members of the family.

These repasts and drinking bouts tend to develop into orgies, and the inexperienced or casual observer may think that they are carousals at the expense of the deceased. As a matter of fact, however, far from suffering a loss, the family of important persons receives more than it spends, at least for the time being (2). The more lavish the celebration, the more it is supposed to please the deceased and cause him to look favorably on his survivors.

764 735 In principle, everything not consumed is supposed to be given away as alms to the poor and not added to the family property. It is quite natural, therefore, that the poor of the village come to partake of the feast, and indeed, they are invited. They must be treated with much cordiality if the sentiment governing the feast conforms to the spirit of the custom. That is why the [171] chronicle tells of Nyana-n-koro, upon the death of Ngolo, claiming that the cowries given should be distributed to the poor, to travelers, and to all the needy; that is the true spirit of the custom, and that type of alms is particularly pleasing to the dead.

The funeral feasting continues for seven days, which are called dyansa, "alms." It is a time especially devoted to [537] condolences, called sanga-fo (1) "funerary discourse." The

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2. The family will have to behave reciprocally toward the families who have thus shown their respect when deaths later occur among them.

1. Literally, "sayings (for the sake) of the dead."

764 period is sometimes reduced to three days, but a week conforms more to custom, as is shown by the Ségou chronicle cited earlier.

All this takes place "at the door of the dead," at the blon'-da, as the natives call it, that is, at the very place where the elder was wont to sit and where offerings were made to the ancestors. It is believed that the soul of the departed is there and will be gratified amidst this abundance honoring him and testifying to his kindness and also to his power. In the minds of the Bambara these repasts of communion form a very strong bond among those who partake of them. The act of eating consecrated food together is a kind of sacrament which binds the participants to mutual aid. A traitor is doomed to be cursed by the manes.

Magic, of course, can free a person from these bonds and even enable him to profit from these funeral gatherings to further the most nefarious schemes, but that does not alter the concepts on which the dyansa and the sanga-fo are based.

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[824] (d) Mourning. The purification of the hut of the deceased takes place on the eighth day. Women pulverize tree bark -- from the cailcedra (2) especially -- put it in water, and sprinkle this liquid about the hut which they then sweep.

They assemble with native brooms, sing, and do a kind of dance step; they collect the dirt and throw it away at a crossroads outside the village (3). The hut may then be reoccupied. [172]

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514 During the eight days following the burial, the daughters of the fa live together in strict seclusion. They spend their days in the blon', where they spin cotton and take their meals. To take care of their natural needs, they go out only in a body;

2. Khaya senegalensis.

3. Preferably at the main crossroads (da-n-kun'-ba-la).

794 of Kore-dyuga-tigi and has the same meaning.

most part strangely accoutered dancers, each of whom dresses
[301] as his fancy dictates. As ornaments, the Kor'dyuga wear strings of beautiful red beans, which are inedible, called n-go ble. These beans are about the size of a large dragée and throughout the western Sudan are used as protection against evil spirits.
[292] These dancers have a leader, the Koro-duga-tigi or Kor'dyuga-tigi, who is further distinguished by a kind of cloak made entirely of bits of reed stalks. On his head he wears a conical hat made of the same reeds, and in his hand he carries a long wand from which hang birds' skulls, packets of sorghum straw, gourd stems, etc. In addition to the dancers, the clergy is accompanied by
[785] flagellants (bisa-tyi-la), torchbearers (ta-tugu-la-n-tigi), and people who lash themselves with bundles of thorns (the ngoni-sa-ma-u).

[534] Of course, the Kore has its orchestra, which includes drums (denu-ba), a kind of castanet (kinge), and gourds filled with seeds or pebbles (nkude) and pierced with holes.

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796 The cult has the usual ceremonies, with the two great festivals at the times of planting and harvesting. On these occasions the Kore-tigi officiates, as the nyana-n-son-na-ba does with respect to nyana dugu-da-siri. He makes the offerings, performs the sacrifices, and sets forth the requests at the foot of the sacred tree, after having thanked the god-protector. The kara and the Kore-kongolo are sprinkled with the blood of the victims; thus, the manes and the nyana of the boli are honored simultaneously.

[764] There is always a meeting of the brotherhood when a Kore-de dies. There are offerings, sacrifices, and communion with all the offerings, which require one or more days of orgies to be consumed, depending on the importance of the deceased, because elders in [282] important posts like that of nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc., are particularly honored at their death.

Young men are admitted only once every seven years, and it is at this time that the ceremonies are most elaborate.

584 She returns to her own family every year at the beginning of
the rainy season and goes back to her future in-laws at the start of
the dry season.

583 Every year she takes home 30 kola nuts and three cocks, and
584 the young man's *fa* begins to pay the bride price which traditionally
came to eight oxen and five sheep. The girl returns at the dry
season bringing *fonio*, fruits of the karite, and *sumbalé* (for making
sauces), and other products.

583 She is married after the appearance of the first menses, and
585 her husband continues to pay the bride price in the following order:
a cow, a bull, a heifer . . .

583 Throughout the engagement period, the young man must
584 cultivate the field of his future parents-in-law.

583 Among the Bambara who currently practice the exchange of
young girls between two families for marriage purposes, the compensation is no longer paid, although gifts and contributions are
still given.

584 On the day of the marriage the girl is accompanied by an
585 attendant who represents her twin, while the young man also is aided
by an attendant, and the two couples symbolize the union of the two
couples of [94] primordial twins. Finally, the young girl is carried
up to the abode constructed for her by her husband. She is followed
by a cortege of seven women, each carrying part of the bride's gifts.
The investigation being carried out by Mme. Dieterlen in the Bambara country indicates that the seven women represent the seven
826 seeds that each man possesses in his clavicles; the bride is the *fonio*
seed that is brought to the husband's village, for marriage is considered to be a cultivation.

The marriage of twins requires slightly different rites. When the twins are not of the same sex, the boy must deflower the girl before she marries (there is only one intercourse). If the twins are two boys, the first to marry must let his wife have relations with his twin. If the twins are girls, the husband of the first to be married must also unite with the second.

f. Death and Funerals

761 Death dissociates the different elements which make up the
764 person. The purpose of the funeral rites is to gather the spiritual

761 principles of the cadaver on altars or masks in order to preserve them
● 764 for the community.

The rites have undergone an evolution. Formerly the bodies
764 were hung from trees until they rotted, while the bones were kept.
At present the bodies are buried. Only a band of cotton symbolizing
the tongue of the deceased, that is, his word, is attached to the
[794] branch of a tree. If the deceased was an initiate of the Komo, the
society plays an important role in the funeral rites.

All these rites have been studied by G. Dieterlen and Tauxier.
766 Monteil has described at great length the funeral ceremonies of a
chief: the three rifle shots recalling his combats, the lamentations
of the women, the notification of the village notables, the offerings
of relatives and friends, the alms at the crossroads, and finally, the
inhumation. The body is prepared, the head shaved, the interior
cleaned with water and salt. A paste of water and ground cowry is
put into the body openings (the ground cowries possess a divine spirit
assuring the preservation of the cadaver). The body, and particularly
the head, is daubed with this same paste, then the body is laid on its
right side, feet to the north (a woman would be laid on her left side).
Finally, the funeral celebration takes place, with the ritual feast
765 and the purifications. Seven days later the celebration of commemoration
(Sangha) takes place, followed by the mourning of the women
for forty days. After this time the deceased is transformed into a
living ancestor.

763 The Bambara receive omens of their death or of a chief's
death from certain signs given them in the bush, such as coming
across a chameleon on a red anthill, the cry of a certain mythical
hyena, the passing of certain crying monkeys or certain birds.

Certain gifted beings have the ability to perceive the departure of a person's spiritual forces and his imminent death. Sometimes they are able to bring back these forces and reinstate them in the body to save the man in danger.

[95] g. Ancestor Worship

769 After his death a man is transformed into a living ancestor
775 and is the object of a cult. The cult is closely connected to the
agricultural cults; the ancestors are efficient vital forces which

304 773 The Bambara decorate their faces and bodies with numerous scarifications, with the aim of conferring on the wearer the qualities symbolized by the scars. By their influence on the character and temperament of an individual, they help him to come up to the ideal man. These marks are associated with the myth of the origin of agriculture They are eight small scars: two vertical ones at the root of the nose, three under each eye. They imitate the facial marks of the mythical being, half man, half animal, who taught men how to cultivate the soil. (1)

1. S. de Ganay, "On a form of cicatrisation among the Bambara," Man.

f. Arrangement of the Settlements

361 The Bambara village follows rules of development which allow a stranger to recognize the disposition of the huts immediately and to single out a chief's house, that of a blacksmith, or that of any other member of the society. In fact, the village is built to the north or east of the protective tree. To the south of the village, [778] is the sacred wood, dwelling place of the chief of the spirits, where the religious ceremonies and the initiation rites take place. As more families come to live in the village, they build their huts around that of the chief, except to the east, for the chief must see the sun rise. The oldest son of the chief, his eventual successor, will have his own plot near his father's. The house of the Komo is situated outside of the village, to the south or west, hidden in a wood or a thicket. At the edge of the village is a round cabin, the house of the Nyama, in the middle is a square cabin with painted walls, house of the Gna (see the chapter on religion). In the center of the village, a cleared place around a doubalé serves for public meetings; the elders hold their councils under the branches of the doubalé.

764 554 [100] Finally, the cemetery of the free men is found outside the village, to the west; that of captives and people of caste is to the south of the free men's cemetery.

326 600 Every village has its blacksmith, for he is life, and the village could not subsist without him. Before the French conquest,

343 which are dried. Then it is reassembled without sealing the pieces
251 together, and as the level of the provisions goes down, the unnecessary sections are taken off. The kitchens are situated to the west of the rooms.

Arrangement of the huts in a concession. The chief's hut is
342 always to the east, for he must see the sun rise. His hut is often
361 quadrangular and has several rooms. The women's huts are generally round; each has its kitchen situated to the west and closed by a separate lock. Private shower rooms are reserved for husbands and
514 wives. Privy cabinets with two holes, one for urine and one for stool, are stopped up and condemned when they are full.

312 Finally, the well is sunk in the middle of the court or else in the immediate proximity of the concession. Water is drawn directly with a calabash fixed to a long rope.

Sometimes individual huts are constructed on piles for pro-
342 tection against mosquitoes at night; the only opening is a trap door in the floor by which the hut is entered.

g. Tombs

764 An old custom had the family heads buried in their huts. The Fama were buried in the courts of their fortified palaces, to the northwest. Babies were buried near their mothers' huts, for their return was awaited. At the present time the Bambara are buried in cemeteries following Moslem or animist custom.

[103] The brotherhood priests dig the graves; tombs may be
767 individual or collective. Monteil (Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta]) describes a chief's tomb: the vault has the form of a parallelepiped; the lower base is one meter wide and two long, the upper base three wide and two long, and a vertical partition of 1. 50 meters forms a right angle with the bases.

In Ouassoulou the custom was to dig a common tomb of several chambers for the whole family. A square entrance about two meters high and two wide led into a narrow corridor that opened on a first chamber reserved for children; another corridor connected the first chamber with a second, larger one reserved for women and for adult males; from this a third corridor led to a last chamber, a smaller one for heads of the family. An oil lamp was placed at the

764 left of each chamber's entrance and was left to go out by itself. The body was placed in the middle of the chamber, the feet to the north and the head to the south. At the time of a new burial, all the long bones were gathered in one corner of the chamber and all the skulls in another, for the number of deceased was verified by these. Finally in the Kokum region hundreds of tumuli cover vaults consisting of a [346] heart-shaped chamber cut in the laterite and preceded by a vestibule to the west and by steps cut into the rock which lead to the open air. The outside and inside doors are closed by a slab of laterite. The outside door is hidden under the tumulus, with three equally-spaced stones marking the location. The skulls are arranged in a dome and separated from the long bones. Lastly, the tomb of the village's founding ancestor is found in the center of the village, to the north of the old fortified court of the chiefs' house.

III. Art

517 The Bambara conception of art is very different from the occidental idea of art for art's sake. Every object that we find beautiful has a precise social, religious, or technical significance for the Bambara: "The art of the Blacks is purposeful . . . it is gratuitous projection in a material of ideas and knowledge which bring the user or spectator nothing other than themselves. Doubtless crude in the first stages, often the product of superficial knowledge or even of calculated errors, the esthetic sense of the Blacks is clarified and affirmed as they learn and as they pass from a 'light knowledge' to a knowledge of the great secrets. It seems impossible to an educated man that he could make an abstraction of his knowledge to judge a dance or to become enthusiastic over the playing of a clever harpist. What we call beauty is for the Black the adequacy of the object to represent that for which it is created." (1)

1. M. Griaule, "L'art nègre" [Negro Art], *Présence africaine*.

532 The masks conceal the person and transform the human being into a supernatural being. They are the privileged instrument of the [769] *nyama*, the first [104] model having been carved to fix the vital force of the first dead ancestor in a wooden figure. "The society of

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Like this first theory, the second, too, can be accepted, and the names can be translated as a lament of the parents to those who congratulate them: "He is without shame (doubtless he has come back to leave us again)." --"We may as well throw him away (i.e., will he not leave us shortly?)." -- "He is a worthless man (i.e., do you think he will not abandon us?)." -- "He is nothing (i.e., it all is the same to us whether we have him or not; will he stay with us longer than a breath which passes and disappears?)."

But whatever theory is accepted, the Negroes' belief in the reincarnation of children who died at the breast before having attained the use of reason remains unchanged. They are also generally unanimous in believing in the reincarnation of young men and women and men and women who die in the prime of life. Such persons have not completed the whole cycle of their existence and must begin it again.

And what of the old men? Do not they come back to life? When a child brings to mind the features of a deceased elder of the family, does it not receive his name? A Bambara never uses the name of a man whom he respects in vain or in an unsuitable manner; so a child animated by the soul of an old man is given a second name, a borrowed name, and the real name is known only by the father, the mother, close friends, and the one who bears it. However, many are given a most expressive name which testifies to this belief; they are called segi, sagi, "he who has come back to life."

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The legends -- and there are many -- only confirm what I put forward; so need I cite any? An old man of Fobougou, a village about 30 or 40 kilometers from Ségou, not far from the Bani on the road that leads to Koutiala, was given magnificent funeral honors at his death. The fetishes were brought out of their dirty dens and bathed in the blood of victims; the women sang to the sound of the drum for three days running. It was a festival which lacked nothing, not even d'lo, or millet beer. A few years later some young people of the village going in search of work went into the Tlébi (1) region,
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1. The term Tlébi is used to denote the entire western region, including Bamako, Kati, Kita, Kayes, Bakel, etc., as far as the ocean.

776 177 798 strong. Is it not a fact that this law still operated forcefully at the time of the last kings of Segou, when El-Hadj-Omar (1) took the crown from the pagan king Mary to give it to his son Ahmadou (2)?

It was Ahmadou who held captive our explorers Mage and Quintin, and at the death of his father he left for Yamina and then for Nioro, leaving the crown to his son Madani. For those Bambara who were incautious, whose fetishes were seized, or who were caught sacrificing, the consequences were the confiscation of possessions, imprisonment, slavery, and death. The huge area where the native cemetery and
● [764] the European cemetery (3) are found at present was soaked with the blood of pagans. Who will ever know how many heads rolled at that time for a purely religious purpose! On some days the arm of the executioner stopped only because it was tired and unable to strike -- so I was told by some Negroes who owed their /71/ lives to this fatigue. And I believe them, for the greatest praise that the story-tellers /griots/ accord these tyrants is that they knew how to cut off heads. The legend that the boli came from Mecca was born inevitably

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1. El-Hadj-Omar ("Omar the Pilgrim"), so named because, it is said, he made the journey to Mecca.

2. Bambara translation of the word Ahmed.

3. There are two European cemeteries at Ségou. The first is at the entrance of the city on the south side. The second, the only one in which burial takes place at present, is on the edge of the native cemetery, south on the road from Sens and Koutiala, about 300 or 400 meters from the city.

794 thousands of sparks rain onto their heads and bare bodies, and smoke
796 and sizzle on their skins before going out. The korodouga, armed with
785 leafy branches, chase the sparks. They devote themselves chiefly
to their obscene songs; their minds on the perforated gourds which
they shake furiously, and more than one dancer feels himself getting
roasted. And when the torches are almost burned out the tatougoula
squat before the big drum and for the last time shake the handful of
[522] burning straw that they have left. An obscene gesture provokes a
stifled laugh here and there, a "hou hou" from the souroukou, a roar
from the djara, a chuckle from the soula, and cries of encouragement
from around the gourds: "O do, that's it!"

While the djara /lions/ or sogo /beasts/, /wearing/ huge masks roar around the groups of drinkers, the ng'oni sama or wara tear their chests and their armpits with brushes of thorns, and the soula, grimacing and weeping, throw the group of women into confusion and put the children to flight. As to the bisatjila, they circle like lions in a cage, uttering wild animal cries and trying to excite themselves. Suddenly, as if seized by fury, they brandish their long, flexible whips. These whirl for a moment above their heads, whistle in the air, and then slap the flesh. The men strike hard; each blow leaves its mark or furrow, and /126/ blood often flows. They pale and tremble in all their limbs under the pain, but in spite of everything they strike and strike, for the instrument of torture must be worn to shreds and fly to pieces. At every blow of the whip the korodouga band throw themselves onto the victim and massage and rub him, and the souroukou lose themselves in indecent behavior in front of the great drum.

794 In addition to the sacrifice offered every seven years, there are
796 annual sacrifices to the koré, to the shades of its priests, the korétigi,
782 and finally to the shades of its initiates, the korédé. There is always
764 a sacrifice at the death of an initiate; the groups dance the sacred
dance, and for three nights there is the shouting and the indescribable
bedlam in the koré tou ("grove of the koré") of which I have told.

794 If the deceased initiate was an old man, a graybeard, he has
764 completed his whole career and his fellow-members come in great
numbers to pay him their respects. Before the corpse, which is laid
out under the trees which shade the entrance of the village, they

794 carry out their indecencies, shout obscenities, drink, and get drunk.
764 And for three consecutive nights after the burial the same scenes are
repeated in front of the fetish tree.

794 The anniversary of the death of a *koredé* ("son of *koré*") who
769 became a *korétigi* (priest of *koré*), a *gnéna-n-sonnaba* (priest of the
dasiri) or a *gouatigi* (head of a group, of a family), is celebrated with
pomp; the family always makes it a point of honor to cook *d'lo* (beer),
and people come from all directions to take part in the orgy. /127/

Chapter 7

The Worship of Satan or Worship of the *Gnâ*, or *Boli*

1. What is Meant by *Gnâ*, or *Boli*

776 Ever since God created their race and put it into the world, the Bambara have respected, venerated, and sacrificed to the *gnéna*, or *djiné*, those beings who are intermediate between angels and men. When one of them forgets himself under the influence of a jug of beer so far as to open to you -- oh, very slightly! -- a recess of his soul, he delights in telling you this, but he is careful not to make such a statement when he speaks to you of the *gnâ*, or *boli*. For although the beginnings of *boli* worship fade into the dark of the ages, it nevertheless has its history. The origin of each *boli* is known, and an initiate, however little instructed in its rites, can tell you whether it comes from the north or south, east or west, and whether it is male or female; and every graybeard can recite its family tree for you.

There is a great difference between the *gnéna* and the *gnâ*; they are different in every way, and we have here two beliefs which, though parallel, are absolutely distinct. Any object, whatever it may be, can become the home of a *gnena*, but these spirits prefer a living being, a plant, a tree, or an animal, for example, and when one is tired of its dwelling it moves elsewhere. A *gnâ* always lives in an

Chapter 11

Bambara Burials

1. The Grave and the Cemetery

764 The Bambara bury their dead, and the graves they dig for them are about one meter fifty to one meter sixty in depth. They are two meters long, and two to three meters wide at the opening, and about one meter wide at the bottom. Three of the walls are shaped with a pick, so that there is a ledge of 0. 10 to 0. 50 meter above its greatest depth; the fourth wall, which rises in a gentle slope, is not shaped with a pick except at the level of the ledge left on the other three sides. A niche is dug the whole length of this wall to receive the corpse, so that the Negroes sleep their last sleep in a kind of little hut, the part dug in a gentle slope forming the roof. Men lie on their right sides with their heads to the south and their faces to the east; women lie on their left sides with their heads to the north and their feet to the south.

Some old men are buried in the inner courts of their dwellings. This custom is not at all widespread, and almost everywhere the cemetery is located around the village, and each one rests in his field of maize. The choice places are reserved for the heads of families and elders, however; the more authority they have and the greater /215/ their age, the nearer to the wall are their graves. Some villages have their cemeteries around the sacred grove which is reserved for the dasiri, genie protector of hamlets. The choice places are at the edge of the grove, and the priests of the fetish, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, are quite often buried on the near side of the grove, leaving the fetish tree between them and their subjects.

2. No Sacrifice to the Shades of the Dead

764 782 At every death the blood of hens, goats, and dogs flows in streams. I would like to be able to think and say with some Europeans that all these sacrifices are an honor paid to the shades of the deceased and the ancestors, but that is impossible for me. Not the slightest sacrifice is offered to a person's soul on the day of death or the day of burial. The Negroes are logical in their beliefs; the soul does not leave the body until after burial, and a dead person has no right to a sacrifice until he is in Lahara, or the world of spirits. Prayers are undoubtedly said. Objects which belonged to the deceased or were used in paying the final respects to him are destroyed and placed as saraka at the corner of land formed by paths that cross. But nothing in all this would be a sacrifice, bloody or bloodless in Bambara eyes (1).

[761] 1. Very rarely, a dead person is thought to have caused a Negro's death. If the sorcerer asserts that a deceased individual is the cause of a death, a sacrifice is made to him, but it is made to quiet him because he is a murderer, and not at all because he is dead.

764 782 761 And to whom are they directed, all these hecatombs and streams of blood? I already said, in the chapter where I discussed sickness and death, that a Bambara never dies a natural death. Always he is the victim of poison, of a gnâma or of a djiné, or -- 80 times out of 100 -- a powerful fetish, such as a Komo, Kono, Nama, Nia, or Douga, has caused him to perish. At every death one or another of the following expressions is on all lips: "Souba ta no do, that is the way the souba act"; -- "keroti kér'a la, the poison of the fetishes was thrown at him"; -- "dounkono dir'a ma, he has been given poison"; -- "Komo, Kono, or Nama, etc., sera a ma, the Komo, Kono, or /216/ Nama

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782 has reached him"; -- "djinéou no do, the djiné are the cause of it";
761 -- "a fa gnâma do, it is his father's gnâma"; -- "boli y'a fa, a boli killed him."

Thus, all the sacrifices which are made on the occasion of a death are directed to the fetishes which are thought to be murderers, and if a deceased member of the family or of a family of strangers gets a slight trickle of blood, that is because on the word of a sorcerer he is guilty. When it is thought that the deceased was the victim of poured poison (dounkono) or korti (poison of the fetishes), thrown sorcery, there is recourse to the diviners and sorcerers to ascertain what invisible being must be soothed and what sacrifice should be uttered. If a gnâma is involved, a sacrifice to a fetish is often prescribed to ensure its protection, but to the gnâma itself a plain saraka, with or without bloodshed, is offered. These saraka are seldom made to the Supreme Being Alla; they are offered to the lesser djiné genii that run around the village and like to rest in the da-n-koun in among the gnâma.

3. Respects Paid to the Uncircumcised

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[304] Few honors are rendered at death to the uncircumcised and unexcised; such persons are not really Bambara, for they lack the tribal mark. The head of the village and his council ascertain that the death has occurred and, depending on the order received from the diviners, a sacrifice is offered or a saraka placed. The people of the village come to offer their condolences to the bereaved family, and when the grave has been dug, two or three youths bury the corpse without further ceremony.

The father wears mourning for a whole day, and for at least three days the mother grieves in her hut with a few women friends, her neighbors. A barbaric custom also decrees that if the deceased is an unweaned infant its big toe must be broken, in the presence of its mother, and many fathers do more. They mark it with a knife on the forehead, the nape of the neck, the shoulders, the arms; they cut the upper lip or the lobe of an ear. This procedure always makes a deep impression on a mother, especially if she has given birth when

766 young, and since custom demands that she take advantage of her marriage without delay and conceive as soon as possible, she may give birth to an infant bearing a mark or /217/ the appearance of a mark made on the corpse of its older brother. Such an event contributes more than a little toward strengthening the Bambara belief in the reincarnation of souls. This belief is even one of the reasons why infants at the breast are buried in the inner court and sometimes in the mother's hut, and are very seldom taken to the cemetery (1).

[775] 1. The soul leaves the body after burial. The soul of a child must take on flesh again in the womb of its mother, and she must conceive as soon as possible. When an infant is buried in the court or the hut, its soul does not have to roam and cannot mistake the family.

764 The respects paid to the circumcised and the excised vary a little according to the age and status of the individuals; it might be said that there is no burial without some particular, characteristic little feature. To give as accurate an idea of the proceedings as possible, I have divided the burials into four categories: first, that of old people; second, that of heads of families; third, that of married persons; and fourth, that of the unmarried. After a word concerning the burial of pregnant women or those dying in childbirth, I will speak of the sacrifices made to the fetishes, of the respects paid to initiates of *koré*, or *koté*, and I will close this chapter with a description of the burial of the excommunicated and of the way the dead are worshipped.

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4. Burials of the Circumcised, Old People, Heads of Families, Married and Unmarried Persons, Pregnant Women

Burials of the First Category, Those of Old People

[388] When I speak of old people I mean every Bambara (man or woman) who has grandchildren and so is a grandfather or grandmother. [224 575] When such an old person dies, gunpowder speaks and the shooting is even quite heavy if the deceased belongs to the association of hunters or there is an initiate of that sect (2) among his children. The chief 764 202 slave or, if there is none, a trusted man runs to notify the headman and his council, and all these dignitaries, spear in hand, come to verify the death and offer the /218/ first condolences to the family. Couriers at once go off in all directions to notify members of the family and friends. The person sent to married children is usually the one who was best man and sometimes the fourouboloma tigi (guardian of the wedding gifts) -- at the marriage. He carries out his mission with tact and delicacy. He first notifies the husband /of a daughter/ who summons his legal wife and orders her to go and take care of her father, who is seriously ill. So she leaves her house knowing nothing, and at least keeping a remnant of hope in her heart. It is only when she is on the way that she learns the sad news.

764 [illegible] While everyone is running right and left, the women wash the body with an aromatic plant called sou kola (1). They dress it in

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2. Hunters (douzo) all belong to a special sect. In order to enter it, a man must have passed his tests and killed a deer. The hunter has a special costume. See pp. 140 ff.

1. Basil, a labiata, ocymum album and febrifugum.

•764 white clothes or wrap it in a shroud, and when they have finished preparing it, they lay it in the middle of the dwelling on a coarse mat (called tjékala or sometimes kara) which is covered with a fine mat in which it will be wrapped to be carried to the grave. Many times, too, a heavy stone, used to grind sorghum, is laid on the abdomen of the corpse, doubtless to keep it from swelling. The women then cover themselves with white cloths, bed covers if nothing else is available; then they sit on their tiny stools and mourn and weep.

The eldest in the family, the new gouatigi (head of the family) also has much to do. /Note the assumption throughout that the old person deceased was also a family head. - Ed./ He consults the sorcerers, places saraka or has them placed, sacrifices, and he does not rest until the diviners have indicated to him the guilty one, the fetish who is the assassin. Dressed in white, he then goes to sit in the b'lon or at the door of the b'lon (the entry hut), and the headman and his council as well as neighbors and friends from the village and from neighboring villages come to pay their respects and express their sympathy.

All these people behave correctly; they talk in low tones and avoid laughter, and the monotony of the silence is broken by the cries of the women. As soon as they come in sight of the village, they throw white cloths over their heads and their cries grow ever louder until at last they are in the hut /219/ of the deceased. There they stop crying, dry their tears, and immediately begin to clap their hands, beat a gourd inverted in a conari full of water, and sing of the honors and achievements of the deceased.

[761] Indeed, there is nothing sad about the death of an old man; he has finished to the end the cycle of his existence, and it is in good taste to rejoice. The grandchildren of the deceased are full of joy, for their great-uncles and uncles give them a ba (800 cowrie shells); they are allowed to take a fat hen from the hen house (often even a billy or nanny goat from the grandfather's stable), and they are made [534] to dance to the sound of xylophones, drums, and triangles (kingé). This dance of the grandchildren is held before the first djansa (1).

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1. A kind of alms given to the players of instruments and to the children.

764 during the night that precedes the burial in front of the corpse which is displayed in the court, and again during the night that follows the burial. The _djansa_ is performed once in the morning and once in the afternoon for three days running. The members of the family, men and women, arrive in Indian file, singing in low tones; they form a ring and circle to the sound of the music. From time to time they throw out a few cowrie shells, and the children, who have come in large numbers for the occasion, scramble after them. On leaving, each places his offering on the ground near the chief musician.

At the cemetery near a fresh grave many feathers, a remnant of ashes, and a few small, carefully picked bones are to be seen. One imagines a sacrifice, but there has been none. The youths who dig the grave receive a hen in payment, and it is a gift from the deceased. For this reason, incidentally, it is given to them dead, after an old man has cracked its skull against the wall of the _b'lon_, or entry hut.

The grave is dug; the children of the deceased are all present (2), and he is about to be buried. The corpse is wrapped in a mat [343] and then laid under the _goua_, a coarse shelter that casts a little shade at the entrances of the dwellings, and through the mediation of the one in charge of the funeral ceremony, almost always a sorcerer, those present pay their respects /220/ to the deceased and offer him a few cowrie shells. Children and grandchildren, each in turn, accuse themselves of lack of consideration and respect in their conduct and ask pardon. Strangers also come and beg the deceased not to be angry, not to wish them ill, and all one hears is the voice of the herald crying: "Pardon, do not be angry, we loved you and respected you, be happy during your stay in _Lahara_ (kingdom of invisible beings)."

2. All the children and grandchildren must be there, and in fact they all come unless it is absolutely impossible to do so. Except for a case of emergency, people sometimes wait one to three days to allow everyone to be present.

764 This ceremony, as beautiful as it is touching, ends with this prayer: "Give us rain when winter comes, give us a plentiful harvest, a vigorous old age, children and wives, and give us prosperity." [482] Four strong fellows then come and take the corpse on their shoulders and, preceded by children and grandchildren who shout and cry, they carry it to the cemetery at almost a run, and the whole crowd follows them (1). The men line up around the grave, the women place themselves behind them, and the sons of the deceased go down into the grave. They undo the mat, take their father in their arms, and lay him in the niche on his right side, facing east. Then they tear a little of the shroud, or white blouse, of the buried man, and one of those present takes the strip torn off and holds it outside of the grave. [417] The children build an arch above the corpse out of small boards that are sometimes worked and colored, but most frequently out of wood chips (faléma) or large slabs of earth dried in the sun. While they are building, the youths mix mortar to stop up the cracks and thoroughly coat the whole structure. The women clap their hands and then sing in low tones to the sound of the drums.

764 782 When the work is done, the children come out of the grave, and the person in charge of the funeral ceremony comes forward, on his shoulder a hoe with the blade hafted in reverse and in his hand a gourd of water. He leans over the grave. The drums stop beating, the women are silent, and he pours water on the head of the buried man three times, saying: "See /221/ this water, do not be angry, forgive us, give us rain in winter and a plentiful harvest (1). Whether

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1. In Bani country I have seen the spear of the deceased carried with great ceremony. The oldest son from time to time threw a few cowrie shells onto the corpse, and the crowd rushed to get them. This djansa is seldom performed, and the custom is not at all general.

the wind blows from the west or the east, from the north or the south, may it be favorable to us. Give us a long life, many descendants, wives and prosperity." The audience answers, "Amina -- o dé ka ké (let it be so)," and, using hoes hafted in reverse so that the curve of the blade is on the outside, the youths fill the grave. The drums beat again, and the women clap their hands and improvise a song whose words usually can be reduced to these: "Our father is dead, we have been told he is dead. But he will come back! Young men, fill the grave well, so that no souba, no hyena, nor any wild animal can take away the corpse."

764 When the grave is filled, the one who is holding the strip of cloth attached to the blouse, or the shroud, of the deceased pulls it toward him until it tears and remains in his hands. This ribbon is a [751] precious relic of which tafo are made; they are a protection from a host of evils, especially throat ailments and gnâma. The coarse mat (tjékala or kara) which was the bed or the seat of the deceased, quite often together with his shoes and the small earthen pot that was his wash basin, are laid on the tomb. If the deceased was a woman, pieces of a gourd, fragments of a hearth, or the stick for stirring gruel (to-n-galama) are thrown onto the tomb instead of the wash basin. The pliant mat in which the corpse was wrapped is often given to a friend. The latter goes and burns it outside the village, or before entering his own village if he is a foreigner; he says: "Here is a mat on which no one will die from now on."

[777] 764 782 Wednesday and Saturday are two unlucky days. On these days strangers never present their condolences to the bereaved family, and if a burial takes place, a small white chicken is killed and given to the deceased so that he can placate the spirits as soon as the grave

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764 782 [823]

1. In the eyes of the Negroes this ceremony is not a bloodless sacrifice but a simple prayer; and the water is poured to give the words greater emphasis, since in their eyes it is the element without which nothing lives nor can live.

764 782 has been filled and his soul goes to *Lahara*. In the eyes of the Negroes, this act has none of the attributes of a sacrifice; it is the price of the right to enter *Lahara* and is given by the children to /222/ their father's soul. Moreover, they give it to him alive, and it is slipped into the grave at the moment when the last small board, the last wood chip, or the last earthen slab making up the root is set in place (1).

764 At the end of the ceremony the deceased's dog is killed (2), and the sons-in-law and the brothers-in-law eat *to*, or millet gruel. [431] When they depart they also receive a rooster or a hen. It is given them in the name of the deceased, and since it is the gift of a dead person, they kill and eat it on the way (3). The fetishes and the genii would be displeased if such a gift should arrive in the village alive, and whoever became guilty of such a crime would become the plaything of most of the *gnâma* and could dig his grave.

The Bambara do not place any kind of food either on or in the grave. But for three days in the evening, at nightfall, a dish of *tô* (gruel) and a little fresh water is placed on the *gouâ* so that the soul of the old man may satisfy his hunger and quench his thirst.

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1. A nest egg is slipped in instead of a hen if the deceased was a woman.

[231] 2. If the deceased owned a dog it is always killed unless the old man decided otherwise while he was alive. There are Bambara, especially women, who raise dogs in order to have this honor, and for this reason only.

[782] 3. This practice, again, is no sacrifice in the eyes of the Negro.

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the women belong to him but he cannot make them his own. From then on they remain without husbands unless they ransom themselves, and they quickly become soungourou (4). /224/

4. Soungourou, a woman who gives herself to the first comer.

Burials of the Second Category, Those of Heads of Families

764 ● Having described the respects paid to old people, that is, to grandfathers, I now need only proceed by elimination and say which of the procedures listed are not included in the burials of other persons. The honors paid to the gouatigi, or head of the family, whether or not he is married, are identical, or almost identical, to those paid to old people. But if he is not a hunter and none of his children is an initiate of the sect, his death is not announced by gunshots. Moreover, there are no dances except for the djansa, held evening and morning for three days, nor does anyone come at the time when the body is removed to the cemetery to accuse or excuse himself for a lack of respect or consideration toward the deceased. Through the intermediary of the herald or of the person in charge of the funeral ceremonies, each pays his respects and his few cowrie shells, and, after a pardon is asked on behalf of all, the prayer is said.

If he dies childless or is laid in the grave on a Wednesday or Saturday, unlucky days, the deceased gouatigi receives a white pullet to pay the spirits for his welcome as he enters Lahara, and he receives it alive. If a wife of a gouatigi is buried on an unlucky day or dies without having given birth to a child (1), an egg of a brooding hen is

[1] If a woman dies after all her children, but has given birth to a child and nursed it, she does not fall into this category. It is a disgrace to receive a hen's egg because one has not had children. The rule is the same for men.

[558]

764 slipped into the grave.

Burials of the Third Category, Those of Married Persons Who are not Heads of Families

The death of married persons who do not have the honor of being *gouatigi*, or head of a family, is not announced by a gunshot unless they belong to the sect of hunters. For them there is no arch of small boards, chips of wood, or dried bricks; a few tree branches are thrown onto the corpse, and the grave is completed. At the removal of the body the prayer is recited, but no one offers cowrie shells and there is no *djansa* (2). Depending on their sex, they receive a white hen or an egg, if the burial /225/ takes place on a Saturday or a Wednesday or if they die without a child, and their dog, faithful companion in travels in the bush, is not killed (1).

2. I have seen the *djansa* held even for young men who were circumcised and not married, but these were exceptions and did not reflect a general practice.

1. It is not a general practice to offer gruel, or *to*.

Burials of the Fourth Category, Those of the Unmarried

Circumcised men and excised women who are unmarried are offered primarily tears. They have not completed the cycle of their existence, they have hardly begun, and at the death of one of them the whole village is in consternation. The *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, or *dougoutigi*, (the religious head), offers his condolences and withdraws into his hut; he does not appear at any of the funeral ceremonies.

764 There is seldom a djansa for unmarried persons, and the corpse lying in the grave does not even get branches to protect it from the earth with which it is covered. Not having had children, the young man receives his live hen and the girl her egg.

Burials of Women Who Were Pregnant or Died in Childbirth

766 845 The death of a woman during pregnancy or while giving birth to her child stirs the whole female population. To appease the spirits, drive away the gnâma, and protect the village from another misfortune of this kind, all the excised women go to cut branches of karité (Bassia parkii) or dogora. As soon as the deceased is carried to the grave, they burst out of the village, crying and weeping. Three times they go back toward the village, waving their branches, and call out "hou" three times in shouts that disturb and chill you.

[326] At the edge of the grave, or most often in the grave itself, a blacksmith -- the surgeon of the occasion -- removes the child, tells its sex, and lays it near the mother (2). During the operation the

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766 845 847 2. If the deceased has already been delivered, the stillborn child is wrapped in the mother's mat. The operation is performed for one who has not been delivered, less to save the child's life than to spare the deceased the disgrace of the egg. A newborn child deprived of its mother is condemned to death. It is not strangled, of course, but no woman wants to give it her breast, and the little thing dies of hunger. If a woman were to nurse it out of compassion, the spirits and gnâma would take revenge by

766 causing her own child to die. A
845 mother who has lost her child may
847 adopt an orphan and give it her
breast.

766 crowd /226/ always withdraws, and the blacksmith remains alone
845 with his assistant. When the work is done, they wash their hands on
the grave itself, and the operator makes the customary prayer:
"Whether the wind comes from the east or the west, from the north or
the south, etc., " (see above, p. 244).

5. Sacrifices to Fetishes on the Occasion of a Death

782 Although at the time of death there is no sacrifice to the soul
• 764 of the deceased nor to the shades of ancestors, blood flows neverthe-
778 less. It even flows in torrents for the Bambara are not satisfied with
reddening the family *boli*; they stain with blood all the *boli* fetishes
they believe to be guilty. Nor do initiates of the sects forget their
deceased brothers, and for a friend who was initiated the same day
as they themselves, they cannot refuse the *boli* a hen and a kola nut.
If the deceased is the master of a fetish, its priest, or an influential
person on its staff, all the initiates comply, and the sacrifice becomes
general. The initiates do more; in the evening they take the god
out of its temple, and all night long they mingle their wild animal
shouts with the blasts of sacred horns and trumpets blown by heralds.
The latter very often wear hideous horned masks on their heads and
are dressed in cloaks of feathers.

761 Eighty times out of a hundred, death is attributed to a powerful
782 *boli* which is taking vengeance, punishing or rewarding, and in the
764 environs of Ségou the *Komo*, *Nia*, *Kono*, *Nama*, and *Douga* are the
778 ones who have the most deaths to their credit. When the murdering
boli is known, the entire village is notified; the trousers, blouse and
bed cover of the deceased, or the *tafé* (1) if it is a woman, are hung

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1. *Tafé*: a rectangular piece of cloth which women wind around their bodies to cover themselves.

761 on the branches of the sacred tree under which the fetish dwells and
782 at the door of its temple, and the members of its staff know how to
extol their god. Under these conditions they are without pity; they
764 bleed the bereaved family white, so that the tax demanded by our
778 circle officers (2) is nothing compared to the tax that they have to
pay. /227/

782 What do they not have to give for a sacrifice to the Komo, for
764 example? The whole house is turned upside down to find goats, dogs,
764 kola nuts, roosters, and hens, gnâma-n-kou (Amormum melegueta),
[824] and djalakouma (a plant whose name I do not know). The family
needs all this, cost what it may, and if they have to buy it all they
have to pay double or triple the value of the objects, for others make
profits from their necessity. First a dog or a goat is sacrificed to
appease the fetish and pay respects to it. Then to find out whether
it is satisfied and its hatred assuaged, two red roosters and two hens
with golden necks bite the dust. A bara (1) (gourd) full of gnâma-n-kou fruit and another full of djalakouma are offered. One portion of these fruits is used for holy water (2); the other is sold for the benefit

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[651] 2. The head tax is 3. 50 francs per person and 5 francs for the servants of Europeans. Here France is surely not a "tyrant, " but a tender mother.

[415 824] 1. This bara (a large pumpkin /courge/ with a small opening at the top) can hold from 18 to 20 liters of liquid. The true gourd is half of a pumpkin.

782 764 824 2. The holy water of the Komo is made of roots and leaves of the djalakouma and the fruit of the

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824 gnâma-n-kou or the na-yanka (I do not know the name of this plant), put to boil and soak in water. To make it effective, at least two kola nuts are offered to the fetish and five hens are sacrificed to it.

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764 of the staff, which lives off the altar. For the mere act of having killed a dog or a goat, of which they receive a good share of the meat, they get a fee consisting of a basket of sorghum (18 to 20 kilograms) and 1, 600 cowrie shells (about 2 francs).

Since initiates of the fetish are the only ones who can touch the corpse and lay it in its final home, they receive 8, 000 to 10, 000 cowrie shells (about 8 to 10 francs) on that score. At the end of the sangafo (3) the god's retinue go and sweep the hut of the deceased,

3. Sangafo, to go and offer condolences to the relatives of a deceased."

purify it with holy water, and drive out the last gnâma of the murdering Komo, and for this five fine hens are slaughtered. As payment for their trouble, the family also gives them five to six meters of cloth and 8 to 10 ba (4) (about 8 to 10 francs); 50 francs do not cover

[802] 4. A ba is worth 800 cowrie shells or about 1 franc. (The Bambara count by 40 and 80, and not by 50 and 100. 40, débé; 80, kémé.)

the cost.

[431] Fortunately, the family does not bear all the expenses. Friends help a little, and everyone brings his offering: from one person they get a /228/ hen, from another a débé (40 cowrie shells) or a kémé (80 cowrie shells). Nevertheless, they bear most of the cost, and

[426] the fetishes are one of the chief reasons for that bonding of children (1)

4: Henry--254 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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● 764
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1. A bonded person works for his food, just like a slave. His condition is worse than that of the slave, for in addition to his food, the latter receives a bit of cloth to cover himself, but the bonded person does not. A slave can ransom himself for a sum varying between 100 and 200 francs, and at present he can escape without fear of being pursued and without paying anything at all. A bonded person must pay the amount of his bond to the last cowrie shell, whether he escapes or not. There are Negroes who, for a certain amount, will give you one of their children for one or two years. These children are not paid since the amount has already been paid, but besides food they get clothing and some gratuities beyond the payment for their work. Lacking the proper words, the Bambara call this also, "bonding" even though it is basically a real "domestic service." When the agreed time has passed, these young people go back to their homes without any payment being made. Even though the Negroes call this bonding, they make a distinction: a) slavery is a stigma which always remains; b) true bonding is a stigma that does not disappear unless the bonded person himself pays the price of his bonding; c) the bonding which is called "domestic service" does not involve any stigma; they are workers and not menial laborers.

764 which is nothing less than disguised slavery. In the presence of a
782 European the Negroes like to complain that he cannot meet their taxes,
but they should not be listened to too closely -- 99 times out of 100
they are lying! Let us not make war against the military or civil
official responsible for levying the tax, which is not at all exorbitant;
let us think before all about the boli and their staffs, a band of persons
without principles or law, human vultures with greedy fingers who
attack the weak, the widows and orphans, terrify them with their
threats of death. They do not leave these people in peace until they
have taken everything: hens, goats, dogs, cowrie shells, sorghum,
and often freedom.

6. Respects Paid to Initiates of the Koré, or Koté

794 The initiates of a fetish are never indifferent to the death of a
766 brother, and they hasten to find a hen and a kola nut with which to
prove their attachment to the deceased and to assuage the wrath of
the god. The sect of koré does things in a grand, even in a ceremonious,
manner, if there is any ceremony in those nocturnal orgies where
d'lo, or millet beer, is drunk to /229/ the point of senselessness, and
where lascivious and obscene dances are danced.

When a young man who is koré dé (son of koré, initiate of the
[778] sect) dies, relatives and friends redden with blood the sacred tree and
the kara, a perforated board painted red and white, which is the genie's
emblem. Although there is general mourning in the village, tears
are dried when evening comes, and for three nights there is nameless
[785] bedlam and endless shouting in the kore tou (the sacred grove) as
initiates flagellate themselves, burn their backs with torches, tear
their bodies with thorns, abandon themselves to their barbaric dances,
[534] and lose themselves in lewd gestures in front of the dénouba (drums
measuring from one to one and a half meters) and the kingé (a triangle,
an iron tube, which is hung from the thumb of the left hand and which
is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger).

For the old people who are granted not a tear nor a regret but
for whom there are dances and songs, fellow initiates come in large
numbers, and during the night preceding the burial, they make a

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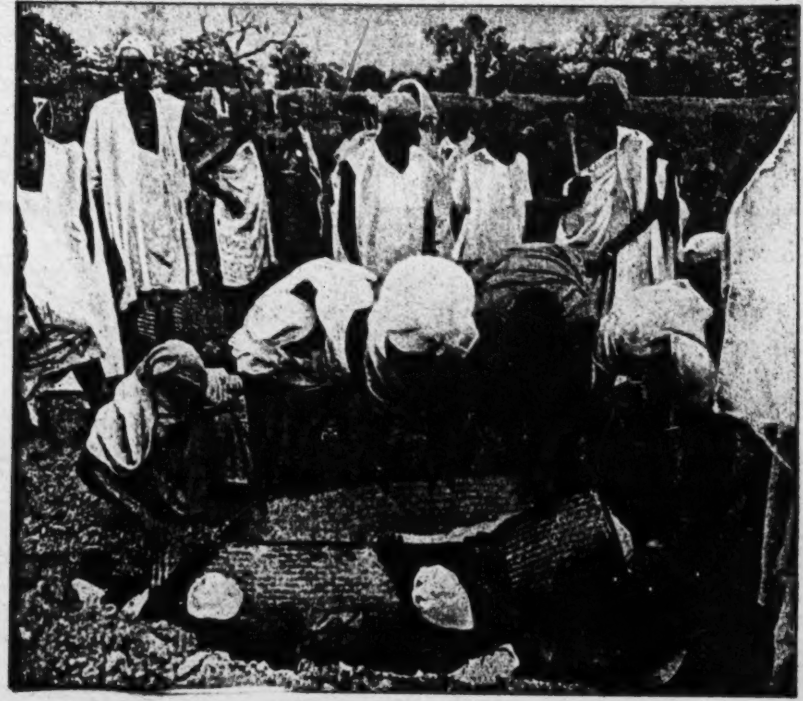

Bambara burial.
The corpse being laid in the grave.

4: Henry--285 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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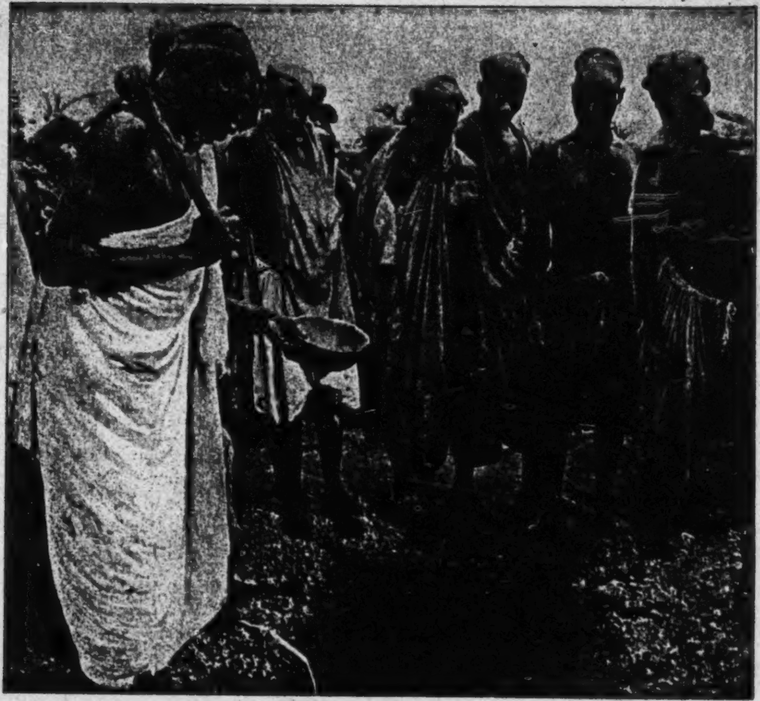

Bambara burial.
The last prayer.

4: Henry--286 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

769 2. M fa faro n so ma bana a dyanza ye kle saba kono ye; ni ye se i ka seki, muso kono ma.

The offering of food is then renewed every three days until a birth brings about the return of the double into the world of the living.

If the dead man has no descendants, his altar remains forever in the sanctuary of the Komo near the nimara boli. Otherwise, it is returned within seven days to the eldest son or to the brother who then becomes the head of the family.

During the night following the seventh day, the soul returns to eat
769 and drink in the hut of the widow who lives alone. All the dishes con-
775 taining water or food are therefore carefully emptied and cleaned.
The same meal is offered to the deceased the night following the
fortieth day after the death. The widow comes out of her house on the
[765] eighth day if she is poor and must work for a living; otherwise, on the
forty-first day.

At the end of a variable period of time, the soul, the double, and the name of the deceased are received by a child who is born into the family. The exuvia, mana or folo of the soul, remains in the sanctuary of the Komo as a permanent testimony to his existence on earth. It is conserved by Faro who watches over it, and maintained by the offerings of the living who will in this way bring it to the final resurrection.

When the deceased does not belong to the Komo society, the rites are celebrated over the altars of the societies to which he belongs; his soul is likewise conserved by them. The spiritual principles /195/ of the women, grouped in institutions comparable to those of men, called muso dye, are the object of the same attentions in which is found the rhythm of four days, the female number.

If the deceased was too poor for all the rituals, which are always
766 costly, to be observed, two gourds of water are prepared and placed
one at the head, the other at the feet of the corpse; he is then lifted
in such a way that his image is reflected in the water. This accomplished,
eight cowrie shells are placed at his head and eight at his feet and the
gourds are covered with a winnowing tray; the image thus conserved is
supposedly reflected in the kaba mana, the fourth sky, where Faro,
776 symbolized by the cowrie shells, passes judgment on its state of purity.
787 A divining rite is then performed. If the man is pure, the villagers

*173 [172] consisting of a rectangular pillar worn away by the rains.

[765] According to custom, the members of the ton' settled down in front of the deceased's house for a week, singing, dancing and generally carousing in the usual way.

When this traditional period was over, Mamari asked them to enclose his father's and his mother's houses within a single [622] wall. They set to work and built a wall with only one door, over which they placed the pyramidal ornaments used only for chiefs' doorways. Within the enclosure they left the existing division in two parts, and it was henceforth understood that the part formerly occupied by Mamari's father would be reserved for people from Doukounna when they wished to stay in Ségou.

Kassoum was determined to show that he had been properly brought up and knew how to return courtesy; so, one day, he invited Mamari to a drinking party, planned especially in his honor. Mamari accepted and, on arriving, found that Kassoum, from impatience no doubt, had started the celebration so far ahead that he was already dead drunk.

According to the usual custom, Mamari ordered one of the [273] ton-den', as it was his duty, to taste the dlo first (2). Lacking a utensil in which to pour a small quantity of the beer, the taster sipped from the crock itself. Kassoum jumped up in a fury, crying out that the ton-den' was a disgusting person, and [37] broke a gourd full of beer over the fellow's head. In turn, Mamari became angry at Kassoum, whose manners struck him as coarse and intolerable. Then, after much invective on both sides, Mamari left the place to return home. Kassoum took up his bow and arrows and set out after Mamari. However, since he was slowed down by his drunkenness, he could not go far and his arrows missed their mark. Mamari returned to Ségou and, for the first time, installed himself in his father's house.

2. A precautionary measure to guard against poison.

764 period is sometimes reduced to three days, but a week conforms more to custom, as is shown by the Ségou chronicle cited earlier.

All this takes place "at the door of the dead," at the *blon'-da*, as the natives call it, that is, at the very place where the elder was wont to sit and where offerings were made to the ancestors. It is believed that the soul of the departed is there and will be gratified amidst this abundance honoring him and testifying to his kindness and also to his power. In the minds of the Bambara these repasts of communion form a very strong bond among those who partake of them. The act of eating consecrated food together is a kind of sacrament which binds the participants to mutual aid. A traitor is doomed to be cursed by the manes.

Magic, of course, can free a person from these bonds and even enable him to profit from these funeral gatherings to further the most nefarious schemes, but that does not alter the concepts on which the *dyansa* and the *sanga-fo* are based.

765 783 [824] (d) *Mourning*. The purification of the hut of the deceased takes place on the eighth day. Women pulverize tree bark -- from the cailcedra (2) especially -- put it in water, and sprinkle this liquid about the hut which they then sweep.

They assemble with native brooms, sing, and do a kind of dance step; they collect the dirt and throw it away at a crossroads outside the village (3). The hut may then be reoccupied. [172]

2. *Khaya senegalensis*.

3. Preferably at the main crossroads (*da-n-kun'-ba-la*).

765 514 During the eight days following the burial, the daughters of the *fa* live together in strict seclusion. They spend their days in the *blon'*, where they spin cotton and take their meals. To take care of their natural needs, they go out only in a body;

765 twice a day, morning and evening, they go in procession, their
[514] heads covered with caps made of white cloth. They spend the
nights together, in a single hut if possible.

The wives of the deceased go out only when it is absolutely
[292] necessary during the first moon after the death; they
are dressed in white and wear a kind of white hood on their
heads and sandals made of goatskin on their feet. At the end
of the moon, at night and separately, they go to a sort of purification
[783] rite that takes place at the crossroads outside the village.

Up to the fortieth day there is a very gradual return to ordinary life. Then, and only then, the successor to the deceased is finally recognized and installed, as is shown in the chronicle of Ségou.

In closing, let us note how every ritual sequence rests
801 on periods of time whose real meaning must be sought in
805 magic. The astral religion of the Semites in fact taught that
on the third, seventh, and fortieth day after death the moon
acts more powerful to destroy the body (1). Apparently some such beliefs must account for the Bambara rites planned precisely according to these numbers. This seems all the more likely since the Sudanese commonly believe that the fortieth day marks the separation of the flesh from the bones of buried corpses.

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1. See the meeting of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres of August 9, 1918, paper by Franz Cumont, "La commémoration des morts et l'astrologie [The Commemoration of the Dead and Astrology]," Journal Officiel (1918), p. 7224.

761 principles of the cadaver on altars or masks in order to preserve them
764 for the community.

The rites have undergone an evolution. Formerly the bodies
764 were hung from trees until they rotted, while the bones were kept.
At present the bodies are buried. Only a band of cotton symbolizing
the tongue of the deceased, that is, his word, is attached to the
[794] branch of a tree. If the deceased was an initiate of the Komo, the
society plays an important role in the funeral rites.

All these rites have been studied by G. Dieterlen and Tauxier.
766 Monteil has described at great length the funeral ceremonies of a
chief: the three rifle shots recalling his combats, the lamentations
of the women, the notification of the village notables, the offerings
of relatives and friends, the alms at the crossroads, and finally, the
inhumation. The body is prepared, the head shaved, the interior
cleaned with water and salt. A paste of water and ground cowry is
put into the body openings (the ground cowries possess a divine spirit
assuring the preservation of the cadaver). The body, and particularly
the head, is daubed with this same paste, then the body is laid on its
right side, feet to the north (a woman would be laid on her left side).
Finally, the funeral celebration takes place, with the ritual feast
● 765 and the purifications. Seven days later the celebration of commemoration (Sangha) takes place, followed by the mourning of the women
for forty days. After this time the deceased is transformed into a
living ancestor.

The Bambara receive omens of their death or of a chief's
763 death from certain signs given them in the bush, such as coming
across a chameleon on a red anthill, the cry of a certain mythical
hyena, the passing of certain crying monkeys or certain birds.

Certain gifted beings have the ability to perceive the departure of a person's spiritual forces and his imminent death. Sometimes they are able to bring back these forces and reinstate them in
the body to save the man in danger.

[95] g. Ancestor Worship

769 After his death a man is transformed into a living ancestor
773 and is the object of a cult. The cult is closely connected to the
agricultural cults; the ancestors are efficient vital forces which

765 The great mourning lasts at least three days, and during all this time the people of the village rest (4). From all sides people come

> 4. For distinguished religious heads (gnéna-n-sonnaba), for example, there are often eight days of rest if the season permits. In the winter this is impossible because there is urgent work.

running in large numbers to be present at the djansa and to keep company with the new head of the family and this is understandable, for however little the family esteems itself, d'lo flows in streams, and [273] the Negroes dread neither travel nor the sun when there is the prospect of gorging themselves with millet beer. At the end of the great mourning, the great sanga fo (5), there is a crowd at the home of the family

> 5. Sanga fo means "to go and give one's condolences to a family on the occasion of a death."

of the deceased, for all the friends are there to pay their respects for the last time to the departed old man and to install his successor. The women grind false-cedar bark, soak it in water, and spread it in the /223/ hut of the deceased. Armed with a broom of dry straw, they sweep from floor to roof, gather the dirt in a worn-out gourd and throw it all onto the da-n-koun (1) of the quarter. To do this they

> 1. Da-n-koun, corner of land formed by paths that cross, hence outside the village.

form a procession; an old hag marches in front, brandishing the broom, and, half dancing and half walking, they all shout:

"Fari ô, fari doun ka di

765 Malakou, salakou
Fari 8, fari doun ka di." (2)

2. A song heard in Bani country. Since these songs are often improvised, they differ from one region to another.

Translation: "Ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans (fari) and to eat all one's fill, ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans!"

The excised daughters and granddaughters of the deceased wear mourning for about eight to ten days. During this time they stay in the b'lon, or entry hut, and spin cotton. The only noteworthy fact [513 is that they all sleep in the same hut and attend to the wants of nature 514] at set times, going to the bush evening and morning in Indian file with white veils on their heads. For the whole moon following the [292] death, the wife (the wives if the old man was polygamous) of the deceased wear sandals of goatskin and go out dressed only in white.

718 562 428 At the end of the moon, the wives of the deceased become the property of the head of the family, who makes them his own or gives them to his circumcised children (3). Some freedom is left to them,

3. Brothers succeed brothers. If there are no brothers, the oldest son inherits. If the deceased is younger than the brother who inherits, the latter possesses the wives but may not enjoy them. If the heir is the son of the deceased, all the father's or grandfather's wives belong to him, and he may enjoy them all except his mother.

for they can ransom themselves if they wish, and for the old and worn, difficulties are soon smoothed away. If the new family head is without a brother and without children or if he is older than the deceased,

845 851 each twin is the *dya* of the other and that this term means "shadow of the body," "spiritual double," as well as "balance." To trade is *dyago*.

845 Three or four days after the name-giving ceremony, depending on 301 their sex, the twins are given bracelets of white metal representing [531] their *dya*. Geometrical symbols of the universe, the sky and the earth, are engraved on each of these (1). The opening of the bracelet represents that of the incomplete terrestrial world. When the twins die ● [766] they will be buried with the bracelets closed over their arms or their ankles to signify that they have penetrated a complete and closed world. Formerly the sacrifices to Faro were carried out with ornaments 845 borrowed from a twin. The person making the sacrifice presented 301 them to the /87/ river while saying: "The iron of the twins is witness 782 to the sacrifice offered to Faro." (2) After the ceremony, everyone gave white kola nuts to the twin; the interested party then went to the village square and waved in the air his arms bedecked with ornaments to spread to the four cardinal points Faro's beneficial *nyama* acquired in the course of the sacrifice. In certain areas twins wear a pendant in the shape of double slave fetters, called *dyõ neke*, / "irons of the captive," or an amulet called *sinzin*, "support," composed of a little piece of wood carved in the shape of a double cup and preferably made by a Bozo. A man who has had twins three times [778] must acquire a double pot which is always kept full of water and which becomes the object of an annual sacrifice (3).

1. This figure is formed by a rectangle divided into two equal superposed squares, including a multiplication sign in the lower square to represent the earth, and an open v in the upper square to represent the sky.

2. *Flani neke ye ma šere ye faro sõni la.*

3. See p. 124, n. 1.

778 784 754 For this reason it receives sacrifices at the time when the fields are being worked, for trade, marriage, war, and hunting where the person risks his life; it helps to fight illness and death. Immediately after the first sacrifice, it captures the personality and aggressiveness of the dead man and puts them on its owner, making him doubly dangerous to those with whom he is in conflict. But on the other hand, the danger may turn against him and, to a greater extent than anyone else, he risks his life at the slightest broken taboo.

Furthermore, the Komo who disapproves of such operations may, if he considers it useful, loosen the dead man's nyama on the person who is using his spiritual forces and put him in danger of death. Thus a Bambara will hesitate a long time before owning such an altar; in fact very few individuals assume this heavy responsibility.

C. The Chief's Seat

778 622 In the courtyard of the home of a family head or village chief can be found a pile of wood stuck on the ground and called dyamana tigi ǰigi (literally, support of the owner of the world) (Fig. 11). This seat symbolizes at once the chief, his power, his social and religious role of supporting the group (1).

> 1. The seat described below was observed at Banankoroni in the courtyard of the village chief. A similar one is found at Soroba.

The pieces of bent wood which compose it are planted rather deep into the earth above a series of objects. One of these pieces, with a simple bend (in a) is called sinzin, support; the two others, shaped like a T, are called ǰigi ba ǰigi (in b) (literally, support of the big support).

782 766 The whole lies over the body of an albino (c) buried in a tomb having a ritual form, covered with ancient clothing dyed in wolo and speckled with small black spots made of /135/ bone ash (kolofin), which represent at the same time the embryo in the womb of women and Faro. The head is covered with the cap of primitive men (e).

In (d), three pickets, symbols of man, are stuck through the skin of the albino's forehead; this skin had been removed and seven ritual

776 It is also at the crossroads that the elders place the child whose
778 legitimacy is in doubt. If the diviner who is then consulted declares
823 that the child is a bastard, he is deprived of the protection of the spirits
848 and is supposedly unable to survive the *nyama* which he has acquired
787 at the place. In this same spot are buried abnormal children, in par-
[766] ticular hydrocephalics who are considered undesirable. The spindle
of a dead woman is placed here along with the broom she habitually
used.

776 But the ritual most characteristic of the crossroads is the one re-
778 sorted to by the village when it is in trouble: the primitive wooden
823 mallet, *gosilande* is planted in the ground; it is then struck with a
783 stalk of millet to chase away evil and to induce new techniques of
reparation to come out of the instrument (1).

C. Stone Altars

778 In the villages, at the intersections of lanes, and in the squares,
211 the founding ancestors are represented by stones under which various
objects are buried (see Pl. V, b).

At Sama, four large stones, encased in a clay platform, symbolize both the cardinal points and the ancestors. They are in touch with the *dasiri* and receive the same offerings. At Banankoroni, the *fara ba* is partly buried. Under its point is an albino skull which represents those of the first ancestors and their bones. Two hoes, one placed near the right ear and the other near the left ear, convey the idea that "the man who cultivates the earth will never hear a humiliating word." Under the chin, another hoe recalls that the villagers who are faithful to agriculture will never know famine. Under the hoe, a *siriku* (2) protects them against those who try to harm them, and brings them "the hyena's luck"; it also means that some of their ancestors were transformed into hyenas in former times. A circumcision knife recalls that all males are circumcised, and all women excised (Fig. 15). Finally, three albino bones and a small pile of copper are a testimony to /142/ Faro's presence and power. Drawings are made on these

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1. See p. 145.

2. See p. 179, n. 1.

794 3. Šu kasa be.

796 The man lowers his head and all move away from him. The masker
688 wounds him with the right hook. He is banished from the circle of
766 dancers and probably will die several days later. His funeral rites are
not solemnized. The corpse is tied by the feet and removed from
his home through a hole made in the wall to prevent his evil nyama
from returning to the family. The body is beaten with switches so
that the soul may leave the village forever, and is thrown into the
common grave or placed in the cleft of a tree, which is then closed
up with thorny bushes. In this case it is often devoured by the hyenas.
The clothing which belonged to him is hung on the hook placed on
the outside wall of the sanctuary. No one has the right to weep for
his death and no one ever mentions him again. To do so would be an
offense to the Komo.

794 It may also happen that the emergence of the Komo occurs without
the village being warned. In this case, if a young girl imprudently
796 approaches the place where the dance is being held, the masker may
688 kill her with one blow of its hook directly upon her head. A little
782 of her blood is then placed as an offering on the nya and her jewelry
thrown into the river where her soul goes to replace the virgin who,
in former times, was annually offered to Faro.

G. Effects of Broken Taboos

794 The breaking of the taboos attached to the altars or to the mask
783 reacts upon each of the parts affected as it does upon the whole and
brings about a diminishing of the Komo's power, which is abandoned
by Faro and the ancestors. A purification may be performed /164/
in certain cases. The error is then corrected and the spiritual forces
reenter the altars.

If a woman or a noninitiate catches a glimpse of the nya, the komo tigi and his age grade go down to the river bank and, to the sound of drums, present the culprit's apologies to the spirit:

"I have not come for someone else, I have come for myself, I have come to reestablish the race of our fathers" (1).

1. Ne mana ma nyini; ne mana nyere nyini,
ne ma na m fa šia tuku ko la.

304 766 The importance of the wanzo and the necessity of its leaving the person are such that in the case where a child dies uncircumcised, the operation is performed on his corpse. If this is not possible, the circumciser cuts his left ear and says:

"I cut the ear instead of circumcision" (1).

1. Mba klo tike bolokoli nona bi la ye.

It is buried with the corpse or kept in the paternal home, but the wanzo leaves the child. If the operation was not performed, it would contribute to the formation of a very dangerous nyama, which would be more aggressive even than that of an old man and from which the society would have to suffer.

/188/

Excision

304 323 189 The operation is performed with a little iron knife by a potter, the wife of a blacksmith. The blade, which is male, represents the sun; the handle, which is female, represents both the clitoris and the moon. The woman protects herself from the wanzo of the newly excised girls by wearing bracelets and charms and by smearing a black salve on her eyes.

304 323 The operation is performed in full daylight at the edge of the village and in the presence of the assembled kinsmen. In certain localities it takes place near the potters' hearth. Each little girl is seated in turn on an inverted pot and is operated upon while prayers are recited. Just as the boy whose foreskin is badly formed is wounded on the thigh, so the girl in the same situation is considered excised if she submits to a test which replaces excision. In the latter case, the woman operator places a hedgehog skin between the girl's thighs and presses these together energetically so as to make the blood run (2).

2. In case the girl is the daughter of a blacksmith, the blood running over the pottery indicates her future role as potter (see p. 169.

The young girls must neither cry nor moan; on the contrary, they sing to exalt the departure of the wanzo.

769 2. *M fa faro n so ma bana a dyanza ye kle saba kono ye; ni ye se i ka seki, muso kono ma.*

The offering of food is then renewed every three days until a birth brings about the return of the double into the world of the living.

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769 and drink in the hut of the widow who lives alone. All the dishes con-
175 taining water or food are therefore carefully emptied and cleaned.
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[765] eighth day if she is poor and must work for a living; otherwise, on the
forty-first day.

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766 If the deceased was too poor for all the rituals, which are always
costly, to be observed, two gourds of water are prepared and placed
one at the head, the other at the feet of the corpse; he is then lifted
in such a way that his image is reflected in the water. This accomplished,
eight cowrie shells are placed at his head and eight at his feet and the
gourds are covered with a winnowing tray; the image thus conserved is
supposedly reflected in the *kaba mana*, the fourth sky, where Faro,
776 symbolized by the cowrie shells, passes judgment on its state of purity.
787 A divining rite is then performed. If the man is pure, the villagers

845
783

2. Ni nya ke šyẽ fla i ka n fa; ka kadi ka kago, gariseke bo fã ka čã; faro (ter).

The water swallowed after these words constitutes a solemn promise to Faro not to repeat the fault.

Next, they are carried home, the man by two members of the society and the woman by three of her companions, so that their toes, [824] the temporary lodging places of the spiritual principles which have returned to them, may not touch the impure earth. They remain three and four days, respectively, on their mats without making a movement. On the seventeenth day, with a thousand precautions, they may resume a more normal life, but they will be entirely free only when a birth occurring in the family will eliminate from their bodies the soul and the double of the dead child by transferring these to the newborn.

/199/ Death of an Uncircumcised Boy

763 When an uncircumcised boy is seriously ill the chief of the ndomo (1) has a rooster sacrificed in order to find out if recovery is possible.

1. See p. 222.

In the case of a negative response the children, taking turns night and day, go into the bush and sound off the ritual objects under the leadership of an initiate. In this way the soul of the dying boy is certain to be captured at the moment of death and channeled by the sound wave and led into the ritual objects themselves. Two initiates are posted near the home of the sick and, as soon as they learn of his death, they go to warn the children in the bush to make them stop playing. The chief sits down facing the west and recites a prayer; then he sacrifices the victims offered by the family.

● 766 [304] Before the corpse is buried, it is circumcised, and the wanzo goes to settle in the mask of the ndomo. During the night following the burial the members go to the fresh grave and sound the ritual instruments which contain the soul. Each year they repeat this action above the children's graves following the threshing of the harvest to "awaken the dead and to tell them that their souls are not lost."

Death at War

727 When a warrior returns home in good health after a battle, the sacrificer or the village chief orders the performance of the ni yere klo, "game of the vibration of the soul," to celebrate his return. Men and women gather in the village square to sing: "The soul is come, the light of the soul is come, the drum of the soul will be played for it" (1). Next they form a circle and turning first in one direction and then in the other, throw a little water on the head of the individual concerned, thus "refreshing his soul."

766 When a man dies at war, the rituals whose object he becomes bring into play the nyama boli of the Komo, the altar dedicated to the conservation of the souls of those who die a vilent death.

In former times the stone which had mortally hit a warrior was carefully kept. The corpse was washed /200/ on cowries and on stones used for slings because its nyama, which impregnated them, made them more efficient in killing. The body was also transported to the exit of the village where each villager offered cowrie shells while he pronounced the name of the victim. Then it was swung three times in the direction of the village, first feet forward and next head forward. After all the villagers had retired to their homes, the Komo was brought out. The stone that had killed the man was struck to call forth his soul; then it was rubbed on the nyama boli to make the soul penetrate the altar. A dance was held with the altar, and the body [824] was buried and covered with fresh branches of ngamyã (2). The grave was watered to "refresh the dead man" while the chief

was watered to "refresh the dead man" while the chief of the Komo made sacrifices over the nyama and the nimara boli.

Death Away from Home

766 167 The necessity of performing the rituals as well as their detailed quality are such that a Bambara is always advised against expatriation.

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1. Ni nana, ni yelengu nana, ni dunu na fo o la.

2. Celtis integrifolia.

766 In fact, if he dies far away his breath cannot be captured nor can the
167 successive transfers be made. For this reason the family head disclaims all responsibility in such a case by warning those who are about to leave for along time of the impossibility of fulfilling his duties toward them.

Nevertheless, a ritual has been instituted for the young men obliged
766 to leave the family groups because of military service. The case is submitted to the chief of the Komo and the party concerned has two goats sacrificed over the altars. While the blood runs, the chief asks the Komo to watch over the soul and to be willing to reclaim it as it would if the person died among his family.

If the news of the death of an absent person spreads, the family
[187] questions the Komo through divining procedures to find out if the soul has returned and if, by this fact, order has been reestablished.

Death by Lightning and Drowning

761 Death which occurs in certain ways considered abnormal and a proof of Faro's wrath does not permit the reincarnation of the spiritual
766 principles. This is true of men killed by the Komo for sorcery, and of people struck by lightning for having broken a taboo of Faro's. Their /201/ soul and their double are lost forever to their descendants, and their bodies thrown into the common grave.

Drowning is either accidental or due to Faro's wrath, in which case the corpse is returned with the nose and navel cut. In both instances, the double preserved in the water is not lost, but sacrifices are necessary for the return of the soul and of the double to a child in the family.

If the body has not risen to the surface, the father of the drowned person has the right to mourn him only when all the rituals have been performed. He asks the chief of the Komo to intercede with Faro to obtain his permission to search for the body in the water. He offers seven tomatoes which the chief throws into the water in exchange for the corpse in the presence of seven elders of his age grade. Some Bozo mobilized for this purpose dive in to bring back the body. The chief cuts the nose and the navel which he throws into the water as an offering. Then the corpse is placed flat on its stomach and pressed
[821] vigorously to extract the water, for to bury it full of water is equivalent to "burying rain" and dooming the countryside to drought.

766 532 After the burial,[1] a drawing is made on the sanctuary with millet mash made of grain from Faro's field; this drawing represents the dead man and the mutilations inflicted upon him. The seven attending elders close their eyes as a sign of respect in order not to "register a drawing made for Faro." In fact, its aim is to obtain the spirit's pity and to ask him to include the dead among the count he keeps of his subjects. It is also in front of this drawing that the family will come to make an offering and mourn every week. [769]

II. Rituals of the Refuse

364 778 The debris, sweepings, and refuse collected in the homes, courtyards, public squares, and crossroads all contain forces which men have communicated to them.

The rituals, of which these are the objects and which vary according to their origin, have as their aim the offering of these forces to Faro who returns them to men purified and regenerated in the form of rainwater with which he irrigates the fields and in the form of ponds and wells. They are thus redistributed and used again for the benefit of the community.

The refuse at the crossroads, called dangu kalaw, stalks or straw of the dangu, contains the force, nyama, of all the beings that have trampled it.

/202/ The refuse from the homes contains the wanzo of the uncircumcised, the nyama which the inhabitants have to bear for having killed animals or insects and for having received insults, and their good or bad tere. These forces, called wanzo dla (literally, to arrange the wanzo) (1) or nyama dla, constantly come to the aid of all the members of the family; they improve the wanzo of the uncircumcised, facilitate the women's childbirth, and renew the vigor of the old men. A small altar, konye, kept in the room reserved for the head of the family, is dedicated to them.

After the coming out of the Komo, the sweepings gathered on the spot where the dances take place contain the forces of the members.

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1. This term is applied to them particularly in houses where there are many children.

[1] [Of a drowned person — Analyst]

791 589 The gifts he has received and the position of his dya compel /221/ the Soma to remain unmarried and to observe a certain chastity. "The wife of the Soma lives with the spirits," says the informant who adds that every forty-nine days (7 x 7) his dya is returned to him during the night for the purpose of a sexual union.

From the moment the Soma begins to exercise his art regularly, he visits the bush from time to time to consult the spirits and make offerings to them. Moreover, the latter visit him in his home where he attracts them by burning a powder that gives off a smell of which they are fond.

Like the griot, the Soma has a mouth full of nyama; his own to which is added that of the spirits who help him and control him. His word is so powerful that he rarely announces a death, for this would contribute to the propagation of death.

The Soma must be rigorously clean, wear simple clothes, and even dress as an indigent. During ceremonies he hangs the stone ǰineworo around his neck with a string and must always carry this stone in a pocket of his tunic. He generally belongs to the Komo society and may become its chief. In this case he is the recognized diviner of the village.

791 766 The Soma keeps in his home his stone of alliance and his harp, with its accessories. When he dies, his body is left for some [illegible] alone in the house; the spirits are supposed to come and reclaim these objects which no one must touch and which no one will inherit. The burial of the body and the funeral ceremonies are performed only after this delay. His soul is never kept in the Komo altars and goes to join the dya in the domains of Téliko; the spiritual principles of the Soma are not reincarnated and the gift which he has received is not hereditary.

791 534 The Soma's harp (Fig. 17) (1) is made of a rectangular chest (bara) pierced through longitudinally by a long piece of wood (ngoni kala, literally, stalk of the ngoni) surrounded by little leather thongs in the shape of rings (ǰiri wolo, literally, skin of wood). These hold

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1. See G. Dieterlen, Morphologie et symbolique de deux instruments de musique bambara /The Morphology and Symbolism of Two Instruments of Bambara Music/.

763 deceased in case he had been killed by a genie (nyana). Sacri-
764 fices, alms, or the payment of a fine are necessary in that event, along with intervention by the priest of the nyana in question.

764 Most often, the body is turned over to a priest (nyana-n-tigi) [167] if the deceased was a member of a brotherhood.

[735] In any event, it is customary to give alms at the crossroads near the village.

768 Further, the death of the fa puts an end (1) to the authority held by him, and this may have serious consequences, since for the moment everyone is virtually independent. That is why the servitor who had the master's confidence and who actually ran the establishment retains his role after taking certain precautions (2). In particular he must make sure that the movable property of the deceased is not carried off. He is familiar with these things, and he is the guardian responsible for them. He makes the women return the gold jewelry and valuable fabrics, puts everything in a safe place, and makes an inventory in the presence of the heir presumptive.

357 1. When a king of Kaarta died, the interruption in sovereignty often gave rise to serious anarchic disturbances.

2. This was the role that Ngolo Dyâra was seeking when he asked to be placed as "guard at the master's door."

764 (b) Burial. The deceased may be buried in the ground within his hut or at least in a corner of his establishment. In former times there was a cemetery outside the village, often near the grove of the nyana dugu-da-siri (guardian genie of the village), and in such cases it was apparent that the more important the deceased, the nearer his tomb to the sacred place.

766 For persons of distinction there is usually a special kind
764 of grave. It is about two meters long, and while the opening

764 is two or three meters wide at the surface of the ground, it is
766 barely a meter wide at a depth of a meter and a half. Three of its walls are vertical, and the fourth is sloping. At the bottom and along the whole length of this fourth side, a hollow is prepared to receive the body, which is placed on its right side with the head toward the south if the deceased is a man, and to the north in the case of a woman.

764 It is usual for the priests of the brotherhoods to dig the grave. In the course of their work, following a special ritual, they collect various elements for [168] their magic. In any case, it is regarded as dangerous to handle anything having to do with death, and only a priest can do it with impunity.

When the time for burial is at hand, the touching ceremony of farewell to the dead takes place under the direction of the principal gravedigger. Wrapped in the mats on which it lay in the house, the body is placed under a shelter (geva) in the courtyard of the house. Everyone in turn pays his respects to the deceased and asks pardon. Everyone in turn, from the eldest to the youngest, comes forward, accusing himself of failings and faults and begging the deceased to grant him protection. All this is done through the mediation of the principal gravedigger who ceaselessly intones: "Pardon us! Do not be angry; we loved you and respected you; be happy and protect us!" Then everyone chants in unison: "Give us rain in the winter, make our harvests abundant; bring prosperity to our houses, and give us many children, wives, and wealth."

When this ceremony has come to an end, the gravediggers lift the corpse to their shoulders and, preceded by the weeping and lamenting children (de-u) and followed by the
482 crowd of relatives, friends, and neighbors, they set off at a fast pace, almost on the run, toward the tomb. There, the body is put down beside the grave; the men stand around it with the women behind them. The sons of the deceased go down into the grave, open the mat, take hold of the body, and place it in the niche. They tear loose a corner of the shroud or shirt and hand the end of this torn fragment to someone present who holds it outside the grave. With wooden scoops or sun-dried tiles they

614 701 411 Chiefs and other notables carried a short sabre (m-pan) slung from their shoulders. These were probably Turkish in origin and were largely ceremonial weapons.

614 714 The troops wore no specific uniform. Only a few of the more important personages were recognizable by certain insignia, and it sometimes happened that certain individuals were honored by distinguishing marks. The chronicle tells us that Mamari [314] had Ngolo Dyara outfitted in red, a uniform particularly desired. Likewise, he gave Tonmassa a pair of trousers that were unusually wide and consequently attracted everyone's attention.

534 614 701 Drummers (dunu) and trumpeters (buru) made up a military clique which also included men who played xylophones (bala) and various accessory instruments, especially bells (tana, veleni, etc.), and gourds half-filled with pebbles or grain.

766 The drum beaten to sound a rally, which was, therefore, in a manner of speaking, the announcer of war, was the tabala. The cylinder, bowl-shaped and usually made of wood or sometimes pottery, was covered with an ox-hide, often untanned, which was stretched by thongs tied under the drum. In theory, this drumhead was always changed at the death of a fama, when the skin was broken as a sign of mourning (1), and was replaced by the hide of the ox sacrificed in honor of the deceased. The tabala was carried horizontally between two men by means of leather grips and a third individual beat it by means of a ball attached to his wrist by a leather thong.

Other drums were of varying sizes and shapes. Some were carried under the arm (dunkan') or slung from the shoulder (tama); others, mounted on three feet (dange), presented a horizontal

1. It should be noted that the destruction of the drumhead is comparable with the killing of the dead chief's dog and the presentation of a dead chicken to his relatives. All these are obviously "intentional breaks."

*173 614 In principle, it did not interfere with anything that was not contrary to its own interests, and within those limits it allowed the conquered peoples to live as they pleased. In regions under its control, however, its operations were not without influence, and it employed measures analogous in every way to those applied by the clan of Ségou.

Organization and Operation

766 614 The following description of the funeral of a Massa-si fama and the installation ceremonies for his successor will show us the principal customs and important personages in action.

[768] When the fama dies, the leader of the slaves assumes command of the royal household; he has all the doors watched and summons the wives of the deceased and takes their jewels and any other objects of value. He places all the valuables in a hut, and he himself keeps the key.

While this is going on, the war drums (tabala) are broken, and the sofa are dispatched to inform members of the family.

When the heir presumptive arrives, the leader of the slaves shows him the body of the deceased, so he can officially identify it, and the collection of valuables so he will know that they have not disappeared. The sofa are then sent to the capital to announce the death of the fama in order that everyone will bring an offering for the funeral ceremonies. The gifts of food will be used for the funeral banquets, and the other gifts (silver, horses, fabrics, etc.) will become part of the royal treasure, even though they are theoretically supposed to be used as alms for the poor.

The body is washed, wrapped in a shroud, and then buried. Burial usually takes place within the royal house, at the place where the deceased liked to sit. If he is interred in the floor of a hut, the hut is abandoned after its door has been walled up.

The door of the central redoubt (tata) is also walled up, and a new opening is made.

766 White oxen are sacrificed on the tomb; their hides are 614 used to make new drumheads for the tabala, and the meat [328] is offered to the manes of the deceased and then distributed among members of the family, allies, familiars, etc. The women wail, weep, and sing the praises of the deceased in com- 786 pany with the people of caste who organize everything. Outside, banquets and virtual orgies, complete with noisy dances and songs, are organized in honor of the deceased.

This ceremony goes on for seven days.

614 At the close of this period, the new fama is publicly proclaimed. For this purpose, the leader of the slaves has the walled-up door of the tata reopened, and the whole company assembles in the large open area in front of the house of the fama. Those present include the newly elected fama, the members of the family of the Massa-si, allies, tributaries, heads of the ton'-dyon', and the sofa.

769 782 An ox has been sacrificed and offered to the manes of the defunct. Its hide is stretched in the center of an open area surrounded by the crowd, and on it is spread out the sheepskin, adorned with precious amulets, which has long served as a rug for the fama of the Massa-si. Other precious family relics include 301 the scarlet cap adorned with amulets, twists of gold for the ears, and heavy silver bracelets.

The representative of the family of Kassi Konaré seats the newly elected fama on the sheepskin, puts the scarlet cap on his head, and adorns him with the gold earrings and silver bracelets. Then he makes a speech to the new fama, outlining the policies followed by his deceased predecessor and enumerating the desiderata of the people of the clan.

567 At this point the leader of the slaves prostrates himself before the new fama and places himself in his hands to show that all the ton'-dyon' are loyal to him. He then presents individually the principal groups of slaves, tributaries, etc.

Another ceremony brings the new fama, prominent Massa-si, their allies, the principal leaders of the slaves, and the tributaries to the wood sacred to the protective idol of the clan, where a reciprocal oath of loyalty is taken. A ritual communion follows.

782 The blood sacrifice is the basic element of the rites. The
778 technique used for it has been described by M. Griaule (2). The Bambara have three types of altars: the wooden stumps called *pembele*, altars made of roughly hewn stone, which generally represent the ancestors; and the *Nyama* or *boli*, man-made objects representing the parts of the universe.

794 The cults can be individual and familial or general for the whole village, such as the *dasiri* and the *dangu*. They are organized by religious societies, *dyo*, whose object is to conserve the spiritual forces of their members. For the men, these societies are: the *Komo* (principally), the *Kworé*, the *Nama*, the *Kono*, the *Nago*, the *Nya*. The women are also grouped in *dyo*, as yet little known, while the uncircumcised are members of the *N'Domo*.

The *Komo* is a hierarchical society whose members have obligations and taboos, such as initiation for future dignitaries of the political and religious society, study of traditions and practices of the cult, study of the science of magic and religious formulas, fabrication and consecration of protective charms (*boli-w*, *dyo-w*), knowledge of [85] poisons and antidotes, procedures for combating enemies and sorcerers.

794 Its moral authority is very widespread, and we shall see the
796 role it plays in justice and public affairs. The *Komo* has obligatory seasonal ceremonies, such as the festival of the cleaning of the sacred wood by the *tinto-w* (most recent initiates), the festival of the emergence of the *komo-sen-w* from the stream, that of stream fishing and of hunting on the banks at the end of the dry season, and, finally, that of the solemn return of the *komo-sen-w* to the stream. In addition, every seven years, a great celebration in April-May lasts for 15 days, with a sacrifice to the *komo-ba*. The ceremony ends with
766 the nomination of a new *komo-tigi* (chief of the *Komo*), who will exercise his priesthood for seven years. He must die at the end of

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2. M. Griaule, "Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice Dogon (Soudan français)" [Remarks on Sacrificial Techniques of the Dogon (French Sudan)], Extract from the *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. X, 1940.

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796 that period; his body will not be buried but will be carried off by
766 members of the Komo, who will take it to a crossroads and crush it
with the aid of komo-se-w [sic]. The remains will be hidden in
a secret place. The same treatment is accorded to the komo-tigi
who dies during his seven-year term.

794 The cult is cantonal, and the various komo-tigi take their
orders from their colleagues of the capital. The cult formerly was
interlcan and intertribal. Labouret (Les Mandingues et leur langue
[The Mandingo and Their Language]) has made a table of the seven
categories of persons who make up the hierarchical society of the
initiates.

794 After initiation into the Komo cult, a natural sequel to cir-
793 cumcision, the young man may, if he so desires, be initiated into
other cults. He then enters a powerful spiritual family which unites
all its members by ties of brotherhood. This brotherhood is super-
imposed on the normal social hierarchy of the flã-tõ [this term is
[564 probably the same as flanton]. The chief of the brotherhood is en-
567] titled nyama-tigi; he is generally a man of caste or a slave. He
acquires his position as chief either by inheriting it, by election, or
[778] by founding a new cult. To do this latter, he must buy an altar,
gna, from the village or from the brotherhood that already possesses
this cult. Such a purchase is considered a marriage with the gna and
is accompanied by drinking. The higher-ranking initiates (dyenfaw:
masters of the truth) are auxiliaries of the nyama-tigi and participate
in the oracle, wara-da. All the initiates are more or less divine.
The clergy includes, in addition, a sacrificer, muru-kala-tigi, and
a dyeli, herald of the god. To become one of the faithful, one must
pay an entrance fee and swear an oath of secrecy, obedience, and
fellowship. The clergy manages the cult's treasury which is fed by
the entrance fees to the brotherhood, by fees levied for a class pro-
motion, by contributions required for the major ceremonies, and by
fines imposed on the members.

The brotherhood is a spiritual family which is organized in a
fashion similar to the natural filiation of the community. The
nyama-tigi plays the role of the fa; the dyen-fa-w and the notable
members form a sort of council for settling, with the chief, all ques-
[527] tions. The cult does nothing on Mondays and Thursdays, the work
holidays.

881 and the member is held up by a split millet stalk. The prepuces are
304 buried, and their white bonnets are put on the circumcised. The
place of the operation is forbidden to women and to the non-circumcised who could take the liberated wanzo.

In the Bamako region the blood of the oldest is gathered in
[534] two new calabashes, which are later broken and the pieces used to
make sistrums, sinzin.

881 After the ceremony, the children retire for three months under the direction of a priest of the Komo. During this period, when they receive a religious and technical education, they enter the village only to sleep in a special house and to repair the roofs of their teachers' huts.

The night before the sixth day after the operation, they are
[794] initiated in the Komo. The next day they are led to the river where they wash their wound. Meals are taken together, followed by songs and dances, until they are healed. The last day, the sistrums, sticks, mats, and everything that has been in contact with the circumcised are put in a pile and burned. Each child jumps over the fire three times and runs home, without turning around, to lose his wanzo definitively. In the Bamako region the sistrums are preserved in the cabin of the village chief and will be used for the children of the following years. The bonnet is returned to the mother and will be preserved until death. The next day the child puts on his new clothes.

881 Let us note that for the circumcision of twins all the offerings
304 for the ceremony and the sacrifices must be doubled, and each child
826 will possess two sistrums. Finally, the albinos today are sent to the
dispensary, because the blacksmiths are afraid to operate on them, their wanzo being particularly dangerous.

304 Circumcision may take place posthumously. The circumciser
● 766 then cuts the left ear of the body, since the wanzo freed by death
would be dangerous to the living.

794 Generally, a sort of ceremony of confirmation of membership in the Komo takes place in the year following the circumcision.

d. Excision

881
304 The excision of the girls has a meaning equivalent to that
[831] of the circumcision of the boys. The operation frees them of the
physical male factor residing in the clitoris.

761 principles of the cadaver on altars or masks in order to preserve them
764 for the community.

The rites have undergone an evolution. Formerly the bodies
764 were hung from trees until they rotted, while the bones were kept.
At present the bodies are buried. Only a band of cotton symbolizing
the tongue of the deceased, that is, his word, is attached to the
764 branch of a tree. If the deceased was an initiate of the Komo, the
society plays an important role in the funeral rites.

All these rites have been studied by G. Dieterlen and Tauxier.
766 Monteil has described at great length the funeral ceremonies of a
chief: the three rifle shots recalling his combats, the lamentations
of the women, the notification of the village notables, the offerings
of relatives and friends, the alms at the crossroads, and finally, the
inhumation. The body is prepared, the head shaved, the interior
cleaned with water and salt. A paste of water and ground cowry is
put into the body openings (the ground cowries possess a divine spirit
assuring the preservation of the cadaver). The body, and particularly
the head, is daubed with this same paste, then the body is laid on its
right side, feet to the north (a woman would be laid on her left side).
Finally, the funeral celebration takes place, with the ritual feast
765 and the purifications. Seven days later the celebration of commemoration
(Sangha) takes place, followed by the mourning of the women
for forty days. After this time the deceased is transformed into a
living ancestor.

The Bambara receive omens of their death or of a chief's
763 death from certain signs given them in the bush, such as coming
across a chameleon on a red anthill, the cry of a certain mythical
hyena, the passing of certain crying monkeys or certain birds.

Certain gifted beings have the ability to perceive the departure
of a person's spiritual forces and his imminent death. Sometimes
they are able to bring back these forces and reinstate them in
the body to save the man in danger.

[95] g. Ancestor Worship

769 After his death a man is transformed into a living ancestor
773 and is the object of a cult. The cult is closely connected to the
agricultural cults; the ancestors are efficient vital forces which

776 among them, they take a complete bath before touching the fetish
784 or sacrificing to it. Usually the tné of the boli is an animal, and the
778 whole family takes it for their own. A palm rat, succulent as it may
be to a Bambara palate, will never be eaten by the owners of Bama-n-djigi and their children: it is the tné, or taboo, of the fetish.

784 I have found no tné for animals, but many trees have them, as do medicinal plants, and when these must be used for particular purposes, they must not be placed in contact with, whatever they abhor or are supposed to detest and which in the eyes of the black man is nothing less than their tné, or taboo.

Men and women, young and old, must venerate and respect their tné and those of the genii, and even children know from their earliest years that they cannot see, kill, or eat a certain animal, that they cannot touch, cut, or break a given tree or plant, without incurring either the curse of the ancestor or the anger of the genie and losing their sight.

The severity of the punishments which hang over every Black who forgets the respect due to the tné (especially to his lineage tné and those of the boli fetishes), and hence the fear of incurring them, seems at first quite tyrannical. It is not as great as one would think, however, since the Bambara is a very good casuist when his person and his interests are at stake, and all the prohibitions except those against consuming certain /26/ meats and certain drinks are but a game.

For example, a Dambelé who sees a band of black monkeys ruining his fields and stealing his crops does nothing to stop his dogs from chasing them, and if a friend of an outside lineage comes to help and shoots them, he will have no regrets. A greater confidence is shown by a Djara when a lion ravages his herds: he goes to meet it and begs it to go away, which, according to the Black it always does.

784
766 When the carcass of a taboo /sic/ is found by one of the people of the lineage which it protects, it usually receives the honors of burial. The Djara, whose tné is the lion, even perform the burial with ceremony: the women weep, the drums beat, and the men offer the lion a piece of cloth, in which it is rolled before being put in the grave.

3. The Reincarnation of Souls

775 769 It is a great surprise that the Bambara believe in the reincarnation of souls. Some do not dare to believe in it because they sacrifice to the shades of their ancestors, and others, "cultivated minds, nourished by the sanest philosophy," reject this belief as illogical, since the religion of the Negro is the worship of the dead! They do, in fact, worship the dead, but in the Bambara religion this worship, extensive as it is, remains a detail, and not the foundation. To honor the shades of his ancestors (but only of those who were heads of families, so that the worship of the dead is already somewhat limited -- with all due respect to those who see nothing but it), the Bambara family head throws a big blot of chicken blood and a mouthful of chewed kola nut onto the dégé, or millet flour mixed with water, and pours it onto the wall at the entrance of his hut. He does so to implore the help and protection of that power or authority which his predecessors possessed in their position as family head, an authority exactly the same as that which he himself possesses. He believes, nonetheless, in the reincarnation of souls! This belief is general and universal among fetishists, and if some do not dare admit it before Europeans and [576] Moslems, their reticence is due to simple human respect, to a fear of contradicting beliefs which they know to be contrary to their own, a wish not to offend anyone and not to be the butt of laughter and ridicule.

● 766 775 Infants who die at the breast before having achieved the use of reason are buried in a corner of the inner courtyard and sometimes even in the hut where they were born. Before such a child is buried, one of its limbs, usually the big toe of the right foot, is broken, and sometimes the father marks it with a knife on /57/ the shoulder, the arm, or the chest. He thinks that the child who will come after it will be animated by the soul of the dead one, and he neglects nothing that might possibly enable him to ascertain whether it is. This stupid and ridiculous operation is commonly performed under the eyes of the mother, and some strange events occur. Since she must submit 775 to the will of her husband as soon as possible and have marital relations 826 with him, she soon conceives. During her pregnancy her imagination

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762 has reached him"; -- "djinéou no do, the djiné are the cause of it";
761 -- "a fa gnâma do, it is his father's gnâma"; -- "boli y'a fa, a boli
killed him."

Thus, all the sacrifices which are made on the occasion of a death are directed to the fetishes which are thought to be murderers, and if a deceased member of the family or of a family of strangers gets a slight trickle of blood, that is because on the word of a sorcerer he is guilty. When it is thought that the deceased was the victim of poured poison (dounkono) or korti (poison of the fetishes), thrown sorcery, there is recourse to the diviners and sorcerers to ascertain what invisible being must be soothed and what sacrifice should be uttered. If a gnâma is involved, a sacrifice to a fetish is often prescribed to ensure its protection, but to the gnâma itself a plain saraka, with or without bloodshed, is offered. These saraka are seldom made to the Supreme Being Alla; they are offered to the lesser djiné genii that run around the village and like to rest in the da-n-koun in among the gnâma.

3. Respects Paid to the Uncircumcised

766 [304] Few honors are rendered at death to the uncircumcised and unexcised; such persons are not really Bambara, for they lack the tribal mark. The head of the village and his council ascertain that the death has occurred and, depending on the order received from the diviners, a sacrifice is offered or a saraka placed. The people of the village come to offer their condolences to the bereaved family, and when the grave has been dug, two or three youths bury the corpse without further ceremony.

The father wears mourning for a whole day, and for at least three days the mother grieves in her hut with a few women friends, her neighbors. A barbaric custom also decrees that if the deceased is an unweaned infant its big toe must be broken, in the presence of its mother, and many fathers do more. They mark it with a knife on the forehead, the nape of the neck, the shoulders, the arms; they cut the upper lip or the lobe of an ear. This procedure always makes a deep impression on a mother, especially if she has given birth when

766 young, and since custom demands that she take advantage of her marriage without delay and conceive as soon as possible, she may give birth to an infant bearing a mark or /217/ the appearance of a mark made on the corpse of its older brother. Such an event contributes more than a little toward strengthening the Bambara belief in the reincarnation of souls. This belief is even one of the reasons why infants at the breast are buried in the inner court and sometimes in the mother's hut, and are very seldom taken to the cemetery (1).

[775] 1. The soul leaves the body after burial. The soul of a child must take on flesh again in the womb of its mother, and she must conceive as soon as possible. When an infant is buried in the court or the hut, its soul does not have to roam and cannot mistake the family.

764 The respects paid to the circumcised and the excised vary a little according to the age and status of the individuals; it might be said that there is no burial without some particular, characteristic little feature. To give as accurate an idea of the proceedings as possible, I have divided the burials into four categories: first, that of old people; second, that of heads of families; third, that of married persons; and fourth, that of the unmarried. After a word concerning the burial of pregnant women or those dying in childbirth, I will speak of the sacrifices made to the fetishes, of the respects paid to initiates of *koré*, or *koté*, and I will close this chapter with a description of the burial of the excommunicated and of the way the dead are worshipped.

764 There is seldom a djansa for unmarried persons, and the corpse lying in the grave does not even get branches to protect it from the earth with which it is covered. Not having had children, the young man receives his live hen and the girl her egg.

Burials of Women Who Were Pregnant or Died in Childbirth

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845 The death of a woman during pregnancy or while giving birth to her child stirs the whole female population. To appease the spirits, drive away the gnâma, and protect the village from another misfortune of this kind, all the excised women go to cut branches of karité (Bassia parkii) or dogora. As soon as the deceased is carried to the grave, they burst out of the village, crying and weeping. Three times they go back toward the village, waving their branches, and call out "hou" three times in shouts that disturb and chill you.

[526] At the edge of the grave, or most often in the grave itself, a blacksmith -- the surgeon of the occasion -- removes the child, tells its sex, and lays it near the mother (2). During the operation the

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2. If the deceased has already been delivered, the stillborn child is wrapped in the mother's mat. The operation is performed for one who has not been delivered, less to save the child's life than to spare the deceased the disgrace of the egg. A newborn child deprived of its mother is condemned to death. It is not strangled, of course, but no woman wants to give it her breast, and the little thing dies of hunger. If a woman were to nurse it out of compassion, the spirits and gnâma would take revenge by

766 causing her own child to die. A
845 mother who has lost her child may
847 adopt an orphan and give it her
breast.

766 crowd /226/ always withdraws, and the blacksmith remains alone
845 with his assistant. When the work is done, they wash their hands on
the grave itself, and the operator makes the customary prayer:
"Whether the wind comes from the east or the west, from the north or
the south, etc., " (see above, p. 244).

5. Sacrifices to Fetishes on the Occasion of a Death

782 Although at the time of death there is no sacrifice to the soul
764 of the deceased nor to the shades of ancestors, blood flows neverthe-
less. It even flows in torrents for the Bambara are not satisfied with
778 reddening the family boli; they stain with blood all the boli fetishes
they believe to be guilty. Nor do initiates of the sects forget their
deceased brothers, and for a friend who was initiated the same day
as they themselves, they cannot refuse the boli a hen and a kola nut.
If the deceased is the master of a fetish, its priest, or an influential
person on its staff, all the initiates comply, and the sacrifice becomes
general. The initiates do more; in the evening they take the god
out of its temple, and all night long they mingle their wild animal
shouts with the blasts of sacred horns and trumpets blown by heralds.
The latter very often wear hideous horned masks on their heads and
are dressed in cloaks of feathers.

761 Eighty times out of a hundred, death is attributed to a powerful
boli which is taking vengeance, punishing or rewarding, and in the
782 environs of Ségou the Komo, Nia, Kono, Nama, and Douga are the
764 ones who have the most deaths to their credit. When the murdering
778 boli is known, the entire village is notified; the trousers, blouse and
bed cover of the deceased, or the tafé (1) if it is a woman, are hung

1. Tafé: a rectangular piece of cloth which women wind around their bodies to cover themselves.

764 which is nothing less than disguised slavery. In the presence of a
782 European the Negroes like to complain that he cannot meet their taxes,
but they should not be listened to too closely -- 99 times out of 100
they are lying! Let us not make war against the military or civil
official responsible for levying the tax, which is not at all exorbitant;
let us think before all about the boli and their staffs, a band of persons
without principles or law, human vultures with greedy fingers who
attack the weak, the widows and orphans, terrify them with their
threats of death. They do not leave these people in peace until they
have taken everything: hens, goats, dogs, cowrie shells, sorghum,
and often freedom.

6. Respects Paid to Initiates of the Koré, or Koté

794 The initiates of a fetish are never indifferent to the death of a
766 brother, and they hasten to find a hen and a kola nut with which to
prove their attachment to the deceased and to assuage the wrath of
the god. The sect of koré does things in a grand, even in a ceremonious,
manner, if there is any ceremony in those nocturnal orgies where
d'lo, or millet beer, is drunk to /229/ the point of senselessness, and
where lascivious and obscene dances are danced.

When a young man who is koré dé (son of koré, initiate of the
[778] sect) dies, relatives and friends redden with blood the sacred tree and
the kara, a perforated board painted red and white, which is the genie's
emblem. Although there is general mourning in the village, tears
are dried when evening comes, and for three nights there is nameless
[785] bedlam and endless shouting in the kore tou (the sacred grove) as
initiates flagellate themselves, burn their backs with torches, tear
their bodies with thorns, abandon themselves to their barbaric dances,
[534] and lose themselves in lewd gestures in front of the dénouba (drums
measuring from one to one and a half meters) and the kingé (a triangle,
an iron tube, which is hung from the thumb of the left hand and which
is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger).

For the old people who are granted not a tear nor a regret but for whom there are dances and songs, fellow initiates come in large numbers, and during the night preceding the burial, they make a

794 766 bedlam and racket in front of the corpse, which is displayed under the great trees that shade the entrance of the village. *That is a most lugubrious and macabre rite! After the burial for three successive nights, the same respects are paid to the deceased in front of the fetish tree in the _koré tou_ (sacred grove), and if the deceased was a _korétigi_ (head of the sect of _koré_), a _gnéna-n-sonnaba_ (head of the village and priest of the _dasiri_), a _bolitigi_ (master of a _boli_), a _flélikéla_ (famous sorcerer), a _gouatigi_ (family head), a _souroukou tigi_ or a _korodouga tigi_ (head of a group in the sect (1)), they often continue their orgies for eight days running, gorging themselves with _d'lo_ (beer), and getting drunk.

794 769 The anniversaries of the old people, those who had fame, authority, and especially authority in the sect, are observed regularly every year, and on that day there is a memorial to members of the family who belonged to the sect. Youths in large numbers come from all directions to abandon themselves to barbaric dances, and since beer flows in streams, the drinking bout that takes place is indescribable. /230/ Only a family reduced to the blackest poverty would neglect to offer _d'lo_ (millet beer).

794 769 185 On the morning that follows these dances in honor of a deceased _koré dé_, a _saraka_ is placed with great ceremony at the _dankoun ba_ (1) of the village. It consists of the remains of the torches of the _tatougoula_ (2), the bent, broken, and unraveled whips of the _bisatjila_ (3), the thorn brooms of the _woni sama_ (4), and finally the leafy branch

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1. See my chapter on the _koré_, or _koté_.

1. _Dankoun_, a corner of land formed by two paths that cross; _dankoun ba_, "great _dankoun_," the _dankoun_ most popular in the village.

2. _Tatougoula_, those who dance with fire.

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3. Bisatjila, those who flagellate themselves.

4. Woni sama, those who scratch themselves with thorns.

used by the korodouga (5) to drive away the sparks crackling on the

5. Korodouga, clowns, storytellers /griots/ of the sect.

backs of the tatougoula.

7. Burial of the Excommunicated

766 Those with sores, lepers, and persons killed by a fetish who did not accept their sacrifice may be said to be excommunicated. No Ex adult who dies without hair on his head or body has the right to the honor of a Bambara burial, and he is given that of lepers.

A leper is never buried in the common cemetery; he is sent far off into the bush to a separate place. The more usual custom, actually, is to slip the corpse into a hollow baobab (Adansonia digitata) with a small, live pullet as companion -- or an egg, if the deceased is a girl. The same fate befalls a bald person.

The reason for this custom is that this class of people have been abandoned by the Creator and the spirits, all of whom scorn them and withdraw from them. If ever the ground where ancestors rest should receive the remains of one of these accursed ones, their bones would shake with disgust. Moreover, they would take revenge for having to rest near people who during their lifetime were without hair; they would be deaf to every prayer and would refuse every sacrifice. The village and the entire region there would suffer a total lack of rain, a drought without any equal, in short, a famine with all its horrors. /231/

766 The victim of a boli may also become for the village and the region an impure, base creature that has lived all too long. This happens when the murdering, or supposedly murdering, fetish three times refuses the sacrifices offered to appease it (1). When this occurs

782 1. A sacrifice is not accepted if the hen charged with giving the god's answer dies on its breast with its feet under it, and the kola nut, cut in two, falls on its pulp with the rounded part on top.

the whole family, men, women and children, must still their cries and must not weep, however great their sorrow may be. Family heads abandon themselves to sacrifices, the initiates of the sect do the same, and everybody thanks the boli for having caused the death of a person who deserved only scorn and should never have lived, and begs never to meet such a fate nor to be like him.

766 794 When the grave has been dug (a plain grave without a niche), the men of the murdering boli (2) come and wrap the corpse in a mat.

2. When a boli has killed someone, it is the men of that boli who come to bury him. It is not always a boli of the village, but sometimes from a distance of one, two, or three days' journey, and if the men of that fetish cannot come at once, e. g., if they are elsewhere burying a man killed by the god, people close the door of the hut in which the corpse lies and wait until the gravediggers choose to arrive. I saw the corpse of a blacksmith left like this for four full days. The sorcerers are the ones who name the boli and the village where it is.

766 When they have sewed and tied it well, they take it on their shoulders
794 and head on the double for the exit door. There they stop and without any respect roughly set the body down. Armed with picks they make an opening in the wall of the hut and, seizing the corpse by the feet, they drag it and put it into this opening. Strong hands seize it from the outside, they pull and the others push, and the excommunicated one comes out of his dwelling and appears in the alley or on the square. [482] Four fellows -- sons of the fetish, for they alone are present at these burials -- take him on their shoulders and, running, carry him to the cemetery. At the edge of the grave they put down their load, the initiates give a loud cry, a sort of roar, and they roll him with their feet into his final home. For such people there is not the slightest farewell or prayer, and the grave is filled at once.

In the evening the fetish is brought out, and the initiates abandon [789] themselves to their sacred dances, while the god, in the hands of its priests, /232/ runs about the village and its environs, exorcising. All night long nothing is heard but the bellowing of horns and trumpets and sacred hymns shouted by the crowd, and from a distance one would say they were dull rumblings or the actual cries of wild animals.

8. Worship accorded to the Dead

769 At the death of a Bambara not the slightest sacrifice is directed either to him or to the deceased of the family. However, the worship of the dead is prevalent among the Bambara, althought it cannot be compared to the worship of the genii, especially of the *boli*. Nevertheless, everyday one can see, at the door of one family or another, a large splash of blood on the wall about a meter from the ground, a brownish octopus one might say, throwing its twisted arms here and there and struggling against a clump of feathers stuck on its back with the juice of a chewed kola nut. Some people have seen in this worship, the basis of the Negro religion and, no doubt because they did not know the language and have been unable to give an exact meaning to the words caught by their ears, they have portrayed the Bambara with knife always in hand, ready to slaughter in honor of his relatives. Because they group together all *saraka* and sacrifices,

763 A gunshot today most likely signals the death of a hunter or the father of a hunter. In any case, however, there are always cries and vociferations by [165] the women, who are joined by their friends, relatives, and neighbors.

Horsemen ride off to notify any of the sons of the deceased who are away.

[567] Meanwhile, the chief of the slaves, the major-domo, the confidential agent, or a friend or neighbor of the deceased goes to inform the chief and the principal men in the village.

764 These personages come to the mortuary house at once, spear in hand. After being received by the man temporarily in charge of the house, they go to the deceased to discover his identity and at the same time express their condolences to the family represented by the person who received them; then they withdraw.

[824] [285] In the mortuary hut silence descends while the women prepare the body. They wash it with warm water usually scented with basil, su-ko-la (Ocimum album and febrifugum); they dry it and wrap it in pieces of native white cotton material or else dress it in its own garments, likewise white. A mat of coarse straw (tyekala, kara) is placed in the middle of the room. A fine, flexible mat made of iphène leaves is put on top of it, and the women lay out the corpse on the second mat. Sometimes they place a grindstone on the abdomen to keep it from swelling.

[352 516] [152] When these preparations are completed, the women, dressed in white native cloth, sit down in the native fashion on tiny stools in the mortuary hut. Those who come in from outside give evidence of terrible grief: they cry out, they weep, they cover their heads with a bit of cloth and hurry toward the mortuary hut. As soon as they enter, they become quiet and stop weeping.

152 764 767 Among the Bambara grief is never silent; it is customary to show it overtly. As soon as there is a crowd, the singing begins, in rhythm to the clapping of hands. One person or another will be inspired to sing of the achievements and virtues of the deceased. Professional weepers and mourners mingle with the crowd, guiding and gradually encouraging the noisy display.

343 which are dried. Then it is reassembled without sealing the pieces
251 together, and as the level of the provisions goes down, the unnecessary sections are taken off. The kitchens are situated to the west of the rooms.

342 361 Arrangement of the huts in a concession. The chief's hut is always to the east, for he must see the sun rise. His hut is often quadrangular and has several rooms. The women's huts are generally round; each has its kitchen situated to the west and closed by a separate lock. Private shower rooms are reserved for husbands and
514 wives. Privy cabinets with two holes, one for urine and one for stool, are stopped up and condemned when they are full.

312 Finally, the well is sunk in the middle of the court or else in the immediate proximity of the concession. Water is drawn directly with a calabash fixed to a long rope.

342 Sometimes individual huts are constructed on piles for protection against mosquitoes at night; the only opening is a trap door in the floor by which the hut is entered.

g. Tombs

764 An old custom had the family heads buried in their huts. The Fama were buried in the courts of their fortified palaces, to the northwest. Babies were buried near their mothers' huts, for their return was awaited. At the present time the Bambara are buried in cemeteries following Moslem or animist custom.

● 767 [103] The brotherhood priests dig the graves; tombs may be individual or collective. Monteil (Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta]) describes a chief's tomb: the vault has the form of a parallelepiped; the lower base is one meter wide and two long, the upper base three wide and two long, and a vertical partition of 1. 50 meters forms a right angle with the bases.

In Ouassoulou the custom was to dig a common tomb of several chambers for the whole family. A square entrance about two meters high and two wide led into a narrow corridor that opened on a first chamber reserved for children; another corridor connected the first chamber with a second, larger one reserved for women and for adult males; from this a third corridor led to a last chamber, a smaller one for heads of the family. An oil lamp was placed at the

764 inserts them into the deceased's throat; he fills his own mouth with food previously brought forth by a woman and blows until the stomach of the deceased is filled. The rest of the food is placed near the dead man who is lowered into the grave by his sons and daughters. He is laid down on his right side, facing east, in the hole, *sele dẽ*, dug at the bottom of the grave. The two stalks of millet are placed next to him; they are more powerful than the forces of decay and destruction, and affirm the immortality of the ancestors. Together with the corpse, they are the image of the first three who died and the whole expresses the hope of resurrection promised to men.

While songs burst forth in honor of the deceased, the young men cover him with fresh branches before closing the grave; above the grave the masker whistles to proclaim that hereafter it is he who will settle the problems of the dead.

[768] The objects formerly belonging to the deceased, such as bed, mat, pipe, and razor, are then put into a pile with a little bag containing his hair. Fire is set to the pile while the chief of the Komo recites the following prayer: "Let your burned possessions leave to wait /194 before you, let them leave in smoke. We are behind, we are not in front of you; ask happiness for us. Let all the *dyo* with the pincers and the anvil come, let peace come" (1).

1. *I ka fẽ maralew dyenina, n ka ta i kono i nye, m bita šiši fe, an bi ko an ti nye, i ka here nyini ã nye; ka dyow ani bala ani kula, dũ ka na.*

The masker dances about the hearth, whistling and throwing up dust. The children of the deceased who are impregnated with his *nyama* leap three times over the flame; the force, absorbed by the smoke, is dissipated with it.

The meat of the sacrificed animal is cooked, eaten by the participants, and the containers are broken.

769 Three days after the death, the family goes down to the river bank and throws in the clothing of the deceased as well as a plate of food; both will serve to clothe and feed the double. They then recite the following prayer:

"My father Faro, a person of my family has died, here is his offering of the three days; make him return again in a woman's womb" (2).

cvo invoked is requested or required to act.

789 778 [784] There are times when on the contrary, the native is inclined to hold the energy in check, in order to avoid the harm that would result from this sort of action. For this purpose he abstains from doing certain things; this is the origin of many taboos (tne).

The acquisition of magic power in order to gain strength or to be able to act so as to avoid being affected by magic or, finally, to be able to get rid of magic power when one is permeated by it to a dangerous point -- all these involve appropriate actions or rites whose forms and conditions only magicians or others gifted with intuition can determine.

The chronicle shows that chiefs make use of magic to try to strengthen the supernatural power which is the basis of their position. Dina Wara secretly ate a special dish made of a goat's head; Biton took special baths, whose virtues Ngolo appropriated by trickery just as Biton had done with respect to Dina Wara, his brother-in-law. All sorts of comparable practices accounted for the increase of Ngolo's "luck," that modal quality of supernatural power which confers a degree of magic potency on the possessor. This so-called "luck" has, as it were, a kind of radiation, which confers special good fortune on whatever it touches. That is why the marabouts advised Biton to live in close proximity to Ngolo so as to take advantage of the favorable atmosphere.

778 ● 768 This energy is attached to everything and, especially, to objects that come into direct contact with anything impregnated with it. What one wears on oneself thus becomes a sort of accumulator, and that is why the objects left upon a powerful person's death are so carefully preserved and constitute the most valuable part of his legacy. The chronicle tells us with what veneration the cap and weapons belonging to Biton were regarded.

778 789 Magic force is therefore acquired by means of appropriate practices indicated by magicians; one shares its benefits by living near those entrusted with it by applying to oneself what comes from such privileged persons. Here again is a result of the continuity of matter. Whatever the case, anything

763 deceased in case he had been killed by a genie (nyana). Sacri-
764 fices, alms, or the payment of a fine are necessary in that event, along with intervention by the priest of the nyana in question.

764 Most often, the body is turned over to a priest (nyana-n-tigi) [167] if the deceased was a member of a brotherhood.

[735] In any event, it is customary to give alms at the cross-roads near the village.

Further, the death of the fa puts an end (1) to the au-

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1. When a king of Kaarta died, the interruption in sovereignty often gave rise to serious anarchic disturbances.

thority held by him, and this may have serious consequences, since for the moment everyone is virtually independent. That is why the servitor who had the master's confidence and who actually ran the establishment retains his role after taking certain precautions (2). In particular he must make sure that the

2. This was the role that Ngolo Dyâra was seeking when he asked to be placed as "guard at the master's door."

movable property of the deceased is not carried off. He is familiar with these things, and he is the guardian responsible for them. He makes the women return the gold jewelry and valuable fabrics, puts everything in a safe place, and makes an inventory in the presence of the heir presumptive.

764 (b) Burial. The deceased may be buried in the ground within his hut or at least in a corner of his establishment. In former times there was a cemetery outside the village, often near the grove of the nyana dugu-da-siri (guardian genie of the village), and in such cases it was apparent that the more important the deceased, the nearer his romb to the sacred place.

766 For persons of distinction there is usually a special kind
768 of grave. It is about two meters long, and while the opening

476 461 567 [361] The patriarchal community draws its subsistence from this agricultural exploitation, and as a result, a kind of work organization has developed. Patriarchal communities or important families have agricultural land in various regions and these tracts are often far apart. Some members of the community or a group of slaves are therefore settled in each domain, sometimes on a permanent basis, sometimes for the period of clearing and cultivating the soil, sometimes for the period of harvest.

Theoretically, every member of the community and every slave must work for the community from dawn to around noon every day during the farming season. Two days, however, Monday and Thursday, are given to these persons for work in their own fields. Anyone who cannot or will not work has the right to provide a replacement from among his dependents.

There are, of course, many exceptions to these rules. In the first place, everyone works according to his position. Among the poor, the master works as hard as the slave, if not harder; among people in comfortable circumstances, the master merely controls and directs the work, sometimes reserving a particular job for himself. In important communities, field work [189] is almost exclusively the duty of the slaves, under the surveillance of their leaders and following the orders of the fa, who either supervises it himself or has a member of his entourage do so.

583 589 ● 768 Conjugal usufruct. When she marries, a woman is given in usufruct in exchange for the bride price. This usufruct is community property exactly like the things used for the bride price.

When a fa dies, the disposal of the conjugal usufruct included in the estate is a serious matter. Since the conjugal usufruct is of the same duration as the life of the woman, the death of the husband has no legal effect on the situation of his spouse. Since it is understood, however, that the widow has no sexual obligations to her husband's heirs, the usufruct is reduced in that respect. Such is the lot of widows when the heirs decide to keep them without marrying them and the women elect to remain.

583 589 Most often, however, the heirs either marry the widows or send them home, or the women leave of their own volition.

● 768 [587] An heir who marries a widow of the deceased must take her back to her family, obtain their consent, and pay them a new bride price, required because a new usufruct is involved. The chronicle of Ségou shows us how this custom operates. Upon the death of Dina Wara, his son escorted to Ségou his father's widow, Biton's sister, whom he wanted to marry. He made sumptuous gifts in order to obtain consent.

In the case of a widow who is sent home or who leaves of her own accord, responsibility for the bride price already paid rests with the party who broke the contract, i.e., with the person who sent the widow away or, if she left of her own accord, with her family. The question of responsibility for the bride price is an important one, since usually neither party has either the means or the desire to make it up. As a result, every effort is made to evade payment, and it is common practice to resort to the most shameless bargaining of the woman involved. A husband is sought who will agree to pay the bride price asked by the one having rights over her, but most often, partial payment will be made when the woman is returned, the creditor's impatience is calmed by gifts, and the balance of the bride price remains wholly or partly unpaid [190] at the time of the debtor's death. This obviously results in insolvable complications during and after the marriage (1).

1. Concerning the lot of widows, see the discussions about the widows of Biton and Ngolo in the chronicle of Ségou.

567 727 Slaves. Enslavement comes about in many ways, but the three principal ones are force, birth, and the result of obligations.

Force has perhaps been the primary cause of enslavement. A person who surrenders is the chattel of the conqueror, but the treatment given him varies in accordance with his previous situation. Was he a man of position? If he is violent, he is killed or sold; if it is thought that his relatives will pay a high ransom, he is kept. If he is clever enough to arouse sympathy, he often is

583 768 Finally, if the union is still in effect at the time of the husband's death, the wife's community theoretically regains authority over her, provided that the bride price is paid back.

581 626 These three definite points show that lawful union, or marriage, legally speaking, is essentially a kind of usufruct of the woman to the advantage of the husband, and the price is the bride price. As a result, the woman's community is obliged to see to it that the husband enjoys his rights. Hence, when a wife misbehaves, no matter how, the husband reports it to her community which takes steps to bring the erring girl to terms for fear of having to refund the bride price. On the other hand, the husband is expected to treat his wife in a manner worthy of her, that is, with consideration for her origins, and if he fails to do so, he risks the consequences of breach of the marriage contract.

There are, therefore, reciprocal rights and duties required of the spouses. Based on the marriage contract, these rights and duties are reinforced, completed, or, more generally, influenced by ethics no less than by the feelings of the [207] couple in relation to each other and to their respective communities.

581 562 [554] This is why a girl from a great house with high standing (1) cannot be treated like a common concubine, even though the husband may prefer the concubine to the wife, because the free daughter of a powerful house, richly dowered, is virtually independent in the household. If she is sufficiently well off, she may even live in a house of her own, and since her only obligation is the sexual conjugal duty, she receives her husband as she would a lover.

On the other hand the free woman of modest circumstances and, even more, of lowly birth is her husband's companion in wretchedness. She does all kinds of work, even the hardest and most disagreeable, and she desires no rupture that would deprive her of the only affection that sustains her, the love of her children.

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1. Thus, in the western Sudan, the daughters of the Massa-si are treated with great deference.

429 A person who is away for a long or indefinite period [217] delegates the direction of the family community for as long as necessary to a friend or relative. This substitute, however, is expected to act only in accordance with the customary counsel and the family of the absent person.

[586] In case of divorce, the children always remain with the father. A divorced woman again comes under the guardianship of her own community.

● 768 429 When the mother dies, the father retains the administration of her property which belongs jointly to her children. If, however, one of her sons is married or of marriageable age and is competent, all such property is supposed to be handed over to him to administer in his capacity as fa of the uterine community.

When a father dies, his minor children are placed under the guardianship of the patriarch under whose authority the deceased was living. If he was independent, guardianship would be set up in accordance with his wishes which he would not have failed to make known.

In any event, if one of his sons is married or of marriageable age and sufficiently competent, he becomes fa of the familial community which gradually, as the younger sons grow up and establish families of their own, becomes a patriarchy such as we have described above.

[641] According to native law, deprivation of civil rights does not exist. In fact, however, persons who by reason of ill-health or senility are unable to comply with custom in carrying out their functions are supplanted by such persons as are designated by custom to replace them at the time of death.

596 614 Faya. The faya is the authority and power of the fa over all his dependents. It has the same character, differing only in extent, whether it concerns a familial or a patriarchal community.

Familial faya. Within the family, the fa theoretically has complete authority over everything that constitutes this community. It makes little difference whether he acts on his own initiative or whether he allows himself to be swayed by the

*173 In principle, it did not interfere with anything that was
94 not contrary to its own interests, and within those limits it allowed the conquered peoples to live as they pleased. In regions under its control, however, its operations were not without influence, and it employed measures analogous in every way to those applied by the clan of Ségou.

Organization and Operation

766 The following description of the funeral of a Massa-si
614 fama and the installation ceremonies for his successor will show us the principal customs and important personages in action.

When the fama dies, the leader of the slaves assumes
768 command of the royal household; he has all the doors watched and summons the wives of the deceased and takes their jewels and any other objects of value. He places all the valuables in a hut, and he himself keeps the key.

While this is going on, the war drums (tabala) are broken, and the sofa are dispatched to inform members of the family.

When the heir presumptive arrives, the leader of the slaves shows him the body of the deceased, so he can officially identify it, and the collection of valuables so he will know that they have not disappeared. The sofa are then sent to the capital to announce the death of the fama in order that everyone will bring an offering for the funeral ceremonies. The gifts of food will be used for the funeral banquets, and the other gifts (silver, horses, fabrics, etc.) will become part of the royal treasure, even though they are theoretically supposed to be used as alms for the poor.

The body is washed, wrapped in a shroud, and then buried. Burial usually takes place within the royal house, at the place where the deceased liked to sit. If he is interred in the floor of a hut, the hut is abandoned after its door has been walled up.

The door of the central redoubt (tata) is also walled up, and a new opening is made.

562 When the husband dies, the wives are considered the principal
428 wealth of the heir. Among certain Bambara, the wives are divided
768 among the brothers; the eldest brother chooses and then has the other
587 brothers choose in order of age. Among others, the heritage goes to
the children who must ally themselves with their father's wives. The
wives who do not want to remain with the heir have the option of returning to their families, providing the settlement is returned.

The wife may have personal property given to her by her
428 parents at the time of marriage. Among certain Bambara, the
562 father of the bride must give her the settlement paid by the husband,
and this becomes her personal property. When a widow dies, all of her goods go to her eldest son; if there is no son, half of her goods goes to her daughters, and the other half is divided among her father, her mother, and her brother. When a married woman dies without children, her goods are divided between her husband and her father; if she no longer has her father, half goes to her husband and the other half to her brothers and sisters.

On the other hand, we have seen how a woman may inherit all of the wealth of a family head, and even of a chief, in default of male heirs, and the Mali empire had a woman Keita at its head, daughter of Naré, fa Maghan.

A woman must not take part in any political discussion or
562 demonstration, which does not mean that her role in these matters
662 is nil. All the history of Mali is full of palace intrigues which reach
their acute stage at the moment of a Fama's death and of the election of a new chief. It is at this moment that the women knew how to throw into the balance all the weight of their family's power to determine the new election.

Finally, we have seen that in a fashion parallel to the male
562 brotherhoods and societies, the women were organized into powerful
561 hierarchical societies according to their age classes and their degree
575 of initiation. These societies, where men do not enter, are still
imperfectly known, but they are at least as formidable as the male brotherhoods.

The woman must pound the millet, draw water, and carry out
562 all the household chores, but when the man kills an animal, the meat
belongs to the wife, and the man must accept in turn what she will give him.

765 Malakou, salakou
Fari ô, fari doun ka di." (2)

Translation: "Ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans (fari) and to eat all one's fill, ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans!"

The excised daughters and granddaughters of the deceased wear mourning for about eight to ten days. During this time they stay in the b'lon, or entry hut, and spin cotton. The only noteworthy fact [513 is that they all sleep in the same hut and attend to the wants of nature 514] at set times, going to the bush evening and morning in Indian file with white veils on their heads. For the whole moon following the [292] death, the wife (the wives if the old man was polygamous) of the deceased wear sandals of goatskin and go out dressed only in white.

● 768 562 428 At the end of the moon, the wives of the deceased become the property of the head of the family, who makes them his own or gives them to his circumcised children (3). Some freedom is left to them, for they can ransom themselves if they wish, and for the old and worn, difficulties are soon smoothed away. If the new family head is without a brother and without children or if he is older than the deceased,

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2. A song heard in Bani country. Since these songs are often improvised, they differ from one region to another.

3. Brothers succeed brothers. If there are no brothers, the oldest son inherits. If the deceased is younger than the brother who inherits, the latter possesses the wives but may not enjoy them. If the heir is the son of the deceased, all the father's or grandfather's wives belong to him, and he may enjoy them all except his mother.

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562
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the women belong to him but he cannot make them his own. From then on they remain without husbands unless they ransom themselves, and they quickly become soungourou (4). /224/

4. Soungourou, a woman who gives herself to the first comer.

Burials of the Second Category, Those of Heads of Families

764 Having described the respects paid to old people, that is, to grandfathers, I now need only proceed by elimination and say which of the procedures listed are not included in the burials of other persons. The honors paid to the gouatigi, or head of the family, whether or not he is married, are identical, or almost identical, to those paid to old people. But if he is not a hunter and none of his children is an initiate of the sect, his death is not announced by gunshots. Moreover, there are no dances except for the djansa, held evening and morning for three days, nor does anyone come at the time when the body is removed to the cemetery to accuse or excuse himself for a lack of respect or consideration toward the deceased. Through the intermediary of the herald or of the person in charge of the funeral ceremonies, each pays his respects and his few cowrie shells, and, after a pardon is asked on behalf of all, the prayer is said.

If he dies childless or is laid in the grave on a Wednesday or Saturday, unlucky days, the deceased gouatigi receives a white pullet to pay the spirits for his welcome as he enters Lahara, and he receives it alive. If a wife of a gouatigi is buried on an unlucky day or dies without having given birth to a child (1), an egg of a brooding hen is

1. If a woman dies after all her children, but has given birth to a child and nursed it, she does not fall into this category. It is a disgrace to receive a hen's egg because one has not had children. The rule is the same for men.

[558]

782 /91/ Actually the altars from the region of Ségou originate mostly
778 in Toko, a settlement situated to the south of the town where the king's
326 blacksmiths lived. The ancestor of these blacksmiths is buried in the
rocks which border Toko and from which the stones used as altar are

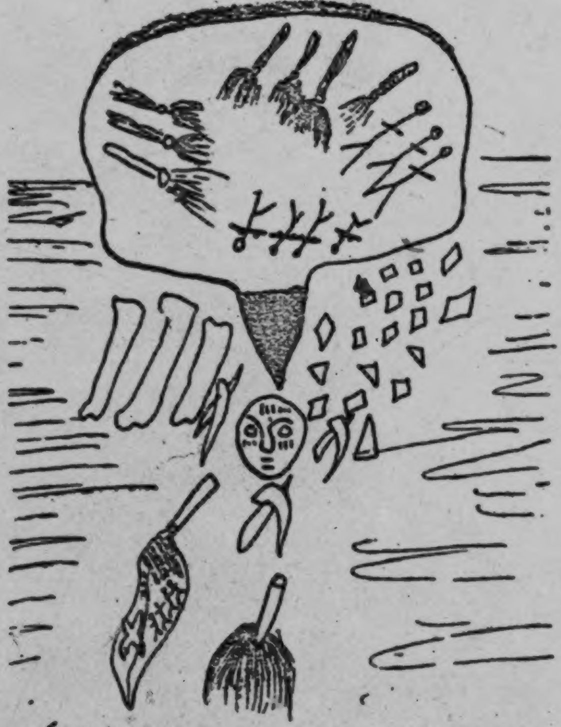

Fig. 5.—Stone altar, fara ba, of Banankoroni, consecrated to ancestors. It is stuck into the ground above the skull and bones of an albino, hoes, and a circumcision knife. The ritual drawing traced during the ceremonies of the renewal of the year represents the torches and the whips of the Kworè, 3 men and 4 women, which recall the number 7, image of the creation (Informant's drawing). [532 769]

carved. If a village chief wants to obtain one he sends a delegate to Toko. This emissary receives from the blacksmith the stone appropriate to the function of the altar and the quality of the person

794 The ancestors are worshipped in various places: at the doors and
thresholds of houses, at the cemetery, and at stone altars placed at
769 the intersections of lanes and in public squares. These positive cults,
778 which are aimed at the acquisition of beneficial forces, have as a
counterpart, cults in which the villagers rid themselves of all their
unlucky and infectious elements; these take place, in particular, at
the corssroads, dangu, which are placed under the guardianship of the
earth Soba spirits.

It would be impossible to treat all of the cults of the Bambara villages. Among these, three have caught our attention; they concern the dasiri, the dangu, and the ancestral altar stones.

A. The dasiri

794 The word dasiri (literally, which binds the mouth) designates the
776 invisible spirit, Faro's representative entrusted with watching over
778 /138/ the village, as well as the seat of this spirit and, sometimes
too, the animal which accompanies it or symbolizes it.

The spirit haunts a rock, a thicket, or a tree situated near the village; the approaches to this spot are reserved for the elder in charge of the ritual (1).

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[824] 1. In Massala and Soroba it is a baobab tree; in Sama, a tamarind tree, etc. See the observations on the dasiri collected by Ch. Monteil, Monographie de Djenné /Monograph of Djenne/, pp. 137-138; L. Tauxier. La Religion Bambara, pp. 195-208.

[787 Generally the place is pointed out by the geomancer at the time
361] the village is founded, or else determined by an event which occurred
at that time. It is after this operation that the buildings are erected
to the west of the chosen spot.

If the dasiri is a tree, no one may burn or cut its branches. In
[822] many cases it cannot be approached by anyone dressed in black or
indigo, colors which represent obscurity. No Peul may sit in its
[563] shade (2). Any infraction of these taboos brings about the death of

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2. The reasons for the taboo concerning the Peul have not yet been ascertained.

764 inserts them into the deceased's throat; he fills his own mouth with food previously brought forth by a woman and blows until the stomach of the deceased is filled. The rest of the food is placed near the dead man who is lowered into the grave by his sons and daughters. He is laid down on his right side, facing east, in the hole, sele dẽ, dug at the bottom of the grave. The two stalks of millet are placed next to him; they are more powerful than the forces of decay and destruction, and affirm the immortality of the ancestors. Together with the corpse, they are the image of the first three who died and the whole expresses the hope of resurrection promised to men.

While songs burst forth in honor of the deceased, the young men cover him with fresh branches before closing the grave; above the grave the masker whistles to proclaim that hereafter it is he who will settle the problems of the dead.

[768] The objects formerly belonging to the deceased, such as bed, mat, pipe, and razor, are then put into a pile with a little bag containing his hair. Fire is set to the pile while the chief of the Komo recites the following prayer: "Let your burned possessions leave to wait /194 before you, let them leave in smoke. We are behind, we are not in front of you; ask happiness for us. Let all the dyo with the pincers and the anvil come, let peace come" (1).

1. I ka fẽ maralew dyenina, n ka ta i kono i nye, m bita šiši fe, an bi ko an ti nye, i ka here nyini ã nye; ka dyow ani bala ani kula, dũ ka na.

The masker dances about the hearth, whistling and throwing up dust. The children of the deceased who are impregnated with his nyama leap three times over the flame; the force, absorbed by the smoke, is dissipated with it.

The meat of the sacrificed animal is cooked, eaten by the participants, and the containers are broken.

769 Three days after the death, the family goes down to the river bank and throws in the clothing of the deceased as well as a plate of food; both will serve to clothe and feed the double. They then recite the following prayer:

"My father Faro, a person of my family has died, here is his offering of the three days; make him return again in a woman's womb" (2).

769 2. *M fa faro n so ma bana a dyanza ye kle saba kono ye; ni ye se i ka seki, muso kono ma.*

The offering of food is then renewed every three days until a birth brings about the return of the double into the world of the living.

If the dead man has no descendants, his altar remains forever in the sanctuary of the Komo near the *nimara boli*. Otherwise, it is returned within seven days to the eldest son or to the brother who then becomes the head of the family.

During the night following the seventh day, the soul returns to eat
769 and drink in the hut of the widow who lives alone. All the dishes con-
775 taining water or food are therefore carefully emptied and cleaned.
The same meal is offered to the deceased the night following the
fortieth day after the death. The widow comes out of her house on the
[765] eighth day if she is poor and must work for a living; otherwise, on the
forty-first day.

At the end of a variable period of time, the soul, the double, and the name of the deceased are received by a child who is born into the family. The exuvia, *mana* or *folo* of the soul, remains in the sanctuary of the Komo as a permanent testimony to his existence on earth. It is conserved by Faro who watches over it, and maintained by the offerings of the living who will in this way bring it to the final resurrection.

When the deceased does not belong to the Komo society, the rites are celebrated over the altars of the societies to which he belongs; his soul is likewise conserved by them. The spiritual principles /195/ of the women, grouped in institutions comparable to those of men, called *muso dye*, are the object of the same attentions in which is found the rhythm of four days, the female number.

766 If the deceased was too poor for all the rituals, which are always
costly, to be observed, two gourds of water are prepared and placed
one at the head, the other at the feet of the corpse; he is then lifted
in such a way that his image is reflected in the water. This accomplished,
eight cowrie shells are placed at his head and eight at his feet and the
gourds are covered with a winnowing tray; the image thus conserved is
supposedly reflected in the *kaba mana*, the fourth sky, where Faro,
776 symbolized by the cowrie shells, passes judgment on its state of purity.
787 A divining rite is then performed. If the man is pure, the villagers

776 attend his burial despite the fact that the rituals have not been per-
787 formed. If not, he is abandoned to the care of his family.

To neglect the rituals assuring life in the beyond and the security
764 of the living causes the shadow *šu dya*, or the ghost *šu kere dye*
775 (literally, white side of the dead man), to arise and present itself under the same which the dead man had on earth, to claim his due from his descendants.

Ancestor Cult

769 In the entryway of some residences a supporting stake (*čĕ dloma*),
778 sometimes marked by seven notches, represents the founding ancestor of the family. On the anniversary of his death the stake is oiled "to refresh his soul." In addition, each year the owner of the house sacrifices to all the ancestors on the family altar, on the stake, and on the threshold of the door. In some villages the ancestors are called upon by tapping the threshold with a little wooden hammer, *dyele kala ni*, which represents them.

In the courtyards, pieces of wood stuck in the ground (*ǰigi semen dloma*) represent the paternal uncle, the brother of the founder, and are used as seats for the heads of families who lean against them "in order to lean well upon the traditions." Farmers, before leaving for the fields, rub their hoes on them to show them to the ancestors.

Before planting the women give the head of the family a ball of
769 raw millet, which he lines up to represent the dead according to age
241 and rank. Then he gives them a pinch of the seed beginning with the one representing the most recent deceased and calling successively all the dead by name. The paste and the seeds are then put in water and the mash thus obtained is poured on the /196/ doorposts to the entryway of the family house upon which the blood of a sacrificial victim also is poured. When the planting time comes, the chief who has prepared the mash made with a few grains taken from the seeds distributes this to the women, beginning with the one who represents the oldest deceased. He asks the ancestors to watch over, during the germination period, the soul of the millet which will descend into the seed with the first rainfall. When the millet has reached maturity, the first seeds harvested are placed in a pot on the threshing floor where the grain will be threshed later, and are distributed to the women in the same manner as the time of planting, the oldest of the deceased having to receive the first of the seed.

769 At an annual ceremony presided over by the Komo, the members assemble in honor of thedead. It is called šu sɔ sibiri, "Saturday of the sacrifice to the dead" and is celebrated on a Saturday at the time when the ears are being formed in the millet fields.

The kotigi removes the ancestral tools from their shelter and carries them to the graves. Then the chief of the Komo and his assistants, accompanied by the maskers, carry the altars to the cemetery while singing. Each grave is put for a moment into contact with the nimara boli and the nyama boli; the exuviae of the souls of the dead each visit the bodies they once animated. To the rhythm šu bara, "rhythm of the dead," played on the drums, the maskers dance and sing around the graves while mock labor is carried out with each of the ancestral tools. During the whole ceremony the kinsmen wail, the men near the graves and the women in the house. A victim is sacrificed, cut up, and cooked in new pots which are broken after they have been used in order to avoid the contagion of the nyama of the dead. The dances of the maskers are performed during the two days that follow. In some villages the ceremony is repeated after the harvest has been threshed.

Exceptional Cases

The Stillborn

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783 It is said of a stillborn child that he has lost both his soul and his double, that is to say, his complete being. The parents who are responsible to Faro for this disaster are obliged to find and recapture the spiritual elements of their child, the woman the soul, and the man the double, in the course of long and sometimes painful rituals.

As soon as the woman is able to go out after the birth, both parents are led, shaved and naked, before the members of the family assembled in the courtyard. As testimony /197/ of the deceased to Faro, their hair, mixed with that of the child, is buried in the wall of their home. [824] Then a tomato, representing the foetus, is introduced into a large incision made in the woman's thigh. The man crouches and drinks the juice which drips from the fruit and which symbolizes the double. Each one bows before the elders of the family, holding their hands behind their backs, to apologize for the fault committed, sayiing: "Here is my humiliated (sex) behind me" (1).

766 532 After the burial,[1] a drawing is made on the sanctuary with millet mash made of grain from Faro's field; this drawing represents the dead man and the mutilations inflicted upon him. The seven attending elders close their eyes as a sign of respect in order not to "register a drawing made for Faro." In fact, its aim is to obtain the spirit's pity and to ask him to include the dead among the count he keeps of his subjects. It is also in front of this drawing that the family will come to make an offering and mourn every week. [769]

II. Rituals of the Refuse

364 778 The debris, sweepings, and refuse collected in the homes, courtyards, public squares, and crossroads all contain forces which men have communicated to them.

The rituals, of which these are the objects and which vary according to their origin, have as their aim the offering of these forces to Faro who returns them to men purified and regenerated in the form of rainwater with which he irrigates the fields and in the form of ponds and wells. They are thus redistributed and used again for the benefit of the community.

The refuse at the crossroads, called dangu kalaw, stalks or straw of the dangu, contains the force, nyama, of all the beings that have trampled it.

/202/ The refuse from the homes contains the wanzo of the uncircumcised, the nyama which the inhabitants have to bear for having killed animals or insects and for having received insults, and their good or bad tere. These forces, called wanzo dla (literally, to arrange the wanzo) (1) or nyama dla, constantly come to the aid of all the members of the family; they improve the wanzo of the uncircumcised, facilitate the women's childbirth, and renew the vigor of the old men. A small altar, konye, kept in the room reserved for the head of the family, is dedicated to them.

After the coming out of the Komo, the sweepings gathered on the spot where the dances take place contain the forces of the members.

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1. This term is applied to them particularly in houses where there are many children.

[1] [Of a drowned person — Analyst]

562 778 This suspicion readily degenerates into disrespect, scorn and hatred when a woman [123] is weak -- this being the usual state of affairs. On the contrary, the feeling changes to superstitious fear if she resorts to occult practices and shows herself [754] an adept at sorcery. Many old women are held to be very expert at such practices.

851 In the same connection, it should be noted that a newborn child is also subject to scrutiny. For seven days after birth it is not officially taken into the family, because it is thought that during this period the infant may undergo metamorphosis unless closely watched over by its mother.

We shall see, through a study of their institutions, how the Bambara conceive of life and organize it.

Funeral practices will show us how the Bambara regard the idea of death.

And after death?

775 769 The Romans distinguished among spirits: the manes or good gods (dŭ[1] manes) and the lemurs or evil spirits, both of whom take an interest in the family.

The Bambara have analogous concepts.

Once it has left the body, the soul of a patriarch goes to join the souls of his ancestors, where it finds a spiritual family which protects the earthly family.

The manes (fa su-u) always like to frequent the places where their bodies lived, and that is why one keeps the things that belong to the deceased, why he is buried near his house or sometimes even under the floor, and why some families piously keep the skull of the departed to do it honor.

[778] The entrance-hut (blon') is usually the site of the altar of the ancestors and of the family gods. The ancestral altar may be a small board with a human mask, called kara, or a mound of earth shaped vaguely like a human being. The manes are thought to enter into these objects to receive the offerings and sacrifices made to them.

It is sometimes thought that the world of the manes may be without light and heat but that otherwise they each continue the existence it had in life with the same passions, the same

[1] [dei ? —Analyst]

775 passions, the same preferences and the same [124] animosities. 769 The weak lead a passive existence in poverty and oblivion, whereas the powerful -- chiefs, heads of families, diviners -- are, on the contrary, active, intriguing and passionately devoted to the interests of their earthly families. They live among their fellow beings, who are incorporeal like themselves, just as their relatives live on earth. However, they all have powers superior to those of earthly men over winds and rain, farming and hunting, in short, over all things that constitute the visible world of man. All can manifest themselves to the living, and they like to choose a place where their presence and their action will be most useful and where they prefer to receive offerings, as in a grove, on a hill, or near a spring or a tomb.

Certain manes are thought to attain an increasingly eminent position in the invisible world through special activity, until they become pure spirits.

Woe unto him who fails to maintain cordial relations with his manes! Woe unto him who neglects the dead! The dead suffer from such negligence, become angry and seek vengeance. Hence the terrifying appearance of ghosts who come to bewitch the impious; hence the possession that disturbs a person's faculties to such a degree that it makes him dangerous to others and only exorcisers could restore them to their normal state.

Here occur the analogies with the lemures, for abandoned manes are easily captured through the sorcerers' artifices and then must do the latter's bidding. Further, all those who were cast off by society during their lifetime because of harmful activities, like those of sorcerers or criminals, the accursed also have their thurifers, whom they help with their supernatural powers.

775 Does this survival of the good and the evil have any purpose or any duration and, if so, what are they? Do people believe in immortality or eternity? Obviously the Bambara do not ask such questions and native practices do not seem to provide any answers. The one definite belief is in a survival which the Bambara can only conceive of in terms of ordinary life; the terms used to describe the other world bear this out: the dead eat,

601 the household, they are ba-u (mothers), and the title ba is commonly used out of deference or respect. Very old women are addressed as mama, "grandmother" or "ancestress." [163]

564 Members of castes. These are free men who are destitute and form a kind of clientage of important families. We shall discuss them later on.

567 Slaves. Only slaves entrusted with special duties lived in the house. When a master discerned qualities in a new slave that might make him useful in the house, he kept him in his own service and often treated him well and generously. Custom gave the children of such a slave a privileged position; since they were "born in the house" (wolo-so-u, they could not be sold except in the case of extreme necessity. All confidential servants were recruited from the wolo-so-u, and the eldest, most experienced, and most favored often acquired great influence in family affairs. They knew more about the secrets and resources of the community than most of its members.

Another category of slaves is made up of those who after three generations were ipso facto freed (dyongoron'-u). They have played an important role in native society.

2. The Patriarchal Community or Patriarchy

769 The ancestral spirit-god. In order to view a custom from its most expressive aspect, it is necessary to observe it in its fullest development and, at the same time, to note anything adventitious or foreign that modifies its appearance and procedure or alters its basis.

The cult of the ancestors is the very essence of the family, and the most characteristic manifestation of this cult is the funeral ceremonies for the head of a family, the patriarch (fa). Here, one is present at the transformation of a man into an ancestral spirit-god within the span of 40 days.

This period is an interval during which a link between the past and the future is formed in the present, whereby

769 continuity is established between the living and the dead, with the deceased acting as intermediary. Religious customs, magic, and civil law, all are intermingled in apparent disorder, and the casual or inexperienced observer is all the more confused inasmuch as diverse accessory or circumstantial features mask the essentials in being more obvious. [164]

Does not the same sort of confusion confront a foreigner in France who sees the funeral of a prominent citizen? If he is uninformed, how is he to recognize the religious rites and civil requirements which form the common basis of all funeral ceremonies, for the great and for the humble, brought to their highest development for the one, reduced to their absolute minimum for the other.

764 Therefore, the important thing to show here is the substratum on which all funeral observances rest. For the sake of clarity, we shall divide the period of 40 days into four phases: (a) from death to burial; (b) burial; (c) the funeral celebration; (d) the period of mourning.

763 (a) From death to burial. As soon as death occurs, the fact is announced to everyone by appropriate means.

The lamentations of the women burst forth, and this spreads the news in the immediate vicinity, while gunshots inform the whole settlement. These acts have something of the ritual that was carried out when a Bambara died in war. Raffenel has given us a remarkable picture of it.

763 152 "When a Bambara died in battle, three gunshots, fired near the door of his hut by one of his companions-at-arms, announced his death to the family. Wailings answered this announcement, and the weeping women of the village came out of all the huts to run to the house from where the signal had been heard. Everything was abandoned in order to share in this sorrow. First they wept, and then they ran to find out where the mourning was...

763 "The warrior charged with this mission arrived at the door at a gallop. He pulled up his horse, slowly loaded his gun, shot it, reloaded it again, then again... , and when the third shot had rung out, he rode off with equal speed, without uttering a word, without giving a single detail... Two shots announced enslavement."

764 574 Theoretically, all of this is supposed to be used to honor the dead, which is done in several ways. In the first place, it is obligatory to serve food and particularly drink to anyone who comes to present condolences. These meals and drinking bouts are a kind of communion since from everything consumed an offering is first made to the deceased and also [769] to the ancestors whom he has gone to join; it is a kind of communion with the departed members of the family.

These repasts and drinking bouts tend to develop into orgies, and the inexperienced or casual observer may think that they are carousals at the expense of the deceased. As a matter of fact, however, far from suffering a loss, the family of important persons receives more than it spends, at least for the time being (2). The more lavish the celebration, the more it is supposed to please the deceased and cause him to look favorably on his survivors.

764 735 In principle, everything not consumed is supposed to be given away as alms to the poor and not added to the family property. It is quite natural, therefore, that the poor of the village come to partake of the feast, and indeed, they are invited. They must be treated with much cordiality if the sentiment governing the feast conforms to the spirit of the custom. That is why the [171] chronicle tells of Nyana-n-koro, upon the death of Ngolo, claiming that the cowries given should be distributed to the poor, to travelers, and to all the needy; that is the true spirit of the custom, and that type of alms is particularly pleasing to the dead.

The funeral feasting continues for seven days, which are called dyansa, "alms." It is a time especially devoted to [537] condolences, called sanga-fo (1) "funerary discourse." The

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2. The family will have to behave reciprocally toward the families who have thus shown their respect when deaths later occur among them.

1. Literally, "sayings (for the sake) of the dead."

596 honored by the new fa, and there is nothing to prevent him
614 from adding to the treasure.

The basic cult of the family is the cult of the ancestors.
•769 Although the dead are frequently buried outside the family residence, their souls are thought to live in the blon' of the dwelling.
·[343 The blon' is a hut with two openings on opposite sides, one
592] to the street and the other to the interior, usually the courtyard. It is impossible to enter or leave a house without going through the blon', where there is always a guard, at least in
778 important houses. The ancestors are usually represented in the blon' by a group of crude, conical clay figures of a man and
769 woman, the latter identifiable by the exaggerated breasts. Sometimes the symbol of the dead is a small board about a meter long, twenty centimeters wide, and a little more than a centimeter thick; at one of its extremities a slight protuberance vaguely suggests a head, a kind of ellipsoidal cylinder with eyes, nose, mouth, and chin faintly carved on one side. On the side with the face, the board has a checkerboard pattern, often of alternating black and red squares, probably to indicate the material of a loincloth. The lower extremity of the figure has a semicircular portion cut away to give the effect of legs spread apart when the effigy is set up.

769 Whatever form it may have, the representation of the
•782 dead is called kara (1) and serves in some manner as an altar on which libations are poured and to which are attached the remains of the sacrifices made to the dead (su-u). Nevertheless, it is also a very widespread practice to make libations and sacrifices before the door of the blon' and, more rarely, before the door of an inner hut. In this case the liquid is poured and
[775] the remains smeared on the vertical edge of the opening. This practice is based on the belief that the souls of the dead ancestors like to return to the place where the fa liked to sit during his lifetime. Undoubtedly, the ancestors are regarded as guardians of the threshold; they are [181] honored as such because it is believed that they prefer to be honored in this way.

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778 1. In Soninké, kara means "to die" and "death."

769 This is the place where on important occasions the fa
778 receives congratulations or condolences, which are addressed
782 not only to him but also to the ancestors who, though invisible, are nevertheless present.

When the fa wishes to make an offering to the ances-
769 tors (fa su son'), he squats before the door of the blon' with his
782 head bare and a chicken in his hand. He addresses the most recently deceased (1), saying: "I offer this chicken in my own name and in that of my children. Jointly with our dead fathers and mothers, preserve us from sorcerers who eat souls (suba) and from the evil of the wicked; protect us from sickness and disaster; guard our health; give us good wives and healthy children; bring success to our work in the fields, and give us rain."

If the offering is being made for a particular purpose, the fa is explicit about it and speaks just as he would to a living person. He concludes by asking that the victim reveal the response by the way it falls as it dies. Then he cuts the chicken's throat and dribbles the blood on the wall at either side of the door of the blon'. He than resumes his crouched position, and after throwing the fowl a short distance, he watches its convul-
787 sions and waits for it to fall motionless. Usually the position is regarded as favorable if the animal dies with its legs in the air and its feet turned toward the officiator; if the feet are turned away, the response is unfavorable. Often, just as he completes the offering, the fa announces what position he considers favorable or unfavorable.

The fa gives the sacrificed chicken to his wife to be cooked, and then he divides it among the members of the family; this is truly a communion.

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1. It seems that the ancestors form a kind of chain in which the first invisible link is the ancestor most recently deceased and the first visible link is the current fa.

769 As a substitute for the chicken, it is very common to
782 offer some dege, a bit of millet coarsely ground and thrown
in a little water. The fa keeps this liquid in a small gourd.
It is perhaps [182] reasonable to think that this is the most
ancient manner of honoring the dead and, in particular, calling
for their protection in obtaining the two essentials of life: grain
and water.

[273] An equally common libation is made with dlo, a kind of
millet beer which every Bambara enjoys drinking to the point
of intoxication. The dead could hardly fail to be pleased with
an offering of what they had enjoyed so much on earth!

[276] One must conclude, too, that offerings of kola nuts
please the dead because it gives them a chance to enjoy a
favorite treat. The officiator chews the kola nut and then
spits out his saliva mixed with the juice and remains along the
walls of the blon'.

Such are the ordinary offerings, but on special occasions
the quantity and importance of the gifts are increased according
to the desired results. When many people are present and the
[781] house is prosperous, the victims are oxen and sheep. It should
not be forgotten that the flesh of these consecrated victims,
eaten in common, makes a very strong mystical bond between
the participants; it is a true communion. It is generally conceded that the bond created by drinking consecrated liquids together is much less strong.

776 In addition to his ancestors, every Bambara has as his
778 special protector, one of those gods (nyana) which are created
wholly by the work of the magician. Every family has one or
more nyana, whose priest is the fa. The boli, the symbol and
altar of this type of divinity, is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put into a leather or canvas sack, a gourd, or a
pot. The nyana of Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, was
a n-ko whose boli was kept in a monkey skin. The boli is
taken out of its cover so that libations can be poured over it
and animal remains smeared on it. If there is some objection
to exposing it, the offering is put on the cover.

769 Everything that takes place relative to the cult of the
794 nyana is analogous to that described for the cult of the ancestors.

769 794 It has the same base: request, offering, communion. In addition, there is a liturgy appropriate to each nyana, in particular, the mysterious sayings that attract the god and make him [183] the actual servitor of the person uttering these sayings, rather than a benevolent protector. This shows the antithesis as to final ends between religion and magic, as was set forth in Chapter 2 of the present work.

596 614 778 The fa also has the responsibility of maintaining the efficacy of magic weapons; he must fulfill all the obligations required by each of them. Among them there are true nyana, sometimes independent, sometimes a part of the great nyana. Mostly they are amulets or talismans whose virtue depends on certain rites or simply on the observance of certain interdicts.

596 614 778 Finally, the fa is the guardian of custom and family relics, which likewise have a religious basis since custom, after all, is the continuing will of the generations, the imperious mandate of the ancestors, the table of law of the manes. Any transgression of custom is certain to bring the worst disasters. The relics are ordinary or ceremonial objects left by the successive fa. Some of them are so strongly associated with the patriarchal office that on special occasions or in certain circumstances the fa is forced by custom to wear these objects impregnated with the virtue of the ancestors. The cap and weapons of Biton at Ségou were of this nature, and such is the case among the Massa-si.

596 614 Relations between members of the community. Theoretically, the powers of the fa over the members of the community are absolute. He can hire them out, offer them as security, sell them, and even put them to death (1). He also has the right to use whatever belongs to them,(2) both persons

1. Note how Ma-n-son got rid of some of his brothers.

2. Ngolo sacrificed his son's son.

782 genie. The same is done with libations of *dlo* or the juice of
796 kola nuts. Since anything offered to the genie is supposed to be
[786] consumed on the spot, an orgy lasting for several days usually
follows.

782 In addition to these two great obligatory ceremonies especially concerned with the exploitation of the land, the god's protection is sought by similar, but much simplified means in all affairs whether they concern the entire settlement (wars, disasters), a particular patriarchal or familial community, or even a single individual. Through the high priest as intermediary, the offering and the request are made for the purpose indicated by the petitioner, who often promises to make a further gift to the genie when his wish has been granted. Vows of this type are made very frequently.

794 The cult of his high [230] priests and of all the im-
portant men of the settlement is tied in with the cult of the
769 genie, obviously a consequence of the fact that the genie is the spiritual patron of the community which honors him; its members are his children and with him form what amounts to a family. So, in line with what happens in a patriarchal or familial community, the territorial community also holds an annual festival for the dead, during which special honor is paid to noted personages, among whom deceased high priests have first place.

311 *Exploitation of the land.* The high priest in charge of
621 the cult likewise regulates everything concerning the exploita-
tion of the terrestrial domain of the genie, and in this capacity
423 773 he is known as the *dugu-tigi* (1), master of the earth. In this office he has the help of the council of *fa*, and in important matters he must follow their advice.

With the help of this council, he allots the land when

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1. In line with common practice, I shall henceforth use this title to designate both capacities, the high priest and the master of the earth.

794 clergy. On the other hand, an innocent man will be over-
696 whelmed by mental and physical torture if he is unable to give his executioners what they demand.

681 Corporal punishment includes flogging, chains, starvation, torture, and death by all imaginable methods. Pecuniary punishment includes fines, confiscation, and pillage. The condemned man is also sometimes forced to labor for the clergy or is even enslaved by them.

Social and Political Role of the Brotherhoods

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769 By its actions, the brotherhood, an artificial family, tends to take the place of the natural family whose organization it has borrowed and whose cult it has banished. It is easy to account for this.

The cult of the manes is the framework of the family and of the communities derived from it. The brotherhood has cleverly managed to set up such a cult by specially honoring the manes of its high priests, its famous members, and its eminent worshipers. [267]

Gradually, the nyana dugu-da-siri, protector of the territorial community, has given way to the nyana of the boli, a more powerful god since his territory is unlimited.

It is true that in spite of everything the tradition remains, and even though they are largely over-shadowed by the nyana of the boli, the manes of the ancestors and the nyana dugu-da-siri are still venerated. Though sowing and harvesting are celebrated
731 with great pomp by the brotherhoods, still, when a disaster, epidemic, or terrible drought occurs, sacrifices are promptly of-
782 fered to the manes and the gods of the place. People may fear their anger, but they also have confidence in their good will, and it is felt that their severity can always be tempered. On the other hand, the nyana of the boli are supposed to be basically evil, and their worship seems intended to ward off their malignity rather than to obtain their favor.

794 This duality in religion brings about extremely compli-
621 cated interrelationships which bind the communities and

614 own action, as a possible daily eventuality which should cause
794 no surprise.

761 The practice of this implacable ferocity must also be considered the natural source of that kind of burning faith, as intransigent as it is horrible in our eyes, which is capable of nullifying all the feelings of affection that we regard as natural. When Ngolo realized that he had aroused dangerous ambitions in his son Ntyi, he decided that he could not escape the danger he himself had created except by a sacrifice in keeping with the contingency, and with his own hand and without hesitation, he sacrificed Ntyi's son, his own grandson.

Stubborn Bambara are often heard to say: "You may kill me; I will not yield." Tyitya's resistance shows that this is no idle boast; this same affair also shows the aspiration toward equality, so basic in the Bambara, which makes it impossible for him to bow before his fellows. Another example of the same quality is to be seen in the resistance of the "elders" whom Mamari, even he, could subdue only by murder.

794 To complete the description of the somewhat mystical features of the clan of "those of Ségou," let us recall that after
614 [321] Mamari's death he was honored by a cult: on the part of his
769 natural descendants because he had been their fa; on the part of the people of the clan because he had been fama; and finally, on the part of the faithful of the idols' cult because he had been the high priest. Under this aegis there was a fusion of sorts of all the people who recognized mutual bonds because they were all spiritual sons of Mamari. This relationship was the excuse used by the ton'-dyon' when they usurped supreme power, and the right of the leaders of the ton'-dyon' to succeed to the office of fama was in fact settled by the expedient of treating this relationship as though it were true descent. This cult took its characteristics from the cult of the idols. When Tonmassa began his duties
[782] as high priest, his first act was to honor the manes of Mamari, and the offering was the same as that always made to ba Kongo-ba when a new fama was elected: a man and an ox.

614 Such are some of the characteristics of the faith that united the "people of Ségou" by ties which, without metaphor,
794 can be called bloody. It is true, of course, that the clan's

766 White oxen are sacrificed on the tomb; their hides are
614 used to make new drumheads for the *tabala*, and the meat [328]
is offered to the manes of the deceased and then distributed
among members of the family, allies, familiars, etc. The
women wail, weep, and sing the praises of the deceased in
[786] company with the people of caste who organize everything. Outside,
banquets and virtual orgies, complete with noisy dances and
songs, are organized in honor of the deceased.

This ceremony goes on for seven days.

614 At the close of this period, the new *fama* is publicly proclaimed. For this purpose, the leader of the slaves has the walled-up door of the *tata* reopened, and the whole company assembles in the large open area in front of the house of the *fama*. Those present include the newly elected *fama*, the members of the family of the Massa-si, allies, tributaries, heads of the *ton'-dyon'*, and the *sofa*.

● [769 782] An ox has been sacrificed and offered to the manes of
the defunct. Its hide is stretched in the center of an open area
surrounded by the crowd, and on it is spread out the sheepskin,
adorned with precious amulets, which has long served as a rug
for the *fama* of the Massa-si. Other precious family relics include
[301] the scarlet cap adorned with amulets, twists of gold for the ears,
and heavy silver bracelets.

The representative of the family of Kassi Konaré seats the newly elected *fama* on the sheepskin, puts the scarlet cap on his head, and adorns him with the gold earrings and silver bracelets. Then he makes a speech to the new *fama*, outlining the policies followed by his deceased predecessor and enumerating the desiderata of the people of the clan.

At this point the leader of the slaves prostrates himself
[567] before the new *fama* and places himself in his hands to show that
all the *ton'-dyon'* are loyal to him. He then presents individually
the principal groups of slaves, tributaries, etc.

Another ceremony brings the new *fama*, prominent Massa-si, their allies, the principal leaders of the slaves, and the tributaries to the wood sacred to the protective idol of the clan, where a reciprocal oath of loyalty is taken. A ritual communion follows.

761 principles of the cadaver on altars or masks in order to preserve them
764 for the community.

The rites have undergone an evolution. Formerly the bodies
764 were hung from trees until they rotted, while the bones were kept.
At present the bodies are buried. Only a band of cotton symbolizing
the tongue of the deceased, that is, his word, is attached to the
[794] branch of a tree. If the deceased was an initiate of the Komo, the
society plays an important role in the funeral rites.

All these rites have been studied by G. Dieterlen and Tauxier.
766 Monteil has described at great length the funeral ceremonies of a
chief: the three rifle shots recalling his combats, the lamentations
of the women, the notification of the village notables, the offerings
of relatives and friends, the alms at the crossroads, and finally, the
inhumation. The body is prepared, the head shaved, the interior
cleaned with water and salt. A paste of water and ground cowry is
put into the body openings (the ground cowries possess a divine spirit
assuring the preservation of the cadaver). The body, and particularly
the head, is daubed with this same paste, then the body is laid on its
right side, feet to the north (a woman would be laid on her left side).
Finally, the funeral celebration takes place, with the ritual feast
765 and the purifications. Seven days later the celebration of commemoration
(Sangha) takes place, followed by the mourning of the women
for forty days. After this time the deceased is transformed into a
living ancestor.

The Bambara receive omens of their death or of a chief's
763 death from certain signs given them in the bush, such as coming
across a chameleon on a red anthill, the cry of a certain mythical
hyena, the passing of certain crying monkeys or certain birds.

Certain gifted beings have the ability to perceive the departure
of a person's spiritual forces and his imminent death. Sometimes
they are able to bring back these forces and reinstate them in
the body to save the man in danger.

[95] g. Ancestor Worship

769 After his death a man is transformed into a living ancestor
773 and is the object of a cult. The cult is closely connected to the
agricultural cults; the ancestors are efficient vital forces which

769 participate in men's lives, protect them, and make their fields
775 fertile. The farming tools are presented at their altars before the tillage, and every year their souls come to animate the maskers who dance in their honor under the supervision of the Komo. After the grain is threshed, they receive the first products and are offered sacrifices.

h. Other Rites

788 Besides the rites concerning the person, the Bambara have others, such as those relating to the household wastes where the forces of men are accumulated. The purpose of these rites is to offer these forces to Faro and to regenerate and purify men. The wastes are burned periodically, the men breathe in the fumes, and the ashes are thrown in the river. Sacrifices are offered to the god, and special dances accompany the ceremony.

Rain rites common to all of Africa are practiced in May by
796 the members of the Kworé society. The rites for renewing the year involve individual, familial, and collective participation. The signs of the world are traced on the walls of individual or collective sanctuaries, and by the intermediary of a sacrifice on the altars, by dances and rhythmic chants, man renews the cardinal points and the forces of the world which in turn renew his soul. (All these rites have been described by G. Dieterlen in the Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

B. Special Technique In General Usage

773 In Bambara thought, "every technique is a reparation taught man by Faro, a palliative to the cosmic disorder which is generally caused by an infraction of taboo . . . Men first lived by gathering their food, then later by fishing and hunting; they used only their hands. Little by little the techniques appeared, following a chronology remembered by the Bambara of today. The first material to be used was the fiber of the nyama tree frond which were made the first fishing nets, the first sling, the first covering for the sexual parts." (1) The second material was wood from which the farming

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1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

342 shovel. A coping of bricks is then laid out around the roof, leaving
room for the gutters which spill into the streets. These houses may
be topped with a second roof, a thatched cone. The four chief
timbers are set at the four angles of the house. There is a door in
the first ceiling, and precious goods or objects are kept in this part
of the house. As in the round huts, the door always opens to the
south.

[237] The outside of the houses are plastered with earth mixed with
cow dung; on the inside, the floor and lower part of the walls are
daubed with black earth mixed with fresh cow manure and bark from
[824] the *jumbo* tree *(Napoleona Heudelotii)*; the upper walls and the ceiling
are covered with white river clay. Where the two colors meet,
[531] lines of festoons traced with the finger symbolize the descent of the
third Word. On the white walls are painted ladders, calabash spoons,
animsla, signs conveying [102] the worldly situation of the owner
as well as the soul of the artist.

[356] The periphery of the entrance door is daubed with fresh cow
[769] dung every 15 days, and more liberally with rotted cow dung once
a year before the rains. This custom is linked to ancestor worship.

Canari [earthenware vessels] containing certain plants are
353 buried under the bed of the head of the family; other plants and
352 juice from roots are hidden under the women's beds. The *boli* are
hooked to the roofing of the houses for they must touch neither earth,
water, nor fire. Nets, *diakumadjulu*, are hung from the ceiling;
they hold clothes or calabashes for the food; mats or animal skins
are spread on the ground; beds, different-sized calabashes, and stools
complete the furnishings. The different huts belonging to one family
351 are surrounded by a wall that opens into the vestibule of a hut with
342 two doors, oriented north-south. This is where the head of the
[354] family receives strangers. In the inside court are found hearths made
of three stones, mortars for millet, and chicken coops, a sort of
small square hut made of clay mixed with straw. The granaries,
343 constructed on piles, have the form of round huts. They are divided
251 into four parts, where the four principal grains are kept: millet,
rice, fonio, ground nuts. Some grains may be kept together in the
same compartment, for example, millet and ground nuts. Certain
granaries, *bonio*, are veritable cigar-shaped pots made by the blacksmiths'
wives. When the *bonio* is finished, it is cut into sections

764 left of each chamber's entrance and was left to go out by itself. The
body was placed in the middle of the chamber, the feet to the north
and the head to the south. At the time of a new burial, all the long
bones were gathered in one corner of the chamber and all the skulls
in another, for the number of deceased was verified by these. Finally
in the Kokum region hundreds of tumuli cover vaults consisting of a
[346] heart-shaped chamber cut in the laterite and preceded by a vestibule
to the west and by steps cut into the rock which lead to the open air.
The outside and inside doors are closed by a slab of laterite. The
outside door is hidden under the tumulus, with three equally-spaced
stones marking the location. The skulls are arranged in a dome and
separated from the long bones. Lastly, the tomb of the village's
founding ancestor is found in the center of the village, to the north
of the old fortified court of the chiefs' house.

III. Art

517 The Bambara conception of art is very different from the
occidental idea of art for art's sake. Every object that we find beautiful has a precise social, religious, or technical significance for the
Bambara: "The art of the Blacks is purposeful ... it is gratuitous
projection in a material of ideas and knowledge which bring the user
or spectator nothing other than themselves. Doubtless crude in the
first stages, often the product of superficial knowledge or even of calculated errors, the esthetic sense of the Blacks is clarified and affirmed as they learn and as they pass from a 'light knowledge' to a
knowledge of the great secrets. It seems impossible to an educated
man that he could make an abstraction of his knowledge to judge a
dance or to become enthusiastic over the playing of a clever harpist.
What we call beauty is for the Black the adequacy of the object to
represent that for which it is created." (1)

1. M. Griaule, "L'art nègre" [Negro Art], _Présence africaine_.

532 The masks conceal the person and transform the human being
into a supernatural being. They are the privileged instrument of the
● [769] _nyama_, the first [104] model having been carved to fix the vital
force of the first dead ancestor in a wooden figure. "The society of

3. The Reincarnation of Souls

775 769 It is a great surprise that the Bambara believe in the reincarnation of souls. Some do not dare to believe in it because they sacrifice to the shades of their ancestors, and others, "cultivated minds, nourished by the sanest philosophy," reject this belief as illogical, since the religion of the Negro is the worship of the dead! They do, in fact, worship the dead, but in the Bambara religion this worship, extensive as it is, remains a detail, and not the foundation. To honor the shades of his ancestors (but only of those who were heads of families, so that the worship of the dead is already somewhat limited -- with all due respect to those who see nothing but it), the Bambara family head throws a big blot of chicken blood and a mouthful of chewed kola nut onto the *dégé*, or millet flour mixed with water, and pours it onto the wall at the entrance of his hut. He does so to implore the help and protection of that power or authority which his predecessors possessed in their position as family head, an authority exactly the same as that which he himself possesses. He believes, nonetheless, in the reincarnation of souls! This belief is general and universal among fetishists, and if some do not dare admit it before Europeans and [576] Moslems, their reticence is due to simple human respect, to a fear of contradicting beliefs which they know to be contrary to their own, a wish not to offend anyone and not to be the butt of laughter and ridicule.

766 775 Infants who die at the breast before having achieved the use of reason are buried in a corner of the inner courtyard and sometimes even in the hut where they were born. Before such a child is buried, one of its limbs, usually the big toe of the right foot, is broken, and sometimes the father marks it with a knife on /57/ the shoulder, the arm, or the chest. He thinks that the child who will come after it will be animated by the soul of the dead one, and he neglects nothing that might possibly enable him to ascertain whether it is. This stupid and ridiculous operation is commonly performed under the eyes of the mother, and some strange events occur. Since she must submit 775 826 to the will of her husband as soon as possible and have marital relations with him, she soon conceives. During her pregnancy her imagination

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4. I dangha sagi, "may you be blessed on your arrival, on your return into our midst." -- (Your return to us is a blessing.) -- The Negroes abbreviate, saying, i dana sagi; it is only old men and those who pride themselves on speaking their language well, who articulate clearly and say i dangha sagi.

legend, this sagi whose name one avoids taking in vain, was chief of the village and influential in its environs. He died very old, took on flesh again in the womb of a woman of the family, and recommenced the cycle of his existence. He again became village chief, and again died in extreme old age, and returned to the flesh again a third time. As always he was chief, passed from life to death in extreme old age, was honored and respected by everyone, and received funeral honors such as have never been awarded to any Negro prince.

775 At the time of death the soul goes into Lahara, a vague word, so vague that a Bambara cannot define it or give you any idea of it. It is the place where the invisible beings live and where everything becomes invisible. Children and those who have not completely fulfilled the cycle of their existence, only pass through and hasten to return to the wombs of their mothers, or at least to those of women of their families.

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769 A secret force urges old men to return to the flesh again in their own family, but sometimes they refuse and seek limbs elsewhere. They spend a longer time in Lahara and, doubtless matured by experience, they are not always in a hurry to reappear. Many remain there for a number of years, awaiting a favorable moment, and this uncertainty hovering over the fate of the old men, may be a reason for sacrifices to the dead. One definite fact is that these sacrifices are directed only to the dead who have had authority in the country, the village, or the family, and the honors rendered them seem to be

775 •769 directed more to the authority which they had in their lifetimes than to the persons themselves.

775 A good number of Bambara believe in hell and assert that the souls of the wicked are condemned by God to eternal torment. It is clear that they are changed into demons and do not come back to life, but it is so difficult to deserve hell that not one Bambara goes there, and they live without any fear, just as if it did not exist. This belief in hell perhaps indicates an exception to my statement on the reincarnation of souls but does not destroy its validity, and it can be stated that the majority of Negroes believe in such a reincarnation. /61/

Chapter 4

Bambara Ideas concerning God, Invisible Beings, and Adam and Eve

1. Belief in God

776 The Bambara believe in the existence of a Supreme Being who is Creator and Master of all things; they believe in God, in a recompensing God who can punish and reward. Their most polished formulas are those in which they testify to their belief in Him, and His name is on their lips at every moment without any special reason.

776 576 To a young married couple, a Bambara hastens to say: "May your union be happy, may God give you peace and many children," and when a family is in sorrow, for instance because they have lost one of the members, it is in God that they seek consolation and in invoking Him that they give comfort: "May God have pity on him and grant him a happy sojourn in Lahara," "may He not separate him from good people and may He add to your days those of which he has been deprived." (1)

776 775 1. These last phrases have been taken by some as a reason to doubt that the

794 764 carry out their indecencies, shout obscenities, drink, and get drunk. And for three consecutive nights after the burial the same scenes are repeated in front of the fetish tree.

794 769 The anniversary of the death of a koredé ("son of koré") who became a korétigi (priest of koré), a gnéna-n-sonnaba (priest of the dasiri) or a gouatigi (head of a group, of a family), is celebrated with pomp; the family always makes it a point of honor to cook d'lo (beer), and people come from all directions to take part in the orgy. /127/

Chapter 7

The Worship of Satan or Worship of the Gnâ, or Boli

1. What is Meant by Gnâ, or Boli

776 Ever since God created their race and put it into the world, the Bambara have respected, venerated, and sacrificed to the gnéna, or djiné, those beings who are intermediate between angels and men. When one of them forgets himself under the influence of a jug of beer so far as to open to you -- oh, very slightly! -- a recess of his soul, he delights in telling you this, but he is careful not to make such a statement when he speaks to you of the gnâ, or boli. For although the beginnings of boli worship fade into the dark of the ages, it nevertheless has its history. The origin of each boli is known, and an initiate, however little instructed in its rites, can tell you whether it comes from the north or south, east or west, and whether it is male or female; and every graybeard can recite its family tree for you.

There is a great difference between the gnéna and the gnâ; they are different in every way, and we have here two beliefs which, though parallel, are absolutely distinct. Any object, whatever it may be, can become the home of a gnena, but these spirits prefer a living being, a plant, a tree, or an animal, for example, and when one is tired of its dwelling it moves elsewhere. A gnâ always lives in an

794 766 bedlam and racket in front of the corpse, which is displayed under the great trees that shade the entrance of the village. That is a most lugubrious and macabre rite! After the burial for three successive nights, the same respects are paid to the deceased in front of the fetish tree in the koré tou (sacred grove), and if the deceased was a korétigi (head of the sect of koré), a gnéna-n-sonnaba (head of the village and priest of the dasiri), a bolitigi (master of a boli), a flélikéla (famous sorcerer), a gouatigi (family head), a souroukou tigi or a korodouga tigi (head of a group in the sect (1)), they often continue their orgies for eight days running, gorging themselves with d'lo (beer), and getting drunk.

794 769 The anniversaries of the old people, those who had fame, authority, and especially authority in the sect, are observed regularly every year, and on that day there is a memorial to members of the family who belonged to the sect. Youths in large numbers come from all directions to abandon themselves to barbaric dances, and since beer flows in streams, the drinking bout that takes place is indescribable. /230/ Only a family reduced to the blackest poverty would neglect to offer d'lo (millet beer).

794 769 185 On the morning that follows these dances in honor of a deceased koré dé, a saraka is placed with great ceremony at the dankoun ba (1) of the village. It consists of the remains of the torches of the tatougoula (2), the bent, broken, and unraveled whips of the bisatjila (3), the thorn brooms of the woni sama (4), and finally the leafy branch

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1. See my chapter on the koré, or koté.

1. Dankoun, a corner of land formed by two paths that cross; dankoun ba, "great dankoun," the dankoun most popular in the village.

2. Tatougoula, those who dance with fire.

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3. Bisatjila, those who flagellate themselves.

4. Woni sama, those who scratch themselves with thorns.

used by the korodouga (5) to drive away the sparks crackling on the

5. Korodouga, clowns, storytellers /griots/ of the sect.

backs of the tatougoula.

7. Burial of the Excommunicated

766 Those with sores, lepers, and persons killed by a fetish who did not accept their sacrifice may be said to be excommunicated. No adult who dies without hair on his head or body has the right to the honor of a Bambara burial, and he is given that of lepers.

A leper is never buried in the common cemetery; he is sent far off into the bush to a separate place. The more usual custom, actually, is to slip the corpse into a hollow baobab (Adansonia digitata) with a small, live pullet as companion -- or an egg, if the deceased is a girl. The same fate befalls a bald person.

The reason for this custom is that this class of people have been abandoned by the Creator and the spirits, all of whom scorn them and withdraw from them. If ever the ground where ancestors rest should receive the remains of one of these accursed ones, their bones would shake with disgust. Moreover, they would take revenge for having to rest near people who during their lifetime were without hair; they would be deaf to every prayer and would refuse every sacrifice. The village and the entire region there would suffer a total lack of rain, a drought without any equal, in short, a famine with all its horrors. /231/

766 When they have sewed and tied it well, they take it on their shoulders
794 and head on the double for the exit door. There they stop and without
any respect roughly set the body down. Armed with picks they make
an opening in the wall of the hut and, seizing the corpse by the feet,
they drag it and put it into this opening. Strong hands seize it from
the outside, they pull and the others push, and the excommunicated
one comes out of his dwelling and appears in the alley or on the square.
[482] Four fellows -- sons of the fetish, for they alone are present at these
burials -- take him on their shoulders and, running, carry him to the
cemetery. At the edge of the grave they put down their load, the
initiates give a loud cry, a sort of roar, and they roll him with their
feet into his final home. For such people there is not the slightest
farewell or prayer, and the grave is filled at once.

In the evening the fetish is brought out, and the initiates abandon
[789] themselves to their sacred dances, while the god, in the hands of its
priests, /232/ runs about the village and its environs, exorcising.
All night long nothing is heard but the bellowing of horns and trumpets
and sacred hymns shouted by the crowd, and from a distance one
would say they were dull rumblings or the actual cries of wild animals.

8. Worship accorded to the Dead

769 At the death of a Bambara not the slightest sacrifice is directed either to him or to the deceased of the family. However, the worship of the dead is prevalent among the Bambara, althought it cannot be compared to the worship of the genii, especially of the boli. Nevertheless, everyday one can see, at the door of one family or another, a large splash of blood on the wall about a meter from the ground, a brownish octopus one might say, throwing its twisted arms here and there and struggling against a clump of feathers stuck on its back with the juice of a chewed kola nut. Some people have seen in this worship the basis of the Negro religion and, no doubt because they did not know the language and have been unable to give an exact meaning to the words caught by their ears, they have portrayed the Bambara with knife always in hand, ready to slaughter in honor of his relatives. Because they group together all saraka and sacrifices,

769 and do not know the ways and customs of the country, they take for sacrifices to the shades of the ancestors, the sacrifices which are made to the gnéna, or djiné, genii and to the gnâ, or boli, genii.

769 554 Thus, worship of the dead does not have all the scope that people sometimes choose to attribute to it. Moreover, the Bambara revere only those dead who had a little authority on this earth, such as the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or the dougoutigi (village heads, priests of the dasiri), the sotigi (heads of quarters), and the gouatigi (1) (heads of families), and this reverence is given less to the individuals themselves than to the authority they had. /233/

1. The gouatigi, head of the family, is called fa, "father." This word "father" should be taken in a broad sense, for to much of the family the gouatigi is a grandfather, a brother, or an uncle. Making a sacrifice to the fa sou (fa, "father"; sou, "corpse") does not mean sacrificing to the father who begot you, to the father of the family, to the one who bore the title of gouatigi. The chief wife of a gnéna-n-sonnaba, sotigi, and gouatigi, like her husband, receives a share of the sacrifice.

769 The first sacrifice to an ancestor who was a headman is made a year after his death and at the second big festival that follows his death. In order for him to be entitled to a trickle of blood, the sangafo (1) must have been completed, and it ends at the first festival held at the end of the sounkalo (soun, "fast"; kalo, "month"), or Ramadan (2).

1. Sangafo, "to offer condolences on the occasion of a death."

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2. The Negroes' great festival is held at the end of Ramadan. They have a second at the festival of the كَبش sheep. The Moslem masters forced them to observe these two festivals, but the Bambara have not adopted a single Moslem rite. They sacrifice to the dasiri, to some djiné genii, and to the dead.

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The great sacrifice to the dead is made at the end of Ramadan and at the festival of the كَبش sheep. The gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, first sacrifices to the b'lon da ba sou (3), those who,

3. Sou, "corpses"; b'lon da ba, "of the great b'lon, " the great entry hut giving access to the village.

like themselves, were priests of the dasiri and, in a general way, to all those who had some civil or religious authority in the village. All the members of his council are present at this sacrifice. After the libations of millet flour mixed with water and d'lo, or millet beer, a fine white hen (4) is slaughtered, and sometimes a sheep then, two

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4. In general sacrifices where the whole population or a whole sect participates, the liturgical color is the primary consideration, and a pullet a day old has as much value as a large rooster. When a victim of the liturgical color cannot be obtained, only water, dégé, and the kola nut are offered.

white kola nuts are offered and, if the sacrifice is accepted, a clump of wool or a few feathers are torn from the victim and stuck onto the

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middle of the splash of blood by means of a bit of chewed kola nut. When the general sacrifice has been made, every member of the council offers his white hen and his kola nut.

When the village has paid its respects to the blonda ba sou, the sotigi (heads of quarters) gather the gouatigi (heads of families) under their jurisdiction, and all these people sacrifice as before to the shades of those who were heads of quarters (5). Each family head then goes back to his home, gathers his children, and sacrifices to the shades of his fathers, to those who, like him, were heads of the family. /234/

The Bambara sacrifice to their ancestors very often; they do so by order of a sorcerer and on any occasions in their lives that are at all important, such as the circumcision or excision of one of their children, a betrothal or a wedding (1), but they do so especially when winter comes and the fields are sown. The sacrifices are simple and individual, and only the people of the house are present; just a hen, with a little dégé and a kola nut, comprise the whole expense.

The formula of the sacrifice has no special characteristics. The same ideas are always repeated: "I offer this dégé, this d'lo, and this hen; it is a sacrifice that I make to you in my name and in the name of my children. Preserve us from the souba, from sorcery, and from evil-doers. Favor us, preserve us from sickness, give us wives and healthy children, cause us to have rain in the winter, health to work our fields, and a fine harvest."

5. Only hens are slaughtered. There are always libations of dégé (millet flour mixed with water) and of d'lo (beer), and offerings of kola nuts.

1. Many Bambara do not sacrifice even on these occasions (circumcision, wedding, betrothal) but prefer to call on the family boli, which they dread more. In the winter everybody sacrifices to the shades of ancestors.

4: Henry--263 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

769 The sacrifice to the dead is most often made on the doorsill of
762 the entry hut, and a splash of blood is spread on the wall on each side
778 of the door, about a meter and half from the ground. Many families also have an altar for sacrificing to the dead in their main b'lon; it is the kârâ, an earthen bas-relief depicting a man and a woman. It is all crudely made and has no human qualities about it. Nevertheless, one can guess what the Negroes wanted to depict, for although the woman is without mouth, ears, nose, or eyes, just like her mate, she is always adorned with two fine breasts.

794 No one may remain a member of the ndomo after his circumcision. It is said that an individual who would continue his activity in the ndomo would acquire a double wanzo.

/176/ Chapter 7

RITES

●771 The rites of the Bambara are very complex and often involve several institutions. The following descriptions are not of a general character as the rites admit perceptible variations from one village to the next, variations of which the individuals concerned are aware, for there is no absolute rule for any institution or ceremony.

[574] Nevertheless, their various manifestations, which adhere to this flexibility of thought, testify to the unity of the cosmological and religious representations. When a Bambara is invited to be a spectator to the ceremonies of neighboring villages, he is frequently informed about this or that aspect of the ritual which is unfamiliar to him during the drinking parties which follow. In fact, tradition demands that the preceding ceremony be commented upon and explained in front of the beer jars. But the unity of the representations is such that, according to the declaration of a qualified informant, "whoever knows the principles and mechanisms may deduce from them, without explanations, the meaning and symbolism of a ritual which has not been commented upon."

On the other hand, the rites are symbolic even in their most insignificant manifestations: time and place, form of the ritual objects, aspect of the victims, repetition of formulas or prayers, mimicry of the participants, the wearing of certain secular or priestly garments, etc. A very great subtlety presides over the choice of details. It is thus that, during the stages of creation, the supernatural powers have established, organized, and reorganized the universe (skies, spaces, lands) following the itineraries which include "the cardinal directions and angles." The rites in which the cardinal points occur include gesticulation which, depending upon the power

771 considered, follows the chronological order used by this power in the beginning. Similarly, the various skies where Faro reigns are invoked according to their role and the aims of the petitioners /177/ who appeal to them in many cases with very long prayers.

In order not to overload this discussion, a very limited number of rites are described below. Among them, an important place is reserved for those concerning the person (see Ch. 3), which relate to birth, circumcision and excision, funeral rites, and the cult of ancestors. For each one of these the respective positions of the elements composing the individuality at different times have been pointed out.

The rites relating to the ordinary which come next, affect the collective life of the family and village. They concern the residences, the crossroads, and the public squares. They have a very definite character of a gathering together and redistribution of individual forces for the good of the community.

The rain rituals, also collective, which involve the Komo and the Kworè, present a typical example of Bambara symbolism.

Finally, the rituals for "the renewal of the year" have still a more general character: they show close ties uniting individual and community to the cosmos (1).

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1. The agricultural rites have not been touched upon in this work as they will be the object of a detailed description in: S. de Ganay, Techniques et rites de l'agriculture chez les Bambara (to be published).

In addition, most of the rituals are duplicated by a series of games of a cosmogonic character which relate to the stages of creation and to its past, present, or future states. See p. 54.

I. Rites Concerning the Person

Birth and Name-Giving

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271 From the moment of his birth, a newborn is washed with millet beer mixed with water. The beer has a purifying quality and the

775 their death and more or less far away from the place where they died, have been seen living a new life.

The dya is then, as it were, the essence of individuality, 774 and the body, its material expression, takes on forms that are 775 somehow characteristic of the dya.

The dya is a fluid which has its own attributes. There are sorcerers who are thought to know ways to capture the dya, especially for the purpose of using it to make idols that can talk.

It is further believed that a part of the dya is indestructible because it is made up of another fluid common to all nature, which the Bambara call nyama.

The nyama has no shape, but it retains, as it were, a trace of the identity it had during its incarnation; so the name borne by the person who was animated by this nyama has an irresistible attraction for the nyama and the latter is forced to obey anyone who knows how to use this propensity to make it carry out his wishes. After death, the nyama retains human contacts and, in certain respects, continues to behave as it did during its corporeal lifetime. Its manifestations are seen by the Bambara in matters of vengeance: the nyama of an ancestor is especially attentive to the manner in which the ancestor's wishes are being carried out and it is relentless in punishing those who fail to comply. It is the nyama of the fa (father of a family or patriarch) who torments the accursed; it is the nyama of the victim who pursues the murderer; and it is the nyama of anything tabooed that strikes down the impious.

So it is that, for the Bambara, a human being is composed of a corporeal body (su) which serves as the outward envelope (fure) of a fluid element (dya), whose subtle essence (nyama) is merely a part of the universal energy which permeates all nature.

771 [122] To a certain extent the Bambara applies the foregoing ideas on human beings to all that surrounds him. However, it should not be assumed from this that he conceives of everything as being made exactly in his own image. To express abstract ideas, he uses concrete terms which may, however, give a false impression. There is no doubt whatever that the Bambara differentiates between himself and animals; he also distinguishes from vegetables or minerals.

771 In any case, these are questions which he does not ask or which, at least, he has not considered in any way that would cause him to make logical, even if fragmentary, syntheses. His words and his acts are indications and sometimes even guideposts for us, but how uncertain and misleading they can be! And, in the observation of current facts, how many at least seeming contradictions there are! However, in the main, the analysis given in the paragraphs above represents the basis of Bambara dogma, since everything happens in reality as if the Bambara were living in accordance with these principles.

That being the case, life results from the union of the
761 two parts of the body, while death is a result of their separation.
772 Whence come these two elements and who it is that decides
upon their union? No answer is possible. The Bambara say,
merely, that certain persons are reincarnations. Precautions
[844] taken during pregnancy and delivery show that childbirth is one
of those mysteries against which taboos must be observed as a
protection. The frequent and readily believed stories about
[845] women giving birth to monsters -- usually animals -- bear wit-
ness to the affinities which, in the minds of the Bambara, exist
between all creatures. But nothing specific is said about what
precedes and determines the birth of a child.

This is a secret to which the Bambara are, of course,
562 not indifferent. It is evidenced in the fact that women, through
778 whom man comes into the world, are held to be doubtful
creatures, at the very least, partly because of menstruation,
which makes a woman impure, and partly because of the mys-
terious travail she endures during the delivery of a child (1).

[774] 1. Women are also susceptible of being possessed continuously by a spirit (see the story of the Déni-bo Ba, p. 123). That is why, when a woman is several times widowed, she is suspected of being possessed by a jealous spirit who kills off her husbands. She is often even thought to be herself a sorceress.

787 The kolon' kala is used in the same way to discover stolen or lost objects. In that case it is wrapped in a loincloth belonging to the victim of the theft, along with something equally personal.

What are we to conclude from these divinatory practices? Are oracles based entirely on charlatanism and trickery? This would be a failure to recognize the credulity of the practitioners, most often the first to believe in their own practices.

771 Religion and Magic. There is nothing more involved, incoherent and contradictory than the cult customs of the Bambara. In order to give a clear picture of the essential traits, we shall follow an outline based on the distinction which becomes apparent on close analysis.

It can be stated that these people always honor the manes, the nyana dugu-da-siri and some other nyana, without presuming to impose human will upon them. Indeed, it may even be said that the Bambara make an effort to behave in a manner presumed to be pleasing to them.

However, the majority of the nyana are spirits suborned by man and serving his will.

Finally, there are appropriate rites which make it possible for humans to exploit a portion of the universal energy and to use it as they wish.

771 789 Let us say that the cult of the manes and of the independent nyana are what constitutes the religion of the Bambara, while the subjection of the spirits and the exploitation of universal energy properly constitute magic, which in its most feared form is called sorcery.

This distinction is obviously arbitrary. There is no custom that is not in some measure impregnated with magic, and this is so true that it is uncertain whether one should consider [139] religion to be a sort of purified magic and magic a perversion of religion or even its parasite.

Without seeking to decide this question, we shall simply point out that there is often a clear line of demarcation between religion and magic. All one needs in order to see the difference is to compare the cult of the manes with the practices of sorcery

771 789 used to capture the spirits of the dead. The native clearly shows how much he respects the cult of the manes and, on the contrary, how much he is disturbed and terrified by the practices of the suba (1). However, many practices cannot be so clearly differentiated because they have elements of both religion and magic. Such practices are held to be allowable and even desirable, illicit and hateful, depending on the point of view and the places, circumstances and persons involved.

If we keep in mind the foregoing remarks and limit ourselves to the most characteristic traits, it is possible to establish a parallel between religion and magic among the Blacks.

Both acknowledge the existence of an invisible world which is everywhere in contact with everything subject to our senses. But while religion in principle assumes man's dependence vis-à-vis this invisible world, magic operates on the theory that anything that exists comes within the power of "the one who knows" (don'na ba).

Since the Master of the Universe appears not to take much interest in what he has created, his creatures do not honor him but, rather, have recourse to the Spirits and Powers (nyana) who are willing to take a hand in human affairs. Religion organizes, for the benefit of these benevolent nyana, a cult designed to make sure of their good offices. Magic, on the other hand, forces them to execute its will.

775 Religion and magic both believe firmly in the dual nature of man: a finite body and a soul which survives this body. When death comes, this soul goes off to join the family of manes, who are bodiless souls like it. From that vantage point the soul continues to watch over the affairs of its relatives still in the world of men. Religion regards the manes as guardian spirits and strives to make sure the continuity of their [140] will and wishes. Magic treats (1) these incorporeal souls like the

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1. See Chapter 7 concerning the suba.

1. Especially by means which give magic the character of sorcery.

● 771 789 nyana and seeks to use them for utilitarian ends.

By virtue of the beliefs on which it is based, religion engenders a certain degree of morality. Magic uses its knowledge to exploit the Universe for material profit.

In both camps there are initiates. Whereas the most [791] famous adepts in magic live in a kind of isolation, where they jealously keep the secret of their practices and where they exist apart from human societies which at once honor and fear them, [794] religion, on the other hand, displays its cults, if not exactly publicly, at least in the circle of the faithful. The latter, since they are usually completely familiar with the ceremonies of the cult and with the high-priests, are the masters and most venerated members of society.

Religion receives its most reliable support from the natural family and from the communities derived from that family. Legal magic has copied these organizations in the form of brotherhoods, which Europeans call "secret societies," a kind of spiritual family in which the members are only gradually admitted to all secrets.

Whereas the religion of the manes forms the strongest link that holds together the members of a community, and represents the framework of the society, magic on the other hand cares little for this union and in fact helps to disrupt it by the hatred it engenders. Thanks to magic, the individual feels competent to challenge the community and never fails to do so.

Let us look more closely into the traits characteristic of religion and those characteristicof magic.

By studying all that concerns especially the patriarchal and family communities and the associations growing out of these communities we shall be able to see the place occupied by the religion of the manes and of the spirits, as well as the effect of magic upon the basic manifestations of the life of these communities.

789 Since magic, in a sense, envelops every act of the native, it seems to us essential, at the start, to look into its characteristics so as to facilitate the understanding of all that is to follow, which is impreganted by magic in so many ways.

596 614 787 It is the duty of the fa to see to the cult. He projects everything that happens to him personally to the supernatural plane so as to come to conclusions that will guide his own conduct. He discerns in the most ordinary dreams indications of what will please the dead. Furthermore, the people around him point out the signs of divine will that they have observed. If, as happens in great houses, the fa is obliged to turn over part of his responsibility to the family gods to one of his confidantes, the latter will not fail to keep him informed of anything significant that may be revealed.

● [771] ~~Thus,~~ daily life is unceasingly dominated by the supernatural, and every important event is conditioned by these beliefs. This is readily seen in all the family institutions: birth, circumcision, marriage, and death.

[577] It follows that the moral behavior of the family is a concern of the fa. Whenever something abnormal or painful occurs, the fa looks into it. Do the dead perhaps have reason to be dissatisfied? Have they been neglected or offended? He questions them, and if he finds confirmation for his suspicions, he at once seeks to appease the manes in whatever way they desire. If the trouble persists, he investigates further, and sometimes everyone in the house is questioned or, if one prefers, made to confess, even infants. Could one of them, moved by ill feeling, have uttered maledictions when invoking the dead?

614 596 783 [578] When the fa himself is ill, this general confession is virtually obligatory. This is because the absolute authority of a fa can hardly fail to arouse hatred, and hatred, a bad counselor, makes people resort to magic to rob the more powerful of life. Fear that the elder's "clairvoyance" will discover the wickedness in the depths of one's soul and punish it usually induces the guilty person to obtain a pardon for his wrongdoing by confessing it, and then everything returns to normal.

596 614 Upon the death of the fa, it is the first duty of his successor to try to discover, by any means, the causes of death and to avenge it if need be.

[763] Everything which the old fa was wont to honor, which forms the spiritual treasure [180] of the family, must also be

184 614 On the other hand, it closely resembles the clan of the Khasso region, on which we have published a detailed study (1).
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1. See Les Khassonké in the series Revue du Monde musulman.

Chapter 6

Islam

1. Islamism and Paganism

● 771 797 It is a commonplace to say that the Bambara are implacable enemies of Islam.

However, history shows that for centuries the Bambara have been living in contact with Islam, that they maintain close relations with native communities of Islamic converts, and that they are willing to seek the good offices of marabouts of all races and ranks.

Are they, besides, as refractory to conversion as they are said to be? The chiefs of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta and some of their near connections and intimates, as well as other notables, have been practicing Islam. The Somono, who are of Bambara extraction, are faithful believers and, what is even more significant, they are fervent propagandists for Islam.

Actually, paganism and Islamism are not mutually antagonistic dogmas in the minds of the Bambara or of the Sudanese people in general, as many Europeans believe and state it to be. In these regions, Islamization has a counterpart which prepares the way for it and explains it, and that is the "sudanization" of Islam.

During his sojourn in Kaarta Raffenel tells of an interesting incident: "I had as a landlord a blacksmith named Niany, a grotesque personage, excessively naive and with a corresponding sense of logic, but a good fellow and very amusing. One day he

771 came to me to complain that [332] my Negroes were using a
777 satala (1) to take water from his jug.

" 'What difference does that make to you?' I asked him.

" 'What difference does it make!' he answered with an angry air.

"And with that he favored me with the following astonishing line of reasoning:

" 'Now you see, I am not a (Moslem) marabout and if the marabouts take water from my jar with the satala, the water that remains in the jar will necessarily be sanctified because it came into contact with that vessel. My children and I drink this water and, since we don't know how to salaam and don't fast, and since we eat pork, God (2) will punish us for having failed to obey his orders. For, after all, any water that has touched a satala makes a marabout (3) of the person who drinks it. That is what I heard from my father."

776 The net result is that, on the whole, Ngalla (Allah) is regarded as one of the nyana which we have mentioned and for which the Bambara has a superstitious respect without for that matter being a worshiper. He avoids any contact with all that concerns the nyana, not because of hostility, but for fear of incurring its wrath on account of some impurity. Just as he may call upon any convenient nyana for aid, so he asks the help of

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415 783 177 1. A kind of saucepan made of copper or tin, of European origin, used by Moslem Sudanese for their ritual ablutions.

2. That is, in Niany's mind, the nyana called Ngalla (Allah) by the Bambara.

3. That is, an initiate of Ngalla (Allah).

771 Ngalla through his priests, the marabouts. At other times he
787 thinks he will get into Ngalla's good graces by taking part in the great Moslem festivals and by imitating the visible rites (4) of the faithful. He has not the faintest doubt but that he can produce the same effects as they do.

So it is that the pagan, deriving from Islam whatever his own concepts can make use of, "Sudanizes" it in the process. As a result, between the two poles of Islam and paganism, there exists an infinity of intermediate states which link the two and which, depending on the angle of observation, sometimes look like an Islamization of the Sudanese and, at other times, like a Sudanization of Islam.

Father Niany, of the blacksmiths' caste, was one of those [333] individuals who, being versed in the practice of native occultism, consider Islam as a rival Hermetism until the day when they realize that it can provide them with useful new magic power. Many are the blacksmiths, magicians like Niany, who have become Moslems for the purpose of getting their hands on the arsenal of magic which Islam brings into these lands.

787
[177] So it is that all the native brotherhoods have adopted divination by geomancy which was introduced by the Moslems and there is not a Bambara who does not on occasion consult the geomancer, known as *laturudala* or *kenyelala* (1) or the

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4. In the tale of the Hyena, given later, there is an example of this mimicry in the way in which those who follow the Hyena each pretend to be the *nyana* discovered by the Hyena (see Chapter 7 [not translated]).

1. Derived from *kenye* meaning "sand," and *la* meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the sand."

787 buguriigala (2). These three words are sufficient in themselves to illustrate the process of Sudanization. Although the first comes from a corruption of the Arabic word el tereb (earth), the other two are strictly Bambara in all respects. Besides, the manner in which the natives have altered the practice of geomancy is an illustration of the same process.
177

2. Derived from buguri meaning "dust," and da meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the dust."

771 It may therefore be concluded that, in certain respects, Islam has strengthened paganism. For example, the pagans
797 commonly believe that an illiterate geomancer, who is nevertheless an expert in this type of divination, will obtain the same results as a learned marabout who is guided by the book of Er Zenati. As a result, a well-known laturadala enjoys special prestige because of the fact that his prognostications are corroborated by a book, and the same fact accounts in part for the influence of the priests of the brotherhoods.

We are thus able to verify the contacts between Islam and the paganism of the Bambara who are the subject of this study.

693 The historical tales related in the foregoing show the continuous relations which existed between the native chiefs and the pious and renowned marabouts. Whenever a legal dispute arose which could not be settled by pagan arbitration, the last recourse was an appeal for judgment or conciliation to a marabout, who was always sought out and greeted with deference. Mamari, Tonmassa, Ngolo and Ma-n-son's sons all had occasion to make such appeals in some most embarrassing situations.

[334] Further, on occasions when they hoped to bring off some questionable deal or to improve their prospects, the chiefs were also wont to call on a marabout. Mamari did so against the Massa-si Foro-koro and so did Ngolo when he was anxious to make sure that his fame would survive him.

In matters of judicial arbitration, it appears that the marabout derives his authority rather more, perhaps, from his

693 reputation for integrity and impartiality than for his knowledge of the books. In other matters, however, his Moslem esoterism is the quality most highly valued.

771 797 It is assumed, besides, that the high priests and other persons of note should be initiated into Islamic matters, which seem to be regarded simply as a branch of occultism to which such persons are especially addicted. The Kouloubali, the Dyara, and other lords of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta have practiced Islamism (1) without betraying paganism; on the contrary, by adding to it the luster of these foreign mysteries, it can be said that they have "Sudanized" Islam as completely as possible. Neither Mamari nor Ngolo, for example, was in the least embarrassed by his Moslem practices. Both remained high priests of their tutelary idols and simply borrowed (2) the external "manner" of Islam.

The bloodthirsty Dékoro was a Moslem of the same type. He was preparing to perform his ablutions, followed by his faithful blacksmith, at the very moment when he was assassinated by Tonmassa. And the blacksmith was actually carrying one of the satala which father Niany regarded as so compromising.

614 797 Naturally, the adoption of Islam was never allowed to create any political deviation which might compromise the interests of the clan. That would be treason, and such was the case for Touro-koro Mari. He was put to death not because he was converted to Islam, but because he had enfeoffed himself to El Hadj Omar to such an extent that the clan's independence was threatened.

(1) In the Sudanese manner, of course.

(2) This borrowing is done with the same awkwardness as that seen when a Black puts on a suit of European clothes which happens to come into his possession. The ease with which an occasional native can adapt it is exceptional.

771 797 It should be noted that this acceptance of things Islamic was not imposed on the Bambara by fanatical or warlike converters; in any case it [335] goes back to a time that was long before the exploits of the "people of Macina" and of "those of Fouta."

Mungo Park says that, when he passed through the area, half the Kaarta army were Moslems, and we are even better informed by Raffenel. Of course, it is in general only a kind of "Sudanized" Islam, but that is already a very important step.

Raffenel observes that the people of the Massa-si clan added a much-feared nyana of the boli to the cult of the ancestors which is common to all the Bambara. He further points out 776 that all the Bambara recognize Ngalla (Allah) and that, although they practice Islam only casually, they distinguish between believers and infidels among themselves. The Kouloubali especially consider themselves to be Moslems and affect to behave as such.

From this derives a curious spectacle giving evidence of a kind of dualism that is very suggestive. The general assembly of what one might call the ruling elements of the Massa-si clan took place at the festival of Baïram, and the Kouloubali, the chiefs of the clan, their relatives, their allies, the principal slave leaders and other dignitaries never failed to attend and to take part in the ceremonies in honor of their clan's tutelary nyana, since the meeting was especially devoted to a renewal of the oath of loyalty to this same idol. Now Raffenel reports that the Moslem festival of the sacrifice of the lamb was also held in the midst of the general rejoicing. It was, to be sure, directed by the Soninké marabouts, but most of the Bambara took part in it, imitating the motions of the officiating priests to the best of their ability and often sacrificing a lamb.

And Raffenel remarks: "Kaffirs though they are, the Bambara nevertheless show respect for the marabouts. Thus, for the festival of Baïram, the Sarakole (1) marabouts, otherwise known

1. Who call themselves Soninké but whom the Bambara call Marka.

771 797 as sila, also gather at Keghé (2) and address prayers to heaven for the preservation of the king's life and the glory of his reign. Custom requires the king to make rich presents to the sila on this occasion."

[336] This dualism, which appears strange and which has sometimes been interpreted as a result of Islamic influence during an earlier period of Moslem supremacy, is, on the contrary and without any doubt whatever, an essential characteristic of the native milieu. In this milieu, in theory, all religions can flourish without hindrance and even with the benevolent assent of the faithful believers of the various sects, if one may so describe the adepts in these innumerable nyana. It is certain that all religions, a priori and by their very nature, enjoy particular esteem among the Blacks.

[609] In the mind of the native, a foreigner is particularly dangerous because he is assumed to possess mysterious magic powers. Many Sudanese legends bear witness to the Black's belief that encounters with foreigners are accompanied by combats whose outcome depends entirely on magic. As a result of this state of mind, as soon as it is apparent that the stranger's cult brings no calamities in its wake, not only is the cult tolerated, but some of the natives even adopt it, at first as a kind of addition to their own cults and then gradually they become converts.

Islam has also profited from this state of mind. With the external and public manifestations of his cult the Moslem easily impresses the Bambara who, as we have seen, are constantly obsessed with the supernatural. How could they fail to be struck by this divinity called Allah, who is endlessly proclaimed all day long, and by religious observances which are displayed before the public: ablutions, prayers pronounced aloud in as strange language, rosaries, mosques which are often monumental, great and impressive ceremonies?

Further, the fact that Islam is supported by the written word of its books gives it an element of certainty that is lacking in the native cults.

2. Then the royal residence of the Massa-si chiefs.

771 Finally, there is no doubt that a learned Moslem, who 787 is well-dressed, who does not get drunk (1) and who behaves with dignity (1) [see footnote above] greatly impresses the pagans; his mere example creates a favorable atmosphere for Islam.

Therefore some of the natives, trying to imitate outward appearances, find themselves drawn toward Islam, whose rites they practice without even having any desire to be converted. The mere fact of dressing in white, wearing a white cap, going about [337] in sandals, conspicuously telling one's beads, salaaming while muttering incomprehensible words or continually repeating "Allah Akoubar," and participating in important ceremonies, suffices to give an individual an elegant air without in the least interfering with pagan traditions.

The Islamism noted by Mungo Park in the Bambara army and among the Kouloubali and other dignitaries, is an example of this simple formalism. On the other hand, the Bambara, without [789] exception, are eternally on the lookout for magic formulas: talismans, amulets, remedies and procedures of all kinds. And Islam provides a whole arsenal of magic which is very popular with the Blacks.

In addition to all these attractions, Islam seems to the Bambara to have institutions which are not basically opposed to their own. It tolerates polygamy, divorce, repudiation and slavery. As practiced over a long period by the natives, who have skilfully Sudanized it, it is adapted without difficulty to all sorts of situations. The blacksmith, that master of accultism, scarcely has to change at all when he becomes a marabout; he merely acquires some new manners which enable him to preside at birth, circumcision, marriage, death or other social or family ceremonies in the name of Islam. However, this is an Islam so close to paganism that it differs only in name. Allah, under the name of Ngalla, has taken his place in the Bambara pantheon alongside the other nyana, and the only distinction is that he has his own "manner."

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1. At least in public.

771 797 [567] Incidentally, this "manner" possesses, under some circumstances, advantages which encourage adhesion to Islam. Slaves belonging to true Moslem believers do well to give clear evidence of their new faith if they wish to obtain their freedom. Ngolo made use of this means according to the chronicle of Ségou.

Women and, in general, the "weak people" often claim conversion -- only rarely deep or sincere -- in order to escape from the arbitrary and rigorous nature of the custom governing them.

2. The agents of Islam

797 As regards the people with whom we are here concerned, it can be said that the center, which directly or indirectly has [338] had the greatest influence in spreading Islam, is the city of Dia (1).

1. A city on the left bank of the Niger, in the present-day province of Macina..

Dia is certainly the oldest metropolis of Islam in western Sudan, but this was an accommodating kind of Islam, which compromised easily with native customs and gave a large role to magic.

"The characteristic of the marabouts of Dia is their scarcely disguised tendency to rely on Islamic magic. The city has always been considered the great center for the production of amulets in the valley of the Middle Niger" (Marty, *Études sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan* [Studies on Islam and the tribes of the Sudan] Vol. 4).

These marabouts belong to very diverse races, but those of the Marka are dominant and with them should be considered their confreres, the Bozo, on whose training the Marka have always exerted a preponderant influence. The Somono marabouts usually come from one or the other of these two races.

All of them are linked in one way or another with high priests from Moorish or Peul Islam and, through them or their emissaries, are allied with one or another of the brotherhoods.

177 basis of judicial decisions, and the Chambers also give advice on the
444 program of agricultural improvement undertaken by the administration
and the welfare societies.

In Senegal, there are Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry at Dakar, Saint-Louis, Thiès, Kaolack, and Ziguinchor; in the Sudan, at Bamako; in Guinea and the Ivory Coast, at Conakry and Abidjan.

e. Work Regulation. Unions

464 Sparsely populated, West Africa lacks manpower. A decree
of October 22, 1925, and an order of the Governor General of March 29, 1926, set the conditions by which workers could be recruited and work contracts established: salary, bonus, food, lodgings, medical care ... Individual or collective disputes between employers and employees are taken before arbitration boards presided over by a French employer and a native assistant judge.

An act of April 2, 1932, regulates the work of women and
464 children. One of March 11, 1937, organizes the trade unions, and
467 a decree of March 20, 1937, the native professional associations.
Others regulate collective agreements applying to work. The National Assembly has voted the Overseas Work Code which is beginning to be applied. African unions have developed a great deal in the course of these last years; there are six African unions in the Sudan. The complexity of labor problems has led to the creation at Dakar of an office to inspect manpower problems, this office being attached to the General Bureau of Political, Administrative, and Social Affairs.

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CHAPTER 7

CULTURAL ASPECTS

I. Religion

771 One can never insist too much on the importance of religion. It governs the entire social, political, artistic, and even economic life of the country. No institution can be understood without knowing

771 the religious system which animates and explains it. The Bambara is an essentially religious being; all his acts are dictated by ritual duties or taboos, and he finds his true liberty only within the rules transmitted to him by tradition. To destroy his religion amounts to destroying his whole social structure as well as his soul. Inversely, every transformation of techniques will have grave repercussions, not only on the material life of the individual, but also on his inner life. In fact, the religion is itself part of a whole cosmological and metaphysical system which explains and orders every existing thing. The simplest and poorest object is a reflection of complex concepts which leave nothing to chance or to imagination, and we arrive at the paradox that the technical progress and enrichment introduced by the European civilization impoverish the over-all metaphysical representation, while the social evolution ends in detaching the Bambara from his traditional religion and makes of him a rootless being who will be the prey of badly understood ideologies, foreign to his nature and to his genius.

114 771 L. Tauxier (1), pursuing the studies of Father Henry and C. Monteil, has attempted a comprehensive description of Bambara beliefs. But in his exposition Bambara religion appears to be composed of disparate elements with no links between them. This impression is due in large part to the esoteric character of this religion, which certainly contains exoteric elements accessible to all, but whose fundamental principles remain known only to the elders and to the initiated who are reluctant to confide in strangers. The study of Bambara religion has been entirely renewed in these last few years by Mme. Dieterlen (2), who has known how to go beyond the superficial knowledge we had had of this people. She has introduced us to an admirably cohesive metaphysical system and ritual organization [81] In fact, "the Bambara metaphysic and religion offer a structured whole

1. L. Tauxier, La religion bambara [Bambara Religion].

2. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

144 771 which encompasses all social, technical and economic activities" (1) of this people. The myths are "a sum of knowledge, wisdom, and not a series of fixed etiological recitations. One may say that they constitute a metaphysic including the knowledge of created things, as well as the principles of their state of being and of their action." (2)

171 771 Thorough investigation of other Sudanese peoples has revealed that the Bambara religion is part of a pan-Sudanese system in which differences lie in the modes of expression and not in the essence of the thought.

A. Cosmogony

772 The Bambara conceive the world as a mass of active forces which man can influence. Thanks to certain techniques, the pivotal one being the blood sacrifice, man may amass or liberate these forces, may direct and orient them; in short, man may have a hand in the movement of the world and may aid it in its consciousness and accomplishment. This central role of man is explained to us by the order of creation itself, which governs all the rites to which man is subject. The Bambara conceive the world as having issued from an 773 original void which was endowed with movement (3): the gla. This void emitted a voice which created its double, and from the couple came a humid substance, zo sumale (cold rust), which formed hard shining bodies. After a series of movements and transformations, there was an explosion between the two gla, which caused the ejection of a hard and powerful matter that vibrated as it fell. Out of this vibration came signs which settled on all the things as yet uncreated to designate them. Then, man's consciousness detached itself from the gla and settled on things to awaken their consciousness in naming them. In the

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1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion], P.U.F., 1951.

2. Id., ibid.

3. Passim, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

576 that she may speak to him freely. When the day of union comes, the
593 wife herself prepares her husband's food; then she lies on the left side
833 (the feminine side) and her husband on the right side, and she cannot
[842] be impregnated except by a union twice repeated.

771 These corporal techniques[1] are dictated and ordered by the religious imperatives which pervade the life of the Bambara from before his birth until after his death.

761 What we have said of the Bambara's religion and of his conception of the world enables us to understand that there cannot be for him a complete break between life and death: birth is a reincarnation; death is not destruction. This is why a man's life does not present one substantial unity but is divided into a certain number of distinct periods, each of which is inaugurated by a rite of transition that marks the death of an anterior state and the rebirth to a new life.

a. Before Birth

843 From the first month after his conception, the infant consti-
761 tutes a person who receives a series of spiritual forces emanating
858 from his father's side of the family and especially from the recently deceased ancestor whose name he will receive. At the same time, he inherits all of the paternal taboos, which the mother must respect during her pregnancy. It is only after his birth, at the time he receives his name, that the infant receives the spiritual forces coming from his mother's side. These forces are transmitted through the medium of the priest and the ancestors of the priest.

761 From then on, the infant is required to observe all the taboos
858 of the beings who have had a part in the composition of his personality; he thus finds himself tightly bound to the society in which he will live.

b. Birth Rites

852 At birth the baby is washed with millet beer (1) (to purify him)

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1. For all these rites, see G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

[1] [i.e., sexual reproduction and childrearing, see pp. 117-119. -Analyst]

326 as well as of silver, on a wooden core. The thrones of the ancient [531] Bambara chiefs were covered in this manner. Today the golden ornaments are no longer reserved exclusively for the wives of kings. [301] Bracelets, pendants, and necklaces are produced in large quantities in a filigree work in which the Black excels.

B. Ceramics

323 The land is very rich in pottery, but Bambara men do not model clay, pottery being a woman's art. Inversely, the women do not work on statuary.

C. Painting

531 386 The Bambara paint murals on the sanctuary walls with ocher and a millet paste. The priests make these drawings periodically. The walls of the young people's huts are also decorated with symbolic motifs: calabash spoons, festoons, ladders with 22 bars, drawings of hands, lines of chevrons. The young girls come to paint these, [237] with clay from the river or with a mixture of clay and cow dung. All these geometric drawings are signs representing not only the cosmogony, but a subtle translation of all the movements of the executing artist's soul. They are a veritable form of writing.

D. Music

533 ●771 Music is a privileged art (1) because it is bound to instruments, that is to say, to materials, to the human body by the voice and the dance, to numbers by the rhythm, to medicine, to divination, and to religion.

534 771 [106] In a report to the French Institute of Anthropology on February 18, 1948, Mme. G. Dieterlen described the structure and symbolism of the two Bambara musical instruments, the Sema guitar and the royal drum.

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1. Griaule, Passim, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the African Arts], Présence africaine.

534 "The form of Bambara musical instruments is governed by a
771 symbolism which enters into the metaphysical and religious system
of this population."

a. The chief instrument is the drum, the tabale, reserved to kings and chiefs. The mythical prototype of this instrument was made of copper, a primordial metal whose vibration is likened to that of light, of sound, of water, and of speech in this population.

The instrument today is composed of two parts: a square wooden frame covered with goat's skin, which forms the body of the drum, and a detachable apron of engraved wood, in the form of a half-moon on one of its faces, which is attached to one of the drum's sides. This apron is covered with plaques of engraved and adorned wood, and, on the periphery of the rounded face, with a strap of leather trimmed with copper rings. This apron represents an ear which is at the same time that of the spirit of the air, that of the masters of sound, and that of the king. The copper rings are replicas of those worn in the ears by everybody; their role is to transmit sounds and rhythms to the eardrum.

The wooden drumstick used to beat the instrument is unusually long and anthropomorphous in form. It has a bell at one end. It represents Koumabana, the first of the eight ancestors in the Bambara pantheon who received "the Word" ...

b. The anthropomorphism of the harp [guitar?], ngoni, is very plain in the minds of its users.

The instrument's rectangular frame represents the mask of Koumabana, the ancestor who received the Word; the two side pieces are his eyes; the sound hole, his nose and his respiration; the tailpiece, his mouth and his teeth; the strings, eight in number, his words. It is also the image of his tomb, and the two rods that cross it represent the second and third ancestors who accompanied him in death. The frame also represents the face of the seer and his tomb, the two rods being the two millet stalks put in the ground with the cadaver. At the end of the handle, copper bells have the same role, technical and religious at the same time, as those attached to the apron on the drum described above.

534 Each sound given by each of the eight strings is a prayer.
787 The seer plucks the strings separately, following their rank and ac-
cording to the importance of the questioner and of the questions he

771 181 [101] If the Bambara have fought to safeguard their independence, they have done so primarily to preserve their faith and keep their fetishes. They have shown such great attachment for these, that their conquerors have described them as rebels and applied to them the epithet Bamba, synonym of Kafri. These religious struggles in themselves allow us to state as an indisputable fact that before the arrival of the Moslems the Bambara were animistic and sacrificed to genii. /69/

776 811 Did they have an exact and precise idea of their genii as they do now? Apparently yes, for they always reasoned using themselves as a basis of comparison so that in their minds the invisible, impalpable genii to whom they sacrificed had a striking resemblance to man. It is not a man, and yet it is one, they say unable to define their concept or idea, ma si fa do (1).

1. Ma; "man"; si fa' "certain kind"; do; "it is."

776 782 [824] The Moslem word djin translates this idea precisely, and the Bambara use it in everyday language; but when the day of the sacrifice comes, they become unaware of it and there remains only one word -- ma, meaning "man." When they redden with blood the bark of the baobab (Adansonia digitata), the tamarind tree, the false cedar (family of the cedrelaceae), etc., to obtain the good graces and protection of the genie who dwells there, they always confer on it the title ma ("man"), and never that of djine. "Ma n'zira ba, ma n'tomi ba, ma djala ba; O great baobab man, O great tamarind tree man, O great false-cedar man!" begins the formula used by the sacrificer in offering victims and millet flour to the genie (2). They also have

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2. In /J. Henry/, "Culte des esprits chez les Bambara /Spirit Worship among the Bambara/," Anthropos, Vol. III, No. 4 (1908), p. 1 /p. 702/, note 1, there is an error in translation.

771 [77] The better one knows the Bambara, the more one studies their beliefs in the light of their practices, considering them from their own way of thinking, seeing, feeling, and envisaging things, the more one is convinced that they owe none of their concepts to the Moslems. They have only taken from their conquerors certain words /82/ from the Koran, and these they have adopted to express themselves. They are words which corresponded to their ideas and which, being foreign to their language, remained terms that conceal.

772 177 It is a curious and surprising fact that certain Moslem truths suited to make an impression on their minds, such as hell, paradise, the judgment of the soul followed by reward or punishment, the end of the world, etc., have always left them cold and indifferent. Had they, perhaps, lost this concept by the time of the Moslems' arrival so that all this was new to him?

772 What does hell matter to the Bambara! Should they fear this consuming fire compared to which ours would be only the remains from a seventh washing (1)? To begin with, they believe in the reincarnation of souls, and this belief protects them from all these tortures, and if some Negroes think of hell, they think of it without trembling. To deserve it, one must insult the gnéna or djiné, or the gnâ (boli, sétané), or be a monster to the point of denying all the laws of justice and hospitality. The occasions for sacrificing to the gnéna and to the gnâ are too frequent always to go unnoticed, their fears of the fetishes are too numerous for anyone continuously to refuse the hen and the kola nut to the invisible tyrants. And is there any monster here below whose heart is not at one time or another moved, touched, or seized with compassion for the weak? Where is the rough, rude being who is ashamed to offer a glass of water to the passing traveler or, even

(1) Definition of hell: A douga ko wolonoula, min bi to a wolonoula ko, an tassouma flé nin yé, literally: "it to extinguish washing seventh that which is left to it seventh (washing) after our fire, look, that is it."

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> whole circle in the dry season. For example, the master of a *Nama* will give an account, and the storyteller will take up the refrain, which always ends: "I have told you truly, the *Nama* can refrain from evil, but it is capable only of evil (*a ka fari, a ka djougou ko djougou*). It is evil, very evil!"

776 theless refrain from an evil act and thus indirectly grant a blessing to human beings. The words of the formula in the sacrifices to the *gnéna* and the *gnâ* seem identical, and yet, when one has understood the inmost feelings of the Bambara soul, one sees all the difference between them. To one as to the other the Negroes say: "*Ka dji d'amma* (give us water), *ka mousoou d'amma* (give us wives), *ka nafolo d'amma* (give us wealth), etc." But while in speaking to the first they actually ask for water, wives, etc., they make an indirect request to the second, so that their words mean: "Do nothing to keep us from having wives," "do nothing to keep us from having water," etc. In expressing himself this way he uses all his cunning, and all his deceit comes to the surface and is revealed. Yes, he really deserves the epithet that neighboring tribes have given him and of which he is proud; it is *misi bo*, "cow dung," -- dry on the outside but limp and soft inside, so that it is squashed when it is stepped on. His inner feeling when he addresses the *boli* is this: "O Spirits, evil genii, you are capable only of evil; may your hatred not attack me or those who are dear to me, may it all be for my enemies and those that can harm me!" /130/

2. The Legend of the *Boli*

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This is a very curious legend, for it makes the *boli* come from Mecca, the holy city! To understand it better, let us remember in passing that Islam has only made the Bambara more attached to their idols. They have died in order to keep them; they answered the

771 798 778 "believe or die" of the Moslems by taking up their spears, and when they were conquered, reduced to servitude, and unable to continue their worship openly, they remained true to the faith they received from their ancestors. Severed heads became the prey of vultures, and spilled blood flowed, but those that survived only became hardened. The Moslem conquerors, tired of striking and in need of slaves and manpower, had to admit their defeat in the field of religion.

Some fell away from the idols (slaves, and some rich people seeking to safeguard their lives and possessions), but their apostasy was strictly external and a lie, for they shouted the formula but in secret devoted themselves to their bloody rites, imbuing their children with their own faith and not that of their masters. A lie has never [517] been difficult for the Bambara; to know how to lie is for them more than half a virtue. Thus, when the right to freedom was proclaimed [567] in 1907, I was not at all surprised to see that out of nearly 5,000 slaves who spontaneously set themselves free, the majority returned to their homes or to the land of their fathers, forgot the formula, and declared themselves to be fetishists. They did not get initiated then since they already had been (1).

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1. Those who took back their own freedom in 1907 were all slaves of the Moslems. The "Peulls" /Fulani/, a shepherd people, saw almost all their slaves escape. The Bambara in slavery kept their traditions as well as they could; in the Negro village of Biskra I found sons of the Bambara who did not know their own language and were fanatical Moslems, yet kept their tattoos, sacrificed to the family boli handed down by their fathers, danced the dance of the korodouga, and used the Bambara formulas and songs although they no longer understood them.

798 771 778 Since all the Bambara could not be made to submit to shameful servitude, the Moslems were satisfied to impose a tax, to forbid public worship of the idols, and, with sheathed sword, sought to make converts by persuasion. Their caravans were quick to cover the country, preaching Islam in all places both favorable and unfavorable, but the mass of the people could not be approached. In order to give /131/ their beliefs a rational basis, they always did everything in the name of "Alla, " "Stamboul" (the Sultan of Constantinople), and "Makka (Mecca), and said to the conqueror: "All true belief comes from Mecca (Makka); it is the center of all religious life, so why do you fight so hard against our boli? They all come from Mecca. God has given you the formula: 'there is no Divinity other than God and Mohammed is His prophet'; for you He prescribes ablutions, Friday rest, etc.. Keep your formula and shout it! To us Bambara He has given the boli and bloody sacrifices, so why do you want to take from us our treasures that are hungry for blood?" 773 776 794 I do not doubt that we owe our "legend" to the discussions which arose between the m'rabet (the marabout, or Moslem priest) and the gnâtigi, or bolitigi. Here it is as I so often heard it told by bold old men:

A group of youths who were devoting themselves to trade and following lady luck (ou toumbe kolo (1) gnini, "they were seeking cowrie shells"), one day took the road to the east. Over mountains and valleys the little band walked and walked for a long time, and then finally they reached the great, blue, salty water, the ocean, on the shores of which lies the holy city, Mecca (Makka) (2).

[436] 1. Kolo, "cowrie shells" (singular, koké), small shells used as money.

[823] 2. Since the Moslems said that Mecca was located on the seacoast, and since the Bambara did not know Arabia, they believed it to be in this direction. In their minds the ocean does not have to be crossed to get there. Actually, this is the least of their worries.

173 the slow evolution of consciousness (concept of pain), judgment (concept of responsibility and guilt), will (concept of the creative effort and work), all of which develop in man with the advent of suffering [761] and death. Death is felt to be an accident in the working out of the universal order, an accident compensated for in part by the conservation of spiritual principles and their reincarnation in accordance with the fundamental belief in the eternal resurrection of all things. The myth describes the first ritual, the rejuvenation, which ceases with the advent of death but is replaced by blood sacrifice which today is still the central practice of the rites (1).

1. Wherever possible the writer has avoided discussion of the details of myths so as not to distract the reader from the general line of the Bambara world view. But the scholar, in attempting to better understand the collective psychological processes of this people, may profitably study the numerous variant themes found among them.

The myths described below are the framework of the present-day Bambara religion and of the general cults to Pemba and Faro maintained by the people.

Preliminaries of Creation

1. The *glã* *glã* *zo*

172 The Bambara creation myths imply a philosophy of being and of the universe developed from the void, from nothing, *fu* (2).

[802] 2. This concept is expressed by a sign with the same name which can also be translated by "nothingness" or "zero" and is a part of the Bambara number system. See Fig. 1, No. 11. For a discussion of this sign denoting the continuity and proliferation of creation, see p. 102.

772 This knowledge, derived from the Kéita of Mandé, is called glã glã zo and describes the timeless and primordial state that preceded the stages of creation. The word glã which indicates the original void, connotes at the same time the ideas of movement, awakening, reawakening, and resurrection; glã is the principle of the inner universal movement of the cosmos and all that composes it. On the other hand, the term implies the idea that creation is continuous /3/ from the moment of its beginning and perpetually maintained in all things as well as in the universe taken as a whole (1).

[197] 1. The word glã belongs to the ancient language. The Bambara term closest to it in meaning is kununi, which means "reawakening, resurrection." Glã is the principle of the eternal resurrection of all things.

Glã, "full of its own emptiness and its emptiness full of itself," extended its power everywhere. It sounded "a voice of emptiness" which brought into being its double, dya; glã became two, thus indicating the primordial character of duality, the existential principle (2). The

2. It is said: glã ye lankolo nye, lankolo nye glã ye, glã ye a yere ke lankolo fla ye, lankolo fla ye a yere ke glã ye; "glã is the emptiness, emptiness is glã, glã made itself into two emptinesses, two emptinesses made themselves into glã itself."

two gave forth a damp substance, zo zumale, "cold rust," which came out as invisible liquid vapor and formed hard shiny substances (3).

3. glã ye koloya a la ka kr zo ye, boli tumbi kę šiši ye bali ye, ka kę dyi sumale ye, ka kę zo yele gele ye; "glã made a substance which was rust come out of itself; this emission was invisible smoke which then became cold water, the latter becoming a hard and shiny rust." The informant translated the word zo as "rust."

And while comparing this matter to the product of oxidation in a metal, once it is released, he describes it as a crystal.

When all was filled with these frozen substances, *glã* emitted a power, *zo ñami*, which, rising and descending within itself, produced an inner breath called *fyẽ tasuma*, "fire of wind." The two *glã* crossed this vast content and the fire melted the substances (1). At the time of this first fusion "the vast *glã* gave a place to all things secretly and invisibly" (2).

1. "The two *glã* arose and melted away the voice of *glã*; creation spoke with the voice of *glã*"; (*glã flã wululila ke, glã kã yeke, dali ye glã kã fo*).

2. *kono glã ye sikiyoro di few be ma, gundo ni blika la*. The word "thing," a literal translation of *fẽ*, is used here in its most general sense.

The two *glã* then immobilized themselves, "gathering their energy into themselves," and, once more, everything became fixed and frozen. Then, a second time, they melted the substances, as though destroying the preliminary form in order to make another. These movements, called *glã glã*, bear witness to the very essence of *glã* which is the eternal resurrection of all things, and the repetition of the word expresses duality, the basis of creation. At the time of these two successive fusions, the *glã* fixed "four points," one at the moment of the first melting and the other three in the course of the second, all of which were placed in a state of "immobile action" (3).

3. The informant compares this stage of creation to a hand holding a pencil, the tip of which rests on a sheet of paper. The hand is poised as if to write, but is immobilized. The four points anticipate the cardinal points, beginning with the east (see p. 223).

772 Then glã released within itself a shuttling motion /4/, the repercussions of which gave the elements of the potential universe a soul. This movement also had the effect of situating the elements and of keeping them in place through the force of attraction (mana): "glã has stirred up the elements, they have taken their places, and heat has kept them in place" (1).

> 1. glã ye few yereyere, u nye, u sikiyoro mine, funteni yu mana. The informant compares this horizontal movement to one which might be applied to a surface pitted with cup-like depressions; the objects of creation, at first strewn about in disorder, would, under the effect of this shuttling movement, each place itself in a hole. Mana is translated as "attraction, " or "agglutination, " when it is used as a noun. It can also mean "to shed" and may designate the product of the shedding the exuvia; mana is thus a synonym of folo.

At the same time, the contact established between the two glã produced a kind of explosion out of which was ejected "a hard and powerful substance" which vibrated as it descended. Out of this vibration came, one by one, the signs which, attracted by the objects (as yet uncreated but about to be created) to which they gave name, placed themselves on the objects. Thus, each thing acquired its sign and its word, and "obeying the movement of glã, " each began to vibrate feebly within itself and in its assigned place.

When all things were thus assigned their places and potentially designated, another element detached itself from glã and placed itself on the objects in order to take cognizance of them: this was "man's foot" (or "the grain of the foot"), a symbol of human consciousness. As this element gained knowledge, it communicated this knowledge to all things which then became conscious of themselves. Thus, all things were designated and named silently before they came into existence, and were called into being by their names and their signs. But they did not know themselves as such except in man's consciousness, the "grain" or principle of the universe.

772 Then all things assembled and began to rumble in order to complete the creation of the universe. The glã remained within themselves and delegated to zo the responsibility of liberating the designated and animated objects which they contained and of which they had created the essence. Zo took possession of them and joined their elements into a huge ball, kuru, called yo yebali, "invisible yo": zo gave yo the principle of the seed and endowed it with attraction and power (1).

1. zo ye kise masa di yo ma, ka samani masa bla la, ka mineni masa bla a la.

Yo was the spirit, more exactly "the thought and action," that was to work out the creation, using the "signed objects" determined by glã.

772 532 /5/ The glã glã zo is represented by three engravings on wood. The first, glã kele, represents the two glã in the shape of two spirals in opposite directions and with connected points of origin; below this is engraved "the object with four arms" from which issued the signs (2). These signs, 226 in number, are barely sketched out, showing that "the creation of glã takes place in the invisible, the unknown, the unrealized." The second, glã dya, is composed of 226 horizontal or vertical lines, the counterparts or "witnesses" of words. The third, glã zo, is an oval divided into seven compartments (a square in the middle and two times three lateral sections) in which the symbolic representations are clearly engraved. In the middle of the central square, there is an oval containing six signs which represent simultaneously "the egg of the world and yo, the creating voice."

[824] 2. Today this object is represented by a twig of Acacia albida, called "the wood that separates the signs," ti kla dyiri. Its bark is removed in such a way as to outline the multiplication sign enclosed in an oval representing the world.

772 2. The yo

The creation of the perceptible universe beginning with yo is conceived of as a progression in "thinking," tasi (3). This progression, called *oryo* or *oyo*, is broken down into three stages: *yo*, the inner word, invisible spirit and inaudible voice, potentially containing all creation: *o* the transition from the inaudible to the audible; [801] *yereyereli*, the creative vibration (4). The progression is represented by seven signs, 7 being the symbolic number of man (homo) "seed of the world." Indeed, this numeral is the sum of 3 (male symbol) and 4 (female symbol). The couple they form is itself the symbol of duality, the fundamental law of creation, since each human being is both male and female in body and spirit (5).

•772 3. From *ta* (to do, in the ancient language) and *si* (to act). The Bambara freely translate *tasi* as "spirit of nothing" and give this stage, originating in nothingness and preceding creation, the name of *tasi dyẽ*, "world of the spirit of nothing."

4. The name *oyo*, given to this system, is a composite of *o* and *yo*, and when pronounced reverses the chronological order. This anomaly is recognized by the Bambara who explain it by the fact that *yo*, designating an inaudible voice, cannot be pronounced before *o* which designates a perceptible noise. Thus, in reversing the chronological order, *yo* "remains in the secret of o" which is in accord with its nature.

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5. The number 3 represents the penis and two testicles of the male body; the number 4 the four labia of the female body. On the other hand, man and woman are each endowed with two twin souls of different sexes; the soul of sex, opposite to that of its bearer, has its seat in the foreskin or the clitoris until the operation of circumcision or excision is performed. For further discussion of the duality of man and his

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person, see G. Dieterlen, *La Personne chez les Bambara* /The individual among the Bambara/ and infra, Ch. 3, *The Person.*

772 It is said that *yo,* the inner secret voice, "is born of itself, is known by itself, and comes out from itself /6/, out of the nothing which is itself" (1). Out of *yo* there will come only things that are themselves and that will be nothing other than *yo.* Each thing, being *yo,* proceeds like *yo,* only from itself. Hence, man is nothing other than himself, since he is a creation of *yo* and since *yo*'s creations are by itself. Thus, there is nothing in the world besides oneself, since the person is *yo,* and *yo* is entirely contained in the person. As a result, each being is directly descended from *yo* with no intermediary; it is *yo* and exists only because it wills it. That is to say, man, the image of *yo,* alone has the will, alone has the capacity to bring forth action or creation, since these can be nothing but himself. "Who then," say the initiates, " can know himself, make himself known and manifest himself, other than through himself? Who then can manifest anything but himself?"

But *yo,* being at the origin of the inaudible and invisible things that are itself, is also in the unknown, hence in nothingness. And consequently, the same is true of man who is nothingness and can act only on the nothingness of himself.

Thus, *yo,* insofar as it was mind, was free in its ability to decide and to use its creative will. Its work, in nothingness, consisted in shedding, "for it was the continuous shedding of the world." When it
772 manifested itself by rotating on itself, it went five times to the four
801 "angles of its thought," *seleke miri,* once to the "sky of its thought," *sã miri,* once to the "earth of its thought," *dugukolo miri,* thus communicating its power to them (2). The realization of this universe,

1. *yo na na a yere la, bwora a yere la, dona a yere la, a be fu la min ya yere ye.*

2. On the meaning of the number 5, see p. 25. *Yo* has endowed the "angles," corresponding to the "cardinal angles" in the completed universe, with its greatest

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strength for there the Bambara place the poles of attraction which, in the universe, uphold all bodies. It is said: "All bodies accept the force of attraction of the four angles, " *fari be bi sõ seleke nuni mana barika la*.

which determined "the space of *yo* in its own thought, " is expressed by the number 22: "*yo*, darkness of creation, in the depth of the secret space of night, master of the foundation of the 22 rotations, great bearer of vibration, great builder of the marrow of bones (1).

These 22 spirals stirred up all that *yo* contained in spirit; *nugu*, "entrails, intestines, " which carried all things and man within itself; *yalã*, " seed of the air, " which placed the voids in all /7/ parts of space"; *fayã*, "seed of the wind"; *sani*, "seed of water"; *yerẽ*, "seed of fire"; *yelẽgu*, "seed of earthly matter" (2). The rotations of *yo* put them in order and kept them under the force of attraction (*mana*). In other words, carried away by this whirlwind, both magnetic and creative, the elements became organized, one in relation to the other; in this way the 22 terms of the universe, as thought out by *yo*, were determined; these terms are also the 22 periods of its thought:

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1. *yo dali dyibi, šu kene gundo tyema, munumunu mu tani fla siki ba, yere done ba, kolow nye kono dlaba*, *kono* being the ancient term for marrow.

This prayer is recited in honor of *yo* when a woman's pregnancy is first noticed; it is also recited at eclipses of the sun.

2. *fayã, sani, yerẽ* (in ancient language), and *yelẽgu* were at the origin of the four elements, air, water, fire and earth, all of which did not yet exist but were to appear later.

The seven elements composing *yo* are represented by signs, reproduced in Figure 1 (1 to 7).

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1. origin of the west, klebi dyu
2. origin of the east, koro dyu
3. origin of the north, baba dyu
4. origin of the south, bani dyu
5. the sky from above, sã kaba

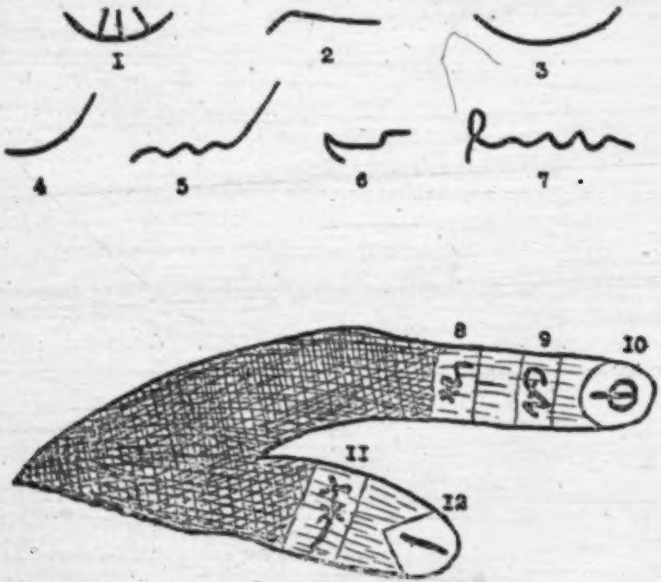

Fig. 1.—Bambara signs. From 1 to 7, signs of yo. From 8 to 12, signs of the king's thumb and index finger, representing the actual world and the future world (drawings by an informant).

6. secret space, tyema gundo
7. earth, dugu
8. center of the earth, kotye dugu
9. eye of the earth, dugu nye
10. mouth of the earth, dugu da (1)

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1. The earth breathes through orifices called "mouths."

11. northwest, seleke se /8/ (literally: foot of the angle)

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12. southwest, seleke bolo (literally: hand of the angle)
13. northeast, seleke (angle)
14. southeast, seleke (angle)
15. sun, kle
16. moon, kalo
17. male star, dolo ke
18. female star, dolo muso
19. mouth or mother of the star, dolo da or dolo ba
20. grain of rain, sã kise
21. secret rain, sã gundo
22. damp rain, sã suma (1).

1. It is said of these times: "yo says only yo above, one should imitate this; the world has moved to the west, the east, the north, the south, " yo bi yo fo sana, ladeke ka kãka kę o la, giri kera wa la, ni flaye la, ni kaye la, ni noro la. The terms giri, wa, flaye, kaye, noro belong to the ancient language.

While whirling from the "angles" to the cardinal sides, yo thought out four worlds (2):

2. The four worlds are represented by a drawing made up of four concentric quadrangular figures, observed by the informant in the village of Kéré in Mandé. The Bambara conceive of space as a square with cardinal angles and sides (see p. 55 , Fig. 3).

The first, dyẽ mana, "the shedding of the world, " belongs to the time when yo "circulated within himself" in nothingness, and of which it is said: "yo was the shedding of the world; he made himself shed"(3).

3. yo tunye dyẽ mana ye, o tumbi mana a yere la.

The following world, dyẽ gale, "the first world, " is the universe about to be realized, the actual world, and it is said that its symbol

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is 3: "The foundation of the first world was given to all things by yo, these things were constructed at 3." (1) In order to realize the world,

> 1. dyẽ gale sikityoko dira fama yo fę few ma, o few ye dlali ke saba la.

yo had to use intermediaries which he created as such, but which were responsible for imperfection since the harmony of all things would have required that creation be directly willed and engendered by yo himself. The first constructed universe is thus 3: yo is 1, the intermediary is 2, the world itself is 3. As a result the whole creation is not equal to yo, for its perfection would have expressed itself by 2, that is to say by yo and the world with no intermediary (2).

> 2. This idea would seem to contradict the principle of yo's identity with all creation. It should be taken to mean that the total work of creation also includes imperfection. The cause of this imperfection is precisely the presence of intermediaries created, so to speak, with this purpose in mind.

On the other hand, it is said that the actualized universe was constructed and perceived at 3, known at 4. When yo decided to create, in period one, nothing could know it, since it alone moved in the nothingness in which it placed its energies. When these energies united, they formed a new unity which, added to yo, made 2, that is to say the period two which was as yet unknown. These energies grew slowly heavier while "resisting in attraction," that is, ordering themselves. This was /9/ period three and things became perceptible. But not until period four did they become clearly known, that is, man became conscious of them. As a result, masculinity (symbol 3) in nature is considered the original stimulus in determining fertility. The fulfillment of fertility and the complete knowledge of it can only be accomplished through femininity (symbol 4).

But yo, being perfect, wanted perfection, and in attempting to achieve it, wished to reach 5. For this purpose, he went beyond universe 3 and reached 4. Since numbers were already the symbol of

772 801 things and (so to speak) the things themselves, 4, representing femininity, could not create by itself, for 4 does not exist in 3, symbol of masculinity. And in the universe as thought out by yo, nothing can be engendered without the help of complementaries or twins, whose prototype is the couple: masculinity-femininity.

World 4 is called dyẽ bana, "the refused world," for, in the face of difficulty, yo kept that creation within itself; it remains there as a potential and will return into the world called dyẽ nata, "the world to come," in which, reaching 5, yo will achieve a universe not in 3, like the actual one, but in 2 (yo and the world), without an intermediary. Hence its perfection, for it will be equal to its creator. This universe will be created in the opposite direction of the preceding one in the following order: south, north, east, and west. It will be established by the "great voice of one word" and characterized by the transformation of beings, a new distribution, the absence of error, a close contact with the essence of things, and perfect knowledge. For it is said: "In the world to come, all words will be changed. Solidity was not achieved in this creation, but union will be accomplished in the solidity of one word. Yo's course, yo's work, yo's sleep will penetrate every being. The second world is a new world, the world of one word" (1).

1. Dyẽ nata la, kumaw be bi yelema;
sikityoko ma kle dali ko la fara ñugã
na kę kuma dyotyoko kele nye; yo boli,
yo bara, yo suna, bi dõ ma be la;
dyẽ fla ye dyẽ kura ye, dyẽ kura ye
kuma kele nye.

This text is sometimes recited in the course of talks which follow religious ceremonies, and at times when the movements of creation are discussed. Many details of rituals and games indicate this preoccupation with a second universe. See Fig. 1, p. 22 and Fig. 4, p. 56.

Because yo has only constructed the first universe, men understand only half of its thought, the other half to be realized in the "second world."

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801 After having thought out the universe and rotated upon itself to create the universe, yo "divided and distributed its Word." It placed three times 22 voices /10/ in o, which then entrusted one time 22 voices to yereyereli, out of which the finally conceived universe was to come forth. This deposit in o is none other than the change of the inaudible voice, yo, into an audible voice. When that voice began to sound outside of yo, still invisible and secret, the latter stopped moving and remained motionless within itself: o, in its sound, is the emissary of yo. And in that voice all things necessary to the building of the universe were proposed; all these things also potentially rumbled across the "angles of the world." When this primary movement reached its heighth, the yereyereli, the vibration, issued from it, and when the vibration existed and was shed, o stopped rumbling but was itself the spirit of movement: it is said: "yere came forth from o, o was its foundation" (1).

1. yere bwora o la, o kera siki kele nye a ko.

772 Yo being the immense and inaudible voice, o became the rumbling voice; finally yereyereli, the high-sounding vibration, formed the rays of light in space. The whole of the infinite trembled, shone, and resounded. After the yereyereli had filled space with movement, light, and sound, it ask o for its power and became "pregnant," bearing all it wanted and had to create: "The vibration had the power of attraction, the creator was secretly within it" (2). The present universe issued from the vibration, provoking "astonishment," koni, a term used to designate both the yereyereli and the creative principle it contained (3).

2. Yereyereli tunye mana ma ye, daliba tumbi a kono gundo la.
The Bambara imagined that the light and sound of this vibration were such that they were intolerable to vision and hearing; however, even though man cannot perceive the vibration, it exists nonetheless; "the egg of the world continues its vibration in sound and light."

772 3. On koni, see S. de Canay, Notes sur la théodicée bambara, pp. 188ff.

Creation of the Universe

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773 At the center of yereyereli was the spirit, miri, in the spirit was the doing, wali; in the doing was the coming of all things, nali; and in nali was the division of all things, tali. These four terms also define the four basic elements of creation, respectively air, earth, fire, and water; air and fire being male, earth and water, female. (1)

1. "yereyereli was originally made up of four elements which enabled it to vibrate secretly, " (yereyereli gale gale kono kera ni wale nani ye, o ya to a sera ka yereyereli šu a la).

The miri was also "the egg of the world in which nature was enclosed." It is represented by three ovals, all contained within each other; this figure also expresses the three /11/ rotations made by yereyereli at each of the cardinal points (in the following order: north, south, east, west), each rotation stirring up the four elements (2). The central oval, or so de, "son of the house, " is the primordial grain which placed all things in the nature of the four elements. The intermediary oval, dyẽ wali gale, "the first action of the world, "

[801] 2. See Fig. 2, p. 34 . Creation is thus expressed by the numbers seven and 12, obtained by the addition and multiplication of three (male symbol, and number of rotations) and four (female symbol and number of elements). Seven is the symbol of man (homo) and of the principle of the universe; 12 is the symbol of the multiplication of beings and of the perpetual development of this universe.

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773 represents fertility; it determines man, the principal thing of the universe, who has also received from it the capacity for thought and knowledge. The external oval, dyẽ ko, "gate of the world, " is essentially mobile; rotating upon itself, it dilates or contracts, depending upon the births or deaths of the multiple-formed matter it contains. It is this oval that makes all things in the universe "unable to escape from the sight of the creator" (1).

1. fẽw be dyele ngala ka yeli kono.

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773 The essential part of that which the yereyereli stirred up as it rotated was the spirit. The spirit, inflated by all its potential power, finally began to sound. "The spirit resounded in the midst of facts, " (2) and as it was the strongest element in space, it held itself up alone

2. miri ye manga ti walew tyela.

and arose. Then it burst and from it poured elements which slowly separated, dispersed, and ordered themselves. It is said of this event: "In the old days, all things came out together" (3). These fundamental

3. folo kow bõñuana.

elements, numbering twenty-two, are at the origin of creation which is classified into twenty-two categories.

The Bambara use several methods to order and name these elements. First, according to the fundamental system of creative thought, yo, they divide the elements into three groups of seven, to which a twenty-second is added.

The first seven, dyẽ dyo kã gale, "the first voice of the building of the world, " express yereyereli before knowledge, but containing all things with man, "seed" of nature, in the first place. The seven following elements, dyẽ dyo kã saba "the third voice of the building of the world, " denote the beginning of the knowledge of yereyereli as masculinity and assures all fertility. It is at this moment that the term koni appears, attributed to yereyereli, and expressing awe before creation. The last seven, dye dyo ka nani "the fourth voice of the building of the world, " contains "the complete revelation of the dispositions and situations /12/ of all that was created";

772 *yereyereli* then becomes known as femininity and assures the supremacy
801 of femininity over nature. The twenty-second element sums up these
773 three groups of seven and expresses total knowledge (1).

Another division of the elements determines the categories. The first seven are the *bõnuana* of which it is said: "The seven *bõnuana* came out first" (2). Then came twelve *bangini*, births or *bayeremani* "discoveries," of which it is said: "Twelve discoveries were left in space" (3). After them, there appeared three *ǰiginis*, foundations or *dyoli*, situations, of which it is said: "Three foundations ate up the world" (4). The first seven elements are the "states of the world"; the next twelve, "the foundations of the world"; the last three, "the words of the world's situation" (5).

1. The same progression of numbers as in the creative thought *yo*, characterizes the creation by vibration. Being 1, the vibration passed on to 2. At 2, it conceived invisible "light air" and the powers it contained were grouped together to form a whole. At 3, the powers became gravity, and the visible "heavy air" appeared. At 4, and only at that moment, creation, completely visible, was revealed to the consciousness. For further discussion of the "heavy air," see also S. de Ganay, *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, p. 188.

2. *Bõnuana wolo fla bwora folo*. The word *bõnuana* means literally "come out together."

3. *Bangini tani fla bla ka kęnę da*.

4. *J̌igini saba ye dyẽ dũn*.

5. *dyẽ dyo tyoko*; *dyẽ sigi tyoko*; *dyẽ dyo ka*.

● 772 801 773 The seven bõnuana summarize the general characteristics of beings and things:

1. keleña, unity;
2. makari, pity, mercy;
3. mako, necessity;
4. sinaya, aggression, jealousy;
5. fadena, rivalry;
6. maloya, shame;
7. sia, race, species, stock.

The twelve bangini, which follow, determine the qualities and destinies of the person:

1. ma ye ma ye, literally: a person is a person; gifts, possibilities of each, propositions and dispositions.
2. mako, mutual aid, simplicity, dignity, courtesy, wisdom.
3. sebaya, power, domination.
4. dyuguya, maliciousness, vulgarity, ferocity, difficulties.
5. kunanguya, bad luck, bad destiny, ill nature.
6. sira, road, guide, obedience, discipline.
7. ñafola, wealth, health, fertility.
8. adamadeña, brotherhood, humanity, liberty, kindness.
9. dahirime, food, material possessions.
10. saya, death, illness, infirmities, madness.

/13/ 11. šu, night, light and dark, secret, witchcraft.

12. kle, day, sun; all the boli altars of the Bambara.

The three ǰijini are respectively:

1. kun, the head that thought out the world.
2. ba, the womb that formed it.
3. fo, the word that created it.

772 773 Knowledge, fã, was born of three foundations which finally became detached from the spirit (1). Knowledge opened up, divided, and

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782 1. The following prayer, relating to the fã, is sometimes recited: fango, ma dua, ma bo, fẽ mbina, fẽ nkumba, fẽ ndaba, fẽ semba, wolo tigi ye nye, djiri tigi ye nye, panye bwora na. O bwora mi, o nya nyimi senge do. Ntigi ye yereyere ye, ka bo miri kono, miri dane sandyi.

782

> "Road of knowledge, I am not small,
> I am not big. A thing arrives, a thing with
> a large head, a large mouth, a large foot.
> I am the master of fertility; I am the master
> of trees. Where does it come from? It comes
> from the weariness of my seed. My master is
> the vibration, out of which came the spirit,
> the rain of which fertilizes."

●772 773 contributed to the building of the visible world, especially engendering particles, moño moño, which entered into the composition of the earth, and a radiance, noro, used for the formation of the sky.

At the same time, the spirit let fall upon the earth (still in the process of formation) a heavy object in the form of a globule, kulu, which was later named pemba (1). Pemba, moving as a whirlwind to the four cardinal points (south, west, east, and north), received twelve of the elements issued from the spirit. Then, with the help of the particles that came out of fã, he modeled lumps and mounds which gave shape to the earth.

But in the course of rising, the spirit had thrown upwards that which was later called fãro (2). Faro, who was then no more than vibration,

1. From fẽ, thing and ba, big.

192 2. The Bambara use either faro or fãro, from fa (creation) or fã (knowledge) in the ancient language. This double etymology indicates the closeness in their minds between the concepts of creation and knowledge (see p. 17). The suffix ro expresses the idea of a whole, a totality. Another etymology has been suggested by S. de Ganay, in Notes sur la théodicée bambara, p. 196. "... the words Fané (the name of a family of blacksmiths), Faro, fan (force), fara (stone), and fari (body) all have the same origin. Faro is the secret name of stone." This etymology

192

is interesting in that it accentuates the ties which, in the Sudan, bind the Faro of the Bambara and the Bozo, the Nommo of the Dogon, and the blacksmiths. See M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau* (*passim*).

● 772 helped the spirit with ten of its elements and with the radiance from 773 *fā* to build the sky along an oriented trajectory. Faro first went to the west, then the south, the east, and the north, thus determining the celestial cardinal points.

/14/ The sky is distinct from empty space, *kęnę*, which separates it from the earth and which is the product of the "*yereyereli*'s shedding after it had given birth to the spirit." The sky, composed of seven parts placed one above the other, was completed before the earth which itself is also made up of seven corresponding parts.

773 Although he had received the larger share of the elements disgorged by the spirit, Pemba could not finish his work alone. When the sky was completed, the spirit blessed Faro, precipitated him in the form of water along the trajectory followed by Pemba during his descent. This water fell drop by drop from the seventh part of the sky to the seventh part of the earth into which it streamed to gain knowledge of the earth's foundations. As Faro descended vertically, he left a globule in space which became the spirit of the air, Teliko (1); on earth, he deposited a particle which formed the spirit Soba (2). As he dripped between the mounds which made up the earth, he saw that the latter was not completed, so he filled the empty pockets with water, thus forming the hidden springs of today.

Then life appeared on earth. Faro, impregnated by the vibration which was potentially masculine and feminine, gave birth to twin daughters on a deserted hillock (3). As soon as they appeared, the

1. From *teli*, to go quickly.

2. Literally: *so*, house, *ba*, big.

823 3. Naked hillocks, *walawala*, and clearings are the scene of rituals concerning the twins.

776 782 address the following: "Seventh heaven, you are large, you are long; your west is red; your east is white; your north is great; your south is black; seventh heaven, you are the king of seats among all seats, you are the great generator of the power of all powers, you are the great discoverer of all secrets, you are the source of all /55/ fortunes, you are the place where the common weal may not be destroyed; source of all things, deliver me from sin" (1).

1. Wolo flã kaba, i ka bo, i ka dyã, i kle bi ka ble, i koro ka dye, i baba ka bo, i bani ka fi; wolo flã kaba, siki yoro u la sikiyoro masa, fanga u la fanga ba sindi, gundow be ladyele fara be, nafolo be ladyele boyoro, dyẽ wari dũ bali yoro; ko be boyoro, hake tonye.
This prayer is recited by the head of the family during childbirth, a grave illness, or a death. It was also used during rituals of the enthronement of kings or chiefs.

776 772 Pemba and Faro, the complementary principles, were both born of the spirit, miri, at the beginning of the universe. In considering the psychological aspects of their symbolic roles, one can understand why, despite the antecedence of Pemba's role, from time to time the Bambara say that "Faro is the eldest." For he represents, in the human microcosm, the will and wisdom capable of controlling the propulsion of sexual instinct as symbolized by the prolificness of the balanza as well as the violence and disorder of the emotions as expressed in Mousso Koroni's vertiginous chthonian voyage and her madness. The antithesis of the sexes, realized in the myth by the bodily separation of Pemba and Mousso Koroni, and their disagreements and quarrels which are the origin of all cosmic disorders, are compensated for by harmonious agreement and union, as established by Faro in his androgynous state. Faro is the dual vibration which, from then on, orders the universe; he is reason and moderation opposed to the overwhelming force of the balanza; he is the light of the spirit which triumphs over darkness and primordial gropings.

776 latter animal which is imitated by the vukuri during the children's
825 nocturnal ritual described on page 65.

This new information confirms the observations noted on page 47, footnote 1, concerning the identity of the Bambara and Dogon representations. Moreover, the warableni, like the yurugu (Vulpes pallida) of the Dogon, intervenes in divination, particularly in geomancy. The investigations permit the extension of these representations to Sudanese tribes coming from Mandé (see p. 2), particularly, to the Bozo and the Peul.

Chapter 3

826 All Sudanese peoples originating in Mandé are characterized by the
773 seeds (or fish) contained in their collarbone, these varying from one tribe to another. On the other hand, within a tribe, the theoretical
824 content of the eight seeds, though roughly similar in terminology, differs in arrangement from family to family. Also the positions of the first and last seeds are reversed for men and women. Example: the blacksmiths have as their first seed the keninge and as their last the tikaninkuru, whereas the potters have as their first seed the tikaninkuru which they cultivate in the sacred fields (see p. 170) and as their last the keninge.

Moreover, after Mousso Koroni had stolen from Pemba the seeds he was entrusted to give on earth, Faro, through the intermediary of the /232/ animals who ate them at his order, reclaimed them from her; thus purified, he distributed them to men. The animal, which brought back to Faro the essential seed of each family, becomes the taboo, tne, of the family concerned, and the breaking of this taboo has the basic effect of removing the content of the culprit's collarbone. Analogous representations are noted among the Dogon.

Totemism, the so called "joking relationship" (senankuya of the Bambara), the caste system, and the exogamous laws of the Sudanese are based on the elements and classification of the contents of the collarbone.

Chapter 6

794 All the great adult institutions (dyo) are in contact with the
857 children's society of the Ndomo which reflects the universal organization
772

794 (space, elements). Each of the six *dyo* to which men are initiated
857 after their circumcision corresponds to a ritual object in the Ndomo:
772 the Komo (west and air) is represented by the *dyara* (rhombus); the Kworè (east and water) by the *tori*; the Nama (south and fire) by the *wulu*; the Kono (north and earth) by the instrument of the same name. The *ǰineble* corresponds to the Nya (nadir) and Nago (zenith). These last two institutions are linked with the whirlwind movement of the creative seed, symbolized by the fonio seed. That is to say, membership in the children's Ndomo society constitutes a pre-initiation to the adult societies which are essentially cosmogonic. The sanctuaries and the sacred fields of the first four *dyo* are theoretically situated at the corresponding cardinal point. The operation of the societies according to a strict system confirms the observations and hypotheses presented on page 10.

Moreover, the mask of the Ndomo represents both Mousso Koroni and the eight seeds stolen from Pemba. All the ceremonies concerning the coming out of Bambara masks (those of the *dyo* as well as those of the *čiwara* and the *sogo*) recall the theft and cultivation of nourishing seeds by Mousso Koroni and their recapture by the animals on Faro's behalf. Similar representations are observed among the Dogon concerning the *yurugu*, *yasigi*, and Nommo.

771 In any case, these are questions which he does not ask or which, at least, he has not considered in any way that would cause him to make logical, even if fragmentary, syntheses. His words and his acts are indications and sometimes even guideposts for us, but how uncertain and misleading they can be! And, in the observation of current facts, how many at least seeming contradictions there are! However, in the main, the analysis given in the paragraphs above represents the basis of Bambara dogma, since everything happens in reality as if the Bambara were living in accordance with these principles.

761 That being the case, life results from the union of the two parts of the body, while death is a result of their separation.
772 Whence come these two elements and who it is that decides upon their union? No answer is possible. The Bambara say, merely, that certain persons are reincarnations. Precautions
[844] taken during pregnancy and delivery show that childbirth is one of those mysteries against which taboos must be observed as a protection. The frequent and readily believed stories about
[845] women giving birth to monsters -- usually animals -- bear witness to the affinities which, in the minds of the Bambara, exist between all creatures. But nothing specific is said about what precedes and determines the birth of a child.

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778 This is a secret to which the Bambara are, of course, not indifferent. It is evidenced in the fact that women, through whom man comes into the world, are held to be doubtful creatures, at the very least, partly because of menstruation, which makes a woman impure, and partly because of the mysterious travail she endures during the delivery of a child (1).

[774] 1. Women are also susceptible of being possessed continuously by a spirit (see the story of the Déni-bo Ba, p. 123). That is why, when a woman is several times widowed, she is suspected of being possessed by a jealous spirit who kills off her husbands. She is often even thought to be herself a sorceress.

144 771 which encompasses all social, technical and economic activities" (1)

1. G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion], P.U.F., 1951.

of this people. The myths are "a sum of knowledge, wisdom, and not a series of fixed etiological recitations. One may say that they constitute a metaphysic including the knowledge of created things, as well as the principles of their state of being and of their action." (2)

2. Id., *ibid*.

171 771 Thorough investigation of other Sudanese peoples has revealed that the Bambara religion is part of a pan-Sudanese system in which differences lie in the modes of expression and not in the essence of the thought.

A. Cosmogony

772 The Bambara conceive the world as a mass of active forces which man can influence. Thanks to certain techniques, the pivotal one being the blood sacrifice, man may amass or liberate these forces, may direct and orient them; in short, man may have a hand in the movement of the world and may aid it in its consciousness and accomplishment. This central role of man is explained to us by the order of creation itself, which governs all the rites to which man is subject. The Bambara conceive the world as having issued from an 773 original void which was endowed with movement (3): the *gla*. This

3. Passim, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].

void emitted a voice which created its double, and from the couple came a humid substance, *zo sumale* (cold rust), which formed hard shining bodies. After a series of movements and transformations, there was an explosion between the two *gla*, which caused the ejection of a hard and powerful matter that vibrated as it fell. Out of this vibration came signs which settled on all the things as yet uncreated to designate them. Then, man's consciousness detached itself from the *gla* and settled on things to awaken their consciousness in naming them. In the

The Soul of an African People
The Bambara
Their Psychic, Ethical, Religious, and Social Life

/12/ Chapter 1

1. Beliefs Concerning the Forces of Nature

181 It would seem child's play to demonstrate to a Negro the absurdity of his prejudices and his superstitious practices; yet such a demonstration does not suceed. No matter how clear and simple your arguments may be, you will not succeed in bringing into his mind the least spark of light or the slightest doubt. The o do, "that's it, " and tigné, "that's true, " which spring so readily from the mouth of one whose eyes you try to open, are polite sayings, and nothing more.

There is no reason to be surprised. Being incapable of long meditation and broad reasoning, he does not grasp the illogicality of his beliefs and, the contradictions in his behavior; he believes what his fathers believed and, like them, he sacrifices, so that everything with which he comes in contact is reddened slightly with blood. Your talk at once surprises him and leaves him cold; he does not understand you or grasp what you say; he even finds you a little silly. If he does not dare to admit this feeling to himself he stops with the words: Toubabou do! (This is a white man! Can he think and judge as I myself judge?").

In addition, his beliefs are linked to one another, and if we are able to get down to his lev[illegible] taking care all the while to raise him to ours, if we judge as he judges and think as he thinks, we will move from surprise to surprise, more than ever, for his conception of the world and ours are not at all the same, and his mentality and ours are different from each other.

181 Every non-Mohammedan Bambara considers himself a close
811 relative of animals and plants and, I may add with all assurance /13/,
772 a close relative of inanimate things. Without any doubt he distinguishes

181 the kingdoms from each other; for him a mineral is not a vegetable
811 nor a vegetable an animal. He differentiates between the animate
772 and the inanimate and does not confuse the genera and species. But has he known how to establish a definite, clear, and well-demarcated line of distinction between man and the rest of creation? No, he bases his ideas of all things on himself or, to be more definite, on what he feels and believes himself to be. In addition to genii and spirits, he sees conscious forces and energies everywhere in nature. He cannot define these forces; his ideas on the subject are confused and indefinite. But, nevertheless, it is true, that he attributes a glimmer of reason and feeling to everything. Obviously the black man does not attribute a soul -- in the sense that we understand it -- to everything; nor does he say that everything is the home of a genie or a spirit; yet he cannot conceive of pure matter. He finds instinct in animals and special virtues and properties in plants. In inert matter he encounters phenomena which he cannot explain, and since he always uses himself and his reasoning as the basis of comparisons, he endows everything with the immaterial, invisible, imperceptible attributes of reason and feeling. In his mind I repeat, matter is not a soul, or a genie as he conceives of one; yet it is a being, a force, a power that has its own existence and the ability to act of its own accord. Here are a few examples taken from a thousand:

811 In July, 1908 at the time when the crops were sprouting, cer-
731 tain regions of the Ségou circle were invaded by tiny caterpillars
measuring barely 0.025 meters in length. They were a beautiful
782 velvety black with pale green lines on their sides; they came from the
825 east out of no one knows where and myriads of them proceeded toward the west in serried ranks. Wherever they passed everything was eaten, and the eleusine /African millet/, corn, and sorghum had to be resown.

While these creatures were devouring the crops, the Moslem cried his insignificant formula toward the east and repeated, "God is great." He prostrated himself, crouched on his heels, devoutly shaking his forefinger, but all was in vain, for the quivering black wave continued to draw back on itself, to hump its back, and then to grow longer /14/; it continued to advance and to grow. The pagan

Legend of the Samaké

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My grandfather has often told it to me; he himself got it from his ancestors.... A Samaké -- I cannot tell whether he had been fording the river or driving the stakes to which fishing mats are fastened -- was seized by an alligator which dragged him to the depths of its den. The alligator did not kill him, /21/ for it had fed.... Leaving the unhappy man to his sad thoughts, it withdrew.... It did not go away, however, and from time to time it hit the water with its tail at the entrance of the hole, making it quite clear that there was only one way out and that this was the door. Stretched out in the ooze, the unhappy Samaké moaned: "Who will save me from those terrible claws and those powerful teeth?" An ant lion at the top of the den was watching for flies and ants in the bottom of its pit; it had pity on the man and, working with its two horns, succeeded in bringing in a ray of sunlight to revive the hopes of the Samaké. "Will I be saved?" he asked the ant lion. Two pinches of sand were the answer, and he understood. Working with both hands, he helped the ant lion; the hole grew and he was able to get through. He escaped. When the alligator re-entered its den, exhausted with hunger, it was disappointed not to find its prey there. So as not to invite the curse of their ancestor, the descendants of this Samaké respect and venerate the géré, or ant lion, and it is their tné. Other Samaké have the elephant (sama) for their tné.

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These few legends are sufficient; they all show us that although the Bambara believes that the bond with the tné is simply one of fraternity, friendship, and gratitude and not a bond of real and physical kinship, he nonetheless does not fail to attribute reason and emotion to everything around him, to animals and to plants. In nature he does not find pure matter; rather he attributes human feelings in some degree to everything, and throughout he sees a force, a power, an intangible, which he does not know how to define and which thinks, loves, laments, and weeps.

182 776 The saraka is the Bambara's only direct religious act toward their Creator and sovereign Lord. Although it is often performed and presented in the corner formed by two paths that fork or cross, it may be given anywhere, and I was right in saying that the Bambara God remains without priest, altar or sacrifice, and, strictly speaking, without worship.

776 177 3. The Bambara Belief in God is not of Islamic Origin any more than are their Ideas on Heaven, Hell, and the World of Invisible Beings (1)

1. Cf. J. Brun of the White Fathers, "Notes sur les Croyances et les Pratiques religieuses des Malinkés fétishistes /Notes on the Religious Beliefs and Practices of the Malinke Fetishists/," Anthropos, II, pp. 952-954.

772 776 177 Bambara notions of God, heaven and hell, and the world of invisible beings conform so closely to the teachings of the Koran, that we ask ourselves first of all if they were not received from the Moslems. Our surprise increases even more when we begin to study these people, for with respect to religion the only terms in which they can express themselves in present-day language are purely and exclusively Arabic. This is a fact, and the similarity is very easy to establish.

The angels -- Bambara méléké, Arabic malaïka ملائكة -- are spirits -- Bambara hakili, Arabic 'aqal عقل --, superior to the genii -- Bambara djiné, Arabic el-djin الجن --; beings intermediate between men and angels and to whom God has entrusted the custody of the elements. The good angels are in paradise -- Bambara ardjana, Arabic El-djanna الجنة -- up there in the blue sky and constitute the heavenly court of the Creator and sovereign Lord of all things, God -- Bambara Alla, Arabic Allāh الله --, the cause of good and evil. God rules seven heavens and seven terrestrial globes placed one above the other, and the wicked angels

772 -- Bambara sétané, Arabic chéltane شَيْطَان -- are at open war with
776 Him; rooted in evil, powerful, and capable of harming and oppressing
177 human beings. They must nevertheless undergo eternal punishments
in hell -- Bambara djahanéma /67/, Arabic djahannam جَهَنَّم --
in a fire compared to which, says the legend, ours would be only the
little that would remain after seven consecutive washings with large
quantities of water.

As this cursory glance indicates, both concept and words are strictly from the Koran. Can it be doubted that the Negro was taught all this by the Moslem? I have lived too long among the Negroes to take appearance for reality, and here once again I am wary of accepting the statements of our learned "travelers."

For centuries now, Islam has penetrated into the heart of Africa
177 and established itself in the midst of our Negro peoples; slow as its
181 advance has been, it has not failed to leave its mark. The Bambara,
the most important kernel of the Mande peoples, was always at war
against the Moslem to safeguard his independence and the faith of his
fathers (the wars were primarily religious). They were in turn conqueror and conquered, but most often conquered (for the Bambara, egoistic, plan their personal and individual interests before that of the group, and they always lacked cohesion and agreement, and never really had a leader at the top); they could not escape. Since they are nevertheless essentially deceitful, crafty, and hypocritical so that other peoples compare them to a piece of cow dung, dry outside but soft and loose inside so that it breaks and soils one as soon as a foot is placed on it -- and this comparison pleases them -- I do not hesitate to say that they took nothing from Islam that was not already in their minds. If they have taken Arabic terms to express themselves, I cannot doubt that this was purely diplomacy on their part. The use of Arabic terms that correspond to their own ideas in order to express their beliefs in present-day language represented adaptation and in no sense acceptance on their part. I would even assert that here they gave evidence, not of tact towards their conqueror (this is a quality which at the present time they do not possess even in an embryonic form), but of a certain pliability and shrewdness. In fact, by appearing before their tyrant on an equal footing with respect to dogma, they

771 177 The better one knows the Bambara, the more one studies their beliefs in the light of their practices, considering them from their own way of thinking, seeing, feeling, and envisaging things, the more one is convinced that they owe none of their concepts to the Moslems. They have only taken from their conquerors certain words /82/ from the Koran, and these they have adopted to express themselves. They are words which corresponded to their ideas and which, being foreign to their language, remained terms that conceal.

772 177 It is a curious and surprising fact that certain Moslem truths suited to make an impression on their minds, such as hell, paradise, the judgment of the soul followed by reward or punishment, the end of the world, etc., have always left them cold and indifferent. Had they, perhaps, lost this concept by the time of the Moslems' arrival so that all this was new to him?

772 What does hell matter to the Bambara! Should they fear this consuming fire compared to which ours would be only the remains from a seventh washing (1)? To begin with, they believe in the reincarnation of souls, and this belief protects them from all these tortures, and if some Negroes think of hell, they think of it without trembling. To deserve it, one must insult the gnéna or djiné, or the gnâ (boli, sétané), or be a monster to the point of denying all the laws of justice and hospitality. The occasions for sacrificing to the gnéna and to the gnâ are too frequent always to go unnoticed, their fears of the fetishes are too numerous for anyone continuously to refuse the hen and the kola nut to the invisible tyrants. And is there any monster here below whose heart is not at one time or another moved, touched, or seized with compassion for the weak? Where is the rough, rude being who is ashamed to offer a glass of water to the passing traveler or, even

1. Definition of hell: A douga ko wolonoula, min bi to a wolonoula ko, an tassouma flé nin yé, literally: "it to extinguish washing seventh that which is left to it seventh (washing) after our fire, look, that is it."

772 more, to a brother, one of his people? It is more difficult for a Bambara
to deserve hell than to avoid it; thus they need not think about it and
never do think about it.

Paradise hardly absorbs their thoughts more. The thought that they are called upon to contemplate the Creator, to live near Him and rejoice in Him, has not touched them for a long time; they have evolved too far; they have reached the last runs of degradation, and to go lower they would have to be Moslems. Furthermore, the paradise of Mohammed seems absurd to them! That indecent corps of virgins with modest looks and beautiful black eyes, whose color makes them resemble ostrich eggs carefully hidden in the sand (2), leaves them indifferent. They still prefer the ones here below, undoubtedly on the
principle /83/ that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush"
/literally: "one good thing that you have is worth 36 that you will
have"/. Virginity is too beautiful for the Bambara to have a word
[831] for it; it is the flower of a day which a girl of ten no longer has. And
what does it matter to them whether a woman is young or somewhat
[562] mature, virgin or not, pretty or ugly; to them a woman, a real one, is
a good servant, a good cook, and one who provides carnal pleasure
at a man's will without ever tiring.

The pleasures and joys of this earth suffice for the Negro; he wishes for no others, and no doubt that is why he believes in a perpetual return. If, when barely in the grave, he already lives again in the womb of a woman, could the idea of judgment after death, the idea of the end of the world and a new judgment, make an impression on his mind? Can he who lives again and again conceive of the end of the world?

It is senseless to speak of their knowledge of Adam, father of
773 the human race, and of Eve, his wife. The Bambara meaning of the
829 words Adama (Adam) and Awa (Eve) are quite different from the one
we give them. When a missionary, a Moslem, or any European
introduces himself to them as the son of Adam and Eve, these words
are to them generic terms denoting the first father and the first mother

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2. Koran, Chap. XXXVII - v. 47.

Chapter 1

MYTHS

13 The myths of the Bambara must be understood as a sum of knowledge, a kind of world view, and not as a sequence of fixed etiological stories. It may be said that they make up a metaphysics which includes a knowledge of the objects of creation as well as a knowledge of the principles of their state and action.

The knowledge of divine things takes its place within this ensemble but does not come first in time. The Bambara deals with creation and the cosmos, conceptualized as an entity peopled with deities, a cosmos of which he himself is the most significant expression. The following texts explain first the origin of creation, secondly the ordering of the perceptible universe, created from the primordial vibration, and finally the creation of originally immortal living beings on the earth molded by Pemba.

Domination of the mundane world and particularly of the human species was first assumed by one of Pemba's metamorphoses, the phallic tree balanza, which lived on blood and assimilated the strength of men. His reign was troubled by severe cosmic disorders provoked by the rebellion of the first-created female, Mousso Koroni. Today men are still subjected to the after-effects of these disorders. However, the fact that the tree abused its power caused Faro to rise up against it and vanquish it. Faro then reorganized the universe by establishing its boundaries and naming and classifying its component elements. On Earth, where death made its appearance due to the curse of the tree, the basis of this reorganization is the principle of duality, the "word" taught to men by Faro who from then on has the master of the Word and of restoring techniques which would, as needs arose, assure subsistence. The reign of Faro, whom henceforth men worshipped, was founded on order and measure and foreshadowed the "future words" which he is to disclose in the course of time.

/2/The sequence of mythical themes presents a structure of the cosmos; space and time; natural and supernatural worlds; categories, numbers, and the notion of the spatial and temporal cohesion of its elements (interdependence of phenomena). It situates the individual (body and spiritual principles) and in the psychological realm, describes

173 the slow evolution of consciousness (concept of pain), judgment (concept of responsibility and guilt), will (concept of the creative effort and work), all of which develop in man with the advent of suffering [761] and death. Death is felt to be an accident in the working out of the universal order, an accident compensated for in part by the conservation of spiritual principles and their reincarnation in accordance with the fundamental belief in the eternal resurrection of all things. The myth describes the first ritual, the rejuvenation, which ceases with the advent of death but is replaced by blood sacrifice which today is still the central practice of the rites (1).

1. Wherever possible the writer has avoided discussion of the details of myths so as not to distract the reader from the general line of the Bambara world view. But the scholar, in attempting to better understand the collective psychological processes of this people, may profitably study the numerous variant themes found among them.

The myths described below are the framework of the present-day Bambara religion and of the general cults to Pemba and Faro maintained by the people.

Preliminaries of Creation

1. The glã glã zo

172 The Bambara creation myths imply a philosophy of being and of the universe developed from the void, from nothing, fu (2).

[802] 2. This concept is expressed by a sign with the same name which can also be translated by "nothingness" or "zero" and is a part of the Bambara number system. See Fig. 1, No. 11. For a discussion of this sign denoting the continuity and proliferation of creation, see p. 102.

772 3. On koni, see S. de Canay, Notes sur la théodicée bambara, pp. 188ff.

Creation of the Universe

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773 At the center of yereyereli was the spirit, miri, in the spirit was the doing, wali; in the doing was the coming of all things, nali; and in nali was the division of all things, tali. These four terms also define the four basic elements of creation, respectively air, earth, fire, and water; air and fire being male, earth and water, female. (1)

1. "yereyereli was originally made up of four elements which enabled it to vibrate secretly, " (yereyereli gale gale kono kera ni wale nani yè, o ya to a sera ka yereyereli šu a la).

The miri was also "the egg of the world in which nature was enclosed. " It is represented by three ovals, all contained within each other; this figure also expresses the three /11/ rotations made by yereyereli at each of the cardinal points (in the following order: north, south, east, west), each rotation stirring up the four elements (2). The central oval, or so de, "son of the house, " is the primordial

[801] 2. See Fig. 2, p. 34 . Creation is thus expressed by the numbers seven and 12, obtained by the addition and multiplication of three (male symbol, and number of rotations) and four (female symbol and number of elements). Seven is the symbol of man (homo) and of the principle of the universe; 12 is the symbol of the multiplication of beings and of the perpetual development of this universe.

grain which placed all things in the nature of the four elements. The intermediary oval, dyẽ wali gale, "the first action of the world, "

772 represents fertility; it determines man, the principal thing of the
773 universe, who has also received from it the capacity for thought and
knowledge. The external oval, dyẽ ko, "gate of the world, " is essentially mobile; rotating upon itself, it dilates or contracts, depending upon the births or deaths of the multiple-formed matter it contains. It is this oval that makes all things in the universe "unable to escape from the sight of the creator" (1).

1. fẽw be dyele ngala ka yeli kono.

772 The essential part of that which the yereyereli stirred up as it
801 rotated was the spirit. The spirit, inflated by all its potential power,
finally began to sound. "The spirit resounded in the midst of facts, "
773 (2) and as it was the strongest element in space, it held itself up alone

2. miri ye manga ti walew tyela.

and arose. Then it burst and from it poured elements which slowly separated, dispersed, and ordered themselves. It is said of this event: "In the old days, all things came out together" (3). These fundamental

3. folo kow bõñuana.

elements, numbering twenty-two, are at the origin of creation which is classified into twenty-two categories.

The Bambara use several methods to order and name these elements. First, according to the fundamental system of creative thought, yo, they divide the elements into three groups of seven, to which a twenty-second is added.

The first seven, dyẽ dyo kã gale, "the first voice of the building of the world, " express yereyereli before knowledge, but containing all things with man, "seed" of nature, in the first place. The seven following elements, dyẽ dyo kã saba "the third voice of the building of the world, " denote the beginning of the knowledge of yereyereli as masculinity and assures all fertility. It is at this moment that the term koni appears, attributed to yereyereli, and expressing awe before creation. The last seven, dye dyo ka nani "the fourth voice of the building of the world, " contains "the complete revelation of the dispositions and situations /12/ of all that was created";

772 yereyereli then becomes known as femininity and assures the supremacy
801 of femininity over nature. The twenty-second element sums up these
773 three groups of seven and expresses total knowledge (1).

1. The same progression of numbers as in the creative thought yo, characterizes the creation by vibration. Being 1, the vibration passed on to 2. At 2, it conceived invisible "light air" and the powers it contained were grouped together to form a whole. At 3, the powers became gravity, and the visible "heavy air" appeared. At 4, and only at that moment, creation, completely visible, was revealed to the consciousness. For further discussion of the "heavy air," see also S. de Ganay, Notes sur la théodicée bambara, p. 188.

Another division of the elements determines the categories. The first seven are the bõnuana of which it is said: "The seven bõnuana came out first" (2). Then came twelve bangini, births or bayeremani "discoveries," of which it is said: "Twelve discoveries were left in space" (3). After them, there appeared three J̌iginis, foundations or dyoli, situations, of which it is said: "Three foundations ate up the world" (4). The first seven elements are the "states of the world"; the next twelve, "the foundations of the world"; the last three, "the words of the world's situation" (5).

2. Bõnuana wolo fla bwora folo. The word bõnuana means literally "come out together."

3. Bangini tani fla bla ka kẹnẹ da.

4. J̌igini saba ye dyẽ dũ.

5. dyẽ dyo tyoko; dyẽ sigi tyoko; dyẽ dyo ka.

772 801 773 The seven bõnuana summarize the general characteristics of beings and things:

1. keleña, unity;
2. makari, pity, mercy;
3. mako, necessity;
4. sinaya, aggression, jealousy;
5. fadena, rivalry;
6. maloya, shame;
7. sia, race, species, stock.

The twelve bangini, which follow, determine the qualities and destinies of the person:

1. ma ye ma ye, literally: a person is a person; gifts, possibilities of each, propositions and dispositions.
2. mako, mutual aid, simplicity, dignity, courtesy, wisdom.
3. sebaya, power, domination.
4. dyuguya, maliciousness, vulgarity, ferocity, difficulties.
5. kunanguya, bad luck, bad destiny, ill nature.
6. sira, road, guide, obedience, discipline.
7. ñafola, wealth, health, fertility.
8. adamadeña, brotherhood, humanity, liberty, kindness.
9. dahirime, food, material possessions.
10. saya, death, illness, infirmities, madness.
11. /13/ šu, night, light and dark, secret, witchcraft.
12. kle, day, sun; all the boli altars of the Bambara.

The three ǰijini are respectively:

1. kun, the head that thought out the world.
2. ba, the womb that formed it.
3. fo, the word that created it.

772 773 Knowledge, fã, was born of three foundations which finally became detached from the spirit (1). Knowledge opened up, divided, and

782 1. The following prayer, relating to the fã, is sometimes recited: fango, ma dua, ma bo, fẽ mbinâ, fẽ nkumba, fẽ ndaba, fẽ semba, wolo tigi ye nye, djiri tigi ye nye, panve bwora na. O bwora mi, o nya nyimi senge do. Ntigi ye yereyere ye, ka bo miri kono, miri dane sandyi.

782

> "Road of knowledge, I am not small,
> I am not big. A thing arrives, a thing with
> a large head, a large mouth, a large foot.
> I am the master of fertility; I am the master
> of trees. Where does it come from? It comes
> from the weariness of my seed. My master is
> the vibration, out of which came the spirit,
> the rain of which fertilizes."

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contributed to the building of the visible world, especially engendering particles, *moño moño*, which entered into the composition of the earth, and a radiance, *noro,* used for the formation of the sky.

At the same time, the spirit let fall upon the earth (still in the process of formation) a heavy object in the form of a globule, *kulu,* which was later named *pemba* (1). *Pemba*, moving as a whirlwind to the four cardinal points (south, west, east, and north), received twelve of the elements issued from the spirit. Then, with the help of the particles that came out of *fã*, he modeled lumps and mounds which gave shape to the earth.

But in the course of rising, the spirit had thrown upwards that which was later called *fãro* (2). Faro, who was then no more than vibration,

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1. From *fɛ̃,* thing and *ba,* big.

192
2. The Bambara use either *faro* or *fãro*, from *fa* (creation) or *fã* (knowledge) in the ancient language. This double etymology indicates the closeness in their minds between the concepts of creation and knowledge (see p. 17). The suffix *ro* expresses the idea of a whole, a totality. Another etymology has been suggested by S. de Ganay, in *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, p. 196. "...the words Fané (the name of a family of blacksmiths), Faro, *fan* (force), *fara* (stone), and *fari* (body) all have the same origin. Faro is the secret name of stone." This etymology

192

772 helped the spirit with ten of its elements and with the radiance from
773 *fā* to build the sky along an oriented trajectory. Faro first went to the west, then the south, the east, and the north, thus determining the celestial cardinal points.

/14/ The sky is distinct from empty space, *kęnę*, which separates it from the earth and which is the product of the "*yereyereli*'s shedding after it had given birth to the spirit." The sky, composed of seven parts placed one above the other, was completed before the earth which itself is also made up of seven corresponding parts.

773 Although he had received the larger share of the elements disgorged by the spirit, Pemba could not finish his work alone. When the sky was completed, the spirit blessed Faro, precipitated him in the form of water along the trajectory followed by Pemba during his descent. This water fell drop by drop from the seventh part of the sky to the seventh part of the earth into which it streamed to gain knowledge of the earth's foundations. As Faro descended vertically, he left a globule in space which became the spirit of the air, Teliko (1); on earth, he deposited a particle which formed the spirit Soba (2). As he dripped between the mounds which made up the earth, he saw that the latter was not completed, so he filled the empty pockets with water, thus forming the hidden springs of today.

Then life appeared on earth. Faro, impregnated by the vibration which was potentially masculine and feminine, gave birth to twin daughters on a deserted hillock (3). As soon as they appeared, the

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is interesting in that it accentuates the ties which, in the Sudan, bind the Faro of the Bambara and the Bozo, the Nommo of the Dogon, and the blacksmiths. See M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau* (*passim*).

1. From *teli*, to go quickly.

2. Literally: *so*, house, *ba*, big.

[823] 3. Naked hillocks, *walawala*, and clearings are the scene of rituals concerning the twins.

773 first grass, *yayalẽ* (1), grew around them, and scorpions, entrusted with protecting the twins, came forth (2). After a time, an abundant dew that had collected spread over the hillock and formed a spring from which a stream began to run. At its head, the fish *kokoni* (3) appeared, directing the first flow of fresh water to run on earth. He was soon followed by another fish of the same species which took Faro and his children on its back; the stream carried them to their water homeland. The first of Faro's daughters gave birth to twins, one of whom was a male. Faro sent his messenger, the swallow, to place the soul or vital force of the twins in the birth waters. As evidence he kept their doubles, *dya*, in water in order to protect them against all evil. Of these twins the Bozo were born, and, like Faro's twin daughters, they could live in water and converse with him (4). Faro then created the fish /15/, which served as food for them, the crocodilians, and all the aquatic animals that people the seas and the running waters. Then he returned to the sky.

Of this first creation of earth and sky, it is said: "Pemba descended on earth; Pemba was the builder of all things. Faro's evidence came forth and spread over it; the great water (of Faro) descended and entered the eyes of the earth: in these places Faro made known his power" (5).

1. *Andropogon* (*Hyparrhenia*) *hirtus*.

2. The scorpion, weapon of the twins, attacks those who would harm them, for to attack a twin would be to offend Faro.

3. *Calrias* *senegalensis*.

4. The male twin mated with his sister who gave birth to the Bozo; the daughter mated with a man descended from Mousso Koroni (see p. 65).

5. pemba djigi na dugukolo ka, pemba dlala fẽwnye, faro ka šereya bwora o la, dyi ba djigini dona dugukolo nyena, yoro min faro ye a sebaya do o la. This text is recited in the course of the annual ceremonies of the Kworè (see p. 217).

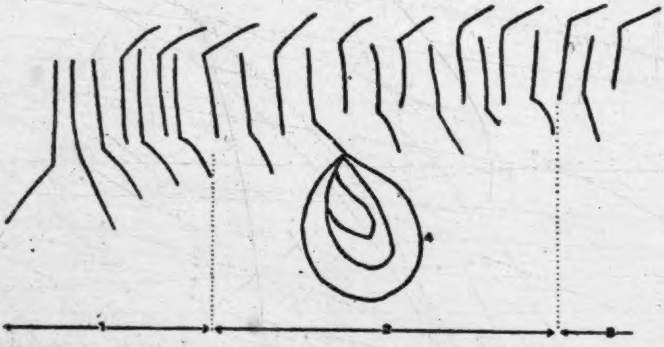

Fig. 2. —The twenty-two elements issued from the explosion of the spirit (4). They are divided into seven bõñuana, twelve bangini (2) and three jijini (3). This drawing was made on the sanctuaries of Komo. (An informant's drawing).

The first phase of the formation of the world is commemorated each year by a drawing traced on the sanctuary of the Komo: it represents the spirit, miri, and the twenty-two elements of creation (Fig. 2). The vertical lines are read from left to right; they are bent alternately above and below to indicate that they belong alternately to Pemba and Faro, and also signify that each of the elements is the first of a series engendered by it. The miri is drawn in the center in the shape of a slanted pocket, the image of "yereyereli's pregnancy." The old man in charge of the ritual recites as he draws: "Pemba and Faro have situated and organized the world, the sky above was secretly made by Faro with the help of the spirit; Pemba descended on earth and was known very quickly; the humans ask your help, yereyereli, my two hands are behind my back" (1). /16/

173 1. pemba ni faro ye dyẽ dyokã ani dyẽ dyotyoko kȩ, sankaba dlala faro fe gundola miri deme ni ko la, pemba djigini dugukolo ka, a dõ teli yala, dyobe na warilike yereyereli, mbolo fla yenko.

Pemba's Reign

For seven years, Pemba was a whirlwind (1). Transformed into an acacia seed, he moved about in space, carried by the wind and entraining the rain; finally, exhausted, he came to rest on the earth which hid him under a few lumps of dirt and enabled him to germinate; a tree, the balanza (2), grew but soon died of drought. There remained no more than a sort of rectangular board lying on the bare earth. It was called pembele, also ko kun, "the head of things."

Pemba was alone on the earth in the shape of a tree root which potentially contained the creation of animals and plants. Beneath

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1. This part of the myth concerning the pembele was collected by S. de Ganay and published in the Journal de Psychologie normale et pathologique under the title: "Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara. /Aspects of Bambara Mythology and Symbolism/." We have made a few changes in the text.

[824] 2. Acacia albida. The Dogon give an equally important place to the acacia albida in the prelude of creation. The first materialization of the world rotated between two thorns of the tree, placed symetrically point to point. Its shape was that of a rotating, flattened out truncated cone made from the wood of the same tree.

773 him his own decomposition collected. As he occasionally moved about in a whirlwind, weary of his solitude, he said to himself one day: "The dust of my tracks will dissipate my nostalgia." Having spoken these words, his tracks came together and the wind pushed them towards the mound of earth and rotting wood. He kneaded this mass with his saliva, thus incorporating into it a breath-soul, ni; he gave it a shape and an immaterial double, dya. However, as he distrusted it, he turned the double over to Faro, master of sky and the waters, guardian of the dya. Then Pemba laid himself down upon the shape for four days. On the fifth day, he heard, coming from beneath him a high-pitched feminine voice which said: "Get up, I am exhausted." "No," he replied, "first I will give you a name so that you may be my wife."

This creature had a head with long, pointed ears and the torso of an animal; the rest of the body was human except the tail. Until her fall, she retained that shape.

In order that she might become the womb of future beings, the repository of knowledge and the stimulant to Pemba's thoughts, she had to assure him of her total love. She promised him this and thereupon received the name of Muso koroni kundye, "little old woman with a white head,"—little, for she had issued from him; old, for she was an emanation for him and therefore his equal in age; white, /17/ because, coming from him, she was as pure as he. Thus named, she got up and became his wife. Although he did not enter her, she received multiple inseminations from him and in exchange he took his own sap back. She gave birth to plants and animals, the first of which was the panther. All that she engendered had a soul or vital force, ni, and a double, dya, similar to those which Pemba had deposited in her as he kneaded her with his saliva. At that time, no being was articulated (1).

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824 The earth began to swarm with beings who appeared without order as they were born at random; they all went to worship Pemba as their creator, calling him god, Ngala. The latter wished to assert his complete domination over this chaotic work /of creation/; so he asked Mousso Koroni to plant him in the earth. He immediately took

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1. Such beings with supple, non-articulated limbs are called mašibadẽ.

773 root by his own power and became the first of all trees, the *balanza*,
824 green in dry season and dry in rainy season, and it extended his power (1).

1. The *balanza* is not Pemba in his totality, which is spirit, force, and matter. It is Pemba's earthly metamorphosis and, more especially, the image of his fertile masculinity. Pemba took the shape of the *balanza* in order to continue his work of creation and to bring death on the earth.

773 The human beings born of Faro lived amidst the burning rocks and sought refuge under that tree, whose power was obvious to all since it needed no water to keep it green. They prayed to it and received from it directives for their lives. Since they were immortal, time did not exist. However, they figured their age according to their pilosity: at age 12, the public hair grew; at 22, the hair under the arms; at 36, the beard was black; at 52, the hair whitened. When he could count the four types of hair, his being was complete; but seven years later, he suddenly grew thin and lost his vitality, and his soul weakened; he was then an old man.

Men at that time knew no language and had no clothes. They lived naked and communicated to each other through gestures and grunts. At the instigation of Mousso Koroni, and in order to recognize [801] each other, they scarred their face with three or four lines, three being the sexual symbol of man (the penis and two testicles) and four that of woman (the four labia). In keeping with this, each person, according to his sex, would repeat his actions three or four times.

Men at that time received their food from /18/ the sky, thanks to the spirit Téliko, who, up in space, watched over Faro's waters. During the rainy season, he would send them stones from the seventh heaven containing karite nuts, *si kolo*. From these stones the women extracted oil which they ate with fruit. One day, during the dry season, a woman who had drawn oil from four nuts wiped her hands on the *balanza* under which she was seated alone. "This, I want," said the tree. From then on, all the women offered him oil and were imitated by men who later partook of the cult.

However, the *balanza* was no longer satisfied with only Mousso Koroni. It demanded that all the women give it their love. Therefore they all had to mate with it, thus increasing its vitality and power, for it fed on their sap just as it had with its first female. The latter became overpowered by jealousy and brought ill will into all things; she refused to share and no longer came near it, thus denying it the love and faithfulness she had promised. She betrayed it, isolated herself, and, refusing to cooperate in the work of creation, began to disturb it. This was the origin of her fall, her poverty, and her hardship for the *balanza* cursed her for her betrayal and rejected her whenever she attempted to go back to it.

She then knew such nostalgia and despair that a kind of madness seized her. She chased about the heavens, the space, and the earth from west to north, from south to east, plunging pieces of wood into the ground as she had done for Pemba in the hope that they in turn would become *balanza*.

Mousso Koroni had maimed herself on the *pembele* at the time she had sexual relations with it. In the course of her voyage, she wished to inflict the same wounds on others; her fury drove her to circumcise and to excise all the human beings she encountered with her teeth and nails. The violence of her actions caused in her the appearance of the first menses. (1) At the same time, she revealed to men all that Pemba had taught her and which should have remained secret; she communicated to all she touched the impurity of her betrayal. At her touch, the earth became impure and has remained so until today (2).

Pemba vainly pursued Mousso Koroni throughout the universe in an attempt to reclaim that which he had given her: power and /19/ knowledge. Faro, at his request, chased her in turn from east to south, from north to west; he caught up with her, vanquished her, and attempted to submit her to her creator. But she refused, declared herself free, and thus introduced disorder into creation: evil, unhappiness, and death were brought into the world by her.

1. *Dyoli tumbi bo muso koroni, bolokoli gale ke to a fe na ni ma sone ye.* "Blood came out of Mousso Koroni the moment she circumcised with her nails and teeth."

2. See p. 82.

•113 After a long life of misery and madness, Mousso Koroni died, abandoned and anguished, without ever having seen the light. But men gained something from her misery: her efforts to keep from starvation with the origin of the agricultural techniques that she taught (1).

During that time, life was multiplying on earth; the tree engendered beings with each of the women with whom it mated.

In the meantime other beings appeared on earth—spirits of the air who had become visible, having acquired bodies and become transformed, through contact with the impure earth, into men called mahalakillen (2). They had supple inarticulated limbs and were similar to the beings brought into the world by Mousso Koroni Koundye. But the multiplication of living beings it wanted to dominate caused the balanza to seek an increase in its own strength, drawing it first from the genital secretion of women. As this became insufficient, a more powerful sustenance was revealed to it. An old man who was to marry a virgin one day lost his strength and could not consummate the sexual act. The young girl mated with the tree, which, having deflowered her, was covered with blood and became warm. The purpose of this warmth was to repel those women who had previously presented themselves to it; it signified that the tree wanted something besides their genital secretion. Seized with fear, women practices divining rites in order to learn its wish: the answer was that it wished blood.

The men, not knowing how to satisfy its desire, asked the eldest among them, who was a diviner, to put the dried blood of the virgin into the tree trunk. He first dampened the stained spot with water and rubbed the tree. On the third day, as he was doing this work,

1. The part of the myth pertaining to the origins of agriculture will be related in detail by S. de Ganay, in Techniques et rites de l'agriculture chez les Bambara, /Agricultural Techniques and Rituals among the Bambara/, (in press).

2. Literally: fallen person.

773 one of his hands caught on the rough bark; a vein in his wrist opened and his blood ran. After this, men offered the blood of their veins twice a year to the tree which would absorb the strength to regenerate itself. In exchange for this offering, the tree agreed to rejuvenate men when they reached the critical age of fifty-nine. But, in return, the tree required that the wives of all men become his wives. /20/ The power of the tree and the youthfulness of men resulted from this continuous exchange, but it was possible only through the medium of those women who were used as a tribute.

The first blood offering of men took place at the begging of the dry season. Grouped around the tree, with the eldest in command, they opened the veins of their right wrists without murmur or complaint and in the midst of chants, they sprinkled the trunk with blood. To give the blood of the right hand meant to give half of one's body and to entrust to the tree one's work and one's double, dya. As soon as the blood stopped spurting, that is, as soon as it seemed to have lost its strength, the wrists were bound with fibers of da, and the wounds healed without leaving any scars.

The stain of each offering was noted by the elder who learned to identify people according to the color of their blood. Then each man, his hands behind his back, licked the place he had bled in order to take back the blood to which the tree had given new life, leaving in the trunk the strong and dangerous element it previously contained.

During this ceremony the old men who wished to regain their youth assembled around the tree. Each one, in turn, climbed to the top and opened the veins of his left wrist, thus surrendering his last strength. Then he climbed down and the young men who were present pulled out the hair of his body, one by one, beginning with the public hair and continuing with the hair of the underarm, the beard, and the head. They finished off by taking out the body hair. The man who endured this was not to groan or cry out, but to sing in order to give himself courage, because suffering stoically borne was necessary to rejuvenation. His entire body was then beaten by the young men, the beating started with the nape of his neck; he fainted and became once more a seven year old child. The adolescents blew into his veins to activate his lungs and insufflated him with water so as to replace the blood he had lost.

The eldest son of the rejuvenated old man became the head of the family but could not inherit the women who, according to the pact, 113 belonged to the tree. In addition, the balanza required that the fourth daughter born in each family be entirely consecrated to it. Every virgin had to be deflowered by it on the eve of her marriage, and the act was ritually performed with the hand of one of the women belonging to the tree in such a way that the blood would run onto the trunk.

The cycle of births that followed these various matings was regulated as follows: when a woman's husband reached the age of /21/ fifty-two, she continued to have sexual relations with the tree. She gave birth to all sorts of animals and plants. After her rejuvenation, which occurred without ritual or suffering when she reached her fifty-ninth year, she regained her virginity (1). She was deflowered by the tree and gave birth to an animal or a plant, after which, having re-united with her husband, she would again engender men. When her husband grew old, she returned to the tree and the cycle began again.

The tree also demanded of women their menstrual blood and all births took place near it. When men learned to work stone and made their first axes, the tree ordered them to carve wooden phalli which they inserted into its trunk. The shape given to these objects varied according to a woman's vagina and age. The women feared these painful matings but had to submit to them without a tear, because the tree drew not only its strength from them as in the old days, but also a pleasure unknown to it before. Its strength grew still greater and its pleasure reached a peak when the balanza received the blood of the first virgin deflowered by one of the wooden phalli.

When the blood sacrifices were organized, the tree instructed men in other things. It taught them, in particular, to make fire by rubbing two stones together; to thank it they cut the veins of their right hands and gave it their blood.

The power of the balanza was then at its height. But the way in which it abused its creatures brought about its downfall. Indeed, at that time, men as well as women were not only exhausted from giving blood, but, because of a constant increase in population, they were dying of hunger. One evening a woman fainted as she passed by

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1. It would seem that women obtained rejuvenation in return for their genital secretion and menstrual blood which they constantly gave the tree.

a field of wild tomatoes. When she came to Faro, who was then in the earthly waters, suggested to her the idea of eating fruit. In her body, the fruit was transformed into blood and she regained her strength and got up. She went to bathe in the Niger, a region where famine had become so bad that sand was the only food. There Faro seized her, sliced off her nose and her navel, and opened her belly. He ate the red pulp which he found there. He counted the seeds of the fruit and found the number to be a multiple of seven. Each /22/ tomato carried within it both blood and the principle of duality (3 plus 4), both of these being the fundamental elements that made up the human being. Faro placed the principle of life in the tomato: men and women, informed of this transformation, ate the fruit to regain strength and continue feeding the balanza which, in return, rejuvenated them.

But Faro was opposed to this increase in power. He found it unfair and excessive that the tree enjoy both the domination of the world and sexual pleasure. He also considered the tree his tributary to some extent since water and the tomato, both of which belonged to him, were indispensable to the life of men and to the regeneration of their blood. He therefore made the tree understand the conditions under which he would continue to dispense water. He demanded that the tree stop the procreation of beings through women's mating with wood, and reserved for himself the power to procreate with the tomato as intermediary.

The balanza knew it was going to be vanquished; it foresaw that men were going to betray it and that their worship would now be given to Faro since water was essential to their subsistence and to the multiplication of plants. It knew also that this betrayal would bring about death, but that Faro would take over in his name the work of creation.

Nevertheless it uprooted itself and went to meet with Faro. "The struggle was as bitter as their words, as hard as their hatred," but victory was Faro's.

Death

The women of the vanquished, who gave birth to the animals and plants, were the first to leave it after seven days and it called them back in vain. They went to live near the river; thereafter, without

773 intervention of any kind, they gave birth after drinking water in which Faro had secretly mixed tomato juice. They offered thanks by giving him three or four tomatoes, depending upon the sex of the child.

After the women, the men, too, gave up worshiping the tree. Instead of seeking wood elsewhere, as they had been in the habit of doing, they began to burn the twigs that fell under the balanza in order to maintain their fire, the fire it had given them.

The tree cursed them. They were thus preyed upon by illness and bad feelings: vindictiveness, hatred, jealousy. The wounds they /23/ inflicted upon themselves in order to give blood and regain their youth no longer healed and became infected.

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825 A few among them tried to remedy this new state of affairs. Eight of the eldest men went up to the balanza and, in spite of the heat it gave off in order to repel them, they made incisions on their tongues and offered it their blood. The tree was surprised and first gave out a sort of sigh, for it appreciated the sacrifice. Finally it spoke to them and announced the coming of death. But because of their submission and the sacrifice they had consented to, it transformed them into birds, tatugu kononi (literally: little birds of fire). In order to accomplish this, it demanded that they rub their backs against the tree trunk until all their blood was gone. The men cried out in pain in the process, but just as they were about to die, their souls were transformed into birds. Their flesh and skin penetrated into the tree; their bones mingled with the white bark and the marrow became the red fruit which, from that day on, ripened on the tree. Since that time, the "human flesh" which is the wood of the balanza is rarely put to profane use. These first eight elders transformed into birds were subsequently venerated by men (1).

[325] 1. In particular by all blacksmiths. Since their transformation the birds tatugu kononi supposedly live near the balanza and respect a certain number of taboos: they must not separate but must live communally outside of villages. They are responsible for fire; though incapable of lighting it, they have the power, by their very presence, to keep it up or to put it out. A twig of damp

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> straw bursts into flames when one lights it while pronouncing their name. They also protect woman potters against burns. They are considered impure because of the earth in which they dig holes and because of the fire which is itself impure.

773 As the tree blossomed and bore fruit, the sacrifices, of which it was still the object, increased its yield: leaves and fruit contained the blood of men. The latter began to eat the fruit for it was appetizing and sweet. They also cut branches to feed their animals. The tree remained silent.

But soon men took advantage of it. One man climbed to its summit, cut off all its buds, and carried them away. Those who came afterwards were terrified to find the tree mutilated. The culprit was terrified by his own action and ran away to Mandé, but there the avenging force (nyama) that pursued him caught up with him and he dropped dead.

The people of Mandé, not knowing that they had broken a taboo and being ignorant of death, sheltered him, thinking he was asleep. They tried to feed him and rubbed the corpse with sorrel and oil. Thanks to these ministrations the body /24/ kept for a certain time, but at the end of ten days, it rotted. The force (nyama) it exuded attacked other men who in turn also died.

The deceased's parents came to fetch the body. They ate the flesh because since the arrival of death, the thunder stones that fell from the sky no longer contained karite nuts and they were beginning to starve. They carried away the dead man's bones.

When they returned to the tree, it ordered them to grind the bones and rub its mutilated branches with powder. It told them that from then on it would be useless to give it their blood; they would no longer be rejuvenated and they would all know death.

At the sound of these words, three men fell; four women who unexpectedly came by suffered the same fate. The seven corpses rotted around the tree that had taken their lives. This was the last sacrifice.

The tree announced that it was forsaking men but that it would continue to give the red fruit representing their blood poured over him in the past. And since then, the tree follows an annual cycle contrary to that of other plants: during the winter season it loses its

strength along with its leaves and fruit. But it blossoms in the dry season, after the harvest, just like a well-fed person who is afraid of nothing because the harvest is in. As it carries within itself its own sacrifices, it requires nothing of human beings.

After having been forsaken, men in desperation went up to a torrent to implore the invisible. But for two years they received no answer. They began to waste away and their patriarch went up to the tree to obtain its forgiveness. He prayed in vain and had to return to the water. Thereupon he heard the voice of Faro and the power of that first word caused him to faint. A little water brought him back to consciousness but he was terrified by a black shadow. Reaching out with his arms he prayed: "The tree has put darkness between you and us." Then the shadow became white and the coolness of Faro entered his body. He went to fetch his people and Faro instructed them, saying: "I will give the necessary rain for farming, as well as the springs, the ponds, the torrents, and a great river, the Niger. But remember that all water is holy and must be revered. I cannot eliminate death, but I will compensate for it." And he taught them speech and their own language.

Faro said to the first of the eight oldest men, a patriarch thereafter known as kumabana (1): "You are going to die." Eight /25/ days later the old man, feeling his end near, went to the edge of the torrents and said to those who surrounded him and who listened respectfully:

"We did not have the power of speech; through Faro, we have received it. And now we must die. I did not expect this suffering, this sadness: all of you will know the same."

An old man questioned him; he no longer responded. Thinking that they might bring him back to life, the men threw the body into the river where it sank. The second old man, wishing to find it, threw himself in after it. But his body, with nose and navel cut up, floated to the surface of the water which became covered with

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1. "End of speech." This word also means "there are no more words" in the sense of "outside of these words there are no others." Kumabana had complete knowledge.

●173 blood. The body was then taken and placed in the crack of a baobab tree. Eight days later, the third old man drowned while bathing; the water turned red at the place of his fall.

When the fourth old man saw this, he concluded that Faro demanded sacrifices. He became the first priest of the cult which he established and which men have honored since that day.

Since this period each of the animal and vegetable species reproduced itself, and the random births of the first ages ceased.

The women, impregnated by Faro, gave birth to humans only. Moreover, they no longer gave birth to single beings as in the days of the balanza, but to twins in the image of those the spirit had engendered to populate the waters of the earth.

Twin births were the rule for a long time until the day men betrayed Faro. Then the spirit of the air, Téliko, decided to take his turn at controlling creation.

"The breath of living beings is mine," he said; "all men's joys come from me through the wind."

"Without me, nothing can live," answered Faro, "for to breathe one must drink; water is indispensable to life."

Deprived of air and water, men wasted away. They attempted to mediate, but Faro refused, "for the body of Téliko, in contact with impure earth, is hot and worn out by the wind." Nevertheless, Téliko, out of pride, decided to take his turn at visiting the boundaries of the world, and men, believing he would be the winner, abandoned Faro to follow him. The latter, sure of his own power, waited for his adversary to attempt the crossing of the seas. At that moment, Faro dashed him against a rock, depriving him of his virility and breaking his right arm which was unarticulated like those of all the creatures of that period.

/26/ After Téliko had recognized his defeat, Faro adjudged men guilty. He punished them for their betrayal but did not forsake them as the balanza had done. First he provided them with articulations necessary for the manual labor they were forced to perform from then on in order to survive. He eliminated the rule of double births and women gave birth to single beings, twins being reserved for rare, privileged individuals. But he replaced twins by the double dya who, from his home in the water, was entrusted with watching over the living and in particular with helping women in childbirth (1).

1. In her *Notes sur la théodicée Bambara*, Mrs. S. de Ganay has given a first version of the creation in which Koni (alias Pemba), conceived of as the only creator, gives birth to "female twins in the divine substance," Mousso Koroni and Faro respectively, the latter seen in his female aspect. This version is in line with Bambara thought which sees creation as founded on the principle of duality.

The version presented here is of interest because it is absolutely comparable to the Dogon creation myth and takes into account the identity of representations among both tribes. Indeed, in the Dogon myth, creative thought (the god Amma), having formed the "egg of the world," splits it into two placentae (*me*), each containing one of the Nommo twins, bearers of his word charged respectively with the creation of sky and earth. The same is true of Faro and Pemba (see p. 31). But the Nommo of the earth, having lost his female double, was transformed into an animal desperately seeking his double. As a result, disorder was introduced and the Nommo of the sky was charged with putting the confusion into order. To do this, he recognized the universe, reclaiming from the other Nommo the words Amma had entrusted him with. Among the Bambara, the same roles of Pemba, Mousso Koroni, and Faro are found.

To elaborate on this, Pemba and the *balanza* have their counterparts in the *yurugu* (*Vulpes pallida*) and the *senge* (*Acacia albida*), Mousso Koroni in the female being Yasigui, twin of *yurugu*, now represented by a dignitary of the Mask Society, the *yasigine*. Yasigui, like Mousso Koroni, revealed the words of the creator, that is, the language of Sigui. She circumcised and excised men and women and

773 171 [821] taught certain agricultural techniques. In both tribes, the same star, Sirius (called *sigi toto* by the Dogon; *sigi doto* by the Bambara), represents them. The androgynous Faro is comparable in all ways to the Nommo, the universal monitor, custodian of the word and of life. The *yurugu* and the Nommo made voyages similar to those of Pemba and Faro. In particular, at the time of their descent on earth, the *yurugu*, and later the Nommo, used an "ark," *koro*, whose counterparts are Pemba's wood *pembele* and Faro's ark *kuru*, described by certain initiates (see M. Griaule, *L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes*. /The ark of the world among Nigerian peoples/.

For both tribes, man "the seed of the world," is the image of the cosmos. The exact role of the seed of the *Acacia albida* does not appear clearly in the two myths, but in both cases, it is considered to be a first aborted creation.

Faro's Reign

773 Faro, having vanquished the balanza and overcome Téliko, took over the creation himself. He reorganized the whole universe and established the order under which it still functions today. /27/ He spread his word and his light; he named and classified all things: "All things (of the universe) are under the domination of Faro; eight hundred transformations are in his power" (1).

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802 1. *Fêw* *be* *be* *faro* *ka* *se* *kono*, *yelemani* *ba* *kele* *be* *a* *la* *a* *fe*.

The number 800 which is "the end of the count," here expresses the infinite. In the so-called "eastern number system," now

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used by most Sudanese, the principal units are 1, 80, 800, etc. Ten remains a secondary unit for counting from 1 to 79 and is combined with 80 for units of the other orders.

There is also the so-called "Mande" number system, the principal units of which are 1, 60, 600, etc. in which 10 remains a secondary unit for the count from 1 to 59, and combines with 60 for units of a higher order.

On the other hand, it must be noted that the Bambara number system is vigesimal and reflects the concept of the person as identified with the 20 fingers of his hands and feet, and spiritually endowed with two souls of the opposite sex, each of which represents the number 10. If one follows this line of thought, 10 is the unit parexcellence (see p. 213, n. 2). The two counts, 60 and 80, in Sudanese metaphysics, are complementary in the sense that one, 60, is male (60 is three times the person) and the other, 80, is female (80, four times the person) (for a discussion on 3 and 4, see p. 19). In the tribes where generally only the count based on 80 is used, the count based on 60 is still used today in certain rituals (principally among the Dogon).

173 To carry through his plan, Faro undertook a voyage of reconnaissance to the ends of the world in order to name the cardinal points.

He first visited the east, and all the beings who lived there recognized his power and his wisdom. Comparing the luminous whiteness of this region to that of hair discolored by age, he gave it the name of koro, old, a word which also indicates that it was his first stop. He made the east the seat of death.

He then went to the west. As it was dark there, he named the inhabitants klebi maw, "people of the fallen sun." He made the

773 west, klebi, the seat of customs and of good and beautiful things.

He then started off in the direction of the north, taking eight epochs to cross the spaces and the depths. He named the north baba, "great river," for the distance was great, the water deep, and the area difficult. In the north, which he reached in the ninth epoch, he established the seat of his control and that of all royalty.

He then went to the south where evil creatures who had listened to Mousso Koroni and followed her advice spoke a language they had stolen (1). The tried to resist Faro, but he destroyed great numbers of them. Although the survivors submitted to him, he made their domain the seat of impurity and named it /28/ bani, "little river," to emphasize their weakness and their shameful failure.

The itinerary was measured in palms, sibiri, the unit of measurement being 22 palms (2). The distance separating the cardinal points, the height of the sky and the depth of the earth were measured in the same way.

During the same period he determined the seasons and created the regular alternation of day and night to replace the premordial darkness. Having measured space, he created time.

Faro then placed himself in the center of the universe: still actuated by a vibratory movement, he traversed in a spiral turning from right to left up to the outer boundaries, "where there is no more than a trembling of the surface." Then he returned along the same route, going from left to right in order to "place himself at the central point (3) whence he distinguished between beings and things" (4).

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[171] 1. The Dogon have a similar notion of the theft of the language. See p. 47, n. 1.

[804] 2. sibiri nye, literally "eye of the palm." The Bambara palm is a length obtained with an open hand, from the extremity of the thumb to the extremity of the middle finger.

3. It is said of this act, faro tyema yera; or faro sigi yoro seleke nani tyela. "Faro

773 sat down in the middle of the cardinal point."

4. A ye klali ke.

The first sky, kaba noro, is less pure than the others and the impure traces of Mousso Koroni's passage, in the form of clouds, have remained there. From that sky comes the wind which Pemba had placed there while pursuing her.

But the second sky, kaba dye, "the white sky," is fresh and already in Faro's power. It is the seat of the souls (ni) of men and animals. The Kwore spirits live there and strive to permit the passage of rain as it falls on earth from the seventh heaven.

The third, kaba fî, "the black sky," is the resting place of all spirits, and the fourth, kaba mana ("shedding of the sky," is the mirror of the other three. There, Faro does his daily "accounting" of the world.

In the fifth sky, koblekaba, "the red sky," Faro hands out judgments on those who have broken the laws. It is the sky of struggles, battles and victories—the sky to which the king offered sacrifices before going to war. It is also the sky of blood, fire, and hot and harmful winds.

In the sixth sky, suna kaba, the secrets of the world situation are kept (1). As its name indicates, it is also the sky of sleep. All the souls of spirits and living beings sleep there, each in an allotted place. [827] Sleep /29/ is a purification of the soul and dreams are the directives given to it by Faro. Fainting spells, insomnia, and illness are the result of disturbances in the displacement of souls during sleep.

The seventh sky, wolõ fla kaba, is the site of Faro's reign and the seat of power, royal power in particular. From this sky, the realm of purifying water, Faro sends forth over the world the beneficial rain that brings a soul to the grain.

[821] The sun, to which Faro "holds the rope," penetrates the first sky in the morning and crosses all the others successively until evening when it skinks into the seventh. It is the god Pemba who, weary of his pursuit of Mousso Koroni, turns red. The stars are his pores, dilated by effort.

1. Dyẽ dyoka gundo be sunakaba la.

773 Empty space, or *tyema*, which separates the sky from the earth, remains under the domination of Tɛliko. It is the domain of air, the winds and insects.

773 823 The earth is divided into seven parts which correspond to the seven heavens and are as follows: (1) *dugukolo*, earth; (2) *dugukolo fi*, black earth; (3) *dugukolo dye*, white earth; (4) *dugukolo mana*, shedding of the earth; (5) *dugukolo bele*, "stone of the earth"; (6) *dugukolo noro*, soft earth; (7) *dugukolo woloflã*, the seventh earth.

On earth, Faro first created deep watery holes, the abysses of the sea and the rivers which he haunts. He himself dug the first well, the ponds, and the bed of torrents. He established the schedule of the rains which fall from the seventh part of heaven to the seventh part of the earth and constitute the purification and reparation of cosmic disorders.

773 825 824 He then classified living beings. In the east, wild and domestic animals, each group headed respectively by the lion and the horse; in the west, the birds; in the north, the fish with the miri (1) at their head, the sauria, and the batrachia; in the south, all plant life which he divided into three categories (2), indicating the purifying and medicinal power of each.

773 Men were also named and classified and the races distributed according to the quality of the blood into which Faro inscribed the destiny of each. He determined the castes, beginning with the slaves.

He then decided each one's foods and, to protect /30/ the species from destruction, he indicated the forbidden foods, animal and vegetable, which each category of beings had to respect.

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1. *Micralestes acutidens*.

2. These are respectively: herbs, *bin*, headed by the *narakata* (*Digitaria digitata*); plants, *fura*, the first being the *sindya* (*Cassia siberiana*), and trees, *dyiri*, divided into three categories headed respectively by the karite, the baobab, and the *nere* (*Parkia biglobosa*).

173 Finally, he occupied himself with agriculture. In particular, he gave men, through the intermediary of the blacksmiths, the eight cereal grains that had been created simultaneously with man but had remained hidden in the sky (1). The eight grains became the basis for subsistence and are fundamental to the human being who carried the symbol of them on his collar-bone (2).

Everything on earth is represented in the water: living beings by their doubles or witnesses, dya; plants and minerals by an exact replica, which enabled Faro to exert constant control over the existence and actions of the beings placed in his power.

He put spirits as his representatives everywhere in charge of watching over the universal order.

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[171] 1. A myth parallel to this can be found among the Dogon (see M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*). It makes the Bambara blacksmith into a civilizing hero, a metamorphosis of Faro, descended from the sky in an ark, *kuru*, and holding in his hand a mass containing the eight cereal grains. See M. Griaule, *L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes*; S. de Ganay, *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, pp. 194-196.

[171 243] 2. The eight grains are as follows: *sañõ*, small millet (*Pennicillaria spicata*); *keninge*, large millet (*Sorghum gambicum*); *kende*, red millet (*Sorghum magaritiferum*); *fini*, fonio (*Digitaria exilis*); *šyõ*, beans (*Vigna maniculata*); *tikaninkuru*, peas; *malo*, rice. The names of the seeds vary, but the same symbols occur among the Dogon. In the Bozo myth, the collar-bone is the receptacle for eight fish, represented by symbols on the forward part of canoes. See G. Dieterlen. *Les Correspondances cosmo-biologiques chez les Soudanais* /Cosmic-Biological Correspondences among the Sudanese/.

The Future Waters

173 The order of the universe prevails in space and time: the present order of things is but one phase thereof. When the "first running waters" covered the ground, Faro permitted only the primordial water to spread out; twelve waters remained hidden and they will rush forth and submerge the earth when he gives the order. The words they contain will be revealed and the "world to come" as thought out by _yo_ will be realized.

Meanwhile, in the expectation of these "future waters," men must provide themselves with objects that will save them; the Bozo and some Bambara have canoes, shepherds have their gourds, spinners their spindles, and women their wooden stools (1). The coming /31/ of the waters is represented by a drawing on these objects as well as on a number of other everyday tools (Fig. 3).

173 524 This drawing serves as the framework for a game, the _sumangolo_, which the Bambara of all ages and both sexes play in order to "contribute to the progress of the world."

This game bears the name of the ancestor Soumangolo who traveled throughout the universe to find out and reveal to men "the

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[192] 1. It is significant that _kuru_ (canoe), _kuruni_ (spindle), and _kuruni_ (stool) come from the same root. The word _kuru_ designates the original globule in which Pemba descended, and which later became the wood _pembele_ in the shape of a trough; it also designates the case or ark used by the mythical blacksmith, bearer of the nutritive seeds. See p. 53, n. 1. The word _kuru_ [171] should be compared to _koro_ which, in the Dogon language, has the general meaning of case, box, wooden receptacle, trough and canoe, and which also designates, among these people, the vessel in which the blacksmith descended. See M. Griaule. _L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes_, p. 117, n. 3.

773 location and disposition of the waters" (dyi walew and dyi kono few).
524 During his voyage, "he was unable to reach the central springs of the sky, " and that is why they have remained unknown to men. /32/ But he visited "the waters of the cardinal angles" from which there emanates a vapor that determines the seasons and the temperatures. Then he studied "the waters of the cardinal sides" and asked Faro to let them stream over the earth. He crossed them in order to explore them and instruct men about them. It is said: "Soumangolo of creation has shown to people and things the ponds, rivers and old ponds" (1).

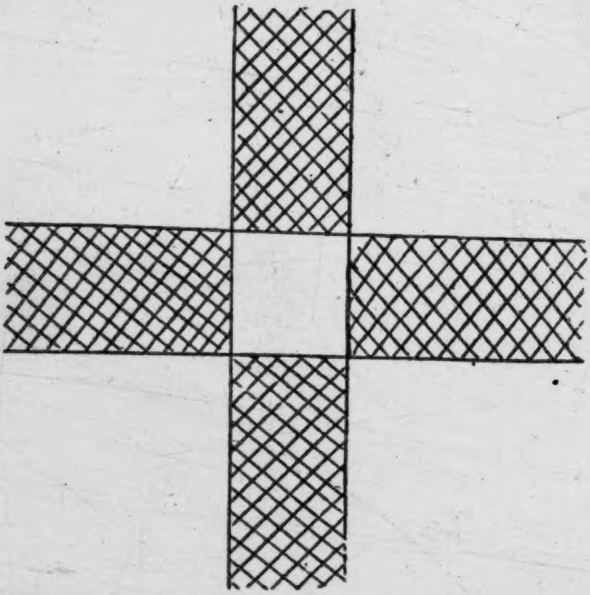

Fig. 3. —The arrival of the "twelve future waters." The central square represents the world and its four cardinal points, the arms of the cross, and the expansion of the waters. This drawing is made on a great number of objects and tools.

1. Dali sumangolo ye ko, ba, ko koro kono ko dyira ma ni fěw la.

773 The game consists in the player crossing the three waters that come
524 from each of the cardinal sides. (1) The drawing represents /33/

1. See Fig. 4. This figure is drawn on the ground: the central square represents the universe and the branches of the cross are the waters emanating from the cardinal sides and divided within each group into three parts.

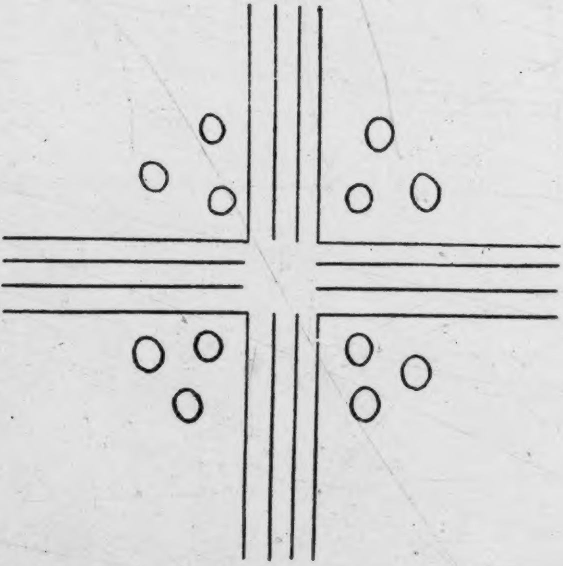

Fig. 4. —Game of the sumangolo, symbolizing the "arrival of the twelve future waters."

Three or four pebbles, depending on the sex of the player, are placed in the angles.

The player turns his back on the drawing and sings: "The little man has left the dance; the little man, the bad man has left the dance; another has not danced; may the difficulty of the water cease (tyeni bwora do la; tyeni, tyendyugu bwora do la; tye were te do ke nin kelenko; dyi geleya ka ta). He then names the three parts of water in the branch of the cross, while his partner

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points them out successively with his finger, saying: "cross the pond" (ko tike sumangolo), "cross the river" (ba tike sumangolo), "Soumangolo's descent is over" (sumangolo yigi bana). The partner removes the pebble immediately adjacent to the branch pointed to and asks: "Is this it?" (nin wa?). The player must answer: "Yes! Soumangolo." The game is again taken up in the same way at the starting point. When the onlooker places his finger on the now empty space, he asks: "Is this it?". The player must answer: "No! Soumangolo." The second pebble is removed and, to the same question, the player must then answer: "Yes! Soumangolo." Then follows the same chant, the same mimicry to get at the third pebble, which is also removed. The game is started over again in the same way, at the same starting point, and the second branch of the cross is reached. This continues until the four groups of pebbles placed in the angles are eliminated. The player who has answered without making a mistake is the winner; supposedly he has victoriously crossed "the twelve future waters."

The immediate effect of this game is to place the winner in a favorable position: his earnings increase; his enterprises succeed. But this is not all: it represents a cosmogonic operation of a high order. In the old days, sumangolo was [789] played to bring about rain in times of drought; every person playing it today contributes to the actual functioning of the universe as well as to the realization of future times awaited by men. [796] In certain villages the ancestor Soumangolo is celebrated yearly by a hearty feast at which millet beer is drunk and all day long the villagers play the game bearing his name.

The sumangolo is part of a series of figures, sometimes geometrical, which serve as the base for cosmogonic games of semi-ritual character such as the one described above.

773 [524] both the waters that flowed over the earth in the past and those that will spread over the world when Faro orders them (Fig. 4).

While awaiting that day, Faro continues his work. Taking the spiral route originally followed at the time of the reorganization of the world, every four centuries he travels about, inspecting the confines of the world, and then returns to the central point whence he surveys and governs the universe.

Chapter 2

The Representations

776 /34/ The duality of *glã*, in the microcosm that is man by his twin souls (*ni* and *dya*), is projected into the universe in the form of the pair, sky-earth, originally formed by the splitting of the spirit in two. The pair is represented by two supernatural powers, Faro and Pemba, to whom the principal Bambara cults are addressed.

Pemba is both spirit, strength, and matter. He is actually represented by an engraved piece of wood, symbol of plank originally responsible for the creation of all living things on earth. Theoretically, each family has one.

Faro, master of the word, reigns both in the sky and in the waters, which are the earthly reflection of the sky. In his capacity as master of the word and reorganizer of the universe, custodian of life, and guardian of souls, Faro, light and vibration, reigns in the seventh heaven. As master of the waters, he is described by the Bambara as a living being who has a body and is subject to metamorphosis. Yet to the initiated, he remains first and foremost a higher spirit, detached from contingencies and free in the exercise of the sovereign power conferred on him.

In order to understand fully the spirit of the Bambara religion, it is necessary to examine all the representations of these powers (1).

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1. A few authors have summarily described Faro, in particular, L. Tauxier in *Religion bambara* (pp. 142-145), in

776 the daily movement of the sun "which unfolds until evening." The
292 regularity of the rays symbolizes order and the classification of beings and things by Faro. The /41/ ends of the straw sprigs forming the spiral must remain free: they represent the infinite extension of Faro's realm and power. The hat is also a mask "which hides Faro's invisible face and through which he watches over the world" (1).

1. Today, a basket of considerably higher dimensions is made and used by women (See pl. I, b).

[643] The headgear yugu was formerly reserved for the king, who wore it under a turban. Certain deserving old men were also permitted to keep it. The rituals of making and wearing this headdress attest to the importance attributed to it. In particular, when an old man was
[695] suspected of having committed a serious offense, his hat was pierced with four holes representing the four cardinal points. He was then made to wear it, thus submitting him to Faro's judgment; if found guilty, he died.

776 As the spirit of the waters, Faro is supposed to belong to the white race and his body to be half albino flesh and half copper (pl. I, c).

776 A myth relates how his physical being was formed.

773 When Faro caused the streaming waters to descend on earth, he manifested himself for a long time only by his voice. He had no body, and since he needed appropriate matter to achieve one, he bided his time in the waters of the sea.

The winged spirit Téliko, who had the body of an albino, wished one day, in his arrogance and jealousy, to cross the world in order to know it and to dominate it. Faro, warned by the dogfish, decided to seize his enemy's body to complete his own. The albino, who always flew, fed on his own substance. He chewed his own flesh and his bones were soon bare; the marrow came out of them. It turned into red copper which fell into the sea and nourished Faro.

While Téliko descended to the water level, the dogfish that was watching him sang in order to attract him. The albino, aware of the danger, climbed back to the highest heaven, attempting to continue his flight and to reach the ends of the world. But he quickly lost strength and after his dya had fallen into the waters, his body was

176 173 seized by Faro who, after giving the genitals to the dogfish, completed his own physical being. His head and torso were made of the albino's flesh; his tail was of copper, as were his breasts, the "essential organs that fed and revived the world."

Faro's head can be compared to that of a white woman: his eyes are black and piercing; his hair is black, straight and long like a horsetail.

/42/ His ears are two holes with no outer ear, but are protected by two fins. Two necklaces of copper and gold hang from his neck and act as receivers, enabling him to hear all sounds and all words: the copper necklace reports idle talks of little importance; the gold one, secret conversations and powerful words. Faro puts all that the receivers collect in his fins, which are also the mirror reflecting all that his eyes have seen, both good or bad. He looks, shuts his eyes, and puts out his tongue; the images penetrate into his fins and classify themselves according to the regular movements of his tail. Thus, images and sounds are chronologically inscribed and can be brought before him at any moment "like a card pulled out of a file." In this way he knows to what use he can put things and events.

Both his hands—the right one male and the other female—and the end of his tail are webbed. Without any apparent sex, the preeminence of the feminine shape usually attributed to him recalls that he once impregnated himself in order to give birth to twin girls at the time the first waters streamed onto the earth.

Faro's appearance, which is linked to the problem of his origin, has been the object of legends and tales among the people. While these have attracted the scholar's attention, they present a serious problem. The legends are truncated, episodic, and often childish versions of an imposing myth, which is perfectly constructed and often expresses a dogma.

176 173 171 Two examples will be given of legends whose only interest here is to suggest further research into myths forming the framework for collective symbols. One of these legends is Peul /Fulani/, and the other Touareg /Tuareg/.

1. At a time when the Niger was but a narrow, deep river, a pregnant Peul woman asked some Bozo fishermen, who usually ferried people on request, to take her across the stream. At first they refused,

776 using her pregnancy as an excuse. As she insisted, they took her in their canoe, left her on the other shore, and went away.

773 As soon as she had landed, she was seized with pains of her labor. 171 The water of the river dried up at the point where it had been deepest. A voice came out of it, advising the woman to bear her child there. She went down into the pit after having left her clothes on the shore.

From her womb there first came forth milk, honey, and precious stones (*lulu*) which dropped onto the milk and honey as though on /43/ a straw mat. The woman was writhing with pain: the child finally appeared feet first and fell on the stones. His hands and feet were webbed.

As the water began to reappear, she attempted to get away, but in vain. Her husband, who had run up to the river's edge and had found her clothing there, saw her appear three times holding the child above the waters. She then disappeared, carried away by the current. Both she and the child became Faro spirits.

2. The village of Siyango, located fifteen kilometers from Nyono, has a very deep, perennial natural well called *ala kolo faro*, Faro of the well of god, "or *Mbata dyi*, " "water of *Mbata*." No one drinks its water. At the beginning of creation, a woman named *Mbata* lived alone and without water. She gave birth to twins. Exhausted and dying of thirst, she came out of the cave and, going down to the edge of the sand, prayed that God let her die if she could have no water. A spirit appeared and said to her: "God will entrust all waters to you; but he will first prepare you a home." A pit having been formed and filled with water, the woman stepped inside and was transformed into Faro. She then took her two children in with her; one became a male spirit and the other, a female spirit.

The pit extended underground through a kind of tunnel and Mbata, who had followed it down, came out again with so much water that the Niger was created.

The water of this well was soon forbidden to human beings, for if anyone looked at himself in it, Mbata would take hold of his shadow and make him fall. The corpse, using the underground passage, came out into the river. Those who threw themselves into the water sometimes also became Faro.

One day Mbata resumed her human shape and went to the market where she bought tomatoes. She asked those she met what they did for the spirit who owned the water they so much needed. She advised them to offer him copper and gold and to slaughter white rams at the well.

776 173 171 The following day, in order to give thanks to Faro, the villagers went to the edge of the well to the sound of drums and sacrificed the animal. The water swelled, seethed up, and formed a streat which still runs into the Niger today.

The composition of Faro's body determines the behavior of men in the rituals performed in his honor. While the usual offerings of blood, tomatoes, raw cereal mash, and baked cakes are consumed by him and returned to the givers in the shape of material possessions (children, millet, rain) or spiritual possessions (preservation of the souls of the living and the dead), the choice content of the offerings or sacrifices, the albino and copper, are reserved only for him and help increase his strength and stimulate his action. /44/ He absorbs them for his own sake; thus it is said that: "copper and albino are the sacrificial privileges of Faro."

Manifestations of Faro

776 824 All the atmospheric manifestations in the sky are evidence of Faro's presence and power. Rain, thunder, squalls, hail, and the rainbow all demonstrate his action. The lightning that bursts forth in the koblenkaba is a weapon, a small axe (sempere ni or dyele dẽ čini) which he throws from the top of the sky. If lightning strikes, it is a proof of his revenge. In the tree, the lightning hits the gecko (ala ǰugu), an evil animal which, when it lives in homes near the hearth, supposedly stirs up fires of conflagration. When lightning strikes men, it is in punishment for the breaking of a taboo. The stone axes, found at the point where lightning strikes, are collected and kept in the sanctuaries of the rain altars, to be used in case of drought or in the course of seasonal rites. They are also placed in the seeded fields, so that their strength, by communicating itself to the seed, may be beneficial to germination. [825]

776 On earth, Faro is conceived of as a unique being whose principal home is the Niger; he is present everywhere. In practice, the Bambara believe that a spirit haunts each torrent, pond, or well, each gourd of water, each dewdrop; they call him dyi tigi, "master of water."

776 On market day, a gourd filled with river water, called fle ndinye
823 faro, is placed close to the shore where the canoes land. To drink a
mouthful of this water is equivalent to a sacrifice to the spirit. The
782 drinker gives a cowrie as alms to the beggar who drew the water, for
"never can [Faro's] water be bought or sold" (1).

1. Ma ti dyi fere ma ti dyi sã.
See pl. II, b.

At Sama, the faro tyin is a kind of natural corridor located amidst the rocks bordering and overhanging the left bank of the river.

[825] The finches nesting there warn the boatmen of the place's sanctity by flying off; the boatmen then stop to pray. In passing, they throw an offering and those who have broken taboos purify themselves by washing. Each shows the spirit all that he carries with him. Two nearby trees, faro sõndyiri or "trees of Faro's sacrifice," are used to tie up the white bulls at twilight. The following day, they are thrown alive into the river with millet mash and cola nuts. At the bottom of the passage, on a fairly smooth surface, the image of Faro described above was drawn each year in the course of the ceremony celebrated by the society of the Komo.

/47/ Faro also haunts ponds and wells. In the village of Nango a natural well was revealed to a hunter by a white ram which appeared out of a thicket. The village was built after the discovery of the water hole where the inhabitants now worship the spirit.

In the village of Siyango, the water of the well in which Faro
resides is tabooed, the site of the well being the seat of all the re-
ligious ceremonies of the villagers. There the newborn are presented,
[755] and deaths and marriages announced. The sick are treated by being
made to drink the well water and wash in it. From his herd, each
person offers every year an animal which is thrown alive into the pit.
[681] Finally, those condemned to death are executed by drowning in the
same spot.

Faro's Auxiliaries

776 Faro has placed spirits as his representatives in the skies, in space,
173 on earth, in the trees, and in the rocks of the mountains. They see

776 to it that all things proceed in good order. In addition he is accom-
773 panied by auxiliaries who participate in his work.

The most important of these is his "secretary," the *bolokuruni*, a blacksmith of the black race who had lost the use of his hands and who went to live with Faro after his crippling.

This blacksmith lived on earth at a time when craftsmen did not know the use of tongs and used to seize the red iron in their bare hands to carry it to the anvil. The man who was to become Faro's companion had reached an advanced age and was still practicing his art when one day both his wrists were broken by the hammer of a clumsy apprentice. Mad with pain, he ran to the river and threw himself in to ease his suffering. Seeing that in his grief the man had turned to him, Faro took pity on him and kept him at his side. His body was never found and a diviner told his family the happy event of his disappearance.

The *bolokuruni* accompanies Faro and assists him in his incessant labor. He is the one who consults the register in Faro's fins in which everything is inscribed. "The requested image is sent from the fins into the pupil of Faro's eye which the blacksmith watches." As this image is reflected in the servitor's eye, he uses it according to the orders he receives. Thus he verifies daily the count of those living and dead.

776 /48/ The spirit has numerous auxiliaries among the animals. His
825 airborne messenger is the swallow. It never rests upon the impure earth and its wings, reproduced on the headdress of the old men, symbolize the words it carries. The scorpion's stinger is the weapon given by Faro to the original twins: whoever attacks or wounds a twin is stung by this insect. The crocodile is the executor of Faro's important works: it kills those guilty of breaking taboos, or chases undesirables away from the river's edge. The scaleless fish, called *kokoni*, directed the first streaming of the waters on earth (1). The

1. See p. 33.

tneni (2) is Faro's "ordure" which it is the duty of someone to sweep

2. *Alestes nigrilineatus*.

776 773 At death, he takes back the spiritual principles of the diseased and preserves them in water so as to reintegrate them into another body, thus using forces which are eternally reusable. The product of the "shedding" (mana or folo) of souls which remain on the altars is for him in a way of constantly verifying the account of those living and dead who are entrusted to him.

On earth, men are indebted to him for all they possess. He gave them language, an expression of thought, and taught them its usage, having warned them against the misuse and evil use of words.

The techniques of survival, another expression of "Faro's words," so necessary to their lives since they have to provide the means for ~~their~~ existence, were revealed to them by the spirit. He helped them with his sovereign power, either by directly providing them with new tools, or by inspiring some of them to develop new techniques by putting to use observed facts. In this way, he gave the Bozo fishing nets which enabled them to catch the first recorded animal food, the fish; likewise, he encouraged among the Bambara the discovery of weaving through observing the spider's web.

He also gave men certain seeds which became the origin of farming, such as cotton and fonio, both of them being known before millet and the other cereals.

As proprietor of cowrie shells and metals, he is the master of wealth, distributing it as he pleases. Thus, one who owns precious 182 metal is responsible to Faro for it and owes him a part of one's earnings. For this reason many offerings are made by throwing gold or copper into the river.

776 241 Faro's deed is essential where the Bambara's main activity, agricultural work, is concerned. Every man with dignity and nobility must cultivate the earth in order to honor Faro. Each stroke of the hoe is a wound inflicted upon the earth and a punishment for its impurity. Each stroke of the hoe humiliates Mousso Koroni and purifies the earth. Faro watches over the soul and the vital force of the seeds. Only he can provide rain necessary to germination, for rain contains the soul, (ni) of the cereal grains as does the water of ponds and streams which one collects in case of drought.

776 774 241 Millet receives its soul as soon as it gets the humidity of the earth, and from that time on, it accompanies the various stages of germination with utterances which, at the beginning of the world, could be heard. As soon as /54/ it has received the rain, the seed splits and says: "My place is assigned." Then the sprout comes out of the earth

55/ etymology are often associated with an historical event (1). The most familiar names are derived from those of the mythical families (2). On the other hand it must be noted that a *dyamu*, which applies to a great number of total families living in various regions, is not always reserved for the Bambara groups only. The *dyamu* Kouloubali, for example, also belongs to certain Somono and some blacksmiths. This means that a *dyamu* is not only attributed to a family in its broadest meaning, but also to people apparently unrelated to it. Another typical fact makes it impossible for us to give the term "family" the meaning it has in our societies: a person changes his name when he leaves his country. A Dogon becomes Keyta when he goes to live in Mandé. A Bambara Traoré, if he goes to the land of the Wolof, becomes a Diop (3). Finally, an important family may have several names and devices.

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1. On the historical aspects of the *dyamu*, see P. Humblot, *Du nom propre et des appellations chez les Malinké*; M. Delafosse, *Des soi-disant clans totémiques de l'Afrique occidentale* /The So-called Totemic Clans of West Africa/, Ch. Monteil, *Les Empires du Mali*.

[113] 2. The Bambara myth mentions family names that were determined by Faro when he classified beings and things. It is still generally said of this event: "When Faro travelled, he broke the support for Mousso Koroni, and an agreement as to names was made by him" (*faro tama na muso koroni ǰigi kari la, dyama dyamy ko la dili kera faro fę*).

3. An investigation of this very important aspect of Sudanese social organization remains to be made.

784 It has not been possible heretofore to consider all aspects of the various taboos. On the other hand, the great number of versions concerning their origin indicates that the current story, told to all who pass by, conceals much deep notions of the categories that indicate the bonds linking men to animals and plants (1). It would also be appropriate to study the relations between the species, between animals and plants and minerals in terms of the spiritual forces that animate them.

Whatever it may be, the taboo confers on man his title of nobility; not to possess one is degrading. It assures the protection of the group that observes it. Thus, the hyenas of Konodimini protect the village inhabitants who feed them.

Examples of taboo:

784 773 The Traoré family has crocodile flesh as its taboo. An ancestor called Makyon, having transformed himself into a crocodile, fed his family during a famine that lasted six years; he fished and brought the catch to the members of his family.

In the seventh year, since the famine still raged, the Traoré decided to kill him for food. In the morning, when he appeared with the fish he had caught, an old man advanced to attack him. /81/ The animal stopped him and predicted he would die if he pursued his plan. The man paid no attention and wounded the beast which had enough strength left, however, to return to the river. The old man regretted his act and the others tried to disassociate themselves from the responsibility. The following morning the crocodile came out of the river and died at their feet so that they might see what they had done. The guilty man was in turn killed by his family and the two corpses were buried together in the same shroud. When all was over, the chief revealed that Maydon /sic/ was a member of the family, that as a member of the same race he had been feeding his kin

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1. See also L. Tauxier. La Religion bambara (Théorie des Ntana et des tabous /Theory of the Ntana and Taboos/), pp. 114-138.

784 during the famine, and that in the future the crocodile would be taboo
773 to the Traoré as a sign of gratitude for his gift and as an apology for
the murder committed.

The taboo of the Diara family is the lion, whose name they bear. In the olden days two old friends were always in the habit of hunting together with arrows and spears. In the course of a long famine, their weapons broke and they were not able to find others. In order to feed their families, they attacked wild animals with bare hands; the one would stun his victims with his fists, and the other would skin them.

Gradually the life they were leading changed their behavior. They no longer washed, their hair and beards grew, and thick hair covered their body. Their nails became so long and so hard that they used them to slice meat and to dig the earth. They even forgot the language they had spoken and only communicated by grunts.

They fought with the spirits to gain a foothold in those places ordinarily reserved for the latter. They no longer returned to their village. Their parents searched for them, but as soon as they saw people, they ran away. They ended by walking on all fours and appeared like the animals they pursued.

One day as they lay sleeping next to each other, they mated and the stronger one impregnated the weaker to give birth, a little later, to two lion cubs. The men who saw them in the bush with their offspring decided that hereafter they could not kill a lion for it had their blood in its veins. Even today, when a Diara meets a lion, the animal lies down, "so ashamed to be descended from the mating of two men who had become beasts."

784 These two examples, selected from many others, illustrate the relations between man and animal. These appear even more clearly in the mechanism set off by the breaking of the adopted taboo.

Indeed, the first consequence of any infraction is the offender's loss of the seeds in his collarbone, a symbol of his basic sustenance. He becomes "an empty granary" and, deprived of his strength, is unable to contend against that of the wounded animal /82/ attacking him. The pain he feels at that moment is proof of the state of his physical and psychic inferiority. Any breaking of a taboo affects first the eyes, then the other openings of the body.

784 If the animal is wounded, it delegates its *tere* to warn the guilty
783 man of the sin committed, but makes no attempt on his life since
it is his ally. On the other hand, its death liberates its *nyama* which

Chapter 5

TECHNOLOGY

773 The Bambara who are conscious of the evolution of their civilization trace it far back in time. The history of their origin as well as the feats and exploits of their most distant ancestors are not only inscribed in their memories but also in present day ceremonies and often in the material products of the culture, secular as well as religious.

The invention and evolution of technology, in the course of which the spiritual and the material, revelation and human effort, all work together, give rise to legends and representations which are characteristic of Bambara psychology (1).

> 1. What we relate here concerning the origin of technology is exclusively a summary of what the natives tell. The context, in the form of practical daily rituals, of which the forge is the best example, is sufficient and requires no commentary.

According to Bambara thought, all technology is an atonement taught man by Faro, a palliative to cosmic disorder, generally induced by a broken taboo. Famine, war, epidemics, misery, and death, which such disorders bring about, are compensated for —as far as possible—by new technologies which are revealed as needs arise. All these exist potentially in the wooden club used to smash and beat the fiber, which was the first raw material used (2).

[171]

> 2. The wooden club is a duplicate of the mythical blacksmith's hammer which contained the techniques and the cultivable grains (see p. 53, n. 1). The same origin of technology is given by the Dogon, see Dieu d'Eau, p. 84.

773
829 The first works were made by "primitive men," ancestors of the Bambara of whom the following description is given:

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829 "They were covered with shaggy body hair, beard and hair; their long nails resembled claws; their teeth resembled fangs. They knew no language and had no clothing to protect themselves from bad weather; they lived in holes dug in the /99/ ground or in habitable natural caves, at the bottom of which they slept and kept their prey. To defend themselves against wild animals, they placed wooden spikes and pointed rocks at the entrance of these quarters. These deep holes communicated with each other and together formed regular underground villages" (Fig. 6) (1).

[332]

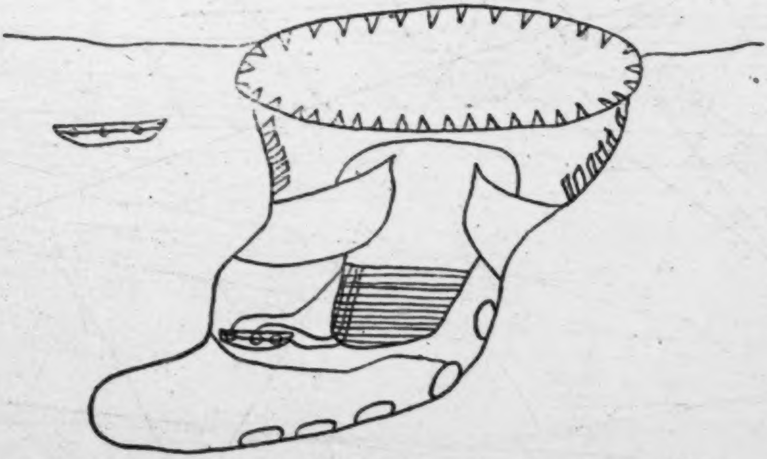

Fig. 6 —Underground home of primitive men. The entrance is guarded by pointed rocks. In the center, the drawing of the first loom invented by men. At the left, the shuttle (see p. 181). (Drawing by an informant.)

[172] 1. Some of these excavations in the neighborhood of Ségou, which may still be visited today, are venerated by the Bambara as ancestral homes.

Since they did not know language these men communicated by means of head gestures, movements of the feet and hands, and grunts. When a difference arose between them, before using their hands they drew back their lips and measured their long canines to determine who the winner would be. "Later they were given language, but

773 829 knowing its power, men at first used it sparingly. A question was never discussed twice. If a request was reiterated, after an objection, the party requested would bow and agree at the risk and peril of the person making the request."

Men first lived by gathering and later by fishing and hunting without tools, using only /100/ hands to seize their prey, and nails and teeth to tear and cut it. Gradually this primitive life changed; technologies developed one by one according to a chronology which the present Bambara still remember.

773 The first raw material used, according to a tradition which is not confined to the Bambara alone, was the fiber of the nyama tree (1) (nyama fu) out of which were woven the first fishing nets, the first sling, and the first loincloth (2).

When they began to work the soil, they developed a set of primitive wooden tools. At the same time, they invented a throwing weapon made of the same material. Wood remained in use for a long time; the invention of weaving and crude pottery goes back to this period. Later, they came to know stone tools, iron, and the forge. The art of house building, about which no myth has been gathered until now, seems to have developed much later, after the discovery of iron (3).

The study of this assemblage of tools and of their ritual use is most suggestive because they are a first indication of technological

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[824] 1. Bauhinia reticulata (in the north), Bauhinia Thonningii (in the south).

[171] 2. The Dogon also mention this fiber as the first material used by men. With them as with the Bambara, it has a ritual function. See M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau, p. 26.

3. Certain parts of the investigation concerning technology have been summarized by the author in "l'Arme et l'outil chez les anciens Bambara /Weapons and Tools among the Ancient Bambara/," Africa, Vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 105-111.

773 evolution. They also indicate different stages in the development of the forms. These may be observed in certain museums of arts and crafts which, in some villages, are the sanctuaries where ancestral material is kept. Finally, in numerous ceremonies and in the education of the young, they constitute precious milestones in the history of the Bambara people.

Fishing and Hunting

773
226 According to tradition, the fishing net was the first instrument of technology taught men, and fish constituted the primeval food.

"One day, four women went to the shore of the Niger to collect sand which they used for bedding and which also served as food since they no longer received any from the sky. As they advanced, the sand drew back so that they soon found themselves very far from their usual stopping place. They /101/ then wished to return, but Faro prevented them from doing so and asked them to work for him, promising them a precious gift in return. They "swept up the spirit's excrements" for seven days; on the eighth day, "the words began with Faro." He showed them two fishing nets, *dyo*, and explained to them their manufacture and use. One had very fine loops, *dyonyemise* (literally, net of the thin eyes), and the other larger loops, *dyonyekumba* (literally, net with big eyes). Both were made of the fiber of the *nyama* tree. The first was reserved for *tneni* (1) fishing, called "Faro's excrements," and the second for the capture of larger fish such as sheatfish, gurnard, and catfish.

825

"For seven days the women were taught by the spirit and his captive; on the eighth day they were liberated. Seven days after these events they began to fish and to nourish themselves with fish.

"But they soon abused the gift they had received. Taking turns day and night, and fishing without interruption at the very place of the revelation, they taxed the spirit's patience. The latter appeared to them above the water, holding his girl twins in his arms; he complained of their harshness, their stupidity, and the weariness they caused him. Reclaiming the secret he had given them, he indicated to them that fishing would hereafter be a man's job and that they would only have the right to sell the fish.

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1. *Alestes nigrinileatus.*

773 226 "Despite their tears, the spirit gave the nets to three men who were present and repeated his teaching. The women left the water's edge while the men turned their new knowledge to account. But at the end of a few days the women became hungry; they went to ask for fish which for seven days was denied them. They then united with the fishermen and the Bozo people were the issue of these first marriages."

At first, fishing was reserved for the Bozo people alone and it was only later that the Bambara learned from the Bozo how to make and manage the fishing nets as well as how to carry out the numerous rites centered around them.

773 226 411 The Bambara practiced hunting and gathering before becoming farmers. It is interesting to compare the fishing net with the sling (ndõfere) now mostly used by children. One of its models (Fig. 7) is described as having been the most ancient of their weapons of the hunt and war. The central portion of this sling which in reality had the shape of a net /102/ (dyoba, literally, big net) woven from nyama fibers and similar to the one used by fishermen, was drawn out into two thongs. The right one (kinintegere, literally, tegere of the right) ended in a sort of a bouquet of wooden lamellae (tegere), making it easier to hold. The left one (missema, literally, little thing) or numan (literally, left) was free. The man would hold the weapon by both ends, putting stones in the net and "blowing on the right thong to give breath" to the sling. Placing his left foot forward, would twirl it rapidly and let go the left thong, thus releasing the projectiles.

[532]

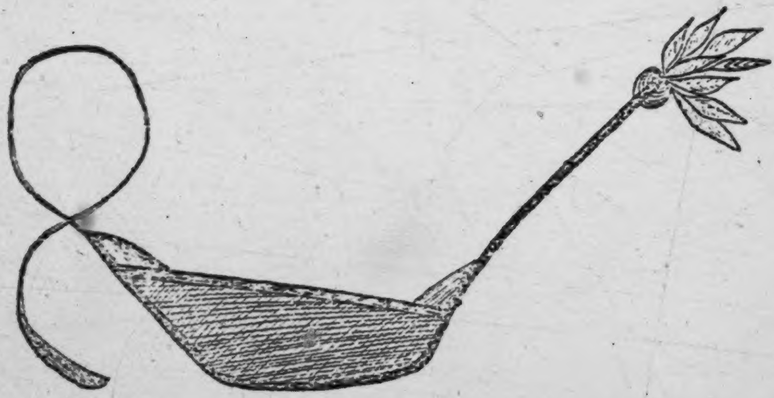

Fig. 7 — Sling (ndõfere) of the ancient Bambara (Drawing by an informant).

● 773 224 411 Propitiatory sacrifices were offered on the wooden lamellae and the blood ran along the thong into the net. In addition, the hunter would saturate his weapon with the blood of wounded or killed animals to give his contrivance the victims' strength and to increase his own skill.

The *ndõfere* was used for a long time as a military weapon.

Weaving

773 286 The invention of weaving is linked to the discovery of cotton cultivation. The latter appeared long before that of millet at a time when the only known tools were those of wood used to scratch /103/ the earth at the base of the wild grasses with which men nourished themselves (1).

The myth mentions simultaneously the appearance of cotton and the invention of spindles and shuttle; it does not mention the loom which appeared later. The tale of the manufacture of the first clothing also includes details on dyeing which seems to have been known at a very early date.

When the men returned from the bush where they had been cultivating the *norolã sise* (commonly known as *cram-cram*) and the *narakata*, a kind of couch grass which provided them with edible seeds, they would often abandon their wooden hoes at the crossroads in honor of the Soba spirit.

One day an old man who used to pass nearby was summoned by the spirit, saying: "To all of you who leave your hoes as you pass by, I wish to give something to hide your nakedness; but I will do it if you offer me a sacrifice."

The old man reported this incident to the men of his generation, who decided to sacrifice an albino at the crossroads. The spirit then told them to take the seed which they would find at the intersection of the roads and taught them how to sow and harvest it.

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[171] 1. See p. 154. The Dogon admit the same priority of weaving over cultivation of cereal grains. See M. Griaule. *Dieu d'eau*, pp. 31ff.

773 286 "This," he said, "will be useful to you later as clothing." Men first made skirts of leaves and fibers which they used as loincloth. Then they sent their women to sing and give thanks to the spirit. When they had sown and harvested, they placed the cotton on the crossroads as a gesture of homage (1). The spirit then taught the wife of a farmer, who used to come and greet him everyday at noon. One day she saw at the crossroads a bird whose name means "little bird who spins the cotton of God" (ala ka kwori parata kono ni). It held white fibers in its beak, pulled them out with its feet, and rolled the thread thus obtained around the body with its wings. "Watch the bird," said the spirit. "In this way he spins and weaves in the sky in order to protect his eggs. Cotton should be used in this way. Your death is near. Begin work from tomorrow on this little stick," he added, pointing to a spindle, "and teach the women of your family and the children."

The woman first spun awkwardly and went down to the river to show Faro her work and to ask for help. A fish came out of the water and gave her a spindle whorl in the shape of a ball, showed her how to adapt it to the spindle, and explained to her its use and divine origin. It announced to her that hereafter similar spindle whorl would fall from the sky with the rain for the women who spun cotton.

/104/ Having resumed her work with this new tool the woman was successful in it and taught her companions. They then threw their first threads into the Niger as an offering to the spirit so that the secret might not be lost. All artisans did the same with their first piece of work (2).

1. This custom is still observed today.

[782] 2. Every first piece of work is thrown into the river as an offering to Faro. It is a guarantee for the artisan that his skill will be retained and that his technique will improve. Actually the young spinners of Ségou throw their first spindle into the river. In addition, the parata bird which taught weaving is captured, its wings and feet are roasted, and the powder is given to whoever begins the appreticeship so that it may be over rapidly.

773 286 Seventeen days after the apprenticeship the old woman died. Her companions continued to spin but since they did not work on wood (1), they had to ask the men to carve spindles, thus revealing their secret.

Some time after this the spirit sent a spider to weave its web at the opening of one of the underground holes used for habitation (see Fig. 6), where lived a man called Bambou Diara. The latter watched the insect and they called in his friend, Kari Mariko. They wished to imitate the web by using the spider's thread which, however, proved too fragile to work with. They then asked the women for their cotton threads. Holding a twig of straw on which he had wound the thread, and having secured the warp, as had the insect, to the two rocks protecting the entrance, Bambou imitated the spider and made a kind of round fan, shaped like the web with coarse loops. When he had woven two, he joined them with a rope made of nyama bark, thus obtaining the first loincloth (mbogo nimba).

Kari Mariko had watched the work and had noticed the difficulty with which his friend threaded the woof through the warp. He got the idea of winding the thread on a thin stick more resistant than the straw and of placing this in a stone trough which would slide easily between the elements of the warp. This was the first shuttle (kuruni). He wound the thread on it in three bobbins, the symbol of masculinity, thus consecrating weaving as man's work. The threads were then stretched horizontally and the shuttle was used vertically, thus cutting across the warp each time it went up or down (Fig. 6).

All came to see the work of the two artisans and named the village where they lived the "village of intelligence, hakilidugu." They learned from them the art of weaving and today the names of the two friends are still invoked over the plate of food which each apprentice must eat before beginning his instruction.

Following the breaking of a taboo in the course of a fishing expedition on the river, the spindle whorls ceased to fall from the sky. Since then, fishermen /105/ produce them by mixing clay with karite oil and drying them in the sun.

[412] 1. Except for cooking, a woman never uses a knife, an object reserved for men.

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[782]
The loom was invented later. The positions of the warp and woof and the practice of breaks and knots were modified. The loom was formerly the object of nocturnal human sacrifices whereas the shuttle received lesser sacrifices in the day time (1).

1. At present, looms are set in the ground above a piece of pottery, the bottom of which is pierced before the pot is buried.

The stone on which women clean the cotton, kaba, represents the sky and recalls the divine origin of cotton and of the technology relating to it.

Clothing

291 Clothing which has intimate contact with the human body is a part of the person wearing it. On the other hand, the material of which it is made, and the various elements which compose it and which are associated with one or another aspect of Bambara metaphysics, exercise an influence on the wearer. The choice of clothing is rarely a matter of chance or individual taste and the various manifestations of social or religious life usually obligate people to wear appropriate clothing, the symbolism of which is linked to the action or circumstance under consideration. The role of the garment appears as early as infancy: a newborn wears around his loins a cotton thread, dyura dyuru, which is both a protection (for it "solidifies his spinal column") and a foreshadowing of what he will wear later. When he reaches the required age, a family reunion takes place on the day he is dressed for the first time. Before this, it is necessary for him to have dreamed of his first garment and to have talked to his mother of this dream; she then begins to spin the necessary cotton. Before dressing, the initiate proceeds with an ablution called mayadyi (literally, water of the person's action) in water taken from the Niger or from a pond of Faro's. The dressed child is told "that he is now a man and may become a member of the ndomo (2)"; then his kinsfolk tease

2. Society of the uncircumcised (see p. 222).

291 him and joke with him, indicating by semi-ritual jokes his accession to a new status.

291 Men's first garment was the skirt of ṅyama fibers (Fig. 8, A). The bark was beaten and prepared by means of a club, a wooden club,
773 gosilande or kuruninde, which is /106/ supposed "to contain potentially all human technology invented as the need arose." It is said of this club that it is "the mold of perfection and the place from which all useful things issue." The club was also originally a primitive instrument of rhythm (1); the hammering of blows "chased away the evil

[783] 1. kow dyele bwo yoro. On certain occasion when the Komo masks are brought out, the chief carries on his head the gosilande which represents the universe. Certain collective purifications are also executed with this instrument at the crossroads (see p. 186).

[755] sounds emitted by Téliko at the time of his revolt." Even today, a deafmute is seated near the gosilande which is prayed to so that he may be rid of his infirmity. The clothing of a woman in labor, in
[844] order to purify it, is beaten with the gosilande at the same time the infant utters its first cry. Dyed clothing is beaten not only to make the color penetrate, but also to chase out any impurity.

When they first learned about cotton, and after the invention of weaving, the Bambara made garments which are in disuse today but of which they still make specimens for ritual purposes. In fact, with the exception of the loincloth, these ancient garments are worn only during religious ceremonies and their principal function is to represent the ancestors who were their progenitors.

291 The first garment woven was an imitation of the fiber skirt. The
773 men made loincloth (mboko nimba) still worn today by the uncir-
386 cumcised and dyed it yellow, wolo (2) (Fig. 8, B), a color which

[824] 2. This dye is made with the leaves of the ngalama (Angeissus leiocarpus), which are boiled, dried, and pulverized. The powder is put in water.

represents that which a certain disease gives to the black's skin,

291 which they got rid of by means of this dye. A live swallow was im-
773 mersed in the liquid, which was obtained by soaking the leaves and to
386 which was mixed ground charcoal, and later was released, thus conse-
crating the dye into which the loincloth was soaked.

291 The next garment was made of two strips, dyo kama (literally,
773 shoulder nets), which were hooked on to each arm. The strip on the
right arm, representing male, was attached by three thin straps (male
number). The other was attached by four straps, four and left being
female. The wearer would lie down over the strip on the right side

[532]

[787]

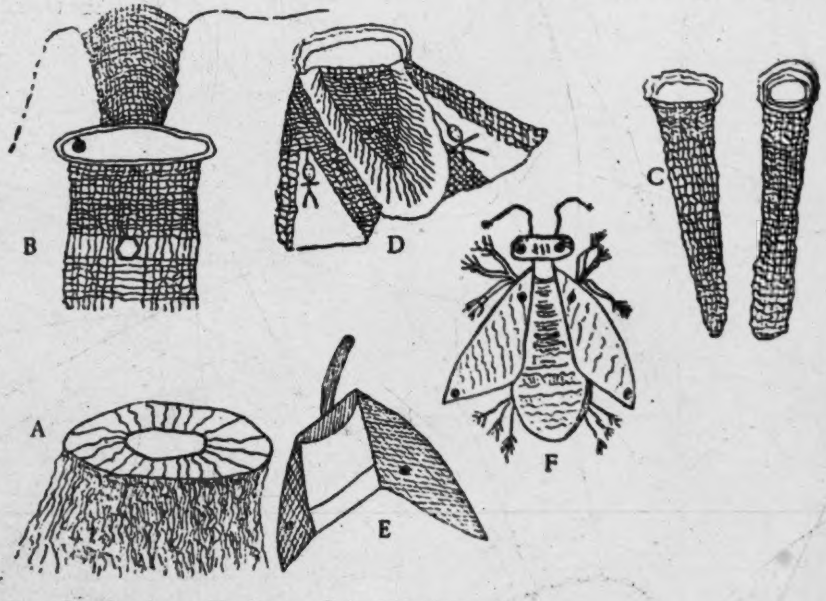

Fig. 8—Ancient Clothing of the Bambara.

(A) The skirt of nyama fibers; (B) the loincloth; (C) the "shoulder nets"; (D) the tunic; (E) the bonnet are made of dyed and woven cotton threads. (F) the dung beetle, an insect which plays a part in geomancy. (Drawing by an informant).

and would cover himself with that on the left (Fig. 8, C).

Next, men made a kind of short tunic, wǫlǫ kama (literally, partridge wings), which was dyed red (Fig. 8, D). At the top of the openings where the arms passed were suspended /107/ two little figures (mani) carved out of wood. These represented the souls of the wearer, "took their life from the veins, and gave their strength to the

291 773 arms on which they rested." The center of the garment represented the chest, the liver, and the heart of the wearer; the horizontal threads the veins and arteries. The supporting collar, made of three bark fibers of the *da* tree, was "the individual's double during his sleep." Sweat was the offering made to this garment. In the cold season it was replaced by salt. The first time a man wore this garment he would pray: "Garment, we wear you in the name of our old ancestors and in honor of those who created you."

The ancestors drawn on the sanctuaries and the granaries are all equipped with caps, *banfla*, which they wore in olden times (Fig. 8, E). At the top were affixed a wooden picket and a hyena tail, through which the sky gave its strength to man who in return /108/ would send his "through the wind." The cap (*čema*), made of strips of yellow dyed cotton, had wings (bamadae), symbol of the ears: the lines on the right wing assured numerous offspring and those on the left, a secure and righteous life. The wings also recall those of the swallow, the water spirit's messenger entrusted with carrying into the womb, at the moment of sexual union, the drop of blood containing the child's life and soul. The two indigo dyed spots on each wing are the symbol of this womb.

The cap as a whole (*farofla*) was the "link maintaining the life of man," who is himself represented by the line which encircles the cap. It protected him against cold, disaster, and death. It was also the symbol of Faro's home and power. When he received it, the wearer would say: "Wing of the cap, cap, son of Faro, I have drawn you with strength. Oh, swallow" (1).

After the invention of the loom, clothes were no longer made piece by piece. Bands of cotton made by weavers were used, cut up, fitted, and sewn—a technique still observed today throughout the Sudan.

291 773 531 There exists a "science of the bands," *finew tno* or *finew dongo*, which is familiar to all those who wear the traditional clothes. It

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1. *Bamadę*, *bonza*, *farodẽ*, *ni be ke ola ni barikaye*, *nanale*. The primitive clothes described above were observed by an informant at Bougoula and are presented to the postulants at the moment of their initiation.

291 173 531 rests upon the knowledge of the symbolism of colors, drawings, and numbers. The bands are numerous and each one represents one aspect of metaphysics, one fragment of the myth. Thus, the story of Mousso Koroni is told in four successive bands (Pl. III, from 5 to 8). The wearing of the bands depends upon the physical or moral state of the wearer, upon his functions and activities (1).

> 1. We give below the description of a certain number of these bands, chosen from the ones most representative; we intend to publish a complete study of this aspect of a technique most revealing of Sudanese psychology.

291 173 531 122 The white band, *finin muku dye*, represents Faro, being as white and luminous as the sky and the rays of the sun. White denotes wisdom and purity of the spirit, the purity of blood. The one who appears in public thus dressed is respected because he affirms thereby his desire to follow religious rules. It is also the color of offerings made to the spirit. A piece of white cloth is sometimes hung over the door of a home where people have just /109/ made a sacrifice. A sick man throws three white bands into the river, or gives them to a person poorer than himself. A white cloth, worn over a man's shoulder, "strengthens his nerves and articulations." At nightfall every evening, all the children put on a tunic of this color. Thus, despite the darkness, they are "in Faro's light" and will recognize each other in times to come as the children of one father, one family, one blood. The marriage veil is made up of eleven bands each measuring eleven cubits; these are not sewn together but rather basted in spirals. Thus dressed, the woman goes in the night to her future husband's village, in the luminous word of Faro and surrounded by the twenty-two elements of creation, the eleven spirals intersecting each other on the right and left. A dead person is also dressed in white: trousers with six strips representing man and his *dya*, and a hat with three bands. He is rolled up in a blanket of the same color and visitors place upon the corpse pieces of white cloth or cowrie shells. The whole signifies good will, sincerity, and devotion toward Faro of the deceased who must be "white under the earth" if he has not broken any taboos.

The opposite of white is indigo, *konofi*, which symbolizes darkness and impurity and which is worn in most cases where the spirit's

291 activity is not involved. Nevertheless, a woman puts on an indigo
773 loincloth the day she resumes sexual relations with her husband after
822 the end of her menses; she retains it until pregnancy. When she is sure
531 of her condition, she puts the loincloth in the sun to purify it and will
place the newborn child in it to remind him later that he owes his
life to his parents. A dead person who has broken a taboo is buried
[764 in an indigo shroud, the only reminder of light being a white cotton
784] thread which is placed on the corpse as an expression of apology and
forgiveness. Since indigo is taboo in most of Faro's sacred places, no
one wears it during sacrifices or religious ceremonies.

White and indigo complement each other. To twist a white and
[789] an indigo thread together to make a string used for holding an amulet
is to "roll together happiness and unhappiness, as in life."

The *dye wolo* is the color of yellow copper. It is in this color
that the newly circumcised are dressed after the operation and until
they are healed. Red, *mbegu*, is the color of copper and of blood.
Hunters who wear a tunic of *mbegu* are "covered with a garment of
blood." The band *kayo* (Pl. III, a, 1), in which are found these two
colors, indigo and white, reproduces the rainbow: the white intervals
are symbols of the word and of purity. /110/ A person making a
sacrifice sews a piece of this band on his clothing to indicate that he
is circumcised, that he is a hunter, and that he is truthful in his
actions and words. A band is hung at the gate of the northern entry
to the village in order to protect its inhabitants from dangers coming
from outside. A man wears it when he has been ill or has suffered
serious financial or family difficulties. On the altars, on the doorways,
the colors are represented by millet mash, blood, and kola nut extract.
[821 As the rainbow keeps away the rain and dries up water, the *kayo*
784] strip may not be worn near the river or during sexual intercourse, for
it is Faro's taboo.

The band *sirakele* (literally, a road) (Pl. III, a, 2) represents Faro's descent from the seventh part of the sky down to the seventh part of the earth, the indigo stripe being the *dyi fi*, "black water," the spirit's earth seat. When put on the loincloth of a married woman, it expresses her rectitude and the good behavior she intends to maintain towards her husband. When worn by a traveler, it prevents him from losing his way.

291 The *buguni* (1) (Pl. III, a, 3) is "the sun ray Faro gave to Pemba
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821 1. The word designates the band's place of
531 origin, Bougouni.

291 for his great earthly labors." When clouds form, it is said that Faro
773 "is showing the buguni in the sky" and the diviners advise each person
821 to wear a strip in homage to the spirit and to facilitate the coming of
531 rain. The geomaneer gently rubs the earth, where he is going to
draw signs, with a cloth of this design. It is as though he has injected
sun, light, and truth into the work he must execute on the impure soil.

291 This band is also called kolõso mako, "necessity of the mixture,"
773 or kami, guinea hen, whose plumage as well as whose fragility the
band betokens. In this respect, the buguni symbolizes man's weak-
ness and incompleteness. When placed on a convalescent's clothing,
[155] it signifies that the latter has lost some of his vitality during his illness. Dressed in this fashion, he goes to the Niger and bathes so that Faro might heal him. A man who has suffered severe financial losses also wears the buguni. At the market, in public meetings, he will not be made to pay his share of beer because of the band's silent language which is clearer than words. If a widower remarries, he sews a piece of it on his cap in memory of his first wife. The knife of the person offering a sacrifice is wrapped in the buguni, for it "never has enough blood," also in certain boli which continually crave it.

/111/ In conclusion, the squares of indigo cloth represent the void and darkness; the white ones, fulfillment and light. To wear the buguni signifies hope, the impure or weak man hoping to become pure, strong, and fulfilled.

The bugunimba (literally, large buguni) or nyedẽ (literally, threads of the eye) has the same symbolism. A wound is bandaged with it. A man who has broken a taboo wears a cap of this material; an illegitimate child also wears it. The buguni tyekorole which symbolizes the impurity of Mousso Koroni is used to implore Faro's help in great calamities and for misfortunes without remedy. Thus, the body of a stillborn child is covered with it.

291 The buguni nyama (Pl. III, a, 4), made of twenty-two alternating
773 indigo and white squares, symbolizes creation in its harmonious and
822 orderly entirety. Its separation into two layers recalls the duality of
801 nature, represented by a thin stripe through the middle. A happy
man sews an entire strip into his tunic. The man who has difficulties
of any kind divides it lengthwise and pins a small piece at the bottom
of his garment.

291 The nyeba, "big eye, " or koloso tyema, "mixed masculinity"
113 (with femininity), (Pl. III, a, 11) also represents creation, here sym-
822 bolized by the double layer of five indigo and white bands (1). At
801

the same time the cloth also symbolizes the complete man, said to be both masculine and feminine. A newborn child, but never an illegitimate one, is clothed in it.

291 The band soli (Pl. III, a, 5) represents the good conduct of Mousso
113 Koroni at the beginning of her life as well as her betrayal which brought disorder on earth.

531 In olden times, people who had committed bad deeds were obliged
[764] to wear it. Today it is used as the shroud for a child who dies immediately after birth; a strip is sewn to the garment of a recently excised girl or to the loincloth of a woman insured in childbirth. When differences or conflicts arise within a family, a fragment is placed in amulets which the women must then wear.

The wutu nyekorotike (Pl. III, a, 6) pictures the disorderly voyage
[828] of Mousso Koroni, her despair and her madness. This pattern is reserved for insane people in order to warn others of their condition.

The band gombo (Pl. III, a, 7) recalls the pursuit of Mousso /112/ Koroni by the god Pemba into the depths of the sky and the earth.

The band tyatyeli (Pl. III, a, 8) a picture of Mousso Koroni's defeat, symbolizes human work. It is given to a courageous and energetic woman. It is circulated among those present at religious ceremonies and its mere presence indicates that nothing here below is obtained without work and that all stems from work. To wear this band strengthens the man who is entering upon a task in a village other than his own.

The band saki is the koblenkaba, "red sky. " It symbolizes heat, anger, difficulties, and sorrows. It is woven at the time of marriage negotiations for the purpose of resolving any differences of opinion.
[844] A piece of it is dipped into the blood after birth and then thrown away in order to purify everything.

[822] The blue stripes of dyitala represent impurity, and the red stripes, purification by sacrifice. Whoever has broken a taboo wears the blue, and the red when he is purified. A piece of red cloth may be inserted into the vagina of a young woman, after she has lost her virginity or

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1. On the value of number 5, see pp. 24, 25.

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531 to replace the blood lost in childbirth; this piece is then burned to hasten the healing of the wounds.

The loincloth of a woman who has given birth to twins is made of the sukaba band with large, regular, alternating squares of yellow and indigo. The mother places on the garment as an offering a little of the millet mash she feeds her children for the first time.

The band nyoronga was formerly used for shrouds. The king would wear a whole garment of this or had three bands sewn onto his tunic when he went off to war; thus he wore his own shroud. A brave man would tie a piece of it to the barrel of his rifle to show his indifference in the face of death. A strip was tied to the right hand of those killed on the battlefield as a reward for having done their duty. Today, a shred of this band is hung at the door of a home where a death has occurred; People bandage a wounded limb with it before going to the healer's.

The wutu tyerokole with three stripes is worn by a child born after the death in infancy of numerous brothers and sisters. It represents the departure of these members of the family and their return in the newborn. Shaking such a band in the air honors the seventh sky and the seventh earth and asks their protection for the child. This cloth is never worn at funerals.

/113/ The kemba (literally, mother of scarifications) (Pl. III, a, 10) substitutes for scarifications when it has not been possible to perform them; on the other hand, this band is taboo to those who are ritually scarred.

The warabawolo (Pl. III, a, 12) represents the lion of the Diara: the first son of this family was born on this cloth. A boy born with a lock of hair on his forehead is seated on the cotton band to make him strong and rich. Formerly the king made a rug for his throne out of it. Since the lion is their taboo, the Diara do not have the right to wear it or even to see it.

Weapons and Tools

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824 Originally, men lived by hunting and fishing. But hunger drove them to eat plants of which the first three are the yayalẽ, an aquatic plant commonly found on the shores of the Niger; the narakata, couch grass; and the norolã size, commonly called cramcram (1). Long

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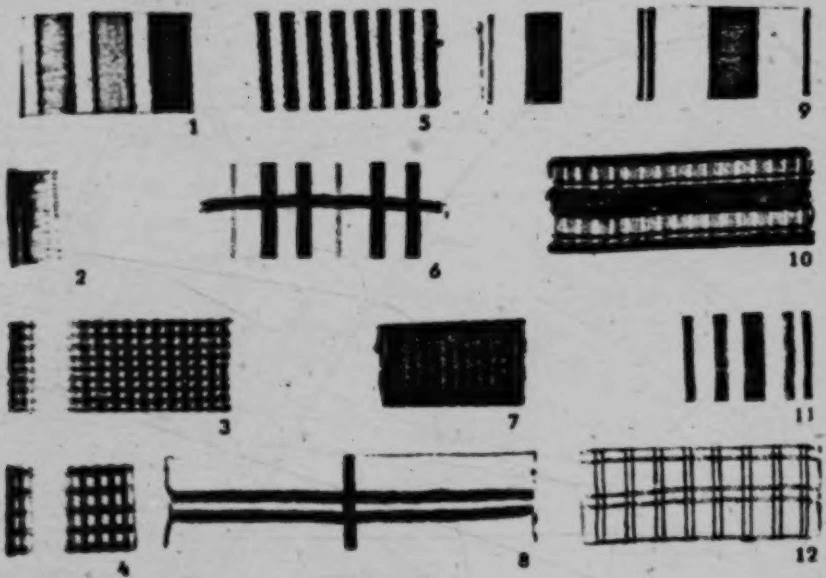

(a) Bands of cotton (the warp is presented vertically).

Plate III

(b) Offering of a band of cotton to the dasiri tree (Soroba).

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773 262 824 1. These three plants are respectively: *Andropogon* (*Hyparrhenia*) *hirtus*, *Digitaria debilis*, *Cenchrus catharticus*.

before the cultivation of cotton and cereals was known to them, the Bambara worked the soil with wooden sticks around the base of those grasses whose seeds they then sowed. As their stock of tools developed,
773 they began to make the first hoes and axes. In the case of the Mandé
326 Bambara (2) the origin of these tools is linked with the history of the
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2. The names and the origin of tools of the Bambara of the Ségou region are different.

blacksmiths, *numu*, who form a kind of caste in this part of Africa as in many others. They practice endogamy, maintain joking relationships, *senankuya*, with other Blacks, and are in charge of certain cults dedicated to ancestors and to Faro (3).

3. On the myth of the divine origin of blacksmiths, see S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara." See also *infra*, p. 53 n. 1

Before the discovery of metal, ancestors of the present blacksmiths worked with wood, then stone. From then on they bore the name of *numu*, a term which today is reserved exclusively for the artisans of iron, *jirifa numu* or *farafa numu*, according to whether they worked with wood or stone (4).

4. L. Desplagnes mentions the historical aspect of the origin and role of the Sudanese blacksmiths (*Le Plateau central nigérien* /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, p. 110).

The peoples issued from the intermixture of the *ou*, shepherds (*Getules*), with the *ar*, sedentary tribes (*Fari*), have already been pointed out in earliest antiquity by writers, historians, and geographers who called them Numidians. Salluste tells us that "The Faronsũ, in mixing with the

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getules (gne-Toules), formed the nation of Numidians.

But according to tradition, these half-breed Numidians, today called Noumous, were the first initiators among primitive peoples of the industrial arts; thereafter the title of Noumous was kept and applied to all blacksmiths."

And in the footnote on the same page: "But in Nigerian countries, this term for blacksmith, Noumou, does not necessarily contain the notion of a metallurgist."

/114/ All blacksmiths said to be of "pure blood," that is to say those who belong to the three families of Fané, Koumaré, and Balo, are descended from the Gwonna, who came from the underground village of Gwondougou and to whom goes the glory of having discovered iron.

According to informants, the word Gwonna comes from gwã, a name usually given to the hearth of the forge, which designates precisely the place from which the ore is extracted and where it is treated. The high furnace is called gwã so. The gwã tuku munu, extracting blacksmith, is the only one able to perform important rites. The word Fané derives from fã, which designates the forge in its entirety. Koumaré comes from kuma, word. It is the Koumaré who are charged [537] with the responsibility of debating in council meetings or in public gatherings. The word Balo recalls the fact that the bearers came to settle in former days on the shores of the Niger, ba.

The Gwonna are senãnku of the other blacksmiths. Moreover, in the villages where they live together with other artisans, they are by right the chiefs of the Komo and guardians of the sanctuaries where the ancestral tools are kept. Only if they fail in their obligation will the blacksmiths belonging to other families assume these duties.

The titles of the Gwonna are linked to the mythical origin of the forge which is under the domination of the Téliko spirits, masters of the air and wind, hence of the bellows and fire.

773 564 326 They inherited them from the eight ancestors who, before the appearance of death, were transformed into bee eaters (tatugu kononi) by the balanza and who received the power to activate or to extinguish fire (1).

1. See p. 43.

The Téliko spirits, jealous of the independence of these new beings, resolved to subdue them and waged war on them. The birds, who had no weapons, bewailed and a Gwonna blacksmith took pity on them; he requested axes, hoes, and arrows from the men of his family and gave them to the birds, receiving in return the promise of revelations which would be useful to him. Having made this arrangement, the birds, armed with weapons, went to meet Téliko at the place called gonya. They used their weapons in a gigantic conflict in which neither adversary could vanquish the other.

/115/ The birds then returned to earth and thanked the blacksmiths by teaching them three secrets necessary to the good progress of their work:

1. How to build their altars by mixing in a panther skin cold water, iron, and a stone, soul of the forge.
2. How to protect from the fire the hands of women potters.
3. How to make and consecrate the circumcision knife.

Since these revelations, the Gwonna venerate these teachers, thus raising the number of their ancestors to sixteen: the first eight transformed into birds who had not the use of speech, and the eight others who received the word from Faro.

564 326 In each village the patriarch of the Gwonna holds the title of kotigi (literally, owner of things). He guarantees the custody of the ancestral tools deposited in a sanctuary and of the ritual objects which belong to the blacksmiths of the village, and which are kept in his home. In addition, he is the only one who may perform the rituals concerning these tools and the purifications.

The important position of the Gwonna family is translated into ritual. Whereas an ordinary blacksmith, after breaking a taboo, must request the intervention of the kotigi to purify himself, a Gwonna simply asks the members of his own family.

564 326 774 Every blacksmith is regarded as the holder of an excellent tere. He is well-intentioned, affable, and never hurts anyone. It is easy to make friends with him, to joke with him, even if one knows him but a short time. The senankuya relationships which he has with other Blacks also contribute to the cordiality of these ties.

[304] The good tere of the blacksmith is brought into play particularly at circumcision which is preferably entrusted to a Gwonna. Being circumcised by a blacksmith causes the wanzo to diminish rapidly, hastens the healing, and improves the tere. A blacksmith is reputed to have the power of transforming himself at will into an animal or a plant. In those places where hyenas are venerated as the animal [825] protectors of a village (dasiri), they are always considered as the blacksmith's ancestors who have undergone metamorphosis. (1).

1. Particularly in the village of Konodimi, situated 21 km. to the southwest of Ségou.

773 564 326 412 The ritual paraphernalia now preserved in each village comprise models of all the tools manufactured by the blacksmiths since their first appearance.

a. Wooden tools The craftsmen first used wood, gradually changing the shape of the objects. From a simple stick /116/ (generally in sunzun) (2) or from a rough-hewn block, they gradually made more perfect tools, obtaining the shape desired by rubbing and polishing on rocks.

773 564 326 411 The first weapon used in hunting was a throwing instrument in the shape of a boar-spear, the semenkala (from kala, handle, Fig. 9, A). Hewn from one piece, it comprised three distinct parts: (1) the bulonda; (2) the semenu; and (3) the koli (literally, hook). Men threw the object with all their strength at the pursued animal or else they dug into the earth where their prey was hiding with the pointed end (semena) which was often poisoned with a viper's venom. The weapon was the object of blood sacrifices carried out on the koli and destined to increase its strength.

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2. Diospyros mespiliformis. The wood of this tree is very hard.

●173 The first agricultural tool was the yirewolo (literally, noble, Fig.
564 9, B), thus named because of its antiquity, mogokoroba (literally, old
324 person, ancestor).
412 b. Stone tools Later, craftsmen learned to use stone. They used
[172] neolithic axes called "thunder stones" (1) which were used as scissors.
Those of the Gwondougou were at all times famous for their solidity. The craftsmen worked together and when they had rough-hewn their models, certain individuals among them were delegated to sharpen these by rubbing them on a rock.

The farakun (literally, stone head) (Fig. 9, D) was the first axe the handle of which was invented by an artisan who, having poisoned the sharp edge of his tool, wished to try it out on a tree. He sank the stone into a young tree trunk with the idea that the leaves would dry up of themselves. But he died without having ascertained the result. Later a passerby, having tried in vain to remove the stone from the tree, cut the wood above and below it, and in handling this new tool, was surprised at its efficiency. The use of the hafted axe spread among men who utilized the fiber of the nyama to tie the stone to the wood. In addition, the stone could be separated quickly from the handle and used as a knife to cut meat or bones. The handle was used as a pointed stick with which to dig in the ground and to attack animals.

It is probable that hafting was also applied to wooden hoes made in two sections and used /117/ for a long time in areas where there was no hard stone. In fact, a myth concerning the discovery of the cultivation of cotton, which preceded that of cereal grains, mentions the fact that men used to take their handles home, but left the ends of their hoes at the crossroads each day in honor of the local spirit.

c. Iron tools Finally, the Gwonna discovered iron and developed the science of metallurgy (2).

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1. The Bambara, like other Blacks of the Sudan, attributed divine origin to certain neolithic axes (see p. 71. It would seem that a great many primitive tools had been found by them in the area at the time of their arrival.

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2. The Blacks consider that the discovery of iron and metallurgy are due to the Gwonna. It is, however, not impossible that this technology was imported by craftsmen who came from the Mediterranean.

At a time when the men had left the village of Gwondougou, taking their altars with them, two girls left their home and went to live with two artisans of the Fané and Koumaré families.

[532]

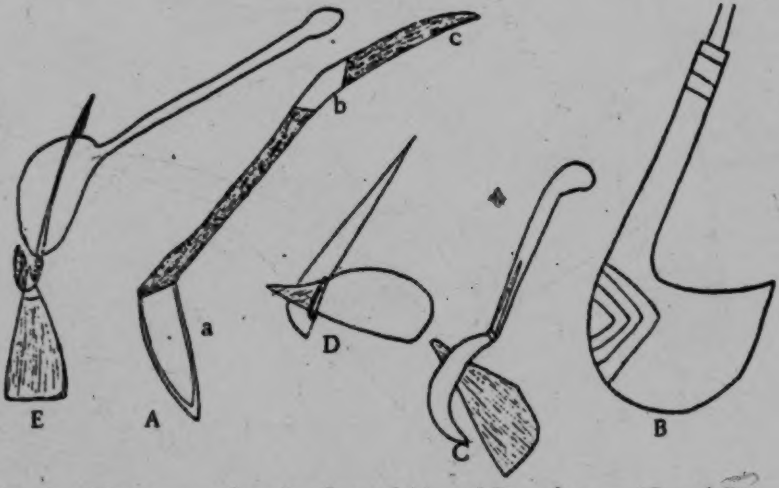

Fig. 9 —Weapons and tools of wood (A and B), of stone (C and D), of iron (E) of the ancient Bambara. (Drawing by an informant).

When the men returned to the village to get some hard stone which they would like to use, they were very much troubled not to find their girls. They dug the ground to search for them, thinking that they had been buried, since men in those days lived in laid-out underground holes. In the course of this work they discovered some rocks which were hitherto unknown to them and which are called farabele. The men thought these rocks beautiful and wished to use them. When placed in fire they were changed and became so hard /118/ that the hammers with which the men attempted to shape them split. The pieces of iron were then used as projectiles to replace the stones of the slings. But the blacksmiths, who had abducted the young girls and who had returned to the village with their wives, saw the new substance and suggested the idea of making axes out of it.

773 The first forged tool, the kongobwona (literally, to abandon hunger),
564 is still used by blacksmiths today as a ritual axe (Fig. 9, E).

326 It is made up of a wooden handle terminating in an enlargement
412 which forms its bulk, and pierced by a bent iron rod which in turn holds the cutting edge (farabye) of the axe proper. The handle is very long, allowing the man to work without bending over.

The tool justifies its name for it brought prosperity to the craftsmen. The symbolism of the different sections shows this: the enlarged part of the consecrated model, which each blacksmith keeps on his altar and which is the object of regular rituals, is hollowed out and holds money, millet, and copper. The iron rod which pierces it represents at its lower extremity the tongue of the oldest of the Gwonna, and at its upper extremity that of the youngest, thus recalling the actions and the words of those who discovered the metal for the benefit of all.

Later, blacksmiths manufactured other models of iron axes and hoes, copying those previously used, but reducing their size.

Each day the end piece of the wooden hoes was abandoned at the crossroads after they had been used in honor of the local spirit. The worker kept only the handle and carved a new tool for the following day. The handles of hoes and axes were considered to be people because they were impregnated with the vital force of those who held them. The farmer left the cutting edge (of stone or iron) in his field and brought home the handle which he placed on his mat at night.

[782] Weapons and tools were the objects of regular sacrifices. The handle was removed and the blood of victims would flow first into the hole used to secure it, then on the cutting edge, while the officiating person recited a prayer.

773 Today, the assemblages of ancient tools are called makorobaw ka
564 minew (literally, tools of the great ancestor). Considered as the
326 most respectable and precious /119/ testimony of their civilization,
412 models of each object are kept in sanctuaries called makoroba so
778 (literally, house of the ancestors) which are generally natural caves
or holes dug in the ground, reminiscent of primitive habitations. These tools are identified with the ancestors who used them and who were, long before the organization of religious societies, the object of a regular cult. That is why, in deference to this fundamental hierarchy, they are presented to the circumcised in front of the family altars (1) at the time of the initiation of the Komo. Similarly, they

1. Particularly in the village of Konodimini in the Ségou region.

773 564 are removed from the sanctuaries, honored, and replaced before the
326 Komo altars during the agricultural and funerary rituals; to fail to ob-
412 serve this rule would constitute the breaking of a taboo and entail
778 the most serious disorders.

In the course of the annual ceremony consecrating the dead, these tools are carried to the cemetery and receive as many victims as do the dead, for they represent the ancestors.

The *kotigi* brings them to the same place on two other occasions: during the agricultural ceremonies carried on after the growth of the ear of corn and after threshing the harvest. Axes and hoes are presented one by one at the tombs of the dead and then, reunited in the center of the cemetery, each of them is used once to cut a branch or to dig the soil. This ritual gesture recalls the use which the ancestors made of them.

The Forge

326 The blacksmith establishes his workshop under a shed, usually
826 located in one of the squares or at the entrance to the village. It is the simplest of its kind and involves a minimum of equipment. The forge represents the craftsman: the furnace his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red hot metal is beaten with the hammer, a replica of the *gosilãnde*, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and thunder bolts.

326 The altar of the forge, sometimes situated to the west of the hearth,
778 contains blackened hoe, pickaxe and axe handles, coal (*fininkoro*, literally, old coal) ashes kneaded with clay (*bũguri*, literally, ashes of the hearth), all of which belonged to former owners, and finally an axe *kongobwona* called "mother of the altar," a smaller replica of the ancestral axes.

The bulk of the wood which holds the iron hooks and the blade /120/ is hollowed out and forms a kind of storage divided into three compartments.

The upper one contains money so that whatever happens, the blacksmith will have means to live.

In the central compartment are placed copper and iron, metals which the blacksmith works, as well as water, basic element and preferred seat of Faro, master of the word.

Pottery

323 The ancient Bambara did not know about pottery. At the time they
113 lived in caverns, they let their meat dry in the sun on the rocks. Next, they manufactured receptacles by hollowing out stones, of which certain unused millstones /125/ seen today are copies. When they had invented fire, they cooked meat by spitting it with skewers of green sunzun wood and by exposing it to flames and live coals.

Later, they shaped and dried vessels of coarse clay, imitating the hollowed-out stones. One of these vessels, which was exposed to the fire in order to cook the food it contained, was observed to have changed color, hardened, and become more resistant. In this way they developed the technology of making pottery at a time when they still had only wooden tools.

323 Since this technology is related to the invention of fire, the wives
326 of the blacksmiths were the first to practice it.(1). Today they form a society (tõ) in each village and own many altars entrusted to the care of the head of the society.

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The principal altar, the dyo kala, which represents the thumb of the potters, is made of wood carved in the shape of a thumb and engraved with symbolic lines. To learn her trade, each initiate is lightly touched on the head with it. The head of the society spills her blood over it in the case of a broken taboo affecting the society. But its principal function is to be the receptacle for the spiritual forces of the group: upon a member's death, this object, placed upon the corpse, gathers up the soul which escapes from the body.

[252] In certain villages, the pots with holes, ñintin, used for cooking couscous, are placed near the village upon the pile of ashes from the great hearth where the pots are fired (see Pl. IV, a); they also serve as altars at the time when the potters are consecrated.

323 Since her childhood the potter, following the example of her
561 seniors, practices kneading and shaping little pots, bokofani (literal-
575 ly, little clay pots). After excision at the required age, she joins

1. The different techniques of pottery making were supposedly revealed to the village of Gwondougou (see p. 155) by the Soba spirits of the crossroads.

B. The Altars

178 194 Each family head wears a small altar called kere la boli ni (literally, little side altar), which maintains relations with the souls of the members of the family for which he is, in part, responsible. /132/ In case of illness he offers sacrifices on this boli for the recovery of the patient. In case of death, he keeps the soul in it temporarily before carrying it to the collective altar of the Komo (1). He also sacrifices on this altar at the time of sowing.

[763] If the family head is himself very ill, the altar is placed on his head in an effort to replace the soul which is escaping with that which the altar contains. [764] If he dies, it is placed on his chest to take in the soul which is then transported to the sanctuary of the Komo. At the end of seven days, the object is given to the deceased's eldest son who, upon becoming family head, sacrifices two goats to the Komo on this occasion.

The Čuafebla (literally, worn at the hip) is made by a father for his son when the latter attains maturity and is on the point of leading a man's life, farming his own field and founding a family.

If there is no Komo in the village, the father may make it earlier, right after the name-giving ceremony.

The altar is made of hyena tails, scorpion tails, and whole peppers tied with a little stick; it represents the owner's flesh and blood.

It receives an annual sacrifice at the time of sowing after the collective offering tothe Komo. This takes place in the family courtyard in the presence of all the members of the family (2). Moreover,

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1. The society, the altars, and the role of the Komo are described on pages ff.

178 194 173 241 2. The cult rendered on this altar brings the intervention of the Sago spirit whose agricultural role is still obscure at the present stage of the inquiry. He taught men how to water their fields.

"Two birds konodyanfi began to circle and sing above the workers in the fields;

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> the latter abandoned their hoes in order to watch them. The birds fetched water with their beaks on the shore of a neighboring pond and returned to pour it at the foot of a millet stalk, the ear of which was not yet formed. The men put a mark on this stalk in order to recognize it and later observed that it produced a finer ear than the others. Imitating the bird, they dampened their plantings and watered their fields; their harvest was considerably improved by it. They kept up this habit and, in acknowledgment, produced a cult to the Sago spirit whose emissaries the birds were and who comes to slake his thirst at the čuafebla."

778 794 it is the object of sacrifices when important business is being handled: marriage, private or administrative action, fight against an epidemic.

[428] A son may inherit his father's altar and keep it with his own which he wears tied to his hip.

The čuafebyẽni (literally, little horn at the hip) is composed of a cowrie, taken from Faro's granary, copper which is the altar's soul /133/ (ni), pepper, charcoal, and honey. This mixture is introduced into a ram's horn decorated with cowries at its opening and often wrapped in a red cloth bearing the same ornamentation.

[782] The altar is consecrated on those of the Komo, over which it is passed seven times. The throats of victims are cut, their blood is collected in a gourd, and the boli dipped into it three times before being taken out in the sun to dry.

Its role is one of protection. Its owner carries it during the Komo ceremonies to defend himself against spells, korti, which may be cast by someone in the audience.

It also maintains the integrity of its owner's forces. If the latter faints or goes into a trance, he is returned to his normal state by completely renewing the ingredients which constitute it. When the horn is emptied of its contents, "both the soul of the altar and that of the man" are removed. The container is rinsed out with water from the

794 534 on half-gourds, and accompanied by flutes and bells. The musicians, recruited from among the musical members of the society, are obliged to submit to certain precautions because of the proximity of the mask during the performance of the dances. In fact, if the mask casts a spell (korti), they may, unwittingly, breathe in the dangerous powder and it is wise to protect oneself by taking the antidote ahead of time.

794 534 The Komo's iron bell, kolõkolõ or grinda, is kept with certain altars in the chief's residence; it is rung by a special bearer, grindayo or nadara koloyo.

773 539 A myth recalls the origin of this bell. "A small child, who went to play at the crossroads situated at the approaches to the village, heard one day a bell ring and invisible beings speak. Seized with fear, he returned home. When he was questioned by his parents, he refused to answer but with his finger pointed out to them the road which he took every day. The parents followed it and arrived at the crossroads where they found a copper bell. The spirit of the place, Soba, announced to them that he was making a gift of it so that they might call the spirits by ringing it and that the spirits would answer them (1). But he asked the father to give him in exchange the child who habitually came to the crossroads so that the child could continue to play with the spirit's children. When the father, in despair, told him he had not the courage to part with his son, the spirit advised him to consult Faro.

The man gathered the young girls of the village together and asked them to intercede for him with the spirit. Dressed in their most beautiful clothes and wearing their ornaments, they went off singing and threw cakes and couscous into the river (2). The elders went down in turn and received Faro's consent. He demanded that

1. In olden times, "men spoke with their ancestors and with their gods."

[796] 2. Each year the offering and the race are repeated by the young girls of Ségou who go to the river singing the nyari nyari to.

794 they keep the instrument for religious ceremonies. After declaring
534 that they would obey, the elders returned to the crossroads where
773 the Soba spirit gave them the bell and left in exchange the child whom
the spirit had called to him in their absence.
539 The object was then taken to the blacksmith who made one in the
same shape, using wood or bone for the body, and stone for the
clapper. After the invention of iron, they were forged according to
the ancient model with the addition of small copper bells."

/153/ To ring the bell is "to make Faro hear the sound of copper,"
794 to call him, and flatter him at the same time. When the mask is
534 brought out, the sound warns the noninitiates to avoid the procession.
The flute or reed pipe of the Komo, *wara da*, "mouth of the one
armed with claws," is made of a bamboo stem pierced by three holes.
The middle one is open and the two others are obstructed by a cobweb.
The instrument is held between the bearer's teeth and is tied
by a string to the back of his neck or to his ears.

794 A myth tells the origin of Faro's flute, made according to the
534 same principle, but of a different shape.
A woman, called Koussouba Koulibali, was bathing one morning
773 when she saw Faro and the *dodo* fish sitting at the river bank. The
539 fish was playing the flute and singing:
"I will whistle, I will whistle in my Faro's flute; he who will not
hear me will die, he who will die will regret it" (1).

The woman fled and told her husband, who was a diviner and chief of the Komo, about what had happened. The latter proceeded to the banks of the Niger and frightened away the fish who abandoned its instrument. The man seized it and went home, followed by the turbulent river water from which he managed to escape in his canoe. But his whole family perished in the flood.

In the morning, the man returned to the river bank and cried as he played the flute. He played for such a long time that Faro, taking pity on him, came out and said: "I have drowned the members of your family and flooded the village. I forgive you, however,

1. *Na* *fye*, *na* *fye* *ne* *nka* *faro* *fle* *flye*,
nyimi *mame* *o* *na* *sa*, *nyimi* *sara* *o* *bone* *na*.

794 534 773 539 because of the offerings made by other men. Keep the flute and since you are Soma and chief of the Komo, let all the Komo flutes be blessed because of this one." By this he meant that the Komo flute, like the other ritual objects, would hereafter contain his strength, nyama. He added that, when men wished to call him or to talk to him, they would have to do it through the intermediary of this instrument.

794 534 Before each occasion when the mask is brought out, a sacrifice is performed upon the flutes "to improve their sound." Faro's flute is used in the rituals performed at the river bank, to pray to him or to thank him. To play the flute is equivalent to reciting his device; he is forced to hear. The Komo flute is used only during the masked ceremonies; it makes those who hear it say that the Komo is "a thing with a soft throat" (1).

1. Fẽ kã duma.

In former times the chief alone was allowed to play the flute, whatever its type; death was sanctioned for infraction of this rule. Ordinary flutes /154/ of a style different from those belonging to the cult are used by children.

E. Initiation to the Komo

794 852 Three days after the birth of a boy, his father presents him with the elements which he has contributed to the making of the Komo boli and recites the komo kumã: "You, Komo boli, these things are inside; society of the Komo, these things are inside; customs of the Komo, these things are inside; you are a child, you are going to approach the age of the elders; Komo boli, here is my child, watch over him" (2).

2. Komo boli la, nin waliw ba kono;
komo dyẽ la, nin fẽw ba la; komo sira
la, nin kunko ba kono; i ye demisẽ ye
i bi ta makorobaya ye; komo boli nde fle,
tyę do, i dyã to a la.

He then returns the child to its mother with these words: "The son has been introduced to the secret of masculinity; he has received

794 The candidates next swear an oath the text of which is recited by the chief:

"If I reveal (the secrets of) the boli, may it kill me; if I disclose the institutions, may they kill me; until my death, if I speak, may my father die, may my mother die, may the boli break my heart" (1).

> 1. Ni nye korobo, boli ka fa, ni nye korobo,
> dyow ka fa, fo kata n sa ni nya fo n fa ka sa m
> ba ka sa, boli dyugu ka sõ ta.

Each in his turn, the children next lick the head and the hooks of the mask three times, thus assuring it their allegiance: "Until my death, I shall not reveal the koli. Faro has not been revealed! Let the koli not be revealed!" (1)

> 1. Fo ka ta n sa nte korobo koli, faro ma
> korobo, koli kana korobo.

After the altars, including the pembele, have been presented to [782] them, the postulants drink the blood of a goat offered in sacrifice; thus they assimilate the forces of the Komo and by this communion consecrate their oath.

Finally, the mechanism of the society in all its details is explained to them: the necessity of hierarchy in age grades, of respect for taboos, and of the secrecy in which all that concerns the organization must be held. A moral lesson is also taught them; in particular they [867] are advised to set themselves a line of conduct in private life as well as in public life, to be righteous, to avoid duplicity and bad faith, flãvlãña (literally, double action), never to serve two masters, and not to entertain conflicting desires among themselves.

794 As an illustration, the adventures of the first members who broke these laws are told.

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531 One of Makanta Djigui's companions, Garou Keita, was afflicted with this serious fault. He had become friendly with Moridje Sidibé, son of the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé, who had the same character. At this period three great Komo were already functioning in the region: that of Koulikouro called selo (literally, grave); that of Nyamina called dyibi (literally, dark); and that of Kankan.

Garou went to one of the ceremonies of the Komo of Kankan /156/ and by telling lies, incited the members to revolt against the local

794 chiefs, which they did. They interrupted the dances and refused to
773 recognize the Komo which was dissolved, leaving the chief alone.
539 But Garou, who had lied, died shortly after that.

The chief of Kankan carried away the altars and put them under the protection of the Komo chief of Koulikoro, and the members participated in the ceremonies of this locality. Moridje went to Nyamina and, in the same way as Garou, incited the members to engage in a kind of rivalry with the Komo of Koulikoro. In the course of a ceremony celebrated in this latter village, he called forth the Komo of Nyamina, using the authority attached to his father's name, and offerred a male goat to both groups. The two chiefs refused, arguing with reason that one victim could not satisfy two Komo. Moridje paid no attention and brought the two maskers face to face with the goat between them. A fight took place with the animal as a pawn, each masker using his magical powers to win it, and the members gathered behind their respective masks shouting: "the goat is ours." Later, the mask wearer also died prematurely.

794 To avoid the possibility that members will give their allegiance to two Komo, they are made to lick the mask once again, while the following prayer is recited: "If you lick the mask, may you not make the flãvlãña, may you not perpetrate a betrayal" (1). If, after swearing this oath, the party betrays it, he becomes "a rotten person" (matolilo) and loses the esteem and confidence of his companions.

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532 As the young men grow with years and increase in knowledge, the instruction they are given is increasingly comprehensive. The head of the Komo, accompanied by men of his age grade, takes the postulant into the bush and questions him about his intentions and aims. Before indicating to him the group to which he is to be attached and introducing its members to him, he teaches him by drawing on the ground the combination of signs representing the arrangement in the universe of the Komo society, a combination which is usually reproduced before each ceremony and which permits the participants to recognize their place (see Fig. 12).

This drawing, called wolo ti, "sign of the generation," is composed of two long lines cutting each other at right angles and oriented

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1. Nye komo kun no, i kana seka flãvlãña kę, nye komo kun no, i kana seka dyãfa kę.

776 latter animal which is imitated by the *vukuri* during the children's
825 nocturnal ritual described on page 65.

This new information confirms the observations noted on page 47, footnote 1, concerning the identity of the Bambara and Dogon representations. Moreover, the *warableni*, like the *yurugu* (*Vulpes pallida*) of the Dogon, intervenes in divination, particularly in geomancy. The investigations permit the extension of these representations to Sudanese tribes coming from Mandé (see p. 2), particularly, to the Bozo and the Peul.

Chapter 3

826 All Sudanese peoples originating in Mandé are characterized by the
773 seeds (or fish) contained in their collarbone, these varying from one tribe to another. On the other hand, within a tribe, the theoretical
824 content of the eight seeds, though roughly similar in terminology, differs in arrangement from family to family. Also the positions of the first and last seeds are reversed for men and women. Example: the blacksmiths have as their first seed the *keninge* and as their last the *tikaninkuru*, whereas the potters have as their first seed the *tikaninkuru* which they cultivate in the sacred fields (see p. 170) and as their last the *keninge*.

Moreover, after Mousso Koroni had stolen from Pemba the seeds he was entrusted to give on earth, Faro, through the intermediary of the /232/ animals who ate them at his order, reclaimed them from her; thus purified, he distributed them to men. The animal, which brought back to Faro the essential seed of each family, becomes the taboo, *tne*, of the family concerned, and the breaking of this taboo has the basic effect of removing the content of the culprit's collarbone. Analogous representations are noted among the Dogon.

Totemism, the so called "joking relationship" (*senankuya* of the Bambara), the caste system, and the exogamous laws of the Sudanese are based on the elements and classification of the contents of the collarbone.

Chapter 6

794 All the great adult institutions (*dyo*) are in contact with the
857 children's society of the Ndomo which reflects the universal organization
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144 771 which encompasses all social, technical and economic activities" (1)

1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion], P.U.F., 1951.

of this people. The myths are "a sum of knowledge, wisdom, and not a series of fixed etiological recitations. One may say that they constitute a metaphysic including the knowledge of created things, as well as the principles of their state of being and of their action." (2)

2. Id., ibid.

171 771 Thorough investigation of other Sudanese peoples has revealed that the Bambara religion is part of a pan-Sudanese system in which differences lie in the modes of expression and not in the essence of the thought.

A. Cosmogony

772 The Bambara conceive the world as a mass of active forces which man can influence. Thanks to certain techniques, the pivotal one being the blood sacrifice, man may amass or liberate these forces, may direct and orient them; in short, man may have a hand in the movement of the world and may aid it in its consciousness and accomplishment. This central role of man is explained to us by the order of creation itself, which governs all the rites to which man is subject. The Bambara conceive the world as having issued from an 773 original void which was endowed with movement (3): the gla. This

3. Passim, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

void emitted a voice which created its double, and from the couple came a humid substance, zo sumale (cold rust), which formed hard shining bodies. After a series of movements and transformations, there was an explosion between the two gla, which caused the ejection of a hard and powerful matter that vibrated as it fell. Out of this vibration came signs which settled on all the things as yet uncreated to designate them. Then, man's consciousness detached itself from the gla and settled on things to awaken their consciousness in naming them. In the

773 course of this creation, the active spirit Yo appeared, plus 22 fundamental elements, 22 whorls which agitated Yo and gave birth to sound, light, all beings, all actions, and all feelings in existence. Afterwards, a series of disorders followed by reorganizations came to trouble creation; man played a preponderant role in these.

Two initial powers were born of the spirit Yo: one, Faro, master of the Word, made the seven skies, which correspond to the seven parts of the earth in following a calculated course; Faro gave birth to Teliko, spirit of the air, then, in the form of water, spread life on the earth and created two twin females who gave birth to the Bozo, first inhabitants of the waters; the other power, Pemba, in moving with a whirling motion to the four cardinal points, created the mounds and buttes which give form to the earth. After seven years in his whirlwind form, Penba transformed himself into seed of the Acacia albida, came to rest on the [82] earth and developed into a tree, the balanze, which became his earthly avatar. Then, with the dust of his tracks mixed with his saliva, he created a woman, Musso Koroni, into whom he breathed a soul, ni, and a double, dya; he joined with her and created the plants and animals.

Men rendered homage to Pemba and Mousso [sic] Koroni, who, in exchange, gave them directions for life. All the women had to join with Pemba; which is why Mousso Koroni, jealous, began to trouble creation and to sow disorder. She instituted circumcision and excision, and revealed to men all she had learned from Pemba. Communicating impurity to all she touched, she introduced evil, pain, and death into the world. Pemba pursued her; Faro overtook her but was unable to subdue her. Finally, she died, but before disappearing she revealed the agricultural techniques to man.

Pemba, in addition to the women's love, demanded the men's blood from which he drew his power. In exchange, he rejuvenated the men when they became old and taught them how to use fire. But he abused his power and exhausted the men, which caused his downfall. In fact, the men turned from worship of the balanza and devoted themselves to the cult of Faro. Faro impregnated the women, who gave birth to twins with supple limbs. But the men violated a taboo concerning Pemba, and death appeared and spread among them. To compensate for this misfortune, Faro taught them how to speak. Then, the spirit of the air, Teliko, attempted to seize power; the men

773 abandoned Faro to follow him. Faro vanquished him and punished men by giving them the joints used in manual labor, which all were forced to do. Births became single, but, in compensation, each being had a double, dya, which lived in water.

After these successive disorders, each of which, however, was followed by the acquisition of new knowledge or of a new technique, Faro again undertook Creation and reorganized the universe by a voyage to the ends of the earth. He established the system of the rains, and he classified living beings according to series, each series having a head of the list. Men thus were named and classed by race and by caste, beginning with the slaves. He gave men the eight cereal seeds which remain the basis of their subsistence and which are forever in [826] their clavicles. Finally, he controls all existence and acts of beings placed under his domination.

The present order is only a phase in space and time. Twelve waters are still hidden; they must in the future, on the order of Faro, rise and spread in the world. They will make known the words of the future, and the world conceived by Yo will be realized.

776 All this mythology is presently represented by numerous objects which serve as props for the different rituals regulating men's lives.

778 Pemba in represented in the houses of the religious chiefs and heads of families by a wooden block named Pembele, image of the first thick plank (1). In a [83] central hollow, symbolizing the tomb, are engraved three times 22 marks representing Pemba the creator, the transmission of his Word, and his power to Faro, the token of his foreknowledge of all things, etc. Pembele is an altar guaranteeing the prosperity and life of the group.

776 If the balanza [illegible] no longer is the object of a cult, the Bambara still regard it with a special attitude, which recalls its former role. Mousso Koroni is the impure and untilled land; the agricultural techniques she taught are a partial reparation for the disorders she created. This farm work wounds and purifies the land at the same

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1. See S. de Ganay, "Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara" [Aspects of Bambara Mythology and Symbolism]. [Ed., J. psych. norm. et path., Vol. 42 (1949), pp. 181-201.]

769 participate in men's lives, protect them, and make their fields
775 fertile. The farming tools are presented at their altars before the
tillage, and every year their souls come to animate the maskers who dance in their honor under the supervision of the Komo. After the grain is threshed, they receive the first products and are offered sacrifices.

h. Other Rites

788 Besides the rites concerning the person, the Bambara have others, such as those relating to the household wastes where the forces of men are accumulated. The purpose of these rites is to offer these forces to Faro and to regenerate and purify men. The wastes are burned periodically, the men breathe in the fumes, and the ashes are thrown in the river. Sacrifices are offered to the god, and special dances accompany the ceremony.

Rain rites common to all of Africa are practiced in May by
796 the members of the Kworé society. The rites for renewing the year involve individual, familial, and collective participation. The signs of the world are traced on the walls of individual or collective sanctuaries, and by the intermediary of a sacrifice on the altars, by dances and rhythmic chants, man renews the cardinal points and the forces of the world which in turn renew his soul. (All these rites have been described by G. Dieterlen in the Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

B. Special Technique In General Usage

773 In Bambara thought, "every technique is a reparation taught man by Faro, a palliative to the cosmic disorder which is generally caused by an infraction of taboo ... Men first lived by gathering their food, then later by fishing and hunting; they used only their hands. Little by little the techniques appeared, following a chronology remembered by the Bambara of today. The first material to be used was the fiber of the nyama tree frond which were made the first fishing nets, the first sling, the first covering for the sexual parts." (1) The second material was wood from which the farming

1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

Ba
773 tools and the throwing weapon were made. Then, unfired pottery
and weaving were invented; and men finally came to know stone
tools, iron and the forge. The technique of making dwellings
seems to have developed more slowly.

Ba
Bo

a. Fishing

226 Side by side with populations who specialize in the art of fish-
463 ing, such as the Bozo or the Somono caste, all the Bambara fish in
564 the [96] rivers or watercourses in the neighborhood of their dwellings.
A detailed study has been made by J. Daget (1). The Somono, who
are the caste of Bambara fishermen, use traps and nets for fishing;
the Bozo remain faithful rather to harpoons and small nets. They are
Ba the ones who almost always make the pirogues, for they alone may
Bo enter in rapport with the spirit of the water, Faro. The nets are of
286 knotted mesh made with a weaver's shuttle, sia, and a cylindrical
227 mold, pako. The band of the net, as it is being made, is nearly
always attached to a wooden bridge especially conceived for this
purpose, the kale or dio soyo kala, a regular tetrahedron whose edges
Ba are about 20 centimeters long, one of which is prolonged by a handle
Bo 1.50 meters long. The fisherman, seated on the ground, puts the
283 bridge before him, keeping the handle close to his leg. The fibers
824 used in netmaking are da (Hibiscus cannabinus), kie (Figna unguiculata),
cotton, and now European thread.

Bo
226 The Bozo construct weirs from cut and joined tree branches;
the weirs assume several different forms according to the regions and
Bo the snares used. Fish are used for human consumption; they are eaten
Ba fresh, grilled, fried or boiled, or preserved by smoking or drying. Oil,
251 used for cooking and as a lubricant, is extracted from certain fish,
252 such as the tineni.

Ba Fishing in Bambara villages is done communally under the
226 direction of a fishing chief at the time the waters recede. Precise
rules of fishing rights and of rents due the masters of the waters are
respected everywhere.

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1. Jacques Daget, "La pêche dans le delta central du Niger" [Fishing in the Central Delta of the Niger], Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. XIX (1949), No. 1.

b. Pottery

323 Pottery is entirely fashioned and fired by the women of the blacksmiths' caste, masters of the fire. The modelling is done in two ways, either by hollowing a mass of clay with the aid of a cylindrical stone (2), or by rolling a cylinder of clay around a mold. The decoration is generally a double line of chevrons imprinted around the neck and the foot by the potter's twisted bracelet. The firing is done in the open air over a wood fire.

c. The Forge

326 Wood, iron, metals in general, are fashioned by the blacksmiths. The blacksmith's workshop and the objects he makes are simple, but they are rich in symbolic representations. "The forge represents the artisan: the furnace is his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red-hot iron is beaten by the hammer, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and the thunderbolt." (3) With his
rudimentary tools spread on the ground under a shelter, the artisan
forges all farming instruments, the principal one being the hoe. The
412 hoe, [97] according to its shape, is considered to be male or female.
831 The female hoe has a short handle with an ovoid swelling at the end,
[801] into which sticks the point of an iron triangle. The three sides of this
triangle are three arcs of a circle; three, symbol of masculinity,
represents here the clitoris, the male principle which sustains the
[773] double, the *dya*, of the woman. (According to myth, it was with the
241 aid of this part of the body that the first being of female sex inaugurated agricultural labors.) The male hoe has a slightly trapezoidal iron
part which is attached to the handle in the same manner. The four
sides symbolize the femininity of man sustained by the prepuce. Thus,

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2. M. Griaule, *Masques dogons* [Dogon Masks]. [531]

3. G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].

412
831 the peasant digs with the male hoe and covers with the female hoe; the work done with the female double of the peasant and the male double of the wife symbolizes the sexual union. (1)

d. Basketry

285 Basketry is done by everyone, men and women; it plays a large part in the construction and furnishing of the house. Sometimes the lofts are immense baskets, woven on the diagonal. In certain regions a great mat is wrapped around the exterior wall of the round hut. The doors of mud huts are often coarse mats woven diagonally [531] which are placed before the opening. But much finer mats, made from fibers of different colors and with geometric designs with a symbolic meaning, cover the ground for sitting or sleeping.

e. Weaving, Clothes, Ornaments

291 The first article of clothing was the fiber skirt made from the [824] *nyama* (*Bauhinia reticulata*, or *Bauhinia thonningii*) and the covering for the sexual parts which are still worn during religious ceremonies.

[773] Mythology designates cotton as the first fiber to be woven.

286 Weaving is one of the most widespread techniques. Cotton, spun by the women, is woven by the men, in olden times by the captives, who work in the open air near the huts, in the shade of trees in the courtyards or in the public places. A primitive loom made of four vertical wooden parts connected by horizontal shafts and driven by pedals weaves long bands. The warp and woof form a ground stich and symbolize a being of intelligence and eloquence. Moreover, a science of the bands exists which is based on the symbolism of colors, designs, and numbers.

822 The Bambara distinguish three fundamental colors: white, red, and black. Each of these three tints has its history and its role

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1. M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, "L'agriculture des Bozo," [Bozo Agriculture] *Journal des Africanistes* [Ed., *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, 1949.]

304 773 The Bambara decorate their faces and bodies with numerous scarifications, with the aim of conferring on the wearer the qualities symbolized by the scars. By their influence on the character and temperament of an individual, they help him to come up to the ideal man. These marks are associated with the myth of the origin of agriculture. They are eight small scars: two vertical ones at the root of the nose, three under each eye. They imitate the facial marks of the mythical being, half man, half animal, who taught men how to cultivate the soil. (1)

1. S. de Ganay, "On a form of cicatrisation among the Bambara," Man.

f. Arrangement of the Settlements

361 The Bambara village follows rules of development which allow a stranger to recognize the disposition of the huts immediately and to single out a chief's house, that of a blacksmith, or that of any other member of the society. In fact, the village is built to the north or east of the protective tree. To the south of the village, [778] is the sacred wood, dwelling place of the chief of the spirits, where the religious ceremonies and the initiation rites take place. As more families come to live in the village, they build their huts around that of the chief, except to the east, for the chief must see the sun rise. The oldest son of the chief, his eventual successor, will have his own plot near his father's. The house of the Komo is situated outside of the village, to the south or west, hidden in a wood or a thicket. At the edge of the village is a round cabin, the house of the Nyama, in the middle is a square cabin with painted walls, house of the Gna (see the chapter on religion). In the center of the village, a cleared place around a doubalé serves for public meetings; the elders hold their councils under the branches of the doubalé.

764 554 [100] Finally, the cemetery of the free men is found outside the village, to the west; that of captives and people of caste is to the south of the free men's cemetery.

326 600 Every village has its blacksmith, for he is life, and the village could not subsist without him. Before the French conquest,

171 in his Die Ethnologie der Indianerstämme von Guatemala /The
614 Ethnology of the Indian Tribes of Guatemala/, Leyden, 1882. This
825 work is cited by Lang in Chap. III of Mythes, cultes et religions.
784 His tné is a friend, a protector, and may be defined as follows: it is
an animate or inanimate being entitled to the respect and veneration of an entire lineage, family, or clan, in recognition of an outstanding service which has prevented the lineage, family, or clan from disappearing or becoming extinct, or has preserved them from a misfortune.

173 Every tne has its legend. Although in the mouth of the black
614 man the tale may be embellished and decorated a little so that it
539 varies somewhat, the substance remains the same. I will translate
784 a few of these legends, preserving both their form and their substance.
825

Legend of the Two Kouloubali

The people were at war; everywhere there were only fugitives. The Kouloubali lineage had been cruelly stricken and reduced to two members, two brothers lost in the bush with their wives and children. The elder who followed /sic/ his brother at a distance, (since for fear of being surprised, they avoided camping in the same place). He arrived at the bank of a swollen river and saw he could not cross, there being no boats. "Where can I flee now?" he lamented. "I am in the hands of my enemies! For me and my family it is death or slavery." A mpolio was passing by; it heard, was touched by compassion, and, raising its big, bearded head out of the water, called to him: "I can take you over, have no fear!" The elder of the Kouloubali and his family, with their weapons and baggage, settled themselves on the slimy back of the strange fish and crossed the river. Then he said to the fish: "Listen, good mpolio, my brother and his family are over there on the bank. Do not render them the /19/ service that you rendered me, for he is an ingrate, one without a heart, and he might kill you." -- "Kill me? Come now!" and the fish dove, disappeared, and emerged far over near the other bank, at the moment when the young Kouloubali was wondering how his older brother had been able to cross such a wide

773 and deep river when there were no boats. "It is thanks to me," said
614 the mpolio, "place yourself on my spine as he did." And so the
539 younger brother and his wives crossed the river.

784 The young Kouloubali was heartless. When the women had put
825 down their gourds and baskets on the bank, at the moment when the mpolio leaped up and raised the full height of its body out of the water in order to dive and disappear, he threw his spear at it. The fish struggled for an instant, the water foamed, reddened, and then there was quiet: it was dead.

The family of the young Kouloubali cut up the animal and, without shame or remorse, invited the family of the elder brother to come to the feast. "Eat the mpolio," cried the latter, "never! And may there be a curse on any of mine that dares to eat it." Since that day, the mpolio has been the tné of the descendants of the elder Kouloubali.

To some extent it is also the tné of the descendants of the younger brother, but they eat it except for the head.

Legend of a Branch of the Taraoulé

A woman saw all her children die, and so she trembled for her last born, a sickly, puny little boy whom her milk did not help. One day she was alone in her hut crouched on her mat with the child on her knees, spinning cotton when she began to cry and moan: "You will not live, you will join your elder brothers, you will go away and leave me alone." A spitting snake was passing by; he came in and gently coiled himself around the body of the child. The mother let out a cry, and the neighbors came running.... The snake slowly uncoiled and left the dwelling while the child held his arms out to it and smiled. He did not die but became strong and healthy, for the snake had drunk all the gnâma, all elements of illness that were in him. From that day on the Taraoulé branch of which this child is the father does not eat the spitting snake, or n'gorono, for the curse of the ancestor would descend on them: that is, the spitting snake is their tné. /20/

4: Henry--10 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

Legend of Another Taraoulé Branch

773 A woman was fetching wood in the forest when she was seized
614 with the pains of childbirth. "All alone, what will become of me?"
539 she cried. "I have no one to help me; who will wash my child? Oh!
784 I will take a corpse home with me." She knelt by her load of wood,
825 gave birth to her child, collapsed, and lost consciousness. A big
black monkey was munching fruit in a near-by tree; it saw her and
was moved.... It played midwife, washed the little creature, rocked
him in its arms, and when the mother came to herself it gave her back
her little boy. From that day on no descendant of this Taraoulé branch
eats ngoba; this big black monkey is their tné, and the ancestor
would curse anyone who did so.

Legend of the Two Djara

Two Djara brothers with wives and children were fleeing before their enemies. Overcome with fatigue they sat down in the shade of a dondol determined to go no farther. Actually, they were so plagued by thirst that they could not go on. An iguana was wandering in the vicinity; it had pity on the two Djara, so it climbed the dondol and, working with its tail and feet, succeeded in producing a gentle dew under the tree. All were able to quench their thirst with the sap held in the calyxes of this tree's blossoms. "The kana (iguana) shall from now on be my tné," said the elder, "and I curse any one of my descendants who kills or eats it." -- "Think it over," said the younger, "is it not to the dondol that we owe our lives? Is it not its sap that quenched our thirst? Would it not be better to take this tree as tné?" The two Djara argued, could never agree, and separated. The kana became the tné of the older branch, and the boumou, or dondol, that of the younger branch.

Legend of the *Samaké*

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614 My grandfather has often told it to me; he himself got it from
539 his ancestors.... A *Samaké* -- I cannot tell whether he had been
784 fording the river or driving the stakes to which fishing mats are fastened
825 -- was seized by an alligator which dragged him to the depths of its den. The alligator did not kill him, /21/ for it had fed.... Leaving the unhappy man to his sad thoughts, it withdrew.... It did not go away, however, and from time to time it hit the water with its tail at the entrance of the hole, making it quite clear that there was only one way out and that this was the door. Stretched out in the ooze, the unhappy *Samaké* moaned: "Who will save me from those terrible claws and those powerful teeth?" An ant lion at the top of the den was watching for flies and ants in the bottom of its pit; it had pity on the man and, working with its two horns, succeeded in bringing in a ray of sunlight to revive the hopes of the *Samaké*. "Will I be saved?" he asked the ant lion. Two pinches of sand were the answer, and he understood. Working with both hands, he helped the ant lion; the hole grew and he was able to get through. He escaped. When the alligator re-entered its den, exhausted with hunger, it was disappointed not to find its prey there. So as not to invite the curse of their ancestor, the descendants of this *Samaké* respect and venerate the *géré*, or ant lion, and it is their *tné*. Other *Samaké* have the elephant *(sama)* for their *tné*.

773 These few legends are sufficient; they all show us that although
825 the Bambara believes that the bond with the *tné* is simply one of
811 fraternity, friendship, and gratitude and not a bond of real and
772 physical kinship, he nonetheless does not fail to attribute reason and emotion to everything around him, to animals and to plants. In nature he does not find pure matter; rather he attributes human feelings in some degree to everything, and throughout he sees a force, a power, an intangible, which he does not know how to define and which thinks, loves, laments, and weeps.

784 and-such a liquid, that animal, object, or liquid assumes a certain sacredness, and the Bambara calls it a *tné*. It thus conforms to the definition of a taboo that A. Lang gives us in Chapter III of his work *Mythes, cults et religions*, and Nicolay in Chapter II, Volume I, of his work *Histoires des croyances, moeurs, coutumes* also says: "To be taboo is to be marked by a religious sign."

The *tné*, or taboos, are legion in Bambara country. Not only does each lineage have its own, but the *goua*, or families, the confraternities, villages, individuals, genii, and plants also have theirs. Many are permanent in that they are perpetuated from generation to generation. Others, on the contrary, are impermanent; they pass, fall into disuse, disappear, or are dropped as soon as they become inconvenient. All depends upon the authority from which they are derived.

Taboos can be divided into five groups. There are lineage taboos, family taboos, taboos of the *djiné* genii and the *boli* genii, and finally plant taboos. I have given some legends concerning lineage taboos (see p. 8 ff.); these are permanent, passed on from generation to generation, and cannot disappear. /23/ They embody the idea of the ancestor, not in the sense that they merge and become one, but rather because the animal or plant has saved the stock by saving him. The *tné* have become the fathers of the Bambara in the broad sense of the word; they are, on an ancestor's name, or *diamou*, like armorial bearings on a shield, and a Bambara cannot rid himself of them. The ancestor has bound himself to the *tné* as a result of a service rendered, and his oath has made the union so close that if one disappeared the other would disappear with it -- how could one repudiate someone who is, and was, an ancestor and whose name, or *diamou* one bears!

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Family taboos also have their legends and resemble those of lineages. They are different, however; the service was rendered to a member of the family and not to its head. In addition, the taboos are less extensive and include only a part of a species or race. To cite just one example, certain *Dambélé* may not buy, raise, kill, or eat a *da-n-fign*, or black dog, but they are not thereby prevented

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from owning, killing, or eating a dog of another color; a dish of dog is even a delicacy served during orgies in honor of the fetishes *Nia*, *Komo*, *Kono*, *Nama*, etc. The dog is taboo for them, but only the black dog, and the reason is as follows: A *Dambélé* family was working their fields, and every noon the wife in charge of cooking brought them gruel. One fine day the cook, seeing her child asleep, laid him on the mat and left.... Hardly had she reached the field when the big black dog arrived, yapping and whining, running toward the village and coming back, and yapping and whining even more. This performance puzzled everyone, and they all dropped their hoes and followed the dog back to the village. The dwelling had been consumed by fire and was only a pile of ashes.... "My child, my child," cried the mother at once, desperate and wild with grief.... And the dog pranced around her, put its paws on her shoulders, licked her with joyful growls, and seemed to say to her: "Have no fear, I have saved him." It had in fact saved the child; seeing the fire in the dwelling, it thought of the child, took him gently in its mouth, and carried him to the hut where karité nuts were being roasted. They found him there, well and safe, sound asleep, and from that day on they took the black dog as *tné*; all the family respected and /24/ venerated it, and their descendants still respect and venerate it today.

784 Family *tné* sometimes become taboo for a whole village. For example, where the *Dambélé* of the black dog are powerful because of their number and especially through their affinal ties, members of outside lineages avoid raising these dogs or eating their flesh, out of respect for the old people and to spare the feelings of their wives and families. Little by little the custom takes root and the animal becomes a *tné* or taboo for everyone.

Its durability, however, is nowhere near that of a lineage taboo. A *Dambélé* woman married into a village where the black dog is not taboo may refrain as much as possible from eating its flesh, but she will not fear it long. Little by little the taboo is forgotten, and only a vague memory stays with her: "*An dougou tné do*, for the village I came from it is taboo," she may say, but it will seem to her that for her it is no longer so. As to members of outside

772 more, to a brother, one of his people? It is more difficult for a Bambara to deserve hell than to avoid it; thus they need not think about it and never do think about it.

Paradise hardly absorbs their thoughts more. The thought that they are called upon to contemplate the Creator, to live near Him and rejoice in Him, has not touched them for a long time; they have evolved too far; they have reached the last runs of degradation, and to go lower they would have to be Moslems. Furthermore, the paradise of Mohammed seems absurd to them! That indecent corps of virgins with modest looks and beautiful black eyes, whose color makes them resemble ostrich eggs carefully hidden in the sand (2), leaves them indifferent. They still prefer the ones here below, undoubtedly on the principle /83/ that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" /literally: "one good thing that you have is worth 36 that you will have"/. Virginity is too beautiful for the Bambara to have a word
[831] for it; it is the flower of a day which a girl of ten no longer has. And what does it matter to them whether a woman is young or somewhat
[562] mature, virgin or not, pretty or ugly; to them a woman, a real one, is a good servant, a good cook, and one who provides carnal pleasure at a man's will without ever tiring.

The pleasures and joys of this earth suffice for the Negro; he wishes for no others, and no doubt that is why he believes in a perpetual return. If, when barely in the grave, he already lives again in the womb of a woman, could the idea of judgment after death, the idea of the end of the world and a new judgment, make an impression on his mind? Can he who lives again and again conceive of the end of the world?

773 It is senseless to speak of their knowledge of Adam, father of
829 the human race, and of Eve, his wife. The Bambara meaning of the words Adama (Adam) and Awa (Eve) are quite different from the one we give them. When a missionary, a Moslem, or any European introduces himself to them as the son of Adam and Eve, these words are to them generic terms denoting the first father and the first mother

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2. Koran, Chap. XXXVII - v. 47.

773 of a race, but not words that denote the first father and mother of the
829 human species. A pure Bambara does not believe in the unity of mankind; God created the white man white and the black man black, to use his expression, and to each He has given a father and a mother of his own color.

829 582 Nor has the arrival of the Europeans and the Moslems changed any of his ideas in this respect. For many, each tribe and each caste had a first father and a first mother, and if there are castes which cannot be united by marriage, this seems to me to be the reason. "An té sé, a yé noumoy yé an yé Bamana déou yé an té si (1) kélé-n-yé,

1. Si: "similar" or "like nature;" "of the same race, descent, origin, people, nature."

we cannot marry each other, he is noumou (blacksmith) and we are not of the same people, the same blood, the same stock, the same father." Some seem to me very explicit when they say: "An té fa kélé-n-yé, we are not of the same father." /84/

Chapter 5

000 Fetishism among the Bambara; The Worship of the Gnéna Classification of the Gnéna, Who are Identical with the Arab Djiné

1. What is Meant by Gnéna or Djiné

776 The Supreme Being, the Bambara God, lives up above behind the blue sky, gliding through happy and quiet days with his celestial band, the good angels (méléké) that form His court, and, omnipotent though He is, He is without priest or sacrifice. For He concerns Himself very little with men. He has divided the dominion of creation with the djiné. His laws, which are immutable, He has decreed once

798 Since all the Bambara could not be made to submit to shameful
771 servitude, the Moslems were satisfied to impose a tax, to forbid
778 public worship of the idols, and, with sheathed sword, sought to make converts by persuasion. Their caravans were quick to cover the country, preaching Islam in all places both favorable and unfavorable, but the mass of the people could not be approached. In order to give /131/ their beliefs a rational basis, they always did everything in the name of "Alla," "Stamboul" (the Sultan of Constantinople), and "Makka (Mecca), and said to the conqueror: "All true belief comes from Mecca (Makka); it is the center of all religious life, so why do you fight so hard against our boli? They all come from Mecca. God has given you the formula: 'there is no Divinity other than God and Mohammed is His prophet'; for you He prescribes ablutions, Friday rest, etc.. Keep your formula and shout it! To us Bambara He has given the boli and bloody sacrifices, so why do you want to take from us our treasures that are hungry for blood?" I do not doubt that we owe
● 773 our "legend" to the discussions which arose between the m'rabet (the
776 marabout, or Moslem priest) and the gnâtigi, or bolitigi. Here it is
794 as I so often heard it told by bold old men:

A group of youths who were devoting themselves to trade and following lady luck (ou toumbe kolo (1) gnini, "they were seeking cowrie shells"), one day took the road to the east. Over mountains and valleys the little band walked and walked for a long time, and then finally they reached the great, blue, salty water, the ocean, on the shores of which lies the holy city, Mecca (Makka) (2).

[136] 1. Kolo, "cowrie shells" (singular, kokê), small shells used as money.

[823] 2. Since the Moslems said that Mecca was located on the seacoast, and since the Bambara did not know Arabia, they believed it to be in this direction. In their minds the ocean does not have to be crossed to get there. Actually, this is the least of their worries.

773 Their stay there lasted several years, and no one expected to
776 see them again. It was said that bandits had fallen upon them and
794 massacred them or reduced them to slavery, and funeral rites were to be given them. The sanga fo (3) in their honor began; the women wept, filling the air with their cries, and after several days of dancing, everybody went back to pleasure and work.

The young Bambara were not dead, they came back and, better yet, were in no way stained by Mohammedanism. Even in the heart of Mecca they met a Bambara tribe, brothers who were thoroughly fetishist, and their secret rites, sacred dances, and sacrifices made more impression on their hearts and imaginations than the worn and cold formula, stupid prostrations, and tiresome /132/ ablutions of the sons of Islam. They were initiated into the rites of the gnâ, or boli; they bought some; and one fine day, rich in gold and silver, flocks of goats and sheep, women and slaves, they took the road back to the Niger. The caravan was large, the loads heavy, the road was barely passable, and discouragement touched the hearts of the bravest more than once. Finally, they reached the great river and the loads and boli filled boats by the hundreds.

The start of the voyage was happy; only a very few loads fell into the water and were lost going through rapids. Then a day came when everything changed; the wind started to blow violently; the water boiled, foamed, and swelled; and the boats, made of two hollowed tree trunks placed end to end and bound together with weak ropes, crashed together and broke. Who can tell how many disappeared in the floods that day with all their cargoes! The loss was great, especially in boli, but these have the power of gods, and they quickly changed into fish. According to the legend there have been torpedo fish, manatee, etc. in the depths of the river since that day.

Everything was not lost, however. When the travelers arrived in the Béledougou and the Ben-dougou (1), they still had a large stock

3. Condolences from acquaintances to the family of the deceased.

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of boli. People came running from all directions. Of course there were festivals and amusements, and everyone wanted news and wished to learn about this Mecca which was so vaunted by the Moslems. "It is indeed a large city," they said, "but do not think that all they know there is the worn formula la ilah ill l'allah, which is shouted by the sons of the Prophet all day long. At Mecca there are Bambara (2) who sacrifice to genii as we do. They have additional rites that you do not know; /133/ they know how to protect themselves from evil genii and demons; they sacrifice to the boli. The latter /boli/ are terrible. They kill anyone who insults or displeases them and actually have consideration only for those who give themselves to them and become their children. Thanks to them, our brothers in Mecca are rich and powerful and live to be old. They quickly discover thefts, lies, and adultery. In fact, the boli render justice, and whoever asks it of them cannot lie with impunity. The deepest insult against them is to call on them to witness a lie; they always take vengeance for this offense, causing endless evils to its perpetrator

1. Bélédougou: bélé, "ferruginous rock"; dougou, "village," "country"; a province back of Bamako kati. Ben-dougou: ben, "meet"; dougou, "country"; the eastern end of Bambara country, on the Bani.

2. This word Bambara (Bamana) of the legend denotes less the people than the religion, and it seems to me that it should be understood in the sense of kafri, as already indicated in speaking of the origin of the word Bambara. (As I pointed out /in Chap. IV, 3/ I believe its original meaning to have been "rebel" and not "son of the alligator" or of the fish ban ma, a kind of tench.)

773
778 and even going so far as tocause his death." These accounts excited
794 the Negroes' curiosity; they wished to see the *boli*, wanted to sacrifice
to them. They gave themselves to the *boli*, and thus became their
children.

Once the people were initiated, the travelers unveiled the
mysteries to them, bound them by the law of secrecy. They imposed
upon them the prohibition against admitting uninitiated men and
women and children to their ranks, and the sects were formed. These
have multiplied continuously; each *boli* has its own, and since the
boli are male and female and produce children, they have become
legion, and each village has sects and *boli* of its own. Although the
778 worship of the boli has not destroyed that of the *gnéna*, or *djiné*, it
794 has long exceeded the latter; their sacrifices and drinking bouts are
accompanied by an external pomp that has a different grandeur, and
no important action is taken without their agreement. It can be
asserted without fear of error that the worship of the *gnâ*, or *boli*, is
the chief religion of the Bambara at the present time. It is the basis
of union within families and the foundation of the *sina-n-koun*, or
sworn friendship; through the *boli* the people of the same village are
closely united, and this union extends from one village to another
and from one province to another, since all members of a *boli*'s sect
are brothers and owe each other mutual assistance under certain
specified circumstances.

776 In the Bambara's mind (and I have spoken of this at length in
778 my chapter, "The Ideas of the Bambara are not of Islamic Origin"),
782 the *boli* are nothing less than intrinsically evil beings in revolt against
the Supreme Being, God the Creator and Lord of all things. As the
formula of the sacrifice to *Touafé Bla* suggests, the place where they
dwell is fire or hell, and there is not a Negro who will not tell you
/134/ that the *boli* is a demon (*sétané*). Can it not be said that his
religion is a worship rendered to "Satan himself?" He renders this
worship in full knowledge of what he is doing. Have I not heard the
sacrificer in a sacrifice to a *Nama boli* (1), shout before cutting the

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1. A note by Father Coppe of the
White Fathers (unpublished manuscript).

778 782 roosters, two red kola nuts, and one *dégenéni*, an infant of two to three months."

Since the French occupation and the suppression of slavery, human beings are no longer sacrificed regularly. All the legends give one to understand, moreover, that they were always unusual and very infrequent. Yet who will ever be able to say what took place, and what still takes place nowadays at night in those sacred groves which only initiates can enter? One can always imagine that, lacking sacrifices, the initiates of the *siri*, the fetish of the *souba* or *soubaga*, disinter corpses in order to have human blood to offer to their idol and human flesh to taste. It is a unanimous belief among all the Negroes that they do so, and no sacrifice is made to the *gnéna*, to the *gnâ*, or to the shades of ancestors without a repetition of the words: "Protect us from the souba," -- in other words: "Protect us against the initiates of *siri*." These *souba*, of which I have already spoken /140/ in my chapter on metamorphosis (see above, p. 29), do not seem to differ in any way from the occult religious sects of the Basêzi of Uganda and the Baswêzi of the Ouchirombo, the cannibals of the equator.

778 And of what are they made, all these *boli* that for the most part
have their temples and their sacred groves? A little of everything, I
think, goes into the making of these horrors. Many times have I
untangled these blood-coated gods and found only the bark of trees,
roots, horns of goats, deer, and bulls, and finally claws of almost
778 all quadrupeds. It is said that the *Komo* of Tigini, 30 or 35 kilometers
773 from Ségou, is the body of a child. The legend says it was made by
one Kari, the great-great-grandfather of the man who owns it at
present, and this miserable man pushed barbarism to the point of
taking his first grandson, a few months old, and grinding him alive
in a mortar. An almost identical legend is current about the *Komo* of
Kégné in Bani country which is at present in the hands of quite a young
man called Marka N'zan. It is even said that if the first child of the
owner of this latter fetish is a boy it belongs to the *Komo*. Is this
child sacrificed or do they simply poison him? I have nothing definite
on this matter.

772 3. From *ta* (to do, in the ancient language) and *si* (to act). The Bambara freely translate *tasi* as "spirit of nothing" and give this stage, originating in nothingness and preceding creation, the name of *tasi dyẽ*, "world of the spirit of nothing."

called *oryo* or *oyo*, is broken down into three stages: *yo*, the inner word, invisible spirit and inaudible voice, potentially containing all creation: *o* the transition from the inaudible to the audible;
[801] *yereyereli*, the creative vibration (4). The progression is represented

4. The name *oyo*, given to this system, is a composite of *o* and *yo*, and when pronounced reverses the chronological order. This anomaly is recognized by the Bambara who explain it by the fact that *yo*, designating an inaudible voice, cannot be pronounced before *o* which designates a perceptible noise. Thus, in reversing the chronological order, *yo* "remains in the secret of o" which is in accord with its nature.

by seven signs, 7 being the symbolic number of man (homo) "seed of the world." Indeed, this numeral is the sum of 3 (male symbol) and 4 (female symbol). The couple they form is itself the symbol of duality, the fundamental law of creation, since each human being is both male and female in body and spirit (5).

5. The number 3 represents the penis and
831 two testicles of the male body; the number
●774 4 the four labia of the female body. On the other hand, man and woman are each endowed with two twin souls of different sexes; the soul of sex, opposite to that of its bearer, has its seat in the foreskin or the clitoris until the operation of circumcision or excision is performed. For further discussion of the duality of man and his

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person, see G. Dieterlen, La Personne chez les Bambara /The individual among the Bambara/ and infra, Ch. 3, The Person.

772 It is said that yo, the inner secret voice, "is born of itself, is known by itself, and comes out from itself /6/, out of the nothing which is itself" (1). Out of yo there will come only things that are themselves

1. yo na na a yere la, bwora a yere la, dona a yere la, a be fu la min ya yere ye.

and that will be nothing other than yo. Each thing, being yo, proceeds like yo, only from itself. Hence, man is nothing other than himself, since he is a creation of yo and since yo's creations are by itself. Thus, there is nothing in the world besides oneself, since the person is yo, and yo is entirely contained in the person. As a result, each being is directly descended from yo with no intermediary; it is yo and exists only because it wills it. That is to say, man, the image of yo, alone has the will, alone has the capacity to bring forth action or creation, since these can be nothing but himself. "Who then," say the initiates, " can know himself, make himself known and manifest himself, other than through himself? Who then can manifest anything but himself?"

But yo, being at the origin of the inaudible and invisible things that are itself, is also in the unknown, hence in nothingness. And consequently, the same is true of man who is nothingness and can act only on the nothingness of himself.

Thus, yo, insofar as it was mind, was free in its ability to decide and to use its creative will. Its work, in nothingness, consisted in shedding, "for it was the continuous shedding of the world." When it
772 manifested itself by rotating on itself, it went five times to the four
801 "angles of its thought, " seleke miri, once to the "sky of its thought, " sã miri, once to the "earth of its thought, " dugukolo miri, thus communicating its power to them (2). The realization of this universe,

2. On the meaning of the number 5, see p. 25. Yo has endowed the "angles, " corresponding to the "cardinal angles" in the completed universe, with its greatest

776 773 At death, he takes back the spiritual principles of the diseased and preserves them in water so as to reintegrate them into another body, thus using forces which are eternally reusable. The product of the "shedding" (mana or folo) of souls which remain on the altars is for him in a way of constantly verifying the account of those living and dead who are entrusted to him.

On earth, men are indebted to him for all they possess. He gave them language, an expression of thought, and taught them its usage, having warned them against the misuse and evil use of words.

The techniques of survival, another expression of "Faro's words," so necessary to their lives since they have to provide the means for their existence, were revealed to them by the spirit. He helped them with his sovereign power, either by directly providing them with new tools, or by inspiring some of them to develop new techniques by putting to use observed facts. In this way, he gave the Bozo fishing nets which enabled them to catch the first recorded animal food, the fish; likewise, he encouraged among the Bambara the discovery of weaving through observing the spider's web.

He also gave men certain seeds which became the origin of farming, such as cotton and fonio, both of them being known before millet and the other cereals.

[782] As proprietor of cowrie shells and metals, he is the master of wealth, distributing it as he pleases. Thus, one who owns precious metal is responsible to Faro for it and owes him a part of one's earnings. For this reason many offerings are made by throwing gold or copper into the river.

776 241 Faro's deed is essential where the Bambara's main activity, agricultural work, is concerned. Every man with dignity and nobility must cultivate the earth in order to honor Faro. Each stroke of the hoe is a wound inflicted upon the earth and a punishment for its impurity. Each stroke of the hoe humiliates Mousso Koroni and purifies the earth. Faro watches over the soul and the vital force of the seeds. Only he can provide rain necessary to germination, for rain contains the soul, (ni) of the cereal grains as does the water of ponds and streams which one collects in case of drought.

776 774 241 Millet receives its soul as soon as it gets the humidity of the earth, and from that time on, it accompanies the various stages of germination with utterances which, at the beginning of the world, could be heard. As soon as /54/ it has received the rain, the seed splits and says: "My place is assigned." Then the sprout comes out of the earth

776 with the words: "May I be protected." Finally the growth of the stem
774 is accompanied by a third utterance: "May I be obeyed" (1). It pre-
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1. These are the three formula:
ndyora, nga kolosi, nga bunye.

serves its soul until full maturity, that is, the moment is is harvested. When the harvester's blade cuts the spike or the cluster, the plant sends its soul into Faro's realm with these words: "Iron is forbidden my grain; soul, go away to the house of water" (2). Thus deprived

2. Neke ye nkise tne ye, ni, ta dyi so la.

of its soul, the millet becomes suitable for eating and it says: "If I were not dead, I could not be eaten; my breed cannot be lost: whether or not I am eaten, nothing can reduce me for my soul is in water" (3).

3. Ni ńa sale te nti dũ, n šia tise ka tunu,
ndunaw ma dũn wo, fẽ te bwona, ni be dyi la.

776 Many agrarian rituals are celebrated in order to assure Faro's pro-
241 tection. The high quality of the first fruits of the harvest offered to him indicates the importance of his role. It is in fact a payment made to him for the past harvest and in anticipation of the harvest to come.

776 He is also the guardian of the artisan's skill. The first object forged by the young blacksmith and the first spindle of thread woven by the young weaver are brought to him. Through this gesture, the individual entrusts him with both his work and his manual dexterity. After Faro has seen the work, he does not let the worker forget what he has learned and will help him perfect his skill.

Faro is a judge. Those who break the rules he has made are the object of his righteous wrath: those who are drowned or struck by lightning are always persons who have broken a taboo. Men submit most difficult cases to him as a last resort. Through the intermediary of the agents of different rituals such as the intermediary of the diviners, he answers requests and "settles the words." Most prayers
776 are addressed to him and in many cases the invocations end with his
782 name. He is omnipresent, invoked everywhere, and the seat of his power, as of all others, is the seventh heaven, to which the Bambara

761 After the marital couple has absorbed the fruit, a smooth-bodied
776 embryo with nonarticulated limbs is formed in the maternal womb.
842 /58/ It is at this moment that the couple consummate the sexual act in the course of which the woman "takes into herself the entire body of her husband": the upper part through the eyes, the lower part through the genital organs. The masculine seed located in the seven principal articulations (knees, elbows, ankles, and spine) transmits them to the embryo. The body, originally similar to the body of the spirit, thus becomes that of a human being.

The spirit restows the spiritual forces after the man has mated for the second time with his wife. If the woman bears a single child it means that the man, in the course of the second union, formed the double of the first germ, but was not permitted to procreate twins.

Faro disposes of the child's life and nature. He decides all that the
761 child will be and will do, and determines his destiny from the moment
776 the seed is placed by him in the womb. The foetus then develops
843 with no further modifications until parturition, at which time it re-
774 ceives the spiritual principles, the soul, ni, and the double, dya, which will be his throughout his life. It is at this time that the inner relations of the individual to the social group to which he belongs intervene. Although Faro gives each child a new body, he animates this body with spiritual forces drawn from the family reservoir. The
[775] newborn child is the direct heir to the ni and the dya of a deceased member of the family, actually of the one, whatever one's sex, who died shortly before the birth of the child (1).

1. The reincarnation of the deceased's spiritual principles, however, is not an absolute rule. Faro is the master of an infinite reserve of souls. Twins, albinos, and certain other children are born with the ni and dya as yet undetermined. They originate respectively in the second sky (kaba dye) and in water (dyi sumale). Further study on this particular point is necessary to complete this investigation.

761 The consequence of death was, in effect, to separate the corpse
776 from the forces that animated it. The ni, by appropriate ritual, had
774 been preserved on the altar of the ancestors (2), and the dya had left
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the dying man to go into the water and place itself under Faro's protection. At the moment of delivery, both ni and dya return to the body of the newborn child who replaces the dead man, but they return in reversed order: the dya is returned to the body of the child and becomes his ni; the ni of the deceased mixes with the birth water spread on the ground which forms the shadow (suma) and will be his double, the twin (1). In the case of a boy, the dya will be female; in the case /59/ of a girl, it will be male. These movements are independent of the sex of the deceased as the spirit reverses the sexes when necessary. Each human being is thus both male and female
[828] through his soul and his double. This conception of human nature,
which is fundamental to the Bambara, is expressed in the symbolism
[801] of numbers. The number seven is formed of three (male sexual symbol) and four (female sexual symbol) and represents the complete man. In addition, on another level, the number six is that of male twins, seven that of mixed twins (and the hermaphrodite), and eight that of female twins. The body of the newborn child is gently tapped
[844] by the number of strokes representing the above figures in order to call the child's ni according to its sex.

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2. Grouped hierarchally, children, male adults, and women form religious societies or institutions, dyo. Each dyo is charged with the upkeep of altars which serve to preserve the spiritual forces of the group. (See p.

[844
824]
1. The blood of childbirth represents the excess tomato juice absorbed by the woman, that which remains in the womb after the formation of the embryo. On the eighth day after birth, the mother of the parturient woman squeezes three or four tomatoes (depending on the sex of the newborn) into a gourd which she then gives to the child's father. The latter makes his wife drink the juice to replace the blood which she has lost and which is considered impure.

●774 827 The ni, which animates the body, is visible during the weeks following birth in the movements of the fontanel. It is also the breath, the respiration, the beating of the arteries. Like the dya, it is not indissolubly bound to the body for it leaves it during sleep in order to go to the sixth sky, sunankaba. When the person awakens, the ni returns [828] to the body and the dream is considered a memory of what it has seen, a premonition of an event concerning the individual, the family, or the village (1).

[781] 1. Great numbers of fish seen in a dream foretell an abundant catch; quarrelling signifies war; to swim suggests purification for an offense. The passage of crickets from west to east is the sign of a great battle or famine. In this last instance, the situation is so serious that the village is forewarned and each one must make an offering to a needy person saying these words: "I make this soul sacrifice to God in order that he save me (nye nin ye ni sakaka ye ka ngala ma a la ka mbo)." The village chief also offers a collective sacrifice.

774 The dya, the double or twin of the human being and its opposite sex, has a body: either the shadow on the ground or the image in the water. It may move alone or be forced to leave the person it is accompanying under Faro's order. When a crocodile carries off or wounds a man by order of the spirit, he first seizes his visible shadow on the surface of the water and his dya in the water. The same thing may be attempted by someone with evil intentions. In such a case the close contact which the dya as a shadow maintains with the impure earth makes it particularly vulnerable. In order to remedy this, the person concerned must look at himself in the water contained in a gourd; then, when his image is clear, he clouds it by tipping the receptacle; this puts the dya under Faro's protection.

/60/ The independence and vulnerability of the dya require, in the course of certain religious functions, that it be taken over by Faro for the duration of the ceremony.

Wild and domestic animals are endowed with a ni and a dya. Plants also have a ni. The ni of trees is situated in the buds and insures its growth and its life; that of cereals necessary to human life

774 is the object of constant concern during agrarian rituals. The role of the soul of plants is particularly noticeable in their medicinal uses. Drawing a remedy from a plant may cause its death, liberating its spiritual principles for the benefit of the sick man. Because of this, such an act is equated with a blood sacrifice.

With the exception of the ngovo tomato, plants have no dya. The shadow (suma) of a plant is not independent like that of a man or an animal. It exists only through light effects and its movements are caused by the air and the wind moving its leaves and branches. This is what the Bambara means when he says that the dya has a life of its own and depends on Faro, whereas the plant's suma depends on the spirit Téliko, master of the air.

774 787 804 843 An individual's dya can be known and his temperament and life possibilities assessed by measuring his shadow on the earth at noon. The unit employed is the little finger, which is a corporeal symbol of the person. If a pregnant woman is thus measured, the sex of the child may be predicted.

774 [579] When a boy or a girl gets married, it is said of them: a ye a dya furu: "he (or she) has married his dya." For it is impolite to say that a person married anyone but his spiritual double. Besides, the union of the couple is repeated by the union of their dya which like themselves are of opposite sex. [595 851] In olden times, male twins married the same woman and the latter's dya was taken over by Faro in the Niger. The child she conceived was the son of both husbands.

589 791 Some men do not marry. This is true of the Soma, the religious diviner attached to the major Bambara societies. Initiated in the course of a solitary sojourn in the bush, he left his dya with the invisible spirits. This is a prerequisite to the gift of double sight with which he is endowed as well as a protection against possible dangers to the dya when it remains in contact with the earth, or when it approaches other humans. The true spouse of the Soma is his dya: he may mate only with it on a fixed date when the spirits return it to him for this purpose. /61/

The tere

774 The tere was inflicted by Pemba on Mousso Koroni in order to diminish her power at the time he was pursuing her. This explains its complexity: it is at once the character of a man, his strength,

774 his consciousness, as well as that part of his being which, through the body, makes him sensitive to events. If man is vulnerable through his double, it is his *tere* that is affected by any breaking of taboos; it receives and submits to impurity.

1824 The *tere* has its seat in the blood and the head (*kun tere*). It develops in the foetus in the course of gestation and is composed in part of the parents' *tere* to which is added that of the deceased person whose soul and double the child has inherited.

774 553 787 The appearance of the child's *tere* is determined by the old men of the family in the course of the name-giving ceremony which takes place publicly on the eighth day after birth. After carefully examining the child's hairline along the forehead, the manner in which his eyebrows join, the shape of his eyes (the seat of intelligence), mouth, hands, and feet, one of the old men present announces in a loud voice the revealing signs of his character. The position of these signs makes it possible to say whether a child has a good or a bad *tere* and to make predictions about his life. A slight bald spot on the middle of his head will make him a rich man; a wide and deep skull will make him a chief. The old man then swings the child in the direction of the four cardinal points above the family altars and gives him the first name of the deceased person whose *ni* and *dya* he has inherited. Some of the hair, shaved off shortly before, is then thrown into the Niger by the father who pronounces the name while facing the river. The gesture and the word are meant to entrust the *tere* to the spirit of the waters and to ask his protection. On the same day the blacksmith marks out on the child's face the scarifications that act on his *tere*, giving him strength, courage, and virtue.

774 787 828 As the child grows, certain of his physical peculiarities are interpreted as characteristics of his *tere*. If he grinds his teeth while sleeping it means he will attack his parents; if he often takes hold of his left wrist with his right hand he will always be victorious. A girl who walks swinging her hands and throwing them behind and who raises dust with her feet while walking will destroy her husband's fortune. Some informants say that a person has several *tere*: /62/ one for his manner of walking, one for the way he carries his head, one for the shape of his limbs, and one for the breasts if the person is a woman (1).

1. The physical signs determining the *tere* are very numerous. On this subject see

774 D. Traore. "Le Tere chez les Bambara du
787 Ségou /The Tere among the Bambara of Ségou/,"
828 *Notes africaines*, January 1947, pp. 29-31.

774 Man is considered the bearer of a strong *tere*. Because he talks, is
well informed, and knows good from evil, he is responsible for his own
life and that of his family. The *tere* is the gaining of consciousness.

This aspect of the *tere* means that only domestic animals, whose
774 life depends on man, are bearers of this principle. Wild animals
825 "have a hard and barren life; they have to labor to feed themselves;
so they do not have to bear the burden of a *tere*." All that lives independently of man is without a *tere*. (1)

1. However, according to certain informants, wild animals might also be endowed with several *tere* for different parts of the body. In this case, it would seem that the term designates especially the animal's physical peculiarities and not its consciousness, as in the case of man and domestic animals.

The *tere* of domestic animals is not as powerful as that of man, but is also revealed by external signs. For instance, a horse that swings its head from right to left while it is tied up has a very bad *tere*; it is said to be its *duga fufa* (2). Such a beast is undesirable in a home for it "chases away happiness and success." A wounded domestic animal attacks its enemy with its *tere*.

2. Literally, "the swaying of the hawk." It is said that when a hawk descends on its prey, it swings its head right and left in order to see the prey better.

774 The fact that the *tere* is that part of the person which suffers the
784 consequences of impurity testifies to the bonds that unite man to the
outer world. The *tere* is disturbed when a taboo, *tne*, is broken. If
827 it is a good *tere*, it leaves the person; if it is a bad one, it becomes
worse. On the other hand, the brezking of a taboo provokes a
physiological change in the blood which loses its red color and becomes

774 pale. It is manifested by a loss of strength and by illnesses affecting
784 the body openings: the man becomes blind and deaf-mute. He may
827 also become paralyzed. Generally he does not die but is pursued by
ills until he purifies himself.

In addition, the *tere* changes when it is detached from its normal
774 support; it then becomes *nyama*, a force which acts outside the body.
Manifest in action, the fact can already be sensed in the spoken word,
the bearer of *nyama* which immediately affects /63/ the person to
whom it is addressed. The consequences of this action of the word
are manifold.

761 At the time of death, the *tere* is completely liberated. Transformed
into *nyama* which leaves the body, it then becomes a very active
774 form which, in certain cases, can attack whomever it considers
778 responsible for the death (1).

774 Sacrificial beings, men or animals, or plants for ritual use never
778 release a dangerous *nyama*. Their spiritual principles and forces
are channeled in the course of the ritual and directed toward the
benefit of a supernatural power through the altar. The same is true
of domestic animals immolated for consumption, in which case their
forces are used over again and their death causes no disorder since
it was foreseen by Faro's law concerning food.

On the other hand, the *nyama* of the bush animals (*nyama bakâ*) leave their dead bodies and pursue the hunter (2). To protect himself

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1. This very visible but incomplete aspect of the *nyama* is the one that has been most studied heretofore. On this subject, see the works of the Abbé Henry, Ch. Monteil, H. Labouret, L. Tauxier. Furthermore, in the sky, in space, and on earth, there is a *nyama* independent of the *tere*. The nature of this general and vital element has not been completely clarified by investigation.

2. The sick man may be treated in the following manner: seven (or a multiple of seven) cowrie shells are thrown upon the hide of the animal

as an offering, which implies an apology with the understanding that the guilty man is given as many blows as there are cowrie shells offered. Next, the hide is soaked in water and washed. It is then secured so that it may not once again run away into the bush. These various operations are performed as often as necessary and until the crisis is over. On the other hand, this purification may be performed as often as necessary, but cannot be renewed in the case of a broken taboo.

the hunter carries an altar, dözoboli, suspended from his shoulder. Into it the animal's strength is channeled the moment it dies.

Every individual is, therefore, constantly faced during his lifetime with this active force which is liberated by the word, by certain acts, and by death. He must be in a position to fend off danger, to maintain his own tere which will help him if it is good, but which may on the contrary join the enemy forces and help them in their destruction if it is evil. Therefore, in the latter case the individual tries to change it by seeking the assistance and advice of the Komo diviner. But whatever happens, each individual, whether he wishes it or not, endures the attacks and the presence of numerous and varied nyama, because he has destroyed plants, trodden on insects, and wounded other living beings. Thus, he is at all times the bearer of displaced life forces that are foreign to him. Moreover, these forces find their way /64/ through him to all that he touches. He becomes a center of influences which first exert their action on his person and which he must take into account to maintain his integrity (1).

1. Although this feeling is very distinct in the mind of the Bambara, it does not make him inactive. The responsibility is only serious in the case of a voluntary act of useless destruction. In all other cases, the rites counteract the inconveniences. The Bambara are responsible, but free.

826 is also through the feet that a part of man's strength is deposited in the
sweepings and rubbish upon which he treads. Their role as receptacles
appears in the rituals concerning household refuse and the dirt on
roads and paths.

Like the little finger, the small toe symbolizes the whole person.
[301] It is sometimes adorned with a silver ring, symbol of the word, which
recalls that man's body is the seat of the word extended within him
from head to feet (1).

1. In olden times the ring on the small toe was made of red *nyama* fiber (*nyama fu*), which played the same role as metal.

831 The notion of the bisexuality of human beings is fundamental:
the spiritual principles are sexed like the body, whose ambivalence
826 /71/ is evident during childhood: the boy is feminine in his foreskin;
the girl is masculine in her clitoris. One of the aims of circumcision
[304] and excision is to help the child attain the sex to which it is apparently
destined by removing the organ of the opposite sex. (2). But the
initial duality of the soul and body is the very foundation of the human
being. He is complete only if he originally received it, and he retains
it even after the operation imposed by physical and social life,
● [774] for the soul of the opposite sex, though diminished in the body, remains
present in the shadow, the *dya*. He also rediscovers his dual
unity when he marries. A married couple are a unit for their *dya*
[581] join as do their bodies in an act which is not merely physical and
which realizes the ideal union of twins.

831 The sex to which one belongs dominates one's whole existence on
earth. Objects and tools bear masculine or feminine marks, according
801 to the rules of the division of labor. The numbers three (man)
and four (woman) are abridged forms of the sex. "Primitive men"
who, according to the Bambara expressed themselves mostly by
gestures and signs, engraved their rare objects with the number of

[171] 2. The same conception is found among the Dogon; see M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, p. 185.

564 Every blacksmith is regarded as the holder of an excellent *tere*.
326 He is well-intentioned, affable, and never hurts anyone. It is easy
774 to make friends with him, to joke with him, even if one knows him
but a short time. The *senankuya* relationships which he has with other
Blacks also contribute to the cordiality of these ties.

The good *tere* of the blacksmith is brought into play particularly
[304] at circumcision which is preferably entrusted to a Gwonna. Being
circumcised by a blacksmith causes the *wanzo* to diminish rapidly,
hastens the healing, and improves the *tere*. A blacksmith is reputed
to have the power of transforming himself at will into an animal or
a plant. In those places where hyenas are venerated as the animal
[825] protectors of a village (*dasiri*), they are always considered as the
blacksmith's ancestors who have undergone metamorphosis. (1).

773 The ritual paraphernalia now preserved in each village comprise
564 models of all the tools manufactured by the blacksmiths since their
326 first appearance.
412

a. *Wooden tools* The craftsmen first used wood, gradually changing the shape of the objects. From a simple stick /116/ (generally in *sunzun*) (2) or from a rough-hewn block, they gradually made more perfect tools, obtaining the shape desired by rubbing and polishing on rocks.

773 The first weapon used in hunting was a throwing instrument in the
564 shape of a boar-spear, the *semenkala* (from *kala*, handle, Fig. 9, A).
326 Hewn from one piece, it comprised three distinct parts: (1) the
411 *bulonda*; (2) the *semenu*; and (3) the *koli* (literally, hook). Men
threw the object with all their strength at the pursued animal or else
they dug into the earth where their prey was hiding with the pointed
end (*semena*) which was often poisoned with a viper's venom. The
weapon was the object of blood sacrifices carried out on the *koli*
and destined to increase its strength.

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1. Particularly in the village of Konodimi, situated 21 km. to the southwest of Ségou.

2. *Diospyros mespiliformis*. The wood of this tree is very hard.

794 B. Altars of the Komo

118 The *boli* altars occupy a distinguished place in the religious and mythological representations of the society organized around them. On the one hand they are a capsule of the universe because of their composition; on the other they are a capsule of the society as all its members are present in them. In fact, each member has provided a part of the composing elements after having impregnated them with his person by salivating over them while pronouncing his name.

794 118 346 The altars of the Komo are kept in a sanctuary, the *komo so* (literally, house of the Komo), a medium sized hut built either in the chief's dwelling place, or in the bush at some distance from the village. The approach to this structure which is under Faro's protection is forbidden to the ordinary person. The chief himself never enters alone. It is said that a snake, the soul and guardian of the sanctuary, is born and lives at the top of the hut in the branches which form the roof (Pl. VI, a).

The hut is divided into a number of floors on each of which is placed /146/ an altar. The highest one contains at its center the *nimara boli* (literally, altar of the souls) which, as its name indicates, is the container of the souls belonging to deceased members of the society and to sacrificed animals (1). It contains, from top to bottom, hair of the dead, copper for the souls of animals, gold for those of men. These various ingredients, placed in a double sac, receive the sacrificial blood which runs between the two layers and soaks them.

794 118 The *nimara boli* is surrounded by small individual altars which have served to channel the souls of the dying and lead them to the common receptacle (2). These small *boli* remain in the hut only

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● [774 782] 1. There is constant preoccupation with preserving all vital elements. The souls of sacrificed animals are the object of the same care as those of humans. Like them, they participate in the resurrection promised to everything which has lived.

2. See p. 175.

[119] Chapter 2

Concepts

1. Beliefs

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826 The Bambara, like ourselves, has a sense of inner life and he expresses it in his language through figurative expressions which, in a sense, localize his sensations.

The eye, whose lens reflects everything that goes on around us, is, for the Bambara, a kind of mirror of the inner life: to be sad, nye na-fin, means "to have a somber eye"; to be cheerful, nye na-dye, means "to have a bright eye"; to be beaten down, nye na-koro, means "to have an eye that is old."

The head is the seat of decision, will and pride. To be active, kun' kene, is "to have an ardent head"; to be tenacious, kun' gwele, is "to have a hard head."

All emotional life is concentrated in the heart. A man who has proper feelings, a son' ka nyi, "has a good heart"; one who is bad, a son' ka dyugu, "has an evil heart." In a more general sense, anything that acts within (kono) us is a be n-kono, literally "it is within myself," meaning "I think, I intend, etc."

It is noteworthy that for these people life resides especially in two organs, the heart and the liver. The most solemn oath among them always contains the phrase: i ka n son' ni m bien' ta or "take my heart and my liver," that is, "destroy me, annihilate me, by removing these two knots of life."

● 774
195 In addition to these figurative expressions, which are common to [120] all languages, there are abstract terms which serve to express all that we imply in the words "life," "soul," etc. In Bambara, ni is "physical life," characterized by the drawing of breath (ni), which begins and ends with life. Dusu is emotional or moral life; si is duration, in the sense of living and also of becoming.

774 The Bambara does not conceive of a body's shadow as being caused by the interception of light by that body. For him

774 it is a fluid emanated from the body itself and made manifest as much by the shadow, which may be seen in sunlight or in a bright light, as by the image which appears when the body is placed in front of a reflecting surface. This fluid is called dya.

774 The dya has the faculty of leaving the body when it is 787 asleep to wander wherever it wishes; the sight of its wanderings, which the body can witness, constitutes a dream (sugo). Dream is a kind of reality; it is in a sense the private life of the dya in company with its fellow-dya. During waking hours, the dya accompanies the actions of the body; during sleep, the body must endure the dya's peregrinations, for there is no doubt but that the dya rules the body it inhabits. Thus, waking a person abruptly is virtually a criminal act because, if the dya is away 761 at the time, a too abrupt summons may break the link between the dya and the body, and such a rupture (sa) is death (sa). Besides, the body has only a vague memory of the wanderings of its dya, it experiences the consequences of this action. On awaking, the body is exhausted by all these mad rushing about and fantastic escapades, and it feels the effects of the dya's actions, either good or bad.

In short, this dya is comparable to what some Europeans call a "double."

775 Further, it appears that the dya plays a crucial role in the "return" (sagi) to life, that is, rebirth, which is one of the most strongly held beliefs of the Bambara. After death, the dya is reincarnated in the same families; the Bambara even claim to have positive proof of this fact. Such and such a newborn child has such and such anatomical peculiarity of the deceased -- is this not a proof that the deceased wanted to show thereby that he was re-embodied? If a child dies very young, the body is mutilated in some agreed manner -- a finger is broken, for instance -- [121] and if later a child is born in the family with a similar deformity, everyone is convinced that the dead child has "returned": a sagira, "he has returned."

It is also believed possible for a dead person to be reincarnated far from his own people. All over Bambara country stories are retold of dead people who, more or less long after

775 their death and more or less far away from the place where they died, have been seen living a new life.

774 The dya is then, as it were, the essence of individuality, and the body, its material expression, takes on forms that are
775 somehow characteristic of the dya.

The dya is a fluid which has its own attributes. There are sorcerers who are thought to know ways to capture the dya, especially for the purpose of using it to make idols that can talk.

It is further believed that a part of the dya is indestructible because it is made up of another fluid common to all nature, which the Bambara call nyama.

The nyama has no shape, but it retains, as it were, a trace of the identity it had during its incarnation; so the name borne by the person who was animated by this nyama has an irresistible attraction for the nyama and the latter is forced to obey anyone who knows how to use this propensity to make it carry out his wishes. After death, the nyama retains human contacts and, in certain respects, continues to behave as it did during its corporeal lifetime. Its manifestations are seen by the Bambara in matters of vengeance: the nyama of an ancestor is especially attentive to the manner in which the ancestor's wishes are being carried out and it is relentless in punishing those who fail to comply. It is the nyama of the fa (father of a family or patriarch) who torments the accursed; it is the nyama of the victim who pursues the murderer; and it is the nyama of anything tabooed that strikes down the impious.

So it is that, for the Bambara, a human being is composed of a corporeal body (su) which serves as the outward envelope (fure) of a fluid element (dya), whose subtle essence (nyama) is merely a part of the universal energy which permeates all nature.

771 [122] To a certain extent the Bambara applies the foregoing ideas on human beings to all that surrounds him. However, it should not be assumed from this that he conceives of everything as being made exactly in his own image. To express abstract ideas, he uses concrete terms which may, however, give a false impression. There is no doubt whatever that the Bambara differentiates between himself and animals; he also distinguishes from vegetables or minerals.

771 In any case, these are questions which he does not ask or which, at least, he has not considered in any way that would cause him to make logical, even if fragmentary, syntheses. His words and his acts are indications and sometimes even guide-posts for us, but how uncertain and misleading they can be! And, in the observation of current facts, how many at least seeming contradictions there are! However, in the main, the analysis given in the paragraphs above represents the basis of Bambara dogma, since everything happens in reality as if the Bambara were living in accordance with these principles.

761 That being the case, life results from the union of the two parts of the body, while death is a result of their separation.
772 Whence come these two elements and who it is that decides upon their union? No answer is possible. The Bambara say, merely, that certain persons are reincarnations. Precautions
[844] taken during pregnancy and delivery show that childbirth is one of those mysteries against which taboos must be observed as a protection. The frequent and readily believed stories about
[845] women giving birth to monsters -- usually animals -- bear witness to the affinities which, in the minds of the Bambara, exist between all creatures. But nothing specific is said about what precedes and determines the birth of a child.

562 This is a secret to which the Bambara are, of course,
778 not indifferent. It is evidenced in the fact that women, through whom man comes into the world, are held to be doubtful creatures, at the very least, partly because of menstruation, which makes a woman impure, and partly because of the mysterious travail she endures during the delivery of a child (1).

[774] 1. Women are also susceptible of being possessed continuously by a spirit (see the story of the Déni-bo Ba, p. 123). That is why, when a woman is several times widowed, she is suspected of being possessed by a jealous spirit who kills off her husbands. She is often even thought to be herself a sorceress.

789 In connection with the brotherhoods, we shall see how magic has been organized [141] in the very heart of native society and we shall observe the stability and the repercussions of its work.

Magic

778
789
774 Universal energy. There exist individuals who are subject to certain phenomena, as yet imperfectly known or explained, in which the human being is divided into two so that on occasion his immaterial self lives a life independent of his body in a sphere inaccessible to corporeal sense. Such a man then enters a milieu from which he brings back visions and sensations that he can only describe vaguely and frighteningly in his habitual language after he has returned to a normal waking state.

Among the Bambara, occurrences of this kind have been observed and good use has been made of them, especially in the brotherhoods. They constitute a confirmation of belief in the invisible world, as do dreams. And the Bambara sees many other indications -- which escape us -- of the existence of this extra-natural world which envelops everything and which he conceives as a force sometimes active and sometimes inert, diffused or personified. It is this energy which is, as it were, set in motion by a curse, by the extreme expression of envy called "evil eye," by luck or by misfortune. A chief's authority derives the essence of its strength from this activity. And it is the reason for honoring the dead.

This invisible force, instantly transmissible to the greatest distances, is present in all things; it exists everywhere, in everything and in everyone. It possesses or acquires a greater or lesser power in certain objects and in certain people for a stated period of time or for a temporary period. It can be beneficent or maleficent, or both in turn. The ordinary man who touches such objects or such persons will usually be struck dead or, at the least, gravely affected, as he would be if he touched a high-voltage electric current. For the initiate who knows the secret of this force and who knows how to use it, this

776 time; it is the noblest work, and one to which every member of the Bambara race must be subject. Faro is represented by a spiral, munu; the vibrating movements of the spiral are the same that animate the daily movements of the sun. These movements are materialized in a basketwork headdress, yugu, which has eight whorls and which formerly was reserved for kings. Faro's face is white, because he took it from the spirit of the air, Teliko, who was an albino. His ears are protected by two fins; his hands are of different sex; his tail is palmate, and his breast is of copper. Albinos and copper are the spirit's preferred sacrifices. All atmospheric manifestations denote his presence; his principal seat is the Niger River, but he has the gift of ubiquity and haunts all waters. Faro is accompanied by helpers, the most representative of whom is the bolokuruni, one-armed blacksmith of a black race. His air messenger is the swallow, who carries the
824 fertilizing word. Certain plants are in permanent rapport with him: the Yayalẽ, the Ngoyõ (tomato), which is compared to blood. Thus, small fields of tomatoes reserved for the cult of Faro are cultivated in each village. All metals are reserved for Faro. The Bozo, born of Faro's first twins, enjoy a privileged position because they were not subject to the defilement caused by Mousso Koroni and can enter into direct communication with the spirit. In addition, they are the masters of the water.

776 The cult of Faro includes a whole series of taboos, such as the
784 black earth of the river which may not be used by the potters and
841 butter which may not be kept in water. But the principal taboo is menstrual blood, originally provoked by the disorders of Mousso Koroni.

B. Conception of Man

774 The Bambara conceive man as a microcosm, a resumé of the
761 totality of beings and things. The principle of duality contained in the original creative thought is realized in man by his twin souls which compensate for the separation of the sexes. In man, Faro is represented by the ni (soul) and the dya (double). Pemba is represented by the téré (the character, force, and conscience) and the nyama (which is the téré when it leaves its corporeal support after
826 death). Mousso Koroni is represented by the Wanzo (evil force with

[826]

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761 its seat in the prepuce and the clitoris, necessitating circumcision and excision). The body is conceived as being the support of all spiritual forces; each part is distinctly known [84] for its particular role. The body, like the spiritual principles, is bisexual; the boy [304 is feminine in his prepuce, the girl masculine in her clitoris, and it 831] is only after circumcision and excision that the man and woman can unite and realize the original fruitful twinship. On the metaphysical plane, there is identity between man, "seed of the world," and the cereal seed; the basic nutriments that are made up of the eight principal cereals are represented symbolically in men's clavicles. 775 761 Finally, death separates all of these elements composing the person. The dya remains in the water where it will become the ni of the new-born in the family of the deceased; the ni is caught by the family head and transported to the altar where it will animate the dya of the new-born; the tērē becomes nyama, a dangerous and vengeful force; it is deposited on the pembele, where it rejoins the ancestral forces. The body is buried and belongs to the termites. At birth, all the spiritual forces are transmitted again, whole, "refreshed," and purified. One being replaces another until the final resurrection.

C. Ritual, Sacrifice, and Cults

782 To appeal to and influence the spiritual forces, the Bambara use prayer, offerings, and sacrifices. Oral rites are used everywhere and at any time. "They pray to the sky, the cardinal points, the spirits; they sacrifice on stones, on the ground, on trees, by water holes, just as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries or situated in public or private places. Every circumcized adult, father of a family, owner of a home and cultivatable land, is a sacrificer, a capacity [531] emphasized by the red spot which sometimes is an ornament of the walls of the principal room in the man's residence." (1)

1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

4. The *dja*

774 778 Here again is a word very difficult to translate into our French language. We use *dja* to translate the words "phantoms," "pictures," "photographs," "shadows," "that which is reflected by water or by a mirror"; but there are other meanings, and there is no question of shadows or images in the following sentences, for example: *a dja tikéra*, *a dja oulila*, *misiou dja oulila*. They mean: "he is afraid," "he is crazed," "the cows are crazed." In the eyes of the Bambara, the *dja* is not only the shadow, the image, or the outline of objects, it is also that which makes them manifest. It is a force, a power common to beings of all kinds, and even though it cannot be compared to a genie or a soul, they nevertheless think of it as a kind of being which they are unable to define but which has its own existence and can act of its own accord.

[791] 774 784 The *gné-fla*, whom I mentioned when speaking of the *souba*, are feared because they see the genii and our private thoughts, and also because they practice sympathetic magic, by taking possession of that which makes the shadows of persons and things. The Bambara is convinced that his *dja* can be taken, and when this occurs he henceforth no longer casts a shadow. Although, because of their fear of the Europeans and in some cases because they have long been in contact with them, the Bambara may readily pose before a camera, one can nevertheless say that, in general, they do not like to be photographed. Particularly the old people object and begin to resist /42/ as soon as they see a lens. They have the notion in their heads that their *dja* will escape from them to make an imprint on the plate and leave its form there, and that this form will comprise the portrait, thus placing a part of their being in the hands of the operator and themselves at his mercy. They fear lest, as a result, they lose their shadows and the ability to cast them, and thus become idiots. [828]

774 Even though the Bambara cannot explain their ideas on this subject, these closely resemble the theories of Mr. de Rochas, discussed by Monseigneur Méric in Volume II of his work, *Imagination et Prodiges* /Imagination and Marvels/ /Paris, 1905/. The *dja* is something similar to what English psychologists call a double and

●774 the French a phantom. It may be regarded as a kind of fluid, having some degree of consciousness and capable of escaping from the animate or inanimate object to which it belongs, without becoming completely separated from it, and giving that object a shadow, bearing its external form and outline, as well as the imprint of the fear, sorrow, joy, and sadness which may be reflected on a person's face. A dja may also escape and separate and detach itself completely, but nevertheless retain the external form of the object which it left. When a dja leaves its object, it stays in the neighborhood or goes wandering far off, and the being that it has left sees this double or merely feels it, or may even be unconscious of its existence.

774 828 For the Bambara, a dream is not a product of the imagination; it is a reality. They say that while they are asleep their dja sometimes escape and wander far away, and there they actually see and chat with friends, attend real feasts on real drinking bouts. A person is not surprised to awaken after such a dream with a dry throat and an empty stomach, for what he saw, drank, and ate were the dja of things and people, nothing more tenuous or imponderable, and only his dja saw, drank, ate, and enjoyed himself.

787 A dream is quite a deceiver, and its external realization is unusual, but it does sometimes occur. Certain Negroes are famous because they know how to interpret dreams, a knowledge not available to everyone, or again because they know how to dream and prophesy /43/ the more or less immediate future. They have a booth which is fairly well patronized; people consulted them and bring them cowrie shells. There are even people who run and tell them about every interesting story they dream, and since these people take precautions afterward not to miss some predicted piece of luck or to avoid a misfortune that threatens, they are aided in the realization of their dreams without suspecting it, and these results constribute not a little toward fortifying their false beliefs. /44/

761 After the marital couple has absorbed the fruit, a smooth-bodied
776 embryo with nonarticulated limbs is formed in the maternal womb.
842 /58/ It is at this moment that the couple consummate the sexual act
in the course of which the woman "takes into herself the entire body
of her husband": the upper part through the eyes, the lower part
through the genital organs. The masculine seed located in the seven
principal articulations (knees, elbows, ankles, and spine) transmits
them to the embryo. The body, originally similar to the body of the
spirit, thus becomes that of a human being.

The spirit restows the spiritual forces after the man has mated for the second time with his wife. If the woman bears a single child it means that the man, in the course of the second union, formed the double of the first germ, but was not permitted to procreate twins.

761 Faro disposes of the child's life and nature. He decides all that the
child will be and will do, and determines his destiny from the moment
776 the seed is placed by him in the womb. The foetus then develops
843 with no further modifications until parturition, at which time it re-
774 ceives the spiritual principles, the soul, ni, and the double, dya,
which will be his throughout his life. It is at this time that the inner
relations of the individual to the social group to which he belongs
intervene. Although Faro gives each child a new body, he animates
this body with spiritual forces drawn from the family reservoir. The
[775] newborn child is the direct heir to the ni and the dya of a deceased
member of the family, actually of the one, whatever one's sex, who
died shortly before the birth of the child (1).

> 1. The reincarnation of the deceased's spiritual principles, however, is not an absolute rule. Faro is the master of an infinite reserve of souls. Twins, albinos, and certain other children are born with the ni and dya as yet undetermined. They originate respectively in the second sky (kaba dye) and in water (dyi sumale). Further study on this particular point is necessary to complete this investigation.

761 The consequence of death was, in effect, to separate the corpse
776 from the forces that animated it. The ni, by appropriate ritual, had
774 been preserved on the altar of the ancestors (2), and the dya had left
775

761 2. Grouped hierarchally, children, male
776 adults, and women form religious societies
774 or institutions, dyo. Each dyo is charged
775 with the upkeep of altars which serve to
preserve the spiritual forces of the group.
(See p.

the dying man to go into the water and place itself under Faro's protection. At the moment of delivery, both ni and dya return to the body of the newborn child who replaces the dead man, but they return in reversed order: the dya is returned to the body of the child and becomes his ni; the ni of the deceased mixes with the birth water spread on the ground which forms the shadow (suma) and will be his double, the twin (1). In the case of a boy, the dya will be female; in the case /59/ of a girl, it will be male. These movements are independent of the sex of the deceased as the spirit reverses the sexes when necessary. Each human being is thus both male and female [828] through his soul and his double. This conception of human nature, which is fundamental to the Bambara, is expressed in the symbolism of numbers. The number seven is formed of three (male sexual sym- [801] bol) and four (female sexual symbol) and represents the complete man. In addition, on another level, the number six is that of male twins, seven that of mixed twins (and the hermaphrodite), and eight that of female twins. The body of the newborn child is gently tapped [844] by the number of strokes representing the above figures in order to call the child's ni according to its sex.

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1. The blood of childbirth represents the [844 824] excess tomato juice absorbed by the woman, that which remains in the womb after the formation of the embryo. On the eighth day after birth, the mother of the parturient woman squeezes three or four tomatoes (depending on the sex of the newborn) into a gourd which she then gives to the child's father. The latter makes his wife drink the juice to replace the blood which she has lost and which is considered impure.

D. Role of the Institution

794 182 According to Bambara expression, the ndomo is "the mother of the wanzo of the uncircumcised (1)" for its power which resides in the ritual objects /175/ is composed of the wanzo of all adolescents.

The mask and the altars at first keep a part of the wanzo of the members who wear them, manipulate them, or offer them sacrifices. On the other hand, after circumcision, at the moment of the final leap of the newly circumcised over the ritual fire, the wanzo ultimately leaves them to settle itself in the mask of the ndomo. Thus channeled and conserved, these forces add themselves to those of the uncircumcised in the masks which become the repositories of their life.

[775] Moreover, the soul of the uncircumcised and nonexcised who have died prematurely establishes itself in the altars during the funeral rites celebrated by the members.

The mask of the ndomo is thus the receptacle of the wanzo of the circumcised, living and dead; as for the altars, they contain all the souls of the uncircumcised dead. All of this confers upon the ndomo the responsibility for the life of the adolescents and gives it such power that to a certain extent, this society of young people is feared by the adults (2) who have left it.

1. Wanzo ba ye čeble

794 833 782 2. When an adult, especially a member of the Komo society, has disturbed the peace of a member of the ndomo or has wronged the society, the wanzo may cause him to be impotent. In this case, in order to recover his virility, the man must obtain several tens of gray lizards which are sacrificed in his name on the mask and other altars. The animals are then cooked and the man is completely smeared over with the cooked substance which is then placed in the calabash and poured over the altars; the wanzo assigned to the man by the ndomo thus returns to the latter and the man is rid of its evil.

304 [292 534] During the seclusion, they wear about their head a piece of white cloth, Faro's color, which has the same function as the cap of the circumcised boy. They shake a gourd bolokode barani, filled with eight grains or small pebbles, whose sound keeps passers-by away. The leaps, which they perform over the fire made of clothes, gourds, and refuse that have been ignited, end the seclusion and rid them of their wanzo, which goes to settle in the altars of the ndomo.

It is said of a young girl who was well excised that she is well behaved and carries herself with dignity. On the contrary, it is said of a girl of light morals "that her hands were not washed clean" (1).

1. A bolo ma ko ka dye ya.

which means that she was improperly excised.

Funerals

761 764 115 The effect of death is to dissociate the elements composing the person. The body becomes a corpse (šu) from which the /189/ ni and the dya escape to follow their particular destinies, while the tere is transformed into nyama, an active and dangerous force which wanders about the deceased. The funeral rites aim first to channel the deceased's spiritual elements which must be conserved in the interest of the deceased as well as that of the community. Moreover, through the care given to the body and to these elements, the memory of the dead person is piously kept up. The notion of a final resurrection, promised to all who have lived, inspires these preparations. The bones of the deceased, which are like the exuvia of his physical body, its solid and durable framework, join the exuvia of his soul which is kept in the altars of the Komo. Thus, at the end of time, the dead man "will rise and, to everyone's joy, join his family."

764 The funeral rites, which the Bambara have always celebrated, have evolved along with their beliefs. At the time when the cult of the balanza was flourishing, the dead bodies were hung from trees until they rotted, their bones picked up and kept by their descendants. [532] The ancestors of the Gwonna then carved pieces of sunzun wood called mani (literally, little person) in the image of the dead. The length of the wood was proportionate to the length of the body; the head, arms, legs, and genitals were carefully reproduced. The mani

764 were kept by the village patriarch and the cult of the ancestors was celebrated upon these altars.

At the present time, the body is buried during rites in which the Komo plays an important role for the initiates. As soon as a member
763 is seriously ill, the family head places upon the dying man's chest
778 the portable altar, kere la boli ni, which belongs to the community.
He does not leave the bedside in order to catch the last breath. Immediately after death, without turning back or saying a word to anyone, he goes to the chief of the Komo who places the object in the
[775] sanctuary where the altars are kept. The soul is introduced into the nimara boli (1).

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[843] 1. See p. 192. In former times, the soul of the dead man was caught between two gourds which were then joined together and hung on the conjugal bed. When the woman became pregnant, the gourds were broken over her abdomen in order to make the soul penetrate the foetus. Later on this method of transmission of the soul was no longer possible because of the impurity brought about by "frivolous discussions regarding the arrangements and situations of creation."

764 Upon his return to the house of the deceased, the family head brushes his hand over the dead man's face to gather his nyama which he then entrusts to Pemba by rubbing the cavity in the family pembele "so that the total of the work he has accomplished during his life will not be dissolved by death, but will be like /190/ an accumulated force serving the community, and so that his intelligence, his qualities, and his skill in different kinds of work, especially in agriculture, will not be lost but will be found in other members of the family. The
[778] block of wood, acting as an altar for storing the forces, preserves this nyama until a new birth occurs in the family" (2).

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2. S. De Ganay, "Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara," p. 199.

769 2. M fa faro n so ma bana a dyanza ye
kle saba kono ye; ni ye se i ka seki, muso
kono ma.

The offering of food is then renewed every three days until a birth brings about the return of the double into the world of the living.

If the dead man has no descendants, his altar remains forever in the sanctuary of the Komo near the nimara boli. Otherwise, it is returned within seven days to the eldest son or to the brother who then becomes the head of the family.

During the night following the seventh day, the soul returns to eat
769 and drink in the hut of the widow who lives alone. All the dishes con-
775 taining water or food are therefore carefully emptied and cleaned.
The same meal is offered to the deceased the night following the
fortieth day after the death. The widow comes out of her house on the
[765] eighth day if she is poor and must work for a living; otherwise, on the
forty-first day.

At the end of a variable period of time, the soul, the double, and the name of the deceased are received by a child who is born into the family. The exuvia, mana or folo of the soul, remains in the sanctuary of the Komo as a permanent testimony to his existence on earth. It is conserved by Faro who watches over it, and maintained by the offerings of the living who will in this way bring it to the final resurrection.

When the deceased does not belong to the Komo society, the rites are celebrated over the altars of the societies to which he belongs; his soul is likewise conserved by them. The spiritual principles /195/ of the women, grouped in institutions comparable to those of men, called muso dye, are the object of the same attentions in which is found the rhythm of four days, the female number.

766 If the deceased was too poor for all the rituals, which are always
costly, to be observed, two gourds of water are prepared and placed
one at the head, the other at the feet of the corpse; he is then lifted
in such a way that his image is reflected in the water. This accomplished,
eight cowrie shells are placed at his head and eight at his feet and the
gourds are covered with a winnowing tray; the image thus conserved is
supposedly reflected in the kaba mana, the fourth sky, where Faro,
776 symbolized by the cowrie shells, passes judgment on its state of purity.
787 A divining rite is then performed. If the man is pure, the villagers

776 787 attend his burial despite the fact that the rituals have not been performed. If not, he is abandoned to the care of his family.

To neglect the rituals assuring life in the beyond and the security 764 775 of the living causes the shadow *šu dya*, or the ghost *šu kere dye* (literally, white side of the dead man), to arise and present itself under the same which the dead man had on earth, to claim his due from his descendants.

Ancestor Cult

769 778 In the entryway of some residences a supporting stake (*čĕ dloma*), sometimes marked by seven notches, represents the founding ancestor of the family. On the anniversary of his death the stake is oiled "to refresh his soul." In addition, each year the owner of the house sacrifices to all the ancestors on the family altar, on the stake, and on the threshold of the door. In some villages the ancestors are called upon by tapping the threshold with a little wooden hammer, *dyele kala ni*, which represents them.

In the courtyards, pieces of wood stuck in the ground (*ǰigi semen dloma*) represent the paternal uncle, the brother of the founder, and are used as seats for the heads of families who lean against them "in order to lean well upon the traditions." Farmers, before leaving for the fields, rub their hoes on them to show them to the ancestors.

769 241 Before planting the women give the head of the family a ball of raw millet, which he lines up to represent the dead according to age and rank. Then he gives them a pinch of the seed beginning with the one representing the most recent deceased and calling successively all the dead by name. The paste and the seeds are then put in water and the mash thus obtained is poured on the /196/ doorposts to the entryway of the family house upon which the blood of a sacrificial victim also is poured. When the planting time comes, the chief who has prepared the mash made with a few grains taken from the seeds distributes this to the women, beginning with the one who represents the oldest deceased. He asks the ancestors to watch over, during the germination period, the soul of the millet which will descend into the seed with the first rainfall. When the millet has reached maturity, the first seeds harvested are placed in a pot on the threshing floor where the grain will be threshed later, and are distributed to the women in the same manner as the time of planting, the oldest of the deceased having to receive the first of the seed.

774 it is a fluid emanated from the body itself and made manifest as much by the shadow, which may be seen in sunlight or in a bright light, as by the image which appears when the body is placed in front of a reflecting surface. This fluid is called dya.

774 The dya has the faculty of leaving the body when it is
787 asleep to wander wherever it wishes; the sight of its wanderings, which the body can witness, constitutes a dream (sugo). Dream is a kind of reality; it is in a sense the private life of the dya in company with its fellow-dya. During waking hours, the dya accompanies the actions of the body; during sleep, the body must endure the dya's peregrinations, for there is no doubt but that the dya rules the body it inhabits. Thus, waking a person abruptly is virtually a criminal act because, if the dya is away
761 at the time, a too abrupt summons may break the link between the dya and the body, and such a rupture (sa) is death (sa). Besides, the body has only a vague memory of the wanderings of its dya, it experiences the consequences of this action. On awaking, the body is exhausted by all these mad rushing about and fantastic escapades, and it feels the effects of the dya's actions, either good or bad.

In short, this dya is comparable to what some Europeans call a "double."

775 Further, it appears that the dya plays a crucial role in the "return" (sagi) to life, that is, rebirth, which is one of the most strongly held beliefs of the Bambara. After death, the dya is reincarnated in the same families; the Bambara even claim to have positive proof of this fact. Such and such a newborn child has such and such anatomical peculiarity of the deceased -- is this not a proof that the deceased wanted to show thereby that he was re-embodied? If a child dies very young, the body is mutilated in some agreed manner -- a finger is broken, for instance -- [121] and if later a child is born in the family with a similar deformity, everyone is convinced that the dead child has "returned": a sagira, "he has returned."

It is also believed possible for a dead person to be reincarnated far from his own people. All over Bambara country stories are retold of dead people who, more or less long after

775 their death and more or less far away from the place where they died, have been seen living a new life.

The *dya* is then, as it were, the essence of individuality,
774 and the body, its material expression, takes on forms that are
775 somehow characteristic of the *dya*.

The *dya* is a fluid which has its own attributes. There are sorcerers who are thought to know ways to capture the *dya*, especially for the purpose of using it to make idols that can talk.

It is further believed that a part of the *dya* is indestructible because it is made up of another fluid common to all nature, which the Bambara call *nyama*.

The *nyama* has no shape, but it retains, as it were, a trace of the identity it had during its incarnation; so the name borne by the person who was animated by this *nyama* has an irresistible attraction for the *nyama* and the latter is forced to obey anyone who knows how to use this propensity to make it carry out his wishes. After death, the *nyama* retains human contacts and, in certain respects, continues to behave as it did during its corporeal lifetime. Its manifestations are seen by the Bambara in matters of vengeance: the *nyama* of an ancestor is especially attentive to the manner in which the ancestor's wishes are being carried out and it is relentless in punishing those who fail to comply. It is the *nyama* of the *fa* (father of a family or patriarch) who torments the accursed; it is the *nyama* of the victim who pursues the murderer; and it is the *nyama* of anything tabooed that strikes down the impious.

So it is that, for the Bambara, a human being is composed of a corporeal body (*su*) which serves as the outward envelope (*fure*) of a fluid element (*dya*), whose subtle essence (*nyama*) is merely a part of the universal energy which permeates all nature.

771 [122] To a certain extent the Bambara applies the foregoing ideas on human beings to all that surrounds him. However, it should not be assumed from this that he conceives of everything as being made exactly in his own image. To express abstract ideas, he uses concrete terms which may, however, give a false impression. There is no doubt whatever that the Bambara differentiates between himself and animals; he also distinguishes from vegetables or minerals.

562 778 This suspicion readily degenerates into disrespect, scorn and hatred when a woman [123] is weak -- this being the usual state of affairs. On the contrary, the feeling changes to superstitious fear if she resorts to occult practices and shows herself [754] an adept at sorcery. Many old women are held to be very expert at such practices.

851 In the same connection, it should be noted that a newborn child is also subject to scrutiny. For seven days after birth it is not officially taken into the family, because it is thought that during this period the infant may undergo metamorphosis unless closely watched over by its mother.

We shall see, through a study of their institutions, how the Bambara conceive of life and organize it.

Funeral practices will show us how the Bambara regard the idea of death.

And after death?

● 775 769 The Romans distinguished among spirits: the manes or good gods (dii[1] manes) and the lemurs or evil spirits, both of whom take an interest in the family.

The Bambara have analogous concepts.

Once it has left the body, the soul of a patriarch goes to join the souls of his ancestors, where it finds a spiritual family which protects the earthly family.

The manes (fa su-u) always like to frequent the places where their bodies lived, and that is why one keeps the things that belong to the deceased, why he is buried near his house or sometimes even under the floor, and why some families piously keep the skull of the departed to do it honor.

[778] The entrance-hut (blon') is usually the site of the altar of the ancestors and of the family gods. The ancestral altar may be a small board with a human mask, called kara, or a mound of earth shaped vaguely like a human being. The manes are thought to enter into these objects to receive the offerings and sacrifices made to them.

It is sometimes thought that the world of the manes may be without light and heat but that otherwise they each continue the existence it had in life with the same passions, the same

[1] [dei ? —Analyst]

775 passions, the same preferences and the same [124] animosities.
769 The weak lead a passive existence in poverty and oblivion, whereas the powerful -- chiefs, heads of families, diviners -- are, on the contrary, active, intriguing and passionately devoted to the interests of their earthly families. They live among their fellow beings, who are incorporeal like themselves, just as their relatives live on earth. However, they all have powers superior to those of earthly men over winds and rain, farming and hunting, in short, over all things that constitute the visible world of man. All can manifest themselves to the living, and they like to choose a place where their presence and their action will be most useful and where they prefer to receive offerings, as in a grove, on a hill, or near a spring or a tomb.

Certain manes are thought to attain an increasingly eminent position in the invisible world through special activity, until they become pure spirits.

Woe unto him who fails to maintain cordial relations with his manes! Woe unto him who neglects the dead! The dead suffer from such negligence, become angry and seek vengeance. Hence the terrifying appearance of ghosts who come to bewitch the impious; hence the possession that disturbs a person's faculties to such a degree that it makes him dangerous to others and only exorcisers could restore them to their normal state.

Here occur the analogies with the lemures, for abandoned manes are easily captured through the sorcerers' artifices and then must do the latter's bidding. Further, all those who were cast off by society during their lifetime because of harmful activities, like those of sorcerers or criminals, the accursed also have their thurifers, whom they help with their supernatural powers.

775 Does this survival of the good and the evil have any purpose or any duration and, if so, what are they? Do people believe in immortality or eternity? Obviously the Bambara do not ask such questions and native practices do not seem to provide any answers. The one definite belief is in a survival which the Bambara can only conceive of in terms of ordinary life; the terms used to describe the other world bear this out: the dead eat,

775 drink, dress themselves, wear adornments, etc. -- in short, behave exactly like living men.

[125] All peoples use or have used such language in trying to express a concept which is by its nature impossible to make concrete. It is, therefore, perhaps premature to conclude that a Bambara cannot conceive of a strictly immaterial world for his manes. He is merely at present incapable of giving a description unencumbered with concrete terms in habitual use. However, it may be stated in general that the Bambara does not trouble himself about the why or how of things outside of what he sees or knows. Reality surrounds him and limits him. He makes decisions on the spur of the moment and also under the influence of time-honored empiricism which is the basis of custom. 812

776 We have pointed out that among the incorporeal souls are some who, through the right efforts, rise to such heights that they can enter the world of spirits. There are spirits, indeed, who have nothing of the human about them. What are their origin and nature? The Bambara say of them: ma si fa do, meaning "It is a kind of person." Here, too, the expression betrays the thought. Aside from the fact that the native vocabulary does not provide for expressions strictly immaterial, the Bambara has an inevitable tendency to use himself as an object of comparison. For him, the world of the spirits like that of the manes, is analogous to our own. But the manner in which he speaks of the spirits contradicts his words. A spirit is invisible, without a material body; if it appears, it does so under the most diverse forms, borrowed for a brief time. A spirit is often called "a wind," meaning "a fluid." It is also a weightless substance, so rarefied that it can go anywhere -- even to entering a living man's body, where it can perform all sorts of fantastic things (1).

1. See Chapter 7.

For the Bambara, most spirits remain in this vague and inconsistent state. Only events, circumstances or the native's will occasionally tear some of them away from this chaos and transports them to the worldly scene (2). We shall speak of them

2. Assuming for these and other similar

771 789 used to capture the spirits of the dead. The native clearly shows how much he respects the cult of the manes and, on the contrary, how much he is disturbed and terrified by the practices of the suba (1). However, many practices cannot be so clearly differentiated because they have elements of both religion and magic. Such practices are held to be allowable and even desirable, illicit and hateful, depending on the point of view and the places, circumstances and persons involved.

If we keep in mind the foregoing remarks and limit ourselves to the most characteristic traits, it is possible to establish a parallel between religion and magic among the Blacks.

Both acknowledge the existence of an invisible world which is everywhere in contact with everything subject to our senses. But while religion in principle assumes man's dependence vis-à-vis this invisible world, magic operates on the theory that anything that exists comes within the power of "the one who knows" (don'na ba).

Since the Master of the Universe appears not to take much interest in what he has created, his creatures do not honor him but, rather, have recourse to the Spirits and Powers (nyana) who are willing to take a hand in human affairs. Religion organizes, for the benefit of these benevolent nyana, a cult designed to make sure of their good offices. Magic, on the other hand, forces them to execute its will.

775 Religion and magic both believe firmly in the dual nature of man; a finite body and a soul which survives this body. When death comes, this soul goes off to join the family of manes, who are bodiless souls like it. From that vantage point the soul continues to watch over the affairs of its relatives still in the world of men. Religion regards the manes as guardian spirits and strives to make sure the continuity of their [140] will and wishes. Magic treats (1) these incorporeal souls like the

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1. See Chapter 7 concerning the suba.

1. Especially by means which give magic the character of sorcery.

596 honored by the new fa, and there is nothing to prevent him
614 from adding to the treasure.

The basic cult of the family is the cult of the ancestors.
769 Although the dead are frequently buried outside the family residence, their souls are thought to live in the blon' of the dwell-
[343 ing. The blon' is a hut with two openings on opposite sides, one
592] to the street and the other to the interior, usually the courtyard. It is impossible to enter or leave a house without going
through the blon', where there is always a guard, at least in
778 important houses. The ancestors are usually represented in the
blon' by a group of crude, conical clay figures of a man and
769 woman, the latter identifiable by the exaggerated breasts.
Sometimes the symbol of the dead is a small board about a meter long, twenty centimeters wide, and a little more than a centimeter thick; at one of its extremities a slight protuberance vaguely suggests a head, a kind of ellipsoidal cylinder with eyes, nose, mouth, and chin faintly carved on one side. On the side with the face, the board has a checkerboard pattern, often of alternating black and red squares, probably to indicate the material of a loincloth. The lower extremity of the figure has a semicircular portion cut away to give the effect of legs spread apart when the effigy is set up.

769 Whatever form it may have, the representation of the
dead is called kara (1) and serves in some manner as an altar
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778

on which libations are poured and to which are attached the remains of the sacrifices made to the dead (su-u). Nevertheless, it is also a very widespread practice to make libations and sacrifices before the door of the blon' and, more rarely, before
[775] the door of an inner hut. In this case the liquid is poured and
the remains smeared on the vertical edge of the opening. This practice is based on the belief that the souls of the dead ancestors like to return to the place where the fa liked to sit during his lifetime. Undoubtedly, the ancestors are regarded as guardians of the threshold; they are [181] honored as such because it is believed that they prefer to be honored in this way.

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1. In Soninké, kara means "to die" and "death."

[826]
774 its seat in the prepuce and the clitoris, necessitating circumcision
761 and excision). The body is conceived as being the support of all
spiritual forces; each part is distinctly known [84] for its particular
role. The body, like the spiritual principles, is bisexual; the boy
[304 is feminine in his prepuce, the girl masculine in her clitoris, and it
831] is only after circumcision and excision that the man and woman can
unite and realize the original fruitful twinship. On the metaphysical
plane, there is identity between man, "seed of the world," and the
cereal seed; the basic nutriments that are made up of the eight
principal cereals are represented symbolically in men's clavicles.
● 775 Finally, death separates all of these elements composing the person.
The *dya* remains in the water where it will become the *ni* of the
761 new-born in the family of the deceased; the *ni* is caught by the family
head and transported to the altar where it will animate the *dya* of the
new-born; the *téré* becomes *nyama*, a dangerous and vengeful force;
it is deposited on the *pembele*, where it rejoins the ancestral forces.
The body is buried and belongs to the termites. At birth, all the
spiritual forces are transmitted again, whole, "refreshed," and
purified. One being replaces another until the final resurrection.

C. Ritual, Sacrifice, and Cults

782 To appeal to and influence the spiritual forces, the Bambara
use prayer, offerings, and sacrifices. Oral rites are used everywhere
and at any time. "They pray to the sky, the cardinal points, the
spirits; they sacrifice on stones, on the ground, on trees, by water
holes, just as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries or situated in
public or private places. Every circumcized adult, father of a family,
owner of a home and cultivatable land, is a sacrificer, a capacity
[531] emphasized by the red spot which sometimes is an ornament of the
walls of the principal room in the man's residence." (1)

1. G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].

761 principles of the cadaver on altars or masks in order to preserve them
764 for the community.

The rites have undergone an evolution. Formerly the bodies
764 were hung from trees until they rotted, while the bones were kept.
At present the bodies are buried. Only a band of cotton symbolizing
the tongue of the deceased, that is, his word, is attached to the
[774] branch of a tree. If the deceased was an initiate of the Komo, the
society plays an important role in the funeral rites.

All these rites have been studied by G. Dieterlen and Tauxier.
766 Monteil has described at great length the funeral ceremonies of a
chief: the three rifle shots recalling his combats, the lamentations
of the women, the notification of the village notables, the offerings
of relatives and friends, the alms at the crossroads, and finally, the
inhumation. The body is prepared, the head shaved, the interior
cleaned with water and salt. A paste of water and ground cowry is
put into the body openings (the ground cowries possess a divine spirit
assuring the preservation of the cadaver). The body, and particularly
the head, is daubed with this same paste, then the body is laid on its
right side, feet to the north (a woman would be laid on her left side).
Finally, the funeral celebration takes place, with the ritual feast
765 and the purifications. Seven days later the celebration of commemoration
(Sangha) takes place, followed by the mourning of the women
for forty days. After this time the deceased is transformed into a
living ancestor.

763 The Bambara receive omens of their death or of a chief's
death from certain signs given them in the bush, such as coming
across a chameleon on a red anthill, the cry of a certain mythical
hyena, the passing of certain crying monkeys or certain birds.

Certain gifted beings have the ability to perceive the departure of a person's spiritual forces and his imminent death. Sometimes they are able to bring back these forces and reinstate them in the body to save the man in danger.

[95] g. Ancestor Worship

769 After his death a man is transformed into a living ancestor
● 778 and is the object of a cult. The cult is closely connected to the
agricultural cults; the ancestors are efficient vital forces which

769 participate in men's lives, protect them, and make their fields
775 fertile. The farming tools are presented at their altars before the
tillage, and every year their souls come to animate the maskers who
dance in their honor under the supervision of the Komo. After the
grain is threshed, they receive the first products and are offered
sacrifices.

h. Other Rites

788 Besides the rites concerning the person, the Bambara have others, such as those relating to the household wastes where the forces of men are accumulated. The purpose of these rites is to offer these forces to Faro and to regenerate and purify men. The wastes are burned periodically, the men breathe in the fumes, and the ashes are thrown in the river. Sacrifices are offered to the god, and special dances accompany the ceremony.

Rain rites common to all of Africa are practiced in May by
796 the members of the Kworé society. The rites for renewing the year
involve individual, familial, and collective participation. The
signs of the world are traced on the walls of individual or collective
sanctuaries, and by the intermediary of a sacrifice on the altars, by
dances and rhythmic chants, man renews the cardinal points and the
forces of the world which in turn renew his soul. (All these rites have
been described by G. Dieterlen in the Essai sur la religion bambara
[Essay on Bambara Religion].

B. Special Technique In General Usage

773 In Bambara thought, "every technique is a reparation taught man by Faro, a palliative to the cosmic disorder which is generally caused by an infraction of taboo ... Men first lived by gathering their food, then later by fishing and hunting; they used only their hands. Little by little the techniques appeared, following a chronology remembered by the Bambara of today. The first material to be used was the fiber of the nyama tree frond which were made the first fishing nets, the first sling, the first covering for the sexual parts." (1) The second material was wood from which the farming

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1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

3. The Reincarnation of Souls

775 769 It is a great surprise that the Bambara believe in the reincarnation of souls. Some do not dare to believe in it because they sacrifice to the shades of their ancestors, and others, "cultivated minds, nourished by the sanest philosophy," reject this belief as illogical, since the religion of the Negro is the worship of the dead! They do, in fact, worship the dead, but in the Bambara religion this worship, extensive as it is, remains a detail, and not the foundation. To honor the shades of his ancestors (but only of those who were heads of families, so that the worship of the dead is already somewhat limited -- with all due respect to those who see nothing but it), the Bambara family head throws a big blot of chicken blood and a mouthful of chewed kola nut onto the *dégé*, or millet flour mixed with water, and pours it onto the wall at the entrance of his hut. He does so to implore the help and protection of that power or authority which his predecessors possessed in their position as family head, an authority exactly the same as that which he himself possesses. He believes, nonetheless, in the reincarnation of souls! This belief is general and universal among fetishists, and if some do not dare admit it before Europeans and [576] Moslems, their reticence is due to simple human respect, to a fear of contradicting beliefs which they know to be contrary to their own, a wish not to offend anyone and not to be the butt of laughter and ridicule.

766 775 Infants who die at the breast before having achieved the use of reason are buried in a corner of the inner courtyard and sometimes even in the hut where they were born. Before such a child is buried, one of its limbs, usually the big toe of the right foot, is broken, and sometimes the father marks it with a knife on /57/ the shoulder, the arm, or the chest. He thinks that the child who will come after it will be animated by the soul of the dead one, and he neglects nothing that might possibly enable him to ascertain whether it is. This stupid and ridiculous operation is commonly performed under the eyes of the mother, and some strange events occur. Since she must submit 775 826 to the will of her husband as soon as possible and have marital relations with him, she soon conceives. During her pregnancy her imagination

775 826 may be active and in her dreams she may dwell on the events which accompanied the burial of her dead child. Thus, she sometimes gives birth to an infant which has the marks made by the father. Such occurences contribute not a little to "confirm" the Bambara's belief in reincarnation of souls. At Wéléngéla, on the road from Ségou to Sens, there was a Negro who had a cleft upper lip from birth, and the people of the village were unanimous in giving the reason. His mother had given birth only to sickly and puny infants, all of whom died within few weeks. At the death of the last one the father, furious, cut his lip with a stroke of the knife. When he returned to life, the child did not want to take back the lip that his father had removed! I hav seen others who from birth had a sort of tattoo on the back, chest, o arms, and the parents of each did not hesitate to tell me that it was the mark made on his deceased older brother.

775 551 Children born after a deceased sister or brother are given a special name; it would seem that the Negroes seek to make the soul of this small being feel how inconsiderate he was toward his parents in coming into the world and immediately leaving, after having kindled both love and hope in their hearts. Perhaps they also think to put on a good countenance before their fellows, for it is a great disgrace not to have children or to have only children who die at birth. Both theories are plausible, and the second would only be an expression of humility disguising a secret hope. The names most frequently given to these latecomers are: Malobali, "shameless one"; Ta fli, "go throw it away"; Foui té, "he is nothing"; Fou, "nothing"; etc. -- If the first theory that I propose is accepted these names would be translated as follows: "Are you not ashamed (i.e., to come into the world only to leave it so soon)?" -- "Might just as well throw you away, bury you (i.e., for all the time /58/ you spend among us)." -- "You are no good /literally, in French: "a being of nothing"/ (you are but a heartless one, you who come to us only to leave us in a short time)." -- "That is nothing." A Negro blowing on the palm of his hand gives us the full meaning of this word; the gesture translates his thought: "You are no more to us than nothing, are you not like a breath that passes and disappears?"

775 551 Like this first theory, the second, too, can be accepted, and the names can be translated as a lament of the parents to those who congratulate them: "He is without shame (doubtless he has come back to leave us again)." --"We may as well throw him away (i. e., will he not leave us shortly?)." -- "He is a worthless man (i. e., do you think he will not abandon us?)." -- "He is nothing (i. e., it all is the same to us whether we have him or not; will he stay with us longer than a breath which passes and disappears?)."

But whatever theory is accepted, the Negroes' belief in the reincarnation of children who died at the breast before having attained the use of reason remains unchanged. They are also generally unanimous in believing in the reincarnation of young men and women and men and women who die in the prime of life. Such persons have not completed the whole cycle of their existence and must begin it again.

And what of the old men? Do not they come back to life? When a child brings to mind the features of a deceased elder of the family, does it not receive his name? A Bambara never uses the name of a man whom he respects in vain or in an unsuitable manner; so a child animated by the soul of an old man is given a second name, a borrowed name, and the real name is known only by the father, the mother, close friends, and the one who bears it. However, many are given a most expressive name which testifies to this belief; they are called segi, sagi, "he who has come back to life."

764 775 The legends -- and there are many -- only confirm what I put forward; so need I cite any? An old man of Fobougou, a village about 30 or 40 kilometers from Ségou, not far from the Bani on the road that leads to Koutiala, was given magnificent funeral honors at his death. The fetishes were brought out of their dirty dens and bathed in the blood of victims; the women sang to the sound of the drum for three days running. It was a festival which lacked nothing, not even 775 d'lo, or millet beer. A few years later some young people of the village going in search of work went into the Tlébi (1) region,

1. The term Tlébi is used to denote the entire western region, including Bamako, Kati, Kita, Kayes, Bakel, etc., as far as the ocean.

775 walking in the direction of Kita. They stopped in a village near this city and were lodged by a Malinke (2). On entering the courtyard, they stopped dumfounded, for they found sitting on a mat an elderly man whose features were familiar to them, -- wasn't he the old man of Fobougou? It was he, for he greeted them and asked them news of the old men of the village and of the members of his family. After supper they returned to the courtyard, wanting to sit near their old man, whom they had found again so far from his native land, but he was no longer there, and their host told them that he had fled, refusing to tell what direction he was taking.... "That was our old man," say the people of Fobougou with great conviction, for they believe in this as in the capture of Ségou. "Our young people saw him, talked with him, and some had known him before his death. Without doubt," they add, "he must have suffered in his family while he was alive, so he did not dare come back to life in our midst." This story, which I heard in Fobougou itself, is told more or less everywhere with a few variations; in September, 1908, between Ségou and Koulikoro on the Niger, one of the laptot (3) told it to his colleagues as they squatted around him in a circle.

2. A Mandingo tribe whose group "taboo" is the Mali or Mani, the hippopotamus.

505 3. Negroes who serve as sailors on the river are called laptot.

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576 In Ouentja, a village an hour and a half or two hours at the most from the Bani, on the road between Ségou and Koutiala, the people have such great respect for one of their deceased former chiefs, the old sagi, that they avoid saying his name. They have even changed or rather abbreviated one of their greetings, and while almost everywhere else strangers are greeted with the words: "i dangha sagi," here they say to you only: "i danghana (4)." According to the /60/

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4. I dangha sagi, "may you be blessed on your arrival, on your return into our midst." -- (Your return to us is a blessing.) -- The Negroes abbreviate, saying, i dana sagi; it is only old men and those who pride themselves on speaking their language well, who articulate clearly and say i dangha sagi.

legend, this sagi whose name one avoids taking in vain, was chief of the village and influential in its environs. He died very old, took on flesh again in the womb of a woman of the family, and recommenced the cycle of his existence. He again became village chief, and again died in extreme old age, and returned to the flesh again a third time. As always he was chief, passed from life to death in extreme old age, was honored and respected by everyone, and received funeral honors such as have never been awarded to any Negro prince.

775 At the time of death the soul goes into Lahara, a vague word, so vague that a Bambara cannot define it or give you any idea of it. It is the place where the invisible beings live and where everything becomes invisible. Children and those who have not completely fulfilled the cycle of their existence, only pass through and hasten to return to the wombs of their mothers, or at least to those of women of their families.

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769 A secret force urges old men to return to the flesh again in their own family, but sometimes they refuse and seek limbs elsewhere. They spend a longer time in Lahara and, doubtless matured by experience, they are not always in a hurry to reappear. Many remain there for a number of years, awaiting a favorable moment, and this uncertainty hovering over the fate of the old men, may be a reason for sacrifices to the dead. One definite fact is that these sacrifices are directed only to the dead who have had authority in the country, the village, or the family, and the honors rendered them seem to be

775 769 directed more to the authority which they had in their lifetimes than to the persons themselves.

775 A good number of Bambara believe in hell and assert that the souls of the wicked are condemned by God to eternal torment. It is clear that they are changed into demons and do not come back to life, but it is so difficult to deserve hell that not one Bambara goes there, and they live without any fear, just as if it did not exist. This belief in hell perhaps indicates an exception to my statement on the reincarnation of souls but does not destroy its validity, and it can be stated that the majority of Negroes believe in such a reincarnation. /61/

Chapter 4

Bambara Ideas concerning God, Invisible Beings, and Adam and Eve

1. Belief in God

776 The Bambara believe in the existence of a Supreme Being who is Creator and Master of all things; they believe in God, in a recompensing God who can punish and reward. Their most polished formulas are those in which they testify to their belief in Him, and His name is on their lips at every moment without any special reason.

776 576 To a young married couple, a Bambara hastens to say: "May your union be happy, may God give you peace and many children," and when a family is in sorrow, for instance because they have lost one of the members, it is in God that they seek consolation and in invoking Him that they give comfort: "May God have pity on him and grant him a happy sojourn in Lahara," "may He not separate him from good people and may He add to your days those of which he has been deprived." (1)

776 775 1. These last phrases have been taken by some as a reason to doubt that the

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Bambara believe in the reincarnation of souls. But the Negroes say that a soul separated from the body lacks something, it is not complete. Since a soul stays in *Lahara* for a fairly long time, until it finds the opportunity to be reincarnated and decides to do so, the wish is expressed that during this period that it may live with the souls of good people and not suffer too much from the loss of its body -- and nothing more. These comforting expressions are heard at every death, whether of a child, a man, or an old man.

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842 The sterility of a woman is obviously not natural; it is attributed to fetishes, to the evil spells of a malicious person, and quite often /62/ also to God. "*Alla b'a kégné dén-na* --, God is placing an obstacle to /against/ her having children." As the Bambara gives small gifts of honey, cotton, butter, sugar, or cowrie shells to a woman who has just given birth, they say, "May God soothe your back (your pains); may He preserve your child." Upon receiving the slightest favor, the recipient commends the one who performed it to the protection of the Almighty, and the wishes at festivals and drinking bouts are an endless litany a large part of which refers to God.

776 The Bambara speak the name of God apropos of a trifle and always -- except in certain sacrifices to the *boli* fetishes where they use it blasphemously -- with some respect. I confess that (if I did not know through being somewhat acquainted with them that in their mouths this name is a word and no more, a commonplace into which enters neither affection nor love) it would sometimes seem that they have deep and tender feelings of piety. In fact there is nothing more [576] touching than to hear a pagan Negro, a Bambara, answer whoever asks after his health: "*Nébi Alla tanoun,* I praise God, I glorify God."

766 young, and since custom demands that she take advantage of her marriage without delay and conceive as soon as possible, she may give birth to an infant bearing a mark or /217/ the appearance of a mark made on the corpse of its older brother. Such an event contributes more than a little toward strengthening the Bambara belief in the reincarnation of souls. This belief is even one of the reasons why infants at the breast are buried in the inner court and sometimes in the mother's hut, and are very seldom taken to the cemetery (1).

●[775] 1. The soul leaves the body after burial. The soul of a child must take on flesh again in the womb of its mother, and she must conceive as soon as possible. When an infant is buried in the court or the hut, its soul does not have to roam and cannot mistake the family.

764 The respects paid to the circumcised and the excised vary a little according to the age and status of the individuals; it might be said that there is no burial without some particular, characteristic little feature. To give as accurate an idea of the proceedings as possible, I have divided the burials into four categories: first, that of old people; second, that of heads of families; third, that of married persons; and fourth, that of the unmarried. After a word concerning the burial of pregnant women or those dying in childbirth, I will speak of the sacrifices made to the fetishes, of the respects paid to initiates of koré, or koté, and I will close this chapter with a description of the burial of the excommunicated and of the way the dead are worshipped.

773 [524] both the waters that flowed over the earth in the past and those that will spread over the world when Faro orders them (Fig. 4).

While awaiting that day, Faro continues his work. Taking the spiral route originally followed at the time of the reorganization of the world, every four centuries he travels about, inspecting the confines of the world, and then returns to the central point whence he surveys and governs the universe.

Chapter 2

The Representations

776 /34/ The duality of *glã*, in the microcosm that is man by his twin souls (*ni* and *dya*), is projected into the universe in the form of the pair, sky-earth, originally formed by the splitting of the spirit in two. The pair is represented by two supernatural powers, Faro and Pemba, to whom the principal Bambara cults are addressed.

Pemba is both spirit, strength, and matter. He is actually represented by an engraved piece of wood, symbol of plank originally responsible for the creation of all living things on earth. Theoretically, each family has one.

Faro, master of the word, reigns both in the sky and in the waters, which are the earthly reflection of the sky. In his ~~capacity as~~ master of the word and reorganizer of the universe, custodian of life, and guardian of souls, Faro, light and vibration, reigns in the seventh heaven. As master of the waters, he is described by the Bambara as a living being who has a body and is subject to metamorphosis. Yet to the initiated, he remains first and foremost a higher spirit, detached from contingencies and free in the exercise of the sovereign power conferred on him.

In order to understand fully the spirit of the Bambara religion, it is necessary to examine all the representations of these powers (1).

776 114 1. A few authors have summarily described Faro, in particular, L. Tauxier in *Religion bambara* (pp. 142-145), in

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which he quotes Msgr. Bazin and the Abbé Henry. These authors have not disclosed the fundamental role of this power nor the area he covers.

It would be proper to compare here these representations with those observed by the Griaule missions in the Sudan such as the Nommo of the Dogon, the Domfé of the Kouroumba, and Faro or Yégou of the Bozo, and published in the following books and articles:

M. Griaule, *Masques Dogon* /Dogon Masks/; "Le Domfé des Kouroumba /The Domfé of Kouroumba/," *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. II (1941), pp. 7-20. D. Paulme, *Organisation sociale des Dogon* /Social Organization of the Dogon/. S. de Ganay, *Les Devises des Dogon* /Dogon Device/; *Le Binou Yébéné* /The Yébéné Binou/. G. Dieterlen, *Les Ames des Dogon*; "Notes sur le Génie des Eaux chez les Bozo /Notes on the Water Spirit of the Bozo/," *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. 12 (1942), pp. 149-155. G. Dieterlen and S. de Ganay, *Le Génie des Eaux chez des Dogon* /The Water Spirit among the Dogon/. M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*. Mrs. B. Appia has also published interesting observations in "Note sur le Génie des Eaux en Guinée /Note on the Water Spirit in Guinea/," *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. 14 (1944), pp. 33-42.

/35/ Pemba

776 Pemba, born of primordial vibration, was originally a "globule," *kuru*, which whirled around to create the earth. While he was a whirlwind, a molecule broke off and became a seed, which fell onto the earth, sprouted and became the *Acacia albida*. The latter grew,

776 dried up, and fell; soon the only thing that remained of it was a block of wood called *pembele.* Out of its own substance, *pembele* created a female being, Mousso Koroni, and with her engendered all living things on earth, except for the human beings born of Faro. But following the disturbances created by Mousso Koroni, Pemba had to give up his power, and his Word became the property of Faro, who was entrusted with the reorganization of the universe.

Pemba was known to men who submitted to him on earth before they became aware of Faro who had remained secretly in the heavens (1). They worshipped him as their god and named him Ngala Pemba, god Pemba, or Koni, to recall his origin and the awe inspired by creation (2).

The Pembele

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776 At the present time, religious leaders and heads of families use the *pembele* to represent Pemba; it is a block of wood, the image of the original plank (3). This object has a hollow dug out in the center, called *sele dẽ,* reminiscent of the hole at the bottom of the grave where the corpse is placed (4). Three times 22 slanted lines

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1. It is said: " Faro is a celestial being from above; if one says Pemba, it is because he has been seen on earth" (*faro ye sana fẽ ye; a fo pemba ye a ka yeli ye dugu la*).

2. The secret names of Pemba are innumerable.

3. The symbolism of the *pembele,* summarized below, has been studied by S. de Ganay in "Aspect de mythologie et de symbolique bambara."

4. See p. 248.

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are engraved in the hollow; below it, two groups of seven lines, divided in the left section into 3 and 4, and in the right /36/ section into 4 and 3. The 22 lines on the left represent Pemba, the creator; the 22 lines on the right, the transmission of his word and his power to Faro. The 22 central lines are "a testimony to the foreknowledge he had of all things (1)," and the symbol of the great works he accom-

1. See S. de Ganay, *Aspect de mythologie et de symbolique bambara*, p. 192.

plished at the dawn of creation.

The two groups of 7 lines represent Pemba, 3, and Mousso Koroni, 4, in order to recall how Pemba, originally androgynous, "separated himself from his feminine part so that the two parts might unite as male and female to produce living things"(2).

2. See S. de Ganay, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

The wooden plank, in addition, is engraved at each end with 22 notches which are, to the left, Pemba and his words, and to the right, all the words entrusted to the spirits and still unknown to men.

The object, taken as a whole, is the image of the universe: its upper surface, upon which are inscribed the lines, is the sky; its lower surface is the earth; the four sides are the four directions of space. It is also the first grave ever dug for the ancestor; the *sele dé* concentrates "the active and latent energies." Here "the *pembele* can be considered as thought which is constantly unfolding and which, starting from its own substance, stretches out into time to entrust itself finally to Faro in the guise of the word" (3).

3. See S. de Ganay, *op. cit.*, p. 191

Finally, the *pembele* summarizes the myth of the creation and organization of the world by the series of 22 lines that decorate it; the duality expressed in the double engraving of 7 lines; its shape, reminiscent of the primeval plank, generator of life on earth; and the wood of which it is made—wood from the *balanza* tree, formerly master of creation.

All these characteristics justify the name of Ngala, god, which is given to the *pembele*, for it possesses in addition all the power and

•776 strength (nyama) of the divinity it represents (1).

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1. That strength is particularly active at the angles of the plank and thus takes on the name boy nyama, "venomous nyama."

778 The pembele is an altar, a guarantee of prosperity, life, and the spiritual and material patrimony of the group to which it belongs. There are different types of pembele: those belonging strictly to families, on which the meat eaten by the family is carved, and those belonging to sanctuaries, which must be engraved with symbolic marks. The small board used for circumcisions bears the same name; it /37/ recalls Mousso Koroni's mutilation on the pembele and the origin of the removal of foreskin and clitoris from the human body (2).

2. See p. 38.

The role of Pemba, as promoter of the force, nyama, which activates all beings, and as the hypostasis of the earth, is illustrated by the ritual use the Bambara made of the pembele which represents Pemba.

[764] After each death, the head of the family gathers the force, nyama, which emanates from the corpse, and entrusts it to the pembele, "which preserves it until a birth occurs in the family." A parallel ritual bestows the force of the dead ancestor on the newborn child (3).

3. See p. 253.

At the time of the ceremonies relating to the large pembele, "all the participants bring a small piece of meat which, after having been placed on the plank, is eaten raw so that fire may not destroy the beneficial nyama emanating from the divinity itself" (4).

4. S. de Ganay, op. cit., p. 199.

Finally, "in cases where it is necessary to obtain a maximum of nyama, infinitesimal slivers of wood are taken from the corners of the board, where its force is concentrated... However, if this practice is abused, the nyama of the earth becomes diminished. It is

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the latter... We are familiar enough with the Bambara agricultural customs, but none of them would have brought about the spread of the balanzas, their regular spacing in the fields, and their protection from goats. In almost all the cases we have observed, the balanzas are of considerable age, development and density. There lies in this subject a fine dissertation topic for a young ethnographer and naturalist." (pp. 135, 136).

The myths of the Bambara answer M. Roberty's questions.

/39/ Mousso Koroni

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Mousso Koroni is the impure earth; she symbolizes all that is opposed to light: darkness, night, witchcraft. She is also the symbol of rebellion, disorder, and impurity. Pemba pursued her in vain in his effort to take back what he had given her: the "words" she had received from him were divulged to men in spite of him.

Although no cult honors her and no sacrifice is offered her, her name is cited in various ceremonies and mentioned in the chants; her actions are recalled by certain gestures in the ritual.

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On the other hand, she is the initiator of the separation of the sexes realized in the human body by the removal of the foreskin and the clitoris, an operation which after her betrayal, she performed on all those she met. In this way, she placed them in the same state of rupture in which she found herself: a female principle as opposed to Pemba, the male principle. In addition, she is present in every human being in the form of an evil force, the wanzo, which she had communicated to all those she approached, and of which one must rid oneself through the methods she herself inaugurated: circumcision and excision (1).

1. See p. 95.

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Mousso Koroni is also the originator of certain agricultural techniques which she taught men, and every year, in certain villages, she

776 241 is represented as making her nocturnal visitation at the time the grain is threshed. An old woman, dressed in rags, wearing old unmatched sandals, and carrying broken gourds, runs about the countryside simulating madness. She follows the mythological itinerary from west to south and from east to north, and then returns and sits down near the granaries (1).

776 857 Mousso Koroni's agricultural work and her unhappy wanderings are also represented in a children's ritual, carried out at night during the cultivation period. One of the players, the *yukuri* or *dantoni* (literally, little hunchback), wears sandals for ears, a hump at the small of his back, a cloth tail tied low about his waist. He goes begging from /40/ door to door, followed by all the uncircumcised of his neighborhood. He pretends to cultivate and to thresh grain while his companions intone chants recalling Mousso Koroni's mythical actions. Aft[illegible]his round is finished and the presents of millet are gathered, the player, pursued by all the others, runs off and disappears amid catcalls.

776 241 783 But while this parody of cultivation, with its rituals and chants, recalls the phases of Mousso Koroni's disorderly life, the agricultural techniques she initiated earlier are in themselves an important expression of the reparation made to the confusions she had caused. Every hoeing by the farmer is a wound inflicted on the impure earth,

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[171] 1. However, the very first agricultural techniques known as *fyẽ ti* (literally, cultivation of the wind) are recalled, particularly among the Bozo, by random sowings of a certain number of wild grasses, then cereals, in the fields where the harvest is offered to Faro. Similar rituals are celebrated in certain Bambara villages. The techniques taught by Mousso Koroni came after those "of the wind," and precede that of millet cultivation.

For information on some agricultural rituals of the Bozo, see G. Dieterlen, "L'Agriculture rituelle des Bozo /Ritual Agriculture of the Bozo/," *Journal de la Société des Africanistes,* Vol. 20 (1950).

776 241 183 hence on Mousso Koroni. The ritual cultivation of millet, a noble activity to which every aristocratic Bambara must dedicate himself, is an institution which Faro taught in his time and constitutes a purification and a reordering of the soil (1).

1. *Dugukolo be be dyuruma*, "the whole earth is impure." But as only virgin soil is considered impure, it is also said: *dyurumu be be dugukolo ka forow sani nyala do*, "the whole earth is impure except for the cultivated fields." The word *dugukolo* (literally, bone of the earth) designates both the earth as a whole and the earth as matter. The same notions [171] concerning the impurity of the earth hold for the Dogon. See M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, p. 94.

Faro

Faro's Shapes

776 Faro was a "voice" before he materialized into a body. In his role as master of the word and reorganizer of the universe, he is represented by a spiral, *munu*, in which he occupies the point of origin at all times. The spiral is situated in the center of the cardinal points (2). Its vibratory unrolling represents "the displacement of Faro for the realization of all things in the universe."

2. This "central point," which is also the firmament, is described by the Bambara as *sa tyema kolo*, literally, the bone of the middle of the sky.

776 292 This image is materialized in a basketry headdress, *yugu*, with a spiral of eight turns. The straw sprigs that form the spokes supporting the spiral symbolize the vibration; the intervals, *yugunye* or eye of the *yugu*, which separate them are rays of light, the spiral representing

776 292 the daily movement of the sun "which unfolds until evening." The regularity of the rays symbolizes order and the classification of beings and things by Faro. The /41/ ends of the straw sprigs forming the spiral must remain free: they represent the infinite extension of Faro's realm and power. The hat is also a mask "which hides Faro's invisible face and through which he watches over the world" (1).

1. Today, a basket of considerably higher dimensions is made and used by women (See pl. I, b).

[613] The headgear yugu was formerly reserved for the king, who wore it under a turban. Certain deserving old men were also permitted to keep it. The rituals of making and wearing this headdress attest to the importance attributed to it. In particular, when an old man was [695] suspected of having committed a serious offense, his hat was pierced with four holes representing the four cardinal points. He was then made to wear it, thus submitting him to Faro's judgment; if found guilty, he died.

776 As the spirit of the waters, Faro is supposed to belong to the white race and his body to be half albino flesh and half copper (pl. I, c).

776 773 A myth relates how his physical being was formed.

When Faro caused the streaming waters to descend on earth, he manifested himself for a long time only by his voice. He had no body, and since he needed appropriate matter to achieve one, he bided his time in the waters of the sea.

The winged spirit Téliko, who had the body of an albino, wished one day, in his arrogance and jealousy, to cross the world in order to know it and to dominate it. Faro, warned by the dogfish, decided to seize his enemy's body to complete his own. The albino, who always flew, fed on his own substance. He chewed his own flesh and his bones were soon bare; the marrow came out of them. It turned into red copper which fell into the sea and nourished Faro.

While Téliko descended to the water level, the dogfish that was watching him sang in order to attract him. The albino, aware of the danger, climbed back to the highest heaven, attempting to continue his flight and to reach the ends of the world. But he quickly lost strength and after his dya had fallen into the waters, his body was

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seized by Faro who, after giving the genitals to the dogfish, completed his own physical being. His head and torso were made of the albino's flesh; his tail was of copper, as were his breasts, the "essential organs that fed and revived the world."

Faro's head can be compared to that of a white woman: his eyes are black and piercing; his hair is black, straight and long like a horsetail.

/42/ His ears are two holes with no outer ear, but are protected by two fins. Two necklaces of copper and gold hang from his neck and act as receivers, enabling him to hear all sounds and all words: the copper necklace reports idle talks of little importance; the gold one, secret conversations and powerful words. Faro puts all that the receivers collect in his fins, which are also the mirror reflecting all that his eyes have seen, both good or bad. He looks, shuts his eyes, and puts out his tongue; the images penetrate into his fins and classify themselves according to the regular movements of his tail. Thus, images and sounds are chronologically inscribed and can be brought before him at any moment "like a card pulled out of a file." In this way he knows to what use he can put things and events.

Both his hands—the right one male and the other female—and the end of his tail are webbed. Without any apparent sex, the preeminence of the feminine shape usually attributed to him recalls that he once impregnated himself in order to give birth to twin girls at the time the first waters streamed onto the earth.

Faro's appearance, which is linked to the problem of his origin, has been the object of legends and tales among the people. While these have attracted the scholar's attention, they present a serious problem. The legends are truncated, episodic, and often childish versions of an imposing myth, which is perfectly constructed and often expresses a dogma.

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Two examples will be given of legends whose only interest here is to suggest further research into myths forming the framework for collective symbols. One of these legends is Peul /Fulani/, and the other Touareg /Tuareg/.

1. At a time when the Niger was but a narrow, deep river, a pregnant Peul woman asked some Bozo fishermen, who usually ferried people on request, to take her across the stream. At first they refused,

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using her pregnancy as an excuse. As she insisted, they took her in their canoe, left her on the other shore, and went away.

As soon as she had landed, she was seized with pains of her labor. The water of the river dried up at the point where it had been deepest. A voice came out of it, advising the woman to bear her child there. She went down into the pit after having left her clothes on the shore.

From her womb there first came forth milk, honey, and precious stones (*lulu*) which dropped onto the milk and honey as though on /43/ a straw mat. The woman was writhing with pain: the child finally appeared feet first and fell on the stones. His hands and feet were webbed.

As the water began to reappear, she attempted to get away, but in vain. Her husband, who had run up to the river's edge and had found her clothing there, saw her appear three times holding the child above the waters. She then disappeared, carried away by the current. Both she and the child became Faro spirits.

2. The village of Siyango, located fifteen kilometers from Nyono, has a very deep, perennial natural well called *ala kolo faro*, Faro of the well of god, "or *Mbata dyi*, " "water of *Mbata*." No one drinks its water. At the beginning of creation, a woman named *Mbata* lived alone and without water. She gave birth to twins. Exhausted and dying of thirst, she came out of the cave and, going down to the edge of the sand, prayed that God let her die if she could have no water. A spirit appeared and said to her: "God will entrust all waters to you; but he will first prepare you a home." A pit having been formed and filled with water, the woman stepped inside and was transformed into Faro. She then took her two children in with her; one became a male spirit and the other, a female spirit.

The pit extended underground through a kind of tunnel and Mbata, who had followed it down, came out again with so much water that the Niger was created.

The water of this well was soon forbidden to human beings, for if anyone looked at himself in it, Mbata would take hold of his shadow and make him fall. The corpse, using the underground passage, came out into the river. Those who threw themselves into the water sometimes also became Faro.

One day Mbata resumed her human shape and went to the market where she bought tomatoes. She asked those she met what they did for the spirit who owned the water they so much needed. She advised them to offer him copper and gold and to slaughter white rams at the well.

776 773 171 The following day, in order to give thanks to Faro, the villagers went to the edge of the well to the sound of drums and sacrificed the animal. The water swelled, seethed up, and formed a streat which still runs into the Niger today.

The composition of Faro's body determines the behavior of men in the rituals performed in his honor. While the usual offerings of blood, tomatoes, raw cereal mash, and baked cakes are consumed by him and returned to the givers in the shape of material possessions (children, millet, rain) or spiritual possessions (preservation of the souls of the living and the dead), the choice content of the offerings or sacrifices, the albino and copper, are reserved only for him and help increase his strength and stimulate his action. /44/ He absorbs them for his own sake; thus it is said that: "copper and albino are the sacrificial privileges of Faro."

Manifestations of Faro

776 824 All the atmospheric manifestations in the sky are evidence of Faro's presence and power. Rain, thunder, squalls, hail, and the rainbow all demonstrate his action. The lightning that bursts forth in the *koblenkaba* is a weapon, a small axe (*sempere ni* or *dyele dẽ čini*) which he throws from the top of the sky. If lightning strikes, [825] it is a proof of his revenge. In the tree, the lightning hits the *gecko* (*ala ǰugu*), an evil animal which, when it lives in homes near the hearth, supposedly stirs up fires of conflagration. When lightning strikes men, it is in punishment for the breaking of a taboo. The stone axes, found at the point where lightning strikes, are collected and kept in the sanctuaries of the rain altars, to be used in case of drought or in the course of seasonal rites. They are also placed in the seeded fields, so that their strength, by communicating itself to the seed, may be beneficial to germination.

776 On earth, Faro is conceived of as a unique being whose principal home is the Niger; he is present everywhere. In practice, the Bambara believe that a spirit haunts each torrent, pond, or well, each gourd of water, each dewdrop; they call him *dyi tigi*, "master of water."

776 He takes on many forms. He can be seen in the brush as a gazelle feeding on wild tomatoes and onions. As a ram with golden fleece and wearing ear ornaments, he travels underground along gold veins. As a young and seductive woman he goes to the villages to seduce the boys and take them away with him. He is the head of the fleeting torrent that runs after a rainfall; he is the seething and swelling of the currents. He can be recognized in the bluish haze that floats above the ponds. A stream that dries up is a sign of his anger.

Faro's Realm

776 821 At the beginning, the waters that originated in the "central springs of the sky" and streamed over the earth, were pure, clear, beneficial and "easy." But after Mousso Koroni's betrayal and that of the beings who listened to her, impurity was communicated to the earth /45/: the water that covered the earth clouded, changed color, and became "difficult." It either dried up or, on the contrary, flooded the land, drowning living beings.

Today only the streaming rain water has preserved its character, more especially the first rain that falls at the beginning of winter. [783] It is considered a purifying agent par excellence and is called *dane sandyi*, "water that sows," for it brings to the grains their soul, *ni*; the earth, sterile and "empty," becomes full and fertile, plants are reborn, animals and insects multiply (1).

[577] 1. A person who is generous and good is referred to as being like this first rain. It is also said of the spirit: "the spirit [is good like] the first rain" (*miri dane sandyi*).

The terrestrial waters, Faro's kingdom, are classified into seven distinct realms. They are in layers which correspond to the seven parts of the sky and earth.

The first, *dyi woyo* "seething water," is surface water: it seethes when Faro makes himself known, and overflows in floods, as the heads [783] of streams are swelled by the storm. It is also the lustral water used for purification and the water drawn for drinking.

●776 821 The second, dyi ble "red water, " is Faro's copper, a reflection of koblenkaba or "red sky." It is similarly the seat of the spirit's warlike or punitive activities. Water of wrath and vengeful action, it drowns the guilty. Through it, Faro strikes the bodies and health of those who do not recognize his dominion.

Faro prefers to sojourn in the dyi fi, "black water, " where he keeps his secrets. It is to this water that one prays to seek grace. It is from the dyi fi that the twelve future waters will flow.

Calm and felicity reign in the dyi sumane, "cold water, " where the fish live. The dya of earthly bwings are preserved in it.

While Faro drowns those he punishes in the dyi ble, it is in the madũ (literally, person, to eat) that their bodies rot or become the prey of fish.

The sixth category of water, kosira (literally, thing of fear) is a jail. In it Faro temporarily places all that comes under his domination.

The seventh water, dyi wolõflã, corresponds to the seventh heaven.

776 823 782 In the Niger, the places inhabited by Faro bear the general name of faro tyin. These are mostly deep depressions, well known to the shore dwellers, particularly the Bozo. /46/ Sometimes a consecrated stone, placed on the shore, receives the sacrifices offered to the spirit.

The most celebrated is a place called Souko, located upstream from Koulikoro near the village of Kayo. The local spirit engendered all that now lives in the river. Because of this he is worshipped by all Bozo and Somono fishermen, who used to send delegations to the annual sacrifice that took place during the dry season.

776 823 The Faro of Ségou lives in the Faka, a deep hole located close to the right bank, facing the town. Legend has it that the Faka is extended by tunnels: one links the river to the Bani while the other opens out at Dya and was used by the founders of the settlement in mythical times.

[825] The Faka is placed under the guardianship of a crocodile to which each year the inhabitants offered victims. At the bottom of the hole there is a fat blind scaleless polyo, which the fishermen always return to the water if they catch it in their nets "because it is Faro's gate-keeper." In olden times, a flat stone upon which were traced a representation of Faro and black dots equal in number to the inhabitants of Ségou was visible in the deepest part of the waters. On
[782] this occasion an albino was sacrificed (by slitting his throat) and the first fruits of the harvest were offered to the spirit.

776 On market day, a gourd filled with river water, called fle ndinye
823 faro, is placed close to the shore where the canoes land. To drink a
mouthful of this water is equivalent to a sacrifice to the spirit. The
782 drinker gives a cowrie as alms to the beggar who drew the water, for
"never can [Faro's] water be bought or sold" (1).

1. Ma ti dyi fere ma ti dyi sã.
See pl. II, b.

At Sama, the faro tyin is a kind of natural corridor located amidst the rocks bordering and overhanging the left bank of the river.

[825] The finches nesting there warn the boatmen of the place's sanctity by flying off; the boatmen then stop to pray. In passing, they throw an offering and those who have broken taboos purify themselves by washing. Each shows the spirit all that he carries with him. Two nearby trees, faro sõndyiri or "trees of Faro's sacrifice," are used to tie up the white bulls at twilight. The following day, they are thrown alive into the river with millet mash and cola nuts. At the bottom of the passage, on a fairly smooth surface, the image of Faro described above was drawn each year in the course of the ceremony celebrated by the society of the Komo.

/47/ Faro also haunts ponds and wells. In the village of Nango a natural well was revealed to a hunter by a white ram which appeared out of a thicket. The village was built after the discovery of the water hole where the inhabitants now worship the spirit.

In the village of Siyango, the water of the well in which Faro
resides is tabooed, the site of the well being the seat of all the re-
ligious ceremonies of the villagers. There the newborn are presented,
and deaths and marriages announced. The sick are treated by being
[755] made to drink the well water and wash in it. From his herd, each
person offers every year an animal which is thrown alive into the pit.
[681] Finally, those condemned to death are executed by drowning in the
same spot.

Faro's Auxiliaries

776 Faro has placed spirits as his representatives in the skies, in space,
773 on earth, in the trees, and in the rocks of the mountains. They see

776 773 to it that all things proceed in good order. In addition he is accompanied by auxiliaries who participate in his work.

The most important of these is his "secretary," the bolokuruni, a blacksmith of the black race who had lost the use of his hands and who went to live with Faro after his crippling.

This blacksmith lived on earth at a time when craftsmen did not know the use of tongs and used to seize the red iron in their bare hands to carry it to the anvil. The man who was to become Faro's companion had reached an advanced age and was still practicing his art when one day both his wrists were broken by the hammer of a clumsy apprentice. Mad with pain, he ran to the river and threw himself in to ease his suffering. Seeing that in his grief the man had turned to him, Faro took pity on him and kept him at his side. His body was never found and a diviner told his family the happy event of his disappearance.

The bolokuruni accompanies Faro and assists him in his incessant labor. He is the one who consults the register in Faro's fins in which everything is inscribed. "The requested image is sent from the fins into the pupil of Faro's eye which the blacksmith watches." As this image is reflected in the servitor's eye, he uses it according to the orders he receives. Thus he verifies daily the count of those living and dead.

776 825 /48/ The spirit has numerous auxiliaries among the animals. His airborne messenger is the swallow. It never rests upon the impure earth and its wings, reproduced on the headdress of the old men, symbolize the words it carries. The scorpion's stinger is the weapon given by Faro to the original twins: whoever attacks or wounds a twin is stung by this insect. The crocodile is the executor of Faro's important works: it kills those guilty of breaking taboos, or chases undesirables away from the river's edge. The scaleless fish, called kokoni, directed the first streaming of the waters on earth (1). The tmeni (2) is Faro's "ordure" which it is the duty of someone to sweep

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(1) See p. 33.

(2) Alestes nigrilineatus.

776 825 up (1). The small *miri* (2), "mother of fish," is regarded as the creator and guardian of all fish. Its name is associated with all prayers that are recited on the waters. The *dodo* (3) is Faro's messenger in the waters and transmits his orders and directives, and the *polyo* (4) is the gatekeeper, controlling those who wish to penetrate into the spirit's domain.

776 824 Certain plants are in constant communication with him. The *yayale* (5), "Faro's grass," grew on the mound where the mythical twins were born. The tomato, *ngoyo* (6), is assimilated in the blood. It carries within it the potential embryo for its seeds are multiples of seven, the number of duality. It is by means of the tomato that Faro impregnates women for it possesses, like humans and animals, a *ni* and a *dya*. When it has a double bloom, the two twin tomatoes are given to the women so that they may bear twins. If the fruit is single on the stem, it is split in two to be cooked and eaten. The gesture of splitting separates it symbolically from its *dya* which is thus returned to Faro (7).

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1. The ordure has its use in religious life. See p. 258.

2. *Micralestes acutidens.*

3. *Tétrodon fahaka.*

4. The *polyo fi* is *Herterobranchus longifilis*; the *polyo bie* is *Heterobranchus bidorsalis.*

5. *Andropogon (Hyparrhenia) hirtus.*

6. *Lycopersicum cerasiforme*, the native tomato (pl. II, a).

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> 7. Only vegetables whose spiritual essence does not have to be preserved are cooked, "for to cook is to shatter the soul."

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In each village are grown one or several small fields of tomatoes, called "Faro's fields," or "fields of twins." The fruits of these fields are reserved for the worship of the spirit (1).

> 1. On the site of the ancient village of Soroba, at the edge of a pond located near the present-day village, there are two rectangular fields of tomatoes dedicated to male twins and four square fields dedicated to female twins in the village. Each year the villagers gather at the edge of the pond for a ceremony. The symbolic words relating to twins are recited and a prayer is said, to be followed by ablutions.
>
> The fruit that is harvested is offered to the spirit by squashing it on a neighboring tree trunk.

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/49/ All metals belong to Faro. The seven /sic/ principal metals are the following: copper (male), brass (female), gold, silver, tin, and iron. Copper and brass come from the fifth sky (koblenkaba). They descend at each thunderclap and, along with the "thunderstones," penetrated into the soil. They were discovered by a diviner at the bottom of a pond that had dried up because of a broken taboo. Be-
[301] cause of their divine origin, copper and brass represent "Faro's sounds." These sounds twist themselves around the spiralled copper or brass earrings that everyone wears and penetrate the eardrum, thus making it possible to hear words. Gold plays a part in the building of certain altars (boli) to which it confers strength and stability.

The sacrifices made with or on copper, brass, or gold have a restraining influence on the spirit for they are of his own essence.

No woman wearing copper, brass, or gold jewelry, may cross the Niger without opening her luggage out of deference to the spirit, for "all ornaments belong to him and often must be returned to him after death.

[784] It is taboo to bring metal into contact with cow's butter, an oily substance that does not allow water to penetrate.

Ba 776 436 Legend has it that cowrie shells, widespread throughout Black Africa and used as money, come from the deep water where Faro keeps his fortune. Faro "sleeps on a bed of cowrie." Their mythical origin explains their role and both the economic and religious value attributed to them.

Ba 776 823 The black earth of the river banks, bogo fi, such as that found on the sea shore in sandy places, contains the strength of the spirit and is used in numerous rites. Smeared at the base of the interior walls of the huts, it symbolizes Faro's presence in the bosom of the family. It serves to decorate the headdress of the circumcised (1). Those who live far from the Niger or from any source of water pray to it as if addressing Faro.

Ba 776 173 Some men occupy a privileged position in their relationship with the spirit. The first are the eight mythical ancestors, the eldest of whom is Koumabana. They received the word of the spirit, transmitted it to their descendants, explained before dying the new order of things, and instituted the cult.

At present they are still venerated as the prototypes of /50/ the human being in his new environment. Along with immortality, man lost the heavenly food which, until then, had been sufficient to nourish him. The articulated limbs which were provided for him dedicated him to manual labor, the techniques of which were taught him little by little. On the other hand, in the spiritual domain a deep change also occurred. In primitive times, man lived an almost animal existence and was without any responsibility. His abandonment by the balanza brought him suffering and death, but with them, his consciousness, symbolized by Faro's "word," developed. Along with death, illness, sorrow, bad instincts and the hard daily labor, there appeared also man's feeling about his own person and his place in an ordered universe, governed by Faro, as opposed to primitive chaos.

The eight ancestors taught men to venerate Faro, to ask him for all they needed, and to thank him for all they received. Therefore their names are invoked in most prayers and the episodes of their lives are told to the young to whom their works are held up as an example.

Bo 776 773 Mention should also be made here of the special position held by the Bozo who were born to the mythical girl twins, daughters of Faro (2).

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1. See p. 233, Fig. 14.

Bozo MS6

2. See p. 33, n. 4.

Bo 776 173 In many cases, this origin enables them to intervene with the spirit, where others are helpless. Born as twins of the master of the waters, the Bozo never suffered the contamination caused by Mousso Koroni which affects all other men. Because of this fact it is possible for them to establish communication with the spirit at the bottom of ponds or in the river and to seek out the bodies of those drowned. The fishing rights conferred on them by Faro were never contested by the conquerors who settled on the shore of the Niger during the historic period.

Numerous articles or essays have already been published on the Bozo. Their language and fishing techniques have been studied. However, inquiries into their religion and the image they have of themselves prove very difficult. This is caused, on the one hand, by their apparent conversion to Islam and, on the other, by their reticence in discussing their traditional system. Such a contribution, however, will be indispensable to scholarship in the study of certain aspects of Sudanese metaphysics, particularly that of the Bambara and the Dogon. The myths of both groups mention the apparition of the Bozo on earth as coinciding with the beginning of /51/ Faro's actions which, in turn, coincides with the development of techniques among the Bambara, and with the "third word" of the Dogon (1).

1. See M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau.

In addition, the "joking relationships" which they maintain with the Dogon and which go back to the origin of a whole system of tribal and intertribal alliances clearly indicate the importance of the symbolic role conferred upon them (2).

2. See p. 119, n. 1.

Ba 776 782 Whenever he feels the need, Faro carries women and young girls off to his watery home. Many disappearances in the course of river crossings by canoe are attributed to him.

In olden times, each year a young virgin, chosen for her beauty by the griot of the village, became the wife and servant of Faro. In most cases she was willing and proud to become his eternal companion. On a designated day, wearing her finest jewelry, she was

776 782 brought to the middle of the river and thrown in while the villagers prayed the spirit to give the village his protection and to bring rain to future harvests.

Faro's Taboos

776 784 All of Faro's subjects, in particular the Bambara of both sexes and of all ages, are requested to respect a certain number of taboos.

The black earth, bogo fi, of the river banks, used ritually in many instances, would be excellent in pottery making. The women potters, however, cannot use it because it blackens in the process of baking. No pottery that has been fired may be washed in those places haunted by the spirit (1).

> 1. At Ségou, numerous drownings are blamed on the increasing frequency with which this taboo is broken.

[262] Butter in many places is forbidden by Faro and may not be preserved in water. (2)

> 2. This taboo is linked to the relation between Faro and the Peul, but the nature of their relationship has not been clarified.

No one crosses the river without opening his luggage and presenting Faro with the gold, copper, or food it contains. As a rule, the wearing of metals is forbidden in those places haunted by the spirit.

776 784 841 The principal taboo concerns menstrual blood which was originally caused to flow because of the sins and impurity of Mousso /52/ Koroni. No menstruating woman may visit the places inhabited by Faro; none may draw water, wash clothes or cooking utensils, or cleanse herself in any of these spots. In addition, a man whose wife is in such condition must refrain from appearing at religious ceremonies or, if he is a priest, from performing the ritual.

In this part of Africa, as in many others, menses are conceived of as a necessary flow of empty blood, impure because it has not contributed to the formation of the foetus, the embryo of which each

776 784 841 woman carries within her. (1) Deprived of Faro's essentially impregnating power and contrary to its generating action, this blood is considered evil, and all that recalls it or comes near it is excluded from the ritual.

Faro's Character, Role, and Deed

776 The principal characteristics of Faro's deed in creation are: omnipotence, omnipresence, and benevolence. Everything, whether animate or inanimate, depends on him in time and space.

The Bambara are extremely sensitive to Faro's power over the universe. They say: "Neither by day nor by night does Faro stop his incessant work." He sees to the efficient workings of the order which he inaugurated and which requires constant attention. His time is divided: from dawn until evening he occupies himself with the earth and its inhabitants; the next twelve hours' work is devoted to aquatic animals and members of his own family. Procreation depends on his will; it is he who, in the sky and in the water, controls the physical and spiritual life of all beings: the soul and vital force. In due order, with which the humans cooperate by observing his laws, he maintains life and makes the new bodies participate in the functioning of the universe according to a regular rhythm. Souls are reincarnated, assuring the continuity of spiritual forces in the world. The same power directs all acts of individual and social life: birth, circumcision, excision, initiation, marriage, agricultural work, voyages, war or peace.

Throughout the development of individual life, it is Faro who maintains man's physical integrity: he gives him health, necessary to action. [53] Sickness is always /53/ considered a loss of strength which the individual must ask Faro to restore. The sovereign master of man's life, he has the power to take it away from him.

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1. See G. Dieterlen, "Mécanisme de l'impureté chez les Dogon" /The Mechanism of Impurity Among the Dogon/ *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. 17 (1947), pp. 82ff.

● 776 773 At death, he takes back the spiritual principles of the diseased and preserves them in water so as to reintegrate them into another body, thus using forces which are eternally reusable. The product of the "shedding" (mana or folo) of souls which remain on the altars is for him in a way of constantly verifying the account of those living and dead who are entrusted to him.

On earth, men are indebted to him for all they possess. He gave them language, an expression of thought, and taught them its usage, having warned them against the misuse and evil use of words.

The techniques of survival, another expression of "Faro's words," so necessary to their lives since they have to provide the means for their existence, were revealed to them by the spirit. He helped them with his sovereign power, either by directly providing them with new tools, or by inspiring some of them to develop new techniques by putting to use observed facts. In this way, he gave the Bozo fishing nets which enabled them to catch the first recorded animal food, the fish; likewise, he encouraged among the Bambara the discovery of weaving through observing the spider's web.

He also gave men certain seeds which became the origin of farming, such as cotton and fonio, both of them being known before millet and the other cereals.

As proprietor of cowrie shells and metals, he is the master of wealth, distributing it as he pleases. Thus, one who owns precious [782] metal is responsible to Faro for it and owes him a part of one's earnings. For this reason many offerings are made by throwing gold or copper into the river.

776 241 Faro's deed is essential where the Bambara's main activity, agricultural work, is concerned. Every man with dignity and nobility must cultivate the earth in order to honor Faro. Each stroke of the hoe is a wound inflicted upon the earth and a punishment for its impurity. Each stroke of the hoe humiliates Mousso Koroni and purifies the earth. Faro watches over the soul and the vital force of the seeds. Only he can provide rain necessary to germination, for rain contains the soul, (ni) of the cereal grains as does the water of ponds and streams which one collects in case of drought.

776 774 241 Millet receives its soul as soon as it gets the humidity of the earth, and from that time on, it accompanies the various stages of germination with utterances which, at the beginning of the world, could be heard. As soon as /54/ it has received the rain, the seed splits and says: "My place is assigned." Then the sprout comes out of the earth

•776 with the words: "May I be protected." Finally the growth of the stem
774 is accompanied by a third utterance: "May I be obeyed" (1). It pre-
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1. These are the three formula:
ndyora, nga kolosi, nga bunye.

serves its soul until full maturity, that is, the moment is is harvested. When the harvester's blade cuts the spike or the cluster, the plant sends its soul into Faro's realm with these words: "Iron is forbidden my grain; soul, go away to the house of water" (2). Thus deprived

2. Neke ye nkise tne ye, ni, ta dyi so la.

of its soul, the millet becomes suitable for eating and it says: "If I were not dead, I could not be eaten; my breed cannot be lost: whether or not I am eaten, nothing can reduce me for my soul is in water" (3).

3. Ni ná sale te nti dũ, n šia tise ka tunu,
ndunaw ma dũn wo, fẽ te bwona, ni be dyi la.

776 Many agrarian rituals are celebrated in order to assure Faro's pro-
241 tection. The high quality of the first fruits of the harvest offered to
him indicates the importance of his role. It is in fact a payment made
to him for the past harvest and in anticipation of the harvest to come.

776 He is also the guardian of the artisan's skill. The first object
forged by the young blacksmith and the first spindle of thread woven by the young weaver are brought to him. Through this gesture, the individual entrusts him with both his work and his manual dexterity. After Faro has seen the work, he does not let the worker forget what he has learned and will help him perfect his skill.

Faro is a judge. Those who break the rules he has made are the object of his righteous wrath: those who are drowned or struck by lightning are always persons who have broken a taboo. Men submit most difficult cases to him as a last resort. Through the intermediary of the agents of different rituals such as the intermediary of the diviners, he answers requests and "settles the words." Most prayers
776 are addressed to him and in many cases the invocations end with his
782 name. He is omnipresent, invoked everywhere, and the seat of his
power, as of all others, is the seventh heaven, to which the Bambara

776 782 address the following: "Seventh heaven, you are large, you are long; your west is red; your east is white; your north is great; your south is black; seventh heaven, you are the king of seats among all seats, you are the great generator of the power of all powers, you are the great discoverer of all secrets, you are the source of all /55/ fortunes, you are the place where the common weal may not be destroyed; source of all things, deliver me from sin" (1).

1. Wolo flã kaba, i ka bo, i ka dyã, i kle bi ka ble, i koro ka dye, i baba ka bo, i bani ka fi; wolo flã kaba, siki yoro u la sikiyoro masa, fanga u la fanga ba sindi, gundow be ladyele fara be, nafolo be ladyele boyoro, dyẽ wari dũ bali yoro; ko be boyoro, hake tonye.

This prayer is recited by the head of the family during childbirth, a grave illness, or a death. It was also used during rituals of the enthronement of kings or chiefs.

776 772 Pemba and Faro, the complementary principles, were both born of the spirit, miri, at the beginning of the universe. In considering the psychological aspects of their symbolic roles, one can understand why, despite the antecedence of Pemba's role, from time to time the Bambara say that "Faro is the eldest." For he represents, in the human microcosm, the will and wisdom capable of controlling the propulsion of sexual instinct as symbolized by the prolificness of the balanza as well as the violence and disorder of the emotions as expressed in Mousso Koroni's vertiginous chthonian voyage and her madness. The antithesis of the sexes, realized in the myth by the bodily separation of Pemba and Mousso Koroni, and their disagreements and quarrels which are the origin of all cosmic disorders, are compensated for by harmonious agreement and union, as established by Faro in his androgynous state. Faro is the dual vibration which, from then on, orders the universe; he is reason and moderation opposed to the overwhelming force of the balanza; he is the light of the spirit which triumphs over darkness and primordial gropings.

Spiritual Principles (1)

114 1. A few comments on the spiritual principles of the Bambara (in particular on the *dya* and the *nyama*) have been collected in the chapter entitled "Théorie des âmes" by Tauxier, *La Religion bambara* (pp. 14-25), in which the author appraises the works of the Abbé Henry and of Ch. Monteil. Some of the observations made in the following chapter have been summarized by the author in "La Personne chez les Bambara" and in "Note sur le tere chez les Bambara /Note on the Tere among the Bambara/." It will be useful to compare this study of spiritual principles with the studies made among the Dogon and presented respectively by M. Griaule, S. de Ganay, and the author in *Masques Dogon*, *Les Devises des Dogon*, and *Les Âmes des Dogon*.

761 The Soul, *ni*, and the Double, *dya*:

776 Faro controls the principle of life in water, which is his realm
as well as the life-giving element par excellence. In the bodies of
[826] living beings, this principle has its seat in the blood. The blood of the sacrifices offered to the spirit (or failing that, the juice of the tomato, a transformation of blood) is a contribution to the reservoir of life controlled by Faro—life which he redistributes in all its forms throughout the universe. Water is the privileged element in which life may persevere indefinitely. Elsewhere, life is maintained only if water comes to nourish it.

761 Faro's creative function is materialized by each marital partner
776 eating a tomato before sexual relations. This act is accompanied by
842 the recital of a prayer. The juice of the fruit, which contains the
833 body of the future child, transmits life according to the following mechanism:

Faro receives the offerings of tomatoes grown ritually in the
761 consecrated fields, as well as the blood of victims slain in his name
776 above the waters. Blood and juice, spreading over water, the fertili-
842 zing agent, are collected by the swallow, Faro's airborne messenger.
824 Liberated in space, they return to the soil with fertilizing rain and penetrate the tomato seeds which thus contain a particle of generative power.

761 776 842 After the marital couple has absorbed the fruit, a smooth-bodied embryo with nonarticulated limbs is formed in the maternal womb. /58/ It is at this moment that the couple consummate the sexual act in the course of which the woman "takes into herself the entire body of her husband": the upper part through the eyes, the lower part through the genital organs. The masculine seed located in the seven principal articulations (knees, elbows, ankles, and spine) transmits them to the embryo. The body, originally similar to the body of the spirit, thus becomes that of a human being.

The spirit restows the spiritual forces after the man has mated for the second time with his wife. If the woman bears a single child it means that the man, in the course of the second union, formed the double of the first germ, but was not permitted to procreate twins.

761 776 843 774 Faro disposes of the child's life and nature. He decides all that the child will be and will do, and determines his destiny from the moment the seed is placed by him in the womb. The foetus then develops with no further modifications until parturition, at which time it receives the spiritual principles, the soul, ni, and the double, dya, which will be his throughout his life. It is at this time that the inner relations of the individual to the social group to which he belongs intervene. Although Faro gives each child a new body, he animates this body with spiritual forces drawn from the family reservoir. The [775] newborn child is the direct heir to the ni and the dya of a deceased member of the family, actually of the one, whatever one's sex, who died shortly before the birth of the child (1).

1. The reincarnation of the deceased's spiritual principles, however, is not an absolute rule. Faro is the master of an infinite reserve of souls. Twins, albinos, and certain other children are born with the ni and dya as yet undetermined. They originate respectively in the second sky (kaba dye) and in water (dyi sumale). Further study on this particular point is necessary to complete this investigation.

761 776 774 775 The consequence of death was, in effect, to separate the corpse from the forces that animated it. The ni, by appropriate ritual, had been preserved on the altar of the ancestors (2), and the dya had left

the dying man to go into the water and place itself under Faro's protection. At the moment of delivery, both *ni* and *dya* return to the body of the newborn child who replaces the dead man, but they return in reversed order: the *dya* is returned to the body of the child and becomes his *ni*; the *ni* of the deceased mixes with the birth water spread on the ground which forms the shadow (*suma*) and will be his double, the twin (1). In the case of a boy, the *dya* will be female; in the case /59/ of a girl, it will be male. These movements are independent of the sex of the deceased as the spirit reverses the sexes when necessary. Each human being is thus both male and female
[828] through his soul and his double. This conception of human nature, which is fundamental to the Bambara, is expressed in the symbolism
[801] of numbers. The number seven is formed of three (male sexual symbol) and four (female sexual symbol) and represents the complete man. In addition, on another level, the number six is that of male twins, seven that of mixed twins (and the hermaphrodite), and eight that of female twins. The body of the newborn child is gently tapped
[844] by the number of strokes representing the above figures in order to call the child's *ni* according to its sex.

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761 776 774 775 2. Grouped hierarchally, children, male adults, and women form religious societies or institutions, *dyo*. Each *dyo* is charged with the upkeep of altars which serve to preserve the spiritual forces of the group. (See p.

[844 824] 1. The blood of childbirth represents the excess tomato juice absorbed by the woman, that which remains in the womb after the formation of the embryo. On the eighth day after birth, the mother of the parturient woman squeezes three or four tomatoes (depending on the sex of the newborn) into a gourd which she then gives to the child's father. The latter makes his wife drink the juice to replace the blood which she has lost and which is considered impure.

826 827 The mouth and tongue, ejectors of the word, can be compared in importance to the ear, a receptive organ. It is through the ear that man receives and remembers the word. Its role is comparable to that of the sex organs which eject life and receive it. The ear in itself has both sexes: male by its auricle, female by its orifice. This duality expresses the basic duality of man. That is why the corpse of [764] an uncircumcised man is sometimes amputated at the ear rather than at the foreskin.

826 301 Because of the symbolism of its shape and because of its function, the ear is adorned. Men formerly wore three copper rings on the right ear and four on the left, the number seven representing the complete being, male and female, ni and dya. Women wear four rings on each auricle or, if they can, twenty-two, which represent the twenty-two stages of creation, or the twenty-two generative categories. Sometimes, for both men and women, a single ring attached to the earlobe represents the mother of the other rings (1).

[178] 1. In olden times, men and women wore cowrie shells on their ears in the place of copper rings, a custom which would seem to be still respected in certain villages today. These shells played the same part as copper.

827 191 301 ●776 But the role of this adornment goes much further. As symbol of the word, it is through the ornaments that the spirit Téliko, master of sound, hears what /68/ is said to man. They attract sound and send it back to Téliko and Faro, who thus judge the acts and words of men. To wear earrings did not originally mean to adorn oneself, but to hear the spirits as well as to force them to hear what was said (2). Its second effect is to embarass the liar, the bearer of false news

2. Rings placed on musical instruments have the same purpose and also symbolize those worn by men. See p. 282.

or evil words, by putting him in the position of being understood by the invisible, therefore of being judged by them. A pleasant or well-intentioned word benefits the one to whom it is addressed and this

827 gain is felt as a contribution to the beneficial nyama. "The spirit
191 Téliko transforms the air emitted by the speaker into favorable nyama;
upon hearing a good word, it would be necessary to stop one's ears so
381 that this nyama does not leave the person who received it." Moreover,
776 if a person opens his eyes wide while watching the speaker, "the latter's nyama is able to penetrate the body of the listener" and spread within it as a reviving tide. While this takes place, the good word saturates the air, helping the action of breathing, hence the life, of the listener. "One breathes," says an informant, "with the nyama of the words which enter through the eyes and ears." But this process is not one-sided. The good nyama returns to the speaker through his own eyes while he is looking at the other person. He is reflected in the person with whom he is talking and it is as though he were talking to himself. There is a beneficial exchange even when only one of the two actors speaks.

Inversely, a bad word or an insult upsets the listener and rebounds, acting upon the insulting person. This harmonious arrangement summarizes precisely and powerfully the universal movement, principle of life and strength for all beings. It comprises an individual movement provoked by the word which acts upon the body by developing and regularizing the rhythm of breathing, and a collective movement set off by the return of the word to the speaker. Because of the effect of the spoken word, exchanges are established that are favorable both to the rhythm of individual breathing and to the equilibrium of universal life. This effect is not limited to words in the strict sense; sight enjoys the same prerogatives as hearing and diction. If an object
[431] belonging to a certain person is seen and coveted by another, the owner cannot refuse to give it to him. The act of seeing has established by itself, between the stranger and the object, a bond which is affectively stronger than that of ownership.

836 The articulated parts of the human body are just as meaningful as the head. The bones, more lasting than the flesh /69/ and a testimony, in the grave, of the life that has passed, are its foundation and framework.

The navel is the central point of the articulations: that is why Faro, when he drowns a person, returns the body after having slit the nose and navel. This double mutilation shows that he has reclaimed the head and the body of the guilty man. The articulations are the indication of man's condition in the new order. Where he was once

326 The lower compartment contains millet from a field called
778 kongobwona foro, reserved for the needs of the cult of the forge. This
243 land is placed under the guardianship of the patriarch belonging to
the Gwonna family, and its upkeep is assured by the community. The seeds are given by each blacksmith to the old man who sows them himself. The work of cultivation and threshing is done communally. The millet is stored in the old man's granary and each blacksmith receives a share. This share is not eaten, but is put aside. From time to time the artisan takes a few seeds which he places as an offering, on his altar, and which remain for a time in the compartment reserved for them; then they are considered to have been eaten by the axe and are removed and replaced by others. Part of the millet is kept as seed for the following year.

326 Each compartment is open and the blacksmith may insert his
778 fingers; if his earnings are insufficient, he rubs his body and tongue
with the hand which he has just dipped into the pocket containing
789 money; the price, set by the spoken word, will not be questioned by
the client. If he goes to work in his field, he places his hand into the millet each morning to draw upon the strength it contains and to improve the results of his agricultural work. If he burns himself while working at the forge, he dips his fingers into the third compartment and cools himself in Faro's water. It is this same water which a young artisan must drink at the beginning of his apprenticeship.

326 The triangular iron, farabye, which constitutes the axe proper is
placed under the power of three spirits belonging to the group of air
778 spirits: A gayru who revealed iron to men; Tengu who taught them
776 Faro's supremacy; and Gullé. The first two are the masters of the
bellows and direct the work as a whole; the third does their bidding and teaches men the technology of ironwork (1). When the owner of the altar dies, the /121/ axe is removed and placed in the village
428 sanctuary where the ancestral tools are kept. But the remaining
objects are inherited by the son.

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1. The spirit would have refused to teach the blacksmiths the working of copper and gold, as these two metals belonged to Faro who reserved for himself the right to use them. Since iron was black he had abandoned its use to the spirits of the air.

194 The ancestors are worshipped in various places: at the doors and
thresholds of houses, at the cemetery, and at stone altars placed at
769 the intersections of lanes and in public squares. These positive cults,
778 which are aimed at the acquisition of beneficial forces, have as a
counterpart, cults in which the villagers rid themselves of all their
unlucky and infectious elements; these take place, in particular, at
the corssroads, dangu, which are placed under the guardianship of the
earth Soba spirits.

It would be impossible to treat all of the cults of the Bambara villages. Among these, three have caught our attention; they concern the dasiri, the dangu, and the ancestral altar stones.

A. The dasiri

194 The word dasiri (literally, which binds the mouth) designates the
776 invisible spirit, Faro's representative entrusted with watching over
778 /138/ the village, as well as the seat of this spirit and, sometimes
too, the animal which accompanies it or symbolizes it.

The spirit haunts a rock, a thicket, or a tree situated near the village; the approaches to this spot are reserved for the elder in charge of the ritual (1).

[824] 1. In Massala and Soroba it is a baobab tree; in Sama, a tamarind tree, etc. See the observations on the dasiri collected by Ch. Monteil, Monographie de Djenné /Monograph of Djenne/, pp. 137-138; L. Tauxier. La Religion Bambara, pp. 195-208.

[787 Generally the place is pointed out by the geomancer at the time
361] the village is founded, or else determined by an event which occurred
at that time. It is after this operation that the buildings are erected
to the west of the chosen spot.

If the dasiri is a tree, no one may burn or cut its branches. In
[822] many cases it cannot be approached by anyone dressed in black or
indigo, colors which represent obscurity. No Peul may sit in its
[563] shade (2). Any infraction of these taboos brings about the death of

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2. The reasons for the taboo concerning the Peul have not yet been ascertained.

794 In some villages, the sacrificer never
●776 consumes butter or milk, foods which
778 the Peul furnish the Bambara.
[563]

the culprit and deprives the villagers of their protector.

The spirit of the dasiri sometimes has as its compansion an animal
794 which seems to represent the group's ancestor. At Ségou, it is a
776 crocodile; at Ouélenguena, a she-ass; at Koulikoro, a monkey; in
825 other places it is a male goat which is replaced when it dies. At
Konodimini there are a series of deep intercommunicating wells
which would have served as homes for the ancestors. These holes are
at present occupied by hyenas which are considered to be incarnations
of the blacksmiths of former times and which are the dasiri of the
place.

The dasiri's animal is free to enter homes and to eat what it finds.
It is often fed by the inhabitants. No one may attack it and whoever
breaks this taboo, set on by a vengeful nyama of which he cannot
[582 rid himself, risks being forbidden to marry, even being no longer
626] tolerated in his native village (1).

1. This was, at Soroba, the case of Dji Diara, who, after killing a hyena, could not marry as no woman was willing to link her destiny to his.

As its name indicates, the function of the dasiri is to maintain
794 the stability and integrity of the village. It is the "support of the
776 inhabitants' lives"; the numerous rituals (individual or collective),
782 of which it is the object, reveal the importance of its role as well
as the diversity of the beings invoked. To Faro are addressed prayers
for rain; to the ancestors prayers for questions /139/ concerning the
family; and to the spirit of the tree when it is a matter of stopping an
epidemic. But directly or indirectly, any sacrifice offered to the
dasiri is offered to Faro. The victims (sheep or fowl) and the offerings
(cotton bands, kola nuts) are always white (see Pl. 3, b).

When children reach the age of six or seven, they are led to the
794 tree; they sit on its roots upon which kola nut juice is spat, and are,
778 by this fact, introduced into the village cult. They are then presented
852 to all the allies senanku and especially to the blacksmiths with whom
they proceed to joke.

794 Each year a sacrifice bringing together all the inhabitants is offered
●776 to the *dasiri* and is terminated by communal eating of the sacrificial
182 victim. The first fruits of the harvest are also brought to it by the sacrificer.

B. The *dangu*

The crossroads *dangu* or *danku* (literally, boundary of the head) are
776 inhabited by the Soba spirits who, under Faro, constantly intervene
778 in human affairs. Everything placed at this spot belongs to them,
823 and no one passes by without leaving an offering or a token of his
783 presence: a tool, raw cotton, seeds, cloth. A travelling stranger kneels and deposits a little ash or some cotton; if not, he cleans off a little space on which he spits before leaving. A child passing by will greet it with these words: "Crossroads, my soul is in your hands." On the occasion of any event concerning the individual; the family, or the community, red kola nuts are placed at the crossroads and the following words uttered: "You, crossroads, I entrust my head to you; you are my support; I say, you, crossroads" (1).

1. *E dangu m be ni ku kalifa, do i la ni ǰigi be fe̜, ngo e dangu.*

The corssroad, as an ideal public thoroughfare, is the chosen spot where one easily rids oneself of the *nyama* which any individual keeps and carries about with him. All that is impure, unlucky, and undesirable for the individual or the community is left at the crossroads. Objects which have belonged to dead people are also left there. The forces which are thus gotten rid of are supposedly absorbed by the spirits for whom they constitute a kind of nourishment which will then be returned to men in the form of gifts free of any taint. (2)

2. See p, 258.

/140/ Several examples will illustrate the role played by the crossroads in the community:

Any man who has wounded an animal or squashed an insect is affected in his own *tere* by that of the victim. He goes to the crossroads, kneels, and prays, depositing at the same time a band of cotton, an egg, and ashes. The band of woven cotton, symbol of

776 the word, is offered as clothing, and the eggs are offered as purification.
778 As for the ashes, it is the ideal pure element since fire has "removed"
823 its *tere* from the wood; here it represents the man from whom "the bad
783 force acting on his *tere* has been removed" (1). Whoever murders an
animal proceeds in the samw way with the animal's hide upon which he throws cowrie shells. In both cases, the spirits absorb the *tere* and *nyama*, which add to their own forces and free the culprit.

Collective purifications are carried out on the *dangu* when sexual taboos regarding cultivated fields and bush are broken. The impurity
[833] resulting from copulation performed outdoors is communicated to all
the land belonging to the village; the trees in the bush will no longer bear fruit; the harvests will deteriorate. Formerly the two lovers
[684] taken by surprise were deprived of their clothing which was burned on
the *dangu* after they had circled the village three times starting at the left. The culprits were then banished. At present, if the plight of the fields suggests that such an act has been committed, all varieties of cultivated seeds are gathered in a basket which is placed at the crossroads. Then, all the villagers and their domestic animals circle the village three times while sham battles take place between men mounted on horseback. After a sacrifice offered at the *dangu*, the seeds, thus purified, are sown.

776 Offerings are made to the spirits of the crossroads at the time of
778 sowing to invoke their protection. This ritual is obligatory for whomever sows cotton, since this seed was given to men by these spirits.
823 The farmer places the seeds, sits down facing west, and cries out three
241 times the name of the *dangu* above the seeds. He leaves three small piles in homage to the spirit along with fibers from the plant, and kills a victim before proceeding to sow his field. When the stalks are up, he cuts some boughs and returns to the place of sacrifice to sweep up the seeds, thus impregnating them with the *nyama* of the *dangu*. He then dries them, grinds, sifts, and mixes them with earth picked up on the same spot. In his field, he shouts /141/ the name of the *dangu* and throws the mixture with all his strength in the direction of the cardinal points, the zenith, and the ground. When the plants are mature he picks the first seven ripe seeds, brings them to the same place, and offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

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1. See pp. 90ff.

776 It is also at the crossroads that the elders place the child whose
778 legitimacy is in doubt. If the diviner who is then consulted declares
823 that the child is a bastard, he is deprived of the protection of the spirits
848 and is supposedly unable to survive the nyama which he has acquired
787 at the place. In this same spot are buried abnormal children, in par-
[766] ticular hydrocephalics who are considered undesirable. The spindle
of a dead woman is placed here along with the broom she habitually
used.

776 But the ritual most characteristic of the crossroads is the one re-
778 sorted to by the village when it is in trouble: the primitive wooden
823 mallet, gosilande is planted in the ground; it is then struck with a
783 stalk of millet to chase away evil and to induce new techniques of
reparation to come out of the instrument (1).

1. See p. 145.

C. Stone Altars

778 In the villages, at the intersections of lanes, and in the squares,
211 the founding ancestors are represented by stones under which various
objects are buried (see Pl. V, b).

At Sama, four large stones, encased in a clay platform, symbolize both the cardinal points and the ancestors. They are in touch with the dasiri and receive the same offerings. At Banankoroni, the fara ba is partly buried. Under its point is an albino skull which represents those of the first ancestors and their bones. Two hoes, one placed near the right ear and the other near the left ear, convey the idea that "the man who cultivates the earth will never hear a humiliating word." Under the chin, another hoe recalls that the villagers who are faithful to agriculture will never know famine. Under the hoe, a siriku (2) protects them against those who try to harm them, and brings them

2. See p. 179, n. 1.

"the hyena's luck"; it also means that some of their ancestors were transformed into hyenas in former times. A circumcision knife recalls that all males are circumcised, and all women excised (Fig. 15). Finally, three albino bones and a small pile of copper are a testimony to /142/ Faro's presence and power. Drawings are made on these

794 For male members, the large dyo, the principal aim of which is the preservation of spiritual forces and the maintenance of the person in daily life, are the Komo, the Kworè, the Nama, the Kono, the Nago, and the Nya. Women are grouped around muso dyo, about which little information has been obtained. The uncircumcised belong to the ndomo (or čeble). In addition, members of these societies are divided into groups which may be independent of age grades and which are designated by signs.

The Komo

The word Komo indicates the complex theoretically made up in each village of society members, living and dead, the sanctuary and its altars (boli), the responsible chief, and the mask. It is dominated [776] and protected by the invisible power of Faro and by the presence of a particular spirit to which it is consecrated. The latter haunts a tree located in the thicket where the ceremonies take place. He is /143/ respected for having taught in ancient times the origin and role of the boli and the variations of the cult; he comes to slake his thirst on the blood of victims.

The Komo is as powerful as it is old. The terms trodeni (ni, small) and tro ba (ba, big) are given to it, depending upon how ancient it is. Each Komo has, in addition, a particular name (1). The Komo

(1) According to native etymology, komo means "taking (mo) of the pond (ko)." According to L. Tauxier, "Komo in Bambara means bad, mean, difficult" (see the Dictionnaire bambara-français of Mgr. Bazin, p. 308). On the root Ko or Kon see M. Delafosse, "Terminologie religieuse au Soudan /Religious Terminology in the Sudan/" l'Anthropologie, December, 1923, quoted by L. Tauxier. Some observations concerning the composition and functioning of the Komo society have been the object of a chapter of L. Tauxier in the Religion Bambara, pp. 272-310, which quotes works published by Ch. Monteil and the Abbe Henry. See also: Moussa Travélé, "Le Komo ou Koma /The Komo

69 2. M fa faro n so ma bana a dyanza ye kle saba kono ye; ni ye se i ka seki, muso kono ma.

The offering of food is then renewed every three days until a birth brings about the return of the double into the world of the living.

If the dead man has no descendants, his altar remains forever in the sanctuary of the Komo near the nimara boli. Otherwise, it is returned within seven days to the eldest son or to the brother who then becomes the head of the family.

769 775 During the night following the seventh day, the soul returns to eat and drink in the hut of the widow who lives alone. All the dishes containing water or food are therefore carefully emptied and cleaned. The same meal is offered to the deceased the night following the fortieth day after the death. The widow comes out of her house on the [765] eighth day if she is poor and must work for a living; otherwise, on the forty-first day.

At the end of a variable period of time, the soul, the double, and the name of the deceased are received by a child who is born into the family. The exuvia, mana or folo of the soul, remains in the sanctuary of the Komo as a permanent testimony to his existence on earth. It is conserved by Faro who watches over it, and maintained by the offerings of the living who will in this way bring it to the final resurrection.

When the deceased does not belong to the Komo society, the rites are celebrated over the altars of the societies to which he belongs; his soul is likewise conserved by them. The spiritual principles /195/ of the women, grouped in institutions comparable to those of men, called muso dye, are the object of the same attentions in which is found the rhythm of four days, the female number.

766 If the deceased was too poor for all the rituals, which are always costly, to be observed, two gourds of water are prepared and placed one at the head, the other at the feet of the corpse; he is then lifted in such a way that his image is reflected in the water. This accomplished, eight cowrie shells are placed at his head and eight at his feet and the gourds are covered with a winnowing tray; the image thus conserved is supposedly reflected in the kaba mana, the fourth sky, where Faro, 776 symbolized by the cowrie shells, passes judgment on its state of purity. 787 A divining rite is then performed. If the man is pure, the villagers

776 attend his burial despite the fact that the rituals have not been per-
787 formed. If not, he is abandoned to the care of his family.

To neglect the rituals assuring life in the beyond and the security
764 of the living causes the shadow šu dya, or the ghost šu kere dye
775 (literally, white side of the dead man), to arise and present itself under the same which the dead man had on earth, to claim his due from his descendants.

Ancestor Cult

769 In the entryway of some residences a supporting stake (čě dloma),
778 sometimes marked by seven notches, represents the founding ancestor of the family. On the anniversary of his death the stake is oiled "to refresh his soul." In addition, each year the owner of the house sacrifices to all the ancestors on the family altar, on the stake, and on the threshold of the door. In some villages the ancestors are called upon by tapping the threshold with a little wooden hammer, dyele kala ni, which represents them.

In the courtyards, pieces of wood stuck in the ground (ǰigi semen dloma) represent the paternal uncle, the brother of the founder, and are used as seats for the heads of families who lean against them "in order to lean well upon the traditions." Farmers, before leaving for the fields, rub their hoes on them to show them to the ancestors.

Before planting the women give the head of the family a ball of
769 raw millet, which he lines up to represent the dead according to age
241 and rank. Then he gives them a pinch of the seed beginning with the one representing the most recent deceased and calling successively all the dead by name. The paste and the seeds are then put in water and the mash thus obtained is poured on the /196/ doorposts to the entryway of the family house upon which the blood of a sacrificial victim also is poured. When the planting time comes, the chief who has prepared the mash made with a few grains taken from the seeds distributes this to the women, beginning with the one who represents the oldest deceased. He asks the ancestors to watch over, during the germination period, the soul of the millet which will descend into the seed with the first rainfall. When the millet has reached maturity, the first seeds harvested are placed in a pot on the threshing floor where the grain will be threshed later, and are distributed to the women in the same manner as the time of planting, the oldest of the deceased having to receive the first of the seed.

121

1. Among others J. Toutain, C. R. des Garnered Shelves de J. Frazer /Report on the Garnered Shelves by J. Frazer/.

concerning the absence of historical documents and the difference in periods. To admit these postulates, it is necessary to prove precisely this absence and also the incapability of oral tradition to keep alive the traditions and ways of viewing the world over long periods of time.

In any event, whatever the opinion adopted, it would be good methodology to admit as an immediate hypothesis the probable or possible role played by the Sudanese world as a preserver or transformer of attitudes, rites, and concepts which scholars find everywhere else but which remain unexplained. For in a few years nothing will remain to be either disclaimed or confirmed concerning these systems which are on their way to rapid disintegration. Because of mechanization and an unconscious wish for self destruction the Black civilizations will soon become only a shadow of their former selves and the instability of their material will not allow them to be reconstituted in their complexity and grandeur.

And whatever the fate of this hypothesis, we may find, as a result of such thinking that the religious thought of the Blacks, whether original or not, will take its place in the philosophy of history and in the history of humanity.

/231/ ADDENDA

000 The research conducted in the field during the publishing of the present work has brought to light the following facts which, we believe, it will be useful to present succinctly to the reader.

Chapter 1

776 825 Because of the loss of the seeds in their collarbones, Pemba and Mousso Koroni actually have an animal aspect which they owe to their impurity as well as to that of the uncultivated earth which they symbolize. Pemba is represented by the warableni (Vulpes pallida) and Mousso Koroni by the kongowuluni (unidentified fox). It is this

776 latter animal which is imitated by the *vukuri* during the children's
825 nocturnal ritual described on page 65.

This new information confirms the observations noted on page 47, footnote 1, concerning the identity of the Bambara and Dogon representations. Moreover, the *warableni,* like the *yurugu* (*Vulpes pallida*) of the Dogon, intervênes in divination, particularly in geomancy. The investigations permit the extension of these representations to Sudanese tribes coming from Mandé (see p. 2), particularly, to the Bozo and the Peul.

Chapter 3

826 All Sudanese peoples originating in Mandé are characterized by the
773 seeds (or fish) contained in their collarbone, these varying from one
824 tribe to another. On the other hand, within a tribe, the theoretical content of the eight seeds, though roughly similar in terminology, differs in arrangement from family to family. Also the positions of the first and last seeds are reversed for men and women. Example: the blacksmiths have as their first seed the *keninge* and as their last the *tikaninkuru,* whereas the potters have as their first seed the *tikaninkuru* which they cultivate in the sacred fields (see p. 170) and as their last the *keninge*.

Moreover, after Mousso Koroni had stolen from Pemba the seeds he was entrusted to give on earth, Faro, through the intermediary of the /232/ animals who ate them at his order, reclaimed them from her; thus purified, he distributed them to men. The animal, which brought back to Faro the essential seed of each family, becomes the taboo, *tne,* of the family concerned, and the breaking of this taboo has the basic effect of removing the content of the culprit's collarbone. Analogous representations are noted among the Dogon.

Totemism, the so called "joking relationship" (*senankuya* of the Bambara), the caste system, and the exogamous laws of the Sudanese are based on the elements and classification of the contents of the collarbone.

Chapter 6

194 All the great adult institutions (*dyo*) are in contact with the
857 children's society of the Ndomo which reflects the universal organization
772

775 drink, dress themselves, wear adornments, etc. -- in short, behave exactly like living men.

812 [125] All peoples use or have used such language in trying to express a concept which is by its nature impossible to make concrete. It is, therefore, perhaps premature to conclude that a Bambara cannot conceive of a strictly immaterial world for his manes. He is merely at present incapable of giving a description unencumbered with concrete terms in habitual use. However, it may be stated in general that the Bambara does not trouble himself about the why or how of things outside of what he sees or knows. Reality surrounds him and limits him. He makes decisions on the spur of the moment and also under the influence of time-honored empiricism which is the basis of custom.

776 We have pointed out that among the incorporeal souls are some who, through the right efforts, rise to such heights that they can enter the world of spirits. There are spirits, indeed, who have nothing of the human about them. What are their origin and nature? The Bambara say of them: ma si fa do, meaning "It is a kind of person." Here, too, the expression betrays the thought. Aside from the fact that the native vocabulary does not provide for expressions strictly immaterial, the Bambara has an inevitable tendency to use himself as an object of comparison. For him, the world of the spirits like that of the manes, is analogous to our own. But the manner in which he speaks of the spirits contradicts his words. A spirit is invisible, without a material body; if it appears, it does so under the most diverse forms, borrowed for a brief time. A spirit is often called "a wind," meaning "a fluid." It is also a weightless substance, so rarefied that it can go anywhere -- even to entering a living man's body, where it can perform all sorts of fantastic things (1).

1. See Chapter 7.

For the Bambara, most spirits remain in this vague and inconsistent state. Only events, circumstances or the native's will occasionally tear some of them away from this chaos and transports them to the worldly scene (2). We shall speak of them

2. Assuming for these and other similar

776

again in the chapter on brotherhoods.

[126] Spirits, genii and gods (1) known to the Bambara may be divided into three classes:

First, manes who have become spirits. These are of ten wandering and ill-disposed spirits. That is why the word *nyama*, to which we have alluded, is often used in a pejorative sense. It is also perhaps believed -- by analogy again -- that some manes can become so perfect in evil that they become true evil spirits, just as others become, if not actually good spirits, at least indifferent ones.

A second category comprises genii of the place or gods of the earth (*nyana dugu-da-siri*). There is not a single spot that [823] is inhabited, cultivated, populated or, on the other hand, isolated and deserted that does not have its genie. However, only some of these genii have an organized cult. They are usually the protectors of those who inhabit, cultivate, frequent or visit the places in question, provided that they are suitably honored. They often reveal their presence by entering into direct relations with someone who is in their vicinity and telling him how they wish to be honored in exchange for protection (2); on other occasions they are only discovered by a "seer." In any event, the genie of a place has complete possession of whatever is in the place, and man can profit in one way or another only in accordance with his pact with the genie. In principle he has only a simple right of usufruct, different from and more extensive than our right.

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terms the same meaning of supernatural forces.

1. See on p. 123 the tradition about the horse Kori who was the husband of a *mabo* woman.

2. See the story about the genie who revealed himself to Kolé (p. 51).

●776 The third class comprises the enormous throng of genii of all sorts included under the vague and general term of nyana (3).

[177] 3. One also hears the word nyena. I do not think that this is a corruption of the Arab word jinn. In the first place, it was not Islam that introduced the concept to the Bambara, since it is common to all Blacks. Further, the word nyana is connected with a root nya meaning "powerful," "lord," "master," and nyena is only a dialectal variant.

The nyana may be divided into two categories: the [127] wandering and the solitary, for whom no permanent or formal cult is provided. They live pretty much anywhere. Some have a marked preference for being near men, for crossroads or for the vicinity of wells or springs. They also wander, invisible and ready for pranks, in the courtyards of houses where during the night they love to roam among the kitchen-ware. It is said that they put unclean things into the pots unless one has been careful to turn them upside down. It is even said that if any woman is so imprudent as to use a pot in which one of these wandering spirits has urinated, she will give birth to a sorcerer.

Others of these cult-less spirits throng the countryside and are the terror of travelers (1). Everyone has heard of Wokolo: a little black, hairy hunter who likes to live in the trees, along the paths and also in the brush, beside creeks. Others say that he likes to live in the si (Bassia Parkii) which we call the butter tree or karite. In any case one cannot escape his sharp arrows except

1. They can assume any form they like and take part in the life of humans under the most diverse forms. See p. 123 for the horse Kori.

776 by greeting him as soon as he is observed; if he is unarmed, the best thing to do is to jump on him and rain so many blows on him that he loses count. Then one can escape while he is still knocked out.

[794] The second category of *nyana* includes a motley array of spirits, all of whom have cults. The outward manifestations of these cults have struck anyone traveling in the country, and under their apparent diversity there are recognizable general traits. All are magic practices intended to make the spirits serve man's will. By this means, man tries to make use of supernatural forces of the same nature as those whose unfavorable action he fears. He resorts to the invisible for weapons of defense and of attack. However, these practices must never go beyond certain limits, which are not too well-defined, if they are to be legitimate. Beyond these limits it becomes illicit magic or sorcery, which is especially feared and, whenever possible, relentlessly punished (2).

2. See Chapter 7 on the *suba*.

[128] In reality, the whole mass of these facts is extremely confused. The licit and the illicit are intertwined to the point where they cannot be disentangled. However, there are perfectly clear cases where there seems to be no doubt about the distinction; but there are all possible gradations between strictly magic practices and unadulterated sorcery.

Theoretically, the *nyana* are all-powerful and are honored the more in proportion to these powers, since, in general, it is their malevolent side that earns them their reputation. Homage is paid to them much more out of fear and terror than because of the kindness sometimes attributed to them. What a Bambara wants of them is the *dyigi-seme*, or "powerful master," who will protect him against everything and everyone and, if need be, help him against his enemies or give him the means of succeeding in some evil project.

A belief in a master of the universe exists among the Bambara, but the belief has borrowed from Islam a degree of

776 precision of which the native substratum seems unaware. In any event, there is no Bambara word for "God" except the one
[177] brought by the Moslems -- "Allah," pronounced as Ngala. This lack of a Bambara word may be explained by their custom of avoiding pronouncing the name of powerful people for fear of incurring their wrath.

[177] There is no superior spirit of evil: Seītane [Satan] is likewise a Moslem introduction. The Bambara does not visualize a hierarchy of spirits.

776 Finally, it must be concluded, from the existence of many magic practices, that there is a belief in a kind of uni-
778 versal energy, which is diffuse by nature and which, by appropriate
789 means, one can capture and use as one likes. Certain genii or gods are merely emanations of this invisible, imponderable and active force, which no obstacle can stop and which can instantly overcome space and strike at a distance. This is the basis of all native magic.

[129] 2. Morality and Customs

776 When, as among Catholics and Moslems, the after-life is believed to be influenced by one's conduct in this life, there
577 is a rule which determines what is and what is not proper if one wishes to earn the greatest possible rewards in the life to come. The saints and pious men have shown the way to this end.

For the Bambara, however, the next life is merely a continuation of this one and he does not think that he can, by conduct, improve his chances in the next life since it offers no rewards or punishments for his day-by-day actions. Neither his manes nor his genii give him an example of conduct to guide him. Therefore, without thought of the future, he goes along solely concerned with the present; he seeks what will give him pleasure, tries to avoid what seems harmful, and all this in a groping way, as one walks in the dark.

577 Sometimes, it is true, he is led to behave with a degree
626 of decency and to avoid certain too shocking lapses, which would expose him to reproach, alienate his friends and create for him

769 As a substitute for the chicken, it is very common to
782 offer some dege, a bit of millet coarsely ground and thrown in a little water. The fa keeps this liquid in a small gourd. It is perhaps [182] reasonable to think that this is the most ancient manner of honoring the dead and, in particular, calling for their protection in obtaining the two essentials of life: grain and water.

[273] An equally common libation is made with dlo, a kind of millet beer which every Bambara enjoys drinking to the point of intoxication. The dead could hardly fail to be pleased with an offering of what they had enjoyed so much on earth!

[276] One must conclude, too, that offerings of kola nuts please the dead because it gives them a chance to enjoy a favorite treat. The officiator chews the kola nut and then spits out his saliva mixed with the juice and remains along the walls of the blon'.

Such are the ordinary offerings, but on special occasions the quantity and importance of the gifts are increased according to the desired results. When many people are present and the house is prosperous, the victims are oxen and sheep. It should
[781] not be forgotten that the flesh of these consecrated victims, eaten in common, makes a very strong mystical bond between the participants; it is a true communion. It is generally conceded that the bond created by drinking consecrated liquids together is much less strong.

●776 In addition to his ancestors, every Bambara has as his special protector, one of those gods (nyana) which are created
778 wholly by the work of the magician. Every family has one or more nyana, whose priest is the fa. The boli, the symbol and altar of this type of divinity, is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put into a leather or canvas sack, a gourd, or a pot. The nyana of Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, was a n-ko whose boli was kept in a monkey skin. The boli is taken out of its cover so that libations can be poured over it and animal remains smeared on it. If there is some objection to exposing it, the offering is put on the cover.

769 Everything that takes place relative to the cult of the
794 nyana is analogous to that described for the cult of the ancestors.

562 inevitably leave the community, she can never claim any
583 authority. Thus condemned to perpetual powerlessness, a
woman never has the right to any position other than an inferior one in native society. Motives based on interest or affection may modify her situation more or less to her advantage, but they will not change her basic rights, which are at the root of all disputes about women, between spouses or between communities.

II. The Community of Property

421 What is the property of which the patrimony is composed?

It is impossible to provide a detailed list, which would, in any case, he endless. Nor should we limit ourselves to the definitions of our legal system, which are too narrow. From the native point of view, patrimonial property [187] may be divided into three principal categories.

[776] First, there are the gods; the manes, or souls of the ancestral protectors of the family; and the nyana, the gods created by the magician. Some of them protect only the community, while others are also concerned with other collectivities. Finally, there are the innumerable magic weapons, which are gods of a sort. In the discussion of the duties of the fa, I spoke of these gods, and they are also mentioned in other parts of this work.

A second category of property is made up of the recipro-
421 cal rights of the community and its members, on the one hand,
424 and of the community and similar collectivities, on the other.
I have just explained the first, and the second will be dealt with later in the chapter under the heading "Relations between Communities."

Finally, all the things that are particularly valued make
421 up the third category: gold; cattle and sheep; grain; agricul-
422 tural, industrial, and commercial products of all kinds; dwell-
423 ings; etc. Three points related to this last category require
special consideration: agrarian usufruct, conjugal usufruct, and slaves.

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This conjugal union differs clearly from [227] ordinary forms of marriage. In view of the fact that the husband gets a wife without paying a bride price for her, the wife is not given in usufruct, and therefore she must be treated with the greatest consideration or she may be taken back. The situation can only be normalized if the husband is rich enough to present to the donor a gift equal to or preferably, if possible, greater than the dowry brought by the wife, or he may give a similar gift to the wife (1).

1. Such property is the wife's paraphernalia.

In these situations also, the procedure varies a great deal. The donor may offer a girl from another community and provide her with a dowry. This is what Biton did in order to bind Ngolo to him: Biton gave him a girl designated by the marabouts as one of the elect, and he also provided the girl with a rich dowry.

The significance of such alliances can be estimated only when one has some knowledge of the intentions of the parties involved, especially those of the donor. We shall see one important type in the chapter on Islam, the marriage of Allah.

IV. The common cult (2). The territorial community.

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2. Communities may be united under the protection of the same god. Here we shall study only their union under the protection of the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-siri). Other common cults will be studied in the following chapter, "Brotherhoods."

In the mind of the Bambara, the earth, together with everything in it, is the property of the spirits. As a result, no one may make use of it or presume to settle on or cultivate an unused field without first going through certain ceremonies.

For this purpose, either on his own responsibility or, more often, with the aid of "the one who knows" (don-na-ba), a

311 Bambara seeks the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-
621 siri) or, more exactly, determines where this genie dwells. It
● 776 may be a spring, a hill, or a rock; often it is a fine tree, in-
794 variably surrounded by a grove or at least with a grove nearby. Then, always following the same procedure, he finds out the conditions under which the genie will allow someone to settle in his domain in order to live there and cultivate the lands. Thus, a contract is worked out which governs the man's exploitation of the genie's territorial domain. As a result, provided he worships the genie in the manner required, the man [228] will be able to work under the protection of the god. Anyone who has had a share in the contract, even if only through representatives, will likewise profit if he scrupulously observes the conditions.

621 The establishment of a village requires the cooperation of
622 several communities, each represented by its fa. One of these fa will either appropriate the leadership or be chosen as the rep-
793 resentative or chief of the others. Sometimes he may be merely
794 primus inter pares; otherwise he may have managed to have his primacy conceded by the rest. It is this chief who treats with the genie in the name of the whole village; thus, he becomes the "high priest of the genie" (nyana-n-son-na-ba) with the essential function of "making the offerings" (son') required by the cult. Furthermore, he administers the earthly domain of the genie and is therefore called dugu-tigi (master of the earth).

To the nyana dugu-da-siri is usually attributed the same dyamu as that of its high priest, just as though the genie belonged to the spiritual family of the priest. This is a result consistent with the mentality of the Bambara.

621 The same mental state accounts for the custom in certain villages of dedicating a living animal, often a ram, to the
776 nyana dugu-da-siri and believing it to be the god's mount. The
778 animal is allowed to wander freely about the village, and its
[825] mischief is never punished; indeed, the people enjoy caressing and indulging it. The animal takes on some of the attributes of the genie and is, as it were, endowed with certain supernatural virtues, so only good can come from contact with it.

621 Theoretically, each settlement has only one genie, but
776 actually it may have several, especially if it has been settled by

621 successive groups, each recognizing a genie-protector. In that
776 case, the genie first recognized and worshiped takes precedence
over the others. In any case, social life requires each segment
to respect the gods of its neighbors, and this respect carries with
it a certain amount of superstitious fear.

311 It is evident from the foregoing that occupying and
cultivating land poses certain problems for the settlement bene-
621 fited, and these may be grouped under three heads: the cult of
794 the genie-protector; the exploitation of the land; and the or-
ganization of the territorial community.

793 *The cult.* This is mainly supported by the high priest,
whose principal duty is to "make the offerings" (*son'*) to the
794 "genie" [229] (*nyana*), hence his title *nyana-son-na-ba*. He
is assisted by the council of *fa*, one of whom, the *syere* (follower),
may replace him in case of need. The office of high priest is
for life and is inherited in the same way as his *faya*. This con-
tinuity shows that the genie is actually regarded as a kind of
spiritual ancestor of the priest, as we have seen from the fact
that it is given the same *dyamu* as its high priest.

794 The cult ceremonies are very simple. They consist of
offerings made by the high priest, who at the same time indi-
796 cates to the genie the purpose for which they are being made.
The most solemn ceremonies take place when millet is sown
and harvested. For these occasions, every worshiper is expected
to bring a contribution in proportion to his resources. The kind
of gift is not specified; everyone brings whatever he can or
whatever he wishes, usually animals (sheep, beef, fowl, etc.),
grain, and especially millet beer (*dlo*).

782 During these general gatherings, from which no one is
excluded, only the high priest and the members of the council
796 enter the sacred grove or approach the genie's abode. There,
778 the high priest makes known the purpose of the sacrifice: to
+ thank the genie for his past favors; to offer him the gifts brought
by everyone; and to ask him to continue to protect the com-
munity so that its prosperity may be assured. Then the victims
are sacrificed, and their blood is sprinkled on the tree trunk
or whatever object or place is reputed to be the home of the
genie.

Nyana

794 Each brotherhood is founded on the cult of a spirit
776 (nyana). What we call "spirit" to indicate its immateriality, the Bambara from another point of view calls "power," "master," "lord", etc., for such is the meaning of the words nya, nyana, nama, dyara, komo, faro, etc., by which he designates the innumerable "gods" of his pantheon, thus affirming his subjection to this invisible restraint upon him.

It is the magician who creates the nyana of the boli worshiped by the brotherhoods with which we are here concerned. His incantations call up a kind of echo from the invisible; his persistent and peremptory practices produce a sort of personification of his desire in the depths of the universal and diffuse energy, because he "names" the thing he wants. The nyana thus created, which he attracted by "naming" it, is retained by offerings and sacrifices, just as a person is seduced by presents. Finally, he forges a link with the nyana through communion. From that point on creature and creator are [253] so closely bound to each other that neither can refuse anything to the other; they form a single being whose visible aspect is completed by the invisible.

Judging from statements, concepts, and practices, this is the native belief as to the mysterious work of the magician. The latter creates as many nyana as he likes, and he draws at will on the invisible which he fashions and rules.

Boli

794 Mankind in general and the native in particular need
778 to give material support to their speculations. The magician and the believer alike need to have at hand the nyana, this essence which is personified by being "named." Appropriate procedures make the nyana come to that altar which at the same time is its symbol and which the Bambara call boli (1).

1. Otherwise known as buri. It should be noted that in ordinary language the

794 "After the creation came the consecration. The
778 Kouroubari and the leaders of the people witnessed it. A white ox, a red ox, and a red rooster were sacrificed for the occasion (2)."

2. Raffenel, *Nouveau voyage au Pays des Nègres* [New Journey to the Country of the Negroes], Vol. 1, p. 237.

The *boli* is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put in a sack or other receptacle, and except during ceremonies it
846 is stored with other cult objects in a kind of temple often resembling a miniature native hut and called *nyana-bon'*, "hut of the *nyana*."

776 Obviously there are differences between the various *nyana*, because peculiar practices call up unlike spirits. In any event, however, the captive spirit is, as it were, a slave of the magician, who treats it as such and even sells it, along with instructions for its use. There are magicians who go from place to place, making and selling *nyana* and other magic weapons, and
443 there are recognized markets where one can always [256] obtain the *boli* of the most popular *nyana*. The markets at Bélédougou, Bendougou, and Follona are especially well known.

Trade in Boli

794 The chronicle of Ségou tells that Biton, the founder of
778 the empire, acquired his principal idols in the Bendougou re-
438 gion where the popular markets of Moribala, Kourbadougou, and Diali are located.

Itinerant merchants deal in all sorts of cult objects, and there are settled traders who are sometimes very well known, like a certain Minkoli who made *boli* and was so famous that his village is named after him: *Minkoli ka dugu* (village of Minkoli). I have never been able to find out, however, which village in the Bendougou area was the home of the famous Minkoli.

By such means the cult of a given *nyana*, once it has been created, spreads to some extent, depending on the degree

794 to which its creator chooses to reveal the ritual of initiation.

778 The head of a family, just like an isolated individual
498 or the head of a large community, will not fail to acquire, for a monetary consideration, exclusive possession of one of these powerful boli, which becomes his personal protector. Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, had with him the nyana n-Ka; Biton, the founder of the empire of Ségou, possessed several famous nyana: na n-Golo-ko (1), Nye-n-dinge du (2), and ba Kung-o-ba (3). Generally speaking, these private cults cannot spread,
[776] but when their possessor becomes a powerful chief, they migrate rapidly. This is what happened to Biton's cults; his followers took up the worship of his idols.

777 When an individual becomes the acknowledged possessor of a nyana the result is an alliance with this nyana, which in the native language is called furu, the same word as that used for the
[833] conjugal union of a man and a woman. Indeed, the installation of a renowned nyana in its master's village gives rise to rejoicing [257] similar to that occasioned by a wedding; hence, the following expressions: a ye boli furu, "he is united with a boli"; a ye boh' furu gosi, "he has effected a union with a boli"; a-ta boli konyo kera, "he has celebrated the wedding of his boli." On the day of such festivals, the master of the nyana (nyana-tigi or boli-tigi, surrounded by his acolytes, offers dlo to his guests who have come to greet him and give him presents. At nightfall, when the uninitiated have withdrawn, the clergy and the adepts in a procession take the boli to the "sacred wood" where the first cult ceremony is held, characterized principally by dancing and singing.

1. Literally, na-n-Goloko, "the mother concerned with birth" or, freely translated, "the goddess who presides at birth."

2. Nye dinge du, "the deep orbit of the eye."

3. Ba-kung-o-ba, "mother of the great bush."

794 Some of the clergy use a disguise when officiating in
[292] public; furthermore, the ceremonies are held only at night.

Finally, in the presence of the profane, the initiated
[198] use a special language for everything referring specifically to
the cult. The greatest secret of all is the name of the nyana,
[551] because anyone who knows the name has complete power over
the spirit it designates.

799 From the point of view of the disguised clerical body,
this secrecy is virtually impenetrable. A disguised person loses
298 his human personality and is withdrawn from the natural world.
It is an accepted fact that it is dangerous for those not affiliated to intercept his glance through the tiny openings in the mask; undoubtedly his person on that occasion is impregnated with a fluid whose emanations are fatal to those who, not being affiliated, are unprotected against them.

Some of these disguises include a headdress or mask and for the body a kind of costume usually made of long strips of vegetal material; is this, as has been suggested, simply a means of dominating the herd of adepts and even more the profane through the terror such regalia inspires when seen at night by the flickering light of torches and bonfires? It seems more probable that one must put this matter on the plane of the supernatural in order to understand it. Dangerous wild animals
[825 are believed to be incarnations of evil and powerful gods, and
● 776] an attempt is made to present an outward appearance consistent
with the terror merely seeing them inspires, in order thereby to acquire the supernatural qualities that characterize them (1).

1. There is no doubt that some individuals, under the influence of the role of wild beast that they are portraying, have been led to commit actual murders during ritual observances. I have often heard this asserted in connection with the dyara (lion).

794 It should be noted that the costume, gestures, [259]
782 dances, songs, and music of the dye-n-fa and their acolytes

The Operation of the Brotherhood

794 A brotherhood is a spiritual family whose internal affairs are conducted like those of a community with natural filiation. The nyana-tigi has the role of fa, and the assemblage of dye-n-fa-u, reinforced by the initiated and the leading believers, serve as the community council. Thus, questions confined to the cult and to administrative matters are dealt with by the nyana-tigi acting alone or with his council, just like the fa in the community. Therefore, the description of the latter's duties which has been given above will suffice to explain by analogy the practices in the brotherhoods. There are, however, certain details peculiar to the brotherhoods, and these will be set forth in what follows.

The Cult

794 The cult is made public during certain ceremonies, of
which the two most important are the one at the time of sowing
786 and the other at the time of harvest. It is accepted as fact in the brotherhoods that at planting time the boli copulate so as to produce issue at the time of harvest, hence the hymn to Nama which says: "boli fyerela ka den' (the boli has flowered to bring forth fruit)." These ceremonies are accompanied by orgies [262] during which the celebrants, both men and women, are said to indulge in sexual licentiousness. It may be concluded from these two series of happenings that the rites seek by appropriate mimicry to encourage the fruitfulness of nature.

794 There are other indications which show that it is indeed
toward nature that the rites are directed. In certain brother-
776 hoods, notably the Kore, the costumed officiants who farm the
825 cartege pretend to be wara-u (wild beasts), suruku-u (hyenas),
golo-u (monkeys), and other terrifying inhabitants of the bush (1).

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1. They are all called wara or sogo, terms used for all wild animals. It should be noted that every nyana is called wara (power, lord).

794 776 825 It is not rash to suppose that in this case they are symbolizing the role, probably primordial and in any event primary, of the nyana to control the supernatural and particularly malevolent forces of the bush. As a matter of fact, the most popular and important nyana are the protectors of the harvests which represent virtually the only property of the natives. One of the nyana is even especially concerned with agricultural work (2); this is Tyi=wara (god of agricultural work), who presides over the first clearing of the land at the beginning of the winter season.

In any case, whether the animal is regarded as the visible form of a spirit or, if one prefers, the perceptible manifestation of a supernatural force, the belief is strengthened by the common practice of the interdict (tne) and, still more, by the magical acts required of a hunter.

Another aspect of this belief is seen in the choice of an animal to represent the mount of the nyana dugu-da-siri.

794 825 It is for a similar reason that the brotherhoods usually adopt the name of an animal: for the Nama this is usually the hyena (suruku) (3); for the Komo, the hyena (suruku) or the elephant (sama); for the Dyara, the lion; for the Kono, the ostrich (kono-ba), etc. It is said that the cries, the shouts, and

[461] 2. In the native vocabulary, "to work" (tya-ke, short for tyi-ya-ke) primarily means "to work in the fields."

[552] 3. The hyena is often designated by the words nama-koro (old Nama) or suya-koro (old sorcerer) when the speaker does not want to use the animal's real name (suruku). There is a whole vocabulary for use to "avoid" the names that are dangerous to utter, and the name of the hyena is one of them.

794 clergy. On the other hand, an innocent man will be over-
696 whelmed by mental and physical torture if he is unable to give
his executioners what they demand.

681 Corporal punishment includes flogging, chains, starvation, torture, and death by all imaginable methods. Pecuniary punishment includes fines, confiscation, and pillage. The condemned man is also sometimes forced to labor for the clergy or is even enslaved by them.

Social and Political Role of the Brotherhoods

794 By its actions, the brotherhood, an artificial family,
776 tends to take the place of the natural family whose organization
● it has borrowed and whose cult it has banished. It is easy to ac-
769 count for this.

The cult of the manes is the framework of the family and of the communities derived from it. The brotherhood has cleverly managed to set up such a cult by specially honoring the manes of its high priests, its famous members, and its eminent worshipers. [267]

Gradually, the nyana dugu-da-siri, protector of the territorial community, has given way to the nyana of the boli, a more powerful god since his territory is unlimited.

It is true that in spite of everything the tradition remains, and even though they are largely over-shadowed by the nyana of the boli, the manes of the ancestors and the nyana dugu-da-siri are still venerated. Though sowing and harvesting are celebrated
731 with great pomp by the brotherhoods, still, when a disaster,
epidemic, or terrible drought occurs, sacrifices are promptly of-
782 fered to the manes and the gods of the place. People may fear
their anger, but they also have confidence in their good will, and it is felt that their severity can always be tempered. On the other hand, the nyana of the boli are supposed to be basically evil, and their worship seems intended to ward off their malignity rather than to obtain their favor.

794 This duality in religion brings about extremely compli-
621 cated interrelationships which bind the communities and

614 *173 Mamari had been elected by the ton'-den'; by means of successive usurpations, whose progress we have shown, he achieved a kind of despotism whose entire gain he was unable to hand down to his descendants, in spite of his wishes.

For his descendants, election followed their installation in office by the ton'-masa, who at the same time publicly announced the assent of the furu-ba-dyon' by a symbolic gesture in which he presented himself to the new fama wearing a loincloth around his neck and put its two ends into the hands of the fama. Under the protection of the deity called ba Kongo-ba, which Mamari had bought in Bendougou, an oath was taken which formed an unbreakable bond between the two elements of the clan.

The election of Tonmassa Dembélé as fama was the result of discussions following the coup d'état which he himself carried out, and it is probable that this election, too, was followed by an oath of loyalty on the part of the dyon'-kuntigi in one or another of the ways already described.

In the case of the successors of Tonmassa Dembélé, the choice of a new chief was preceded by gatherings at which it was announced that the place was vacant and open to the person who could take over Mamari's bow and quiver. Then the election was held, and it was followed by a ritual banquet.

614 *173 782 For this banquet, an ox and a slave were ritually slaughtered in the hut used as a temple for ba Kongo-ba (1), to whom the victims were sacrificed. The corpses were then cut into pieces, cooked together, and stirred frequently to make sure that they would be well mixed. A part of this macabre dish was served in the same hut and in the same gourd to the

• [776]

(1) A literal translation of the name was given to me, "Mother of the Great Bush," wherein "mother" is equivalent to goddess." There is an allusion to the ceremony described here in the journal of Isaac (second voyage of Mungo Park), which uses the name Kogno-ba, a variant of Kongo-ba.

614 between Ségou-koro and Kirango was the area under what we
631 would call direct administration, because this zone was occupied substantially by the fama, his community, and his ton'-dyon'.

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794 Ségou-koro, which had witnessed the birth and the development of the clan, had remained Mamari's capital; he preferred to live there, and he had installed the protective idols of the clan there. Thus it was, so to speak, the seat of the brotherhood, whose four principal idols continued to be known under the
[778] names of ba Kongo-ba, na n-Golo ko, Nye-dinge-dun', and
● [776] Kolo-koloni. [319]

The fama was the high priest, and the other officiants of the cult were chosen from among the ton'-dyon'; that is why Ngolo Dyara was dye-n-fa. Any follower of Mamari or his successors was affiliated with the cult of these idols. The adepts who lived far from Ségou-koro founded branches which in certain ways ~~were~~ so dependent on the capital that Ségou-koro was for a long time regarded as a holy city.

We have no detailed knowledge concerning the cult of these important idols; we only know that in general they did not differ greatly from what we have already said about the nyana of the boli. The annual festival was exceptionally solemn and brought the faithful from even quite distant regions. The fama, of course, presided over the ceremony which involved certain essential rites: a renewal of religious faith, the reception of new
614 members, and an oath of loyalty to the fama.

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776 The four deities mentioned above were not the only ones in the Bambara pantheon at Ségou (1); others were added, some bought and others invented out of the extravagant faith of the ton'-dyon'. Among the latter should no doubt be included the drums of the ton'-dyon', which are mentioned several times in the accounts and which are presented always in a very bloodthirsty light. Ngolo sacrificed his most hated enemies to the drum-idols,

1. In Les Bambara [The Bambara], Father Henry mentions, in addition to ba Kongo-ba and na-n-Golo-ko, two other idols, Kuantara and Safolo.

614 794 776 beginning with his relatives, to avenge his hatred toward them for selling him into slavery. It seems likely that the establishment of these ferocious deities may well date from the time of this despot and perhaps was due to his personal initiative.

The "people of Ségou" also held in high esteem the deities of the people they conquered. Indeed, there is no doubt that they constituted the most precious part of the booty of war. The Toucouleur [Tukolor] relate that when they entered Ségou-Sikoro they found an idol in chains; it was the protective deity of a group of the Nono-n-kobe people of the cliff of Bandiagara. With the evident intention of keeping this conquered people forever enslaved, the Bambara had captured their god and were having its cult observed by its own priest, kept captive likewise for the purpose (2). [320]

The chronicle shows that the Komo also figured in the Ségou pantheon, and if one refers to what we have said about this brotherhood, he will understand the important role it played in the to-da since the fama himself acted as Komo-tigi.

614 794 761 [266] There is absolutely no doubt that cannibalism was in favor on certain definite occasions and, according to appropriate, ritual, especially, at the time of the election of a fama. It is obvious, in any case, that under the despotic rule of the clan human life had little value. The atrocities of Dékoro, the passiveness of his victims, the help given him in the execution of his worst crimes by the very people who were directly threatened -- these are not isolated cases. They are indicative of the basic Sudanese temperament in general, which, if not innate, at least is affected by a very ancient atavism. It is because this kind of arbitrary command over the lives of individuals has been practiced for so many centuries that the Bambara often remain impassive in the face of death. They consider its unforeseen occurrence, even when sudden and the result of man's

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2. See Desplagnes, Le plateau central nigérien [The Nigerian Central Plateau], p. 175.

771 came to me to complain that [332] my Negroes were using a
777 satala (1) to take water from his jug.

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783
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1. A kind of saucepan made of copper or tin, of European origin, used by Moslem Sudanese for their ritual ablutions.

" 'What difference does that make to you?' I asked him.

" 'What difference does it make!' he answered with an angry air.

"And with that he favored me with the following astonishing line of reasoning:

" 'Now you see, I am not a (Moslem) marabout and if the marabouts take water from my jar with the satala, the water that remains in the jar will necessarily be sanctified because it came into contact with that vessel. My children and I drink this water and, since we don't know how to salaam and don't fast, and since we eat pork, God (2) will punish us for having failed

2. That is, in Niany's mind, the nyana called Ngalla (Allah) by the Bambara.

to obey his orders. For, after all, any water that has touched a satala makes a marabout (3) of the person who drinks it. That is

3. That is, an initiate of Ngalla (Allah).

what I heard from my father."

776 The net result is that, on the whole, Ngalla (Allah) is regarded as one of the nyana which we have mentioned and for which the Bambara has a superstitious respect without for that matter being a worshiper. He avoids any contact with all that concerns the nyana, not because of hostility, but for fear of incurring its wrath on account of some impurity. Just as he may call upon any convenient nyana for aid, so he asks the help of

771 797 It should be noted that this acceptance of things Islamic was not imposed on the Bambara by fanatical or warlike converters; in any case it [335] goes back to a time that was long before the exploits of the "people of Macina" and of "those of Fouta."

Mungo Park says that, when he passed through the area, half the Kaarta army were Moslems, and we are even better informed by Raffenel. Of course, it is in general only a kind of "Sudanized" Islam, but that is already a very important step.

Raffenel observes that the people of the Massa-si clan added a much-feared nyana of the boli to the cult of the ancestors which is common to all the Bambara. He further points out 776 that all the Bambara recognize Ngalla (Allah) and that, although they practice Islam only casually, they distinguish between believers and infidels among themselves. The Kouloubali especially consider themselves to be Moslems and affect to behave as such.

From this derives a curious spectacle giving evidence of a kind of dualism that is very suggestive. The general assembly of what one might call the ruling elements of the Massa-si clan took place at the festival of Baïram, and the Kouloubali, the chiefs of the clan, their relatives, their allies, the principal slave leaders and other dignitaries never failed to attend and to take part in the ceremonies in honor of their clan's tutelary nyana, since the meeting was especially devoted to a renewal of the oath of loyalty to this same idol. Now Raffenel reports that the Moslem festival of the sacrifice of the lamb was also held in the midst of the general rejoicing. It was, to be sure, directed by the Soninké marabouts, but most of the Bambara took part in it, imitating the motions of the officiating priests to the best of their ability and often sacrificing a lamb.

And Raffenel remarks: "Kaffirs though they are, the Bambara nevertheless show respect for the marabouts. Thus, for the festival of Baïram, the Sarakole (1) marabouts, otherwise known

1. Who call themselves Soninké but whom the Bambara call Marka.

212 by numbers, and notably by ten, which may be obtained, among
801 other ways and if it's a question of representing the Creator, by
adding the first four numbers, or by adding the number five to
[776] itself." Ten is the numerical symbol of Faro (god of water); it
● symbolizes what is just, true, perfect, and complete.

The symbolism of numbers is used in divination: a first
[787] group of eight signs, called the secret count, reproduces the seven first numbers which, according to a Bambara myth, were engraved in space at the instant that the Creator by his word formed the universe. They contain the whole universe.

These numerical signs were ritually traced on the most varied occasions.

[802] Finally, we must note the existence of the sign for "nothing," fu gundo, zero, which stands at the beginning of a series of 196 numerical signs used by those who practice arithomancy.

The word Mandé, of central significance for 44 peoples, may be interpreted, according to some, as manin (the secret name for ten), number of unity and of the cultural community.

F. Writing

212 For everyday use, the Bambara have adopted arabic characters, called by them "writing of the Blacks." In fact, only those who have studied in the Marabouts' schools know how to read or write them. No written literature, properly speaking, exists. A
538 large store of traditions, epics, tales, legends, songs, and proverbs is transmitted orally from generation to [17] generation by professional storytellers, the griot. Moreover, the whole sum of sci-
867 entific, juridical, ethical, and practical knowledge is taught orally
868 in the course of daily life or during long years of initiation. Certain old masters renowned for their learning are consulted from far distances when a chief is in doubt on a point of tradition.

212 Nevertheless, signs do exist for a secret writing that the priests, the heads of families, or blacksmiths draw on the sanctuaries, on masks, furniture, clothing, cabin walls, or in the sand.

212 For the Bambara, things exist by signs. These signs have at-
tached themselves to things, calling them to consciousness and to
812 the attention of man.

622 gives the orders concerning local celebrations and initiations.

In fact, the land originally belongs to spirits, and the chief
622 who succeeds the founder of the village is the only one who is able
776 to establish contact with the chief of the spirits and negotiate with
him. He is the earthly administrator of the spirit; he assures his worship, the exploitation of the land, and the organization of the community territory.

621 The first chief of the land was the first occupant; the suc-
622 ceeding chiefs are his heirs, following the order of succession. To found a new village, a chief chooses a place in unoccupied territory, usually at a crossroads, near a water source, near a baobab,
778 a *doubalé*, or other sacred tree. He offers sacrifices to the spirits
824 and receives in exchange their authorization to settle. If his group prospers, and less fortunate families want to establish themselves in this well-favored location, they ask the chief for authorization. However, as Monteil (1) remarks: "... The *fa* of a familial community depends strictly on the patriarchy only if, attached to it by the male line, he holds some goods of the patriarchy or if he claims rights in this patriarchy. In the contrary case, the family *fa* conducts himself as a stranger in relation to the patriarchy, which can only treat him in like fashion ..." Every familial community becomes patriarchal at the death of the family head when he has no heirs (see the chapter on inheritance); the community then groups around itself familial communities which themselves include paternally related groups and maternally related groups. When the patriarchy is an old one, a considerable number of persons live under its aegis. All recognize *dyamu* and taboos (see below) in common.

621 When the settlement becomes too populous, a *fa* gathers a
631 group and founds another village. Afterwards, the people of neighboring districts may solicit the patronage of the first village, by participating in its *djo* (2) and by sacrificing to its guardian spirits.

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1. Monteil, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta* [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

2. See the chapter on religion.

773 abandoned Faro to follow him. Faro vanquished him and punished men by giving them the joints used in manual labor, which all were forced to do. Births became single, but, in compensation, each being had a double, dya, which lived in water.

After these successive disorders, each of which, however, was followed by the acquisition of new knowledge or of a new technique, Faro again undertook Creation and reorganized the universe by a voyage to the ends of the earth. He established the system of the rains, and he classified living beings according to series, each series having a head of the list. Men thus were named and classed by race and by caste, beginning with the slaves. He gave men the eight cereal seeds which remain the basis of their subsistence and which are forever in
[826] their clavicles. Finally, he controls all existence and acts of beings placed under his domination.

The present order is only a phase in space and time. Twelve waters are still hidden; they must in the future, on the order of Faro, rise and spread in the world. They will make known the words of the future, and the world conceived by Yo will be realized.

● 776 All this mythology is presently represented by numerous objects which serve as props for the different rituals regulating men's lives.

778 Pemba in represented in the houses of the religious chiefs and heads of families by a wooden block named Pembele, image of the first thick plank (1). In a [83] central hollow, symbolizing the tomb, are engraved three times 22 marks representing Pemba the creator, the transmission of his Word, and his power to Faro, the token of his foreknowledge of all things, etc. Pembele is an altar guaranteeing the prosperity and life of the group.

776 If the balanza tree no longer is the object of a cult, the Bambara still regard it with a special attitude, which recalls its former role. Mousso Koroni is the impure and untilled land; the agricultural techniques she taught are a partial reparation for the disorders she created. This farm work wounds and purifies the land at the same

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1. See S. de Ganay, "Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara" [Aspects of Bambara Mythology and Symbolism]. [Ed., J. psych. norm. et path., Vol. 42 (1949), pp. 181-201.]

776 time; it is the noblest work, and one to which every member of the Bambara race must be subject. Faro is represented by a spiral, munu; the vibrating movements of the spiral are the same that animate the daily movements of the sun. These movements are materialized in a basketwork headdress, yugu, which has eight whorls and which formerly was reserved for kings. Faro's face is white, because he took it from the spirit of the air, Teliko, who was an albino. His ears are protected by two fins; his hands are of different sex; his tail is palmate, and his breast is of copper. Albinos and copper are the spirit's preferred sacrifices. All atmospheric manifestations denote his presence; his principal seat is the Niger River, but he has the gift of ubiquity and haunts all waters. Faro is accompanied by helpers, the most representative of whom is the bolokuruni, one-armed blacksmith of a black race. His air messenger is the swallow, who carries the [824] fertilizing word. Certain plants are in permanent rapport with him: the Yayalẽ, the Ngoyõ (tomato), which is compared to blood. Thus, small fields of tomatoes reserved for the cult of Faro are cultivated in each village. All metals are reserved for Faro. The Bozo, born of Faro's first twins, enjoy a privileged position because they were not subject to the defilement caused by Mousso Koroni and can enter into direct communication with the spirit. In addition, they are the masters of the water.

776 The cult of Faro includes a whole series of taboos, such as the
784 black earth of the river which may not be used by the potters and
841 butter which may not be kept in water. But the principal taboo is menstrual blood, originally provoked by the disorders of Mousso Koroni.

B. Conception of Man

774 The Bambara conceive man as a microcosm, a resumé of the
761 totality of beings and things. The principle of duality contained in the original creative thought is realized in man by his twin souls which compensate for the separation of the sexes. In man, Faro is represented by the ni (soul) and the dya (double). Pemba is represented by the téré (the character, force, and conscience) and the nyama (which is the téré when it leaves its corporeal support after [826] death). Mousso Koroni is represented by the Wanzo (evil force with

794 A strict internal discipline regulates the members' conduct; this discipline is founded on secrecy, obedience, and speed in carrying out orders. An accused confesses [86] his faults under the effect of the oath, torture, or divination, and the punishments are determined according to the seriousness of the offense in the eyes of the clergy. These punishments are corporal (flogging, confinement in irons, deprivation of food, death) or pecuniary (fines, confiscation); they may include forced labor for the benefit of the clergy. We shall see further on the social and political role these brotherhoods play in Bambara life.

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796 The *Kworé* society carries out the rites concerning the sky, space, the cardinal points, and the atmospheric manifestations of Faro, notably rain. The ceremonies generally take place around a tree, the *kworé-jigi*, situated to the east of the village. The altars are placed either in the brush, in the chief's house, or near the village. The society owns a field of small millet which is reserved to meet the needs of the cult.

[793] The *n'Domo* includes all the non-circumcised. Heading it is the chief, assisted by a sacrificer, *muru-kala-tigi*, and by a master of ceremonies, *dyoloko-tigi*. The society is divided into five grades, corresponding to the five fundamental altars; the initiate advances a grade each year. The society possesses a mask, a whip, and five musical instruments. An annual ceremony takes place after the harvest and includes a blood sacrifice and a ritual fight, followed by a new initiation. The society also owns a ritual field cultivated by its members.

● [776] The *Nama* brotherhood (*Nama*, "hyena" in Mandé) plays an important role in the Ségou region. *Nama* is the god of the incomplete, the unique god, whose annual ceremonies at sowing time and harvest time are observed by the men and women together.

794 The society of *Kono*, whose hut is situated in the middle of the village, must also be mentioned, as well as those of *Dyo*, an old divinity, *Nia* or *Gnã*, *Wara*, and *Duga*.

To all of these societies, which have been described by Tauxier, Monteil, G. Dieterlen, etc., must be added the women's societies, still imperfectly known but very powerful and particularly feared by the men. The principal female *dyo* in the Bamako region are: the *Niagua*, the *Kulukutu*, and the *J̌ide* which assembles its initiates on Mondays and Fridays.

797 (Koutiala circle), Mandjakuy (San circle), Ségou, Kolongotomo (Macina subdivision), and at Sikasso (apostolic prefecture). In Guinea there is a Catholic center at Siguiri. In Upper Volta there are centers at Niangoloko (Banfora circle), Ouahigouya, and Bam: Black sisters (Ouahigouya circle). Finally, in the Ivory Coast there is a center at Gorhogo.

Protestant missions are even less numerous; they are generally American. The efforts they have exerted are far from having been crowned with success. We will mention, however, the cultural centers at Bamako with two protestant schools, the center at Sirakoro (Yanfolila circle), the ones at Baramba and Somasso (Koutiala circle), comprising two missions, the center at N'Torosso (San circle), and that of Sikasso. In Upper Volta, centers are at Siniena (Banfora circle) and at Ouahigouya. Finally, in the Ivory Coast there is one at Torogo (Korhogo circle).

II. Techniques

182 It is impossible to give a complete picture of all Bambara techniques; we are far from knowing them all. Investigations are being carried out on the spot, and already they indicate that no object, in its form or its material, no gesture of the customary actions, is due to the imagination of the maker. On the contrary, the material, [88] as well as the movements, is integrated in a system of representations that the Bambara can explain. The principal techniques among these have been analyzed and explained, but many have been described in a very superficial manner.

A. Body Techniques

The Bambara think that fecundation is the work of Faro. This
776 creative function is represented materially by the eating of a tomato
833 by each spouse before sexual relations, which must be repeated twice.
842 It is by means of this consecrated tomato that Faro transmits the life
he conserves in water. The role of the father is to give the new-born his articulations which make him fit for work. He transforms the celestial seed into terrestial seed.

291 [177] designs. European influence has naturally made itself felt in the fashions, and European thread is replacing native cotton thread, but the color symbolism in the bands is retained. Even though European fabrics invade the markets more and more, the traditional clothes remain the most sought after, although they have undergone certain modifications inspired by European fashions even while remaining very original.

291 531 585 Although the Bambara go barefoot, in certain circumstances they make ornamented clogs to give to the new bride. These sandals are decorated with geometric designs, engraved with a hot iron by the blacksmith, that symbolize the twinship, the multiplication of children, the parents, the husband's family, the couple's language, and the sealing of the association. These signs are encircled by the sign of the union of the whole. Also, the whole ritual of taking possession lasts for several days.

302 Coiffure. At the present time, the adult males no longer wear the traditional coiffure consisting of two plaits at the side, but the children still have their hair shaved and braided according to custom. Thus, the uncircumcised boys wear a crest of hair going from the forehead to the nape of the neck, while the rest of the head is shaved. The crest symbolizes the [99] divine serpent. The children of blacksmiths also wear, at the sides of the head, two circles of hair which are cut by lines representing the forge. When a child is born after the death of several brothers and sisters, only half of his head is shaved in mockery, so that the dya subject to this pretended neglect will decide to stay in the child. The children of Marabouts have their hair shaved in such a manner that it forms a spiral which starts in the middle of the skull and covers the whole head. Afterwards, bands of hair are shaved in a manner to trace a cross on this spiral. The little girls wear a small braid across the forehead, falling on the left side, while married women wear a braid at each side of the head. These braids are made by adding fibers of the da, shining with karite, plaited with the hair. Finally, the women wear
301 22 gold rings at the ears, images of the 22 primordial elements, or sometimes a single large ring in the form of a crescent closed by threads of red cotton, which is a résumé of the 22 others. These rings keep impure words from the ear, which plays an important
[776] role in generation; it is through the ornamentation that the spirits hear what is said to man.

784 lineages, they usually abandon such a taboo as soon as they leave the village, and if, because of the habit they have acquired they abide by it until their death, their children give it up.

Carrying his organization into the world of invisible beings, the Bambara endows the latter also with *tné*, or *taboos*, and make these his own. Not only are the sacred woods taboo, together with all they contain, but there are also ways of acting and behaving which displease the spirits, and some animals have the capability of making them angry. When a woman comes back from the forest with her fagot of wood on her head, she must unbind it before entering the village or do so on the public square. In some places shoes are removed at the door of the entrance hut, or *b'lon* through which the village is entered; elsewhere the people take off their caps; and no one ever whistles in the lanes without incurring the hatred of the invisible beings. Partridges, which are numerous in the fields around, the walls, must never get into the village except dead and plucked, and children who catch them in their nets never break this custom.
[787] If by mischance a partridge flies across the village and cackles in passing, all the population is in turmoil, and for three nights thereafter men, women, and children sleep under the stars. Often, /25/ depending on the oracles of the sorcerer, they even leave their homes and build them again a short distance away.

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778 The genii called *boli* are the terror of women, children, and the uninitiated, who cannot touch any object used in the ritual and who may not enter their sacred woods and their sanctuaries. The *boli* (1) have *tné*, which are taboo for their owners and those that sacrifice to them, and which sometimes also become taboo for their children. One of the strangest is the *tné* or taboo of the *Bara*, which is millet beer, or *d'lo*. Its owner and the person sacrificing to him must avoid drinking beer if possible, and if the habit is too established

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1. The term *boli* denotes any evil fetish, and hence any object used by an evil spirit or demon as his dwelling. See Chap. VII, 1.

776 among them, they take a complete bath before touching the fetish
784 or sacrificing to it. Usually the tné of the boli is an animal, and the
778 whole family takes it for their own. A palm rat, succulent as it may
be to a Bambara palate, will never be eaten by the owners of Baman-djigi and their children: it is the tné, or taboo, of the fetish.

784 I have found no tné for animals, but many trees have them, as do medicinal plants, and when these must be used for particular purposes, they must not be placed in contact with, whatever they abhor or are supposed to detest and which in the eyes of the black man is nothing less than their tné, or taboo.

Men and women, young and old, must venerate and respect their tné and those of the genii, and even children know from their earliest years that they cannot see, kill, or eat a certain animal, that they cannot touch, cut, or break a given tree or plant, without incurring either the curse of the ancestor or the anger of the genie and losing their sight.

The severity of the punishments which hang over every Black who forgets the respect due to the tné (especially to his lineage tné and those of the boli fetishes), and hence the fear of incurring them, seems at first quite tyrannical. It is not as great as one would think, however, since the Bambara is a very good casuist when his person and his interests are at stake, and all the prohibitions except those against consuming certain /26/ meats and certain drinks are but a game.

For example, a Dambelé who sees a band of black monkeys ruining his fields and stealing his crops does nothing to stop his dogs from chasing them, and if a friend of an outside lineage comes to help and shoots them, he will have no regrets. A greater confidence is shown by a Djara when a lion ravages his herds: he goes to meet it and begs it to go away, which, according to the Black it always does.

784 When the carcass of a taboo /sic/ is found by one of the people
766 of the lineage which it protects, it usually receives the honors of
burial. The Djara, whose tné is the lion, even perform the burial with ceremony: the women weep, the drums beat, and the men offer the lion a piece of cloth, in which it is rolled before being put in the grave.

789 778 825 153 [751] Animals also have gnâma, and the gnâma of birds are among those most feared. By preference, they attack little children, who die in convulsions as a result; it is impossible to mistake the cause of their illness and death, since the hands and feet of the child curl up like a bird's claws. Birds are thought to be especially wicked in winter time, undoubtedly because they nest, find plenty of food, and are big, fat, and vigorous. During that season mothers tie around the necks of nursing infants a string that has nine knots in it, which places them under the protection of their gnâma. Birds keep their gnâma even when dead, and I remember that in November or December, 1907, all the village of Songhobougou attributed a small influenza epidemic to the death of a big black bird (the djougo), which a European killed in one of their fields. "We have pains in our kidneys, we have pains in our throats, and we cough," they said dismally, "and the hunter is to blame for it all. Toubabou ko té vva? A ye djougo do fa en ka forola, djougo gnâma do.... It is the European's fault, he killed a djougo in our fields and we are weighed down with gnâma." /29/

Chapter 2

Animism and Its Consequences

1. The Beliefs about Spirits

776 The Bambara has not deified the forces of nature. Although in some instances he shows them respect and fears them, he leaves them without priest, /sacrificial/ victim, or altar: he is not a "nature worshipper" in the strict sense of the word; his true religion is animism. His spiritualism knows no bounds and he sees genii just about everywhere. The bush is full of these spirits; they lodge in the trees or lounge astride branches; they run around the outskirts of villages; splash in ponds and wells; they pull themselves onto high rocks,

176 termite nests, and mounds, and like very much to crouch in the corners formed by paths that fork or intersect. Inside the villages there are also those that roll in the ashes of the hearth and stir the fire, while others watch over the household utensils -- pots, gourds, plates, and all the kitchen implements. The b'lon (vestibules or entrance huts) through which a village or a dwelling is entered are nests of genii. Individual homes are definitely not private, either; all the horns, rags, pieces of wood, and gourds, dusty and black with smoke, that are piously hung over the doors, on the beams that support the flat terrace roofs, on the walls, and pretty much everywhere, are dwellings of genii, or votive offerings in honor of those who fly in the air or run through the outbuildings.

The Bambara has not been able to rise to the conception of a complete immateriality. Although he attributes some invisible, intangible quality to everything, /30/ he also attributes to everything some material aspect or body. He thus arrives at the strangest ideas, since his imagination carries him toward the world of spirits or genii. These, with whatever name they are invested, dress in clothes and collect gold and silver, have sex and procreate; they are also seized by the lowest, vilest, and most contemptible passions. They are jealous, hateful, and intemperate, and they do evil for pleasure. The Black very seldom shows them as good, compassionate, or merciful. The life they lead is not in the least edifying; they go from orgy to orgy and are constantly fighting among themselves.

One might say that the genii are terrible tyrants, always ready to pounce on poor humanity. They are not all equally powerful or equally wicked. The Bambara divides them into two quite distinct groups: those who can directly grant a favor and, if they wish, do good; and those who can only do evil, although they can refrain from it. He makes the same petitions and uses the same words in sacrificing to both, but the words have a different meaning. When said to the first group, the words "give us rain, wives, children, prosperity," are a direct request; the words become an indirect request when addressed to spirits of the second group. In the latter case they mean "do nothing to deprive us of rain, wives, children, or prosperity."

776 In a word, "if you must work your wickedness on someone or on something, let it not be on our persons or on what belongs to us."

The spirits of the first group are gnéna (1), better known under the name of djiné (Arabic word الْجنّ imported by the Moslems), and those of the second are gnâ, or boli.

As conceived of by a black man, the gnéna, or djiné, are not strictly speaking angels; they are beings intermediate between angels and men. Not only do they eat, drink, procreate, pursue well-being and wealth, they are also /31/ subject to the physical and mental suffering that afflicts human beings, and can die as the victims of the hate, vengeance, or wickedness of a stronger being. Their priests [793 are the gnéna-n-sonna or dougoutigi (village chiefs whose jurisdiction 782] is religious and often also civil), and the sacrifices which are offered to them are addressed indirectly and in a very vague and very confused way to a Supreme Being. This vagueness and confusion is apparent especially at the present time, since all ideas of the Divinity are disappearing more and more every day; but it is likely that, in the beginning, God had a greater part in the honors rendered to His deputies, to those whom He appointed as guardians of the elements, dividing among them the empire of His creation.

The djiné remain subject to the authority of the Creator. They have not cast off the yoke and, wicked though they may be, they have not ceased to be good. If they wish, they can do good, protect men, and grant them favors. They punish and chastise because they are above all responsible for the welfare of humanity.

[1] Women and also children often refer to both the djiné and the boli under the generic term gnena, and in the presence of the uninitiated, initiates use these words without making any distinction. It is nonetheless true that the word gnéna denotes a genie called djiné, and the word gnâ a genie called boli.

776 They are the necessary intermediaries between man and the Divinity, and since each has absolute authority in its sphere. The black man must appeal to them first of all in all his needs. Consequently, these spirits have assumed a dominant place in the Negro mind to the detriment of God.

776 829 Every *djiné* can appear in human form, and when it does so it wears a white skin and his appearance does not differ from that of a European. Many a time I have heard women, young girls, and children whisper behind me: "*A gné dé djémé wala-wala déren*! *a boloou be iko djiniou ta tjoko*, *ne bi siran*, He has white eyeballs! his arms are like those of the genii, I am afraid. . . . " This seems strange and leads one to think that this concept developed after the arrival of white men whom, not without reason, they regard as being superior to them in every way. However, I believe that it antedates our arrival. The old Bambara who told me that Mage and Quintin, held prisoners at Segou by King Amadou (أحمدو) until the death of his father, Omar el Hadj (1), were regarded by them as *djiné* seemed to me sincere, for an old legend states that during in /32/ one of their migrations the Bambara skirted a country inhabited by white men who resembled genii in every way. I might also add that white is the [32] liturgical color in formal sacrifices to the *djiné*; hens, goats, sheep, even kola nuts -- short of the impossible -- are white in color, undoubtedly because of the people's notion of the color of genii. When traveling Europeans ask their hospitality, they do everything possible to find a white hen to offer them; they believe that this is the way they can most honor their guests because of the color of the latter's skin. The old men think also that we French have intimate

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1. El-Hadj-Omar, or Omar the Pilgrim, so called because he saw Mecca, was at Ségou around 1835, 1837, or 1839, sometime before the death of Tjéyolo, which occurred around 1839. See Introduction /not translated/.

776 829 contact with the genii and know their family names, or diamou; however little they may be at ease with a Frenchman they will beg him to show them the place where a well should be dug, convinced that we know where live the spirits who are appointed to watch over water. Do we not bear them a certain resemblance?

776 The gnâ, or boli, also are sexed; they reproduce and found families. They are superior to the genii in power and wickedness, and, except indirectly, capable only of evil. They are at open war with God who, without taking away any of their intelligence or liberty, has condemned them tosuffer and to undergo the punishment of fire. They continually set up ambushes against the djiné to make their plans, good or evil, miscarry; they take pleasure in tormenting men, and the Bambara fears them greatly. The worship of the djiné is nothing compared to what is accorded them. Those considered most powerful have an entire retinue to serve them and to render them [651] honors and, as will be seen later, the head tax of 3.50 francs per head is nothing compared to the sums the Blacks spend to ward off the blows of the boli and avoid their wrath.

Like the djiné, the boli appears in human form, but it is disgusting and hideous to behold. All those upon whom the favor of an appearance is bestowed are frozen with terror; the body of the boli is terrifyingly black, and its face disappears in a flame above which rise horns.

[782 822] In the sacrifices to the boli the liturgical colors are black and red, and a white victim is never offered except in an indirect sacrifice necessitated by an offering called saraka, which is quite rare. /33/

2. Sorcery and Priesthood

152 Surrounded by spirits, by genii always seeking to harm him, a Bambara is quick to believe that he is the victim of one. This attitude contributes more than a little to give him a certain endurance manifested in the face of suffering. I would even say that he usually bears suffering, not with stoicism but with the torpor of an animal.

152 After all, what can one do about an evil that cannot be exorcised
except to bear it? What can one do against a powerful being that
cannot be disarmed? Nevertheless, in the depth of his being he feels
a need to enjoy himself (and enjoyment for him consists in drinking,
eating, sleeping, and procreating); therefore he feels a horror of all
suffering and neglects nothing that can protect him from it. In order
751 to live in peace, he reddens everything a little with blood and covers
789 his body with grigris or good-luck charms, with talismans that change
the course of things and even of nature, and lastly amulets which will
forearm him against poison, help him avoid an accident, cause the
sorcery of the malicious to miscarry, send away the *gnâma* of the
genii, of the living and the dead, and prevent the unknown forces
which are found more or less everywhere in nature from taking hold of
the wearer. For this protection they address themselves to the priests
of the *djiné* and the *boli*, and especially to the sorcerers who have
close contacts with the genii and are the mediators between man and
the entire invisible world.

776 Since the Bambara conceived the visible and invisible world as
782 similar to what he believes himself to be, he has come to believe
quite naturally and without any effort that the genii can be seen and,
conversed with their language understood and, finally, that it is possible to subjugate the forces of nature and hold them in one's power.
By making offerings and sacrifices or causing them to be made through
the intermediary of a priest, he can win a spirit's favor and thus
lessen his fears and terrors. But if the spirit is weak, they will be
ready to withdraw their attentions; it must be equal to the one feared
and if possible outdo it.

778 It is force, or, to use their term, *fanga*, that governs each
791 person's conduct toward his neighbor; to be obeyed, a man must first
cause himself to be feared, and only a powerful man will succeed
and see everything yield before him. /34/

The Negroes have seen people of low birth and poor family succeed in increasing their property and become rich to the point of where they have servants and slaves and dominate a whole village, a whole tribe, or a whole people. Since they like to reason from

793 776 The pagan priesthood -- like the Moslem -- also casts a halo of strength and power about its priest; he becomes the close friend of his fetish, and the latter often condescends to take his *diamou*, or family name, and become, for example, the *dasiri*, or protecting genie, of a village. Depending on the name of its owner, it will be a *Djara* or a *Kouloubali* or a *Tankara*, etc., etc.

793 564 An intelligent Bambara who, for one reason or another, cannot be a sorcerer, has one other means of becoming feared and powerful: he can become a *gnéna sonna* or *dougoutigi* (priest of the protecting fetish of villages, called *dasiri*), a *gnâtigi* or *bolitigi* (matter of a *boli*), or at least to belong to a retinue such as surrounds every powerful *boli* fetish.

793 There are curbs on the thirst for *fanga*, or power, however. The office of *gnéna sonna* is the prerogative of a particular family within which it is transmitted from brother to brother by right of inheritance, and not every Negro succeeds in obtaining a *boli* -- I mean an influential *boli* that would establish him among his people -- even though one can be obtained by purchase. A man desiring a particular *boli* must first form a retinue for it, and its members must be taken from the village itself; the mutual mistrust and fear of poison are so great that it is not always possible to do so. Beside the price to be paid, varying between 25 and 30 francs, there are the expenses of the *konio*, or wedding of the fetish (the purchaser marries his *boli*), which raise its cost to 60, 80, and sometimes 100 francs. Furthermore, there is a mass of liturgical formulas to be engraved in the memory. These must be learned in every detail, for the omission of one sign or gesture, the garbling of one formula can easily incur the disfavor of the fetish, which is relentless with one who is careless and causes him to perish! It should be added that before a person can reward himself with such a luxury as the acquisition of a fetish, he must consult a sorcerer and take his advice, and if he is not rich and already feared, the sorcerer knows how to place his veto. For the mass 794 of the people there is thus only one way to be safe: to become 793 associated with sects, and with as many sects as possible. Through membership they earn the title of "sons of *boli*," and build relationships for themselves and make friends among those in power, the

794 793 bolitigi, the latter have every interest in protecting them, for not only do they pay /38/ their masters annual dues of 80 to 160 cowrie shells, which is little, but they also provide the meats and kola nuts for sacrifices and the d'lo, or beer, for the nocturnal drinking bouts and orgies, and thus are a real godsend.

3. Metamorphosis

776 789 The Negroes say that a djiné or a boli genie can pass from one body into another. Today it may paddle in a pond, be enclosed in a tree, or sit on a rock; tomorrow, if it wishes, it will make its dwelling in a cow's tail, in a horn, in a dirty rag. Whatever its dwelling may be, it is never confined. The Negroes compare these spirits to the wind, to a breath which enters and penetrates into a space through the smallest crack and fills it. Yet they have bodies and are equipped with organs; they drink, eat, and procreate and differ from man only in their tenuity. Since the Negroes are convinced that certain people have become able to master and command the spirits, could they not come to believe that it was possible to attain, like them, a rarefied state? In any case, they do believe in metamorphosis, and it is by entering into an animal or plant, or changing himself into an animal, a plant, etc., that the wicked person succeeds most often in avenging himself, in appeasing his hatred, and even in doing evil for the mere pleasure of doing it.

789 564 754 A good number of sorcerers have this privilege, and sorcerers are not the only ones! Entire castes have the power of metamorphosis; among others the Koulé, who dig out canoes and mend cracked gourds, can all change themselves into hyenas. The sons of the Siri, who are members of the sect dedicated to the boli of this name and are called souba (1) because they commit their crimes during the night, change

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1. The name souba is derived from sou ("night") and ba ("great"), ma ("man"), being implied. It means "a man of the great night," "men

761 "Koroya do, it is old age," but let us allow them to finish their
sentences and continue their thoughts "a ko toun kadi Komo yé, he
was beloved by the Komo," -- "à ko toun kadi Kono yé, Nama yé,
Douga ye, he was beloved by the Kono, the Nama, the Douga," etc.

When people pass by holding a rooster or hen by the feet one
761 may wonder where they are going; if one follows, one finds that they
782 are going to the temple of a fetish, there to sacrifice and to redden
●776 their god with blood. "A toun koromé Alla sèrà à ma, he was old
and God came to him," is an expression which is rarely on Bambara
lips. When it is heard, it is used with a very special meaning; it
signifies that the old man in question was a good man, beloved by all,
even by God, but by no means that God killed him. The sacrifices
made on this occasion clearly demonstrate this, for they are all directed
to a fetish. If God alone were the cause and not the fetishes, the
family of the deceased would refrain from all sacrifice; at the very
most, it would offer a saraka by order of a sorcerer, but even the
saraka offered to God -- and they are offered to Him -- is not a sacrifice,
as we shall see later.

The priests of a djiné fetish and the owners and priests of a boli
761 fetish have the consolation that they always fall under the blows of
778 the genie which they hold and to which they sacrifice. As for other
mortals, 80 times out of 100, and one might say even more without
exaggerating, they are killed by a boli fetish. The Komo, Kono,
Nia, Nama, and Douga fetishes etc., are the chief murderers, and
entire villages are often decimated by them.

Although they are able to deliver blows on their own initiative,
•761 they are often only intermediaries, the agents of a depraved will to
578 which they have offered their services; almost always there is either
674 a thrown poison, korti, or a poison that is poured, dounkono. Thus
754 sorcerors are consulted at every death; one is sought through their
mediation. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the great
maxim for the Bambara as for the Jews, and vengeance must be taken
on the one who was able to win over the good graces of a fetish and
force it to bring suffering or mourning into the bosom of a family.
This vengeance is obtained through the intermediary of a fetish, and

754 674 278 of poison, and the brown powder concealed in it is usually Strophanthus seed /53/ crushed and kneaded into excreta of human corpses and saliva taken from their mouths. This mixture is dried in the shade and then wrapped in a piece of hyena intestine, and to render the effects more immediate and certain, the fetish is brought out and placed on this meal and a sacrifice made. These sacrosanct preparations are made at night, if possible in the first quarter of the moon, and never on a Monday or Thursday, which are days of rest for the boli gods (1).

527 776 1. The boli have two days' leave per week, and the Negroes also take this rest. However, they are broadminded on this point even though for certain labors they ask the religious chief or a sorcerer to be allowed to work. As a rule a boli may not go out Sunday or Monday night nor on Wednesday or Thursday. They quite often do go out, however, but only by command of the fetish or a sorcerer. To bring out a fetish is to spend the night dancing the dance of the fetish, and when the initiates want to dance they always manage to do so. The boli are also sacrificed to on Monday and Thursday even though they are at rest. In theory there is rest for the fetishes; actually, the idea is loosely applied.

754 674 To succeed and to keep from displeasing the fetish, who would then abandon your cause and turn against you, you must follow the prescriptions of the priest and members of his council to the letter; the omission of one rite, one sign, one formula, one imprecation, destroys the power of the poison contained in the horn, or at least renders it ineffective. Sometimes this powder is thrown and is called korti sou, and at other times it is poured and is called dounkono di.

775 directed more to the authority which they had in their lifetimes than
769 to the persons themselves.

A good number of Bambara believe in hell and assert that the
775 souls of the wicked are condemned by God to eternal torment. It is clear that they are changed into demons and do not come back to life, but it is so difficult to deserve hell that not one Bambara goes there, and they live without any fear, just as if it did not exist. This belief in hell perhaps indicates an exception to my statement on the reincarnation of souls but does not destroy its validity, and it can be stated that the majority of Negroes believe in such a reincarnation. /61/

Chapter 4

Bambara Ideas concerning God, Invisible Beings, and Adam and Eve

1. Belief in God

776 The Bambara believe in the existence of a Supreme Being who is Creator and Master of all things; they believe in God, in a recompensing God who can punish and reward. Their most polished formulas are those in which they testify to their belief in Him, and His name is on their lips at every moment without any special reason.

To a young married couple, a Bambara hastens to say: "May
776 your union be happy, may God give you peace and many children, "
576 and when a family is in sorrow, for instance because they have lost one of the members, it is in God that they seek consolation and in invoking Him that they give comfort: "May God have pity on him and grant him a happy sojourn in Lahara, " "may He not separate him from good people and may He add to your days those of which he has been deprived. " (1)

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1. These last phrases have been taken by some as a reason to doubt that the

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Bambara believe in the reincarnation of souls. But the Negroes say that a soul separated from the body lacks something, it is not complete. Since a soul stays in Lahara for a fairly long time, until it finds the opportunity to be reincarnated and decides to do so, the wish is expressed that during this period that it may live with the souls of good people and not suffer too much from the loss of its body -- and nothing more. These comforting expressions are heard at every death, whether of a child, a man, or an old man.

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842 The sterility of a woman is obviously not natural; it is attributed to fetishes, to the evil spells of a malicious person, and quite often /62/ also to God. "Alla b'a kégné dén-na --, God is placing an obstacle to /against/ her having children." As the Bambara gives small gifts of honey, cotton, butter, sugar, or cowrie shells to a woman who has just given birth, they say, "May God soothe your back (your pains); may He preserve your child." Upon receiving the slightest favor, the recipient commends the one who performed it to the protection of the Almighty, and the wishes at festivals and drinking bouts are an endless litany a large part of which refers to God.

776 •The Bambara speak the name of God apropos of a trifle and always -- except in certain sacrifices to the boli fetishes where they use it blasphemously -- with some respect. I confess that (if I did not know through being somewhat acquainted with them that in their mouths this name is a word and no more, a commonplace into which enters neither affection nor love) it would sometimes seem that they have deep and tender feelings of piety. In fact there is nothing more touching than to hear a pagan Negro, a Bambara, answer whoever asks after his health: "Nébi Alla tanoun, I praise God, I glorify God." [576]

776 782 In the mouths of the Bambara, the name of God is only a word! Although they acknowledge Him as sole and sovereign master of all things, Who created the visible, the invisible, and all that exists, although they believe Him capable of rewarding the good and punishing the evil even in this world (but suffering and death are rarely, or practically never, attributed to Him), they do not dream of praying to Him or invoking Him, and they who redden everything a little with the blood of victims leave God without an altar, without a priest, and without a sacrifice. They address Him directly only when ordered to do so by a sorcerer; and then they comply through fear, because they are forced to -- "djakoyala, by force," as they say so well, and their hearts are not in it.

They appeal to the Almighty Being indirectly, through the mediation of the fetishes called djiné, but actually this indirect appeal is barely noticeable -- their knowledge has been dimmed and is becoming dimmer each day, and the created has replaced the uncreated. As I will explain when speaking of the worship of the djiné genii, the mediator between the Bambara and the Divinity has risen to the detriment of God; He has been eclipsed and the mediator has taken His place.

000 This evolution of the Negro is in no way an ascending one; it is actually a decline, for from a more perfect state they have descended to a /63/ less perfect one, and from the less perfect they have arrived at a discord in which they bury themselves a little more every day. This is a strange evolution which in no way recalls the theories of rational evolutionists.

776 782 I have said that the Bambara address God directly by order of a sorcerer, and from time to time an individual, a family, or an entire village can be seen at a crossing of paths, in a bare spot outside the village, or sometimes even in the village under one of the great trees that shade the square, offering Him /millet/ flour mixed with water, hens, goats, and kola nuts. That is the saraka.

782 The *saraka* is the Bambara's only direct religious act toward
776 their Creator and sovereign Lord. Although it is often performed and presented in the corner formed by two paths that fork or cross, it may be given anywhere, and I was right in saying that the Bambara God remains without priest, altar or sacrifice, and, strictly speaking, without worship.

776 3. The Bambara Belief in God is not of Islamic Origin any more
177 than are their Ideas on Heaven, Hell, and the World of Invisible Beings (1)

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1. Cf. J. Brun of the White Fathers, "Notes sur les Croyances et les Pratiques religieuses des Malinkés fétishistes /Notes on the Religious Beliefs and Practices of the Malinke Fetishists/," *Anthropos*, II, pp. 952-954.

772 Bambara notions of God, heaven and hell, and the world of
776 invisible beings conform so closely to the teachings of the Koran,
177 that we ask ourselves first of all if they were not received from the Moslems. Our surprise increases even more when we begin to study these people, for with respect to religion the only terms in which they can express themselves in present-day language are purely and exclusively Arabic. This is a fact, and the similarity is very easy to establish.

The angels -- Bambara *méléké*, Arabic *mala'ika* ملائكة -- are spirits -- Bambara *hakili*, Arabic *'aqal* العقل --, superior to the genii -- Bambara *djiné*, Arabic *el-djin* الجن --, beings intermediate between men and angels and to whom God has entrusted the custody of the elements. The good angels are in paradise -- Bambara *ardjana*, Arabic *El-djanna* الجنة -- up there in the blue sky and constitute the heavenly court of the Creator and sovereign Lord of all things, God -- Bambara *Alla*, Arabic *Allah* الله --, the cause of good and evil. God rules seven heavens and seven terrestrial globes placed one above the other, and the wicked angels

772 -- Bambara sétané, Arabic chéitane شَيْطَان -- are at open war with
776 Him; rooted in evil, powerful, and capable of harming and oppressing
777 human beings. They must nevertheless undergo eternal punishments
in hell -- Bambara djahanéma /67/, Arabic djahannam جَهَنَّم -- in a fire compared to which, says the legend, ours would be only the little that would remain after seven consecutive washings with large quantities of water.

As this cursory glance indicates, both concept and words are strictly from the Koran. Can it be doubted that the Negro was taught all this by the Moslem? I have lived too long among the Negroes to take appearance for reality, and here once again I am wary of accepting the statements of our learned "travelers."

For centuries now, Islam has penetrated into the heart of Africa
777 and established itself in the midst of our Negro peoples; slow as its
781 advance has been, it has not failed to leave its mark. The Bambara, the most important kernel of the Mande peoples, was always at war against the Moslem to safeguard his independence and the faith of his fathers (the wars were primarily religious). They were in turn conqueror and conquered, but most often conquered (for the Bambara, egoistic, plan their personal and individual interests before that of the group, and they always lacked cohesion and agreement, and never really had a leader at the top); they could not escape. Since they are nevertheless essentially deceitful, crafty, and hypocritical so that other peoples compare them to a piece of cow dung, dry outside but soft and loose inside so that it breaks and soils one as soon as a foot is placed on it -- and this comparison pleases them -- I do not hesitate to say that they took nothing from Islam that was not already in their minds. If they have taken Arabic terms to express themselves, I cannot doubt that this was purely diplomacy on their part. The use of Arabic terms that correspond to their own ideas in order to express their beliefs in present-day language represented adaptation and in no sense acceptance on their part. I would even assert that here they gave evidence, not of tact towards their conqueror (this is a quality which at the present time they do not possess even in an embryonic form), but of a certain pliability and shrewdness. In fact, by appearing before their tyrant on an equal footing with respect to dogma, they

771 If the Bambara have fought to safeguard their independence,
181 they have done so primarily to preserve their faith and keep their fetishes. They have shown such great attachment for these, that their
[101] conquerors have described them as rebels and applied to them the epithet Bamba, synonym of Kafri. These religious struggles in themselves allow us to state as an indisputable fact that before the arrival of the Moslems the Bambara were animistic and sacrificed to genii. /69/

776 Did they have an exact and precise idea of their genii as they
811 do now? Apparently yes, for they always reasoned using themselves as a basis of comparison so that in their minds the invisible, impalpable genii to whom they sacrificed had a striking resemblance to man. It is not a man, and yet it is one, they say unable to define their concept or idea, ma si fa do (1).

1. Ma; "man"; si fa' "certain kind"; do; "it is."

776 The Moslem word djin translates this idea precisely, and the
782 Bambara use it in everyday language; but when the day of the sacrifice comes, they become unaware of it and there remains only one word -- ma, meaning "man." When they redden with blood the bark of
[824] the baobab (Adansonia digitata), the tamarind tree, the false cedar (family of the cedrelaceae), etc., to obtain the good graces and protection of the genie who dwells there, they always confer on it the title ma ("man"), and never that of djiné. "Ma n'zira ba, ma n'tomi ba, ma djala ba; O great baobab man, O great tamarind tree man, O great false-cedar man!" begins the formula used by the sacrificer in offering victims and millet flour to the genie (2). They also have

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2. In /J. Henry/, "Culte des esprits chez les Bambara /Spirit Worship among the Bambara/," Anthropos, Vol. III, No. 4 (1908), p. 1 /p. 702/, note 1, there is an error in translation.

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> *Ma n'zira ba*, etc., does not mean
> "great baobab of man." The real
> meaning is: "O man who is a great
> baobab." In writing it I prefer a
> "z" to an "a." Usually the Bambara
> [194] soften the hard sound by a euphonious
> little "n." With a hard "s" the
> word *sira* cannot be distinguished from
> the word "tobacco": *sira siramougou*,
> "snuff tobacco"; *n'ziremougou*,
> "baobab flour."

776 a purely Bambara term to express their idea /of these spirits/, and
782 they to the word *djiné*; they call them *gnéna*.

Before the arrival of the Moslems, the Negro sacrificed to beings
776 to whom they have attributed bodies and souls, although imponderable
782 and invisible, who are intermediate between men and angels and whom
177 the Arabs call الجنّ *el djiné*. But they also sacrificed to evil
798 beings, superior to the former in power, whom they call *boli*. The
legend of the *boli*, an ironic legend which I will tell in full when I discuss this matter, is sufficient proof of this belief. For the Moslems of the Sudan only two things here below /70/ are worthy of attention: Mecca (*Makka*) and *Stamboul* -- old Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Constantinople -- who in their eyes, as in the eyes of all Moslems of our colonies, is the great Pope of Islam. Everything that does not bear the stamp of Mecca, everything that does not come from Stamboul, is to be rejected and scorned. Thus the Bambara, fertile in expedients, quickly managed to find a way out of their discussions with the propagators of Islam: "All our *boli* come from Mecca," was their weapon of war.

776 The Bambara were pursued from every side, unable to perform
177 publicly even religious ceremonies in honor of simple genii. Can
798 one believe that they added others that were still more terrible? As
conquerors the Moslems have always ruthlessly opposed idolatry, destroying its temples and overthrowing its altars. "Believe or die" has always been their motto and always will be as long as they feel

776 strong. Is it not a fact that this law still operated forcefully at the
177 time of the last kings of Segou, when El-Hadj-Omar (1) took the
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crown from the pagan king Mary to give it to his son Ahmadou (2)?

It was Ahmadou who held captive our explorers Mage and Quintin,
and at the death of his father he left for Yamina and then for Nioro,
leaving the crown to his son Madani. For those Bambara who were
incautious, whose fetishes were seized, or who were caught sacrificing,
the consequences were the confiscation of possessions, imprisonment,
slavery, and death. The huge area where the native cemetery and
[764] the European cemetery (3) are found at present was soaked with the
blood of pagans. Who will ever know how many heads rolled at that
time for a purely religious purpose! On some days the arm of the
executioner stopped only because it was tired and unable to strike
-- so I was told by some Negroes who owed their /71/ lives to this
fatigue. And I believe them, for the greatest praise that the storytellers /*griots*/ accord these tyrants is that they knew how to cut off
heads. The legend that the *boli* came from Mecca was born inevitably

1. *El-Hadj-Omar* ("Omar the Pilgrim"), so named because, it is said, he made the journey to Mecca.

2. Bambara translation of the word *Ahmed*.

3. There are two European cemeteries at Ségou. The first is at the entrance of the city on the south side. The second, the only one in which burial takes place at present, is on the edge of the native cemetery, south on the road from Sens and Koutiala, about 300 or 400 meters from the city.

776 out of the Bambara's need to soften their crime of idolatry and to pre-
177 serve it by lending it extenuating circumstances. If the cradle of
798 Islam is Mecca, if its superiority is derived from the holiness of that
city, chosen and beloved by God (1), what can the Moslems want of

1. See what I said above on the subject of Mecca and Stamboul.

him, the Bambara, whose religion comes from this same much vaunted city? And if the God of Whom the Moslems preached to the Bambara has decreed everything (2), good and evil, if He is the Author of both

2. See the Koran: VI, v. 3 - 39; X, v. 99; XIV, v. 4; XVII, v. 32; XXXVI, v. 6, 7, 8, 9; LIII, v. 43, 44, 45 - 49; LXXVI, v. 29; LXXX, v. 29; etc.

good and evil and leads each person along the course that pleases Him to such a degree that he no longer has freedom of choice, why wish to take from them that which God has given them, that which comes to them from the holy city of Mecca!

776 The Bambara term for the boli is gna. Their idea of them
796 corresponds closely to the Arab concept of the chéitane شيطان .
782 and in everyday language, they define them by a single word: sétané,
[192] "satan, " even though this word is never on their lips in the sacrifices.
In their nocturnal orgies and religious dances, the Negroes' notion
of the genie to which they are sacrificing are shown in concrete form.
And when, in their religious ceremonies in honor of the Komo, Kono,
[778] Nama, etc., the spirit appears by the glow of little fires lit in the
sacred woods, decked out in a cloak of feathers, his head hidden in a
huge horned mask that has nothing human about it, one cannot help
776 thinking of the tales of old Breton grandmothers, told on a winter
796 evening in the stables. The blasting of trumpets, bamboos, and koba
534 horns (3), the tinkling of /72/ the little bell, and the shouts of the
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crowd grip and terrify you and make you think yourself transported into the midst of a sabbath of long ago. When one has been present at these scenes, one does not doubt the veracity of the Negroes who say: "When the boli appears it is hideous and freezes with fear whoever sees it. It is as black as soot and its face disappears in a flame above which there are horns."

776 796 782 The face disappearing in a flame inevitably recalls the idea of an infernal spirit, and one who has been present at certain sacrifices to the Komo and the Nama, for example, and has heard the blasphemies of the sacrificer no longer doubts that it is Satan himself that is worshipped here. The blasphemies are repeated by all those present: Alla k'an bla, "may God leave us" (the real meaning: "We do not want God"); Alla djampa ba, "God is a great traitor" (meaning: "God makes promises and does not fulfill them, since he has decreed everything and his decrees are immutable"; A yé né djampa, "he has betrayed me," says a Negro of someone who has made him a promise and has not kept it). One is further convinced by being present at the sacrifice to Touafé Bla (1), one of the most ancient boli. The

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776 796 534 782 3. Formerly the trumpets and horns were ivory. The Moslem tyrants quickly had them confiscated, no doubt because they knew the price of an elephant tusk. At present the Bambara use only cattle horns and those of the koba, a large antelope which grows to the size of a fine heifer. (Koba is the word that designates this antelope in the Peul language; the Bambara call it dadjé, "white mouth," no doubt because it has two white lines on its jowls.)

1. The name Touafé Bla undoubtedly comes from the custom of suspending

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> this boli from the belt and hanging it at the side along the thigh.

three most famous sorcerers, whose names -- Makono, Tjewolo, and Tjéba -- have been preserved, but whose origin is lost in the dark of ages, sacrificed to it by preference. This is the formula:

"Touafé Bla, Touafé Bla, the mountain of Touafé Bla is known, the trees of this mountain are known, I want to speak of the fire of its mountain. Touafé Bla, spare some houses (meaning: 'those of my friends') and go and kindle (your fire) in others (meaning: 'cast ruin and desolation among my enemies, among those who wish me ill'). Touafé Bla, favor me, and if I cannot see your fire, Touafé Bla, let me at least see the tip of its long column of smoke (meaning: 'you live in the fire; I cannot see your dwelling, but I can still know your power through the smoke of your fire, that is to say, /I shall know it/ if I am a witness of the misfortunes which you will cause to fall on my enemies and those whom I hate')." /73/

This formula shows us clearly that the boli, or gnâ, live in fire. The Negroes sacrificed to them before the arrival of the Moslems, and gave concrete form to their concept of the infernal spirit, just as they do today, by decking themselves out in a hideous horned mask and a cloak of feathers. Their blowing and shouting in the sacred woods on the days of great orgies have remained the same, and al- [192] though they have taken the words sétané شَيْطَان, and djahanéma جَهَنَّم, from the Moslems, they have had the concept for a long time.

776 Now then, as to the Bambaras' knowledge of the Supreme Being, 181 God the Creator and Ruler, Lord of all, do they owe it to the Moslems?

596 The Bambara have too hierarchical a nature to need a master here! The youngest child is always the slave of the next older brother, who is the slave of an older one, and so the progression moves up invariably without ever changing, to the grey beard, the elder, the tjekoroba, a real fetish whom everyone obeys, whatever his stupidity, his narrowness of mind, or his lack of judgment.

In every family there is the same progression: the immediate lord of the children is their father, while he in turn bows before his

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776 elders; and above them, as undisputed lord, soars the eldest, the
181 gouatigi, or head of the family.

All the gouatigi are subject to heads of quarters, led by the
776 dougoutigi, (1) or village heads; these obey the kafotigi, or heads of the canton, who in turn are governed by the fama déou, sons of the king or ministers. Such was the original organization of the Bambara, and all these petty chiefs, were absolute and uncontested lords, each in his own sphere.
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776 Above them all there was the king, Fama or Massa (2), whose chief function was to allow himself to live in affluence and /74/ sweet idleness. He held all his subjects in his hands; all were his slaves, from the least to the highest, and he had the power of life and death over each and every one.
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1. The dougoutigi, or religious head of the village, takes precedence over the sotigi, or civil head. I believe that since the time of Carrier, administrator of the circle in 1901, this hierarchy as such has been officially done away with. It persists nevertheless, and the kafotigi and fama déou, priestly in character, secretly retain their prestige.

2. The word Massa, used to designate the king, also means "great and powerful sorcerer." In the beginning the king really had absolute power, both civil and religious, and was really the prince or pope of fetishism. If he were not, would he have been given the title of Massa, "great priest," "great sorcerer?"

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Before the arrival of the Moslem, the Bambara sacrificed to the *gnéna*, otherwise known as *djiné*, and to the *gnâ*, or *sétané*; and all these genii, whatever name one is pleased to call them, were arranged in a hierarchy as they are today. They were all divided into groups, each with its head, and these heads in turn formed other groups governed by a more powerful one. And if we conclude that the Bambara owes the concept of this hierarchy to the Moslem, would we not be saying that the latter pulled his sword from its sheath in order to strengthen the Negro in his fetishism? Would not we be admitting that he betrayed the Koran which commands him to destroy idolatry: "... kill them /idolators/ wheresoever you shall find them, and take them prisoners, and besiege them, and lay wait for them in every convenient place." (1) All the evidence permits us to say that this hierarchy in the world of invisible beings comes from the Bambara themselves! How then can we believe that they stopped half-way, they who are always grouping and dividing? Is it possible that they did not attain the idea of the autocrat, the unparalleled one, God the sovereign Lord of the genii and sovereign Lord of the beings beneath them, of men and the rest of creation?

And when I study the Bambara hierarchy, I become aware that it is primarily religious! The *go[illegible]atigi*, or head of the family, is a priest; the *Fama* or *Massa*, the king, is a priest! Recognition of the genii and of the Creator must thus necessarily have preceded it.

Consequently, there is every reason to believe, not only that the Bambara had the idea of an only God, sovereign Lord of all before the arrival of the Moslems, but that this was their first belief.

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In the mouth of a Bambara the word God has not nearly the breadth of meaning that we give it. They believe that although He sees all, knows all, and exercises His power everywhere, He is not really everywhere, for powerful, great, and immeasurable as He may be, He remains a "Being" which has quantity and dimensions; /75/ He is circumscribed and occupies space. From here the idea of good angels is only a step, and how easy it is for them to make it.

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1. Koran: chap. IX, v. 5.

776 If on this earth the smallest of rulers, the least of potentates, is surrounded by servants and slaves, could the Creator be without them? If those who form the court of a king are superior to the *gouatigi*, or "family heads," to the *dougoutigi*, or "village heads," and to the *kafotigi*, or "heads of cantons," would those who form the celestial court be inferior to men, to genii, or to demons? The conclusion is perfectly natural; they would be superior to the latter, and to what will he /the Bambara/ compare them? Since they always in every way use themselves as a basis for comparison, they have only to think of themselves in order to remain logical in their conception of the world and to attribute to these beings the nature of their souls, their *dousou*, which they also call *son*. Is this not what they have done? When the Bambara define their idea of the soul and want to be understood, have they any other word than this very one, *méléké*, which they use to designate the angels? It is clear that they do not owe their concept [777] of heaven and the angels to the Moslems; they have appropriated from a foreign language a word which corresponded to a concept they already had, and that is all.

776 777 192 196 However, I am told that they have only one word to designate the Divinity, the Only God, and that word is the Islamic term itself, *Alla*. They have no other, and the first missionaries, doubtless through ignorance of the pagans' hatred of the Moslems, adopted it, thus creating a hindrance to their ministry (1). Yes, *Alla* is the term

797 1. By translating as *Alla* both God and our concept of the Divinity, the first missionaries failed to establish the profound division which should exist between Catholicism and Islamism. The pagans regard the Catholic and the Moslem, as cousins, if not as brothers, and the word *Alla* is not irrelevant to this view. Because the Catholics believe in the Old Testament, they seem in the eyes of the Negro to border on Islamism, and the departure from it into Christianity

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> seems to them like membership in a sect derived directly from Islamism. The Moslems help with all their might to further belief in this nonsense. Therefore the missionaries should delete from their catechisms the word Alla for "God," as well as the ridiculous word mori for "priest," the word néma for "grace," etc., etc. -- in a word, all that is not Bambara.

176 they use in everyday language when they speak of God, but in the be-
177 ginning did they not have another, and do they not still have one at
192 present? /76/

196 I have always been surprised at the Negro's readiness to call a divine blessing by the name of its Author, and when in the winter he receives the blessing of blessings, the rain that makes plants sprout and the harvest grow, this is the way he expresses himself: "Alla bi fign, Alla bi na, Alla bi kouloukoulou, Alla bi yégé yégé, Alla do, etc., God darkens, God comes, God rumbles, God flashes, it is God," etc. These are purely metaphoric expressions, which mean: "The clouds gather; it will rain; the thunder rumbles; there are flashes of lightning, it is the rain."

I have found these metaphors on their lips also with exactly the same meaning but this time in Bambara words: "Sa bi fign, sa bi na, sa bi kouloukoulou, sa bi yégé yégé, sa do," the meaning is likewise: "The clouds gather; it will rain; the thunder rumbles; there are flashes of lightning; it is the rain." The word sa is strictly Bambara and so cannot reasonably be regarded as more recent than the Arab word; the Negroes therefore had it before they knew the word Alla. The word did not mean "cloud," "thunder," "lightning," or "rain," and there is every reason to believe that there was a time when it awakened in their minds a concept identical with that which the word Alla awakens in them at present, and that this word Alla from a foreign language is only used to express a concept long held by them.

776 What is the meaning of the word sa? Could it be the original
196 name of the Divinity? Since certain Bantu tribes have a high regard for snakes and dedicate a cult to them, some Europeans have wanted to see in it a translation of the word "snake." That is a great and fundamental error. The word sa, "snake," and the word sa in the sentences sa bi fign, sa bi na, etc., may have the same spelling, but
[194] the pronunciation is different. The hard "s" of sa, "snake," is pronounced by opening the teeth slightly and protruding the lips, and the word sa in sa bi fign, etc., is pronounced by closing the teeth and pulling in the lips. Thus, these are two quite distinct words. Moreover, to claim the snake is, or has been, the Bambara divinity seems to me a piece of stupidity. If they do not claim any bond of real or physical kinship even with the animals that are their taboo, one must believe a fortiori that they would not claim /77/ an animal, even a snake, as Creator and sovereign Lord. Some Bambara have it as a family taboo, and a branch of the Mande people have such great respect for the python Minia (1) that now they are known only by the

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1. The Baganda of Uganda before they became Christian venerated the snake as the dwelling place of a demon. Their snake has a great resemblance to the animals that are family taboos for the Bambara, or better still, to the python Minia, taboo of the Mande branch commonly known under the name of Minia-n-ka. Since the Minia-n-ka derive their name from the word Minia, name of the snake that is venerated and an object of public worship, some have insisted that the Bambara or Bamana derive their name from the word Bama, meaning "cayman" /a species of alligator/. If the cayman, Bama in

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the Bambara language, had given its name to the people, this animal would be taboo for them, as the *Minia* is taboo for the *Minianka*, and the *Mani* or *Mali*, the hippopotamus, is taboo for the Malinke. None of this is true of the cayman in Bambara country; it is in no way the taboo of the tribe. Moreover, the word *Bamana* could just as well come from the word *bama*, a kind of tench /a fresh-water fish of the carp family/ which is found in abundance in the Bani and the Niger. This idea has not occurred to the partisans of the cayman, who undoubtedly are not familiar with the fish called *bama*. The word *Bambara* comes from the word *bamba* which means "rebel" and, in the mouths of the Moslems, carries the meaning of *Kafri*. *Bambara* means "the rebel who has never submitted to Islam," and the Negroes of the west speak of *Bamako* or *Bambako*, "the river of the rebels." Father Copte, a student of the Bambara recognized by the Negroes of the Ségou, quickly understood this fact and noted it in his accounts in the *Annals* of the White Fathers. Mr. De Lafosse, an administrator most conversant with the native laws, customs, and ways, recognized it also, and I share their opinion concerning the name Bambara.

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name of *Minia-n-ka*, the people of the Minia snake. But have the Minianka ever worshipped, or do they still worship, the snake as their

776 God, their supreme deity? They are not that stupid, the snake is an 196 ordinary taboo, the dwelling place of a genie, an infernal spirit or a demon, and nothing more.

The word sa in the sentences sa bi fign, sa do, etc. ("the clouds gather, it is the rain," etc.), has a broad and vague meaning, indicating everything that is on high, everything that is above us. Was this word in the past the very name of the Divinity, as the word Alla is for many today? I do not think so. The word sa was the veiled term used to speak of the Divinity and, like the word Alla, it originally expressed a concept or an idea, and not a "being" at all.

Since, according to Bambara ideas, God is a spirit dwelling above us with His court and angels, the expressions sa bi na, sa bi /78/ fign, sa bi kouloukoulou, sa-dji, etc., should be interpreted to mean: "Min bé sa-n-fé bi na, Min bé sa-n-fé bi fign, Min bé sa-n-fé bi kouloukoulou, Sa-n-fe ta dji -- He Who (the spirit which) is up above comes (will favor us with His blessing of rain); He Who is above darkens (gathers clouds); He Who is above rumbles (makes His voice heard); the water of Him Who is above."

776 196 192 The supreme blessing that the Divinity, the Supreme Being, grants to human beings, is rain. As I shall demonstrate in a moment, the Bambara were unable to speak the name of their God and in their gratitude used a metaphor. Their fact that their metaphor, Alla bi na, Alla bi fign, is identical to the one in which the word sa appears, i.e., sa bi na, sa bi fign, etc., leads me to think, nay forces me to think, that in the beginning the word Alla expressed less an individual or a being than an idea or a concept. For I must confess that although some of our Bambara have the very ideas of the Moslems concerning God and the word Alla, there are more whose ideas on this subject remain confused, and for the majority God or Alla is nothing more than the arch of heaven (1), a covering which hides from us a "Spirit,"

1. To pagan Negroes, God is a spirit Who is everywhere, sees everything, but remains ens quantum. He dwells on high, is as large as the celestial vault, and because He hovers above us

a Being endowed with reason and all powerful. The term is the translation of the word sa.

It is apparent that in the beginning the word Alla in no way meant a Being or an Individual; it simply expressed a concept, an idea already known, accepted and translated by the word sa, and the Bambara simply adopted a foreign word corresponding to their own concept.

776 196 192 551 576 687 If to the Bambara the word Alla had meant the Divinity Himself, the Supreme Being, would they ever have dared to speak it, to make it their own? I cannot bring myself to believe that they would, among them the name of a powerful person, a religious chief, or venerated being is never spoken in vain or in an unsuitable manner. If some of their kings, among them /19/ N'golo, not to mention others, punished anyone caught speaking his /the royal/ name by fines and prison, cast them into slavery, and even beheaded them as guilty of the crime of lese majesty, what would they not have to fear from the Creator if they spoke His name in vain and inappropriately! Furthermore, it is a widespread custom to avoid speaking the name of one who is feared or venerated.

576 551 595 No well-bred and self-respecting woman ever speaks the name of her husband. She speaks of him as né tigi ("my master"), so tigi ("the master of the house"). Most frequently she adorns him with a borrowed name, a bougna toua, or name of respect, and a polygamist has several such names, each wife giving him one of her own invention.

In well-brought-up families -- and most of them are (1) -- the

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• 776 196 192 sees everything. The old men explain this to you with an intensity that proves their good faith, and children recite the sayings of the old men with a frankness so naive that one cannot misunderstand it.

1. Our Bambara Negroes have great respect for the members of their families and are considerate of them;

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> Djasé instead of Nama or Namakoro. The Nama is sometimes surrounded by a wall instead of mats. This is extremely unusual, and I have seen only one sanctuary of this kind, at Dougoutigila in the Bani /region/.

of the Komo is of iron, so one says: "An bi négé son, we are sacrificing to the iron." A fetish can give health in the sense that it can refrain from causing sickness if it is a gnâ, or it can actually give health and well-being if it is a gnéna; thus the expression used most frequently is: "An ta foura bi son, we are sacrificing to our cure," or again: "An ta foura bi djigi so, our cure is paying us the honor of a visit."

776 Are we here dealing with a recent custom, which dates from the arrival of the Moslem? I cannot accept this idea, for all the evidence indicates that it antedates presence, I believe without hesitation that the name of the Divinity or Supreme Being was never spoken by the Bambara, that they were not permitted to pronounce it. It is not surprising, then, that the name should gradually have been lost, erased from their memories so that it is unknown at present.

Moreover, since the Bambara God was without priest, altar, or sacrifice, was there any need to speak His name? According to their ideas, the gnéna or djiné are beings intermediate between men and angels, put in charge of the elements by the Divinity and delegated by Him to distribute His favors and His punishments to human beings; would it then be foolish and presumptuous to believe that since the beginning he only addressed God through the mediation of the gnéna or djiné? I cannot doubt that the Bambara implored the djiné to present their homage and worship to their Lord, the Lord of the whole universe, to their Tigi ani fen bê tigi yé, as the sorcerers always say in their liturgical ceremonies. The latter are the watchful guardians of the ancient formulas and customs; that is the source of all their prestige.

Moreover, the worship of the gnéna, or djiné, antedates that of the gnâ (boli or sétané). It has no history; its origin is lost in the darkness of the ages, and in this fact I see a new reason to believe that they were the first intermediaries between man and God.

773 of a race, but not words that denote the first father and mother of the
829 human species. A pure Bambara does not believe in the unity of mankind; God created the white man white and the black man black, to use his expression, and to each He has given a father and a mother of his own color.

829 Nor has the arrival of the Europeans and the Moslems changed any of his ideas in this respect. For many, each tribe and each caste
582 had a first father and a first mother, and if there are castes which cannot be united by marriage, this seems to me to be the reason. "An té sé, a yé noumoy yé an yé Bamana déou yé an té si (1) kélé-n-yé, we cannot marry each other, he is noumou (blacksmith) and we are not of the same people, the same blood, the same stock, the same father." Some seem to me very explicit when they say: "Án té fa kélé-n-yé, we are not of the same father." /84/

Chapter 5

000 Fetishism among the Bambara; The Worship of the Gnéna Classification of the Gnéna, Who are Identical with the Arab Djiné

1. What is Meant by Gnéna or Djiné

776 The Supreme Being, the Bambara God, lives up above behind the blue sky, gliding through happy and quiet days with his celestial band, the good angels (méléké) that form His court, and, omnipotent though He is, He is without priest or sacrifice. For He concerns Himself very little with men. He has divided the dominion of creation with the djiné, His laws, which are immutable, He has decreed once

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1. Si: "similar" or "like nature;" "of the same race, descent, origin, people, nature."

776 and for all, and since then He has simply lived, resting in sweet "idleness" .... Let us not think, however, that the Negro is without religion; he is excessively religious and he spends his life sacrificing, squandering flour, and scattering the blood of victims uselessly, for the sole benefit of vultures.

Believing that he can expect nothing from God, he calls upon the djiné or gnéna who are in charge of the elements, each having absolute power in its sphere. Doubtless the latter are unable to change the whole universal order established by the Creator and Soverign Lord of all things -- au tigi ("our Lord") ani fen /85/ bê tigi yé ("and Lord of all things") --, but they can grant a material (1) blessing, turn away a misfortune, and reward or punish.

The gnéna is reminiscent of the djin of the Koran (Chap. VI, XXX, VIII, XLI). It is a being intermediate between men and angels. "Ma si fa do do, it is a kind of man," say the Negroes, and in fact it does resemble a man since it eats, drinks, amuses itself, marries, and has children. /2/ Many even believe them /gnéna/ to be clothed, and in the late evening it is not unusual to hear a storyteller /conteur/ say of them: "Sanou b'oufé. Wari b'oufé. Bagi fana b'oufé. They have gold. They have silver. They also have fabrics." Above all they have might! They are powerful, and although some people wear

776 little bags of cloth or leather and strings with seven and nine knots --

751 as amulets --, and claws of wild animals, deer and goats horns, tafo

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[782] 1. A Negro does not have the idea of asking a supernatural blessing.

2. In the sacrifices it is called ma, "man," and the name of the object in which it is found is added to this word. Thus ma djala ba, "great false-cedar man," etc. /No text reference to this footnote. Tr:/

776 of leather wrapped in the hide of an anteater or monkey, etc. -- as
751 talismans -- which protect them from their blows; although there are
diviners, sorcerers, and certain hunters and blacksmiths (noumou), etc.,
on whom these invisible beings have no hold, it is nonetheless true that
they are feared, held in awe by all, that they are honored and their
776 good graces sought. Moreover, they give good luck, good fortune, and
success to their friends and preserve them from a host of evils -- spells,
sorcery, poverty, sickness, etc. -- springing from an enemy's rancor.

The worship of the gnéna, beings intermediate between angels and men, is among the oldest. Its origin is lost in the dark of the ages, and, unlike that of the boli or gnâ, of which I will speak later, it has no history. Since they are not all equally strong and powerful, I have divided them into three main groups: those that live in the bush, those that roam in the villages and their environs, and finally those that are really interested in the Bambara and actually protect them. /3/ /86/

3. See Anthropos, Vol. III (1908), part 4 /J. M. Henry, "Le Culte des esprits chez les Bambara (Spirit Worship among the Bambara). There is no text reference to this footnote which appears on text page 85. Tr./

2. Gnéna Who Dwell in the Bush

These /gnéna/ hide in thickets and perch on trees, and they are terrible only during the day, at high noon and in the greatest heat. Woe to him who at that time disturbs them in their walks, climbs on the trees they have chosen for a home, or tries to prune the branches on which they are frolicking or resting. They do not like children at all! For these little vandals, always running and climbing to catch lizards, rob nests, and stuff themselves with fruit, they have reserved violent headaches and stomach-aches. Often, too, they make them lame, blind, deaf and dumb, crazy, etc., and there is no village where one is not shown some of their victims (1).

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1. To understand ~~this~~ belief of the Negro, read the chapter on sickness and death.

The most famous and terrible of all these invisible little beings of the bush, who are without official minister or priest but to whom many offerings nevertheless are made, is the wokolo. It is black as soot, with a skin like a monkey's, and no larger than an infant of one or two months. It likes to appear, and one can say that no Negro reaches thirty without having seen it. Although sometimes during the most severe heat or in the evening by the light of the moon, it runs along the banks of the river, throwing into the stream its tiny line, almost invisible and finer than a hair, it prefers the bush and the butter tree; the karité (Bassia parkii) is its prime favorite. With quiver slung over its shoulder and bow always strung, it lies in wait, and woe betide anyone who comes by and disturbs it. To defeat it and force it to beat a retreat, the one who comes upon it must greet it as soon as he sees it, but usually it is invisible and shoots him with its arrow, an arrow so small that he does not even feel it penetrate the flesh. It is this [753] arrow that causes the deep pussy abscesses (2) from which our Negroes suffer.

2. Like all superstitious and weak-minded people, the Negro believes that he has actually seen what are but imaginary dreams and wishes.

Many of these invisible beings have no name. The least sociable are those that live in the false cedars, for to subdue them /87/ one must be a noumou (blacksmith), a koulé (digger of canoes, mender of gourds), etc. Only such persons dare to deal the first stroke of the ax to these trees and cut them down (1).

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1. Before doing so they recite a formula, and the first stroke of the ax is dealt by the chief of the blacksmiths, etc., or his deputy.

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3. *Gnéna* Who Roam the Village and Its Environs

These *gnéna* like especially to sit where paths cross and somewhat resemble the *gnâma*, even though they are different (2). They protect from spells and sorcery, give health and exorcise sickness, and it is not unusual in the morning at daybreak or in the evening just as the sun is about to disappear to see men and especially old women sprinkling a little clear water here and there at a crossing of paths. They are interceding for children and grandchildren or for a member of the family who is sick and lying on his mat, or they are imploring the *gnéna* to protect them from an enemy or an evil spell, or to shelter them from the *gnâma*.

776 782 Although these *gnéna* have no official priest, they nevertheless receive many gifts, and there is no circumcised man who does not feel obliged to make them his small offering, at one time or another. At crossings of paths one throws them preferably flour mixed with water, cowrie shells, milk, hatching eggs, ashes of herbs and plants, gruel, kola nuts, and sorghum cakes. At children's festivals the fodder is thrown to them in greater abundance; the cakes pile up at the entrance of the village (to the great joy of dogs and hens), and the ground is moistened with a light dew of blood (3). On the second day of the drinking bout, which corresponds to the festival of the كبش (sheep), the *soli* girls, who are shortly to be excised, throw them the remains of the *basi* *k'li* in great handfuls without counting. *Basi* *k'li* is the name given to the repast provided for the whole village on this

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2. See what I said about the *gnâma* in the first chapter.

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3. All these offerings are made by the order of a sorcerer and are called *saraka*. See what I have said about the *saraka* in Chapter IV, Section I, "Belief in God."

776 day by the soli (those who are to be excised). It is a kind of semolina
782 (very fine couscous called basi) which is eaten with an /88/ extremely
304 spicy sauce of smoked fish. It is called basi k'li because, in order to
262 provide this repast, the little girls are obliged to run from door to door,
clapping their hands, singing and begging (k'li).

776 Among the invisible wanderers, there is one which is strongly
reminiscent of our "werewolf." It is the souroukou, an imaginary
825 hyena, whose supposed existence has brought about a strange practice.
514 Every evening one sees groups of little boys and groups of little girls,
turning aside a little into the bush: they all go in a band to take their
last precautions and attend to the wants of nature -- union is strength
even against the gnéna.

776 Many other gnéna are among this group that roams the village; they flutter in the b'lon, or entrance huts, they live in horrible filth, hung over doors, on the walls, and on the posts that support the terrace roofs, and the only hangings to be seen anywhere are eggshells, heads of millet, fruit pits, and seeds from the bush, which are offered to these friends as saraka. Nor are private huts without them, for the gnéna roll in the ashes of the hearth, snore on the mats, and take the air in the conari (1); there are some everywhere.

Finally, there are gnéna or djiné who are powerful. Without mercy for their enemies, whom they abandon to all kinds of sorcery and evil spells, they are full of both attention and consideration for their friends. They can cause sickness, poverty, and other calamities to descend on a family, a village, or a whole region; but they can also side with them against a visible or invisible enemy; they can protect them, exorcise anything, and grant real blessings to each and all. The characteristic trait of the gnéna, in fact, is not that they can refrain from doing harm, but that they can also do good directly by performing a good act. Some choose to live in a rock, others prefer a knoll or a large tree near the village, and there are those who

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[415] 1. The conari is a baked earth receptacle used for water, beer, and cooking food.

776 do not disdain to frolic in the bottom of a well or pond and keep cool there. These last are put in charge of the elements in a very special way. Although endowed /89/ with a divine virtue, they are still far from gods and are only intermediaries between human beings and the Divinity. This last idea seems to be in the background, almost disappearing, and yet, if one has the patience to listen to the old men and let them express themselves, one quickly sees that they still have it, even though ill defined and very confused, and one can believe that in the beginning the worship of the gnéna was a direct worship, offered to the Divinity through their mediation. Men, women, children, everybody takes part in the worship of the gnéna; although there is one, koté (kouéré in Bani), whose mysteries are veiled, its sect is only semioccult, and the entire population takes part in the festivals held in its honor. Barring a formal order from the sorcerers or the
776 822 impossibility of obtaining items in the liturgical (1) color, everything used in this worship -- victims, kola nuts -- is white, and among the Negroes white is the symbol of innocence and purity.

776 782 "Primitive peoples admit the existence of superhuman powers," says Nicolay. "When these are supposed to inhabit certain objects in the form of spirits, genii, etc., that is animism." /*/ This

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1. The reason for a failure to conform to the liturgy is always announced before a saraka or a sacrifice.

/* Fernand Nicolay, Curiosite's des lois et coutumes - Histoire des croyances, superstitions, moeurs, usages et coutumes (selon le plan du Décalogue) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. The History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Ways, Practices, and Customs (according to the outline of the Decalogue). Vol. I, prop. 13. Paris: V. Retaux, 1901./

776 782 definition fits closely with what we have said about the *gnéna*, and the worship of these genii is indeed animism and not idolatry. And since, according to Burton, fetishism is less adoration than a propitiation of animate or inanimate objects to which a mysterious power is attributed, the sacrifices and *saraka* offered by the Bambara to their genii are acts of propitiation rather than of worship.

776 To give the reader a more precise notion of the worship of the *gnéna* -- and they are legion -- I will divide the powerful ones, those of the third group, into eight categories: the genii of ponds, springs, and wells; the genii of the crops; those who protect children; and those who protect circumcised youths; the genii of the women, that of twins; the *dasiri*, protector of villages; and the *koté* or *kouéré*, a special genie of a semioccult sect. All these genii have their priests, their sacrifices, and their *saraka*, but since all are not equal in strength and power, the extensiveness and formality of worship is not the same with respect to all. /90/

4. Genie of Ponds, Springs, and Wells

776 782 823 There are genii splashing around in all ponds, springs, and wells, and our Negroes think that in order to obtain their good graces they are obliged from time to time to offer them a trickle of /millet/ flour and water, the blood of a white hen, or a mouthful of chewed kola nut. On the edge of a well, at the mouth of a spring, on the edge of a pond, and finally on the banks of a river, offerings, sacrifices, and *saraka* are made, and their purpose is to prevent our Kneippist genii from escaping. If they leave displeased they take with them the water without which people cannot live, and the spring dries. There is total drought, a terrible misfortune -- for what can become of them without water!

The sacrificer to the water genii is quite often the head of the family on whose land the spring is located. Usually this honor goes by right to the head of the quarter; there are even villages where the sacrificer is none other than the religious head of the village, the *gnéna-n-sonnoba* /sic/, who is priest of the *dasiri*, the genie protector of the village.

776 Most frequently these genii are given saraka, but a hen is sacri-
782 ficed each time the wells are cleaned: it is in good taste to do so,
823 and few villages depart from the rule. Once a year a public sacrifice is offered to them, with a degree of formality that varies according to whether the sacrificer is merely the head of a family, the head of a quarter, or the head of the village. Since the women spend a good half of their lives around the wells, they are almost everywhere the ones who provide the materials for the sacrifice.

5. Genii of the Crops

776 When planting time comes, the Bambara, who are farmers above
241 all, blossom out with sacrifices and redden just about everything with
782 blood. The head of the family does not forget the genie of the seed. He offers it a saraka at home and sometimes a sacrifice, and unless he is very old and helpless he appears at the field on the day when the first pinch of seed is consigned to the earth. Before /91/ the /sowing/ is begun a hen's blood must be offered to the genie of fertility, which is responsible for watching over the seed and causing it to sprout and grow, and it is he that makes this offering, unless he has delegated this duty to his eldest son or his brother (the one next after him in seniority).

The departure for the field at planting time has its own unique characteristics. A child (if there is one in the family, obviously) is given the gourd (1) containing the seed, and in the name of the genie the father gives him orders and admonitions. On the way out of the hut the child pays his respects to the shades of his ancestors by placing the gourd on the threshold, and leaves quickly, proud as Artaban. He must be careful not to stop on the way unless he has to, and, above all, he must keep silent so that the spirits that fly here, there, and everywhere remain ignorant of what he is carrying and cannot attack the seeds in the millet grain. Anyone who talks runs a grave

(1) A pumpkin cut in two, emptied and dried in the sun.

776 risk of spoiling the crop -- o be gno soun tigné ("it destroys the vitality
241 of the seed of the millet grain").
782 These genii do not have special festivals in the course of the
year. Their priests, the heads of families, offer them saraka and
sacrifices at planting time, and some of them sacrifice a hen in the
corner of the field while the crop is sprouting and growing, but that
is all.

6. Genii Protectors of Children

889 It is not until circumcision that Bambara children take part in
the mysteries of pagan worship, but they are early prepared for it so
794 that they may be introduced to the law of secrecy which they must
776 strictly adhere to later when they are initiates of an occult sect. At
about the age of seven or eight years, they become affiliated with an
association worshipping the genii responsible for protecting them.
All these sects are alike, differing only in name. On the banks of the
[825] Bani and the Niger, the object of worship is the tauri (toad or frog),
and the croaking of this animal is imitated in their festivals; some
villages have the djara (lion) and imitate its roar by whirling their
[534] slingshots, small boards four fingers wide and one to two centimeters
long, attached to the end of a string. The most widespread /children's
[824] genie/ is n'tomo, which undoubtedly gets its name from the tree in
which it lives (the /92/ jujube tree, n'tomo). It makes children hale
and hearty, preserves them from sickness, defends them against the
invisible little creatures of the bush, against spells and sorcery, and
makes them strong, steadfast, and impervious to suffering.

The confraternity of the n'tomo is modeled after that of the boli. (This is true of both kinds -- for there are two; a white costume is worn to the dance for n'tomo djé and a black costume for n'tomo fign). In order to be admitted one must offer a hen to the child who is head of the n'tomo (the n'tomotigi), prostrate oneself before the tree of the genie, and swear to keep the secret and never to speak of the n'tomo to the uninitiated, especially not to little girls.

796 857 the sacrifice is furnished by the children themselves; all of them together work a small field for this purpose during the winter, and if the harvest is not sufficient, they go begging from door to door so that nothing will be lacking at the feast -- neither d'lo, the millet beer, nor kola nuts. On the evening of this great day, each new initiate chooses his n'golo mouso, as they call the little girl each one takes as his "sister of the heart," his bonne amie as one would say in France /his girlfriend/. But she is more; she is a little maid of all work, and the gift which he gives her every year at the celebration is more a payment than a gift of friendship, "pure and simple." /94/

7. The Genie Protector of Circumcised Youths

794 776 778 At circumcision the Bambara leave the association of the n'tomo and place themselves under the protection of more powerful genii. These genii are all of the same nature, only the name differs with each region, and all the confraternities are copied after one and the same model. The most widespread is that of the n'golo (1).

1. In Bani it is the n'goso rather than the n'golo.

The n'golo is nothing but two forked branches fastened together and hung on a light dloma (2). One can meet it quite often in a corner of the village, out of doors, but usually it is under a small shed or hut. This genie gives the youths not only strength, vigor, and health, but also the talent, if not of pleasing women, at least of attracting them and thus being able to obtain some crude satisfactions. It helps the unmarried to meet the girl of the moment, and thanks to it,

[342] 2. Dloma are forked sticks on which rest the crossbars or beams that hold up the flat terrace roofs. The name dloma is given to all forked sticks, small and large.

794 a married man finds his wife gentle, submissive, and obedient. It
776 preserves the members from disgraceful ailments and, in a quite
778 special manner, from ma ko sa (3), a paralysis of the reproductive organ.

3. Ma, "man"; ko, "affair," "parts," "testicles"; sa, "dead," "lifeless."

794 This group of worshippers forms the foundation of the organization of the fla-n-to (4), headed by the to-n-tigi (5) who is the master of the n'golo fetish. His assistants before the genie help him with his duties; he has a siéré, or aide, a djéli, who is a kind of herald and repeats his orders, advice, and thanks during the days of celebration and drinking bouts, and a djalatiké, responsible for seeing that the rules or laws of the organization are kept. Among the Negroes nothing is done without drinking and eating; they must have celebrations and drinking bouts, and in order to obtain the means for them the fla-n-to impose a large number of fines on their members, the to-n-dé (6).

4. To, "gruel"; fla, "for"; flani, "twins of the same age."

5. To, "gruel"; tigi, "head."

6. To; "gruel"; "child."

Their rules are /95/ nevertheless odd. For example, a fine is imposed on whoever blows his nose or sneezes, gets up from the table, or starts eating before commanded to do so by the head, the tontigi. Those who are late for the dance or sleep during the day or night of a celebration are granted no mercy! (1)

1. When the tondé organize a dance or celebration, everyone must be present and spend a sleepless night.

794 The *to-n-dé*, or members of the association, are formed into groups, each corresponding to a circumcision, and all these groups, united among themselves by a common bond, which is the worship to be rendered to the *n'golo* genie, submit to and obey the head, the *n'golo tigi*, preferably called *to-n-tigi*. Thanks to this unity, a host of quarrels and fights is avoided, and they all help each other, sharing in the joys and sorrows of their fellow members. In a word, this association corresponds, in miniature, to our societies of mutual assistance and help.

794 796 To get a girl of the moment, the young *to-n-dé* from time to time sacrifice a small pullet. But a big sacrifice is made yearly and the victim is at least a goat; it is offered in the name of all. The offering of the general sacrifice does not prevent each initiate from adding a hen and a kola nut; food abounds, millet beer flows in streams, the association furnishes food and drinks to the whole village and to friends from surrounding villages. On this day also the youths circumcised during the year enter the confraternity of the *n'golo* and become *to-n-de*, or members of the organization of the *fla-n-to*. To do so they must spend from 80 to 120 cowrie shells (2 to 3 sous) and offer to the fetish the hen and two kola nuts as a sacrifice.

8. The Women's Genie

776 824 Not all villages possess this fetish tree, which is called *mouso ka djiri* (2), but all hamlets have a genie whose chief function is to

2. This tree is often a fig tree called *n'zoro* or a *toro* sycamore (*ficus vogeli*, *ficus ferruginosa*). *Mouso* means "woman"; *ka* is particle indicating possession; *djiri* means "tree"; the whole phrase therefore means "the tree of the women."

776 preserve the freshness of youth in the ladies for a long time, to give
824 mothers breasts that are loaded with /96/ milk, to bring fertility to
the sterile, and finally to keep an eye on the periods, or menses, of
each and every one. Every month at the new moon the excised women,
776 married and unmarried, spend an entire night dancing in its honor,
535 to the beat of a special drum called mouso denou (1). These dances
[534] are not very decent, and except for some shameless individuals who watch even these scenes from the height of the flat terrace roofs, the men among the Bani stay at a distance.

776 Many villages (and they are numerous in Bani country) believe
824 that the genie takes shelter in a fig tree near the walls and establishes
its home there. It is the trunk of this tree that is reddened with blood at the annual festival, and most of the dances take place in its shade, as does the repast of which the Negro women partake on this occasion. The girls excised during the year spend 80 to 120 cowrie shells, offer a pullet for the sacrifice, and are thereafter permitted to pay their respects to the genie.

794 Out of this group of worshippers arises a small mutual aid society, identical in every way with the youth's association, the fla-n-to. The head of this organization is usually the oldest woman of the village, and she is given the title of massa, "queen." All the female population call her mba, "my mother."

This society, called mouso-n-to (2), from time to time offers the people of the village d'lo, or millet beer, and once a year at the festival of the genie a plentiful repast with a dessert of kola nuts for the old and the usual drinking bout for everyone. Those who break the laws of the association are fined, and the sum of all these fines, together with the 80 or 120 cowrie shells spend by the excised girls of the year, help the massa and her associates to meet all expenses.

1. Mouso, "woman"; denou, "drum."

2. Mouso, "woman"; to, "gruel."

9. The Twins' Genie

845 776 Having twins is far from an unmixed blessing for Bambara women. Those whom I have seen afflicted with this good fortune and honor (for it is one, since it is regarded as /97/ a blessing from the Supreme Being, the Creator) have seemed to me greatly inconvenienced by their two babies. The healthier, stronger and more robust of the two relaxes pleasantly on the mother's back, while the one who needs a little care always gets his belly squashed on one shoulder or the other.

845 776 778 435 The genie of twins lives in a kind of hourglass made of two plates of braided grass; a bit of iron or wood onto which a piece of the umbilical cord has been rolled is hung from the centers. This fetish is called a *sinsin* and costs the father between 1 *ba* and 1 *ba* 200 cowrie shells (between 800 and 1200 cowrie shells, or 20 to 25 sous), not including, of course, the hens and kola nuts given to the *sinsin tigi* (1), more commonly called *sinsin d'la tigi* (2). To make this /98/ horror, which is hung in the entrance hut within an inverted gourd (1), one must own a father *sinsin* fetish and know the rites and formulas.

1. *Sinsin*, the fetish bearing this name; *tigi*, "master," "owner."

2. *Sinsin*, the fetish; *d'la*, "maker"; *tigi*, "master," "He who manufactures the *sinsin*."

1. This gourd protects the *sinsin* from the teeth of rodents.

A sacrifice to the *sinsin* is performed every year by the head of the family, who is himself its priest; the sacrifice continues to be made even in case of the death of the twins, because it is the

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778 peculiarity of this fetish that it continues to live in its hourglass as
778 long as a particle of this object remains.

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Young Bambara holding the sinsin, the fetish of twins

845 This fetish protects the mother of the twins, and unites the latter
778 in such close affection that one never receives a gift without sharing
431 it with the other. I would even go so far as to say that it is in good
taste never to offer anything to one without offering as much to the
other, and when they are given something, the first to be favored is
the last born, who is considered by everyone as the older.

845 If one of the twins dies early in life, as usually happens, the
778 survivor receives a statuette which he keeps all his life with jealous
431 care and to which he gives the name of the deceased. He dresses it
to the best of his ability, often covers it with glass trinkets, such as
bangles, beads, bits of amber, rings, etc., and well-bred people
never give him a gift without adding at least 5 cowrie shells for the
statuette.

845 The sinsin also grants twins a curious privilege. A scorpion not
778 only cannot bite them, it is even at their service, and on their order
825 will bite a fellow who has displeased them.

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A twins' doll.

845 It is easy to recognize twins (flani in Bambara) as they have
551 special names, the commonest being Sinna, Mafénè, Gno, and
Ouassa. /99/

10. The Genie Protector of Villages

776 The genie protector of a village lives on a knoll or a rock;
621 almost always, if not invariably, its home is a baobab or false cedar
near the walls, in a little grove intersected by neat paths, well kept
and often raked.

776 621 193 Such a spirit is the exclusive property of one family, and even bears its name, or diamou. Its sacrificer, called gnéna-n-sonnaba, also bears the name of dougoutigi (1); he is, in fact, the real head of the village. [554] Although at present the civil and religious authorities are separate in many places, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or religious priest, always holds precedence, and self-respecting people call him dougoutigi (head of the village), giving the title of sotigi (2) to the one who has only civil authority. Here we have further evidence that the organization of the Bambara nation was, at its origin purely religious. The separation of the two authorities in certain hamlets can easily be understood.

[291 516] Typical Bambara headman.

631 Under the Bambara dynasty the kingdom of Ségou was divided into provinces, cantons, and villages. The king, Fama or Massa

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1. Gnena, "fetish," "genie"; sonnaba, "great sacrificer"; dougou, "village"; tigi, "head," "master."

2. So, "hut," "house"; tigi, "head."

796 A great sacrifice to the spirit protector of the village, the
825 dasiri, is made every year. The spirit always has a mount such as
782 a snake, a rat, a lizard, a donkey, etc.; almost everywhere the
mount is a terrible billy goat that roams through the village, enters
everywhere, eats everything, and breaks everything without paying
attention to the switch. For at least three days at the time of the sacrifice.
the village makes merry; men, women, and children dance, stuff
themselves with food, and drink and get drunk.

796 Just as everyone takes part in the feasting and drinking, so all
participate in the sacrifice, even the women, who at least go to the
782 edge of the sacred grove, though they do not enter. And /101/ there
is an abundance of everything: dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with
honey water and milk, d'lo, or millet beer, and finally meats. At
least a goat, and sometimes a bull, is killed for the whole village,
and the heads of families offer goats and hens, depending their
wealth.

782 In addition to the sacrifices offered once a year and those offered
778 by a family when one of the children marries, the fetish receives
776 homage and tribute from just about everyone. Sterile women and
those who habitually miscarry offer it many hens and fawn upon the
animal that is its mount. If one gives birth to a baby, one consecrates
it to the fetish, calling it dji-ri-ba ("great tree"), gnéna ma ké
(gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"; ké, "male"), or gnéna ma (gnéna,
"genie"; ma, "man"). They even like to add the name of the village
where the bountiful dasiri is found: Kolotomo gnéna ma (1), /102/

1. Kolotomo, the name of a village about 30 kilometers from Ségou; gnena, "genie"; ma, "man."

(man or daughter of the dasiri genie of Kolotomo). Actually, the
name gnénama is given only to girls; for boys the word ké ("male")
is added: gnénama-ké.

776 It is known through the mediation of sorcerers that a dasiri
778 sometimes leaves its sacred grove and its tree. This event is unusual;
824 the tree may fall from old age, but the sacrifices will be continued

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778 on the stump, the open hole, or on the sprout that comes out of the
824 ground, grows, and replaces the tree.

776 Every dasiri has a sacred mount which bears its name and, as
778 I have already said, it seems to prefer a billy goat above all. The
825 latter dies of old age, that is, unless the good of the community
dictates otherwise; I saw one perish in the prime of life because of

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A dasiri fetish tree (of Songobougou).

its scandalous behavior; he was inordinately fond of the ewes of the village, which he mistook for goats, and this behavior was far too shameless for a sacred being.

776 The fetish protects the village by causing the evil spells and
778 sorcery cast on it to misfire. It defends the village against wicked
621 people and against its enemies, and thanks to it the inhabitants can
793 peacefully devote themselves to their work in the fields. While averting plagues and diseases which decimate the population, it gives strength, health, and vigor to all, and finally it populates the village by making the women fertile. Above all, it is the source of unity among families for it brings them all together under the authority of a single head; the friends of the head of the family whose name, or *diamou*, it bears, are its friends, and his enemies are also its own. To fail the priest, the *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, the *dougoutigi*, is to fail the fetish, so close and intimate is the union between the two.

11. The *Koté*, or *Koré*, Genie

794 Since it is the fundamental basis of power and authority, the
776 worship of the *dasiri* can, with some justice, be regarded as the first
778 and oldest of all Bambara religious practices. That of the *koté*, or
koré, likewise seems to me quite respectable from this standpoint and
just as old. As a matter of fact, this spirit, like the *dasiri*, lives in
[824] a little grove near the village, and the three trees it likes to inhabit
are the baobab, the false cedar, and the nettle tree.

794 The worship of the *koré* is especially popular in Bani country. Today not all the villages have the fetish, but all have at /103/ least a few initiates belonging to this semioccult sect. The sect includes women among its members; it is divided into eight groups, each ruled by its oldest member, who in turn is under the authority of the *koretigi*, the supreme head of the association.

794 At the time of the annual sacrifices, and especially at the
778 sacrifices made every seven years on the days of admission (for it is
necessary to be a *koré dé* (1) in order to participate in the secret part

1. *Koré*, the fetish bearing this name; *dé*, "son."

794 776 The koré fetish watches over the crops and gives its initiates the only pleasures that they know and desire -- to drink, to eat, and to enjoy /104/ a woman -- and, as will later be demonstrated, all this comes out in their dances and orgies. In spite of its great power, the poor genie cannot handle its many concerns; the Bambara, who judge everything according to themselves to such an extent that they inject their own organization into the world of invisible beings, have therefore given it eight groups of spirits who carry out its orders and make up its court. Some watch over the insignia and preserve the names of the initiates, and others render powerless anyone who would harm the crops. Just like a distinguished, powerful, and rich man here, the koré has its storyteller /griots/ or heralds, the korodouga, who sing its praises, transmit to it the petitions and prayers of the initiates, and dance its dances. The eight groups of the sect are simply the representation of this court, the concrete expression of the Negroes' concept of it.

794 The initiation into, or affiliation with, the koré sect takes place only every seven years. It is long and painful; for fifteen days the young initiates live in the sacred grove and cannot go into the village. Since they need some training for future dances, the old men come to torment them every noon in the worst heat, and each initiate, according to the group to which he belongs, suffers for some moments the torment of fire, thorns, or the rod.

[626] The rigor of the admission in no way alienates the Bambara, and in Bani it is a disgrace to refuse the hen for the sacrifice and the /payment of/ 120 cowrie shells, and not to join. It is true that everything is repaid, for the sect has many festivals and d'lo, or millet beer, is never lacking.

In addition to the annual sacrifice, a sacrifice is made to the genie every time an initiate dies. There is another sacrifice on the anniversary of his death, and during the dry season the kore dé go from one festival to another, spending their nights in nameless drinking bouts and orgies. /105/

Chapter 6

Worship, Celebrations, Saraka, Sacrifices, and Dances in Honor of the Gnéna

1. The First Two Groups of Gnéna

781 The fundamental bases of all Bambara devotions are first, and
776 above all, fear and secondly, the desire to have everything without
effort or work. The Bambara respect a strong, powerful being because
it can punish and reward, and since their fetishes are not equal in
power, they take care not to honor all equally.

776 The genii of the first two groups have no priest or official
minister, and public, solemn sacrifices are offered them very rarely.
782 In the dry season, however, some festivals are held in their honor.
852 The chief participants are children, who on these days stuff themselves
with /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, and with
sorghum cakes. When they are full they take the leftovers outside the
village to a place where paths cross, and many hens, dogs, and other
animals come for the booty. The poor and unfortunate also come, for
[735] they, too, may take their share; every saraka (1) belongs to them.

1. Tax, tribute, alms.

776 Little girls and boys take part in these festivals, but there is a
852 special one for unexcised girls, and those who are soon to be excised
and are getting ready for this great event in Bambara life bear /106/
all the expenses. It is the celebration of soli basi k'li (1), of which
I will speak at greater length in my chapter on circumcision,

1. Soli, "young firls who will soon be excised"; basi, a kind of couscous with very small grains which distantly resembles semolina; k'li, "obtained by singing and clapping hands."

000 I will speak at greater length in my chapter on circumcision.

776 782 Although the individual worship of the lesser genii by one person or family is seldom public -- except sometimes temporarily, it nonetheless involves an enormous waste of /millet/ flour, kola nuts, cotton, cowrie shells, etc. Nevertheless, there are very few sacrifices in these offerings; most frequently, if not always, they are saraka, or alms, and a kind of tax or tribute since they are obligatory.

782 191 They are, in fact, obligatory alms, paid by an individual, a family, or a whole quarter of a village, upon the command of a sorcerer. Some sorcerers who have renown or want to acquire it manage to prescribe these taxes for an entire village and, sometimes, even for a whole region. The occurence is not unusual; I have seen it happen every year. A shrewd operator from Bélé Koun in the circle of Sikasso, crosses the Bani in every dry season, and there is not a village in the circle of Ségou but feels called upon to hand hens and cowrie shells over to him and, in addition, afterwards to take a large contribution to one of the nearby crossroads. In spite of his youth -- [787] he is twenty-five or thirty at most -- he is said to learn everything by searching hens' entrails and crushing their viscera between his fingers. He makes profit by predicting terrible calamities everywhere. All his knowledge is summed up in the following words: "The genii are displeased, offer a saraka and offer it quickly, for if you do not, all children under three years old will die... goats, cows, horses, and sheep will die... springs will dry up... the karité butter will fail..., etc." In one place the words are those of a hyena, in another, those of a cow, and farther away it is a wild pig that speaks. And the dégé (/millet/ flour mixed with water) is spread and the blood of hens flows in streams. In short, the people are always expected to give to the fetishes and the sorcerers, and to give everything. Some occasionally balk and do not want to obey. The orders of the sorcerer become urgent, his prophesies more terrible than ever; at the end of his patience, he may spit out insults and /107/ curses, and then everyone comes to offer the saraka. Even Moslems let themselves be taken in.

782 In Bambara eyes, the saraka never has the character of a sacrifice. As I explained at length in speaking of the worship of God, it is always

782 857 There are many kinds of saraka, and they are offered for just about all purposes. Besides those given by order of sorcerers, there are some established by custom itself, and uncircumcised children are required to carry them out. They often hunt turtles, /108/ palm rats, guinea fowl, and partridges, so they plant a strong dry branch either outside the village or even inside it, and on its branches hang the heads of captured animals and the shells of eggs they have sucked. This is their way of thanking the genii, of ensuring other successful hunts, and of protecting themselves from the gnâma of their many victims.

782 The Bambara also give the name of saraka to some practices that are purely and simply superstitious and do not, strictly speaking, have the character of religious worship. In these instances the word saraka must be given a broader meaning than that which I have attributed to it. The old shoes, caps, fruit rinds, rags, etc., hung here and there on branches of trees are not so much a rendering of homage by the Black to a genie, to an external agent, as they are a tribute paid their own inner, personal, and unreasoned fear. In this respect they are like some Europeans, foster brothers of these idiots, who believe in the salt cellar, crossed knives, thirteen at the table, Friday, etc., who turn over the salad bowl before undertaking a serious matter, or slide a four-leaf clover into their vest pockets. And why? It brings good luck, causes success. And how? They cannot tell you, for with them it is not reasoned -- nor is it with the Bambara.

2. Gnéna of the Third Group;
The Eight /sic/ Categories of Powerful Gnéna

776 782 796 The third group of genii have their priests and ministers; saraka are not enough for them, and they receive sacrifices. The public sacrifices are annual, and the whole population -- men, women, and children -- participate. Dégé (/millet/ flour mixed with water), white hens, and white kola nuts are the usual material of the sacrifice, and the formula recited can always be reduced to the following: "Give us water; cause peace to reign among us, in the

776 village and in our families; grant us plenty and wealth, give us many
782 wives, healthy and vigorous children, and a long and hearty old age."
796 If the occasion is semipublic /109/ or public, a general sacrifice is always offered in the name of the family, the quarter, or the village, and then individual sacrifices follow. On the days when they are held, there are always dances and drinking bouts, for the favors of a fetish cannot be obtained except by leaping to the sound of drums and by getting drunk.

At the risk of repeating myself, I cannot resist giving the fascinating side of the Negroes' attachment to their fetishism and describing the festivals and celebrations in honor of the principal fetishes -- in order that the reader may gain a greater understanding and feeling for their worship.

The N'tomo, the Special Children's Fetish

852 The harvest is over, and the yield of the field cultivated by the
796 children during the winter, together with the small donations received from the people of the village, allows the *n'tomigi* (head of the confraternity) and his *siéré* (aide, deputy) to furnish its initiates and the old men -- the latter are never forgotten -- with a plentiful feast of kola nuts, millet beer, or *d'lo*, and /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, or *dégé*. The day of the celebration is set by the head of the village and by the elders, and everyone prepares for it two weeks in advance. In the *blon*, or entrance huts, and in the
852 shade of trees, one sees nothing but old men cutting and sewing *dloki*,
796 *bougi*, *bogo*, and *yaba* (1), which will be worn for the first time on
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1. *Dloki*, a large blouse. *Bougi*, near Ségou, a kind of pants without legs; in Bani country, a strip of cloth three to four fingers wide which goes around the waist, passes between the thighs, and drops in back, forming flaps over the heavy part of the thighs.

852 794 Every time one of the three principal members of the staff, wants to dance, respects are paid to them or to their leader, and all day and all night nothing is heard but frightful "*you you*" and atrocious cries. There is a protocol for everyone to follow, and before each *to-n-dé* begins to prance in front of the drums, he goes and bows to his leader to show his devotion and respect for him. He holds himself like a spring, brandishes the gun, ax, or stick that he will use in the dance, and in one jump strikes his feet together under the nose of the one to whom he is paying his respects. The women are quieter and show their respect by a genuflection before the master.

In addition to his staff the master of a *n'golo*, the *to-n-tigi*, has pages, a standard bearer, trumpeters, and soldiers, and to vary the program he goes here and there with his frenzied band to greet an elder and give him a serenade. In some villages custom decrees that the youths put on the best they have in the way of clothing; in others, on the contrary, they must get themselves up in horrible, dirty rags so that, on seeing them thus clad, one asks where they could have dug up all these horrors. They must amuse themselves and be [522] amused, laugh and cause laughter, and this last aim is always accomplished as they have such priceless mimics. /114/

The *Mouso ka djiri*, the Women's Special

776 796 831 It is impossible to know all the genii responsible for watching over women, for they are legion. Every month, at the new moon, the women organize a dance in their honor, and every year they make a public, solemn sacrifice to them. The most widespread is the *mouso ka djiri*, and its worship flourishes especially in Bani country.

When its festival comes, all the excised women offer it a little /millet/ flour mixed with water, a hen, and two kola nuts, and the head of the village, or, in his absence, an elder, goes and reddens the bark of the fetish tree (1). There is no need for me to go into

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[782] 1. Some people assert that they have seen women sacrificing. I have seen women perform *saraka* involving bloodshed, but never a sacrifice.

776 796 831 this sacrifice at length, for in the preceding chapter I stated the function of the fetish; it may be imagined that the ladies and maidens ask for whatever makes a woman strong and beautiful. Moreover, the indecent dances to which they abandon themselves under the sacred tree sufficiently reveal their inner thoughts. They have only one -- to show their breasts to the fetish and scratch their navels on its bark; in some villages custom demands this, and it is required of all. Young girls do it to develop their breasts, married women to become fertile, and all of them to be protected from the unpleasant accidents peculiar to their sex.

796 There is no festival without a feast and none without drinking, and the women offer the whole village sorghum gruel and beer for a drinking bout. They also offer kola nuts to all the elders and heads of families, and they know better than to withhold this treat from fathers, husbands, grown sons, older brothers, and those they love.

The Sinsin, the Special Twin's Fetish

782 845 778 852 The sacrifice to a sinsin is made on the umbilical cord which is hung in the center of plates of woven grass that constitute the fetish. Each plate belongs to one of the twins and even bears his name. The sacrifices in honor of this fetish are always double; for each child separately, the family offers /millet/ flour /115/ mixed with water, millet beer, a kola nut, and a hen.

845 778 852 This is strictly a family fetish; the father of the family is its priest, and only the children and their parents are present at the sacrifices. Everything is done in a quiet and happy intimacy, and although there may be a few drunkards here and there, there is never an orgy. Sacrifices to a sinsin are made very frequently to bring its blessing to the mother and children; they are also performed on all occasions of the slightest importance in the lives of the twins: when their hair is cut eight days after birth, at the tattooing festival, at circumcision, at marriage, etc. Once a year a more formal sacrifice is made; the women cook d'lo, the millet beer, and the

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778 old men and important people of the village, as well as friends, are
852 invited to squat before the jugs and partake of the liquid refreshment.

The *Dasiri* Fetish, Protector of Villages

776 The *dasiri* is the chief of all the *gnena*, or *djine*. In order that
621 its worship may be better understood and that the reader may have an idea of the power of its priest, I must go into a few details which cannot help but throw some light on Bambara organization. Let us, for example, take a village that is being founded: we are present at the election of the priest of the *dasiri*, the *gnéna*-*n*-*sonnaba*; at the choice of the fetish tree and of the sacred animal, the genie's mount; at the enthroning of the sacrificer; and finally at the sacrifices.

Election of the priest

776 The population has grown, the surrounding land is exhausted,
621 and a group of families must move out. The old men who are still
793 lively and the youths full of strength and life take up their arms and
1482 fasten a dirty goatskin, a *foroko* of provisions, on their shoulders and scatter in the bush in search of less ungrateful soil. When they have found it they go back to their homes, and the council of family heads meets to choose a leader. This leader is really a priest, for his chief function is to sacrifice in a public and formal manner to the *blonda ba sou* (1), the shades of the great entry hut /116/, that is, to leaders and priests who, just like him, held the reins of power, and to the *gnéna*, genii, spirits, and fetishes, whence come his names of *gnéna*-*n*-*sonna* ("he who sacrifices to the *gnéna* fetishes") and *gnéna*-*n*-*sonnaba* ("great sacrificer of the *gnéna* fetishes"). He alone has the authority to sacrifice to all /these spirits/ in the name of all /the people/.

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1. *Blon*, "entry hut"; *da*, "door," "doorsill"; *ba*, "great"; *sou*, "corpses," "shades."

621 The palavers and deliberations are long, but the choice is a
793 happy one; the old man chosen as gnéna-n-sonnaba always has the
555 slyness and guile characteristic of the Bambara type. Patient and likeable, he will know how to be just and impartial in disputes, diplomatic and sufficiently master of himself to say only what he intends to. He will know how to acquire the reputation of an upright man who does not know theft or falsehood.

Elected for life to hold both civil and religious power, he is
621 truly the head of the village, the dougoutigi. His position is hereditary;
793 it passes from brother to brother and, when there are none, goes by right to his oldest son. The one who is to succeed him becomes his aide (siéré), and the heads of families (gouatigi-ou) compose his council; they are always summoned when a question is to be handled or a decision made.

The Choice of the dasiri fetish and its sacred mount

776 The new village has a head, his aide, and its council; it is
778 organized. Now they must find out the whereabouts of the spring,
787 rock, or tree where lives the protecting spirit, the dougou dasiri (1),

> 1. Dougou dasiri: /dougou/, "village"; da, "mouth," "entrance"; siri, "bind."

who fastens the entrance to the village and watches over it. For this knowledge the people appeal to a sorcerer; he has intimate contact with the spirits, knows their ways and customs, and understands their language.

There are many sorcerers, and they do not all work in the same way. One discovers his oracles in the entrails of a hen, a second traces cabalistic signs on ashes, a third endlessly moves little stones, bones, and cowrie shells, counting them again and again. To locate the dasiri, people have recourse to the flélikéla (2) diviner, who

> 2. Fléliké, "to look attentively, curiously."

776 works with a gourd three quarters full of water.

778 When he has received his honorarium of 40 cowrie shells, which he takes in both hands, he places beside him in the dust his little 787 /117/ gift, consisting of two kola nuts, a few hens, or better, a small billy goat. He asks about the place chosen for the new village and has it described to him down to the smallest detail. Then he takes down a dirty n'go (1) on which he places a gourd which he tips slowly right and left, forward and backward, to give it a firm position on its stand. Having done this, he sums up for the spirits the conversation which he has had, and then, with eyes afire and holding his breath, he gives the gourd three flicks with the middle finger of his right hand. They say that a soft murmur, a murmur which is none other than the voices of the genii, is noticed by all present. They hear without understanding, but the sorcerer knows these voices and when he rises it is with a tone of authority that he names the dasiri and the animal which will be its mount.

In the province of Ségou the dasiri is a tree; the tamarind, the false cedar, and the baobab are the preferred trees. The sacred mount, also called dasiri, is a snake, an iguana, a rat, a donkey, etc., but most frequently it is a billy goat.

778 621 Enthronement of the gnéna-n-sonnaba, priest of the dasiri and dougoutigi, head of the village

Our Blacks establish the new village and build their huts. Near the fetish tree each family sets up its mortars for grinding sorghum, places its hearths, and installs its kitchens. Bows, guns, and farming implements are hung on the branches of the dasiri, and while the work of settling continues, meals are eaten and dances held in its shade, and in the evening when the moon is shining it is near the tree that they finally stretch out to sleep.

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1. A ring made of braided roots bound with cotton thread, which is covered with a thick layer of blood.

778 the fetish tree, the former by the children who smear themselves
782 and whiten their entire faces, and the latter by the men and circum-
796 cised youths (1).

1. By the main sacrifice I mean the sacrifice made in the name of the whole village.

After the noon meal men, women, and children go to the public square to drink beer, or d'lo, and to dance. /119/ The signal for the celebration is given by the gnéna-n-sonnaba, who makes a little speech inviting his children (né ka démisenou, "my children, " "my subjects") to have fun and to drink but to avoid fights and quarrels, and then launches into a quadrille. While he dances, the crowd stands bareheaded, cries "you you" loudly, and competes as to who will shake his spear or ax to beat the measure. This annual festival goes on for three or four days, as long as the d'lo, or millet beer, lasts.

776 All circumcised men and excised women may, through the
782 intermediary of the gnéna-n-sonnaba, offer a sacrifice to the genie
protector of the village. Anyone who thinks he has offended or dis-
pleased it offers one -- with or without bloodshed according to his
means -- to obtain pardon, propitiate it, and gain its favor. In-
dividuals sacrifice primarily to make requests; a di ("give it") are
the first words they were able to lisp as infants. A sterile woman
[842] will offer it a kola nut, dégé, a rooster or a hen at every moment,
always promising not to be miserly and to give more if she becomes
a mother. She will be especially assiduous toward the dasiri animal,
the mount of the genie of this name; she will coax it, stuff it with
bran, and will often go far into the bush to pick it a stalk of grass
or a leafy branch which are its delicacies.

776 Genii spirits can leave the spring, the rock, or the tree where
they have established their dwellings, and the dasiri is no exception
778 to this rule. If it does so, the fetish tree loses its sanctity, becomes
a common object, and can be destroyed. Similarly, all things in
the sacred grove, both plant and animal, cease to be taboo and can
be used for their customary purposes. The dasiri is not at all fickle.

776 778 It rarely leaves its tree; it likes its little grove and shady park, and in many places it is satisfied with a stump that is all blackened, worm eaten, rotten, and falling to pieces.

The formula of the sacrifice

782 781 When one is present at a sacrifice to the dasiri and sees the gnéna-n-sonnaba uncover his head, take off his large blouse, and crouch at the feet of the fetish, one expects something imposing and grand. Nothing of the sort occurs, and one is quite surprised to find so little gravity /120/ in such an important act. People enjoy themselves and chat; the priest, red with blood, tosses off witticisms and coarse jokes, and while feet and wings of the victims -- goats, sheep, and hens -- twitch in the agonies of death, nothing passes from one group to another but bursts of laughter that finally disappear far off at the edge of the grove where the women are.

782 The words in the sacrificial formula vary a little from one village to another, all depending on the volubility of the sacrificer. Nevertheless, it remains basically the same everywhere. After having greeted the fetish in his own name and the name of his subjects, he implores it to forgive them all the insults, offenses, and disrespect toward it, of which they have been guilty, voluntarily or involuntarily, during the entire year. He then calls it by a name related to the type of tree in which it is located -- e.g., ma ziraba ("great baobab man"), ma djala ba ("great false-cedar man"), -- and announces that he is going to sacrifice. While offering the dégé and d'lo, he implores it to protect them against the evils of the sons of the fetish siri, the souba (1), to preserve them from the souya maou (2), the

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[754] 1. Sou, "night"; ba, "great." The souba are masters of the night who change themselves into hyenas or owls, dig up corpses, and eat human flesh.

2. Souyaké, "to prowl at night."

794 carry out their indecencies, shout obscenities, drink, and get drunk.
764 And for three consecutive nights after the burial the same scenes are repeated in front of the fetish tree.

794 The anniversary of the death of a *koredé* ("son of *koré*") who
769 became a *korétigi* (priest of *koré*), a *gnéna-n-sonnaba* (priest of the *dasiri*) or a *gouatigi* (head of a group, of a family), is celebrated with pomp; the family always makes it a point of honor to cook *d'lo* (beer), and people come from all directions to take part in the orgy. /127/

Chapter 7

The Worship of Satan or Worship of the *Gnâ*, or *Boli*

1. What is Meant by *Gnâ*, or *Boli*

776 Ever since God created their race and put it into the world, the Bambara have respected, venerated, and sacrificed to the *gnéna*, or *djiné*, those beings who are intermediate between angels and men. When one of them forgets himself under the influence of a jug of beer so far as to open to you -- oh, very slightly! -- a recess of his soul, he delights in telling you this, but he is careful not to make such a statement when he speaks to you of the *gnâ*, or *boli*. For although the beginnings of *boli* worship fade into the dark of the ages, it nevertheless has its history. The origin of each *boli* is known, and an initiate, however little instructed in its rites, can tell you whether it comes from the north or south, east or west, and whether it is male or female; and every graybeard can recite its family tree for you.

There is a great difference between the *gnéna* and the *gnâ*; they are different in every way, and we have here two beliefs which, though parallel, are absolutely distinct. Any object, whatever it may be, can become the home of a *gnena*, but these spirits prefer a living being, a plant, a tree, or an animal, for example, and when one is tired of its dwelling it moves elsewhere. A *gnâ* always lives in an

176 inanimate object, and whether the form it takes is human or animal, whether it resembles an eggplant, a potato, or a napkin ring, that form remains a boli as long /128/ as there is a piece left that is visible to the naked eye, and the boli never leaves it. In the case of the boli, there is such a close union between the object and the spirit that this combination becomes one and the same individual; it is the union of soul and body in order to make up a person or individual.

176 182 In sacrifices to the gnéna, the reverence of the Negro is not directed to the spring, the tree, the plant, etc., but to the genie that inhabits it. But in sacrifices to the gnâ, reverence is directed simultaneously to the spirit and to its object; one does not exist, is not thought of, without the other. Negroes have often given me to understand this, and one of my old friends, in order to explain his worship, expressed himself in these words: "When you honor your friend, is it his body or his soul that you honor? It is neither his body nor his soul; you honor both at the same time, the person himself as a whole, your friend; that is how it is with the boli." (1) /129/

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1. In Bambara:	Translation:
"Ne koko, n'i bé i terké bôgna, i be a fari bôgna wa ouala a dousou bôgna. I té i terké bôgna wa? A bé té boliou fé koï'. An bi Sétané bôgna wa ouala a fen yéré bôgna, héwa, anou dé bi boli bôgna.	"I myself say: if you honor your friend, do you honor his body or his soul? You honor your friend, don't you? It is the same with the boli. Do we honor satan or do we honor his object? Assuredly, it is the boli.
"Faran fasili do be dasiri, djiri an'a djiné tjé. N'i b'a djiri son, i dé bé dasiri son, nka, i bé dasiri bôgna doron? Djiri te fen gouansan yé? a ti fouï gnâ.	"There is a difference between the dasiri tree and its genie. If you sacrifice to the tree, you sacrifice to the dasiri, but do you not honor the dasiri alone? Is the tree not a mere object? It gives us nothing.
"Taï, o do.	"Exactly, that's right.

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"O fara n fasili-'ln te boli dé ni sétané tjé wa? Nibé boli dé son, i be Sétané son tigné, nka i be sétané bôgna doron, boli dé, héwa fen min yéra o dé te fou'l gnâ.	"Does this difference not exist between the boli and satan? If you sacrifice to the boli, you sacrifice to satan, that is certain; but you honor only the demon, and its object is no help to you.
"O té, djiné ni boli ma-n-kan, boli dé hen, an be fen min yé, o be fen gnâ dérén. Sétané an'o fen olou foula té ké boli yé wa?"	"No, you haven't understood. A genie and a boli are not the same. The boli is bound to what we see; it is useful to us. Satan and his object, both together -- do they not make up the boli?"

Boli dé: An object in which is found the spirit the Negroes call Sétané, "Satan."

776 The gnéna, or djiné, half man and half angel, malicious though it is, can nevertheless do good and grant a direct blessing by performing a good act. But the gnâ, the boli, a fallen angel (méléké sifa do do, " it is a kind of angel"), in revolt against God and, as I stated in my chapter on God, condemned to the tortures of fire, is entirely evil and cannot directly do a good deed (1). It can never-

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1. I challenge the European "Bambara scholars" of Ségou to listen to the two djéli (storytellers /griots/) of Go'ln, a small village a short distance from this center. The sacred dances and songs of the boli are their specialty, and they travel over the

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> whole circle in the dry season. For example, the master of a Nama will give an account, and the storyteller will take up the refrain, which always ends: "I have told you truly, the Nama can refrain from evil, but it is capable only of evil (a ka fari, a ka djougou ko djougou). It is evil, very evil!"

776 theless refrain from an evil act and thus indirectly grant a blessing to human beings. The words of the formula in the sacrifices to the gnéna and the gnâ seem identical, and yet, when one has understood the inmost feelings of the Bambara soul, one sees all the difference between them. To one as to the other the Negroes say: "Ka dji d'amma (give us water), ka mousoou d'amma (give us wives), ka nafolo d'amma (give us wealth), etc." But while in speaking to the first they actually ask for water, wives, etc., they make an indirect request to the second, so that their words mean: "Do nothing to keep us from having wives," "do nothing to keep us from having water," etc. In expressing himself this way he uses all his cunning, and all his deceit comes to the surface and is revealed. Yes, he really deserves the epithet that neighboring tribes have given him and of which he is proud; it is misi bo, "cow dung," -- dry on the outside but limp and soft inside, so that it is squashed when it is stepped on. His inner feeling when he addresses the boli is this: "O Spirits, evil genii, you are capable only of evil; may your hatred not attack me or those who are dear to me, may it all be for my enemies and those that can harm me!" /130/

2. The Legend of the Boli

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This is a very curious legend, for it makes the boli come from Mecca, the holy city! To understand it better, let us remember in passing that Islam has only made the Bambara more attached to their idols. They have died in order to keep them; they answered the

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778 and even going so far as tocause his death." These accounts excited
794 the Negroes' curiosity; they wished to see the boli, wanted to sacrifice to them. They gave themselves to the boli, and thus became their children.

Once the people were initiated, the travelers unveiled the mysteries to them, bound them by the law of secrecy. They imposed upon them the prohibition against admitting uninitiated men and women and children to their ranks, and the sects were formed. These have multiplied continuously; each boli has its own, and since the boli are male and female and produce children, they have become legion, and each village has sects and boli of its own. Although the
778 worship of the boli has not destroyed that of the gnéna, or djiné, it
794 has long exceeded the latter; their sacrifices and drinking bouts are accompanied by an external pomp that has a different grandeur, and no important action is taken without their agreement. It can be asserted without fear of error that the worship of the gnâ, or boli, is the chief religion of the Bambara at the present time. It is the basis of union within families and the foundation of the sina-n-koûn, or sworn friendship; through the boli the people of the same village are closely united, and this union extends from one village to another and from one province to another, since all members of a boli's sect are brothers and owe each other mutual assistance under certain specified circumstances.

● 776 In the Bambara's mind (and I have spoken of this at length in
778 my chapter, "The Ideas of the Bambara are not of Islamic Origin"),
782 the boli are nothing less than intrinsically evil beings in revolt against the Supreme Being, God the Creator and Lord of all things. As the formula of the sacrifice to Touafé Bla suggests, the place where they dwell is fire or hell, and there is not a Negro who will not tell you /134/ that the boli is a demon (sétané). Can it not be said that his religion is a worship rendered to "Satan himself?" He renders this worship in full knowledge of what he is doing. Have I not heard the sacrificer in a sacrifice to a Nama boli (1), shout before cutting the

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1. A note by Father Coppe of the White Fathers (unpublished manuscript).

776 778 782 which I have before me, reports the same fact on the subject of the Komo boli. Moreover, this Father is a student of the Bambara -- when the Blacks of Ségou speak of him, they say, "Bamana-n-do," which means that he spoke and understood their language well.

throat of the victim of the general sacrifice: "Alla djampa ba, i k'an bla, i ka bo an koun na, God, great traitor, leave us, go away from us!" -- and the crowd repeated the blasphemy after him: "Alla djampa ba, i k'anbla, i ka bo an koun na!"

3. Boli Whose Power is Slight

776 778 Since the boli do not all have the same strength and power, and fear is the basis and foundation of Bambara worship, they are not all equally honored. We will divide them into two main groups, those of "little power" and those of "great power," and we will end this chapter with a word on the talking boli, the prerogative of certain sorcerers, and on the sirikoun, another, quite special, kind of boli.

778 278 By boli of little power I mean all evil fetishes which are basically not very terrifying, in the sense that it is thought that they very seldom cause anyone's death. Many of them are primarily medicines, and almost everyone has them. They are tails of cows, goats, dogs, and wild animals; they have no specific names and are generally called foura (2) ("medicine"). Additional "medicines" are the kana,

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2. This name foura is given in a general way to all boli; I should therefore remark that the word "medicine" in the sense that we understand it, is not the exact translation of the word foura. This word is in itself untranslatable

764 782 [823] 1. In the eyes of the Negroes this ceremony is not a bloodless sacrifice but a simple prayer; and the water is poured to give the words greater emphasis, since in their eyes it is the element without which nothing lives nor can live.

the wind blows from the west or the east, from the north or the south, may it be favorable to us. Give us a long life, many descendants, wives and prosperity." The audience answers, "Amina -- o dé ka ké (let it be so)," and, using hoes hafted in reverse so that the curve of the blade is on the outside, the youths fill the grave. The drums beat again, and the women clap their hands and improvise a song whose words usually can be reduced to these: "Our father is dead, we have been told he is dead. But he will come back! Young men, fill the grave well, so that no souba, no hyena, nor any wild animal can take away the corpse."

764 When the grave is filled, the one who is holding the strip of cloth attached to the blouse, or the shroud, of the deceased pulls it toward him until it tears and remains in his hands. This ribbon is a [751] precious relic of which tafo are made; they are a protection from a host of evils, especially throat ailments and gnâma. The coarse mat (tjékala or kara) which was the bed or the seat of the deceased, quite often together with his shoes and the small earthen pot that was his wash basin, are laid on the tomb. If the deceased was a woman, pieces of a gourd, fragments of a hearth, or the stick for stirring gruel (to-n-galama) are thrown onto the tomb instead of the wash basin. The pliant mat in which the corpse was wrapped is often given to a friend. The latter goes and burns it outside the village, or before entering his own village if he is a foreigner; he says: "Here is a mat on which no one will die from now on."

[777] 764 782 Wednesday and Saturday are two unlucky days. On these days strangers never present their condolences to the bereaved family, and if a burial takes place, a small white chicken is killed and given to the deceased so that he can placate the spirits as soon as the grave

has the name of Dyéliba and used to be /xiv/ called Toubla. The name of Kaba (1) given by all Sudanese to the ancient capital of Mali actually designates the village of Kangaba. But the oldest agglomerations known, before Dyéliba (Mali I according to J. Vidal), are situated in the regions of Kri Koroni and Ouanda.

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in Mandé. See also S. de Ganay, *Notes sur la théodicée bambara* /Notes on Bambara theodicy/, pp. 212-213. "In the village of Manin Kaba, there exists what is called the *manti blo,* 'the vestibule of the Mande,' in which are arranged around the object called *pembele* twelve seats (*sigi yoro*) representing the forty-four 'races' of this common hearth."

This origin is well known to the Sudanese, but the number of tribes varies. In the course of the septennial ceremony of Kangaba (see p. 15 note 1) the *griot* say: "We were forty-eight; through the mixture of the winds, the races came out at the four cardinal points" (*an tumbi debe ni seki la, siaw bwora fyẽ nyamile seleke nami*).

1. The word *kaba* has its origin in *ni ya ka ba ko ye* "this is astonishing," an expression currently used concerning the sanctuary and the ritual objects it contains. The Dogon, who claim to originate in Mandé and who have dispersed into the cliffs of Bandiagara from agglomerations to which they had given the name Kani, explain this last term by giving it the meaning of "little Ka." These were, in a sense, relay stations between their original habitat and the one they now occupy. Concerning these migrations, see G. Dieterlen, *Les Ames des Dogon* /The souls of the Dogon/, pp. 9ff.

796 778 In the village of Kangaba a sanctuary, called mande blo "vestibule of Mande, " or kaba blo "vestibule of astonishment, " is the object of a septennial ritual attended by representatives of all the races /who are/ said to be of the same origin. There ceremony consists in rebuilding the roof of the sanctuary which shelters an object dolin, but only those persons of pure race belonging to the Kéita family (1) and the traditional griot of the chiefs of Mandé, the Dyabaté, are authorized to perform the ritual. Only they may penetrate the sanctuary and tread on its soil, which is said to be "heavier and more powerful than all things." (2)

551 1. The name of Kéita, for which various etymologies have been found, is that of the founders of the Mandingo empire. Cf. C. Monteil, Les Empires du Mali, p. 31, and L. Tauxier, Histoire des Bambara /Bambara History/, p. 40: "The first kings of Mali lived at Kangaba and were in fact Kéita."

By extension the name of Kéita may be adopted by individuals belonging to one of the tribes originating in Mandé. Thus a Dogon will take on as dyamu Kéita if he comes to live in Mandé. On the other hand, the heraldic device of the Kéita, which relates the high deeds of the Mandingo princes, includes the devices of almost all the tribes said to be of the same origin. This common origin may perhaps throw some light on the institution of regularized name changes observed in Black Africa, a problem which has claimed the attention of some authors; see in particular P. Humblot, Du nom et des appellations chez les Malinke /Names and nomenclature among the Maunke/.

778 346 2. Kangaba dugukolo ka gri fẽw be. The sanctuary is a round hut provided with two doors, one oriented to the east and the

778 346 other to the west, and covered with a thatched roof in which is hidden an object called *dolin*. The village is surrounded by several sacred places: a *sunzun* tree to the north; a well to the west; two stones, one (*fara fi*) situated near the village and the other (*fara gwe*) on the river's edge.

796 The septennial ceremony is performed at night. Toward evening, the eldest of the Kéita goes secretly to remove the object *dolin* from the old thatch and hides it. The new roof is made with materials gathered by the descendants of Farako Makan Kegni (straw, bamboo, and fibers) while the women of the same relationship plaster the walls. The Dyabaté *griot* who will officiate provide themselves with a little stick of *sunzun* wood about the length of the ring finger with which they will rub their teeth; the twigs must be cut by the elder sister of the chief of the *griot* who gives her in exchange /xv/ a loin-cloth of eight [801] bands of white cotton and a number of cowries in multiples of 8 such as 8, 480.

The orators who will officiate during the night wear a white cap topped by a band of cotton of the same color and a yellow tunic (*wolo*) (see p. 20). Sitting inside the hut from which the old roof has been removed, facing east, they spit into a receptacle in order not to soil the ground. The Kéita remain outside the hut on a site marked by stones and covered with gravel collected in the river bed by young men. During the entire night, the *griot*, each in turn and encouraged by a relative, recite from the devices of all the tribes issued from Mandé. At dawn, they sing as they circle the construction; then the Kéita hoist up the new roof. Next, the elder

776 dried up, and fell; soon the only thing that remained of it was a block of wood called pembele. Out of its own substance, pembele created a female being, Mousso Koroni, and with her engendered all living things on earth, except for the human beings born of Faro. But following the disturbances created by Mousso Koroni, Pemba had to give up his power, and his Word became the property of Faro, who was entrusted with the reorganization of the universe.

Pemba was known to men who submitted to him on earth before they became aware of Faro who had remained secretly in the heavens (1). They worshipped him as their god and named him Ngala Pemba, god Pemba, or Koni, to recall his origin and the awe inspired by creation (2).

The Pembele

• 778 776 At the present time, religious leaders and heads of families use the pembele to represent Pemba; it is a block of wood, the image of the original plank (3). This object has a hollow dug out in the center, called sele dẽ, reminiscent of the hole at the bottom of the grave where the corpse is placed (4). Three times 22 slanted lines

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1. It is said: " Faro is a celestial being from above; if one says Pemba, it is because he has been seen on earth" (faro ye sana fẽ ye; a fo pemba ye a ka yeli ye dugu la).

2. The secret names of Pemba are innumerable.

3. The symbolism of the pembele, summarized below, has been studied by S. de Ganay in "Aspect de mythologie et de symbolique bambara."

4. See p. 248.

are engraved in the hollow; below it, two groups of seven lines, divided in the left section into 3 and 4, and in the right /36/ section into 4 and 3. The 22 lines on the left represent Pemba, the creator; the 22 lines on the right, the transmission of his word and his power to Faro. The 22 central lines are "a testimony to the foreknowledge he had of all things (1)," and the symbol of the great works he accomplished at the dawn of creation.

The two groups of 7 lines represent Pemba, 3, and Mousso Koroni, 4, in order to recall how Pemba, originally androgynous, "separated himself from his feminine part so that the two parts might unite as male and female to produce living things"(2).

The wooden plank, in addition, is engraved at each end with 22 notches which are, to the left, Pemba and his words, and to the right, all the words entrusted to the spirits and still unknown to men.

The object, taken as a whole, is the image of the universe: its upper surface, upon which are inscribed the lines, is the sky; its lower surface is the earth; the four sides are the four directions of space. It is also the first grave ever dug for the ancestor; the *sele dẽ* concentrates "the active and latent energies." Here "the *pembele* can be considered as thought which is constantly unfolding and which, starting from its own substance, stretches out into time to entrust itself finally to Faro in the guise of the word" (3).

Finally, the *pembele* summarizes the myth of the creation and organization of the world by the series of 22 lines that decorate it; the duality expressed in the double engraving of 7 lines; its shape, reminiscent of the primeval plank, generator of life on earth; and the wood of which it is made—wood from the *balanza* tree, formerly master of creation.

All these characteristics justify the name of Ngala, god, which is given to the *pembele*, for it possesses in addition all the power and

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1. See S. de Ganay, *Aspect de mythologie et de symbolique bambara*, p. 192.

2. See S. de Ganay, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

3. See S. de Ganay, *op. cit.*, p. 191

776 strength (nyama) of the divinity it represents (1).

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1. That strength is particularly active at the angles of the plank and thus takes on the name boy nyama, "venomous nyama."

778 The pembele is an altar, a guarantee of prosperity, life, and the spiritual and material patrimony of the group to which it belongs. There are different types of pembele: those belonging strictly to families, on which the meat eaten by the family is carved, and those belonging to sanctuaries, which must be engraved with symbolic marks. The small board used for circumcisions bears the same name; it /37/ recalls Mousso Koroni's mutilation on the pembele and the origin of the removal of foreskin and clitoris from the human body (2).

2. See p. 38.

The role of Pemba, as promoter of the force, nyama, which activates all beings, and as the hypostasis of the earth, is illustrated by the ritual use the Bambara made of the pembele which represents Pemba.

[764] After each death, the head of the family gathers the force, nyama, which emanates from the corpse, and entrusts it to the pembele, "which preserves it until a birth occurs in the family." A parallel ritual bestows the force of the dead ancestor on the newborn child (3).

3. See p. 253.

At the time of the ceremonies relating to the large pembele, "all the participants bring a small piece of meat which, after having been placed on the plank, is eaten raw so that fire may not destroy the beneficial nyama emanating from the divinity itself" (4).

4. S. de Ganay, op. cit., p. 199.

Finally, "in cases where it is necessary to obtain a maximum of nyama, infinitesimal slivers of wood are taken from the corners of the board, where its force is concentrated... However, if this practice is abused, the nyama of the earth becomes diminished. It is

●778 understandable that the strength of the large *pembele* should be preserved intact since it represents the world. No ritual concerning it is celebrated alone by the man in charge without the presence of a council of elders. Its four corners can be scraped only under worthwhile circumstances for, according to the informant, the god *pembele* will not tolerate his being used for trifles. As the corners are gradually scraped off and consequently the *nyama* contained in these corners is reduced, the earth becomes worn out. And if the earth should lose its *nyama*, all would be empty of its substance; the millet would still grow but its stalk would yield no grain... women would bear no children, no longer having any *nyama*. Bereft of strength, people would no longer be able to fight. The earth would subsist, but would be sterile" (1).

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1. S. de Ganay, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

The *Balanza*

824 The tree *balanza*, the plant form of Pemba's metamorphosis, vanquished by Faro, is no longer worshipped by men. However, the Bambara's attitude towards it and certain ritual gestures of which it is /38/ sometimes the object, recall the time when, after having spread its domination over all creation, it introduced death to the human species.

[761] In certain settlements, the belief is that whoever rests in its shade
dies, the tree having taken his *dya*. In others, women still make it
[782] offerings of karite oil, despite advice from men who have informed
them of its inefficacy. They lie at its base, simulating illness,
agony, and then death to recall the painful events that have brought
them to men; finally they touch the ground successively with each of
their four principal articulations as a sign of submission, before
smearing the tree trunk with the oil they have brought. In still others,
[843] in order to recall that births used to take place near the tree, pregnant
women are presented by their husbands to the tree to each childbirth.

The fields surrounding the settlements in the region of Ségou are covered profusely with *balanza*. The device of Ségou, which tells of the history of the town, enumerates the names of the trees planted at the time of its founding. This device also mentions *kokuruni* (literally, little humped back), the *balanza* of Banankoroni (pl. I, a),

774 pale. It is manifested by a loss of strength and by illnesses affecting
784 the body openings: the man becomes blind and deaf-mute. He may
827 also become paralyzed. Generally he does not die but is pursued by
ills until he purifies himself.

In addition, the tere changes when it is detached from its normal
774 support; it then becomes nyama, a force which acts outside the body.
Manifest in action, the fact can already be sensed in the spoken word,
the bearer of nyama which immediately affects /63/ the person to
whom it is addressed. The consequences of this action of the word
are manifold.

761 At the time of death, the tere is completely liberated. Transformed
774 into nyama which leaves the body, it then becomes a very active
form which, in certain cases, can attack whomever it considers
778 responsible for the death (1).

1. This very visible but incomplete aspect of the nyama is the one that has been most studied heretofore. On this subject, see the works of the Abbé Henry, Ch. Monteil, H. Labouret, L. Tauxier. Furthermore, in the sky, in space, and on earth, there is a nyama independent of the tere. The nature of this general and vital element has not been completely clarified by investigation.

774 Sacrificial beings, men or animals, or plants for ritual use never
778 release a dangerous nyama. Their spiritual principles and forces
are channeled in the course of the ritual and directed toward the
benefit of a supernatural power through the altar. The same is true
of domestic animals immolated for consumption, in which case their
forces are used over again and their death causes no disorder since
it was foreseen by Faro's law concerning food.

On the other hand, the nyama of the bush animals (nyama bakâ) leave their dead bodies and pursue the hunter (2). To protect himself

2. The sick man may be treated in the following manner: seven (or a multiple of seven) cowrie shells are thrown upon the hide of the animal

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as an offering, which implies an apology with the understanding that the guilty man is given as many blows as there are cowrie shells offered. Next, the hide is soaked in water and washed. It is then secured so that it may not once again run away into the bush. These various operations are performed as often as necessary and until the crisis is over. On the other hand, this purification may be performed as often as necessary, but cannot be renewed in the case of a broken taboo.

the hunter carries an altar, dǒzoboli, suspended from his shoulder. Into it the animal's strength is channeled the moment it dies.

Every individual is, therefore, constantly faced during his lifetime with this active force which is liberated by the word, by certain acts, and by death. He must be in a position to fend off danger, to maintain his own tere which will help him if it is good, but which may on the contrary join the enemy forces and help them in their destruction if it is evil. Therefore, in the latter case the individual tries to change it by seeking the assistance and advice of the Komo diviner. But whatever happens, each individual, whether he wishes it or not, endures the attacks and the presence of numerous and varied nyama, because he has destroyed plants, trodden on insects, and wounded other living beings. Thus, he is at all times the bearer of displaced life forces that are foreign to him. Moreover, these forces find their way /64/ through him to all that he touches. He becomes a center of influences which first exert their action on his person and which he must take into account to maintain his integrity (1).

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1. Although this feeling is very distinct in the mind of the Bambara, it does not make him inactive. The responsibility is only serious in the case of a voluntary act of useless destruction. In all other cases, the rites counteract the inconveniences. The Bambara are responsible, but free.

The wanzo

778 304 The wanzo, an evil force created in the beginning by Mousso Koroni's impurity, was caused by the curse, of which she was the object after her betrayal, and which she communicated to the earth during her underground journey. After she had maimed herself on Pemba while having sexual relations with him, her jealousy pushed her into avenging herself on the women who mated with the balanza. Her madness and despair prompted her to pursue her betrayal to the very end. With nails and teeth she excised and circumcised the men and women she met during her travels. The wanzo she carried about thus penetrated the human species, making the operation necessary for all those to follow. Faro could not remedy this, but his protection is invoked for each child during the operation. The headdress of the circumcised symbolizes the sky and the purifying light.

At birth, each child receives the wanzo, "the word of Mousso Koroni," in its blood and on its skin at the moment of contact with the earth on which it is born. This force, also called kono nyama, "the nyama of the inside," is not to be confused with the tere but is of the same nature and is transmitted to everything the bearer touches. [826] Its seat is mostly in the foreskin of the man and the clitoris of the woman, and it represents the disorder in the individual: "it makes man such that he can live with no one, can stand no one, and cannot stand himself." In addition, it is opposed to fertility.

In order to become a stable individual, to marry, procreate, and to sacrifice, the child must be rid of his wanzo. This is achieved in the course of circumcision or excision and in the rituals that end the seclusion of those operated upon. The greatest part of its force runs into the earth with the blood of the mutilated organ. The rest of it escapes with the smoke of the fire over which the children jump (three or four times according to their sex) before returning to their homes. The act of abandoning their /65/ old clothes and putting on new ones at that time confirms their new status. But the wanzo does not disappear; it is channeled into the masks of the ndomo society to which the uncircumcised belong (1). Similarly, when a child dies before being

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1. See p. 222.

circumcised, appropriate rituals have the effect of channeling the

778 304 *wanzo* and directing it into the mask to prevent it from doing harm (1). Thus, nothing of the individual forces is lost. The *wanzo* itself harmful at the beginning, when properly channeled and directed, serves to consolidate the collective energies of the infantile societies based on it.

[582] Only when an adolescent has lost his *wanzo* is he permitted to marry; any individual would refuse to marry a partner who is not completely rid of it.

The Body

826 The Bambara have a notion of their bodies and the role of the different parts and organs. This notion is all the deeper because it is linked to that of the spiritual principles that animate it.

Indeed, the *tere* is determined by certain visible aspects of the body, while the *ni* and the *dya* also have sexes like the body. Therefore any study should include the links that unite the spiritual elements to the physical body in order to understand properly its state and function.

[841] Blood, which together with breath is the seat of life, is also the vehicle of physical and spiritual forces that circulate with it in the veins and arteries. The blood sacrifice liberates these forces which sustain the altars, the soil, and the beings who receive them. Certain alliances are consecrated by an exchange of blood. The clear color of blood is proof of its purity: all infractions bring about a change and cause it to become pale. Menstrual blood, testimony to Mousso Koroni's impurity and of the momentary sterility of women, is the principal taboo of the supernatural powers that create and protect life.

826 828 827 The head, which contains thought, is an essential part of the individual and his symbol: "the head of the members of society" is represented by a stroke in the course of the rituals performed by members of the Komo or the Kwore. Man grows through his head just as a plant "grows through its head bud" (2). Man's head is protected

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1. See p. 256.

2. The myth mentions the "head of the *balanza*" at the time that men broke the

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4. *Fale kwonda mene šiw, tow bomaw ye dugu sã ka sigi, aw bemaw ya soro ni to ani kala.* Falé, Kwonda, and Méné are the names of ancestors. The device is that of the Tangara of the village of Barbé.

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Moreover, the device also carries a statement of the bearer's genealogy, *burudyu* (1). To say this genealogy is equivalent to "attacking the /77/ ancestors." To speak of them, to quote them, and to tell their exploits honors them and pacifies them. In the course of the recitation "the air emitted by the speaker" is transformed by the power of the spirit, Teliko, into coolness which penetrates the ancestors (2). The same is true for supernatural powers. As soon as the Komo chief recites Faro's *burudyu*, "the air coming out of the chief's mouth is transformed into good *nyama* which penetrates Faro's body through his pupils and ears."

To tell a man his *burudyu* is to honor him greatly. He thinks of his ancestors, their fortune, and their glory; he is proud to be descended from them and is incited to do as well or better than they. The effect of the "good word" described above is due to the indirect but powerful action of the ancestors (3). The recitation by a third party has the effect of maintaining the individual in his being, of making him persevere by affirming it (4), for the device appeals to

1. The word *ši*, meaning race, is used to indicate the *burudyu*, which is comparable to the *dambe* of the Peul of Mopti.

2. *Teliko ba sumaya se u ma.* "Téliko makes coolness come to them."

3. However the soul (*ni*) of the cited ancestors is neither called upon nor displaced by the recitation. It is the vital force, *nyama*, which is put into motion here.

its possessor's soul, ni. If, at this moment, the person flattered is in a normal state, his device causes his "soul to swell and his body to harden, inciting him to courageous action and joy." If the contrary is true, anger or emotion takes the place of contentment and calmness.

The reciter receives in return the strength of the beneficial word which, having contented the person it was addressed to, contents him also. There is an exchange of nyama: that which the reciter sends out and that which he receives in return and from which he benefits.

551 576 778 564 That is why the recitation of the device is not always left to the individual's discretion. Because of its importance, it has become a public function generally reserved for the griot (dyeliw) who form a caste practicing endogamy and who earn their living by getting paid to recite the devices and adulations in daily life as well as during public or religious ceremonies (1). But the fact that they earn a salary for this service affects their dignity: nobody else ever recites the devices because nobody wishes to be taken for a griot, and nobody ever marries him. The griot is at once indispensable, feared, and despised. The mechanism of forces put into motion by his action makes it possible to understand the ambivalence of feelings of which he is the object.

/78/ When the words come out of his mouth, the griot's tere is transformed into nyama, which becomes filled with a force called kuma nyamu, "nyama of words." This force goes from the head to the mouth of the speaker and reaches the person addressed. If a man is wealthy and powerful, it is said that he gets the "nyama from the mouth of those griot who flatter him." He is then forced to pay them for their encouragement. If he does not, they remain silent when

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551 576 778 4. This effect is already obtained by the simple repetition of the family name with which one greets a man upon meeting him. It is common to hear the Blacks greet each other by repeating their dyamu to each other several times.

1. The recitation given by anyone other than the griot would be far from producing the same effect.

551 passing before his door and thus empty him of his *nyama*. The man
576 grows thin and poor. The *griot* may bring about his death with evil
•778 words, their *nyama* attacking the heart, the chest, then the entire
564 body of the victim.

The *griot*'s power over the person he flatters becomes more involved and varies according to what he is reciting. If he recites the *burudyu* several times, if he speaks at length of the ancestors, their *nyama* enters his mouth and is added to his own, thus reinforcing the power of the word. Thus, when the *griot* recites a *barama* without receiving payment, his *nyama* attacks the person spoken to. If this offense is repeated and if the *burudyu* is recited, the man is forced to pay if he does not wish to be attacked by the much more formidable *nyama* of the ancestors.

In these various situations, the *tere* of the person flattered intervenes: if it is good, it fights to defend the person, but if it is weak or wicked, it joins the ancestral forces and the person is doubly threatened.

The recitation is always made by the *griot* before a witness so that his action will be more binding and make the miser lose face. On the other hand, a man who pays the *griot* generously is looked after by the latter who sings of his generosity on all occasions and announces the sum he has received; often he does not hesitate to exaggerate the total amount received if he can hope to profit by doing so (1).

[789] 1. If the *griot* knows that the wealthy man he is addressing is miserly, he rubs his teeth with roots which he knows has the power to make his words even more effective.

[554] Sometimes a man reaches a secret agreement with the *griot* in order to gain prestige. He publicly gives him a considerable sum, part of which the *griot* returns the following day as agreed upon. The gift is so generous that none can surpass it.

[585 561] This practice is particularly apparent at the time of marriage. The men of the same age grade as the groom outdo each other in their gifts to the *griot*. The one who has given most passes for the most generous. Sometimes the *griot* invents a new *barama* on the spot even though he does not know the device.

551 The device is recited on numerous occasions. After a birth, the
576 griot proclaim it in the course of the name-giving ceremony, address-
778 ing themselves to the father, then to the newborn child /79/ who thus
564 receives it for the first time. At a marriage the barama of the two
partners are alternatly recited. In everyday life, the recitation is
carried on most frequently during religious ceremonies or feasts. In
the hunt or at war, it has the effect of helping the participants and increasing their courage (1). In a meeting it is used to greet people bearing the same name, and if one of the assistants is to be particularly honored, the first words of his device are recited.

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755 In case of illness, the ally (senãnku) (2) comes to the patient's side and recites his barama to encourage him and help him get well. If he is dying, the recitation, which is then the equivalent of a prayer, may help his soul return. After death, the ally, the griot, and the
[764] blacksmiths come near the corpse to recite his barama in order to honor him.

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539 The devices pertaining to the various crafts are used when addressing the artisan with whom one has business. Thus the blacksmith to whom one brings work is greeted first by his name to which is then added:

"ini fara ani goni, you are with stone and fire."

A person crossing a field will say to the farmer bent over the earth: "i ni tye i ba ka kusebe daba, greeting to him who handles the hoe well," or simply: "i ni tye daba la, greeting to him who is with the hoe." To the shoemaker one would say: "bana ani ba golo, (you are) with the acacia (3) and the goat leather."

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[727] 1. If the griot recites it to a war chief and the town under attack is taken, he receives part of the loot.

2. See p. 119.

[386] 3. This refers to the bana or boina (Acacia arabica) used by the shoemaker to make a black dye.

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851 each twin is the dya of the other and that this term means "shadow of the body," "spiritual double," as well as "balance." To trade is dyago.

845 Three or four days after the name-giving ceremony, depending on
301 their sex, the twins are given bracelets of white metal representing
[531] their dya. Geometrical symbols of the universe, the sky and the earth, are engraved on each of these (1). The opening of the bracelet represents that of the incomplete terrestrial world. When the twins die
[766] they will be buried with the bracelets closed over their arms or their ankles to signify that they have penetrated a complete and closed world. Formerly the sacrifices to Faro were carried out with ornaments
845 borrowed from a twin. The person making the sacrifice presented
301 them to the /87/ river while saying: "The iron of the twins is witness
782 to the sacrifice offered to Faro." (2) After the ceremony, everyone gave white kola nuts to the twin; the interested party then went to the village square and waved in the air his arms bedecked with ornaments to spread to the four cardinal points Faro's beneficial nyama acquired in the course of the sacrifice. In certain areas twins wear a pendant in the shape of double slave fetters, called dyõ neke, "irons of the captive," or an amulet called sinzin, "support," composed of a little piece of wood carved in the shape of a double cup and preferably made by a Bozo. A man who has had twins three times
●[778] must acquire a double pot which is always kept full of water and which becomes the object of an annual sacrifice (3).

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1. This figure is formed by a rectangle divided into two equal superposed squares, including a multiplication sign in the lower square to represent the earth, and an open v in the upper square to represent the sky.

2. Flani neke ye ma šere ye faro sõni la.

3. See p. 124, n. 1.

845 Up to the time they are twelve, the children bathe themselves preferably in the Niger. They supposedly can walk on water and never run the risk of drowning.

The twins do not become separated from each other any more than
the dya is separated from the living being to which it is attached.
They wear the same clothes and eat the same food simultaneously.
Formerly male twins married the same woman. If one of them dies
845 at an early age, the blacksmith carves a small wooden doll called
778 flanitokele, which takes the name of the deceased and which the
mother puts on the mat next to the living child. The latter takes this
doll with him at the time of his circumcision and keeps it during the
period of his seclusion in order to bring it back to the parental home
whence it is never removed. When he marries, he sticks the doll
into the earth along with another piece of wood symbolizing the wife
of the deceased. Since twins are in a sense a living replica of Faro,
none can bother them without showing disrespect to him. On the other
hand, they are the object of attention and precaution on the part of
their family as well as their neighbors. Their presence is always
beneficial. Considered invulnerable, twins used to march ahead of
[728] troups in times of war and would serve as inviolable intermediaries
between the warring parties during truce.

The Hermaphrodite

826 The hermaphrodite, being both male and female, is to all extent and purpose his own twin. Consequently, he has no dya (1).

[825
304] 1. The hyena is considered a hermaphrodite; it can engender or conceive, depending on its size and strength: "the stronger impregnating the weaker." A tattooing system is based upon this belief.

/88/ The Albino

[143] Albinos of light or reddish skin and red hair are called gombele or yepege, this latter term being reserved for those who show the most accentuated characteristics.

826 The albino is supposedly born of sexual relations which took place
833 in the middle of the day when the sun is in the koblenkaba, sky of

826 [833] Faro's wrath—a fact which constitutes a serious breaking of taboo. The consequence of this is to coalesce in the maternal womb the twins originally granted to the woman by Faro and to decolorize the skin of the being thus formed. Because of this fact, the albino, the embodiment of twins, does not inherit the spiritual princples of a deceased person and is also a new being given to men by Faro. But the impurity he has acquired increases tenfold his tere and his wanzo, [304] which are so active that the circumciser must sacrifice on his own personal altars before performing the operation. From the ambivalence of the albino, originally of the same essence as Faro but fallen because of the impurity transmitted by his parents, stem various customs and representations. (1).

> 1. This ambivalence is also at the root of the belief that the albino is a being formerly provided with wings and able to fly (see p. 68, a quality he lost after his contact with the impure soil.

826 ●778 His body is believed to be endowed with special powers. The person who owns his skull will have a numerous family and prosperity; his hair brings wealth; the marrow of his bones provides gold and copper. If he is made to sit at a place where bones are buried, whatever one asks for is granted. His excrements, mixed with seed, have the effect of increasing the harvest for the year.

826 782 Because of the value attributed to the albino he is a choice victim for the sacrifices to Faro. His nyama is such that he can be sacrificed without prayer, the act itself constituting an efficacious invocation. Lacking living albinos, men often tried to appropriate the remains of a buried body.

/89/

Chapter 4

SACRIFICE AND THE ALTAR

782 To call upon spiritual forces and to influence them, the Bambara use prayer, offering, and sacrifice. They perform oral and manual

the altar. At the time men gave the *balanza* their blood, they would let it dry and then, licking the trunk with their tongue, would reclaim it after it was rid of the element constituting the offering. All their active forces passed into the tree and a substance almost totally lacking in vitality was returned to them.

782 The blood sacrifices which were originally instituted on the trunk of the *balanza* are actually performed in the most varied sites: earth, trees, ponds, wells, etc. Moreover, as the Bambara developed their technology, they would sacrifice on those objects, utensils, or contrivances which they discovered or invented such as the forge and its tools, the loom, and agricultural implements.

782 The Bambara also have altars which may be classified into three categories:

778 1. The wood stumps called *pembele*, which represent Pemba. Many heads of families or of religious societies keep one of these (1).

A unique sanctuary at Massala is a pilgrimage center for Bambara from all regions who come in great numbers to take part in the annual sacrifice. Besides *pembele*, it contains two large pots, *da*, covered with sacrificial blood, which give the sanctuary its name. It is in this place that ordeals are executed, judicial questions settled, and serious illnesses treated.

2. The altars, made of stones crudely cut and occasionally engraved, have their origin in a mythical stone, issued out of the seventh part of the earth, and situated under the mound where Faro's female twins were born. Having a red color, it was itself a symbol of sacrifice. It divided itself and gave birth to all other sacrificial stones (Fig. 5 and Pl. V. b).

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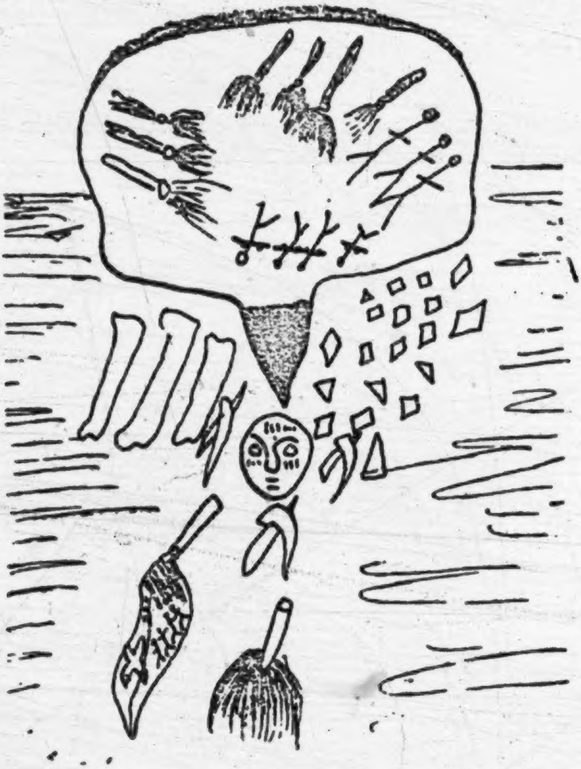
826
[171]
3. The mechanism of blood sacrifice among the Bambara is comparable to that observed among the Dogon and described by M. Griaule, "Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice dogon (Soudan Français) /Remarks on the Mechanism of Dogon Sacrifice (French Sudan)/, " *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*. Vol. 10, 1940, pp. 127 ff.

1. See p. 77 for a description of the *pembele* altars.

782 /91/ Actually the altars from the region of Ségou originate mostly
● 778 in Toko, a settlement situated to the south of the town where the king's
326 blacksmiths lived. The ancestor of these blacksmiths is buried in the
rocks which border Toko and from which the stones used as altar are carved. If a village chief wants to obtain one he sends a delegate to Toko. This emissary receives from the blacksmith the stone appropriate to the function of the altar and the quality of the person



[532 769] Fig. 5.—Stone altar, fara ba, of Banankoroni, consecrated to ancestors. It is stuck into the ground above the skull and bones of an albino, hoes, and a circumcision knife. The ritual drawing traced during the ceremonies of the renewal of the year represents the torches and the whips of the Kworè, 3 men and 4 women, which recall the number 7, image of the creation (Informant's drawing).

782 778 [326] requesting it. Thus, a black stone is given to those who have broken a /92/ taboo, a stone of two colors to a stranger, and the red stone "rounded and polished by the ancestors" to those whom one wishes to honor.

The stone altars which are innumerable (both private and public ones) generally represent the ancestors. When they are placed in the fields they receive the sacrifices offered in their name for helping the crops. At the intersection of narrow roads and on the public square, they assure the stability of ancestral customs.

3. The Bambara also sacrifice on manufactured objects which bear the general name of boli (literally, to run) and which are the equivalent of the altars although they are of an entirely different nature than the preceding ones. Their origin is different. To the initiates they originate in the twelfth bangini which gave birth to the day (see pp. 30-31). In the shape of "globules" they were released in space by Faro as he descended to the earth; they were collected by the spirits of the air and of the ground into which some of them penetrated, and were later given to men (1).

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173 782 778 1. The popular belief has it that the eight principal boli of the Bambara were brought back from Mecca by the famous Makanta Djigui, a personage whose name is cited in numerous prayers (particularly in the course of the ceremonies of the Komo).
L. Tauxier attributes this tradition to Islam influence under the reign of Soundiata's successor, Malinké Kankan Moussa, who made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324 (La Religion bambara, p. 287, n. 3).

The name of Makanta Djigui is cited in the device (burudyu) of the Komo: the chiefs of this important society carry their altars each year to the shore of the Niger near the village of Tikko on the spot where the historical canoe which transported him is said to have sunk.

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● 178
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It is possible that this figure played the role of a religious legislator by codifying certain beliefs and founding associations around the boli which, according to qualified informants, existed before his intervention. On this point see also L. Tauxier, La Religion bambara, p. 287, n. 3.

The versions of the voyage of Makanta Djigui, which the natives readily tell, are innumerable. See the Abbé Henry, L'Âme d'un peuple africain: les Bambara /The Soul of an African People: The Bambara/, pp. 131-133: Ch. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta /The Bambara of Ségou and of Kaarta/, p. 170; D. Traore, Makanta Djigui, fondateur de la magie soudanaise /Makanta Djigui, Founder of Sudanese Magic/, pp. 23-25.

We have collected two versions of this episode, which we do not feel useful for presentation in this study.

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The boli, also called nyana, are made with the most diverse materials: hyena tails, peppers, honey, coal, precious metals, parts of the body. Each element has its value, and its use is determined by its place in the categories: the time of its manufacture is also important. But whatever its composition, each boli, whose name expresses the universal movement of things, is a combination of elements representing the parts of the universe (1). /93/ It is,

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1. At the present stage of this investigation the classification by categories of materials or elements composing the Bambara universe has only been outlined. It is only after the completion of this study that the exact role given the elements composing the boli will become clear and that the problem of the origin of these altars can be considered.

178 182 therefore, the symbol of the universe and the receptacle of the forces which animate it. These forces, already very powerful at the time the *boli* is made, are constantly kept up, increased by the additions received in the course of the blood sacrifices of which the *boli* is the object. It becomes a concentration of forces, which gives back in proportion to that which it receives and of which the owner is the first beneficiary.

A *boli* is also an intermediate agent, permitting one to reach a supernatural power—an ancestor or a living being who impregnates it with strength by coming to consume the offering over it. Through the spilled blood, this strength reenters the victim as well as the sacrificer if he partakes of it.

Therefore a *boli* contains:

A part of the soul (*ni*) and the force (*nyama*) of the being to whom it is consecrated.

The *ni* and the *nyama* of the victims offered to it.

The *nyama* of individuals who, having broken the taboos dictated by the divinity, have died as a result.

The Bambara differentiate two kinds of *boli*: the most numerous, whose power is relatively benign, called *soni* (literally, to give little); and those which contrariwise are charged with powerful, truly dangerous forces, called *saraka* (1). The latter, by their power alone, supposedly kill the victims offered them without making it necessary to cut the victim's throat. It suffices to present to them the victims while reciting an appropriate prayer to make the victims die. It is then said that the "*boli* has made the blood come out" and this death is equivalent to a blood sacrifice (2). These *boli* also attack those whom a person has vowed to persecute.

It is said that a *boli* "is hot and has a dry throat" and that is why occasionally the ritual includes collecting the blood in a gourd in which [the *boli*] is allowed to soak.

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1. The *čuafebla* is a *soni*; the *mbe ndyugu ka* is a *saraka* (see pp. 175 and 176).

2. If the victim does not die fast enough, the person offering sacrifice may "insult" the altar to force it to act.

778 Some boli are individual, sometimes inherited from an ancestor
782 and consecrated to their owner whose strength they maintain. Others
are collective and consecrated to supernatural powers which protect
the life of the community.

The taboos relating to beings whose soul "impregnates" the boli
778 and to the elements which compose them are decreed at the time /94/
782 of their making. They must be scrupulously respected by those re-
784 sponsible and by those officiating. The boli are generally placed in a sheltered spot either in sanctuaries or in an isolated room of the house, which no one enters without the permission of those responsible. This is done in order to avoid the dangers resulting from broken taboos which would affect the integrity of the boli as well as that of its owners. The handling of the boli, dangerous as it is, is restricted to priests, to the head of the family, or to the owner.

782 Victims most commonly offered on all altars are domestic animals such as fowl, cattle, sheep, and goats. However, on the altars of hunters and those of the uncircumcised, only wild animals are immolated.

The color of the victim is determined by the quality of the being
to which it is consecrated as well as by the altar itself. Animals of
[822] a red color are generally killed on the boli of religious societies,
thereby increasing the nyama which they contain. White, the symbol of light and purity, is reserved for Faro.

The death of the victim is used as an occasion for divination.
782 The throat is cut in such a way as to prolong the death struggle so
787 that the officiating person may interpret the position of the body.
The cutting process is followed by eating which has the function of communion. Furthermore, certain parts of the body (the liver) are left on the altar; others such as the jawbone, feathers, and hair are kept as tokens by the person offering the sacrifice.

The ritual is usually accompanied by offerings of boiled millet as
782 "refreshment," since the blood is given to the altar as a nourishment.
Kola nuts, chosen for their shape and color, are divided into two portions: the officiating person chews one half and spits it out onto the altar before eating the other half.

In former times, human sacrifice was also practiced. These took place in serious cases involving the kingdom, the king, or the chiefs. The usual victim was the albino.

773 The first forged tool, the kongobwona (literally, to abandon hunger),
564 is still used by blacksmiths today as a ritual axe (Fig. 9, E).

326 It is made up of a wooden handle terminating in an enlargement
412 which forms its bulk, and pierced by a bent iron rod which in turn
holds the cutting edge (farabye) of the axe proper. The handle is very long, allowing the man to work without bending over.

The tool justifies its name for it brought prosperity to the craftsmen. The symbolism of the different sections shows this: the enlarged part of the consecrated model, which each blacksmith keeps on his altar and which is the object of regular rituals, is hollowed out and holds money, millet, and copper. The iron rod which pierces it represents at its lower extremity the tongue of the oldest of the Gwonna, and at its upper extremity that of the youngest, thus recalling the actions and the words of those who discovered the metal for the benefit of all.

Later, blacksmiths manufactured other models of iron axes and hoes, copying those previously used, but reducing their size.

Each day the end piece of the wooden hoes was abandoned at the crossroads after they had been used in honor of the local spirit. The worker kept only the handle and carved a new tool for the following day. The handles of hoes and axes were considered to be people because they were impregnated with the vital force of those who held them. The farmer left the cutting edge (of stone or iron) in his field and brought home the handle which he placed on his mat at night.

[782] Weapons and tools were the objects of regular sacrifices. The handle was removed and the blood of victims would flow first into the hole used to secure it, then on the cutting edge, while the officiating person recited a prayer.

773 Today, the assemblages of ancient tools are called makorobaw ka
564 minew (literally, tools of the great ancestor). Considered as the
326 most respectable and precious /119/ testimony of their civilization,
412 models of each object are kept in sanctuaries called makoroba so
778 (literally, house of the ancestors) which are generally natural caves
or holes dug in the ground, reminiscent of primitive habitations. These tools are identified with the ancestors who used them and who were, long before the organization of religious societies, the object of a regular cult. That is why, in deference to this fundamental hierarchy, they are presented to the circumcised in front of the family altars (1) at the time of the initiation of the Komo. Similarly, they

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1. Particularly in the village of Konodimini in the Ségou region.

773 are removed from the sanctuaries, honored, and replaced before the
564 Komo altars during the agricultural and funerary rituals; to fail to ob-
326 serve this rule would constitute the breaking of a taboo and entail
412 the most serious disorders.
778

In the course of the annual ceremony consecrating the dead, these tools are carried to the cemetery and receive as many victims as do the dead, for they represent the ancestors.

The *kotigi* brings them to the same place on two other occasions: during the agricultural ceremonies carried on after the growth of the ear of corn and after threshing the harvest. Axes and hoes are presented one by one at the tombs of the dead and then, reunited in the center of the cemetery, each of them is used once to cut a branch or to dig the soil. This ritual gesture recalls the use which the ancestors made of them.

The Forge

326 The blacksmith establishes his workshop under a shed, usually
826 located in one of the squares or at the entrance to the village. It is
the simplest of its kind and involves a minimum of equipment. The forge represents the craftsman: the furnace his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red hot metal is beaten with the hammer, a replica of the *gosilǎnde*, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and thunder bolts.

326 The altar of the forge, sometimes situated to the west of the hearth,
778 contains blackened hoe, pickaxe and axe handles, coal (*fininkoro*,
literally, old coal) ashes kneaded with clay (*buguri*, literally, ashes of the hearth), all of which belonged to former owners, and finally an axe *kongobwona* called "mother of the altar, " a smaller replica of the ancestral axes.

The bulk of the wood which holds the iron hooks and the blade /120/ is hollowed out and forms a kind of storage divided into three compartments.

The upper one contains money so that whatever happens, the blacksmith will have means to live.

In the central compartment are placed copper and iron, metals which the blacksmith works, as well as water, basic element and preferred seat of Faro, master of the word.

326 The lower compartment contains millet from a field called
778 kongobwona foro, reserved for the needs of the cult of the forge. This
243 land is placed under the guardianship of the patriarch belonging to
the Gwonna family, and its upkeep is assured by the community. The seeds are given by each blacksmith to the old man who sows them himself. The work of cultivation and threshing is done communally. The millet is stored in the old man's granary and each blacksmith receives a share. This share is not eaten, but is put aside. From time to time the artisan takes a few seeds which he places as an offering, on his altar, and which remain for a time in the compartment reserved for them; then they are considered to have been eaten by the axe and are removed and replaced by others. Part of the millet is kept as seed for the following year.

326 Each compartment is open and the blacksmith may insert his
778 fingers; if his earnings are insufficient, he rubs his body and tongue
789 with the hand which he has just dipped into the pocket containing
money; the price, set by the spoken word, will not be questioned by the client. If he goes to work in his field, he places his hand into the millet each morning to draw upon the strength it contains and to improve the results of his agricultural work. If he burns himself while working at the forge, he dips his fingers into the third compartment and cools himself in Faro's water. It is this same water which a young artisan must drink at the beginning of his apprenticeship.

326 The triangular iron, farabye, which constitutes the axe proper is
778 placed under the power of three spirits belonging to the group of air
776 spirits: Agayru who revealed iron to men; Tengu who taught them
Faro's supremacy; and Gullé. The first two are the masters of the bellows and direct the work as a whole; the third does their bidding and teaches men the technology of ironwork (1). When the owner of the altar dies, the /121/ axe is removed and placed in the village
428 sanctuary where the ancestral tools are kept. But the remaining objects are inherited by the son.

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1. The spirit would have refused to teach the blacksmiths the working of copper and gold, as these two metals belonged to Faro who reserved for himself the right to use them. Since iron was black he had abandoned its use to the spirits of the air.

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In addition, in each blacksmith's home, a replica of the kongobwona axe preserved in the common sanctuary, constitutes the family altar, passed on from father to son, on which the interested party offers to his ancestors regular or occasional sacrifices. Sometimes it also possesses a small iron plate upon which is engraved a drawing representing the creation and in particular the "spirals of the creative spirit at the cardinal angles," the multiplication sign, etc. The angles of this object are drawn up to indicate that the world is lifting itself up, awakening, and constantly reviving.

The forges of the village artisans are generally grouped in a public square, around a large anvil, kula, held in a wooden piece forming its base and buried deep in the ground (Pl. IV, b). In front of this communal anvil judicial affairs are settled, such as marriages or broken agreements; before it vows are pronounced and solemn promises are made to the boli. It is also here that the purifications for breaking taboos take place.

The blacksmiths are also communal owners of a certain number of ritual objects which are usually kept by the kotigi and brought out for religious ceremonies. Among these, the nege dyun (literally, mother of iron) (1) is a lump of iron forged in the likeness of the semẽkala (see Fig. 9, B), on which the kotigi draws small lines. Some of these lines represent the heads of each of the Gwonna blacksmiths; others, well separated from the first, recall the heads of the artisans belonging to other families. The whole symbolizes the total number of blacksmiths in the village. The nege dẽ (literally, son of iron) is a ritual bell also decorated with lines representing members of the blacksmith families.

After it has been made, the nege dyun is placed in the sanctuary of ancestral tools. It remains there two or three months in order to become saturated with the strength of the ancestors and from time to time receives the blood of sacrifices performed at night. It is after this period that it is placed with the nege dẽ in the kotigi's home.

Each artisan offers individual sacrifices on the kongobwona axe kept in his home as well as on the objects /122/ contained in the altar of his forge: at the same time his tools receive libations of boiled millet mash.

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1. Dyun means "mother" in archaic language.

326 778 196 In addition, each year the blacksmiths join together and offer a sacrifice on the communal anvil. All tools are placed around it, overflowed with the blood of the victims.

An annual ceremony which also brings the craftsmen together has the purpose of asking Faro to help in the cooling of the wrought iron and to give the water into which the iron is dipped the strength to fulfill its function. Assembled before the kotigi's forge, they bring a certain number of tomatoes which are first presented to the altar, then to the ancestral axe farakun on which each one in turn licks with his tongue.

Keeping their mouths closed so as not to let the strength thus gathered escape, they all walk toward the river, while one of the [534 participants strikes up, on the ritual bell (nege dẽ) with a lump of 533] (nege dyun), the rhythm called klide fo (literally, rhythm of the sons of the testicles) (1) addressed to the one-arm blacksmith, the bolokuruni, Faro's companion. Once on the bank, the kotigi undresses and throws himself into the water. When re reappears on the surface, all the participants open their hands the better to seize the strength of Faro and his companion, which the man is supposed to bring back. They rush to help him dress and the one who succeeds in touching him believes he receives Faro's special favors.

The tomatoes are then squashed into a gourd and the pulp is thrown into the river at a deep spot where each participant draws water and drinks to communicate with Faro. The group then returns, bringing back in the gourd a little water into which each one dips his individual axe, starting with the patriarch who, at the end of the ceremony, drinks up the rest.

326 778 842 If a woman is sterile, she asks the help of the three spirits protecting the forge as they have the reputation of being very prolific. Without her presence, the blacksmith crouches before the altar with his hands spread out, his head lowered, and prays. The woman must then swear to respect scrupulously the taboo of the invoked spirits, which is to pronounce their name. She may also ask the blacksmith to implore the help of the ritual ashes of the altar.

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[522] 1. Kli dẽ, "son of the testicle, " is one of the ritual jokes addressed to the blacksmiths by their senãnku.

Pottery

323 113 The ancient Bambara did not know about pottery. At the time they lived in caverns, they let their meat dry in the sun on the rocks. Next, they manufactured receptacles by hollowing out stones, of which certain unused millstones /125/ seen today are copies. When they had invented fire, they cooked meat by spitting it with skewers of green sunzun wood and by exposing it to flames and live coals.

Later, they shaped and dried vessels of coarse clay, imitating the hollowed-out stones. One of these vessels, which was exposed to the fire in order to cook the food it contained, was observed to have changed color, hardened, and become more resistant. In this way they developed the technology of making pottery at a time when they still had only wooden tools.

323 326 778 575 Since this technology is related to the invention of fire, the wives of the blacksmiths were the first to practice it.(1). Today they form a society (tõ) in each village and own many altars entrusted to the care of the head of the society.

The principal altar, the dyo kala, which represents the thumb of the potters, is made of wood carved in the shape of a thumb and engraved with symbolic lines. To learn her trade, each initiate is lightly touched on the head with it. The head of the society spills her blood over it in the case of a broken taboo affecting the society. But its principal function is to be the receptacle for the spiritual forces of the group: upon a member's death, this object, placed upon the corpse, gathers up the soul which escapes from the body.

[252] In certain villages, the pots with holes, ñintin, used for cooking couscous, are placed near the village upon the pile of ashes from the great hearth where the pots are fired (see Pl. IV, a); they also serve as altars at the time when the potters are consecrated.

323 561 575 Since her childhood the potter, following the example of her seniors, practices kneading and shaping little pots, bokofani (literally, little clay pots). After excision at the required age, she joins

1. The different techniques of pottery making were supposedly revealed to the village of Gwondougou (see p. 155) by the Soba spirits of the crossroads.

/128/ Chapter 6

THE CULTS

194 The purpose of the Bambara cults, whether they are of individuals, families, or villages, is to promote the functioning of the universe in an orderly way, which includes the preservation and conservation of individuals and the whole community in their spiritual or material forms.

The following chapter is not exhaustive. We have described a certain number of cults selected from the most representative. Under their apparently diverse aspects, shown in their purposes as well as in their modes, all are integrated into the system of Bambara thought.

I. Individual and Family Cults

●778 194 Over individual altars sheltered within the family enclosure or preserved in the private room (česo) of their owner, the rituals of "maintaining self" are practiced. They assure the stability of physical (čuafebla, čuafebyeni) and social (dyamana tigi ǰigi) forces; they afford protection outside dangers (mbe ndyugu kā); they are the temporary containers of souls at the time of death (kere la boli ni).

Since man must, in many circumstances of his life, remedy any depletion of his strength, these altars represent repositories, relays, in which at least certain elements of his being are integrated. They permit him to regroup or revitalize his physical or psychical forces for his own well-being as well as for that of the community.

A. The česo

In the homes the movable altars are kept in a room called česo (literally, house of man), which is reserved for the /129/ owner and which contains, besides his weapons and agricultural implements, family altars, either collective or individual (1) depending upon

1. The following description is that of the house of Tětè, an important citizen of Banankoroni.

118 whether he is head of a family, head of a religious society, or a
794 bachelor.

These objects are hung from the ceiling or hidden away in corners from the looks of people and the risks of impurity. The walls of the room, daubed up to a third of their height /130/ with black earth,

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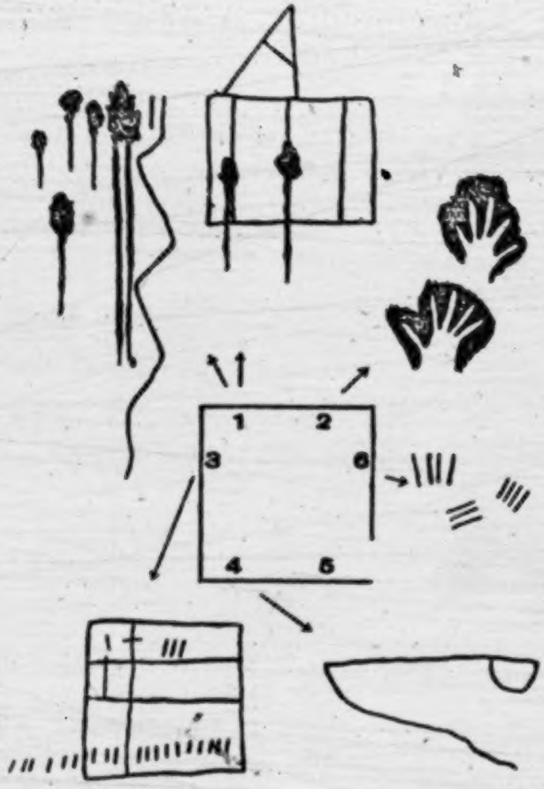

Fig. 10 — Diagram of the *česo* of Tètè, important citizen of Banankoroni and reproduction of the drawings on the walls: 1. The ancestors and their home. 2. The hands of the living. 3. The sky, space, the earth, and the 22 categories. 4. The Komo's whip. 5. A red stain. 6. The owner (three) and his two wives (four and four).

symbolizing Faro's presence and protection, are covered with paintings and drawings.

778 On one of the walls, small lines representing the ancestors and a
794 broken line representing the human person are drawn with millet mash;
on another, engraved with a sharp point, is a schematic geometrical
532 figure of the ancestral home; it is accompanied by the silhouettes of
two hands (see Fig. 10, 1 and 2), the hands of the living, "crossed
and reaching out to the world of the dead." The left hand, symbol
[826] of disorder, incertitude, and the variations of human conscience,
is placed below to the right of the other to recall man's obligation
towards his right hand, symbol of order, righteousness, fidelity, and
work (1). Thus arranged, the hands express complete submission of the living to the ancestors.

Farther away are drawn the divisions of the universe (Fig. 10, 3) with the help of a square divided into three compartments symbolizing from top to bottom: the sky and water, the air, the earth.

In the upper square to the left, a line represents Faro in all his power, sole master of sky, water, and life. A horizontal line recalls his domination over the world. The lines that follow are his children. The total indicates the feminine form of the spirit.

All individual or family sacrifices offered to Faro are performed over his sign which the officiator rubs with copper and crushed tomatoes in order "to thank the spirit who protects his dya, and to pray to the spirit to give his wife children."

The central rectangle is the domain of Téliko: air and wind. The small line which vertically bisects the square on the left represents the spirit attempting to penetrate into Faro's plan to vanquish him. His defeat is indicated by the fact that the major portion of the line is situated in Téliko's domain, since the latter violated only temporarily the boundaries of his adversary.

The lower rectangle outlines the earth, seat of the Soba spirits. The row of 22 short lines which covers it recalls the 22 elements of creation, "the 22 things indispensable to man in this world."

On another wall, fire is indicated by two whips: that of Faro, lightning, and that of Komo, the law. They also recall "the power

1. In making this drawing the following words are repeated: "I place my right hand on the wall night and day," *neben* *kinin* *bolo* *da* *koko* *la* *šu* *ni* *kle*.

778 794 532 of the initiates' word" and are exposed to fire to increase this power (Fig. 10, 4). Beside them, /131/ a large red stain, *dyoli ǰikin*, painted in ochre, states that man is the sacrificer, that the cult has immolation as its basis. Of such a man it is said that: "he reckons with the proof of the blood (1)" (Fig. 10, 5).

Above the bed which consists of a simple mat placed on the ground, three engraved lines symbolize the man and two four lines the two women who alternately share his bed (Fig. 10, 6).

778 794 532 413 In certain villages, the drawings are made by an instrument called *ngwoni*, used during the rituals of the year's "renewal" (2).

The point of baobab wood, which is used for engraving, is as slim as a slat and fits on to a kind of racket made of *sunzuñ* wood which holds a net of *da* fibers. The hide of a male goat, called *soni wolo ni* (literally, soul of the skin of sacrifice), and two handles of *ngolobe* wood (3) complete the assemblage. The net, made of sixteen cotton threads dyed with red ochre, kolo, is called *ngwoni kene ba* (literally, great space of the *ngwoni*) and represents Faro.

778 794 532 Before being used, the instrument is washed with water which will be used later to cook the food for the family. Next, tomatoes are pressed on the net and the juice runs into the hide which forms a pocket; holding the point in the right hand and the handle in the left, one then makes the drawings on the wall of the *česo*. The seeds of the fruit remain in the pouch until the following year to serve as a testimony to the offering. Next, with a red hot knife the following lines are engraved on the object: four lines, representing Faro, and two 16 lines, multiples of four, the female symbol. After each cut, "a rag saturated with fresh water is placed on it to soothe the pain." The frame is saturated with kola nut extract and four dots, the womb of women, are also marked with a black stone, *kolofin*. An egg is then smashed on the object to "refresh the soul of the ensemble."

1. *Dyoli tamaše mine ba*.

2. Particularly at Banankoroni.

3. *Combretum michrantum*.

B. The Altars

178 194 Each family head wears a small altar called kere la boli ni (literally, little side altar), which maintains relations with the souls of the members of the family for which he is, in part, responsible. /132/ In case of illness he offers sacrifices on this boli for the recovery of the patient. In case of death, he keeps the soul in it temporarily before carrying it to the collective altar of the Komo (1). He also sacrifices on this altar at the time of sowing.

If the family head is himself very ill, the altar is placed on his [763] head in an effort to replace the soul which is escaping with that which the altar contains. If he dies, it is placed on his chest to take in the [764] soul which is then transported to the sanctuary of the Komo. At the end of seven days, the object is given to the deceased's eldest son who, upon becoming family head, sacrifices two goats to the Komo on this occasion.

The čuafebla (literally, worn at the hip) is made by a father for his son when the latter attains maturity and is on the point of leading a man's life, farming his own field and founding a family.

If there is no Komo in the village, the father may make it earlier, right after the name-giving ceremony.

The altar is made of hyena tails, scorpion tails, and whole peppers tied with a little stick; it represents the owner's flesh and blood.

It receives an annual sacrifice at the time of sowing after the collective offering tothe Komo. This takes place in the family courtyard in the presence of all the members of the family (2). Moreover,

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1. The society, the altars, and the role of the Komo are described on pages ff.

178 194 773 241 2. The cult rendered on this altar brings the intervention of the Sago spirit whose agricultural role is still obscure at the present stage of the inquiry. He taught men how to water their fields.

"Two birds konodyanfi began to circle and sing above the workers in the fields;

> 778 the latter abandoned their hoes in order
> 194 to watch them. The birds fetched water
> 173 with their beaks on the shore of a neighboring pond and returned to pour it at
> 241 the foot of a millet stalk, the ear of which
> was not yet formed. The men put a mark
> on this stalk in order to recognize it and
> later observed that it produced a finer ear
> than the others. Imitating the bird, they
> dampened their plantings and watered their
> fields; their harvest was considerably improved by it. They kept up this habit and,
> in acknowledgment, produced a cult to
> the Sago spirit whose emissaries the birds
> were and who comes to slake his thirst at
> the *čuafebla*."

778 194 it is the object of sacrifices when important business is being handled: marriage, private or administrative action, fight against an epidemic.

[428] A son may inherit his father's altar and keep it with his own which he wears tied to his hip.

The *čuafebyẽni* (literally, little horn at the hip) is composed of a cowrie, taken from Faro's granary, copper which is the altar's soul /133/ (*ni*), pepper, charcoal, and honey. This mixture is introduced into a ram's horn decorated with cowries at its opening and often wrapped in a red cloth bearing the same ornamentation.

[782] The altar is consecrated on those of the Komo, over which it is passed seven times. The throats of victims are cut, their blood is collected in a gourd, and the *boli* dipped into it three times before being taken out in the sun to dry.

Its role is one of protection. Its owner carries it during the Komo ceremonies to defend himself against spells, *korti*, which may be cast by someone in the audience.

It also maintains the integrity of its owner's forces. If the latter faints or goes into a trance, he is returned to his normal state by completely renewing the ingredients which constitute it. When the horn is emptied of its contents, "both the soul of the altar and that of the man" are removed. The container is rinsed out with water from the

778 Niger after which the reconstitution of the altar is carried on and is
794 equivalent to "the taking on a new soul." Each family member comes to the aid of the party concerned: the father gives copper, the women, peppers, the children, charcoal; a new cowrie is removed from Faro's granary.

778 The mbendyugukã (literally, I am on the enemy) is an individual
794 altar which permits its owner to overcome his adversaries and even to
754 attack their life.

The person who wishes to own one makes it after the death of an enemy. He goes secretly to unearth the corpse, shaves off its hair, cuts off its tongue and nails, and removes the eyes.

An elderly owner of such an altar takes it with him to the person who wishes to make one. The latter prepares and mixes the ingredients according to a special ritual and ties them to a hyena's tail. Before a witness who belongs to his age grade, the elder rubs the new altar on the old one seven times while reciting a prayer to consecrate it; he then returns it to its owner (1).

> 1. Because of its evil powers, the altar may not be made and entrusted to its owner except in the presence of a known witness.

The symbolism of the various parts composing it explain the use to which this altar will later be put. The tongue of the dead man contains his voice and gives to that of the owner the strength to convince those who contradict him in arguments as well as in council meetings. The eyes of the dead man permit him to see what others may not see, or even to blind his enemies by poisoning them with his nails. The hair, evidence of the other parts /134/ of the corpse, contains the nyama of the deceased and is an essential part of the mbendyugukã.

[595] The owner of this altar, which excludes the number four, marries only three wives. Moreover, he cannot mix his own hair with that of another without risking death.

[782] Because of its aggressive character, the mbendyugukã demands victims, dogs or roosters, of red coloring. It gives to whomever owns it a strength which will always be greater than that of his competitors in whatever he may undertake.

778 794 754 For this reason it receives sacrifices at the time when the fields are being worked, for trade, marriage, war, and hunting where the person risks his life; it helps to fight illness and death. Immediately after the first sacrifice, it captures the personality and aggressiveness of the dead man and puts them on its owner, making him doubly dangerous to those with whom he is in conflict. But on the other hand, the danger may turn against him and, to a greater extent than anyone else, he risks his life at the slightest broken taboo.

Furthermore, the Komo who disapproves of such operations may, if he considers it useful, loosen the dead man's nyama on the person who is using his spiritual forces and put him in danger of death. Thus a Bambara will hesitate a long time before owning such an altar; in fact very few individuals assume this heavy responsibility.

C. The Chief's Seat

778 622 In the courtyard of the home of a family head or village chief can be found a pile of wood stuck on the ground and called dyamana tigi ǰigi (literally, support of the owner of the world) (Fig. 11). This seat symbolizes at once the chief, his power, his social and religious role of supporting the group (1).

1. The seat described below was observed at Banankoroni in the courtyard of the village chief. A similar one is found at Soroba.

The pieces of bent wood which compose it are planted rather deep into the earth above a series of objects. One of these pieces, with a simple bend (in a) is called sinzin, support; the two others, shaped like a T, are called ǰigi ba ǰigi (in b) (literally, support of the big support).

782 766 The whole lies over the body of an albino (c) buried in a tomb having a ritual form, covered with ancient clothing dyed in wolo and speckled with small black spots made of /135/ bone ash (kolofin), which represent at the same time the embryo in the womb of women and Faro. The head is covered with the cap of primitive men (e).

In (d), three pickets, symbols of man, are stuck through the skin of the albino's forehead; this skin had been removed and seven ritual

622 178

scars symbolizing the person (three and four) are made on it. At the moment the skin is buried under the seat, the following prayer is recited:

"I have sworn in your names by striking on the siriku of Yamba by (burying) the skin from the right and left sides of the forehead; the skin from the forehead (seven times)" (1).

1. Tena wolo fla kini ani numa yamba

[532]

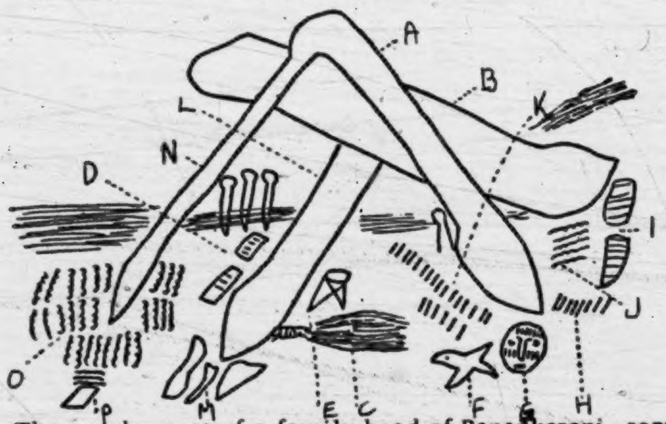

Fig. 11 — The wooden seat of a family head of Banankoroni, representing his joints. It is inserted into the ground in the courtyard above the bones of an albino, those of a child, and various symbolic objects. (Drawing by an informant.)

ka siriku nye di ka fo ani aw čua ye kena, tena wolo.

The prayer recalls here the acts of the fourth ancestor Yamba, who inaugurated the sacrifices of albinos to Faro, and his role as a chief beginning with this mythical period (see p. 46), a role which the present chief must fulfill with the same righteousness. The siriku is a small protective altar usually made from a hyena tail.

In (m) are placed the three principal bones of the albino; the two femurs and the right humerus, "so that the chief may have white

622 bones, " that is to say, that he may live to be so old that his bones
118 will be visible through his skin which is transparent.

In (n) the bent part of the wood, called *kuntigi tigiya jigi* (literally, /136/ support of the chief's deed), is planted over the hair of the previously shaved albino (in o) from which it takes its strength.

801 In (k), twenty-two small sticks are the symbol of the number 22, representing "the ensemble of words received by the ancestor Koumabana who was never caught unawares by anyone." In depositing these sticks, the officiator expresses the wish that the chief may become unbeatable like the ancestor.

801 In (h), eight small sticks of *zekene* wood (1) represent the eight

> 824 1. *Balanites aegyptica*. This bush, according to popular belief, grows over the tomb of a man who died "with rancor and bitterness, as did Koumabana."

ancestors; they signify that man must be, like Koumabana, master of words and that he must be "true to his word."

In (f), the bird *tatugu kononi*, master of fire, is buried. The prayer recited states that it must be able to penetrate into the earth and come out freely, for since mythical times it has played a decisive role in combats (2).

> 2. See p. 155. The chief, who is sometimes obligated to declare war, must be able to win it.

In (g) is buried the head of the first child to die in the chief's family, in order to recall the loss suffered and to avoid its recurrence. On the skull are marked the signs of the person: two times 3 and 7, or two times 4 and 7, depending upon the sex of the deceased. In (j) the hair is buried, a testimony to the misfortune and the loss which should be compensated for. In (e) is placed the skin of the forehead, divided into two pieces; the piece on the right signifies that Faro is free to give the child for as long as he chooses; on the piece on the left are engraved the eight signs of the word, recalling that Faro, master of the word, is also master of the destiny of the deceased, whose number has been reckoned among the dead. In (p) a small

622 178 of polished stone called fara yele, "stone that rejoices," expresses the wish that the chief's rule prosper.

The seat, taken as a whole, represents the chief's skeleton and his joints. It is erected upon various elements which sum up his ties to the ancestors and the supernatural powers, indicating his responsibility and contributing to the maintenance of his strength. It is situated in such a way that all the events in the courtyard take place around it. and that nothing which is said is out of earshot. As a center of the family household, as the symbol of the industrious and responsible man, it is the framework of the community which it upholds, just as the chief does through his physical endurance and moral firmness. The whole village "leans upon the chief's joint."

Each morning and evening, the ǰigi ba ǰigi and the ba ǰigi /137/ are greeted so that the chief may be strong, that his family may increase, that he may foster the ancestral beliefs. Offerings and [782] libations are made upon the seat and upon the body of the chief when his authority is questioned. In (b) tomato juice is being poured; in (a), representing the elbow or the knee, the water which has been used for ritual bathing of these same joints; at the foot, in (n), the fowls' throats are cut while the officiator, before pouring down the blood of the sacrifice, blows into a small hole dug in the ground; finally, in (l) the water which was used to wash the chief's whole body is poured in.

[826] In this way the chief's joints, which are the seat of his strength and his procreative seed, are purified and fortified.

II. Village Cults

794 The village, as a physical entity, and its inhabitants are placed under the protection of the supernatural powers and of the ancestors. Faro is directly invoked at all water spots.

If the village is situated at the river's edge, the rituals are addressed to the Faro tyin. If it is not too far from the bank, the inhabitants go out to make their offerings to the spirit. Frequently, the stream, pond, or natural well, which often determined the site chosen by the founders, is though to be inhabited by an incarnation of Faro whose name is revered and to whom all offer a cult.

On the other hand, each village is placed under the protection of the dasiri, a special spirit delegated by Faro.

194 The ancestors are worshipped in various places: at the doors and
thresholds of houses, at the cemetery, and at stone altars placed at
769 the intersections of lanes and in public squares. These positive cults,
778 which are aimed at the acquisition of beneficial forces, have as a
counterpart, cults in which the villagers rid themselves of all their unlucky and infectious elements; these take place, in particular, at the corssroads, dangu, which are placed under the guardianship of the earth Soba spirits.

It would be impossible to treat all of the cults of the Bambara villages. Among these, three have caught our attention; they concern the dasiri, the dangu, and the ancestral altar stones.

A. The dasiri

194 The word dasiri (literally, which binds the mouth) designates the
776 invisible spirit, Faro's representative entrusted with watching over
778 /138/ the village, as well as the seat of this spirit and, sometimes
too, the animal which accompanies it or symbolizes it.

The spirit haunts a rock, a thicket, or a tree situated near the village; the approaches to this spot are reserved for the elder in charge of the ritual (1).

[787 Generally the place is pointed out by the geomancer at the time
361] the village is founded, or else determined by an event which occurred
at that time. It is after this operation that the buildings are erected to the west of the chosen spot.

If the dasiri is a tree, no one may burn or cut its branches. In
[822] many cases it cannot be approached by anyone dressed in black or
indigo, colors which represent obscurity. No Peul may sit in its
[563] shade (2). Any infraction of these taboos brings about the death of

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[824] 1. In Massala and Soroba it is a baobab tree; in Sama, a tamarind tree, etc. See the observations on the dasiri collected by Ch. Monteil, Monographie de Djenné /Monograph of Djenne/, pp. 137-138; L. Tauxier. La Religion Bambara, pp. 195-208.

2. The reasons for the taboo concerning the Peul have not yet been ascertained.

794 In some villages, the sacrificer never
776 consumes butter or milk, foods which
778 the Peul furnish the Bambara.
[563]

the culprit and deprives the villagers of their protector.

The spirit of the dasiri sometimes has as its compansion an animal
794 which seems to represent the group's ancestor. At Ségou, it is a
776 crocodile; at Ouélenguena, a she-ass; at Koulikoro, a monkey; in
825 other places it is a male goat which is replaced when it dies. At
Konodimini there are a series of deep intercommunicating wells
which would have served as homes for the ancestors. These holes are
at present occupied by hyenas which are considered to be incarnations
of the blacksmiths of former times and which are the dasiri of the
place.

The dasiri's animal is free to enter homes and to eat what it finds.
It is often fed by the inhabitants. No one may attack it and whoever
breaks this taboo, set on by a vengeful nyama of which he cannot
[582 rid himself, risks being forbidden to marry, even being no longer
626] tolerated in his native village (1).

1. This was, at Soroba, the case of Dji Diara, who, after killing a hyena, could not marry as no woman was willing to link her destiny to his.

As its name indicates, the function of the dasiri is to maintain
794 the stability and integrity of the village. It is the "support of the
776 inhabitants' lives"; the numerous rituals (individual or collective),
782 of which it is the object, reveal the importance of its role as well
as the diversity of the beings invoked. To Faro are addressed prayers
for rain; to the ancestors prayers for questions /139/ concerning the
family; and to the spirit of the tree when it is a matter of stopping an
epidemic. But directly or indirectly, any sacrifice offered to the
dasiri is offered to Faro. The victims (sheep or fowl) and the offerings
(cotton bands, kola nuts) are always white (see Pl. 3, b).

When children reach the age of six or seven, they are led to the
794 tree; they sit on its roots upon which kola nut juice is spat, and are,
778 by this fact, introduced into the village cult. They are then presented
852 to all the allies senãnku and especially to the blacksmiths with whom
they proceed to joke.

794 776 182 Each year a sacrifice bringing together all the inhabitants is offered to the dasiri and is terminated by communal eating of the sacrificial victim. The first fruits of the harvest are also brought to it by the sacrificer.

B. The dangu

776 778 823 783 The crossroads dangu or danku (literally, boundary of the head) are inhabited by the Soba spirits who, under Faro, constantly intervene in human affairs. Everything placed at this spot belongs to them, and no one passes by without leaving an offering or a token of his presence: a tool, raw cotton, seeds, cloth. A travelling stranger kneels and deposits a little ash or some cotton; if not, he cleans off a little space on which he spits before leaving. A child passing by will greet it with these words: "Crossroads, my soul is in your hands." On the occasion of any event concerning the individual, the family, or the community, red kola nuts are placed at the crossroads and the following words uttered: "You, crossroads, I entrust my head to you; you are my support; I say, you, crossroads" (1).

1. E dangu m be ni ku kalifa, do i la ni jigi be fɛ, ngo e dangu.

The corssroad, as an ideal public thoroughfare, is the chosen spot where one easily rids oneself of the nyama which any individual keeps and carries about with him. All that is impure, unlucky, and undesirable for the individual or the community is left at the crossroads. Objects which have belonged to dead people are also left there. The forces which are thus gotten rid of are supposedly absorbed by the spirits for whom they constitute a kind of nourishment which will then be returned to men in the form of gifts free of any taint. (2)

2. See p, 258.

/140/ Several examples will illustrate the role played by the crossroads in the community:

Any man who has wounded an animal or squashed an insect is affected in his own tere by that of the victim. He goes to the crossroads, kneels, and prays, depositing at the same time a band of cotton, an egg, and ashes. The band of woven cotton, symbol of

776 the word, is offered as clothing, and the eggs are offered as purification.
778 As for the ashes, it is the ideal pure element since fire has "removed"
● its tere from the wood; here it represents the man from whom "the bad
823 force acting on his tere has been removed" (1). Whoever murders an
783 animal proceeds in the samw way with the animal's hide upon which he throws cowrie shells. In both cases, the spirits absorb the tere and nyama, which add to their own forces and free the culprit.

Collective purifications are carried out on the dangu when sexual taboos regarding cultivated fields and bush are broken. The impurity
[833] resulting from copulation performed outdoors is communicated to all the land belonging to the village; the trees in the bush will no longer bear fruit; the harvests will deteriorate. Formerly the two lovers
[684] taken by surprise were deprived of their clothing which was burned on the dangu after they had circled the village three times starting at the left. The culprits were then banished. At present, if the plight of the fields suggests that such an act has been committed, all varieties of cultivated seeds are gathered in a basket which is placed at the crossroads. Then, all the villagers and their domestic animals circle the village three times while sham battles take place between men mounted on horseback. After a sacrifice offered at the dangu, the seeds, thus purified, are sown.

776 Offerings are made to the spirits of the crossroads at the time of
778 sowing to invoke their protection. This ritual is obligatory for whomever sows cotton, since this seed was given to men by these spirits.
823 The farmer places the seeds, sits down facing west, and cries out three
241 times the name of the dangu above the seeds. He leaves three small piles in homage to the spirit along with fibers from the plant, and kills a victim before proceeding to sow his field. When the stalks are up, he cuts some boughs and returns to the place of sacrifice to sweep up the seeds, thus impregnating them with the nyama of the dangu. He then dries them, grinds, sifts, and mixes them with earth picked up on the same spot. In his field, he shouts /141/ the name of the dangu and throws the mixture with all his strength in the direction of the cardinal points, the zenith, and the ground. When the plants are mature he picks the first seven ripe seeds, brings them to the same place, and offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

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1. See pp. 90ff.

776 It is also at the crossroads that the elders place the child whose
778 legitimacy is in doubt. If the diviner who is then consulted declares
823 that the child is a bastard, he is deprived of the protection of the spirits
848 and is supposedly unable to survive the nyama which he has acquired
787 at the place. In this same spot are buried abnormal children, in par-
[766] ticular hydrocephalics who are considered undesirable. The spindle
of a dead woman is placed here along with the broom she habitually
used.

776 But the ritual most characteristic of the crossroads is the one re-
778 sorted to by the village when it is in trouble: the primitive wooden
823 mallet, gosilande is planted in the ground; it is then struck with a
183 stalk of millet to chase away evil and to induce new techniques of
reparation to come out of the instrument (1).

C. Stone Altars

778 In the villages, at the intersections of lanes, and in the squares,
211 the founding ancestors are represented by stones under which various
objects are buried (see Pl. V, b).

At Sama, four large stones, encased in a clay platform, symbolize both the cardinal points and the ancestors. They are in touch with the dasiri and receive the same offerings. At Banankoroni, the fara ba is partly buried. Under its point is an albino skull which represents those of the first ancestors and their bones. Two hoes, one placed near the right ear and the other near the left ear, convey the idea that "the man who cultivates the earth will never hear a humiliating word." Under the chin, another hoe recalls that the villagers who are faithful to agriculture will never know famine. Under the hoe, a siriku (2) protects them against those who try to harm them, and brings them "the hyena's luck"; it also means that some of their ancestors were transformed into hyenas in former times. A circumcision knife recalls that all males are circumcised, and all women excised (Fig. 15). Finally, three albino bones and a small pile of copper are a testimony to /142/ Faro's presence and power. Drawings are made on these

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1. See p. 145.

2. See p. 179, n. 1.

178 211 stones at the time of the collective ceremonies called the years "renewal" (1).

III. The Religious Societies

194 Members of groups formed by families in a broad sense, headed by patriarchs and owning lands which cannot be divided, also belong to other collective groups called *flâ*; these are formed by the age grade of circumcision, excision, or initiation, and grouped around altars which are their own and which possess their special rituals.

These societies are called by the general term *dyo* (2) meaning 194 "to build, "to edify" and also "secret." This term recalls that each individual constitutes an element of the whole group formed by the society.

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1. See pp. ff.

476 2. It is appropriate to distinguish the religious societies, *dyo*, described in this work, from the mutual aid societies, *tõ*, of apparently secular character. The latter are also very numerous and exist in all the Bambara villages.

These organizations are strongly hierarchical and are placed under the direction of responsible chiefs. Their members perform communal work which concerns the life of the village: felling trees, clearing, cultivation of individual or communal fields, house construction, etc., and participation in marriage ceremonies. The detailed study of the *tõ* whose role is considerable would be indispensable to an understanding of the social and economic organization of this tribe.

The participation of the *tõ* in agricultural work will be described by Mme. de Ganay in *Techniques et rites de l'agriculture* (in press).

794 778 B. Altars of the Komo

The boli altars occupy a distinguished place in the religious and mythological representations of the society organized around them. On the one hand they are a capsule of the universe because of their composition; on the other they are a capsule of the society as all its members are present in them. In fact, each member has provided a part of the composing elements after having impregnated them with his person by salivating over them while pronouncing his name.

794 778 346 The altars of the Komo are kept in a sanctuary, the komo so (literally, house of the Komo), a medium sized hut built either in the chief's dwelling place, or in the bush at some distance from the village. The approach to this structure which is under Faro's protection is forbidden to the ordinary person. The chief himself never enters alone. It is said that a snake, the soul and guardian of the sanctuary, is born and lives at the top of the hut in the branches which form the roof (Pl. VI, a).

The hut is divided into a number of floors on each of which is placed /146/ an altar. The highest one contains at its center the nimara boli (literally, altar of the souls) which, as its name indicates, is the container of the souls belonging to deceased members of the society and to sacrificed animals (1). It contains, from top to bottom, hair of the dead, copper for the souls of animals, gold for those of men. These various ingredients, placed in a double sac, receive the sacrificial blood which runs between the two layers and soaks them.

794 778 The nimara boli is surrounded by small individual altars which have served to channel the souls of the dying and lead them to the common receptacle (2). These small boli remain in the hut only

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[774 782] 1. There is constant preoccupation with preserving all vital elements. The souls of sacrificed animals are the object of the same care as those of humans. Like them, they participate in the resurrection promised to everything which has lived.

2. See p. 175.

194 778 during the seven days following the death and are returned to the heir of the deceased (son or brother); they remain permanently in the sanctuary only if the dead man has no descendants. They are held up by two wooden stakes called čin ta bere (literally, sticks which collect inheritance) which keep the souls of the dead and which contain at the top wood dust from Makanta Djigui's canoe and gold at the bottom. These stakes feed the boli which they hold and the souls of the dead which they contain, thus demonstrating that the "Komo never abandons anyone and that men without descendants remain with it for ever."

The taboos concerning the nimara boli are numerous and strict:
[784] it may not be removed from the sanctuary except for funerals (1). No woman must ever see it. No foreign cult could ever conceivably be celebrated in its presence.

On the second floor is located the ñõ boli (literally, altar of millet) which contains an invigorating power intended for the society's crops. It is composed of a sac divided into six pockets which contain (from top to bottom) at the left: small millet, fonio, and copper; at the right: large millet, rice and other cereals, and gold. The sac, which opens at the top, receives at the time of agricultural ceremonies (sowing and harvest) the blood of victims offered by members of the millet society, ñõtõ. It must always remain damp with sacrificial blood so that the seeds which it contains will always live.

The ñõ boli is also tied to two stakes called ñõ boli kane (literally, protection of the ñõ boli) which contain in a hollowed-out /147/ section some millet and gold; it is tied to the stakes by threads which bring it the forces they contain.

The ñõ boli watches over the growth of cereals: germination, formation of the ears, maturation. It is responsible for the "head of millet" (2).

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1. See p. 247.

2. Each farmer is the owner of an individual ñõ boli which is placed in a subordinate position under that of the Komo. In addition, the Komo's ñõ boli is in close touch with the ñõ boli of the Kworè, a society whose purpose is to obtain

194 the rain necessary for cultivation (see p. 217).
118 The agricultural role of the Komo will be
described by S. de Ganay in *Techniques et
rites de l'agriculture*.

194 The main taboo of the ñõ boli is the loss or waste of food. If even
118 a grain of cereal drops to the ground, or into the fire, the members of
784 the millet society are responsible for picking it up and eating it;
otherwise the Komo will punish for the failure to do so and the harvest
suffers.

The third floor contains the nyama boli, a repository of the forces
194 (nyama) of individuals who have died a violent death (murder, war,
118 execution). The nyama boli used to contain in former times a stone
726 called gõgoro kurube, considered to be the "mother" of the stones
thrown by the warriors' sling. It was removed from the sac in case of war and carried to the battlefield by a twin walking at the head of the troops. On its surface were engraved a series of lines representing the king, the warriors, and their wives. It gathered all the souls of those dead in combat and received their blood as an offering.

194 The nyama boli is, moreover, responsible for the soul of the crops
118 and a repository for the souls of sacrificed animals; it also receives
the "nyama of the words" of the members. It shares with the ñõ boli the responsibility for the cultivations and confers in this way great power to the society.

The sac contains in its lower part a mixture of coagulated blood and gold, and in its upper part a mixture of charcoal powder, pepper, and honey, which gives power to the nyama with which the sac is
loaded. The taboo of the nyama boli is the rapid death of victims
[782] which are sacrificed to it; only slow death confers effective nyama.

Upon the ground of the sanctuary, along with the dance costume of the mask, nya, are placed small altars intended either for sale, or for the creation of the new Komo, or for individual purposes. Animal horns, both byẽ ba (literally, big horn) and byẽ ni (literally, little horn), are also placed there; they contain powder for ritual usage, korti, whose dangerous action takes place during the times the mask is taken out (1).

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1. The various mixtures used for the religious practices of the Bambara

794
778 often contain ingredients which have been pulverized: wood dust, charcoal powder, even powder of precious metals. Our investigation has not yet allowed us to clarify the role of this pulverization process. However, its mention by the Bambara and the frequent use of korti indicate the importance attached to this type of preparation.

/148/ Outside the hut, at the height of the nyama boli, a hook holds up the clothes of those who are killed by the Komo. The sanctuary, as well as the clothing of the mask, is daubed with black earth taken on the shore of the river representing Faro, and covered with feathers of the same color. Generally speaking, the metal [823] contained in the Komo altars gives it its strength and life. The most powerful of these is gold, silver comes next, then copper. Since each person gives an offering according to his means, the power of the altar thus depends in a certain measure on the wealth of the members of the society.

[782] Regular sacrifices upon the stakes, the bases of which sometimes contain a little wood from the historic canoe of Makanta Djigui, permit them to "maintain the pressure, the life" in the various altars.

These altars are removed from the sanctuary only upon the occasion of funerals or agricultural rites. When the mask is removed and when there are dances, replicas commonly found in the home of the chief are sometimes used instead.

The pembele is the protector of the society, the container of the forces (nyama) of the group. It is rarely placed in the sanctuary and usually kept by the chief who never exhibits it; occasionally it is watered with rain water symbolizing the work of creation.

796
778 Before the annual ceremony called "anniversary of the Komo," drawings are made on the sanctuary by the chief or an elder; they are a reminder that the sanctuary is the link between the invisible powers and the members of the society. Besides the image of creation as an issue of the initial vibration (see Fig. 2), the head of the ancestor Koumabana, figurations of the twins, and the twenty-two fundamental signs are sometimes drawn. Finally hoes emphasize the agricultural function of the Komo (1). Granaries intended for conserving grains

1. At the time when the attention of specialists is attracted by the division of

796 778 religious and social powers in ancient societies, it is interesting to point out that the Komo altars represent a very definite three-way division: the first is used for the conservation of spiritual forces (souls) of the group; the second presides exclusively over agricultural rites; the third is concerned with keeping the spiritual principles of individuals who died violently and of crop seeds; it played an important role during the wars. This threefold division is comparable on many points to that observed by M. Dumezil in Indo-European societies.

from the first crops /149/ used as offerings, are placed next to the sanctuaries or in the home of the chief (1).

1. In the village of Soroba the sanctuary includes seven granaries: three for small millet, sañõ; four for large millet, keninge. Seven is the number symbolic of the person, three for masculinity (small millet is male) and four for femininity (large millet is female).

C. The Mask

794 532 The man who wears the mask during the ceremonies personifies the Komo. The head is sculptured in the shape of a human face or animal face. At Konodimini, it represents the panther; at Soungoba, a stork; at Banankoroni, an eagle; at Banoumbougoula, an elephant; at Ségoubougou, a vulture. The mask is usually decorated with elements borrowed from several animals. Thus, at Soroba, the skull and horns are those of a buffalo, but the jaw is that of a crocodile. It is, moreover, ornamented with the feathers of a wild duck (2).

2. An informant, who attended Komo ceremonies in a great number of villages, asserted he had never seen the same mask twice.

778

a) Tree of the Ndomo, at the center of the uncultivated square (Soroba).

Plate V

b) Stone altar (Banankoroni).

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778

a) Hut of the Komo (Konodimini).

Plate VI

b) Holes for refuse (Banankoroni).

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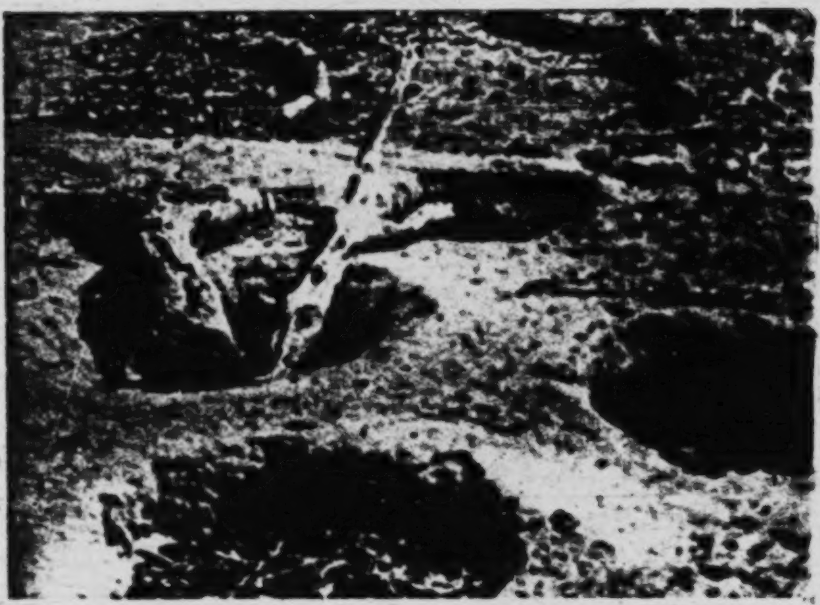

/166/

The Kworę

194 821 The Kworè society, kworę dye (literally, reunion of the Kworè) consists of individuals around the altars (kworę boli) on which rites are performed concerning the skies, space, the cardinal points, the atmospheric manifestations of Faro, and particularly rain. Kworè literally means "dried up pond."

The rituals are intended for the Kworè spirits who depend upon Faro and who live in the kaba fǐn (third sky). They are in charge of watching over the rains sent from the wolofl̂a kaba (seventh sky), which cross the other skies and "the void" before reaching the earth. The spirits struggle in the skies and in space against the mahalakillen of the koblenkaba (fifth sky) who try to stop the water. Lightning, thunder, and thunderbolt are the effects of these struggles.

194 118 ● The principal ceremonies take place around a tree, called kworę ǰigi, which is situated to the east of the village and is the usual habitation of the spirits when they descend to receive men's offerings. The altars are placed in a hut built in the bush; other samples of these are kept in the chief's residence. A large stone, kworę fara, located near the village and placed in the ground above some symbolic objects, also receives offerings. The Kworè society is the owner of a communally cultivated field, in which small millet, sañõ, is exclusively sown and the harvest of which is kept for the needs of the cult.

A chief, the kworę tigi, is entrusted with the care of the altars and performance of the ritual.

A. The Altars

The altars of the kworę are placed in a sanctuary called buku sãmpere ni (literally, little hut of thunder) and situated at a certain distance from the village because of the dangers from lightning. The door is low and very narrow so that the forces held within may not escape.

The altars are composed of the following objects:

1. A large sac of the skin of a male goat, kworę boli sãmpere, open at its upper extremity and suspended by a boa skin (miñã) which symbolizes lightning. This sac, which has three compartments, contains copper, water from the Niger, rain water, and the "thunder stones" of the society. The "thunder stones," sãmpereni or sãmpere

794 *dyele*, play an essential role /167/ in the rain cult among the Bambara
118 as among the other blacks of the Sudan. They supposedly fall from the sky with lightning bolts (1).

> 1. They are picked up at the spot where they fall and are the object of an important trade.
>
> At the time when a Kworè society is being founded, the chief, generally accompanied by the *komotigi*, visits villages where lightning has struck in order to buy stones and to choose them with a knowledge of the case. Each member contributes to the purchase of one stone.

2. Another sac also made of the skin of a male goat, called *ñõ boli* (*boli* of millet), is suspended from the roof by a serpent skin. This altar is dependent upon the *ñõ boli* of the Komo, which presides over germination. It contains small millet from the fields of the Kworè and some of the small millet from the *ñõ boli* of the Komo.

3. A sac containing water from the last rain, called *ngule sãndyi*.

4. A sac made of the bladder of an ox, *ǰettemine boli*, makes it possible to see the water level from the outside. After each rainfall the level is checked by the chief and the water is poured into the *ngule sãndyi* where it is kept throughout the year.

5. A sac containing thunder stones intended for sale:
   - (a) To be suspended from roof to counteract lightning.
   - (b) To attract lightning; in this case the stone is placed under a shelter in the bush.
   - (c) To make a new *kworę boli*.

This sac is the object of libations consisting of rain water drawn from the *ngule sãndyi*, to which has been added a pulverized thunder stone.

6. An axe called *sãmpere dyele koro* (literally, old thunder axe) of an ancient shape, made of a hewn stone set in a wooden handle. Considered as the "mother of the thunder stones," it is not removed from the altar until the very last when the rites for rain have failed.

Pieces of mirror brought by members of the society are set into the wall; the reflections from these mirrors also are supposed to affect rainfall.

794 778 B. In the chief's residence, there are replicas of the axe and the altars. According to the needs, they are transported to the shore of the Niger, into the fields, or to the public square during the ceremonies. The originals, on the other hand, remain sheltered from the looks of outsiders and risks of impurity. Moreover, the chief owns a special altar, the kworę ni, "soul of the kworę," /168/ which contains the spiritual principles of the members who do not belong to the Komo society. The kworę ni is placed upon the chest of a dying man and receives his soul at the moment of death as does the nimara boli of the Komo (1). It is regularly saturated with rainwater.

C. The stone of the kworę, of which the lower part is crudely carved into seven teeth called kworę fara ni, is stuck into the ground after the following objects have been buried in this site. (See Fig. 13)

1. Three thunder stones called: fara ba, "big stone"; /169/ fara bye, "stone point"; fara ǰoli, "blood of stone." These recall the presence of Faro's power, rain, under the altar. When placing them, the following words are repeated seven times: "Help us" (1)!

1. A ka demme.

2. Three whips, the male number, testimony to the course of men who withstand the pain of the strokes without complaining. When they are buried the following words are spoken: "Let us be courageous" (2).

2. A ka farina.

3. A kongobwona axe (see p. 160) which recalls the ancestors' victory over famine; it announces harvests and future wealth.

Drawings are made on the stone during the annual ceremony. In the center, a black dot called faro dẽzo, "womb of Faro," represents the spirit. It is framed by two series of three whips, each "to defend him," as well as by the first three of the eight ancestors (one of which was Koumabana) and by seven figures representing the members.

[184] Woman is the taboo of the Kworè. Only males may approach the sanctuary and the altars. Any circumcised male desiring to participate 794 785 in the ceremonies must be initiated. The postulants are brought together by the chief under the Kworè tree, at the foot of which a fire is lit; each carries a twig of ñuãna wood. They suffer

794 785 uncomplainingly the burns inflicted upon them with a torch and they whip themselves vigorously. The chief next teaches them the role of the Kworè spirits, the rituals celebrating them, and the symbolic value of the objects of the cult.

794 522 Some of the members are designated to take the role of kworę duga during the ceremonies. Masked and waving freshly cut branches in each hand, they mount a wooden horse, the kworęduga so (1). Thus

[532 778] ●

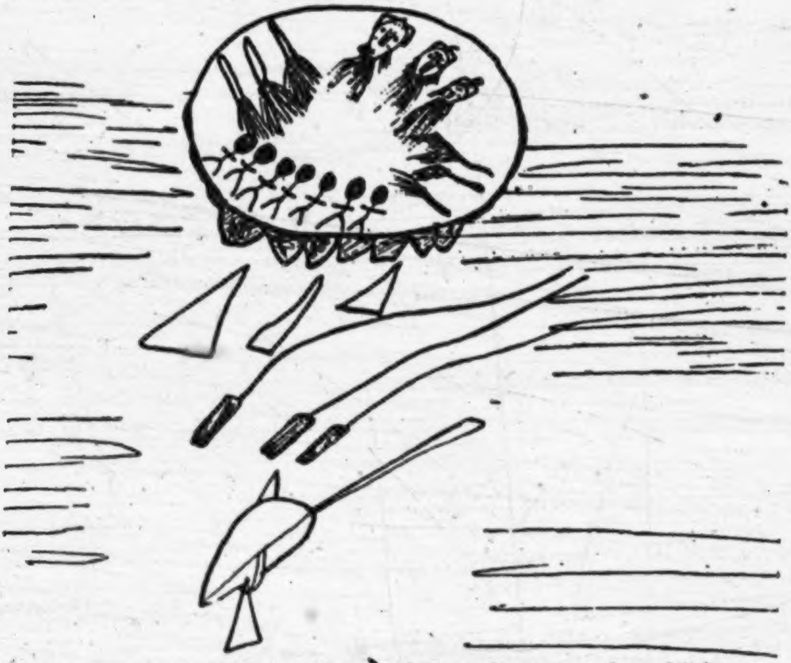

Fig. 13 —Stone altar of the Kworè of Banankoroni under which are buried three neolithic axes, three whips, the ritual iron axe, kongobwona. The drawing, made in the course of the annual ceremony, represents the first three of the eight ancestors who received the word, the members of the society, and the Kworè whips; the black spot is the "womb of Faro." (Drawing by an informant)

1. The kworę duga (literally, vulture of the Kworè), also called togoro koya, "jesters," are as their name indicates, jesters who have the right to joke about

794 instruction and initiation. Five years are thus necessary to reach the highest rank. Each promotion is paid for by the individual providing [782] two roosters whose throats are cut upon the altars at the end of the annual ceremony which takes place in the bush under a tree called the kalabana, following communally performed labor. After meal, a [526] fight called bari, organized under the direction of the chiefs, puts the young boys in opposite groups and gives them the opportunity to show their courage and their initiative.

794 The members' activity consists of collective work at the time of 476 the cultivation. The millet and the gifts in kind received in payment for the work are owned communally.

A. Material Objects of the Cult.

794 The society is the owner of ritual objects such as a mask and whips 778 which are usually placed in a hut, ndomo buku, at some distance 534 from the village.

The objects, numbering five, are rudimentary musical instruments. The wara, the clawed one, or diara, the lion, is a wooden bull-roarer approximately 35 centimeters in length, which is manipulated by means of a string a meter long. Sometimes the object is of iron and of smaller dimensions. The tori, toad, is a small box which gives off a nasal sound when it is scratched. The kono, bird, is made of two pieces of gourd bound together by spider webs. The wulu, dog, is a small calabash of about 10 centimeters in diameter, punctured by four holes. A string, threaded through its neck, allows it to be rotated like a rhombos. The jineble (literally, red spirit) is a buffalo horn pierced by three holes, /172/ obstructed by spider webs, into which one blows and which produce a loud, flute-like sound. One society usually owns several specimens of each of these instruments.

794 The mask, said to be the most ancient object, is of sculptured wood 778 representing a human face crowned by several vertical, rather long 532 horns (1). The whole is completely decorated with cowrie shells and red kise (2), grains which represent the blood from the offerings. The

1. The masks most often carry eight horns, but this rule is not always respected.

2. Linociera sudarica.

794 778 532 high forehead, black and always smeared with karite butter, confers upon the face a beneficial power. The whole mask is regularly rubbed with ground charcoal powder and with the juice of the kola nut.

794 778 The whips of the mask (*ndomo busa*) are made of *ñuana* branches famous for their suppleness. They are made at the time of the annual ceremony and only renewed the following year. At the time of their manufacture, they are soaked in water, which the members of the society then drink "in order not to have to suffer from the blows which they will receive."

[824] Each member also possesses a long whip made of the branches of a bush, the *ngere ni*, (1) which is also called "tree of Faro" for it grows in water, and which contains part of the beneficial power of the spirit. The whip is used to try out the children's courage. The one who cries or complains will carry this handicap with him through life; even after his circumcision he will be referred to as a coward.

B. Initiation

794 526 Each new grade is acquired in the course of the annual ceremony which takes place after the harvest. An elder entrusted with the sacrifices cuts the throats of the roosters offered by the postulants over the tree of the *ndomo* (Pl. V, a) and over the ritual objects placed at his feet, and then pours boiled millet as an offering. During this time the young people plow the ground where the contest, *bari* (2), is to take place; this fight will pit them against each other and give them the opportunity to show their courage and competitive spirit.

The chief designates the fighters two by two who are watched over /173/ by the *dyolokotigi*. In the contest, during which any use of legs or feet disqualifies the fighter, the one who makes his adversary fall three consecutive times is chosen to be initiated into a higher grade on the following night. After this contest, the losers must bring two additional roosters if they also wish to be initiated. Then a meal eaten in common brings together the members of the society and the postulants.

1. *Hibiscus pandoriformia*.

2. To make oneself fall, the joust.

764 were kept by the village patriarch and the cult of the ancestors was celebrated upon these altars.

At the present time, the body is buried during rites in which the Komo plays an important role for the initiates. As soon as a member
763 is seriously ill, the family head places upon the dying man's chest
778 the portable altar, *kere la boli ni*, which belongs to the community.
He does not leave the bedside in order to catch the last breath. Immediately after death, without turning back or saying a word to anyone, he goes to the chief of the Komo who places the object in the
[775] sanctuary where the altars are kept. The soul is introduced into the
nimara boli (1).

[843] 1. See p. 192. In former times, the soul of the dead man was caught between two gourds which were then joined together and hung on the conjugal bed. When the woman became pregnant, the gourds were broken over her abdomen in order to make the soul penetrate the foetus. Later on this method of transmission of the soul was no longer possible because of the impurity brought about by "frivolous discussions regarding the arrangements and situations of creation."

764 Upon his return to the house of the deceased, the family head brushes his hand over the dead man's face to gather his *nyama* which he then entrusts to Pemba by rubbing the cavity in the family *pembele* "so that the total of the work he has accomplished during his life will not be dissolved by death, but will be like /190/ an accumulated force serving the community, and so that his intelligence, his qualities, and his skill in different kinds of work, especially in agriculture, will not be lost but will be found in other members of the family. The
[778] block of wood, acting as an altar for storing the forces, preserves this
nyama until a new birth occurs in the family" (2).

2. S. De Ganay, "*Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara*," p. 199.

776 attend his burial despite the fact that the rituals have not been per-
787 formed. If not, he is abandoned to the care of his family.

To neglect the rituals assuring life in the beyond and the security
764 of the living causes the shadow šu dya, or the ghost šu kere dye
775 (literally, white side of the dead man), to arise and present itself under
the same which the dead man had on earth, to claim his due from his
descendants.

Ancestor Cult

769 In the entryway of some residences a supporting stake (če dloma),
● 778 sometimes marked by seven notches, represents the founding ancestor
of the family. On the anniversary of his death the stake is oiled "to refresh his soul." In addition, each year the owner of the house sacrifices to all the ancestors on the family altar, on the stake, and on the threshold of the door. In some villages the ancestors are called upon by tapping the threshold with a little wooden hammer, dyele kala ni, which represents them.

In the courtyards, pieces of wood stuck in the ground (ǰigi semen dloma) represent the paternal uncle, the brother of the founder, and are used as seats for the heads of families who lean against them "in order to lean well upon the traditions." Farmers, before leaving for the fields, rub their hoes on them to show them to the ancestors.

Before planting the women give the head of the family a ball of
769 raw millet, which he lines up to represent the dead according to age
241 and rank. Then he gives them a pinch of the seed beginning with the
one representing the most recent deceased and calling successively all the dead by name. The paste and the seeds are then put in water and the mash thus obtained is poured on the /196/ doorposts to the entryway of the family house upon which the blood of a sacrificial victim also is poured. When the planting time comes, the chief who has prepared the mash made with a few grains taken from the seeds distributes this to the women, beginning with the one who represents the oldest deceased. He asks the ancestors to watch over, during the germination period, the soul of the millet which will descend into the seed with the first rainfall. When the millet has reached maturity, the first seeds harvested are placed in a pot on the threshing floor where the grain will be threshed later, and are distributed to the women in the same manner as the time of planting, the oldest of the deceased having to receive the first of the seed.

766 After the burial,[1] a drawing is made on the sanctuary with millet
mash made of grain from Faro's field; this drawing represents the
532 dead man and the mutilations inflicted upon him. The seven attending
elders close their eyes as a sign of respect in order not to "register a
drawing made for Faro." In fact, its aim is to obtain the spirit's pity
and to ask him to include the dead among the count he keeps of his
[769] subjects. It is also in front of this drawing that the family will come
to make an offering and mourn every week.

II. Rituals of the Refuse

364 The debris, sweepings, and refuse collected in the homes, court-
778 yards, public squares, and crossroads all contain forces which men
have communicated to them.

The rituals, of which these are the objects and which vary according to their origin, have as their aim the offering of these forces to Faro who returns them to men purified and regenerated in the form of rainwater with which he irrigates the fields and in the form of ponds and wells. They are thus redistributed and used again for the benefit of the community.

The refuse at the crossroads, called *dangu kalaw*, stalks or straw of the *dangu*, contains the force, *nyama*, of all the beings that have trampled it.

/202/ The refuse from the homes contains the *wanzo* of the uncircumcised, the *nyama* which the inhabitants have to bear for having killed animals or insects and for having received insults, and their good or bad *tere*. These forces, called *wanzo dla* (literally, to arrange the *wanzo*) (1) or *nyama dla*, constantly come to the aid of all the members of the family; they improve the *wanzo* of the uncircumcised, facilitate the women's childbirth, and renew the vigor of the old men. A small altar, *konye*, kept in the room reserved for the head of the family, is dedicated to them.

After the coming out of the Komo, the sweepings gathered on the spot where the dances take place contain the forces of the members.

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1. This term is applied to them particularly in houses where there are many children.

[1] [Of a drowned person — Analyst]

364 778 782 (a) Household refuse, collected individually, is placed in separate piles inside shallow circular excavations dug out at the approaches to the villages (see Pl. VI, b). Among wealthy people a goat is sacrificed each week by having its throat cut above the pile on which the altar is temporarily placed. The sacrifice effects a double exchange: the blood nourishes the altar while at the same time it brings about the transfer into the altar of the forces contained in the refuse.

364 778 796 Every two months and seven days, at the decision of the village chief, these individual rubbish piles are removed from the holes. Each person burns his own pile and inhales the smoke. The ashes are deposited on the river bank, dampened so that the wind does not blow them away, and abandoned during seven days, a period during which Faro "comes to visit them and to bless them."

On the eighth day, after a meeting at the chief's residence, the villagers gather at the crossroads to burn the collective refuse piles, to collect the ashes, and to transport them, accompanied by the rhythm wanzo foli beaten on the drums, to the river bank where they will join those of the individual heaps.

After a sacrifice offered upon the konye altars of the participants, the griot of the Komo is struck by the nyama boli until he goes into a trance and flings himself into the water without saying a word. All must throw their ashes in after him before he comes out again. At that moment the spittles of the man who flutters about in the water are collected as a gift from Faro in exchange for the refuse which has been thrown in. Each person rubs his hands and feet with the saliva and upon returning, which is done in silence, impregnates the threshold of his home with it as evidence of the sacrifice so that Faro "might recognize his own and protect their life."

/203/ The following Thursday the people gather to dance according to the rhythms appropriate to each sex and generation. In the evening, each person places his foot on the site of the refuse heap; then all gather at the crossroads to offer the Soba spirit some millet, cotton, and kola nuts. The ceremony ends with a meeting at the chief's residence where he gives advice and encourages each one to respect tradition and to honor the ancestors and the protecting spirits.

(b) After the comings out of the Komo, the refuse is swept up and deposited in front of the sanctuary. Each participant leaps over the pile three times to communicate his nyama to it. In the evening the masker circles and whistles around the heap on which fire is lit while

364 the chief throws dust three times to the four cardinal points. The
778 masker then stands in the wind in such a way as to receive the smoke;
the chief and the members crouch in line behind him with their mouths
796 open to inhale better. When the wind changes its direction they all
move to continue this fumigation, *wušuli*, which constitutes a purifi-
cation as well as an increment of forces. At the moment the fire is
almost out, the most courageous of the participants stamps on it in
order to assimilate better the *nyama* which it exudes. The ashes,
[804] gathered by the chief, are distributed, the unit of measurement being
the gourd *mure*. An important share goes to the *nyama boli*, another
is given as an offering to Faro, and a third is distributed among the
members.

Several days later, the group goes to the river bank to the sound of drums beating out the *murumuruw foli* (literally, rhythm of the refuse); they throw the ashes reserved for Faro into the water and, continuing to dance, return to the village.

364 Those ashes given to the members are used to prepare the potass
778 which is mixed into the millet cake, the daily food of the Bambara,
and which will make the members of the family share in the powers
252 contained in the *nyamanto*.

The eating of this mixture closes the cycle of the transfer of forces,
364 which were temporarily communicated to the refuse by the individuals,
778 then recovered by Faro, and finally redistributed to the social body.

III. Rain Rites

789 At the time the first work is done in the fields, a drawing is made
241 with millet mash upon the tree of the Kworè in the shape of a lozenge
inscribed within a rectangle, which represents "the great fire which
issued /204/ from the cardinal angles" at the time of their creation.
While this is being done, the following words are spoken: "The four
elbows (the lozenge) are the fire of the angles; here is the anniversary
of the Kworè." The clearing of the field or the first plowing always
symbolizes the very first clearing obtained through fire.

During the month of May, the members of the Kworè society make
789 sacrifices upon their altars before the first rumbling of thunder in
796 order to purify the first sky where clouds are formed from the impure
794 passage of Mousso Koroni. The chief gathers the members about the
tree and recites the following prayer:

*173
175 came, everyone was astounded to see him leave everything for the birds.

The oracle was fulfilled at once. Biton ruled from Timbuktu to the Atlantic. And the dyeli, Karé Tammoura, who told me the legend, adds that thereafter there was a very strange thing at Ségou: a combination animal and plant which the Bambara called Sanu-so or "golden horse." Ahmadou, the son of Omar, had a mosque erected on the spot where Sanu-so was wont to appear but, all the same, it did not disappear until the arrival of the French. Even since then, there are those who say that on certain days strange lights appear at the spot on the Niger where Monseigneur Hacquart died and where the genie appeared to Mamari.

[171] This fable about a local genie is not in itself remarkable, but when compared to the legend about Ngolo Dyara (see later, p. 51) and to many other similar ones current in the Sudan (2), what it really is becomes clear: the figurative expression of a native mentality about which the European is usually very ill-informed and which deserves to be noted here briefly.

778 [23] Anything that departs from the average, the ordinary, or the normal -- power, wealth, success, ... illness, poverty, misfortune -- to any extraordinary degree or in a suspicious way, is, for the Bambara in particular and for the Black in general, the manifestation of an occult force acting either spontaneously or after provocation.

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778 That is why, in the eyes of a native, a chief (a paramount chief, of course) is out of the common run, not so much because of the position he occupies as because of the magic powers attributed to him (1). Power is merely the reflection of his

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2. See, especially, the legend of Ndyadyane Ndyaye in "Légendes et coutumes sénégalaises [Senegalese Legends and Customs] by H. Gaden, 1912, and the "Dyide de Djenné" in Contes du Sénégal et du Niger, by Zeltner.

efficacies in magic and he himself is convinced that this is true. Everything he does is accepted without protest because his acts have a supernatural character. The only ones who can resist him are those who, like him, have special powers (2). Therefore he makes a point of seeking the company and advice of initiates in matters that are hidden from the common herd. These are the sorcerers, magicians and marabouts, all of whom believe that they possess -- or appear to possess -- a share in the knowledge that allows its practitioners to influence the unseen, Sometimes he is one of them or becomes one, and in any event he is always, willingly or not, dependent upon them.

791 778 This is an age-old state of mind, which Islam has merely strengthened, for the Black man, whether Moslem or not, always regards the marabout as a diviner, a performer of miracles, a maker of philters, talismans and amulets, and a caster of spells. Many facts attest the truth of this observation, and the tales which follow will afford examples.

*173 It is understandable that with such beliefs,[1] the Black man could hardly be expected to admit that the life of an important person, a powerful chief or a founder of an empire, could possibly be or have been banal, ordinary or simple. That is why supernatural, fictitious deeds make up such a large part of the native historical traditions that one may look in vain for any trace of the actions we see performed around us day after day. One must be very thoroughly accustomed to this delusion in order not to give way to discouragement at being unable to grasp

643 •778 1. Compare, on p. 31 and p. 49, the conduct of Dina Wara and of Biton.

[*173] 2. Legendary traditions abound in magic combats; see especially the tradition concerning Dinga, the ancestor of the Wagadou people, and that concerning Samba Guéladio Diégui, the hero of Fouta.

[1] [i.e., in magical and occult power with influence over the supernatural.–Analyst]

*173 On the following Monday all meant to arrive promptly at the meeting; however, out of habit, instead of coming to Ségou-Sikoro [69] they went to Ségou-koro (1). Ngolo went there too,

[778]

bringing with him the four principal idols: ba Koungo-ba, Nyédingué-dou, na Ngolo-ko and Kolokoloni. Addressing the throng, he cried: "Someone must be chosen to look after these idols, for they are languishing in neglect. As for me, I shall keep the sacrificial knife."

"If the idols are languishing," interrupted Ngolo Ké-ba, "it's your fault, because our master has entrusted them to you. That's your duty, quite as much as guarding our master's houses at Ségou-Sikoro. For our part, all we want are guns and gunpowder."

"I can't give you guns and powder," answered Ngolo Dyara, "but I will give you all of Ton-massa's wives as well as the wives of Kanou-ba-nyouma and Kafa-dyougou. I can't marry them myself because I've married Mamari's daughter. The powder and the guns remain my share."

"That's nothing but trickery," replied Ngolo Ké-ba. "Why should we need these women when we all have our own!"

"I'm not playing any trick," said Ngolo Dyara, "I'm
[587] offering you these women because it is customary among us for brothers to marry the wives of their deceased brothers and, if I were to keep them for myself, you would certainly cry scandal and injustice."

"No, we shan't say anything, for we're at your mercy and very uneasy. We're caught like a rat in the claws of a cat."

"Well, I'll do you no harm, provided that you swear to leave me as the guardian of everything up to the time when we once more have a master."

He dismissed them and called a meeting of the chiefs for the following Saturday at Ba-dyi-soumalén-ba, on the left bank of the Niger. Each chief was expressly ordered to bring with him only his kasa-bearer (2).

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1. Which was, for all practical purposes, their holy place.

2. The kasa is a kind of woolen coverlet

771 In any case, these are questions which he does not ask or which, at least, he has not considered in any way that would cause him to make logical, even if fragmentary, syntheses. His words and his acts are indications and sometimes even guideposts for us, but how uncertain and misleading they can be! And, in the observation of current facts, how many at least seeming contradictions there are! However, in the main, the analysis given in the paragraphs above represents the basis of Bambara dogma, since everything happens in reality as if the Bambara were living in accordance with these principles.

761 That being the case, life results from the union of the
two parts of the body, while death is a result of their separation.
772 Whence come these two elements and who it is that decides
upon their union? No answer is possible. The Bambara say,
merely, that certain persons are reincarnations. Precautions
[844] taken during pregnancy and delivery show that childbirth is one
of those mysteries against which taboos must be observed as a
protection. The frequent and readily believed stories about
[845] women giving birth to monsters -- usually animals -- bear witness
to the affinities which, in the minds of the Bambara, exist
between all creatures. But nothing specific is said about what
precedes and determines the birth of a child.

562 This is a secret to which the Bambara are, of course,
not indifferent. It is evidenced in the fact that women, through
778 whom man comes into the world, are held to be doubtful
creatures, at the very least, partly because of menstruation,
which makes a woman impure, and partly because of the mysterious
travail she endures during the delivery of a child (1).

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[774] 1. Women are also susceptible of being possessed continuously by a spirit (see the story of the Déni-bo Ba, p. 123). That is why, when a woman is several times widowed, she is suspected of being possessed by a jealous spirit who kills off her husbands. She is often even thought to be herself a sorceress.

562 This suspicion readily degenerates into disrespect, scorn and
778 hatred when a woman [123] is weak -- this being the usual
state of affairs. On the contrary, the feeling changes to super-
stitious fear if she resorts to occult practices and shows herself
[754] an adept at sorcery. Many old women are held to be very ex-
pert at such practices.

In the same connection, it should be noted that a new-
851 born child is also subject to scrutiny. For seven days after birth it is not officially taken into the family, because it is thought that during this period the infant may undergo metamorphosis unless closely watched over by its mother.

We shall see, through a study of their institutions, how the Bambara conceive of life and organize it.

Funeral practices will show us how the Bambara regard the idea of death.

And after death?

775 The Romans distinguished among spirits: the manes or
769 good gods (dii[1] manes) and the lemurs or evil spirits, both of
whom take an interest in the family.

The Bambara have analogous concepts.

Once it has left the body, the soul of a patriarch goes to join the souls of his ancestors, where it finds a spiritual family which protects the earthly family.

The manes (fa su-u) always like to frequent the places where their bodies lived, and that is why one keeps the things that belong to the deceased, why he is buried near his house or sometimes even under the floor, and why some families piously keep the skull of the departed to do it honor.

The entrance-hut (blon') is usually the site of the altar of
[778] the ancestors and of the family gods. The ancestral altar may be
a small board with a human mask, called kara, or a mound of earth shaped vaguely like a human being. The manes are thought to enter into these objects to receive the offerings and sacrifices made to them.

It is sometimes thought that the world of the manes may be without light and heat but that otherwise they each continue the existence it had in life with the same passions, the same

[1] [dei ? —Analyst]

776 precision of which the native substratum seems unaware. In
any event, there is no Bambara word for "God" except the one
[177] brought by the Moslems -- "Allah," pronounced as Ngala. This
lack of a Bambara word may be explained by their custom of
avoiding pronouncing the name of powerful people for fear of
incurring their wrath.

There is no superior spirit of evil: Seïtane [Satan] is
[177] likewise a Moslem introduction. The Bambara does not visualize a hierarchy of spirits.

Finally, it must be concluded, from the existence of
776 many magic practices, that there is a belief in a kind of universal
● 778 versal energy, which is diffuse by nature and which, by appropriate
789 means, one can capture and use as one likes. Certain genii or
gods are merely emanations of this invisible, imponderable and
active force, which no obstacle can stop and which can instantly
overcome space and strike at a distance. This is the basis of all
native magic.

## [129] 2. Morality and Customs

776 When, as among Catholics and Moslems, the after-life
is believed to be influenced by one's conduct in this life, there
577 is a rule which determines what is and what is not proper if one
wishes to earn the greatest possible rewards in the life to come.
The saints and pious men have shown the way to this end.

For the Bambara, however, the next life is merely a continuation of this one and he does not think that he can, by conduct, improve his chances in the next life since it offers no rewards or punishments for his day-by-day actions. Neither his manes nor his genii give him an example of conduct to guide him. Therefore, without thought of the future, he goes along solely concerned with the present; he seeks what will give him pleasure, tries to avoid what seems harmful, and all this in a groping way, as one walks in the dark.

577 Sometimes, it is true, he is led to behave with a degree
626 of decency and to avoid certain too shocking lapses, which would
expose him to reproach, alienate his friends and create for him

789 In connection with the brotherhoods, we shall see how magic has been organized [141] in the very heart of native society and we shall observe the stability and the repercussions of its work.

Magic

778 789 774 Universal energy. There exist individuals who are subject to certain phenomena, as yet imperfectly known or explained, in which the human being is divided into two so that on occasion his immaterial self lives a life independent of his body in a sphere inaccessible to corporeal sense. Such a man then enters a milieu from which he brings back visions and sensations that he can only describe vaguely and frighteningly in his habitual language after he has returned to a normal waking state.

Among the Bambara, occurrences of this kind have been observed and good use has been made of them, especially in the brotherhoods. They constitute a confirmation of belief in the invisible world, as do dreams. And the Bambara sees many other indications -- which escape us -- of the existence of this extra-natural world which envelops everything and which he conceives as a force sometimes active and sometimes inert, diffused or personified. It is this energy which is, as it were, set in motion by a curse, by the extreme expression of envy called "evil eye," by luck or by misfortune. A chief's authority derives the essence of its strength from this activity. And it is the reason for honoring the dead.

This invisible force, instantly transmissible to the greatest distances, is present in all things; it exists everywhere, in everything and in everyone. It possesses or acquires a greater or lesser power in certain objects and in certain people for a stated period of time or for a temporary period. It can be beneficent or maleficent, or both in turn. The ordinary man who touches such objects or such persons will usually be struck dead or, at the least, gravely affected, as he would be if he touched a high-voltage electric current. For the initiate who knows the secret of this force and who knows how to use it, this

● 778 is a virtue which exalts his own faculties to such an extent that
789 it gives him a supernatural power that is terrifying to the un-
initiated.

This property of transmission by contact accounts for the veneration which surrounds the possessions of eminent persons and those among the dead who [142] exercised power during their lifetime. Objects especially venerated are those that were in almost constant personal use: clothing, weapons, toilet articles.

The same property of transmission no doubt also accounts for the nature attributed to matter, which has been called continuity. Everything emanating from an object retains the occult energy within it, and, further, anything that "the man who knows" (*don-na-ba*) does to these detached parts affects the whole from which they came (1). That is why an undigested portion of food, if suitably treated by the magician, can spoil the digested portion of the same food. The chronicle tells of how this theory of the continuity of matter was used against Bani. By means of hair and a sandal, stolen from him, the magician paralyzed Bani's clairvoyance and put him at Da's mercy.

791 *Magicians*. It is the learning of the magician which, so to speak, brings order out of the chaos of the world. In the broadest sense of the word, his art, magic, is a kind of utilization of the occult. It is true that there is no Bambara, from a chief down to the least of the slaves, who does not act as his own magician, but there are specialists and some of them very famous. Besides, not everyone can be a real magician. Natural talents give some individuals the power to penetrate the invisible world and to feel at home there. Some are initiated by genii who have taken a fancy to them, as shown in the chronicle of Biton; others learn the craft from a relative or a well-known magician, either at no cost or at great expense.

[787] 1. Divination by means of the *kolon' kala*, previously described, is allied to this belief. The bits and pieces of the deceased act as the dead man himself would do in guiding the bearers of the *kolon' kala*.

791 •

609 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that
821 was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and
show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the
Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equip-
224 ment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well
as an arsenal of magic weapons.

825 The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of
778 this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at
some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The
animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[552] *wara-ba* means lion; *sa-ma*, elephant; *ma-li*, hippopotamus;
bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names
indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief
that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The
attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an appli-
cation of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual
and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a
small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
231 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
552 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of
825 their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once
held and which is still shown on occasion: *fa-li* meaning "donkey"
derives from *fa* meaning "powerful," just as *nya-ri* meaning "cat"
derives from *nya* and has the same meaning, along with *ba*
meaning "goat."

231 825 meaning "goat." In the case of the goat, there remain some customs that are very suggestive. Its milk is the basis of the most solemn of all oaths, that of fraternization; milk is also used to put out fires started by lightning and the hide is used to make sandals worn by widows during the period of mourning. The chronicle tells us that a certain dish made of a goat's head gives rise to the chief's power and sustains it (1). In spite of all this, the goat shares with the donkey a general scorn and they are considered to be the born companions of slaves. This is perhaps why some people refuse to allow either animal to come into the house. Indeed, it is believed that a rich and powerful man can be ruined if either of these animals enters his house or, even worse, if he touches them.

● 778 791 754 Magician's work. So it is that man is immersed in a strange fluid. In the final analysis, everything, man included, [149] is merely a manifestation of this fluid. Currents and eddies have all forms of life at their mercy, and only the strongest are able to resist, control and even acquire in the struggle greater power than they would otherwise display. "The one who knows" can avoid or follow this chaotic movement; he can control himself and others. He is the real "master" (soma) and he alone can utilize this ever present and ever powerful invisible world.

754 What makes a magician can be described by a single term: the magic weapon, to be used for defense as well as for attack, and indeed for anything else, by one who knows how to use it. Let us consider some of the examples in the Bambara arsenal.

For anyone who wants to destroy an enemy, the so ma sama (lit., "bundle of the person of the house") is a valuable weapon. It is a mysterious powder, kept in the horn of a hind, in which is placed a small stick. It is used in the following manner: let us suppose that a Bambara wishes to harm a person who is passing through the village. The Bambara secretly takes

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1. See p. 31, in connection with Dina Wara.

788 as it returned to its point of departure. This was presumably because the operator had not done what was necessary to assure the reintegration of the supernatural power.

[778] There are thus rites that set in motion this universal energy, whether diffuse or personified -- rites that channel, direct and orientate this energy so that not only it will reach the goal sought, but also it will be kept from straying from the desired route, thus harming the very person it is supposed to aid. Similar means are used to forestall the misdeeds which may be committed by an agent mistakenly invoked. When Ngolo had aroused his son Ntyi's ambition, he thought he could conjure away its effects by sacrificing his two grandsons, Ntyi's own children.

Those actions that call upon, guide and reintegrate this universal energy, whether diffuse or personified, are what we call rites.

788 754 During the oath using kola, the operator has in his hand a sharp object (pin, thorn, etc.) with which he pricks or stabs through the nut, saying, for instance: "Take my heart and my liver and kill me, if...." (i ka ne son' ni m bien' ta, ni ...). These pricks indicate to the "power" with which the operator is concerned that, if necessary, it should take vengeance by piercing the guilty person, just as the kola is pierced by the pin (1).

1. The shirt sent by Ma-n-son to Forokoro was first pricked with a needle (p. 120).

In curses, all the imprecations used are so many indications, indeed sometimes instructions (2), as to how the [153] spirit INVoKed is Requested to act.

[575] 2. At the time of admission to the brotherhoods, the most frightful threats are made against the traitor or perjuror in the form of curses indicating to the avenging spirit how he should punish: "may it enter through your anus and come out through your mouth, etc."

ovo invoked is requested or required to act.

There are times when on the contrary, the native is
789 inclined to hold the energy in check, in order to avoid the
778 harm that would result from this sort of action. For this pur-
[784] pose he abstains from doing certain things; this is the origin
of many taboos (tne).

The acquisition of magic power in order to gain strength or to be able to act so as to avoid being affected by magic or, finally, to be able to get rid of magic power when one is permeated by it to a dangerous point -- all these involve appropriate actions or rites whose forms and conditions only magicians or others gifted with intuition can determine.

The chronicle shows that chiefs make use of magic to try to strengthen the supernatural power which is the basis of their position. Dina Wara secretly ate a special dish made of a goat's head; Biton took special baths, whose virtues Ngolo appropriated by trickery just as Biton had done with respect to Dina Wara, his brother-in-law. All sorts of comparable practices accounted for the increase of Ngolo's "luck," that modal quality of supernatural power which confers a degree of magic potency on the possessor. This so-called "luck" has, as it were, a kind of radiation, which confers special good fortune on whatever it touches. That is why the marabouts advised Biton to live in close proximity to Ngolo so as to take advantage of the favorable atmosphere.

778 This energy is attached to everything and, especially,
768 to objects that come into direct contact with anything im-
pregnated with it. What one wears on oneself thus becomes a sort of accumulator, and that is why the objects left upon a powerful person's death are so carefully preserved and constitute the most valuable part of his legacy. The chronicle tells us with what veneration the cap and weapons belonging to Biton were regarded.

778 Magic force is therefore acquired by means of appropri-
789 ate practices indicated by magicians; one shares its benefits
by living near those entrusted with it by applying to oneself what comes from such privileged persons. Here again is a result of the continuity of matter. Whatever the case, anything

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789 emanating from the person or object impregnated with magic
force acts as if it were a part of that person or object. Often
[788] the magician or [154] ritual officiant spits on the person or
object involved in the rites. This is a means of transferring
one person's fluid to another.

Conversely, it is vital to know how to avoid contact
751 with, or even emanations from, a maleficent magic force.
789 That is the reason for the great number of mysterious magic
754 practices and the secret of the innumerable amulets that form
so many shields, to be placed presumably where they will best
protect against any blow. Therefore it is the magician's
prerogative to make amulets and to prescribe the conduct
necessary to preserve their efficacy.

It should be noted that protection set up against a given person is good only for him and is useless against a successor, for instance. The chronicle tells us that Bani, chief of Samba-Nyana, was successful in using certain artifices to prevent Ma-n-son from conquering him. But, kept in ignorance of Ma-n-son's death and having taken no precautions against Da, Ma-n-son's son and successor, Bani was conquered by Da, against whom his artifices availed nothing.

If one is caught in spite of precautions, what is to be done? Everyone is afflicted in one way or another in any event. A Bambara is always inclined to believe in some sort of supernatural intervention. He has on hand some sort of remedy, but more often he resorts to a "seer" for guidance or, if the case requires, to a magician's skill.

Native medicine is a mass of magic formulas and of remedies strikingly reminiscent of the pharmacopeia of the Middle Ages (see, in the foregoing, father Niany's operations).

[571] The individual does not live as an isolated unit but
789 rather as an integral part of a community. In the society in
which he lives, however restricted it may be, he progressively
783 occupies various situations. On both physical and moral levels,
he undergoes changes and, depending on circumstances, whether
fortunate or unfortunate happenings, changes take place within
him. In short, his magic potential varies. These variations
are always believed to concern the entire milieu, upon which
they may (in the case of illness or death) have disastrous effects.

592 comparable to what our law defines as a family. In fact, the
601 four terms just discussed, ton', ba-denya, gwa, and so, are
596 all used for the purpose. It is what is intended by their use that gives them their meaning, and depending on the region, each term has a meaning made precise by usage.

592 The dwelling of the Bambara family usually includes a fairly large number of huts of various kinds. Some are
342 cylindrical and built of native masonry with a conical straw roof and, for a door, a slit or opening which does not extend all the way to the ground. Others are parallelepiped, made of native masonry, and ordinarily also provided with no opening except the door.

Shelters (gwa), consisting of flat straw roofs supported on forked sticks, are usually placed haphazardly or wherever the master of the house wants them and are certainly not governed by any traditional rules or fixed orientation. All these dwellings or out-buildings are enclosed by either a clay wall or an unbroken hedge whose two ends are supported by the walls
343 of the hut called blon' which serves as a vestibule for the establishment.

178 The altar of the ancestors and of the household gods is found in the blon'.

The houses of notables are somewhat more elaborately arranged: instead of a single inner court, there are two, three, or even more, sometimes graduated in extent. The master arranges his people in such a way as to divide into sections the heterogeneous elements gathered together under his protection.
592 The domestic servants and the young [161] men, the women, girls, and small children, and finally the eventual successor are, as it were, fenced apart in their own blocks of dwellings, while the fa himself is to be found in impressive isolation, which lends weight to his authority.

592 Among great personages, especially among heads of clans, this arrangement is the rule, and their isolation deep in
712 the interior is virtually a security measure. In the old days a kind of fortress or redoubt, the tata, was built in the center of the royal residence. Gunpowder, weapons, and all the means of defense were kept there, and it was no easy matter to capture

764 close the opening of the niche and carefully fill any cracks with earth moistened and kneaded on the spot.

During all this the women sing in a low voice and clap their hands, accompanied by muffled drums.

When all is done, the sons of the deceased come out of the excavation, and the principal gravedigger comes forward with his spade upside down on his shoulder and holding a gourd full of water in his hand. Silence falls, and the women and drummers are still. He pours some water at the head of the grave, saying: "See this water. Do not be angry, pardon [169] us, give us rain in the winter and an abundant harvest. May the wind blow from the east or from the west, from the north or from the south, as is best for us. Give us long life, many descendants, wives, and wealth." And the throng replies: "So be it (o de ka ke)."

With the back side of their spades the gravediggers then fill in the excavation. The women resume their singing in rhythm with the clapping of hands, and accompanied by subdued drums, they say: "Our fa is dead, but he will return! Young men, fill in the grave well so that no sorcerer (suba), no hyena, no wild beast can carry away the corpse."

764 When the grave is filled in, the person holding the strip of material still attached to the shroud pulls it so that it breaks.
778 This bit of cloth is a precious relic for use in various magical
789 performances. The magical bands called tafo are made from it and are tied around the waist to protect one from back ailments and spectral apparitions (1).

The coarse mat which had served as a bed for the deceased is put upon the grave, along with a pair of his old sandals and his water jug. The finer mat is usually given to a friend or to a family, and it is then burned outside the village (1) [Ed., see footnote above].

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1. These are a few of the innumerable examples of magic practices which in the most diverse forms accompany all important activities.

596 honored by the new *fa*, and there is nothing to prevent him
614 from adding to the treasure.

The basic cult of the family is the cult of the ancestors.
769 Although the dead are frequently buried outside the family residence,
their souls are thought to live in the *blon'* of the dwelling.
[343 The *blon'* is a hut with two openings on opposite sides, one
592] to the street and the other to the interior, usually the courtyard.
It is impossible to enter or leave a house without going
through the *blon'*, where there is always a guard, at least in
778 important houses. The ancestors are usually represented in the
blon' by a group of crude, conical clay figures of a man and
769 woman, the latter identifiable by the exaggerated breasts.
Sometimes the symbol of the dead is a small board about a
meter long, twenty centimeters wide, and a little more than
a centimeter thick; at one of its extremities a slight protuberance
vaguely suggests a head, a kind of ellipsoidal cylinder
with eyes, nose, mouth, and chin faintly carved on one side.
On the side with the face, the board has a checkerboard pattern,
often of alternating black and red squares, probably to
indicate the material of a loincloth. The lower extremity of
the figure has a semicircular portion cut away to give the effect
of legs spread apart when the effigy is set up.

769 Whatever form it may have, the representation of the
782 dead is called *kara* (1) and serves in some manner as an altar
on which libations are poured and to which are attached the
remains of the sacrifices made to the dead (*su-u*). Nevertheless,
it is also a very widespread practice to make libations and
sacrifices before the door of the *blon'* and, more rarely, before
the door of an inner hut. In this case the liquid is poured and
[775] the remains smeared on the vertical edge of the opening. This
practice is based on the belief that the souls of the dead ancestors
like to return to the place where the *fa* liked to sit during
his lifetime. Undoubtedly, the ancestors are regarded as guardians
of the threshold; they are [181] honored as such because it is
believed that they prefer to be honored in this way.

778 1. In Soninké, *kara* means "to die" and "death."

769 778 782 This is the place where on important occasions the fa receives congratulations or condolences, which are addressed not only to him but also to the ancestors who, though invisible, are nevertheless present.

769 782 When the fa wishes to make an offering to the ancestors (fa su son'), he squats before the door of the blon' with his head bare and a chicken in his hand. He addresses the most recently deceased (1), saying: "I offer this chicken in my own name and in that of my children. Jointly with our dead fathers and mothers, preserve us from sorcerers who eat souls (suba) and from the evil of the wicked; protect us from sickness and disaster; guard our health; give us good wives and healthy children; bring success to our work in the fields, and give us rain."

If the offering is being made for a particular purpose, the fa is explicit about it and speaks just as he would to a living person. He concludes by asking that the victim reveal the response by the way it falls as it dies. Then he cuts the chicken's throat and dribbles the blood on the wall at either side of the door of the blon'. He than resumes his crouched position, and after throwing the fowl a short distance, he watches its convulsions and waits for it to fall motionless. [787] Usually the position is regarded as favorable if the animal dies with its legs in the air and its feet turned toward the officiator; if the feet are turned away, the response is unfavorable. Often, just as he completes the offering, the fa announces what position he considers favorable or unfavorable.

The fa gives the sacrificed chicken to his wife to be cooked, and then he divides it among the members of the family; this is truly a communion.

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1. It seems that the ancestors form a kind of chain in which the first invisible link is the ancestor most recently deceased and the first visible link is the current fa.

769 782 As a substitute for the chicken, it is very common to offer some *dege*, a bit of millet coarsely ground and thrown in a little water. The *fa* keeps this liquid in a small gourd. It is perhaps [182] reasonable to think that this is the most ancient manner of honoring the dead and, in particular, calling for their protection in obtaining the two essentials of life: grain and water.

[273] An equally common libation is made with *dlo*, a kind of millet beer which every Bambara enjoys drinking to the point of intoxication. The dead could hardly fail to be pleased with an offering of what they had enjoyed so much on earth!

[276] One must conclude, too, that offerings of kola nuts please the dead because it gives them a chance to enjoy a favorite treat. The officiator chews the kola nut and then spits out his saliva mixed with the juice and remains along the walls of the *blon'*.

Such are the ordinary offerings, but on special occasions the quantity and importance of the gifts are increased according to the desired results. When many people are present and the [781] house is prosperous, the victims are oxen and sheep. It should not be forgotten that the flesh of these consecrated victims, eaten in common, makes a very strong mystical bond between the participants; it is a true communion. It is generally conceded that the bond created by drinking consecrated liquids together is much less strong.

776 778 In addition to his ancestors, every Bambara has as his special protector, one of those gods (*nyana*) which are created wholly by the work of the magician. Every family has one or more *nyana*, whose priest is the *fa*. The *boli*, the symbol and altar of this type of divinity, is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put into a leather or canvas sack, a gourd, or a pot. The *nyana* of Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, was a *n-ko* whose *boli* was kept in a monkey skin. The *boli* is taken out of its cover so that libations can be poured over it and animal remains smeared on it. If there is some objection to exposing it, the offering is put on the cover.

769 794 Everything that takes place relative to the cult of the *nyana* is analogous to that described for the cult of the ancestors.

769 794 It has the same base: request, offering, communion. In addition, there is a liturgy appropriate to each nyana, in particular, the mysterious sayings that attract the god and make him [183], the actual servitor of the person uttering these sayings, rather than a benevolent protector. This shows the antithesis as to final ends between religion and magic, as was set forth in Chapter 2 of the present work.

596 614 778 The fa also has the responsibility of maintaining the efficacy of magic weapons; he must fulfill all the obligations required by each of them. Among them there are true nyana, sometimes independent, sometimes a part of the great nyana. Mostly they are amulets or talismans whose virtue depends on certain rites or simply on the observance of certain interdicts.

596 614 ● 778 Finally, the fa is the guardian of custom and family relics, which likewise have a religious basis since custom, after all, is the continuing will of the generations, the imperious mandate of the ancestors, the table of law of the manes. Any transgression of custom is certain to bring the worst disasters. The relics are ordinary or ceremonial objects left by the successive fa. Some of them are so strongly associated with the patriarchal office that on special occasions or in certain circumstances the fa is forced by custom to wear these objects impregnated with the virtue of the ancestors. The cap and weapons of Biton at Ségou were of this nature, and such is the case among the Massa-si.

596 614 Relations between members of the community. Theoretically, the powers of the fa over the members of the community are absolute. He can hire them out, offer them as security, sell them, and even put them to death (1). He also has the right to use whatever belongs to them,(2) both persons

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1. Note how Ma-n-son got rid of some of his brothers.

2. Ngolo sacrificed his son's son.

311 Bambara seeks the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-
621 siri) or, more exactly, determines where this genie dwells. It
776 may be a spring, a hill, or a rock; often it is a fine tree, in-
794 variably surrounded by a grove or at least with a grove nearby.
Then, always following the same procedure, he finds out the conditions under which the genie will allow someone to settle in his domain in order to live there and cultivate the lands. Thus, a contract is worked out which governs the man's exploitation of the genie's territorial domain. As a result, provided he worships the genie in the manner required, the man [228] will be able to work under the protection of the god. Anyone who has had a share in the contract, even if only through representatives, will likewise profit if he scrupulously observes the conditions.

621 The establishment of a village requires the cooperation of
622 several communities, each represented by its fa. One of these fa
793 will either appropriate the leadership or be chosen as the rep-
794 resentative or chief of the others. Sometimes he may be merely
primus inter pares; otherwise he may have managed to have his primacy conceded by the rest. It is this chief who treats with the genie in the name of the whole village; thus, he becomes the "high priest of the genie" (nyana-n-son-na-ba) with the essential function of "making the offerings" (son') required by the cult. Furthermore, he administers the earthly domain of the genie and is therefore called dugu-tigi (master of the earth).

To the nyana dugu-da-siri is usually attributed the same dyamu as that of its high priest, just as though the genie belonged to the spiritual family of the priest. This is a result consistent with the mentality of the Bambara.

621 The same mental state accounts for the custom in certain
776 villages of dedicating a living animal, often a ram, to the
● 778 nyana dugu-da-siri and believing it to be the god's mount. The
[825] animal is allowed to wander freely about the village, and its
mischief is never punished; indeed, the people enjoy caressing and indulging it. The animal takes on some of the attributes of the genie and is, as it were, endowed with certain supernatural virtues, so only good can come from contact with it.

621 Theoretically, each settlement has only one genie, but
776 actually it may have several, especially if it has been settled by

621 successive groups, each recognizing a genie-protector. In that
776 case, the genie first recognized and worshiped takes precedence over the others. In any case, social life requires each segment to respect the gods of its neighbors, and this respect carries with it a certain amount of superstitious fear.

311 It is evident from the foregoing that occupying and cultivating land poses certain problems for the settlement bene-
621 fited, and these may be grouped under three heads: the cult of
794 the genie-protector; the exploitation of the land; and the organization of the territorial community.

793 *The cult.* This is mainly supported by the high priest, whose principal duty is to "make the offerings" (*son'*) to the
794 "genie" [229] (*nyana*), hence his title *nyana-son-na-ba*. He is assisted by the council of *fa*, one of whom, the *syere* (follower), may replace him in case of need. The office of high priest is for life and is inherited in the same way as his *faya*. This continuity shows that the genie is actually regarded as a kind of spiritual ancestor of the priest, as we have seen from the fact that it is given the same *dyamu* as its high priest.

794 The cult ceremonies are very simple. They consist of offerings made by the high priest, who at the same time indi-
796 cates to the genie the purpose for which they are being made. The most solemn ceremonies take place when millet is sown and harvested. For these occasions, every worshiper is expected to bring a contribution in proportion to his resources. The kind of gift is not specified; everyone brings whatever he can or whatever he wishes, usually animals (sheep, beef, fowl, etc.), grain, and especially millet beer (*dlo*).

782 During these general gatherings, from which no one is excluded, only the high priest and the members of the council
796 enter the sacred grove or approach the genie's abode. There,
● 778 the high priest makes known the purpose of the sacrifice: to
+ thank the genie for his past favors; to offer him the gifts brought by everyone; and to ask him to continue to protect the community so that its prosperity may be assured. Then the victims are sacrificed, and their blood is sprinkled on the tree trunk or whatever object or place is reputed to be the home of the genie.

Nyana

794 776 Each brotherhood is founded on the cult of a spirit (nyana). What we call "spirit" to indicate its immateriality, the Bambara from another point of view calls "power," "master," "lord", etc., for such is the meaning of the words nya, nyana, nama, dyara, komo, faro, etc., by which he designates the innumerable "gods" of his pantheon, thus affirming his subjection to this invisible restraint upon him.

It is the magician who creates the nyana of the boli worshiped by the brotherhoods with which we are here concerned. His incantations call up a kind of echo from the invisible; his persistent and peremptory practices produce a sort of personification of his desire in the depths of the universal and diffuse energy, because he "names" the thing he wants. The nyana thus created, which he attracted by "naming" it, is retained by offerings and sacrifices, just as a person is seduced by presents. Finally, he forges a link with the nyana through communion. From that point on creature and creator are [253] so closely bound to each other that neither can refuse anything to the other; they form a single being whose visible aspect is completed by the invisible.

Judging from statements, concepts, and practices, this is the native belief as to the mysterious work of the magician. The latter creates as many nyana as he likes, and he draws at will on the invisible which he fashions and rules.

Boli

794 778 Mankind in general and the native in particular need to give material support to their speculations. The magician and the believer alike need to have at hand the nyana, this essence which is personified by being "named." Appropriate procedures make the nyana come to that altar which at the same time is its symbol and which the Bambara call boli (1).

1. Otherwise known as buri. It should be noted that in ordinary language the

774 terms nyana and boli are used inter-
778 changeably. This is natural enough
since the latter is merely the symbol
of the former.

Each nyana has a boli which in form and substance is peculiar to it. Anything may be used to make boli: horn or hair of the hare, hind, or cattle; nails or claws; animal venom or excretions. It is not unusual to find parts of a human body put to use. As the chronicle tells, the war drums of the ton-
[727 dyon' were elevated to the rank of boli and were then adorned
782] with the craniums and jaws of human beings sacrificed to them. Often the ball tied to the end of a piece of rope or leather and used to beat the tabala [Tr., big drum] is a human hand which has been severed and wrapped in a leather cover.

Certain of the boli, particularly those of the Komo and the Kono, are said to be made of a child's torso; those of the Tyi-wara and Nama are made of wood, and those of the Duga of horn.

All sorts of shapes are employed: men, animals, doll-like figures, balls, small crowns, etc. The principal boli, called boli-de-n-fa, is accompanied by subsidiary ones called boli-de.

The boli is also given sex: one is male, another female; and it is said that there is a kind of mystical copulation [254] from which at the time of initiation are born the spiritual sons of the nyana.

Among boli should be noted those made of forked sticks, such as the n-Golo and the Tyi-wara, both patrons of brotherhoods of young men (1).

171 1. If one makes certain comparisons, the forked stick seems to deserve special attention. Among the Khassonké, for instance, the soli-ma always build their seclusion hut (bire) with a forked post in the center. This post, called biri-makho (master of the hut), is a tree trunk chosen

171 and cut by the *gankurango* (magician-protector of the *soli-ma* among the Khassonké) because it is so placed in the forest that the normal progress of the sun follows the axis formed by the two branches of the fork. There is thus some relation between the sun and the forked tree called *biri-makho*. Perhaps the same relationship accounts for the sleeping position of the boys in the *bire*: they always lie with their heads toward the center post and their bodies forming the spokes of a wheel around it. During the *soli* ceremonies the same Khassonké *soli-ma* use a short wand forked at one end.

The forked stick with mystical significance is also found among the Koniagui.

It is not possible, given the present state of our knowledge, to be specific about the origin or significance of this symbol. For the same reason, we cannot say whether it can be related to the lyre-shaped stones found in the mysterious collection of rocks discovered in Gambia, in which there is thought to be discernible a clearly defined cult of the sun (cf. *Bulletin du Comité d'études historiques et scientifiques de l'A.O.F.*, 1920, No. 1).

774 To the European these *boli* are thoroughly repulsive objects.
778 Since magic utilizes everything (2), all kinds of things are used to make them, and during the sacrifices, blood, hair, feathers, viscera, etc., are usually placed on the *boli*. The result is usually a repugnant sight. The native, however, seems to pay no attention to this repulsive aspect which so horrifies

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2. And particularly things which are considered repulsive in ordinary life.

794 Europeans. The Black sees only the symbolic altar which he
778 venerates. Besides, in theory at least, the boli does not acquire its prestige in the eyes of the Black from its strange or bizarre nature; the fact that it is consecrated confers upon it its sacred character and its ritual use. That is why, in general (3), the destruction of a boli no more means the destruction of [255] the corresponding cult than destroying a statue of Buddha would mean the annihilation of Buddhism.

The making and consecration of a boli are matters not easily accessible to the profane. Here is what Raffenel's informant, Bouo, told him about a boli belonging to the Massa-si: "The sorcerers first sought a very rare tree. They approached it in a procession, dug a hole at its foot, and after invocations in an unknown tongue gathered parts of its roots with bizarre ceremonies. Using the same invocations and ceremonies, they procured some hairs from the tail of a black horse. So that these ingredients should answer their purpose, they had one of their number take off his trousers and shirt and then pick up the objects (1). The bark and the horsehair were placed in an earthen vessel and remained there for half a day over a hot fire. During this last day the proxy of the magicians prostrated himself, face to the ground, seven times seven times, while reciting prayers in a language which no one could understand.

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3. I say "in general" because there are exceptions. The skull of a chief named Sama, who ruled over a village called Gniningo in the Gangaran area, was the boli of a cult created by that chief. When the skull was destroyed, that put an end to the cult, since it was impossible to replace this unique object.

1. It is common for a sorcerer to remove all his clothing for the performance of his duties.

794 "After the creation came the consecration. The
778 Kouroubari and the leaders of the people witnessed it. A white ox, a red ox, and a red rooster were sacrificed for the occasion (2)."

2. Raffenel, Nouveau voyage au Pays des Nègres [New Journey to the Country of the Negroes], Vol. 1, p. 237.

The boli is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put in a sack or other receptacle, and except during ceremonies it
846 is stored with other cult objects in a kind of temple often resembling a miniature native hut and called nyana-bon', "hut of the nyana."

776 Obviously there are differences between the various nyana, because peculiar practices call up unlike spirits. In any event, however, the captive spirit is, as it were, a slave of the magician, who treats it as such and even sells it, along with instructions for its use. There are magicians who go from place to place, making and selling nyana and other magic weapons, and
443 there are recognized markets where one can always [256] obtain the boli of the most popular nyana. The markets at Bélédougou, Bendougou, and Follona are especially well known.

Trade in Boli

794 The chronicle of Ségou tells that Biton, the founder of
778 the empire, acquired his principal idols in the Bendougou region where the popular markets of Moribala, Kourbadougou,
438 and Diali are located.

Itinerant merchants deal in all sorts of cult objects, and there are settled traders who are sometimes very well known, like a certain Minkoli who made boli and was so famous that his village is named after him: Minkoli ka dugu (village of Minkoli). I have never been able to find out, however, which village in the Bendougou area was the home of the famous Minkoli.

By such means the cult of a given nyana, once it has been created, spreads to some extent, depending on the degree

794 to which its creator chooses to reveal the ritual of initiation.

● 778 The head of a family, just like an isolated individual 438 or the head of a large community, will not fail to acquire, for a monetary consideration, exclusive possession of one of these powerful boli, which becomes his personal protector. Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, had with him the nyana n-Ka; Biton, the founder of the empire of Ségou, possessed several famous nyana: na n-Golo-ko (1), Nye-n-dinge du (2), and ba Kung-o-ba (3). [776] Generally speaking, these private cults cannot spread, but when their possessor becomes a powerful chief, they migrate rapidly. This is what happened to Biton's cults; his followers took up the worship of his idols.

794 When an individual becomes the acknowledged possessor of a nyana the result is an alliance with this nyana, which in the native language is called furu, the same word as that used for the [833] conjugal union of a man and a woman. Indeed, the installation of a renowned nyana in its master's village gives rise to rejoicing [257] similar to that occasioned by a wedding; hence, the following expressions: a ye boli furu, "he is united with a boli"; a ye boh' furu gosi, "he has effected a union with a boli"; a-ta boli konyo kera, "he has celebrated the wedding of his boli." On the day of such festivals, the master of the nyana (nyana-tigi or boli-tigi, surrounded by his acolytes, offers dlo to his guests who have come to greet him and give him presents. At nightfall, when the uninitiated have withdrawn, the clergy and the adepts in a procession take the boli to the "sacred wood" where the first cult ceremony is held, characterized principally by dancing and singing.

(1). Literally, na-n-Goloko, "the mother concerned with birth" or, freely translated, "the goddess who presides at birth."

(2). Nye dinge du, "the deep orbit of the eye."

(3). Ba-kung-o-ba, "mother of the great bush."

778 The cash value of boli varies considerably. At the most it is between 30 and 40 francs, payable in kind or in cowries.
435 The cost is increased, however, by gifts to the seller and his acolytes who come to instruct the new clergy in their functions. As a result, considering the various kinds of refreshments, dogs, goats, and chickens, as well as kola nuts and millet beer (dlo), the price may actually come to 100 francs.

778 Since the nyana-tigi (master of the nyana) has full con-
794 trol over his nyana, he may admit anyone he likes to the benefits of his cult. Well-known cults have been much sought after, and as they developed, they became complicated. As the importance of a cult increases, its ceremonies are amplified and augmented in proportion to the number of people taking part in them. Initiation requires a fee, and a clergy becomes necessary. This is the way that these cults, established through participation, have given rise to associations which the Europeans call "secret societies" but which might better be called "brotherhoods," because of the spiritual filiation uniting the affiliates.

Mysteries and Liturgical Equipment

Everything that concerns the brotherhood of the nyana is shrouded in mystery; for various reasons, everything is concealed (do, as the natives put it). It is, indeed, a principle of magic that power exists only insofar as its essence evades the investigation of its adversaries. The uninitiated therefore, must not know the basis of the supernatural power of the nyana, because, if they knew, they would be able to acquire the means of [258] destroying it, resisting it, or at the very least rendering it inefficacious. Anything related to the nyana is bound to it and is, so to speak, an integral part of the nyana by virtue of consecration: the clergy and the liturgical equipment. That is why both are do and why every effort is made to hide them, in their magical aspect, from curiosity of the profane. By extension, however, all members of a brotherhood of any nyana of the boli in Bambara country are identified as do-u, "the hidden people."

794 621 brotherhoods together, although the latter seem to dominate the former. These brotherhoods hem in the communities they dominate by abusively extending their jurisdiction far beyond its proper limits. Indeed, the faithful are not the only ones who are subject to the judgments handed down by the brotherhoods, whose clergy make decisions affecting not only members involved but often also third parties in the neighborhood or even people from neighboring or distant regions. The brotherhoods are tyrannical toward their own members and no less so to strangers, who often see no way of escaping persecution short of asking to be received into the ranks.

794 661 182 Thus, it is apparent how a brotherhood increases in size and in power as time passes. Each year it takes in the young people at the end of the *soli*, and as a result all the communities are at length absorbed by it live in it and for it (1). It

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1. The following is a typical example.

•[778] In the village of Marenna (Fouladougou Arbala), the natives belong to the cult of Ba-ku. This *boli* consists of a small sheaf of roots of the indigo tree. For every newborn child the *nyana-tigi* makes and consecrates a small Ba-ku, which he places in a gourd and puts in the temple of this *nyana*. At the time of the *soli*, the child becomes affiliated with the cult, takes the *boli* placed in the gourd for him at birth and henceforth wears it on his person. All the families in Marenna are thus closely involved in the cult of Ba-ku, being, as it were, engendered by this god to whom each person owes both physical and spiritual birth. Ba-ku comes from Sangaran, and his high priest is a Dyara; that is why he is invoked and called by the expression *Ba-ku Dyara Sangaran-ka*. The word *ba-ku* literally means "tail of a

794 country and that the Bambara Massa-si, who had fled to
173 Gadiaga, received it, in turn, from one Namori or Nyamori, a former slave who had been initiated into the mysteries of the Koré and who, for that reason, was named Kor-dyuga.

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778 Over and above the general characteristics already noted, the Komo has the following peculiarities.

It is said that to make it perfect the boli of the Komo requires the body of a degeni, that is, of a very young boy. Thus, the body of the Komo of Tiguini (20 to 40 kilometers from Ségou) is said to be none other than the body of the grandson [271] of its founder. The same thing is said of the boli of the Komo at Kégué in Bani territory.

This boli-den'-fa is equipped with three iron tubes, and the whole thing is called tama gengen-ba (1). There is a horn at the end of one of these tubes, with an opening serving as a mouthpiece. The sound drawn from this trumpet of sorts by the wara-da announces a meeting of the Komo.

The usual accessories accompany the boli-den'-fa: korti, kana, and siri-kun', which we have already mentioned.

[281] When not in use for ceremonies, all this equipment is put into baskets similar to those used to transport cotton. The tama-gengen-ba are wrapped in a tiger skin. A hut with a conical roof, similar to the native huts, serves as a temple and holds all the regalia. It is called the Komo-bon' (hut of the Komo).

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778 When he is on duty, the wara-da, "oracle" of the Komo, is dressed in a special costume consisting of a mask and a cloak. The mask is surmounted by horns and does not cover the face, but rather is affixed to a stick hidden in the folds of the cloak; it goes up and down at the pleasure of the wara-da, who is completely

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1. The term Komo dyoloro, meaning "chain of the Komo," is used in front of the uninitiated. The wara-da, oracle of the Komo, is called dyoloro samana, "he who drags the chain" of the Komo. In the special language of the cult, "sacrificing to the Komo" ~~is expressed~~ by an bi nege son' (we pay homage to the iron).

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794 covered by the cloak made of feathers from guinea fowl and
778 chickens. Beneath this garb, the wara-da performs all sorts of acrobatics. Skillfully manipulating the mask and the cloak during ritual dances, he gives the illusion, in the light of the fires, of a fantastic creature whose cries, transmitted through the horn, terrify even the initiated.

793 In addition to the wara-da, the clergy includes: a
794 Komo-tigi, high priest; some muru-kala-tigi, sacrificers; a da-ro-tigi, porter, who announces and prepares for the meetings; and a Komo-dyeli, herald. There are also student wara-da, called soma-den' (literally, "elder sons" in the special language), who act as assistants, and finally, there are many other auxiliaries who form a cortege with the wara-da when he carries the boli in nocturnal processions. These people are grouped together under the term tie-den' or tigi-den' ("sons of the master" in the special language). Conspicuous among them are the ta-tugu who [272] carry the flaming torches which are so characteristic of the nocturnal processions.

When the wara-da makes known the revelations of the god, he speaks through the tube with the horn. Since he uses the special language and since the tube distorts the sounds, the Komo-tigi must interpret for him. It is the Komo-dyeli who shouts the revelation which echoes through the night.

794 At the time of the two great annual ceremonies, the wara-da takes the boli and the other liturgical equipment to the
796 sacred grove. The Komo-tigi directs the ceremonies. The sacrifices are entrusted to the muru-kala-tigi among whom are to be noted: the one who brings the victim and who, when the ceremony takes place in the temple, leads it across the threshold (1); and the one who removes the victim and carries its body

1. This door is then called nyena-ma don'-da, "entry of the living," in the special language, and the muru-kala-tigi who brings the victim in is called da-kuna-sigi or "master of the fatal (literally 'bitter') door."

794 796 For a certain length of time, the new members are kept in seclusion while being instructed by initiates, especially the older ones, who see to it that they learn the songs and dances and become familiar with the special language. It is in the course of this instruction that they are given certain formulas to use for recognition among the komo-den' (sons of the Komo). The following are two examples and by no means the only ones; each Komo-ya has its own formulas, and in addition the adepts of the various Komo-ya are readily inclined to fraternize, especially when they are alone, far from their respective groups. In such cases, the identical principles of their cults bring them together, and they question each other at once:

539 --E b' a la wa (Are you a member)?

--M ba' la (I am).

--N'i b'a la, tyoko dyira r na (If you are, show me the secret sign).

201 This sign varies and is completely arbitrary. Sometimes it involves raising the hand with the fingers spread apart in a certain way; at other times, twigs are placed in a special pattern, and so on. [275]

The Nama

794 This cult arose at an unknown date at Missango (Bélédougou). The head of the Nama at Missango is addressed respectfully as Fura-tigi-ba, meaning literally, "grand master of the fura (fura specifically means "leaf" of a tree and, by extension, "remedy"). This is one of the expressions with double meanings which are so common in the brotherhoods: Fura-tigi-ba, the great physician, great savant, grand master.

The Nama is also called Nama-koro and Suya-koro, and a certain Nama is called Siriman 'fin'.

778 Objects used in worship include; the Nama-kon-golo-u (craniums of the Nama), which are a kind of headdress, usually made of linge wood and shaped like fantastic birds; the wara-se (literally, "foot of the wara"), a small wooden board about a meter high with three horns affixed to it; and a similar board with two horns, called nye-bla.

794 There are, of course, the usual accessories: kana,
[778] korti, siri-kun', pottery, bells, horns, and so forth.

Most of these objects are stored in a small hut called Nama-bon', similar to the native huts.

794 The ceremonies take place in a grove which is reserved
for the purpose. If there appears to be not enough privacy in
778 spite of the dense foliage, or for some other reason, a palisade
(dyase) or a few straw mats are put up to form an enclosure.
In the special language of this brotherhood, the term for offering
a sacrifice to the Nama is dyase son' (literally, "to honor the
palisade").

794 The assemblage of the adepts of the same Nama constitute a Nama-ya, Nama brotherhood. Persons who wish to form a Nama-ya appeal to an existing Nama-ya to obtain the secrets or, more accurately, the rules governing the brotherhood: the mysterious words and acts by which the god (wara) is summoned and made amenable to his worshipers; cult objects; organization and role of the clergy and of the common worshipers; the liturgy, etc.

The fundamental ceremony by means of which the priest and his god are united is called furu, "union, marriage," in the special language of the brotherhoods. [276] Once a year, through the furu of the Nama, males and females, the Nama-de-u (spiritual sons of the Nama) are born. Behind this realism, required for the ordinary adept, is there not hidden a profound meaning for the initiate; is not close union with the diety a "spiritual marriage" in all the great religions? Possibly the special language is not intended merely to hide secrets from the prying curiosity of the profane, but is also intended to hide a profound meaning, today unknown to almost all the initiates, but felt and perhaps even known, at least vaguely, by some of them!

793 In every Nama-ya there are various functions and ranks,
794 corresponding to different grades of initiation. The grand master,
Nama-tigi, is often the person who contributed the most for the
expenses of founding the Nama-ya; he directs and watches over
the cult and is therefore a feared and formidable personage.

794

The Kore (1)

The Kore is particularly popular in the Bani region, that is to say, the riverine area of this tributary of the Niger, in the part that is on a line with Ségou.

This brotherhood has the peculiarity of having a cult which honors the three divinities always worshiped by the Bambara: the manes, the god of the soil, and the nyana of the boli. [778] Therefore the site of the brotherhood is the chosen site of the god of the soil, usually a tree within a grove (Kore-tu, "grove of the Kore") near the village. A kara, that is, the little board symbolic of the dead, and a surku-kongolo (skull of a hyena), the boli of the Kore and for that reason called the Kore-kongolo (skull of the Kore), are kept here.

The clergy and its assistants form a large body of personnel that includes all of the faithful. [281]

In addition to the high priest, Kore-tigi, there are the "people of the kara" (kara-ma-u) and the persons who wear masks, called wara-u (1) (wild beasts) or sogo-u (savage animals), among whom are hyenas (suruku), lions (dyara), and monkeys (sûba). The persons in costume, called Kor'dyuga (2), are for the

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[193] 1. One also hears "Kote" and, in the Bani region, "Kwere." It should be noted that these three words, Kore, Kote, and Kwere, all have an ending which is frequently found in Soninké but not in Bambara.

1. The terms wara or sogo are usually applied to all those who have some function, from the suruku to the ngoni-sama.

2. The term seems to come from the Soninké language: Kore yugo or Kor'-dyuga, "man of the Kore." The expression Koré-duga-tigi is a corruption

794 process, let loose a rain of sparks which the Kore-duga zealously
776 put out with leafy branches. Then each dancer, carrying what
786 is left of his torch, kneels before the drums, making an obscene
gesture which arouses the laughter of the onlookers and giving
the cries, roars, or laugh of the "wild beasts." Elsewhere, the
nyoni-sa-ma are roaming among the drinkers, tearing at them-
selves with thorns. Flagellants lash themselves with switches
[785] that leave cuts from which the blood flows. They stiffen them-
selves against the pain and keep up this cruel sport, which once
again the Kore-duga mitigate by binding up the wounds.

There appears to be no doubt that during these orgies the most shameful excesses are committed without the slightest restraint.

The Nya

794 This brotherhood is highly esteemed in all the Bambara villages in the cantons of Say and Karadougou. It is less common in the canton of Séladougou; in the canton of Saro, five-sixths of the villages are loyal to it. It is rarely found in Nyansannari, and outside these areas in the circle of Djenné, there are only a few scattered Nya brotherhoods in the Bendougou and Ségou areas.

The cult arose in the Bendougou region. As has been
[443] noted above, the villages of Moribala, Kourbadougou, Diali,
etc., are market villages where all the boli are found, together
with directions for using them.

● 778 The boli of the Nya consists of a piece of wood from 25
to 30 centimeters in length and from 10 to 15 centimeters in
794 height and width. It is wrapped in an absorbent material, usu-
ally cotton. The blood of the victims and the liquid of the
libations are poured on this boli, and then hairs or feathers and
bits of entrails, eggs, and kola nuts are stuck to it, giving it a
repulsive appearance. It is true that the boli is often concealed
[281] from inquisitive eyes by putting it in a container made of an old
piece of the hide of a she-goat. However, since the container is
given the same treatment as the boli it contains, it is just as
disgusting.

794 This boli-den'-fa is provided with the usual boli-de:
● [778] kana, korti, siri-kun', etc. [284]

[346] A hut with a conical roof serves as temple (Nya-bon').

[534] An orchestra accompanies the ceremonies; it includes a kind of harp, made by the natives and peculiar to the Nya, plus large numbers of the usual drums, bells, and trumpets.

Since the Nya is acquired by purchase, the high priest (Nya-tigi) is theoretically the person who contributed most generously to this purchase. The office may also be attained by inheritance or by election. The truly religious role, however, is that of the wara-mina-den', the medium through which the god reveals his will or his desires and who is, therefore, the oracle (wara-da) of the Nya. A certain amount of training by appropriate methods is necessary to acquire the degree of extra-lucidity claimed by the wara-mina-den', and that is why they are recruited by co-optation.

794
787 Under the influence of the Nya, the wara-mina-den' falls into a trance. His speech, hesitant and strange, is incomprehensible to the common people. The Nya-tigi then approaches to receive and to interpret the oracle. The inspiration of the wara-mina-den' may be spontaneous or it may be provoked and deliberately sought by him. For example, when a person dies, the wara-mina-den' questions the Nya, either at the request of the interested parties or of his own volition. For this purpose, he retires to the temple (Nya-bon'), concentrates on the point to be clarified, and after meditating, withdraws (1). He then sometimes falls asleep, and while he sleeps, the Nya reveals the truth to him in a dream. On other occasions the wara-mina-den' falls into a trance, and the spirit speaks through his mouth. One way or another, it is learned whether the death is to be attributed to the Nya and, if so, why. Or it is made plain that it is the work of the suba and under what form, human or otherwise, they are hiding. Or, finally, it is learned whether some other nyana struck down the deceased.

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1. These details were given to me by a wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara.

534 beating surface. The most highly regarded was the denu-ba;
614 made of a hollowed cylindrical trunk with fairly thick walls,
701 the denu-ba is sometimes more than a meter high, with its
lower third often slightly tapered with an adze. The drumhead is made of strong hide, reinforced in the center by a patch of leather sewed to it and stretched on pegs driven into the sides of the drum a few centimeters below the upper edge. When it is to be played, the drum is inclined on a fork that supports it. The drummer uses a kind of wooden hook, cleverly curved for elasticity and provided at one end [315] with a rounded part, often formed by a swelling contrived for the purpose or at other times made of a leather ball. The drummer's free hand provides the syncopation.

In certain cases, two denu-ba are used together; the drummer strikes them in such a way as to obtain a variety of sounds to form the basis for conventional harmony. Thus, the soldiers not only were trained to obey appropriate flourishes, but also were kept in touch with distant battalions by means of the
[202] drums. When it was skillfully played, the denu-ba made it possible to transmit information for considerable distances, because other drummers would retransmit it in turn. That is why it has
[778] been said that the denu-ba can talk and no doubt why it was so highly regarded by the ton'-dyon' that they considered it an oracle and honored the god who spoke through the drum by making the denu-ba the boli of this god. Hence, human victims came to
[782] be sacrificed to the drums of the ton'-dyon', especially under Ngolo, according to the chronicle.

[237] Trumpets (buru) were formerly made of ivory. The Tedzkiret speaks of the ivory trumpets used by a certain Bambara named Maro, and Mage relates that Ahmadou, Sultan of Ségou, gave the Bambara their ivory trumpets on the occasion of the Moslem festival.

[237] These ivory trumpets, however, have disappeared, no doubt carried off by traders. Trumpets made of horn, which were used concurrently with the ivory instruments, have been substituted for them. The horns of the large antelope are much in demand for this purpose. An opening is made a few centimeters from the pointed end, and the trumpeter makes the sound through this opening. The only result is a loud but monotonous noise.

614 between Ségou-koro and Kirango was the area under what we
631 would call direct administration, because this zone was occupied
substantially by the fama, his community, and his ton'-dyon'.

614 Ségou-koro, which had witnessed the birth and the de-
794 velopment of the clan, had remained Mamari's capital; he preferred to live there, and he had installed the protective idols of the clan there. Thus it was, so to speak, the seat of the brother-
● [778] hood, whose four principal idols continued to be known under the
names of ba Kongo-ba, na n-Golo ko, Nye-dinge-dun', and
[776] Kolo-koloni. [319]

The fama was the high priest, and the other officiants of the cult were chosen from among the ton'-dyon'; that is why Ngolo Dyara was dye-n-fa. Any follower of Mamari or his successors was affiliated with the cult of these idols. The adepts who lived far from Ségou-koro founded branches which in certain ways were so dependent on the capital that Ségou-koro was for a long time regarded as a holy city.

We have no detailed knowledge concerning the cult of these important idols; we only know that in general they did not differ greatly from what we have already said about the nyana of the boli. The annual festival was exceptionally solemn and brought the faithful from even quite distant regions. The fama, of course, presided over the ceremony which involved certain essential rites: a renewal of religious faith, the reception of new
614 members, and an oath of loyalty to the fama.

794 The four deities mentioned above were not the only ones
776 in the Bambara pantheon at Ségou (1); others were added, some bought and others invented out of the extravagant faith of the ton'-dyon'. Among the latter should no doubt be included the drums of the ton'-dyon', which are mentioned several times in the accounts and which are presented always in a very bloodthirsty light. Ngolo sacrificed his most hated enemies to the drum-idols,

1. In Les Bambara [The Bambara], Father Henry mentions, in addition to ba Kongo-ba and na-n-Golo-ko, two other idols, Kuantara and Safolo.

Plate 4

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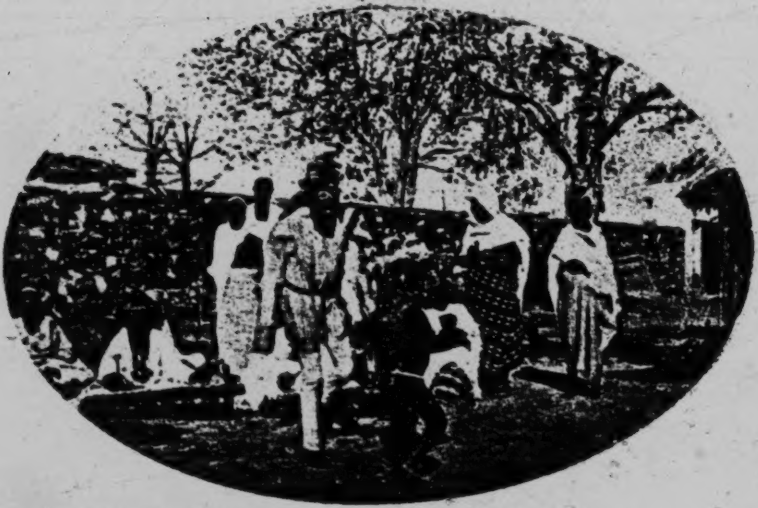

Fig. 7. Penperenni, small dancers in costume.

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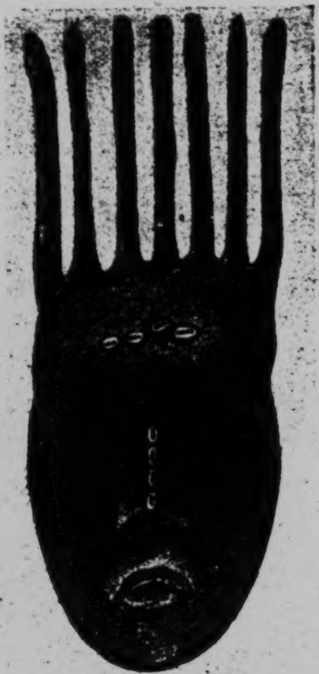

Fig. 8. N'Tomo mask decorated with cowries.

[End Plate 4]

622 gives the orders concerning local celebrations and initiations.

In fact, the land originally belongs to spirits, and the chief
622 who succeeds the founder of the village is the only one who is able
776 to establish contact with the chief of the spirits and negotiate with
him. He is the earthly administrator of the spirit; he assures his
worship, the exploitation of the land, and the organization of the
community territory.

621 The first chief of the land was the first occupant; the suc-
622 ceeding chiefs are his heirs, following the order of succession. To
found a new village, a chief chooses a place in unoccupied terri-
778 tory, usually at a crossroads, near a water source, near a baobab,
824 a doubalé, or other sacred tree. He offers sacrifices to the spirits
and receives in exchange their authorization to settle. If his group
prospers, and less fortunate families want to establish themselves
in this well-favored location, they ask the chief for authorization.
However, as Monteil (1) remarks: "... The fa of a familial community depends strictly on the patriarchy only if, attached to it by the male line, he holds some goods of the patriarchy or if he claims rights in this patriarchy. In the contrary case, the family fa conducts himself as a stranger in relation to the patriarchy, which can only treat him in like fashion ..." Every familial community becomes patriarchal at the death of the family head when he has no heirs (see the chapter on inheritance); the community then groups around itself familial communities which themselves include paternally related groups and maternally related groups. When the patriarchy is an old one, a considerable number of persons live under its aegis. All recognize dyamu and taboos (see below) in common.

621 When the settlement becomes too populous, a fa gathers a
631 group and founds another village. Afterwards, the people of neigh-
boring districts may solicit the patronage of the first village, by
participating in its djo (2) and by sacrificing to its guardian spirits.

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1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

2. See the chapter on religion.

773 abandoned Faro to follow him. Faro vanquished him and punished men by giving them the joints used in manual labor, which all were forced to do. Births became single, but, in compensation, each being had a double, *dya*, which lived in water.

After these successive disorders, each of which, however, was followed by the acquisition of new knowledge or of a new technique, Faro again undertook Creation and reorganized the universe by a voyage to the ends of the earth. He established the system of the rains, and he classified living beings according to series, each series having a head of the list. Men thus were named and classed by race and by caste, beginning with the slaves. He gave men the eight cereal seeds which remain the basis of their subsistence and which are forever in
826 their clavicles. Finally, he controls all existence and acts of beings placed under his domination.

The present order is only a phase in space and time. Twelve waters are still hidden; they must in the future, on the order of Faro, rise and spread in the world. They will make known the words of the future, and the world conceived by *Yo* will be realized.

776 All this mythology is presently represented by numerous objects which serve as props for the different rituals regulating men's lives.

778 Pemba in represented in the houses of the religious chiefs and heads of families by a wooden block named *Pembele*, image of the first thick plank (1). In a [83] central hollow, symbolizing the tomb, are engraved three times 22 marks representing Pemba the creator, the transmission of his Word, and his power to Faro, the token of his foreknowledge of all things, etc. Pembele is an altar guaranteeing the prosperity and life of the group.

776 If the balanza tree no longer is the object of a cult, the Bambara still regard it with a special attitude, which recalls its former role. Mousso Koroni is the impure and untilled land; the agricultural techniques she taught are a partial reparation for the disorders she created. This farm work wounds and purifies the land at the same

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1. See S. de Ganay, "Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara" [Aspects of Bambara Mythology and Symbolism]. [Ed., *J. psych. norm. et path.*, Vol. 42 (1949), pp. 181-201.]

782 778 The blood sacrifice is the basic element of the rites. The technique used for it has been described by M. Griaule (2). The Bambara have three types of altars: the wooden stumps called *pembele*, altars made of roughly hewn stone, which generally represent the ancestors; and the *Nyama* or *boli*, man-made objects representing the parts of the universe.

794 The cults can be individual and familial or general for the whole village, such as the *dasiri* and the *dangu*. They are organized by religious societies, *dyo*, whose object is to conserve the spiritual forces of their members. For the men, these societies are: the *Komo* (principally), the *Kworé*, the *Nama*, the *Kono*, the *Nago*, the *Nya*. The women are also grouped in *dyo*, as yet little known, while the uncircumcised are members of the *N'Domo*.

The *Komo* is a hierarchical society whose members have obligations and taboos, such as initiation for future dignitaries of the political and religious society, study of traditions and practices of the cult, study of the science of magic and religious formulas, fabrication and consecration of protective charms (*boli-w*, *dyo-w*), knowledge of [85] poisons and antidotes, procedures for combating enemies and sorcerers.

794 796 Its moral authority is very widespread, and we shall see the role it plays in justice and public affairs. The *Komo* has obligatory seasonal ceremonies, such as the festival of the cleaning of the sacred wood by the *tinto-w* (most recent initiates), the festival of the emergence of the *komo-sen-w* from the stream, that of stream fishing and of hunting on the banks at the end of the dry season, and, finally, that of the solemn return of the *komo-sen-w* to the stream. In addition, every seven years, a great celebration in April-May lasts for 15 days, with a sacrifice to the *komo-ba*. [766] The ceremony ends with the nomination of a new *komo-tigi* (chief of the *Komo*), who will exercise his priesthood for seven years. He must die at the end of

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2. M. Griaule, "Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice Dogon (Soudan français)" [Remarks on Sacrificial Techniques of the Dogon (French Sudan)], Extract from the *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. X, 1940.

794
796 that period; his body will not be buried but will be carried off by
766 members of the Komo, who will take it to a crossroads and crush it
with the aid of komo-se-w [sic]. The remains will be hidden in
a secret place. The same treatment is accorded to the komo-tigi
who dies during his seven-year term.

794 The cult is cantonal, and the various komo-tigi take their
orders from their colleagues of the capital. The cult formerly was
interlcan and intertribal. Labouret (Les Mandingues et leur langue
[The Mandingo and Their Language]) has made a table of the seven
categories of persons who make up the hierarchical society of the
initiates.

794 After initiation into the Komo cult, a natural sequel to cir-
793 cumcision, the young man may, if he so desires, be initiated into
other cults. He then enters a powerful spiritual family which unites
all its members by ties of brotherhood. This brotherhood is super-
imposed on the normal social hierarchy of the flã-tõ [this term is
[564 probably the same as flanton]. The chief of the brotherhood is en-
567] titled nyama-tigi; he is generally a man of caste or a slave. He
acquires his position as chief either by inheriting it, by election, or
[778] by founding a new cult. To do this latter, he must buy an altar,
gna, from the village or from the brotherhood that already possesses
this cult. Such a purchase is considered a marriage with the gna and
is accompanied by drinking. The higher-ranking initiates (dyenfaw:
masters of the truth) are auxiliaries of the nyama-tigi and participate
in the oracle, wara-da. All the initiates are more or less divine.
The clergy includes, in addition, a sacrificer, muru-kala-tigi, and
a dyeli, herald of the god. To become one of the faithful, one must
pay an entrance fee and swear an oath of secrecy, obedience, and
fellowship. The clergy manages the cult's treasury which is fed by
the entrance fees to the brotherhood, by fees levied for a class pro-
motion, by contributions required for the major ceremonies, and by
fines imposed on the members.

The brotherhood is a spiritual family which is organized in a
fashion similar to the natural filiation of the community. The
nyama-tigi plays the role of the fa; the dyen-fa-w and the notable
members form a sort of council for settling, with the chief, all ques-
[527] tions. The cult does nothing on Mondays and Thursdays, the work
holidays.

304 The Bambara decorate their faces and bodies with numerous
773 scarifications, with the aim of conferring on the wearer the qualities
symbolized by the scars. By their influence on the character and
temperament of an individual, they help him to come up to the ideal
man. These marks are associated with the myth of the origin of agriculture
They are eight small scars: two vertical ones at the root of the nose,
three under each eye. They imitate the facial marks of the mythical
being, half man, half animal, who taught men how to cultivate the
soil. (1)

1. S. de Ganay, "On a form of cicatrisation among the Bambara," *Man.*

f. Arrangement of the Settlements

The Bambara village follows rules of development which al-
361 low a stranger to recognize the disposition of the huts immediately
and to single out a chief's house, that of a blacksmith, or that of
any other member of the society. In fact, the village is built to
the north or east of the protective tree. To the south of the village,
● [778] is the sacred wood, dwelling place of the chief of the spirits, where
the religious ceremonies and the initiation rites take place. As
more families come to live in the village, they build their huts
around that of the chief, except to the east, for the chief must see
the sun rise. The oldest son of the chief, his eventual successor,
will have his own plot near his father's. The house of the Komo is
situated outside of the village, to the south or west, hidden in a
wood or a thicket. At the edge of the village is a round cabin, the
house of the Nyama, in the middle is a square cabin with painted
walls, house of the Gna (see the chapter on religion). In the center
of the village, a cleared place around a *doubalé* serves for public
meetings; the elders hold their councils under the branches of the
doubalé.

764 [100] Finally, the cemetery of the free men is found outside the
554 village, to the west; that of captives and people of caste is to the
south of the free men's cemetery.

326 Every village has its blacksmith, for he is life, and the vil-
600 lage could not subsist without him. Before the French conquest,

Before the French conquest,
712 Bambara villages were fortified. They were protected by a triple enclosure of clay blocks following a line of beams that sheltered the sentinels. The first wall enclosed the village and the surrounding gardens, the second circled the interior of the village, and the third surrounded the chief's houses. These walls could be as high as five meters and as wide as two meters at the base. They had a ditch in front of them and were re-inforced by steps. Considerable ruins of these fortifications may still be seen in the Kourolamini at Ténintu (Bougouni circle).

342 House construction. (1) Throughout the Sudan, house construction is carried out during the dry season. The same is true for repairs, except for the most urgent caused by damage from rains, streaming waters, violent winds, or by the ravages of termites.

Choice of the site. The choice is often made near a tem-
342 361 porary or permanent watercourse where wells may be sunk. A sooth-
787 sayer or Marabout is next consulted, who reveals the existence of a
778 spirit whose favorite place is the cailcedra; if the spirit is benevo-
lent, the installation is authorized, and the sacred tree becomes the altar of the collectivity. It is bathed with periodic sacrifices.

342 Types of habitation. 1. The round hut with thatched roof (tuba bo); 2 the square or rectangular hut (bili) with flat roof.

Round hut. The man drives a stake to which he attaches a cord 1.50 meters long at the most, which is also tied to the head of
401 a hoe. The man circles the stake and traces a circumference that will be the scheme of the house. No foundation is laid. A series of double pickets (kassassin) is set up around the circumference. A bamboo strip is passed in and out between the double stakes, and this basketwork is raised from the ground up to a height of about two meters.

When the cylinder forming the walls of the base is finished, a door is cut, facing south, 25 centimeters from the ground and 1.50 meters high. One then plasters with banco, that is, with earth dug not far from the hut by the young people and made into a paste with a mixture of fonio straw, cow dung, and water drawn by the women. The roof is constructed on the ground. A circumference equal to that

1. Information, in part, given by Moussa Traoré, from the village of Gouani (Diemandougou canton), Bamako circle.

784 lineages, they usually abandon such a taboo as soon as they leave the village, and if, because of the habit they have acquired they abide by it until their death, their children give it up.

Carrying his organization into the world of invisible beings, the Bambara endows the latter also with *tné*, or *taboos*, and make these his own. Not only are the sacred woods taboo, together with all they contain, but there are also ways of acting and behaving which displease the spirits, and some animals have the capability of making them angry. When a woman comes back from the forest with her fagot of wood on her head, she must unbind it before entering the village or do so on the public square. In some places shoes are removed at the door of the entrance hut, or *b'lon* through which the village is entered; elsewhere the people take off their caps; and no one ever whistles in the lanes without incurring the hatred of the invisible beings. Partridges, which are numerous in the fields around the walls, must never get into the village except dead and plucked, and children who catch them in their nets never break this custom. [787] If by mischance a partridge flies across the village and cackles in passing, all the population is in turmoil, and for three nights thereafter men, women, and children sleep under the stars. Often, /25/ depending on the oracles of the sorcerer, they even leave their homes and build them again a short distance away.

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784
●778 The genii called *boli* are the terror of women, children, and the uninitiated, who cannot touch any object used in the ritual and who may not enter their sacred woods and their sanctuaries. The *boli* (1) have *tné*, which are taboo for their owners and those that sacrifice to them, and which sometimes also become taboo for their children. One of the strangest is the *tné* or taboo of the *Bara*, which is millet beer, or *d'lo*. Its owner and the person sacrificing to him must avoid drinking beer if possible, and if the habit is too established

1. The term *boli* denotes any evil fetish, and hence any object used by an evil spirit or demon as his dwelling. See Chap. VII, 1.

776 784 778 among them, they take a complete bath before touching the fetish or sacrificing to it. Usually the tné of the boli is an animal, and the whole family takes it for their own. A palm rat, succulent as it may be to a Bambara palate, will never be eaten by the owners of Bama-n-djigi and their children: it is the tné, or taboo, of the fetish.

784 I have found no tné for animals, but many trees have them, as do medicinal plants, and when these must be used for particular purposes, they must not be placed in contact with, whatever they abhor or are supposed to detest and which in the eyes of the black man is nothing less than their tné, or taboo.

Men and women, young and old, must venerate and respect their tné and those of the genii, and even children know from their earliest years that they cannot see, kill, or eat a certain animal, that they cannot touch, cut, or break a given tree or plant, without incurring either the curse of the ancestor or the anger of the genie and losing their sight.

The severity of the punishments which hang over every Black who forgets the respect due to the tné (especially to his lineage tné and those of the boli fetishes), and hence the fear of incurring them, seems at first quite tyrannical. It is not as great as one would think, however, since the Bambara is a very good casuist when his person and his interests are at stake, and all the prohibitions except those against consuming certain /26/ meats and certain drinks are but a game.

For example, a Dambelé who sees a band of black monkeys ruining his fields and stealing his crops does nothing to stop his dogs from chasing them, and if a friend of an outside lineage comes to help and shoots them, he will have no regrets. A greater confidence is shown by a Djara when a lion ravages his herds: he goes to meet it and begs it to go away, which, according to the Black it always does.

784 766 When the carcass of a taboo /sic/ is found by one of the people of the lineage which it protects, it usually receives the honors of burial. The Djara, whose tné is the lion, even perform the burial with ceremony: the women weep, the drums beat, and the men offer the lion a piece of cloth, in which it is rolled before being put in the grave.

784 One might perhaps think that it would be very difficult not to
602 see one's tné....? In the Sudan good manners require that people
discipline their glances from their earliest years. A son-in-law lowers
576 his eyes in the presence of his mother-in-law, a daughter-in-law turns her back at a three-quarters angle out of modesty in the presence of her father-in-law, and when a lover goes to win over the father of his fiancée, she runs away and hides. Any Negro, however poor his manners, will direct his look no one knows where, into space or upon his toes, every time he greets anyone and hears his news, and will chat with a person for a quarter hour without ever looking at him. No more is asked for the tné. Undoubtedly a Bambara shields himself with both hands in its presence... and he plays the young daughter-in-law; he knows well how to differentiate between seeing and looking, and he knows how to tell you at the time, however little he is accused: "Né y'a yé tigné, n'ka, nè gné tount'a la, né m'a flè. I saw it certainly, but I did not leave my eyes on it, I did not look at it."

3. The Gnâma

789 The tné are rendered sacred, above all, by the curse of the
ancestor. Nothing is so much feared by the Bambara. To be cursed,
• 778 and cursed by his father, is the greatest evil that can befall a man;
626 his wives would run away from him, his children would blush to call him "father," his /27/ friends would abandon him, the people of the village would be terrified to speak to him; he would have to flee. And where would he go? The gnâma of his father, of his ancestor, of his fetish's tné, would cling to his steps and follow him everywhere. Only suffering would be left for him; sickness, hunger, poverty, and humiliation would be his lot and, rejected by humanity, he would die in despair.

789 The word gnâma is very difficult to translate. Does its equivalent
778 exist in our French language? Gnâma is a force, a power, or also perhaps a /kind of/ energy, a fluid possessed by every man, every animal, every living being; it never disappears and continues to exist even

789 after death. This energy, this fluid, is the envoy, messenger, or
778 emissary of hatred, vengeance, and justice, and it goes wherever it is sent by the will which is its director and master; it goes wrongly or rightly to bring misfortune, poverty, sickness, and death. The word gnâma is constantly heard from Bambara lips.

The song of young girls who have been excised begins with
789 these words:

778 Bo n' yé, gnâma, o gnâma, bo n' yé!
304 Go away from me, gnâma, oh, gnâma, go away from me!
539 Dankoun bâ la
(i.e., Gnâma who dwell) at the great corner of land formed
by two paths that cross.
Gnâma fambali, bo n' yé!
Gnama who kill, go away from me! (1)

1. Translation: "Go away from me, all kinds of gnâma, who dwell at the big dankoun (a corner of land formed by two paths that fork, intersect, or cross at the exit from the village)! Gnâma who kill, go away from me!"

789 The ears of those who consult sorcerers have had their fill of
778 this word: Gnâma djougou bi é nofé. A malicious gnâma is chasing you, so avoid this and that, kill a goat, a chicken, or a dog, place a gift of cowrie shells, a kola nut, etc... in a certain place. Nonté i fa gnâma na ouli i la, otherwise the gnâma, the avenging force possessed by your father, will rise up against you.

Always, the word gnâma carries this meaning of a force, a power, a fluid that causes sickness, suffering, and death. The following proverb alone expresses much of its meaning: Ni warani-n-kala ko, /28/ ka fa, gnâma si dé t'o la. If the panther (a tyrant as wicked as a panther) says, "Let us kill him," we surely have no gnâma to set against him (no force or energy that we might set against him as a counterbalance to the force of his gnâma).

789 Animals also have gnâma, and the gnâma of birds are among
178 those most feared. By preference, they attack little children, who
825 die in convulsions as a result; it is impossible to mistake the cause
of their illness and death, since the hands and feet of the child curl
153 up like a bird's claws. Birds are thought to be especially wicked in
winter time, undoubtedly because they nest, find plenty of food, and
[751] are big, fat, and vigorous. During that season mothers tie around
the necks of nursing infants a string that has nine knots in it, which
places them under the protection of their gnâma. Birds keep their
gnâma even when dead, and I remember that in November or December,
1907, all the village of Songhobougou attributed a small influenza
epidemic to the death of a big black bird (the djougo), which a
European killed in one of their fields. "We have pains in our kidneys,
we have pains in our throats, and we cough," they said dismally,
"and the hunter is to blame for it all. Toubabou ko té vva? A ye
djougo do fa en ka forola, djougo gnâma do.... It is the European's
fault, he killed a djougo in our fields and we are weighed down with
gnâma." /29/

Chapter 2

Animism and Its Consequences

1. The Beliefs about Spirits

776 The Bambara has not deified the forces of nature. Although in some instances he shows them respect and fears them, he leaves them without priest, /sacrificial/ victim, or altar: he is not a "nature worshipper" in the strict sense of the word; his true religion is animism. His spiritualism knows no bounds and he sees genii just about everywhere. The bush is full of these spirits; they lodge in the trees or lounge astride branches; they run around the outskirts of villages; splash in ponds and wells; they pull themselves onto high rocks,

152 After all, what can one do about an evil that cannot be exorcised
except to bear it? What can one do against a powerful being that
cannot be disarmed? Nevertheless, in the depth of his being he feels
a need to enjoy himself (and enjoyment for him consists in drinking,
eating, sleeping, and procreating); therefore he feels a horror of all
suffering and neglects nothing that can protect him from it. In order
751 to live in peace, he reddens everything a little with blood and covers
789 his body with grigris or good-luck charms, with talismans that change
the course of things and even of nature, and lastly amulets which will
forearm him against poison, help him avoid an accident, cause the
sorcery of the malicious to miscarry, send away the gnâma of the
genii, of the living and the dead, and prevent the unknown forces
which are found more or less everywhere in nature from taking hold of
the wearer. For this protection they address themselves to the priests
of the djiné and the boli, and especially to the sorcerers who have
close contacts with the genii and are the mediators between man and
the entire invisible world.

776 Since the Bambara conceived the visible and invisible world as
782 similar to what he believes himself to be, he has come to believe
quite naturally and without any effort that the genii can be seen and conversed with their language understood and, finally, that it is possible to subjugate the forces of nature and hold them in one's power. By making offerings and sacrifices or causing them to be made through the intermediary of a priest, he can win a spirit's favor and thus lessen his fears and terrors. But if the spirit is weak, they will be ready to withdraw their attentions; it must be equal to the one feared and if possible outdo it.

778 It is force, or, to use their term, fanga, that governs each
778 person's conduct toward his neighbor; to be obeyed, a man must first
791 cause himself to be feared, and only a powerful man will succeed
and see everything yield before him. /34/

The Negroes have seen people of low birth and poor family succeed in increasing their property and become rich to the point of where they have servants and slaves and dominate a whole village, a whole tribe, or a whole people. Since they like to reason from

778 comparisons with themselves, they have thought that certain indi-
791 viduals could also create understandings in the world of spirits, and
thus become the spirits' equals and even command them and make
them obey. They firmly believe that such is the case, and although
there are many sorcerers, there are still more people who maneuver
to attain this position. Possession of the occult sciences cannot be acquired by anyone who wishes, however. The diploma or certificate
of competence, cannot be obtained without swallowing certain mixtures
of ashes, intestines, and blood, and certain repulsive eyewashes, such
as the rheum from dogs' eyes, must be slid under the eyelids in order
to see the invisible beings. In addition, unless a man is initiated by
his father or brother, he must expect to pay a goodly sum. This is
an art that pays, and generously! Every aspirant must also have a good
memory in order to engrave in his mind the formulas, gestures, and
rites; only the intelligent succeed.

791 The competence of sorcerers is far from equal, nor do they
proceed in an identical manner. Some read the future and discover
787 secrets in the entrails of hens; others play with knuckle bones, pebbles,
or cowrie shells (1) which they throw on the ground and count and
recount, or trace cabalistic signs on scattered ashes, moving the forefinger back and forth, as in a game of Goose /a game played with
dice on a board/. Some work with a gourd three quarters full of water,
which they set on a n'gô (a kind of napkin ring or bracelet made of
braided roots) washed frequently in the blood of /sacrificial/ victims.
This procedure is the least complicated. The gourd is tipped right and
left, forward and backward, until it sits firmly on the n'gô and can
no longer be moved without carrying the stand along. Then the
operator need only flick it three times with the middle finger of the
right hand while stating the petitions..., and the spirit will answer
in a soft murmur which those present can hear, but which he alone
791 understands. In a word, the /35/ good sorcerer stands out above the

[436] 1. /Torn page/ white /shells/ used as money.

4. The dja

774 778 Here again is a word very difficult to translate into our French language. We use dja to translate the words "phantoms," "pictures," "photographs," "shadows," "that which is reflected by water or by a mirror"; but there are other meanings, and there is no question of shadows or images in the following sentences, for example: a dja tikéra, a dja oulila, misiou dja oulila. They mean: "he is afraid," "he is crazed," "the cows are crazed." In the eyes of the Bambara, the dja is not only the shadow, the image, or the outline of objects, it is also that which makes them manifest. It is a force, a power common to beings of all kinds, and even though it cannot be compared to a genie or a soul, they nevertheless think of it as a kind of being which they are unable to define but which has its own existence and can act of its own accord.

[791] 774 784 The gné-fla, whom I mentioned when speaking of the souba, are feared because they see the genii and our private thoughts, and also because they practice sympathetic magic, by taking possession of that which makes the shadows of persons and things. The Bambara is convinced that his dja can be taken, and when this occurs he henceforth no longer casts a shadow. Although, because of their fear of the Europeans and in some cases because they have long been in contact with them, the Bambara may readily pose before a camera, one can nevertheless say that, in general, they do not like to be photographed. Particularly the old people object and begin to resist /42/ as soon as they see a lens. They have the notion in their heads that their dja will escape from them to make an imprint on the plate and leave its form there, and that this form will comprise the portrait, thus placing a part of their being in the hands of the operator and [828] themselves at his mercy. They fear lest, as a result, they lose their shadows and the ability to cast them, and thus become idiots.

774 Even though the Bambara cannot explain their ideas on this subject, these closely resemble the theories of Mr. de Rochas, discussed by Monseigneur Méric in Volume II of his work, Imagination et Prodiges /Imagination and Marvels/ /Paris, 1905/. The dja is something similar to what English psychologists call a double and

761 "Koroya do, it is old age," but let us allow them to finish their sentences and continue their thoughts "a ko toun kadi Komo yé, he was beloved by the Komo," -- "à ko toun kadi Kono yé, Nama yé, Douga ye, he was beloved by the Kono, the Nama, the Douga," etc.

When people pass by holding a rooster or hen by the feet one
761 may wonder where they are going; if one follows, one finds that they
782 are going to the temple of a fetish, there to sacrifice and to redden
776 their god with blood. "A toun koromé Alla sérà à ma, he was old and God came to him," is an expression which is rarely on Bambara lips. When it is heard, it is used with a very special meaning; it signifies that the old man in question was a good man, beloved by all, even by God, but by no means that God killed him. The sacrifices made on this occasion clearly demonstrate this, for they are all directed to a fetish. If God alone were the cause and not the fetishes, the family of the deceased would refrain from all sacrifice; at the very most, it would offer a saraka by order of a sorcerer, but even the saraka offered to God -- and they are offered to Him -- is not a sacrifice, as we shall see later.

761 The priests of a djiné fetish and the owners and priests of a boli
● 778 fetish have the consolation that they always fall under the blows of the genie which they hold and to which they sacrifice. As for other mortals, 80 times out of 100, and one might say even more without exaggerating, they are killed by a boli fetish. The Komo, Kono, Nia, Nama, and Douga fetishes etc., are the chief murderers, and entire villages are often decimated by them.

761 Although they are able to deliver blows on their own initiative,
578 they are often only intermediaries, the agents of a depraved will to
which they have offered their services; almost always there is either
674 a thrown poison, korti, or a poison that is poured, dounkono. Thus
754 sorcerors are consulted at every death; one is sought through their mediation. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the great maxim for the Bambara as for the Jews, and vengeance must be taken on the one who was able to win over the good graces of a fetish and force it to bring suffering or mourning into the bosom of a family. This vengeance is obtained through the intermediary of a fetish, and

754 674 all functions to some degree, and it is to his own advantage to be content, in such an instance, with the position of solicitor; to whoever /52/ consults him, he indicates a celebrated fetish in the hands of one of his friends. The Bambara runs there without delay, and the master of the fetish, generously and heavily paid, takes the god out of its dirty goatskin. Onto one of its instruments (for a boli is manifold, and [778] horns of cattle and antelopes, varnished with blood and brownish in color, are mingled with other objects in the shape of an eggplant, a turnip, a beetroot, a napkin ring, horse dung, etc., etc.), onto the sirikoun, which is almost always wrapped in a red shirt front, he ties firmly with a cotton thread seven straws five to seven centimeters long. The petitioner explains his visit, names the enemy on whom he wants to take vengeance, gives the reasons that compel him, and the master of the fetish recites his formulas, reddens his sirikoun with blood, and plasters onto its sides some spittle containing chewed kola nut.

754 674 787 If the sacrificial hen dies with spread wings and breast on the ground and if when split in half the kola nut falls with the pulp down and the round side up, the contemplated revenge is put off until later, for it is believed that the sacrifice has not been accepted. Our Bambara then goes away, relieved of a hen, two kola nuts, and at least 160 cauri, but nowise defeated; eight or ten days later he returns to the charge, unless he is too impatient to wait and consults a new sorcerer, who gives him orders to appeal to a fetish that shows a greater interest and has a more enterprising and less timid disposition.

If the hen dies on its side or on its back with its feet in the air, and if the pieces of kola nut fall on the round side with the pulp on top, the sacrifice is accepted, and this is the god's answer to the effect that he is taking his client's side. The enemy is thenceforth
754 placed under the boli a blara boli koro, the sanctioned expression;
674 he is placed under the avenging power of the fetish and is in its hands,
278 and the master of the idol, the sacrificer, and the people in his retinue plot to make him disappear at once. They undertake the task themselves as seldom as possible, however; they prescribe sacrifices and offerings to the client and give him a deer horn carefully tied up, telling him how to use it. This deer horn is nothing less than a horn

2. The *saraka*

782 Europeans -- civilian, military, or of the church -- easily confuse a *saraka* with a sacrifice, no matter how much they know of Bambara ways and customs. They do not even see that there is a difference, since sometimes it involves the shedding of blood. But even a bloody *saraka* is not a sacrifice; I even deny it the name of offering, for it is a tax, a tribute, and in my opinion that is the only appropriate name for it.

782 791 Private or public, with or without bloodshed, it is always performed on the express order of a sorcerer who, as we know, has intimate relations with the world of spirits and learns from them what the Divinity demands. When a sorcerer speaks and gives his oracles they are obeyed and carried out, so greatly are his threats feared, and it is all done "*djakoyola*, because forced." The *saraka* is given under his orders as the tax is given to the head of the circle.

782 778 In the eyes of the Bambara the *saraka* has no other character than that of a tax, a tribute paid either to the Divinity or to the fetishes. In February, 1907 the rumor spread in the villages around Ségou that the *Komo* fetish of Sioribougou had spoken. "Quick, give Death a hen through me in a *saraka*," the fetish said. "It is preparing to decimate you, and the only way left for you to disarm it is to give it a hen." The sorcerers confirmed this folly, the masters of the *Komo* found it to their taste, and not one head of a family dared refuse the hen that Death demanded. So they offered it, and the formula on this occasion was this: "The *Komo* of Sioribougou has ordered us to offer /64/ Death a white hen as a *saraka*. *Komo*, so-and-so makes this offering for himself and his family through your mediation; it is his *saraka*. If the wind blows from the east, may this hen preserve him from it! If it blows from the west, may it also preserve him! If the wind blows from the Ouorodougou (the country of the kola nut, the south), may this hen deliver him from it, and if it blows from the north may it deliver him from it also!" Cutting the hen's throat, the sacrificer of the *Komo* then added, reddening his fetish: "This is a *saraka*, the *saraka* which so-and-so gives to Death on behalf of himself, his wives, his children, and his friends.

782 The Komo of Sioribougou has ordered us to do this; its mother, 778 M'gouni Domba, informed it that we owe this saraka to Death."

782 The saraka, a term derived from the Arabic word (صَدَقَة) meaning "alms," is no less than compulsory giving of alms to God, the djiné genii, or to ancestors upon orders of a sorcerer; it really is a tax, a tribute which cannot be avoided and which is offered and presented (1) to the invisible beings.

1. Saraka di, "to give a saraka," is the Bambara expression.

A saraka is in no way a sacrifice, even when it involves bloodshed. Cutting the throat of a hen, a dog, or a kid does not in itself constitute a sacrifice, for otherwise we would have to conclude that every butcher and every cook sacrifices. He who cuts the throats must have the intention of making a sacrifice, and this intention is so essential that it is always expressed by the Negroes: "soni do, this is a sacrifice," he says as he makes the knife thrust. In performing a saraka, it is important for the officiant to say that he is not sacrificing, so he expresses his intention in the words: "saraka do, this is a saraka," and all present repeat after him: "saraka do, this is a saraka."

In every sacrifice there is a priest, and the responsibility is especially entrusted to him, but in the saraka there is no priest strictly speaking. Doubtless when a saraka is given by a village or a family, the head of the village or of the family is asked to officiate, but this is done out of deference, or by necessity if the saraka involved is given indirectly through the mediation of a fetish. In the case of a direct saraka the sorcerer himself can designate the person who should give it, and anyone, man or woman, is eligible; they need only be either circumcised or excised. Obviously, a woman is /65/ never [562] chosen for a public saraka. Where a man is available, a woman must step aside, and in order to safeguard the principles of the hierarchy, a respected old man, an elder, is chosen in the absence of a priest.

At the end of a public sacrifice the sacrificer usually receives a choice morsel and the skin of the animal, and those present roast

776 out of the Bambara's need to soften their crime of idolatry and to pre-
177 serve it by lending it extenuating circumstances. If the cradle of
798 Islam is Mecca, if its superiority is derived from the holiness of that
city, chosen and beloved by God (1), what can the Moslems want of him, the Bambara, whose religion comes from this same much vaunted city? And if the God of Whom the Moslems preached to the Bambara has decreed everything (2), good and evil, if He is the Author of both good and evil and leads each person along the course that pleases Him to such a degree that he no longer has freedom of choice, why wish to take from them that which God has given them, that which comes to them from the holy city of Mecca!

776 The Bambara term for the boli is gna. Their idea of them
796 corresponds closely to the Arab concept of the chéitane شيطان ,
782 and in everyday language, they define them by a single word: sétané,
[192] "satan," even though this word is never on their lips in the sacrifices. In their nocturnal orgies and religious dances, the Negroes' notion of the genie to which they are sacrificing are shown in concrete form. And when, in their religious ceremonies in honor of the Komo, Kono,
[178] Nama, etc., the spirit appears by the glow of little fires lit in the sacred woods, decked out in a cloak of feathers, his head hidden in a huge horned mask that has nothing human about it, one cannot help
776 thinking of the tales of old Breton grandmothers, told on a winter
796 evening in the stables. The blasting of trumpets, bamboos, and koba
534 horns (3), the tinkling of /72/ the little bell, and the shouts of the
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1. See what I said above on the subject of Mecca and Stamboul.

2. See the Koran: VI, v. 3 - 39; X, v. 99; XIV, v. 4; XVII, v. 32; XXXVI, v. 6, 7, 8, 9; LIII, v. 43, 44, 45 - 49; LXXVI, v. 29; LXXX, v. 29; etc.

888 child, woman, or young man that can tell you the name of the great
793 sacrificer of the village if the latter is in the least old. Out of respect
576 and veneration his name is never spoken; he is the head, and if they
551 are questioned all will answer: "Toua si t'a la dougoutigi ko, he has
no other name than that of dougoutigi, head of the village." And, in
fact, most of the people know no other name for him.

551 This need to avoid speaking the name of whosoever is respected,
576 venerated, or feared goes so far as to bring about the abbreviation of
778 phrases customarily used in salutations (1), so it can easily be imagined
that the name of the fetishes is not known except by their masters and their initiates. Of course, a Moslem, a woman, an uncircumcised man, or an unexcised woman can tell you the number of the gnéna and gnâ owned by the village, and they also know whether the gnéna (djiné) include a Dasiri, Ngolo, Koté, Ntomo, Tauri, etc., and whether the gnâ (boli, sétané) include a Komo, Nia, Douga, Kono, Nama, Bala, etc. But except for the initiates, who could tell you that a certain boli is called Sélé, Magné, Toroba, Dono, or Nono, or that the Magna is also called Tjarofign and the Nama, Sirima-n-fign? Only the generic name is known, and it is in good taste not to pronounce even that when extending an invitation to a festival in its honor. The Nama is enclosed in a beehive in the shade of a tamarind tree, which in turn are enclosed in coarse mats, and when an invitation is given to the sacrifice, the most stylish formula is: "Come and see us, an bi djasé (2) son, we are sacrificing to the /81/ palisade." The trumpet

1. See what I said in this connection in the preceding chapter, /section on/ "Reincarnation of Souls," pertaining to Ouentja.

2. Djasé, name of a palisade composed of large mats. Children born at the time of the sacrifices to the Nama, who are dedicated to the fetish, are frequently given the name

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576
778

Djasé instead of Nama or Namakoro. The Nama is sometimes surrounded by a wall instead of mats. This is extremely unusual, and I have seen only one sanctuary of this kind, at Dougoutigila in the Bani /region/.

of the Komo is of iron, so one says: "An bi négé son, we are sacrificing to the iron." A fetish can give health in the sense that it can refrain from causing sickness if it is a gnâ, or it can actually give health and well-being if it is a gnéna; thus the expression used most frequently is: "An ta foura bi son, we are sacrificing to our cure," or again: "An ta foura bi djigi so, our cure is paying us the honor of a visit."

776 Are we here dealing with a recent custom, which dates from the arrival of the Moslem? I cannot accept this idea, for all the evidence indicates that it antedates presence; I believe without hesitation that the name of the Divinity or Supreme Being was never spoken by the Bambara, that they were not permitted to pronounce it. It is not surprising, then, that the name should gradually have been lost, erased from their memories so that it is unknown at present.

Moreover, since the Bambara God was without priest, altar, or sacrifice, was there any need to speak His name? According to their ideas, the gnéna or djiné are beings intermediate between men and angels, put in charge of the elements by the Divinity and delegated by Him to distribute His favors and His punishments to human beings; would it then be foolish and presumptuous to believe that since the beginning he only addressed God through the mediation of the gnéna or djiné? I cannot doubt that the Bambara implored the djiné to present their homage and worship to their Lord, the Lord of the whole universe, to their Tigi ani fen bê tigi yé, as the sorcerers always say in their liturgical ceremonies. The latter are the watchful guardians of the ancient formulas and customs; that is the source of all their prestige.

Moreover, the worship of the gnéna, or djiné, antedates that of the gnâ (boli or sétané). It has no history; its origin is lost in the darkness of the ages, and in this fact I see a new reason to believe that they were the first intermediaries between man and God.

869 In addition to wearing the costume, which is white
794 (n'tomo djé) or yellow, black, etc. (n'tomo fign), the boy who
778 dances the dance of the genie hides his face in a frightful wooden
mask on top of which are five, seven, and sometimes eight horns.

869 The n'tomo injects a whole organization into the world
794 of children. They quite naturally divide themselves into
561 small groups, each corresponding to a circumcision that is to take place, and are thus all of the same age, born in the same year, or very nearly so. The member of each group who is the oldest -- be it by only one day -- becomes its head, and all the younger heads obey the head of the oldest group, the n'tomotigi, and his aide, the n'tomotigi siéré (1), who is drawn from the group which will be circumcised after that

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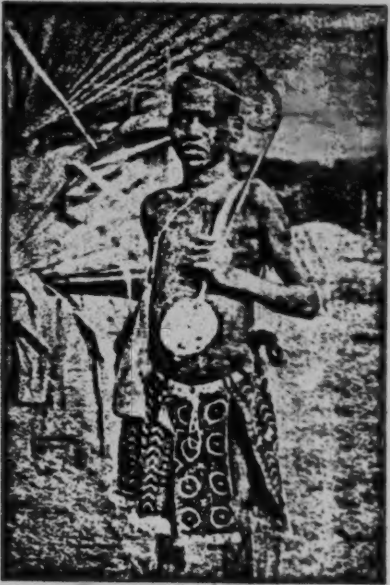


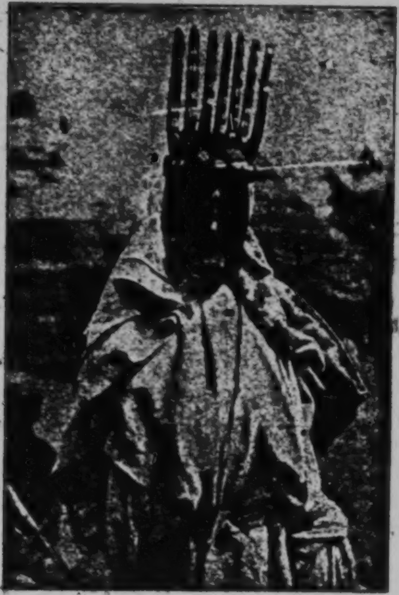
Child wearing the loincloth called yaba.

1. Siéré, "aide," "deputy."

869 of the n'tomotigi. /93/

794 These two children prepare the hunts for rats and lizards, or-
ganize the games and supervise them, and if an offence is committed
561 by the band, it is up to them to discover the culprit. When quarrels,
arguments, and fights arise among the children, they intervene, judge
each case, and, if the matter is worth the trouble, the mischief-maker,
or the one who is declared responsible, is severely beaten. All this

● [178]



Mask of the n'tomo, the children's fetish.

produces unity within the various groups and prevents them from coming to blows at every moment.

The little girls also have an organization into groups; but it lacks cohesion; it would have to be religious in nature, since religion is the basis of all unity in the Bambara country. Only at the time of excision does all this change, and then there is real cohesion among them.

796 Every year children sacrifice to the n'tomo genie through the
mediation of their head, the n'tomotigi. The day of the sacrifice is
859 a day of great rejoicing which ends in flagellation. The material for

196 857 the sacrifice is furnished by the children themselves; all of them together work a small field for this purpose during the winter, and if the harvest is not sufficient, they go begging from door to door so that nothing will be lacking at the feast -- neither d'lo, the millet beer, nor kola nuts. On the evening of this great day, each new initiate chooses his n'golo mouso, as they call the little girl each one takes as his "sister of the heart," his bonne amie as one would say in France /his girlfriend/. But she is more; she is a little maid of all work, and the gift which he gives her every year at the celebration is more a payment than a gift of friendship, "pure and simple." /94/

7. The Genie Protector of Circumcised Youths

194 776 778 At circumcision the Bambara leave the association of the n'tomo and place themselves under the protection of more powerful genii. These genii are all of the same nature, only the name differs with each region, and all the confraternities are copied after one and the same model. The most widespread is that of the n'golo (1).

1. In Bani it is the n'goso rather than the n'golo.

The n'golo is nothing but two forked branches fastened together and hung on a light dloma (2). One can meet it quite often in a corner of the village, out of doors, but usually it is under a small shed or hut. This genie gives the youths not only strength, vigor, and health, but also the talent, if not of pleasing women, at least of attracting them and thus being able to obtain some crude satisfactions. It helps the unmarried to meet the girl of the moment, and thanks to it,

[342] 2. Dloma are forked sticks on which rest the crossbars or beams that hold up the flat terrace roofs. The name dloma is given to all forked sticks, small and large.

794 a married man finds his wife gentle, submissive, and obedient. It
776 preserves the members from disgraceful ailments and, in a quite
778 special manner, from ma ko sa (3), a paralysis of the reproductive organ.

3. Ma, "man"; ko, "affair," "parts," "testicles"; sa, "dead," "lifeless."

794 This group of worshippers forms the foundation of the organization of the fla-n-to (4), headed by the to-n-tigi (5) who is the master of the n'golo fetish. His assistants before the genie help him with his duties; he has a siéré, or aide, a djéli, who is a kind of herald and repeats his orders, advice, and thanks during the days of celebration and drinking bouts, and a djalatiké, responsible for seeing that the rules or laws of the organization are kept. Among the Negroes nothing is done without drinking and eating; they must have celebrations and drinking bouts, and in order to obtain the means for them the fla-n-to impose a large number of fines on their members, the to-n-dé (6).

4. To, "gruel"; fla, "for"; flani, "twins of the same age."

5. To, "gruel"; tigi, "head."

6. To; "gruel"; "child."

Their rules are /95/ nevertheless odd. For example, a fine is imposed on whoever blows his nose or sneezes, gets up from the table, or starts eating before commanded to do so by the head, the tontigi. Those who are late for the dance or sleep during the day or night of a celebration are granted no mercy! (1).

1. When the tondé organize a dance or celebration, everyone must be present and spend a sleepless night.

9. The Twins' Genie

845 776 Having twins is far from an unmixed blessing for Bambara women. Those whom I have seen afflicted with this good fortune and honor (for it is one, since it is regarded as /97/ a blessing from the Supreme Being, the Creator) have seemed to me greatly inconvenienced by their two babies. The healthier, stronger and more robust of the two relaxes pleasantly on the mother's back, while the one who needs a little care always gets his belly squashed on one shoulder or the other.

845 776 778 135 The genie of twins lives in a kind of hourglass made of two plates of braided grass; a bit of iron or wood onto which a piece of the umbilical cord has been rolled is hung from the centers. This fetish is called a sinsin and costs the father between 1 ba and 1 ba 200 cowrie shells (between 800 and 1200 cowrie shells, or 20 to 25 sous), not including, of course, the hens and kola nuts given to the sinsin tigi (1), more commonly called sinsin d'la tigi (2). To make this /98/ horror, which is hung in the entrance hut within an inverted gourd (1), one must own a father sinsin fetish and know the rites and formulas.

A sacrifice to the sinsin is performed every year by the head of the family, who is himself its priest; the sacrifice continues to be made even in case of the death of the twins, because it is the

1. Sinsin, the fetish bearing this name; tigi, "master," "owner."

2. Sinsin, the fetish; d'la, "maker"; tigi, "master," "He who manufactures the sinsin."

1. This gourd protects the sinsin from the teeth of rodents.

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776 peculiarity of this fetish that it continues to live in its hourglass as
778 long as a particle of this object remains.

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Young Bambara holding the sinsin, the fetish of twins

845 This fetish protects the mother of the twins, and unites the latter
778 in such close affection that one never receives a gift without sharing
431 it with the other. I would even go so far as to say that it is in good taste never to offer anything to one without offering as much to the other, and when they are given something, the first to be favored is the last born, who is considered by everyone as the older.

845 778 431 If one of the twins dies early in life, as usually happens, the survivor receives a statuette which he keeps all his life with jealous care and to which he gives the name of the deceased. He dresses it to the best of his ability, often covers it with glass trinkets, such as bangles, beads, bits of amber, rings, etc., and well-bred people never give him a gift without adding at least 5 cowrie shells for the statuette.

845 778 825 The sinsin also grants twins a curious privilege. A scorpion not only cannot bite them, it is even at their service, and on their order will bite a fellow who has displeased them.

845 778 A twins' doll.

845 551 It is easy to recognize twins (flani in Bambara) as they have special names, the commonest being Sinna, Maféné, Gno, and Ouassa. /99/

10. The Genie Protector of Villages

776 621 The genie protector of a village lives on a knoll or a rock; almost always, if not invariably, its home is a baobab or false cedar near the walls, in a little grove intersected by neat paths, well kept and often raked.

796 A great sacrifice to the spirit protector of the village, the
825 dasiri, is made every year. The spirit always has a mount such as
782 a snake, a rat, a lizard, a donkey, etc.; almost everywhere the
mount is a terrible billy goat that roams through the village, enters
everywhere, eats everything, and breaks everything without paying
attention to the switch. For at least three days at the time of the sacrifice.
the village makes merry; men, women, and children dance, stuff
themselves with food, and drink and get drunk.

796 Just as everyone takes part in the feasting and drinking, so all
782 participate in the sacrifice, even the women, who at least go to the
edge of the sacred grove, though they do not enter. And /101/ there
is an abundance of everything: dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with
honey water and milk, d'lo, or millet beer, and finally meats. At
least a goat, and sometimes a bull, is killed for the whole village,
and the heads of families offer goats and hens, depending their
wealth.

782 In addition to the sacrifices offered once a year and those offered
● 778 by a family when one of the children marries, the fetish receives
776 homage and tribute from just about everyone. Sterile women and
those who habitually miscarry offer it many hens and fawn upon the
animal that is its mount. If one gives birth to a baby, one consecrates
it to the fetish, calling it dji-ri-ba ("great tree"), gnéna ma ké
(gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"; ké, "male"), or gnéna ma (gnéna,
"genie"; ma, "man"). They even like to add the name of the village
where the bountiful dasiri is found: Kolotomo gnéna ma (1), /102/

1. Kolotomo, the name of a village about 30 kilometers from Ségou; gnena, "genie"; ma, "man."

(man or daughter of the dasiri genie of Kolotomo). Actually, the name gnénama is given only to girls; for boys the word ké ("male") is added: gnénama-ké.

776 It is known through the mediation of sorcerers that a dasiri
778 sometimes leaves its sacred grove and its tree. This event is unusual;
824 the tree may fall from old age, but the sacrifices will be continued

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on the stump, the open hole, or on the sprout that comes out of the ground, grows, and replaces the tree.

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Every dasiri has a sacred mount which bears its name and, as I have already said, it seems to prefer a billy goat above all. The latter dies of old age, that is, unless the good of the community dictates otherwise; I saw one perish in the prime of life because of

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A dasiri fetish tree (of Songobougou).

its scandalous behavior; he was inordinately fond of the ewes of the village, which he mistook for goats, and this behavior was far too shameless for a sacred being.

776 The fetish protects the village by causing the evil spells and
778 sorcery cast on it to misfire. It defends the village against wicked
621 people and against its enemies, and thanks to it the inhabitants can
193 peacefully devote themselves to their work in the fields. While averting plagues and diseases which decimate the population, it gives strength, health, and vigor to all, and finally it populates the village by making the women fertile. Above all, it is the source of unity among families for it brings them all together under the authority of a single head; the friends of the head of the family whose name, or diamou, it bears, are its friends, and his enemies are also its own. To fail the priest, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, the dougoutigi, is to fail the fetish, so close and intimate is the union between the two.

11. The Koté, or Koré, Genie

794 Since it is the fundamental basis of power and authority, the
776 worship of the dasiri can, with some justice, be regarded as the first
778 and oldest of all Bambara religious practices. That of the koté, or
koré, likewise seems to me quite respectable from this standpoint and
just as old. As a matter of fact, this spirit, like the dasiri, lives in
[824] a little grove near the village, and the three trees it likes to inhabit
are the baobab, the false cedar, and the nettle tree.

794 The worship of the koré is especially popular in Bani country. Today not all the villages have the fetish, but all have at /103/ least a few initiates belonging to this semioccult sect. The sect includes women among its members; it is divided into eight groups, each ruled by its oldest member, who in turn is under the authority of the koretigi, the supreme head of the association.

794 At the time of the annual sacrifices, and especially at the
778 sacrifices made every seven years on the days of admission (for it is
necessary to be a koré dé (1) in order to participate in the secret part

(1) Koré, the fetish bearing this name; dé, "son."

194 of the mysteries carried out in the sacred grove), these groups present
178 the most ludicrous gathering in the circle of Ségou. The kara maou carry a red and white perforated board, about two meters long called the kara; the souroukou wear a mask resembling a hyena (souroukou) and walk leaning on two sticks; and the korodouga get themselves up in a costume impossible to describe. The ta tougoula (2) dance, holding a burning torch in each hand; the n'goni sama (3) cover themselves with thorns or lacerate themselves on the chest and under the armpits until they bleed; and the bisatjila (4) whip themselves with long, flexible switches. There are also the djara (lions), who wear a mask just like that of the hyena (souroukou) only larger, and the soula (monkeys), who parade with hideous, grimacing masks and wear a tail in back made of braided grass.

194 The koré sect is semioccult, for while only initiates are allowed at the sacrifices and within the sacred grove, the dances are held in the village, and all, men, women, and children, attend. The wives of the korodouga belong to the confraternity by right, but they do not know the password djantéma ("man of the djanté"), and they are forbidden to enter the sacred grove. Their great privilege is that they are permitted to wear their husbands' uniform, which is a long necklace of red beans, to sit with the men around the gourds of beer, and finally to dance the dirty and disgusting dance of the korodouga without having to be ashamed.

2. Ta, "fire"; tougou, "to light."

3. N'goni, "thorns"; sama, "to draw to oneself"; they are also called wara, "wild," "fearless," "courageous."

4. Bisa, or bousa, "stick," "switch"; tji, "hit," "break."

776 this sacrifice at length, for in the preceding chapter I stated the
796 function of the fetish; it may be imagined that the ladies and maidens
831 ask for whatever makes a woman strong and beautiful. Moreover,
the indecent dances to which they abandon themselves under the sacred tree sufficiently reveal their inner thoughts. They have only one -- to show their breasts to the fetish and scratch their navels on its bark; in some villages custom demands this, and it is required of all. Young girls do it to develop their breasts, married women to become fertile, and all of them to be protected from the unpleasant accidents peculiar to their sex.

796 There is no festival without a feast and none without drinking,
and the women offer the whole village sorghum gruel and beer for a drinking bout. They also offer kola nuts to all the elders and heads of families, and they know better than to withhold this treat from fathers, husbands, grown sons, older brothers, and those they love.

The *Sinsin*, the Special Twin's Fetish

782 The sacrifice to a *sinsin* is made on the umbilical cord which
845 is hung in the center of plates of woven grass that constitute the
778 fetish. Each plate belongs to one of the twins and even bears his
852 name. The sacrifices in honor of this fetish are always double; for
each child separately, the family offers /millet/ flour /115/ mixed with water, millet beer, a kola nut, and a hen.

This is strictly a family fetish; the father of the family is its
845 priest, and only the children and their parents are present at the
778 sacrifices. Everything is done in a quiet and happy intimacy, and
852 although there may be a few drunkards here and there, there is
never an orgy. Sacrifices to a *sinsin* are made very frequently to bring its blessing to the mother and children; they are also performed on all occasions of the slightest importance in the lives of the twins: when their hair is cut eight days after birth, at the tattooing festival, at circumcision, at marriage, etc. Once a year a more formal sacrifice is made; the women cook *d'lo*, the millet beer, and the

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778 old men and important people of the village, as well as friends, are
852 invited to squat before the jugs and partake of the liquid refreshment.

The Dasiri Fetish, Protector of Villages

776 621 The dasiri is the chief of all the gnena, or djine. In order that its worship may be better understood and that the reader may have an idea of the power of its priest, I must go into a few details which cannot help but throw some light on Bambara organization. Let us, for example, take a village that is being founded: we are present at the election of the priest of the dasiri, the gnéna-n-sonnaba; at the choice of the fetish tree and of the sacred animal, the genie's mount; at the enthroning of the sacrificer; and finally at the sacrifices.

Election of the priest

776 621 793 482 The population has grown, the surrounding land is exhausted, and a group of families must move out. The old men who are still lively and the youths full of strength and life take up their arms and fasten a dirty goatskin, a foroko of provisions, on their shoulders and scatter in the bush in search of less ungrateful soil. When they have found it they go back to their homes, and the council of family heads meets to choose a leader. This leader is really a priest, for his chief function is to sacrifice in a public and formal manner to the blonda ba sou (1), the shades of the great entry hut /116/, that is, to leaders and priests who, just like him, held the reins of power, and to the gnéna, genii, spirits, and fetishes, whence come his names of gnéna-n-sonna ("he who sacrifices to the gnéna fetishes") and gnéna-n-sonnaba ("great sacrificer of the gnéna fetishes"). He alone has the authority to sacrifice to all /these spirits/ in the name of all /the people/.

1. Blon, "entry hut"; da, "door," "doorsill"; ba, "great"; sou, "corpses," "shades."

621 The palavers and deliberations are long, but the choice is a
793 happy one; the old man chosen as gnéna-n-sonnaba always has the
555 slyness and guile characteristic of the Bambara type. Patient and likeable, he will know how to be just and impartial in disputes, diplomatic and sufficiently master of himself to say only what he intends to. He will know how to acquire the reputation of an upright man who does not know theft or falsehood.

Elected for life to hold both civil and religious power, he is
621 truly the head of the village, the dougoutigi. His position is hereditary;
793 it passes from brother to brother and, when there are none, goes by right to his oldest son. The one who is to succeed him becomes his aide (siéré), and the heads of families (gouatigi-ou) compose his council; they are always summoned when a question is to be handled or a decision made.

The Choice of the dasiri fetish and its sacred-mount

776 The new village has a head, his aide, and its council; it is
● 778 organized. Now they must find out the whereabouts of the spring,
787 rock, or tree where lives the protecting spirit, the dougou dasiri (1),

1. Dougou dasiri: /dougou/, "village"; da, "mouth," "entrance"; siri, "bind."

who fastens the entrance to the village and watches over it. For this knowledge the people appeal to a sorcerer; he has intimate contact with the spirits, knows their ways and customs, and understands their language.

There are many sorcerers, and they do not all work in the same way. One discovers his oracles in the entrails of a hen, a second traces cabalistic signs on ashes, a third endlessly moves little stones, bones, and cowrie shells, counting them again and again. To locate the dasiri, people have recourse to the flélikéla (2) diviner, who

2. Flélikė, "to look attentively, curiously."

776 works with a gourd three quarters full of water.

778 When he has received his honorarium of 40 cowrie shells, which
● he takes in both hands, he places beside him in the dust his little
787 /117/ gift, consisting of two kola nuts, a few hens, or better, a small
billy goat. He asks about the place chosen for the new village and has
it described to him down to the smallest detail. Then he takes down
a dirty *n'go* (1) on which he places a gourd which he tips slowly right and left, forward and backward, to give it a firm position on its stand. Having done this, he sums up for the spirits the conversation which he has had, and then, with eyes afire and holding his breath, he gives the gourd three flicks with the middle finger of his right hand. They say that a soft murmur, a murmur which is none other than the voices of the genii, is noticed by all present. They hear without understanding, but the sorcerer knows these voices and when he rises it is with a tone of authority that he names the *dasiri* and the animal which will be its mount.

1. A ring made of braided roots bound with cotton thread, which is covered with a thick layer of blood.

In the province of Ségou the *dasiri* is a tree; the tamarind, the false cedar, and the baobab are the preferred trees. The sacred mount, also called *dasiri*, is a snake, an iguana, a rat, a donkey, etc., but most frequently it is a billy goat.

778 621 Enthronement of the *gnéna*-*n*-*sonnaba*, priest of the *dasiri* and *dougoutigi*, head of the village

Our Blacks establish the new village and build their huts. Near the fetish tree each family sets up its mortars for grinding sorghum, places its hearths, and installs its kitchens. Bows, guns, and farming implements are hung on the branches of the *dasiri*, and while the work of settling continues, meals are eaten and dances held in its shade, and in the evening when the moon is shining it is near the tree that they finally stretch out to sleep.

793 The gnéna-n-sonnaba, the dougoutigi, assumes office from the
782 first day and offers a sacrifice in the name of his people. On the trunk
621 of the tree, about a meter from the ground, he pours d'lo, or millet
778 beer, and dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with water, and causes a flow of blood from hens, roosters, goats, and sometimes from a young bull. After this general sacrifice, individual ones follow, for, in order to /118/ place himself under the protection of the genie, each family head in order of seniority offers it a little dégé and a little blood, through the intermediary of his leader, the priest. And on the trunk of the tree there is nothing but great blood stains with feathers, hairs, and shreds of skin stuck in their midst with the remains of chewed kola nuts. Then come the dances, and men, women, and children go into a frenzy at the sound of drums; and the tumult is indescribable.

Sacrifices offered to the dasiri

778 A path a meter wide leads from the village to the fetish tree
782 which is always located in the middle of a small grove if possible.
796 Heads of families sacrifice to it several times a year -- on the morning after the konio, or first night of marriage, for example, but the festival in which the whole village takes part is annual. The ceremony has greater importance every second year, and every seventh year it degenerates into an orgy.

During the sacrifice the women stay at the edge of the sacred grove, and only the men and boys go inside and surround the fetish. After an offering of dégé and a little d'lo, the throat of a sheep or goat is cut in the name of the whole village, and the head of each family, comes with hens, sheep, goats, etc., according to the family's means and the number of members; the meat piles up. The hens are plucked on the spot, the large pieces are cut up, and the women carry it all back to the village. Each family head is given a piece as big as a fist from the first sacrifice offered in the name of all, and this, too, is
[252] taken back to the village; the rest is roasted and then grilled on the spot and eaten by the men, without salt, pepper, or any kind of seasoning. The dégé and d'lo of the main sacrifice are drunk under

778 the fetish tree, the former by the children who smear themselves
782 and whiten their entire faces, and the latter by the men and circum-
796 cised youths (1).

1. By the main sacrifice I mean the sacrifice made in the name of the whole village.

After the noon meal men, women, and children go to the public square to drink beer, or d'lo, and to dance. /119/ The signal for the celebration is given by the gnéna-n-sonnaba, who makes a little speech inviting his children (né ka démisenou, "my children," "my subjects") to have fun and to drink but to avoid fights and quarrels, and then launches into a quadrille. While he dances, the crowd stands bareheaded, cries "you you" loudly, and competes as to who will shake his spear or ax to beat the measure. This annual festival goes on for three or four days, as long as the d'lo, or millet beer, lasts.

776 All circumcised men and excised women may, through the
782 intermediary of the gnéna-n-sonnaba, offer a sacrifice to the genie
protector of the village. Anyone who thinks he has offended or dis-
pleased it offers one -- with or without bloodshed according to his
means -- to obtain pardon, propitiate it, and gain its favor. In-
dividuals sacrifice primarily to make requests; a di ("give it") are
the first words they were able to lisp as infants. A sterile woman
[842] will offer it a kola nut, dégé, a rooster or a hen at every moment,
always promising not to be miserly and to give more if she becomes a mother. She will be especially assiduous toward the dasiri animal, the mount of the genie of this name; she will coax it, stuff it with bran, and will often go far into the bush to pick it a stalk of grass or a leafy branch which are its delicacies.

776 Genii spirits can leave the spring, the rock, or the tree where
776 they have established their dwellings, and the dasiri is no exception
778 to this rule. If it does so, the fetish tree loses its sanctity, becomes a common object, and can be destroyed. Similarly, all things in the sacred grove, both plant and animal, cease to be taboo and can be used for their customary purposes. The dasiri is not at all fickle.

776 It rarely leaves its tree; it likes its little grove and shady park, and
778 in many places it is satisfied with a stump that is all blackened,
worm eaten, rotten, and falling to pieces.

The formula of the sacrifice

782 When one is present at a sacrifice to the dasiri and sees the
781 gnéna-n-sonnaba uncover his head, take off his large blouse, and crouch at the feet of the fetish, one expects something imposing and grand. Nothing of the sort occurs, and one is quite surprised to find so little gravity /120/ in such an important act. People enjoy themselves and chat; the priest, red with blood, tosses off witticisms and coarse jokes, and while feet and wings of the victims -- goats, sheep, and hens -- twitch in the agonies of death, nothing passes from one group to another but bursts of laughter that finally disappear far off at the edge of the grove where the women are.

782 The words in the sacrificial formula vary a little from one village to another, all depending on the volubility of the sacrificer. Nevertheless, it remains basically the same everywhere. After having greeted the fetish in his own name and the name of his subjects, he implores it to forgive them all the insults, offenses, and disrespect toward it, of which they have been guilty, voluntarily or involuntarily, during the entire year. He then calls it by a name related to the type of tree in which it is located -- e.g., ma ziraba ("great baobab man"), ma djala ba ("great false-cedar man"), -- and announces that he is going to sacrifice. While offering the dégé and d'lo, he implores it to protect them against the evils of the sons of the fetish siri, the souba (1), to preserve them from the souya maou (2), the

[754] 1. Sou, "night"; ba, "great." The souba are masters of the night who change themselves into hyenas or owls, dig up corpses, and eat human flesh.

2. Souyaké, "to prowl at night."

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1. Drums over a meter long and peculiar to the koré.

2. A kind of triangle which is hung on the thumb of the left hand and is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger.

[778] the kârâ"), one of whom carries the kârâ, the perforated board which is the emblem of the fetish and at the same time the altar on which sacrifice is made to deceased members. First come the souroukou (hyenas) who guard the sacred grove and during the sacrifices drive away prying, uninitiated people; they wear crude masks, roll their big heads right and left, and utter frightful "hou hous." The [522] korodouga (clowns), who rake the paths in the sacred grove as well as its environs to protect it from brush fires, run from one to another shouting obscenities. Furiously they shake their gourds, which have handles and are perforated and filled with small stones, and furiously they blow into pipes made of pumpkin stems. The leader of this [292] band is dressed up in a cloak made of reed stems, he also wears a reed headdress which is topped by a pyramid of large red beans called n'go blé and decorated with a plume; in his hands he holds the emblem of the group, a long pole on which are hung dirty bags, sorghum stems 10 to 20 centimeters long bound into bundles, pumpkin stems, /123/ skulls of rats, beaks of ducks and hawks, panther claws, etc.

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Apart from the long string of red beans which all korodougo are required to wear which they twine around their necks several times or sling over the shoulder, crossing and recrossing it on the back and chest, each one dresses according to his own inspiration. The hats are made of bunches of feathers, wings of vultures and ducks, and even entire birds, and around them to decorate them further are red beans, rat skulls, birds beaks, claws, and small bones; all these objects fall on the neck and shoulders and knock together with a sinister sound. Next to men in full breeches are men in rags or men with close-fitting trousers made of innumerable pieces all in different

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> whole circle in the dry season. For example, the master of a *Nama* will give an account, and the storyteller will take up the refrain, which always ends: "I have told you truly, the *Nama* can refrain from evil, but it is capable only of evil (*a ka fari, a ka djougou ko djougou*). It is evil, very evil!"

776 theless refrain from an evil act and thus indirectly grant a blessing to human beings. The words of the formula in the sacrifices to the *gnéna* and the *gnâ* seem identical, and yet, when one has understood the inmost feelings of the Bambara soul, one sees all the difference between them. To one as to the other the Negroes say: "*Ka dji d'amma* (give us water), *ka mousoou d'amma* (give us wives), *ka nafolo d'amma* (give us wealth), etc." But while in speaking to the first they actually ask for water, wives, etc., they make an indirect request to the second, so that their words mean: "Do nothing to keep us from having wives," "do nothing to keep us from having water," etc. In expressing himself this way he uses all his cunning, and all his deceit comes to the surface and is revealed. Yes, he really deserves the epithet that neighboring tribes have given him and of which he is proud; it is *misi bo*, "cow dung," -- dry on the outside but limp and soft inside, so that it is squashed when it is stepped on. His inner feeling when he addresses the *boli* is this: "O Spirits, evil genii, you are capable only of evil; may your hatred not attack me or those who are dear to me, may it all be for my enemies and those that can harm me!" /130/

2. The Legend of the *Boli*

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778 This is a very curious legend, for it makes the *boli* come from Mecca, the holy city! To understand it better, let us remember in passing that Islam has only made the Bambara more attached to their idols. They have died in order to keep them; they answered the

771 "believe or die" of the Moslems by taking up their spears, and when
798 they were conquered, reduced to servitude, and unable to continue
778 their worship openly, they remained true to the faith they received
from their ancestors. Severed heads became the prey of vultures, and spilled blood flowed, but those that survived only became hardened. The Moslem conquerors, tired of striking and in need of slaves and manpower, had to admit their defeat in the field of religion.

Some fell away from the idols (slaves, and some rich people seeking to safeguard their lives and possessions), but their apostasy was strictly external and a lie, for they shouted the formula but in secret devoted themselves to their bloody rites, imbuing their children with their own faith and not that of their masters. A lie has never
[517] been difficult for the Bambara; to know how to lie is for them more than half a virtue. Thus, when the right to freedom was proclaimed
[567] in 1907, I was not at all surprised to see that out of nearly 5,000 slaves who spontaneously set themselves free, the majority returned to their homes or to the land of their fathers, forgot the formula, and declared themselves to be fetishists. They did not get initiated then since they already had been (1).

1. Those who took back their own freedom in 1907 were all slaves of the Moslems. The "Peulls" /Fulani/, a shepherd people, saw almost all their slaves escape. The Bambara in slavery kept their traditions as well as they could; in the Negro village of Biskra I found sons of the Bambara who did not know their own language and were fanatical Moslems, yet kept their tattoos, sacrificed to the family boli handed down by their fathers, danced the dance of the korodouga, and used the Bambara formulas and songs although they no longer understood them.

798 Since all the Bambara could not be made to submit to shameful
771 servitude, the Moslems were satisfied to impose a tax, to forbid
public worship of the idols, and, with sheathed sword, sought to make
●778 converts by persuasion. Their caravans were quick to cover the
country, preaching Islam in all places both *favorable and unfavorable,*
but the mass of the people could not be approached. In order to give
/131/ their beliefs a rational basis, they always did everything in
the name of "Alla, " "Stamboul" (the Sultan of Constantinople), and
"Makka (Mecca), and said to the conqueror: "All true belief comes
from Mecca (Makka); it is the center of all religious life, so why do
you fight so hard against our *boli*? They all come from Mecca. God
has given you the formula: 'there is no Divinity other than God and
Mohammed is His prophet'; for you He prescribes ablutions, Friday
rest, etc.. Keep your formula and shout it! To us Bambara He has
given the *boli* and bloody sacrifices, so why do you want to take from
us our treasures that are hungry for blood?" I do not doubt that we owe
773 our "legend" to the discussions which arose between the *m'rabet* (the
776 marabout, or Moslem priest) and the *gnâtigi*, or *bolitigi*. Here it is
794 as I so often heard it told by bold old men:

A group of youths who were devoting themselves to trade and following lady luck (*ou toumbe kolo* (1) *gnini*, "they were seeking cowrie shells"), one day took the road to the east. Over mountains and valleys the little band walked and walked for a long time, and then finally they reached the great, blue, salty water, the ocean, on the shores of which lies the holy city, Mecca (*Makka*) (2).

[436] 1. *Kolo*, "cowrie shells" (singular, *kokê*), small shells used as money.

[823] 2. Since the Moslems said that Mecca was located on the seacoast, and since the Bambara did not know Arabia, they believed it to be in this direction. In their minds the ocean does not have to be crossed to get there. Actually, this is the least of their worries.

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794 Their stay there lasted several years, and no one expected to see them again. It was said that bandits had fallen upon them and massacred them or reduced them to slavery, and funeral rites were to be given them. The sanga fo (3) in their honor began; the women wept, filling the air with their cries, and after several days of dancing, everybody went back to pleasure and work.

The young Bambara were not dead, they came back and, better yet, were in no way stained by Mohammedanism. Even in the heart of Mecca they met a Bambara tribe, brothers who were thoroughly fetishist, and their secret rites, sacred dances, and sacrifices made more impression on their hearts and imaginations than the worn and cold formula, stupid prostrations, and tiresome /132/ ablutions of the sons of Islam. They were initiated into the rites of the gnâ, or boli; they bought some; and one fine day, rich in gold and silver, flocks of goats and sheep, women and slaves, they took the road back to the Niger. The caravan was large, the loads heavy, the road was barely passable, and discouragement touched the hearts of the bravest more than once. Finally, they reached the great river and the loads and boli filled boats by the hundreds.

The start of the voyage was happy; only a very few loads fell into the water and were lost going through rapids. Then a day came when everything changed; the wind started to blow violently; the water boiled, foamed, and swelled; and the boats, made of two hollowed tree trunks placed end to end and bound together with weak ropes, crashed together and broke. Who can tell how many disappeared in the floods that day with all their cargoes! The loss was great, especially in boli, but these have the power of gods, and they quickly changed into fish. According to the legend there have been torpedo fish, manatee, etc. in the depths of the river since that day.

Everything was not lost, however. When the travelers arrived in the Bélédougou and the Ben-dougou (1), they still had a large stock

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3. Condolences from acquaintances
to the family of the deceased.

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of boli. People came running from all directions. Of course there were festivals and amusements, and everyone wanted news and wished to learn about this Mecca which was so vaunted by the Moslems. "It is indeed a large city," they said, "but do not think that all they know there is the worn formula la ilah ill l'allah, which is shouted by the sons of the Prophet all day long. At Mecca there are Bambara (2) who sacrifice to genii as we do. They have additional rites that you do not know; /133/ they know how to protect themselves from evil genii and demons; they sacrifice to the boli. The latter /boli/ are terrible. They kill anyone who insults or displeases them and actually have consideration only for those who give themselves to them and become their children. Thanks to them, our brothers in Mecca are rich and powerful and live to be old. They quickly discover thefts, lies, and adultery. In fact, the boli render justice, and whoever asks it of them cannot lie with impunity. The deepest insult against them is to call on them to witness a lie; they always take vengeance for this offense, causing endless evils to its perpetrator

1. Bélédougou: bélé, "ferruginous rock"; dougou, "village," "country"; a province back of Bamako kati. Ben-dougou: ben, "meet"; dougou, "country"; the eastern end of Bambara country, on the Bani.

2. This word Bambara (Bamana) of the legend denotes less the people than the religion, and it seems to me that it should be understood in the sense of kafri, as already indicated in speaking of the origin of the word Bambara. (As I pointed out /in Chap. IV, 3/ I believe its original meaning to have been "rebel" and not "son of the alligator" or of the fish ban ma, a kind of tench.)

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778 and even going so far as tocause his death." These accounts excited
794 the Negroes' curiosity; they wished to see the boli, wanted to sacrifice
to them. They gave themselves to the boli, and thus became their
children.

Once the people were initiated, the travelers unveiled the
mysteries to them, bound them by the law of secrecy. They imposed
upon them the prohibition against admitting uninitiated men and
women and children to their ranks, and the sects were formed. These
have multiplied continuously; each boli has its own, and since the
boli are male and female and produce children, they have become
legion, and each village has sects and boli of its own. Although the
778 worship of the boli has not destroyed that of the gnéna, or djiné, it
794 has long exceeded the latter; their sacrifices and drinking bouts are
accompanied by an external pomp that has a different grandeur, and
no important action is taken without their agreement. It can be
asserted without fear of error that the worship of the gnâ, or boli, is
the chief religion of the Bambara at the present time. It is the basis
of union within families and the foundation of the sina-n-koun, or
sworn friendship; through the boli the people of the same village are
closely united, and this union extends from one village to another
and from one province to another, since all members of a boli's sect
are brothers and owe each other mutual assistance under certain
specified circumstances.

776 In the Bambara's mind (and I have spoken of this at length in
778 my chapter, "The Ideas of the Bambara are not of Islamic Origin"),
782 the boli are nothing less than intrinsically evil beings in revolt against
the Supreme Being, God the Creator and Lord of all things. As the
formula of the sacrifice to Touafé Bla suggests, the place where they
dwell is fire or hell, and there is not a Negro who will not tell you
/134/ that the boli is a demon (sétané). Can it not be said that his
religion is a worship rendered to "Satan himself?" He renders this
worship in full knowledge of what he is doing. Have I not heard the
sacrificer in a sacrifice to a Nama boli (1), shout before cutting the

1. A note by Father Coppe of the
White Fathers (unpublished manuscript).

throat of the victim of the general sacrifice: "Alla djampa ba, i k'an bla, i ka bo an koun na, God, great traitor, leave us, go away from us!" -- and the crowd repeated the blasphemy after him: "Alla djampa ba, i k'anbla, i ka bo an koun na!"

3. Boli Whose Power is Slight

776 778 Since the boli do not all have the same strength and power, and fear is the basis and foundation of Bambara worship, they are not all equally honored. We will divide them into two main groups, those of "little power" and those of "great power," and we will end this chapter with a word on the talking boli, the prerogative of certain sorcerers, and on the sirikoun, another, quite special, kind of boli.

778 278 By boli of little power I mean all evil fetishes which are basically not very terrifying, in the sense that it is thought that they very seldom cause anyone's death. Many of them are primarily medicines, and almost everyone has them. They are tails of cows, goats, dogs, and wild animals; they have no specific names and are generally called foura (2) ("medicine"). Additional "medicines" are the kana,

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776 778 782 which I have before me, reports the same fact on the subject of the Komo boli. Moreover, this Father is a student of the Bambara -- when the Blacks of Ségou speak of him, they say, "Bamana-n-do," which means that he spoke and understood their language well.

2. This name foura is given in a general way to all boli; I should therefore remark that the word "medicine" in the sense that we understand it, is not the exact translation of the word foura. This word is in itself untranslatable

778 into our language and means a force,
278 a conscious force, that opposes
another conscious force which seeks
to harm us, and destroys it.

horns and hoofs of bulls filled with an ointment the composition of which it is very difficult to specify: blood, fat, and dried, crushed glow-worms are combined with iron powder, charcoal, and other /135/ ingredients. They are the Bambara equivalent of the "pink" pills which cure all ills, including baldness and ingrowing nails -- and that sums it up. The *kana* of which I speak are *boli*, and differ from the *kana* possessed by each powerful *boli*, which are no longer *boli* but parts of *boli*. Let us quickly admit that the word *kana* is as indefinite as the word *foura*, and means primarily "that which protects, preserves, and keeps us from harm."

778 These little fetishes are not given festivals, and only their
782 owners sprinkle them with blood and sacrifice to them. They cost
little, and a sorcerer or the owner of a father *foura* or *kana* will make
[436] one for a modest sum varying between 5 *kémés* and a *ba fla* (5 *kémés* =
200 cowrie shells; *ba fla* = 1, 600 cowrie shells), which is from 5 sous
to 2 francs.

Apart from the sorcerers, whose *boli* are innumerable, there is a
whole group of people, the *noumons* (blacksmiths), the *koulés* (who
dig canoes and mend broken gourds), the *donzo* (hunters), etc., who
have such strong confidence in all these horrors that they would rather
die of hunger than be deprived of them. The hunters all have some to
224 make them active and alert. Before every hunt of the least importance
778 there is a black pullet from each, and on the return another sacrifice
782 is made, however unlucky the hunt may have been. The keeper of
each fetish is usually the only one to pay respects to it. However,
his brother hunters may give it a small offering, and it is understandable
that they do so, since each fetish has its specialty. One is for deer,
another for guinea fowl, a third for the big antelope (*dadjé* in Bambara
and best known to Europeans under the name of *koba*, a word of the
Peul language) or for the wild pig /*facochère*/, for the panther or the

224 777 782 lion, for the hyena or for the anteater, etc., and since each cannot possess them all, one or the other is appealed to according to the need of the moment.

The most interesting of this group of *boli* are the *togo fen foula*, which watch over the gun and arms of the hunter in a quite special way, protecting them from the *ko nege ba*, a greedy and rough hand which deprives a woman of her periods if she touches meat offered to it in sacrifice or game killed under its auspices, and from the *tougouroûna*, which has consideration only for those who own it and makes all others /136/ powerless /the French word here is *impuissant*, meaning both "powerless" and "impotent"/ if they touch the meat of its sacrifices or game killed under its auspices (1).

1. Game killed under the auspices of a *boli* belongs to it just like the victims of a sacrifice, and if these are "taboo" for a class of people, the game similarly becomes taboo.

224 778 Along with the fetish some hunters also own the *gnâma daha* (2), a *conari* in which roots and leaves gathered at night by moonlight, here and there at random are simmered and soaked. When certain kinds of game, such as an anteater, for example, have been killed, the animal is washed with these roots and this juice of doubtful color. I have been told that the juice of the *gnâma daha* induces the flow of urine, so that the *gnâma* (3) of the animal leaves, its wild animal smell disappears, and then the meat can be eaten (4). /137/

2. *Gnâma*, "force," "power," "malignant fluid"; *daha*, earthen receptacle called a *conari*.

3. See what I said about the *gnâma* in Chap. I, p. 17 ff.

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4. All Negroes do not resort to the *gnâma daha*. But then they are not limited to a single means of handling

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Costume of a Bambara hunter.

the problem; they have more than one string to their bow. Immediately after killing a fur-bearing animal, every hunter empties the urine by pressure or cutting.

224 778 These little hunters' fetishes have no festival or formal sacrifice. Some ultimately gain great renown in the ranks of our "Nimrods," however, and then they come in large numbers bringing black pullets. The master of the idol then chooses a day for a strictly private drinking bout at which only initiates of the hunter sect are present.

778 596 The most powerful of all the *boli* whose influence is slight are the *boli* of the hut or the family, the familial *boli* to which the heads of families, the *gouatigi*, sacrifice. These take practically all shapes: they are horns, balls coated with blood resembling all the tubers of creation, all kinds of tomatoes and eggplants, napkin rings, etc. -- in sum, horrors, each wrapped in a very dirty, filthy goatskin. They are to be found hung in the *b'lon*, or entry hut, together with the *ex voto*, a package of goat skulls carefully emptied and stripped of flesh. The family *boli* are legion, and it is impossible to know them all. The most widespread and the most highly valued are the *ma bara*, the *sirini*, the *bala*, the *bara*, the *baga* (1), and the *bama-n-djigi*.

1. A *boli* is always made of several pieces, each with a special name. All these pieces are called *boli dé*. Among the *boli dé* there is one which is called *boli dén fa*. One piece of the *baga* is a thong which forms a belt that the sacrificer puts around his thighs, all covered with blood, before proceeding with the individual sacrifices. The *baga* protects against bullets, arrows, and spears. Some *baga* are famous, and Negroes go to find the masters of these fetishes and receive from them a small facsimile of the *baga* belt.

778 596 782 At the annual sacrifice the *gouatigi*, or head of the family, offers a goat and at least a hen and a kola nut for each male child no matter how strained his circumstances or how slight his self-respect. He also offers *d'lo*, or millet beer, and all his family make merry. [574] Some even do things in a big way, and although the whole village does not take part in the drinking bout, all the old men are invited, and many close friends come from everywhere.

778 596 The family *boli* take the interests of the head of the family in their hands; they are responsible for driving away illness and reverses of fortune. /138/ Through them one gains many descendants, wealth, wives, a happy and lively old age, honor and respect. They are also appealed to on all occasions in life that are of the slightest importance. Before a long journey is undertaken or a business venture is entered into, when a disaster threatens or there is a possibility of a piece of unhoped-for good fortune, they are reddened with a trickle of blood. Sacrifice is also made to them at harvest time (many are even called by the generic name of *gno four*, "millet medicine"), but especially at circumcisions and excisions, at betrothals, marriages, and funerals. The tne, or "taboo," of these fetishes (see above, p. 5 ff.), is taboo for each wife's eldest son, and sometimes the whole family makes it its own.

4. *Boli* whose Power is Great

778 782 796 I call powerful *boli* all those *gnâ* of every shape and size whose worship is secret and in whose mysteries only those participate who have been initiated into the rites, after having sworn on their lives never to reveal them. Countless victims are offered to these *boli*; some of them are always warm and are ceaselessly reddened with blood. At the annual festivals not only is there a hecatomb of roosters and hens, but dogs and goats by the dozen also die, and in Bani country I have seen as many as five or six sacrificers working at the same time. This is the great and true Bambara worship, and it gives rise to orgies of four to eight days; it eclipses the ancient worship, that

778 of the *gnéna*, or *djiné*, and like it or not, the worship of the dead is
782 trivial in comparison, a little devotion, one might say.

796 These *boli* are greatly feared and dreaded. They render justice and decide all controversies; they have the right of life and death over human beings; and it is through their intermediary that the Bambara avenge themselves and take reprisal on a real or imaginary enemy.

No victims are too fine for the powerful *boli*. There was a time
778 when men were sacrificed to them -- I think that this cannot possibly
782 be doubted. At the time of the Negro king *N'golo*, says the legend, a man of Faléma -- a small village on the road from Ségou to Koutiala which is now in ruins -- went to the king with his fetish /139/ *Sa folo*. The king had himself initiated, wanted to own it, and his first victim was the owner himself, the man from Faléma. If old men talk to you about the capture of Sikasso by the French, they will all tell you that, on the morning of the attack, men were sacrificed to the chief *boli* of the city. Were there not, in 1907, in a temple not far from Koutiala, a row of human skulls hung on the walls as *ex voto*? A little before the conquest, under the reign of the Moslem princes El-Hadj-Omar and Amadou, the master of the *Nama* fetish of Misango was asked to go to Ségou with his idol. He said he did not own one, but a woman betrayed him, and a search was made in Misango and its environs. The man was informed in time, and he changed the hiding place of his *Nama*, and the woman, convicted of lying, was given him as a slave in compensation. A little later, a sacrifice of thanksgiving was offered to the fetish, and the traitorous woman was among the victims. She was old, and the god considered her too tough; he ordered that she be sold and some children be bought, since they were victims worthy of it. Its orders were carried out, "for," say the storytellers who sing it praises, "when sacrifice is made to the *Nama* one must never forget *nzégéné dégé* (1), honey, two red

1. Millet flour and *nzégéné* (*Balanites oethiopica*).

778 782 roosters, two red kola nuts, and one dégenéni, an infant of two to three months."

Since the French occupation and the suppression of slavery, human beings are no longer sacrificed regularly. All the legends give one to understand, moreover, that they were always unusual and very infrequent. Yet who will ever be able to say what took place, and what still takes place nowadays at night in those sacred groves which only initiates can enter? One can always imagine that, lacking sacrifices, the initiates of the siri, the fetish of the souba or soubaga, disinter corpses in order to have human blood to offer to their idol and human flesh to taste. It is a unanimous belief among all the Negroes that they do so, and no sacrifice is made to the gnéna, to the gnâ, or to the shades of ancestors without a repetition of the words: "Protect us from the souba," -- in other words: "Protect us against the initiates of siri." These souba, of which I have already spoken /140/ in my chapter on metamorphosis (see above, p. 29), do not seem to differ in any way from the occult religious sects of the Basêzi of Uganda and the Baswêzi of the Ouchirombo, the cannibals of the equator.

778 And of what are they made, all these boli that for the most part have their temples and their sacred groves? A little of everything, I think, goes into the making of these horrors. Many times have I untangled these blood-coated gods and found only the bark of trees, roots, horns of goats, deer, and bulls, and finally claws of almost all quadrupeds. 778 773 It is said that the Komo of Tigini, 30 or 35 kilometers from Ségou, is the body of a child. The legend says it was made by one Kari, the great-great-grandfather of the man who owns it at present, and this miserable man pushed barbarism to the point of taking his first grandson, a few months old, and grinding him alive in a mortar. An almost identical legend is current about the Komo of Kégné in Bani country which is at present in the hands of quite a young man called Marka N'zan. It is even said that if the first child of the owner of this latter fetish is a boy it belongs to the Komo. Is this child sacrificed or do they simply poison him? I have nothing definite on this matter.

778 All these are obviously legends and I give them as such, not having been able to assure myself of the facts de visu; I maintain, however, that they may be true. I broke open not a Komo, but a Kono, which was the torso of a child three to four years old.

Some boli, like the Tji wara and the Nama, are made of wood; others, like the Douga, consist of a considerable number of bulls' horns. They also take on almost all shapes, and when one opens the dirty goatskins that serve as their tabernacles, one finds horns and napkin rings, and among them balls suggesting all the fruits and tubers of creation, and one has to be more than an initiate to recognize the main item in this conglomeration. There are also some that resemble a crude doll whose arms are two horns; others are in the form of a hippopotamus, a cow, or an elephant, and in the Magna of Zambala on the Bani, in the circle of Sikasso, I even saw a little horse.

The boli are always composed of several pieces called boli dé, among which is the boli den fa, a little larger /141/ and rounder than the others because it receives the first trickle of blood and the mouthful of chewed kola nut. Some boli are strictly male or female, and others, like the Nama and Tji wara, for example, are mated and live in their temples with the females. The latter always resemble their husbands; they are less strong, but that is all. These fetishes, especially those that are famous, feared, and dreaded, often stay hidden, and their covering is not taken off until the moment of sacrifice.

778 The worship of the powerful boli is more complicated than that
791 of the gnéna, or djiné, and an entire staff is needed to serve them.
158 First, there is the owner of the fetish, the gnâtigi, or bolitigi, and the sacrificer, the mouroukalatigi. These are helped in their duties by two wara da (also called waraminadé), who are intermediaries between the fetish and its owner (1). It is through them that the genie

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1. The Komo being the most famous in the province of Ségou, it is the staff of this fetish I am giving here. The others have staffs that are similar, but

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of course the names change a little. On the staff of the Nama there are not only warada but also djenfa tje and djenfa mouso, who go through the village to exorcise /all evil from/ it, holding the fetish in their hands or putting it over their faces. They are preceded by a torch bearer, who is usually the darotigi, or beadle. Some fetishes, the Kono for example, have a person especially responsible for carrying it to the place of sacrifice. He performs the duties of the darotigi; the one who carries the Kono is quite often called Kono guenguéba.

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makes known its wishes and gives its orders; and when it does so, its spokesman is always seized by an epileptic attack followed by catalepsy. When he has spoken he is brought out of this state by being sprinkled with consecrated water, and he goes back to his place as if nothing unusual had happened. He seems to feel no fatigue, his features are composed; and yet only a moment earlier his body ran with sweat, his limbs shook with nervous trembling, his eyes were wild and starting out of their sockets, saliva that was often tinged with blood ran from his mouth, and his breath was whistling and irregular.

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The gnâ also has its beadle, the darotigi, who rings for the sacrifice, thus warning the initiates to come quickly and the uninitiated to stay in their huts. Since he also sings the praises of the fetish while ringing his bell, he is also called /142/ gnâ djéli, storyteller /griot/of the gnâ. To all these are added the band of members and initiates, whose function consists chiefly in providing the food and beer for the orgies. These are the gnako dé-n-ou, children of the gnâ.

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One becomes master of a gnéna, or djiné (1), by election or

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1. The sinsin, the gnéna of twins, is an exception, as it may also be bought.

inheritance, and rarely by purchase. The gnâ pass from father to son by inheritance, but it is always possible to obtain one by purchase; all that is necessary is to find in the village the number of people needed to make up the staff of the idol, provided one is not opposed by the sorcerer's veto.

Every purchase of a powerful boli occasions celebrations, festivals, and drinking bouts that last from three to eight days. These festivals are like marriage celebrations. Surrounded by his staff, the new fetish owner spends the day offering d'lo, or millet beer, to the many friends who come to congratulate him and give him their gifts. It is not until evening that he leaves his b'lon, or entry hut, and, followed by initiates carrying the idol, goes to the sacred grove or under the trees chosen to be the meeting place henceforth. The night is spent in dancing and shouting hymns.

In the eyes of the Negro to buy a gnâ is to become united with it in a firm and indissoluble way. It is equivalent to marrying the fetish, and they have no other phrase to express their idea, their notion of the matter: "A yé boli fourou, he got married"; "ayé boli fourou gosi, he has stamped and sealed his marriage with the boli" (2); "ne ka fourouboloma faro (3) flé, here is my wedding present";

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2. Fourou gosi: In order to enjoy the marriage lawfully, whoever marries must, in the presence of the head of the village, pay his wife's parents a handful of kola nuts -- usually eleven, one more than the required ten.

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3. Fourouboloma fara: This is the name of the small present of cowrie shells given to a

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/newly married/ couple by their friends. It varies from 40 cowrie shells to 2 kémés, or 160 cowrie shells.

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425 "a taboli konio kera, the marriage of his boli has taken place."

435 The value of a gnâ varies between 30 and 40 francs, and whoever owns one can from then on make them. If one counts the presents given to the maker and to his staff, the dogs, goats, and kola nuts offered in sacrifice on the day of his reception, and finally the beer of the wedding, its value is undoubtedly more than 100 francs.

5. Differences among the Powerful Boli

778 I class all the powerful boli into three main groups. In the first I place those which formerly were the prerogative of kings, princes, and ministers; in the second, those which have neither temple nor sacred grove; and in the third, those which have a temple and a sacred grove, or at least one or the other.

Those of the first group are not at all numerous, and the most popular are the Safolo, the Kongoba, the Nan-Woloko, and the Kouantara. They are usually found in villages which were formerly capitals of cantons or provinces and are in the hands of people whose families have included a kafotigi (head of a canton) or a fama (king or petty king), i.e., a head of a province, a minister of the king on whom the title of ruler (fama) was bestowed.

Everything leads me to think that in the beginning these were merely fetishes responsible for watching over the king and the people of his court, analogous to what above I have called the family boli. At present they have become boli of sects. But although all circumcised men can enter the ranks of those who pay them respect, only married men become initiated, and the orgies in their honor are private orgies whose entire cost is borne by graybeards.

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782 According to legend, slaves were sacrificed to these boli in the time of the Bambara kings. Since then the worshippers have been content to offer them millet beer, hens, and goats in addition to the

778 kola nuts required in every sacrifice. All the people of the village
782 rejoice at the annual sacrifice. From the goat hut, where hangs the goatskin that serves as its tabernacle (1), the fetish is carried in procession to the place of sacrifice, a large tree that casts a little shade inside the village. During the procession the initiates shout sacred hymns at the tops of their voices, drums and xylophones beat and rumble, and all the circumcised stop when it passes /144/ and reverently bare their heads. The women and the uncircumcised kneel and bow their heads respectfully at the passing of the idol, which is hidden from profane view by a dirty cloth covering.

778 The *boli* of the second group are legion, and it is very difficult to know all of them. The main two are the *Tji wara* and the *Douga*.

A *Tji wara* seldom gives evidence of its power. Although it may kill its owner or anyone who happens to separate the male from the female in the course of the sacred dance, a Negro is seldom heard to blame it for the death of one of his family. This fetish is made of two forked sticks, one male and the other female, on which sacrifices are made. It may be seen hanging in the entry hut of its master, along with its cloak of false-cedar bark and its mask which are used in the sacred dance.

778 The mask of the *Tji wara* is tastefully made; in fact, it is the
532 best Bambara sculpture I have seen. It is carved of the wood of the *dondol* (*Bombax cornui*) and seems intended to represent a goat or a deer. The male often has curved horns and sometimes measures almost a meter in height. The female is smaller, its horns are straight, rings hang from its nose and ears and, no doubt because a goddess could not be sterile, it carries its child on its back. (1) During the

[346] 1. The Bambara, whose huts are usually very clean, put their gods away in dark, filthy corners. The temples are small and have such low doors that it is often necessary to lie prone in order to enter.

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1. It is easy to obtain a mask of the *tji wara*. Many colonials bring them back from the Sudan, but they are mistaken in speaking of it as a "Sudanese fetish." This mask and all the other masks, including the twins' doll, are not "fetishes" at all. They externalize for the Negroes their idea of the genie -- *sétané* -- which animates the object to which they sacrifice. /Placement of this footnote is editor's emendation, the original gives it on following page 153/.

During the sacred dance the Negroes, decked out in mask and cloak, are bent double and constantly in motion. From time to time they bellow [516] into a bull's horn. Since they cannot stand straight without failing in respect for the idol, they stretch out on the ground or crouch on all fours when they are tired and weary.

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At the time of the arrival of the *bani-n-kono* (storks), a little before the rainy season, a sacrifice of dogs, goats, and hens is offered to the *Tji wara*. This fetish is especially venerated by youths; they ask it for strength, health, and earnestness in work. Thus, when young people get together to cut shrubs and make a new field in the midst of the bush or to pull out weeds in the winter, a goat is sacrificed; and they work to the sound of the drum and the *tji wara* bellowing into his horn. Upon their return from the field, the workers are given millet beer; then the sacred dance begins in the public square /145/ and continues far into the night, to the great delight of the women and children.

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The *douga* consists of a fairly large number of bulls' horns enclosed in a goatskin. It is hung in the entry hut, and it is there its altar is set; this altar is a square column of earth attached to one of the corners of the room. It often measures a meter in height; the

•778 corner that is visible is decorated with horns, and a conari, a receptacle of baked earth, is fastened to the platform to catch the overflow of victims' blood. This receptacle is always surrounded by a little hedge made of porcupine quills, which gives the whole arrangement a somewhat fancy appearance.

778 782 More terrible than the tji wara, it is popular with some people; the Negroes readily appeal to it when they want to take revenge on an enemy. Nor is it unusual to hear a Bambara blame it for the death of one of his family, and since several victims are offered whenever such situations and occasions arise, it receives a good sprinkling of blood from here and there. A great sacrifice is made to it annually, and on the assigned day dogs, goats, and hens are offered to it. Following the sacrifice, the initiates meet at the home of one or anoth of the most influential members of the sect, and the day is spent emptying jugs of millet beer and getting drunk.

The specialty of the douga is to protect people from snake bites. Nevertheless the Bambara sacrifice to it to some extent for everything. From it, as from the others, they ask for wealth, wives, rain in the winter, etc., etc. (2).

2. In every sacrifice there is the sacramental consumption of part of the meat and objects offered to the idol. These present partake of this communion at the actual site of the sacrifice and without any seasoning whatever.

778 Many other /boli in this category/ could be mentioned; for example, there is the da, to which the Bambara sacrifice in order to have a good harvest. But, although these are terrible, they are still not the boli which they really fear and dread and to which /146/ they sacrifice continuously throught their lives. The latter form a separate group; they have temples and sacred groves, nothing is done without them, and they are always being taken out of their stinking dens and filthy temples. Men, women -- everybody worships and consults

778 them, they have unlimited power. They render justice, oaths are taken on them, they exorcise all evils to some degree, they give fertility to the sterile, they have the right of life and death over human beings, and it is to them that appeal is made for vengeance on an enemy.

[291
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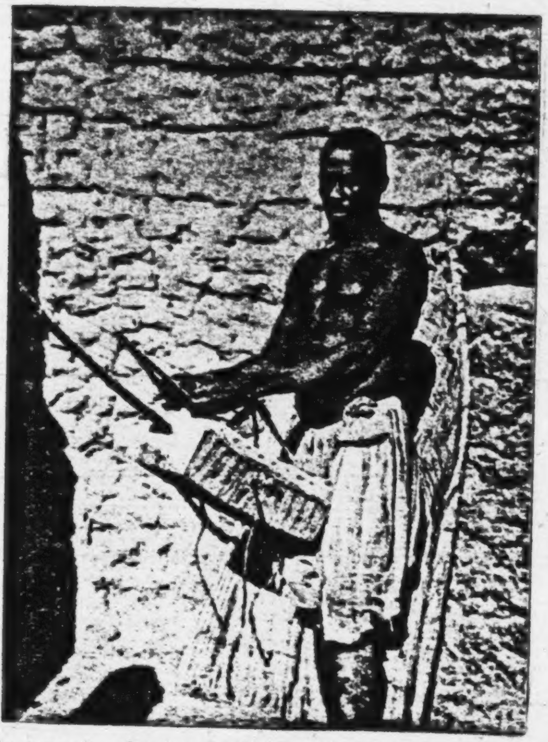

Nia ngoni: the harp of the Nia fetish

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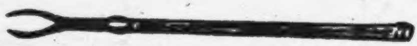
534 Chief among these fetishes are the Komo, the Nama, the Kono, the Nia, the Wara (or Djara), the Djo and the Magna, also called Tjaro fign. All of them have their special drums and musical instruments, and some, like the Nia and the Magna, even have an entire band. The band of the Nia consists primarily of guitars, skin bags, and small baskets in the shape of hourglasses filled with stones or bits of scrap iron. That of the Magna consists of one or /147/ two long

778 534 drums and a fairly large number of antelope horns (1). These are tuned by means of a wooden bell, and each gives a special note and tone. 778 533 In fact, Bambara music is the sweetest and the least shrill that I have heard. Moreover the Negroes enjoy [534] it; one day at Bagini on the Bani, when three such bands gave a concert together, the women were so happy, so pleased and moved by the charm of its sweetness, that they took off their bracelets, earrings, and nose rings and laid them at the feet of the musicians.



Horned iron tube, trumpet of the Komo fetish (seen at Bagini in Bani country at the home of Boya, head owner of the fetish; it is between 0.30 and 0.35 meters long.

The Komo, the Kono, and the Nama have the wildest music there is -- trumpet blasts and frightful bellowings that freeze one with 778 534 terror. In the Komo music, an iron tube which is part of the fetish is blown into, and the initiates, warada darotigi, accompany the sacred songs on bamboo pipes. The pipes of the Kono are bulls' horns (2), and the sounds that come out of them are real roars. Those of

1. The old men say that before the Moslem invasion of Omar el Hadj, the musicians blew into elephant tusks. The tusks were confiscated because of the ivory and were replaced by horns of the great antelope, which the Europeans call by the Peul name, koba.

2. To make these pipes the Negroes cut the tip of the horn and close the opening with a spider's web.

178 534 the Nama are made of bamboo and smaller than those of the Komo. The big instrument here is the drum which is beaten with a bent iron rod. The syncopation is given on the bass drum which is wooden; the vibrations of the skins stop, and one would say that the sound is the knock of a bone that is broken clean; it gives one the shivers.

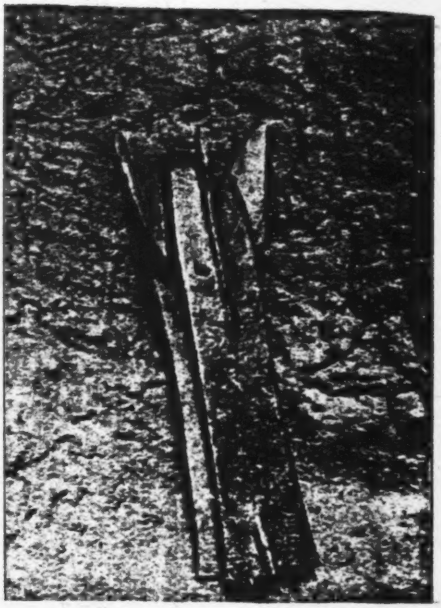
178 The Komo is always most carefully hidden, and one has to belong to the village to know in which hut it dwells. The main parts of the fetish are enclosed in baskets just like those used for transporting cotton, but three iron rods (3) on which /148/ sacrifices are made are usually kept in the skin of a striped cat. The Nama lives under a tamarind tree outside the village and has a beehive for a tabernacle. [417] The whole thing is surrounded by a djasé, a kind of palisade made of coarse mats which hides from the uninitiated both the hive and the receptacle into which the remainder of the victims' blood is poured.

3. In the presence of the uninitiated these sticks are called Komo djoloko, and (again so that none of the mysteries will be revealed) the warada, those who speak in the name of the idol, are called djoloko samana, "those who carry the chains of Komo."

178 346 The Nia and the Wara, or Djara, have round huts surmounted by conical thatch roofs. While the first is inside the village, the second is always outside at one of the entrances. The Kono has a square house with a flat terrace roof. It is always decorated with small bells fastened by lines on which are hung skulls of dogs and goats that have been sacrificed. Usually, if not always, it faces the inside of the village. The Magna does not have a temple strictly speaking, but it has its altar, a round turret surmounted by a receptacle [824] to receive the blood of victims. It is outside the village and always under a silk-cotton tree (Eriodendron anfractuosum -- kapok tree).

178 The Komo is equipped with a jointed mask and a cloak made of feathers of guinea fowl, hens, etc., which are used for the sacred dance. By means of a stick which the feather cloak hides from sight,

the dancer raises or lowers his mask, and at night, in the dim light of the fires, one might think it a dwarf demon which alternately grows little by little and then becomes smaller again. /149/ The *Kono* also has a mask. It is not jointed, and its cloak is not variegated like that of the *Komo,* for all its feathers are those of the *djougo* (1), which are black.



Mask of the *Kono* fetish

All these fetishes are made up of a fairly large number of objects. Among the chief pieces there is usually a horn called *kana,* and a *sirikoun* which is used to will death to one's enemy and at the same time shield oneself from it. The principal part of the *Kono,* called *boli den fa,* is a kind of ragged doll with two horns for arms.

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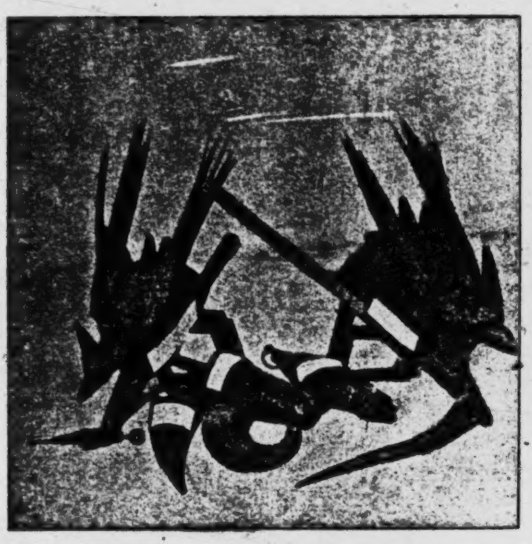
1. A large black bird the French name of which I do not know.

In the *Komo* an important part is played by three iron tubes, one of which is used as a trumpet (2). The most interesting and original unquestionably is the *Nama*, which consists of two wooden heads called *koungolo Nama* ("heads of the Nama"); one, the male, is called *tjéma* and the other, the female, is called *mousoma*.



The *Nama* Fetish

These two heads seem to represent two fantastic birds, and the illusion created is complete when, preceded by the *darotigi* who shakes his bell and carries a lantern, the *djenfa mousoou* (3) run through the village and around its walls looking for *siri*. It becomes even stronger when they place the heads on their foreheads and mingle

2. *Tama guengueba* is its name.

3. The term applied to those who are permitted to take the heads in their hands.

778 with the dancers /150/ who, with torsos naked to the waist, gesticulate and shout their sacred songs to the sound of drums and pipes:

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A djigina so, gnâ, ma fambali, a djigina so, tjon k'a e.
He is our guest, the gnâ, great killer of men, he is our guest
tjon k'a é.
A fiéréla ka dén, boli fiéréla ka dén.
He has blossomed to bear, to bear his fruits; this boli has
blossomed, he has his fruit.
Soubaou, yo, nin kéra malo ko ye.
Souba, yo, this is done because of shame.
Soubaya kéra, dabali bé an ko yé.
Someone has devoted himself to the practices of the souba, we
have a means of saving ourselves.

778
782 Nor does sacrifice to the Nama fail to be impressive. Only members of the staff enter the enclosure where the beehive used as its tabernacle is located. The crowd of members remains outside, and no one approaches the palisade before it is his turn to give a sacrificial hen and kola nuts to the sacrificer. While the idol is being reddened with blood (1), /151/ two men, naked to the waist and facing the

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1. The Nama of the Malinké is absolutely identical with that of their Bambara brothers. At Bendougouba, a village of the Kosilanbougou culture near Kita, there is a Nama, and one can identify the words as they are very nearly the same.

Bambara	Malinké
Male Nama: Tjema	Male Nama: Kema
Female Nama: Mousoma	Female Nama: Mousoma
The Nama protects chiefly against initiates of the siri, who are said to eat human flesh and are called souba.	The Nama protects against the soubaga, identical with the souba. It comes from Misèngo in Bélédougou.

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The Nama comes from Misango, a province of Bélédougou.

The Nama is sometimes called Souyakoro, Namakoro, and its diamou, or lineal name, is Sirima-n-fign.

The palisade around the Nama is called djasé; the receptacle for the blood, da.

The horned pieces of wood are called wara se and gnê bla, djenfa mousoou, djenfa tjeou, sometimes called waraou.

The master of the Nama at Misango, which is father of all /Nama/ is at present Tjema-n-djan; out of respect all masters of the Nama of Misango are called Foura tigiba.

There are three names for one and the same thing, say the Negroes of Kita: Souyakoro, Namakoro, and Sirimafing.

The palisade is called djasa; the receptacle, daga.

The horned pieces of wood are called gnâ bla and ko bla Wara, or Waradjeli or gnâ Wara.

Out of respect all masters of the Nama of Misango are called Foura tigiba (foura, "medicine"; tigiba, "great master").

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182 crowd, stand immobile on each side of the sacrificer and hold in their hands two pieces of wood about a meter long on which are tied three rams' horns (wara se) and two horns /sic/ (gné bla). It is an honor, even a distinction, to hold these horned pieces of wood, and these men are called djenfa tjéou.

Two annual sacrifices are offered to the boli of this group: one before the rainy season when, the Negroes say, the male and female idols mate, and the other about three months later, a little before harvesting begins when the grain is almost ripe. This is the time when the female idols give birth to their offspring, the best time to buy fetishes and to have fourou and konio made, because, as I said

778 before, whoever wants to own a *boli* must unite with it in as close a
182 bond as if he were contracting a *fourou* marriage. In order to seal this
union he must offer kola nuts, *fourou gosi* (1), to the village head and the elders, in short, have a wedding (*konio*).

Women, uncircumcised men, and the uninitiated are never
778 present at the sacrifices and festivals in honor of the fetishes of which
182 I speak. However, I have seen women summoned to clap their hands
562 and sing the praises of the *Komo* or the *Kono*. On the nights of the festivals they stay inside the village, and paths leading to the square where they are gathered are closed with *kara*, or coarse mats. Near them they hear the roar of trumpets and horns, and from time to time, above the mats, the silhouette of a hideous mask appears in sight and freezes them with fear and terrifies them, but in the dark of the night they cannot see details and are not able to say what they have seen. When the *Nama* is brought out (2), the women are summoned at daybreak at the moment when the god is put back into his beehive, and

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1. The tribute which every man must pay if he wishes to enjoy his marriage legitimately.

2. The phrase "to bring out the *Nama*" is my translation for the Bambara expression, *Nama bora*, which means that a sacrifice to the idol has been made, and that the night is spent in shouting and dancing the sacred dances. The Negroes also have the expression, *a djigina so*, "he came to visit us at home," (*a djigina*, ("he visited us at"...; *so*, "our home"). These expressions are used in relation to all *boli*.

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562 /152/ at the foot of the tree under which the initiates shouted and danced all night, they are shown the siri found by the djenfa tjéou (1) and the darotigi, or darotala (2). While these siri (3) are burned, the women dance and sing the praises of the idol.

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782 The boli have two days of rest a week, Monday and Thursday (4). It is nevertheless permissible to sacrifice to them on these days,

1. Djenfa tjeou: those who run with heads of the Nama.

2. Darotigi, or darotala: he who rings the bell and precedes the djenfa tjéou with a lantern.

[754] 3. The siri are sacred objects which initiates of siri, the souba, throw here and there in the environs of the village in order to cast evil spells and sorcery on persons to whom they wish harm. Every time the Nama is brought out 20 to 40 siri are found. These small amulets /sic/, made of a little of everything, including trouser buttons, hooks, and belt buckles, tremble and moan while the women watch them. I have been present several times at this performance but have never perceived these tremblings and moanings, doubtless because I am not a Negro.

[304] 4. They rest in the sense that a festival at which they preside, e. g., a circumcision, never takes place on those days.

778 782 and on Sunday evening (tné sou, "the night of Monday"), the initiates of the Komo like to go out or, if you like, dance their dances and shout their sacred hymns. Since the boli preside at all important events of life, circumcisions, marriages, deaths, etc., I will speak of the admission to the sects of these fetishes and the sacrifices offered to them when I discuss these matters. I will say, however, before closing this paragraph, that at no time or season does a village let a week go by without offering a sacrifice to the great boli which they own or dancing their dances. The staff of these fetishes is feared, dreaded, respected, and honored, and on days of celebration their owners are in the place of honor and sit next to the gnéna-n-sonnaba (religious head of a village), or at least next to the sotigi (civil head).

778 782 695 In addition to the formal sacrifices at which the initiates are present, the great boli receive homage, tribute, and great streams of blood from individuals: appeals for their intervention are made constantly. Over a mere nothing an oath on such a fetish -- called kali boli la (5) is required, and if a dispute arises between two families,

5. There is a slight difference between kali boli la and boli sien. To take the oath called kali boli la is to swear on the fetish that one is telling the truth, that one is innocent. Only the accuser sacrifices. Seven straws must be fastened onto the object called sirikoun, and the accused, blara boli koro, is placed under the boli -- his life is placed in its hands -- and is to die if he has lied. In performing the boli sien, the accuser and the accused both sacrifice. Here again seven straws are fastened onto the sirikoun, and the accused is placed in the fetish's power twice:

778 782 695 first by the accuser and a second time of his own accord (a blara boli koro, "the accuser places him under the boli"; a y'i bla boli koro, "the accused has placed himself under the fetish").

a boli sien (5) is needed, for the fetish must again be called on to be

/See footnote 5 immediately preceding./

a witness. /153/ These oaths entail heavy expenses, for one hen is seldom enough and a goat is very often necessary. I have seen four or five dogs, equal to an expenditure of 20 to 30 francs, sacrificed over a trivial matter.

778 782 The three chief sacrifices offered by individuals are the fani-nké (1), the gnénama fani (2), and the sou fani (3). The first is made

1. Fani, "small throat cutting"; ké, "to make."

2. Gnénama, "one who has life," "alive."

3. Sou, "corpse."

to obtain a favor, to place oneself in the good graces of the fetish; the second, to preserve one's life, to escape a death already decreed; and the third is offered to appease a fetish whom one blames for the death of a relative (4) and to entreat it to spare the survivors of the

[761] 4. Eighty times out of 100, without exaggeration, death is blamed on a boli fetish.

778 family.

782 At the end of every important sacrifice, all the objects which make up the fetish are washed in the blood that has collected in the earthen receptacles called da, and it is not until after this operation, performed in the deepest silence, that the objects are replaced in their goatskins.

778 551 Negroes like to give the name of the fetish to children born at times of great sacrifices. I would even say that in studying the "names of people" one learns to know the gnâ, or boli, the gnéna, or djiné, and becomes initiated into the usages and customs of the country.

Names of children dedicated to the Komo, the most popular in the district of Ségou: Boli, boli ba, Néné, Nono, Négé son (or Négi son) (5), Togo-ba-tjé (6). /154/

> 5. Négi son: sacrifice to iron. Sometimes the word Komo is left unspoken out of respect, and the child is designated by one of the pieces of the fetish. The objects mentioned in the case of the Komo are three iron tubes (négi), sometimes called Komo djoloko ("chains of the Komo") in the presence of the uninitiated. The tube used as a trumpet is called tama guengueba.
>
> 6. Togo, "name"; ba, "big"; tjé, "man," etc.

Names of children dedicated to the Nama, the most important fetish after the Komo: Djasé, Sirima, Namakoro, Nama (1).

> 1. Djasé, the palisade which surrounds the sanctuary of the Nama. Sirimafign is the diamou, or family or lineal name, of the Nama.

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551 Children dedicated to the Nia: Nia-gné foula, Nia-n-ti, Nia-n-nkoro, Nia.

Children dedicated to the Kono: Nièlé, Tjétjélé, Djonké (2).

[576] 2. Djonke, a respectful appellation often applied to the master of the Kono. Tjétjélé, the password of the initiates of the Kono and its family name, or diamou. When a stranger appears at the sacrifice, he is asked the question: "E b'a la wa Wélema djonké? Are you of the sect of Wélema djonké?" Only a brother can answer: "Tjétjélé, ne b'a la. Tjétjélé, I am."

Children dedicated to the Magna: Ma-n-djé, Magna, Magné.
Children dedicated to the Djo: Djo, Djokoro, Djoméné.
Children dedicated to the Douga: Dougakoro, Douga-n-tjé.
Children dedicated to the Da: Dakoro, Da-n-son, Da-n-wélé.
Children dedicated to the Bala: Bala, Balake, Mousa and Misa (3).

3. Mousa and Misa are synonyms of Bala and not a translation of the name Moses.

778
572 It is also on a powerful boli, or rather in its presence, that the Bambara swear to an indissoluble friendship, a friendship so close that it finds the two persons and their children like a kinship tie. This is the sinnakoun! No Negro has ever been able to talk to me about it with any clarity or precision, so that I am unable to give it a very exact definition. Basing my interpretation on the custom -- widespread among the Bambara -- of a woman showing her breast in order to indicate clearly that she is the mother of a child (a wolo ba, "his

778 572 mother who bore him"), and on the phrase sinna dé meaning "a child at the breast," I believe I can give this meaning to the word sinnakoun ("head," "tip of the breast": or again, "because of the breast"): "Between us it is as if we had sucked the same breast; therefore, we are like brothers." And /155/the persons bound by this type of friendship regard themselves as such, exchanging witticisms and light jokes without ever quarreling. Yet the Negroes are very sensitive and hardly ever allow joking. Seing such friends one would take them for kanémé, and the latter are relatives since they are maternal cousins (1).

1. A woman's children and the children of her brothers are kanémé to each other. Sinnakoun and kanémé are not impediments to marriage.

The sinnakoun between families dates from time immemorial; it appears to have no history, or at least I was unable to persuade anyone to tell me what it is. In any case, one can believe that it is a friendship sworn on a boli, or in its presence if you like, since nowadays two heads of families who wish to be united, to be sinnakoun, together redden a powerful fetish.

6. Talking Boli

778 [761] These are supposed to bring death to anyone who scorns them. Nevertheless, they are seldom blamed for death, and they bring chiefly evil spells, sorcery, and sickness. They are in the hands of so-called sorcerers, real leeches who go through villages in the dry season, always holding out their hands and begging.

778 791 A talking boli is usually the tail of an animal and the sacrifices are made on this tail. The owner always has his instrument in an unusual skin, often the hide of a small wild animal, and he lets an end protrude. That, I believe, is his insignia, his mark of identification, unless it be the small bell he hangs on the paws of the hide and which he knows so well how to shake in order to notify people of his arrival.

778 791 The Bambara consult these sorcerers to find out the future and to draw their horoscopes or good luck. The fee for a seance is not at all unreasonable; it seldom exceeds the moderate sum of 40 cowrie shells, or one sou.

Concerning the *Sirikoun*

778 754 Every great *boli* includes an object called *sirikoun*. There are other *sirikoun* which are no longer parts of *boli*, but have become actual *boli*. The latter are hung at the waist and are always /156/ covered with a red cloth. Almost everyone owns them, although they are most frequently in the hands of the owners and sacrificers of great fetishes. They are usually ends of the tails of cows, horses, wild pigs, etc., and are often sprinkled with blood. They are sought in order to cast a spell or sorcery on an enemy, to make him sick, and even [151] cause him to die, or again to protect oneself from a spell, sorcery, sickness, or death.

The *sirikoun* and the talking *boli* are fetishes belonging to individuals; they have neither festivals nor formal sacrifices, and they are not publically worshipped.

Chapter 8

The First Years in the Life of a Bambara

1. The Sexual Morality of the Bambara

181 Those who have seen the Bambara and have the slightest acquaintance with them will not hesitate to tell you: "They are liars and thieves." They certainly never pass up a chance to take the property of another, and they lie boldly and with such complete calm that not a muscle in their bodies flinches. This has always surprised

843 but is lost after the first months -- something that is inexplicable to her. To avoid this misfortune she covers herself with grigris and talismans; she wears them on her neck, on her hips, down her breasts, on her arms. One in particular I cannot silently pass over; it is the *tafo*, a narrow leather thong held in the skin of a monkey's hand and knotted sometimes around the wrist and sometimes above the biceps.

842 A sterile woman or one subject to accidents during her
843 pregnancies appeals to the *Komo*, *Kono*, or *Nama boli* fetishes, but
more often to the *gnena*, or *djine*, fetishes, and above all to the
782 *dasiri* fetish, the genie protector of the village. Through the inter-
778 mediary of the priest, the *gnena-sonnaba*, or *dougoutigi*, she offers
it hens, kola nuts, and *dégé*, or millet flour mixed with water. She dedicates and consecrates the fruit of her womb to the *dasiri* and swears an oath to offer a sacrifice worthy of it if she succeeds in carrying her child to full term.

I should reiterate in passing that the *dasiri gnéna* is not, as
842 one might suppose, constantly sitting down or astride of a /167/ leafy
843 branch or, if you like, enclosed in a tree trunk with bark as a fitted
782 jacket. It walks around, readily leaves the tree, the spring, or the
778 rock which it uses as dwelling, home, or resting place; it visits its
825 relatives and close friends, it carouses with its companions every time
a drinking bout is held in honor of one of them, and when there are no parties, it takes advantage of its freedom. It is afraid of walking with its feet on the ground, so for its romantic excursions in and around the village, it straddles its mount, which is a snake, a lizard, or a donkey, but usually, as we already know, a terrible billy goat. It is this animal, especially, that the sterile woman showers with her attentions; she often goes far into the bush to fetch a handful of tender grass which is its delicacy, and every day measures of millet and maize bran are set aside for it. When she becomes a mother, she overflows with sacrifices and acts of thanksgiving, and her child receives the name of the fetish. He will be *djiriba*, *gnénama*, or *gnénamaké*, as I have already said in the paragraph in which I discussed the *dasiri*, who is the genie protector of the village and the first of the *gnéna*.

881 196 194 It is after midnight. The circumcised boys are seated in the place of honor where their older brothers sat before, and they furiously shake their gourd disks strung on sticks. Leaning on their millet stalks, the regulation sticks, the excised girls in their turn arrive at the public square, singing and shaking their pierced gourds, and the dances begin as at the *soli si* and continue until morning. Outside, under the sacred trees, the bell of the fetish tinkles and summons the initiates, and the *Komo* god roars through the mouth of its herald. At a sign from the priest the circumcised boys get up, leave the village, and go under the big trees to swear loyalty and to dedicate themselves, body and soul, to the prince of darkness (1). How can this scene be described! The circumcised boys sit under the god's favorite tree, and the crowd of initiates, grouped by villages, gather around the gourds full of *d'lo* that froths and bubbles. Little fires are lighted and cast a strange light into the night, and a circle of crouching human beings appears and takes shape. The master of the idol (*Komo tigi*); the sacrificer (*mourou kala tigi*); the beadle (*darotigi*), who rings for the sacrifice and gathers the initiates; the fetish's storytellers /*griots*/ (*Komo djeli maou*), who sing the praises of the god, fall into catalepsy at the sacrifices and then give out oracles; [778 534] the *Komo warada*, who wear a coat covered with the feather of guinea hens, hens, egrets, etc., and a long horned mask, and who carry the fetish to the place of sacrifice and blow into an iron tube that ends in two horns /186/ and is at once idol and trumpet, and draw from it frightful "*fouin fouin*" that freeze you with fear: in short, all the staff of the *Komo* appear on the scene, and there is a lascivious dance, the dance of the god, the sacred dance. Then there is the

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1. The scene which I describe sometimes takes place the evening before. Sometimes, by order of a sorcerer and for a reason considered serious, the entrance into the sect of a fetish is postponed until later.

584 sterile? And if he should be one of those sensualists so numerous
593 among us, and, bored after having enjoyed her, should drive her away
and reject her?" He trembles and wants to know what the future holds
both for him and for her, and goes to consult the diviners.

Two and often three diviners are consulted. If they all agree in
584 testifying that the suitor is of good character, that divorce is not to
593 be feared, and that the child will become the mother of healthy, strong,
787 and vigorous children who will perpetuate her people and her blood,
he finds joy again. He tells the verdict to both his wife and his
daughter, he imparts his decision to the head of the village and the
council of elders, and /202/ without any delay, freed as he is from
all fear, he notifies the suitor that the doors of his home are open
to him.

At this announcement the suitor chooses a fat hen from his hen
584 house, takes one or two kola nuts from his store, and again the
787 fourouboloma tigi, the guardian of the wedding gifts, starts on his way,
for this time he must find out whether the family boli, and sometimes
the shades of its ancestors, are opposed to the proposed union (1).

1. If some occurrence later causes the engagement to be broken, or if there is a marriage followed by divorce, it does not enter his mind that the diviners were mistaken. The whole responsibility falls on the head of an enemy, who through hatred or jealousy has found a way to disrupt everything. It is almost always someone unknown, which is fortunate.

The father of the little girl takes down his goatskin, or often the
584 skin of a wild animal, a frightful, dirty foroko, the tabernacle of the
787 family boli; he sprinkles them with the blood of the hen and then spits
● 778 a piece of chewed kola nut on them. If he does not have family boli
-- an unusual situation -- he sacrifices to his ancestors on the doorsill
of the entry hut, or b'lon, and on the kârâ, if he owns one.

584 A kârâ is an earthern bas-relief inside the b'lon, or entry hut, which
787 very crudely depicts a woman and a man and is used as an altar.

778 When the sacrifice is accepted -- that is, if the feathered biped has the fortunate idea of not dying with its wings spread and its breast on the ground, and if the pieces of kola nut, cut in two, which are thrown on the boli or the kârâ, fall with the rounded part on the ground and the pulp on top (2) -- there is an unequivocal "yes" on the part of the family, and all hearts rejoice. As to the fourouboloma tigi, he delightedly sucks his piece of kola nut, he savors his piece of the hen, and the scene of the sacrifice is far from his memory. Yet he trembled when, crouched before his boli or the kârâ, altar of his ancestors, the father-in-law cut the throat of the victim and threw down the kola nut, saying in a solemn and cavernous voice: "We have consulted the diviners, and they all agree in praising the suitor; if they are to be believed, he is worthy of our daughter. But you, what do you think of this union? If it is to be /203/ happy, if divorce is not to be feared, if it is to be fertile, accept my sacrifice, I pray you. In that case, grant them wealth, long life, many children, and peace. This hen and the kolas are indeed for the sacrifice, and it is a true sacrifice which the suitor offers you through my mediation."

This manner of accepting or rejecting a suitor is most ingenious! Since everything is referred to the decision of the diviners, the boli, and the shades of ancestors, any dispute on the part of a rejected man is impossible, no quarrel arises between the two families, and when a more fortunate suitor obtains the little girl's hand, he need not fear the hate, rancor, or vengeance of his predecessor for he has nothing to do with the latter's misfortune.

2. A procedure which is repeated up to three times in case of failure.

585 Departure of the bride. Exorcism of her hut by the boli of the village. Her entrance into the village. The first night. -- It is night, the hour when families crouch in a circle around the gourds of to, or millet gruel, stuff themselves with food, and noisily suck their fingers. Why is it, then, that this evening the women hurry in such numbers to the public square with gourds on their heads? At every turning of the streets there are people who are cleaning their long flintlocks, and in the b'lon, or entry huts, there is the deafening noise of drums as the skins are stretched and they are tuned. And the cries that fill the village crack your ears and jar your nerves. What is it then? A young woman, a fiancée, who is struggling in the arms of two husky fellows and shrieking -- for appearances, since as soon as she is outside the walls her cries cease and she places on her head the long cloth (a present from her husband) from which she can make herself three loincloths and in very lively fashion follows the women and girls who are carrying her trousseau. The band of young men, with drums, trumpets, and guns, hurries after her, and there are songs of joy and hand clappings, and from time to time the long-drawn-out cry, "kouyo, kouyo," uttered by an old woman, tears the peace and silence of the night. /208/

585 789 778 And while the bride, in short steps, continues her triumphal march, a strange scene takes place in the village where she is going. The chief boli of the village has left its putrid hiding place, and while women, children, and the uninitiated, huddled in their huts, tremble at each roar given forth by its herald, it runs about the alleys in the hands of its initiates (1). This is not all; it goes into the husband's

1. Ou tara djira à tjéma k'a d'a ma: "They have gone to show her to her husband in order to give her to him." The real expression is as follows: A wéléla k'a se-n-don, A se-n-donna; "Her husband has summoned her in order to sleep with her. She has slept with her husband." The answer is: Fourou kera: "They got married."

585 court and enters the hut of the bride. At that instant the boli déou,
189 sons of the boli, sing the sacred hymn and abandon themselves to
778 their dances, and the god itself lies on the white cloth spread on the
bed, on the mat where the poor girl soon will rest. Like every rite of this kind, this ceremony is called kéné salo, "to exorcise the place (2), " and its purpose is to drive out the harmful spirits who might have evil intentions against the woman and her husband. For the husband it is also a means of publicly bearing witness to his faith in the boli and his love and his attachment for it, in short, a means of obtaining its favor and attaining a happy and fertile marriage.

585 The young woman and her retinue continue to walk very slowly along the winding paths, and in the distance, here and there, a gunshot, a clapping of hands, and the famous cry of "kouyo kouyo" can be heard; the cry comes near and again draws away, depending on the bends of the path, only to draw near again with a stronger burst. Finally they arrive at the edge of the fields, 200 to 300 meters at most from the village. The young men run to place themselves at the head of the procession, the bearers of the trousseau pass to the rear, the drums roll, and the horns of the band roar loudly, for this is the dance. But what a dance! The women, bent double, move
[535] their torsos back and forth in a manner which might best be compared with that of a worm that draws back and slowly stretches out; they glide over the ground without lifting /209/ their feet, leaving on the sand behind them a long trail as if a boa had passed by. With discouraging slowness, they go like this to the gate of the village, taking an hour, and often two, to cover these few hundred meters.

Covered with sweat and white with dust, the procession moves along the walls; here it is at the gate, firing guns, clapping hands,

2. Kéné, "surface, " "plane, " "floor, " "court"; salo, "stroke gently with the hand"; this term denotes a movement of the hands that the sorcerers use when they are treating an invalid, "to make /ritual/ gestures. "

766 causing her own child to die. A
845 mother who has lost her child may
847 adopt an orphan and give it her
breast.

766 crowd /226/ always withdraws, and the blacksmith remains alone
845 with his assistant. When the work is done, they wash their hands on
the grave itself, and the operator makes the customary prayer:
"Whether the wind comes from the east or the west, from the north or
the south, etc., " (see above, p. 244).

5. Sacrifices to Fetishes on the Occasion of a Death

782 Although at the time of death there is no sacrifice to the soul
764 of the deceased nor to the shades of ancestors, blood flows neverthe-
less. It even flows in torrents for the Bambara are not satisfied with
778 reddening the family *boli*; they stain with blood all the *boli* fetishes they believe to be guilty. Nor do initiates of the sects forget their deceased brothers, and for a friend who was initiated the same day as they themselves, they cannot refuse the *boli* a hen and a kola nut. If the deceased is the master of a fetish, its priest, or an influential person on its staff, all the initiates comply, and the sacrifice becomes general. The initiates do more; in the evening they take the god out of its temple, and all night long they mingle their wild animal shouts with the blasts of sacred horns and trumpets blown by heralds. The latter very often wear hideous horned masks on their heads and are dressed in cloaks of feathers.

761 Eighty times out of a hundred, death is attributed to a powerful
782 *boli* which is taking vengeance, punishing or rewarding, and in the
764 environs of Ségou the *Komo*, *Nia*, *Kono*, *Nama*, and *Douga* are the
778 ones who have the most deaths to their credit. When the murdering
boli is known, the entire village is notified; the trousers, blouse and bed cover of the deceased, or the *tafé* (1) if it is a woman, are hung

1. *Tafé*: a rectangular piece of cloth which women wind around their bodies to cover themselves.

761 on the branches of the sacred tree under which the fetish dwells and
782 at the door of its temple, and the members of its staff know how to
764 extol their god. Under these conditions they are without pity; they
bleed the bereaved family white, so that the tax demanded by our
778 circle officers (2) is nothing compared to the tax that they have to pay. /227/

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[824] What do they not have to give for a sacrifice to the Komo, for example? The whole house is turned upside down to find goats, dogs, kola nuts, roosters, and hens, gnâma-n-kou (Amormum melegueta), and djalakouma (a plant whose name I do not know). The family needs all this, cost what it may, and if they have to buy it all they have to pay double or triple the value of the objects, for others make profits from their necessity. First a dog or a goat is sacrificed to appease the fetish and pay respects to it. Then to find out whether it is satisfied and its hatred assuaged, two red roosters and two hens with golden necks bite the dust. A bara (1) (gourd) full of gnâma-n-kou fruit and another full of djalakouma are offered. One portion of these fruits is used for holy water (2); the other is sold for the benefit

[651] 2. The head tax is 3.50 francs per person and 5 francs for the servants of Europeans. Here France is surely not a "tyrant," but a tender mother.

[415
824] 1. This bara (a large pumpkin /courge/ with a small opening at the top) can hold from 18 to 20 liters of liquid. The true gourd is half of a pumpkin.

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764
824 2. The holy water of the Komo is made of roots and leaves of the djalakouma and the fruit of the

764 which is nothing less than disguised slavery. In the presence of a
782 European the Negroes like to complain that he cannot meet their taxes,
but they should not be listened to too closely -- 99 times out of 100
they are lying! Let us not make war against the military or civil
official responsible for levying the tax, which is not at all exorbitant;
let us think before all about the *boli* and their staffs, a band of persons
without principles or law, human vultures with greedy fingers who
attack the weak, the widows and orphans, terrify them with their
threats of death. They do not leave these people in peace until they
have taken everything: hens, goats, dogs, cowrie shells, sorghum,
and often freedom.

6. Respects Paid to Initiates of the *Koré*, or *Koté*

794 The initiates of a fetish are never indifferent to the death of a
766 brother, and they hasten to find a hen and a kola nut with which to
prove their attachment to the deceased and to assuage the wrath of
the god. The sect of *koré* does things in a grand, even in a ceremonious,
manner, if there is any ceremony in those nocturnal orgies where
d'lo, or millet beer, is drunk to /229/ the point of senselessness, and
where lascivious and obscene dances are danced.

When a young man who is *koré dé* (son of *koré*, initiate of the
sect) dies, relatives and friends redden with blood the sacred tree and
● [778] the *kara*, a perforated board painted red and white, which is the genie's
emblem. Although there is general mourning in the village, tears
are dried when evening comes, and for three nights there is nameless
[785] bedlam and endless shouting in the *kore tou* (the sacred grove) as
initiates flagellate themselves, burn their backs with torches, tear
their bodies with thorns, abandon themselves to their barbaric dances,
[534] and lose themselves in lewd gestures in front of the *dénouba* (drums
measuring from one to one and a half meters) and the *kingé* (a triangle,
an iron tube, which is hung from the thumb of the left hand and which
is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger).

For the old people who are granted not a tear nor a regret but for whom there are dances and songs, fellow initiates come in large numbers, and during the night preceding the burial, they make a

4: Henry--263 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

769 The sacrifice to the dead is most often made on the doorsill of
782 the entry hut, and a splash of blood is spread on the wall on each side
778 of the door, about a meter and half from the ground. Many families
also have an altar for sacrificing to the dead in their main b'lon; it
is the kârâ, an earthen bas-relief depicting a man and a woman.
It is all crudely made and has no human qualities about it. Nevertheless, one can guess what the Negroes wanted to depict, for although the woman is without mouth, ears, nose, or eyes, just like her mate, she is always adorned with two fine breasts.

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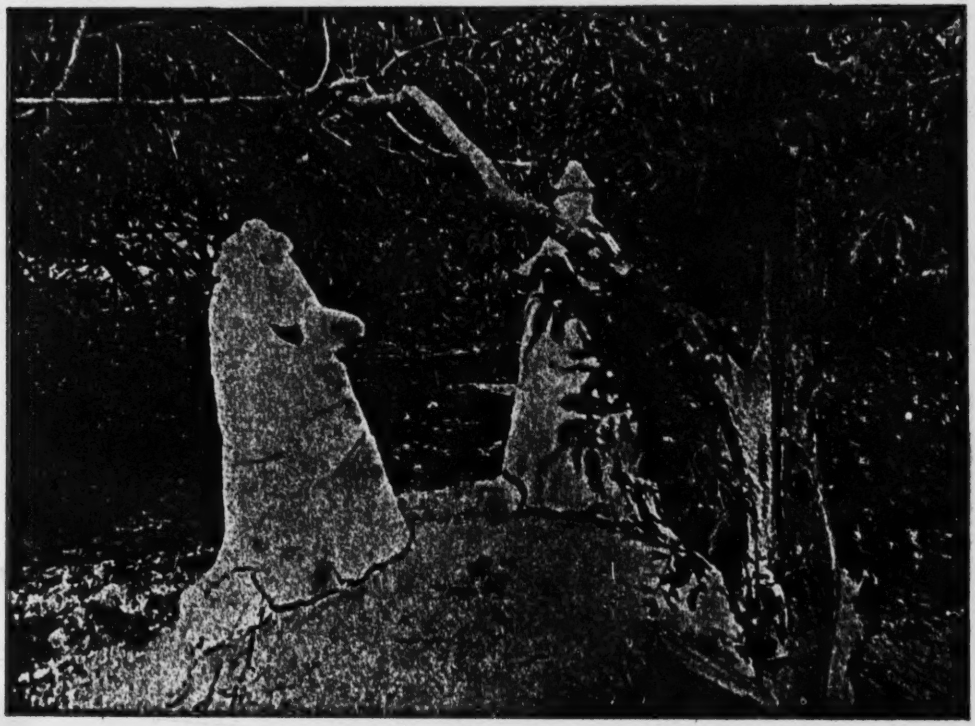
4: Henry--267 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



A fetish in the bush; the dwelling of a djiné genie (near Bamako).

4: Henry--271 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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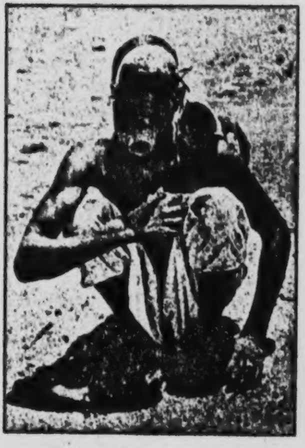

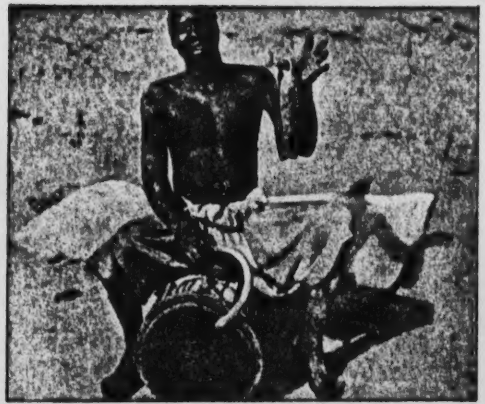

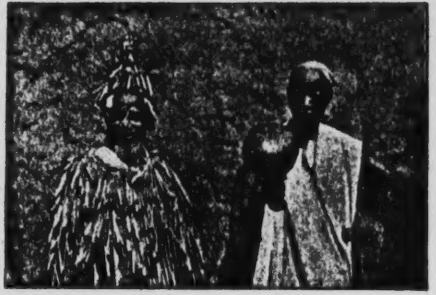

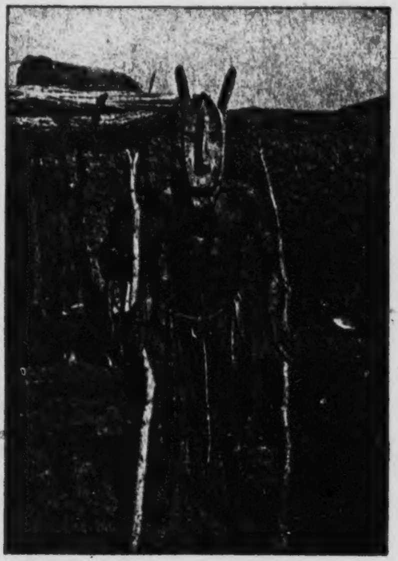

Left: Souba (monkey), society of the Koré. Above: Denouba (the big drum) and kinge (a triangle), society of the Koré. Center: Head korodouga and his herald, society of the Koré.
Right: Souroukou (hyena), society of the Koré.

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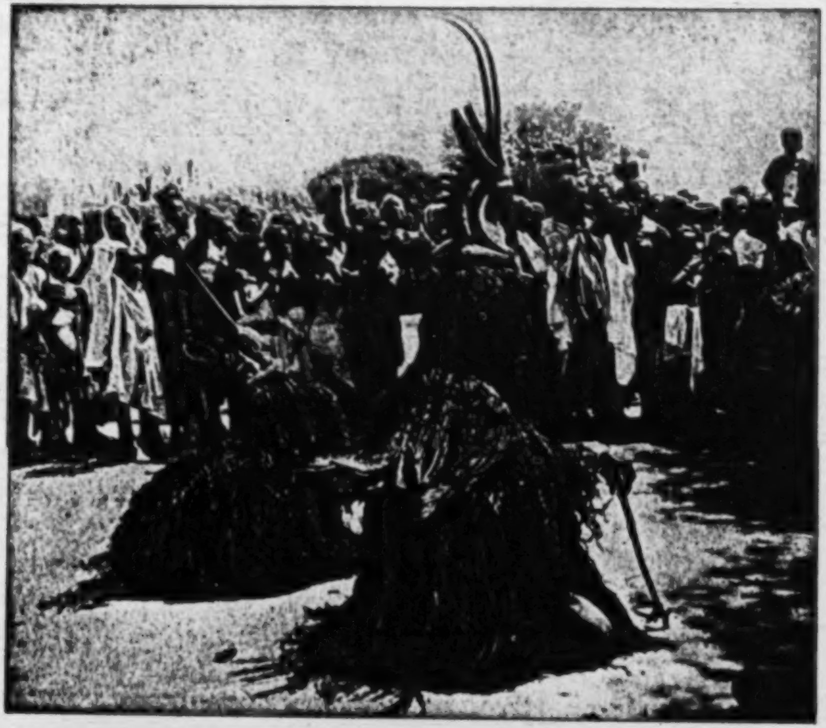

Sacred dance in honor of the Tji wara fetish, the genie of work.

4: Henry--274 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

4: Henry-275 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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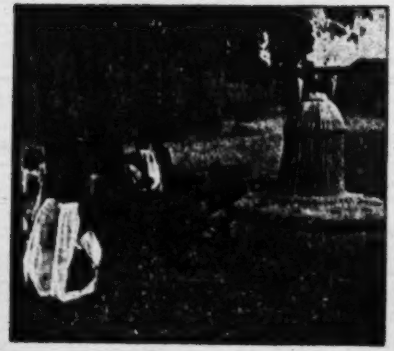
Sacred dance of the mourou kalatigi (sacrificer) after a sacrifice accepted by the boli M'bie Djougou at Talakala.



Mask of the boli fetish Komo.

Temple of Nia, a powerful boli.

Above: Pillar of the Magnan, a powerful boli fetish.

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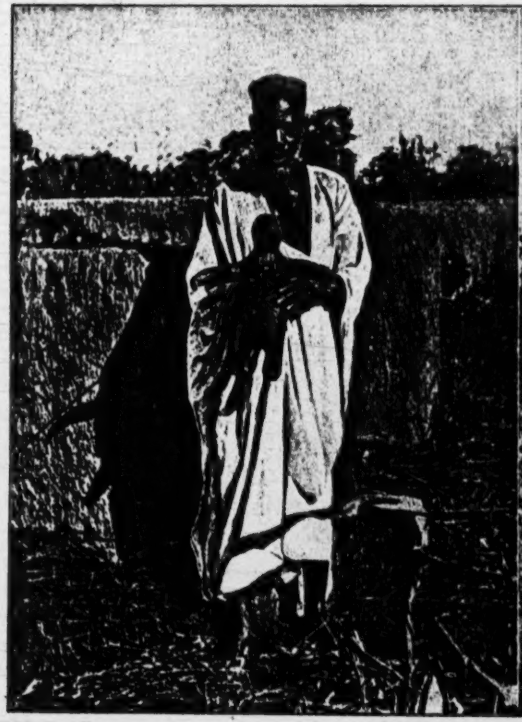
4: Henry--276 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Zanké and the boli fetish, Kono.

Temple of the Kono fetish.

4: Henry--277 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910
FA8 Bambara FA8

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The Nama fetish.

4: Henry--278 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910
FA8 Bambara FA8

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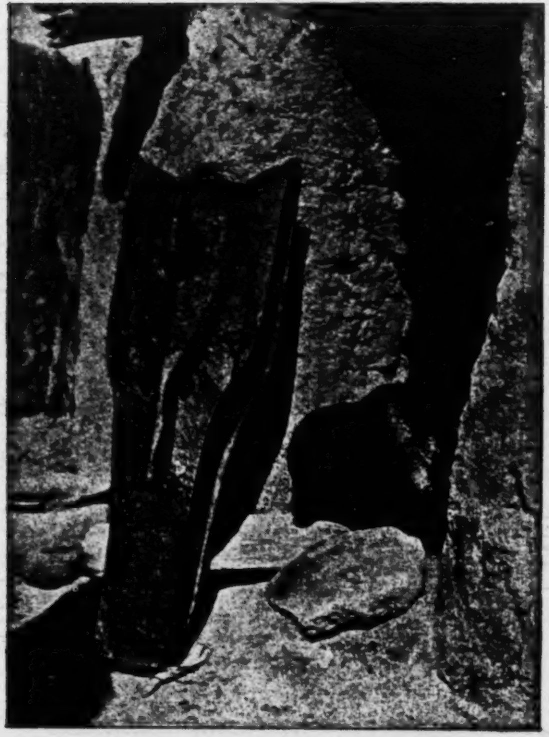

A boli fetish in the shape of a hippopotamus,
with the mask worn during the sacred dance.

121 knowledge. However, the same effort would have to be undertaken with regard to their neighbors so that gradually from one tribe to the next, it can be extended to the whole Black world.

For it is true that, however indispensable it is to order the facts concerning the Bambara themselves and to seek an internal explanation, the comparative method is necessary for the understanding of a religion. This method imposes itself with particular force in this context. The Bambara system does appear to be, on the one hand, the original synthesis of several other systems found by them on the spot at the time when they made their ultimate settlement, or brought along at the time of the great migratory movements. On the other hand this system is in a state of perpetual symbiosis with those of other Sudanese peoples, as is proved indubitably by recent observations.

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At present we can already state that at least nine tribes of varying importance (1) live on the same metaphysical, if not religious, foundation. They have a common theme of the creation by means of a word, which is originally motionless and whose vibration determines little by little the essence and later the existence of all things. The same is true of the movement of the universe in a conical spiral which is constantly extending itself. They share the same conception of the person, as well as of the primordial duality, the expression of perfect unity. All these peoples admit the mediation by a hypostasis of the divinity which sometimes takes on the aspect of a redeemer, master of a world, whose appearance is everywhere identical. All believe in the necessity /229/ of universal harmony as well as that of the internal harmony of beings, both being related. One of the

1. In the order of increasing depth of studies, we cite the following groups: Dogon and Bambara, blacksmiths, Kouroumba (or Foulsé), Bozo, Manding, Samogo /Samoro/, Mossi, Koulé, altogether amounting to more than two million people. It is fitting to note likewise that several tens of peoples or tribes of the Sudan (in the wider meaning of the word) consider themselves of the same origin. Important rituals, materials, agents, and places reinforce this belief (see p. 2).

121 corollaries of this notion is the subtle mechanism of disorder which we
171 call impurity for lack of a better term, and which goes hand in hand
779 with that of highly developed cathartic practices.

Finally, all these offer an extraordinary efflorescence—not to be called abuse—of the spoken, written, drawn, or gesticulated symbols many of which are found everywhere, each one of them being the basis for several levels of images.

We may therefore speak from now on of a Sudanese civilization whose substratum may be discerned among many tribes as it has been among the Dogon and the Bambara in particular. Under the diversity of languages and institutions is hidden the same framework of representations. It is as though each tribe had arranged the designs characteristic of its own genius on an identical canvas.

For this reason, it is appropriate to consider the present essay as a
121 first step toward an understanding of this civilization. In the future, this vast entity will have to take its place in relation to the Mediterranean and Asiatic system. And there is no doubt that this search for its position will bring up problems of borrowings, migrations, and assimilation. And doubtless, too, an anatomy of the old civilizations which had taken refuge in the western impasse in Africa will throw a valuable light on the primitive organizations which were found in contact with each other during the high period in these regions, and which were able toeffect a union between indigenous ways of thinking and others with which we are more familiar.

It is tempting to reconstruct archaic states of humanity with the help of broken potsherds or literary shreds. In the more favorable cases, abundant texts and materials have permitted syntheses, whose vicissitudes are one of the reasons for the existence of erudition. On no occasion has anyone ever been discouraged by terrains without echoes, by the absence of the authors of texts and materials. Thus, a wealth of activity concerning the situations and thoughts of ancient times was instituted, a kind of science shrouded in silence where the spirit of research alone was alive.

Today it seems possible, in the light of new observations, to find among numerous and diverse living people, archaic forms and wellsprings common to men of another color living in another time. This does not imply that one should disregard the cautious advice given by the men of the old schools (1); but this advice rests /230/ on postulates

769 782 As a substitute for the chicken, it is very common to offer some dege, a bit of millet coarsely ground and thrown in a little water. The fa keeps this liquid in a small gourd. It is perhaps [182] reasonable to think that this is the most ancient manner of honoring the dead and, in particular, calling for their protection in obtaining the two essentials of life: grain and water.

[273] An equally common libation is made with dlo, a kind of millet beer which every Bambara enjoys drinking to the point of intoxication. The dead could hardly fail to be pleased with an offering of what they had enjoyed so much on earth!

[276] One must conclude, too, that offerings of kola nuts please the dead because it gives them a chance to enjoy a favorite treat. The officiator chews the kola nut and then spits out his saliva mixed with the juice and remains along the walls of the blon'.

Such are the ordinary offerings, but on special occasions the quantity and importance of the gifts are increased according to the desired results. When many people are present and the house is prosperous, the victims are oxen and sheep. [781] It should not be forgotten that the flesh of these consecrated victims, eaten in common, makes a very strong mystical bond between the participants; it is a true communion. It is generally conceded that the bond created by drinking consecrated liquids together is much less strong.

776 778 In addition to his ancestors, every Bambara has as his special protector, one of those gods (nyana) which are created wholly by the work of the magician. Every family has one or more nyana, whose priest is the fa. The boli, the symbol and altar of this type of divinity, is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put into a leather or canvas sack, a gourd, or a pot. The nyana of Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, was a n-ko whose boli was kept in a monkey skin. The boli is taken out of its cover so that libations can be poured over it and animal remains smeared on it. If there is some objection to exposing it, the offering is put on the cover.

769 794 Everything that takes place relative to the cult of the nyana is analogous to that described for the cult of the ancestors.

Chapter 6

Worship, Celebrations, Saraka, Sacrifices, and Dances in Honor of the Gnéna

1. The First Two Groups of Gnéna

781 The fundamental bases of all Bambara devotions are first, and
776 above all, fear and secondly, the desire to have everything without
effort or work. The Bambara respect a strong, powerful being because
it can punish and reward, and since their fetishes are not equal in
power, they take care not to honor all equally.

The genii of the first two groups have no priest or official
776 minister, and public, solemn sacrifices are offered them very rarely.
782 In the dry season, however, some festivals are held in their honor.
852 The chief participants are children, who on these days stuff themselves
with /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, and with
sorghum cakes. When they are full they take the leftovers outside the
village to a place where paths cross, and many hens, dogs, and other
animals come for the booty. The poor and unfortunate also come, for
[735] they, too, may take their share; every saraka (1) belongs to them.

1. Tax, tribute, alms.

776 Little girls and boys take part in these festivals, but there is a
852 special one for unexcised girls, and those who are soon to be excised
and are getting ready for this great event in Bambara life bear /106/
all the expenses. It is the celebration of soli basi k'li (1), of which
I will speak at greater length in my chapter on circumcision.

1. Soli, "young firls who will soon be excised"; basi, a kind of couscous with very small grains which distantly resembles semolina; k'li, "obtained by singing and clapping hands."

776 It rarely leaves its tree; it likes its little grove and shady park, and
778 in many places it is satisfied with a stump that is all blackened, worm eaten, rotten, and falling to pieces.

The formula of the sacrifice

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● 781 When one is present at a sacrifice to the dasiri and sees the gnéna-n-sonnaba uncover his head, take off his large blouse, and crouch at the feet of the fetish, one expects something imposing and grand. Nothing of the sort occurs, and one is quite surprised to find so little gravity /120/ in such an important act. People enjoy themselves and chat; the priest, red with blood, tosses off witticisms and coarse jokes, and while feet and wings of the victims -- goats, sheep, and hens -- twitch in the agonies of death, nothing passes from one group to another but bursts of laughter that finally disappear far off at the edge of the grove where the women are.

782 The words in the sacrificial formula vary a little from one village to another, all depending on the volubility of the sacrificer. Nevertheless, it remains basically the same everywhere. After having greeted the fetish in his own name and the name of his subjects, he implores it to forgive them all the insults, offenses, and disrespect toward it, of which they have been guilty, voluntarily or involuntarily, during the entire year. He then calls it by a name related to the type of tree in which it is located -- e.g., ma ziraba ("great baobab man"), ma djala ba ("great false-cedar man"), -- and announces that he is going to sacrifice. While offering the dégé and d'lo, he implores it to protect them against the evils of the sons of the fetish siri, the souba (1), to preserve them from the souya maou (2), the

[754] 1. Sou, "night"; ba, "great." The souba are masters of the night who change themselves into hyenas or owls, dig up corpses, and eat human flesh.

2. Souyaké, "to prowl at night."

which determined "the space of yo in its own thought," is expressed by the number 22: "yo, darkness of creation, in the depth of the secret space of night, master of the foundation of the 22 rotations, great bearer of vibration, great builder of the marrow of bones (1).

These 22 spirals stirred up all that yo contained in spirit; nugu, "entrails, intestines," which carried all things and man within itself; yalã, "seed of the air," which placed the voids in all /7/ parts of space"; fayã, "seed of the wind"; sani, "seed of water"; yerẽ, "seed of fire"; yelẽgu, "seed of earthly matter" (2). The rotations of yo put them in order and kept them under the force of attraction (mana). In other words, carried away by this whirlwind, both magnetic and creative, the elements became organized, one in relation to the other; in this way the 22 terms of the universe, as thought out by yo, were determined; these terms are also the 22 periods of its thought:

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772 801 strength for there the Bambara place the poles of attraction which, in the universe, uphold all bodies. It is said: "All bodies accept the force of attraction of the four angles," fari be bi sõ seleke nuni mana barika la.

● [782 843 821] 1. yo dali dyibi, šu kene gundo tyema, munumunu mu tani fla siki ba, yere done ba, kolow nye kono dlaba, kono being the ancient term for marrow.

This prayer is recited in honor of yo when a woman's pregnancy is first noticed; it is also recited at eclipses of the sun.

2. fayâ, sani, yerẽ (in ancient language), and yelẽgu were at the origin of the four elements, air, water, fire and earth, all of which did not yet exist but were to appear later.

The seven elements composing yo are represented by signs, reproduced in Figure 1 (1 to 7).

772 801 773 The seven *bõnuana* summarize the general characteristics of beings and things:

1. *keleña*, unity;
2. *makari*, pity, mercy;
3. *mako*, necessity;
4. *sinaya*, aggression, jealousy;
5. *fadena*, rivalry;
6. *maloya*, shame;
7. *sia*, race, species, stock.

The twelve *bangini*, which follow, determine the qualities and destinies of the person:

1. *ma ye ma ye*, literally: a person is a person; gifts, possibilities of each, propositions and dispositions.
2. *mako*, mutual aid, simplicity, dignity, courtesy, wisdom.
3. *sebaya*, power, domination.
4. *dyuguya*, maliciousness, vulgarity, ferocity, difficulties.
5. *kunanguya*, bad luck, bad destiny, ill nature.
6. *sira*, road, guide, obedience, discipline.
7. *ńafola*, wealth, health, fertility.
8. *adamadeña*, brotherhood, humanity, liberty, kindness.
9. *dahirime*, food, material possessions.
10. *saya*, death, illness, infirmities, madness.
11. /13/ *šu*, night, light and dark, secret, witchcraft.
12. *kle*, day, sun; all the *boli* altars of the Bambara.

The three *ǰijini* are respectively:

1. *kun*, the head that thought out the world.
2. *ba*, the womb that formed it.
3. *fo*, the word that created it.

772 773 Knowledge, *fã*, was born of three foundations which finally became detached from the spirit (1). Knowledge opened up, divided, and

● 782 1. The following prayer, relating to the *fã*, is sometimes recited: *fango, ma dua, ma bo, fẽ mbina, fẽ nkumba, fẽ ndaba, fẽ semba, wolo tigi ye nye, djiri tigi ye nye, panve bwora na. O bwora mi, o nya nyimi senge do. Ntigi ye yereyere ye, ka bo miri kono, miri dane sandyi.*

782 > "Road of knowledge, I am not small, I am not big. A thing arrives, a thing with a large head, a large mouth, a large foot. I am the master of fertility; I am the master of trees. Where does it come from? It comes from the weariness of my seed. My master is the vibration, out of which came the spirit, the rain of which fertilizes."

772 contributed to the building of the visible world, especially engendering
773 particles, *moño moño*, which entered into the composition of the earth, and a radiance, *noro*, used for the formation of the sky.

At the same time, the spirit let fall upon the earth (still in the process of formation) a heavy object in the form of a globule, *kulu*, which was later named *pemba* (1). *Pemba*, moving as a whirlwind to the four cardinal points (south, west, east, and north), received twelve of the elements issued from the spirit. Then, with the help of the particles that came out of *fã*, he modeled lumps and mounds which gave shape to the earth.

But in the course of rising, the spirit had thrown upwards that which was later called *fãro* (2). Faro, who was then no more than vibration,

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1. From *fẽ*, thing and *ba*, big.

192 2. The Bambara use either *faro* or *fãro*, from *fa* (creation) or *fã* (knowledge) in the ancient language. This double etymology indicates the closeness in their minds between the concepts of creation and knowledge (see p. 17). The suffix *ro* expresses the idea of a whole, a totality. Another etymology has been suggested by S. de Ganay, in *Notes sur la théodicée bambara*, p. 196. "... the words Fané (the name of a family of blacksmiths), Faro, *fan* (force), *fara* (stone), and *fari* (body) all have the same origin. Faro is the secret name of stone." This etymology

778 understandable that the strength of the large pembele should be preserved intact since it represents the world. No ritual concerning it is celebrated alone by the man in charge without the presence of a council of elders. Its four corners can be scraped only under worthwhile circumstances for, according to the informant, the god pembele will not tolerate his being used for trifles. As the corners are gradually scraped off and consequently the nyama contained in these corners is reduced, the earth becomes worn out. And if the earth should lose its nyama, all would be empty of its substance; the millet would still grow but its stalk would yield no grain. . . women would bear no children, no longer having any nyama. Bereft of strength, people would no longer be able to fight. The earth would subsist, but would be sterile" (1).

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1. S. de Ganay, op. cit., p. 200.

The Balanza

824 The tree balanza, the plant form of Pemba's metamorphosis, vanquished by Faro, is no longer worshipped by men. However, the Bambara's attitude towards it and certain ritual gestures of which it is /38/ sometimes the object, recall the time when, after having spread its domination over all creation, it introduced death to the human species.

[761] In certain settlements, the belief is that whoever rests in its shade dies, the tree having taken his dya. In others, women still make it [782] offerings of karite oil, despite advice from men who have informed them of its inefficacy. They lie at its base, simulating illness, agony, and then death to recall the painful events that have brought them to men; finally they touch the ground successively with each of their four principal articulations as a sign of submission, before smearing the tree trunk with the oil they have brought. In still others, [843] in order to recall that births used to take place near the tree, pregnant women are presented by their husbands to the tree to each childbirth.

The fields surrounding the settlements in the region of Ségou are covered profusely with balanza. The device of Ségou, which tells of the history of the town, enumerates the names of the trees planted at the time of its founding. This device also mentions kokuruni (literally, little humped back), the balanza of Banankoroni (pl. I, a),

776 821 The second, dyi ble "red water," is Faro's copper, a reflection of koblenkaba or "red sky." It is similarly the seat of the spirit's warlike or punitive activities. Water of wrath and vengeful action, it drowns the guilty. Through it, Faro strikes the bodies and health of those who do not recognize his dominion.

Faro prefers to sojourn in the dyi fi, "black water," where he keeps his secrets. It is to this water that one prays to seek grace. It is from the dyi fi that the twelve future waters will flow.

Calm and felicity reign in the dyi sumane, "cold water," where the fish live. The dya of earthly bwings are preserved in it.

While Faro drowns those he punishes in the dyi ble, it is in the madũ (literally, person, to eat) that their bodies rot or become the prey of fish.

The sixth category of water, kosira (literally, thing of fear) is a jail. In it Faro temporarily places all that comes under his domination.

The seventh water, dyi wolõflã, corresponds to the seventh heaven.

776 823 ●782 In the Niger, the places inhabited by Faro bear the general name of faro tyin. These are mostly deep depressions, well known to the shore dwellers, particularly the Bozo. /46/ Sometimes a consecrated stone, placed on the shore, receives the sacrifices offered to the spirit.

The most celebrated is a place called Souko, located upstream from Koulikoro near the village of Kayo. The local spirit engendered all that now lives in the river. Because of this he is worshipped by all Bozo and Somono fishermen, who used to send delegations to the annual sacrifice that took place during the dry season.

776 823 The Faro of Ségou lives in the Faka, a deep hole located close to the right bank, facing the town. Legend has it that the Faka is extended by tunnels: one links the river to the Bani while the other opens out at Dya and was used by the founders of the settlement in mythical times.

[825] The Faka is placed under the guardianship of a crocodile to which each year the inhabitants offered victims. At the bottom of the hole there is a fat blind scaleless polyo, which the fishermen always return to the water if they catch it in their nets "because it is Faro's gate-keeper." In olden times, a flat stone upon which were traced a representation of Faro and black dots equal in number to the inhabitants of Ségou was visible in the deepest part of the waters. [782] On this occasion an albino was sacrificed (by slitting his throat) and the first fruits of the harvest were offered to the spirit.

776 On market day, a gourd filled with river water, called *fle ndinye*
823 *faro*, is placed close to the shore where the canoes land. To drink a
mouthful of this water is equivalent to a sacrifice to the spirit. The
782 drinker gives a cowrie as alms to the beggar who drew the water, for
"never can [Faro's] water be bought or sold" (1).

1. *Ma ti dyi fere ma ti dyi sã*.
See pl. II, b.

At Sama, the *faro tyin* is a kind of natural corridor located amidst the rocks bordering and overhanging the left bank of the river.

[825] The finches nesting there warn the boatmen of the place's sanctity by flying off; the boatmen then stop to pray. In passing, they throw an offering and those who have broken taboos purify themselves by washing. Each shows the spirit all that he carries with him. Two nearby trees, *faro sõndyiri* or "trees of Faro's sacrifice," are used to tie up the white bulls at twilight. The following day, they are thrown alive into the river with millet mash and cola nuts. At the bottom of the passage, on a fairly smooth surface, the image of Faro described above was drawn each year in the course of the ceremony celebrated by the society of the Komo.

/47/ Faro also haunts ponds and wells. In the village of Nango a natural well was revealed to a hunter by a white ram which appeared out of a thicket. The village was built after the discovery of the water hole where the inhabitants now worship the spirit.

In the village of Siyango, the water of the well in which Faro
resides is tabooed, the site of the well being the seat of all the re-
ligious ceremonies of the villagers. There the newborn are presented,
and deaths and marriages announced. The sick are treated by being
[755] made to drink the well water and wash in it. From his herd, each
person offers every year an animal which is thrown alive into the pit.
[681] Finally, those condemned to death are executed by drowning in the
same spot.

Faro's Auxiliaries

776 Faro has placed spirits as his representatives in the skies, in space,
773 on earth, in the trees, and in the rocks of the mountains. They see

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7. Only vegetables whose spiritual essence does not have to be preserved are cooked, "for to cook is to shatter the soul."

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In each village are grown one or several small fields of tomatoes, called "Faro's fields," or "fields of twins." The fruits of these fields are reserved for the worship of the spirit (1).

1. On the site of the ancient village of Soroba, at the edge of a pond located near the present-day village, there are two rectangular fields of tomatoes dedicated to male twins and four square fields dedicated to female twins in the village. Each year the villagers gather at the edge of the pond for a ceremony. The symbolic words relating to twins are recited and a prayer is said, to be followed by ablutions.

The fruit that is harvested is offered to the spirit by squashing it on a neighboring tree trunk.

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/49/ All metals belong to Faro. The seven /sic/ principal metals are the following: copper (male), brass (female), gold, silver, tin, and iron. Copper and brass come from the fifth sky (koblenkaba). They descend at each thunderclap and, along with the "thunderstones," penetrated into the soil. They were discovered by a diviner at the bottom of a pond that had dried up because of a broken taboo. Because of their divine origin, copper and brass represent "Faro's sounds." [301] These sounds twist themselves around the spiralled copper or brass earrings that everyone wears and penetrate the eardrum, thus making it possible to hear words. Gold plays a part in the building of certain altars (boli) to which it confers strength and stability.

The sacrifices made with or on copper, brass, or gold have a restraining influence on the spirit for they are of his own essence.

No woman wearing copper, brass, or gold jewelry, may cross the Niger without opening her luggage out of deference to the spirit, for "all ornaments belong to him and often must be returned to him after death.

[784] It is taboo to bring metal into contact with cow's butter, an oily substance that does not allow water to penetrate.

Bozo MS6

2. See p. 33, n. 4.

Bo 776 173 In many cases, this origin enables them to intervene with the spirit, where others are helpless. Born as twins of the master of the waters, the Bozo never suffered the contamination caused by Mousso Koroni which affects all other men. Because of this fact it is possible for them to establish communication with the spirit at the bottom of ponds or in the river and to seek out the bodies of those drowned. The fishing rights conferred on them by Faro were never contested by the conquerors who settled on the shore of the Niger during the historic period.

Numerous articles or essays have already been published on the Bozo. Their language and fishing techniques have been studied. However, inquiries into their religion and the image they have of themselves prove very difficult. This is caused, on the one hand, by their apparent conversion to Islam and, on the other, by their reticence in discussing their traditional system. Such a contribution, however, will be indispensable to scholarship in the study of certain aspects of Sudanese metaphysics, particularly that of the Bambara and the Dogon. The myths of both groups mention the apparition of the Bozo on earth as coinciding with the beginning of /51/ Faro's actions which, in turn, coincides with the development of techniques among the Bambara, and with the "third word" of the Dogon (1).

1. See M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau.

In addition, the "joking relationships" which they maintain with the Dogon and which go back to the origin of a whole system of tribal and intertribal alliances clearly indicate the importance of the symbolic role conferred upon them (2).

2. See p. 119, n. 1.

Ba 776 782 Whenever he feels the need, Faro carries women and young girls off to his watery home. Many disappearances in the course of river crossings by canoe are attributed to him.

In olden times, each year a young virgin, chosen for her beauty by the griot of the village, became the wife and servant of Faro. In most cases she was willing and proud to become his eternal companion. On a designated day, wearing her finest jewelry, she was

776 782 brought to the middle of the river and thrown in while the villagers prayed the spirit to give the village his protection and to bring rain to future harvests.

Faro's Taboos

776 784 All of Faro's subjects, in particular the Bambara of both sexes and of all ages, are requested to respect a certain number of taboos.

The black earth, bogo fi, of the river banks, used ritually in many instances, would be excellent in pottery making. The women potters, however, cannot use it because it blackens in the process of baking. No pottery that has been fired may be washed in those places haunted by the spirit (1).

1. At Ségou, numerous drownings are blamed on the increasing frequency with which this taboo is broken.

[262] Butter in many places is forbidden by Faro and may not be preserved in water. (2)

2. This taboo is linked to the relation between Faro and the Peul, but the nature of their relationship has not been clarified.

No one crosses the river without opening his luggage and presenting Faro with the gold, copper, or food it contains. As a rule, the wearing of metals is forbidden in those places haunted by the spirit.

776 784 841 The principal taboo concerns menstrual blood which was originally caused to flow because of the sins and impurity of Mousso /52/ Koroni. No menstruating woman may visit the places inhabited by Faro; none may draw water, wash clothes or cooking utensils, or cleanse herself in any of these spots. In addition, a man whose wife is in such condition must refrain from appearing at religious ceremonies or, if he is a priest, from performing the ritual.

In this part of Africa, as in many others, menses are conceived of as a necessary flow of empty blood, impure because it has not contributed to the formation of the foetus, the embryo of which each

776 773 At death, he takes back the spiritual principles of the diseased and preserves them in water so as to reintegrate them into another body, thus using forces which are eternally reusable. The product of the "shedding" (mana or folo) of souls which remain on the altars is for him in a way of constantly verifying the account of those living and dead who are entrusted to him.

On earth, men are indebted to him for all they possess. He gave them language, an expression of thought, and taught them its usage, having warned them against the misuse and evil use of words.

The techniques of survival, another expression of "Faro's words," so necessary to their lives since they have to provide the means for their existence, were revealed to them by the spirit. He helped them with his sovereign power, either by directly providing them with new tools, or by inspiring some of them to develop new techniques by putting to use observed facts. In this way, he gave the Bozo fishing nets which enabled them to catch the first recorded animal food, the fish; likewise, he encouraged among the Bambara the discovery of weaving through observing the spider's web.

He also gave men certain seeds which became the origin of farming, such as cotton and fonio, both of them being known before millet and the other cereals.

782 As proprietor of cowrie shells and metals, he is the master of wealth, distributing it as he pleases. Thus, one who owns precious metal is responsible to Faro for it and owes him a part of one's earnings. For this reason many offerings are made by throwing gold or copper into the river.

776 241 Faro's deed is essential where the Bambara's main activity, agricultural work, is concerned. Every man with dignity and nobility must cultivate the earth in order to honor Faro. Each stroke of the hoe is a wound inflicted upon the earth and a punishment for its impurity. Each stroke of the hoe humiliates Mousso Koroni and purifies the earth. Faro watches over the soul and the vital force of the seeds. Only he can provide rain necessary to germination, for rain contains the soul, (ni) of the cereal grains as does the water of ponds and streams which one collects in case of drought.

776 774 241 Millet receives its soul as soon as it gets the humidity of the earth, and from that time on, it accompanies the various stages of germination with utterances which, at the beginning of the world, could be heard. As soon as /54/ it has received the rain, the seed splits and says: "My place is assigned." Then the sprout comes out of the earth

776 with the words: "May I be protected." Finally the growth of the stem
774 is accompanied by a third utterance: "May I be obeyed" (1). It pre-

241 1. These are the three formula:
ndyora, nga kolosi, nga bunye.

serves its soul until full maturity, that is, the moment is is harvested. When the harvester's blade cuts the spike or the cluster, the plant sends its soul into Faro's realm with these words: "Iron is forbidden my grain; soul, go away to the house of water" (2). Thus deprived

2. Neke ye nkise tne ye, ni, ta dyi so la.

of its soul, the millet becomes suitable for eating and it says: "If I were not dead, I could not be eaten; my breed cannot be lost: whether or not I am eaten, nothing can reduce me for my soul is in water" (3).

3. Ni ná sale te nti dũ, n šia tise ka tunu,
ndunaw ma dũn wo, fẽ te bwona, ni be dyi la.

776 Many agrarian rituals are celebrated in order to assure Faro's pro-
241 tection. The high quality of the first fruits of the harvest offered to
him indicates the importance of his role. It is in fact a payment made
to him for the past harvest and in anticipation of the harvest to come.

776 He is also the guardian of the artisan's skill. The first object
forged by the young blacksmith and the first spindle of thread woven
by the young weaver are brought to him. Through this gesture, the
individual entrusts him with both his work and his manual dexterity.
After Faro has seen the work, he does not let the worker forget what
he has learned and will help him perfect his skill.

Faro is a judge. Those who break the rules he has made are the
object of his righteous wrath: those who are drowned or struck by
lightning are always persons who have broken a taboo. Men submit
most difficult cases to him as a last resort. Through the intermediary
of the agents of different rituals such as the intermediary of the
diviners, he answers requests and "settles the words." Most prayers
776 are addressed to him and in many cases the invocations end with his
782 name. He is omnipresent, invoked everywhere, and the seat of his
power, as of all others, is the seventh heaven, to which the Bambara

776 782 address the following: "Seventh heaven, you are large, you are long; your west is red; your east is white; your north is great; your south is black; seventh heaven, you are the king of seats among all seats, you are the great generator of the power of all powers, you are the great discoverer of all secrets, you are the source of all /55/ fortunes, you are the place where the common weal may not be destroyed; source of all things, deliver me from sin" (1).

(1). *Wolo flã kaba, i ka bo, i ka dyã, i kle bi ka ble, i koro ka dye, i baba ka bo, i bani ka fi; wolo flã kaba, siki yoro u la sikiyoro masa, fanga u la fanga ba sindi, gundow be ladyele fara be, nafolo be ladyele boyoro, dyẽ wari dũ bali yoro; ko be boyoro, hake tonye.*

This prayer is recited by the head of the family during childbirth, a grave illness, or a death. It was also used during rituals of the enthronement of kings or chiefs.

776 772 Pemba and Faro, the complementary principles, were both born of the spirit, *miri*, at the beginning of the universe. In considering the psychological aspects of their symbolic roles, one can understand why, despite the antecedence of Pemba's role, from time to time the Bambara say that "Faro is the eldest." For he represents, in the human microcosm, the will and wisdom capable of controlling the propulsion of sexual instinct as symbolized by the prolificness of the *balanza* as well as the violence and disorder of the emotions as expressed in Mousso Koroni's vertiginous chthonian voyage and her madness. The antithesis of the sexes, realized in the myth by the bodily separation of Pemba and Mousso Koroni, and their disagreements and quarrels which are the origin of all cosmic disorders, are compensated for by harmonious agreement and union, as established by Faro in his androgynous state. Faro is the dual vibration which, from then on, orders the universe; he is reason and moderation opposed to the overwhelming force of the *balanza*; he is the light of the spirit which triumphs over darkness and primordial gropings.

831 lines or dots depending upon the sex of those who used them. Thus,
801 women marked their spindles with four lines whereas men twisted three
threads on their shuttles.

826 On the metaphysical level, man's body, "the seed of the world,"
is identified with the cereal grain. The Bambara separate cereal
824 grains into seven parts, corresponding to a division of the human
812 organs into seven groups (1). Man and grain are one and identical in
their substance. On the other hand, the basic foods, that is, the
eight principal cereals, are symbolically present in the collarbones
(kolo kalanjiri, or ka kolo). Man carries within him his subsistance,
[783] and its location reflects the person's general condition (2). As proof
of /72/ man's spiritual integrity, these grains leave him when he is
in a state of impurity. He is then drained of his substance and subsistence. Thepurpose of purification is to reestablish this wholeness.

812 Moreover, the bonds which unite the whole person, body and
561 spiritual principles, to the cosmos, are made clear by the fact that

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1. The divisions of the grain are as follows:
kungu, "little beard of millet," involucre;
fara dye, "white bark," glume and glumales;
fara fi, "black bark," bran and protein aceous
bark; fara mugu, "farinaceous bark" (which
corresponds to a milky diastatic zone); mugu
dunta, "flour for eating," starch; kolo dye, "
white bone," embryo; kise de, "son of grain,"
the micropyle from which the rootlet issues
at the time of germination. The classification
of organs in relation to these divisions is under
study. We thank M. Pitot of the Institut
Français d'Afrique Noire for the identification
of the parts of the grain corresponding to the
native divisions. In certain villages, grains
[782] undergo a process of hulling and the determined
elements only are used in the making up of
the ritually offered millet mash.

2. See p. 53, n. 2.

551 The institution of the device, with all its elaborations, has the
576 effect of confirming people in their bodies, their spiritual principles,
and their social functions. Except for the cases of emigration mentioned
above, the occasions are rare indeed when an individual is
obliged to change his name or device during his life. A woman keeps
her father's *barama* even after marriage.

551 An illegitimate child receives neither the name nor the device of
his family. They may be given him later if the father makes himself
848 known. A Bambara who contracts a misalliance, for example, by
564 marrying the daughter of a blacksmith or a *griot*, will bring into the
783 world impure children who will never have a right to their father's
barama (1).

1. Such a child is said to be a *sofali* (literally, horse donkey), that is, a bastard.

552 We must add that the prerogative of having a device is not limited
782 to humans. All animate beings, many /80/ inanimate ones, the elements
of nature, places, villages, plants, animals, and all the
supernatural powers have theirs which men address during prayers.

The Taboo

784 One or several eating taboos, *tne* or *tana*, are attached to the
[551] family name and are observed by all who bear the name. According
to certain initiates, the taboos were decreed by Faro when he determined
the food proper to each species (2) after having classified the
beings of creation. For the common man, the origin of the taboo is always the subject of a tale or legend and justifies the bonds between an ancestor of the family and the animal or plant designated. Most frequently, the animal has helped the man, has saved his life, or the other way around; or else, following some serious events, the ancestor was transformed into an animal or plant. Numerous versions of the origins of such bonds are given.

2. See p. 52.

826 [833] Faro's wrath—a fact which constitutes a serious breaking of taboo. The consequence of this is to coalesce in the maternal womb the twins originally granted to the woman by Faro and to decolorize the skin of the being thus formed. Because of this fact, the albino, the embodiment of twins, does not inherit the spiritual princples of a deceased person and is also a new being given to men by Faro. But the impurity he has acquired increases tenfold his tere and his wanzo, [304] which are so active that the circumciser must sacrifice on his own personal altars before performing the operation. From the ambivalence of the albino, originally of the same essence as Faro but fallen because of the impurity transmitted by his parents, stem various customs and representations. (1).

1. This ambivalence is also at the root of the belief that the albino is a being formerly provided with wings and able to fly (see p. 68, a quality he lost after his contact with the impure soil.

826 718 His body is believed to be endowed with special powers. The person who owns his skull will have a numerous family and prosperity; his hair brings wealth; the marrow of his bones provides gold and copper. If he is made to sit at a place where bones are buried, whatever one asks for is granted. His excrements, mixed with seed, have the effect of increasing the harvest for the year.

826 782 Because of the value attributed to the albino he is a choice victim for the sacrifices to Faro. His nyama is such that he can be sacrificed without prayer, the act itself constituting an efficacious invocation. Lacking living albinos, men often tried to appropriate the remains of a buried body.

/89/ Chapter 4

SACRIFICE AND THE ALTAR

782 To call upon spiritual forces and to influence them, the Bambara use prayer, offering, and sacrifice. They perform oral and manual

782 rites in all places at all times. They pray to the sky, to the cardinal points, and to the spirits; they sacrifice on rocks, on the earth, on trees, in water holes, as well as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries, or located in private or public places. Every circumcised adult, father of a family, or owner of a house and arable land can be a sacrificer whose qualification is underscored by the red stain which sometimes adorns the walls of the main room of his house (1).

1. See pp. 171ff.

To the uninformed observer these rituals cover a great network of apparently unrelated beliefs. But actually it is otherwise. The rituals stimulate definite movements of forces which are integrated with those of the world.

Without trying to give a general picture of the manners, the times, and the places peculiar to Bambara rites, it is nevertheless important to study apart one of the most important mechanisms, namely the blood sacrifice. It constitutes the framework for the rituals and brings into play the principles and elements composing the living being (see preceding chapter), for it must be noted that the first sacrifices stated in the myth were human sacrifices.

A sacrifice takes place when the blood of the victim runs over a substance or an object containing the force of a supernatural power or of an ancestor. The words of the prayer pronounced during the immolation dedicate the victim to the power that comes to nourish itself on the blood according to popular belief. At the same time, they direct the life forces which escape from the body. The soul, *ni*, is channeled by the altar and will be kept there until resurrection. Its *nyama*, which gains in power as /90/ the agony is prolonged, is also retained by the altar whose strength it increases. The victim is thus completely emptied of its spiritual principles for "all the *nyama* are in the blood" (2) which it abandons.

2. *Nyama* *be* *bi* *dyoli* *la*.

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826 In all cases, the sacrifice represents an exchange: the sacrificer receives in return a part of the strength of the one whom he supplants (3). The blood is the carrier of an active, dangerous element left on

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3. The mechanism of blood sacrifice among the Bambara is comparable to that observed among the Dogon and described by M. Griaule, "Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice dogon (Soudan Français) /Remarks on the Mechanism of Dogon Sacrifice (French Sudan)/, " *Journal de la Société des Africanistes.* Vol. 10, 1940, pp. 127 ff.

the altar. At the time men gave the *balanza* their blood, they would let it dry and then, licking the trunk with their tongue, would reclaim it after it was rid of the element constituting the offering. All their active forces passed into the tree and a substance almost totally lacking in vitality was returned to them.

782 The blood sacrifices which were originally instituted on the trunk of the *balanza* are actually performed in the most varied sites: earth, trees, ponds, wells, etc. Moreover, as the Bambara developed their technology, they would sacrifice on those objects, utensils, or contrivances which they discovered or invented such as the forge and its tools, the loom, and agricultural implements.

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778 The Bambara also have altars which may be classified into three categories:

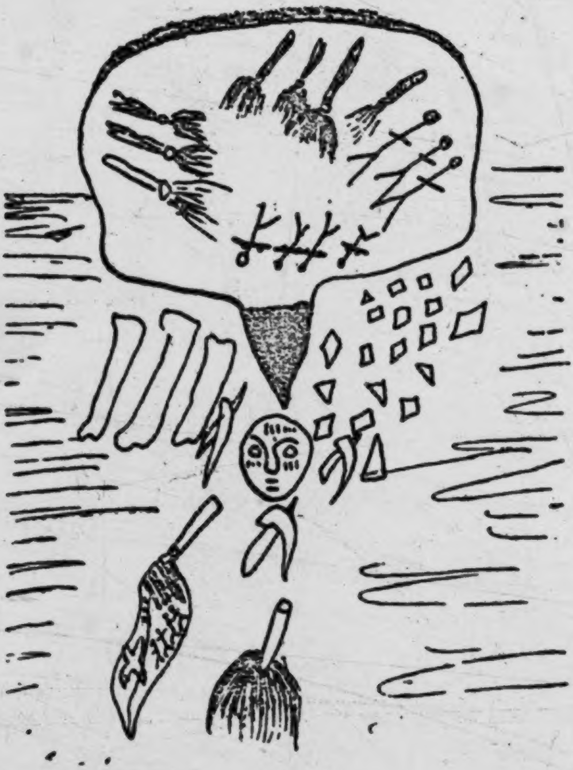
1. The wood stumps called *pembele*, which represent Pemba. Many heads of families or of religious societies keep one of these (1).

1. See p. 77 for a description of the *pembele* altars.

A unique sanctuary at Massala is a pilgrimage center for Bambara from all regions who come in great numbers to take part in the annual sacrifice. Besides *pembele*, it contains two large pots, *da*, covered with sacrificial blood, which give the sanctuary its name. It is in this place that ordeals are executed, judicial questions settled, and serious illnesses treated.

2. The altars, made of stones crudely cut and occasionally engraved, have their origin in a mythical stone, issued out of the seventh part of the earth, and situated under the mound where Faro's female twins were born. Having a red color, it was itself a symbol of sacrifice. It divided itself and gave birth to all other sacrificial stones (Fig. 5 and Pl. V. b).

782 /91/ Actually the altars from the region of Ségou originate mostly
778 in Toko, a settlement situated to the south of the town where the king's
326 blacksmiths lived. The ancestor of these blacksmiths is buried in the
rocks which border Toko and from which the stones used as altar are carved. If a village chief wants to obtain one he sends a delegate to Toko. This emissary receives from the blacksmith the stone appropriate to the function of the altar and the quality of the person



[532 769] Fig. 5. —Stone altar, fara ba, of Banankoroni, consecrated to ancestors. It is stuck into the ground above the skull and bones of an albino, hoes, and a circumcision knife. The ritual drawing traced during the ceremonies of the renewal of the year represents the torches and the whips of the Kwore, 3 men and 4 women, which recall the number 7, image of the creation (Informant's drawing).

782 requesting it. Thus, a black stone is given to those who have broken
778 a /92/ taboo, a stone of two colors to a stranger, and the red stone
[326] "rounded and polished by the ancestors" to those whom one wishes to
honor.

The stone altars which are innumerable (both private and public ones) generally represent the ancestors. When they are placed in the fields they receive the sacrifices offered in their name for helping the crops. At the intersection of narrow roads and on the public square, they assure the stability of ancestral customs.

3. The Bambara also sacrifice on manufactured objects which bear the general name of boli (literally, to run) and which are the equivalent of the altars although they are of an entirely different nature than the preceding ones. Their origin is different. To the initiates they originate in the twelfth bangini which gave birth to the day (see pp. 30-31). In the shape of "globules" they were released in space by Faro as he descended to the earth; they were collected by the spirits of the air and of the ground into which some of them penetrated, and were later given to men (1).

173 1. The popular belief has it that the
782 eight principal boli of the Bambara
778 were brought back from Mecca by the
famous Makanta Djigui, a personage whose name is cited in numerous prayers (particularly in the course of the ceremonies of the Komo).
L. Tauxier attributes this tradition to Islam influence under the reign of Soundiata's successor, Malinké Kankan Moussa, who made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324 (La Religion bambara, p. 287, n. 3).

The name of Makanta Djigui is cited in the device (burudyu) of the Komo: the chiefs of this important society carry their altars each year to the shore of the Niger near the village of Tikko on the spot where the historical canoe which transported him is said to have sunk.

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It is possible that this figure played the role of a religious legislator by codifying certain beliefs and founding associations around the boli which, according to qualified informants, existed before his intervention. On this point see also L. Tauxier, La Religion bambara, p. 287, n. 3.

The versions of the voyage of Makanta Djigui, which the natives readily tell, are innumerable. See the Abbé Henry, L'Âme d'un peuple africain: les Bambara /The Soul of an African People: The Bambara/, pp. 131-133: Ch. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta /The Bambara of Ségou and of Kaarta/, p. 170; D. Traore, Makanta Djigui, fondateur de la magie soudanaise /Makanta Djigui, Founder of Sudanese Magic/, pp. 23-25.

We have collected two versions of this episode, which we do not feel useful for presentation in this study.

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The boli, also called nyana, are made with the most diverse materials: hyena tails, peppers, honey, coal, precious metals, parts of the body. Each element has its value, and its use is determined by its place in the categories: the time of its manufacture is also important. But whatever its composition, each boli, whose name expresses the universal movement of things, is a combination of elements representing the parts of the universe (1). /93/ It is,

1. At the present stage of this investigation the classification by categories of materials or elements composing the Bambara universe has only been outlined. It is only after the completion of this study that the exact role given the elements composing the boli will become clear and that the problem of the origin of these altars can be considered.

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therefore, the symbol of the universe and the receptacle of the forces which animate it. These forces, already very powerful at the time the boli is made, are constantly kept up, increased by the additions received in the course of the blood sacrifices of which the boli is the object. It becomes a concentration of forces, which gives back in proportion to that which it receives and of which the owner is the first beneficiary.

A boli is also an intermediate agent, permitting one to reach a supernatural power—an ancestor or a living being who impregnates it with strength by coming to consume the offering over it. Through the spilled blood, this strength reenters the victim as well as the sacrificer if he partakes of it.

Therefore a boli contains:

A part of the soul (ni) and the force (nyama) of the being to whom it is consecrated.

The ni and the nyama of the victims offered to it.

The nyama of individuals who, having broken the taboos dictated by the divinity, have died as a result.

The Bambara differentiate two kinds of boli: the most numerous, whose power is relatively benign, called soni (literally, to give little); and those which contrariwise are charged with powerful, truly dangerous forces, called saraka (1). The latter, by their power alone, supposedly kill the victims offered them without making it necessary to cut the victim's throat. It suffices to present to them the victims while reciting an appropriate prayer to make the victims die. It is then said that the "boli has made the blood come out" and this death is equivalent to a blood sacrifice (2). These boli also attack those whom a person has vowed to persecute.

It is said that a boli "is hot and has a dry throat" and that is why occasionally the ritual includes collecting the blood in a gourd in which [the boli] is allowed to soak.

1. The čuafebla is a soni; the mbe ndyugu ka is a saraka (see pp. 175 and 176).

2. If the victim does not die fast enough, the person offering sacrifice may "insult" the altar to force it to act.

778 Some boli are individual, sometimes inherited from an ancestor
782 and consecrated to their owner whose strength they maintain. Others
are collective and consecrated to supernatural powers which protect
the life of the community.

The taboos relating to beings whose soul "impregnates" the boli
778 and to the elements which compose them are decreed at the time /94/
782 of their making. They must be scrupulously respected by those re-
784 sponsible and by those officiating. The boli are generally placed in
a sheltered spot either in sanctuaries or in an isolated room of the
house, which no one enters without the permission of those responsible.
This is done in order to avoid the dangers resulting from broken taboos
which would affect the integrity of the boli as well as that of its owners.
The handling of the boli, dangerous as it is, is restricted to priests,
to the head of the family, or to the owner.

782 Victims most commonly offered on all altars are domestic animals
such as fowl, cattle, sheep, and goats. However, on the altars of
hunters and those of the uncircumcised, only wild animals are immolated.

The color of the victim is determined by the quality of the being
to which it is consecrated as well as by the altar itself. Animals of
[822] a red color are generally killed on the boli of religious societies,
thereby increasing the nyama which they contain. White, the symbol
of light and purity, is reserved for Faro.

The death of the victim is used as an occasion for divination.
782 The throat is cut in such a way as to prolong the death struggle so
787 that the officiating person may interpret the position of the body.
The cutting process is followed by eating which has the function of
communion. Furthermore, certain parts of the body (the liver) are
left on the altar; others such as the jawbone, feathers, and hair are
kept as tokens by the person offering the sacrifice.

The ritual is usually accompanied by offerings of boiled millet as
782 "refreshment, " since the blood is given to the altar as a nourishment.
Kola nuts, chosen for their shape and color, are divided into two
portions: the officiating person chews one half and spits it out onto
the altar before eating the other half.

In former times, human sacrifice was also practiced. These took place in serious cases involving the kingdom, the king, or the chiefs. The usual victim was the albino.

782 As an example we will summarize below the ritual killing of albinos as it was practiced under the royalty. This underlines the mystical value of the victim and is an excellent example of the mechanism inherent in sacrifice; it brings out the ritual value of the details on each of which the Bambara place particular emphasis. Finally, it confirms the value and symbolism of different parts of the body as described in the preceding chapter.

/95/ The kings of Ségou were formerly provided with albinos by a 782 man from the village of Pelengena who kept them prisoners and set 826 them aside for this purpose. But this man exploited them by shaving their hair and selling it to the chiefs of neighboring villages as symbols of the men whom, sooner or later, they could reckon to have under their domination. The chief, having counted his subjects, war prisoners held as slaves as well as captives received as tribute, would prepare as many small sticks as there were men; then he would mix up these sticks with the hair and bury them all in the wall over the sill of the entrance to his home. The hair is supposed to represent beforehand an increase in the subjects of his domain and to help bring in the taxes.

But the albinos themselves were kept for the king who sacrificed them to Faro in cases involving the affairs of the kingdom.

1. When the king found himself in difficulties of an administrative nature, the victim was cut in half through the middle of the body at [283 824] the level of the abdomen by means of a rope of the da fiber (1): his cries, gestures, and excrement were considered the vehicles of a nyama which "would eliminate the difficulty encountered by the king." No one was supposed to hear his cries which were not intended for human ears but for Faro, to whom suffering was also due. The king, above all, should not hear the screams under penalty of failing in his enterprise, and yet he had to be present at the torture and watch it with complete detachment.

The lower half of the victim's body was Faro's due. It was carried to the Niger by three men if the victim was a male, or by four if it was a female. One of them carried the body on his head.

1. Hibiscus. The nyama fiber was considered impure and could not be used for the albino.

● 782 826 While keeping his eyes and his left hand closed, he walked without touching the ground with his toes in order to respect "the soul of that which he carried (1). At the edge of the river, the joints were broken, the marrow extracted and poured into the water. After placing their toes on the body, to "give a part of their soul to Faro," the men deposited it gently in the river, into which it sank while they loudly proclaimed the reason for their action. When they returned to their master, they brought him the spirit's gratitude and a little water from the river, which was poured over the royal seat (2).

1. To touch the ground with one's toes amounted to putting the soul of the victim's body in contact with the earth's impurity (see p. 102).

2. This offering was called nasi, "well-being."

/96/ The upper part of the victim's body was the king's and used for the needs of the state. The tõdyõ first blew into the mouth of the tortured victim so that the "air, in coming out, would take all his words to Faro." Then they buried his head under the king's throne and danced to the rhythm of drums.

[726 789] In case of war, the blood which had spilled during the sacrifice was collected by the tõdyõ and dried in the sun; then the residue was carried away and before the assault was thrown in the direction of the town to be attacked. The king who advanced with his army found, according to the formula, "his sacrifice before him" (saraka bla ñe).

782 826 789 2. In case the king was short of funds, the killing took place towards the west and was performed by sticking a bamboo stick into the throat of the victim so that blood would run over the cowrie shells which the king had earned himself "with his own sweat." Thus consecrated, the cowries "attracted gold, silver, and copper to the royal treasury."

The head was placed under the throne. The chest and lungs were dried, reduced to powder, and preserved in a bag which the king kept. When he received his tax-payers, he smeared his face and mouth with this powder, thus forcing the visitor to give. He rubbed his body with it before going to war, causing the warriors to say:

782 826 789 "To see the king is to see gold" (1).

1. Fama yele ye sanu yele ye.

He gave some of it to his wives and children who put it in their drinks in order "to inherit his place and his goods." This powder was offered at each sacrifice to Faro in order to fertilize the kingdom.

782 826 266 3. When a family was plagued by numerous deaths, they asked the king to authorize the sacrifice of an albino whom he furnished himself. The victim's tongue was dried, pounded to powder, seasoned with pepper, and eaten by the father of the family to permit him to "reclaim the words and the nyama of the deceased." The nose was swallowed by the mother so that she might "reclaim the breath of the dead children." The father then ate the broiled eyes to "preserve lost sights." The dried ears were hung above the sill of the entrance "so that death, upon hearing the funeral wails, might not return." The skull was retained as a token and buried in the courtyard; a wooden stick marked the burial place. The rest of the body was thrown into the Niger, "for an ordinary man does not have the right to keep that which is reserved for the king."

782 826 622 If the king permitted it, chiefs of the important villages /97/ also placed the body of an albino under their seats "in order that their authority be solid and enduring" (2).

2. Sometimes the sum total of the taxes raised in a village were given the parents of an albino in exchange for the child. Those who could not obtain a victim used an animal bone as a substitute and performed the ritual as though it were an albino. Regarding the chief's seat, see p. 178.

782 826 In certain serious cases, the albino was sacrificed on the altar of Komo. This sacrifice was accomplished in silence for "a prayer unknown to the person sacrificing is in the blood of the albino" who is powerful enough to act without words.

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"This," he said, "will be useful to you later as clothing." Men first made skirts of leaves and fibers which they used as loincloth. Then they sent their women to sing and give thanks to the spirit. When they had sown and harvested, they placed the cotton on the crossroads as a gesture of homage (1). The spirit then taught the wife of a farmer, who used to come and greet him everyday at noon. One day she saw at the crossroads a bird whose name means "little bird who spins the cotton of God" (ala ka kwori parata kono ni). It held white fibers in its beak, pulled them out with its feet, and rolled the thread thus obtained around the body with its wings. "Watch the bird," said the spirit. "In this way he spins and weaves in the sky in order to protect his eggs. Cotton should be used in this way. Your death is near. Begin work from tomorrow on this little stick," he added, pointing to a spindle, "and teach the women of your family and the children."

The woman first spun awkwardly and went down to the river to show Faro her work and to ask for help. A fish came out of the water and gave her a spindle whorl in the shape of a ball, showed her how to adapt it to the spindle, and explained to her its use and divine origin. It announced to her that hereafter similar spindle whorl would fall from the sky with the rain for the women who spun cotton.

/104/ Having resumed her work with this new tool the woman was successful in it and taught her companions. They then threw their first threads into the Niger as an offering to the spirit so that the secret might not be lost. All artisans did the same with their first piece of work (2).

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1. This custom is still observed today.

[782] 2. Every first piece of work is thrown into the river as an offering to Faro. It is a guarantee for the artisan that his skill will be retained and that his technique will improve. Actually the young spinners of Ségou throw their first spindle into the river. In addition, the parata bird which taught weaving is captured, its wings and feet are roasted, and the powder is given to whoever begins the appreticeship so that it may be over rapidly.

173 286 [782] The loom was invented later. The positions of the warp and woof and the practice of breaks and knots were modified. The loom was formerly the object of nocturnal human sacrifices whereas the shuttle received lesser sacrifices in the day time (1).

> 1. At present, looms are set in the ground above a piece of pottery, the bottom of which is pierced before the pot is buried.

The stone on which women clean the cotton, kaba, represents the sky and recalls the divine origin of cotton and of the technology relating to it.

Clothing

291 Clothing which has intimate contact with the human body is a part of the person wearing it. On the other hand, the material of which it is made, and the various elements which compose it and which are associated with one or another aspect of Bambara metaphysics, exercise an influence on the wearer. The choice of clothing is rarely a matter of chance or individual taste and the various manifestations of social or religious life usually obligate people to wear appropriate clothing, the symbolism of which is linked to the action or circumstance under consideration. The role of the garment appears as early as infancy: a newborn wears around his loins a cotton thread, dyura dyuru, which is both a protection (for it "solidifies his spinal column") and a foreshadowing of what he will wear later. When he reaches the required age, a family reunion takes place on the day he is dressed for the first time. Before this, it is necessary for him to have dreamed of his first garment and to have talked to his mother of this dream; she then begins to spin the necessary cotton. Before dressing, the initiate proceeds with an ablution called mayadyi (literally, water of the person's action) in water taken from the Niger or from a pond of Faro's. The dressed child is told "that he is now a man and may become a member of the ndomo (2)"; then his kinsfolk tease

> 2. Society of the uncircumcised (see p. 222).

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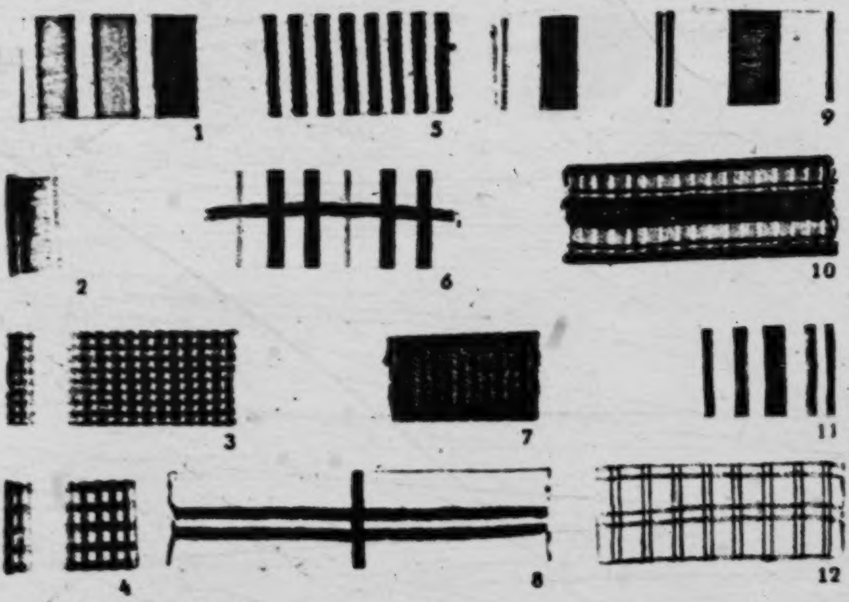

(a) Bands of cotton (the warp is presented vertically).

Plate III

(b) Offering of a band of cotton to the dasiri tree (Soroba).

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773 The first forged tool, the kongobwona (literally, to abandon hunger),
564 is still used by blacksmiths today as a ritual axe (Fig. 9, E).

326 It is made up of a wooden handle terminating in an enlargement
412 which forms its bulk, and pierced by a bent iron rod which in turn holds the cutting edge (farabye) of the axe proper. The handle is very long, allowing the man to work without bending over.

The tool justifies its name for it brought prosperity to the craftsmen. The symbolism of the different sections shows this: the enlarged part of the consecrated model, which each blacksmith keeps on his altar and which is the object of regular rituals, is hollowed out and holds money, millet, and copper. The iron rod which pierces it represents at its lower extremity the tongue of the oldest of the Gwonna, and at its upper extremity that of the youngest, thus recalling the actions and the words of those who discovered the metal for the benefit of all.

Later, blacksmiths manufactured other models of iron axes and hoes, copying those previously used, but reducing their size.

Each day the end piece of the wooden hoes was abandoned at the crossroads after they had been used in honor of the local spirit. The worker kept only the handle and carved a new tool for the following day. The handles of hoes and axes were considered to be people because they were impregnated with the vital force of those who held them. The farmer left the cutting edge (of stone or iron) in his field and brought home the handle which he placed on his mat at night.

Weapons and tools were the objects of regular sacrifices. The
[782] handle was removed and the blood of victims would flow first into the hole used to secure it, then on the cutting edge, while the officiating person recited a prayer.

773 Today, the assemblages of ancient tools are called makorobaw ka
564 minew (literally, tools of the great ancestor). Considered as the
326 most respectable and precious /119/ testimony of their civilization,
412 models of each object are kept in sanctuaries called makoroba so
778 (literally, house of the ancestors) which are generally natural caves or holes dug in the ground, reminiscent of primitive habitations. These tools are identified with the ancestors who used them and who were, long before the organization of religious societies, the object of a regular cult. That is why, in deference to this fundamental hierarchy, they are presented to the circumcised in front of the family altars (1) at the time of the initiation of the Komo. Similarly, they

1. Particularly in the village of Konodimini in the Ségou region.

575 323 [561] the society during a public consecration which she receives with several others, the group forming an age grade.

After an apprenticeship of seven days, the potters decide upon the date of the ceremony which is celebrated at the firing spot near the altars. Each member provides a hairpin (bandigi), which represents her on this occasion, and the skin of a hedgehog. Disrobed in front of the assembled villages, each girl is seated in turn on the altar as an aged woman examines her genitals to verify her virginity and the proper execution of the excision.

/126/ If the young girl is no longer a virgin, she is publicly de-
[831] clared dangadè (literally, bastard) and finds herself automatically excluded from the society; she will never be able to receive the potter's title. Otherwise, a proclamation is made immediately to the great joy of the public. If the excision has not been judged
[304] sufficient, the patient is given the title of potter after having submitted to a new operation performed in such a way that the blood runs over the pottery (1).

1. If excision is not possible, the operation takes the form of a wound inflicted with the hedgehog's skin (see p. 243).

575 323 867 An old woman then appears seated before members of the age grade and instructs them. She tells of the origin and history of pottery, apprising them of the difficulties of the craft such as fatigue, burns, etc. She teaches them patience towards the client and enumerates the rules which will have to be observed during their lifetime: to be pure in heart and to hate no one; not to undertake work shortly after having had sexual relations; to work in silence; to respect all taboos in general.

575 323 782 431 She then makes a libation of karite oil on the altar and rubs it on the bodies of the initiates who must run their tongues over the pottery, thus making an oath. Sheep, brought by the initiates' parents, are then killed by having their throat cut over the hearth in the name of the potters while the elders of the society present to the initiates gifts consisting of several pots which they will sell for profit while waiting for their first work. This gift is moreover a sign of adoption.

323 317 184 The utensils are made with clay, mbogo pasa, taken from the bottom of the watercourse or along the river's edge; they belong to

> 778 194 173 241 the latter abandoned their hoes in order to watch them. The birds fetched water with their beaks on the shore of a neighboring pond and returned to pour it at the foot of a millet stalk, the ear of which was not yet formed. The men put a mark on this stalk in order to recognize it and later observed that it produced a finer ear than the others. Imitating the bird, they dampened their plantings and watered their fields; their harvest was considerably improved by it. They kept up this habit and, in acknowledgment, produced a cult to the Sago spirit whose emissaries the birds were and who comes to slake his thirst at the čuafebla."

778 194 it is the object of sacrifices when important business is being handled: marriage, private or administrative action, fight against an epidemic.

[428] A son may inherit his father's altar and keep it with his own which he wears tied to his hip.

The čuafebyẽni (literally, little horn at the hip) is composed of a cowrie, taken from Faro's granary, copper which is the altar's soul /133/ (ni), pepper, charcoal, and honey. This mixture is introduced into a ram's horn decorated with cowries at its opening and often wrapped in a red cloth bearing the same ornamentation.

[782] The altar is consecrated on those of the Komo, over which it is passed seven times. The throats of victims are cut, their blood is collected in a gourd, and the boli dipped into it three times before being taken out in the sun to dry.

Its role is one of protection. Its owner carries it during the Komo ceremonies to defend himself against spells, korti, which may be cast by someone in the audience.

It also maintains the integrity of its owner's forces. If the latter faints or goes into a trance, he is returned to his normal state by completely renewing the ingredients which constitute it. When the horn is emptied of its contents, "both the soul of the altar and that of the man" are removed. The container is rinsed out with water from the

778 Niger after which the reconstitution of the altar is carried on and is
794 equivalent to "the taking on a new soul." Each family member comes to the aid of the party concerned: the father gives copper, the women, peppers, the children, charcoal; a new cowrie is removed from Faro's granary.

778 The mbendyugukã (literally, I am on the enemy) is an individual
794 altar which permits its owner to overcome his adversaries and even to
754 attack their life.

The person who wishes to own one makes it after the death of an enemy. He goes secretly to unearth the corpse, shaves off its hair, cuts off its tongue and nails, and removes the eyes.

An elderly owner of such an altar takes it with him to the person who wishes to make one. The latter prepares and mixes the ingredients according to a special ritual and ties them to a hyena's tail. Before a witness who belongs to his age grade, the elder rubs the new altar on the old one seven times while reciting a prayer to consecrate it; he then returns it to its owner (1).

1. Because of its evil powers, the altar may not be made and entrusted to its owner except in the presence of a known witness.

The symbolism of the various parts composing it explain the use to which this altar will later be put. The tongue of the dead man contains his voice and gives to that of the owner the strength to convince *those who contradict him in arguments as well as in council meetings.* The eyes of the dead man permit him to see what others may not see, or even to blind his enemies by poisoning them with his nails. The hair, evidence of the other parts /134/ of the corpse, contains the nyama of the deceased and is an essential part of the mbendyugukã.

[595] The owner of this altar, which excludes the number four, marries only three wives. Moreover, he cannot mix his own hair with that of another without risking death.

Because of its aggressive character, the mbendyugukã demands
● [782] victims, dogs or roosters, of red coloring. It gives to whomever owns it a strength which will always be greater than that of his competitors in whatever he may undertake.

778 784 754 For this reason it receives sacrifices at the time when the fields are being worked, for trade, marriage, war, and hunting where the person risks his life; it helps to fight illness and death. Immediately after the first sacrifice, it captures the personality and aggressiveness of the dead man and puts them on its owner, making him doubly dangerous to those with whom he is in conflict. But on the other hand, the danger may turn against him and, to a greater extent than anyone else, he risks his life at the slightest broken taboo.

Furthermore, the Komo who disapproves of such operations may, if he considers it useful, loosen the dead man's nyama on the person who is using his spiritual forces and put him in danger of death. Thus a Bambara will hesitate a long time before owning such an altar; in fact very few individuals assume this heavy responsibility.

C. The Chief's Seat

778 622 In the courtyard of the home of a family head or village chief can be found a pile of wood stuck on the ground and called dyamaña tigi ǰigi (literally, support of the owner of the world) (Fig. 11). This seat symbolizes at once the chief, his power, his social and religious role of supporting the group (1).

> 1. The seat described below was observed at Banankoroni in the courtyard of the village chief. A similar one is found at Soroba.

The pieces of bent wood which compose it are planted rather deep into the earth above a series of objects. One of these pieces, with a simple bend (in a) is called sinzin, support; the two others, shaped like a T, are called ǰigi ba ǰigi (in b) (literally, support of the big support).

● 782 766 The whole lies over the body of an albino (c) buried in a tomb having a ritual form, covered with ancient clothing dyed in wolo and speckled with small black spots made of /135/ bone ash (kolofin), which represent at the same time the embryo in the womb of women and Faro. The head is covered with the cap of primitive men (e).

In (d), three pickets, symbols of man, are stuck through the skin of the albino's forehead; this skin had been removed and seven ritual

622 778 of polished stone called fara yele, "stone that rejoices," expresses the wish that the chief's rule prosper.

The seat, taken as a whole, represents the chief's skeleton and his joints. It is erected upon various elements which sum up his ties to the ancestors and the supernatural powers, indicating his responsibility and contributing to the maintenance of his strength. It is situated in such a way that all the events in the courtyard take place around it and that nothing which is said is out of earshot. As a center of the family household, as the symbol of the industrious and responsible man, it is the framework of the community which it upholds, just as the chief does through his physical endurance and moral firmness. The whole village "leans upon the chief's joint."

Each morning and evening, the ǰigi ba ǰigi and the ba ǰigi /137/ are greeted so that the chief may be strong, that his family may increase, that he may foster the ancestral beliefs. Offerings and [782] libations are made upon the seat and upon the body of the chief when his authority is questioned. In (b) tomato juice is being poured; in (a), representing the elbow or the knee, the water which has been used for ritual bathing of these same joints; at the foot, in (n), the fowls' throats are cut while the officiator, before pouring down the blood of the sacrifice, blows into a small hole dug in the ground; finally, in (l) the water which was used to wash the chief's whole body is poured in.

[826] In this way the chief's joints, which are the seat of his strength and his procreative seed, are purified and fortified.

II. Village Cults

794 The village, as a physical entity, and its inhabitants are placed under the protection of the supernatural powers and of the ancestors. Faro is directly invoked at all water spots.

If the village is situated at the river's edge, the rituals are addressed to the Faro tyin. If it is not too far from the bank, the inhabitants go out to make their offerings to the spirit. Frequently, the stream, pond, or natural well, which often determined the site chosen by the founders, is though to be inhabited by an incarnation of Faro whose name is revered and to whom all offer a cult.

On the other hand, each village is placed under the protection of the dasiri, a special spirit delegated by Faro.

794 In some villages, the sacrificer never
776 consumes butter or milk, foods which
778 the Peul furnish the Bambara.
[563]

the culprit and deprives the villagers of their protector.

The spirit of the dasiri sometimes has as its compansion an animal
794 which seems to represent the group's ancestor.* At Ségou, it is a
776 crocodile; at Ouélenguena, a she-ass; at Koulikoro, a monkey; in
825 other places it is a male goat which is replaced when it dies. At
Konodimini there are a series of deep intercommunicating wells
which would have served as homes for the ancestors. These holes are
at present occupied by hyenas which are considered to be incarnations
of the blacksmiths of former times and which are the dasiri of the
place.

The dasiri's animal is free to enter homes and to eat what it finds.
It is often fed by the inhabitants. No one may attack it and whoever
breaks this taboo, set on by a vengeful nyama of which he cannot
[582 rid himself, risks being forbidden to marry, even being no longer
626] tolerated in his native village (1).

1. This was, at Soroba, the case of Dji Diara, who, after killing a hyena, could not marry as no woman was willing to link her destiny to his.

As its name indicates, the function of the dasiri is to maintain
794 the stability and integrity of the village. It is the "support of the
776 inhabitants' lives"; the numerous rituals (individual or collective),
782 of which it is the object, reveal the importance of its role as well
as the diversity of the beings invoked. To Faro are addressed prayers
for rain; to the ancestors prayers for questions /139/ concerning the
family; and to the spirit of the tree when it is a matter of stopping an
epidemic. But directly or indirectly, any sacrifice offered to the
dasiri is offered to Faro. The victims (sheep or fowl) and the offerings
(cotton bands, kola nuts) are always white (see Pl. 3, b).

When children reach the age of six or seven, they are led to the
794 tree; they sit on its roots upon which kola nut juice is spat, and are,
778 by this fact, introduced into the village cult. They are then presented
852 to all the allies senãnku and especially to the blacksmiths with whom
they proceed to joke.

794 776 182 Each year a sacrifice bringing together all the inhabitants is offered to the *dasiri* and is terminated by communal eating of the sacrificial victim. The first fruits of the harvest are also brought to it by the sacrificer.

B. The *dangu*

776 778 823 783 The crossroads *dangu* or *danku* (literally, boundary of the head) are inhabited by the Soba spirits who, under Faro, constantly intervene in human affairs. Everything placed at this spot belongs to them, and no one passes by without leaving an offering or a token of his presence: a tool, raw cotton, seeds, cloth. A travelling stranger kneels and deposits a little ash or some cotton; if not, he cleans off a little space on which he spits before leaving. A child passing by will greet it with these words: "Crossroads, my soul is in your hands." On the occasion of any event concerning the individual; the family, or the community, red kola nuts are placed at the crossroads and the following words uttered: "You, crossroads, I entrust my head to you; you are my support; I say, you, crossroads" (1).

1. *E dangu m be ni ku kalifa, do i la ni ǰigi be fę, ngo e dangu.*

The corssroad, as an ideal public thoroughfare, is the chosen spot where one easily rids oneself of the *nyama* which any individual keeps and carries about with him. All that is impure, unlucky, and undesirable for the individual or the community is left at the crossroads. Objects which have belonged to dead people are also left there. The forces which are thus gotten rid of are supposedly absorbed by the spirits for whom they constitute a kind of nourishment which will then be returned to men in the form of gifts free of any taint. (2)

2. See p. 258.

/140/ Several examples will illustrate the role played by the crossroads in the community:

Any man who has wounded an animal or squashed an insect is affected in his own *tere* by that of the victim. He goes to the crossroads, kneels, and prays, depositing at the same time a band of cotton, an egg, and ashes. The band of woven cotton, symbol of

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B. Altars of the Komo

118 The boli altars occupy a distinguished place in the religious and mythological representations of the society organized around them. On the one hand they are a capsule of the universe because of their composition; on the other they are a capsule of the society as all its members are present in them. In fact, each member has provided a part of the composing elements after having impregnated them with his person by salivating over them while pronouncing his name.

794 118 346 The altars of the Komo are kept in a sanctuary, the komo so (literally, house of the Komo), a medium sized hut built either in the chief's dwelling place, or in the bush at some distance from the village. The approach to this structure which is under Faro's protection is forbidden to the ordinary person. The chief himself never enters alone. It is said that a snake, the soul and guardian of the sanctuary, is born and lives at the top of the hut in the branches which form the roof (Pl. VI, a).

The hut is divided into a number of floors on each of which is placed /146/ an altar. The highest one contains at its center the nimara boli (literally, altar of the souls) which, as its name indicates, is the container of the souls belonging to deceased members of the society and to sacrificed animals (1). It contains, from top to bottom, hair of the dead, copper for the souls of animals, gold for those of men. These various ingredients, placed in a double sac, receive the sacrificial blood which runs between the two layers and soaks them.

794 118 The nimara boli is surrounded by small individual altars which have served to channel the souls of the dying and lead them to the common receptacle (2). These small boli remain in the hut only

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[774 782] 1. There is constant preoccupation with preserving all vital elements. The souls of sacrificed animals are the object of the same care as those of humans. Like them, they participate in the resurrection promised to everything which has lived.

2. See p. 175.

194 the rain necessary for cultivation (see p. 217).
118 The agricultural role of the Komo will be
described by S. de Ganay in *Techniques et
rites de l'agriculture*.

194 The main taboo of the ñõ boli is the loss or waste of food. If even
118 a grain of cereal drops to the ground, or into the fire, the members of
784 the millet society are responsible for picking it up and eating it; otherwise the Komo will punish for the failure to do so and the harvest suffers.

The third floor contains the nyama boli, a repository of the forces
194 (nyama) of individuals who have died a violent death (murder, war,
118 execution). The nyama boli used to contain in former times a stone
726 called gõgoro kurube, considered to be the "mother" of the stones thrown by the warriors' sling. It was removed from the sac in case of war and carried to the battlefield by a twin walking at the head of the troops. On its surface were engraved a series of lines representing the king, the warriors, and their wives. It gathered all the souls of those dead in combat and received their blood as an offering.

194 The nyama boli is, moreover, responsible for the soul of the crops
118 and a repository for the souls of sacrificed animals; it also receives the "nyama of the words" of the members. It shares with the ñõ boli the responsibility for the cultivations and confers in this way great power to the society.

The sac contains in its lower part a mixture of coagulated blood and gold, and in its upper part a mixture of charcoal powder, pepper, and honey, which gives power to the nyama with which the sac is loaded. The taboo of the nyama boli is the rapid death of victims
[782] which are sacrificed to it; only slow death confers effective nyama.

Upon the ground of the sanctuary, along with the dance costume of the mask, nya, are placed small altars intended either for sale, or for the creation of the new Komo, or for individual purposes. Animal horns, both byẽ ba (literally, big horn) and byẽ ni (literally, little horn), are also placed there; they contain powder for ritual usage, korti, whose dangerous action takes place during the times the mask is taken out (1).

1. The various mixtures used for the religious practices of the Bambara

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often contain ingredients which have been pulverized: wood dust, charcoal powder, even powder of precious metals. Our investigation has not yet allowed us to clarify the role of this pulverization process. However, its mention by the Bambara and the frequent use of korti indicate the importance attached to this type of preparation.

/148/ Outside the hut, at the height of the nyama boli, a hook holds up the clothes of those who are killed by the Komo. The sanctuary, as well as the clothing of the mask, is daubed with black earth taken on the shore of the river representing Faro, and covered with feathers of the same color. Generally speaking, the metal
[823] contained in the Komo altars gives it its strength and life. The most powerful of these is gold, silver comes next, then copper. Since each person gives an offering according to his means, the power of the altar thus depends in a certain measure on the wealth of the members of the society.

[782] Regular sacrifices upon the stakes, the bases of which sometimes contain a little wood from the historic canoe of Makanta Djigui, permit them to "maintain the pressure, the life" in the various altars.

These altars are removed from the sanctuary only upon the occasion of funerals or agricultural rites. When the mask is removed and when there are dances, replicas commonly found in the home of the chief are sometimes used instead.

The pembele is the protector of the society, the container of the forces (nyama) of the group. It is rarely placed in the sanctuary and usually kept by the chief who never exhibits it; occasionally it is watered with rain water symbolizing the work of creation.

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Before the annual ceremony called "anniversary of the Komo," drawings are made on the sanctuary by the chief or an elder; they are a reminder that the sanctuary is the link between the invisible powers and the members of the society. Besides the image of creation as an issue of the initial vibration (see Fig. 2), the head of the ancestor Koumabana, figurations of the twins, and the twenty-two fundamental signs are sometimes drawn. Finally hoes emphasize the agricultural function of the Komo (1). Granaries intended for conserving grains

1. At the time when the attention of specialists is attracted by the division of

794 The candidates next swear an oath the text of which is recited by the chief:

"If I reveal (the secrets of) the boli, may it kill me; if I disclose the institutions, may they kill me; until my death, if I speak, may my father die, may my mother die, may the boli break my heart" (1).

> 1. Ni nye korobo, boli ka fa, ni nye korobo, dyow ka fa, fo kata n sa ni nya fo n fa ka sa m ba ka sa, boli dyugu ka sõ ta.

Each in his turn, the children next lick the head and the hooks of the mask three times, thus assuring it their allegiance: "Until my death, I shall not reveal the koli. Faro has not been revealed! Let the koli not be revealed!" (1)

> 1. Fo ka ta n sa nte korobo koli, faro ma korobo, koli kana korobo.

After the altars, including the pembele, have been presented to
[782] them, the postulants drink the blood of a goat offered in sacrifice; thus they assimilate the forces of the Komo and by this communion consecrate their oath.

Finally, the mechanism of the society in all its details is explained to them: the necessity of hierarchy in age grades, of respect for taboos, and of the secrecy in which all that concerns the organization must be held. A moral lesson is also taught them; in particular they
[867] are advised to set themselves a line of conduct in private life as well as in public life, to be righteous, to avoid duplicity and bad faith, flãvlãña (literally, double action), never to serve two masters, and not to entertain conflicting desires among themselves.

794 As an illustration, the adventures of the first members who broke these laws are told.
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539 One of Makanta Djigui's companions, Garou Keita, was afflicted with this serious fault. He had become friendly with Moridje Sidibé, son of the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé, who had the same character. At this period three great Komo were already functioning in the region: that of Koulikouro called selo (literally, grave); that of Nyamina called dyibi (literally, dark); and that of Kankan.

Garou went to one of the ceremonies of the Komo of Kankan /156/ and by telling lies, incited the members to revolt against the local

794 3. Šu kasa be.

796 The man lowers his head and all move away from him. The masker
688 wounds him with the right hook. He is banished from the circle of
766 dancers and probably will die several days later. His funeral rites are not solemnized. The corpse is tied by the feet and removed from his home through a hole made in the wall to prevent his evil nyama from returning to the family. The body is beaten with switches so that the soul may leave the village forever, and is thrown into the common grave or placed in the cleft of a tree, which is then closed up with thorny bushes. In this case it is often devoured by the hyenas. The clothing which belonged to him is hung on the hook placed on the outside wall of the sanctuary. No one has the right to weep for his death and no one ever mentions him again. To do so would be an offense to the Komo.

794 It may also happen that the emergence of the Komo occurs without
796 the village being warned. In this case, if a young girl imprudently
796 approaches the place where the dance is being held, the masker may
688 kill her with one blow of its hook directly upon her head. A little
782 of her blood is then placed as an offering on the nya and her jewelry
● thrown into the river where her soul goes to replace the virgin who, in former times, was annually offered to Faro.

G. Effects of Broken Taboos

794 The breaking of the taboos attached to the altars or to the mask
783 reacts upon each of the parts affected as it does upon the whole and brings about a diminishing of the Komo's power, which is abandoned by Faro and the ancestors. A purification may be performed /164/ in certain cases. The error is then corrected and the spiritual forces reenter the altars.

If a woman or a noninitiate catches a glimpse of the nya, the komo tigi and his age grade go down to the river bank and, to the sound of drums, present the culprit's apologies to the spirit:

"I have not come for someone else, I have come for myself, I have come to reestablish the race of our fathers" (1).

1. Ne mana ma nyini; ne mana nyere nyini,
ne ma na m fa Šia tuku ko la.

794 instruction and initiation. Five years are thus necessary to reach the highest rank. Each promotion is paid for by the individual providing [782] two roosters whose throats are cut upon the altars at the end of the annual ceremony which takes place in the bush under a tree called the kalabana, following communally performed labor. After meal, a [526] fight called bari, organized under the direction of the chiefs, puts the young boys in opposite groups and gives them the opportunity to show their courage and their initiative.

794 476 The members' activity consists of collective work at the time of the cultivation. The millet and the gifts in kind received in payment for the work are owned communally.

A. Material Objects of the Cult.

794 778 534 The society is the owner of ritual objects such as a mask and whips which are usually placed in a hut, ndomo buku, at some distance from the village.

The objects, numbering five, are rudimentary musical instruments. The wara, the clawed one, or diara, the lion, is a wooden bull-roarer approximately 35 centimeters in length, which is manipulated by means of a string a meter long. Sometimes the object is of iron and of smaller dimensions. The tori, toad, is a small box which gives off a nasal sound when it is scratched. The kono, bird, is made of two pieces of gourd bound together by spider webs. The wulu, dog, is a small calabash of about 10 centimeters in diameter, punctured by four holes. A string, threaded through its neck, allows it to be rotated like a rhombos. The ǰineble (literally, red spirit) is a buffalo horn pierced by three holes, /172/ obstructed by spider webs, into which one blows and which produce a loud, flute-like sound. One society usually owns several specimens of each of these instruments.

794 778 532 The mask, said to be the most ancient object, is of sculptured wood representing a human face crowned by several vertical, rather long horns (1). The whole is completely decorated with cowrie shells and red kise (2), grains which represent the blood from the offerings. The

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1. The masks most often carry eight horns, but this rule is not always respected.

2. Linociera sudarica.

794 On the following night, the future initiates are led into the bush to a place called biri yoro (literally, place of initiation), where they sit down upon the ground, their heads covered with a piece of cloth.

At a sign from the dyolokotigi, a member causes the ritual instruments to roar or sing in succession; then he hides them and the postulants must find them. As they are not able to do so, a series of hazings are inflicted upon them (1) after which they are shown the instruments and each in turn made to repeat the solemn oath:

"If you have heard the dyara of the uncircumcised, that is it. Chisel a piece of wood, make a hole, put a string through, turn it, it is that which is the word of the ndomo dyara. If you reveal it, may it take your heart, may it take your liver, may it kill you" (2).

Next, they are made to lick three times the object which is then entrusted to them so that they may learn to use it. The same ritual is performed for each instrument, and the prayer is repeated with only a change in the name.

The young men frequently sacrifice upon the altars of the ndomo.
794 The usual content of the sacrifice is the gray lizard /margouillat/,
182 busa, likened to an uncircumcised boy (its tail representing the
825 foreskin). The victim's wanzo, liberated by death, joins the wanzo contained in the altars and, consequently, that of the members.
[262] The animal is then cooked and eaten.

C. Activity of the Society

794 At the time the fields are being cultivated, the members who are called upon to do work take their ritual objects along. The young

1. These hazings are often severe; fun is made of the ignorance and fears of the postulant.

2. Ni ye me bilakorow ka ndomo dyara, nin do ka djiri dese, ka wo bo o la, ka dyuru ndo o la, o bi fyeku, o de bi ndomo dyara ka fo, ñi ya korobo, a ki sõ ta, a ki biñe ta, a ki fa.

D. Role of the Institution

794 182 According to Bambara expression, the ndomo is "the mother of the wanzo of the uncircumcised (1)" for its power which resides in the ritual objects /175/ is composed of the wanzo of all adolescents.

1. Wanzo ba ye čeble

The mask and the altars at first keep a part of the wanzo of the members who wear them, manipulate them, or offer them sacrifices. On the other hand, after circumcision, at the moment of the final leap of the newly circumcised over the ritual fire, the wanzo ultimately leaves them to settle itself in the mask of the ndomo. Thus channeled and conserved, these forces add themselves to those of the uncircumcised in the masks which become the repositories of their life.

[775] Moreover, the soul of the uncircumcised and nonexcised who have died prematurely establishes itself in the altars during the funeral rites celebrated by the members.

The mask of the ndomo is thus the receptacle of the wanzo of the circumcised, living and dead; as for the altars, they contain all the souls of the uncircumcised dead. All of this confers upon the ndomo the responsibility for the life of the adolescents and gives it such power that to a certain extent, this society of young people is feared by the adults (2) who have left it.

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794 833 782 2. When an adult, especially a member of the Komo society, has disturbed the peace of a member of the ndomo or has wronged the society, the wanzo may cause him to be impotent. In this case, in order to recover his virility, the man must obtain several tens of gray lizards which are sacrificed in his name on the mask and other altars. The animals are then cooked and the man is completely smeared over with the cooked substance which is then placed in the calabash and poured over the altars; the wanzo assigned to the man by the ndomo thus returns to the latter and the man is rid of its evil.

364 (a) Household refuse, collected individually, is placed in separate
778 piles inside shallow circular excavations dug out at the approaches to
the villages (see Pl. VI, b). Among wealthy people a goat is sacrificed
782 each week by having its throat cut above the pile on which the altar
is temporarily placed. The sacrifice effects a double exchange: the
blood nourishes the altar while at the same time it brings about the
transfer into the altar of the forces contained in the refuse.

364 . Every two months and seven days, at the decision of the village
chief, these individual-rubbish piles are removed from the holes.
778 Each person burns his own pile and inhales the smoke. The ashes are
796 deposited on the river bank, dampened so that the wind does not blow
them away, and abandoned during seven days, a period during which
Faro "comes to visit them and to bless them."

On the eighth day, after a meeting at the chief's residence, the villagers gather at the crossroads to burn the collective refuse piles, to collect the ashes, and to transport them, accompanied by the rhythm wanzo foli beaten on the drums, to the river bank where they will join those of the individual heaps.

After a sacrifice offered upon the konye altars of the participants, the griot of the Komo is struck by the nyama boli until he goes into a trance and flings himself into the water without saying a word. All must throw their ashes in after him before he comes out again. At that moment the spittles of the man who flutters about in the water are collected as a gift from Faro in exchange for the refuse which has been thrown in. Each person rubs his hands and feet with the saliva and upon returning, which is done in silence, impregnates the threshold of his home with it as evidence of the sacrifice so that Faro "might recognize his own and protect their life."

/203/ The following Thursday the people gather to dance according to the rhythms appropriate to each sex and generation. In the evening, each person places his foot on the site of the refuse heap; then all gather at the crossroads to offer the Soba spirit some millet, cotton, and kola nuts. The ceremony ends with a meeting at the chief's residence where he gives advice and encourages each one to respect tradition and to honor the ancestors and the protecting spirits.

(b) After the comings out of the Komo, the refuse is swept up and deposited in front of the sanctuary. Each participant leaps over the pile three times to communicate his nyama to it. In the evening the masker circles and whistles around the heap on which fire is lit while

IV. Rites for the Renewal of the Year

796 These rites involve individual, familial, and collective actions;
783 the latter bring into play most of the institutions (1). Everyone, from the newborn to the elder, must undergo a kind of purification which consists essentially of the /207/ rejection of the breath and forces of the past year and of the taking in of new breath and forces. It is, according to Bambara expression, " a refreshing of the body and soul. " But the renewal is not limited to elements which make up the person; it extends to the cosmos and the cardinal points.

1. The individual rite of the family chief is performed with the instrument ngoni, which is used to make on the wall of his česo the drawings representing the universe. (2) He starts out with an offering of tomato juice to Faro who presides over the family use of the object and who is present thereafter. The fruits are squeezed; a hedgehog
[825 is sacrificed over the juice so that no other spirit may touch it. Next
782] the man sacrifices a gray lizard as a reminder of his own condition before circumcision. This sacrifice represents a new circumcision offered to Faro and increases his strength.

The man who is offering the sacrifice puts his tongue in the juice of the fruit without swallowing a drop in order to give Faro " a complete accounting of all his acts and thoughts during the past year (work, births, deaths, illnesses, quarrels, fortune, and misfortune) just as a subordinate gives an accounting to his superior. " He puts his right little finger in the liquid and places it on the wall over the drawing representing Faro. Then he sucks in a little of the tomato juice through his nostrils and blows it over the ngoni, thus sweeping away the remaining life from the past year which he still had in his body. A new air which comes from Faro then circulates in his lungs. He next fills his mouth with the liquid contained in the male goatskin of the instrument and spits it out immediately to show the spirit that

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1. As examples of collective rites we present those which are performed on the stone altars of the village (fara ba) (see p. 129).

2. See p. 172, Fig. 10.

*173 "Very well," said Ton-massa, "I'll give you the cowries, you divide them, let's celebrate. We are free and life was made to be enjoyed."

Kanou-ba-nyouma thanked him on behalf of all and asked leave to retire with his companions.

Ton-massa kept with him Ngolo Dyara, Kolé and Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué.

He appointed another assembly for a fortnight later when offerings would be made to the dead and to the idols.

Everyone was prompt at the assembly.

Ton-massa said: "Now then, where shall we begin? With the dead or with the idols?"

"You ask our advice?" cried Kanou-ba-nyouma. "You paid no attention to our views when you killed our master! You wanted to be chief -- now exert your authority!"

"Very well, we'll begin with the dead," said Ton-massa.

[782] He sacrificed a young man to the shades of Mamari, the founder of the clan, and then ordered the sofa leaders to sacrifice two more, and Kanou-ba-nyouma still another. This was the first time that human sacrifices were performed on the tomb of the dead.

On the eighth day after this ceremony, Ton-massa called a general gathering of the slaves and, when all had arrived, cried out: "We buried a corpse but left a foot protruding." He alluded to Mamari's last-remaining son, Dyon-kolo, who lived at Oftala on the left bank of the Niger.

"We did away with Dé-koro only because he did wrong," said Kolé, "and we still have the same veneration for our master [Mamari] and his descendants. The right thing would be to bring Dyon-kolo here, where he can take his father's place and bring peace among us."

Kanou-ba-nyouma said to Ton-massa: "How will you ever be able to face a man whose brother you murdered? Now will you explain your crime to him, a crime that has put you in his father's place? Nevertheless, I shan't oppose the idea simply to perpetuate our discord and, if it is the general will to bring Dyon-kolo back, so be it."

[61] Two Peul, named Bon-gué and Ndyan, were selected to carry out the delicate mission to Dyon-kolo. Upon reaching

596 614 The functions of the "fa." The duties of the fa are many and complex; for the sake of clarity, we shall study them under three headings: cult; relations between communities; administration of property (which will be studied in connection with community property).

596 614 782 Cult. Religion gives considerable strength to the family since nothing is decided without consulting the manes and the gods. Raffenel has given us a picture of old Niany praying to his manes on behalf of his absent son: "O my God, I command my son to your case since he has gone away on a mission important to all of us. Be with him on his journey. Preserve him from the wicked and from all misfortune so that he may once again enter by this door through which he departed and before which I am now kneeling. I implore you, O my God, to restore him to my love and to that of his mother, his brothers and his sisters (1)."

[114] 1. In spite of deviations due to Raffenel's desire to give a personal and literary touch to what he reports, the essential points of this prayer are accurate, and that is why I quote it.

[787] The chronicle of Kaarta tells us that old Sounson begged for early death as a sign that his lineage would be powerful in the future. Also, in order to make a prophecy come true, Deniba Bo submitted to the fatal blows of the Khassonké to make sure that his people would conquer the country.

After all, no one is free of fear of the gods, not even those whom one would take for brave spirits. Raffenel tells us that Bouo, his informant, feared the wrath of the god whose secrets he had revealed. The chronicle of Ségou tells that Ngolo, thinking he had aroused the wrath of his manes by encouraging evil desires in his eldest son, Ntyi, did not hesitate to sacrifice his [179] own grandson, the son of the aforesaid Ntyi, an atrocity which bears witness to a faith that was as profound as it was barbarous.

596 honored by the new fa, and there is nothing to prevent him
614 from adding to the treasure.

The basic cult of the family is the cult of the ancestors.
769 Although the dead are frequently buried outside the family residence, their souls are thought to live in the blon' of the dwelling.
[343 The blon' is a hut with two openings on opposite sides, one
592] to the street and the other to the interior, usually the courtyard. It is impossible to enter or leave a house without going through the blon', where there is always a guard, at least in
778 important houses. The ancestors are usually represented in the blon' by a group of crude, conical clay figures of a man and
769 woman, the latter identifiable by the exaggerated breasts. Sometimes the symbol of the dead is a small board about a meter long, twenty centimeters wide, and a little more than a centimeter thick; at one of its extremities a slight protuberance vaguely suggests a head, a kind of ellipsoidal cylinder with eyes, nose, mouth, and chin faintly carved on one side. On the side with the face, the board has a checkerboard pattern, often of alternating black and red squares, probably to indicate the material of a loincloth. The lower extremity of the figure has a semicircular portion cut away to give the effect of legs spread apart when the effigy is set up.

769 Whatever form it may have, the representation of the dead is called kara (1) and serves in some manner as an altar
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on which libations are poured and to which are attached the remains of the sacrifices made to the dead (su-u). Nevertheless, it is also a very widespread practice to make libations and sacrifices before the door of the blon' and, more rarely, before the door of an inner hut. In this case the liquid is poured and
[775] the remains smeared on the vertical edge of the opening. This practice is based on the belief that the souls of the dead ancestors like to return to the place where the fa liked to sit during his lifetime. Undoubtedly, the ancestors are regarded as guardians of the threshold; they are [181] honored as such because it is believed that they prefer to be honored in this way.

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1. In Soninké, kara means "to die" and "death."

769 This is the place where on important occasions the fa
778 receives congratulations or condolences, which are addressed
782 not only to him but also to the ancestors who, though invisible,
are nevertheless present.

When the fa wishes to make an offering to the ances-
769 tors (fa su son'), he squats before the door of the blon' with his
782 head bare and a chicken in his hand. He addresses the most recently deceased (1), saying: "I offer this chicken in my own name and in that of my children. Jointly with our dead fathers and mothers, preserve us from sorcerers who eat souls (suba) and from the evil of the wicked; protect us from sickness and disaster; guard our health; give us good wives and healthy children; bring success to our work in the fields, and give us rain."

If the offering is being made for a particular purpose, the fa is explicit about it and speaks just as he would to a living person. He concludes by asking that the victim reveal the response by the way it falls as it dies. Then he cuts the chicken's throat and dribbles the blood on the wall at either side of the door of the blon'. He than resumes his crouched position, and after throwing the fowl a short distance, he watches its convul-
787 sions and waits for it to fall motionless. Usually the position is
regarded as favorable if the animal dies with its legs in the air and its feet turned toward the officiator; if the feet are turned away, the response is unfavorable. Often, just as he completes the offering, the fa announces what position he considers favorable or unfavorable.

The fa gives the sacrificed chicken to his wife to be cooked, and then he divides it among the members of the family; this is truly a communion.

1. It seems that the ancestors form a kind of chain in which the first invisible link is the ancestor most recently deceased and the first visible link is the current fa.

769 782 As a substitute for the chicken, it is very common to offer some *dege*, a bit of millet coarsely ground and thrown in a little water. The *fa* keeps this liquid in a small gourd. It is perhaps [182] reasonable to think that this is the most ancient manner of honoring the dead and, in particular, calling for their protection in obtaining the two essentials of life: grain and water.

273 An equally common libation is made with *dlo*, a kind of millet beer which every Bambara enjoys drinking to the point of intoxication. The dead could hardly fail to be pleased with an offering of what they had enjoyed so much on earth!

276 One must conclude, too, that offerings of kola nuts please the dead because it gives them a chance to enjoy a favorite treat. The officiator chews the kola nut and then spits out his saliva mixed with the juice and remains along the walls of the *blon'*.

781 Such are the ordinary offerings, but on special occasions the quantity and importance of the gifts are increased according to the desired results. When many people are present and the house is prosperous, the victims are oxen and sheep. It should not be forgotten that the flesh of these consecrated victims, eaten in common, makes a very strong mystical bond between the participants; it is a true communion. It is generally conceded that the bond created by drinking consecrated liquids together is much less strong.

776 778 In addition to his ancestors, every Bambara has as his special protector, one of those gods (*nyana*) which are created wholly by the work of the magician. Every family has one or more *nyana*, whose priest is the *fa*. The *boli*, the symbol and altar of this type of divinity, is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put into a leather or canvas sack, a gourd, or a pot. The *nyana* of Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, was a *n-ko* whose *boli* was kept in a monkey skin. The *boli* is taken out of its cover so that libations can be poured over it and animal remains smeared on it. If there is some objection to exposing it, the offering is put on the cover.

769 794 Everything that takes place relative to the cult of the *nyana* is analogous to that described for the cult of the ancestors.

621 successive groups, each recognizing a genie-protector. In that
776 case, the genie first recognized and worshiped takes precedence over the others. In any case, social life requires each segment to respect the gods of its neighbors, and this respect carries with it a certain amount of superstitious fear.

311 It is evident from the foregoing that occupying and
cultivating land poses certain problems for the settlement bene-
621 fited, and these may be grouped under three heads: the cult of
794 the genie-protector; the exploitation of the land; and the organization of the territorial community.

793 The cult. This is mainly supported by the high priest,
whose principal duty is to "make the offerings" (son') to the
794 "genie" [229] (nyana), hence his title nyana-son-na-ba. He is assisted by the council of fa, one of whom, the syere (follower), may replace him in case of need. The office of high priest is for life and is inherited in the same way as his faya. This continuity shows that the genie is actually regarded as a kind of spiritual ancestor of the priest, as we have seen from the fact that it is given the same dyamu as its high priest.

794 The cult ceremonies are very simple. They consist of
offerings made by the high priest, who at the same time indi-
796 cates to the genie the purpose for which they are being made. The most solemn ceremonies take place when millet is sown and harvested. For these occasions, every worshiper is expected to bring a contribution in proportion to his resources. The kind of gift is not specified; everyone brings whatever he can or whatever he wishes, usually animals (sheep, beef, fowl, etc.), grain, and especially millet beer (dlo).

•782 During these general gatherings, from which no one is
excluded, only the high priest and the members of the council
796 enter the sacred grove or approach the genie's abode. There,
778 the high priest makes known the purpose of the sacrifice: to
+ thank the genie for his past favors; to offer him the gifts brought by everyone; and to ask him to continue to protect the community so that its prosperity may be assured. Then the victims are sacrificed, and their blood is sprinkled on the tree trunk or whatever object or place is reputed to be the home of the genie.

782 796 [784] genie. The same is done with libations of dlo or the juice of kola nuts. Since anything offered to the genie is supposed to be consumed on the spot, an orgy lasting for several days usually follows.

782 In addition to these two great obligatory ceremonies especially concerned with the exploitation of the land, the god's protection is sought by similar, but much simplified means in all affairs whether they concern the entire settlement (wars, disasters), a particular patriarchal or familial community, or even a single individual. Through the high priest as intermediary, the offering and the request are made for the purpose indicated by the petitioner, who often promises to make a further gift to the genie when his wish has been granted. Vows of this type are made very frequently.

794 769 The cult of his high [230] priests and of all the important men of the settlement is tied in with the cult of the genie, obviously a consequence of the fact that the genie is the spiritual patron of the community which honors him; its members are his children and with him form what amounts to a family. So, in line with what happens in a patriarchal or familial community, the territorial community also holds an annual festival for the dead, during which special honor is paid to noted personages, among whom deceased high priests have first place.

311 621 423 793 Exploitation of the land. The high priest in charge of the cult likewise regulates everything concerning the exploitation of the terrestrial domain of the genie, and in this capacity he is known as the dugu-tigi (1), master of the earth. In this office he has the help of the council of fa, and in important matters he must follow their advice.

With the help of this council, he allots the land when

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1. In line with common practice, I shall henceforth use this title to designate both capacities, the high priest and the master of the earth.

857 use corporal punishment.

From this early age, therefore, a Bambara is subject to the corporate discipline which will henceforth dominate his whole life, for the same sort of discipline prevails in the adult brotherhoods.

The genie-protector is honored by offerings, [237] sacri-
857 fices, and ritual dances. When they perform these dances, the
292 n-Tomo-den' take turns wearing the ceremonial mask and cos-
● [782] tume. The mask has the form of a human face surmounted by a number of vertical horns (five to eight of these) and decorated with a few cowries. The costume consists of a dloki (a kind of blouse with wide sleeves) and a pair of long trousers, which completely cover the body. If the costume is yellowish-brown (basa) or white (dye), the association is called "n-Tomo-fin' (black n-Tomo)" or "n-Tomo-dye (white n-Tomo)," respectively. Is this costume supposed to represent the adepts' conception of their protector's appearance? No. As in all sects, it is intended to differentiate the officiant from the profane world (1).

[536] 1. Some of these associations give a kind of public performance from which they derive profit. Notably, they exhibit a kind of puppet called peremperen' (dancers) which members of the n-Tomo manipulate in a more or less comical manner; often one of the puppets rep-
[831] resents a man and the other a woman, and their movements abound in the obscenities which are so popular with the onlookers.

831 A wooden phallus (or a small board) is commonly used to
857 summon the n-Tomo-den' to meetings. This is tied to the end
[534] of a rope and whirled like a sling, producing a noise which the operator can vary and which carries a considerable distance. This apparatus is called n-Tomo-ulu, translated as "dog of the
[195] n-Tomo." It should be noted that the words used in the brotherhoods usually have a double meaning, with a special sense under a vulgar form. For instance, the word ulu means both

857 831 195 "dog" and "the sexual parts of a man," and it seems evident that the expression n-Tomo-ulu should be taken in the latter sense. This is all the more likely since in the similar organization among the Khassonké the same apparatus is called khe-fengo, literally, "thing of a man," that is, "sexual parts of a man."

857 796 The great festival of the association takes place every year after the harvest and does not differ essentially from the one celebrated at the same time by all the brotherhoods. It involves offerings and sacrifices to the genie-protector, communion by the n-Tomo-den' at a corporate banquet, and the admission of new members. The following is a detailed description. [238]

At the instigation of the n-Tomo-tigi, the brotherhood's field has been harvested and to the grain collected has been added whatever the boys could obtain from their families or friends by any means, even theft. From this millet the n-Tomo-[273] tigi has had dlo (beer) prepared, which is drunk in great quantities on such occasions. The "elders" (koro-u), relatives, and friends can be counted on to send their contributions in kind.

Each n-Tomo-den' is given a little outfit appropriate to the occasion. The ceremonial costume is put in order; the dloki and trousers are washed and ironed, if need be, and the mask is rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu) to give it gloss.

On the day set, everything is in readiness. Many gourds of dege (1) and to (2), numerous jars of beer (dlo), and also some kola nuts have been assembled, along with sacrificial victims.

857 796 The n-Tomo-den', each leading a chicken on a string, go to the meeting place in single file, with the n-Tomo-tigi

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[258] 1. Dege is made by putting coarsely ground millet into a small quantity of water.

2. A native mush.

857 and his syere at the head. There, the n-Tomo-den' squat at
796 a little distance from the n-Tomo-tigi, who takes his place in
782 front of them, facing the tree where the guardian genie dwells,
in order to perform the libations and sacrifices. First he takes a small gourd and pours the dege it contains against the trunk of the tree; he cuts the throat of a chicken and dribbles its blood on the tree in the same way; next, in a jet of saliva, he spits on it the juice and particles of kola nuts which he has chewed for the purpose; finally, he fastens a few of the chicken's feathers in the smear of blood. As he makes each of these offerings, he says to the genie: "Look here, I offer you this chicken, protect us, defend us against the wicked and against evil genii. Give us enough to live well. Save us from illness. Give us rain to make our fields fruitful and be propitious to our families."

He speaks thus for everybody, after which each one comes in turn to offer his sacrifice and to make personal requests through him as intermediary.

The admission of new members follows. Each of them
857 pays his entrance fee and then, prostrate before the genie,
796 swears never to reveal anything to the uninitiated, [239] above
all to the women." If you betray your brothers," says the n-Tomo-tigi, "may the genie kill you!" The new member repeats: "May he kill me!"

At this point the victims are cooked, and while they are
[535] being prepared, the n-Tomo-den' dance in turn, dressed in the
ceremonial regalia. Their steps are accompanied by the beating of drums, and they twirl a flexible stick as they dance. When the victims are cooked, the banquet begins. Everyone eats and drinks as much as he can; a special treat of kola nuts brings the banquet to a close.

857 On this day each n-Tomo-den' is expected to take one of
796 his gifts or some other personal possession and make a present of
572 it to his n-golo-moso (1). This is how one names the young
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1. N-golo-moso, literally, "woman of the birth," is the companion associated with the rite which he is to undergo.

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terms nyana and boli are used interchangeably. This is natural enough since the latter is merely the symbol of the former.

Each nyana has a boli which in form and substance is peculiar to it. Anything may be used to make boli: horn or hair of the hare, hind, or cattle; nails or claws; animal venom or excretions. It is not unusual to find parts of a human body put to use. As the chronicle tells, the war drums of the ton-dyon' were elevated to the rank of boli and were then adorned with the craniums and jaws of human beings sacrificed to them. Often the ball tied to the end of a piece of rope or leather and used to beat the tabala [Tr., big drum] is a human hand which has been severed and wrapped in a leather cover. [727 782]

Certain of the boli, particularly those of the Komo and the Kono, are said to be made of a child's torso; those of the Tyi-wara and Nama are made of wood, and those of the Duga of horn.

All sorts of shapes are employed: men, animals, doll-like figures, balls, small crowns, etc. The principal boli, called boli-de-n-fa, is accompanied by subsidiary ones called boli-de.

The boli is also given sex: one is male, another female; and it is said that there is a kind of mystical copulation [254] from which at the time of initiation are born the spiritual sons of the nyana.

Among boli should be noted those made of forked sticks, such as the n-Golo and the Tyi-wara, both patrons of brotherhoods of young men (1).

171 1. If one makes certain comparisons, the forked stick seems to deserve special attention. Among the Khassonké, for instance, the soli-ma always build their seclusion hut (bire) with a forked post in the center. This post, called biri-makho (master of the hut), is a tree trunk chosen

794 Some of the clergy use a disguise when officiating in
[292] public; furthermore, the ceremonies are held only at night.

Finally, in the presence of the profane, the initiated
[198] use a special language for everything referring specifically to
the cult. The greatest secret of all is the name of the nyana,
[551] because anyone who knows the name has complete power over
the spirit it designates.

794 From the point of view of the disguised clerical body,
this secrecy is virtually impenetrable. A disguised person loses
298 his human personality and is withdrawn from the natural world.
It is an accepted fact that it is dangerous for those not affiliated to intercept his glance through the tiny openings in the mask; undoubtedly his person on that occasion is impregnated with a fluid whose emanations are fatal to those who, not being affiliated, are unprotected against them.

Some of these disguises include a headdress or mask
and for the body a kind of costume usually made of long strips
of vegetal material; is this, as has been suggested, simply a
means of dominating the herd of adepts and even more the profane through the terror such regalia inspires when seen at night
by the flickering light of torches and bonfires? It seems more
probable that one must put this matter on the plane of the
supernatural in order to understand it. Dangerous wild animals
[825 are believed to be incarnations of evil and powerful gods, and
776] an attempt is made to present an outward appearance consistent
with the terror merely seeing them inspires, in order thereby
to acquire the supernatural qualities that characterize them (1).

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1. There is no doubt that some individuals, under the influence of the role of wild beast that they are portraying, have been led to commit actual murders during ritual observances. I have often heard this asserted in connection with the dyara (lion).

794 It should be noted that the costume, gestures, [259]
782 dances, songs, and music of the dye-n-fa and their acolytes

794 782 are all designed to attract and capture the god and, for this purpose, to transfer the officiant from our world to the supernatural one. I have never heard anyone claim that the costume and the various actions of the officiant were intended to counterfeit the *nyana*, nor that the *boli* in any way represented the native's idea of the god.

The Clergy

793 Even though, in theory, familial *nyana* are inherited, those worshiped by the brotherhoods are usually bought. The head of the brotherhood is called the *nyana-tigi* (master of the *nyana*) (1), whether he has inherited the office, been elected to it, or has imposed himself by virtue of being the most prominent founder of the brotherhood. It is he who keeps the *boli*, hence his title of *boli-tigi*, and who knows all the secrets of the cult. His duty is to direct the cult and to administer the brotherhood, and this gives him considerable local prestige.

1. Ordinarily the word *nyana* is replaced by the specific name of the *nyana*, Komo, Nama, ~~Nya~~, etc.

The initiates of higher rank are called *dye-n-fa-u*, "masters of the truth." The *nyana-tigi* chooses his aides from this group, particularly the person who, "seized by the god" (*wara-mina-den'*), becomes the "oracle" (*wara-da*). The role 787 791 of medium requires special persons who can go into a trance under the influence of the animating spirit, and the *wara-da* has the duty of choosing and training the person who will succeed him or replace him, if the need arises (2).

2. These *dye-n-fa* students are called *soma-de* (elder sons) in the Komo brotherhood.

All the initiates are to some extent diviners through practices which are peculiar to them, and the brotherhoods often

794 in France. The question is too complex, however, to be treated here.

794 For important ceremonies, the faithful bring the *nyana-*
782 *tigi* a contribution in proportion to their means; each of them
brings grain, livestock, fowl, cowries, cloth, etc., and no one
is so poor that he cannot furnish one or more jugs of beer (*dlo*).
Everything thus collected is offered to the *nyana* at the general
meeting of the faithful through the intermediary, the *nyana-tigi*.
In accordance with [264] established ritual, the victims are
slaughtered and libations made. Then the *nyana-tigi* gives thanks
to the god and asks him to continue to protect his worshipers.
Finally, all or part of the food is eaten at a joint banquet. This
is a true communion, by means of which the god and his
worshipers on the one hand, and the worshipers among them-
[786] selves on the other, are closely bound together. These banquets,
which often last for several days, degenerate into orgies.

Internal Discipline

794 A result of the cult is that the brotherhood forms an organized body in which each member is subject to a discipline that may be summarized under these three terms: secrecy, obedience, solidarity.

Secrecy is obligatory, especially for anything having to
do with the cult. Divulging the mysteries carries with it a
[688] punishment which, depending on circumstances, may vary from
a simple reprimand to condemnation to death, with fines,
flogging, etc., as intermediate forms. People who are known
to be unable to keep a secret are, on that account, excluded
from the brotherhoods of *nyana*; this excludes women, children, certain people of caste, etc.

The obedience required of the faithful is shown by the seemingly fantastic rules enforced during the official banquets of certain brotherhoods. Members are fined for very odd infractions: sitting down, getting up, spitting, etc., before being given permission or being asked to do so. This is obviously a means of swelling the common fund, but it is also a means of making the adept realize that he is subservient to the sect.

794 clergy. On the other hand, an innocent man will be over-
696 whelmed by mental and physical torture if he is unable to give
his executioners what they demand.

681 Corporal punishment includes flogging, chains, starvation, torture, and death by all imaginable methods. Pecuniary punishment includes fines, confiscation, and pillage. The condemned man is also sometimes forced to labor for the clergy or is even enslaved by them.

Social and Political Role of the Brotherhoods

794 By its actions, the brotherhood, an artificial family,
776 tends to take the place of the natural family whose organization
it has borrowed and whose cult it has banished. It is easy to ac-
769 count for this.

The cult of the manes is the framework of the family and of the communities derived from it. The brotherhood has cleverly managed to set up such a cult by specially honoring the manes of its high priests, its famous members, and its eminent worshipers. [267]

Gradually, the *nyana dugu-da-siri*, protector of the territorial community, has given way to the *nyana* of the *boli*, a more powerful god since his territory is unlimited.

It is true that in spite of everything the tradition remains, and even though they are largely over-shadowed by the *nyana* of the *boli*, the manes of the ancestors and the *nyana dugu-da-siri* are still venerated. Though sowing and harvesting are celebrated
731 with great pomp by the brotherhoods, still, when a disaster,
epidemic, or terrible drought occurs, sacrifices are promptly of-
782 fered to the manes and the gods of the place. People may fear
their anger, but they also have confidence in their good will, and it is felt that their severity can always be tempered. On the other hand, the *nyana* of the *boli* are supposed to be basically evil, and their worship seems intended to ward off their malignity rather than to obtain their favor.

794 This duality in religion brings about extremely compli-
621 cated interrelationships which bind the communities and

794 796 over the threshold (2). The ceremonies are announced and
[534] accompanied by a strident, wild orchestra made up of drums (denu-ba) which are accompanied by iron instruments, called kinge, consisting of pieces of metal that are struck against each other or shaken to obtain sound from the rings attached to them. The "cry" of the Komo, which the wara-da shouts through his horn, is accompanied by a kind of reed pipe played by his companions.

● [782] There is nothing unusual about the offerings, sacrifices, or communion. The blood of the victim is used to wash the boli and the priests, as will be described for the Nama.

Processions held at night are always very effective, and they strike terror into the hearts of not only the uninitiated but also the initiated themselves. This long cortege, lighted by the torchbearers who shout and dash about like madmen while the wara-da gives the "cry" of the Komo, makes a very strong impression on everyone who sees or hears it (3). [273]

2. Then the door is called su-bo-da, "exit of the corpse," and the sacrificer is called moso-bolo (literally, "woman's hand").

3. Elsewhere, the Komo meets in the daytime, and in the old days, notably in Bobo country, it was very popular (cf. Binger, Du Niger au golfe de Guinée [From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea],
794 Vol. 1, p. 379, and Monteil, De Saint-Louis à Tripoli par le Tchad [From Saint-
796 Louis to Tripoli via Chad], p. 89). We
292 have already seen that all the officiants in the brotherhood are called dou, "the hidden people," because of the disguises they affect. "The dou are persons ludicrously disguised, wearing clothing on which are sewed bits of da-fou (native

794 if one had to travel, since the Dyuola [Diula] and other travelers were at the mercy of the whims and banditry of the [278] Nama-den' (1) and only avoided them to a certain extent by claiming to be of the Nama-den'. Even Moslems often became adherents of the Nama; all that was required of them was absolute secrecy and a few gifts in exchange for the secret passwords.

794 796 782 There are two great annual ceremonies: one at planting and the other at harvest, the dates for both decided by the Nama-tigi and his council. Each of them involves offerings, sacrifice, communion, and a nocturnal procession. Young members are usually admitted at the harvest ceremony.

The initiates gather for the sacrifice before the temple (Nama-bon'). Only the Nama-tigi and his clergy may enter the sacred place; the common worshipers remain outside. The sacrificial animals are brought up. Two sacrificers (muru-kala-tigi), naked to the waist, stretch their arms toward the four cardinal points and spit three times in each direction. Two dye-n-fa, also naked to the waist, hold the pieces of wood bearing horns and face the faithful. Three times the sacrificers utter the cry, "ture-dyo," twice alternating this cry with another, "dyo-Nama." They invoke the god two times, and then they slaughter the victims, sometimes inside the temple and sometimes outside.

The blood is carefully collected in receptacles, and the ashes of straw are added to it. All the cult objects, especially the boli itself, are smeared with the mixture. The Nama-tigi and the other principal initiates remove their clothing to anoint themselves with the same mixture and do not put on their garments again until the blood has dried on their bodies.

[796 437] 1. Cf. Monteil, Binger, op. cit.; at the time of the great annual festivals of the Komo, all trading was halted for several days. Strangers could be sure of being respected only by claiming membership in the brotherhood. The same was true of the Nama.

794 [787] Furthermore, every wara-mina-den' is able to read the will of the Nya and, more generally, to reveal the acts of the invisible by means of the divination practices which we have already mentioned.

[782] The sacrifices are performed by the muru-kala-tigi, and a dyeli (herald) serves as factotum, just as in the other brotherhoods. [285]

794 796 The faithful are initiated and called to participate in the cult to an extent determined by the clergy; they are called Nya-ko-den'-u, literally, "those who follow the Nya." In order to be admitted, an individual must give a chicken and 120 cowries. The next day, in the presence of the Nya-tigi and the wara-mina-den', the chicken is sacrificed on the boli by the muru-kala-tigi. The candidate is present, and in his behalf the Nya-tigi asks the Nya for protection against the suba, snakes, korti, and the evil eye. Then the neophyte is led to the sacred grove to be ritually purified with consecrated water contained in a vessel used exclusively for this purpose (1).

[783] 1. Every year at the time of harvest/ the clergy undergoes ritual purification by washing in the sacred water. When a Nya is inaugurated, this purification takes place at the first harvest after the installation.

[731] The two great annual festivals are celebrated at the times of planting and harvesting. Similar ceremonies take place in connection with important events (epidemics, public catastrophes, etc.). For these ceremonies, during which the Nya is supposed to give revelations about the event in question and to answer various other questions troubling the faithful, the wara-mina-den' [273] undergo special preparation and at the proper time drink a very heady beverage (2) which, they say, brings on their extra-lucidity.

[691] 2. I learned most of these details about the Nya during a criminal trial brought against the wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara,

614 *173 Mamari had been elected by the *ton'-den'*; by means of successive usurpations, whose progress we have shown, he achieved a kind of despotism whose entire gain he was unable to hand down to his descendants, in spite of his wishes.

For his descendants, election followed their installation in office by the *ton'-masa*, who at the same time publicly announced the assent of the *furu-ba-dyon'* by a symbolic gesture in which he presented himself to the new *fama* wearing a loincloth around his neck and put its two ends into the hands of the *fama*. Under the protection of the deity called *ba Kongo-ba*, which Mamari had bought in Bendougou, an oath was taken which formed an unbreakable bond between the two elements of the clan.

The election of Tonmassa Dembélé as *fama* was the result of discussions following the *coup d'état* which he himself carried out, and it is probable that this election, too, was followed by an oath of loyalty on the part of the *dyon'-kuntigi* in one or another of the ways already described.

In the case of the successors of Tonmassa Dembélé, the choice of a new chief was preceded by gatherings at which it was announced that the place was vacant and open to the person who could take over Mamari's bow and quiver. Then the election was held, and it was followed by a ritual banquet.

614 *173 •782 For this banquet, an ox and a slave were ritually slaughtered in the hut used as a temple for *ba Kongo-ba* (1), to whom the victims were sacrificed. The corpses were then cut into pieces, cooked together, and stirred frequently to make sure that they would be well mixed. A part of this macabre dish was served in the same hut and in the same gourd to the

5 [776] 1. A literal translation of the name was given to me, "Mother of the Great Bush," wherein "mother" is equivalent to goddess." There is an allusion to the ceremony described here in the journal of Isaac (second voyage of Mungo Park), which uses the name *Kogno-ba*, a variant of *Kongo-ba*.

614 *dyon'-kuntigi* who had acted as electors. When it was time to
782 eat, they squatted on the ground around the gourd with their
*173 backs to it, and in this position and without turning their heads
to make a choice, [305] they dipped into the dish and took a piece which might be animal or human. This meal constituted a communion by which those partaking of it were so closely linked that *ba Kongo-ba* was supposed to kill any one of them who should commit perjury by failing in the loyalty he owed to the man elected.

614 The choice made was then definitive, and the man elected
was put through a test intended to indicate the length of his
*173 reign. To make this test, the newly elected chief's throat was wrapped in one of the cotton bands used to make native loincloths; two of the bystanders pulled the two ends in opposite directions while the victim feverishly plunged his hands into a gourd containing a mixture of small pebbles and ground baobab leaves. The number of pebbles he managed to pick out in one try was the number of years in his reign. When this number of years had passed, the *fama* was strangled with the strip of cotton. If his rule had been popular, however, he was left in office until the first complaint was lodged against him.

Such is the tradition. Though it is acceptable in essentials, it is less so in certain details when comparison is made with the chronicle which makes no reference to this uniform death by strangulation or to determining in advance the length of the reign.

One thing that is certain is the oath of loyalty which followed every election and which was also often demanded by the *fama* during the course of his reign. This oath unquestionably had a sacramental form, characterized by a communion under the patronage of the idol. What the chronicle has to say about the election of Ngolo Dyara shows that the man elected was also
required to participate in the oath, thus making it reciprocal.
[661] Ngolo managed to avoid taking the oath, and so his electors bore
the whole burden of it; this is one of the means by which despots of all lands pave the way for their tyranny.

534 614 701 beating surface. The most highly regarded was the *denu-ba*; made of a hollowed cylindrical trunk with fairly thick walls, the *denu-ba* is sometimes more than a meter high, with its lower third often slightly tapered with an adze. The drumhead is made of strong hide, reinforced in the center by a patch of leather sewed to it and stretched on pegs driven into the sides of the drum a few centimeters below the upper edge. When it is to be played, the drum is inclined on a fork that supports it. The drummer uses a kind of wooden hook, cleverly curved for elasticity and provided at one end [315] with a rounded part, often formed by a swelling contrived for the purpose or at other times made of a leather ball. The drummer's free hand provides the syncopation.

In certain cases, two *denu-ba* are used together; the drummer strikes them in such a way as to obtain a variety of sounds to form the basis for conventional harmony. Thus, the soldiers not only were trained to obey appropriate flourishes, but also were kept in touch with distant battalions by means of the drums. When it was skillfully played, the *denu-ba* made it possi- [202] ble to transmit information for considerable distances, because other drummers would retransmit it in turn. That is why it has [778] been said that the *denu-ba* can talk and no doubt why it was so highly regarded by the *ton'-dyon'* that they considered it an oracle and honored the god who spoke through the drum by making the *denu-ba* the *boli* of this god. Hence, human victims came to [782] be sacrificed to the drums of the *ton'-dyon'*, especially under Ngolo, according to the chronicle.

Trumpets (*buru*) were formerly made of ivory. The [237] Tedzkiret speaks of the ivory trumpets used by a certain Bambara named Maro, and Mage relates that Ahmadou, Sultan of Ségou, gave the Bambara their ivory trumpets on the occasion of the Moslem festival.

These ivory trumpets, however, have disappeared, no [237] doubt carried off by traders. Trumpets made of horn, which were used concurrently with the ivory instruments, have been substituted for them. The horns of the large antelope are much in demand for this purpose. An opening is made a few centimeters from the pointed end, and the trumpeter makes the sound through this opening. The only result is a loud but monotonous noise.

614 own action, as a possible daily eventuality which should cause
794 no surprise.

761 The practice of this implacable ferocity must also be considered the natural source of that kind of burning faith, as intransigent as it is horrible in our eyes, which is capable of nullifying all the feelings of affection that we regard as natural. When Ngolo realized that he had aroused dangerous ambitions in his son Ntyi, he decided that he could not escape the danger he himself had created except by a sacrifice in keeping with the contingency, and with his own hand and without hesitation, he sacrificed Ntyi's son, his own grandson.

Stubborn Bambara are often heard to say: "You may kill me; I will not yield." Tyitya's resistance shows that this is no idle boast; this same affair also shows the aspiration toward equality, so basic in the Bambara, which makes it impossible for him to bow before his fellows. Another example of the same quality is to be seen in the resistance of the "elders" whom Mamari, even he, could subdue only by murder.

794 To complete the description of the somewhat mystical
features of the clan of "those of Ségou," let us recall that after
614 [321] Mamari's death he was honored by a cult: on the part of his
769 natural descendants because he had been their fa; on the part of the people of the clan because he had been fama; and finally, on the part of the faithful of the idols' cult because he had been the high priest. Under this aegis there was a fusion of sorts of all the people who recognized mutual bonds because they were all spiritual sons of Mamari. This relationship was the excuse used by the ton'-dyon' when they usurped supreme power, and the right of the leaders of the ton'-dyon' to succeed to the office of fama was in fact settled by the expedient of treating this relationship as though it were true descent. This cult took its characteristics from the cult of the idols. When Tonmassa began his duties
[782] as high priest, his first act was to honor the manes of Mamari, and the offering was the same as that always made to ba Kongo-ba when a new fama was elected: a man and an ox.

614 Such are some of the characteristics of the faith that united the "people of Ségou" by ties which, without metaphor,
794 can be called bloody. It is true, of course, that the clan's

766 White oxen are sacrificed on the tomb; their hides are
614 used to make new drumheads for the tabala, and the meat [328]
is offered to the manes of the deceased and then distributed
among members of the family, allies, familiars, etc. The
women wail, weep, and sing the praises of the deceased in company
[786] with the people of caste who organize everything. Outside,
banquets and virtual orgies, complete with noisy dances and
songs, are organized in honor of the deceased.

This ceremony goes on for seven days.

614 At the close of this period, the new fama is publicly proclaimed. For this purpose, the leader of the slaves has the walled-up door of the tata reopened, and the whole company assembles in the large open area in front of the house of the fama. Those present include the newly elected fama, the members of the family of the Massa-si, allies, tributaries, heads of the ton'-dyon', and the sofa.

[769] An ox has been sacrificed and offered to the manes of
the defunct. Its hide is stretched in the center of an open area
● [782] surrounded by the crowd, and on it is spread out the sheepskin,
adorned with precious amulets, which has long served as a rug
for the fama of the Massa-si. Other precious family relics include
[301] the scarlet cap adorned with amulets, twists of gold for the ears,
and heavy silver bracelets.

The representative of the family of Kassi Konaré seats the newly elected fama on the sheepskin, puts the scarlet cap on his head, and adorns him with the gold earrings and silver bracelets. Then he makes a speech to the new fama, outlining the policies followed by his deceased predecessor and enumerating the desiderata of the people of the clan.

[567] At this point the leader of the slaves prostrates himself
before the new fama and places himself in his hands to show that
all the ton'-dyon' are loyal to him. He then presents individually
the principal groups of slaves, tributaries, etc.

Another ceremony brings the new fama, prominent Massa-si, their allies, the principal leaders of the slaves, and the tributaries to the wood sacred to the protective idol of the clan, where a reciprocal oath of loyalty is taken. A ritual communion follows.

Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;
222 their caffeine content makes them a stimulant and energizer. The
[276] Bambara use seven kinds of kola nuts in their sacrificial and
782 divinatory rites: 1. Dangoro (red nut); 2. Geleworo (white nut);
787 Sosokuworo (a red nut pointed at one end); 4. Flaniworo (yellow kola); 5. Worodanda (kola without opening) which has no apparent cleft where it may be split open; 6. Bassiworo (a dark red, bitter nut); 7. Ryeworo (nut of light and indeterminate color). (This list is given us by G. Dieterlen in her Essai sur la religion Bambara [Essay on the Bambara Religion]).

252 To prepare kola nuts, they are placed in baskets of very coarse mesh lined with leaves that are moistened every four or five days.

245 Among cultivated trees, other than banana, mango, lemon, orange, pineapple trees [ananas, may be a kind of pine; the pineapple is not a tree fruit], etc., one must mention the Acacia albida, which plays a large role in Bambara mythology. In the dry season, it is used as fodder for cattle.

[32] C. Textile Crops

248 Side by side with these food crops, the Bambara cultivate textile plants which they use in addition to the wild textile plants. Among the principal ones, we shall point out the da (Hibiscus
[227 cannabinus) whose fibers are used by fishermen to make their nets.
286] It does not rot and is a possible rival of jute. The labor to exploit it, pulling up the stalks, retting, extraction of the fibers, is done in the dry season, when many hands are available. (1)

1. G. Spitz, L'Ouest africain français [The French West African]. [Ed., L'Ouest africain, A.O.F. et Togo; The West African, French West Africa and Togo.]

Cotton, which grows spontaneously in many places, is cultivated near the villages as an annual plant; it is a perennial plant which renews itself every four or five years. During the cultivation cycle, it is grown between millet and maize. The harvesting is
[288] done by women; it is picked out and spun by women, but it is woven

462

Men	Women	Children	All
Medicaments			
Preparation and application especially reserved to men	Rarely done by women if not to treat own sex		
Religious Practice (see Religion)			
Reserved to men	Women rarely take part in sacrifices		
[782] Make their personal sacrifices to the right of hut door	Make their personal sacrifices to the left of hut door		

(When one faces entrance)

2. Distribution of tasks according to Labouret.

Labouret, in Paysans noirs [Black Peasants], divides the work more specifically assigned to men and women as in the following table:

Men	Women	Common Tasks
Trapping	Gathering alimentary plants for domestic industry	
Maritime or deep-water river fishing	Shallow-water river fishing	
Preparation of the fish	Preparation and sale of the fish	Preparation and sale
Preparation of traps and hunting or fishing gear	Making women's fishing gear	

[826]
774 its seat in the prepuce and the clitoris, necessitating circumcision
761 and excision). The body is conceived as being the support of all
spiritual forces; each part is distinctly known [84] for its particular
role. The body, like the spiritual principles, is bisexual; the boy
[304 is feminine in his prepuce, the girl masculine in her clitoris, and it
831] is only after circumcision and excision that the man and woman can
unite and realize the original fruitful twinship. On the metaphysical
plane, there is identity between man, "seed of the world," and the
cereal seed; the basic nutriments that are made up of the eight
principal cereals are represented symbolically in men's clavicles.
775 Finally, death separates all of these elements composing the person.
The *dya* remains in the water where it will become the *ni* of the
761 new-born in the family of the deceased; the *ni* is caught by the family
head and transported to the altar where it will animate the *dya* of the
new-born; the *téré* becomes *nyama*, a dangerous and vengeful force;
it is deposited on the *pembele*, where it rejoins the ancestral forces.
The body is buried and belongs to the termites. At birth, all the
spiritual forces are transmitted again, whole, "refreshed," and
purified. One being replaces another until the final resurrection.

C. Ritual, Sacrifice, and Cults

782 To appeal to and influence the spiritual forces, the Bambara
use prayer, offerings, and sacrifices. Oral rites are used everywhere
and at any time. "They pray to the sky, the cardinal points, the
spirits; they sacrifice on stones, on the ground, on trees, by water
holes, just as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries or situated in
public or private places. Every circumcized adult, father of a family,
owner of a home and cultivatable land, is a sacrificer, a capacity
[531] emphasized by the red spot which sometimes is an ornament of the
walls of the principal room in the man's residence." (1)

1. G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara*
[Essay on Bambara Religion].

782 The blood sacrifice is the basic element of the rites. The
778 technique used for it has been described by M. Griaule (2). The Bambara have three types of altars: the wooden stumps called pembele, altars made of roughly hewn stone, which generally represent the ancestors; and the Nyama or boli, man-made objects representing the parts of the universe.

794 The cults can be individual and familial or general for the
whole village, such as the dasiri and the dangu. They are organized by religious societies, dyo, whose object is to conserve the spiritual forces of their members. For the men, these societies are: the Komo (principally), the Kworé, the Nama, the Kono, the Nago, the Nya. The women are also grouped in dyo, as yet little known, while the uncircumcised are members of the N'Domo.

The Komo is a hierarchical society whose members have obligations and taboos, such as initiation for future dignitaries of the political and religious society, study of traditions and practices of the cult, study of the science of magic and religious formulas, fabrication and consecration of protective charms (boli-w, dyo-w), knowledge of [85] poisons and antidotes, procedures for combating enemies and sorcerers.

794 Its moral authority is very widespread, and we shall see the
796 role it plays in justice and public affairs. The Komo has obligatory
seasonal ceremonies, such as the festival of the cleaning of the sacred wood by the tinto-w (most recent initiates), the festival of the emergence of the komo-sen-w from the stream, that of stream fishing and of hunting on the banks at the end of the dry season, and, finally, that of the solemn return of the komo-sen-w to the stream. In addition, every seven years, a great celebration in April-May lasts for
15 days, with a sacrifice to the komo-ba. The ceremony ends with
[766] the nomination of a new komo-tigi (chief of the Komo), who will
exercise his priesthood for seven years. He must die at the end of

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2. M. Griaule, "Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice Dogon (Soudan français)" [Remarks on Sacrificial Techniques of the Dogon (French Sudan)], Extract from the Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. X, 1940.

856 the blacksmith. The doll is given the name of the dead infant, the
[304 child^a carries it with him to the circumcision, and, when he marries,
589] he buries the doll with a piece of wood representing the wife of the deceased.

845 Twins are replicas of Faro, their presence is beneficial, and they are considered invulnerable.

826
833 The albino is supposed to be the issue of sexual relations held in sunlight, a breach of taboo. He, too, is a new being. His wanzo
904 is so active that the circumciser must take great precautions before operating on it.

826
782 He is considered to be endowed with special powers which make him a choice victim for the sacrifices offered to the spirit of the water.

553
326 To the children of blacksmiths, the name is given near the paternal forge in the presence of all the artisans. An old man prepares seven little sticks, giving each the name of an ancestor. Three of these are drawn at random from the group, and the third gives the name of the baby. The head of the baby is rubbed with the axe Kongobwona, and his shaved hair is soaked in sacrificial blood.

553
782 In the Bamako region two chickens or a sheep are sacrificed to celebrate the name-giving. The distribution of the meat is made according to established custom. If it is a chicken, the patriarch receives the head and the gizzard, while the wing and white meat go to the old woman who washed the baby during the first eight days. If it is a sheep, the patriarch receives [91] the ribs (because they are a bulwark, and the patriarch is the defender of the village) and the heart; the blacksmith receives the shoulder; the infant's family gets the head (so that the infant will go ahead), the back (symbol of prosperity), and the limbs (supports one wishes the new-born to have); the blood which runs on the ground is destined for the infant's protective ancestors. Then the family divides the raw meat with the heads of family, and the old woman thus receives her part indirectly.

c. Circumcision

881
304
831 A male infant is born, but he still keeps (because of the primordial twinship) the prepuce as the physical support of the female sex. He will only be freed of this by circumcision. It is this operation that definitively determines his sexual qualification and renders him fit to contract marriage.

^a[i.e., the surviving child of twins. -Analyst]

181 the kingdoms from each other; for him a mineral is not a vegetable
811 nor a vegetable an animal. He differentiates between the animate
772 and the inanimate and does not confuse the genera and species. Bût
has he known how to establish a definite, clear, and well-demarcated line of distinction between man and the rest of creation? No, he bases his ideas of all things on himself or, to be more definite, on what he feels and believes himself to be. In addition to genii and spirits, he sees conscious forces and energies everywhere in nature. He cannot define these forces; his ideas on the subject are confused and indefinite. But, nevertheless, it is true, that he attributes a glimmer of reason and feeling to everything. Obviously the black man does not attribute a soul -- in the sense that we understand it -- to everything; nor does he say that everything is the home of a genie or a spirit; yet he cannot conceive of pure matter. He finds instinct in animals and special virtues and properties in plants. In inert matter he encounters phenomena which he cannot explain, and since he always uses himself and his reasoning as the basis of comparisons, he endows everything with the immaterial, invisible, imperceptible attributes of reason and feeling. In his mind I repeat, matter is not a soul, or a genie as he conceives of one; yet it is a being, a force, a power that has its own existence and the ability to act of its own accord. Here are a few examples taken from a thousand:

811 In July, 1908 at the time when the crops were sprouting, cer-
731 tain regions of the Ségou circle were invaded by tiny caterpillars
measuring barely 0.025 meters in length. They were a beautiful
782 velvety black with pale green lines on their sides; they came from the
825 east out of no one knows where and myriads of them proceeded toward the west in serried ranks. Wherever they passed everything was eaten, and the eleusine /African millet/, corn, and sorghum had to be resown.

While these creatures were devouring the crops, the Moslem cried his insignificant formula toward the east and repeated, "God is great." He prostrated himself, crouched on his heels, devoutly shaking his forefinger, but all was in vain, for the quivering black wave continued to draw back on itself, to hump its back, and then to grow longer /14/; it continued to advance and to grow. The pagan

811 whitened the front of his dwelling with a mixture of millet flour and
131 water that had been offered to the shades of his ancestors, and poured
chicken blood here and there; then he thought it best to meet in
782 council and consult his sorcerers. The same orders were given every-
825 where: a potentate, perhaps a prince, doubtless of the caterpillar people, was celebrating his wedding and respects must be paid to him. All the pagan villages did so, and the marriage of the caterpillars took place one fine morning at daybreak. Two or three caterpillars were placed at the bottom of old worn-out gourds and carried far up a path on the west side and out of the village by a procession of women and girls, singing and dancing, and preceded by furiously beating drums. They placed the little creatures on a spot determined by the elders and, after a wild dance they made their farewells, foolish farewells, stupid perhaps and yet nevertheless touching. For if the young people called to them with a long burst of laughter: "I na somaon fo (you will greet your people), " and some old shrews in a tone of command cried: " Ta so! (Go home!), " there were more who said to them: "Toumouni (little caterpillar), an bi déli (we implore you) have pity on us, go back now to your kingdoms; everything is eaten, and there is nothing left. Go, bring greetings to the people of your family, greet them all and greet them well. "

They continued to come through for at least eight days, but their number decreased and a storm came and swept them away. Every Bambara will tell you that these caterpillars do not talk, that they have no soul. And yet if you try to make him understand that he has rendered them futile, useless, childish honors and that they could neither enjoy his music and songs nor understand his prayers and supplications, he will shrug his shoulders: "Tigné o (you are right), " he will tell you with a mocking air, and cutting your talk short will add: "Ou tara!", and one who knows the Bambara will guess the full implication: "Nevertheless, they left."

In August, 1908 a large part of the population of the villages
825 located in the environs of Ségou spent the day of Friday the twenty-
787 eighth in sweet idleness. Since I knew that a Kono fetish brought
by its masters to recruit initiates was going from village /15/ to

7

776 In a word, "if you must work your wickedness on someone or on something, let it not be on our persons or on what belongs to us."

The spirits of the first group are gnéna (1), better known under the name of djiné (Arabic word الجنّ imported by the Moslems), and those of the second are gnâ, or boli.

As conceived of by a black man, the gnéna, or djiné, are not strictly speaking angels; they are beings intermediate between angels and men. Not only do they eat, drink, procreate, pursue well-being and wealth, they are also /31/ subject to the physical and mental suffering that afflicts human beings, and can die as the victims of the hate, vengeance, or wickedness of a stronger being. Their priests
[793
782] are the gnéna-n-sonna or dougoutigi (village chiefs whose jurisdiction is religious and often also civil), and the sacrifices which are offered to them are addressed indirectly and in a very vague and very confused way to a Supreme Being. This vagueness and confusion is apparent especially at the present time, since all ideas of the Divinity are disappearing more and more every day; but it is likely that, in the beginning, God had a greater part in the honors rendered to His deputies, to those whom He appointed as guardians of the elements, dividing among them the empire of His creation.

The djiné remain subject to the authority of the Creator. They have not cast off the yoke and, wicked though they may be, they have not ceased to be good. If they wish, they can do good, protect men, and grant them favors. They punish and chastise because they are above all responsible for the welfare of humanity.

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1. Women and also children often refer to both the djiné and the boli under the generic term gnena, and in the presence of the uninitiated, initiates use these words without making any distinction. It is nonetheless true that the word gnéna denotes a genie called djiné, and the word gnâ a genie called boli.

776 829 contact with the genii and know their family names, or diamou; however little they may be at ease with a Frenchman they will beg him to show them the place where a well should be dug, convinced that we know where live the spirits who are appointed to watch over water. Do we not bear them a certain resemblance?

776 The gnâ, or boli, also are sexed; they reproduce and found families. They are superior to the genii in power and wickedness, and, except indirectly, capable only of evil. They are at open war with God who, without taking away any of their intelligence or liberty, has condemned them tosuffer and to undergo the punishment of fire. They continually set up ambushes against the djiné to make their plans, good or evil, miscarry; they take pleasure in tormenting men, and the Bambara fears them greatly. The worship of the djiné is nothing compared to what is accorded them. Those considered most powerful have an entire retinue to serve them and to render them [651] honors and, as will be seen later, the head tax of 3. 50 francs per head is nothing compared to the sums the Blacks spend to ward off the blows of the boli and avoid their wrath.

Like the djiné, the boli appears in human form, but it is disgusting and hideous to behold. All those upon whom the favor of an appearance is bestowed are frozen with terror; the body of the boli is terrifyingly black, and its face disappears in a flame above which rise horns.

[782 822] In the sacrifices to the boli the liturgical colors are black and red, and a white victim is never offered except in an indirect sacrifice necessitated by an offering called saraka, which is quite rare. /33/

2. Sorcery and Priesthood

152 Surrounded by spirits, by genii always seeking to harm him, a Bambara is quick to believe that he is the victim of one. This attitude contributes more than a little to give him a certain endurance manifested in the face of suffering. I would even say that he usually bears suffering, not with stoicism but with the torpor of an animal.

152 After all, what can one do about an evil that cannot be exorcised
except to bear it? What can one do against a powerful being that
cannot be disarmed? Nevertheless, in the depth of his being he feels
a need to enjoy himself (and enjoyment for him consists in drinking,
eating, sleeping, and procreating); therefore he feels a horror of all
suffering and neglects nothing that can protect him from it. In order
751 to live in peace, he reddens everything a little with blood and covers
789 his body with grigris or good-luck charms, with talismans that change
the course of things and even of nature, and lastly amulets which will
forearm him against poison, help him avoid an accident, cause the
sorcery of the malicious to miscarry, send away the *gnâma* of the
genii, of the living and the dead, and prevent the unknown forces
which are found more or less everywhere in nature from taking hold of
the wearer. For this protection they address themselves to the priests
of the *djiné* and the *boli*, and especially to the sorcerers who have
close contacts with the genii and are the mediators between man and
the entire invisible world.

776 Since the Bambara conceived the visible and invisible world as
782 similar to what he believes himself to be, he has come to believe
quite naturally and without any effort that the genii can be seen and
conversed with their language understood and, finally, that it is possible to subjugate the forces of nature and hold them in one's power.
By making offerings and sacrifices or causing them to be made through
the intermediary of a priest, he can win a spirit's favor and thus
lessen his fears and terrors. But if the spirit is weak, they will be
ready to withdraw their attentions; it must be equal to the one feared
and if possible outdo it.

778 It is force, or, to use their term, *fanga*, that governs each
791 person's conduct toward his neighbor; to be obeyed, a man must first
cause himself to be feared, and only a powerful man will succeed
and see everything yield before him. /34/

The Negroes have seen people of low birth and poor family succeed in increasing their property and become rich to the point of where they have servants and slaves and dominate a whole village, a whole tribe, or a whole people. Since they like to reason from

794 789 and metamorphoses. Although I have no precise data, this coincidence leads me to think that the same is true of cannibals of the Ubangi.

782 To be convinced one need only be present at the sacrifices; no matter whether the offering is to the *djiné* genii, the *boli* genii, or to the shades of ancestors, there recurs, always, the phrase: "Deliver us from the *souba* and the *gné-fla*." One of the chief functions of the *boli* fetishes is just this, and there are some whose special and primary role is to make war against the *Siri* genii. One of these fetishes is the *Nama*, a powerful *boli* which is greatly honored, venerated, and, I should say, fashionable in the Ségou circle and among all Mande peoples. The *Ngouansa*, known especially in the Worodougou, is also said to specialize in this sphere. From time to time it makes its appearance in the Ségou circle, and its owner without fail does his bit of business and fills his purse. People run to him from all sides bringing hens, goats, and kola nuts, and I have seen these *Ngouansa tigi*, or masters of a *Ngouansa*, red with blood after spending the entire morning sacrificing. Before cutting their victims' throats, they stand, facing east with arms akimbo, and shout at the tops of their voices: "*Souba*, you are dogs, you are even less, the excrements of dogs, *oubou bo*."

791 825 824 Would the name of the *souba* and the *gné-fla* be heard so often from the lips of the Negroes, would families, villages, and sects /41/ spill so much blood or offer so many kola nuts, if they did not sincerely believe in them? Not only do they find an irrefutable proof of the possibility of metamorphosis in the fact that the caterpillar turns into a chrysalis which becomes a butterfly, they will also tell you that the winged termite, "that short-lived creature which on winter evenings comes in swarms around the lights, scattering wings everywhere, in the soup and on the plates," buries itself in the ground, swells like a sorghum seed, grows roots, and becomes a graceful shrub and then a beautiful tree provided it is spared by fire. I do not know the scientific name of this shrub or tree, but the Negroes call it *sandéré*.

761 "Koroya do, it is old age," but let us allow them to finish their sentences and continue their thoughts "a ko toun kadi Komo yé, he was beloved by the Komo," -- "à ko toun kadi Kono yé, Nama yé, Douga ye, he was beloved by the Kono, the Nama, the Douga," etc.

761 782 776 When people pass by holding a rooster or hen by the feet one may wonder where they are going; if one follows, one finds that they are going to the temple of a fetish, there to sacrifice and to redden their god with blood. "A toun koromé Alla sérà à ma, he was old and God came to him," is an expression which is rarely on Bambara lips. When it is heard, it is used with a very special meaning; it signifies that the old man in question was a good man, beloved by all, even by God, but by no means that God killed him. The sacrifices made on this occasion clearly demonstrate this, for they are all directed to a fetish. If God alone were the cause and not the fetishes, the family of the deceased would refrain from all sacrifice; at the very most, it would offer a saraka by order of a sorcerer, but even the saraka offered to God -- and they are offered to Him -- is not a sacrifice, as we shall see later.

761 778 The priests of a djiné fetish and the owners and priests of a boli fetish have the consolation that they always fall under the blows of the genie which they hold and to which they sacrifice. As for other mortals, 80 times out of 100, and one might say even more without exaggerating, they are killed by a boli fetish. The Komo, Kono, Nia, Nama, and Douga fetishes etc., are the chief murderers, and entire villages are often decimated by them.

761 578 674 754 Although they are able to deliver blows on their own initiative, they are often only intermediaries, the agents of a depraved will to which they have offered their services; almost always there is either a thrown poison, korti, or a poison that is poured, dounkono. Thus sorcerors are consulted at every death; one is sought through their mediation. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the great maxim for the Bambara as for the Jews, and vengeance must be taken on the one who was able to win over the good graces of a fetish and force it to bring suffering or mourning into the bosom of a family. This vengeance is obtained through the intermediary of a fetish, and

776 182 In the mouths of the Bambara, the name of God is only a word! Although they acknowledge Him as sole and sovereign master of all things, Who created the visible, the invisible, and all that exists, although they believe Him capable of rewarding the good and punishing the evil even in this world (but suffering and death are rarely, or practically never, attributed to Him), they do not dream of praying to Him or invoking Him, and they who redden everything a little with the blood of victims leave God without an altar, without a priest, and without a sacrifice. They address Him directly only when ordered to do so by a sorcerer; and then they comply through fear, because they are forced to -- "djakoyala, by force," as they say so well, and their hearts are not in it.

They appeal to the Almighty Being indirectly, through the mediation of the fetishes called djiné, but actually this indirect appeal is barely noticeable -- their knowledge has been dimmed and is becoming dimmer each day, and the created has replaced the uncreated. As I will explain when speaking of the worship of the djiné genii, the mediator between the Bambara and the Divinity has risen to the detriment of God; He has been eclipsed and the mediator has taken His place.

000 This evolution of the Negro is in no way an ascending one; it is actually a decline, for from a more perfect state they have descended to a /63/ less perfect one, and from the less perfect they have arrived at a discord in which they bury themselves a little more every day. This is a strange evolution which in no way recalls the theories of rational evolutionists.

776 182 I have said that the Bambara address God directly by order of a sorcerer, and from time to time an individual, a family, or an entire village can be seen at a crossing of paths, in a bare spot outside the village, or sometimes even in the village under one of the great trees that shade the square, offering Him /millet/ flour mixed with water, hens, goats, and kola nuts. That is the saraka.

2. The saraka

782 Europeans -- civilian, military, or of the church -- easily confuse a saraka with a sacrifice, no matter how much they know of Bambara ways and customs. They do not even see that there is a difference, since sometimes it involves the shedding of blood. But even a bloody saraka is not a sacrifice; I even deny it the name of offering, for it is a tax, a tribute, and in my opinion that is the only appropriate name for it.

782 791 Private or public, with or without bloodshed, it is always performed on the express order of a sorcerer who, as we know, has intimate relations with the world of spirits and learns from them what the Divinity demands. When a sorcerer speaks and gives his oracles they are obeyed and carried out, so greatly are his threats feared, and it is all done "djakoyola, because forced." The saraka is given under his orders as the tax is given to the head of the circle.

782 778 In the eyes of the Bambara the saraka has no other character than that of a tax, a tribute paid either to the Divinity or to the fetishes. In February, 1907 the rumor spread in the villages around Ségou that the Komo fetish of Sioribougou had spoken. "Quick, give Death a hen through me in a saraka," the fetish said. "It is preparing to decimate you, and the only way left for you to disarm it is to give it a hen." The sorcerers confirmed this folly, the masters of the Komo found it to their taste, and not one head of a family dared refuse the hen that Death demanded. So they offered it, and the formula on this occasion was this: "The Komo of Sioribougou has ordered us to offer /64/ Death a white hen as a saraka. Komo, so-and-so makes this offering for himself and his family through your mediation; it is his saraka. If the wind blows from the east, may this hen preserve him from it! If it blows from the west, may it also preserve him! If the wind blows from the Ouorodougou (the country of the kola nut, the south), may this hen deliver him from it, and if it blows from the north may it deliver him from it also!" Cutting the hen's throat, the sacrificer of the Komo then added, reddening his fetish: "This is a saraka, the saraka which so-and-so gives to Death on behalf of himself, his wives, his children, and his friends.

782 The Komo of Sioribougou has ordered us to do this; its mother, 778 M'gouni Domba, informed it that we owe this saraka to Death."

The saraka, a term derived from the Arabic word (صَدَقَةٌ) 782 meaning "alms," is no less than compulsory giving of alms to God, the djiné genii, or to ancestors upon orders of a sorcerer; it really is a tax, a tribute which cannot be avoided and which is offered and presented (1) to the invisible beings.

1. Saraka di, "to give a saraka," is the Bambara expression.

A saraka is in no way a sacrifice, even when it involves bloodshed. Cutting the throat of a hen, a dog, or a kid does not in itself constitute a sacrifice, for otherwise we would have to conclude that every butcher and every cook sacrifices. He who cuts the throats must have the intention of making a sacrifice, and this intention is so essential that it is always expressed by the Negroes: "soni do, this is a sacrifice," he says as he makes the knife thrust. In performing a saraka, it is important for the officiant to say that he is not sacrificing, so he expresses his intention in the words: "saraka do, this is a saraka," and all present repeat after him: "saraka do, this is a saraka."

In every sacrifice there is a priest, and the responsibility is especially entrusted to him, but in the saraka there is no priest strictly speaking. Doubtless when a saraka is given by a village or a family, the head of the village or of the family is asked to officiate, but this is done out of deference, or by necessity if the saraka involved is given indirectly through the mediation of a fetish. In the case of a direct saraka the sorcerer himself can designate the person who should give it, and anyone, man or woman, is eligible; they need only be either circumcised or excised. Obviously, a woman is /65/ never [562] chosen for a public saraka. Where a man is available, a woman must step aside, and in order to safeguard the principles of the hierarchy a respected old man, an elder, is chosen in the absence of a priest.

At the end of a public sacrifice the sacrificer usually receives a choice morsel and the skin of the animal, and those present roast

782 the meat and eat it on the spot. When a saraka is given, barring a very special order by the sorcerer, meats, millet flour, kola nuts, and cowrie shells are left on the spot, and only the poor may take and eat them. Most frequently, the children of both sexes are called, and it is they who devour the meats and the flour. As soon as this food has been received, the leftovers are gathered and placed in a corner formed by two paths that meet or cross. When a saraka is offered by the whole village, a goat is almost always slaughtered, and the skin, folded in four or six ply, is tied with gnama fou (1), and then hung on the end of a pole at the entrance of the village.

A saraka is never given to the boli fetishes; it is given to djiné fetishes and to God. It may, or may not, involve bloodshed, and it may be given directly or indirectly. A direct saraka can be given by anyone, and by either a man or a woman; they need only be circumcised or excised, depending on their sex. But to offer a saraka, indirectly through the mediation of a djiné genie or of a boli (a boli is never intermediary in a saraka given to God), the owners and sacrificers of the djiné and boli genii must officiate, for they alone have the privilege of speaking and appealing directly to these gods. In saraka of this sort two simultaneous and distinct acts are always performed; in the case of a saraka involving bloodshed there is no doubt on this subject. The saraka animal has its throat cut in front of the fetish chosen as intermediary, and this fetish takes the responsibility of telling the rightful one that this slaughtering was done as a tribute or tax presented to him. And this procedure is in no way illogical, for it is not at all the flesh and bones of the animal that are given to the invisible being; it is the animal's life, the blood which contains its ni, or life. Two things are given in a saraka -- the material and the immaterial, and when it is indirect /66/ blood must necessarily be spilled for the benefit of the mediator, so that he can lay hands on the life of the animal given in tribute and offer it to the rightful one.

[824] 1. Bouhinia reticulata, commonly called "tree of Judea."

782 776 The saraka is the Bambara's only direct religious act toward their Creator and sovereign Lord. Although it is often performed and presented in the corner formed by two paths that fork or cross, it may be given anywhere, and I was right in saying that the Bambara God remains without priest, altar or sacrifice, and, strictly speaking, without worship.

776 777 3. The Bambara Belief in God is not of Islamic Origin any more than are their Ideas on Heaven, Hell, and the World of Invisible Beings (1)

1. Cf. J. Brun of the White Fathers, "Notes sur les Croyances et les Pratiques religieuses des Malinkés fétishistes /Notes on the Religious Beliefs and Practices of the Malinke Fetishists/," Anthropos, II, pp. 952-954.

772 776 777 Bambara notions of God, heaven and hell, and the world of invisible beings conform so closely to the teachings of the Koran, that we ask ourselves first of all if they were not received from the Moslems. Our surprise increases even more when we begin to study these people, for with respect to religion the only terms in which they can express themselves in present-day language are purely and exclusively Arabic. This is a fact, and the similarity is very easy to establish.

The angels -- Bambara méléké, Arabic malaïka ملائكة -- are spirits -- Bambara hakili, Arabic 'aqal العقل --, superior to the genii -- Bambara djiné, Arabic el-djin الجن --, beings intermediate between men and angels and to whom God has entrusted the custody of the elements. The good angels are in paradise -- Bambara ardjana, Arabic El-djanna الجنة -- up there in the blue sky and constitute the heavenly court of the Creator and sovereign Lord of all things, God -- Bambara Alla, Arabic Allah الله --, the cause of good and evil. God rules seven heavens and seven terrestrial globes placed one above the other, and the wicked angels

771 If the Bambara have fought to safeguard their independence,
181 they have done so primarily to preserve their faith and keep their fetishes. They have shown such great attachment for these, that their
[101] conquerors have described them as rebels and applied to them the epithet Bamba, synonym of Kafri. These religious struggles in themselves allow us to state as an indisputable fact that before the arrival of the Moslems the Bambara were animistic and sacrificed to genii. /69/

776 Did they have an exact and precise idea of their genii as they
811 do now? Apparently yes, for they always reasoned using themselves as a basis of comparison so that in their minds the invisible, impalpable genii to whom they sacrificed had a striking resemblance to man. It is not a man, and yet it is one, they say unable to define their concept or idea, ma si fa do (1).

776 The Moslem word djin translates this idea precisely, and the
782 Bambara use it in everyday language; but when the day of the sacrifice comes, they become unaware of it and there remains only one word -- ma, meaning "man." When they redden with blood the bark of
[824] the baobab (Adansonia digitata), the tamarind tree, the false cedar (family of the cedrelaceae), etc., to obtain the good graces and protection of the genie who dwells there, they always confer on it the title ma ("man"), and never that of djiné. "Ma n'zira ba, ma n'tomi ba, ma djala ba; O great baobab man, O great tamarind tree man, O great false-cedar man!" begins the formula used by the sacrificer in offering victims and millet flour to the genie (2). They also have

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1. Ma; "man"; si fa' "certain kind"; do; "it is."

114 2. In /J. Henry/, "Culte des esprits chez les Bambara /Spirit Worship among the Bambara/," Anthropos, Vol. III, No. 4 (1908), p. 1 /p. 702/, note 1, there is an error in translation.

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> Ma n'zira ba, etc., does not mean "great baobab of man." The real meaning is: "O man who is a great baobab." In writing it I prefer a "z" to an "a." Usually the Bambara [194] soften the hard sound by a euphonious little "n." With a hard "s" the word sira cannot be distinguished from the word "tobacco": sira siramougou, "snuff tobacco"; n'ziremougou, "baobab flour."

776 a purely Bambara term to express their idea /of these spirits/, and
782 they to the word djiné; they call them gnéna.

Before the arrival of the Moslems, the Negro sacrificed to beings
776 to whom they have attributed bodies and souls, although imponderable
782 and invisible, who are intermediate between men and angels and whom
177 the Arabs call الجِنّ el djiné. But they also sacrificed to evil
798 beings, superior to the former in power, whom they call boli. The legend of the boli, an ironic legend which I will tell in full when I discuss this matter, is sufficient proof of this belief. For the Moslems of the Sudan only two things here below /70/ are worthy of attention: Mecca (Makka) and Stamboul -- old Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Constantinople -- who in their eyes, as in the eyes of all Moslems of our colonies, is the great Pope of Islam. Everything that does not bear the stamp of Mecca, everything that does not come from Stamboul, is to be rejected and scorned. Thus the Bambara, fertile in expedients, quickly managed to find a way out of their discussions with the propagators of Islam: "All our boli come from Mecca," was their weapon of war.

776 The Bambara were pursued from every side, unable to perform
177 publicly even religious ceremonies in honor of simple genii. Can
798 one believe that they added others that were still more terrible? As conquerors the Moslems have always ruthlessly opposed idolatry, destroying its temples and overthrowing its altars. "Believe or die" has always been their motto and always will be as long as they feel

776 out of the Bambara's need to soften their crime of idolatry and to pre-
177 serve it by lending it extenuating circumstances. If the cradle of
798 Islam is Mecca, if its superiority is derived from the holiness of that
city, chosen and beloved by God (1), what can the Moslems want of
him, the Bambara, whose religion comes from this same much vaunted
city? And if the God of Whom the Moslems preached to the Bambara
has decreed everything (2), good and evil, if He is the Author of both
good and evil and leads each person along the course that pleases Him
to such a degree that he no longer has freedom of choice, why wish
to take from them that which God has given them, that which comes
to them from the holy city of Mecca!

776 The Bambara term for the boli is gna. Their idea of them
796 corresponds closely to the Arab concept of the chéitane شيطان ,
● 782 and in everyday language, they define them by a single word: sétané,
[192] "satan," even though this word is never on their lips in the sacrifices.
In their nocturnal orgies and religious dances, the Negroes' notion
of the genie to which they are sacrificing are shown in concrete form.
And when, in their religious ceremonies in honor of the Komo, Kono,
[178] Nama, etc., the spirit appears by the glow of little fires lit in the
sacred woods, decked out in a cloak of feathers, his head hidden in a
huge horned mask that has nothing human about it, one cannot help
776 thinking of the tales of old Breton grandmothers, told on a winter
796 evening in the stables. The blasting of trumpets, bamboos, and koba
534 horns (3), the tinkling of /72/ the little bell, and the shouts of the
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1. See what I said above on the subject of Mecca and Stamboul.

2. See the Koran: VI, v. 3 - 39; X, v. 99; XIV, v. 4; XVII, v. 32; XXXVI, v. 6, 7, 8, 9; LIII, v. 43, 44, 45 - 49; LXXVI, v. 29; LXXX, v. 29; etc.

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3. Formerly the trumpets and horns were ivory. The Moslem tyrants quickly had them confiscated, no doubt because they knew the price of an elephant tusk. At present the Bambara use only cattle horns and those of the koba, a large antelope which grows to the size of a fine heifer. (Koba is the word that designates this antelope in the Peul language; the Bambara call it dadjé, "white mouth," no doubt because it has two white lines on its jowls.)

crowd grip and terrify you and make you think yourself transported into the midst of a sabbath of long ago. When one has been present at these scenes, one does not doubt the veracity of the Negroes who say: "When the boli appears it is hideous and freezes with fear whoever sees it. It is as black as soot and its face disappears in a flame above which there are horns."

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The face disappearing in a flame inevitably recalls the idea of an infernal spirit, and one who has been present at certain sacrifices to the Komo and the Nama, for example, and has heard the blasphemies of the sacrificer no longer doubts that it is Satan himself that is worshipped here. The blasphemies are repeated by all those present: Alla k'an bla, "may God leave us" (the real meaning: "We do not want God"); Alla djampa ba, "God is a great traitor" (meaning: "God makes promises and does not fulfill them, since he has decreed everything and his decrees are immutable"; A yé né djampa, "he has betrayed me," says a Negro of someone who has made him a promise and has not kept it). One is further convinced by being present at the sacrifice to Touafé Bla (1), one of the most ancient boli. The

1. The name Touafé Bla undoubtedly comes from the custom of suspending

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this boli from the belt and hanging
it at the side along the thigh.

three most famous sorcerers, whose names -- Makono, Tjewolo, and Tjéba -- have been preserved, but whose origin is lost in the dark of ages, sacrificed to it by preference. This is the formula:

"Touafé Bla, Touafé Bla, the mountain of Touafé Bla is known, the trees of this mountain are known, I want to speak of the fire of its mountain. Touafé Bla, spare some houses (meaning: 'those of my friends') and go and kindle (your fire) in others (meaning: 'cast ruin and desolation among my enemies, among those who wish me ill'). Touafé Bla, favor me, and if I cannot see your fire, Touafé Bla, let me at least see the tip of its long column of smoke (meaning: 'you live in the fire; I cannot see your dwelling, but I can still know your power through the smoke of your fire, that is to say, /I shall know it/ if I am a witness of the misfortunes which you will cause to fall on my enemies and those whom I hate'). " /73/

This formula shows us clearly that the boli, or gnâ, live in fire. The Negroes sacrificed to them before the arrival of the Moslems, and gave concrete form to their concept of the infernal spirit, just as they do today, by decking themselves out in a hideous horned mask and a cloak of feathers. Their blowing and shouting in the sacred woods on the days of great orgies have remained the same, and although they have taken the words sétané شَيْطَان, and djahanéma جَهَنَّم, from the Moslems, they have had the concept for a long time. [192]

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Now then, as to the Bambaras' knowledge of the Supreme Being, God the Creator and Ruler, Lord of all, do they owe it to the Moslems?

The Bambara have too hierarchical a nature to need a master here! The youngest child is always the slave of the next older brother, who is the slave of an older one, and so the progression moves up invariably without ever changing, to the grey beard, the elder, the tjekoróba, a real fetish whom everyone obeys, whatever his stupidity, his narrowness of mind, or his lack of judgment.

In every family there is the same progression: the immediate lord of the children is their father, while he in turn bows before his

776 and for all, and since then He has simply lived, resting in sweet "idleness" .... Let us not think, however, that the Negro is without religion; he is excessively religious and he spends his life sacrificing, squandering flour, and scattering the blood of victims uselessly, for the sole benefit of vultures.

Believing that he can expect nothing from God, he calls upon the djiné or gnéna who are in charge of the elements, each having absolute power in its sphere. Doubtless the latter are unable to change the whole universal order established by the Creator and Soverign Lord of all things -- au tigi ("our Lord") ani fen /85/ bè tigi yé ("and Lord of all things") --, but they can grant a material (1) blessing, turn away a misfortune, and reward or punish.

The gnéna is reminiscent of the djin of the Koran (Chap. VI, XXX, VIII, XLI). It is a being intermediate between men and angels. "Ma si fa do do, it is a kind of man, " say the Negroes, and in fact it does resemble a man since it eats, drinks, amuses itself, marries, and has children. /2/ Many even believe them /gnéna/ to be clothed, and in the late evening it is not unusual to hear a storyteller /conteur/ say of them: "Sanou b'oufé. Wari b'oufé. Bagi fana b'oufé. They have gold. They have silver. They also have fabrics." Above all they have might! They are powerful, and although some people wear
776 little bags of cloth or leather and strings with seven and nine knots --
751 as amulets --, and claws of wild animals, deer and goats horns, tafo

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●[782] 1. A Negro does not have the idea of asking a supernatural blessing.

2. In the sacrifices it is called ma, "man, " and the name of the object in which it is found is added to this word. Thus ma djala ba, "great false-cedar man, " etc. /No text reference to this footnote. Tr./

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3. *Gnéna* Who Roam the Village and Its Environs

These *gnéna* like especially to sit where paths cross and somewhat resemble the *gnâma*, even though they are different (2). They

2. See what I said about the *gnâma* in the first chapter.

protect from spells and sorcery, give health and exorcise sickness, and it is not unusual in the morning at daybreak or in the evening just as the sun is about to disappear to see men and especially old women sprinkling a little clear water here and there at a crossing of paths. They are interceding for children and grandchildren or for a member of the family who is sick and lying on his mat, or they are imploring the *gnéna* to protect them from an enemy or an evil spell, or to shelter them from the *gnâma*.

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Although these *gnéna* have no official priest, they nevertheless receive many gifts, and there is no circumcised man who does not feel obliged to make them his small offering, at one time or another. At crossings of paths one throws them preferably flour mixed with water, cowrie shells, milk, hatching eggs, ashes of herbs and plants, gruel, kola nuts, and sorghum cakes. At children's festivals the fodder is thrown to them in greater abundance; the cakes pile up at the entrance of the village (to the great joy of dogs and hens), and the ground is moistened with a light dew of blood (3). On the second day of the

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3. All these offerings are made by the order of a sorcerer and are called *saraka*. See what I have said about the *saraka* in Chapter IV, Section I, "Belief in God."

drinking bout, which corresponds to the festival of the كبش (sheep), the *soli* girls, who are shortly to be excised, throw them the remains of the *basi k'li* in great handfuls without counting. *Basi k'li* is the name given to the repast provided for the whole village on this

776 day by the soli (those who are to be excised). It is a kind of semolina
782 (very fine couscous called basi) which is eaten with an /88/ extremely
304 spicy sauce of smoked fish. It is called basi k'li because, in order to
262 provide this repast, the little girls are obliged to run from door to door,
clapping their hands, singing and begging (k'li).

Among the invisible wanderers, there is one which is strongly
776 reminiscent of our "werewolf." It is the souroukou, an imaginary
825 hyena, whose supposed existence has brought about a strange practice.
514 Every evening one sees groups of little boys and groups of little girls,
turning aside a little into the bush: they all go in a band to take their
last precautions and attend to the wants of nature -- union is strength
even against the gnéna.

776 Many other gnéna are among this group that roams the village; they flutter in the b'lon or entrance huts, they live in horrible filth, hung over doors, on the walls, and on the posts that support the terrace roofs, and the only hangings to be seen anywhere are eggshells, heads of millet, fruit pits, and seeds from the bush, which are offered to these friends as saraka. Nor are private huts without them, for the gnéna roll in the ashes of the hearth, snore on the mats, and take the air in the conari (1); there are some everywhere.

[415] 1. The conari is a baked earth receptacle used for water, beer, and cooking food.

Finally, there are gnéna or djiné who are powerful. Without mercy for their enemies, whom they abandon to all kinds of sorcery and evil spells, they are full of both attention and consideration for their friends. They can cause sickness, poverty, and other calamities to descend on a family, a village, or a whole region; but they can also side with them against a visible or invisible enemy; they can protect them, exorcise anything, and grant real blessings to each and all. The characteristic trait of the gnéna, in fact, is not that they can refrain from doing harm, but that they can also do good directly by performing a good act. Some choose to live in a rock, others prefer a knoll or a large tree near the village, and there are those who

776 do not disdain to frolic in the bottom of a well or pond and keep cool there. These last are put in charge of the elements in a very special way. Although endowed /89/ with a divine virtue, they are still far from gods and are only intermediaries between human beings and the Divinity. This last idea seems to be in the background, almost disappearing, and yet, if one has the patience to listen to the old men and let them express themselves, one quickly sees that they still have it, even though ill defined and very confused, and one can believe that in the beginning the worship of the gnéna was a direct worship, offered to the Divinity through their mediation. Men, women, children, everybody takes part in the worship of the gnéna; although there is one, koté (kouéré in Bani), whose mysteries are veiled, its sect is only semioccult, and the entire population takes part in the festivals held in its honor. Barring a formal order from the sorcerer or the 776 822 impossibility of obtaining items in the liturgical (1) color, everything used in this worship -- victims, kola nuts -- is white, and among the Negroes white is the symbol of innocence and purity.

776 782 "Primitive peoples admit the existence of superhuman powers," says Nicolay. "When these are supposed to inhabit certain objects in the form of spirits, genii, etc., that is animism." /*/ This

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1. The reason for a failure to conform to the liturgy is always announced before a saraka or a sacrifice.

/* Fernand Nicolay, Curiosite's des lois et coutumes - Histoire des croyances, superstitions, moeurs, usages et coutumes (selon le plan du Décalogue) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. The History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Ways, Practices, and Customs (according to the outline of the Decalogue). Vol. I, prop. 13. Paris: V. Retaux, 1901./

776 782 definition fits closely with what we have said about the gnéna, and the worship of these genii is indeed animism and not idolatry. And since, according to Burton, fetishism is less adoration than a propitiation of animate or inanimate objects to which a mysterious power is attributed, the sacrifices and saraka offered by the Bambara to their genii are acts of propitiation rather than of worship.

776 To give the reader a more precise notion of the worship of the gnéna -- and they are legion -- I will divide the powerful ones, those of the third group, into eight categories: the genii of ponds, springs, and wells; the genii of the crops; those who protect children; and those who protect circumcised youths; the genii of the women, that of twins; the dasiri, protector of villages; and the koté or kouéré, a special genie of a semioccult sect. All these genii have their priests, their sacrifices, and their saraka, but since all are not equal in strength and power, the extensiveness and formality of worship is not the same with respect to all. /90/

4. Genie of Ponds, Springs, and Wells

776 782 823 There are genii splashing around in all ponds, springs, and wells, and our Negroes think that in order to obtain their good graces they are obliged from time to time to offer them a trickle of /millet/ flour and water, the blood of a white hen, or a mouthful of chewed kola nut, On the edge of a well, at the mouth of a spring, on the edge of a pond, and finally on the banks of a river, offerings, sacrifices, and saraka are made, and their purpose is to prevent our Kneippist genii from escaping. If they leave displeased they take with them the water without which people cannot live, and the spring dries. There is total drought, a terrible misfortune -- for what can become of them without water!

The sacrificer to the water genii is quite often the head of the family on whose land the spring is located. Usually this honor goes by right to the head of the quarter; there are even villages where the sacrificer is none other than the religious head of the village, the gnéna-n-sonnoba /sic/, who is priest of the dasiri, the genie protector of the village.

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Most frequently these genii are given saraka, but a hen is sacrificed each time the wells are cleaned: it is in good taste to do so, and few villages depart from the rule. Once a year a public sacrifice is offered to them, with a degree of formality that varies according to whether the sacrificer is merely the head of a family, the head of a quarter, or the head of the village. Since the women spend a good half of their lives around the wells, they are almost everywhere the ones who provide the materials for the sacrifice.

5. Genii of the Crops

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When planting time comes, the Bambara, who are farmers above all, blossom out with sacrifices and redden just about everything with blood. The head of the family does not forget the genie of the seed. He offers it a saraka at home and sometimes a sacrifice, and unless he is very old and helpless he appears at the field on the day when the first pinch of seed is consigned to the earth. Before /91/ the /sowing/ is begun a hen's blood must be offered to the genie of fertility, which is responsible for watching over the seed and causing it to sprout and grow, and it is he that makes this offering, unless he has delegated this duty to his eldest son or his brother (the one next after him in seniority).

The departure for the field at planting time has its own unique characteristics. A child (if there is one in the family, obviously) is given the gourd (1) containing the seed, and in the name of the genie the father gives him orders and admonitions. On the way out of the hut the child pays his respects to the shades of his ancestors by placing the gourd on the threshold, and leaves quickly, proud as Artaban. He must be careful not to stop on the way unless he has to, and, above all, he must keep silent so that the spirits that fly here, there, and everywhere remain ignorant of what he is carrying and cannot attack the seeds in the millet grain. Anyone who talks runs a grave

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1. A pumpkin cut in two, emptied and dried in the sun.

776 risk of spoiling the crop -- o be gno soun tigné ("it destroys the vitality
241 of the seed of the millet grain").

782 These genii do not have special festivals in the course of the
year. Their priests, the heads of families, offer them saraka and
sacrifices at planting time, and some of them sacrifice a hen in the
corner of the field while the crop is sprouting and growing, but that
is all.

6. Genii Protectors of Children

It is not until circumcision that Bambara children take part in
889 the mysteries of pagan worship, but they are early prepared for it so
794 that they may be introduced to the law of secrecy which they must
776 strictly adhere to later when they are initiates of an occult sect. At
about the age of seven or eight years, they become affiliated with an
association worshipping the genii responsible for protecting them.
All these sects are alike, differing only in name. On the banks of the
825 Bani and the Niger, the object of worship is the tauri (toad or frog),
and the croaking of this animal is imitated in their festivals; some
villages have the djara (lion) and imitate its roar by whirling their
534 slingshots, small boards four fingers wide and one to two centimeters
long, attached to the end of a string. The most widespread /children's
824 genie/ is n'tomo, which undoubtedly gets its name from the tree in
which it lives (the /92/ jujube tree, n'tomo). It makes children hale
and hearty, preserves them from sickness, defends them against the
invisible little creatures of the bush, against spells and sorcery, and
makes them strong, steadfast, and impervious to suffering.

The confraternity of the n'tomo is modeled after that of the boli. (This is true of both kinds -- for there are two; a white costume is worn to the dance for n'tomo djé and a black costume for n'tomo fign). In order to be admitted one must offer a hen to the child who is head of the n'tomo (the n'tomotigi), prostrate oneself before the tree of the genie, and swear to keep the secret and never to speak of the n'tomo to the uninitiated, especially not to little girls.

796 825 782 A great sacrifice to the spirit protector of the village, the dasiri, is made every year. The spirit always has a mount such as a snake, a rat, a lizard, a donkey, etc.; almost everywhere the mount is a terrible billy goat that roams through the village, enters everywhere, eats everything, and breaks everything without paying attention to the switch. For at least three days at the time of the sacrifice. the village makes merry; men, women, and children dance, stuff themselves with food, and drink and get drunk.

796 782 Just as everyone takes part in the feasting and drinking, so all participate in the sacrifice, even the women, who at least go to the edge of the sacred grove, though they do not enter. And /101/ there is an abundance of everything: dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, d'lo, or millet beer, and finally meats. At least a goat, and sometimes a bull, is killed for the whole village, and the heads of families offer goats and hens, depending their wealth.

782 778 776 In addition to the sacrifices offered once a year and those offered by a family when one of the children marries, the fetish receives homage and tribute from just about everyone. Sterile women and those who habitually miscarry offer it many hens and fawn upon the animal that is its mount. If one gives birth to a baby, one consecrates it to the fetish, calling it dji-ri-ba ("great tree"), gnéna ma ké (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"; ké, "male"), or gnéna ma (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"). They even like to add the name of the village where the bountiful dasiri is found: Kolotomo gnéna ma (1), /102/ (man or daughter of the dasiri genie of Kolotomo). Actually, the name gnénama is given only to girls; for boys the word ké ("male") is added: gnénama-ké.

776 778 824 It is known through the mediation of sorcerers that a dasiri sometimes leaves its sacred grove and its tree. This event is unusual; the tree may fall from old age, but the sacrifices will be continued

1. Kolotomo, the name of a village about 30 kilometers from Ségou; gnena, "genie"; ma, "man."

Chapter 6

Worship, Celebrations, Saraka, Sacrifices, and Dances in Honor of the Gnéna

1. The First Two Groups of Gnéna

781 The fundamental bases of all Bambara devotions are first, and
776 above all, fear and secondly, the desire to have everything without
effort or work. The Bambara respect a strong, powerful being because
it can punish and reward, and since their fetishes are not equal in
power, they take care not to honor all equally.

776 The genii of the first two groups have no priest or official
782 minister, and public, solemn sacrifices are offered them very rarely.
852 In the dry season, however, some festivals are held in their honor.
The chief participants are children, who on these days stuff themselves
with /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, and with
sorghum cakes. When they are full they take the leftovers outside the
village to a place where paths cross, and many hens, dogs, and other
animals come for the booty. The poor and unfortunate also come, for
735 they, too, may take their share; every saraka (1) belongs to them.

1. Tax, tribute, alms.

776 Little girls and boys take part in these festivals, but there is a
852 special one for unexcised girls, and those who are soon to be excised
and are getting ready for this great event in Bambara life bear /106/
all the expenses. It is the celebration of soli basi k'li (1), of which
I will speak at greater length in my chapter on circumcision,

1. Soli, "young firls who will soon be excised"; basi, a kind of couscous with very small grains which distantly resembles semolina; k'li, "obtained by singing and clapping hands."

000 I will speak at greater length in my chapter on circumcision.

776 Although the individual worship of the lesser genii by one per-
782 son or family is seldom public -- except sometimes temporarily, it
nonetheless involves an enormous waste of /millet/ flour, kola nuts,
cotton, cowrie shells, etc. Nevertheless, there are very few sacrifices
in these offerings; most frequently, if not always, they are *saraka*,
or alms, and a kind of tax or tribute since they are obligatory.

782 They are, in fact, obligatory alms, paid by an individual, a
191 family, or a whole quarter of a village, upon the command of a
sorcerer. Some sorcerers who have renown or want to acquire it
manage to prescribe these taxes for an entire village and, sometimes,
even for a whole region. The occurence is not unusual; I have seen
it happen every year. A shrewd operator from Bélé Koun in the circle
of Sikasso, crosses the Bani in every dry season, and there is not a
village in the circle of Ségou but feels called upon to hand hens and
cowrie shells over to him and, in addition, afterwards to take a large
contribution to one of the nearby crossroads. In spite of his youth --
[787] he is twenty-five or thirty at most -- he is said to learn everything
by searching hens' entrails and crushing their viscera between his
fingers. He makes profit by predicting terrible calamities everywhere.
All his knowledge is summed up in the following words: "The genii
are displeased, offer a *saraka* and offer it quickly, for if you do not,
all children under three years old will die... goats, cows, horses,
and sheep will die... springs will dry up... the karité butter will
fail..., etc." In one place the words are those of a hyena, in
another, those of a cow, and farther away it is a wild pig that speaks.
And the *dégé* (/millet/ flour mixed with water) is spread and the
blood of hens flows in streams. In short, the people are always ex-
pected to give to the fetishes and the sorcerers, and to give everything.
Some occasionally balk and do not want to obey. The orders of the
sorcerer become urgent, his prophesies more terrible than ever; at
the end of his patience, he may spit out insults and /107/ curses,
and then everyone comes to offer the *saraka*. Even Moslems let
themselves be taken in.

782 In Bambara eyes, the *saraka* never has the character of a sacrifice.
As I explained at length in speaking of the worship of God, it is always

782 alms, an obligatory gift, and consequently a tribute or tax paid to the genii in order to consecrate to them an object, an animal, a person for the purpose of protecting oneself, of avoiding the risk of any disfavor or of receiving a blessing. That is its nature whether it is individual or village-wide, regardless of whether it does or does not involve bloodshed. The Bambara call this kind of offering saraka bo, saraka di (1).

782 754 Saraka are also offered to consecrate an object, an animal, or a person to the genii for the purpose of harming a neighbor. There is always a little magic involved in these offerings, and it is not unusual, at a short distance from the corner of land fromed by paths that join or cross, to find on the path a wad of hair, a bit of a horn, a box full of ashes, etc.

The Bambara performs this magic to help the fulfillment of his saraka, his entreaty; he is convinced that if his enemy touches the magic object thus thrown out at random, his vengeance will be more certain, prompt, and drastic. There is more to this symbolic magic: how many times have I seen, at these corners of land where the gnâma (2) stay and the saraka are held, a chicken heart fastened to the ground by a bamboo spike! Often someone will crucify a little animal, usually a lizard, on the ground, and a nail will be driven into the part where he wants his enemy to be stricken. For this kind of saraka the Bambara have a standard term, saraka da ma kan (3), ("to make a saraka against someone").

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1. Bo, "go out"; di, "give."

2. Fluids, conscious forces which cause death and sickness. See my chapter on the gnâma.

3. Saraka, "obligatory alms," "tribute," "tax"; da, "to place," "to put"; ma-kan, "on a man."

782 There are many kinds of saraka, and they are offered for just
851 about all purposes. Besides those given by order of sorcerers, there are some established by custom itself, and uncircumcised children are required to carry them out. They often hunt turtles, /108/ palm rats, guinea fowl, and partridges, so they plant a strong dry branch either outside the village or even inside it, and on its branches hang the heads of captured animals and the shells of eggs they have sucked. This is their way of thanking the genii, of ensuring other successful hunts, and of protecting themselves from the gnâma of their many victims.

782 The Bambara also give the name of saraka to some practices that are purely and simply superstitious and do not, strictly speaking, have the character of religious worship. In these instances the word saraka must be given a broader meaning than that which I have attributed to it. The old shoes, caps, fruit rinds, rags, etc., hung here and there on branches of trees are not so much a rendering of homage by the Black to a genie, to an external agent, as they are a tribute paid their own inner, personal, and unreasoned fear. In this respect they are like some Europeans, foster brothers of these idiots, who believe in the salt cellar, crossed knives, thirteen at the table, Friday, etc., who turn over the salad bowl before undertaking a serious matter, or slide a four-leaf clover into their vest pockets. And why? It brings good luck, causes success. And how? They cannot tell you, for with them it is not reasoned -- nor is it with the Bambara.

2. Gnéna of the Third Group;
The Eight /sic/ Categories of Powerful Gnéna

776 The third group of genii have their priests and ministers;
782 saraka are not enough for them, and they receive sacrifices. The
796 public sacrifices are annual, and the whole population -- men, women, and children -- participate. Dégé (/millet/ flour mixed with water), white hens, and white kola nuts are the usual material of the sacrifice, and the formula recited can always be reduced to the following: "Give us water; cause peace to reign among us, in the

776 village and in our families; grant us plenty and wealth, give us many
● 782 wives, healthy and vigorous children, and a long and hearty old age."
796 If the occasion is semipublic /109/ or public, a general sacrifice is always offered in the name of the family, the quarter, or the village, and then individual sacrifices follow. On the days when they are held, there are always dances and drinking bouts, for the favors of a fetish cannot be obtained except by leaping to the sound of drums and by getting drunk.

At the risk of repeating myself, I cannot resist giving the fascinating side of the Negroes' attachment to their fetishism and describing the festivals and celebrations in honor of the principal fetishes -- in order that the reader may gain a greater understanding and feeling for their worship.

The N'tomo, the Special Children's Fetish

852 796 The harvest is over, and the yield of the field cultivated by the children during the winter, together with the small donations received from the people of the village, allows the n'tomigi (head of the confraternity) and his siéré (aide, deputy) to furnish its initiates and the old men -- the latter are never forgotten -- with a plentiful feast of kola nuts, millet beer, or d'lo, and /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, or dégé. The day of the celebration is set by the head of the village and by the elders, and everyone prepares for it two weeks in advance. In the blon, or entrance huts, and in the
852 shade of trees, one sees nothing but old men cutting and sewing dloki,
796 bougi, bogo, and yaba (1), which will be worn for the first time on
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1. Dloki, a large blouse. Bougi, near Ségou, a kind of pants without legs; in Bani country, a strip of cloth three to four fingers wide which goes around the waist, passes between the thighs, and drops in back, forming flaps over the heavy part of the thighs.

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> The end of this strip is tucked up.
> Bogo, garment worn by girls until their marriage, consisting of a strip of cloth tied at the waist and falling in back to make a train.
> Yaba, boys' jacket, especially common in Bani country.

that day. A swarm of children patch the yellow or white blouses that will be worn during the dance, and grease and regrease the mask of the n'tomo. They pay special attention to the horns, which are often hidden under little thongs of red leather decorated from end to end with well-polished cowrie shells as white as snow.

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But now we come to the longed-for day! All the little rebels go single file to the fetish tree, and each carries the hen, its feet tied, which he intends for the sacrifice. They /110/ all take off their blouses -- the little undergarment allows freer movement and is less hampering -- and, after some whispering they finally end up squatting, fixing their big, black eyes on the leader, the n'tomotigi, who begins the sacrifice with the assistance of his aide, the siéré.

This little fellow is really funny, as with the solemnity of an old man he pours the dégé, sprinkles the blood of the hens, and noisily spits the remains of a piece of chewed kola nut onto the sacred tree, the dwelling of his genie. I do not doubt that he is convinced, and thoroughly convinced, that he is not addressing a tree trunk that has no consciousness; he believes that he is in the presence of who watches him, waits for him, and asks only to grant his wishes. Since he is addressing a powerful being, fear and emotion at first make him tremble; but gradually his voice grows firmer, and very clearly he pronounces his formula: "N'tomo ye, see this hen, a beautiful hen, isn't it? It is fat! n'tomo, on behalf of all of us I offer you this hen as a sacrifice. Favor us, defend us against the fury of the genii of the bush and against the malicious. Make us strong and vigorous, give us plenty to eat and drink, drive sickness from us. Give us water and a good harvest, n'tomo, and give wealth to our families."

852 After this special sacrifice come the individual sacrifices, and
796 the very young boys who are henceforth to belong to the n'tomo
782 prostrate themselves before the fetish tree and take an oath to reveal nothing to the uninitiated, and especially not to little girls. This oath is not at all trivial: "If you talk, if you reveal your oath," says the leader showing each one some black powder, "you will die." And they all reply without trembling: "May I die!"

852 When the rite of admission is over, each initiate plucks his hen
796 and draws it, and while the victims simmer over the fire in an earthen conari, the youngsters beat drums and abandon themselves to the dance, and so into a frenzy which continues under the eye of the fetish, in the shade of its preferred tree until the time of the feast. Each child in turn dances the dance of the fetish, which consists of leaps and capers and a graceful twirling of a flexible switch. To dance he dons
[292] the white or yellow blouse of the fetish (n'tomo ka dloki, "the blouse of the n'tomo"), which is white (dje) or black, yellow (fign, as I said in the preceding chapter) /sic/ /111/, and takes the horned mask, the n'tomo kongolo ("head of the n'tomo") by means of which he externalizes in a concrete form his concept of the genie.

Victims abound, and the feast is plentiful. There is enough for everybody, and there is not one on that day who does not lick his fingers and say with a smile: "Ne ne fara de! (1), How full I am!"

1. Né, "me," "I"; fara, "am full"; dé, "surely."

The little boys' families contribute much, for Bambara mothers and little sisters have good hearts. Thanks to them, every initiate can offer from 10 to 20 liters of dégé, the same amount of d'lo; and his gourd of to (gruel) holds enough to tire six to eight big eaters. In addition to the dessert, which is kola nut, each boy receives a new garment for himself and a light bogo and sometimes a tafé (2) for

[291] 2. Tafé, rectangular piece of cloth which the women wear around their hips.

852 Every time one of the three principal members of the staff,
794 wants to dance, respects are paid to them or to their leader, and all
day and all night nothing is heard but frightful "you you" and atrocious
cries. There is a protocol for everyone to follow, and before each
to-n-dé begins to prance in front of the drums, he goes and bows to
his leader to show his devotion and respect for him. He holds himself
like a spring, brandishes the gun, ax, or stick that he will use in the
dance, and in one jump strikes his feet together under the nose of the
one to whom he is paying his respects. The women are quieter and
show their respect by a genuflection before the master.

In addition to his staff the master of a n'golo, the to-n-tigi,
has pages, a standard bearer, trumpeters, and soldiers, and to vary
the program he goes here and there with his frenzied band to greet
an elder and give him a serenade. In some villages custom decrees
that the youths put on the best they have in the way of clothing;
in others, on the contrary, they must get themselves up in horrible,
dirty rags so that, on seeing them thus clad, one asks where they could
have dug up all these horrors. They must amuse themselves and be
[522] amused, laugh and cause laughter, and this last aim is always accom-
plished as they have such priceless mimics. /114/

The Mouso ka djiri, the Women's Special

776 It is impossible to know all the genii responsible for watching
796 over women, for they are legion. Every month, at the new moon,
831 the women organize a dance in their honor, and every year they make
a public, solemn sacrifice to them. The most widespread is the
mouso ka djiri, and its worship flourishes especially in Bani country.

When its festival comes, all the excised women offer it a little
/millet/ flour mixed with water, a hen, and two kola nuts, and the
head of the village, or, in his absence, an elder, goes and reddens
the bark of the fetish tree (1). There is no need for me to go into

[782] 1. Some people assert that they have seen women sacrificing. I have seen women perform saraka involving bloodshed, but never a sacrifice.

776 this sacrifice at length, for in the preceding chapter I stated the
796 function of the fetish; it may be imagined that the ladies and maidens
831 ask for whatever makes a woman strong and beautiful. Moreover, the indecent dances to which they abandon themselves under the sacred tree sufficiently reveal their inner thoughts. They have only one -- to show their breasts to the fetish and scratch their navels on its bark; in some villages custom demands this, and it is required of all. Young girls do it to develop their breasts, married women to become fertile, and all of them to be protected from the unpleasant accidents peculiar to their sex.

796 There is no festival without a feast and none without drinking, and the women offer the whole village sorghum gruel and beer for a drinking bout. They also offer kola nuts to all the elders and heads of families, and they know better than to withhold this treat from fathers, husbands, grown sons, older brothers, and those they love.

The Sinsin, the Special Twin's Fetish

782 The sacrifice to a sinsin is made on the umbilical cord which
845 is hung in the center of plates of woven grass that constitute the
778 fetish. Each plate belongs to one of the twins and even bears his
852 name. The sacrifices in honor of this fetish are always double; for each child separately, the family offers /millet/ flour /115/ mixed with water, millet beer, a kola nut, and a hen.

This is strictly a family fetish; the father of the family is its
845 priest, and only the children and their parents are present at the
778 sacrifices. Everything is done in a quiet and happy intimacy, and
852 although there may be a few drunkards here and there, there is never an orgy. Sacrifices to a sinsin are made very frequently to bring its blessing to the mother and children; they are also performed on all occasions of the slightest importance in the lives of the twins: when their hair is cut eight days after birth, at the tattooing festival, at circumcision, at marriage, etc. Once a year a more formal sacrifice is made; the women cook d'lo, the millet beer, and the

783 The *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, the *dougoutigi*, assumes office from the
782 first day and offers a sacrifice in the name of his people. On the trunk
621 of the tree, about a meter from the ground, he pours *d'lo*, or millet
778 beer, and *dégé*, or /millet/ flour mixed with water, and causes a
flow of blood from hens, roosters, goats, and sometimes from a young
bull. After this general sacrifice, individual ones follow, for, in
order to /118/ place himself under the protection of the genie, each
family head in order of seniority offers it a little *dégé* and a little
blood, through the intermediary of his leader, the priest. And on the
trunk of the tree there is nothing but great blood stains with feathers,
hairs, and shreds of skin stuck in their midst with the remains of
chewed kola nuts. Then come the dances, and men, women, and
children go into a frenzy at the sound of drums; and the tumult is
indescribable.

Sacrifices offered to the *dasiri*

778 A path a meter wide leads from the village to the fetish tree
782 which is always located in the middle of a small grove if possible.
796 Heads of families sacrifice to it several times a year -- on the morning
after the *konio*, or first night of marriage, for example, but the
festival in which the whole village takes part is annual. The ceremony has greater importance every second year, and every seventh
year it degenerates into an orgy.

During the sacrifice the women stay at the edge of the sacred
grove, and only the men and boys go inside and surround the fetish.
After an offering of *dégé* and a little *d'lo*, the throat of a sheep or goat
is cut in the name of the whole village, and the head of each family,
comes with hens, sheep, goats, etc., according to the family's means
and the number of members; the meat piles up. The hens are plucked
on the spot, the large pieces are cut up, and the women carry it all
back to the village. Each family head is given a piece as big as a fist
from the first sacrifice offered in the name of all, and this, too, is
[252] taken back to the village; the rest is roasted and then grilled on the
spot and eaten by the men, without salt, pepper, or any kind of
seasoning. The *dégé* and *d'lo* of the main sacrifice are drunk under

778 the fetish tree, the former by the children who smear themselves
782 and whiten their entire faces, and the latter by the men and circum-
796 cised youths (1).

1. By the main sacrifice I mean the sacrifice made in the name of the whole village.

After the noon meal men, women, and children go to the public square to drink beer, or d'lo, and to dance. /119/ The signal for the celebration is given by the gnéna-n-sonnaba, who makes a little speech inviting his children (né ka démisenou, "my children, " "my subjects") to have fun and to drink but to avoid fights and quarrels, and then launches into a quadrille. While he dances, the crowd stands bareheaded, cries "you you" loudly, and competes as to who will shake his spear or ax to beat the measure. This annual festival goes on for three or four days, as long as the d'lo, or millet beer, lasts.

776 All circumcised men and excised women may, through the
782 intermediary of the gnéna-n-sonnaba, offer a sacrifice to the genie
protector of the village. Anyone who thinks he has offended or dis-
pleased it offers one -- with or without bloodshed according to his
means -- to obtain pardon, propitiate it, and gain its favor. In-
dividuals sacrifice primarily to make requests; a di ("give it") are
the first words they were able to lisp as infants. A sterile woman
[842] will offer it a kola nut, dégé, a rooster or a hen at every moment,
always promising not to be miserly and to give more if she becomes
a mother. She will be especially assiduous toward the dasiri animal,
the mount of the genie of this name; she will coax it, stuff it with
bran, and will often go far into the bush to pick it a stalk of grass
or a leafy branch which are its delicacies.

776 Genii spirits can leave the spring, the rock, or the tree where
they have established their dwellings, and the dasiri is no exception
778 to this rule. If it does so, the fetish tree loses its sanctity, becomes
a common object, and can be destroyed. Similarly, all things in
the sacred grove, both plant and animal, cease to be taboo and can
be used for their customary purposes. The dasiri is not at all fickle.

776 778 It rarely leaves its tree; it likes its little grove and shady park, and in many places it is satisfied with a stump that is all blackened, worm eaten, rotten, and falling to pieces.

The formula of the sacrifice

782 781 When one is present at a sacrifice to the dasiri and sees the gnéna-n-sonnaba uncover his head, take off his large blouse, and crouch at the feet of the fetish, one expects something imposing and grand. Nothing of the sort occurs, and one is quite surprised to find so little gravity /120/ in such an important act. People enjoy themselves and chat; the priest, red with blood, tosses off witticisms and coarse jokes, and while feet and wings of the victims -- goats, sheep, and hens -- twitch in the agonies of death, nothing passes from one group to another but bursts of laughter that finally disappear far off at the edge of the grove where the women are.

782 The words in the sacrificial formula vary a little from one village to another, all depending on the volubility of the sacrificer. Nevertheless, it remains basically the same everywhere. After having greeted the fetish in his own name and the name of his subjects, he implores it to forgive them all the insults, offenses, and disrespect toward it, of which they have been guilty, voluntarily or involuntarily, during the entire year. He then calls it by a name related to the type of tree in which it is located -- e. g., ma ziraba ("great baobab man"), ma djala ba ("great false-cedar man"), -- and announces that he is going to sacrifice. While offering the dégé and d'lo, he implores it to protect them against the evils of the sons of the fetish siri, the souba (1), to preserve them from the souya maou (2), the

[754] 1. Sou, "night"; ba, "great." The souba are masters of the night who change themselves into hyenas or owls, dig up corpses, and eat human flesh.

2. Souyaké, "to prowl at night."

782 *gné-foula* (3), and from the *wokolo*, a little dwarf genie. He then asks for strength and health for all, for children who will be healthy, strong, and vigorous, and for wives. "Preserve us," he adds in closing, "from wicked people, discord, quarrels, and fights, from the rage of women who easily fall under the power of 'satan,' and from sickness; finally, give us rain, without which a harvest is not possible." Then he cuts the throat of a goat or a white sheep, and while he reddens the bark of the sacred tree with blood, he repeats his pleas and requests, and he says them again a third time while offering the kola nut.

At individual sacrifices nothing in the formula is changed. However, if the person on whose behalf the sacrifice is offered wants a special blessing or favor, he tells the sacrificer about it, and the latter states the request then and there. /121/

When the head of a family cannot be present at a sacrifice, his substitute gives the reason for his absence. Two witnesses then come to testify that the reason given is the true one and that there is no ill will whatever on the part of the absentee.

Sometimes a great clamor arises during the sacrifice, and one would say that people were fighting under the sacred tree, or at least arguing. ..

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781 Nothing of the sort is happening; the crowd is crying out against the fetish and interceding for an unfortunate whose sacrifice has not been accepted. It is known that this has happened when the hen does not fall on its back or its side with its feet in the air. The kola nut gives the genie's answer much more definitely. The sacrificer cuts it in two, holds the two pieces together between thumb and forefinger, and having touched the ground with them twice saying, "Tell us if you accept the sacrifice," he throws them at the foot of the sacred tree. If the two pieces fall with the pulp on top, no further doubt is possible; the sacrifice is accepted, and he repeats the same procedure again, saying, "Since you accept the sacrifice, tell us if

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3. "Two eyes," i.e., people with second sight.

782 you accept it at my hands." If one of the pieces falls with the pulp
787 on top and the other onto the pulp, there is an affirmative answer from the dasiri. The sacrificer bites the kola nut, cuts out with his teeth the piece that contains the seed, and, when he has chewed it a moment, spits the remains onto the bark of the fetish tree.

This procedure, wholly dependent on chance, is often long, for the pieces of kola nut do not always fall in the desired position at the first try. After three failures the crowd ceases to restrain itself and, with gestures and voice, each person intercedes for the unfortunate one. The cries do not stop until the kola nut gives the answer, "I accept and am no longer angry!"

The Semiocccult Society of the Koré, or Koté

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[461] The Bambara are, above all, farmers, and cultivating a field has such great importance in their eyes that for them it alone really deserves the name of work. One who does not handle the pick may be active and skillful, but he is not a worker and one does not say of him: "A bi ajaké, he is working." But will the seed that /122/ they consign to the earth in the winter sprout, grow, become large, and ripen? However little one knows the Bambara, one can imagine and understand their fears, for they are surrounded by a band of malicious spirits ever ready to pounce on them. Therefore they heed protectors and helpers, and at planting time they offer something to all, even to the rain. The main fetish to which they appeal is the koté, or koré, which lives in a tree in the middle of a small grove.

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534 In order to be present at the sacrifices to the koté, it is necessary to be initiated and to know the password. This initiation, may take place by day, but at least in Bani country, it usually takes place at nightfall when the setting sun takes on a bloody hue. The sons of the genie go in procession to the sacred grove. The korétigi, the priest, opens the march, preceded by musicians who beat the denouba (1) and the kingé (2). With him are the kârâ ma ("man of

794 796 korédé ("sons of koré"), and in all the province of Ségou, wherever a sacrifice is offered to the fetish, they may go into the sacred grove without any fear and take part in the mysteries. They have the password -- "djanté ma, man of djanté," and will know how to answer when interrogated by the souroukou (group of the hyena).

794 796 782 After the initiation the korétigi (priest of koré) proceeds with sacrifices. Everything happens as at the dasiri: after the libations of /millet/ flour (dégé) and beer (d'lo), the trunk of the sacred tree is reddened with blood, and all around the blood are tufts of fur and feathers stuck to the bark by remainders of chewed kola nut. A hyena mask called koré koungolo ("head /tête/ of koré") is also reddened with blood, as is the kârâ, the emblem of the genie which is used as an altar for deceased initiates. Part of the meat is taken to the village, and the rest is grilled on the spot and eaten without any seasoning whatever.

In the sacrifices, koré and those that form its court are asked to watch over the harvest so that it may be abundant, to watch over the flocks so that they may thrive, to provide the petitioners with their fill of food and drink all their lives, and to give them a vigorous old age, etc., and all this is requested for one sole purpose: "so that we may be able to enjoy a woman and devote ourselves to carnal pleasures."

794 796 After the repast the crowd abandons itself to the dance, and until morning there is an indescribable uproar and endless shouting. At daybreak they go to the public square, and as long as the beer (d'lo) lasts /125/ the orchestra makes bedlam in front of the drinkers who squat around full gourds, and the women sit on mats or tiny stools piled on top of each other, clap their hands, and answer the obscenities of the korodouga with further obscenities.

[535] The dance of the groups, in which all members, young and old, take part, consists of more or less comical contortions which they execute going around in a circle, one behind the other. The old men tire quickly and their throats soon get dry, so they are not slow to sit down and get drunk to please koré, and the young people then abandon themselves and dance to their hearts' content.

794 796 785 Two or three tatougoula, a flaming torch in each hand, open the dance. They scorch their backs, chests, and armpits, and

794 thousands of sparks rain onto their heads and bare bodies, and smoke
796 and sizzle on their skins before going out. The korodouga, armed with
785 leafy branches, chase the sparks. They devote themselves chiefly
to their obscene songs; their minds on the perforated gourds which
they shake furiously, and more than one dancer feels himself getting
roasted. And when the torches are almost burned out the tatougoula
squat before the big drum and for the last time shake the handful of
[522] burning straw that they have left. An obscene gesture provokes a
stifled laugh here and there, a "hou hou" from the souroukou, a roar
from the djara, a chuckle from the soula, and cries of encouragement
from around the gourds: "O do, that's it!"

While the djara /lions/ or sogo /beasts/, /wearing/ huge masks roar around the groups of drinkers, the ng'oni sama or wara tear their chests and their armpits with brushes of thorns, and the soula, grimacing and weeping, throw the group of women into confusion and put the children to flight. As to the bisatjila, they circle like lions in a cage, uttering wild animal cries and trying to excite themselves. Suddenly, as if seized by fury, they brandish their long, flexible whips. These whirl for a moment above their heads, whistle in the air, and then slap the flesh. The men strike hard; each blow leaves its mark or furrow, and /126/ blood often flows. They pale and tremble in all their limbs under the pain, but in spite of everything they strike and strike, for the instrument of torture must be worn to shreds and fly to pieces. At every blow of the whip the korodouga band throw themselves onto the victim and massage and rub him, and the souroukou lose themselves in indecent behavior in front of the great drum.

794 In addition to the sacrifice offered every seven years, there are
796 annual sacrifices to the koré, to the shades of its priests, the korétigi,
782 and finally to the shades of its initiates, the korédé. There is always
764 a sacrifice at the death of an initiate; the groups dance the sacred
dance, and for three nights there is the shouting and the indescribable
bedlam in the koré tou ("grove of the koré") of which I have told.

794 If the deceased initiate was an old man, a graybeard, he has
764 completed his whole career and his fellow-members come in great
numbers to pay him their respects. Before the corpse, which is laid
out under the trees which shade the entrance of the village, they

176 inanimate object, and whether the form it takes is human or animal, whether it resembles an eggplant, a potato, or a napkin ring, that form remains a boli as long /128/ as there is a piece left that is visible to the naked eye, and the boli never leaves it. In the case of the boli, there is such a close union between the object and the spirit that this combination becomes one and the same individual; it is the union of soul and body in order to make up a person or individual.

176 182 In sacrifices to the gnéna, the reverence of the Negro is not directed to the spring, the tree, the plant, etc., but to the genie that inhabits it. But in sacrifices to the gnâ, reverence is directed simultaneously to the spirit and to its object; one does not exist, is not thought of, without the other. Negroes have often given me to understand this, and one of my old friends, in order to explain his worship, expressed himself in these words: "When you honor your friend, is it his body or his soul that you honor? It is neither his body nor his soul; you honor both at the same time, the person himself as a whole, your friend; that is how it is with the boli." (1) /129/

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1. In Bambara:	Translation:
"Ne koko, n'i bé i terké bôgna, i be a fari bôgna wa ouala a dousou bôgna. I té i terké bôgna wa? A bé té boliou fé koï. An bi Sétané bôgna wa ouala a fen yéré bôgna, héwa, anou dé bi boli bôgna.	"I myself say: if you honor your friend, do you honor his body or his soul? You honor your friend, don't you? It is the same with the boli. Do we honor satan or do we honor his object? Assuredly, it is the boli.
"Faran fasili do be dasiri, djiri an'a djiné tjé. N'i b'a djiri son, i dé bé dasiri son, nka, i bé dasiri bôgna doron? Djiri te fen gouansan yé? a ti fouï gnâ.	"There is a difference between the dasiri tree and its genie. If you sacrifice to the tree, you sacrifice to the dasiri, but do you not honor the dasiri alone? Is the tree not a mere object? It gives us nothing.
"Taï, o do.	"Exactly, that's right.

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"O fara n fasili-'n te boli dé ni sétané tjé wa? Nibé boli dé son, i be Sétané son tigné, nka i be sétané bôgna doron, boli dé, héwa fen min yéra o dé te foul gnâ.	"Does this difference not exist between the boli and satan? If you sacrifice to the boli, you sacrifice to satan, that is certain; but you honor only the demon, and its object is no help to you.
"O té, djiné ni boli ma-n-kan, boli dé hen, an be fen min yé, o be fen gnâ dérén. Sétané an'o fen olou foula té ké boli yé wa?"	"No, you haven't understood. A genie and a boli are not the same. The boli is bound to what we see; it is useful to us. Satan and his object, both together -- do they not make up the boli?"

Boli dé: An object in which is found the spirit the Negroes call Sétané, "Satan."

776 The gnéna, or djiné, half man and half angel, malicious though it is, can nevertheless do good and grant a direct blessing by performing a good act. But the gnâ, the boli, a fallen angel (méléké sifa do do, " it is a kind of angel"), in revolt against God and, as I stated in my chapter on God, condemned to the tortures of fire, is entirely evil and cannot directly do a good deed (1). It can never-

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1. I challenge the European "Bambara scholars" of Ségou to listen to the two djéli (storytellers /griots/) of Goïn, a small village a short distance from this center. The sacred dances and songs of the boli are their specialty, and they travel over the

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778 and even going so far as tocause his death." These accounts excited
794 the Negroes' curiosity; they wished to see the *boli*, wanted to sacrifice
to them. They gave themselves to the *boli*, and thus became their
children.

Once the people were initiated, the travelers unveiled the
mysteries to them, bound them by the law of secrecy. They imposed
upon them the prohibition against admitting uninitiated men and
women and children to their ranks, and the sects were formed. These
have multiplied continuously; each *boli* has its own, and since the
boli are male and female and produce children, they have become
legion, and each village has sects and *boli* of its own. Although the
778 worship of the boli has not destroyed that of the *gnéna*, or *djiné*, it
794 has long exceeded the latter; their sacrifices and drinking bouts are
accompanied by an external pomp that has a different grandeur, and
no important action is taken without their agreement. It can be
asserted without fear of error that the worship of the *gnâ*, or *boli*, is
the chief religion of the Bambara at the present time. It is the basis
of union within families and the foundation of the *sina-n-koun*, or
sworn friendship; through the *boli* the people of the same village are
closely united, and this union extends from one village to another
and from one province to another, since all members of a *boli*'s sect
are brothers and owe each other mutual assistance under certain
specified circumstances.

776 In the Bambara's mind (and I have spoken of this at length in
778 my chapter, "The Ideas of the Bambara are not of Islamic Origin"),
782 the *boli* are nothing less than intrinsically evil beings in revolt against
the Supreme Being, God the Creator and Lord of all things. As the
formula of the sacrifice to *Touafé Bla* suggests, the place where they
dwell is fire or hell, and there is not a Negro who will not tell you
/134/ that the *boli* is a demon (*sétané*). Can it not be said that his
religion is a worship rendered to "Satan himself?" He renders this
worship in full knowledge of what he is doing. Have I not heard the
sacrificer in a sacrifice to a *Nama boli* (1), shout before cutting the

1. A note by Father Coppe of the
White Fathers (unpublished manuscript).

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which I have before me, reports the same fact on the subject of the Komo boli. Moreover, this Father is a student of the Bambara -- when the Blacks of Ségou speak of him, they say, "Bamana-n-do," which means that he spoke and understood their language well.

throat of the victim of the general sacrifice: "Alla djampa ba, i k'an bla, i ka bo an koun na, God, great traitor, leave us, go away from us!" -- and the crowd repeated the blasphemy after him: "Alla djampa ba, i k'anbla, i ka bo an koun na!"

3. Boli Whose Power is Slight

776 778 Since the boli do not all have the same strength and power, and fear is the basis and foundation of Bambara worship, they are not all equally honored. We will divide them into two main groups, those of "little power" and those of "great power," and we will end this chapter with a word on the talking boli, the prerogative of certain sorcerers, and on the sirikoun, another, quite special, kind of boli.

778 278 By boli of little power I mean all evil fetishes which are basically not very terrifying, in the sense that it is thought that they very seldom cause anyone's death. Many of them are primarily medicines, and almost everyone has them. They are tails of cows, goats, dogs, and wild animals; they have no specific names and are generally called foura (2) ("medicine"). Additional "medicines" are the kana,

2. This name foura is given in a general way to all boli; I should therefore remark that the word "medicine" in the sense that we understand it, is not the exact translation of the word foura. This word is in itself untranslatable

> 778 into our language and means a force,
> 278 a conscious force, that opposes
> another conscious force which seeks
> to harm us, and destroys it.

horns and hoofs of bulls filled with an ointment the composition of which it is very difficult to specify: blood, fat, and dried, crushed glow-worms are combined with iron powder, charcoal, and other /135/ ingredients. They are the Bambara equivalent of the "pink" pills which cure all ills, including baldness and ingrowing nails -- and that sums it up. The *kana* of which I speak are *boli*, and differ from the *kana* possessed by each powerful *boli*, which are no longer *boli* but parts of *boli*. Let us quickly admit that the word *kana* is as indefinite as the word *foura*, and means primarily "that which protects, preserves, and keeps us from harm."

778 These little fetishes are not given festivals, and only their
●782 owners sprinkle them with blood and sacrifice to them. They cost
little, and a sorcerer or the owner of a father *foura* or *kana* will make
[436] one for a modest sum varying between 5 *kémés* and a *ba fla* (5 *kémés* =
200 cowrie shells; *ba fla* = 1, 600 cowrie shells), which is from 5 sous
to 2 francs.

Apart from the sorcerers, whose *boli* are innumerable, there is a
whole group of people, the *noumons* (blacksmiths), the *koulés* (who
dig canoes and mend broken gourds), the *donzo* (hunters), etc., who
have such strong confidence in all these horrors that they would rather
die of hunger than be deprived of them. The hunters all have some to
224 make them active and alert. Before every hunt of the least importance
778 there is a black pullet from each, and on the return another sacrifice
782 is made, however unlucky the hunt may have been. The keeper of
each fetish is usually the only one to pay respects to it. However,
his brother hunters may give it a small offering, and it is understandable
that they do so, since each fetish has its specialty. One is for deer,
another for guinea fowl, a third for the big antelope (*dadjé* in Bambara
and best known to Europeans under the name of *koba*, a word of the
Peul language) or for the wild pig /*facochère*/, for the panther or the

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782 lion, for the hyena or for the anteater, etc., and since each cannot possess them all, one or the other is appealed to according to the need of the moment.

The most interesting of this group of *boli* are the *togo fen foula*, which watch over the gun and arms of the hunter in a quite special way, protecting them from the *ko nege ba*, a greedy and rough hand which deprives a woman of her periods if she touches meat offered to it in sacrifice or game killed under its auspices, and from the *tougourouna*, which has consideration only for those who own it and makes all others /136/ powerless /the French word here is impuissant, meaning both "powerless" and "impotent"/ if they touch the meat of its sacrifices or game killed under its auspices (1).

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778 Along with the fetish some hunters also own the *gnâma daha* (2), a *conari* in which roots and leaves gathered at night by moonlight, here and there at random are simmered and soaked. When certain kinds of game, such as an anteater, for example, have been killed, the animal is washed with these roots and this juice of doubtful color. I have been told that the juice of the *gnâma daha* induces the flow of urine, so that the *gnâma* (3) of the animal leaves, its wild animal smell disappears, and then the meat can be eaten (4). /137/

1. Game killed under the auspices of a *boli* belongs to it just like the victims of a sacrifice, and if these are "taboo" for a class of people, the game similarly becomes taboo.

2. *Gnâma*, "force," "power," "malignant fluid"; *daha*, earthen receptacle called a *conari*.

3. See what I said about the *gnâma* in Chap. I, p. 17 ff.

778 At the annual sacrifice the gouatigi, or head of the family,
596 offers a goat and at least a hen and a kola nut for each male child no
●782 matter how strained his circumstances or how slight his self-respect.
He also offers d'lo, or millet beer, and all his family make merry.
[574] Some even do things in a big way, and although the whole village
does not take part in the drinking bout, all the old men are invited,
and many close friends come from everywhere.

778 The family boli take the interests of the head of the family in
their hands; they are responsible for driving away illness and reverses
596 of fortune. /138/ Through them one gains many descendants, wealth,
wives, a happy and lively old age, honor and respect. They are also
appealed to on all occasions in life that are of the slightest importance.
Before a long journey is undertaken or a business venture is entered
into, when a disaster threatens or there is a possibility of a piece of
unhoped-for good fortune, they are reddened with a trickle of blood.
Sacrifice is also made to them at harvest time (many are even called
by the generic name of gno four, "millet medicine"), but especially
at circumcisions and excisions, at betrothals, marriages, and funerals.
The tne, or "taboo," of these fetishes (see above, p. 5ff.), is taboo
for each wife's eldest son, and sometimes the whole family makes it
its own.

4. Boli whose Power is Great

778 I call powerful boli all those gnâ of every shape and size whose
782 worship is secret and in whose mysteries only those participate who
796 have been initiated into the rites, after having sworn on their lives
never to reveal them. Countless victims are offered to these boli;
some of them are always warm and are ceaselessly reddened with
blood. At the annual festivals not only is there a hecatomb of roosters
and hens, but dogs and goats by the dozen also die, and in Bani
country I have seen as many as five or six sacrificers working at the
same time. This is the great and true Bambara worship, and it gives
rise to orgies of four to eight days; it eclipses the ancient worship, that

778 of the gnéna, or djiné, and like it or not, the worship of the dead is
782 trivial in comparison, a little devotion, one might say.

796 These boli are greatly feared and dreaded. They render justice and decide all controversies; they have the right of life and death over human beings; and it is through their intermediary that the Bambara avenge themselves and take reprisal on a real or imaginary enemy.

778 782 No victims are too fine for the powerful boli. There was a time when men were sacrificed to them -- I think that this cannot possibly be doubted. At the time of the Negro king N'golo, says the legend, a man of Faléma -- a small village on the road from Ségou to Koutiala which is now in ruins -- went to the king with his fetish /139/ Sa folo. The king had himself initiated, wanted to own it, and his first victim was the owner himself, the man from Faléma. If old men talk to you about the capture of Sikasso by the French, they will all tell you that, on the morning of the attack, men were sacrificed to the chief boli of the city. Were there not, in 1907, in a temple not far from Koutiala, a row of human skulls hung on the walls as ex voto? A little before the conquest, under the reign of the Moslem princes El-Hadj-Omar and Amadou, the master of the Nama fetish of Misango was asked to go to Ségou with his idol. He said he did not own one, but a woman betrayed him, and a search was made in Misango and its environs. The man was informed in time, and he changed the hiding place of his Nama, and the woman, convicted of lying, was given him as a slave in compensation. A little later, a sacrifice of thanksgiving was offered to the fetish, and the traitorous woman was among the victims. She was old, and the god considered her too tough; he ordered that she be sold and some children be bought, since they were victims worthy of it. Its orders were carried out, "for," say the storytellers who sing it praises, "when sacrifice is made to the Nama one must never forget nzégéné dégé (1), honey, two red

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1. Millet flour and nzégéné (Balanites oethiopica).

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782 roosters, two red kola nuts, and one *dégenéni*, an infant of two to three months."

Since the French occupation and the suppression of slavery, human beings are no longer sacrificed regularly. All the legends give one to understand, moreover, that they were always unusual and very infrequent. Yet who will ever be able to say what took place, and what still takes place nowadays at night in those sacred groves which only initiates can enter? One can always imagine that, lacking sacrifices, the initiates of the *siri*, the fetish of the *souba* or *soubaga*, disinter corpses in order to have human blood to offer to their idol and human flesh to taste. It is a unanimous belief among all the Negroes that they do so, and no sacrifice is made to the *gnéna*, to the *gnâ*, or to the shades of ancestors without a repetition of the words: "Protect us from the souba," -- in other words: "Protect us against the initiates of *siri*." These *souba*, of which I have already spoken /140/ in my chapter on metamorphosis (see above, p. 29), do not seem to differ in any way from the occult religious sects of the Basêzi of Uganda and the Baswêzi of the Ouchirombo, the cannibals of the equator.

778 And of what are they made, all these *boli* that for the most part have their temples and their sacred groves? A little of everything, I think, goes into the making of these horrors. Many times have I untangled these blood-coated gods and found only the bark of trees, roots, horns of goats, deer, and bulls, and finally claws of almost
778 all quadrupeds. It is said that the *Komo* of Tigini, 30 or 35 kilometers
773 from Ségou, is the body of a child. The legend says it was made by one Kari, the great-great-grandfather of the man who owns it at present, and this miserable man pushed barbarism to the point of taking his first grandson, a few months old, and grinding him alive in a mortar. An almost identical legend is current about the *Komo* of Kégné in Bani country which is at present in the hands of quite a young man called Marka N'zan. It is even said that if the first child of the owner of this latter fetish is a boy it belongs to the *Komo*. Is this child sacrificed or do they simply poison him? I have nothing definite on this matter.

431 585 /newly married/ couple by their friends. It varies from 40 cowrie shells to 2 kémés, or 160 cowrie shells.

778 425 "a taboli konio kera, the marriage of his boli has taken place."

435 The value of a gnâ varies between 30 and 40 francs, and whoever owns one can from then on make them. If one counts the presents given to the maker and to his staff, the dogs, goats, and kola nuts offered in sacrifice on the day of his reception, and finally the beer of the wedding, its value is undoubtedly more than 100 francs.

5. Differences among the Powerful Boli

778 I class all the powerful boli into three main groups. In the first I place those which formerly were the prerogative of kings, princes, and ministers; in the second, those which have neither temple nor sacred grove; and in the third, those which have a temple and a sacred grove, or at least one or the other.

Those of the first group are not at all numerous, and the most popular are the Safolo, the Kongoba, the Nan-Woloko, and the Kouantara. They are usually found in villages which were formerly capitals of cantons or provinces and are in the hands of people whose families have included a kafotigi (head of a canton) or a fama (king or petty king), i.e., a head of a province, a minister of the king on whom the title of ruler (fama) was bestowed.

Everything leads me to think that in the beginning these were merely fetishes responsible for watching over the king and the people of his court, analogous to what above I have called the family boli. At present they have become boli of sects. But although all circumcised men can enter the ranks of those who pay them respect, only married men become initiated, and the orgies in their honor are private orgies whose entire cost is borne by graybeards.

778 782 According to legend, slaves were sacrificed to these boli in the time of the Bambara kings. Since then the worshippers have been content to offer them millet beer, hens, and goats in addition to the

778 782 kola nuts required in every sacrifice. All the people of the village rejoice at the annual sacrifice. From the goat hut, where hangs the goatskin that serves as its tabernacle (1), the fetish is carried in procession to the place of sacrifice, a large tree that casts a little shade inside the village. During the procession the initiates shout sacred hymns at the tops of their voices, drums and xylophones beat and rumble, and all the circumcised stop when it passes /144/ and reverently bare their heads. The women and the uncircumcised kneel and bow their heads respectfully at the passing of the idol, which is hidden from profane view by a dirty cloth covering.

778 The boli of the second group are legion, and it is very difficult to know all of them. The main two are the Tji wara and the Douga.

A Tji wara seldom gives evidence of its power. Although it may kill its owner or anyone who happens to separate the male from the female in the course of the sacred dance, a Negro is seldom heard to blame it for the death of one of his family. This fetish is made of two forked sticks, one male and the other female, on which sacrifices are made. It may be seen hanging in the entry hut of its master, along with its cloak of false-cedar bark and its mask which are used in the sacred dance.

778 532 The mask of the Tji wara is tastefully made; in fact, it is the best Bambara sculpture I have seen. It is carved of the wood of the dondol (Bombax cornui) and seems intended to represent a goat or a deer. The male often has curved horns and sometimes measures almost a meter in height. The female is smaller, its horns are straight, rings hang from its nose and ears and, no doubt because a goddess could not be sterile, it carries its child on its back. (1) During the

[346] 1. The Bambara, whose huts are usually very clean, put their gods away in dark, filthy corners. The temples are small and have such low doors that it is often necessary to lie prone in order to enter.

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1. It is easy to obtain a mask of the tji wara. Many colonials bring them back from the Sudan, but they are mistaken in speaking of it as a "Sudanese fetish." This mask and all the other masks, including the twins' doll, are not "fetishes" at all. They externalize for the Negroes their idea of the genie -- sétané -- which animates the object to which they sacrifice. /Placement of this footnote is editor's emendation, the original gives it on following page 153/.

During the sacred dance the Negroes, decked out in mask and cloak, are bent double and constantly in motion. From time to time they bellow [516] into a bull's horn. Since they cannot stand straight without failing in respect for the idol, they stretch out on the ground or crouch on all fours when they are tired and weary.

778 782 At the time of the arrival of the bani-n-kono (storks), a little before the rainy season, a sacrifice of dogs, goats, and hens is offered to the Tji wara. This fetish is especially venerated by youths; they ask it for strength, health, and earnestness in work. Thus, when young people get together to cut shrubs and make a new field in the midst of the bush or to pull out weeds in the winter, a goat is sacrificed; and they work to the sound of the drum and the tji wara bellowing into his horn. Upon their return from the field, the workers are given millet beer; then the sacred dance begins in the public square /145/ and continues far into the night, to the great delight of the women and children.

778 The douga consists of a fairly large number of bulls' horns enclosed in a goatskin. It is hung in the entry hut, and it is there its altar is set; this altar is a square column of earth attached to one of the corners of the room. It often measures a meter in height; the

778 corner that is visible is decorated with horns, and a conari, a receptacle of baked earth, is fastened to the platform to catch the overflow of victims' blood. This receptacle is always surrounded by a little hedge made of porcupine quills, which gives the whole arrangement a somewhat fancy appearance.

778 782 More terrible than the tji wara, it is popular with some people; the Negroes readily appeal to it when they want to take revenge on an enemy. Nor is it unusual to hear a Bambara blame it for the death of one of his family, and since several victims are offered whenever such situations and occasions arise, it receives a good sprinkling of blood from here and there. A great sacrifice is made to it annually, and on the assigned day dogs, goats, and hens are offered to it. Following the sacrifice, the initiates meet at the home of one or anoth of the most influential members of the sect, and the day is spent emptying jugs of millet beer and getting drunk.

The specialty of the douga is to protect people from snake bites. Nevertheless the Bambara sacrifice to it to some extent for everything. From it, as from the others, they ask for wealth, wives, rain in the winter, etc., etc. (2).

2. In every sacrifice there is the sacramental consumption of part of the meat and objects offered to the idol. These present partake of this communion at the actual site of the sacrifice and without any seasoning whatever.

778 Many other /boli in this category/ could be mentioned; for example, there is the da, to which the Bambara sacrifice in order to have a good harvest. But, although these are terrible, they are still not the boli which they really fear and dread and to which /146/ they sacrifice continuously throught their lives. The latter form a separate group; they have temples and sacred groves, nothing is done without them, and they are always being taken out of their stinking dens and filthy temples. Men, women -- everybody worships and consults

778 with the dancers /150/ who, with torsos naked to the waist, gesticulate and shout their sacred songs to the sound of drums and pipes:

778 A djigina so, gnâ, ma fambali, a djigina so, tjon k'a e.
539 He is our guest, the gnâ, great killer of men, he is our guest tjon k'a é.
A fiéréla ka dén, boli fiéréla ka dén.
He has blossomed to bear, to bear his fruits; this boli has blossomed, he has his fruit.
Soubaou, yo, nin kéra malo ko ye.
Souba, yo, this is done because of shame.
Soubaya kéra, dabali bé an ko yé.
Someone has devoted himself to the practices of the souba, we have a means of saving ourselves.

778 Nor does sacrifice to the Nama fail to be impressive. Only 782 members of the staff enter the enclosure where the beehive used as its tabernacle is located. The crowd of members remains outside, and no one approaches the palisade before it is his turn to give a sacrificial hen and kola nuts to the sacrificer. While the idol is being reddened with blood (1), /151/ two men, naked to the waist and facing the

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1. The Nama of the Malinké is absolutely identical with that of their Bambara brothers. At Bendougouba, a village of the Kosilanbougou culture near Kita, there is a Nama, and one can identify the words as they are very nearly the same.

Bambara	Malinké
Male Nama: Tjema	Male Nama: Kema
Female Nama: Mousoma	Female Nama: Mousoma
The Nama protects chiefly against initiates of the siri, who are said to eat human flesh and are called souba.	The Nama protects against the soubaga, identical with the souba. It comes from Misèngo in Bélédougou.

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The Nama comes from Misango, a province of Bélédougou.	
The Nama is sometimes called Souyakoro, Namakoro, and its diamou, or lineal name, is Sirima-n-fign.	There are three names for one and the same thing, say the Negroes of Kita: Souyakoro, Namakoro, and Sirimafing.
The palisade around the Nama is called djasé; the receptacle for the blood, da.	The palisade is called djasa; the receptacle, daga.
The horned pieces of wood are called wara se and gnê bla, djenfa mousoou, djenfa tjeou, sometimes called waraou.	The horned pieces of wood are called gnâ bla and ko bla Wara, or Waradjeli or gnâ Wara.
The master of the Nama at Misango, which is father of all /Nama/ is at present Tjema-n-djan; out of respect all masters of the Nama of Misango are called Foura tigiba.	Out of respect all masters of the Nama of Misango are called Foura tigiba (foura, "medicine"; tigiba, "great master").

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182 crowd, stand immobile on each side of the sacrificer and hold in their hands two pieces of wood about a meter long on which are tied three rams' horns (wara se) and two horns /sic/ (gné bla). It is an honor, even a distinction, to hold these horned pieces of wood, and these men are called djenfa tjéou.

Two annual sacrifices are offered to the boli of this group: one before the rainy season when, the Negroes say, the male and female idols mate, and the other about three months later, a little before harvesting begins when the grain is almost ripe. This is the time when the female idols give birth to their offspring, the best time to buy fetishes and to have fourou and konio made, because, as I said

778 782 before, whoever wants to own a boli must unite with it in as close a bond as if he were contracting a fourou marriage. In order to seal this union he must offer kola nuts, fourou gosi (1), to the village head and the elders, in short, have a wedding (konio).

778 782 562 Women, uncircumcised men, and the uninitiated are never present at the sacrifices and festivals in honor of the fetishes of which I speak. However, I have seen women summoned to clap their hands and sing the praises of the Komo or the Kono. On the nights of the festivals they stay inside the village, and paths leading to the square where they are gathered are closed with kara, or coarse mats. Near them they hear the roar of trumpets and horns, and from time to time, above the mats, the silhouette of a hideous mask appears in sight and freezes them with fear and terrifies them, but in the dark of the night they cannot see details and are not able to say what they have seen. When the Nama is brought out (2), the women are summoned at daybreak at the moment when the god is put back into his beehive, and

1. The tribute which every man must pay if he wishes to enjoy his marriage legitimately.

2. The phrase "to bring out the Nama" is my translation for the Bambara expression, Nama bora, which means that a sacrifice to the idol has been made, and that the night is spent in shouting and dancing the sacred dances. The Negroes also have the expression, a djigina so, "he came to visit us at home," (a djigina, ("he visited us at"...; so, "our home"). These expressions are used in relation to all boli.

778 782 562 /152/ at the foot of the tree under which the initiates shouted and danced all night, they are shown the *siri* found by the *djenfa tjéou* (1)

1. *Djenfa tjeou*: those who run with heads of the *Nama*.

and the *darotigi*, or *darotala* (2). While these *siri* (3) are burned, the

2. *Darotigi*, or *darotala*: he who rings the bell and precedes the *djenfa tjéou* with a lantern.

[754] 3. The *siri* are sacred objects which initiates of *siri*, the *souba*, throw here and there in the environs of the village in order to cast evil spells and sorcery on persons to whom they wish harm. Every time the *Nama* is brought out 20 to 40 *siri* are found. These small amulets /sic/, made of a little of everything, including trouser buttons, hooks, and belt buckles, tremble and moan while the women watch them. I have been present several times at this performance but have never perceived these tremblings and moanings, doubtless because I am not a Negro.

women dance and sing the praises of the idol.

778 782 The *boli* have two days of rest a week, Monday and Thursday (4). It is nevertheless permissible to sacrifice to them on these days,

[304] 4. They rest in the sense that a festival at which they preside, e.g., a circumcision, never takes place on those days.

778 782 and on Sunday evening (*tné sou*, "the night of Monday"), the initiates of the *Komo* like to go out or, if you like, dance their dances and shout their sacred hymns. Since the *boli* preside at all important events of life, circumcisions, marriages, deaths, etc., I will speak of the admission to the sects of these fetishes and the sacrifices offered to them when I discuss these matters. I will say, however, before closing this paragraph, that at no time or season does a village let a week go by without offering a sacrifice to the great *boli* which they own or dancing their dances. The staff of these fetishes is feared, dreaded, respected, and honored, and on days of celebration their owners are in the place of honor and sit next to the *gnéna-n-sonnaba* (religious head of a village), or at least next to the *sotigi* (civil head).

778 782 695 In addition to the formal sacrifices at which the initiates are present, the great *boli* receive homage, tribute, and great streams of blood from individuals: appeals for their intervention are made constantly. Over a mere nothing an oath on such a fetish -- called *kali boli la* (5) is required, and if a dispute arises between two families,

5. There is a slight difference between *kali boli la* and *boli sien*. To take the oath called *kali boli la* is to swear on the fetish that one is telling the truth, that one is innocent. Only the accuser sacrifices. Seven straws must be fastened onto the object called *sirikoun*, and the accused, *blara boli koro*, is placed under the *boli* -- his life is placed in its hands -- and is to die if he has lied. In performing the *boli sien*, the accuser and the accused both sacrifice. Here again seven straws are fastened onto the *sirikoun*, and the accused is placed in the fetish's power twice;

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first by the accuser and a second time of his own accord (a blara boli koro, "the accuser places him under the boli"; a y'i bla boli koro, "the accused has placed himself under the fetish").

a boli sien (5) is needed, for the fetish must again be called on to be

/See footnote 5 immediately preceding./

a witness. /153/ These oaths entail heavy expenses, for one hen is seldom enough and a goat is very often necessary. I have seen four or five dogs, equal to an expenditure of 20 to 30 francs, sacrificed over a trivial matter.

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The three chief sacrifices offered by individuals are the fani-nké (1), the gnénama fani (2), and the sou fani (3). The first is made

1. Fani, "small throat cutting"; ké, "to make."

2. Gnénama, "one who has life," "alive."

3. Sou, "corpse."

to obtain a favor, to place oneself in the good graces of the fetish; the second, to preserve one's life, to escape a death already decreed; and the third is offered to appease a fetish whom one blames for the death of a relative (4) and to entreat it to spare the survivors of the

[761]
4. Eighty times out of 100, without exaggeration, death is blamed on a boli fetish.

778 family.

782 At the end of every important sacrifice, all the objects which make up the fetish are washed in the blood that has collected in the earthen receptacles called *da*, and it is not until after this operation, performed in the deepest silence, that the objects are replaced in their goatskins.

778 551 Negroes like to give the name of the fetish to children born at times of great sacrifices. I would even say that in studying the "names of people" one learns to know the *gnâ*, or *boli*, the *gnéna*, or *djiné*, and becomes initiated into the usages and customs of the country.

Names of children dedicated to the *Komo*, the most popular in the district of Ségou: *Boli*, *boli ba*, *Néné*, *Nono*, *Négé son* (or *Négi son*) (5), *Togo-ba-tjé* (6). /154/

5. *Négi son*: sacrifice to iron. Sometimes the word *Komo* is left unspoken out of respect, and the child is designated by one of the pieces of the fetish. The objects mentioned in the case of the *Komo* are three iron tubes (*négi*), sometimes called *Komo djoloko* ("chains of the *Komo*") in the presence of the uninitiated. The tube used as a trumpet is called *tama guengueba*.

6. *Togo*, "name"; *ba*, "big"; *tjé*, "man," etc.

Names of children dedicated to the *Nama*, the most important fetish after the *Komo*: *Djasé*, *Sirima*, *Namakoro*, *Nama* (1).

1. *Djasé*, the palisade which surrounds the sanctuary of the *Nama*. *Sirimafign* is the *diamou*, or family or lineal name, of the *Nama*.

843 but is lost after the first months -- something that is inexplicable to
her. To avoid this misfortune she covers herself with grigris and
talismans; she wears them on her neck, on her hips, down her breasts,
on her arms. One in particular I cannot silently pass over; it is the
tafo, a narrow leather thong held in the skin of a monkey's hand and
knotted sometimes around the wrist and sometimes above the biceps.

842 A sterile woman or one subject to accidents during her
843 pregnancies appeals to the Komo, Kono, or Nama boli fetishes, but
more often to the gnena, or djine, fetishes, and above all to the
782 dasiri fetish, the genie protector of the village. Through the intermediary
778 of the priest, the gnena-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, she offers
it hens, kola nuts, and dégé, or millet flour mixed with water. She
dedicates and consecrates the fruit of her womb to the dasiri and
swears an oath to offer a sacrifice worthy of it if she succeeds in carrying
her child to full term.

I should reiterate in passing that the dasiri gnéna is not, as
842 one might suppose, constantly sitting down or astride of a /167/ leafy
843 branch or, if you like, enclosed in a tree trunk with bark as a fitted
782 jacket. It walks around, readily leaves the tree, the spring, or the
778 rock which it uses as dwelling, home, or resting place; it visits its
825 relatives and close friends, it carouses with its companions every time
a drinking bout is held in honor of one of them, and when there are
no parties, it takes advantage of its freedom. It is afraid of walking
with its feet on the ground, so for its romantic excursions in and
around the village, it straddles its mount, which is a snake, a lizard, or
a donkey, but usually, as we already know, a terrible billy goat.
It is this animal, especially, that the sterile woman showers with
her attentions; she often goes far into the bush to fetch a handful of
tender grass which is its delicacy, and every day measures of millet
and maize bran are set aside for it. When she becomes a mother, she
overflows with sacrifices and acts of thanksgiving, and her child
receives the name of the fetish. He will be djiriba, gnénama, or
gnénamaké, as I have already said in the paragraph in which I discussed
the dasiri, who is the genie protector of the village and the
first of the gnéna.

881 796 794 rallying cry, bellowed by a hundred throats, "kou kou kou, ke ke ke"; drums roll, and drunken voices shout:

T'an ta bara ladjé.
Stop, let us go and see the gourd (of beer).
Bara ma dja an na,
When the beer has made us joyful (1),

1. Dja, "to make happy," "to please," "to be agreeable," "to make joyful."

An na youyouba yougouba.
We will dance and dance (2).

2. Yougouba, "to dance with a shaking of the whole body."

Gnâ tigi, né ka nougouni-n-ke min yé?
Master of the gnâ, what has happened to my (hen's) entrails? (3)

●[782] 3. This line recalls a peculiarity of the sacrifice of the newly initiated. With one twist of the finger the sacrificer takes the entrails out of the hen, and when the young initiate wants to draw it, he is quite surprised to find that none of the viscera are in it any more.

Gnâ tigi do nougou na bo gnouan yé.
A master of the gnâ (kodit) the entrails will come out together.

Excited, or rather irritated, by the wait, the circumcised boys get up, move forward in a line, and prostrate themselves before the god's escort, the one who shakes without any rest under his cloak of feathers and brings resounding blasts from his horned tube (4), and

2. No Sacrifice to the Shades of the Dead

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At every death the blood of hens, goats, and dogs flows in streams. I would like to be able to think and say with some Europeans that all these sacrifices are an honor paid to the shades of the deceased and the ancestors, but that is impossible for me. Not the slightest sacrifice is offered to a person's soul on the day of death or the day of burial. The Negroes are logical in their beliefs; the soul does not leave the body until after burial, and a dead person has no right to a sacrifice until he is in Lahara, or the world of spirits. Prayers are undoubtedly said. Objects which belonged to the deceased or were used in paying the final respects to him are destroyed and placed as saraka at the corner of land formed by paths that cross. But nothing in all this would be a sacrifice, bloody or bloodless in Bambara eyes (1).

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1. Very rarely, a dead person is thought to have caused a Negro's death. If the sorcerer asserts that a deceased individual is the cause of a death, a sacrifice is made to him, but it is made to quiet him because he is a murderer, and not at all because he is dead.

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And to whom are they directed, all these hecatombs and streams of blood? I already said, in the chapter where I discussed sickness and death, that a Bambara never dies a natural death. Always he is the victim of poison, of a gnâma or of a djiné, or -- 80 times out of 100 -- a powerful fetish, such as a Komo, Kono, Nama, Nia, or Douga, has caused him to perish. At every death one or another of the following expressions is on all lips: "Souba ta no do, that is the way the souba act"; -- "keroti kér'a la, the poison of the fetishes was thrown at him"; -- "dounkono dir'a ma, he has been given poison"; -- "Komo, Kono, or Nama, etc., sera a ma, the Komo, Kono, or /216/ Nama

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782 761 has reached him"; -- "djinéou no do, the djiné are the cause of it"; -- "a fa gnâma do, it is his father's gnâma"; -- "boli y'a fa, a boli killed him."

Thus, all the sacrifices which are made on the occasion of a death are directed to the fetishes which are thought to be murderers, and if a deceased member of the family or of a family of strangers gets a slight trickle of blood, that is because on the word of a sorcerer he is guilty. When it is thought that the deceased was the victim of poured poison (dounkono) or korti (poison of the fetishes), thrown sorcery, there is recourse to the diviners and sorcerers to ascertain what invisible being must be soothed and what sacrifice should be uttered. If a gnâma is involved, a sacrifice to a fetish is often prescribed to ensure its protection, but to the gnâma itself a plain saraka, with or without bloodshed, is offered. These saraka are seldom made to the Supreme Being Alla; they are offered to the lesser djiné genii that run around the village and like to rest in the da-n-koun in among the gnâma.

3. Respects Paid to the Uncircumcised

766 [304] Few honors are rendered at death to the uncircumcised and unexcised; such persons are not really Bambara, for they lack the tribal mark. The head of the village and his council ascertain that the death has occurred and, depending on the order received from the diviners, a sacrifice is offered or a saraka placed. The people of the village come to offer their condolences to the bereaved family, and when the grave has been dug, two or three youths bury the corpse without further ceremony.

The father wears mourning for a whole day, and for at least three days the mother grieves in her hut with a few women friends, her neighbors. A barbaric custom also decrees that if the deceased is an unweaned infant its big toe must be broken, in the presence of its mother, and many fathers do more. They mark it with a knife on the forehead, the nape of the neck, the shoulders, the arms; they cut the upper lip or the lobe of an ear. This procedure always makes a deep impression on a mother, especially if she has given birth when

764 This ceremony, as beautiful as it is touching, ends with this prayer: "Give us rain when winter comes, give us a plentiful harvest, a vigorous old age, children and wives, and give us prosperity." [482] Four strong fellows then come and take the corpse on their shoulders and, preceded by children and grandchildren who shout and cry, they carry it to the cemetery at almost a run, and the whole crowd follows them (1). The men line up around the grave, the women place themselves behind them, and the sons of the deceased go down into the grave. They undo the mat, take their father in their arms, and lay him in the niche on his right side, facing east. Then they tear a little of the shroud, or white blouse, of the buried man, and one of those present takes the strip torn off and holds it outside of the grave. [417] The children build an arch above the corpse out of small boards that are sometimes worked and colored, but most frequently out of wood chips (falema) or large slabs of earth dried in the sun. While they are building, the youths mix mortar to stop up the cracks and thoroughly coat the whole structure. The women clap their hands and then sing in low tones to the sound of the drums.

764 782 When the work is done, the children come out of the grave, and the person in charge of the funeral ceremony comes forward, on his shoulder a hoe with the blade hafted in reverse and in his hand a gourd of water. He leans over the grave. The drums stop beating, the women are silent, and he pours water on the head of the buried man three times, saying: "See /221/ this water, do not be angry, forgive us, give us rain in winter and a plentiful harvest (1). Whether

1. In Bani country I have seen the spear of the deceased carried with great ceremony. The oldest son from time to time threw a few cowrie shells onto the corpse, and the crowd rushed to get them. This djansa is seldom performed, and the custom is not at all general.

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1. In the eyes of the Negroes this ceremony is not a bloodless sacrifice but a simple prayer; and the water is poured to give the words greater emphasis, since in their eyes it is the element without which nothing lives nor can live.

the wind blows from the west or the east, from the north or the south, may it be favorable to us. Give us a long life, many descendants, wives and prosperity." The audience answers, "*Amina* -- *o dé ka ké* (let it be so)," and, using hoes hafted in reverse so that the curve of the blade is on the outside, the youths fill the grave. The drums beat again, and the women clap their hands and improvise a song whose words usually can be reduced to these: "Our father is dead, we have been told he is dead. But he will come back! Young men, fill the grave well, so that no *souba*, no hyena, nor any wild animal can take away the corpse."

764 When the grave is filled, the one who is holding the strip of cloth attached to the blouse, or the shroud, of the deceased pulls it toward him until it tears and remains in his hands. This ribbon is a [751] precious relic of which *tafo* are made; they are a protection from a host of evils, especially throat ailments and *gnâma*. The coarse mat (*tjékala* or *kara*) which was the bed or the seat of the deceased, quite often together with his shoes and the small earthen pot that was his wash basin, are laid on the tomb. If the deceased was a woman, pieces of a gourd, fragments of a hearth, or the stick for stirring gruel (*to-n-galama*) are thrown onto the tomb instead of the wash basin. The pliant mat in which the corpse was wrapped is often given to a friend. The latter goes and burns it outside the village, or before entering his own village if he is a foreigner; he says: "Here is a mat on which no one will die from now on."

[777] 764 782 Wednesday and Saturday are two unlucky days. On these days strangers never present their condolences to the bereaved family, and if a burial takes place, a small white chicken is killed and given to the deceased so that he can placate the spirits as soon as the grave

764 782 has been filled and his soul goes to Lahara. In the eyes of the Negroes, this act has none of the attributes of a sacrifice; it is the price of the right to enter Lahara and is given by the children to /222/ their father's soul. Moreover, they give it to him alive, and it is slipped into the grave at the moment when the last small board, the last wood chip, or the last earthen slab making up the root is set in place (1).

1. A nest egg is slipped in instead of a hen if the deceased was a woman.

764 At the end of the ceremony the deceased's dog is killed (2),

[231] 2. If the deceased owned a dog it is always killed unless the old man decided otherwise while he was alive. There are Bambara, especially women, who raise dogs in order to have this honor, and for this reason only.

and the sons-in-law and the brothers-in-law eat to, or millet gruel. [431] When they depart they also receive a rooster or a hen. It is given them in the name of the deceased, and since it is the gift of a dead person, they kill and eat it on the way (3). The fetishes and the genii

[782] 3. This practice, again, is no sacrifice in the eyes of the Negro.

would be displeased if such a gift should arrive in the village alive, and whoever became guilty of such a crime would become the plaything of most of the gnâma and could dig his grave.

The Bambara do not place any kind of food either on or in the grave. But for three days in the evening, at nightfall, a dish of tô (gruel) and a little fresh water is placed on the gouâ so that the soul of the old man may satisfy his hunger and quench his thirst.

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causing her own child to die. A mother who has lost her child may adopt an orphan and give it her breast.

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crowd /226/ always withdraws, and the blacksmith remains alone with his assistant. When the work is done, they wash their hands on the grave itself, and the operator makes the customary prayer: "Whether the wind comes from the east or the west, from the north or the south, etc., " (see above, p. 244).

5. Sacrifices to Fetishes on the Occasion of a Death

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Although at the time of death there is no sacrifice to the soul of the deceased nor to the shades of ancestors, blood flows nevertheless. It even flows in torrents for the Bambara are not satisfied with reddening the family boli; they stain with blood all the boli fetishes they believe to be guilty. Nor do initiates of the sects forget their deceased brothers, and for a friend who was initiated the same day as they themselves, they cannot refuse the boli a hen and a kola nut. If the deceased is the master of a fetish, its priest, or an influential person on its staff, all the initiates comply, and the sacrifice becomes general. The initiates do more; in the evening they take the god out of its temple, and all night long they mingle their wild animal shouts with the blasts of sacred horns and trumpets blown by heralds. The latter very often wear hideous horned masks on their heads and are dressed in cloaks of feathers.

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Eighty times out of a hundred, death is attributed to a powerful boli which is taking vengeance, punishing or rewarding, and in the environs of Ségou the Komo, Nia, Kono, Nama, and Douga are the ones who have the most deaths to their credit. When the murdering boli is known, the entire village is notified; the trousers, blouse and bed cover of the deceased, or the tafé (1) if it is a woman, are hung

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1. Tafé: a rectangular piece of cloth which women wind around their bodies to cover themselves.

761 on the branches of the sacred tree under which the fetish dwells and
782 at the door of its temple, and the members of its staff know how to
764 extol their god. Under these conditions they are without pity; they
778 bleed the bereaved family white, so that the tax demanded by our circle officers (2) is nothing compared to the tax that they have to pay. /227/

782 What do they not have to give for a sacrifice to the *Komo*, for
764 example? The whole house is turned upside down to find goats, dogs,
[824] kola nuts, roosters, and hens, *gnâma-n-kou* (*Amormum melegueta*), and *djalakouma* (a plant whose name I do not know). The family needs all this, cost what it may, and if they have to buy it all they have to pay double or triple the value of the objects, for others make profits from their necessity. First a dog or a goat is sacrificed to appease the fetish and pay respects to it. Then to find out whether it is satisfied and its hatred assuaged, two red roosters and two hens with golden necks bite the dust. A *bara* (1) (gourd) full of *gnâma-n-kou* fruit and another full of *djalakouma* are offered. One portion of these fruits is used for holy water (2); the other is sold for the benefit

[651] 2. The head tax is 3.50 francs per person and 5 francs for the servants of Europeans. Here France is surely not a "tyrant," but a tender mother.

[415 854] 1. This *bara* (a large pumpkin /*courge*/ with a small opening at the top) can hold from 18 to 20 liters of liquid. The true gourd is half of a pumpkin.

782 764 824 2. The holy water of the *Komo* is made of roots and leaves of the *djalakouma* and the fruit of the

782 764 824 gnâma-n-kou or the na-yanka (I do not know the name of this plant), put to boil and soak in water. To make it effective, at least two kola nuts are offered to the fetish and five hens are sacrificed to it.

782 764 of the staff, which lives off the altar. For the mere act of having killed a dog or a goat, of which they receive a good share of the meat, they get a fee consisting of a basket of sorghum (18 to 20 kilograms) and 1, 600 cowrie shells (about 2 francs).

Since initiates of the fetish are the only ones who can touch the corpse and lay it in its final home, they receive 8, 000 to 10, 000 cowrie shells (about 8 to 10 francs) on that score. At the end of the sangafo (3) the god's retinue go and sweep the hut of the deceased, purify it with holy water, and drive out the last gnâma of the murdering Komo, and for this five fine hens are slaughtered. As payment for their trouble, the family also gives them five to six meters of cloth and 8 to 10 ba (4) (about 8 to 10 francs); 50 francs do not cover the cost.

[431] Fortunately, the family does not bear all the expenses. Friends help a little, and everyone brings his offering: from one person they get a /228/ hen, from another a débé (40 cowrie shells) or a kémé (80 cowrie shells). Nevertheless, they bear most of the cost, and [424] the fetishes are one of the chief reasons for that bonding of children (1)

3. Sangafo, to go and offer condolences to the relatives of a deceased."

[802] 4. A ba is worth 800 cowrie shells or about 1 franc. (The Bambara count by 40 and 80, and not by 50 and 100. 40, débé; 80, kémé.)

4: Henry--254 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 . FA8 Bambara FA8

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1. A bonded person works for his food, just like a slave. His condition is worse than that of the slave, for in addition to his food, the latter receives a bit of cloth to cover himself, but the bonded person does not. A slave can ransom himself for a sum varying between 100 and 200 francs, and at present he can escape without fear of being pursued and without paying anything at all. A bonded person must pay the amount of his bond to the last cowrie shell, whether he escapes or not. There are Negroes who, for a certain amount, will give you one of their children for one or two years. These children are not paid since the amount has already been paid, but besides food they get clothing and some gratuities beyond the payment for their work. Lacking the proper words, the Bambara call this also, "bonding" even though it is basically a real "domestic service." When the agreed time has passed, these young people go back to their homes without any payment being made. Even though the Negroes call this bonding, they make a distinction: a) slavery is a stigma which always remains; b) true bonding is a stigma that does not disappear unless the bonded person himself pays the price of his bonding; c) the bonding which is called "domestic service" does not involve any stigma; they are workers and not menial laborers.

764 782 which is nothing less than disguised slavery. In the presence of a European the Negroes like to complain that he cannot meet their taxes, but they should not be listened to too closely -- 99 times out of 100 they are lying! Let us not make war against the military or civil official responsible for levying the tax, which is not at all exorbitant; let us think before all about the *boli* and their staffs, a band of persons without principles or law, human vultures with greedy fingers who attack the weak, the widows and orphans, terrify them with their threats of death. They do not leave these people in peace until they have taken everything: hens, goats, dogs, cowrie shells, sorghum, and often freedom.

6. Respects Paid to Initiates of the *Koré*, or *Koté*

794 766 The initiates of a fetish are never indifferent to the death of a brother, and they hasten to find a hen and a kola nut with which to prove their attachment to the deceased and to assuage the wrath of the god. The sect of *koré* does things in a grand, even in a ceremonious, manner, if there is any ceremony in those nocturnal orgies where *d'lo*, or millet beer, is drunk to /229/ the point of senselessness, and where lascivious and obscene dances are danced.

When a young man who is *koré dé* (son of *koré*, initiate of the sect) dies, relatives and friends redden with blood the sacred tree and [778] the *kara*, a perforated board painted red and white, which is the genie's emblem. Although there is general mourning in the village, tears are dried when evening comes, and for three nights there is nameless [785] bedlam and endless shouting in the *kore tou* (the sacred grove) as initiates flagellate themselves, burn their backs with torches, tear their bodies with thorns, abandon themselves to their barbaric dances, [534] and lose themselves in lewd gestures in front of the *dénouba* (drums measuring from one to one and a half meters) and the *kingé* (a triangle, an iron tube, which is hung from the thumb of the left hand and which is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger).

For the old people who are granted not a tear nor a regret but for whom there are dances and songs, fellow initiates come in large numbers, and during the night preceding the burial, they make a

766 The victim of a boli may also become for the village and the region an impure, base creature that has lived all too long. This happens when the murdering, or supposedly murdering, fetish three times refuses the sacrifices offered to appease it (1). When this occurs

• [782] 1. A sacrifice is not accepted if the hen charged with giving the god's answer dies on its breast with its feet under it, and the kola nut, cut in two, falls on its pulp with the rounded part on top.

the whole family, men, women and children, must still their cries and must not weep, however great their sorrow may be. Family heads abandon themselves to sacrifices, the initiates of the sect do the same, and everybody thanks the boli for having caused the death of a person who deserved only scorn and should never have lived, and begs never to meet such a fate nor to be like him.

766 794 When the grave has been dug (a plain grave without a niche), the men of the murdering boli (2) come and wrap the corpse in a mat.

2. When a boli has killed someone, it is the men of that boli who come to bury him. It is not always a boli of the village, but sometimes from a distance of one, two, or three days' journey, and if the men of that fetish cannot come at once, e. g., if they are elsewhere burying a man killed by the god, people close the door of the hut in which the corpse lies and wait until the gravediggers choose to arrive. I saw the corpse of a blacksmith left like this for four full days. The sorcerers are the ones who name the boli and the village where it is.

769 796 797 2. The Negroes' great festival is held at the end of Ramadan. They have a second at the festival of the كَبْش sheep. The Moslem masters forced them to observe these two festivals, but the Bambara have not adopted a single Moslem rite. They sacrifice to the dasiri, to some djiné genii, and to the dead.

769 782 The great sacrifice to the dead is made at the end of Ramadan and at the festival of the كَبْش sheep. The gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, first sacrifices to the b'lon da ba sou (3), those who, like themselves, were priests of the dasiri and, in a general way, to all those who had some civil or religious authority in the village. All the members of his council are present at this sacrifice. After the libations of millet flour mixed with water and d'lo, or millet beer, a fine white hen (4) is slaughtered, and sometimes a sheep then, two white kola nuts are offered and, if the sacrifice is accepted, a clump of wool or a few feathers are torn from the victim and stuck onto the

3. Sou, "corpses"; b'lon da ba, "of the great b'lon," the great entry hut giving access to the village.

[822] 4. In general sacrifices where the whole population or a whole sect participates, the liturgical color is the primary consideration, and a pullet a day old has as much value as a large rooster. When a victim of the liturgical color cannot be obtained, only water, dégé, and the kola nut are offered.

769 middle of the splash of blood by means of a bit of chewed kola nut.
782 When the general sacrifice has been made, every member of the council offers his white hen and his kola nut.

When the village has paid its respects to the *blonda ba sou*, the *sotigi* (heads of quarters) gather the *gouatigi* (heads of families) under their jurisdiction, and all these people sacrifice as before to the shades of those who were heads of quarters (5). Each family head then goes back to his home, gathers his children, and sacrifices to the shades of his fathers, to those who, like him, were heads of the family. /234/

5. Only hens are slaughtered. There are always libations of *dégé* (millet flour mixed with water) and of *d'lo* (beer), and offerings of kola nuts.

The Bambara sacrifice to their ancestors very often; they do so by order of a sorcerer and on any occasions in their lives that are at all important, such as the circumcision or excision of one of their children, a betrothal or a wedding (1), but they do so especially when winter comes and the fields are sown. The sacrifices are simple and individual, and only the people of the house are present; just a hen, with a little *dégé* and a kola nut, comprise the whole expense.

1. Many Bambara do not sacrifice even on these occasions (circumcision, wedding, betrothal) but prefer to call on the family *boli*, which they dread more. In the winter everybody sacrifices to the shades of ancestors.

The formula of the sacrifice has no special characteristics. The same ideas are always repeated: "I offer this *dégé*, this *d'lo*, and this hen; it is a sacrifice that I make to you in my name and in the name of my children. Preserve us from the *souba*, from sorcery, and from evil-doers. Favor us, preserve us from sickness, give us wives and healthy children, cause us to have rain in the winter, health to work our fields, and a fine harvest."

4: Henry--263 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

769 The sacrifice to the dead is most often made on the doorsill of
● 782 the entry hut, and a splash of blood is spread on the wall on each side
778 of the door, about a meter and half from the ground. Many families
also have an altar for sacrificing to the dead in their main b'lon; it
is the kârâ, an earthen bas-relief depicting a man and a woman.
It is all crudely made and has no human qualities about it. Nevertheless, one can guess what the Negroes wanted to depict, for although the woman is without mouth, ears, nose, or eyes, just like her mate, she is always adorned with two fine breasts.

4: Henry--272 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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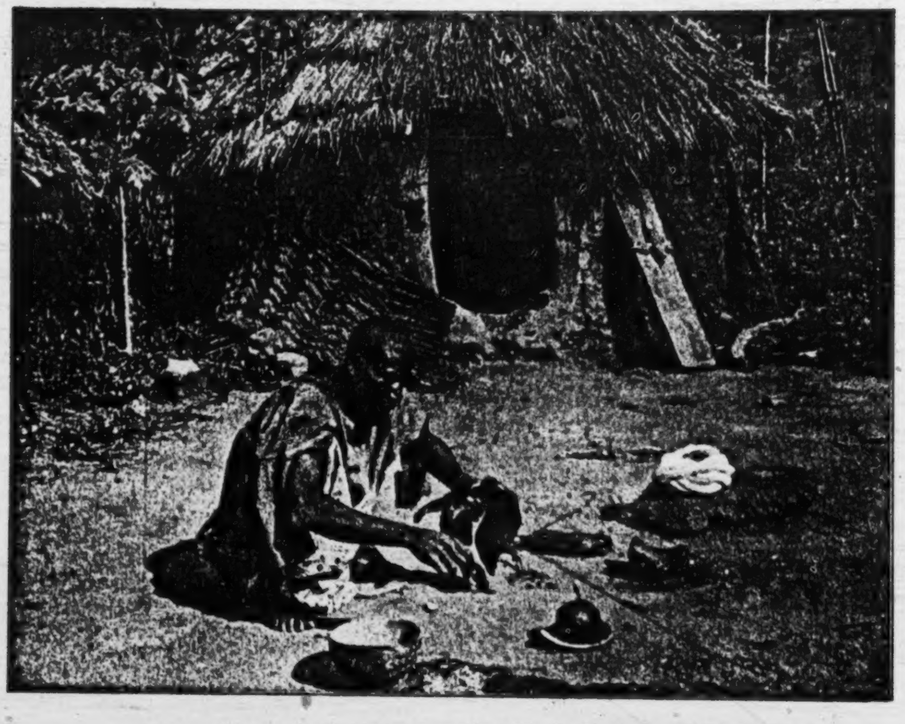

Sacrifice of a hen to the "family *boli*."

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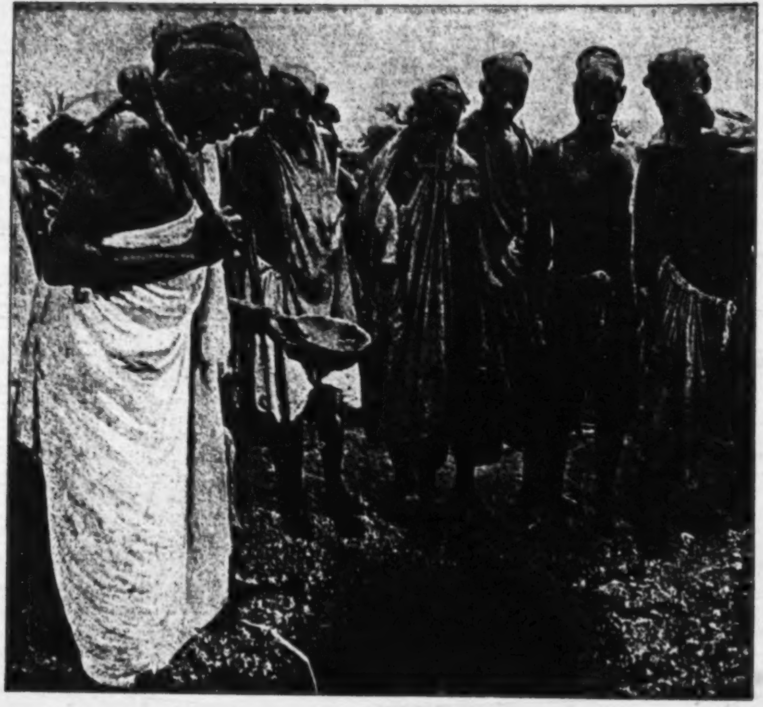
4: Henry--286 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Bambara burial.
The last prayer.

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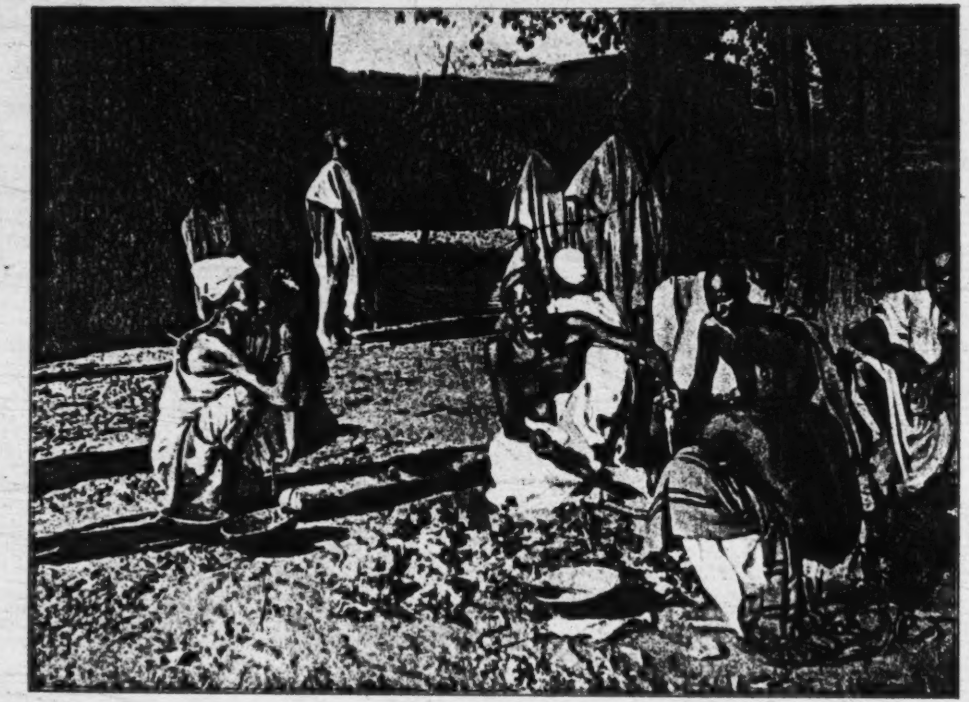
4: Henry--287 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



After the sacrifice: division of the sacred meats.

776 241 is represented as making her nocturnal visitation at the time the grain is threshed. An old woman, dressed in rags, wearing old unmatched sandals, and carrying broken gourds, runs about the countryside simulating madness. She follows the mythological itinerary from west to south and from east to north, and then returns and sits down near the granaries (1).

[171] 1. However, the very first agricultural techniques known as *fyẽ ti* (literally, cultivation of the wind) are recalled, particularly among the Bozo, by random sowings of a certain number of wild grasses, then cereals, in the fields where the harvest is offered to Faro. Similar rituals are celebrated in certain Bambara villages. The techniques taught by Mousso Koroni came after those "of the wind," and precede that of millet cultivation.

For information on some agricultural rituals of the Bozo, see G. Dieterlen, "L'Agriculture rituelle des Bozo /Ritual Agriculture of the Bozo/," *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. 20 (1950).

776 851 Mousso Koroni's agricultural work and her unhappy wanderings are also represented in a children's ritual, carried out at night during the cultivation period. One of the players, the *yukuri* or *dantoni* (literally, little hunchback), wears sandals for ears, a hump at the small of his back, a cloth tail tied low about his waist. He goes begging from /40/ door to door, followed by all the uncircumcised of his neighborhood. He pretends to cultivate and to thresh grain while his companions intone chants recalling Mousso Koroni's mythical actions. After his round is finished and the presents of millet are gathered, the player, pursued by all the others, runs off and disappears amid catcalls.

776 241 783 But while this parody of cultivation, with its rituals and chants, recalls the phases of Mousso Koroni's disorderly life, the agricultural techniques she initiated earlier are in themselves an important expression of the reparation made to the confusions she had caused. Every hoeing by the farmer is a wound inflicted on the impure earth,

776 244 183 hence on Mousso Koroni. The ritual cultivation of millet, a noble activity to which every aristocratic Bambara must dedicate himself, is an institution which Faro taught in his time and constitutes a purification and a reordering of the soil (1).

1. *Dugukolo be be dyuruma*, "the whole earth is impure." But as only virgin soil is considered impure, it is also said: *dyurumu be be dugukolo ka forow sani nyala do*, "the whole earth is impure except for the cultivated fields." The word *dugukolo* (literally, bone of the earth) designates both the earth as a whole and the earth as matter. The same notions [171] concerning the impurity of the earth hold for the Dogon. See M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, p. 94.

Faro

Faro's Shapes

776 Faro was a "voice" before he materialized into a body. In his role as master of the word and reorganizer of the universe, he is represented by a spiral, *munu*, in which he occupies the point of origin at all times. The spiral is situated in the center of the cardinal points (2). Its vibratory unrolling represents "the displacement of Faro for the realization of all things in the universe."

2. This "central point," which is also the firmament, is described by the Bambara as *sǎ tyema kolo*, literally, the bone of the middle of the sky.

776 292 This image is materialized in a basketry headdress, *yugu*, with a spiral of eight turns. The straw sprigs that form the spokes supporting the spiral symbolize the vibration; the intervals, *yugunye* or eye of the *yugu*, which separate them are rays of light, the spiral representing

776 He takes on many forms. He can be seen in the brush as a gazelle feeding on wild tomatoes and onions. As a ram with golden fleece and wearing ear ornaments, he travels underground along gold veins. As a young and seductive woman he goes to the villages to seduce the boys and take them away with him. He is the head of the fleeting torrent that runs after a rainfall; he is the seething and swelling of the currents. He can be recognized in the bluish haze that floats above the ponds. A stream that dries up is a sign of his anger.

Faro's Realm

776 821 At the beginning, the waters that originated in the "central springs of the sky" and streamed over the earth, were pure, clear, beneficial and "easy." But after Mousso Koroni's betrayal and that of the beings who listened to her, impurity was communicated to the earth /45/: the water that covered the earth clouded, changed color, and became "difficult." It either dried up or, on the contrary, flooded the land, drowning living beings.

[783] Today only the streaming rain water has preserved its character, more especially the first rain that falls at the beginning of winter. It is considered a purifying agent par excellence and is called dane sandyi, "water that sows," for it brings to the grains their soul, ni; the earth, sterile and "empty," becomes full and fertile, plants are reborn, animals and insects multiply (1).

[577] 1. A person who is generous and good is referred to as being like this first rain. It is also said of the spirit: "the spirit [is good like] the first rain" (miri dane sandyi).

The terrestrial waters, Faro's kingdom, are classified into seven distinct realms. They are in layers which correspond to the seven parts of the sky and earth.

[783] The first, dyi woyo "seething water," is surface water: it seethes when Faro makes himself known, and overflows in floods, as the heads of streams are swelled by the storm. It is also the lustral water used for purification and the water drawn for drinking.

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1. *Bolo ti doniya ye dali duru sira ye, bolokoni kumba dãga ye dyɛ̌ saba gundo ye, tyemasa bolokoni ye dyɛ̌ dura ye.*

yo, of which only the first is realized (2).

2. On the worlds thought out by *yo*, see pp. 23-26.

826
643 On another level, the signs of the thumb are related to powers and those of the index to royal domains (fig. 1, nos. 8-12):[1]

1. Sign zero (*fu*) represents the beginning of creation, the origin of all things. A curved segment extended from left to right denotes the dynamic quality of the universe. It is intersected by a multiplication sign expressing the infinite development of beings and things. But the vertical stroke crossing it on the left indicates both the cessation and the suppression of the whole (no. 11).

2. Sign of lightning. It expresses royal power and justice and is traced under the thumb ring of the king. The latter, when giving an order, would swing his hand, which means he is swinging lightning before those he addresses (no. 12).

3. Sign of the royal domain. The opening asserts the possible extension of the kingdom; the transversal bar is a protection of this kingdom from all destruction (no. 8).

4. Sign of the extension of this domain at the tree cardinal sides: east, west, and south (no. 9).

5. Sign of union. The oval represents the whole group of functionaries called *tǒdyɔ̌* and *barodɛ̌*, officers and councilors who administer the kingdom under the king's authority (no. 10).

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● [783] As the feet are constantly in touch with the soil, they take on its impurity. An individual who has gone through severe purifications will need to avoid putting his feet on the ground during a period of time occasionally quite prolonged, for "to place one's toes on the ground is to put one's soul in contact with the impure earth" (1). It

[291] 1. The invention of the shoe is mythically linked to the notion of the earth's impurity; the wearer must therefore avoid this contact.

[1] [p. 22, category 116—Analyst.]

831 lines or dots depending upon the sex of those who used them. Thus,
801 women marked their spindles with four lines whereas men twisted three threads on their shuttles.

On the metaphysical level, man's body, "the seed of the world,"
826 is identified with the cereal grain. The Bambara separate cereal
824 grains into seven parts, corresponding to a division of the human
812 organs into seven groups (1). Man and grain are one and identical in their substance. On the other hand, the basic foods, that is, the eight principal cereals, are symbolically present in the collarbones (*kolo kalanjiri*, or *ka kolo*). Man carries within him his subsistance, and its location reflects the person's general condition (2). As proof of /72/ man's spiritual integrity, these grains leave him when he is in a state of impurity. He is then drained of his substance and subsistence. Thepurpose of purification is to reestablish this wholeness.

812 Moreover, the bonds which unite the whole person, body and
561 spiritual principles, to the cosmos, are made clear by the fact that

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[782] 1. The divisions of the grain are as follows: *kungu*, "little beard of millet," involucre; *fara dye*, "white bark," glume and glumales; *fara fi*, "black bark," bran and protein aceous bark; *fara mugu*, "farinaceous bark" (which corresponds to a milky diastatic zone); *mugu dunta*, "flour for eating," starch; *kolo dye*, "white bone," embryo; *kise de*, "son of grain," the micropyle from which the rootlet issues at the time of germination. The classification of organs in relation to these divisions is under study. We thank M. Pitot of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire for the identification of the parts of the grain corresponding to the native divisions. In certain villages, grains undergo a process of hulling and the determined elements only are used in the making up of the ritually offered millet mash.

[783] 2. See p. 53, n. 2.

551 The institution of the device, with all its elaborations, has the
576 effect of confirming people in their bodies, their spiritual principles, and their social functions. Except for the cases of emigration mentioned above, the occasions are rare indeed when an individual is obliged to change his name or device during his life. A woman keeps her father's *barama* even after marriage.

551 An illegitimate child receives neither the name nor the device of
848 his family. They may be given him later if the father makes himself known. A Bambara who contracts a misalliance, for example, by
564 marrying the daughter of a blacksmith or a *griot*, will bring into the
783 world impure children who will never have a right to their father's *barama* (1).

552 We must add that the prerogative of having a device is not limited
782 to humans. All animate beings, many /80/ inanimate ones, the elements of nature, places, villages, plants, animals, and all the supernatural powers have theirs which men address during prayers.

The Taboo

784 One or several eating taboos, *tne* or *tana*, are attached to the
[551] family name and are observed by all who bear the name. According to certain initiates, the taboos were decreed by Faro when he determined the food proper to each species (2) after having classified the beings of creation. For the common man, the origin of the taboo is always the subject of a tale or legend and justifies the bonds between an ancestor of the family and the animal or plant designated. Most frequently, the animal has helped the man, has saved his life, or the other way around; or else, following some serious events, the ancestor was transformed into an animal or plant. Numerous versions of the origins of such bonds are given.

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1. Such a child is said to be a *sofali* (literally, horse donkey), that is, a bastard.

2. See p. 52.

784 during the famine, and that in the future the crocodile would be taboo
773 to the Traoré as a sign of gratitude for his gift and as an apology for
the murder committed.

The taboo of the Diara family is the lion, whose name they bear. In the olden days two old friends were always in the habit of hunting together with arrows and spears. In the course of a long famine, their weapons broke and they were not able to find others. In order to feed their families, they attacked wild animals with bare hands; the one would stun his victims with his fists, and the other would skin them.

Gradually the life they were leading changed their behavior. They no longer washed, their hair and beards grew, and thick hair covered their body. Their nails became so long and so hard that they used them to slice meat and to dig the earth. They even forgot the language they had spoken and only communicated by grunts.

They fought with the spirits to gain a foothold in those places ordinarily reserved for the latter. They no longer returned to their village. Their parents searched for them, but as soon as they saw people, they ran away. They ended by walking on all fours and appeared like the animals they pursued.

One day as they lay sleeping next to each other, they mated and the stronger one impregnated the weaker to give birth, a little later, to two lion cubs. The men who saw them in the bush with their offspring decided that hereafter they could not kill a lion for it had their blood in its veins. Even today, when a Diara meets a lion, the animal lies down, "so ashamed to be descended from the mating of two men who had become beasts."

784 These two examples, selected from many others, illustrate the relations between man and animal. These appear even more clearly in the mechanism set off by the breaking of the adopted taboo.

Indeed, the first consequence of any infraction is the offender's loss of the seeds in his collarbone, a symbol of his basic sustenance. He becomes "an empty granary" and, deprived of his strength, is unable to contend against that of the wounded animal /82/ attacking him. The pain he feels at that moment is proof of the state of his physical and psychic inferiority. Any breaking of a taboo affects first the eyes, then the other openings of the body.

784 If the animal is wounded, it delegates its tere to warn the guilty
783 man of the sin committed, but makes no attempt on his life since
it is his ally. On the other hand, its death liberates its nyama which

784 acts more energetically. But it is even more serious to eat one's taboo 783 than to ill it, for then the person cannot get rid of his victim's *nyama* and must suffer all the consequences.

The guilty person goes to the shore of the Niger and in a loud voice, discloses the facts to Faro while making him an offering (millet mash, copper, etc.), then he drinks a little water and goes home. If he lives too far from the river, he goes to a remote place and acts in the same way by spilling a little of his own blood as a sign of expiation. These acts have the effect of rectifying everything with Faro whom he has offended by breaking the established order. Next, he undergoes the purification rites. Their agent is his ally *senanku* and the rites are carried out at an intersection, dangu (1). The effect of such rites is to rid him of his victim's *nyama*, and then to reinstate the symbol of the eight life-giving cereal seeds in his collarbone: thus he recovers his lost strength. After his recovery, the old men of his family summon him and give him some stern advice for another breaking of the taboo cannot be atoned by any purification: the animal's *nyama* will no no longer leave the repeating offender who may die of it.

784 Voluntary infractions, which are very rare, of course bring about far more serious consequences for the person in question since his responsibility is involved. This is not so in the opposite case. If a man has eaten his taboo without knowing it during a meal taken at the home of another, the animal's *nyama* may attack those responsible: either the host or his wife becomes ill. The guilty woman must then [201] ask the man's forgiveness. On her knee and with her hands at the back, she discloses the facts to the person she has injured who may ask for time to think and make her wait in order to punish her. Otherwise he demands three kola nuts with which he carried out the *dyanzani* or "replacement." He throws them in the bush or gives them to the first poor person he meets. A few days later the responsible person is liberated.

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[602] 1. See p. 183. In certain cases the purification may be carried out by a kinsman of an ascending generation and may include ablutions with water consecrated by a prayer addressed to Faro.

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> Tangara chief gave them land to build their houses and set up their fields. The two groups live in perfect understanding.

their descendants. Such an alliance is equivalent to kinship. It involves the absolute obligation never to covet the life or possessions of the senãnku. The two parties are obligated to mutual assistance in many cases: food, housing, material aid; help in case of war or lawsuit; obligatory presence at religious ceremonies; purifications in case a taboo is broken.

These rules imply that the alliance affects the individual not only in his social roles, but also in his spiritual principles. The senãnku is a kind of twin to each individual belonging to the other family. He has within himself a part of his partner and vice versa.

602 Because of this fact, the reactions set off by insult or by joking are singular: the senãnku will accept from the mouth of the other, without becoming angry, mockery which he would not normally tolerate. He cannot be affected by them since the words are addressed to that part of his being which comes from the person insulting him. Moreover, the joke or the insult, without touching his spiritual integrity, has the effect of confirming him in his position relative to the person addressing him and of affirming the state of both parties, thereby increasing their vitality. It determines movements of forces from which the two speakers reciprocally benefit, as from a kind word.

This proceeding is used on numerous occasions, particularly at the time a person achieves a new social status or a new grade. The senãnku jokes with a newborn child as soon as his name is given and, later, on the day he wears his first piece of clothing. The circumcised boys become allies and joke between themselves the day of the daworo which consecrates the age grade (1). On the evening of marriage, the young woman is the object of ritual sarcasm which marks her final introduction into the husband's family group.

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•783 The senãnku is the only one who, in certain cases, is able to carry out the purification rites made necessary by a broken taboo (tne). It is true that he carries in his collarbone—but only /85/ where his partner is concerned—twice the number of symbolic seeds,

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1. See p. 241.

602 •783 that is, sixteen. This fact qualifies him, by his gesture of purification and through his essential role as provider of sustenance, to restore the seeds that had left the guilty man's collarbone. If the offense is slight, the offender gives him millet, money, or an object. The wounded animal's nyama settles on the object, and the senãnku who receives it rids him of it without being affected himself. If the offense is more serious, the two allies go off together to a road intersection, dangu; then the senãnku takes a straw torch in the shape of a cross and circles the guilty man's head with it from left to right. The being who has been offended by the broken taboo can refuse nothing when confronted with this procedure. He removes the nyama he had inflicted and the man, powerfully aided by the forces of the purifying agent, recovers those he had lost, as symbolized by the seeds in his collarbone.

This cathartic role of reinstating subsistence forces into the human body is illustrated in daily life by the food prestations to which the partners are held. This is like the secular and materialistic representation of an invisible operation of purification.

The Person: Exceptional Cases

000 Certain physical peculiarities constitute the manifest evidence of a modification of the elements making up the person. It is appropriate here to examine the cases of individuals who are thus affected.

Twins

845 Twins, flani (literally, two little ones), are two new beings given to men by Faro and considered as his offspring alone. Because of this fact, twins inherit neither the ni nor the dya of a dead person, but they inherit new principles which come to them from the spirit. Moreover, their dya never leaves the water for the shadow, but remains in the hands of the spirit throughout their entire life. Because of this they are protected from all danger and from all impurity.

Such a birth is considered a blessing and is granted only to certain privileged people called kunandi. It is announced by holding up the [201] right and left forefingers without uttering a word, for its announcement would be so powerful that it would harm the newborn. Their mother wraps a white cotton band called dyala about her forehead to indicate the presence of the children's dya /86/ in Faro's hands.

291 him and joke with him, indicating by semi-ritual jokes his accession to a new status.

291 173 Men's first garment was the skirt of nyama fibers (Fig. 8, A). The bark was beaten and prepared by means of a club, a wooden club, gosilande or kuruninde, which is /106/ supposed "to contain potentially all human technology invented as the need arose." It is said of this club that it is "the mold of perfection and the place from which all useful things issue." The club was also originally a primitive instrument of rhythm (1); the hammering of blows "chased away the evil

[783] 1. kow dyele bwo yoro. On certain occasion when the Komo masks are brought out, the chief carries on his head the gosilande which represents the universe. Certain collective purifications are also executed with this instrument at the crossroads (see p. 186).

[755] sounds emitted by Téliko at the time of his revolt." Even today, a deafmute is seated near the gosilande which is prayed to so that he may be rid of his infirmity. [844] The clothing of a woman in labor, in order to purify it, is beaten with the gosilande at the same time the infant utters its first cry. Dyed clothing is beaten not only to make the color penetrate, but also to chase out any impurity.

When they first learned about cotton, and after the invention of weaving, the Bambara made garments which are in disuse today but of which they still make specimens for ritual purposes. In fact, with the exception of the loincloth, these ancient garments are worn only during religious ceremonies and their principal function is to represent the ancestors who were their progenitors.

291 173 386 The first garment woven was an imitation of the fiber skirt. The men made loincloth (mboko nimba) still worn today by the uncircumcised and dyed it yellow, wolo (2) (Fig. 8, B), a color which

[824] 2. This dye is made with the leaves of the ngalama (Angeissus leiocarpus), which are boiled, dried, and pulverized. The powder is put in water.

represents that which a certain disease gives to the black's skin,

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hypocrisy, humiliation, and cheating
are not done at the door of the forge."

5. Envy, jealousy, and ill humor are generally bad for the blacksmith who loses his "turn of the hand." He must "have a pure heart" (1).

1. Numu te keleya note i bolo na tye:
"The blacksmith must not be jealous,
otherwise his hand is spoiled."

6. A mirror must never be brought near the forge; it would take hold of its soul which resides in the axe at the altar (2).

2. Dugalle te gere fã na a kanana; ka fã
ni tã: "The mirror must not be brought near
the forge; it will take the soul from the forge."

[834] 7. Sexual relations near the forge prevent its functioning (3).

3. Noa te gere fa nda la: "No obscene
action may take place near the door of
the forge."

Breaking the taboos of the forge is equivalent to attacking the virility of the blacksmith, for the bellows are his testicles. Thus the artisans present themselves naked before the culprit to shame him; he is seated on the communal anvil and water in which large [583] millet (keninge) has been soaking is poured over his head to purify the instrument (4).

4. If the fault is irreparable, the kneeling chief crushes three grains of large
millet (keninge) on the anvil, a gesture
which symbolizes the death of the
culprit whose name he pronounces at the
same time.

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/124/ The affected owner then proceeds to reconstruct his forge. Having taken a piece of charcoal, a piece of iron, a piece of leather, and his tools, he goes to the kotigi to ask him to perform the necessary purifications. In the presence of the parents gathered around the forge and in front of the culprit, the kotigi officiating alone, crushes the iron, leather, and charcoal, and then goes to fetch the kongobwona axe kept in the sanctuary of ancestral tools. He places all this before the altar facing the east, and recites the following prayer over a gourd filled with water, which he holds in his hands:

"You forge, ancient thing, you belong to us, to us Gwonna; so and so has broken his taboo, I am his senãnku and am apologizing to you for this deed. I have said: forge; I have said: blacksmith of Gwondougou" (1).

1. E fã, fẽ Roro, e ye an gwonna ta ye;
kari macina ye tnę tyẽ, ne ye senãnku ye,
nye delili kę a ko la; ngo fã; ngo
gwondugu numu.

The axe is then washed in water to which has been added some earth taken out of the hut. Next, the officiator completely demolishes the tainted forge and rebuilds it with the mud thus obtained while one of the Gwonna witnesses keeps a little of this earth in a piece of cloth as a testimony to the reconstruction.

The blacksmith slits the throats of two roosters over the new forge while the ingredients groundup by the kotigi are placed on the altar. The following day, accompanied by his parents, he goes to ask the chief of the Komo to proceed with the purification. The members of the society meet at his home and the masker whistles into the forge to chase away ultimately the miasmas provoked by the breaking of the taboo. The fowls brought by the participants are sacrificed on the forge and all join in drinking beer offered by the interested party. The following day, the chief of the Komo calls for the latter's wives. Each in her turn, they place their heads on the anvil, an act which chases away the nyama which they have been concealing since the offense was committed, and then leave on it, cowrie shells and kola nuts as an offering.

794 Each year a sacrifice bringing together all the inhabitants is offered
776 to the dasiri and is terminated by communal eating of the sacrificial
182 victim. The first fruits of the harvest are also brought to it by the
sacrificer.

B. The dangu

776 The crossroads dangu or danku (literally, boundary of the head) are
778 inhabited by the Soba spirits who, under Faro, constantly intervene
823 in human affairs. Everything placed at this spot belongs to them,
783 and no one passes by without leaving an offering or a token of his
● presence: a tool, raw cotton, seeds, cloth. A travelling stranger
kneels and deposits a little ash or some cotton; if not, he cleans off
a little space on which he spits before leaving. A child passing by
will greet it with these words: "Crossroads, my soul is in your hands."
On the occasion of any event concerning the individual; the family,
or the community, red kola nuts are placed at the crossroads and the
following words uttered: "You, crossroads, I entrust my head to you;
you are my support; I say, you, crossroads" (1).

1. E dangu m be ni ku kalifa, do i la
ni jigi be fę, ngo e dangu.

The corssroad, as an ideal public thoroughfare, is the chosen spot where one easily rids oneself of the nyama which any individual keeps and carries about with him. All that is impure, unlucky, and undesirable for the individual or the community is left at the crossroads. Objects which have belonged to dead people are also left there. The forces which are thus gotten rid of are supposedly absorbed by the spirits for whom they constitute a kind of nourishment which will then be returned to men in the form of gifts free of any taint.(2)

2. See p, 258.

/140/ Several examples will illustrate the role played by the crossroads in the community:

Any man who has wounded an animal or squashed an insect is affected in his own tere by that of the victim. He goes to the crossroads, kneels, and prays, depositing at the same time a band of cotton, an egg, and ashes. The band of woven cotton, symbol of

776 the word, is offered as clothing, and the eggs are offered as purification.
778 As for the ashes, it is the ideal pure element since fire has "removed"
823 its *tere* from the wood; here it represents the man from whom "the bad
783 force acting on his *tere* has been removed" (1). Whoever murders an animal proceeds in the samw way with the animal's hide upon which he throws cowrie shells. In both cases, the spirits absorb the *tere* and *nyama*, which add to their own forces and free the culprit.

Collective purifications are carried out on the *dangu* when sexual taboos regarding cultivated fields and bush are broken. The impurity
[833] resulting from copulation performed outdoors is communicated to all the land belonging to the village; the trees in the bush will no longer bear fruit; the harvests will deteriorate. Formerly the two lovers
[684] taken by surprise were deprived of their clothing which was burned on the *dangu* after they had circled the village three times starting at the left. The culprits were then banished. At present, if the plight of the fields suggests that such an act has been committed, all varieties of cultivated seeds are gathered in a basket which is placed at the crossroads. Then, all the villagers and their domestic animals circle the village three times while sham battles take place between men mounted on horseback. After a sacrifice offered at the *dangu*, the seeds, thus purified, are sown.

776 Offerings are made to the spirits of the crossroads at the time of
778 sowing to invoke their protection. This ritual is obligatory for whom-
823 ever sows cotton, since this seed was given to men by these spirits.
241 The farmer places the seeds, sits down facing west, and cries out three times the name of the *dangu* above the seeds. He leaves three small piles in homage to the spirit along with fibers from the plant, and kills a victim before proceeding to sow his field. When the stalks are up, he cuts some boughs and returns to the place of sacrifice to sweep up the seeds, thus impregnating them with the *nyama* of the *dangu*. He then dries them, grinds, sifts, and mixes them with earth picked up on the same spot. In his field, he shouts /141/ the name of the *dangu* and throws the mixture with all his strength in the direction of the cardinal points, the zenith, and the ground. When the plants are mature he picks the first seven ripe seeds, brings them to the same place, and offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

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1. See pp. 90 ff.

776 It is also at the crossroads that the elders place the child whose
778 legitimacy is in doubt. If the diviner who is then consulted declares
823 that the child is a bastard, he is deprived of the protection of the spirits
848 and is supposedly unable to survive the nyama which he has acquired
787 at the place. In this same spot are buried abnormal children, in particular
[766] hydrocephalics who are considered undesirable. The spindle
of a dead woman is placed here along with the broom she habitually
used.

776 But the ritual most characteristic of the crossroads is the one resorted
778 to by the village when it is in trouble: the primitive wooden
823 mallet, gosilande is planted in the ground; it is then struck with a
783 stalk of millet to chase away evil and to induce new techniques of
reparation to come out of the instrument (1).

1. See p. 145.

C. Stone Altars

778 In the villages, at the intersections of lanes, and in the squares,
211 the founding ancestors are represented by stones under which various
objects are buried (see Pl. V, b).

At Sama, four large stones, encased in a clay platform, symbolize both the cardinal points and the ancestors. They are in touch with the dasiri and receive the same offerings. At Banankoroni, the fára ba is partly buried. Under its point is an albino skull which represents those of the first ancestors and their bones. Two hoes, one placed near the right ear and the other near the left ear, convey the idea that "the man who cultivates the earth will never hear a humiliating word." Under the chin, another hoe recalls that the villagers who are faithful to agriculture will never know famine. Under the hoe, a siriku (2) protects them against those who try to harm them, and brings them "the hyena's luck"; it also means that some of their ancestors were transformed into hyenas in former times. A circumcision knife recalls that all males are circumcised, and all women excised (Fig. 15). Finally, three albino bones and a small pile of copper are a testimony to /142/ Faro's presence and power. Drawings are made on these

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2. See p. 179, n. 1.

794 3. *Šu kasa be.*

796 The man lowers his head and all move away from him. The masker
688 wounds him with the right hook. He is banished from the circle of
766 dancers and probably will die several days later. His funeral rites are
not solemnized. The corpse is tied by the feet and removed from
his home through a hole made in the wall to prevent his evil *nyama*
from returning to the family. The body is beaten with switches so
that the soul may leave the village forever, and is thrown into the
common grave or placed in the cleft of a tree, which is then closed
up with thorny bushes. In this case it is often devoured by the hyenas.
The clothing which belonged to him is hung on the hook placed on
the outside wall of the sanctuary. No one has the right to weep for
his death and no one ever mentions him again. To do so would be an
offense to the Komo.

794 It may also happen that the emergence of the Komo occurs without
the village being warned. In this case, if a young girl imprudently
796 approaches the place where the dance is being held, the masker may
688 kill her with one blow of its hook directly upon her head. A little
782 of her blood is then placed as an offering on the *nya* and her jewelry
thrown into the river where her soul goes to replace the virgin who,
in former times, was annually offered to Faro.

G. Effects of Broken Taboos

794 The breaking of the taboos attached to the altars or to the mask
783 reacts upon each of the parts affected as it does upon the whole and
brings about a diminishing of the Komo's power, which is abandoned
by Faro and the ancestors. A purification may be performed /164/
in certain cases. The error is then corrected and the spiritual forces
reenter the altars.

If a woman or a noninitiate catches a glimpse of the *nya*, the *komo tigi* and his age grade go down to the river bank and, to the sound of drums, present the culprit's apologies to the spirit:

"I have not come for someone else, I have come for myself, I have come to reestablish the race of our fathers" (1).

1. *Ne mana ma nyini; ne mana nyere nyini, ne ma na m fa Šia tuku ko la.*

794 783 The victim offered by the responsible party then has its throat cut, its body is thrown into the water, and the members take some black earth to smear again on the regenerated nya.

If the chief does not observe the chastity imposed upon him before every sacrifice, he must advise the elders of his age grade and purify the altars by sacrificing two roosters or a goat.

It would seem that the taboo of the nimara boli may not be broken without danger, and that in this case the fault is almost irreparable. The Komo is affected not only in one of its parts, but in its entirety, and a general reordering becomes necessary for the society. The chief and the elders carry away the principal altars to their place of origin, that is to say to the village where they were consecrated through contact with those of the local Komo (1). The owner of this latter Komo keeps the tainted objects for seven days. After this delay, the petitioners return, bringing victims which are sacrificed upon the altars now placed in contact with those from which they originated (2). The meat is eaten by the chief who is being consulted, and by him alone. The petitioners must then return home with their sack without speaking a word to anyone during the trip.

This ceremony, which is a second consecration, may under no circumstances be repeated. If the taboo is broken once more after a first fault and a first reordering, the Komo is considered to be entirely destroyed and the village is sometimes abandoned by the inhabitants who have "lost their soul" and who fear the wrath of Faro; they disperse, unhappy and powerless. Some conversions to Islam or to Christianity may have had no other motivation.

H. Role of the Komo

794 182 "The Komo is a society which unites the highest divine power, men, animals, and plants until the /165/ end of the world. It is the

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1. See p. 190.

2. The nimara boli is "rubbed" on the nimara boli of the tro ba, the nyɔ̃ boli on the nyɔ̃ boli of the same, etc.

169 At an annual ceremony presided over by the Komo, the members assemble in honor of thedead. It is called *šu sɔ sibiri*, "Saturday of the sacrifice to the dead" and is celebrated on a Saturday at the time when the ears are being formed in the millet fields.

The *kotigi* removes the ancestral tools from their shelter and carries them to the graves. Then the chief of the Komo and his assistants, accompanied by the maskers, carry the altars to the cemetery while singing. Each grave is put for a moment into contact with the *nimara boli* and the *nyama boli*; the exuviae of the souls of the dead each visit the bodies they once animated. To the rhythm *šu bara*, "rhythm of the dead," played on the drums, the maskers dance and sing around the graves while mock labor is carried out with each of the ancestral tools. During the whole ceremony the kinsmen wail, the men near the graves and the women in the house. A victim is sacrificed, cut up, and cooked in new pots which are broken after they have been used in order to avoid the contagion of the *nyama* of the dead. The dances of the maskers are performed during the two days that follow. In some villages the ceremony is repeated after the harvest has been threshed.

Exceptional Cases

The Stillborn

845 783 It is said of a stillborn child that he has lost both his soul and his double, that is to say, his complete being. The parents who are responsible to Faro for this disaster are obliged to find and recapture the spiritual elements of their child, the woman the soul, and the man the double, in the course of long and sometimes painful rituals.

As soon as the woman is able to go out after the birth, both parents are led, shaved and naked, before the members of the family assembled in the courtyard. As testimony /197/ of the deceased to Faro, their hair, mixed with that of the child, is buried in the wall of their home. Then a tomato, representing the foetus, is introduced into a large incision made in the woman's thigh. The man crouches and drinks the juice which drips from the fruit and which symbolizes the double. Each one bows before the elders of the family, holding their hands behind their backs, to apologize for the fault committed, sayiing: "Here is my humiliated (sex) behind me" (1).

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1. A ngari ko le ye ngo (ngari is a word of the archaic language which expresses submission.)

Each person responds by striking their genital organs with the little finger: "It is well humiliated" (2).

[826] 2. A ngari ko karu. The little finger is the symbol of the whole person; to strike with it is to acquiesce with all one's being.

They are led to the door of their home where the village elders of both sexes are gathered; they repeat their apologies to which the same response is given, accompanied by the same gesture of acquiescence.

[304] The chief of the Komo and three elders of his age grade who have never broken any taboos led them to the river bank where they undergo a new circumcision for the man and a new excision for the woman; the blood which is a gift to Faro must fall into the water. This operation is called "purification of the foreskin" (yiriyiri tige) and the pain suffered has an expiatory value.

The sixth day after the operation the members, gathered on the village square (3), dance and sing to the rhythm of the Komo, which is furiously beaten out, in the following words:

3. This ceremony, called daworo is comparable to that celebrated on the sixth day after circumcision.

"Circumcised children, it is not good to break the taboo of the anus. I am telling you, Soma and members of the society, do not count their faults. Faro "(ter) (4).

[195] 4. (I ye ye) boloko dew tne tyẽ mañi boda la; nye fo aw ye somaw moko ka na jigi u la; faro (ter). That is to say, "forgive them." The word anus here replaces the word genitals which, according to propriety, is not spoken.

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The parents are led to the square and turn, open-mouthed, around the circle of dancers, seeking to recapture the soul and the double of their child who is present during the ceremony, attracted by the rhythm and visible to them alone. They turn and dance until they fall into a sort of trance called "fainting of the Komo" during which the soul and the double enter them. If the entrance occurs through the mouth, they cease their cries; if it is through the nose, they appear to smother; if by the eyes, their tears run.

/198/ The rhythm then becomes progressively fainter. Soon it is only a murmur. In order not to interrupt the action, in order that the double and the soul may penetrate gently the stretched out bodies, the murmur decreases further to die out gradually. The drummers' sticks alone beat the air in silence, performing the rhythm called "the drum of the soul" (*ni dunu foli*). With mouths shut so as not to frighten the invisible, the participants softly drone out a song, *ni bonye*, which calms the soul and incites it to penetrate the two suffering parents. The latter, accompanied by the musicians, are led back home. They are beaten with sticks so that the spiritual principles may not leave them while that which has just been accomplished is proclaimed in a loud voice as well as the shame and suffering voluntarily submitted to. They are then fanned for the "repose of the child's soul."

The following day, the chief of the Komo and his age grade go to the cemetery to remove the bones of the stillborn child. They place them on the ground, examine them in the open, and dance around them to the rhythm of "the drum of the bones" (*kolo dunu*) while singing:

"White bones, you, dead ones! I have come to see you" (1). Then

1. *Kolo dyew aw šu ne nǰa na bo ye.*

the grave is once more closed over them.

The man and the woman are then called to the field of the dead (*šu foro*) to swear an oath. While their mouths are full of rain water or water from the Niger, a participant in the ceremony leans over and, "to heat the liquid with the strength of words," recites the following prayer under their chins:

"Kill me if I do it twice: good or bad, chance comes from several places. Faro" (*ter*) (2).

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2. Ni nya ke šyẽ fla i ka n fa; ka kadi ka
kago, gariseke bo fã ka čã; faro (ter).

The water swallowed after these words constitutes a solemn promise to Faro not to repeat the fault.

[826] Next, they are carried home, the man by two members of the society and the woman by three of her companions, so that their toes, the temporary lodging places of the spiritual principles which have returned to them, may not touch the impure earth. They remain three and four days, respectively, on their mats without making a movement. On the seventeenth day, with a thousand precautions, they may resume a more normal life, but they will be entirely free only when a birth occurring in the family will eliminate from their bodies the soul and the double of the dead child by transferring these to the newborn.

/199/ Death of an Uncircumcised Boy

763 When an uncircumcised boy is seriously ill the chief of the ndomo (1) has a rooster sacrificed in order to find out if recovery is possible.

1. See p. 222.

In the case of a negative response the children, taking turns night and day, go into the bush and sound off the ritual objects under the leadership of an initiate. In this way the soul of the dying boy is certain to be captured at the moment of death and channeled by the sound wave and led into the ritual objects themselves. Two initiates are posted near the home of the sick and, as soon as they learn of his death, they go to warn the children in the bush to make them stop playing. The chief sits down facing the west and recites a prayer; then he sacrifices the victims offered by the family.

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[304] Before the corpse is buried, it is circumcised, and the wanzo goes to settle in the mask of the ndomo. During the night following the burial the members go to the fresh grave and sound the ritual instruments which contain the soul. Each year they repeat this action above the children's graves following the threshing of the harvest to "awaken the dead and to tell them that their souls are not lost."

IV. Rites for the Renewal of the Year

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783 These rites involve individual, familial, and collective actions; the latter bring into play most of the institutions (1). Everyone, from

1. As examples of collective rites we present those which are performed on the stone altars of the village (fara ba) (see p. 129).

the newborn to the elder, must undergo a kind of purification which consists essentially of the /207/ rejection of the breath and forces of the past year and of the taking in of new breath and forces. It is, according to Bambara expression, " a refreshing of the body and soul." But the renewal is not limited to elements which make up the person; it extends to the cosmos and the cardinal points.

1. The individual rite of the family chief is performed with the instrument ngoni, which is used to make on the wall of his česo the drawings representing the universe. (2) He starts out with an offering

2. See p. 172, Fig. 10.

of tomato juice to Faro who presides over the family use of the object and who is present thereafter. The fruits are squeezed; a hedgehog is sacrificed over the juice so that no other spirit may touch it. Next the man sacrifices a gray lizard as a reminder of his own condition before circumcision. This sacrifice represents a new circumcision offered to Faro and increases his strength. [825 782]

The man who is offering the sacrifice puts his tongue in the juice of the fruit without swallowing a drop in order to give Faro "a complete accounting of all his acts and thoughts during the past year (work, births, deaths, illnesses, quarrels, fortune, and misfortune) just as a subordinate gives an accounting to his superior." He puts his right little finger in the liquid and places it on the wall over the drawing representing Faro. Then he sucks in a little of the tomato juice through his nostrils and blows it over the ngoni, thus sweeping away the remaining life from the past year which he still had in his body. A new air which comes from Faro then circulates in his lungs. He next fills his mouth with the liquid contained in the male goatskin of the instrument and spits it out immediately to show the spirit that

796 783 all is returned to him. He then goes to the river or to the edge of Faro's pond, where he drinks a little water as a purification for the year to come.

2. On the day chosen for the family ceremony, the *ngoni* is solemnly removed from the room where it is usually kept hidden from view, and is presented to the family assembled before the door.

The rhythm called *kalafoli* is beaten out on the frame; the effect of this is to return the soul (*ni*) of the participants to the river or well. Then another rhythm, representing Faro, is played on the net to call in the renewed soul which has been returned by the spirit. Everyone opens his mouth and inhales the new, beneficial emanations coming over the family. When the rhythm ceases they all shut their mouths and return home without speaking. At the entrance door the children are given little strokes on the back with a little rope, *sebe dyuru* /208/ "to receive and withstand all that the new year will bring."

The instrument is then replaced in the home while all the participants shut their eyes in order not to see it. The owner goes into a trance, a fact which shows that Faro himself carried the instrument to the place where it will remain during the year. The man walks out backwards from the room where he has placed it and is carried into his *česo*, where he receives special care intended to return him to his normal state, which includes a purification performed on his individual altar, *Čuafebyěni* (1).

1. See p. 175.

3. The collective ceremonies for the renewal of the person are first performed on the stone *fara ba* of the village.

The "signs of creation" (*bolo ti doniya*), engraved with a red-hot iron on a gourd as a request to the ancestors for their support, are presented to the participants. Next, the stone is removed and the objects covered by it are checked, the group thus assuring itself that none has been displaced during the year. Then they proceed to the 796 783 532 reconstruction of the ritual drawings. The operator first draws the torches representing the fire used in olden times by the ancestors to defend themselves against attacks and dangers from the outside while they were building the village. The following prayer is recited:

"You, torch of fire, I have prepared you in the mountain (from which our ancestors came), you who keep the souls of the village, protect us from those who wish us harm, fire" (*ter*) (2).

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532

> 2. E mõ ñõ tasuma, ñe e šu kulu la kę dla,
> dugu nimara ba ke, i kã kla kelenyõ na,
> tasuma (ter).

Then he draws, as on the ancestors' caps, a black dot which represents the womb of women as well as Faro. The latter will help men by giving them water, for without his help "none, not even the Kworè, have the rain necessary for agriculture.

Three small figures represent the three responsible chiefs of the Kworè who are subjected to the fire rites and who withstand with courage for the common welfare all the sufferings and burns. The other members are represented by four silhouettes to indicate their inferior position by a feminine number. The entire grouping of personages and torches converges on the black dot to show that "the men by their feet and the torches by their fire throw back their nyama toward him."

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[185]

When the drawings are finished, all the participants in turn place their little finger and then their tongue on them to abandon the nyama of the year and to receive new forces. The women use the same gestures as the men but repeat them four times. Each person then receives, respectively, three /209/ or four lashes of the whip on his back so as to integrate properly within him these new elements (3).

> 3. The little finger acts upon the nyama of the body, and the tongue upon the nyama of words.

The children, led by their mothers, are the objects of similar attentions. The boys press their toes upon the stone; the little girls present their genitals to it to prove their femininity. All are then seated in turn on the stone so that the old nyama leaves them through the anus. Then, they are lifted up above it by their parents and "are shaken in all directions to settle properly the newly received nyama in them." The mothers pass their hands over the fact of their children and then over their own, a gesture which binds them to their offspring for the year to come.

The assembly goes to the Kworè stone where the cardinal points are renewed by brandishing lighted torches to the west, north, south, and then east. Each person apologizes for the faults committed during

796 the year. The men in turn each place their right foot on the stone
783 and turn in succession toward the cardinal points, inhaling deeply with
open mouth and extended tongue as though "to breathe them in."

The women do the same, but place their middle finger on the stone;
[785] at the same time they receive four whip lashes on the back so as to
"sustain (1) the change of the cardinal points with pain."

1. The more familiar term, "to receive" would be a better translation.

With heads lowered and hands at their back, the sick persons would present to the stone those parts of their bodies which are the source of their sufferings, saying: "Here is the evil that is in my flesh" (2), for

2. Nka soko la ba na fle ninye.

the stone is both responsible for and a depository of illness. The one-eyed and blind show their closed eyes. The cripples place their affected limb upon it. Then the initiated elders, completely naked, encircle the stone while recting a formula in the ancient language (3).

3. Dede ku'mbeyde mala kay kapo kumbey de malado. This text would mean: "stone, mistress of all, fear nothing, your children are there."

Next, the young men run around it rapidly rotating their right arms with closed fists. By this gesture, they are asking the stone to help them find a wife. The young girls follow them, walking in their footsteps, a gesture of docility which also expresses their desire to marry.

The ceremony ends with beer drinking which lasts three days. Each person is happy and gay at having "renewed" his soul; the young people will marry and children will be conceived.

778 787 emanating from the person or object impregnated with magic force acts as if it were a part of that person or object. Often [788] the magician or [154] ritual officiant spits on the person or object involved in the rites. This is a means of transferring one person's fluid to another.

Conversely, it is vital to know how to avoid contact 751 with, or even emanations from, a maleficent magic force. 787 That is the reason for the great number of mysterious magic 754 practices and the secret of the innumerable amulets that form so many shields, to be placed presumably where they will best protect against any blow. Therefore it is the magician's prerogative to make amulets and to prescribe the conduct necessary to preserve their efficacy.

It should be noted that protection set up against a given person is good only for him and is useless against a successor, for instance. The chronicle tells us that Bani, chief of Samba-Nyana, was successful in using certain artifices to prevent Ma-n-son from conquering him. But, kept in ignorance of Ma-n-son's death and having taken no precautions against Da, Ma-n-son's son and successor, Bani was conquered by Da, against whom his artifices availed nothing.

If one is caught in spite of precautions, what is to be done? Everyone is afflicted in one way or another in any event. A Bambara is always inclined to believe in some sort of supernatural intervention. He has on hand some sort of remedy, but more often he resorts to a "seer" for guidance or, if the case requires, to a magician's skill.

Native medicine is a mass of magic formulas and of remedies strikingly reminiscent of the pharmacopeia of the Middle Ages (see, in the foregoing, father Niany's operations).

[571] The individual does not live as an isolated unit but 789 rather as an integral part of a community. In the society in which he lives, however restricted it may be, he progressively 783 occupies various situations. On both physical and moral levels, he undergoes changes and, depending on circumstances, whether fortunate or unfortunate happenings, changes take place within him. In short, his magic potential varies. These variations are always believed to concern the entire milieu, upon which they may (in the case of illness or death) have disastrous effects.

789 The individual is therefore required to [155] undergo proper
783 treatment to return him to his normal, harmless state.

789 From this point of view, social life seems to give rise
to a series of rites involving the disintegration and reintegra-
788 tion or the aggregation of the individual in relation to the group
182 in which he lives. Birth, circumcision, marriage, illness,
death and the performance of certain trades are all modes of existence, whose beginning and end usually involve three stages: separation from the common milieu, accomplishment of the act, and reintegration into the former milieu or aggregation in a new milieu. Between the first and the second state as well as between the third and the fourth there exists usually a kind of negative interval which we call marginal. This system, which comes to light upon an analysis of multiple facts, is actually subject to modifications or alterations which can change its physiognomy. Nevertheless, the basis of these ritual sequences is so well established that by comparing external manifestations with the theoretical system it is possible to understand them better and to restore to some of them, which have become badly mutilated, their real meaning, which the native is usually, if not always, unable to explain or to define precisely.

A detailed study of institutions will give an opportunity for concrete analysis of these ritual sequences, which a kind of age-old empiricism has transformed into laws of a sort. They have come to represent that part of custom which has acquired a kind of permanence by virtue of public acceptance.

It is apparent everywhere among the Blacks that events of a general character (birth, coming-of-age, marriage, illness and death) are surrounded by ritual practices that vary outwardly from place to place but may all fit our theoretical system of three stages with marginal periods. All denote a common basis of magic and all derive from a long-tried empiricism which has given them a peculiar and relatively stable physiognomy in terms of the milieu with which the rites are connected.

571 What we have just said about individuals must also ap-
182 ply to collective groups: the latter deal with each other or

764 period is sometimes reduced to three days, but a week conforms more to custom, as is shown by the Ségou chronicle cited earlier.

All this takes place "at the door of the dead," at the *blon'-da*, as the natives call it, that is, at the very place where the elder was wont to sit and where offerings were made to the ancestors. It is believed that the soul of the departed is there and will be gratified amidst this abundance honoring him and testifying to his kindness and also to his power. In the minds of the Bambara these repasts of communion form a very strong bond among those who partake of them. The act of eating consecrated food together is a kind of sacrament which binds the participants to mutual aid.' A traitor is doomed to be cursed by the manes.

Magic, of course, can free a person from these bonds and even enable him to profit from these funeral gatherings to further the most nefarious schemes, but that does not alter the concepts on which the *dyansa* and the *sanga-fo* are based.

765 •783 [824] (d) *Mourning*. The purification of the hut of the deceased takes place on the eighth day. Women pulverize tree bark -- from the cailcedra (2) especially -- put it in water,

2. *Khaya senegalensis*.

and sprinkle this liquid about the hut which they then sweep.

They assemble with native brooms, sing, and do a kind of dance step; they collect the dirt and throw it away at a crossroads outside the village (3). The hut may then be re-

3. Preferably at the main crossroads (*da-n-kun'-ba-la*).

occupied. [172]

765 514 During the eight days following the burial, the daughters of the *fa* live together in strict seclusion. They spend their days in the *blon'*, where they spin cotton and take their meals. To take care of their natural needs, they go out only in a body;

765 twice a day, morning and evening, they go in procession, their [514] heads covered with caps made of white cloth. They spend the nights together, in a single hut if possible.

The wives of the deceased go out only when it is absolutely necessary during the first moon after the death; [292] they are dressed in white and wear a kind of white hood on their heads and sandals made of goatskin on their feet. At the end of the moon, at night and separately, they go to a sort of purification rite that takes place at the crossroads outside the village. [783]

Up to the fortieth day there is a very gradual return to ordinary life. Then, and only then, the successor to the deceased is finally recognized and installed, as is shown in the chronicle of Ségou.

801 805 In closing, let us note how every ritual sequence rests on periods of time whose real meaning must be sought in magic. The astral religion of the Semites in fact taught that on the third, seventh, and fortieth day after death the moon acts more powerful to destroy the body (1). Apparently some such beliefs must account for the Bambara rites planned precisely according to these numbers. This seems all the more likely since the Sudanese commonly believe that the fortieth day marks the separation of the flesh from the bones of buried corpses.

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1. See the meeting of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres of August 9, 1918, paper by Franz Cumont, "La commémoration des morts et l'astrologie [The Commemoration of the Dead and Astrology]," Journal Officiel (1918), p. 7224.

596 614 787 It is the duty of the fa to see to the cult. He projects everything that happens to him personally to the supernatural plane so as to come to conclusions that will guide his own conduct. He discerns in the most ordinary dreams indications of what will please the dead. Furthermore, the people around him point out the signs of divine will that they have observed. If, as happens in great houses, the fa is obliged to turn over part of his responsibility to the family gods to one of his confidantes, the latter will not fail to keep him informed of anything significant that may be revealed.

[771] Thus, daily life is unceasingly dominated by the supernatural, and every important event is conditioned by these beliefs. This is readily seen in all the family institutions: birth, circumcision, marriage, and death.

[577] It follows that the moral behavior of the family is a concern of the fa. Whenever something abnormal or painful occurs, the fa looks into it. Do the dead perhaps have reason to be dissatisfied? Have they been neglected or offended? He questions them, and if he finds confirmation for his suspicions, he at once seeks to appease the manes in whatever way they desire. If the trouble persists, he investigates further, and sometimes everyone in the house is questioned or, if one prefers, made to confess, even infants. Could one of them, moved by ill feeling, have uttered maledictions when invoking the dead?

614 596 ●783 [578] When the fa himself is ill, this general confession is virtually obligatory. This is because the absolute authority of a fa can hardly fail to arouse hatred, and hatred, a bad counselor, makes people resort to magic to rob the more powerful of life. Fear that the elder's "clairvoyance" will discover the wickedness in the depths of one's soul and punish it usually induces the guilty person to obtain a pardon for his wrongdoing by confessing it, and then everything returns to normal.

596 614 Upon the death of the fa, it is the first duty of his successor to try to discover, by any means, the causes of death and to avenge it if need be.

[763] Everything which the old fa was wont to honor, which forms the spiritual treasure [180] of the family, must also be

881 At the end of this time, the nyana-n-son-na-ba and his council having come to an agreement with the sema to end the period of seclusion, each leader performs certain magic passes, under the boys' tree and near the girls' huts, to dispel any evil. The Bambara are convinced that so long as the period of convalescence is not officially closed the circumcised boys or excised girls are as much a danger to society as society is to them; that is why they must spend this period in seclusion. Further-
881 more, anything used by them during their seclusion is impreg-
783 nated with this evil and may spread it.

Therefore, as soon as the interdict is lifted, everything is collected to be burned at sunset (2). Near the trees outside the village the mats, the n-koso-m-bara, the gourds, millet stalks, rags, etc., are all piled up, and the nyana-n-son-na-ba sets them afire. The boys and girls jump over the fire three times; they are then free to return to the village. They run home promptly to adorn themselves for the festival celebrating their return.

881 Once more there are lavish meals and interminable drinking bouts, followed by a general gathering in the public square. People come from all directions, among them appallingly decrepit old women who try to manage everything. [247]

[291] On this occasion, the boys, soli-ma-tye, appear for the first time in true man's attire, full trousers, cap with earlaps, and an ample new shirt. With lance in hand, they swagger about and simulate the behavior of warriors; they are now tye-kura, "new men."

881 The girls also are decked out to excess in women's attire.
301 Wearing several skirts and adorned with all the jewelry relatives

[789] 2. However, personal effects (the boys' kursi, dloki, and baufla, and the girls' tafe) are not burned; along with their stains, these are impregnated with virtues which make them particularly valuable for talismans, amulets, and other magic weapons.

794 Besides, this submission, if one may call it that, is
merely a corollary of the solidarity existing between *nyana-den'*.
This solidarity is shown to the profane whenever litigation
arises outside the sphere of the brotherhood; *nyana-den'* do not
[694] hesitate to bear false witness for the sole purpose of helping a
guilty co-member evade the sanctions of profane jurisdiction.

For failure to fulfill his obligations or for any other wrong considered reprehensible by the brotherhood, the *nyana-den'* comes under the jurisdiction of this brotherhood.

Fearing the supernatural retribution which his misdeeds
[783] [265] may provoke and seeing portents of it in apparently inexplicable
things that cause him pain and surprise, the *nyana-den'* himself seeks pardon through some kind of expiation, determined by his own intuition alone or by one of the clergy.

On other occasions, the guilty person fails to denounce
himself, not merely by deliberate design but sometimes because
[787] he is not aware of his wrongdoing and its consequences. In that
case it is the *wara-da* (oracle) who reveals it in a trance.

794 The clergy is led, by means of self-accusation, denunciation
695 by witnesses, or accusations based on the most varied
imputations, to learn, to investigate, to adjudicate, and to punish the acts of the faithful in material as well as spiritual matters. In the process of carrying out its duties in this respect, the clergy uses every imaginable means of obtaining information and of examination, but the proof of guilt that they particularly want is confession.

The various procedures used to persuade the accused to confess his wrongs may be put under three headings: oath, torture, and divination.

When an oath is taken, the *boli* is provided with an accessory known as the *siri-kun'* (knot), to which seven straws are attached. The person taking the oath (*kali boli la*, "to swear on the *boli*") then pronounces the usual formula: "May the *nyana* take my heart and my liver if I lie." When two people exchange this oath in order to vouch for their respective statements, they are said to have "tied the *boli*" (*boli syen'*), and it is believed that anyone who perjures himself will be put to death

794 [787] Furthermore, every wara-mina-den' is able to read the will of the Nya and, more generally, to reveal the acts of the invisible by means of the divination practices which we have already mentioned.

[782] The sacrifices are performed by the muru-kala-tigi, and a dyeli (herald) serves as factotum, just as in the other brotherhoods. [285]

794 796 The faithful are initiated and called to participate in the cult to an extent determined by the clergy; they are called Nya-ko-den'-u, literally, "those who follow the Nya." In order to be admitted, an individual must give a chicken and 120 cowries. The next day, in the presence of the Nya-tigi and the wara-mina-den', the chicken is sacrificed on the boli by the muru-kala-tigi. The candidate is present, and in his behalf the Nya-tigi asks the Nya for protection against the suba, snakes, korti, and the evil eye. Then the neophyte is led to the sacred grove to be ritually purified with consecrated water contained in a vessel used exclusively for this purpose (1).

[783] 1. Every year at the time of harvest, the clergy undergoes ritual purification by washing in the sacred water. When a Nya is inaugurated, this purification takes place at the first harvest after the installation.

[731] The two great annual festivals are celebrated at the times of planting and harvesting. Similar ceremonies take place in connection with important events (epidemics, public catastrophes, etc.). For these ceremonies, during which the Nya is supposed to give revelations about the event in question and to answer various other questions troubling the faithful, the wara-mina-den' [273] undergo special preparation and at the proper time drink a very heady beverage (2) which, they say, brings on their extra-lucidity.

[691] 2. I learned most of these details about the Nya during a criminal trial brought against the wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara,

771 came to me to complain that [332] my Negroes were using a 777 satala (1) to take water from his jug.

" 'What difference does that make to you?' I asked him.

" 'What difference does it make!' he answered with an angry air.

"And with that he favored me with the following astonishing line of reasoning:

" 'Now you see, I am not a (Moslem) marabout and if the marabouts take water from my jar with the satala, the water that remains in the jar will necessarily be sanctified because it came into contact with that vessel. My children and I drink this water and, since we don't know how to salaam and don't fast, and since we eat pork, God (2) will punish us for having failed to obey his orders. For, after all, any water that has touched a satala makes a marabout (3) of the person who drinks it. That is what I heard from my father."

776 The net result is that, on the whole, Ngalla (Allah) is regarded as one of the nyana which we have mentioned and for which the Bambara has a superstitious respect without for that matter being a worshiper. He avoids any contact with all that concerns the nyana, not because of hostility, but for fear of incurring its wrath on account of some impurity. Just as he may call upon any convenient nyana for aid, so he asks the help of

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● 783
177 1. A kind of saucepan made of copper or tin, of European origin, used by Moslem Sudanese for their ritual ablutions.

2. That is, in Niany's mind, the nyana called Ngalla (Allah) by the Bambara.

3. That is, an initiate of Ngalla (Allah).

621
581 Koulibali of Ségou, founded Bamako, and changed its name to Niaré
583 in becoming Bambara.

The tné: the taboo concerning an animal or some object.
621 The basis of this alliance is the oath of the *fa* not to kill or eat the
784 object of the taboo. All the generations following this ancestor must
respect the taboo *ad infinitum*.

Thus, the Kéita have the hippopotamus for *tné*; the Traoré, the Dambélé, and the Warata have the panther; the Samaké, the elephant; the Koubilali of Ségou, the hippopotamus; those of Issa Ber, the *m'polio* [a fish]; others have the mole cricket (*n'gere*) and the striped mouse (*n'kelika*); the Niaré, Sisé, Silla, Doukouré, and the Daramé, the python, etc.

The oath: this seals a pact of *dyonge* fraternization. Each
621 party to the contract extracts some drops of blood from his forearm
608 which is mixed with goat's milk. Swearing by his ancestors, he
states the conditions of the alliance and drinks part of the beverage.
This alliance binds the parties to it and all their descendants *ad*
[582] *infinitum*. It entails a prohibition or, contrariwise, a recommendation
of marriage between members of the two communities, and establishes
solidarity between the two communities which owe each other mutual
assistance. In the framework of this alliance is the cathartic alliance
termed *sénankuya*, which, besides the preceding obligations, governs
the system of purifications.

The *sénankuya*: unites certain specific groups bearing differ-
621 names within the same village, but can also have an intertribal
608 character; ex.: Mandingue-Peul. Humblot observed the following
648 alliances at Kankan: Kéita-Fofana; Kondé-Traoré; Kéita-Bérété-
Sérigou-Sissé; [56] Kala-Kéita-Kouyaté; Kourouma-Koma;
Kourouma-Dabo; Kourouba-Konaté-Kamara-Bagayoko; Konaté-
Dougoumoko; Konaté-Sidibé. This system of alliance in which
[783] the two allies are equal and complementary governs the mechanism
of the purifications, notably by the insult, and the duties of reciprocal
assistance (1). Formerly, when a *sénanku* was reduced to slavery,

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1. M. Griaule, "L'alliance cathartique" [The Cathartic Alliance], *Africa*, Vol. XVIII, 1948.

881 healing of their children and their return home. The next morning around the wells one sees only women and young girls with naked torsos washing up in millet in plenty of water; it is to be fermented for the coming drinking bout.

And on that day, a little before the sun sets and when it is only
881 a bloody disk, the circumcised and excised young people bring their
783 mats, the gourd disks strung on sticks, the pierced gourds the size of a fist and filled with small pebbles, the millet stalks carried for so long as sticks, and the dirty handkerchiefs that wrapped their heads under the sacred trees, and the gnéna-n-sonnaba, the one who sacrifices to the genii protectors of the village, sets them afire. A black, thick, acrid and loathsome smoke fouls the air, and an uncertain flame of greenish red tries in vain to rise, so choked is it by old dirt and sweat. Boys and girls dart forward and jump three times over this fire of joy. At once they are purified of all their pollution; they have left behind and abandoned the old selves, smoked them out. Agile as deer or
881 gazelles they run to their huts to masiri don ("to make themselves beautiful"). Everywhere there is an indescribable bustle! Lids of gourds, which are the Negroes' cupboards, roll on the ground, split, break, and fall to pieces, and in the midst of laughter of delirious joy there are the lamentations of an old woman who screams and grumbles. This haste and fever is the cause of delays, and the girls especially cannot yet done with arraying themselves. A piece of amber hangs too low or not low enough, the necklaces are too loose and have to be shortened, worn threads break, and beads by handfuls are lost in the dust.

At last, to the great relief of all, the cry of joy "Kouyo ê, Kouyo ê!" rings out from the four corners of the village. Preceded
533 by the /195/ chorus of singers (a group of women and girls who clap their hands and sing a most barbaric tune in falsetto, without ever being in harmony), the drums slowly head toward the great trees of the square that is the ballroom. In all the alleys that intersect the village and make it a labyrinth, a crowd of women, men, and children rush, jostle elbows, and shout, and in a moment the square is full.

776 7. Only vegetables whose spiritual essence
824 does not have to be preserved are cooked,
"for to cook is to shatter the soul."

776 In each village are grown one or several small fields of tomatoes,
824 called "Faro's fields," or "fields of twins." The fruits of these fields
244 are reserved for the worship of the spirit (1).
782

1. On the site of the ancient village of Soroba, at the edge of a pond located near the present-day village, there are two rectangular fields of tomatoes dedicated to male twins and four square fields dedicated to female twins in the village. Each year the villagers gather at the edge of the pond for a ceremony. The symbolic words relating to twins are recited and a prayer is said, to be followed by ablutions.

The fruit that is harvested is offered to the spirit by squashing it on a neighboring tree trunk.

776 /49/ All metals belong to Faro. The seven /sic/ principal metals
823 are the following: copper (male), brass (female), gold, silver, tin,
and iron. Copper and brass come from the fifth sky (koblenkaba).
They descend at each thunderclap and, along with the "thunderstones,"
penetrated into the soil. They were discovered by a diviner at the
bottom of a pond that had dried up because of a broken taboo. Be-
[301] cause of their divine origin, copper and brass represent "Faro's sounds."
These sounds twist themselves around the spiralled copper or brass earrings that everyone wears and penetrate the eardrum, thus making it possible to hear words. Gold plays a part in the building of certain altars (boli) to which it confers strength and stability.

The sacrifices made with or on copper, brass, or gold have a restraining influence on the spirit for they are of his own essence.

No woman wearing copper, brass, or gold jewelry, may cross the Niger without opening her luggage out of deference to the spirit, for "all ornaments belong to him and often must be returned to him after death.

[784] It is taboo to bring metal into contact with cow's butter, an oily substance that does not allow water to penetrate.

776 brought to the middle of the river and thrown in while the villagers
782 prayed the spirit to give the village his protection and to bring rain
to future harvests.

Faro's Taboos

776 All of Faro's subjects, in particular the Bambara of both sexes and
784 of all ages, are requested to respect a certain number of taboos.

The black earth, bogo fi, of the river banks, used ritually in many instances, would be excellent in pottery making. The women potters, however, cannot use it because it blackens in the process of baking. No pottery that has been fired may be washed in those places haunted by the spirit (1).

> 1. At Ségou, numerous drownings are blamed on the increasing frequency with which this taboo is broken.

[262] Butter in many places is forbidden by Faro and may not be preserved in water. (2)

> 2. This taboo is linked to the relation between Faro and the Peul, but the nature of their relationship has not been clarified.

No one crosses the river without opening his luggage and presenting Faro with the gold, copper, or food it contains. As a rule, the wearing of metals is forbidden in those places haunted by the spirit.

776 The principal taboo concerns menstrual blood which was originally
784 caused to flow because of the sins and impurity of Mousso /52/
841 Koroni. No menstruating woman may visit the places inhabited by
Faro; none may draw water, wash clothes or cooking utensils, or cleanse herself in any of these spots. In addition, a man whose wife is in such condition must refrain from appearing at religious ceremonies or, if he is a priest, from performing the ritual.

In this part of Africa, as in many others, menses are conceived of as a necessary flow of empty blood, impure because it has not contributed to the formation of the foetus, the embryo of which each

776 woman carries within her. (1) Deprived of Faro's essentially im-

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pregnating power and contrary to its generating action, this blood is considered evil, and all that recalls it or comes near it is excluded from the ritual.

Faro's Character, Role, and Deed

776 The principal characteristics of Faro's deed in creation are: omnipotence, omnipresence, and benevolence. Everything, whether animate or inanimate, depends on him in time and space.

The Bambara are extremely sensitive to Faro's power over the universe. They say: "Neither by day nor by night does Faro stop his incessant work." He sees to the efficient workings of the order which he inaugurated and which requires constant attention. His time is divided: from dawn until evening he occupies himself with the earth and its inhabitants; the next twelve hours' work is devoted to aquatic animals and members of his own family. Procreation depends on his will; it is he who, in the sky and in the water, controls the physical and spiritual life of all beings: the soul and vital force. In due order, with which the humans cooperate by observing his laws, he maintains life and makes the new bodies participate in the functioning of the universe according to a regular rhythm. Souls are reincarnated, assuring the continuity of spiritual forces in the world. The same power directs all acts of individual and social life: birth, circumcision, excision, initiation, marriage, agricultural work, voyages, war or peace.

Throughout the development of individual life, it is Faro who maintains man's physical integrity: he gives him health, necessary to action. Sickness is always /53/ considered a loss of strength which the individual must ask Faro to restore. The sovereign master of man's life, he has the power to take it away from him. [753]

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1. See G. Dieterlen, "Mécanisme de l'impureté chez les Dogon" /The Mechanism of Impurity Among the Dogon/ Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 17 (1947), pp. 82 ff.

774 D. Traore. "Le Tere chez les Bambara du
787 Ségou /The Tere among the Bambara of Ségou/."
828 *Notes africaines*, January 1947, pp. 29-31.

774 Man is considered the bearer of a strong *tere*. Because he talks, is well informed, and knows good from evil, he is responsible for his own life and that of his family. The *tere* is the gaining of consciousness.

This aspect of the *tere* means that only domestic animals, whose
774 life depends on man, are bearers of this principle. Wild animals
825 "have a hard and barren life; they have to labor to feed themselves; so they do not have to bear the burden of a *tere*." All that lives independently of man is without a *tere*. (1)

> 1. However, according to certain informants, wild animals might also be endowed with several *tere* for different parts of the body. In this case, it would seem that the term designates especially the animal's physical peculiarities and not its consciousness, as in the case of man and domestic animals.

The *tere* of domestic animals is not as powerful as that of man, but is also revealed by external signs. For instance, a horse that swings its head from right to left while it is tied up has a very bad *tere*; it is said to be its *duga fufa* (2). Such a beast is undesirable in a home for it "chases away happiness and success." A wounded domestic animal attacks its enemy with its *tere*.

> 2. Literally, "the swaying of the hawk." It is said that when a hawk descends on its prey, it swings its head right and left in order to see the prey better.

774 The fact that the *tere* is that part of the person which suffers the
784 consequences of impurity testifies to the bonds that unite man to the outer world. The *tere* is disturbed when a taboo, *tne*, is broken. If
827 it is a good *tere*, it leaves the person; if it is a bad one, it becomes worse. On the other hand, the brezking of a taboo provokes a physiological change in the blood which loses its red color and becomes

774 pale. It is manifested by a loss of strength and by illnesses affecting
784 the body openings: the man becomes blind and deaf-mute. He may
827 also become paralyzed. Generally he does not die but is pursued by
ills until he purifies himself.

774 In addition, the tere changes when it is detached from its normal support; it then becomes nyama, a force which acts outside the body. Manifest in action, the fact can already be sensed in the spoken word, the bearer of nyama which immediately affects /63/ the person to whom it is addressed. The consequences of this action of the word are manifold.

761 At the time of death, the tere is completely liberated. Transformed
774 into nyama which leaves the body, it then becomes a very active
form which, in certain cases, can attack whomever it considers
778 responsible for the death (1).

774 Sacrificial beings, men or animals, or plants for ritual use never
778 release a dangerous nyama. Their spiritual principles and forces are channeled in the course of the ritual and directed toward the benefit of a supernatural power through the altar. The same is true of domestic animals immolated for consumption, in which case their forces are used over again and their death causes no disorder since it was foreseen by Faro's law concerning food.

On the other hand, the nyama of the bush animals (nyama bakâ) leave their dead bodies and pursue the hunter (2). To protect himself

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(1) This very visible but incomplete aspect of the nyama is the one that has been most studied heretofore. On this subject, see the works of the Abbé Henry, Ch. Monteil, H. Labouret, L. Tauxier. Furthermore, in the sky, in space, and on earth, there is a nyama independent of the tere. The nature of this general and vital element has not been completely clarified by investigation.

(2) The sick man may be treated in the following manner: seven (or a multiple of seven) cowrie shells are thrown upon the hide of the animal

551 The institution of the device, with all its elaborations, has the
576 effect of confirming people in their bodies, their spiritual principles,
and their social functions. Except for the cases of emigration mentioned above, the occasions are rare indeed when an individual is obliged to change his name or device during his life. A woman keeps her father's barama even after marriage.

551 An illegitimate child receives neither the name nor the device of
848 his family. They may be given him later if the father makes himself
known. A Bambara who contracts a misalliance, for example, by
564 marrying the daughter of a blacksmith or a griot, will bring into the
783 world impure children who will never have a right to their father's
barama (1).

552 We must add that the prerogative of having a device is not limited
782 to humans. All animate beings, many /80/ inanimate ones, the elements of nature, places, villages, plants, animals, and all the supernatural powers have theirs which men address during prayers.

The Taboo

● 784 One or several eating taboos, tne or tana, are attached to the
[551] family name and are observed by all who bear the name. According
to certain initiates, the taboos were decreed by Faro when he determined the food proper to each species (2) after having classified the beings of creation. For the common man, the origin of the taboo is always the subject of a tale or legend and justifies the bonds between an ancestor of the family and the animal or plant designated. Most frequently, the animal has helped the man, has saved his life, or the other way around; or else, following some serious events, the ancestor was transformed into an animal or plant. Numerous versions of the origins of such bonds are given.

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1. Such a child is said to be a sofali (literally, horse donkey), that is, a bastard.

2. See p. 52.

●784 It has not been possible heretofore to consider all aspects of the various taboos. On the other hand, the great number of versions concerning their origin indicates that the current story, told to all who pass by, conceals much deep notions of the categories that indicate the bonds linking men to animals and plants (1). It would also be appropriate to study the relations between the species, between animals and plants and minerals in terms of the spiritual forces that animate them.

Whatever it may be, the taboo confers on man his title of nobility; not to possess one is degrading. It assures the protection of the group that observes it. Thus, the hyenas of Konodimini protect the village inhabitants who feed them.

Examples of taboo:

784 TT3 The Traoré family has crocodile flesh as its taboo. An ancestor called Makyon, having transformed himself into a crocodile, fed his family during a famine that lasted six years; he fished and brought the catch to the members of his family.

In the seventh year, since the famine still raged, the Traoré decided to kill him for food. In the morning, when he appeared with the fish he had caught, an old man advanced to attack him. /81/ The animal stopped him and predicted he would die if he pursued his plan. The man paid no attention and wounded the beast which had enough strength left, however, to return to the river. The old man regretted his act and the others tried to disassociate themselves from the responsibility. The following morning the crocodile came out of the river and died at their feet so that they might see what they had done. The guilty man was in turn killed by his family and the two corpses were buried together in the same shroud. When all was over, the chief revealed that Maydon /sic/ was a member of the family, that as a member of the same race he had been feeding his kin

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1. See also L. Tauxier. La Religion bambara (Théorie des Ntana et des tabous /Theory of the Ntana and Taboos/), pp. 114-138.

784 773 during the famine, and that in the future the crocodile would be taboo to the Traoré as a sign of gratitude for his gift and as an apology for the murder committed.

The taboo of the Diara family is the lion, whose name they bear. In the olden days two old friends were always in the habit of hunting together with arrows and spears. In the course of a long famine, their weapons broke and they were not able to find others. In order to feed their families, they attacked wild animals with bare hands; the one would stun his victims with his fists, and the other would skin them.

Gradually the life they were leading changed their behavior. They no longer washed, their hair and beards grew, and thick hair covered their body. Their nails became so long and so hard that they used them to slice meat and to dig the earth. They even forgot the language they had spoken and only communicated by grunts.

They fought with the spirits to gain a foothold in those places ordinarily reserved for the latter. They no longer returned to their village. Their parents searched for them, but as soon as they saw people, they ran away. They ended by walking on all fours and appeared like the animals they pursued.

One day as they lay sleeping next to each other, they mated and the stronger one impregnated the weaker to give birth, a little later, to two lion cubs. The men who saw them in the bush with their offspring decided that hereafter they could not kill a lion for it had their blood in its veins. Even today, when a Diara meets a lion, the animal lies down, "so ashamed to be descended from the mating of two men who had become beasts."

784 These two examples, selected from many others, illustrate the relations between man and animal. These appear even more clearly in the mechanism set off by the breaking of the adopted taboo.

Indeed, the first consequence of any infraction is the offender's loss of the seeds in his collarbone, a symbol of his basic sustenance. He becomes "an empty granary" and, deprived of his strength, is unable to contend against that of the wounded animal /82/ attacking him. The pain he feels at that moment is proof of the state of his physical and psychic inferiority. Any breaking of a taboo affects first the eyes, then the other openings of the body.

784 783 If the animal is wounded, it delegates its tere to warn the guilty man of the sin committed, but makes no attempt on his life since it is his ally. On the other hand, its death liberates its nyama which

784 783 acts more energetically. But it is even more serious to eat one's taboo than to ill it, for then the person cannot get rid of his victim's *nyama* and must suffer all the consequences.

The guilty person goes to the shore of the Niger and in a loud voice, discloses the facts to Faro while making him an offering (millet mash, copper, etc.), then he drinks a little water and goes home. If he lives too far from the river, he goes to a remote place and acts in the same way by spilling a little of his own blood as a sign of expiation. These acts have the effect of rectifying everything with Faro whom he has offended by breaking the established order. Next, he undergoes the purification rites. Their agent is his ally *senanku* and the rites are carried out at an intersection, dangu (1). The effect of such rites is to rid him of his victim's *nyama*, and then to reinstate the symbol of the eight life-giving cereal seeds in his collarbone: thus he recovers his lost strength. After his recovery, the old men of his family summon him and give him some stern advice for another breaking of the taboo cannot be atoned by any purification: the animal's *nyama* will no no longer leave the repeating offender who may die of it.

784 Voluntary infractions, which are very rare, of course bring about far more serious consequences for the person in question since his responsibility is involved. This is not so in the opposite case. If a man has eaten his taboo without knowing it during a meal taken at the home of another, the animal's *nyama* may attack those responsible: either the host or his wife becomes ill. The guilty woman must then [201] ask the man's forgiveness. On her knee and with her hands at the back, she discloses the facts to the person she has injured who may ask for time to think and make her wait in order to punish her. Otherwise he demands three kola nuts with which he carried out the *dyanzani* or "replacement." He throws them in the bush or gives them to the first poor person he meets. A few days later the responsible person is liberated.

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[602] 1. See p. 183. In certain cases the purification may be carried out by a kinsman of an ascending generation and may include ablutions with water consecrated by a prayer addressed to Faro.

778 Some *boli* are individual, sometimes inherited from an ancestor
782 and consecrated to their owner whose strength they maintain. Others are collective and consecrated to supernatural powers which protect the life of the community.

The taboos relating to beings whose soul "impregnates" the *boli*
778 and to the elements which compose them are decreed at the time /94/
782 of their making. They must be scrupulously respected by those re-
● 784 sponsible and by those officiating. The *boli* are generally placed in a sheltered spot either in sanctuaries or in an isolated room of the house, which no one enters without the permission of those responsible. This is done in order to avoid the dangers resulting from broken taboos which would affect the integrity of the *boli* as well as that of its owners. The handling of the *boli*, dangerous as it is, is restricted to priests, to the head of the family, or to the owner.

782 Victims most commonly offered on all altars are domestic animals such as fowl, cattle, sheep, and goats. However, on the altars of hunters and those of the uncircumcised, only wild animals are immolated.

The color of the victim is determined by the quality of the being to which it is consecrated as well as by the altar itself. Animals of
[822] a red color are generally killed on the *boli* of religious societies, thereby increasing the *nyama* which they contain. White, the symbol of light and purity, is reserved for Faro.

The death of the victim is used as an occasion for divination.
782 The throat is cut in such a way as to prolong the death struggle so
787 that the officiating person may interpret the position of the body. The cutting process is followed by eating which has the function of communion. Furthermore, certain parts of the body (the liver) are left on the altar; others such as the jawbone, feathers, and hair are kept as tokens by the person offering the sacrifice.

782 The ritual is usually accompanied by offerings of boiled millet as "refreshment," since the blood is given to the altar as a nourishment. Kola nuts, chosen for their shape and color, are divided into two portions: the officiating person chews one half and spits it out onto the altar before eating the other half.

In former times, human sacrifice was also practiced. These took place in serious cases involving the kingdom, the king, or the chiefs. The usual victim was the albino.

291 activity is not involved. Nevertheless, a woman puts on an indigo
773 loincloth the day she resumes sexual relations with her husband after
822 the end of her menses; she retains it until pregnancy. When she is sure
531 of her condition, she puts the loincloth in the sun to purify it and will
place the newborn child in it to remind him later that he owes his
life to his parents. A dead person who has broken a taboo is buried
[764 in an indigo shroud, the only reminder of light being a white cotton
784] thread which is placed on the corpse as an expression of apology and
forgiveness. Since indigo is taboo in most of Faro's sacred places, no
one wears it during sacrifices or religious ceremonies.

White and indigo complement each other. To twist a white and
[789] an indigo thread together to make a string used for holding an amulet
is to "roll together happiness and unhappiness, as in life."

The dye wolo is the color of yellow copper. It is in this color that the newly circumcised are dressed after the operation and until they are healed. Red, mbegu, is the color of copper and of blood. Hunters who wear a tunic of mbegu are "covered with a garment of blood." The band kayo (Pl. III, a, 1), in which are found these two colors, indigo and white, reproduces the rainbow: the white intervals are symbols of the word and of purity. /110/ A person making a sacrifice sews a piece of this band on his clothing to indicate that he is circumcised, that he is a hunter, and that he is truthful in his actions and words. A band is hung at the gate of the northern entry to the village in order to protect its inhabitants from dangers coming from outside. A man wears it when he has been ill or has suffered serious financial or family difficulties. On the altars, on the doorways, the colors are represented by millet mash, blood, and kola nut extract.
[821 As the rainbow keeps away the rain and dries up water, the kayo
784] strip may not be worn near the river or during sexual intercourse, for
it is Faro's taboo.

The band sirakele (literally, a road) (Pl. III, a, 2) represents Faro's descent from the seventh part of the sky down to the seventh part of the earth, the indigo stripe being the dyi fi, "black water," the spirit's earth seat. When put on the loincloth of a married woman, it expresses her rectitude and the good behavior she intends to maintain towards her husband. When worn by a traveler, it prevents him from losing his way.

291 The buguni (1) (Pl. III, a, 3) is "the sun ray Faro gave to Pemba
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821 1. The word designates the band's place of
531 origin, Bougouni.

326 Taboos Provided with vital force and a soul, ni, the forge, a
784 living being, is surrounded by taboos aimed at protecting its material and spiritual integrity.

These taboos, numbering seven, are peculiar to the forge and to the altars which it contains; they concern not only the /123/ blacksmiths, but also his clients, the passers-by, whatever sex they may belong.

[252] 1. None may cook meat on the fire of the forge; it would be equivalent to "eating the meat of the Soba spirits." To break this rule deprives the fire of its strength and causes the abdomen of the person breaking the taboo to swell (1).

> 1. It is said of the culprit: soko dyeni bala, fa ta sababu yalla: "he is full of meat cooked on the fire of the forge."

2. No insult may be uttered near the forge, particularly if it is of a sexual nature (2). This would be equivalent to insulting the fire;

> 2. Neni teke fã nda la: "Insults are not to be spoken at the door of the forge."

the flame would waver and, despite the bellows, no heat would rise from the hearth.

[201] 3. The sole of the foot and the palm of the hand are never presented to the fire, for the forge is alive and just as these same gestures made towards another human being would bring about physical disorders, so the various parts of the forge are vulnerable and may break (the hammer or anvil) or tear (the membrane of the bellows) (3).

> 3. Se ndege tere te jira fa na: "The tere of the sole of the foot must not be presented to the forge."

4. Any quarrel or misunderstanding disturbs the forge, upsets it, and harms the work (4).

> 4. Dadyuguya, filibatya, kunasirinlenya, konodyuguya te kę fã nda la: "Meanness,

326
784 hypocrisy, humiliation, and cheating
are not done at the door of the forge."

5. Envy, jealousy, and ill humor are generally bad for the blacksmith who loses his "turn of the hand." He must "have a pure heart" (1).

> 1. Numu te keleya note i bolo na tye: "The blacksmith must not be jealous, otherwise his hand is spoiled."

6. A mirror must never be brought near the forge; it would take hold of its soul which resides in the axe at the altar (2).

> 2. Dugalle te gere fã na a kanana; ka fã ni tá: "The mirror must not be brought near the forge; it will take the soul from the forge."

[834] 7. Sexual relations near the forge prevent its functioning (3).

> 3. Noa te gere fa nda la: "No obscene action may take place near the door of the forge."

Breaking the taboos of the forge is equivalent to attacking the virility of the blacksmith, for the bellows are his testicles. Thus the artisans present themselves naked before the culprit to shame him; he is seated on the communal anvil and water in which large millet (keninge) has been soaking is poured over his head to purify the instrument (4). [783]

> 4. If the fault is irreparable, the kneeling chief crushes three grains of large millet (keninge) on the anvil, a gesture which symbolizes the death of the culprit whose name he pronounces at the same time.

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323 the society during a public consecration which she receives with
[561] several others, the group forming an age grade.

After an apprenticeship of seven days, the potters decide upon the date of the ceremony which is celebrated at the firing spot near the altars. Each member provides a hairpin (bandigi), which represents her on this occasion, and the skin of a hedgehog. Disrobed in front of the assembled villages, each girl is seated in turn on the altar as an aged woman examines her genitals to verify her virginity and the proper execution of the excision.

/126/ If the young girl is no longer a virgin, she is publicly de-
[831] clared dangade (literally, bastard) and finds herself automatically
excluded from the society; she will never be able to receive the
potter's title. Otherwise, a proclamation is made immediately to
the great joy of the public. If the excision has not been judged
[304] sufficient, the patient is given the title of potter after having sub-
mitted to a new operation performed in such a way that the blood
runs over the pottery (1).

575 An old woman then appears seated before members of the age grade
323 and instructs them. She tells of the origin and history of pottery,
867 apprising them of the difficulties of the craft such as fatigue, burns,
etc. She teaches them patience towards the client and enumerates the rules which will have to be observed during their lifetime: to be pure in heart and to hate no one; not to undertake work shortly after having had sexual relations; to work in silence; to respect all taboos in general.

575 She then makes a libation of karite oil on the altar and rubs it on
323 the bodies of the initiates who must run their tongues over the pottery,
782 thus making an oath. Sheep, brought by the initiates' parents, are
then killed by having their throat cut over the hearth in the name of
431 the potters while the elders of the society present to the initiates gifts
consisting of several pots which they will sell for profit while waiting
for their first work. This gift is moreover a sign of adoption.

323 The utensils are made with clay, mbogo pasa, taken from the
317 bottom of the watercourse or along the river's edge; they belong to
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1. If excision is not possible, the operation takes the form of a wound inflicted with the hedgehog's skin (see p. 243).

323 Faro. These places have as taboos the wearing of indigo and pregnancy.
317 No pregnant woman may approach them without provoking the death
784 of the child she is carrying, thus ultimately impairing the durability
of pottery and seriously harming the society of which she is a member.

323 An annual sacrifice is offered by the potters at the end of the winter
796 season when, the level of the river having dropped and the banks
lowered, they return for the first time to collect the clay which they need. Dressed in white, they bring out their hoes and the sickle with which they cut the damp grasses used to cover the pots on the hearth during firing, while the head of the society carries the altars. The objects are placed in a pile on a bed of nyama fibers used for separating them from the ground. The throats of two red roosters are cut open over this pile while a prayer is addressed to Faro, requesting authorization to take the /127/ mbogo pasa during the year, and seeking his protection and help for the work of the society's membership.

The potters make an annual offering to their altars on the day their husbands sacrifice on the forges. Immediately after the libations, they come and squat before the forge altar on which they throw some ten cowrie shells. They then go to the ñintin, undress, and present to it their genitals from the front and from the back, this gesture being an indication of their submission to the spirits of pottery which are the same as those of the forge. Still naked, they circle the pile of ashes left from the last firing and light a big bonfire; this fire attracts the bee eaters, tatugu kononi, which circle over the flames. They shoot some down with a sling, cook them, and reduce them to ashes which they mix with karite oil; they rub their bodies with this mixture before purifying themselves by going through the flames. As an offering to the spirits, they then throw pots on the fire which they put out before returning home.

323 The potters cultivate together a small ritual field in which a fe-
244 male twin sows white peas, tikaninkuru, symbols of their right hand.
The produce of this harvest is eaten communally on a mound, walawala, after an offering of several seeds is made to the altars and tools. A potter whose tools are broken by the fire must go through a purification with the products of this field.

326 The wives of blacksmiths, whether or not they are potters, are
304 skilled in practicing excision on young girls.

794 or Koma/, " *Outremer*, 1929; H. Labouret, *Les Manding et leur langue*.

794 The Komo society, *komo tyew* (literally, men, people of the Komo) is composed
561 of all circumcised men, with the exception of the *griot* who may
under no condition become members, after an initiation performed
according to the age grade, the members of which are called *tonyaw*.
The hierarchy is rigorously respected: an earlier age grade will always be ahead of the one that follows it in all circumstances of secular
or religious life. The Komo recognizes a chief, *komotigi* (literally,
master or owner of the Komo) who preferably belongs to the caste of
blacksmiths and whose function is hereditary. The son automatically
assumes command of the age grade which follows that of his father.
Upon the latter's death, he changes ~~his~~ age grade and becomes the
head of his father's. In the case where the owner of the Komo dies
[304] young and his eldest son, who is to inherit the office, is not yet
circumcised, he is made to undergo the operation in the night following
the death, and on the following day is proclaimed chief (1).

1. In *La Religion Bambara*, L. Tauxier points out that in some villages the chief of the Komo exercises his power only during a seven-year term. At the end of seven years an election takes place and the function is not hereditary.

794 Because of the importance of his functions, the chief of the Komo
784 is made to respect a great number of taboos. In particular he may
not penetrate into the sanctuary if he has not been chaste during the
past twenty-four hours. If the taboo is broken, he must warn the men
of his age grade and sacrifice two roosters upon the altars to purify
himself. His wife is initiated (for she is apt to see certain ritual
[562] objects generally hidden from women because of her intimacy with
the chief), but she is not present at any of the ceremonies to which
only the members are /144/ admitted. If she commits adultery she
[837] brings about her husband's exclusion from the society, not only as
chief but also as member.

794 The chief is often assisted by two elders belonging to his age grade,
whose advice he seeks in all cases concerning the community. In
561 addition, he is always helped by young initiates. If one of these

194 778 during the seven days following the death and are returned to the heir of the deceased (son or brother); they remain permanently in the sanctuary only if the dead man has no descendants. They are held up by two wooden stakes called čin ta bere (literally, sticks which collect inheritance) which keep the souls of the dead and which contain at the top wood dust from Makanta Djigui's canoe and gold at the bottom. These stakes feed the boli which they hold and the souls of the dead which they contain, thus demonstrating that the "Komo never abandons anyone and that men without descendants remain with it for ever."

[784] The taboos concerning the nimara boli are numerous and strict; it may not be removed from the sanctuary except for funerals (1). No woman must ever see it. No foreign cult could ever conceivably be celebrated in its presence.

On the second floor is located the ñõ boli (literally, altar of millet) which contains an invigorating power intended for the society's crops. It is composed of a sac divided into six pockets which contain (from top to bottom) at the left: small millet, fonio, and copper; at the right: large millet, rice and other cereals, and gold. The sac, which opens at the top, receives at the time of agricultural ceremonies (sowing and harvest) the blood of victims offered by members of the millet society, ñõtõ. It must always remain damp with sacrificial blood so that the seeds which it contains will always live.

The ñõ boli is also tied to two stakes called ñõ boli kane (literally, protection of the ñõ boli) which contain in a hollowed-out /147/ section some millet and gold; it is tied to the stakes by threads which bring it the forces they contain.

The ñõ boli watches over the growth of cereals: germination, formation of the ears, maturation. It is responsible for the "head of millet" (2).

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1. See p. 247.

2. Each farmer is the owner of an individual ñõ boli which is placed in a subordinate position under that of the Komó. In addition, the Komo's ñõ boli is in close touch with the ñõ boli of the Kworè, a society whose purpose is to obtain

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778 the rain necessary for cultivation (see p. 217). The agricultural role of the Komo will be described by S. de Ganay in Techniques et rites de l'agriculture.

794 The main taboo of the nõ boli is the loss or waste of food. If even
778 a grain of cereal drops to the ground, or into the fire, the members of
784 the millet society are responsible for picking it up and eating it; otherwise the Komo will punish for the failure to do so and the harvest suffers.

794 The third floor contains the nyama boli, a repository of the forces (nyama) of individuals who have died a violent death (murder, war,
778 execution). The nyama boli used to contain in former times a stone
726 called gõgoro kurube, considered to be the "mother" of the stones thrown by the warriors' sling. It was removed from the sac in case of war and carried to the battlefield by a twin walking at the head of the troops. On its surface were engraved a series of lines representing the king, the warriors, and their wives. It gathered all the souls of those dead in combat and received their blood as an offering.

794
778 The nyama boli is, moreover, responsible for the soul of the crops and a repository for the souls of sacrificed animals; it also receives the "nyama of the words" of the members. It shares with the nõ boli the responsibility for the cultivations and confers in this way great power to the society.

The sac contains in its lower part a mixture of coagulated blood and gold, and in its upper part a mixture of charcoal powder, pepper, and honey, which gives power to the nyama with which the sac is loaded. The taboo of the nyama boli is the rapid death of victims
[782] which are sacrificed to it; only slow death confers effective nyama.

Upon the ground of the sanctuary, along with the dance costume of the mask, nya, are placed small altars intended either for sale, or for the creation of the new Komo, or for individual purposes. Animal horns, both byẽ ba (literally, big horn) and byẽ ni (literally, little horn), are also placed there; they contain powder for ritual usage, korti, whose dangerous action takes place during the times the mask is taken out (1).

1. The various mixtures used for the religious practices of the Bambara

794 532 The head of the mask is usually made of bone (a human or hyena skull), or of wood painted white, black, and red. The mask, per se, is made in such a way as to frighten the future initiates. Just as the soul of a dead person, which requests offerings or threatens to drag his kin with it, is feared, so too is this fact which is in contact with the altar of souls (nimara boli) and which reflects the face of the ancestors. It also represents Faro: the mask is sometimes provided with a long beard symbolic of his hair, and lightly plastered with a layer of black earth taken from the river bank and impregnated with his power; it is sometimes smeared with the blood of a young girl who has died in the course of the ceremonies, in commemoration of the virgins annually offered to Faro in olden times.

Copper arrows (kun bye) are inserted into the skull and charms (kun kanana) are attached to them with the purpose of attacking the undesirables (noninitiates, women, or children) who approach the dance site.

"The eyes of the mask are large, so that the Komo may see and unveil everything; the nostrils are well opened for he must sniff everything, smell the good and bad of things. The mouth is twisted for the Komo does not talk; he only whistles and sings. The ears are vast so that he may hear everything, even that /150/ which each one says secretly in his heart. The chin of the mask is square, a sign of purity, decision, and clairvoyance." During the ceremonies, he silently opens his mouth. It is said that due to the presence of the altar of souls, nimara boli, "happiness penetrates him" (1). By singing, he redistributes this felicity to the audience and this is why he repeats the verses.

794 532 784 841 As a rule, women, griot and noninitiates are taboo to the mask. To each of the elements composing it also belongs a particular taboo. Thus, the head of the mask must never touch menstrual blood. Any infraction would bring about "a visible change to the face" and the altars contained in the sac carried by the dancer would be without strength. For this reason, no member must participate in the ceremonies if his wife is in a menstrual period.

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1. Here dun, literally, penetration of happiness.

794 The costume worn by the dancer is held up by a sort of carcass
292 (bry) made of ngolobe (1) wood used because of its flexibility, and is
enveloped with a light blanket for protection. Inside the bry are suspended various flutes (komo fle) which are blackened by the blood of sacrifices offered to "improve their sound" and which will be used in the course of the ceremonies. Along with these flutes is a little bag filled with spare spider webs. Any individual who goes under the
[834] bry to dance must abstain from sexual relations for a specified period of time prior to the ceremony.

The costume (nya) which covers the carcass is made with the clothing of individuals killed by the Komo (2). Contrary to the bry, which has no active role but serves only to isolate the dancer inside the mask, the religious role of the costume is very important. It represents the "body and the valor of the ancestors." It is not the object of blood sacrifices, but is covered by a powder made of the bones of individuals killed by the Komo to which has been added kola nut juice. The
794 cloth is dyed with black earth taken from the river bank in exchange
292 for a small offering of copper, gold, or cereals. Drawings called
532 komo mani (literally, little people of the Komo) are made on the cloth to represent Faro on the one hand, recognizable by his long black hair, and on the other the eight ancestors who received the word. All the first agricultural implements of the Bambara are drawn with red ochre. The feathers of black, white, and red egrets are then sewn on the nya to hide /151/ the black earth, which is the spirit's abode. Two days before everything is taken out, these feathers are the object of offerings of kola nut juice, millet mash, and the blood of fowls.

794 The costume, like the head of the mask, must be seen neither
292 by women nor by noninitiates. "Its color would change and it would
784 become dull, making a purification necessary."

794 The body of the mask has two arms into which the dancer intro-
532 duces his own. The arms terminate in a hook, koli (3), which is

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1. Combretum micranthum.

2. When a guilty member or a noninitiate is "killed" by the Komo, his clothing is offered to it.

794
532 3. Koli means nail or spur in reference to a rooster and, by extension, hook.

impregnated with black earth from the river and made of copper, Faro's metal, soaked in the venom of a viper before the hook was formed. These hooks are also annually soaked in red venom mixed with pepper. All these preparations make them dangerous weapons used for different purposes during the ceremonies.

The right hook (kinin koli) is used to kill the guilty ones or the undesirables. A slight would brings about death which is then attributed to Faro. The left hook defends members of the society against the dangers which are present, even for them, in the actions and emanations of the right hook. It contains two shards of black pottery, Faro's taboo, which keep away and thus diminish the latter's power. During the dance the Komo, wishing to protect one of the members under its jurisdiction, waves the left arm over him to attenuate the strength of the right. During funerals a gesture of the left hook will indicate the deceased's membership in the society and will assure him protection in the hereafter.

[784
823] The taboo of the copper hooks is the same as Faro's concerning this metal. Just as no one would cross the Niger wearing an object or an ornament of copper, similarly no one would wear copper in attending the Komo ceremonies.

The wearing of the mask, which is much sought after by several initiates at each ceremony, is assigned to one of them by the chief. This role involves risks which are diminished by certain precautions such as abstention from sexual relations before the ceremony. On the day of the ceremony, the elders make the wearer drink millet beer until he is completely inebriated; then for a moment they apply to his chin and abdomen the nyama boli which he will carry in a bag during the ceremony. He also puts on a ritual headdress which sometimes has incorporated in it a particle of the one belonging to the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé. The mask is then adjusted on his head, the flute slipped between his teeth, while the chief assures him of his good faith and proves to him that he runs no danger.

/152/ D. Musical Instruments

794
534 The emergence of the Komo is accompanied by rhythms played on drums, dyiri kolo (literally, bone, wood), made of hides stretched

794
778 B. In the chief's residence, there are replicas of the axe and the altars. According to the needs, they are transported to the shore of the Niger, into the fields, or to the public square during the ceremonies. The originals, on the other hand, remain sheltered from the looks of outsiders and risks of impurity. Moreover, the chief owns a special altar, the kworę ni, "soul of the kworę," /168/ which contains the spiritual principles of the members who do not belong to the Komo society. The kworę ni is placed upon the chest of a dying man and receives his soul at the moment of death as does the nimara boli of the Komo (1). It is regularly saturated with rainwater.

C. The stone of the kworę, of which the lower part is crudely carved into seven teeth called kworę fara ni, is stuck into the ground after the following objects have been buried in this site. (See Fig. 13)

1. Three thunder stones called: fara ba, "big stone"; /169/ fara bye, "stone point"; fara ǰoli, "blood of stone." These recall the presence of Faro's power, rain, under the altar. When placing them, the following words are repeated seven times: "Help us" (1)!

1. A ka demme.

2. Three whips, the male number, testimony to the course of men who withstand the pain of the strokes without complaining. When they are buried the following words are spoken: "Let us be courageous" (2).

2. A ka farina.

3. A kongobwona axe (see p. 160) which recalls the ancestors' victory over famine; it announces harvests and future wealth.

Drawings are made on the stone during the annual ceremony. In the center, a black dot called faro dẽzo, "womb of Faro," represents the spirit. It is framed by two series of three whips, each "to defend him," as well as by the first three of the eight ancestors (one of which was Koumabana) and by seven figures representing the members.

[F184] Woman is the taboo of the Kworè. Only males may approach the sanctuary and the altars. Any circumcised male desiring to participate
794 in the ceremonies must be initiated. The postulants are brought
785 together by the chief under the Kworè tree, at the foot of which a fire is lit; each carries a twig of fiuãna wood. They suffer

304 recovers part of his tere. The organ is then held up by means of a
326 small apparatus, mine naw, made of a millet stem split in two in the shape of a fork.

"Circumcision is a sacrifice" (1). It is only valid if blood has run,

1. Bolokoli ye saraka ye.

and any patient who has not wet the ground with his blood is wounded on the thigh by the circumciser. The same is true for a child born
[732 without a foreskin. This detail must, moreover, be kept secret by
582] the members of his age grade, since the revelation of a malformation might prevent the individual concerned from contracting a marriage (2).

2. A woman might believe that these malformations are the sign that the man who was operated upon has not lost his wanzo, a fact which would be a definite obstacle to marriage.

/186/ When all is finished, the operator, holding the foreskins in his hand, says these words before burying them:

"We have transferred the wanzo of the circumcised child, may the tere be well" (3).

3. Ãn ye dẽ bolokole wanzo fili la, tere ka ñe.

304 After this, the circumcised boys have their caps put first on their
292 napes and foreheads representing the east-west direction, and then on
561 the sides of their heads representing the north-south direction. All their strength resides from then on in the headpiece which they will wear night and day, without removing it, during the entire period of seclusion.

304 The approach to the site of the operation is formally forbidden to
784 women and uncircumcised males. The one who might go there out of
561 curiosity "would contract the wanzo" (wanzo ba nofe, "the wanzo follows him"). Any uncircumcised boy who might break this law would have to take the consequences at the time of his own operation

304 784 561 which would be a dangerous one (1). The same rule applies to the

1. The approach of the virulent wanzo of the uncircumcised boy acts upon those of the boys undergoing the operations and afflicts them in the genital organs.

enclosure, consisting of several huts, where the newly circumcised boys remain under the surveillance of the sema. The enclosure is situated at a distance of several tens of meters from the village in order to isolate the age grade. For all that touches them, such as clothing, sticks, sistrums, dishes, and refuse, with the exception of the cap, is impregnated with their wanzo.

561 304 [431] The newly circumcised boys receive from their parents gifts of cowrie shells and food called wanzo sababu yala, "in honor of the wanzo," to speed their recovery.

[794] On the night which precedes the sixth day after the operation, a day called daworo, the children are initiated to the Komo (2).

2. See p. 203.

The following day, the sema leads them to the edge of the river, where they wash their wounds for the first time. This act, which brings about direct intervention of the element in which Faro lives, has moreover a social meaning: it consecrates the age grade and from this moment on, the children belong for the rest of their lives to the same flã, exchanging jokes and insults which are suitable between senãnku (3). It must be noted that this very simple act of communal

3. See p. 119.

ablution constitutes the inauguration of an age grade of circumcised boys and sets off from that moment all the rights and obligations its members will have toward each other.

A meal, eaten in common and accompanied by songs and dances, ends the ceremonies of the daworo. Hereafter the ablutions are repeated daily until the wounds are healed.

304 561 881 /187/ On the last day, all that has been in contact with the newly circumcised boys is gathered together at a crossroad near the enclosure.

183 However, there is superimposed upon this natural law its application, the so-called positive law. How very odd is the aspect of this natural law beneath its external surface! For there are as many ways of envisaging the application of natural law as there are legislators, and among the Bambara, in many respects everyone is his own legislator since each has his own custom. All these [individual] customs which jostle, cross, interpenetrate and superpose each other, constitute for the European a compact mass which he calls "custom," whose thousand facets are changeable, elusive, diverse and unstable. However, under these disparate exteriors emerge general traits which are, so to speak, the framework of custom, and this will be shown in the following study of institutions.

183 784 Among the laws which the Bambara imposes on himself or on his fellows, the most widespread and, in any event, the ones most noticed by Europeans, are the taboos (tne). The Bambara forbids himself, his relatives and his congeners to do or to say certain things; and the domain of these prohibitions has, theoretically, no limits. A hasty and therefore superficial and incomplete study of what may be called "the honorable name" (dyamu) has given rise to research by ethnographers on these taboos as they affect the limited area of the dyamu; they have chosen to study taboos especially in this connection.

In actual fact, however, the taboo (tne) penetrates the entire native milieu and is really its law. The purpose is to prevent any contact whatsoever with the invisible [132] on the theory that, should such contact take place, it would inevitably unleash severe punishment upon its author unless the latter had the time and the means to purify himself at once through ritual procedures. As a result, the only person who can state what a taboo is, is one who has knowledge of the invisible and can discern its presence when the ordinary person is aware of nothing. Knowledge is the prerogative of the old (koro) and of the master (fa), who represent the ancestors and are the guardians of custom. It is also the secret of a small number of "seers," whose natural methods are ordinarily reinforced by innumerable processes of mantic.

183 784 Thus used, taboo has organized and transformed the native milieu; it has established a line of demarcation between the sacred and the profane by removing from ordinary intercourse persons, places and objects connected with the invisible and considered to be impregnated by it. However, since by its very nature it forms an incontestable and nonappealable law, it has been the favorite means of anyone in authority wishing to impose his will without fear of protest. Thus the laity has, so to speak, had to submit to a arbitrary system of law that is essentially religious. Social regulations, rules of hygiene, medical prescriptions, culinary preparations, forms of courtesy -- all these are surrounded with taboos and all have absorbed from the tne the very essence of its vitality and its constraining force.

784 593 Within the family, which is the generating force of any collective group, the individual finds himself surrounded by taboos throughout his life. They are what establish and maintain the authority of the elders (koro-u) and especially of their head (fa). Taboos impose ancestral traditions which have developed separately and become gradually superimposition from earliest times to the present, the whole of which constitute, in fact, family custom.

784 [571] Patriarchy, brotherhood, the state, and all Bambara collectivities operate in the same way, since all collectivities are in a sense modeled on the natural family.

Religion, family, and society as a whole, in short the whole of Bambara civilization, have been and continue to be largely dependent on the tne.

## [133] 3. Mantic, Religion and Magic

787 Mantic. Among the Bambara, as among all the Sudanese, religion and magic are both based on a belief in a permanent revelation which the manes, the spirits and the gods give to men with regard to the events of their lives.

The various means by which man can come to know this revelation on the part of invisible beings are what is called divination or mantic. This is extra-rational knowledge since it makes known things which could not be learned through reason

800 invoked is requested or required to act.

There are times when on the contrary, the native is
789 inclined to hold the energy in check, in order to avoid the
778 harm that would result from this sort of action. For this pur-
● [784] pose he abstains from doing certain things; this is the origin
of many taboos (tne).

The acquisition of magic power in order to gain strength or to be able to act so as to avoid being affected by magic or, finally, to be able to get rid of magic power when one is permeated by it to a dangerous point -- all these involve appropriate actions or rites whose forms and conditions only magicians or others gifted with intuition can determine.

The chronicle shows that chiefs make use of magic to try to strengthen the supernatural power which is the basis of their position. Dina Wara secretly ate a special dish made of a goat's head; Biton took special baths, whose virtues Ngolo appropriated by trickery just as Biton had done with respect to Dina Wara, his brother-in-law. All sorts of comparable practices accounted for the increase of Ngolo's "luck," that modal quality of supernatural power which confers a degree of magic potency on the possessor. This so-called "luck" has, as it were, a kind of radiation, which confers special good fortune on whatever it touches. That is why the marabouts advised Biton to live in close proximity to Ngolo so as to take advantage of the favorable atmosphere.

778 This energy is attached to everything and, especially,
768 to objects that come into direct contact with anything impregnated with it. What one wears on oneself thus becomes a sort of accumulator, and that is why the objects left upon a powerful person's death are so carefully preserved and constitute the most valuable part of his legacy. The chronicle tells us with what veneration the cap and weapons belonging to Biton were regarded.

778 Magic force is therefore acquired by means of appropri-
789 ate practices indicated by magicians; one shares its benefits by living near those entrusted with it by applying to oneself what comes from such privileged persons. Here again is a result of the continuity of matter. Whatever the case, anything

Alliance

596 The types of alliance between communities appear to
614 differ widely, but in actual fact all alliances are based on a
621 religious or magic rite and, more generally, on an oath.

784 Four forms of alliance particularly deserve attention: the tne or interdict, the oath, marriage, and the common cult.

I. The tne. The native regards the invisible world as a duplicate of the visible world, complete with communities. He carries the analogy even to those things which we call inanimate objects. That is why, when a native binds himself to an interdict, he is not promising to respect such and such a person or thing but, rather, the community of which he believes the person or thing to be a representative. Besides, just as the interdict applies to the whole community to which the object of the interdict belongs, it also binds all the members of the community whose fa instituted it. [224]

The basis of the alliance is the oath of the fa, any infraction of which automatically brings the most dreadful calamities upon the guilty party. It is like a sacrament, which the descendants of the fa must respect in infinitum.

The chronicle of Ségou shows us how such an oath happens to be made. Upon reaching the Niger, and having no means of crossing it, Ntchi in his peril called upon his ancestors for help. His prayer was answered: a poyon' appeared and ferried him and his people to the opposite shore. In gratitude for this service, Ntchi swore that the fish would henceforth be sacred to him and to his descendants. By this act, all poyon' became tne for Ntchi and his descendants, although this does not mean that there was a cult of the fish. It was a kind of alliance or covenant, analogous to one between human communities and with similar effects; it entailed some sort of reciprocal brotherly mutual aid. In practice, a Kouloubali descended from Ntchi must never, under any circumstances whatsoever, voluntarily harm a poyon', his tne, on pain of the most disastrous consequences. If he has done so inadvertently, he can atone with sacrifices or appropriate penance, which his own intuition or a diviner suggests. He must always, in so far as the need arises,

596 assist his tne, while showing it the greatest respect. The mysti-
614 cal basis of this alliance sometimes causes the native to behave
621 in a particular way toward his tne: he will not look straight at
● 784 it; he will not touch it, unless absolutely forced to do so, and then he will apologize and ask forgiveness.

Anything may be the object of a tne, but there is probably not a single Bambara family which does not have some animal as tne. Expressions which the natives in general and the Bambara in particular use to make foreigners understand their relations with this animal tne have made many Europeans think that the native regards the animal as a relative in the literal sense of the word. This is not the case, as we have just seen, and consequently Bambara totem is a purely European invention (1). [225]

596 II. The oath. In native society, a man who is ambitious
614 or merely anxious to establish a powerful community can do so
621 only with the support of faithful allies. Massa and Biton not only
608 succeeded in dominating their young companions, but they also bound them closely through the oath and the cult.

Undoubtedly all the founders of powerful communities have not proceeded in exactly the same way, but all of them have employed analogous methods. An isolated individual can accomplish nothing in this social milieu where everything rests on these strongly organized collectivities, the communities. Any Bambara eager for well-being and peace will seek out and attach himself to a "powerful protector" (dyigi seme) capable of providing him with this security, even if it means the loss of his own

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1. It should be understood that the tne has many sources besides one mentioned here, which is the only one pertinent to this chapter. Thus, Bala refused to pronounce any word having the syllable da (p.); Sounsan abstained from the kulé (p. , footnote 1).

621
581 Koulibali of Ségou, founded Bamako, and changed its name to Niaré
583 in becoming Bambara.

The tné: the taboo concerning an animal or some object.
621 The basis of this alliance is the oath of the fa not to kill or eat the
784 object of the taboo. All the generations following this ancestor must
respect the taboo *ad infinitum*.

Thus, the Kéita have the hippopotamus for tné; the Traoré, the Dambélé, and the Warata have the panther; the Samaké, the elephant; the Koubilali of Ségou, the hippopotamus; those of Issa Ber, the m'polio [a fish]; others have the mole cricket (n'gere) and the striped mouse (n'kelika); the Niaré, Sisé, Silla, Doukouré, and the Daramé, the python, etc.

The oath: this seals a pact of dyonge fraternization. Each
621 party to the contract extracts some drops of blood from his forearm
608 which is mixed with goat's milk. Swearing by his ancestors, he
states the conditions of the alliance and drinks part of the beverage.
This alliance binds the parties to it and all their descendants *ad*
[582] *infinitum*. It entails a prohibition or, contrariwise, a recommendation
of marriage between members of the two communities, and establishes
solidarity between the two communities which owe each other mutual
assistance. In the framework of this alliance is the cathartic alliance
termed sénankuya, which, besides the preceding obligations, governs
the system of purifications.

The sénankuya: unites certain specific groups bearing differ-
621 names within the same village, but can also have an intertribal
608 character; ex.: Mandingue-Peul. Humblot observed the following
648 alliances at Kankan: Kéita-Fofana; Kondé-Traoré; Kéita-Bérété-
Sérigou-Sissé; [56] Kala-Kéita-Kouyaté; Kourouma-Koma;
Kourouma-Dabo; Kourouba-Konaté-Kamara-Bagayoko; Konaté-
Dougoumoko; Konaté-Sidibé. This system of alliance in which
[783] the two allies are equal and complementary governs the mechanism
of the purifications, notably by the insult, and the duties of recipro-
cal assistance (1). Formerly, when a sénanku was reduced to slavery,

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1. M. Griaule, "L'alliance cathartique" [The Cathartic Alliance], *Africa*, Vol. XVIII, 1948.

776 time; it is the noblest work, and one to which every member of the Bambara race must be subject. Faro is represented by a spiral, munu; the vibrating movements of the spiral are the same that animate the daily movements of the sun. These movements are materialized in a basketwork headdress, yugu, which has eight whorls and which formerly was reserved for kings. Faro's face is white, because he took it from the spirit of the air, Teliko, who was an albino. His ears are protected by two fins; his hands are of different sex; his tail is palmate, and his breast is of copper. Albinos and copper are the spirit's preferred sacrifices. All atmospheric manifestations denote his presence; his principal seat is the Niger River, but he has the gift of ubiquity and haunts all waters. Faro is accompanied by helpers, the most representative of whom is the bolokuruni, one-armed blacksmith of a black race. His air messenger is the swallow, who carries the
[824] fertilizing word. Certain plants are in permanent rapport with him: the Yayalẽ, the Ngoyõ (tomato), which is compared to blood. Thus, small fields of tomatoes reserved for the cult of Faro are cultivated in each village. All metals are reserved for Faro. The Bozo, born of Faro's first twins, enjoy a privileged position because they were not subject to the defilement caused by Mousso Koroni and can enter into direct communication with the spirit. In addition, they are the masters of the water.

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784
841 The cult of Faro includes a whole series of taboos, such as the black earth of the river which may not be used by the potters and butter which may not be kept in water. But the principal taboo is menstrual blood, originally provoked by the disorders of Mousso Koroni.

B. Conception of Man

774
761 The Bambara conceive man as a microcosm, a resumé of the totality of beings and things. The principle of duality contained in the original creative thought is realized in man by his twin souls which compensate for the separation of the sexes. In man, Faro is represented by the ni (soul) and the dya (double). Pemba is represented by the téré (the character, force, and conscience) and the nyama (which is the téré when it leaves its corporeal support after
[826] death). Mousso Koroni is represented by the Wanzo (evil force with

825 village, I thought at first that here lay the reason for this rest, extraordinary
787 during the time of the most intensive hoeing. Not at all; the
pagan Bambara were resting, and the women were giving their husbands
[262] and children dégé (millet flour mixed with milk and honey
water) in obedience to a hyena's command. The hyena, it was said
-- and all the sorcerers confirmed this -- had emerged from its dumbness,
its tongue had been loosed, and it had predicted to the people
of the west that a plague even more terrible than that of the caterpillars
would descend on the country. Only one means to avert it
remained: to refrain from going to the fields on Friday and to treat
themselves to dégé, the food so dear to Moslems.

482 On my excursions I have often met men and women carrying
757 on their heads a gourd or a basket containing a handful of leaves or
824 some bundles of roots, and apart from the customary greetings it
● 784 has been impossible for me to get a word out of them. And why this
silence? They were carrying a medicinal plant, a remedy which
would lose all its virtue and all its efficacy if they conversed on the
way, and they had to take care not to trample such-and-such a plant
that grew on the edge of the path.

757 The Bambara quite readily names the plants and herbs whose
753 curative powers are known to him, and yet in the presence of a sick
784 person he will very seldom give you the name of the remedy the
latter is taking, or the names of the roots and leaves that make up
his poultices. Sickness, he believes is a force, a power which tortures
our bodies. He is afraid that in naming the remedy he would provide
this power with a weapon against its healing virtue, which is
another force or power. He sets the second power against the first
to make it leave.

811 It is evident that he attributes bits of reason and emotion to
784 everything, that he attributes human feelings to all that is animate
and inanimate. The "taboos" are not merely one piece of evidence
of this, they are an irrefutable proof of this attitude.

2. Taboos

114 The Bambara people are divided into several families or lineages
825 each of which bears a special name, or diamou, and sees at its head
•784 /16/ certain plants or animals as protectors and patrons. The Djara
lineage claims kinship with the lion, the kana, or iguana (1), the boumou, or dondol; the Dambélé with a large black monkey called Ngoba; the Tankara with a spiney silk-cotton tree, the dondol; the Kouloubali with the wild pig /biche cochon?/, the Mpolio (2), and the panther. There is not a lineage that does not have one or even several tné, or taboos. As will be seen below, lineages of the same name often regard themselves as bound by a tie of fraternity and friendship, while a difference in the tné shows, that a division occurred at some particular time.

Europeans, churchmen, military men, and civilians, usually call the Bambara tné "totems." Since Long, the one to speak first of "totemism" and "totems," this question has been treated at length by serious and distinguished authors, by competent authorities. Their definitions cannot be applied to the Bambara tné. Striking as is the resemblance of some of them to the totems of the Redskins and the Australians, I cannot apply to them the definition given by Nicolay in speaking of the Redskins: "The Redskins also believe in the existence of spirits peculiar to individuals (as fetishes are to Africans) and which, in animal form, bear the names of totems." (3) The

[136] 1. A kind of large lizard resembling a small alligator. It lives on river banks and near ponds, and though it prefers the land and climbs trees, it likes to play in the water. The French commonly call it gueule tapée /"smart jaw"/.

2. A slimy and spined fish.

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3. /Fernand/ Nicolay, /Curiosités des lois et coutumes./ Histoire des croyances, /superstitions,/ moeurs, /usages et/ coutumes /(selon le plan du Décalogue) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. The History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Manners, Ways, and Customs (according to the outline of the Decalogue)/, / Vol. 1, Book 1, Chap. 1. /Paris, 1901.?

Bambara tné are completely different from fetishes and have nothing in common with the latter. In a chapter (1901, p. 61) of his work, "myths, cultes et religions /Myths, Cults, and Religions/, A. Lang defines totemism for us thus:" The word "totemism" or "totamism" was applied for the first time by Long... to the customs of the Indians.. which acknowledges kinship with animals.... Totemists spare animals which are of their flesh and blood...." According to A. Lang, the Redskins and Australians believe themselves to be truly and physically related to the animal-totem, and they number among their grandparents /17/ a doe, a toad, an ant, a rabbit, etc. All actual physical kinship is of course communicated by means of blood, and two beings who have in their veins the blood of the same individual are related. In order to be of the same flesh and blood as their totems, the Redskins and Australians thus believe themselves to be actual sons of an ancestor who formerly was a doe, toad, ant, rabbit.... In Chapter II of his work Histoire des croyances, moeurs et coutumes, Nicolay gives one to understand that the Redskins believe that at the moment of death the spirit of their ancestor found shelter in the body of the animal which serves as totem; is it possible that Lang, who is silent on this point, is unaware of Indian beliefs in metamorphosis and metempsychosis? He does not report the fact anywhere in his work Myths, cultes et religions, but whatever hypothesis one may make on this point, the fact remains that according to him Indian beliefs imply a real physical kinship. If one assumes that the first ancestors of the Indian were changed or metamorphosed at some

614 825 784 given moment into a doe, toad, ant, or rabbit -- a singular evolution if ever there was one, one may suppose that at the moment of the metamorphosis these animals did not exist and they are all, men and animals, of the same flesh and the same blood; or, more plausibly, the ancestors changed themselves into already existing animals, procreating among them does, toads, ants, or rabbits as they had formerly reproduced human beings, so that in killing one of these totem animals a Redskin must always be afraid that he is killing a son or grandson of the ancestor, or some other of the latter's descendants, and therefore of his own flesh and blood (1).

1. /sic/ A. Lang does not seem to doubt that the people of whom he speaks -- Redskins, Tahitians, and Africans -- give a very broad meaning to the words "father," "mother," "brother," "wife," "son," and that they customarily use them to refer to persons with whom they have no bond of kinship.

[578] There is nothing like this for a Bambara. To call someone a wild animal is in his eyes an insult, and to call a man the son of a dog (oulou den) is enough to make him angry, to throw him into a fit of anger; even if he has a dog for a tné, that is a wrong which will sooner or later be avenged. He does not number among his ancestors a dog, or a panther, a lion or a snake. A Kouloubali would be much surprised to learn that a doe gave birth to him, and there is not a Tankara who thinks he has /18/ the sap of the dondol or the juice of its fruit in his veins. When a Djara calls himself the son of a lion, or a Dambélé the son of a big black monkey, what they say must be understood in a very broad sense, as an analogy. We ourselves say of a special benefactor: "He is my father," "he is my mother," "he is my all."

171 614 825 784 Here the Bambara is akin to the Christian Quichés of Guatemala of whom D. G. Brinton speaks in his "Nagualism," 1294, -- O. Stoll

171 in his *Die Ethnologie der Indianerstämme von Guatemala* /The
614 Ethnology of the Indian Tribes of Guatemala/, Leyden, 1882. This
825 work is cited by Lang in Chap. III of *Mythes, cultes et religions*.
784 His *tné* is a friend, a protector, and may be defined as follows: it is
an animate or inanimate being entitled to the respect and veneration
of an entire lineage, family, or clan, in recognition of an outstanding
service which has prevented the lineage, family, or clan from disappearing or becoming extinct, or has preserved them from a misfortune.

773 Every *tne* has its legend. Although in the mouth of the black
614 man the tale may be embellished and decorated a little so that it
539 varies somewhat, the substance remains the same. I will translate
784 a few of these legends, preserving both their form and their substance.
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Legend of the Two *Kouloubali*

The people were at war; everywhere there were only fugitives. The *Kouloubali* lineage had been cruelly stricken and reduced to two members, two brothers lost in the bush with their wives and children. The elder who followed /sic/ his brother at a distance, (since for fear of being surprised, they avoided camping in the same place). He arrived at the bank of a swollen river and saw he could not cross, there being no boats. "Where can I flee now?" he lamented. "I am in the hands of my enemies! For me and my family it is death or slavery." A *mpolio* was passing by; it heard, was touched by compassion, and, raising its big, bearded head out of the water, called to him: "I can take you over, have no fear!" The elder of the *Kouloubali* and his family, with their weapons and baggage, settled themselves on the slimy back of the strange fish and crossed the river. Then he said to the fish: "Listen, good *mpolio*, my brother and his family are over there on the bank. Do not render them the /19/ service that you rendered me, for he is an ingrate, one without a heart, and he might kill you." -- "Kill me? Come now!" and the fish dove, disappeared, and emerged far over near the other bank, at the moment when the young *Kouloubali* was wondering how his older brother had been able to cross such a wide

773 and deep river when there were no boats. "It is thanks to me," said
614 the mpolio, "place yourself on my spine as he did." And so the
539 younger brother and his wives crossed the river.

●784 The young Kouloubali was heartless. When the women had put
825 down their gourds and baskets on the bank, at the moment when the
mpolio leaped up and raised the full height of its body out of the water in order to dive and disappear, he threw his spear at it. The fish struggled for an instant, the water foamed, reddened, and then there was quiet: it was dead.

The family of the young Kouloubali cut up the animal and, without shame or remorse, invited the family of the elder brother to come to the feast. "Eat the mpolio," cried the latter, "never! And may there be a curse on any of mine that dares to eat it." Since that day, the mpolio has been the tné of the descendants of the elder Kouloubali.

To some extent it is also the tné of the descendants of the younger brother, but they eat it except for the head.

Legend of a Branch of the Taraoulé

A woman saw all her children die, and so she trembled for her last born, a sickly, puny little boy whom her milk did not help. One day she was alone in her hut crouched on her mat with the child on her knees, spinning cotton when she began to cry and moan: "You will not live, you will join your elder brothers, you will go away and leave me alone." A spitting snake was passing by; he came in and gently coiled himself around the body of the child. The mother let out a cry, and the neighbors came running.... The snake slowly uncoiled and left the dwelling while the child held his arms out to it and smiled. He did not die but became strong and healthy, for the snake had drunk all the gnâma, all elements of illness that were in him. From that day on the Taraoulé branch of which this child is the father does not eat the spitting snake, or n'gorono, for the curse of the ancestor would descend on them: that is, the spitting snake is their tné. /20/

Legend of Another Taraoulé Branch

773 A woman was fetching wood in the forest when she was seized
614 with the pains of childbirth. "All alone, what will become of me?"
539 she cried. "I have no one to help me; who will wash my child? Oh!
● 784 I will take a corpse home with me." She knelt by her load of wood,
825 gave birth to her child, collapsed, and lost consciousness. A big
black monkey was munching fruit in a near-by tree; it saw her and was moved.... It played midwife, washed the little creature, rocked him in its arms, and when the mother came to herself it gave her back her little boy. From that day on no descendant of this Taraoulé branch eats ngoba; this big black monkey is their tné, and the ancestor would curse anyone who did so.

Legend of the Two Djara

Two Djara brothers with wives and children were fleeing before their enemies. Overcome with fatigue they sat down in the shade of a dondol determined to go no farther. Actually, they were so plagued by thirst that they could not go on. An iguana was wandering in the vicinity; it had pity on the two Djara, so it climbed the dondol and, working with its tail and feet, succeeded in producing a gentle dew under the tree. All were able to quench their thirst with the sap held in the calyxes of this tree's blossoms. "The kana (iguana) shall from now on be my tné," said the elder, "and I curse any one of my descendants who kills or eats it." -- "Think it over," said the younger, "is it not to the dondol that we owe our lives? Is it not its sap that quenched our thirst? Would it not be better to take this tree as tné?" The two Djara argued, could never agree, and separated. The kana became the tné of the older branch, and the boumou, or dondol, that of the younger branch.

Legend of the Samaké

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614 My grandfather has often told it to me; he himself got it from
539 his ancestors.... A Samaké -- I cannot tell whether he had been
784 fording the river or driving the stakes to which fishing mats are fastened
825 -- was seized by an alligator which dragged him to the depths of its den. The alligator did not kill him, /21/ for it had fed.... Leaving the unhappy man to his sad thoughts, it withdrew.... It did not go away, however, and from time to time it hit the water with its tail at the entrance of the hole, making it quite clear that there was only one way out and that this was the door. Stretched out in the ooze, the unhappy Samaké moaned: "Who will save me from those terrible claws and those powerful teeth?". An ant lion at the top of the den was watching for flies and ants in the bottom of its pit; it had pity on the man and, working with its two horns, succeeded in bringing in a ray of sunlight to revive the hopes of the Samaké. "Will I be saved?" he asked the ant lion. Two pinches of sand were the answer, and he understood. Working with both hands, he helped the ant lion; the hole grew and he was able to get through. He escaped. When the alligator re-entered its den, exhausted with hunger, it was disappointed not to find its prey there. So as not to invite the curse of their ancestor, the descendants of this Samaké respect and venerate the géré, or ant lion, and it is their tné. Other Samaké have the elephant (sama) for their tné.

773 These few legends are sufficient; they all show us that although
825 the Bambara believes that the bond with the tné is simply one of
811 fraternity, friendship, and gratitude and not a bond of real and
772 physical kinship, he nonetheless does not fail to attribute reason and emotion to everything around him, to animals and to plants. In nature he does not find pure matter; rather he attributes human feelings in some degree to everything, and throughout he sees a force, a power, an intangible, which he does not know how to define and which thinks, loves, laments, and weeps.

582 614 The Bambara tné differs further from the totem of the Redskin and the Australian: it creates no obstacle to marriage between lineages of the same tne or of different tne. Each man takes a wife wherever he finds her and where he thinks best, and through these alliances the lineages mingle, cross, and recross. They do not merge, however, [557] since the husband keeps his name, or diamou, and with it his tné; he does not take that of his wife. As to the children, they have their father's tné, and his only, and it is his name, or diamou, they bear. /22/

784 The Bambara tné is nothing less than a taboo /sic/. The word itself is very vague and difficult to translate into our French language. It implies primarily a prohibitive command, an order not to do, not to act. Whenever a competent authority -- an alleged genie, such as a boli (who speaks and gives his oracles through the mouth of a herald or interpreter, the djélimac) or a priest of the genii (djiné) believed to preside over the elements, the dougoutigi (who actually does nothing without consulting his council and the sorcerers) whenever the sorcerer (the intermediary between man and the invisible world) or a priest of the shades of the ancestors' (1) --, that is, an authority of a religious character, forbids eating, killing, or looking at an animal; cutting, breaking, or using an object; drinking such-

[596] 1. This term seems to me the most accurate. Undoubtedly, the gouatigi, or head of the family makes the sacrifices, but his position does not always correspond to what we call in French the father of the family. He is not always married; although all the family except his mother, brothers, and sisters call him m'fa, "my father," the word "father" should be taken in a very broad sense, as he is quite often only a grand-uncle, an uncle, or a cousin.

784 and-such a liquid, that animal, object, or liquid assumes a certain sacredness, and the Bambara calls it a *tné*. It thus conforms to the definition of a taboo that A. Lang gives us in Chapter III of his work *Mythes, cults et religions*, and Nicolay in Chapter II, Volume I, of his work *Histoires des croyances, moeurs, coutumes* also says: "To be taboo is to be marked by a religious sign."

The *tné*, or taboos, are legion in Bambara country. Not only does each lineage have its own, but the *goua*, or families, the confraternities, villages, individuals, genii, and plants also have theirs. Many are permanent in that they are perpetuated from generation to generation. Others, on the contrary, are impermanent; they pass, fall into disuse, disappear, or are dropped as soon as they become inconvenient. All depends upon the authority from which they are derived.

Taboos can be divided into five groups. There are lineage taboos, family taboos, taboos of the *djiné* genii and the *boli* genii, and finally plant taboos. I have given some legends concerning lineage taboos (see p. 8 ff.); these are permanent, passed on from generation to generation, and cannot disappear. /23/ They embody the idea of the ancestor, not in the sense that they merge and become one, but rather because the animal or plant has saved the stock by saving him. The *tné* have become the fathers of the Bambara in the broad sense of the word; they are, on an ancestor's name, or *diamou*, like armorial bearings on a shield, and a Bambara cannot rid himself of them. The ancestor has bound himself to the *tné* as a result of a service rendered, and his oath has made the union so close that if one disappeared the other would disappear with it -- how could one repudiate someone who is, and was, an ancestor and whose name, or *diamou* one bears!

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262 Family taboos also have their legends and resemble those of lineages. They are different, however; the service was rendered to a member of the family and not to its head. In addition, the taboos are less extensive and include only a part of a species or race. To cite just one example, certain *Dambélé* may not buy, raise, kill, or eat a *da-n-fign*, or black dog, but they are not thereby prevented

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from owning, killing, or eating a dog of another color; a dish of dog is even a delicacy served during orgies in honor of the fetishes *Nia*, *Komo*, *Kono*, *Nama*, etc. The dog is taboo for them, but only the black dog, and the reason is as follows: A *Dambélé* family was working their fields, and every noon the wife in charge of cooking brought them gruel. One fine day the cook, seeing her child asleep, laid him on the mat and left.... Hardly had she reached the field when the big black dog arrived, yapping and whining, running toward the village and coming back, and yapping and whining even more. This performance puzzled everyone, and they all dropped their hoes and followed the dog back to the village. The dwelling had been consumed by fire and was only a pile of ashes.... "My child, my child," cried the mother at once, desperate and wild with grief.... And the dog pranced around her, put its paws on her shoulders, licked her with joyful growls, and seemed to say to her: "Have no fear, I have saved him." It had in fact saved the child; seeing the fire in the dwelling, it thought of the child, took him gently in its mouth, and carried him to the hut where karité nuts were being roasted. They found him there, well and safe, sound asleep, and from that day on they took the black dog as *tné*; all the family respected and /24/ venerated it, and their descendants still respect and venerate it today.

784 Family *tné* sometimes become taboo for a whole village. For example, where the *Dambélé* of the black dog are powerful because of their number and especially through their affinal ties, members of outside lineages avoid raising these dogs or eating their flesh, out of respect for the old people and to spare the feelings of their wives and families. Little by little the custom takes root and the animal becomes a *tné* or taboo for everyone.

Its durability, however, is nowhere near that of a lineage taboo. A *Dambélé* woman married into a village where the black dog is not taboo may refrain as much as possible from eating its flesh, but she will not fear it long. Little by little the taboo is forgotten, and only a vague memory stays with her: "*An dougou tné do*, for the village I came from it is taboo," she may say, but it will seem to her that for her it is no longer so. As to members of outside

784 lineages, they usually abandon such a taboo as soon as they leave the village, and if, because of the habit they have acquired they abide by it until their death, their children give it up.

Carrying his organization into the world of invisible beings, the Bambara endows the latter also with tné, or taboos, and make these his own. Not only are the sacred woods taboo, together with all they contain, but there are also ways of acting and behaving which displease the spirits, and some animals have the capability of making them angry. When a woman comes back from the forest with her fagot of wood on her head, she must unbind it before entering the village or do so on the public square. In some places shoes are removed at the door of the entrance hut, or b'lon through which the village is entered; elsewhere the people take off their caps; and no one ever whistles in the lanes without incurring the hatred of the invisible beings. Partridges, which are numerous in the fields around the walls, must never get into the village except dead and plucked, and children who catch them in their nets never break this custom. [787] If by mischance a partridge flies across the village and cackles in passing, all the population is in turmoil, and for three nights thereafter men, women, and children sleep under the stars. Often, /25/ depending on the oracles of the sorcerer, they even leave their homes and build them again a short distance away.

776 784 778 The genii called boli are the terror of women, children, and the uninitiated, who cannot touch any object used in the ritual and who may not enter their sacred woods and their sanctuaries. The boli (1) have tné, which are taboo for their owners and those that sacrifice to them, and which sometimes also become taboo for their children. One of the strangest is the tné or taboo of the Bara, which is millet beer, or d'lo. Its owner and the person sacrificing to him must avoid drinking beer if possible, and if the habit is too established

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1. The term boli denotes any evil fetish, and hence any object used by an evil spirit or demon as his dwelling. See Chap. VII, 1.

776 among them, they take a complete bath before touching the fetish
784 or sacrificing to it. Usually the tné of the boli is an animal, and the
778 whole family takes it for their own. A palm rat, succulent as it may be to a Bambara palate, will never be eaten by the owners of Bama-n-djigi and their children: it is the tné, or taboo, of the fetish.

784 I have found no tné for animals, but many trees have them, as do medicinal plants, and when these must be used for particular purposes, they must not be placed in contact with, whatever they abhor or are supposed to detest and which in the eyes of the black man is nothing less than their tné, or taboo.

Men and women, young and old, must venerate and respect their tné and those of the genii, and even children know from their earliest years that they cannot see, kill, or eat a certain animal, that they cannot touch, cut, or break a given tree or plant, without incurring either the curse of the ancestor or the anger of the genie and losing their sight.

The severity of the punishments which hang over every Black who forgets the respect due to the tné (especially to his lineage tné and those of the boli fetishes), and hence the fear of incurring them, seems at first quite tyrannical. It is not as great as one would think, however, since the Bambara is a very good casuist when his person and his interests are at stake, and all the prohibitions except those against consuming certain /26/ meats and certain drinks are but a game.

For example, a Dambelé who sees a band of black monkeys ruining his fields and stealing his crops does nothing to stop his dogs from chasing them, and if a friend of an outside lineage comes to help and shoots them, he will have no regrets. A greater confidence is shown by a Djara when a lion ravages his herds: he goes to meet it and begs it to go away, which, according to the Black it always does.

784 When the carcass of a taboo /sic/ is found by one of the people
766 of the lineage which it protects, it usually receives the honors of burial. The Djara, whose tné is the lion, even perform the burial with ceremony: the women weep, the drums beat, and the men offer the lion a piece of cloth, in which it is rolled before being put in the grave.

784 One might perhaps think that it would be very difficult not to
602 see one's tné....? In the Sudan good manners require that people
576 discipline their glances from their earliest years. A son-in-law lowers his eyes in the presence of his mother-in-law, a daughter-in-law turns her back at a three-quarters angle out of modesty in the presence of her father-in-law, and when a lover goes to win over the father of his fiancée, she runs away and hides. Any Negro, however poor his manners, will direct his look no one knows where, into space or upon his toes, every time he greets anyone and hears his news, and will chat with a person for a quarter hour without ever looking at him. No more is asked for the tné. Undoubtedly a Bambara shields himself with both hands in its presence... and he plays the young daughter-in-law; he knows well how to differentiate between seeing and looking, and he knows how to tell you at the time, however little he is accused: "Né y'a yé tigné, n'ka, nè gné tount'a la, né m'a flè. I saw it certainly, but I did not leave my eyes on it, I did not look at it."

3. The Gnâma

789 The tné are rendered sacred, above all, by the curse of the
ancestor. Nothing is so much feared by the Bambara. To be cursed,
778 and cursed by his father, is the greatest evil that can befall a man;
626 his wives would run away from him, his children would blush to call him "father," his /27/ friends would abandon him, the people of the village would be terrified to speak to him; he would have to flee. And where would he go? The gnâma of his father, of his ancestor, of his fetish's tné, would cling to his steps and follow him everywhere. Only suffering would be left for him; sickness, hunger, poverty, and humiliation would be his lot and, rejected by humanity, he would die in despair.

789 The word gnâma is very difficult to translate. Does its equivalent
exist in our French language? Gnâma is a force, a power, or also per-
778 haps a /kind of/ energy, a fluid possessed by every man, every animal, every living being; it never disappears and continues to exist even

4. The dja

774 Here again is a word very difficult to translate into our French 778 language. We use dja to translate the words "phantoms," "pictures," "photographs," "shadows," "that which is reflected by water or by a mirror"; but there are other meanings, and there is no question of shadows or images in the following sentences, for example: a dja tikéra, a dja oulila, misiou dja oulila. They mean: "he is afraid," "he is crazed," "the cows are crazed." In the eyes of the Bambara, the dja is not only the shadow, the image, or the outline of objects, it is also that which makes them manifest. It is a force, a power common to beings of all kinds, and even though it cannot be compared to a genie or a soul, they nevertheless think of it as a kind of being which they are unable to define but which has its own existence and can act of its own accord.

[791] The gné-fla, whom I mentioned when speaking of the souba, 774 are feared because they see the genii and our private thoughts, and 784 also because they practice sympathetic magic, by taking possession of that which makes the shadows of persons and things. The Bambara is convinced that his dja can be taken, and when this occurs he henceforth no longer casts a shadow. Although, because of their fear of the Europeans and in some cases because they have long been in contact with them, the Bambara may readily pose before a camera, one can nevertheless say that, in general, they do not like to be photographed. Particularly the old people object and begin to resist /42/ as soon as they see a lens. They have the notion in their heads that their dja will escape from them to make an imprint on the plate and leave its form there, and that this form will comprise the portrait, thus placing a part of their being in the hands of the operator and [828] themselves at his mercy. They fear lest, as a result, they lose their shadows and the ability to cast them, and thus become idiots.

774 Even though the Bambara cannot explain their ideas on this subject, these closely resemble the theories of Mr. de Rochas, discussed by Monseigneur Méric in Volume II of his work, Imagination et Prodiges /Imagination and Marvels/ /Paris, 1905/. The dja is something similar to what English psychologists call a double and

881 This quiet life, this life of retreat, wearies the young boys and girls. At the end of four to five weeks they get hotheaded, they become insubordinate, and want to go home, for they are healed. Since the Negro man and woman appointed to watch them no longer insist, the council of elders meets and declares their task finished. In the afternoon when the sun, still high above the horizon, gathers all its rays to cast them furiously for one last time before going out in a purple disk, under the sacred trees and in the courts in front of the huts of the girls, the heads of the quarters make their gestures and simultaneously, without taking breath, recite their formulas and spit and then proceed to the exorcisms. "Bissimillahi (a phrase which in the mouth of a Bambara has not at all the meaning "in the name of God, " but rather signifies "everything goes as desired"), our children are healed and they are going home, under the paternal roof; spirits that watch over them, spirits that protect them, let them go!"

881 •184 There is a reason for this exorcism. Since the day when the blacksmith's razor, all shining, was lifted to cut, the little Negroes have been under the tutelage of fiercely jealous spirits. That is even one of the chief reasons why they are set apart and live far from the world, its ceremony and its work. No circumcised or excised child can set foot in a village hut, not even in that of their parents; their invisible protectors draw after them a whole series of evils, and wherever they are forced to enter they bring ruin and desolation (1).

1. O be n'wanso bla mala, "this causes misfortune to fall on a man."

To let one of these boys or girls enter one's home is to invite, if not death, at least sickness, bad luck, or the most dreadful poverty. To guard against such misfortunes, /194/ the Bambara must drive away these spirits, and since their assistance is considered useless, they are thanked with arm gestures and spitting.

881 When the exorcisms are over, the young brood scatters and runs everywhere into the huts; in the public square and in the alleys one hears interminable greetings and endless chatter. But the Bambara are too fond of drinking and eating, and they must celebrate the

794 778 B. In the chief's residence, there are replicas of the axe and the altars. According to the needs, they are transported to the shore of the Niger, into the fields, or to the public square during the ceremonies. The originals, on the other hand, remain sheltered from the looks of outsiders and risks of impurity. Moreover, the chief owns a special altar, the kworę ni, "soul of the kworę," /168/ which contains the spiritual principles of the members who do not belong to the Komo society. The kworę ni is placed upon the chest of a dying man and receives his soul at the moment of death as does the nimara boli of the Komo (1). It is regularly saturated with rainwater.

C. The stone of the kworę, of which the lower part is crudely carved into seven teeth called kworę fara ni, is stuck into the ground after the following objects have been buried in this site. (See Fig. 13)

1. Three thunder stones called: fara ba, "big stone"; /169/ fara bye, "stone point"; fara ǰoli, "blood of stone." These recall the presence of Faro's power, rain, under the altar. When placing them, the following words are repeated seven times: "Help us" (1)!

1. A ka demme.

2. Three whips, the male number, testimony to the course of men who withstand the pain of the strokes without complaining. When they are buried the following words are spoken: "Let us be courageous" (2).

2. A ka farina.

3. A kongobwona axe (see p. 160) which recalls the ancestors' victory over famine; it announces harvests and future wealth.

Drawings are made on the stone during the annual ceremony. In the center, a black dot called faro dẽzo, "womb of Faro," represents the spirit. It is framed by two series of three whips, each "to defend him," as well as by the first three of the eight ancestors (one of which was Koumabana) and by seven figures representing the members.

[F184] Woman is the taboo of the Kworè. Only males may approach the sanctuary and the altars. Any circumcised male desiring to participate 794 785 in the ceremonies must be initiated. The postulants are brought together by the chief under the Kworè tree, at the foot of which a fire is lit; each carries a twig of fiuāna wood. They suffer

194 785 uncomplainingly the burns inflicted upon them with a torch and they whip themselves vigorously. The chief next teaches them the role of the Kworè spirits, the rituals celebrating them, and the symbolic value of the objects of the cult.

194 522 Some of the members are designated to take the role of kworę duga during the ceremonies. Masked and waving freshly cut branches in each hand, they mount a wooden horse, the kworęduga so (1). Thus

[532 778]

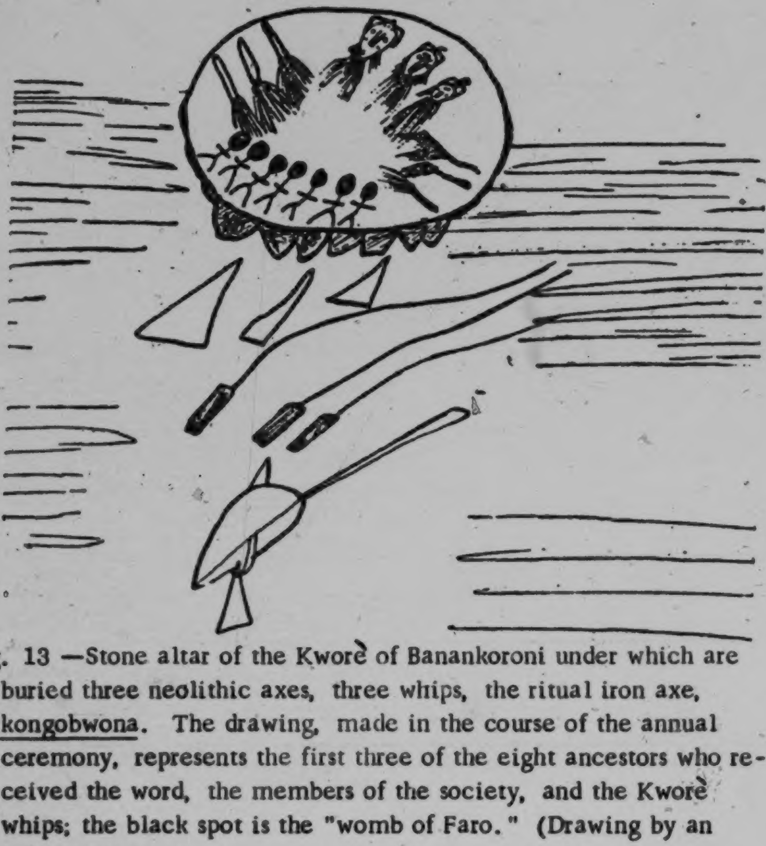

Fig. 13 —Stone altar of the Kworè of Banankoroni under which are buried three neolithic axes, three whips, the ritual iron axe, kongobwona. The drawing, made in the course of the annual ceremony, represents the first three of the eight ancestors who received the word, the members of the society, and the Kworè whips; the black spot is the "womb of Faro." (Drawing by an informant)

1. The kworę duga (literally, vulture of the Kworè), also called togoro koya, "jesters," are as their name indicates, jesters who have the right to joke about

789 796 794 as an imitation of Faro who has only one lower limb. The altar, which is placed in the sanctuary by the chief who enters it walking backwards, receives as an offering a little water from the Niger in which thunder stones have been soaking since the night before to be "refreshed." The same libation is made on the kwore boli. After returning to the home of the chief of the Komo, libations of millet mash are poured upon the walls of his house; then, in the name of Faro, the nimara boli, and the Kworè, the throat of a white ram is cut; the flesh of the animal will be thrown into the river, at the conclusion of the ceremonies.

794 796 (c) At the end of the winter season the "anniversary of the Kworè" is celebrated; its purpose is to commemorate the action of the spirits during the preceding season in order to obtain rain water.

On the fixed day, members of the society, wearing loincloth and carrying in their left hand a whip made of macerated and twisted grass, and in their other hand a torch of burning straw, gather near the tree around which they circle and sing to "gather up the Kworè." [785] The cracking of whip lashes which they give each other represents thunder claps; the beating of the drum which accompanies their songs imitates its rumbling. The burns which they inflict upon themselves recall those which the spirits endure in the celestial combats. They next direct their steps toward the public square where the villagers have gathered and where the spirit they have supposedly invoked by their mimicry is leading them. When all have gathered, the kworeduga, who represent the spirits mounted on their winged horses ready to fly into combat, appear dressed in their traditional costumes and riding their wooden horses.

They advance while dancing and singing verses which are then taken up by a chorus of the members. The latter having formed a [785] circle, the chief places himself in the center, whipping himself, burning himself, and pretending to swallow the fire of his torch. When he is weary he stops and the members take turns to imitate him. Powder made from ground pepper is blown into the dancers' eyes to recall the burning heat of the fiery heavens.

The kworeduga, who have by then put down their wooden horses, set their foot on the earth ready for the fight, after having seized some green tree branches. They put out the fire which has caught onto the clothing of the dancers and participants. This gesture recalls the action of the wind which, in space, put out the hot fire that

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2. E mõ ñõ tasuma, ñe e šu kulu la kę dla,
dugu nimara ba ke, i kã kla kelenyõ na,
tasuma (ter).

Then he draws, as on the ancestors' caps, a black dot which represents the womb of women as well as Faro. The latter will help men by giving them water, for without his help "none, not even the Kworè, have the rain necessary for agriculture.

Three small figures represent the three responsible chiefs of the Kworè who are subjected to the fire rites and who withstand with courage for the common welfare all the sufferings and burns. The other members are represented by four silhouettes to indicate their inferior position by a feminine number. The entire grouping of personages and torches converges on the black dot to show that "the men by their feet and the torches by their fire throw back their nyama toward him."

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When the drawings are finished, all the participants in turn place their little finger and then their tongue on them to abandon the nyama of the year and to receive new forces. The women use the same gestures as the men but repeat them four times. Each person then [185] receives, respectively, three /209/ or four lashes of the whip on his back so as to integrate properly within him these new elements (3).

3. The little finger acts upon the nyama of the body, and the tongue upon the nyama of words.

The children, led by their mothers, are the objects of similar attentions. The boys press their toes upon the stone; the little girls present their genitals to it to prove their femininity. All are then seated in turn on the stone so that the old nyama leaves them through the anus. Then, they are lifted up above it by their parents and "are shaken in all directions to settle properly the newly received nyama in them." The mothers pass their hands over the fact of their children and then over their own, a gesture which binds them to their offspring for the year to come.

The assembly goes to the Kworè stone where the cardinal points are renewed by brandishing lighted torches to the west, north, south, and then east. Each person apologizes for the faults committed during

796 the year. The men in turn each place their right foot on the stone
783 and turn in succession toward the cardinal points, inhaling deeply with open mouth and extended tongue as though "to breathe them in."

785 The women do the same, but place their middle finger on the stone; at the same time they receive four whip lashes on the back so as to "sustain (1) the change of the cardinal points with pain."

> 1. The more familiar term, "to receive" would be a better translation.

With heads lowered and hands at their back, the sick persons would present to the stone those parts of their bodies which are the source of their sufferings, saying: "Here is the evil that is in my flesh" (2), for

> 2. Nka soko la ba na fle ninye.

the stone is both responsible for and a depository of illness. The one-eyed and blind show their closed eyes. The cripples place their affected limb upon it. Then the initiated elders, completely naked, encircle the stone while recting a formula in the ancient language (3).

> 3. Dede kumbeyde mala kay kapo kumbey de malado. This text would mean: "stone, mistress of all, fear nothing, your children are there."

Next, the young men run around it rapidly rotating their right arms with closed fists. By this gesture, they are asking the stone to help them find a wife. The young girls follow them, walking in their footsteps, a gesture of docility which also expresses their desire to marry.

The ceremony ends with beer drinking which lasts three days. Each person is happy and gay at having "renewed" his soul; the young people will marry and children will be conceived.

857 796 [572] companion whom each n-Tomo-den' is required to choose upon his admission into the sect; she is his special girl friend and his relations with her are not merely platonic.

857 796 785 The meal is over by mid-afternoon, and the band returns to the village for a public performance during which the members beat one another. First, the n-Tomo-tigi and his syere advance to the middle of a circle of onlookers, relatives, friends, and others; the mothers wrap cloths or scarves around their hips and stomachs to protect them from serious injury. Onlookers sing and clap their hands. The n-Tomo-tigi holds his whip aloft with his arms outstretched, and the syere immediately flogs his head and shoulders, front and back, his thighs, legs, and feet; he keeps this up, the victim uttering not a single cry of pain, until he can strike no longer, either because he is exhausted or because his whip is broken.

Then it is the turn of the syere to be flogged in the same way. Following this, the n-Tomo-den' in pairs flog each other until it is the turn of the very youngest who, being less hardened, weep and scream and run away at the first blow. This naturally gives rise to laughter and mockery among the onlookers, who had greatly admired the stamina of the others.

In some places each n-Tomo-den' flagellates himself.

What is the meaning of this practice? It seems likely that originally its purpose was to emphasize the secrecy required of the n-Tomo-den' by giving them a chance to show that they would not violate [240] their oaths even under blows. It should be recalled that flogging was the common method of obtaining confessions, always considered the best proof of guilt. Thus, the practice of flagellation would to some extent enable the adepts not to confess under blows (1). The practice is also a means of preparing the boys to undergo circumcision without flinching, since it is a signal disgrace to show or expose pain at that time.

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1. Flagellation is also practiced in certain brotherhoods for no apparent reason except that of hardening one against pain. See "The Koré" below.

794 of Kore-dyuga-tigi and has the same meaning.-

most part strangely accoutered dancers, each of whom dresses [301] as his fancy dictates. As ornaments, the Kor'dyuga wear strings of beautiful red beans, which are inedible, called n-go ble. These beans are about the size of a large dragée and throughout the western Sudan are used as protection against evil spirits. [292] These dancers have a leader, the Koro-duga-tigi or Kor'dyuga-tigi, who is further distinguished by a kind of cloak made entirely of bits of reed stalks. On his head he wears a conical hat made of the same reeds, and in his hand he carries a long wand from which hang birds' skulls, packets of sorghum straw, gourd stems, etc. In addition to the dancers, the clergy is accompanied by [785] flagellants (bisa-tyi-la), torchbearers (ta-tugu-la-n-tigi), and people who lash themselves with bundles of thorns (the ngoni-sa-ma-u).

[534] Of course, the Kore has its orchestra, which includes drums (denu-ba), a kind of castanet (kinge), and gourds filled with seeds or pebbles (nkude) and pierced with holes.

794 796 The cult has the usual ceremonies, with the two great festivals at the times of planting and harvesting. On these occasions the Kore-tigi officiates, as the nyana-n-son-na-ba does with respect to nyana dugu-da-siri. He makes the offerings, performs the sacrifices, and sets forth the requests at the foot of the sacred tree, after having thanked the god-protector. The kara and the Kore-kongolo are sprinkled with the blood of the victims; thus, the manes and the nyana of the boli are honored simultaneously.

[764] There is always a meeting of the brotherhood when a Kore-de dies. There are offerings, sacrifices, and communion with all the offerings, which require one or more days of orgies to be consumed, depending on the importance of the deceased, because elders in [282] important posts like that of nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc., are particularly honored at their death.

Young men are admitted only once every seven years, and it is at this time that the ceremonies are most elaborate.

794 process, let loose a rain of sparks which the Kore-duga zealously
776 put out with leafy branches. Then each dancer, carrying what
786 is left of his torch, kneels before the drums, making an obscene
gesture which arouses the laughter of the onlookers and giving
the cries, roars, or laugh of the "wild beasts." Elsewhere, the
nyoni-sa-ma are roaming among the drinkers, tearing at themselves with thorns. Flagellants lash themselves with switches
[785] that leave cuts from which the blood flows. They stiffen themselves against the pain and keep up this cruel sport, which once again the Kore-duga mitigate by binding up the wounds.

There appears to be no doubt that during these orgies the most shameful excesses are committed without the slightest restraint.

The Nya

794 This brotherhood is highly esteemed in all the Bambara villages in the cantons of Say and Karadougou. It is less common in the canton of Séladougou; in the canton of Saro, five-sixths of the villages are loyal to it. It is rarely found in Nyansannari, and outside these areas in the circle of Djenné, there are only a few scattered Nya brotherhoods in the Bendougou and Ségou areas.

The cult arose in the Bendougou region. As has been
[443] noted above, the villages of Moribala, Kourbadougou, Diali, etc., are market villages where all the boli are found, together with directions for using them.

778 The boli of the Nya consists of a piece of wood from 25
794 to 30 centimeters in length and from 10 to 15 centimeters in height and width. It is wrapped in an absorbent material, usually cotton. The blood of the victims and the liquid of the libations are poured on this boli, and then hairs or feathers and bits of entrails, eggs, and kola nuts are stuck to it, giving it a
[281] repulsive appearance. It is true that the boli is often concealed from inquisitive eyes by putting it in a container made of an old piece of the hide of a she-goat. However, since the container is given the same treatment as the boli it contains, it is just as disgusting.

852 796 his "sister of the heart." In fact, on the day of his admission to the n'tomo every small Bambara chooses a n'golo mouso to whom he gives a small gift each year. The dreadful part of this custom is that in Bambara country the n'golo mouso is less prudish than the girl friend or sweetheart of a little French boy and is often a little maid-of-all-work who lends herself without qualms to unhealthy and indecent play.

After the feast, which takes about three hours, the n'tomo déou (sons of the n'tomo) leave the place of sacrifice and return to the village in Indian file, preceded by drums. D'lo, or millet beer, awaits them, but before touching the divine liqueur they must perform a bloody rite. It is hideous, and yet, it is the high point and chief attraction of the celebration!

On the public square, in front of drums that give the measure 852 796 ●785 and beat the rhythm, the young n'tomo déou flagellate themselves, usually until they bleed. The old men run up, dragging their mats after them; the women, squatting on their tiny stools, clap their hands and sing; and mothers wrap the loins of their children in long white scarves to protect their lower abdomens from misdirected blows. The n'tomigi and his siéré -- honor to whom honor is due -- go into the arena, and while the little leader holds his switch above his head with both hands, /112/ the siéré beats him hard with his own switch on the back chest, calves, soles of his feet, and everywhere. When he is tired of beating or his switch breaks, he stops and the leader in his turn gives a round to his aide. In this way, two by two, according to age and size, the children flagellate (1) each other. The flick, flack of whip lashes, which cause blood to spurt, bruise the flesh, and always leave a furrow as wide as a thumb, may often be heard for hours. Little boys of six or seven years often stop at the second blow to scratch their backs and open their mouths to cry, but I have seen some stay unmoved just like their elders of ten to twelve years, without a

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1. In Bani country each child flagellates himself. Although that is not the usual custom, it may be encountered in many villages.

852 tear, a complaint, or a cry of pain, and they are so imperious that
796 one might think they were of bronze.
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The N'golo, the Special Fetish of the Circumcised

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794 The children of this fetish, whose function I explained in the preceding chapter, grant themselves many days of celebration in its honor in the course of the year. The main festival, however, is annual and in addition to the dégé, a hen, and two kola nuts offered by each initiate, a goat is sacrificed on behalf of all.

Since it is from this fetish that the fla-n-to organization derives its existence, its members, the to-n-déou, offer drink and food to the whole village for two or three days. The women, too, contribute their share to this horrible drinking bout, and their queen (fama, massa) -- humbling herself before the to-n-tigi, head of the fla-n-to and priest of the n'golo, who thoughtlessly wastes the produce of the field worked by his subjects in the winter -- distributes many kola nuts and adds still more to the d'lo, which already flows in streams.

The beer is drunk out of doors on the public square, and everyone -- men, women, and children -- is there, shouting, dancing, and getting drunk. Seated under a goua, a shed covered with coarse
[346] mats, /113/ and surrounded by his acolytes (the siéré, the djéli, and the djalatiké), the to-n-tigi sits in the place of honor, and it is he who directs the drinking and the dances. He is really king on these days, and all obey him at the slightest sign, gesture, or word. When he gets up to romp or take a turn before the drums, he is honored; all the initiates call "you you," shake their caps (ban fla), and compete as to who will take his gun, spear, stick, or ax and beat the time for the dance. But he wants to speak; he must speak; he feels the need to issue an order, to give thanks, or to impose a light fine on his band; and his spokesman runs to his side. He repeats the speech of his chief word for word and sentence by sentence, and sometimes even adds a comment of his own, for some Bambara have a sharp wit and very easily find a saying to bring a laugh.

794 colors, one leg of which goes down to the ankle while the other does
796 not even reach the knee. Some brandish wooden swords, and others
292 ride astride on a bamboo, a reed, or a sorghum stalk, rearing and
522 kicking, and there is not one who does not act the clown.

The bisatjila (flagellants) make their flexible whips whistle in
794 the air; shortly thereafter these whips rain blows onto their backs; the
796 ta tougoula (fire lighters, incendiaries) seem impatient to shower
● [185] their bare backs with sparks. The djara (lions) or sogo (beasts, animals)
with masks even larger than those of the souroukou (hyenas) growl
around the n'goni sama (1), also called wara (fearless wild animals).

1. N'goni, "thorns"; sama, "to kill for oneself."

The soula run from one group to another, slip between legs, and never stay still; they are seen everywhere, sometimes standing, sometimes with hands on the ground on all fours, or again sitting down, breaking bundles of grass or bits of wood between their hands and throwing them with shrill cries at the heads of their companions. And at the end of the procession come the old men, weighed down by the years and no longer of an age for all this fancy dress. They drag or carry the victims intended for the sacrifices.

In the grove around the sacred tree, there is a deafening noise of drums, triangles, reed pipes, and many voices /124/ that shout all together without ever harmonizing. At a sign from the leader, the kârâ bearer goes and stands before the fetish tree, and everything becomes calm and quiet. The youths who have been waiting for seven years to be initiated advance in a line, fall on their knees before the fetish and its emblem, and then prostrate themselves with foreheads in the dust. They remain in this position as long as the sacred hymn
lasts. On rising, they say: "Djanté koré déou djanté (djanté children
[535 of the djanté koré), djanté ma (man of the djanté)," and each dances
831] the dance of the group to which he belongs. These dances are indecent
and always conclude with an obscene gesture.

The oldest sons belong to the groups of their fathers; as to the others, they choose the group they like best. Thenceforth they are

794 796 korédé ("sons of koré"), and in all the province of Ségou, wherever a sacrifice is offered to the fetish, they may go into the sacred grove without any fear and take part in the mysteries. They have the password -- "djanté ma, man of djanté," and will know how to answer when interrogated by the souroukou (group of the hyena).

794 796 782 After the initiation the koretigi (priest of koré) proceeds with sacrifices. Everything happens as at the dasiri: after the libations of /millet/ flour (dégé) and beer (d'lo), the trunk of the sacred tree is reddened with blood, and all around the blood are tufts of fur and feathers stuck to the bark by remainders of chewed kola nut. A hyena mask called koré koungolo ("head /tête/ of koré") is also reddened with blood, as is the kârâ, the emblem of the genie which is used as an altar for deceased initiates. Part of the meat is taken to the village, and the rest is grilled on the spot and eaten without any seasoning whatever.

In the sacrifices, koré and those that form its court are asked to watch over the harvest so that it may be abundant, to watch over the flocks so that they may thrive, to provide the petitioners with their fill of food and drink all their lives, and to give them a vigorous old age, etc., and all this is requested for one sole purpose: "so that we may be able to enjoy a woman and devote ourselves to carnal pleasures."

794 796 After the repast the crowd abandons itself to the dance, and until morning there is an indescribable uproar and endless shouting. At daybreak they go to the public square, and as long as the beer (d'lo) lasts /125/ the orchestra makes bedlam in front of the drinkers who squat around full gourds, and the women sit on mats or tiny stools piled on top of each other, clap their hands, and answer the obscenities of the korodouga with further obscenities.

[535] The dance of the groups, in which all members, young and old, take part, consists of more or less comical contortions which they execute going around in a circle, one behind the other. The old men tire quickly and their throats soon get dry, so they are not slow to sit down and get drunk to please koré, and the young people then abandon themselves and dance to their hearts' content.

794 796 •785 Two or three tatougoula, a flaming torch in each hand, open the dance. They scorch their backs, chests, and armpits, and

794 thousands of sparks rain onto their heads and bare bodies, and smoke
796 and sizzle on their skins before going out. The korodouga, armed with
785 leafy branches, chase the sparks. They devote themselves chiefly
to their obscene songs; their minds on the perforated gourds which they shake furiously, and more than one dancer feels himself getting roasted. And when the torches are almost burned out the tatougoula squat before the big drum and for the last time shake the handful of
[522] burning straw that they have left. An obscene gesture provokes a
stifled laugh here and there, a "hou hou" from the souroukou, a roar from the djara, a chuckle from the soula, and cries of encouragement from around the gourds: "O do, that's it!"

While the djara /lions/ or sogo /beasts/, /wearing/ huge masks roar around the groups of drinkers, the ng'oni sama or wara tear their chests and their armpits with brushes of thorns, and the soula, grimacing and weeping, throw the group of women into confusion and put the children to flight. As to the bisatjila, they circle like lions in a cage, uttering wild animal cries and trying to excite themselves. Suddenly, as if seized by fury, they brandish their long, flexible whips. These whirl for a moment above their heads, whistle in the air, and then slap the flesh. The men strike hard; each blow leaves its mark or furrow, and /126/ blood often flows. They pale and tremble in all their limbs under the pain, but in spite of everything they strike and strike, for the instrument of torture must be worn to shreds and fly to pieces. At every blow of the whip the korodouga band throw themselves onto the victim and massage and rub him, and the souroukou lose themselves in indecent behavior in front of the great drum.

794 In addition to the sacrifice offered every seven years, there are
796 annual sacrifices to the koré, to the shades of its priests, the korétigi,
782 and finally to the shades of its initiates, the korédé. There is always
764 a sacrifice at the death of an initiate; the groups dance the sacred
dance, and for three nights there is the shouting and the indescribable bedlam in the koré tou ("grove of the koré") of which I have told.

794 If the deceased initiate was an old man, a graybeard, he has
764 completed his whole career and his fellow-members come in great
numbers to pay him their respects. Before the corpse, which is laid out under the trees which shade the entrance of the village, they

881 as ugly as possible, and plays the fool. Armed with a long stick -- the stick which is used to stir the gruel that is simmering on the fire (1) -- she darts out of the village, agile as a gazelle. Her companions all chase her at a full run, giving many shouts; they circle around the walls four times. At every fork in the path they form a circle, dance with frenzy, and throw large handfuls of basi and smoked fish sauce to the spirits without keeping count. "Dégé dounlé, idiots," shouts the smeared girl, and all her retinue repeats with ever increasing enthusiasm: "Nalouma, big fool. . . . " And this day, which is not very edifying, is full of delights for the little Bambara girls who are to be excised.

The little soli boys are satisfied with sacrificing to n'tomo, a good fetish which is their protector, but although they dance wearing masks with six, seven, and sometimes eight horns, they do not
● [785] flagellate themselves, or at least flagellation is not required on this day.

2. The Soli Si Festival, or the Vigil of the Circumcised

Here we are on the eve of the circumcision! It is black night, d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer, hums and foams in the earthenware bowls, and a thin mist comes out of all the huts and envelops them. Here karité grease sputters as it melts in the pot and browns the skin of a chicken or the leg of a goat; there one hears the loud laughter of people with full stomachs, the hiccups of a glutton, the dry and decisive sound of two heavy lips releasing five great /178/ sticky fingers glued to each other by a remainder of gruel. Their foreheads
[301 decorated with beads in a kind of crown of white, red, and yellow,
291] the colors of the rainbow, and their bodies draped in blankets, Roman style, groups of women glide silently like shadows along the alleys, carrying on their heads huge gourds full of dégé, millet flour mixed with honey water and milk.

[415] 1. To-n-galama: a stick with a large, flattened end, used to stir gruel in the pot.

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764 782 which is nothing less than disguised slavery. In the presence of a European the Negroes like to complain that he cannot meet their taxes, but they should not be listened to too closely -- 99 times out of 100 they are lying! Let us not make war against the military or civil official responsible for levying the tax, which is not at all exorbitant; let us think before all about the boli and their staffs, a band of persons without principles or law, human vultures with greedy fingers who attack the weak, the widows and orphans, terrify them with their threats of death. They do not leave these people in peace until they have taken everything: hens, goats, dogs, cowrie shells, sorghum, and often freedom.

6. Respects Paid to Initiates of the Koré, or Koté

794 766 The initiates of a fetish are never indifferent to the death of a brother, and they hasten to find a hen and a kola nut with which to prove their attachment to the deceased and to assuage the wrath of the god. The sect of koré does things in a grand, even in a ceremonious, manner, if there is any ceremony in those nocturnal orgies where d'lo, or millet beer, is drunk to /229/ the point of senselessness, and where lascivious and obscene dances are danced.

When a young man who is koré dé (son of koré, initiate of the sect) dies, relatives and friends redden with blood the sacred tree and [778] the kara, a perforated board painted red and white, which is the genie's emblem. Although there is general mourning in the village, tears are dried when evening comes, and for three nights there is nameless bedlam and endless shouting in the kore tou (the sacred grove) as [785] initiates flagellate themselves, burn their backs with torches, tear their bodies with thorns, abandon themselves to their barbaric dances, and lose themselves in lewd gestures in front of the dénouba (drums [534] measuring from one to one and a half meters) and the kingé (a triangle, an iron tube, which is hung from the thumb of the left hand and which is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger).

For the old people who are granted not a tear nor a regret but for whom there are dances and songs, fellow initiates come in large numbers, and during the night preceding the burial, they make a

794 766 bedlam and racket in front of the corpse, which is displayed under the great trees that shade the entrance of the village. That is a most lugubrious and macabre rite! After the burial for three successive nights, the same respects are paid to the deceased in front of the fetish tree in the *koré tou* (sacred grove), and if the deceased was a *korétigi* (head of the sect of *koré*), a *gnéna-n-sonnaba* (head of the village and priest of the *dasiri*), a *bolitigi* (master of a *boli*), a *flélikéla* (famous sorcerer), a *gouatigi* (family head), a *souroukou tigi* or a *korodouga tigi* (head of a group in the sect (1)), they often continue their orgies for eight days running, gorging themselves with *d'lo* (beer), and getting drunk.

794 769 The anniversaries of the old people, those who had fame, authority, and especially authority in the sect, are observed regularly every year, and on that day there is a memorial to members of the family who belonged to the sect. Youths in large numbers come from all directions to abandon themselves to barbaric dances, and since beer flows in streams, the drinking bout that takes place is indescribable. /230/ Only a family reduced to the blackest poverty would neglect to offer *d'lo* (millet beer).

794 769 185 On the morning that follows these dances in honor of a deceased *koré dé*, a *saraka* is placed with great ceremony at the *dankoun ba* (1) of the village. It consists of the remains of the torches of the *tatougoula* (2), the bent, broken, and unraveled whips of the *bisatjila* (3), the thorn brooms of the *woni sama* (4), and finally the leafy branch

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1. See my chapter on the *koré*, or *koté*.

1. *Dankoun*, a corner of land formed by two paths that cross; *dankoun ba*, "great *dankoun*," the *dankoun* most popular in the village.

2. *Tatougoula*, those who dance with fire.

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3. Bisatjila, those who flagellate themselves.

4. Woni sama, those who scratch themselves with thorns.

used by the korodouga (5) to drive away the sparks crackling on the

5. Korodouga, clowns, storytellers /griots/ of the sect.

backs of the tatougoula.

7. Burial of the Excommunicated

766 Those with sores, lepers, and persons killed by a fetish who did not accept their sacrifice may be said to be excommunicated. No adult who dies without hair on his head or body has the right to the honor of a Bambara burial, and he is given that of lepers. 826

A leper is never buried in the common cemetery; he is sent far off into the bush to a separate place. The more usual custom, actually, is to slip the corpse into a hollow baobab (Adansonia digitata) with a small, live pullet as companion -- or an egg, if the deceased is a girl. The same fate befalls a bald person.

The reason for this custom is that this class of people have been abandoned by the Creator and the spirits, all of whom scorn them and withdraw from them. If ever the ground where ancestors rest should receive the remains of one of these accursed ones, their bones would shake with disgust. Moreover, they would take revenge for having to rest near people who during their lifetime were without hair; they would be deaf to every prayer and would refuse every sacrifice. The village and the entire region there would suffer a total lack of rain, a drought without any equal, in short, a famine with all its horrors. /231/

4: Henry--269 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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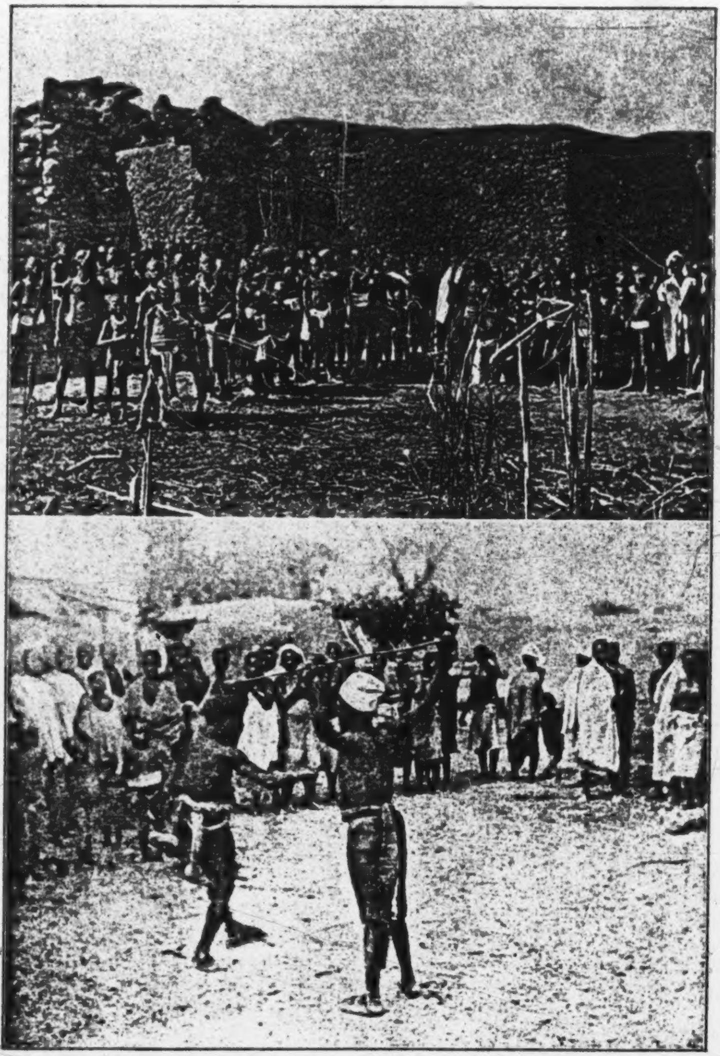

Festival of the N'tomo.
Flagellation of children.

Above: Festival of N'tomo.
Before the flagellation.

782 genie. The same is done with libations of dlo or the juice of
796 kola nuts. Since anything offered to the genie is supposed to be
786 consumed on the spot, an orgy lasting for several days usually
follows.

782 In addition to these two great obligatory ceremonies especially concerned with the exploitation of the land, the god's protection is sought by similar, but much simplified means in all affairs whether they concern the entire settlement (wars, disasters), a particular patriarchal or familial community, or even a single individual. Through the high priest as intermediary, the offering and the request are made for the purpose indicated by the petitioner, who often promises to make a further gift to the genie when his wish has been granted. Vows of this type are made very frequently.

794 The cult of his high [230] priests and of all the im-
portant men of the settlement is tied in with the cult of the
769 genie, obviously a consequence of the fact that the genie is the spiritual patron of the community which honors him; its members are his children and with him form what amounts to a family. So, in line with what happens in a patriarchal or familial community, the territorial community also holds an annual festival for the dead, during which special honor is paid to noted personages, among whom deceased high priests have first place.

311 Exploitation of the land. The high priest in charge of
621 the cult likewise regulates everything concerning the exploita-
423 tion of the terrestrial domain of the genie, and in this capacity
793 he is known as the dugu-tigi (1), master of the earth. In this office he has the help of the council of fa, and in important matters he must follow their advice.

With the help of this council, he allots the land when

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1. In line with common practice, I shall henceforth use this title to designate both capacities, the high priest and the master of the earth.

881 on the sixth day. Just as a baby is admitted to the family on the seventh day after its birth, so on the sixth day after the surgical operation which has, as it were, marked the end of childhood, one attains a new status.

The sixth day, *da woro*, is the most important festival
881 of the *soli*. All the relatives and friends are invited and even
786 the most distant make great efforts to be present. Each one sends or brings his contribution to the orgy-like meals which go on and on, that day and the days following. The fiancés of the girls must be represented and send gifts. Married brothers and sisters must come, bringing their respective wives and husbands. It is an occasion for feasting and drinking, and it goes on as long as the provisions last, i.e., for several days.

881 The essential part of the ceremony, for which everyone has come, takes place on the evening of the sixth day. The onlookers gather in the public square where there will be [245] dancing, but usually only the women and girls remain there; the men and boys go outside for the admittance of the *soli-ma-tye* to the leading brotherhood of the village (Komoya, Namaya) (1).

Sometimes, however, there is no separation of the sexes, either because there is no active brotherhood or because the high priest has set a later date for the admittance ceremony.

In any case, the performance within the village is particularly for the girls, *soli-ma-moso*. Wrapped in a cotton coverlet with blue and white stripes, called *dampe*, each girl lies between her mother's legs (2) on a white cloth laid upon a mat.

[534] While the boys, *soli-ma-tye*, are noisily shaking their rattles, *n-koso-m-bara*, the girls, *soli-ma-moso*, flourish their pebble-filled gourds.

1. We shall describe this admittance when we discuss the brotherhoods.

2. Or those of a relative or friend of her mother.

The Operation of the Brotherhood

794 A brotherhood is a spiritual family whose internal affairs are conducted like those of a community with natural filiation. The nyana-tigi has the role of fa, and the assemblage of dye-n-fa-u, reinforced by the initiated and the leading believers, serve as the community council. Thus, questions confined to the cult and to administrative matters are dealt with by the nyana-tigi acting alone or with his council, just like the fa in the community. Therefore, the description of the latter's duties which has been given above will suffice to explain by analogy the practices in the brotherhoods. There are, however, certain details peculiar to the brotherhoods, and these will be set forth in what follows.

The Cult

794 786 The cult is made public during certain ceremonies, of which the two most important are the one at the time of sowing and the other at the time of harvest. It is accepted as fact in the brotherhoods that at planting time the boli copulate so as to produce issue at the time of harvest, hence the hymn to Nama which says: "boli fyerela ka den' (the boli has flowered to bring forth fruit)." These ceremonies are accompanied by orgies [262] during which the celebrants, both men and women, are said to indulge in sexual licentiousness. It may be concluded from these two series of happenings that the rites seek by appropriate mimicry to encourage the fruitfulness of nature.

794 776 825 There are other indications which show that it is indeed toward nature that the rites are directed. In certain brotherhoods, notably the Kore, the costumed officiants who farm the cartege pretend to be wara-u (wild beasts), suruku-u (hyenas), golo-u (monkeys), and other terrifying inhabitants of the bush (1).

1. They are all called wara or sogo, terms used for all wild animals. It should be noted that every nyana is called wara (power, lord).

794 in France. The question is too complex, however, to be treated here.

794 For important ceremonies, the faithful bring the nyana-
782 tigi a contribution in proportion to their means; each of them
brings grain, livestock, fowl, cowries, cloth, etc., and no one
is so poor that he cannot furnish one or more jugs of beer (dlo).
Everything thus collected is offered to the nyana at the general
meeting of the faithful through the intermediary, the nyana-tigi.
In accordance with [264] established ritual, the victims are
slaughtered and libations made. Then the nyana-tigi gives thanks
to the god and asks him to continue to protect his worshipers.
Finally, all or part of the food is eaten at a joint banquet. This
is a true communion, by means of which the god and his
worshipers on the one hand, and the worshipers among them-
[786] selves on the other, are closely bound together. These banquets,
which often last for several days, degenerate into orgies.

Internal Discipline

794 A result of the cult is that the brotherhood forms an organized body in which each member is subject to a discipline that may be summarized under these three terms: secrecy, obedience, solidarity.

Secrecy is obligatory, especially for anything having to
do with the cult. Divulging the mysteries carries with it a
[688] punishment which, depending on circumstances, may vary from
a simple reprimand to condemnation to death, with fines,
flogging, etc., as intermediate forms. People who are known
to be unable to keep a secret are, on that account, excluded
from the brotherhoods of nyana; this excludes women, children, certain people of caste, etc.

The obedience required of the faithful is shown by the seemingly fantastic rules enforced during the official banquets of certain brotherhoods. Members are fined for very odd infractions: sitting down, getting up, spitting, etc., before being given permission or being asked to do so. This is obviously a means of swelling the common fund, but it is also a means of making the adept realize that he is subservient to the sect.

794 796 At dusk on the day selected, the clergy proceeds with the greatest pomp to the *Kore-tu* (grove of the Kore). The orchestra, composed of drums (*denu-ba*), bells (*kinge*), and gourds (*nkude*), leads the procession. Then come the high priest (*Kore-tigi*) and the *kara-ma*, "people of the plank of the dead" (*kara*), which one of them carries. Finally comes the dense crowd, motley and noisy, of *wara-u*, *Kor-dyuga*, *bisa-tyi-la*, *ta-tugu-la-n-tigi*, and *ngoni-sa-ma*.

Everyone is performing his role. The masked men imitate the beasts they represent; the costumed *Kor'dyuga* act like clowns; the flagellants make their switches hiss. Thus the crowd approaches the *Kore-tu* amidst a great din, but only the clergy may enter it. The bearer of the *kara* takes his place under the sacred tree. On orders from the *Kore-tigi*, silence falls for the reception of the *Kore-de* postulants.

516 The latter form a line facing the tree and the *kara*. They prostrate themselves in the dust for the duration of the sacred hymn of the Kore, which begins with the words, "*Dyante Kore de-u*." When they rise, they are *dyante-ma-u*, "affiliates."

The members thus admitted remain in the sacred grove for 15 days and are not allowed to return to the village. There they are instructed by the "elders." Then they are assigned to the different groups of *wara*; theoretically, an eldest son enters the group to which his father belongs, while the rest of the sons may choose whichever group they prefer. In addition to his duties during ceremonies, each *wara* has a certain job: the hyenas (*suruku*) guard and patrol the sacred grove and question the inquisitive to learn whether they are members (*dyante ma*); the *Kore-duga* see to the maintenance of the grove, clearing its environs in order to guard against the grove's being damaged by brush fires.

794 796 786 The offerings and the sacrifices, and then the communion repast, follow the ceremony of admission and are accompanied and followed by dancing and singing. The orgy then goes on for several days, as long as food remains. The various groups assemble for their dances, and the *ta-tugu-la-n-tigi* start the proceedings. With a flaming torch [283] in each hand, they chase each other, singe each other's backs and chests, and in the

794 process, let loose a rain of sparks which the Kore-duga zealously
776 put out with leafy branches. Then each dancer, carrying what
986 is left of his torch, kneels before the drums, making an obscene
gesture which arouses the laughter of the onlookers and giving
the cries, roars, or laugh of the "wild beasts." Elsewhere, the
nyoni-sa-ma are roaming among the drinkers, tearing at them-
selves with thorns. Flagellants lash themselves with switches
785 that leave cuts from which the blood flows. They stiffen them-
selves against the pain and keep up this cruel sport, which once
again the Kore-duga mitigate by binding up the wounds.

There appears to be no doubt that during these orgies the most shameful excesses are committed without the slightest restraint.

The Nya

794 This brotherhood is highly esteemed in all the Bambara villages in the cantons of Say and Karadougou. It is less common in the canton of Séladougou; in the canton of Saro, five-sixths of the villages are loyal to it. It is rarely found in Nyansannari, and outside these areas in the circle of Djenné, there are only a few scattered Nya brotherhoods in the Bendougou and Ségou areas.

The cult arose in the Bendougou region. As has been
443 noted above, the villages of Moribala, Kourbadougou, Diali,
etc., are market villages where all the boli are found, together
with directions for using them.

778 The boli of the Nya consists of a piece of wood from 25
to 30 centimeters in length and from 10 to 15 centimeters in
794 height and width. It is wrapped in an absorbent material, usu-
ally cotton. The blood of the victims and the liquid of the
libations are poured on this boli, and then hairs or feathers and
bits of entrails, eggs, and kola nuts are stuck to it, giving it a
repulsive appearance. It is true that the boli is often concealed
281 from inquisitive eyes by putting it in a container made of an old
piece of the hide of a she-goat. However, since the container is
given the same treatment as the boli it contains, it is just as
disgusting.

766 614 White oxen are sacrificed on the tomb; their hides are used to make new drumheads for the *tabala*, and the meat [328] is offered to the manes of the deceased and then distributed among members of the family, allies, familiars, etc. The women wail, weep, and sing the praises of the deceased in [786] company with the people of caste who organize everything. Outside, banquets and virtual orgies, complete with noisy dances and songs, are organized in honor of the deceased.

This ceremony goes on for seven days.

614 At the close of this period, the new *fama* is publicly proclaimed. For this purpose, the leader of the slaves has the walled-up door of the *tata* reopened, and the whole company assembles in the large open area in front of the house of the *fama*. Those present include the newly elected *fama*, the members of the family of the Massa-si, allies, tributaries, heads of the *ton'-dyon'*, and the *sofa*.

[769 782] An ox has been sacrificed and offered to the manes of the defunct. Its hide is stretched in the center of an open area surrounded by the crowd, and on it is spread out the sheepskin, adorned with precious amulets, which has long served as a rug for the *fama* of the Massa-si. Other precious family relics include [301] the scarlet cap adorned with amulets, twists of gold for the ears, and heavy silver bracelets.

The representative of the family of Kassi Konaré seats the newly elected *fama* on the sheepskin, puts the scarlet cap on his head, and adorns him with the gold earrings and silver bracelets. Then he makes a speech to the new *fama*, outlining the policies followed by his deceased predecessor and enumerating the desiderata of the people of the clan.

At this point the leader of the slaves prostrates himself [567] before the new *fama* and places himself in his hands to show that all the *ton'-dyon'* are loyal to him. He then presents individually the principal groups of slaves, tributaries, etc.

Another ceremony brings the new *fama*, prominent Massa-si, their allies, the principal leaders of the slaves, and the tributaries to the wood sacred to the protective idol of the clan, where a reciprocal oath of loyalty is taken. A ritual communion follows.

774 827 The ni, which animates the body, is visible during the weeks following birth in the movements of the fontanel. It is also the breath, the respiration, the beating of the arteries. Like the dya, it is not indissolubly bound to the body for it leaves it during sleep in order to go to the sixth sky, sunankaba. When the person awakens, the ni returns [828] to the body and the dream is considered a memory of what it has seen, a premonition of an event concerning the individual, the family, or the village (1).

[787] 1. Great numbers of fish seen in a dream foretell an abundant catch; quarrelling signifies war; to swim suggests purification for an offense. The passage of crickets from west to east is the sign of a great battle or famine. In this last instance, the situation is so serious that the village is forewarned and each one must make an offering to a needy person saying these words: "I make this soul sacrifice to God in order that he save me (nye nin ye ni sakaka ye ka ngala ma a la ka mbo)." The village chief also offers a collective sacrifice.

774 The dya, the double or twin of the human being and its opposite sex, has a body: either the shadow on the ground or the image in the water. It may move alone or be forced to leave the person it is accompanying under Faro's order. When a crocodile carries off or wounds a man by order of the spirit, he first seizes his visible shadow on the surface of the water and his dya in the water. The same thing may be attempted by someone with evil intentions. In such a case the close contact which the dya as a shadow maintains with the impure earth makes it particularly vulnerable. In order to remedy this, the person concerned must look at himself in the water contained in a gourd; then, when his image is clear, he clouds it by tipping the receptacle; this puts the dya under Faro's protection.

/60/ The independence and vulnerability of the dya require, in the course of certain religious functions, that it be taken over by Faro for the duration of the ceremony.

Wild and domestic animals are endowed with a ni and a dya. Plants also have a ni. The ni of trees is situated in the buds and insures its growth and its life; that of cereals necessary to human life

774 is the object of constant concern during agrarian rituals. The role of
the soul of plants is particularly noticeable in their medicinal uses.
Drawing a remedy from a plant may cause its death, liberating its
spiritual principles for the benefit of the sick man. Because of this,
such an act is equated with a blood sacrifice.

With the exception of the ngovo tomato, plants have no dya. The shadow (suma) of a plant is not independent like that of a man or an animal. It exists only through light effects and its movements are caused by the air and the wind moving its leaves and branches. This is what the Bambara means when he says that the dya has a life of its own and depends on Faro, whereas the plant's suma depends on the spirit Téliko, master of the air.

774 An individual's dya can be known and his temperament and life
possibilities assessed by measuring his shadow on the earth at noon.
787 The unit employed is the little finger, which is a corporeal symbol
804 of the person. If a pregnant woman is thus measured, the sex of the
843 child may be predicted.

When a boy or a girl gets married, it is said of them: a ye a dya
774 furu: "he (or she) has married his dya." For it is impolite to say that
[579] a person married anyone but his spiritual double. Besides, the union
of the couple is repeated by the union of their dya which like them-
[595 selves are of opposite sex. In olden times, male twins married the
851] same woman and the latter's dya was taken over by Faro in the Niger.
The child she conceived was the son of both husbands.

Some men do not marry. This is true of the Soma, the religious
589 diviner attached to the major Bambara societies. Initiated in the
791 course of a solitary sojourn in the bush, he left his dya with the invisible spirits. This is a prerequisite to the gift of double sight with which he is endowed as well as a protection against possible dangers to the dya when it remains in contact with the earth, or when it approaches other humans. The true spouse of the Soma is his dya: he may mate only with it on a fixed date when the spirits return it to him for this purpose. /61/

The tere

774 The tere was inflicted by Pemba on Mousso Koroni in order to diminish her power at the time he was pursuing her. This explains its complexity: it is at once the character of a man, his strength,

774 his consciousness, as well as that part of his being which, through the body, makes him sensitive to events. If man is vulnerable through his double, it is his *tere* that is affected by any breaking of taboos; it receives and submits to impurity.

824 The *tere* has its seat in the blood and the head (*kun tere*). It develops in the foetus in the course of gestation and is composed in part of the parents' *tere* to which is added that of the deceased person whose soul and double the child has inherited.

774 553 787 The appearance of the child's *tere* is determined by the old men of the family in the course of the name-giving ceremony which takes place publicly on the eighth day after birth. After carefully examining the child's hairline along the forehead, the manner in which his eyebrows join, the shape of his eyes (the seat of intelligence), mouth, hands, and feet, one of the old men present announces in a loud voice the revealing signs of his character. The position of these signs makes it possible to say whether a child has a good or a bad *tere* and to make predictions about his life. A slight bald spot on the middle of his head will make him a rich man; a wide and deep skull will make him a chief. The old man then swings the child in the direction of the four cardinal points above the family altars and gives him the first name of the deceased person whose *ni* and *dya* he has inherited. Some of the hair, shaved off shortly before, is then thrown into the Niger by the father who pronounces the name while facing the river. The gesture and the word are meant to entrust the *tere* to the spirit of the waters and to ask his protection. On the same day the blacksmith marks out on the child's face the scarifications that act on his *tere*, giving him strength, courage, and virtue.

774 787 828 As the child grows, certain of his physical peculiarities are interpreted as characteristics of his *tere*. If he grinds his teeth while sleeping it means he will attack his parents; if he often takes hold of his left wrist with his right hand he will always be victorious. A girl who walks swinging her hands and throwing them behind and who raises dust with her feet while walking will destroy her husband's fortune. Some informants say that a person has several *tere*: /62/ one for his manner of walking, one for the way he carries his head, one for the shape of his limbs, and one for the breasts if the person is a woman (1).

1. The physical signs determining the *tere* are very numerous. On this subject see

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D. Traore. "Le Tere chez les Bambara du Ségou /The Tere among the Bambara of Ségou/." Notes africaines, January 1947, pp. 29-31.

774 Man is considered the bearer of a strong tere. Because he talks, is well informed, and knows good from evil, he is responsible for his own life and that of his family. The tere is the gaining of consciousness.

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This aspect of the tere means that only domestic animals, whose life depends on man, are bearers of this principle. Wild animals "have a hard and barren life; they have to labor to feed themselves; so they do not have to bear the burden of a tere." All that lives independently of man is without a tere. (1)

The tere of domestic animals is not as powerful as that of man, but is also revealed by external signs. For instance, a horse that swings its head from right to left while it is tied up has a very bad tere; it is said to be its duga fufa (2). Such a beast is undesirable in a home for it "chases away happiness and success." A wounded domestic animal attacks its enemy with its tere.

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The fact that the tere is that part of the person which suffers the consequences of impurity testifies to the bonds that unite man to the outer world. The tere is disturbed when a taboo, tne, is broken. If it is a good tere, it leaves the person; if it is a bad one, it becomes worse. On the other hand, the brezking of a taboo provokes a physiological change in the blood which loses its red color and becomes

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1. However, according to certain informants, wild animals might also be endowed with several tere for different parts of the body. In this case, it would seem that the term designates especially the animal's physical peculiarities and not its consciousness, as in the case of man and domestic animals.

2. Literally, "the swaying of the hawk." It is said that when a hawk descends on its prey, it swings its head right and left in order to see the prey better.

778 Some boli are individual, sometimes inherited from an ancestor
782 and consecrated to their owner whose strength they maintain. Others
are collective and consecrated to supernatural powers which protect
the life of the community.

The taboos relating to beings whose soul "impregnates" the boli
778 and to the elements which compose them are decreed at the time /94/
782 of their making. They must be scrupulously respected by those re-
784 sponsible and by those officiating. The boli are generally placed in
a sheltered spot either in sanctuaries or in an isolated room of the
house, which no one enters without the permission of those responsible.
This is done in order to avoid the dangers resulting from broken taboos
which would affect the integrity of the boli as well as that of its owners.
The handling of the boli, dangerous as it is, is restricted to priests,
to the head of the family, or to the owner.

782 Victims most commonly offered on all altars are domestic animals
such as fowl, cattle, sheep, and goats. However, on the altars of
hunters and those of the uncircumcised, only wild animals are im-
molated.

The color of the victim is determined by the quality of the being
to which it is consecrated as well as by the altar itself. Animals of
[822] a red color are generally killed on the boli of religious societies,
thereby increasing the nyama which they contain. White, the symbol
of light and purity, is reserved for Faro.

The death of the victim is used as an occasion for divination.
782 The throat is cut in such a way as to prolong the death struggle so
787 that the officiating person may interpret the position of the body.
The cutting process is followed by eating which has the function of
communion. Furthermore, certain parts of the body (the liver) are
left on the altar; others such as the jawbone, feathers, and hair are
kept as tokens by the person offering the sacrifice.

The ritual is usually accompanied by offerings of boiled millet as
782 "refreshment," since the blood is given to the altar as a nourishment.
Kola nuts, chosen for their shape and color, are divided into two
portions: the officiating person chews one half and spits it out onto
the altar before eating the other half.

In former times, human sacrifice was also practiced. These took
place in serious cases involving the kingdom, the king, or the chiefs.
The usual victim was the albino.

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291 773 386 which they got rid of by means of this dye. A live swallow was immersed in the liquid, which was obtained by soaking the leaves and to which was mixed ground charcoal, and later was released, thus consecrating the dye into which the loincloth was soaked.

291 773 The next garment was made of two strips, dyo kama (literally, shoulder nets), which were hooked on to each arm. The strip on the right arm, representing male, was attached by three thin straps (male number). The other was attached by four straps, four and left being female. The wearer would lie down over the strip on the right side

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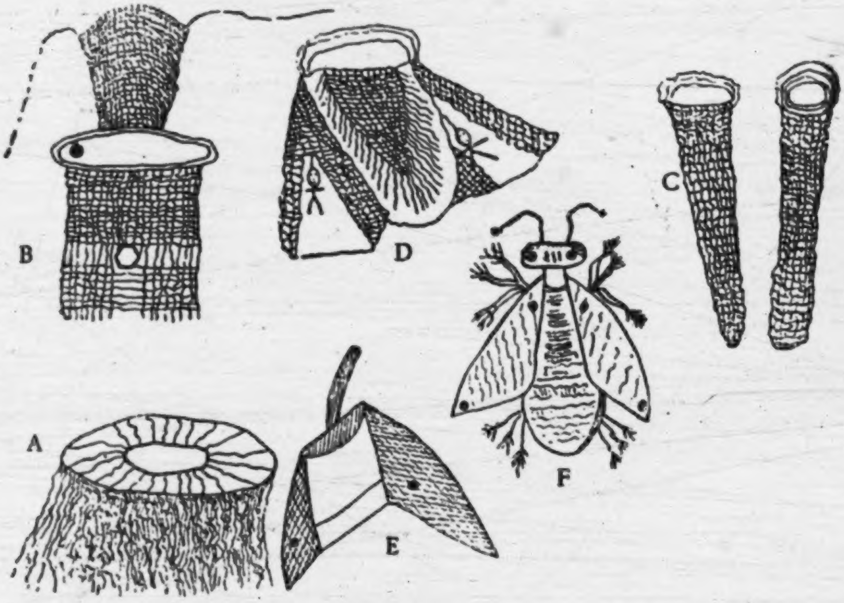

Fig. 8 — Ancient Clothing of the Bambara.
(A) The skirt of nyama fibers; (B) the loincloth; (C) the "shoulder nets"; (D) the tunic; (E) the bonnet are made of dyed and woven cotton threads. (F) the dung beetle, an insect which plays a part in geomancy. (Drawing by an informant).

and would cover himself with that on the left (Fig. 8, C).

Next, men made a kind of short tunic, wọlọ kama (literally, partridge wings), which was dyed red (Fig. 8, D). At the top of the openings where the arms passed were suspended /107/ two little figures (mani) carved out of wood. These represented the souls of the wearer, "took their life from the veins, and gave their strength to the

194 769 778 The ancestors are worshipped in various places: at the doors and thresholds of houses, at the cemetery, and at stone altars placed at the intersections of lanes and in public squares. These positive cults, which are aimed at the acquisition of beneficial forces, have as a counterpart, cults in which the villagers rid themselves of all their unlucky and infectious elements; these take place, in particular, at the corssroads, dangu, which are placed under the guardianship of the earth Soba spirits.

It would be impossible to treat all of the cults of the Bambara villages. Among these, three have caught our attention; they concern the dasiri, the dangu, and the ancestral altar stones.

A. The dasiri

194 776 778 The word dasiri (literally, which binds the mouth) designates the invisible spirit, Faro's representative entrusted with watching over /138/ the village, as well as the seat of this spirit and, sometimes too, the animal which accompanies it or symbolizes it.

The spirit haunts a rock, a thicket, or a tree situated near the village; the approaches to this spot are reserved for the elder in charge of the ritual (1).

[187 361] Generally the place is pointed out by the geomancer at the time the village is founded, or else determined by an event which occurred at that time. It is after this operation that the buildings are erected to the west of the chosen spot.

If the dasiri is a tree, no one may burn or cut its branches. In [822] many cases it cannot be approached by anyone dressed in black or indigo, colors which represent obscurity. No Peul may sit in its [563] shade (2). Any infraction of these taboos brings about the death of

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[824] 1. In Massala and Soroba it is a baobab tree; in Sama, a tamarind tree, etc. See the observations on the dasiri collected by Ch. Monteil, Monographie de Djenné /Monograph of Djenne/, pp. 137-138; L. Tauxier. La Religion Bambara, pp. 195-208.

2. The reasons for the taboo concerning the Peul have not yet been ascertained.

776 It is also at the crossroads that the elders place the child whose
778 legitimacy is in doubt. If the diviner who is then consulted declares
823 that the child is a bastard, he is deprived of the protection of the spirits
848 and is supposedly unable to survive the *nyama* which he has acquired
787 at the place. In this same spot are buried abnormal children, in par-
[766] ticular hydrocephalics who are considered undesirable. The spindle
of a dead woman is placed here along with the broom she habitually
used.

776 But the ritual most characteristic of the crossroads is the one re-
778 sorted to by the village when it is in trouble: the primitive wooden
823 mallet, *gosilande* is planted in the ground; it is then struck with a
783 stalk of millet to chase away evil and to induce new techniques of
reparation to come out of the instrument (1).

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1. See p. 145.

C. Stone Altars

778 In the villages, at the intersections of lanes, and in the squares,
211 the founding ancestors are represented by stones under which various
objects are buried (see Pl. V, b).

At Sama, four large stones, encased in a clay platform, symbolize both the cardinal points and the ancestors. They are in touch with the *dasiri* and receive the same offerings. At Banankoroni, the *fara ba* is partly buried. Under its point is an albino skull which represents those of the first ancestors and their bones. Two hoes, one placed near the right ear and the other near the left ear, convey the idea that "the man who cultivates the earth will never hear a humiliating word." Under the chin, another hoe recalls that the villagers who are faithful to agriculture will never know famine. Under the hoe, a *siriku* (2) protects them against those who try to harm them, and brings them "the hyena's luck"; it also means that some of their ancestors were transformed into hyenas in former times. A circumcision knife recalls that all males are circumcised, and all women excised (Fig. 15). Finally, three albino bones and a small pile of copper are a testimony to /142/ Faro's presence and power. Drawings are made on these

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2. See p. 179, n. 1.

794 jigi la, e komo fare ma e bwora dyeni ma, e
796 bwora soma moriba, o ya di dyeni ma, oy a di
numu dew ma dyenuye komo tigiw ye, makanta
jigi, soma moriba, numu dew; oluw ma malo,
aw kana malo, oluw ma lebu, aw kana lebu.
E komo ni nyenama biribalyuw dyugu,
birilew nyima i dyugu son ta i la ka bye ta
mbi ko nti nye.
E komo, i šu klo la faba, nyenemaw
kasange, minya kila a ko la, mi ma kila
a ko la.

When the drums beat and the dances are animated, and when the masker cries, it is said that "the bara of the komo is hot" (komo bara wušule do). The ceremony is in full swing.

Diverse incidents may occur in the course of the masked dances which give rise to interpretations and interventions by the members.

794 796 781 When one of the arrows attached to the mask trembles, it indicates the presence of a sorcerer in the assembly. The elders remove the arrow and immediately order /163/ the ceremony to stop. After the drums have been silenced, they request the culprit to present himself, which he immediately does. These words are spoken to him: "Your arrow attacks you" (1). He then offers a ram and beer in sacrifice,

1. Komo bye bila.

while the arrow is replaced and the dances resume. If an arrow falls in the course of the dance it indicates the presence of a sorcerer in the village.

794 796 If a part of the costume falls off, it is picked up by three members and kept to be burned with the refuse that is later swept up (2).

2. See p. 259.

794 796 688 If one of the participants has broken the taboo and revealed the secrets of the Komo during the past year, the masker whistles, asks the drummers to stop playing, and says: "Here is a grasshopper for me." These words express the contempt in which he holds the culprit. Next he adds: "There is the smell of a corpse here" (3).

304 The foreskin, which is tied by a string (drawn at the center of the
532 blade) at the moment of the operation, is placed upon the pembele
413 (black rectangle) and the cutting knife is tapped with a small wooden
mallet, gossilã (drawn at the tip of the knife). These three figures receive during operation the offering of the first spurt of blood from the circumcised boy.

The line, which crosses the blade along the middle, separates the bird and the ancestors who gave proof of courage from the instruments used for the circumcision. As a division it symbolizes first of all that each grade of circumcised boys must be considered apart from the others. This is its social meaning. But the delicacy of the line itself has a meaning which applies to the individual: each one must, in his own image, be morally /183/ simple, just, and sensitive. By conforming to the rule symbolically indicated by the design, the individual will become a member of the elite.

384 The date of the operation is fixed when Mousso Koroni's star, sigi
●787 dolo (Sirius), rises in the evening at a certain point in the east (1).
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1. See note 1 p. 47. To determine the date, however, the ndomo society may be consulted, which sometimes postpones it to keep its members longer.

After the boys to be operated have been counted, each gets ready, and on the appointed day the mother washes her son's penis with water in which an iron axe or hoe has been soaked. Then she prepares a dish
[262] of rice, ye farina to "dish of man's bravery," which the child eats
before he is led to the place of the operation, called yorola sakole "reserved place," located in the bush.

304 When all are gathered together the blacksmith-circumciser operates
upon each one in turn after he has made them sit down in a circle on
326 the ground. Pulling and twisting the foreskin, he ties it with the
string which he keeps taut by securing its extremity between his toes. He next places the member upon the pembele, rests the knife /on the foreskin/ and taps /it/ with the wooden mallet. In this way he cuts off the foreskin while saying the following words:

"Circumcised one, your father, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, the father of that one too, the ear (the genitals) of the ancestors of the latter have withstood (the pain); you, yourself, withstand it as

69 2. M fa faro n so ma bana a dyanza ye kle saba kono ye; ni ye se i ka seki, muso kono ma.

The offering of food is then renewed every three days until a birth brings about the return of the double into the world of the living.

If the dead man has no descendants, his altar remains forever in the sanctuary of the Komo near the nimara boli. Otherwise, it is returned within seven days to the eldest son or to the brother who then becomes the head of the family.

During the night following the seventh day, the soul returns to eat
769 and drink in the hut of the widow who lives alone. All the dishes con-
775 taining water or food are therefore carefully emptied and cleaned.
The same meal is offered to the deceased the night following the
fortieth day after the death. The widow comes out of her house on the
[765] eighth day if she is poor and must work for a living; otherwise, on the
forty-first day.

At the end of a variable period of time, the soul, the double, and the name of the deceased are received by a child who is born into the family. The exuvia, mana or folo of the soul, remains in the sanctuary of the Komo as a permanent testimony to his existence on earth. It is conserved by Faro who watches over it, and maintained by the offerings of the living who will in this way bring it to the final resurrection.

When the deceased does not belong to the Komo society, the rites are celebrated over the altars of the societies to which he belongs; his soul is likewise conserved by them. The spiritual principles /195/ of the women, grouped in institutions comparable to those of men, called muso dye, are the object of the same attentions in which is found the rhythm of four days, the female number.

766 If the deceased was too poor for all the rituals, which are always
costly, to be observed, two gourds of water are prepared and placed
one at the head, the other at the feet of the corpse; he is then lifted
in such a way that his image is reflected in the water. This accomplished,
eight cowrie shells are placed at his head and eight at his feet and the
gourds are covered with a winnowing tray; the image thus conserved is
supposedly reflected in the kaba mana, the fourth sky, where Faro,
776 symbolized by the cowrie shells, passes judgment on its state of purity.
787 A divining rite is then performed. If the man is pure, the villagers

776 attend his burial despite the fact that the rituals have not been per-
787 formed. If not, he is abandoned to the care of his family.

To neglect the rituals assuring life in the beyond and the security
764 of the living causes the shadow šu dya, or the ghost šu kere dye
775 (literally, white side of the dead man), to arise and present itself under
the same which the dead man had on earth, to claim his due from his descendants.

Ancestor Cult

769 In the entryway of some residences a supporting stake (če dloma),
778 sometimes marked by seven notches, represents the founding ancestor
of the family. On the anniversary of his death the stake is oiled "to refresh his soul." In addition, each year the owner of the house sacrifices to all the ancestors on the family altar, on the stake, and on the threshold of the door. In some villages the ancestors are called upon by tapping the threshold with a little wooden hammer, dyele kala ni, which represents them.

In the courtyards, pieces of wood stuck in the ground (ǰigi semen dloma) represent the paternal uncle, the brother of the founder, and are used as seats for the heads of families who lean against them "in order to lean well upon the traditions." Farmers, before leaving for the fields, rub their hoes on them to show them to the ancestors.

Before planting the women give the head of the family a ball of
769 raw millet, which he lines up to represent the dead according to age
241 and rank. Then he gives them a pinch of the seed beginning with the one representing the most recent deceased and calling successively all the dead by name. The paste and the seeds are then put in water and the mash thus obtained is poured on the /196/ doorposts to the entryway of the family house upon which the blood of a sacrificial victim also is poured. When the planting time comes, the chief who has prepared the mash made with a few grains taken from the seeds distributes this to the women, beginning with the one who represents the oldest deceased. He asks the ancestors to watch over, during the germination period, the soul of the millet which will descend into the seed with the first rainfall. When the millet has reached maturity, the first seeds harvested are placed in a pot on the threshing floor where the grain will be threshed later, and are distributed to the women in the same manner as the time of planting, the oldest of the deceased having to receive the first of the seed.

766 In fact, if he dies far away his breath cannot be captured nor can the
167 successive transfers be made. For this reason the family head disclaims all responsibility in such a case by warning those who are about to leave for along time of the impossibility of fulfilling his duties toward them.

Nevertheless, a ritual has been instituted for the young men obliged
766 to leave the family groups because of military service. The case is submitted to the chief of the Komo and the party concerned has two goats sacrificed over the altars. While the blood runs, the chief asks the Komo to watch over the soul and to be willing to reclaim it as it would if the person died among his family.

If the news of the death of an absent person spreads, the family
[187] questions the Komo through divining procedures to find out if the soul has returned and if, by this fact, order has been reestablished.

Death by Lightning and Drowning

761 Death which occurs in certain ways considered abnormal and a proof of Faro's wrath does not permit the reincarnation of the spiritual
766 principles. This is true of men killed by the Komo for sorcery, and of people struck by lightning for having broken a taboo of Faro's. Their /201/ soul and their double are lost forever to their descendants, and their bodies thrown into the common grave.

Drowning is either accidental or due to Faro's wrath, in which case the corpse is returned with the nose and navel cut. In both instances, the double preserved in the water is not lost, but sacrifices are necessary for the return of the soul and of the double to a child in the family.

If the body has not risen to the surface, the father of the drowned person has the right to mourn him only when all the rituals have been performed. He asks the chief of the Komo to intercede with Faro to obtain his permission to search for the body in the water. He offers seven tomatoes which the chief throws into the water in exchange for the corpse in the presence of seven elders of his age grade. Some Bozo mobilized for this purpose dive in to bring back the body. The chief cuts the nose and the navel which he throws into the water as an offering. Then the corpse is placed flat on its stomach and pressed
[821] vigorously to extract the water, for to bury it full of water is equivalent to "burying rain" and dooming the countryside to drought.

/210/ Chapter 8

DIVINATION

781 If we still find it difficult to isolate the general principles of divination among the Bambara, it is possible nevertheless to perceive identical elements among its diversified aspects. As soon as we approach the mechanisms and the symbols employed by the diviners, it appears that the first and fundamental element of divination is the "word, " the creator of life, the motivation of the cosmos, and the power of Faro.

To foresee the future is to reveal to the secular the "word" which is situated in space as well as in time, and which is the will and the material expression of that will. Destiny is understood as the realization of the designs of creation to which all must conform. To submit to this will is supreme wisdom. To inquire into the reason for a past state or event, or to determine the attitude to be taken in the face of future states or events, is what the wise man can and must do.

The supernatural powers, rightful masters of the word, alone have to power to reveal it. They have done this in mythical times for all men by teaching them technologies capable of reparing the repeated disorders brought about in the process of creation. They do this for each individual if he is in need of it and if he knows how to read through the various methods of gaining knowledge which they have put at his disposal. It is therefore to them that the diviner addresses himself in order that the word be communicated.

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801 Which will be the privileged signs over which the diviners will bend their efforts? It appears that these are numbers, notably the first twenty-two. In fact, all aspects of physical and moral life are inscribed in them. Taken as a whole, they reflect the succession of events in space and in time. A complex symbolism, which is superimposed over the others, is assigned to each one separately.

Each number has one or several meanings appropriate to it. /211/ It is odd or even, a notion linked to that of duality which has been so frequently mentioned in the course of this work. The sum of several numbers also expresses a particular idea which is added to those recovered by each element. Finally, a value is attributed to the succession of numbers, which is the first expression of time (1).

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1. This expression is symbolized by the progression of the first four numbers in the preliminaries of creation. See p. 23.

The first 22 numbers, which represent the totality of "words" and which express the sum total of the Bambara's mystical knowledge, must be considered from different angles according to whether they are seen as the 22 fundamental elements of creation, the 22 elements of the domination of this creation by Pemba, or the 22 methods and periods of the reorganization of this creation by Faro. In this series appears clearly the classification of elements composing the human being, ni, dya, tere, according to dualism which is Faro's own character and principle of action.

Moreover the stages of time, which itself did not exist before his domination, are expressed by the succession of numbers, each of which is linked to a part of the myth.

Current divination utilizes the first 22 elements at the level where they express "the order and the word of Faro."

1. kele. Faro; the word. Number of the master of the word. District of the chief; the right of the eldest, the right of the first; the head. The conscience: psychical aspect, moral aspect.

2. fla. Original duality, twinness. Faro's two female twins, the two first human twins. Love and friendship; union of beings. Necessity for man, however, to be straightforward in his action, not to follow two tracks.

3. saba. Sexual symbol of man and his soul. Birth of mixed twins, sons of the sinful Bozo women.

4. nani. Sexual symbol of woman and man's double (dya). Birth of a Bozo girl.

5. duru. Unlucky number composed of 4 (woman) and 1 (incompleteness). Miscarriage, failure, death. A stillborn child is called duru. However, it has an auspicious aspect and so signifies the universe (2).

2. See p. 24.

6. woro. Symbol of male twins (3 and 3). Lucky number (3).

3. Dĕke ni fla ye gariseke ye, "two little male twins, that is luck."

7. wolõfla. Symbol of mixed twins (3 and 4). Complete man possessing the ni and dya of opposed sexes. Complete world; growth /212/ of nature. Ideal image of creation; perfect word.

8. sekin. Symbol of female twins (4 and 4), of the eight ancestors and their word. Excess of words; danger of this excess caused by women.

9. konoto. Symbol of character or tere. Incompleteness.

10. tã. Composed of 6 (male twins) and of 4 (female birth), it is a lucky number and expresses the fertility desired by Faro as well as Faro himself.

11. tã ani kele. Conflict and debate. During the eleventh period after Faro's domination, Téliko wanted to resist.

12. tã ani fla. Téliko's attempt to dominate the world and to connive with men.

13. tã ani saba. Composed of 3 (Téliko, male spirit) and 10 (Faro): expresses Faro's opposition to Téliko's domination.

14. tã ani nani. Téliko's voyage.

15. tã ani duru. Téliko's defeat.

16. tã ani woro.
17. tã ani wolõfla.
18. tã ani sekin.
19. tã ani konoto.

Faro's work in organizing the universe.

20. muka. Meeting of Faro and Téliko to decide on the order and progress of the universe.

21. duka ani kele. Faro's complete domination over creation.

22. muka ani fla. Total of the periods elapsed between the creation and the organization of the world. Conclusion and "end of the words."

The symbolism of numbers in everyday life comes into play every time they occur. From the beginning they were used to qualify tools and utensils. According to whether these belonged to men or women, they were marked respectively with three or four easily recognizable signs, indicating their ownership. Thus, in weaving, the shuttle carried three bobins, the spindle four lines.

Each ritual is repeated three times in the case of a man, four times in the case of a woman. If it is performed several days running or at regular intervals, the same rhythm is observed. Thus the dya of a drowned man is fed every three days, or every four days in the case of a drowned woman. The organization of the chief's district

781 801 and the priesthood is founded on the same laws. A religious chief is generally accompanied by two aides or two elders belonging to his age grade. The group they compose is a duplication of the first three of the eight original ancestors.

Seven, the expression of perfect creation appears notably in the repetition of Faro's name when a request is addressed to him relating to fertility which may by symbolized /213/ by a male-female couple whose number is seven. To say Faro's name alerts him, but to repeat it seven times makes him hear that which may best satisfy him and presents him with what he desires.

Eight is the number of the ancestors who received the word and of the families that spread it. Six and eight, images of male and female twins, are at the basis of the Bambara system of numbers and calculations (1). Ten, which repeats unity, is composed of the sum of the first four numbers marking the stages of creation; it represents Faro (2). Twenty-two, which determines the categories of the creative

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1. See p. 48, n. 1.

2. "The religious function of the decade plays an extremely important role among the Bambara because the symbolism of all numbers is included in it as it contains them all. Since it can be made up by the sum of the first four numbers which in themselves express the unity and duality of the being, masculinity and femininity, the fourfold nature of twins, the very essence of existence—in a word the decade—expresses all that which is achieved within oneself, all that which is complete, perfect, and just. The very name of ten, *tã*, indicates these notions; moreover, instead of *tã*, ten, the Bambara often say *dafarẹ*, "it is complete." Consequently, ten is the essential symbol of divinity." S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara," p. 198.

● 787 thought yo, represents the universe; it is found on all sanctuaries or ritual objects.

801 Inversely, a number may be attached to an individual because of his behavior. It is said of a wicked man that he is an "eleven." The person who wishes to take power when he has no right to is "twelve." A man who is disgraced because he is denied that which he asks for is "thirteen."

787 Another fundamental element of the divining technique is derived from the state and qualities of the diviner. In order to question the supernatural, no special quality is ordinarily needed other than that normally required of a person making a sacrifice. Thus any Bambara, before making his offering, throws a kola nut on the ground to interpret its position. But the diviner is in a peculiar position. His spiritual elements, constantly in touch with the divinity, are the object of precautions which introduce him into the supernatural cycle and permit him to hear its message. They are, therefore, protected from the impurity which they might acquire in their contact with ordinary men. Because of this, the diviner is forced to respect a certain number of taboos. His double, guarantee for his state, is preserved by the spirits which protect it on the one hand and excercise control over its owner on the other. It is for them a means of action. "If the diviner has received the word and makes a mistake, the spirits may cause him to die." His mouth is filled up /214/ with a force which comes to him from these powers and which he must not misuse.

On the other hand, the trance is the state in which the spiritual is best expressed. In the excitement of the dance, at the frenetic rhythm of the drums, the Komo divines and predicts. At this moment he is entirely under the influence of the spiritual beings which express themselves through him.

Having presented these different points, is it possible in the present state of the inquiry to classify the methods of divination we have observed among the Bambara? This classification which we will attempt is tentative, and the observations will have to be taken up again more profoundly.

A brief description of several methods of divination currently in use is given below, and two of the techniques we have studied more carefully will be explained in detail: divination by guitar playing and divination by throwing cowrie shells (1).

781 1. In this chapter we purposely do not approach the study of geomancy, which is reserved for later treatment. This mode of divination has been the object of a detailed description in C. Monteil, *La Divination chez les Noirs de l'Afrique occidentale française* /Divination among the Blacks of French West Africa/. Geomancy is currently used by the Bambara, by all the chiefs of religious societies, and by all the hunters who are familiar with several types, particularly the *nama ti* "sign of the hyena," the *timba ti* "sign of the aardvark," and the *tyẽ dyę* "white truth" or *trabu*. The symbols connected with this type of divination are very complex among the Bambara who state that they possess an autochthonous method of geomancy distinct from the type called "Moslem," with which they are also familiar. This last point seems to be confirmed by the observations gathered by B. Maupoil in Dahomey and explained in his conclusions (see *La Géomancie à l'ancienne côte des Esclaves* /Geomancy on the Old Slave Coast/, p. 678). Geomancy is practiced in similiar ways on the whole African continent. More than any other activity, its study raises the problem of influences, notably that of Islam, with which we have dealt on page 7.

Methods of Divination Linked to the Idea of the Person

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Knowledge of the person is a constant concern of the Bambara. The body, which supports the spiritual principles, is marked from birth by signs which any knowledgeable individual is capable of interpreting. They determine not only the character (*tere*) of a person but also, to a certain extent, the destiny that awaits him.

Thus by examining carefully the facial features of a newborn child, his hairline, the shape of his eyes, nose, and head, the lines on his

787 forehead, it is possible to predict to a great extent, what he will be
826 or do in life. Later on /215/ the gait, the swinging of the arms, the
way of placing the feet, of holding the head or the breasts will complete, for the informed people, the portrait sketched at birth.

Measurement of the dya

[804] Certain indications concerning the individual are also given by the double or twin (dya) (1) which materializes in the shadow of the body and is measured by using the little finger as a unit. Starting from the top of the head, this operation is undertaken at noon in the sun when the shadow is shortest. The measurements which are noted down are grouped alternatively by three, the male number, and by four, the female number, according to the following table:

1. The first three unit measures (little finger) represent the nerves, pasa (masc.).
2. From the fourth to the seventh, the soft parts, the flesh, bu (fem.).
3. From the eighth to the tenth, the bones, kolo (masc.).
4. From the eleventh to the fourteenth, the body liquids, dyi (fem.).
5. From the fifteenth to the seventeenth, the male genitals, wulu (masc.).
6. From the eighteenth to the twenty-first, the female genitals, bye̜, (fem.).
7. From the twenty-second to the twenty-fourth, the joints, kolonye, (masc.).
8. From the twenty-fifth to the twenty-eighth, the breasts, ši (fem.).
9. From the twenty-ninth to the thirty-first, the backbone, koloko (masc.).
10. From the thirty-second to the thirty-fifth, the womb, dẽzo (fem.).
11. From the thirty-sixth to the thirty-eighth, the intelligence, hakili (masc.).

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1. See p. 86.

781 12. From the thirty-ninth to the forty-second, pettiness, stupidity, misenya, (fem.).

826 13. From the forty-third to the forty-fifth, judgment, calmness, basigi (masc.).

14. From the forty-fifth to the forty-ninth, incoherence, agitation, hakiliwuli (fem.).

[804] These groupings are symbolized by little sticks whose length increases for male measures and decreases for female measures.

Example: if the measure of the individual stops at group 7, he will be represented by four sticks (males) of increasing size and by three others (females) of decreasing size and different aspects.

/216/ Whatever their number, these sticks are then placed in the following manner: those of the nerves in a dry receptacle, those of the flesh in millet flour, those of the bones on a hard stone, those of the liquids in water, those of the male genitals on the testicles of a male goat, those of the female genitals on the vulva of a mare, those of the breasts in karite oil, those of the womb in water from the Niger or a well, those of the intelligence in fresh milk, those of calmness and judgment in water. On the stick representing the joints is shown the name for lion; on that representing the backbone, the word dyose, (literally, point of support); on that representing pettiness, the name for dung beetle; on that representing disorder and agitation, the words muso dãga (literally, accursed woman).

A prayer is recited over the sticks which are then grouped and counted with their numbered representation and their symbolism according to the complicated calculations whose details we will not enter upon here (1). This prayer and counting are called: faro kanubaya, "love of Faro." They indicate his solicitude for his subjects and were supposedly revealed to men by the swallow messenger at the time of the first girl twins' birth.

781 Each of these measurements corresponds to a certain moral and
826 physical behavior of man, predetermined by Faro before one's birth.
843 It is therefore possible, by measuring the dya of a pregnant woman,

1. It must, nevertheless, be noted that the total of the signs is (7 x 3) + (7 x 4) or 49.

787 826 [843] to know the sex of the child a woman is carrying and the character which will be attributed to him by the spirit.

Without further elaboration on this method of divination which implies a series of interpretations, it suffices to note that it is integrated into the system of Bambara thought and inspired by the conception he has of man's place in the universe.

Divination by the Kola Nut

787 The kola nuts which the Bambara eat and use in their sacrificial or divinatory rituals are classified into seven categories according to their form and color.

1. *dangoro*, red nut.
2. *yeleworo*, white nut.
3. *sosokuworo* (literally, mosquito head), a red nut pointed at one of its extremities.

/217/ 4. *flaniworo* (literally, twin kola), a white nut with the same signs on both its halves.

5. *worodanda* (literally, kola without a mouth), a nut of two colors without an apparent crack permitting it to be divided.
6. *bassiworo*, a dark red and very bitter nut.
7. *nyeworo*, a nut of light and indeterminate color.

The kola nut, "created for Faro's twin girls," is itself a symbol of duality, for both its adhering halves are easily separated. In daily life, unless the diviner has ordered it as a purification, a kola nut is not eaten by one person alone; it is divided and one of the halves given to a third person. This gesture of politeness and friendship is also the expression of the duality of man, comparable to that of the fruit itself.

[576] To give kola nuts is always a sign of deference, respect, or affection. To eat a white nut "chases away sorrow and worry." The nut without a crack is rarely eaten. As it appears to be of one piece, it has an inauspicious character. In religious ceremonies the *bassiworo* nuts are preferred for the boli; the ordinary red nuts, *dangoro*, for the other altars. The pointed nut, *sosokuworo*, is offered by one who wants a child. The officiator chews half the nut and spits it onto the altar before eating the other half.

781 Divination by the kola nut is practiced in numerous cases concerning the individual and the community. Moreover, it precedes almost all the sacrifices performed on the different altars. Before the throat of a victim is cut, the question of the consent of the beneficial power is posed. This method is used for spirits who are invoked by means of a recited prayer at the time the nut is divided but before it is thrown. The color and shape of the nut are chosen according to the question formulated, as well as according to the quality of the being whose mediation is sought. If the plea is addressed to Faro, for a marriage for instance, the nut must be white; if the spirits of the earth or the skies are questioned, it must be red; for a birth or a death and for all requests to the spirits of the west, the beneficial nut, yeleworo, is used. On the contrary, as a protection against an enemy or to convey a curse, the spirits of the east are invoked with the mouthless nut, worodanda. A good divining nut must, in addition, show a kind of design, called yeleda (literally, mouth for laughing, at the intersection of the two pieces composing it. It is also fitting that it be /218/ pointed at one extremity to "prick the subject" benefiting from the ritual. The officiator, who has divided the nut lengthwise into two parts, following its natural dividing line, holds the two pieces in his hand and recites the following prayer:

"Faro, my mother, Faro, my father, spirits of the earth, spirits of the skies, spirits of the west, spirits of the east, you who are better than all of them, Faro, here are the kolas, let truth be unveiled, let the two (pieces) part at the top. I say, you, Faro" (ter) (1).

1. Ne ba faro ne fa faro du kuma J̌inew,
sãnfe J̌inew, klebi J̌inew, korona J̌inew
dyenin kausa na be ye, e faro, woro fle
tye ka banke fla ka dya safe; ngo e faro (ter).

He may also say more simply:

"Here are two kola nuts, if you refuse, may one be shut and the other open; if you accept, may both be open or may both be shut"(2).

2. Woro fla, fle ninye, ni ma sõ,
kele ka dyã, kele ka bri, ni sona a
fla ka dyã, fla ka bri.

787 This text determines the interpretation of the answer which will be given. The diviner next opens his hand, releases the pieces, and watches the way in which they fall on the ground: if they are arranged in the same way on the inner or outer sides, the answer is affirmative; it is negative.

Divination by Cowrie Shells

This practice is called: kolo nin fli, literally, "to throw the soul of the cowries." These shells are in no way different from those used for trade or ornamentation. Only one taboo is attached to the way in which they are acquired; they must not be bought or obtained without payment. To acquire them, the diviner must secure a loan called [426] kuma boli (literally, to come out of the word); he gives as surety a product or an object which will be reclaimed by him later when he returns the cowries.

The 22 cowries used summarize "that which is necessary to man" and are divided into three groups:

The first seven, teliko dẽ, sons of Téliko, represent the spirit of the air, Téliko and his children, as well as "the respiration" of men. In fact, it is said of them: "The Téliko spirits are the man's respiration" (1).

1. Teliko ye adamadẽ ninakli kuma bo ye.

The next seven, faro dẽ, sons of Faro, symbolize human /219/ beings. One of them, chosen because it is easy to distinguish from the others, represents Faro; the diviner repeats the name of the spirit seven times over this shell before mixing it with the others, the effect being to give all of them the strength of the spirit.

The last eight, kumabana dẽ, sons of Koumabana, are the words of the eight great ancestors. One of them, different from the others, is called "mother of words." It is both Koumabana, first of the eight ancestors, and the unequaled word which he "spat" since Koumabana had known "all the words now existing on earth."

Thus 22, the expressions of the universe, summarize the human individual in the system of the 22 cowries: body and soul, Faro; breath and respiration, Téliko; revealed word, Koumabana. The division into three series, two of which are 7 and one 8, is also

significant; the number 7 is the sign of the complete man and it occurs twice to recall duality. Eight is the number of the word which animates him.

This type of divination is only performed during the day, for it is disrespectful to alert the spirits at nightfall. Moreover, the orientation of the shells on the ground is important and easier to observe by the light of the sun. The officiator takes the cowries in his hand, three or four times consecutively, according to the sex of the person consulting him, and lets them fall to the ground or onto a tray. He then studies them, following their orientation, and the place they occupy with relation to the mother or the "conclusion of words," according to their open or closed position. Very skilled diviners, who have to resolve complex problems, operate with 22 cowries. But sometimes the eight kumabana dẽ are sufficient.

In this case, before throwing them, the diviner pronounces the following prayer:

"You, eight old ancestors, none has surpassed you in words, your vision was so great that it surpassed the number (of the others); the cowries are thrown, you will show the truth; I say, you, the eight elders, I say, you, good spirits" (1).

1. Aw moko korobaw sekin, moko ma se teme aw ka kuma na, aw ka somaya bonya ma, fo ka dama teme koloniw fle la, aw ka ntiñe ǰira, ngo aw maw sekin, ngo jinew aw maw.

In the short space of time in which the cowries are thrown, destiny is written. The moment the diviner releases them, "the spirit of the air which controls them, having examined the case, adjudges and proposes. The moment they touch the ground, Faro, master of the last appeal, disposes" (2). The design of the cowries translates his word; they /220/ are the expression of his will visible to man through the word revealed by Koumabana. This whole delicate spiritual

2. It is said colloquially: "Téliko proposes and Faro disposes," teliko ba singa, faro ba sinze.

787 mechanism, invisible for the ordinary person, unknown to the noninitiate, can be perceived by the seer and the diviner who are conscious of the fact that they are manipulating the divine with the cowries. Because of this they bend over the constantly renewed shape given to the dispersed material with a powerful feeling of the presence of the forces to whom they are appealing.

The Somaya

791 According to tradition, the *somaya* or science of the *soma* was revealed in Mandé, that is to say, it was known to the Bambara before their arrival in the territory which they now occupy. It was restricted to a few privileged persons. The gifts of clairvoyance which it presupposes may be discovered in a newborn baby at the time when the signs determining his character (*tere*) are examined by the elders during the name-giving ceremony. In early childhood frequent manifestations of suffering are a sign of the spirits' presence and from the first steps, the way of walking itself confirms the child's vocation. About the age of ten, the young boy "guided by the Téliko spirits" is attracted by them into the bush near a pond where he lives in their invisible company for several days.

After this retreat the child returns to his village, provided with a little stone (*ǰinaworo*, literally, kola nut of the spirits), a sign of the alliance he has contracted with them.

However, he pretends not to know the place he came from. He also never makes any statements concerning the gift of double sight with which he has been endowed, but does manifest it by making some unsolicited revelations about their future to those he encounters. After a time, people recognize by these signs his quality as a Soma, which implies a change in his spiritual principles: the *dya* remains under the protection of the Téliko spirits who also control the diviner; they act directly on his person and hold his health and life in their power, punishing him in case of an infraction or in case of disorders which are harmful to the exercise of his art (1).

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1. A Soma would become a *mahalakillen* or a harmful animal if his *dya* were altered through contact with the impure earth.

791 The box is transpierced by two wooden sticks, če kala (literally,
534 man-stalk), recalling the two millet stalks which accompany every
dead man into his grave and which are in themselves symbols of the
two elders.

When the Soma falls ill, he removes the two sticks from his instru-
791 ment and places them beside him on his mat, anticipating the position,
534 he will lie in the grave. Thus stretched out, "he is in the grave and
755 walks with the two ancestors"; if his condition improves the sticks have
liberated him from his illness. He replaces them in the harp only after
his recovery.

The box contains seven pebbles, the number of man (3 + 4) and a
791 piece of copper in the shape of a star symbolizing the word. The
534 Soma may look into the harp through an opening on its side, called
šu wo (sorcery hole) or bara dinge (hole of the box), which "permits
him to breathe," to see "the ancestor Koumabana, master of the word,
and to know the deepest secrets." At the bottom of the instrument
another opening, considered the anus, permits the release of all that
is harmful.

/224/ A red stain placed on one of the faces, sindera ble (literally, red belt), expresses the fact that the instrument is the object of blood sacrifices like the stone ǰineworo.

The case is the image, the mask of Koumabana; the two faces, called respectively kini nye, "right eye," and numa nye, "left eye," represent his eyes; the comb, his mouth; the opening, his nose and respiration; the strings, his words. It is also the replica of the tomb and of the first three of the eight ancestors who knew death. Finally, it is the face of the Soma and his tomb.

The instrument must never be touched by a woman; moreover, no one must play it if his intentions are not pure, "if his heart is not clean."

When the Soma plays in response to requests from those who consult
791 him, each sound is a prayer. With his free hand he holds a twig with
533 which he strikes the base. Each stroke is a word. As he plays, images
781 form before his eyes and within him. He touches the cords separately
according to their position and in relation to the importance of the
question that is being asked. Thus, he pinches modẽ for subjects of
little importance: hunt, journey, etc.; fadẽ for that which is concerned
with health, procreation, the physical or moral life of the individual;
fa for the future, destiny, the private and public life of a man, his

791 authority, his command; fa koroke for planting and cultivation, the
533 control of water, rains, and ponds, and for fortune and wealth; fa
787 dogone for the germination of grains, the formation of the ears and
the light rains; ba for all that concerns women; faso for all that concerns the family house and those who are absent.

But the Soma also plays airs with rhythms accompanied by words. He plays them one after the other during the sitting or choses them according to the character of the person consulting him and the questions raised.

The following seven songs were collected and interpreted by the Soma of Bandiagara:

"A good thing comes with a bad thing" (1). This song has the

1. Ko ñumã de bina ni ko dyugu ye.

effect of revealing to the Soma the thoughts of the consulter.

"Man knows little" (2). In spite of his learning a man knows few

2. Adama dɛ̃ te ko do.

things; a child often knows that which an adult ignores.

/225/ "Even when a man is satiated he may not go beyond the mother who has given him birth" (3). This rhythm is performed for

3. Mako fara čokočoko a tise ka temme
a wolo ba ka.

those who show arrogance or vanity, or for those whose wife has left the conjugal home and has taken refuge with her father.

"Even if he is handsome, a man must have eyes (that is, to be informed)" (4). The Soma plays this air whenever there is a marriage,

4. Moko če kani čokočoko fo nɛ̃ ka soro i ku.

a birth, or an initiation.

"The world is big" (5). When anguish overwhelms the consulter,

5. Diñɛ̃ ka bõ.

791 this song calms his restlessness and gives him back peace and serenity. "Whatever man is, he may not go beyond God" (1). The Soma

533
781

1. Moko a kera čokočoko a te teme ngala ka.

plays this air if the consulter harbors bad intentions or if he is ignorant or stubborn. He does the same to discover the gifts of a child and to encourage the family to develop his learning.

"Joy embellishes the world" (2) is performed for futile and pleasant

things: feasts and dances, ornaments.

2. Klo ye diñe dya.

things: feasts and dances, ornaments.

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801 Divination, in a large measure, is the application of the static and dynamic quality of numbers. On the one hand these translate the relationships; on the other, they are symbols for phenomena, beings, behaviors, situations, and in general all the constituent parts of the universe. Though not endowed with power in themselves, they symbolize powerful and well regulated elements. It may also be said that the numbers are superior realities, the same as the primordial signs which preceded the perceptibility of all things and on account of which the things began to exist once man had taken them into his consciousness. (3)

3. See p. 17.

In the course of divination, they indicate to the individual or collective consulter his personal position with regard to the rest of the universe. In a way, they permit the formulation of a particular equation for each person at a given time.

CONCLUSION

121 /227/ It is only recently that the discipline of silence adhered to by the Blacks has been relaxed in certain circles of the initiates. Human behavior, backed up by a rigorous method, has allowed a group of researchers to establish a documentation which suffers less from the usual faults. It is no longer superficial or fragmentary; it is

774 it is a fluid emanated from the body itself and made manifest as much by the shadow, which may be seen in sunlight or in a bright light, as by the image which appears when the body is placed in front of a reflecting surface. This fluid is called dya.

774 The dya has the faculty of leaving the body when it is
787 asleep to wander wherever it wishes; the sight of its wanderings,
which the body can witness, constitutes a dream (sugo). Dream
is a kind of reality; it is in a sense the private life of the dya
in company with its fellow-dya. During waking hours, the dya
accompanies the actions of the body; during sleep, the body
must endure the dya's peregrinations, for there is no doubt but
that the dya rules the body it inhabits. Thus, waking a person
abruptly is virtually a criminal act because, if the dya is away
761 at the time, a too abrupt summons may break the link between
the dya and the body, and such a rupture (sa) is death (sa). Besides, the body has only a vague memory of the wanderings of its dya, it experiences the consequences of this action. On awaking, the body is exhausted by all these mad rushing about and fantastic escapades, and it feels the effects of the dya's actions, either good or bad.

In short, this dya is comparable to what some Europeans call a "double."

775 Further, it appears that the dya plays a crucial role in the "return" (sagi) to life, that is, rebirth, which is one of the most strongly held beliefs of the Bambara. After death, the dya is reincarnated in the same families; the Bambara even claim to have positive proof of this fact. Such and such a newborn child has such and such anatomical peculiarity of the deceased -- is this not a proof that the deceased wanted to show thereby that he was re-embodied? If a child dies very young, the body is mutilated in some agreed manner -- a finger is broken, for instance -- [121] and if later a child is born in the family with a similar deformity, everyone is convinced that the dead child has "returned": a sagira, "he has returned."

It is also believed possible for a dead person to be reincarnated far from his own people. All over Bambara country stories are retold of dead people who, more or less long after

183 784 Thus used, taboo has organized and transformed the native milieu; it has established a line of demarcation between the sacred and the profane by removing from ordinary intercourse persons, places and objects connected with the invisible and considered to be impregnated by it. However, since by its very nature it forms an incontestable and nonappealable law, it has been the favorite means of anyone in authority wishing to impose his will without fear of protest. Thus the laity has, so to speak, had to submit to a arbitrary system of law that is essentially religious. Social regulations, rules of hygiene, medical prescriptions, culinary preparations, forms of courtesy -- all these are surrounded with taboos and all have absorbed from the tne the very essence of its vitality and its constraining force.

784 593 Within the family, which is the generating force of any collective group, the individual finds himself surrounded by taboos throughout his life. They are what establish and maintain the authority of the elders (koro-u) and especially of their head (fa). Taboos impose ancestral traditions which have developed separately and become gradually superimposition from earliest times to the present, the whole of which constitute, in fact, family custom.

784 [571] Patriarchy, brotherhood, the state, and all Bambara collectivities operate in the same way, since all collectivities are in a sense modeled on the natural family.

Religion, family, and society as a whole, in short the whole of Bambara civilization, have been and continue to be largely dependent on the tne.

## [133] 3. Mantic, Religion and Magic

787 Mantic. Among the Bambara, as among all the Sudanese, religion and magic are both based on a belief in a permanent revelation which the manes, the spirits and the gods give to men with regard to the events of their lives.

The various means by which man can come to know this revelation on the part of invisible beings are what is called divination or mantic. This is extra-rational knowledge since it makes known things which could not be learned through reason

787 alone and it applies to the future as well as to the present and the past.

Mantic differs from magic in that the latter allows man
787 to use certain methods so as to subordinate natural and extra-
788 natural forces, while the former is contemplative knowledge,
791 which does not impinge on the prerogatives of the divine but
merely puts divine thoughts into communication with human
understanding.

Further, theoretically at least, the diviner is not linked to any particular cult and is not to be confused with the priest, since he transmits the divine will outside of sacrifice, which is the priest's function. However, it also sometimes happens that the diviner is the oracle of a particular divinity and that the same person combines the functions of both diviner and priest as in certain cults described in what follows.

787 There are innumerable methods of divination. Before pointing out the principal traits of some of them, let us first note that there are cases when the divinity enters into direct relationship with a human being and speaks to him in human language. The chronicle of Ségou gives an example,in the legend concerning Kolé, head of Biton's guards, who was approached by a genie in the forest and told of the conditions on which he would be assured of his power. Ngolo Diara cheated Kolé of the benefits of the revelation by carrying out the sacrifice required by the genie before Kolé got around to it.

Dreams in which events take place just as they do in reality constitute one method of direct revelation. Frequently, however, there is a variation between dream and reality [134] which makes the meaning of the dream uncertain and therefore makes an interpretation necessary. Among the Bambara there are people who act as diviners by interpreting their own dreams. On being consulted about a problem, they claim to receive in a dream during sleep the correct information for throwing light on the difficulties involved.

A favorite method is that in which the diviner abandons himself to his god: he is possessed by the god and becomes his oracle. In the trance he is, so to speak, the instrument through

787 which the god speaks. In the brotherhoods of which we shall presently speak, the wara-mina-den' is, as the term indicates, "possessed by the god"; he is also said to be "the mouth of the god" (wara da). However, the diviner can speak only unin-
198 telligible gibberish during trance, and so this half-human, half-divine language must be interpreted by the wara-tigi or high-priest.

During dream or divine possession, the invisible is brought within man's reach by a sort of inner illumination; both methods may be said to be intuitive divination. Other methods, even more widely used, are based on a different procedure. These methods purport to penetrate the divine intention and will by observation of external signs. How do these signs differ from natural phenomena?

The native pays very little attention to what we call
811 natural laws. He reasons by analogy and attributes any unfamiliar phenomenon to an invisible being endowed like himself with intelligence and will. The indications of this will are not precise, and it is up to each person to recognize and to interpret them. Divination based on external signs may be called deductive. The signs may be classified in two categories: those involving living beings and those involving inanimate objects.

787 Living beings. Theoretically, any animal is useful for
825 purposes of observation because its actions, whose determining cause is unknown to the ordinary man, reveal to the seer the divine will or intervention.

Observations of this kind have given rise to many taboos (tne). Here is an example: while crossing a [135] stream an ancestor of the Samaké was caught by a crocodile and carried down through the water to the creature's lair, where he was abandoned. It happened that the man was merely stunned and when he came to, he pondered how he might escape. Suddenly he felt some grains of sand fall on his face and, seeking the source, noticed that a thread of light came in through a tiny fissure in the rock. The grains of sand were coming through this crack, and he realized that an ant lion (gere) was throwing them in an effort to show him how to get out; so he managed to enlarge the crack enough to escape. But, remembering the insect to

787 which he owed his life, he vowed that he and his descendants
825 would evermore respect it. That is why the gere is tne for all the Samaké, the descendants of that ancestor.

Before beginning a fight with Blisi, Bacari Dyan, a Peul, wanted to know the outcome. A marabout told him to get two rams: "Name one Blisi and the other Bacari," he said," and watch them fighting." To be sure, during one of their combats, the ram named Bacari killed the one named Blisi and such, too, was the result of the fight between Bacari Dyan and Blisi.

But although a living animal can show the divine will through its actions, the dead body of one offered in sacrifice is no less informative. It is the duty of the seer or initiate to discover the signs of the divine will from the dying spasms, from the position taken by the body, or from the relative position of the entrails or the general constitution of each animal. This branch of mantic is called extispicy, from which are derived various methods of divination used by the Bambara.

It is common practice to sacrifice a chicken; if it falls on its back, with its feet extended away from the observer, the omens are thought to be unfavorable. If the feet point toward the observer, the omens are good. Any other position is doubtful and, if need be, the sacrifice is repeated until a categorical answer has been obtained.

Often enough a Bambara returning from a long journey wants to learn whether one or another of his wives has been faithful to him. He sacrifices a rooster and, after opening it, examines the scrotum; if it looks normal, the wife has been faithful, but if it shows [136] certain peculiarities, notably a reddish color, her guilt is proved.

787 Inanimate objects. Every Bambara possesses a set of divining cowrie shells. He almost always carries a stated number of shells -- usually 12 -- in a small bag. If he wants to consult the omens -- about the most varied sorts of enterprise -- he takes the cowries in hand and throws them onto the ground from a point not far above the ground. He reads the answer in the general arrangement of the group and also in the position of individual cowries relative to one another. If one cowrie is

787 surrounded by several others, this designates a powerful master surrounded by his proteges and promises aid. If one cowrie is stuck perpendicularly in another, that pattern is called "little girl in the gourd" and presages the birth of a girl. If two cowries are close together and turned in opposite directions, this is the symbol of sexual intercourse and presages the success of a love affair.

The kola nut is used as often as the chicken for divinatory offering. Here is how the method operates with respect to the nyana dugu-da-siri, of which we shall soon speak. After separating the nut into its two parts, the officiant brings them together again between his thumb and index finger and touches the ground with them, while asking the nyana to make known whether the offering is accepted. Then from a point not far off the ground, he casts the nut against, or a little in front of, that which is supposed to be the seat of the nyana. If the two parts both turn toward the officiant on the sides which were formerly in contact, the reply is favorable.

The officiant then repeats the proceedings in order to find out if the nyana agrees that he should make the offering. A new position, with one part turned toward the officiant and the other toward the ground, means that the answer is favorable once more. In case of doubt or failure, the process is repeated as many as three times.

Stones are also used as intermediaries for divination. On [412] top of a flat stone -- usually one used for crushing condiments [137] is placed another stone, also flat but smaller. After having reflected deeply upon the object of his inquiry, the diviner holds the smaller stone with his fingertips and guides it slowly over the surface of the larger stone. He then interprets any slight resistance that developes as the smaller stone is moved around.

There is another method very similar to the one just described. The diviner places a gourd filled with water on some kind of rag or straw crown which water-carriers, in particular, place on their heads beneath the vessel to be carried. He rocks the gourd gently to and fro and then, as before, interprets the resistance produced.

787 With the same equipment the diviner sometimes operates differently. Setting the gourd firmly on the crown that supports it, he then taps it two or three times with his middle finger. Then, it is claimed, he can hear special sounds, which are revelations by the water-spirit and which he alone can understand.

In short, there is an endless number of divining practices and here, if anywhere, the old saw which says that the spirit blows where, when and how it listeth, is singularly appropriate. And nothing is more accommodating than human credulity. It [198] goes without saying that there are some remarkable ventriloquists among the Bambara, who give such talented support to inanimate objects that the latter become veritable oracles. A piece of horn stuck into the ground or a mute block of wood are thus transformed through such artifice into mediums that answer anyone on any subject.

[828] [154] There are also many highly suggestible individuals who readily fall into wakeful or hypnotic states, during which they reveal hidden things.

787 763 Another practice among the Bambara is the use of the kolon' kala (1) which is specially amenable to hypnotic suggestion. When a suspicious death requires search for a murderer, the corpse is often used for the discovery. It is carried on the heads of [138] two impressionable young men, who are then assumed to be possessed by the soul of the deceased. The lugubrious remains are rapidly borne through the settlement or the countryside, disregarding obstacles, until it finally stops of itself at a spot where the murderer or some revelatory sign is to be found.

787 A kind of effigy is often used instead of a corpse. This is made of a kolon' kala to which is tied a little bag containing bits of the body (finger-nails, hair, etc.) and which is wrapped in a cloth. The effigy plays the role of the corpse.

[412] 1. This is the wooden pestle used in all native kitchens to crush grain and condiments.

787 The kolon' kala is used in the same way to discover stolen or lost objects. In that case it is wrapped in a loincloth belonging to the victim of the theft, along with something equally personal.

What are we to conclude from these divinatory practices? Are oracles based entirely on charlatanism and trickery? This would be a failure to recognize the credulity of the practitioners, most often the first to believe in their own practices.

771 Religion and Magic. There is nothing more involved, incoherent and contradictory than the cult customs of the Bambara. In order to give a clear picture of the essential traits, we shall follow an outline based on the distinction which becomes apparent on close analysis.

It can be stated that these people always honor the manes, the nyana dugu-da-siri and some other nyana, without presuming to impose human will upon them. Indeed, it may even be said that the Bambara make an effort to behave in a manner presumed to be pleasing to them.

However, the majority of the nyana are spirits suborned by man and serving his will.

Finally, there are appropriate rites which make it possible for humans to exploit a portion of the universal energy and to use it as they wish.

771 Let us say that the cult of the manes and of the independent nyana are what constitutes the religion of the Bambara, while
789 the subjection of the spirits and the exploitation of universal energy properly constitute magic, which in its most feared form is called sorcery.

This distinction is obviously arbitrary. There is no custom that is not in some measure impregnated with magic, and this is so true that it is uncertain whether one should consider [139] religion to be a sort of purified magic and magic a perversion of religion or even its parasite.

Without seeking to decide this question, we shall simply point out that there is often a clear line of demarcation between religion and magic. All one needs in order to see the difference is to compare the cult of the manes with the practices of sorcery

778 789 is a virtue which exalts his own faculties to such an extent that it gives him a supernatural power that is terrifying to the uninitiated.

This property of transmission by contact accounts for the veneration which surrounds the possessions of eminent persons and those among the dead who [142] exercised power during their lifetime. Objects especially venerated are those that were in almost constant personal use: clothing, weapons, toilet articles.

The same property of transmission no doubt also accounts for the nature attributed to matter, which has been called continuity. Everything emanating from an object retains the occult energy within it, and, further, anything that "the man who knows" (don-na-ba) does to these detached parts affects the whole from which they came (1). That is why an undigested portion of food, if suitably treated by the magician, can spoil the digested portion of the same food. The chronicle tells of how this theory of the continuity of matter was used against Bani. By means of hair and a sandal, stolen from him, the magician paralyzed Bani's clairvoyance and put him at Da's mercy.

791 Magicians. It is the learning of the magician which, so to speak, brings order out of the chaos of the world. In the broadest sense of the word, his art, magic, is a kind of utilization of the occult. It is true that there is no Bambara, from a chief down to the least of the slaves, who does not act as his own magician, but there are specialists and some of them very famous. Besides, not everyone can be a real magician. Natural talents give some individuals the power to penetrate the invisible world and to feel at home there. Some are initiated by genii who have taken a fancy to them, as shown in the chronicle of Biton; others learn the craft from a relative or a well-known magician, either at no cost or at great expense.

● [787] 1. Divination by means of the kolon' kala, previously described, is allied to this belief. The bits and pieces of the deceased act as the dead man himself would do in guiding the bearers of the kolon' kala.

596 614 The functions of the "fa." The duties of the fa are many and complex; for the sake of clarity, we shall study them under three headings: cult; relations between communities; administration of property (which will be studied in connection with community property).

596 614 782 Cult. Religion gives considerable strength to the family since nothing is decided without consulting the manes and the gods. Raffenel has given us a picture of old Niany praying to his manes on behalf of his absent son: "O my God, I command my son to your case since he has gone away on a mission important to all of us. Be with him on his journey. Preserve him from the wicked and from all misfortune so that he may once again enter by this door through which he departed and before which I am now kneeling. I implore you, O my God, to restore him to my love and to that of his mother, his brothers and his sisters (1)."

[114] 1. In spite of deviations due to Raffenel's desire to give a personal and literary touch to what he reports, the essential points of this prayer are accurate, and that is why I quote it.

[787] The chronicle of Kaarta tells us that old Sounson begged for early death as a sign that his lineage would be powerful in the future. Also, in order to make a prophecy come true, Deniba Bo submitted to the fatal blows of the Khassonké to make sure that his people would conquer the country.

After all, no one is free of fear of the gods, not even those whom one would take for brave spirits. Raffenel tells us that Bouo, his informant, feared the wrath of the god whose secrets he had revealed. The chronicle of Ségou tells that Ngolo, thinking he had aroused the wrath of his manes by encouraging evil desires in his eldest son, Ntyi, did not hesitate to sacrifice his [179] own grandson, the son of the aforesaid Ntyi, an atrocity which bears witness to a faith that was as profound as it was barbarous.

596 614 787 ● It is the duty of the fa to see to the cult. He projects everything that happens to him personally to the supernatural plane so as to come to conclusions that will guide his own conduct. He discerns in the most ordinary dreams indications of what will please the dead. Furthermore, the people around him point out the signs of divine will that they have observed. If, as happens in great houses, the fa is obliged to turn over part of his responsibility to the family gods to one of his confidantes, the latter will not fail to keep him informed of anything significant that may be revealed.

[771] Thus, daily life is unceasingly dominated by the supernatural, and every important event is conditioned by these beliefs. This is readily seen in all the family institutions: birth, circumcision, marriage, and death.

[577] It follows that the moral behavior of the family is a concern of the fa. Whenever something abnormal or painful occurs, the fa looks into it. Do the dead perhaps have reason to be dissatisfied? Have they been neglected or offended? He questions them, and if he finds confirmation for his suspicions, he at once seeks to appease the manes in whatever way they desire. If the trouble persists, he investigates further, and sometimes everyone in the house is questioned or, if one prefers, made to confess, even infants. Could one of them, moved by ill feeling, have uttered maledictions when invoking the dead?

614 596 783 [578] When the fa himself is ill, this general confession is virtually obligatory. This is because the absolute authority of a fa can hardly fail to arouse hatred, and hatred, a bad counselor, makes people resort to magic to rob the more powerful of life. Fear that the elder's "clairvoyance" will discover the wickedness in the depths of one's soul and punish it usually induces the guilty person to obtain a pardon for his wrongdoing by confessing it, and then everything returns to normal.

596 614 Upon the death of the fa, it is the first duty of his successor to try to discover, by any means, the causes of death and to avenge it if need be.

[763] Everything which the old fa was wont to honor, which forms the spiritual treasure [180] of the family, must also be

769 This is the place where on important occasions the fa
778 receives congratulations or condolences, which are addressed
782 not only to him but also to the ancestors who, though invisible,
are nevertheless present.

When the fa wishes to make an offering to the ances-
769 tors (fa su son'), he squats before the door of the blon' with his
782 head bare and a chicken in his hand. He addresses the most
recently deceased (1), saying: "I offer this chicken in my own name and in that of my children. Jointly with our dead fathers and mothers, preserve us from sorcerers who eat souls (suba) and from the evil of the wicked; protect us from sickness and disaster; guard our health; give us good wives and healthy children; bring success to our work in the fields, and give us rain."

If the offering is being made for a particular purpose, the fa is explicit about it and speaks just as he would to a living person. He concludes by asking that the victim reveal the response by the way it falls as it dies. Then he cuts the chicken's throat and dribbles the blood on the wall at either side of the door of the blon'. He than resumes his crouched position, and after throwing the fowl a short distance, he watches its convul-
787 sions and waits for it to fall motionless. Usually the position is
regarded as favorable if the animal dies with its legs in the air and its feet turned toward the officiator; if the feet are turned away, the response is unfavorable. Often, just as he completes the offering, the fa announces what position he considers favorable or unfavorable.

The fa gives the sacrificed chicken to his wife to be cooked, and then he divides it among the members of the family; this is truly a communion.

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1. It seems that the ancestors form a kind of chain in which the first invisible link is the ancestor most recently deceased and the first visible link is the current fa.

794 are all designed to attract and capture the god and, for this 782 purpose, to transfer the officiant from our world to the supernatural one. I have never heard anyone claim that the costume and the various actions of the officiant were intended to counterfeit the nyana, nor that the boli in any way represented the native's idea of the god.

The Clergy

793 Even though, in theory, familial nyana are inherited, those worshiped by the brotherhoods are usually bought. The head of the brotherhood is called the nyana-tigi (master of the nyana) (1), whether he has inherited the office, been elected to it, or has imposed himself by virtue of being the most prominent founder of the brotherhood. It is he who keeps the boli, hence his title of boli-tigi, and who knows all the secrets of the cult. His duty is to direct the cult and to administer the brotherhood, and this gives him considerable local prestige.

The initiates of higher rank are called dye-n-fa-u, "masters of the truth." The nyana-tigi chooses his aides from this group, particularly the person who, "seized by the god" 787 (wara-mina-den"), becomes the "oracle" (wara-da). The role of medium requires special persons who can go into a trance 791 under the influence of the animating spirit, and the wara-da has the duty of choosing and training the person who will succeed him or replace him, if the need arises (2).

All the initiates are to some extent diviners through practices which are peculiar to them, and the brotherhoods often

1. Ordinarily the word nyana is replaced by the specific name of the nyana, Komo, Nama, Nya, etc.

2. These dye-n-fa students are called soma-de (elder sons) in the Komo brotherhood.

794 Besides, this submission, if one may call it that, is
merely a corollary of the solidarity existing between nyana-den'.
This solidarity is shown to the profane whenever litigation
arises outside the sphere of the brotherhood; nyana-den' do not
[696] hesitate to bear false witness for the sole purpose of helping a
guilty co-member evade the sanctions of profane jurisdiction.

For failure to fulfill his obligations or for any other wrong considered reprehensible by the brotherhood, the nyana-den' comes under the jurisdiction of this brotherhood.

Fearing the supernatural retribution which his misdeeds
[783] [265] may provoke and seeing portents of it in apparently in-
explicable things that cause him pain and surprise, the nyana-
den' himself seeks pardon through some kind of expiation, de-
termined by his own intuition alone or by one of the clergy.

On other occasions, the guilty person fails to denounce
himself, not merely by deliberate design but sometimes because
[787] he is not aware of his wrongdoing and its consequences. In that
case it is the wara-da (oracle) who reveals it in a trance.

794 The clergy is led, by means of self-accusation, denun-
695 ciation by witnesses, or accusations based on the most varied
imputations, to learn, to investigate, to adjudicate, and to punish the acts of the faithful in material as well as spiritual matters. In the process of carrying out its duties in this respect, the clergy uses every imaginable means of obtaining information and of examination, but the proof of guilt that they particularly want is confession.

The various procedures used to persuade the accused to confess his wrongs may be put under three headings: oath, torture, and divination.

When an oath is taken, the boli is provided with an accessory known as the siri-kun' (knot), to which seven straws are attached. The person taking the oath (kali boli la, "to swear on the boli") then pronounces the usual formula: "May the nyana take my heart and my liver if I lie." When two people exchange this oath in order to vouch for their respective statements, they are said to have "tied the boli" (boli syen'), and it is believed that anyone who perjures himself will be put to death

794 695 by the god. It is conceded, however, that a perjurer may redeem himself by gifts and sacrifices whose nature and value are decided by the clergy.

Torture includes the most diverse types of moral and physical constraint thought to be efficacious in getting a confession: usually flogging, imprisonment, starvation, mutilation, and other tortures, often horrible. A method that often succeeds and that is commonly used is to offer up the unknown guilty party to the wrath of the nyana; it is not at all rare for the guilty person to confess at the first signs of discomfort due to auto-suggestion. It is so firmly established that the wrath of the nyana is always implacable and terrible that innocent persons, accused only for the sake of exploiting them, have been known to confess abominable crimes which they [266] never committed, for instance, in cases of accusation of sorcery.

[787] Divination comes to the support of the inquiry, and the deity's revelations are combined with endless spying among the members.

It goes without saying that these various methods of inquiry are not used alone; they are combined so as to provide mutual support.

On the basis of findings made in this way, the clergy passes judgment and has the sentence carried out in a despotic and often mysterious manner (1).

1. Indeed, most of the brotherhoods owe their terrifying reputations to the fact that sentences resulting in death or disappearance have been carried out by ways and agents who remain mysterious.

794 696 The penalties are varied and arbitrary; the importance of a misdemeanor is not determined in advance on the basis of specific characteristics. Rather, everything depends on the clergy's interest in the case, and this interest is influenced by the most appalling intrigues. Therefore, even though the accused is guilty of the most terrible crimes, he may escape punishment entirely provided he can satisfy the demands of the

794 This boli-den'-fa is provided with the usual boli-de:
[778] kana, korti, siri-kun', etc. [284]

[346] A hut with a conical roof serves as temple (Nya-bon').

[534] An orchestra accompanies the ceremonies; it includes a kind of harp, made by the natives and peculiar to the Nya, plus large numbers of the usual drums, bells, and trumpets.

Since the Nya is acquired by purchase, the high priest (Nya-tigi) is theoretically the person who contributed most generously to this purchase. The office may also be attained by inheritance or by election. The truly religious role, however, is that of the wara-mina-den', the medium through which the god reveals his will or his desires and who is, therefore, the oracle (wara-da) of the Nya. A certain amount of training by appropriate methods is necessary to acquire the degree of extra-lucidity claimed by the wara-mina-den', and that is why they are recruited by co-optation.

794 Under the influence of the Nya, the wara-mina-den' falls into a trance. His speech, hesitant and strange, is incomprehen-
•787 sible to the common people. The Nya-tigi then approaches to receive and to interpret the oracle. The inspiration of the wara-mina-den' may be spontaneous or it may be provoked and deliberately sought by him. For example, when a person dies, the wara-mina-den' questions the Nya, either at the request of the interested parties or of his own volition. For this purpose, he retires to the temple (Nya-bon'), concentrates on the point to be clarified, and after meditating, withdraws (1). He then sometimes falls asleep, and while he sleeps, the Nya reveals the truth to him in a dream. On other occasions the wara-mina-den' falls into a trance, and the spirit speaks through his mouth. One way or another, it is learned whether the death is to be attributed to the Nya and, if so, why. Or it is made plain that it is the work of the suba and under what form, human or otherwise, they are hiding. Or, finally, it is learned whether some other nyana struck down the deceased.

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1. These details were given to me by a wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara.

794 Furthermore, every wara-mina-den' is able to read the
787 will of the Nya and, more generally, to reveal the acts of the
invisible by means of the divination practices which we have already mentioned.

782 The sacrifices are performed by the muru-kala-tigi, and
a dyeli (herald) serves as factotum, just as in the other brotherhoods. [285]

The faithful are initiated and called to participate in the
794 cult to an extent determined by the clergy; they are called Nya-
796 ko-den'-u, literally, "those who follow the Nya." In order to be admitted, an individual must give a chicken and 120 cowries. The next day, in the presence of the Nya-tigi and the wara-mina-den', the chicken is sacrificed on the boli by the muru-kala-tigi. The candidate is present, and in his behalf the Nya-tigi asks the Nya for protection against the suba, snakes, korti, and the evil eye. Then the neophyte is led to the sacred grove to be ritually purified with consecrated water contained in a vessel used exclusively for this purpose (1).

783 1. Every year at the time of harvest, the clergy undergoes ritual purification by washing in the sacred water. When a Nya is inaugurated, this purification takes place at the first harvest after the installation.

The two great annual festivals are celebrated at the times of planting and harvesting. Similar ceremonies take place in
731 connection with important events (epidemics, public catastrophes, etc.). For these ceremonies, during which the Nya is supposed to give revelations about the event in question and to answer various other questions troubling the faithful, the wara-mina-den'
273 undergo special preparation and at the proper time drink a very heady beverage (2) which, they say, brings on their extra-lucidity.

691 2. I learned most of these details about the Nya during a criminal trial brought against the wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara,

771 Ngalla through his priests, the marabouts. At other times he 787 thinks he will get into Ngalla's good graces by taking part in the great Moslem festivals and by imitating the visible rites (4) of the faithful. He has not the faintest doubt but that he can produce the same effects as they do.

So it is that the pagan, deriving from Islam whatever his own concepts can make use of, "Sudanizes" it in the process. As a result, between the two poles of Islam and paganism, there exists an infinity of intermediate states which link the two and which, depending on the angle of observation, sometimes look like an Islamization of the Sudanese and, at other times, like a Sudanization of Islam.

Father Niany, of the blacksmiths' caste, was one of those [333] individuals who, being versed in the practice of native occultism, consider Islam as a rival Hermetism until the day when they realize that it can provide them with useful new magic power. Many are the blacksmiths, magicians like Niany, who have become Moslems for the purpose of getting their hands on the arsenal of magic which Islam brings into these lands.

787 [177] So it is that all the native brotherhoods have adopted divination by geomancy which was introduced by the Moslems and there is not a Bambara who does not on occasion consult the geomancer, known as laturudala or kenyelala (1) or the

4. In the tale of the Hyena, given later, there is an example of this mimicry in the way in which those who follow the Hyena each pretend to be the nyana discovered by the Hyena (see Chapter 7 [not translated]).

1. Derived from kenye meaning "sand," and la meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the sand."

● 787 *bugurigala* (2). These three words are sufficient in themselves
177
to illustrate the process of Sudanization. Although the first comes from a corruption of the Arabic word *el tereb* (earth), the other two are strictly Bambara in all respects. Besides, the manner in which the natives have altered the practice of geomancy is an illustration of the same process.

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It may therefore be concluded that, in certain respects, Islam has strengthened paganism. For example, the pagans commonly believe that an illiterate geomancer, who is nevertheless an expert in this type of divination, will obtain the same results as a learned marabout who is guided by the book of Er Zenati. As a result, a well-known *laturadala* enjoys special prestige because of the fact that his prognostications are corroborated by a book, and the same fact accounts in part for the influence of the priests of the brotherhoods.

We are thus able to verify the contacts between Islam and the paganism of the Bambara who are the subject of this study.

693 The historical tales related in the foregoing show the continuous relations which existed between the native chiefs and the pious and renowned marabouts. Whenever a legal dispute arose which could not be settled by pagan arbitration, the last recourse was an appeal for judgment or conciliation to a marabout, who was always sought out and greeted with deference. Mamari, Tonmassa, Ngolo and Ma-n-son's sons all had occasion to make such appeals in some most embarrassing situations.

[334] Further, on occasions when they hoped to bring off some questionable deal or to improve their prospects, the chiefs were also wont to call on a marabout. Mamari did so against the Massa-si Foro-koro and so did Ngolo when he was anxious to make sure that his fame would survive him.

In matters of judicial arbitration, it appears that the marabout derives his authority rather more, perhaps, from his

2. Derived from *buguri* meaning "dust," and *da* meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the dust."

212 by numbers, and notably by ten, which may be obtained, among
801 other ways and if it's a question of representing the Creator, by
adding the first four numbers, or by adding the number five to
[776] itself." Ten is the numerical symbol of Faro (god of water); it
symbolizes what is just, true, perfect, and complete.

The symbolism of numbers is used in divination: a first
[787] group of eight signs, called the secret count, reproduces the seven
first numbers which, according to a Bambara myth, were engraved
in space at the instant that the Creator ~~by~~ his word formed the universe. They contain the whole universe.

These numerical signs were ritually traced on the most varied occasions.

Finally, we must note the existence of the sign for "nothing,"
[802] fu gundo, zero, which stands at the beginning of a series of 196
numerical signs used by those who practice arithomancy.

The word Mandé, of central significance for 44 peoples, may be interpreted, according to some, as manin (the secret name for ten), number of unity and of the cultural community.

F. Writing

212 For everyday use, the Bambara have adopted arabic characters, called by them "writing of the Blacks." In fact, only those
who have studied in the Marabouts' schools know how to read or
write them. No written literature, properly speaking, exists. A
538 large store of traditions, epics, tales, legends, songs, and proverbs
is transmitted orally from generation to [17] generation by professional storytellers, the griot. Moreover, the whole sum of sci-
867 entific, juridical, ethical, and practical knowledge is taught orally
868 in the course of daily life or during long years of initiation. Certain old masters renowned for their learning are consulted from far distances when a chief is in doubt on a point of tradition.

Nevertheless, signs do exist for a secret writing that the
212 priests, the heads of families, or blacksmiths draw on the sanctuaries, on masks, furniture, clothing, cabin walls, or in the sand.

For the Bambara, things exist by signs. These signs have at-
212 tached themselves to things, calling them to consciousness and to
812 the attention of man.

805 the angles represents 90 days (the year, for the Bambara, is 360 days).
815 The symbols are not merely mathematical; they form part of the daily life of the society. [18] The zigzags are a characteristic theme
[531] in the decoration of pottery, weapons, tools, sanctuaries, and houses. One finds them in agricultural techniques and in ritual dance figures. The universal rhythms of the earth and sky echo through all the activities of man and society. (1) Finally, another series of 16 signs is habitually used in geomancy. It is interesting to note that these signs were used in a practical manner for correspondence. The Bambara chiefs used multiple combinations of them to send each other messages.

G. Local Diversities

197 Given the extent and the diversity of the regions where Bambara is spoken, it is no wonder one notices differences in pronunciation, and even in structure and vocabulary, from one province to another. At Kaarta the speech is not the same as at Ségou, and a Bambara of Ségou has trouble understanding a Bambara of Bougouni. This is due partly to the influence of other languages which are in contact with Bambara and which ultimately alter and modify it, and partly to the normal evolution of language within a group separated for centuries from its place of origin. It is interesting to note that in the Bougouni circle the conservatives in speech are the old men, while the women are the evolutionary element.

191 Traditionally, Ségou was considered the center for the most elegant Bambara speech. Before the conquest, children were sent to Ségou to learn the purest Bambara.

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[787]

1. Id., "Conception de l'écliptique chez les Dogons et les Bambara" [The Dogon and Bambara Conception of the Ecliptic]. [Ed., Africa, 1951.]

Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;
222 their caffeine content makes them a stimulant and energizer. The
[276] Bambara use seven kinds of kola nuts in their sacrificial and
782 divinatory rites: 1. Dangoro (red nut); 2. Geleworo (white nut);
787 Sosokuworo (a red nut pointed at one end); 4. Flaniworo (yellow kola); 5. Worodanda (kola without opening) which has no apparent cleft where it may be split open; 6. Bassiworo (a dark red, bitter nut); 7. Ryeworo (nut of light and indeterminate color). (This list is given us by G. Dieterlen in her Essai sur la religion Bambara [Essay on the Bambara Religion]).

252 To prepare kola nuts, they are placed in baskets of very coarse mesh lined with leaves that are moistened every four or five days.

245 Among cultivated trees, other than banana, mango, lemon, orange, pineapple trees [ananas, may be a kind of pine; the pineapple is not a tree fruit], etc., one must mention the Acacia albida, which plays a large role in Bambara mythology. In the dry season, it is used as fodder for cattle.

[32] C. Textile Crops

248 Side by side with these food crops, the Bambara cultivate textile plants which they use in addition to the wild textile plants. Among the principal ones, we shall point out the da (Hibiscus
[227 cannabinus) whose fibers are used by fishermen to make their nets.
286] It does not rot and is a possible rival of jute. The labor to exploit it, pulling up the stalks, retting, extraction of the fibers, is done in the dry season, when many hands are available. (1)

Cotton, which grows spontaneously in many places, is cultivated near the villages as an annual plant; it is a perennial plant which renews itself every four or five years. During the cultivation cycle, it is grown between millet and maize. The harvesting is
[286] done by women; it is picked out and spun by women, but it is woven

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1. G. Spitz, L'Ouest africain français [The French West African]. [Ed., L'Ouest africain, A.O.F. et Togo; The West African, French West Africa and Togo.]

439 By the south -- Guinea: rubber, ivory, gold, livestock, rice, millet. Ivory Coast: Sahel salt, livestock, wax, karite, native cotton and wool cloth and blankets. Gold Coast: livestock, native cloth.

443 In addition, all centers of any importance had a large periodic market which was a sort of regional fair, plus a small daily market which permitted the inhabitants of the locality to obtain provisions as needed.

b. Caravan Commerce

443 484 Over and above these markets, a long-distance caravan trade is carried on by the Haoussa and the Dioula, who transport their merchandise in the north with beasts of burdens, in the south by human bearers. These movements continue a commercial tradition and have been altered only by legislation. Before the conquest, any man who wished could enter this commerce on the condition of paying his "Fama" the usual sum. The traders, to protect themselves against brigands, traveled [42] in caravans. Practice had it that the [787] traders consulted a priest before leaving to find out if their undertaking would succeed. After the usual sacrifices, the priest revealed the name of the one who would direct the group. The caravan chief could even be a captive, but everyone owed him obedience because a divine force inhabited him. To each state which is crossed, the [651] caravan paid a customs fee on entering and asked the Fama for permission to cross, indicating the extent of their route and making propitiatory sacrifices in each region. Sometimes certain districts, such as the region of Bougouni, forbade blood sacrifices for fear of bringing down evil forces on themselves. The caravans then let loose an animal secretly at night.

c. Commercial Practices

438 643 Everything could be sold except gold, which was the property of the Fama. No one was supposed to possess gold. If the gold miners of Bouré could sell the gold extracted from the mines, when the buyers entered the Bambara country, they had to present it to the Fama. If he did not wish to buy it, he authorized certain rich people permanently settled in the district (that is, who would be unlikely to leave) to buy

712 Before the French conquest, Bambara villages were fortified. They were protected by a triple enclosure of clay blocks following a line of beams that sheltered the sentinels. The first wall enclosed the village and the surrounding gardens, the second circled the interior of the village, and the third surrounded the chief's houses. These walls could be as high as five meters and as wide as two meters at the base. They had a ditch in front of them and were re-inforced by steps. Considerable ruins of these fortifications may still be seen in the Kourolàmini at Ténintu (Bougouni circle).

342 House construction. (1) Throughout the Sudan, house construction is carried out during the dry season. The same is true for repairs, except for the most urgent caused by damage from rains, streaming waters, violent winds, or by the ravages of termites.

342 361 787 778 Choice of the site. The choice is often made near a temporary or permanent watercourse where wells may be sunk. A soothsayer or Marabout is next consulted, who reveals the existence of a spirit whose favorite place is the cailcedra; if the spirit is benevolent, the installation is authorized, and the sacred tree becomes the altar of the collectivity. It is bathed with periodic sacrifices.

342 Types of habitation. 1. The round hut with thatched roof (tuba bo); 2 the square or rectangular hut (bili) with flat roof.

401 Round hut. The man drives a stake to which he attaches a cord 1.50 meters long at the most, which is also tied to the head of a hoe. The man circles the stake and traces a circumference that will be the scheme of the house. No foundation is laid. A series of double pickets (kassassin) is set up around the circumference. A bamboo strip is passed in and out between the double stakes, and this basketwork is raised from the ground up to a height of about two meters.

When the cylinder forming the walls of the base is finished, a door is cut, facing south, 25 centimeters from the ground and 1.50 meters high. One then plasters with banco, that is, with earth dug not far from the hut by the young people and made into a paste with a mixture of fonio straw, cow dung, and water drawn by the women. The roof is constructed on the ground. A circumference equal to that

1. Information, in part, given by Moussa Traoré, from the village of Gouani (Diemandougou canton), Bamako circle.

534 "The form of Bambara musical instruments is governed by a
771 symbolism which enters into the metaphysical and religious system of this population."

a. The chief instrument is the drum, the tabale, reserved to kings and chiefs. The mythical prototype of this instrument was made of copper, a primordial metal whose vibration is likened to that of light, of sound, of water, and of speech in this population.

The instrument today is composed of two parts: a square wooden frame covered with goat's skin, which forms the body of the drum, and a detachable apron of engraved wood, in the form of a half-moon on one of its faces, which is attached to one of the drum's sides. This apron is covered with plaques of engraved and adorned wood, and, on the periphery of the rounded face, with a strap of leather trimmed with copper rings. This apron represents an ear which is at the same time that of the spirit of the air, that of the masters of sound, and that of the king. The copper rings are replicas of those worn in the ears by everybody; their role is to transmit sounds and rhythms to the eardrum.

The wooden drumstick used to beat the instrument is unusually long and anthropomorphous in form. It has a bell at one end. It represents Koumabana, the first of the eight ancestors in the Bambara pantheon who received "the Word" ...

b. The anthropomorphism of the harp [guitar?], ngoni, is very plain in the minds of its users.

The instrument's rectangular frame represents the mask of Koumabana, the ancestor who received the Word; the two side pieces are his eyes; the sound hole, his nose and his respiration; the tail-piece, his mouth and his teeth; the strings, eight in number, his words. It is also the image of his tomb, and the two rods that cross it represent the second and third ancestors who accompanied him in death. The frame also represents the face of the seer and his tomb, the two rods being the two millet stalks put in the ground with the cadaver. At the end of the handle, copper bells have the same role, technical and religious at the same time, as those attached to the apron on the drum described above.

534 Each sound given by each of the eight strings is a prayer.
787 The seer plucks the strings separately, following their rank and according to the importance of the questioner and of the questions he

534 787 asks: modè (grandson) for unimportant subjects, hunting, voyages; fadê (son of the father) for individual life, physical and moral; fa (father) for the future, destiny, the public life of a man, his authority, his rule; fakoroke (father's older brother) for the plantings, the rains, for fortune; fa dogone (father's younger brother) for germination of the cereals; ba (mother) for everything concerning the women; [107] faso (father's house) for everything concerning the familial abode or the absent.

534 The principal efficacy of the harp is in bringing order, by the rhythms and sounds emanating from it, to all that is troubled in the march of events.

The harp presides at sacrifices, at cathartic or medical rites, at purifications, at apotropaic rites, at solitary meditations. Its high notes are celestial and symbolic of completeness; the low notes connote terrestrial things and incompleteness. Its playing commands arrivals and departures, proliferations and diminutions, calls to order; its presence at the edge of a pool, where it had been silently placed, is assurance of appeasement.

The harpist, before beginning his service, puts his mouth to 788 the orifice in the frame and murmurs to the master of the Word: "Now it is your turn, organize the world." (1)

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1. Passim, Griaule, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the Africain Arts].

533 534 Music, dance, and song are intimately linked in the religious movement. Thus it is that a djo of the Samaké (Bougouni circle) is composed entirely of musicians who form an orchestra in which the whole scale is represented by eight different principal instruments, which are types of a multitude of others. There is one n'ganian-ba, an instrument made by hollowing out a trough in a tree trunk, which gives a very deep sound when rubbed; it is the bass which gives the cadence. Two to three tiorõ give a sharper sound; four to six tioun, a still sharper sound, and there are as many as ten fere, the instrument 533 with the sharpest sound. Finally, a host of N'ganian dyeli begin the 292 music as the griot quiets the crowd at the start. All these instruments have the form of a pirogue. In addition, the orchestra includes two singers and two dancers. Everyone wears masks, bonnets with crests

821 whitened the front of his dwelling with a mixture of millet flour and
131 water that had been offered to the shades of his ancestors, and poured chicken blood here and there; then he thought it best to meet in
782 council and consult his sorcerers. The same orders were given every-
825 where: a potentate, perhaps a prince, doubtless of the caterpillar people, was celebrating his wedding and respects must be paid to him. All the pagan villages did so, and the marriage of the caterpillars took place one fine morning at daybreak. Two or three caterpillars were placed at the bottom of old worn-out gourds and carried far up a path on the west side and out of the village by a procession of women and girls, singing and dancing, and preceded by furiously beating drums. They placed the little creatures on a spot determined by the elders and, after a wild dance they made their farewells, foolish farewells, stupid perhaps and yet nevertheless touching. For if the young people called to them with a long burst of laughter: "I na somaon fo (you will greet your people)," and some old shrews in a tone of command cried: "Ta so! (Go home!)," there were more who said to them: "Toumouni (little caterpillar), an bi déli (we implore you) have pity on us, go back now to your kingdoms; everything is eaten, and there is nothing left. Go, bring greetings to the people of your family, greet them all and greet them well."

They continued to come through for at least eight days, but their number decreased and a storm came and swept them away. Every Bambara will tell you that these caterpillars do not talk, that they have no soul. And yet if you try to make him understand that he has rendered them futile, useless, childish honors and that they could neither enjoy his music and songs nor understand his prayers and supplications, he will shrug his shoulders: "Tigné o (you are right)," he will tell you with a mocking air, and cutting your talk short will add: "Ou tara!", and one who knows the Bambara will guess the full implication: "Nevertheless, they left."

In August, 1908 a large part of the population of the villages
825 located in the environs of Ségou spent the day of Friday the twenty-
787 eighth in sweet idleness. Since I knew that a Kono fetish brought by its masters to recruit initiates was going from village /15/ to

825 village, I thought at first that here lay the reason for this rest, extraordinary
181 during the time of the most intensive hoeing. Not at all; the
pagan Bambara were resting, and the women were giving their husbands
[262] and children dégé (millet flour mixed with milk and honey
water) in obedience to a hyena's command. The hyena, it was said
-- and all the sorcerers confirmed this -- had emerged from its dumbness,
its tongue had been loosed, and it had predicted to the people
of the west that a plague even more terrible than that of the caterpillars
would descend on the country. Only one means to avert it
remained: to refrain from going to the fields on Friday and to treat
themselves to dégé, the food so dear to Moslems.

482 On my excursions I have often met men and women carrying
757 on their heads a gourd or a basket containing a handful of leaves or
824 some bundles of roots, and apart from the customary greetings it
784 has been impossible for me to get a word out of them. And why this
silence? They were carrying a medicinal plant, a remedy which
would lose all its virtue and all its efficacy if they conversed on the
way, and they had to take care not to trample such-and-such a plant
that grew on the edge of the path.

757 The Bambara quite readily names the plants and herbs whose
753 curative powers are known to him, and yet in the presence of a sick
784 person he will very seldom give you the name of the remedy the
latter is taking, or the names of the roots and leaves that make up
his poultices. Sickness, he believes is a force, a power which tortures
our bodies. He is afraid that in naming the remedy he would provide
this power with a weapon against its healing virtue, which is
another force or power. He sets the second power against the first
to make it leave.

811 It is evident that he attributes bits of reason and emotion to
784 everything, that he attributes human feelings to all that is animate
and inanimate. The "taboos" are not merely one piece of evidence
of this, they are an irrefutable proof of this attitude.

784 lineages, they usually abandon such a taboo as soon as they leave the village, and if, because of the habit they have acquired they abide by it until their death, their children give it up.

Carrying his organization into the world of invisible beings, the Bambara endows the latter also with *tné*, or *taboos*, and make these his own. Not only are the sacred woods taboo, together with all they contain, but there are also ways of acting and behaving which displease the spirits, and some animals have the capability of making them angry. When a woman comes back from the forest with her fagot of wood on her head, she must unbind it before entering the village or do so on the public square. In some places shoes are removed at the door of the entrance hut, or *b'lon* through which the village is entered; elsewhere the people take off their caps; and no one ever whistles in the lanes without incurring the hatred of the invisible beings. Partridges, which are numerous in the fields around the walls, must never get into the village except dead and plucked, and children who catch them in their nets never break this custom. ●[787] If by mischance a partridge flies across the village and cackles in passing, all the population is in turmoil, and for three nights thereafter men, women, and children sleep under the stars. Often, /25/ depending on the oracles of the sorcerer, they even leave their homes and build them again a short distance away.

776 784 778 The genii called *boli* are the terror of women, children, and the uninitiated, who cannot touch any object used in the ritual and who may not enter their sacred woods and their sanctuaries. The *boli* (1) have *tné*, which are taboo for their owners and those that sacrifice to them, and which sometimes also become taboo for their children. One of the strangest is the *tné* or taboo of the *Bara*, which is millet beer, or *d'lo*. Its owner and the person sacrificing to him must avoid drinking beer if possible, and if the habit is too established

1. The term *boli* denotes any evil fetish, and hence any object used by an evil spirit or demon as his dwelling. See Chap. VII, 1.

778 791 comparisons with themselves, they have thought that certain individuals could also create understandings in the world of spirits, and thus become the spirits' equals and even command them and make them obey. They firmly believe that such is the case, and although there are many sorcerers, there are still more people who maneuver to attain this position. Possession of the occult sciences cannot be acquired by anyone who wishes, however. The diploma or certificate of competence, cannot be obtained without swallowing certain mixtures of ashes, intestines, and blood, and certain repulsive eyewashes, such as the rheum from dogs' eyes, must be slid under the eyelids in order to see the invisible beings. In addition, unless a man is initiated by his father or brother, he must expect to pay a goodly sum. This is an art that pays, and generously! Every aspirant must also have a good memory in order to engrave in his mind the formulas, gestures, and rites; only the intelligent succeed.

791 ● 787 The competence of sorcerers is far from equal, nor do they proceed in an identical manner. Some read the future and discover secrets in the entrails of hens; others play with knuckle bones, pebbles, or cowrie shells (1) which they throw on the ground and count and recount, or trace cabalistic signs on scattered ashes, moving the forefinger back and forth, as in a game of Goose /a game played with dice on a board/. Some work with a gourd three quarters full of water, which they set on a *n'gô* (a kind of napkin ring or bracelet made of braided roots) washed frequently in the blood of /sacrificial/ victims. This procedure is the least complicated. The gourd is tipped right and left, forward and backward, until it sits firmly on the *n'gô* and can no longer be moved without carrying the stand along. Then the operator need only flick it three times with the middle finger of the right hand while stating the petitions..., and the spirit will answer in a soft murmur which those present can hear, but which he alone
791 understands. In a word, the /35/ good sorcerer stands out above the

[436] 1. /Torn page/ white /shells/ used as money.

774 the French a phantom. It may be regarded as a kind of fluid, having some degree of consciousness and capable of escaping from the animate or inanimate object to which it belongs, without becoming completely separated from it, and giving that object a shadow, bearing its external form and outline, as well as the imprint of the fear, sorrow, joy, and sadness which may be reflected on a person's face. A dja may also escape and separate and detach itself completely, but nevertheless retain the external form of the object which it left. When a dja leaves its object, it stays in the neighborhood or goes wandering far off, and the being that it has left sees this double or merely feels it, or may even be unconscious of its existence.

774 828 For the Bambara, a dream is not a product of the imagination; it is a reality. They say that while they are asleep their dja sometimes escape and wander far away, and there they actually see and chat with friends, attend real feasts on real drinking bouts. A person is not surprised to awaken after such a dream with a dry throat and an empty stomach, for what he saw, drank, and ate were the dja of things and people, nothing more tenuous or imponderable, and only his dja saw, drank, ate, and enjoyed himself.

•787 A dream is quite a deceiver, and its external realization is unusual, but it does sometimes occur. Certain Negroes are famous because they know how to interpret dreams, a knowledge not available to everyone, or again because they know how to dream and prophesy /43/ the more or less immediate future. They have a booth which is fairly well patronized; people consulted them and bring them cowrie shells. There are even people who run and tell them about every interesting story they dream, and since these people take precautions afterward not to miss some predicted piece of luck or to avoid a misfortune that threatens, they are aided in the realization of their dreams without suspecting it, and these results constribute not a little toward fortifying their false beliefs. /44/

754 all functions to some degree, and it is to his own advantage to be con-
674 tent, in such an instance, with the position of solicitor; to whoever
/52/ consults him, he indicates a celebrated fetish in the hands of one
of his friends. The Bambara runs there without delay, and the master
of the fetish, generously and heavily paid, takes the god out of its
[778] dirty goatskin. Onto one of its instruments (for a boli is manifold, and
horns of cattle and antelopes, varnished with blood and brownish in
color, are mingled with other objects in the shape of an eggplant, a
turnip, a beetroot, a napkin ring, horse dung, etc., etc.), onto the
sirikoun, which is almost always wrapped in a red shirt front, he ties
firmly with a cotton thread seven straws five to seven centimeters
long. The petitioner explains his visit, names the enemy on whom
he wants to take vengeance, gives the reasons that compel him, and
the master of the fetish recites his formulas, reddens his sirikoun with
blood, and plasters onto its sides some spittle containing chewed kola
nut.

754 If the sacrificial hen dies with spread wings and breast on the
674 ground and if when split in half the kola nut falls with the pulp down
•787 and the round side up, the contemplated revenge is put off until later,
for it is believed that the sacrifice has not been accepted. Our
Bambara then goes away, relieved of a hen, two kola nuts, and at
least 160 cauri, but nowise defeated; eight or ten days later he returns
to the charge, unless he is too impatient to wait and consults a new
sorcerer, who gives him orders to appeal to a fetish that shows a greater
interest and has a more enterprising and less timid disposition.

If the hen dies on its side or on its back with its feet in the air,
and if the pieces of kola nut fall on the round side with the pulp on
top, the sacrifice is accepted, and this is the god's answer to the
effect that he is taking his client's side. The enemy is thenceforth
754 placed under the boli a blara boli koro, the sanctioned expression;
674 he is placed under the avenging power of the fetish and is in its hands,
278 and the master of the idol, the sacrificer, and the people in his retinue
plot to make him disappear at once. They undertake the task them-
selves as seldom as possible, however; they prescribe sacrifices and
offerings to the client and give him a deer horn carefully tied up,
telling him how to use it. This deer horn is nothing less than a horn

000 I will speak at greater length in my chapter on circumcision.

776 Although the individual worship of the lesser genii by one per- 782 son or family is seldom public -- except sometimes temporarily, it nonetheless involves an enormous waste of /millet/ flour, kola nuts, cotton, cowrie shells, etc. Nevertheless, there are very few sacrifices in these offerings; most frequently, if not always, they are saraka, or alms, and a kind of tax or tribute since they are obligatory.

782 They are, in fact, obligatory alms, paid by an individual, a 191 family, or a whole quarter of a village, upon the command of a sorcerer. Some sorcerers who have renown or want to acquire it manage to prescribe these taxes for an entire village and, sometimes, even for a whole region. The occurence is not unusual; I have seen it happen every year. A shrewd operator from Bélé Koun in the circle of Sikasso, crosses the Bani in every dry season, and there is not a village in the circle of Ségou but feels called upon to hand hens and cowrie shells over to him and, in addition, afterwards to take a large contribution to one of the nearby crossroads. In spite of his youth -- [787] he is twenty-five or thirty at most -- he is said to learn everything by searching hens' entrails and crushing their viscera between his fingers. He makes profit by predicting terrible calamities everywhere. All his knowledge is summed up in the following words: "The genii are displeased, offer a saraka and offer it quickly, for if you do not, all children under three years old will die... goats, cows, horses, and sheep will die... springs will dry up... the karité butter will fail..., etc." In one place the words are those of a hyena, in another, those of a cow, and farther away it is a wild pig that speaks. And the dégé (/millet/ flour mixed with water) is spread and the blood of hens flows in streams. In short, the people are always expected to give to the fetishes and the sorcerers, and to give everything. Some occasionally balk and do not want to obey. The orders of the sorcerer become urgent, his prophesies more terrible than ever; at the end of his patience, he may spit out insults and /107/ curses, and then everyone comes to offer the saraka. Even Moslems let themselves be taken in.

782 In Bambara eyes, the saraka never has the character of a sacrifice. As I explained at length in speaking of the worship of God, it is always

621 793 555 The palavers and deliberations are long, but the choice is a happy one; the old man chosen as gnéna-n-sonnaba always has the slyness and guile characteristic of the Bambara type. Patient and likeable, he will know how to be just and impartial in disputes, diplomatic and sufficiently master of himself to say only what he intends to. He will know how to acquire the reputation of an upright man who does not know theft or falsehood.

621 793 Elected for life to hold both civil and religious power, he is truly the head of the village, the dougoutigi. His position is hereditary; it passes from brother to brother and, when there are none, goes by right to his oldest son. The one who is to succeed him becomes his aide (siéré), and the heads of families (gouatigi-ou) compose his council; they are always summoned when a question is to be handled or a decision made.

The Choice of the dasiri fetish and its sacred mount

776 778 787 The new village has a head, his aide, and its council; it is organized. Now they must find out the whereabouts of the spring, rock, or tree where lives the protecting spirit, the dougou dasiri (1), who fastens the entrance to the village and watches over it. For this knowledge the people appeal to a sorcerer; he has intimate contact with the spirits, knows their ways and customs, and understands their language.

There are many sorcerers, and they do not all work in the same way. One discovers his oracles in the entrails of a hen, a second traces cabalistic signs on ashes, a third endlessly moves little stones, bones, and cowrie shells, counting them again and again. To locate the dasiri, people have recourse to the flélikéla (2) diviner, who

1. Dougou dasiri: /dougou/, "village"; da, "mouth," "entrance"; siri, "bind."

2. Fléliké, "to look attentively, curiously."

776 works with a gourd three quarters full of water.

778 When he has received his honorarium of 40 cowrie shells, which
he takes in both hands, he places beside him in the dust his little
787 /117/ gift, consisting of two kola nuts, a few hens, or better, a small
billy goat. He asks about the place chosen for the new village and has it described to him down to the smallest detail. Then he takes down a dirty n'go (1) on which he places a gourd which he tips slowly right and left, forward and backward, to give it a firm position on its stand. Having done this, he sums up for the spirits the conversation which he has had, and then, with eyes afire and holding his breath, he gives the gourd three flicks with the middle finger of his right hand. They say that a soft murmur, a murmur which is none other than the voices of the genii, is noticed by all present. They hear without understanding, but the sorcerer knows these voices and when he rises it is with a tone of authority that he names the dasiri and the animal which will be its mount.

In the province of Ségou the dasiri is a tree; the tamarind, the false cedar, and the baobab are the preferred trees. The sacred mount, also called dasiri, is a snake, an iguana, a rat, a donkey, etc., but most frequently it is a billy goat.

778
621 Enthronement of the gnéna-n-sonnaba, priest of the dasiri and dougoutigi, head of the village

Our Blacks establish the new village and build their huts. Near the fetish tree each family sets up its mortars for grinding sorghum, places its hearths, and installs its kitchens. Bows, guns, and farming implements are hung on the branches of the dasiri, and while the work of settling continues, meals are eaten and dances held in its shade, and in the evening when the moon is shining it is near the tree that they finally stretch out to sleep.

1. A ring made of braided roots bound with cotton thread, which is covered with a thick layer of blood.

782 gné-foula (3), and from the wokolo, a little dwarf genie. He then asks for strength and health for all, for children who will be healthy, strong, and vigorous, and for wives. "Preserve us," he adds in closing, "from wicked people, discord, quarrels, and fights, from the rage of women who easily fall under the power of 'satan,' and from sickness; finally, give us rain, without which a harvest is not possible." Then he cuts the throat of a goat or a white sheep, and while he reddens the bark of the sacred tree with blood, he repeats his pleas and requests, and he says them again a third time while offering the kola nut.

At individual sacrifices nothing in the formula is changed. However, if the person on whose behalf the sacrifice is offered wants a special blessing or favor, he tells the sacrificer about it, and the latter states the request then and there. /121/

When the head of a family cannot be present at a sacrifice, his substitute gives the reason for his absence. Two witnesses then come to testify that the reason given is the true one and that there is no ill will whatever on the part of the absentee.

Sometimes a great clamor arises during the sacrifice, and one would say that people were fighting under the sacred tree, or at least arguing.

782 781 Nothing of the sort is happening; the crowd is crying out against the fetish and interceding for an unfortunate whose sacrifice has not been accepted. It is known that this has happened when the hen does not fall on its back or its side with its feet in the air. The kola nut gives the genie's answer much more definitely. The sacrificer cuts it in two, holds the two pieces together between thumb and forefinger, and having touched the ground with them twice saying, "Tell us if you accept the sacrifice," he throws them at the foot of the sacred tree. If the two pieces fall with the pulp on top, no further doubt is possible; the sacrifice is accepted, and he repeats the same procedure again, saying, "Since you accept the sacrifice, tell us if

3. "Two eyes," i.e., people with second sight.

782 787 you accept it at my hands." If one of the pieces falls with the pulp on top and the other onto the pulp, there is an affirmative answer from the *dasiri*. The sacrificer bites the kola nut, cuts out with his teeth the piece that contains the seed, and, when he has chewed it a moment, spits the remains onto the bark of the fetish tree.

This procedure, wholly dependent on chance, is often long, for the pieces of kola nut do not always fall in the desired position at the first try. After three failures the crowd ceases to restrain itself and, with gestures and voice, each person intercedes for the unfortunate one. The cries do not stop until the kola nut gives the answer, "I accept and am no longer angry!"

The Semioccult Society of the *Koré*, or *Koté*

794 241 [461] The Bambara are, above all, farmers, and cultivating a field has such great importance in their eyes that for them it alone really deserves the name of work. One who does not handle the pick may be active and skillful, but he is not a worker and one does not say of him: "*A bi ajaké*, he is working." But will the seed that /122/ they consign to the earth in the winter sprout, grow, become large, and ripen? However little one knows the Bambara, one can imagine and understand their fears, for they are surrounded by a band of malicious spirits ever ready to pounce on them. Therefore they heed protectors and helpers, and at planting time they offer something to all, even to the rain. The main fetish to which they appeal is the *koté*, or *koré*, which lives in a tree in the middle of a small grove.

794 796 534 In order to be present at the sacrifices to the *koté*, it is necessary to be initiated and to know the password. This initiation, may take place by day, but at least in Bani country, it usually takes place at nightfall when the setting sun takes on a bloody hue. The sons of the genie go in procession to the sacred grove. The *korétigi*, the priest, opens the march, preceded by musicians who beat the *denouba* (1) and the *kingé* (2). With him are the *kâra ma* ("man of

304 seven years and has a strictly religious character (5). The gnéna-sonnaba, surrounded by his council, the gouatigi, sacrifices to the dasiri; a hen is offered to the shades of the ancestors, the family boli are /173/ taken out of their dirty skins and sprinkled with blood, and all the village makes merry. People go in procession to the place 304 where the blacksmith tattooer is, and as long as the operation lasts 533 the women clap their hands, marking time for the blacksmith, who sings as he operates, and together they join in the chorus.

The tattoo, the chief distinctive mark of the people, is made 304 with a knife having one or two blades. The two-bladed knife cer- 413 tainly makes a tattoo which stands out more and has more detail, but it also requires more skill on the part of the operator, and, doubtless for this reason, it is relatively unusual.

At present a great many Bambara no longer wear the mark of 314 their tribe on their cheeks. The Moslems have contributed greatly to the abolition of this painful practice. Before the arrival of Europeans, under the reigns of Ahmadou and Madani, very severe punishments were inflicted on anyone who tattooed himself or had his children tattooed. One should not think, however, that tattooing was ever a [187] strict and unqualified requirement; in this connection everything is entrusted to the decision of diviners and sorcerers, of djiné, or gnéna, genii, and especially of the family boli, which are consulted and sacrificed to in order to find out whether or not it is necessary to wear the marks of the tribe. Thus it is not unusual to find that some members of a family are tattooed and others are not, and that those who are not tattooed have their children tattooed, while the tattooed refrain from doing so. This ceremony is carried out every seven years, and the head of the family may be away when the blacksmith tattooer comes by, so that the sacrifices do not take place, and the tattooing of the children is put off until seven years later. When they have

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5. This ceremony takes place only once every seven years. The girls are always fairly big when their chests are tattooed.

584 sterile? And if he should be one of those sensualists so numerous
593 among us, and, bored after having enjoyed her, should drive her away
and reject her?" He trembles and wants to know what the future holds
both for him and for her, and goes to consult the diviners.

Two and often three diviners are consulted. If they all agree in
584 testifying that the suitor is of good character, that divorce is not to
593 be feared, and that the child will become the mother of healthy, strong,
787 and vigorous children who will perpetuate her people and her blood,
he finds joy again. He tells the verdict to both his wife and his
daughter, he imparts his decision to the head of the village and the
council of elders, and /202/ without any delay, freed as he is from
all fear, he notifies the suitor that the doors of his home are open
to him.

At this announcement the suitor chooses a fat hen from his hen
584 house, takes one or two kola nuts from his store, and again the
787 fourouboloma tigi, the guardian of the wedding gifts, starts on his way,
for this time he must find out whether the family boli, and sometimes
the shades of its ancestors, are opposed to the proposed union (1).

1. If some occurrence later causes the engagement to be broken, or if there is a marriage followed by divorce, it does not enter his mind that the diviners were mistaken. The whole responsibility falls on the head of an enemy, who through hatred or jealousy has found a way to disrupt everything. It is almost always someone unknown, which is fortunate.

584 The father of the little girl takes down his goatskin, or often the
skin of a wild animal, a frightful, dirty foroko, the tabernacle of the
787 family boli; he sprinkles them with the blood of the hen and then spits
178 a piece of chewed kola nut on them. If he does not have family boli
-- an unusual situation -- he sacrifices to his ancestors on the doorsill
of the entry hut, or b'lon, and on the kârâ, if he owns one.

584 A kârâ is an earthern bas-relief inside the b'lon, or entry hut, which
787 very crudely depicts a woman and a man and is used as an altar.

118 When the sacrifice is accepted -- that is, if the feathered biped has the fortunate idea of not dying with its wings spread and its breast on the ground, and if the pieces of kola nut, cut in two, which are thrown on the boli or the kârâ, fall with the rounded part on the ground and the pulp on top (2) -- there is an unequivocal "yes" on the part of the family, and all hearts rejoice. As to the fourouboloma tigi, he delightedly sucks his piece of kola nut, he savors his piece of the hen, and the scene of the sacrifice is far from his memory. Yet he trembled when, crouched before his boli or the kârâ, altar of his ancestors, the father-in-law cut the throat of the victim and threw down the kola nut, saying in a solemn and cavernous voice: "We have consulted the diviners, and they all agree in praising the suitor; if they are to be believed, he is worthy of our daughter. But you, what do you think of this union? If it is to be /203/ happy, if divorce is not to be feared, if it is to be fertile, accept my sacrifice, I pray you. In that case, grant them wealth, long life, many children, and peace. This hen and the kolas are indeed for the sacrifice, and it is a true sacrifice which the suitor offers you through my mediation."

This manner of accepting or rejecting a suitor is most ingenious! Since everything is referred to the decision of the diviners, the boli, and the shades of ancestors, any dispute on the part of a rejected man is impossible, no quarrel arises between the two families, and when a more fortunate suitor obtains the little girl's hand, he need not fear the hate, rancor, or vengeance of his predecessor for he has nothing to do with the latter's misfortune.

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2. A procedure which is repeated up to three times in case of failure.

754 [755] designed to neutralize the effects of the *korti*. It was a *kana* that father Niany used against the snake bites (2).

2. See above, pp. 157-159.

A third category of magic weapons is that of the *siri-kun'* or "knots." Though not itself a genie, the *siri-kun'* is at least dependent on a genie, and it is by addressing a vow or an oath to the genie that one succeeds in obtaining revenge or avoiding the vengeance of another.

As its name would suggest, the *siri-kun'* is something that binds, that is, something that forces or paralyzes. It receives the obligations undertaken and sworn to by individuals in its presence and it will punish perjury. It renders helpless and paralyzes anyone against whom its intervention has been asked.

I have myself seen Bambara clutching a few bits of straw when they came to me to settle some lawsuit or other. They were following instructions and trying to make me submit to the *siri-kun'*, that is, to paralyze my capacity to take action against them (3).

3. The chronicle of Ségou tells of a similar action by Ngolo against Mamari (see p. 53).

All these dealings in criminal magic are performed in an atmosphere of the most disconcerting trickery and hypocrisy; often the most fawning neighbors are the most to be feared. That is why a Bambara [152] likes to have the assurance of a "powerful protector" (*dyigi seme*). He seeks him and often thinks that he has found him in the brotherhood of one of those all-powerful genii of which we shall have occasion to speak.

788 *Rites*. There is no magic without appropriate rites, which must be strictly observed. Any negligence makes the operation useless, even dangerous, for the performer. We saw how the initiator who went to sleep while awaiting the return of the spirit he had invoked was promptly killed by the spirit

788 as it returned to its point of departure. This was presumably because the operator had not done what was necessary to assure the reintegration of the supernatural power.

[778] There are thus rites that set in motion this universal energy, whether diffuse or personified -- rites that channel, direct and orientate this energy so that not only it will reach the goal sought, but also it will be kept from straying from the desired route, thus harming the very person it is supposed to aid. Similar means are used to forestall the misdeeds which may be committed by an agent mistakenly invoked. When Ngolo had aroused his son Ntyi's ambition, he thought he could conjure away its effects by sacrificing his two grandsons, Ntyi's own children.

Those actions that call upon, guide and reintegrate this universal energy, whether diffuse or personified, are what we call rites.

788 754 During the oath using kola, the operator has in his hand a sharp object (pin, thorn, etc.) with which he pricks or stabs through the nut, saying, for instance: "Take my heart and my liver and kill me, if...." (i ka ne son' ni m bien' ta, ni ...). These pricks indicate to the "power" with which the operator is concerned that, if necessary, it should take vengeance by piercing the guilty person, just as the kola is pierced by the pin (1).

1. The shirt sent by Ma-n-son to Forokoro was first pricked with a needle (p. 120).

In curses, all the imprecations used are so many indications, indeed sometimes instructions (2), as to how the [153] spirit invoked is requested to act.

[575] 2. At the time of admission to the brotherhoods, the most frightful threats are made against the traitor or perjuror in the form of curses indicating to the avenging spirit how he should punish: "may it enter through your anus and come out through your mouth, etc."

778
789 emanating from the person or object impregnated with magic
force acts as if it were a part of that person or object. Often
[788] the magician or [154] ritual officiant spits on the person or
object involved in the rites. This is a means of transferring
one person's fluid to another.

Conversely, it is vital to know how to avoid contact
751 with, or even emanations from, a maleficent magic force.
789 That is the reason for the great number of mysterious magic
754 practices and the secret of the innumerable amulets that form
so many shields, to be placed presumably where they will best
protect against any blow. Therefore it is the magician's
prerogative to make amulets and to prescribe the conduct
necessary to preserve their efficacy.

It should be noted that protection set up against a given person is good only for him and is useless against a successor, for instance. The chronicle tells us that Bani, chief of Samba-Nyana, was successful in using certain artifices to prevent Ma-n-son from conquering him. But, kept in ignorance of Ma-n-son's death and having taken no precautions against Da, Ma-n-son's son and successor, Bani was conquered by Da, against whom his artifices availed nothing.

If one is caught in spite of precautions, what is to be done? Everyone is afflicted in one way or another in any event. A Bambara is always inclined to believe in some sort of supernatural intervention. He has on hand some sort of remedy, but more often he resorts to a "seer" for guidance or, if the case requires, to a magician's skill.

Native medicine is a mass of magic formulas and of remedies strikingly reminiscent of the pharmacopeia of the Middle Ages (see, in the foregoing, father Niany's operations).

[571] The individual does not live as an isolated unit but
789 rather as an integral part of a community. In the society in
which he lives, however restricted it may be, he progressively
783 occupies various situations. On both physical and moral levels,
he undergoes changes and, depending on circumstances, whether
fortunate or unfortunate happenings, changes take place within
him. In short, his magic potential varies. These variations
are always believed to concern the entire milieu, upon which
they may (in the case of illness or death) have disastrous effects.

789 783 The individual is therefore required to [155] undergo proper
treatment to return him to his normal, harmless state.

789 From this point of view, social life seems to give rise
to a series of rites involving the disintegration and reintegra-
788 tion or the aggregation of the individual in relation to the group
182 in which he lives. Birth, circumcision, marriage, illness,
death and the performance of certain trades are all modes of existence, whose beginning and end usually involve three stages: separation from the common milieu, accomplishment of the act, and reintegration into the former milieu or aggregation in a new milieu. Between the first and the second state as well as between the third and the fourth there exists usually a kind of negative interval which we call marginal. This system, which comes to light upon an analysis of multiple facts, is actually subject to modifications or alterations which can change its physiognomy. Nevertheless, the basis of these ritual sequences is so well established that by comparing external manifestations with the theoretical system it is possible to understand them better and to restore to some of them, which have become badly mutilated, their real meaning, which the native is usually, if not always, unable to explain or to define precisely.

A detailed study of institutions will give an opportunity for concrete analysis of these ritual sequences, which a kind of age-old empiricism has transformed into laws of a sort. They have come to represent that part of custom which has acquired a kind of permanence by virtue of public acceptance.

It is apparent everywhere among the Blacks that events of a general character (birth, coming-of-age, marriage, illness and death) are surrounded by ritual practices that vary outwardly from place to place but may all fit our theoretical system of three stages with marginal periods. All denote a common basis of magic and all derive from a long-tried empiricism which has given them a peculiar and relatively stable physiognomy in terms of the milieu with which the rites are connected.

571 What we have just said about individuals must also ap-
182 ply to collective groups: the latter deal with each other or

769 participate in men's lives, protect them, and make their fields
775 fertile. The farming tools are presented at their altars before the tillage, and every year their souls come to animate the maskers who dance in their honor under the supervision of the Komo. After the grain is threshed, they receive the first products and are offered sacrifices.

h. Other Rites

788 Besides the rites concerning the person, the Bambara have others, such as those relating to the household wastes where the forces of men are accumulated. The purpose of these rites is to offer these forces to Faro and to regenerate and purify men. The wastes are burned periodically, the men breathe in the fumes, and the ashes are thrown in the river. Sacrifices are offered to the god, and special dances accompany the ceremony.

Rain rites common to all of Africa are practiced in May by
796 the members of the *Kworé* society. The rites for renewing the year involve individual, familial, and collective participation. The signs of the world are traced on the walls of individual or collective sanctuaries, and by the intermediary of a sacrifice on the altars, by dances and rhythmic chants, man renews the cardinal points and the forces of the world which in turn renew his soul. (All these rites have been described by G. Dieterlen in the *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].

B. Special Technique In General Usage

773 In Bambara thought, "every technique is a reparation taught man by Faro, a palliative to the cosmic disorder which is generally caused by an infraction of taboo ... Men first lived by gathering their food, then later by fishing and hunting; they used only their hands. Little by little the techniques appeared, following a chronology remembered by the Bambara of today. The first material to be used was the fiber of the *nyama* tree frond which were made the first fishing nets, the first sling, the first covering for the sexual parts." (1) The second material was wood from which the farming

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1. G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].

534 787 asks: modè (grandson) for unimportant subjects, hunting, voyages; fadè (son of the father) for individual life, physical and moral; fa (father) for the future, destiny, the public life of a man, his authority, his rule; fakoroke (father's older brother) for the plantings, the rains, for fortune; fa dogone (father's younger brother) for germination of the cereals; ba (mother) for everything concerning the women; [107] faso (father's house) for everything concerning the familial abode or the absent.

534 The principal efficacy of the harp is in bringing order, by the rhythms and sounds emanating from it, to all that is troubled in the march of events.

The harp presides at sacrifices, at cathartic or medical rites, at purifications, at apotropaic rites, at solitary meditations. Its high notes are celestial and symbolic of completeness; the low notes connote terrestrial things and incompleteness. Its playing commands arrivals and departures, proliferations and diminutions, calls to order; its presence at the edge of a pool, where it had been silently placed, is assurance of appeasement.

The harpist, before beginning his service, puts his mouth to [788] the orifice in the frame and murmurs to the master of the Word: "Now it is your turn, organize the world." (1)

1. Passim, Griaule, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the Africain Arts].

533 534 Music, dance, and song are intimately linked in the religious movement. Thus it is that a djo of the Samakè (Bougouni circle) is composed entirely of musicians who form an orchestra in which the whole scale is represented by eight different principal instruments, which are types of a multitude of others. There is one n'ganian-ba, an instrument made by hollowing out a trough in a tree trunk, which gives a very deep sound when rubbed; it is the bass which gives the cadence. Two to three tiorō give a sharper sound; four to six tioun, a still sharper sound, and there are as many as ten fere, the instrument 533 with the sharpest sound. Finally, a host of N'ganian dyeli begin the 292 music as the griot quiets the crowd at the start. All these instruments have the form of a pirogue. In addition, the orchestra includes two singers and two dancers. Everyone wears ~~masks~~, bonnets with crests

776

1. To understand this belief of the Negro, read the chapter on sickness and death.

The most famous and terrible of all these invisible little beings of the bush, who are without official minister or priest but to whom many offerings nevertheless are made, is the wokolo. It is black as soot, with a skin like a monkey's, and no larger than an infant of one or two months. It likes to appear, and one can say that no Negro reaches thirty without having seen it. Although sometimes during the most severe heat or in the evening by the light of the moon, it runs along the banks of the river, throwing into the stream its tiny line, almost invisible and finer than a hair, it prefers the bush and the butter tree; the karité (Bassia parkii) is its prime favorite. With quiver slung over its shoulder and bow always strung, it lies in wait, and woe betide anyone who comes by and disturbs it. To defeat it and force it to beat a retreat, the one who comes upon it must greet it as soon as he sees it, but usually it is invisible and shoots him with its arrow, an arrow so small that he does not even feel it penetrate the flesh. It is this [753] arrow that causes the deep pussy abscesses (2) from which our Negroes suffer.

2. Like all superstitious and weak-minded people, the Negro believes that he has actually seen what are but imaginary dreams and wishes.

Many of these invisible beings have no name. The least sociable are those that live in the false cedars, for to subdue them /87/ one must be a noumou (blacksmith), a koulé (digger of canoes, mender of gourds), etc. Only such persons dare to deal the first stroke of the ax to these trees and cut them down (1).

● [788]

1. Before doing so they recite a formula, and the first stroke of the ax is dealt by the chief of the blacksmiths, etc., or his deputy.

773 points them out successively with his finger, 524 saying: "cross the pond" (*ko tike sumangolo*), "cross the river" (*ba tike sumangolo*), "Soumangolo's descent is over" (*sumangolo yigi bana*). The partner removes the pebble immediately adjacent to the branch pointed to and asks: "Is this it?" (*nin wa?*). The Λ player must answer: "Yes! Soumangolo." The game is again taken up in the same way at the starting point. When the onlooker places his finger on the now empty space, he asks: "Is this it?". The player must answer: "No! Soumangolo." The second pebble is removed and, to the same question, the player must then answer: "Yes! Soumangolo." Then follows the same chant, the same mimicry to get at the third pebble, which is also removed. The game is started over again in the same way, at the same starting point, and the second branch of the cross is reached. This continues until the four groups of pebbles placed in the angles are eliminated. The player who has answered without making a mistake is the winner; supposedly he has victoriously crossed "the twelve future waters."

The immediate effect of this game is to place the winner in a favorable position: his earnings increase; his enterprises succeed. But this is not all: it represents a cosmogonic operation of a high order. In the old days, *sumangolo* was ● [789] played to bring about rain in times of drought; every person playing it today contributes to the actual functioning of the universe as well as to the realization of future times awaited by men. In certain villages the ancestor Soumangolo is [796] celebrated yearly by a hearty feast at which millet beer is drunk and all day long the villagers play the game bearing his name.

The *sumangolo* is part of a series of figures, sometimes geometrical, which serve as the base for cosmogonic games of semi-ritual character such as the one described above.

826 828 [827] taboo by cutting its buds (see p. 43). The altars of the fields and of agricultural societies, to, watch over the "head of the millet."

/66/ and purified in order to maintain his health and prosperity. It is the seat of consciousness and will, and receives a share of the scarifications made at birth, which will exercise influence on the person.

826 Hair contains an important part of the individual's ni. It is therefore dangerous to mix it with the hair of another, for that would create a vital and indissoluble bond between the two parties. To burn it is equivalent to making an attempt on one's own life. It is buried or placed in a deep hole in the wall of the house for protection (1).

Hair and the pilose system play a part in the myth and were used to count the age of primitive men until the advent of death on earth. All the ancestors represented in the sanctuaries are bearded and hairy. Their appearance shows that, having become mortal, they lived at a time when rejuvenation no longer existed.

826 827 The pupil is the fundamental part of the eye. Its name, nyemani, "little person of the eye" (2), expresses its function. The pupil reflects and absorbs the person it sees. The image is a kind of double,

[832 789] ● 1. Many charms and magic spells are based on hair. In order to be loved by a woman, a man must mix some of her hair with his and place it under his head at night with a prayer. In order to keep his job, an employee does the same with his hair and that of his employer; he then sacrifices a victim over the ensemble so that the employer cannot fire him without risking his own life.

2. Man's pupil, according to information that is still obscure, was made with that of the serpent and was also called nye mani sa, "serpent of the little person of the eye."

551 passing before his door and thus empty him of his nyama. The man
576 grows thin and poor. The griot may bring about his death with evil
778 words, their nyama attacking the heart, the chest, then the entire
564 body of the victim.

The griot's power over the person he flatters becomes more involved and varies according to what he is reciting. If he recites the burudyu several times, if he speaks at length of the ancestors, their nyama enters his mouth and is added to his own, thus reinforcing the power of the word. Thus, when the griot recites a barama without receiving payment, his nyama attacks the person spoken to. If this offense is repeated and if the burudyu is recited, the man is forced to pay if he does not wish to be attacked by the much more formidable nyama of the ancestors.

In these various situations, the tere of the person flattered intervenes: if it is good, it fights to defend the person, but if it is weak or wicked, it joins the ancestral forces and the person is doubly threatened.

The recitation is always made by the griot before a witness so that his action will be more binding and make the miser lose face. On the other hand, a man who pays the griot generously is looked after by the latter who sings of his generosity on all occasions and announces the sum he has received; often he does not hesitate to exaggerate the total amount received if he can hope to profit by doing so (1).

[789] 1. If the griot knows that the wealthy man he is addressing is miserly, he rubs his teeth with roots which he knows has the power to make his words even more effective.

[554] Sometimes a man reaches a secret agreement with the griot in order to gain prestige. He publicly gives him a considerable sum, part of which the griot returns the following day as agreed upon. The gift is so generous that none can surpass it.

[585
561] This practice is particularly apparent at the time of marriage. The men of the same age grade as the groom outdo each other in their gifts to the griot. The one who has given most passes for the most generous. Sometimes the griot invents a new barama on the spot even though he does not know the device.

782 826 While keeping his eyes and his left hand closed, he walked without touching the ground with his toes in order to respect "the soul of that which he carried (1). At the edge of the river, the joints were broken,

1. To touch the ground with one's toes amounted to putting the soul of the victim's body in contact with the earth's impurity (see p. 102).

the marrow extracted and poured into the water. After placing their toes on the body, to "give a part of their soul to Faro, " the men deposited it gently in the river, into which it sank while they loudly proclaimed the reason for their action. When they returned to their master, they brought him the spirit's gratitude and a little water from the river, which was poured over the royal seat (2).

2. This offering was called nasi, "well-being."

/96/ The upper part of the victim's body was the king's and used for the needs of the state. The tõdyõ first blew into the mouth of the tortured victim so that the "air, in coming out, would take all his words to Faro." Then they buried his head under the king's throne and danced to the rhythm of drums.

[726 789] In case of war, the blood which had spilled during the sacrifice was collected by the tõdyõ and dried in the sun; then the residue was carried away and before the assault was thrown in the direction of the town to be attacked. The king who advanced with his army found, according to the formula, "his sacrifice before him" (saraka bla ñe).

782 826 789 2. In case the king was short of funds, the killing took place towards the west and was performed by sticking a bamboo stick into the throat of the victim so that blood would run over the cowrie shells which the king had earned himself "with his own sweat." Thus consecrated, the cowries "attracted gold, silver, and copper to the royal treasury."

The head was placed under the throne. The chest and lungs were dried, reduced to powder, and preserved in a bag which the king kept. When he received his tax-payers, he smeared his face and mouth with this powder, thus forcing the visitor to give. He rubbed his body with it before going to war, causing the warriors to say:

782 "To see the king is to see gold" (1).
826
789

1. Fama yele ye sanu yele ye.

He gave some of it to his wives and children who put it in their drinks in order "to inherit his place and his goods." This powder was offered at each sacrifice to Faro in order to fertilize the kingdom.

782 3. When a family was plagued by numerous deaths, they asked
the king to authorize the sacrifice of an albino whom he furnished
826 himself. The victim's tongue was dried, pounded to powder, seasoned
266 with pepper, and eaten by the father of the family to permit him to "reclaim the words and the nyama of the deceased." The nose was swallowed by the mother so that she might "reclaim the breath of the dead children." The father then ate the broiled eyes to "preserve lost sights." The dried ears were hung above the sill of the entrance "so that death, upon hearing the funeral wails, might not return." The skull was retained as a token and buried in the courtyard; a wooden stick marked the burial place. The rest of the body was thrown into the Niger, "for an ordinary man does not have the right to keep that which is reserved for the king."

782 If the king permitted it, chiefs of the important villages /97/ also
826 placed the body of an albino under their seats "in order that their
622 authority be solid and enduring" (2).

2. Sometimes the sum total of the taxes raised in a village were given the parents of an albino in exchange for the child. Those who could not obtain a victim used an animal bone as a substitute and performed the ritual as though it were an albino. Regarding the chief's seat, see p. 178.

782 In certain serious cases, the albino was sacrificed on the altar of
826 Komo. This sacrifice was accomplished in silence for "a prayer unknown to the person sacrificing is in the blood of the albino" who is powerful enough to act without words.

291 activity is not involved. Nevertheless, a woman puts on an indigo
773 loincloth the day she resumes sexual relations with her husband after
822 the end of her menses; she retains it until pregnancy. When she is sure
531 of her condition, she puts the loincloth in the sun to purify it and will
place the newborn child in it to remind him later that he owes his
life to his parents. A dead person who has broken a taboo is buried
[764 in an indigo shroud, the only reminder of light being a white cotton
784] thread which is placed on the corpse as an expression of apology and
forgiveness. Since indigo is taboo in most of Faro's sacred places, no
one wears it during sacrifices or religious ceremonies.

White and indigo complement each other. To twist a white and
[789] an indigo thread together to make a string used for holding an amulet
is to "roll together happiness and unhappiness, as in life."

The dye wolo is the color of yellow copper. It is in this color that the newly circumcised are dressed after the operation and until they are healed. Red, mbegu, is the color of copper and of blood. Hunters who wear a tunic of mbegu are "covered with a garment of blood." The band kayo (Pl. III, a, 1), in which are found these two colors, indigo and white, reproduces the rainbow: the white intervals are symbols of the word and of purity. /110/ A person making a sacrifice sews a piece of this band on his clothing to indicate that he is circumcised, that he is a hunter, and that he is truthful in his actions and words. A band is hung at the gate of the northern entry to the village in order to protect its inhabitants from dangers coming from outside. A man wears it when he has been ill or has suffered serious financial or family difficulties. On the altars, on the doorways, the colors are represented by millet mash, blood, and kola nut extract.
[821 As the rainbow keeps away the rain and dries up water, the kayo
784] strip may not be worn near the river or during sexual intercourse, for
it is Faro's taboo.

The band sirakele (literally, a road) (Pl. III, a, 2) represents Faro's descent from the seventh part of the sky down to the seventh part of the earth, the indigo stripe being the dyi fi, "black water," the spirit's earth seat. When put on the loincloth of a married woman, it expresses her rectitude and the good behavior she intends to maintain towards her husband. When worn by a traveler, it prevents him from losing his way.

291 The buguni (1) (Pl. III, a, 3) is "the sun ray Faro gave to Pemba

773
821 1. The word designates the band's place of
531 origin, Bougouni.

326 The lower compartment contains millet from a field called
778 kongobwona foro, reserved for the needs of the cult of the forge. This
243 land is placed under the guardianship of the patriarch belonging to
the Gwonna family, and its upkeep is assured by the community. The seeds are given by each blacksmith to the old man who sows them himself. The work of cultivation and threshing is done communally. The millet is stored in the old man's granary and each blacksmith receives a share. This share is not eaten, but is put aside. From time to time the artisan takes a few seeds which he places as an offering, on his altar, and which remain for a time in the compartment reserved for them; then they are considered to have been eaten by the axe and are removed and replaced by others. Part of the millet is kept as seed for the following year.

326 Each compartment is open and the blacksmith may insert his
778 fingers; if his earnings are insufficient, he rubs his body and tongue
with the hand which he has just dipped into the pocket containing
789 money; the price, set by the spoken word, will not be questioned by
the client. If he goes to work in his field, he places his hand into the millet each morning to draw upon the strength it contains and to improve the results of his agricultural work. If he burns himself while working at the forge, he dips his fingers into the third compartment and cools himself in Faro's water. It is this same water which a young artisan must drink at the beginning of his apprenticeship.

326 The triangular iron, farabye, which constitutes the axe proper is
placed under the power of three spirits belonging to the group of air
778 spirits: A gayru who revealed iron to men; Tengu who taught them
776 Faro's supremacy; and Gullé. The first two are the masters of the
bellows and direct the work as a whole; the third does their bidding and teaches men the technology of ironwork (1). When the owner of the altar dies, the /121/ axe is removed and placed in the village
428 sanctuary where the ancestral tools are kept. But the remaining objects are inherited by the son.

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1. The spirit would have refused to teach the blacksmiths the working of copper and gold, as these two metals belonged to Faro who reserved for himself the right to use them. Since iron was black he had abandoned its use to the spirits of the air.

two jars of millet beer, a ram which will be sacrificed, and money to the griot who will sing during the ceremony.

● [789 A lock of the newborn's hair is shaved off and kept in a case (sebe) which, before being carried away, will be hidden in an oil container 826] for the following reasons: to protect the person from magical practices; to prevent a donkey from eating it, an occurrence which would cause the child's death; to permit him to seek for himself health and a long life in the image of his hair which will have remained in good condition.

The rest of the hair is carried by a female relative to the river, into which it is thrown in honor of Faro. Next a band of white cotton called faro fini (literally, Faro's clothing), on which someone has "spat" kola nut juice, is bound around the forehead of the newly baptized baby to indicate his subjugation to the spirit.

The senior elder then examines with attention the hairline and the meeting point of the eyebrows on the forehead before announcing in a loud voice the signs determining the child's character (tere). Then he grasps the child and swings it /179/ seven times from east to west, eight times from south to north above the altar while giving it the forename (toko) which he has inherited from a dead person along with the spiritual principles (1). The griot recite the father's genealogy (burudyu); the senanku comes to joke with the newborn and gently pulls his nose and ears.

852 304 On the same day the blacksmith draws on the child's face the wolo ti, consisting of seven vertical frontal scars and two horizontal scars under each eye. The first scars represent the complete man (ni and dya); the second, representing the number two, symbol of

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553 852 3. If the village has no Komo, the name may be given above the paternal Ycuafebla.

1. According to another source of information, the eldest son receives the forename of his paternal grandfather, the second son that of his father, and the following sons those of the mother's fathers and grandfathers.

304 766 The importance of the wanzo and the necessity of its leaving the person are such that in the case where a child dies uncircumcised, the operation is performed on his corpse. If this is not possible, the circumciser cuts his left ear and says:

"I cut the ear instead of circumcision" (1).

1. Mba klo tike bolokoli nona bi la ye.

It is buried with the corpse or kept in the paternal home, but the wanzo leaves the child. If the operation was not performed, it would contribute to the formation of a very dangerous nyama, which would be more aggressive even than that of an old man and from which the society would have to suffer.

/188/

Excision

304 323 189 The operation is performed with a little iron knife by a potter, the wife of a blacksmith. The blade, which is male, represents the sun; the handle, which is female, represents both the clitoris and the moon. The woman protects herself from the wanzo of the newly excised girls by wearing bracelets and charms and by smearing a black salve on her eyes.

304 323 The operation is performed in full daylight at the edge of the village and in the presence of the assembled kinsmen. In certain localities it takes place near the potters' hearth. Each little girl is seated in turn on an inverted pot and is operated upon while prayers are recited. Just as the boy whose foreskin is badly formed is wounded on the thigh, so the girl in the same situation is considered excised if she submits to a test which replaces excision. In the latter case, the woman operator places a hedgehog skin between the girl's thighs and presses these together energetically so as to make the blood run (2).

2. In case the girl is the daughter of a blacksmith, the blood running over the pottery indicates her future role as potter (see p. 169.

The young girls must neither cry nor moan; on the contrary, they sing to exalt the departure of the wanzo.

364 the chief throws dust three times to the four cardinal points. The
778 masker then stands in the wind in such a way as to receive the smoke;
the chief and the members crouch in line behind him with their mouths
796 open to inhale better. When the wind changes its direction they all
move to continue this fumigation, wušuli, which constitutes a purification as well as an increment of forces. At the moment the fire is almost out, the most courageous of the participants stamps on it in order to assimilate better the nyama which it exudes. The ashes,
[804] gathered by the chief, are distributed, the unit of measurement being
the gourd mure. An important share goes to the nyama boli, another is given as an offering to Faro, and a third is distributed among the members.

Several days later, the group goes to the river bank to the sound of drums beating out the murumuruw foli (literally, rhythm of the refuse); they throw the ashes reserved for Faro into the water and, continuing to dance, return to the village.

364 Those ashes given to the members are used to prepare the potass
778 which is mixed into the millet cake, the daily food of the Bambara,
and which will make the members of the family share in the powers
252 contained in the nyamanto.

364 The eating of this mixture closes the cycle of the transfer of forces,
which were temporarily communicated to the refuse by the individuals,
778 then recovered by Faro, and finally redistributed to the social body.

III. Rain Rites

● 789 At the time the first work is done in the fields, a drawing is made
241 with millet mash upon the tree of the Kworè in the shape of a lozenge
inscribed within a rectangle, which represents "the great fire which issued /204/ from the cardinal angles" at the time of their creation. While this is being done, the following words are spoken: "The four elbows (the lozenge) are the fire of the angles; here is the anniversary of the Kworè." The clearing of the field or the first plowing always symbolizes the very first clearing obtained through fire.

During the month of May, the members of the Kworè society make
789 sacrifices upon their altars before the first rumbling of thunder in
796 order to purify the first sky where clouds are formed from the impure
794 passage of Mousso Koroni. The chief gathers the members about the
tree and recites the following prayer:

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796
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"I have come to you, Kworè, if (the cloud) is black in the east, let it come; black in the west, let it come; black in the south, let it come; black in the north, let it come; black above, let it come, and then let it give a great water" (1). He next pours on the ground the millet mash and the blood of fowls brought by each member. The initiation of the new members takes place during this ceremony.

After the drinking of millet beer which follows the ceremonies, it is customary to tell the story of Mousso Koroni chased by Pemba and pursued by Faro.

If, in spite of this the rain does not come soon enough, the members gather at the foot of the tree and bring with them an iron axhead which is placed in fresh water. The water is next poured out at the foot of the tree; it symbolizes the cold which the spirits of the Kworè are subjected to in the second sky during their struggles to make the rain come through.

In certain villages the sacrifices to the Kworè and to Faro are offered at the same time. At Massala and Soroba, the members go to the shore of the Niger, carrying the kworę boli with them. The bit of water which it contains is poured into the river and replaced while a prayer is addressed to Faro. The throat of a victim is then cut and some copper is thrown into the river. The altar is shaken above the water to imitate the noise of thunder and rain. Upon their return to the village, the members light a fire at the foot of the Kworè tree and place thunder stones in its embers.

"Heating the stones shakes up their soul"; when they are hot, they are plunged into cold water "to warm and to agitate the soul of water." The smoke from the fire, as well as the heat absorbed by the stones and the water, force the rain to fall.

/205/ Victims are sacrificed and the members return to the village around which they circle six times, beginning at the west. Then they return the nimara boli to the sanctuary and the elders who represent the spirit dance about on one foot to the sound of drums

1. Ne nani na kwore nani na; a ma fi korona a ka na; a ma fi klebi a ka na; a ma fi woro dugu a ka na; a ma fi keñeka a ka na; a ma fi sãfe a ka na; otumana a ka ke dyi ba ye.

189 196 194 as an imitation of Faro who has only one lower limb. The altar, which is placed in the sanctuary by the chief who enters it walking backwards, receives as an offering a little water from the Niger in which thunder stones have been soaking since the night before to be "refreshed." The same libation is made on the *kworè boli*. After returning to the home of the chief of the Komo, libations of millet mash are poured upon the walls of his house; then, in the name of Faro, the *nimara boli*, and the Kworè, the throat of a white ram is cut; the flesh of the animal will be thrown into the river, at the conclusion of the ceremonies.

194 196 (c) At the end of the winter season the "anniversary of the Kworè" is celebrated; its purpose is to commemorate the action of the spirits during the preceding season in order to obtain rain water.

On the fixed day, members of the society, wearing loincloth and carrying in their left hand a whip made of macerated and twisted grass, and in their other hand a torch of burning straw, gather near the tree around which they circle and sing to "gather up the Kworè." [185] The cracking of whip lashes which they give each other represents thunder claps; the beating of the drum which accompanies their songs imitates its rumbling. The burns which they inflict upon themselves recall those which the spirits endure in the celestial combats. They next direct their steps toward the public square where the villagers have gathered and where the spirit they have supposedly invoked by their mimicry is leading them. When all have gathered, the *kworeduga*, who represent the spirits mounted on their winged horses ready to fly into combat, appear dressed in their traditional costumes and riding their wooden horses.

They advance while dancing and singing verses which are then taken up by a chorus of the members. The latter having formed a
[185] circle, the chief places himself in the center, whipping himself, burning himself, and pretending to swallow the fire of his torch. When he is weary he stops and the members take turns to imitate him. Powder made from ground pepper is blown into the dancers' eyes to recall the burning heat of the fiery heavens.

The *kworeduga*, who have by then put down their wooden horses, set their foot on the earth ready for the fight, after having seized some green tree branches. They put out the fire which has caught onto the clothing of the dancers and participants. This gesture recalls the action of the wind which, in space, put out the hot fire that

776 precision of which the native substratum seems unaware. In
any event, there is no Bambara word for "God" except the one
[177] brought by the Moslems -- "Allah," pronounced as Ngala. This
lack of a Bambara word may be explained by their custom of
avoiding pronouncing the name of powerful people for fear of
incurring their wrath.

There is no superior spirit of evil: Seïtane [Satan] is
[177] likewise a Moslem introduction. The Bambara does not visualize a hierarchy of spirits.

Finally, it must be concluded, from the existence of
776 many magic practices, that there is a belief in a kind of uni-
778 versal energy, which is diffuse by nature and which, by appropriate
789 means, one can capture and use as one likes. Certain genii or
gods are merely emanations of this invisible, imponderable and active force, which no obstacle can stop and which can instantly overcome space and strike at a distance. This is the basis of all native magic.

## [129] 2. Morality and Customs

776 When, as among Catholics and Moslems, the after-life
is believed to be influenced by one's conduct in this life, there
577 is a rule which determines what is and what is not proper if one wishes to earn the greatest possible rewards in the life to come. The saints and pious men have shown the way to this end.

For the Bambara, however, the next life is merely a continuation of this one and he does not think that he can, by conduct, improve his chances in the next life since it offers no rewards or punishments for his day-by-day actions. Neither his manes nor his genii give him an example of conduct to guide him. Therefore, without thought of the future, he goes along solely concerned with the present; he seeks what will give him pleasure, tries to avoid what seems harmful, and all this in a groping way, as one walks in the dark.

577 Sometimes, it is true, he is led to behave with a degree
626 of decency and to avoid certain too shocking lapses, which would
expose him to reproach, alienate his friends and create for him

787 alone and it applies to the future as well as to the present and the past.

Mantic differs from magic in that the latter allows man
787 to use certain methods so as to subordinate natural and extra-
788 natural forces, while the former is contemplative knowledge,
791 which does not impinge on the prerogatives of the divine but
merely puts divine thoughts into communication with human
understanding.

Further, theoretically at least, the diviner is not linked to any particular cult and is not to be confused with the priest, since he transmits the divine will outside of sacrifice, which is the priest's function. However, it also sometimes happens that the diviner is the oracle of a particular divinity and that the same person combines the functions of both diviner and priest as in certain cults described in what follows.

787 There are innumerable methods of divination. Before pointing out the principal traits of some of them, let us first note that there are cases when the divinity enters into direct relationship with a human being and speaks to him in human language. The chronicle of Ségou gives an example, in the legend concerning Kolé, head of Biton's guards, who was approached by a genie in the forest and told of the conditions on which he would be assured of his power. Ngolo Diara cheated Kolé of the benefits of the revelation by carrying out the sacrifice required by the genie before Kolé got around to it.

Dreams in which events take place just as they do in reality constitute one method of direct revelation. Frequently, however, there is a variation between dream and reality [134] which makes the meaning of the dream uncertain and therefore makes an interpretation necessary. Among the Bambara there are people who act as diviners by interpreting their own dreams. On being consulted about a problem, they claim to receive in a dream during sleep the correct information for throwing light on the difficulties involved.

A favorite method is that in which the diviner abandons himself to his god: he is possessed by the god and becomes his oracle. In the trance he is, so to speak, the instrument through

787 The kolon' kala is used in the same way to discover stolen or lost objects. In that case it is wrapped in a loincloth belonging to the victim of the theft, along with something equally personal.

What are we to conclude from these divinatory practices? Are oracles based entirely on charlatanism and trickery? This would be a failure to recognize the credulity of the practitioners, most often the first to believe in their own practices.

771 Religion and Magic. There is nothing more involved, incoherent and contradictory than the cult customs of the Bambara. In order to give a clear picture of the essential traits, we shall follow an outline based on the distinction which becomes apparent on close analysis.

It can be stated that these people always honor the manes, the nyana dugu-da-siri and some other nyana, without presuming to impose human will upon them. Indeed, it may even be said that the Bambara make an effort to behave in a manner presumed to be pleasing to them.

However, the majority of the nyana are spirits suborned by man and serving his will.

Finally, there are appropriate rites which make it possible for humans to exploit a portion of the universal energy and to use it as they wish.

771 789 Let us say that the cult of the manes and of the independent nyana are what constitutes the religion of the Bambara, while the subjection of the spirits and the exploitation of universal energy properly constitute magic, which in its most feared form is called sorcery.

This distinction is obviously arbitrary. There is no custom that is not in some measure impregnated with magic, and this is so true that it is uncertain whether one should consider [139] religion to be a sort of purified magic and magic a perversion of religion or even its parasite.

Without seeking to decide this question, we shall simply point out that there is often a clear line of demarcation between religion and magic. All one needs in order to see the difference is to compare the cult of the manes with the practices of sorcery

771 789 used to capture the spirits of the dead. The native clearly shows how much he respects the cult of the manes and, on the contrary, how much he is disturbed and terrified by the practices of the suba (1). However, many practices cannot be so clearly differentiated because they have elements of both religion and magic. Such practices are held to be allowable and even desirable, illicit and hateful, depending on the point of view and the places, circumstances and persons involved.

If we keep in mind the foregoing remarks and limit ourselves to the most characteristic traits, it is possible to establish a parallel between religion and magic among the Blacks.

Both acknowledge the existence of an invisible world which is everywhere in contact with everything subject to our senses. But while religion in principle assumes man's dependence vis-à-vis this invisible world, magic operates on the theory that anything that exists comes within the power of "the one who knows" (don'na ba).

Since the Master of the Universe appears not to take much interest in what he has created, his creatures do not honor him but, rather, have recourse to the Spirits and Powers (nyana) who are willing to take a hand in human affairs. Religion organizes, for the benefit of these benevolent nyana, a cult designed to make sure of their good offices. Magic, on the other hand, forces them to execute its will.

775 Religion and magic both believe firmly in the dual nature of man: a finite body and a soul which survives this body. When death comes, this soul goes off to join the family of manes, who are bodiless souls like it. From that vantage point the soul continues to watch over the affairs of its relatives still in the world of men. Religion regards the manes as guardian spirits and strives to make sure the continuity of their [140] will and wishes. Magic treats (1) these incorporeal souls like the

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1. See Chapter 7 concerning the suba.

1. Especially by means which give magic the character of sorcery.

771 nyana and seeks to use them for utilitarian ends.

789 By virtue of the beliefs on which it is based, religion engenders a certain degree of morality. Magic uses its knowledge to exploit the Universe for material profit.

In both camps there are initiates. Whereas the most
791 famous adepts in magic live in a kind of isolation, where they jealously keep the secret of their practices and where they exist apart from human societies which at once honor and fear them,
794 religion, on the other hand, displays its cults, if not exactly publicly, at least in the circle of the faithful. The latter, since they are usually completely familiar with the ceremonies of the cult and with the high-priests, are the masters and most venerated members of society.

Religion receives its most reliable support from the natural family and from the communities derived from that family. Legal magic has copied these organizations in the form of brotherhoods, which Europeans call "secret societies," a kind of spiritual family in which the members are only gradually admitted to all secrets.

Whereas the religion of the manes forms the strongest link that holds together the members of a community, and represents the framework of the society, magic on the other hand cares little for this union and in fact helps to disrupt it by the hatred it engenders. Thanks to magic, the individual feels competent to challenge the community and never fails to do so.

Let us look more closely into the traits characteristic of religion and those characteristicof magic.

By studying all that concerns especially the patriarchal and family communities and the associations growing out of these communities we shall be able to see the place occupied by the religion of the manes and of the spirits, as well as the effect of magic upon the basic manifestations of the life of these communities.

789 Since magic, in a sense, envelops every act of the native, it seems to us essential, at the start, to look into its characteristics so as to facilitate the understanding of all that is to follow, which is impreganted by magic in so many ways.

789 In connection with the brotherhoods, we shall see how magic has been organized [141] in the very heart of native society and we shall observe the stability and the repercussions of its work.

Magic

778 789 [774] Universal energy. There exist individuals who are subject to certain phenomena, as yet imperfectly known or explained, in which the human being is divided into two so that on occasion his immaterial self lives a life independent of his body in a sphere inaccessible to corporeal sense. Such a man then enters a milieu from which he brings back visions and sensations that he can only describe vaguely and frighteningly in his habitual language after he has returned to a normal waking state.

Among the Bambara, occurrences of this kind have been observed and good use has been made of them, especially in the brotherhoods. They constitute a confirmation of belief in the invisible world, as do dreams. And the Bambara sees many other indications -- which escape us -- of the existence of this extra-natural world which envelops everything and which he conceives as a force sometimes active and sometimes inert, diffused or personified. It is this energy which is, as it were, set in motion by a curse, by the extreme expression of envy called "evil eye," by luck or by misfortune. A chief's authority derives the essence of its strength from this activity. And it is the reason for honoring the dead.

This invisible force, instantly transmissible to the greatest distances, is present in all things; it exists everywhere, in everything and in everyone. It possesses or acquires a greater or lesser power in certain objects and in certain people for a stated period of time or for a temporary period. It can be beneficent or maleficent, or both in turn. The ordinary man who touches such objects or such persons will usually be struck dead or, at the least, gravely affected, as he would be if he touched a high-voltage electric current. For the initiate who knows the secret of this force and who knows how to use it, this

778 789 is a virtue which exalts his own faculties to such an extent that it gives him a supernatural power that is terrifying to the uninitiated.

This property of transmission by contact accounts for the veneration which surrounds the possessions of eminent persons and those among the dead who [142] exercised power during their lifetime. Objects especially venerated are those that were in almost constant personal use: clothing, weapons, toilet articles.

The same property of transmission no doubt also accounts for the nature attributed to matter, which has been called continuity. Everything emanating from an object retains the occult energy within it, and, further, anything that "the man who knows" (*don-na-ba*) does to these detached parts affects the whole from which they came (1). That is why an undigested portion of food, if suitably treated by the magician, can spoil the digested portion of the same food. The chronicle tells of how this theory of the continuity of matter was used against Bani. By means of hair and a sandal, stolen from him, the magician paralyzed Bani's clairvoyance and put him at Da's mercy.

791 *Magicians*. It is the learning of the magician which, so to speak, brings order out of the chaos of the world. In the broadest sense of the word, his art, magic, is a kind of utilization of the occult. It is true that there is no Bambara, from a chief down to the least of the slaves, who does not act as his own magician, but there are specialists and some of them very famous. Besides, not everyone can be a real magician. Natural talents give some individuals the power to penetrate the invisible world and to feel at home there. Some are initiated by genii who have taken a fancy to them, as shown in the chronicle of Biton; others learn the craft from a relative or a well-known magician, either at no cost or at great expense.

[787] 1. Divination by means of the *kolon' kala*, previously described, is allied to this belief. The bits and pieces of the deceased act as the dead man himself would do in guiding the bearers of the *kolon' kala*.

791 Every magician (_soma_) (2) has his own methods: one may be intuitive and work from an inner light; another may operate only by deductive divination. All who lay claim to real power submit to rules which are often strange and rigorous and which dominate the most trifling activities of their lives. And all are fanatically determined to keep the secrets which, in their own eyes no less than in the eyes of the uninitiated, are the foundation of their mysterious powers.

[143] Very properly, the range of their investigations and their action is without limits, since everything is impregnated by the energy which is everywhere and in everything and which perhaps is everything, material form being merely one of its manifestations.

● 789 It is worthy of note that artisans are subject to the same
dislike as that for ill-famed magicians. It is not too hazardous
463 to deduce that manual labor once consisted of magic rites which
791 were held to be indispensable in conquering matter. This is
still evident in the case of blacksmiths and hunters.

791 Everywhere in the Sudan, blacksmiths are considered
and, indeed, behave like magicians. The extraction of iron is
326 surrounded by essentially magic rites in which only blacksmiths
may participate. After ritual preparation, they work naked while the job lasts and return to normal life only for a certain time after the work has been completed; even then they have to observe special rules. Their work is commonly thought to be tinged with magic. Their tools are impregnated by this invisible energy and, on certain days, the hut in which they are kept becomes a sort of temple, with the blacksmith as priest. The chronicle (1) attributes to _fa_ Siné Dyara, a blacksmith who could understand the language of the birds, a role especially helpful to the Massa-si.

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2. A sorcerer is a _suba_ (See Chapter 7).

1. See p. 112.

791
609 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that
821 was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and
show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the
Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equip-
224 ment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well
as an arsenal of magic weapons.

The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
825 they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of
778 this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at
some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The
animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[552] wara-ba means lion; sa-ma, elephant; ma-li, hippopotamus;
bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names
indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief
that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The
attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an application of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual
and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a
small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
231 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
552 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of
825 their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once
held and which is still shown on occasion: fa-li meaning "donkey"
derives from fa meaning "powerful," just as nya-ri meaning "cat"
derives from nya and has the same meaning, along with ba
meaning "goat."

evo invoked is requested or required to act.

789 There are times when on the contrary, the native is inclined to hold the energy in check, in order to avoid the
778 harm that would result from this sort of action. For this pur-
[784] pose he abstains from doing certain things; this is the origin of many taboos (tne).

The acquisition of magic power in order to gain strength or to be able to act so as to avoid being affected by magic or, finally, to be able to get rid of magic power when one is permeated by it to a dangerous point -- all these involve appropriate actions or rites whose forms and conditions only magicians or others gifted with intuition can determine.

The chronicle shows that chiefs make use of magic to try to strengthen the supernatural power which is the basis of their position. Dina Wara secretly ate a special dish made of a goat's head; Biton took special baths, whose virtues Ngolo appropriated by trickery just as Biton had done with respect to Dina Wara, his brother-in-law. All sorts of comparable practices accounted for the increase of Ngolo's "luck," that modal quality of supernatural power which confers a degree of magic potency on the possessor. This so-called "luck" has, as it were, a kind of radiation, which confers special good fortune on whatever it touches. That is why the marabouts advised Biton to live in close proximity to Ngolo so as to take advantage of the favorable atmosphere.

778 This energy is attached to everything and, especially,
768 to objects that come into direct contact with anything impregnated with it. What one wears on oneself thus becomes a sort of accumulator, and that is why the objects left upon a powerful person's death are so carefully preserved and constitute the most valuable part of his legacy. The chronicle tells us with what veneration the cap and weapons belonging to Biton were regarded.

778 Magic force is therefore acquired by means of appropri-
789 ate practices indicated by magicians; one shares its benefits by living near those entrusted with it by applying to oneself what comes from such privileged persons. Here again is a result of the continuity of matter. Whatever the case, anything

778 emanating from the person or object impregnated with magic
789 force acts as if it were a part of that person or object. Often
[788] the magician or [154] ritual officiant spits on the person or
object involved in the rites. This is a means of transferring
one person's fluid to another.

Conversely, it is vital to know how to avoid contact
751 with, or even emanations from, a maleficent magic force.
789 That is the reason for the great number of mysterious magic
754 practices and the secret of the innumerable amulets that form
so many shields, to be placed presumably where they will best
protect against any blow. Therefore it is the magician's
prerogative to make amulets and to prescribe the conduct
necessary to preserve their efficacy.

It should be noted that protection set up against a given person is good only for him and is useless against a successor, for instance. The chronicle tells us that Bani, chief of Samba-Nyana, was successful in using certain artifices to prevent Ma-n-son from conquering him. But, kept in ignorance of Ma-n-son's death and having taken no precautions against Da, Ma-n-son's son and successor, Bani was conquered by Da, against whom his artifices availed nothing.

If one is caught in spite of precautions, what is to be done? Everyone is afflicted in one way or another in any event. A Bambara is always inclined to believe in some sort of supernatural intervention. He has on hand some sort of remedy, but more often he resorts to a "seer" for guidance or, if the case requires, to a magician's skill.

Native medicine is a mass of magic formulas and of remedies strikingly reminiscent of the pharmacopeia of the Middle Ages (see, in the foregoing, father Niany's operations).

[571] The individual does not live as an isolated unit but
rather as an integral part of a community. In the society in
789 which he lives, however restricted it may be, he progressively
783 occupies various situations. On both physical and moral levels,
he undergoes changes and, depending on circumstances, whether
fortunate or unfortunate happenings, changes take place within
him. In short, his magic potential varies. These variations
are always believed to concern the entire milieu, upon which
they may (in the case of illness or death) have disastrous effects.

●789 The individual is therefore required to [155] undergo proper
783 treatment to return him to his normal, harmless state.

789 From this point of view, social life seems to give rise
to a series of rites involving the disintegration and reintegra-
788 tion or the aggregation of the individual in relation to the group
182 in which he lives. Birth, circumcision, marriage, illness, death and the performance of certain trades are all modes of existence, whose beginning and end usually involve three stages: separation from the common milieu, accomplishment of the act, and reintegration into the former milieu or aggregation in a new milieu. Between the first and the second state as well as between the third and the fourth there exists usually a kind of negative interval which we call marginal. This system, which comes to light upon an analysis of multiple facts, is actually subject to modifications or alterations which can change its physiognomy. Nevertheless, the basis of these ritual sequences is so well established that by comparing external manifestations with the theoretical system it is possible to understand them better and to restore to some of them, which have become badly mutilated, their real meaning, which the native is usually, if not always, unable to explain or to define precisely.

A detailed study of institutions will give an opportunity for concrete analysis of these ritual sequences, which a kind of age-old empiricism has transformed into laws of a sort. They have come to represent that part of custom which has acquired a kind of permanence by virtue of public acceptance.

It is apparent everywhere among the Blacks that events of a general character (birth, coming-of-age, marriage, illness and death) are surrounded by ritual practices that vary outwardly from place to place but may all fit our theoretical system of three stages with marginal periods. All denote a common basis of magic and all derive from a long-tried empiricism which has given them a peculiar and relatively stable physiognomy in terms of the milieu with which the rites are connected.

571 What we have just said about individuals must also ap-
182 ply to collective groups: the latter deal with each other or

764 close the opening of the niche and carefully fill any cracks with earth moistened and kneaded on the spot.

During all this the women sing in a low voice and clap their hands, accompanied by muffled drums.

When all is done, the sons of the deceased come out of the excavation, and the principal gravedigger comes forward with his spade upside down on his shoulder and holding a gourd full of water in his hand. Silence falls, and the women and drummers are still. He pours some water at the head of the grave, saying: "See this water. Do not be angry, pardon [169] us, give us rain in the winter and an abundant harvest. May the wind blow from the east or from the west, from the north or from the south, as is best for us. Give us long life, many descendants, wives, and wealth." And the throng replies: "So be it (o de ka ke)."

With the back side of their spades the gravediggers then fill in the excavation. The women resume their singing in rhythm with the clapping of hands, and accompanied by subdued drums, they say: "Our fa is dead, but he will return! Young men, fill in the grave well so that no sorcerer (suba), no hyena, no wild beast can carry away the corpse."

764 778 789 When the grave is filled in, the person holding the strip of material still attached to the shroud pulls it so that it breaks. This bit of cloth is a precious relic for use in various magical performances. The magical bands called tafo are made from it and are tied around the waist to protect one from back ailments and spectral apparitions (1).

1. These are a few of the innumerable examples of magic practices which in the most diverse forms accompany all important activities.

The coarse mat which had served as a bed for the deceased is put upon the grave, along with a pair of his old sandals and his water jug. The finer mat is usually given to a friend or to a family, and it is then burned outside the village (1) [Ed., see footnote above].

764 789 Burials are never willingly held on either Wednesday or Saturday (1) [Ed., see footnote above].

Finally, a small white chicken (2) to ward off bad luck is sometimes put into the niche just before it is closed off (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above].

Upon returning from the burial, someone clubs the dead man's dog (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above], unless he left express orders to the contrary. Some Bambara even go so far [554] as to buy a dog with this posthumous honor in mind. This seems to be another magic practice to exorcise the ghost of the deceased (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above].

When they have returned to the house, the brothers-in-law of the deceased eat the national dish, millet mush (to). When they leave for their homes, each is given a rooster or a hen in the name of the deceased, which they must eat en route before they reach home. If the fowl [170] were not eaten until they reached their villages, it would arouse the dead man's vengeance; his ghost (nyama) would haunt these impious persons. This too seems to be another magic practice to counteract the evil effects of death.

764 431 (c) The funeral celebration. As soon as the death has been announced, it is the duty of every relative, neighbor, friend, or anyone under any sort of obligation to the deceased to bring an offering in proportion to his rank or degree of obligation for the purpose of honoring the dead (1).

In certain cases, the total of these offerings is very large. The chronicle of Ségou tells us that when Ngolo died the cowries contributed filled seven huts, representing several thousand francs. Besides, people give whatever they wish or can afford: a horse, a cow, a sheep, fowl, cowries, gold, strips of native cotton, fabrics, grain, etc.

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2. If the corpse is a woman, a fertilized egg is used.

1. We noted earlier the sanctions applied at the funerals of Biton and Ngolo.

881 [302] freshly shaved (4), their bodies rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu), [242] arrive in single file. .Greeted by the onlookers, they take their places in the front row. Shouts, noisy conversation, and songs are intermingled and make a racket which is interrupted by the arrival of the "girls of the soli" (soli-ma-moso-u). With their hair in a tangle and dressed in short skirts (1) reaching from the navel to the knee, they enter one behind the other, walk around the assemblage, and finally take their places in a group near their mothers and friends.

The assembled men drink around the fires.

881 533 534 All the drums are there, and as soon as the girls appear, the drummers rush to their instruments. There are big drums resting on three legs (denu-ba), others which hang from the shoulder, and still others carried under the arm. Young women shake bits of iron (kinge) as one shakes castanets, and there are other iron instruments provided with rings. Old women pound on gourds turned upside down in pots filled with water.

The noise is deafening, and it is dominated by songs in honor of the ancestors shouted by the whole assemblage as loudly as possible. Then the whole crowd, where the tipsy are in the majority and where everyone is at the highest possible pitch of excitement, starts a frenzied dance accompanied by songs usually improvised.

881 781 While all this is going on, the adepts of the major brotherhood (2) are outside the village, noisily driving out the

4. Just as their heads were shaved at birth.

1. Blue for Moslems and yellowish-brown (basa) for the purely pagan Bambara.

2. The Komo around Ségou; the Nama in the Kaarta area.

881 evil genii in order to preserve the "people of the soli" (soli-ma-u)
787 from their bewitchments.

881 The soli. The soli, this make-believe birth, is marked
by a bloody operation, circumcision for the boys and excision
304 for the girls. The fact that the ceremony does not get its name
from this operation demonstrates that it is merely show; it is
merely a rite of separation between the previous state and the
new one (3). The operation takes place at dawn.

[171] 3. That is why among other peoples the operation does not exist or represented by a mere slash on the thigh (among the Koniagui).

Boys. The blacksmith who is to circumcise the boys waits outside the village under a tree. Assisted by members [243] of the sects and especially by the Komo-tigi, he performs the operation behind a loincloth hung up as a screen. The boy stands erect, and the blacksmith draws out the prepuce and cuts it off, after having determined approximately the proper place to cut. The patient is expected to show no weakness; on the contrary, he exerts himself to say a few words to show his courage.

As soon as the operation is finished, a gunshot announces the news to the elders crouched about the village fires, and a female griot proclaims it to the bystanders. The Komo-tigi takes a few nyanka leaves, burns them, and goes to place the ashes on the boy's familial kara. The boy runs off to rejoin his companions under the tree especially chosen for this reassembly. All the boys will spend their days there, on the fringe of society with which they are forbidden to mingle. They return to the village only at night, to sleep in a hut reserved for them.

881 A man reputed to know how to care for circumcised
boys lives with them, takes care of them, and closely supervises
304 them; this is the sema-tye. Every day abundant food is brought
292 to him for his patients. The latter wear a dloki (blouse) and
kursi (trousers) made of cotton cloth, blue or yellow-brown (basa)
depending on their affiliations (1), and their headgear is usually

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1. The basa color is much in demand

881
304 among the Bambara, while the Marka use cloth dyed indigo-blue.
292

a high cap with strings extending from the earlaps. They can only leave the place where they are assembled, even for the needs of nature, under the leadership of the *sema-tye* and shaking a stick of wood to which are attached bits of broken pottery. This rattle is called *n-koso-m-bara.*

881 They pass the time plaiting mats, gossiping, laughing, and pestering passers-by. 304 On market days they are permitted to block the paths leading to the village and to collect a tithe from the traders.

The officials of the sects often visit them in their retreat.

Girls. The blacksmiths' wives who are to remove part of the clitoris await the girls outside the village under the trees. Some matrons assist them. Each child in turn runs up to the operator and squeezes herself between [244] the legs of the matron who exposes the clitoris. The excised clitoris is laid [789] in a little woven basket and is carefully preserved for making talismans.

The completion of the operation is announced in the same way as for the boys, and the *Komo-tigi* likewise puts the ashes from *nyanka* leaves on the familial *kara.*

The girl then rejoins her companions in the hut reserved for them in each section of the settlement. There they are under the surveillance of an old woman, the *sema-moso,* who knows how to take care of them and who sees to it that they behave properly. They are very well fed.

881 Wrapped in skirts, they lean on canes of dried millet stalks when they walk and shake a gourd pierced with holes and [514] filled with pebbles. They go out only for the needs of nature and then all in a body. They warn the passers-by by shaking their rattles and singing improvised songs. As they near paths outside the village, they intone a refrain.

Soli da woro (1). The seclusion of the soli-ma ceases

1. Literally, "sixth day of the *soli.*"

881 At the end of this time, the nyana-n-son-na-ba and his council having come to an agreement with the sema to end the period of seclusion, each leader performs certain magic passes, under the boys' tree and near the girls' huts, to dispel any evil. The Bambara are convinced that so long as the period of convalescence is not officially closed the circumcised boys or excised girls are as much a danger to society as society is to them; that is why they must spend this period in seclusion. Further-
881 more, anything used by them during their seclusion is impreg-
783 nated with this evil and may spread it.

Therefore, as soon as the interdict is lifted, everything is collected to be burned at sunset (2). Near the trees outside the village the mats, the n-koso-m-bara, the gourds, millet stalks, rags, etc., are all piled up, and the nyana-n-son-na-ba sets them afire. The boys and girls jump over the fire three times; they are then free to return to the village. They run home promptly to adorn themselves for the festival celebrating their return.

881 Once more there are lavish meals and interminable drinking bouts, followed by a general gathering in the public square. People come from all directions, among them appallingly decrepit old women who try to manage everything. [247]

[291] On this occasion, the boys, soli-ma-tye, appear for the first time in true man's attire, full trousers, cap with earlaps, and an ample new shirt. With lance in hand, they swagger about and simulate the behavior of warriors; they are now tye-kura, "new men."

881 The girls also are decked out to excess in women's attire.
301 Wearing several skirts and adorned with all the jewelry relatives

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● [789] 2. However, personal effects (the boys' kursi, dloki, and baufla, and the girls' tafe) are not burned; along with their stains, these are impregnated with virtues which make them particularly valuable for talismans, amulets, and other magic weapons.

Methods

794 789 Are the rites and magical practices used in the brotherhoods efficacious?

Here, as in all matters, the Blacks operate by feeling their way, imitation, or adaptation, all incomplete. Just as an ignorant man is perfectly capable of accidentally starting a clockworks whose mechanism he does not understand and so can either start or stop it, put it out of order, or break it, so a Black can sometimes, by a kind of empiricism, get results similar to those of the magnetizers, hypnotists, magicians, and alchemists of all times and places.

Without plan or method, the Sudanese magicians and sorcerers [252] have nevertheless not worked in vain. In the process of arousing the native's emotional temperament and keeping it ever aroused, they have created an atmosphere favorable to the rise and propagation of psychic phenomena. Any type of spirituality would benefit from this age-old process by which the Sudanese soul is all the better prepared to broaden its mystical tendencies toward the cult of the manes which the magicians have carefully kept within the material domain of immediate utility.

We have never heard of a single magician who, when he seeks to penetrate the invisible, has sought to understand its arrangement so as to regulate his own life with a view to attaining a privileged position in that world invisible to us. Each of them is merely trying to obtain a fragment of the universal energy in order to realize his worldly designs. Still, this continual striving toward the supernatural has often strengthened the feeling toward the manes through the spirituality that has been aroused. Thus, as magic loses its power, man's desire for the supernatural, lacking a goal, augments the cult of the manes until it goes on to something higher. Thus a new spirituality is created on the native plane, which is easily oriented toward revealed religions when they know how to receive it.

771 Finally, there is no doubt that a learned Moslem, who
797 is well-dressed, who does not get drunk (1) and who behaves with dignity (1) [see footnote above] greatly impresses the pagans; his mere example creates a favorable atmosphere for Islam.

Therefore some of the natives, trying to imitate outward appearances, find themselves drawn toward Islam, whose rites they practice without even having any desire to be converted. The mere fact of dressing in white, wearing a white cap, going about [337] in sandals, conspicuously telling one's beads, salaaming while muttering incomprehensible words or continually repeating "Allah Akoubar," and participating in important ceremonies, suffices to give an individual an elegant air without in the least interfering with pagan traditions.

The Islamism noted by Mungo Park in the Bambara army
and among the Kouloubali and other dignitaries, is an example
of this simple formalism. On the other hand, the Bambara, with-
● [789] out exception, are eternally on the lookout for magic formulas:
talismans, amulets, remedies and procedures of all kinds. And
Islam provides a whole arsenal of magic which is very popular
with the Blacks.

In addition to all these attractions, Islam seems to the Bambara to have institutions which are not basically opposed to their own. It tolerates polygamy, divorce, repudiation and slavery. As practiced over a long period by the natives, who have skilfully Sudanized it, it is adapted without difficulty to all sorts of situations. The blacksmith, that master of accultism, scarcely has to change at all when he becomes a marabout; he merely acquires some new manners which enable him to preside at birth, circumcision, marriage, death or other social or family ceremonies in the name of Islam. However, this is an Islam so close to paganism that it differs only in name. Allah, under the name of Ngalla, has taken his place in the Bambara pantheon alongside the other nyana, and the only distinction is that he has his own "manner."

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1. At least in public.

784 One might perhaps think that it would be very difficult not to
602 see one's tné....? In the Sudan good manners require that people
576 discipline their glances from their earliest years. A son-in-law lowers
his eyes in the presence of his mother-in-law, a daughter-in-law turns her back at a three-quarters angle out of modesty in the presence of her father-in-law, and when a lover goes to win over the father of his fiancée, she runs away and hides. Any Negro, however poor his manners, will direct his look no one knows where, into space or upon his toes, every time he greets anyone and hears his news, and will chat with a person for a quarter hour without ever looking at him. No more is asked for the tné. Undoubtedly a Bambara shields himself with both hands in its presence... and he plays the young daughter-in-law; he knows well how to differentiate between seeing and looking and he knows how to tell you at the time, however little he is accused: "Né y'a yé tigné, n'ka, nè gné tount'a la, né m'a flè. I saw it certainly, but I did not leave my eyes on it, I did not look at it."

3. The Gnâma

789 The tné are rendered sacred, above all, by the curse of the
778 ancestor. Nothing is so much feared by the Bambara. To be cursed,
626 and cursed by his father, is the greatest evil that can befall a man;
his wives would run away from him, his children would blush to call him "father," his /27/ friends would abandon him, the people of the village would be terrified to speak to him; he would have to flee. And where would he go? The gnâma of his father, of his ancestor, of his fetish's tné, would cling to his steps and follow him everywhere. Only suffering would be left for him; sickness, hunger, poverty, and humiliation would be his lot and, rejected by humanity, he would die in despair.

789 The word gnâma is very difficult to translate. Does its equivalent
778 exist in our French language? Gnâma is a force, a power, or also perhaps a /kind of/ energy, a fluid possessed by every man, every animal, every living being; it never disappears and continues to exist even

789 778 after death. This energy, this fluid, is the envoy, messenger, or emissary of hatred, vengeance, and justice, and it goes wherever it is sent by the will which is its director and master; it goes wrongly or rightly to bring misfortune, poverty, sickness, and death. The word gnâma is constantly heard from Bambara lips.

789 The song of young girls who have been excised begins with these words:

778 Bo n' yé, gnâma, o gnâma, bo n' yé!
304 Go away from me, gnâma, oh, gnâma, go away from me!
539 Dankoun bâ la
(i.e., Gnâma who dwell) at the great corner of land formed by two paths that cross.
Gnâma fambali, bo n' yé!
Gnama who kill, go away from me! (1)

1. Translation: "Go away from me, all kinds of gnâma, who dwell at the big dankoun (a corner of land formed by two paths that fork, intersect, or cross at the exit from the village)! Gnâma who kill, go away from me!"

789 778 The ears of those who consult sorcerers have had their fill of this word: Gnâma djougou bi é nofé. A malicious gnâma is chasing you, so avoid this and that, kill a goat, a chicken, or a dog, place a gift of cowrie shells, a kola nut, etc... in a certain place. Nonté i fa gnâma na ouli i la, otherwise the gnâma, the avenging force possessed by your father, will rise up against you.

Always, the word gnâma carries this meaning of a force, a power, a fluid that causes sickness, suffering, and death. The following proverb alone expresses much of its meaning: Ni warani-n-kala ko, /28/ ka fa, gnâma si dé t'o la. If the panther (a tyrant as wicked as a panther) says, "Let us kill him," we surely have no gnâma to set against him (no force or energy that we might set against him as a counterbalance to the force of his gnâma).

789 Animals also have gnâma, and the gnâma of birds are among
178 those most feared. By preference, they attack little children, who
825 die in convulsions as a result; it is impossible to mistake the cause
153 of their illness and death, since the hands and feet of the child curl
up like a bird's claws. Birds are thought to be especially wicked in
winter time, undoubtedly because they nest, find plenty of food, and
[751] are big, fat, and vigorous. During that season mothers tie around
the necks of nursing infants a string that has nine knots in it, which
places them under the protection of their gnâma. Birds keep their
gnâma even when dead, and I remember that in November or December,
1907, all the village of Songhobougou attributed a small influenza
epidemic to the death of a big black bird (the djougo), which a
European killed in one of their fields. "We have pains in our kidneys,
we have pains in our throats, and we cough," they said dismally,
"and the hunter is to blame for it all. Toubabou ko té vva? A ye
djougo do fa en ka forola, djougo gnâma do.... It is the European's
fault, he killed a djougo in our fields and we are weighed down with
gnâma." /29/

Chapter 2

Animism and Its Consequences

1. The Beliefs about Spirits

776 The Bambara has not deified the forces of nature. Although in some instances he shows them respect and fears them, he leaves them without priest, /sacrificial/ victim, or altar: he is not a "nature worshipper" in the strict sense of the word; his true religion is animism. His spiritualism knows no bounds and he sees genii just about everywhere. The bush is full of these spirits; they lodge in the trees or lounge astride branches; they run around the outskirts of villages; splash in ponds and wells; they pull themselves onto high rocks,

152 After all, what can one do about an evil that cannot be exorcised
except to bear it? What can one do against a powerful being that
cannot be disarmed? Nevertheless, in the depth of his being he feels
a need to enjoy himself (and enjoyment for him consists in drinking,
eating, sleeping, and procreating); therefore he feels a horror of all
suffering and neglects nothing that can protect him from it. In order
751 to live in peace, he reddens everything a little with blood and covers
789 his body with grigris or good-luck charms, with talismans that change
the course of things and even of nature, and lastly amulets which will
forearm him against poison, help him avoid an accident, cause the
sorcery of the malicious to miscarry, send away the *gnâma* of the
genii, of the living and the dead, and prevent the unknown forces
which are found more or less everywhere in nature from taking hold of
the wearer. For this protection they address themselves to the priests
of the *djiné* and the *boli*, and especially to the sorcerers who have
close contacts with the genii and are the mediators between man and
the entire invisible world.

776 Since the Bambara conceived the visible and invisible world as
782 similar to what he believes himself to be, he has come to believe
quite naturally and without any effort that the genii can be seen and
conversed with their language understood and, finally, that it is possible
to subjugate the forces of nature and hold them in one's power.
By making offerings and sacrifices or causing them to be made through
the intermediary of a priest, he can win a spirit's favor and thus
lessen his fears and terrors. But if the spirit is weak, they will be
ready to withdraw their attentions; it must be equal to the one feared
and if possible outdo it.

778 It is force, or, to use their term, *fanga*, that governs each
791 person's conduct toward his neighbor; to be obeyed, a man must first
cause himself to be feared, and only a powerful man will succeed
and see everything yield before him. /34/

The Negroes have seen people of low birth and poor family succeed in increasing their property and become rich to the point of where they have servants and slaves and dominate a whole village, a whole tribe, or a whole people. Since they like to reason from

794 793 bolitigi, the latter have every interest in protecting them, for not only do they pay /38/ their masters annual dues of 80 to 160 cowrie shells, which is little, but they also provide the meats and kola nuts for sacrifices and the d'lo, or beer, for the nocturnal drinking bouts and orgies, and thus are a real godsend.

3. Metamorphosis

776 789 The Negroes say that a djiné or a boli genic can pass from one body into another. Today it may paddle in a pond, be enclosed in a tree, or sit on a rock; tomorrow, if it wishes, it will make its dwelling in a cow's tail, in a horn, in a dirty rag. Whatever its dwelling may be, it is never confined. The Negroes compare these spirits to the wind, to a breath which enters and penetrates into a space through the smallest crack and fills it. Yet they have bodies and are equipped with organs; they drink, eat, and procreate and differ from man only in their tenuity. Since the Negroes are convinced that certain people have become able to master and command the spirits, could they not come to believe that it was possible to attain, like them, a rarefied state? In any case, they do believe in metamorphosis, and it is by entering into an animal or plant, or changing himself into an animal, a plant, etc., that the wicked person succeeds most often in avenging himself, in appeasing his hatred, and even in doing evil for the mere pleasure of doing it.

789 564 154 A good number of sorcerers have this privilege, and sorcerers are not the only ones! Entire castes have the power of metamorphosis; among others the Koulé, who dig out canoes and mend cracked gourds, can all change themselves into hyenas. The sons of the Siri, who are members of the sect dedicated to the boli of this name and are called souba (1) because they commit their crimes during the night, change

1. The name souba is derived from sou ("night") and ba ("great"), ma ("man"), being implied. It means "a man of the great night," "men

789 564 754 who operate in the depth of night, " but by no means refers to nocturnal sorcerers. Moreover, in the eyes of the Negroes it designates not a bugaboo, but a reality.

themselves into hyenas in order to dig up corpses and eat them, and into *gingin* ("owl, " "screech owl") to drink the blood of sleeping men and women. It is said that the blood of young girls has an especially exquisite taste, /39/ and when the *souba* are unable to enter a dwelling in material form to obtain it, they change themselves into such a rarefied breath that they go through the walls and roofs.

753 789 754 All persons whose faces are disfigured with scars resulting from boils or canker sores are considered victims of a *souba*, as are those whose legs are rotted by syphilis; every person infected by erysipelas goes to the members of the *Siri* sect, the *souba*.

791 789 In addition to the *souba* there are the *gné-fla* (1), men with two eyes, with second sight, so called because they see the world of invisible beings and know the secret thoughts of men without having to undergo metamorphosis. Some of them are good and some evil; there are those who use their prerogatives to halt the blows of the *souba* and protect their fellows, and others who use them only to harm their neighbors. As the good as well as the evil can abuse their power, the Negroes keep them all together, and since the *souba* are almost always *gné-fla* as well, they are indiscriminately feared and hated.

789 When a person is metamorphosed into something else he keeps his intelligence and his reason, but he is dominated by an instinct, either good or evil, which destroys his will and anesthetizes him.

1. They are supposed to have the ability to make themselves invisible by means of grisgris hung on their belts. Deprived of these, they are powerless.

789 It is impossible for him to resist this force, this power which seizes him and forces him to act. His mercy or his rage is exercised on the first person at hand; he does not even spare those who are dear to him, and his children, his wives, and his friends quite often become his victims. He has one excuse: he remembers nothing -- for a very good reason -- and if he does remember, it seems to him that he dreamed.

794 789 The Siri sect, which admits women to its ranks, hides its mysteries in such profound secrecy that it is impossible to have a really accurate and precise idea of them, at least for the moment. Nor is it possible to know who is a souba without being a souba oneself; one can only guess. If someone were to denounce his fellow as really being a son of the Siri, he would be declaring himself to be a member of the sect, and the vengeance of the people would fall on both the accuser and the accused. /40/

Belief in the souba, the gne-fla, and in all those people metamorphosing themselves is most childish, and like all Europeans I have treated it as a myth, a daydream, and a bogy used by men to terrify women and children. But now, I must state that the contrary is true: this belief is generally held and is firmly entrenched in minds of the Bambara, and anyone who would try to prove the impossibility of metamorphosis to one of them would appear a fool in his eyes, for to him it is a fact (1).

1. The Siri sect, whose members are known in the Ségou circle as the souba, and among the Malinké, the people of the Worodougou, etc., etc., as the soubaga, resembles the cannibals of Uganda, the Basêzi, and the cannibals of the Ouchirombo, the Baswêzi. These cannibals are not a separate people (in a given family some may be Basêzi or Baswêzi and others not), but members of a sect similar to that of the Bambara souba and capable of the same transformations

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789 and metamorphoses. Although I have no precise data, this coincidence leads me to think that the same is true of cannibals of the Ubangi.

782 To be convinced one need only be present at the sacrifices; no matter whether the offering is to the djiné genii, the boli genii, or to the shades of ancestors, there recurs, always, the phrase: "Deliver us from the souba and the gné-fla." One of the chief functions of the boli fetishes is just this, and there are some whose special and primary role is to make war against the Siri genii. One of these fetishes is the Nama, a powerful boli which is greatly honored, venerated, and, I should say, fashionable in the Ségou circle and among all Mande peoples. The Ngouansa, known especially in the Worodougou, is also said to specialize in this sphere. From time to time it makes its appearance in the Ségou circle, and its owner without fail does his bit of business and fills his purse. People run to him from all sides bringing hens, goats, and kola nuts, and I have seen these Ngouansa tigi, or masters of a Ngouansa, red with blood after spending the entire morning sacrificing. Before cutting their victims' throats, they stand, facing east with arms akimbo, and shout at the tops of their voices: "Souba, you are dogs, you are even less, the excrements of dogs, oubou bo."

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824 Would the name of the souba and the gné-fla be heard so often from the lips of the Negroes, would families, villages, and sects /41/ spill so much blood or offer so many kola nuts, if they did not sincerely believe in them? Not only do they find an irrefutable proof of the possibility of metamorphosis in the fact that the caterpillar turns into a chrysalis which becomes a butterfly, they will also tell you that the winged termite, "that short-lived creature which on winter evenings comes in swarms around the lights, scattering wings everywhere, in the soup and on the plates," buries itself in the ground, swells like a sorghum seed, grows roots, and becomes a graceful shrub and then a beautiful tree provided it is spared by fire. I do not know the scientific name of this shrub or tree, but the Negroes call it sandéré.

754 674 The dounkono is administered or poured by sliding a pinch of it under the nail of the middle finger of the left hand and throwing it with a skillfully concealed flick into the food or drink of the enemy. Food sauce, dégé (millet flour mixed with water), millet beer (d'lo), and di kolé (hydromel) are suitable and without doubt easily poisoned.

Throwing poison, korti sou, remains the prerogative of the sorcerers, priests, and masters of the fetishes, and one must be somebody in order to use it (2). As with the dounkono, a pinch is slid under /54/ the nail of the middle finger, and with a strong flick it is thrown onto the enemy or merely toward him or onto an object which has belonged to him, and it is ordered to be effective, to kill him if possible, or at least to reward him with a sickness which he will long remember.

The Bambara fear the korti far more than the dounkono and if an enemy seriously threatens him with it they tremble. For a person so threatened is no longer dealing with a man, a power equal to his own; he must be on guard against an all-powerful god who places his strength and power at the service of the man. The force is submissive and obedient, triumphant and vengeful; it delivers its blows blindly where it is ordered and onto any person against whom it is aroused and against whom it is hurled. That, in my opinion, is the exact translation of the expression, korti sou ma la. As a dog is set on a person (oulou sou ma la), so korti poison is thrown at him (korti sou ma la).

The Negroes say that korti has a crushing effect: when it strikes you, you feel a violent upheaval throughout your body, your limbs stiffen, and you fall backward. You may die of the attack, but

[264 •789] 2. There are many old Bambara who, after a meal with a neighbor or friend, mutter a prayer while washing their hands and make the motion of throwing korti poison. This is a curse which they throw against the enemies of the family that has received them.

843 291 One last discreet word about the pregnant women: Their loincloths, the cloth rags with which they gird their hips, are held in place by means of a cord, a common string knotted below the navel, a very unsightly thing, or sometimes by means of a colored cloth, a red handkerchief, for example, folded in a triangle.

842 789 A male child, is more highly valued than a girl, and to obtain this blessing the Bambara consult sorcerers and diviners and sacrifice to the boli fetishes. The women have great confidence in amulets, and they wear hung at the waist many dirty bags which form an ugly roll under the tafé, or loincloth (the knotted cord, tafo, is worn around the hips). Some wear their "boy bringer" where it can be seen; it is a square leather bag three fingers wide which contains medicine: bits of bark and wood, and sometimes a goat's horn which the woman slips between her thighs (1). /168/

> 1. This horn is also often worn in order that the child may have a perfect body, or so as not to have a premature delivery. Nicolay says that these talismans or magic objects, which are capable of changing the course of events and even of nature, are made and sold by sorcerers. /Fernand Nicolay, Curiosités des lois et coutumes. Histoire des croyances, superstitions, moeurs, usages et coutumes (selon le plan du Décalogue) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. A History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Manners, Usages and Customs (according to the Outline of the Decalogue), Paris: V. Retaux, 1901./

844 Birth of a child. -- In Bambara country the "demon" usually takes part in the joys and sorrows of the family. However, I have

881 534 Shouting -- and that is an understatement, the young people throw themselves onto their instruments, which are drums of every shape and size. Some, the bass drums, are carried on the abdomen and fastened to the waist by a bark cord; others, smaller but longer, are slid between the legs or under the arms, and tambourines, hung from the neck, swing at the level of the navel as a new kind of pendant. The old women with toothless jaws join in; they scrape two iron rods together or create syncapation by furiously beating on an inverted gourd floating in a *conari* full of water with a piece of wood or a pumpkin stem.

881 Virgins, married women, widows, prostitutes (all mingling) slowly circle again and again around the orchestra behind the *soli*, shaking in their hands the bags of goatskin or boxes of white iron, and until morning every boy that is to be circumcised and every girl to be excised hears the glories and feats of his lineage. There is nothing very lofty about these songs containing thousands and thousands of wishes; although there is a feeling of passion in them, there is no love; beauty of the heart is lacking, and all is badly told. The men also from time to time leave the jug and mingle in the dance, but the night belongs to the women. And it belongs to the gods. If, tired of the bedlam, you leave the ball and go outside the village to breathe a little fresh air, you hear the piercing cries of the herald of the gods, you even see him in the darkness, running from one tree [292] to another; with horns on his head and a coat decorated with feathers of hens, guinea fowl, egrets (1), etc., he looks like those story demons which grandmothers depict so well in the late evenings.

● [789] And this herald of the gods, with his retinue, is performing a curious rite: he is chasing out the evil spirits and clearing a place for the favorite god of the village so as to drive away sorcery from the circumcised and the excised. /180/ In Bambara this is called *kéné sâlo* (1) and can be translated into French as "exorcising the place."

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1. This is the costume worn by Negroes when they dance the dance of the *Komo*-fetish.

881 until they are completely healed; for it is not until evening, when the setting sun reddens the horizon and takes on its bloody hue that [292] they re-enter the village. From this day on they wear a costume (all yellow if they are Bambara) of trousers, a blouse, and on their heads a kind of handkerchief tied under the chin (4). They pass the time in making mats, singing, striking together gourd disks strung on a stick, and especially in eating, "for they are being stuffed," and in sleeping. /181/

881 304 But in speaking of the boys, I forgot the little girls! They undress under the tree nearest to the sacred karité. Naked as a worm, each one when her turn comes runs at top speed with her abdomen to the ground and throws herself into the arms of a woman, also of the blacksmith caste, who immediately cuts her. On a braided platter, [285 415 189] made of fine, pliable grass, the mother or her substitute receives the bloody fragment which will be a grigri, a talisman or good-luck charm for the house, and while the gunpowder speaks, the disabled girl, pretending not to be suffering at all from the loss of her clitoris, goes back to her place, and another replaces her.

881 The session ends with the last girl, and the crowd breaks out in a song of joy and triumph. The mother, the eldest sister, or a [482] serving woman wraps the excised girl in a big white cloth and carries her astride her back to the village to the hut which has been prepared for her (1). This carrying, so laughable in itself (they can walk, even

4. In some villages, instead of the yellow handkerchief the circumcised have a cap with two points. In Bani country the circumcised wear the blouse and handkerchief, or cap, and nothing more.

[621 346] 1. Each village is divided into quarters. The excised girls of each quarter have their hut in that quarter.

585 Departure of the bride. Exorcism of her hut by the *boli* of the village. Her entrance into the village. The first night. -- It is night, the hour when families crouch in a circle around the gourds of *to*, or millet gruel, stuff themselves with food, and noisily suck their fingers. Why is it, then, that this evening the women hurry in such numbers to the public square with gourds on their heads? At every turning of the streets there are people who are cleaning their long flintlocks, and in the *b'lon*, or entry huts, there is the deafening noise of drums as the skins are stretched and they are tuned. And the cries that fill the village crack your ears and jar your nerves. What is it then? A young woman, a fiancée, who is struggling in the arms of two husky fellows and shrieking -- for appearances, since as soon as she is outside the walls her cries cease and she places on her head the long cloth (a present from her husband) from which she can make herself three loincloths and in very lively fashion follows the women and girls who are carrying her trousseau. The band of young men, with drums, trumpets, and guns, hurries after her, and there are songs of joy and hand clappings, and from time to time the long-drawn-out cry, "*kouyo, kouyo,*" uttered by an old woman, tears the peace and silence of the night. /208/

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118 And while the bride, in short steps, continues her triumphal march, a strange scene takes place in the village where she is going. The chief *boli* of the village has left its putrid hiding place, and while women, children, and the uninitiated, huddled in their huts, tremble at each roar given forth by its herald, it runs about the alleys in the hands of its initiates (1). This is not all; it goes into the husband's

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1. *Ou tara djira à tjéma k'a d'a ma*: "They have gone to show her to her husband in order to give her to him." The real expression is as follows: *A wéléla k'a se-n-don, A se-n-donna*; "Her husband has summoned her in order to sleep with her. She has slept with her husband." The answer is: *Fourou kera*: "They got married."

585 court and enters the hut of the bride. At that instant the boli déou,
189 sons of the boli, sing the sacred hymn and abandon themselves to
778 their dances, and the god itself lies on the white cloth spread on the bed, on the mat where the poor girl soon will rest. Like every rite of this kind, this ceremony is called kéné salo, "to exorcise the place (2)," and its purpose is to drive out the harmful spirits who might have evil intentions against the woman and her husband. For the husband it is also a means of publicly bearing witness to his faith in the boli and his love and his attachment for it, in short, a means of obtaining its favor and attaining a happy and fertile marriage.

585 The young woman and her retinue continue to walk very slowly along the winding paths, and in the distance, here and there, a gunshot, a clapping of hands, and the famous cry of "kouyo kouyo" can be heard; the cry comes near and again draws away, depending on the bends of the path, only to draw near again with a stronger burst. Finally they arrive at the edge of the fields, 200 to 300 meters at most from the village. The young men run to place themselves at the head of the procession, the bearers of the trousseau pass to the rear, the drums roll, and the horns of the band roar loudly, for this is the dance. But what a dance! The women, bent double, move
535 their torsos back and forth in a manner which might best be compared with that of a worm that draws back and slowly stretches out; they glide over the ground without lifting /209/ their feet, leaving on the sand behind them a long trail as if a boa had passed by. With discouraging slowness, they go like this to the gate of the village, taking an hour, and often two, to cover these few hundred meters.

Covered with sweat and white with dust, the procession moves along the walls; here it is at the gate, firing guns, clapping hands,

2. Kéné, "surface," "plane," "floor," "court"; salo, "stroke gently with the hand"; this term denotes a movement of the hands that the sorcerers use when they are treating an invalid, "to make /ritual/ gestures."

774 is the object of constant concern during agrarian rituals. The role of the soul of plants is particularly noticeable in their medicinal uses. Drawing a remedy from a plant may cause its death, liberating its spiritual principles for the benefit of the sick man. Because of this, such an act is equated with a blood sacrifice.

With the exception of the *ngovo* tomato, plants have no *dya*. The shadow (*suma*) of a plant is not independent like that of a man or an animal. It exists only through light effects and its movements are caused by the air and the wind moving its leaves and branches. This is what the Bambara means when he says that the *dya* has a life of its own and depends on Faro, whereas the plant's *suma* depends on the spirit Téliko, master of the air.

774 787 804 843 An individual's *dya* can be known and his temperament and life possibilities assessed by measuring his shadow on the earth at noon. The unit employed is the little finger, which is a corporeal symbol of the person. If a pregnant woman is thus measured, the sex of the child may be predicted.

774 [579] [595 851] When a boy or a girl gets married, it is said of them: *a ye a dya furu*: "he (or she) has married his dya." For it is impolite to say that a person married anyone but his spiritual double. Besides, the union of the couple is repeated by the union of their *dya* which like themselves are of opposite sex. In olden times, male twins married the same woman and the latter's *dya* was taken over by Faro in the Niger. The child she conceived was the son of both husbands.

589 791 Some men do not marry. This is true of the Soma, the religious diviner attached to the major Bambara societies. Initiated in the course of a solitary sojourn in the bush, he left his *dya* with the invisible spirits. This is a prerequisite to the gift of double sight with which he is endowed as well as a protection against possible dangers to the *dya* when it remains in contact with the earth, or when it approaches other humans. The true spouse of the Soma is his *dya*: he may mate only with it on a fixed date when the spirits return it to him for this purpose. /61/

The *tere*

774 The *tere* was inflicted by Pemba on Mousso Koroni in order to diminish her power at the time he was pursuing her. This explains its complexity: it is at once the character of a man, his strength,

781 mechanism, invisible for the ordinary person, unknown to the noninitiate, can be perceived by the seer and the diviner who are conscious of the fact that they are manipulating the divine with the cowries. Because of this they bend over the constantly renewed shape given to the dispersed material with a powerful feeling of the presence of the forces to whom they are appealing.

The Somaya

791 According to tradition, the *somaya* or science of the *soma* was revealed in Mandé, that is to say, it was known to the Bambara before their arrival in the territory which they now occupy. It was restricted to a few privileged persons. The gifts of clairvoyance which it presupposes may be discovered in a newborn baby at the time when the signs determining his character (*tere*) are examined by the elders during the name-giving ceremony. In early childhood frequent manifestations of suffering are a sign of the spirits' presence and from the first steps, the way of walking itself confirms the child's vocation. About the age of ten, the young boy "guided by the Téliko spirits" is attracted by them into the bush near a pond where he lives in their invisible company for several days.

After this retreat the child returns to his village, provided with a little stone (*ǰinaworo*, literally, kola nut of the spirits), a sign of the alliance he has contracted with them.

However, he pretends not to know the place he came from. He also never makes any statements concerning the gift of double sight with which he has been endowed, but does manifest it by making some unsolicited revelations about their future to those he encounters. After a time, people recognize by these signs his quality as a Soma, which implies a change in his spiritual principles: the *dya* remains under the protection of the Téliko spirits who also control the diviner; they act directly on his person and hold his health and life in their power, punishing him in case of an infraction or in case of disorders which are harmful to the exercise of his art (1).

(1) A Soma would become a *mahalakillen* or a harmful animal if his *dya* were altered through contact with the impure earth.

791 589 The gifts he has received and the position of his *dya* compel /221/ the Soma to remain unmarried and to observe a certain chastity. "The wife of the Soma lives with the spirits," says the informant who adds that every forty-nine days (7 x 7) his *dya* is returned to him during the night for the purpose of a sexual union.

From the moment the Soma begins to exercise his art regularly, he visits the bush from time to time to consult the spirits and make offerings to them. Moreover, the latter visit him in his home where he attracts them by burning a powder that gives off a smell of which they are fond.

Like the *griot*, the Soma has a mouth full of *nyama*: his own to which is added that of the spirits who help him and control him. His word is so powerful that he rarely announces a death, for this would contribute to the propagation of death.

The Soma must be rigorously clean, wear simple clothes, and even dress as an indigent. During ceremonies he hangs the stone *ǰineworo* around his neck with a string and must always carry this stone in a pocket of his tunic. He generally belongs to the Komo society and may become its chief. In this case he is the recognized diviner of the village.

791 766 The Soma keeps in his home his stone of alliance and his harp with its accessories. When he dies, his body is left for some time alone in the house; the spirits are supposed to come and reclaim these objects which no one must touch and which no one will inherit. The burial of the body and the funeral ceremonies are performed only after this delay. His soul is never kept in the Komo altars and goes to join the *dya* in the domains of Tɛliko; the spiritual principles of the Soma are not reincarnated and the gift which he has received is not hereditary.

791 534 The Soma's harp (Fig. 17) (1) is made of a rectangular chest (*bara*) pierced through longitudinally by a long piece of wood (*ngoni kala*, literally, stalk of the *ngoni*) surrounded by little leather thongs in the shape of rings (*ǰiri wolo*, literally, skin of wood). These hold

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1. See G. Dieterlen, *Morphologie et symbolique de deux instruments de musique bambara* /The Morphology and Symbolism of Two Instruments of Bambara Music/.

791 534 the goatskin thongs (ngoni dyuru, literally, ropes of the ngoni). At the end of the stalk, ngoni ku, is affixed an iron percussion plate (boso) decorated with rings of the same metal (nyege nyegele) which are the "earrings of the spirits." These rings are said to be "multicolored' for the sound they emit is blurred and confused.

[532]

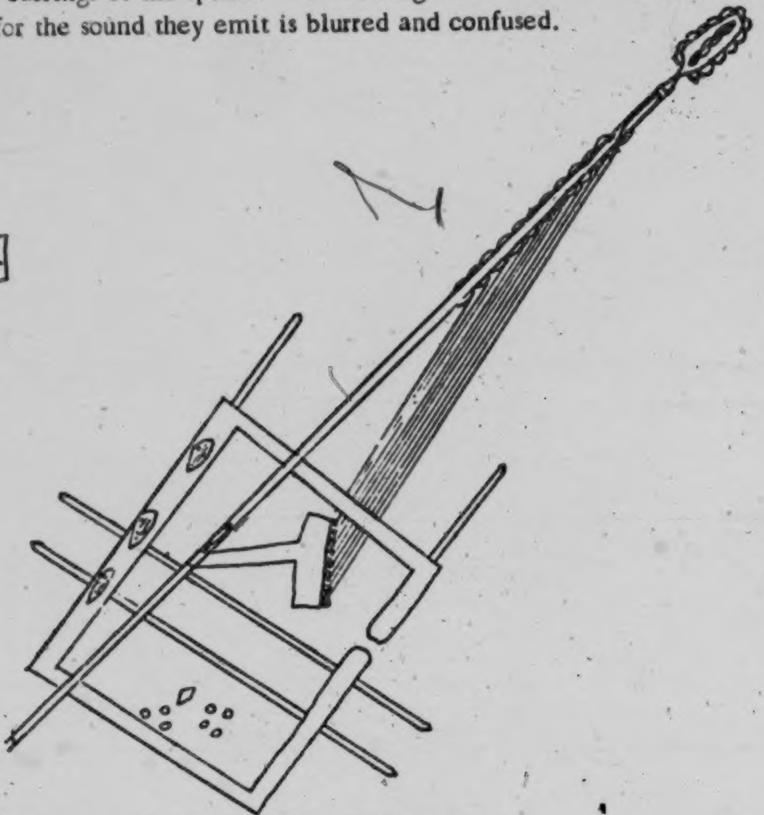

Fig. 17 —The Divining Harp of the Soma.
The instrument represents the face of the ancestor Koumabana who received "the word," and his tomb; on another level, it symbolizes also the face of the diviner and his tomb. (Drawing by an informant.)

When the percussion plate is placed on the handle, "it increases the sounds and filters them in the air, which pleases the spirits and calls them to the diviner whom they assist during his work." If the instrument /222/ is used without the percussion plate, that is to say, for a secular purpose, the spirits are not alerted by the playing of the music.

791 534 The skin, stretched on the box by means of goatskin thongs, is soaked in water over which the name of the spirit Téliko has been pronounced forty-nine times. The supporting strings are made of twisted shreds of shrouds picked up in a cemetery. The musical strings are made of goatskin, numbering eight, /223/ symbol of the word (1),

1. The harp of the Soma differs from that of the *griot* which usually has even strings.

and are named as follows, beginning with the shortest: *kumabana*, *fa dẽ* (son of the father), *fa* (father), *fa koroke* (elder brother of the father), *fa dogone* (younger brother of the father), *ba* (mother), *modẽ* (grandson), *fa so* (house of the father).

Tied to a bridge, *y̌iri ni* (literally, teeth of the *ngoni*), which represents the mouth and teeth of Koumabana, they are the ancestor's words. On another level, they are also the home and the family of the spirit Téliko.

Of a relatively equal length in different harps, they give eight different notes; the intervals are called *dyuru fara dye* (2).

2. On some instruments we have observed, the first and the eighth string gave the same note at an interval of an octave. It may be predicted that a thorough study of Bambara music would bring to light a system of correspondences between the disposition of musical sounds and that of the world. M. Griaule, in his research on the Dogon harp, has already discovered a relationship between the notes, the numbers, and the universe.

[532] On the right side of the box the three first ancestors of the Bambara are sometimes drawn; Koumabana and the two elders who died after him. They may be recognized by the hair with which their faces are covered, just as those of the ancestors to whom the razor was unknown (3).

3. This detail has been observed on ancient instruments in the region of Koutiala.

791 534 The box is transpierced by two wooden sticks, če kala (literally, man-stalk), recalling the two millet stalks which accompany every dead man into his grave and which are in themselves symbols of the two elders.

791 534 755 When the Soma falls ill, he removes the two sticks from his instrument and places them beside him on his mat, anticipating the position he will lie in the grave. Thus stretched out, "he is in the grave and walks with the two ancestors"; if his condition improves the sticks have liberated him from his illness. He replaces them in the harp only after his recovery.

791 534 The box contains seven pebbles, the number of man (3 + 4) and a piece of copper in the shape of a star symbolizing the word. The Soma may look into the harp through an opening on its side, called šu wo (sorcery hole) or bara dinge (hole of the box), which "permits him to breathe," to see "the ancestor Koumabana, master of the word, and to know the deepest secrets." At the bottom of the instrument another opening, considered the anus, permits the release of all that is harmful.

/224/ A red stain placed on one of the faces, sindera ble (literally, red belt), expresses the fact that the instrument is the object of blood sacrifices like the stone ǰineworo.

The case is the image, the mask of Koumabana; the two faces, called respectively kini nye, "right eye," and numa nye, "left eye," represent his eyes; the comb, his mouth; the opening, his nose and respiration; the strings, his words. It is also the replica of the tomb and of the first three of the eight ancestors who knew death. Finally, it is the face of the Soma and his tomb.

The instrument must never be touched by a woman; moreover, no one must play it if his intentions are not pure, "if his heart is not clean."

791 533 781 When the Soma plays in response to requests from those who consult him, each sound is a prayer. With his free hand he holds a twig with which he strikes the base. Each stroke is a word. As he plays, images form before his eyes and within him. He touches the cords separately according to their position and in relation to the importance of the question that is being asked. Thus, he pinches modẽ for subjects of little importance: hunt, journey, etc.; fadẽ for that which is concerned with health, procreation, the physical or moral life of the individual; fa for the future, destiny, the private and public life of a man, his

● 791 authority, his command; fa koroke for planting and cultivation, the
533 control of water, rains, and ponds, and for fortune and wealth; fa
787 dogone for the germination of grains, the formation of the ears and
the light rains; ba for all that concerns women; faso for all that concerns the family house and those who are absent.

But the Soma also plays airs with rhythms accompanied by words. He plays them one after the other during the sitting or choses them according to the character of the person consulting him and the questions raised.

The following seven songs were collected and interpreted by the Soma of Bandiagara:

"A good thing comes with a bad thing" (1). This song has the effect of revealing to the Soma the thoughts of the consulter.

1. Ko ñumã de bina ni ko dyugu ye.

"Man knows little" (2). In spite of his learning a man knows few things; a child often knows that which an adult ignores.

2. Adama dɛ̃ te ko do.

/225/ "Even when a man is satiated he may not go beyond the mother who has given him birth" (3). This rhythm is performed for those who show arrogance or vanity, or for those whose wife has left the conjugal home and has taken refuge with her father.

3. Mako fara čokočoko a tise ka temme
a wolo ba ka.

"Even if he is handsome, a man must have eyes (that is, to be informed)" (4). The Soma plays this air whenever there is a marriage, a birth, or an initiation.

4. Moko če kani čokočoko fo nɛ̃ ka soro i ku.

"The world is big" (5). When anguish overwhelms the consulter,

5. Diñɛ̃ ka bõ.

791 533 181 this song calms his restlessness and gives him back peace and serenity.

"Whatever man is, he may not go beyond God" (1). The Soma

1. Moko a kera čokočoko a te teme ngala ka.

plays this air if the consulter harbors bad intentions or if he is ignorant or stubborn. He does the same to discover the gifts of a child and to encourage the family to develop his learning.

"Joy embellishes the world" (2) is performed for futile and pleasant

2. Klo ye dīne dya.

things: feasts and dances, ornaments.

181 801 Divination, in a large measure, is the application of the static and dynamic quality of numbers. On the one hand these translate the relationships; on the other, they are symbols for phenomena, beings, behaviors, situations, and in general all the constituent parts of the universe. Though not endowed with power in themselves, they symbolize powerful and well regulated elements. It may also be said that the numbers are superior realities, the same as the primordial signs which preceded the perceptibility of all things and on account of which the things began to exist once man had taken them into his consciousness. (3)

3. See p. 17.

In the course of divination, they indicate to the individual or collective consulter his personal position with regard to the rest of the universe. In a way, they permit the formulation of a particular equation for each person at a given time.

CONCLUSION

121 /227/ It is only recently that the discipline of silence adhered to by the Blacks has been relaxed in certain circles of the initiates. Human behavior, backed up by a rigorous method, has allowed a group of researchers to establish a documentation which suffers less from the usual faults. It is no longer superficial or fragmentary; it is

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1. Compare, on p. 31 and p. 49, the conduct of Dina Wara and of Biton.

efficacies in magic and he himself is convinced that this is true. Everything he does is accepted without protest because his acts have a supernatural character. The only ones who can resist him are those who, like him, have special powers (2). Therefore he

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2. Legendary traditions abound in magic combats; see especially the tradition concerning Dinga, the ancestor of the Wagadou people, and that concerning Samba Guéladio Diégui, the hero of Fouta.

makes a point of seeking the company and advice of initiates in matters that are hidden from the common herd. These are the sorcerers, magicians and marabouts, all of whom believe that they possess -- or appear to possess -- a share in the knowledge that allows its practitioners to influence the unseen, Sometimes he is one of them or becomes one, and in any event he is always, willingly or not, dependent upon them.

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This is an age-old state of mind, which Islam has merely strengthened, for the Black man, whether Moslem or not, always regards the marabout as a diviner, a performer of miracles, a maker of philters, talismans and amulets, and a caster of spells. Many facts attest the truth of this observation, and the tales which follow will afford examples.

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It is understandable that with such beliefs[1] the Black man could hardly be expected to admit that the life of an important person, a powerful chief or a founder of an empire, could possibly be or have been banal, ordinary or simple. That is why supernatural, fictitious deeds make up such a large part of the native historical traditions that one may look in vain for any trace of the actions we see performed around us day after day. One must be very thoroughly accustomed to this delusion in order not to give way to discouragement at being unable to grasp

[1] [i.e., in magical and occult power with influence over the supernatural. - Analyst]

787 alone and it applies to the future as well as to the present and the
past.

Mantic differs from magic in that the latter allows man
787 to use certain methods so as to subordinate natural and extra-
789 natural forces, while the former is contemplative knowledge,
791 which does not impinge on the prerogatives of the divine but
merely puts divine thoughts into communication with human
understanding.

Further, theoretically at least, the diviner is not linked to any particular cult and is not to be confused with the priest, since he transmits the divine will outside of sacrifice, which is the priest's function. However, it also sometimes happens that the diviner is the oracle of a particular divinity and that the same person combines the functions of both diviner and priest as in certain cults described in what follows.

787 There are innumerable methods of divination. Before
pointing out the principal traits of some of them, let us first note that there are cases when the divinity enters into direct relationship with a human being and speaks to him in human language. The chronicle of Ségou gives an example, in the legend concerning Kolé, head of Biton's guards, who was approached by a genie in the forest and told of the conditions on which he would be assured of his power. Ngolo Diara cheated Kolé of the benefits of the revelation by carrying out the sacrifice required by the genie before Kolé got around to it.

Dreams in which events take place just as they do in reality constitute one method of direct revelation. Frequently, however, there is a variation between dream and reality [134] which makes the meaning of the dream uncertain and therefore makes an interpretation necessary. Among the Bambara there are people who act as diviners by interpreting their own dreams. On being consulted about a problem, they claim to receive in a dream during sleep the correct information for throwing light on the difficulties involved.

A favorite method is that in which the diviner abandons himself to his god: he is possessed by the god and becomes his oracle. In the trance he is, so to speak, the instrument through

771 789 nyana and seeks to use them for utilitarian ends.

By virtue of the beliefs on which it is based, religion engenders a certain degree of morality. Magic uses its knowledge to exploit the Universe for material profit.

In both camps there are initiates. Whereas the most [791] famous adepts in magic live in a kind of isolation, where they jealously keep the secret of their practices and where they exist apart from human societies which at once honor and fear them, [794] religion, on the other hand, displays its cults, if not exactly publicly, at least in the circle of the faithful. The latter, since they are usually completely familiar with the ceremonies of the cult and with the high-priests, are the masters and most venerated members of society.

Religion receives its most reliable support from the natural family and from the communities derived from that family. Legal magic has copied these organizations in the form of brotherhoods, which Europeans call "secret societies," a kind of spiritual family in which the members are only gradually admitted to all secrets.

Whereas the religion of the manes forms the strongest link that holds together the members of a community, and represents the framework of the society, magic on the other hand cares little for this union and in fact helps to disrupt it by the hatred it engenders. Thanks to magic, the individual feels competent to challenge the community and never fails to do so.

Let us look more closely into the traits characteristic of religion and those characteristicof magic.

By studying all that concerns especially the patriarchal and family communities and the associations growing out of these communities we shall be able to see the place occupied by the religion of the manes and of the spirits, as well as the effect of magic upon the basic manifestations of the life of these communities.

789 Since magic, in a sense, envelops every act of the native, it seems to us essential, at the start, to look into its characteristics so as to facilitate the understanding of all that is to follow, which is impreganted by magic in so many ways.

778 789 is a virtue which exalts his own faculties to such an extent that it gives him a supernatural power that is terrifying to the uninitiated.

This property of transmission by contact accounts for the veneration which surrounds the possessions of eminent persons and those among the dead who [142] exercised power during their lifetime. Objects especially venerated are those that were in almost constant personal use: clothing, weapons, toilet articles.

The same property of transmission no doubt also accounts for the nature attributed to matter, which has been called continuity. Everything emanating from an object retains the occult energy within it, and, further, anything that "the man who knows" (*don-na-ba*) does to these detached parts affects the whole from which they came (1). That is why an undigested portion of food, if suitably treated by the magician, can spoil the digested portion of the same food. The chronicle tells of how this theory of the continuity of matter was used against Bani. By means of hair and a sandal, stolen from him, the magician paralyzed Bani's clairvoyance and put him at Da's mercy.

791 *Magicians*. It is the learning of the magician which, so to speak, brings order out of the chaos of the world. In the broadest sense of the word, his art, magic, is a kind of utilization of the occult. It is true that there is no Bambara, from a chief down to the least of the slaves, who does not act as his own magician, but there are specialists and some of them very famous. Besides, not everyone can be a real magician. Natural talents give some individuals the power to penetrate the invisible world and to feel at home there. Some are initiated by genii who have taken a fancy to them, as shown in the chronicle of Biton; others learn the craft from a relative or a well-known magician, either at no cost or at great expense.

[787] 1. Divination by means of the *kolon' kala*, previously described, is allied to this belief. The bits and pieces of the deceased act as the dead man himself would do in guiding the bearers of the *kolon' kala*.

● 791 Every magician (soma) (2) has his own methods: one may be intuitive and work from an inner light; another may operate only by deductive divination. All who lay claim to real power submit to rules which are often strange and rigorous and which dominate the most trifling activities of their lives. And all are fanatically determined to keep the secrets which, in their own eyes no less than in the eyes of the uninitiated, are the foundation of their mysterious powers.

[143] Very properly, the range of their investigations and their action is without limits, since everything is impregnated by the energy which is everywhere and in everything and which perhaps is everything, material form being merely one of its manifestations.

789 It is worthy of note that artisans are subject to the same
dislike as that for ill-famed magicians. It is not too hazardous
463 to deduce that manual labor once consisted of magic rites which
791 were held to be indispensable in conquering matter. This is
still evident in the case of blacksmiths and hunters.

791 Everywhere in the Sudan, blacksmiths are considered
and, indeed, behave like magicians. The extraction of iron is
326 surrounded by essentially magic rites in which only blacksmiths
may participate. After ritual preparation, they work naked while the job lasts and return to normal life only for a certain time after the work has been completed; even then they have to observe special rules. Their work is commonly thought to be tinged with magic. Their tools are impregnated by this invisible energy and, on certain days, the hut in which they are kept becomes a sort of temple, with the blacksmith as priest. The chronicle (1) attributes to fa Siné Dyara, a blacksmith who could understand the language of the birds, a role especially helpful to the Massa-si.

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2. A sorcerer is a suba (See Chapter 7).

1. See p. 112.

326 Raffenel has given us an interesting portrait of one of
791 these Bambara blacksmiths, whom he called father Niany, whose guest he was at Foutobi (Kaarta). He saw him act successively as fa, as priest of the manes and of the guardian spirits of the family, as doctor, and as exorcist. He was always alert, always excited and ever watching for the thousand manifestations of the invisible and hastening either to cooperate with them or to force them to do his will.

Here are some excerpts concerning the highly character-
752 istic personage, father Niany:

"I saw a small child die of a snake-bite," reports Raffenel (2); "the poor creature was hideous and swollen up like a balloon. Its mother had laid it [144] down in a field of millet which she was hoeing. A snake appeared (1) and bit the child. The mother misinterpreted its cries and offered her breast. Soon, however, the swelling became evident and the child had died within 24 hours." ....

2. In Nouveau voyage au pays des nègres [A New Journey to the Land of the Negroes], Vol. 1, p. 417.

[137] 1. "These snakes are 50 centimeters long and about 4 centimeters in diameter. Their back is gray, with very conspicuous black rings around the body. They have white bellies and a flat head rounded at the end. The part nearest the tail is covered on the upper surface by a series of vertical scales covering about a quarter of the length of the body. The tail is much smaller in diameter than the body. They like the outskirts of villages and are markedly fond of the roofs of houses." (Raffenel)

755 "(1) I have stated elsewhere that among Negro beliefs the tradition of the state of possession was carefully preserved. One evening I was present at a ceremony designed to drive a devil out of a woman's body. Father Niany, the universal man of Foutobi, was the exorcist. At the first rumor of this event, a throng converged on the woman's hut and I joined the crowd, curious to see what was going to happen. I saw a wretched woman rolling about on the ground in terrible convulsions in the midst of a circle of onlookers who let her thrash about without trying to help and merely watched her movements. There was great excitement when Niany appeared, and the circle opened to let him pass. He approached the woman, touched her, said a few words in a low voice, lifted her and placed her on a mat.

"The woman at once became calm, and father Niany, who seemed not at all impressed by his triumph, withdrew after speaking a few words in her ear. The crowd melted away, also without showing the least surprise at such complete and prompt success. I conclude that such happenings were not at all infrequent and that Niany had a special talent for driving devils out of women's bodies. I cannot [146] say what her trouble was, but when I saw her I thought that she was simply having an attack of epilepsy and I did not recognize the usual symptoms of that dreadful malady in the sort of convulsions she was having."

791 609 Though he was sure of his art, Niany nevertheless recognized its hazards. There is no magician who does not find another who is more powerful. A foreigner, that unknown creature, is a danger, because he may chance to possess secrets which might invalidate the cleverest methods. That is why Niany fears Islam. He has an idea, which to us seems strange, of what Allah may be, as compared to a miscreant like himself and, being persuaded of the continuity of matter, he applies it in a manner that we shall describe in the chapter on Islam.

791 609 821 Though he may have his doubts about Islam, Niany is no less suspicious of the maneuvers of the foreigner, Raffenel, who is staying with him.

1. Raffenel, op. cit., p. 463.

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"(1) One morning he came and complained bitterly that

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1. Raffenel, op. cit., p. 322.

I was preventing the rain from falling and that I was causing a lot of trouble to the villagers. I could not imagine, at first, why he was thus berating me, but he explained. It was his considered opinion that the rain was very much annoyed with me for being too much interested in it. I was watching the raindrops and examining the clouds, and so the rain was getting its vengeance by refusing to fall. Father Niany resented my thermometers too, but his principal target was my barometer, to which he attributed all sorts of evil designs.

"On the following day he returned to the charge, accompanied by a deputation of farmers carrying their agricultural tools on their shoulders.

"'We've thought it all over,' said Niany, 'and we have decided that since you can stop the rain, you can also make it fall again. Therefore we have come to ask you to speak to the rain in our name.'" ....

"Two days later there came another deputation, but one which, this time, looked threatening. Among them were some [147] new faces.

"'We want you to make it rain,' said the leaders, with an angry glance at my barometer, 'for we have already waited too long. You will never convince us that what you do with your machines (they pointed at my instruments), while you look up into the air and write down the grigri, is innocent. Never before in this country, has the rain held off so long from falling and no one has ever before done what you're doing. Manage it as you will, but we must have rain by tonight.'

"The sky was filled with heavy black clouds which reassured me. .... An hour later the rain fell, but those wretches, no doubt fearing that my presence would interfere with its good intentions, pushed me unceremoniously into my hut and shut the door. By this ridiculous step they prevented me from watching the progress of a wonderful storm and noting the barometric pressure changes.

● 791

609 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that
821 was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and
show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the
Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
224 start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equipment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well
as an arsenal of magic weapons.

825 The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
778 they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of
this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at
some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The
animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[552] wara-ba means lion; sa-ma, elephant; ma-li, hippopotamus;
bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names
indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief
that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The
attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an application of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual
and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a
small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

231 It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
552 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of
825 their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once
held and which is still shown on occasion: fa-li meaning "donkey"
derives from fa meaning "powerful," just as nya-ri meaning "cat"
derives from nya and has the same meaning, along with ba
Meaning "goat."

231 meaning "goat." In the case of the goat, there remain some
825 customs that are very suggestive. Its milk is the basis of the
most solemn of all oaths, that of fraternization; milk is also
used to put out fires started by lightning and the hide is used to
make sandals worn by widows during the period of mourning.
The chronicle tells us that a certain dish made of a goat's head
gives rise to the chief's power and sustains it (1). In spite of all
this, the goat shares with the donkey a general scorn and they
are considered to be the born companions of slaves. This is
perhaps why some people refuse to allow either animal to come
into the house. Indeed, it is believed that a rich and powerful
man can be ruined if either of these animals enters his house or,
even worse, if he touches them.

778 *Magician's work.* So it is that man is immersed in a
strange fluid. In the final analysis, everything, man included,
791 [149] is merely a manifestation of this fluid. Currents and
754 eddies have all forms of life at their mercy, and only the strongest are able to resist, control and even acquire in the struggle greater power than they would otherwise display. "The one who knows" can avoid or follow this chaotic movement; he can control himself and others. He is the real "master" (*soma*) and he alone can utilize this ever present and ever powerful invisible world.

754 What makes a magician can be described by a single term: the magic weapon, to be used for defense as well as for attack, and indeed for anything else, by one who knows how to use it. Let us consider some of the examples in the Bambara arsenal.

For anyone who wants to destroy an enemy, the *so ma sama* (lit., "bundle of the person of the house") is a valuable weapon. It is a mysterious powder, kept in the horn of a hind, in which is placed a small stick. It is used in the following manner: let us suppose that a Bambara wishes to harm a person who is passing through the village. The Bambara secretly takes

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1. See p. 31, in connection with Dina Wara.

794 782 are all designed to attract and capture the god and, for this purpose, to transfer the officiant from our world to the supernatural one. I have never heard anyone claim that the costume and the various actions of the officiant were intended to counterfeit the *nyana*, nor that the *boli* in any way represented the native's idea of the god.

The Clergy

793 Even though, in theory, familial *nyana* are inherited, those worshiped by the brotherhoods are usually bought. The head of the brotherhood is called the *nyana-tigi* (master of the *nyana*) (1), whether he has inherited the office, been elected to it, or has imposed himself by virtue of being the most prominent founder of the brotherhood. It is he who keeps the *boli*, hence his title of *boli-tigi*, and who knows all the secrets of the cult. His duty is to direct the cult and to administer the brotherhood, and this gives him considerable local prestige.

The initiates of higher rank are called *dye-n-fa-u*, "masters of the truth." The *nyana-tigi* chooses his aides from this group, particularly the person who, "seized by the god" (*wara-mina-den'*), becomes the "oracle" (*wara-da*). [787 791] The role of medium requires special persons who can go into a trance under the influence of the animating spirit, and the *wara-da* has the duty of choosing and training the person who will succeed him or replace him, if the need arises (2).

All the initiates are to some extent diviners through practices which are peculiar to them, and the brotherhoods often

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1. Ordinarily the word *nyana* is replaced by the specific name of the *nyana*, Komo, Nama, Nya, etc.

2. These *dye-n-fa* students are called *soma-de* (elder sons) in the Komo brotherhood.

152 After all, what can one do about an evil that cannot be exorcised except to bear it? What can one do against a powerful being that cannot be disarmed? Nevertheless, in the depth of his being he feels a need to enjoy himself (and enjoyment for him consists in drinking, eating, sleeping, and procreating); therefore he feels a horror of all suffering and neglects nothing that can protect him from it. In order
751 to live in peace, he reddens everything a little with blood and covers
789 his body with grigris or good-luck charms, with talismans that change the course of things and even of nature, and lastly amulets which will forearm him against poison, help him avoid an accident, cause the sorcery of the malicious to miscarry, send away the gnâma of the genii, of the living and the dead, and prevent the unknown forces which are found more or less everywhere in nature from taking hold of the wearer. For this protection they address themselves to the priests of the djiné and the boli, and especially to the sorcerers who have close contacts with the genii and are the mediators between man and the entire invisible world.

776 Since the Bambara conceived the visible and invisible world as
782 similar to what he believes himself to be, he has come to believe quite naturally and without any effort that the genii can be seen and conversed with their language understood and, finally, that it is possible to subjugate the forces of nature and hold them in one's power. By making offerings and sacrifices or causing them to be made through the intermediary of a priest, he can win a spirit's favor and thus lessen his fears and terrors. But if the spirit is weak, they will be ready to withdraw their attentions; it must be equal to the one feared and if possible outdo it.

778 It is force, or, to use their term, fanga, that governs each
● 791 person's conduct toward his neighbor; to be obeyed, a man must first cause himself to be feared, and only a powerful man will succeed and see everything yield before him. /34/

The Negroes have seen people of low birth and poor family succeed in increasing their property and become rich to the point of where they have servants and slaves and dominate a whole village, a whole tribe, or a whole people. Since they like to reason from

778 comparisons with themselves, they have thought that certain individuals
791 could also create understandings in the world of spirits, and thus become the spirits' equals and even command them and make them obey. They firmly believe that such is the case, and although there are many sorcerers, there are still more people who maneuver to attain this position. Possession of the occult sciences cannot be acquired by anyone who wishes, however. The diploma or certificate of competence, cannot be obtained without swallowing certain mixtures of ashes, intestines, and blood, and certain repulsive eyewashes, such as the rheum from dogs' eyes, must be slid under the eyelids in order to see the invisible beings. In addition, unless a man is initiated by his father or brother, he must expect to pay a goodly sum. This is an art that pays, and generously! Every aspirant must also have a good memory in order to engrave in his mind the formulas, gestures, and rites; only the intelligent succeed.

791 The competence of sorcerers is far from equal, nor do they proceed in an identical manner. Some read the future and discover
787 secrets in the entrails of hens; others play with knuckle bones, pebbles, or cowrie shells (1) which they throw on the ground and count and recount, or trace cabalistic signs on scattered ashes, moving the forefinger back and forth, as in a game of Goose /a game played with dice on a board/. Some work with a gourd three quarters full of water, which they set on a n'gô (a kind of napkin ring or bracelet made of braided roots) washed frequently in the blood of /sacrificial/ victims. This procedure is the least complicated. The gourd is tipped right and left, forward and backward, until it sits firmly on the n'gô and can no longer be moved without carrying the stand along. Then the operator need only flick it three times with the middle finger of the right hand while stating the petitions..., and the spirit will answer in a soft murmur which those present can hear, but which he alone
791 understands. In a word, the /35/ good sorcerer stands out above the

[436] 1. /Torn page/ white /shells/ used as money.

791 rest of his fellows by intelligence, trickery, and deceit; the fool who vegetates is hardly patronized, for the crowd goes to the one who is craftiest, and if he is a diplomat and knows how to contrive matters to suit the occasion, he wins great fame quickly. Even while remaining a specialist (all sorcerers are to some extent), such a man is not slow to expand and, not satisfied with predicting the future, he plays the part in turn, of a doctor, a veterinary, and a pharmacist, and not a day passes when he does not find a new recipe to make his love philters, amulets, good luck charms, and talismans. Often, too, he will show off out of a desire for glory and will prescribe that a family, a village, or a whole region perform sacrifices called saraka, a kind of offering or tax which is usually placed at the corner of land formed by two paths that fork or intersect.

The practice of sorcery in Bambara country is what most defeats our logic. While some sorcerers address the djiné genii directly and begin their formulas with an invocation to the Creator -- whom they call An tigi, min yé fen bê tigi yé, "Our master who is the master of all things, " or An tigi Alla, "God our master, " leading one to suppose that in the beginning the greatest part of the worship was directed toward God -- others petition at the same time both the djiné genii and the boli genii, now invoking God and now denying and even insulting Him all in one and the same session. A third group of sorcerers have a more clear-cut domain leaving aside God and the djiné genii, they address themselves to the boli and to them alone. They are real
[484] globe-trotters and go from one village to another with their talking boli -- for it is said that they talk -- enclosed in a goatskin or, more often, in the hide of a wildcat, on the paws of which swings a little bell that announces their arrival to everyone. Usually they read the
[787] future in the intestines of hens, which help them to tell fortunes and draw horoscopes.

A sorcerer is honored because he is feared and dreaded, and all his orders and prescriptions are followed to the letter. Nothing serious is done except through him. He is consulted about everything, even a change of dwelling or a move to a different village, or a journey of /36/ any length; men and women and entire villages through their delegations file before him in turn. The sorcerers hold the Bambara

791 people in their hands; it is they who guide them and force them into obedience by predicting that those who resist will be afflicted with sickness, all kinds of calamities, and death. They are capable of all sorts of actions to preserve their prestige. They compound love philters, talismans, amulets, etc., but they are even better at compounding poisons: they are familiar with Strophanthus and their mixtures of hyena intestines, excrements of human corpses, and saliva taken from their mouths have terrible effects. [278]

791 648 These makers of rain and fair weather, who predict the future, cast lots, and cure the sick are all jealous of one another; there is no unity among them, and since cowardice is each one's chief virtue, there is no fear for the moment that they will press toward revolt. However, one should have no illusions, for that good-fellow smile on the lips of the Bambara in no way gives a true picture of their feelings. They hate the French because they are conquerors, and especially because the French have forbidden them to take slaves, sell, or even own them, and because they cannot administer justice as they please. The elders, who were formerly so powerful, feel their authority decreasing little by little, and there is fury in their hearts. They tremble and are afraid, they dread our rifles and cannons, whose rumblings still ring in their ears; they believe France to be even greater and more powerful than she is. But if some day a bold, enterprising, and audacious sorcerer should appear, he would succeed in creating a temporary union between these divergent groups no matter how slight a control he achieves. Then, without any doubt, we would see partial uprisings like those so frequent among the Moslems. The latter have deep in their hearts a hatred of everything that is not Islam and are never so happy as when they can march behind a fanatical Marabout; certain Frenchmen, well intentioned I like to believe, who refuse to admit thousands upon thousands of conclusive facts, continue nevertheless to help and pamper them, because they do not know the Koran and its teachings. Urged by I know not what naive philanthropy, they warm a snake which will turn against us every time it feels strong enough /37/ to raise its head, and they are preparing bloody days for our colonies in the fairly near future.

themselves into hyenas in order to dig up corpses and eat them, and into gingin ("owl," "screech owl") to drink the blood of sleeping men and women. It is said that the blood of young girls has an especially exquisite taste, /39/ and when the souba are unable to enter a dwelling in material form to obtain it, they change themselves into such a rarefied breath that they go through the walls and roofs.

753 All persons whose faces are disfigured with scars resulting from
789 boils or canker sores are considered victims of a souba, as are those
754 whose legs are rotted by syphilis; every person infected by erysipelas
goes to the members of the Siri sect, the souba.

791 789 In addition to the souba there are the gné-fla (1), men with two eyes, with second sight, so called because they see the world of invisible beings and know the secret thoughts of men without having to undergo metamorphosis. Some of them are good and some evil; there are those who use their prerogatives to halt the blows of the souba and protect their fellows, and others who use them only to harm their neighbors. As the good as well as the evil can abuse their power, the Negroes keep them all together, and since the souba are almost always gné-fla as well, they are indiscriminately feared and hated.

789 When a person is metamorphosed into something else he keeps his intelligence and his reason, but he is dominated by an instinct, either good or evil, which destroys his will and anesthetizes him.

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789 who operate in the depth of night,"
564 but by no means refers to nocturnal
754 sorcerers. Moreover, in the eyes
of the Negroes it designates not a bugaboo, but a reality.

1, They are supposed to have the ability to make themselves invisible by means of grisgris hung on their belts. Deprived of these, they are powerless.

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789 and metamorphoses. Although I have no precise data, this coincidence leads me to think that the same is true of cannibals of the Ubangi.

782 To be convinced one need only be present at the sacrifices; no matter whether the offering is to the djiné genii, the boli genii, or to the shades of ancestors, there recurs, always, the phrase: "Deliver us from the souba and the gné-fla." One of the chief functions of the boli fetishes is just this, and there are some whose special and primary role is to make war against the Siri genii. One of these fetishes is the Nama, a powerful boli which is greatly honored, venerated, and, I should say, fashionable in the Ségou circle and among all Mande peoples. The Ngouansa, known especially in the Worodougou, is also said to specialize in this sphere. From time to time it makes its appearance in the Ségou circle, and its owner without fail does his bit of business and fills his purse. People run to him from all sides bringing hens, goats, and kola nuts, and I have seen these Ngouansa tigi, or masters of a Ngouansa, red with blood after spending the entire morning sacrificing. Before cutting their victims' throats, they stand, facing east with arms akimbo, and shout at the tops of their voices: "Souba, you are dogs, you are even less, the excrements of dogs, oubou bo."

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824 Would the name of the souba and the gné-fla be heard so often from the lips of the Negroes, would families, villages, and sects /41/ spill so much blood or offer so many kola nuts, if they did not sincerely believe in them? Not only do they find an irrefutable proof of the possibility of metamorphosis in the fact that the caterpillar turns into a chrysalis which becomes a butterfly, they will also tell you that the winged termite, "that short-lived creature which on winter evenings comes in swarms around the lights, scattering wings everywhere, in the soup and on the plates," buries itself in the ground, swells like a sorghum seed, grows roots, and becomes a graceful shrub and then a beautiful tree provided it is spared by fire. I do not know the scientific name of this shrub or tree, but the Negroes call it sanderé.

4. The *dja*

774 778 Here again is a word very difficult to translate into our French language. We use *dja* to translate the words "phantoms," "pictures," "photographs," "shadows," "that which is reflected by water or by a mirror"; but there are other meanings, and there is no question of shadows or images in the following sentences, for example: *a dja tikéra*, *a dja oulila*, *misiou dja oulila*. They mean: "he is afraid," "he is crazed," "the cows are crazed." In the eyes of the Bambara, the *dja* is not only the shadow, the image, or the outline of objects, it is also that which makes them manifest. It is a force, a power common to beings of all kinds, and even though it cannot be compared to a genie or a soul, they nevertheless think of it as a kind of being which they are unable to define but which has its own existence and can act of its own accord.

[791] 774 784 The *gné-fla*, whom I mentioned when speaking of the *souba*, are feared because they see the genii and our private thoughts, and also because they practice sympathetic magic, by taking possession of that which makes the shadows of persons and things. The Bambara is convinced that his *dja* can be taken, and when this occurs he henceforth no longer casts a shadow. Although, because of their fear of the Europeans and in some cases because they have long been in contact with them, the Bambara may readily pose before a camera, one can nevertheless say that, in general, they do not like to be photographed. Particularly the old people object and begin to resist /42/ as soon as they see a lens. They have the notion in their heads that their *dja* will escape from them to make an imprint on the plate and leave its form there, and that this form will comprise the portrait, thus placing a part of their being in the hands of the operator and [828] themselves at his mercy. They fear lest, as a result, they lose their shadows and the ability to cast them, and thus become idiots.

774 Even though the Bambara cannot explain their ideas on this subject, these closely resemble the theories of Mr. de Rochas, discussed by Monseigneur Méric in Volume II of his work, *Imagination et Prodiges* /Imagination and Marvels/ /Paris, 1905/. The *dja* is something similar to what English psychologists call a double and

2. The *saraka*

782 Europeans -- civilian, military, or of the church -- easily confuse a *saraka* with a sacrifice, no matter how much they know of Bambara ways and customs. They do not even see that there is a difference, since sometimes it involves the shedding of blood. But even a bloody *saraka* is not a sacrifice; I even deny it the name of offering, for it is a tax, a tribute, and in my opinion that is the only appropriate name for it.

782 ● 791 Private or public, with or without bloodshed, it is always performed on the express order of a sorcerer who, as we know, has intimate relations with the world of spirits and learns from them what the Divinity demands. When a sorcerer speaks and gives his oracles they are obeyed and carried out, so greatly are his threats feared, and it is all done "*djakoyola*, because forced." The *saraka* is given under his orders as the tax is given to the head of the circle.

782 778 In the eyes of the Bambara the *saraka* has no other character than that of a tax, a tribute paid either to the Divinity or to the fetishes. In February, 1907 the rumor spread in the villages around Ségou that the *Komo* fetish of Sioribougou had spoken. "Quick, give Death a hen through me in a *saraka*," the fetish said. "It is preparing to decimate you, and the only way left for you to disarm it is to give it a hen." The sorcerers confirmed this folly, the masters of the *Komo* found it to their taste, and not one head of a family dared refuse the hen that Death demanded. So they offered it, and the formula on this occasion was this: "The *Komo* of Sioribougou has ordered us to offer /64/ Death a white hen as a *saraka*. *Komo*, so-and-so makes this offering for himself and his family through your mediation; it is his *saraka*. If the wind blows from the east, may this hen preserve him from it! If it blows from the west, may it also preserve him! If the wind blows from the Ouorodougou (the country of the kola nut, the south), may this hen deliver him from it, and if it blows from the north may it deliver him from it also!" Cutting the hen's throat, the sacrificer of the *Komo* then added, reddening his fetish: "This is a *saraka*, the *saraka* which so-and-so gives to Death on behalf of himself, his wives, his children, and his friends.

000 I will speak at greater length in my chapter on circumcision.

776 Although the individual worship of the lesser genii by one per-
782 son or family is seldom public -- except sometimes temporarily, it
nonetheless involves an enormous waste of /millet/ flour, kola nuts,
cotton, cowrie shells, etc. Nevertheless, there are very few sacrifices
in these offerings; most frequently, if not always, they are saraka,
or alms, and a kind of tax or tribute since they are obligatory.

782 They are, in fact, obligatory alms, paid by an individual, a
● 791 family, or a whole quarter of a village, upon the command of a
sorcerer. Some sorcerers who have renown or want to acquire it
manage to prescribe these taxes for an entire village and, sometimes,
even for a whole region. The occurence is not unusual; I have seen
it happen every year. A shrewd operator from Bélé Koun in the circle
of Sikasso, crosses the Bani in every dry season, and there is not a
village in the circle of Ségou but feels called upon to hand hens and
cowrie shells over to him and, in addition, afterwards to take a large
contribution to one of the nearby crossroads. In spite of his youth --
[787] he is twenty-five or thirty at most -- he is said to learn everything
by searching hens' entrails and crushing their viscera between his
fingers. He makes profit by predicting terrible calamities everywhere.
All his knowledge is summed up in the following words: "The genii
are displeased, offer a saraka and offer it quickly, for if you do not,
all children under three years old will die... goats, cows, horses,
and sheep will die... springs will dry up... the karité butter will
fail..., etc." In one place the words are those of a hyena, in
another, those of a cow, and farther away it is a wild pig that speaks.
And the dégé (/millet/ flour mixed with water) is spread and the
blood of hens flows in streams. In short, the people are always expected to give to the fetishes and the sorcerers, and to give everything. Some occasionally balk and do not want to obey. The orders of the sorcerer become urgent, his prophesies more terrible than ever; at the end of his patience, he may spit out insults and /107/ curses, and then everyone comes to offer the saraka. Even Moslems let themselves be taken in.

782 In Bambara eyes, the saraka never has the character of a sacrifice. As I explained at length in speaking of the worship of God, it is always

778 All these are obviously legends and I give them as such, not having been able to assure myself of the facts *de visu*; I maintain, however, that they may be true. I broke open not a *Komo*, but a *Kono*, which was the torso of a child three to four years old.

Some *boli*, like the *Tji wara* and the *Nama*, are made of wood; others, like the *Douga*, consist of a considerable number of bulls' horns. They also take on almost all shapes, and when one opens the dirty goatskins that serve as their tabernacles, one finds horns and napkin rings, and among them balls suggesting all the fruits and tubers of creation, and one has to be more than an initiate to recognize the main item in this conglomeration. There are also some that resemble a crude doll whose arms are two horns; others are in the form of a hippopotamus, a cow, or an elephant, and in the *Magna* of Zambala on the Bani, in the circle of Sikasso, I even saw a little horse.

The *boli* are always composed of several pieces called *boli dé*, among which is the *boli den fa*, a little larger /141/ and rounder than the others because it receives the first trickle of blood and the mouthful of chewed kola nut. Some *boli* are strictly male or female, and others, like the *Nama* and *Tji wara*, for example, are mated and live in their temples with the females. The latter always resemble their husbands; they are less strong, but that is all. These fetishes, especially those that are famous, feared, and dreaded, often stay hidden, and their covering is not taken off until the moment of sacrifice.

778 The worship of the powerful *boli* is more complicated than that
191 of the *gnéna*, or *djiné*, and an entire staff is needed to serve them.
First, there is the owner of the fetish, the *gnâtigi*, or *bolitigi*, and
158 the sacrificer, the *mouroukalatigi*. These are helped in their duties by two *wara da* (also called *waraminadé*), who are intermediaries between the fetish and its owner (1). It is through them that the genie

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191
1. The *Komo* being the most famous in the province of Ségou, it is the staff of this fetish I am giving here. The others have staffs that are similar, but

778 of course the names change a little.
•791 On the staff of the Nama there are not only warada but also djenfa tje and djenfa mouso, who go through the village to exorcise /all evil from/ it, holding the fetish in their hands or putting it over their faces. They are preceded by a torch bearer, who is usually the darotigi, or beadle. Some fetishes, the Kono for example, have a person especially responsible for carrying it to the place of sacrifice. He performs the duties of the darotigi; the one who carries the Kono is quite often called Kono guenguéba.

778 791 158 makes known its wishes and gives its orders; and when it does so, its spokesman is always seized by an epileptic attack followed by catalepsy. When he has spoken he is brought out of this state by being sprinkled with consecrated water, and he goes back to his place as if nothing unusual had happened. He seems to feel no fatigue, his features are composed; and yet only a moment earlier his body ran with sweat, his limbs shook with nervous trembling, his eyes were wild and starting out of their sockets, saliva that was often tinged with blood ran from his mouth, and his breath was whistling and irregular.

778 791 The gnâ also has its beadle, the darotigi, who rings for the sacrifice, thus warning the initiates to come quickly and the uninitiated to stay in their huts. Since he also sings the praises of the fetish while ringing his bell, he is also called /142/ gnâ djéli, storyteller /griot/of the gnâ. To all these are added the band of members and initiates, whose function consists chiefly in providing the food and beer for the orgies. These are the gnako dé-n-ou, children of the gnâ.

778 425 One becomes master of a gnéna, or djiné (1), by election or

778 mother who bore him"), and on the phrase sinna dé meaning "a child
572 at the breast, " I believe I can give this meaning to the word sinnakoun ("head, " "tip of the breast": or again, "because of the breast"): "Between us it is as if we had sucked the same breast; therefore, we are like brothers. " And /155/the persons bound by this type of friendship regard themselves as such, exchanging witticisms and light jokes without ever quarreling. Yet the Negroes are very sensitive and hardly ever allow joking. Seing such friends one would take them for kanémé, and the latter are relatives since they are maternal cousins (1).

1. A woman's children and the children of her brothers are kanémé to each other. Sinnakoun and kanémé are not impediments to marriage.

The sinnakoun between families dates from time immemorial; it appears to have no history, or at least I was unable to persuade anyone to tell me what it is. In any case, one can believe that it is a friendship sworn on a boli, or in its presence if you like, since nowadays two heads of families who wish to be united, to be sinnakoun, together redden a powerful fetish.

6. Talking Boli

778 These are supposed to bring death to anyone who scorns them.
[761] Nevertheless, they are seldom blamed for death, and they bring chiefly evil spells, sorcery, and sickness. They are in the hands of so-called sorcerers, real leeches who go through villages in the dry season, always holding out their hands and begging.

778 A talking boli is usually the tail of an animal and the sacrifices
791 are made on this tail. The owner always has his instrument in an unusual skin, often the hide of a small wild animal, and he lets an end protrude. That, I believe, is his insignia, his mark of identification, unless it be the small bell he hangs on the paws of the hide and which he knows so well how to shake in order to notify people of his arrival.

778
791 The Bambara consult these sorcerers to find out the future and to draw their horoscopes or good luck. The fee for a seance is not at all unreasonable; it seldom exceeds the moderate sum of 40 cowrie shells, or one sou.

Concerning the Sirikoun

778
754 Every great boli includes an object called sirikoun. There are other sirikoun which are no longer parts of boli, but have become actual boli. The latter are hung at the waist and are always /156/ covered with a red cloth. Almost everyone owns them, although they are most frequently in the hands of the owners and sacrificers of great fetishes. They are usually ends of the tails of cows, horses, wild pigs, etc., and are often sprinkled with blood. They are sought in order to cast a spell or sorcery on an enemy, to make him sick, and even cause him to die, or again to protect oneself from a spell, sorcery, sickness, or death. [151]

The sirikoun and the talking boli are fetishes belonging to individuals; they have neither festivals nor formal sacrifices, and they are not publically worshipped.

Chapter 8

The First Years in the Life of a Bambara[1]

1. The Sexual Morality of the Bambara

181 Those who have seen the Bambara and have the slightest acquaintance with them will not hesitate to tell you: "They are liars and thieves." They certainly never pass up a chance to take the property of another, and they lie boldly and with such complete calm that not a muscle in their bodies flinches. This has always surprised

*173 mission to Ngolo on the theory that the impetuous and violent young man could hardly fail to anger the old man, who would shortly do away with him by means of the occult practices known to marabouts. From the beginning, however, the old man realized that this was a man destined to accomplish great things; so he welcomed him kindly, gave him amulets and made him promise to follow his advice most exactly. Ngolo asked him to use his influence to effect a reconciliation with Mamari. So the old man warned Mamari that he could expect good fortune only if he lived in constant association with Ngolo, who "had luck."

[50] From that day forward, Mamari had Ngolo about his person. He added a thousand men to those already following Ngolo and, so that the latter could support his followers suitably, he gave him cattle and sheep. He had Ngolo live at Ségou-koro, and although the young man kept the name Sikoro Ngolo, he was 793 also given the title of *dyenfa*, meaning high priest of his idols. Of these, the two most important were *ba Kungo-ba* and *na Ngolo-ko*, which he had brought from Kaminiadougou.

Further, the old marabout of Niamina told Ngolo of a young girl in the village of Diaba destined to bear children who would have a brilliant future. On the basis of the learned man's advice, Ngolo asked the girl's hand in marriage; but she was an only child and her parents were no more anxious to lose her than she was to leave them. Mamari intervened, and upon his order the girl was handed over to Ngolo, while her grieving parents were recompensed with a gift of ten slaves.

In any case, Mamari's prudent friendship for Ngolo by no means blinded him to his own interests. He extended his influence less by warlike means than by very clever diplomacy. When he had settled in the Ségou area, the country between Dina and Kirango had about 40 cantons which were independent of each other. He was skillful enough to impose himself gradually as overlord by making use of the dissensions which divided them. By means of adroit diplomacy and an occasional successful campaign, he managed to gain control of the whole area.

In order to eliminate the barriers which tribes or families stubbornly maintained between one another, he moved whole groups of populations from place to place. Or he would establish

311 Bambara seeks the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-
621 siri) or, more exactly, determines where this genie dwells. It
776 may be a spring, a hill, or a rock; often it is a fine tree, invariably
794 surrounded by a grove or at least with a grove nearby.
Then, always following the same procedure, he finds out the
conditions under which the genie will allow someone to settle
in his domain in order to live there and cultivate the lands.
Thus, a contract is worked out which governs the man's exploitation
of the genie's territorial domain. As a result, provided he
worships the genie in the manner required, the man [228] will
be able to work under the protection of the god. Anyone who has
had a share in the contract, even if only through representatives,
will likewise profit if he scrupulously observes the conditions.

621 The establishment of a village requires the cooperation of
several communities, each represented by its fa. One of these fa
622 will either appropriate the leadership or be chosen as the representative
793 or chief of the others. Sometimes he may be merely
794 primus inter pares; otherwise he may have managed to have his
primacy conceded by the rest. It is this chief who treats with the
genie in the name of the whole village; thus, he becomes the
"high priest of the genie" (nyana-n-son-na-ba) with the essential
function of "making the offerings" (son') required by the cult.
Furthermore, he administers the earthly domain of the genie
and is therefore called dugu-tigi (master of the earth).

To the nyana dugu-da-siri is usually attributed the same dyamu as that of its high priest, just as though the genie belonged to the spiritual family of the priest. This is a result consistent with the mentality of the Bambara.

621 The same mental state accounts for the custom in certain
villages of dedicating a living animal, often a ram, to the
776 nyana dugu-da-siri and believing it to be the god's mount. The
778 animal is allowed to wander freely about the village, and its
[825] mischief is never punished; indeed, the people enjoy caressing
and indulging it. The animal takes on some of the attributes
of the genie and is, as it were, endowed with certain supernatural
virtues, so only good can come from contact with it.

621 Theoretically, each settlement has only one genie, but
776 actually it may have several, especially if it has been settled by

621 successive groups, each recognizing a genie-protector. In that
776 case, the genie first recognized and worshiped takes precedence
over the others. In any case, social life requires each segment
to respect the gods of its neighbors, and this respect carries with
it a certain amount of superstitious fear.

311 It is evident from the foregoing that occupying and
cultivating land poses certain problems for the settlement benefited,
621 and these may be grouped under three heads: the cult of
794 the genie-protector; the exploitation of the land; and the organization
of the territorial community.

793 The cult. This is mainly supported by the high priest,
whose principal duty is to "make the offerings" (son') to the
794 "genie" [229] (nyana), hence his title nyana-son-na-ba. He
is assisted by the council of fa, one of whom, the syere (follower),
may replace him in case of need. The office of high priest is
for life and is inherited in the same way as his faya. This continuity
shows that the genie is actually regarded as a kind of
spiritual ancestor of the priest, as we have seen from the fact
that it is given the same dyamu as its high priest.

794 The cult ceremonies are very simple. They consist of
offerings made by the high priest, who at the same time indi-
796 cates to the genie the purpose for which they are being made.
The most solemn ceremonies take place when millet is sown
and harvested. For these occasions, every worshiper is expected
to bring a contribution in proportion to his resources. The kind
of gift is not specified; everyone brings whatever he can or
whatever he wishes, usually animals (sheep, beef, fowl, etc.),
grain, and especially millet beer (dlo).

782 During these general gatherings, from which no one is
excluded, only the high priest and the members of the council
796 enter the sacred grove or approach the genie's abode. There,
778 the high priest makes known the purpose of the sacrifice: to
+ thank the genie for his past favors; to offer him the gifts brought
by everyone; and to ask him to continue to protect the community
so that its prosperity may be assured. Then the victims
are sacrificed, and their blood is sprinkled on the tree trunk
or whatever object or place is reputed to be the home of the
genie.

782 genie. The same is done with libations of dlo or the juice of
796 kola nuts. Since anything offered to the genie is supposed to be
[786] consumed on the spot, an orgy lasting for several days usually
follows.

782 In addition to these two great obligatory ceremonies
especially concerned with the exploitation of the land, the god's
protection is sought by similar, but much simplified means in
all affairs whether they concern the entire settlement (wars,
disasters), a particular patriarchal or familial community, or
even a single individual. Through the high priest as intermediary, the offering and the request are made for the purpose indicated by the petitioner, who often promises to make a further
gift to the genie when his wish has been granted. Vows of this
type are made very frequently.

794 The cult of his high [230] priests and of all the important men of the settlement is tied in with the cult of the
769 genie, obviously a consequence of the fact that the genie is the
spiritual patron of the community which honors him; its members are his children and with him form what amounts to a family. So, in line with what happens in a patriarchal or familial community, the territorial community also holds an annual festival for the dead, during which special honor is paid to noted personages, among whom deceased high priests have first place.

311 Exploitation of the land. The high priest in charge of
621 the cult likewise regulates everything concerning the exploita-
tion of the terrestrial domain of the genie, and in this capacity
423 he is known as the dugu-tigi (1), master of the earth. In this
793 office he has the help of the council of fa, and in important matters he must follow their advice.

With the help of this council, he allots the land when

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1. In line with common practice, I shall henceforth use this title to designate both capacities, the high priest and the master of the earth.

311 the community is founded. His permission is required before
621 anyone may build a dwelling in the portion reserved as the seat
423 of the community; the village is therefore kept within precise
793 limits. In practice, however, everyone builds wherever he
pleases if there is no objection. If there is an objection, the
dispute is settled by the dugu-tigi and his council.

Outside the village proper, the terrain includes fields
423 which, either at the start or during the course of settlement,
621 are allotted in perpetuity to the various fa of the community
by the dugu-tigi in council. Each fa and his dependents have
indefinite use of the same fields, although by law the authority
which assigned them may take them away without being required to justify the act. This use is a kind of usufruct that is
more extensive than that of our law, since the beneficiary may
[425] use the land without restriction, except that he may not alienate
it. The tenant, however, may not use the land in any way that
might be prejudicial to the community as a whole without the
consent of the dugu-tigi and council. For example, such would
be the case if he proposed to give his right of use to an outsider.

Any land not specifically allotted [231] and anything it
produces or contains belongs, theoretically, to the member of
the community who cultivates it. Certain fruits or produce, however, are sometimes reserved for the community as a whole:
the leaves or fruit of the baobab, karite, nété, tamarind trees,
etc.; the fish in certain ponds, watercourses, fluvial zones,
[476] etc.; the game in certain cantons, etc. On the dates set for
these collective enterprises by the dugu-tigi and his council,
the people proceed in a body to gather fruit, harvest the crop,
fish, or hunt. Sometimes each person is allowed to keep what
he has gathered; sometimes all the proceeds are collected for
the dugu-tigi to distribute according to custom. There are also
special regulations governing the extraction of matter or materials from the ground.

621 Organization of the territorial community. The duties
of the dugu-tigi and his council are not limited to directing the
622 cult and regulating the use of land. Anything that happens
within the territorial community concerns the nyana-dugu-da-siri, because the members of the community are his children

561 857 and take an oath of secrecy. The boy leaves the n-Tomo after the soli. Girls are not admitted.

881 The n-Tomo-tigi and his syere organize the association so as to assure it some property which in principle is collective property. Through common abuse, however, they are the primary if not the sole beneficiaries of it. They persuade their comrades to cultivate a field whose produce will provide the food for their club feasts. The entrance fee is augmented by force, spontaneously or at the order of the n-Tomo-tigi: gifts, collections, theft, hunting, fishing, etc.; in short, anything may be collected by individual or collective effort to form a kind of common treasury.

857 793 There is no collectivity, however, without its spiritual patron. The n-Tomo meets out-of-doors, at the foot of a tree (1) believed to be the chosen home of a genie-protector.

> 1. The name "n-Tomo" comes from this. It has been thought that the term was simply the name of the tree where the genie-protector lives and that it was the tree which the Bambara call "n-Tomo." If this were true, why should people in Kaarta use the term "n-Tori" when the tree called n-Tomo does not change its name? It has been suggested that n-Tori is another word meaning "toad" and came from the peculiar "cry" characteristic of the society.
>
> It is my belief that the two terms, "n-Tomo" and "n-Tori" designate the same grouping in different regions and have one and the same meaning: meeting, assembly.

The n-Tomo-tigi is the high priest of this genie; as such he receives the oaths of the neophytes and has a certain degree of authority over the whole band, which enables him to punish any misdeed committed by a n-Tomo-den'. He does not hesitate to use corporal punishment.

794 are all designed to attract and capture the god and, for this
782 purpose, to transfer the officiant from our world to the supernatural one. I have never heard anyone claim that the costume and the various actions of the officiant were intended to counterfeit the nyana, nor that the boli in any way represented the native's idea of the god.

The Clergy

•793 Even though, in theory, familial nyana are inherited, those worshiped by the brotherhoods are usually bought. The head of the brotherhood is called the nyana-tigi (master of the nyana) (1), whether he has inherited the office, been elected to it, or has imposed himself by virtue of being the most prominent founder of the brotherhood. It is he who keeps the boli, hence his title of boli-tigi, and who knows all the secrets of the cult. His duty is to direct the cult and to administer the brotherhood, and this gives him considerable local prestige.

The initiates of higher rank are called dye-n-fa-u, "masters of the truth." The nyana-tigi chooses his aides from this group, particularly the person who, "seized by the god"
[787 (wara-mina-den'), becomes the "oracle" (wara-da). The role of medium requires special persons who can go into a trance
791] under the influence of the animating spirit, and the wara-da has the duty of choosing and training the person who will succeed him or replace him, if the need arises (2).

All the initiates are to some extent diviners through practices which are peculiar to them, and the brotherhoods often

1. Ordinarily the word nyana is replaced by the specific name of the nyana, Komo, Nama, Nya, etc.

2. These dye-n-fa students are called soma-de (elder sons) in the Komo brotherhood.

793 provide instruction in deductive divination, which usually requires two years of study.

This clergy is recruited and formed by co-optation, and it includes, besides the persons already mentioned, the muru-kala-tigi (3) or "sacrificer," who kills the victims, and a dyeli or "herald" of the god.

794 The rank and file of the faithful are called nyana-den u, sons of the nyana (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above]. In order to be accepted as nyana-den', it is necessary [260] to take an oath and to pay an entrance fee. The terms of the oath used in the brotherhoods reveal that, in sum, the nyana-den' promises secrecy, obedience, and solidarity, as we shall show in what follows. Certain aides of the clergy are selected from among the common run of the faithful, for instance, the da-ro-tigi or da-ro-ta-la, who is a kind of beadle.

The Treasury

The performance of liturgical ceremonies is not the only function of the clergy; it also constitutes a kind of council to administer the property of the brotherhood, for the cult is not gratuitous. First, admission to the brotherhood requires the payment of a fee, and the same is true whenever an individual is nominated or promoted to an office. Furthermore, an important contribution, in proportion to the individual's resources, is required for any important ceremony. Finally, fines are imposed on the faithful and even on outsiders as punishment for wrong doings.

794 681 Fines assume many forms, whether they are to atone for a wrong committed by one of the faithful against the brotherhood or the god, whether an outsider is to be punished similarly for arousing the wrath of the nyana, or for reasons sometimes known only to the clergy who levies them. The nyana-tigi and

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3. Literally, "he who holds the handle of the knife."

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794 covered by the cloak made of feathers from guinea fowl and
778 chickens. Beneath this garb, the wara-da performs all sorts of acrobatics. Skillfully manipulating the mask and the cloak during ritual dances, he gives the illusion, in the light of the fires, of a fantastic creature whose cries, transmitted through the horn, terrify even the initiated.

793 In addition to the wara-da, the clergy includes: a
794 Komo-tigi, high priest; some muru-kala-tigi, sacrificers; a da-ro-tigi, porter, who announces and prepares for the meetings; and a Komo-dyeli, herald. There are also student wara-da, called soma-den' (literally, "elder sons" in the special language), who act as assistants, and finally, there are many other auxiliaries who form a cortege with the wara-da when he carries the boli in nocturnal processions. These people are grouped together under the term tie-den' or tigi-den' ("sons of the master" in the special language). Conspicuous among them are the ta-tugu who [272] carry the flaming torches which are so characteristic of the nocturnal processions.

When the wara-da makes known the revelations of the god, he speaks through the tube with the horn. Since he uses the special language and since the tube distorts the sounds, the Komo-tigi must interpret for him. It is the Komo-dyeli who shouts the revelation which echoes through the night.

At the time of the two great annual ceremonies, the
794 wara-da takes the boli and the other liturgical equipment to the
796 sacred grove. The Komo-tigi directs the ceremonies. The sacrifices are entrusted to the muru-kala-tigi among whom are to be noted: the one who brings the victim and who, when the ceremony takes place in the temple, leads it across the threshold (1); and the one who removes the victim and carries its body

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1. This door is then called nyena-ma don'-da, "entry of the living," in the special language, and the muru-kala-tigi who brings the victim in is called da-kuna-sigi or "master of the fatal (literally 'bitter') door."

794 [778] There are, of course, the usual accessories: kana, korti, siri-kun', pottery, bells, horns, and so forth.

Most of these objects are stored in a small hut called Nama-bon', similar to the native huts.

794 778 The ceremonies take place in a grove which is reserved for the purpose. If there appears to be not enough privacy in spite of the dense foliage, or for some other reason, a palisade (dyase) or a few straw mats are put up to form an enclosure. In the special language of this brotherhood, the term for offering a sacrifice to the Nama is dyase son' (literally, "to honor the palisade").

794 The assemblage of the adepts of the same Nama constitute a Nama-ya, Nama brotherhood. Persons who wish to form a Nama-ya appeal to an existing Nama-ya to obtain the secrets or, more accurately, the rules governing the brotherhood: the mysterious words and acts by which the god (wara) is summoned and made amenable to his worshipers; cult objects; organization and role of the clergy and of the common worshipers; the liturgy, etc.

The fundamental ceremony by means of which the priest and his god are united is called furu, "union, marriage," in the special language of the brotherhoods. [276] Once a year, through the furu of the Nama, males and females, the Nama-de-u (spiritual sons of the Nama) are born. Behind this realism, required for the ordinary adept, is there not hidden a profound meaning for the initiate; is not close union with the diety a "spiritual marriage" in all the great religions? Possibly the special language is not intended merely to hide secrets from the prying curiosity of the profane, but is also intended to hide a profound meaning, today unknown to almost all the initiates, but felt and perhaps even known, at least vaguely, by some of them!

793 794 In every Nama-ya there are various functions and ranks, corresponding to different grades of initiation. The grand master, Nama-tigi, is often the person who contributed the most for the expenses of founding the Nama-ya; he directs and watches over the cult and is therefore a feared and formidable personage.

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794 He is assisted by the *dye-n-fa-u* (masters of truth), among whom those who wear the headdress called *Nama-kongolo* are the oracles (*wara-da*) of the Nama. Other assistants have the duty of holding the horned boards (*wara-se* and *nye-bla*) during the ceremonies.

One adept serves as factotum under the title *da-ro-tigi* (master of the entrance) (1).

This clergy is recruited by co-optation, and anyone named to it or promoted in it must pay for the privilage. The cleric is even more bound to secrecy than the common worshiper, since any indiscretion on his part would reveal the secrets of the cult.

794 The common adherents or the faithful are called *Nama-de-u* (children of the Nama), that is, spiritual sons of the Nama, but we shall see that when allusions are made during the ceremonies to a kind of material birth, this is plebeian mythology.

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(1) During the night when the Nama goes about the village to drive out sorcerers, the *da-ro-tigi* runs ahead of the *dye-n-fa* who wear the *Nama-kongolo*. Shaking his bell, he warns people off the road followed by the *dye-n-fa*, and he carries a torch to reveal the inquisitive. If he finds any such person, he warns the *dye-n-fa* in the special language to halt or to change their course. Then he questions the intruder, chases him off with blows, curses him, or, on the contrary, takes him into the group. He is thus truly "the one who guards the entrance," but he is like a concierge rather than a master who agrees or refuses to receive the visitor whom the concierge has admitted. We have pointed out an analogous emphasis in the title of *ton'-masa*, given to the head of the servants of the *ton'* even though the term literally means "head of the *ton'*."

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796 that period; his body will not be buried but will be carried off by
766 members of the Komo, who will take it to a crossroads and crush it
with the aid of komo-se-w [sic]. The remains will be hidden in
a secret place. The same treatment is accorded to the komo-tigi
who dies during his seven-year term.

794 The cult is cantonal, and the various komo-tigi take their
orders from their colleagues of the capital. The cult formerly was
interlcan and intertribal. Labouret (Les Mandingues et leur langue
[The Mandingo and Their Language]) has made a table of the seven
categories of persons who make up the hierarchical society of the
initiates.

794 After initiation into the Komo cult, a natural sequel to cir-
793 cumcision, the young man may, if he so desires, be initiated into
● other cults. He then enters a powerful spiritual family which unites
all its members by ties of brotherhood. This brotherhood is super-
imposed on the normal social hierarchy of the flã-tõ [this term is
[564 probably the same as flanton]. The chief of the brotherhood is en-
567] titled nyama-tigi; he is generally a man of caste or a slave. He
acquires his position as chief either by inheriting it, by election, or
[778] by founding a new cult. To do this latter, he must buy an altar,
gna, from the village or from the brotherhood that already possesses
this cult. Such a purchase is considered a marriage with the gna and
is accompanied by drinking. The higher-ranking initiates (dyenfaw:
masters of the truth) are auxiliaries of the nyama-tigi and participate
in the oracle, wara-da. All the initiates are more or less divine.
The clergy includes, in addition, a sacrificer, muru-kala-tigi, and
a dyeli, herald of the god. To become one of the faithful, one must
pay an entrance fee and swear an oath of secrecy, obedience, and
fellowship. The clergy manages the cult's treasury which is fed by
the entrance fees to the brotherhood, by fees levied for a class pro-
motion, by contributions required for the major ceremonies, and by
fines imposed on the members.

The brotherhood is a spiritual family which is organized in a
fashion similar to the natural filiation of the community. The
nyama-tigi plays the role of the fa; the dyen-fa-w and the notable
members form a sort of council for settling, with the chief, all ques-
[527] tions. The cult does nothing on Mondays and Thursdays, the work
holidays.

794 A strict internal discipline regulates the members' conduct; this discipline is founded on secrecy, obedience, and speed in carrying out orders. An accused confesses [86] his faults under the effect of the oath, torture, or divination, and the punishments are determined according to the seriousness of the offense in the eyes of the clergy. These punishments are corporal (flogging, confinement in irons, deprivation of food, death) or pecuniary (fines, confiscation); they may include forced labor for the benefit of the clergy. We shall see further on the social and political role these brotherhoods play in Bambara life.

794 796 The Kworé society carries out the rites concerning the sky, space, the cardinal points, and the atmospheric manifestations of Faro, notably rain. The ceremonies generally take place around a tree, the kworé-jigi, situated to the east of the village. The altars are placed either in the brush, in the chief's house, or near the village. The society owns a field of small millet which is reserved to meet the needs of the cult.

The n'Domo includes all the non-circumcised. Heading it [793] is the chief, assisted by a sacrificer, muru-kala-tigi, and by a master of ceremonies, dyoloko-tigi. The society is divided into five grades, corresponding to the five fundamental altars; the initiate advances a grade each year. The society possesses a mask, a whip, and five musical instruments. An annual ceremony takes place after the harvest and includes a blood sacrifice and a ritual fight, followed by a new initiation. The society also owns a ritual field cultivated by its members.

The Nama brotherhood (Nama, "hyena" in Mandé) plays an [776] important role in the Ségou region. Nama is the god of the incomplete, the unique god, whose annual ceremonies at sowing time and harvest time are observed by the men and women together.

794 The society of Kono, whose hut is situated in the middle of the village, must also be mentioned, as well as those of Dyo, an old divinity, Nia or Gnã, Wara, and Duga.

To all of these societies, which have been described by Tauxier, Monteil, G. Dieterlen, etc., must be added the women's societies, still imperfectly known but very powerful and particularly feared by the men. The principal female dyo in the Bamako region are: the Niagua, the Kulukutu, and the Jide which assembles its initiates on Mondays and Fridays.

776 In a word, "if you must work your wickedness on someone or on something, let it not be on our persons or on what belongs to us."

The spirits of the first group are gnéna (1), better known under the name of djiné (Arabic word الجنّ imported by the Moslems), and those of the second are gnâ, or boli.

As conceived of by a black man, the gnéna, or djiné, are not strictly speaking angels; they are beings intermediate between angels and men. Not only do they eat, drink, procreate, pursue well-being and wealth, they are also /31/ subject to the physical and mental suffering that afflicts human beings, and can die as the victims of the hate, vengeance, or wickedness of a stronger being. Their priests
[793 are the gnéna-n-sonna or dougoutigi (village chiefs whose jurisdiction
782] is religious and often also civil), and the sacrifices which are offered to them are addressed indirectly and in a very vague and very confused way to a Supreme Being. This vagueness and confusion is apparent especially at the present time, since all ideas of the Divinity are disappearing more and more every day; but it is likely that, in the beginning, God had a greater part in the honors rendered to His deputies, to those whom He appointed as guardians of the elements, dividing among them the empire of His creation.

The djiné remain subject to the authority of the Creator. They have not cast off the yoke and, wicked though they may be, they have not ceased to be good. If they wish, they can do good, protect men, and grant them favors. They punish and chastise because they are above all responsible for the welfare of humanity.

1. Women and also children often refer to both the djiné and the boli under the generic term gnena, and in the presence of the uninitiated, initiates use these words without making any distinction. It is nonetheless true that the word gnéna denotes a genie called djiné, and the word gnâ a genie called boli.

793 The pagan priesthood -- like the Moslem -- also casts a halo of
776 strength and power about its priest; he becomes the close friend of his fetish, and the latter often condescends to take his diamou, or family name, and become, for example, the dasiri, or protecting genie, of a village. Depending on the name of its owner, it will be a Djara or a Kouloubali or a Tankara, etc., etc.

793 An intelligent Bambara who, for one reason or another, cannot be a sorcerer, has one other means of becoming feared and powerful:
554 he can become a gnéna sonna or dougoutigi (priest of the protecting fetish of villages, called dasiri), a gnâtigi or bolitigi (matter of a boli), or at least to belong to a retinue such as surrounds every powerful boli fetish.

793 There are curbs on the thirst for fanga, or power, however. The office of gnéna sonna is the prerogative of a particular family within which it is transmitted from brother to brother by right of inheritance, and not every Negro succeeds in obtaining a boli -- I mean an influential boli that would establish him among his people -- even though one can be obtained by purchase. A man desiring a particular boli must first form a retinue for it, and its members must be taken from the village itself; the mutual mistrust and fear of poison are so great that it is not always possible to do so. Beside the price to be paid, varying between 25 and 30 francs, there are the expenses of the konio, or wedding of the fetish (the purchaser marries his boli), which raise its cost to 60, 80, and sometimes 100 francs. Furthermore, there is a mass of liturgical formulas to be engraved in the memory. These must be learned in every detail, for the omission of one sign or gesture, the garbling of one formula can easily incur the disfavor of the fetish, which is relentless with one who is careless and causes him to perish! It should be added that before a person can reward himself with such a luxury as the acquisition of a fetish, he must consult a sorcerer and take his advice, and if he is not rich and already feared, the sorcerer knows how to place his veto. For the mass
794 of the people there is thus only one way to be safe: to become
793 associated with sects, and with as many sects as possible. Through membership they earn the title of "sons of boli," and build relationships for themselves and make friends among those in power, the

794 bolitigi, the latter have every interest in protecting them, for not
793 only do they pay /38/ their masters annual dues of 80 to 160 cowrie
shells, which is little, but they also provide the meats and kola nuts
for sacrifices and the d'lo, or beer, for the nocturnal drinking bouts
and orgies, and thus are a real godsend.

3. Metamorphosis

776 The Negroes say that a djiné or a boli genie can pass from one
189 body into another. Today it may paddle in a pond, be enclosed in a
tree, or sit on a rock; tomorrow, if it wishes, it will make its dwelling in a cow's tail, in a horn, in a dirty rag. Whatever its dwelling may be, it is never confined. The Negroes compare these spirits to the wind, to a breath which enters and penetrates into a space through the smallest crack and fills it. Yet they have bodies and are equipped with organs; they drink, eat, and procreate and differ from man only in their tenuity. Since the Negroes are convinced that certain people have become able to master and command the spirits, could they not come to believe that it was possible to attain, like them, a rarefied state? In any case, they do believe in metamorphosis, and it is by entering into an animal or plant, or changing himself into an animal, a plant, etc., that the wicked person succeeds most often in avenging himself, in appeasing his hatred, and even in doing evil for the mere pleasure of doing it.

189 A good number of sorcerers have this privilege, and sorcerers
are not the only ones! Entire castes have the power of metamorphosis;
564 among others the Koulé, who dig out canoes and mend cracked gourds,
154 can all change themselves into hyenas. The sons of the Siri, who are
members of the sect dedicated to the boli of this name and are called
souba (1) because they commit their crimes during the night, change

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(1) The name souba is derived from sou ("night") and ba ("great"), ma ("man"), being implied. It means "a man of the great night," "men

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in this respect they are far superior to any of the Arabs of Algeria, for example. Family life is more open and cordial among them.

children do not speak the name of their father, especially if he is a gouatigi, or family head, and when a swarm of children are enjoying themselves around their old daddy, only one word is on all the little lips to awaken his attention, avoid his reprimand, call for his caress, and bring forth his smile: Koké-yo -- koké-wé! (2)

2. I use the word Koké-yo -- (Né koké) koké we (koké, "I beg you, Koké") -- because it is the most common; there are obviously other similar terms. Favorite wives also like to call their husbands by this name. For everyone it is a term of respect and at the same time it is tender, affectionate, and coaxing.

[888] Old men are given borrowed names, bougna toua, out of respect
576 and veneration, and the reason for this practice is to avoid having to
551 speak their names in vain and unsuitably. The practice is current,
and it is even carried to an extreme, for although a child is given a
respect name within his family, he is never called by that name. How
many people there are whose real name is not known except by close
[553] relatives and friends! All the Dougoutigi, To-n-tigi, Ba-koroba, and
Moké-touama received a name on the eighth day after their birth,
and the names used to designate them are borrowed names. /80/

888 In the environs of Ségou, where Islam is widespread and spreads
793 farther every day, the sacrificers to the protecting genii of the villages,
576 the gnéna-n-sonna ba, or dougoutigi, have lost some of their prestige,
551 but anyone who respects them, even if he be a Moslem, never speaks
their names. At the present time in Bani country, where the old
customs and traditions are preserved with jealous care, there is not a

888 child, woman, or young man that can tell you the name of the great
193 sacrificer of the village if the latter is in the least old. Out of respect
576 and veneration his name is never spoken; he is the head, and if they
551 are questioned all will answer: "Toua si t'a la dougoutigi ko, he has
no other name than that of dougoutigi, head of the village." And, in
fact, most of the people know no other name for him.

551 This need to avoid speaking the name of whosoever is respected,
576 venerated, or feared goes so far as to bring about the abbreviation of
778 phrases customarily used in salutations (1), so it can easily be imagined that the name of the fetishes is not known except by their masters and their initiates. Of course, a Moslem, a woman, an uncircumcised man, or an unexcised woman can tell you the number of the gnéna and gnâ owned by the village, and they also know whether the gnéna (djiné) include a Dasiri, Ngolo, Koté, Ntomo, Tauri, etc., and whether the gnâ (boli, sétané) include a Komo, Nia, Douga, Kono, Nama, Bala, etc. But except for the initiates, who could tell you that a certain boli is called Sélé, Magné, Toroba, Dono, or Nono, or that the Magna is also called Tjarofign and the Nama, Sirima-n-fign? Only the generic name is known, and it is in good taste not to pronounce even that when extending an invitation to a festival in its honor. The Nama is enclosed in a beehive in the shade of a tamarind tree, which in turn are enclosed in coarse mats, and when an invitation is given to the sacrifice, the most stylish formula is: "Come and see us, an bi djasé (2) son, we are sacrificing to the /81/ palisade." The trumpet

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1. See what I said in this connection in the preceding chapter, /section on/ "Reincarnation of Souls," pertaining to Ouentja.

2. Djasé, name of a palisade composed of large mats. Children born at the time of the sacrifices to the Nama, who are dedicated to the fetish, are frequently given the name

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Typical Bambara headman.

776 Such a spirit is the exclusive property of one family, and even
624 bears its name, or diamou. Its sacrificer, called gnéna-n-sonnaba,
793 also bears the name of dougoutigi (1); he is, in fact, the real head of
the village. Although at present the civil and religious authorities
[554] are separate in many places, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or religious priest,
always holds precedence, and self-respecting people call him
dougoutigi (head of the village), giving the title of sotigi (2) to the
one who has only civil authority. Here we have further evidence
that the organization of the Bambara nation was, at its origin purely
religious. The separation of the two authorities in certain hamlets
can easily be understood.

631 Under the Bambara dynasty the kingdom of Ségou was divided
into provinces, cantons, and villages. The king, Fama or Massa

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1. Gnena, "fetish," "genie"; sonnaba, "great sacrificer"; dougou, "village"; tigi, "head," "master."

2. So, "hut," "house"; tigi, "head."

631 ("great sorcerer who has communication with the invisible beings"), lived at Ségou with his court. At the head of each of his provinces he had a minister responsible for levying the tax (/this man was/ his tool, often one of his children, to whom -- doubtless for this reason -- was given the title of *Fama*, petty king. The minister did his work through the intermediary of the heads of cantons, or *kafotigi*, under who, with respect to civil matters, were all the heads of villages, the *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, or *dougoutigi*. /100/

The levying of the tax often gave rise to disputes between the *kafotigi* and the *dougoutigi*, and the latter would resign from his functions or be relieved of them. After that he lost all civil powers but none of his religious or priestly authority, and since the religious sphere had precedence over the civil, he kept his title of *dougoutigi* in his role as *gnéna-n-sonnaba*. The one who replaced him /in the civil sphere/ was never anything but an upstart and worthy only of the name *sotigi* ("head of houses"), although his responsibility became hereditary.

798 Under Moslem domination the worship of the *gnéna*, or *djiné*,
● 793 was forbidden and punished by very severe penalties (slavery or death). It can thus be believed that it was to the advantage of the *gnena-n-*
624 *sonnaba* to keep their position quiet, to refuse the title of *dougoutigi*, and even to forbid their people to bestow it on them. In Bani country and among the Bambara of Sikasso and Koutiala, where Moslem domination was never solidly established, there was no cause for similar fears, and it is understandable that the custom of calling the religious head *dougoutigi* and the civil head *sotigi* has been retained.

624 The *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, or *dougoutigi*, is helped in his duties
793 by a *siéré* (aide, deputy); the heads of quarters (*sotigi*) and the heads of families (*gouatigi*) make up his council. Nothing important is done in the village without consulting its head, who calls all his elders together and decides nothing without them. All of them are also present at any sacrifice if it is offered by a family, and it is not unusual to see them going single file, evening or morning, to the sacred grove of the fetish. On the morning of a marriage, they always go there.

776 The fetish protects the village by causing the evil spells and
778 sorcery cast on it to misfire. It defends the village against wicked
621 people and against its enemies, and thanks to it the inhabitants can
793 peacefully devote themselves to their work in the fields. While averting plagues and diseases which decimate the population, it gives strength, health, and vigor to all, and finally it populates the village by making the women fertile. Above all, it is the source of unity among families for it brings them all together under the authority of a single head; the friends of the head of the family whose name, or diamou, it bears, are its friends, and his enemies are also its own. To fail the priest, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, the dougoutigi, is to fail the fetish, so close and intimate is the union between the two.

11. The Koté, or Koré, Genie

794 Since it is the fundamental basis of power and authority, the
776 worship of the dasiri can, with some justice, be regarded as the first
778 and oldest of all Bambara religious practices. That of the koté, or
koré, likewise seems to me quite respectable from this standpoint and
just as old. As a matter of fact, this spirit, like the dasiri, lives in
[824] a little grove near the village, and the three trees it likes to inhabit
are the baobab, the false cedar, and the nettle tree.

794 The worship of the koré is especially popular in Bani country. Today not all the villages have the fetish, but all have at /103/ least a few initiates belonging to this semioccult sect. The sect includes women among its members; it is divided into eight groups, each ruled by its oldest member, who in turn is under the authority of the koretigi, the supreme head of the association.

794 At the time of the annual sacrifices, and especially at the
778 sacrifices made every seven years on the days of admission (for it is
necessary to be a koré dé (1) in order to participate in the secret part

1. Koré, the fetish bearing this name; dé, "son."

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778 old men and important people of the village, as well as friends, are
852 invited to squat before the jugs and partake of the liquid refreshment.

The Dasiri Fetish, Protector of Villages

776 621 The dasiri is the chief of all the gnena, or djine. In order that its worship may be better understood and that the reader may have an idea of the power of its priest, I must go into a few details which cannot help but throw some light on Bambara organization. Let us, for example, take a village that is being founded: we are present at the election of the priest of the dasiri, the gnéna-n-sonnaba; at the choice of the fetish tree and of the sacred animal, the genie's mount; at the enthroning of the sacrificer; and finally at the sacrifices.

Election of the priest

776 621 •793 482 The population has grown, the surrounding land is exhausted, and a group of families must move out. The old men who are still lively and the youths full of strength and life take up their arms and fasten a dirty goatskin, a foroko of provisions, on their shoulders and scatter in the bush in search of less ungrateful soil. When they have found it they go back to their homes, and the council of family heads meets to choose a leader. This leader is really a priest, for his chief function is to sacrifice in a public and formal manner to the blonda ba sou (1), the shades of the great entry hut /116/, that is, to leaders and priests who, just like him, held the reins of power, and to the gnéna, genii, spirits, and fetishes, whence come his names of gnéna-n-sonna ("he who sacrifices to the gnéna fetishes") and gnéna-n-sonnaba ("great sacrificer of the gnéna fetishes"). He alone has the authority to sacrifice to all /these spirits/ in the name of all /the people/.

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1. Blon, "entry hut"; da, "door," "doorsill"; ba, "great"; sou, "corpses," "shades."

621 793 555 The palavers and deliberations are long, but the choice is a happy one; the old man chosen as gnéna-n-sonnaba always has the slyness and guile characteristic of the Bambara type. Patient and likeable, he will know how to be just and impartial in disputes, diplomatic and sufficiently master of himself to say only what he intends to. He will know how to acquire the reputation of an upright man who does not know theft or falsehood.

621 793 Elected for life to hold both civil and religious power, he is truly the head of the village, the dougoutigi. His position is hereditary; it passes from brother to brother and, when there are none, goes by right to his oldest son. The one who is to succeed him becomes his aide (siéré), and the heads of families (gouatigi-ou) compose his council; they are always summoned when a question is to be handled or a decision made.

The Choice of the dasiri fetish and its sacred mount

776 778 787 The new village has a head, his aide, and its council; it is organized. Now they must find out the whereabouts of the spring, rock, or tree where lives the protecting spirit, the dougou dasiri (1),

1. Dougou dasiri: /dougou/, "village"; da, "mouth," "entrance"; siri, "bind."

who fastens the entrance to the village and watches over it. For this knowledge the people appeal to a sorcerer; he has intimate contact with the spirits, knows their ways and customs, and understands their language.

There are many sorcerers, and they do not all work in the same way. One discovers his oracles in the entrails of a hen, a second traces cabalistic signs on ashes, a third endlessly moves little stones, bones, and cowrie shells, counting them again and again. To locate the dasiri, people have recourse to the flélikéla (2) diviner, who

2. Fléliké, "to look attentively, curiously."

793 782 621 778 The gnéna-n-sonnaba, the dougoutigi, assumes office from the first day and offers a sacrifice in the name of his people. On the trunk of the tree, about a meter from the ground, he pours d'lo, or millet beer, and dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with water, and causes a flow of blood from hens, roosters, goats, and sometimes from a young bull. After this general sacrifice, individual ones follow, for, in order to /118/ place himself under the protection of the genie, each family head in order of seniority offers it a little dégé and a little blood, through the intermediary of his leader, the priest. And on the trunk of the tree there is nothing but great blood stains with feathers, hairs, and shreds of skin stuck in their midst with the remains of chewed kola nuts. Then come the dances, and men, women, and children go into a frenzy at the sound of drums; and the tumult is indescribable.

Sacrifices offered to the dasiri

778 782 796 A path a meter wide leads from the village to the fetish tree which is always located in the middle of a small grove if possible. Heads of families sacrifice to it several times a year -- on the morning after the konio, or first night of marriage, for example, but the festival in which the whole village takes part is annual. The ceremony has greater importance every second year, and every seventh year it degenerates into an orgy.

During the sacrifice the women stay at the edge of the sacred grove, and only the men and boys go inside and surround the fetish. After an offering of dégé and a little d'lo, the throat of a sheep or goat is cut in the name of the whole village, and the head of each family, comes with hens, sheep, goats, etc., according to the family's means and the number of members; the meat piles up. The hens are plucked on the spot, the large pieces are cut up, and the women carry it all back to the village. Each family head is given a piece as big as a fist from the first sacrifice offered in the name of all, and this, too, is [252] taken back to the village; the rest is roasted and then grilled on the spot and eaten by the men, without salt, pepper, or any kind of seasoning. The dégé and d'lo of the main sacrifice are drunk under

[846] The navel dries between the sixth and eighth day. The head-
852 man and elders are told of the event, and all the heads of families
553 (the gouatigou) come and sit in order of age and rank at the entrance
door of the hut which opens into the court of the confined woman.
The religious head, the gnéna-sonnaba (2), goes alone into the hut
and /170/ shaves the head of the infant on its mother's knees. Long
[201 lines of women push into the inner court, clap their hands, let out
431] shrill cries of "kouyo kouyo" as signs of joy, and give their friend a
small present of millet and cotton (1).

•[793] 2. Usually it is the religious head, priest of the dasiri, who shaves the child, but there are exceptions to this rule. In some villages it is the civil head who performs the tonsure; in others this task is the prerogative of a family. Sometimes the shaving is done by the father or the grandfather. The families in which this custom is followed are not pure Bambara but are mixed with Marka blood.

1. The women give a handful of cotton and about a pound of millet.

When the head of the child has been shaved and well cleaned, the headman lays his hands on him to drive away evil spirits that might wish to harm his life; he gently strokes his back and chest and, spitting lightly, recites a short formula which he alone knows and can understand. Then he goes and sits among his people, and the father presents him with eleven kola nuts on a platter of braided grass. The heads of families, in order of age, place their offering of 40 to 80 cowrie shells (2) on this same platter, and the gnéna-sonnaba asks

2. The men give 40 cowrie shells. The generous ones go as high as 80.

/128/ Chapter 6

THE CULTS

794 The purpose of the Bambara cults, whether they are of individuals, families, or villages, is to promote the functioning of the universe in an orderly way, which includes the preservation and conservation of individuals and the whole community in their spiritual or material forms.

The following chapter is not exhaustive. We have described a certain number of cults selected from the most representative. Under their apparently diverse aspects, shown in their purposes as well as in their modes, all are integrated into the system of Bambara thought.

I. Individual and Family Cults

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794 Over individual altars sheltered within the family enclosure or preserved in the private room (*česo*) of their owner, the rituals of "maintaining self" are practiced. They assure the stability of physical (*čuafebla*, *čuafebyeni*) and social (*dyamana* *tigi* *ǰigi*) forces; they afford protection outside dangers (*mbe* *ndyugu* *kã*); they are the temporary containers of souls at the time of death (*kere* *la* *boli* *ni*).

Since man must, in many circumstances of his life, remedy any depletion of his strength, these altars represent repositories, relays, in which at least certain elements of his being are integrated. They permit him to regroup or revitalize his physical or psychical forces for his own well-being as well as for that of the community.

A. The *česo*

In the homes the movable altars are kept in a room called *česo* (literally, house of man), which is reserved for the /129/ owner and which contains, besides his weapons and agricultural implements, family altars, either collective or individual (1) depending upon

1. The following description is that of the house of Tètè, an important citizen of Banankoroni.

778 whether he is head of a family, head of a religious society, or a
794 bachelor.

These objects are hung from the ceiling or hidden away in corners from the looks of people and the risks of impurity. The walls of the room, daubed up to a third of their height /130/ with black earth,

[532]

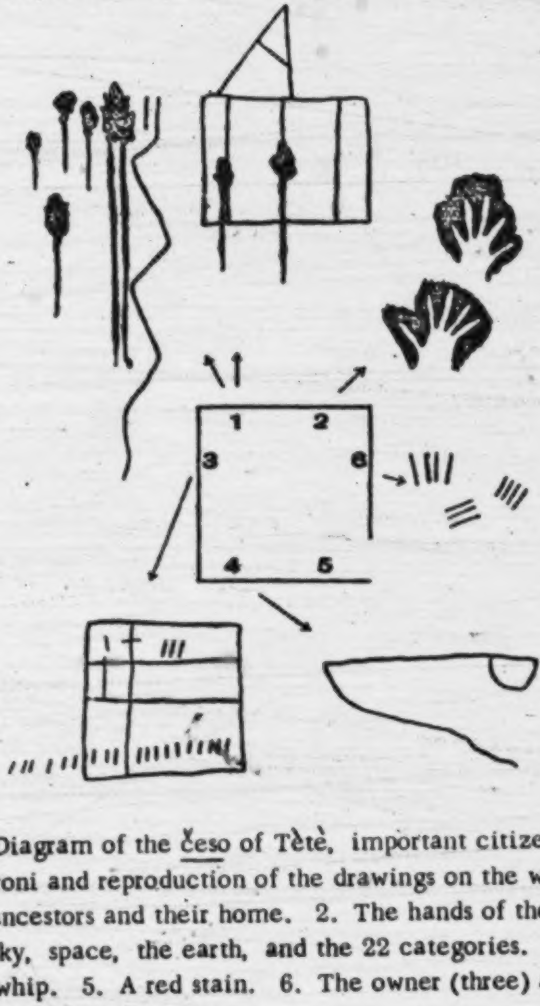

Fig. 10 — Diagram of the česo of Tètè, important citizen of Banankoroni and reproduction of the drawings on the walls: 1. The ancestors and their home. 2. The hands of the living. 3. The sky, space, the earth, and the 22 categories. 4. The Komo's whip. 5. A red stain. 6. The owner (three) and his two wives (four and four).

symbolizing Faro's presence and protection, are covered with paintings and drawings.

778 On one of the walls, small lines representing the ancestors and a
broken line representing the human person are drawn with millet mash;
● 794 on another, engraved with a sharp point, is a schematic geometrical
532 figure of the ancestral home; it is accompanied by the silhouettes of
two hands (see Fig. 10, 1 and 2), the hands of the living, "crossed
and reaching out to the world of the dead." The left hand, symbol
[826] of disorder, incertitude, and the variations of human conscience,
is placed below to the right of the other to recall man's obligation
towards his right hand, symbol of order, righteousness, fidelity, and
work (1). Thus arranged, the hands express complete submission of
the living to the ancestors.

Farther away are drawn the divisions of the universe (Fig. 10, 3) with the help of a square divided into three compartments symbolizing from top to bottom: the sky and water, the air, the earth.

In the upper square to the left, a line represents Faro in all his power, sole master of sky, water, and life. A horizontal line recalls his domination over the world. The lines that follow are his children. The total indicates the feminine form of the spirit.

All individual or family sacrifices offered to Faro are performed over his sign which the officiator rubs with copper and crushed tomatoes in order "to thank the spirit who protects his dya, and to pray to the spirit to give his wife children."

The central rectangle is the domain of Téliko: air and wind. The small line which vertically bisects the square on the left represents the spirit attempting to penetrate into Faro's plan to vanquish him. His defeat is indicated by the fact that the major portion of the line is situated in Téliko's domain, since the latter violated only temporarily the boundaries of his adversary.

The lower rectangle outlines the earth, seat of the Soba spirits. The row of 22 short lines which covers it recalls the 22 elements of creation, "the 22 things indispensable to man in this world."

On another wall, fire is indicated by two whips: that of Faro, lightning, and that of Komo, the law. They also recall "the power

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1. In making this drawing the following words are repeated: "I place my right hand on the wall night and day," neben kinin bolo da koko la šu ni kle.

778 of the initiates' word" and are exposed to fire to increase this power
794 (Fig. 10, 4). Beside them, /131/ a large red stain, dyoli Yikin,
532 painted in ochre, states that man is the sacrificer, that the cult has
immolation as its basis. Of such a man it is said that: "he reckons
with the proof of the blood (1)" (Fig. 10, 5).

Above the bed which consists of a simple mat placed on the ground, three engraved lines symbolize the man and two four lines the two women who alternately share his bed (Fig. 10, 6).

778 In certain villages, the drawings are made by an instrument called
794 ngwoni, used during the rituals of the year's "renewal" (2).
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The point of baobab wood, which is used for engraving, is as slim as a slat and fits on to a kind of racket made of sunzun wood which holds a net of da fibers. The hide of a male goat, called soni wolo ni (literally, soul of the skin of sacrifice), and two handles of ngolobe wood (3) complete the assemblage. The net, made of sixteen cotton threads dyed with red ochre, kolo, is called ngwoni kene ba (literally, great space of the ngwoni) and represents Faro.

778 Before being used, the instrument is washed with water which will
794 be used later to cook the food for the family. Next, tomatoes are
532 pressed on the net and the juice runs into the hide which forms a
pocket; holding the point in the right hand and the handle in the left, one then makes the drawings on the wall of the česo. The seeds of the fruit remain in the pouch until the following year to serve as a testimony to the offering. Next, with a red hot knife the following lines are engraved on the object: four lines, representing Faro, and two 16 lines, multiples of four, the female symbol. After each cut, "a rag saturated with fresh water is placed on it to soothe the pain." The frame is saturated with kola nut extract and four dots, the womb of women, are also marked with a black stone, kolofin. An egg is then smashed on the object to "refresh the soul of the ensemble."

1. Dyoli tamaše mine ba.

2. Particularly at Bananakoroni.

3. Combretum michrantum.

B. The Altars

778 794 Each family head wears a small altar called kere la boli ni (literally, little side altar), which maintains relations with the souls of the members of the family for which he is, in part, responsible. /132/ In case of illness he offers sacrifices on this boli for the recovery of the patient. In case of death, he keeps the soul in it temporarily before carrying it to the collective altar of the Komo (1). He also sacrifices on this altar at the time of sowing.

[763] If the family head is himself very ill, the altar is placed on his head in an effort to replace the soul which is escaping with that which the altar contains. If he dies, it is placed on his chest to take in the [764] soul which is then transported to the sanctuary of the Komo. At the end of seven days, the object is given to the deceased's eldest son who, upon becoming family head, sacrifices two goats to the Komo on this occasion.

The Čuafebla (literally, worn at the hip) is made by a father for his son when the latter attains maturity and is on the point of leading a man's life, farming his own field and founding a family.

If there is no Komo in the village, the father may make it earlier, right after the name-giving ceremony.

The altar is made of hyena tails, scorpion tails, and whole peppers tied with a little stick; it represents the owner's flesh and blood.

It receives an annual sacrifice at the time of sowing after the collective offering tothe Komo. This takes place in the family courtyard in the presence of all the members of the family (2). Moreover,

1. The society, the altars, and the role of the Komo are described on pages ff.

778 794 773 241 2. The cult rendered on this altar brings the intervention of the Sago spirit whose agricultural role is still obscure at the present stage of the inquiry. He taught men how to water their fields.

"Two birds konodyanfi began to circle and sing above the workers in the fields;

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> the latter abandoned their hoes in order to watch them. The birds fetched water with their beaks on the shore of a neighboring pond and returned to pour it at the foot of a millet stalk, the ear of which was not yet formed. The men put a mark on this stalk in order to recognize it and later observed that it produced a finer ear than the others. Imitating the bird, they dampened their plantings and watered their fields; their harvest was considerably improved by it. They kept up this habit and, in acknowledgment, produced a cult to the Sago spirit whose emissaries the birds were and who comes to slake his thirst at the Čuafebla."

778 it is the object of sacrifices when important business is being handled:
194 marriage, private or administrative action, fight against an epidemic.

[428] A son may inherit his father's altar and keep it with his own which he wears tied to his hip.

The Čuafebyẽni (literally, little horn at the hip) is composed of a cowrie, taken from Faro's granary, copper which is the altar's soul /133/ (ni), pepper, charcoal, and honey. This mixture is introduced into a ram's horn decorated with cowries at its opening and often wrapped in a red cloth bearing the same ornamentation.

[782] The altar is consecrated on those of the Komo, over which it is passed seven times. The throats of victims are cut, their blood is collected in a gourd, and the boli dipped into it three times before being taken out in the sun to dry.

Its role is one of protection. Its owner carries it during the Komo ceremonies to defend himself against spells, korti, which may be cast by someone in the audience.

It also maintains the integrity of its owner's forces. If the latter faints or goes into a trance, he is returned to his normal state by completely renewing the ingredients which constitute it. When the horn is emptied of its contents, "both the soul of the altar and that of the man" are removed. T~~he container is~~ rinsed out with water from the

778 Niger after which the reconstitution of the altar is carried on and is
794 equivalent to "the taking on a new soul." Each family member comes to the aid of the party concerned: the father gives copper, the women, peppers, the children, charcoal; a new cowrie is removed from Faro's granary.

778 The mbendyugukã (literally, I am on the enemy) is an individual
794 altar which permits its owner to overcome his adversaries and even to
754 attack their life.

The person who wishes to own one makes it after the death of an enemy. He goes secretly to unearth the corpse, shaves off its hair, cuts off its tongue and nails, and removes the eyes.

An elderly owner of such an altar takes it with him to the person who wishes to make one. The latter prepares and mixes the ingredients according to a special ritual and ties them to a hyena's tail. Before a witness who belongs to his age grade, the elder rubs the new altar on the old one seven times while reciting a prayer to consecrate it; he then returns it to its owner (1).

1. Because of its evil powers, the altar may not be made and entrusted to its owner except in the presence of a known witness.

The symbolism of the various parts composing it explain the use to which this altar will later be put. The tongue of the dead man contains his voice and gives to that of the owner the strength to convince those who contradict him in arguments as well as in council meetings. The eyes of the dead man permit him to see what others may not see, or even to blind his enemies by poisoning them with his nails. The hair, evidence of the other parts /134/ of the corpse, contains the nyama of the deceased and is an essential part of the mbendyugukã.

[595] The owner of this altar, which excludes the number four, marries only three wives. Moreover, he cannot mix his own hair with that of another without risking death.

Because of its aggressive character, the mbendyugukã demands
[782] victims, dogs or roosters, of red coloring. It gives to whomever owns it a strength which will always be greater than that of his competitors in whatever he may undertake.

778 784 754 For this reason it receives sacrifices at the time when the fields are being worked, for trade, marriage, war, and hunting where the person risks his life; it helps to fight illness and death. Immediately after the first sacrifice, it captures the personality and aggressiveness of the dead man and puts them on its owner, making him doubly dangerous to those with whom he is in conflict. But on the other hand, the danger may turn against him and, to a greater extent than anyone else, he risks his life at the slightest broken taboo.

Furthermore, the Komo who disapproves of such operations may, if he considers it useful, loosen the dead man's nyama on the person who is using his spiritual forces and put him in danger of death. Thus a Bambara will hesitate a long time before owning such an altar; in fact very few individuals assume this heavy responsibility.

C. The Chief's Seat

778 622 In the courtyard of the home of a family head or village chief can be found a pile of wood stuck on the ground and called dyamana tigi ǰigi (literally, support of the owner of the world) (Fig. 11). This seat symbolizes at once the chief, his power, his social and religious role of supporting the group (1).

> 1. The seat described below was observed at Banankoroni in the courtyard of the village chief. A similar one is found at Soroba.

The pieces of bent wood which compose it are planted rather deep into the earth above a series of objects. One of these pieces, with a simple bend (in a) is called sinzin, support; the two others, shaped like a T, are called ǰigi ba ǰigi (in b) (literally, support of the big support).

782 766 The whole lies over the body of an albino (c) buried in a tomb having a ritual form, covered with ancient clothing dyed in wolo and speckled with small black spots made of /135/ bone ash (kolofin), which represent at the same time the embryo in the womb of women and Faro. The head is covered with the cap of primitive men (e).

In (d), three pickets, symbols of man, are stuck through the skin of the albino's forehead; this skin had been removed and seven ritual

622 778 of polished stone called *fara yele*, "stone that rejoices, " expresses the wish that the chief's rule prosper.

The seat, taken as a whole, represents the chief's skeleton and his joints. It is erected upon various elements which sum up his ties to the ancestors and the supernatural powers, indicating his responsibility and contributing to the maintenance of his strength. It is situated in such a way that all the events in the courtyard take place around it. and that nothing which is said is out of earshot. As a center of the family household, as the symbol of the industrious and responsible man, it is the framework of the community which it upholds, just as the chief does through his physical endurance and moral firmness. The whole village "leans upon the chief's joint."

Each morning and evening, the *ǰigi ba ǰigi* and the *ba ǰigi* /137/ are greeted so that the chief may be strong, that his family may increase, that he may foster the ancestral beliefs. Offerings and [782] libations are made upon the seat and upon the body of the chief when his authority is questioned. In (b) tomato juice is being poured; in (a), representing the elbow or the knee, the water which has been used for ritual bathing of these same joints; at the foot, in (n), the fowls' throats are cut while the officiator, before pouring down the blood of the sacrifice, blows into a small hole dug in the ground; finally, in (l) the water which was used to wash the chief's whole body is poured in.

[826] In this way the chief's joints, which are the seat of his strength and his procreative seed, are purified and fortified.

II. Village Cults

794 The village, as a physical entity, and its inhabitants are placed under the protection of the supernatural powers and of the ancestors. Faro is directly invoked at all water spots.

If the village is situated at the river's edge, the rituals are addressed to the Faro *tyin*. If it is not too far from the bank, the inhabitants go out to make their offerings to the spirit. Frequently, the stream, pond, or natural well, which often determined the site chosen by the founders, is though to be inhabited by an incarnation of Faro whose name is revered and to whom all offer a cult.

On the other hand, each village is placed under the protection of the *dasiri*, a special spirit delegated by Faro.

194 The ancestors are worshipped in various places: at the doors and
thresholds of houses, at the cemetery, and at stone altars placed at
769 the intersections of lanes and in public squares. These positive cults,
778 which are aimed at the acquisition of beneficial forces, have as a
counterpart, cults in which the villagers rid themselves of all their
unlucky and infectious elements; these take place, in particular, at
the corssroads, dangu, which are placed under the guardianship of the
earth Soba spirits.

It would be impossible to treat all of the cults of the Bambara villages. Among these, three have caught our attention; they concern the dasiri, the dangu, and the ancestral altar stones.

A. The dasiri

194 The word dasiri (literally, which binds the mouth) designates the
776 invisible spirit, Faro's representative entrusted with watching over
778 /138/ the village, as well as the seat of this spirit and, sometimes
too, the animal which accompanies it or symbolizes it.

The spirit haunts a rock, a thicket, or a tree situated near the village; the approaches to this spot are reserved for the elder in charge of the ritual (1).

[787 Generally the place is pointed out by the geomancer at the time
361] the village is founded, or else determined by an event which occurred
at that time. It is after this operation that the buildings are erected
to the west of the chosen spot.

If the dasiri is a tree, no one may burn or cut its branches. In
[822] many cases it cannot be approached by anyone dressed in black or
indigo, colors which represent obscurity. No Peul may sit in its
[563] shade (2). Any infraction of these taboos brings about the death of

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[824] 1. In Massala and Soroba it is a baobab tree; in Sama, a tamarind tree, etc. See the observations on the dasiri collected by Ch. Monteil, Monographie de Djenné /Monograph of Djenne/, pp. 137-138; L. Tauxier. La Religion Bambara, pp. 195-208.

2. The reasons for the taboo concerning the Peul have not yet been ascertained.

794 In some villages, the sacrificer never
776 consumes butter or milk, foods which
778 the Peul furnish the Bambara.
[563]

the culprit and deprives the villagers of their protector.

The spirit of the dasiri sometimes has as its compansion an animal
794 which seems to represent the group's ancestor. At Ségou, it is a
776 crocodile; at Ouélenguena, a she-ass; at Koulikoro, a monkey; in
825 other places it is a male goat which is replaced when it dies. At
Konodimini there are a series of deep intercommunicating wells which would have served as homes for the ancestors. These holes are at present occupied by hyenas which are considered to be incarnations of the blacksmiths of former times and which are the dasiri of the place.

The dasiri's animal is free to enter homes and to eat what it finds. It is often fed by the inhabitants. No one may attack it and whoever breaks this taboo, set on by a vengeful nyama of which he cannot
[582 rid himself, risks being forbidden to marry, even being no longer
626] tolerated in his native village (1).

1. This was, at Soroba, the case of Dji Diara, who, after killing a hyena, could not marry as no woman was willing to link her destiny to his.

As its name indicates, the function of the dasiri is to maintain
794 the stability and integrity of the village. It is the "support of the
776 inhabitants' lives"; the numerous rituals (individual or collective),
782 of which it is the object, reveal the importance of its role as well
as the diversity of the beings invoked. To Faro are addressed prayers for rain; to the ancestors prayers for questions /139/ concerning the family; and to the spirit of the tree when it is a matter of stopping an epidemic. But directly or indirectly, any sacrifice offered to the dasiri is offered to Faro. The victims (sheep or fowl) and the offerings (cotton bands, kola nuts) are always white (see Pl. 3, b).

When children reach the age of six or seven, they are led to the
794 tree; they sit on its roots upon which kola nut juice is spat, and are,
778 by this fact, introduced into the village cult. They are then presented
852 to all the allies senãnku and especially to the blacksmiths with whom
they proceed to joke.

794 776 182 Each year a sacrifice bringing together all the inhabitants is offered to the dasiri and is terminated by communal eating of the sacrificial victim. The first fruits of the harvest are also brought to it by the sacrificer.

B. The dangu

776 778 823 783 The crossroads dangu or danku (literally, boundary of the head) are inhabited by the Soba spirits who, under Faro, constantly intervene in human affairs. Everything placed at this spot belongs to them, and no one passes by without leaving an offering or a token of his presence: a tool, raw cotton, seeds, cloth. A travelling stranger kneels and deposits a little ash or some cotton; if not, he cleans off a little space on which he spits before leaving. A child passing by will greet it with these words: "Crossroads, my soul is in your hands." On the occasion of any event concerning the individual; the family, or the community, red kola nuts are placed at the crossroads and the following words uttered: "You, crossroads, I entrust my head to you; you are my support; I say, you, crossroads" (1).

1. E dangu m be ni ku kalifa, do i la ni ǰigi be fę, ngo e dangu.

The corssroad, as an ideal public thoroughfare, is the chosen spot where one easily rids oneself of the nyama which any individual keeps and carries about with him. All that is impure, unlucky, and undesirable for the individual or the community is left at the crossroads. Objects which have belonged to dead people are also left there. The forces which are thus gotten rid of are supposedly absorbed by the spirits for whom they constitute a kind of nourishment which will then be returned to men in the form of gifts free of any taint. (2)

2. See p. 258.

/140/ Several examples will illustrate the role played by the crossroads in the community:

Any man who has wounded an animal or squashed an insect is affected in his own tere by that of the victim. He goes to the crossroads, kneels, and prays, depositing at the same time a band of cotton, an egg, and ashes. The band of woven cotton, symbol of

178 211 stones at the time of the collective ceremonies called the years "renewal" (1).

1. See pp. ff.

III. The Religious Societies

794 Members of groups formed by families in a broad sense, headed by patriarchs and owning lands which cannot be divided, also belong to other collective groups called flâ; these are formed by the age grade of circumcision, excision, or initiation, and grouped around altars which are their own and which possess their special rituals.

These societies are called by the general term dyo (2) meaning
794 "to build, "to edify" and also "secret." This term recalls that each individual constitutes an element of the whole group formed by the society.

476 2. It is appropriate to distinguish the religious societies, dyo, described in this work, from the mutual aid societies, tõ, of apparently secular character. The latter are also very numerous and exist in all the Bambara villages.

These organizations are strongly hierarchical and are placed under the direction of responsible chiefs. Their members perform communal work which concerns the life of the village: felling trees, clearing, cultivation of individual or communal fields, house construction, etc., and participation in marriage ceremonies. The detailed study of the tõ whose role is considerable would be indispensable to an understanding of the social and economic organization of this tribe.

The participation of the tõ in agricultural work will be described by Mme. de Ganay in Techniques et rites de l'agriculture (in press).

794 For male members, the large *dyo*, the principal aim of which is the preservation of spiritual forces and the maintenance of the person in daily life, are the Komo, the Kworè, the Nama, the Kono, the Nago, and the Nya. Women are grouped around *muso dyo*, about which little information has been obtained. The uncircumcised belong to the *ndomo* (or *čeble*). In addition, members of these societies are divided into groups which may be independent of age grades and which are designated by signs.

The Komo

The word Komo indicates the complex theoretically made up in each village of society members, living and dead, the sanctuary and its altars (*boli*), the responsible chief, and the mask. It is dominated [776] and protected by the invisible power of Faro and by the presence of a particular spirit to which it is consecrated. The latter haunts a tree located in the thicket where the ceremonies take place. He is /143/ respected for having taught in ancient times the origin and role of the *boli* and the variations of the cult; he comes to slake his thirst on the blood of victims.

The Komo is as powerful as it is old. The terms *trodeni* (*ni*, small) and *tro ba* (*ba*, big) are given to it, depending upon how ancient it is.

Each Komo has, in addition, a particular name (1). The Komo

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1. According to native etymology, *komo* means "taking (*mo*) of the pond (*ko*)." According to L. Tauxier, "Komo in Bambara means bad, mean, difficult" (see the *Dictionnaire bambara-français* of Mgr. Bazin, p. 308). On the root *Ko* or *Kon* see M. Delafosse, "Terminologie religieuse au Soudan /Religious Terminology in the Sudan/" *l'Anthropologie*, December, 1923, quoted by L. Tauxier. Some observations concerning the composition and functioning of the Komo society have been the object of a chapter of L. Tauxier in the *Religion Bambara*, pp. 272-310, which quotes works published by Ch. Monteil and the Abbe Henry. See also: Moussa Travélé, "Le Komo ou Koma /The Komo

794 or Koma/, " Outremer, 1929; H. Labouret,
Les Manding et leur langue.

The Komo
794 society, komo tyew (literally, men, people of the Komo) is composed
561 of all circumcised men, with the exception of the griot who may
under no condition become members, after an initiation performed
according to the age grade, the members of which are called tonyaw.
The hierarchy is rigorously respected: an earlier age grade will always
be ahead of the one that follows it in all circumstances of secular
or religious life. The Komo recognizes a chief, komotigi (literally,
master or owner of the Komo) who preferably belongs to the caste of
blacksmiths and whose function is hereditary. The son automatically
assumes command of the age grade which follows that of his father.
Upon the latter's death, he changes his age grade and becomes the
head of his father's. In the case where the owner of the Komo dies
[304] young and his eldest son, who is to inherit the office, is not yet
circumcised, he is made to undergo the operation in the night following
the death, and on the following day is proclaimed chief (1).

1. In La Religion Bambara, L. Tauxier points out that in some villages the chief of the Komo exercises his power only during a seven-year term. At the end of seven years an election takes place and the function is not hereditary.

794 Because of the importance of his functions, the chief of the Komo
784 is made to respect a great number of taboos. In particular he may
not penetrate into the sanctuary if he has not been chaste during the
past twenty-four hours. If the taboo is broken, he must warn the men
of his age grade and sacrifice two roosters upon the altars to purify
himself. His wife is initiated (for she is apt to see certain ritual
[562] objects generally hidden from women because of her intimacy with
the chief), but she is not present at any of the ceremonies to which
only the members are /144/ admitted. If she commits adultery she
[837] brings about her husband's exclusion from the society, not only as
chief but also as member.

794 The chief is often assisted by two elders belonging to his age grade,
whose advice he seeks in all cases concerning the community. In
561 addition, he is always helped by young initiates. If one of these

794 561 distinguishes himself through diligence, obedience, and skill, he may occasionally, if the elders so decide, be promoted to a more advanced age grade than his own and thus find himself on an equal footing with his elders.

794 The responsibilities of the Komo chief are considerable. He is the guardian of the altars which, as we shall later see, contain all the spiritual forces of the society; he is the only one able to manipulate them and is in charge of all the rituals which depend upon them. He [426] manages the patrimony of the group (seeds and money) which is kept in the cowrie or millet granaries, and which he may tap, in case of necessity, in order to make interest loans to members of the society who request them. (1)

But this function, honorary and advantageous from many points of view, involves not only rights but, more important, duties from which the chief cannot be exemated. He must, under no circumstances, abuse his power; he can make no decision without the agreement of the members and may not act, even in the most insignificant case, without advising each and every one of them. Each person is kept up to date as regarding the smallest details concerning the general activity of the Komo and the entire age grade must be informed at the same moment. To break these rules would mean to become exposed to the greatest dangers. Just like the head of the total family whose power is far from being absolute (2), the responsible person

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1. See S. de Ganay, "Un jardin d'essai et son autel chez les Bambara /A Sample Garden and Its Altar among the Bambara/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 17 (1947), pp. 57-63.

794 614 2. "The Mandingo fa," says Henri Labouret, in Les Manding et leur langue, "appears less free in his acts and decisions than the master of the ancient taisible fraternity. Far from being the tyrannical and strong willed autocrat whom people have frequently taken pleasure in describing, he seems to me, rather, to fulfill therole of a delegated administrator,

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614 an enforcement agent, expected to conform to the directives decided upon by the domestic council composed of elders and family heads (pp. 54 and 55). The aim pursued by the chief is to administer wisely a patrimony which will always remain undivided" (p. 57).

794 must exercise his office with strictness, honesty, and thoughtfulness.

A. Creation and Consecration of the Komo

The few villages not possessing a Komo are linked to the Komo in a neighboring village. If a village decides to create /145/ an independent society, it delegates its elders to an important Komo (tro ba) whose chief, after the performance of divinatory rites, makes them swear submission to the altars which he will entrust to them after consecrating them; they promise never to drop the cult, never to omit a sacrifice or offering. After the sacs brought by the petitioners have been filled with necessary products (honey, pepper, charcoal, gold, copper, etc.), they are overflowed with the blood of victims provided by those about to take office and then rubbed on the altars of the tro. The new Komo becomes the trodeni of the one from which it thus receives part of its power. In the course of the night following the consecration and the daytime transfer of the boli (1), a member of the society brings to his village a pembele similarly consecrated by the donors. This shift at night recalls the period of Pemba's reign preceding the apparition of light and the regular succession of days and nights.

Once back in the village, the society, gathered around the chief, organizes its ritual, chooses its officers, obtains the necessary masks, builds the sanctuary, and places on it the altars upon which blood sacrifices will be performed daily during this first period.

1. The boli, as indicated on p. 130, are linked to a category including day and sun.

B. Altars of the Komo

794 118 The *boli* altars occupy a distinguished place in the religious and mythological representations of the society organized around them. On the one hand they are a capsule of the universe because of their composition; on the other they are a capsule of the society as all its members are present in them. In fact, each member has provided a part of the composing elements after having impregnated them with his person by salivating over them while pronouncing his name.

794 118 346 The altars of the Komo are kept in a sanctuary, the *komo so* (literally, house of the Komo), a medium sized hut built either in the chief's dwelling place, or in the bush at some distance from the village. The approach to this structure which is under Faro's protection is forbidden to the ordinary person. The chief himself never enters alone. It is said that a snake, the soul and guardian of the sanctuary, is born and lives at the top of the hut in the branches which form the roof (Pl. VI, a).

The hut is divided into a number of floors on each of which is placed /146/ an altar. The highest one contains at its center the *nimara boli* (literally, altar of the souls) which, as its name indicates, is the container of the souls belonging to deceased members of the society and to sacrificed animals (1). It contains, from top to bottom, hair of the dead, copper for the souls of animals, gold for those of men. These various ingredients, placed in a double sac, receive the sacrificial blood which runs between the two layers and soaks them.

794 118 The *nimara boli* is surrounded by small individual altars which have served to channel the souls of the dying and lead them to the common receptacle (2). These small *boli* remain in the hut only

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[774 782] 1. There is constant preoccupation with preserving all vital elements. The souls of sacrificed animals are the object of the same care as those of humans. Like them, they participate in the resurrection promised to everything which has lived.

2. See p. 175.

194 778 during the seven days following the death and are returned to the heir of the deceased (son or brother); they remain permanently in the sanctuary only if the dead man has no descendants. They are held up by two wooden stakes called čin ta bere (literally, sticks which collect inheritance) which keep the souls of the dead and which contain at the top wood dust from Makanta Djigui's canoe and gold at the bottom. These stakes feed the boli which they hold and the souls of the dead which they contain, thus demonstrating that the "Komo never abandons anyone and that men without descendants remain with it for ever."

[784] The taboos concerning the nimara boli are numerous and strict: it may not be removed from the sanctuary except for funerals (1). No woman must ever see it. No foreign cult could ever conceivably be celebrated in its presence.

On the second floor is located the ñõ boli (literally, altar of millet) which contains an invigorating power intended for the society's crops. It is composed of a sac divided into six pockets which contain (from top to bottom) at the left: small millet, fonio, and copper; at the right: large millet, rice and other cereals, and gold. The sac, which opens at the top, receives at the time of agricultural ceremonies (sowing and harvest) the blood of victims offered by members of the millet society, ñõtõ. It must always remain damp with sacrificial blood so that the seeds which it contains will always live.

The ñõ boli is also tied to two stakes called ñõ boli kane (literally, protection of the ñõ boli) which contain in a hollowed-out /147/ section some millet and gold; it is tied to the stakes by threads which bring it the forces they contain.

The ñõ boli watches over the growth of cereals: germination, formation of the ears, maturation. It is responsible for the "head of millet" (2).

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1. See p. 247.

2. Each farmer is the owner of an individual ñõ boli which is placed in a subordinate position under that of the Komo. In addition, the Komo's ñõ boli is in close touch with the ñõ boli of the Kworè, a society whose purpose is to obtain

194 118 the rain necessary for cultivation (see p. 217). The agricultural role of the Komo will be described by S. de Ganay in *Techniques et rites de l'agriculture*.

194 118 784 The main taboo of the n͠o boli is the loss or waste of food. If even a grain of cereal drops to the ground, or into the fire, the members of the millet society are responsible for picking it up and eating it; otherwise the Komo will punish for the failure to do so and the harvest suffers.

194 118 726 The third floor contains the nyama boli, a repository of the forces (nyama) of individuals who have died a violent death (murder, war, execution). The nyama boli used to contain in former times a stone called gõgoro kurube, considered to be the "mother" of the stones thrown by the warriors' sling. It was removed from the sac in case of war and carried to the battlefield by a twin walking at the head of the troops. On its surface were engraved a series of lines representing the king, the warriors, and their wives. It gathered all the souls of those dead in combat and received their blood as an offering.

194 118 The nyama boli is, moreover, responsible for the soul of the crops and a repository for the souls of sacrificed animals; it also receives the "nyama of the words" of the members. It shares with the n͠o boli the responsibility for the cultivations and confers in this way great power to the society.

The sac contains in its lower part a mixture of coagulated blood and gold, and in its upper part a mixture of charcoal powder, pepper, and honey, which gives power to the nyama with which the sac is loaded. The taboo of the nyama boli is the rapid death of victims [782] which are sacrificed to it; only slow death confers effective nyama.

Upon the ground of the sanctuary, along with the dance costume of the mask, nya, are placed small altars intended either for sale, or for the creation of the new Komo, or for individual purposes. Animal horns, both byẽ ba (literally, big horn) and byẽ ni (literally, little horn), are also placed there; they contain powder for ritual usage, korti, whose dangerous action takes place during the times the mask is taken out (1).

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1. The various mixtures used for the religious practices of the Bambara

•794 778 often contain ingredients which have been pulverized: wood dust, charcoal powder, even powder of precious metals. Our investigation has not yet allowed us to clarify the role of this pulverization process. However, its mention by the Bambara and the frequent use of korti indicate the importance attached to this type of preparation.

/148/ Outside the hut, at the height of the nyama boli, a hook holds up the clothes of those who are killed by the Komo. The sanctuary, as well as the clothing of the mask, is daubed with black earth taken on the shore of the river representing Faro, and covered with feathers of the same color. Generally speaking, the metal [823] contained in the Komo altars gives it its strength and life. The most powerful of these is gold, silver comes next, then copper. Since each person gives an offering according to his means, the power of the altar thus depends in a certain measure on the wealth of the members of the society.

[782] Regular sacrifices upon the stakes, the bases of which sometimes contain a little wood from the historic canoe of Makanta Djigui, permit them to "maintain the pressure, the life" in the various altars.

These altars are removed from the sanctuary only upon the occasion of funerals or agricultural rites. When the mask is removed and when there are dances, replicas commonly found in the home of the chief are sometimes used instead.

The pembele is the protector of the society, the container of the forces (nyama) of the group. It is rarely placed in the sanctuary and usually kept by the chief who never exhibits it; occasionally it is watered with rain water symbolizing the work of creation.

796 778 Before the annual ceremony called "anniversary of the Komo," drawings are made on the sanctuary by the chief or an elder; they are a reminder that the sanctuary is the link between the invisible powers and the members of the society. Besides the image of creation as an issue of the initial vibration (see Fig. 2), the head of the ancestor Koumabana, figurations of the twins, and the twenty-two fundamental signs are sometimes drawn. Finally hoes emphasize the agricultural function of the Komo (1). Granaries intended for conserving grains

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1. At the time when the attention of specialists is attracted by the division of

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religious and social powers in ancient societies, it is interesting to point out that the Komo altars represent a very definite three-way division: the first is used for the conservation of spiritual forces (souls) of the group; the second presides exclusively over agricultural rites; the third is concerned with keeping the spiritual principles of individuals who died violently and of crop seeds; it played an important role during the wars. This threefold division is comparable on many points to that observed by M. Dumezil in Indo-European societies.

from the first crops /149/ used as offerings, are placed next to the sanctuaries or in the home of the chief (1).

1. In the village of Soroba the sanctuary includes seven granaries: three for small millet, *sañõ*; four for large millet, *keninge*. Seven is the number symbolic of the person, three for masculinity (small millet is male) and four for femininity (large millet is female).

C. The Mask

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The man who wears the mask during the ceremonies personifies the Komo. The head is sculptured in the shape of a human face or animal face. At Konodimini, it represents the panther; at Soungoba, a stork; at Banankoroni, an eagle; at Banoumbougoula, an elephant; at Ségoubougou, a vulture. The mask is usually decorated with elements borrowed from several animals. Thus, at Soroba, the skull and horns are those of a buffalo, but the jaw is that of a crocodile. It is, moreover, ornamented with the feathers of a wild duck (2).

2. An informant, who attended Komo ceremonies in a great number of villages, asserted he had never seen the same mask twice.

● 794 532 The head of the mask is usually made of bone (a human or hyena skull), or of wood painted white, black, and red. The mask, per se, is made in such a way as to frighten the future initiates. Just as the soul of a dead person, which requests offerings or threatens to drag his kin with it, is feared, so too is this fact which is in contact with the altar of souls (nimara boli) and which reflects the face of the ancestors. It also represents Faro: the mask is sometimes provided with a long beard symbolic of his hair, and lightly plastered with a layer of black earth taken from the river bank and impregnated with his power; it is sometimes smeared with the blood of a young girl who has died in the course of the ceremonies, in commemoration of the virgins annually offered to Faro in olden times.

Copper arrows (kun bye) are inserted into the skull and charms (kun kanana) are attached to them with the purpose of attacking the undesirables (noninitiates, women, or children) who approach the dance site.

"The eyes of the mask are large, so that the Komo may see and unveil everything; the nostrils are well opened for he must sniff everything, smell the good and bad of things. The mouth is twisted for the Komo does not talk; he only whistles and sings. The ears are vast so that he may hear everything, even that /150/ which each one says secretly in his heart. The chin of the mask is square, a sign of purity, decision, and clairvoyance." During the ceremonies, he silently opens his mouth. It is said that due to the presence of the altar of souls, nimara boli, "happiness penetrates him" (1). By singing, he redistributes this felicity to the audience and this is why he repeats the verses.

794 532 784 841 As a rule, women, griot and noninitiates are taboo to the mask. To each of the elements composing it also belongs a particular taboo. Thus, the head of the mask must never touch menstrual blood. Any infraction would bring about "a visible change to the face" and the altars contained in the sac carried by the dancer would be without strength. For this reason, no member must participate in the ceremonies if his wife is in a menstrual period.

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1. Here dun, literally, penetration of happiness.

794 292 The costume worn by the dancer is held up by a sort of carcass (*bry*) made of *ngolobe* (1) wood used because of its flexibility, and is enveloped with a light blanket for protection. Inside the *bry* are suspended various flutes (*komo fle*) which are blackened by the blood of sacrifices offered to "improve their sound" and which will be used in the course of the ceremonies. Along with these flutes is a little bag filled with spare spider webs. Any individual who goes under the [834] *bry* to dance must abstain from sexual relations for a specified period of time prior to the ceremony.

The costume (*nya*) which covers the carcass is made with the clothing of individuals killed by the Komo (2). Contrary to the *bry*, which has no active role but serves only to isolate the dancer inside the mask, the religious role of the costume is very important. It represents the "body and the valor of the ancestors." It is not the object of blood sacrifices, but is covered by a powder made of the bones of individuals killed by the Komo to which has been added kola nut juice. The 794 292 532 cloth is dyed with black earth taken from the river bank in exchange for a small offering of copper, gold, or cereals. Drawings called *komo mani* (literally, little people of the Komo) are made on the cloth to represent Faro on the one hand, recognizable by his long black hair, and on the other the eight ancestors who received the word. All the first agricultural implements of the Bambara are drawn with red ochre. The feathers of black, white, and red egrets are then sewn on the *nya* to hide /151/ the black earth, which is the spirit's abode. Two days before everything is taken out, these feathers are the object of offerings of kola nut juice, millet mash, and the blood of fowls.

794 292 784 The costume, like the head of the mask, must be seen neither by women nor by noninitiates. "Its color would change and it would become dull, making a purification necessary."

794 532 The body of the mask has two arms into which the dancer introduces his own. The arms terminate in a hook, *koli* (3), which is

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1. *Combretum micranthum*.

2. When a guilty member or a noninitiate is "killed" by the Komo, his clothing is offered to it.

●794 532 3. Koli means nail or spur in reference to a rooster and, by extension, hook.

impregnated with black earth from the river and made of copper, Faro's metal, soaked in the venom of a viper before the hook was formed. These hooks are also annually soaked in red venom mixed with pepper. All these preparations make them dangerous weapons used for different purposes during the ceremonies.

The right hook (kinin koli) is used to kill the guilty ones or the undesirables. A slight would brings about death which is then attributed to Faro. The left hook defends members of the society against the dangers which are present, even for them, in the actions and emanations of the right hook. It contains two shards of black pottery, Faro's taboo, which keep away and thus diminish the latter's power. During the dance the Komo, wishing to protect one of the members under its jurisdiction, waves the left arm over him to attenuate the strength of the right. During funerals a gesture of the left hook will indicate the deceased's membership in the society and will assure him protection in the hereafter.

[784 823] The taboo of the copper hooks is the same as Faro's concerning this metal. Just as no one would cross the Niger wearing an object or an ornament of copper, similarly no one would wear copper in attending the Komo ceremonies.

The wearing of the mask, which is much sought after by several initiates at each ceremony, is assigned to one of them by the chief. This role involves risks which are diminished by certain precautions such as abstention from sexual relations before the ceremony. On the day of the ceremony, the elders make the wearer drink millet beer until he is completely inebriated; then for a moment they apply to his chin and abdomen the nyama boli which he will carry in a bag during the ceremony. He also puts on a ritual headdress which sometimes has incorporated in it a particle of the one belonging to the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé. The mask is then adjusted on his head, the flute slipped between his teeth, while the chief assures him of his good faith and proves to him that he runs no danger.

/152/ D. Musical Instruments

794 534 The emergence of the Komo is accompanied by rhythms played on drums, dyiri kolo (literally, bone, wood), made of hides stretched

794 534 on half-gourds, and accompanied by flutes and bells. The musicians, recruited from among the musical members of the society, are obliged to submit to certain precautions because of the proximity of the mask during the performance of the dances. In fact, if the mask casts a spell (*korti*), they may, unwittingly, breathe in the dangerous powder and it is wise to protect oneself by taking the antidote ahead of time.

The Komo's iron bell, *kolõkolõ* or *grinda*, is kept with certain 794 534 altars in the chief's residence; it is rung by a special bearer, *grindavo* or *nadara koloyo*.

713 539 A myth recalls the origin of this bell. "A small child, who went to play at the crossroads situated at the approaches to the village, heard one day a bell ring and invisible beings speak. Seized with fear, he returned home. When he was questioned by his parents, he refused to answer but with his finger pointed out to them the road which he took every day. The parents followed it and arrived at the crossroads where they found a copper bell. The spirit of the place, Soba, announced to them that he was making a gift of it so that they might call the spirits by ringing it and that the spirits would answer them (1). But he asked the father to give him in exchange the child who habitually came to the crossroads so that the child could continue to play with the spirit's children. When the father, in despair, told him he had not the courage to part with his son, the spirit advised him to consult Faro.

The man gathered the young girls of the village together and asked them to intercede for him with the spirit. Dressed in their most beautiful clothes and wearing their ornaments, they went off singing and threw cakes and couscous into the river (2). The elders went down in turn and received Faro's consent. He demanded that

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1. In olden times, "men spoke with their ancestors and with their gods."

[796] 2. Each year the offering and the race are repeated by the young girls of Ségou who go to the river singing the *nyari nyari to*.

● 794 they keep the instrument for religious ceremonies. After declaring
534 that they would obey, ~~the elders returned~~ to the crossroads where
773 the Soba spirit gave them the bell and left ~~in~~ exchange the child whom
the spirit had called to him in their absence.

539 The object was then taken to the blacksmith who made one in the same shape, using wood or bone for the body, and stone for the clapper. After the invention of iron, they were forged according to the ancient model with the addition of small copper bells."

/153/ To ring the bell is "to make Faro hear the sound of copper,"
794 to call him, and flatter him at the same time. When the mask is
534 brought out, the sound warns the noninitiates to avoid the procession. The flute or reed pipe of the Komo, wara da, "mouth of the one armed with claws," is made of a bamboo stem pierced by three holes. The middle one is open and the two others are obstructed by a cobweb. The instrument is held between the bearer's teeth and is tied by a string to the back of his neck or to his ears.

794 A myth tells the origin of Faro's flute, made according to the
534 same principle, but of a different shape.

A woman, called Koussouba Koulibali, was bathing one morning
773 when she saw Faro and the dodo fish sitting at the river bank. The
539 fish was playing the flute and singing:

"I will whistle, I will whistle in my Faro's flute; he who will not hear me will die, he who will die will regret it" (1).

1. Na fye, na fye ne nka faro fle flye,
nyimi mame o na sa, nyimi sara o bone na.

The woman fled and told her husband, who was a diviner and chief of the Komo, about what had happened. The latter proceeded to the banks of the Niger and frightened away the fish who abandoned its instrument. The man seized it and went home, followed by the turbulent river water from which he managed to escape in his canoe. But his whole family perished in the flood.

In the morning, the man returned to the river bank and cried as he played the flute. He played for such a long time that Faro, taking pity on him, came out and said: "I have drowned the members of your family and flooded the village. I forgive you, however,

794 534 773 539 because of the offerings made by other men. Keep the flute and since you are Soma and chief of the Komo, let all the Komo flutes be blessed because of this one." By this he meant that the Komo flute, like the other ritual objects, would hereafter contain his strength, *nyama*. He added that, when men wished to call him or to talk to him, they would have to do it through the intermediary of this instrument.

794 534 Before each occasion when the mask is brought out, a sacrifice is performed upon the flutes "to improve their sound." Faro's flute is used in the rituals performed at the river bank, to pray to him or to thank him. To play the flute is equivalent to reciting his device; he is forced to hear. The Komo flute is used only during the masked ceremonies; it makes those who hear it say that the Komo is "a thing with a soft throat" (1).

1. *Fẽ kã duma.*

In former times the chief alone was allowed to play the flute, whatever its type; death was sanctioned for infraction of this rule. Ordinary flutes /154/ of a style different from those belonging to the cult are used by children.

E. Initiation to the Komo

794 852 Three days after the birth of a boy, his father presents him with the elements which he has contributed to the making of the Komo *boli* and recites the *komo kumã*: "You, Komo *boli*, these things are inside; society of the Komo, these things are inside; customs of the Komo, these things are inside; you are a child, you are going to approach the age of the elders; Komo *boli*, here is my child, watch over him" (2).

2. *Komo boli la, nin waliw ba kono;*
komo dyɛ̃ la, nin fɛ̃w ba la; komo sira
la, nin kunko ba kono; i yę demisɛ̃ yę
i bi ta makorobaya yę; komo boli nde fle,
tyę do, i dyã to a la.

He then returns the child to its mother with these words: "The son has been introduced to the secret of masculinity; he has received

794 852 the Komo's blessings, the Komo's blessing is with him; let him join the men, let his light be with us" (1). The child is then presented in the same way to its grandmother.

794 These acts anticipate the initiation which later will make the newborn an adolescent member of the Komo society.

794 561 [564] In each village this society is composed of all initiated men, divided into age grades, which are themselves composed, theoretically, of the men circumcised in the same year. Only the griot are not admitted. It is permissible for an individual who has not been initiated immediately after his circumcision to be admitted later if the society agrees. He will belong, regardless of his age, to the age grade with which he will have been initiated.

One age grade has precedence over the other which follows. This hierarchical order is followed strictly in daily life as well as during councils and ceremonies. To break these rules of seniority would mean to disturb the order even in the hereafter, since the Komo gathers together the sum total of both living and dead members.

794 [735] The recruitment of members varies from one region to another because of the expenses involved in the admission ceremony and in participation in the ritual. Some villagers refrain from joining because of poverty, and it also happens that some conversions to Islam are brought about by this fact.

/155/ The initiation is performed at night. The kotigi (2) presents to the future members, one by one, the ancestors' tools. He explains to them their origin, their history, their role, and their spiritual value. He teaches them the respect they owe the ancestors for their courage, their labors, and the technological inventions of which they were either initiators or guardians. The mask is removed from its shelter and dressed by a member; in front of the children the man who wears it unmasks himself and reveals to them the meaning of the different parts of the costume.

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1. De dyira la tyę gundo la; ani komo ye dukaw mine nuofe, komo ka barka bi a fe; ka fara tyew ka, ka yele kę an ta ye.

2. See p. 156.

794 The candidates next swear an oath the text of which is recited by the chief:

"If I reveal (the secrets of) the boli, may it kill me; if I disclose the institutions, may they kill me; until my death, if I speak, may my father die, may my mother die, may the boli break my heart" (1).

> 1. Ni nye korobo, boli ka fa, ni nye korobo, dyow ka fa, fo kata n sa ni nya fo n fa ka sa m ba ka sa, boli dyugu ka sõ ta.

Each in his turn, the children next lick the head and the hooks of the mask three times, thus assuring it their allegiance: "Until my death, I shall not reveal the koli. Faro has not been revealed! Let the koli not be revealed!" (1)

> 1. Fo ka ta n sa nte korobo koli, faro ma korobo, koli kana korobo.

After the altars, including the pembele, have been presented to [782] them, the postulants drink the blood of a goat offered in sacrifice; thus they assimilate the forces of the Komo and by this communion consecrate their oath.

Finally, the mechanism of the society in all its details is explained to them: the necessity of hierarchy in age grades, of respect for taboos, and of the secrecy in which all that concerns the organization must be held. A moral lesson is also taught them; in particular they [867] are advised to set themselves a line of conduct in private life as well as in public life, to be righteous, to avoid duplicity and bad faith, flãvlãña (literally, double action), never to serve two masters, and not to entertain conflicting desires among themselves.

794 As an illustration, the adventures of the first members who broke these laws are told.

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539 One of Makanta Djigui's companions, Garou Keita, was afflicted with this serious fault. He had become friendly with Moridje Sidibé, son of the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé, who had the same character. At this period three great Komo were already functioning in the region: that of Koulikouro called selo (literally, grave); that of Nyamina called dyibi (literally, dark); and that of Kankan.

Garou went to one of the ceremonies of the Komo of Kankan /156/ and by telling lies, incited the members to revolt against the local

194 chiefs, which they did. They interrupted the dances and refused to
113 recognize the Komo which was dissolved, leaving the chief alone.
539 But Garou, who had lied, died shortly after that.

The chief of Kankan carried away the altars and put them under the protection of the Komo chief of Koulikoro, and the members participated in the ceremonies of this locality. Moridje went to Nyamina and, in the same way as Garou, incited the members to engage in a kind of rivalry with the Komo of Koulikoro. In the course of a ceremony celebrated in this latter village, he called forth the Komo of Nyamina, using the authority attached to his father's name, and offerred a male goat to both groups. The two chiefs refused, arguing with reason that one victim could not satisfy two Komo. Moridje paid no attention and brought the two maskers face to face with the goat between them. A fight took place with the animal as a pawn, each masker using his magical powers to win it, and the members gathered behind their respective masks shouting: "the goat is ours." Later, the mask wearer also died prematurely.

194 To avoid the possibility that members will give their allegiance to two Komo, they are made to lick the mask once again, while the following prayer is recited: "If you lick the mask, may you not make the flãvlãña, may you not perpetrate a betrayal" (1). If, after swearing this oath, the party betrays it, he becomes "a rotten person" (matolilo) and loses the esteem and confidence of his companions.

194 As the young men grow with years and increase in knowledge, the
869 instruction they are given is increasingly comprehensive. The head of the Komo, accompanied by men of his age grade, takes the
532 postulant into the bush and questions him about his intentions and aims. Before indicating to him the group to which he is to be attached and introducing its members to him, he teaches him by drawing on the ground the combination of signs representing the arrangement in the universe of the Komo society, a combination which is usually reproduced before each ceremony and which permits the participants to recognize their place (see Fig. 12).

This drawing, called wolo ti, "sign of the generation," is composed of two long lines cutting each other at right angles and oriented

1. Nye komo kun no, i kana seka flãvlãña kę, nye komo kun no, i kana seka dyãfa kę.

794 according to the cardinal points. The point of juncture is placed in the
869 center of a square called *bara kęnę*, "rhythm of space," the internal
532 angles of which are armed with hooks. The two crossed lines are /157/ the symbol of the multiplication and extension of beings and things in the universe which is represented by the central square. The four angle hooks express the creation rotating upon itself (1). It is therefore, a schematic representation of the order and movement of the universe.

Along the extension of the diagonal lines outside the central square are drawn five signs which are each the symbol of a category of initiates or of a ritual object; these signs also indicate the place of the participants during the ceremonies.

On the eastern and western branches are placed the signs of the older initiates:

1. *dyę*, "union." Sign of the Komo Society in its entirety, the body of its members.
2. *doniya*, "knowledge." The point of the angle is "the point of knowledge" and its opening "the collective voice of the society." We are dealing here with the science which the initiates possess.
3. *bako*, "link." This closed sign expresses the ties which bind the initiates one to another and to the Komo, as well as the group spirit of which they must give proof.
4. *sɔ̃ni*, "good will, consent." The point of departure of the stroke from the line indicates that the initiate is free to enter the society, to climb the steps of the successive grades indicated by the broken line, but not to leave it, and that he must have the will to follow the rules of the organization.
5. *tyɛ̃*, "truth." The members must be sincere. The two symmetrical hooks indicate that one must begin with truth and end with it.
6. *tyɛ̃ šere*, "evidence of truth." This drawing, testimony to the preceding, is sometimes attributed to strangers who come to attend the ceremony and recognize the conventional signs (2).

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1. See p. 20. We have here a special representation of the swastika whose branches are turned toward the center.

2. See p. 211.

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7. bẽni so, "house of agreement." Evidence of the sign 1, it represents a sickle, symbol of the house and of the union of the members. In serious cases, to stop a quarrel or to settle a difference, the Komo chief presents an ancient sickle and says: "It is the proof of the agreement, it is the evidence of the union" (1).

1. Beni so yeta do, dye šere do.

8. ǰigi so, "house of support." The dot symbolizes the komo so and the whole recalls the support which the chief offers the members. Orphans sit in the spot where this sign is drawn.

/158/ 9. so ba, "big house." The drawing represents "the egg of the world" and marks the spot where the oldest geomancer in the village stands alone.

10. komba, "big door." Sign and place of the person who performs the sacrifice, for the sacrifice "opens the doors" and puts man into contact with the invisible.

On the northern branch are placed the signs which concern the young initiates.

11. timidẽ, "circumcised." This refers to those circumcised in the next to the last age grade. The sign is that of the completed person (2).

2. See G. Dieterlen, "Les signes des Kéita du Mandé /Signs of the Kéita among the Mande/," l'Homme. Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie, de linguistique (in press).

12. timidẽ kle, "circumcised of the last age grade." The drawing shows the incomplete person.

13. tyi dẽ, "son of work." These are the sons of the kworę duga (3). The sign, drawn inverse to that of the person, expresses the /159/

3. See p. 220.

necessary disturbances and the pleasantries brought by these dignitaries to the Kworè and Komo ceremonies.

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14. soni dẽ, "son of the sacrifice." Drawn on the place for the sacrificer's son, the sign includes a horizontal line representing the knife, for the son may be called upon to replace his father in performing his duty during the ceremonies.

15. yeleka tigela, "the laughing man who cuts." This is the individual in charge of proclaiming the good or bad position of the victims which have been sacrificed.

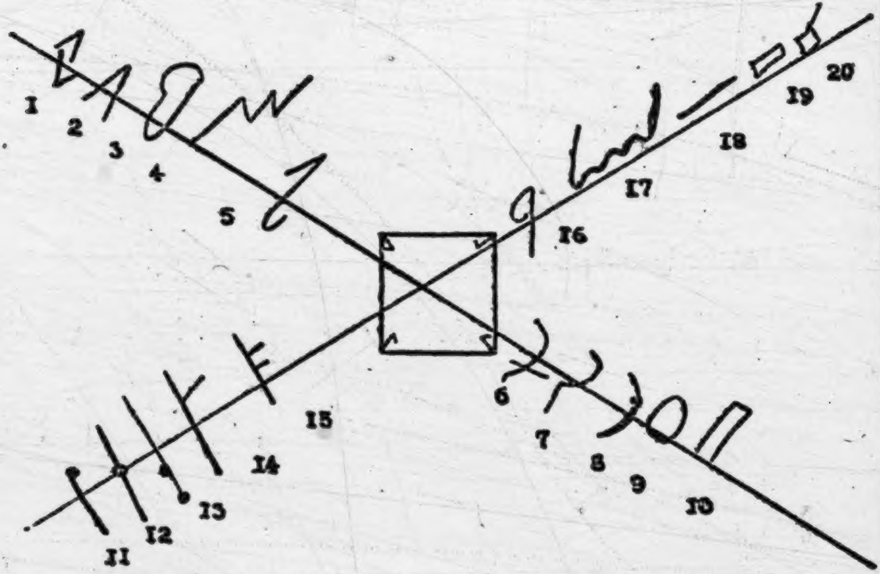

Fig. 12 — Drawing made on the ground by the chief of the Komo to mark, by their signs, the places of the participants during the ceremonies. This drawing, observed in the village of Dougoutiguibougou, is complete. When the branches forming an x are missing, the central square is always represented. (Drawing by an informant)

On the southern branch are placed the signs representing the blacksmiths; they relate to the institution of circumcision and to the functioning of the Komo of which these artisans are the dignitaries.

16. boñema, "honored person." Place of the aged blacksmiths.

17. wara da dyuru, "string from the mouth of the man armed with hooks." This is the small string of the flute, called "voice" of the Komo.

18. wara da, "mouth of the man armed with hooks." The flute of the Komo.

794 19. pembele. This sign represents both the society's pembele and
869 the board of the same name used for circumcision.

20. gosilãnde. The sign designates the primitive club and the small
532 mallet used in circumcising.

The ensemble of these figures, representing a summary of the universe in its arrangement and its movement, forms the scene upon which the actors in the ceremony take their places. The latter are in a way the living embodiment of these drawings as well as the movements which change the order of presentation and must be executed with special precautions. In effect, any change made in the arrangement of the actors in the scene is felt to have repercussions in the universal organization. This is why the movements of each one give rise to rituals of forgiveness and purification concerning the sign corresponding to him (1).

1. See below.

F. Ceremonies of the Komo

794 The ceremonies in which the mask participates take place several
796 times a year according to the decision of the members. Their purpose is to discuss the interests of the society, to make joint decisions assuring the prosperity of its members, to promote harvesting, and to commemorate the organization of the Komo.

Three principal ceremonies are celebrated: the first, called /160/ "anniversary of the Komo" (komo sanyelema), at the end of the dry season; the second after the harvest, for offering of the first produce, as the mask is never taken into the fields at the time of cultivation; the third during the cold season at the time of circumcision. They involve sacrifices offered in the cemetery in honor of the dead as well as divining rites. Occasional ceremonies may also take place inbetween upon the membership's decision; the mask is taken out for purifications. The neighboring societies are generally invited to
[574] attend the reunions and the drinking which follow (2).

2. The important Komo chiefs are thus consulted by strangers in the village, who sometimes travel considerable distances.

194 196 The ceremony begins with a council meeting which is attended by all the members and which takes place in an enclosure, kara so. Early in the morning, the Komo chief, aided by two men of his age grade, draws upon the ground the figures which indicate the places of the participants and of the material objects (1).

1. See Fig. 12.

When the members arrive, they immediately place themselves, without risking disorder, near the sign proper to the group to which they belong. Each one, in passing, greets the person who will perform the sacrifice. The inhabitants of the neighboring villages are received by a member in a spot somewhat removed. They state the group to which they belong or draw their sign on the ground without saying a word. The chief acclaims their arrival with these words: "The strangers have come; the strangers, sons of the Komo have come; their place is in their hand; let tolerance be granted them" (2). The council meeting is then opened.

2. Dnow nana, komo dẽ dnow nana,
u siki yoro be u bolo, yafa ka kę u ma.

The chief sits down in the central square, facing the west, places the boli to his right, listens to the propositions of the members, all of whom similarly face west. If he rises, all conversation ceases; it resumes only when he is again seated. If a member wishes to move during the meeting, he must ask the permission of the chief of the Komo. The latter goes to place his hand near the sign as an excuse for the man. When the member returns, the chief of his group takes a little water with which to pour over the drawing as a purification (3).

3. The temporary absence of a member is called: wuli ka bo komo ko la, "to rise and leave the affair of the Komo" and the return do dye ba la komo jine sabu la, "to enter into the great union of the spirit of the Komo."

When all questions concerning the society or the village have been examined and discussed, and when the decisions have been reached, everyone stands up; the drawings on the ground are erased with water.

794 796 201 The rituals in which the mask participates generally /161/ take place the following night in a thicket called komo tu, "bushy one of the Komo," situated in the bush near the village.

As soon as they hear the mask whistling, the members approach according to their age grades, the older ones first. In principle, only those under the jurisdiction of the functioning Komo and their guests are present. However, any initiated stranger who wishes to attend the dances makes his status known by means of the following signs:

1. Shouting "hé" or "ho," he presents his right hand to the mask with all the fingers folded except the index and the little finger which point towards it. The index, in this case, represents the circumcised man, member of the Komo society, in sum, the petitioner. The little finger, which is smaller, expresses this man's submission to the Komo and the fact that he is and will always remain its inferior.

2. He puts a twig of straw in his mouth; the light colored straw signifies that his heart is pure, that he has no evil intention. The mouth, closed over the straw, shows that the man, "understanding the word of the Komo," has no need to speak of it.

3. On his arrival, he says: ani bara (literally, I am with the bara). The masker, hearing these words, crouches and then straightens up suddenly before the newcomer as though to frighten him. The latter then says: "I am a new child of the society" (1). When he is accepted, the masker resumes the dance and the ceremony continues.

794 796 533 The rhythms of the Komo bear the general name of komo bara or komo foli dunu (literally, rhythm of the Komo drums) (2). They are numerous, adapted to the rituals they accompany, each endowed with a separate name. The Bambara classify them into three categories: the rapid, violent, and difficult rhythms performed against the non-initiates; the soft rhythms for circumcision; the sad rhythms for funerals.

1. Ne ye timidẽ kura ye.

2. The word bara is reserved for the rhythms of the masked Komo dances. The rhythms of the profane dances of the elders are called mabere fo, those of the young men, bõdyala, those of the girls, kofili.

194 196 533 During the masked dances, once the drummers have begun the rhythm of the Komo, they must neither slow down nor cease their playing; otherwise the masker will rush at the player and threaten him with his left hook. In this case, the musician changes the rhythm in order to soothe the masker and sings: "You, old men, you are with the bara; listen, this bara is not empty." (1).

1. Aw ni bara makorabaw; klo madyo,
nin bara te bara lãkulo ye.

194 196 198 /162/ The masker participates in the ceremony not only by dancing and by uttering cries, whose pitch and intensity vary according to the action which he is preparing or performing.

A guttural and very muffled cry (buâ, buâ, buâ) called komo suruku (literally, hyena of the Komo) is used to frighten the participants.

A shrill and short cry (pyę, pyę, pyę) called kono fari kasi (literally, cry of the bad bird) is frequently used to animate the dance and amuse the spectators.

A long and softer cry (ô-ô, ô, ô, the last three ô's being very close together) called morokorobaw kasi (literally, cry of the ancestors) greets the chief and his age grade.

194 196 During the mask dance, the Komo's griot encourages it by reciting the devices which exalt its power, authority, and judicial powers: "You, Komo, you griot of the Komo, you, ringer of the bell, from whom do you come? You come from Makanta Djigui. You, bad Komo, from whom do you come? You come from Soma Moriba. To whom did this one give it? He gave it to the sons of the blacksmiths. Who are the owners of the Komo? Makanta Djigui, Soma Moriba, the sons of the blacksmiths. These have not known shame; you must not be ashamed. These have not received humiliations; you must not be humiliated.

"You, little living Komo, enemy of non-members, friend of members, take your enemy's heart, take his liver. I follow behind you and not before you. Ah! Komo; you, killer of the fat dead ones, shroud of those living, act upon him who provokes you as you do upon him who does not provoke you" (2).

2. E komo, e dyeli, e ndara kolo fo,
e bwora dyeni ma, e bwora makanta

794 796 jigi la, e komo fare ma e bwora dyeni ma, e bwora soma moriba, o ya di dyeni ma, oy a di numu dew ma dyenuye komo tigiw ye, makanta jigi, soma moriba, numu dew; oluw ma malo, aw kana malo, oluw ma lebu, aw kana lebu.

E komo ni nyenama biribalyuw dyugu, birilew nyima i dyugu son ta i la ka bye ta mbi ko nti nye.

E komo, i šu klo la faba, nyenemaw kasange, minya kila a ko la, mi ma kila a ko la.

When the drums beat and the dances are animated, and when the masker cries, it is said that "the bara of the komo is hot" (komo bara wušule do). The ceremony is in full swing.

Diverse incidents may occur in the course of the masked dances which give rise to interpretations and interventions by the members.

794 796 787 When one of the arrows attached to the mask trembles, it indicates the presence of a sorcerer in the assembly. The elders remove the arrow and immediately order /163/ the ceremony to stop. After the drums have been silenced, they request the culprit to present himself, which he immediately does. These words are spoken to him: "Your arrow attacks you" (1). He then offers a ram and beer in sacrifice, while the arrow is replaced and the dances resume. If an arrow falls in the course of the dance it indicates the presence of a sorcerer in the village.

1. Komo bye bila.

794 796 If a part of the costume falls off, it is picked up by three members and kept to be burned with the refuse that is later swept up (2).

2. See p. 259.

794 796 688 If one of the participants has broken the taboo and revealed the secrets of the Komo during the past year, the masker whistles, asks the drummers to stop playing, and says: "Here is a grasshopper for me." These words express the contempt in which he holds the culprit. Next he adds: "There is the smell of a corpse here" (3).

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3. Šu kasa be.

796 The man lowers his head and all move away from him. The masker
688 wounds him with the right hook. He is banished from the circle of
766 dancers and probably will die several days later. His funeral rites are
not solemnized. The corpse is tied by the feet and removed from his home through a hole made in the wall to prevent his evil nyama from returning to the family. The body is beaten with switches so that the soul may leave the village forever, and is thrown into the common grave or placed in the cleft of a tree, which is then closed up with thorny bushes. In this case it is often devoured by the hyenas. The clothing which belonged to him is hung on the hook placed on the outside wall of the sanctuary. No one has the right to weep for his death and no one ever mentions him again. To do so would be an offense to the Komo.

794 It may also happen that the emergence of the Komo occurs without
796 the village being warned. In this case, if a young girl imprudently
688 approaches the place where the dance is being held, the masker may
782 kill her with one blow of its hook directly upon her head. A little
of her blood is then placed as an offering on the nya and her jewelry thrown into the river where her soul goes to replace the virgin who, in former times, was annually offered to Faro.

G. Effects of Broken Taboos

794 The breaking of the taboos attached to the altars or to the mask
783 reacts upon each of the parts affected as it does upon the whole and
brings about a diminishing of the Komo's power, which is abandoned by Faro and the ancestors. A purification may be performed /164/ in certain cases. The error is then corrected and the spiritual forces reenter the altars.

If a woman or a noninitiate catches a glimpse of the nya, the komo tigi and his age grade go down to the river bank and, to the sound of drums, present the culprit's apologies to the spirit:

"I have not come for someone else, I have come for myself, I have come to reestablish the race of our fathers" (1).

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1. Ne mana ma nyini; ne mana nyere nyini, ne ma na m fa Šia tuku ko la.

194 183 The victim offered by the responsible party then has its throat cut, its body is thrown into the water, and the members take some black earth to smear again on the regenerated nya.

If the chief does not observe the chastity imposed upon him before every sacrifice, he must advise the elders of his age grade and purify the altars by sacrificing two roosters or a goat.

It would seem that the taboo of the nimara boli may not be broken without danger, and that in this case the fault is almost irreparable. The Komo is affected not only in one of its parts, but in its entirety, and a general reordering becomes necessary for the society. The chief and the elders carry away the principal altars to their place of origin, that is to say to the village where they were consecrated through contact with those of the local Komo (1). The owner of this latter Komo keeps the tainted objects for seven days. After this delay, the petitioners return, bringing victims which are sacrificed upon the altars now placed in contact with those from which they originated (2). The meat is eaten by the chief who is being consulted, and by him alone. The petitioners must then return home with their sack without speaking a word to anyone during the trip.

This ceremony, which is a second consecration, may under no circumstances be repeated. If the taboo is broken once more after a first fault and a first reordering, the Komo is considered to be entirely destroyed and the village is sometimes abandoned by the inhabitants who have "lost their soul" and who fear the wrath of Faro; they disperse, unhappy and powerless. Some conversions to Islam or to Christianity may have had no other motivation.

H. Role of the Komo

194 182 "The Komo is a society which unites the highest divine power, men, animals, and plants until the /165/ end of the world. It is the

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1. See p. 190.

2. The nimara boli is "rubbed" on the nimara boli of the tro ba, the nyõ boli on the nyõ boli of the same, etc.

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keeper of souls. When there is no longer life on earth, when there are neither men, nor animals, nor plants, the Komo will awaken the souls of the dead which have been in its keeping for eternity."

As a repository of the spiritual forces of its members, the Komo is involved in most of their activities and participates in daily life. Birth, circumcision, marriage, burial, and the cult of the ancestors are all characterized by its direct or indirect intervention. It plays a remarkable role in agricultural life (rain, agrarian rites, household and communal excrement) as well as in the functioning of handicraft technologies. Collective issues (war, political conflict) and economic questions are submitted to its decision. In fact, the members' belongings (grain, cowries) are kept in granaries for which the chief is responsible and from which he agrees to make interest loans to needy members. The chief of the Komo, who is a diviner, is consulted directly by petitioners. Assisted by the elders of his age grade, he is also responsible for dispensing justice (1). Thus the name of an unworthy member is pronounced above the *pembele* which is immediately removed. This gesture deprives the culprit of the protection of Pemba and abandons him to misery and shame.

On the other hand, the actual functioning of the society develops social life. The initiates of neighboring villages are invited when the mask is brought out and a number of marriage negotiations are concluded during the drinking parties which follow the ceremonies. These also favor cultural exchanges. It is during publicly held conversations that teaching is furthered, for the rituals are commented upon and explained, and the myths and their metaphysical foundations are presented in detail. The most knowledgeable informants all speak of nights spent in listening to the competent elders around the jars of millet beer.

The Komo is the repository of traditional beliefs and rules of solidarity between members. It diffuses a thorough knowledge of civic and moral instructions, the rights and duties of the members, the taboos and sanctions which affect those who break taboos. Its juridical role makes it a disciplinary agent: it is a powerful support of the Bambara social organization.

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1. The judicial role has been notably pointed out by L. Tauxier in *La Religion bambara*, p. 300.

/166/ The Kworę

194 821 The Kworè society, kworę dye (literally, reunion of the Kworè) consists of individuals around the altars (kworę boli) on which rites are performed concerning the skies, space, the cardinal points, the atmospheric manifestations of Faro, and particularly rain. Kworè literally means "dried up pond.."

The rituals are intended for the Kworè spirits who depend upon Faro and who live in the kaba fǐn (third sky). They are in charge of watching over the rains sent from the woloflâ kaba (seventh sky), which cross the other skies and "the void" before reaching the earth. The spirits struggle in the skies and in space against the mahalakillen of the koblenkaba (fifth sky) who try to stop the water. Lightning, thunder, and thunderbolt are the effects of these struggles.

194 118 The principal ceremonies take place around a tree, called kworę ťigi, which is situated to the east of the village and is the usual habitation of the spirits when they descend to receive men's offerings. The altars are placed in a hut built in the bush; other samples of these are kept in the chief's residence. A large stone, kworę fara, located near the village and placed in the ground above some symbolic objects, also receives offerings. The Kworè society is the owner of a communally cultivated field, in which small millet, sañõ, is exclusively sown and the harvest of which is kept for the needs of the cult.

A chief, the kworę tigi, is entrusted with the care of the altars and performance of the ritual.

A. The Altars

The altars of the kworę are placed in a sanctuary called buku sãmpere ni (literally, little hut of thunder) and situated at a certain distance from the village because of the dangers from lightning. The door is low and very narrow so that the forces held within may not escape.

The altars are composed of the following objects:

1. A large sac of the skin of a male goat, kworę boli sãmpere, open at its upper extremity and suspended by a boa skin (miñã) which symbolizes lightning. This sac, which has three compartments, contains copper, water from the Niger, rain water, and the "thunder stones" of the society. The "thunder stones," sãmpereni or sãmpere

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dyele, play an essential role /167/ in the rain cult among the Bambara as among the other blacks of the Sudan. They supposedly fall from the sky with lightning bolts (1).

> 1. They are picked up at the spot where they fall and are the object of an important trade.
>
> At the time when a Kworè society is being founded, the chief, generally accompanied by the *komotigi*, visits villages where lightning has struck in order to buy stones and to choose them with a knowledge of the case. Each member contributes to the purchase of one stone.

2. Another sac also made of the skin of a male goat, called *ñõ boli* (*boli* of millet), is suspended from the roof by a serpent skin. This altar is dependent upon the *ñõ boli* of the Komo, which presides over germination. It contains small millet from the fields of the Kworè and some of the small millet from the *ñõ boli* of the Komo.

3. A sac containing water from the last rain, called *ngule sãndyi*.

4. A sac made of the bladder of an ox, *ǰettemine boli*, makes it possible to see the water level from the outside. After each rainfall the level is checked by the chief and the water is poured into the *ngule sãndyi* where it is kept throughout the year.

5. A sac containing thunder stones intended for sale:
   (a) To be suspended from roof to counteract lightning.
   (b) To attract lightning; in this case the stone is placed under a shelter in the bush.
   (c) To make a new *kworę boli*.

This sac is the object of libations consisting of rain water drawn from the *ngule sãndyi*, to which has been added a pulverized thunder stone.

6. An axe called *sãmpere dyele koro* (literally, old thunder axe) of an ancient shape, made of a hewn stone set in a wooden handle. Considered as the "mother of the thunder stones," it is not removed from the altar until the very last when the rites for rain have failed.

Pieces of mirror brought by members of the society are set into the wall; the reflections from these mirrors also are supposed to affect rainfall.

794 778 B. In the chief's residence, there are replicas of the axe and the altars. According to the needs, they are transported to the shore of the Niger, into the fields, or to the public square during the ceremonies. The originals, on the other hand, remain sheltered from the looks of outsiders and risks of impurity. Moreover, the chief owns a special altar, the *kworę ni*, "soul of the *kworę*," /168/ which contains the spiritual principles of the members who do not belong to the Komo society. The *kworę ni* is placed upon the chest of a dying man and receives his soul at the moment of death as does the *nimara boli* of the Komo (1). It is regularly saturated with rainwater.

C. The stone of the *kworę*, of which the lower part is crudely carved into seven teeth called *kworę fara ni*, is stuck into the ground after the following objects have been buried in this site. (See Fig. 13)

1. Three thunder stones called: *fara ba*, "big stone"; /169/ *fara bye*, "stone point"; *fara ǰoli*, "blood of stone." These recall the presence of Faro's power, rain, under the altar. When placing them, the following words are repeated seven times: "Help us" (1)!

1. *A ka demme*.

2. Three whips, the male number, testimony to the course of men who withstand the pain of the strokes without complaining. When they are buried the following words are spoken: "Let us be courageous" (2).

2. *A ka farina*.

3. A *kongobwona* axe (see p. 160) which recalls the ancestors' victory over famine; it announces harvests and future wealth.

Drawings are made on the stone during the annual ceremony. In the center, a black dot called *faro dĕzo*, "womb of Faro," represents the spirit. It is framed by two series of three whips, each "to defend him," as well as by the first three of the eight ancestors (one of which was Koumabana) and by seven figures representing the members.

[784] Woman is the taboo of the Kworè. Only males may approach the sanctuary and the altars. Any circumcised male desiring to participate 794 785 in the ceremonies must be initiated. The postulants are brought together by the chief under the Kworè tree, at the foot of which a fire is lit; each carries a twig of *n̄uāna* wood. They suffer

194 785 uncomplainingly the burns inflicted upon them with a torch and they whip themselves vigorously. The chief next teaches them the role of the Kworè spirits, the rituals celebrating them, and the symbolic value of the objects of the cult.

194 522 Some of the members are designated to take the role of kworę duga during the ceremonies. Masked and waving freshly cut branches in each hand, they mount a wooden horse, the kworęduga so (1). Thus

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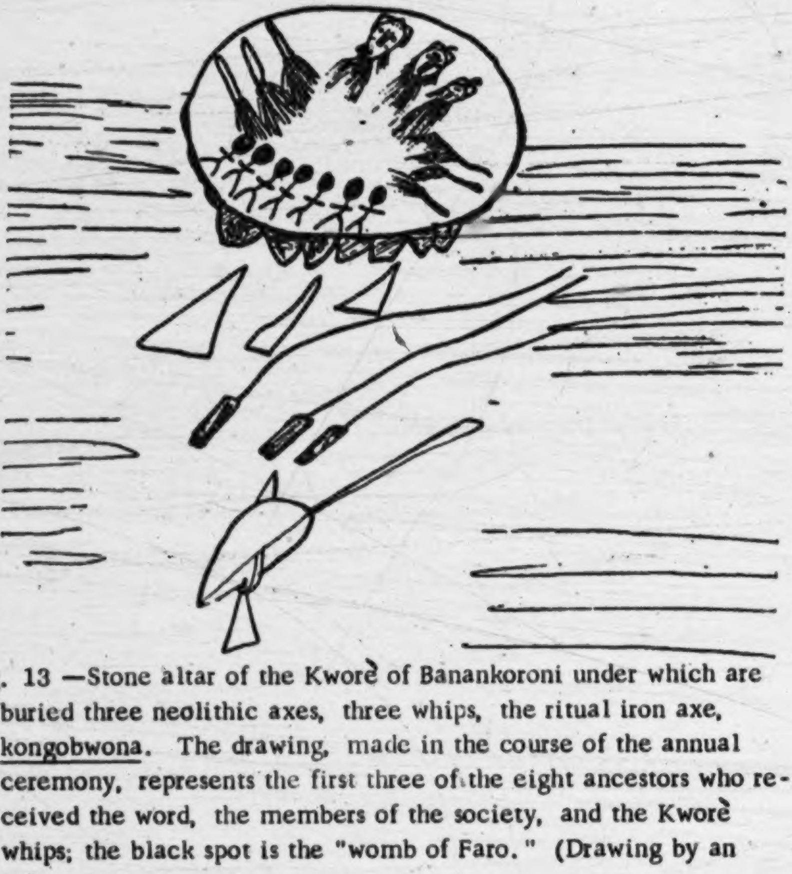

Fig. 13 —Stone altar of the Kworè of Banankoroni under which are buried three neolithic axes, three whips, the ritual iron axe, kongobwona. The drawing, made in the course of the annual ceremony, represents the first three of the eight ancestors who received the word, the members of the society, and the Kworè whips; the black spot is the "womb of Faro." (Drawing by an informant)

1. The kworę duga (literally, vulture of the Kworè), also called togoro koya, "jesters," are as their name indicates, jesters who have the right to joke about

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the most sacred things; their social position is comparable to that of the *griot*. In former times they were the first to sacrifice to the *boli*.

equipped, they represent the spirits of the *kworę*, mounted on their winged horses to attack the sky. One of them wears a mask, the *kworę ku*, to represent the ancestor of the group (1).

1. The materials, wooden horses, and masks are blackened by fire and saturated with karite oil.

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Close bonds unite the Komo and the Kworè. Their cults complement each other and an individual wealthy enough to meet the necessary expenses may belong to the two societies. In fact, one of the Komo's roles is to watch /170/ over the progress of the cultivations: its altars watch over the soul and the vital force of the crop seeds. The harvest, however, depends on rain and thus comes under the jurisdiction of the altars of the Kworè. The complementary activity of the two societies is certainly felt by the users who declare that "the *ñõ boli* of the Komo and the Kworè are united in action."

Some authors have raised the question of the Kworè's greater antiquity, when compared to that of the Komo, on the basis of the "Priapic" aspect of the former's ceremonies (2). Since the real purposes

2. See L. Tauxier. *La Religion bambara*, p. 311.

of the institution have almost completely escaped these observers, it was not possible for them to penetrate the meaning of these rituals. It is at the foot of the tree of the Kworè that men call upon the skies where Faro reigns; they pray to the *koblenkaba* in case of war, the *sunãnkaba* in case of epidemics, etc. The annual ceremony is a representation of the action of the invisible powers to obtain the rain necessary to men. The burns and the blows which the members inflict upon themselves, as well as the galloping of the *kworęduga*, symbolize the celestial struggles of the spirits among the unleashed elements.

The Ceble or Ndomo

•794 Like their circumcised and adult elders, all the uncircumcised and nonexcised members of a village form a society, called čeble (literally, red man) or ndomo (literally, gathering), whose members are called ndomo dew, sons of the ndomo, or also ndomo ngow. The society of the ndomo is older than that of the Komo (1). Formerly it brought together a great number of adolescents since circumcision was performed much later. Nowadays, since children are operated upon very young, its importance has diminished, but as it contains the power of the uncircumcised it still plays an important role which is expressed even in its name. Red is a symbol of power and energy; it is also the sign of the sacrifice. [822]

The ndomo is directed by a chief assisted by a person who performs the sacrifices, murukalatigi (literally, master of the knife handle) and by an organizer of ceremonies, the dyolokotigi (literally, master of the chain).

It is in the course of agricultural work communally performed that the /171/ most energetic member is name chief; he is the one who has best and most rapidly fulfilled his task and who has, in addition, caused the adversaries who have been presented to touch the ground three times. The chief, who is responsible for the altars of the ndomo, sees to the instruction of the initiates, regulates their competitions, nominates the bearer of the mask and the one who is charged with the maintenance of ritual objects. Finally, he officiates during the collective ceremonies. The murukalatigi cuts the throats of the victims; he cuts out and makes the masks and other ritual objects. The dyolokotigi directs the ceremonies and makes decisions about the members' advancement.

The hierarchy is composed of five grades corresponding to the five fundamental altars. Each grade is passed annually after special

1. It is said: ndomo ka koro komo ye, "the ndomo is older than the komo." Certain aspects of the ndomo have been described by Ch. Monteil, Monographie de Djenné, p. 15, and L. Tauxier, La Religion bambara, p. 380 ff.

194 instruction and initiation. Five years are thus necessary to reach the
highest rank. Each promotion is paid for by the individual providing
[782] two roosters whose throats are cut upon the altars at the end of the
annual ceremony which takes place in the bush under a tree called the
kalabana, following communally performed labor. After meal, a
[526] fight called *bari*, organized under the direction of the chiefs, puts the
young boys in opposite groups and gives them the opportunity to show
their courage and their initiative.

194 The members' activity consists of collective work at the time of
476 the cultivation. The millet and the gifts in kind received in payment
for the work are owned communally.

A. Material Objects of the Cult.

194 The society is the owner of ritual objects such as a mask and whips
118 which are usually placed in a hut, *ndomo buku*, at some distance
534 from the village.

The objects, numbering five, are rudimentary musical instruments. The *wara*, the clawed one, or *diara*, the lion, is a wooden bull-roarer approximately 35 centimeters in length, which is manipulated by means of a string a meter long. Sometimes the object is of iron and of smaller dimensions. The *tori*, toad, is a small box which gives off a nasal sound when it is scratched. The *kono*, bird, is made of two pieces of gourd bound together by spider webs. The *wulu*, dog, is a small calabash of about 10 centimeters in diameter, punctured by four holes. A string, threaded through its neck, allows it to be rotated like a rhombos. The *ǰineble* (literally, red spirit) is a buffalo horn pierced by three holes, /172/ obstructed by spider webs, into which one blows and which produce a loud, flute-like sound. One society usually owns several specimens of each of these instruments.

194 The mask, said to be the most ancient object, is of sculptured wood
118 representing a human face crowned by several vertical, rather long
532 horns (1). The whole is completely decorated with cowrie shells and
red kise (2), grains which represent the blood from the offerings. The

1. The masks most often carry eight horns, but this rule is not always respected.

2. *Linociera sudarica*.

794 778 532 high forehead, black and always smeared with karite butter, confers upon the face a beneficial power. The whole mask is regularly rubbed with ground charcoal powder and with the juice of the kola nut.

794 778 The whips of the mask (ndomo busa) are made of ñuana branches famous for their suppleness. They are made at the time of the annual ceremony and only renewed the following year. At the time of their manufacture, they are soaked in water, which the members of the society then drink "in order not to have to suffer from the blows which they will receive."

824 Each member also possesses a long whip made of the branches of a bush, the ngere ni, (1) which is also called "tree of Faro" for it grows in water, and which contains part of the beneficial power of the spirit. The whip is used to try out the children's courage. The one who cries or complains will carry this handicap with him through life; even after his circumcision he will be referred to as a coward.

B. Initiation

794 526 Each new grade is acquired in the course of the annual ceremony which takes place after the harvest. An elder entrusted with the sacrifices cuts the throats of the roosters offered by the postulants over the tree of the ndomo (Pl. V, a) and over the ritual objects placed at his feet, and then pours boiled millet as an offering. During this time the young people plow the ground where the contest, bari (2), is to take place; this fight will pit them against each other and give them the opportunity to show their courage and competitive spirit.

The chief designates the fighters two by two who are watched over /173/ by the dyolokotigi. In the contest, during which any use of legs or feet disqualifies the fighter, the one who makes his adversary fall three consecutive times is chosen to be initiated into a higher grade on the following night. After this contest, the losers must bring two additional roosters if they also wish to be initiated. Then a meal eaten in common brings together the members of the society and the postulants.

1. Hibiscus pandoriformia.

2. To make oneself fall, the joust.

794 On the following night, the future initiates are led into the bush to a place called biri yoro (literally, place of initiation), where they sit down upon the ground, their heads covered with a piece of cloth.

At a sign from the dyolokotigi, a member causes the ritual instruments to roar or sing in succession; then he hides them and the postulants must find them. As they are not able to do so, a series of hazings are inflicted upon them (1) after which they are shown the instruments and each in turn made to repeat the solemn oath:

"If you have heard the dyara of the uncircumcised, that is it. Chisel a piece of wood, make a hole, put a string through, turn it, it is that which is the word of the ndomo dyara. If you reveal it, may it take your heart, may it take your liver, may it kill you" (2).

Next, they are made to lick three times the object which is then entrusted to them so that they may learn to use it. The same ritual is performed for each instrument, and the prayer is repeated with only a change in the name.

The young men frequently sacrifice upon the altars of the ndomo.
794 The usual content of the sacrifice is the gray lizard /margouillat/,
782 busa, likened to an uncircumcised boy (its tail representing the
825 foreskin). The victim's wanzo, liberated by death, joins the wanzo contained in the altars and, consequently, that of the members.
[262] The animal is then cooked and eaten.

C. Activity of the Society

794 At the time the fields are being cultivated, the members who are called upon to do work take their ritual objects along. The young

1. These hazings are often severe; fun is made of the ignorance and fears of the postulant.

2. Ni ye me bilakorow ka ndomo dyara, nin do ka djiri dese, ka wo bo o la, ka dyuru ndo o la, o bi fyeku, o de bi ndomo dyara ka fo, ni ya korobo, a ki sõ ta, a ki biñe ta, a ki fa.

194 girls who provide water and are present during the work sing to encourage the best workers or to insult the lazy ones.

Once their task is done, they partake on the spot of dishes /174/ especially prepared for them. As they leave they make their instruments roar and resound. By these means, the force (wanzo) which they have spent in working is "recaptured in the wind" by the twirling of the rhombos and returned to the ndomo, that is, recovered by themselves. For if their wanzo has permitted a useful effort, it has penetrated into the fields, thus diminishing by so much the store of the ndomo. On the other hand, this power, which is useful for cultivation, is harmful to germination. To leave it in the earth would injure the harvests. And this is why, as an extra precaution, the owner burns a gray lizard in his plot the following day in order to rid it completely of this evil accretion.

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196 During the dry season, ceremonies to bring out the mask are performed for the purpose of soliciting gifts from the inhabitants of the village. The members stand in a circle before each door while the masker dances the ndomo do, the dance of the ndomo. The chief designates two young men who, placed in the center, each receive three whip lashings from their comrades. Then, the youngest strikes the masker who dances again, hitting in his turn with his long whip those who do not lower their heads correctly as a sign of respect.

If the owner who is being solicited turns a deaf ear, all sing to make fun of him and to force him to give:

"It is the custom, we are not hungry; it is the custom of the world, we are not hungry" (1).

1. Lada do, kongo tawna, dyẽ lada do kongo tawna.

When all the houses have been visited, the children line up to return and, at the chief's order, walk towards a crossroad, which is the seat of the protecting spirits of the ndomo. There they leave the mask and break their whips saying: "Crossroads, I entrust myself to you."

The gifts representing food or cowrie shells are divided up among the maskers and the three chiefs. The millet is kept for the day of the annual ceremony.

On following night, the masker goes to the crossroads and brings back to the chief the ritual objects which were temporarily left there.

D. Role of the Institution

794 182 According to Bambara expression, the *ndomo* is "the mother of the *wanzo* of the uncircumcised (1)" for its power which resides in the ritual objects /175/ is composed of the *wanzo* of all adolescents.

The mask and the altars at first keep a part of the *wanzo* of the members who wear them, manipulate them, or offer them sacrifices. On the other hand, after circumcision, at the moment of the final leap of the newly circumcised over the ritual fire, the *wanzo* ultimately leaves them to settle itself in the mask of the *ndomo*. Thus channeled and conserved, these forces add themselves to those of the uncircumcised in the masks which become the repositories of their life.

[775] Moreover, the soul of the uncircumcised and nonexcised who have died prematurely establishes itself in the altars during the funeral rites celebrated by the members.

The mask of the *ndomo* is thus the receptacle of the *wanzo* of the circumcised, living and dead; as for the altars, they contain all the souls of the uncircumcised dead. All of this confers upon the *ndomo* the responsibility for the life of the adolescents and gives it such power that to a certain extent, this society of young people is feared by the adults (2) who have left it.

1. *Wanzo ba ye čeble*

794 833 182 2. When an adult, especially a member of the Komo society, has disturbed the peace of a member of the *ndomo* or has wronged the society, the *wanzo* may cause him to be impotent. In this case, in order to recover his virility, the man must obtain several tens of gray lizards which are sacrificed in his name on the mask and other altars. The animals are then cooked and the man is completely smeared over with the cooked substance which is then placed in the calabash and poured over the altars; the *wanzo* assigned to the man by the *ndomo* thus returns to the latter and the man is rid of its evil.

794 No one may remain a member of the ndomo after his circumcision. It is said that an individual who would continue his activity in the ndomo would acquire a double wanzo.

/176/ Chapter 7

RITES

771 The rites of the Bambara are very complex and often involve several institutions. The following descriptions are not of a general character as the rites admit perceptible variations from one village to the next, variations of which the individuals concerned are aware, for there is no absolute rule for any institution or ceremony.

Nevertheless, their various manifestations, which adhere to this flexibility of thought, testify to the unity of the cosmological and religious representations. [514] When a Bambara is invited to be a spectator to the ceremonies of neighboring villages, he is frequently informed about this or that aspect of the ritual which is unfamiliar to him during the drinking parties which follow. In fact, tradition demands that the preceding ceremony be commented upon and explained in front of the beer jars. But the unity of the representations is such that, according to the declaration of a qualified informant, "whoever knows the principles and mechanisms may deduce from them, without explanations, the meaning and symbolism of a ritual which has not been commented upon."

On the other hand, the rites are symbolic even in their most insignificant manifestations: time and place, form of the ritual objects, aspect of the victims, repetition of formulas or prayers, mimicry of the participants, the wearing of certain secular or priestly garments, etc. A very great subtlety presides over the choice of details. It is thus that, during the stages of creation, the supernatural powers have established, organized, and reorganized the universe (skies, spaces, lands) following the itineraries which include "the cardinal directions and angles." The rites in which the cardinal points occur include gesticulation which, depending upon the power

304 784 561 which would be a dangerous one (1). The same rule applies to the enclosure, consisting of several huts, where the newly circumcised boys remain under the surveillance of the sema. The enclosure is situated at a distance of several tens of meters from the village in order to isolate the age grade. For all that touches them, such as clothing, sticks, sistrums, dishes, and refuse, with the exception of 561 the cap, is impregnated with their wanzo.

304 [431] The newly circumcised boys receive from their parents gifts of cowrie shells and food called wanzo sababu yala, "in honor of the wanzo," to speed their recovery.

[794] On the night which precedes the sixth day after the operation, a day called daworo, the children are initiated to the Komo (2).

The following day, the sema leads them to the edge of the river, where they wash their wounds for the first time. This act, which brings about direct intervention of the element in which Faro lives, has moreover a social meaning: it consecrates the age grade and from this moment on, the children belong for the rest of their lives to the same flã, exchanging jokes and insults which are suitable between senãnku (3). It must be noted that this very simple act of communal ablution constitutes the inauguration of an age grade of circumcised boys and sets off from that moment all the rights and obligations its members will have toward each other.

A meal, eaten in common and accompanied by songs and dances, ends the ceremonies of the daworo. Hereafter the ablutions are repeated daily until the wounds are healed.

304 561 881 /187/ On the last day, all that has been in contact with the newly circumcised boys is gathered together at a crossroad near the enclosure.

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1. The approach of the virulent wanzo of the uncircumcised boy acts upon those of the boys undergoing the operations and afflicts them in the genital organs.

2. See p. 203.

3. See p. 119.

764 The members of the oldest age grade go to the home of the deceased. The eldest son of the Komo chief, holding /191/ the ritual whistle between his teeth, whistles alternatively in the right and left ears, then into the eyes of the dead man, which he closes while pulling his two toes. He then says: "So and so has not answered."

The chief of the Komo next comes to "touch the corpse while it is still warm in order to return to Faro that which belongs to him." He then draws a line upon the body (see Fig. 16) with his little finger dipped in boiled millet mash. In 1 and 2, the strength of the little finger acts by sending away the semen which is in the blood. In 4, it suppresses the voice (for the dead man will talk no more) as well as "the tastes, savors, and appetites of his tongue, the power of his jaws, and the air in his mouth." In 5 it returns all that was in his head, such as ideas, experiences, opinions, folly, and wisdom, through the left ear, removing all the sounds it has heard, the good as well as the bad. Next the ear is plugged. Whatever it has heard will return to the one who will inherit his soul and his double, as the dead man in the grave must hear only with his right ear the whistle of the Komo and all that will be communicated to him. In 6 it removes "the will power and stubbornness" so that the dead may submit to Faro even in the grave. It next touches the navel, 3, and all the joints to send back the semen which lies in man's marrow.

● 194 764 The corpse is then transported into a contiguous chamber for an ablution performed by a member of the society who wears over his shoulder the sack containing the Komo altars and who drones out a song celebrating the Soma Moriba Sidibé (1). The two millet stalks are placed upon the body during the ablutions "which purify and calm his soul."

764 Dressed in its finest clothes, the body is brought back to the main room where its hair is shaved. The deceased's own individual altar is given to the chief of the Komo who places it near the nimara boli. It is at this time that the bell bearer (grindavo) goes to the village

1. The ablution is performed with the contents of a large gourd (dyuru fle nyẽ) to which are added the contents of a small gourd (dye fle nyẽ) which represents the "last water of the dead man."

364 the chief throws dust three times to the four cardinal points. The
778 masker then stands in the wind in such a way as to receive the smoke;
the chief and the members crouch in line behind him with their mouths
796 open to inhale better. When the wind changes its direction they all
move to continue this fumigation, wušuli, which constitutes a purification as well as an increment of forces. At the moment the fire is
almost out, the most courageous of the participants stamps on it in
order to assimilate better the nyama which it exudes. The ashes,
[804] gathered by the chief, are distributed, the unit of measurement being
the gourd mure. An important share goes to the nyama boli, another
is given as an offering to Faro, and a third is distributed among the
members.

Several days later, the group goes to the river bank to the sound of drums beating out the murumuruw foli (literally, rhythm of the refuse); they throw the ashes reserved for Faro into the water and, continuing to dance, return to the village.

364 Those ashes given to the members are used to prepare the potass
778 which is mixed into the millet cake, the daily food of the Bambara,
and which will make the members of the family share in the powers
252 contained in the nyamanto.

The eating of this mixture closes the cycle of the transfer of forces,
364 which were temporarily communicated to the refuse by the individuals,
778 then recovered by Faro, and finally redistributed to the social body.

III. Rain Rites

789 At the time the first work is done in the fields, a drawing is made
241 with millet mash upon the tree of the Kworè in the shape of a lozenge
inscribed within a rectangle, which represents "the great fire which issued /204/ from the cardinal angles" at the time of their creation. While this is being done, the following words are spoken: "The four elbows (the lozenge) are the fire of the angles; here is the anniversary of the Kworè." The clearing of the field or the first plowing always symbolizes the very first clearing obtained through fire.

During the month of May, the members of the Kworè society make
789 sacrifices upon their altars before the first rumbling of thunder in
796 order to purify the first sky where clouds are formed from the impure
794 passage of Mousso Koroni. The chief gathers the members about the
tree and recites the following prayer:

189 196 194 "I have come to you, Kworè, if (the cloud) is black in the east, let it come; black in the west, let it come; black in the south, let it come; black in the north, let it come; black above, let it come, and then let it give a great water" (1). He next pours on the ground the

> 1. Ne nani na kwore nani na; a ma fi korona a ka na; a ma fi klebi a ka na; a ma fi woro dugu a ka na; a ma fi keñeka a ka na; a ma fi sãfe a ka na; otumana a ka ke dyi ba ye.

millet mash and the blood of fowls brought by each member. The initiation of the new members takes place during this ceremony.

After the drinking of millet beer which follows the ceremonies, it is customary to tell the story of Mousso Koroni chased by Pemba and pursued by Faro.

If, in spite of this the rain does not come soon enough, the members gather at the foot of the tree and bring with them an iron axhead which is placed in fresh water. The water is next poured out at the foot of the tree; it symbolizes the cold which the spirits of the Kworè are subjected to in the second sky during their struggles to make the rain come through.

In certain villages the sacrifices to the Kworè and to Faro are offered at the same time. At Massala and Soroba, the members go to the shore of the Niger, carrying the kworè boli with them. The bit of water which it contains is poured into the river and replaced while a prayer is addressed to Faro. The throat of a victim is then cut and some copper is thrown into the river. The altar is shaken above the water to imitate the noise of thunder and rain. Upon their return to the village, the members light a fire at the foot of the Kworè tree and place thunder stones in its embers.

"Heating the stones shakes up their soul"; when they are hot, they are plunged into cold water "to warm and to agitate the soul of water." The smoke from the fire, as well as the heat absorbed by the stones and the water, force the rain to fall.

/205/ Victims are sacrificed and the members return to the village around which they circle six times, beginning at the west. Then they return the nimara boli to the sanctuary and the elders who represent the spirit dance about on one foot to the sound of drums

189 as an imitation of Faro who has only one lower limb. The altar, which
196 is placed in the sanctuary by the chief who enters it walking backwards,
194 receives as an offering a little water from the Niger in which thunder stones have been soaking since the night before to be "refreshed." The same libation is made on the kworè boli. After returning to the home of the chief of the Komo, libations of millet mash are poured upon the walls of his house; then, in the name of Faro, the nimara boli, and the Kworè, the throat of a white ram is cut; the flesh of the animal will be thrown into the river, at the conclusion of the ceremonies.

194 (c) At the end of the winter season the "anniversary of the Kworè"
196 is celebrated; its purpose is to commemorate the action of the spirits during the preceding season in order to obtain rain water.

On the fixed day, members of the society, wearing loincloth and carrying in their left hand a whip made of macerated and twisted grass, and in their other hand a torch of burning straw, gather near the tree around which they circle and sing to "gather up the Kworè."
[785] The cracking of whip lashes which they give each other represents thunder claps; the beating of the drum which accompanies their songs imitates its rumbling. The burns which they inflict upon themselves recall those which the spirits endure in the celestial combats. They next direct their steps toward the public square where the villagers have gathered and where the spirit they have supposedly invoked by their mimicry is leading them. When all have gathered, the kworeduga, who represent the spirits mounted on their winged horses ready to fly into combat, appear dressed in their traditional costumes and riding their wooden horses.

They advance while dancing and singing verses which are then taken up by a chorus of the members. The latter having formed a
[785] circle, the chief places himself in the center, whipping himself, burning himself, and pretending to swallow the fire of his torch. When he is weary he stops and the members take turns to imitate him. Powder made from ground pepper is blown into the dancers' eyes to recall the burning heat of the fiery heavens.

The kworeduga, who have by then put down their wooden horses, set their foot on the earth ready for the fight, after having seized some green tree branches. They put out the fire which has caught onto the clothing of the dancers and participants. This gesture recalls the action of the wind which, in space, put out the hot fire that

● 194 attacked /206/ the fighters. Between dances the participants drink beer
196 brought to the spot for the occasion in order to nourish the invisible beings which they represent.

[262] All the participants also eat a dish made up of peas, beans, groundnuts, rice, manioc, millet, fonio, cooked with baobab leaves and karite oil. This mixture is identified with the spirits' struggle with the clouds which they supposedly swallow at the height of the battle. When the ceremony draws to an end, the chief sends the women and children home and fetches the kwore boli which he swings eighteen times over the square.

In a file, the members of the society return to the tree to "bring back" the Kworè which, while invisible, has been present at all the ceremonies. They circle around the tree singing to the rhythm of the drums. Then they put out their torches and throw them at the foot of the tree along with the whips before returning to their homes. [752] Their wounds and burns are cared for by their wives with water from the Kworè altar, this medication bearing the name of kworɛ kane (remedy of the Kworè).

The same dances and the comings out of the mask take place three days in succession. On the fourth day the chief and the elders, all undressed, crawl to the sanctuary for the annual sacrifice offered inside it. The chief gathers the thunder stones collected during the past year and places them in the sack containing the altars which are to be sold.

To "clarify" the mirrors, he pours millet mash over them; he cut the throat of fowls and places kola nut juice over the snake and the ñõ boli; he next fills the ñõ boli with millet previously taken from that of the Komo. With the remaining seeds he makes a mash with which to pour a libation over the sack. He next passes a burning twig of straw over the snake while saying:

"You, snake, you do not fear the fire; you must not fear fire and rain" (1).

1. E ngorongo e ma sira tasuma ne e kana sira sandyi tasuma ñe.

The effect of this action is to prepare the snake by means of these burns and to attract lightning whose effects it must not fear.

776 latter animal which is imitated by the vukuri during the children's
825 nocturnal ritual described on page 65.

This new information confirms the observations noted on page 47, footnote 1, concerning the identity of the Bambara and Dogon representations. Moreover, the warableni, like the yurugu (Vulpes pallida) of the Dogon, intervenes in divination, particularly in geomancy. The investigations permit the extension of these representations to Sudanese tribes coming from Mandé (see p. 2), particularly, to the Bozo and the Peul.

Chapter 3

826 All Sudanese peoples originating in Mandé are characterized by the
seeds (or fish) contained in their collarbone, these varying from one
773 tribe to another. On the other hand, within a tribe, the theoretical
824 content of the eight seeds, though roughly similar in terminology, differs in arrangement from family to family. Also the positions of the first and last seeds are reversed for men and women. Example: the blacksmiths have as their first seed the keninge and as their last the tikaninkuru, whereas the potters have as their first seed the tikaninkuru which they cultivate in the sacred fields (see p. 170) and as their last the keninge.

Moreover, after Mousso Koroni had stolen from Pemba the seeds he was entrusted to give on earth, Faro, through the intermediary of the /232/ animals who ate them at his order, reclaimed them from her; thus purified, he distributed them to men. The animal, which brought back to Faro the essential seed of each family, becomes the taboo, tne, of the family concerned, and the breaking of this taboo has the basic effect of removing the content of the culprit's collarbone. Analogous representations are noted among the Dogon.

Totemism, the so called "joking relationship" (senankuya of the Bambara), the caste system, and the exogamous laws of the Sudanese are based on the elements and classification of the contents of the collarbone.

Chapter 6

194 All the great adult institutions (dyo) are in contact with the
857 children's society of the Ndomo which reflects the universal organization
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194 857 172 (space, elements). Each of the six *dyo* to which men are initiated after their circumcision corresponds to a ritual object in the Ndomo: the Komo (west and air) is represented by the *dyara* (rhombus); the Kworè (east and water) by the *tori;* the Nama (south and fire) by the *wulu;* the Kono (north and earth) by the instrument of the same name. The *ǰineble* corresponds to the Nya (nadir) and Nago (zenith). These last two institutions are linked with the whirlwind movement of the creative seed, symbolized by the fonio seed. That is to say, membership in the children's Ndomo society constitutes a pre-initiation to the adult societies which are essentially cosmogonic. The sanctuaries and the sacred fields of the first four *dyo* are theoretically situated at the corresponding cardinal point. The operation of the societies according to a strict system confirms the observations and hypotheses presented on page 10.

Moreover, the mask of the Ndomo represents both Mousso Koroni and the eight seeds stolen from Pemba. All the ceremonies concerning the coming out of Bambara masks (those of the *dyo* as well as those of the *čiwara* and the *sogo*) recall the theft and cultivation of nourishing seeds by Mousso Koroni and their recapture by the animals on Faro's behalf. Similar representations are observed among the Dogon concerning the *yurugu*, *yasigi*, and Nommo.

776 by greeting him as soon as he is observed; if he is unarmed, the best thing to do is to jump on him and rain so many blows on him that he loses count. Then one can escape while he is still knocked out.

[794] The second category of *nyana* includes a motley array of spirits, all of whom have cults. The outward manifestations of these cults have struck anyone traveling in the country, and under their apparent diversity there are recognizable general traits. All are magic practices intended to make the spirits serve man's will. By this means, man tries to make use of supernatural forces of the same nature as those whose unfavorable action he fears. He resorts to the invisible for weapons of defense and of attack. However, these practices must never go beyond certain limits, which are not too well-defined, if they are to be legitimate. Beyond these limits it becomes illicit magic or sorcery, which is especially feared and, whenever possible, relentlessly punished (2).

2. See Chapter 7 on the *suba*.

[128] In reality, the whole mass of these facts is extremely confused. The licit and the illicit are intertwined to the point where they cannot be disentangled. However, there are perfectly clear cases where there seems to be no doubt about the distinction; but there are all possible gradations between strictly magic practices and unadulterated sorcery.

Theoretically, the *nyana* are all-powerful and are honored the more in proportion to these powers, since, in general; it is their malevolent side that earns them their reputation. Homage is paid to them much more out of fear and terror than because of the kindness sometimes attributed to them. What a Bambara wants of them is the *dyigi-seme*, or "powerful master," who will protect him against everything and everyone and, if need be, help him against his enemies or give him the means of succeeding in some evil project.

A belief in a master of the universe exists among the Bambara, but the belief has borrowed from Islam a degree of

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789 nyana and seeks to use them for utilitarian ends.

By virtue of the beliefs on which it is based, religion engenders a certain degree of morality. Magic uses its knowledge to exploit the Universe for material profit.

In both camps there are initiates. Whereas the most [791] famous adepts in magic live in a kind of isolation, where they jealously keep the secret of their practices and where they exist apart from human societies which at once honor and fear them, [794] religion, on the other hand, displays its cults, if not exactly publicly, at least in the circle of the faithful. The latter, since they are usually completely familiar with the ceremonies of the cult and with the high-priests, are the masters and most venerated members of society.

Religion receives its most reliable support from the natural family and from the communities derived from that family. Legal magic has copied these organizations in the form of brotherhoods, which Europeans call "secret societies," a kind of spiritual family in which the members are only gradually admitted to all secrets.

Whereas the religion of the manes forms the strongest link that holds together the members of a community, and represents the framework of the society, magic on the other hand cares little for this union and in fact helps to disrupt it by the hatred it engenders. Thanks to magic, the individual feels competent to challenge the community and never fails to do so.

Let us look more closely into the traits characteristic of religion and those characteristicof magic.

By studying all that concerns especially the patriarchal and family communities and the associations growing out of these communities we shall be able to see the place occupied by the religion of the manes and of the spirits, as well as the effect of magic upon the basic manifestations of the life of these communities.

789 Since magic, in a sense, envelops every act of the native, it seems to us essential, at the start, to look into its characteristics so as to facilitate the understanding of all that is to follow, which is impreganted by magic in so many ways.

769 As a substitute for the chicken, it is very common to
782 offer some dege, a bit of millet coarsely ground and thrown in a little water. The fa keeps this liquid in a small gourd. It is perhaps [182] reasonable to think that this is the most ancient manner of honoring the dead and, in particular, calling for their protection in obtaining the two essentials of life: grain and water.

273 An equally common libation is made with dlo, a kind of millet beer which every Bambara enjoys drinking to the point of intoxication. The dead could hardly fail to be pleased with an offering of what they had enjoyed so much on earth!

276 One must conclude, too, that offerings of kola nuts please the dead because it gives them a chance to enjoy a favorite treat. The officiator chews the kola nut and then spits out his saliva mixed with the juice and remains along the walls of the blon'.

781 Such are the ordinary offerings, but on special occasions the quantity and importance of the gifts are increased according to the desired results. When many people are present and the house is prosperous, the victims are oxen and sheep. It should not be forgotten that the flesh of these consecrated victims, eaten in common, makes a very strong mystical bond between the participants; it is a true communion. It is generally conceded that the bond created by drinking consecrated liquids together is much less strong.

776 In addition to his ancestors, every Bambara has as his
778 special protector, one of those gods (nyana) which are created wholly by the work of the magician. Every family has one or more nyana, whose priest is the fa. The boli, the symbol and altar of this type of divinity, is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put into a leather or canvas sack, a gourd, or a pot. The nyana of Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, was a n-ko whose boli was kept in a monkey skin. The boli is taken out of its cover so that libations can be poured over it and animal remains smeared on it. If there is some objection to exposing it, the offering is put on the cover.

769 Everything that takes place relative to the cult of the
794 nyana is analogous to that described for the cult of the ancestors.

769 794 It has the same base: request, offering, communion. In addition, there is a liturgy appropriate to each *nyana*, in particular, the mysterious sayings that attract the god and make him [183] the actual servitor of the person uttering these sayings, rather than a benevolent protector. This shows the antithesis as to final ends between religion and magic, as was set forth in Chapter 2 of the present work.

596 614 778 The *fa* also has the responsibility of maintaining the efficacy of magic weapons; he must fulfill all the obligations required by each of them. Among them there are true *nyana*, sometimes independent, sometimes a part of the great *nyana*. Mostly they are amulets or talismans whose virtue depends on certain rites or simply on the observance of certain interdicts.

596 614 778 Finally, the *fa* is the guardian of custom and family relics, which likewise have a religious basis since custom, after all, is the continuing will of the generations, the imperious mandate of the ancestors, the table of law of the manes. Any transgression of custom is certain to bring the worst disasters. The relics are ordinary or ceremonial objects left by the successive *fa*. Some of them are so strongly associated with the patriarchal office that on special occasions or in certain circumstances the *fa* is forced by custom to wear these objects impregnated with the virtue of the ancestors. The cap and weapons of Biton at Ségou were of this nature, and such is the case among the Massa-si.

596 614 *Relations between members of the community*. Theoretically, the powers of the *fa* over the members of the community are absolute. He can hire them out, offer them as security, sell them, and even put them to death (1). He also has the right to use whatever belongs to them,(2) both persons

1. Note how Ma-n-son got rid of some of his brothers.

2. Ngolo sacrificed his son's son.

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This conjugal union differs clearly from [227] ordinary forms of marriage. In view of the fact that the husband gets a wife without paying a bride price for her, the wife is not given in usufruct, and therefore she must be treated with the greatest consideration or she may be taken back. The situation can only be normalized if the husband is rich enough to present to the donor a gift equal to or preferably, if possible, greater than the dowry brought by the wife, or he may give a similar gift to the wife (1).

> 1. Such property is the wife's paraphernalia.

In these situations also, the procedure varies a great deal. The donor may offer a girl from another community and provide her with a dowry. This is what Biton did in order to bind Ngolo to him: Biton gave him a girl designated by the marabouts as one of the elect, and he also provided the girl with a rich dowry.

The significance of such alliances can be estimated only when one has some knowledge of the intentions of the parties involved, especially those of the donor. We shall see one important type in the chapter on Islam, the marriage of Allah.

IV. The common cult (2). The territorial community.

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> 2. Communities may be united under the protection of the same god. Here we shall study only their union under the protection of the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-siri). Other common cults will be studied in the following chapter, "Brotherhoods."

In the mind of the Bambara, the earth, together with everything in it, is the property of the spirits. As a result, no one may make use of it or presume to settle on or cultivate an unused field without first going through certain ceremonies.

For this purpose, either on his own responsibility or, more often, with the aid of "the one who knows" (don-na-ba), a

311 Bambara seeks the "genie, master of the earth" (*nyana dugu-da-*
621 *siri*) or, more exactly, determines where this genie dwells. It
776 may be a spring, a hill, or a rock; often it is a fine tree, in-
●794 variably surrounded by a grove or at least with a grove nearby.
Then, always following the same procedure, he finds out the conditions under which the genie will allow someone to settle in his domain in order to live there and cultivate the lands. Thus, a contract is worked out which governs the man's exploitation of the genie's territorial domain. As a result, provided he worships the genie in the manner required, the man [228] will be able to work under the protection of the god. Anyone who has had a share in the contract, even if only through representatives, will likewise profit if he scrupulously observes the conditions.

621 The establishment of a village requires the cooperation of
several communities, each represented by its *fa*. One of these *fa*
622 will either appropriate the leadership or be chosen as the rep-
793 resentative or chief of the others. Sometimes he may be merely
794 *primus inter pares*; otherwise he may have managed to have his
primacy conceded by the rest. It is this chief who treats with the genie in the name of the whole village; thus, he becomes the "high priest of the genie" (*nyana-n-son-na-ba*) with the essential function of "making the offerings" (*son'*) required by the cult. Furthermore, he administers the earthly domain of the genie and is therefore called *dugu-tigi* (master of the earth).

To the *nyana dugu-da-siri* is usually attributed the same *dyamu* as that of its high priest, just as though the genie belonged to the spiritual family of the priest. This is a result consistent with the mentality of the Bambara.

The same mental state accounts for the custom in certain
621 villages of dedicating a living animal, often a ram, to the
776 *nyana dugu-da-siri* and believing it to be the god's mount. The
778 animal is allowed to wander freely about the village, and its
[825] mischief is never punished; indeed, the people enjoy caressing
and indulging it. The animal takes on some of the attributes of the genie and is, as it were, endowed with certain supernatural virtues, so only good can come from contact with it.

621 Theoretically, each settlement has only one genie, but
776 actually it may have several, especially if it has been settled by

621 successive groups, each recognizing a genie-protector. In that
776 case, the genie first recognized and worshiped takes precedence
over the others. In any case, social life requires each segment
to respect the gods of its neighbors, and this respect carries with
it a certain amount of superstitious fear.

It is evident from the foregoing that occupying and
311 cultivating land poses certain problems for the settlement bene-
621 fited, and these may be grouped under three heads: the cult of
794 the genie-protector; the exploitation of the land; and the or-
ganization of the territorial community.

793 *The cult.* This is mainly supported by the high priest,
whose principal duty is to "make the offerings" (*son'*) to the
794 "genie" [229] (*nyana*), hence his title *nyana-son-na-ba*. He
is assisted by the council of *fa*, one of whom, the *syere* (follower),
may replace him in case of need. The office of high priest is
for life and is inherited in the same way as his *faya*. This continuity shows that the genie is actually regarded as a kind of
spiritual ancestor of the priest, as we have seen from the fact
that it is given the same *dyamu* as its high priest.

794 The cult ceremonies are very simple. They consist of
offerings made by the high priest, who at the same time indi-
796 cates to the genie the purpose for which they are being made.
The most solemn ceremonies take place when millet is sown
and harvested. For these occasions, every worshiper is expected
to bring a contribution in proportion to his resources. The kind
of gift is not specified; everyone brings whatever he can or
whatever he wishes, usually animals (sheep, beef, fowl, etc.),
grain, and especially millet beer (*dlo*).

During these general gatherings, from which no one is
782 excluded, only the high priest and the members of the council
796 enter the sacred grove or approach the genie's abode. There,
778 the high priest makes known the purpose of the sacrifice: to
+ thank the genie for his past favors; to offer him the gifts brought
by everyone; and to ask him to continue to protect the com-
munity so that its prosperity may be assured. Then the victims
are sacrificed, and their blood is sprinkled on the tree trunk
or whatever object or place is reputed to be the home of the
genie.

782 genie. The same is done with libations of *dlo* or the juice of
796 kola nuts. Since anything offered to the genie is supposed to be
[784] consumed on the spot, an orgy lasting for several days usually follows.

In addition to these two great obligatory ceremonies
782 especially concerned with the exploitation of the land, the god's protection is sought by similar, but much simplified means in all affairs whether they concern the entire settlement (wars, disasters), a particular patriarchal or familial community, or even a single individual. Through the high priest as intermediary, the offering and the request are made for the purpose indicated by the petitioner, who often promises to make a further gift to the genie when his wish has been granted. Vows of this type are made very frequently.

794 The cult of his high [230] priests and of all the important men of the settlement is tied in with the cult of the
769 genie, obviously a consequence of the fact that the genie is the spiritual patron of the community which honors him; its members are his children and with him form what amounts to a family. So, in line with what happens in a patriarchal or familial community, the territorial community also holds an annual festival for the dead, during which special honor is paid to noted personages, among whom deceased high priests have first place.

311 *Exploitation of the land.* The high priest in charge of
621 the cult likewise regulates everything concerning the exploita-
423 tion of the terrestrial domain of the genie, and in this capacity
793 he is known as the *dugu-tigi* (1), master of the earth. In this office he has the help of the council of *fa*, and in important matters he must follow their advice.

With the help of this council, he allots the land when

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1. In line with common practice, I shall henceforth use this title to designate both capacities, the high priest and the master of the earth.

621 622 651 652 These are the principal resources of the community treasury, which is held and administered by the dugu-tigi with the help and under the control of the fa. The dugu-tigi may use the treasury to help him perform his duties honorably, to assist unfortunate or indigent members of the community, to receive the guests of the community in a suitable manner, and to meet emergencies.

[661] Under no circumstances does this treasury constitute any part of the personal fortune of the dugu-tigi. Only usurpation, which is fairly common under various guises, alters this state of affairs. In the same way, it is not uncommon for this wealth to be divided in some measure among the members of the council, who in one way or another appropriate it. Such abuses, no matter how common, do not in the least alter the principle that legally such wealth is and remains exclusively the property of the community. [234]

Chapter 4

Brotherhoods

1. The End of Childhood

● 794 881 General considerations. The cult of the ancestors and of the nyana dugu-da-siri are not enough for the Bambara in his efforts to make sure of the protection, help, and services of the invisible world. The magician has created for him some renowned protectors or servitors which are powerful and formidable: the nyana of the boli.

The cult of these gods gives rise to spiritual families whose members are so closely linked by the bonds of fraternity that we may safely say that these groupings are brotherhoods. All these brotherhoods share the common characteristic that no one can be received into them before having submitted to a certain rite called soli (1) or bolo-ko (1), terms which

1. Soli is the word for the action of piercing, emerging, laying an egg, or

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881 being born; *bolo-ko* literally means "affair involving birth."

etymologically mean "birth."

Having entered the family through physical birth, a child enters a new phase of his life through the spiritual birth represented by the *soli*. Through this rite, a child in fact ceases to belong to sexless childhood and becomes: the boy, a man; the girl, a woman. Let us look at the stages of this change of status which is truly the principal event of a native's life.

857 Until he is about seven years old, a small boy lives in daily contact with his mother, only slipping away, as time goes on, to play nearby with his friends.

During this period, one can already observe the influence [235] of the native milieu on the development of his young soul. He has watched cult and magic practices, and he too plays at being a magician to kill or capture rats, lizards, and other small animals for his little feasts. He collects roots with simulated rites and attaches them to his toy bow so as to ensure the success of his hunting, believing that he has attracted a spirit by promising an offering of the blood of his victims. He is already a little hunter, seeking mysterious procedures through which game can be and ought to be put at his mercy without danger to himself.

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794 Around the age of seven, he is thinking about the crucial act of his life, the *soli*, one of whose rites is that of circumcision.

Observance of the *soli*, complete with public circumcision and preceded and followed by membership in a brotherhood, is not absolutely indispensable. When, by reason of circumstances, a child lives in an isolated situation, he undergoes the *soli* within the family circle, without fuss, and this in no way lessens the validity of the act.

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571 There is no doubt, however, that nothing but absolute necessity will make a Bambara do this; he loathes such wretched economy, which in any case seems inappropriate to such an important occasion (1). On the contrary, he loves to take part in

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1. Besides, since no exact age limit is

881 imposed and since there may be as
561 much as six or seven years' difference
571 in age between the oldest and youngest
●794 children participating in the same *soli*,
it is obviously possible for a candidate to arrange to be included at some point within this range of ages so as not to be an isolated case.

881 a noisy demonstration and to share in all of the rejoicing the
571 brotherhoods provide for their members. This is by no means the
794 least of the reasons for the spread of these brotherhoods, to
which the n-Tomo (2) is really the front door, since no one is admitted to a brotherhood unless he is *soli-ma*, and the specific final object of the n-Tomo is the *soli*.

2. n-Tomo is the term used in the Ségou area; in Kaarta the term n-Tori is used.

n-Tomo

561 The n-Tomo is an association which, in preparation for
857 the *soli*, bands together boys (3) of about seven to fourteen years

881 3. Little girls have no organized society to prepare them for the *soli*, but they have agreements among themselves and, in addition, are chosen as *n-golo-moso-u* by the *n-Tomo-den'-u*.

Each [236] n-Tomo normally includes all the boys due to be circumcised, without distinction by race or rank. Each member is called *n-Tomo-den'*; the eldest is the leader or *n-Tomo-tigi*, and he is assisted by a *syere* or "follower." New members are received every year at the time of the annual festival, and they must pay an entrance fee (a chicken) and a few cowries

561 575 association, each fula-ni is a ton'-den'.

The bachelors and some of the married men regard the fla-n-ton' simply as a means of having a good time in the company of boon companions. Anything brought by an individual member goes to swell the common fund which is most often used to organize feasts and drinking bouts. At these banquets, it is customary to comply with rules which appear curious at first sight and which must be obeyed unless the member wants to pay a fine into the common fund. Thus, anyone who acts on his own prior to or contrary to an order from the ton-tigi, anyone who comes or leaves, blows his nose, [250] spits, sneezes, and so on, without permission, is fined. Aside from the profit to the common fund, the procedure has its uses in making the ton-den' amenable to discipline.

In principle, the treasury of the fla-n-ton' is supposed to be used only to succor poor, embarrassed, or unfortunate members, who are expected to repay with interest insofar as they are able to do so. In theory, also, all of the ton-den' can count on moral and material aid from their fla-ni whenever there is need for it. It goes without saying that this fine spirit of altruism is rarely put into practice.

The fact of the matter is that the young masters (kamale-u) make use of the organization to resist the omnipotence of the elders (koro-u); malcontents of all sorts take refuge in it; adventurers find it useful in promoting their schemes. We shall see how the two most powerful Bambara empires were built on the fla-n-ton'.

2. General Considerations Concerning the Brotherhoods

Origin of the Brotherhoods

171 794 There is no reason to suppose that the Bambara brotherhoods are not purely native institutions; similar organizations are to be found all over Africa, particularly in areas untouched by Moslem influence. All of them follow similar principles made manifest in ways characteristic of African occultism.

177 794 There is no doubt, however, that in the case of the Bambara with whom we are here concerned this native foundation

177 794 has acquired various elements brought in from the outside world by Berbers, Arabs, and others, or by Sudanese pilgrims returning from the Orient. In any event, this foreign occultism -- usually oriental -- certainly did not give rise to or greatly modify the local Sudanese occultism; it merely strengthened its organization, its institutions, and its methods by adding new knowledge.

The legend (1) which claims that the *nyana* of the *boli* are a Moslem importation does not mean that these "gods" were introduced [251] actually and exclusively by such means. It means only that pre-existing native institutions have received foreign support from pilgrims or others returning or arriving from the Orient.

Dogma

794 Are these brotherhoods based on a more or less secret teaching of cardinal truths? It does not seem to me to be risky to say that they are not. Everything in these cults may be summed up as empirical practices which are believed to have the effect of forcing a "god" (that is, an extranatural force) to serve man. The aim is essentially utilitarian and worldly: to acquire a "powerful protector" (*dyigi seme*) for defence, for offence, and especially for the purpose of attaining sufficient power for the realization of all desires.

Such an alliance with a god by means of a cult compels one to behave in certain ways, but discipline of this type does not lead to the improvement of either the individual or the society through the acquisition of what we call moral qualities or virtues. It is all the more obvious, then, that the brotherhoods are not trying to assure their members entry into a supernatural world; they can barely claim to assure them protection and a modicum of material well-being. A spiritual mysticism is unknown to them (1).

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1. Reported below in the chapter on Islam.

1. However, see Chapter 7. [Not translated.]

Methods

794 Are the rites and magical practices used in the brotherhoods efficacious? 789

Here, as in all matters, the Blacks operate by feeling their way, imitation, or adaptation, all incomplete. Just as an ignorant man is perfectly capable of accidentally starting a clockworks whose mechanism he does not understand and so can either start or stop it, put it out of order, or break it, so a Black can sometimes, by a kind of empiricism, get results similar to those of the magnetizers, hypnotists, magicians, and alchemists of all times and places.

Without plan or method, the Sudanese magicians and sorcerers [252] have nevertheless not worked in vain. In the process of arousing the native's emotional temperament and keeping it ever aroused, they have created an atmosphere favorable to the rise and propagation of psychic phenomena. Any type of spirituality would benefit from this age-old process by which the Sudanese soul is all the better prepared to broaden its mystical tendencies toward the cult of the manes which the magicians have carefully kept within the material domain of immediate utility.

We have never heard of a single magician who, when he seeks to penetrate the invisible, has sought to understand its arrangement so as to regulate his own life with a view to attaining a privileged position in that world invisible to us. Each of them is merely trying to obtain a fragment of the universal energy in order to realize his worldly designs. Still, this continual striving toward the supernatural has often strengthened the feeling toward the manes through the spirituality that has been aroused. Thus, as magic loses its power, man's desire for the supernatural, lacking a goal, augments the cult of the manes until it goes on to something higher. Thus a new spirituality is created on the native plane, which is easily oriented toward revealed religions when they know how to receive it.

Nyana

794 776 Each brotherhood is founded on the cult of a spirit (nyana). What we call "spirit" to indicate its immateriality, the Bambara from another point of view calls "power," "master," "lord", etc., for such is the meaning of the words nya, nyana, nama, dyara, komo, faro, etc., by which he designates the innumerable "gods" of his pantheon, thus affirming his subjection to this invisible restraint upon him.

It is the magician who creates the nyana of the boli worshiped by the brotherhoods with which we are here concerned. His incantations call up a kind of echo from the invisible; his persistent and peremptory practices produce a sort of personification of his desire in the depths of the universal and diffuse energy, because he "names" the thing he wants. The nyana thus created, which he attracted by "naming" it, is retained by offerings and sacrifices, just as a person is seduced by presents. Finally, he forges a link with the nyana through communion. From that point on creature and creator are [253] so closely bound to each other that neither can refuse anything to the other; they form a single being whose visible aspect is completed by the invisible.

Judging from statements, concepts, and practices, this is the native belief as to the mysterious work of the magician. The latter creates as many nyana as he likes, and he draws at will on the invisible which he fashions and rules.

Boli

794 778 Mankind in general and the native in particular need to give material support to their speculations. The magician and the believer alike need to have at hand the nyana, this essence which is personified by being "named." Appropriate procedures make the nyana come to that altar which at the same time is its symbol and which the Bambara call boli (1).

1. Otherwise known as buri. It should be noted that in ordinary language the

774 778 terms nyana and boli are used interchangeably. This is natural enough since the latter is merely the symbol of the former.

Each nyana has a boli which in form and substance is peculiar to it. Anything may be used to make boli: horn or hair of the hare, hind, or cattle; nails or claws; animal venom or excretions. It is not unusual to find parts of a human body put to use. As the chronicle tells, the war drums of the ton-dyon' were elevated to the rank of boli and were then adorned with the craniums and jaws of human beings sacrificed to them. [727 782] Often the ball tied to the end of a piece of rope or leather and used to beat the tabala [Tr., big drum] is a human hand which has been severed and wrapped in a leather cover.

Certain of the boli, particularly those of the Komo and the Kono, are said to be made of a child's torso; those of the Tyi-wara and Nama are made of wood, and those of the Duga of horn.

All sorts of shapes are employed: men, animals, doll-like figures, balls, small crowns, etc. The principal boli, called boli-de-n-fa, is accompanied by subsidiary ones called boli-de.

The boli is also given sex: one is male, another female; and it is said that there is a kind of mystical copulation [254] from which at the time of initiation are born the spiritual sons of the nyana.

Among boli should be noted those made of forked sticks, such as the n-Golo and the Tyi-wara, both patrons of brotherhoods of young men (1).

171 1. If one makes certain comparisons, the forked stick seems to deserve special attention. Among the Khassonké, for instance, the soli-ma always build their seclusion hut (bire) with a forked post in the center. This post, called biri-makho (master of the hut), is a tree trunk chosen

171 and cut by the gankurango (magician-protector of the soli-ma among the Khassonké) because it is so placed in the forest that the normal progress of the sun follows the axis formed by the two branches of the fork. There is thus some relation between the sun and the forked tree called biri-makho. Perhaps the same relationship accounts for the sleeping position of the boys in the bire: they always lie with their heads toward the center post and their bodies forming the spokes of a wheel around it. During the soli ceremonies the same Khassonké soli-ma use a short wand forked at one end.

The forked stick with mystical significance is also found among the Koniagui.

It is not possible, given the present state of our knowledge, to be specific about the origin or significance of this symbol. For the same reason, we cannot say whether it can be related to the lyre-shaped stones found in the mysterious collection of rocks discovered in Gambia, in which there is thought to be discernible a clearly defined cult of the sun (cf. Bulletin du Comité d'études historiques et scientifiques de l'A.O.F., 1920, No. 1).

794 To the European these boli are thoroughly repulsive objects.
778 Since magic utilizes everything (2), all kinds of things are used to make them, and during the sacrifices, blood, hair, feathers, viscera, etc., are usually placed on the boli. The result is usually a repugnant sight. The native, however, seems to pay no attention to this repulsive aspect which so horrifies

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2. And particularly things which are considered repulsive in ordinary life.

794 Europeans. The Black sees only the symbolic altar which he
778 venerates. Besides, in theory at least, the *boli* does not acquire its prestige in the eyes of the Black from its strange or bizarre nature; the fact that it is consecrated confers upon it its sacred character and its ritual use. That is why, in general (3), the destruction of a *boli* no more means the destruction of [255] the corresponding cult than destroying a statue of Buddha would mean the annihilation of Buddhism.

The making and consecration of a *boli* are matters not easily accessible to the profane. Here is what Raffenel's informant, Bouo, told him about a *boli* belonging to the Massa-si: "The sorcerers first sought a very rare tree. They approached it in a procession, dug a hole at its foot, and after invocations in an unknown tongue gathered parts of its roots with bizarre ceremonies. Using the same invocations and ceremonies, they procured some hairs from the tail of a black horse. So that these ingredients should answer their purpose, they had one of their number take off his trousers and shirt and then pick up the objects (1). The bark and the horsehair were placed in an earthen vessel and remained there for half a day over a hot fire. During this last day the proxy of the magicians prostrated himself, face to the ground, seven times seven times, while reciting prayers in a language which no one could understand.

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3. I say "in general" because there are exceptions. The skull of a chief named Sama, who ruled over a village called Gniningo in the Gangaran area, was the *boli* of a cult created by that chief. When the skull was destroyed, that put an end to the cult, since it was impossible to replace this unique object.

1. It is common for a sorcerer to remove all his clothing for the performance of his duties.

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778 "After the creation came the consecration. The Kouroubari and the leaders of the people witnessed it. A white ox, a red ox, and a red rooster were sacrificed for the occasion (2)."

2. Raffenel, Nouveau voyage au Pays des Nègres [New Journey to the Country of the Negroes], Vol. 1, p. 237.

846 The boli is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put in a sack or other receptacle, and except during ceremonies it is stored with other cult objects in a kind of temple often resembling a miniature native hut and called nyana-bon', "hut of the nyana."

776 Obviously there are differences between the various nyana, because peculiar practices call up unlike spirits. In any event, however, the captive spirit is, as it were, a slave of the magician, who treats it as such and even sells it, along with instructions for its use. There are magicians who go from place to place, making and selling nyana and other magic weapons, and there are recognized markets where one can always [256] obtain the boli of the most popular nyana. The markets at Bélédougou, Bendougou, and Follona are especially well known. 443

Trade in Boli

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438 The chronicle of Ségou tells that Biton, the founder of the empire, acquired his principal idols in the Bendougou region where the popular markets of Moribala, Kourbadougou, and Diali are located.

Itinerant merchants deal in all sorts of cult objects, and there are settled traders who are sometimes very well known, like a certain Minkoli who made boli and was so famous that his village is named after him: Minkoli ka dugu (village of Minkoli). I have never been able to find out, however, which village in the Bendougou area was the home of the famous Minkoli.

By such means the cult of a given nyana, once it has been created, spreads to some extent, depending on the degree

794 to which its creator chooses to reveal the ritual of initiation.

778 The head of a family, just like an isolated individual
438 or the head of a large community, will not fail to acquire, for a monetary consideration, exclusive possession of one of these powerful boli, which becomes his personal protector. Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, had with him the nyana n-Ka; Biton, the founder of the empire of Ségou, possessed several famous
[776] nyana: na n-Ġolo-ko (1), Nye-n-dinge du (2), and ba Kung-o-ba (3). Generally speaking, these private cults cannot spread, but when their possessor becomes a powerful chief, they migrate rapidly. This is what happened to Biton's cults; his followers took up the worship of his idols.

1. Literally, na-n-Goloko, "the mother concerned with birth" or, freely translated, "the goddess who presides at birth."

2. Nye dinge du, "the deep orbit of the eye."

3. Ba-kung-o-ba, "mother of the great bush."

794 When an individual becomes the acknowledged possessor of a nyana the result is an alliance with this nyana, which in the native language is called furu, the same word as that used for the
[833] conjugal union of a man and a woman. Indeed, the installation of a renowned nyana in its master's village gives rise to rejoicing [257] similar to that occasioned by a wedding; hence, the following expressions: a ye boli furu, "he is united with a boli"; a ye boh' furu gosi, "he has effected a union with a boli"; a-ta boli konyo kera, "he has celebrated the wedding of his boli." On the day of such festivals, the master of the nyana (nyana-tigi or boli-tigi, surrounded by his acolytes, offers dlo to his guests who have come to greet him and give him presents. At nightfall, when the uninitiated have withdrawn, the clergy and the adepts in a procession take the boli to the "sacred wood" where the first cult ceremony is held, characterized principally by dancing and singing.

778 435 The cash value of boli varies considerably. At the most it is between 30 and 40 francs, payable in kind or in cowries. The cost is increased, however, by gifts to the seller and his acolytes who come to instruct the new clergy in their functions. As a result, considering the various kinds of refreshments, dogs, goats, and chickens, as well as kola nuts and millet beer (dlo), the price may actually come to 100 francs.

778 ● 794 Since the nyana-tigi (master of the nyana) has full control over his nyana, he may admit anyone he likes to the benefits of his cult. Well-known cults have been much sought after, and as they developed, they became complicated. As the importance of a cult increases, its ceremonies are amplified and augmented in proportion to the number of people taking part in them. Initiation requires a fee, and a clergy becomes necessary. This is the way that these cults, established through participation, have given rise to associations which the Europeans call "secret societies" but which might better be called "brotherhoods," because of the spiritual filiation uniting the affiliates.

Mysteries and Liturgical Equipment

Everything that concerns the brotherhood of the nyana is shrouded in mystery; for various reasons, everything is concealed (do, as the natives put it). It is, indeed, a principle of magic that power exists only insofar as its essence evades the investigation of its adversaries. The uninitiated therefore, must not know the basis of the supernatural power of the nyana, because, if they knew, they would be able to acquire the means of [258] destroying it, resisting it, or at the very least rendering it inefficacious. Anything related to the nyana is bound to it and is, so to speak, an integral part of the nyana by virtue of consecration: the clergy and the liturgical equipment. That is why both are do and why every effort is made to hide them, in their magical aspect, from curiosity of the profane. By extension, however, all members of a brotherhood of any nyana of the boli in Bambara country are identified as do-u, "the hidden people."

794 Some of the clergy use a disguise when officiating in
[292] public; furthermore, the ceremonies are held only at night.

Finally, in the presence of the profane, the initiated
[198] use a special language for everything referring specifically to
the cult. The greatest secret of all is the name of the nyana,
[551] because anyone who knows the name has complete power over
the spirit it designates.

794 From the point of view of the disguised clerical body,
this secrecy is virtually impenetrable. A disguised person loses
292 his human personality and is withdrawn from the natural world.
It is an accepted fact that it is dangerous for those not affiliated to intercept his glance through the tiny openings in the mask; undoubtedly his person on that occasion is impregnated with a fluid whose emanations are fatal to those who, not being affiliated, are unprotected against them.

Some of these disguises include a headdress or mask and for the body a kind of costume usually made of long strips of vegetal material; is this, as has been suggested, simply a means of dominating the herd of adepts and even more the profane through the terror such regalia inspires when seen at night by the flickering light of torches and bonfires? It seems more probable that one must put this matter on the plane of the supernatural in order to understand it. Dangerous wild animals
[825 are believed to be incarnations of evil and powerful gods, and
776] an attempt is made to present an outward appearance consistent
with the terror merely seeing them inspires, in order thereby
to acquire the supernatural qualities that characterize them (1).

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(1). There is no doubt that some individuals, under the influence of the role of wild beast that they are portraying, have been led to commit actual murders during ritual observances. I have often heard this asserted in connection with the dyara (lion).

794 It should be noted that the costume, gestures, [259]
782 dances, songs, and music of the dye-n-fa and their acolytes

794 782 are all designed to attract and capture the god and, for this purpose, to transfer the officiant from our world to the supernatural one. I have never heard anyone claim that the costume and the various actions of the officiant were intended to counterfeit the nyana, nor that the boli in any way represented the native's idea of the god.

The Clergy

793 Even though, in theory, familial nyana are inherited, those worshiped by the brotherhoods are usually bought. The head of the brotherhood is called the nyana-tigi (master of the nyana) (1), whether he has inherited the office, been elected to it, or has imposed himself by virtue of being the most prominent founder of the brotherhood. It is he who keeps the boli, hence his title of boli-tigi, and who knows all the secrets of the cult. His duty is to direct the cult and to administer the brotherhood, and this gives him considerable local prestige.

The initiates of higher rank are called dye-n-fa-u, "masters of the truth." The nyana-tigi chooses his aides from this group, particularly the person who, "seized by the god" (wara-mina-den"), becomes the "oracle" (wara-da). The role of medium requires special persons who can go into a trance under the influence of the animating spirit, and the wara-da has the duty of choosing and training the person who will succeed him or replace him, if the need arises (2). 787 791

All the initiates are to some extent diviners through practices which are peculiar to them, and the brotherhoods often

1. Ordinarily the word nyana is replaced by the specific name of the nyana, Komo, Nama, Nya, etc.

2. These dye-n-fa students are called soma-de (elder sons) in the Komo brotherhood.

793 provide instruction in deductive divination, which usually requires two years of study.

This clergy is recruited and formed by co-optation, and it includes, besides the persons already mentioned, the muru-kala-tigi (3) or "sacrificer," who kills the victims, and a dyeli or "herald" of the god.

794 The rank and file of the faithful are called nyana-den u, sons of the nyana (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above]. In order to be accepted as nyana-den', it is necessary [260] to take an oath and to pay an entrance fee. The terms of the oath used in the brotherhoods reveal that, in sum, the nyana-den' promises secrecy, obedience, and solidarity, as we shall show in what follows. Certain aides of the clergy are selected from among the common run of the faithful, for instance, the da-ro-tigi or da-ro-ta-la, who is a kind of beadle.

The Treasury

The performance of liturgical ceremonies is not the only function of the clergy; it also constitutes a kind of council to administer the property of the brotherhood, for the cult is not gratuitous. First, admission to the brotherhood requires the payment of a fee, and the same is true whenever an individual is nominated or promoted to an office. Furthermore, an important contribution, in proportion to the individual's resources, is required for any important ceremony. Finally, fines are imposed on the faithful and even on outsiders as punishment for wrong doings.

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681 Fines assume many forms, whether they are to atone for a wrong committed by one of the faithful against the brotherhood or the god, whether an outsider is to be punished similarly for arousing the wrath of the nyana, or for reasons sometimes known only to the clergy who levies them. The nyana-tigi and

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3. Literally, "he who holds the handle of the knife."

794 his acolytes are exceedingly zealous in discovering wrong-
681 doings and the guilty parties and in requiring material proof of repentance, which they determine and try to multiply since they appropriate the whole profit, albeit abusively. Theoretically, these fines are not very heavy and are paid in kind (fowl, a goat, a dog, some kola nuts, millet, beer), but, when multiplied, they become a heavy burden for the debtor. He cannot evade this method of extortion, because his persecutors, in league against him, use every means, even criminal, to force him to pay.

794 Strictly speaking, all the property belongs to the nyana;
421 it is by rights the common property of the nyana-den' and in
426 principle is not to be privately appropriated nor alienated. It is to be used only for the needs of the cult, for assisting needy members, and in exceptional cases for loans to outsiders at exorbitant interest. For that matter, the nyana-den' who gets a loan from the common fund must repay it [261] as soon as his affairs take a turn for the better and, insofar as possible, add a certain amount in order to show his gratitude. It sometimes happens that an outsider is aided out of the common fund; this is a kind of charity which is both a good advertisement and extremely profitable.

794 The common property is not to be appropriated by any
421 dignitary or member of the brotherhood for his own benefit. Although there is certainly not a single native who is unaware of this regulation (1), it is all too evident that abuses have led to extraordinary perversions. The clergy regularly appropriates the property of the nyana to its own use, and in order to increase the profit, they do not hesitate to commit actual crimes that enable them to exploit the terror they inspire, which they are careful to nurture and to reinforce.

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1. Raffenel writes (op. cit., p. 239): "The victims' flesh and other objects become the property of the poor."

The Operation of the Brotherhood

794 A brotherhood is a spiritual family whose internal affairs are conducted like those of a community with natural filiation. The nyana-tigi has the role of fa, and the assemblage of dye-n-fa-u, reinforced by the initiated and the leading believers, serve as the community council. Thus, questions confined to the cult and to administrative matters are dealt with by the nyana-tigi acting alone or with his council, just like the fa in the community. Therefore, the description of the latter's duties which has been given above will suffice to explain by analogy the practices in the brotherhoods. There are, however, certain details peculiar to the brotherhoods, and these will be set forth in what follows.

The Cult

794 786 The cult is made public during certain ceremonies, of which the two most important are the one at the time of sowing and the other at the time of harvest. It is accepted as fact in the brotherhoods that at planting time the boli copulate so as to produce issue at the time of harvest, hence the hymn to Nama which says: "boli fyerela ka den' (the boli has flowered to bring forth fruit)." These ceremonies are accompanied by orgies [262] during which the celebrants, both men and women, are said to indulge in sexual licentiousness. It may be concluded from these two series of happenings that the rites seek by appropriate mimicry to encourage the fruitfulness of nature.

794 776 825 There are other indications which show that it is indeed toward nature that the rites are directed. In certain brotherhoods, notably the Kore, the costumed officiants who farm the cartege pretend to be wara-u (wild beasts), suruku-u (hyenas), golo-u (monkeys), and other terrifying inhabitants of the bush (1).

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1. They are all called wara or sogo, terms used for all wild animals. It should be noted that every nyana is called wara (power, lord).

● 794 It is not rash to suppose that in this case they are symbolizing
776 the role, probably primordial and in any event primary, of
825 the nyana to control the supernatural and particularly malevolent forces of the bush. As a matter of fact, the most popular and important nyana are the protectors of the harvests which represent virtually the only property of the natives. One of the nyana is even especially concerned with agricultural work (2); this is Tyi-wara (god of agricultural work), who presides over the first clearing of the land at the beginning of the winter season.

In any case, whether the animal is regarded as the visible form of a spirit or, if one prefers, the perceptible manifestation of a supernatural force, the belief is strengthened by the common practice of the interdict (tne) and, still more, by the magical acts required of a hunter.

Another aspect of this belief is seen in the choice of an animal to represent the mount of the nyana dugu-da-siri.

It is for a similar reason that the brotherhoods usually
794 adopt the name of an animal: for the Nama this is usually the
825 hyena (suruku) (3); for the Komo, the hyena (suruku) or the elephant (sama); for the Dyara, the lion; for the Kono, the ostrich (kono-ba), etc. It is said that the cries, the shouts, and

[461] 2. In the native vocabulary, "to work" (tya-ke, short for tyi-ya-ke) primarily means "to work in the fields."

[552] 3. The hyena is often designated by the words nama-koro (old Nama) or suya-koro (old sorcerer) when the speaker does not want to use the animal's real name (suruku). There is a whole vocabulary for use to "avoid" the names that are dangerous to utter, and the name of the hyena is one of them.

794 The sounds of the [263] trumpets to announce the meetings
825 imitate the cry of the animal (1).

[534] 1. This is true of the Dyara. In the brotherhood of that name, a cry like a roar is drawn from an instrument made as follows: the hollow trunk of a palm tree is covered at one end by a tightly stretched skin; a long thong or rope runs down inside the trunk from the center of the skin; the operator pulls the rope tight, then lets it slip through his hand by jerks, and having achieved a certain facility, he succeeds in producing a noise like a roar.

000 Can it be that the costumes made of bark strips, the strange masks, and the mimicry of the people who wear them are connected with mysteries which are now unknown to us, either because they have been adopted without understanding and thus deformed beyond recognition, or because they are the last vestiges of far older cults, today unfathomable since they no longer exist?

Did Egypt inspire these cults, as some people believe? Or rather was Egypt herself influenced originally by a preexistent Black civilization whose last surviving traces she kept alive by altering them? This is an unlimited field for speculation.

Generally speaking, the cult is in abeyance on Monday
794 and Thursday of each week. The same days are holidays from
805 communal work and are left to the "poor people" for their own profit. There must be some connection between these two facts, and it should further be noted that, as a result, the religious week is reduced to five days. A question naturally arises, therefore, as to whether the week as now observed is truly native. It seems likely that the week is an oriental contribution, more specifically Islamic. It could be a coincidence that Islam organized slavery, and when a seven-day week was adopted, two days were allotted to the gens de poëste, as used to be said in France;

794 in France. The question is too complex, however, to be treated here.

794 782 For important ceremonies, the faithful bring the nyana-tigi a contribution in proportion to their means; each of them brings grain, livestock, fowl, cowries, cloth, etc., and no one is so poor that he cannot furnish one or more jugs of beer (dlo). Everything thus collected is offered to the nyana at the general meeting of the faithful through the intermediary, the nyana-tigi. In accordance with [264] established ritual, the victims are slaughtered and libations made. Then the nyana-tigi gives thanks to the god and asks him to continue to protect his worshipers. Finally, all or part of the food is eaten at a joint banquet. This is a true communion, by means of which the god and his worshipers on the one hand, and the worshipers among themselves on the other, are closely bound together. These banquets, [786] which often last for several days, degenerate into orgies.

Internal Discipline

794 A result of the cult is that the brotherhood forms an organized body in which each member is subject to a discipline that may be summarized under these three terms: secrecy, obedience, solidarity.

Secrecy is obligatory, especially for anything having to do with the cult. Divulging the mysteries carries with it a [688] punishment which, depending on circumstances, may vary from a simple reprimand to condemnation to death, with fines, flogging, etc., as intermediate forms. People who are known to be unable to keep a secret are, on that account, excluded from the brotherhoods of nyana; this excludes women, children, certain people of caste, etc.

The obedience required of the faithful is shown by the seemingly fantastic rules enforced during the official banquets of certain brotherhoods. Members are fined for very odd infractions: sitting down, getting up, spitting, etc., before being given permission or being asked to do so. This is obviously a means of swelling the common fund, but it is also a means of making the adept realize that he is subservient to the sect.

•794 Besides, this submission, if one may call it that, is merely a corollary of the solidarity existing between nyana-den'. This solidarity is shown to the profane whenever litigation arises outside the sphere of the brotherhood; nyana-den' do not [696] hesitate to bear false witness for the sole purpose of helping a guilty co-member evade the sanctions of profane jurisdiction.

For failure to fulfill his obligations or for any other wrong considered reprehensible by the brotherhood, the nyana-den' comes under the jurisdiction of this brotherhood.

Fearing the supernatural retribution which his misdeeds [783] [265] may provoke and seeing portents of it in apparently inexplicable things that cause him pain and surprise, the nyana-den' himself seeks pardon through some kind of expiation, determined by his own intuition alone or by one of the clergy.

On other occasions, the guilty person fails to denounce himself, not merely by deliberate design but sometimes because [787] he is not aware of his wrongdoing and its consequences. In that case it is the wara-da (oracle) who reveals it in a trance.

794 695 The clergy is led, by means of self-accusation, denunciation by witnesses, or accusations based on the most varied imputations, to learn, to investigate, to adjudicate, and to punish the acts of the faithful in material as well as spiritual matters. In the process of carrying out its duties in this respect, the clergy uses every imaginable means of obtaining information and of examination, but the proof of guilt that they particularly want is confession.

The various procedures used to persuade the accused to confess his wrongs may be put under three headings: oath, torture, and divination.

When an oath is taken, the boli is provided with an accessory known as the siri-kun' (knot), to which seven straws are attached. The person taking the oath (kali boli la, "to swear on the boli") then pronounces the usual formula: "May the nyana take my heart and my liver if I lie." When two people exchange this oath in order to vouch for their respective statements, they are said to have "tied the boli" (boli syen'), and it is believed that anyone who perjures himself will be put to death

794 695 by the god. It is conceded, however, that a perjurer may redeem himself by gifts and sacrifices whose nature and value are decided by the clergy.

Torture includes the most diverse types of moral and physical constraint thought to be efficacious in getting a confession: usually flogging, imprisonment, starvation, mutilation, and other tortures, often horrible. A method that often succeeds and that is commonly used is to offer up the unknown guilty party to the wrath of the nyana; it is not at all rare for the guilty person to confess at the first signs of discomfort due to auto-suggestion. It is so firmly established that the wrath of the nyana is always implacable and terrible that innocent persons, accused only for the sake of exploiting them, have been known to confess abominable crimes which they [266] never committed, for instance, in cases of accusation of sorcery.

[787] Divination comes to the support of the inquiry, and the deity's revelations are combined with endless spying among the members.

It goes without saying that these various methods of inquiry are not used alone; they are combined so as to provide mutual support.

On the basis of findings made in this way, the clergy passes judgment and has the sentence carried out in a despotic and often mysterious manner (1).

794 696 The penalties are varied and arbitrary; the importance of a misdemeanor is not determined in advance on the basis of specific characteristics. Rather, everything depends on the clergy's interest in the case, and this interest is influenced by the most appalling intrigues. Therefore, even though the accused is guilty of the most terrible crimes, he may escape punishment entirely provided he can satisfy the demands of the

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1. Indeed, most of the brotherhoods owe their terrifying reputations to the fact that sentences resulting in death or disappearance have been carried out by ways and agents who remain mysterious.

794 clergy. On the other hand, an innocent man will be over-
696 whelmed by mental and physical torture if he is unable to give
his executioners what they demand.

681 Corporal punishment includes flogging, chains, starvation, torture, and death by all imaginable methods. Pecuniary punishment includes fines, confiscation, and pillage. The condemned man is also sometimes forced to labor for the clergy or is even enslaved by them.

Social and Political Role of the Brotherhoods

794 By its actions, the brotherhood, an artificial family,
776 tends to take the place of the natural family whose organization
it has borrowed and whose cult it has banished. It is easy to ac-
769 count for this.

The cult of the manes is the framework of the family and of the communities derived from it. The brotherhood has cleverly managed to set up such a cult by specially honoring the manes of its high priests, its famous members, and its eminent worshipers. [267]

Gradually, the *nyana dugu-da-siri*, protector of the territorial community, has given way to the *nyana* of the *boli*, a more powerful god since his territory is unlimited.

It is true that in spite of everything the tradition remains,
and even though they are largely over-shadowed by the *nyana* of
the *boli*, the manes of the ancestors and the *nyana dugu-da-siri* are
still venerated. Though sowing and harvesting are celebrated
[731] with great pomp by the brotherhoods, still, when a disaster,
epidemic, or terrible drought occurs, sacrifices are promptly of-
[782] fered to the manes and the gods of the place. People may fear
their anger, but they also have confidence in their good will,
and it is felt that their severity can always be tempered. On the
other hand, the *nyana* of the *boli* are supposed to be basically
evil, and their worship seems intended to ward off their malignity
rather than to obtain their favor.

794 This duality in religion brings about extremely compli-
621 cated interrelationships which bind the communities and

● 794 brotherhoods together, although the latter seem to dominate the
621 former. These brotherhoods hem in the communities they dominate by abusively extending their jurisdiction far beyond its proper limits. Indeed, the faithful are not the only ones who are subject to the judgments handed down by the brotherhoods, whose clergy make decisions affecting not only members involved but often also third parties in the neighborhood or even people from neighboring or distant regions. The brotherhoods are tyrannical toward their own members and no less so to strangers, who often see no way of escaping persecution short of asking to be received into the ranks.

794 Thus, it is apparent how a brotherhood increases in size
661 and in power as time passes. Each year it takes in the young
182 people at the end of the soli, and as a result all the communities are at length absorbed by it live in it and for it (1). It

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[778] 1. The following is a typical example.

In the village of Marenna (Fouladougou Arbala), the natives belong to the cult of Ba-ku. This boli consists of a small sheaf of roots of the indigo tree. For every newborn child the nyana-tigi makes and consecrates a small Ba-ku, which he places in a gourd and puts in the temple of this nyana. At the time of the soli, the child becomes affiliated with the cult, takes the boli placed in the gourd for him at birth and henceforth wears it on his person. All the families in Marenna are thus closely involved in the cult of Ba-ku, being, as it were, engendered by this god to whom each person owes both physical and spiritual birth. Ba-ku comes from Sangaran, and his high priest is a Dyara; that is why he is invoked and called by the expression Ba-ku Dyara Sangaran-ka. The word ba-ku literally means "tail of a

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goat," and, indeed, that describes the appearance of the little bunch of roots. It is possible that the word Ba-ku is merely the profane name and that the real name of the nyana is kept secret.

claims eminent rights over every person or thing it touches, as a consequence of the supernatural power of the nyana protecting them. [268]

So it is that the brotherhood, by what might be called divine right, comes to play a political role which is inconsistent only because it was not designed to play such a role. Let an ambitious man come forth, one who knows how to make use of the organization and its redoubtable power for his own ends, and the brotherhood then becomes the cradle of a veritable political state.

So it is that when the regular authority cannot firmly resist its encroachments, the brotherhood becomes a kind of high judge and uses that high office to establish a reign of terror which exploits the defections due to hatreds its own machinations have aroused and encouraged. This wretched [578] game naturally brings repercussions within the brotherhood itself: the nyana-den' are at each other's throats, and the grimmest dramas accompany the indulgence of the lowest instincts. The chronicle of Ségou bears witness to these facts.

It is, unfortunately, by no means unusual for the established authority to condone these crimes through weakness, interest, or membership in the brotherhood. As a result, innumerable regions have fallen into anarchy.

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That is why and how the brotherhoods have been the cause of a great deal of unrest in the native milieu. As a refuge for escaped slaves, malcontents, vagabonds, intriguers, in a word, for all enemies of public order, the brotherhoods everywhere set themselves up in opposition to regularly constituted authority, and when they are unable to take it over, seek to thwart it by taking the head into partnership.

The dynastic convulsions of most of the Sudanese empires, especially that of Ségou, are in large part explained by the usurpations of these great brotherhoods of nyana.

794 182 578 The family, too, has been assailed, perverted, [269] and disorganized, because dissident elements found support in the brotherhoods that made it possible for them to combat their "own people" in the communities and sometimes even to bring about their downfall.

Moreover, within the community, they set up the cult of *nyana* of the *boli* in opposition to the cult of the manes. In associations of communities, the *nyana dugu-da-siri* has been gradually abandoned in favor of these imperious and jealous *nyana* of the *boli*. Although the latter could not entirely eliminate the former because of their failure to appropriate the rights over the land, they have nevertheless eclipsed it by their all-encompassing authority. So it has come about that *nyana* of the *boli* have been created who are honored as protectors of the citizens, although they do not own the soil.

It is remarkable that these destroyers of the natural family always seek to organize themselves as artificial families by taking on certain characteristics of the family: communities of inalienable spiritual and temporal property; communities of the dead and the living; the cult of the manes of the high priests, etc.

It is the secular action of these laboratories of magic that has most strongly shaken the foundations of native society. Only a strong power could contend with them effectively, and such a power has seldom presented itself. Islam has often been their implacable enemy and yet has actually strengthened them by introducing a knowledge of oriental occultism.

3. Some Important Brotherhoods

794 The cult is the essential framework of all the brotherhoods. One must know its principal characteristics in order to understand the organization and operation of any brotherhood. Each *nyana* has its special cult, characterized by particular traits, of course, but these differences do not change the basic elements in which all cults of *nyana* resemble each other.

Therefore, although descriptions of all the different cults would no doubt bring out an interesting variety of details,

794 still -- aside from the fact that this would not appreciably alter the broad lines already indicated -- the present state of our knowledge makes it possible to describe in detail only a few great brotherhoods which are widespread among [270] the Bambara with whom we are here concerned; these are based on cults of Komo, Nama, Kore, and Nya.

The Komo

794 173 The Komo is held in particularly high esteem in the Ségou area. According to the accepted legend, the Komo was brought from Mandé country, where it is supposed to have been introduced by El Hadj Moussa. El Hadj Moussa, having failed to obtain pardon for his sins during a visit to Mecca, turned to the study of magic. He obtained the Komo in exchange for a miraculous shirt (dloki) which some sorcerers had woven for him and which had the faculty of growing longer or shorter at the pleasure of its owner (1).

> 1. Another example of miraculous cloth, in that case a gift of the marabouts of Djenné, is referred to in the chronicle of Ségou in connection with the installation of Bakari, son of Biton (p.   ).

El Hadj Moussa is also supposed to have brought a no less miraculous canoe from Mecca, which is still preserved in the greatest secrecy in a swamp in the vicinity of Kouri, near Naréna, in Mandé country.

[825] Finally, he brought back many boli. As he was coming up the Niger, some of them fell into the river and were transformed; the n-tigi (silurids or torpedo fish) is thought to be the result of such a transformation.

According to another legend, the Komo was brought from the Orient, not by El Hadj Moussa but by Fa Koli Sissokho, a follower of El Hadj Moussa.

Whatever may be the truth of the matter, the Bambara are convinced that the Komo was brought to Ségou from Mandé

794 country and that the Bambara Massa-si, who had fled to
173 Gadiaga, received it, in turn, from one Namori or Nyamori,
a former slave who had been initiated into the mysteries of the Koré and who, for that reason, was named Kor-dyuga.

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778 Over and above the general characteristics already noted, the Komo has the following peculiarities.

It is said that to make it perfect the boli of the Komo requires the body of a degeni, that is, of a very young boy. Thus, the body of the Komo of Tiguini (20 to 40 kilometers from Ségou) is said to be none other than the body of the grandson [271] of its founder. The same thing is said of the boli of the Komo at Kégué in Bani territory.

This boli-den'-fa is equipped with three iron tubes, and the whole thing is called tama gengen-ba (1). There is a horn at the end of one of these tubes, with an opening serving as a mouthpiece. The sound drawn from this trumpet of sorts by the wara-da announces a meeting of the Komo.

The usual accessories accompany the boli-den'-fa: korti, kana, and siri-kun', which we have already mentioned.

When not in use for ceremonies, all this equipment is
[281] put into baskets similar to those used to transport cotton. The tama-gengen-ba are wrapped in a tiger skin. A hut with a conical roof, similar to the native huts, serves as a temple and holds all the regalia. It is called the Komo-bon' (hut of the Komo).

When he is on duty, the wara-da, "oracle" of the Komo,
793 is dressed in a special costume consisting of a mask and a cloak.
794 The mask is surmounted by horns and does not cover the face, but
778 rather is affixed to a stick hidden in the folds of the cloak; it goes up and down at the pleasure of the wara-da, who is completely

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1. The term Komo dyoloro, meaning "chain of the Komo," is used in front of the uninitiated. The wara-da, oracle of the Komo, is called dyoloro samana, "he who drags the chain" of the Komo. In the special language of the cult, "sacrificing to the Komo" is expressed by an bi nege son' (we pay homage to the iron).

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● 794 778 covered by the cloak made of feathers from guinea fowl and chickens. Beneath this garb, the wara-da performs all sorts of acrobatics. Skillfully manipulating the mask and the cloak during ritual dances, he gives the illusion, in the light of the fires, of a fantastic creature whose cries, transmitted through the horn, terrify even the initiated.

793 794 In addition to the wara-da, the clergy includes: a Komo-tigi, high priest; some muru-kala-tigi, sacrificers; a da-ro-tigi, porter, who announces and prepares for the meetings; and a Komo-dyeli, herald. There are also student wara-da, called soma-den' (literally, "elder sons" in the special language), who act as assistants, and finally, there are many other auxiliaries who form a cortege with the wara-da when he carries the boli in nocturnal processions. These people are grouped together under the term tie-den' or tigi-den' ("sons of the master" in the special language). Conspicuous among them are the ta-tugu who [272] carry the flaming torches which are so characteristic of the nocturnal processions.

When the wara-da makes known the revelations of the god, he speaks through the tube with the horn. Since he uses the special language and since the tube distorts the sounds, the Komo-tigi must interpret for him. It is the Komo-dyeli who shouts the revelation which echoes through the night.

794 796 At the time of the two great annual ceremonies, the wara-da takes the boli and the other liturgical equipment to the sacred grove. The Komo-tigi directs the ceremonies. The sacrifices are entrusted to the muru-kala-tigi among whom are to be noted: the one who brings the victim and who, when the ceremony takes place in the temple, leads it across the threshold (1); and the one who removes the victim and carries its body

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1. This door is then called nyena-ma don'-da, "entry of the living," in the special language, and the muru-kala-tigi who brings the victim in is called da-kuna-sigi or "master of the fatal (literally 'bitter') door."

794 796 over the threshold (2). The ceremonies are announced and

2. Then the door is called su-bo-da, "exit of the corpse," and the sacrificer is called moso-bolo (literally, "woman's hand").

[534] accompanied by a strident, wild orchestra made up of drums (denu-ba) which are accompanied by iron instruments, called kinge, consisting of pieces of metal that are struck against each other or shaken to obtain sound from the rings attached to them. The "cry" of the Komo, which the wara-da shouts through his horn, is accompanied by a kind of reed pipe played by his companions.

[782] There is nothing unusual about the offerings, sacrifices, or communion. The blood of the victim is used to wash the boli and the priests, as will be described for the Nama.

Processions held at night are always very effective, and they strike terror into the hearts of not only the uninitiated but also the initiated themselves. This long cortege, lighted by the torchbearers who shout and dash about like madmen while the / wara-da gives the "cry" of the Komo, makes a very strong impression on everyone who sees or hears it (3). [273]

3. Elsewhere, the Komo meets in the daytime, and in the old days, notably in Bobo country, it was very popular (cf. Binger, Du Niger au golfe de Guinée [From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea], Vol. 1, p. 379, and Monteil, De Saint-Louis à Tripoli par le Tchad [From Saint-Louis to Tripoli via Chad], p. 89). We have already seen that all the officiants in the brotherhood are called dou, "the hidden people," because of the disguises they affect. "The dou are persons ludicrously disguised, wearing clothing on which are sewed bits of da-fou (native

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> 794 hemp), palm fibers, and leaves.
> 796 On their heads they wear a cap or
> 292 calotte, also made of hemp and
> surmounted by a yellowish-red wooden
> crest or a bird's beak, also of wood.
> There are two holes in the calotte for
> the eyes. These *dou* are given free
> *dlo* by the populace which makes up
> their cortege. They wander about the
> village and fields day and night..."
> (Binger).

794 796 There is never any cult service or ceremony on Monday or Thursday.

The clergy serves as an administrative council for the property of the *Komo-ya* (brotherhood of the Komo) in accordance with the general principles already noted. The *Komo-tigi* of Tiguini, we have been told, is especially famous for respecting the principles which give the treasury of the brotherhood an exclusively fraternal character.

The *Komo-ya* are mutually independent, and all have experienced the kind of deviations which give rise to political action. The Komo has played a preponderant role in the affairs of the clan of Ségou, as is evident from the chronicle.

794 796 539 Young men are taken into the brotherhood during the harvest festivals. They appear before the circle of initiates, while those present sing:

Da woro-na nana,
Bolo-ko deu da woro-na,
Toro man na ko la-nyini.
Sira bo nin' ye, ko dugu le den',
Sira bo nin' ye ko dugu le sira.

Translation: "The sixth day has come, the sixth day of the newborn (1), and there has been no accident. Let us show the

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1. That is, those who have just been born to a new status through the *soli* or *bolo-ko*.

794 way to this child, the way which the village follows."

796 One by one they pass before the wara-da who, dressed 539 in full regalia, is supposed to receive their oath. The oracle places the tube with the horn on each boy's head in turn, and the following dialogue takes place:

--Mun' b'i kun' (What is it you have on your head?), asks the oracle.

A kala be n kun' (I have his symbol (2) on my head). [274]

> 2. Kala, literally, is the cylindrical part of a thing; here, in the special language, it is a way of alluding to the tube with its horn and thus is a kind of symbol of the Komo.

I y'a ye wa (Have you seen it [the Komo])?

Ne m'a ye (No, I have not seen it).

I y'a fo ma min'ye, k'i kun' ti ki' son' n'i bien' ta a k'ifa (If you speak of it to anyone, may it [the Komo] smash your head and may it [the Komo] take your heart and your liver and kill you).

A ka ne fa (May it kill me).

I sirila nyama-n-fu dyala la (You are bound by the bark thong of the nyama) (1).

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> 1. An allusion to the strips of bark from the nyama tree (Bauhinia reticulata), which make up the common costume for concealing the officiants during the ceremonies. It is simply a way of saying: "Do you agree to join?" And the reply is equivalent to: "Yes, for as long as I shall live."

Ne si sirila a la (My life is bound by this thong).

Ni si m'a fo ma si ye, Komo k'i kisi (If you speak to no one about all this, may the Komo protect you [literally, "save you"]).

A ka ne kisi (May he protect me).

794 796 For a certain length of time, the new members are kept in seclusion while being instructed by initiates, especially the older ones, who see to it that they learn the songs and dances and become familiar with the special language. It is in the course of this instruction that they are given certain formulas to use for recognition among the komo-den' (sons of the Komo). The following are two examples and by no means the only ones; each Komo-ya has its own formulas, and in addition the adepts of the various Komo-ya are readily inclined to fraternize, especially when they are alone, far from their respective groups. In such cases, the identical principles of their cults bring them together, and they question each other at once:

539 --E b' a la wa (Are you a member)?

--M ba' la (I am).

--N'i b'a la, tyoko dyira r na (If you are, show me the secret sign).

201 This sign varies and is completely arbitrary. Sometimes it involves raising the hand with the fingers spread apart in a certain way; at other times, twigs are placed in a special pattern, and so on. [275]

The Nama

794 This cult arose at an unknown date at Missango (Bélédougou). The head of the Nama at Missango is addressed respectfully as Fura-tigi-ba, meaning literally, "grand master of the fura (fura specifically means "leaf" of a tree and, by extension, "remedy"). This is one of the expressions with double meanings which are so common in the brotherhoods: Fura-tigi-ba, the great physician, great savant, grand master.

The Nama is also called Nama-koro and Suya-koro, and a certain Nama is called Siriman 'fin'.

778 Objects used in worship include: the Nama-kon-golo-u (craniums of the Nama), which are a kind of headdress, usually made of linge wood and shaped like fantastic birds; the wara-se (literally, "foot of the wara"), a small wooden board about a meter high with three horns affixed to it; and a similar board with two horns, called nye-bla.

794 There are, of course, the usual accessories: kana,
[778] korti, siri-kun', pottery, bells, horns, and so forth.

Most of these objects are stored in a small hut called Nama-bon', similar to the native huts.

794 The ceremonies take place in a grove which is reserved
for the purpose. If there appears to be not enough privacy in
778 spite of the dense foliage, or for some other reason, a palisade (dyase) or a few straw mats are put up to form an enclosure. In the special language of this brotherhood, the term for offering a sacrifice to the Nama is dyase son' (literally, "to honor the palisade").

794 The assemblage of the adepts of the same Nama constitute a Nama-ya, Nama brotherhood. Persons who wish to form a Nama-ya appeal to an existing Nama-ya to obtain the secrets or, more accurately, the rules governing the brotherhood: the mysterious words and acts by which the god (wara) is summoned and made amenable to his worshipers; cult objects; organization and role of the clergy and of the common worshipers; the liturgy, etc.

The fundamental ceremony by means of which the priest and his god are united is called furu, "union, marriage," in the special language of the brotherhoods. [276] Once a year, through the furu of the Nama, males and females, the Nama-de-u (spiritual sons of the Nama) are born. Behind this realism, required for the ordinary adept, is there not hidden a profound meaning for the initiate; is not close union with the diety a "spiritual marriage" in all the great religions? Possibly the special language is not intended merely to hide secrets from the prying curiosity of the profane, but is also intended to hide a profound meaning, today unknown to almost all the initiates, but felt and perhaps even known, at least vaguely, by some of them!

793 In every Nama-ya there are various functions and ranks,
794 corresponding to different grades of initiation. The grand master, Nama-tigi, is often the person who contributed the most for the expenses of founding the Nama-ya; he directs and watches over the cult and is therefore a feared and formidable personage.

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794 He is assisted by the dye-n-fa-u (masters of truth), among whom those who wear the headdress called Nama-kongolo are the oracles (wara-da) of the Nama. Other assistants have the duty of holding the horned boards (wara-se and nye-bla) during the ceremonies.

One adept serves as factotum under the title da-ro-tigi (master of the entrance) (1).

1. During the night when the Nama goes about the village to drive out sorcerers, the da-ro-tigi runs ahead of the dye-n-fa who wear the Nama-kongolo. Shaking his bell, he warns people off the road followed by the dye-n-fa, and he carries a torch to reveal the inquisitive. If he finds any such person, he warns the dye-n-fa in the special language to halt or to change their course. Then he questions the intruder, chases him off with blows, curses him, or, on the contrary, takes him into the group. He is thus truly "the one who guards the entrance," but he is like a concierge rather than a master who agrees or refuses to receive the visitor whom the concierge has admitted. We have pointed out an analogous emphasis in the title of ton'-masa, given to the head of the servants of the ton' even though the term literally means "head of the ton'."

This clergy is recruited by co-optation, and anyone named to it or promoted in it must pay for the privilage. The cleric is even more bound to secrecy than the common worshiper, since any indiscretion on his part would reveal the secrets of the cult.

794 The common adherents or the faithful are called Nama-de-u (children of the Nama), that is, spiritual sons of the Nama, but we shall see that when allusions are made during the ceremonies to a kind of material birth, this is plebeian mythology.

794 In order to be Nama-de, the individual must be approved [277] by the clergy, pay a fee, and promise not to betray in any way the secrets of the brotherhood, never to injure a fellow-member and especially never to testify against him, to contribute to the expenses of the cult by making annual offerings in proportion to his means.

The adepts are legally responsible to the Nama-ya for all their acts. This spiritual family is infinitely more tyrannical than the temporal family since, in order to consolidate its authority, the clergy does not hesitate to use any means even criminal; fines are the most profitable for pecuniary returns. The totality of entrance fees, gifts, offerings, and fines constitutes the treasury of the Nama and hence of the Nama-ya. The Nama-tigi administers it with the help of the council of the dye-n-fa. It is current practice for this clergy to appropriate all the property for its own use. This does not, however, nullify the principle that any unfortunate adept, whatever the reason for his situation, has a right to ask for aid from the common fund on condition that he repay the loan with interest when his situation improves.

This material exploitation of the cult of the Nama can be seen in another form: although not an adept of the Nama, one can obtain its good offices for a price fixed by the clergy. The other means of exploitation, extortion and political deviation, discussed above, are likewise practiced by the Nama-ya.

It is the material role of the Nama-ya which really interests the majority of the natives. It is the showy exhibitions, accompanied by prolonged orgies that are mischievous, which have given the Nama, as well as the Komo, a bad reputation, albeit well deserved.

There is no real hierarchy among the Nama-ya. The Nama-tigi of Missango is held in particular esteem, and, in general, any Nama-ya keeps on good terms with the group that initiated it, but there is nothing like what might be called an archbrotherhood. On the contrary, any Nama-den' certainly has access to any Nama-ya, and this fact makes it likely that, under given circumstances, there may be very widespread solidarity. In the old days it was very useful to be a member of a Nama-ya

774 if one had to travel, since the Dyuola [Diula] and other travelers were at the mercy of the whims and banditry of the [278] Nama-den' (1) and only avoided them to a certain extent by claiming to be of the Nama-den'. Even Moslems often became adherents of the Nama; all that was required of them was absolute secrecy and a few gifts in exchange for the secret passwords.

774 There are two great annual ceremonies: one at planting
796 and the other at harvest, the dates for both decided by the
782 Nama-tigi and his council. Each of them involves offerings, sacrifice, communion, and a nocturnal procession. Young members are usually admitted at the harvest ceremony.

The initiates gather for the sacrifice before the temple (Nama-bon'). Only the Nama-tigi and his clergy may enter the sacred place; the common worshipers remain outside. The sacrificial animals are brought up. Two sacrificers (muru-kala-tigi), naked to the waist, stretch their arms toward the four cardinal points and spit three times in each direction. Two dye-n-fa, also naked to the waist, hold the pieces of wood bearing horns and face the faithful. Three times the sacrificers utter the cry, "ture-dyo," twice alternating this cry with another, "dyo-Nama." They invoke the god two times, and then they slaughter the victims, sometimes inside the temple and sometimes outside.

The blood is carefully collected in receptacles, and the ashes of straw are added to it. All the cult objects, especially the boli itself, are smeared with the mixture. The Nama-tigi and the other principal initiates remove their clothing to anoint themselves with the same mixture and do not put on their garments again until the blood has dried on their bodies.

[796 437] 1. Cf. Monteil, Binger, op. cit.; at the time of the great annual festivals of the Komo, all trading was halted for several days. Strangers could be sure of being respected only by claiming membership in the brotherhood. The same was true of the Nama.

● 794 796 The food is eaten by those attending the ceremony; the millet mush which constitutes the meal is supposed to have been prepared by the wives of the dignitaries. This communion is the most important act of the ceremony.

When night comes, the procession of the Nama takes place. Its aim is to rid the village and its environs of sorcerers, the eaters of souls known as [279] suba (1), and to discover and destroy the objects called siri which bear witness to the measures taken by the sorcerers to harm the natives.

The ritual cries of ture-dyo and dyo-Nama break into the racket of trumpets and drums while the Nama wanders about. The dye-n-fa, wearing the symbolic headdress (Nama-kongolo) and preceded by the da-ro-tigi tinkling his bell to warn people to clear the way, is followed or surrounded by torchbearers

[539] (called ta-tugula-n-tigi) who shout a hymn in praise of the god.
A dyigina so Nama fambali: He is our host, mighty Nama.
A fyerela ka den': He blossoms in order to bear fruit.
Suba yo, nin kera malo-ko ye: Oh! Suba (2), shame on you!"

One of the persons in his entourage shouts defiance and curses in all directions, aimed at the suba, the eaters of souls.

It is during this procession that the dye-n-fa, at the instigation of the bearer of the symbol, discover the siri-fen' (2) [Ed., see footnote 2 above]; these are the objects used by the eaters of souls to accomplish their sinister designs or are the remains of their macabre repasts. Here it is a knife, there a pot, elsewhere a bit of human flesh (or so it is claimed)! All these things are dug up amidst cries, exclamations, and imprecations by the whole company.

A suba discovered in the course of these proceedings is hotly pursued, and it is said that, exhausted by the chase and

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1 See Chapter 7 below. [Not translated.]

2. Literally, the "bonds" (see Chapter 7 below). [Not translated]

794 overpowered by the god, he always comes to die near the temple.
796 When this happens, the wretch's corpse is left there, naked; his
clothing is thrown to the roof of the temple where it remains for
a long time as an example. The siri-fen' are also displayed near
the temple, within sight of the women, who are allowed to come
and look at them.

It is just prior to these solemn sorties of the Nama that the clergy begins the proceedings to admit the youths who have just completed the soli. In the center of a circle of the faithful in front of the temple, they take their oath of secrecy:

794 --I y'a fo ma min' ye, boli k'i son' ta, k'i been'ta, ka
796 [280] dun' i dyu fe'ka bo i da fe: If you speak to anyone, may
539 the boli take your heart and your liver, may he go in through your
anus and go out through your mouth.

--O ka ke: Let it be so.

--Ni e ma fo ma ye, k'i kisi suba-u ma k'i son' si la, k'i son' keneya la: If you tell no one, may he protect you from the suba, grant you descendants, and give you good health.

--O ka ke: Let it be so.

The new members must pay an entrance fee of a franc
and ten kola nuts and must go through a kind of initiation. For
a fortnight they live apart under supervision and are required to
learn the songs and dances under the tutelage of the clergy and
[198] old men. They are told the significance of the words with
double meanings, which constitute the language peculiar to the
brotherhood, and are also given the formula of recognition, of
which the following are some examples:

--E b'a la wa? (Are you one of us?)

--Ne b'a la (I am).

--Fere tyon' kan' (Show the sign).

He shows it and explains it. The questioner then concludes:

--Dya! e b'a la, ko! (You are indeed one of us)!

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The Kore (1)

[193]

The Kore is particularly popular in the Bani region, that is to say, the riverine area of this tributary of the Niger, in the part that is on a line with Ségou.

This brotherhood has the peculiarity of having a cult which honors the three divinities always worshiped by the Bambara: the manes, the god of the soil, and the nyana of the boli. Therefore the site of the brotherhood is the chosen site of the god of the soil, usually a tree within a grove (Kore-tu, "grove of the Kore") near the village. A kara, that is, the little board symbolic of the dead, and a surku-kongolo (skull of a hyena), the boli of the Kore and for that reason called the Kore-kongolo (skull of the Kore), are kept here. [778]

The clergy and its assistants form a large body of personnel that includes all of the faithful. [281]

In addition to the high priest, Kore-tigi, there are the "people of the kara" (kara-ma-u) and the persons who wear masks, called wara-u (1) (wild beasts) or sogo-u (savage animals), among whom are hyenas (suruku), lions (dyara), and monkeys (sûba). The persons in costume, called Kor'dyuga (2), are for the

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1. One also hears "Kote" and, in the Bani region, "Kwere." It should be noted that these three words, Kore, Kote, and Kwere, all have an ending which is frequently found in Soninké but not in Bambara.

1. The terms wara or sogo are usually applied to all those who have some function, from the suruku to the ngoni-sama.

2. The term seems to come from the Soninké language: Kore yugo or Kor'-dyuga, "man of the Kore." The expression Koré[illegible]ga-tigi is a corruption

794 of Kore-dyuga-tigi and has the same meaning.

most part strangely accoutered dancers, each of whom dresses [301] as his fancy dictates. As ornaments, the Kor'dyuga wear strings of beautiful red beans, which are inedible, called n-go ble. These beans are about the size of a large dragée and throughout the western Sudan are used as protection against evil spirits. [292] These dancers have a leader, the Koro-duga-tigi or Kor'dyuga-tigi, who is further distinguished by a kind of cloak made entirely of bits of reed stalks. On his head he wears a conical hat made of the same reeds, and in his hand he carries a long wand from which hang birds' skulls, packets of sorghum straw, gourd stems, etc. In addition to the dancers, the clergy is accompanied by [785] flagellants (bisa-tyi-la), torchbearers (ta-tugu-la-n-tigi), and people who lash themselves with bundles of thorns (the ngoni-sama-u).

[534] Of course, the Kore has its orchestra, which includes drums (denu-ba), a kind of castanet (kinge), and gourds filled with seeds or pebbles (nkude) and pierced with holes.

794 796 The cult has the usual ceremonies, with the two great festivals at the times of planting and harvesting. On these occasions the Kore-tigi officiates, as the nyana-n-son-na-ba does with respect to nyana dugu-da-siri. He makes the offerings, performs the sacrifices, and sets forth the requests at the foot of the sacred tree, after having thanked the god-protector. The kara and the Kore-kongolo are sprinkled with the blood of the victims; thus, the manes and the nyana of the boli are honored simultaneously.

[764] There is always a meeting of the brotherhood when a Kore-de dies. There are offerings, sacrifices, and communion with all the offerings, which require one or more days of orgies to be consumed, depending on the importance of the deceased, because elders in [282] important posts like that of nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc., are particularly honored at their death.

Young men are admitted only once every seven years, and it is at this time that the ceremonies are most elaborate.

794 796 At dusk on the day selected, the clergy proceeds with the greatest pomp to the Kore-tu (grove of the Kore). The orchestra, composed of drums (denu-ba), bells (kinge), and gourds (nkude), leads the procession. Then come the high priest (Kore-tigi) and the kara-ma, "people of the plank of the dead" (kara), which one of them carries. Finally comes the dense crowd, motley and noisy, of wara-u, Kor-dyuga, bisa-tyi-la, ta-tugu-la-n-tigi, and ngoni-sa-ma.

Everyone is performing his role. The masked men imitate the beasts they represent; the costumed Kor'dyuga act like clowns; the flagellants make their switches hiss. Thus the crowd approaches the Kore-tu amidst a great din, but only the clergy may enter it. The bearer of the kara takes his place under the sacred tree. On orders from the Kore-tigi, silence falls for the reception of the Kore-de postulants.

[516] The latter form a line facing the tree and the kara. They prostrate themselves in the dust for the duration of the sacred hymn of the Kore, which begins with the words, "Dyante Kore de-u." When they rise, they are dyante-ma-u, "affiliates."

The members thus admitted remain in the sacred grove for 15 days and are not allowed to return to the village. There they are instructed by the "elders." Then they are assigned to the different groups of wara; theoretically, an eldest son enters the group to which his father belongs, while the rest of the sons may choose whichever group they prefer. In addition to his duties during ceremonies, each wara has a certain job: the hyenas (suruku) guard and patrol the sacred grove and question the inquisitive to learn whether they are members (dyante ma); the Kore-duga see to the maintenance of the grove, clearing its environs in order to guard against the grove's being damaged by brush fires.

794 796 786 The offerings and the sacrifices, and then the communion repast, follow the ceremony of admission and are accompanied and followed by dancing and singing. The orgy then goes on for several days, as long as food remains. The various groups assemble for their dances, and the ta-tugu-la-n-tigi start the proceedings. With a flaming torch/[283] in each hand, they chase each other, singe each other's backs and chests, and in the

794 776 786 process, let loose a rain of sparks which the *Kore-duga* zealously put out with leafy branches. Then each dancer, carrying what is left of his torch, kneels before the drums, making an obscene gesture which arouses the laughter of the onlookers and giving the cries, roars, or laugh of the "wild beasts." Elsewhere, the *nyoni-sa-ma* are roaming among the drinkers, tearing at themselves with thorns. [785] Flagellants lash themselves with switches that leave cuts from which the blood flows. They stiffen themselves against the pain and keep up this cruel sport, which once again the *Kore-duga* mitigate by binding up the wounds.

There appears to be no doubt that during these orgies the most shameful excesses are committed without the slightest restraint.

The Nya

794 This brotherhood is highly esteemed in all the Bambara villages in the cantons of Say and Karadougou. It is less common in the canton of Séladougou; in the canton of Saro, five-sixths of the villages are loyal to it. It is rarely found in Nyansannari, and outside these areas in the circle of Djenné, there are only a few scattered Nya brotherhoods in the Bendougou and Ségou areas.

[443] The cult arose in the Bendougou region. As has been noted above, the villages of Moribala, Kourbadougou, Diali, etc., are market villages where all the *boli* are found, together with directions for using them.

778 794 The *boli* of the Nya consists of a piece of wood from 25 to 30 centimeters in length and from 10 to 15 centimeters in height and width. It is wrapped in an absorbent material, usually cotton. The blood of the victims and the liquid of the libations are poured on this *boli*, and then hairs or feathers and bits of entrails, eggs, and kola nuts are stuck to it, giving it a [281] repulsive appearance. It is true that the *boli* is often concealed from inquisitive eyes by putting it in a container made of an old piece of the hide of a she-goat. However, since the container is given the same treatment as the *boli* it contains, it is just as disgusting.

794 This boli-den'-fa is provided with the usual boli-de:
[778] kana, korti, siri-kun', etc. [284]

[346] A hut with a conical roof serves as temple (Nya-bon').

An orchestra accompanies the ceremonies; it includes
[534] a kind of harp, made by the natives and peculiar to the Nya, plus large numbers of the usual drums, bells, and trumpets.

Since the Nya is acquired by purchase, the high priest (Nya-tigi) is theoretically the person who contributed most generously to this purchase. The office may also be attained by inheritance or by election. The truly religious role, however, is that of the wara-mina-den', the medium through which the god reveals his will or his desires and who is, therefore, the oracle (wara-da) of the Nya. A certain amount of training by appropriate methods is necessary to acquire the degree of extra-lucidity claimed by the wara-mina-den', and that is why they are recruited by co-optation.

794 787 Under the influence of the Nya, the wara-mina-den' falls into a trance. His speech, hesitant and strange, is incomprehensible to the common people. The Nya-tigi then approaches to receive and to interpret the oracle. The inspiration of the wara-mina-den' may be spontaneous or it may be provoked and deliberately sought by him. For example, when a person dies, the wara-mina-den' questions the Nya, either at the request of the interested parties or of his own volition. For this purpose, he retires to the temple (Nya-bon'), concentrates on the point to be clarified, and after meditating, withdraws (1). He then sometimes falls asleep, and while he sleeps, the Nya reveals the truth to him in a dream. On other occasions the wara-mina-den' falls into a trance, and the spirit speaks through his mouth. One way or another, it is learned whether the death is to be attributed to the Nya and, if so, why. Or it is made plain that it is the work of the suba and under what form, human or otherwise, they are hiding. Or, finally, it is learned whether some other nyana struck down the deceased.

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1. These details were given to me by a wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara.

794 [787] Furthermore, every wara-mina-den' is able to read the will of the Nya and, more generally, to reveal the acts of the invisible by means of the divination practices which we have already mentioned.

[782] The sacrifices are performed by the muru-kala-tigi, and a dyeli (herald) serves as factotum, just as in the other brotherhoods. [285]

794 The faithful are initiated and called to participate in the
cult to an extent determined by the clergy; they are called Nya-
796 ko-den'-u, literally, "those who follow the Nya." In order to be
admitted, an individual must give a chicken and 120 cowries.
The next day, in the presence of the Nya-tigi and the wara-mina-den', the chicken is sacrificed on the boli by the muru-kala-tigi. The candidate is present, and in his behalf the Nya-tigi asks the Nya for protection against the suba, snakes, korti, and the evil eye. Then the neophyte is led to the sacred grove to be ritually purified with consecrated water contained in a vessel used exclusively for this purpose (1).

[783] 1. Every year at the time of harvest, the clergy undergoes ritual purification by washing in the sacred water. When a Nya is inaugurated, this purification takes place at the first harvest after the installation.

The two great annual festivals are celebrated at the times
[731] of planting and harvesting. Similar ceremonies take place in
connection with important events (epidemics, public catastrophes,
etc.). For these ceremonies, during which the Nya is supposed
to give revelations about the event in question and to answer
various other questions troubling the faithful, the wara-mina-den'
[273] undergo special preparation and at the proper time drink a very
heady beverage (2) which, they say, brings on their extra-lucidity.

[691] 2. I learned most of these details about the Nya during a criminal trial brought against the wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara,

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[691]

near Djenné. The son of the chief of that village drank the special liquid, in spite of the fact that the wara-mina-den' had told him not to do so, and died. The latter was accused of having poisoned him, but when he explained the circumstances before the native tribunal, he was acquitted.

It is said that this drink is made by soaking any sort of root found while digging graves and seasoning it with pepper, salt, and red peppers. The beverage, which is highly intoxicating, is ritually consecrated.

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796 Excited by this beverage and by the songs and dances of a crowd which is itself warmed with drink, the wara-mina-den' during major festivals acts as a visionary who freely reveals the will and desires of the god. On the evening before these important ceremonies and for several evenings before that, all the clergy and their aides meet for a kind of rehearsal of the dances and songs. It is then that the young men prepare for the major roles they will later play. The [286] wara-mina-den' is particularly concerned with the training of the man who will replace him in case of need.

There is nothing of special interest to note about the brotherhood's treasury, which is acquired and appropriated just as in other brotherhoods. The political action of the Nya and its relations with the communities are also such that they require no special attention. [287]

Chapter 5

The Clans

1. General Considerations

631 It is usual to use the word "empire" or "kingdom" to describe the form of government of most of the Sudanese states and particularly those founded in Kaarta and Ségou by the

Relations between the Elements of the Clan

614 596 A study of the clan of Ségou is fortunately clarified by comparison with the organizations which we have discussed earlier: communities and brotherhoods. [306]

The influence of the community and the brotherhood on the clan is clearly shown by the two traits which reveal the consistent effort made by the fama to fuse the clan with his own patriarchy. First, there is the connection of the important ton'-dyon' chiefs and, through them, of all of the furu-dyon' to the fama. This is achieved by placing each of these dyon'-kuntigi under the patronage of an influential member of that patriarchy. Under Mamari and Ngolo, for instance, each of these dyon'-kuntigi was attached to the mother, wife, son, or brother of the fama. The ton'-masa himself asked to be put under the protection of Bakari, son of Mamari.

[794] From another viewpoint, the liaison between the clan and the patriarchy of the fama is made even closer by the participation of the ton'-dyon' in the personal cults of Mamari. Some of them were leading officients of the cults; it was precisely this circumstance that enabled Ngolo to dominate his companions.

It is therefore not too rash to state that under these conditions the clan is merely a kind of extension of the patriarchy of the fama. Besides, the ton'-dyon' always made a point of the bonds which in so many ways linked them to Mamari and which established a real brotherhood between them. That is why, first of all, their cult honored Mamari as though he were an ancestor. Secondly, it was the reason for the mode of succession which was imposed during periods of anarchy, bringing to power the man longest in Mamari's service. Finally, for the same reason, when the fama dies, the ceremonies are exactly like those for a patriarch.

614 There is another consequence: the prosperity, the power, and even the existence of the clan depend essentially on the personal qualities of the fama. When he is equal to the task, the clan is rich and powerful. If he lacks authority or is unable to assign each member a position and a role and keep him there, opposition will at once arise. By its very nature, such opposition inevitably separates the elements that go to make up the clan,

614 between Ségou-koro and Kirango was the area under what we
631 would call direct administration, because this zone was occupied substantially by the fama, his community, and his ton'-dyon'.

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794 Ségou-koro, which had witnessed the birth and the development of the clan, had remained Mamari's capital; he preferred to live there, and he had installed the protective idols of the clan there. Thus it was, so to speak, the seat of the brother-
[778] hood, whose four principal idols continued to be known under the names of ba Kongo-ba, na n-Golo ko, Nye-dinge-dun', and
[776] Kolo-koloni. [319]

The fama was the high priest, and the other officiants of the cult were chosen from among the ton'-dyon'; that is why Ngolo Dyara was dye-n-fa. Any follower of Mamari or his successors was affiliated with the cult of these idols. The adepts who lived far from Ségou-koro founded branches which in certain ways ~~were~~ so dependent on the capital that Ségou-koro was for a long time regarded as a holy city.

We have no detailed knowledge concerning the cult of these important idols; we only know that in general they did not differ greatly from what we have already said about the nyana of the boli. The annual festival was exceptionally solemn and brought the faithful from even quite distant regions. The fama, of course, presided over the ceremony which involved certain essential rites: a renewal of religious faith, the reception of new
614 members, and an oath of loyalty to the fama.

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776 The four deities mentioned above were not the only ones in the Bambara pantheon at Ségou (1); others were added, some bought and others invented out of the extravagant faith of the ton'-dyon'. Among the latter should no doubt be included the drums of the ton'-dyon', which are mentioned several times in the accounts and which are presented always in a very bloodthirsty light. Ngolo sacrificed his most hated enemies to the drum-idols,

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1. In Les Bambara [The Bambara], Father Henry mentions, in addition to ba Kongo-ba and na-n-Golo-ko, two other idols, Kuantara and Safolo.

614 beginning with his relatives, to avenge his hatred toward them
●794 for selling him into slavery. It seems likely that the establishment
776 of these ferocious deities may well date from the time of this despot and perhaps was due to his personal initiative.

The "people of Ségou" also held in high esteem the deities of the people they conquered. Indeed, there is no doubt that they constituted the most precious part of the booty of war. The Toucouleur [Tukolor] relate that when they entered Ségou-Sikoro they found an idol in chains; it was the protective deity of a group of the Nono-n-kobe people of the cliff of Bandiagara. With the evident intention of keeping this conquered people forever enslaved, the Bambara had captured their god and were having its cult observed by its own priest, kept captive likewise for the purpose (2). [320]

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2. See Desplagnes, Le plateau central nigérien [The Nigerian Central Plateau], p. 175.

The chronicle shows that the Komo also figured in the Ségou pantheon, and if one refers to what we have said about this brotherhood, he will understand the important role it played in the to-da since the fama himself acted as Komo-tigi.

614 There is absolutely no doubt that cannibalism was in
794 favor on certain definite occasions and, according to appropriate,
761 ritual, especially, at the time of the election of a fama. It is obvious, in any case, that under the despotic rule of the clan
[266] human life had little value. The atrocities of Dékoro, the passiveness of his victims, the help given him in the execution of his worst crimes by the very people who were directly threatened -- these are not isolated cases. They are indicative of the basic Sudanese temperament in general, which, if not innate, at least is affected by a very ancient atavism. It is because this kind of arbitrary command over the lives of individuals has been practiced for so many centuries that the Bambara often remain impassive in the face of death. They consider its unforeseen occurrence, even when sudden and the result of man's

614 own action, as a possible daily eventuality which should cause
794 no surprise.

761 The practice of this implacable ferocity must also be considered the natural source of that kind of burning faith, as intransigent as it is horrible in our eyes, which is capable of nullifying all the feelings of affection that we regard as natural. When Ngolo realized that he had aroused dangerous ambitions in his son Ntyi, he decided that he could not escape the danger he himself had created except by a sacrifice in keeping with the contingency, and with his own hand and without hesitation, he sacrificed Ntyi's son, his own grandson.

Stubborn Bambara are often heard to say: "You may kill me; I will not yield." Tyitya's resistance shows that this is no idle boast; this same affair also shows the aspiration toward equality, so basic in the Bambara, which makes it impossible for him to bow before his fellows. Another example of the same quality is to be seen in the resistance of the "elders" whom Mamari, even he, could subdue only by murder.

794 To complete the description of the somewhat mystical features of the clan of "those of Ségou," let us recall that after
614 [321] Mamari's death he was honored by a cult: on the part of his
769 natural descendants because he had been their fa; on the part of the people of the clan because he had been fama; and finally, on the part of the faithful of the idols' cult because he had been the high priest. Under this aegis there was a fusion of sorts of all the people who recognized mutual bonds because they were all spiritual sons of Mamari. This relationship was the excuse used by the ton'-dyon' when they usurped supreme power, and the right of the leaders of the ton'-dyon' to succeed to the office of fama was in fact settled by the expedient of treating this relationship as though it were true descent. This cult took its characteristics from the cult of the idols. When Tonmassa began his duties
[782] as high priest, his first act was to honor the manes of Mamari, and the offering was the same as that always made to ba Kongo-ba when a new fama was elected: a man and an ox.

614 Such are some of the characteristics of the faith that
794 united the "people of Ségou" by ties which, without metaphor, can be called bloody. It is true, of course, that the clan's

614 leading men made use of the cults to realize their ambitious
● 794 designs and to gratify their personal hatreds. From that point of view it can indeed be said that religion was a means of domination. It would be altogether too simple, however, to say that these cults had no other reason for existence than to maintain terror as the basis of the power of the fama. Any such facile opinion should be discarded, because the facts should be evaluated, not from the outside, but rather in the native milieu. It then certainly appears possible that they are of the same order as the many phenomena already examined.

This powerful religious focus animated the whole clan. Impetus, direction and control belonged to the fama, whose role was conditioned, as we have seen, by the attitudes of the furu-ba dyon' and especially of the ton'-dyon', both of which were represented by the dyon'-kuntigi who were, in a sense, their agents. Was it not inevitable that there should be a kind of spiritual current, supposedly emanating from the idols, which inspired the fama and the furu-ba dyon' and then returned to the idols in the form of a cult? How could such a constant preoccupation with the supernatural not make a deep impression? This preoccupation haunts the natives everywhere and always, [322] and they express it in ways that are in perfect harmony with their world, however ridiculous they may appear to European logic and reason.

614
621 The Ségou area acquired special importance because of the presence of the community of the fama, which settled there under remarkable circumstances.

It is usual in any important community for the first-born son to be set apart. Destined to succeed the fa upon his death, he is prepared for his future responsibilities by being given the management of a portion of the joint property. As the fa grows older, the role and the importance of this eldest son increase.

*173
614 When a community is sufficiently wealthy, a privileged position is likewise given to the eldest sons of the other wives of the fa, because he is always forced to distribute favors equally among his various wives whose jealousy may have far-reaching effects. Upon the death of a fa, many difficulties arise, stemming from his all too obvious preferences. An example of this was the

782 The blood sacrifice is the basic element of the rites. The 778 technique used for it has been described by M. Griaule (2). The Bambara have three types of altars: the wooden stumps called pembele, altars made of roughly hewn stone, which generally represent the ancestors; and the Nyama or boli, man-made objects representing the parts of the universe.

794 The cults can be individual and familial or general for the whole village, such as the dasiri and the dangu. They are organized by religious societies, dyo, whose object is to conserve the spiritual forces of their members. For the men, these societies are: the Komo (principally), the Kworé, the Nama, the Kono, the Nago, the Nya. The women are also grouped in dyo, as yet little known, while the uncircumcised are members of the N'Domo.

The Komo is a hierarchical society whose members have obligations and taboos, such as initiation for future dignitaries of the political and religious society, study of traditions and practices of the cult, study of the science of magic and religious formulas, fabrication and consecration of protective charms (boli-w, dyo-w), knowledge of [85] poisons and antidotes, procedures for combating enemies and sorcerers.

794 Its moral authority is very widespread, and we shall see the 796 role it plays in justice and public affairs. The Komo has obligatory seasonal ceremonies, such as the festival of the cleaning of the sacred wood by the tinto-w (most recent initiates), the festival of the emergence of the komo-sen-w from the stream, that of stream fishing and of hunting on the banks at the end of the dry season, and, finally, that of the solemn return of the komo-sen-w to the stream. In addition, every seven years, a great celebration in April-May lasts for 15 days, with a sacrifice to the komo-ba. The ceremony ends with 766 the nomination of a new komo-tigi (chief of the Komo), who will exercise his priesthood for seven years. He must die at the end of

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2. M. Griaule, "Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice Dogon (Soudan français)" [Remarks on Sacrificial Techniques of the Dogon (French Sudan)], Extract from the Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. X, 1940.

794
796 that period; his body will not be buried but will be carried off by 766 members of the Komo, who will take it to a crossroads and crush it with the aid of komo-se-w [sic]. The remains will be hidden in a secret place. The same treatment is accorded to the komo-tigi who dies during his seven-year term.

The cult is cantonal, and the various komo-tigi take their 794 orders from their colleagues of the capital. The cult formerly was interlcan and intertribal. Labouret (Les Mandingues et leur langue [The Mandingo and Their Language]) has made a table of the seven categories of persons who make up the hierarchical society of the initiates.

794 After initiation into the Komo cult, a natural sequel to cir- 793 cumcision, the young man may, if he so desires, be initiated into other cults. He then enters a powerful spiritual family which unites all its members by ties of brotherhood. This brotherhood is superimposed on the normal social hierarchy of the flã-tõ [this term is [564 probably the same as flanton]. The chief of the brotherhood is en- 567] titled nyama-tigi; he is generally a man of caste or a slave. He acquires his position as chief either by inheriting it, by election, or [778] by founding a new cult. To do this latter, he must buy an altar, gna, from the village or from the brotherhood that already possesses this cult. Such a purchase is considered a marriage with the gna and is accompanied by drinking. The higher-ranking initiates (dyenfaw: masters of the truth) are auxiliaries of the nyama-tigi and participate in the oracle, wara-da. All the initiates are more or less divine. The clergy includes, in addition, a sacrificer, muru-kala-tigi, and a dyeli, herald of the god. To become one of the faithful, one must pay an entrance fee and swear an oath of secrecy, obedience, and fellowship. The clergy manages the cult's treasury which is fed by the entrance fees to the brotherhood, by fees levied for a class promotion, by contributions required for the major ceremonies, and by fines imposed on the members.

The brotherhood is a spiritual family which is organized in a fashion similar to the natural filiation of the community. The nyama-tigi plays the role of the fa; the dyen-fa-w and the notable members form a sort of council for settling, with the chief, all ques- [527] tions. The cult does nothing on Mondays and Thursdays, the work holidays.

794 A strict internal discipline regulates the members' conduct; this discipline is founded on secrecy, obedience, and speed in carrying out orders. An accused confesses [86] his faults under the effect of the oath, torture, or divination, and the punishments are determined according to the seriousness of the offense in the eyes of the clergy. These punishments are corporal (flogging, confinement in irons, deprivation of food, death) or pecuniary (fines, confiscation); they may include forced labor for the benefit of the clergy. We shall see further on the social and political role these brotherhoods play in Bambara life.

794 796 The Kworé society carries out the rites concerning the sky, space, the cardinal points, and the atmospheric manifestations of Faro, notably rain. The ceremonies generally take place around a tree, the kworé-jigi, situated to the east of the village. The altars are placed either in the brush, in the chief's house, or near the village. The society owns a field of small millet which is reserved to meet the needs of the cult.

[793] The n'Domo includes all the non-circumcised. Heading it is the chief, assisted by a sacrificer, muru-kala-tigi, and by a master of ceremonies, dyoloko-tigi. The society is divided into five grades, corresponding to the five fundamental altars; the initiate advances a grade each year. The society possesses a mask, a whip, and five musical instruments. An annual ceremony takes place after the harvest and includes a blood sacrifice and a ritual fight, followed by a new initiation. The society also owns a ritual field cultivated by its members.

[776] The Nama brotherhood (Nama, "hyena" in Mandé) plays an important role in the Ségou region. Nama is the god of the incomplete, the unique god, whose annual ceremonies at sowing time and harvest time are observed by the men and women together.

794 The society of Kono, whose hut is situated in the middle of the village, must also be mentioned, as well as those of Dyo, an old divinity, Nia or Gnã, Wara, and Duga.

To all of these societies, which have been described by Tauxier, Monteil, G. Dieterlen, etc., must be added the women's societies, still imperfectly known but very powerful and particularly feared by the men. The principal female dyo in the Bamako region are: the Niagua, the Kulukutu, and the Jide which assembles its initiates on Mondays and Fridays.

304 881 794 The society of *n'Domo* has the task of preparing children for circumcision; the *wanzo* of the child liberated by the operation goes in the mask of the *n'Domo.*

881 304 Formerly, circumcision took place between 18 and 20 years of age, and the circumcised had to bear arms the following year. At present, the children are circumcised between 8 and 16 years of age, but all those of the same promotion are considered to belong to [561] the same age class and are *flani* [sic] (twins) all their lives.

The ritual of circumcision has been described many times, in particular by Tauxier and G. Dieterlen. Therefore we will only report the essential phases.

The ceremony takes place during the dry season, in bountiful years after the harvest. The appearance of the constellation "*Sigi-lolo*" is watched for at a certain point in the sky, and when it is very brilliant, the date is fixed. The operation cannot take place except every three years.

The parents prepare for the ceremony long in advance: they make the child a bonnet of white cloth which they present to the Niger, and they make the signs representing the person of the child with earth from the river. Some days before the operation, the child enters into a period of seclusion; he is placed under the protection of the purifying light of Faro and receives gifts (cowries, food ....).

When the day arrives, his hair is shaved off. His mother washes his shaft with water in which an iron axe has been soaked, then has him eat a plate of rice.

The blacksmith prepares his knife, *boloko kumba moru*, which is enclosed in an iron sheath, this knife represents the circumcised and the prepuce which will be taken from him. The priest washes the handle and, symbolically, the penis. Then with coal or with millet paste he traces the blade with ritual designs symbolizing the three first circumcised men, the four first excised women, and the bird which is the avatar of the eight ancestral blacksmiths. Next, he ties the prepuce with a small cord (drawn on the middle of the blade) and places it on the *pembelé*. The cutting knife is hit with a small block of wood, and the blacksmith then traces the scarifications on the shaft. The circumcised bleed in a circle on the ground, in individual holes [92] dug between their legs. They thus deliver the *wanzo* to the impure earth, while the circumciser recites the prayers. Then they apply a dressing of bloody earth to the wound,

881 and the member is held up by a split millet stalk. The prepuces are
304 buried, and their white bonnets are put on the circumcised. The
place of the operation is forbidden to women and to the non-circumcised
who could take the liberated wanzo.

In the Bamako region the blood of the oldest is gathered in
[534] two new calabashes, which are later broken and the pieces used to
make sistrums, sinzin.

881 After the ceremony, the children retire for three months under the direction of a priest of the Komo. During this period, when they receive a religious and technical education, they enter the village only to sleep in a special house and to repair the roofs of their teachers' huts.

[794] The night before the sixth day after the operation, they are initiated in the Komo. The next day they are led to the river where they wash their wound. Meals are taken together, followed by songs and dances, until they are healed. The last day, the sistrums, sticks, mats, and everything that has been in contact with the circumcised are put in a pile and burned. Each child jumps over the fire three times and runs home, without turning around, to lose his wanzo definitively. In the Bamako region the sistrums are preserved in the cabin of the village chief and will be used for the children of the following years. The bonnet is returned to the mother and will be preserved until death. The next day the child puts on his new clothes.

881 Let us note that for the circumcision of twins all the offerings
304 for the ceremony and the sacrifices must be doubled, and each child
826 will possess two sistrums. Finally, the albinos today are sent to the
dispensary, because the blacksmiths are afraid to operate on them,
their wanzo being particularly dangerous.

304 Circumcision may take place posthumously. The circumciser
766 then cuts the left ear of the body, since the wanzo freed by death
would be dangerous to the living.

794 Generally, a sort of ceremony of confirmation of membership in the Komo takes place in the year following the circumcision.

d. Excision

881
304 The excision of the girls has a meaning equivalent to that
[831] of the circumcision of the boys. The operation frees them of the
physical male factor residing in the clitoris.

761 principles of the cadaver on altars or masks in order to preserve them
764 for the community.

The rites have undergone an evolution. Formerly the bodies
764 were hung from trees until they rotted, while the bones were kept.
At present the bodies are buried. Only a band of cotton symbolizing
the tongue of the deceased, that is, his word, is attached to the
● [794] branch of a tree. If the deceased was an initiate of the Komo, the
society plays an important role in the funeral rites.

All these rites have been studied by G. Dieterlen and Tauxier.
766 Monteil has described at great length the funeral ceremonies of a
chief: the three rifle shots recalling his combats, the lamentations
of the women, the notification of the village notables, the offerings
of relatives and friends, the alms at the crossroads, and finally, the
inhumation. The body is prepared, the head shaved, the interior
cleaned with water and salt. A paste of water and ground cowry is
put into the body openings (the ground cowries possess a divine spirit
assuring the preservation of the cadaver). The body, and particularly
the head, is daubed with this same paste, then the body is laid on its
right side, feet to the north (a woman would be laid on her left side).
Finally, the funeral celebration takes place, with the ritual feast
765 and the purifications. Seven days later the celebration of commemoration
(Sangha) takes place, followed by the mourning of the women
for forty days. After this time the deceased is transformed into a
living ancestor.

The Bambara receive omens of their death or of a chief's
763 death from certain signs given them in the bush, such as coming
across a chameleon on a red anthill, the cry of a certain mythical
hyena, the passing of certain crying monkeys or certain birds.

Certain gifted beings have the ability to perceive the departure
of a person's spiritual forces and his imminent death. Sometimes
they are able to bring back these forces and reinstate them in
the body to save the man in danger.

[95] g. Ancestor Worship

769 After his death a man is transformed into a living ancestor
775 and is the object of a cult. The cult is closely connected to the
agricultural cults; the ancestors are efficient vital forces which

533 292 of black, red, and yellow fibers, clothes of plaited fibers, and the musicians wear a cuirass made of *fana* seeds (a sort of bean). The bass player wears a band in the back which reaches to his heels and describes a circle when the musician whirls in going from north to south and from east to west to give the cadence. The other musicians form a circle which the dancers and singers do not enter. Another *djo* is the *So*, where the musicians and the singers wear masks of wooden horses, except for two clowns who represent the masculine element in the midst of the crowd of young girls. Lastly, the third *djo* is the *djõ buru* (*buru*, "trumpet"). This is the *djo* of the slaves; they play the ivory horn and are clothed like the *N'ganian*, but the bass player represents a cow, and the others are the heifers who respond to the cadence indicated to them by their mother.

E. Literature

538 Bambara literature, entirely oral, is extremely rich. It is the monopoly of the *griot* who from their earliest days learn the stories, the proverbs, the mottoes associated with each [108] family. They recite very long and very numerous epic songs concerning each great family, accompanying themselves on the harp. Certain parts are recited, others are sung in chorus by the *griot* and his wife. These stories are at the same time historical narratives of heroes' exploits and the mythical history of a demiurge symbolized by the hero. An infinitely small part of these epic songs has been collected. Some Bambara proverbs and stories have been collected by Moussa Traoré in particular.

545 794 522 It is interesting to mention another literary production, one in which the creative inspiration of the artist plays a greater part: these are the narratives of the members of the *Kworé* brotherhood. The *Kworéduga* are clowns, or rather *commedia dell'arte* players. One is a *Kworéduga* by hereditary transmission or by natural bent. During his initiation in the bush, where he submits to ritual harsh treatment, the initiate learns never to lose his temper, no matter what the circumstances. He is taught a comic language, witty sayings. He is trained to observe men's character closely and to recite stanzas and couplets giving his observations.

545 Example:
794 *Tiekoroba kolili* (the old man who has nothing)
522 *Ita rokina momindi* (what you say is not liked)
Ida konieti aie (you are right)
N'ka idia dopina marmandi (but one doesn't like what you say)
Or again:
Demise fentili (the rich young man)
Ida dokma kakadi (one likes what you say)
Ida konie tinaie (what you say is not true)
N'ka idia dokma makadi (but one likes what you say)

545 534 794 The *Kworeduga* have the *su* (Moor) as taboo, and they accompany themselves in singing with a sacred gourd, *yaraba*, which contains seeds of *Lufa cilindrica*.

535 881 Finally, during the circumcision initiation period for example, the child learns the sacred dances which often mime exploits of the mythical ancestors.

177 517 A certain evolution characterizes the native art which has been transformed in a curious fashion by contact with Europeans. In European centers, prolonged contact with the Whites has confused the beliefs that inspired the art, but the artists have lost neither their taste nor their gifts. At the request of the Whites themselves, they have undertaken a controlled art, with the aim of pleasing the Europeans. Needless to say, even if it conserves some charm in its form, all this new art, which evolves with the same swift rhythm as our modes, remains terribly dead, for the true source of inspiration has dried up. This art no longer seeks to be true, but to be pretty; by this it signs its own death warrant.

[109] CONCLUSION

I. Traditional Interpretation of Mental Characteristics

181

In the introduction to *Religion Bambara*, Tauxier insists on the mental characteristics: "The Bambara has remained rather openly fetishist"; he possesses "two dominant traits, which are absolutely undisputed and indisputable:

"1. He is a very good farmer.

793 176 The pagan priesthood -- like the Moslem -- also casts a halo of strength and power about its priest; he becomes the close friend of his fetish, and the latter often condescends to take his diamou, or family name, and become, for example, the dasiri, or protecting genie, of a village. Depending on the name of its owner, it will be a Djara or a Kouloubali or a Tankara, etc., etc.

793 554 An intelligent Bambara who, for one reason or another, cannot be a sorcerer, has one other means of becoming feared and powerful: he can become a gnéna sonna or dougoutigi (priest of the protecting fetish of villages, called dasiri), a gnâtigi or bolitigi (matter of a boli), or at least to belong to a retinue such as surrounds every powerful boli fetish.

793 There are curbs on the thirst for fanga, or power, however. The office of gnéna sonna is the prerogative of a particular family within which it is transmitted from brother to brother by right of inheritance, and not every Negro succeeds in obtaining a boli -- I mean an influential boli that would establish him among his people -- even though one can be obtained by purchase. A man desiring a particular boli must first form a retinue for it, and its members must be taken from the village itself; the mutual mistrust and fear of poison are so great that it is not always possible to do so. Beside the price to be paid, varying between 25 and 30 francs, there are the expenses of the konio, or wedding of the fetish (the purchaser marries his boli), which raise its cost to 60, 80, and sometimes 100 francs. Furthermore, there is a mass of liturgical formulas to be engraved in the memory. These must be learned in every detail, for the omission of one sign or gesture, the garbling of one formula can easily incur the disfavor of the fetish, which is relentless with one who is careless and causes him to perish! It should be added that before a person can reward himself with such a luxury as the acquisition of a fetish, he must consult a sorcerer and take his advice, and if he is not rich and already feared, the sorcerer knows how to place his veto. For the mass
794 of the people there is thus only one way to be safe: to become
793 associated with sects, and with as many sects as possible. Through membership they earn the title of "sons of boli," and build relationships for themselves and make friends among those in power, the

794 793 bolitigi, the latter have every interest in protecting them, for not only do they pay /38/ their masters annual dues of 80 to 160 cowrie shells, which is little, but they also provide the meats and kola nuts for sacrifices and the d'lo, or beer, for the nocturnal drinking bouts and orgies, and thus are a real godsend.

3. Metamorphosis

776 789 The Negroes say that a djiné or a boli genie can pass from one body into another. Today it may paddle in a pond, be enclosed in a tree, or sit on a rock; tomorrow, if it wishes, it will make its dwelling in a cow's tail, in a horn, in a dirty rag. Whatever its dwelling may be, it is never confined. The Negroes compare these spirits to the wind, to a breath which enters and penetrates into a space through the smallest crack and fills it. Yet they have bodies and are equipped with organs; they drink, eat, and procreate and differ from man only in their tenuity. Since the Negroes are convinced that certain people have become able to master and command the spirits, could they not come to believe that it was possible to attain, like them, a rarefied state? In any case, they do believe in metamorphosis, and it is by entering into an animal or plant, or changing himself into an animal, a plant, etc., that the wicked person succeeds most often in avenging himself, in appeasing his hatred, and even in doing evil for the mere pleasure of doing it.

789 564 754 A good number of sorcerers have this privilege, and sorcerers are not the only ones! Entire castes have the power of metamorphosis; among others the Koulé, who dig out canoes and mend cracked gourds, can all change themselves into hyenas. The sons of the Siri, who are members of the sect dedicated to the boli of this name and are called souba (1) because they commit their crimes during the night, change

1. The name souba is derived from sou ("night") and ba ("great"), ma ("man"), being implied. It means "a man of the great night," "men

789 It is impossible for him to resist this force, this power which seizes him and forces him to act. His mercy or his rage is exercised on the first person at hand; he does not even spare those who are dear to him, and his children, his wives, and his friends quite often become his victims. He has one excuse: he remembers nothing -- for a very good reason -- and if he does remember, it seems to him that he dreamed.

794 789 The Siri sect, which admits women to its ranks, hides its mysteries in such profound secrecy that it is impossible to have a really accurate and precise idea of them, at least for the moment. Nor is it possible to know who is a souba without being a souba oneself; one can only guess. If someone were to denounce his fellow as really being a son of the Siri, he would be declaring himself to be a member of the sect, and the vengeance of the people would fall on both the accuser and the accused. /40/

Belief in the souba, the gne-fla, and in all those people metamorphosing themselves is most childish, and like all Europeans I have treated it as a myth, a daydream, and a bogy used by men to terrify women and children. But now, I must state that the contrary is true: this belief is generally held and is firmly entrenched in minds of the Bambara, and anyone who would try to prove the impossibility of metamorphosis to one of them would appear a fool in his eyes, for to him it is a fact (1).

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1. The Siri sect, whose members are known in the Ségou circle as the souba, and among the Malinké, the people of the Worodougou, etc., etc., as the soubaga, resembles the cannibals of Uganda, the Basêzi, and the cannibals of the Ouchirombo, the Baswêzi. These cannibals are not a separate people (in a given family some may be Basêzi or Baswêzi and others not), but members of a sect similar to that of the Bambara souba and capable of the same transformations

> 794 789 and metamorphoses. Although I have no precise data, this coincidence leads me to think that the same is true of cannibals of the Ubangi.

782 To be convinced one need only be present at the sacrifices; no matter whether the offering is to the djiné genii, the boli genii, or to the shades of ancestors, there recurs, always, the phrase: "Deliver us from the souba and the gné-fla." One of the chief functions of the boli fetishes is just this, and there are some whose special and primary role is to make war against the Siri genii. One of these fetishes is the Nama, a powerful boli which is greatly honored, venerated, and, I should say, fashionable in the Ségou circle and among all Mande peoples. The Ngouansa, known especially in the Worodougou, is also said to specialize in this sphere. From time to time it makes its appearance in the Ségou circle, and its owner without fail does his bit of business and fills his purse. People run to him from all sides bringing hens, goats, and kola nuts, and I have seen these Ngouansa tigi, or masters of a Ngouansa, red with blood after spending the entire morning sacrificing. Before cutting their victims' throats, they stand, facing east with arms akimbo, and shout at the tops of their voices: "Souba, you are dogs, you are even less, the excrements of dogs, oubou bo."

791 825 824 Would the name of the souba and the gné-fla be heard so often from the lips of the Negroes, would families, villages, and sects /41/ spill so much blood or offer so many kola nuts, if they did not sincerely believe in them? Not only do they find an irrefutable proof of the possibility of metamorphosis in the fact that the caterpillar turns into a chrysalis which becomes a butterfly, they will also tell you that the winged termite, "that short-lived creature which on winter evenings comes in swarms around the lights, scattering wings everywhere, in the soup and on the plates," buries itself in the ground, swells like a sorghum seed, grows roots, and becomes a graceful shrub and then a beautiful tree provided it is spared by fire. I do not know the scientific name of this shrub or tree, but the Negroes call it sandéré.

776 risk of spoiling the crop -- o be gno soun tigné ("it destroys the vitality
241 of the seed of the millet grain").

782 These genii do not have special festivals in the course of the year. Their priests, the heads of families, offer them saraka and sacrifices at planting time, and some of them sacrifice a hen in the corner of the field while the crop is sprouting and growing, but that is all.

6. Genii Protectors of Children

819 It is not until circumcision that Bambara children take part in the mysteries of pagan worship, but they are early prepared for it so
794 that they may be introduced to the law of secrecy which they must
776 strictly adhere to later when they are initiates of an occult sect. At about the age of seven or eight years, they become affiliated with an association worshipping the genii responsible for protecting them. All these sects are alike, differing only in name. On the banks of the
825 Bani and the Niger, the object of worship is the tauri (toad or frog), and the croaking of this animal is imitated in their festivals; some villages have the djara (lion) and imitate its roar by whirling their
534 slingshots, small boards four fingers wide and one to two centimeters long, attached to the end of a string. The most widespread /children's
824 genie/ is n'tomo, which undoubtedly gets its name from the tree in which it lives (the /92/ jujube tree, n'tomo). It makes children hale and hearty, preserves them from sickness, defends them against the invisible little creatures of the bush, against spells and sorcery, and makes them strong, steadfast, and impervious to suffering.

The confraternity of the n'tomo is modeled after that of the boli. (This is true of both kinds -- for there are two; a white costume is worn to the dance for n'tomo djé and a black costume for n'tomo fign). In order to be admitted one must offer a hen to the child who is head of the n'tomo (the n'tomotigi), prostrate oneself before the tree of the genie, and swear to keep the secret and never to speak of the n'tomo to the uninitiated, especially not to little girls.

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778 In addition to wearing the costume, which is white (n'tomo djé) or yellow, black, etc. (n'tomo fign), the boy who dances the dance of the genie hides his face in a frightful wooden mask on top of which are five, seven, and sometimes eight horns.

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561 The n'tomo injects a whole organization into the world of children. They quite naturally divide themselves into small groups, each corresponding to a circumcision that is to take place, and are thus all of the same age, born in the same year, or very nearly so. The member of each group who is the oldest -- be it by only one day -- becomes its head, and all the younger heads obey the head of the oldest group, the n'tomotigi, and his aide, the n'tomotigi siéré (1), who is drawn from the group which will be circumcised after that

[291
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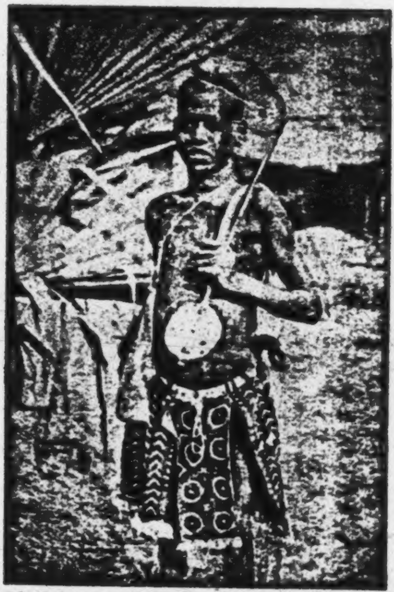


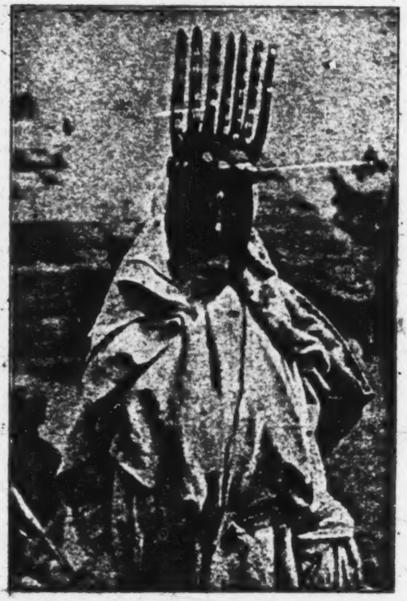
Child wearing the loincloth called yaba.

1. Siéré, "aide," "deputy."

869 of the n'tomotigi. /93/

794 These two children prepare the hunts for rats and lizards, organize the games and supervise them, and if an offence is committed 561 by the band, it is up to them to discover the culprit. When quarrels, arguments, and fights arise among the children, they intervene, judge each case, and, if the matter is worth the trouble, the mischief-maker, or the one who is declared responsible, is severely beaten. All this produces unity within the various groups and prevents them from coming to blows at every moment.

[778]



Mask of the n'tomo, the children's fetish.

The little girls also have an organization into groups, but it lacks cohesion; it would have to be religious in nature, since religion is the basis of all unity in the Bambara country. Only at the time of excision does all this change, and then there is real cohesion among them.

796 Every year children sacrifice to the n'tomo genie through the mediation of their head, the n'tomotigi. The day of the sacrifice is 857 a day of great rejoicing which ends in flagellation. The material for

796 the sacrifice is furnished by the children themselves; all of them to-
857 gether work a small field for this purpose during the winter, and if the harvest is not sufficient, they go begging from door to door so that nothing will be lacking at the feast -- neither d'lo, the millet beer, nor kola nuts. On the evening of this great day, each new initiate chooses his n'golo mouso, as they call the little girl each one takes as his "sister of the heart," his bonne amie as one would say in France /his girlfriend/. But she is more; she is a little maid of all work, and the gift which he gives her every year at the celebration is more a payment than a gift of friendship, "pure and simple." /94/

7. The Genie Protector of Circumcised Youths

794 At circumcision the Bambara leave the association of the n'tomo
776 and place themselves under the protection of more powerful genii.
778 These genii are all of the same nature, only the name differs with each region, and all the confraternities are copied after one and the same model. The most widespread is that of the n'golo (1).

1. In Bani it is the n'goso rather than the n'golo.

The n'golo is nothing but two forked branches fastened together and hung on a light dloma (2). One can meet it quite often in a corner of the village, out of doors, but usually it is under a small shed or hut. This genie gives the youths not only strength, vigor, and health, but also the talent, if not of pleasing women, at least of attracting them and thus being able to obtain some crude satisfactions. It helps the unmarried to meet the girl of the moment, and thanks to it,

[342] 2. Dloma are forked sticks on which rest the crossbars or beams that hold up the flat terrace roofs. The name dloma is given to all forked sticks, small and large.

794 a married man finds his wife gentle, submissive, and obedient. It
776 preserves the members from disgraceful ailments and, in a quite
778 special manner, from ma ko sa (3), a paralysis of the reproductive

> 3. Ma, "man"; ko, "affair," "parts," "testicles"; sa, "dead," "lifeless."

organ.

794 This group of worshippers forms the foundation of the organization of the fla-n-to (4), headed by the to-n-tigi (5) who is the master of

> 4. To, "gruel"; fla, "for"; flani, "twins of the same age."
>
> 5. To, "gruel"; tigi, "head."

the n'golo fetish. His assistants before the genie help him with his duties; he has a siéré, or aide, a djéli, who is a kind of herald and repeats his orders, advice, and thanks during the days of celebration and drinking bouts, and a djalatiké, responsible for seeing that the rules or laws of the organization are kept. Among the Negroes nothing is done without drinking and eating; they must have celebrations and drinking bouts, and in order to obtain the means for them the fla-n-to impose a large number of fines on their members, the to-n-dé (6).

> 6. To; "gruel"; "child."

Their rules are /95/ nevertheless odd. For example, a fine is imposed on whoever blows his nose or sneezes, gets up from the table, or starts eating before commanded to do so by the head, the tontigi. Those who are late for the dance or sleep during the day or night of a celebration are granted no mercy! (1)

> 1. When the tondé organize a dance or celebration, everyone must be present and spend a sleepless night.

● 794 The *to-n-dé*, or members of the association, are formed into groups, each corresponding to a circumcision, and all these groups, united among themselves by a common bond, which is the worship to be rendered to the *n'golo* genie, submit to and obey the head, the *n'golo tigi*, preferably called *to-n-tigi*. Thanks to this unity, a host of quarrels and fights is avoided, and they all help each other, sharing in the joys and sorrows of their fellow members. In a word, this association corresponds, in miniature, to our societies of mutual assistance and help.

794 796 To get a girl of the moment, the young *to-n-dé* from time to time sacrifice a small pullet. But a big sacrifice is made yearly and the victim is at least a goat; it is offered in the name of all. The offering of the general sacrifice does not prevent each initiate from adding a hen and a kola nut; food abounds, millet beer flows in streams, the association furnishes food and drinks to the whole village and to friends from surrounding villages. On this day also the youths circumcised during the year enter the confraternity of the *n'golo* and become *to-n-de*, or members of the organization of the *fla-n-to*. To do so they must spend from 80 to 120 cowrie shells (2 to 3 sous) and offer to the fetish the hen and two kola nuts as a sacrifice.

8. The Women's Genie

776 824 Not all villages possess this fetish tree, which is called *mouso ka djiri* (2), but all hamlets have a genie whose chief function is to

2. This tree is often a fig tree called *n'zoro* or a *toro* sycamore (*ficus vogeli*, *ficus ferruginosa*). *Mouso* means "woman"; *ka* is particle indicating possession; *djiri* means "tree"; the whole phrase therefore means "the tree of the women."

776 824 preserve the freshness of youth in the ladies for a long time, to give
mothers breasts that are loaded with /96/ milk, to bring fertility to
the sterile, and finally to keep an eye on the periods, or menses, of
776 535 [534] each and every one. Every month at the new moon the excised women,
married and unmarried, spend an entire night dancing in its honor,
to the beat of a special drum called mouso denou (1). These dances
are not very decent, and except for some shameless individuals who
watch even these scenes from the height of the flat terrace roofs, the
men among the Bani stay at a distance.

776 824 Many villages (and they are numerous in Bani country) believe
that the genie takes shelter in a fig tree near the walls and establishes
its home there. It is the trunk of this tree that is reddened with blood
at the annual festival, and most of the dances take place in its shade,
as does the repast of which the Negro women partake on this occasion.
The girls excised during the year spend 80 to 120 cowrie shells, offer
a pullet for the sacrifice, and are thereafter permitted to pay their
respects to the genie.

794 Out of this group of worshippers arises a small mutual aid
society, identical in every way with the youth's association, the
fla-n-to. The head of this organization is usually the oldest woman
of the village, and she is given the title of massa, "queen." All
the female population call her mba, "my mother."

This society, called mouso-n-to (2), from time to time offers
the people of the village d'lo, or millet beer, and once a year at the
festival of the genie a plentiful repast with a dessert of kola nuts for
the old and the usual drinking bout for everyone. Those who break
the laws of the association are fined, and the sum of all these fines,
together with the 80 or 120 cowrie shells spend by the excised girls
of the year, help the massa and her associates to meet all expenses.

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1. Mouso, "woman"; denou, "drum."

2. Mouso, "woman"; to, "gruel."

776 The fetish protects the village by causing the evil spells and
778 sorcery cast on it to misfire. It defends the village against wicked
621 people and against its enemies, and thanks to it the inhabitants can
793 peacefully devote themselves to their work in the fields. While averting plagues and diseases which decimate the population, it gives strength, health, and vigor to all, and finally it populates the village by making the women fertile. Above all, it is the source of unity among families for it brings them all together under the authority of a single head; the friends of the head of the family whose name, or diamou, it bears, are its friends, and his enemies are also its own. To fail the priest, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, the dougoutigi, is to fail the fetish, so close and intimate is the union between the two.

11. The Koté, or Koré, Genie

794 Since it is the fundamental basis of power and authority, the
776 worship of the dasiri can, with some justice, be regarded as the first
778 and oldest of all Bambara religious practices. That of the koté, or
koré, likewise seems to me quite respectable from this standpoint and
just as old. As a matter of fact, this spirit, like the dasiri, lives in
[824] a little grove near the village, and the three trees it likes to inhabit
are the baobab, the false cedar, and the nettle tree.

794 The worship of the koré is especially popular in Bani country. Today not all the villages have the fetish, but all have at /103/ least a few initiates belonging to this semioccult sect. The sect includes women among its members; it is divided into eight groups, each ruled by its oldest member, who in turn is under the authority of the koretigi, the supreme head of the association.

794 At the time of the annual sacrifices, and especially at the
778 sacrifices made every seven years on the days of admission (for it is
necessary to be a koré dé (1) in order to participate in the secret part

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1. Koré, the fetish bearing this name; dé, "son."

194 of the mysteries carried out in the sacred grove), these groups present
178 the most ludicrous gathering in the circle of Ségou. The kara maou carry a red and white perforated board, about two meters long called the kara; the souroukou wear a mask resembling a hyena (souroukou) and walk leaning on two sticks; and the korodouga get themselves up in a costume impossible to describe. The ta tougoula (2) dance,

2. Ta, "fire"; tougou, "to light."

holding a burning torch in each hand; the n'goni sama (3) cover them-

3. N'goni, "thorns"; sama, "to draw to oneself"; they are also called wara, "wild," "fearless," "courageous."

selves with thorns or lacerate themselves on the chest and under the armpits until they bleed; and the bisatjila (4) whip themselves with

4. Bisa, or bousa, "stick," "switch"; tji, "hit," "break."

long, flexible switches. There are also the djara (lions), who wear a mask just like that of the hyena (souroukou) only larger, and the soula (monkeys), who parade with hideous, grimacing masks and wear a tail in back made of braided grass.

194 The koré sect is semioccult, for while only initiates are allowed at the sacrifices and within the sacred grove, the dances are held in the village, and all, men, women, and children, attend. The wives of the korodouga belong to the confraternity by right, but they do not know the password djantéma ("man of the djanté"), and they are forbidden to enter the sacred grove. Their great privilege is that they are permitted to wear their husbands' uniform, which is a long necklace of red beans, to sit with the men around the gourds of beer, and finally to dance the dirty and disgusting dance of the korodouga without having to be ashamed.

794 776 The *koré* fetish watches over the crops and gives its initiates the only pleasures that they know and desire -- to drink, to eat, and to enjoy /104/ a woman -- and, as will later be demonstrated, all this comes out in their dances and orgies. In spite of its great power, the poor genie cannot handle its many concerns; the Bambara, who judge everything according to themselves to such an extent that they inject their own organization into the world of invisible beings, have therefore given it eight groups of spirits who carry out its orders and make up its court. Some watch over the insignia and preserve the names of the initiates, and others render powerless anyone who would harm the crops. Just like a distinguished, powerful, and rich man here, the *koré* has its storyteller /*griots*/ or heralds, the *korodouga*, who sing its praises, transmit to it the petitions and prayers of the initiates, and dance its dances. The eight groups of the sect are simply the representation of this court, the concrete expression of the Negroes' concept of it.

794 The initiation into, or affiliation with, the *koré* sect takes place only every seven years. It is long and painful; for fifteen days the young initiates live in the sacred grove and cannot go into the village. Since they need some training for future dances, the old men come to torment them every noon in the worst heat, and each initiate, according to the group to which he belongs, suffers for some moments the torment of fire, thorns, or the rod.

[626] The rigor of the admission in no way alienates the Bambara, and in Bani it is a disgrace to refuse the hen for the sacrifice and the /payment of/ 120 cowrie shells, and not to join. It is true that everything is repaid, for the sect has many festivals and *d'lo*, or millet beer, is never lacking.

In addition to the annual sacrifice, a sacrifice is made to the genie every time an initiate dies. There is another sacrifice on the anniversary of his death, and during the dry season the *kore dé go* from one festival to another, spending their nights in nameless drinking bouts and orgies. /105/

852 tear, a complaint, or a cry of pain, and they are so imperious that
796 one might think they were of bronze.
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The *N'golo*, the Special Fetish of the Circumcised

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794 The children of this fetish, whose function I explained in the preceding chapter, grant themselves many days of celebration in its honor in the course of the year. The main festival, however, is annual and in addition to the *dégé*, a hen, and two kola nuts offered by each initiate, a goat is sacrificed on behalf of all.

Since it is from this fetish that the *fla-n-to* organization derives its existence, its members, the *to-n-déou*, offer drink and food to the whole village for two or three days. The women, too, contribute their share to this horrible drinking bout, and their queen (*fama, massa*) -- humbling herself before the *to-n-tigi*, head of the *fla-n-to* and priest of the *n'golo*, who thoughtlessly wastes the produce of the field worked by his subjects in the winter -- distributes many kola nuts and adds still more to the *d'lo*, which already flows in streams.

The beer is drunk out of doors on the public square, and everyone -- men, women, and children -- is there, shouting, dancing, and getting drunk. Seated under a *goua*, a shed covered with coarse
[346] mats, /113/ and surrounded by his acolytes (the *siéré*, the *djéli*, and the *djalatiké*), the *to-n-tigi* sits in the place of honor, and it is he who directs the drinking and the dances. He is really king on these days, and all obey him at the slightest sign, gesture, or word. When he gets up to romp or take a turn before the drums, he is honored; all the initiates call "*you you*," shake their caps (*ban fla*), and compete as to who will take his gun, spear, stick, or ax and beat the time for the dance. But he wants to speak; he must speak; he feels the need to issue an order, to give thanks, or to impose a light fine on his band; and his spokesman runs to his side. He repeats the speech of his chief word for word and sentence by sentence, and sometimes even adds a comment of his own, for some Bambara have a sharp wit and very easily find a saying to bring a laugh.

852 794 Every time one of the three principal members of the staff, wants to dance, respects are paid to them or to their leader, and all day and all night nothing is heard but frightful "you you" and atrocious cries. There is a protocol for everyone to follow, and before each to-n-dé begins to prance in front of the drums, he goes and bows to his leader to show his devotion and respect for him. He holds himself like a spring, brandishes the gun, ax, or stick that he will use in the dance, and in one jump strikes his feet together under the nose of the one to whom he is paying his respects. The women are quieter and show their respect by a genuflection before the master.

In addition to his staff the master of a n'golo, the to-n-tigi, has pages, a standard bearer, trumpeters, and soldiers, and to vary the program he goes here and there with his frenzied band to greet an elder and give him a serenade. In some villages custom decrees that the youths put on the best they have in the way of clothing; in others, on the contrary, they must get themselves up in horrible, dirty rags so that, on seeing them thus clad, one asks where they could have dug up all these horrors. They must amuse themselves and be [522] amused, laugh and cause laughter, and this last aim is always accomplished as they have such priceless mimics. /114/

The Mouso ka djiri, the Women's Special

776 796 831 It is impossible to know all the genii responsible for watching over women, for they are legion. Every month, at the new moon, the women organize a dance in their honor, and every year they make a public, solemn sacrifice to them. The most widespread is the mouso ka djiri, and its worship flourishes especially in Bani country.

When its festival comes, all the excised women offer it a little /millet/ flour mixed with water, a hen, and two kola nuts, and the head of the village, or, in his absence, an elder, goes and reddens the bark of the fetish tree (1). There is no need for me to go into

[782] 1. Some people assert that they have seen women sacrificing. I have seen women perform saraka involving bloodshed, but never a sacrifice.

782 787 you accept it at my hands." If one of the pieces falls with the pulp on top and the other onto the pulp, there is an affirmative answer from the dasiri. The sacrificer bites the kola nut, cuts out with his teeth the piece that contains the seed, and, when he has chewed it a moment, spits the remains onto the bark of the fetish tree.

This procedure, wholly dependent on chance, is often long, for the pieces of kola nut do not always fall in the desired position at the first try. After three failures the crowd ceases to restrain itself and, with gestures and voice, each person intercedes for the unfortunate one. The cries do not stop until the kola nut gives the answer, "I accept and am no longer angry!"

The Semioccult Society of the Koré, or Koté

● 794 241 [461] The Bambara are, above all, farmers, and cultivating a field has such great importance in their eyes that for them it alone really deserves the name of work. One who does not handle the pick may be active and skillful, but he is not a worker and one does not say of him: "A bi ajaké, he is working." But will the seed that /122/ they consign to the earth in the winter sprout, grow, become large, and ripen? However little one knows the Bambara, one can imagine and understand their fears, for they are surrounded by a band of malicious spirits ever ready to pounce on them. Therefore they heed protectors and helpers, and at planting time they offer something to all, even to the rain. The main fetish to which they appeal is the koté, or koré, which lives in a tree in the middle of a small grove.

794 796 534 In order to be present at the sacrifices to the koté, it is necessary to be initiated and to know the password. This initiation may take place by day, but at least in Bani country, it usually takes place at nightfall when the setting sun takes on a bloody hue. The sons of the genie go in procession to the sacred grove. The korétigi, the priest, opens the march, preceded by musicians who beat the denouba (1) and the kingé (2). With him are the kârâ ma ("man of

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1. Drums over a meter long and peculiar to the koré.

2. A kind of triangle which is hung on the thumb of the left hand and is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger.

[778] the kârâ"), one of whom carries the kârâ, the perforated board which is the emblem of the fetish and at the same time the altar on which sacrifice is made to deceased members. First come the souroukou (hyenas) who guard the sacred grove and during the sacrifices drive away prying, uninitiated people; they wear crude masks, roll their big heads right and left, and utter frightful "hou hous." The [522] korodouga (clowns), who rake the paths in the sacred grove as well as its environs to protect it from brush fires, run from one to another shouting obscenities. Furiously they shake their gourds, which have handles and are perforated and filled with small stones, and furiously they blow into pipes made of pumpkin stems. The leader of this [292] band is dressed up in a cloak made of reed stems, he also wears a reed headdress which is topped by a pyramid of large red beans called n'go blé and decorated with a plume; in his hands he holds the emblem of the group, a long pole on which are hung dirty bags, sorghum stems 10 to 20 centimeters long bound into bundles, pumpkin stems, /123/ skulls of rats, beaks of ducks and hawks, panther claws, etc.

Apart from the long string of red beans which all korodougo are
794 required to wear which they twine around their necks several times
796 or sling over the shoulder, crossing and recrossing it on the back and
292 chest, each one dresses according to his own inspiration. The hats
522 are made of bunches of feathers, wings of vultures and ducks, and even entire birds, and around them to decorate them further are red beans, rat skulls, birds beaks, claws, and small bones; all these objects fall on the neck and shoulders and knock together with a sinister sound. Next to men in full breeches are men in rags or men with close-fitting trousers made of innumerable pieces all in different

794 colors, one leg of which goes down to the ankle while the other does
796 not even reach the knee. Some brandish wooden swords, and others
292 ride astride on a bamboo, a reed, or a sorghum stalk, rearing and
522 kicking, and there is not one who does not act the clown.

794 The bisatjila (flagellants) make their flexible whips whistle in
796 the air; shortly thereafter these whips rain blows onto their backs; the
[185] ta tougoula (fire lighters, incendiaries) seem impatient to shower
their bare backs with sparks. The djara (lions) or sogo (beasts, animals) with masks even larger than those of the souroukou (hyenas) growl around the n'goni sama (1), also called wara (fearless wild animals).

1. N'goni, "thorns"; sama, "to kill for oneself."

The soula run from one group to another, slip between legs, and never stay still; they are seen everywhere, sometimes standing, sometimes with hands on the ground on all fours, or again sitting down, breaking bundles of grass or bits of wood between their hands and throwing them with shrill cries at the heads of their companions. And at the end of the procession come the old men, weighed down by the years and no longer of an age for all this fancy dress. They drag or carry the victims intended for the sacrifices.

In the grove around the sacred tree, there is a deafening noise of drums, triangles, reed pipes, and many voices /124/ that shout all together without ever harmonizing. At a sign from the leader, the kârâ bearer goes and stands before the fetish tree, and everything becomes calm and quiet. The youths who have been waiting for seven years to be initiated advance in a line, fall on their knees before the fetish and its emblem, and then prostrate themselves with foreheads in the dust. They remain in this position as long as the sacred hymn
lasts. On rising, they say: "Djanté koré déou djanté (djanté children
[535 of the djanté koré), djanté ma (man of the djanté)," and each dances
831] the dance of the group to which he belongs. These dances are indecent
and always conclude with an obscene gesture.

The oldest sons belong to the groups of their fathers; as to the others, they choose the group they like best. Thenceforth they are

794 korédé ("sons of koré"), and in all the province of Ségou, wherever
796 a sacrifice is offered to the fetish, they may go into the sacred grove without any fear and take part in the mysteries. They have the password -- "djanté ma, man of djanté," and will know how to answer when interrogated by the souroukou (group of the hyena).

794 After the initiation the korétigi (priest of koré) proceeds with sacrifices. Everything happens as at the dasiri: after the libations of
796 /millet/ flour (dégé) and beer (d'lo), the trunk of the sacred tree is
782 reddened with blood, and all around the blood are tufts of fur and feathers stuck to the bark by remainders of chewed kola nut. A hyena mask called koré koungolo ("head /tête/ of koré") is also reddened with blood, as is the kârâ, the emblem of the genie which is used as an altar for deceased initiates. Part of the meat is taken to the village, and the rest is grilled on the spot and eaten without any seasoning whatever.

In the sacrifices, koré and those that form its court are asked to watch over the harvest so that it may be abundant, to watch over the flocks so that they may thrive, to provide the petitioners with their fill of food and drink all their lives, and to give them a vigorous old age, etc., and all this is requested for one sole purpose: "so that we may be able to enjoy a woman and devote ourselves to carnal pleasures."

794 After the repast the crowd abandons itself to the dance, and un-
796 til morning there is an indescribable uproar and endless shouting. At daybreak they go to the public square, and as long as the beer (d'lo) lasts /125/ the orchestra makes bedlam in front of the drinkers who squat around full gourds, and the women sit on mats or tiny stools piled on top of each other, clap their hands, and answer the obscenities of the korodouga with further obscenities.

The dance of the groups, in which all members, young and
[535] old, take part, consists of more or less comical contortions which they execute going around in a circle, one behind the other. The old men tire quickly and their throats soon get dry, so they are not slow to sit down and get drunk to please koré, and the young people then abandon themselves and dance to their hearts' content.

794 Two or three tatougoula, a flaming torch in each hand, open
796 the dance. They scorch their backs, chests, and armpits, and
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794 796 785 thousands of sparks rain onto their heads and bare bodies, and smoke and sizzle on their skins before going out. The korodouga, armed with leafy branches, chase the sparks. They devote themselves chiefly to their obscene songs; their minds on the perforated gourds which they shake furiously, and more than one dancer feels himself getting roasted. And when the torches are almost burned out the tatougoula squat before the big drum and for the last time shake the handful of burning straw that they have left. [522] An obscene gesture provokes a stifled laugh here and there, a "hou hou" from the souroukou, a roar from the djara, a chuckle from the soula, and cries of encouragement from around the gourds: "O do, that's it!"

While the djara /lions/ or sogo /beasts/, /wearing/ huge masks roar around the groups of drinkers, the ng'oni sama or wara tear their chests and their armpits with brushes of thorns, and the soula, grimacing and weeping, throw the group of women into confusion and put the children to flight. As to the bisatjila, they circle like lions in a cage, uttering wild animal cries and trying to excite themselves. Suddenly, as if seized by fury, they brandish their long, flexible whips. These whirl for a moment above their heads, whistle in the air, and then slap the flesh. The men strike hard; each blow leaves its mark or furrow, and /126/ blood often flows. They pale and tremble in all their limbs under the pain, but in spite of everything they strike and strike, for the instrument of torture must be worn to shreds and fly to pieces. At every blow of the whip the korodouga band throw themselves onto the victim and massage and rub him, and the souroukou lose themselves in indecent behavior in front of the great drum.

794 796 782 764 In addition to the sacrifice offered every seven years, there are annual sacrifices to the koré, to the shades of its priests, the korétigi, and finally to the shades of its initiates, the korédé. There is always a sacrifice at the death of an initiate; the groups dance the sacred dance, and for three nights there is the shouting and the indescribable bedlam in the koré tou ("grove of the koré") of which I have told.

794 764 If the deceased initiate was an old man, a graybeard, he has completed his whole career and his fellow-members come in great numbers to pay him their respects. Before the corpse, which is laid out under the trees which shade the entrance of the village, they

794 764 carry out their indecencies, shout obscenities, drink, and get drunk. And for three consecutive nights after the burial the same scenes are repeated in front of the fetish tree.

794 769 The anniversary of the death of a *koredé* ("son of *koré*") who became a *korétigi* (priest of *koré*), a *gnéna-n-sonnaba* (priest of the *dasiri*) or a *gouatigi* (head of a group, of a family), is celebrated with pomp; the family always makes it a point of honor to cook *d'lo* (beer), and people come from all directions to take part in the orgy. /127/

Chapter 7

The Worship of Satan or Worship of the *Gnâ*, or *Boli*

1. What is Meant by *Gnâ*, or *Boli*

776 Ever since God created their race and put it into the world, the Bambara have respected, venerated, and sacrificed to the *gnéna*, or *djiné*, those beings who are intermediate between angels and men. When one of them forgets himself under the influence of a jug of beer so far as to open to you -- oh, very slightly! -- a recess of his soul, he delights in telling you this, but he is careful not to make such a statement when he speaks to you of the *gnâ*, or *boli*. For although the beginnings of *boli* worship fade into the dark of the ages, it nevertheless has its history. The origin of each *boli* is known, and an initiate, however little instructed in its rites, can tell you whether it comes from the north or south, east or west, and whether it is male or female; and every graybeard can recite its family tree for you.

There is a great difference between the *gnéna* and the *gnâ*; they are different in every way, and we have here two beliefs which, though parallel, are absolutely distinct. Any object, whatever it may be, can become the home of a *gnena*, but these spirits prefer a living being, a plant, a tree, or an animal, for example, and when one is tired of its dwelling it moves elsewhere. A *gnâ* always lives in an

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198 771 778 Since all the Bambara could not be made to submit to shameful servitude, the Moslems were satisfied to impose a tax, to forbid public worship of the idols, and, with sheathed sword, sought to make converts by persuasion. Their caravans were quick to cover the country, preaching Islam in all places both favorable and unfavorable, but the mass of the people could not be approached. In order to give /131/ their beliefs a rational basis, they always did everything in the name of "Alla, " "Stamboul" (the Sultan of Constantinople), and "Makka (Mecca), and said to the conqueror: "All true belief comes from Mecca (Makka); it is the center of all religious life, so why do you fight so hard against our boli? They all come from Mecca. God has given you the formula: 'there is no Divinity other than God and Mohammed is His prophet'; for you He prescribes ablutions, Friday rest, etc.. Keep your formula and shout it! To us Bambara He has given the boli and bloody sacrifices, so why do you want to take from us our treasures that are hungry for blood?" I do not doubt that we owe 773 776 794 our "legend" to the discussions which arose between the m'rabet (the marabout, or Moslem priest) and the gnâtigi, or bolitigi. Here it is as I so often heard it told by bold old men:

A group of youths who were devoting themselves to trade and following lady luck (ou toumbe kolo (1) gnini, "they were seeking cowrie shells"), one day took the road to the east. Over mountains and valleys the little band walked and walked for a long time, and then finally they reached the great, blue, salty water, the ocean, on the shores of which lies the holy city, Mecca (Makka) (2).

[436] 1. Kolo, "cowrie shells" (singular, kokê), small shells used as money.

[823] 2. Since the Moslems said that Mecca was located on the seacoast, and since the Bambara did not know Arabia, they believed it to be in this direction. In their minds the ocean does not have to be crossed to get there. Actually, this is the least of their worries.

773 Their stay there lasted several years, and no one expected to
776 see them again. It was said that bandits had fallen upon them and
●794 massacred them or reduced them to slavery, and funeral rites were to
be given them. The *sanga fo* (3) in their honor began; the women wept, filling the air with their cries, and after several days of dancing, everybody went back to pleasure and work.

The young Bambara were not dead, they came back and, better yet, were in no way stained by Mohammedanism. Even in the heart of Mecca they met a Bambara tribe, brothers who were thoroughly fetishist, and their secret rites, sacred dances, and sacrifices made more impression on their hearts and imaginations than the worn and cold formula, stupid prostrations, and tiresome /132/ ablutions of the sons of Islam. They were initiated into the rites of the *gnâ*, or *boli*; they bought some; and one fine day, rich in gold and silver, flocks of goats and sheep, women and slaves, they took the road back to the Niger. The caravan was large, the loads heavy, the road was barely passable, and discouragement touched the hearts of the bravest more than once. Finally, they reached the great river and the loads and *boli* filled boats by the hundreds.

The start of the voyage was happy; only a very few loads fell into the water and were lost going through rapids. Then a day came when everything changed; the wind started to blow violently; the water boiled, foamed, and swelled; and the boats, made of two hollowed tree trunks placed end to end and bound together with weak ropes, crashed together and broke. Who can tell how many disappeared in the floods that day with all their cargoes! The loss was great, especially in *boli*, but these have the power of gods, and they quickly changed into fish. According to the legend there have been torpedo fish, manatee, etc. in the depths of the river since that day.

Everything was not lost, however. When the travelers arrived in the Bélédougou and the Ben-dougou (1), they still had a large stock

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3. Condolences from acquaintances to the family of the deceased.

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of *boli*. People came running from all directions. Of course there were festivals and amusements, and everyone wanted news and wished to learn about this Mecca which was so vaunted by the Moslems. "It is indeed a large city," they said, "but do not think that all they know there is the worn formula *la ilah ill l'allah*, which is shouted by the sons of the Prophet all day long. At Mecca there are Bambara (2) who sacrifice to genii as we do. They have additional rites that you do not know; /133/ they know how to protect themselves from evil genii and demons; they sacrifice to the *boli*. The latter /*boli*/ are terrible. They kill anyone who insults or displeases them and actually have consideration only for those who give themselves to them and become their children. Thanks to them, our brothers in Mecca are rich and powerful and live to be old. They quickly discover thefts, lies, and adultery. In fact, the *boli* render justice, and whoever asks it of them cannot lie with impunity. The deepest insult against them is to call on them to witness a lie; they always take vengeance for this offense, causing endless evils to its perpetrator

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1. *Bélédougou*: *bélé*, "ferruginous rock"; *dougou*, "village," "country"; a province back of Bamako kati. *Ben-dougou*: *ben*, "meet"; *dougou*, "country"; the eastern end of Bambara country, on the Bani.

2. This word *Bambara* (*Bamana*) of the legend denotes less the people than the religion, and it seems to me that it should be understood in the sense of *kafri*, as already indicated in speaking of the origin of the word Bambara. (As I pointed out /in Chap. IV, 3/ I believe its original meaning to have been "rebel" and not "son of the alligator" or of the fish *ban ma*, a kind of tench.)

773 778 794 and even going so far as tocause his death." These accounts excited the Negroes' curiosity; they wished to see the boli, wanted to sacrifice to them. They gave themselves to the boli, and thus became their children.

Once the people were initiated, the travelers unveiled the mysteries to them, bound them by the law of secrecy. They imposed upon them the prohibition against admitting uninitiated men and women and children to their ranks, and the sects were formed. These have multiplied continuously; each boli has its own, and since the boli are male and female and produce children, they have become legion, and each village has sects and boli of its own. Although the
778 worship of the boli has not destroyed that of the gnéna, or djiné, it
794 has long exceeded the latter; their sacrifices and drinking bouts are accompanied by an external pomp that has a different grandeur, and no important action is taken without their agreement. It can be asserted without fear of error that the worship of the gnâ, or boli, is the chief religion of the Bambara at the present time. It is the basis of union within families and the foundation of the sina-n-koun, or sworn friendship; through the boli the people of the same village are closely united, and this union extends from one village to another and from one province to another, since all members of a boli's sect are brothers and owe each other mutual assistance under certain specified circumstances.

776 778 782 In the Bambara's mind (and I have spoken of this at length in my chapter, "The Ideas of the Bambara are not of Islamic Origin"), the boli are nothing less than intrinsically evil beings in revolt against the Supreme Being, God the Creator and Lord of all things. As the formula of the sacrifice to Touafé Bla suggests, the place where they dwell is fire or hell, and there is not a Negro who will not tell you /134/ that the boli is a demon (sétané). Can it not be said that his religion is a worship rendered to "Satan himself?" He renders this worship in full knowledge of what he is doing. Have I not heard the sacrificer in a sacrifice to a Nama boli (1), shout before cutting the

1. A note by Father Coppe of the White Fathers (unpublished manuscript).

881 It is after midnight. The circumcised boys are seated in the
796 place of honor where their older brothers sat before, and they furious-
•794 ly shake their gourd disks strung on sticks. Leaning on their millet stalks, the regulation sticks, the excised girls in their turn arrive at the public square, singing and shaking their pierced gourds, and the dances begin as at the soli si and continue until morning. Outside, under the sacred trees, the bell of the fetish tinkles and summons the initiates, and the Komo god roars through the mouth of its herald. At a sign from the priest the circumcised boys get up, leave the village, and go under the big trees to swear loyalty and to dedicate themselves, body and soul, to the prince of darkness (1). How can this scene be described! The circumcised boys sit under the god's favorite tree, and the crowd of initiates, grouped by villages, gather around the gourds full of d'lo that froths and bubbles. Little fires are lighted and cast a strange light into the night, and a circle of crouching human beings appears and takes shape. The master of the idol (Komo tigi); the sacrificer (mourou kala tigi); the beadle (darotigi), who rings for the sacrifice and gathers the initiates; the fetish's storytellers /griots/ (Komo djeli maou), who sing the praises of the god, fall into catalepsy at the sacrifices and then give out oracles;
[778 the Komo warada, who wear a coat covered with the feather of guinea
534] hens, hens, egrets, etc., and a long horned mask, and who carry the fetish to the place of sacrifice and blow into an iron tube that ends in two horns /186/ and is at once idol and trumpet, and draw from it frightful "fouin fouin" that freeze you with fear: in short, all the staff of the Komo appear on the scene, and there is a lascivious dance, the dance of the god, the sacred dance. Then there is the

1. The scene which I describe sometimes takes place the evening before. Sometimes, by order of a sorcerer and for a reason considered serious, the entrance into the sect of a fetish is postponed until later.

881 796 794 rallying cry, bellowed by a hundred throats, "kou kou kou, ke ke ke"; drums roll, and drunken voices shout:

T'an ta bara ladjé.
Stop, let us go and see the gourd (of beer).
Bara ma dja an na,
When the beer has made us joyful (1),

1. Dja, "to make happy," "to please," "to be agreeable," "to make joyful."

An na youyouba yougouba.
We will dance and dance (2).

2. Yougouba, "to dance with a shaking of the whole body."

Gnâ tigi, né ka nougouni-n-ko min yé?
Master of the gnâ, what has happened to my (hen's) entrails? (3)

[782] 3. This line recalls a peculiarity of the sacrifice of the newly initiated. With one twist of the finger the sacrificer takes the entrails out of the hen, and when the young initiate wants to draw it, he is quite surprised to find that none of the viscera are in it any more.

Gnâ tigi do nougou na bo gnouan yé.
A master of the gnâ (kodit) the entrails will come out together.

Excited, or rather irritated, by the wait, the circumcised boys get up, move forward in a line, and prostrate themselves before the god's escort, the one who shakes without any rest under his cloak of feathers and brings resounding blasts from his horned tube (4), and

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4. While the trumpet is blowing, the initiates accompany it with pipes.

grows and shrinks by raising and lowering his jointed mask. The hour of the initiation has rung, and they will be born into the religious life.

The master of the idol, the Komo tigi, places the horned iron tube on each initiates shoulder, and in a slow, solemn, hollow voice, he says these words of the initiation ceremony (5);

5. During this ceremony the initiates are prostrate.

For the Komo

Q. Moun bé i koun? What have you on your head?

A. A kala be n'koun. His handle is on my head (repeated three times). /187/

Q. I y'a yé wa? Have you seen him?

A. Né m'a yé. I have not seen him.

Q. Nin be ma fa. I y a fo ma min yé, a k'i fo! He kills a man. If you speak of him to anyone, may he kill you!

A. Ni ne y'a fo ma min yé, a k'a né fa! If I speak of him, may he kill me!

Q. I si sirila gnâma-n-fou, djala la. Your life is fastened onto the cedar with gnâma-n-fou!

A. Né si sirila à la. My life is bound to it.

Q. Ni se ma fo ma si yé, Komo k'i kisi! If you do not speak of him to anyone, may the Komo be your protector!

A. A ka né kisi! May he be my protector!

Q. I y'a fo ma min ye, i kono ka founou, a k'i fa! If you speak of if, may your abdomen swell, may he kill you!

A. A ka né fa! May he kill me!

Q. Komo k'i son ni bien (1) ta, ki koun ti, né kana bo djoli kana bo.

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1. Bien, a woman's sexual organs. Bien, "horn"; this is a veiled term sometimes meaning a man's organs. They also say k'i bien ta, "may he tear out the organs."

May the Komo take away your heart and your organs, may he crush your head without your brains coming out, without your blood coming out.

A. O k'a ké. May it be so.

For the Nama

Q. I y'a fo ma min ye, Boli k'i so ta, k'i bien ta (1), ka doun i

/1. Same as preceding footnote 1/

djoufé ka bo i da fé. If you speak of him, may the boli cause your house and your wives to perish, may he enter you by the anus and leave you by the mouth.

A. O k'a ké! May it be so!

Q. K'i Kono gni bri, ka gni bri, gna bara.

A. O k'a ké.

Q. Ni e ma fo ma yé, k'i disi soubaou ma. K'i son sila, k'i son kénéyala! If you keep the secret may he save you from the souba, may he give you descendants and health!

"Tell me, what have you on your head? Yourlife is henceforth bound with gnâma-n-fou (bark of Bauhinia reticulata); if you talk, /188/ if you reveal our mysteries, may your abdomen swell, may the Komo kill you, may he tear out your organs, may he tear out your heart, may he break your head without your brain coming out, without blood flowing."

This ceremony in the night, in the light of the little fires that distort the shadows and lengthen them, impresses, pierces, and grips the youths, and they are heard to answer all atremble in these words that at every moment break through the nasal tone of the pipes and

881 796 •794 the trumpet blasts: "I have the kala (1) on my head, my life is henceforth bound with gnâma-n-fou; if I reveal the secrets of the sect, may my abdomen swell and may the Komo kill me." Then they get up, 881 796 794 539 and the crowd of initiates sing hymns to the Komo at the tops of their voices:

1. Kala, "handle of a tool," "a pestle," "an oblong object"; Komo kala, iron tube ending in two horns.

Da Woro la nana, Boloko déou da Worola.
To the festival of Da Woro he (the fetish) has come, to
Da Woro of the circumcised (he has come).
Toro ma na kola gnini.
Toro (2) has not come to cause evil.

2. Toro, the name of a Komo.

Sira bo nin ye, ko dougoulé dén.
To him we give an (open) road because (he is) a child of the
village.
Sira bo nin yé, ko dougoulen sira.
Give him an (open) road to know the road of the children of
the village (He is one of us, let us make room for him)
(3).

3. Songs of Nama:
A djigina so Nama fambali, a djigina
so, tjon k'a'é.
The Nama that kills has paid us a
visit, he has visited us*, let us not be

*The Nama protects against the souba, initiates of siri, reputed to be cannibals.

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neglectful toward him (let us welcome
the Nama who comes to visit us).
A fiéréla ka den, boli fiéréla ka den.
He has blossomed to have fruits, the
boli has blossomed to have fruits
(the Nama has had a child).
Souba yo nin kéra ma lo ko yé.
Souba yo. This is done because of shame.
Souyaya kéra dabali bé an koyé.
The practice of the souba has been done
(among us), we have a means of protecting ourselves from it. /189/

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While these hymns are being sung, the circumcised boys dance with the idol -- this is the standard expression to signify that for the first time they are executing the lascivious motions of the sacred dance.

And when they get back to their places, they are transformed, they are no longer the plain, good children who, even the day before, approached you nicely with a frank smile on their lips. They have become Bambara, and we, we are white men and strangers, masters and conquerors, and between them and us an abyss has been opened. And this abyss is opened further every day, for every time the god Komo comes out of its temple and out of the dirty foroko (goatskin) that serves as its tabernacle, they will go under the sacred trees, and will strengthen their faith and harden their hearts (1). Henceforth they will be at home in every part of the Sudan; they need not fear

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1. The initiates of powerful boli's sect make a sort of "renewal of vows" a year after their admission. Those of the Komo, who are given the name of timini deou, hold a festival to break all records; there is meat and gruel to spare, and the divine liqueur, d'lo, or millet beer, is plentiful.

881 796 •794 the poison that kills the inquisitive and the traitors, and wherever they are asked the question, "Are you of the Komo?", they can give the password, draw two crossed lines in the sand, and then, holding the thumb, the middle finger, and fourth finger in the hand, extend the forefinger and the little finger over this mark, saying to the questioner, "I am one of you."

I have noted here the verbal text of these questions and the answers to give them.

For the Komo

Q. E b'a la Wa? Are you of the Komo?
A. Ne b'a la. I am.
Q. N'i b'a la, tjoko djira anna? If you are, show us the sign.
A. Ka'l ta Drahamé.

In saying these words bend the thumb, the middle finger, and the fourth finger while extending the forefinger and the little finger. /190/

II.

Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Komo?
A. Né b'a la. I am.
Q. Tjoko djira anna wé? Show us the sign.
A. Da sigi da da la.

Place a container on the mouth of a container. While saying these words, place the feet one in front of the other, and immediately add: Djan kéné ouala djan djala. Make two parallel lines in the dust.

III.

Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Komo?
A. Né b'a la. I am.
Q. E n'i so mâou benna mi ni? And where did you and your people meet?

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794 A. An benna dlaba da la, ou bi gouélé foura bosi. We met at the door of dlaba; they pick the leaves of the gouélé (false ebony) (1).

1. For the Nama.
Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Nama?
A. Né b'a la. I am.
Q. Féré tjon k'an.
Two straws are laid in a cross of
St. Andrew and shown to you.
A. Nin yé sira gné bo la yé. This is the road that guides, lights.
Q. A perpendicular straw is laid down.
A. Nin yé wara sé n-yé. Wara ti tama sén ko. This is the foot of a wild animal*.

* The boli are often given the epithet of wara, "wild animal," meaning "strong," "powerful."

A wild animal does not walk without legs.

Sirima-n-fign: this word is the family name, the diamou of Nama. End of the questions: Dja e b'a la koï ! Dja (exclamation) you surely are [of the Nama].

Through the whole night there are howls of wild animals, songs and lascivious dances, bellowings of trumpets freezing one with fear, and the nasal and piercing sounds of the pipes.

At dawn a warada, speaking into the horned tube, thanks those present in the name of the god Komo; a second repeats his words into a pipe, and a djélima (storyteller /griot/ of the Komo) repeats the words of the god in plainer terms to those present. And the /191/ crowd gives thanks, utters cries, makes its requests. Everyone retires exhausted, worn out, with his throat on fire and foam on his lips,

881 796 794 reeling on his legs -- in these festivals one must get drunk to please the god.

While all these things are happening outside, the women and little girls on the public square abandon themselves to their hearts' content. They perform none of the leaps and capers customary at ordinary festivals: shaking in their hands the goatskin bag or the white iron box full of little stones, they circle slowly, with short steps, around the orchestra, and only their buttocks move. These roll to the right and roll to the left, dip forward and quickly draw back -- a movement which is definitely not graceful. The excised girls spend the night sitting on mats covered with white cloths, between the legs of their mothers or serving women, and their heads, loosely thrown back, rest on the breasts whence they drew their life. They are wrapped in covers that have blue stripes on white background, only their heads showing, and one might say this was a display of new, shiny dolls with big black eyes, happy and all sparkling with joy. From time to time at the invitation of the dancers who sing of their grace and beauty, they shake their pierced gourds, make them rattle in their hands, and take part in the dance; then at dawn, in the morning, in a final round, they put their heels together and three times make three leaps in the air with their hands crossed on top of their heads.

And, if one believes the Negroes, this custom is not without meaning. The whitecloth on an excised girl's mat reminds the mother of one of the beautiful days of her life, the one when she gave herself to her husband in the bonds of marriage, and reminds the child hidden in her arms, wrapped in the cover like an infant in its cloths, that since she has now become a grown girl and has left childhood, she must guard her virginity. This large white cloth will testify for her on the day of her marriage as it testified for her mother, and it will be inexorable. The circle around the orchestra in short steps is the infant practicing its first steps; but now she has reached her full development, /192/ she can be sufficient to herself, and for that reason she makes these nine leaps with her hands crossed on top of her head.

881 796 As soon as the sabbath of the sons of the Komo is terminated outside, the excised girls are led back to their huts with great pomp, with music in the lead, and the festival still goes on, for a Bambara

764 782 which is nothing less than disguised slavery. In the presence of a European the Negroes like to complain that he cannot meet their taxes, but they should not be listened to too closely -- 99 times out of 100 they are lying! Let us not make war against the military or civil official responsible for levying the tax, which is not at all exorbitant; let us think before all about the *boli* and their staffs, a band of persons without principles or law, human vultures with greedy fingers who attack the weak, the widows and orphans, terrify them with their threats of death. They do not leave these people in peace until they have taken everything: hens, goats, dogs, cowrie shells, sorghum, and often freedom.

6. Respects Paid to Initiates of the *Koré*, or *Koté*

794 766 The initiates of a fetish are never indifferent to the death of a brother, and they hasten to find a hen and a kola nut with which to prove their attachment to the deceased and to assuage the wrath of the god. The sect of *koré* does things in a grand, even in a ceremonious, manner, if there is any ceremony in those nocturnal orgies where *d'lo*, or millet beer, is drunk to /229/ the point of senselessness, and where lascivious and obscene dances are danced.

When a young man who is *koré dé* (son of *koré*, initiate of the [778] sect) dies, relatives and friends redden with blood the sacred tree and the *kara*, a perforated board painted red and white, which is the genie's emblem. Although there is general mourning in the village, tears are dried when evening comes, and for three nights there is nameless [785] bedlam and endless shouting in the *kore tou* (the sacred grove) as initiates flagellate themselves, burn their backs with torches, tear their bodies with thorns, abandon themselves to their barbaric dances, [534] and lose themselves in lewd gestures in front of the *dénouba* (drums measuring from one to one and a half meters) and the *kingé* (a triangle, an iron tube, which is hung from the thumb of the left hand and which is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger).

For the old people who are granted not a tear nor a regret but for whom there are dances and songs, fellow initiates come in large numbers, and during the night preceding the burial, they make a

794 766 bedlam and racket in front of the corpse, which is displayed under the great trees that shade the entrance of the village. That is a most lugubrious and macabre rite! After the burial for three successive nights, the same respects are paid to the deceased in front of the fetish tree in the *koré tou* (sacred grove), and if the deceased was a *korétigi* (head of the sect of *koré*), a *gnéna-n-sonnaba* (head of the village and priest of the *dasiri*), a *bolitigi* (master of a *boli*), a *flélikéla* (famous sorcerer), a *gouatigi* (family head), a *souroukou tigi* or a *korodouga tigi* (head of a group in the sect (1)), they often continue their orgies for eight days running, gorging themselves with *d'lo* (beer), and getting drunk.

794 769 The anniversaries of the old people, those who had fame, authority, and especially authority in the sect, are observed regularly every year, and on that day there is a memorial to members of the family who belonged to the sect. Youths in large numbers come from all directions to abandon themselves to barbaric dances, and since beer flows in streams, the drinking bout that takes place is indescribable. /230/ Only a family reduced to the blackest poverty would neglect to offer *d'lo* (millet beer).

794 769 185 On the morning that follows these dances in honor of a deceased *koré dé*, a *saraka* is placed with great ceremony at the *dankoun ba* (1) of the village. It consists of the remains of the torches of the *tatougoula* (2), the bent, broken, and unraveled whips of the *bisatjila* (3), the thorn brooms of the *woni sama* (4), and finally the leafy branch

1. See my chapter on the *koré*, or *koté*.

1. *Dankoun*, a corner of land formed by two paths that cross; *dankoun ba*, "great *dankoun*," the *dankoun* most popular in the village.

2. *Tatougoula*, those who dance with fire.

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3. Bisatjila, those who flagellate themselves.

4. Woni sama, those who scratch themselves with thorns.

used by the korodouga (5) to drive away the sparks crackling on the

5. Korodouga, clowns, storytellers /griots/ of the sect.

backs of the tatougoula.

7. Burial of the Excommunicated

766 Those with sores, lepers, and persons killed by a fetish who did not accept their sacrifice may be said to be excommunicated. No adult who dies without hair on his head or body has the right to the honor of a Bambara burial, and he is given that of lepers. 826

A leper is never buried in the common cemetery; he is sent far off into the bush to a separate place. The more usual custom, actually, is to slip the corpse into a hollow baobab (Adansonia digitata) with a small, live pullet as companion -- or an egg, if the deceased is a girl. The same fate befalls a bald person.

The reason for this custom is that this class of people have been abandoned by the Creator and the spirits, all of whom scorn them and withdraw from them. If ever the ground where ancestors rest should receive the remains of one of these accursed ones, their bones would shake with disgust. Moreover, they would take revenge for having to rest near people who during their lifetime were without hair; they would be deaf to every prayer and would refuse every sacrifice. The village and the entire region there would suffer a total lack of rain, a drought without any equal, in short, a famine with all its horrors. /231/

766 The victim of a boli may also become for the village and the region an impure, base creature that has lived all too long. This happens when the murdering, or supposedly murdering, fetish three times refuses the sacrifices offered to appease it (1). When this occurs

[782] 1. A sacrifice is not accepted if the hen charged with giving the god's answer dies on its breast with its feet under it, and the kola nut, cut in two, falls on its pulp with the rounded part on top.

the whole family, men, women and children, must still their cries and must not weep, however great their sorrow may be. Family heads abandon themselves to sacrifices, the initiates of the sect do the same, and everybody thanks the boli for having caused the death of a person who deserved only scorn and should never have lived, and begs never to meet such a fate nor to be like him.

766 794 When the grave has been dug (a plain grave without a niche), the men of the murdering boli (2) come and wrap the corpse in a mat.

2. When a boli has killed someone, it is the men of that boli who come to bury him. It is not always a boli of the village, but sometimes from a distance of one, two, or three days' journey, and if the men of that fetish cannot come at once, e. g., if they are elsewhere burying a man killed by the god, people close the door of the hut in which the corpse lies and wait until the gravediggers choose to arrive. I saw the corpse of a blacksmith left like this for four full days. The sorcerers are the ones who name the boli and the village where it is.

766 794 When they have sewed and tied it well, they take it on their shoulders and head on the double for the exit door. There they stop and without any respect roughly set the body down. Armed with picks they make an opening in the wall of the hut and, seizing the corpse by the feet, they drag it and put it into this opening. Strong hands seize it from the outside, they pull and the others push, and the excommunicated one comes out of his dwelling and appears in the alley or on the square. [482] Four fellows -- sons of the fetish, for they alone are present at these burials -- take him on their shoulders and, running, carry him to the cemetery. At the edge of the grave they put down their load, the initiates give a loud cry, a sort of roar, and they roll him with their feet into his final home. For such people there is not the slightest farewell or prayer, and the grave is filled at once.

In the evening the fetish is brought out, and the initiates abandon [789] themselves to their sacred dances, while the god, in the hands of its priests, /232/ runs about the village and its environs, exorcising. All night long nothing is heard but the bellowing of horns and trumpets and sacred hymns shouted by the crowd, and from a distance one would say they were dull rumblings or the actual cries of wild animals.

8. Worship accorded to the Dead

769 At the death of a Bambara not the slightest sacrifice is directed either to him or to the deceased of the family. However, the worship of the dead is prevalent among the Bambara, althought it cannot be compared to the worship of the genii, especially of the boli. Nevertheless, everyday one can see, at the door of one family or another, a large splash of blood on the wall about a meter from the ground, a brownish octopus one might say, throwing its twisted arms here and there and struggling against a clump of feathers stuck on its back with the juice of a chewed kola nut. Some people have seen in this worship the basis of the Negro religion and, no doubt because they did not know the language and have been unable to give an exact meaning to the words caught by their ears, they have portrayed the Bambara with knife always in hand, ready to slaughter in honor of his relatives. Because they group together all saraka and sacrifices,

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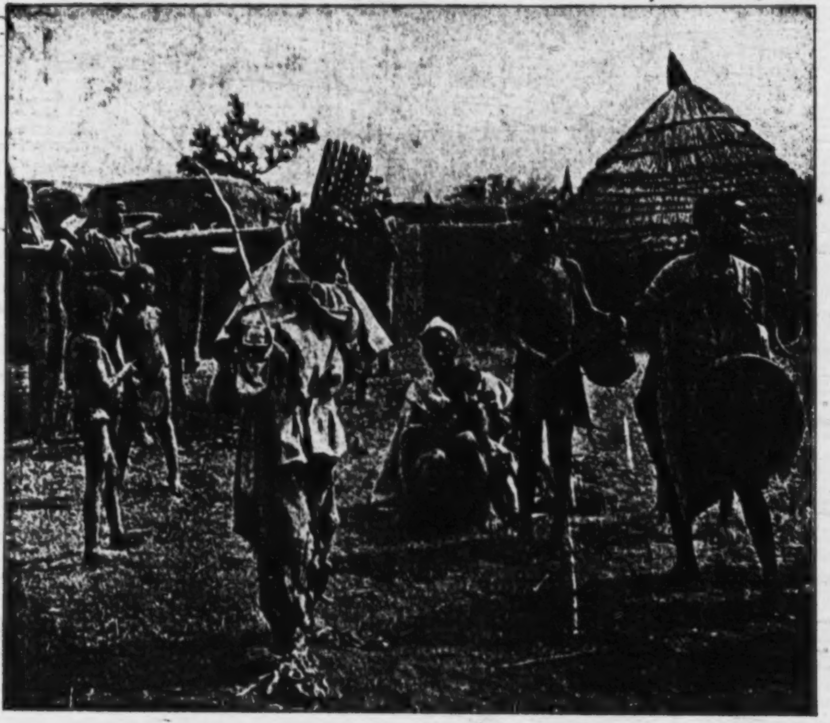

Sacred dance in honor of the N'tomo, the children's fetish.

/sub-caption: The hut with a conical roof, on the right, is the temple of the boli fetish Nia. /

4: Henry--268 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

796 778 In the village of Kangaba a sanctuary, called *mande blo* "vestibule of Mande," or *kaba blo* "vestibule of astonishment," is the object of a septennial ritual attended by representatives of all the races /who are/ said to be of the same origin. There ceremony consists in rebuilding the roof of the sanctuary which shelters an object *dolin*, but only those persons of pure race belonging to the Kéita family (1) and the traditional *griot* of the chiefs of Mandé, the Dyabaté, are authorized to perform the ritual. Only they may penetrate the sanctuary and tread on its soil, which is said to be "heavier and more powerful than all things." (2)

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551 1. The name of Kéita, for which various etymologies have been found, is that of the founders of the Mandingo empire. Cf. C. Monteil, *Les Empires du Mali*, p. 31, and L. Tauxier, *Histoire des Bambara* /Bambara History/, p. 40: "The first kings of Mali lived at Kangaba and were in fact Kéita."

By extension the name of Kéita may be adopted by individuals belonging to one of the tribes originating in Mandé. Thus a Dogon will take on as *dyamu* Kéita if he comes to live in Mandé. On the other hand, the heraldic device of the Kéita, which relates the high deeds of the Mandingo princes, includes the devices of almost all the tribes said to be of the same origin. This common origin may perhaps throw some light on the institution of regularized name changes observed in Black Africa, a problem which has claimed the attention of some authors; see in particular P. Humblot, *Du nom et des appellations chez les Malinke* /Names and nomenclature among the Maunke/.

778 346 2. *Kangaba dugukolo ka gri few be*. The sanctuary is a round hut provided with two doors, one oriented to the east and the

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other to the west, and covered with a thatched roof in which is hidden an object called dolin. The village is surrounded by several sacred places: a sunzun tree to the north; a well to the west; two stones, one (fara fi) situated near the village and the other (fara gwe) on the river's edge.

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The septennial ceremony is performed at night. Toward evening, the eldest of the Kéita goes secretly to remove the object dolin from the old thatch and hides it. The new roof is made with materials gathered by the descendants of Farako Makan Kegni (straw, bamboo, and fibers) while the women of the same relationship plaster the walls. The Dyabaté griot who will officiate provide themselves with a little stick of sunzun wood about the length of the ring finger with which they will rub their teeth; the twigs must be cut by the elder sister of the chief of the griot who gives her in exchange /xv/ a loin-cloth of eight
[801] bands of white cotton and a number of cowries in multiples of 8 such as 8, 480.

The orators who will officiate during the night wear a white cap topped by a band of cotton of the same color and a yellow tunic (wolo) (see p. 20). Sitting inside the hut from which the old roof has been removed, facing east, they spit into a receptacle in order not to soil the ground. The Kéita remain outside the hut on a site marked by stones and covered with gravel collected in the river bed by young men. During the entire night, the griot, each in turn and encouraged by a relative, recite from the devices of all the tribes issued from Mandé. At dawn, they sing as they circle the construction; then the Kéita hoist up the new roof. Next, the elder

196 secretly replaces the object in the new thatch. A white ox is sacrificed at the well.

The information collected on this ceremony is still fragmentary but the color of the clothing worn by those officiating, that of the victim, the number of bands of the loin-cloth, and the number of cowrie shells given by the griot to his sister, the origin of the gravel used as the seat for the Kéita are evidence that we have here a ritual executed under the protection of Faro (see Chap. II)

175 As early as the fourteenth century numerous travelers described the Bambara /xv/as organized into small groups headed by a chief and more or less submitting to the neighboring empires. This state of affairs lasted until the period of the Peul invasion of this region (in the seventeenth century) which founded two kingdoms and created a local aristocracy of mixed Peul and Bambara blood. The first of these kingdoms was that of Ségou, the history of which is partly known (1). The investigations centered particularly in this area; the chief

1. On the history of the Bambara we refer the reader to the well documented volume of L. Tauxier. Histoire des Bambara.

town which was a capital for a long time retains the traces of a well [197] organized legal system and religion. It is also in this area that, according to specialists, the purest dialect is spoken. (2)

[556 191] 2. The children of families sufficiently wealthy to afford it were formerly sent to Ségou to live with affinals in order to learn how to speak well an elegant and pure language.

197 212 The Bambara dialects belong to the sub-group of Mandingo languages of the Nigero-Senegalese group. (3) The Bambara know certain

3. See A. Meillet et M. Cohen. Les Langues du Monde /Languages of the World/, p. 546.

773 524 points them out successively with his finger, saying: "cross the pond" (ko tike sumangolo), "cross the river" (ba tike sumangolo), "Soumangolo's descent is over" (sumangolo yigi bana). The partner removes the pebble immediately adjacent to the branch pointed to and asks: "Is this it?" (nin wa?). The player must answer: "Yes! Soumangolo." The game is again taken up in the same way at the starting point. When the onlooker places his finger on the now empty space, he asks: "Is this it?". The player must answer: "No! Soumangolo." The second pebble is removed and, to the same question, the player must then answer: "Yes! Soumangolo." Then follows the same chant, the same mimicry to get at the third pebble, which is also removed. The game is started over again in the same way, at the same starting point, and the second branch of the cross is reached. This continues until the four groups of pebbles placed in the angles are eliminated. The player who has answered without making a mistake is the winner; supposedly he has victoriously crossed "the twelve future waters."

The immediate effect of this game is to place the winner in a favorable position: his earnings increase; his enterprises succeed. But this is not all: it represents a cosmogonic operation of a high order. [789] In the old days, sumangolo was played to bring about rain in times of drought; every person playing it today contributes to the actual functioning of the universe as well as to the realization of future times awaited by men. [796] In certain villages the ancestor Soumangolo is celebrated yearly by a hearty feast at which millet beer is drunk and all day long the villagers play the game bearing his name.

The sumangolo is part of a series of figures, sometimes geometrical, which serve as the base for cosmogonic games of semi-ritual character such as the one described above.

812 561 man's life passes through seven successive ages corresponding to the seven skies, the seven earths, the seven waters, and the seven stages of millet growth. The seven ages are: bilakoro, "an uncircumcised person"; kemɛ̃koro "a circumcised person of the last age grade"; tyebalɛ̃, literally, a big man; maselɛ̃, literally, a successful person; makoroba, literally, an elderly person; madeselɛ̃, literally, a person who cannot succeed, an old man; mabalɛ̃, an impotent old man.

812 561 796 These bonds are also confirmed annually for everybody in the course of the ritual called "the renewal of the year." By renewing the cardinal points, the Bambara add to the strength of these poles of attraction which are responsible for maintaining things within themselves and with respect to each other. At the same time they proceed to a "revival of the body and soul," including all from the youngest to the oldest. For the year to come, they take a fresh breath, a new life, and submit the body to internal and external purifications, making it adequate to fulfill its role.

Effects of Death on the Person

761 The first effect of death is to dissociate the elements that make up the person. The religious practices, imbued with respect for these elements, aim at organizing their preservation in order that they may not be lost to the deceased, to society, and finally, to Faro who controls life and assures the survival of souls.

The dya remains in the water where it will be kept until the birth of a child. But the ni, which escapes from the body with the last breath, is watched for by the head of the family who catches it and carries it to an altar. As we have seen above, it will return to animate the dya of the child who will inherit the deceased's spiritual principles, leaving behind it on the altar, a kind of exuvia, mana or folo, as a sign of the deceased's sojourn on earth.

The tere becomes transformed at death; liberated from the body, it becomes nyama which escapes and which may sometimes attack the living. Proof of this is the fear aroused by the sight of a corpse. /73/ It would seem that the tere's combination of strength and character is expressed by the activity of the nyama; but it is really dangerous only in the case of violent death (the murder of a man or an animal). In this case the nyama attacks the responsible party. If death is natural, the nyama, like the ni, is directed by the relatives and placed on the family altar (pembele) in the course of the

326 778 796 In addition, each year the blacksmiths join together and offer a sacrifice on the communal anvil. All tools are placed around it, overflowed with the blood of the victims.

An annual ceremony which also brings the craftsmen together has the purpose of asking Faro to help in the cooling of the wrought iron and to give the water into which the iron is dipped the strength to fulfill its function. Assembled before the kotigi's forge, they bring a certain number of tomatoes which are first presented to the altar, then to the ancestral axe farakun on which each one in turn licks with his tongue.

Keeping their mouths closed so as not to let the strength thus gathered escape, they all walk toward the river, while one of the [534 participants strikes up, on the ritual bell (nege dẽ) with a lump of 533] (nege dyun), the rhythm called klide fo (literally, rhythm of the sons of the testicles) (1) addressed to the one-arm blacksmith, the bolokuruni, Faro's companion. Once on the bank, the kotigi undresses and throws himself into the water. When re reappears on the surface, all the participants open their hands the better to seize the strength of Faro and his companion, which the man is supposed to bring back. They rush to help him dress and the one who succeeds in touching him believes he receives Faro's special favors.

The tomatoes are then squashed into a gourd and the pulp is thrown into the river at a deep spot where each participant draws water and drinks to communicate with Faro. The group then returns, bringing back in the gourd a little water into which each one dips his individual axe, starting with the patriarch who, at the end of the ceremony, drinks up the rest.

326 778 842 If a woman is sterile, she asks the help of the three spirits protecting the forge as they have the reputation of being very prolific. Without her presence, the blacksmith crouches before the altar with his hands spread out, his head lowered, and prays. The woman must then swear to respect scrupulously the taboo of the invoked spirits, which is to pronounce their name. She may also ask the blacksmith to implore the help of the ritual ashes of the altar.

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[522] 1. Kli dẽ, "son of the testicle," is one of the ritual jokes addressed to the blacksmiths by their senãnku.

323 317 784 Faro. These places have as taboos the wearing of indigo and pregnancy. No pregnant woman may approach them without provoking the death of the child she is carrying, thus ultimately impairing the durability of pottery and seriously harming the society of which she is a member.

323 796 An annual sacrifice is offered by the potters at the end of the winter season when, the level of the river having dropped and the banks lowered, they return for the first time to collect the clay which they need. Dressed in white, they bring out their hoes and the sickle with which they cut the damp grasses used to cover the pots on the hearth during firing, while the head of the society carries the altars. The objects are placed in a pile on a bed of nyama fibers used for separating them from the ground. The throats of two red roosters are cut open over this pile while a prayer is addressed to Faro, requesting authorization to take the /127/ mbogo pasa during the year, and seeking his protection and help for the work of the society's membership.

The potters make an annual offering to their altars on the day their husbands sacrifice on the forges. Immediately after the libations, they come and squat before the forge altar on which they throw some ten cowrie shells. They then go to the ñintin, undress, and present to it their genitals from the front and from the back, this gesture being an indication of their submission to the spirits of pottery which are the same as those of the forge. Still naked, they circle the pile of ashes left from the last firing and light a big bonfire; this fire attracts the bee eaters, tatugu kononi, which circle over the flames. They shoot some down with a sling, cook them, and reduce them to ashes which they mix with karite oil; they rub their bodies with this mixture before purifying themselves by going through the flames. As an offering to the spirits, they then throw pots on the fire which they put out before returning home.

323 244 The potters cultivate together a small ritual field in which a female twin sows white peas, tikaninkuru, symbols of their right hand. The produce of this harvest is eaten communally on a mound, walawala, after an offering of several seeds is made to the altars and tools. A potter whose tools are broken by the fire must go through a purification with the products of this field.

326 304 The wives of blacksmiths, whether or not they are potters, are skilled in practicing excision on young girls.

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often contain ingredients which have been pulverized: wood dust, charcoal powder, even powder of precious metals. Our investigation has not yet allowed us to clarify the role of this pulverization process. However, its mention by the Bambara and the frequent use of korti indicate the importance attached to this type of preparation.

/148/ Outside the hut, at the height of the nyama boli, a hook holds up the clothes of those who are killed by the Komo. The sanctuary, as well as the clothing of the mask, is daubed with black earth taken on the shore of the river representing Faro, and covered with feathers of the same color. Generally speaking, the metal [823] contained in the Komo altars gives it its strength and life. The most powerful of these is gold, silver comes next, then copper. Since each person gives an offering according to his means, the power of the altar thus depends in a certain measure on the wealth of the members of the society.

[782] Regular sacrifices upon the stakes, the bases of which sometimes contain a little wood from the historic canoe of Makanta Djigui, permit them to "maintain the pressure, the life" in the various altars.

These altars are removed from the sanctuary only upon the occasion of funerals or agricultural rites. When the mask is removed and when there are dances, replicas commonly found in the home of the chief are sometimes used instead.

The pembele is the protector of the society, the container of the forces (nyama) of the group. It is rarely placed in the sanctuary and usually kept by the chief who never exhibits it; occasionally it is watered with rain water symbolizing the work of creation.

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Before the annual ceremony called "anniversary of the Komo," drawings are made on the sanctuary by the chief or an elder; they are a reminder that the sanctuary is the link between the invisible powers and the members of the society. Besides the image of creation as an issue of the initial vibration (see Fig. 2), the head of the ancestor Koumabana, figurations of the twins, and the twenty-two fundamental signs are sometimes drawn. Finally hoes emphasize the agricultural function of the Komo (1). Granaries intended for conserving grains

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1. At the time when the attention of specialists is attracted by the division of

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religious and social powers in ancient societies, it is interesting to point out that the Komo altars represent a very definite three-way division: the first is used for the conservation of spiritual forces (souls) of the group; the second presides exclusively over agricultural rites; the third is concerned with keeping the spiritual principles of individuals who died violently and of crop seeds; it played an important role during the wars. This threefold division is comparable on many points to that observed by M. Dumezil in Indo-European societies.

from the first crops /149/ used as offerings, are placed next to the sanctuaries or in the home of the chief (1).

1. In the village of Soroba the sanctuary includes seven granaries: three for small millet, *sañõ*; four for large millet, *keninge*. Seven is the number symbolic of the person, three for masculinity (small millet is male) and four for femininity (large millet is female).

C. The Mask

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The man who wears the mask during the ceremonies personifies the Komo. The head is sculptured in the shape of a human face or animal face. At Konodimini, it represents the panther; at Soungoba, a stork; at Banankoroni, an eagle; at Banoumbougoula, an elephant; at Ségoubougou, a vulture. The mask is usually decorated with elements borrowed from several animals. Thus, at Soroba, the skull and horns are those of a buffalo, but the jaw is that of a crocodile. It is, moreover, ornamented with the feathers of a wild duck (2).

2. An informant, who attended Komo ceremonies in a great number of villages, asserted he had never seen the same mask twice.

794 on half-gourds, and accompanied by flutes and bells. The musicians,
534 recruited from among the musical members of the society, are obliged to submit to certain precautions because of the proximity of the mask during the performance of the dances. In fact, if the mask casts a spell (korti), they may, unwittingly, breathe in the dangerous powder and it is wise to protect oneself by taking the antidote ahead of time.

The Komo's iron bell, kolõkolõ or grinda, is kept with certain
794 altars in the chief's residence; it is rung by a special bearer, grindavo
534 or nadara koloyo.

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539 A myth recalls the origin of this bell. "A small child, who went to play at the crossroads situated at the approaches to the village, heard one day a bell ring and invisible beings speak. Seized with fear, he returned home. When he was questioned by his parents, he refused to answer but with his finger pointed out to them the road which he took every day. The parents followed it and arrived at the crossroads where they found a copper bell. The spirit of the place, Soba, announced to them that he was making a gift of it so that they might call the spirits by ringing it and that the spirits would answer them (1). But he asked the father to give him in exchange the child who habitually came to the crossroads so that the child could continue to play with the spirit's children. When the father, in despair, told him he had not the courage to part with his son, the spirit advised him to consult Faro.

The man gathered the young girls of the village together and asked them to intercede for him with the spirit. Dressed in their most beautiful clothes and wearing their ornaments, they went off singing and threw cakes and couscous into the river (2). The elders went down in turn and received Faro's consent. He demanded that

(1) In olden times, "men spoke with their ancestors and with their gods."

[796] (2) Each year the offering and the race are repeated by the young girls of Ségou who go to the river singing the nyari nyari to.

794 19. pembele. This sign represents both the society's pembele and
869 the board of the same name used for circumcision.

20. gosilãnde. The sign designates the primitive club and the small
532 mallet used in circumcising.

The ensemble of these figures, representing a summary of the universe in its arrangement and its movement, forms the scene upon which the actors in the ceremony take their places. The latter are in a way the living embodiment of these drawings as well as the movements which change the order of presentation and must be executed with special precautions. In effect, any change made in the arrangement of the actors in the scene is felt to have repercussions in the universal organization. This is why the movements of each one give rise to rituals of forgiveness and purification concerning the sign corresponding to him (1).

1. See below.

F. Ceremonies of the Komo

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796 The ceremonies in which the mask participates take place several times a year according to the decision of the members. Their purpose is to discuss the interests of the society, to make joint decisions assuring the prosperity of its members, to promote harvesting, and to commemorate the organization of the Komo.

Three principal ceremonies are celebrated: the first, called /160/ "anniversary of the Komo" (komo sanyelema), at the end of the dry season; the second after the harvest, for offering of the first produce, as the mask is never taken into the fields at the time of cultivation; the third during the cold season at the time of circumcision. They involve sacrifices offered in the cemetery in honor of the dead as well as divining rites. Occasional ceremonies may also take place inbetween upon the membership's decision; the mask is taken out for purifications. The neighboring societies are generally invited to
[574] attend the reunions and the drinking which follow (2).

2. The important Komo chiefs are thus consulted by strangers in the village, who sometimes travel considerable distances.

194 196 The ceremony begins with a council meeting which is attended by all the members and which takes place in an enclosure, kara so. Early in the morning, the Komo chief, aided by two men of his age grade, draws upon the ground the figures which indicate the places of the participants and of the material objects (1).

1. See Fig. 12.

When the members arrive, they immediately place themselves, without risking disorder, near the sign proper to the group to which they belong. Each one, in passing, greets the person who will perform the sacrifice. The inhabitants of the neighboring villages are received by a member in a spot somewhat removed. They state the group to which they belong or draw their sign on the ground without saying a word. The chief acclaims their arrival with these words: "The strangers have come; the strangers, sons of the Komo have come; their place is in their hand; let tolerance be granted them" (2). The council meeting is then opened.

2. Dnow nana, komo dẽ dnow nana,
u siki yoro be u bolo, yafa ka kę u ma.

The chief sits down in the central square, facing the west, places the boli to his right, listens to the propositions of the members, all of whom similarly face west. If he rises, all conversation ceases; it resumes only when he is again seated. If a member wishes to move during the meeting, he must ask the permission of the chief of the Komo. The latter goes to place his hand near the sign as an excuse for the man. When the member returns, the chief of his group takes a little water with which to pour over the drawing as a purification (3).

3. The temporary absence of a member is called: wuli ka bo komo ko la, "to rise and leave the affair of the Komo" and the return do dye ba la komo jine sabu la, "to enter into the great union of the spirit of the Komo."

When all questions concerning the society or the village have been examined and discussed, and when the decisions have been reached, everyone stands up; the drawings on the ground are erased with water.

794 796 201 The rituals in which the mask participates generally /161/ take place the following night in a thicket called komo tu, "bushy one of the Komo," situated in the bush near the village.

As soon as they hear the mask whistling, the members approach according to their age grades, the older ones first. In principle, only those under the jurisdiction of the functioning Komo and their guests are present. However, any initiated stranger who wishes to attend the dances makes his status known by means of the following signs:

1. Shouting "hé" or "ho," he presents his right hand to the mask with all the fingers folded except the index and the little finger which point towards it. The index, in this case, represents the circumcised man, member of the Komo society, in sum, the petitioner. The *little finger, which is smaller, expresses this man's submission to the* Komo and the fact that he is and will always remain its inferior.

2. He puts a twig of straw in his mouth; the light colored straw signifies that his heart is pure, that he has no evil intention. The mouth, closed over the straw, shows that the man, "understanding the word of the Komo," has no need to speak of it.

3. On his arrival, he says: ani bara (literally, I am with the bara). The masker, hearing these words, crouches and then straightens up suddenly before the newcomer as though to frighten him. The latter then says: "I am a new child of the society" (1). When he is accepted, the masker resumes the dance and the ceremony continues.

794 796 533 The rhythms of the Komo bear the general name of komo bara or komo foli dunu (literally, rhythm of the Komo drums) (2). They are numerous, adapted to the rituals they accompany, each endowed with a separate name. The Bambara classify them into three categories: the rapid, violent, and difficult rhythms performed against the non-initiates; the soft rhythms for circumcision; the sad rhythms for funerals.

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1. Ne ye timidɛ̃ kura ye.

2. The word bara is reserved for the rhythms of the masked Komo dances. The rhythms of the profane dances of the elders are called mabere fo, those of the young men, bɔ̃dyala, those of the girls, kofili.

194 196 533 During the masked dances, once the drummers have begun the rhythm of the Komo, they must neither slow down nor cease their playing; otherwise the masker will rush at the player and threaten him with his left hook. In this case, the musician changes the rhythm in order to soothe the masker and sings: "You, old men, you are with the bara; listen, this bara is not empty." (1).

1. Aw ni bara makorabaw; klo madyo,
nin bara te bara lãkulo ye.

194 196 198 /162/ The masker participates in the ceremony not only by dancing and by uttering cries, whose pitch and intensity vary according to the action which he is preparing or performing.

A guttural and very muffled cry (buâ, buâ, buâ) called komo suruku (literally, hyena of the Komo) is used to frighten the participants.

A shrill and short cry (pyę, pyę, pyę) called kono fari kasi (literally, cry of the bad bird) is frequently used to animate the dance and amuse the spectators.

A long and softer cry (ô-ô, ô, ô, the last three ô's being very close together) called morokorobaw kasi (literally, cry of the ancestors) greets the chief and his age grade.

194 196 During the mask dance, the Komo's griot encourages it by reciting the devices which exalt its power, authority, and judicial powers:

"You, Komo, you griot of the Komo, you, ringer of the bell, from whom do you come? You come from Makanta Djigui. You, bad Komo, from whom do you come? You come from Soma Moriba. To whom did this one give it? He gave it to the sons of the blacksmiths. Who are the owners of the Komo? Makanta Djigui, Soma Moriba, the sons of the blacksmiths. These have not known shame; you must not be ashamed. These have not received humiliations; you must not be humiliated.

"You, little living Komo, enemy of non-members, friend of members, take your enemy's heart, take his liver. I follow behind you and not before you. Ah! Komo; you, killer of the fat dead ones, shroud of those living, act upon him who provokes you as you do upon him who does not provoke you" (2).

2. E komo, e dyeli, e ndara kolo fo,
e bwora dyeni ma, e bwora makanta

794 jigi la, e komo fare ma e bwora dyeni ma, e
796 bwora soma moriba, o ya di dyeni ma, oy a di
numu dew ma dyenuye komo tigiw ye, makanta
jigi, soma moriba, numu dew; oluw ma malo,
aw kana malo, oluw ma lebu, aw kana lebu.

E komo ni nyenama biribalyuw dyugu,
birilew nyima i dyugu son ta i la ka bye ta
mbi ko nti nye.

E komo, i šu klo la faba, nyenemaw
kasange, minya kila a ko la, mi ma kila
a ko la.

When the drums beat and the dances are animated, and when the masker cries, it is said that "the bara of the komo is hot" (komo bara wušule do). The ceremony is in full swing.

Diverse incidents may occur in the course of the masked dances which give rise to interpretations and interventions by the members.

794 796 787 When one of the arrows attached to the mask trembles, it indicates the presence of a sorcerer in the assembly. The elders remove the arrow and immediately order /163/ the ceremony to stop. After the drums have been silenced, they request the culprit to present himself, which he immediately does. These words are spoken to him: "Your arrow attacks you" (1). He then offers a ram and beer in sacrifice,

1. Komo bye bila.

while the arrow is replaced and the dances resume. If an arrow falls in the course of the dance it indicates the presence of a sorcerer in the village.

794 796 If a part of the costume falls off, it is picked up by three members and kept to be burned with the refuse that is later swept up (2).

2. See p. 259.

794 796 688 If one of the participants has broken the taboo and revealed the secrets of the Komo during the past year, the masker whistles, asks the drummers to stop playing, and says: "Here is a grasshopper for me." These words express the contempt in which he holds the culprit. Next he adds: "There is the smell of a corpse here" (3).

794 3. Šu kasa be.

796 The man lowers his head and all move away from him. The masker
688 wounds him with the right hook. He is banished from the circle of
766 dancers and probably will die several days later. His funeral rites are
not solemnized. The corpse is tied by the feet and removed from
his home through a hole made in the wall to prevent his evil nyama
from returning to the family. The body is beaten with switches so
that the soul may leave the village forever, and is thrown into the
common grave or placed in the cleft of a tree, which is then closed
up with thorny bushes. In this case it is often devoured by the hyenas.
The clothing which belonged to him is hung on the hook placed on
the outside wall of the sanctuary. No one has the right to weep for
his death and no one ever mentions him again. To do so would be an
offense to the Komo.

794 It may also happen that the emergence of the Komo occurs without
the village being warned. In this case, if a young girl imprudently
796 approaches the place where the dance is being held, the masker may
688 kill her with one blow of its hook directly upon her head. A little
782 of her blood is then placed as an offering on the nya and her jewelry
thrown into the river where her soul goes to replace the virgin who,
in former times, was annually offered to Faro.

G. Effects of Broken Taboos

794 The breaking of the taboos attached to the altars or to the mask
783 reacts upon each of the parts affected as it does upon the whole and
brings about a diminishing of the Komo's power, which is abandoned
by Faro and the ancestors. A purification may be performed /164/
in certain cases. The error is then corrected and the spiritual forces
reenter the altars.

If a woman or a noninitiate catches a glimpse of the nya, the komo tigi and his age grade go down to the river bank and, to the sound of drums, present the culprit's apologies to the spirit:

"I have not come for someone else, I have come for myself, I have come to reestablish the race of our fathers" (1).

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1. Ne mana ma nyini; ne mana nyere nyini,
ne ma na m fa Šia tuku ko la.

194 girls who provide water and are present during the work sing to encourage the best workers or to insult the lazy ones.

Once their task is done, they partake on the spot of dishes /174/ especially prepared for them. As they leave they make their instruments roar and resound. By these means, the force (*wanzo*) which they have spent in working is "recaptured in the wind" by the twirling of the rhombos and returned to the *ndomo*, that is, recovered by themselves. For if their *wanzo* has permitted a useful effort, it has penetrated into the fields, thus diminishing by so much the store of the *ndomo*. On the other hand, this power, which is useful for cultivation, is harmful to germination. To leave it in the earth would injure the harvests. And this is why, as an extra precaution, the owner burns a gray lizard in his plot the following day in order to rid it completely of this evil accretion.

194 •196 During the dry season, ceremonies to bring out the mask are performed for the purpose of soliciting gifts from the inhabitants of the village. The members stand in a circle before each door while the masker dances the *ndomo do*, the dance of the *ndomo*. The chief designates two young men who, placed in the center, each receive three whip lashings from their comrades. Then, the youngest strikes the masker who dances again, hitting in his turn with his long whip those who do not lower their heads correctly as a sign of respect.

If the owner who is being solicited turns a deaf ear, all sing to make fun of him and to force him to give:

"It is the custom, we are not hungry; it is the custom of the world, we are not hungry" (1).

When all the houses have been visited, the children line up to return and, at the chief's order, walk towards a crossroad, which is the seat of the protecting spirits of the *ndomo*. There they leave the mask and break their whips saying: "Crossroads, I entrust myself to you."

The gifts representing food or cowrie shells are divided up among the maskers and the three chiefs. The millet is kept for the day of the annual ceremony.

On following night, the masker goes to the crossroads and brings back to the chief the ritual objects which were temporarily left there.

1. *Lada do, kongo tawna, dyẽ lada do kongo tawna.*

364 (a) Household refuse, collected individually, is placed in separate
778 piles inside shallow circular excavations dug out at the approaches to
the villages (see Pl. VI, b). Among wealthy people a goat is sacrificed
782 each week by having its throat cut above the pile on which the altar
is temporarily placed. The sacrifice effects a double exchange: the
blood nourishes the altar while at the same time it brings about the
transfer into the altar of the forces contained in the refuse.

Every two months and seven days, at the decision of the village
364 chief, these individual rubbish piles are removed from the holes.
778 Each person burns his own pile and inhales the smoke. The ashes are
796 deposited on the river bank, dampened so that the wind does not blow
them away, and abandoned during seven days, a period during which
Faro "comes to visit them and to bless them."

On the eighth day, after a meeting at the chief's residence, the villagers gather at the crossroads to burn the collective refuse piles, to collect the ashes, and to transport them, accompanied by the rhythm wanzo foli beaten on the drums, to the river bank where they will join those of the individual heaps.

After a sacrifice offered upon the konye altars of the participants, the griot of the Komo is struck by the nyama boli until he goes into a trance and flings himself into the water without saying a word. All must throw their ashes in after him before he comes out again. At that moment the spittles of the man who flutters about in the water are collected as a gift from Faro in exchange for the refuse which has been thrown in. Each person rubs his hands and feet with the saliva and upon returning, which is done in silence, impregnates the threshold of his home with it as evidence of the sacrifice so that Faro "might recognize his own and protect their life."

/203/ The following Thursday the people gather to dance according to the rhythms appropriate to each sex and generation. In the evening, each person places his foot on the site of the refuse heap; then all gather at the crossroads to offer the Soba spirit some millet, cotton, and kola nuts. The ceremony ends with a meeting at the chief's residence where he gives advice and encourages each one to respect tradition and to honor the ancestors and the protecting spirits.

(b) After the comings out of the Komo, the refuse is swept up and deposited in front of the sanctuary. Each participant leaps over the pile three times to communicate his nyama to it. In the evening the masker circles and whistles around the heap on which fire is lit while

364 the chief throws dust three times to the four cardinal points. The
778 masker then stands in the wind in such a way as to receive the smoke;
the chief and the members crouch in line behind him with their mouths
796 open to inhale better. When the wind changes its direction they all
move to continue this fumigation, *wušuli*, which constitutes a purification
as well as an increment of forces. At the moment the fire is
almost out, the most courageous of the participants stamps on it in
order to assimilate better the *nyama* which it exudes. The ashes,
[804] gathered by the chief, are distributed, the unit of measurement being
the gourd *mure*. An important share goes to the *nyama boli*, another
is given as an offering to Faro, and a third is distributed among the
members.

Several days later, the group goes to the river bank to the sound of drums beating out the *murumuruw foli* (literally, rhythm of the refuse); they throw the ashes reserved for Faro into the water and, continuing to dance, return to the village.

364 Those ashes given to the members are used to prepare the potass
778 which is mixed into the millet cake, the daily food of the Bambara,
and which will make the members of the family share in the powers
252 contained in the *nyamanto*.

The eating of this mixture closes the cycle of the transfer of forces,
364 which were temporarily communicated to the refuse by the individuals,
778 then recovered by Faro, and finally redistributed to the social body.

III. Rain Rites

789 At the time the first work is done in the fields, a drawing is made
241 with millet mash upon the tree of the Kworè in the shape of a lozenge
inscribed within a rectangle, which represents "the great fire which
issued /204/ from the cardinal angles" at the time of their creation.
While this is being done, the following words are spoken: "The four
elbows (the lozenge) are the fire of the angles; here is the anniversary
of the Kworè." The clearing of the field or the first plowing always
symbolizes the very first clearing obtained through fire.

During the month of May, the members of the Kworè society make
789 sacrifices upon their altars before the first rumbling of thunder in
796 order to purify the first sky where clouds are formed from the impure
794 passage of Mousso Koroni. The chief gathers the members about the
tree and recites the following prayer:

789 "I have come to you, Kworè, if (the cloud) is black in the east,
•796 let it come; black in the west, let it come; black in the south, let it
794 come; black in the north, let it come; black above, let it come, and then let it give a great water" (1). He next pours on the ground the millet mash and the blood of fowls brought by each member. The initiation of the new members takes place during this ceremony.

After the drinking of millet beer which follows the ceremonies, it is customary to tell the story of Mousso Koroni chased by Pemba and pursued by Faro.

If, in spite of this the rain does not come soon enough, the members gather at the foot of the tree and bring with them an iron axhead which is placed in fresh water. The water is next poured out at the foot of the tree; it symbolizes the cold which the spirits of the Kworè are subjected to in the second sky during their struggles to make the rain come through.

In certain villages the sacrifices to the Kworè and to Faro are offered at the same time. At Massala and Soroba, the members go to the shore of the Niger, carrying the kworè boli with them. The bit of water which it contains is poured into the river and replaced while a prayer is addressed to Faro. The throat of a victim is then cut and some copper is thrown into the river. The altar is shaken above the water to imitate the noise of thunder and rain. Upon their return to the village, the members light a fire at the foot of the Kworè tree and place thunder stones in its embers.

"Heating the stones shakes up their soul"; when they are hot, they are plunged into cold water "to warm and to agitate the soul of water." The smoke from the fire, as well as the heat absorbed by the stones and the water, force the rain to fall.

/205/ Victims are sacrificed and the members return to the village around which they circle six times, beginning at the west. Then they return the nimara boli to the sanctuary and the elders who represent the spirit dance about on one foot to the sound of drums

1. Ne nani na kwore nani na; a ma fi korona a ka na; a ma fi klebi a ka na; a ma fi woro dugu a ka na; a ma fi keñeka a ka na; a ma fi sâfe a ka na; otumana a ka ke dyi ba ye.

789 as an imitation of Faro who has only one lower limb. The altar, which
796 is placed in the sanctuary by the chief who enters it walking backwards,
● 794 receives as an offering a little water from the Niger in which thunder
stones have been soaking since the night before to be "refreshed." The same libation is made on the kwore boli. After returning to the home of the chief of the Komo, libations of millet mash are poured upon the walls of his house; then, in the name of Faro, the nimara boli, and the Kworè, the throat of a white ram is cut; the flesh of the animal will be thrown into the river, at the conclusion of the ceremonies.

794 (c) At the end of the winter season the "anniversary of the Kworè"
796 is celebrated; its purpose is to commemorate the action of the spirits
during the preceding season in order to obtain rain water.

On the fixed day, members of the society, wearing loincloth and carrying in their left hand a whip made of macerated and twisted grass, and in their other hand a torch of burning straw, gather near the tree around which they circle and sing to "gather up the Kworè."
[185] The cracking of whip lashes which they give each other represents
thunder claps; the beating of the drum which accompanies their songs imitates its rumbling. The burns which they inflict upon themselves recall those which the spirits endure in the celestial combats. They next direct their steps toward the public square where the villagers have gathered and where the spirit they have supposedly invoked by their mimicry is leading them. When all have gathered, the kworeduga, who represent the spirits mounted on their winged horses ready to fly into combat, appear dressed in their traditional costumes and riding their wooden horses.

They advance while dancing and singing verses which are then taken up by a chorus of the members. The latter having formed a
[185] circle, the chief places himself in the center, whipping himself,
burning himself, and pretending to swallow the fire of his torch. When he is weary he stops and the members take turns to imitate him. Powder made from ground pepper is blown into the dancers' eyes to recall the burning heat of the fiery heavens.

The kworeduga, who have by then put down their wooden horses, set their foot on the earth ready for the fight, after having seized some green tree branches. They put out the fire which has caught onto the clothing of the dancers and participants. This gesture recalls the action of the wind which, in space, put out the hot fire that

194 attacked /206/ the fighters. Between dances the participants drink beer 116 brought to the spot for the occasion in order to nourish the invisible beings which they represent.

[262] All the participants also eat a dish made up of peas, beans, groundnuts, rice, manioc, millet, fonio, cooked with baobab leaves and karite oil. This mixture is identified with the spirits' struggle with the clouds which they supposedly swallow at the height of the battle. When the ceremony draws to an end, the chief sends the women and children home and fetches the kwore boli which he swings eighteen times over the square.

In a file, the members of the society return to the tree to "bring back" the Kworè which, while invisible, has been present at all the ceremonies. They circle around the tree singing to the rhythm of the drums. Then they put out their torches and throw them at the foot of the tree along with the whips before returning to their homes. [752] Their wounds and burns are cared for by their wives with water from the Kworè altar. this medication bearing the name of kworɛ kane (remedy of the Kworè).

The same dances and the comings out of the mask take place three days in succession. On the fourth day the chief and the elders, all undressed, crawl to the sanctuary for the annual sacrifice offered inside it. The chief gathers the thunder stones collected during the past year and places them in the sack containing the altars which are to be sold.

To "clarify" the mirrors, he pours millet mash over them; he cut the throat of fowls and places kola nut juice over the snake and the ñõ boli; he next fills the ñõ boli with millet previously taken from that of the Komo. With the remaining seeds he makes a mash with which to pour a libation over the sack. He next passes a burning twig of straw over the snake while saying:

"You, snake, you do not fear the fire; you must not fear fire and rain" (1).

1. E ngorongo e ma sira tasuma ne e kana sira sandyi tasuma ñe.

The effect of this action is to prepare the snake by means of these burns and to attract lightning whose effects it must not fear.

IV. Rites for the Renewal of the Year

●796 These rites involve individual, familial, and collective actions;
783 the latter bring into play most of the institutions (1). Everyone, from the newborn to the elder, must undergo a kind of purification which consists essentially of the /207/ rejection of the breath and forces of the past year and of the taking in of new breath and forces. It is, according to Bambara expression, " a refreshing of the body and soul. " But the renewal is not limited to elements which make up the person; it extends to the cosmos and the cardinal points.

1. The individual rite of the family chief is performed with the instrument ngoni, which is used to make on the wall of his česo the drawings representing the universe. (2) He starts out with an offering of tomato juice to Faro who presides over the family use of the object and who is present thereafter. The fruits are squeezed; a hedgehog
[825 is sacrificed over the juice so that no other spirit may touch it. Next
782] the man sacrifices a gray lizard as a reminder of his own condition before circumcision. This sacrifice represents a new circumcision offered to Faro and increases his strength.

The man who is offering the sacrifice puts his tongue in the juice of the fruit without swallowing a drop in order to give Faro " a complete accounting of all his acts and thoughts during the past year (work, births, deaths, illnesses, quarrels, fortune, and misfortune) just as a subordinate gives an accounting to his superior. " He puts his right little finger in the liquid and places it on the wall over the drawing representing Faro. Then he sucks in a little of the tomato juice through his nostrils and blows it over the ngoni, thus sweeping away the remaining life from the past year which he still had in his body. A new air which comes from Faro then circulates in his lungs. He next fills his mouth with the liquid contained in the male goatskin of the instrument and spits it out immediately to show the spirit that

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1. As examples of collective rites we present those which are performed on the stone altars of the village (fara ba) (see p. 129).

2. See p. 172, Fig. 10.

196 183 all is returned to him. He then goes to the river or to the edge of Faro's pond, where he drinks a little water as a purification for the year to come.

2. On the day chosen for the family ceremony, the ngoni is solemnly removed from the room where it is usually kept hidden from view, and is presented to the family assembled before the door.

The rhythm called kalafoli is beaten out on the frame; the effect of this is to return the soul (ni) of the participants to the river or well. Then another rhythm, representing Faro, is played on the net to call in the renewed soul which has been returned by the spirit. Everyone opens his mouth and inhales the new, beneficial emanations coming over the family. When the rhythm ceases they all shut their mouths and return home without speaking. At the entrance door the children are given little strokes on the back with a little rope, sebe dyuru /208/ "to receive and withstand all that the new year will bring."

The instrument is then replaced in the home while all the participants shut their eyes in order not to see it. The owner goes into a trance, a fact which shows that Faro himself carried the instrument to the place where it will remain during the year. The man walks out backwards from the room where he has placed it and is carried into his česo, where he receives special care intended to return him to his normal state, which includes a purification performed on his individual altar, čuafebyěni (1).

1. See p. 175.

3. The collective ceremonies for the renewal of the person are first performed on the stone fara ba of the village.

The "signs of creation" (bolo ti doniya), engraved with a red-hot iron on a gourd as a request to the ancestors for their support, are presented to the participants. Next, the stone is removed and the objects covered by it are checked, the group thus assuring itself that none has been displaced during the year. Then they proceed to the reconstruction of the ritual drawings. The operator first draws the torches representing the fire used in olden times by the ancestors to defend themselves against attacks and dangers from the outside while they were building the village. The following prayer is recited: 196 183 532

"You, torch of fire, I have prepared you in the mountain (from which our ancestors came), you who keep the souls of the village, protect us from those who wish us harm, fire" (ter) (2).

● 796 2. E mõ̆ ñ̆õ̆ tašuma, ñ̆e e šu kulu la kę dla,
183 dugu nimara ba ke, i kã̄ kla kelenyȭ na,
532 tasuma (ter).

Then he draws, as on the ancestors' caps, a black dot which represents the womb of women as well as Faro. The latter will help men by giving them water, for without his help "none, not even the Kworè, have the rain necessary for agriculture.

Three small figures represent the three responsible chiefs of the Kworè who are subjected to the fire rites and who withstand with courage for the common welfare all the sufferings and burns. The other members are represented by four silhouettes to indicate their inferior position by a feminine number. The entire grouping of personages and torches converges on the black dot to show that "the men by their feet and the torches by their fire throw back their nyama toward him."

796 When the drawings are finished, all the participants in turn place their little finger and then their tongue on them to abandon the nyama 183 of the year and to receive new forces. The women use the same gestures as the men but repeat them four times. Each person then [185] receives, respectively, three /209/ or four lashes of the whip on his back so as to integrate properly within him these new elements (3).

3. The little finger acts upon the nyama
of the body, and the tongue upon the nyama
of words.

The children, led by their mothers, are the objects of similar attentions. The boys press their toes upon the stone; the little girls present their genitals to it to prove their femininity. All are then seated in turn on the stone so that the old nyama leaves them through the anus. Then, they are lifted up above it by their parents and "are shaken in all directions to settle properly the newly received nyama in them." The mothers pass their hands over the fact of their children and then over their own, a gesture which binds them to their offspring for the year to come.

The assembly goes to the Kworè stone where the cardinal points are renewed by brandishing lighted torches to the west, north, south, and then east. Each person apologizes for the faults committed during

796 the year. The men in turn each place their right foot on the stone
783 and turn in succession toward the cardinal points, inhaling deeply with
open mouth and extended tongue as though "to breathe them in."

The women do the same, but place their middle finger on the stone;
[785] at the same time they receive four whip lashes on the back so as to
"sustain (1) the change of the cardinal points with pain."

1. The more familiar term, "to receive" would be a better translation.

With heads lowered and hands at their back, the sick persons would present to the stone those parts of their bodies which are the source of their sufferings, saying: "Here is the evil that is in my flesh" (2), for

2. Nka soko la ba na fle ninye.

the stone is both responsible for and a depository of illness. The one-eyed and blind show their closed eyes. The cripples place their affected limb upon it. Then the initiated elders, completely naked, encircle the stone while recting a formula in the ancient language (3).

3. Dede kumbeyde mala kay kapo kumbey de malado. This text would mean: "stone, mistress of all, fear nothing, your children are there."

Next, the young men run around it rapidly rotating their right arms with closed fists. By this gesture, they are asking the stone to help them find a wife. The young girls follow them, walking in their footsteps, a gesture of docility which also expresses their desire to marry.

The ceremony ends with beer drinking which lasts three days. Each person is happy and gay at having "renewed" his soul; the young people will marry and children will be conceived.

621 776 successive groups, each recognizing a genie-protector. In that case, the genie first recognized and worshiped takes precedence over the others. In any case, social life requires each segment to respect the gods of its neighbors, and this respect carries with it a certain amount of superstitious fear.

311 621 794 It is evident from the foregoing that occupying and cultivating land poses certain problems for the settlement benefited, and these may be grouped under three heads: the cult of the genie-protector; the exploitation of the land; and the organization of the territorial community.

793 794 The cult. This is mainly supported by the high priest, whose principal duty is to "make the offerings" (son') to the "genie" [229] (nyana), hence his title nyana-son-na-ba. He is assisted by the council of fa, one of whom, the syere (follower), may replace him in case of need. The office of high priest is for life and is inherited in the same way as his faya. This continuity shows that the genie is actually regarded as a kind of spiritual ancestor of the priest, as we have seen from the fact that it is given the same dyamu as its high priest.

794 ● 796 The cult ceremonies are very simple. They consist of offerings made by the high priest, who at the same time indicates to the genie the purpose for which they are being made. The most solemn ceremonies take place when millet is sown and harvested. For these occasions, every worshiper is expected to bring a contribution in proportion to his resources. The kind of gift is not specified; everyone brings whatever he can or whatever he wishes, usually animals (sheep, beef, fowl, etc.), grain, and especially millet beer (dlo).

782 796 778 + During these general gatherings, from which no one is excluded, only the high priest and the members of the council enter the sacred grove or approach the genie's abode. There, the high priest makes known the purpose of the sacrifice: to thank the genie for his past favors; to offer him the gifts brought by everyone; and to ask him to continue to protect the community so that its prosperity may be assured. Then the victims are sacrificed, and their blood is sprinkled on the tree trunk or whatever object or place is reputed to be the home of the genie.

782 genie. The same is done with libations of *dlo* or the juice of
● 796 kola nuts. Since anything offered to the genie is supposed to be
786 consumed on the spot, an orgy lasting for several days usually
follows.

782 In addition to these two great obligatory ceremonies especially concerned with the exploitation of the land, the god's protection is sought by similar, but much simplified means in all affairs whether they concern the entire settlement (wars, disasters), a particular patriarchal or familial community, or even a single individual. Through the high priest as intermediary, the offering and the request are made for the purpose indicated by the petitioner, who often promises to make a further gift to the genie when his wish has been granted. Vows of this type are made very frequently.

794 The cult of his high [230] priests and of all the im-
portant men of the settlement is tied in with the cult of the
769 genie, obviously a consequence of the fact that the genie is the spiritual patron of the community which honors him; its members are his children and with him form what amounts to a family. So, in line with what happens in a patriarchal or familial community, the territorial community also holds an annual festival for the dead, during which special honor is paid to noted personages, among whom deceased high priests have first place.

311 Exploitation of the land. The high priest in charge of
621 the cult likewise regulates everything concerning the exploita-
tion of the terrestrial domain of the genie, and in this capacity
423 he is known as the *dugu-tigi* (1), master of the earth. In this
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office he has the help of the council of *fa*, and in important matters he must follow their advice.

With the help of this council, he allots the land when

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1. In line with common practice, I shall henceforth use this title to designate both capacities, the high priest and the master of the earth.

857 "dog" and "the sexual parts of a man," and it seems evident
831 that the expression n-Tomo-ulu should be taken in the latter
195 sense. This is all the more likely since in the similar organization among the Khassonké the same apparatus is called khefengo, literally, "thing of a man," that is, "sexual parts of a man."

857 The great festival of the association takes place every year after the harvest and does not differ essentially from the
796 one celebrated at the same time by all the brotherhoods. It involves offerings and sacrifices to the genie-protector, communion by the n-Tomo-den' at a corporate banquet, and the admission of new members. The following is a detailed description. [238]

At the instigation of the n-Tomo-tigi, the brotherhood's field has been harvested and to the grain collected has been added whatever the boys could obtain from their families or friends by any means, even theft. From this millet the n-Tomo-
[273] tigi has had dlo (beer) prepared, which is drunk in great quantities on such occasions. The "elders" (koro-u), relatives, and friends can be counted on to send their contributions in kind.

Each n-Tomo-den' is given a little outfit appropriate to the occasion. The ceremonial costume is put in order; the dloki and trousers are washed and ironed, if need be, and the mask is rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu) to give it gloss.

On the day set, everything is in readiness. Many gourds of dege (1) and to (2), numerous jars of beer (dlo), and also some kola nuts have been assembled, along with sacrificial victims.

857 The n-Tomo-den', each leading a chicken on a string,
796 go to the meeting place in single file, with the n-Tomo-tigi
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[258] 1. Dege is made by putting coarsely ground millet into a small quantity of water.

2. A native mush.

857 and his syere at the head. There, the n-Tomo-den' squat at
796 a little distance from the n-Tomo-tigi, who takes his place in
front of them, facing the tree where the guardian genie dwells,
782 in order to perform the libations and sacrifices. First he takes a small gourd and pours the dege it contains against the trunk of the tree; he cuts the throat of a chicken and dribbles its blood on the tree in the same way; next, in a jet of saliva, he spits on it the juice and particles of kola nuts which he has chewed for the purpose; finally, he fastens a few of the chicken's feathers in the smear of blood. As he makes each of these offerings, he says to the genie: "Look here, I offer you this chicken, protect us, defend us against the wicked and against evil genii. Give us enough to live well. Save us from illness. Give us rain to make our fields fruitful and be propitious to our families."

He speaks thus for everybody, after which each one comes in turn to offer his sacrifice and to make personal requests through him as intermediary.

The admission of new members follows. Each of them
857 pays his entrance fee and then, prostrate before the genie,
796 swears never to reveal anything to the uninitiated, [239] above all to the women." If you betray your brothers," says the n-Tomo-tigi, "may the genie kill you!" The new member repeats: "May he kill me!"

At this point the victims are cooked, and while they are
[535] being prepared, the n-Tomo-den' dance in turn, dressed in the ceremonial regalia. Their steps are accompanied by the beating of drums, and they twirl a flexible stick as they dance. When the victims are cooked, the banquet begins. Everyone eats and drinks as much as he can; a special treat of kola nuts brings the banquet to a close.

857 On this day each n-Tomo-den' is expected to take one of
796 his gifts or some other personal possession and make a present of
572 it to his n-golo-moso (1). This is how one names the young
[431]

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1. N-golo-moso, literally, "woman of the birth," is the companion associated with the rite which he is to undergo.

857 companion whom each n-Tomo-den' is required to choose upon
796 his admission into the sect; she is his special girl friend and
[572] his relations with her are not merely platonic.

The meal is over by mid-afternoon, and the band re-
857 turns to the village for a public performance during which the
796 members beat one another. First, the n-Tomo-tigi and his
785 syere advance to the middle of a circle of onlookers, relatives, friends, and others; the mothers wrap cloths or scarves around their hips and stomachs to protect them from serious injury. Onlookers sing and clap their hands. The n-Tomo-tigi holds his whip aloft with his arms outstretched, and the syere immediately flogs his head and shoulders, front and back, his thighs, legs, and feet; he keeps this up, the victim uttering not a single cry of pain, until he can strike no longer, either because he is exhausted or because his whip is broken.

Then it is the turn of the syere to be flogged in the same way. Following this, the n-Tomo-den' in pairs flog each other until it is the turn of the very youngest who, being less hardened, weep and scream and run away at the first blow. This naturally gives rise to laughter and mockery among the onlookers, who had greatly admired the stamina of the others.

In some places each n-Tomo-den' flagellates himself.

What is the meaning of this practice? It seems likely that originally its purpose was to emphasize the secrecy required of the n-Tomo-den' by giving them a chance to show that they would not violate [240] their oaths even under blows. It should be recalled that flogging was the common method of obtaining confessions, always considered the best proof of guilt. Thus, the practice of flagellation would to some extent enable the adepts not to confess under blows (1). The practice is also a means of preparing the boys to undergo circumcision without flinching, since it is a signal disgrace to show or expose pain at that time.

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1. Flagellation is also practiced in certain brotherhoods for no apparent reason except that of hardening one against pain. See "The Koré" below.

793 794 778 covered by the cloak made of feathers from guinea fowl and chickens. Beneath this garb, the *wara-da* performs all sorts of acrobatics. Skillfully manipulating the mask and the cloak during ritual dances, he gives the illusion, in the light of the fires, of a fantastic creature whose cries, transmitted through the horn, terrify even the initiated.

793 794 In addition to the *wara-da*, the clergy includes: a *Komo-tigi*, high priest; some *muru-kala-tigi*, sacrificers; a *da-ro-tigi*, porter, who announces and prepares for the meetings; and a *Komo-dyeli*, herald. There are also student *wara-da*, called *soma-den'* (literally, "elder sons" in the special language), who act as assistants, and finally, there are many other auxiliaries who form a cortege with the *wara-da* when he carries the *boli* in nocturnal processions. These people are grouped together under the term *tie-den'* or *tigi-den'* ("sons of the master" in the special language). Conspicuous among them are the *ta-tugu* who [272] carry the flaming torches which are so characteristic of the nocturnal processions.

When the *wara-da* makes known the revelations of the god, he speaks through the tube with the horn. Since he uses the special language and since the tube distorts the sounds, the *Komo-tigi* must interpret for him. It is the *Komo-dyeli* who shouts the revelation which echoes through the night.

794 796 At the time of the two great annual ceremonies, the *wara-da* takes the *boli* and the other liturgical equipment to the sacred grove. The *Komo-tigi* directs the ceremonies. The sacrifices are entrusted to the *muru-kala-tigi* among whom are to be noted: the one who brings the victim and who, when the ceremony takes place in the temple, leads it across the threshold (1); and the one who removes the victim and carries its body

1. This door is then called *nyena-ma don'-da*, "entry of the living," in the special language, and the *muru-kala-tigi* who brings the victim in is called *da-kuna-sigi* or "master of the fatal (literally 'bitter') door."

794 over the threshold (2). The ceremonies are announced and
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> 2. Then the door is called *su-bo-da*, "exit of the corpse," and the sacrificer is called *moso-bolo* (literally, "woman's hand").

[534] accompanied by a strident, wild orchestra made up of drums (*denu-ba*) which are accompanied by iron instruments, called *kinge*, consisting of pieces of metal that are struck against each other or shaken to obtain sound from the rings attached to them. The "cry" of the Komo, which the *wara-da* shouts through his horn, is accompanied by a kind of reed pipe played by his companions.

[782] There is nothing unusual about the offerings, sacrifices, or communion. The blood of the victim is used to wash the *boli* and the priests, as will be described for the Nama.

Processions held at night are always very effective, and they strike terror into the hearts of not only the uninitiated but also the initiated themselves. This long cortege, lighted by the torchbearers who shout and dash about like madmen while the *wara-da* gives the "cry" of the Komo, makes a very strong impression on everyone who sees or hears it (3). [273]

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> 3. Elsewhere, the Komo meets in the daytime, and in the old days, notably in Bobo country, it was very popular (cf. Binger, *Du Niger au golfe de Guinée* [From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea], Vol. 1, p. 379, and Monteil, *De Saint-Louis à Tripoli par le Tchad* [From Saint-Louis to Tripoli via Chad], p. 89). We have already seen that all the officiants in the brotherhood are called *dou*, "the hidden people," because of the disguises they affect. "The *dou* are persons ludicrously disguised, wearing clothing on which are sewed bits of *da-fou* (native

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hemp), palm fibers, and leaves. On their heads they wear a cap or calotte, also made of hemp and surmounted by a yellowish-red wooden crest or a bird's beak, also of wood. There are two holes in the calotte for the eyes. These dou are given free dlo by the populace which makes up their cortege. They wander about the village and fields day and night..." (Binger).

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There is never any cult service or ceremony on Monday or Thursday.

The clergy serves as an administrative council for the property of the Komo-ya (brotherhood of the Komo) in accordance with the general principles already noted. The Komo-tigi of Tiguini, we have been told, is especially famous for respecting the principles which give the treasury of the brotherhood an exclusively fraternal character.

The Komo-ya are mutually independent, and all have experienced the kind of deviations which give rise to political action. The Komo has played a preponderant role in the affairs of the clan of Ségou, as is evident from the chronicle.

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Young men are taken into the brotherhood during the harvest festivals. They appear before the circle of initiates, while those present sing:

Da woro-na nana,
Bolo-ko deu da woro-na,
Toro man na ko la-nyini.
Sira bo nin' ye, ko dugu le den',
Sira bo nin' ye ko dugu le sira.

Translation: "The sixth day has come, the sixth day of the newborn (1), and there has been no accident. Let us show the

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1. That is, those who have just been born to a new status through the soli or balo-ko.

794 way to this child, the way which the village follows."

796 One by one they pass before the wara-da who, dressed
539 in full regalia, is supposed to receive their oath. The oracle places the tube with the horn on each boy's head in turn, and the following dialogue takes place:

--Mun' b'i kun' (What is it you have on your head?), asks the oracle.

A kala be n kun' (I have his symbol (2) on my head). [274]

2. Kala, literally, is the cylindrical part of a thing; here, in the special language, it is a way of alluding to the tube with its horn and thus is a kind of symbol of the Komo.

I y'a ye wa (Have you seen it [the Komo])?

Ne m'a ye (No, I have not seen it).

I y'a fo ma min'ye, k'i kun' ti ki' son' n'i bien' ta a k'ifa (If you speak of it to anyone, may it [the Komo] smash your head and may it [the Komo] take your heart and your liver and kill you).

A ka ne fa (May it kill me).

I sirila nyama-n-fu dyala la (You are bound by the bark thong of the nyama) (1).

[824] 1. An allusion to the strips of bark from the nyama tree (Bauhinia reticulata), which make up the common costume for concealing the officiants during the ceremonies. It is simply a way of saying: "Do you agree to join?" And the reply is equivalent to: "Yes, for as long as I shall live."

Ne si sirila a la (My life is bound by this thong).

Ni si m'a fo ma si ye, Komo k'i kisi (If you speak to no one about all this, may the Komo protect you [literally, "save you"]).

A ka ne kisi (May he protect me).

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796 For a certain length of time, the new members are kept in seclusion while being instructed by initiates, especially the older ones, who see to it that they learn the songs and dances and become familiar with the special language. It is in the course of this instruction that they are given certain formulas to use for recognition among the komo-den' (sons of the Komo). The following are two examples and by no means the only ones; each Komo-ya has its own formulas, and in addition the adepts of the various Komo-ya are readily inclined to fraternize, especially when they are alone, far from their respective groups. In such cases, the identical principles of their cults bring them together, and they question each other at once:

[539] --E b' a la wa (Are you a member)?

--M ba' la (I am).

--N'i b'a la, tyoko dyira r na (If you are, show me the secret sign).

[201] This sign varies and is completely arbitrary. Sometimes it involves raising the hand with the fingers spread apart in a certain way; at other times, twigs are placed in a special pattern, and so on. [275]

The Nama

794 This cult arose at an unknown date at Missango (Bélédougou). The head of the Nama at Missango is addressed respectfully as Fura-tigi-ba, meaning literally, "grand master of the fura (fura specifically means "leaf" of a tree and, by extension, "remedy"). This is one of the expressions with double meanings which are so common in the brotherhoods: Fura-tigi-ba, the great physician, great savant, grand master.

The Nama is also called Nama-koro and Suya-koro, and a certain Nama is called Siriman 'fin'.

[778] Objects used in worship include; the Nama-kon-golo-u (craniums of the Nama), which are a kind of headdress, usually made of linge wood and shaped like fantastic birds; the wara-se (literally, "foot of the wara"), a small wooden board about a meter high with three horns affixed to it; and a similar board with two horns, called nye-bla.

794 if one had to travel, since the Dyuola [Diula] and other travelers were at the mercy of the whims and banditry of the [278] *Nama-den'* (1) and only avoided them to a certain extent by claiming to be of the *Nama-den'*. Even Moslems often became adherents of the *Nama*; all that was required of them was absolute secrecy and a few gifts in exchange for the secret passwords.

794 796 782 There are two great annual ceremonies: one at planting and the other at harvest, the dates for both decided by the *Nama-tigi* and his council. Each of them involves offerings, sacrifice, communion, and a nocturnal procession. Young members are usually admitted at the harvest ceremony.

The initiates gather for the sacrifice before the temple (*Nama-bon'*). Only the *Nama-tigi* and his clergy may enter the sacred place; the common worshipers remain outside. The sacrificial animals are brought up. Two sacrificers (*muru-kala-tigi*), naked to the waist, stretch their arms toward the four cardinal points and spit three times in each direction. Two *dye-n-fa*, also naked to the waist, hold the pieces of wood bearing horns and face the faithful. Three times the sacrificers utter the cry, "*ture-dyo*," twice alternating this cry with another, "*dyo-Nama*." They invoke the god two times, and then they slaughter the victims, sometimes inside the temple and sometimes outside.

The blood is carefully collected in receptacles, and the ashes of straw are added to it. All the cult objects, especially the *boli* itself, are smeared with the mixture. The *Nama-tigi* and the other principal initiates remove their clothing to anoint themselves with the same mixture and do not put on their garments again until the blood has dried on their bodies.

● [796 437] 1. Cf. Monteil, Binger, *op. cit.*; at the time of the great annual festivals of the Komo, all trading was halted for several days. Strangers could be sure of being respected only by claiming membership in the brotherhood. The same was true of the Nama.

794 796 The food is eaten by those attending the ceremony; the millet mush which constitutes the meal is supposed to have been prepared by the wives of the dignitaries. This communion is the most important act of the ceremony.

When night comes, the procession of the Nama takes place. Its aim is to rid the village and its environs of sorcerers, the eaters of souls known as [279] suba (1), and to discover and destroy the objects called siri which bear witness to the measures taken by the sorcerers to harm the natives.

The ritual cries of ture-dyo and dyo-Nama break into the racket of trumpets and drums while the Nama wanders about. The dye-n-fa, wearing the symbolic headdress (Nama-kongolo) and preceded by the da-ro-tigi tinkling his bell to warn people to clear the way, is followed or surrounded by torchbearers 539 (called ta-tugula-n-tigi) who shout a hymn in praise of the god.

A dyigima so Nama fambali: He is our host, mighty Nama.
A fyerela ka den': He blossoms in order to bear fruit.
Suba yo, nin kera malo-ko ye: Oh! Suba (2), shame on you!"

One of the persons in his entourage shouts defiance and curses in all directions, aimed at the suba, the eaters of souls.

It is during this procession that the dye-n-fa, at the instigation of the bearer of the symbol, discover the siri-fen' (2) [Ed., see footnote 2 above]; these are the objects used by the eaters of souls to accomplish their sinister designs or are the remains of their macabre repasts. Here it is a knife, there a pot, elsewhere a bit of human flesh (or so it is claimed)! All these things are dug up amidst cries, exclamations, and imprecations by the whole company.

A suba discovered in the course of these proceedings is hotly pursued, and it is said that, exhausted by the chase and

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1 See Chapter 7 below. [Not translated.]

2. Literally, the "bonds" (see Chapter 7 below). [Not translated]

794 overpowered by the god, he always comes to die near the temple.
796 When this happens, the wretch's corpse is left there, naked; his clothing is thrown to the roof of the temple where it remains for a long time as an example. The siri-fen' are also displayed near the temple, within sight of the women, who are allowed to come and look at them.

It is just prior to these solemn sorties of the Nama that the clergy begins the proceedings to admit the youths who have just completed the soli. In the center of a circle of the faithful in front of the temple, they take their oath of secrecy:

794 --I y'a fo ma min' ye, boli k'i son' ta, k'i been'ta, ka
796 [280] dun' i dyu fe'ka bo i da fe: If you speak to anyone, may
539 the boli take your heart and your liver, may he go in through your anus and go out through your mouth.

--O ka ke: Let it be so.

-- Ni e ma fo ma ye, k'i kisi suba-u ma k'i son' si la, k'i son' keneya la: If you tell no one, may he protect you from the suba, grant you descendants, and give you good health.

-- O ka ke: Let it be so.

The new members must pay an entrance fee of a franc and ten kola nuts and must go through a kind of initiation. For a fortnight they live apart under supervision and are required to learn the songs and dances under the tutelage of the clergy and
[198] old men. They are told the significance of the words with double meanings, which constitute the language peculiar to the brotherhood, and are also given the formula of recognition, of which the following are some examples:

-- E b'a la wa? (Are you one of us?)

-- Ne b'a la (I am).

-- Fere tyon' kan' (Show the sign).

He shows it and explains it. The questioner then concludes:

--Dya! e b'a la, ko! (You are indeed one of us)!

794 of Kore-dyuga-tigi and has the same meaning.

most part strangely accoutered dancers, each of whom dresses
301 as his fancy dictates. As ornaments, the Kor'dyuga wear strings of beautiful red beans, which are inedible, called n-go ble. These beans are about the size of a large dragée and throughout the western Sudan are used as protection against evil spirits.
292 These dancers have a leader, the Koro-duga-tigi or Kor'dyuga-tigi, who is further distinguished by a kind of cloak made entirely of bits of reed stalks. On his head he wears a conical hat made of the same reeds, and in his hand he carries a long wand from which hang birds' skulls, packets of sorghum straw, gourd stems, etc. In addition to the dancers, the clergy is accompanied by
785 flagellants (bisa-tyi-la), torchbearers (ta-tugu-la-n-tigi), and people who lash themselves with bundles of thorns (the ngoni-sa-ma-u).

534 Of course, the Kore has its orchestra, which includes drums (denu-ba), a kind of castanet (kinge), and gourds filled with seeds or pebbles (nkude) and pierced with holes.

794 The cult has the usual ceremonies, with the two great festivals at the times of planting and harvesting. On these oc-
796 casions the Kore-tigi officiates, as the nyana-n-son-na-ba does with respect to nyana dugu-da-siri. He makes the offerings, performs the sacrifices, and sets forth the requests at the foot of the sacred tree, after having thanked the god-protector. The kara and the Kore-kongolo are sprinkled with the blood of the victims; thus, the manes and the nyana of the boli are honored simultaneously.

764 There is always a meeting of the brotherhood when a Kore-de dies. There are offerings, sacrifices, and communion with all the offerings, which require one or more days of orgies to be consumed, depending on the importance of the deceased, because elders in [282] important posts like that of nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc., are particularly honored at their death.

Young men are admitted only once every seven years, and it is at this time that the ceremonies are most elaborate.

794 796 At dusk on the day selected, the clergy proceeds with the greatest pomp to the Kore-tu (grove of the Kore). The orchestra, composed of drums (denu-ba), bells (kinge), and gourds (nkude), leads the procession. Then come the high priest (Kore-tigi) and the kara-ma, "people of the plank of the dead" (kara), which one of them carries. Finally comes the dense crowd, motley and noisy, of wara-u, Kor-dyuga, bisa-tyi-la, ta-tugu-la-n-tigi, and ngoni-sa-ma.

Everyone is performing his role. The masked men imitate the beasts they represent; the costumed Kor'dyuga act like clowns; the flagellants make their switches hiss. Thus the crowd approaches the Kore-tu amidst a great din, but only the clergy may enter it. The bearer of the kara takes his place under the sacred tree. On orders from the Kore-tigi, silence falls for the reception of the Kore-de postulants.

516 The latter form a line facing the tree and the kara. They prostrate themselves in the dust for the duration of the sacred hymn of the Kore, which begins with the words, "Dyante Kore de-u." When they rise, they are dyante-ma-u, "affiliates."

The members thus admitted remain in the sacred grove for 15 days and are not allowed to return to the village. There they are instructed by the "elders." Then they are assigned to the different groups of wara; theoretically, an eldest son enters the group to which his father belongs, while the rest of the sons may choose whichever group they prefer. In addition to his duties during ceremonies, each wara has a certain job: the hyenas (suruku) guard and patrol the sacred grove and question the inquisitive to learn whether they are members (dyante ma); the Kore-duga see to the maintenance of the grove, clearing its environs in order to guard against the grove's being damaged by brush fires.

794 796 786 The offerings and the sacrifices, and then the communion repast, follow the ceremony of admission and are accompanied and followed by dancing and singing. The orgy then goes on for several days, as long as food remains. The various groups assemble for their dances, and the ta-tugu-la-n-tigi start the proceedings. With a flaming torch [283] in each hand, they chase each other, singe each other's backs and chests, and in the

794 process, let loose a rain of sparks which the Kore-duga zealously
796 put out with leafy branches. Then each dancer, carrying what
786 is left of his torch, kneels before the drums, making an obscene
gesture which arouses the laughter of the onlookers and giving
the cries, roars, or laugh of the "wild beasts." Elsewhere, the
nyoni-sa-ma are roaming among the drinkers, tearing at them-
selves with thorns. Flagellants lash themselves with switches
[785] that leave cuts from which the blood flows. They stiffen them-
selves against the pain and keep up this cruel sport, which once
again the Kore-duga mitigate by binding up the wounds.

There appears to be no doubt that during these orgies the most shameful excesses are committed without the slightest restraint.

The Nya

794 This brotherhood is highly esteemed in all the Bambara villages in the cantons of Say and Karadougou. It is less common in the canton of Séladougou; in the canton of Saro, five-sixths of the villages are loyal to it. It is rarely found in Nyansannari, and outside these areas in the circle of Djenné, there are only a few scattered Nya brotherhoods in the Bendougou and Ségou areas.

The cult arose in the Bendougou region. As has been
[443] noted above, the villages of Moribala, Kourbadougou, Diali,
etc., are market villages where all the boli are found, together
with directions for using them.

778 The boli of the Nya consists of a piece of wood from 25
794 to 30 centimeters in length and from 10 to 15 centimeters in
height and width. It is wrapped in an absorbent material, usu-
ally cotton. The blood of the victims and the liquid of the
libations are poured on this boli, and then hairs or feathers and
bits of entrails, eggs, and kola nuts are stuck to it, giving it a
repulsive appearance. It is true that the boli is often concealed
[281] from inquisitive eyes by putting it in a container made of an old
piece of the hide of a she-goat. However, since the container is
given the same treatment as the boli it contains, it is just as
disgusting.

794 [787] - Furthermore, every wara-mina-den' is able to read the will of the Nya and, more generally, to reveal the acts of the invisible by means of the divination practices which we have already mentioned.

[782] The sacrifices are performed by the muru-kala-tigi, and a dyeli (herald) serves as factotum, just as in the other brotherhoods. [285]

794 796 The faithful are initiated and called to participate in the cult to an extent determined by the clergy; they are called Nya-ko-den'-u, literally, "those who follow the Nya." In order to be admitted, an individual must give a chicken and 120 cowries. The next day, in the presence of the Nya-tigi and the wara-mina-den', the chicken is sacrificed on the boli by the muru-kala-tigi. The candidate is present, and in his behalf the Nya-tigi asks the Nya for protection against the suba, snakes, korti, and the evil eye. Then the neophyte is led to the sacred grove to be ritually purified with consecrated water contained in a vessel used exclusively for this purpose (1).

[783] 1. Every year at the time of harvest, the clergy undergoes ritual purification by washing in the sacred water. When a Nya is inaugurated, this purification takes place at the first harvest after the installation.

The two great annual festivals are celebrated at the times of planting and harvesting. Similar ceremonies take place in [731] connection with important events (epidemics, public catastrophes, etc.). For these ceremonies, during which the Nya is supposed to give revelations about the event in question and to answer various other questions troubling the faithful, the wara-mina-den' [273] undergo special preparation and at the proper time drink a very heady beverage (2) which, they say, brings on their extra-lucidity.

[691] 2. I learned most of these details about the Nya during a criminal trial brought against the wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara,

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> near Djenné. The son of the chief of that village drank the special liquid, in spite of the fact that the wara-mina-den' had told him not to do so, and died. The latter was accused of having poisoned him, but when he explained the circumstances before the native tribunal, he was acquitted.

It is said that this drink is made by soaking any sort of root found while digging graves and seasoning it with pepper, salt, and red peppers. The beverage, which is highly intoxicating, is ritually consecrated.

794 796 Excited by this beverage and by the songs and dances of a crowd which is itself warmed with drink, the wara-mina-den' during major festivals acts as a visionary who freely reveals the will and desires of the god. On the evening before these important ceremonies and for several evenings before that, all the clergy and their aides meet for a kind of rehearsal of the dances and songs. It is then that the young men prepare for the major roles they will later play. The [286] wara-mina-den' is particularly concerned with the training of the man who will replace him in case of need.

There is nothing of special interest to note about the brotherhood's treasury, which is acquired and appropriated just as in other brotherhoods. The political action of the Nya and its relations with the communities are also such that they require no special attention. [287]

Chapter 5

The Clans

1. General Considerations

631 It is usual to use the word "empire" or "kingdom" to describe the form of government of most of the Sudanese states and particularly those founded in Kaarta and Ségou by the

173 there is no country called Mandé and there never was. Every chief situates its capital wherever seems best to him."

Among these capitals are counted: Kangaba, Miami, Tabou, Diakala, Kounfangué ... For the Bambara, Mandé is the center from which issued the 48 Sudanese populations which spread out following a definite movement (3) to cover the territory included between the Atlantic coast, the Senegal, the Niger, and up to Dahomey. (4)

[796] The memory of this expansion is still preserved today in the septennial cult which brings all the people to the sanctuary of Kangaba, the Mandé blow (the vestibule of Mandé), under the direction of persons of pure race belonging to the Kéita family. (5) Other traditions recognize two centers of expansion: one to the south of Kangaba at Balanzan, the other in the Nioro circle to the south of Goumbou, Waghadou. Intertribal septennial cults commemorate this event.

From our historical point of view, we know very little about the origins of the Bambara.

172 Prehistoric geological strata, still poorly dated, found in the valleys of the Senegal and the Niger show us that these territories were very anciently inhabited. Franz de Zeltner (6) has gathered

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3. S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara" [Notes on Bambara Theodicy]. [Ed., Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, Vol. 135 (1949), pp. 187-213.]

4. Zahan, Aperçu sur la théogonie dogon [A Look At Dogon Theogony].

5. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

6. Fr. Zeltner, "Quelques gisements préhistoriques de la vallée du Sénégal" [Some Prehistoric Strata in the Valley

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considered as being in the same category as their grandparents; they are said to belong to the same age class.

561 857 [57] The relations between boys and girls before the ceremonies of circumcision and excision are governed by a sort of non-consummated marriage uniting the children of the different ton.

The little girl (ton-musso) must take care of the clothes and household of her infant husband (tontié); later she must decorate his house with designs he tells her to make. In return, her husband will give her gifts and will help cultivate her parents' field. When the girl marries in earnest, her tontié must himself give her to her husband. Throughout this false marriage, the young girl's virginity must be respected, and her tontié is held responsible for it.

561 Before their circumcision, all the children are affiliated according to their age classes to the brotherhood of the n'Tomo (see the chapter on religion). The oldest of the group will be the head of his class; all the little chiefs are subjects of the chief of the oldest group: the n'tomo-tigi and to his deputy, the n'tomo-tigi-syere. The brotherhood prepares the children for the circumcision initiation; it regulates the common work, the religious ceremonies, and the celebrations. It settles disputes that may arise between members.

561 796 The different ceremonies of the n'Tomo, which take place each year after the harvest, have been described by Monteil (1) and by Tauxier (2). They include offerings, sacrifices to the guardian spirit, a communion, and masked dances followed by a lash from the ritual whip, which marks the definitive acceptance of the neophytes.

561 Later, those who have belonged to the same n'tomoya and who have undergone the soli together are united for life. They are fulani, that is to say, twins (they are born the same day to the sexual, social,

[1] Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

[2] Tauxier, La religion bambara [The Bambara Religion].

782 The blood sacrifice is the basic element of the rites. The
778 technique used for it has been described by M. Griaule (2). The Bambara have three types of altars: the wooden stumps called pembele, altars made of roughly hewn stone, which generally represent the ancestors; and the Nyama or boli, man-made objects representing the parts of the universe.

794 The cults can be individual and familial or general for the whole village, such as the dasiri and the dangu. They are organized by religious societies, dyo, whose object is to conserve the spiritual forces of their members. For the men, these societies are: the Komo (principally), the Kworé, the Nama, the Kono, the Nago, the Nya. The women are also grouped in dyo, as yet little known, while the uncircumcised are members of the N'Domo.

The Komo is a hierarchical society whose members have obligations and taboos, such as initiation for future dignitaries of the political and religious society, study of traditions and practices of the cult, study of the science of magic and religious formulas, fabrication and consecration of protective charms (boli-w, dyo-w), knowledge of [85] poisons and antidotes, procedures for combating enemies and sorcerers.

794 Its moral authority is very widespread, and we shall see the
796 role it plays in justice and public affairs. The Komo has obligatory seasonal ceremonies, such as the festival of the cleaning of the sacred wood by the tinto-w (most recent initiates), the festival of the emergence of the komo-sen-w from the stream, that of stream fishing and of hunting on the banks at the end of the dry season, and, finally, that of the solemn return of the komo-sen-w to the stream. In addition, every seven years, a great celebration in April-May lasts for
766 15 days, with a sacrifice to the komo-ba. The ceremony ends with the nomination of a new komo-tigi (chief of the Komo), who will exercise his priesthood for seven years. He must die at the end of

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2. M. Griaule, "Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice Dogon (Soudan français)" [Remarks on Sacrificial Techniques of the Dogon (French Sudan)], Extract from the Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. X, 1940.

794 796 766 that period; his body will not be buried but will be carried off by members of the Komo, who will take it to a crossroads and crush it with the aid of *komo-se-w* [sic]. The remains will be hidden in a secret place. The same treatment is accorded to the *komo-tigi* who dies during his seven-year term.

794 The cult is cantonal, and the various *komo-tigi* take their orders from their colleagues of the capital. The cult formerly was interlcan and intertribal. Labouret (*Les Mandingues et leur langue* [The Mandingo and Their Language]) has made a table of the seven categories of persons who make up the hierarchical society of the initiates.

794 793 After initiation into the *Komo* cult, a natural sequel to circumcision, the young man may, if he so desires, be initiated into other cults.. He then enters a powerful spiritual family which unites all its members by ties of brotherhood. This brotherhood is superimposed on the normal social hierarchy of the *flã-tõ* [this term is [564 567] probably the same as *flanton*]. The chief of the brotherhood is entitled *nyama-tigi*; he is generally a man of caste or a slave. He acquires his position as chief either by inheriting it, by election, or [778] by founding a new cult. To do this latter, he must buy an altar, *gna*, from the village or from the brotherhood that already possesses this cult. Such a purchase is considered a marriage with the *gna* and is accompanied by drinking. The higher-ranking initiates (*dyenfaw*: masters of the truth) are auxiliaries of the *nyama-tigi* and participate in the oracle, *wara-da*. All the initiates are more or less divine. The clergy includes, in addition, a sacrificer, *muru-kala-tigi*, and a *dyeli*, herald of the god. To become one of the faithful, one must pay an entrance fee and swear an oath of secrecy, obedience, and fellowship. The clergy manages the cult's treasury which is fed by the entrance fees to the brotherhood, by fees levied for a class promotion, by contributions required for the major ceremonies, and by fines imposed on the members.

The brotherhood is a spiritual family which is organized in a fashion similar to the natural filiation of the community. The *nyama-tigi* plays the role of the *fa*; the *dyen-fa-w* and the notable members form a sort of council for settling, with the chief, all questions. [527] The cult does nothing on Mondays and Thursdays, the work holidays.

794 A strict internal discipline regulates the members' conduct; this discipline is founded on secrecy, obedience, and speed in carrying out orders. An accused confesses [86] his faults under the effect of the oath, torture, or divination, and the punishments are determined according to the seriousness of the offense in the eyes of the clergy. These punishments are corporal (flogging, confinement in irons, deprivation of food, death) or pecuniary (fines, confiscation); they may include forced labor for the benefit of the clergy. We shall see further on the social and political role these brotherhoods play in Bambara life.

794, 796 The Kworé society carries out the rites concerning the sky, space, the cardinal points, and the atmospheric manifestations of Faro, notably rain. The ceremonies generally take place around a tree, the kworé-jigi, situated to the east of the village. The altars are placed either in the brush, in the chief's house, or near the village. The society owns a field of small millet which is reserved to meet the needs of the cult.

[793] The n'Domo includes all the non-circumcised. Heading it is the chief, assisted by a sacrificer, muru-kala-tigi, and by a master of ceremonies, dyoloko-tigi. The society is divided into five grades, corresponding to the five fundamental altars; the initiate advances a grade each year. The society possesses a mask, a whip, and five musical instruments. An annual ceremony takes place after the harvest and includes a blood sacrifice and a ritual fight, followed by a new initiation. The society also owns a ritual field cultivated by its members.

[776] The Nama brotherhood (Nama, "hyena" in Mandé) plays an important role in the Ségou region. Nama is the god of the incomplete, the unique god, whose annual ceremonies at sowing time and harvest time are observed by the men and women together.

794 The society of Kono, whose hut is situated in the middle of the village, must also be mentioned, as well as those of Dyo, an old divinity, Nia or Gnã, Wara, and Duga.

To all of these societies, which have been described by Tauxier, Monteil, G. Dieterlen, etc., must be added the women's societies, still imperfectly known but very powerful and particularly feared by the men. The principal female dyo in the Bamako region are: the Niagua, the Kulukutu, and the J̌ide which assembles its initiates on Mondays and Fridays.

769 participate in men's lives, protect them, and make their fields 776 fertile. The farming tools are presented at their altars before the tillage, and every year their souls come to animate the maskers who dance in their honor under the supervision of the Komo. After the grain is threshed, they receive the first products and are offered sacrifices.

h. Other Rites

788 Besides the rites concerning the person, the Bambara have others, such as those relating to the household wastes where the forces of men are accumulated. The purpose of these rites is to offer these forces to Faro and to regenerate and purify men. The wastes are burned periodically, the men breathe in the fumes, and the ashes are thrown in the river. Sacrifices are offered to the god, and special dances accompany the ceremony.

796 Rain rites common to all of Africa are practiced in May by the members of the Kworé society. The rites for renewing the year involve individual, familial, and collective participation. The signs of the world are traced on the walls of individual or collective sanctuaries, and by the intermediary of a sacrifice on the altars, by dances and rhythmic chants, man renews the cardinal points and the forces of the world which in turn renew his soul. (All these rites have been described by G. Dieterlen in the Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

B. Special Technique In General Usage

773 In Bambara thought, "every technique is a reparation taught man by Faro, a palliative to the cosmic disorder which is generally caused by an infraction of taboo . . . Men first lived by gathering their food, then later by fishing and hunting; they used only their hands. Little by little the techniques appeared, following a chronology remembered by the Bambara of today. The first material to be used was the fiber of the nyama tree frond which were made the first fishing nets, the first sling, the first covering for the sexual parts." (1) The second material was wood from which the farming

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1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

776 out of the Bambara's need to soften their crime of idolatry and to preserve
177 it by lending it extenuating circumstances. If the cradle of
798 Islam is Mecca, if its superiority is derived from the holiness of that
city, chosen and beloved by God (1), what can the Moslems want of him, the Bambara, whose religion comes from this same much vaunted city? And if the God of Whom the Moslems preached to the Bambara has decreed everything (2), good and evil, if He is the Author of both good and evil and leads each person along the course that pleases Him to such a degree that he no longer has freedom of choice, why wish to take from them that which God has given them, that which comes to them from the holy city of Mecca!

776 The Bambara term for the boli is gna. Their idea of them
•796 corresponds closely to the Arab concept of the chéitane شيطان ,
782 and in everyday language, they define them by a single word: sétané,
[192] "satan," even though this word is never on their lips in the sacrifices.
In their nocturnal orgies and religious dances, the Negroes' notion
of the genie to which they are sacrificing are shown in concrete form.
And when, in their religious ceremonies in honor of the Komo, Kono,
[778] Nama, etc., the spirit appears by the glow of little fires lit in the
sacred woods, decked out in a cloak of feathers, his head hidden in a
huge horned mask that has nothing human about it, one cannot help
776 thinking of the tales of old Breton grandmothers, told on a winter
796 evening in the stables. The blasting of trumpets, bamboos, and koba
534 horns (3), the tinkling of /72/ the little bell, and the shouts of the
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1. See what I said above on the subject of Mecca and Stamboul.

2. See the Koran: VI, v. 3 - 39; X, v. 99; XIV, v. 4; XVII, v. 32; XXXVI, v. 6, 7, 8, 9; LIII, v. 43, 44, 45 - 49; LXXVI, v. 29; LXXX, v. 29; etc.

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3. Formerly the trumpets and horns were ivory. The Moslem tyrants quickly had them confiscated, no doubt because they knew the price of an elephant tusk. At present the Bambara use only cattle horns and those of the koba, a large antelope which grows to the size of a fine heifer. (Koba is the word that designates this antelope in the Peul language; the Bambara call it dadjé, "white mouth, " no doubt because it has two white lines on its jowls.)

crowd grip and terrify you and make you think yourself transported into the midst of a sabbath of long ago. When one has been present at these scenes, one does not doubt the veracity of the Negroes who say: "When the boli appears it is hideous and freezes with fear whoever sees it. It is as black as soot and its face disappears in a flame above which there are horns."

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The face disappearing in a flame inevitably recalls the idea of an infernal spirit, and one who has been present at certain sacrifices to the Komo and the Nama, for example, and has heard the blasphemies of the sacrificer no longer doubts that it is Satan himself that is worshipped here. The blasphemies are repeated by all those present: Alla k'an bla, "may God leave us" (the real meaning: "We do not want God"); Alla djampa ba, "God is a great traitor" (meaning: "God makes promises and does not fulfill them, since he has decreed everything and his decrees are immutable"; A yé né djampa, "he has betrayed me," says a Negro of someone who has made him a promise and has not kept it). One is further convinced by being present at the sacrifice to Touafé Bla (1), one of the most ancient boli. The

1. The name Touafé Bla undoubtedly comes from the custom of suspending

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this boli from the belt and hanging
it at the side along the thigh.

three most famous sorcerers, whose names -- Makono, Tjewolo, and Tjéba -- have been preserved, but whose origin is lost in the dark of ages, sacrificed to it by preference. This is the formula:

"Touafé Bla, Touafé Bla, the mountain of Touafé Bla is known, the trees of this mountain are known, I want to speak of the fire of its mountain. Touafé Bla, spare some houses (meaning: 'those of my friends') and go and kindle (your fire) in others (meaning: 'cast ruin and desolation among my enemies, among those who wish me ill'). Touafé Bla, favor me, and if I cannot see your fire, Touafé Bla, let me at least see the tip of its long column of smoke (meaning: 'you live in the fire; I cannot see your dwelling, but I can still know your power through the smoke of your fire, that is to say, /I shall know it/ if I am a witness of the misfortunes which you will cause to fall on my enemies and those whom I hate'). " /73/

This formula shows us clearly that the boli, or gnâ, live in fire. The Negroes sacrificed to them before the arrival of the Moslems, and gave concrete form to their concept of the infernal spirit, just as they do today, by decking themselves out in a hideous horned mask and a cloak of feathers. Their blowing and shouting in the sacred woods on the days of great orgies have remained the same, and although they have taken the words sétané شَيْطَان, and djahanéma جَهَنَّم, from the Moslems, they have had the concept for a long time. [192]

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Now then, as to the Bambaras' knowledge of the Supreme Being, God the Creator and Ruler, Lord of all, do they owe it to the Moslems?

The Bambara have too hierarchical a nature to need a master here! The youngest child is always the slave of the next older brother, who is the slave of an older one, and so the progression moves up invariably without ever changing, to the grey beard, the elder, the tjekoroba, a real fetish whom everyone obeys, whatever his stupidity, his narrowness of mind, or his lack of judgment.

In every family there is the same progression: the immediate lord of the children is their father, while he in turn bows before his

869 of the n'tomotigi. /93/

794 These two children prepare the hunts for rats and lizards, organize the games and supervise them, and if an offence is committed 561 by the band, it is up to them to discover the culprit. When quarrels, arguments, and fights arise among the children, they intervene, judge each case, and, if the matter is worth the trouble, the mischief-maker, or the one who is declared responsible, is severely beaten. All this produces unity within the various groups and prevents them from coming to blows at every moment.

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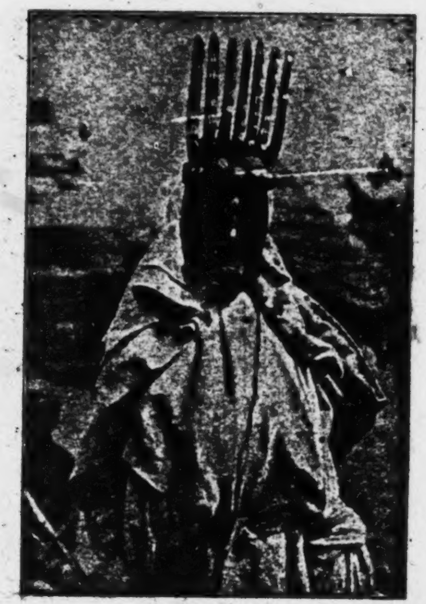

Mask of the n'tomo, the children's fetish.

The little girls also have an organization into groups; but it lacks cohesion; it would have to be religious in nature, since religion is the basis of all unity in the Bambara country. Only at the time of excision does all this change, and then there is real cohesion among them.

796 Every year children sacrifice to the n'tomo genie through the mediation of their head, the n'tomotigi. The day of the sacrifice is 859 a day of great rejoicing which ends in flagellation. The material for

796 857 the sacrifice is furnished by the children themselves; all of them together work a small field for this purpose during the winter, and if the harvest is not sufficient, they go begging from door to door so that nothing will be lacking at the feast -- neither d'lo, the millet beer, nor kola nuts. On the evening of this great day, each new initiate chooses his n'golo mouso, as they call the little girl each one takes as his "sister of the heart," his bonne amie as one would say in France /his girlfriend/. But she is more; she is a little maid of all work, and the gift which he gives her every year at the celebration is more a payment than a gift of friendship, "pure and simple." /94/

7. The Genie Protector of Circumcised Youths

794 776 778 At circumcision the Bambara leave the association of the n'tomo and place themselves under the protection of more powerful genii. These genii are all of the same nature, only the name differs with each region, and all the confraternities are copied after one and the same model. The most widespread is that of the n'golo (1).

1. In Bani it is the n'goso rather than the n'golo.

The n'golo is nothing but two forked branches fastened together and hung on a light dloma (2). One can meet it quite often in a corner of the village, out of doors, but usually it is under a small shed or hut. This genie gives the youths not only strength, vigor, and health, but also the talent, if not of pleasing women, at least of attracting them and thus being able to obtain some crude satisfactions. It helps the unmarried to meet the girl of the moment, and thanks to it,

[342] 2. Dloma are forked sticks on which rest the crossbars or beams that hold up the flat terrace roofs. The name dloma is given to all forked sticks, small and large.

794 The to-n-dé, or members of the association, are formed into groups, each corresponding to a circumcision, and all these groups, united among themselves by a common bond, which is the worship to be rendered to the n'golo genie, submit to and obey the head, the n'golo tigi, preferably called to-n-tigi. Thanks to this unity, a host of quarrels and fights is avoided, and they all help each other, sharing in the joys and sorrows of their fellow members. In a word, this association corresponds, in miniature, to our societies of mutual assistance and help.

794 To get a girl of the moment, the young to-n-dé from time to
796 time sacrifice a small pullet. But a big sacrifice is made yearly and the victim is at least a goat; it is offered in the name of all. The offering of the general sacrifice does not prevent each initiate from adding a hen and a kola nut; food abounds, millet beer flows in streams, the association furnishes food and drinks to the whole village and to friends from surrounding villages. On this day also the youths circumcised during the year enter the confraternity of the n'golo and become to-n-de, or members of the organization of the fla-n-to. To do so they must spend from 80 to 120 cowrie shells (2 to 3 sous) and offer to the fetish the hen and two kola nuts as a sacrifice.

8. The Women's Genie

776 Not all villages possess this fetish tree, which is called mouso
824 ka djiri (2), but all hamlets have a genie whose chief function is to

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2. This tree is often a fig tree called n'zoro or a toro sycamore (ficus vogeli, ficus ferruginosa). Mouso means "woman"; ka is particle indicating possession; djiri means "tree"; the whole phrase therefore means "the tree of the women."

● 796 A great sacrifice to the spirit protector of the village, the
825 dasiri, is made every year. The spirit always has a mount such as
782 a snake, a rat, a lizard, a donkey, etc.; almost everywhere the
mount is a terrible billy goat that roams through the village, enters everywhere, eats everything, and breaks everything without paying attention to the switch. For at least three days at the time of the sacrifice, the village makes merry; men, women, and children dance, stuff themselves with food, and drink and get drunk.

796 Just as everyone takes part in the feasting and drinking, so all
participate in the sacrifice, even the women, who at least go to the
782 edge of the sacred grove, though they do not enter. And /101/ there
is an abundance of everything: dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, d'lo, or millet beer, and finally meats. At least a goat, and sometimes a bull, is killed for the whole village, and the heads of families offer goats and hens, depending their wealth.

782 In addition to the sacrifices offered once a year and those offered
778 by a family when one of the children marries, the fetish receives
776 homage and tribute from just about everyone. Sterile women and
those who habitually miscarry offer it many hens and fawn upon the animal that is its mount. If one gives birth to a baby, one consecrates it to the fetish, calling it dji-ri-ba ("great tree"), gnéna ma ké (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"; ké, "male"), or gnéna ma (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"). They even like to add the name of the village where the bountiful dasiri is found: Kolotomo gnéna ma (1), /102/ (man or daughter of the dasiri genie of Kolotomo). Actually, the name gnénama is given only to girls; for boys the word ké ("male") is added: gnénama-ké.

776 It is known through the mediation of sorcerers that a dasiri
778 sometimes leaves its sacred grove and its tree. This event is unusual;
824 the tree may fall from old age, but the sacrifices will be continued

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1. Kolotomo, the name of a village about 30 kilometers from Ségou; gnena, "genie"; ma, "man."

782 There are many kinds of *saraka*, and they are offered for just
857 about all purposes. Besides those given by order of sorcerers, there are some established by custom itself, and uncircumcised children are required to carry them out. They often hunt turtles, /108/ palm rats, guinea fowl, and partridges, so they plant a strong dry branch either outside the village or even inside it, and on its branches hang the heads of captured animals and the shells of eggs they have sucked. This is their way of thanking the genii, of ensuring other successful hunts, and of protecting themselves from the *gnâma* of their many victims.

782 The Bambara also give the name of *saraka* to some practices that are purely and simply superstitious and do not, strictly speaking, have the character of religious worship. In these instances the word *saraka* must be given a broader meaning than that which I have attributed to it. The old shoes, caps, fruit rinds, rags, etc., hung here and there on branches of trees are not so much a rendering of homage by the Black to a genie, to an external agent, as they are a tribute paid their own inner, personal, and unreasoned fear. In this respect they are like some Europeans, foster brothers of these idiots, who believe in the salt cellar, crossed knives, thirteen at the table, Friday, etc., who turn over the salad bowl before undertaking a serious matter, or slide a four-leaf clover into their vest pockets. And why? It brings good luck, causes success. And how? They cannot tell you, for with them it is not reasoned -- nor is it with the Bambara.

2. *Gnéna* of the Third Group;
The Eight /sic/ Categories of Powerful *Gnéna*

776 The third group of genii have their priests and ministers;
782 *saraka* are not enough for them, and they receive sacrifices. The
● 796 public sacrifices are annual, and the whole population -- men, women, and children -- participate. *Dégé* (/millet/ flour mixed with water), white hens, and white kola nuts are the usual material of the sacrifice, and the formula recited can always be reduced to the following: "Give us water; cause peace to reign among us, in the

776 village and in our families; grant us plenty and wealth, give us many
782 wives, healthy and vigorous children, and a long and hearty old age."
796 If the occasion is semipublic /109/ or public, a general sacrifice is
always offered in the name of the family, the quarter, or the village, and then individual sacrifices follow. On the days when they are held, there are always dances and drinking bouts, for the favors of a fetish cannot be obtained except by leaping to the sound of drums and by getting drunk.

At the risk of repeating myself, I cannot resist giving the fascinating side of the Negroes' attachment to their fetishism and describing the festivals and celebrations in honor of the principal fetishes -- in order that the reader may gain a greater understanding and feeling for their worship.

The N'tomo, the Special Children's Fetish

852 The harvest is over, and the yield of the field cultivated by the
796 children during the winter, together with the small donations received
from the people of the village, allows the n'tomigi (head of the confraternity) and his siéré (aide, deputy) to furnish its initiates and the old men -- the latter are never forgotten -- with a plentiful feast of kola nuts, millet beer, or d'lo, and /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, or dégé. The day of the celebration is set by the head of the village and by the elders, and everyone prepares for it two weeks in advance. In the blon, or entrance huts, and in the
852 shade of trees, one sees nothing but old men cutting and sewing dloki,
796 bougi, bogo, and yaba (1), which will be worn for the first time on
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1. Dloki, a large blouse. Bougi, near Ségou, a kind of pants without legs; in Bani country, a strip of cloth three to four fingers wide which goes around the waist, passes between the thighs, and drops in back, forming flaps over the heavy part of the thighs.

852 The end of this strip is tucked up.
● 796 Bogo, garment worn by girls until
291 their marriage, consisting of a
strip of cloth tied at the waist and
falling in back to make a train.
Yaba, boys' jacket, especially common in Bani country.

that day. A swarm of children patch the yellow or white blouses that will be worn during the dance, and grease and re-grease the mask of the n'tomo. They pay special attention to the horns, which are often hidden under little thongs of red leather decorated from end to end with well-polished cowrie shells as white as snow.

But now we come to the longed-for day! All the little rebels
852 go single file to the fetish tree, and each carries the hen, its feet
796 tied, which he intends for the sacrifice. They /110/ all take off their
782 blouses -- the little undergarment allows freer movement and is less hampering -- and, after some whispering they finally end up squatting, fixing their big, black eyes on the leader, the n'tomotigi, who begins the sacrifice with the assistance of his aide, the siéré.

This little fellow is really funny, as with the solemnity of an old man he pours the dégé, sprinkles the blood of the hens, and noisily spits the remains of a piece of chewed kola nut onto the sacred tree, the dwelling of his genie. I do not doubt that he is convinced, and thoroughly convinced, that he is not addressing a tree trunk that has no consciousness; he believes that he is in the presence of who watches him, waits for him, and asks only to grant his wishes. Since he is addressing a powerful being, fear and emotion at first make him tremble; but gradually his voice grows firmer, and very clearly he pronounces his formula: "N'tomo ye, see this hen, a beautiful hen, isn't it? It is fat! n'tomo, on behalf of all of us I offer you this hen as a sacrifice. Favor us, defend us against the fury of the genii of the bush and against the malicious. Make us strong and vigorous, give us plenty to eat and drink, drive sickness from us. Give us water and a good harvest, n'tomo, and give wealth to our families."

852 ● 796 782 After this special sacrifice come the individual sacrifices, and the very young boys who are henceforth to belong to the n'tomo prostrate themselves before the fetish tree and take an oath to reveal nothing to the uninitiated, and especially not to little girls. This oath is not at all trivial: "If you talk, if you reveal your oath," says the leader showing each one some black powder, "you will die." And they all reply without trembling: "May I die!"

857 796 When the rite of admission is over, each initiate plucks his hen and draws it, and while the victims simmer over the fire in an earthen conari, the youngsters beat drums and abandon themselves to the dance, and so into a frenzy which continues under the eye of the fetish, in the shade of its preferred tree until the time of the feast. Each child in turn dances the dance of the fetish, which consists of leaps and capers and a graceful twirling of a flexible switch. To dance he dons [292] the white or yellow blouse of the fetish (n'tomo ka dloki, "the blouse of the n'tomo"), which is white (dje) or black, yellow (fign, as I said in the preceding chapter) /sic/ /111/, and takes the horned mask, the n'tomo kongolo ("head of the n'tomo") by means of which he externalizes in a concrete form his concept of the genie.

Victims abound, and the feast is plentiful. There is enough for everybody, and there is not one on that day who does not lick his fingers and say with a smile: "Ne ne fara de! (1), How full I am!"

1. Né, "me," "I"; fara, "am full"; dé, "surely."

The little boys' families contribute much, for Bambara mothers and little sisters have good hearts. Thanks to them, every initiate can offer from 10 to 20 liters of dégé, the same amount of d'lo; and his gourd of to (gruel) holds enough to tire six to eight big eaters. In addition to the dessert, which is kola nut, each boy receives a new garment for himself and a light bogo and sometimes a tafé (2) for

[291] 2. Tafé, rectangular piece of cloth which the women wear around their hips.

852 • 796 his "sister of the heart." In fact, on the day of his admission to the *n'tomo* every small Bambara chooses a *n'golo mouso* to whom he gives a small gift each year. The dreadful part of this custom is that in Bambara country the *n'golo mouso* is less prudish than the girl friend or sweetheart of a little French boy and is often a little maid-of-all-work who lends herself without qualms to unhealthy and indecent play.

After the feast, which takes about three hours, the *n'tomo déou* (sons of the *n'tomo*) leave the place of sacrifice and return to the village in Indian file, preceded by drums. *D'lo*, or millet beer, awaits them, but before touching the divine liqueur they must perform a bloody rite. It is hideous, and yet, it is the high point and chief attraction of the celebration!

On the public square, in front of drums that give the measure 852 and beat the rhythm, the young *n'tomo déou* flagellate themselves, 796 usually until they bleed. The old men run up, dragging their mats 785 after them; the women, squatting on their tiny stools, clap their hands and sing; and mothers wrap the loins of their children in long white scarves to protect their lower abdomens from misdirected blows. The *n'tomigi* and his *siéré* -- honor to whom honor is due -- go into the arena, and while the little leader holds his switch above his head with both hands, /112/ the *siéré* beats him hard with his own switch on the back chest, calves, soles of his feet, and everywhere. When he is tired of beating or his switch breaks, he stops and the leader in his turn gives a round to his aide. In this way, two by two, according to age and size, the children flagellate (1) each other. The flick, flack of whip lashes, which cause blood to spurt, bruise the flesh, and always leave a furrow as wide as a thumb, may often be heard for hours. Little boys of six or seven years often stop at the second blow to scratch their backs and open their mouths to cry, but I have seen some stay unmoved just like their elders of ten to twelve years, without a

1. In Bani country each child flagellates himself. Although that is not the usual custom, it may be encountered in many villages.

852 tear, a complaint, or a cry of pain, and they are so imperious that
796 one might think they were of bronze.
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The N'golo, the Special Fetish of the Circumcised

852 The children of this fetish, whose function I explained in the
794 preceding chapter, grant themselves many days of celebration in its honor in the course of the year. The main festival, however, is annual and in addition to the dégé, a hen, and two kola nuts offered by each initiate, a goat is sacrificed on behalf of all.

Since it is from this fetish that the fla-n-to organization derives its existence, its members, the to-n-déou, offer drink and food to the whole village for two or three days. The women, too, contribute their share to this horrible drinking bout, and their queen (fama, massa) -- humbling herself before the to-n-tigi, head of the fla-n-to and priest of the n'golo, who thoughtlessly wastes the produce of the field worked by his subjects in the winter -- distributes many kola nuts and adds still more to the d'lo, which already flows in streams.

The beer is drunk out of doors on the public square, and everyone -- men, women, and children -- is there, shouting, dancing,
and getting drunk. Seated under a goua, a shed covered with coarse
[346] mats, /113/ and surrounded by his acolytes (the siéré, the djéli, and the djalatiké), the to-n-tigi sits in the place of honor, and it is he who directs the drinking and the dances. He is really king on these days, and all obey him at the slightest sign, gesture, or word. When he gets up to romp or take a turn before the drums, he is honored; all the initiates call "you you," shake their caps (ban fla), and compete as to who will take his gun, spear, stick, or ax and beat the time for the dance. But he wants to speak; he must speak; he feels the need to issue an order, to give thanks, or to impose a light fine on his band; and his spokesman runs to his side. He repeats the speech of his chief word for word and sentence by sentence, and sometimes even adds a comment of his own, for some Bambara have a sharp wit and very easily find a saying to bring a laugh.

852 194 Every time one of the three principal members of the staff, wants to dance, respects are paid to them or to their leader, and all day and all night nothing is heard but frightful "you you" and atrocious cries. There is a protocol for everyone to follow, and before each to-n-dé begins to prance in front of the drums, he goes and bows to his leader to show his devotion and respect for him. He holds himself like a spring, brandishes the gun, ax, or stick that he will use in the dance, and in one jump strikes his feet together under the nose of the one to whom he is paying his respects. The women are quieter and show their respect by a genuflection before the master.

In addition to his staff the master of a n'golo, the to-n-tigi, has pages, a standard bearer, trumpeters, and soldiers, and to vary the program he goes here and there with his frenzied band to greet an elder and give him a serenade. In some villages custom decrees that the youths put on the best they have in the way of clothing; in others, on the contrary, they must get themselves up in horrible, dirty rags so that, on seeing them thus clad, one asks where they could have dug up all these horrors. They must amuse themselves and be [522] amused, laugh and cause laughter, and this last aim is always accomplished as they have such priceless mimics. /114/

The Mouso ka djiri, the Women's Special

776 196 831 It is impossible to know all the genii responsible for watching over women, for they are legion. Every month, at the new moon, the women organize a dance in their honor, and every year they make a public, solemn sacrifice to them. The most widespread is the mouso ka djiri, and its worship flourishes especially in Bani country.

When its festival comes, all the excised women offer it a little /millet/ flour mixed with water, a hen, and two kola nuts, and the head of the village, or, in his absence, an elder, goes and reddens the bark of the fetish tree (1). There is no need for me to go into

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[782] 1. Some people assert that they have seen women sacrificing. I have seen women perform saraka involving bloodshed, but never a sacrifice.

776 this sacrifice at length, for in the preceding chapter I stated the
796 function of the fetish; it may be imagined that the ladies and maidens
831 ask for whatever makes a woman strong and beautiful. Moreover, the indecent dances to which they abandon themselves under the sacred tree sufficiently reveal their inner thoughts. They have only one -- to show their breasts to the fetish and scratch their navels on its bark; in some villages custom demands this, and it is required of all. Young girls do it to develop their breasts, married women to become fertile, and all of them to be protected from the unpleasant accidents peculiar to their sex.

796 There is no festival without a feast and none without drinking, and the women offer the whole village sorghum gruel and beer for a drinking bout. They also offer kola nuts to all the elders and heads of families, and they know better than to withhold this treat from fathers, husbands, grown sons, older brothers, and those they love.

The Sinsin, the Special Twin's Fetish

782 The sacrifice to a sinsin is made on the umbilical cord which
845 is hung in the center of plates of woven grass that constitute the
778 fetish. Each plate belongs to one of the twins and even bears his
852 name. The sacrifices in honor of this fetish are always double; for each child separately, the family offers /millet/ flour /115/ mixed with water, millet beer, a kola nut, and a hen.

This is strictly a family fetish; the father of the family is its
845 priest, and only the children and their parents are present at the
778 sacrifices. Everything is done in a quiet and happy intimacy, and
852 although there may be a few drunkards here and there, there is never an orgy. Sacrifices to a sinsin are made very frequently to bring its blessing to the mother and children; they are also performed on all occasions of the slightest importance in the lives of the twins: when their hair is cut eight days after birth, at the tattooing festival, at circumcision, at marriage, etc. Once a year a more formal sacrifice is made; the women cook d'lo, the millet beer, and the

793 782 621 778 The gnéna-n-sonnaba, the dougoutigi, assumes office from the first day and offers a sacrifice in the name of his people. On the trunk of the tree, about a meter from the ground, he pours d'lo, or millet beer, and dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with water, and causes a flow of blood from hens, roosters, goats, and sometimes from a young bull. After this general sacrifice, individual ones follow, for, in order to /118/ place himself under the protection of the genie, each family head in order of seniority offers it a little dégé and a little blood, through the intermediary of his leader, the priest. And on the trunk of the tree there is nothing but great blood stains with feathers, hairs, and shreds of skin stuck in their midst with the remains of chewed kola nuts. Then come the dances, and men, women, and children go into a frenzy at the sound of drums; and the tumult is indescribable.

Sacrifices offered to the dasiri

778 782 796 A path a meter wide leads from the village to the fetish tree which is always located in the middle of a small grove if possible. Heads of families sacrifice to it several times a year -- on the morning after the konio, or first night of marriage, for example, but the festival in which the whole village takes part is annual. The ceremony has greater importance every second year, and every seventh year it degenerates into an orgy.

During the sacrifice the women stay at the edge of the sacred grove, and only the men and boys go inside and surround the fetish. After an offering of dégé and a little d'lo, the throat of a sheep or goat is cut in the name of the whole village, and the head of each family, comes with hens, sheep, goats, etc., according to the family's means and the number of members; the meat piles up. The hens are plucked on the spot, the large pieces are cut up, and the women carry it all back to the village. Each family head is given a piece as big as a fist from the first sacrifice offered in the name of all, and this, too, is [252] taken back to the village; the rest is roasted and then grilled on the spot and eaten by the men, without salt, pepper, or any kind of seasoning. The dégé and d'lo of the main sacrifice are drunk under

778 the fetish tree, the former by the children who smear themselves
782 and whiten their entire faces, and the latter by the men and circumcised
796 youths (1).

1. By the main sacrifice I mean the sacrifice made in the name of the whole village.

After the noon meal men, women, and children go to the public square to drink beer, or d'lo, and to dance. /119/ The signal for the celebration is given by the gnéna-n-sonnaba, who makes a little speech inviting his children (né ka démisenou, "my children," "my subjects") to have fun and to drink but to avoid fights and quarrels, and then launches into a quadrille. While he dances, the crowd stands bareheaded, cries "you you" loudly, and competes as to who will shake his spear or ax to beat the measure. This annual festival goes on for three or four days, as long as the d'lo, or millet beer, lasts.

776 All circumcised men and excised women may, through the
782 intermediary of the gnéna-n-sonnaba, offer a sacrifice to the genie
protector of the village. Anyone who thinks he has offended or displeased
it offers one -- with or without bloodshed according to his
means -- to obtain pardon, propitiate it, and gain its favor. Individuals
sacrifice primarily to make requests; a di ("give it") are
the first words they were able to lisp as infants. A sterile woman
[842] will offer it a kola nut, dégé, a rooster or a hen at every moment,
always promising not to be miserly and to give more if she becomes
a mother. She will be especially assiduous toward the dasiri animal,
the mount of the genie of this name; she will coax it, stuff it with
bran, and will often go far into the bush to pick it a stalk of grass
or a leafy branch which are its delicacies.

776 Genii spirits can leave the spring, the rock, or the tree where
778 they have established their dwellings, and the dasiri is no exception
to this rule. If it does so, the fetish tree loses its sanctity, becomes
a common object, and can be destroyed. Similarly, all things in
the sacred grove, both plant and animal, cease to be taboo and can
be used for their customary purposes. The dasiri is not at all fickle.

782 you accept it at my hands." If one of the pieces falls with the pulp
787 on top and the other onto the pulp, there is an affirmative answer from
the dasiri. The sacrificer bites the kola nut, cuts out with his teeth
the piece that contains the seed, and, when he has chewed it a moment,
spits the remains onto the bark of the fetish tree.

This procedure, wholly dependent on chance, is often long, for the pieces of kola nut do not always fall in the desired position at the first try. After three failures the crowd ceases to restrain itself and, with gestures and voice, each person intercedes for the unfortunate one. The cries do not stop until the kola nut gives the answer, "I accept and am no longer angry!"

The Semioccult Society of the Koré, or Koté

794 The Bambara are, above all, farmers, and cultivating a field
241 has such great importance in their eyes that for them it alone really
[461] deserves the name of work. One who does not handle the pick may
be active and skillful, but he is not a worker and one does not say of
him: "A bi ajaké, he is working." But will the seed that /122/ they
consign to the earth in the winter sprout, grow, become large, and
ripen? However little one knows the Bambara, one can imagine and
understand their fears, for they are surrounded by a band of malicious
spirits ever ready to pounce on them. Therefore they heed protectors
and helpers, and at planting time they offer something to all, even
to the rain. The main fetish to which they appeal is the koté, or
koré, which lives in a tree in the middle of a small grove.

794 In order to be present at the sacrifices to the koté, it is
796 necessary to be initiated and to know the password. This initiation,
534 may take place by day, but at least in Bani country, it usually takes
place at nightfall when the setting sun takes on a bloody hue. The
sons of the genie go in procession to the sacred grove. The korétigi,
the priest, opens the march, preceded by musicians who beat the
denouba (1) and the kingé (2). With him are the kârâ ma ("man of

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1. Drums over a meter long and peculiar to the kore.

2. A kind of triangle which is hung on the thumb of the left hand and is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger.

[778] the kârâ"), one of whom carries the kârâ, the perforated board which is the emblem of the fetish and at the same time the altar on which sacrifice is made to deceased members. First come the souroukou (hyenas) who guard the sacred grove and during the sacrifices drive away prying, uninitiated people; they wear crude masks, roll their big heads right and left, and utter frightful "hou hous." The [522] korodouga (clowns), who rake the paths in the sacred grove as well as its environs to protect it from brush fires, run from one to another shouting obscenities. Furiously they shake their gourds, which have handles and are perforated and filled with small stones, and furiously they blow into pipes made of pumpkin stems. The leader of this [292] band is dressed up in a cloak made of reed stems, he also wears a reed headdress which is topped by a pyramid of large red beans called n'go blé and decorated with a plume; in his hands he holds the emblem of the group, a long pole on which are hung dirty bags, sorghum stems 10 to 20 centimeters long bound into bundles, pumpkin stems, /123/ skulls of rats, beaks of ducks and hawks, panther claws, etc.

794 796 292 522 Apart from the long string of red beans which all korodougo are required to wear which they twine around their necks several times or sling over the shoulder, crossing and recrossing it on the back and chest, each one dresses according to his own inspiration. The hats are made of bunches of feathers, wings of vultures and ducks, and even entire birds, and around them to decorate them further are red beans, rat skulls, birds beaks, claws, and small bones; all these objects fall on the neck and shoulders and knock together with a sinister sound. Next to men in full breeches are men in rags or men with close-fitting trousers made of innumerable pieces all in different

794 colors, one leg of which goes down to the ankle while the other does
796 not even reach the knee. Some brandish wooden swords, and others
292 ride astride on a bamboo, a reed, or a sorghum stalk, rearing and
522 kicking, and there is not one who does not act the clown.

The bisatjila (flagellants) make their flexible whips whistle in
794 the air; shortly thereafter these whips rain blows onto their backs; the
796 [185] ta tougoula (fire lighters, incendiaries) seem impatient to shower
their bare backs with sparks. The djara (lions) or sogo (beasts, animals) with masks even larger than those of the souroukou (hyenas) growl around the n'goni sama (1), also called wara (fearless wild animals).

1. N'goni, "thorns"; sama, "to kill for oneself."

The soula run from one group to another, slip between legs, and never stay still; they are seen everywhere, sometimes standing, sometimes with hands on the ground on all fours, or again sitting down, breaking bundles of grass or bits of wood between their hands and throwing them with shrill cries at the heads of their companions. And at the end of the procession come the old men, weighed down by the years and no longer of an age for all this fancy dress. They drag or carry the victims intended for the sacrifices.

In the grove around the sacred tree, there is a deafening noise of drums, triangles, reed pipes, and many voices /124/ that shout all together without ever harmonizing. At a sign from the leader, the kârâ bearer goes and stands before the fetish tree, and everything becomes calm and quiet. The youths who have been waiting for seven years to be initiated advance in a line, fall on their knees before the fetish and its emblem, and then prostrate themselves with foreheads in the dust. They remain in this position as long as the sacred hymn
lasts. On rising, they say: "Djanté koré déou djanté (djanté children
[535 of the djanté koré), djanté ma (man of the djanté), " and each dances
931] the dance of the group to which he belongs. These dances are indecent
and always conclude with an obscene gesture.

The oldest sons belong to the groups of their fathers; as to the others, they choose the group they like best. Thenceforth they are

794 korédé ("sons of koré"), and in all the province of Ségou, wherever
● 796 a sacrifice is offered to the fetish, they may go into the sacred grove
without any fear and take part in the mysteries. They have the password -- "djanté ma, man of djanté," and will know how to answer when interrogated by the souroukou (group of the hyena).

794 After the initiation the korétigi (priest of koré) proceeds with
sacrifices. Everything happens as at the dasiri: after the libations of
796 /millet/ flour (dégé) and beer (d'lo), the trunk of the sacred tree is
782 reddened with blood, and all around the blood are tufts of fur and
feathers stuck to the bark by remainders of chewed kola nut. A hyena mask called koré koungolo ("head /tête/ of koré") is also reddened with blood, as is the kàrà, the emblem of the genie which is used as an altar for deceased initiates. Part of the meat is taken to the village, and the rest is grilled on the spot and eaten without any seasoning whatever.

In the sacrifices, koré and those that form its court are asked to watch over the harvest so that it may be abundant, to watch over the flocks so that they may thrive, to provide the petitioners with their fill of food and drink all their lives, and to give them a vigorous old age, etc., and all this is requested for one sole purpose: "so that we may be able to enjoy a woman and devote ourselves to carnal pleasures."

794 After the repast the crowd abandons itself to the dance, and un-
796 til morning there is an indescribable uproar and endless shouting.
At daybreak they go to the public square, and as long as the beer (d'lo) lasts /125/ the orchestra makes bedlam in front of the drinkers who squat around full gourds, and the women sit on mats or tiny stools piled on top of each other, clap their hands, and answer the obscenities of the korodouga with further obscenities.

The dance of the groups, in which all members, young and
[535] old, take part, consists of more or less comical contortions which they execute going around in a circle, one behind the other. The old men tire quickly and their throats soon get dry, so they are not slow to sit down and get drunk to please koré, and the young people then abandon themselves and dance to their hearts' content.

794 Two or three tatougoula, a flaming torch in each hand, open
796 the dance. They scorch their backs, chests, and armpits, and
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794 thousands of sparks rain onto their heads and bare bodies, and smoke
796 and sizzle on their skins before going out. The korodouga, armed with
785 leafy branches, chase the sparks. They devote themselves chiefly
to their obscene songs; their minds on the perforated gourds which
they shake furiously, and more than one dancer feels himself getting
roasted. And when the torches are almost burned out the tatougoula
squat before the big drum and for the last time shake the handful of
[522] burning straw that they have left. An obscene gesture provokes a
stifled laugh here and there, a "hou hou" from the souroukou, a roar
from the djara, a chuckle from the soula, and cries of encouragement
from around the gourds: "O do, that's it!"

While the djara /lions/ or sogo /beasts/, /wearing/ huge masks roar around the groups of drinkers, the ng'oni sama or wara tear their chests and their armpits with brushes of thorns, and the soula, grimacing and weeping, throw the group of women into confusion and put the children to flight. As to the bisatjila, they circle like lions in a cage, uttering wild animal cries and trying to excite themselves. Suddenly, as if seized by fury, they brandish their long, flexible whips. These whirl for a moment above their heads, whistle in the air, and then slap the flesh. The men strike hard; each blow leaves its mark or furrow, and /126/ blood often flows. They pale and tremble in all their limbs under the pain, but in spite of everything they strike and strike, for the instrument of torture must be worn to shreds and fly to pieces. At every blow of the whip the korodouga band throw themselves onto the victim and massage and rub him, and the souroukou lose themselves in indecent behavior in front of the great drum.

794 In addition to the sacrifice offered every seven years, there are
796 annual sacrifices to the koré, to the shades of its priests, the korétigi,
and finally to the shades of its initiates, the korédé. There is always
782 a sacrifice at the death of an initiate; the groups dance the sacred
764 dance, and for three nights there is the shouting and the indescribable
bedlam in the koré tou ("grove of the koré") of which I have told.

794 If the deceased initiate was an old man, a graybeard, he has
764 completed his whole career and his fellow-members come in great
numbers to pay him their respects. Before the corpse, which is laid
out under the trees which shade the entrance of the village, they

778 At the annual sacrifice the *gouatigi*, or head of the family,
596 offers a goat and at least a hen and a kola nut for each male child no
782 matter how strained his circumstances or how slight his self-respect.
He also offers *d'lo*, or millet beer, and all his family make merry.
[574] Some even do things in a big way, and although the whole village
does not take part in the drinking bout, all the old men are invited,
and many close friends come from everywhere.

778 The family *boli* take the interests of the head of the family in
their hands; they are responsible for driving away illness and reverses
596 of fortune. /138/ Through them one gains many descendants, wealth, wives, a happy and lively old age, honor and respect. They are also appealed to on all occasions in life that are of the slightest importance. Before a long journey is undertaken or a business venture is entered into, when a disaster threatens or there is a possibility of a piece of unhoped-for good fortune, they are reddened with a trickle of blood. Sacrifice is also made to them at harvest time (many are even called by the generic name of *gno four*, "millet medicine"), but especially at circumcisions and excisions, at betrothals, marriages, and funerals. The tne, or "taboo," of these fetishes (see above, p. 5ff.), is taboo for each wife's eldest son, and sometimes the whole family makes it its own.

4. *Boli* whose Power is Great

778 I call powerful *boli* all those *gnâ* of every shape and size whose
782 worship is secret and in whose mysteries only those participate who
796 have been initiated into the rites, after having sworn on their lives
never to reveal them. Countless victims are offered to these *boli*; some of them are always warm and are ceaselessly reddened with blood. At the annual festivals not only is there a hecatomb of roosters and hens, but dogs and goats by the dozen also die, and in Bani country I have seen as many as five or six sacrificers working at the same time. This is the great and true Bambara worship, and it gives rise to orgies of four to eight days; it eclipses the ancient worship, that

778 of the gnéna, or djiné, and like it or not, the worship of the dead is
782 trivial in comparison, a little devotion, one might say.

•796 These boli are greatly feared and dreaded. They render justice and decide all controversies; they have the right of life and death over human beings; and it is through their intermediary that the Bambara avenge themselves and take reprisal on a real or imaginary enemy.

No victims are too fine for the powerful boli. There was a time
778 when men were sacrificed to them -- I think that this cannot possibly
782 be doubted. At the time of the Negro king N'golo, says the legend, a man of Faléma -- a small village on the road from Ségou to Koutiala which is now in ruins -- went to the king with his fetish /139/ Sa folo. The king had himself initiated, wanted to own it, and his first victim was the owner himself, the man from Faléma. If old men talk to you about the capture of Sikasso by the French, they will all tell you that, on the morning of the attack, men were sacrificed to the chief boli of the city. Were there not, in 1907, in a temple not far from Koutiala, a row of human skulls hung on the walls as ex voto? A little before the conquest, under the reign of the Moslem princes El-Hadj-Omar and Amadou, the master of the Nama fetish of Misango was asked to go to Ségou with his idol. He said he did not own one, but a woman betrayed him, and a search was made in Misango and its environs. The man was informed in time, and he changed the hiding place of his Nama, and the woman, convicted of lying, was given him as a slave in compensation. A little later, a sacrifice of thanksgiving was offered to the fetish, and the traitorous woman was among the victims. She was old, and the god considered her too tough; he ordered that she be sold and some children be bought, since they were victims worthy of it. Its orders were carried out, "for," say the storytellers who sing it praises, "when sacrifice is made to the Nama one must never forget nzégéné dégé (1), honey, two red

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1. Millet flour and nzégéné (Balanites oethiopica).

881 533 Gnâma fambali, bo n'yé!
Murderer gnâma (who kills), go away from me!

And coming back they sing songs and even improvise some to greet the old and influential men of the village. Back in their huts they kneel on the mat to stretch out or sit down, and there is silence, the silence of schoolgirls which is not broken except in secret, with trembling and in a low voice.

3. The Da Woro Festival, or the Sixth Day Festival

881 ●796 Boys and girls have paid the tribute of blood to the tribe, five days have already elapsed, and this is the evening before the sixth. Far over there in the west the sun has disappeared behind the heavy baobab trees that border the horizon, myriads of stars twinkle in the sky, and the moon, followed by Venus (Kolo mouso, Nièlé, "Nièlé, wife of the moon"), traces on a blue background its silver crescent singed with a gold border.

All the paths that lead to the village are full of people walking, seeming like an endless ribbon or a snake that folds back on itself only to stretch out suddenly. Behind the band of young girls walk the women, each with a black cherub on her back that always wakes up to cry and demand the breast; and to them the girls have entrusted their little loincloths, the cloth slings with which they gird themselves for the dance. The girls walk quickly, for although they carry on [482] their heads tall pyramids of gourds held in nets of large mesh, although they carry the fiancé's present to the queen of his heart -- salt; dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water and milk; d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer; millet and dried fish in which worms crawl; they are confortable in their clothing; /183/ nothing hinders their movements except a narrow cloth band three fingers wide which passes between the legs, is fastened at the waist in front, and waves in back in a limp and soft train. And in the night there is the rustling of dry grass trodden under foot; /there are/ long peals of laughter, light jibes that are well aimed and to the point, and witticisms, for the maiden's tongues have been loosened, and they do not lack wit.

796 881 The youths follow, dressed in blouses knotted at the abdomen like towels and trousers into which three pairs of legs and three abdomens could fit without any trouble, dragging drums and bass drums. To keep up the march and cause it to be forgotten (they often come from far away) they shout a loud "you you" and make coarse jokes, which are here addressed to the fair sex more than elsewhere. Sometimes also, between two laughs, two great silly laughs, something like the crack of a whip is heard. This sound is made by five stubby fingers as they are applied to the cheeks of dear little angels, warming them. In fact, a band of little boys and girls trot among the youths in their birthday suits, passing to the right and to the left and winding between their legs, and patience wears out and quickly comes to an end.

After the young people come the old men; they are bent double, leaning on spears, and even while talking of future projects they recall the days of the past. It is quite apparent that there are no more like them, their equal cannot be found. Into the foroko, the goatskins they slip over their arms and fasten on their shoulders, they have slipped some good handfuls of cowrie shells for the mothers of the circumcised [276 431] and excised, a box of the snuff that every self-respecting stranger gives as a gift to the men of the village, and finally the kola nuts that the sacrificer will chew before spitting the remains onto the front side of the god and some that, as educated, well-bred men, they keep for close friends. They also carry the hens or roosters for the sacrifice; these are attached by the feet to the straps of the foroko and hung head down their wings flapping horribly.

881 796 301 The human flood arrives at the gates of the village, stops a moment under the big trees, and tidies itself. The pointed caps /184/ are put a little to one side of the head, the blouses are unfolded, and nakedness is concealed. On the women's side there is indescribable hubbub, like the sound of the distant ocean at rising tide; they polish and adorn themselves and beautify themselves. On their feet they put little chains, on their arms heavy bracelets that knock together with the sound of old iron, and on their hips the young girls at least hang belts of beads sprinkled with little bells that tinkle at the slightest movement. In their noses they put crescents of gold or copper, in

889 each ear ten to twelve rings of soft iron, tin, or silver, and those that
•796 they put on their fingers and toes number more than twenty.

301 On the braids of their hair, all running with grease, they hang bits of amber and rings of polished pottery as white as snow, and around all their necks are bead necklaces from which dangle bits of amber, grigris, and here and there, held by leather strips, pottery rings that fall back between the shoulders and in front on their bosoms. They also bind their foreheads with narrow crowns of rainbow-colored beads or diadems of coral. Such are the Negro girls in their most beautiful array.

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881 At the homes of the circumcised and excised, the huts and courts are crowded with people, for in addition to friends and storytellers /griots/ -- the poor troubadours of the country -- there may be in each home older married daughters who have come with their husbands, children, and parents-in-law, and the fiancé's delegation to his betrothed seem to be in every corner. This is really the festival of the tribe, and everybody is present; only the fiancés are excluded and cannot appear on this day. And how very Bambara it is! In one [264] spot people quench their thirst with great drinks of d'lo, or millet beer, while nearby, squatted around steaming gourds, others stuff themselves with to, or gruel. The hands held out to you are running with sauce; the children who surround you are covered with leftovers from the feast and brandish under your nose bones that they gnaw clean with their bare teeth, and while they call to you Sogo ("some meat"), the satiated people next to you exclaim: "Abarka, thank you Né fara san, I am full for the moment." And everywhere there is an infernal bedlam! Old women beat furiously on inverted pumpkins in conari full of water /185/; youths beat drums, women and young girls clap their hands in rhythm, and everybody shouts the glories of the family. The families of the circumcised and excised are beside [431] themselves, so great is their joy, and if you are one of their close friends you will be shown all the gifts received, in plain sight in the court. You are made to taste of everything, to touch and feel everything, and, just as on the day when the child is given its name, you receive, on leaving, the kola nut of life (le ni woro).

881 796 194 It is after midnight. The circumcised boys are seated in the place of honor where their older brothers sat before, and they furiously shake their gourd disks strung on sticks. Leaning on their millet stalks, the regulation sticks, the excised girls in their turn arrive at the public square, singing and shaking their pierced gourds, and the dances begin as at the soli si and continue until morning. Outside, under the sacred trees, the bell of the fetish tinkles and summons the initiates, and the Komo god roars through the mouth of its herald. At a sign from the priest the circumcised boys get up, leave the village, and go under the big trees to swear loyalty and to dedicate themselves, body and soul, to the prince of darkness (1). How can this scene be described! The circumcised boys sit under the god's favorite tree, and the crowd of initiates, grouped by villages, gather around the gourds full of d'lo that froths and bubbles. Little fires are lighted and cast a strange light into the night, and a circle of crouching human beings appears and takes shape. The master of the idol (Komo tigi); the sacrificer (mourou kala tigi); the beadle (darotigi), who rings for the sacrifice and gathers the initiates; the fetish's storytellers /griots/ (Komo djeli maou), who sing the praises of the god, fall into catalepsy at the sacrifices and then give out oracles; [778 534] the Komo warada, who wear a coat covered with the feather of guinea hens, hens, egrets, etc., and a long horned mask, and who carry the fetish to the place of sacrifice and blow into an iron tube that ends in two horns /186/ and is at once idol and trumpet, and draw from it frightful "fouin fouin" that freeze you with fear: in short, all the staff of the Komo appear on the scene, and there is a lascivious dance, the dance of the god, the sacred dance. Then there is the

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1. The scene which I describe sometimes takes place the evening before. Sometimes, by order of a sorcerer and for a reason considered serious, the entrance into the sect of a fetish is postponed until later.

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rallying cry, bellowed by a hundred throats, "kou kou kou, ke ke ke"; drums roll, and drunken voices shout:

T'an ta bara ladjé.
Stop, let us go and see the gourd (of beer).
Bara ma dja an na,
When the beer has made us joyful (1),

1. Dja, "to make happy,"
"to please," "to be agreeable,"
"to make joyful."

An na youyouba yougouba.
We will dance and dance (2).

2. Yougouba, "to dance with a
shaking of the whole body."

Gnâ tigi, né ka nougouni-n-ko min yé?
Master of the gnâ, what has happened to my (hen's) entrails? (3)

[782]

3. This line recalls a peculiarity of the sacrifice of the newly initiated. With one twist of the finger the sacrificer takes the entrails out of the hen, and when the young initiate wants to draw it, he is quite surprised to find that none of the viscera are in it any more.

Gnâ tigi do nougou na bo gnouan yé.
A master of the gnâ (kodit) the entrails will come out together.

Excited, or rather irritated, by the wait, the circumcised boys get up, move forward in a line, and prostrate themselves before the god's escort, the one who shakes without any rest under his cloak of feathers and brings resounding blasts from his horned tube (4), and

grows and shrinks by raising and lowering his jointed mask. The hour of the initiation has rung, and they will be born into the religious life.

The master of the idol, the Komo tigi, places the horned iron tube on each initiates shoulder, and in a slow, solemn, hollow voice, he says these words of the initiation ceremony (5);

For the Komo

Q. Moun bé i koun? What have you on your head?
A. A kala be n'koun. His handle is on my head (repeated three times). /187/
Q. I y'a yé wa? Have you seen him?
A. Né m'a yé. I have not seen him.
Q. Nin be ma fa. I y a fo ma min yé, a k'i fo! He kills a man. If you speak of him to anyone, may he kill you!
A. Ni ne y'a fo ma min yé, a k'a né fa! If I speak of him, may he kill me!
Q. I si sirila gnâma-n-fou, djala la. Your life is fastened onto the cedar with gnâma-n-fou!
A. Né si sirila à la. My life is bound to it.
Q. Ni se ma fo ma si yé, Komo k'i kisi! If you do not speak of him to anyone, may the Komo be your protector!
A. A ka né kisi! May he be my protector!
Q. I y'a fo ma min ye, i kono ka founou, a k'i fa! If you speak of if, may your abdomen swell, may he kill you!
A. A ka né fa! May he kill me!
Q. Komo k'i son ni bien (1) ta, ki koun ti, né kana bo djoli kana bo.

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4. While the trumpet is blowing, the initiates accompany it with pipes.

5. During this ceremony the initiates are prostrate.

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1. Bien, a woman's sexual organs. Bien, "horn"; this is a veiled term sometimes meaning a man's organs. They also say k'i bien ta, "may he tear out the organs."

May the Komo take away your heart and your organs, may he crush your head without your brains coming out, without your blood coming out.

A. O k'a ké. May it be so.

For the Nama

Q. I y'a fo ma min ye, Boli k'i so ta, k'i bien ta (1), ka doun i

/1. Same as preceding footnote 1/

djoufé ka bo i da fé. If you speak of him, may the boli cause your house and your wives to perish, may he enter you by the anus and leave you by the mouth.

A. O k'a ké! May it be so!

Q. K'i Kono gni bri, ka gni bri, gna bara.

A. O k'a ké.

Q. Ni e ma fo ma yé, k'i disi soubaou ma. K'i son sila, k'i son kénéyala! If you keep the secret may he save you from the souba, may he give you descendants and health!

"Tell me, what have you on your head? Yourlife is henceforth bound with gnâma-n-fou (bark of Bauhinia reticulata): if you talk, /188/ if you reveal our mysteries, may your abdomen swell, may the Komo kill you, may he tear out your organs, may he tear out your heart, may he break your head without your brain coming out, without blood flowing."

This ceremony in the night, in the light of the little fires that distort the shadows and lengthen them, impresses, pierces, and grips the youths, and they are heard to answer all atremble in these words that at every moment break through the nasal tone of the pipes and

881 •796 794 the trumpet blasts: "I have the kala (1) on my head, my life is hence-

1. Kala, "handle of a tool, "
"a pestle, " "an oblong object";
Komo kala, iron tube ending in
two horns.

forth bound with gnâma-n-fou; if I reveal the secrets of the sect, may my abdomen swell and may the Komo kill me." Then they get up, and the crowd of initiates sing hymns to the Komo at the tops of their voices:

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Da Woro la nana, Boloko déou da Worola.
To the festival of Da Woro he (the fetish) has come, to
Da Woro of the circumcised (he has come).
Toro ma na kola gnini.
Toro (2) has not come to cause evil.

2. Toro, the name of a Komo.

Sira bo nin ye, ko dougoulé dén.
To him we give an (open) road because (he is) a child of the
village.
Sira bo nin yé, ko dougoulen sira.
Give him an (open) road to know the road of the children of
the village (He is one of us, let us make room for him)
(3).

3. Songs of Nama:
A djigina so Nama fambali, a djigina
so, tjon k'a'é.
The Nama that kills has paid us a
visit, he has visited us*, let us not be

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*The Nama protects against the
souba, initiates of siri, reputed
to be cannibals.

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•796 neglectful toward him (let us welcome
794 the Nama who comes to visit us).
539 A fiérèla ka den, boli fiérèla ka den.
He has blossomed to have fruits, the
boli has blossomed to have fruits
(the Nama has had a child).
Souba yo nin kèra ma lo ko yé.
Souba yo. This is done because of shame.
Souyaya kèra dabali bé an koyé.
The practice of the souba has been done
(among us), we have a means of protecting ourselves from it. /189/

881 796 794 While these hymns are being sung, the circumcised boys dance with the idol -- this is the standard expression to signify that for the first time they are executing the lascivious motions of the sacred dance.

And when they get back to their places, they are transformed, they are no longer the plain, good children who, even the day before, approached you nicely with a frank smile on their lips. They have become Bambara, and we, we are white men and strangers, masters and conquerors, and between them and us an abyss has been opened. And this abyss is opened further every day, for every time the god Komo comes out of its temple and out of the dirty foroko (goatskin) that serves as its tabernacle, they will go under the sacred trees, and will strengthen their faith and harden their hearts (1). Henceforth they will be at home in every part of the Sudan; they need not fear

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1. The initiates of powerful boli's sect make a sort of "renewal of vows" a year after their admission. Those of the Komo, who are given the name of timini deou, hold a festival to break all records; there is meat and gruel to spare, and the divine liqueur, d'lo, or millet beer, is plentiful.

881 the poison that kills the inquisitive and the traitors, and wherever they
● 796 are asked the question, "Are you of the Komo?", they can give the
794 password, draw two crossed lines in the sand, and then, holding the
thumb, the middle finger, and fourth finger in the hand, extend the forefinger and the little finger over this mark, saying to the questioner, "I am one of you."

I have noted here the verbal text of these questions and the answers to give them.

For the Komo

Q. E b'a la Wa? Are you of the Komo?
A. Ne b'a la. I am.
Q. N'i b'a la, tjoko djira anna? If you are, show us the sign.
A. Ka'l ta Drahamé.

In saying these words bend the thumb, the middle finger, and the fourth finger while extending the forefinger and the little finger. /190/

II.

Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Komo?
A. Né b'a la. I am.
Q. Tjoko djira anna wé? Show us the sign.
A. Da sigi da da la.

Place a container on the mouth of a container. While saying these words, place the feet one in front of the other, and immediately add: Djan kéné ouala djan djala. Make two parallel lines in the dust.

III.

Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Komo?
A. Né b'a la. I am.
Q. E n'i so mâou benna mi ni? And where did you and your people meet?

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A. An benna dlaba da la, ou bi gouélé foura bosi. We met at the door of dlaba; they pick the leaves of the gouélé (false ebony) (1).

1. For the Nama.
Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Nama?
A. Né b'a la. I am.
Q. Féré tjon k'an.
Two straws are laid in a cross of
St. Andrew and shown to you.
A. Nin yé sira gné bo la yé. This is
the road that guides, lights.
Q. A perpendicular straw is laid down.
A. Nin yé wara sé n-yé. Wara ti tama
sén ko. This is the foot of a wild animal*.

* The boli are often given the
epithet of wara, "wild animal, "
meaning "strong, " "powerful. "

A wild animal does not walk without
legs.
Sirima-n-fign: this word is the family name, the diamou of Nama. End of the questions: Dja e b'a la koï ! Dja (exclamation) you surely are [of the Nama].

Through the whole night there are howls of wild animals, songs and lascivious dances, bellowings of trumpets freezing one with fear, and the nasal and piercing sounds of the pipes.

At dawn a warada, speaking into the horned tube, thanks those present in the name of the god Komo; a second repeats his words into a pipe, and a djélima (storyteller /griot/ of the Komo) repeats the words of the god in plainer terms to those present. And the /191/ crowd gives thanks, utters cries, makes its requests. Everyone retires exhausted, worn out, with his throat on fire and foam on his lips,

881 reeling on his legs -- in these festivals one must get drunk to please
796 the god.

794 While all these things are happening outside, the women and little girls on the public square abandon themselves to their hearts' content. They perform none of the leaps and capers customary at ordinary festivals: shaking in their hands the goatskin bag or the white iron box full of little stones, they circle slowly, with short steps, around the orchestra, and only their buttocks move. These roll to the right and roll to the left, dip forward and quickly draw back -- a movement which is definitely not graceful. The excised girls spend the night sitting on mats covered with white cloths, between the legs of their mothers or serving women, and their heads, loosely thrown back, rest on the breasts whence they drew their life. They are wrapped in covers that have blue stripes on white background, only their heads showing, and one might say this was a display of new, shiny dolls with big black eyes, happy and all sparkling with joy. From time to time at the invitation of the dancers who sing of their grace and beauty, they shake their pierced gourds, make them rattle in their hands, and take part in the dance; then at dawn, in the morning, in a final round, they put their heels together and three times make three leaps in the air with their hands crossed on top of their heads.

And, if one believes the Negroes, this custom is not without meaning. The whitecloth on an excised girl's mat reminds the mother of one of the beautiful days of her life, the one when she gave herself to her husband in the bonds of marriage, and reminds the child hidden in her arms, wrapped in the cover like an infant in its cloths, that since she has now become a grown girl and has left childhood, she must guard her virginity. This large white cloth will testify for her on the day of her marriage as it testified for her mother, and it will be inexorable. The circle around the orchestra in short steps is the infant practicing its first steps; but now she has reached her full development, /192/ she can be sufficient to herself, and for that reason she makes these nine leaps with her hands crossed on top of her head.

881 As soon as the sabbath of the sons of the Komo is terminated
796 outside, the excised girls are led back to their huts with great pomp, with music in the lead, and the festival still goes on, for a Bambara

881 •196 festival lasts as long as there is d'lo. After a few hours of sleep, before the noon meal, the excised girls come back, and around the well there is an endless babel punctuated by joyous laughter as they wash their loincloths, the cloths soiled by the dust of the night, and as they mend gourds, the dishes of this country. The pure Bambara girls, those who are not of the blacksmith caste nor of the "Marka" people of more or less mixed stock, have lost their grace and beauty and seem quite comical with their shaved heads. Just as at six to eight days [302] after birth the head of the village, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, priest of the dasiri fetish, made motions over their heads and cut their hair, since the "hair of the womb" is not allowed to be seen in public, so at the da woro, six days after circumcision, they lose it again, since they cannot enter life with the hair of childhood; a dirty handkerchief replaces the locks of which they were so proud, they are without bead or jewel, and on their foreheads, in place of the multicolored crown, [151] is the string with nine knots called the tafo, and it is fastened in back at the nape of the neck to the string called the djo, which is intended to protect them from sore throat, mumps, headache, and just about all illnesses.

4. The Festival of the Boloko Déou Don Bo, The Coming Out of the Circumcised and the Excised, The Real Entry into Civil and Religious Life

881 883 After the da woro, the festival of the sixth day, the circumcised boys go back under the sacred tree outside the village, and the excised girls return to their huts. They take up again their life of "sweet idleness," and their little excursions in a group, at specified hours, to satisfy the wants of nature. They also have their days of big excursions. When the markets take place, they go to cut thorns at some 100 meters from the village. They bar the paths, set up /193/ a barricade, and ask every passer-by for a doua-mo, a share of the market. From habit, and especially from fear of the cuffings that are readily given out and of the spirits that watch over and protect the young people, everybody obeys and pays the toll. In addition to fish tails they also take in enough cowrie shells to buy a bit of meat and make themselves a treat.

766 When they have sewed and tied it well, they take it on their shoulders
794 and head on the double for the exit door. There they stop and without
any respect roughly set the body down. Armed with picks they make
an opening in the wall of the hut and, seizing the corpse by the feet,
they drag it and put it into this opening. Strong hands seize it from
the outside, they pull and the others push, and the excommunicated
one comes out of his dwelling and appears in the alley or on the square.
[482] Four fellows -- sons of the fetish, for they alone are present at these
burials -- take him on their shoulders and, running, carry him to the
cemetery. At the edge of the grave they put down their load, the
initiates give a loud cry, a sort of roar, and they roll him with their
feet into his final home. For such people there is not the slightest
farewell or prayer, and the grave is filled at once.

In the evening the fetish is brought out, and the initiates abandon
[789] themselves to their sacred dances, while the god, in the hands of its
● priests, /232/ runs about the village and its environs, exorcising.
All night long nothing is heard but the bellowing of horns and trumpets
and sacred hymns shouted by the crowd, and from a distance one
would say they were dull rumblings or the actual cries of wild animals.

8. Worship accorded to the Dead

769 At the death of a Bambara not the slightest sacrifice is directed either to him or to the deceased of the family. However, the worship of the dead is prevalent among the Bambara, althought it cannot be compared to the worship of the genii, especially of the boli. Nevertheless, everyday one can see, at the door of one family or another, a large splash of blood on the wall about a meter from the ground, a brownish octopus one might say, throwing its twisted arms here and there and struggling against a clump of feathers stuck on its back with the juice of a chewed kola nut. Some people have seen in this worship the basis of the Negro religion and, no doubt because they did not know the language and have been unable to give an exact meaning to the words caught by their ears, they have portrayed the Bambara with knife always in hand, ready to slaughter in honor of his relatives. Because they group together all saraka and sacrifices,

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The great sacrifice to the dead is made at the end of Ramadan and at the festival of the كَبْش sheep. The *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, or dougoutigi, first sacrifices to the *b'lon da ba sou* (3), those who, like themselves, were priests of the *dasiri* and, in a general way, to all those who had some civil or religious authority in the village. All the members of his council are present at this sacrifice. After the libations of millet flour mixed with water and *d'lo*, or millet beer, a fine white hen (4) is slaughtered, and sometimes a sheep then, two white kola nuts are offered and, if the sacrifice is accepted, a clump of wool or a few feathers are torn from the victim and stuck onto the

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2. The Negroes' great festival is held at the end of Ramadan. They have a second at the festival of the كَبْش sheep. The Moslem masters forced them to observe these two festivals, but the Bambara have not adopted a single Moslem rite. They sacrifice to the *dasiri*, to some *djiné* genii, and to the dead.

3. *Sou*, "corpses"; *b'lon da ba*, "of the great *b'lon*," the great entry hut giving access to the village.

[822]
4. In general sacrifices where the whole population or a whole sect participates, the liturgical color is the primary consideration, and a pullet a day old has as much value as a large rooster. When a victim of the liturgical color cannot be obtained, only water, *dégé*, and the kola nut are offered.

4: Henry--269 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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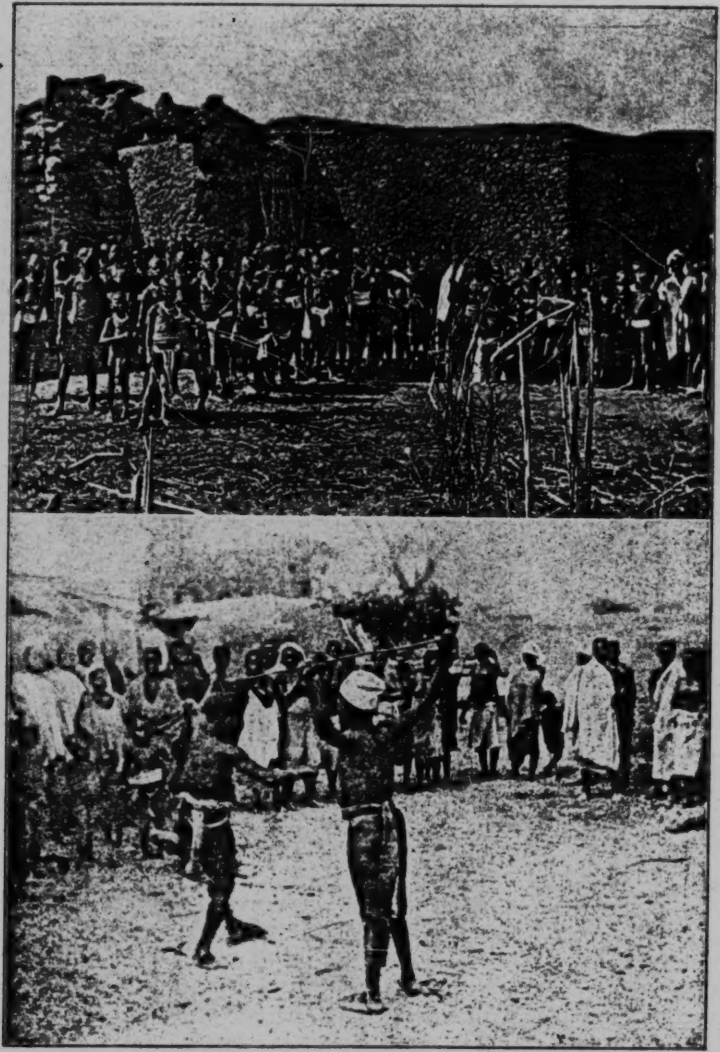

Festival of the N'tomo.
Flagellation of children.

Above: Festival of N'tomo.
Before the flagellation.

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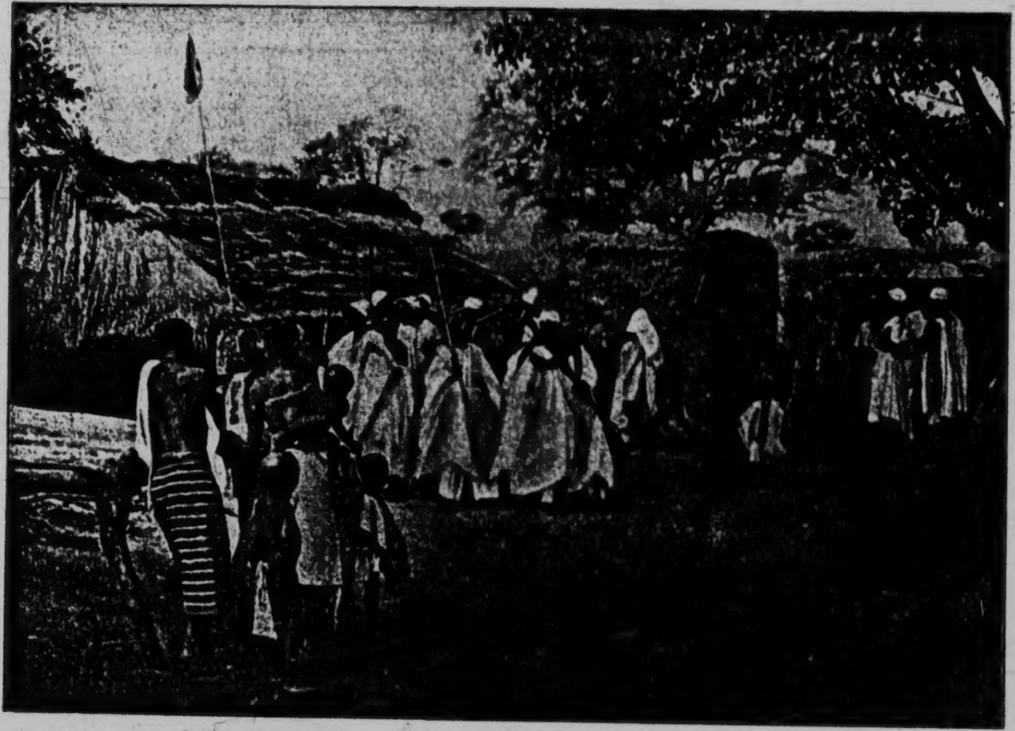
4: Henry--270 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Festival of the N'golo fetish: An outing of the to-n-de, of the association of the fla-n-to.

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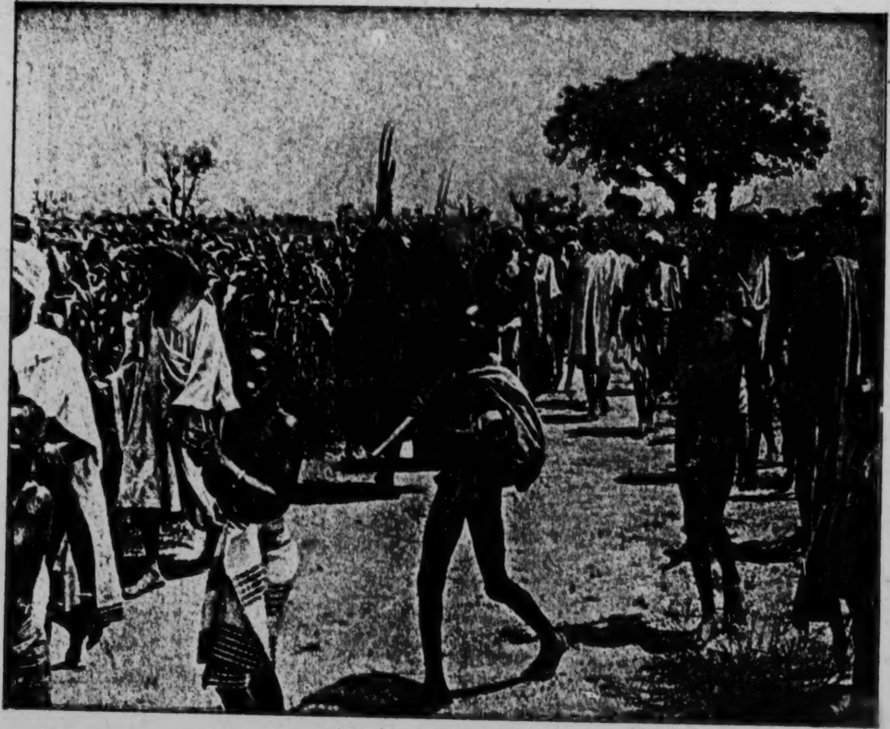
4: Henry--273 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8



Procession of the Tji wara: the young people meet at the field to work under the eyes of two companions dressed in the insignia of the fetish of work.

4: Henry--274 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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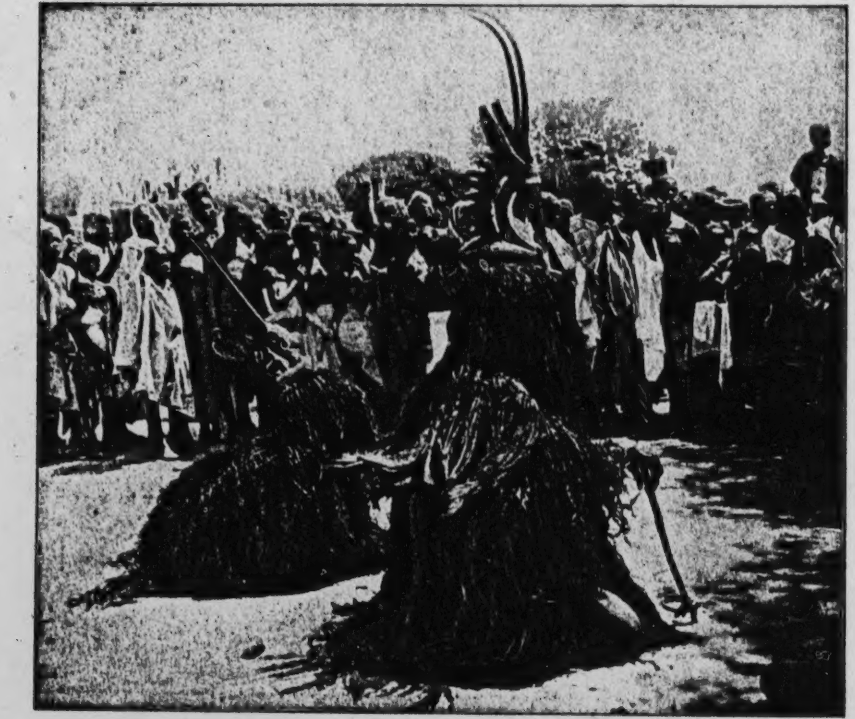

Sacred dance in honor of the Tji wara fetish, the genie of work.

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614 On the other hand, it closely resembles the clan of the Khasso region, on which we have published a detailed study (1).
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1. See Les Khassonké in the series Revue du Monde musulman.

Chapter 6

Islam

1. Islamism and Paganism

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797 It is a commonplace to say that the Bambara are implacable enemies of Islam.

However, history shows that for centuries the Bambara have been living in contact with Islam, that they maintain close relations with native communities of Islamic converts, and that they are willing to seek the good offices of marabouts of all races and ranks.

Are they, besides, as refractory to conversion as they are said to be? The chiefs of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta and some of their near connections and intimates, as well as other notables, have been practicing Islam. The Somono, who are of Bambara extraction, are faithful believers and, what is even more significant, they are fervent propagandists for Islam.

Actually, paganism and Islamism are not mutually antagonistic dogmas in the minds of the Bambara or of the Sudanese people in general, as many Europeans believe and state it to be. In these regions, Islamization has a counterpart which prepares the way for it and explains it, and that is the "sudanization" of Islam.

During his sojourn in Kaarta Raffenel tells of an interesting incident: "I had as a landlord a blacksmith named Niany, a grotesque personage, excessively naive and with a corresponding sense of logic, but a good fellow and very amusing. One day he

771 came to me to complain that [332] my Negroes were using a
797 satala (1) to take water from his jug.

" 'What difference does that make to you?' I asked him.

" 'What difference does it make!' he answered with an angry air.

"And with that he favored me with the following astonishing line of reasoning:

" 'Now you see, I am not a (Moslem) marabout and if the marabouts take water from my jar with the satala, the water that remains in the jar will necessarily be sanctified because it came into contact with that vessel. My children and I drink this water and, since we don't know how to salaam and don't fast, and since we eat pork, God (2) will punish us for having failed to obey his orders. For, after all, any water that has touched a satala makes a marabout (3) of the person who drinks it. That is what I heard from my father."

776 The net result is that, on the whole, Ngalla (Allah) is regarded as one of the nyana which we have mentioned and for which the Bambara has a superstitious respect without for that matter being a worshiper. He avoids any contact with all that concerns the nyana, not because of hostility, but for fear of incurring its wrath on account of some impurity. Just as he may call upon any convenient nyana for aid, so he asks the help of

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1. A kind of saucepan made of copper or tin, of European origin, used by Moslem Sudanese for their ritual ablutions.

2. That is, in Niany's mind, the nyana called Ngalla (Allah) by the Bambara.

3. That is, an initiate of Ngalla (Allah).

771 Ngalla through his priests, the marabouts. At other times he
787 thinks he will get into Ngalla's good graces by taking part in
the great Moslem festivals and by imitating the visible rites (4) of the faithful. He has not the faintest doubt but that he can produce the same effects as they do.

So it is that the pagan, deriving from Islam whatever his own concepts can make use of, "Sudanizes" it in the process. As a result, between the two poles of Islam and paganism, there exists an infinity of intermediate states which link the two and which, depending on the angle of observation, sometimes look like an Islamization of the Sudanese and, at other times, like a Sudanization of Islam.

Father Niany, of the blacksmiths' caste, was one of those [333] individuals who, being versed in the practice of native occultism, consider Islam as a rival Hermetism until the day when they realize that it can provide them with useful new magic power. Many are the blacksmiths, magicians like Niany, who have become Moslems for the purpose of getting their hands on the arsenal of magic which Islam brings into these lands.

787 So it is that all the native brotherhoods have adopted
[177] divination by geomancy which was introduced by the Moslems
and there is not a Bambara who does not on occasion consult
the geomancer, known as laturudala or kenyelala (1) or the

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4. In the tale of the Hyena, given later, there is an example of this mimicry in the way in which those who follow the Hyena each pretend to be the nyana discovered by the Hyena (see Chapter 7 [not translated]).

1. Derived from kenye meaning "sand," and la meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the sand."

787 *buguri gala* (2). These three words are sufficient in themselves to illustrate the process of Sudanization. Although the first comes from a corruption of the Arabic word *el tereb* (earth), the other two are strictly Bambara in all respects. Besides, the manner in which the natives have altered the practice of geomancy is an illustration of the same process.

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771 It may therefore be concluded that, in certain respects, Islam has strengthened paganism. For example, the pagans 797 commonly believe that an illiterate geomancer, who is nevertheless an expert in this type of divination, will obtain the same results as a learned marabout who is guided by the book of Er Zenati. As a result, a well-known *laturadala* enjoys special prestige because of the fact that his prognostications are corroborated by a book, and the same fact accounts in part for the influence of the priests of the brotherhoods.

We are thus able to verify the contacts between Islam and the paganism of the Bambara who are the subject of this study.

693 The historical tales related in the foregoing show the continuous relations which existed between the native chiefs and the pious and renowned marabouts. Whenever a legal dispute arose which could not be settled by pagan arbitration, the last recourse was an appeal for judgment or conciliation to a marabout, who was always sought out and greeted with deference. Mamari, Tonmassa, Ngolo and Ma-n-son's sons all had occasion to make such appeals in some most embarrassing situations.

[334] Further, on occasions when they hoped to bring off some questionable deal or to improve their prospects, the chiefs were also wont to call on a marabout. Mamari did so against the Massa-si Foro-koro and so did Ngolo when he was anxious to make sure that his fame would survive him.

In matters of judicial arbitration, it appears that the marabout derives his authority rather more, perhaps, from his

2. Derived from *buguri* meaning "dust," and *da* meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the dust."

613 reputation for integrity and impartiality than for his knowledge of the books. In other matters, however, his Moslem esoterism is the quality most highly valued.

It is assumed, besides, that the high priests and other 771 persons of note should be initiated into Islamic matters, which ●797 seem to be regarded simply as a branch of occultism to which such persons are especially addicted. The Kouloubali, the Dyara, and other lords of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta have practiced Islamism (1) without betraying paganism; on the contrary, by adding to it the luster of these foreign mysteries, it can be said that they have "Sudanized" Islam as completely as possible. Neither Mamari nor Ngolo, for example, was in the least embarrassed by his Moslem practices. Both remained high priests of their tutelary idols and simply borrowed (2) the external "manner" of Islam.

The bloodthirsty Dékoro was a Moslem of the same type. He was preparing to perform his ablutions, followed by his faithful blacksmith, at the very moment when he was assassinated by Tonmassa. And the blacksmith was actually carrying one of the satala which father Niany regarded as so compromising.

614 Naturally, the adoption of Islam was never allowed to create any political deviation which might compromise the 797 interests of the clan. That would be treason, and such was the case for Touro-koro Mari. He was put to death not because he was converted to Islam, but because he had enfeoffed himself to El Hadj Omar to such an extent that the clan's independence was threatened.

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(1) In the Sudanese manner, of course.

(2) This borrowing is done with the same awkwardness as that seen when a Black puts on a suit of European clothes which happens to come into his possession. The ease with which an occasional native can adapt it is exceptional.

771 797 It should be noted that this acceptance of things Islamic was not imposed on the Bambara by fanatical or warlike converters; in any case it [335] goes back to a time that was long before the exploits of the "people of Macina" and of "those of Fouta."

Mungo Park says that, when he passed through the area, half the Kaarta army were Moslems, and we are even better informed by Raffenel. Of course, it is in general only a kind of "Sudanized" Islam, but that is already a very important step.

Raffenel observes that the people of the Massa-si clan added a much-feared nyana of the boli to the cult of the ancestors which is common to all the Bambara. He further points out 776 that all the Bambara recognize Ngalla (Allah) and that, although they practice Islam only casually, they distinguish between believers and infidels among themselves. The Kouloubali especially consider themselves to be Moslems and affect to behave as such.

From this derives a curious spectacle giving evidence of a kind of dualism that is very suggestive. The general assembly of what one might call the ruling elements of the Massa-si clan took place at the festival of Bañram, and the Kouloubali, the chiefs of the clan, their relatives, their allies, the principal slave leaders and other dignitaries never failed to attend and to take part in the ceremonies in honor of their clan's tutelary nyana, since the meeting was especially devoted to a renewal of the oath of loyalty to this same idol. Now Raffenel reports that the Moslem festival of the sacrifice of the lamb was also held in the midst of the general rejoicing. It was, to be sure, directed by the Soninké marabouts, but most of the Bambara took part in it, imitating the motions of the officiating priests to the best of their ability and often sacrificing a lamb.

And Raffenel remarks: "Kaffirs though they are, the Bambara nevertheless show respect for the marabouts. Thus, for the festival of Bañram, the Sarakole (1) marabouts, otherwise known

1. Who call themselves Soninké
but whom the Bambara call Marka.

77/ as sila, also gather at Keghé (2) and address prayers to heaven for the preservation of the king's life and the glory of his reign. Custom requires the king to make rich presents to the sila on this occasion."

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[336] This dualism, which appears strange and which has sometimes been interpreted as a result of Islamic influence during an earlier period of Moslem supremacy, is, on the contrary and without any doubt whatever, an essential characteristic of the native milieu. In this milieu, in theory, all religions can flourish without hindrance and even with the benevolent assent of the faithful believers of the various sects, if one may so describe the adepts in these innumerable nyana. It is certain that all religions, a priori and by their very nature, enjoy particular esteem among the Blacks.

[609] In the mind of the native, a foreigner is particularly dangerous because he is assumed to possess mysterious magic powers. Many Sudanese legends bear witness to the Black's belief that encounters with foreigners are accompanied by combats whose outcome depends entirely on magic. As a result of this state of mind, as soon as it is apparent that the stranger's cult brings no calamities in its wake, not only is the cult tolerated, but some of the natives even adopt it, at first as a kind of addition to their own cults and then gradually they become converts.

Islam has also profited from this state of mind. With the external and public manifestations of his cult the Moslem easily impresses the Bambara who, as we have seen, are constantly obsessed with the supernatural. How could they fail to be struck by this divinity called Allah, who is endlessly proclaimed all day long, and by religious observances which are displayed before the public: ablutions, prayers pronounced aloud in as strange language, rosaries, mosques which are often monumental, great and impressive ceremonies?

Further, the fact that Islam is supported by the written word of its books gives it an element of certainty that is lacking in the native cults.

2. Then the royal residence of the Massa-si chiefs.

771 Finally, there is no doubt that a learned Moslem, who
797 is well-dressed, who does not get drunk (1) and who behaves with dignity (1) [see footnote above] greatly impresses the pagans; his mere example creates a favorable atmosphere for Islam.

Therefore some of the natives, trying to imitate outward appearances, find themselves drawn toward Islam, whose rites they practice without even having any desire to be converted. The mere fact of dressing in white, wearing a white cap, going about [337] in sandals, conspicuously telling one's beads, salaaming while muttering incomprehensible words or continually repeating "Allah Akoubar," and participating in important ceremonies, suffices to give an individual an elegant air without in the least interfering with pagan traditions.

The Islamism noted by Mungo Park in the Bambara army
and among the Kouloubali and other dignitaries, is an example
of this simple formalism. On the other hand, the Bambara, with-
789 out exception, are eternally on the lookout for magic formulas:
talismans, amulets, remedies and procedures of all kinds. And
Islam provides a whole arsenal of magic which is very popular
with the Blacks.

In addition to all these attractions, Islam seems to the Bambara to have institutions which are not basically opposed to their own. It tolerates polygamy, divorce, repudiation and slavery. As practiced over a long period by the natives, who have skilfully Sudanized it, it is adapted without difficulty to all sorts of situations. The blacksmith, that master of acultism, scarcely has to change at all when he becomes a marabout; he merely acquires some new manners which enable him to preside at birth, circumcision, marriage, death or other social or family ceremonies in the name of Islam. However, this is an Islam so close to paganism that it differs only in name. Allah, under the name of Ngalla, has taken his place in the Bambara pantheon alongside the other nyana, and the only distinction is that he has his own "manner."

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1. At least in public.

771 797 [567] Incidentally, this "manner" possesses, under some circumstances, advantages which encourage adhesion to Islam. Slaves belonging to true Moslem believers do well to give clear evidence of their new faith if they wish to obtain their freedom. Ngolo made use of this means according to the chronicle of Ségou.

Women and, in general, the "weak people" often claim conversion -- only rarely deep or sincere -- in order to escape from the arbitrary and rigorous nature of the custom governing them.

2. The agents of Islam

797 As regards the people with whom we are here concerned, it can be said that the center, which directly or indirectly has [338] had the greatest influence in spreading Islam, is the city of Dia (1).

1. A city on the left bank of the Niger, in the present-day province of Macina..

Dia is certainly the oldest metropolis of Islam in western Sudan, but this was an accommodating kind of Islam, which compromised easily with native customs and gave a large role to magic.

"The characteristic of the marabouts of Dia is their scarcely disguised tendency to rely on Islamic magic. The city has always been considered the great center for the production of amulets in the valley of the Middle Niger" (Marty, *Études sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan* [Studies on Islam and the tribes of the Sudan] Vol. 4).

These marabouts belong to very diverse races, but those of the Marka are dominant and with them should be considered their confreres, the Bozo, on whose training the Marka have always exerted a preponderant influence. The Somono marabouts usually come from one or the other of these two races.

All of them are linked in one way or another with high priests from Moorish or Peul Islam and, through them or their emissaries, are allied with one or another of the brotherhoods.

797 However, the doctrinal aspect is relatively much less important than the considerable consequences brought about by the Sudanization accomplished over a long period and in different ways by these agents who have been active in and intimately mingled with local life.

Foreigners, such as Berbers and Arabs, who have appeared to enjoy a certain degree of predominance during their lifetime, have been absorbed in the end by the native milieu: their children belong completely to it and, as a result, lose entirely their independence.

Such are the major lines of influence which should not be lost from sight, for they dominate the work of peaceful Islamization which gives Islam such a hold that like its original propagandists, it has, in fact, gradually taken on an entirely native physiognomy.

This peaceful propagation and diffusion have been at work at all times and it is because of their action that there spreads an Islamic atmosphere along both banks of the Middle Niger.

The strong measures taken by the "people of Macina" and also [339] by the "people of Fouta" were far from being efficacious and sometimes they even had to be compromised. It must be conceded, however, that the "people of Macina" did achieve certain widespread and lasting results, thanks to the methodical and prolonged labors (1) of Sheik Ahmadou Bari which resulted in conversions long since prepared for by the surrounding atmosphere.

On the other hand, the sectarian fanaticism of the "people of Fouta" forced the fearful to embrace the Moslem faith temporarily and without any spirit of conversion, but only to escape imminent peril. Once the danger had passed, everyone resumed his independence.

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797 The Somono families, such as the Kané, the Dyiré and the Tyéro, which historical tradition associates with the earliest

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1. For these labors see Monographie de Djénné [Monograph on Djenné].

*773 events of the clan of Ségou, are still in existence in the area
797 and their members are regarded as enlightened and zealous Moslems. The chronicle tells us that the chiefs of these families were well-known marabouts by the beginning of the seventeenth century. Soma Kouloubali accepted the hospitality of Alfa Sérou Kané (2). Almami Ousman Dyiré, who resided at Ségou-koro, went to live at Togou in order to evade the inconvenience of being too close to Mamari Kouloubali. The Tyéro family, said to have come from the Bobo country in Mamari's time, owed their important position to one of their leaders, Bari Tyéro, who was chief of the Somono.

These three families, Kané, Dyiré and Tyéro, which are regarded as essentially Somono, undoubtedly descend from mingled Soninké and Bozo stocks, for a change of nationality through preference is common. The Dyiré of Ségou, a corruption of whose name gave the name to the N-Guiré of Koulikoro, were originally related to the Bozo, Dyité or Guité of Kabara, who are themselves of Soninké origin, as are the Guissé of Gadiaga.

The Kané are even closer to this Soninké origin. The Tyéro are connected with a Bozo root at Pondori (in the Djenné region).

These champions of Islam on the right bank of the Niger are seconded, on the left bank, by [340] Karamoko Ousman Dyari at Nyamina; the Khomma and the Diakhaté at Sansanding; and the sherifs, also at Sansanding, led by Sherif Ismaïl.

Along the river, the Bozo and the Somono are necessarily predominant, but their local importance should not obscure the fact that both derive from the Soninké who, along the whole

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2. One of his descendants, Mamadou Kané, served as Ngolo's intermediary when the latter was trying to get back into Mamari's good graces. Later, one of the three arbiters called upon to make peace between Ngolo's sons was the Somono marabout, Birama Kané, who lived at Sien.

*173 length of the Niger valley from Bammako to Mopti, represent
•797 the oldest center of Moslem proselytism.

In the same period, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is the Soninké who are Islamizing the whole country where the Massa-si clan is going to be the dominant force. This clan will suffer vicissitudes which will cause it to be constantly on the move, but it will never actually leave the area brought under Islam by the Soninké. Indeed, little by little, some elements of the clan will be led to become Moslems, in the native manner of course, that is, by Sudanizing whatever aspects of Islam they feel will give a cachet of superiority to their oligarchy.

The empire of Sheik Ahmadou Bari forced the Bambara under its control to adopt Moslem ways, and for many the conversion was a real one. For our purposes here, we cite the Bambara collectivities which constitute the major portion of the population in the cantons of Dérari and Femay (in the circle of Djenné). The Bozo were likewise greatly affected by the action of Sheik Ahmadou Bari, and the Somono perhaps even more so.

In the case of the "people of Fouta," they conquered the people of Ségou and Kaarta but their rule was unfortunate for Islam.

El Hadj Omar sent from Farabana a messenger to the Massa-si to enjoin them to become Moslems. As we have just seen, the Massa-si had already practiced Islam in the Sudanese fashion. Thus, without abandoning any of their native customs, they had assumed those outward aspects of the Moslem religion which they considered dignified.

The ultimatum issued by El Hadj Omar struck them as a challenge and they replied by putting the messenger to death.

Omar put his army on the march against the Bambara. He defeated them at Koulou, crossed the Senegal at Soutoukoulé, [341] entered Kouniakari, crossed the Séro, soon reached Yélimané and, without stopping, took Tango and Dioka. Finally at Simbi, he received the surrender of Mamadi Kandia, chief of the Kouloubali; Karouga, chief of the Diawara; Nouhoun and Sambonné, chiefs of the Peul of Bakounou; and Mahoundé, chief of the Kagoro.

*173 797 Omar then proceeded to Nioro, where he confiscated the treasure of the Massa-si, put to death the children of Mamadi Kandia and imposed Islam on the people of Nioro. In particular, he ordered polygamous individuals to keep only four of their wives and to turn over the rest to his *talibés*.

These victories and the excesses that accompanied them made inevitable the revolt of the native populations. Omar was then besieged at Nioro, while the rest of his army was blocked in the Kolomina area. He managed to raise the siege and get away to aid his people at Kolomina. In spite of a serious defeat at Kandiari, he succeeded in freeing Kolomina.

Thence he returned to Nioro and, after putting Mamadi Kandia to death, succeeded in quelling the Bambara revolt. Then Kaarta was conquered and Omar settled at Nioro, which he fortified.

The Diawara, aroused and led by Karouga, revolted. Omar defeated them at Diabigué, was halted at Bambéro, but finally put down this rebellion of the Kingui region.

Then he entered into negotiations with Ahmadou, Sultan of Macina, hoping to arrange an alliance to make a joint attack on Ségou. Ahmadou refused and marched against Omar, only to be defeated at Kassakaré.

Omar then made a deal with Touro-koro Mari, the chief of Ségou, but the latter, accused of betraying his clan, was put to death by Kégné-Mari and replaced by Ali (1856).

175 797 It was at this point that Omar came up against the French at Médina. For a period of three years his activity was limited to the west by the affairs of Médina, Koundian and Guémou (1856-1859).

In 1859, revolt again threatened in Kaarta. Omar left Nioro, which he turned over to his devoted follower, Moustapha. Through Bagoîna, he passed around the Diangounté region to fall on the Bambara of Kaarta and Bélédougou at Marikoya. The capture of Marikoya was echoed far and wide. This agglomeration was a kind of capital of [342] paganism, and it is said that Omar, rushing about the burning village, kept running into magic objects which had been scattered about for the purpose of killing him. He touched each of these objects with the tip of

175 his iron-shod staff and pronounced a formula of exorcism; at
797 once the object threw itself in the flames.

After his defeat, Karouga, chief of the Diawara, fled to Ségou. He persuaded Ali to give him an army and marched against Omar.

The latter defeated him in the northern part of Bélédougou.

The Bambara of the Bélédougou and Fadougou areas were likewise beaten, as was a new army from Ségou which had come to help them.

Since there was nothing left with which to feed his people at Marikoya, Omar decided to march on Ségou. An episode, characteristic of these times of banditry, marked his departure. He decided to abandon the women whom his faithful followers had taken from the conquered because they were useless mouths to feed, so he turned the poor creatures over to the fetishists.

Omar entered Myamina in April, 1860. When he had exhausted the provisions in that region he marched on Oftalà, the village of Ali's son Tata and captured it. Sansanding was delivered to him by the Khomma people because of their hatred for the Cissé people.

Ahmadou, Sultan of Macina, wrote Omar to ask him to leave the country and then sent an army against him. This force, commanded by Ahmadon's uncle, Ba Lobba, reached Kani, below Sansanding on the Niger, and then Ali, chief of Ségou, joined Ba Lobba at Tio.

Omar crossed the Niger in January, 1861, defeated the allies and entered Ségou on March 10, 1861.

The two Bambara clans of Ségou and Kaarta were now finally defeated.

Within a few months of his arrival at Ségou, Omar received the submission of the former Bambara officials: army chiefs and territorial chiefs. Among other conditions, he imposed on them the following orders: they were to shave their heads; to stop drinking fermented beverages; to eat no more unclean meats; to make the ritual prayers; and for each of them, to have no more than four legitimate wives. He demanded hostages from the sons or brothers of chiefs or other notables, and incorporated them into his *sofa*.

175 797 When Omar left Ségou in April, 1862, [343] to march against Handallahi, he left his son Ahmadou in command, backed by a guard of 1,500 *tabilés* and the support of the Bambara chiefs who had sworn loyalty to him.

3. The Results

175 614 797 It is usual to consider Omar's warlike enterprises solely from the point of view of Islam and to attribute their purpose and result to Peul proselytism. Such an explanation is dubious at best and in any case is very ambiguous. This question, however, involves a detailed study which is beyond the scope of this work, so we shall limit ourselves here to the subject at hand.

Omar replaced the clans of Kaarta and Ségou with the clan of the "people of Fouta," claiming that his conquests were due to a desire to convert the Bambara to Islam. In reality, this Moslem label did not change the native customs in the least; the clan of the people of Fouta proved to be conditioned and dominated by the same principles as the clans of Kaarta and Ségou.

The composition of this clan is a proof of this similarity. Omar and his community are at the head of an association made up of the *tabilés*, the people of Fouta, the usual *sofa* and *ton'-dyon'*, and the *tuburu*, who are people converted to Islam by force. All these people, linked by material interests, are brought together by a common faith. Leaders of the slaves hold important military or political posts. What is there in all this that is not already to be found in what we have discussed before? The means used to gain power are identical, and the only thing that differs is the label. It is claimed that Islam instead of paganism constitutes the motivating force.

In general, the evolution of this clan differs not at all from that of the clans already discussed; it can be described in the same terms.

175 797 A man of remarkable intelligence and powers of leadership, Omar would probably have given his achievements the cohesion and stability needed to make them endure if he had lived long enough. However, he died too soon before he had

175 reached a point of limiting, at least temporarily, the extent
797 of his conquests.

He left his son Ahmadou to face the worst possible difficulties. Ahmadou had neither Omar's authority nor his prestige to impose them on ~~the~~ chiefs of Fouta whom his [344] father had drawn into his orbit. Therefore they formed a party of malcontents who intrigued against him at the behest and for the profit of his various adversaries or enemies.

He was forced to deal with serious treason fomented against him within his own family by his brothers. He managed to get rid of some of the latter by criminal means. He was one of those fa who, at once weak and cruel, are incapable either of making their authority acceptable or of imposing it in case of need. As a result, Ahmadou was never supported by the confident or devoted affection of his own people.

At the mercy of the implacable and changeable machinations of a small group of his intimates, he was a puppet in the hands of these intriguers.

The occasionally successful expeditions which he led against his enemies and which, at the same time, served to satisfy his subjects' need for booty, had no important political significance. This was because they were carried out without any careful planning which would have made it possible to profit from them by taking local conditions into account.

The net result was that this long reign represented simply a long period of unrest among the members of the clan, accompanied by a brutal exploitation of the conquered people.

What could Islam gain from such a regime? If we set aside, as outside the sphere of our subject, the matter of doctrinal influence which was the work of Omar, it can be stated that the domination of the fouta-n-ke was an unfortunate development for the spread of Islam among the Bambara people with whom we are here concerned. No adequate organization, comparable to that of Sheik Ahmadou Bari at Macina, was formed to discipline the pagans and to interest them, especially to link them to the destinies of the clan of the Fouta people. The fanaticism of the talibé, the ferocious brutality of the sofa

175 and the political incoherence of the fama all combined to keep
the Bambara in a state of perpetual rebellion, either open or
797 latent. Islam itself was not responsible for this state of affairs;
rather, it was the incompetence and tyranny of its agents and
the political regime in general which were at the root of the
implacable hostility of the Bambara.

797 Islam prospers during peaceful eras. In itself it is not in the least antipathetic to pagans; on the contrary, the Bambara live perfectly harmoniously with the faithful, who, for their part, [345] successfully accommodate their brand of Islam to local native customs. That is why the Somono, the Bozo and the Marka are the best-qualified and most successful propagandists for Islam in the Bambara country. It was through their effort that, little by little, Moslem influence slowly penetrated the native atmosphere as if through a process of absorption.

True conversion occurs most often in an unconscious manner as a result of the Sudanization of Islam, whose endless ramifications form a kind of network of capillaries through which the Moslem sap in turn finds its way and, in the process, transforms the native temperament, often without the latter's awareness. The result of this process is a religion which is Islam only in name but which, being perfectly adapted to the purpose, has exercised, still exercises and will for a long time continue to exercise a vital role in the development of native society.

175 The occasion seemed favorable. After the death of the great N'Golo-Diara, two of his sons disputed the power. Dessé had the bad luck to support the loser. The victor, Mansong (1792-1808), came at once to punish the Kaarta inhabitants and destroyed Guémou, but he could not establish himself in the region.

After this, the evolution of the two kingdoms is roughly parallel. When the people of Ségou are occupied in the east against the people of Macina, the people of Kaarta seize the occasion to raid in the west against the Diawara and the Kassonké. When things go poorly in Macina, the people of Ségou revenge themselves by forays into the territory of the Massassi of Kaarta, who, less powerful, then have to relinguish their expansionist plans. Moreover, somber hours approach for the Bambara. In the east Ahmadou Bari founded a powerful Peul kingdom (1810) in the Macina, and his grandson Hamadou-Hamadou exerts more and more pressure on the kingdom of Ségou. To the west the great Massassi king, Bodian Moriba (1815-32), by repeated blows has exhausted the forces of the Diawara and the Kassonké. This done, he rules over Nioro, but at the same time suppresses those who could have helped him resist the Moslem push of the Toucouleur.

F. The Toucouleur Invasion and the End of the Bambara Kingdoms

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797 In 1854 El Hadj Omar, leading his "Talibés" animated by a fierce proselytizing spirit, occupied Nioro and Kaarta and attempted to impose Islam on the Bambara population. The Bambara resisted, supported by their racial brothers of Ségou who had forgotten, too late, the old quarrels. El Hadj Omar, vanquished by the French before Medina, [49] abandoned his dream of a push to the west and sought compensation by turning toward Ségou.

175 The Bambara then put aside their family resentments and joined the Peul of Macina, who were equally menaced by the Toucouleur expansion. But they were up against too strong a foe. Tata, son of the king Ali Diara, resisted for five days against El Hadj Omarls howitzers at Oïtala on the Niger (1861), then succumbed. Hamadou-Hamadou, who had come to his aid, was beaten at Sansanding. Ségou opened its doors; Ali Diara was put in irons. His brother, Kégué-Mari, continued the fight against Ahmadou, son

D. The New Religions: Islam and Christianity

797 177 Alongside this ancestral religion, the Bambara have been exposed to imported religions: Islam and Christianity. The Bambara long resisted the advance of Islam from the Sahara and the cruel Toucouleur domination lasted too briefly to transform a solidly organized religion. But the social evolution provoked by the French conquest has realized what El-Hadj-Omar's conquest could not. The breakdown of the traditional social structures was accompanied by a loosening of religious authority, counterbalanced by the political and administrative authority of the French. Moreover, European educational practices tend to replace the initiation each child received and to turn the children away from the traditional notions. [87] Now, this ignorance and this loss of religious authority are particularly favorable to the diffusion of Islam whose powerful propagandizing is well-known. This diffusion seems to be helped besides by the development of the means of communication, which, on the one hand, aid in separating the young people from the traditional familial authority, and, on the other hand, promote the travel of Dioula and Syrian merchants. All these Mussulmans live in close contact with the population and spread their beliefs, as well as their merchandise, throughout the country. If Islam is constantly on the increase, its practice remains nevertheless superficial and very far from orthodox. Very often it affects only the external forms of the ritual, while the old beliefs and even the traditional sacrifices remain. In addition, the country is still more divided by a certain number of sects, each of which has a Marabout at its head. But the Istiklal constantly attempts, by means of Koran schools directed by Egyptian Mussulmans, to unify this movement which is political as well as religious.

797 The Christian movement is much less important. In the Sudan it is essentially Catholic; missions are created in the bush and in certain centers, but they are still very few and far between. However, the creation of a Black clergy permits easier contacts with the population. The principal centers of the Catholic cult in the Sudan are at Bamako, the residence of the apostolic vicar, at Kati, Ouolosebougou (Bamako circle), Béléko (Diaila subdivision), Gualala (Yanfolila circle), Kayes, an apostolic prefecture with two churches, at Kakoulou (Kayes circle), Kita (White fathers and sisters of Our Lady of Africa), Karangasso

797 (Koutiala circle), Mandjakuy (San circle), Ségou, Kolongotomo (Macina subdivision), and at Sikasso (apostolic prefecture). In Guinea there is a Catholic center at Siguiri. In Upper Volta there are centers at Niangoloko (Banfora circle), Ouahigouya, and Bam: Black sisters (Ouahigouya circle). Finally, in the Ivory Coast there is a center at Gorhogo.

Protestant missions are even less numerous; they are generally American. The efforts they have exerted are far from having been crowned with success. We will mention, however, the cultural centers at Bamako with two protestant schools, the center at Sirakoro (Yanfolila circle), the ones at Baramba and Somasso (Koutiala circle), comprising two missions, the center at N'Torosso (San circle), and that of Sikasso. In Upper Volta, centers are at Siniena (Banfora circle) and at Ouahigouya. Finally, in the Ivory Coast there is one at Torogo (Korhogo circle).

II. Techniques

182 It is impossible to give a complete picture of all Bambara techniques; we are far from knowing them all. Investigations are being carried out on the spot, and already they indicate that no object, in its form or its material, no gesture of the customary actions, is due to the imagination of the maker. On the contrary, the material, [88] as well as the movements, is integrated in a system of representations that the Bambara can explain. The principal techniques among these have been analyzed and explained, but many have been described in a very superficial manner.

A. Body Techniques

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The Bambara think that fecundation is the work of Faro. This creative function is represented materially by the eating of a tomato by each spouse before sexual relations, which must be repeated twice. It is by means of this consecrated tomato that Faro transmits the life he conserves in water. The role of the father is to give the new-born his articulations which make him fit for work. He transforms the celestial seed into terrestial seed.

776 If on this earth the smallest of rulers, the least of potentates, is surrounded by servants and slaves, could the Creator be without them? If those who form the court of a king are superior to the gouatigi, or "family heads," to the dougoutigi, or "village heads," and to the kafotigi, or "heads of cantons," would those who form the celestial court be inferior to men, to genii, or to demons? The conclusion is perfectly natural; they would be superior to the latter, and to what will he /the Bambara/ compare them? Since they always in every way use themselves as a basis for comparison, they have only to think of themselves in order to remain logical in their conception of the world and to attribute to these beings the nature of their souls, their dousou, which they also call son. Is this not what they have done? When the Bambara define their idea of the soul and want to be understood, have they any other word than this very one, méléké, which they use to designate the angels? It is clear that they do not owe their concept [777] of heaven and the angels to the Moslems; they have appropriated from a foreign language a word which corresponded to a concept they already had, and that is all.

776 777 792 796 However, I am told that they have only one word to designate the Divinity, the Only God, and that word is the Islamic term itself, Alla. They have no other, and the first missionaries, doubtless through ignorance of the pagans' hatred of the Moslems, adopted it, thus creating a hindrance to their ministry (1). Yes, Alla is the term

•797 1. By translating as Alla both God and our concept of the Divinity, the first missionaries failed to establish the profound division which should exist between Catholicism and Islamism. The pagans regard the Catholic and the Moslem, as cousins, if not as brothers, and the word Alla is not irrelevant to this view. Because the Catholics believe in the Old Testament, they seem in the eyes of the Negro to border on Islamism, and the departure from it into Christianity

797 seems to them like membership in
a sect derived directly from Islamism.
The Moslems help with all their might
to further belief in this nonsense.
Therefore the missionaries should delete
from their catechisms the word *Alla* for
"God," as well as the ridiculous word
mori for "priest," the word *néma* for
"grace," etc., etc. -- in a word, all
that is not Bambara.

776 they use in everyday language when they speak of God, but in the be-
177 ginning did they not have another, and do they not still have one at
192 present? /76/
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I have always been surprised at the Negro's readiness to call a divine blessing by the name of its Author, and when in the winter he receives the blessing of blessings, the rain that makes plants sprout and the harvest grow, this is the way he expresses himself: "*Alla bi fign*, *Alla bi na*, *Alla bi kouloukoulou*, *Alla bi yégé yégé*, *Alla do*, etc., God darkens, God comes, God rumbles, God flashes, it is God," etc. These are purely metaphoric expressions, which mean: "The clouds gather; it will rain; the thunder rumbles; there are flashes of lightning, it is the rain."

I have found these metaphors on their lips also with exactly the same meaning but this time in Bambara words: "*Sa bi fign*, *sa bi na*, *sa bi kouloukoulou*, *sa bi yégé yégé*, *sa do*," the meaning is likewise: "The clouds gather; it will rain; the thunder rumbles; there are flashes of lightning; it is the rain." The word *sa* is strictly Bambara and so cannot reasonably be regarded as more recent than the Arab word; the Negroes therefore had it before they knew the word *Alla*. The word did not mean "cloud," "thunder," "lightning," or "rain," and there is every reason to believe that there was a time when it awakened in their minds a concept identical with that which the word *Alla* awakens in them at present, and that this word *Alla* from a foreign language is only used to express a concept long held by them.

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2. The Negroes' great festival is held at the end of Ramadan. They have a second at the festival of the كَبش sheep. The Moslem masters forced them to observe these two festivals, but the Bambara have not adopted a single Moslem rite. They sacrifice to the *dasiri*, to some *djiné* genii, and to the dead.

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The great sacrifice to the dead is made at the end of Ramadan and at the festival of the كَبش sheep. The *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, or dougoutigi, first sacrifices to the *b'lon da ba sou* (3), those who,

3. *Sou*, "corpses"; *b'lon da ba*, "of the great *b'lon*," the great entry hut giving access to the village.

like themselves, were priests of the *dasiri* and, in a general way, to all those who had some civil or religious authority in the village. All the members of his council are present at this sacrifice. After the libations of millet flour mixed with water and *d'lo*, or millet beer, a fine white hen (4) is slaughtered, and sometimes a sheep then, two

[822]

4. In general sacrifices where the whole population or a whole sect participates, the liturgical color is the primary consideration, and a pullet a day old has as much value as a large rooster. When a victim of the liturgical color cannot be obtained, only water, *dégé*, and the kola nut are offered.

white kola nuts are offered and, if the sacrifice is accepted, a clump of wool or a few feathers are torn from the victim and stuck onto the

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Ma n'zira ba, etc., does not mean "great baobab of man." The real meaning is: "O man who is a great baobab." In writing it I prefer a "z" to an "a." Usually the Bambara soften the hard sound by a euphonious little "n." With a hard "s" the word sira cannot be distinguished from the word "tobacco": sira siramougou, "snuff tobacco"; n'ziremougou, "baobab flour."

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776 782 a purely Bambara term to express their idea /of these spirits/, and they to the word djiné; they call them gnéna.

776 782 777 798 Before the arrival of the Moslems, the Negro sacrificed to beings to whom they have attributed bodies and souls, although imponderable and invisible, who are intermediate between men and angels and whom the Arabs call الجن el djiné. But they also sacrificed to evil beings, superior to the former in power, whom they call boli. The legend of the boli, an ironic legend which I will tell in full when I discuss this matter, is sufficient proof of this belief. For the Moslems of the Sudan only two things here below /70/ are worthy of attention: Mecca (Makka) and Stamboul -- old Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Constantinople -- who in their eyes, as in the eyes of all Moslems of our colonies, is the great Pope of Islam. Everything that does not bear the stamp of Mecca, everything that does not come from Stamboul, is to be rejected and scorned. Thus the Bambara, fertile in expedients, quickly managed to find a way out of their discussions with the propagators of Islam: "All our boli come from Mecca," was their weapon of war.

776 777 798 The Bambara were pursued from every side, unable to perform publicly even religious ceremonies in honor of simple genii. Can one believe that they added others that were still more terrible? As conquerors the Moslems have always ruthlessly opposed idolatry, destroying its temples and overthrowing its altars. "Believe or die" has always been their motto and always will be as long as they feel

776 177 798 strong. Is it not a fact that this law still operated forcefully at the time of the last kings of Segou, when El-Hadj-Omar (1) took the crown from the pagan king Mary to give it to his son Ahmadou (2)?

1. El-Hadj-Omar ("Omar the Pilgrim"), so named because, it is said, he made the journey to Mecca.

2. Bambara translation of the word Ahmed.

It was Ahmadou who held captive our explorers Mage and Quintin, and at the death of his father he left for Yamina and then for Nioro, leaving the crown to his son Madani. For those Bambara who were incautious, whose fetishes were seized, or who were caught sacrificing, the consequences were the confiscation of possessions, imprisonment, slavery, and death. The huge area where the native cemetery and [764] the European cemetery (3) are found at present was soaked with the blood of pagans. Who will ever know how many heads rolled at that time for a purely religious purpose! On some days the arm of the executioner stopped only because it was tired and unable to strike -- so I was told by some Negroes who owed their /71/ lives to this fatigue. And I believe them, for the greatest praise that the story-tellers /griots/ accord these tyrants is that they knew how to cut off heads. The legend that the boli came from Mecca was born inevitably

3. There are two European cemeteries at Ségou. The first is at the entrance of the city on the south side. The second, the only one in which burial takes place at present, is on the edge of the native cemetery, south on the road from Sens and Koutiala, about 300 or 400 meters from the city.

776 out of the Bambara's need to soften their crime of idolatry and to pre-
177 serve it by lending it extenuating circumstances. If the cradle of
798 Islam is Mecca, if its superiority is derived from the holiness of that
● city, chosen and beloved by God (1), what can the Moslems want of

> 1. See what I said above on the subject of Mecca and Stamboul.

him, the Bambara, whose religion comes from this same much vaunted city? And if the God of Whom the Moslems preached to the Bambara has decreed everything (2), good and evil, if He is the Author of both

> 2. See the Koran: VI, v. 3 - 39; X, v. 99; XIV, v. 4; XVII, v. 32; XXXVI, v. 6, 7, 8, 9; LIII, v. 43, 44, 45 - 49; LXXVI, v. 29; LXXX, v. 29; etc.

good and evil and leads each person along the course that pleases Him to such a degree that he no longer has freedom of choice, why wish to take from them that which God has given them, that which comes to them from the holy city of Mecca!"

776 The Bambara term for the *boli* is *gna*. Their idea of them
796 corresponds closely to the Arab concept of the *chéitane* شَيْطان,
782 and in everyday language, they define them by a single word: *sétané*,
[192] "satan," even though this word is never on their lips in the sacrifices.
In their nocturnal orgies and religious dances, the Negroes' notion
of the genie to which they are sacrificing are shown in concrete form.
And when, in their religious ceremonies in honor of the *Komo*, *Kono*,
[178] *Nama*, etc., the spirit appears by the glow of little fires lit in the
sacred woods, decked out in a cloak of feathers, his head hidden in a
huge horned mask that has nothing human about it, one cannot help
776 thinking of the tales of old Breton grandmothers, told on a winter
796 evening in the stables. The blasting of trumpets, bamboos, and *koba*
534 horns (3), the tinkling of /72/ the little bell, and the shouts of the
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631 ("great sorcerer who has communication with the invisible beings"), lived at Ségou with his court. At the head of each of his provinces he had a minister responsible for levying the tax (/this man was/ his tool, often one of his children, to whom -- doubtless for this reason -- was given the title of *Fama*, petty king. The minister did his work through the intermediary of the heads of cantons, or *kafotigi*, under who, with respect to civil matters, were all the heads of villages, the *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, or *dougoutigi*. /100/

The levying of the tax often gave rise to disputes between the *kafotigi* and the *dougoutigi*, and the latter would resign from his functions or be relieved of them. After that he lost all civil powers but none of his religious or priestly authority, and since the religious sphere had precedence over the civil, he kept his title of *dougoutigi* in his role as *gnéna-n-sonnaba*. The one who replaced him /in the civil sphere/ was never anything but an upstart and worthy only of the name *sotigi* ("head of houses"), although his responsibility became hereditary.

●798 793 624 Under Moslem domination the worship of the *gnéna*, or *djiné*, was forbidden and punished by very severe penalties (slavery or death). It can thus be believed that it was to the advantage of the *gnena-n-sonnaba* to keep their position quiet, to refuse the title of *dougoutigi*, and even to forbid their people to bestow it on them. In Bani country and among the Bambara of Sikasso and Koutiala, where Moslem domination was never solidly established, there was no cause for similar fears, and it is understandable that the custom of calling the religious head *dougoutigi* and the civil head *sotigi* has been retained.

624 793 The *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, or *dougoutigi*, is helped in his duties by a *siéré* (aide, deputy); the heads of quarters (*sotigi*) and the heads of families (*gouatigi*) make up his council. Nothing important is done in the village without consulting its head, who calls all his elders together and decides nothing without them. All of them are also present at any sacrifice if it is offered by a family, and it is not unusual to see them going single file, evening or morning, to the sacred grove of the fetish. On the morning of a marriage, they always go there.

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538 whole circle in the dry season. For example, the master of a Nama will give an account, and the storyteller will take up the refrain, which always ends: "I have told you truly, the Nama can refrain from evil, but it is capable only of evil (a ka fari, a ka djougou ko djougou). It is evil, very evil!"

776 theless refrain from an evil act and thus indirectly grant a blessing to human beings. The words of the formula in the sacrifices to the gnéna and the gnâ seem identical, and yet, when one has understood the inmost feelings of the Bambara soul, one sees all the difference between them. To one as to the other the Negroes say: "Ka dji d'amma (give us water), ka mousoou d'amma (give us wives), ka nafolo d'amma (give us wealth), etc." But while in speaking to the first they actually ask for water, wives, etc., they make an indirect request to the second, so that their words mean: "Do nothing to keep us from having wives," "do nothing to keep us from having water," etc. In expressing himself this way he uses all his cunning, and all his deceit comes to the surface and is revealed. Yes, he really deserves the epithet that neighboring tribes have given him and of which he is proud; it is misi bo, "cow dung," -- dry on the outside but limp and soft inside, so that it is squashed when it is stepped on. His inner feeling when he addresses the boli is this: "O Spirits, evil genii, you are capable only of evil; may your hatred not attack me or those who are dear to me, may it all be for my enemies and those that can harm me!" /130/

2. The Legend of the Boli

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778 This is a very curious legend, for it makes the boli come from Mecca, the holy city! To understand it better, let us remember in passing that Islam has only made the Bambara more attached to their idols. They have died in order to keep them; they answered the

771 "believe or die" of the Moslems by taking up their spears, and when
798 they were conquered, reduced to servitude, and unable to continue
778 their worship openly, they remained true to the faith they received from their ancestors. Severed heads became the prey of vultures, and spilled blood flowed, but those that survived only became hardened. The Moslem conquerors, tired of striking and in need of slaves and manpower, had to admit their defeat in the field of religion.

Some fell away from the idols (slaves, and some rich people seeking to safeguard their lives and possessions), but their apostasy was strictly external and a lie, for they shouted the formula but in secret devoted themselves to their bloody rites, imbuing their children with their own faith and not that of their masters. A lie has never
[577] been difficult for the Bambara; to know how to lie is for them more than half a virtue. Thus, when the right to freedom was proclaimed
[567] in 1907, I was not at all surprised to see that out of nearly 5,000 slaves who spontaneously set themselves free, the majority returned to their homes or to the land of their fathers, forgot the formula, and declared themselves to be fetishists. They did not get initiated then since they already had been (1).

1. Those who took back their own freedom in 1907 were all slaves of the Moslems. The "Peulls" /Fulani/, a shepherd people, saw almost all their slaves escape. The Bambara in slavery kept their traditions as well as they could; in the Negro village of Biskra I found sons of the Bambara who did not know their own language and were fanatical Moslems, yet kept their tattoos, sacrificed to the family boli handed down by their fathers, danced the dance of the korodouga, and used the Bambara formulas and songs although they no longer understood them.

798 Since all the Bambara could not be made to submit to shameful 771 servitude, the Moslems were satisfied to impose a tax, to forbid public worship of the idols, and, with sheathed sword, sought to make 778 converts by persuasion. Their caravans were quick to cover the country, preaching Islam in all places both favorable and unfavorable, but the mass of the people could not be approached. In order to give /131/ their beliefs a rational basis, they always did everything in the name of "Alla, " "Stamboul" (the Sultan of Constantinople), and "Makka (Mecca), and said to the conqueror: "All true belief comes from Mecca (Makka); it is the center of all religious life, so why do you fight so hard against our boli? They all come from Mecca. God has given you the formula: 'there is no Divinity other than God and Mohammed is His prophet'; for you He prescribes ablutions, Friday rest, etc.. Keep your formula and shout it! To us Bambara He has given the boli and bloody sacrifices, so why do you want to take from us our treasures that are hungry for blood?" I do not doubt that we owe 773 our "legend" to the discussions which arose between the m'rabet (the 776 marabout, or Moslem priest) and the gnâtigi, or bolitigi. Here it is 794 as I so often heard it told by bold old men:

A group of youths who were devoting themselves to trade and following lady luck (ou toumbe kolo (1) gnini, "they were seeking cowrie shells"), one day took the road to the east. Over mountains and valleys the little band walked and walked for a long time, and then finally they reached the great, blue, salty water, the ocean, on the shores of which lies the holy city, Mecca (Makka) (2).

[436] 1. Kolo, "cowrie shells" (singular, koké), small shells used as money.

[823] 2. Since the Moslems said that Mecca was located on the seacoast, and since the Bambara did not know Arabia, they believed it to be in this direction. In their minds the ocean does not have to be crossed to get there. Actually, this is the least of their worries.

778 other to the west, and covered with a
346 thatched roof in which is hidden an object
called dolin. The village is surrounded by
several sacred places: a sunzun tree to the
north; a well to the west; two stones, one
(fara fi) situated near the village and the
other (fara gwe) on the river's edge.

796 The septennial ceremony is performed
at night. Toward evening, the eldest of
the Kéita goes secretly to remove the
object dolin from the old thatch and hides
it. The new roof is made with materials
gathered by the descendants of Farako
Makan Kegni (straw, bamboo, and fibers)
while the women of the same relationship
plaster the walls. The Dyabaté griot who will
officiate provide themselves with a little
stick of sunzun wood about the length of the
ring finger with which they will rub their
teeth; the twigs must be cut by the elder
sister of the chief of the griot who gives her
in exchange /xv/ a loin-cloth of eight
[801] bands of white cotton and a number of cowries
in multiples of 8 such as 8, 480.

The orators who will officiate during the night wear a white cap topped by a band of cotton of the same color and a yellow tunic (wolo) (see p. 20). Sitting inside the hut from which the old roof has been removed, facing east, they spit into a receptacle in order not to soil the ground. The Kéita remain outside the hut on a site marked by stones and covered with gravel collected in the river bed by young men. During the entire night, the griot, each in turn and encouraged by a relative, recite from the devices of all the tribes issued from Mandé. At dawn, they sing as they circle the construction; then the Kéita hoist up the new roof. Next, the elder

called oryo or oyo, is broken down into three stages: yo, the inner word, invisible spirit and inaudible voice, potentially containing all creation: o the transition from the inaudible to the audible;
801 yereyereli, the creative vibration (4). The progression is represented by seven signs, 7 being the symbolic number of man (homo) "seed of the world." Indeed, this numeral is the sum of 3 (male symbol) and 4 (female symbol). The couple they form is itself the symbol of duality, the fundamental law of creation, since each human being is both male and female in body and spirit (5).

772 3. From ta (to do, in the ancient language) and si (to act). The Bambara freely translate tasi as "spirit of nothing" and give this stage, originating in nothingness and preceding creation, the name of tasi dyẽ, "world of the spirit of nothing."

4. The name oyo, given to this system, is a composite of o and yo, and when pronounced reverses the chronological order. This anomaly is recognized by the Bambara who explain it by the fact that yo, designating an inaudible voice, cannot be pronounced before o which designates a perceptible noise. Thus, in reversing the chronological order, yo "remains in the secret of o" which is in accord with its nature.

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774 5. The number 3 represents the penis and two testicles of the male body; the number 4 the four labia of the female body. On the other hand, man and woman are each endowed with two twin souls of different sexes; the soul of sex, opposite to that of its bearer, has its seat in the foreskin or the clitoris until the operation of circumcision or excision is performed. For further discussion of the duality of man and his

772 It is said that *yo,* the inner secret voice, "is born of itself, is known by itself, and comes out from itself /6/, out of the nothing which is itself" (1). Out of *yo* there will come only things that are themselves and that will be nothing other than *yo.* Each thing, being *yo,* proceeds like *yo,* only from itself. Hence, man is nothing other than himself, since he is a creation of *yo* and since *yo*'s creations are by itself. Thus, there is nothing in the world besides oneself, since the person is *yo,* and *yo* is entirely contained in the person. As a result, each being is directly descended from *yo* with no intermediary; it is *yo* and exists only because it wills it. That is to say, man, the image of *yo,* alone has the will, alone has the capacity to bring forth action or creation, since these can be nothing but himself. "Who then," say the initiates, " can know himself, make himself known and manifest himself, other than through himself? Who then can manifest anything but himself?"

But *yo,* being at the origin of the inaudible and invisible things that are itself, is also in the unknown, hence in nothingness. And consequently, the same is true of man who is nothingness and can act only on the nothingness of himself.

Thus, *yo,* insofar as it was mind, was free in its ability to decide and to use its creative will. Its work, in nothingness, consisted in shedding, "for it was the continuous shedding of the world." When it
772 manifested itself by rotating on itself, it went five times to the four
801 "angles of its thought," *seleke miri,* once to the "sky of its thought," *sã miri,* once to the "earth of its thought," *dugukolo miri,* thus communicating its power to them (2). The realization of this universe,

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831 person, see G. Dieterlen, *La Personne chez les*
774 *Bambara* /The individual among the Bambara/ and infra, Ch. 3, *The Person.*

1. *yo na na a yere la, bwora a yere la, dona a yere la, a be fu la min ya yere ye.*

2. On the meaning of the number 5, see p. 25. *Yo* has endowed the "angles," corresponding to the "cardinal angles" in the completed universe, with its greatest

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strength for there the Bambara place the poles of attraction which, in the universe, uphold all bodies. It is said: "All bodies accept the force of attraction of the four angles, " fari be bi sõ seleke nuni mana barika la.

which determined "the space of yo in its own thought, " is expressed by the number 22: "yo, darkness of creation, in the depth of the secret space of night, master of the foundation of the 22 rotations, great bearer of vibration, great builder of the marrow of bones (1).

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1. yo dali dyibi, šu kene gundo tyema, munumunu mu tani ma siki ba, yere done ba, kolow nye kono dlaba; kono being the ancient term for marrow.

This prayer is recited in honor of yo when a woman's pregnancy is first noticed; it is also recited at eclipses of the sun.

These 22 spirals stirred up all that yo contained in spirit; nugu, "entrails, intestines, " which carried all things and man within itself; yalã, " seed of the air, " which placed the voids in all /7/ parts of space"; fayã, "seed of the wind"; sani, "seed of water"; yerẽ, "seed of fire"; yelẽgu, "seed of earthly matter" (2). The rotations of yo

2. fayã, sani, yerẽ (in ancient language), and yelẽgu were at the origin of the four elements, air, water, fire and earth, all of which did not yet exist but were to appear later.

The seven elements composing yo are represented by signs, reproduced in Figure 1 (1 to 7).

put them in order and kept them under the force of attraction (mana). In other words, carried away by this whirlwind, both magnetic and creative, the elements became organized, one in relation to the other; in this way the 22 terms of the universe, as thought out by yo, were determined; these terms are also the 22 periods of its thought:

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1. origin of the west, klebi dyu
2. origin of the east, koro dyu
3. origin of the north, baba dyu
4. origin of the south, bani dyu
5. the sky from above, sã kaba

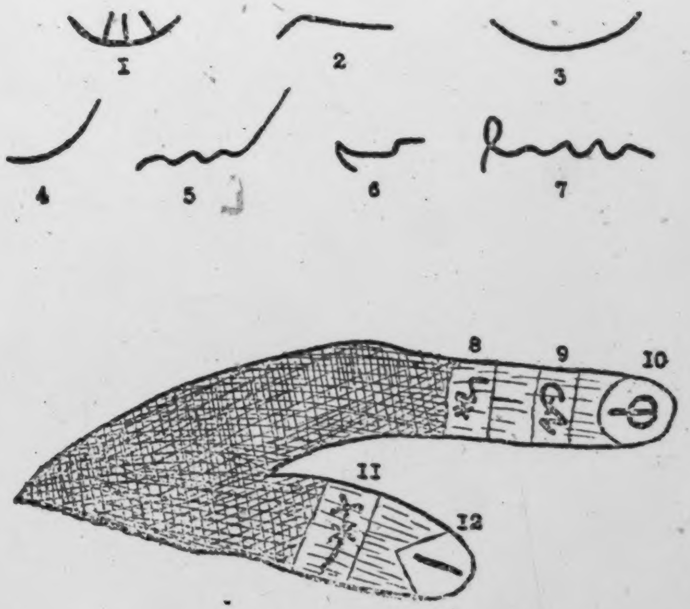

Fig. 1.—Bambara signs. From 1 to 7, signs of yo. From 8 to 12, signs of the king's thumb and index finger, representing the actual world and the future world (drawings by an informant).

6. secret space, tyema gundo
7. earth, dugu
8. center of the earth, kotye dugu
9. eye of the earth, dugu nye
10. mouth of the earth, dugu da (1)

[823]

1. The earth breathes through orifices called "mouths."

11. northwest, seleke se /8/ (literally: foot of the angle)

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801

12. southwest, seleke bolo (literally: hand of the angle)
13. northeast, seleke (angle)
14. southeast, seleke (angle)
15. sun, kle
16. moon, kalo
17. male star, dolo ke
18. female star, dolo muso
19. mouth or mother of the star, dolo da or dolo ba
20. grain of rain, sã kise
21. secret rain, sã gundo
22. damp rain, sã suma (1).

> 1. It is said of these times: "yo says only yo above, one should imitate this; the world has moved to the west, the east, the north, the south," yo bi yo fo sana, ladeke ka kãka kę o la, giri kera wa la, ni flaye la, ni kaye la, ni noro la. The terms giri, wa, flaye, kaye, noro belong to the ancient language.

While whirling from the "angles" to the cardinal sides, yo thought out four worlds (2):

> 2. The four worlds are represented by a drawing made up of four concentric quadrangular figures, observed by the informant in the village of Kéré in Mandé. The Bambara conceive of space as a square with cardinal angles and sides (see p. 55, Fig. 3).

The first, dyẽ mana, "the shedding of the world," belongs to the time when yo "circulated within himself" in nothingness, and of which it is said: "yo was the shedding of the world; he made himself shed"(3).

> 3. yo tunye dyẽ mana ye, o tumbi màna a yere la.

The following world, dyẽ gale, "the first world," is the universe about to be realized, the actual world, and it is said that its symbol is 3: "The foundation of the first world was given to all things by yo, these things were constructed at 3." (1) In order to realize the world,

> 1. dyẽ gale sikityoko dira fama yo fę few ma, o few ye dlali ke saba la.

yo had to use intermediaries which he created as such, but which were responsible for imperfection since the harmony of all things would have required that creation be directly willed and engendered by yo himself. The first constructed universe is thus 3: yo is 1, the intermediary is 2, the world itself is 3. As a result the whole creation is not equal to yo, for its perfection would have expressed itself by 2, that is to say by yo and the world with no intermediary (2).

> 2. This idea would seem to contradict the principle of yo's identity with all creation. It should be taken to mean that the total work of creation also includes imperfection. The cause of this imperfection is precisely the presence of intermediaries created, so to speak, with this purpose in mind.

On the other hand, it is said that the actualized universe was constructed and perceived at 3, known at 4. When yo decided to create, in period one, nothing could know it, since it alone moved in the nothingness in which it placed its energies. When these energies united, they formed a new unity which, added to yo, made 2, that is to say the period two which was as yet unknown. These energies grew slowly heavier while "resisting in attraction," that is, ordering themselves. This was /9/ period three and things became perceptible. But not until period four did they become clearly known, that is, man became conscious of them. As a result, masculinity (symbol 3) in nature is considered the original stimulus in determining fertility. The fulfillment of fertility and the complete knowledge of it can only be accomplished through femininity (symbol 4).

But yo, being perfect, wanted perfection, and in attempting to achieve it, wished to reach 5. For this purpose, he went beyond universe 3 and reached 4. Since numbers were already the symbol of things and (so to speak) the things themselves, 4, representing femininity, could not create by itself, for 4 does not exist in 3, symbol of masculinity. And in the universe as thought out by *yo*, nothing can be engendered without the help of complementaries or twins, whose prototype is the couple: masculinity-femininity.

World 4 is called *dyẽ bana*, "the refused world, " for, in the face of difficulty, *yo* kept that creation within itself; it remains there as a potential and will return into the world called *dyẽ nata*, "the world to come, " in which, reaching 5, *yo* will achieve a universe not in 3, like the actual one, but in 2 (*yo* and the world), without an intermediary. Hence its perfection, for it will be equal to its creator. This universe will be created in the opposite direction of the preceding one in the following order: south, north, east, and west. It will be established by the "great voice of one word" and characterized by the transformation of beings, a new distribution, the absence of error, a close contact with the essence of things, and perfect knowledge. For it is said: "In the world to come, all words will be changed. Solidity was not achieved in this creation, but union will be accomplished in the solidity of one word. *Yo*'s course, *yo*'s work, *yo*'s sleep will penetrate every being. The second world is a new world, the world of one word" (1).

Because *yo* has only constructed the first universe, men understand only half of its thought, the other half to be realized in the "second world."

1. *Dyẽ nata la, kumaw be bi yelema;*
sikityoko ma kle dali ko la fara ñugã
na kę kuma dyotyoko kele nye; yo boli,
yo bara, yo suna, bi dõ ma be la;
dyẽ fla ye dyẽ kura ye, dyẽ kura ye
kuma kele nye.

This text is sometimes recited in the course of talks which follow religious ceremonies, and at times when the movements of creation are discussed. Many details of rituals and games indicate this preoccupation with a second universe. See Fig. 1, p. 22 and Fig. 4, p. 56.

772 801 After having thought out the universe and rotated upon itself to create the universe, yo "divided and distributed its Word." It placed three times 22 voices /10/ in o, which then entrusted one time 22 voices to yereyereli, out of which the finally conceived universe was to come forth. This deposit in o is none other than the change of the inaudible voice, yo, into an audible voice. When that voice began to sound outside of yo, still invisible and secret, the latter stopped moving and remained motionless within itself: o, in its sound, is the emissary of yo. And in that voice all things necessary to the building of the universe were proposed; all these things also potentially rumbled across the "angles of the world." When this primary movement reached its heighth, the yereyereli, the vibration, issued from it, and when the vibration existed and was shed, o stopped rumbling but was itself the spirit of movement: it is said: "yere came forth from o, o was its foundation" (1).

1. yere bwora o la, o kera siki kele nye a ko.

772 Yo being the immense and inaudible voice, o became the rumbling voice; finally yereyereli, the high-sounding vibration, formed the rays of light in space. The whole of the infinite trembled, shone, and resounded. After the yereyereli had filled space with movement, light, and sound, it ask o for its power and became "pregnant," bearing all it wanted and had to create: "The vibration had the power of attraction, the creator was secretly within it" (2). The present universe issued from the vibration, provoking "astonishment," koni, a term used to designate both the yereyereli and the creative principle it contained (3).

2. Yereyereli tunye mana ma ye, daliba tumbi a kono gundo la.
The Bambara imagined that the light and sound of this vibration were such that they were intolerable to vision and hearing; however, even though man cannot perceive the vibration, it exists nonetheless; "the egg of the world continues its vibration in sound and light."

772 3. On koni, see S. de Canay, Notes sur la théodicée bambara, pp. 188ff.

Creation of the Universe

772 773 At the center of yereyereli was the spirit, miri, in the spirit was the doing, wali; in the doing was the coming of all things, nali; and in nali was the division of all things, tali. These four terms also define the four basic elements of creation, respectively air, earth, fire, and water; air and fire being male, earth and water, female. (1)

The miri was also "the egg of the world in which nature was enclosed." It is represented by three ovals, all contained within each other; this figure also expresses the three /11/ rotations made by yereyereli at each of the cardinal points (in the following order: north, south, east, west), each rotation stirring up the four elements (2). The central oval, or so de, "son of the house," is the primordial grain which placed all things in the nature of the four elements. The intermediary oval, dyẽ wali gale, "the first action of the world,"

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1. "yereyereli was originally made up of four elements which enabled it to vibrate secretly," (yereyereli gale gale kono kera ni wale nani ye, o ya to a sera ka yereyereli šu a la).

● [801] 2. See Fig. 2, p. 34 . Creation is thus expressed by the numbers seven and 12, obtained by the addition and multiplication of three (male symbol, and number of rotations) and four (female symbol and number of elements). Seven is the symbol of man (homo) and of the principle of the universe; 12 is the symbol of the multiplication of beings and of the perpetual development of this universe.

772 represents fertility; it determines man, the principal thing of the
773 universe, who has also received from it the capacity for thought and
knowledge. The external oval, dyẽ ko, "gate of the world, " is essentially mobile; rotating upon itself, it dilates or contracts, depending upon the births or deaths of the multiple-formed matter it contains. It is this oval that makes all things in the universe "unable to escape from the sight of the creator" (1).

1. fẽw be dyele ngala ka yeli kono.

772 The essential part of that which the yereyereli stirred up as it
801 rotated was the spirit. The spirit, inflated by all its potential power,
finally began to sound. "The spirit resounded in the midst of facts, "
773 (2) and as it was the strongest element in space, it held itself up alone

2. miri ye manga ti walew tyela.

and arose. Then it burst and from it poured elements which slowly separated, dispersed, and ordered themselves. It is said of this event: "In the old days, all things came out together" (3). These fundamental

3. folo kow bõñuana.

elements, numbering twenty-two, are at the origin of creation which is classified into twenty-two categories.

The Bambara use several methods to order and name these elements. First, according to the fundamental system of creative thought, yo, they divide the elements into three groups of seven, to which a twenty-second is added.

The first seven, dyẽ dyo kã gale, "the first voice of the building of the world, " express yereyereli before knowledge, but containing all things with man, "seed" of nature, in the first place. The seven following elements, dyẽ dyo kã saba "the third voice of the building of the world, " denote the beginning of the knowledge of yereyereli as masculinity and assures all fertility. It is at this moment that the term koni appears, attributed to yereyereli, and expressing awe before creation. The last seven, dye dyo ka nani "the fourth voice of the building of the world, " contains "the complete revelation of the dispositions and situations /12/ of all that was created";

772 yereyereli then becomes known as femininity and assures the supremacy
801 of femininity over nature. The twenty-second element sums up these
773 three groups of seven and expresses total knowledge (1).

Another division of the elements determines the categories. The first seven are the bõnuana of which it is said: "The seven bõnuana came out first" (2). Then came twelve bangini, births or bayeremani "discoveries," of which it is said: "Twelve discoveries were left in space" (3). After them, there appeared three ǰiginis, foundations or dyoli, situations, of which it is said: "Three foundations ate up the world" (4). The first seven elements are the "states of the world"; the next twelve, "the foundations of the world"; the last three, "the words of the world's situation" (5).

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1. The same progression of numbers as in the creative thought yo, characterizes the creation by vibration. Being 1, the vibration passed on to 2. At 2, it conceived invisible "light air" and the powers it contained were grouped together to form a whole. At 3, the powers became gravity, and the visible "heavy air" appeared. At 4, and only at that moment, creation, completely visible, was revealed to the consciousness. For further discussion of the "heavy air," see also S. de Ganay, Notes sur la théodicée bambara, p. 188.

2. Bõnuana wolo fla bwora folo. The word bõnuana means literally "come out together."

3. Bangini tani fla bla ka kęnę da.

4. J̌igini saba ye dyẽ dũn.

5. dyẽ dyo tyoko; dyẽ sigi tyoko; dyẽ dyo ka.

773 root by his own power and became the first of all trees, the balanza,
824 green in dry season and dry in rainy season, and it extended his power (1).

> 1. The balanza is not Pemba in his totality, which is spirit, force, and matter. It is Pemba's earthly metamorphosis and, more especially, the image of his fertile masculinity. Pemba took the shape of the balanza in order to continue his work of creation and to bring death on the earth.

773 The human beings born of Faro lived amidst the burning rocks and sought refuge under that tree, whose power was obvious to all since it needed no water to keep it green. They prayed to it and received from it directives for their lives. Since they were immortal, time did not exist. However, they figured their age according to their pilosity: at age 12, the public hair grew; at 22, the hair under the arms; at 36, the beard was black; at 52, the hair whitened. When he could count the four types of hair, his being was complete; but seven years later, he suddenly grew thin and lost his vitality, and his soul weakened; he was then an old man.

Men at that time knew no language and had no clothes. They lived naked and communicated to each other through gestures and grunts. At the instigation of Mousso Koroni, and in order to recognize [801] each other, they scarred their face with three or four lines, three being the sexual symbol of man (the penis and two testicles) and four that of woman (the four labia). In keeping with this, each person, according to his sex, would repeat his actions three or four times.

Men at that time received their food from /18/ the sky, thanks to the spirit Téliko, who, up in space, watched over Faro's waters. During the rainy season, he would send them stones from the seventh heaven containing karite nuts, si kolo. From these stones the women extracted oil which they ate with fruit. One day, during the dry season, a woman who had drawn oil from four nuts wiped her hands on the balanza under which she was seated alone. "This, I want," said the tree. From then on, all the women offered him oil and were imitated by men who later partook of the cult.

However, the balanza was no longer satisfied with only Mousso Koroni. It demanded that all the women give it their love. Therefore

173 171 [821] taught certain agricultural techniques. In both tribes, the same star, Sirius (called *sigi toto* by the Dogon; *sigi doto* by the Bambara), represents them. The androgynous Faro is comparable in all ways to the Nommo, the universal monitor, custodian of the word and of life. The *yurugu* and the Nommo made voyages similar to those of Pemba and Faro. In particular, at the time of their descent on earth, the *yurugu*, and later the Nommo, used an "ark," *koro*, whose counterparts are Pemba's wood *pembele* and Faro's ark *kuru*, described by certain initiates (see M. Griaule, *L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes*. /The ark of the world among Nigerian peoples/.

For both tribes, man "the seed of the world," is the image of the cosmos. The exact role of the seed of the *Acacia albida* does not appear clearly in the two myths, but in both cases, it is considered to be a first aborted creation.

Faro's Reign

173 Faro, having vanquished the balanza and overcome Téliko, took over the creation himself. He reorganized the whole universe and established the order under which it still functions today. /27/ He spread his word and his light; he named and classified all things: "All things (of the universe) are under the domination of Faro; eight hundred transformations are in his power" (1).

•801 802 1. *Fêw be be faro ka se kono, yelemani ba kele be a la a fe.*

The number 800 which is "the end of the count," here expresses the infinite. In the so-called "eastern number system," now

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used by most Sudanese, the principal units are 1, 80, 800, etc. Ten remains a secondary unit for counting from 1 to 79 and is combined with 80 for units of the other orders.

There is also the so-called "Mandé" number system, the principal units of which are 1, 60, 600, etc. in which 10 remains a secondary unit for the count from 1 to 59, and combines with 60 for units of a higher order.

On the other hand, it must be noted that the Bambara number system is vigesimal and reflects the concept of the person as identified with the 20 fingers of his hands and feet, and spiritually endowed with two souls of the opposite sex, each of which represents the number 10. If one follows this line of thought, 10 is the unit parexcellence (see p. 213, n. 2). The two counts, 60 and 80, in Sudanese metaphysics, are complementary in the sense that one, 60, is male (60 is three times the person) and the other, 80, is female (80, four times the person) (for a discussion on 3 and 4, see p. 19). In the tribes where generally only the count based on 80 is used, the count based on 60 is still used today in certain rituals (principally among the Dogon).

173 To carry through his plan, Faro undertook a voyage of reconnaissance to the ends of the world in order to name the cardinal points.

He first visited the east, and all the beings who lived there recognized his power and his wisdom. Comparing the luminous whiteness of this region to that of hair discolored by age, he gave it the name of koro, old, a word which also indicates that it was his first stop. He made the east the seat of death.

He then went to the west. As it was dark there, he named the inhabitants klebi maw, "people of the fallen sun." He made the

the dying man to go into the water and place itself under Faro's protection. At the moment of delivery, both ni and dya return to the body of the newborn child who replaces the dead man, but they return in reversed order: the dya is returned to the body of the child and becomes his ni; the ni of the deceased mixes with the birth water spread on the ground which forms the shadow (suma) and will be his double, the twin (1). In the case of a boy, the dya will be female; in the case /59/ of a girl, it will be male. These movements are independent of the sex of the deceased as the spirit reverses the sexes when necessary. Each human being is thus both male and female [828] through his soul and his double. This conception of human nature, which is fundamental to the Bambara, is expressed in the symbolism of numbers. The number seven is formed of three (male sexual symbol) and four (female sexual symbol) and represents the complete ● [801] man. In addition, on another level, the number six is that of male twins, seven that of mixed twins (and the hermaphrodite), and eight that of female twins. The body of the newborn child is gently tapped [844] by the number of strokes representing the above figures in order to call the child's ni according to its sex.

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761 2. Grouped hierarchally, children, male
776 adults, and women form religious societies
774 or institutions, dyo. Each dyo is charged
775 with the upkeep of altars which serve to
preserve the spiritual forces of the group.
(See p.

1. The blood of childbirth represents the
[844 excess tomato juice absorbed by the woman,
824] that which remains in the womb after the
formation of the embryo. On the eighth day
after birth, the mother of the parturient
woman squeezes three or four tomatoes (depending on the sex of the newborn) into a
gourd which she then gives to the child's
father. The latter makes his wife drink the
juice to replace the blood which she has lost
and which is considered impure.

826 is also through the feet that a part of man's strength is deposited in the
sweepings and rubbish upon which he treads. Their role as receptacles
appears in the rituals concerning household refuse and the dirt on
roads and paths.

Like the little finger, the small toe symbolizes the whole person.
[301] It is sometimes adorned with a silver ring, symbol of the word, which
recalls that man's body is the seat of the word extended within him
from head to feet (1).

831 The notion of the bisexuality of human beings is fundamental:
the spiritual principles are sexed like the body, whose ambivalence
826 /71/ is evident during childhood: the boy is feminine in his foreskin;
the girl is masculine in her clitoris. One of the aims of circumcision
[304] and excision is to help the child attain the sex to which it is apparently
destined by removing the organ of the opposite sex. (2). But the
initial duality of the soul and body is the very foundation of the human
being. He is complete only if he originally received it, and he retains
it even after the operation imposed by physical and social life,
[774] for the soul of the opposite sex, though diminished in the body, remains
present in the shadow, the *dya*. He also rediscovers his dual
unity when he marries. A married couple are a unit for their *dya*
[581] join as do their bodies in an act which is not merely physical and
which realizes the ideal union of twins.

831 The sex to which one belongs dominates one's whole existence on
earth. Objects and tools bear masculine or feminine marks, according
801 to the rules of the division of labor. The numbers three (man)
and four (woman) are abridged forms of the sex. "Primitive men"
who, according to the Bambara expressed themselves mostly by
gestures and signs, engraved their rare objects with the number of

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1. In olden times the ring on the small toe was made of red *nyama* fiber (*nyama fu*), which played the same role as metal.

[171] 2. The same conception is found among the Dogon; see M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, p. 185.

831 lines or dots depending upon the sex of those who used them. Thus,
801 women marked their spindles with four lines whereas men twisted three
threads on their shuttles.

826 On the metaphysical level, man's body, "the seed of the world,"
is identified with the cereal grain. The Bambara separate cereal
824 grains into seven parts, corresponding to a division of the human
812 organs into seven groups (1). Man and grain are one and identical in
their substance. On the other hand, the basic foods, that is, the
eight principal cereals, are symbolically present in the collarbones
(kolo kalanjiri, or ka kolo). Man carries within him his subsistance,
and its location reflects the person's general condition (2). As proof
[783]
of /72/ man's spiritual integrity, these grains leave him when he is
in a state of impurity. He is then drained of his substance and subsistence. Thepurpose of purification is to reestablish this wholeness.

812 Moreover, the bonds which unite the whole person, body and
561 spiritual principles, to the cosmos, are made clear by the fact that

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1. The divisions of the grain are as follows: kungu, "little beard of millet," involucre; fara dye, "white bark," glume and glumales; fara fi, "black bark," bran and protein aceous bark; fara mugu, "farinaceous bark" (which corresponds to a milky diastatic zone); mugu dunta, "flour for eating," starch; kolo dye, "white bone," embryo; kise de, "son of grain," the micropyle from which the rootlet issues at the time of germination. The classification of organs in relation to these divisions is under study. We thank M. Pitot of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire for the identification of the parts of the grain corresponding to the
[782] native divisions. In certain villages, grains undergo a process of hulling and the determined elements only are used in the making up of the ritually offered millet mash.

2. See p. 53, n. 2.

291 for his great earthly labors." When clouds form, it is said that Faro
773 "is showing the *buguni* in the sky" and the diviners advise each person
821 to wear a strip in homage to the spirit and to facilitate the coming of
531 rain. The geomaneer gently rubs the earth, where he is going to
draw signs, with a cloth of this design. It is as though he has injected
sun, light, and truth into the work he must execute on the impure soil.

291 This band is also called *kolõso mako*, "necessity of the mixture,"
773 or *kami*, guinea hen, whose plumage as well as whose fragility the
band betokens. In this respect, the *buguni* symbolizes man's weakness
and incompleteness. When placed on a convalescent's clothing,
[155] it signifies that the latter has lost some of his vitality during his illness.
Dressed in this fashion, he goes to the Niger and bathes so that Faro might heal him. A man who has suffered severe financial losses also wears the *buguni*. At the market, in public meetings, he will not be made to pay his share of beer because of the band's silent language which is clearer than words. If a widower remarries, he sews a piece of it on his cap in memory of his first wife. The knife of the person offering a sacrifice is wrapped in the buguni, for it "never has enough blood," also in certain *boli* which continually crave it.

/111/ In conclusion, the squares of indigo cloth represent the void and darkness; the white ones, fulfillment and light. To wear the *buguni* signifies hope, the impure or weak man hoping to become pure, strong, and fulfilled.

The *bugunimba* (literally, large *buguni*) or *nyedẽ* (literally, threads of the eye) has the same symbolism. A wound is bandaged with it. A man who has broken a taboo wears a cap of this material; an illegitimate child also wears it. The *buguni tyekorole* which symbolizes the impurity of Mousso Koroni is used to implore Faro's help in great calamities and for misfortunes without remedy. Thus, the body of a stillborn child is covered with it.

291 The *buguni nyama* (Pl. III, a, 4), made of twenty-two alternating
773 indigo and white squares, symbolizes creation in its harmonious and
822 orderly entirety. Its separation into two layers recalls the duality of
801 nature, represented by a thin stripe through the middle. A happy
man sews an entire strip into his tunic. The man who has difficulties of any kind divides it lengthwise and pins a small piece at the bottom of his garment.

291 773 822 801 The nyeba, "big eye," or koloso tyema, "mixed masculinity" (with femininity), (Pl. III, a, 11) also represents creation, here symbolized by the double layer of five indigo and white bands (1). At the same time the cloth also symbolizes the complete man, said to be both masculine and feminine. A newborn child, but never an illegitimate one, is clothed in it.

291 773 531 The band soli (Pl. III, a, 5) represents the good conduct of Mousso Koroni at the beginning of her life as well as her betrayal which brought disorder on earth.

[764] In olden times, people who had committed bad deeds were obliged to wear it. Today it is used as the shroud for a child who dies immediately after birth; a strip is sewn to the garment of a recently excised girl or to the loincloth of a woman insured in childbirth. When differences or conflicts arise within a family, a fragment is placed in amulets which the women must then wear.

[828] The wutu nyekorotike (Pl. III, a, 6) pictures the disorderly voyage of Mousso Koroni, her despair and her madness. This pattern is reserved for insane people in order to warn others of their condition.

The band gombo (Pl. III, a, 7) recalls the pursuit of Mousso /112/ Koroni by the god Pemba into the depths of the sky and the earth.

The band tyatyeli (Pl. III, a, 8) a picture of Mousso Koroni's defeat, symbolizes human work. It is given to a courageous and energetic woman. It is circulated among those present at religious ceremonies and its mere presence indicates that nothing here below is obtained without work and that all stems from work. To wear this band strengthens the man who is entering upon a task in a village other than his own.

[844] The band saki is the koblenkaba, "red sky." It symbolizes heat, anger, difficulties, and sorrows. It is woven at the time of marriage negotiations for the purpose of resolving any differences of opinion. A piece of it is dipped into the blood after birth and then thrown away in order to purify everything.

[822] The blue stripes of dyitala represent impurity, and the red stripes, purification by sacrifice. Whoever has broken a taboo wears the blue, and the red when he is purified. A piece of red cloth may be inserted into the vagina of a young woman, after she has lost her virginity or

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1. On the value of number 5, see pp. 24, 25.

622 bones, " that is to say, that he may live to be so old that his bones
778 will be visible through his skin which is transparent.

In (n) the bent part of the wood, called *kuntigi* *tigiya* *jigi* (literally, /136/ support of the chief's deed), is planted over the hair of the previously shaved albino (in o) from which it takes its strength.

[801] In (k), twenty-two small sticks are the symbol of the number 22, representing "the ensemble of words received by the ancestor Koumabana who was never caught unawares by anyone." In depositing these sticks, the officiator expresses the wish that the chief may become unbeatable like the ancestor.

[801] In (h), eight small sticks of *zekene* wood (1) represent the eight ancestors; they signify that man must be, like Koumabana, master of words and that he must be "true to his word."

In (f), the bird *tatugu* *kononi*, master of fire, is buried. The prayer recited states that it must be able to penetrate into the earth and come out freely, for since mythical times it has played a decisive role in combats (2).

In (g) is buried the head of the first child to die in the chief's family, in order to recall the loss suffered and to avoid its recurrence. On the skull are marked the signs of the person: two times 3 and 7, or two times 4 and 7, depending upon the sex of the deceased. In (j) the hair is buried, a testimony to the misfortune and the loss which should be compensated for. In (e) is placed the skin of the forehead, divided into two pieces; the piece on the right signifies that Faro is free to give the child for as long as he chooses; on the piece on the left are engraved the eight signs of the word, recalling that Faro, master of the word, is also master of the destiny of the deceased, whose number has been reckoned among the dead. In (p) a small

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[824] 1. *Balanites* *aegyptica*. This bush, according to popular belief, grows over the tomb of a man who died "with rancor and bitterness, as did Koumabana."

2. See p. 155. The chief, who is sometimes obligated to declare war, must be able to win it.

/210/

Chapter 8

DIVINATION

781 If we still find it difficult to isolate the general principles of divination among the Bambara, it is possible nevertheless to perceive identical elements among its diversified aspects. As soon as we approach the mechanisms and the symbols employed by the diviners, it appears that the first and fundamental element of divination is the "word," the creator of life, the motivation of the cosmos, and the power of Faro.

To foresee the future is to reveal to the secular the "word" which is situated in space as well as in time, and which is the will and the material expression of that will. Destiny is understood as the realization of the designs of creation to which all must conform. To submit to this will is supreme wisdom. To inquire into the reason for a past state or event, or to determine the attitude to be taken in the face of future states or events, is what the wise man can and must do.

The supernatural powers, rightful masters of the word, alone have to power to reveal it. They have done this in mythical times for all men by teaching them technologies capable of reparing the repeated disorders brought about in the process of creation. They do this for each individual if he is in need of it and if he knows how to read through the various methods of gaining knowledge which they have put at his disposal. It is therefore to them that the diviner addresses himself in order that the word be communicated.

781 801 Which will be the privileged signs over which the diviners will bend their efforts? It appears that these are numbers, notably the first twenty-two. In fact, all aspects of physical and moral life are inscribed in them. Taken as a whole, they reflect the succession of events in space and in time. A complex symbolism, which is superimposed over the others, is assigned to each one separately.

Each number has one or several meanings appropriate to it. /211/ It is odd or even, a notion linked to that of duality which has been so frequently mentioned in the course of this work. The sum of several numbers also expresses a particular idea which is added to those recovered by each element. Finally, a value is attributed to the succession of numbers, which is the first expression of time (1).

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1. This expression is symbolized by the progression of the first four numbers in the preliminaries of creation. See p. 23.

The first 22 numbers, which represent the totality of "words" and which express the sum total of the Bambara's mystical knowledge, must be considered from different angles according to whether they are seen as the 22 fundamental elements of creation, the 22 elements of the domination of this creation by Pemba, or the 22 methods and periods of the reorganization of this creation by Faro. In this series appears clearly the classification of elements composing the human being, ni, dya, tere, according to dualism which is Faro's own character and principle of action.

Moreover the stages of time, which itself did not exist before his domination, are expressed by the succession of numbers, each of which is linked to a part of the myth.

Current divination utilizes the first 22 elements at the level where they express "the order and the word of Faro."

1. kele. Faro; the word. Number of the master of the word. District of the chief; the right of the eldest, the right of the first; the head. The conscience: psychical aspect, moral aspect.

2. fla. Original duality, twinness. Faro's two female twins, the two first human twins. Love and friendship; union of beings. Necessity for man, however, to be straightforward in his action, not to follow two tracks.

3. saba. Sexual symbol of man and his soul. Birth of mixed twins, sons of the sinful Bozo women.

4. nani. Sexual symbol of woman and man's double (dya). Birth of a Bozo girl.

5. duru. Unlucky number composed of 4 (woman) and 1 (incompleteness). Miscarriage, failure, death. A stillborn child is called duru. However, it has an auspicious aspect and so signifies the universe (2).

2. See p. 24.

6. woro. Symbol of male twins (3 and 3). Lucky number (3).

3. Dẽke ni fla ye gariseke ye, "two little male twins, that is luck."

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7. wolõfla. Symbol of mixed twins (3 and 4). Complete man possessing the ni and dya of opposed sexes. Complete world; growth /212/ of nature. Ideal image of creation; perfect word.

8. sekin. Symbol of female twins (4 and 4), of the eight ancestors and their word. Excess of words; danger of this excess caused by women.

9. konoto. Symbol of character or tere. Incompleteness.

10. tã. Composed of 6 (male twins) and of 4 (female birth), it is a lucky number and expresses the fertility desired by Faro as well as Faro himself.

11. tã ani kele. Conflict and debate. During the eleventh period after Faro's domination, Téliko wanted to resist.

12. tã ani fla. Téliko's attempt to dominate the world and to connive with men.

13. tã ani saba. Composed of 3 (Téliko, male spirit) and 10 (Faro): expresses Faro's opposition to Téliko's domination.

14. tã ani nani. Téliko's voyage.

15. tã ani duru. Téliko's defeat.

16. tã ani woro.
17. tã ani wolõfla.
18. tã ani sekin.
19. tã ani konoto.

Faro's work in organizing the universe.

20. muka. Meeting of Faro and Téliko to decide on the order and progress of the universe.

21. duka ani kele. Faro's complete domination over creation.

22. muka ani fla. Total of the periods elapsed between the creation and the organization of the world. Conclusion and "end of the words."

The symbolism of numbers in everyday life comes into play every time they occur. From the beginning they were used to qualify tools and utensils. According to whether these belonged to men or women, they were marked respectively with three or four easily recognizable signs, indicating their ownership. Thus, in weaving, the shuttle carried three bobins, the spindle four lines.

Each ritual is repeated three times in the case of a man, four times in the case of a woman. If it is performed several days running or at regular intervals, the same rhythm is observed. Thus the dya of a drowned man is fed every three days, or every four days in the case of a drowned woman. The organization of the chief's district

781 801 and the priesthood is founded on the same laws. A religious chief is generally accompanied by two aides or two elders belonging to his age grade. The group they compose is a duplication of the first three of the eight original ancestors.

Seven, the expression of perfect creation appears notably in the repetition of Faro's name when a request is addressed to him relating to fertility which may by symbolized /213/ by a male-female couple whose number is seven. To say Faro's name alerts him, but to repeat it seven times makes him hear that which may best satisfy him and presents him with what he desires.

Eight is the number of the ancestors who received the word and of the families that spread it. Six and eight, images of male and female twins, are at the basis of the Bambara system of numbers and calculations (1). Ten, which repeats unity, is composed of the sum of the first four numbers marking the stages of creation; it represents Faro (2). Twenty-two, which determines the categories of the creative

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1. See p. 48, n. 1.

2. "The religious function of the decade plays an extremely important role among the Bambara because the symbolism of all numbers is included in it as it contains them all. Since it can be made up by the sum of the first four numbers which in themselves express the unity and duality of the being, masculinity and femininity, the fourfold nature of twins, the very essence of existence—in a word the decade—expresses all that which is achieved within oneself, all that which is complete, perfect, and just. The very name of ten, t̲ã, indicates these notions; moreover, instead of t̲ã, ten, the Bambara often say dafarę, "it is complete." Consequently, ten is the essential symbol of divinity." S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la theódicée bambara," p. 198.

781 thought yo, represents the universe; it is found on all sanctuaries or
801 ritual objects.

Inversely, a number may be attached to an individual because of his behavior. It is said of a wicked man that he is an "eleven." The person who wishes to take power when he has no right to is "twelve." A man who is disgraced because he is denied that which he asks for is "thirteen."

781 Another fundamental element of the divining technique is derived from the state and qualities of the diviner. In order to question the supernatural, no special quality is ordinarily needed other than that normally required of a person making a sacrifice. Thus any Bambara, before making his offering, throws a kola nut on the ground to interpret its position. But the diviner is in a peculiar position. His spiritual elements, constantly in touch with the divinity, are the object of precautions which introduce him into the supernatural cycle and permit him to hear its message. They are, therefore, protected from the impurity which they might acquire in their contact with ordinary men. Because of this, the diviner is forced to respect a certain number of taboos. His double, guarantee for his state, is preserved by the spirits which protect it on the one hand and excercise control over its owner on the other. It is for them a means of action. "If the diviner has received the word and makes a mistake, the spirits may cause him to die." His mouth is filled up /214/ with a force which comes to him from these powers and which he must not misuse.

On the other hand, the trance is the state in which the spiritual is best expressed. In the excitement of the dance, at the frenetic rhythm of the drums, the Komo divines and predicts. At this moment he is entirely under the influence of the spiritual beings which express themselves through him.

Having presented these different points, is it possible in the present state of the inquiry to classify the methods of divination we have observed among the Bambara? This classification which we will attempt is tentative, and the observations will have to be taken up again more profoundly.

A brief description of several methods of divination currently in use is given below, and two of the techniques we have studied more carefully will be explained in detail: divination by guitar playing and divination by throwing cowrie shells (1).

791 this song calms his restlessness and gives him back peace and serenity.
533 "Whatever man is, he may not go beyond God" (1). The Soma

787 1. Moko a kera čokočoko a te teme ngala ka.

plays this air if the consulter harbors bad intentions or if he is ignorant or stubborn. He does the same to discover the gifts of a child and to encourage the family to develop his learning.

"Joy embellishes the world" (2) is performed for futile and pleasant

things: feasts and dances, ornaments.

2. Klo ye diñe dya.

things: feasts and dances, ornaments.

787 Divination, in a large measure, is the application of the static
801 and dynamic quality of numbers. On the one hand these translate the relationships; on the other, they are symbols for phenomena, beings, behaviors, situations, and in general all the constituent parts of the universe. Though not endowed with power in themselves, they symbolize powerful and well regulated elements. It may also be said that the numbers are superior realities, the same as the primordial signs which preceded the perceptibility of all things and on account of which the things began to exist once man had taken them into his consciousness. (3)

3. See p. 17.

In the course of divination, they indicate to the individual or collective consulter his personal position with regard to the rest of the universe. In a way, they permit the formulation of a particular equation for each person at a given time.

CONCLUSION

121 /227/ It is only recently that the discipline of silence adhered to by the Blacks has been relaxed in certain circles of the initiates. Human behavior, backed up by a rigorous method, has allowed a group of researchers to establish a documentation which suffers less from the usual faults. It is no longer superficial or fragmentary; it is

765 twice a day, morning and evening, they go in procession, their
[514] heads covered with caps made of white cloth. They spend the
nights together, in a single hut if possible.

The wives of the deceased go out only when it is ab-
[292] solutely necessary during the first moon after the death; they
are dressed in white and wear a kind of white hood on their
heads and sandals made of goatskin on their feet. At the end
of the moon, at night and separately, they go to a sort of puri-
[783] fication rite that takes place at the crossroads outside the village.

Up to the fortieth day there is a very gradual return to ordinary life. Then, and only then, the successor to the deceased is finally recognized and installed, as is shown in the chronicle of Ségou.

In closing, let us note how every ritual sequence rests
● 801 on periods of time whose real meaning must be sought in
805 magic. The astral religion of the Semites in fact taught that
on the third, seventh, and fortieth day after death the moon
acts more powerful to destroy the body (1). Apparently some such beliefs must account for the Bambara rites planned precisely according to these numbers. This seems all the more likely since the Sudanese commonly believe that the fortieth day marks the separation of the flesh from the bones of buried corpses.

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1. See the meeting of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres of August 9, 1918, paper by Franz Cumont, "La commémoration des morts et l'astrologie [The Commemoration of the Dead and Astrology]," Journal Officiel (1918), p. 7224.

192 with nature; the same terms designate the parts of animals, plants, or even objects. These words serve as roots, as do the names of the four elements and of their properties. Two consequences follow:

1. A great ease in forming compound words; 2. The existence [194] of a multiplicity of homonyms which we can distinguish only by the context, but which the natives distinguish by differences in tone or in vowel length.

E. Numeration

802 In contrast to the Ouolof and Peul, who first count to five and then say "five and one," "five and two," etc., the Bambara have a different name for each number from one to ten (the word "five," doulou, [16] comes from "hand"; the word "ten", tan, from "to thank," to give both hands). After ten, they count "ten and one," "ten and two," up to 20, which is said as two tens, then three tens, four tens, etc., up to 80. The series begins again after 80 as it does in French after 100.

The Bambara have graphic signs to represent numbers. These 212 signs have been studied by S. de Ganay (1).

1. S. de Ganay, "Graphie Bambara des nombres" [Bambara Number Writing]. [Ed., Journal de la Société de Africanistes, No. 2, 1950.]

[184] The graphic system varies with regions and sometimes from one village to another, but the most widespread method uses a series of vertical lines, each line representing a unit. To indicate that the number is doubled, the lines are placed inside a circle or crossed by a horizontal bar: |||| or (||) or ╫ = four. To indicate an uneven number, a line is added under the horizontal bar.

But a line may indicate not only a unit, but a group of ten, and even a "hundred," keme (whose value is 80). To keep this clear, an arc is put over the line: $\overset{\frown}{|}$ = 80.

212 801 Some systems represent ten by ten lines or by five barred lines under a single line. This method has a religious origin; it recalls that "creation is the issue of a unique principle symbolized

212 by numbers, and notably by ten, which may be obtained, among
801 other ways and if it's a question of representing the Creator, by
adding the first four numbers, or by adding the number five to
776 itself." Ten is the numerical symbol of Faro (god of water); it
symbolizes what is just, true, perfect, and complete.

The symbolism of numbers is used in divination: a first
787 group of eight signs, called the secret count, reproduces the seven
first numbers which, according to a Bambara myth, were engraved
in space at the instant that the Creator by his word formed the universe. They contain the whole universe.

These numerical signs were ritually traced on the most varied occasions.

802 Finally, we must note the existence of the sign for "nothing,"
fu gundo, zero, which stands at the beginning of a series of 196
numerical signs used by those who practice arithomancy.

The word Mandé, of central significance for 44 peoples, may be interpreted, according to some, as manin (the secret name for ten), number of unity and of the cultural community.

F. Writing

212 For everyday use, the Bambara have adopted arabic characters, called by them "writing of the Blacks." In fact, only those
who have studied in the Marabouts' schools know how to read or
write them. No written literature, properly speaking, exists. A
538 large store of traditions, epics, tales, legends, songs, and proverbs
is transmitted orally from generation to [17] generation by professional storytellers, the griot. Moreover, the whole sum of sci-
867 entific, juridical, ethical, and practical knowledge is taught orally
868 in the course of daily life or during long years of initiation. Certain old masters renowned for their learning are consulted from far
distances when a chief is in doubt on a point of tradition.

212 Nevertheless, signs do exist for a secret writing that the
priests, the heads of families, or blacksmiths draw on the sanctuaries,
on masks, furniture, clothing, cabin walls, or in the sand.

For the Bambara, things exist by signs. These signs have at-
212 tached themselves to things, calling them to consciousness and to
812 the attention of man.

881 physical male factor residing in the clitoris. The operation takes
304 place, moreover, during the same period as the circumcision. It is
carried out by the potteress, wife of the blacksmith, in full daylight
before the assembled kin. During their seclusion the girls wear a
white veil which plays the same role as the bonnet of the circumcised.
[534] Instead of the sistrum, the girls shake a gourd which contains eight
millet seeds and cotton fibers which their fiancés have given them.
A goat is sacrificed for the ceremony. The collected blood is given
to the fiancé in honor of his ancestors who become those of the girl.

[93] On the last day of the ceremony the girls definitively rid themselves of their wanzo by jumping over a pyre composed of the clothes and scraps of the excised.

e. Marriage

[582] It is only after having been circumcised or excised that young
584 people may marry. The institution of marriage is regulated by a
ritual which has often been described, particularly by Amar, Monteil,
Tauxier, Aubert . . .

The marriage arrangements are made by the respective fa
of the two betrothed, after the young people have been consulted.
The request is officially made to the parents by an intermediary, a
man of caste or a sènanku. It is accompanied by ritual gifts offered
to the fa of the girl. In the Bougouni region the request is accom-
panied by ten kola nuts, because ten is a complete number that
[80] designates good events and future births. (Nine kola nuts are offered
576 to present condolences, four as a sign of greeting. To send three
[431] nuts would be insulting, and 19 nuts, marking incompleteness, would
be a sign of lack of confidence.) The first kola nuts to be offered
[824] are always wrapped in one or two karite leaves, symbol of life and
of fecundity. If the ten kola nuts are accepted, it means that the
father has opened the way to the marriage. The intermediary then
make a second trip the following week, bringing a cock for sacrifice
to the ancestors and ten more kola nuts; during a third trip he offers
another cock and ten more kola nuts before the entire assembled
family of the young girl, witnessing that the girl may meet her
fiancé. In the course of the fourth trip, the intermediary leads the
girl to the fiancé's family, where she will be confided to the wife
of the head of the family who will undertake her education.

b. Pottery

323 Pottery is entirely fashioned and fired by the women of the
blacksmiths' caste, masters of the fire. The modelling is done in two
ways, either by hollowing a mass of clay with the aid of a cylindrical
stone (2), or by rolling a cylinder of clay around a mold. The
[531] decoration is generally a double line of chevrons imprinted around
the neck and the foot by the potter's twisted bracelet. The firing is
done in the open air over a wood fire.

c. The Forge

326 Wood, iron, metals in general, are fashioned by the blacksmiths.
The blacksmith's workshop and the objects he makes are
simple, but they are rich in symbolic representations. "The forge
represents the artisan: the furnace is his body, the bellows his
testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red-hot
iron is beaten by the hammer, which symbolizes the universe,
the sparks are the lightning and the thunderbolt." (3) With his
rudimentary tools spread on the ground under a shelter, the artisan
forges all farming instruments, the principal one being the hoe. The
412 hoe, [97] according to its shape, is considered to be male or female.
831 The female hoe has a short handle with an ovoid swelling at the end,
● [801] into which sticks the point of an iron triangle. The three sides of this
triangle are three arcs of a circle; three, symbol of masculinity,
represents here the clitoris, the male principle which sustains the
[773 double, the dya, of the woman. (According to myth, it was with the
241] aid of this part of the body that the first being of female sex inaugurated
agricultural labors.) The male hoe has a slightly trapezoidal iron
part which is attached to the handle in the same manner. The four
sides symbolize the femininity of man sustained by the prepuce. Thus,

2. M. Griaule, Masques dogons [Dogon Masks].

3. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

822 in the rites. "Red is the color of the middle regions of the world.
It characterizes dry heat; it is the color of anger and of justice,
that of the king, center of the kingdom." Black or indigo (2) is
identified with the North and the [98] rainy season. It evokes
impurity, obscurity. It denotes sadness and the end of labor. The
South accords with the ancestors and the color white which rep-
resents light and purity; it is the color of Faro. The whole system
286 of bands woven from different colored threads according to various
822 designs translates the different conditions of the wearer, for each
band has its own history, its definite use, and its cosmogonic cor-
respondences. The study of this was begun by G. Dieterlen in Essai
sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion] and is being
291 pursued at the present time. Today the form of clothing varies ac-
cording to the age and sex of the wearer. Young children are nude,
with the loins girt with a cotton string or with a belt of blue beads or
cowry shells. Sometimes, two small copper bells attract the pro-
tection of Faro by their sound. Up until their marriage, the young
girls wear a loincloth passed between their legs and held in place
by eight bead belts. When they are married, women wear the loin-
cloth open, attached at the waist, and a cotton handkerchief covers
[854] their hair. When a child is born, another cloth knotted at the chest
holds the infant astraddle on the mother's back A chief's wife
[554] wore a piece of material made of seven bands which she threw over
her shoulder. Very young boys wear short drawers whose form varies
with the age classes. Later they are dressed in a short tunic with a
neck opening cut out and fitted sleeves, and in ample short breeches
[801] formed of three bands (the masculine number), passing between the
legs and three bands on each side covering the thighs. The waist is
also encircled by four times three bands, numbers of femininity and of
masculinity. Over their clothes, men and women wear a large cloak
with an opening cut out in the middle for the head and whose ends
are sown together, leaving large openings on each side. These
cloaks have a large pocket in front and are embroidered with symbolic

2. Zahan, Les couleurs chez les Bambara du Soudan francais [Colors Among the Bambara of the French Sudan], Notes Africaines, 1951.

197 systems of signs and ideograms which may be considered as a sort of
212 writing and the study of which is currently pursued. The system from
which all the others supposedly stem, the *glã glã zo*, has 226 ideograms
which, according to informants, summarize the knowledge of the
[802] Bambara (1). On the other hand, the Bamba use a numerical system
based on twenty. Moreover, an analysis of the texts collected, some of them quoted in this essay, has brought to light an /xvi/ important number of words which, according to informants, belong to an ancient language of Mandingo origin, now used as liturgical language. It is not within the framework of this essay to present this material or to comment upon it, but it is appropriate to note that the study of this vocabulary would contribute to an understanding of religious thinking among the Bambara.

173 The Bambara have a rather clear idea of their early history and even of their prehistory. They describe their ancestors with precision and know the phases of development of their technology. These premises are necessary to an understanding of their religion which, like the other institutions, is especially linked to this technological development. Moreover, the only observable remains comprise household furniture and utensils, transient but perennial material whose forms and ornamentation indicate the metaphysical principles on which their way of thinking is based.

177
121 It is appropriate not to neglect those influences which have acted upon the Bambara through their contacts with other Sudanese tribes

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1. See. p. 21. This system and two of the ideograms, of which *to* designates the mash of boiled cereals and by extension nourishment in general, will be the object of a comment by M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen. "Signes graphiques des Soudanais. L'Homme. /Graphic signs of the Sudanese man/." *Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie et de linguistique, Hermann* (in press).

On certain types of writing observed among the Mandé and the Vai, see J. Février, *Histoire de l'écriture* /The History of Writing/, pp. 528-529.

173 the slow evolution of consciousness (concept of pain), judgment (concept of responsibility and guilt), will (concept of the creative effort and work), all of which develop in man with the advent of suffering [761] and death. Death is felt to be an accident in the working out of the universal order, an accident compensated for in part by the conservation of spiritual principles and their reincarnation in accordance with the fundamental belief in the eternal resurrection of all things. The myth describes the first ritual, the rejuvenation, which ceases with the advent of death but is replaced by blood sacrifice which today is still the central practice of the rites (1).

The myths described below are the framework of the present-day Bambara religion and of the general cults to Pemba and Faro maintained by the people.

Preliminaries of Creation

1. The glã glã zo

172 The Bambara creation myths imply a philosophy of being and of the universe developed from the void, from nothing, fu (2).

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1. Wherever possible the writer has avoided discussion of the details of myths so as not to distract the reader from the general line of the Bambara world view. But the scholar, in attempting to better understand the collective psychological processes of this people, may profitably study the numerous variant themes found among them.

[802] 2. This concept is expressed by a sign with the same name which can also be translated by "nothingness" or "zero" and is a part of the Bambara number system. See Fig. 1, No. 11. For a discussion of this sign denoting the continuity and proliferation of creation, see p. 102.

773 171 [821] taught certain agricultural techniques. In both tribes, the same star, Sirius (called sigi toto by the Dogon; sigi doto by the Bambara), represents them. The androgynous Faro is comparable in all ways to the Nommo, the universal monitor, custodian of the word and of life. The yurugu and the Nommo made voyages similar to those of Pemba and Faro. In particular, at the time of their descent on earth, the yurugu, and later the Nommo, used an "ark," koro, whose counterparts are Pemba's wood pembele and Faro's ark kuru, described by certain initiates (see M. Griaule, L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes. /The ark of the world among Nigerian peoples/.

For both tribes, man "the seed of the world," is the image of the cosmos. The exact role of the seed of the Acacia albida does not appear clearly in the two myths, but in both cases, it is considered to be a first aborted creation.

Faro's Reign

773 Faro, having vanquished the balanza and overcome Téliko, took over the creation himself. He reorganized the whole universe and established the order under which it still functions today. /27/ He spread his word and his light; he named and classified all things: "All things (of the universe) are under the domination of Faro; eight hundred transformations are in his power" (1).

801 802 1. Fêw be be faro ka se kono, yelemani ba kele be a la a fe.

The number 800 which is "the end of the count," here expresses the infinite. In the so-called "eastern number system," now

802 801 used by most Sudanese, the principal units are 1, 80, 800, etc. Ten remains a secondary unit for counting from 1 to 79 and is combined with 80 for units of the other orders.

There is also the so-called "Mandé" number system, the principal units of which are 1, 60, 600, etc. in which 10 remains a secondary unit for the count from 1 to 59, and combines with 60 for units of a higher order.

On the other hand, it must be noted that the Bambara number system is vigesimal and reflects the concept of the person as identified with the 20 fingers of his hands and feet, and spiritually endowed with two souls of the opposite sex, each of which represents the number 10. If one follows this line of thought, 10 is the unit parexcellence (see p. 213, n. 2). The two counts, 60 and 80, in Sudanese metaphysics, are complementary in the sense that one, 60, is male (60 is three times the person) and the other, 80, is female (80, four times the person) (for a discussion on 3 and 4, see p. 19). In the tribes where generally only the count based on 80 is used, the count based on 60 is still used today in certain rituals (principally among the Dogon).

173 To carry through his plan, Faro undertook a voyage of reconnaissance to the ends of the world in order to name the cardinal points.

He first visited the east, and all the beings who lived there recognized his power and his wisdom. Comparing the luminous whiteness of this region to that of hair discolored by age, he gave it the name of koro, old, a word which also indicates that it was his first stop. He made the east the seat of death.

He then went to the west. As it was dark there, he named the inhabitants klebi maw, "people of the fallen sun." He made the

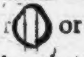
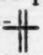
192 with nature; the same terms designate the parts of animals, plants, or even objects. These words serve as roots, as do the names of the four elements and of their properties. Two consequences follow:

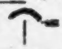
[194] 1. A great ease in forming compound words; 2. The existence of a multiplicity of homonyms which we can distinguish only by the context, but which the natives distinguish by differences in tone or in vowel length.

E. Numeration

802 In contrast to the Ouolof and Peul, who first count to five and then say "five and one," "five and two," etc., the Bambara have a different name for each number from one to ten (the word "five," doulou, [16] comes from "hand"; the word "ten", tan, from "to thank," to give both hands). After ten, they count "ten and one," "ten and two," up to 20, which is said as two tens, then three tens, four tens, etc., up to 80. The series begins again after 80 as it does in French after 100.

The Bambara have graphic signs to represent numbers. These 212 signs have been studied by S. de Ganay (1).

[184] The graphic system varies with regions and sometimes from one village to another, but the most widespread method uses a series of vertical lines, each line representing a unit. To indicate that the number is doubled, the lines are placed inside a circle or crossed by a horizontal bar: |||| or  or  = four. To indicate an uneven number, a line is added under the horizontal bar.

But a line may indicate not only a unit, but a group of ten, and even a "hundred," keme (whose value is 80). To keep this clear, an arc is put over the line:  80.

212 801 Some systems represent ten by ten lines or by five barred lines under a single line. This method has a religious origin; it recalls that "creation is the issue of a unique principle symbolized

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1. S. de Ganay, "Graphie Bambara des nombres" [Bambara Number Writing]. [Ed., Journal de la Société de Africanistes, No. 2, 1950.]

212 by numbers, and notably by ten, which may be obtained, among
801 other ways and if it's a question of representing the Creator, by
adding the first four numbers, or by adding the number five to
[776] itself." Ten is the numerical symbol of Faro (god of water); it
symbolizes what is just, true, perfect, and complete.

The symbolism of numbers is used in divination: a first
[787] group of eight signs, called the secret count, reproduces the seven
first numbers which, according to a Bambara myth, were engraved
in space at the instant that the Creator by his word formed the universe.
They contain the whole universe.

These numerical signs were ritually traced on the most varied occasions.

Finally, we must note the existence of the sign for "nothing,"
[802] fu gundo, zero, which stands at the beginning of a series of 196
● numerical signs used by those who practice arithomancy.

The word Mandé, of central significance for 44 peoples, may be interpreted, according to some, as manin (the secret name for ten), number of unity and of the cultural community.

F. Writing

212 For everyday use, the Bambara have adopted arabic characters,
called by them "writing of the Blacks." In fact, only those
who have studied in the Marabouts' schools know how to read or
write them. No written literature, properly speaking, exists. A
538 large store of traditions, epics, tales, legends, songs, and proverbs
is transmitted orally from generation to [17] generation by professional
storytellers, the griot. Moreover, the whole sum of scientific,
867 juridical, ethical, and practical knowledge is taught orally
868 in the course of daily life or during long years of initiation. Certain
old masters renowned for their learning are consulted from far
distances when a chief is in doubt on a point of tradition.

212 Nevertheless, signs do exist for a secret writing that the
priests, the heads of families, or blacksmiths draw on the sanctuaries,
on masks, furniture, clothing, cabin walls, or in the sand.

For the Bambara, things exist by signs. These signs have at-
212 tached themselves to things, calling them to consciousness and to
812 the attention of man.

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of the staff, which lives off the altar. For the mere act of having killed a dog or a goat, of which they receive a good share of the meat, they get a fee consisting of a basket of sorghum (18 to 20 kilograms) and 1, 600 cowrie shells (about 2 francs).

Since initiates of the fetish are the only ones who can touch the corpse and lay it in its final home, they receive 8, 000 to 10, 000 cowrie shells (about 8 to 10 francs) on that score. At the end of the sangafo (3) the god's retinue go and sweep the hut of the deceased, purify it with holy water, and drive out the last gnâma of the murdering Komo, and for this five fine hens are slaughtered. As payment for their trouble, the family also gives them five to six meters of cloth and 8 to 10 ba (4) (about 8 to 10 francs); 50 francs do not cover the cost.

Fortunately, the family does not bear all the expenses. Friends
[431] help a little, and everyone brings his offering: from one person they get a /228/ hen, from another a débé (40 cowrie shells) or a kémé (80 cowrie shells). Nevertheless, they bear most of the cost, and
[426] the fetishes are one of the chief reasons for that bonding of children (1)

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gnâma-n-kou or the na-yanka (I do not know the name of this plant), put to boil and soak in water. To make it effective, at least two kola nuts are offered to the fetish and five hens are sacrificed to it.

3. Sangafo, to go and offer condolences to the relatives of a deceased."

● [802] 4. A ba is worth 800 cowrie shells or about 1 franc. (The Bambara count by 40 and 80, and not by 50 and 100. 40, débé; 80, kémé.)

773 west, *klebi*, the seat of customs and of good and beautiful things.

He then started off in the direction of the north, taking eight epochs to cross the spaces and the depths. He named the north *baba*, "great river, " for the distance was great, the water deep, and the area difficult. In the north, which he reached in the ninth epoch, he established the seat of his control and that of all royalty.

He then went to the south where evil creatures who had listened to Mousso Koroni and followed her advice spoke a language they had stolen (1). The tried to resist Faro, but he destroyed great numbers of them. Although the survivors submitted to him, he made their domain the seat of impurity and named it /28/ *bani*, "little river, " to emphasize their weakness and their shameful failure.

The itinerary was measured in palms, *sibiri*, the unit of measurement being 22 palms (2). The distance separating the cardinal points, the height of the sky and the depth of the earth were measured in the same way.

During the same period he determined the seasons and created the regular alternation of day and night to replace the premordial darkness. Having measured space, he created time.

Faro then placed himself in the center of the universe: still actuated by a vibratory movement, he traversed in a spiral turning from right to left up to the outer boundaries, "where there is no more than a trembling of the surface." Then he returned along the same route, going from left to right in order to "place himself at the central point (3) whence he distinguished between beings and things" (4).

[171] 1. The Dogon have a similar notion of the theft of the language. See p. 47, n. 1.

[804] 2. *sibiri nye*, literally "eye of the palm." The Bambara palm is a length obtained with an open hand, from the extremity of the thumb to the extremity of the middle finger.

3. It is said of this act, *faro tyema yera*; *or faro sigi yoro seleke nani tyela*. "Faro

774 is the object of constant concern during agrarian rituals. The role of the soul of plants is particularly noticeable in their medicinal uses. Drawing a remedy from a plant may cause its death, liberating its spiritual principles for the benefit of the sick man. Because of this, such an act is equated with a blood sacrifice.

With the exception of the ngovo tomato, plants have no dya. The shadow (suma) of a plant is not independent like that of a man or an animal. It exists only through light effects and its movements are caused by the air and the wind moving its leaves and branches. This is what the Bambara means when he says that the dya has a life of its own and depends on Faro, whereas the plant's suma depends on the spirit Téliko, master of the air.

774 An individual's dya can be known and his temperament and life
787 possibilities assessed by measuring his shadow on the earth at noon.
● 804 The unit employed is the little finger, which is a corporeal symbol
843 of the person. If a pregnant woman is thus measured, the sex of the child may be predicted.

When a boy or a girl gets married, it is said of them: a ye a dya
774 furu: "he (or she) has married his dya." For it is impolite to say that
[576] a person married anyone but his spiritual double. Besides, the union of the couple is repeated by the union of their dya which like them-
[595 selves are of opposite sex. In olden times, male twins married the
851] same woman and the latter's dya was taken over by Faro in the Niger. The child she conceived was the son of both husbands.

589 Some men do not marry. This is true of the Soma, the religious diviner attached to the major Bambara societies. Initiated in the
791 course of a solitary sojourn in the bush, he left his dya with the invisible spirits. This is a prerequisite to the gift of double sight with which he is endowed as well as a protection against possible dangers to the dya when it remains in contact with the earth, or when it approaches other humans. The true spouse of the Soma is his dya: he may mate only with it on a fixed date when the spirits return it to him for this purpose. /61/

The tere

774 The tere was inflicted by Pemba on Mousso Koroni in order to diminish her power at the time he was pursuing her. This explains its complexity: it is at once the character of a man, his strength,

364 the chief throws dust three times to the four cardinal points. The
778 masker then stands in the wind in such a way as to receive the smoke;
the chief and the members crouch in line behind him with their mouths
796 open to inhale better. When the wind changes its direction they all
move to continue this fumigation, wušuli, which constitutes a purification as well as an increment of forces. At the moment the fire is almost out, the most courageous of the participants stamps on it in order to assimilate better the nyama which it exudes. The ashes,
[804] gathered by the chief, are distributed, the unit of measurement being
the gourd mure. An important share goes to the nyama boli, another is given as an offering to Faro, and a third is distributed among the members.

Several days later, the group goes to the river bank to the sound of drums beating out the murumuruw foli (literally, rhythm of the refuse); they throw the ashes reserved for Faro into the water and, continuing to dance, return to the village.

364 Those ashes given to the members are used to prepare the potass
778 which is mixed into the millet cake, the daily food of the Bambara,
and which will make the members of the family share in the powers
252 contained in the nyamanto.

The eating of this mixture closes the cycle of the transfer of forces,
364 which were temporarily communicated to the refuse by the individuals,
778 then recovered by Faro, and finally redistributed to the social body.

III. Rain Rites

789 At the time the first work is done in the fields, a drawing is made
241 with millet mash upon the tree of the Kworè in the shape of a lozenge
inscribed within a rectangle, which represents "the great fire which issued /204/ from the cardinal angles" at the time of their creation. While this is being done, the following words are spoken: "The four elbows (the lozenge) are the fire of the angles; here is the anniversary of the Kworè." The clearing of the field or the first plowing always symbolizes the very first clearing obtained through fire.

During the month of May, the members of the Kworè society make
789 sacrifices upon their altars before the first rumbling of thunder in
796 order to purify the first sky where clouds are formed from the impure
794 passage of Mousso Koroni. The chief gathers the members about the
tree and recites the following prayer:

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826 forehead, it is possible to predict to a great extent, what he will be or do in life. Later on /215/ the gait, the swinging of the arms, the way of placing the feet, of holding the head or the breasts will complete, for the informed people, the portrait sketched at birth.

Measurement of the dya

804 Certain indications concerning the individual are also given by the double or twin (dya) (1) which materializes in the shadow of the body and is measured by using the little finger as a unit. Starting from the top of the head, this operation is undertaken at noon in the sun when the shadow is shortest. The measurements which are noted down are grouped alternatively by three, the male number, and by four, the female number, according to the following table:

1. The first three unit measures (little finger) represent the nerves, pasa (masc.).
2. From the fourth to the seventh, the soft parts, the flesh, bu (fem.).
3. From the eighth to the tenth, the bones, kolo (masc.).
4. From the eleventh to the fourteenth, the body liquids, dyi (fem.).
5. From the fifteenth to the seventeenth, the male genitals, wulu (masc.).
6. From the eighteenth to the twenty-first, the female genitals, byȩ (fem.).
7. From the twenty-second to the twenty-fourth, the joints, kolonye, (masc.).
8. From the twenty-fifth to the twenty-eighth, the breasts, ši (fem.).
9. From the twenty-ninth to the thirty-first, the backbone, koloko (masc.).
10. From the thirty-second to the thirty-fifth, the womb, dẽzo (fem.).
11. From the thirty-sixth to the thirty-eighth, the intelligence, hakili (masc.).

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1. See p. 86.

781 12. From the thirty-ninth to the forty-second, pettiness, stupidity, misenya, (fem.).

826 13. From the forty-third to the forty-fifth, judgment, calmness, basigi (masc.).

14. From the forty-fifth to the forty-ninth, incoherence, agitation, hakiliwuli (fem.).

[804] These groupings are symbolized by little sticks whose length increases for male measures and decreases for female measures.

Example: if the measure of the individual stops at group 7, he will be represented by four sticks (males) of increasing size and by three others (females) of decreasing size and different aspects.

/216/ Whatever their number, these sticks are then placed in the following manner: those of the nerves in a dry receptacle, those of the flesh in millet flour, those of the bones on a hard stone, those of the liquids in water, those of the male genitals on the testicles of a male goat, those of the female genitals on the vulva of a mare, those of the breasts in karite oil, those of the womb in water from the Niger or a well, those of the intelligence in fresh milk, those of calmness and judgment in water. On the stick representing the joints is shown the name for lion; on that representing the backbone, the word dyose, (literally, point of support); on that representing pettiness, the name for dung beetle; on that representing disorder and agitation, the words muso dãga (literally, accursed woman).

A prayer is recited over the sticks which are then grouped and counted with their numbered representation and their symbolism according to the complicated calculations whose details we will not enter upon here (1). This prayer and counting are called: faro kanubaya, "love of Faro." They indicate his solicitude for his subjects and were supposedly revealed to men by the swallow messenger at the time of the first girl twins' birth.

781 826 843 Each of these measurements corresponds to a certain moral and physical behavior of man, predetermined by Faro before one's birth. It is therefore possible, by measuring the dya of a pregnant woman,

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1. It must, nevertheless, be noted that the total of the signs is (7 x 3) + (7 x 4) or 49.

*173 All of these confusing events, however, did not fail to arouse resistance. The people of Doukounna and Banan-koroni, though unable to fight openly, nevertheless sought to avenge themselves upon Mamari. For this purpose they made common cause with the people of Doua. A man from Doukounna, along
[80] with one from Doua who carried [41] 300 *gros* [*gros* = 1/8 oz.] of gold, went to Kong to seek an army to fight against Mamari. The people of Kong (1) agreed and provided a well-organized

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1. Native traditions tend to center around great empires, capitals or paramount chiefs.

I have indicated that the origin of the Kouloubali, who founded the empire of Ségou, is connected with ancestors said by some traditionists to have come from Mandé and by others to be descended from a hunter from the east (see p. 30).

These two contrasting traditions reappear in connection with the siege of Ségou. The version given in this tale is also found in the *Notice historique du Royaume et du Cercle de Ségou* [Historical Note on the Kingdom and Circle of Ségou] and in *Autour de Kita* [Around Kita], p. 38. At this period Kong had an extensive sphere of influence, and M. Binger has shown how, by entirely commercial and peaceful means, it managed to acquire far-flung authority. Therefore, this version of a Kong army coming to attack Ségou and, on being defeated, retreating to the west and occupying Banan and then Mandé, seems suspect, because it is out of character with the practices of the Dioula [Diula] of Kong.

*173 the scene, he grossly insulted the *ton-masa*, calling him a coward and an incompetent, and had him given 40 lashes in front of the troops. Then Dé-koro took the village and killed the chief.

On his return, the *ton-masa* complained bitterly to Mamari of the shameful treatment accorded him and he made no secret of his hatred for Dé-koro. On the advice of a friend named Dyon-kolo, Mamari commiserated with the *ton-masa* and assured him that in the future no one [52] would fail to show him the respect due him. In token of his regard and esteem, he gave [804] him 150 coudees [a measure of ca. 50 centimeters] of silk to make a *bila* and a belt such as were worn by the *sofa*; the *ton-masa* alone had this regalia. Finally, in order to obviate any possible discord between the *ton-masa* and Dé-koro, Mamari acceded to the *ton-masa's* request to be placed in the service of son Bakari, who was pursuing his Islamic studies at Djenné.

Soon after this serious event, Mamari died (1).

1. His dominion extended on both banks of the Niger from Dina to Timbuktu.

"Around 1670, Er Rachid, the first *filalien* or *hassanide* sultan of Fez, in the course of an expedition into the Sous, besieged the mosque of a Moslem religious officiant named Ali ben Haidara, who fled to the Sudan and took refuge with the Banmana emperor Biton Kouloubali, whose authority was beginning to extend as far as Timbuktu. Ali offered Biton beautiful women captives of Spanish or Portuguese origin whom he had brought with him. The Banmana prince was so taken with this gift that he permitted Ali to settle at Timbuktu with his family and pupils and promised him protection. Indeed, when the sultan, Er Rachid, in hot pursuit of Ali, encountered the Ségou army between Timbuktu and Djenné in the northern part of Massina, he met with

438 643 [648] the gold. But they, in turn, could in no case resell the gold to anybody other than the Fama. Aside from certain sacrificial uses and the making of jewels for the Fama's wives, gold served to ransom captives or to negotiate royal alliances.

435 [286] The price of the commodities was set by agreement between buyer and seller, except for cloth which had a fixed price, 100 cowrie shells per cubit in the Bamako region. As a matter of fact, the cotton gathered in the fields of the community was woven by captives who were not paid.

426 686 Loans were made without interest. Interest, *korko*, is still forbidden today. Loans are guaranteed by labor. The debtor who could not repay his debt on time and whose family head refused to pay it for him was seized by the Fama and held as security until such time as he had reimbursed his debt.

804 [436] Side by side with French units of measurement, the natives use their own for trade. Their measures of length: the cubit (elbow to tip of middle finger), the span, the foot, the length of both arms extended, the pace, the *diare*, and the *kala* . . . ; their measures of capacity: the *sawel* or *mouré*, the *mud*; their weights: the *moutkhal*, the *catal*, the large and little *karoni*, the *wakie*, the pellet of *tali*, of *tomi*, of *bagana*, of *gelen*. Cotton is weighed on rough scales whose pointer is a wooden rod and the balances large gourds hung by strings. For weights, large rocks, *kulu*, from 800 to 1,200 grams are used. Finally, the Bambara use French money almost exclusively: one franc of metropolitan France is equivalent to 0.50 francs C.F.A. Nevertheless, the use of cowrie shells is still frequent.

d. Banks

453 One bank of issue exists in French West Africa: the Bank of French West Africa. There are also private banks, the number of which has increased during the past few years.

The Bank of French West Africa, which has a branch at Bamako, carries out the following operations: [43]

1. discounts notes or bills of two or several signatures due in not more than 180 days;
2. creates, negotiates, or buys drafts;

688 Tjoína, or Kégné, and the Nama
of Misango, Kokodjan, or Guendo.
The Djara of Tjikoumela is very
popular in Bani country. A perjured
Negro offers a gnénama fani,
and the fani-n-kolo is costly.
For the Komo it consists of two
red roosters, two goats, a dog,
two red kola nuts, a basket of
millet (between 18 and 20
kilograms) and three times 8
[804 kémé (the kémé is worth 80
436] cowrie shells) if the culprit is
a man, or four times 8 kémé if
it is a woman. For the Nama
the price includes a gourd of honey,
two gourds of karité butter, a red
hen, two red kola nuts, a basket of
[804 millet, and 8 ba (the ba is worth
436] 800 cowrie shells, or one franc),
a kémé, and a débé (120 cowrie
shells). In addition these are one
to two kilograms of salt and a gourd
of gnama-n-kou (malagueta pepper:
amomum melegueta) for the
sacrificer. For the Nia the cost is
12 ba, four chickens, two dogs,
and two hens.

684 837 Adultery is frequent; it occurs daily and is the source of most of the disputes that arise. Some husbands are tolerant, however, and many are satisfied with 2 to 3 ba (between 1, 600 and 2, 400 cowrie shells, or 2 to 3 francs) and victims for a sacrifice to the family boli, such as a hen, a dog, a kid, or two kola nuts.

684 836 Like adultery, fornication is a serious offence because it violates the rights of third parties. It is less serious /163/ than adultery.

765 twice a day, morning and evening, they go in procession, their [514] heads covered with caps made of white cloth. They spend the nights together, in a single hut if possible.

The wives of the deceased go out only when it is ab- [292] solutely necessary during the first moon after the death; they are dressed in white and wear a kind of white hood on their heads and sandals made of goatskin on their feet. At the end of the moon, at night and separately, they go to a sort of puri- [783] fication rite that takes place at the crossroads outside the village.

Up to the fortieth day there is a very gradual return to ordinary life. Then, and only then, the successor to the deceased is finally recognized and installed, as is shown in the chronicle of Ségou.

In closing, let us note how every ritual sequence rests 801 on periods of time whose real meaning must be sought in 805 magic. The astral religion of the Semites in fact taught that on the third, seventh, and fortieth day after death the moon acts more powerful to destroy the body (1). Apparently some such beliefs must account for the Bambara rites planned precisely according to these numbers. This seems all the more likely since the Sudanese commonly believe that the fortieth day marks the separation of the flesh from the bones of buried corpses.

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1. See the meeting of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres of August 9, 1918, paper by Franz Cumont, "La commémoration des morts et l'astrologie [The Commemoration of the Dead and Astrology]," Journal Officiel (1918), p. 7224.

794 the sounds of the [263] trumpets to announce the meetings
825 imitate the cry of the animal (1).

[534] 1. This is true of the Dyara. In the brotherhood of that name, a cry like a roar is drawn from an instrument made as follows: the hollow trunk of a palm tree is covered at one end by a tightly stretched skin; a long thong or rope runs down inside the trunk from the center of the skin; the operator pulls the rope tight, then lets it slip through his hand by jerks, and having achieved a certain facility, he succeeds in producing a noise like a roar.

000 Can it be that the costumes made of bark strips, the strange masks, and the mimicry of the people who wear them are connected with mysteries which are now unknown to us, either because they have been adopted without understanding and thus deformed beyond recognition, or because they are the last vestiges of far older cults, today unfathomable since they no longer exist?

Did Egypt inspire these cults, as some people believe? Or rather was Egypt herself influenced originally by a pre-existent Black civilization whose last surviving traces she kept alive by altering them? This is an unlimited field for speculation.

Generally speaking, the cult is in abeyance on Monday
794 and Thursday of each week. The same days are holidays from
805 communal work and are left to the "poor people" for their own profit. There must be some connection between these two facts, and it should further be noted that, as a result, the religious week is reduced to five days. A question naturally arises, therefore, as to whether the week as now observed is truly native. It seems likely that the week is an oriental contribution, more specifically Islamic. It could be a coincidence that Islam organized slavery, and when a seven-day week was adopted, two days were allotted to the *gens de poëste*, as used to be said in France.

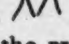
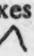
212 From the central core of creation four categories of signs have 812 emerged, 266 in all, which represent the complete signs of the world; they give color, form, and matter to things. In time these 266 signs came to head lists of an infinity of other signs encompassing all of creation.

"It is by these signs that man enters into possession of the greatest part of his domain, which is the universe. And in the measure that he does not know a sign, ~~that~~ he cannot analyze it, that is, possess it in its component parts, he finds certain sectors of the total knowledge of things closed to him." (1)

1. M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, Signes graphiques soudanais [Sudanese Graphic Signs].

815 The Bambara, like the Dogon, represent the movement of the stars graphically as well as mathematically, and, in particular, the revolution of the sun around the earth, center of the cosmos. These movements are measured by a cylindrical granary that they use as gnomon (wati dyati dyiginye); it is a round structure of seko [plaited walling?] with a conical roof, constructed according to precise measurements. It rests on a small packed mound in the form of a square which has first been carefully measured and oriented. Twenty-two stones are buried in each angle of the square, and 22 more in the center. Three rows of four big stones are oriented east-west on the little hill: one row on the southern side, one to the north, and one in the middle. Small wooden beams are laid on these rows. Each part and each measurement has a symbolic meaning. The gnomon serves to determine the dates of the solstices and the equinoxes by the observation of its shadow on the ground. (2)

2. D. Zahan, "Un gnomon soudanais" [A Sudanese Gnomon], Africa, 1950.

205 815 The diurnal and annual movements of the sun are represented by a zigzag line,  . Certain variations in the form of the zigzag represent the procession of the equinoxes and the variable length of the days in summer and winter,  . Four angles represent the four cardinal points, and each of the lines that make up

805 the angles represents 90 days (the year, for the Bambara, is 360 days).
815 The symbols are not merely mathematical; they form part of the daily life of the society. [18] The zigzags are a characteristic theme
[531] in the decoration of pottery, weapons, tools, sanctuaries, and houses. One finds them in agricultural techniques and in ritual dance figures. The universal rhythms of the earth and sky echo through all the activities of man and society. (1) Finally, another series of 16 signs is habitually used in geomancy. It is interesting to note that these signs were used in a practical manner for correspondence. The Bambara chiefs used multiple combinations of them to send each other messages.

G. Local Diversities

197 Given the extent and the diversity of the regions where Bambara is spoken, it is no wonder one notices differences in pronunciation, and even in structure and vocabulary, from one province to another. At Kaarta the speech is not the same as at Ségou, and a Bambara of Ségou has trouble understanding a Bambara of Bougouni. This is due partly to the influence of other languages which are in contact with Bambara and which ultimately alter and modify it, and partly to the normal evolution of language within a group separated for centuries from its place of origin. It is interesting to note that in the Bougouni circle the conservatives in speech are the old men, while the women are the evolutionary element.

191 Traditionally, Ségou was considered the center for the most elegant Bambara speech. Before the conquest, children were sent to Ségou to learn the purest Bambara.

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[787] 1. Id., "Conception de l'écliptique chez les Dogons et les Bambara" [The Dogon and Bambara Conception of the Ecliptic]. [Ed., Africa, 1951.]

787 which the god speaks. In the brotherhoods of which we shall presently speak, the wara-mina-den' is, as the term indicates, "possessed by the god"; he is also said to be "the mouth of the god" (wara da). However, the diviner can speak only unin-
[198] telligible gibberish during trance, and so this half-human, half-divine language must be interpreted by the wara-tigi or high-priest.

During dream or divine possession, the invisible is brought within man's reach by a sort of inner illumination; both methods may be said to be intuitive divination. Other methods, even more widely used, are based on a different procedure. These methods purport to penetrate the divine intention and will by observation of external signs. How do these signs differ from natural phenomena?

The native pays very little attention to what we call
[811] natural laws. He reasons by analogy and attributes any unfamiliar phenomenon to an invisible being endowed like himself with intelligence and will. The indications of this will are not precise, and it is up to each person to recognize and to interpret them. Divination based on external signs may be called deductive. The signs may be classified in two categories: those involving living beings and those involving inanimate objects.

787 825 Living beings. Theoretically, any animal is useful for purposes of observation because its actions, whose determining cause is unknown to the ordinary man, reveal to the seer the divine will or intervention.

Observations of this kind have given rise to many taboos (tne). Here is an example: while crossing a [135] stream an ancestor of the Samaké was caught by a crocodile and carried down through the water to the creature's lair, where he was abandoned. It happened that the man was merely stunned and when he came to, he pondered how he might escape. Suddenly he felt some grains of sand fall on his face and, seeking the source, noticed that a thread of light came in through a tiny fissure in the rock. The grains of sand were coming through this crack, and he realized that an ant lion (gere) was throwing them in an effort to show him how to get out; so he managed to enlarge the crack enough to escape. But, remembering the insect to

752 "A few days after the child's death, a woman in the house was also bitten, just a step from my hut and by a similar snake. Old Niany was summoned and came at once. I was not aware that he had any knowledge of medical matters but, on seeing the confidence shown him, I realized that this was not a new experience for him.

"His medication consisted, first, of ridiculous gestures and a spate of incoherent words spoken very rapidly. Then he brought out from under his boubou [robe] a small horn containing a black and oily ointment. The injured woman, who seemed very calm, prepared her own bandage and placed the ointment on the wound, adding some ground root which the old man took from another horn. When she had finished, it was Niany's turn. He muttered some more words, put his finger into his ears and took out some stuff, which was apparently there in quantity, and carefully spread it over the ointment. The woman then arose and returned to her work.

"I watched this treatment with a lively interest since I knew that I myself might have need of it at any time. For the same reason I often asked after the woman and was always told that she was getting on well. On the third day, I was told that she was completely cured and that there had been no swelling or pain to keep her from performing her usual chores.

"The snake that had bitten her was nevertheless of [145] the same type as the one that had caused the child's death. I saw and held in my hands both snakes; I saw the remedy applied and I have faithfully described it. Are we to believe in the virtue of grigri and in the omniscience of the Aesculapius of Foutobi, or must we give an unorthodox twist to the aphorism which says that faith conquers all?

"In any case, I firmly resolved to trust myself to the learned hands of Niany if the need should arise.

"When I went to Niany to congratulate him on his remarkable cure, I reminded him of the death of the child who had been treated in the same way. The singular logic of the blacksmith's reply has no doubt been encountered before: 'that's not at all strange,' he told me, 'since my remedy cures only those who believe in it and the little child did not believe.' "....

811

The Soul of an African People
The Bambara
Their Psychic, Ethical, Religious, and Social Life

/12/

Chapter 1

1. Beliefs Concerning the Forces of Nature

181 It would seem child's play to demonstrate to a Negro the absurdity of his prejudices and his superstitious practices; yet such a demonstration does not suceed. No matter how clear and simple your arguments may be, you will not succeed in bringing into his mind the least spark of light or the slightest doubt. The *o do*, "that's it, " and *tigné*, "that's true, " which spring so readily from the mouth of one whose eyes you try to open, are polite sayings, and nothing more.

There is no reason to be surprised. Being incapable of long meditation and broad reasoning, he does not grasp the illogicality of his beliefs and, the contradictions in his behavior; he believes what his fathers believed and, like them, he sacrifices, so that everything with which he comes in contact is reddened slightly with blood. Your talk at once surprises him and leaves him cold; he does not understand you or grasp what you say; he even finds you a little silly. If he does not dare to admit this feeling to himself he stops with the words: *Toubabou do*! (This is a white man! Can he think and judge as I myself judge?").

In addition, his beliefs are linked to one another, and if we are able to get down to his level, taking care all the while to raise him to ours, if we judge as he judges and think as he thinks, we will move from surprise to surprise, more than ever, for his conception of the world and ours are not at all the same, and his mentality and ours are different from each other.

181 811 772 Every non-Mohammedan Bambara considers himself a close relative of animals and plants and, I may add with all assurance /13/, a close relative of inanimate things. Without any doubt he distinguishes

181 the kingdoms from each other; for him a mineral is not a vegetable
811 nor a vegetable an animal. He differentiates between the animate
772 and the inanimate and does not confuse the genera and species. But has he known how to establish a definite, clear, and well-demarcated line of distinction between man and the rest of creation? No, he bases his ideas of all things on himself or, to be more definite, on what he feels and believes himself to be. In addition to genii and spirits, he sees conscious forces and energies everywhere in nature. He cannot define these forces; his ideas on the subject are confused and indefinite. But, nevertheless, it is true, that he attributes a glimmer of reason and feeling to everything. Obviously the black man does not attribute a soul -- in the sense that we understand it -- to everything; nor does he say that everything is the home of a genie or a spirit; yet he cannot conceive of pure matter. He finds instinct in animals and special virtues and properties in plants. In inert matter he encounters phenomena which he cannot explain, and since he always uses himself and his reasoning as the basis of comparisons, he endows everything with the immaterial, invisible, imperceptible attributes of reason and feeling. In his mind I repeat, matter is not a soul, or a genie as he conceives of one; yet it is a being, a force, a power that has its own existence and the ability to act of its own accord. Here are a few examples taken from a thousand:

811 In July, 1908 at the time when the crops were sprouting, cer-
731 tain regions of the Ségou circle were invaded by tiny caterpillars
measuring barely 0.025 meters in length. They were a beautiful
782 velvety black with pale green lines on their sides; they came from the
825 east out of no one knows where and myriads of them proceeded toward the west in serried ranks. Wherever they passed everything was eaten, and the eleusine /African millet/, corn, and sorghum had to be resown.

While these creatures were devouring the crops, the Moslem cried his insignificant formula toward the east and repeated, "God is great." He prostrated himself, crouched on his heels, devoutly shaking his forefinger, but all was in vain, for the quivering black wave continued to draw back on itself, to hump its back, and then to grow longer /14/; it continued to advance and to grow. The pagan

821 whitened the front of his dwelling with a mixture of millet flour and water that had been offered to the shades of his ancestors, and poured
131 chicken blood here and there; then he thought it best to meet in
782 council and consult his sorcerers. The same orders were given every-
825 where: a potentate, perhaps a prince, doubtless of the caterpillar people, was celebrating his wedding and respects must be paid to him. All the pagan villages did so, and the marriage of the caterpillars took place one fine morning at daybreak. Two or three caterpillars were placed at the bottom of old worn-out gourds and carried far up a path on the west side and out of the village by a procession of women and girls, singing and dancing, and preceded by furiously beating drums. They placed the little creatures on a spot determined by the elders and, after a wild dance they made their farewells, foolish farewells, stupid perhaps and yet nevertheless touching. For if the young people called to them with a long burst of laughter: "I na somaon fo (you will greet your people)," and some old shrews in a tone of command cried: "Ta so! (Go home!)," there were more who said to them: "Toumouni (little caterpillar), an bi déli (we implore you) have pity on us, go back now to your kingdoms; everything is eaten, and there is nothing left. Go, bring greetings to the people of your family, greet them all and greet them well."

They continued to come through for at least eight days, but their number decreased and a storm came and swept them away. Every Bambara will tell you that these caterpillars do not talk, that they have no soul. And yet if you try to make him understand that he has rendered them futile, useless, childish honors and that they could neither enjoy his music and songs nor understand his prayers and supplications, he will shrug his shoulders: "Tigné o (you are right)," he will tell you with a mocking air, and cutting your talk short will add: "Ou tara!", and one who knows the Bambara will guess the full implication: "Nevertheless, they left."

In August, 1908 a large part of the population of the villages
825 located in the environs of Ségou spent the day of Friday the twenty-
787 eighth in sweet idleness. Since I knew that a Kono fetish brought by its masters to recruit initiates was going from village /15/ to

825 village, I thought at first that here lay the reason for this rest, extraordinary
787 during the time of the most intensive hoeing. Not at all; the
pagan Bambara were resting, and the women were giving their husbands
[262] and children dégé (millet flour mixed with milk and honey
water) in obedience to a hyena's command. The hyena, it was said -- and all the sorcerers confirmed this -- had emerged from its dumbness, its tongue had been loosed, and it had predicted to the people of the west that a plague even more terrible than that of the caterpillars would descend on the country. Only one means to avert it remained: to refrain from going to the fields on Friday and to treat themselves to dégé, the food so dear to Moslems.

482 On my excursions I have often met men and women carrying
757 on their heads a gourd or a basket containing a handful of leaves or
824 some bundles of roots, and apart from the customary greetings it
784 has been impossible for me to get a word out of them. And why this
silence? They were carrying a medicinal plant, a remedy which would lose all its virtue and all its efficacy if they conversed on the way, and they had to take care not to trample such-and-such a plant that grew on the edge of the path.

757 The Bambara quite readily names the plants and herbs whose
753 curative powers are known to him, and yet in the presence of a sick
784 person he will very seldom give you the name of the remedy the
latter is taking, or the names of the roots and leaves that make up his poultices. Sickness, he believes is a force, a power which tortures our bodies. He is afraid that in naming the remedy he would provide this power with a weapon against its healing virtue, which is another force or power. He sets the second power against the first to make it leave.

811 It is evident that he attributes bits of reason and emotion to
784 everything, that he attributes human feelings to all that is animate
and inanimate. The "taboos" are not merely one piece of evidence of this, they are an irrefutable proof of this attitude.

Legend of the Samaké

773
614 My grandfather has often told it to me; he himself got it from
539 his ancestors.... A Samaké -- I cannot tell whether he had been
784 fording the river or driving the stakes to which fishing mats are fastened
825 -- was seized by an alligator which dragged him to the depths of its
den. The alligator did not kill him, /21/ for it had fed.... Leaving the unhappy man to his sad thoughts, it withdrew.... It did not go away, however, and from time to time it hit the water with its tail at the entrance of the hole, making it quite clear that there was only one way out and that this was the door. Stretched out in the ooze, the unhappy Samaké moaned: "Who will save me from those terrible claws and those powerful teeth?" An ant lion at the top of the den was watching for flies and ants in the bottom of its pit; it had pity on the man and, working with its two horns, succeeded in bringing in a ray of sunlight to revive the hopes of the Samaké. "Will I be saved?" he asked the ant lion. Two pinches of sand were the answer, and he understood. Working with both hands, he helped the ant lion; the hole grew and he was able to get through. He escaped. When the alligator re-entered its den, exhausted with hunger, it was disappointed not to find its prey there. So as not to invite the curse of their ancestor, the descendants of this Samaké respect and venerate the géré, or ant lion, and it is their tné. Other Samaké have the elephant (sama) for their tné.

773 These few legends are sufficient; they all show us that although
825 the Bambara believes that the bond with the tné is simply one of
● 811 fraternity, friendship, and gratitude and not a bond of real and
772 physical kinship, he nonetheless does not fail to attribute reason and
emotion to everything around him, to animals and to plants. In nature he does not find pure matter; rather he attributes human feelings in some degree to everything, and throughout he sees a force, a power, an intangible, which he does not know how to define and which thinks, loves, laments, and weeps.

771 If the Bambara have fought to safeguard their independence,
181 they have done so primarily to preserve their faith and keep their fetishes. They have shown such great attachment for these, that their
[101] conquerors have described them as rebels and applied to them the epithet Bamba, synonym of Kafri. These religious struggles in themselves allow us to state as an indisputable fact that before the arrival of the Moslems the Bambara were animistic and sacrificed to genii. /69/

776 Did they have an exact and precise idea of their genii as they
●811 do now? Apparently yes, for they always reasoned using themselves as a basis of comparison so that in their minds the invisible, impalpable genii to whom they sacrificed had a striking resemblance to man. It is not a man, and yet it is one, they say unable to define their concept or idea, ma si fa do (1).

1. Ma; "man"; si fa' "certain kind"; do; "it is."

776 The Moslem word djin translates this idea precisely, and the
782 Bambara use it in everyday language; but when the day of the sacrifice comes, they become unaware of it and there remains only one word -- ma, meaning "man." When they redden with blood the bark of
[824] the baobab (Adansonia digitata), the tamarind tree, the false cedar (family of the cedrelaceae), etc., to obtain the good graces and protection of the genie who dwells there, they always confer on it the title ma ("man"), and never that of djiné. "Ma n'zira ba, ma n'tomi ba, ma djala ba; O great baobab man, O great tamarind tree man, O great false-cedar man!" begins the formula used by the sacrificer in offering victims and millet flour to the genie (2). They also have

114 2. In /J. Henry/, "Culte des esprits chez les Bambara /Spirit Worship among the Bambara/," Anthropos, Vol. III, No. 4 (1908), p. 1 /p. 702/, note 1, there is an error in translation.

177 substratum on which each tribe has grafted its original system. The
121 study of this substratum would help define the problem of origins and
influences.

After this, we have at our disposal the support of philology and above all the advantage of seeing the Bambara live their beliefs and of discovering their myths in a crude but expressive material as well as in numerous rites. The observations made over a wide field of inquiry serve as the basis for the presentation of this religious system.

114 The Bambara have been for a long time the subject of articles and
121 works, of which we will give below a concise bibliography. The only
author who, until now, has attempted to describe their beliefs as a
system is L. Tauxier whose study of La Religion Bambara /Bambara
religion/ takes into account to a large extent the works of the Abbé
Henry and Ch. Monteil. However, through the descriptions of these
different observers which are certainly conscientious, this religion
appears as a composite of diverse and even inconsistent elements with
no apparent link between them. Despite a uniform plan and a laudable
absence of preconceived ideas, L. Tauxier has been unable to bring
out the fundamental concepts of the people he observed.

In fact, the study of a present-day Negro religion runs into difficulties of various kinds stemming on the one hand from the necessity of going into the field and on the other hand from the largely esoteric character of the doctrine. These circumstances make this study essentially a work of discovery.

Indeed, Bambara religion, like all Sudanese religions, has an
exoteric part, quite easily accessible, which observation conducted
along scientific lines may reveal in detail. Rules of life admitted by
all, beliefs openly professed, and public or private practices may be
the object of detailed work. But this religion, like that of the neighboring peoples, rests upon a doctrine whose fundamental principles
[609] are known to elders and initiates who show considerable aversion to confiding in strangers, particularly whites. Such a situation explains the
ignorance in which scholarship has remained for so long concerning
the religious way of thinking of this people (1).

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812 1. The Bambara themselves distinguish between two kinds of knowledge. The first, called doni fyẽma "knowledge (which has) wind" /xviii/ is superficial

812

> and considered to be "the introduction to beliefs and customs." It belongs to adults who know little of cosmology. On the contrary, the second, called "deep knowledge" (doniya duna or kuru doniya), is restricted to priests, heads of families, elders of both sexes who are versed in "the science of the things of creation." It can only be acquired slowly in the course of successive initiations and through actual instruction which is sometimes diffused during the rites.

114-121 /xviii/ A rigorous method of observation which neglects no detail and which involves the use of close collaboration from the natives has brought forth a system coherent in all its parts and, it may be said, based on a metaphysics hitherto unknown. Taking the Bambara postulates as a point of departure, the sequence of events through the myths, the development of institutions and technology, their operation and the actual destiny of man in the cosmos all unfold in a logical framework.

On the other hand, this system is projected into the concrete in the form of symbols which borrow the most diversified aspects and which play an active role. The symbolism not only penetrates religious life proper by appearing in the sanctuaries, in the cult materials (shapes and sign writing), or during religious ceremonies (times and places, rituals, etc.), but is present in every aspect of secular life and daily behavior.

The metaphysics and the religion of this people offer a structural entity which includes all social, technological, and economic activities. In the following chapters, we shall attempt to clarify these principles and this system. We believe we may safely state that certain inconsistencies or contradictions presented by the religious system as it is described here are not due to Bambara thought—even though it is subtle and based on a dialectic—but to lacunae in the investigation.

/56/

Chapter 3

THE PERSON

812 The Bambara conceive of man (homo) as the principle of nature. He is "the seed of the world" and as such reflects the totality of beings and things in their essence and in their situation. Like the universe, man is life, and like life, "he is maintained by the attraction of the cardinal angels." Universe and man are each the condition of the other: the totality of things upholds the human being in his place and situation and makes him persevere within himself. Man, on the other hand, is the basis, the "raison d'être," and the cause of the universe by virtue of his consciousness and the knowledge he has of himself.

In this way the principle of duality, contained in the original creative thought and realized in the universe by the sky and the earth, is reflected in the person. The human being shows in his body the separation of the sexes necessary to the multiplication of the species —a separation, expressed in the myth of Pemba and Mousso Koroni, that shows the disorders, the difficulties, and the conflicts implicit in such a situation. But through his twin souls, the human being brings about the ideal union of the sexes as expressed in the myth of Faro's androgyny.

812 828 Moreover, these mythical personalities are present in man: Faro through the ni and the dya, Pemba through the tere and the nyama, Mousso Koroni through the wanzo. It can also be said that the peregrinations of these beings and their pursuits in time and in the mythical regions are the expression of man's psychological states such as the inner explorations and conflicts necessary to man's defining himself within himself and with respect to the rest of the creation. In other words, they are the expression of the growing consciousness of self. The whole religious and social attitude of the individual testifies to the interplay of these various forces, between which he must maintain balance and harmony.

000 /57/ In this chapter we shall examine in succession the following elements that make up or determine the person: the spiritual principles (ni, dya, tere, nyama, wanzo), the parts of the human body related to them, and certain social attributes of the individual (given name, family name, device, taboo). Finally we shall consider the cathartic role of the institution of joking relationship founded on the notion of duality.

831 lines or dots depending upon the sex of those who used them. Thus,
801 women marked their spindles with four lines whereas men twisted three
threads on their shuttles.

On the metaphysical level, man's body, "the seed of the world,"
826 is identified with the cereal grain. The Bambara separate cereal
824 grains into seven parts, corresponding to a division of the human
812 organs into seven groups (1). Man and grain are one and identical in
their substance. On the other hand, the basic foods, that is, the
eight principal cereals, are symbolically present in the collarbones
(*kolo kalanjiri*, or *ka kolo*). Man carries within him his subsistance,
[783] and its location reflects the person's general condition (2). As proof
of /72/ man's spiritual integrity, these grains leave him when he is
in a state of impurity. He is then drained of his substance and subsistence. Thepurpose of purification is to reestablish this wholeness.

812 Moreover, the bonds which unite the whole person, body and
561 spiritual principles, to the cosmos, are made clear by the fact that

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1. The divisions of the grain are as follows: *kungu*, "little beard of millet," involucre; *fara dye*, "white bark," glume and glumales; *fara fi*, "black bark," bran and protein aceous bark; *fara mugu*, "farinaceous bark" (which corresponds to a milky diastatic zone); *mugu dunta*, "flour for eating," starch; *kolo dye*, "white bone," embryo; *kise de*, "son of grain," the micropyle from which the rootlet issues at the time of germination. The classification of organs in relation to these divisions is under study. We thank M. Pitot of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire for the identification of the parts of the grain corresponding to the native divisions. In certain villages, grains [782] undergo a process of hulling and the determined elements only are used in the making up of the ritually offered millet mash.

2. See p. 53, n. 2.

812 561 man's life passes through seven successive ages corresponding to the seven skies, the seven earths, the seven waters, and the seven stages of millet growth. The seven ages are: *bilakoro*, "an uncircumcised person"; *kemẽkoro* "a circumcised person of the last age grade"; *tyebalẽ*, literally, a big man; *maselẽ*, literally, a successful person; *makoroba*, literally, an elderly person; *madeselẽ*, literally, a person who cannot succeed, an old man; *mabalẽ*, an impotent old man.

812 561 796 These bonds are also confirmed annually for everybody in the course of the ritual called "the renewal of the year." By renewing the cardinal points, the Bambara add to the strength of these poles of attraction which are responsible for maintaining things within themselves and with respect to each other. At the same time they proceed to a "revival of the body and soul," including all from the youngest to the oldest. For the year to come, they take a fresh breath, a new life, and submit the body to internal and external purifications, making it adequate to fulfill its role.

Effects of Death on the Person

761 The first effect of death is to dissociate the elements that make up the person. The religious practices, imbued with respect for these elements, aim at organizing their preservation in order that they may not be lost to the deceased, to society, and finally, to Faro who controls life and assures the survival of souls.

The *dya* remains in the water where it will be kept until the birth of a child. But the *ni*, which escapes from the body with the last breath, is watched for by the head of the family who catches it and carries it to an altar. As we have seen above, it will return to animate the *dya* of the child who will inherit the deceased's spiritual principles, leaving behind it on the altar, a kind of exuvia, *mana* or *folo*, as a sign of the deceased's sojourn on earth.

The *tere* becomes transformed at death; liberated from the body, it becomes *nyama* which escapes and which may sometimes attack the living. Proof of this is the fear aroused by the sight of a corpse. /73/ It would seem that the *tere*'s combination of strength and character is expressed by the activity of the *nyama*; but it is really dangerous only in the case of violent death (the murder of a man or an animal). In this case the *nyama* attacks the responsible party. If death is natural, the *nyama*, like the *ni*, is directed by the relatives and placed on the family altar (*pembele*) in the course of the

776 drink, dress themselves, wear adornments, etc. -- in short, behave exactly like living men.

[125] All peoples use or have used such language in try-
812 ing to express a concept which is by its nature impossible to make concrete. It is, therefore, perhaps premature to conclude that a Bambara cannot conceive of a strictly immaterial world for his manes. He is merely at present incapable of giving a description unencumbered with concrete terms in habitual use. However, it may be stated in general that the Bambara does not trouble himself about the why or how of things outside of what he sees or knows. Reality surrounds him and limits him. He makes decisions on the spur of the moment and also under the influence of time-honored empiricism which is the basis of custom.

776 We have pointed out that among the incorporeal souls are some who, through the right efforts, rise to such heights that they can enter the world of spirits. There are spirits, indeed, who have nothing of the human about them. What are their origin and nature? The Bambara say of them: ma si fa do, meaning "It is a kind of person." Here, too, the expression betrays the thought. Aside from the fact that the native vocabulary does not provide for expressions strictly immaterial, the Bambara has an inevitable tendency to use himself as an object of comparison. For him, the world of the spirits like that of the manes, is analogous to our own. But the manner in which he speaks of the spirits contradicts his words. A spirit is invisible, without a material body; if it appears, it does so under the most diverse forms, borrowed for a brief time. A spirit is often called "a wind," meaning "a fluid." It is also a weightless substance, so rarefied that it can go anywhere -- even to entering a living man's body, where it can perform all sorts of fantastic things (1).

1. See Chapter 7.

For the Bambara, most spirits remain in this vague and inconsistent state. Only events, circumstances or the native's will occasionally tear some of them away from this chaos and transports them to the worldly scene (2). We shall speak of them

2. Assuming for these and other similar

571 182 with individuals in the same way as individuals deal with each other. They are not only moral persons, as we put it, but they are truly persons, [156] as evidenced by the Blacks' impulsive need for anthropomorphism.

812 Let us note, finally, that a Black does not abstract himself from surrounding nature; nor has he reached the stage of development at which man regards himself as a kind of intermediary between the natural and the supernatural. The Black is an integral part of nature and that is why he treats it like himself. Therefore, natural phenomena are subjected on his behalf to the same kind of ritual sequences as those followed in his own behavior.

Chapter 3

Communities

1. General Considerations

114 631 Native society is not simple, and Europeans studying these countries have used terminology which, not being defined, has obscured reality.

In particular, they have used the terms "kingdom" and "empire" to describe Sudanese states, and both authors and readers have taken these expressions to imply a social organization more or less analogous to those meant by these words in our country.

631 These empires or kingdoms, however, are simply clans, i.e., political groups that have imposed their authority on other groups whose members then become their tributaries, members of a caste, or slaves. Such an empire, if one wishes to use this term, has no exact geographical boundaries or, if one prefers, its boundaries are constantly changing. Furthermore, the country embraced by this term has two parts: territories which may be said to be under direct administration, in which the authority of the clan is directly imposed; and those territories whose position with respect to the ruling clan

212 by numbers, and notably by ten, which may be obtained, among
801 other ways and if it's a question of representing the Creator, by
adding the first four numbers, or by adding the number five to
[776] itself." Ten is the numerical symbol of Faro (god of water); it
symbolizes what is just, true, perfect, and complete.

The symbolism of numbers is used in divination: a first
[787] group of eight signs, called the secret count, reproduces the seven
first numbers which, according to a Bambara myth, were engraved
in space at the instant that the Creator by his word formed the universe. They contain the whole universe.

These numerical signs were ritually traced on the most varied occasions.

Finally, we must note the existence of the sign for "nothing,"
[802] fu gundo, zero, which stands at the beginning of a series of 196
numerical signs used by those who practice arithomancy.

The word Mandé, of central significance for 44 peoples, may be interpreted, according to some, as manin (the secret name for ten), number of unity and of the cultural community.

F. Writing

212 For everyday use, the Bambara have adopted arabic characters, called by them "writing of the Blacks." In fact, only those
who have studied in the Marabouts' schools know how to read or
write them. No written literature, properly speaking, exists. A
538 large store of traditions, epics, tales, legends, songs, and proverbs
is transmitted orally from generation to [17] generation by professional storytellers, the griot. Moreover, the whole sum of sci-
867 entific, juridical, ethical, and practical knowledge is taught orally
868 in the course of daily life or during long years of initiation. Certain old masters renowned for their learning are consulted from far distances when a chief is in doubt on a point of tradition.

212 Nevertheless, signs do exist for a secret writing that the priests, the heads of families, or blacksmiths draw on the sanctuaries, on masks, furniture, clothing, cabin walls, or in the sand.

For the Bambara, things exist by signs. These signs have at-
212 tached themselves to things, calling them to consciousness and to
812 the attention of man.

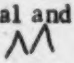
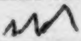
212 From the central core of creation four categories of signs have
812 emerged, 266 in all, which represent the complete signs of the world; they give color, form, and matter to things. In time these 266 signs came to head lists of an infinity of other signs encompassing all of creation.

"It is by these signs that man enters into possession of the greatest part of his domain, which is the universe. And in the measure that he does not know a sign, that he cannot analyze it, that is, possess it in its component parts, he finds certain sectors of the total knowledge of things closed to him." (1)

1. M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, Signes graphiques soudanais [Sudanese Graphic Signs].

815 The Bambara, like the Dogon, represent the movement of the stars graphically as well as mathematically, and, in particular, the revolution of the sun around the earth, center of the cosmos. These movements are measured by a cylindrical granary that they use as gnomon (wati dyati dyiginye); it is a round structure of seko [plaited walling?] with a conical roof, constructed according to precise measurements. It rests on a small packed mound in the form of a square which has first been carefully measured and oriented. Twenty-two stones are buried in each angle of the square, and 22 more in the center. Three rows of four big stones are oriented east-west on the little hill: one row on the southern side, one to the north, and one in the middle. Small wooden beams are laid on these rows. Each part and each measurement has a symbolic meaning. The gnomon serves to determine the dates of the solstices and the equinoxes by the observation of its shadow on the ground. (2)

2. D. Zahan, "Un gnomon soudanais" [A Sudanese Gnomon], Africa, 1950.

805 The diurnal and annual movements of the sun are represented
815 by a zigzag line, . Certain variations in the form of the zigzag represent the procession of the equinoxes and the variable length of the days in summer and winter, . Four angles represent the four cardinal points, and each of the lines that make up

*173 something whose strangeness places it outside our [24] understanding or what is worse, not to be deceived into interpreting this incoherent jumble simply to fit a preconceived theory.

*173 814 To these reflections of the native mentality must be added the deformations in the hands of the collectors of historical traditions (1): the dyeli among the Bambara. This word dyeli, meaning "master," shows the esteem accorded, in principle, to the archivist, which is what each dyeli should be. Indeed the job consists essentially in preserving from oblivion the genealogy and in celebrating -- by magnifying them -- the achievements of the personage to whom the dyeli is attached. As a result, the dyeli extends his inquiries to all who come into contact with his lord, so that in fact he becomes the historian of an entire family, an entire clan and even an entire tribe.

[555] The dyeli's great erudition and, even more, his skill in making the most of his superficial knowledge bring it about that the esteem in which he is held takes the practical form of gifts -- often so considerable as to make the dyeli very prosperous indeed. Therefore, the majority of dyeli, being less anxious to safeguard truth than to increase their own fortunes, flatter or slander, as required, those on whom they impose their services, so as to profit as much as possible. It is because of this sort of corruption that the dyeli is often scorned.

Dyeli who have kept their integrity are rare; those who possess extensive knowledge and sufficient critical sense to make a wise selection from the mass of contradictory traditions are rarer still.

In general, each dyeli works only within the very restricted limits of a clan tradition, plus a few family traditions; he is entirely ignorant of anything that concerns neighboring clans and families and, especially, people outside his own tribe and race.

The dyeli preserves in his memory the historical tradition and hands it down. Thus, since each dyeli works entirely independently, he can add any fantasies he pleases, spread them abroad, and pass them off for truth, which is accepted as such and passed on by others.

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1. Here called "traditionists."

*173 These, in brief, are the difficulties encountered in dealing
814 with sources for native historical tradition. When Islam
217 introduced [25] a written language, there was created a new
212 category of archivists, the marabouts. They have added this duty to many others; it cannot be proved that they have purged the job of its former vices, but it may be stated categorically that they have added a few new ones.

It is notorious that, in the Sudan, the Moslem traditionists have an ineradicable tendency to transpose everything into their own mentality. Further, since a manuscript gives a kind of quasi definitiveness to the oral tradition, including all its errors, it becomes almost impossible to eliminate these errors because of the unquestioning respect usually accorded a written document.

*173 There are also the non-literate Moslem traditionists:
814 ordinary dyeli who have been converted in the usual Sudanese fashion, as described in Chapter 6, and who have abandoned none
[177] of the characteristics of their caste. They have merely added a few peculiarities due to Moslem influence.

114 In drawing on these sources, European publications add new reasons for doubt. Most especially, because of a desire -- legitimate, in principle -- to bring some sort of order out of the incoherent mass of traditions, but also because of a need to make them fit a personal theory, the European author takes refuge in an hypothesis. Now there is no objection to this, assuming that the hypothesis on which the author bases his theories is clearly stated. Too often, however, the hypothesis is so well concealed or even so intricately entwined in the tradition that it is impossible either to discover what it is or to set an exact limit to its range. This new metamorphosis of tradition is not the least dangerous for historical truth.

115 It is to two non-literate Moslem dyeli that I am indebted
*173 for the traditions concerning the Ségou and Kaarta clans. My interpreter, Souleïman Goundiamou (1), whose services as a guide and informant on native matters were invaluable to me, gave

1. Now chief of the village of Ambidédi (Gadiaga).

538 701 726 when the action had occurred, to celebrate the glory of its author. If, however, events showed that there had been mere bravado, the griot was then expected to stigmatize the braggart's cowardice -- something he never failed to do, since he found it just as profitable as to celebrate the glory of a hero.

At a critical hour when the army threatened to yield to the baser instincts engendered by rout, panic, and defeat, the griot often had the fortunate ability to arouse failing courage, sometimes [317] with cutting sarcasm, sometimes by exalting the lofty achievements of the ancestors, sometimes by setting forth in a tragic light the lot of the defeated. The chronicle shows him in this role when Ma-n-son, held in check by the stubborn resistance of Tyitya, sees himself -- final disgrace -- abandoned by his wives who have decided to return to Ségou. All through the night the griot sang battle songs, and at dawn the terrible assault proved that the army had recovered its spirit.

This handler of words was undoubtedly a formidable "master." He was said to know words that kill, since he was aware of the actions dominating every person's life. When Ma-n-son's twelve wives came in a body and told him that they had resolved to return without him to Ségou because they were all the more homesick when they felt that defeat was at hand, he ordered them to repeat their words before the griot whom he had summoned. With their action thus publicly noted, he gave them leave to depart, knowing that he would be able to avenge himself for their desertion whenever he decided to do so.

The songs of the griot, retold and repeated by the warriors and the people, gave memorable actions ineffaceable lineaments. The chronicle tells us that when the expedition against Dina was undertaken, the griot improvised the song which begins: "In the shade of the bushy kaminya tree, the hen cannot tell a grain of millet from a grain of sand." This meant that, in the confusion of battle, a warrior can make no distinctions. In fact, the country was completely laid waste during this expedition, and the booty was so abundant that forever after the griot had only to sing this song to arouse the warlike ardor of the ton'-dyon'.

538 814 A man of high rank is always accompanied by his griot, who is both a confidant and a mere factotum. It is true, of course,

538 814 that the *griot* is often a wretched character, an insignificant parasite living at the expense of everyone. There are those among them, however, who carry out their duties as archivist very faithfully and who are sincerely devoted to their masters, great and generous lords in the native fashion whose interests and reputations such *griot* ably defend.

It is *griot* of this last type who transmit the reliable historical tradition from which we have borrowed the foregoing accounts. There [318] is no doubt that these *griot*, true "masters" (*dyeli*) of historical traditions, have played a considerable role in native society. Therefore their words should never be passed over lightly, although obviously they should be subjected to judicious criticism.

The To-da

614 631 In origin, evolution, and contingencies, the clan developed from the social bases already studied, community and brotherhood, of which it is, in the last analysis, only an amalgamation. As a result, its various manifestations are similar to those of these institutions, even though possessing its own peculiarities.

One of the most characteristic features of the clan is the *to-da*, which was the familiar term used by members of the clan for the region in which they lived. The word literally means "the pot of mush" and alludes to the essential element in the corporate [539] banquets of the *fla-n-ton'*. As the saying goes: "*furu-ba to, to kadi, na ka ko*, (at the corporate meal the mush is good and the sauce is bad.")

The *to-da* originally was limited to Ségou-koro and its immediate environs, i.e., the small number of villages affiliated with the *ton'* either voluntarily or by force. It progressively extended its sway along the Niger: first on the right bank as far as Kirango; later almost to Dina; finally it extended its influence over a broad area on both sides of the river from Kan ga-ba to Timbuktu.

This territory was organized in various ways. The key region ran along the Niger from Dina to Kirango, and the sector

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812 From the central core of creation four categories of signs have emerged, 266 in all, which represent the complete signs of the world; they give color, form, and matter to things. In time these 266 signs came to head lists of an infinity of other signs encompassing all of creation.

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2. D. Zahan, "Un gnomon soudanais" [A Sudanese Gnomon], Africa, 1950.

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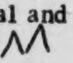
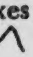
815 The diurnal and annual movements of the sun are represented by a zigzag line,  . Certain variations in the form of the zigzag represent the procession of the equinoxes and the variable length of the days in summer and winter,  . Four angles represent the four cardinal points, and each of the lines that make up

806 the angles represents 90 days (the year, for the Bambara, is 360 days).
815 The symbols are not merely mathematical; they form part of the
[531] daily life of the society. [18] The zigzags are a characteristic theme
in the decoration of pottery, weapons, tools, sanctuaries, and houses.
One finds them in agricultural techniques and in ritual dance figures.
The universal rhythms of the earth and sky echo through all the
activities of man and society. (1) Finally, another series of 16 signs
212 [787] is habitually used in geomancy. It is interesting to note that these
signs were used in a practical manner for correspondence. The
Bambara chiefs used multiple combinations of them to send each
other messages.

G. Local Diversities

197 Given the extent and the diversity of the regions where Bambara is spoken, it is no wonder one notices differences in pronunciation, and even in structure and vocabulary, from one province to another. At Kaarta the speech is not the same as at Ségou, and a Bambara of Ségou has trouble understanding a Bambara of Bougouni. This is due partly to the influence of other languages which are in contact with Bambara and which ultimately alter and modify it, and partly to the normal evolution of language within a group separated for centuries from its place of origin. It is interesting to note that in the Bougouni circle the conservatives in speech are the old men, while the women are the evolutionary element.

191 Traditionally, Ségou was considered the center for the most elegant Bambara speech. Before the conquest, children were sent to Ségou to learn the purest Bambara.

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1. Id., "Conception de l'écliptique chez les Dogons et les Bambara" [The Dogon and Bambara Conception of the Ecliptic]. [Ed., Africa, 1951.]

772 801 strength for there the Bambara place the poles of attraction which, in the universe, uphold all bodies. It is said: "All bodies accept the force of attraction of the four angles," *fari be bi sõ seleke nuni mana barika la*.

which determined "the space of *yo* in its own thought," is expressed by the number 22: "*yo*, darkness of creation, in the depth of the secret space of night, master of the foundation of the 22 rotations, great bearer of vibration, great builder of the marrow of bones (1).

[782 843 821] 1. *yo dali dyibi, šu kene gundo tyema, munumunu mu tani fla siki ba, yere done ba, kolow nye kono dlaba*, *kono* being the ancient term for marrow.

This prayer is recited in honor of *yo* when a woman's pregnancy is first noticed; it is also recited at eclipses of the sun.

These 22 spirals stirred up all that *yo* contained in spirit; *nugu*, "entrails, intestines," which carried all things and man within itself; *yalã*, "seed of the air," which placed the voids in all /7/ parts of space"; *fayã*, "seed of the wind"; *sani*, "seed of water"; *yerẽ*, "seed of fire"; *yelẽgu*, "seed of earthly matter" (2). The rotations of *yo*

2. *fayã*, *sani*, *yerẽ* (in ancient language), and *yelẽgu* were at the origin of the four elements, air, water, fire and earth, all of which did not yet exist but were to appear later.

The seven elements composing *yo* are represented by signs, reproduced in Figure 1 (1 to 7).

put them in order and kept them under the force of attraction (*mana*). In other words, carried away by this whirlwind, both magnetic and creative, the elements became organized, one in relation to the other; in this way the 22 terms of the universe, as thought out by *yo*, were determined; these terms are also the 22 periods of its thought:

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821
taught certain agricultural techniques. In both tribes, the same star, Sirius (called sigi toto by the Dogon; sigi doto by the Bambara), represents them. The androgynous Faro is comparable in all ways to the Nommo, the universal monitor, custodian of the word and of life. The yurugu and the Nommo made voyages similar to those of Pemba and Faro. In particular, at the time of their descent on earth, the yurugu, and later the Nommo, used an "ark," koro, whose counterparts are Pemba's wood pembele and Faro's ark kuru, described by certain initiates (see M. Griaule, L'Arche du monde chez les populations nigériennes. /The ark of the world among Nigerian peoples/.

For both tribes, man "the seed of the world," is the image of the cosmos. The exact role of the seed of the Acacia albida does not appear clearly in the two myths, but in both cases, it is considered to be a first aborted creation.

Faro's Reign

173 Faro, having vanquished the balanza and overcome Téliko, took over the creation himself. He reorganized the whole universe and established the order under which it still functions today. /27/ He spread his word and his light; he named and classified all things: "All things (of the universe) are under the domination of Faro; eight hundred transformations are in his power" (1).

801
802
1. Fêw be be faro ka se kono, yelemani ba kele be a la a fe.

The number 800 which is "the end of the count," here expresses the infinite. In the so-called "eastern number system," now

sat down in the middle of the cardinal point."

4. A ye klali ke.

The first sky, kaba noro, is less pure than the others and the impure traces of Mousso Koroni's passage, in the form of clouds, have remained there. From that sky comes the wind which Pemba had placed there while pursuing her.

But the second sky, kaba dye, "the white sky," is fresh and already in Faro's power. It is the seat of the souls (ni) of men and animals. The Kwore spirits live there and strive to permit the passage of rain as it falls on earth from the seventh heaven.

The third, kaba fî, "the black sky," is the resting place of all spirits, and the fourth, kaba mana ("shedding of the sky," is the mirror of the other three. There, Faro does his daily "accounting" of the world.

In the fifth sky, koblekaba, "the red sky," Faro hands out judgments on those who have broken the laws. It is the sky of struggles, battles and victories—the sky to which the king offered sacrifices before going to war. It is also the sky of blood, fire, and hot and harmful winds.

In the sixth sky, suna kaba, the secrets of the world situation are kept (1). As its name indicates, it is also the sky of sleep. All the souls of spirits and living beings sleep there, each in an allotted place. [827] Sleep /29/ is a purification of the soul and dreams are the directives given to it by Faro. Fainting spells, insomnia, and illness are the result of disturbances in the displacement of souls during sleep.

The seventh sky, wolõ fla kaba, is the site of Faro's reign and the seat of power, royal power in particular. From this sky, the realm of purifying water, Faro sends forth over the world the beneficial rain that brings a soul to the grain.

[821] The sun, to which Faro "holds the rope," penetrates the first sky in the morning and crosses all the others successively until evening when it skinks into the seventh. It is the god Pemba who, weary of his pursuit of Mousso Koroni, turns red. The stars are his pores, dilated by effort.

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1. Dyẽ dyoka gundo be sunakaba la.

776 The following day, in order to give thanks to Faro, the villagers
773 went to the edge of the well to the sound of drums and sacrificed the
771 animal. The water swelled, seethed up, and formed a streat which
still runs into the Niger today.

The composition of Faro's body determines the behavior of men in the rituals performed in his honor. While the usual offerings of blood, tomatoes, raw cereal mash, and baked cakes are consumed by him and returned to the givers in the shape of material possessions (children, millet, rain) or spiritual possessions (preservation of the souls of the living and the dead), the choice content of the offerings or sacrifices, the albino and copper, are reserved only for him and help increase his strength and stimulate his action. /44/ He absorbs them for his own sake; thus it is said that: "copper and albino are the sacrificial privileges of Faro."

Manifestations of Faro

776 All the atmospheric manifestations in the sky are evidence of
Faro's presence and power. Rain, thunder, squalls, hail, and the
824 rainbow all demonstrate his action. The lightning that bursts forth
in the koblenkaba is a weapon, a small axe (sempere ni or dyele dẽ
čini) which he throws from the top of the sky. If lightning strikes,
it is a proof of his revenge. In the tree, the lightning hits the gecko
825 (ala ǰugu), an evil animal which, when it lives in homes near the
hearth, supposedly stirs up fires of conflagration. When lightning
strikes men, it is in punishment for the breaking of a taboo. The
stone axes, found at the point where lightning strikes, are collected
and kept in the sanctuaries of the rain altars, to be used in case of
drought or in the course of seasonal rites. They are also placed in
the seeded fields, so that their strength, by communicating itself to
the seed, may be beneficial to germination.

776 On earth, Faro is conceived of as a unique being whose principal home is the Niger; he is present everywhere. In practice, the Bambara believe that a spirit haunts each torrent, pond, or well, each gourd of water, each dewdrop; they call him dyi tigi, "master of water."

776 He takes on many forms. He can be seen in the brush as a gazelle feeding on wild tomatoes and onions. As a ram with golden fleece and wearing ear ornaments, he travels underground along gold veins. As a young and seductive woman he goes to the villages to seduce the boys and take them away with him. He is the head of the fleeting torrent that runs after a rainfall; he is the seething and swelling of the currents. He can be recognized in the bluish haze that floats above the ponds. A stream that dries up is a sign of his anger.

Faro's Realm

776
821 At the beginning, the waters that originated in the "central springs of the sky" and streamed over the earth, were pure, clear, beneficial and "easy." But after Mousso Koroni's betrayal and that of the beings who listened to her, impurity was communicated to the earth /45/: the water that covered the earth clouded, changed color, and became "difficult." It either dried up or, on the contrary, flooded the land, drowning living beings.

Today only the streaming rain water has preserved its character, more especially the first rain that falls at the beginning of winter. [783] It is considered a purifying agent par excellence and is called *dane sandyi*, "water that sows," for it brings to the grains their soul, *ni*; the earth, sterile and "empty," becomes full and fertile, plants are reborn, animals and insects multiply (1).

[577] 1. A person who is generous and good is referred to as being like this first rain. It is also said of the spirit: "the spirit [is good like] the first rain" (*miri dane sandyi*).

The terrestrial waters, Faro's kingdom, are classified into seven distinct realms. They are in layers which correspond to the seven parts of the sky and earth.

The first, *dyi woyo* "seething water," is surface water: it seethes when Faro makes himself known, and overflows in floods, as the heads [783] of streams are swelled by the storm. It is also the lustral water used for purification and the water drawn for drinking.

776 The second, dyi ble "red water," is Faro's copper, a reflection of
821 koblenkaba or "red sky." It is similarly the seat of the spirit's warlike or punitive activities. Water of wrath and vengeful action, it drowns the guilty. Through it, Faro strikes the bodies and health of those who do not recognize his dominion.

Faro prefers to sojourn in the dyi fi, "black water," where he keeps his secrets. It is to this water that one prays to seek grace. It is from the dyi fi that the twelve future waters will flow.

Calm and felicity reign in the dyi sumane, "cold water," where the fish live. The dya of earthly bwings are preserved in it.

While Faro drowns those he punishes in the dyi ble, it is in the madũ (literally, person, to eat) that their bodies rot or become the prey of fish.

The sixth category of water, kosira (literally, thing of fear) is a jail. In it Faro temporarily places all that comes under his domination.

The seventh water, dyi wolõflã, corresponds to the seventh heaven.

776 In the Niger, the places inhabited by Faro bear the general name
823 of faro tyin. These are mostly deep depressions, well known to the
782 shore dwellers, particularly the Bozo. /46/ Sometimes a consecrated stone, placed on the shore, receives the sacrifices offered to the spirit.

The most celebrated is a place called Souko, located upstream from Koulikoro near the village of Kayo. The local spirit engendered all that now lives in the river. Because of this he is worshipped by all Bozo and Somono fishermen, who used to send delegations to the annual sacrifice that took place during the dry season.

776 The Faro of Ségou lives in the Faka, a deep hole located close to
823 the right bank, facing the town. Legend has it that the Faka is extended by tunnels: one links the river to the Bani while the other opens out at Dya and was used by the founders of the settlement in mythical times.

[825] The Faka is placed under the guardianship of a crocodile to which each year the inhabitants offered victims. At the bottom of the hole there is a fat blind scaleless polyo, which the fishermen always return to the water if they catch it in their nets "because it is Faro's gate-keeper." In olden times, a flat stone upon which were traced a representation of Faro and black dots equal in number to the inhabitants of Ségou was visible in the deepest part of the waters. On
[782] this occasion an albino was sacrificed (by slitting his throat) and the first fruits of the harvest were offered to the spirit.

291 activity is not involved. Nevertheless, a woman puts on an indigo
773 loincloth the day she resumes sexual relations with her husband after
822 the end of her menses; she retains it until pregnancy. When she is sure
531 of her condition, she puts the loincloth in the sun to purify it and will
place the newborn child in it to remind him later that he owes his
life to his parents. A dead person who has broken a taboo is buried
[764 in an indigo shroud, the only reminder of light being a white cotton
784] thread which is placed on the corpse as an expression of apology and
forgiveness. Since indigo is taboo in most of Faro's sacred places, no
one wears it during sacrifices or religious ceremonies.

White and indigo complement each other. To twist a white and
[789] an indigo thread together to make a string used for holding an amulet
is to "roll together happiness and unhappiness, as in life."

The dye wolo is the color of yellow copper. It is in this color
that the newly circumcised are dressed after the operation and until
they are healed. Red, mbegu, is the color of copper and of blood.
Hunters who wear a tunic of mbegu are "covered with a garment of
blood." The band kayo (Pl. III, a, 1), in which are found these two
colors, indigo and white, reproduces the rainbow: the white intervals
are symbols of the word and of purity. /110/ A person making a
sacrifice sews a piece of this band on his clothing to indicate that he
is circumcised, that he is a hunter, and that he is truthful in his
actions and words. A band is hung at the gate of the northern entry
to the village in order to protect its inhabitants from dangers coming
from outside. A man wears it when he has been ill or has suffered
serious financial or family difficulties. On the altars, on the doorways,
the colors are represented by millet mash, blood, and kola nut extract.
● [821 As the rainbow keeps away the rain and dries up water, the kayo
784] strip may not be worn near the river or during sexual intercourse, for
it is Faro's taboo.

The band sirakele (literally, a road) (Pl. III, a, 2) represents Faro's descent from the seventh part of the sky down to the seventh part of the earth, the indigo stripe being the dyi fi, "black water," the spirit's earth seat. When put on the loincloth of a married woman, it expresses her rectitude and the good behavior she intends to maintain towards her husband. When worn by a traveler, it prevents him from losing his way.

291 The buguni (1) (Pl. III, a, 3) is "the sun ray Faro gave to Pemba
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821 1. The word designates the band's place of
531 origin, Bougouni.

291 for his great earthly labors." When clouds form, it is said that Faro
773 "is showing the buguni in the sky" and the diviners advise each person
821 to wear a strip in homage to the spirit and to facilitate the coming of
531 rain. The geomaneer gently rubs the earth, where he is going to
draw signs, with a cloth of this design. It is as though he has injected
sun, light, and truth into the work he must execute on the impure soil.

291 This band is also called kolõso mako, "necessity of the mixture,"
773 or kami, guinea hen, whose plumage as well as whose fragility the
band betokens. In this respect, the buguni symbolizes man's weak-
ness and incompleteness. When placed on a convalescent's clothing,
[155] it signifies that the latter has lost some of his vitality during his illness. Dressed in this fashion, he goes to the Niger and bathes so that Faro might heal him. A man who has suffered severe financial losses also wears the buguni. At the market, in public meetings, he will not be made to pay his share of beer because of the band's silent language which is clearer than words. If a widower remarries, he sews a piece of it on his cap in memory of his first wife. The knife of the person offering a sacrifice is wrapped in the buguni, for it "never has enough blood," also in certain boli which continually crave it.

/111/ In conclusion, the squares of indigo cloth represent the void and darkness; the white ones, fulfillment and light. To wear the buguni signifies hope, the impure or weak man hoping to become pure, strong, and fulfilled.

The bugunimba (literally, large buguni) or nyedẽ (literally, threads of the eye) has the same symbolism. A wound is bandaged with it. A man who has broken a taboo wears a cap of this material; an illegitimate child also wears it. The buguni tyekorole which symbolizes the impurity of Mousso Koroni is used to implore Faro's help in great calamities and for misfortunes without remedy. Thus, the body of a stillborn child is covered with it.

291 The buguni nyama (Pl. III, a, 4), made of twenty-two alternating
773 indigo and white squares, symbolizes creation in its harmonious and
822 orderly entirety. Its separation into two layers recalls the duality of
801 nature, represented by a thin stripe through the middle. A happy
man sews an entire strip into his tunic. The man who has difficulties
of any kind divides it lengthwise and pins a small piece at the bottom
of his garment.

4

/166/ The Kwore̜

794 821 The Kworè society, *kworę dye* (literally, reunion of the Kworè) consists of individuals around the altars (*kworę boli*) on which rites are performed concerning the skies, space, the cardinal points, the atmospheric manifestations of Faro, and particularly rain. Kworè literally means "dried up pond."

The rituals are intended for the Kworè spirits who depend upon Faro and who live in the *kaba fǐn* (third sky). They are in charge of watching over the rains sent from the *woloflâ kaba* (seventh sky), which cross the other skies and "the void" before reaching the earth. The spirits struggle in the skies and in space against the *mahalakillen* of the *koblenkaba* (fifth sky) who try to stop the water. Lightning, thunder, and thunderbolt are the effects of these struggles.

794 778 The principal ceremonies take place around a tree, called *kworę ǰigi*, which is situated to the east of the village and is the usual habitation of the spirits when they descend to receive men's offerings. The altars are placed in a hut built in the bush; other samples of these are kept in the chief's residence. A large stone, *kworę fara*, located near the village and placed in the ground above some symbolic objects, also receives offerings. The Kworè society is the owner of a communally cultivated field, in which small millet, *safiõ*, is exclusively sown and the harvest of which is kept for the needs of the cult.

A chief, the *kworę tigi*, is entrusted with the care of the altars and performance of the ritual.

A. The Altars

The altars of the *kworę* are placed in a sanctuary called *buku sãmpere ni* (literally, little hut of thunder) and situated at a certain distance from the village because of the dangers from lightning. The door is low and very narrow so that the forces held within may not escape.

The altars are composed of the following objects:

1. A large sac of the skin of a male goat, *kworę boli sãmpere*, open at its upper extremity and suspended by a boa skin (*minã*) which symbolizes lightning. This sac, which has three compartments, contains copper, water from the Niger, rain water, and the "thunder stones" of the society. The "thunder stones," *sãmpereni* or *sãmpere*

304 The foreskin, which is tied by a string (drawn at the center of the
532 blade) at the moment of the operation, is placed upon the pembele
413 (black rectangle) and the cutting knife is tapped with a small wooden
mallet, gossilã (drawn at the tip of the knife). These three figures receive during operation the offering of the first spurt of blood from the circumcised boy.

The line, which crosses the blade along the middle, separates the bird and the ancestors who gave proof of courage from the instruments used for the circumcision. As a division it symbolizes first of all that each grade of circumcised boys must be considered apart from the others. This is its social meaning. But the delicacy of the line itself has a meaning which applies to the individual: each one must, in his own image, be morally /183/ simple, just, and sensitive. By conforming to the rule symbolically indicated by the design, the individual will become a member of the elite.

384 The date of the operation is fixed when Mousso Koroni's star, sigi
787 dolo (Sirius), rises in the evening at a certain point in the east (1).
•821

> 1. See note 1 p. 47. To determine the date, however, the ndomo society may be consulted, which sometimes postpones it to keep its members longer.

After the boys to be operated have been counted, each gets ready, and
on the appointed day the mother washes her son's penis with water in
which an iron axe or hoe has been soaked. Then she prepares a dish
[262] of rice, ye farina to "dish of man's bravery," which the child eats
before he is led to the place of the operation, called yorola sakole
"reserved place," located in the bush.

304 When all are gathered together the blacksmith-circumciser operates
upon each one in turn after he has made them sit down in a circle on
326 the ground. Pulling and twisting the foreskin, he ties it with the string which he keeps taut by securing its extremity between his toes. He next places the member upon the pembele, rests the knife /on the foreskin/ and taps /it/ with the wooden mallet. In this way he cuts off the foreskin while saying the following words:

"Circumcised one, your father, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, the father of that one too, the ear (the genitals) of the ancestors of the latter have withstood (the pain); you, yourself, withstand it as

766 167 In fact, if he dies far away his breath cannot be captured nor can the successive transfers be made. For this reason the family head disclaims all responsibility in such a case by warning those who are about to leave for along time of the impossibility of fulfilling his duties toward them.

766 Nevertheless, a ritual has been instituted for the young men obliged to leave the family groups because of military service. The case is submitted to the chief of the Komo and the party concerned has two goats sacrificed over the altars. While the blood runs, the chief asks the Komo to watch over the soul and to be willing to reclaim it as it would if the person died among his family.

[187] If the news of the death of an absent person spreads, the family questions the Komo through divining procedures to find out if the soul has returned and if, by this fact, order has been reestablished.

Death by Lightning and Drowning

761 766 Death which occurs in certain ways considered abnormal and a proof of Faro's wrath does not permit the reincarnation of the spiritual principles. This is true of men killed by the Komo for sorcery, and of people struck by lightning for having broken a taboo of Faro's. Their /201/ soul and their double are lost forever to their descendants, and their bodies thrown into the common grave.

Drowning is either accidental or due to Faro's wrath, in which case the corpse is returned with the nose and navel cut. In both instances, the double preserved in the water is not lost, but sacrifices are necessary for the return of the soul and of the double to a child in the family.

If the body has not risen to the surface, the father of the drowned person has the right to mourn him only when all the rituals have been performed. He asks the chief of the Komo to intercede with Faro to obtain his permission to search for the body in the water. He offers seven tomatoes which the chief throws into the water in exchange for the corpse in the presence of seven elders of his age grade. Some Bozo mobilized for this purpose dive in to bring back the body. The chief cuts the nose and the navel which he throws into the water as an offering. Then the corpse is placed flat on its stomach and pressed vigorously to extract the water, for to bury it full of water is equivalent to "burying rain" and dooming the countryside to drought. ● [821]

755 "(1) I have stated elsewhere that among Negro beliefs

1. Raffenel, op. cit., p. 463.

the tradition of the state of possession was carefully preserved. One evening I was present at a ceremony designed to drive a devil out of a woman's body. Father Niany, the universal man of Foutobi, was the exorcist. At the first rumor of this event, a throng converged on the woman's hut and I joined the crowd, curious to see what was going to happen. I saw a wretched woman rolling about on the ground in terrible convulsions in the midst of a circle of onlookers who let her thrash about without trying to help and merely watched her movements. There was great excitement when Niany appeared, and the circle opened to let him pass. He approached the woman, touched her, said a few words in a low voice, lifted her and placed her on a mat.

"The woman at once became calm, and father Niany, who seemed not at all impressed by his triumph, withdrew after speaking a few words in her ear. The crowd melted away, also without showing the least surprise at such complete and prompt success. I conclude that such happenings were not at all infrequent and that Niany had a special talent for driving devils out of women's bodies. I cannot [146] say what her trouble was, but when I saw her I thought that she was simply having an attack of epilepsy and I did not recognize the usual symptoms of that dreadful malady in the sort of convulsions she was having."

791
609 Though he was sure of his art, Niany nevertheless recognized its hazards. There is no magician who does not find another who is more powerful. A foreigner, that unknown creature, is a danger, because he may chance to possess secrets which might invalidate the cleverest methods. That is why Niany fears Islam. He has an idea, which to us seems strange, of what Allah may be, as compared to a miscreant like himself and, being persuaded of the continuity of matter, he applies it in a manner that we shall describe in the chapter on Islam.

791
609
821 Though he may have his doubts about Islam, Niany is no less suspicious of the maneuvers of the foreigner, Raffenel, who is staying with him.

791
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821

"(1) One morning he came and complained bitterly that

1. Raffenel, op. cit., p. 322.

I was preventing the rain from falling and that I was causing a lot of trouble to the villagers. I could not imagine, at first, why he was thus berating me, but he explained. It was his considered opinion that the rain was very much annoyed with me for being too much interested in it. I was watching the raindrops and examining the clouds, and so the rain was getting its vengeance by refusing to fall. Father Niany resented my thermometers too, but his principal target was my barometer, to which he attributed all sorts of evil designs.

"On the following day he returned to the charge, accompanied by a deputation of farmers carrying their agricultural tools on their shoulders.

"'We've thought it all over,' said Niany, 'and we have decided that since you can stop the rain, you can also make it fall again. Therefore we have come to ask you to speak to the rain in our name.'" ....

"Two days later there came another deputation, but one which, this time, looked threatening. Among them were some [147] new faces.

"'We want you to make it rain,' said the leaders, with an angry glance at my barometer, 'for we have already waited too long. You will never convince us that what you do with your machines (they pointed at my instruments), while you look up into the air and write down the grigri, is innocent. Never before in this country, has the rain held off so long from falling and no one has ever before done what you're doing. Manage it as you will, but we must have rain by tonight.'

"The sky was filled with heavy black clouds which reassured me. .... An hour later the rain fell, but those wretches, no doubt fearing that my presence would interfere with its good intentions, pushed me unceremoniously into my hut and shut the door. By this ridiculous step they prevented me from watching the progress of a wonderful storm and noting the barometric pressure changes.

791
609 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that
● 821 was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and
show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the
Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equip-
224 ment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well
as an arsenal of magic weapons.

825 The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of
778 this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at
some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The
animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[552] wara-ba means lion; sa-ma, elephant; ma-li, hippopotamus;
bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names
indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief
that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The
attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an application of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual
and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a
small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
231 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
552 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of
825 their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once
held and which is still shown on occasion: fa-li meaning "donkey"
derives from fa meaning "powerful," just as nya-ri meaning "cat"
derives from nya and has the same meaning, along with ba
Meaning "goat."

241 Lastly, the *furuba* are veritable brush fields where wide, extensive, and cyclical cultivation is carried out, the brush being cleared by burning. During the dry season, the trees are cut at 0.70 meters or 1 meter from the ground [28] without removing the stumps, so that the subsequent fallow period may be brief. The cut branches are piled by the stumps. After drying, the grass is set on fire. On old fields, millet stalks and high grass are piled up before setting the fire; then the ground is superficially loosened by hoeing, and the ashes are mixed into the soil. The first year millet and peanuts are sown, during the following years less rich crops until the soil is exhausted (by manioc).

The preparation of the soil and the sowing must be done very rapidly (in about three weeks or a month) at the beginning of the rainy season. Sometimes the farmer must hastily sow an insufficiently prepared field, being obliged to transplant later. Sowing time is
821 determined by the appearance in the sky of the Pleiades, which the Bambara call "the hen and the chicks." In the Macina region the sowing begins at a certain village and follows a route going successively from the south northwards, in a zigzag movement corresponding to the appearance of the rains.

In the brush fields, maize is planted, then fonio and coarse millet (sorghum), peanuts and small millet (*Pennisetum*), etc. (see below). In the fields, monoculture is practiced, or else the cultivation of associated crops: for example, black-eyed peas (*Vigna unguiculati walp* = V. Catjang) and okra (*Hibiscus esculentus*) with millets and maize; the *da sauce* (*Hibiscus sabdariffa Linn*) with fonio (*Digitaria exilis*); peanuts with underground peas. In some fields these crops are associated: millets, maize, black-eyed peas, cotton, underground peas, peanuts, sweet potatoes, manioc, and okra (each plant exploiting the soil at a different level).

Sowing is always preceded by familial sacrifices and general rites.

Harvest time is determined by the vegetative period of the plants, without regard to their apparent ripeness. Thus, errors often result when new varieties are introduced by the administration. Accordingly, the harvest date for peanuts, sweet potatoes, and yams

881 with honey water and milk. They go to the public square, the only ballroom known in Bambara country. The big boys, their heads freshly shaved and their bodies thoroughly greased and all shining, also arrive in a long line, and in the square there is nothing but indescribable bedlam, for all these people at once greet each other, talk and shout, and not a voice is in harmony.

[821] Young and old consult the canopy of stars, for although they are not astronomers they know that around midnight a certain star of the firmament is at such and such an angle, and they are impatient. Then the hour has come, and the male soli are crouched in the place of honor, and the young lady soli arrive in single file, their hair in disorder and their hips girded with paltry loincloths that reach from the knees up to the navel. The loincloths are gifts from the fiancé [292] of each one, and must be worn. Their colors vary, indicating the tribe and caste of each girl, so one can see that they are of some importance (1).

> 1. The Moslems have blue. The pure Bambara wants a yellow background with black rose shapes and lines.

[186] A Bambara woman is proud of her blood and proud of her tribe, and, wearing her loincloth in the national colors, a narrow cloth band of black stripes on a yellow background, she almost thinks she is a queen, if not a goddess, at the soli si. The girls' gait reflects this feeling: with heads high, eyes 15 paces ahead, chests stuck out like Prussians (they puff themselves up a little to bring out their charms), they admire themselves and are enraptured, each knowing that she is the focus of more than one shining eye full of desire. They advance slowly, raising a cloud of dust, and in her hands each one shakes a bag of goatskin and an iron box filled with little pebbles; her torso bends to the left and bends to the right. In the dark of the night as the little fires /179/ cast their gleams here and there, one might say that they are frail shells lost in the waves and tossed by the winds, struck by the swell and always ready to capsize.

778 782 Some *boli* are individual, sometimes inherited from an ancestor and consecrated to their owner whose strength they maintain. Others are collective and consecrated to supernatural powers which protect the life of the community.

778 782 784 The taboos relating to beings whose soul "impregnates" the *boli* and to the elements which compose them are decreed at the time /94/ of their making. They must be scrupulously respected by those responsible and by those officiating. The *boli* are generally placed in a sheltered spot either in sanctuaries or in an isolated room of the house, which no one enters without the permission of those responsible. This is done in order to avoid the dangers resulting from broken taboos which would affect the integrity of the *boli* as well as that of its owners. The handling of the *boli*, dangerous as it is, is restricted to priests, to the head of the family, or to the owner.

782 Victims most commonly offered on all altars are domestic animals such as fowl, cattle, sheep, and goats. However, on the altars of hunters and those of the uncircumcised, only wild animals are immolated.

The color of the victim is determined by the quality of the being to which it is consecrated as well as by the altar itself. [822] Animals of a red color are generally killed on the *boli* of religious societies, thereby increasing the *nyama* which they contain. White, the symbol of light and purity, is reserved for Faro.

782 787 The death of the victim is used as an occasion for divination. The throat is cut in such a way as to prolong the death struggle so that the officiating person may interpret the position of the body. The cutting process is followed by eating which has the function of communion. Furthermore, certain parts of the body (the liver) are left on the altar; others such as the jawbone, feathers, and hair are kept as tokens by the person offering the sacrifice.

782 The ritual is usually accompanied by offerings of boiled millet as "refreshment, " since the blood is given to the altar as a nourishment. Kola nuts, chosen for their shape and color, are divided into two portions: the officiating person chews one half and spits it out onto the altar before eating the other half.

In former times, human sacrifice was also practiced. These took place in serious cases involving the kingdom, the king, or the chiefs. The usual victim was the albino.

291 rests upon the knowledge of the symbolism of colors, drawings, and
773 numbers. The bands are numerous and each one represents one aspect
531 of metaphysics, one fragment of the myth. Thus, the story of Mousso
Koront is told in four successive bands (Pl. III, from 5 to 8). The wearing of the bands depends upon the physical or moral state of the wearer; upon his functions and activities (1).

1. We give below the description of a certain number of these bands, chosen from the ones most representative; we intend to publish a complete study of this aspect of a technique most revealing of Sudanese psychology.

291 The white band, finin muku dye, represents Faro, being as white
773 and luminous as the sky and the rays of the sun. White denotes wis-
531 dom and purity of the spirit, the purity of blood. The one who ap-
122 pears in public thus dressed is respected because he affirms thereby
his desire to follow religious rules. It is also the color of offerings made to the spirit. A piece of white cloth is sometimes hung over the door of a home where people have just /109/ made a sacrifice. A sick man throws three white bands into the river, or gives them to a person poorer than himself. A white cloth, worn over a man's shoulder, "strengthens his nerves and articulations." At nightfall every evening, all the children put on a tunic of this color. Thus, despite the darkness, they are "in Faro's light" and will recognize each other in times to come as the children of one father, one family, one blood. The marriage veil is made up of eleven bands each measuring eleven cubits; these are not sewn together but rather basted in spirals. Thus dressed, the woman goes in the night to her future husband's village, in the luminous word of Faro and surrounded by the twenty-two elements of creation, the eleven spirals intersecting each other on the right and left. A dead person is also dressed in white: trousers with six strips representing man and his dya, and a hat with three bands. He is rolled up in a blanket of the same color and visitors place upon the corpse pieces of white cloth or cowrie shells. The whole signifies good will, sincerity, and devotion toward Faro of the deceased who must be "white under the earth" if he has not broken any taboos.

The opposite of white is indigo, konofi, which symbolizes darkness and impurity and which is worn in most cases where the spirit's

291 activity is not involved. Nevertheless, a woman puts on an indigo
773 loincloth the day she resumes sexual relations with her husband after
●822 the end of her menses; she retains it until pregnancy. When she is sure
531 of her condition, she puts the loincloth in the sun to purify it and will
place the newborn child in it to remind him later that he owes his
life to his parents. A dead person who has broken a taboo is buried
[764 in an indigo shroud, the only reminder of light being a white cotton
784] thread which is placed on the corpse as an expression of apology and
forgiveness. Since indigo is taboo in most of Faro's sacred places, no
one wears it during sacrifices or religious ceremonies.

White and indigo complement each other. To twist a white and
[789] an indigo thread together to make a string used for holding an amulet
is to "roll together happiness and unhappiness, as in life."

The dye wolo is the color of yellow copper. It is in this color
that the newly circumcised are dressed after the operation and until
they are healed. Red, mbegu, is the color of copper and of blood.
Hunters who wear a tunic of mbegu are "covered with a garment of
blood." The band kayo (Pl. III, a, 1), in which are found these two
colors, indigo and white, reproduces the rainbow: the white intervals
are symbols of the word and of purity. /110/ A person making a
sacrifice sews a piece of this band on his clothing to indicate that he
is circumcised, that he is a hunter, and that he is truthful in his
actions and words. A band is hung at the gate of the northern entry
to the village in order to protect its inhabitants from dangers coming
from outside. A man wears it when he has been ill or has suffered
serious financial or family difficulties. On the altars, on the doorways,
the colors are represented by millet mash, blood, and kola nut extract.
[821 As the rainbow keeps away the rain and dries up water, the kayo
784] strip may not be worn near the river or during sexual intercourse, for
it is Faro's taboo.

The band sirakele (literally, a road) (Pl. III, a, 2) represents Faro's descent from the seventh part of the sky down to the seventh part of the earth, the indigo stripe being the dyi fi, "black water," the spirit's earth seat. When put on the loincloth of a married woman, it expresses her rectitude and the good behavior she intends to maintain towards her husband. When worn by a traveler, it prevents him from losing his way.

291 The buguni (1) (Pl. III, a, 3) is "the sun ray Faro gave to Pemba
773

821 1. The word designates the band's place of
531 origin, Bougouni.

291 for his great earthly labors." When clouds form, it is said that Faro
773 "is showing the buguni in the sky" and the diviners advise each person
821 to wear a strip in homage to the spirit and to facilitate the coming of
531 rain. The geomaneer gently rubs the earth, where he is going to
draw signs, with a cloth of this design. It is as though he has injected
sun, light, and truth into the work he must execute on the impure soil.

291 This band is also called kolõso mako, "necessity of the mixture,"
773 or kami, guinea hen, whose plumage as well as whose fragility the
band betokens. In this respect, the buguni symbolizes man's weakness and incompleteness. When placed on a convalescent's clothing,
[155] it signifies that the latter has lost some of his vitality during his illness. Dressed in this fashion, he goes to the Niger and bathes so that Faro might heal him. A man who has suffered severe financial losses also wears the buguni. At the market, in public meetings, he will not be made to pay his share of beer because of the band's silent language which is clearer than words. If a widower remarries, he sews a piece of it on his cap in memory of his first wife. The knife of the person offering a sacrifice is wrapped in the buguni, for it "never has enough blood," also in certain boli which continually crave it.

/111/ In conclusion, the squares of indigo cloth represent the void and darkness; the white ones, fulfillment and light. To wear the buguni signifies hope, the impure or weak man hoping to become pure, strong, and fulfilled.

The bugunimba (literally, large buguni) or nyedẽ (literally, threads of the eye) has the same symbolism. A wound is bandaged with it. A man who has broken a taboo wears a cap of this material; an illegitimate child also wears it. The buguni tyekorole which symbolizes the impurity of Mousso Koroni is used to implore Faro's help in great calamities and for misfortunes without remedy. Thus, the body of a stillborn child is covered with it.

291 The buguni nyama (Pl. III, a, 4), made of twenty-two alternating
773 indigo and white squares, symbolizes creation in its harmonious and
822 orderly entirety. Its separation into two layers recalls the duality of
801 nature, represented by a thin stripe through the middle. A happy
man sews an entire strip into his tunic. The man who has difficulties of any kind divides it lengthwise and pins a small piece at the bottom of his garment.

291 The nyeba, "big eye, " or koloso tyema, "mixed masculinity"
773 (with femininity), (Pl. III, a, 11) also represents creation, here sym-
822 bolized by the double layer of five indigo and white bands (1). At
801 the same time the cloth also symbolizes the complete man, said to be both masculine and feminine. A newborn child, but never an illegitimate one, is clothed in it.

The band soli (Pl. III, a, 5) represents the good conduct of Mousso
291 Koroni at the beginning of her life as well as her betrayal which
773 brought disorder on earth.
531 In olden times, people who had committed bad deeds were obliged to wear it. Today it is used as the shroud for a child who dies im-
[764] mediately after birth; a strip is sewn to the garment of a recently excised girl or to the loincloth of a woman insured in childbirth. When differences or conflicts arise within a family, a fragment is placed in amulets which the women must then wear.

The wutu nyekorotike (Pl. III, a, 6) pictures the disorderly voyage
[828] of Mousso Koroni, her despair and her madness. This pattern is reserved for insane people in order to warn others of their condition.

The band gombo (Pl. III, a, 7) recalls the pursuit of Mousso /112/ Koroni by the god Pemba into the depths of the sky and the earth.

The band tyatyeli (Pl. III, a, 8) a picture of Mousso Koroni's defeat, symbolizes human work. It is given to a courageous and energetic woman. It is circulated among those present at religious ceremonies and its mere presence indicates that nothing here below is obtained without work and that all stems from work. To wear this band strengthens the man who is entering upon a task in a village other than his own.

The band saki is the koblenkaba, "red sky. " It symbolizes heat, anger, difficulties, and sorrows. It is woven at the time of marriage negotiations for the purpose of resolving any differences of opinion.
[844] A piece of it is dipped into the blood after birth and then thrown away in order to purify everything.

[822] The blue stripes of dyitala represent impurity, and the red stripes, purification by sacrifice. Whoever has broken a taboo wears the blue, and the red when he is purified. A piece of red cloth may be inserted into the vagina of a young woman, after she has lost her virginity or

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1. On the value of number 5, see pp. 24, 25.

194 The ancestors are worshipped in various places: at the doors and thresholds of houses, at the cemetery, and at stone altars placed at
769 the intersections of lanes and in public squares. These positive cults,
778 which are aimed at the acquisition of beneficial forces, have as a counterpart, cults in which the villagers rid themselves of all their unlucky and infectious elements; these take place, in particular, at the corssroads, *dangu*, which are placed under the guardianship of the earth Soba spirits.

It would be impossible to treat all of the cults of the Bambara villages. Among these, three have caught our attention; they concern the *dasiri*, the *dangu*, and the ancestral altar stones.

A. The *dasiri*

194 The word *dasiri* (literally, which binds the mouth) designates the
776 invisible spirit, Faro's representative entrusted with watching over
778 /138/ the village, as well as the seat of this spirit and, sometimes too, the animal which accompanies it or symbolizes it.

The spirit haunts a rock, a thicket, or a tree situated near the village; the approaches to this spot are reserved for the elder in charge of the ritual (1).

[824] 1. In Massala and Soroba it is a baobab tree; in Sama, a tamarind tree, etc. See the observations on the *dasiri* collected by Ch. Monteil, *Monographie de Djenné* /Monograph of Djenne/, pp. 137-138; L. Tauxier. *La Religion Bambara*, pp. 195-208.

[787 361] Generally the place is pointed out by the geomancer at the time the village is founded, or else determined by an event which occurred at that time. It is after this operation that the buildings are erected to the west of the chosen spot.

If the *dasiri* is a tree, no one may burn or cut its branches. In
[822] many cases it cannot be approached by anyone dressed in black or indigo, colors which represent obscurity. No Peul may sit in its
[563] shade (2). Any infraction of these taboos brings about the death of

2. The reasons for the taboo concerning the Peul have not yet been ascertained.

The Ceble or Ndomo

794 Like their circumcised and adult elders, all the uncircumcised and nonexcised members of a village form a society, called čeble (literally, red man) or ndomo (literally, gathering), whose members are called ndomo dew, sons of the ndomo, or also ndomo ngow. The society of the ndomo is older than that of the Komo (1). Formerly it brought together a great number of adolescents since circumcision was performed much later. Nowadays, since children are operated upon very young, its importance has diminished, but as it contains the power of the uncircumcised it still plays an important role which is expressed even in its name. Red is a symbol of power and energy; it is also the sign of the sacrifice.

[822]

The ndomo is directed by a chief assisted by a person who performs the sacrifices, murukalatigi (literally, master of the knife handle) and by an organizer of ceremonies, the dyolokotigi (literally, master of the chain).

It is in the course of agricultural work communally performed that the /171/ most energetic member is name chief; he is the one who has best and most rapidly fulfilled his task and who has, in addition, caused the adversaries who have been presented to touch the ground three times. The chief, who is responsible for the altars of the ndomo, sees to the instruction of the initiates, regulates their competitions, nominates the bearer of the mask and the one who is charged with the maintenance of ritual objects. Finally, he officiates during the collective ceremonies. The murukalatigi cuts the throats of the victims; he cuts out and makes the masks and other ritual objects. The dyolokotigi directs the ceremonies and makes decisions about the members' advancement.

The hierarchy is composed of five grades corresponding to the five fundamental altars. Each grade is passed annually after special

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1. It is said: ndomo ka koro komo ye, "the ndomo is older than the komo." Certain aspects of the ndomo have been described by Ch. Monteil, Monographie de Djenné, p. 15, and L. Tauxier, La Religion bambara, p. 380 ff.

*173 Mamari was soon charmed by the wide-awake countenance and quick intelligence of Ngolo and made him a boon companion and sharer of all his secrets. He gave him the key to the room where his idols were kept and taught him the rituals of their cult. He presented him to his wives, dressed him in red (1) and, in short, treated him as the most cherished of favorites.

A year passed before the people of Nyouanna put in an appearance; Mamari asked them if they wanted to claim the child. "No," they said, "for not only has the time-limit passed, but also we still have not the means to pay the tax agreed; when he accepted your proposal, Ménkoro knew perfectly well that he could never carry it out. Besides, the child has by now acquired habits from living among you which would make it unbearable for him to live with us." Mamari ordered the blacksmith to inform everyone of these statements so that it would be well known that Ngolo Dyara was now his slave both in fact and by law.

By dint of living so intimately with his master, Ngolo soon learned all Mamari's secrets. He knew, for instance, that on certain days Mamari bathed in water which had the virtue of strengthening and increasing his authority. It occurred to him that he could no doubt acquire a bit of this power if he bathed in the magic water. So every time the master took a bath, the child stood beneath the gutter that carried the water outside so as to share the wonderful effects of this magic practice. [46] But Mamari had noticed traces of footprints beneath the gutter on

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[822]

1. Scarlet is a favorite color among the Sudanese. The tale here recounted shows three examples of this fact: the foregoing about Ngolo, another about Tonmassa, and still another about Deni-ba Bo. The last two examples would seem to indicate that red was especially reserved for chiefs. A similar conclusion is to be reached from analogous facts at Malli set forth by Ibn Batouta.

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831 the peasant digs with the male hoe and covers with the female hoe; the work done with the female double of the peasant and the male double of the wife symbolizes the sexual union. (1)

1. M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, "L'agriculture des Bozo," [Bozo Agriculture] Journal des Africanistes [Ed., Journal de la Société des Africanistes, 1949.]

d. Basketry

285 Basketry is done by everyone, men and women; it plays a large part in the construction and furnishing of the house. Sometimes the lofts are immense baskets, woven on the diagonal. In certain regions a great mat is wrapped around the exterior wall of the round hut. The doors of mud huts are often coarse mats woven diagonally [531] which are placed before the opening. But much finer mats, made from fibers of different colors and with geometric designs with a symbolic meaning, cover the ground for sitting or sleeping.

e. Weaving, Clothes, Ornaments

291 The first article of clothing was the fiber skirt made from the [824] nyama (Bauhinia reticulata, or Bauhinia thonningii) and the covering for the sexual parts which are still worn during religious ceremonies.

[773] Mythology designates cotton as the first fiber to be woven.

286 Weaving is one of the most widespread techniques. Cotton, spun by the women, is woven by the men, in olden times by the captives, who work in the open air near the huts, in the shade of trees in the courtyards or in the public places. A primitive loom made of four vertical wooden parts connected by horizontal shafts and driven by pedals weaves long bands. The warp and woof form a ground stich and symbolize a being of intelligence and eloquence. Moreover, a science of the bands exists which is based on the symbolism of colors, designs, and numbers.

● 822 The Bambara distinguish three fundamental colors: white, red, and black. Each of these three tints has its history and its role

822 in the rites. "Red is the color of the middle regions of the world.
It characterizes dry heat; it is the color of anger and of justice,
that of the king, center of the kingdom." Black or indigo (2) is
identified with the North and the [98] rainy season. It evokes
impurity, obscurity. It denotes sadness and the end of labor. The
South accords with the ancestors and the color white which rep-
resents light and purity; it is the color of Faro. The whole system
286 of bands woven from different colored threads according to various
822 designs translates the different conditions of the wearer, for each
band has its own history, its definite use, and its cosmogonic cor-
respondences. The study of this was begun by G. Dieterlen in Essai
sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion] and is being
291 pursued at the present time. Today the form of clothing varies ac-
cording to the age and sex of the wearer. Young children are nude,
with the loins girt with a cotton string or with a belt of blue beads or
cowry shells. Sometimes, two small copper bells attract the pro-
tection of Faro by their sound. Up until their marriage, the young
girls wear a loincloth passed between their legs and held in place
by eight bead belts. When they are married, women wear the loin-
cloth open, attached at the waist, and a cotton handkerchief covers
[854] their hair. When a child is born, another cloth knotted at the chest
holds the infant astraddle on the mother's back A chief's wife
[554] wore a piece of material made of seven bands which she threw over
her shoulder. Very young boys wear short drawers whose form varies
with the age classes. Later they are dressed in a short tunic with a
neck opening cut out and fitted sleeves, and in ample short breeches
[801] formed of three bands (the masculine number), passing between the
legs and three bands on each side covering the thighs. The waist is
also encircled by four times three bands, numbers of femininity and of
masculinity. Over their clothes, men and women wear a large cloak
with an opening cut out in the middle for the head and whose ends
are sown together, leaving large openings on each side. These
cloaks have a large pocket in front and are embroidered with symbolic

2. Zahan, Les couleurs chez les Bambara du Soudan français [Colors Among the Bambara of the French Sudan], Notes Africaines, 1951.

776 They are the necessary intermediaries between man and the Divinity, and since each has absolute authority in its sphere. The black man must appeal to them first of all in all his needs. Consequently, these spirits have assumed a dominant place in the Negro mind to the detriment of God.

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829 Every *djiné* can appear in human form, and when it does so it wears a white skin and his appearance does not differ from that of a European. Many a time I have heard women, young girls, and children whisper behind me: "*A gné dé djémé wala-wala déren! a boloou be iko djiniou ta tjoko, ne bi siran*, He has white eyeballs! his arms are like those of the genii, I am afraid...." This seems strange and leads one to think that this concept developed after the arrival of white men whom, not without reason, they regard as being superior to them in every way. However, I believe that it antedates our arrival. The old Bambara who told me that Mage and Quintin, held prisoners at Segou by King Amadou (أَحْمَدُ) until the death of his father, Omar el Hadj (1), were regarded by them as *djiné* seemed to me sincere, for an old legend states that during in /32/ one of their migrations the Bambara skirted a country inhabited by white men who resembled genii in every way. I might also add that white is the

822 liturgical color in formal sacrifices to the *djiné*: hens, goats, sheep, even kola nuts -- short of the impossible -- are white in color, undoubtedly because of the people's notion of the color of genii. When traveling Europeans ask their hospitality, they do everything possible to find a white hen to offer them; they believe that this is the way they can most honor their guests because of the color of the latter's skin. The old men think also that we French have intimate

1. El-Hadj-Omar, or Omar the Pilgrim, so called because he saw Mecca, was at Ségou around 1835, 1837, or 1839, sometime before the death of Tjéyolo, which occurred around 1839. See Introduction /not translated/.

776 829 contact with the genii and know their family names, or diamou; however little they may be at ease with a Frenchman they will beg him to show them the place where a well should be dug, convinced that we know where live the spirits who are appointed to watch over water. Do we not bear them a certain resemblance?

776 The gnâ, or boli, also are sexed; they reproduce and found families. They are superior to the genii in power and wickedness, and, except indirectly, capable only of evil. They are at open war with God who, without taking away any of their intelligence or liberty, has condemned them tosuffer and to undergo the punishment of fire. They continually set up ambushes against the djiné to make their plans, good or evil, miscarry; they take pleasure in tormenting men, and the Bambara fears them greatly. The worship of the djiné is nothing compared to what is accorded them. Those considered most powerful have an entire retinue to serve them and to render them [651] honors and, as will be seen later, the head tax of 3.50 francs per head is nothing compared to the sums the Blacks spend to ward off the blows of the boli and avoid their wrath.

Like the djiné, the boli appears in human form, but it is disgusting and hideous to behold. All those upon whom the favor of an appearance is bestowed are frozen with terror; the body of the boli is terrifyingly black, and its face disappears in a flame above which rise horns.

[782 822] In the sacrifices to the boli the liturgical colors are black and red, and a white victim is never offered except in an indirect sacrifice necessitated by an offering called saraka, which is quite rare. /33/

2. Sorcery and Priesthood

152 Surrounded by spirits, by genii always seeking to harm him, a Bambara is quick to believe that he is the victim of one. This attitude contributes more than a little to give him a certain endurance manifested in the face of suffering. I would even say that he usually bears suffering, not with stoicism but with the torpor of an animal.

776 do not disdain to frolic in the bottom of a well or pond and keep cool there. These last are put in charge of the elements in a very special way. Although endowed /89/ with a divine virtue, they are still far from gods and are only intermediaries between human beings and the Divinity. This last idea seems to be in the background, almost disappearing, and yet, if one has the patience to listen to the old men and let them express themselves, one quickly sees that they still have it, even though ill defined and very confused, and one can believe that in the beginning the worship of the gnéna was a direct worship, offered to the Divinity through their mediation. Men, women, children, everybody takes part in the worship of the gnéna; although there is one, koté (kouéré in Bani), whose mysteries are veiled, its sect is only semioccult, and the entire population takes part in the festivals held in its honor. Barring a formal order from the sorcerer or the
776 822 impossibility of obtaining items in the liturgical (1) color, everything used in this worship -- victims, kola nuts -- is white, and among the Negroes white is the symbol of innocence and purity.

776 782 "Primitive peoples admit the existence of superhuman powers," says Nicolay. "When these are supposed to inhabit certain objects in the form of spirits, genii, etc., that is animism." /*/ This

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1. The reason for a failure to conform to the liturgy is always announced before a saraka or a sacrifice.

/* Fernand Nicolay, Curiosite's des lois et coutumes - Histoire des croyances, superstitions, moeurs, usages et coutumes (selon le plan du Décalogue) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. The History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Ways, Practices, and Customs (according to the outline of the Decalogue). Vol. I, prop. 13. Paris: V. Retaux, 1901./

769 782 The great sacrifice to the dead is made at the end of Ramadan and at the festival of the كَبْش sheep. The gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, first sacrifices to the b'lon da ba sou (3), those who, like themselves, were priests of the dasiri and, in a general way, to all those who had some civil or religious authority in the village. All the members of his council are present at this sacrifice. After the libations of millet flour mixed with water and d'lo, or millet beer, a fine white hen (4) is slaughtered, and sometimes a sheep then, two white kola nuts are offered and, if the sacrifice is accepted, a clump of wool or a few feathers are torn from the victim and stuck onto the

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769 796 797 2. The Negroes' great festival is held at the end of Ramadan. They have a second at the festival of the كَبْش sheep. The Moslem masters forced them to observe these two festivals, but the Bambara have not adopted a single Moslem rite. They sacrifice to the dasiri, to some djiné genii, and to the dead.

3. Sou, "corpses"; b'lon da ba, "of the great b'lon," the great entry hut giving access to the village.

[822] 4. In general sacrifices where the whole population or a whole sect participates, the liturgical color is the primary consideration, and a pullet a day old has as much value as a large rooster. When a victim of the liturgical color cannot be obtained, only water, dégé, and the kola nut are offered.

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1. origin of the west, klebi dyu
2. origin of the east, koro dyu
3. origin of the north, baba dyu
4. origin of the south, bani dyu
5. the sky from above, sã kaba

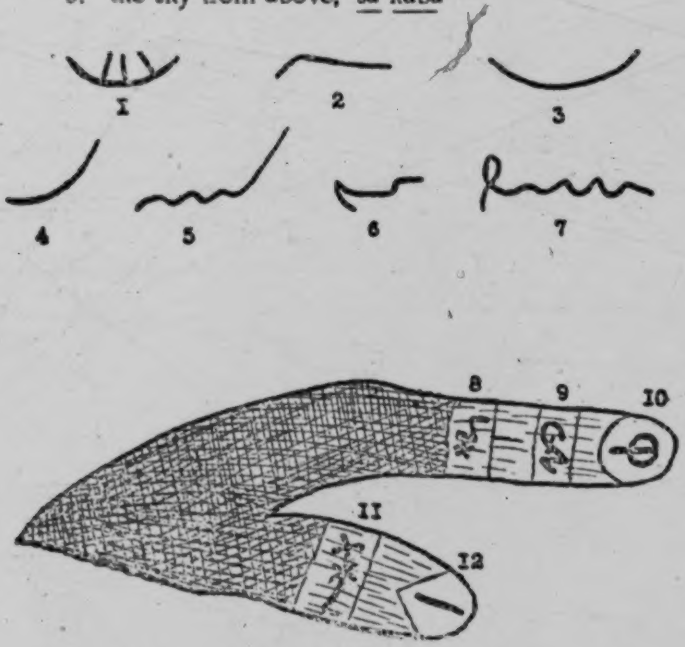

Fig. 1.—Bambara signs. From 1 to 7, signs of yo. From 8 to 12, signs of the king's thumb and index finger, representing the actual world and the future world (drawings by an informant).

6. secret space, tyema gundo
7. earth, dugu
8. center of the earth, kotye dugu
9. eye of the earth, dugu nye
10. mouth of the earth, dugu da (1)

[823]

1. The earth breathes through orifices called "mouths."

11. northwest, seleke se /8/ (literally: foot of the angle)

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772 helped the spirit with ten of its elements and with the radiance from 773 fã to build the sky along an oriented trajectory. Faro first went to the west, then the south, the east, and the north, thus determining the celestial cardinal points.

/14/ The sky is distinct from empty space, kęnę, which separates it from the earth and which is the product of the "yereyereli's shedding after it had given birth to the spirit." The sky, composed of seven parts placed one above the other, was completed before the earth which itself is also made up of seven corresponding parts.

773 Although he had received the larger share of the elements disgorged by the spirit, Pemba could not finish his work alone. When the sky was completed, the spirit blessed Faro, precipitated him in the form of water along the trajectory followed by Pemba during his descent. This water fell drop by drop from the seventh part of the sky to the seventh part of the earth into which it streamed to gain knowledge of the earth's foundations. As Faro descended vertically, he left a globule in space which became the spirit of the air, Teliko (1); on earth, he deposited a particle which formed the spirit Soba (2). As he dripped between the mounds which made up the earth, he saw that the latter was not completed, so he filled the empty pockets with water, thus forming the hidden springs of today.

Then life appeared on earth. Faro, impregnated by the vibration which was potentially masculine and feminine, gave birth to twin daughters on a deserted hillock (3). As soon as they appeared, the

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is interesting in that it accentuates the ties which, in the Sudan, bind the Faro of the Bambara and the Bozo, the Nommo of the Dogon, and the blacksmiths. See M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau (passim).

1. From teli, to go quickly.

2. Literally: so, house, ba, big.

● [823] 3. Naked hillocks, walawala, and clearings are the scene of rituals concerning the twins.

773 Empty space, or tyema, which separates the sky from the earth, remains under the domination of Téliko. It is the domain of air, the winds and insects.

773 823 The earth is divided into seven parts which correspond to the seven heavens and are as follows: (1) dugukolo, earth; (2) dugukolo fi, black earth; (3) dugukolo dye, white earth; (4) dugukolo mana, shedding of the earth; (5) dugukolo bele, "stone of the earth"; (6) dugukolo noro, soft earth; (7) dugukolo woloflã, the seventh earth.

On earth, Faro first created deep watery holes, the abysses of the sea and the rivers which he haunts. He himself dug the first well, the ponds, and the bed of torrents. He established the schedule of the rains which fall from the seventh part of heaven to the seventh part of the earth and constitute the purification and reparation of cosmic disorders.

773 825 824 He then classified living beings. In the east, wild and domestic animals, each group headed respectively by the lion and the horse; in the west, the birds; in the north, the fish with the miri (1) at their head, the sauria, and the batrachia; in the south, all plant life which he divided into three categories (2), indicating the purifying and medicinal power of each.

773 Men were also named and classified and the races distributed according to the quality of the blood into which Faro inscribed the destiny of each. He determined the castes, beginning with the slaves.

He then decided each one's foods and, to protect /30/ the species from destruction, he indicated the forbidden foods, animal and vegetable, which each category of beings had to respect.

1. Micralestes acutidens.

2. These are respectively: herbs, bin, headed by the narakata (Digitaria digitata); plants, fura, the first being the sindya (Cassia siberiana), and trees, dyiri, divided into three categories headed respectively by the karite, the baobab, and the nere (Parkia biglobosa).

776 821 The second, dyi ble "red water," is Faro's copper, a reflection of koblenkaba or "red sky." It is similarly the seat of the spirit's warlike or punitive activities. Water of wrath and vengeful action, it drowns the guilty. Through it, Faro strikes the bodies and health of those who do not recognize his dominion.

Faro prefers to sojourn in the dyi fi, "black water," where he keeps his secrets. It is to this water that one prays to seek grace. It is from the dyi fi that the twelve future waters will flow.

Calm and felicity reign in the dyi sumane, "cold water," where the fish live. The dya of earthly bwings are preserved in it.

While Faro drowns those he punishes in the dyi ble, it is in the madũ (literally, person, to eat) that their bodies rot or become the prey of fish.

The sixth category of water, kosira (literally, thing of fear) is a jail. In it Faro temporarily places all that comes under his domination.

The seventh water, dyi wolõflã, corresponds to the seventh heaven.

776 ● 823 782 In the Niger, the places inhabited by Faro bear the general name of faro tyin. These are mostly deep depressions, well known to the shore dwellers, particularly the Bozo. /46/ Sometimes a consecrated stone, placed on the shore, receives the sacrifices offered to the spirit.

The most celebrated is a place called Souko, located upstream from Koulikoro near the village of Kayo. The local spirit engendered all that now lives in the river. Because of this he is worshipped by all Bozo and Somono fishermen, who used to send delegations to the annual sacrifice that took place during the dry season.

776 823 The Faro of Ségou lives in the Faka, a deep hole located close to the right bank, facing the town. Legend has it that the Faka is extended by tunnels: one links the river to the Bani while the other opens out at Dya and was used by the founders of the settlement in mythical times.

[825] The Faka is placed under the guardianship of a crocodile to which each year the inhabitants offered victims. At the bottom of the hole there is a fat blind scaleless polyo, which the fishermen always return to the water if they catch it in their nets "because it is Faro's gate-keeper." In olden times, a flat stone upon which were traced a representation of Faro and black dots equal in number to the inhabitants of Ségou was visible in the deepest part of the waters. On [782] this occasion an albino was sacrificed (by slitting his throat) and the first fruits of the harvest were offered to the spirit.

776 On market day, a gourd filled with river water, called fle ndinye
•823 faro, is placed close to the shore where the canoes land. To drink a
782 mouthful of this water is equivalent to a sacrifice to the spirit. The drinker gives a cowrie as alms to the beggar who drew the water, for "never can [Faro's] water be bought or sold" (1).

1. Ma ti dyi fere ma ti dyi sã.
See pl. II, b.

At Sama, the faro tyin is a kind of natural corridor located amidst the rocks bordering and overhanging the left bank of the river.
[825] The finches nesting there warn the boatmen of the place's sanctity by flying off; the boatmen then stop to pray. In passing, they throw an offering and those who have broken taboos purify themselves by washing. Each shows the spirit all that he carries with him. Two nearby trees, faro sõndyiri or "trees of Faro's sacrifice," are used to tie up the white bulls at twilight. The following day, they are thrown alive into the river with millet mash and cola nuts. At the bottom of the passage, on a fairly smooth surface, the image of Faro described above was drawn each year in the course of the ceremony celebrated by the society of the Komo.

/47/ Faro also haunts ponds and wells. In the village of Nango a natural well was revealed to a hunter by a white ram which appeared out of a thicket. The village was built after the discovery of the water hole where the inhabitants now worship the spirit.

In the village of Siyango, the water of the well in which Faro resides is tabooed, the site of the well being the seat of all the religious ceremonies of the villagers. There the newborn are presented,
[755] and deaths and marriages announced. The sick are treated by being made to drink the well water and wash in it. From his herd, each person offers every year an animal which is thrown alive into the pit.
[681] Finally, those condemned to death are executed by drowning in the same spot.

Faro's Auxiliaries

776 Faro has placed spirits as his representatives in the skies, in space,
773 on earth, in the trees, and in the rocks of the mountains. They see

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7. Only vegetables whose spiritual essence does not have to be preserved are cooked, "for to cook is to shatter the soul."

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In each village are grown one or several small fields of tomatoes, called "Faro's fields," or "fields of twins." The fruits of these fields are reserved for the worship of the spirit (1).

1. On the site of the ancient village of Soroba, at the edge of a pond located near the present-day village, there are two rectangular fields of tomatoes dedicated to male twins and four square fields dedicated to female twins in the village. Each year the villagers gather at the edge of the pond for a ceremony. The symbolic words relating to twins are recited and a prayer is said, to be followed by ablutions.

The fruit that is harvested is offered to the spirit by squashing it on a neighboring tree trunk.

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/49/ All metals belong to Faro. The seven /sic/ principal metals are the following: copper (male), brass (female), gold, silver, tin, and iron. Copper and brass come from the fifth sky (koblenkaba). They descend at each thunderclap and, along with the "thunderstones," penetrated into the soil. They were discovered by a diviner at the bottom of a pond that had dried up because of a broken taboo. Because of their divine origin, copper and brass represent "Faro's sounds." [301] These sounds twist themselves around the spiralled copper or brass earrings that everyone wears and penetrate the eardrum, thus making it possible to hear words. Gold plays a part in the building of certain altars (boli) to which it confers strength and stability.

The sacrifices made with or on copper, brass, or gold have a restraining influence on the spirit for they are of his own essence.

No woman wearing copper, brass, or gold jewelry, may cross the Niger without opening her luggage out of deference to the spirit, for "all ornaments belong to him and often must be returned to him after death.

[784] It is taboo to bring metal into contact with cow's butter, an oily substance that does not allow water to penetrate.

Bozo MS6

Ba 776 436 Legend has it that cowrie shells, widespread throughout Black Africa and used as money, come from the deep water where Faro keeps his fortune. Faro "sleeps on a bed of cowrie." Their mythical origin explains their role and both the economic and religious value attributed to them.

Ba 776 823 The black earth of the river banks, bogo fi, such as that found on the sea shore in sandy places, contains the strength of the spirit and is used in numerous rites. Smeared at the base of the interior walls of the huts, it symbolizes Faro's presence in the bosom of the family. It serves to decorate the headdress of the circumcised (1). Those who live far from the Niger or from any source of water pray to it as if addressing Faro.

Ba 776 173 Some men occupy a privileged position in their relationship with the spirit. The first are the eight mythical ancestors, the eldest of whom is Koumabana. They received the word of the spirit, transmitted it to their descendants, explained before dying the new order of things, and instituted the cult.

At present they are still venerated as the prototypes of /50/ the human being in his new environment. Along with immortality, man lost the heavenly food which, until then, had been sufficient to nourish him. The articulated limbs which were provided for him dedicated him to manual labor, the techniques of which were taught him little by little. On the other hand, in the spiritual domain a deep change also occurred. In primitive times, man lived an almost animal existence and was without any responsibility. His abandonment by the balanza brought him suffering and death, but with them, his consciousness, symbolized by Faro's "word," developed. Along with death, illness, sorrow, bad instincts and the hard daily labor, there appeared also man's feeling about his own person and his place in an ordered universe, governed by Faro, as opposed to primitive chaos.

The eight ancestors taught men to venerate Faro, to ask him for all they needed, and to thank him for all they received. Therefore their names are invoked in most prayers and the episodes of their lives are told to the young to whom their works are held up as an example.

Bo 776 773 Mention should also be made here of the special position held by the Bozo who were born to the mythical girl twins, daughters of Faro (2).

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1. See p. 233, Fig. 14.

826 immortal with smooth limbs, he became mortal and hard working. As seats of the male semen, they transmit this condition to the embryo, formed in the maternal womb by Faro. The weariness felt in the limbs after the sexual act is proof of this transmission. As Locus of
[829] the virile semen, framework of the man, and a mechanism suitable for physical labor, the articulations are also the symbol of society. The chief's throne, in the shape of a knee, is the image of its owner's articulated body as well as that of the armature of the social body and of the grouping of individuals under his jurisdiction (1).

1. See p. 178.

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The limbs represent the right and the left. Rectitude, firmness, and directed action are "right"; incertitude, the spirit of indecision, and inconsistency in behavior are "left." The right is male and symbolizes man's labor; the other is female. All gestures, profane and religious, and all representations of objects bear witness to this. Performing his first task in the fields before the rain, the farmer gives three blows with his hoe held in his left hand in order to absorb the impurity of the earth. After this, he works until the harvest with his right hand. To cross one's hands means supplication, to put them behind one's back means humiliation.

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Each finger has its value. The little finger, bolokoni lakare, is "the son of the other fingers" and in it is concealed the entire strength of the hand; it "carries the nyama of the fingers." Hence its use as a measure of divinations. To point to someone with one's little finger means to belittle him with respect to those present. Thus one casts a spell (korti) against an enemy or an undesirable person with the little finger.

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The index finger and the thumb of a chief, formerly those of a king, are marked on certain occasions with signs called bolo ti doniya, "knowledge of the signs of the hand." On the index are drawn three "acts of the world today" (bi dyẽ walew) and on the thumb, two "things of the interior of the secret world" (dyẽ gundo kono fẽw), for it is said that "the knowledge of the signs of the hand /70/ is the road of the creation 5, the index is the world in 3 and the thumb is the new world" (1). The whole represents the worlds thought out by

794 Each year a sacrifice bringing together all the inhabitants is offered
776 to the dasiri and is terminated by communal eating of the sacrificial
182 victim. The first fruits of the harvest are also brought to it by the
sacrificer.

B. The dangu

The crossroads dangu or danku (literally, boundary of the head) are
776 inhabited by the Soba spirits who, under Faro, constantly intervene
778 in human affairs. Everything placed at this spot belongs to them,
823 and no one passes by without leaving an offering or a token of his
783 presence: a tool, raw cotton, seeds, cloth. A travelling stranger
kneels and deposits a little ash or some cotton; if not, he cleans off
a little space on which he spits before leaving. A child passing by
will greet it with these words: "Crossroads, my soul is in your hands."
On the occasion of any event concerning the individual, the family,
or the community, red kola nuts are placed at the crossroads and the
following words uttered: "You, crossroads, I entrust my head to you;
you are my support; I say, you, crossroads" (1).

1. E dangu m be ni ku kalifa, do i la
ni ɲigi be fɛ, ngo e dangu.

The corssroad, as an ideal public thoroughfare, is the chosen spot where one easily rids oneself of the nyama which any individual keeps and carries about with him. All that is impure, unlucky, and undesirable for the individual or the community is left at the crossroads. Objects which have belonged to dead people are also left there. The forces which are thus gotten rid of are supposedly absorbed by the spirits for whom they constitute a kind of nourishment which will then be returned to men in the form of gifts free of any taint. (2)

2. See p, 258.

/140/ Several examples will illustrate the role played by the crossroads in the community:

Any man who has wounded an animal or squashed an insect is affected in his own tere by that of the victim. He goes to the crossroads, kneels, and prays, depositing at the same time a band of cotton, an egg, and ashes. The band of woven cotton, symbol of

776 778 823 783 the word, is offered as clothing, and the eggs are offered as purification. As for the ashes, it is the ideal pure element since fire has "removed" its *tere* from the wood; here it represents the man from whom "the bad force acting on his *tere* has been removed" (1). Whoever murders an animal proceeds in the samw way with the animal's hide upon which he throws cowrie shells. In both cases, the spirits absorb the *tere* and *nyama*, which add to their own forces and free the culprit.

Collective purifications are carried out on the *dangu* when sexual taboos regarding cultivated fields and bush are broken. The impurity [833] resulting from copulation performed outdoors is communicated to all the land belonging to the village; the trees in the bush will no longer bear fruit; the harvests will deteriorate. Formerly the two lovers [684] taken by surprise were deprived of their clothing which was burned on the *dangu* after they had circled the village three times starting at the left. The culprits were then banished. At present, if the plight of the fields suggests that such an act has been committed, all varieties of cultivated seeds are gathered in a basket which is placed at the crossroads. Then, all the villagers and their domestic animals circle the village three times while sham battles take place between men mounted on horseback. After a sacrifice offered at the *dangu*, the seeds, thus purified, are sown.

776 778 823 241 Offerings are made to the spirits of the crossroads at the time of sowing to invoke their protection. This ritual is obligatory for whomever sows cotton, since this seed was given to men by these spirits. The farmer places the seeds, sits down facing west, and cries out three times the name of the *dangu* above the seeds. He leaves three small piles in homage to the spirit along with fibers from the plant, and kills a victim before proceeding to sow his field. When the stalks are up, he cuts some boughs and returns to the place of sacrifice to sweep up the seeds, thus impregnating them with the *nyama* of the *dangu*. He then dries them, grinds, sifts, and mixes them with earth picked up on the same spot. In his field, he shouts /141/ the name of the *dangu* and throws the mixture with all his strength in the direction of the cardinal points, the zenith, and the ground. When the plants are mature he picks the first seven ripe seeds, brings them to the same place, and offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

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1. See pp. 90ff.

776 It is also at the crossroads that the elders place the child whose
778 legitimacy is in doubt. If the diviner who is then consulted declares
823 that the child is a bastard, he is deprived of the protection of the spirits
848 and is supposedly unable to survive the nyama which he has acquired
787 at the place. In this same spot are buried abnormal children, in par-
[766] ticular hydrocephalics who are considered undesirable. The spindle
of a dead woman is placed here along with the broom she habitually
used.

776 But the ritual most characteristic of the crossroads is the one re-
778 sorted to by the village when it is in trouble: the primitive wooden
823 mallet, gosilande is planted in the ground; it is then struck with a
183 stalk of millet to chase away evil and to induce new techniques of
reparation to come out of the instrument (1).

1. See p. 145.

C. Stone Altars

778 In the villages, at the intersections of lanes, and in the squares,
211 the founding ancestors are represented by stones under which various
objects are buried (see Pl. V, b).

At Sama, four large stones, encased in a clay platform, symbolize both the cardinal points and the ancestors. They are in touch with the dasiri and receive the same offerings. At Banankoroni, the fara ba is partly buried. Under its point is an albino skull which represents those of the first ancestors and their bones. Two hoes, one placed near the right ear and the other near the left ear, convey the idea that "the man who cultivates the earth will never hear a humiliating word." Under the chin, another hoe recalls that the villagers who are faithful to agriculture will never know famine. Under the hoe, a siriku (2) protects them against those who try to harm them, and brings them

2. See p. 179, n. 1.

"the hyena's luck"; it also means that some of their ancestors were transformed into hyenas in former times. A circumcision knife recalls that all males are circumcised, and all women excised (Fig. 15). Finally, three albino bones and a small pile of copper are a testimony to /142/ Faro's presence and power. Drawings are made on these

794 778 often contain ingredients which have been pulverized: wood dust, charcoal powder, even powder of precious metals. Our investigation has not yet allowed us to clarify the role of this pulverization process. However, its mention by the Bambara and the frequent use of korti indicate the importance attached to this type of preparation.

/148/ Outside the hut, at the height of the nyama boli, a hook holds up the clothes of those who are killed by the Komo. The sanctuary, as well as the clothing of the mask, is daubed with black earth taken on the shore of the river representing Faro, and covered with feathers of the same color. Generally speaking, the metal [823] contained in the Komo altars gives it its strength and life. The most powerful of these is gold, silver comes next, then copper. Since each person gives an offering according to his means, the power of the altar thus depends in a certain measure on the wealth of the members of the society.

[782] Regular sacrifices upon the stakes, the bases of which sometimes contain a little wood from the historic canoe of Makanta Djigui, permit them to "maintain the pressure, the life" in the various altars. These altars are removed from the sanctuary only upon the occasion of funerals or agricultural rites. When the mask is removed and when there are dances, replicas commonly found in the home of the chief are sometimes used instead.

The pembele is the protector of the society, the container of the forces (nyama) of the group. It is rarely placed in the sanctuary and usually kept by the chief who never exhibits it; occasionally it is watered with rain water symbolizing the work of creation.

796 778 Before the annual ceremony called "anniversary of the Komo," drawings are made on the sanctuary by the chief or an elder; they are a reminder that the sanctuary is the link between the invisible powers and the members of the society. Besides the image of creation as an issue of the initial vibration (see Fig. 2), the head of the ancestor Koumabana, figurations of the twins, and the twenty-two fundamental signs are sometimes drawn. Finally hoes emphasize the agricultural function of the Komo (1). Granaries intended for conserving grains

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1. At the time when the attention of specialists is attracted by the division of

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532 3. *Koli* means nail or spur in reference to a rooster and, by extension, hook.

impregnated with black earth from the river and made of copper, Faro's metal, soaked in the venom of a viper before the hook was formed. These hooks are also annually soaked in red venom mixed with pepper. All these preparations make them dangerous weapons used for different purposes during the ceremonies.

The right hook (*kinin koli*) is used to kill the guilty ones or the undesirables. A slight would brings about death which is then attributed to Faro. The left hook defends members of the society against the dangers which are present, even for them, in the actions and emanations of the right hook. It contains two shards of black pottery, Faro's taboo, which keep away and thus diminish the latter's power. During the dance the Komo, wishing to protect one of the members under its jurisdiction, waves the left arm over him to attenuate the strength of the right. During funerals a gesture of the left hook will indicate the deceased's membership in the society and will assure him protection in the hereafter.

[784
823] The taboo of the copper hooks is the same as Faro's concerning this metal. Just as no one would cross the Niger wearing an object or an ornament of copper, similarly no one would wear copper in attending the Komo ceremonies.

The wearing of the mask, which is much sought after by several initiates at each ceremony, is assigned to one of them by the chief. This role involves risks which are diminished by certain precautions such as abstention from sexual relations before the ceremony. On the day of the ceremony, the elders make the wearer drink millet beer until he is completely inebriated; then for a moment they apply to his chin and abdomen the *nyama boli* which he will carry in a bag during the ceremony. He also puts on a ritual headdress which sometimes has incorporated in it a particle of the one belonging to the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé. The mask is then adjusted on his head, the flute slipped between his teeth, while the chief assures him of his good faith and proves to him that he runs no danger.

/152/ D. Musical Instruments

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534 The emergence of the Komo is accompanied by rhythms played on drums, *dyiri kolo* (literally, bone, wood), made of hides stretched

again in the chapter on brotherhoods.

[126] Spirits, genii and gods (1) known to the Bambara may be divided into three classes:

First, manes who have become spirits. These are of ten wandering and ill-disposed spirits. That is why the word nyama, to which we have alluded, is often used in a pejorative sense. It is also perhaps believed -- by analogy again -- that some manes can become so perfect in evil that they become true evil spirits, just as others become, if not actually good spirits, at least indifferent ones.

A second category comprises genii of the place or gods of the earth (nyana dugu-da-siri). There is not a single spot that [823] is inhabited, cultivated, populated or, on the other hand, isolated and deserted that does not have its genie. However, only some of these genii have an organized cult. They are usually the protectors of those who inhabit, cultivate, frequent or visit the places in question, provided that they are suitably honored. They often reveal their presence by entering into direct relations with someone who is in their vicinity and telling him how they wish to be honored in exchange for protection (2); on other occasions they are only discovered by a "seer." In any event, the genie of a place has complete possession of whatever is in the place, and man can profit in one way or another only in accordance with his pact with the genie. In principle he has only a simple right of usufruct, different from and more extensive than our right.

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terms the same meaning of supernatural forces.

1. See on p. 123 the tradition about the horse Kori who was the husband of a mabo woman.

2. See the story about the genie who revealed himself to Kolé (p. 51).

776 definition fits closely with what we have said about the gnéna, and the
782 worship of these genii is indeed animism and not idolatry. And since, according to Burton, fetishism is less adoration than a propitiation of animate or inanimate objects to which a mysterious power is attributed, the sacrifices and saraka offered by the Bambara to their genii are acts of propitiation rather than of worship.

776 To give the reader a more precise notion of the worship of the gnéna -- and they are legion -- I will divide the powerful ones, those of the third group, into eight categories: the genii of ponds, springs, and wells; the genii of the crops; those who protect children; and those who protect circumcised youths; the genii of the women, that of twins; the dasiri, protector of villages; and the koté or kouéré, a special genie of a semioccult sect. All these genii have their priests, their sacrifices, and their saraka, but since all are not equal in strength and power, the extensiveness and formality of worship is not the same with respect to all. /90/

4. Genie of Ponds, Springs, and Wells

776 There are genii splashing around in all ponds, springs, and wells,
782 and our Negroes think that in order to obtain their good graces they
823 are obliged from time to time to offer them a trickle of /millet/ flour and water, the blood of a white hen, or a mouthful of chewed kola nut. On the edge of a well, at the mouth of a spring, on the edge of a pond, and finally on the banks of a river, offerings, sacrifices, and saraka are made, and their purpose is to prevent our Kneippist genii from escaping. If they leave displeased they take with them the water without which people cannot live, and the spring dries. There is total drought, a terrible misfortune -- for what can become of them without water!

The sacrificer to the water genii is quite often the head of the family on whose land the spring is located. Usually this honor goes by right to the head of the quarter; there are even villages where the sacrificer is none other than the religious head of the village, the gnéna-n-sonnoba /sic/, who is priest of the dasiri, the genie protector of the village.

776 782 ● 823 Most frequently these genii are given saraka, but a hen is sacrificed each time the wells are cleaned: it is in good taste to do so, and few villages depart from the rule. Once a year a public sacrifice is offered to them, with a degree of formality that varies according to whether the sacrificer is merely the head of a family, the head of a quarter, or the head of the village. Since the women spend a good half of their lives around the wells, they are almost everywhere the ones who provide the materials for the sacrifice.

5. Genii of the Crops

776 241 782 When planting time comes, the Bambara, who are farmers above all, blossom out with sacrifices and redden just about everything with blood. The head of the family does not forget the genie of the seed. He offers it a saraka at home and sometimes a sacrifice, and unless he is very old and helpless he appears at the field on the day when the first pinch of seed is consigned to the earth. Before /91/ the /sowing/ is begun a hen's blood must be offered to the genie of fertility, which is responsible for watching over the seed and causing it to sprout and grow, and it is he that makes this offering, unless he has delegated this duty to his eldest son or his brother (the one next after him in seniority).

The departure for the field at planting time has its own unique characteristics. A child (if there is one in the family, obviously) is given the gourd (1) containing the seed, and in the name of the genie the father gives him orders and admonitions. On the way out of the hut the child pays his respects to the shades of his ancestors by placing the gourd on the threshold, and leaves quickly, proud as Artaban. He must be careful not to stop on the way unless he has to, and, above all, he must keep silent so that the spirits that fly here, there, and everywhere remain ignorant of what he is carrying and cannot attack the seeds in the millet grain. Anyone who talks runs a grave

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1. A pumpkin cut in two, emptied and dried in the sun.

778 Since all the Bambara could not be made to submit to shameful
771 servitude, the Moslems were satisfied to impose a tax, to forbid
778 public worship of the idols, and, with sheathed sword, sought to make converts by persuasion. Their caravans were quick to cover the country, preaching Islam in all places both favorable and unfavorable, but the mass of the people could not be approached. In order to give /131/ their beliefs a rational basis, they always did everything in the name of "Alla, " "Stamboul" (the Sultan of Constantinople), and "Makka (Mecca), and said to the conqueror: "All true belief comes from Mecca (Makka); it is the center of all religious life, so why do you fight so hard against our boli? They all come from Mecca. God has given you the formula: 'there is no Divinity other than God and Mohammed is His prophet'; for you He prescribes ablutions, Friday rest, etc.. Keep your formula and shout it! To us Bambara He has given the boli and bloody sacrifices, so why do you want to take from us our treasures that are hungry for blood?" I do not doubt that we owe
773 our "legend" to the discussions which arose between the m'rabet (the
776 marabout, or Moslem priest) and the gnâtigi, or bolitigi. Here it is
774 as I so often heard it told by bold old men:

A group of youths who were devoting themselves to trade and following lady luck (ou toumbe kolo (1) gnini, "they were seeking cowrie shells"), one day took the road to the east. Over mountains and valleys the little band walked and walked for a long time, and then finally they reached the great, blue, salty water, the ocean; on the shores of which lies the holy city, Mecca (Makka) (2).

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[136] 1. Kolo, "cowrie shells" (singular, kokɛ), small shells used as money.

[823] 2. Since the Moslems said that Mecca was located on the seacoast, and since the Bambara did not know Arabia, they believed it to be in this direction. In their minds the ocean does not have to be crossed to get there. Actually, this is the least of their worries.

764
782
[823]

the wind blows from the west or the east, from the north or the south, may it be favorable to us. Give us a long life, many descendants, wives and prosperity." The audience answers, "Amina -- o dé ka ké (let it be so)," and, using hoes hafted in reverse so that the curve of the blade is on the outside, the youths fill the grave. The drums beat again, and the women clap their hands and improvise a song whose words usually can be reduced to these: "Our father is dead, we have been told he is dead. But he will come back! Young men, fill the grave well, so that no souba, no hyena, nor any wild animal can take away the corpse."

764 When the grave is filled, the one who is holding the strip of cloth attached to the blouse, or the shroud, of the deceased pulls it toward him until it tears and remains in his hands. This ribbon is a [751] precious relic of which tafo are made; they are a protection from a host of evils, especially throat ailments and gnâma. The coarse mat (tjékala or kara) which was the bed or the seat of the deceased, quite often together with his shoes and the small earthen pot that was his wash basin, are laid on the tomb. If the deceased was a woman, pieces of a gourd, fragments of a hearth, or the stick for stirring gruel (to-n-galama) are thrown onto the tomb instead of the wash basin. The pliant mat in which the corpse was wrapped is often given to a friend. The latter goes and burns it outside the village, or before entering his own village if he is a foreigner; he says: "Here is a mat on which no one will die from now on."

[777] 764 782 Wednesday and Saturday are two unlucky days. On these days strangers never present their condolences to the bereaved family, and if a burial takes place, a small white chicken is killed and given to the deceased so that he can placate the spirits as soon as the grave

1. In the eyes of the Negroes this ceremony is not a bloodless sacrifice but a simple prayer; and the water is poured to give the words greater emphasis, since in their eyes it is the element without which nothing lives nor can live.

772 Then all things assembled and began to rumble in order to complete the creation of the universe. The *glã* remained within themselves and delegated to *zo* the responsibility of liberating the designated and animated objects which they contained and of which they had created the essence. *Zo* took possession of them and joined their elements into a huge ball, *kuru,* called *yo yebali,* "invisible *yo*": *zo* gave *yo* the principle of the seed and endowed it with attraction and power (1).

1. *zo ye kise masa di yo ma, ka samani masa bla la, ka mineni masa bla a la.*

Yo was the spirit, more exactly "the thought and action, " that was to work out the creation, using the "signed objects" determined by *glã*.

772 532 /5/ The *glã glã zo* is represented by three engravings on wood. The first, *glã kele,* represents the two *glã* in the shape of two spirals in opposite directions and with connected points of origin; below this is engraved "the object with four arms" from which issued the signs (2). These signs, 226 in number, are barely sketched out, showing that "the creation of *glã* takes place in the invisible, the unknown, the unrealized." The second, *glã dya,* is composed of 226 horizontal or vertical lines, the counterparts or "witnesses" of words. The third, *glã zo,* is an oval divided into seven compartments (a square in the middle and two times three lateral sections) in which the symbolic representations are clearly engraved. In the middle of the central square, there is an oval containing six signs which represent simultaneously "the egg of the world and *yo,* the creating voice."

● [824] 2. Today this object is represented by a twig of *Acacia albida,* called "the wood that separates the signs, " *ti kla dyiri.* Its bark is removed in such a way as to outline the multiplication sign enclosed in an oval representing the world.

772 2. The *yo*

The creation of the perceptible universe beginning with *yo* is conceived of as a progression in "thinking, " *tasi* (3). This progression,

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1. *pemba ni faro ye dyẽ dyokã ani dyẽ dyotyoko kę, sankaba dlala faro fe gundola miri deme ni ko la, pemba djigini dugukolo ka, a dõ teli yala, dyobe na warilike yereyereli, mbolo fla yenko.*

Pemba's Reign

For seven years, Pemba was a whirlwind (1). Transformed into a acacia seed, he moved about in space, carried by the wind and entraining the rain; finally, exhausted, he came to rest on the earth which hid him under a few lumps of dirt and enabled him to germinate; a tree, the balanza (2), grew but soon died of drought. There remained no more than a sort of rectangular board lying on the bare earth. It was called *pembele*, also *ko kun*, "the head of things."

Pemba was alone on the earth in the shape of a tree root which potentially contained the creation of animals and plants. Beneath

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1. This part of the myth concerning the *pembele* was collected by S. de Ganay and published in the *Journal de Psychologie normale et pathologique* under the title: "Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara. /Aspects of Bambara Mythology and Symbolism/." We have made a few changes in the text.

[824] 2. *Acacia albida*. The Dogon give an equally important place to the *acacia albida* in the prelude of creation. The first materialization of the world rotated between two thorns of the tree, placed symetrically point to point. Its shape was that of a rotating, flattened out truncated cone made from the wood of the same tree.

773 him his own decomposition collected. As he occasionally moved about in a whirlwind, weary of his solitude, he said to himself one day: "The dust of my tracks will dissipate my nostalgia." Having spoken these words, his tracks came together and the wind pushed them towards the mound of earth and rotting wood. He kneaded this mass with his saliva, thus incorporating into it a breath-soul, ni; he gave it a shape and an immaterial double, dya. However, as he distrusted it, he turned the double over to Faro, master of sky and the waters, guardian of the dya. Then Pemba laid himself down upon the shape for four days. On the fifth day, he heard, coming from beneath him a high-pitched feminine voice which said: "Get up, I am exhausted." "No," he replied, "first I will give you a name so that you may be my wife."

This creature had a head with long, pointed ears and the torso of an animal; the rest of the body was human except the tail. Until her fall, she retained that shape.

In order that she might become the womb of future beings, the repository of knowledge and the stimulant to Pemba's thoughts, she had to assure him of her total love. She promised him this and thereupon received the name of Muso koroni kundye, "little old woman with a white head,"—little, for she had issued from him; old, for she was an emanation for him and therefore his equal in age; white, /17/ because, coming from him, she was as pure as he. Thus named, she got up and became his wife. Although he did not enter her, she received multiple inseminations from him and in exchange he took his own sap back. She gave birth to plants and animals, the first of which was the panther. All that she engendered had a soul or vital force, ni, and a double, dya, similar to those which Pemba had deposited in her as he kneaded her with his saliva. At that time, no being was articulated (1).

1. Such beings with supple, non-articulated limbs are called maŝibadẽ.

773
824 The earth began to swarm with beings who appeared without order as they were born at random; they all went to worship Pemba as their creator, calling him god, Ngala. The latter wished to assert his complete domination over this chaotic work /of creation/; so he asked Mousso Koroni to plant him in the earth. He immediately took

773 root by his own power and became the first of all trees, the balanza,
824 green in dry season and dry in rainy season, and it extended his power (1).

> 1. The balanza is not Pemba in his totality, which is spirit, force, and matter. It is Pemba's earthly metamorphosis and, more especially, the image of his fertile masculinity. Pemba took the shape of the balanza in order to continue his work of creation and to bring death on the earth.

773 The human beings born of Faro lived amidst the burning rocks and sought refuge under that tree, whose power was obvious to all since it needed no water to keep it green. They prayed to it and received from it directives for their lives. Since they were immortal, time did not exist. However, they figured their age according to their pilosity: at age 12, the public hair grew; at 22, the hair under the arms; at 36, the beard was black; at 52, the hair whitened. When he could count the four types of hair, his being was complete; but seven years later, he suddenly grew thin and lost his vitality, and his soul weakened; he was then an old man.

Men at that time knew no language and had no clothes. They lived naked and communicated to each other through gestures and grunts. At the instigation of Mousso Koroni, and in order to recognize
[801] each other, they scarred their face with three or four lines, three being the sexual symbol of man (the penis and two testicles) and four that of woman (the four labia). In keeping with this, each person, according to his sex, would repeat his actions three or four times.

Men at that time received their food from /18/ the sky, thanks to the spirit Téliko, who, up in space, watched over Faro's waters. During the rainy season, he would send them stones from the seventh heaven containing karite nuts, si kolo. From these stones the women extracted oil which they ate with fruit. One day, during the dry season, a woman who had drawn oil from four nuts wiped her hands on the balanza under which she was seated alone. "This, I want," said the tree. From then on, all the women offered him oil and were imitated by men who later partook of the cult.

However, the balanza was no longer satisfied with only Mousso Koroni. It demanded that all the women give it their love. Therefore

773 Empty space, or tyema, which separates the sky from the earth, remains under the domination of Téliko. It is the domain of air, the winds and insects.

773 The earth is divided into seven parts which correspond to the seven
823 heavens and are as follows: (1) dugukolo, earth; (2) dugukolo fi, black earth; (3) dugukolo dye, white earth; (4) dugukolo mana, shedding of the earth; (5) dugukolo bele, "stone of the earth"; (6) dugukolo noro, soft earth; (7) dugukolo woloflã, the seventh earth.

On earth, Faro first created deep watery holes, the abysses of the sea and the rivers which he haunts. He himself dug the first well, the ponds, and the bed of torrents. He established the schedule of the rains which fall from the seventh part of heaven to the seventh part of the earth and constitute the purification and reparation of cosmic disorders.

773 He then classified living beings. In the east, wild and domestic
825 animals, each group headed respectively by the lion and the horse;
824 in the west, the birds; in the north, the fish with the miri (1) at their head, the sauria, and the batrachia; in the south, all plant life which he divided into three categories (2), indicating the purifying and medicinal power of each.

773 Men were also named and classified and the races distributed according to the quality of the blood into which Faro inscribed the destiny of each. He determined the castes, beginning with the slaves.

He then decided each one's foods and, to protect /30/ the species from destruction, he indicated the forbidden foods, animal and vegetable, which each category of beings had to respect.

1. Micralestes acutidens.

2. These are respectively: herbs, bin, headed by the narakata (Digitaria digitata); plants, fura, the first being the sindya (Cassia siberiana), and trees, dyiri, divided into three categories headed respectively by the karite, the baobab, and the nere (Parkia biglobosa).

778 understandable that the strength of the large *pembele* should be preserved intact since it represents the world. No ritual concerning it is celebrated alone by the man in charge without the presence of a council of elders. Its four corners can be scraped only under worthwhile circumstances for, according to the informant, the god *pembele* will not tolerate his being used for trifles. As the corners are gradually scraped off and consequently the *nyama* contained in these corners is reduced, the earth becomes worn out. And if the earth should lose its *nyama*, all would be empty of its substance; the millet would still grow but its stalk would yield no grain. . . women would bear no children, no longer having any *nyama*. Bereft of strength, people would no longer be able to fight. The earth would subsist, but would be sterile" (1).

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1. S. de Ganay, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

The *Balanza*

824 The tree *balanza*, the plant form of Pemba's metamorphosis, vanquished by Faro, is no longer worshipped by men. However, the Bambara's attitude towards it and certain ritual gestures of which it is /38/ sometimes the object, recall the time when, after having spread its domination over all creation, it introduced death to the human species.

[761] In certain settlements, the belief is that whoever rests in its shade dies, the tree having taken his *dya*. In others, women still make it [782] offerings of karite oil, despite advice from men who have informed them of its inefficacy. They lie at its base, simulating illness, agony, and then death to recall the painful events that have brought them to men; finally they touch the ground successively with each of their four principal articulations as a sign of submission, before smearing the tree trunk with the oil they have brought. In still others, [843] in order to recall that births used to take place near the tree, pregnant women are presented by their husbands to the tree to each childbirth.

The fields surrounding the settlements in the region of Ségou are covered profusely with *balanza*. The device of Ségou, which tells of the history of the town, enumerates the names of the trees planted at the time of its founding. This device also mentions *kokuruni* (literally, little humped back), the *balanza* of Banankoroni (pl. I, a),

824 considered as the founding ancestor transformed into a tree. The old men of the village come to the tree each year, leaning their backs
[844] against its trunk, while the placentae of newly delivered women are hung on it (1).

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1. The balanza groves around the Bambara settlements have attracted the attention of botanists. M. G. Roberty, in Les Associations végétales de la vallée moyenne du Niger /The Vegetable Associations of the Middle Nigerian Valley/, has studied their agricultural role: "The Dumosaeptum arboreitoides, cultivation under the balanzas. Artificial, well defined landscape. Trees losing their leaves during the rainy season, regaining them during the dry season, thorny, regularly spaced, but planted in the distant past. The Acacia albida loses its leaves in June and grows them again in December, thus furnishing shade in the dry season and humus in the rainy season. The Dumosaeptum owes it its permanent villages.... The date of the introduction of this very useful tree into the western Sudan remains shrouded in mystery, as is the time and method of its dissemination over cultivated fields. It is probable that the Acacia albida comes from eastern Africa, somewhere south of the equator. How did it come as far as the Bambara country without losing its original seasonal cycle? What sultan, or what agronomer of genius forced its multiplication around the Bambara villages? These questions remain, for the time being, without answers. The tales of the first European conquerors seem to have proved that numerous "tatas, " the enormous citadels of red mud, were enclosed by living balanzas fences with joined trunks... It is probable that their military use has preceeded everywhere their agricultural use... We have very little information concerning

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the latter. . .. We are familiar enough with the Bambara agricultural customs, but none of them would have brought about the spread of the balanzas, their regular spacing in the fields, and their protection from goats. In almost all the cases we have observed, the balanzas are of considerable age, development and density. There lies in this subject a fine dissertation topic for a young ethnographer and naturalist." (pp. 135, 136).

The myths of the Bambara answer M. Roberty's questions.

/39/ Mousso Koroni

776 Mousso Koroni is the impure earth; she symbolizes all that is opposed to light: darkness, night, witchcraft. She is also the symbol of rebellion, disorder, and impurity. Pemba pursued her in vain in his effort to take back what he had given her: the "words" she had received from him were divulged to men in spite of him.

Although no cult honors her and no sacrifice is offered her, her name is cited in various ceremonies and mentioned in the chants; her actions are recalled by certain gestures in the ritual.

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On the other hand, she is the initiator of the separation of the sexes realized in the human body by the removal of the foreskin and the clitoris, an operation which after her betrayal, she performed on all those she met. In this way, she placed them in the same state of rupture in which she found herself: a female principle as opposed to Pemba, the male principle. In addition, she is present in every human being in the form of an evil force, the wanzo, which she had communicated to all those she approached, and of which one must rid oneself through the methods she herself inaugurated: circumcision and excision (1).

1. See p. 95.

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Mousso Koroni is also the originator of certain agricultural techniques which she taught men, and every year, in certain villages, she

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up (1). The small miri (2), "mother of fish," is regarded as the

1. The ordure has its use in religious life. See p. 258.

2. Micralestes acutidens.

creator and guardian of all fish. Its name is associated with all prayers that are recited on the waters. The dodo (3) is Faro's messenger in

3. Tétrodon fahaka.

the waters and transmits his orders and directives, and the polyo (4)

4. The polyo fi is Herterobranchus longifilis; the polyo ble is Heterobranchus bidorsalis.

is the gatekeeper, controlling those who wish to penetrate into the spirit's domain.

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Certain plants are in constant communication with him. The yayale (5), "Faro's grass," grew on the mound where the mythical twins

5. Andropogon (Hyparrhenia) hirtus.

were born. The tomato, ngoyo (6), is assimilated in the blood. It

6. Lycopersicum cerasiforme, the native tomato (pl. II, a).

carries within it the potential embryo for its seeds are multiples of seven, the number of duality. It is by means of the tomato that Faro impregnates women for it possesses, like humans and animals, a ni and a dya. When it has a double bloom, the two twin tomatoes are given to the women so that they may bear twins. If the fruit is single on the stem, it is split in two to be cooked and eaten. The gesture of splitting separates it symbolically from its dya which is thus returned to Faro (7).

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> 7. Only vegetables whose spiritual essence does not have to be preserved are cooked, "for to cook is to shatter the soul."

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In each village are grown one or several small fields of tomatoes, called "Faro's fields," or "fields of twins." The fruits of these fields are reserved for the worship of the spirit (1).

> 1. On the site of the ancient village of Soroba, at the edge of a pond located near the present-day village, there are two rectangular fields of tomatoes dedicated to male twins and four square fields dedicated to female twins in the village. Each year the villagers gather at the edge of the pond for a ceremony. The symbolic words relating to twins are recited and a prayer is said, to be followed by ablutions.
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> The fruit that is harvested is offered to the spirit by squashing it on a neighboring tree trunk.

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/49/ All metals belong to Faro. The seven /sic/ principal metals are the following: copper (male), brass (female), gold, silver, tin, and iron. Copper and brass come from the fifth sky (koblenkaba). They descend at each thunderclap and, along with the "thunderstones," penetrated into the soil. They were discovered by a diviner at the bottom of a pond that had dried up because of a broken taboo. Because of their divine origin, copper and brass represent "Faro's sounds." [301] These sounds twist themselves around the spiralled copper or brass earrings that everyone wears and penetrate the eardrum, thus making it possible to hear words. Gold plays a part in the building of certain altars (boli) to which it confers strength and stability.

The sacrifices made with or on copper, brass, or gold have a restraining influence on the spirit for they are of his own essence.

No woman wearing copper, brass, or gold jewelry, may cross the Niger without opening her luggage out of deference to the spirit, for "all ornaments belong to him and often must be returned to him after death.

[784] It is taboo to bring metal into contact with cow's butter, an oily substance that does not allow water to penetrate.

Spiritual Principles (1)

114 1. A few comments on the spiritual principles of the Bambara (in particular on the *dya* and the *nyama*) have been collected in the chapter entitled "Théorie des âmes" by Tauxier, *La Religion bambara* (pp. 14-25), in which the author appraises the works of the Abbé Henry and of Ch. Monteil. Some of the observations made in the following chapter have been summarized by the author in "La Personne chez les Bambara" and in "Note sur le tere chez les Bambara /Note on the Tere among the Bambara/."

It will be useful to compare this study of spiritual principles with the studies made among the Dogon and presented respectively by M. Griaule, S. de Ganay, and the author in *Masques Dogon*, *Les Devises des Dogon*, and *Les Âmes des Dogon*.

761 The Soul, *ni*, and the Double, *dya*:

776 Faro controls the principle of life in water, which is his realm
as well as the life-giving element par excellence. In the bodies of
[826] living beings, this principle has its seat in the blood. The blood of
the sacrifices offered to the spirit (or failing that, the juice of the
tomato, a transformation of blood) is a contribution to the reservoir
of life controlled by Faro—life which he redistributes in all its forms
throughout the universe. Water is the privileged element in which
life may persevere indefinitely. Elsewhere, life is maintained only
if water comes to nourish it.

761 Faro's creative function is materialized by each marital partner
776 eating a tomato before sexual relations. This act is accompanied by
842 the recital of a prayer. The juice of the fruit, which contains the
833 body of the future child, transmits life according to the following
mechanism:

Faro receives the offerings of tomatoes grown ritually in the
761 consecrated fields, as well as the blood of victims slain in his name
776 above the waters. Blood and juice, spreading over water, the fertili-
842 zing agent, are collected by the swallow, Faro's airborne messenger.
824 Liberated in space, they return to the soil with fertilizing rain and
penetrate the tomato seeds which thus contain a particle of generative
power.

the dying man to go into the water and place itself under Faro's protection. At the moment of delivery, both ni and dya return to the body of the newborn child who replaces the dead man, but they return in reversed order: the dya is returned to the body of the child and becomes his ni; the ni of the deceased mixes with the birth water spread on the ground which forms the shadow (suma) and will be his double, the twin (1). In the case of a boy, the dya will be female; in the case /59/ of a girl, it will be male. These movements are independent of the sex of the deceased as the spirit reverses the sexes when necessary. Each human being is thus both male and female [828] through his soul and his double. This conception of human nature, which is fundamental to the Bambara, is expressed in the symbolism of numbers. The number seven is formed of three (male sexual symbol) [801] and four (female sexual symbol) and represents the complete man. In addition, on another level, the number six is that of male twins, seven that of mixed twins (and the hermaphrodite), and eight that of female twins. The body of the newborn child is gently tapped [844] by the number of strokes representing the above figures in order to call the child's ni according to its sex.

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2. Grouped hierarchally, children, male adults, and women form religious societies or institutions, dyo. Each dyo is charged with the upkeep of altars which serve to preserve the spiritual forces of the group. (See p.

[844
824]
1. The blood of childbirth represents the excess tomato juice absorbed by the woman, that which remains in the womb after the formation of the embryo. On the eighth day after birth, the mother of the parturient woman squeezes three or four tomatoes (depending on the sex of the newborn) into a gourd which she then gives to the child's father. The latter makes his wife drink the juice to replace the blood which she has lost and which is considered impure.

831 lines or dots depending upon the sex of those who used them. Thus,
801 women marked their spindles with four lines whereas men twisted three
threads on their shuttles.

826 On the metaphysical level, man's body, "the seed of the world,"
is identified with the cereal grain. The Bambara separate cereal
824 grains into seven parts, corresponding to a division of the human
812 organs into seven groups (1). Man and grain are one and identical in
their substance. On the other hand, the basic foods, that is, the
eight principal cereals, are symbolically present in the collarbones
(*kolo kalanjiri*, or *ka kolo*). Man carries within him his subsistance,
[783] and its location reflects the person's general condition (2). As proof
of /72/ man's spiritual integrity, these grains leave him when he is
in a state of impurity. He is then drained of his substance and subsistence. Thepurpose of purification is to reestablish this wholeness.

812 Moreover, the bonds which unite the whole person, body and
561 spiritual principles, to the cosmos, are made clear by the fact that

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1. The divisions of the grain are as follows: *kungu*, "little beard of millet," involucre; *fara dye*, "white bark," glume and glumales; *fara fi*, "black bark," bran and protein aceous bark; *fara mugu*, "farinaceous bark" (which corresponds to a milky diastatic zone); *mugu dunta*, "flour for eating," starch; *kolo dye*, "white bone," embryo; *kise de*, "son of grain," the micropyle from which the rootlet issues at the time of germination. The classification of organs in relation to these divisions is under study. We thank M. Pitot of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire for the identification of the parts of the grain corresponding to the native divisions. In certain villages, grains
[782] undergo a process of hulling and the determined elements only are used in the making up of the ritually offered millet mash.

2. See p. 53, n. 2.

782 As an example we will summarize below the ritual killing of albinos as it was practiced under the royalty. This underlines the mystical value of the victim and is an excellent example of the mechanism inherent in sacrifice; it brings out the ritual value of the details on each of which the Bambara place particular emphasis. Finally, it confirms the value and symbolism of different parts of the body as described in the preceding chapter.

/95/ The kings of Ségou were formerly provided with albinos by a
782 man from the village of Pelengena who kept them prisoners and set
826 them aside for this purpose. But this man exploited them by shaving their hair and selling it to the chiefs of neighboring villages as symbols of the men whom, sooner or later, they could reckon to have under their domination. The chief, having counted his subjects, war prisoners held as slaves as well as captives received as tribute, would prepare as many small sticks as there were men; then he would mix up these sticks with the hair and bury them all in the wall over the sill of the entrance to his home. The hair is supposed to represent beforehand an increase in the subjects of his domain and to help bring in the taxes.

But the albinos themselves were kept for the king who sacrificed them to Faro in cases involving the affairs of the kingdom.

1. When the king found himself in difficulties of an administrative nature, the victim was cut in half through the middle of the body at the level of the abdomen by means of a rope of the da fiber (1): his cries, gestures, and excrement were considered the vehicles of a nyama which "would eliminate the difficulty encountered by the king.." No one was supposed to hear his cries which were not intended for human ears but for Faro, to whom suffering was also due. The king, above all, should not hear the screams under penalty of failing in his enterprise, and yet he had to be present at the torture and watch it with complete detachment.

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The lower half of the victim's body was Faro's due. It was carried to the Niger by three men if the victim was a male, or by four if it was a female. One of them carried the body on his head.

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1. Hibiscus. The nyama fiber was considered impure and could not be used for the albino.

773 829 knowing its power, men at first used it sparingly. A question was never discussed twice. If a request was reiterated, after an objection, the party requested would bow and agree at the risk and peril of the person making the request."

Men first lived by gathering and later by fishing and hunting without tools, using only /100/ hands to seize their prey, and nails and teeth to tear and cut it. Gradually this primitive life changed; technologies developed one by one according to a chronology which the present Bambara still remember.

773 The first raw material used, according to a tradition which is not confined to the Bambara alone, was the fiber of the *nyama* tree (1) (*nyama fu*) out of which were woven the first fishing nets, the first sling, and the first loincloth (2).

●[824] 1. *Bauhinia reticulata* (in the north), *Bauhinia Thonningii* (in the south).

[171] 2. The Dogon also mention this fiber as the first material used by men. With them as with the Bambara, it has a ritual function. See M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, p. 26.

When they began to work the soil, they developed a set of primitive wooden tools. At the same time, they invented a throwing weapon made of the same material. Wood remained in use for a long time; the invention of weaving and crude pottery goes back to this period. Later, they came to know stone tools, iron, and the forge. The art of house building, about which no myth has been gathered until now, seems to have developed much later, after the discovery of iron (3).

3. Certain parts of the investigation concerning technology have been summarized by the author in "l'Arme et l'outil chez les anciens Bambara /Weapons and Tools among the Ancient Bambara/, " *Africa*, Vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 105-111.

The study of this assemblage of tools and of their ritual use is most suggestive because they are a first indication of technological

291 him and joke with him, indicating by semi-ritual jokes his accession to a new status.

291 173 Men's first garment was the skirt of nyama fibers (Fig. 8, A). The bark was beaten and prepared by means of a club, a wooden club, gosilande or kuruninde, which is /106/ supposed "to contain potentially all human technology invented as the need arose." It is said of this club that it is "the mold of perfection and the place from which all useful things issue." The club was also originally a primitive instrument of rhythm (1); the hammering of blows "chased away the evil [155] sounds emitted by Téliko at the time of his revolt." Even today, a deafmute is seated near the gosilande which is prayed to so that he may be rid of his infirmity. The clothing of a woman in labor, in [844] order to purify it, is beaten with the gosilande at the same time the infant utters its first cry. Dyed clothing is beaten not only to make the color penetrate, but also to chase out any impurity.

When they first learned about cotton, and after the invention of weaving, the Bambara made garments which are in disuse today but of which they still make specimens for ritual purposes. In fact, with the exception of the loincloth, these ancient garments are worn only during religious ceremonies and their principal function is to represent the ancestors who were their progenitors.

291 173 386 The first garment woven was an imitation of the fiber skirt. The men made loincloth (mboko nimba) still worn today by the uncircumcised and dyed it yellow, wolo (2) (Fig. 8, B), a color which represents that which a certain disease gives to the black's skin,

[783] 1. kow dyele bwo yoro. On certain occasion when the Komo masks are brought out, the chief carries on his head the gosilande which represents the universe. Certain collective purifications are also executed with this instrument at the crossroads (see p. 186).

[824] 2. This dye is made with the leaves of the ngalama (Angeissus leiocarpus), which are boiled, dried, and pulverized. The powder is put in water.

291 113 531 to replace the blood lost in childbirth; this piece is then burned to hasten the healing of the wounds.

The loincloth of a woman who has given birth to twins is made of the sukaba band with large, regular, alternating squares of yellow and indigo. The mother places on the garment as an offering a little of the millet mash she feeds her children for the first time.

The band nyoronga was formerly used for shrouds. The king would wear a whole garment of this or had three bands sewn onto his tunic when he went off to war; thus he wore his own shroud. A brave man would tie a piece of it to the barrel of his rifle to show his indifference in the face of death. A strip was tied to the right hand of those killed on the battlefield as a reward for having done their duty. Today, a shred of this band is hung at the door of a home where a death has occurred; People bandage a wounded limb with it before going to the healer's.

The wutu tyerokole with three stripes is worn by a child born after the death in infancy of numerous brothers and sisters. It represents the departure of these members of the family and their return in the newborn. Shaking such a band in the air honors the seventh sky and the seventh earth and asks their protection for the child. This cloth is never worn at funerals.

/113/ The kemba (literally, mother of scarifications) (Pl. III, a, 10) substitutes for scarifications when it has not been possible to perform them; on the other hand, this band is taboo to those who are ritually scarred.

The warabawolo (Pl. III, a, 12) represents the lion of the Diara: the first son of this family was born on this cloth. A boy born with a lock of hair on his forehead is seated on the cotton band to make him strong and rich. Formerly the king made a rug for his throne out of it. Since the lion is their taboo, the Diara do not have the right to wear it or even to see it.

Weapons and Tools

113 262 824 Originally, men lived by hunting and fishing. But hunger drove them to eat plants of which the first three are the yayalẽ, an aquatic plant commonly found on the shores of the Niger; the narakata, couch grass; and the norolã size, commonly called cramcram((1). Long

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1. These three plants are respectively: *Andropogon* (*Hyparrhenia*) *hirtus*, *Digitaria debilis*, *Cenchrus catharticus*.

before the cultivation of cotton and cereals was known to them, the Bambara worked the soil with wooden sticks around the base of those grasses whose seeds they then sowed. As their stock of tools developed, they began to make the first hoes and axes. In the case of the Mandé Bambara (2) the origin of these tools is linked with the history of the

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2. The names and the origin of tools of the Bambara of the Ségou region are different.

blacksmiths, *numu*, who form a kind of caste in this part of Africa as in many others. They practice endogamy, maintain joking relationships, *senankuya*, with other Blacks, and are in charge of certain cults dedicated to ancestors and to Faro (3).

3. On the myth of the divine origin of blacksmiths, see S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara." See also *infra*, p. 53 n. 1

Before the discovery of metal, ancestors of the present blacksmiths worked with wood, then stone. From then on they bore the name of *numu*, a term which today is reserved exclusively for the artisans of iron, *jirifa numu* or *farafa numu*, according to whether they worked with wood or stone (4).

4. L. Desplagnes mentions the historical aspect of the origin and role of the Sudanese blacksmiths (*Le Plateau central nigérien* /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, p. 110).

The peoples issued from the intermixture of the *ou*, shepherds (*Getules*), with the *ar*, sedentary tribes (*Fari*), have already been pointed out in earliest antiquity by writers, historians, and geographers who called them Numidians. Salluste tells us that "The Faronsû, in mixing with the

622 bones, " that is to say, that he may live to be so old that his bones
778 will be visible through his skin which is transparent.

In (n) the bent part of the wood, called kuntigi tigiya Yigi (literally, /136/ support of the chief's deed), is planted over the hair of the previously shaved albino (in o) from which it takes its strength.

In (k), twenty-two small sticks are the symbol of the number 22, [801] representing "the ensemble of words received by the ancestor Koumabana who was never caught unawares by anyone." In depositing these sticks, the officiator expresses the wish that the chief may become unbeatable like the ancestor.

[801] In (h), eight small sticks of zekene wood (1) represent the eight ancestors; they signify that man must be, like Koumabana, master of words and that he must be "true to his word."

In (f), the bird tatugu kononi, master of fire, is buried. The prayer recited states that it must be able to penetrate into the earth and come out freely, for since mythical times it has played a decisive role in combats (2).

In (g) is buried the head of the first child to die in the chief's family, in order to recall the loss suffered and to avoid its recurrence. On the skull are marked the signs of the person: two times 3 and 7, or two times 4 and 7, depending upon the sex of the deceased. In (j) the hair is buried, a testimony to the misfortune and the loss which should be compensated for. In (e) is placed the skin of the forehead, divided into two pieces; the piece on the right signifies that Faro is free to give the child for as long as he chooses; on the piece on the left are engraved the eight signs of the word, recalling that Faro, master of the word, is also master of the destiny of the deceased, whose number has been reckoned among the dead. In (p) a small

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[824] 1. Balanites aegyptica. This bush, according to popular belief, grows over the tomb of a man who died "with rancor and bitterness, as did Koumabana."

2. See p. 155. The chief, who is sometimes obligated to declare war, must be able to win it.

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The ancestors are worshipped in various places: at the doors and thresholds of houses, at the cemetery, and at stone altars placed at the intersections of lanes and in public squares. These positive cults, which are aimed at the acquisition of beneficial forces, have as a counterpart, cults in which the villagers rid themselves of all their unlucky and infectious elements; these take place, in particular, at the corssroads, dangu, which are placed under the guardianship of the earth Soba spirits.

It would be impossible to treat all of the cults of the Bambara villages. Among these, three have caught our attention; they concern the dasiri, the dangu, and the ancestral altar stones.

A. The dasiri

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The word dasiri (literally, which binds the mouth) designates the invisible spirit, Faro's representative entrusted with watching over /138/ the village, as well as the seat of this spirit and, sometimes too, the animal which accompanies it or symbolizes it.

The spirit haunts a rock, a thicket, or a tree situated near the village; the approaches to this spot are reserved for the elder in charge of the ritual (1).

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1. In Massala and Soroba it is a baobab tree; in Sama, a tamarind tree, etc. See the observations on the dasiri collected by Ch. Monteil, Monographie de Djenné /Monograph of Djenne/, pp. 137-138; L. Tauxier. La Religion Bambara, pp. 195-208.

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Generally the place is pointed out by the geomancer at the time the village is founded, or else determined by an event which occurred at that time. It is after this operation that the buildings are erected to the west of the chosen spot.

If the dasiri is a tree, no one may burn or cut its branches. In [822] many cases it cannot be approached by anyone dressed in black or indigo, colors which represent obscurity. No Peul may sit in its [563] shade (2). Any infraction of these taboos brings about the death of

2. The reasons for the taboo concerning the Peul have not yet been ascertained.

794 778 532 high forehead, black and always smeared with karite butter, confers upon the face a beneficial power. The whole mask is regularly rubbed with ground charcoal powder and with the juice of the kola nut.

794 778 The whips of the mask (*ndomo busa*) are made of *ñuana* branches famous for their suppleness. They are made at the time of the annual ceremony and only renewed the following year. At the time of their manufacture, they are soaked in water, which the members of the society then drink "in order not to have to suffer from the blows which they will receive."

[824] Each member also possesses a long whip made of the branches of a bush, the *ngere ni*, (1) which is also called "tree of Faro" for it grows in water, and which contains part of the beneficial power of the spirit. The whip is used to try out the children's courage. The one who cries or complains will carry this handicap with him through life; even after his circumcision he will be referred to as a coward.

B. Initiation

794 526 Each new grade is acquired in the course of the annual ceremony which takes place after the harvest. An elder entrusted with the sacrifices cuts the throats of the roosters offered by the postulants over the tree of the *ndomo* (Pl. V, a) and over the ritual objects placed at his feet, and then pours boiled millet as an offering. During this time the young people plow the ground where the contest, *bari* (2), is to take place; this fight will pit them against each other and give them the opportunity to show their courage and competitive spirit.

The chief designates the fighters two by two who are watched over /173/ by the *dyolokotigi*. In the contest, during which any use of legs or feet disqualifies the fighter, the one who makes his adversary fall three consecutive times is chosen to be initiated into a higher grade on the following night. After this contest, the losers must bring two additional roosters if they also wish to be initiated. Then a meal eaten in common brings together the members of the society and the postulants.

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1. *Hibiscus pandoriformia*.

2. To make oneself fall, the joust.

844 273 271 contact with water which symbolizes "the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni in the matter of family names" is a prefiguration of name-giving.

851 As soon as the patriarch hears of the birth, he comes and shakes the family *pembele* over the child's head, three or four times according to the sex, in order to pass on to him the *nyama* and the qualities of the deceased person from whom he has inherited the *ni* and the *dya*. Then, he brings the family altar *kere la boli ni* into the house of the woman who has just given birth and places it before him. Crouching upon the ground, with fingers spread over the object, he pronounces the following prayer: "You, *boli*, make me a chief, so that my family prospers, a child is /178/ born, his soul is entrusted to you; I invoke you, *boli*, night and day" (1).

Holding the child on his knees, he places the object on its chest for three consecutive times. Repeating the prayer, he next cuts the throat of a red rooster over the open sac, dips the right index into the blood, and, depending upon whether it is a boy or a girl, makes three or four crosses on the forehead of the newborn who thus becomes the "son of the *boli*," *boli dẽ*.

A white sea shell, krokrodya (2), is placed before the newborn and gently moved about to "condense his *dya* within him." Then it is tied to the child's foot for three or four days according to its sex. 846 824 751 At the same time, the mother who is entrusted with the child's *dya* until the name-giving ritual, adorns herself during the eight days following the birth with a collar (*madya*, "*dya* of the person") made from the odoriferous root of the tree bearing the same name. She will wear it until the child takes its first steps so as to protect it and to recall that she herself carried the soul of the newborn.

553 852 The name is given on the eighth day by the chief of the Komo. Under the *dubale*, a tree which shelters the village meetings, the elders assemble around the Komo altars which have been carried to the spot (3). If it is a first son, the father gives one hundred kola nuts,

1. *Boli tigi i ka masaya kanu ñe, de wolo la, a ni kalifa be i la, ngo boli šu ani kle.*

2. *Cardita vingens.*

769 At an annual ceremony presided over by the Komo, the members assemble in honor of thedead. It is called šu sô sibiri, "Saturday of the sacrifice to the dead" and is celebrated on a Saturday at the time when the ears are being formed in the millet fields.

The kotigi removes the ancestral tools from their shelter and carries them to the graves. Then the chief of the Komo and his assistants, accompanied by the maskers, carry the altars to the cemetery while singing. Each grave is put for a moment into contact with the nimara boli and the nyama boli; the exuviae of the souls of the dead each visit the bodies they once animated. To the rhythm šu bara, "rhythm of the dead, " played on the drums, the maskers dance and sing around the graves while mock labor is carried out with each of the ancestral tools. During the whole ceremony the kinsmen wail, the men near the graves and the women in the house. A victim is sacrificed, cut up, and cooked in new pots which are broken after they have been used in order to avoid the contagion of the nyama of the dead. The dances of the maskers are performed during the two days that follow. In some villages the ceremony is repeated after the harvest has been threshed.

Exceptional Cases

The Stillborn

845
783 It is said of a stillborn child that he has lost both his soul and his double, that is to say, his complete being. The parents who are responsible to Faro for this disaster are obliged to find and recapture the spiritual elements of their child, the woman the soul, and the man the double, in the course of long and sometimes painful rituals.

As soon as the woman is able to go out after the birth, both parents are led, shaved and naked, before the members of the family assembled in the courtyard. As testimony /197/ of the deceased to Faro, their hair, mixed with that of the child, is buried in the wall of their home. Then a tomato, representing the foetus, is introduced into [824] a large incision made in the woman's thigh. The man crouches and drinks the juice which drips from the fruit and which symbolizes the double. Each one bows before the elders of the family, holding their hands behind their backs, to apologize for the fault committed, sayiing: "Here is my humiliated (sex) behind me" (1).

Death at War

727 When a warrior returns home in good health after a battle, the sacrificer or the village chief orders the performance of the ni yere klo, "game of the vibration of the soul, " to celebrate his return. Men and women gather in the village square to sing: "The soul is come, the light of the soul is come, the drum of the soul will be played for it" (1). Next they form a circle and turning first in one direction and then in the other, throw a little water on the head of the individual concerned, thus "refreshing his soul. "

766 When a man dies at war, the rituals whose object he becomes bring into play the nyama boli of the Komo, the altar dedicated to the conservation of the souls of those who die a vilent death.

In former times the stone which had mortally hit a warrior was carefully kept. The corpse was washed /200/ on cowries and on stones used for slings because its nyama, which impregnated them, made them more efficient in killing. The body was also transported to the exit of the village where each villager offered cowrie shells while he pronounced the name of the victim. Then it was swung three times in the direction of the village, first feet forward and next head forward. After all the villagers had retired to their homes, the Komo was brought out. The stone that had killed the man was struck to call forth his soul; then it was rubbed on the nyama boli to make the soul penetrate the altar. A dance was held with the altar, and the body [824] was buried and covered with fresh branches of ngamyã (2). The grave was watered to "refresh the dead man" while the chief of the Komo made sacrifices over the nyama and the nimara boli.

was watered to "refresh the dead man" while the chief

Death Away from Home

766 167 The necessity of performing the rituals as well as their detailed quality are such that a Bambara is always advised against expatriation.

1. Ni nana, ni yelengu nana, ni dunu na fo o la.

2. Celtis integrifolia.

776 latter animal which is imitated by the *vukuri* during the children's
825 nocturnal ritual described on page 65.

This new information confirms the observations noted on page 47, footnote 1, concerning the identity of the Bambara and Dogon representations. Moreover, the *warableni*, like the *yurugu* (*Vulpes pallida*) of the Dogon, intervenes in divination, particularly in geomancy. The investigations permit the extension of these representations to Sudanese tribes coming from Mandé (see p. 2), particularly, to the Bozo and the Peul.

Chapter 3

826 All Sudanese peoples originating in Mandé are characterized by the
773 seeds (or fish) contained in their collarbone, these varying from one
tribe to another. On the other hand, within a tribe, the theoretical
824 content of the eight seeds, though roughly similar in terminology, differs in arrangement from family to family. Also the positions of the first and last seeds are reversed for men and women. Example: the blacksmiths have as their first seed the *keninge* and as their last the *tikaninkuru*, whereas the potters have as their first seed the *tikaninkuru* which they cultivate in the sacred fields (see p. 170) and as their last the *keninge*.

Moreover, after Mousso Koroni had stolen from Pemba the seeds he was entrusted to give on earth, Faro, through the intermediary of the /232/ animals who ate them at his order, reclaimed them from her; thus purified, he distributed them to men. The animal, which brought back to Faro the essential seed of each family, becomes the taboo, *tne*, of the family concerned, and the breaking of this taboo has the basic effect of removing the content of the culprit's collarbone. Analogous representations are noted among the Dogon.

Totemism, the so called "joking relationship" (*senankuya* of the Bambara), the caste system, and the exogamous laws of the Sudanese are based on the elements and classification of the contents of the collarbone.

Chapter 6

194 All the great adult institutions (*dyo*) are in contact with the
857 children's society of the Ndomo which reflects the universal organization
772

763 A gunshot today most likely signals the death of a hunter or the father of a hunter. In any case, however, there are always cries and vociferations by [165] the women, who are joined by their friends, relatives, and neighbors.

Horsemen ride off to notify any of the sons of the deceased who are away.

[567] Meanwhile, the chief of the slaves, the major-domo, the confidential agent, or a friend or neighbor of the deceased goes to inform the chief and the principal men in the village.

764 These personages come to the mortuary house at once, spear in hand. After being received by the man temporarily in charge of the house, they go to the deceased to discover his identity and at the same time express their condolences to the family represented by the person who received them; then they withdraw.

In the mortuary hut silence descends while the women prepare the body. They wash it with warm water usually [824] scented with basil, su-ko-la (Ocimum album and febrifugum); they dry it and wrap it in pieces of native white cotton material or else dress it in its own garments, likewise white. A mat [285] of coarse straw (tyekala, kara) is placed in the middle of the room. A fine, flexible mat made of iphène leaves is put on top of it, and the women lay out the corpse on the second mat. Sometimes they place a grindstone on the abdomen to keep it from swelling.

When these preparations are completed, the women, [352 516] dressed in white native cloth, sit down in the native fashion on tiny stools in the mortuary hut. Those who come in from outside [152] give evidence of terrible grief: they cry out, they weep, they cover their heads with a bit of cloth and hurry toward the mortuary hut. As soon as they enter, they become quiet and stop weeping.

152 764 767 Among the Bambara grief is never silent; it is customary to show it overtly. As soon as there is a crowd, the singing begins, in rhythm to the clapping of hands. One person or another will be inspired to sing of the achievements and virtues of the deceased. Professional weepers and mourners mingle with the crowd, guiding and gradually encouraging the noisy display.

764 period is sometimes reduced to three days, but a week conforms more to custom, as is shown by the Ségou chronicle cited earlier.

All this takes place "at the door of the dead," at the blon'-da, as the natives call it, that is, at the very place where the elder was wont to sit and where offerings were made to the ancestors. It is believed that the soul of the departed is there and will be gratified amidst this abundance honoring him and testifying to his kindness and also to his power. In the minds of the Bambara these repasts of communion form a very strong bond among those who partake of them. The act of eating consecrated food together is a kind of sacrament which binds the participants to mutual aid. A traitor is doomed to be cursed by the manes.

Magic, of course, can free a person from these bonds and even enable him to profit from these funeral gatherings to further the most nefarious schemes, but that does not alter the concepts on which the dyansa and the sanga-fo are based.

765 783 [824] (d) Mourning. The purification of the hut of the deceased takes place on the eighth day. Women pulverize tree bark -- from the cailcedra (2) especially -- put it in water, and sprinkle this liquid about the hut which they then sweep.

They assemble with native brooms, sing, and do a kind of dance step; they collect the dirt and throw it away at a crossroads outside the village (3). The hut may then be reoccupied. [172]

765 514 During the eight days following the burial, the daughters of the fa live together in strict seclusion. They spend their days in the blon', where they spin cotton and take their meals. To take care of their natural needs, they go out only in a body;

2. Khaya senegalensis.

3. Preferably at the main crossroads (da-n-kun'-ba-la).

794 way to this child, the way which the village follows."

796 One by one they pass before the wara-da who, dressed
539 in full regalia, is supposed to receive their oath. The oracle places the tube with the horn on each boy's head in turn, and the following dialogue takes place:

--Mun' b'i kun' (What is it you have on your head?), asks the oracle.

A kala be n kun' (I have his symbol (2) on my head). [274]

> 2. Kala, literally, is the cylindrical part of a thing; here, in the special language, it is a way of alluding to the tube with its horn and thus is a kind of symbol of the Komo.

I y'a ye wa (Have you seen it [the Komo])?

Ne m'a ye (No, I have not seen it).

I y'a fo ma min'ye, k'i kun' ti ki' son' n'i bien' ta a k'ifa (If you speak of it to anyone, may it [the Komo] smash your head and may it [the Komo] take your heart and your liver and kill you).

A ka ne fa (May it kill me).

I sirila nyama-n-fu dyala la (You are bound by the bark thong of the nyama) (1).

[824]

> 1. An allusion to the strips of bark from the nyama tree (Bauhinia reticulata), which make up the common costume for concealing the officiants during the ceremonies. It is simply a way of saying: "Do you agree to join?" And the reply is equivalent to: "Yes, for as long as I shall live."

Ne si sirila a la (My life is bound by this thong).

Ni si m'a fo ma si ye, Komo k'i kisi (If you speak to no one about all this, may the Komo protect you [literally, "save you"]).

A ka ne kisi (May he protect me).

241 may be set too early, and no amount of advice to be patient will retard it. However, for the millets, fonio, and rice, the visible characters of ripeness are known and respected (opening of the husk in the case of millet, color and bowing of the spike in the case of fonio and rice).

242 When a field is exhausted, it is allowed to lie fallow, and
824 another terrain is cleared of brush, sometimes several kilometers
from the village. A field is recognized as being exhausted when a
variety of plant known as sęgę (Striga senegalensis Benth) appears
spontaneously; when the soil is reconstituted and regains its richness,
tiękala (Cymbopogon giganteus Benth) and wägha (Andropogon Gayanus
Kunth) appear, which indicates that the field may again be cultivated.
Thus, the fields are rotated around the village that cultivates them,
342 following a cycle which may last 20 years. Temporary dwellings
are set up near the fields under cultivation, and the farmer lives there
during the work with each of his wives in turn.

[29] B. Food Crops

243 The Bambara cultivate food plants and textile plants. Millet is the basic crop in the savanna. The pénicillaires, small millet (Pennisetum typhoïdeum R.), are cultivated very far north. Their types are characterized by the length of their vegetative cycles, which vary from 65 to 140 days. In general, they are sown in a rather light soil at the beginning of the rainy season. The grain is put in the ground, without preliminary working of the soil, in holes one pace apart and a few centimeters deep. A pinch of seed is put in each hole, and one to three subsequent workings are given the soil; the first, 15 days after reaping, the others in July and August. The yield varies from 350 to 1,000 kilograms per hectare.

The sorghums (Sorghum vulgare) include a considerable number of varieties with vegetative cycles varying from 120 to 150 days. M. Vichon has collected 11 samples of sugar sorghums, 132 of late mid-season, 87 early, 138 of transplants. M. Creak divides the sorghums into three types: with full, compact, conical spikes; with elongated spikes and more detached spikelets; with very elongated spikes and with spikelets even more detached from the axis. A third

622 gives the orders concerning local celebrations and initiations.

In fact, the land originally belongs to spirits, and the chief
622 776 who succeeds the founder of the village is the only one who is able
to establish contact with the chief of the spirits and negotiate with
him. He is the earthly administrator of the spirit; he assures his
worship, the exploitation of the land, and the organization of the
community territory.

621 The first chief of the land was the first occupant; the suc-
622 ceeding chiefs are his heirs, following the order of succession. To
found a new village, a chief chooses a place in unoccupied terri-
tory, usually at a crossroads, near a water source, near a baobab,
[778 824] a doubalé, or other sacred tree. He offers sacrifices to the spirits
and receives in exchange their authorization to settle. If his group
prospers, and less fortunate families want to establish themselves
in this well-favored location, they ask the chief for authorization.
However, as Monteil (1) remarks: "... The fa of a familial community depends strictly on the patriarchy only if, attached to it by the male line, he holds some goods of the patriarchy or if he claims rights in this patriarchy. In the contrary case, the family fa conducts himself as a stranger in relation to the patriarchy, which can only treat him in like fashion ..." Every familial community becomes patriarchal at the death of the family head when he has no heirs (see the chapter on inheritance); the community then groups around itself familial communities which themselves include paternally related groups and maternally related groups. When the patriarchy is an old one, a considerable number of persons live under its aegis. All recognize dyamu and taboos (see below) in common.

621 When the settlement becomes too populous, a fa gathers a
631 group and founds another village. Afterwards, the people of neigh-
boring districts may solicit the patronage of the first village, by
participating in its djo (2) and by sacrificing to its guardian spirits.

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1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

2. See the chapter on religion.

561 and religious life). The young men of the same soli form what is called a flambolo. Three consecutive classes of flambolo form a flanton. The women have a parallel organization. Each fulani is a ton-den (child of the ton), with a corresponding association.

561 The association's role, apart from the seasonal celebrations
and the copious feasts, accompanied by a great deal of drinking, is
241 that of a mutual aid society and of a veritable village work coopera-
476 tive. It is organized, administered, and articulated with a view to the agricultural work. The chief, kariku, expedites current business, with the assistance of a syere (witness, deputy). He has a treasurer who receives offerings and makes payments, the femmaraba (he who preserves things), plus an honorary president and an adviser, chosen from among the notables and delegated by them; he must supervise the society and orient its activities.

This social organism rests, in the last analysis, on the exchanges of services initiated and supported by the kariku. He sees to it that help is forthcoming to a man making the customary work payments in the fields of his parents-in-law or future parents-in-law (in exchange for food and drink furnished by the parents-in-law to these ton-den). In like manner, a farmer asks the kariku for help in clearing a field of brush. This request is made through an inter-
431 mediary or a sènanku who [58] accompanies the request with ten
824 kola nuts. The chief accepts the present and calls his council into session to study the affair technically and to fix the salary. The same procedure is followed for the winter weeding, which calls for rapid completion, as well as for building dams, irrigating canals, paths, roads suitable for carting, etc.

An analogous system exists for the female kari, for sowing the crops as well as for gathering the harvest, mutual domestic aid, etc. The two groups collaborate for the seasonal celebrations.

643 d. The Fama. -- We see that the canton is a grouping formed under the authority and influence of a dominant family. Its unity is determined by political, social, and religious laws which regulate it. The fa or head of the dominant family becomes the Fama, that is, the patriarch, chief of the canton. He then often renounces the administration of the faya, which he turns over to his second (syere),

776 time; it is the noblest work, and one to which every member of the Bambara race must be subject. Faro is represented by a spiral, *munu*; the vibrating movements of the spiral are the same that animate the daily movements of the sun. These movements are materialized in a basketwork headdress, *yugu*, which has eight whorls and which formerly was reserved for kings. Faro's face is white, because he took it from the spirit of the air, Teliko, who was an albino. His ears are protected by two fins; his hands are of different sex; his tail is palmate, and his breast is of copper. Albinos and copper are the spirit's preferred sacrifices. All atmospheric manifestations denote his presence; his principal seat is the Niger River, but he has the gift of ubiquity and haunts all waters. Faro is accompanied by helpers, the most representative of whom is the *bolokuruni*, one-armed blacksmith of a black race. His air messenger is the swallow, who carries the
[824] fertilizing word. Certain plants are in permanent rapport with him:
● the *Yayalẽ*, the *Ngoyõ* (tomato), which is compared to blood. Thus, small fields of tomatoes reserved for the cult of Faro are cultivated in each village. All metals are reserved for Faro. The Bozo, born of Faro's first twins, enjoy a privileged position because they were not subject to the defilement caused by Mousso Koroni and can enter into direct communication with the spirit. In addition, they are the masters of the water.

776 The cult of Faro includes a whole series of taboos, such as the
784 black earth of the river which may not be used by the potters and
841 butter which may not be kept in water. But the principal taboo is menstrual blood, originally provoked by the disorders of Mousso Koroni.

B. Conception of Man

774 The Bambara conceive man as a microcosm, a resumé of the
761 totality of beings and things. The principle of duality contained in the original creative thought is realized in man by his twin souls which compensate for the separation of the sexes. In man, Faro is represented by the *ni* (soul) and the *dya* (double). Pemba is represented by the *téré* (the character, force, and conscience) and the *nyama* (which is the *téré* when it leaves its corporeal support after
[826] death). Mousso Koroni is represented by the *Wanzo* (evil force with

881 physical male factor residing in the clitoris. The operation takes
304 place, moreover, during the same period as the circumcision. It is
carried out by the potteress, wife of the blacksmith, in full daylight
before the assembled kin. During their seclusion the girls wear a
white veil which plays the same role as the bonnet of the circumcised.
[534] Instead of the sistrum, the girls shake a gourd which contains eight
millet seeds and cotton fibers which their fiancés have given them.
A goat is sacrificed for the ceremony. The collected blood is given
to the fiancé in honor of his ancestors who become those of the girl.

[93] On the last day of the ceremony the girls definitively rid themselves of their wanzo by jumping over a pyre composed of the clothes and scraps of the excised.

e. Marriage

[582] It is only after having been circumcised or excised that young
584 people may marry. The institution of marriage is regulated by a
ritual which has often been described, particularly by Amar, Monteil,
Tauxier, Aubert . . .

The marriage arrangements are made by the respective fa
of the two betrothed, after the young people have been consulted.
The request is officially made to the parents by an intermediary, a
man of caste or a sénanku. It is accompanied by ritual gifts offered
to the fa of the girl. In the Bougouni region the request is accompanied by ten kola nuts, because ten is a complete number that
[801] designates good events and future births. (Nine kola nuts are offered
576 to present condolences, four as a sign of greeting. To send three
[431] nuts would be insulting, and 19 nuts, marking incompleteness, would
be a sign of lack of confidence.) The first kola nuts to be offered
[824] are always wrapped in one or two karite leaves, symbol of life and
of fecundity. If the ten kola nuts are accepted, it means that the
father has opened the way to the marriage. The intermediary then
make a second trip the following week, bringing a cock for sacrifice
to the ancestors and ten more kola nuts; during a third trip he offers
another cock and ten more kola nuts before the entire assembled
family of the young girl, witnessing that the girl may meet her
fiancé. In the course of the fourth trip, the intermediary leads the
girl to the fiancé's family, where she will be confided to the wife
of the head of the family who will undertake her education.

BA
773 tools and the throwing weapon were made. Then, unfired pottery
and weaving were invented; and men finally came to know stone
tools, iron and the forge. The technique of making dwellings
seems to have developed more slowly.

a. Fishing

BA
Bo
226 Side by side with populations who specialize in the art of fish-
463 ing, such as the Bozo or the Somono caste, all the Bambara fish in
564 the [96] rivers or watercourses in the neighborhood of their dwellings.
A detailed study has been made by J. Daget (1). The Somono, who
are the caste of Bambara fishermen, use traps and nets for fishing;
the Bozo remain faithful rather to harpoons and small nets. They are
BA the ones who almost always make the pirogues, for they alone may
Bo enter in rapport with the spirit of the water, Faro. The nets are of
286 knotted mesh made with a weaver's shuttle, sia, and a cylindrical
227 mold, pako. The band of the net, as it is being made, is nearly
always attached to a wooden bridge especially conceived for this
purpose, the kale or dio soyo kala, a regular tetrahedron whose edges
BA are about 20 centimeters long, one of which is prolonged by a handle
Bo 1.50 meters long. The fisherman, seated on the ground, puts the
[283 bridge before him, keeping the handle close to his leg. The fibers
824] used in netmaking are da (Hibiscus cannabinus), kie (Figna unguiculata),
cotton, and now European thread.

Bo
226 The Bozo construct weirs from cut and joined tree branches;
the weirs assume several different forms according to the regions and
Bo the snares used. Fish are used for human consumption; they are eaten
BA fresh, grilled, fried or boiled, or preserved by smoking or drying. Oil,
251 used for cooking and as a lubricant, is extracted from certain fish,
252 such as the tineni.

BA Fishing in Bambara villages is done communally under the
226 direction of a fishing chief at the time the waters recede. Precise
rules of fishing rights and of rents due the masters of the waters are
respected everywhere.

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1. Jacques Daget, "La pêche dans le delta central du Niger" [Fishing in the Central Delta of the Niger], Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. XIX (1949), No. 1.

412
831 the peasant digs with the male hoe and covers with the female hoe; the work done with the female double of the peasant and the male double of the wife symbolizes the sexual union. (1)

1. M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, "L'agriculture des Bozo," [Bozo Agriculture] Journal des Africanistes [Ed., Journal de la Société des Africanistes, 1949.]

d. Basketry

285 Basketry is done by everyone, men and women; it plays a large part in the construction and furnishing of the house. Sometimes the lofts are immense baskets, woven on the diagonal. In certain regions a great mat is wrapped around the exterior wall of the round hut. The doors of mud huts are often coarse mats woven diagonally [531] which are placed before the opening. But much finer mats, made from fibers of different colors and with geometric designs with a symbolic meaning, cover the ground for sitting or sleeping.

e. Weaving, Clothes, Ornaments

291 The first article of clothing was the fiber skirt made from the [824] nyama (Bauhinia reticulata, or Bauhinia thonningii) and the covering for the sexual parts which are still worn during religious ceremonies.

[773] Mythology designates cotton as the first fiber to be woven.

286 Weaving is one of the most widespread techniques. Cotton, spun by the women, is woven by the men, in olden times by the captives, who work in the open air near the huts, in the shade of trees in the courtyards or in the public places. A primitive loom made of four vertical wooden parts connected by horizontal shafts and driven by pedals weaves long bands. The warp and woof form a ground stich and symbolize a being of intelligence and eloquence. Moreover, a science of the bands exists which is based on the symbolism of colors, designs, and numbers.

822 The Bambara distinguish three fundamental colors: white, red, and black. Each of these three tints has its history and its role

342 shovel. A coping of bricks is then laid out around the roof, leaving
room for the gutters which spill into the streets. These houses may
be topped with a second roof, a thatched cone. The four chief
timbers are set at the four angles of the house. There is a door in
the first ceiling, and precious goods or objects are kept in this part
of the house. As in the round huts, the door always opens to the
south.

The outside of the houses are plastered with earth mixed with
[237] cow dung; on the inside, the floor and lower part of the walls are
daubed with black earth mixed with fresh cow manure and bark from
● [824] the jumbo tree (Napoleona Heudelotii); the upper walls and the ceiling
are covered with white river clay. Where the two colors meet,
[531] lines of festoons traced with the finger symbolize the descent of the
third Word. On the white walls are painted ladders, calabash spoons,
animsla, signs conveying [102] the worldly situation of the owner
as well as the soul of the artist.

[356] The periphery of the entrance door is daubed with fresh cow
[769] dung every 15 days, and more liberally with rotted cow dung once
a year before the rains. This custom is linked to ancestor worship.

Canari [earthenware vessels] containing certain plants are
353 buried under the bed of the head of the family; other plants and
352 juice from roots are hidden under the women's beds. The boli are
hooked to the roofing of the houses for they must touch neither earth,
water, nor fire. Nets, diakumadjulu, are hung from the ceiling;
they hold clothes or calabashes for the food; mats or animal skins
are spread on the ground; beds, different-sized calabashes, and stools
complete the furnishings. The different huts belonging to one family
351 are surrounded by a wall that opens into the vestibule of a hut with
342 two doors, oriented north-south. This is where the head of the
family receives strangers. In the inside court are found hearths made
[354] of three stones, mortars for millet, and chicken coops, a sort of
small square hut made of clay mixed with straw. The granaries,
343 constructed on piles, have the form of round huts. They are divided
251 into four parts, where the four principal grains are kept: millet,
rice, fonio, ground nuts. Some grains may be kept together in the
same compartment, for example, millet and ground nuts. Certain
granaries, bonio, are veritable cigar-shaped pots made by the blacksmiths'
wives. When the bonio is finished, it is cut into sections

825 village, I thought at first that here lay the reason for this rest, extraordinary
781 during the time of the most intensive hoeing. Not at all; the
pagan Bambara were resting, and the women were giving their husbands
[262] and children dégé (millet flour mixed with milk and honey
water) in obedience to a hyena's command. The hyena, it was said -- and all the sorcerers confirmed this -- had emerged from its dumbness, its tongue had been loosed, and it had predicted to the people of the west that a plague even more terrible than that of the caterpillars would descend on the country. Only one means to avert it remained: to refrain from going to the fields on Friday and to treat themselves to dégé, the food so dear to Moslems.

482 On my excursions I have often met men and women carrying
757 on their heads a gourd or a basket containing a handful of leaves or
824 some bundles of roots, and apart from the customary greetings it
784 has been impossible for me to get a word out of them. And why this
silence? They were carrying a medicinal plant, a remedy which would lose all its virtue and all its efficacy if they conversed on the way, and they had to take care not to trample such-and-such a plant that grew on the edge of the path.

757 The Bambara quite readily names the plants and herbs whose
753 curative powers are known to him, and yet in the presence of a sick
784 person he will very seldom give you the name of the remedy the
latter is taking, or the names of the roots and leaves that make up his poultices. Sickness, he believes is a force, a power which tortures our bodies. He is afraid that in naming the remedy he would provide this power with a weapon against its healing virtue, which is another force or power. He sets the second power against the first to make it leave.

811 It is evident that he attributes bits of reason and emotion to
784 everything, that he attributes human feelings to all that is animate
and inanimate. The "taboos" are not merely one piece of evidence of this, they are an irrefutable proof of this attitude.

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> and metamorphoses. Although I have no precise data, this coincidence leads me to think that the same is true of cannibals of the Ubangi.

782 To be convinced one need only be present at the sacrifices; no matter whether the offering is to the *djiné* genii, the *boli* genii, or to the shades of ancestors, there recurs, always, the phrase: "Deliver us from the *souba* and the *gné*-*fla*." One of the chief functions of the *boli* fetishes is just this, and there are some whose special and primary role is to make war against the *Siri* genii. One of these fetishes is the *Nama*, a powerful *boli* which is greatly honored, venerated, and, I should say, fashionable in the Ségou circle and among all Mande peoples. The *Ngouansa*, known especially in the Worodougou, is also said to specialize in this sphere. From time to time it makes its appearance in the Ségou circle, and its owner without fail does his bit of business and fills his purse. People run to him from all sides bringing hens, goats, and kola nuts, and I have seen these *Ngouansa tigi*, or masters of a *Ngouansa*, red with blood after spending the entire morning sacrificing. Before cutting their victims' throats, they stand, facing east with arms akimbo, and shout at the tops of their voices: "*Souba*, you are dogs, you are even less, the excrements of dogs, *oubou* *bo*."

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824 Would the name of the *souba* and the *gné*-*fla* be heard so often from the lips of the Negroes, would families, villages, and sects /41/ spill so much blood or offer so many kola nuts, if they did not sincerely believe in them? Not only do they find an irrefutable proof of the possibility of metamorphosis in the fact that the caterpillar turns into a chrysalis which becomes a butterfly, they will also tell you that the winged termite, "that short-lived creature which on winter evenings comes in swarms around the lights, scattering wings everywhere, in the soup and on the plates," buries itself in the ground, swells like a sorghum seed, grows roots, and becomes a graceful shrub and then a beautiful tree provided it is spared by fire. I do not know the scientific name of this shrub or tree, but the Negroes call it *sandéré*.

782 the meat and eat it on the spot. When a *saraka* is given, barring a very special order by the sorcerer, meats, millet flour, kola nuts, and cowrie shells are left on the spot, and only the poor may take and eat them. Most frequently, the children of both sexes are called, and it is they who devour the meats and the flour. As soon as this food has been received, the leftovers are gathered and placed in a corner formed by two paths that meet or cross. When a *saraka* is offered by the whole village, a goat is almost always slaughtered, and the skin, folded in four or six ply, is tied with *gnama fou* (1), and then hung on the end of a pole at the entrance of the village.

A *saraka* is never given to the *boli* fetishes; it is given to *djiné* fetishes and to God. It may, or may not, involve bloodshed, and it may be given directly or indirectly. A direct *saraka* can be given by anyone, and by either a man or a woman; they need only be circumcised or excised, depending on their sex. But to offer a *saraka*, indirectly through the mediation of a *djiné* genie or of a *boli* (a *boli* is never intermediary in a *saraka* given to God), the owners and sacrificers of the *djiné* and *boli* genii must officiate, for they alone have the privilege of speaking and appealing directly to these gods. In *saraka* of this sort two simultaneous and distinct acts are always performed; in the case of a *saraka* involving bloodshed there is no doubt on this subject. The *saraka* animal has its throat cut in front of the fetish chosen as intermediary, and this fetish takes the responsibility of telling the rightful one that this slaughtering was done as a tribute or tax presented to him. And this procedure is in no way illogical, for it is not at all the flesh and bones of the animal that are given to the invisible being; it is the animal's life, the blood which contains its *ni*, or life. Two things are given in a *saraka* -- the material and the immaterial, and when it is indirect /66/ blood must necessarily be spilled for the benefit of the mediator, so that he can lay hands on the life of the animal given in tribute and offer it to the rightful one.

•[824] 1. *Bouhinia reticulata*, commonly called "tree of Judea."

771 181 If the Bambara have fought to safeguard their independence, they have done so primarily to preserve their faith and keep their fetishes. They have shown such great attachment for these, that their [101] conquerors have described them as rebels and applied to them the epithet Bamba, synonym of Kafri. These religious struggles in themselves allow us to state as an indisputable fact that before the arrival of the Moslems the Bambara were animistic and sacrificed to genii. /69/

776 811 Did they have an exact and precise idea of their genii as they do now? Apparently yes, for they always reasoned using themselves as a basis of comparison so that in their minds the invisible, impalpable genii to whom they sacrificed had a striking resemblance to man. It is not a man, and yet it is one, they say unable to define their concept or idea, ma si fa do (1).

776 782 The Moslem word djin translates this idea precisely, and the Bambara use it in everyday language; but when the day of the sacrifice comes, they become unaware of it and there remains only one word -- ma, meaning "man." When they redden with blood the bark of [824] the baobab (Adansonia digitata), the tamarind tree, the false cedar (family of the cedrelaceae), etc., to obtain the good graces and protection of the genie who dwells there, they always confer on it the title ma ("man"), and never that of djine. "Ma n'zira ba, ma n'tomi ba, ma djala ba; O great baobab man, O great tamarind tree man, O great false-cedar man!" begins the formula used by the sacrificer in offering victims and millet flour to the genie (2). They also have

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1. Ma; "man"; si fa' "certain kind"; do; "it is."

114 2. In /J. Henry/, "Culte des esprits chez les Bambara /Spirit Worship among the Bambara/," Anthropos, Vol. III, No. 4 (1908), p. 1 /p. 702/, note 1, there is an error in translation.

776 risk of spoiling the crop -- o be gno soun tigné ("it destroys the vitality
241 of the seed of the millet grain").
782 These genii do not have special festivals in the course of the
year. Their priests, the heads of families, offer them saraka and
sacrifices at planting time, and some of them sacrifice a hen in the
corner of the field while the crop is sprouting and growing, but that
is all.

6. Genii Protectors of Children

889 It is not until circumcision that Bambara children take part in
the mysteries of pagan worship, but they are early prepared for it so
794 that they may be introduced to the law of secrecy which they must
776 strictly adhere to later when they are initiates of an occult sect. At
about the age of seven or eight years, they become affiliated with an
association worshipping the genii responsible for protecting them.
All these sects are alike, differing only in name. On the banks of the
[825] Bani and the Niger, the object of worship is the tauri (toad or frog),
and the croaking of this animal is imitated in their festivals; some
villages have the djara (lion) and imitate its roar by whirling their
[534] slingshots, small boards four fingers wide and one to two centimeters
long, attached to the end of a string. The most widespread /children's
[824] genie/ is n'tomo, which undoubtedly gets its name from the tree in
which it lives (the /92/ jujube tree, n'tomo). It makes children hale
and hearty, preserves them from sickness, defends them against the
invisible little creatures of the bush, against spells and sorcery, and
makes them strong, steadfast, and impervious to suffering.

The confraternity of the n'tomo is modeled after that of the boli. (This is true of both kinds -- for there are two; a white costume is worn to the dance for n'tomo djé and a black costume for n'tomo fign). In order to be admitted one must offer a hen to the child who is head of the n'tomo (the n'tomotigi), prostrate oneself before the tree of the genie, and swear to keep the secret and never to speak of the n'tomo to the uninitiated, especially not to little girls.

794 The to-n-dé, or members of the association, are formed into groups, each corresponding to a circumcision, and all these groups, united among themselves by a common bond, which is the worship to be rendered to the n'golo genie, submit to and obey the head, the n'golo tigi, preferably called to-n-tigi. Thanks to this unity, a host of quarrels and fights is avoided, and they all help each other, sharing in the joys and sorrows of their fellow members. In a word, this association corresponds, in miniature, to our societies of mutual assistance and help.

794 796 To get a girl of the moment, the young to-n-dé from time to time sacrifice a small pullet. But a big sacrifice is made yearly and the victim is at least a goat; it is offered in the name of all. The offering of the general sacrifice does not prevent each initiate from adding a hen and a kola nut; food abounds, millet beer flows in streams, the association furnishes food and drinks to the whole village and to friends from surrounding villages. On this day also the youths circumcised during the year enter the confraternity of the n'golo and become to-n-de, or members of the organization of the fla-n-to. To do so they must spend from 80 to 120 cowrie shells (2 to 3 sous) and offer to the fetish the hen and two kola nuts as a sacrifice.

8. The Women's Genie

776 824 Not all villages possess this fetish tree, which is called mouso ka djiri (2), but all hamlets have a genie whose chief function is to

2. This tree is often a fig tree called n'zoro or a toro sycamore (ficus vogeli, ficus ferruginosa). Mouso means "woman"; ka is particle indicating possession; djiri means "tree"; the whole phrase therefore means "the tree of the women."

776 preserve the freshness of youth in the ladies for a long time, to give
● 824 mothers breasts that are loaded with /96/ milk, to bring fertility to
the sterile, and finally to keep an eye on the periods, or menses, of
each and every one. Every month at the new moon the excised women,
776 535 married and unmarried, spend an entire night dancing in its honor,
to the beat of a special drum called mouso denou (1). These dances
[534] are not very decent, and except for some shameless individuals who watch even these scenes from the height of the flat terrace roofs, the men among the Bani stay at a distance.

776 824 Many villages (and they are numerous in Bani country) believe that the genie takes shelter in a fig tree near the walls and establishes its home there. It is the trunk of this tree that is reddened with blood at the annual festival, and most of the dances take place in its shade, as does the repast of which the Negro women partake on this occasion. The girls excised during the year spend 80 to 120 cowrie shells, offer a pullet for the sacrifice, and are thereafter permitted to pay their respects to the genie.

794 Out of this group of worshippers arises a small mutual aid society, identical in every way with the youth's association, the fla-n-to. The head of this organization is usually the eldest woman of the village, and she is given the title of massa, "queen." All the female population call her mba, "my mother."

This society, called mouso-n-to (2), from time to time offers the people of the village d'lo, or millet beer, and once a year at the festival of the genie a plentiful repast with a dessert of kola nuts for the old and the usual drinking bout for everyone. Those who break the laws of the association are fined, and the sum of all these fines, together with the 80 or 120 cowrie shells spend by the excised girls of the year, help the massa and her associates to meet all expenses.

1. Mouso, "woman"; denou, "drum."

2. Mouso, "woman"; to, "gruel."

796 A great sacrifice to the spirit protector of the village, the
825 dasiri, is made every year. The spirit always has a mount such as
782 a snake, a rat, a lizard, a donkey, etc.; almost everywhere the mount is a terrible billy goat that roams through the village, enters everywhere, eats everything, and breaks everything without paying attention to the switch. For at least three days at the time of the sacrifice, the village makes merry; men, women, and children dance, stuff themselves with food, and drink and get drunk.

796 Just as everyone takes part in the feasting and drinking, so all participate in the sacrifice, even the women, who at least go to the
782 edge of the sacred grove, though they do not enter. And /101/ there is an abundance of everything: dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, d'lo, or millet beer, and finally meats. At least a goat, and sometimes a bull, is killed for the whole village, and the heads of families offer goats and hens, depending their wealth.

782 In addition to the sacrifices offered once a year and those offered
778 by a family when one of the children marries, the fetish receives
776 homage and tribute from just about everyone. Sterile women and those who habitually miscarry offer it many hens and fawn upon the animal that is its mount. If one gives birth to a baby, one consecrates it to the fetish, calling it dji-ri-ba ("great tree"), gnéna ma ké (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"; ké, "male"), or gnéna ma (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"). They even like to add the name of the village where the bountiful dasiri is found: Kolotomo gnéna ma (1), /102/

1. Kolotomo, the name of a village about 30 kilometers from Ségou; gnena, "genie"; ma, "man."

(man or daughter of the dasiri genie of Kolotomo). Actually, the name gnénama is given only to girls; for boys the word ké ("male") is added: gnénama-ké.

776 It is known through the mediation of sorcerers that a dasiri
778 sometimes leaves its sacred grove and its tree. This event is unusual;
824 the tree may fall from old age, but the sacrifices will be continued

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778 on the stump, the open hole, or on the sprout that comes out of the
824 ground, grows, and replaces the tree.

776 Every dasiri has a sacred mount which bears its name and, as
778 I have already said, it seems to prefer a billy goat above all. The
825 latter dies of old age, that is, unless the good of the community dictates otherwise; I saw one perish in the prime of life because of its scandalous behavior; he was inordinately fond of the ewes of the village, which he mistook for goats, and this behavior was far too shameless for a sacred being.

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A dasiri fetish tree (of Songobougou).

776 The fetish protects the village by causing the evil spells and
778 sorcery cast on it to misfire. It defends the village against wicked
621 people and against its enemies, and thanks to it the inhabitants can
793 peacefully devote themselves to their work in the fields. While averting plagues and diseases which decimate the population, it gives strength, health, and vigor to all, and finally it populates the village by making the women fertile. Above all, it is the source of unity among families for it brings them all together under the authority of a single head; the friends of the head of the family whose name, or *diamou*, it bears, are its friends, and his enemies are also its own. To fail the priest, the *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, the *dougoutigi*, is to fail the fetish, so close and intimate is the union between the two.

11. The *Koté*, or *Koré*, Genie

794 Since it is the fundamental basis of power and authority, the
776 worship of the *dasiri* can, with some justice, be regarded as the first
778 and oldest of all Bambara religious practices. That of the *koté*, or
koré, likewise seems to me quite respectable from this standpoint and
just as old. As a matter of fact, this spirit, like the *dasiri*, lives in
● [824] a little grove near the village, and the three trees it likes to inhabit are the baobab, the false cedar, and the nettle tree.

794 The worship of the *koré* is especially popular in Bani country. Today not all the villages have the fetish, but all have at /103/ least a few initiates belonging to this semioccult sect. The sect includes women among its members; it is divided into eight groups, each ruled by its oldest member, who in turn is under the authority of the *koretigi*, the supreme head of the association.

794 At the time of the annual sacrifices, and especially at the
778 sacrifices made every seven years on the days of admission (for it is necessary to be a *koré dé* (1) in order to participate in the secret part

1. *Koré*, the fetish bearing this name; *dé*, "son."

178 the Nama are made of bamboo and smaller than those of the Komo. 534 The big instrument here is the drum which is beaten with a bent iron rod. The syncopation is given on the bass drum which is wooden; the vibrations of the skins stop, and one would say that the sound is the knock of a bone that is broken clean; it gives one the shivers.

178 The Komo is always most carefully hidden, and one has to belong to the village to know in which hut it dwells. The main parts of the fetish are enclosed in baskets just like those used for transporting cotton, but three iron rods (3) on which /148/ sacrifices are made are usually kept in the skin of a striped cat. The Nama lives under a tamarind tree outside the village and has a beehive for a tabernacle. [417] The whole thing is surrounded by a djasé, a kind of palisade made of coarse mats which hides from the uninitiated both the hive and the receptacle into which the remainder of the victims' blood is poured.

178 346 The Nia and the Wara, or Djara, have round huts surmounted by conical thatch roofs. While the first is inside the village, the second is always outside at one of the entrances. The Kono has a square house with a flat terrace roof. It is always decorated with small bells fastened by lines on which are hung skulls of dogs and goats that have been sacrificed. Usually, if not always, it faces the inside of the village. The Magna does not have a temple strictly speaking, but it has its altar, a round turret surmounted by a receptacle ● [824] to receive the blood of victims. It is outside the village and always under a silk-cotton tree (Eriodendron anfractuosum -- kapok tree).

178 The Komo is equipped with a jointed mask and a cloak made of feathers of guinea fowl, hens, etc., which are used for the sacred dance. By means of a stick which the feather cloak hides from sight,

3. In the presence of the uninitiated these sticks are called Komo djoloko, and (again so that none of the mysteries will be revealed) the warada, those who speak in the name of the idol, are called djoloko samana, "those who carry the chains of Komo."

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4. Burials of the Circumcised, Old People, Heads of Families, Married and Unmarried Persons, Pregnant Women

Burials of the First Category, Those of Old People

[388] When I speak of old people I mean every Bambara (man or woman) who has grandchildren and so is a grandfather or grandmother. [224 575] When such an old person dies, gunpowder speaks and the shooting is even quite heavy if the deceased belongs to the association of hunters or there is an initiate of that sect (2) among his children. The chief

764 202 slave or, if there is none, a trusted man runs to notify the headman and his council, and all these dignitaries, spear in hand, come to verify the death and offer the /218/ first condolences to the family. Couriers at once go off in all directions to notify members of the family and friends. The person sent to married children is usually the one who was best man and sometimes the fourouboloma tigi (guardian of the wedding gifts) -- at the marriage. He carries out his mission with tact and delicacy. He first notifies the husband /of a daughter/ who summons his legal wife and orders her to go and take care of her father, who is seriously ill. So she leaves her house knowing nothing, and at least keeping a remnant of hope in her heart. It is only when she is on the way that she learns the sad news.

764 [illegible] While everyone is running right and left, the women wash the body with an aromatic plant called sou kola (1). They dress it in

2. Hunters (douzo) all belong to a special sect. In order to enter it, a man must have passed his tests and killed a deer. The hunter has a special costume. See pp. 140 ff.

1. Basil, a labiata, ocymum album and febrifugum.

761 on the branches of the sacred tree under which the fetish dwells and
782 at the door of its temple, and the members of its staff know how to
764 extol their god. Under these conditions they are without pity; they
bleed the bereaved family white, so that the tax demanded by our
778 circle officers (2) is nothing compared to the tax that they have to pay. /227/

[651] 2. The head tax is 3.50 francs per person and 5 francs for the servants of Europeans. Here France is surely not a "tyrant," but a tender mother.

782 What do they not have to give for a sacrifice to the *Komo*, for
764 example? The whole house is turned upside down to find goats, dogs,
kola nuts, roosters, and hens, *gnâma-n-kou* (*Amormum melegueta*),
[824] and *djalakouma* (a plant whose name I do not know). The family
needs all this, cost what it may, and if they have to buy it all they
have to pay double or triple the value of the objects, for others make
profits from their necessity. First a dog or a goat is sacrificed to
appease the fetish and pay respects to it. Then to find out whether
it is satisfied and its hatred assuaged, two red roosters and two hens
with golden necks bite the dust. A *bara* (1) (gourd) full of *gnâma-n-kou* fruit and another full of *djalakouma* are offered. One portion of
these fruits is used for holy water (2); the other is sold for the benefit

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824] 1. This *bara* (a large pumpkin /*courge*/ with a small opening at the top) can hold from 18 to 20 liters of liquid. The true gourd is half of a pumpkin.

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824 2. The holy water of the *Komo* is made of roots and leaves of the *djalakouma* and the fruit of the

782 764 of the staff, which lives off the altar. For the mere act of having
killed a dog or a goat, of which they receive a good share of the
meat, they get a fee consisting of a basket of sorghum (18 to 20
kilograms) and 1,600 cowrie shells (about 2 francs).

Since initiates of the fetish are the only ones who can touch the corpse and lay it in its final home, they receive 8,000 to 10,000 cowrie shells (about 8 to 10 francs) on that score. At the end of the *sangafo* (3) the god's retinue go and sweep the hut of the deceased, purify it with holy water, and drive out the last *gnâma* of the murdering *Komo*, and for this five fine hens are slaughtered. As payment for their trouble, the family also gives them five to six meters of cloth and 8 to 10 *ba* (4) (about 8 to 10 francs); 50 francs do not cover the cost.

Fortunately, the family does not bear all the expenses. Friends
[431] help a little, and everyone brings his offering: from one person they
get a /228/ hen, from another a *débé* (40 cowrie shells) or a *kémé*
(80 cowrie shells). Nevertheless, they bear most of the cost, and
[426] the fetishes are one of the chief reasons for that bonding of children (1)

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782 764 824 *gnâma-n-kou* or the *na-yanka* (I do not know the name of this plant), put to boil and soak in water. To make it effective, at least two kola nuts are offered to the fetish and five hens are sacrificed to it.

3. *Sangafo*, to go and offer condolences to the relatives of a deceased."

[802] 4. A *ba* is worth 800 cowrie shells or about 1 franc. (The Bambara count by 40 and 80, and not by 50 and 100. 40, *débé*; 80, *kémé*.)

773 intervention of any kind, they gave birth after drinking water in which Faro had secretly mixed tomato juice. They offered thanks by giving him three or four tomatoes, depending upon the sex of the child.

After the women, the men, too, gave up worshiping the tree. Instead of seeking wood elsewhere, as they had been in the habit of doing, they began to burn the twigs that fell under the balanza in order to maintain their fire, the fire it had given them.

The tree cursed them. They were thus preyed upon by illness and bad feelings: vindictiveness, hatred, jealousy. The wounds they /23/ inflicted upon themselves in order to give blood and regain their youth no longer healed and became infected.

773 825 A few among them tried to remedy this new state of affairs. Eight of the eldest men went up to the balanza and, in spite of the heat it gave off in order to repel them, they made incisions on their tongues and offered it their blood. The tree was surprised and first gave out a sort of sigh, for it appreciated the sacrifice. Finally it spoke to them and announced the coming of death. But because of their submission and the sacrifice they had consented to, it transformed them into birds, tatugu kononi (literally: little birds of fire). In order to accomplish this, it demanded that they rub their backs against the tree trunk until all their blood was gone. The men cried out in pain in the process, but just as they were about to die, their souls were transformed into birds. Their flesh and skin penetrated into the tree; their bones mingled with the white bark and the marrow became the red fruit which, from that day on, ripened on the tree. Since that time, the "human flesh" which is the wood of the balanza is rarely put to profane use. These first eight elders transformed into birds were subsequently venerated by men (1).

[326] 1. In particular by all blacksmiths. Since their transformation the birds tatugu kononi supposedly live near the balanza and respect a certain number of taboos: they must not separate but must live communally outside of villages. They are responsible for fire; though incapable of lighting it, they have the power, by their very presence, to keep it up or to put it out. A twig of damp

773 825

> straw bursts into flames when one lights it while pronouncing their name. They also protect woman potters against burns. They are considered impure because of the earth in which they dig holes and because of the fire which is itself impure.

773 As the tree blossomed and bore fruit, the sacrifices, of which it was still the object, increased its yield: leaves and fruit contained the blood of men. The latter began to eat the fruit for it was appetizing and sweet. They also cut branches to feed their animals. The tree remained silent.

But soon men took advantage of it. One man climbed to its summit, cut off all its buds, and carried them away. Those who came afterwards were terrified to find the tree mutilated. The culprit was terrified by his own action and ran away to Mandé, but there the avenging force (nyama) that pursued him caught up with him and he dropped dead.

The people of Mandé, not knowing that they had broken a taboo and being ignorant of death, sheltered him, thinking he was asleep. They tried to feed him and rubbed the corpse with sorrel and oil. Thanks to these ministrations the body /24/ kept for a certain time, but at the end of ten days, it rotted. The force (nyama) it exuded attacked other men who in turn also died.

The deceased's parents came to fetch the body. They ate the flesh because since the arrival of death, the thunder stones that fell from the sky no longer contained karite nuts and they were beginning to starve. They carried away the dead man's bones.

When they returned to the tree, it ordered them to grind the bones and rub its mutilated branches with powder. It told them that from then on it would be useless to give it their blood; they would no longer be rejuvenated and they would all know death.

At the sound of these words, three men fell; four women who unexpectedly came by suffered the same fate. The seven corpses rotted around the tree that had taken their lives. This was the last sacrifice.

The tree announced that it was forsaking men but that it would continue to give the red fruit representing their blood poured over him in the past. And since then, the tree follows an annual cycle contrary to that of other plants: during the winter season it loses its

773 Empty space, or tyema, which separates the sky from the earth, remains under the domination of Téliko. It is the domain of air, the winds and insects.

773 823 The earth is divided into seven parts which correspond to the seven heavens and are as follows: (1) dugukolo, earth; (2) dugukolo fi, black earth; (3) dugukolo dye, white earth; (4) dugukolo mana, shedding of the earth; (5) dugukolo bele, "stone of the earth"; (6) dugukolo noro, soft earth; (7) dugukolo woloflã, the seventh earth.

On earth, Faro first created deep watery holes, the abysses of the sea and the rivers which he haunts. He himself dug the first well, the ponds, and the bed of torrents. He established the schedule of the rains which fall from the seventh part of heaven to the seventh part of the earth and constitute the purification and reparation of cosmic disorders.

773 825 824 He then classified living beings. In the east, wild and domestic animals, each group headed respectively by the lion and the horse; in the west, the birds; in the north, the fish with the miri (1) at their head; the sauria, and the batrachia; in the south, all plant life which he divided into three categories (2), indicating the purifying and medicinal power of each.

773 Men were also named and classified and the races distributed according to the quality of the blood into which Faro inscribed the destiny of each. He determined the castes, beginning with the slaves.

He then decided each one's foods and, to protect /30/ the species from destruction, he indicated the forbidden foods, animal and vegetable, which each category of beings had to respect.

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1. Micralestes acutidens.

2. These are respectively: herbs, bin, headed by the narakata (Digitaria digitata); plants, fura, the first being the sindya (Cassia siberiana), and trees, dyiri, divided into three categories headed respectively by the karite, the baobab, and the nere (Parkia biglobosa).

176 173 171 The following day, in order to give thanks to Faro, the villagers went to the edge of the well to the sound of drums and sacrificed the animal. The water swelled, seethed up, and formed a streat which still runs into the Niger today.

The composition of Faro's body determines the behavior of men in the rituals performed in his honor. While the usual offerings of blood, tomatoes, raw cereal mash, and baked cakes are consumed by him and returned to the givers in the shape of material possessions (children, millet, rain) or spiritual possessions (preservation of the souls of the living and the dead), the choice content of the offerings or sacrifices, the albino and copper, are reserved only for him and help increase his strength and stimulate his action. /44/ He absorbs them for his own sake; thus it is said that: "copper and albino are the sacrificial privileges of Faro."

Manifestations of Faro

176 824 All the atmospheric manifestations in the sky are evidence of Faro's presence and power. Rain, thunder, squalls, hail, and the rainbow all demonstrate his action. The lightning that bursts forth in the koblenkaba is a weapon, a small axe (sempere ni or dyele dẽ čini) which he throws from the top of the sky. If lightning strikes, it is a proof of his revenge. In the tree, the lightning hits the gecko [825] (ala ǰugu), an evil animal which, when it lives in homes near the hearth, supposedly stirs up fires of conflagration. When lightning strikes men, it is in punishment for the breaking of a taboo. The stone axes, found at the point where lightning strikes, are collected and kept in the sanctuaries of the rain altars, to be used in case of drought or in the course of seasonal rites. They are also placed in the seeded fields, so that their strength, by communicating itself to the seed, may be beneficial to germination.

176 On earth, Faro is conceived of as a unique being whose principal home is the Niger; he is present everywhere. In practice, the Bambara believe that a spirit haunts each torrent, pond, or well, each gourd of water, each dewdrop; they call him dyi tigi, "master of water."

776 821 The second, dyi ble "red water," is Faro's copper, a reflection of koblenkaba or "red sky." It is similarly the seat of the spirit's warlike or punitive activities. Water of wrath and vengeful action, it drowns the guilty. Through it, Faro strikes the bodies and health of those who do not recognize his dominion.

Faro prefers to sojourn in the dyi fi, "black water," where he keeps his secrets. It is to this water that one prays to seek grace. It is from the dyi fi that the twelve future waters will flow.

Calm and felicity reign in the dyi sumane, "cold water," where the fish live. The dya of earthly bwings are preserved in it.

While Faro drowns those he punishes in the dyi ble, it is in the madũ (literally, person, to eat) that their bodies rot or become the prey of fish.

The sixth category of water, kosira (literally, thing of fear) is a jail. In it Faro temporarily places all that comes under his domination.

The seventh water, dyi wolõflã, corresponds to the seventh heaven.

776 823 782 In the Niger, the places inhabited by Faro bear the general name of faro tyin. These are mostly deep depressions, well known to the shore dwellers, particularly the Bozo. /46/ Sometimes a consecrated stone, placed on the shore, receives the sacrifices offered to the spirit.

The most celebrated is a place called Souko, located upstream from Koulikoro near the village of Kayo. The local spirit engendered all that now lives in the river. Because of this he is worshipped by all Bozo and Somono fishermen, who used to send delegations to the annual sacrifice that took place during the dry season.

776 823 The Faro of Ségou lives in the Faka, a deep hole located close to the right bank, facing the town. Legend has it that the Faka is extended by tunnels: one links the river to the Bani while the other opens out at Dya and was used by the founders of the settlement in mythical times.

● [825] The Faka is placed under the guardianship of a crocodile to which each year the inhabitants offered victims. At the bottom of the hole there is a fat blind scaleless polyo, which the fishermen always return to the water if they catch it in their nets "because it is Faro's gate-keeper." In olden times, a flat stone upon which were traced a representation of Faro and black dots equal in number to the inhabitants of Ségou was visible in the deepest part of the waters. On [782] this occasion an albino was sacrificed (by slitting his throat) and the first fruits of the harvest were offered to the spirit.

776 On market day, a gourd filled with river water, called *fle ndinye*
823 *faro*, is placed close to the shore where the canoes land. To drink a
782 mouthful of this water is equivalent to a sacrifice to the spirit. The
drinker gives a cowrie as alms to the beggar who drew the water, for
"never can [Faro's] water be bought or sold" (1).

1. *Ma ti dyi fere ma ti dyi sã*.
See pl. II, b.

At Sama, the *faro tyin* is a kind of natural corridor located amidst the rocks bordering and overhanging the left bank of the river.

[825] The finches nesting there warn the boatmen of the place's sanctity by flying off; the boatmen then stop to pray. In passing, they throw an offering and those who have broken taboos purify themselves by washing. Each shows the spirit all that he carries with him. Two nearby trees, *faro sõndyiri* or "trees of Faro's sacrifice," are used to tie up the white bulls at twilight. The following day, they are thrown alive into the river with millet mash and cola nuts. At the bottom of the passage, on a fairly smooth surface, the image of Faro described above was drawn each year in the course of the ceremony celebrated by the society of the Komo.

/47/ Faro also haunts ponds and wells. In the village of Nango a natural well was revealed to a hunter by a white ram which appeared out of a thicket. The village was built after the discovery of the water hole where the inhabitants now worship the spirit.

In the village of Siyango, the water of the well in which Faro
resides is tabooed, the site of the well being the seat of all the re-
ligious ceremonies of the villagers. There the newborn are presented,
and deaths and marriages announced. The sick are treated by being
[756] made to drink the well water and wash in it. From his herd, each
person offers every year an animal which is thrown alive into the pit.
[681] Finally, those condemned to death are executed by drowning in the
same spot.

Faro's Auxiliaries

776 Faro has placed spirits as his representatives in the skies, in space,
778 on earth, in the trees, and in the rocks of the mountains. They see

776 773 to it that all things proceed in good order. In addition he is accompanied by auxiliaries who participate in his work.

The most important of these is his "secretary," the *bolokuruni*, a blacksmith of the black race who had lost the use of his hands and who went to live with Faro after his crippling.

This blacksmith lived on earth at a time when craftsmen did not know the use of tongs and used to seize the red iron in their bare hands to carry it to the anvil. The man who was to become Faro's companion had reached an advanced age and was still practicing his art when one day both his wrists were broken by the hammer of a clumsy apprentice. Mad with pain, he ran to the river and threw himself in to ease his suffering. Seeing that in his grief the man had turned to him, Faro took pity on him and kept him at his side. His body was never found and a diviner told his family the happy event of his disappearance.

The *bolokuruni* accompanies Faro and assists him in his incessant labor. He is the one who consults the register in Faro's fins in which everything is inscribed. "The requested image is sent from the fins into the pupil of Faro's eye which the blacksmith watches." As this image is reflected in the servitor's eye, he uses it according to the orders he receives. Thus he verifies daily the count of those living and dead.

776 825 /48/ The spirit has numerous auxiliaries among the animals. His airborne messenger is the swallow. It never rests upon the impure earth and its wings, reproduced on the headdress of the old men, symbolize the words it carries. The scorpion's stinger is the weapon given by Faro to the original twins: whoever attacks or wounds a twin is stung by this insect. The crocodile is the executor of Faro's important works: it kills those guilty of breaking taboos, or chases undesirables away from the river's edge. The scaleless fish, called *kokoni*, directed the first streaming of the waters on earth (1). The

1. See p. 33.

tneni (2) is Faro's "ordure" which it is the duty of someone to sweep

2. *Alestes nigrilineatus*.

776 825 up (1). The small miri (2), "mother of fish," is regarded as the creator and guardian of all fish. Its name is associated with all prayers that are recited on the waters. The *dodo* (3) is Faro's messenger in the waters and transmits his orders and directives, and the *polyo* (4) is the gatekeeper, controlling those who wish to penetrate into the spirit's domain.

776 824 Certain plants are in constant communication with him. The *yayale* (5), "Faro's grass," grew on the mound where the mythical twins were born. The tomato, *ngoyo* (6), is assimilated in the blood. It carries within it the potential embryo for its seeds are multiples of seven, the number of duality. It is by means of the tomato that Faro impregnates women for it possesses, like humans and animals, a *ni* and a *dya*. When it has a double bloom, the two twin tomatoes are given to the women so that they may bear twins. If the fruit is single on the stem, it is split in two to be cooked and eaten. The gesture of splitting separates it symbolically from its *dya* which is thus returned to Faro (7).

1. The ordure has its use in religious life. See p. 258.

2. *Micralestes acutidens.*

3. *Tétrodon fahaka.*

4. The *polyo fi* is *Herterobranchus longifilis*; the *polyo ble* is *Heterobranchus bidorsalis.*

5. *Andropogon (Hyparrhenia) hirtus.*

6. *Lycopersicum cerasiforme,* the native tomato (pl. II, a).

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D. Traore. "Le Tere chez les Bambara du Ségou /The Tere among the Bambara of Ségou/." Notes africaines, January 1947, pp. 29-31.

774 Man is considered the bearer of a strong tere. Because he talks, is well informed, and knows good from evil, he is responsible for his own life and that of his family. The tere is the gaining of consciousness.

774 825 This aspect of the tere means that only domestic animals, whose life depends on man, are bearers of this principle. Wild animals "have a hard and barren life; they have to labor to feed themselves; so they do not have to bear the burden of a tere." All that lives independently of man is without a tere. (1)

The tere of domestic animals is not as powerful as that of man, but is also revealed by external signs. For instance, a horse that swings its head from right to left while it is tied up has a very bad tere; it is said to be its duga fufa (2). Such a beast is undesirable in a home for it "chases away happiness and success." A wounded domestic animal attacks its enemy with its tere.

774 784 827 The fact that the tere is that part of the person which suffers the consequences of impurity testifies to the bonds that unite man to the outer world. The tere is disturbed when a taboo, tne, is broken. If it is a good tere, it leaves the person; if it is a bad one, it becomes worse. On the other hand, the brezking of a taboo provokes a physiological change in the blood which loses its red color and becomes

1. However, according to certain informants, wild animals might also be endowed with several tere for different parts of the body. In this case, it would seem that the term designates especially the animal's physical peculiarities and not its consciousness, as in the case of man and domestic animals.

2. Literally, "the swaying of the hawk." It is said that when a hawk descends on its prey, it swings its head right and left in order to see the prey better.

845 Up to the time they are twelve, the children bathe themselves preferably in the Niger. They supposedly can walk on water and never run the risk of drowning.

The twins do not become separated from each other any more than the *dya* is separated from the living being to which it is attached. They wear the same clothes and eat the same food simultaneously. Formerly male twins married the same woman. If one of them dies
845 at an early age, the blacksmith carves a small wooden doll called
778 *flanitokele*, which takes the name of the deceased and which the mother puts on the mat next to the living child. The latter takes this doll with him at the time of his circumcision and keeps it during the period of his seclusion in order to bring it back to the parental home whence it is never removed. When he marries, he sticks the doll into the earth along with another piece of wood symbolizing the wife of the deceased. Since twins are in a sense a living replica of Faro, none can bother them without showing disrespect to him. On the other hand, they are the object of attention and precaution on the part of their family as well as their neighbors. Their presence is always beneficial. Considered invulnerable, twins used to march ahead of
[728] troups in times of war and would serve as inviolable intermediaries between the warring parties during truce.

The Hermaphrodite

826 The hermaphrodite, being both male and female, is to all extent and purpose his own twin. Consequently, he has no *dya* (1).

[825
304] 1. The hyena is considered a hermaphrodite; it can engender or conceive, depending on its size and strength: "the stronger impregnating the weaker." A tattooing system is based upon this belief.

/88/ The Albino

[143] Albinos of light or reddish skin and red hair are called *gombele* or *yepege*, this latter term being reserved for those who show the most accentuated characteristics.

826
833 The albino is supposedly born of sexual relations which took place in the middle of the day when the sun is in the *koblenkaba*, sky of

773 evolution. They also indicate different stages in the development of the forms. These may be observed in certain museums of arts and crafts which, in some villages, are the sanctuaries where ancestral material is kept. Finally, in numerous ceremonies and in the education of the young, they constitute precious milestones in the history of the Bambara people.

Fishing and Hunting

773 226 According to tradition, the fishing net was the first instrument of technology taught men, and fish constituted the primeval food.

"One day, four women went to the shore of the Niger to collect sand which they used for bedding and which also served as food since they no longer received any from the sky. As they advanced, the sand drew back so that they soon found themselves very far from their usual stopping place. They /101/ then wished to return, but Faro prevented them from doing so and asked them to work for him, promising them a precious gift in return. They "swept up the spirit's excrements" for seven days; on the eighth day, "the words began with Faro." He showed them two fishing nets, dyo, and explained to them their manufacture and use. One had very fine loops, dyonyemise (literally, net of the thin eyes), and the other larger loops, dyonyekumba (literally, net with big eyes). Both were made of the fiber of the nyama tree. The first was reserved for tneni (1) fishing, called "Faro's excrements," and the second for the capture of larger fish such as sheatfish, gurnard, and catfish.

B25

"For seven days the women were taught by the spirit and his captive; on the eighth day they were liberated. Seven days after these events they began to fish and to nourish themselves with fish.

"But they soon abused the gift they had received. Taking turns day and night, and fishing without interruption at the very place of the revelation, they taxed the spirit's patience. The latter appeared to them above the water, holding his girl twins in his arms; he complained of their harshness, their stupidity, and the weariness they caused him. Reclaiming the secret he had given them, he indicated to them that fishing would hereafter be a man's job and that they would only have the right to sell the fish.

1. Alestes nigrinileatus.

787 which the god speaks. In the brotherhoods of which we shall
presently speak, the wara-mina-den' is, as the term indicates,
"possessed by the god"; he is also said to be "the mouth of the
god" (wara da). However, the diviner can speak only unin-
[198] telligible gibberish during trance, and so this half-human, half-
divine language must be interpreted by the wara-tigi or high-
priest.

During dream or divine possession, the invisible is brought within man's reach by a sort of inner illumination; both methods may be said to be intuitive divination. Other methods, even more widely used, are based on a different procedure. These methods purport to penetrate the divine intention and will by observation of external signs. How do these signs differ from natural phenomena?

The native pays very little attention to what we call
[811] natural laws. He reasons by analogy and attributes any un-
familiar phenomenon to an invisible being endowed like himself
with intelligence and will. The indications of this will are not
precise, and it is up to each person to recognize and to interpret
them. Divination based on external signs may be called deduc-
tive. The signs may be classified in two categories: those in-
volving living beings and those involving inanimate objects.

787 Living beings. Theoretically, any animal is useful for
purposes of observation because its actions, whose determining
825 cause is unknown to the ordinary man, reveal to the seer the
divine will or intervention.

Observations of this kind have given rise to many taboos (tne). Here is an example: while crossing a [135] stream an ancestor of the Samaké was caught by a crocodile and carried down through the water to the creature's lair, where he was abandoned. It happened that the man was merely stunned and when he came to, he pondered how he might escape. Suddenly he felt some grains of sand fall on his face and, seeking the source, noticed that a thread of light came in through a tiny fissure in the rock. The grains of sand were coming through this crack, and he realized that an ant lion (gere) was throwing them in an effort to show him how to get out; so he managed to enlarge the crack enough to escape. But, remembering the insect to

564 326 774 Every blacksmith is regarded as the holder of an excellent tere. He is well-intentioned, affable, and never hurts anyone. It is easy to make friends with him, to joke with him, even if one knows him but a short time. The senankuya relationships which he has with other Blacks also contribute to the cordiality of these ties.

[304] The good tere of the blacksmith is brought into play particularly at circumcision which is preferably entrusted to a Gwonna. Being circumcised by a blacksmith causes the wanzo to diminish rapidly, hastens the healing, and improves the tere. A blacksmith is reputed to have the power of transforming himself at will into an animal or a plant. In those places where hyenas are venerated as the animal [825] protectors of a village (dasiri), they are always considered as the blacksmith's ancestors who have undergone metamorphosis. (1).

1. Particularly in the village of Konodimi, situated 21 km. to the southwest of Ségou.

773 564 326 412 The ritual paraphernalia now preserved in each village comprise models of all the tools manufactured by the blacksmiths since their first appearance.

a. Wooden tools The craftsmen first used wood, gradually changing the shape of the objects. From a simple stick /116/ (generally in sunzun) (2) or from a rough-hewn block, they gradually made more perfect tools, obtaining the shape desired by rubbing and polishing on rocks.

773 564 326 411 The first weapon used in hunting was a throwing instrument in the shape of a boar-spear, the semenkala (from kala, handle, Fig. 9, A). Hewn from one piece, it comprised three distinct parts: (1) the bulonda; (2) the semenu; and (3) the koli (literally, hook). Men threw the object with all their strength at the pursued animal or else they dug into the earth where their prey was hiding with the pointed end (semena) which was often poisoned with a viper's venom. The weapon was the object of blood sacrifices carried out on the koli and destined to increase its strength.

2. Diospyros mespiliformis. The wood of this tree is very hard.

794 In some villages, the sacrificer never
776 consumes butter or milk, foods which
778 the Peul furnish the Bambara.
[563]

the culprit and deprives the villagers of their protector.

The spirit of the *dasiri* sometimes has as its compansion an animal
794 which seems to represent the group's ancestor. At Ségou, it is a
776 crocodile; at Ouélenguena, a she-ass; at Koulikoro, a monkey; in
825 other places it is a male goat which is replaced when it dies. At
Konodimini there are a series of deep intercommunicating wells which would have served as homes for the ancestors. These holes are at present occupied by hyenas which are considered to be incarnations of the blacksmiths of former times and which are the *dasiri* of the place.

The *dasiri*'s animal is free to enter homes and to eat what it finds. It is often fed by the inhabitants. No one may attack it and whoever breaks this taboo, set on by a vengeful *nyama* of which he cannot
[582 rid himself, risks being forbidden to marry, even being no longer
626] tolerated in his native village (1).

1. This was, at Soroba, the case of Dji Diara, who, after killing a hyena, could not marry as no woman was willing to link her destiny to his.

As its name indicates, the function of the *dasiri* is to maintain
794 the stability and integrity of the village. It is the "support of the
776 inhabitants' lives"; the numerous rituals (individual or collective),
782 of which it is the object, reveal the importance of its role as well
as the diversity of the beings invoked. To Faro are addressed prayers for rain; to the ancestors prayers for questions /139/ concerning the family; and to the spirit of the tree when it is a matter of stopping an epidemic. But directly or indirectly, any sacrifice offered to the *dasiri* is offered to Faro. The victims (sheep or fowl) and the offerings (cotton bands, kola nuts) are always white (see Pl. 3, b).

When children reach the age of six or seven, they are led to the
794 tree; they sit on its roots upon which kola nut juice is spat, and are,
778 by this fact, introduced into the village cult. They are then presented
852 to all the allies *senãnku* and especially to the blacksmiths with whom
they proceed to joke.

794 On the following night, the future initiates are led into the bush to a place called biri yoro (literally, place of initiation), where they sit down upon the ground, their heads covered with a piece of cloth.

At a sign from the dyolokotigi, a member causes the ritual instruments to roar or sing in succession; then he hides them and the postulants must find them. As they are not able to do so, a series of hazings are inflicted upon them (1) after which they are shown the instruments and each in turn made to repeat the solemn oath:

"If you have heard the dyara of the uncircumcised, that is it. Chisel a piece of wood, make a hole, put a string through, turn it, it is that which is the word of the ndomo dyara. If you reveal it, may it take your heart, may it take your liver, may it kill you" (2).

Next, they are made to lick three times the object which is then entrusted to them so that they may learn to use it. The same ritual is performed for each instrument, and the prayer is repeated with only a change in the name.

The young men frequently sacrifice upon the altars of the ndomo.
794 The usual content of the sacrifice is the gray lizard /margouillat/,
782 busa, likened to an uncircumcised boy (its tail representing the
825 foreskin). The victim's wanzo, liberated by death, joins the wanzo
contained in the altars and, consequently, that of the members.
[262] The animal is then cooked and eaten.

C. Activity of the Society

794 At the time the fields are being cultivated, the members who are called upon to do work take their ritual objects along. The young

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1. These hazings are often severe; fun is made of the ignorance and fears of the postulant.

2. Ni ye me bilakorow ka ndomo dyara, nin do ka djiri dese, ka wo bo o la, ka dyuru ndo o la, o bi fyeku, o de bi ndomo dyara ka fo, ni ya korobo, a ki sõ ta, a ki biñe ta, a ki fa.

IV. Rites for the Renewal of the Year

196 183 These rites involve individual, familial, and collective actions; the latter bring into play most of the institutions (1). Everyone, from the newborn to the elder, must undergo a kind of purification which consists essentially of the /207/ rejection of the breath and forces of the past year and of the taking in of new breath and forces. It is, according to Bambara expression, " a refreshing of the body and soul. " But the renewal is not limited to elements which make up the person; it extends to the cosmos and the cardinal points.

1. The individual rite of the family chief is performed with the instrument ngoni, which is used to make on the wall of his česo the drawings representing the universe. (2) He starts out with an offering of tomato juice to Faro who presides over the family use of the object and who is present thereafter. The fruits are squeezed; a hedgehog ● 825 782 is sacrificed over the juice so that no other spirit may touch it. Next the man sacrifices a gray lizard as a reminder of his own condition before circumcision. This sacrifice represents a new circumcision offered to Faro and increases his strength.

The man who is offering the sacrifice puts his tongue in the juice of the fruit without swallowing a drop in order to give Faro " a complete accounting of all his acts and thoughts during the past year (work, births, deaths, illnesses, quarrels, fortune, and misfortune) just as a subordinate gives an accounting to his superior. " He puts his right little finger in the liquid and places it on the wall over the drawing representing Faro. Then he sucks in a little of the tomato juice through his nostrils and blows it over the ngoni, thus sweeping away the remaining life from the past year which he still had in his body. A new air which comes from Faro then circulates in his lungs. He next fills his mouth with the liquid contained in the male goatskin of the instrument and spits it out immediately to show the spirit that

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1. As examples of collective rites we present those which are performed on the stone altars of the village (fara ba) (see p. 129).

2. See p. 172, Fig. 10.

121 1. Among others J. Toutain, *C. R. des Garnered Shelves de J. Frazer* /Report on the *Garnered Shelves* by J. Frazer/.

concerning the absence of historical documents and the difference in periods. To admit these postulates, it is necessary to prove precisely this absence and also the incapability of oral tradition to keep alive the traditions and ways of viewing the world over long periods of time.

In any event, whatever the opinion adopted, it would be good methodology to admit as an immediate hypothesis the probable or possible role played by the Sudanese world as a preserver or transformer of attitudes, rites, and concepts which scholars find everywhere else but which remain unexplained. For in a few years nothing will remain to be either disclaimed or confirmed concerning these systems which are on their way to rapid disintegration. Because of mechanization and an unconscious wish for self destruction the Black civilizations will soon become only a shadow of their former selves and the instability of their material will not allow them to be reconstituted in their complexity and grandeur.

And whatever the fate of this hypothesis, we may find, as a result of such thinking that the religious thought of the Blacks, whether original or not, will take its place in the philosophy of history and in the history of humanity.

/231/ ADDENDA

000 The research conducted in the field during the publishing of the present work has brought to light the following facts which, we believe, it will be useful to present succinctly to the reader.

Chapter 1

776 825 Because of the loss of the seeds in their collarbones, Pemba and Mousso Koroni actually have an animal aspect which they owe to their impurity as well as to that of the uncultivated earth which they symbolize. Pemba is represented by the warableni (*Vulpes pallida*) and Mousso Koroni by the *kongowuluni* (unidentified fox). It is this

776 latter animal which is imitated by the vukuri during the children's
825 nocturnal ritual described on page 65.

This new information confirms the observations noted on page 47, footnote 1, concerning the identity of the Bambara and Dogon representations. Moreover, the warableni, like the yurugu (Vulpes pallida) of the Dogon, intervenes in divination, particularly in geomancy. The investigations permit the extension of these representations to Sudanese tribes coming from Mandé (see p. 2), particularly, to the Bozo and the Peul.

Chapter 3

826 All Sudanese peoples originating in Mandé are characterized by the
773 seeds (or fish) contained in their collarbone, these varying from one tribe to another. On the other hand, within a tribe, the theoretical
824 content of the eight seeds, though roughly similar in terminology, differs in arrangement from family to family. Also the positions of the first and last seeds are reversed for men and women. Example: the blacksmiths have as their first seed the keninge and as their last the tikaninkuru, whereas the potters have as their first seed the tikaninkuru which they cultivate in the sacred fields (see p. 170) and as their last the keninge.

Moreover, after Mousso Koroni had stolen from Pemba the seeds he was entrusted to give on earth, Faro, through the intermediary of the /232/ animals who ate them at his order, reclaimed them from her; thus purified, he distributed them to men. The animal, which brought back to Faro the essential seed of each family, becomes the taboo, tne, of the family concerned, and the breaking of this taboo has the basic effect of removing the content of the culprit's collarbone. Analogous representations are noted among the Dogon.

Totemism, the so called "joking relationship" (senankuya of the Bambara), the caste system, and the exogamous laws of the Sudanese are based on the elements and classification of the contents of the collarbone.

Chapter 6

194 All the great adult institutions (dyo) are in contact with the
857 children's society of the Ndomo which reflects the universal organization
772

787 which he owed his life, he vowed that he and his descendants
825 would evermore respect it. That is why the gere is tne for all the Samaké, the descendants of that ancestor.

Before beginning a fight with Blisi, Bacari Dyan, a Peul, wanted to know the outcome. A marabout told him to get two rams: "Name one Blisi and the other Bacari," he said," and watch them fighting." To be sure, during one of their combats, the ram named Bacari killed the one named Blisi and such, too, was the result of the fight between Bacari Dyan and Blisi.

But although a living animal can show the divine will through its actions, the dead body of one offered in sacrifice is no less informative. It is the duty of the seer or initiate to discover the signs of the divine will from the dying spasms, from the position taken by the body, or from the relative position of the entrails or the general constitution of each animal. This branch of mantic is called extispicy, from which are derived various methods of divination used by the Bambara.

It is common practice to sacrifice a chicken; if it falls on its back, with its feet extended away from the observer, the omens are thought to be unfavorable. If the feet point toward the observer, the omens are good. Any other position is doubtful and, if need be, the sacrifice is repeated until a categorical answer has been obtained.

Often enough a Bambara returning from a long journey wants to learn whether one or another of his wives has been faithful to him. He sacrifices a rooster and, after opening it, examines the scrotum; if it looks normal, the wife has been faithful, but if it shows [136] certain peculiarities, notably a reddish color, her guilt is proved.

787 Inanimate objects. Every Bambara possesses a set of divining cowrie shells. He almost always carries a stated number of shells -- usually 12 -- in a small bag. If he wants to consult the omens -- about the most varied sorts of enterprise -- he takes the cowries in hand and throws them onto the ground from a point not far above the ground. He reads the answer in the general arrangement of the group and also in the position of individual cowries relative to one another. If one cowrie is

791
609 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that
821 was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and
show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the
Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
791 start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equip-
224 ment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well
as an arsenal of magic weapons.

The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
825 they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of
778 this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at
some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The
animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[552] wara-ba means lion; sa-ma, elephant; ma-li, hippopotamus;
bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names
indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief
that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The
attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an appli-
cation of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual
and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a
small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
231 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
552 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of
825 their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once
held and which is still shown on occasion: fa-li meaning "donkey"
derives from fa meaning "powerful," just as nya-ri meaning "cat"
derives from nya and has the same meaning, along with ba
Meaning "goat."

231 meaning "goat." In the case of the goat, there remain some
825 customs that are very suggestive. Its milk is the basis of the
most solemn of all oaths, that of fraternization; milk is also
used to put out fires started by lightning and the hide is used to
make sandals worn by widows during the period of mourning.
The chronicle tells us that a certain dish made of a goat's head
gives rise to the chief's power and sustains it (1). In spite of all this, the goat shares with the donkey a general scorn and they are considered to be the born companions of slaves. This is perhaps why some people refuse to allow either animal to come into the house. Indeed, it is believed that a rich and powerful man can be ruined if either of these animals enters his house or, even worse, if he touches them.

778 *Magician's work*. So it is that man is immersed in a
strange fluid. In the final analysis, everything, man included,
791 [149] is merely a manifestation of this fluid. Currents and
754 eddies have all forms of life at their mercy, and only the strongest are able to resist, control and even acquire in the struggle greater power than they would otherwise display. "The one who knows" can avoid or follow this chaotic movement; he can control himself and others. He is the real "master" (*soma*) and he alone can utilize this ever present and ever powerful invisible world.

754 What makes a magician can be described by a single
term: the magic weapon, to be used for defense as well as for attack, and indeed for anything else, by one who knows how to use it. Let us consider some of the examples in the Bambara arsenal.

For anyone who wants to destroy an enemy, the *so ma sama* (lit., "bundle of the person of the house") is a valuable weapon. It is a mysterious powder, kept in the horn of a hind, in which is placed a small stick. It is used in the following manner: let us suppose that a Bambara wishes to harm a person who is passing through the village. The Bambara secretly takes

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1. See p. 31, in connection with Dina Wara.

754 operator can drop it into the food or drink unobtrusively while serving the victim.

Some of the powders are tossed at the victim with a quick fillip and enter the skin through the tiniest abrasions.

All this is accompanied by the direst curses and constitutes what is known as korti su. These poisons act in various ways, some quickly and others slowly. It is said that the su-mugu only takes effect gradually. Its action is to be seen in a certain amount of swelling of the abdomen, which causes death within a few months. There is not a single native who is not terrified of the korti, and there are Europeans who have experienced the dangerous effects.

Some korti are not the effect of manipulations but rather of true spirits of evil set in motion by magic practices. The following is an example of the type called donna, which includes also the so ma sama and su-mugu. The symbol or material representation (boli) of this donna is a kind of ball, not very large. In order to use it, the operator places it on the blade of one of the native mattocks called daba. The spell is worked at night. The spirit is attracted by the sacrifice of a chicken and offerings of kola. The operator utters his curses against the people -- often far away -- and asks the spirit [151] to undertake vengeance. If the spirit agrees, a sound is heard which resembles the noise made by the flight of a dung bettle (1). [825]

1. I have been told that this is the reason for the fear certain Bambara have of this insect.

This is the genie starting off on its mission. He will fatally sting the enemy during sleep and then return, announced by the same noise of flight as was heard on his departure. If the imitator should go to sleep while the spirit is away, he will himself be killed in the same way as the victim. He must stay awake for the spirit's return and again sacrifice chicken and kola to him.

754 The korti are counteracted by the kana, which are de-
755 fensive weapons, more particularly, curative. Based on the same principles and using similar ingredients, they are essentially

311 Bambara seeks the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-
621 siri) or, more exactly, determines where this genie dwells. It
776 may be a spring, a hill, or a rock; often it is a fine tree, in-
794 variably surrounded by a grove or at least with a grove nearby.
Then, always following the same procedure, he finds out the conditions under which the genie will allow someone to settle in his domain in order to live there and cultivate the lands. Thus, a contract is worked out which governs the man's exploitation of the genie's territorial domain. As a result, provided he worships the genie in the manner required, the man [228] will be able to work under the protection of the god. Anyone who has had a share in the contract, even if only through representatives, will likewise profit if he scrupulously observes the conditions.

621 The establishment of a village requires the cooperation of
several communities, each represented by its fa. One of these fa
622 will either appropriate the leadership or be chosen as the rep-
793 resentative or chief of the others. Sometimes he may be merely
794 primus inter pares; otherwise he may have managed to have his
primacy conceded by the rest. It is this chief who treats with the genie in the name of the whole village; thus, he becomes the "high priest of the genie" (nyana-n-son-na-ba) with the essential function of "making the offerings" (son') required by the cult. Furthermore, he administers the earthly domain of the genie and is therefore called dugu-tigi (master of the earth).

To the nyana dugu-da-siri is usually attributed the same dyamu as that of its high priest, just as though the genie belonged to the spiritual family of the priest. This is a result consistent with the mentality of the Bambara.

621 The same mental state accounts for the custom in certain
villages of dedicating a living animal, often a ram, to the
776 nyana dugu-da-siri and believing it to be the god's mount. The
778 animal is allowed to wander freely about the village, and its
● [825] mischief is never punished; indeed, the people enjoy caressing
and indulging it. The animal takes on some of the attributes of the genie and is, as it were, endowed with certain supernatural virtues, so only good can come from contact with it.

621 Theoretically, each settlement has only one genie, but
776 actually it may have several, especially if it has been settled by

794 Some of the clergy use a disguise when officiating in
[292] public; furthermore, the ceremonies are held only at night.

Finally, in the presence of the profane, the initiated
[198] use a special language for everything referring specifically to
the cult. The greatest secret of all is the name of the nyana,
[551] because anyone who knows the name has complete power over
the spirit it designates.

794 From the point of view of the disguised clerical body,
298 this secrecy is virtually impenetrable. A disguised person loses his human personality and is withdrawn from the natural world. It is an accepted fact that it is dangerous for those not affiliated to intercept his glance through the tiny openings in the mask; undoubtedly his person on that occasion is impregnated with a fluid whose emanations are fatal to those who, not being affiliated, are unprotected against them.

Some of these disguises include a headdress or mask
and for the body a kind of costume usually made of long strips
of vegetal material; is this, as has been suggested, simply a
means of dominating the herd of adepts and even more the pro-
fane through the terror such regalia inspires when seen at night
by the flickering light of torches and bonfires? It seems more
probable that one must put this matter on the plane of the
supernatural in order to understand it. Dangerous wild animals
●[825 are believed to be incarnations of evil and powerful gods, and
776] an attempt is made to present an outward appearance consistent
with the terror merely seeing them inspires, in order thereby
to acquire the supernatural qualities that characterize them (1).

1. There is no doubt that some individuals, under the influence of the role of wild beast that they are portraying, have been led to commit actual murders during ritual observances. I have often heard this asserted in connection with the dyara (lion).

794 It should be noted that the costume, gestures, [259]
782 dances, songs, and music of the dye-n-fa and their acolytes

The Operation of the Brotherhood

794 A brotherhood is a spiritual family whose internal affairs are conducted like those of a community with natural filiation. The nyana-tigi has the role of fa, and the assemblage of dye-n-fa-u, reinforced by the initiated and the leading believers, serve as the community council. Thus, questions confined to the cult and to administrative matters are dealt with by the nyana-tigi acting alone or with his council, just like the fa in the community. Therefore, the description of the latter's duties which has been given above will suffice to explain by analogy the practices in the brotherhoods. There are, however, certain details peculiar to the brotherhoods, and these will be set forth in what follows.

The Cult

794 786 The cult is made public during certain ceremonies, of which the two most important are the one at the time of sowing and the other at the time of harvest. It is accepted as fact in the brotherhoods that at planting time the boli copulate so as to produce issue at the time of harvest, hence the hymn to Nama which says: "boli fyerela ka den' (the boli has flowered to bring forth fruit)." These ceremonies are accompanied by orgies [262] during which the celebrants, both men and women, are said to indulge in sexual licentiousness. It may be concluded from these two series of happenings that the rites seek by appropriate mimicry to encourage the fruitfulness of nature.

794 776 825 There are other indications which show that it is indeed toward nature that the rites are directed. In certain brotherhoods, notably the Kore, the costumed officiants who farm the cartege pretend to be wara-u (wild beasts), suruku-u (hyenas), golo-u (monkeys), and other terrifying inhabitants of the bush (1).

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1. They are all called wara or sogo, terms used for all wild animals. It should be noted that every nyana is called wara (power, lord).

794 776 825 It is not rash to suppose that in this case they are symbolizing the role, probably primordial and in any event primary, of the nyana to control the supernatural and particularly malevolent forces of the bush. As a matter of fact, the most popular and important nyana are the protectors of the harvests which represent virtually the only property of the natives. One of the nyana is even especially concerned with agricultural work (2); this is Tyi-wara (god of agricultural work), who presides over the first clearing of the land at the beginning of the winter season.

In any case, whether the animal is regarded as the visible form of a spirit or, if one prefers, the perceptible manifestation of a supernatural force, the belief is strengthened by the common practice of the interdict (tne) and, still more, by the magical acts required of a hunter.

Another aspect of this belief is seen in the choice of an animal to represent the mount of the nyana dugu-da-siri.

794 825 It is for a similar reason that the brotherhoods usually adopt the name of an animal: for the Nama this is usually the hyena (suruku) (3); for the Komo, the hyena (suruku) or the elephant (sama); for the Dyara, the lion; for the Kono, the ostrich (kono-ba), etc. It is said that the cries, the shouts, and

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[461] 2. In the native vocabulary, "to work" (tya-ke, short for tyi-ya-ke) primarily means "to work in the fields."

[552] 3. The hyena is often designated by the words nama-koro (old Nama) or suya-koro (old sorcerer) when the speaker does not want to use the animal's real name (suruku). There is a whole vocabulary for use to "avoid" the names that are dangerous to utter, and the name of the hyena is one of them.

794 the sounds of the [263] trumpets to announce the meetings
825 imitate the cry of the animal (1).

[534] 1. This is true of the Dyara. In the brotherhood of that name, a cry like a roar is drawn from an instrument made as follows: the hollow trunk of a palm tree is covered at one end by a tightly stretched skin; a long thong or rope runs down inside the trunk from the center of the skin; the operator pulls the rope tight, then lets it slip through his hand by jerks, and having achieved a certain facility, he succeeds in producing a noise like a roar.

000 Can it be that the costumes made of bark strips, the strange masks, and the mimicry of the people who wear them are connected with mysteries which are now unknown to us, either because they have been adopted without understanding and thus deformed beyond recognition, or because they are the last vestiges of far older cults, today unfathomable since they no longer exist?

Did Egypt inspire these cults, as some people believe? Or rather was Egypt herself influenced originally by a preexistent Black civilization whose last surviving traces she kept alive by altering them? This is an unlimited field for speculation.

794 805 Generally speaking, the cult is in abeyance on Monday and Thursday of each week. The same days are holidays from communal work and are left to the "poor people" for their own profit. There must be some connection between these two facts, and it should further be noted that, as a result, the religious week is reduced to five days. A question naturally arises, therefore, as to whether the week as now observed is truly native. It seems likely that the week is an oriental contribution, more specifically Islamic. It could be a coincidence that Islam organized slavery, and when a seven-day week was adopted, two days were allotted to the gens de poëste, as used to be said in FRANCE,

794 still -- aside from the fact that this would not appreciably alter the broad lines already indicated -- the present state of our knowledge makes it possible to describe in detail only a few great brotherhoods which are widespread among [270] the Bambara with whom we are here concerned; these are based on cults of Komo, Nama, Kore, and Nya.

The Komo

794 173 The Komo is held in particularly high esteem in the Ségou area. According to the accepted legend, the Komo was brought from Mandé country, where it is supposed to have been introduced by El Hadj Moussa. El Hadj Moussa, having failed to obtain pardon for his sins during a visit to Mecca, turned to the study of magic. He obtained the Komo in exchange for a miraculous shirt (dloki) which some sorcerers had woven for him and which had the faculty of growing longer or shorter at the pleasure of its owner (1).

El Hadj Moussa is also supposed to have brought a no less miraculous canoe from Mecca, which is still preserved in the greatest secrecy in a swamp in the vicinity of Kouri, near Naréna, in Mandé country.

Finally, he brought back many boli. As he was coming up the Niger, some of them fell into the river and were transformed; [825] the n-tigi (silurids or torpedo fish) is thought to be the result of such a transformation.

According to another legend, the Komo was brought from the Orient, not by El Hadj Moussa but by Fa Koli Sissokho, a follower of El Hadj Moussa.

Whatever may be the truth of the matter, the Bambara are convinced that the Komo was brought to Ségou from Mandé

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1. Another example of miraculous cloth, in that case a gift of the marabouts of Djenné, is referred to in the chronicle of Ségou in connection with the installation of Bakari, son of Biton (p.).

181 the kingdoms from each other; for him a mineral is not a vegetable
811 nor a végetable an animal. He differentiates between the animate
772 and the inanimate and does not confuse the genera and species. But
has he known how to establish a definite, clear, and well-demarcated
line of distinction between man and the rest of creation? No, he bases
his ideas of all things on himself or, to be more definite, on what he
feels and believes himself to be. In addition to genii and spirits,
he sees conscious forces and energies everywhere in nature. He cannot
define these forces; his ideas on the subject are confused and indefinite.
But, nevertheless, it is true, that he attributes a glimmer of reason
and feeling to everything. Obviously the black man does not attribute
a soul -- in the sense that we understand it -- to everything; nor does
he say that everything is the home of a genie or a spirit; yet he cannot conceive of pure matter. He finds instinct in animals and special
virtues and properties in plants. In inert matter he encounters
phenomena which he cannot explain, and since he always uses himself
and his reasoning as the basis of comparisons, he endows everything
with the immaterial, invisible, imperceptible attributes of reason and
feeling. In his mind I repeat, matter is not a soul, or a genie as he
conceives of one; yet it is a being, a force, a power that has its own
existence and the ability to act of its own accord. Here are a few
examples taken from a thousand:

811 In July, 1908 at the time when the crops were sprouting, certain regions of the Ségou circle were invaded by tiny caterpillars
731 measuring barely 0.025 meters in length. They were a beautiful
782 velvety black with pale green lines on their sides; they came from the
●185 east out of no one knows where and myriads of them proceeded toward the west in serried ranks. Wherever they passed everything was
eaten, and the eleusine /African millet/, corn, and sorghum had to
be resown.

While these creatures were devouring the crops, the Moslem cried his insignificant formula toward the east and repeated, "God is great." He prostrated himself, crouched on his heels, devoutly shaking his forefinger, but all was in vain, for the quivering black wave continued to draw back on itself, to hump its back, and then to grow longer /14/; it continued to advance and to grow. The pagan

821 whitened the front of his dwelling with a mixture of millet flour and
131 water that had been offered to the shades of his ancestors, and poured
782 chicken blood here and there; then he thought it best to meet in
council and consult his sorcerers. The same orders were given every-
● 825 where: a potentate, perhaps a prince, doubtless of the caterpillar people, was celebrating his wedding and respects must be paid to him. All the pagan villages did so, and the marriage of the caterpillars took place one fine morning at daybreak. Two or three caterpillars were placed at the bottom of old worn-out gourds and carried far up a path on the west side and out of the village by a procession of women and girls, singing and dancing, and preceded by furiously beating drums. They placed the little creatures on a spot determined by the elders and, after a wild dance they made their farewells, foolish farewells, stupid perhaps and yet nevertheless touching. For if the young people called to them with a long burst of laughter: "I na somaon fo (you will greet your people)," and some old shrews in a tone of command cried: "Ta so! (Go home!)," there were more who said to them: "Toumouni (little caterpillar), an bi déli (we implore you) have pity on us, go back now to your kingdoms; everything is eaten, and there is nothing left. Go, bring greetings to the people of your family, greet them all and greet them well."

They continued to come through for at least eight days, but their number decreased and a storm came and swept them away. Every Bambara will tell you that these caterpillars do not talk, that they have no soul. And yet if you try to make him understand that he has rendered them futile, useless, childish honors and that they could neither enjoy his music and songs nor understand his prayers and supplications, he will shrug his shoulders: "Tigné o (you are right)," he will tell you with a mocking air, and cutting your talk short will add: "Ou tara!", and one who knows the Bambara will guess the full implication: "Nevertheless, they left."

In August, 1908 a large part of the population of the villages
825 located in the environs of Ségou spent the day of Friday the twenty-
787 eighth in sweet idleness. Since I knew that a Kono fetish brought
by its masters to recruit initiates was going from village /15/ to

825 village, I thought at first that here lay the reason for this rest, extraordinary during the time of the most intensive hoeing. Not at all; the pagan Bambara were resting, and the women were giving their hus-
[262] bands and children dégé (millet flour mixed with milk and honey water) in obedience to a hyena's command. The hyena, it was said -- and all the sorcerers confirmed this -- had emerged from its dumbness, its tongue had been loosed, and it had predicted to the people of the west that a plague even more terrible than that of the caterpillars would descend on the country. Only one means to avert it remained: to refrain from going to the fields on Friday and to treat themselves to dégé, the food so dear to Moslems.

482 On my excursions I have often met men and women carrying
757 on their heads a gourd or a basket containing a handful of leaves or
824 some bundles of roots, and apart from the customary greetings it
784 has been impossible for me to get a word out of them. And why this silence? They were carrying a medicinal plant, a remedy which would lose all its virtue and all its efficacy if they conversed on the way, and they had to take care not to trample such-and-such a plant that grew on the edge of the path.

757 The Bambara quite readily names the plants and herbs whose
753 curative powers are known to him, and yet in the presence of a sick
784 person he will very seldom give you the name of the remedy the latter is taking, or the names of the roots and leaves that make up his poultices. Sickness, he believes is a force, a power which tortures our bodies. He is afraid that in naming the remedy he would provide this power with a weapon against its healing virtue, which is another force or power. He sets the second power against the first to make it leave.

811 It is evident that he attributes bits of reason and emotion to
784 everything, that he attributes human feelings to all that is animate and inanimate. The "taboos" are not merely one piece of evidence of this, they are an irrefutable proof of this attitude.

2. Taboos

614 825 784 The Bambara people are divided into several families or lineages each of which bears a special name, or diamou, and sees at its head /16/ certain plants or animals as protectors and patrons. The Djara lineage claims kinship with the lion, the kana, or iguana (1), the boumou, or dondol; the Dambélé with a large black monkey called Ngoba; the Tankara with a spiney silk-cotton tree, the dondol; the Kouloubali with the wild pig /biche cochon?/, the Mpolio (2), and the panther. There is not a lineage that does not have one or even several tné, or taboos. As will be seen below, lineages of the same name often regard themselves as bound by a tie of fraternity and friendship, while a difference in the tné shows, that a division occurred at some particular time.

Europeans, churchmen, military men, and civilians, usually call the Bambara tné "totems." Since Long, the one to speak first of "totemism" and "totems," this question has been treated at length by serious and distinguished authors, by competent authorities. Their definitions cannot be applied to the Bambara tné. Striking as is the resemblance of some of them to the totems of the Redskins and the Australians, I cannot apply to them the definition given by Nicolay in speaking of the Redskins: "The Redskins also believe in the existence of spirits peculiar to individuals (as fetishes are to Africans) and which, in animal form, bear the names of totems." (3) The

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[136] 1. A kind of large lizard resembling a small alligator. It lives on river banks and near ponds, and though it prefers the land and climbs trees, it likes to play in the water. The French commonly call it gueule tapée /"smart jaw"/.

2. A slimy and spined fish.

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3. /Fernand/ Nicolay, /*Curiosités des lois et coutumes.*/ *Histoire des croyances,* /*superstitions,*/ *moeurs,* /*usages et*/ *coutumes* /(*selon le plan du Décalogue*) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. The History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Manners, Ways, and Customs (according to the outline of the Decalogue)/, / Vol. 1, Book 1, Chap. 1. /Paris, 1901.?

Bambara *tné* are completely different from fetishes and have nothing in common with the latter. In a chapter (1901, p. 61) of his work, "myths, cultes et religions /Myths, Cults, and Religions/, A. Lang defines totemism for us thus:" The word "totemism" or "totamism" was applied for the first time by Long... to the customs of the Indians.. which acknowledges kinship with animals.... Totemists spare animals which are of their flesh and blood...." According to A. Lang, the Redskins and Australians believe themselves to be truly and physically related to the animal-totem, and they number among their grandparents /17/ a doe, a toad, an ant, a rabbit, etc. All actual physical kinship is of course communicated by means of blood, and two beings who have in their veins the blood of the same individual are related. In order to be of the same flesh and blood as their totems, the Redskins and Australians thus believe themselves to be actual sons of an ancestor who formerly was a doe, toad, ant, rabbit.... In Chapter II of his work *Histoire des croyances, moeurs et coutumes,* Nicolay gives one to understand that the Redskins believe that at the moment of death the spirit of their ancestor found shelter in the body of the animal which serves as totem; is it possible that Lang, who is silent on this point, is unaware of Indian beliefs in metamorphosis and metempsychosis? He does not report the fact anywhere in his work *Myths, cultes et religions,* but whatever hypothesis one may make on this point, the fact remains that according to him Indian beliefs imply a real physical kinship. If one assumes that the first ancestors of the Indian were changed or metamorphosed at some

614 825 784 given moment into a doe, toad, ant, or rabbit -- a singular evolution if ever there was one, one may suppose that at the moment of the metamorphosis these animals did not exist and they are all, men and animals, of the same flesh and the same blood; or, more plausibly, the ancestors changed themselves into already existing animals, procreating among them does, toads, ants, or rabbits as they had formerly reproduced human beings, so that in killing one of these totem animals a Redskin must always be afraid that he is killing a son or grandson of the ancestor, or some other of the latter's descendants, and therefore of his own flesh and blood (1).

1. /sic/ A. Lang does not seem to doubt that the people of whom he speaks -- Redskins, Tahitians, and Africans -- give a very broad meaning to the words "father," "mother," "brother," "wife," "son," and that they customarily use them to refer to persons with whom they have no bond of kinship.

[578] There is nothing like this for a Bambara. To call someone a wild animal is in his eyes an insult, and to call a man the son of a dog (*oulou den*) is enough to make him angry, to throw him into a fit of anger; even if he has a dog for a *tné*, that is a wrong which will sooner or later be avenged. He does not number among his ancestors a dog, or a panther, a lion or a snake. A *Kouloubali* would be much surprised to learn that a doe gave birth to him, and there is not a Tankara who thinks he has /18/ the sap of the *dondol* or the juice of its fruit in his veins. When a *Djara* calls himself the son of a lion, or a *Dambélé* the son of a big black monkey, what they say must be understood in a very broad sense, as an analogy. We ourselves say of a special benefactor: "He is my father," "he is my mother," "he is my all."

171 614 825 784 Here the Bambara is akin to the Christian Quichés of Guatemala of whom D. G. Brinton speaks in his "Nagualism," 1294, -- O. Stoll

171 in his *Die Ethnologie der Indianerstämme von Guatemala* /The
614 Ethnology of the Indian Tribes of Guatemala/, Leyden, 1882. This
● 825 work is cited by Lang in Chap. III of *Mythes, cultes et religions*.
184 His *tné* is a friend, a protector, and may be defined as follows: it is an animate or inanimate being entitled to the respect and veneration of an entire lineage, family, or clan, in recognition of an outstanding service which has prevented the lineage, family, or clan from disappearing or becoming extinct, or has preserved them from a misfortune.

173 Every *tne* has its legend. Although in the mouth of the black
614 man the tale may be embellished and decorated a little so that it
539 varies somewhat, the substance remains the same. I will translate
184 a few of these legends, preserving both their form and their substance.
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Legend of the Two *Kouloubali*

The people were at war; everywhere there were only fugitives. The *Kouloubali* lineage had been cruelly stricken and reduced to two members, two brothers lost in the bush with their wives and children. The elder who followed /sic/ his brother at a distance, (since for fear of being surprised, they avoided camping in the same place). He arrived at the bank of a swollen river and saw he could not cross, there being no boats. "Where can I flee now?" he lamented. "I am in the hands of my enemies! For me and my family it is death or slavery." A *mpolio* was passing by; it heard, was touched by compassion, and, raising its big, bearded head out of the water, called to him: "I can take you over, have no fear!" The elder of the *Kouloubali* and his family, with their weapons and baggage, settled themselves on the slimy back of the strange fish and crossed the river. Then he said to the fish: "Listen, good *mpolio*, my brother and his family are over there on the bank. Do not render them the /19/ service that you rendered me, for he is an ingrate, one without a heart, and he might kill you." -- "Kill me? Come now!" and the fish dove, disappeared, and emerged far over near the other bank, at the moment when the young *Kouloubali* was wondering how his older brother had been able to cross such a wide

773 and deep river when there were no boats. "It is thanks to me," said
614 the *mpolio*, "place yourself on my spine as he did." And so the
539 younger brother and his wives crossed the river.

784 The young *Kouloubali* was heartless. When the women had put
down their gourds and baskets on the bank, at the moment when the
•825 *mpolio* leaped up and raised the full height of its body out of the
water in order to dive and disappear, he threw his spear at it. The fish struggled for an instant, the water foamed, reddened, and then there was quiet: it was dead.

The family of the young *Kouloubali* cut up the animal and, without shame or remorse, invited the family of the elder brother to come to the feast. "Eat the *mpolio*," cried the latter, "never! And may there be a curse on any of mine that dares to eat it." Since that day, the mpolio has been the *tné* of the descendants of the elder *Kouloubali*.

To some extent it is also the *tné* of the descendants of the younger brother, but they eat it except for the head.

Legend of a Branch of the *Taraoulé*

A woman saw all her children die, and so she trembled for her last born, a sickly, puny little boy whom her milk did not help. One day she was alone in her hut crouched on her mat with the child on her knees, spinning cotton when she began to cry and moan: "You will not live, you will join your elder brothers, you will go away and leave me alone." A spitting snake was passing by; he came in and gently coiled himself around the body of the child. The mother let out a cry, and the neighbors came running.... The snake slowly uncoiled and left the dwelling while the child held his arms out to it and smiled. He did not die but became strong and healthy, for the snake had drunk all the *gnâma*, all elements of illness that were in him. From that day on the *Taraoulé* branch of which this child is the father does not eat the spitting snake, or *n'gorono*, for the curse of the ancestor would descend on them: that is, the spitting snake is their *tné*. /20/

Legend of Another Taraoulé Branch

773 A woman was fetching wood in the forest when she was seized
614 with the pains of childbirth. "All alone, what will become of me?"
539 she cried. "I have no one to help me; who will wash my child? Oh!
784 I will take a corpse home with me." She knelt by her load of wood,
●825 gave birth to her child, collapsed, and lost consciousness. A big
black monkey was munching fruit in a near-by tree; it saw her and was moved.... It played midwife, washed the little creature, rocked him in its arms, and when the mother came to herself it gave her back her little boy. From that day on no descendant of this Taraoulé branch eats ngoba; this big black monkey is their tné, and the ancestor would curse anyone who did so.

Legend of the Two Djara

Two Djara brothers with wives and children were fleeing before their enemies. Overcome with fatigue they sat down in the shade of a dondol determined to go no farther. Actually, they were so plagued by thirst that they could not go on. An iguana was wandering in the vicinity; it had pity on the two Djara, so it climbed the dondol and, working with its tail and feet, succeeded in producing a gentle dew under the tree. All were able to quench their thirst with the sap held in the calyxes of this tree's blossoms. "The kana (iguana) shall from now on be my tné," said the elder, "and I curse any one of my descendants who kills or eats it." -- "Think it over," said the younger, "is it not to the dondol that we owe our lives? Is it not its sap that quenched our thirst? Would it not be better to take this tree as tné?" The two Djara argued, could never agree, and separated. The kana became the tné of the older branch, and the boumou, or dondol, that of the younger branch.

Legend of the Samaké

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614 My grandfather has often told it to me; he himself got it from
539 his ancestors.... A Samaké -- I cannot tell whether he had been
784 fording the river or driving the stakes to which fishing mats are fastened
825 -- was seized by an alligator which dragged him to the depths of its
den. The alligator did not kill him, /21/ for it had fed.... Leaving the unhappy man to his sad thoughts, it withdrew.... It did not go away, however, and from time to time it hit the water with its tail at the entrance of the hole, making it quite clear that there was only one way out and that this was the door. Stretched out in the ooze, the unhappy Samaké moaned: "Who will save me from those terrible claws and those powerful teeth?" An ant lion at the top of the den was watching for flies and ants in the bottom of its pit; it had pity on the man and, working with its two horns, succeeded in bringing in a ray of sunlight to revive the hopes of the Samaké. "Will I be saved?" he asked the ant lion. Two pinches of sand were the answer, and he understood. Working with both hands, he helped the ant lion; the hole grew and he was able to get through. He escaped. When the alligator re-entered its den, exhausted with hunger, it was disappointed not to find its prey there. So as not to invite the curse of their ancestor, the descendants of this Samaké respect and venerate the géré, or ant lion, and it is their tné. Other Samaké have the elephant (sama) for their tné.

773 These few legends are sufficient; they all show us that although
825 the Bambara believes that the bond with the tné is simply one of
811 fraternity, friendship, and gratitude and not a bond of real and
772 physical kinship, he nonetheless does not fail to attribute reason and
emotion to everything around him, to animals and to plants. In nature he does not find pure matter; rather he attributes human feelings in some degree to everything, and throughout he sees a force, a power, an intangible, which he does not know how to define and which thinks, loves, laments, and weeps.

789 Animals also have *gnâma*, and the *gnâma* of birds are among
778 those most feared. By preference, they attack little children, who
825 die in convulsions as a result; it is impossible to mistake the cause
of their illness and death, since the hands and feet of the child curl
153 up like a bird's claws. Birds are thought to be especially wicked in
winter time, undoubtedly because they nest, find plenty of food, and
[751] are big, fat, and vigorous. During that season mothers tie around
the necks of nursing infants a string that has nine knots in it, which
places them under the protection of their *gnâma*. Birds keep their
gnâma even when dead, and I remember that in November or December,
1907, all the village of Songhobougou attributed a small influenza
epidemic to the death of a big black bird (the *djougo*), which a
European killed in one of their fields. "We have pains in our kidneys,
we have pains in our throats, and we cough," they said dismally,
"and the hunter is to blame for it all. *Toubabou ko té vva? A ye
djougo do fa en ka forola, djougo gnâma do*.... It is the European's
fault, he killed a *djougo* in our fields and we are weighed down with
gnâma." /29/

Chapter 2

Animism and Its Consequences

1. The Beliefs about Spirits

776 The Bambara has not deified the forces of nature. Although in some instances he shows them respect and fears them, he leaves them without priest, /sacrificial/ victim, or altar: he is not a "nature worshipper" in the strict sense of the word; his true religion is animism. His spiritualism knows no bounds and he sees genii just about everywhere. The bush is full of these spirits; they lodge in the trees or lounge astride branches; they run around the outskirts of villages; splash in ponds and wells; they pull themselves onto high rocks,

> 794 789 and metamorphoses. Although I have no precise data, this coincidence leads me to think that the same is true of cannibals of the Ubangi.

182 To be convinced one need only be present at the sacrifices; no matter whether the offering is to the *djiné* genii, the *boli* genii, or to the shades of ancestors, there recurs, always, the phrase: "Deliver us from the *souba* and the *gné-fla*." One of the chief functions of the *boli* fetishes is just this, and there are some whose special and primary role is to make war against the *Siri* genii. One of these fetishes is the *Nama*, a powerful *boli* which is greatly honored, venerated, and, I should say, fashionable in the Ségou circle and among all Mande peoples. The *Ngouansa*, known especially in the Worodougou, is also said to specialize in this sphere. From time to time it makes its appearance in the Ségou circle, and its owner without fail does his bit of business and fills his purse. People run to him from all sides bringing hens, goats, and kola nuts, and I have seen these *Ngouansa tigi*, or masters of a *Ngouansa*, red with blood after spending the entire morning sacrificing. Before cutting their victims' throats, they stand, facing east with arms akimbo, and shout at the tops of their voices: "*Souba*, you are dogs, you are even less, the excrements of dogs, *oubou bo*."

791 825 824 Would the name of the *souba* and the *gné-fla* be heard so often from the lips of the Negroes, would families, villages, and sects /41/ spill so much blood or offer so many kola nuts, if they did not sincerely believe in them? Not only do they find an irrefutable proof of the possibility of metamorphosis in the fact that the caterpillar turns into a chrysalis which becomes a butterfly, they will also tell you that the winged termite, "that short-lived creature which on winter evenings comes in swarms around the lights, scattering wings everywhere, in the soup and on the plates," buries itself in the ground, swells like a sorghum seed, grows roots, and becomes a graceful shrub and then a beautiful tree provided it is spared by fire. I do not know the scientific name of this shrub or tree, but the Negroes call it *sandéré*.

776 196 What is the meaning of the word sa? Could it be the original name of the Divinity? Since certain Bantu tribes have a high regard for snakes and dedicate a cult to them, some Europeans have wanted to see in it a translation of the word "snake." That is a great and fundamental error. The word sa, "snake," and the word sa in the sentences sa bi fign, sa bi na, etc., may have the same spelling, but [194] the pronunciation is different. The hard "s" of sa, "snake," is pronounced by opening the teeth slightly and protruding the lips, and the word sa in sa bi fign, etc., is pronounced by closing the teeth and pulling in the lips. Thus, these are two quite distinct words. Moreover, to claim the snake is, or has been, the Bambara divinity seems to me a piece of stupidity. If they do not claim any bond of real or physical kinship even with the animals that are their taboo, one must believe a fortiori that they would not claim /77/ an animal, even a snake, as Creator and sovereign Lord. Some Bambara have it as a family taboo, and a branch of the Mande people have such great respect for the python Minia (1) that now they are known only by the

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776 825 101 1. The Baganda of Uganda before they became Christian venerated the snake as the dwelling place of a demon. Their snake has a great resemblance to the animals that are family taboos for the Bambara, or better still, to the python Minia, taboo of the Mande branch commonly known under the name of Minia-n-ka. Since the Minia-n-ka derive their name from the word Minia, name of the snake that is venerated and an object of public worship, some have insisted that the Bambara or Bamana derive their name from the word Bama, meaning "cayman" /a species of alligator/. If the cayman, Bama in

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the Bambara language, had given its name to the people, this animal would be taboo for them, as the *Minia* is taboo for the *Minianka,* and the *Mani* or *Mali,* the hippopotamus, is taboo for the Malinke. None of this is true of the cayman in Bambara country; it is in no way the taboo of the tribe. Moreover, the word *Bamana* could just as well come from the word *bama,* a kind of tench /a fresh-water fish of the carp family/ which is found in abundance in the Bani and the Niger. This idea has not occurred to the partisans of the cayman, who undoubtedly are not familiar with the fish called *bama*. The word *Bambara* comes from the word *bamba* which means "rebel" and, in the mouths of the Moslems, carries the meaning of *Kafri.* *Bambara* means "the rebel who has never submitted to Islam," and the Negroes of the west speak of *Bamako* or *Bambako,* "the river of the rebels." Father Copte, a student of the Bambara recognized by the Negroes of the Ségou, quickly understood this fact and noted it in his accounts in the *Annals* of the White Fathers. Mr. De Lafosse, an administrator most conversant with the native laws, customs, and ways, recognized it also, and I share their opinion concerning the name Bambara.

776 name of *Minia-n-ka,* the people of the Minia snake. But have the
196 Minianka ever worshipped, or do they still worship, the snake as their

776 day by the soli (those who are to be excised). It is a kind of semolina
782 (very fine couscous called basi) which is eaten with an /88/ extremely
304 spicy sauce of smoked fish. It is called basi k'li because, in order to
262 provide this repast, the little girls are obliged to run from door to door,
clapping their hands, singing and begging (k'li).

Among the invisible wanderers, there is one which is strongly
776 reminiscent of our "werewolf." It is the souroukou, an imaginary
● 825 hyena, whose supposed existence has brought about a strange practice.
514 Every evening one sees groups of little boys and groups of little girls,
turning aside a little into the bush: they all go in a band to take their last precautions and attend to the wants of nature -- union is strength even against the gnéna.

776 Many other gnéna are among this group that roams the village; they flutter in the b'lon, or entrance huts, they live in horrible filth, hung over doors, on the walls, and on the posts that support the terrace roofs, and the only hangings to be seen anywhere are eggshells, heads of millet, fruit pits, and seeds from the bush, which are offered to these friends as saraka. Nor are private huts without them, for the gnéna roll in the ashes of the hearth, snore on the mats, and take the air in the conari (1); there are some everywhere.

[415] 1. The conari is a baked earth receptacle used for water, beer, and cooking food.

Finally, there are gnéna or djiné who are powerful. Without mercy for their enemies, whom they abandon to all kinds of sorcery and evil spells, they are full of both attention and consideration for their friends. They can cause sickness, poverty, and other calamities to descend on a family, a village, or a whole region; but they can also side with them against a visible or invisible enemy; they can protect them, exorcise anything, and grant real blessings to each and all. The characteristic trait of the gnéna, in fact, is not that they can refrain from doing harm, but that they can also do good directly by performing a good act. Some choose to live in a rock, others prefer a knoll or a large tree near the village, and there are those who

776 risk of spoiling the crop -- o be gno soun tigné ("it destroys the vitality
241 of the seed of the millet grain").

782 These genii do not have special festivals in the course of the
year. Their priests, the heads of families, offer them saraka and
sacrifices at planting time, and some of them sacrifice a hen in the
corner of the field while the crop is sprouting and growing, but that
is all.

6. Genii Protectors of Children

889 It is not until circumcision that Bambara children take part in
the mysteries of pagan worship, but they are early prepared for it so
794 that they may be introduced to the law of secrecy which they must
776 strictly adhere to later when they are initiates of an occult sect. At
about the age of seven or eight years, they become affiliated with an
association worshipping the genii responsible for protecting them.
All these sects are alike, differing only in name. On the banks of the
● [825] Bani and the Niger, the object of worship is the tauri (toad or frog),
and the croaking of this animal is imitated in their festivals; some
villages have the djara (lion) and imitate its roar by whirling their
[534] slingshots, small boards four fingers wide and one to two centimeters
long, attached to the end of a string. The most widespread /children's
[824] genie/ is n'tomo, which undoubtedly gets its name from the tree in
which it lives (the /92/ jujube tree, n'tomo). It makes children hale
and hearty, preserves them from sickness, defends them against the
invisible little creatures of the bush, against spells and sorcery, and
makes them strong, steadfast, and impervious to suffering.

The confraternity of the n'tomo is modeled after that of the boli. (This is true of both kinds -- for there are two; a white costume is worn to the dance for n'tomo djé and a black costume for n'tomo fign). In order to be admitted one must offer a hen to the child who is head of the n'tomo (the n'tomotigi), prostrate oneself before the tree of the genie, and swear to keep the secret and never to speak of the n'tomo to the uninitiated, especially not to little girls.

845 If one of the twins dies early in life, as usually happens, the
778 survivor receives a statuette which he keeps all his life with jealous
431 care and to which he gives the name of the deceased. He dresses it to the best of his ability, often covers it with glass trinkets, such as bangles, beads, bits of amber, rings, etc., and well-bred people never give him a gift without adding at least 5 cowrie shells for the statuette.

845 The sinsin also grants twins a curious privilege. A scorpion not
778 only cannot bite them, it is even at their service, and on their order
825 will bite a fellow who has displeased them.

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A twins' doll.

845 It is easy to recognize twins (flani in Bambara) as they have
551 special names, the commonest being Sinna, Maféné, Gno, and Ouassa. /99/

10. The Genie Protector of Villages

776 The genie protector of a village lives on a knoll or a rock;
621 almost always, if not invariably, its home is a baobab or false cedar near the walls, in a little grove intersected by neat paths, well kept and often raked.

796 A great sacrifice to the spirit protector of the village, the
● 825 dasiri, is made every year. The spirit always has a mount such as
782 a snake, a rat, a lizard, a donkey, etc.; almost everywhere the
mount is a terrible billy goat that roams through the village, enters everywhere, eats everything, and breaks everything without paying attention to the switch. For at least three days at the time of the sacrifice, the village makes merry; men, women, and children dance, stuff themselves with food, and drink and get drunk.

796 Just as everyone takes part in the feasting and drinking, so all
participate in the sacrifice, even the women, who at least go to the
782 edge of the sacred grove, though they do not enter. And /101/ there
is an abundance of everything: dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, d'lo, or millet beer, and finally meats. At least a goat, and sometimes a bull, is killed for the whole village, and the heads of families offer goats and hens, depending their wealth.

782 In addition to the sacrifices offered once a year and those offered
778 by a family when one of the children marries, the fetish receives
776 homage and tribute from just about everyone. Sterile women and
those who habitually miscarry offer it many hens and fawn upon the animal that is its mount. If one gives birth to a baby, one consecrates it to the fetish, calling it dji-ri-ba ("great tree"), gnéna ma ké (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"; ké, "male"), or gnéna ma (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"). They even like to add the name of the village where the bountiful dasiri is found: Kolotomo gnéna ma (1), /102/ (man or daughter of the dasiri genie of Kolotomo). Actually, the name gnénama is given only to girls; for boys the word ké ("male") is added: gnénama-ké.

1. Kolotomo, the name of a village about 30 kilometers from Ségou; gnena, "genie"; ma, "man."

776 It is known through the mediation of sorcerers that a dasiri
770 sometimes leaves its sacred grove and its tree. This event is unusual;
821 the tree may fall from old age, but the sacrifices will be continued

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778 on the stump, the open hole, or on the sprout that comes out of the
824 ground, grows, and replaces the tree.

776 Every dasiri has a sacred mount which bears its name and, as
778 I have already said, it seems to prefer a billy goat above all. The
925 latter dies of old age, that is, unless the good of the community
dictates otherwise; I saw one perish in the prime of life because of

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A dasiri fetish tree (of Songobougou).

its scandalous behavior; he was inordinately fond of the ewes of the village, which he mistook for goats, and this behavior was far too shameless for a sacred being.

843 but is lost after the first months -- something that is inexplicable to her. To avoid this misfortune she covers herself with grigris and talismans; she wears them on her neck, on her hips, down her breasts, on her arms. One in particular I cannot silently pass over; it is the *tafo*, a narrow leather thong held in the skin of a monkey's hand and knotted sometimes around the wrist and sometimes above the biceps.

842 A sterile woman or one subject to accidents during her
843 pregnancies appeals to the *Komo*, *Kono*, or *Nama boli* fetishes, but
more often to the *gnena*, or *djine*, fetishes, and above all to the
782 *dasiri* fetish, the genie protector of the village. Through the intermediary
778 of the priest, the *gnena-sonnaba*, or *dougoutigi*, she offers
it hens, kola nuts, and *dégé*, or millet flour mixed with water. She dedicates and consecrates the fruit of her womb to the *dasiri* and swears an oath to offer a sacrifice worthy of it if she succeeds in carrying her child to full term.

I should reiterate in passing that the *dasiri gnéna* is not, as
842 one might suppose, constantly sitting down or astride of a /167/ leafy
843 branch or, if you like, enclosed in a tree trunk with bark as a fitted
782 jacket. It walks around, readily leaves the tree, the spring, or the
778 rock which it uses as dwelling, home, or resting place; it visits its
825 relatives and close friends, it carouses with its companions every time a drinking bout is held in honor of one of them, and when there are no parties, it takes advantage of its freedom. It is afraid of walking with its feet on the ground, so for its romantic excursions in and around the village, it straddles its mount, which is a snake, a lizard, or a donkey, but usually, as we already know, a terrible billy goat. It is this animal, especially, that the sterile woman showers with her attentions; she often goes far into the bush to fetch a handful of tender grass which is its delicacy, and every day measures of millet and maize bran are set aside for it. When she becomes a mother, she overflows with sacrifices and acts of thanksgiving, and her child receives the name of the fetish. He will be *djiriba*, *gnénama*, or *gnénamaké*, as I have already said in the paragraph in which I discussed the *dasiri*, who is the genie protector of the village and the first of the *gnéna*.

Spiritual Principles (1)

114 1. A few comments on the spiritual principles of the Bambara (in particular on the *dya* and the *nyama*) have been collected in the chapter entitled "Théorie des âmes" by Tauxier, *La Religion bambara* (pp. 14-25), in which the author appraises the works of the Abbé Henry and of Ch. Monteil. Some of the observations made in the following chapter have been summarized by the author in "La Personne chez les Bambara" and in "Note sur le tere chez les Bambara /Note on the Tere among the Bambara/."

It will be useful to compare this study of spiritual principles with the studies made among the Dogon and presented respectively by M. Griaule, S. de Ganay, and the author in *Masques Dogon*, *Les Devises des Dogon*, and *Les Âmes des Dogon*.

761 776 The Soul, *ni*, and the Double, *dya*:

[826] Faro controls the principle of life in water, which is his realm as well as the life-giving element par excellence. In the bodies of living beings, this principle has its seat in the blood. The blood of the sacrifices offered to the spirit (or failing that, the juice of the tomato, a transformation of blood) is a contribution to the reservoir of life controlled by Faro—life which he redistributes in all its forms throughout the universe. Water is the privileged element in which life may persevere indefinitely. Elsewhere, life is maintained only if water comes to nourish it.

761 776 842 833 Faro's creative function is materialized by each marital partner eating a tomato before sexual relations. This act is accompanied by the recital of a prayer. The juice of the fruit, which contains the body of the future child, transmits life according to the following mechanism:

761 776 842 824 Faro receives the offerings of tomatoes grown ritually in the consecrated fields, as well as the blood of victims slain in his name above the waters. Blood and juice, spreading over water, the fertilizing agent, are collected by the swallow, Faro's airborne messenger. Liberated in space, they return to the soil with fertilizing rain and penetrate the tomato seeds which thus contain a particle of generative power.

774 his consciousness, as well as that part of his being which, through the body, makes him sensitive to events. If man is vulnerable through his double, it is his *tere* that is affected by any breaking of taboos; it receives and submits to impurity.

824 The *tere* has its seat in the blood and the head (*kun tere*). It develops in the foetus in the course of gestation and is composed in part of the parents' *tere* to which is added that of the deceased person whose soul and double the child has inherited.

774 553 787 The appearance of the child's *tere* is determined by the old men of the family in the course of the name-giving ceremony which takes place publicly on the eighth day after birth. After carefully examining the child's hairline along the forehead, the manner in which his eyebrows join, the shape of his eyes (the seat of intelligence), mouth, hands, and feet, one of the old men present announces in a loud voice the revealing signs of his character. The position of these signs makes it possible to say whether a child has a good or a bad *tere* and to make predictions about his life. A slight bald spot on the middle of his head will make him a rich man; a wide and deep skull will make him a chief. The old man then swings the child in the direction of the four cardinal points above the family altars and gives him the first name of the deceased person whose *ni* and *dya* he has inherited. Some of the hair, shaved off shortly before, is then thrown into the Niger by the father who pronounces the name while facing the river. The gesture and the word are meant to entrust the *tere* to the spirit of the waters and to ask his protection. On the same day the blacksmith marks out on the child's face the scarifications that act on his *tere*, giving him strength, courage, and virtue.

774 787 828 As the child grows, certain of his physical peculiarities are interpreted as characteristics of his *tere*. If he grinds his teeth while sleeping it means he will attack his parents; if he often takes hold of his left wrist with his right hand he will always be victorious. A girl who walks swinging her hands and throwing them behind and who raises dust with her feet while walking will destroy her husband's fortune. Some informants say that a person has several *tere*: /62/ one for his manner of walking, one for the way he carries his head, one for the shape of his limbs, and one for the breasts if the person is a woman (1).

1. The physical signs determining the *tere* are very numerous. On this subject see

The *wanzo*

778 The *wanzo*, an evil force created in the beginning by Mousso Koroni's impurity, was caused by the curse, of which she was the 304 object after her betrayal, and which she communicated to the earth during her underground journey. After she had maimed herself on Pemba while having sexual relations with him, her jealousy pushed her into avenging herself on the women who mated with the *balanza*. Her madness and despair prompted her to pursue her betrayal to the very end. With nails and teeth she excised and circumcised the men and women she met during her travels. The *wanzo* she carried about thus penetrated the human species, making the operation necessary for all those to follow. Faro could not remedy this, but his protection is invoked for each child during the operation. The headdress of the circumcised symbolizes the sky and the purifying light.

At birth, each child receives the *wanzo*, "the word of Mousso Koroni," in its blood and on its skin at the moment of contact with the earth on which it is born. This force, also called *kono nyama*, "the *nyama* of the inside," is not to be confused with the *tere* but is of the same nature and is transmitted to everything the bearer touches. [826] Its seat is mostly in the foreskin of the man and the clitoris of the woman, and it represents the disorder in the individual: "it makes man such that he can live with no one, can stand no one, and cannot stand himself." In addition, it is opposed to fertility.

In order to become a stable individual, to marry, procreate, and to sacrifice, the child must be rid of his *wanzo*. This is achieved in the course of circumcision or excision and in the rituals that end the seclusion of those operated upon. The greatest part of its force runs into the earth with the blood of the mutilated organ. The rest of it escapes with the smoke of the fire over which the children jump (three or four times according to their sex) before returning to their homes. The act of abandoning their /65/ old clothes and putting on new ones at that time confirms their new status. But the *wanzo* does not disappear; it is channeled into the masks of the *ndomo* society to which the uncircumcised belong (1). Similarly, when a child dies before being circumcised, appropriate rituals have the effect of channeling the

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1. See p. 222.

778 304 wanzo and directing it into the mask to prevent it from doing harm (1). Thus, nothing of the individual forces is lost. The wanzo itself harmful at the beginning, when properly channeled and directed, serves to consolidate the collective energies of the infantile societies based on it.

[582] Only when an adolescent has lost his wanzo is he permitted to marry; any individual would refuse to marry a partner who is not completely rid of it.

The Body

826 The Bambara have a notion of their bodies and the role of the different parts and organs. This notion is all the deeper because it is linked to that of the spiritual principles that animate it.

Indeed, the tere is determined by certain visible aspects of the body, while the ni and the dya also have sexes like the body. Therefore any study should include the links that unite the spiritual elements to the physical body in order to understand properly its state and function.

[841] Blood, which together with breath is the seat of life, is also the vehicle of physical and spiritual forces that circulate with it in the veins and arteries. The blood sacrifice liberates these forces which sustain the altars, the soil, and the beings who receive them. Certain alliances are consecrated by an exchange of blood. The clear color of blood is proof of its purity: all infractions bring about a change and cause it to become pale. Menstrual blood, testimony to Mousso Koroni's impurity and of the momentary sterility of women, is the principal taboo of the supernatural powers that create and protect life.

826 828 827 The head, which contains thought, is an essential part of the individual and his symbol: "the head of the members of society" is represented by a stroke in the course of the rituals performed by members of the Komo or the Kworè. Man grows through his head just as a plant "grows through its head bud" (2). Man's head is protected

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1. See p. 256.

2. The myth mentions the "head of the balanza" at the time that men broke the

826 828 [827] taboo by cutting its buds (see p. 43). The altars of the fields and of agricultural societies, tǒ, watch over the "head of the millet."

/66/ and purified in order to maintain his health and prosperity. It is the seat of consciousness and will, and receives a share of the scarifications made at birth, which will exercise influence on the person.

826 Hair contains an important part of the individual's ni. It is therefore dangerous to mix it with the hair of another, for that would create a vital and indissoluble bond between the two parties. To burn it is equivalent to making an attempt on one's own life. It is buried or placed in a deep hole in the wall of the house for protection (1).

[832 789] 1. Many charms and magic spells are based on hair. In order to be loved by a woman, a man must mix some of her hair with his and place it under his head at night with a prayer. In order to keep his job, an employee does the same with his hair and that of his employer; he then sacrifices a victim over the ensemble so that the employer cannot fire him without risking his own life.

Hair and the pilose system play a part in the myth and were used to count the age of primitive men until the advent of death on earth. All the ancestors represented in the sanctuaries are bearded and hairy. Their appearance shows that, having become mortal, they lived at a time when rejuvenation no longer existed.

826 827 The pupil is the fundamental part of the eye. Its name, nyemani, "little person of the eye" (2), expresses its function. The pupil reflects and absorbs the person it sees. The image is a kind of double,

2. Man's pupil, according to information that is still obscure, was made with that of the serpent and was also called nye mani sa, "serpent of the little person of the eye."

826 827 a replica of the person seen, the double being received and preserved by the seer with the help of the registering mechanism of the eye. It is with his eyes that Faro inscribes in his memory the number of beings under his domination. It is through the eyes as well as through the genitals that woman is united to her husband during the sexual act. The individual who has broken a taboo is affected first through the eyes: he suffers from pains or becomes blind according to the degree of his offense.

The nose is the canal of man's breath or, respiration, *ni na kle* (literally, soul that ascends and descends), a term describing the very movement of life. The seat of breath is the solar plexus, *kwa nye*, "eye of the chest," also said to be *ni dyuru ba*, "the great rope of the soul." When Faro decides to take back the life of a man, he carries him off into the water and returns his corpse with the nose and the navel cut up. The mutilation of the nose reminds all that, as the master /67/ of the guilty man's life, he takes it away from him by taking away his breath.

The mouth and the tongue play a part in all the rites and symbols concerning the person. The voice is "in the throat" but man talks with the mouth. The word is a creator, an act; it carries a force, *nyama*, which inhabits the mouth, permeates the tongue and saliva, and transmits itself to everything it touches. It is Faro's word passing through the mouth, the word received in suffering in mythical times, which integrates the human species with the new order established in the creation.

Its organ is the tongue which, when represented in ritual objects, symbolizes it (1). Its vehicle is saliva: to spit is to give one's word, to seal an oath. The old men spit on seeds, after having promised an offering to the Komo; the sacrificing priest, before the libation, spits prechewed kola nuts onto the altar. Husband and wife spit their marriage oath. The power of the mouth finds its most powerful expression in the *griot*'s recitation of the device (2).

1. The prayers recited during the initiation rites allude to the formidable *nyama* of the initiates' tongues.

2. See p. 112.

826 827 The mouth and tongue, ejectors of the word, can be compared in importance to the ear, a receptive organ. It is through the ear that man receives and remembers the word. Its role is comparable to that of the sex organs which eject life and receive it. The ear in itself has both sexes: male by its auricle, female by its orifice. This duality expresses the basic duality of man. That is why the corpse of [764] an uncircumcised man is sometimes amputated at the ear rather than at the foreskin.

826 301 Because of the symbolism of its shape and because of its function, the ear is adorned. Men formerly wore three copper rings on the right ear and four on the left, the number seven representing the complete being, male and female, ni and dya. Women wear four rings on each auricle or, if they can, twenty-two, which represent the twenty-two stages of creation, or the twenty-two generative categories. Sometimes, for both men and women, a single ring attached to the earlobe represents the mother of the other rings (1).

[178] 1. In olden times, men and women wore cowrie shells on their ears in the place of copper rings, a custom which would seem to be still respected in certain villages today. These shells played the same part as copper.

827 191 301 776 But the role of this adornment goes much further. As symbol of the word, it is through the ornaments that the spirit Téliko, master of sound, hears what /68/ is said to man. They attract sound and send it back to Téliko and Faro, who thus judge the acts and words of men. To wear earrings did not originally mean to adorn oneself, but to hear the spirits as well as to force them to hear what was said (2). Its second effect is to embarass the liar, the bearer of false news

2. Rings placed on musical instruments have the same purpose and also symbolize those worn by men. See p. 282.

or evil words, by putting him in the position of being understood by the invisible, therefore of being judged by them. A pleasant or well-intentioned word benefits the one to whom it is addressed and this

827 gain is felt as a contribution to the beneficial *nyama*. "The spirit
191 Téliko transforms the air emitted by the speaker into favorable *nyama*;
upon hearing a good word, it would be necessary to stop one's ears so
381 that this *nyama* does not leave the person who received it." Moreover,
776 if a person opens his eyes wide while watching the speaker, "the latter's *nyama* is able to penetrate the body of the listener" and spread within it as a reviving tide. While this takes place, the good word saturates the air, helping the action of breathing, hence the life, of the listener. "One breathes," says an informant, "with the *nyama* of the words which enter through the eyes and ears." But this process is not one-sided. The good *nyama* returns to the speaker through his own eyes while he is looking at the other person. He is reflected in the person with whom he is talking and it is as though he were talking to himself. There is a beneficial exchange even when only one of the two actors speaks.

Inversely, a bad word or an insult upsets the listener and rebounds, acting upon the insulting person. This harmonious arrangement summarizes precisely and powerfully the universal movement, principle of life and strength for all beings. It comprises an individual movement provoked by the word which acts upon the body by developing and regularizing the rhythm of breathing, and a collective movement set off by the return of the word to the speaker. Because of the effect of the spoken word, exchanges are established that are favorable both to the rhythm of individual breathing and to the equilibrium of universal life. This effect is not limited to words in the strict sense; sight enjoys the same prerogatives as hearing and diction. If an object
[431] belonging to a certain person is seen and coveted by another, the owner cannot refuse to give it to him. The act of seeing has established by itself, between the stranger and the object, a bond which is affectively stronger than that of ownership.

● 86 The articulated parts of the human body are just as meaningful as the head. The bones, more lasting than the flesh /69/ and a testimony, in the grave, of the life that has passed, are its foundation and framework.

The navel is the central point of the articulations: that is why Faro, when he drowns a person, returns the body after having slit the nose and navel. This double mutilation shows that he has reclaimed the head and the body of the guilty man. The articulations are the indication of man's condition in the new order. Where he was once

826 immortal with smooth limbs, he became mortal and hard working. As seats of the male semen, they transmit this condition to the embryo, formed in the maternal womb by Faro. The weariness felt in the limbs after the sexual act is proof of this transmission. As Locus of [829] the virile semen, framework of the man, and a mechanism suitable for physical labor, the articulations are also the symbol of society. The chief's throne, in the shape of a knee, is the image of its owner's articulated body as well as that of the armature of the social body and of the grouping of individuals under his jurisdiction (1).

1. See p. 178.

826 823 201 The limbs represent the right and the left. Rectitude, firmness, and directed action are "right"; incertitude, the spirit of indecision, and inconsistency in behavior are "left." The right is male and symbolizes man's labor; the other is female. All gestures, profane and religious, and all representations of objects bear witness to this. Performing his first task in the fields before the rain, the farmer gives three blows with his hoe held in his left hand in order to absorb the impurity of the earth. After this, he works until the harvest with his right hand. To cross one's hands means supplication, to put them behind one's back means humiliation.

826 201 576 Each finger has its value. The little finger, *bolokoni lakare*, is "the son of the other fingers" and in it is concealed the entire strength of the hand; it "carries the *nyama* of the fingers." Hence its use as a measure of divinations. To point to someone with one's little finger means to belittle him with respect to those present. Thus one casts a spell (*korti*) against an enemy or an undesirable person with the little finger.

826 622 The index finger and the thumb of a chief, formerly those of a king, are marked on certain occasions with signs called *bolo ti doniya*, "knowledge of the signs of the hand." On the index are drawn three "acts of the world today" (*bi dyẽ walew*) and on the thumb, two "things of the interior of the secret world" (*dyẽ gundo kono fẽw*), for it is said that "the knowledge of the signs of the hand /70/ is the road of the creation 5, the index is the world in 3 and the thumb is the new world" (1). The whole represents the worlds thought out by

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1. Bolo ti doniya ye dali duru sira ye, bolokoni kumba dãga ye dyɛ̃ saba gundo ye, tyemasa bolokoni ye dyɛ̃ dura ye.

yo, of which only the first is realized (2).

2. On the worlds thought out by yo, see pp. 23-26.

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On another level, the signs of the thumb are related to powers and those of the index to royal domains (fig. 1, nos. 8-12):*

1. Sign zero (fu) represents the beginning of creation, the origin of all things. A curved segment extended from left to right denotes the dynamic quality of the universe. It is intersected by a multiplication sign expressing the infinite development of beings and things. But the vertical stroke crossing it on the left indicates both the cessation and the suppression of the whole (no. 11).

2. Sign of lightning. It expresses royal power and justice and is traced under the thumb ring of the king. The latter, when giving an order, would swing his hand, which means he is swinging lightning before those he addresses (no. 12).

3. Sign of the royal domain. The opening asserts the possible extension of the kingdom; the transversal bar is a protection of this kingdom from all destruction (no. 8).

4. Sign of the extension of this domain at the tree cardinal sides: east, west, and south (no. 9).

5. Sign of union. The oval represents the whole group of functionaries called tódyɔ̃ and barodɛ̃, officers and councilors who administer the kingdom under the king's authority (no. 10).

826
[783]
As the feet are constantly in touch with the soil, they take on its impurity. An individual who has gone through severe purifications will need to avoid putting his feet on the ground during a period of time occasionally quite prolonged, for "to place one's toes on the ground is to put one's soul in contact with the impure earth" (1). It

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1. The invention of the shoe is mythically linked to the notion of the earth's impurity; the wearer must therefore avoid this contact.

*[p.22, category 116—Analyst.]

826 is also through the feet that a part of man's strength is deposited in the
sweepings and rubbish upon which he treads. Their role as receptacles
appears in the rituals concerning household refuse and the dirt on
roads and paths.

Like the little finger, the small toe symbolizes the whole person.
[301] It is sometimes adorned with a silver ring, symbol of the word, which
recalls that man's body is the seat of the word extended within him
from head to feet (1).

831 The notion of the bisexuality of human beings is fundamental:
the spiritual principles are sexed like the body, whose ambivalence
826 /71/ is evident during childhood: the boy is feminine in his foreskin;
the girl is masculine in her clitoris. One of the aims of circumcision
[304] and excision is to help the child attain the sex to which it is apparently
destined by removing the organ of the opposite sex. (2) But the
initial duality of the soul and body is the very foundation of the human
being. He is complete only if he originally received it, and he retains
it even after the operation imposed by physical and social life,
[774] for the soul of the opposite sex, though diminished in the body, remains
present in the shadow, the *dya.* He also rediscovers his dual
unity when he marries. A married couple are a unit for their *dya*
[581] join as do their bodies in an act which is not merely physical and
which realizes the ideal union of twins.

831 The sex to which one belongs dominates one's whole existence on
earth. Objects and tools bear masculine or feminine marks, according
801 to the rules of the division of labor. The numbers three (man)
and four (woman) are abridged forms of the sex. "Primitive men"
who, according to the Bambara expressed themselves mostly by
gestures and signs, engraved their rare objects with the number of

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1. In olden times the ring on the small toe was made of red *nyama* fiber (*nyama fu*), which played the same role as metal.

[171] 2. The same conception is found among the Dogon; see M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, p. 185.

831 lines or dots depending upon the sex of those who used them. Thus,
801 women marked their spindles with four lines whereas men twisted three threads on their shuttles.

826 On the metaphysical level, man's body, "the seed of the world," is identified with the cereal grain. The Bambara separate cereal
824 grains into seven parts, corresponding to a division of the human
812 organs into seven groups (1). Man and grain are one and identical in their substance. On the other hand, the basic foods, that is, the eight principal cereals, are symbolically present in the collarbones (kolo kalanjiri, or ka kolo). Man carries within him his subsistance, and its location reflects the person's general condition (2). As proof of /72/ man's spiritual integrity, these grains leave him when he is in a state of impurity. He is then drained of his substance and subsistence. Thepurpose of purification is to reestablish this wholeness.

812 Moreover, the bonds which unite the whole person, body and
561 spiritual principles, to the cosmos, are made clear by the fact that

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1. The divisions of the grain are as follows: kungu, "little beard of millet," involucre; fara dye, "white bark," glume and glumales; fara fi, "black bark," bran and protein aceous bark; fara mugu, "farinaceous bark" (which corresponds to a milky diastatic zone); mugu dunta, "flour for eating," starch; kolo dye, "white bone," embryo; kise de, "son of grain," the micropyle from which the rootlet issues at the time of germination. The classification of organs in relation to these divisions is under study. We thank M. Pitot of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire for the identification of the parts of the grain corresponding to the native divisions. In certain villages, grains undergo a process of hulling and the determined elements only are used in the making up of the ritually offered millet mash. [782]

2. See p. 53, n. 2. [783]

845 Up to the time they are twelve, the children bathe themselves preferably in the Niger. They supposedly can walk on water and never run the risk of drowning.

The twins do not become separated from each other any more than the dya is separated from the living being to which it is attached. They wear the same clothes and eat the same food simultaneously. Formerly male twins married the same woman. If one of them dies 845 at an early age, the blacksmith carves a small wooden doll called 778 flanitokele, which takes the name of the deceased and which the mother puts on the mat next to the living child. The latter takes this doll with him at the time of his circumcision and keeps it during the period of his seclusion in order to bring it back to the parental home whence it is never removed. When he marries, he sticks the doll into the earth along with another piece of wood symbolizing the wife of the deceased. Since twins are in a sense a living replica of Faro, none can bother them without showing disrespect to him. On the other hand, they are the object of attention and precaution on the part of their family as well as their neighbors. Their presence is always beneficial. Considered invulnerable, twins used to march ahead of [728] troups in times of war and would serve as inviolable intermediaries between the warring parties during truce.

The Hermaphrodite

826 The hermaphrodite, being both male and female, is to all extent and purpose his own twin. Consequently, he has no dya (1).

[825 304] 1. The hyena is considered a hermaphrodite; it can engender or conceive, depending on its size and strength: "the stronger impregnating the weaker." A tattooing system is based upon this belief.

/88/ The Albino

[143] Albinos of light or reddish skin and red hair are called gombele or yepege, this latter term being reserved for those who show the most accentuated characteristics.

826 833 The albino is supposedly born of sexual relations which took place in the middle of the day when the sun is in the koblenkaba, sky of

826 Faro's wrath—a fact which constitutes a serious breaking of taboo.
[833] The consequence of this is to coalesce in the maternal womb the twins originally granted to the woman by Faro and to decolorize the skin of the being thus formed. Because of this fact, the albino, the embodiment of twins, does not inherit the spiritual princples of a deceased person and is also a new being given to men by Faro. But the impurity he has acquired increases tenfold his tere and his wanzo, which are so active that the circumciser must sacrifice on his own [304] personal altars before performing the operation. From the ambivalence of the albino, originally of the same essence as Faro but fallen because of the impurity transmitted by his parents, stem various customs and representations. (1).

1. This ambivalence is also at the root of the belief that the albino is a being formerly provided with wings and able to fly (see p. 68, a quality he lost after his contact with the impure soil.

826 778 His body is believed to be endowed with special powers. The person who owns his skull will have a numerous family and prosperity; his hair brings wealth; the marrow of his bones provides gold and copper. If he is made to sit at a place where bones are buried, whatever one asks for is granted. His excrements, mixed with seed, have the effect of increasing the harvest for the year.

826 782 Because of the value attributed to the albino he is a choice victim for the sacrifices to Faro. His nyama is such that he can be sacrificed without prayer, the act itself constituting an efficacious invocation. Lacking living albinos, men often tried to appropriate the remains of a buried body.

/89/ Chapter 4

SACRIFICE AND THE ALTAR

782 To call upon spiritual forces and to influence them, the Bambara use prayer, offering, and sacrifice. They perform oral and manual

782 rites in all places at all times. They pray to the sky, to the cardinal points, and to the spirits; they sacrifice on rocks, on the earth, on trees, in water holes, as well as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries, or located in private or public places. Every circumcised adult, father of a family, or owner of a house and arable land can be a sacrificer whose qualification is underscored by the red stain which sometimes adorns the walls of the main room of his house (1).

1. See pp. 171ff.

To the uninformed observer these rituals cover a great network of apparently unrelated beliefs. But actually it is otherwise. The rituals stimulate definite movements of forces which are integrated with those of the world.

Without trying to give a general picture of the manners, the times, and the places peculiar to Bambara rites, it is nevertheless important to study apart one of the most important mechanisms, namely the blood sacrifice. It constitutes the framework for the rituals and brings into play the principles and elements composing the living being (see preceding chapter), for it must be noted that the first sacrifices stated in the myth were human sacrifices.

A sacrifice takes place when the blood of the victim runs over a substance or an object containing the force of a supernatural power or of an ancestor. The words of the prayer pronounced during the immolation dedicate the victim to the power that comes to nourish itself on the blood according to popular belief. At the same time, they direct the life forces which escape from the body. The soul, ni, is channeled by the altar and will be kept there until resurrection. Its nyama, which gains in power as /90/ the agony is prolonged, is also retained by the altar whose strength it increases. The victim is thus completely emptied of its spiritual principles for "all the nyama are in the blood" (2) which it abandons.

2. Nyama be bi dyoli la.

782 826 In all cases, the sacrifice represents an exchange: the sacrificer receives in return a part of the strength of the one whom he supplants (3). The blood is the carrier of an active, dangerous element left on

the altar. At the time men gave the balanza their blood, they would let it dry and then, licking the trunk with their tongue, would reclaim it after it was rid of the element constituting the offering. All their active forces passed into the tree and a substance, almost totally lacking in vitality was returned to them.

782 The blood sacrifices which were originally instituted on the trunk of the balanza are actually performed in the most varied sites: earth, trees, ponds, wells, etc. Moreover, as the Bambara developed their technology, they would sacrifice on those objects, utensils, or contrivances which they discovered or invented such as the forge and its tools, the loom, and agricultural implements.

782 778 The Bambara also have altars which may be classified into three categories:

1. The wood stumps called pembele, which represent Pemba. Many heads of families or of religious societies keep one of these (1).

A unique sanctuary at Massala is a pilgrimage center for Bambara from all regions who come in great numbers to take part in the annual sacrifice. Besides pembele, it contains two large pots, da, covered with sacrificial blood, which give the sanctuary its name. It is in this place that ordeals are executed, judicial questions settled, and serious illnesses treated.

2. The altars, made of stones crudely cut and occasionally engraved, have their origin in a mythical stone, issued out of the seventh part of the earth, and situated under the mound where Faro's female twins were born. Having a red color, it was itself a symbol of sacrifice. It divided itself and gave birth to all other sacrificial stones (Fig. 5 and Pl. V. b).

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782 826 [171] 3. The mechanism of blood sacrifice among the Bambara is comparable to that observed among the Dogon and described by M. Griaule, "Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice dogon (Soudan Français) /Remarks on the Mechanism of Dogon Sacrifice (French Sudan)/, " Journal de la Société des Africanistes. Vol. 10, 1940, pp. 127 ff.

1. See p. 77 for a description of the pembele altars.

782 As an example we will summarize below the ritual killing of albinos as it was practiced under the royalty. This underlines the mystical value of the victim and is an excellent example of the mechanism inherent in sacrifice; it brings out the ritual value of the details on each of which the Bambara place particular emphasis. Finally, it confirms the value and symbolism of different parts of the body as described in the preceding chapter.

/95/ The kings of Ségou were formerly provided with albinos by a 782 man from the village of Pelengena who kept them prisoners and set 826 them aside for this purpose. But this man exploited them by shaving their hair and selling it to the chiefs of neighboring villages as symbols of the men whom, sooner or later, they could reckon to have under their domination. The chief, having counted his subjects, war prisoners held as slaves as well as captives received as tribute, would prepare as many small sticks as there were men; then he would mix up these sticks with the hair and bury them all in the wall over the sill of the entrance to his home. The hair is supposed to represent beforehand an increase in the subjects of his domain and to help bring in the taxes.

But the albinos themselves were kept for the king who sacrificed them to Faro in cases involving the affairs of the kingdom.

1. When the king found himself in difficulties of an administrative nature, the victim was cut in half through the middle of the body at the level of the abdomen by means of a rope of the _da_ fiber (1): his cries, gestures, and excrement were considered the vehicles of a _nyama_ which "would eliminate the difficulty encountered by the king." No one was supposed to hear his cries which were not intended for human ears but for Faro, to whom suffering was also due. The king, above all, should not hear the screams under penalty of failing in his enterprise, and yet he had to be present at the torture and watch it with complete detachment.

The lower half of the victim's body was Faro's due. It was carried to the Niger by three men if the victim was a male, or by four if it was a female. One of them carried the body on his head.

[283 824]

1. _Hibiscus._ The _nyama_ fiber was considered impure and could not be used for the albino.

782 826 While keeping his eyes and his left hand closed, he walked without touching the ground with his toes in order to respect "the soul of that which he carried (1). At the edge of the river, the joints were broken,

> 1. To touch the ground with one's toes amounted to putting the soul of the victim's body in contact with the earth's impurity (see p. 102).

the marrow extracted and poured into the water. After placing their toes on the body, to "give a part of their soul to Faro," the men deposited it gently in the river, into which it sank while they loudly proclaimed the reason for their action. When they returned to their master, they brought him the spirit's gratitude and a little water from the river, which was poured over the royal seat (2).

> 2. This offering was called nasi, "well-being."

/96/ The upper part of the victim's body was the king's and used for the needs of the state. The tõdyõ first blew into the mouth of the tortured victim so that the "air, in coming out, would take all his words to Faro." Then they buried his head under the king's throne and danced to the rhythm of drums.

[726 789] In case of war, the blood which had spilled during the sacrifice was collected by the tõdyõ and dried in the sun; then the residue was carried away and before the assault was thrown in the direction of the town to be attacked. The king who advanced with his army found, according to the formula, "his sacrifice before him" (saraka bla ñe).

782 826 789 2. In case the king was short of funds, the killing took place towards the west and was performed by sticking a bamboo stick into the throat of the victim so that blood would run over the cowrie shells which the king had earned himself "with his own sweat." Thus consecrated, the cowries "attracted gold, silver, and copper to the royal treasury."

The head was placed under the throne. The chest and lungs were dried, reduced to powder, and preserved in a bag which the king kept. When he received his tax-payers, he smeared his face and mouth with this powder, thus forcing the visitor to give. He rubbed his body with it before going to war, causing the warriors to say:

782 "To see the king is to see gold*" (1).
• 826

789 1. Fama yele ye sanu yele ye.

He gave some of it to his wives and children who put it in their drinks in order "to inherit his place and his goods." This powder was offered at each sacrifice to Faro in order to fertilize the kingdom.

3. When a family was plagued by numerous deaths, they asked
782 the king to authorize the sacrifice of an albino whom he furnished
826 himself. The victim's tongue was dried, pounded to powder, seasoned
266 with pepper, and eaten by the father of the family to permit him to
"reclaim the words and the nyama of the deceased." The nose was swallowed by the mother so that she might "reclaim the breath of the dead children." The father then ate the broiled eyes to "preserve lost sights." The dried ears were hung above the sill of the entrance "so that death, upon hearing the funeral wails, might not return." The skull was retained as a token and buried in the courtyard; a wooden stick marked the burial place. The rest of the body was thrown into the Niger, "for an ordinary man does not have the right to keep that which is reserved for the king."

782 If the king permitted it, chiefs of the important villages /97/ also
826 placed the body of an albino under their seats "in order that their
622 authority be solid and enduring" (2).

2. Sometimes the sum total of the taxes raised in a village were given the parents of an albino in exchange for the child. Those who could not obtain a victim used an animal bone as a substitute and performed the ritual as though it were an albino. Regarding the chief's seat, see p. 178.

782 In certain serious cases, the albino was sacrificed on the altar of
826 Komo. This sacrifice was accomplished in silence for "a prayer un-
known to the person sacrificing is in the blood of the albino" who is powerful enough to act without words.

773 are removed from the sanctuaries, honored, and replaced before the
564 Komo altars during the agricultural and funerary rituals; to fail to ob-
326 412 serve this rule would constitute the breaking of a taboo and entail
778 the most serious disorders.

In the course of the annual ceremony consecrating the dead, these tools are carried to the cemetery and receive as many victims as do the dead, for they represent the ancestors.

The *kotigi* brings them to the same place on two other occasions: during the agricultural ceremonies carried on after the growth of the ear of corn and after threshing the harvest. Axes and hoes are presented one by one at the tombs of the dead and then, reunited in the center of the cemetery, each of them is used once to cut a branch or to dig the soil. This ritual gesture recalls the use which the ancestors made of them.

The Forge

326 The blacksmith establishes his workshop under a shed, usually
826 located in one of the squares or at the entrance to the village. It is the simplest of its kind and involves a minimum of equipment. The forge represents the craftsman: the furnace his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red hot metal is beaten with the hammer, a replica of the *gosilãnde*, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and thunder bolts.

326 The altar of the forge, sometimes situated to the west of the hearth,
778 contains blackened hoe, pickaxe and axe handles, coal (*fininkoro*, literally, old coal) ashes kneaded with clay (*buguri*, literally, ashes of the hearth), all of which belonged to former owners, and finally an axe *kongobwona* called "mother of the altar," a smaller replica of the ancestral axes.

The bulk of the wood which holds the iron hooks and the blade /120/ is hollowed out and forms a kind of storage divided into three compartments.

The upper one contains money so that whatever happens, the blacksmith will have means to live.

In the central compartment are placed copper and iron, metals which the blacksmith works, as well as water, basic element and preferred seat of Faro, master of the word.

778 On one of the walls, small lines representing the ancestors and a
794 broken line representing the human person are drawn with millet mash;
on another, engraved with a sharp point, is a schematic geometrical
532 figure of the ancestral home; it is accompanied by the silhouettes of
two hands (see Fig. 10, 1 and 2), the hands of the living, "crossed
and reaching out to the world of the dead." The left hand, symbol
[826] of disorder, incertitude, and the variations of human conscience,
is placed below to the right of the other to recall man's obligation
towards his right hand, symbol of order, righteousness, fidelity, and
work (1). Thus arranged, the hands express complete submission of
the living to the ancestors.

Farther away are drawn the divisions of the universe (Fig. 10, 3) with the help of a square divided into three compartments symbolizing from top to bottom: the sky and water, the air, the earth.

In the upper square to the left, a line represents Faro in all his power, sole master of sky, water, and life. A horizontal line recalls his domination over the world. The lines that follow are his children. The total indicates the feminine form of the spirit.

All individual or family sacrifices offered to Faro are performed over his sign which the officiator rubs with copper and crushed tomatoes in order "to thank the spirit who protects his dya, and to pray to the spirit to give his wife children."

The central rectangle is the domain of Téliko: air and wind. The small line which vertically bisects the square on the left represents the spirit attempting to penetrate into Faro's plan to vanquish him. His defeat is indicated by the fact that the major portion of the line is situated in Téliko's domain, since the latter violated only temporarily the boundaries of his adversary.

The lower rectangle outlines the earth, seat of the Soba spirits. The row of 22 short lines which covers it recalls the 22 elements of creation, "the 22 things indispensable to man in this world."

On another wall, fire is indicated by two whips: that of Faro, lightning, and that of Komo, the law. They also recall "the power

1. In making this drawing the following words are repeated: "I place my right hand on the wall night and day," *neben kinin bolo da koko la šu ni kle*.

622 778 of polished stone called fara yele, "stone that rejoices," expresses the wish that the chief's rule prosper.

The seat, taken as a whole, represents the chief's skeleton and his joints. It is erected upon various elements which sum up his ties to the ancestors and the supernatural powers, indicating his responsibility and contributing to the maintenance of his strength. It is situated in such a way that all the events in the courtyard take place around it. and that nothing which is said is out of earshot. As a center of the family household, as the symbol of the industrious and responsible man, it is the framework of the community which it upholds, just as the chief does through his physical endurance and moral firmness. The whole village "leans upon the chief's joint."

Each morning and evening, the ǰigi ba ǰigi and the ba ǰigi /137/ are greeted so that the chief may be strong, that his family may increase, that he may foster the ancestral beliefs. Offerings and [782] libations are made upon the seat and upon the body of the chief when his authority is questioned. In (b) tomato juice is being poured; in (a), representing the elbow or the knee, the water which has been used for ritual bathing of these same joints; at the foot, in (n), the fowls' throats are cut while the officiator, before pouring down the blood of the sacrifice, blows into a small hole dug in the ground; finally, in (l) the water which was used to wash the chief's whole body is poured in.

[826] In this way the chief's joints, which are the seat of his strength and his procreative seed, are purified and fortified.

II. Village Cults

794 The village, as a physical entity, and its inhabitants are placed under the protection of the supernatural powers and of the ancestors. Faro is directly invoked at all water spots.

If the village is situated at the river's edge, the rituals are addressed to the Faro tyin. If it is not too far from the bank, the inhabitants go out to make their offerings to the spirit. Frequently, the stream, pond, or natural well, which often determined the site chosen by the founders, is though to be inhabited by an incarnation of Faro whose name is revered and to whom all offer a cult.

On the other hand, each village is placed under the protection of the dasiri, a special spirit delegated by Faro.

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852 3. If the village has no Komo, the name may be given above the paternal Ycuafebla.

two jars of millet beer, a ram which will be sacrificed, and money to the griot who will sing during the ceremony.

[789 A lock of the newborn's hair is shaved off and kept in a case (sebe) which, before being carried away, will be hidden in an oil container
● 826] for the following reasons: to protect the person from magical practices; to prevent a donkey from eating it, an occurrence which would cause the child's death; to permit him to seek for himself health and a long life in the image of his hair which will have remained in good condition.

The rest of the hair is carried by a female relative to the river, into which it is thrown in honor of Faro. Next a band of white cotton called faro fini (literally, Faro's clothing), on which someone has "spat" kola nut juice, is bound around the forehead of the newly baptized baby to indicate his subjugation to the spirit.

The senior elder then examines with attention the hairline and the meeting point of the eyebrows on the forehead before announcing in a loud voice the signs determining the child's character (tere). Then he grasps the child and swings it /179/ seven times from east to west, eight times from south to north above the altar while giving it the forename (toko) which he has inherited from a dead person along with the spiritual principles (1). The griot recite the father's genealogy (burudyu); the senanku comes to joke with the newborn and gently pulls his nose and ears.

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304 On the same day the blacksmith draws on the child's face the wolo ti, consisting of seven vertical frontal scars and two horizontal scars under each eye. The first scars represent the complete man (ni and dya); the second, representing the number two, symbol of

1. According to another source of information, the eldest son receives the forename of his paternal grandfather, the second son that of his father, and the following sons those of the mother's fathers and grandfathers.

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1. A ngari ko le ye ngo (ngari is a word of the archaic language which expresses submission.)

Each person responds by striking their genital organs with the little finger: "It is well humiliated" (2).

[826] 2. A ngari ko karu. The little finger is the symbol of the whole person; to strike with it is to acquiesce with all one's being.

They are led to the door of their home where the village elders of both sexes are gathered; they repeat their apologies to which the same response is given, accompanied by the same gesture of acquiescence.

The chief of the Komo and three elders of his age grade who have [304] never broken any taboos led them to the river bank where they undergo a new circumcision for the man and a new excision for the woman; the blood which is a gift to Faro must fall into the water. This operation is called "purification of the foreskin" (yiriyiri tige) and the pain suffered has an expiatory value.

The sixth day after the operation the members, gathered on the village square (3), dance and sing to the rhythm of the Komo, which is furiously beaten out, in the following words:

3. This ceremony, called daworo is comparable to that celebrated on the sixth day after circumcision.

"Circumcised children, it is not good to break the taboo of the anus. I am telling you, Soma and members of the society, do not count their faults. Faro "(ter) (4).

4. (I ye ye) boloko dew tne tyẽ mañi boda la; nye fo aw ye somaw moko ka na jigi u la; faro (ter). That is to say, "forgive them." The word anus here replaces the word genitals which, according to propriety, is not spoken. [195]

845 2. Ni nya ke šyẽ fla i ka n fa; ka kadi ka
783 kago, gariseke bo fã ka čã; faro (ter).

The water swallowed after these words constitutes a solemn promise to Faro not to repeat the fault.

Next, they are carried home, the man by two members of the society and the woman by three of her companions, so that their toes,
[824] the temporary lodging places of the spiritual principles which have returned to them, may not touch the impure earth. They remain three and four days, respectively, on their mats without making a movement. On the seventeenth day, with a thousand precautions, they may resume a more normal life, but they will be entirely free only when a birth occurring in the family will eliminate from their bodies the soul and the double of the dead child by transferring these to the newborn.

/199/ Death of an Uncircumcised Boy

763 When an uncircumcised boy is seriously ill the chief of the ndomo (1) has a rooster sacrificed in order to find out if recovery is possible.

1. See p. 222.

In the case of a negative response the children, taking turns night and day, go into the bush and sound off the ritual objects under the leadership of an initiate. In this way the soul of the dying boy is certain to be captured at the moment of death and channeled by the sound wave and led into the ritual objects themselves. Two initiates are posted near the home of the sick and, as soon as they learn of his death, they go to warn the children in the bush to make them stop playing. The chief sits down facing the west and recites a prayer; then he sacrifices the victims offered by the family.

766 Before the corpse is buried, it is circumcised, and the wanzo goes
[304] to settle in the mask of the ndomo. During the night following the burial the members go to the fresh grave and sound the ritual instruments which contain the soul. Each year they repeat this action above the children's graves following the threshing of the harvest to "awaken the dead and to tell them that their souls are not lost."

781 1. In this chapter we purposely do not approach the study of geomancy, which is reserved for later treatment. This mode of divination has been the object of a detailed description in C. Monteil, *La Divination chez les Noirs de l'Afrique occidentale française* /Divination among the Blacks of French West Africa/. Geomancy is currently used by the Bambara, by all the chiefs of religious societies, and by all the hunters who are familiar with several types, particularly the *nama ti* "sign of the hyena," the *timba ti* "sign of the aardvark," and the *tyẽ dyę* "white truth" or *trabu*. The symbols connected with this type of divination are very complex among the Bambara who state that they possess an autochthonous method of geomancy distinct from the type called "Moslem," with which they are also familiar. This last point seems to be confirmed by the observations gathered by B. Maupoil in Dahomey and explained in his conclusions (see *La Géomancie à l'ancienne côte des Esclaves* /Geomancy on the Old Slave Coast/, p. 678). Geomancy is practiced in similiar ways on the whole African continent. More than any other activity, its study raises the problem of influences, notably that of Islam, with which we have dealt on page 7.

Methods of Divination Linked to the Idea of the Person

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Knowledge of the person is a constant concern of the Bambara. The body, which supports the spiritual principles, is marked from birth by signs which any knowledgeable individual is capable of interpreting. They determine not only the character (*tere*) of a person but also, to a certain extent, the destiny that awaits him.

Thus by examining carefully the facial features of a newborn child, his hairline, the shape of his eyes, nose, and head, the lines on his

787 forehead, it is possible to predict to a great extent, what he will be
826 or do in life. Later on /215/ the gait, the swinging of the arms, the way of placing the feet, of holding the head or the breasts will complete, for the informed people, the portrait sketched at birth.

Measurement of the dya

804 Certain indications concerning the individual are also given by the double or twin (dya) (1) which materializes in the shadow of the body and is measured by using the little finger as a unit. Starting from the top of the head, this operation is undertaken at noon in the sun when the shadow is shortest. The measurements which are noted down are grouped alternatively by three, the male number, and by four, the female number, according to the following table:

1. The first three unit measures (little finger) represent the nerves, pasa (masc.).
2. From the fourth to the seventh, the soft parts, the flesh, bu (fem.).
3. From the eighth to the tenth, the bones, kolo (masc.).
4. From the eleventh to the fourteenth, the body liquids, dyi (fem.).
5. From the fifteenth to the seventeenth, the male genitals, wulu (masc.).
6. From the eighteenth to the twenty-first, the female genitals, byę (fem.).
7. From the twenty-second to the twenty-fourth, the joints, kolonye, (masc.).
8. From the twenty-fifth to the twenty-eighth, the breasts, ši (fem.).
9. From the twenty-ninth to the thirty-first, the backbone, koloko (masc.).
10. From the thirty-second to the thirty-fifth, the womb, dézo (fem.).
11. From the thirty-sixth to the thirty-eighth, the intelligence, hakili (masc.).

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1. See p. 86.

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12. From the thirty-ninth to the forty-second, pettiness, stupidity, misenya, (fem.).
13. From the forty-third to the forty-fifth, judgment, calmness, basigi (masc.).
14. From the forty-fifth to the forty-ninth, incoherence, agitation, hakiliwuli (fem.).

[804] These groupings are symbolized by little sticks whose length increases for male measures and decreases for female measures.

Example: if the measure of the individual stops at group 7, he will be represented by four sticks (males) of increasing size and by three others (females) of decreasing size and different aspects.

/216/ Whatever their number, these sticks are then placed in the following manner: those of the nerves in a dry receptacle, those of the flesh in millet flour, those of the bones on a hard stone, those of the liquids in water, those of the male genitals on the testicles of a male goat, those of the female genitals on the vulva of a mare, those of the breasts in karite oil, those of the womb in water from the Niger or a well, those of the intelligence in fresh milk, those of calmness and judgment in water. On the stick representing the joints is shown the name for lion; on that representing the backbone, the word dyose, (literally, point of support); on that representing pettiness, the name for dung beetle; on that representing disorder and agitation, the words muso dãga (literally, accursed woman).

A prayer is recited over the sticks which are then grouped and counted with their numbered representation and their symbolism according to the complicated calculations whose details we will not enter upon here (1). This prayer and counting are called: faro kanubaya, "love of Faro." They indicate his solicitude for his subjects and were supposedly revealed to men by the swallow messenger at the time of the first girl twins' birth.

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Each of these measurements corresponds to a certain moral and physical behavior of man, predetermined by Faro before one's birth. It is therefore possible, by measuring the dya of a pregnant woman,

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1. It must, nevertheless, be noted that the total of the signs is (7 x 3) + (7 x 4) or 49.

787 826 [843] to know the sex of the child a woman is carrying and the character which will be attributed to him by the spirit.

Without further elaboration on this method of divination which implies a series of interpretations, it suffices to note that it is integrated into the system of Bambara thought and inspired by the conception he has of man's place in the universe.

Divination by the Kola Nut

787 The kola nuts which the Bambara eat and use in their sacrificial or divinatory rituals are classified into seven categories according to their form and color.

1. *dangoro*, red nut.
2. *yeleworo*, white nut.
3. *sosokuworo* (literally, mosquito head), a red nut pointed at one of its extremities.

/217/ 4. *flaniworo* (literally, twin kola), a white nut with the same signs on both its halves.

5. *worodanda* (literally, kola without a mouth), a nut of two colors without an apparent crack permitting it to be divided.
6. *bassiworo*, a dark red and very bitter nut.
7. *nyeworo*, a nut of light and indeterminate color.

The kola nut, "created for Faro's twin girls," is itself a symbol of duality, for both its adhering halves are easily separated. In daily life, unless the diviner has ordered it as a purification, a kola nut is not eaten by one person alone; it is divided and one of the halves given to a third person. This gesture of politeness and friendship is also the expression of the duality of man, comparable to that of the fruit itself.

[576] To give kola nuts is always a sign of deference, respect, or affection. To eat a white nut "chases away sorrow and worry." The nut without a crack is rarely eaten. As it appears to be of one piece, it has an inauspicious character. In religious ceremonies the *bassiworo* nuts are preferred for the boli; the ordinary red nuts, *dangoro*, for the other altars. The pointed nut, *sosokuworo*, is offered by one who wants a child. The officiator chews half the nut and spits it onto the altar before eating the other half.

776 825 latter animal which is imitated by the vukuri during the children's nocturnal ritual described on page 65.

This new information confirms the observations noted on page 47, footnote 1, concerning the identity of the Bambara and Dogon representations. Moreover, the warableni, like the yurugu (Vulpes pallida) of the Dogon, intervenes in divination, particularly in geomancy. The investigations permit the extension of these representations to Sudanese tribes coming from Mandé (see p. 2), particularly, to the Bozo and the Peul.

Chapter 3

● 826 773 824 All Sudanese peoples originating in Mandé are characterized by the seeds (or fish) contained in their collarbone, these varying from one tribe to another. On the other hand, within a tribe, the theoretical content of the eight seeds, though roughly similar in terminology, differs in arrangement from family to family. Also the positions of the first and last seeds are reversed for men and women. Example: the blacksmiths have as their first seed the keninge and as their last the tikaninkuru, whereas the potters have as their first seed the tikaninkuru which they cultivate in the sacred fields (see p. 170) and as their last the keninge.

Moreover, after Mousso Koroni had stolen from Pemba the seeds he was entrusted to give on earth, Faro, through the intermediary of the /232/ animals who ate them at his order, reclaimed them from her; thus purified, he distributed them to men. The animal, which brought back to Faro the essential seed of each family, becomes the taboo, tne, of the family concerned, and the breaking of this taboo has the basic effect of removing the content of the culprit's collarbone. Analogous representations are noted among the Dogon.

Totemism, the so called "joking relationship" (senankuya of the Bambara), the caste system, and the exogamous laws of the Sudanese are based on the elements and classification of the contents of the collarbone.

Chapter 6

794 857 772 All the great adult institutions (dyo) are in contact with the children's society of the Ndomo which reflects the universal organization

*173 "As far as I am concerned, I ask as inheritance only my father's bow and arrows."

"Well, take them," exclaimed the irrepressible Kalaké, "since you are our eldest brother and since we have no wish to quarrel, as did our father and his brothers."

"All right," replied Da through his griot, "but don't forget that you must keep our father's death secret and act just as you did when he was alive. This is indispensable for the success of my plans."

The fact was that Bani, the chief of Samba Nya-na, had remained invincible only because of the precious amulets [91] he possessed against Ma-n-son. These magic powers naturally would not work against Da; so if Da were able to attack Bani before the latter heard of Ma-n-son's death and was thus forewarned, Da would unquestionably triumph. This was all the more likely in view of the fact that Da had asked a marabout friend of his for a victory talisman. In order to prepare this talisman, the marabout required one of Bani's sandals and some hair from his beard.

In order to obtain these indispensable ingredients, Da bribed with gold a pretty woman, who went to Samba Nya-na with all the necessary instructions.

As soon as Bani saw the pretty woman, he begged persistently for her favors. When she had yielded, she made use of his confidence to get him drunk. Thus she easily obtained what she had come for, and the talisman could be made.

Now the remarkable thing is that, though Bani had always been forewarned by the people of Dina every time Ma-n-son was about to attack him, Da's approach so took him by surprise that he learned of it only when the enemy was before the village gates. This was the work of the magic talisman.

The village was taken and Bani, trying to flee on horseback, was captured by the griot, So-touma. Now Bani had auburn [82] hair, one of those men whom the Bambara call Gon-bilé; they believe that if they put a red-haired man to death they incur the most frightful misfortunes. That is why Da merely removed Bani to Digon, where he died.

[119]

Chapter 2

Concepts

1. Beliefs

195 The Bambara, like ourselves, has a sense of inner life
826 and he expresses it in his language through figurative expressions which, in a sense, localize his sensations.

The eye, whose lens reflects everything that goes on around us, is, for the Bambara, a kind of mirror of the inner life: to be sad, *nye na-fin,* means "to have a somber eye"; to be cheerful, *nye na-dye,* means "to have a bright eye"; to be beaten down, *nye na-koro,* means "to have an eye that is old."

The head is the seat of decision, will and pride. To be active, *kun' kene,* is "to have an ardent head"; to be tenacious, *kun' gwele,* is "to have a hard head."

All emotional life is concentrated in the heart. A man who has proper feelings, *a son' ka nyi,* "has a good heart"; one who is bad, *a son' ka dyugu,* "has an evil heart." In a more general sense, anything that acts within (*kono*) us is *a be n-kono,* literally "it is within myself," meaning "I think, I intend, etc."

It is noteworthy that for these people life resides especially in two organs, the heart and the liver. The most solemn oath among them always contains the phrase: *i ka n son' ni m bien' ta* or "take my heart and my liver," that is, "destroy me, annihilate me, by removing these two knots of life."

774 In addition to these figurative expressions, which are
195 common to [120] all languages, there are abstract terms which serve to express all that we imply in the words "life," "soul," etc. In Bambara, *ni* is "physical life," characterized by the drawing of breath (*ni*), which begins and ends with life. *Dusu* is emotional or moral life; *si* is duration, in the sense of living and also of becoming.

774 The Bambara does not conceive of a body's shadow as being caused by the interception of light by that body. For him

773 abandoned Faro to follow him. Faro vanquished him and punished men by giving them the joints used in manual labor, which all were forced to do. Births became single, but, in compensation, each being had a double, *dya*, which lived in water.

After these successive disorders, each of which, however, was followed by the acquisition of new knowledge or of a new technique, Faro again undertook Creation and reorganized the universe by a voyage to the ends of the earth. He established the system of the rains, and he classified living beings according to series, each series having a head of the list. Men thus were named and classed by race and by caste, beginning with the slaves. He gave men the eight cereal seeds which remain the basis of their subsistence and which are forever in [826] their clavicles. Finally, he controls all existence and acts of beings placed under his domination.

The present order is only a phase in space and time. Twelve waters are still hidden; they must in the future, on the order of Faro, rise and spread in the world. They will make known the words of the future, and the world conceived by *Yo* will be realized.

776 All this mythology is presently represented by numerous objects which serve as props for the different rituals regulating men's lives.

778 Pemba in represented in the houses of the religious chiefs and heads of families by a wooden block named *Pembele*, image of the first thick plank (1). In a [83] central hollow, symbolizing the tomb, are engraved three times 22 marks representing Pemba the creator, the transmission of his Word, and his power to Faro, the token of his foreknowledge of all things, etc. Pembele is an altar guaranteeing the prosperity and life of the group.

776 If the balanza tree no longer is the object of a cult, the Bambara still regard it with a special attitude, which recalls its former role. Mousso Koroni is the impure and untilled land; the agricultural techniques she taught are a partial reparation for the disorders she created. This farm work wounds and purifies the land at the same

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1. See S. de Ganay, "Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara" [Aspects of Bambara Mythology and Symbolism]. [Ed., *J. psych. norm. et path.*, Vol. 42 (1949), pp. 181-201.]

776 time; it is the noblest work, and one to which every member of the Bambara race must be subject. Faro is represented by a spiral, munu; the vibrating movements of the spiral are the same that animate the daily movements of the sun. These movements are materialized in a basketwork headdress, yugu, which has eight whorls and which formerly was reserved for kings. Faro's face is white, because he took it from the spirit of the air, Teliko, who was an albino. His ears are protected by two fins; his hands are of different sex; his tail is palmate, and his breast is of copper. Albinos and copper are the spirit's preferred sacrifices. All atmospheric manifestations denote his presence; his principal seat is the Niger River, but he has the gift of ubiquity and haunts all waters. Faro is accompanied by helpers, the most representative of whom is the bolokuruni, one-armed blacksmith of a black race. His air messenger is the swallow, who carries the
824 fertilizing word. Certain plants are in permanent rapport with him: the Yayalẽ, the Ngoyõ (tomato), which is compared to blood. Thus, small fields of tomatoes reserved for the cult of Faro are cultivated in each village. All metals are reserved for Faro. The Bozo, born of Faro's first twins, enjoy a privileged position because they were not subject to the defilement caused by Mousso Koroni and can enter into direct communication with the spirit. In addition, they are the masters of the water.

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784
841 The cult of Faro includes a whole series of taboos, such as the black earth of the river which may not be used by the potters and butter which may not be kept in water. But the principal taboo is menstrual blood, originally provoked by the disorders of Mousso Koroni.

B. Conception of Man

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761 The Bambara conceive man as a microcosm, a resumé of the totality of beings and things. The principle of duality contained in the original creative thought is realized in man by his twin souls which compensate for the separation of the sexes. In man, Faro is represented by the ni (soul) and the dya (double). Pemba is represented by the téré (the character, force, and conscience) and the nyama (which is the téré when it leaves its corporeal support after
826 death). Mousso Koroni is represented by the Wanzo (evil force with

[826]
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761 its seat in the prepuce and the clitoris, necessitating circumcision
and excision). The body is conceived as being the support of all
spiritual forces; each part is distinctly known [84] for its particular
role. The body, like the spiritual principles, is bisexual; the boy
[304 is feminine in his prepuce, the girl masculine in her clitoris, and it
831] is only after circumcision and excision that the man and woman can
unite and realize the original fruitful twinship. On the metaphysical
plane, there is identity between man, "seed of the world," and the
cereal seed; the basic nutriments that are made up of the eight
principal cereals are represented symbolically in men's clavicles.
775 Finally, death separates all of these elements composing the person.
761 The *dya* remains in the water where it will become the *ni* of the
new-born in the family of the deceased; the *ni* is caught by the family
head and transported to the altar where it will animate the *dya* of the
new-born; the *téré* becomes *nyama*, a dangerous and vengeful force;
it is deposited on the *pembele*, where it rejoins the ancestral forces.
The body is buried and belongs to the termites. At birth, all the
spiritual forces are transmitted again, whole, "refreshed," and
purified. One being replaces another until the final resurrection.

C. Ritual, Sacrifice, and Cults

782 To appeal to and influence the spiritual forces, the Bambara
use prayer, offerings, and sacrifices. Oral rites are used everywhere
and at any time. "They pray to the sky, the cardinal points, the
spirits; they sacrifice on stones, on the ground, on trees, by water
holes, just as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries or situated in
public or private places. Every circumcized adult, father of a family,
owner of a home and cultivatable land, is a sacrificer, a capacity
[531] emphasized by the red spot which sometimes is an ornament of the
walls of the principal room in the man's residence." (1)

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1. G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].

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the blacksmith. The doll is given the name of the dead infant, the
[304 child[1] carries it with him to the circumcision, and, when he marries,
585] he buries the doll with a piece of wood representing the wife of the
deceased.

845 Twins are replicas of Faro, their presence is beneficial, and
they are considered invulnerable.

● 826 The albino is supposed to be the issue of sexual relations held
833 in sunlight, a breach of taboo. He, too, is a new being. His wanzo
904 is so active that the circumciser must take great precautions before
operating on it.

826 He is considered to be endowed with special powers which
782 make him a choice victim for the sacrifices offered to the spirit of
the water.

553 To the children of blacksmiths, the name is given near the
paternal forge in the presence of all the artisans. An old man pre-
326 pares seven little sticks, giving each the name of an ancestor. Three
of these are drawn at random from the group, and the third gives
the name of the baby. The head of the baby is rubbed with the axe
Kongobwona, and his shaved hair is soaked in sacrificial blood.

553 In the Bamako region two chickens or a sheep are sacrificed
782 to celebrate the name-giving. The distribution of the meat is made
according to established custom. If it is a chicken, the patriarch
receives the head and the gizzard, while the wing and white meat go
to the old woman who washed the baby during the first eight days.
If it is a sheep, the patriarch receives [91] the ribs (because they are
a bulwark, and the patriarch is the defender of the village) and the
heart; the blacksmith receives the shoulder; the infant's family gets
the head (so that the infant will go ahead), the back (symbol of
prosperity), and the limbs (supports one wishes the new-born to have);
the blood which runs on the ground is destined for the infant's protec-
tive ancestors. Then the family divides the raw meat with the heads
of family, and the old woman thus receives her part indirectly.

c. Circumcision

881 A male infant is born, but he still keeps (because of the
304 primordial twinship) the prepuce as the physical support of the female
831 sex. He will only be freed of this by circumcision. It is this opera-
tion that definitively determines his sexual qualification and renders
him fit to contract marriage.

[1] [ie., the surviving child of twins. -Analyst]

881 and the member is held up by a split millet stalk. The prepuces are
304 buried, and their white bonnets are put on the circumcised. The place of the operation is forbidden to women and to the non-circumcised who could take the liberated wanzo.

In the Bamako region the blood of the oldest is gathered in
534 two new calabashes, which are later broken and the pieces used to make sistrums, sinzin.

881 After the ceremony, the children retire for three months under the direction of a priest of the Komo. During this period, when they receive a religious and technical education, they enter the village only to sleep in a special house and to repair the roofs of their teachers' huts.

794 The night before the sixth day after the operation, they are initiated in the Komo. The next day they are led to the river where they wash their wound. Meals are taken together, followed by songs and dances, until they are healed. The last day, the sistrums, sticks, mats, and everything that has been in contact with the circumcised are put in a pile and burned. Each child jumps over the fire three times and runs home, without turning around, to lose his wanzo definitively. In the Bamako region the sistrums are preserved in the cabin of the village chief and will be used for the children of the following years. The bonnet is returned to the mother and will be preserved until death. The next day the child puts on his new clothes.

881 Let us note that for the circumcision of twins all the offerings
304 for the ceremony and the sacrifices must be doubled, and each child
826 will possess two sistrums. Finally, the albinos today are sent to the dispensary, because the blacksmiths are afraid to operate on them, their wanzo being particularly dangerous.

304 Circumcision may take place posthumously. The circumciser
766 then cuts the left ear of the body, since the wanzo freed by death would be dangerous to the living.

794 Generally, a sort of ceremony of confirmation of membership in the Komo takes place in the year following the circumcision.

d. Excision

881
304 The excision of the girls has a meaning equivalent to that
831 of the circumcision of the boys. The operation frees them of the physical male factor residing in the clitoris.

584 She returns to her own family every year at the beginning of the rainy season and goes back to her future in-laws at the start of the dry season.

583 584 Every year she takes home 30 kola nuts and three cocks, and the young man's fa begins to pay the bride price which traditionally came to eight oxen and five sheep. The girl returns at the dry season bringing fonio, fruits of the karite, and sumbalé (for making sauces), and other products.

583 585 She is married after the appearance of the first menses, and her husband continues to pay the bride price in the following order: a cow, a bull, a heifer . . .

583 584 Throughout the engagement period, the young man must cultivate the field of his future parents-in-law.

583 Among the Bambara who currently practice the exchange of young girls between two families for marriage purposes, the compensation is no longer paid, although gifts and contributions are still given.

584 585 On the day of the marriage the girl is accompanied by an
attendant who represents her twin, while the young man also is aided
by an attendant, and the two couples symbolize the union of the two
couples of [94] primordial twins. Finally, the young girl is carried
up to the abode constructed for her by her husband. She is followed
by a cortege of seven women, each carrying part of the bride's gifts.
The investigation being carried out by Mme. Dieterlen in the Bambara country indicates that the seven women represent the seven
826 seeds that each man possesses in his clavicles; the bride is the fonio
seed that is brought to the husband's village, for marriage is considered to be a cultivation.

The marriage of twins requires slightly different rites. When the twins are not of the same sex, the boy must deflower the girl before she marries (there is only one intercourse). If the twins are two boys, the first to marry must let his wife have relations with his twin. If the twins are girls, the husband of the first to be married must also unite with the second.

f. Death and Funerals

761 764 Death dissociates the different elements which make up the person. The purpose of the funeral rites is to gather the spiritual

3. The Reincarnation of Souls

775 769 It is a great surprise that the Bambara believe in the reincarnation of souls. Some do not dare to believe in it because they sacrifice to the shades of their ancestors, and others, "cultivated minds, nourished by the sanest philosophy," reject this belief as illogical, since the religion of the Negro is the worship of the dead! They do, in fact, worship the dead, but in the Bambara religion this worship, extensive as it is, remains a detail, and not the foundation. To honor the shades of his ancestors (but only of those who were heads of families, so that the worship of the dead is already somewhat limited -- with all due respect to those who see nothing but it), the Bambara family head throws a big blot of chicken blood and a mouthful of chewed kola nut onto the dégé, or millet flour mixed with water, and pours it onto the wall at the entrance of his hut. He does so to implore the help and protection of that power or authority which his predecessors possessed in their position as family head, an authority exactly the same as that which he himself possesses. He believes, nonetheless, in the reincarnation of souls! This belief is general and universal among fetishists, and if some do not dare admit it before Europeans and
[576] Moslems, their reticence is due to simple human respect, to a fear of contradicting beliefs which they know to be contrary to their own, a wish not to offend anyone and not to be the butt of laughter and ridicule.

766 775 Infants who die at the breast before having achieved the use of reason are buried in a corner of the inner courtyard and sometimes even in the hut where they were born. Before such a child is buried, one of its limbs, usually the big toe of the right foot, is broken, and sometimes the father marks it with a knife on /57/ the shoulder, the arm, or the chest. He thinks that the child who will come after it will be animated by the soul of the dead one, and he neglects nothing that might possibly enable him to ascertain whether it is. This stupid and ridiculous operation is commonly performed under the eyes of the mother, and some strange events occur. Since she must submit
775 826 to the will of her husband as soon as possible and have marital relations with him, she soon conceives. During her pregnancy her imagination

775 826 may be active and in her dreams she may dwell on the events which accompanied the burial of her dead child. Thus, she sometimes gives birth to an infant which has the marks made by the father. Such occurences contribute not a little to "confirm" the Bambara's belief in reincarnation of souls. At Wélèngèla, on the road from Ségou to Sens, there was a Negro who had a cleft upper lip from birth, and the people of the village were unanimous in giving the reason. His mother had given birth only to sickly and puny infants, all of whom died within few weeks. At the death of the last one the father, furious, cut his lip with a stroke of the knife. When he returned to life, the child did not want to take back the lip that his father had removed! I have seen others who from birth had a sort of tattoo on the back, chest, or arms, and the parents of each did not hesitate to tell me that it was the mark made on his deceased older brother.

775 551 Children born after a deceased sister or brother are given a special name; it would seem that the Negroes seek to make the soul of this small being feel how inconsiderate he was toward his parents in coming into the world and immediately leaving, after having kindled both love and hope in their hearts. Perhaps they also think to put on a good countenance before their fellows, for it is a great disgrace not to have children or to have only children who die at birth. Both theories are plausible, and the second would only be an expression of humility disguising a secret hope. The names most frequently given to these latecomers are: Malobali, "shameless one"; Ta fli, "go throw it away"; Foui té, "he is nothing"; Fou, "nothing"; etc. -- If the first theory that I propose is accepted these names would be translated as follows: "Are you not ashamed (i.e., to come into the world only to leave it so soon)?" -- "Might just as well throw you away, bury you (i.e., for all the time /58/ you spend among us)." -- "You are no good /literally, in French: "a being of nothing"/ (you are but a heartless one, you who come to us only to leave us in a short time)." -- "That is nothing." A Negro blowing on the palm of his hand gives us the full meaning of this word; the gesture translates his thought: "You are no more to us than nothing, are you not like a breath that passes and disappears?"

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3. *Bisatjila*, those who flagellate themselves.

4. *Woni sama*, those who scratch themselves with thorns.

used by the *korodouga* (5) to drive away the sparks crackling on the

5. *Korodouga*, clowns, storytellers /*griots*/ of the sect.

backs of the *tatougoula*.

7. Burial of the Excommunicated

766 Those with sores, lepers, and persons killed by a fetish who did not accept their sacrifice may be said to be excommunicated. No adult who dies without hair on his head or body has the right to the honor of a Bambara burial, and he is given that of lepers.

A leper is never buried in the common cemetery; he is sent far off into the bush to a separate place. The more usual custom, actually, is to slip the corpse into a hollow baobab (*Adansonia digitata*) with a small, live pullet as companion -- or an egg, if the deceased is a girl. The same fate befalls a bald person.

The reason for this custom is that this class of people have been abandoned by the Creator and the spirits, all of whom scorn them and withdraw from them. If ever the ground where ancestors rest should receive the remains of one of these accursed ones, their bones would shake with disgust. Moreover, they would take revenge for having to rest near people who during their lifetime were without hair; they would be deaf to every prayer and would refuse every sacrifice. The village and the entire region there would suffer a total lack of rain, a drought without any equal, in short, a famine with all its horrors. /231/

773 sat down in the middle of the cardinal point."

4. A ye klali ke.

The first sky, kaba noro, is less pure than the others and the impure traces of Mousso Koroni's passage, in the form of clouds, have remained there. From that sky comes the wind which Pemba had placed there while pursuing her.

But the second sky, kaba dye, "the white sky," is fresh and already in Faro's power. It is the seat of the souls (ni) of men and animals. The Kwore spirits live there and strive to permit the passage of rain as it falls on earth from the seventh heaven.

The third, kaba fî, "the black sky," is the resting place of all spirits, and the fourth, kaba mana ("shedding of the sky," is the mirror of the other three. There, Faro does his daily "accounting" of the world.

In the fifth sky, koblekaba, "the red sky," Faro hands out judgments on those who have broken the laws. It is the sky of struggles, battles and victories—the sky to which the king offered sacrifices before going to war. It is also the sky of blood, fire, and hot and harmful winds.

In the sixth sky, suna kaba, the secrets of the world situation are kept (1). As its name indicates, it is also the sky of sleep. All the souls of spirits and living beings sleep there, each in an allotted place. [827] Sleep /29/ is a purification of the soul and dreams are the directives given to it by Faro. Fainting spells, insomnia, and illness are the result of disturbances in the displacement of souls during sleep.

The seventh sky, wolõ fla kaba, is the site of Faro's reign and the seat of power, royal power in particular. From this sky, the realm of purifying water, Faro sends forth over the world the beneficial rain that brings a soul to the grain.

[821] The sun, to which Faro "holds the rope," penetrates the first sky in the morning and crosses all the others successively until evening when it skinks into the seventh. It is the god Pemba who, weary of his pursuit of Mousso Koroni, turns red. The stars are his pores, dilated by effort.

1. Dyẽ dyoka gundo be sunakaba la.

774 827 The ni, which animates the body, is visible during the weeks following birth in the movements of the fontanel. It is also the breath, the respiration, the beating of the arteries. Like the dya, it is not indissolubly bound to the body for it leaves it during sleep in order to go to the sixth sky, sunankaba. When the person awakens, the ni returns [828] to the body and the dream is considered a memory of what it has seen, a premonition of an event concerning the individual, the family, or the village (1).

[787] 1. Great numbers of fish seen in a dream foretell an abundant catch; quarrelling signifies war; to swim suggests purification for an offense. The passage of crickets from west to east is the sign of a great battle or famine. In this last instance, the situation is so serious that the village is forewarned and each one must make an offering to a needy person saying these words: "I make this soul sacrifice to God in order that he save me (nye nin ye ni sakaka ye ka ngala ma a la ka mbo)." The village chief also offers a collective sacrifice.

774 The dya, the double or twin of the human being and its opposite sex, has a body: either the shadow on the ground or the image in the water. It may move alone or be forced to leave the person it is accompanying under Faro's order. When a crocodile carries off or wounds a man by order of the spirit, he first seizes his visible shadow on the surface of the water and his dya in the water. The same thing may be attempted by someone with evil intentions. In such a case the close contact which the dya as a shadow maintains with the impure earth makes it particularly vulnerable. In order to remedy this, the person concerned must look at himself in the water contained in a gourd; then, when his image is clear, he clouds it by tipping the receptacle; this puts the dya under Faro's protection.

/60/ The independence and vulnerability of the dya require, in the course of certain religious functions, that it be taken over by Faro for the duration of the ceremony.

Wild and domestic animals are endowed with a ni and a dya. Plants also have a ni. The ni of trees is situated in the buds and insures its growth and its life; that of cereals necessary to human life

774 D. Traore. "Le Tere chez les Bambara du
787 Ségou /The Tere among the Bambara of Ségou/."
828 Notes africaines, January 1947, pp. 29-31.

774 Man is considered the bearer of a strong tere. Because he talks, is well informed, and knows good from evil, he is responsible for his own life and that of his family. The tere is the gaining of consciousness.

774 825 This aspect of the tere means that only domestic animals, whose life depends on man, are bearers of this principle. Wild animals "have a hard and barren life; they have to labor to feed themselves; so they do not have to bear the burden of a tere." All that lives independently of man is without a tere. (1)

1. However, according to certain informants, wild animals might also be endowed with several tere for different parts of the body. In this case, it would seem that the term designates especially the animal's physical peculiarities and not its consciousness, as in the case of man and domestic animals.

The tere of domestic animals is not as powerful as that of man, but is also revealed by external signs. For instance, a horse that swings its head from right to left while it is tied up has a very bad tere; it is said to be its duga fufa (2). Such a beast is undesirable in a home for it "chases away happiness and success." A wounded domestic animal attacks its enemy with its tere.

2. Literally, "the swaying of the hawk." It is said that when a hawk descends on its prey, it swings its head right and left in order to see the prey better.

774 784 827 The fact that the tere is that part of the person which suffers the consequences of impurity testifies to the bonds that unite man to the outer world. The tere is disturbed when a taboo, tne, is broken. If it is a good tere, it leaves the person; if it is a bad one, it becomes worse. On the other hand, the brezking of a taboo provokes a physiological change in the blood which loses its red color and becomes

774 pale. It is manifested by a loss of strength and by illnesses affecting
784 the body openings: the man becomes blind and deaf-mute. He may
827 also become paralyzed. Generally he does not die but is pursued by
ills until he purifies himself.

In addition, the *tere* changes when it is detached from its normal
774 support; it then becomes *nyama*, a force which acts outside the body.
Manifest in action, the fact can already be sensed in the spoken word,
the bearer of *nyama* which immediately affects /63/ the person to
whom it is addressed. The consequences of this action of the word
are manifold.

761 At the time of death, the *tere* is completely liberated. Transformed
into *nyama* which leaves the body, it then becomes a very active
774 form which, in certain cases, can attack whomever it considers
778 responsible for the death (1).

774 Sacrificial beings, men or animals, or plants for ritual use never
778 release a dangerous *nyama*. Their spiritual principles and forces
are channeled in the course of the ritual and directed toward the
benefit of a supernatural power through the altar. The same is true
of domestic animals immolated for consumption, in which case their
forces are used over again and their death causes no disorder since
it was foreseen by Faro's law concerning food.

On the other hand, the *nyama* of the bush animals (*nyama bakâ*) leave their dead bodies and pursue the hunter (2). To protect himself

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(1) This very visible but incomplete aspect of the *nyama* is the one that has been most studied heretofore. On this subject, see the works of the Abbé Henry, Ch. Monteil, H. Labouret, L. Tauxier. Furthermore, in the sky, in space, and on earth, there is a *nyama* independent of the *tere*. The nature of this general and vital element has not been completely clarified by investigation.

(2) The sick man may be treated in the following manner: seven (or a multiple of seven) cowrie shells are thrown upon the hide of the animal

778 wanzo and directing it into the mask to prevent it from doing harm 304 (1). Thus, nothing of the individual forces is lost. The wanzo itself, harmful at the beginning, when properly channeled and directed, serves to consolidate the collective energies of the infantile societies based on it.

Only when an adolescent has lost his wanzo is he permitted to marry; [582] any individual would refuse to marry a partner who is not completely rid of it.

The Body

826 The Bambara have a notion of their bodies and the role of the different parts and organs. This notion is all the deeper because it is linked to that of the spiritual principles that animate it.

Indeed, the tere is determined by certain visible aspects of the body, while the ni and the dya also have sexes like the body. Therefore any study should include the links that unite the spiritual elements to the physical body in order to understand properly its state and function.

Blood, which together with breath is the seat of life, is also the vehicle of physical and spiritual forces that circulate with it in the veins and arteries. The blood sacrifice liberates these forces which sustain the altars, the soil, and the beings who receive them. Certain alliances are consecrated by an exchange of blood. The clear color of blood is proof of its purity: all infractions bring about a change and cause it to become pale. Menstrual blood, testimony to [841] Mousso Koroni's impurity and of the momentary sterility of women, is the principal taboo of the supernatural powers that create and protect life.

826 The head, which contains thought, is an essential part of the in-828 dividual and his symbol: "the head of the members of society" is 827 represented by a stroke in the course of the rituals performed by members of the Komo or the Kworé. Man grows through his head just as a plant "grows through its head bud" (2). Man's head is protected

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1. See p. 256.

2. The myth mentions the "head of the balanza" at the time that men broke the

826 828 [827] taboo by cutting its buds (see p. 43). The altars of the fields and of agricultural societies, tõ, watch over the "head of the millet."

/66/ and purified in order to maintain his health and prosperity. It is the seat of consciousness and will, and receives a share of the scarifications made at birth, which will exercise influence on the person.

826 Hair contains an important part of the individual's ni. It is therefore dangerous to mix it with the hair of another, for that would create a vital and indissoluble bond between the two parties. To burn it is equivalent to making an attempt on one's own life. It is buried or placed in a deep hole in the wall of the house for protection (1).

[832 789] 1. Many charms and magic spells are based on hair. In order to be loved by a woman, a man must mix some of her hair with his and place it under his head at night with a prayer. In order to keep his job, an employee does the same with his hair and that of his employer; he then sacrifices a victim over the ensemble so that the employer cannot fire him without risking his own life.

Hair and the pilose system play a part in the myth and were used to count the age of primitive men until the advent of death on earth. All the ancestors represented in the sanctuaries are bearded and hairy. Their appearance shows that, having become mortal, they lived at a time when rejuvenation no longer existed.

826 827 The pupil is the fundamental part of the eye. Its name, nyemani, "little person of the eye" (2), expresses its function. The pupil reflects and absorbs the person it sees. The image is a kind of double,

2. Man's pupil, according to information that is still obscure, was made with that of the serpent and was also called nye mani sa, "serpent of the little person of the eye."

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a replica of the person seen, the double being received and preserved by the seer with the help of the registering mechanism of the eye. It is with his eyes that Faro inscribes in his memory the number of beings under his domination. It is through the eyes as well as through the genitals that woman is united to her husband during the sexual act. The individual who has broken a taboo is affected first through the eyes: he suffers from pains or becomes blind according to the degree of his offense.

The nose is the canal of man's breath or, respiration, ni na kle (literally, soul that ascends and descends), a term describing the very movement of life. The seat of breath is the solar plexus, kwa nye, "eye of the chest," also said to be ni dyuru ba, "the great rope of the soul." When Faro decides to take back the life of a man, he carries him off into the water and returns his corpse with the nose and the navel cut up. The mutilation of the nose reminds all that, as the master /67/ of the guilty man's life, he takes it away from him by taking away his breath.

The mouth and the tongue play a part in all the rites and symbols concerning the person. The voice is "in the throat" but man talks with the mouth. The word is a creator, an act; it carries a force, nyama, which inhabits the mouth, permeates the tongue and saliva, and transmits itself to everything it touches. It is Faro's word passing through the mouth, the word received in suffering in mythical times, which integrates the human species with the new order established in the creation.

Its organ is the tongue which, when represented in ritual objects, symbolizes it (1). Its vehicle is saliva: to spit is to give one's word, to seal an oath. The old men spit on seeds, after having promised an offering to the Komo; the sacrificing priest, before the libation, spits prechewed kola nuts onto the altar. Husband and wife spit their marriage oath. The power of the mouth finds its most powerful expression in the griot's recitation of the device (2).

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1. The prayers recited during the initiation rites allude to the formidable nyama of the initiates' tongues.

2. See p. 112.

826 The mouth and tongue, ejectors of the word, can be compared in
827 importance to the ear, a receptive organ. It is through the ear that
man receives and remembers the word. Its role is comparable to that
of the sex organs which eject life and receive it. The ear in itself
has both sexes: male by its auricle, female by its orifice. This
duality expresses the basic duality of man. That is why the corpse of
[764] an uncircumcised man is sometimes amputated at the ear rather than
at the foreskin.

826 Because of the symbolism of its shape and because of its function,
the ear is adorned. Men formerly wore three copper rings on the right
301 ear and four on the left, the number seven representing the complete
being, male and female, ni and dya. Women wear four rings on each
auricle or, if they can, twenty-two, which represent the twenty-two
stages of creation, or the twenty-two generative categories. Sometimes, for both men and women, a single ring attached to the earlobe
represents the mother of the other rings (1).

827 But the role of this adornment goes much further. As symbol of
191 the word, it is through the ornaments that the spirit Téliko, master
301 of sound, hears what /68/ is said to man. They attract sound and
776 send it back to Téliko and Faro, who thus judge the acts and words
of men. To wear earrings did not originally mean to adorn oneself,
but to hear the spirits as well as to force them to hear what was said
(2). Its second effect is to embarass the liar, the bearer of false news or evil words, by putting him in the position of being understood by
the invisible, therefore of being judged by them. A pleasant or well-intentioned word benefits the one to whom it is addressed and this

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[178] 1. In olden times, men and women wore cowrie shells on their ears in the place of copper rings, a custom which would seem to be still respected in certain villages today. These shells played the same part as copper.

2. Rings placed on musical instruments have the same purpose and also symbolize those worn by men. See p. 282.

827 191 381 776 gain is felt as a contribution to the beneficial nyama. "The spirit Téliko transforms the air emitted by the speaker into favorable nyama; upon hearing a good word, it would be necessary to stop one's ears so that this nyama does not leave the person who received it." Moreover, if a person opens his eyes wide while watching the speaker, "the latter's nyama is able to penetrate the body of the listener" and spread within it as a reviving tide. While this takes place, the good word saturates the air, helping the action of breathing, hence the life, of the listener. "One breathes," says an informant, "with the nyama of the words which enter through the eyes and ears." But this process is not one-sided. The good nyama returns to the speaker through his own eyes while he is looking at the other person. He is reflected in the person with whom he is talking and it is as though he were talking to himself. There is a beneficial exchange even when only one of the two actors speaks.

Inversely, a bad word or an insult upsets the listener and rebounds, acting upon the insulting person. This harmonious arrangement summarizes precisely and powerfully the universal movement, principle of life and strength for all beings. It comprises an individual movement provoked by the word which acts upon the body by developing and regularizing the rhythm of breathing, and a collective movement set off by the return of the word to the speaker. Because of the effect of the spoken word, exchanges are established that are favorable both to the rhythm of individual breathing and to the equilibrium of universal life. This effect is not limited to words in the strict sense; sight enjoys the same prerogatives as hearing and diction. If an object [431] belonging to a certain person is seen and coveted by another, the owner cannot refuse to give it to him. The act of seeing has established by itself, between the stranger and the object, a bond which is affectively stronger than that of ownership.

836 The articulated parts of the human body are just as meaningful as the head. The bones, more lasting than the flesh /69/ and a testimony, in the grave, of the life that has passed, are its foundation and framework.

The navel is the central point of the articulations: that is why Faro, when he drowns a person, returns the body after having slit the nose and navel. This double mutilation shows that he has reclaimed the head and the body of the guilty man. The articulations are the indication of man's condition in the new order. Where he was once

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3. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal et Niger [Upper Senegal and Niger].

4. Labouret, Les Mandingues et leur langue [The Mandingo and Their Language].

etc., but these are still very fragmentary and incomplete. In addi-
177 tion, this society was completely disrupted by the French conquest, either by such radical measures as the suppression of slavery or by a natural evolution as a result of contact with European societies. Nevertheless, traditional structures retain their vitality, despite the effort to adapt them to European formulas.

178 The society seems to have oscillated between familial anarchy and the clan stage, according to alternating ranges of groupings, disassociation, and regroupings.

1. The Family

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596 Concerning the Sudanese, Delafosse has already made the distinction between "the restricted family" and the "extended family." The restricted family is composed of the parents and children who live in the "hut." Taken alone, it does not represent a social unit. The true social cell is the extended family. This is the large united family made up of a group of restricted families whose heads recognize a common ancestor. This group, composed of agnates in principle, is the ba-denya, whose members live in huts within an enclosure: gwa or so. The two ends of this [51] enclosure rest on a blo (vestibule) where the ancestors' altar is found.

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612 According to Labouret, the Bambara distinguish three categories of family ties: the paternal line, the maternal line, and relationship by marriage. The child takes the dyamu (honorable name) of his father's group, but the terms applied to ancestors and descendants are the same as those of the maternal line.

"... Kinship includes the following generations:
tolo-mina... tolo-sama... tolo-ma-sama: who seizes or pulls ears
[822] (a belief has it that if a great grandson pulls the ear of his great grandfather, the latter becomes deaf);

/56/ Chapter 3

THE PERSON

812 The Bambara conceive of man (homo) as the principle of nature. He is "the seed of the world" and as such reflects the totality of beings and things in their essence and in their situation. Like the universe, man is life, and like life, "he is maintained by the attraction of the cardinal angels." Universe and man are each the condition of the other: the totality of things upholds the human being in his place and situation and makes him persevere within himself. Man, on the other hand, is the basis, the "raison d'être," and the cause of the universe by virtue of his consciousness and the knowledge he has of himself.

In this way the principle of duality, contained in the original creative thought and realized in the universe by the sky and the earth, is reflected in the person. The human being shows in his body the separation of the sexes necessary to the multiplication of the species —a separation, expressed in the myth of Pemba and Mousso Koroni, that shows the disorders, the difficulties, and the conflicts implicit in such a situation. But through his twin souls, the human being brings about the ideal union of the sexes as expressed in the myth of Faro's androgyny.

812 928 Moreover, these mythical personalities are present in man: Faro through the ni and the dya, Pemba through the tere and the nyama, Mousso Koroni through the wanzo. It can also be said that the peregrinations of these beings and their pursuits in time and in the mythical regions are the expression of man's psychological states such as the inner explorations and conflicts necessary to man's defining himself within himself and with respect to the rest of the creation. In other words, they are the expression of the growing consciousness of self. The whole religious and social attitude of the individual testifies to the interplay of these various forces, between which he must maintain balance and harmony.

000 /57/ In this chapter we shall examine in succession the following elements that make up or determine the person: the spiritual principles (ni, dya, tere, nyama, wanzo), the parts of the human body related to them, and certain social attributes of the individual (given name, family name, device, taboo). Finally we shall consider the cathartic role of the institution of joking relationship founded on the notion of duality.

the dying man to go into the water and place itself under Faro's protection. At the moment of delivery, both ni and dya return to the body of the newborn child who replaces the dead man, but they return in reversed order: the dya is returned to the body of the child and becomes his ni; the ni of the deceased mixes with the birth water spread on the ground which forms the shadow (suma) and will be his double, the twin (1). In the case of a boy, the dya will be female; in the case /59/ of a girl, it will be male. These movements are independent of the sex of the deceased as the spirit reverses the sexes when necessary. Each human being is thus both male and female
[828] through his soul and his double. This conception of human nature, which is fundamental to the Bambara, is expressed in the symbolism
[801] of numbers. The number seven is formed of three (male sexual symbol) and four (female sexual symbol) and represents the complete man. In addition, on another level, the number six is that of male twins, seven that of mixed twins (and the hermaphrodite), and eight that of female twins. The body of the newborn child is gently tapped
[844] by the number of strokes representing the above figures in order to call the child's ni according to its sex.

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775
2. Grouped hierarchally, children, male adults, and women form religious societies or institutions, dyo. Each dyo is charged with the upkeep of altars which serve to preserve the spiritual forces of the group. (See p.

[844
824]
1. The blood of childbirth represents the excess tomato juice absorbed by the woman, that which remains in the womb after the formation of the embryo. On the eighth day after birth, the mother of the parturient woman squeezes three or four tomatoes (depending on the sex of the newborn) into a gourd which she then gives to the child's father. The latter makes his wife drink the juice to replace the blood which she has lost and which is considered impure.

114 827 The *ni*, which animates the body, is visible during the weeks following birth in the movements of the fontanel. It is also the breath, the respiration, the beating of the arteries. Like the *dya*, it is not indissolubly bound to the body for it leaves it during sleep in order to go to the sixth sky, *sunankaba*. When the person awakens, the *ni* returns [828] to the body and the dream is considered a memory of what it has seen, a premonition of an event concerning the individual, the family, or the village (1).

[787] 1. Great numbers of fish seen in a dream foretell an abundant catch; quarrelling signifies war; to swim suggests purification for an offense. The passage of crickets from west to east is the sign of a great battle or famine. In this last instance, the situation is so serious that the village is forewarned and each one must make an offering to a needy person saying these words: "I make this soul sacrifice to God in order that he save me (*nye nin ye ni sakaka ye ka ngala ma a la ka mbo*)." The village chief also offers a collective sacrifice.

114 The *dya*, the double or twin of the human being and its opposite sex, has a body: either the shadow on the ground or the image in the water. It may move alone or be forced to leave the person it is accompanying under Faro's order. When a crocodile carries off or wounds a man by order of the spirit, he first seizes his visible shadow on the surface of the water and his *dya* in the water. The same thing may be attempted by someone with evil intentions. In such a case the close contact which the *dya* as a shadow maintains with the impure earth makes it particularly vulnerable. In order to remedy this, the person concerned must look at himself in the water contained in a gourd; then, when his image is clear, he clouds it by tipping the receptacle; this puts the *dya* under Faro's protection.

/60/ The independence and vulnerability of the *dya* require, in the course of certain religious functions, that it be taken over by Faro for the duration of the ceremony.

Wild and domestic animals are endowed with a *ni* and a *dya*. Plants also have a *ni*. The *ni* of trees is situated in the buds and insures its growth and its life; that of cereals necessary to human life

774 his consciousness, as well as that part of his being which, through the body, makes him sensitive to events. If man is vulnerable through his double, it is his *tere* that is affected by any breaking of taboos; it receives and submits to impurity.

824 The *tere* has its seat in the blood and the head (*kun tere*). It develops in the foetus in the course of gestation and is composed in part of the parents' *tere* to which is added that of the deceased person whose soul and double the child has inherited.

774 553 787 The appearance of the child's *tere* is determined by the old men of the family in the course of the name-giving ceremony which takes place publicly on the eighth day after birth. After carefully examining the child's hairline along the forehead, the manner in which his eyebrows join, the shape of his eyes (the seat of intelligence), mouth, hands, and feet, one of the old men present announces in a loud voice the revealing signs of his character. The position of these signs makes it possible to say whether a child has a good or a bad *tere* and to make predictions about his life. A slight bald spot on the middle of his head will make him a rich man; a wide and deep skull will make him a chief. The old man then swings the child in the direction of the four cardinal points above the family altars and gives him the first name of the deceased person whose *ni* and *dya* he has inherited. Some of the hair, shaved off shortly before, is then thrown into the Niger by the father who pronounces the name while facing the river. The gesture and the word are meant to entrust the *tere* to the spirit of the waters and to ask his protection. On the same day the blacksmith marks out on the child's face the scarifications that act on his *tere*, giving him strength, courage, and virtue.

774 787 828 As the child grows, certain of his physical peculiarities are interpreted as characteristics of his *tere*. If he grinds his teeth while sleeping it means he will attack his parents; if he often takes hold of his left wrist with his right hand he will always be victorious. A girl who walks swinging her hands and throwing them behind and who raises dust with her feet while walking will destroy her husband's fortune. Some informants say that a person has several *tere*: /62/ one for his manner of walking, one for the way he carries his head, one for the shape of his limbs, and one for the breasts if the person is a woman (1).

1. The physical signs determining the *tere* are very numerous. On this subject see

774 D. Traore. "Le Tere chez les Bambara du
787 Ségou /The Tere among the Bambara of Ségou/, "
828 *Notes africaines*, January 1947, pp. 29-31.

774 Man is considered the bearer of a strong *tere*. Because he talks, is well informed, and knows good from evil, he is responsible for his own life and that of his family. The *tere* is the gaining of consciousness.

774 825 This aspect of the *tere* means that only domestic animals, whose life depends on man, are bearers of this principle. Wild animals "have a hard and barren life; they have to labor to feed themselves; so they do not have to bear the burden of a *tere*." All that lives independently of man is without a *tere*. (1)

The *tere* of domestic animals is not as powerful as that of man, but is also revealed by external signs. For instance, a horse that swings its head from right to left while it is tied up has a very bad *tere*; it is said to be its *duga fufa* (2). Such a beast is undesirable in a home for it "chases away happiness and success." A wounded domestic animal attacks its enemy with its *tere*.

774 784 827 The fact that the *tere* is that part of the person which suffers the consequences of impurity testifies to the bonds that unite man to the outer world. The *tere* is disturbed when a taboo, *tne*, is broken. If it is a good *tere*, it leaves the person; if it is a bad one, it becomes worse. On the other hand, the brezking of a taboo provokes a physiological change in the blood which loses its red color and becomes

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1. However, according to certain informants, wild animals might also be endowed with several *tere* for different parts of the body. In this case, it would seem that the term designates especially the animal's physical peculiarities and not its consciousness, as in the case of man and domestic animals.

2. Literally, "the swaying of the hawk." It is said that when a hawk descends on its prey, it swings its head right and left in order to see the prey better.

778 304 wanzo and directing it into the mask to prevent it from doing harm (1). Thus, nothing of the individual forces is lost. The wanzo itself, harmful at the beginning, when properly channeled and directed, serves to consolidate the collective energies of the infantile societies based on it.

[582] Only when an adolescent has lost his wanzo is he permitted to marry; any individual would refuse to marry a partner who is not completely rid of it.

The Body

826 The Bambara have a notion of their bodies and the role of the different parts and organs. This notion is all the deeper because it is linked to that of the spiritual principles that animate it.

Indeed, the tere is determined by certain visible aspects of the body, while the ni and the dya also have sexes like the body. Therefore any study should include the links that unite the spiritual elements to the physical body in order to understand properly its state and function.

Blood, which together with breath is the seat of life, is also the vehicle of physical and spiritual forces that circulate with it in the veins and arteries. The blood sacrifice liberates these forces which sustain the altars, the soil, and the beings who receive them. Certain alliances are consecrated by an exchange of blood. The clear color of blood is proof of its purity: all infractions bring about a [841] change and cause it to become pale. Menstrual blood, testimony to Mousso Koroni's impurity and of the momentary sterility of women, is the principal taboo of the supernatural powers that create and protect life.

826 828 827 The head, which contains thought, is an essential part of the individual and his symbol: "the head of the members of society" is represented by a stroke in the course of the rituals performed by members of the Komo or the Kworé. Man grows through his head just as a plant "grows through its head bud" (2). Man's head is protected

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1. See p. 256.

2. The myth mentions the "head of the balanza" at the time that men broke the

826 828 [827] taboo by cutting its buds (see p. 43). The altars of the fields and of agricultural societies, to, watch over the "head of the millet."

/66/ and purified in order to maintain his health and prosperity. It is the seat of consciousness and will, and receives a share of the scarifications made at birth, which will exercise influence on the person.

826 Hair contains an important part of the individual's ni. It is therefore dangerous to mix it with the hair of another, for that would create a vital and indissoluble bond between the two parties. To burn it is equivalent to making an attempt on one's own life. It is buried or placed in a deep hole in the wall of the house for protection (1).

[832 789] 1. Many charms and magic spells are based on hair. In order to be loved by a woman, a man must mix some of her hair with his and place it under his head at night with a prayer. In order to keep his job, an employee does the same with his hair and that of his employer; he then sacrifices a victim over the ensemble so that the employer cannot fire him without risking his own life.

Hair and the pilose system play a part in the myth and were used to count the age of primitive men until the advent of death on earth. All the ancestors represented in the sanctuaries are bearded and hairy. Their appearance shows that, having become mortal, they lived at a time when rejuvenation no longer existed.

826 827 The pupil is the fundamental part of the eye. Its name, nyemani, "little person of the eye" (2), expresses its function. The pupil reflects and absorbs the person it sees. The image is a kind of double,

2. Man's pupil, according to information that is still obscure, was made with that of the serpent and was also called nye mani sa, "serpent of the little person of the eye."

291 The *nyeba*, "big eye," or *koloso tyema*, "mixed masculinity"
773 (with femininity), (Pl. III, a, 11) also represents creation, here sym-
822 bolized by the double layer of five indigo and white bands (1). At
801 the same time the cloth also symbolizes the complete man, said to be both masculine and feminine. A newborn child, but never an illegitimate one, is clothed in it.

The band *soli* (Pl. III, a, 5) represents the good conduct of Mousso
291 Koroni at the beginning of her life as well as her betrayal which
773 brought disorder on earth.

531 In olden times, people who had committed bad deeds were obliged to wear it. Today it is used as the shroud for a child who dies im-
[764] -mediately after birth; a strip is sewn to the garment of a recently excised girl or to the loincloth of a woman insured in childbirth. When differences or conflicts arise within a family, a fragment is placed in amulets which the women must then wear.

The *wutu nyekorotike* (Pl. III, a, 6) pictures the disorderly voyage
[828] of Mousso Koroni, her despair and her madness. This pattern is reserved for insane people in order to warn others of their condition.

The band *gombo* (Pl. III, a, 7) recalls the pursuit of Mousso /112/ Koroni by the god Pemba into the depths of the sky and the earth.

The band *tyatyeli* (Pl. III, a, 8) a picture of Mousso Koroni's defeat, symbolizes human work. It is given to a courageous and energetic woman. It is circulated among those present at religious ceremonies and its mere presence indicates that nothing here below is obtained without work and that all stems from work. To wear this band strengthens the man who is entering upon a task in a village other than his own.

The band *saki* is the *koblenkaba*, "red sky." It symbolizes heat, anger, difficulties, and sorrows. It is woven at the time of marriage negotiations for the purpose of resolving any differences of opinion.
[844] A piece of it is dipped into the blood after birth and then thrown away in order to purify everything.

[822] The blue stripes of *dyitala* represent impurity, and the red stripes, purification by sacrifice. Whoever has broken a taboo wears the blue, and the red when he is purified. A piece of red cloth may be inserted into the vagina of a young woman, after she has lost her virginity or

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1. On the value of number 5, see pp. 24, 25.

787 With the same equipment the diviner sometimes operates differently. Setting the gourd firmly on the crown that supports it, he then taps it two or three times with his middle finger. Then, it is claimed, he can hear special sounds, which are revelations by the water-spirit and which he alone can understand.

In short, there is an endless number of divining practices and here, if anywhere, the old saw which says that the spirit blows where, when and how it listeth, is singularly appropriate. And nothing is more accommodating than human credulity. It [198] goes without saying that there are some remarkable ventriloquists among the Bambara, who give such talented support to inanimate objects that the latter become veritable oracles. A piece of horn stuck into the ground or a mute block of wood are thus transformed through such artifice into mediums that answer anyone on any subject.

[828] There are also many highly suggestible individuals who [154] readily fall into wakeful or hypnotic states, during which they reveal hidden things.

787 Another practice among the Bambara is the use of the 763 kolon' kala (1) which is specially amenable to hypnotic suggestion. When a suspicious death requires search for a murderer, the corpse is often used for the discovery. It is carried on the heads of [138] two impressionable young men, who are then assumed to be possessed by the soul of the deceased. The lugubrious remains are rapidly borne through the settlement or the countryside, disregarding obstacles, until it finally stops of itself at a spot where the murderer or some revelatory sign is to be found.

787 A kind of effigy is often used instead of a corpse. This is made of a kolon' kala to which is tied a little bag containing bits of the body (finger-nails, hair, etc.) and which is wrapped in a cloth. The effigy plays the role of the corpse.

[413] 1. This is the wooden pestle used in all native kitchens to crush grain and condiments.

4. The dja

774 778 Here again is a word very difficult to translate into our French language. We use dja to translate the words "phantoms," "pictures," "photographs," "shadows," "that which is reflected by water or by a mirror"; but there are other meanings, and there is no question of shadows or images in the following sentences, for example: a dja tikéra, a dja oulila, misiou dja oulila. They mean: "he is afraid," "he is crazed," "the cows are crazed." In the eyes of the Bambara, the dja is not only the shadow, the image, or the outline of objects, it is also that which makes them manifest. It is a force, a power common to beings of all kinds, and even though it cannot be compared to a genie or a soul, they nevertheless think of it as a kind of being which they are unable to define but which has its own existence and can act of its own accord.

[791] 774 784 The gné-fla, whom I mentioned when speaking of the souba, are feared because they see the genii and our private thoughts, and also because they practice sympathetic magic, by taking possession of that which makes the shadows of persons and things. The Bambara is convinced that his dja can be taken, and when this occurs he henceforth no longer casts a shadow. Although, because of their fear of the Europeans and in some cases because they have long been in contact with them, the Bambara may readily pose before a camera, one can nevertheless say that, in general, they do not like to be photographed. Particularly the old people object and begin to resist /42/ as soon as they see a lens. They have the notion in their heads that their dja will escape from them to make an imprint on the plate and leave its form there, and that this form will comprise the portrait, thus placing a part of their being in the hands of the operator and [828] themselves at his mercy. They fear lest, as a result, they lose their shadows and the ability to cast them, and thus become idiots.

774 Even though the Bambara cannot explain their ideas on this subject, these closely resemble the theories of Mr. de Rochas, discussed by Monseigneur Méric in Volume II of his work, Imagination et Prodiges /Imagination and Marvels/ /Paris, 1905/. The dja is something similar to what English psychologists call a double and

774 the French a phantom. It may be regarded as a kind of fluid, having some degree of consciousness and capable of escaping from the animate or inanimate object to which it belongs, without becoming completely separated from it, and giving that object a shadow, bearing its external form and outline, as well as the imprint of the fear, sorrow, joy, and sadness which may be reflected on a person's face. A dja may also escape and separate and detach itself completely, but nevertheless retain the external form of the object which it left. When a dja leaves its object, it stays in the neighborhood or goes wandering far off, and the being that it has left sees this double or merely feels it, or may even be unconscious of its existence.

774 828 For the Bambara, a dream is not a product of the imagination; it is a reality. They say that while they are asleep their dja sometimes escape and wander far away, and there they actually see and chat with friends, attend real feasts on real drinking bouts. A person is not surprised to awaken after such a dream with a dry throat and an empty stomach, for what he saw, drank, and ate were the dja of things and people, nothing more tenuous or imponderable, and only his dja saw, drank, ate, and enjoyed himself.

787 A dream is quite a deceiver, and its external realization is unusual, but it does sometimes occur. Certain Negroes are famous because they know how to interpret dreams, a knowledge not available to everyone, or again because they know how to dream and prophesy /43/ the more or less immediate future. They have a booth which is fairly well patronized; people consulted them and bring them cowrie shells. There are even people who run and tell them about every interesting story they dream, and since these people take precautions afterward not to miss some predicted piece of luck or to avoid a misfortune that threatens, they are aided in the realization of their dreams without suspecting it, and these results constribute not a little toward fortifying their false beliefs. /44/

826 immortal with smooth limbs, he became mortal and hard working.
As seats of the male semen, they transmit this condition to the embryo,
formed in the maternal womb by Faro. The weariness felt in the
limbs after the sexual act is proof of this transmission. As Locus of
[829] the virile semen, framework of the man, and a mechanism suitable
for physical labor, the articulations are also the symbol of society.
The chief's throne, in the shape of a knee, is the image of its owner's
articulated body as well as that of the armature of the social body
and of the grouping of individuals under his jurisdiction (1).

1. See p. 178.

826 The limbs represent the right and the left. Rectitude, firmness,
823 and directed action are "right"; incertitude, the spirit of indecision,
201 and inconsistency in behavior are "left." The right is male and
symbolizes man's labor; the other is female. All gestures, profane
and religious, and all representations of objects bear witness to this.
Performing his first task in the fields before the rain, the farmer gives
three blows with his hoe held in his left hand in order to absorb the
impurity of the earth. After this, he works until the harvest with his
right hand. To cross one's hands means supplication, to put them
behind one's back means humiliation.

826 Each finger has its value. The little finger, *bolokoni lakare*, is
201 "the son of the other fingers" and in it is concealed the entire
576 strength of the hand; it "carries the *nyama* of the fingers." Hence
its use as a measure of divinations. To point to someone with one's
little finger means to belittle him with respect to those present.
Thus one casts a spell (*korti*) against an enemy or an undesirable
person with the little finger.

826 The index finger and the thumb of a chief, formerly those of a
622 king, are marked on certain occasions with signs called *bolo ti doniya*,
"knowledge of the signs of the hand." On the index are drawn three
"acts of the world-today" (*bi dyẽ walew*) and on the thumb two
"things of the interior of the secret world" (*dyẽ gundo kono fẽw*),
for it is said that "the knowledge of the signs of the hand /70/ is the
road of the creation 5, the index is the world in 3 and the thumb is
the new world" (1). The whole represents the worlds thought out by

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Chapter 5

TECHNOLOGY

773 The Bambara who are conscious of the evolution of their civilization trace it far back in time. The history of their origin as well as the feats and exploits of their most distant ancestors are not only inscribed in their memories but also in present day ceremonies and often in the material products of the culture, secular as well as religious.

The invention and evolution of technology, in the course of which the spiritual and the material, revelation and human effort, all work together, give rise to legends and representations which are characteristic of Bambara psychology (1).

> 1. What we relate here concerning the origin of technology is exclusively a summary of what the natives tell. The context, in the form of practical daily rituals, of which the forge is the best example, is sufficient and requires no commentary.

According to Bambara thought, all technology is an atonement taught man by Faro, a palliative to cosmic disorder, generally induced by a broken taboo. Famine, war, epidemics, misery, and death, which such disorders bring about, are compensated for —as far as possible—by new technologies which are revealed as needs arise. All these exist potentially in the wooden club used to smash and beat the fiber, which was the first raw material used (2).

> [171] 2. The wooden club is a duplicate of the mythical blacksmith's hammer which contained the techniques and the cultivable grains (see p. 53, n. 1). The same origin of technology is given by the Dogon, see Dieu d'Eau, p. 84.

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829 The first works were made by "primitive men, " ancestors of the Bambara of whom the following description is given:

773 829 "They were covered with shaggy body hair, beard and hair; their long nails resembled claws; their teeth resembled fangs. They knew no language and had no clothing to protect themselves from bad weather; they lived in holes dug in the /99/ ground or in habitable natural caves, at the bottom of which they slept and kept their prey. To defend themselves against wild animals, they placed wooden spikes and pointed rocks at the entrance of these quarters. These deep holes communicated with each other and together formed regular underground villages" (Fig. 6) (1).

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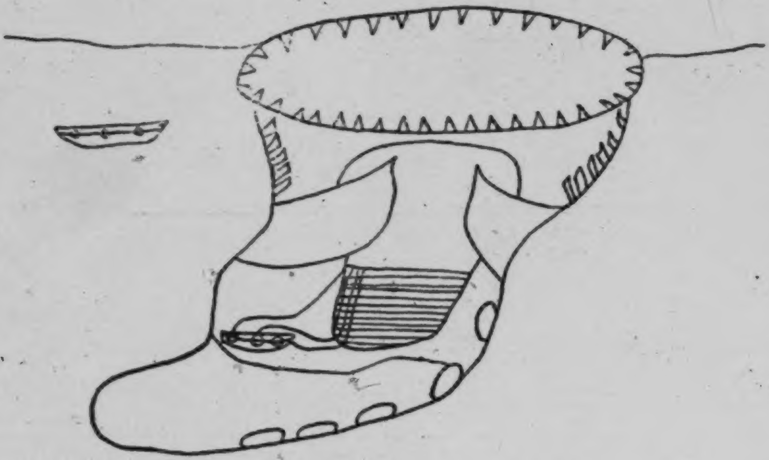

Fig. 6 —Underground home of primitive men. The entrance is guarded by pointed rocks. In the center, the drawing of the first loom invented by men. At the left; the shuttle (see p. 181). (Drawing by an informant.)

[172] 1. Some of these excavations in the neighborhood of Ségou, which may still be visited today, are venerated by the Bambara as ancestral homes.

Since they did not know language these men communicated by means of head gestures, movements of the feet and hands, and grunts. When a difference arose between them, before using their hands they drew back their lips and measured their long canines to determine who the winner would be. "Later they were given language, but

773 knowing its power, men at first used it sparingly. A question was never
829 discussed twice. If a request was reiterated, after an objection, the party requested would bow and agree at the risk and peril of the person making the request."

Men first lived by gathering and later by fishing and hunting without tools, using only /100/ hands to seize their prey, and nails and teeth to tear and cut it. Gradually this primitive life changed; technologies developed one by one according to a chronology which the present Bambara still remember.

773 The first raw material used, according to a tradition which is not confined to the Bambara alone, was the fiber of the *nyama* tree (1) (*nyama fu*) out of which were woven the first fishing nets, the first sling, and the first loincloth (2).

[824] 1. *Bauhinia reticulata* (in the north), *Bauhinia Thonningii* (in the south).

[171] 2. The Dogon also mention this fiber as the first material used by men. With them as with the Bambara, it has a ritual function. See M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, p. 26.

When they began to work the soil, they developed a set of primitive wooden tools. At the same time, they invented a throwing weapon made of the same material. Wood remained in use for a long time; the invention of weaving and crude pottery goes back to this period. Later, they came to know stone tools, iron, and the forge. The art of house building, about which no myth has been gathered until now, seems to have developed much later, after the discovery of iron (3).

3. Certain parts of the investigation concerning technology have been summarized by the author in "l'Arme et l'outil chez les anciens Bambara /Weapons and Tools among the Ancient Bambara/," *Africa*, Vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 105-111.

The study of this assemblage of tools and of their ritual use is most suggestive because they are a first indication of technological

776 They are the necessary intermediaries between man and the Divinity, and since each has absolute authority in its sphere. The black man must appeal to them first of all in all his needs. Consequently, these spirits have assumed a dominant place in the Negro mind to the detriment of God.

776 829 Every djiné can appear in human form, and when it does so it wears a white skin and his appearance does not differ from that of a European. Many a time I have heard women, young girls, and children whisper behind me: "A gné dé djemé wala-wala déren! a boloou be iko djiniou ta tjoko, ne bi siran, He has white eyeballs! his arms are like those of the genii, I am afraid...." This seems strange and leads one to think that this concept developed after the arrival of white men whom, not without reason, they regard as being superior to them in every way. However, I believe that it antedates our arrival. The old Bambara who told me that Mage and Quintin, held prisoners at Segou by King Amadou (أَحْمَدُو) until the death of his father, Omar el Hadj (1), were regarded by them as djiné seemed to me sincere, for an old legend states that during in /32/ one of their migrations the Bambara skirted a country inhabited by white men who resembled genii in every way. I might also add that white is the 822 liturgical color in formal sacrifices to the djiné; hens, goats, sheep, even kola nuts -- short of the impossible -- are white in color, undoubtedly because of the people's notion of the color of genii. When traveling Europeans ask their hospitality, they do everything possible to find a white hen to offer them; they believe that this is the way they can most honor their guests because of the color of the latter's skin. The old men think also that we French have intimate

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1. El-Hadj-Omar, or Omar the Pilgrim, so called because he saw Mecca, was at Ségou around 1835, 1837, or 1839, sometime before the death of Tjéyolo, which occurred around 1839. See Introduction /not translated/.

776 contact with the genii and know their family names, or diamou; how-
829 ever little they may be at ease with a Frenchman they will beg him
to show them the place where a well should be dug, convinced that
we know where live the spirits who are appointed to watch over water.
Do we not bear them a certain resemblance?

776 The gnâ, or boli, also are sexed; they reproduce and found
families. They are superior to the genii in power and wickedness,
and, except indirectly, capable only of evil. They are at open war
with God who, without taking away any of their intelligence or liberty,
has condemned them tosuffer and to undergo the punishment of fire.
They continually set up ambushes against the djiné to make their
plans, good or evil, miscarry; they take pleasure in tormenting men,
and the Bambara fears them greatly. The worship of the djiné is
nothing compared to what is accorded them. Those considered most
powerful have an entire retinue to serve them and to render them
[651] honors and, as will be seen later, the head tax of 3.50 francs per
head is nothing compared to the sums the Blacks spend to ward off
the blows of the boli and avoid their wrath.

Like the djiné, the boli appears in human form, but it is disgusting and hideous to behold. All those upon whom the favor of an appearance is bestowed are frozen with terror; the body of the boli is terrifyingly black, and its face disappears in a flame above which rise horns.

[782 822] In the sacrifices to the boli the liturgical colors are black and red, and a white victim is never offered except in an indirect sacrifice necessitated by an offering called saraka, which is quite rare./33/

2. Sorcery and Priesthood

152 Surrounded by spirits, by genii always seeking to harm him, a Bambara is quick to believe that he is the victim of one. This attitude contributes more than a little to give him a certain endurance manifested in the face of suffering. I would even say that he usually bears suffering, not with stoicism but with the torpor of an animal.

772 more, to a brother, one of his people? It is more difficult for a Bambara to deserve hell than to avoid it; thus they need not think about it and never do think about it.

Paradise hardly absorbs their thoughts more. The thought that they are called upon to contemplate the Creator, to live near Him and rejoice in Him, has not touched them for a long time; they have evolved too far; they have reached the last runs of degradation, and to go lower they would have to be Moslems. Furthermore, the paradise of Mohammed seems absurd to them! That indecent corps of virgins with modest looks and beautiful black eyes, whose color makes them resemble ostrich eggs carefully hidden in the sand (2), leaves them indifferent. They still prefer the ones here below, undoubtedly on the principle /83/ that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" /literally: "one good thing that you have is worth 36 that you will have"/. Virginity is too beautiful for the Bambara to have a word [831] for it; it is the flower of a day which a girl of ten no longer has. And what does it matter to them whether a woman is young or somewhat [562] mature, virgin or not, pretty or ugly; to them a woman, a real one, is a good servant, a good cook, and one who provides carnal pleasure at a man's will without ever tiring.

The pleasures and joys of this earth suffice for the Negro; he wishes for no others, and no doubt that is why he believes in a perpetual return. If, when barely in the grave, he already lives again in the womb of a woman, could the idea of judgment after death, the idea of the end of the world and a new judgment, make an impression on his mind? Can he who lives again and again conceive of the end of the world?

773 It is senseless to speak of their knowledge of Adam, father of the human race, and of Eve, his wife. The Bambara meaning of the
829 words Adama (Adam) and Awa (Eve) are quite different from the one we give them. When a missionary, a Moslem, or any European introduces himself to them as the son of Adam and Eve, these words are to them generic terms denoting the first father and the first mother

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2. Koran, Chap. XXXVII - v. 47.

773 829 of a race, but not words that denote the first father and mother of the human species. A pure Bambara does not believe in the unity of mankind; God created the white man white and the black man black, to use his expression, and to each He has given a father and a mother of his own color.

829 582 Nor has the arrival of the Europeans and the Moslems changed any of his ideas in this respect. For many, each tribe and each caste had a first father and a first mother, and if there are castes which cannot be united by marriage, this seems to me to be the reason. "An té sé, a yé noumoy yé an yé Bamana déou yé an té si (1) kélé-n-yé, we cannot marry each other, he is noumou (blacksmith) and we are not of the same people, the same blood, the same stock, the same father." Some seem to me very explicit when they say: "Án té fa kélé-n-yé, we are not of the same father." /84/

1. Si: "similar" or "like nature;" "of the same race, descent, origin, people, nature."

Chapter 5

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Fetishism among the Bambara; The Worship of the Gnéna Classification of the Gnéna, Who are Identical with the Arab Djiné

1. What is Meant by Gnéna or Djiné

776 The Supreme Being, the Bambara God, lives up above behind the blue sky, gliding through happy and quiet days with his celestial band, the good angels (méléké) that form His court, and, omnipotent though He is, He is without priest or sacrifice. For He concerns Himself very little with men. He has divided the dominion of creation with the djiné. His laws, which are immutable, He has decreed once

called oryo or oyo, is broken down into three stages: yo, the inner word, invisible spirit and inaudible voice, potentially containing all creation: o the transition from the inaudible to the audible;
[801] yeteyereli, the creative vibration (4). The progression is represented by seven signs, 7 being the symbolic number of man (homo) "seed of the world." Indeed, this numeral is the sum of 3 (male symbol) and 4 (female symbol). The couple they form is itself the symbol of duality, the fundamental law of creation, since each human being is both male and female in body and spirit (5).

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772 3. From ta (to do, in the ancient language) and si (to act). The Bambara freely translate tasi as "spirit of nothing" and give this stage, originating in nothingness and preceding creation, the name of tasi dyɛ̃, "world of the spirit of nothing."

4. The name oyo, given to this system, is a composite of o and yo, and when pronounced reverses the chronological order. This anomaly is recognized by the Bambara who explain it by the fact that yo, designating an inaudible voice, cannot be pronounced before o which designates a perceptible noise. Thus, in reversing the chronological order, yo "remains in the secret of o" which is in accord with its nature.

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5. The number 3 represents the penis and two testicles of the male body; the number 4 the four labia of the female body. On the other hand, man and woman are each endowed with two twin souls of different sexes; the soul of sex, opposite to that of its bearer, has its seat in the foreskin or the clitoris until the operation of circumcision or excision is performed. For further discussion of the duality of man and his

772 It is said that yo, the inner secret voice, "is born of itself, is known by itself, and comes out from itself /6/, out of the nothing which is itself" (1). Out of yo there will come only things that are themselves and that will be nothing other than yo. Each thing, being yo, proceeds like yo, only from itself. Hence, man is nothing other than himself, since he is a creation of yo and since yo's creations are by itself. Thus, there is nothing in the world besides oneself, since the person is yo, and yo is entirely contained in the person. As a result, each being is directly descended from yo with no intermediary; it is yo and exists only because it wills it. That is to say, man, the image of yo, alone has the will, alone has the capacity to bring forth action or creation, since these can be nothing but himself. "Who then," say the initiates, " can know himself, make himself known and manifest himself, other than through himself? Who then can manifest anything but himself?"

But yo, being at the origin of the inaudible and invisible things that are itself, is also in the unknown, hence in nothingness. And consequently, the same is true of man who is nothingness and can act only on the nothingness of himself.

Thus, yo, insofar as it was mind, was free in its ability to decide and to use its creative will. Its work, in nothingness, consisted in shedding, "for it was the continuous shedding of the world." When it
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801 manifested itself by rotating on itself, it went five times to the four "angles of its thought," seleke miri, once to the "sky of its thought," sã miri, once to the "earth of its thought," dugukolo miri, thus communicating its power to them (2). The realization of this universe,

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774 person, see G. Dieterlen, La Personne chez les Bambara /The individual among the Bambara/ and infra, Ch. 3, The Person.

1. yo na na a yere la, bwora a yere la, dona a yere la, a be fu la min ya yere ye.

2. On the meaning of the number 5, see p. 25. Yo has endowed the "angles," corresponding to the "cardinal angles" in the completed universe, with its greatest

826 is also through the feet that a part of man's strength is deposited in the sweepings and rubbish upon which he treads. Their role as receptacles appears in the rituals concerning household refuse and the dirt on roads and paths.

Like the little finger, the small toe symbolizes the whole person.
[301] It is sometimes adorned with a silver ring, symbol of the word, which
recalls that man's body is the seat of the word extended within him
from head to feet (1).

1. In olden times the ring on the small toe was made of red nyama fiber (nyama fu), which played the same role as metal.

● 831 The notion of the bisexuality of human beings is fundamental:
the spiritual principles are sexed like the body, whose ambivalence
826 /71/ is evident during childhood: the boy is feminine in his foreskin;
the girl is masculine in her clitoris. One of the aims of circumcision
[304] and excision is to help the child attain the sex to which it is apparently
destined by removing the organ of the opposite sex. (2). But the initial duality of the soul and body is the very foundation of the human
being. He is complete only if he originally received it, and he retains it even after the operation imposed by physical and social life,
[774] for the soul of the opposite sex, though diminished in the body, remains present in the shadow, the dya. He also rediscovers his dual
unity when he marries. A married couple are a unit for their dya
[581] join as do their bodies in an act which is not merely physical and
which realizes the ideal union of twins.

[171] 2. The same conception is found among the Dogon; see M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau, p. 185.

836 The sex to which one belongs dominates one's whole existence on
earth. Objects and tools bear masculine or feminine marks, accord-
801 ing to the rules of the division of labor. The numbers three (man)
and four (woman) are abridged forms of the sex. "Primitive men"
who, according to the Bambara expressed themselves mostly by
gestures and signs, engraved their rare objects with the number of

831 lines or dots depending upon the sex of those who used them. Thus,
801 women marked their spindles with four lines whereas men twisted three
threads on their shuttles.

826 On the metaphysical level, man's body, "the seed of the world, "
is identified with the cereal grain. The Bambara separate cereal
824 grains into seven parts, corresponding to a division of the human
812 organs into seven groups (1). Man and grain are one and identical in

1. The divisions of the grain are as follows: *kungu*, "little beard of millet, " involucre; *fara dye*, "white bark, " glume and glumales; *fara fi*, "black bark, " bran and protein aceous bark; *fara mugu*, "farinaceous bark" (which corresponds to a milky diastatic zone); *mugu dunta*, "flour for eating, " starch; *kolo dye*, " white bone, " embryo; *kise de*, "son of grain, " the micropyle from which the rootlet issues at the time of germination. The classification of organs in relation to these divisions is under study. We thank M. Pitot of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire for the identification of the parts of the grain corresponding to the
[782] native divisions. In certain villages, grains undergo a process of hulling and the determined elements only are used in the making up of the ritually offered millet mash.

their substance. On the other hand, the basic foods, that is, the eight principal cereals, are symbolically present in the collarbones (*kolo kalanjiri*, or *ka kolo*). Man carries within him his subsistance,
[783] and its location reflects the person's general condition (2). As proof

2. See p. 53, n. 2.

of /72/ man's spiritual integrity, these grains leave him when he is in a state of impurity. He is then drained of his substance and subsistence. Thepurpose of purification is to reestablish this wholeness.

812 Moreover, the bonds which unite the whole person, body and
561 spiritual principles, to the cosmos, are made clear by the fact that

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[561] the society during a public consecration which she receives with several others, the group forming an age grade.

After an apprenticeship of seven days, the potters decide upon the date of the ceremony which is celebrated at the firing spot near the altars. Each member provides a hairpin (bandigi), which represents her on this occasion, and the skin of a hedgehog. Disrobed in front of the assembled villages, each girl is seated in turn on the altar as an aged woman examines her genitals to verify her virginity and the proper execution of the excision.

/126/ If the young girl is no longer a virgin, she is publicly de-
[831] clared dangade (literally, bastard) and finds herself automatically
excluded from the society; she will never be able to receive the
potter's title. Otherwise, a proclamation is made immediately to
the great joy of the public. If the excision has not been judged
[304] sufficient, the patient is given the title of potter after having sub-
mitted to a new operation performed in such a way that the blood
runs over the pottery (1).

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1. If excision is not possible, the operation takes the form of a wound inflicted with the hedgehog's skin (see p. 243).

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867 An old woman then appears seated before members of the age grade and instructs them. She tells of the origin and history of pottery, apprising them of the difficulties of the craft such as fatigue, burns, etc. She teaches them patience towards the client and enumerates the rules which will have to be observed during their lifetime: to be pure in heart and to hate no one; not to undertake work shortly after having had sexual relations; to work in silence; to respect all taboos in general.

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431 She then makes a libation of karite oil on the altar and rubs it on the bodies of the initiates who must run their tongues over the pottery, thus making an oath. Sheep, brought by the initiates' parents, are then killed by having their throat cut over the hearth in the name of the potters while the elders of the society present to the initiates gifts consisting of several pots which they will sell for profit while waiting for their first work. This gift is moreover a sign of adoption.

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784 The utensils are made with clay, mbogo pasa, taken from the bottom of the watercourse or along the river's edge; they belong to

304 /184/ they did. Faro, Teliko, Soba! You who are a man, your number
326 is three; three of the penis, three of the twins, designs of the penis, it is the tradition, withstand it; Faro!" (ter) /repeat three times/(1).

1. Bolokodɛ i fa, i moke, o ta fa,
o ta fa were, o ta fa klo masamaw ye
munyu, i yere ka munyu u cǒko la,
faro, teliko, soba, o ye če ta saba ye,
wulu wo, flani wo, kolo nyeke, lada
do, i ka munyu; faro (ter).

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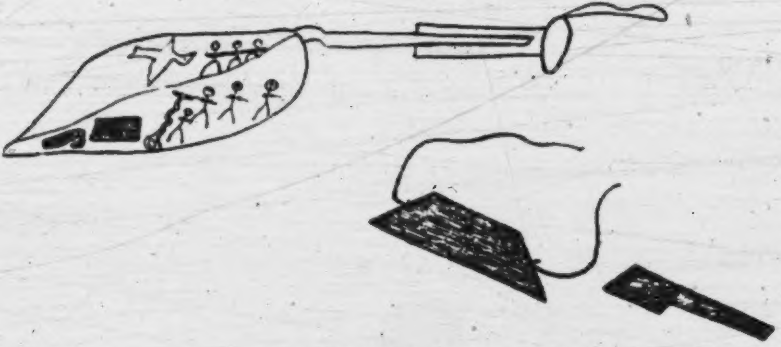

Fig. 15. -- The circumcision knife decorated with ritual designs: three men and four women (representing the number seven); the bee eater symbolizing fire; the string; the small board; and the hammer used for the operation (these last two objects are reproduced on a larger scale to the right). (Drawing by an informant.)

304 After the removal, the operator makes scars upon the child's penis,
326 called faro nyeke (literally, signs of Faro). Under the muscle wulu
831 dyuru (literally, rope of the penis), a small hole is carefully made. Since the penis is considered a source of strength, the muscle which maintains it and erects it binds the circulation of the blood and helps man in all his acts. It is through this muscle that man transmits nerves to his children. A straight organ, firmly held in check, keeps the man and his descendants from numerous illnesses; the aim of this mutilation is to obtain complete and well formed foreskins and
304 clitoris in the children of the party concerned. After the perforation,
326 the operator places in the orifice a little pepper and tomato juice
843 while saying:

857 use corporal punishment.

From this early age, therefore, a Bambara is subject to the corporate discipline which will henceforth dominate his whole life, for the same sort of discipline prevails in the adult brotherhoods.

The genie-protector is honored by offerings, [237] sacri- 857 fices, and ritual dances. When they perform these dances, the 292 n-Tomo-den' take turns wearing the ceremonial mask and cos- [782] tume. The mask has the form of a human face surmounted by a number of vertical horns (five to eight of these) and decorated with a few cowries. The costume consists of a dloki (a kind of blouse with wide sleeves) and a pair of long trousers, which completely cover the body. If the costume is yellowish-brown (basa) or white (dye), the association is called "n-Tomo-fin' (black n-Tomo)" or "n-Tomo-dye (white n-Tomo)," respectively. Is this costume supposed to represent the adepts' conception of their protector's appearance? No. As in all sects, it is intended to differentiate the officiant from the profane world (1).

[536] 1. Some of these associations give a kind of public performance from which they derive profit. Notably, they exhibit a kind of puppet called peremperen' (dancers) which members of the n-Tomo manipulate in a more or less comical manner; often one of the puppets rep- [831] resents a man and the other a woman, and their movements abound in the obscenities which are so popular with the onlookers.

831 A wooden phallus (or a small board) is commonly used to 857 summon the n-Tomo-den' to meetings. This is tied to the end [534] of a rope and whirled like a sling, producing a noise which the operator can vary and which carries a considerable distance. This apparatus is called n-Tomo-ulu, translated as "dog of the [195] n-Tomo." It should be noted that the words used in the brotherhoods usually have a double meaning, with a special sense under a vulgar form. For instance, the word ulu means both

857 "dog" and "the sexual parts of a man," and it seems evident
● 831 that the expression n-Tomo-ulu should be taken in the latter
195 sense. This is all the more likely since in the similar organization among the Khassonké the same apparatus is called khe-fengo, literally, "thing of a man," that is, "sexual parts of a man."

857 The great festival of the association takes place every
796 year after the harvest and does not differ essentially from the one celebrated at the same time by all the brotherhoods. It involves offerings and sacrifices to the genie-protector, communion by the n-Tomo-den' at a corporate banquet, and the admission of new members. The following is a detailed description. [238]

At the instigation of the n-Tomo-tigi, the brotherhood's field has been harvested and to the grain collected has been added whatever the boys could obtain from their families or friends by any means, even theft. From this millet the n-Tomo-
[273] tigi has had dlo (beer) prepared, which is drunk in great quantities on such occasions. The "elders" (koro-u), relatives, and friends can be counted on to send their contributions in kind.

Each n-Tomo-den' is given a little outfit appropriate to the occasion. The ceremonial costume is put in order; the dloki and trousers are washed and ironed, if need be, and the mask is rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu) to give it gloss.

On the day set, everything is in readiness. Many gourds of dege (1) and to (2), numerous jars of beer (dlo), and also some kola nuts have been assembled, along with sacrificial victims.

857 The n-Tomo-den', each leading a chicken on a string,
796 go to the meeting place in single file, with the n-Tomo-tigi
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[252]

1. Dege is made by putting coarsely ground millet into a small quantity of water.

2. A native mush.

[826]
774 its seat in the prepuce and the clitoris, necessitating circumcision
761 and excision). The body is conceived as being the support of all
spiritual forces; each part is distinctly known [84] for its particular
role. The body, like the spiritual principles, is bisexual; the boy
[304 is feminine in his prepuce, the girl masculine in her clitoris, and it
831] is only after circumcision and excision that the man and woman can
unite and realize the original fruitful twinship. On the metaphysical
plane, there is identity between man, "seed of the world," and the
cereal seed; the basic nutriments that are made up of the eight
principal cereals are represented symbolically in men's clavicles.
775 Finally, death separates all of these elements composing the person.
The *dya* remains in the water where it will become the *ni* of the
761 new-born in the family of the deceased; the *ni* is caught by the family
head and transported to the altar where it will animate the *dya* of the
new-born; the *téré* becomes *nyama*, a dangerous and vengeful force;
it is deposited on the *pembele*, where it rejoins the ancestral forces.
The body is buried and belongs to the termites. At birth, all the
spiritual forces are transmitted again, whole, "refreshed," and
purified. One being replaces another until the final resurrection.

C. Ritual, Sacrifice, and Cults

782 To appeal to and influence the spiritual forces, the Bambara
use prayer, offerings, and sacrifices. Oral rites are used everywhere
and at any time. "They pray to the sky, the cardinal points, the
spirits; they sacrifice on stones, on the ground, on trees, by water
holes, just as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries or situated in
public or private places. Every circumcized adult, father of a family,
owner of a home and cultivatable land, is a sacrificer, a capacity
[531] emphasized by the red spot which sometimes is an ornament of the
walls of the principal room in the man's residence." (1)

1. G. Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].

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the blacksmith. The doll is given the name of the dead infant, the
[304 child[1] carries it with him to the circumcision, and, when he marries,
589] he buries the doll with a piece of wood representing the wife of the
deceased.

845 Twins are replicas of Faro, their presence is beneficial, and
they are considered invulnerable.

The albino is supposed to be the issue of sexual relations held
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833 in sunlight, a breach of taboo. He, too, is a new being. His wanzo
904 is so active that the circumciser must take great precautions before
operating on it.

826 He is considered to be endowed with special powers which
782 make him a choice victim for the sacrifices offered to the spirit of
the water.

To the children of blacksmiths, the name is given near the
553 paternal forge in the presence of all the artisans. An old man pre-
326 pares seven little sticks, giving each the name of an ancestor. Three
of these are drawn at random from the group, and the third gives
the name of the baby. The head of the baby is rubbed with the axe
Kongobwona, and his shaved hair is soaked in sacrificial blood.

553 In the Bamako region two chickens or a sheep are sacrificed
782 to celebrate the name-giving. The distribution of the meat is made
according to established custom. If it is a chicken, the patriarch
receives the head and the gizzard, while the wing and white meat go
to the old woman who washed the baby during the first eight days.
If it is a sheep, the patriarch receives [91] the ribs (because they are
a bulwark, and the patriarch is the defender of the village) and the
heart; the blacksmith receives the shoulder; the infant's family gets
the head (so that the infant will go ahead), the back (symbol of
prosperity), and the limbs (supports one wishes the new-born to have);
the blood which runs on the ground is destined for the infant's protective ancestors. Then the family divides the raw meat with the heads
of family, and the old woman thus receives her part indirectly.

c. Circumcision

881 A male infant is born, but he still keeps (because of the
304 primordial twinship) the prepuce as the physical support of the female
831 sex. He will only be freed of this by circumcision. It is this operation that definitively determines his sexual qualification and renders
him fit to contract marriage.

[1] [ie., the surviving child of twins. -Analyst]

881 and the member is held up by a split millet stalk. The prepuces are
304 buried, and their white bonnets are put on the circumcised. The
place of the operation is forbidden to women and to the non-circumcised who could take the liberated wanzo.

In the Bamako region the blood of the oldest is gathered in
[534] two new calabashes, which are later broken and the pieces used to
make sistrums, sinzin.

881 After the ceremony, the children retire for three months under the direction of a priest of the Komo. During this period, when they receive a religious and technical education, they enter the village only to sleep in a special house and to repair the roofs of their teachers' huts.

[794] The night before the sixth day after the operation, they are initiated in the Komo. The next day they are led to the river where they wash their wound. Meals are taken together, followed by songs and dances, until they are healed. The last day, the sistrums, sticks, mats, and everything that has been in contact with the circumcised are put in a pile and burned. Each child jumps over the fire three times and runs home, without turning around, to lose his wanzo definitively. In the Bamako region the sistrums are preserved in the cabin of the village chief and will be used for the children of the following years. The bonnet is returned to the mother and will be preserved until death. The next day the child puts on his new clothes.

881 Let us note that for the circumcision of twins all the offerings
304 for the ceremony and the sacrifices must be doubled, and each child
826 will possess two sistrums. Finally, the albinos today are sent to the
dispensary, because the blacksmiths are afraid to operate on them,
their wanzo being particularly dangerous.

304 Circumcision may take place posthumously. The circumciser
766 then cuts the left ear of the body, since the wanzo freed by death
would be dangerous to the living.

794 Generally, a sort of ceremony of confirmation of membership in the Komo takes place in the year following the circumcision.

d. Excision

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304 The excision of the girls has a meaning equivalent to that
● [831] of the circumcision of the boys. The operation frees them of the
physical male factor residing in the clitoris.

b. Pottery

323 Pottery is entirely fashioned and fired by the women of the blacksmiths' caste, masters of the fire. The modelling is done in two ways, either by hollowing a mass of clay with the aid of a cylindrical stone (2), or by rolling a cylinder of clay around a mold. The
[531] decoration is generally a double line of chevrons imprinted around the neck and the foot by the potter's twisted bracelet. The firing is done in the open air over a wood fire.

c. The Forge

326 Wood, iron, metals in general, are fashioned by the blacksmiths. The blacksmith's workshop and the objects he makes are simple, but they are rich in symbolic representations. "The forge represents the artisan: the furnace is his body, the bellows his testicles, the blast pipe his penis, the fire his head. When the red-hot iron is beaten by the hammer, which symbolizes the universe, the sparks are the lightning and the thunderbolt." (3) With his rudimentary tools spread on the ground under a shelter, the artisan
forges all farming instruments, the principal one being the hoe. The
412 hoe, [97] according to its shape, is considered to be male or female.
831 The female hoe has a short handle with an ovoid swelling at the end,
[801] into which sticks the point of an iron triangle. The three sides of this
triangle are three arcs of a circle; three, symbol of masculinity,
represents here the clitoris, the male principle which sustains the
[773 double, the dya, of the woman. (According to myth, it was with the
241] aid of this part of the body that the first being of female sex inaugurated agricultural labors.) The male hoe has a slightly trapezoidal iron
part which is attached to the handle in the same manner. The four
sides symbolize the femininity of man sustained by the prepuce. Thus,

2. M. Griaule, Masques dogons [Dogon Masks].

3. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

412 831 the peasant digs with the male hoe and covers with the female hoe; the work done with the female double of the peasant and the male double of the wife symbolizes the sexual union. (1)

1. M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, "L'agriculture des Bozo," [Bozo Agriculture] Journal des Africanistes [Ed., Journal de la Société des Africanistes, 1949.]

d. Basketry

285 Basketry is done by everyone, men and women; it plays a large part in the construction and furnishing of the house. Sometimes the lofts are immense baskets, woven on the diagonal. In certain regions a great mat is wrapped around the exterior wall of the round hut. The doors of mud huts are often coarse mats woven diagonally [531] which are placed before the opening. But much finer mats, made from fibers of different colors and with geometric designs with a symbolic meaning, cover the ground for sitting or sleeping.

e. Weaving, Clothes, Ornaments

291 [824] The first article of clothing was the fiber skirt made from the nyama (Bauhinia reticulata, or Bauhinia thonningii) and the covering for the sexual parts which are still worn during religious ceremonies.

[773] Mythology designates cotton as the first fiber to be woven.

286 Weaving is one of the most widespread techniques. Cotton, spun by the women, is woven by the men, in olden times by the captives, who work in the open air near the huts, in the shade of trees in the courtyards or in the public places. A primitive loom made of four vertical wooden parts connected by horizontal shafts and driven by pedals weaves long bands. The warp and woof form a ground stich and symbolize a being of intelligence and eloquence. Moreover, a science of the bands exists which is based on the symbolism of colors, designs, and numbers.

822 The Bambara distinguish three fundamental colors: white, red, and black. Each of these three tints has its history and its role

772 more, to a brother, one of his people? It is more difficult for a Bambara to deserve hell than to avoid it; thus they need not think about it and never do think about it.

Paradise hardly absorbs their thoughts more. The thought that they are called upon to contemplate the Creator, to live near Him and rejoice in Him, has not touched them for a long time; they have evolved too far; they have reached the last runs of degradation, and to go lower they would have to be Moslems. Furthermore, the paradise of Mohammed seems absurd to them! That indecent corps of virgins with modest looks and beautiful black eyes, whose color makes them resemble ostrich eggs carefully hidden in the sand (2), leaves them indifferent. They still prefer the ones here below, undoubtedly on the principle /83/ that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" /literally: "one good thing that you have is worth 36 that you will have"/. Virginity is too beautiful for the Bambara to have a word
[831] for it; it is the flower of a day which a girl of ten no longer has. And what does it matter to them whether a woman is young or somewhat
[562] mature, virgin or not, pretty or ugly; to them a woman, a real one, is a good servant, a good cook, and one who provides carnal pleasure at a man's will without ever tiring.

The pleasures and joys of this earth suffice for the Negro; he wishes for no others, and no doubt that is why he believes in a perpetual return. If, when barely in the grave, he already lives again in the womb of a woman, could the idea of judgment after death, the idea of the end of the world and a new judgment, make an impression on his mind? Can he who lives again and again conceive of the end of the world?

It is senseless to speak of their knowledge of Adam, father of
773 the human race, and of Eve, his wife. The Bambara meaning of the
829 words Adama (Adam) and Awa (Eve) are quite different from the one we give them. When a missionary, a Moslem, or any European introduces himself to them as the son of Adam and Eve, these words are to them generic terms denoting the first father and the first mother

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2. Koran, Chap. XXXVII - v. 47.

852 794 Every time one of the three principal members of the staff, wants to dance, respects are paid to them or to their leader, and all day and all night nothing is heard but frightful "you you" and atrocious cries. There is a protocol for everyone to follow, and before each to-n-dé begins to prance in front of the drums, he goes and bows to his leader to show his devotion and respect for him. He holds himself like a spring, brandishes the gun, ax, or stick that he will use in the dance, and in one jump strikes his feet together under the nose of the one to whom he is paying his respects. The women are quieter and show their respect by a genuflection before the master.

In addition to his staff the master of a n'golo, the to-n-tigi, has pages, a standard bearer, trumpeters, and soldiers, and to vary the program he goes here and there with his frenzied band to greet an elder and give him a serenade. In some villages custom decrees that the youths put on the best they have in the way of clothing; in others, on the contrary, they must get themselves up in horrible, dirty rags so that, on seeing them thus clad, one asks where they could have dug up all these horrors. They must amuse themselves and be [522] amused, laugh and cause laughter, and this last aim is always accomplished as they have such priceless mimics. /114/

The Mouso ka djiri, the Women's Special

776 796 •831 It is impossible to know all the genii responsible for watching over women, for they are legion. Every month, at the new moon, the women organize a dance in their honor, and every year they make a public, solemn sacrifice to them. The most widespread is the mouso ka djiri, and its worship flourishes especially in Bani country.

When its festival comes, all the excised women offer it a little /millet/ flour mixed with water, a hen, and two kola nuts, and the head of the village, or, in his absence, an elder, goes and reddens the bark of the fetish tree (1). There is no need for me to go into

[782]

1. Some people assert that they have seen women sacrificing. I have seen women perform saraka involving bloodshed, but never a sacrifice.

776 this sacrifice at length, for in the preceding chapter I stated the
796 function of the fetish; it may be imagined that the ladies and maidens
831 ask for whatever makes a woman strong and beautiful. Moreover, the indecent dances to which they abandon themselves under the sacred tree sufficiently reveal their inner thoughts. They have only one -- to show their breasts to the fetish and scratch their navels on its bark; in some villages custom demands this, and it is required of all. Young girls do it to develop their breasts, married women to become fertile, and all of them to be protected from the unpleasant accidents peculiar to their sex.

796 There is no festival without a feast and none without drinking, and the women offer the whole village sorghum gruel and beer for a drinking bout. They also offer kola nuts to all the elders and heads of families, and they know better than to withhold this treat from fathers, husbands, grown sons, older brothers, and those they love.

The Sinsin, the Special Twin's Fetish

782 The sacrifice to a sinsin is made on the umbilical cord which
845 is hung in the center of plates of woven grass that constitute the
778 fetish. Each plate belongs to one of the twins and even bears his
852 name. The sacrifices in honor of this fetish are always double; for each child separately, the family offers /millet/ flour /115/ mixed with water, millet beer, a kola nut, and a hen.

This is strictly a family fetish; the father of the family is its
845 priest, and only the children and their parents are present at the
778 sacrifices. Everything is done in a quiet and happy intimacy, and
852 although there may be a few drunkards here and there, there is never an orgy. Sacrifices to a sinsin are made very frequently to bring its blessing to the mother and children; they are also performed on all occasions of the slightest importance in the lives of the twins; when their hair is cut eight days after birth, at the tattooing festival, at circumcision, at marriage, etc. Once a year a more formal sacrifice is made; the women cook d'lo, the millet beer, and the

794 colors, one leg of which goes down to the ankle while the other does
796 not even reach the knee. Some brandish wooden swords, and others
292 ride astride on a bamboo, a reed, or a sorghum stalk, rearing and
522 kicking, and there is not one who does not act the clown.

794 The bisatjila (flagellants) make their flexible whips whistle in
796 the air; shortly thereafter these whips rain blows onto their backs; the
[185] ta tougoula (fire lighters, incendiaries) seem impatient to shower
their bare backs with sparks. The djara (lions) or sogo (beasts, animals) with masks even larger than those of the souroukou (hyenas) growl around the n'goni sama (1), also called wara (fearless wild animals).

1. N'goni, "thorns"; sama, "to kill for oneself."

The soula run from one group to another, slip between legs, and never stay still; they are seen everywhere, sometimes standing, sometimes with hands on the ground on all fours, or again sitting down, breaking bundles of grass or bits of wood between their hands and throwing them with shrill cries at the heads of their companions. And at the end of the procession come the old men, weighed down by the years and no longer of an age for all this fancy dress. They drag or carry the victims intended for the sacrifices.

In the grove around the sacred tree, there is a deafening noise of drums, triangles, reed pipes, and many voices /124/ that shout all together without ever harmonizing. At a sign from the leader, the kârâ bearer goes and stands before the fetish tree, and everything becomes calm and quiet. The youths who have been waiting for seven years to be initiated advance in a line, fall on their knees before the fetish and its emblem, and then prostrate themselves with foreheads in the dust. They remain in this position as long as the sacred hymn lasts. On rising, they say: "Djanté koré déou djanté (djanté children
[535 of the djanté koré), djanté ma (man of the djanté)," and each dances
831] the dance of the group to which he belongs. These dances are indecent
and always conclude with an obscene gesture.

The oldest sons belong to the groups of their fathers; as to the others, they choose the group they like best. Thenceforth they are

181 me, and it seems to me that the Bambara might describe himself as:
"A man sufficiently master of himself to be able always to agree with
you without ever revealing his inner thoughts."

Their character is not made up entirely of vices, however, and
I have been told by earnest men that the Bambara never, at least in
public, practice those familiarities with women which shock and
wound every person of high principles. They have added that the two
[674] crimes of adultery and fornication are unusual with them, and this,
one may be sure, is less on account of the severe penalties which they
incur (it seems that before the French conquest the punishment was
death without reprieve), than because they are without feelings, that
181 is, strong passions. Their women can without any difficulty go around
291 with bare bosoms, breasts exposed, hips girded with a paltry rag
knotted under the navel, and their young girls are satisfied with their
small strip of cloth, three fingers wide, which is knotted in front at
the waist, slides between the legs, and is caught up in back by the
cord, to fall in a long train decorated by a gorgeous pompon the size
of a fist. They did not tell me, of course, but /158/ they gave me
to understand quite well that if it were absolutely necessary the girls
could without blushing go around in the scant garb of children who
roll in the dust dressed as on the day they were born, quite naked.
Nakedness cannot stir a Negro; beauty does not excite his eyes, for he
does not have the feeling for it. And for a long time I believed the
Bambara to be endowed with an angelic nature.

181 All these beautiful thoughts have left me, and I must admit
831 that the Bambara are hideously degraded! Every day has made the
matter clearer to me, for when I have left the mission to go to the
surrounding villages, as the duties of my office oblige me to do
several times a week, I have seen the same scenes again and again,
heard the same songs and the same conversations, and I have found
nothing very angelic in any of them. If I went into a field, I saw
young men bent over their hoes, backs running with sweat, who got
up and jumped, shouted the most raucous "you you," and made an
obscene gesture. If a little girl, a child, came to give them a jug
of cool water, she would get a coarse word as thanks and payment,
and often, not to say almost always, a rough hand would remind her

181 that she is a girl, that one day she will be a man's plaything, an
● 831 object for his pleasure. The child would leave smiling and replace
her three fingers of rag even as she walked away. At dinner time a
[482] big girl would come carrying the gourd of tô, or sorghum gruel, on
her head, and on the palm of her right hand, at shoulder height, the
platter of dried fish sauce. She would be greeted from as far away
as she could be seen and asked for a report on her whole body, and
indeed there would be no stopping at "how are your feet" nor even at
"how are your breasts." And the girl would answer all these vile questions
without getting excited, and when a well-washed hand, ready to
be used as a spoon, embraced her or lifted her breasts, she was not
shocked; only the opposite would surprise her.

887 Here and there in the village a giant tree stretches its branches
538 afar, and the old men, lovers of endless palaver, enjoy themselves
521 under its shade. They go there from the early morning to weave cloth,
make mats, tan hides, scour goats' horns intended for powerful
amulets, etc., and often even /159/ just for the purpose of spending
the hours dozing. And in the midst of all these gray, or at least
graying, beards, swarms a world of children. Among the old men
there are good storytellers /conteur/, who excel in stories of hunting
and war that throb with interest -- but why, alas, must they always
graft on some salacious incident? Their mouths are full chiefly with
[831] stories of adultery and fornication. They will not spare you a single
detail, and they will readily go back to the very beginning so as to
lack no precision whatever. And the moral of these stories can be
reduced to this: "There is nothing in this world comparable to the
pleasures of the flesh; let us enjoy marriage and never pass up a chance
to obtain this satisfaction."

524 If the old men are this lewd, is it surprising to hear the young
831 men describe the ugliness of their bestial evenings while they make
864 mats, stretch the hides of drums, or sew a blouse, a cap, or trousers
for themselves in the b'lon, or entry hut? They talk constantly of their
soungourou, and this term, which should simply mean an unmarried
girl, means any woman, married or not, who gives herself to the
first comer.

Without any shame they talk and chat about all these vile acts
before their little brothers, before children ten and twelve years old,

521 831 864 and before little girls, and it is not unusual to see a big girl leaning against the door of the hut with ears wide open so as not to miss a word, and finding cause to burst into gales of laughter. Are all these people capable of being shocked? I doubt it, even as far as the young girls are concerned, for all or almost all of them have their favorite nooks in the bush. Moreover, they can tell each other vulgar stories, and one should hear them as they clean and spin cotton, or when in the evening, shut in a communal hut (1), they play, laugh, and

591 882 1. In the evening all young girls are shut in a communal hut or dormitory under the supervision of an old woman. The woman's duty is to prevent young men from coming in and to see that the girls do not go out and seek a boy friend's hospitality. There is a dormitory in each quarter.

chatter before going to sleep. Could it be otherwise? Since all the men have soungourou, they know that their fathers and brothers each have one, and they are not unaware that their mothers see no /160/ wrong in giving themselves to their men friends. The great crime is allowing oneself to be caught.

521 831 You may think I exaggerate, yet when two women, each with a nursing infant in her arms, are crouched in the court by their pots in which tô (gruel) is simmering, it is very unusual for them not to be gossiping about the marital infidelities of their neighbors and sometimes even their own. I am saying nothing about the old women with turned-up chins and toothless jaws; they are experienced midwives and talk mainly about abortions.

They are all the same, and more than one mother has made me blush as she gave the breast to her last born and smiled sweetly at the rest of the brood frolicking near her. In wishing health and prosperity to a child that a woman is nursing, one sometimes makes a mistake about its sex, and without respect for one's ears nor pity for

521 one's eyes, the answer is almost always: "A flé bani, mousoni do, ne
831 na d'ima, ka ké i soungourou yé. But look here, this is a girl; I
will give her to you, she will be your soungourou."

521 And all this carelessness from the moral standpoint should not
831 surprise us in a country where a crowd of young men greet each other
576 even in the presence of their mothers: "I sounna ko? About the affair
836 of your sleep? And your lovemaking at night?" "I soungourou ka
kendé? How is your soungourou?"

And where young girls do not blush to say to young men: "Do me the favor that I am asking you."

"Ne na ko doumani fo i ye.

I will tell you of a sweet affair (or: conversation, shameful embraces).

"Né na ne ko doumani d'i ma.

I will give you my sweet affair (or: I give myself to you).

In short, every Bambara who awards himself the prize of virtue, avoids saying that he has respected foreign women and girls temporarily under his roof. The statement would be received with a shrug of the shoulders and a smile. He merely says: "I have respected the women and girls of the village," and he does not shout this very loud nor before everybody.

2. Concerning Adultery and Fornication

684 Adultery is a crime in the eyes of every Negro, and the guilty one caught in the act is brought before the council of elders and severely punished. I must state, however, that although adultery seems a serious offence to all, the crime does not lie in the satisfaction obtained. There has been a lack of fairness, the rights of a third party have been violated, and in this lies all the wrongdoing.

Caught in the act, red handed, the guilty party makes a friendly deal with the husband, who rarely asks him for more than 16,000 cowrie shells (from 15 to 20 francs) and the material for a sacrifice to the family boli, comprising perhaps two hens, a goat, two kola nuts, and between 5 to 800 cowrie shells for the sacrificer's bonus.

585

3. Even those who have known their husbands before this day are honored in this fashion, for the family will have kept this cloth faithfully, and if there is occasion to unfold it, they are very proud.

before all. In a word, everybody praises the bride for having been [831] able to remain a virgin, but they praise her in Bambara, which means they do so in coarse terms, and in order to emphasize her virtue they present her with a bouquet of roses rolled in filth.

When the bride leaves the court, her maids of honor come to fetch her, and while the men stay and get drunk and the women continue to clap their hands, to sing at the top /211/ of their lungs, and to dance to the sound of the drums, trumpets, and guitars, she herself goes into the hut of friends to end the first night of her wedding in sleep. She may not go out for eight days; she takes her meals in the hut and spends her days sitting on a mat with a white veil on her head, spinning cotton in the company of her maids of honor (1).

[178 574]

1. Many have freed themselves from this custom. Those who submit to it -- and they are in the majority -- can see their families again after these eight days of imprisonment and stay with them for two weeks. The bride's trip to her family at this time is called bina kounna sago. A few weeks later she again spends four days -- sou nani yé -- with her parents, and a little later she stays with them for one night, sou kélen si.

The groom stays in his hut for the whole day following the first night, and just about everybody, men and women, come to pay him

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828
[827] taboo by cutting its buds (see p. 43). The altars of the fields and of agricultural societies, tõ, watch over the "head of the millet."

/66/ and purified in order to maintain his health and prosperity. It is the seat of consciousness and will, and receives a share of the scarifications made at birth, which will exercise influence on the person.

826 Hair contains an important part of the individual's ni. It is therefore dangerous to mix it with the hair of another, for that would create a vital and indissoluble bond between the two parties. To burn it is equivalent to making an attempt on one's own life. It is buried or placed in a deep hole in the wall of the house for protection (1).

[832
789] 1. Many charms and magic spells are based on hair. In order to be loved by a woman, a man must mix some of her hair with his and place it under his head at night with a prayer. In order to keep his job, an employee does the same with his hair and that of his employer; he then sacrifices a victim over the ensemble so that the employer cannot fire him without risking his own life.

Hair and the pilose system play a part in the myth and were used to count the age of primitive men until the advent of death on earth. All the ancestors represented in the sanctuaries are bearded and hairy. Their appearance shows that, having become mortal, they lived at a time when rejuvenation no longer existed.

826
827 The pupil is the fundamental part of the eye. Its name, nyemani, "little person of the eye" (2), expresses its function. The pupil reflects and absorbs the person it sees. The image is a kind of double,

2. Man's pupil, according to information that is still obscure, was made with that of the serpent and was also called nye mani sa, "serpent of the little person of the eye."

584

1. The Marriage Proposal (1)

1. The procedures described here apply to the marriage of a young girl. For widows or divorcées who remarry, there are consultations of diviners, sacrifices to the evil fetishes, etc., but the betrothal and wedding ceremonies are performed with a minimum of show.

832 581 The Bambara are not unmoved by the beauty of a woman's form; they can distinguish a well-formed body from a malformed one, a pretty woman from an ugly one, and they find a coppery skin more attractive than one of ebony black. Similarly, a face pitted by smallpox or a bosom covered with scars displeases them, and a man talks to you about his fiancée or his wife, he is quite proud to be able to say: "sien si t'a la, she has a body without blemish," therefore she is beautiful. When it comes to marriage, however, he does not look too closely! He readily keeps silent about his tastes and seldom consults his heart, for a wife to him is primarily a source of pleasure and profit. /200/

581 What he sees in a woman above all is a being of a different sex than he, and if she is industrious, cooks well, and is good at business, he will know how to close his eyes to her defects in order to keep her and allow her to be an important person in his home who must be reckoned with.

584 When a Negro who wants a wife finds an unbetrothed girl, he quickly confides his secret, his fears and hopes, to his close friend, a man of mature age who enjoys some respect in the country (1). The

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1. Some people have thought that the "storytellers /griots/" act as intermediaries in asking the hand of a child. Nothing is more

Spiritual Principles (1)

114 1. A few comments on the spiritual principles of the Bambara (in particular on the *dya* and the *nyama*) have been collected in the chapter entitled "Théorie des âmes" by Tauxier, *La Religion bambara* (pp. 14-25), in which the author appraises the works of the Abbé Henry and of Ch. Monteil. Some of the observations made in the following chapter have been summarized by the author in "La Personne chez les Bambara" and in "Note sur le tere chez les Bambara /Note on the Tere among the Bambara/."

It will be useful to compare this study of spiritual principles with the studies made among the Dogon and presented respectively by M. Griaule, S. de Ganay, and the author in *Masques Dogon*, *Les Devises des Dogon*, and *Les Âmes des Dogon*.

761 The Soul, *ni*, and the Double, *dya*:

776 [826] Faro controls the principle of life in water, which is his realm as well as the life-giving element par excellence. In the bodies of living beings, this principle has its seat in the blood. The blood of the sacrifices offered to the spirit (or failing that, the juice of the tomato, a transformation of blood) is a contribution to the reservoir of life controlled by Faro—life which he redistributes in all its forms throughout the universe. Water is the privileged element in which life may persevere indefinitely. Elsewhere, life is maintained only if water comes to nourish it.

761 776 842 833 Faro's creative function is materialized by each marital partner eating a tomato before sexual relations. This act is accompanied by the recital of a prayer. The juice of the fruit, which contains the body of the future child, transmits life according to the following mechanism:

761 776 842 824 Faro receives the offerings of tomatoes grown ritually in the consecrated fields, as well as the blood of victims slain in his name above the waters. Blood and juice, spreading over water, the fertilizing agent, are collected by the swallow, Faro's airborne messenger. Liberated in space, they return to the soil with fertilizing rain and penetrate the tomato seeds which thus contain a particle of generative power.

845 Up to the time they are twelve, the children bathe themselves preferably in the Niger. They supposedly can walk on water and never run the risk of drowning.

The twins do not become separated from each other any more than the dya is separated from the living being to which it is attached. They wear the same clothes and eat the same food simultaneously. Formerly male twins married the same woman. If one of them dies
845 at an early age, the blacksmith carves a small wooden doll called
778 flanitokele, which takes the name of the deceased and which the mother puts on the mat next to the living child. The latter takes this doll with him at the time of his circumcision and keeps it during the period of his seclusion in order to bring it back to the parental home whence it is never removed. When he marries, he sticks the doll into the earth along with another piece of wood symbolizing the wife of the deceased. Since twins are in a sense a living replica of Faro, none can bother them without showing disrespect to him. On the other hand, they are the object of attention and precaution on the part of their family as well as their neighbors. Their presence is always beneficial. Considered invulnerable, twins used to march ahead of
[728] troups in times of war and would serve as inviolable intermediaries between the warring parties during truce.

The Hermaphrodite

826 The hermaphrodite, being both male and female, is to all extent and purpose his own twin. Consequently, he has no dya (1).

[825
304] 1. The hyena is considered a hermaphrodite; it can engender or conceive, depending on its size and strength; "the stronger impregnating the weaker." A tattooing system is based upon this belief.

/88/ The Albino

[143] Albinos of light or reddish skin and red hair are called gombele or yepege, this latter term being reserved for those who show the most accentuated characteristics.

826
833 The albino is supposedly born of sexual relations which took place in the middle of the day when the sun is in the koblenkaba, sky of

826 Faro's wrath—a fact which constitutes a serious breaking of taboo. [833] The consequence of this is to coalesce in the maternal womb the twins originally granted to the woman by Faro and to decolorize the skin of the being thus formed. Because of this fact, the albino, the embodiment of twins, does not inherit the spiritual princples of a deceased person and is also a new being given to men by Faro. But the impurity he has acquired increases tenfold his tere and his wanzo, [304] which are so active that the circumciser must sacrifice on his own personal altars before performing the operation. From the ambivalence of the albino, originally of the same essence as Faro but fallen because of the impurity transmitted by his parents, stem various customs and representations. (1).

1. This ambivalence is also at the root of the belief that the albino is a being formerly provided with wings and able to fly (see p. 68, a quality he lost after his contact with the impure soil.

826 718 His body is believed to be endowed with special powers. The person who owns his skull will have a numerous family and prosperity; his hair brings wealth; the marrow of his bones provides gold and copper. If he is made to sit at a place where bones are buried, whatever one asks for is granted. His excrements, mixed with seed, have the effect of increasing the harvest for the year.

826 782 Because of the value attributed to the albino he is a choice victim for the sacrifices to Faro. His nyama is such that he can be sacrificed without prayer, the act itself constituting an efficacious invocation. Lacking living albinos, men often tried to appropriate the remains of a buried body.

/89/ Chapter 4

SACRIFICE AND THE ALTAR

782 To call upon spiritual forces and to influence them, the Bambara use prayer, offering, and sacrifice. They perform oral and manual

776 778 823 783 the word, is offered as clothing, and the eggs are offered as purification. As for the ashes, it is the ideal pure element since fire has "removed" its tere from the wood; here it represents the man from whom "the bad force acting on his tere has been removed" (1). Whoever murders an animal proceeds in the samw way with the animal's hide upon which he throws cowrie shells. In both cases, the spirits absorb the tere and nyama, which add to their own forces and free the culprit.

Collective purifications are carried out on the dangu when sexual taboos regarding cultivated fields and bush are broken. The impurity [833] resulting from copulation performed outdoors is communicated to all the land belonging to the village; the trees in the bush will no longer bear fruit; the harvests will deteriorate. Formerly the two lovers [684] taken by surprise were deprived of their clothing which was burned on the dangu after they had circled the village three times starting at the left. The culprits were then banished. At present, if the plight of the fields suggests that such an act has been committed, all varieties of cultivated seeds are gathered in a basket which is placed at the crossroads. Then, all the villagers and their domestic animals circle the village three times while sham battles take place between men mounted on horseback. After a sacrifice offered at the dangu, the seeds, thus purified, are sown.

776 778 823 241 Offerings are made to the spirits of the crossroads at the time of sowing to invoke their protection. This ritual is obligatory for whomever sows cotton, since this seed was given to men by these spirits. The farmer places the seeds, sits down facing west, and cries out three times the name of the dangu above the seeds. He leaves three small piles in homage to the spirit along with fibers from the plant, and kills a victim before proceeding to sow his field. When the stalks are up, he cuts some boughs and returns to the place of sacrifice to sweep up the seeds, thus impregnating them with the nyama of the dangu. He then dries them, grinds, sifts, and mixes them with earth picked up on the same spot. In his field, he shouts /141/ the name of the dangu and throws the mixture with all his strength in the direction of the cardinal points, the zenith, and the ground. When the plants are mature he picks the first seven ripe seeds, brings them to the same place, and offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

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1. See pp. 90 ff.

D. Role of the Institution

794 182 According to Bambara expression, the ndomo is "the mother of the wanzo of the uncircumcised (1)" for its power which resides in the ritual objects /175/ is composed of the wanzo of all adolescents. The mask and the altars at first keep a part of the wanzo of the members who wear them, manipulate them, or offer them sacrifices. On the other hand, after circumcision, at the moment of the final leap of the newly circumcised over the ritual fire, the wanzo ultimately leaves them to settle itself in the mask of the ndomo. Thus channeled and conserved, these forces add themselves to those of the uncircumcised in the masks which become the repositories of their life.

[775] Moreover, the soul of the uncircumcised and nonexcised who have died prematurely establishes itself in the altars during the funeral rites celebrated by the members.

The mask of the ndomo is thus the receptacle of the wanzo of the circumcised, living and dead; as for the altars, they contain all the souls of the uncircumcised dead. All of this confers upon the ndomo the responsibility for the life of the adolescents and gives it such power that to a certain extent, this society of young people is feared by the adults (2) who have left it.

1. Wanzo ba ye čeble

794 833 182 2. When an adult, especially a member of the Komo society, has disturbed the peace of a member of the ndomo or has wronged the society, the wanzo may cause him to be impotent. In this case, in order to recover his virility, the man must obtain several tens of gray lizards which are sacrificed in his name on the mask and other altars. The animals are then cooked and the man is completely smeared over with the cooked substance which is then placed in the calabash and poured over the altars; the wanzo assigned to the man by the ndomo thus returns to the latter and the man is rid of its evil.

794 to which its creator chooses to reveal the ritual of initiation.

778 The head of a family, just like an isolated individual 438 or the head of a large community, will not fail to acquire, for a monetary consideration, exclusive possession of one of these powerful boli, which becomes his personal protector. Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, had with him the nyana n-Ka; Biton, the founder of the empire of Ségou, possessed several famous nyana: na n-Golo-ko (1), Nye-n-dinge du (2), and ba Kung-o-ba (3). Generally speaking, these private cults cannot spread, but when their possessor becomes a powerful chief, they migrate rapidly. This is what happened to Biton's cults; his followers took up the worship of his idols.

[776] 1. Literally, na-n-Goloko, "the mother concerned with birth" or, freely translated, "the goddess who presides at birth."

2. Nye dinge du, "the deep orbit of the eye."

3. Ba-kung-o-ba, "mother of the great bush."

794 When an individual becomes the acknowledged possessor of a nyana the result is an alliance with this nyana, which in the native language is called furu, the same word as that used for the [833] conjugal union of a man and a woman. Indeed, the installation of a renowned nyana in its master's village gives rise to rejoicing [257] similar to that occasioned by a wedding; hence, the following expressions: a ye boli furu, "he is united with a boli"; a ye boh' furu gosi, "he has effected a union with a boli"; a-ta boli konyo kera, "he has celebrated the wedding of his boli." On the day of such festivals, the master of the nyana (nyana-tigi or boli-tigi, surrounded by his acolytes, offers dlo to his guests who have come to greet him and give him presents. At nightfall, when the uninitiated have withdrawn, the clergy and the adepts in a procession take the boli to the "sacred wood" where the first cult ceremony is held, characterized principally by dancing and singing.

797 (Koutiala circle), Mandjakuy (San circle), Ségou, Kolongotomo (Macina subdivision), and at Sikasso (apostolic prefecture). In Guinea there is a Catholic center at Siguiri. In Upper Volta there are centers at Niangoloko (Banfora circle), Ouahigouya, and Bam: Black sisters (Ouahigouya circle). Finally, in the Ivory Coast there is a center at Gorhogo.

Protestant missions are even less numerous; they are generally American. The efforts they have exerted are far from having been crowned with success. We will mention, however, the cultural centers at Bamako with two protestant schools, the center at Sirakoro (Yanfolila circle), the ones at Baramba and Somasso (Koutiala circle), comprising two missions, the center at N'Torosso (San circle), and that of Sikasso. In Upper Volta, centers are at Siniena (Banfora circle) and at Ouahigouya. Finally, in the Ivory Coast there is one at Torogo (Korhogo circle).

II. Techniques

182 It is impossible to give a complete picture of all Bambara techniques; we are far from knowing them all. Investigations are being carried out on the spot, and already they indicate that no object, in its form or its material, no gesture of the customary actions, is due to the imagination of the maker. On the contrary, the material, [88] as well as the movements, is integrated in a system of representations that the Bambara can explain. The principal techniques among these have been analyzed and explained, but many have been described in a very superficial manner.

A. Body Techniques

The Bambara think that fecundation is the work of Faro. This
776 creative function is represented materially by the eating of a tomato
833 by each spouse before sexual relations, which must be repeated twice.
842 It is by means of this consecrated tomato that Faro transmits the life
he conserves in water. The role of the father is to give the new-born
his articulations which make him fit for work. He transforms the
celestial seed into terrestial seed.

844 Before delivery of her child, a woman is advised to pound grain.
When the labor pains come, the woman retires to her hut with several
matrons (men are not allowed access). If the child is poorly presented,
the priest is called. He performs outside the hut, simulating the delivery
and chanting the formulas that ease labor. To deliver the
infant, the woman kneels with her hands thrown behind her, while
the midwife supports the small of her back. At birth the infant's
shoulders must touch the ground; this is the moment when he receives
his spiritual principles. The infant is washed several times and
smeared with karite butter.

846 The mother must not go out during the first eight days after the
853 birth; she must devote herself entirely to the new-born. She massages
854 his head daily in order to give it a more rounded form, and she
pinches his nose. She nurses the infant for the first two years, then
the weaned child passes directly to the communal calabash. Until
the child can walk, the mother carries it astraddle on her back with
the aid of a loincloth knotted at her chest. In this manner the infant
accompanies the mother everywhere, to work as well as to the dance.
868 It is during these intimate contacts that the mother teaches her child
to talk. Later, the little girls stay with their mothers who teach them
all the domestic arts, while the boys are educated in outside work.
[867] During their childhook they are taught the usages and rules of deportment:
a woman knows she must never shake the hand of a man to
201 greet him, and, if he extends his hand, she flings up her arm "as a
576 sign of not being interested." A man will salute his superior by extending
his hand palm upwards, and the superior will put his over it;
inversely, when a man greets an inferior he extends his hand with the
palm down, while for an equal his hand will be perpendicular to the
ground. If a man must ask someone's pardon, he puts his hands behind
his back to simulate the tail of an animal (for he has acted like
an animal). Crossing the hands in front of or upon the head is a sign
of sadness. To mark his submission to a king, a man puts his right
elbow to the ground. To pray to God, the two hands are extended
with the palms turned [89] outward. A woman learns that it is impudent
576 to question her husband during the day, and when she speaks
593 of him, she says koke, that is, big brother, for she cannot pronounce
833 his name or in any way recall the bonds which exist between them.
It is only during the two consecutive nights that she couples with him

576 that she may speak to him freely. When the day of union comes, the
593 wife herself prepares her husband's food; then she lies on the left side
●833 (the feminine side) and her husband on the right side, and she cannot
[842] be impregnated except by a union twice repeated.

771 These corporal techniques[1] are dictated and ordered by the religious imperatives which pervade the life of the Bambara from before his birth until after his death.

761 What we have said of the Bambara's religion and of his conception of the world enables us to understand that there cannot be for him a complete break between life and death: birth is a reincarnation; death is not destruction. This is why a man's life does not present one substantial unity but is divided into a certain number of distinct periods, each of which is inaugurated by a rite of transition that marks the death of an anterior state and the rebirth to a new life.

a. Before Birth

843 From the first month after his conception, the infant consti-
761 tutes a person who receives a series of spiritual forces emanating
858 from his father's side of the family and especially from the recently deceased ancestor whose name he will receive. At the same time, he inherits all of the paternal taboos, which the mother must respect during her pregnancy. It is only after his birth, at the time he receives his name, that the infant receives the spiritual forces coming from his mother's side. These forces are transmitted through the medium of the priest and the ancestors of the priest.

761 From then on, the infant is required to observe all the taboos
858 of the beings who have had a part in the composition of his personality; he thus finds himself tightly bound to the society in which he will live.

b. Birth Rites

852 At birth the baby is washed with millet beer (1) (to purify him)

1. For all these rites, see G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

[1] [i.e., sexual reproduction and childrearing, see pp. 117-119. -Analyst]

856
the blacksmith. The doll is given the name of the dead infant, the
[304 child[1] carries it with him to the circumcision, and, when he marries,
589] he buries the doll with a piece of wood representing the wife of the
deceased.

845 Twins are replicas of Faro, their presence is beneficial, and
they are considered invulnerable.

The albino is supposed to be the issue of sexual relations held
826 in sunlight, a breach of taboo. He, too, is a new being. His wanzo
833 304 is so active that the circumciser must take great precautions before
operating on it.

826 He is considered to be endowed with special powers which
782 make him a choice victim for the sacrifices offered to the spirit of
the water.

To the children of blacksmiths, the name is given near the
553 paternal forge in the presence of all the artisans. An old man pre-
326 pares seven little sticks, giving each the name of an ancestor. Three
of these are drawn at random from the group, and the third gives
the name of the baby. The head of the baby is rubbed with the axe
Kongobwona, and his shaved hair is soaked in sacrificial blood.

In the Bamako region two chickens or a sheep are sacrificed
553 to celebrate the name-giving. The distribution of the meat is made
782 according to established custom. If it is a chicken, the patriarch
receives the head and the gizzard, while the wing and white meat go
to the old woman who washed the baby during the first eight days.
If it is a sheep, the patriarch receives [91] the ribs (because they are
a bulwark, and the patriarch is the defender of the village) and the
heart; the blacksmith receives the shoulder; the infant's family gets
the head (so that the infant will go ahead), the back (symbol of
prosperity), and the limbs (supports one wishes the new-born to have);
the blood which runs on the ground is destined for the infant's protective
ancestors. Then the family divides the raw meat with the heads
of family, and the old woman thus receives her part indirectly.

c. Circumcision

881 A male infant is born, but he still keeps (because of the
304 primordial twinship) the prepuce as the physical support of the female
831 sex. He will only be freed of this by circumcision. It is this operation
that definitively determines his sexual qualification and renders
him fit to contract marriage.

[1] [ie., the surviving child of twins. -Analyst]

837 Such statements simply mean that there is cheating (1) on both sides, for all precautions are taken to see that the /165/ mother's breasts do not dry up to avoid the possibility of her conceiving. The *soungourou*, the widows and divorcées, "real cradle vultures," know how much these precautions weary a young husband, and they come running in large numbers, without shame or modesty.

And while the husband absents himself from his wife for fuller enjoyment, she on her part proves easy with the men friends who visit her or whom she visits, friends who give her the desired enjoyment without ever compromising her. I would go so far as to say that [847] she is glad to find herself deserted, for she might conceive with her husband and then it would be difficult to resort to abortion, while with her friends there is greater freedom.

847 And if she conceives, a pretext is quickly found for her to go to her mother or whoever takes her place. Three fourths of the old women are past masters in abortions. Camphor in large doses is the basis of their brews, and they know how to use gold chloride for a modest fee; they know how to serve each and every one and safeguard their honor.

• [833 836] 1. Onanism is very common. Married men tell you openly: "We cannot have too many children, our wives have to go to the markets, and a pregnant woman cannot do this; *an b'an dabali* ("we manage to avoid having children"). There are few unmarried mothers, and yet the marriage of a virgin is unusual. They have little recourse to abortion, so there is onanism on their part. "*Ka bogotigi soro min te djakouma koun don i na yala*, to find a young girl who has not fornicated, you will take a walk." It is true that their lovers are often children, who cannot make them mothers.

847 And is abortion such a great crime in the eyes of the Bambara?
Less serious, surely, than one might imagine. It is very common,
and when a woman passes, one may overhear from the lips of the
Negroes, even those of children: "a y'i kono tigné, she has destroyed
the fruit of her womb." There is nothing to teach Bambara children;
[864] at eight and ten years they know everything! When one listens to
their conversations and lends an ear to their songs, they always revolve
around the vilest subjects.

3. The Birth of a Child

842 Before birth. -- Not only is it impossible for the Bambara to accept the idea that a man could live without a wife or a woman without a husband, they likewise cannot conceive of a home without children. They desire the pleasures of fatherhood, and a couple who are healthy or, to put it better, capable of consummating the conjugal act, /166/ quickly appeal to a diviner's knowledge, however short a time they have waited to have children. They believe that sterility is the result of sorcery or an evil spell.

When the husband is impotent or afflicted with an illness
•833 which prevents all marital relations, his wife readily becomes unfaith-
847 ful and commits adultery in order to avoid the shame of sterility.
Moreover, in order not to have to face a winking eye that speaks volumes or a disdainful smile which reveals everything, the husband is indulgent and even approves her crime, at least for the first times. Let us admit quickly that he can do nothing about it, for if she cannot be unfaithful, the wife will abandon herself to loud cries, demand a divorce, and reject the man, who would himself leave her if she were in a similar situation. Without approving of such indulgence, one can understand it on the part of an unfortunate who needs to keep his cook and safeguard his honor before a people that scorns an impotent man and sees nothing amiss in adultery since it is a crime that can be redeemed.

[164] If a woman who conceives is in a syphilitic condition, which
843 is often the case, the fruit of her womb seldom comes to full term

326
784 hypocrisy, humiliation, and cheating
are not done at the door of the forge."

5. Envy, jealousy, and ill humor are generally bad for the blacksmith who loses his "turn of the hand." He must "have a pure heart" (1).

> 1. Numu te keleya note i bolo na tye: "The blacksmith must not be jealous, otherwise his hand is spoiled."

6. A mirror must never be brought near the forge; it would take hold of its soul which resides in the axe at the altar (2).

> 2. Dugalle te gere fã na a kanana; ka fã ni tá: "The mirror must not be brought near the forge; it will take the soul from the forge."

[834] 7. Sexual relations near the forge prevent its functioning (3).

> 3. Noa te gere fa nda la: "No obscene action may take place near the door of the forge."

[783] Breaking the taboos of the forge is equivalent to attacking the virility of the blacksmith, for the bellows are his testicles. Thus the artisans present themselves naked before the culprit to shame him; he is seated on the communal anvil and water in which large millet (keninge) has been soaking is poured over his head to purify the instrument (4).

> 4. If the fault is irreparable, the kneeling chief crushes three grains of large millet (keninge) on the anvil, a gesture which symbolizes the death of the culprit whose name he pronounces at the same time.

794 292 The costume worn by the dancer is held up by a sort of carcass (bry) made of ngolobe (1) wood used because of its flexibility, and is enveloped with a light blanket for protection. Inside the bry are suspended various flutes (komo fle) which are blackened by the blood of sacrifices offered to "improve their sound" and which will be used in the course of the ceremonies. Along with these flutes is a little bag filled with spare spider webs. Any individual who goes under the [834] bry to dance must abstain from sexual relations for a specified period of time prior to the ceremony.

The costume (nya) which covers the carcass is made with the clothing of individuals killed by the Komo (2). Contrary to the bry, which has no active role but serves only to isolate the dancer inside the mask, the religious role of the costume is very important. It represents the "body and the valor of the ancestors." It is not the object of blood sacrifices, but is covered by a powder made of the bones of individuals killed by the Komo to which has been added kola nut juice. The 794 292 532 cloth is dyed with black earth taken from the river bank in exchange for a small offering of copper, gold, or cereals. Drawings called komo mani (literally, little people of the Komo) are made on the cloth to represent Faro on the one hand, recognizable by his long black hair, and on the other the eight ancestors who received the word. All the first agricultural implements of the Bambara are drawn with red ochre. The feathers of black, white, and red egrets are then sewn on the nya to hide /151/ the black earth, which is the spirit's abode. Two days before everything is taken out, these feathers are the object of offerings of kola nut juice, millet mash, and the blood of fowls.

794 292 184 The costume, like the head of the mask, must be seen neither by women nor by noninitiates. "Its color would change and it would become dull, making a purification necessary."

794 532 The body of the mask has two arms into which the dancer introduces his own. The arms terminate in a hook, koli (3), which is

1. *Combretum micranthum*.

2. When a guilty member or a noninitiate is "killed" by the Komo, his clothing is offered to it.

853 A child is nursed for two or even three years, and theoretically, a woman should abstain from sexual intercourse throughout this period. In practice, however, the period of three months mentioned above is the limit of such abstention.

854 Childhood. While he is small, the child remains with his mother, whether she cares for him herself, has him cared for by a slave especially designated for the duty, or turns him over to one of her daughters.

During the nursing period of two or even three years, he is carried astraddle by his mother or some other person entrusted with his care until his legs are strong enough for him to run about the house and its vicinity.

857 At about six or eight years old, he is drawn into the juvenile organization known as n-tomo, and he never fails to join it as soon as he is welcome. Little girls are less free; they are kept at home and put to work at household duties, such as bringing water and wood and watching the fire.

881 Puberty. As we shall see, the n-tomo prepares the child for the soli, a ceremony which marks the most important event of his life, civil puberty. The essential but not the only rite involved in this ceremony is circumcision. In principle, the soli is limited to pubescent boys and this implies that all who go through the ceremony have physically reached puberty. Aside from the fact, however, that this condition is reached at differing ages, the boys who undergo the ceremony differ in age because the soli does not take place every year, owing to the considerable expense involved.

882 When the soli is behind him, a boy is no longer a child; he is not exactly a man either, but rather is a "young master," a kamalen'. Since he is admitted to the brotherhoods, apparently his discretion can be counted on, and he is considered competent to take an oath so he can be called upon to testify in a dispute. Also, if he is enterprising enough to attract attention to himself, he is given trifling missions which inspire him to persevere. Fur-
882 thermore, since by now he has been made sophisticated by his
836 companions in the n-tomo, his relations with his female companion

882 [836] in the [216] soli, the n-golo-moso, and with other girl friends are not merely platonic; indeed, sexual licentiousness is common.

As in everything else, a girl's life is more restricted. For her, the soli is merely a way of being presented to society, as we would say, that is, a means of attracting a prospective husband.

884 Coming-of-age, guardianship, deprivation of civil rights. It is obvious from the above that a Bambara has no way of knowing his age with any certainty. At best, he can estimate it by referring to some important event known to have occurred at about the time of his birth.

Since this is the case, we can see that coming-of-age has no correlation with chronological age. The individual's physical development and, still more, his intellectual maturity are signs that lead his family to grant a kamalen' the rights that distinguish a man from a boy. The most important of these rights is assuredly that of taking a wife and founding a family.

As a matter of fact, the soli marks the point after which the young people of both sexes are deemed competent to contract
[582] marriages. Indeed, girls of 16 or 18 years of age and boys over 25 are rarely unmarried. It should further be understood that a girl may be betrothed at birth or even when she is being carried in the womb, as has been explained above.

429 562 Guardianship is intended to protect the individual from the follies of inexperience and the natural weakness of the female sex, a weakness to be understood here to include not only actual lack of physical strength but also incompetence imposed by custom which forbids a woman any power whatever over community rights or property. This is why young men are subject to guardianship until the fa, in council, recognizes their right to exercise the prerogatives of man's estate. In principle, women are subject to guardianship throughout their lives.

429 During his married life, the father is the legal administrator of any properties coming to his minor children, and he usually employs such property with discretion since he is legally bound to render an account when the children reach their majority.

521 one's eyes, the answer is almost always: "A flé bani, mousoni do, ne
831 na d'ima, ka ké i soungourou yé. But look here, this is a girl; I
will give her to you, she will be your soungourou."

521 And all this carelessness from the moral standpoint should not
831 surprise us in a country where a crowd of young men greet each other
576 even in the presence of their mothers: "I sounna ko? About the affair
•836 of your sleep? And your lovemaking at night?" "I soungourou ka
kendé? How is your soungourou?"

And where young girls do not blush to say to young men: "Do me the favor that I am asking you."

"Ne na ko doumani fo i ye.

I will tell you of a sweet affair (or: conversation, shameful embraces).

"Né na ne ko doumani d'i ma.

I will give you my sweet affair (or: I give myself to you).

In short, every Bambara who awards himself the prize of virtue, avoids saying that he has respected foreign women and girls temporarily under his roof. The statement would be received with a shrug of the shoulders and a smile. He merely says: "I have respected the women and girls of the village," and he does not shout this very loud nor before everybody.

2. Concerning Adultery and Fornication

684 Adultery is a crime in the eyes of every Negro, and the guilty one caught in the act is brought before the council of elders and severely punished. I must state, however, that although adultery seems a serious offence to all, the crime does not lie in the satisfaction obtained. There has been a lack of fairness, the rights of a third party have been violated, and in this lies all the wrongdoing.

Caught in the act, red handed, the guilty party makes a friendly deal with the husband, who rarely asks him for more than 16,000 cowrie shells (from 15 to 20 francs) and the material for a sacrifice to the family boli, comprising perhaps two hens, a goat, two kola nuts, and between 5 to 800 cowrie shells for the sacrificer's bonus.

688 Tjoïna, or Kégné, and the Nama
of Misango, Kokodjan, or Guendo.
The Djara of Tjikoumela is very
popular in Bani country. A per-
jured Negro offers a gnénama fani,
and the fani-n-kolo is costly.
For the Komo it consists of two
red roosters, two goats, a dog,
two red kola nuts, a basket of
millet (between 18 and 20
kilograms) and three times 8
[804 kémé (the kémé is worth 80
436] cowrie shells) if the culprit is
a man, or four times 8 kémé if
it is a woman. For the Nama
the price includes a gourd of honey,
two gourds of karité butter, a red
hen, two red kola nuts, a basket of
[804 millet, and 8 ba (the ba is worth
436] 800 cowrie shells, or one franc),
a kémé, and a débé (120 cowrie
shells). In addition these are one
to two kilograms of salt and a gourd
of gnama-n-kou (malagueta pepper:
amomum melegueta) for the
sacrificer. For the Nia the cost is
12 ba, four chickens, two dogs,
and two hens.

684 837 Adultery is frequent; it occurs daily and is the source of most of the disputes that arise. Some husbands are tolerant, however, and many are satisfied with 2 to 3 ba (between 1,600 and 2,400 cowrie shells, or 2 to 3 francs) and victims for a sacrifice to the family boli, such as a hen, a dog, a kid, or two kola nuts.

684 836 Like adultery, fornication is a serious offence because it violates the rights of third parties. It is less serious /163/ than adultery,

684 however, because the Negroes say that although the betrothed girl
836 does not belong entirely to herself, neither does she belong entirely
to her fiancé; she still retains certain rights to her own person, "à ma di ban, she has not yet been given."

684 When a girl becomes pregnant, she is arraigned before the
family council. After a goat has been slaughtered for the family boli,
627 she is asked the name of her partner, and if she refuses to disclose it the council of the elders is called in. She has to yield, otherwise she is tied to one of the forked sticks that support the flat terrace roof, and blows rain thick on her back.

As soon as the guilty man is named, she swears on a powerful boli (1) that she has told the truth, and the man is summoned.

Nothing is to be gained by being a perjurer; it is better to pay the fine and live. The stain on his honor is slight, and he confesses without much shame: "Tigné (that is true); né no do (it is my fault)."

The fine is between 15 and 20 francs and often between 25 and 30 francs (2), not including the sacrifice to the boli, which consists of two hens, two dogs, a goat, and two kola nuts. Quite often the injured fiancé has to be satisfied with the victims for the sacrifice and a small present, one to two kilos of salt, and 800 to 1, 600 cowrie shells, or 1 to 2 francs. As for the child of an unmarried mother, its
847 fate is in the hands of the grandmothers, and of the father and the
848 mother, and it quite often happens that it does not cry twice in this
567 world; to use the Bambara expression: "N'a kasira, a t'na foula ké, if he has cried, he will not do it a second time." I am speaking here of a free girl, for the child of an unmarried slave girl is welcome; it is a gain for the house, and no attention is paid to the guilty man. This is easy to understand, for is there a Negro who does not abuse his slave?

1. It is almost always a Komo, a Nama, or a Kono.

[583] 2. The rule is that the culprit should pay the fiancé the entire bride price, or some 30 francs.

837 Such statements simply mean that there is cheating (1) on both sides, for all precautions are taken to see that the /165/ mother's breasts do not dry up to avoid the possibility of her conceiving. The *soungourou*, the widows and divorcées, "real cradle vultures," know how much these precautions weary a young husband, and they come running in large numbers, without shame or modesty.

And while the husband absents himself from his wife for fuller enjoyment, she on her part proves easy with the men friends who visit her or whom she visits, friends who give her the desired enjoyment without ever compromising her. I would go so far as to say that [847] she is glad to find herself deserted, for she might conceive with her husband and then it would be difficult to resort to abortion, while with her friends there is greater freedom.

And if she conceives, a pretext is quickly found for her to go 847 to her mother or whoever takes her place. Three fourths of the old women are past masters in abortions. Camphor in large doses is the basis of their brews, and they know how to use gold chloride for a modest fee; they know how to serve each and every one and safeguard their honor.

[833 836] 1. Onanism is very common. Married men tell you openly: "We cannot have too many children, our wives have to go to the markets, and a pregnant woman cannot do this; *an b'an dabali* ("we manage to avoid having children"). There are few unmarried mothers, and yet the marriage of a virgin is unusual. They have little recourse to abortion, so there is onanism on their part. "*Ka bogotigi soro min te djakouma koun don i na yala*, to find a young girl who has not fornicated, you will take a walk." It is true that their lovers are often children, who cannot make them mothers.

584 fourouboloma tigi, or guardian of the wedding gifts, puts on his festive
585 clothes and takes 5 kémé, or 400 cowrie shells, to the father-in-law. The gesture is understood by everyone and means: "When will the wedding be?" A Negro has only one love: his interests; only one affect of affection: himself. In his egotism he thinks only of himself and of receiving cowrie shells; his heart is not unduly stirred. He thinks of his fields, his business, and his stomach. The members of the family, from the oldest to the youngest, have only these words on their lips: "How she handles the hoe! What a good tongue for praising merchandise and selling it; how well she cooks!" And it all stops there, for no one pays heed to her feelings. In vain will she cry that she detests her fiancé, that she does not love him at all, never could love him, and that she prefers another; in vain will she flee the /207/ paternal roof and take refuge with a sympathetic relative; she must obey! Her father and mother have received the oracle of the diviners; in accepting the sacrifice, the family boli have accepted the suitor, and they /the family/ cannot oppose the orders of their gods or, if one prefers the other term, their family fetishes (1).

[836] 1. Custom decrees that the girl spend one night with her fiancé 10 or 15 days before the wedding. Some families dispense with this practice. The whole procedure is carried out in privacy: the girl arrives at night, brought by a member of her family, and withdraws at dawn. The two following expressions denote this procedure: Ou tara di à tjéma ("they have gone to give her to her husband").

Moreover, I must admit that there are very few Bambara women who openly show their antipathy. They cannot resist paternal authority and freely give themselves to the man to whom they have been betrothed; "an ka lada do, it is our custom," they say, and the idea does not occur to them that there could be another.

794 or Koma/, " Outremer, 1929; H. Labouret, Les Manding et leur langue.

794 The Komo
794 society, komo tyew (literally, men, people of the Komo) is composed
561 of all circumcised men, with the exception of the griot who may under no condition become members, after an initiation performed according to the age grade, the members of which are called tonyaw. The hierarchy is rigorously respected: an earlier age grade will always be ahead of the one that follows it in all circumstances of secular or religious life. The Komo recognizes a chief, komotigi (literally, master or owner of the Komo) who preferably belongs to the caste of blacksmiths and whose function is hereditary. The son automatically assumes command of the age grade which follows that of his father. Upon the latter's death, he changes his age grade and becomes the head of his father's. In the case where the owner of the Komo dies [304] young and his eldest son, who is to inherit the office, is not yet circumcised, he is made to undergo the operation in the night following the death, and on the following day is proclaimed chief (1).

1. In La Religion Bambara, L. Tauxier points out that in some villages the chief of the Komo exercises his power only during a seven-year term. At the end of seven years an election takes place and the function is not hereditary.

794 Because of the importance of his functions, the chief of the Komo
784 is made to respect a great number of taboos. In particular he may not penetrate into the sanctuary if he has not been chaste during the past twenty-four hours. If the taboo is broken, he must warn the men of his age grade and sacrifice two roosters upon the altars to purify himself. His wife is initiated (for she is apt to see certain ritual [562] objects generally hidden from women because of her intimacy with the chief), but she is not present at any of the ceremonies to which only the members are /144/ admitted. If she commits adultery she [837] brings about her husband's exclusion from the society, not only as chief but also as member.

794 The chief is often assisted by two elders belonging to his age grade, whose advice he seeks in all cases concerning the community. In
561 addition, he is always helped by young initiates. If one of these

562 581 595 Between the omnipotence of the first and the humble lot of the second there is every possible gradation. This is all the more true in that, thanks to polygamy, lawful households may be found in association with the free unions and concubinage desired by the husband, in such a way that the position of each person in the family, already affected by all these contingencies, is, in the last analysis, dominated by the absolute authority of the fa. We shall see this clearly in connection with filiation, and it is no less apparent regarding wives, except for those already described who have sufficient influence and the means to live virtually independent of the rest of the family. Although in fact a wife who was not paid for has no regular position and her children legally do not belong to either of their parents, although a concubine does not even count as a person, according to custom, and her children are their genitor's slaves, merely by the will of the fa either of them may have an enviable pre-eminence in the family, especially envied by the lawful wives.

593 562 Under these circumstances, it may be admitted that conjugal duties, obedience, fidelity, and their counterparts, the rights to help and assistance, have nuances that vary from one situation to another. It is true that a wife must obey her husband and that he is allowed to resort to [208] corporal punishment to control her, which he does not fail to use. She is not completely at his mercy, however. For instance, he can require her to live in a given place; nevertheless, if it has been agreed that she is not to leave the tribal territory, and this usually tacitly understood, he may not take her away. He can force her to do household chores, but if she is free, he cannot require her to do servile tasks. In the same way, he cannot rent out her services, put her up as security, or sell her.

● 837 The duty of reciprocal fidelity is most often very vague. Admittedly, this is not expected of the husband, and indeed, the wife often encourages his lapses from virtue on the theory that this indulgence will attach him to her. As far as a wife's misbehavior is concerned, a husband does not always give it much importance and is sometimes not at all averse to profiting from it. If children result from her indiscretions, he is not distressed in the least about accepting or denying them. [848]

688 Tjoïna, or Kégné, and the Nama
of Misango, Kokodjan, or Guendo.
The Djara of Tjikoumela is very
popular in Bani country. A perjured Negro offers a gnénama fani,
and the fani-n-kolo is costly.
For the Komo it consists of two
red roosters, two goats, a dog,
two red kola nuts, a basket of
millet (between 18 and 20
kilograms) and three times 8
[804 kémé (the kémé is worth 80
436] cowrie shells) if the culprit is
a man, or four times 8 kémé if
it is a woman. For the Nama
the price includes a gourd of honey,
two gourds of karité butter, a red
hen, two red kola nuts, a basket of
[804 millet, and 8 ba (the ba is worth
436] 800 cowrie shells, or one franc),
a kémé, and a débé (120 cowrie
shells). In addition these are one
to two kilograms of salt and a gourd
of gnama-n-kou (malagueta pepper:
amomum melegueta) for the
sacrificer. For the Nia the cost is
12 ba, four chickens, two dogs,
and two hens.

684 Adultery is frequent; it occurs daily and is the source of most
● 837 of the disputes that arise. Some husbands are tolerant, however, and
many are satisfied with 2 to 3 ba (between 1, 600 and 2, 400 cowrie
shells, or 2 to 3 francs) and victims for a sacrifice to the family boli,
such as a hen, a dog, a kid, or two kola nuts.

684 Like adultery, fornication is a serious offence because it violates
836 the rights of third parties. It is less serious /163/ than adultery,

626 Every seducer who has paid the fine demanded by the fiancé can walk with head held high, for he has satisfied justice, cleansed his honor, and his shield is unstained. But let him not be careless enough to go to the village of the injured fiancé, for he will be /164/ beaten hard by the young people; his exclusion often lasts for years.

010 Now, there is no reason to be surprised at the Bambara attitude toward adultery and fornication. If it can all be reduced to a violated principle of justice and nothing more, that is because they have fallen so low that they believe they were created and put in the world by God in order to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh as much as possible.

Abortion

562 Monsieur Louis Barbier wrote in the "Quinzaine" (January 16, 1906) /"Étude sur les populations Bambaras de la Vallée du Niger (A Study of the Bambara Peoples of the Niger Valley)"/: "The Bambara woman is a machine to produce children and do heavy work." In this statement he expresses, I am sure, the belief of all Europeans who have stayed among the Negroes without mingling with them or living their life. If the Bambara woman "is a machine to produce children," [163] it is a slow machine. I know families where there are seven and eight children by the same wife, but that is unusual; the average remains two or three children per woman.

853 • 837 It is not through frequent childbearing or because they are prolific that Bambara women lose their charms and wither. They do not, and cannot, conceive but every two or three years; they cannot bear a child more than once every three or four years, since every mother nurses her child for at least two whole years, and quite often three, and during all that time she may not conceive. Does she remain continent during that time? What is to be thought of these utterances on the part of a husband:

A ye den soro a ti son toun.
She has had a child, she wants no more relations with me.
Né t'a don toun, ne tigouéré a la toun.
I do not know her any more, I no longer go near her.

837 Such statements simply mean that there is cheating (1) on both sides, for all precautions are taken to see that the /165/ mother's breasts do not dry up to avoid the possibility of her conceiving. The *soungourou*, the widows and divorcées, "real cradle vultures," know how much these precautions weary a young husband, and they come running in large numbers, without shame or modesty.

And while the husband absents himself from his wife for fuller enjoyment, she on her part proves easy with the men friends who visit her or whom she visits, friends who give her the desired enjoyment without ever compromising her. I would go so far as to say that [847] she is glad to find herself deserted, for she might conceive with her husband and then it would be difficult to resort to abortion, while with her friends there is greater freedom.

And if she conceives, a pretext is quickly found for her to go 847 to her mother or whoever takes her place. Three fourths of the old women are past masters in abortions. Camphor in large doses is the basis of their brews, and they know how to use gold chloride for a modest fee; they know how to serve each and every one and safeguard their honor.

[833 836] 1. Onanism is very common. Married men tell you openly: "We cannot have too many children, our wives have to go to the markets, and a pregnant woman cannot do this; *an b'an dabali* ("we manage to avoid having children"). There are few unmarried mothers, and yet the marriage of a virgin is unusual. They have little recourse to abortion, so there is onanism on their part. "*Ka bogotigi soro min te djakouma koun don i na yala*, to find a young girl who has not fornicated, you will take a walk." It is true that their lovers are often children, who cannot make them mothers.

776 782 brought to the middle of the river and thrown in while the villagers prayed the spirit to give the village his protection and to bring rain to future harvests.

Faro's Taboos

776 784 All of Faro's subjects, in particular the Bambara of both sexes and of all ages, are requested to respect a certain number of taboos.

The black earth, bogo fi, of the river banks, used ritually in many instances, would be excellent in pottery making. The women potters, however, cannot use it because it blackens in the process of baking. No pottery that has been fired may be washed in those places haunted by the spirit (1).

> 1. At Ségou, numerous drownings are blamed on the increasing frequency with which this taboo is broken.

[262] Butter in many places is forbidden by Faro and may not be preserved in water. (2)

> 2. This taboo is linked to the relation between Faro and the Peul, but the nature of their relationship has not been clarified.

No one crosses the river without opening his luggage and presenting Faro with the gold, copper, or food it contains. As a rule, the wearing of metals is forbidden in those places haunted by the spirit.

776 784 841 The principal taboo concerns menstrual blood which was originally caused to flow because of the sins and impurity of Mousso /52/ Koroni. No menstruating woman may visit the places inhabited by Faro; none may draw water, wash clothes or cooking utensils, or cleanse herself in any of these spots. In addition, a man whose wife is in such condition must refrain from appearing at religious ceremonies or, if he is a priest, from performing the ritual.

In this part of Africa, as in many others, menses are conceived of as a necessary flow of empty blood, impure because it has not contributed to the formation of the foetus, the embryo of which each

776 784 841 woman carries within her. (1) Deprived of Faro's essentially impregnating power and contrary to its generating action, this blood is considered evil, and all that recalls it or comes near it is excluded from the ritual.

Faro's Character, Role, and Deed

776 The principal characteristics of Faro's deed in creation are: omnipotence, omnipresence, and benevolence. Everything, whether animate or inanimate, depends on him in time and space.

The Bambara are extremely sensitive to Faro's power over the universe. They say: "Neither by day nor by night does Faro stop his incessant work." He sees to the efficient workings of the order which he inaugurated and which requires constant attention. His time is divided: from dawn until evening he occupies himself with the earth and its inhabitants; the next twelve hours' work is devoted to aquatic animals and members of his own family. Procreation depends on his will; it is he who, in the sky and in the water, controls the physical and spiritual life of all beings: the soul and vital force. In due order, with which the humans cooperate by observing his laws, he maintains life and makes the new bodies participate in the functioning of the universe according to a regular rhythm. Souls are reincarnated, assuring the continuity of spiritual forces in the world. The same power directs all acts of individual and social life: birth, circumcision, excision, initiation, marriage, agricultural work, voyages, war or peace.

Throughout the development of individual life, it is Faro who maintains man's physical integrity: he gives him health, necessary to action. Sickness is always /53/ considered a loss of strength which the individual must ask Faro to restore. The sovereign master of man's life, he has the power to take it away from him. [53]

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1. See G. Dieterlen, "Mécanisme de l'impureté chez les Dogon" /The Mechanism of Impurity Among the Dogon/ Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 17 (1947), pp. 82 ff.

778 wanzo and directing it into the mask to prevent it from doing harm
304 (1). Thus, nothing of the individual forces is lost. The wanzo itself

1. See p. 256.

harmful at the beginning, when properly channeled and directed, serves to consolidate the collective energies of the infantile societies based on it.

[582] Only when an adolescent has lost his wanzo is he permitted to marry; any individual would refuse to marry a partner who is not completely rid of it.

The Body

826 The Bambara have a notion of their bodies and the role of the different parts and organs. This notion is all the deeper because it is linked to that of the spiritual principles that animate it.

Indeed, the tere is determined by certain visible aspects of the body, while the ni and the dya also have sexes like the body. Therefore any study should include the links that unite the spiritual elements to the physical body in order to understand properly its state and function.

Blood, which together with breath is the seat of life, is also the vehicle of physical and spiritual forces that circulate with it in the veins and arteries. The blood sacrifice liberates these forces which sustain the altars, the soil, and the beings who receive them. Certain alliances are consecrated by an exchange of blood. The clear color of blood is proof of its purity: all infractions bring about a change and cause it to become pale. Menstrual blood, testimony to ● [841] Mousso Koroni's impurity and of the momentary sterility of women, is the principal taboo of the supernatural powers that create and protect life.

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The head, which contains thought, is an essential part of the individual and his symbol: "the head of the members of society" is represented by a stroke in the course of the rituals performed by members of the Komo or the Kworé. Man grows through his head just as a plant "grows through its head bud" (2). Man's head is protected

2. The myth mentions the "head of the balanza" at the time that men broke the

794 532 The head of the mask is usually made of bone (a human or hyena skull), or of wood painted white, black, and red. The mask, *per se*, is made in such a way as to frighten the future initiates. Just as the soul of a dead person, which requests offerings or threatens to drag his kin with it, is feared, so too is this fact which is in contact with the altar of souls (*nimara boli*) and which reflects the face of the ancestors. It also represents Faro: the mask is sometimes provided with a long beard symbolic of his hair, and lightly plastered with a layer of black earth taken from the river bank and impregnated with his power; it is sometimes smeared with the blood of a young girl who has died in the course of the ceremonies, in commemoration of the virgins annually offered to Faro in olden times.

Copper arrows (*kun bye*) are inserted into the skull and charms (*kun kanana*) are attached to them with the purpose of attacking the undesirables (noninitiates, women, or children) who approach the dance site.

"The eyes of the mask are large, so that the Komo may see and unveil everything; the nostrils are well opened for he must sniff everything, smell the good and bad of things. The mouth is twisted for the Komo does not talk; he only whistles and sings. The ears are vast so that he may hear everything, even that /150/ which each one says secretly in his heart. The chin of the mask is square, a sign of purity, decision, and clairvoyance." During the ceremonies, he silently opens his mouth. It is said that due to the presence of the altar of souls, *nimara boli*, "happiness penetrates him" (1). By singing, he redistributes this felicity to the audience and this is why he repeats the verses.

794 532 784 841 As a rule, women, *griot* and noninitiates are taboo to the mask. To each of the elements composing it also belongs a particular taboo. Thus, the head of the mask must never touch menstrual blood. Any infraction would bring about "a visible change to the face" and the altars contained in the sac carried by the dancer would be without strength. For this reason, no member must participate in the ceremonies if his wife is in a menstrual period.

1. *Here dun*, literally, penetration of happiness.

776 time; it is the noblest work, and one to which every member of the Bambara race must be subject. Faro is represented by a spiral, munu; the vibrating movements of the spiral are the same that animate the daily movements of the sun. These movements are materialized in a basketwork headdress, yugu, which has eight whorls and which formerly was reserved for kings. Faro's face is white, because he took it from the spirit of the air, Teliko, who was an albino. His ears are protected by two fins; his hands are of different sex; his tail is palmate, and his breast is of copper. Albinos and copper are the spirit's preferred sacrifices. All atmospheric manifestations denote his presence; his principal seat is the Niger River, but he has the gift of ubiquity and haunts all waters. Faro is accompanied by helpers, the most representative of whom is the bolokuruni, one-armed blacksmith of a black race. His air messenger is the swallow, who carries the [824] fertilizing word. Certain plants are in permanent rapport with him: the Yayalẽ, the Ngoyõ (tomato), which is compared to blood. Thus, small fields of tomatoes reserved for the cult of Faro are cultivated in each village. All metals are reserved for Faro. The Bozo, born of Faro's first twins, enjoy a privileged position because they were not subject to the defilement caused by Mousso Koroni and can enter into direct communication with the spirit. In addition, they are the masters of the water.

776 784 841 The cult of Faro includes a whole series of taboos, such as the black earth of the river which may not be used by the potters and butter which may not be kept in water. But the principal taboo is menstrual blood, originally provoked by the disorders of Mousso Koroni.

B. Conception of Man

774 761 The Bambara conceive man as a microcosm, a resumé of the totality of beings and things. The principle of duality contained in the original creative thought is realized in man by his twin souls which compensate for the separation of the sexes. In man, Faro is represented by the ni (soul) and the dya (double). Pemba is represented by the téré (the character, force, and conscience) and the nyama (which is the téré when it leaves its corporeal support after [826] death). Mousso Koroni is represented by the Wanzo (evil force with

Spiritual Principles (1)

114 1. A few comments on the spiritual principles of the Bambara (in particular on the *dya* and the *nyama*) have been collected in the chapter entitled "Théorie des âmes" by Tauxier, *La Religion bambara* (pp. 14-25), in which the author appraises the works of the Abbé Henry and of Ch. Monteil. Some of the observations made in the following chapter have been summarized by the author in "La Personne chez les Bambara" and in "Note sur le tere chez les Bambara /Note on the Tere among the Bambara/."

It will be useful to compare this study of spiritual principles with the studies made among the Dogon and presented respectively by M. Griaule, S. de Ganay, and the author in *Masques Dogon*, *Les Devises des Dogon*, and *Les Âmes des Dogon*.

761 The Soul, *ni*, and the Double, *dya*:

776 [826] Faro controls the principle of life in water, which is his realm as well as the life-giving element par excellence. In the bodies of living beings, this principle has its seat in the blood. The blood of the sacrifices offered to the spirit (or failing that, the juice of the tomato, a transformation of blood) is a contribution to the reservoir of life controlled by Faro—life which he redistributes in all its forms throughout the universe. Water is the privileged element in which life may persevere indefinitely. Elsewhere, life is maintained only if water comes to nourish it.

761 776 842 833 Faro's creative function is materialized by each marital partner eating a tomato before sexual relations. This act is accompanied by the recital of a prayer. The juice of the fruit, which contains the body of the future child, transmits life according to the following mechanism:

761 776 842 824 Faro receives the offerings of tomatoes grown ritually in the consecrated fields, as well as the blood of victims slain in his name above the waters. Blood and juice, spreading over water, the fertilizing agent, are collected by the swallow, Faro's airborne messenger. Liberated in space, they return to the soil with fertilizing rain and penetrate the tomato seeds which thus contain a particle of generative power.

761 After the marital couple has absorbed the fruit, a smooth-bodied
776 embryo with nonarticulated limbs is formed in the maternal womb.
842 /58/ It is at this moment that the couple consummate the sexual act
in the course of which the woman "takes into herself the entire body of her husband": the upper part through the eyes, the lower part through the genital organs. The masculine seed located in the seven principal articulations (knees, elbows, ankles, and spine) transmits them to the embryo. The body, originally similar to the body of the spirit, thus becomes that of a human being.

The spirit restows the spiritual forces after the man has mated for the second time with his wife. If the woman bears a single child it means that the man, in the course of the second union, formed the double of the first germ, but was not permitted to procreate twins.

761 Faro disposes of the child's life and nature. He decides all that the
child will be and will do, and determines his destiny from the moment
776 the seed is placed by him in the womb. The foetus then develops
843 with no further modifications until parturition, at which time it re-
774 ceives the spiritual principles, the soul, *ni*, and the double, *dya*,
which will be his throughout his life. It is at this time that the inner relations of the individual to the social group to which he belongs intervene. Although Faro gives each child a new body, he animates this body with spiritual forces drawn from the family reservoir. The
[775] newborn child is the direct heir to the *ni* and the *dya* of a deceased
member of the family, actually of the one, whatever one's sex, who died shortly before the birth of the child (1).

761 The consequence of death was, in effect, to separate the corpse
776 from the forces that animated it. The *ni*, by appropriate ritual, had
774 been preserved on the altar of the ancestors (2), and the *dya* had left
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1. The reincarnation of the deceased's spiritual principles, however, is not an absolute rule. Faro is the master of an infinite reserve of souls. Twins, albinos, and certain other children are born with the *ni* and *dya* as yet undetermined. They originate respectively in the second sky (*kaba dye*) and in water (*dyi sumale*). Further study on this particular point is necessary to complete this investigation.

326 778 796 In addition, each year the blacksmiths join together and offer a sacrifice on the communal anvil. All tools are placed around it, overflowed with the blood of the victims.

An annual ceremony which also brings the craftsmen together has the purpose of asking Faro to help in the cooling of the wrought iron and to give the water into which the iron is dipped the strength to fulfill its function. Assembled before the kotigi's forge, they bring a certain number of tomatoes which are first presented to the altar, then to the ancestral axe farakun on which each one in turn licks with his tongue.

Keeping their mouths closed so as not to let the strength thus gathered escape, they all walk toward the river, while one of the [534 participants strikes up, on the ritual bell (nege dẽ) with a lump of 533] (nege dyun), the rhythm called klide fo (literally, rhythm of the sons of the testicles) (1) addressed to the one-arm blacksmith, the bolokuruni, Faro's companion. Once on the bank, the kotigi undresses and throws himself into the water. When re reappears on the surface, all the participants open their hands the better to seize the strength of Faro and his companion, which the man is supposed to bring back. They rush to help him dress and the one who succeeds in touching him believes he receives Faro's special favors.

The tomatoes are then squashed into a gourd and the pulp is thrown into the river at a deep spot where each participant draws water and drinks to communicate with Faro. The group then returns, bringing back in the gourd a little water into which each one dips his individual axe, starting with the patriarch who, at the end of the ceremony, drinks up the rest.

326 778 ●842 If a woman is sterile, she asks the help of the three spirits protecting the forge as they have the reputation of being very prolific. Without her presence, the blacksmith crouches before the altar with his hands spread out, his head lowered, and prays. The woman must then swear to respect scrupulously the taboo of the invoked spirits, which is to pronounce their name. She may also ask the blacksmith to implore the help of the ritual ashes of the altar.

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[522] 1. Kli dẽ, "son of the testicle," is one of the ritual jokes addressed to the blacksmiths by their senãnku.

852 304 "the unknown in creation" (see pp 23 and 24), recall man's existence in this state. Consequently he is conscious of the unknown and has the possibility of apprehending it. These scars act upon the tere of the child and give him at the same time strength, courage, virtue, as well as the strength to penetrate the knowledge of the invisible (1).

[842] 1. They may be redrawn at the root of the nose of an adult who has despaired of having any children, or on the thigh of a woman who wishes to be fertile. These scars, drawn at birth, are not the only ones which the Bambara wear. See S. de Ganay, "On a Form of Cicatrization among the Bambara."

852 553 326 In a blacksmith's family, the name is given near the paternal forge. In the presence of all the village artisans, the kotigi shaves the head of the newborn while an elder prepares seven small sticks, over each one of which he pronounces the name of an ancestor. The kotigi, whose eyes are blindfolded, pulls out in succession three sticks from the group; the third determines the name which he immediately proclaims. While the women chant, the father removes from his altar the kongobwona axe as well as the other ritual objects. The throat of a sheep is cut over all these objects while a prayer is recited. The newborn's head is rubbed first with the axe, then with shaved off hair saturated with sacrificial blood. This gesture introduces the child into the family group. Next he receives the scars of the blacksmiths.

Circumcision

304 561 Whereas in former times circumcision was mandatory and performed upon young men (about twenty years), it is now practiced at an early age if the parents are wealthy enough to afford the expenses involved.

/180/ Because of this fact, a child of eight years may be circumcised with an adolescent of sixteen to eighteen years, whose parents are poor and have only slowly accumulated the articles necessary for the ceremony. These two boys will belong to the same age grade (flǎ), and will be comrades (flani) all their lives, having the same rights and duties. Age thus has a restricted role in social relations.

797 (Koutiala circle), Mandjakuy (San circle), Ségou, Kolongotomo (Macina subdivision), and at Sikasso (apostolic prefecture). In Guinea there is a Catholic center at Siguiri. In Upper Volta there are centers at Niangoloko (Banfora circle), Ouahigouya, and Bam: Black sisters (Ouahigouya circle). Finally, in the Ivory Coast there is a center at Gorhogo.

Protestant missions are even less numerous; they are generally American. The efforts they have exerted are far from having been crowned with success. We will mention, however, the cultural centers at Bamako with two protestant schools, the center at Sirakoro (Yanfolila circle), the ones at Baramba and Somasso (Koutiala circle), comprising two missions, the center at N'Torosso (San circle), and that of Sikasso. In Upper Volta, centers are at Siniena (Banfora circle) and at Ouahigouya. Finally, in the Ivory Coast there is one at Torogo (Korhogo circle).

II. Techniques

182 It is impossible to give a complete picture of all Bambara techniques; we are far from knowing them all. Investigations are being carried out on the spot, and already they indicate that no object, in its form or its material, no gesture of the customary actions, is due to the imagination of the maker. On the contrary, the material, [88] as well as the movements, is integrated in a system of representations that the Bambara can explain. The principal techniques among these have been analyzed and explained, but many have been described in a very superficial manner.

A. Body Techniques

776 The Bambara think that fecundation is the work of Faro. This creative function is represented materially by the eating of a tomato
833 by each spouse before sexual relations, which must be repeated twice.
842 It is by means of this consecrated tomato that Faro transmits the life he conserves in water. The role of the father is to give the new-born his articulations which make him fit for work. He transforms the celestial seed into terrestial seed.

576 that she may speak to him freely. When the day of union comes, the
593 wife herself prepares her husband's food; then she lies on the left side
833 (the feminine side) and her husband on the right side, and she cannot
[842] be impregnated except by a union twice repeated.

771 These corporal techniques[1] are dictated and ordered by the religious imperatives which pervade the life of the Bambara from before his birth until after his death.

761 What we have said of the Bambara's religion and of his conception of the world enables us to understand that there cannot be for him a complete break between life and death: birth is a reincarnation; death is not destruction. This is why a man's life does not present one substantial unity but is divided into a certain number of distinct periods, each of which is inaugurated by a rite of transition that marks the death of an anterior state and the rebirth to a new life.

a. Before Birth

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858 From the first month after his conception, the infant constitutes a person who receives a series of spiritual forces emanating from his father's side of the family and especially from the recently deceased ancestor whose name he will receive. At the same time, he inherits all of the paternal taboos, which the mother must respect during her pregnancy. It is only after his birth, at the time he receives his name, that the infant receives the spiritual forces coming from his mother's side. These forces are transmitted through the medium of the priest and the ancestors of the priest.

761
858 From then on, the infant is required to observe all the taboos of the beings who have had a part in the composition of his personality; he thus finds himself tightly bound to the society in which he will live.

b. Birth Rites

852 At birth the baby is washed with millet beer (1) (to purify him)

(1) For all these rites, see G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

[1] [i.e., sexual reproduction and childrearing], see pp. 117-119. -Analyst]

755 cannot cure. In order to become fertile, a sterile woman knots one[1]
[842] around her wrist or biceps, and a strange *tafo* it is, taken from the skin of a monkey's hand.

Syphilitic children, covered with pimples and pustules of *magnan* -- the name with which they adorn this disease -- have chicken droppings for their *crême Simon*, and this is the ointment of ointments.

[843] Chalk is the specific for pregnant women; to ease the mild discomforts which generally precede maternity, they draw pretty white crosses on the abdomen or on the chest, between the breasts.

2. Death

761
195 If sickness is not natural, there is all the more reason why death should not be. In the eyes of the Bambara there is no evil comparable to it. They fear it and its very name makes them tremble. When it is necessary for someone to announce a death or refer to it, he quite often uses a circumlocution in the presence of a member of the family. At the death of a child it is in good taste to say: "*A sagira a ko*, he has gone backwards," and if the deceased was a grown woman: "She is no more, she has ended her career, she has been buried." The politest of all the expressions concerning married men who have passed from life to death is: "*A so yélémana*, he has changed his dwelling." The initiates of certain sects cannot bear to be spoken to about death, and the *korodouga*, of the *kouéré* or *koté* sects, for example, get up and leave in displeasure, no matter how little this subject is dwelt upon in their presence.

761 The Bambara are not unaware that Moslems, missionaries, and all Europeans make light of their fetishes and scorn them; therefore in the presence of any of these they direct to God the accusation that He has caused the death of one of their people. This procedure is only a courtesy, an indirect way of respecting the belief of those to whom they speak, whose life they share, and whom they fear. They know that God has the power of life and death over human beings, but they attribute death to Him so seldom, that during seven consecutive years spent in the Sudan I did not encounter a single instance.

/48/ Death is always caused by a wicked person, by an enemy who

[1] [i.e. A *tafo*, a string with seven or nine knots. —Analyst]

776
775 Bambara believe in the reincarnation of souls. But the Negroes say that a soul separated from the body lacks something, it is not complete. Since a soul stays in Lahara for a fairly long time, until it finds the opportunity to be reincarnated and decides to do so, the wish is expressed that during this period that it may live with the souls of good people and not suffer too much from the loss of its body -- and nothing more. These comforting expressions are heard at every death, whether of a child, a man, or an old man.

776 The sterility of a woman is obviously not natural; it is attributed
● 842 to fetishes, to the evil spells of a malicious person, and quite often /62/ also to God. "Alla b'a kégné dén-na --, God is placing an obstacle to /against/ her having children." As the Bambara gives small gifts of honey, cotton, butter, sugar, or cowrie shells to a woman who has just given birth, they say, "May God soothe your back (your pains); may He preserve your child." Upon receiving the slightest favor, the recipient commends the one who performed it to the protection of the Almighty, and the wishes at festivals and drinking bouts are an endless litany a large part of which refers to God.

776 The Bambara speak the name of God apropos of a trifle and always -- except in certain sacrifices to the boli fetishes where they use it blasphemously -- with some respect. I confess that (if I did not know through being somewhat acquainted with them that in their mouths this name is a word and no more, a commonplace into which enters neither affection nor love) it would sometimes seem that they have deep and tender feelings of piety. In fact there is nothing more
[576] touching than to hear a pagan Negro, a Bambara, answer whoever asks after his health: "Nébi Alla tanoun, I praise God, I glorify God."

778 the fetish tree, the former by the children who smear themselves
782 and whiten their entire faces, and the latter by the men and circum-
796 cised youths (1).

1. By the main sacrifice I mean the sacrifice made in the name of the whole village.

After the noon meal men, women, and children go to the public square to drink beer, or d'lo, and to dance. /119/ The signal for the celebration is given by the gnéna-n-sonnaba, who makes a little speech inviting his children (né ka démisenou, "my children," "my subjects") to have fun and to drink but to avoid fights and quarrels, and then launches into a quadrille. While he dances, the crowd stands bareheaded, cries "you you" loudly, and competes as to who will shake his spear or ax to beat the measure. This annual festival goes on for three or four days, as long as the d'lo, or millet beer, lasts.

776 All circumcised men and excised women may, through the
782 intermediary of the gnéna-n-sonnaba, offer a sacrifice to the genie
protector of the village. Anyone who thinks he has offended or dis-
pleased it offers one -- with or without bloodshed according to his
means -- to obtain pardon, propitiate it, and gain its favor. In-
dividuals sacrifice primarily to make requests; a di ("give it") are
the first words they were able to lisp as infants. A sterile woman
[842] will offer it a kola nut, dégé, a rooster or a hen at every moment, always promising not to be miserly and to give more if she becomes a mother. She will be especially assiduous toward the dasiri animal, the mount of the genie of this name; she will coax it, stuff it with bran, and will often go far into the bush to pick it a stalk of grass or a leafy branch which are its delicacies.

776 Genii spirits can leave the spring, the rock, or the tree where
778 they have established their dwellings, and the dasiri is no exception
to this rule. If it does so, the fetish tree loses its sanctity, becomes a common object, and can be destroyed. Similarly, all things in the sacred grove, both plant and animal, cease to be taboo and can be used for their customary purposes. The dasiri is not at all fickle.

847 And is abortion such a great crime in the eyes of the Bambara? Less serious, surely, than one might imagine. It is very common, and when a woman passes, one may overhear from the lips of the Negroes, even those of children: "a y'i kono tigné, she has destroyed the fruit of her womb." There is nothing to teach Bambara children; [864] at eight and ten years they know everything! When one listens to their conversations and lends an ear to their songs, they always revolve around the vilest subjects.

3. The Birth of a Child

842 Before birth. -- Not only is it impossible for the Bambara to accept the idea that a man could live without a wife or a woman without a husband, they likewise cannot conceive of a home without children. They desire the pleasures of fatherhood, and a couple who are healthy or, to put it better, capable of consummating the conjugal act, /166/ quickly appeal to a diviner's knowledge, however short a time they have waited to have children. They believe that sterility is the result of sorcery or an evil spell.

833 847 When the husband is impotent or afflicted with an illness which prevents all marital relations, his wife readily becomes unfaithful and commits adultery in order to avoid the shame of sterility. Moreover, in order not to have to face a winking eye that speaks volumes or a disdainful smile which reveals everything, the husband is indulgent and even approves her crime, at least for the first times. Let us admit quickly that he can do nothing about it, for if she cannot be unfaithful, the wife will abandon herself to loud cries, demand a divorce, and reject the man, who would himself leave her if she were in a similar situation. Without approving of such indulgence, one can understand it on the part of an unfortunate who needs to keep his cook and safeguard his honor before a people that scorns an impotent man and sees nothing amiss in adultery since it is a crime that can be redeemed.

[164] 843 If a woman who conceives is in a syphilitic condition, which is often the case, the fruit of her womb seldom comes to full term

843 but is lost after the first months -- something that is inexplicable to her. To avoid this misfortune she covers herself with grigris and talismans; she wears them on her neck, on her hips, down her breasts, on her arms. One in particular I cannot silently pass over; it is the *tafo*, a narrow leather thong held in the skin of a monkey's hand and knotted sometimes around the wrist and sometimes above the biceps.

●842 A sterile woman or one subject to accidents during her
843 pregnancies appeals to the *Komo*, *Kono*, or *Nama* *boli* fetishes, but
782 more often to the *gnena*, or *djine*, fetishes, and above all to the
778 *dasiri* fetish, the genie protector of the village. Through the intermediary of the priest, the *gnena-sonnaba*, or *dougoutigi*, she offers it hens, kola nuts, and *dégé*, or millet flour mixed with water. She dedicates and consecrates the fruit of her womb to the *dasiri* and swears an oath to offer a sacrifice worthy of it if she succeeds in carrying her child to full term.

I should reiterate in passing that the *dasiri gnéna* is not, as
842 one might suppose, constantly sitting down or astride of a /167/ leafy
843 branch or, if you like, enclosed in a tree trunk with bark as a fitted
782 jacket. It walks around, readily leaves the tree, the spring, or the
778 rock which it uses as dwelling, home, or resting place; it visits its
825 relatives and close friends, it carouses with its companions every time a drinking bout is held in honor of one of them, and when there are no parties, it takes advantage of its freedom. It is afraid of walking with its feet on the ground, so for its romantic excursions in and around the village, it straddles its mount, which is a snake, a lizard, or a donkey, but usually, as we already know, a terrible billy goat. It is this animal, especially, that the sterile woman showers with her attentions; she often goes far into the bush to fetch a handful of tender grass which is its delicacy, and every day measures of millet and maize bran are set aside for it. When she becomes a mother, she overflows with sacrifices and acts of thanksgiving, and her child receives the name of the fetish. He will be *djiriba*, *gnénama*, or *gnénamaké*, as I have already said in the paragraph in which I discussed the *dasiri*, who is the genie protector of the village and the first of the *gnéna*.

843 291 One last discreet word about the pregnant women: Their loincloths, the cloth rags with which they gird their hips, are held in place by means of a cord, a common string knotted below the navel, a very unsightly thing, or sometimes by means of a colored cloth, a red handkerchief, for example, folded in a triangle.

● 842 789 A male child, is more highly valued than a girl, and to obtain this blessing the Bambara consult sorcerers and diviners and sacrifice to the boli fetishes. The women have great confidence in amulets, and they wear hung at the waist many dirty bags which form an ugly roll under the tafé, or loincloth (the knotted cord, tafo, is worn around the hips). Some wear their "boy bringer" where it can be seen; it is a square leather bag three fingers wide which contains medicine: bits of bark and wood, and sometimes a goat's horn which the woman slips between her thighs (1). /168/

1. This horn is also often worn in order that the child may have a perfect body, or so as not to have a premature delivery. Nicolay says that these talismans or magic objects, which are capable of changing the course of events and even of nature, are made and sold by sorcerers. /Fernand Nicolay, Curiosités des lois et coutumes. Histoire des croyances, superstitions, moeurs, usages et coutumes (selon le plan du Décalogue) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. A History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Manners, Usages and Customs (according to the Outline of the Decalogue), Paris: V. Retaux, 1901./

844 Birth of a child. -- In Bambara country the "demon" usually takes part in the joys and sorrows of the family. However, I have

which determined "the space of yo in its own thought," is expressed by the number 22: "yo, darkness of creation, in the depth of the secret space of night, master of the foundation of the 22 rotations, great bearer of vibration, great builder of the marrow of bones (1).

These 22 spirals stirred up all that yo contained in spirit; nugu, "entrails, intestines," which carried all things and man within itself; yalã, "seed of the air," which placed the voids in all /7/ parts of space"; fayã, "seed of the wind"; sani, "seed of water"; yerẽ, "seed of fire"; yelẽgu, "seed of earthly matter" (2). The rotations of yo put them in order and kept them under the force of attraction (mana). In other words, carried away by this whirlwind, both magnetic and creative, the elements became organized, one in relation to the other; in this way the 22 terms of the universe, as thought out by yo, were determined; these terms are also the 22 periods of its thought:

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strength for there the Bambara place the poles of attraction which, in the universe, uphold all bodies. It is said: "All bodies accept the force of attraction of the four angles," fari be bi sõ seleke nuni mana barika la.

[782
● 843
821]
1. yo dali dyibi, šu kene gundo tyema, munumunu mu tani fla siki ba, yere done ba, kolow nye kono dlaba, kono being the ancient term for marrow.

This prayer is recited in honor of yo when a woman's pregnancy is first noticed; it is also recited at eclipses of the sun.

2. fayã, sani, yerẽ (in ancient language), and yelẽgu were at the origin of the four elements, air, water, fire and earth, all of which did not yet exist but were to appear later.

The seven elements composing yo are represented by signs, reproduced in Figure 1 (1 to 7).

778 understandable that the strength of the large pembele should be preserved intact since it represents the world. No ritual concerning it is celebrated alone by the man in charge without the presence of a council of elders. Its four corners can be scraped only under worthwhile circumstances for, according to the informant, the god pembele will not tolerate his being used for trifles. As the corners are gradually scraped off and consequently the nyama contained in these corners is reduced, the earth becomes worn out. And if the earth should lose its nyama, all would be empty of its substance; the millet would still grow but its stalk would yield no grain. . . women would bear no children, no longer having any nyama. Bereft of strength, people would no longer be able to fight. The earth would subsist, but would be sterile" (1).

1. S. de Ganay, op. cit., p. 200.

The Balanza

824 The tree balanza, the plant form of Pemba's metamorphosis, vanquished by Faro, is no longer worshipped by men. However, the Bambara's attitude towards it and certain ritual gestures of which it is /38/ sometimes the object, recall the time when, after having spread its domination over all creation, it introduced death to the human species.

[761] In certain settlements, the belief is that whoever rests in its shade dies, the tree having taken his dya. In others, women still make it [782] offerings of karite oil, despite advice from men who have informed them of its inefficacy. They lie at its base, simulating illness, agony, and then death to recall the painful events that have brought them to men; finally they touch the ground successively with each of their four principal articulations as a sign of submission, before smearing the tree trunk with the oil they have brought. In still others, [843] in order to recall that births used to take place near the tree, pregnant women are presented by their husbands to the tree to each childbirth.

The fields surrounding the settlements in the region of Ségou are covered profusely with balanza. The device of Ségou, which tells of the history of the town, enumerates the names of the trees planted at the time of its founding. This device also mentions kokuruni (literally, little humped back), the balanza of Banankoroni (pl. I, a),

761 776 842 After the marital couple has absorbed the fruit, a smooth-bodied embryo with nonarticulated limbs is formed in the maternal womb. /58/ It is at this moment that the couple consummate the sexual act in the course of which the woman "takes into herself the entire body of her husband": the upper part through the eyes, the lower part through the genital organs. The masculine seed located in the seven principal articulations (knees, elbows, ankles, and spine) transmits them to the embryo. The body, originally similar to the body of the spirit, thus becomes that of a human being.

The spirit restows the spiritual forces after the man has mated for the second time with his wife. If the woman bears a single child it means that the man, in the course of the second union, formed the double of the first germ, but was not permitted to procreate twins.

761 776 ● 843 774 Faro disposes of the child's life and nature. He decides all that the child will be and will do, and determines his destiny from the moment the seed is placed by him in the womb. The foetus then develops with no further modifications until parturition, at which time it receives the spiritual principles, the soul, ni, and the double, dya, which will be his throughout his life. It is at this time that the inner relations of the individual to the social group to which he belongs intervene. Although Faro gives each child a new body, he animates this body with spiritual forces drawn from the family reservoir. The [775] newborn child is the direct heir to the ni and the dya of a deceased member of the family, actually of the one, whatever one's sex, who died shortly before the birth of the child (1).

1. The reincarnation of the deceased's spiritual principles, however, is not an absolute rule. Faro is the master of an infinite reserve of souls. Twins, albinos, and certain other children are born with the ni and dya as yet undetermined. They originate respectively in the second sky (kaba dye) and in water (dyi sumale). Further study on this particular point is necessary to complete this investigation.

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761 776 774 775 The consequence of death was, in effect, to separate the corpse from the forces that animated it. The ni, by appropriate ritual, had been preserved on the altar of the ancestors (2), and the dya had left

774 is the object of constant concern during agrarian rituals. The role of the soul of plants is particularly noticeable in their medicinal uses. Drawing a remedy from a plant may cause its death, liberating its spiritual principles for the benefit of the sick man. Because of this, such an act is equated with a blood sacrifice.

With the exception of the ngovo tomato, plants have no dya. The shadow (suma) of a plant is not independent like that of a man or an animal. It exists only through light effects and its movements are caused by the air and the wind moving its leaves and branches. This is what the Bambara means when he says that the dya has a life of its own and depends on Faro, whereas the plant's suma depends on the spirit Téliko, master of the air.

774 An individual's dya can be known and his temperament and life
787 possibilities assessed by measuring his shadow on the earth at noon.
804 The unit employed is the little finger, which is a corporeal symbol
843 of the person. If a pregnant woman is thus measured, the sex of the child may be predicted.

When a boy or a girl gets married, it is said of them: a ye a dya
774 furu: "he (or she) has married his dya." For it is impolite to say that
[576] a person married anyone but his spiritual double. Besides, the union of the couple is repeated by the union of their dya which like themselves are of opposite sex. In olden times, male twins married the
[595 851] same woman and the latter's dya was taken over by Faro in the Niger. The child she conceived was the son of both husbands.

Some men do not marry. This is true of the Soma, the religious
589 diviner attached to the major Bambara societies. Initiated in the
791 course of a solitary sojourn in the bush, he left his dya with the invisible spirits. This is a prerequisite to the gift of double sight with which he is endowed as well as a protection against possible dangers to the dya when it remains in contact with the earth, or when it approaches other humans. The true spouse of the Soma is his dya: he may mate only with it on a fixed date when the spirits return it to him for this purpose. /61/

The tere

774 The tere was inflicted by Pemba on Mousso Koroni in order to diminish her power at the time he was pursuing her. This explains its complexity: it is at once the character of a man, his strength,

304 326 /184/ they did. Faro, Teliko, Soba! You who are a man, your number is three; three of the penis, three of the twins, designs of the penis, it is the tradition, withstand it; Faro!" (ter) /repeat three times/(1).

1. Bolokodẽ i fa, i moke, o ta fa,
o ta fa were, o ta fa klo masamaw ye
munyu, i yere ka munyu u cǒko la,
faro, teliko, soba, o ye če ta saba ye,
wulu wo, flani wo, kolo nyeke, lada
do, i ka munyu; faro (ter).

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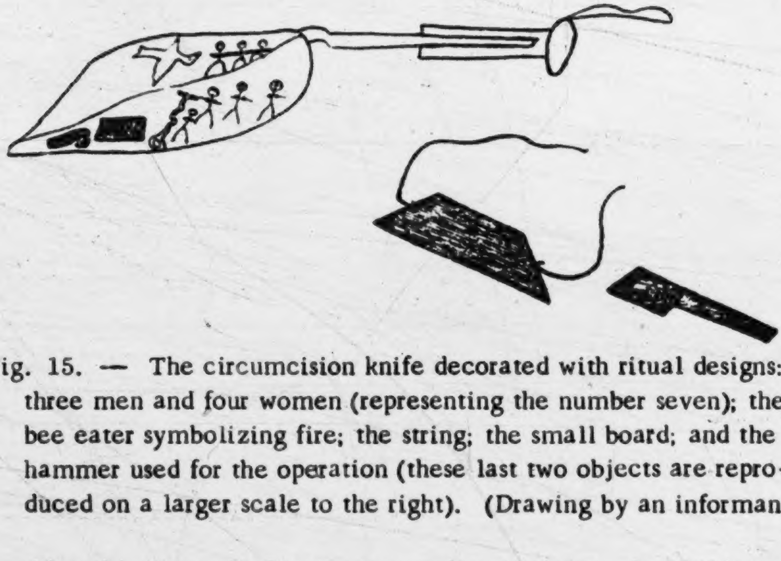

Fig. 15. — The circumcision knife decorated with ritual designs: three men and four women (representing the number seven); the bee eater symbolizing fire; the string; the small board; and the hammer used for the operation (these last two objects are reproduced on a larger scale to the right). (Drawing by an informant.)

304 326 831 After the removal, the operator makes scars upon the child's penis, called faro nyeke (literally, signs of Faro). Under the muscle wulu dyuru (literally, rope of the penis), a small hole is carefully made. Since the penis is considered a source of strength, the muscle which maintains it and erects it binds the circulation of the blood and helps man in all his acts. It is through this muscle that man transmits nerves to his children. A straight organ, firmly held in check, keeps the man and his descendants from numerous illnesses; the aim of this mutilation is to obtain complete and well formed foreskins and clitoris in the children of the party concerned. After the perforation, the operator places in the orifice a little pepper and tomato juice while saying: 304 326 843

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"Strong (when you form) the child, (you who form) the child (in the) womb, give it to Faro" (1).

1. Fariña dẽ, dẽzo dẽ, i ka di faro ma.

The embryo, placed in the feminine womb by Faro, receives force and virility from the pepper and is developed with the help of the tomato.

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Two small holes are carefully made symbolizing man and his dya, while the following prayer is recited:

"Two holes of the penis; I draw the twins and I do it well, the skin of the person is captive, the skin of the person (gives) the twins; withstand them; Faro" (ter) (2).

2. Wulu wo fla, flani mba ti ka nẽ,
moko wolo ye dyo ye, moko wolo ye
flani nye, i ka munyu faro (ter).

"The skin of man, they say, and his entire body are miserable, captives. He is condemned to work, sweat, and suffer. But these two perforations indicate that man is always called upon to procreate twins, the visible images of Faro. Lacking them, he may have numerous children who will return to him, in sweat and work, the seed which he has placed in the maternal womb and which gives shape to the seeds given by Faro."

At the root of the penis, small lines, kolo nyeke, are made with the knife while the operator says:

"Mark of the penis, the genital organ receives this scarification because of the child (whom it will procreate); it is for this that man may be courageous; the one who has (this scar) is respected; great Faro, satiation of Faro" (3).

3. Kolo nyeke, wulu ti kũye dẽ koye,
a ye če fariña ko ye, min ya ke bonyedo,
faro ba, faro fa.

/185/ These recall the scars inflicted upon man's body and symbolize the desired multiplication of his offspring. Finally, they indicate the superiority of the one who has withstood and accepted pain.

764 were kept by the village patriarch and the cult of the ancestors was celebrated upon these altars.

At the present time, the body is buried during rites in which the Komo plays an important role for the initiates. As soon as a member
763 is seriously ill, the family head places upon the dying man's chest
778 the portable altar, kere la boli ni, which belongs to the community. He does not leave the bedside in order to catch the last breath. Immediately after death, without turning back or saying a word to anyone, he goes to the chief of the Komo who places the object in the
[775] sanctuary where the altars are kept. The soul is introduced into the nimara boli (1).

[843] 1. See p. 192. In former times, the soul of the dead man was caught between two gourds which were then joined together and hung on the conjugal bed. When the woman became pregnant, the gourds were broken over her abdomen in order to make the soul penetrate the foetus. Later on this method of transmission of the soul was no longer possible because of the impurity brought about by "frivolous discussions regarding the arrangements and situations of creation."

764 Upon his return to the house of the deceased, the family head brushes his hand over the dead man's face to gather his nyama which he then entrusts to Pemba by rubbing the cavity in the family pembele "so that the total of the work he has accomplished during his life will not be dissolved by death, but will be like /190/ an accumulated force serving the community, and so that his intelligence, his qualities, and his skill in different kinds of work, especially in agriculture, will not be lost but will be found in other members of the family. The
[778] block of wood, acting as an altar for storing the forces, preserves this nyama until a new birth occurs in the family" (2).

2. S. De Ganay, "Aspects de mythologie et de symbolique bambara," p. 199.

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12. From the thirty-ninth to the forty-second, pettiness, stupidity, misenya, (fem.).
13. From the forty-third to the forty-fifth, judgment, calmness, basigi (masc.).
14. From the forty-fifth to the forty-ninth, incoherence, agitation, hakiliwuli (fem.).

[804] These groupings are symbolized by little sticks whose length increases for male measures and decreases for female measures.

Example: if the measure of the individual stops at group 7, he will be represented by four sticks (males) of increasing size and by three others (females) of decreasing size and different aspects.

/216/ Whatever their number, these sticks are then placed in the following manner: those of the nerves in a dry receptacle, those of the flesh in millet flour, those of the bones on a hard stone, those of the liquids in water, those of the male genitals on the testicles of a male goat, those of the female genitals on the vulva of a mare, those of the breasts in karite oil, those of the womb in water from the Niger or a well, those of the intelligence in fresh milk, those of calmness and judgment in water. On the stick representing the joints is shown the name for lion; on that representing the backbone, the word dyose, (literally, point of support); on that representing pettiness, the name for dung beetle; on that representing disorder and agitation, the words muso dãga (literally, accursed woman).

A prayer is recited over the sticks which are then grouped and counted with their numbered representation and their symbolism according to the complicated calculations whose details we will not enter upon here (1). This prayer and counting are called: faro kanubaya, "love of Faro." They indicate his solicitude for his subjects and were supposedly revealed to men by the swallow messenger at the time of the first girl twins' birth.

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843 Each of these measurements corresponds to a certain moral and physical behavior of man, predetermined by Faro before one's birth. It is therefore possible, by measuring the dya of a pregnant woman,

1. It must, nevertheless, be noted that the total of the signs is (7 x 3) + (7 x 4) or 49.

787 826 [843] to know the sex of the child a woman is carrying and the character which will be attributed to him by the spirit.

Without further elaboration on this method of divination which implies a series of interpretations, it suffices to note that it is integrated into the system of Bambara thought and inspired by the conception he has of man's place in the universe.

Divination by the Kola Nut

787 The kola nuts which the Bambara eat and use in their sacrificial or divinatory rituals are classified into seven categories according to their form and color.

1. dangoro, red nut.
2. yeleworo, white nut.
3. sosokuworo (literally, mosquito head), a red nut pointed at one of its extremities.

/217/ 4. flaniworo (literally, twin kola), a white nut with the same signs on both its halves.

5. worodanda (literally, kola without a mouth), a nut of two colors without an apparent crack permitting it to be divided.
6. bassiworo, a dark red and very bitter nut.
7. nyeworo, a nut of light and indeterminate color.

The kola nut, "created for Faro's twin girls," is itself a symbol of duality, for both its adhering halves are easily separated. In daily life, unless the diviner has ordered it as a purification, a kola nut is not eaten by one person alone; it is divided and one of the halves given to a third person. This gesture of politeness and friendship is also the expression of the duality of man, comparable to that of the fruit itself.

[576] To give kola nuts is always a sign of deference, respect, or affection. To eat a white nut "chases away sorrow and worry." The nut without a crack is rarely eaten. As it appears to be of one piece, it has an inauspicious character. In religious ceremonies the bassiwore nuts are preferred for the boli; the ordinary red nuts, dangoro, for the other altars. The pointed nut, sosokuworo, is offered by one who wants a child. The officiator chews half the nut and spits it onto the altar before eating the other half.

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609 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that
821 was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and
show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the
Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
224 start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equipment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well
as an arsenal of magic weapons.

The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
825 they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of
778 this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at
some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The
animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[562] wara-ba means lion; sa-ma, elephant; ma-li, hippopotamus;
bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names
indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief
that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The
attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an application of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual
and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
● [843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a
small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
231 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
552 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of
825 their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once
held and which is still shown on occasion: fa-li meaning "donkey"
derives from fa meaning "powerful," just as nya-ri meaning "cat"
derives from nya and has the same meaning, along with ba
Meaning "goat."

595 A husband owes his wife food, clothing, and lodging within his means, and unless he has imprudently acquired too many wives, everything will be kept within the proper limits. In any event, he must be impartial toward all his wives on one particular point if he wants domestic tranquillity: he must honor each of them in turn with his favors.

In theory, a husband is supposed to treat his wives alike in all things, although it is apparent from the foregoing that this is practically impossible. Besides, it is usually agreed that the first wife, no matter who she is, whether slave or free, has certain prerogatives. She acts as a kind of mother to her co-wives, supervises their work and their pursuits, and issues all the supplies. With reference to her husband, she acts as confidante and adviser.

851 Filiation. This is to be regarded as the totality of facts which, for the sake of clarity, we shall divide into two groups: birth, and giving a name. [209]

● 843 Birth. A pregnant woman, by virtue of her condition, is subject to a kind of special regime whose special features are the following.

In principle, she must forego sexual relations from the moment she feels the child move until two or three months after its birth. This is not done for reasons of hygiene, but rather because the child is thought to require it as a kind of deference, without which it will die.

From the standpoint of diet, the expectant mother should be well and even abundantly fed. When possible she is given the [262] heart and liver of slaughtered wild animals; these are centers of life which, if eaten, will strengthen the child's soul and make the child a courageous individual. A pregnant woman often wants some [261 443] of the yellow or red clay which is sold in the markets, which for some unknown reason she will eat as if it were chocolate.

She must refrain from visiting dying people, attending funerals, going into mourning, or mingling with crowds, all this in order to avoid any contact that might injure the fragile soul she is carrying.

●843 A Bambara has no very exact idea of the duration of pregnancy. His deductions, based on appearances alone, lead him to believe that a child born completely formed must have been in the mother's womb longer than one less well-formed. [845] Besides, it is believed that conception may be due to some spirit who had relations with the woman (1). Children born with some strange or abnormal characteristics are thought to be the result of such affairs, and the fact that some women give birth only to stillborn infants is attributed to the same cause.

The pregnant woman is advised to go about her domestic chores up to the very moment of [210] her confinement and, in particular, to continue to grind grain, no doubt to facilitate labor, especially for those who are mothers for the first time.

844 When the labor pains begin, the woman retires to her hut, accompanied by matrons famed for their experience in these matters. Men, including the husband, may not come near the patient.

845 If there is a breach presentation or any other complication, the women do what they can, based on their personal experience, the inspiration of the moment, or the current superstitions. As a last resort they call in the magician or the marabout, which amounts to the same thing. Neither one is allowed to see the patient, but must work from the outside, using magic passes, incantations, or prayers and prescribing suitable remedies.

844 To deliver the baby, the mother ordinarily squats with her hands behind her head or kneels with her hands against the wall. The eldest or most skillful of the attending matrons ties the umbilical cord and then cuts it. This operation is often badly done and causes the umbilical hernia with which so many natives are afflicted and which is regarded, indeed, as a deformation in

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1. See above, in the chronicle of Kaarta, the tale about Deni-ba Bo, who had relations with a mabo woman who claimed a connection with a spirit in the form of a horse.

576 that she may speak to him freely. When the day of union comes, the
593 wife herself prepares her husband's food; then she lies on the left side
833 (the feminine side) and her husband on the right side, and she cannot
[842] be impregnated except by a union twice repeated.

771 These corporal techniques! are dictated and ordered by the religious imperatives which pervade the life of the Bambara from before his birth until after his death.

761 What we have said of the Bambara's religion and of his conception of the world enables us to understand that there cannot be for him a complete break between life and death: birth is a reincarnation; death is not destruction. This is why a man's life does not present one substantial unity but is divided into a certain number of distinct periods, each of which is inaugurated by a rite of transition that marks the death of an anterior state and the rebirth to a new life.

a. Before Birth

843 From the first month after his conception, the infant consti-
761 tutes a person who receives a series of spiritual forces emanating
858 from his father's side of the family and especially from the recently deceased ancestor whose name he will receive. At the same time, he inherits all of the paternal taboos, which the mother must respect during her pregnancy. It is only after his birth, at the time he receives his name, that the infant receives the spiritual forces coming from his mother's side. These forces are transmitted through the medium of the priest and the ancestors of the priest.

761 From then on, the infant is required to observe all the taboos
858 of the beings who have had a part in the composition of his personality; he thus finds himself tightly bound to the society in which he will live.

b. Birth Rites

852 At birth the baby is washed with millet beer (1) (to purify him)

1. For all these rites, see G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

![i.e., sexual reproduction and childbearing, see pp. 117-119. -Analyst]

755 cannot cure. In order to become fertile, a sterile woman knots one[x]
[842] around her wrist or biceps, and a strange *tafo* it is, taken from the skin of a monkey's hand.

Syphilitic children, covered with pimples and pustules of *magnan* -- the name with which they adorn this disease -- have chicken droppings for their *crême Simon*, and this is the ointment of ointments.

[843] Chalk is the specific for pregnant women; to ease the mild discomforts which generally precede maternity, they draw pretty white crosses on the abdomen or on the chest, between the breasts.

2. Death

761 195 If sickness is not natural, there is all the more reason why death should not be. In the eyes of the Bambara there is no evil comparable to it. They fear it and its very name makes them tremble. When it is necessary for someone to announce a death or refer to it, he quite often uses a circumlocution in the presence of a member of the family. At the death of a child it is in good taste to say: "*A sagira a kô*, he has gone backwards," and if the deceased was a grown woman: "She is no more, she has ended her career, she has been buried." The politest of all the expressions concerning married men who have passed from life to death is: "*A so yélémana*, he has changed his dwelling." The initiates of certain sects cannot bear to be spoken to about death, and the *korodouga*, of the *kouéré* or *koté* sects, for example, get up and leave in displeasure, no matter how little this subject is dwelt upon in their presence.

761 The Bambara are not unaware that Moslems, missionaries, and all Europeans make light of their fetishes and scorn them; therefore in the presence of any of these they direct to God the accusation that He has caused the death of one of their people. This procedure is only a courtesy, an indirect way of respecting the belief of those to whom they speak, whose life they share, and whom they fear. They know that God has the power of life and death over human beings, but they attribute death to Him so seldom, that during seven consecutive years spent in the Sudan I did not encounter a single instance. /48/ Death is always caused by a wicked person, by an enemy who

[x] [i.e. A *tafo*, a string with seven or nine knots. —Analyst]

847 And is abortion such a great crime in the eyes of the Bambara? Less serious, surely, than one might imagine. It is very common, and when a woman passes, one may overhear from the lips of the Negroes, even those of children: "*a y'i kono tigné*, she has destroyed the fruit of her womb." There is nothing to teach Bambara children; [864] at eight and ten years they know everything! When one listens to their conversations and lends an ear to their songs, they always revolve around the vilest subjects.

3. The Birth of a Child

842 Before birth. -- Not only is it impossible for the Bambara to accept the idea that a man could live without a wife or a woman without a husband, they likewise cannot conceive of a home without children. They desire the pleasures of fatherhood, and a couple who are healthy or, to put it better, capable of consummating the conjugal act, /166/ quickly appeal to a diviner's knowledge, however short a time they have waited to have children. They believe that sterility is the result of sorcery or an evil spell.

833 847 When the husband is impotent or afflicted with an illness which prevents all marital relations, his wife readily becomes unfaithful and commits adultery in order to avoid the shame of sterility. Moreover, in order not to have to face a winking eye that speaks volumes or a disdainful smile which reveals everything, the husband is indulgent and even approves her crime, at least for the first times. Let us admit quickly that he can do nothing about it, for if she cannot be unfaithful, the wife will abandon herself to loud cries, demand a divorce, and reject the man, who would himself leave her if she were in a similar situation. Without approving of such indulgence, one can understand it on the part of an unfortunate who needs to keep his cook and safeguard his honor before a people that scorns an impotent man and sees nothing amiss in adultery since it is a crime that can be redeemed.

[164] 843 If a woman who conceives is in a syphilitic condition, which is often the case, the fruit of her womb seldom comes to full term

●843 but is lost after the first months -- something that is inexplicable to her. To avoid this misfortune she covers herself with grigris and talismans; she wears them on her neck, on her hips, down her breasts, on her arms. One in particular I cannot silently pass over; it is the tafo, a narrow leather thong held in the skin of a monkey's hand and knotted sometimes around the wrist and sometimes above the biceps.

842 A sterile woman or one subject to accidents during her
843 pregnancies appeals to the Komo, Kono, or Nama boli fetishes, but
782 more often to the gnena, or djine, fetishes, and above all to the
778 dasiri fetish, the genie protector of the village. Through the intermediary of the priest, the gnena-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, she offers it hens, kola nuts, and dégé, or millet flour mixed with water. She dedicates and consecrates the fruit of her womb to the dasiri and swears an oath to offer a sacrifice worthy of it if she succeeds in carrying her child to full term.

I should reiterate in passing that the dasiri gnéna is not, as
842 one might suppose, constantly sitting down or astride of a /167/ leafy
843 branch or, if you like, enclosed in a tree trunk with bark as a fitted
782 jacket. It walks around, readily leaves the tree, the spring, or the
778 rock which it uses as dwelling, home, or resting place; it visits its
825 relatives and close friends, it carouses with its companions every time a drinking bout is held in honor of one of them, and when there are no parties, it takes advantage of its freedom. It is afraid of walking with its feet on the ground, so for its romantic excursions in and around the village, it straddles its mount, which is a snake, a lizard, or a donkey, but usually, as we already know, a terrible billy goat. It is this animal, especially, that the sterile woman showers with her attentions; she often goes far into the bush to fetch a handful of tender grass which is its delicacy, and every day measures of millet and maize bran are set aside for it. When she becomes a mother, she overflows with sacrifices and acts of thanksgiving, and her child receives the name of the fetish. He will be djiriba, gnénama, or gnénamaké, as I have already said in the paragraph in which I discussed the dasiri, who is the genie protector of the village and the first of the gnéna.

843 291 One last discreet word about the pregnant women: Their loincloths, the cloth rags with which they gird their hips, are held in place by means of a cord, a common string knotted below the navel, a very unsightly thing, or sometimes by means of a colored cloth, a red handkerchief, for example, folded in a triangle.

842 789 A male child, is more highly valued than a girl, and to obtain this blessing the Bambara consult sorcerers and diviners and sacrifice to the *boli* fetishes. The women have great confidence in amulets, and they wear hung at the waist many dirty bags which form an ugly roll under the *tafé,* or loincloth (the knotted cord, *tafo,* is worn around the hips). Some wear their "boy bringer" where it can be seen; it is a square leather bag three fingers wide which contains medicine: bits of bark and wood, and sometimes a goat's horn which the woman slips between her thighs (1). /168/

> 1. This horn is also often worn in order that the child may have a perfect body, or so as not to have a premature delivery. Nicolay says that these talismans or magic objects, which are capable of changing the course of events and even of nature, are made and sold by sorcerers. /Fernand Nicolay, *Curiosités des lois et coutumes. Histoire des croyances, superstitions, moeurs, usages et coutumes (selon le plan du Décalogue)* /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. A History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Manners, Usages and Customs (according to the Outline of the Decalogue), Paris: V. Retaux, 1901./

844 Birth of a child. -- In Bambara country the "demon" usually takes part in the joys and sorrows of the family. However, I have

824 considered as the founding ancestor transformed into a tree. The old men of the village come to the tree each year, leaning their backs [844] against its trunk, while the placentae of newly delivered women are hung on it (1).

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1. The *balanza* groves around the Bambara settlements have attracted the attention of botanists. M. G. Roberty, in *Les Associations végétales de la vallée moyenne du Niger* /The Vegetable Associations of the Middle Nigerian Valley/, has studied their agricultural rôle: "The Dumosaeptum arboreitoides, cultivation under the *balanzas.* Artificial, well defined landscape. Trees losing their leaves during the rainy season, regaining them during the dry season, thorny, regularly spaced, but planted in the distant past. The *Acacia albida* loses its leaves in June and grows them again in December, thus furnishing shade in the dry season and humus in the rainy season. The Dumosaeptum owes it its permanent villages.... The date of the introduction of this very useful tree into the western Sudan remains shrouded in mystery, as is the time and method of its dissemination over cultivated fields. It is probable that the *Acacia albida* comes from eastern Africa, somewhere south of the equator. How did it come as far as the Bambara country without losing its original seasonal cycle? What sultan, or what agronomer of genius forced its multiplication around the Bambara villages? These questions remain, for the time being, without answers. The tales of the first European conquerors seem to have proved that numerous "*tatas,*" the enormous citadels of red mud, were enclosed by living *balanzas* fences with joined trunks... It is probable that their military use has preceeded everywhere their agricultural use... We have very little information concerning

the dying man to go into the water and place itself under Faro's protection. At the moment of delivery, both *ni* and *dya* return to the body of the newborn child who replaces the dead man, but they return in reversed order: the *dya* is returned to the body of the child and becomes his *ni*; the *ni* of the deceased mixes with the birth water spread on the ground which forms the shadow (*suma*) and will be his double, the twin (1). In the case of a boy, the *dya* will be female; in the case /59/ of a girl, it will be male. These movements are independent of the sex of the deceased as the spirit reverses the sexes when necessary. Each human being is thus both male and female
[828] through his soul and his double. This conception of human nature,
which is fundamental to the Bambara, is expressed in the symbolism
of numbers. The number seven is formed of three (male sexual sym-
[801] bol) and four (female sexual symbol) and represents the complete
man. In addition, on another level, the number six is that of male
twins, seven that of mixed twins (and the hermaphrodite), and eight
that of female twins. The body of the newborn child is gently tapped
[844] by the number of strokes representing the above figures in order to
call the child's *ni* according to its sex.

761 776 774 775 2. Grouped hierarchally, children, male adults, and women form religious societies or institutions, *dyo*. Each *dyo* is charged with the upkeep of altars which serve to preserve the spiritual forces of the group. (See p.

● [844 824] 1. The blood of childbirth represents the excess tomato juice absorbed by the woman, that which remains in the womb after the formation of the embryo. On the eighth day after birth, the mother of the parturient woman squeezes three or four tomatoes (depending on the sex of the newborn) into a gourd which she then gives to the child's father. The latter makes his wife drink the juice to replace the blood which she has lost and which is considered impure.

761 funeral rites. There it joins the ancestral forces, the aggregate of which forms a whole whose power is used by the descendants during the seasonal rituals for beneficial purposes.

764 761 The body is buried; it "belongs to the termites" and in the end only the bones will remain and be honored as a testimony of the physical life. Sometimes they are removed from the tomb, examined, and prayed to before being replaced.

761 844 When a birth occurs in the family the newborn child, having inherited the ni and the dya of the deceased, receives his nyama preserved in the pembele and his given name, toko; thus one being replaces another, using the same forces which are used over again and again. Life transmits itself intact. Not only is it undiminished by death, but the dya's sojourn in Faro's residence is thought to be a "reviving," a desirable and beneficial purification. Similarly, the passing of the ni onto the family altars brings about a rejuvenation.

761 On the altars and in the tombs, the "exuviae and bones counted and classified by Faro," are a valid testimony for eternity and serve to maintain the integrity of the whole world of living and dead until the final resurrection.

Attributes of the Person

The Name

551 The organization of the total family /famille indivise/ of the Bambara has already been the object of descriptive works (1). It is however, appropriate to mention it since certain elements such as family names, devices, taboos, and kinship relationships described as "joking" are related to the components of the person.

Socially, the person is first placed by his given name, toko, that of the ancestor who gave him his ni and his dya, or any other in the paternal or maternal line. The given name indicates the relation to a family group as well as /74/ the person's individuality. It is accompanied by the father's family name (dyamu), whose origin and

1. In particular Ch. Monteil, Les Empires du Mali; H. Labouret, Les Manding et leur langue /The Malinke and their Language/.

291 him and joke with him, indicating by semi-ritual jokes his accession to a new status.

291 173 Men's first garment was the skirt of *ṅyama* fibers (Fig. 8, A). The bark was beaten and prepared by means of a club, a wooden club, *gosilande* or *kuruninde*, which is /106/ supposed "to contain potentially all human technology invented as the need arose." It is said of this club that it is "the mold of perfection and the place from which all useful things issue." The club was also originally a primitive instrument of rhythm (1); the hammering of blows "chased away the evil [755] sounds emitted by Téliko at the time of his revolt." Even today, a deafmute is seated near the *gosilande* which is prayed to so that he may be rid of his infirmity. The clothing of a woman in labor, in [844] order to purify it, is beaten with the *gosilande* at the same time the infant utters its first cry. Dyed clothing is beaten not only to make the color penetrate, but also to chase out any impurity.

When they first learned about cotton, and after the invention of weaving, the Bambara made garments which are in disuse today but of which they still make specimens for ritual purposes. In fact, with the exception of the loincloth, these ancient garments are worn only during religious ceremonies and their principal function is to represent the ancestors who were their progenitors.

291 773 386 The first garment woven was an imitation of the fiber skirt. The men made loincloth (*mboko nimba*) still worn today by the uncircumcised and dyed it yellow, *wolo* (2) (Fig. 8, B), a color which represents that which a certain disease gives to the black's skin,

[783] 1. *kow dyele bwo yoro*. On certain occasion when the Komo masks are brought out, the chief carries on his head the *gosilande* which represents the universe. Certain collective purifications are also executed with this instrument at the crossroads (see p. 186).

[824] 2. This dye is made with the leaves of the *ngalama* (Angeissus leiocarpus), which are boiled, dried, and pulverized. The powder is put in water.

291 The *nyeba*, "big eye," or *koloso tyema*, "mixed masculinity"
113 (with femininity), (Pl. III, a, 11) also represents creation, here sym-
822 bolized by the double layer of five indigo and white bands (1). At
801 the same time the cloth also symbolizes the complete man, said to be both masculine and feminine. A newborn child, but never an illegitimate one, is clothed in it.

The band *soli* (Pl. III, a, 5) represents the good conduct of Mousso
291 Koroni at the beginning of her life as well as her betrayal which
113 brought disorder on earth.

531 In olden times, people who had committed bad deeds were obliged
[764] to wear it. Today it is used as the shroud for a child who dies immediately after birth; a strip is sewn to the garment of a recently excised girl or to the loincloth of a woman insured in childbirth. When differences or conflicts arise within a family, a fragment is placed in amulets which the women must then wear.

The *wutu nyekorotike* (Pl. III, a, 6) pictures the disorderly voyage
[828] of Mousso Koroni, her despair and her madness. This pattern is reserved for insane people in order to warn others of their condition.

The band *gombo* (Pl. III, a, 7) recalls the pursuit of Mousso /112/ Koroni by the god Pemba into the depths of the sky and the earth.

The band *tyatyeli* (Pl. III, a, 8) a picture of Mousso Koroni's defeat, symbolizes human work. It is given to a courageous and energetic woman. It is circulated among those present at religious ceremonies and its mere presence indicates that nothing here below is obtained without work and that all stems from work. To wear this band strengthens the man who is entering upon a task in a village other than his own.

The band *saki* is the *koblenkaba*, "red sky." It symbolizes heat, anger, difficulties, and sorrows. It is woven at the time of marriage negotiations for the purpose of resolving any differences of opinion.
[844] A piece of it is dipped into the blood after birth and then thrown away in order to purify everything.

[822] The blue stripes of *dyitala* represent impurity, and the red stripes, purification by sacrifice. Whoever has broken a taboo wears the blue, and the red when he is purified. A piece of red cloth may be inserted into the vagina of a young woman, after she has lost her virginity or

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1. On the value of number 5, see pp. 24, 25.

771 considered, follows the chronological order used by this power in the beginning. Similarly, the various skies where Faro reigns are invoked according to their role and the aims of the petitioners /177/ who appeal to them in many cases with very long prayers.

In order not to overload this discussion, a very limited number of rites are described below. Among them, an important place is reserved for those concerning the person (see Ch. 3), which relate to birth, circumcision and excision, funeral rites, and the cult of ancestors. For each one of these the respective positions of the elements composing the individuality at different times have been pointed out.

The rites relating to the ordinary which come next, affect the collective life of the family and village. They concern the residences, the crossroads, and the public squares. They have a very definite character of a gathering together and redistribution of individual forces for the good of the community.

The rain rituals, also collective, which involve the Komo and the Kworè, present a typical example of Bambara symbolism.

Finally, the rituals for "the renewal of the year" have still a more general character: they show close ties uniting individual and community to the cosmos (1).

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1. The agricultural rites have not been touched upon in this work as they will be the object of a detailed description in: S. de Ganay, Techniques et rites de l'agriculture chez les Bambara (to be published).

In addition, most of the rituals are duplicated by a series of games of a cosmogonic character which relate to the stages of creation and to its past, present, or future states. See p. 54.

I. Rites Concerning the Person

Birth and Name-Giving

● 844
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From the moment of his birth, a newborn is washed with millet beer mixed with water. The beer has a purifying quality and the

844 contact with water which symbolizes "the victory of Faro over Mousso
273 Koroni in the matter of family names" is a prefiguration of name-
271 giving.

851 As soon as the patriarch hears of the birth, he comes and shakes the family pembele over the child's head, three or four times according to the sex, in order to pass on to him the nyama and the qualities of the deceased person from whom he has inherited the ni and the dya. Then, he brings the family altar kere la boli ni into the house of the woman who has just given birth and places it before him. Crouching upon the ground, with fingers spread over the object, he pronounces the following prayer: "You, boli, make me a chief, so that my family prospers, a child is /178/ born, his soul is entrusted to you; I invoke you, boli, night and day" (1).

1. Boli tigi i ka masaya kanu ñe, de wolo la, a ni kalifa be i la, ngo boli šu ani kle.

Holding the child on his knees, he places the object on its chest for three consecutive times. Repeating the prayer, he next cuts the throat of a red rooster over the open sac, dips the right index into the blood, and, depending upon whether it is a boy or a girl, makes three or four crosses on the forehead of the newborn who thus becomes the "son of the boli," boli dẽ.

A white sea shell, krokrodya (2), is placed before the newborn

2. Cardita vingens.

and gently moved about to "condense his dya within him." Then it is tied to the child's foot for three or four days according to its sex.
846 At the same time, the mother who is entrusted with the child's dya
until the name-giving ritual, adorns herself during the eight days
824 following the birth with a collar (madya, "dya of the person") made
751 from the odoriferous root of the tree bearing the same name. She will wear it until the child takes its first steps so as to protect it and to recall that she herself carried the soul of the newborn.

553 The name is given on the eighth day by the chief of the Komo.
852 Under the dubale, a tree which shelters the village meetings, the elders assemble around the Komo altars which have been carried to the spot (3). If it is a first son, the father gives one hundred kola nuts,

771 In any case, these are questions which he does not ask or which, at least, he has not considered in any way that would cause him to make logical, even if fragmentary, syntheses. His words and his acts are indications and sometimes even guideposts for us, but how uncertain and misleading they can be! And, in the observation of current facts, how many at least seeming contradictions there are! However, in the main, the analysis given in the paragraphs above represents the basis of Bambara dogma, since everything happens in reality as if the Bambara were living in accordance with these principles.

761 That being the case, life results from the union of the two parts of the body, while death is a result of their separation.
772 Whence come these two elements and who it is that decides upon their union? No answer is possible. The Bambara say, merely, that certain persons are reincarnations. Precautions
● [844] taken during pregnancy and delivery show that childbirth is one of those mysteries against which taboos must be observed as a protection. The frequent and readily believed stories about
[845] women giving birth to monsters -- usually animals -- bear witness to the affinities which, in the minds of the Bambara, exist between all creatures. But nothing specific is said about what precedes and determines the birth of a child.

This is a secret to which the Bambara are, of course,
562 not indifferent. It is evidenced in the fact that women, through
778 whom man comes into the world, are held to be doubtful creatures, at the very least, partly because of menstruation, which makes a woman impure, and partly because of the mysterious travail she endures during the delivery of a child (1).

[774] 1. Women are also susceptible of being possessed continuously by a spirit (see the story of the Déni-bo Ba, p. 123). That is why, when a woman is several times widowed, she is suspected of being possessed by a jealous spirit who kills off her husbands. She is often even thought to be herself a sorceress.

843 A Bambara has no very exact idea of the duration of pregnancy. His deductions, based on appearances alone, lead him to believe that a child born completely formed must have been in the mother's womb longer than one less well-formed. [845] Besides, it is believed that conception may be due to some spirit who had relations with the woman (1). Children born with some strange or abnormal characteristics are thought to be the result of such affairs, and the fact that some women give birth only to stillborn infants is attributed to the same cause.

The pregnant woman is advised to go about her domestic chores up to the very moment of [210] her confinement and, in particular, to continue to grind grain, no doubt to facilitate labor, especially for those who are mothers for the first time.

● 844 When the labor pains begin, the woman retires to her hut, accompanied by matrons famed for their experience in these matters. Men, including the husband, may not come near the patient.

845 If there is a breach presentation or any other complication, the women do what they can, based on their personal experience, the inspiration of the moment, or the current superstitions. As a last resort they call in the magician or the marabout, which amounts to the same thing. Neither one is allowed to see the patient, but must work from the outside, using magic passes, incantations, or prayers and prescribing suitable remedies.

844 To deliver the baby, the mother ordinarily squats with her hands behind her head or kneels with her hands against the wall. The eldest or most skillful of the attending matrons ties the umbilical cord and then cuts it. This operation is often badly done and causes the umbilical hernia with which so many natives are afflicted and which is regarded, indeed, as a deformation in

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1. See above, in the chronicle of Kaarta, the tale about Deni-ba Bo, who had relations with a mabo woman who claimed a connection with a spirit in the form of a horse.

● 844 good taste. The placenta is buried outdoors near the hut or sometimes in the floor of the hut itself. The mother is washed and often given an infusion to drink which is alleged to stop bleeding.

The baby is washed several times and then anointed with vegetable fat (1) (se tlu) or butter made from cow's milk. Its head is massaged to give it a nice shape, and then the baby is wrapped in a white cloth.

The child is usually not fed for the first 24 hours, although it is sometimes given a few drops of goat's milk, a beverage with mystical qualities. It is then given the breast.

851 At the earliest possible moment the father must be informed of the birth and sex of the child. Indeed, he is brought in by the woman who cut the cord, and the mother shows him the baby, pointing out any body characteristic which seems to her a manifest sign that the child is a reincarnation [211] of a deceased member of the family or other evidence that there has been some influence from the invisible world.

[603] The same woman informs the local authorities (dugu-tigi, nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc.) and the people in the vicinity; the news spreads rapidly.

846 The mother resumes her normal activities as soon as possible and is often on her feet within 24 hours. In any event, she never remains in bed for more than a week, unless it is absolutely impossible for her to get up. For seven or eight days, however, she remains in seclusion. Furthermore, particularly in Kaarta, her food is prepared exclusively by girl friends of her choice.

[751] The detachment of the umbilical cord marks the end of this period of seclusion. In Kaarta the cord is preserved and placed in a small bag which is tied around the baby's neck; later on it will be made into a precious talisman. It is only after the detachment of the cord that the child is considered to be definitely

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1. Known to Europeans as karite, originally a Soninké word.

844 Before delivery of her child, a woman is advised to pound grain.
When the labor pains come, the woman retires to her hut with several
matrons (men are not allowed access). If the child is poorly presented,
the priest is called. He performs outside the hut, simulating the delivery
and chanting the formulas that ease labor. To deliver the
infant, the woman kneels with her hands thrown behind her, while
the midwife supports the small of her back. At birth the infant's
shoulders must touch the ground; this is the moment when he receives
his spiritual principles. The infant is washed several times and
smeared with karite butter.

846 The mother must not go out during the first eight days after the
853 birth; she must devote herself entirely to the new-born. She massages
854 his head daily in order to give it a more rounded form, and she
pinches his nose. She nurses the infant for the first two years, then
the weaned child passes directly to the communal calabash. Until
the child can walk, the mother carries it astraddle on her back with
the aid of a loincloth knotted at her chest. In this manner the infant
accompanies the mother everywhere, to work as well as to the dance.
868 It is during these intimate contacts that the mother teaches her child
to talk. Later, the little girls stay with their mothers who teach them
all the domestic arts, while the boys are educated in outside work.
[867] During their childhook they are taught the usages and rules of deportment:
a woman knows she must never shake the hand of a man to
201 greet him, and, if he extends his hand, she flings up her arm "as a
576 sign of not being interested." A man will salute his superior by extending
his hand palm upwards, and the superior will put his over it;
inversely, when a man greets an inferior he extends his hand with the
palm down, while for an equal his hand will be perpendicular to the
ground. If a man must ask someone's pardon, he puts his hands behind
his back to simulate the tail of an animal (for he has acted like
an animal). Crossing the hands in front of or upon the head is a sign
of sadness. To mark his submission to a king, a man puts his right
elbow to the ground. To pray to God, the two hands are extended
with the palms turned [89] outward. A woman learns that it is impudent
576 to question her husband during the day, and when she speaks
593 of him, she says koke, that is, big brother, for she cannot pronounce
833 his name or in any way recall the bonds which exist between them.
It is only during the two consecutive nights that she couples with him

843 291 One last discreet word about the pregnant women: Their loincloths, the cloth rags with which they gird their hips, are held in place by means of a cord, a common string knotted below the navel, a very unsightly thing, or sometimes by means of a colored cloth, a red handkerchief, for example, folded in a triangle.

842 789 A male child, is more highly valued than a girl, and to obtain this blessing the Bambara consult sorcerers and diviners and sacrifice to the *boli* fetishes. The women have great confidence in amulets, and they wear hung at the waist many dirty bags which form an ugly roll under the *tafé*, or loincloth (the knotted cord, *tafo*, is worn around the hips). Some wear their "boy bringer" where it can be seen; it is a square leather bag three fingers wide which contains medicine: bits of bark and wood, and sometimes a goat's horn which the woman slips between her thighs (1). /168/

1. This horn is also often worn in order that the child may have a perfect body, or so as not to have a premature delivery. Nicolay says that these talismans or magic objects, which are capable of changing the course of events and even of nature, are made and sold by sorcerers. /Fernand Nicolay, *Curiosités des lois et coutumes. Histoire des croyances, superstitions, moeurs, usages et coutumes (selon le plan du Décalogue)* /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. A History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Manners, Usages and Customs (according to the Outline of the Decalogue), Paris: V. Retaux, 1901./

844 Birth of a child. -- In Bambara country the "demon" usually takes part in the joys and sorrows of the family. However, I have

not discovered the slightest satanic rite in connection with the birth of a child; not a *boli* is brought out of its dirty hole.

The Bambara woman gives birth to her child kneeling on a mat with her hands behind her head or propped against the wall. The oldest woman present ties the umbilical cord and cuts it with a dull razor. The infant is washed and washed again, then liberally greased with karité butter (*Bassia parkii*) and, if possible, with butter. The section at the navel is seldom successful, and a large proportion of the Negroes suffer from birth from umbilical hernias. The child's head is also rubbed, and it is wrapped in a white cloth. This massage, called *kounkolo d'la* (1), is performed with the palm of the hand and ends with a gentle blow of the thumb on the nose to turn it up a little.

When the delivery is over, the hut is tidied, and the woman who tied the cord goes out on the doorstep and calls the father, who is sitting in the court or in an entry hut with two or three close friends: "*K'i ka na san*, you can come now" (2). He comes in, and the wife, who is sitting on her bed, shows him the newborn child and tells him its sex. Since her chief responsibility is to watch over this little one, to feed it, and preserve its life, she hastens to cover it so as not to be blamed some day for having been careless. One glance was enough for her to note the defects of this frail body. "*Manoum*, is it possible! Look," she says to her husband, "look at this leg, this arm, this back, this chest. Can he live with such an infirmity?" She enumerates all the physical defects, and if she sees a pimple, a beauty spot, or a slight blueness, it must be noted, for might it not be the mark of an elder, a deceased member of the family?

1. *Kounkolo*, "head"; *d'la*, "to arrange."

2. If the father is away, the person who watches over the hut in his absence, a relative or close friend, is called.

844 851 In the end comes a word of encouragement from the midwives and the father: "A gnéna, that is good." The woman who tied /sic/ the umbilical cord runs to tell the head of the village, the dougoutigi, or /169/ gnéna-n-sonnaba, and the sotigi (if the civil and religious powers do not rest in one and the same head), and the members of his council, the gouatigi (or heads of families), that the village has one more inhabitant. To each and every one she tells the news of the newborn in a flood of words, she declares her fears or her hopes, and everyone greets her, thanks her, and makes her one of those wishes that go straight to the heart. She deserves these praises and can desire them, for she has done her duty. Besides, these are her only fees. A Bambara midwife does not get paid; she receives a present or is given a tip, so let us leave her her glory and not call her mercenary.

The child receives a name; his head is shaved. -- Two or 846 three days after her delivery before she has recovered, a Bambara woman begins to tend to her household duties. But she does not leave her hut at all; she sits on a mat, spins cotton, and smiles at her child or fondles it in her arms. And why does she not get a breath of air at least in her court? Could it be false modesty on her part? Not at all; she is proud to be a mother, but can she leave her darling for even a moment? It has no swaddling clothes or cradle; it can only cry, demand the breast, struggle and get into a position that is harmful to his frail body, and to go outdoors and visit the men friends who seem to ignore her since she became a mother (1), she would have to leave it there alone, all by itself. Until the [854] infant's navel dries, she cannot put the infant astride on her back, which is the only way she knows to carry him, and if she were to go out without her child, her milk would dry up and become full of substances harmful to the nursing infant.

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1. Men do not enter the hut of a woman in confinement until after the tonsure and naming of the infant. The husband himself does not go in except when necessary.

602 183 that is, sixteen. This fact qualifies him, by his gesture of purification and through his essential role as provider of sustenance, to restore the seeds that had left the guilty man's collarbone. If the offense is slight, the offender gives him millet, money, or an object. The wounded animal's *nyama* settles on the object, and the *senãnku* who receives it rids him of it without being affected himself. If the offense is more serious, the two allies go off together to a road intersection, *dangu*; then the *senãnku* takes a straw torch in the shape of a cross and circles the guilty man's head with it from left to right. The being who has been offended by the broken taboo can refuse nothing when confronted with this procedure. He removes the *nyama* he had inflicted and the man, powerfully aided by the forces of the purifying agent, recovers those he had lost, as symbolized by the seeds in his collarbone.

This cathartic role of reinstating subsistence forces into the human body is illustrated in daily life by the food prestations to which the partners are held. This is like the secular and materialistic representation of an invisible operation of purification.

The Person: Exceptional Cases

000 . Certain physical peculiarities constitute the manifest evidence of a modification of the elements making up the person. It is appropriate here to examine the cases of individuals who are thus affected.

Twins

845 Twins, *flani* (literally, two little ones), are two new beings given to men by Faro and considered as his offspring alone. Because of this fact, twins inherit neither the *ni* nor the *dya* of a dead person, but they inherit new principles which come to them from the spirit. Moreover, their *dya* never leaves the water for the shadow, but remains in the hands of the spirit throughout their entire life. Because of this they are protected from all danger and from all impurity.

[201] Such a birth is considered a blessing and is granted only to certain privileged people called *kunandi*. It is announced by holding up the right and left forefingers without uttering a word, for its announcement would be so powerful that it would harm the newborn. Their mother wraps a white cotton band called *dyala* about her forehead to indicate the presence of the children's *dya* /86/ in Faro's hands.

845 [431] Everyone visits the parents' home and takes to them what gifts one can give for, to give to twins is equivalent to giving to Faro.

845 553 851 The name-giving ceremony is carried out on the river bank if the village is situated close to the Niger, or otherwise on the edge of a pond. The children are brought by their parents who, between them, represent the number seven. They are bathed, their hair shaved off and thrown into the river, while the father says: "Mother Faro, your sons are born, here is their hair." (1) He then gives the cotton band,

> 1. Ba faro i wolo dew kunsi ye nin ye.

dyala, which was worn by the mother to the officiant who encircles the child's forehead with it while saying: "These two people are older than I am; let the nyama of the name which is to be given them leave with the dyala." (2) Then he gives them a special name. (3)

> 2. Nin ma fla ka koro u ma, u čua dali nyama ka ta fini disa fĕw dyala fę.

> [177] 3. Séni and Sinè for boys; Bintou and Wasa for girls. Among the Islamized Bambara this custom is also respected; the names given are always Alassan and Fouséni. This is most likely a distortion of the Arab names given to twins in Morocco.

845 851 The next day, carrying one of the children and accompanied by a woman in charge of the other, the mother goes begging for millet or cotton in the village. She holds two identical spoon gourds in her hands. The gifts, equal in weight and quality, symbolize the twins; they are placed on the spoons. Then crossing her hands, the woman pours them into the basket in which she carries the gifts (4).

> 4. All the symbolism of gifts made to twins, like that of the double pot (see below), confirms observations made in the Sudan on the relationships between gifts and trade. On this subject, see M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, pp. 234 ff. It is interesting to note here that

● 845 each twin is the dya of the other and that
851 this term means "shadow of the body, "
"spiritual double, " as well as "balance."
To trade is dyago.

845 Three or four days after the name-giving ceremony, depending on
301 their sex, the twins are given bracelets of white metal representing
[531] their dya. Geometrical symbols of the universe, the sky and the earth,
are engraved on each of these (1). The opening of the bracelet represents
that of the incomplete terrestrial world. When the twins die
[766] they will be buried with the bracelets closed over their arms or their
ankles to signify that they have penetrated a complete and closed
world. Formerly the sacrifices to Faro were carried out with ornaments
845 borrowed from a twin. The person making the sacrifice presented
301 them to the /87/ river while saying: "The iron of the twins is witness
782 to the sacrifice offered to Faro." (2) After the ceremony, everyone
gave white kola nuts to the twin; the interested party then went to
the village square and waved in the air his arms bedecked with
ornaments to spread to the four cardinal points Faro's beneficial
nyama acquired in the course of the sacrifice. In certain areas twins
wear a pendant in the shape of double slave fetters, called dyõ neke,
"irons of the captive," or an amulet called sinzin, "support," composed
of a little piece of wood carved in the shape of a double cup
and preferably made by a Bozo. A man who has had twins three times
[778] must acquire a double pot which is always kept full of water and
which becomes the object of an annual sacrifice (3).

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1. This figure is formed by a rectangle divided into two equal superposed squares, including a multiplication sign in the lower square to represent the earth, and an open v in the upper square to represent the sky.

2. Flani neke ye ma šere ye faro sõni la.

3. See p. 124, n. 1.

●845 Up to the time they are twelve, the children bathe themselves preferably in the Niger. They supposedly can walk on water and never run the risk of drowning.

The twins do not become separated from each other any more than the dya is separated from the living being to which it is attached. They wear the same clothes and eat the same food simultaneously. Formerly male twins married the same woman. If one of them dies
845 at an early age, the blacksmith carves a small wooden doll called
778 flanitokele, which takes the name of the deceased and which the mother puts on the mat next to the living child. The latter takes this doll with him at the time of his circumcision and keeps it during the period of his seclusion in order to bring it back to the parental home whence it is never removed. When he marries, he sticks the doll into the earth along with another piece of wood symbolizing the wife of the deceased. Since twins are in a sense a living replica of Faro, none can bother them without showing disrespect to him. On the other hand, they are the object of attention and precaution on the part of their family as well as their neighbors. Their presence is always beneficial. Considered invulnerable, twins used to march ahead of
[728] troups in times of war and would serve as inviolable intermediaries between the warring parties during truce.

The Hermaphrodite

826 The hermaphrodite, being both male and female, is to all extent and purpose his own twin. Consequently, he has no dya (1).

[825 304] 1. The hyena is considered a hermaphrodite; it can engender or conceive, depending on its size and strength; "the stronger impregnating the weaker." A tattooing system is based upon this belief.

/88/ The Albino

[143] Albinos of light or reddish skin and red hair are called gombele or yepege, this latter term being reserved for those who show the most accentuated characteristics.

826 833 The albino is supposedly born of sexual relations which took place in the middle of the day when the sun is in the koblenkaba, sky of

769 At an annual ceremony presided over by the Komo, the members assemble in honor of thedead. It is called *šu* *sɔ* *sibiri*, "Saturday of the sacrifice to the dead" and is celebrated on a Saturday at the time when the ears are being formed in the millet fields.

The *kotigi* removes the ancestral tools from their shelter and carries them to the graves. Then the chief of the Komo and his assistants, accompanied by the maskers, carry the altars to the cemetery while singing. Each grave is put for a moment into contact with the *nimara* *boli* and the *nyama* *boli*; the exuviae of the souls of the dead each visit the bodies they once animated. To the rhythm *šu* *bara*, "rhythm of the dead," played on the drums, the maskers dance and sing around the graves while mock labor is carried out with each of the ancestral tools. During the whole ceremony the kinsmen wail, the men near the graves and the women in the house. A victim is sacrificed, cut up, and cooked in new pots which are broken after they have been used in order to avoid the contagion of the *nyama* of the dead. The dances of the maskers are performed during the two days that follow. In some villages the ceremony is repeated after the harvest has been threshed.

Exceptional Cases

The Stillborn

845 783 It is said of a stillborn child that he has lost both his soul and his double, that is to say, his complete being. The parents who are responsible to Faro for this disaster are obliged to find and recapture the spiritual elements of their child, the woman the soul, and the man the double, in the course of long and sometimes painful rituals.

As soon as the woman is able to go out after the birth, both parents are led, shaved and naked, before the members of the family assembled in the courtyard. As testimony /197/ of the deceased to Faro, their hair, mixed with that of the child, is buried in the wall of their home. [824] Then a tomato, representing the foetus, is introduced into a large incision made in the woman's thigh. The man crouches and drinks the juice which drips from the fruit and which symbolizes the double. Each one bows before the elders of the family, holding their hands behind their backs, to apologize for the fault committed, sayiing: "Here is my humiliated (sex) behind me" (1).

● 845
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1. *A ngari ko le ye ngo* (*ngari* is a word of the archaic language which expresses submission.)

Each person responds by striking their genital organs with the little finger: "It is well humiliated" (2).

[826]

2. *A ngari ko karu.* The little finger is the symbol of the whole person; to strike with it is to acquiesce with all one's being.

They are led to the door of their home where the village elders of both sexes are gathered; they repeat their apologies to which the same response is given, accompanied by the same gesture of acquiescence.

[304] The chief of the Komo and three elders of his age grade who have never broken any taboos led them to the river bank where they undergo a new circumcision for the man and a new excision for the woman; the blood which is a gift to Faro must fall into the water. This operation is called "purification of the foreskin" (*yiriyiri tige*) and the pain suffered has an expiatory value.

The sixth day after the operation the members, gathered on the village square (3), dance and sing to the rhythm of the Komo, which

3. This ceremony, called *daworo* is comparable to that celebrated on the sixth day after circumcision.

is furiously beaten out, in the following words:

"Circumcised children, it is not good to break the taboo of the anus. I am telling you, Soma and members of the society, do not count their faults. Faro "(*ter*) (4).

4. (*I ye ye*) *boloko dew tne tyẽ mañi boda la; ṇye fo aw ye somaw moko ka na jigi u la; faro* (ter). That is to say, "forgive them." The word anus here replaces the word genitals which, according to propriety, is not spoken.

[195]

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The parents are led to the square and turn, open-mouthed, around the circle of dancers, seeking to recapture the soul and the double of their child who is present during the ceremony, attracted by the rhythm and visible to them alone. They turn and dance until they fall into a sort of trance called "fainting of the Komo" during which the soul and the double enter them. If the entrance occurs through the mouth, they cease their cries; if it is through the nose, they appear to smother; if by the eyes, their tears run.

/198/ The rhythm then becomes progressively fainter. Soon it is only a murmur. In order not to interrupt the action, in order that the double and the soul may penetrate gently the stretched out bodies, the murmur decreases further to die out gradually. The drummers' sticks alone beat the air in silence, performing the rhythm called "the drum of the soul" (ni dunu foli). With mouths shut so as not to frighten the invisible, the participants softly drone out a song, ni bonye, which calms the soul and incites it to penetrate the two suffering parents. The latter, accompanied by the musicians, are led back home. They are beaten with sticks so that the spiritual principles may not leave them while that which has just been accomplished is proclaimed in a loud voice as well as the shame and suffering voluntarily submitted to. They are then fanned for the "repose of the child's soul."

The following day, the chief of the Komo and his age grade go to the cemetery to remove the bones of the stillborn child. They place them on the ground, examine them in the open, and dance around them to the rhythm of "the drum of the bones" (kolo dunu) while singing:

"White bones, you, dead ones! I have come to see you" (1). Then

1. Kolo dyew aw šu ne nǰa na bo ye.

the grave is once more closed over them.

The man and the woman are then called to the field of the dead (šu foro) to swear an oath. While their mouths are full of rain water or water from the Niger, a participant in the ceremony leans over and, "to heat the liquid with the strength of words," recites the following prayer under their chins:

"Kill me if I do it twice: good or bad, chance comes from several places. Faro" (ter) (2).

•845
783 2. Ni nya ke šyẽ fla i ka n fa; ka kadi ka kago, gariseke bo fã ka čã; faro (ter).

The water swallowed after these words constitutes a solemn promise to Faro not to repeat the fault.

Next, they are carried home, the man by two members of the society and the woman by three of her companions, so that their toes, [824] the temporary lodging places of the spiritual principles which have returned to them, may not touch the impure earth. They remain three and four days, respectively, on their mats without making a movement. On the seventeenth day, with a thousand precautions, they may resume a more normal life, but they will be entirely free only when a birth occurring in the family will eliminate from their bodies the soul and the double of the dead child by transferring these to the newborn.

/199/ Death of an Uncircumcised Boy

763 When an uncircumcised boy is seriously ill the chief of the *ndomo* (1) has a rooster sacrificed in order to find out if recovery is possible.

1. See p. 222.

In the case of a negative response the children, taking turns night and day, go into the bush and sound off the ritual objects under the leadership of an initiate. In this way the soul of the dying boy is certain to be captured at the moment of death and channeled by the sound wave and led into the ritual objects themselves. Two initiates are posted near the home of the sick and, as soon as they learn of his death, they go to warn the children in the bush to make them stop playing. The chief sits down facing the west and recites a prayer; then he sacrifices the victims offered by the family.

766 [304] Before the corpse is buried, it is circumcised, and the *wanzo* goes to settle in the mask of the *ndomo*. During the night following the burial the members go to the fresh grave and sound the ritual instruments which contain the soul. Each year they repeat this action above the children's graves following the threshing of the harvest to "awaken the dead and to tell them that their souls are not lost."

[103] History of the Empire of Kaarta

The Descendants of Nya Ngolo

*173 Sounsan (1). When Sounsan and his people had crossed

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[845]
1. As we shall see, the given name marks some event connected with the person's birth. It is common practice, when the delivery is difficult, to hang a rabbit's foot at the mother's side, hence the name Sounsan ("rabbit" in Bambara). The name Péné, used elsewhere, has the same etymology.

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Sounsan is said to have practiced the saddle-maker's trade at Kounando. It is told how one day he went with a kulé (a native carpenter) into the country to get some wood needed for a saddle. At one point the two became separated. The kulé found some honey and ate it, only to be taken sick. He threw up the honey on some stones and then went away. Soon after, Sounsan passed the spot and, seeing the honey, picked it up and ate it. When, on his way back, he learned how the honey happened to be there, he was so disgusted and cursed the kulé so roundly that, since that time, none of his people can touch a kulé with impunity. All members of that caste are thus tne (taboo) for that branch of the Kouloubali.

*173 the Niger with the help of the poyon', they proceeded in the direction of Lamballaré (2). There, at the village of Darigo, Sounsan

[103] 2. In the Soninké language, this is the name of the region watered by a swamp

771 In any case, these are questions which he does not ask or which, at least, he has not considered in any way that would cause him to make logical, even if fragmentary, syntheses. His words and his acts are indications and sometimes even guide-posts for us, but how uncertain and misleading they can be! And, in the observation of current facts, how many at least seeming contradictions there are! However, in the main, the analysis given in the paragraphs above represents the basis of Bambara dogma, since everything happens in reality as if the Bambara were living in accordance with these principles.

761 That being the case, life results from the union of the two parts of the body, while death is a result of their separation. 772 Whence come these two elements and who it is that decides upon their union? No answer is possible. The Bambara say, merely, that certain persons are reincarnations. [844] Precautions taken during pregnancy and delivery show that childbirth is one of those mysteries against which taboos must be observed as a protection. [845] The frequent and readily believed stories about women giving birth to monsters -- usually animals -- bear witness to the affinities which, in the minds of the Bambara, exist between all creatures. But nothing specific is said about what precedes and determines the birth of a child.

562 778 This is a secret to which the Bambara are, of course, not indifferent. It is evidenced in the fact that women, through whom man comes into the world, are held to be doubtful creatures, at the very least, partly because of menstruation, which makes a woman impure, and partly because of the mysterious travail she endures during the delivery of a child (1).

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[774] 1. Women are also susceptible of being possessed continuously by a spirit (see the story of the Déni-bo Ba, p. 123). That is why, when a woman is several times widowed, she is suspected of being possessed by a jealous spirit who kills off her husbands. She is often even thought to be herself a sorceress.

843 A Bambara has no very exact idea of the duration of pregnancy. His deductions, based on appearances alone, lead him to believe that a child born completely formed must have been in the mother's womb longer than one less well-formed.
● [845] Besides, it is believed that conception may be due to some spirit who had relations with the woman (1). Children born with some strange or abnormal characteristics are thought to be the result of such affairs, and the fact that some women give birth only to stillborn infants is attributed to the same cause.

The pregnant woman is advised to go about her domestic chores up to the very moment of [210] her confinement and, in particular, to continue to grind grain, no doubt to facilitate labor, especially for those who are mothers for the first time.

844 When the labor pains begin, the woman retires to her hut, accompanied by matrons famed for their experience in these matters. Men, including the husband, may not come near the patient.

845 If there is a breach presentation or any other complication, the women do what they can, based on their personal experience, the inspiration of the moment, or the current superstitions. As a last resort they call in the magician or the marabout, which amounts to the same thing. Neither one is allowed to see the patient, but must work from the outside, using magic passes, incantations, or prayers and prescribing suitable remedies.

844 To deliver the baby, the mother ordinarily squats with her hands behind her head or kneels with her hands against the wall. The eldest or most skillful of the attending matrons ties the umbilical cord and then cuts it. This operation is often badly done and causes the umbilical hernia with which so many natives are afflicted and which is regarded, indeed, as a deformation in

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1. See above, in the chronicle of Kaarta, the tale about Deni-ba Bo, who had relations with a mabo woman who claimed a connection with a spirit in the form of a horse.

551 more often, called sagi, "the one who has come back." A woman who was barren for a long time gives her child the name of the agent to whom she attributes the cessation of her sterility: Nyana-m-ba, "the great nyana"; Mori-ba, "the great marabout," etc. She does the same thing if she has triumphed over some evil spirit through the aid of some such intermediary, but in that case it is usual to abandon the child at birth; a substitute mother will rescue it. This is a "castoff" child (fili), and from this comes his name, Fili. Such a child may be named for the place where it was abandoned, Sunkun', "refuse heap," for instance, or for his rescuer, Numuke, "blacksmith," or Dyelike, "griot." A child who survives after a series of stillbirths is regarded as the incarnation of an evil spirit finally defeated, and the spirit in question is, so to speak, stigmatized by having the child called Malo-bali, "shameless," or Tuantan', "anonymous." The tua is often merely the name of the month, day, or season of birth: Tenen' "Monday"; Sunkalo, "month of Ramadan"; Sama, "winter season." Twins are both called Fune, literally,
● [845] "alike," but they are sometimes purposely differentiated by calling one of them Sio and the other Sie-koro (1); if the twins are girls, they are called Wassa and Bafune (1) [Ed., footnote above]. In the Bani area, the next child born after twins is called Konimba (1) [Ed., footnote above]. A child born when it had appeared that the mother would have no more children is called Kosa (1) [Ed., foot note above], literally, "business completed." There are families [214] who always use the same name for the eldest sons. Among the Massa-si at one period this name was Bo (1) from which come: Musu-kura Bo; Sira Bo; etc. (meaning "Bo, whose mother was Musu-kura"; "Bo, whose mother was named Sira"; etc.). In Ségou the Kouloubali likewise adopted

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1. See Humblot.

1. Bo is etymologically the same as Ngolo.

428 3. and 4. as above for the head of the family; 5. oldest full brother; 6. oldest half-brother on father's side; 7. the family; 8. the village; 9. the Fama ... Married women may transmit personal property in the following order: 1. her oldest son; 2. her husband's oldest son by another wife; 3. the husband; 4. the woman's family ...
[587] At the death of her [73] husband, a woman is not required to marry his heir." (1)

1. Ortoli, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bamako) [Bambara Customs (Bamako Circle)].

851 We should explain here the notion of seniority which is not always easy to distinguish in a polygamous society. As a matter of fact, when two wives of the same husband bear children at roughly the same time, an intermediary announces the births to the fa, and the first baby to be announced is considered to be the oldest. It may even happen that the first one to be announced is in fact the last-born; he nevertheless remains the senior. ● [845] In the case of twins, the senior is the one brought forth last, for it is thought that twins are not conceived at the same time, and that the last-born is the one first conceived. [551] Certain special names are used for the oldest children: N'tyi for boys, Nya or Nyélé for girls.

643 At the Fama's death, several lines of succession are involved: that of his own family, that of the family community, and that of the patriarchy.

As far as election to the title of Fama is concerned, we have seen how the new Fama was the senior male of the same generation and same family as the deceased Fama, or the eldest of the following generation. It is noteworthy that in the case of no male heir, the succession passes to the Fama's daughter whose husband governs in her name; but that is an exceptional case.

643 644 When the new Fama is designated by the notables, he occupies the fortified residence of the previous Fama, where the founding ancestor is buried; the women and children of the deceased Fama must leave these premises. While his father lived, the Fama's eldest son led a luxurious and independent life; he often commanded an important dugu, sometimes founded by himself. At his father's death, he is a very important person for the new Fama.

852 with water added (to recall the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni). The patriarch shakes the family pembélé three or four times over the infant's head to give him the nyama of the recently deceased whose ni and dya he has inherited. Then he places the altar (kere la boli ni) on the infant's chest three times, after having recited a prayer. He cuts the throat of a red cock, dips his index finger in the blood, and traces three or four crosses on the newborn's forehead, who be- 553 comes boli din. The name is given the eighth day by the Komo chief [431] under the doubalé, where the old people assemble. The father offers 100 kola nuts, two jars of millet beer, plus a ram whose throat is cut, and money for the griot. Part of the baby's hair is shaved off and kept in [90] a case (sebe); another part of the hair is thrown in the river as a sacrifice to Faro. The eldest of the old men examines the roots of the infant's hair and the conjunction of the eyebrows, thus determining its character (téré). Then he swings the baby seven times in an east-west direction and eight times north-south, giving him the first name of the deceased ancestor and, at the same time, his spiritual principles. The griot recite the father's mottoes, the sénanku come to joke with the baby, and the blacksmith traces the scarifications.

845 Twins. We have seen the belief that in the beginning twins were always born, and Faro subsequently punished man by abolishing double births which he no longer accords except to certain privileged persons. For the Bambara, twins are new beings who inherit neither the ni nor the dya of any ancestor. Special rites are observed at their [201] birth which is announced by showing the raised right and left index fingers, without saying anything, for the proclamation would be so powerful that it would be harmful to the newborn twins (see G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion]. 553 The rite of name-giving is carried out on the bank of the river. The following day, accompanied by another woman, the mother goes in search of millet and cotton which she gathers in identical calabash ladles. Equal gifts are put in the ladles, which the mother presents [301] in crossed hands. Later, the twins are fitted with metal bracelets representing their dya, and, in certain regions, with a pendant in the form of double slave irons. The twins always stay together; they 856 wear identical clothes. If one dies in early infancy, the mother places on the mat beside the surviving infant a small doll made by

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the blacksmith. The doll is given the name of the dead infant, the
[304 child^ carries it with him to the circumcision, and, when he marries,
585] he buries the doll with a piece of wood representing the wife of the deceased.

845 Twins are replicas of Faro, their presence is beneficial, and they are considered invulnerable.

826 The albino is supposed to be the issue of sexual relations held
833 in sunlight, a breach of taboo. He, too, is a new being. His wanzo
904 is so active that the circumciser must take great precautions before operating on it.

826 He is considered to be endowed with special powers which
782 make him a choice victim for the sacrifices offered to the spirit of the water.

553 To the children of blacksmiths, the name is given near the paternal forge in the presence of all the artisans. An old man pre-
326 pares seven little sticks, giving each the name of an ancestor. Three of these are drawn at random from the group, and the third gives the name of the baby. The head of the baby is rubbed with the axe Kongobwona, and his shaved hair is soaked in sacrificial blood.

553 In the Bamako region two chickens or a sheep are sacrificed to celebrate the name-giving. The distribution of the meat is made
782 according to established custom. If it is a chicken, the patriarch receives the head and the gizzard, while the wing and white meat go to the old woman who washed the baby during the first eight days. If it is a sheep, the patriarch receives [91] the ribs (because they are a bulwark, and the patriarch is the defender of the village) and the heart; the blacksmith receives the shoulder; the infant's family gets the head (so that the infant will go ahead), the back (symbol of prosperity), and the limbs (supports one wishes the new-born to have); the blood which runs on the ground is destined for the infant's protective ancestors. Then the family divides the raw meat with the heads of family, and the old woman thus receives her part indirectly.

c. Circumcision

881 A male infant is born, but he still keeps (because of the
304 primordial twinship) the prepuce as the physical support of the female
831 sex. He will only be freed of this by circumcision. It is this operation that definitively determines his sexual qualification and renders him fit to contract marriage.

^[i.e., the surviving child of twins. -Analyst]

9. The Twins' Genie

845 776 Having twins is far from an unmixed blessing for Bambara women. Those whom I have seen afflicted with this good fortune and honor (for it is one, since it is regarded as /97/ a blessing from the Supreme Being, the Creator) have seemed to me greatly inconvenienced by their two babies. The healthier, stronger and more robust of the two relaxes pleasantly on the mother's back, while the one who needs a little care always gets his belly squashed on one shoulder or the other.

845 776 778 [1435] The genie of twins lives in a kind of hourglass made of two plates of braided grass; a bit of iron or wood onto which a piece of the umbilical cord has been rolled is hung from the centers. This fetish is called a *sinsin* and costs the father between 1 *ba* and 1 *ba* 200 cowrie shells (between 800 and 1200 cowrie shells, or 20 to 25 sous), not including, of course, the hens and kola nuts given to the *sinsin tigi* (1), more commonly called *sinsin d'la tigi* (2). To make this /98/ horror, which is hung in the entrance hut within an inverted gourd (1), one must own a father *sinsin* fetish and know the rites and formulas.

1. *Sinsin*, the fetish bearing this name; *tigi*, "master," "owner."

2. *Sinsin*, the fetish; *d'la*, "maker"; *tigi*, "master," "He who manufactures the *sinsin*."

1. This gourd protects the *sinsin* from the teeth of rodents.

A sacrifice to the *sinsin* is performed every year by the head of the family, who is himself its priest; the sacrifice continues to be made even in case of the death of the twins, because it is, the

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776 peculiarity of this fetish that it continues to live in its hourglass as
778 long as a particle of this object remains.

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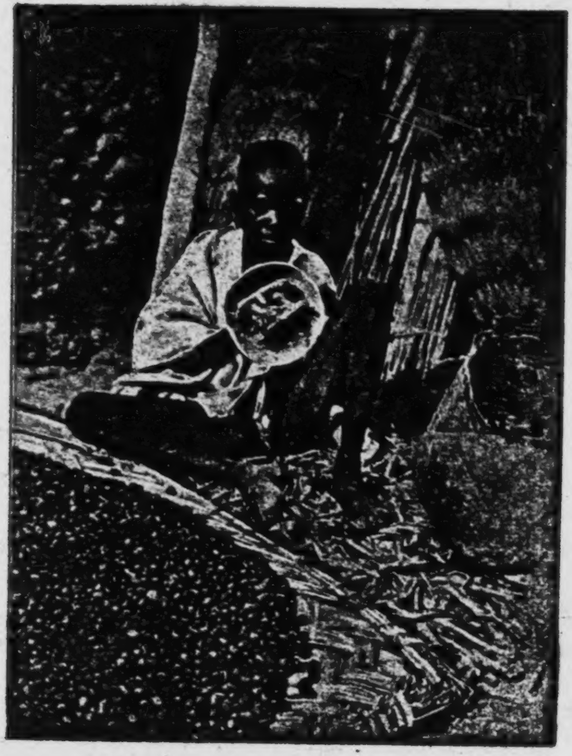

Young Bambara holding the sinsin, the fetish of twins

845 This fetish protects the mother of the twins, and unites the latter
778 in such close affection that one never receives a gift without sharing
431 it with the other. I would even go so far as to say that it is in good
taste never to offer anything to one without offering as much to the
other, and when they are given something, the first to be favored is
the last born, who is considered by everyone as the older.

845 778 431 If one of the twins dies early in life, as usually happens, the survivor receives a statuette which he keeps all his life with jealous care and to which he gives the name of the deceased. He dresses it to the best of his ability, often covers it with glass trinkets, such as bangles, beads, bits of amber, rings, etc., and well-bred people never give him a gift without adding at least 5 cowrie shells for the statuette.

845 778 825 The sinsin also grants twins a curious privilege. A scorpion not only cannot bite them, it is even at their service, and on their order will bite a fellow who has displeased them.

845 778

A twins' doll.

845 551 It is easy to recognize twins (flani in Bambara) as they have special names, the commonest being Sinna, Mafénê, Gno, and Ouassa. /99/

10. The Genie Protector of Villages

776 621 The genie protector of a village lives on a knoll or a rock; almost always, if not invariably, its home is a baobab or false cedar near the walls, in a little grove intersected by neat paths, well kept and often raked.

776 this sacrifice at length, for in the preceding chapter I stated the
796 function of the fetish; it may be imagined that the ladies and maidens
831 ask for whatever makes a woman strong and beautiful. Moreover,
the indecent dances to which they abandon themselves under the
sacred tree sufficiently reveal their inner thoughts. They have only
one -- to show their breasts to the fetish and scratch their navels on
its bark; in some villages custom demands this, and it is required of
all. Young girls do it to develop their breasts, married women to
become fertile, and all of them to be protected from the unpleasant
accidents peculiar to their sex.

796 There is no festival without a feast and none without drinking,
and the women offer the whole village sorghum gruel and beer for
a drinking bout. They also offer kola nuts to all the elders and heads
of families, and they know better than to withhold this treat from
fathers, husbands, grown sons, older brothers, and those they love.

The *Sinsin*, the Special Twin's Fetish

782 The sacrifice to a *sinsin* is made on the umbilical cord which
845 is hung in the center of plates of woven grass that constitute the
778 fetish. Each plate belongs to one of the twins and even bears his
852 name. The sacrifices in honor of this fetish are always double; for
each child separately, the family offers /millet/ flour /115/ mixed
with water, millet beer, a kola nut, and a hen.

This is strictly a family fetish; the father of the family is its
845 priest, and only the children and their parents are present at the
778 sacrifices. Everything is done in a quiet and happy intimacy, and
852 although there may be a few drunkards here and there, there is
never an orgy. Sacrifices to a *sinsin* are made very frequently to
bring its blessing to the mother and children; they are also performed
on all occasions of the slightest importance in the lives of the twins:
when their hair is cut eight days after birth, at the tattooing festival,
at circumcision, at marriage, etc. Once a year a more formal
sacrifice is made; the women cook *d'lo*, the millet beer, and the

845 778 852 old men and important people of the village, as well as friends, are invited to squat before the jugs and partake of the liquid refreshment.

The *Dasiri* Fetish, Protector of Villages

776 621 The *dasiri* is the chief of all the *gnena*, or *djine*. In order that its worship may be better understood and that the reader may have an idea of the power of its priest, I must go into a few details which cannot help but throw some light on Bambara organization. Let us, for example, take a village that is being founded: we are present at the election of the priest of the *dasiri*, the *gnéna-n-sonnaba*; at the choice of the fetish tree and of the sacred animal, the genie's mount; at the enthroning of the sacrificer; and finally at the sacrifices.

Election of the priest

776 621 793 482 The population has grown, the surrounding land is exhausted, and a group of families must move out. The old men who are still lively and the youths full of strength and life take up their arms and fasten a dirty goatskin, a *foroko* of provisions, on their shoulders and scatter in the bush in search of less ungrateful soil. When they have found it they go back to their homes, and the council of family heads meets to choose a leader. This leader is really a priest, for his chief function is to sacrifice in a public and formal manner to the *blonda ba sou* (1), the shades of the great entry hut /116/, that is, to leaders and priests who, just like him, held the reins of power, and to the *gnéna*, genii, spirits, and fetishes, whence come his names of *gnéna-n-sonna* ("he who sacrifices to the *gnéna* fetishes") and *gnéna-n-sonnaba* ("great sacrificer of the *gnéna* fetishes"). He alone has the authority to sacrifice to all /these spirits/ in the name of all /the people/.

1. *Blon*, "entry hut"; *da*, "door," "doorsill"; *ba*, "great"; *sou*, "corpses," "shades."

764 There is seldom a *djansa* for unmarried persons, and the corpse lying in the grave does not even get branches to protect it from the earth with which it is covered. Not having had children, the young man receives his live hen and the girl her egg.

Burials of Women Who Were Pregnant or Died in Childbirth

766 845 The death of a woman during pregnancy or while giving birth to her child stirs the whole female population. To appease the spirits, drive away the *gnâma,* and protect the village from another misfortune of this kind, all the excised women go to cut branches of karité (*Bassia parkii*) or *dogora*. As soon as the deceased is carried to the grave, they burst out of the village, crying and weeping. Three times they go back toward the village, waving their branches, and call out "*hou*" three times in shouts that disturb and chill you.

[326] At the edge of the grave, or most often in the grave itself, a blacksmith -- the surgeon of the occasion -- removes the child, tells its sex, and lays it near the mother (2). During the operation the

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766 845 847 2. If the deceased has already been delivered, the stillborn child is wrapped in the mother's mat. The operation is performed for one who has not been delivered, less to save the child's life than to spare the deceased the disgrace of the egg. A newborn child deprived of its mother is condemned to death. It is not strangled, of course, but no woman wants to give it her breast, and the little thing dies of hunger. If a woman were to nurse it out of compassion, the spirits and *gnâma* would take revenge by

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causing her own child to die. A mother who has lost her child may adopt an orphan and give it her breast.

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crowd /226/ always withdraws, and the blacksmith remains alone with his assistant. When the work is done, they wash their hands on the grave itself, and the operator makes the customary prayer: "Whether the wind comes from the east or the west, from the north or the south, etc., " (see above, p. 244).

5. Sacrifices to Fetishes on the Occasion of a Death

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Although at the time of death there is no sacrifice to the soul of the deceased nor to the shades of ancestors, blood flows nevertheless. It even flows in torrents for the Bambara are not satisfied with reddening the family boli; they stain with blood all the boli fetishes they believe to be guilty. Nor do initiates of the sects forget their deceased brothers, and for a friend who was initiated the same day as they themselves, they cannot refuse the boli a hen and a kola nut. If the deceased is the master of a fetish, its priest, or an influential person on its staff, all the initiates comply, and the sacrifice becomes general. The initiates do more; in the evening they take the god out of its temple, and all night long they mingle their wild animal shouts with the blasts of sacred horns and trumpets blown by heralds. The latter very often wear hideous horned masks on their heads and are dressed in cloaks of feathers.

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Eighty times out of a hundred, death is attributed to a powerful boli which is taking vengeance, punishing or rewarding, and in the environs of Ségou the Komo, Nia, Kono, Nama, and Douga are the ones who have the most deaths to their credit. When the murdering boli is known, the entire village is notified; the trousers, blouse and bed cover of the deceased, or the tafé (1) if it is a woman, are hung

1. Tafé: a rectangular piece of cloth which women wind around their bodies to cover themselves.

844 273 271 contact with water which symbolizes "the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni in the matter of family names" is a prefiguration of name-giving.

851 As soon as the patriarch hears of the birth, he comes and shakes the family *pembele* over the child's head, three or four times according to the sex, in order to pass on to him the *nyama* and the qualities of the deceased person from whom he has inherited the *ni* and the *dya*. Then, he brings the family altar *kere la boli ni* into the house of the woman who has just given birth and places it before him. Crouching upon the ground, with fingers spread over the object, he pronounces the following prayer: "You, *boli*, make me a chief, so that my family prospers, a child is /178/ born, his soul is entrusted to you; I invoke you, *boli*, night and day" (1).

1. *Boli tigi i ka masaya kanu ñe, de wolo la, a ni kalifa be i la, ngo boli šu ani kle*.

Holding the child on his knees, he places the object on its chest for three consecutive times. Repeating the prayer, he next cuts the throat of a red rooster over the open sac, dips the right index into the blood, and, depending upon whether it is a boy or a girl, makes three or four crosses on the forehead of the newborn who thus becomes the "son of the *boli*," *boli dẽ*.

A white sea shell, *krokrodya* (2), is placed before the newborn and gently moved about to "condense his *dya* within him." Then it is tied to the child's foot for three or four days according to its sex.
846 824 751 At the same time, the mother who is entrusted with the child's *dya* until the name-giving ritual, adorns herself during the eight days following the birth with a collar (*madya*, "*dya* of the person") made from the odoriferous root of the tree bearing the same name. She will wear it until the child takes its first steps so as to protect it and to recall that she herself carried the soul of the newborn.

2. *Cardita vingens*.

553 852 The name is given on the eighth day by the chief of the Komo. Under the *dubale*, a tree which shelters the village meetings, the elders assemble around the Komo altars which have been carried to the spot (3). If it is a first son, the father gives one hundred kola nuts,

844 good taste. The placenta is buried outdoors near the hut or sometimes in the floor of the hut itself. The mother is washed and often given an infusion to drink which is alleged to stop bleeding.

The baby is washed several times and then anointed with vegetable fat (1) (se tlu) or butter made from cow's milk. Its head is massaged to give it a nice shape, and then the baby is wrapped in a white cloth.

The child is usually not fed for the first 24 hours, although it is sometimes given a few drops of goat's milk, a beverage with mystical qualities. It is then given the breast.

851 At the earliest possible moment the father must be informed of the birth and sex of the child. Indeed, he is brought in by the woman who cut the cord, and the mother shows him the baby, pointing out any body characteristic which seems to her a manifest sign that the child is a reincarnation [211] of a deceased member of the family or other evidence that there has been some influence from the invisible world.

[203] The same woman informs the local authorities (dugu-tigi, nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc.) and the people in the vicinity; the news spreads rapidly.

846 The mother resumes her normal activities as soon as possible and is often on her feet within 24 hours. In any event, she never remains in bed for more than a week, unless it is absolutely impossible for her to get up. For seven or eight days, however, she remains in seclusion. Furthermore, particularly in Kaarta, her food is prepared exclusively by girl friends of her choice.

[751] The detachment of the umbilical cord marks the end of this period of seclusion. In Kaarta the cord is preserved and placed in a small bag which is tied around the baby's neck; later on it will be made into a precious talisman. It is only after the detachment of the cord that the child is considered to be definitely

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1. Known to Europeans as karite, originally a Soninké word.

● 846 born. In this we see another of the interim periods which accompany any change of status (death, marriage, circumcision, etc.). The real entry of the child into social life is marked by giving it a name.

Giving the name. Naming the child is the prerogative 553 of the father, and he must take into consideration the various 851 circumstances or incidents which marked the birth; through this act the child is received into the family.

At Ségou, family heads, relatives, neighbors, and friends are all invited to this ceremony, especially the dugu-tigi or, more exactly, the nyana-n-son-na-ba. In order of rank and seniority they arrive on the day set and squat in front of the entry to the courtyard which gives access to the mother's hut. The religious leader (nyana-n-son-na-ba) enters the mother's hut and shaves the head of the child whom the mother holds on her knees.

While this is going on, the women, relatives, neighbors, and friends approach in single file, singing, clapping their hands, and at intervals shouting: "Kuyo! Kuyo!" They give millet and cotton to the mother.

After shaving the baby's head, the leader puts his hands on the child, strokes its back and chest, and spits in its face to ward off evil spirits. Then he emerges and sits outside among his people. [212] The father then gives him eleven kola nuts, and the family heads in turn give him 40 to 50 cowries; all this is placed on a woven tray.

At this point, the leader asks the father what name he has selected for the child. Before answering, the father requests that the kola nuts and cowries be divided, they constitute the tua sara "price of the name." Two kola nuts and half of the cowries are given to the mother; the rest is divided among the family heads present. These are the ni wuru, "kola of life," and the tua kolo, "cowrie of the naming." Then the father makes known the name and the reasons for his choice. What are these reasons? It may be some obvious sign that the child is a reincarnation of someone deceased, some incident marking the child's birth, etc. Everyone congratulates the father on the happy event and expresses good wishes for the baby and blessings on the parents.

551 the tua Ngolo, from which come Nyana Ngolo, Barama Ngolo, Solo-Ngolo, etc. In the family of the Bambara chiefs of Femay (2) (a canton in the circle of Djeimé), the eldest son was given the name of the paternal grandfather; the second son was called Moussa; the third, Abdoullah; the fourth, Ngizi; and the fifth, Souleyman. The girls were called, in order of age: first, Fatouma; second, Awa; third, Nyele-ba or Nye-ba; fourth, Dyomene; fifth, Kounadi; and the sixth, Aminata (2) [Ed., footnote 2 above].

There are other names very commonly used for the eldest child: Ntyi and its endless variants for boys; Nya or Nyele for eldest daughters. The last two are so common in the Ségou region that the Soninké derisively designate the Bambara of that area with the expression, Nya ni Nyele-u, "the people of Nya and [606] Nyele." Since husband and wife are forbidden by custom to pronounce the names of their respective parents-in-law, complications arise when, as often happens, a child is named for them. Respect for the interdict is preserved by using a paronym: for a boy, Tye-koro, "the old man"; for a girl, Moso-koro, "the old woman." To satisfy this same interdict, there are true synonyms locally: thus, for Mussa the name Dyigi is used; for Mori-ba, Bo-dyan. Individuals are often designated by these double names whose two parts are synonymous; thus, there are the Mussa-Dyigi or Dyigi-Moussa, the Bodyan-Moriba, and so forth.

The foregoing are some of the characteristic traits that show how individuals are named among the Bambara, but actually the subject is inexhaustible.

• 846 After the name-giving ceremony, the mother resumes her normal life, although she must still observe certain prohibitions: notably, there must be no sexual intercourse for the first three months; and during the same period she must not change her coiffure nor leave the village. Once this period is over, she covers herself with jewelry, [215] beads and pieces of amber -- borrowed from neighbors or relatives, if need be -- rubs the baby with butter, and goes to present him to the local notables.

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2. See Humblot.

844 Before delivery of her child, a woman is advised to pound grain.
When the labor pains come, the woman retires to her hut with several
matrons (men are not allowed access). If the child is poorly presented,
the priest is called. He performs outside the hut, simulating the delivery and chanting the formulas that ease labor. To deliver the
infant, the woman kneels with her hands thrown behind her, while
the midwife supports the small of her back. At birth the infant's
shoulders must touch the ground; this is the moment when he receives
his spiritual principles. The infant is washed several times and
smeared with karite butter.

● 846 The mother must not go out during the first eight days after the
853 birth; she must devote herself entirely to the new-born. She massages
854 his head daily in order to give it a more rounded form, and she
pinches his nose. She nurses the infant for the first two years, then
the weaned child passes directly to the communal calabash. Until
the child can walk, the mother carries it astraddle on her back with
the aid of a loincloth knotted at her chest. In this manner the infant
accompanies the mother everywhere, to work as well as to the dance.
868 It is during these intimate contacts that the mother teaches her child
to talk. Later, the little girls stay with their mothers who teach them
all the domestic arts, while the boys are educated in outside work.
[867] During their childhook they are taught the usages and rules of deportment: a woman knows she must never shake the hand of a man to
201 greet him, and, if he extends his hand, she flings up her arm "as a
576 sign of not being interested." A man will salute his superior by extending his hand palm upwards, and the superior will put his over it;
inversely, when a man greets an inferior he extends his hand with the
palm down, while for an equal his hand will be perpendicular to the
ground. If a man must ask someone's pardon, he puts his hands behind his back to simulate the tail of an animal (for he has acted like
an animal). Crossing the hands in front of or upon the head is a sign
of sadness. To mark his submission to a king, a man puts his right
elbow to the ground. To pray to God, the two hands are extended
with the palms turned [89] outward. A woman learns that it is im-
576 pudent to question her husband during the day, and when she speaks
593 of him, she says koke, that is, big brother, for she cannot pronounce
833 his name or in any way recall the bonds which exist between them.
It is only during the two consecutive nights that she couples with him

844 851 In the end comes a word of encouragement from the midwives and the father: "A gnéna, that is good." The woman who tied /sic/ the umbilical cord runs to tell the head of the village, the dougoutigi, or /169/ gnéna-n-sonnaba, and the sotigi (if the civil and religious powers do not rest in one and the same head), and the members of his council, the gouatigi (or heads of families), that the village has one more inhabitant. To each and every one she tells the news of the newborn in a flood of words, she declares her fears or her hopes, and everyone greets her, thanks her, and makes her one of those wishes that go straight to the heart. She deserves these praises and can desire them, for she has done her duty. Besides, these are her only fees. A Bambara midwife does not get paid; she receives a present or is given a tip, so let us leave her her glory and not call her mercenary.

846 The child receives a name; his head is shaved. -- Two or three days after her delivery before she has recovered, a Bambara woman begins to tend to her household duties. But she does not leave her hut at all; she sits on a mat, spins cotton, and smiles at her child or fondles it in her arms. And why does she not get a breath of air at least in her court? Could it be false modesty on her part? Not at all; she is proud to be a mother, but can she leave her darling for even a moment? It has no swaddling clothes or cradle; it can only cry, demand the breast, struggle and get into a position that is harmful to his frail body, and to go outdoors and visit the men friends who seem to ignore her since she became a mother (1), she would have to leave it there alone, all by itself. 854 Until the infant's navel dries, she cannot put the infant astride on her back, which is the only way she knows to carry him, and if she were to go out without her child, her milk would dry up and become full of substances harmful to the nursing infant.

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1. Men do not enter the hut of a woman in confinement until after the tonsure and naming of the infant. The husband himself does not go in except when necessary.

[846] 852 553 The navel dries between the sixth and eighth day. The headman and elders are told of the event, and all the heads of families (the gouatigou) come and sit in order of age and rank at the entrance door of the hut which opens into the court of the confined woman. The religious head, the gnéna-sonnaba (2), goes alone into the hut and /170/ shaves the head of the infant on its mother's knees. Long [201 431] lines of women push into the inner court, clap their hands, let out shrill cries of "kouyo kouyo" as signs of joy, and give their friend a small present of millet and cotton (1).

[793] 2. Usually it is the religious head, priest of the dasiri, who shaves the child, but there are exceptions to this rule. In some villages it is the civil head who performs the tonsure; in others this task is the prerogative of a family. Sometimes the shaving is done by the father or the grandfather. The families in which this custom is followed are not pure Bambara but are mixed with Marka blood.

1. The women give a handful of cotton and about a pound of millet.

When the head of the child has been shaved and well cleaned, the headman lays his hands on him to drive away evil spirits that might wish to harm his life; he gently strokes his back and chest and, spitting lightly, recites a short formula which he alone knows and can understand. Then he goes and sits among his people, and the father presents him with eleven kola nuts on a platter of braided grass. The heads of families, in order of age, place their offering of 40 to 80 cowrie shells (2) on this same platter, and the gnéna-sonnaba asks

2. The men give 40 cowrie shells. The generous ones go as high as 80.

852 Alla m'i balola, kouyo kouyo, you are called (. . .), may God make
553 you live!" Two women take up the corners of the rectangular cloth which will hold the child cradled on its mother's back, and the little one is rolled three times on an ax head if it is a boy or on the iron stick used to clean cotton if it is a girl, as if to say: "Be strong and vigorous, be a help and a support to your family!"

The child is placed astride on the back of a young girl and knotted into the rectangular piece of cloth, its mother's tafé, or loincloth. An old woman sticks a pinch of chewed kola nut on its forehead, on each side of its cranium above the ears, and on top of its head, and she knots a white cloth band a finger wide around its forehead. The girl receives a handful of millet, goes to the public square to pound it, and, with the child still on her back, prepares dégé (millet flour mixed with water). When she has prepared the gruel, she goes and offers it to the mother, who puts a pinch of it into the little one's moth, and the ceremony is finished. Not entirely, however, for a few old women run around the village with a gourd of dégé in their hands. They look for sterile women, who shut themselves in their huts and hide. Some are always caught, and they are covered with dégé; the more they cry out and the more they struggle, the more they get whitewashed.

● 846 After her child is shaved, a Bambara woman goes about the
852 village and attends to her work. But she does not braid her hair for
three months if she has given birth to a boy and for four months if
302 she has had a girl (1), /172/ nor does she go to neighboring villages.

(1) Women who braid their hair are not of pure stock.

When this period is over, she braids her hair, covers herself with beads, with bits of amber and bracelets, dresses in her best, makes herself beautiful, and goes to present her baby, all running with butter, to the headman and elders. Her husband grants her several days' leave
[514] (1), and she immediately goes to her family.

(1) About 8 to 15 days.

681 survived hardly more than 15 days of this punishment. The whip was applied publicly; the lashes, whose number was fixed by the Fama, were given with either a full swing of the arm or by the forearm only. Fines had to be paid immediately, or else the condemned was held for security until his family liquidated the debt.

672 681 The family of a man who had committed a crime or fault was held responsible and could be confiscated and sold; the confiscation of persons involved the confiscation of goods. All those who worked together under the authority of the same head could be confiscated, but not maternal uncles, paternal and maternal aunts of the culprit, nor his married relatives or those on the point of marrying. The confiscation was to the profit of the Fama who compensated the victims. Confiscation [71] of goods includes all furnishings, but not lands or dwellings.

681 Whoever was condemned to slavery had to be sold outside of the country, to the profit of the Fama. It was a practical method of ridding the land of all undesirables.

Finally, any second offender had his punishment doubled.

c. Examples of Condemnations

682 684 685 847 Homicides are condemned to death, but involuntary homicides or cases of legitimate self-defense are excused. A murderer's accomplice is subject to the same penalty as the murderer. One who receives a criminal or stolen goods is punished in the same fashion as the culprit. Rape of a child is punished by death, of a young girl by being put into irons after having paid reparations to her fiancé. A woman who puts her bastard to death will be excused, for her husband may have required her to do it; if she kills her legitimate child, she is punished by death, but not executed. A woman who has an abortion is publicly whipped; when she causes an abortion in another woman, she is condemned to death. A man who usurps the title of a function to which he is not entitled is put to death, as is the charlatan and the sorcerer. Theft of gold is punishable by death; theft of household objects is compensated for by a fine. If, during a brawl between two villages, a member of one village is killed, the aggrieved village designates an individual in the other village to be put to death. If there are several deaths on both side, the number of deaths in the two villages is equalized. [683 689]

684 836 however, because the Negroes say that although the betrothed girl does not belong entirely to herself, neither does she belong entirely to her fiancé; she still retains certain rights to her own person, "à ma di ban, she has not yet been given."

684 627 When a girl becomes pregnant, she is arraigned before the family council. After a goat has been slaughtered for the family boli, she is asked the name of her partner, and if she refuses to disclose it the council of the elders is called in. She has to yield, otherwise she is tied to one of the forked sticks that support the flat terrace roof, and blows rain thick on her back.

As soon as the guilty man is named, she swears on a powerful boli (1) that she has told the truth, and the man is summoned. Nothing is to be gained by being a perjurer; it is better to pay the fine and live. The stain on his honor is slight, and he confesses without much shame: "Tigné (that is true); né no do (it is my fault)."

1. It is almost always a Komo, a Nama, or a Kono.

The fine is between 15 and 20 francs and often between 25 and 30 francs (2), not including the sacrifice to the boli, which consists of two hens, two dogs, a goat, and two kola nuts. Quite often the injured fiancé has to be satisfied with the victims for the sacrifice and a small present, one to two kilos of salt, and 800 to 1,600 cowrie shells, or 1 to 2 francs. As for the child of an unmarried mother, its 847 848 567 fate is in the hands of the grandmothers, and of the father and the mother, and it quite often happens that it does not cry twice in this world; to use the Bambara expression: "N'a kasira, a t'na foula ké, if he has cried, he will not do it a second time." I am speaking here of a free girl, for the child of an unmarried slave girl is welcome; it is a gain for the house, and no attention is paid to the guilty man. This is easy to understand, for is there a Negro who does not abuse his slave?

[583] 2. The rule is that the culprit should pay the fiancé the entire bride price, or some 30 francs.

837 Such statements simply mean that there is cheating (1) on both sides, for all precautions are taken to see that the /165/ mother's breasts do not dry up to avoid the possibility of her conceiving. The *soungourou*, the widows and divorcées, "real cradle vultures," know how much these precautions weary a young husband, and they come running in large numbers, without shame or modesty.

And while the husband absents himself from his wife for fuller enjoyment, she on her part proves easy with the men friends who visit her or whom she visits, friends who give her the desired enjoyment without ever compromising her. I would go so far as to say that •[847] she is glad to find herself deserted, for she might conceive with her husband and then it would be difficult to resort to abortion, while with her friends there is greater freedom.

And if she conceives, a pretext is quickly found for her to go 847 to her mother or whoever takes her place. Three fourths of the old women are past masters in abortions. Camphor in large doses is the basis of their brews, and they know how to use gold chloride for a modest fee; they know how to serve each and every one and safeguard their honor.

[833 836] 1. Onanism is very common. Married men tell you openly: "We cannot have too many children, our wives have to go to the markets, and a pregnant woman cannot do this; *an b'an dabali* ("we manage to avoid having children"). There are few unmarried mothers, and yet the marriage of a virgin is unusual. They have little recourse to abortion, so there is onanism on their part. "*Ka bogotigi soro min te djakouma koun don i na yala*, to find a young girl who has not fornicated, you will take a walk." It is true that their lovers are often children, who cannot make them mothers.

847 And is abortion such a great crime in the eyes of the Bambara? Less serious, surely, than one might imagine. It is very common, and when a woman passes, one may overhear from the lips of the Negroes, even those of children: "a y'i kono tigné, she has destroyed the fruit of her womb." There is nothing to teach Bambara children; [864] at eight and ten years they know everything! When one listens to their conversations and lends an ear to their songs, they always revolve around the vilest subjects.

3. The Birth of a Child

842 Before birth. -- Not only is it impossible for the Bambara to accept the idea that a man could live without a wife or a woman without a husband, they likewise cannot conceive of a home without children. They desire the pleasures of fatherhood, and a couple who are healthy or, to put it better, capable of consummating the conjugal act, /166/ quickly appeal to a diviner's knowledge, however short a time they have waited to have children. They believe that sterility is the result of sorcery or an evil spell.

833 847 When the husband is impotent or afflicted with an illness which prevents all marital relations, his wife readily becomes unfaithful and commits adultery in order to avoid the shame of sterility. Moreover, in order not to have to face a winking eye that speaks volumes or a disdainful smile which reveals everything, the husband is indulgent and even approves her crime, at least for the first times. Let us admit quickly that he can do nothing about it, for if she cannot be unfaithful, the wife will abandon herself to loud cries, demand a divorce, and reject the man, who would himself leave her if she were in a similar situation. Without approving of such indulgence, one can understand it on the part of an unfortunate who needs to keep his cook and safeguard his honor before a people that scorns an impotent man and sees nothing amiss in adultery since it is a crime that can be redeemed.

[164] 843 If a woman who conceives is in a syphilitic condition, which is often the case, the fruit of her womb seldom comes to full term

764 There is seldom a djansa for unmarried persons, and the corpse lying in the grave does not even get branches to protect it from the earth with which it is covered. Not having had children, the young man receives his live hen and the girl her egg.

Burials of Women Who Were Pregnant or Died in Childbirth

766 845 The death of a woman during pregnancy or while giving birth to her child stirs the whole female population. To appease the spirits, drive away the gnâma, and protect the village from another misfortune of this kind, all the excised women go to cut branches of karité (Bassia parkii) or dogora. As soon as the deceased is carried to the grave, they burst out of the village, crying and weeping. Three times they go back toward the village, waving their branches, and call out "hou" three times in shouts that disturb and chill you.

[326] At the edge of the grave, or most often in the grave itself, a blacksmith -- the surgeon of the occasion -- removes the child, tells its sex, and lays it near the mother (2). During the operation the

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2. If the deceased has already been delivered, the stillborn child is wrapped in the mother's mat. The operation is performed for one who has not been delivered, less to save the child's life than to spare the deceased the disgrace of the egg. A newborn child deprived of its mother is condemned to death. It is not strangled, of course, but no woman wants to give it her breast, and the little thing dies of hunger. If a woman were to nurse it out of compassion, the spirits and gnâma would take revenge by

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847 causing her own child to die. A mother who has lost her child may adopt an orphan and give it her breast.

766 845 crowd /226/ always withdraws, and the blacksmith remains alone with his assistant. When the work is done, they wash their hands on the grave itself, and the operator makes the customary prayer: "Whether the wind comes from the east or the west, from the north or the south, etc., " (see above, p. 244).

5. Sacrifices to Fetishes on the Occasion of a Death

782 764 778 Although at the time of death there is no sacrifice to the soul of the deceased nor to the shades of ancestors, blood flows nevertheless. It even flows in torrents for the Bambara are not satisfied with reddening the family boli; they stain with blood all the boli fetishes they believe to be guilty. Nor do initiates of the sects forget their deceased brothers, and for a friend who was initiated the same day as they themselves, they cannot refuse the boli a hen and a kola nut. If the deceased is the master of a fetish, its priest, or an influential person on its staff, all the initiates comply, and the sacrifice becomes general. The initiates do more; in the evening they take the god out of its temple, and all night long they mingle their wild animal shouts with the blasts of sacred horns and trumpets blown by heralds. The latter very often wear hideous horned masks on their heads and are dressed in cloaks of feathers.

761 782 764 778 Eighty times out of a hundred, death is attributed to a powerful boli which is taking vengeance, punishing or rewarding, and in the environs of Ségou the Komo, Nia, Kono, Nama, and Douga are the ones who have the most deaths to their credit. When the murdering boli is known, the entire village is notified; the trousers, blouse and bed cover of the deceased, or the tafé (1) if it is a woman, are hung

1. Tafé: a rectangular piece of cloth which women wind around their bodies to cover themselves.

551 The institution of the device, with all its elaborations, has the
576 effect of confirming people in their bodies, their spiritual principles,
and their social functions. Except for the cases of emigration mentioned above, the occasions are rare indeed when an individual is obliged to change his name or device during his life. A woman keeps her father's barama even after marriage.

551 An illegitimate child receives neither the name nor the device of
his family. They may be given him later if the father makes himself
848 known. A Bambara who contracts a misalliance, for example, by
564 marrying the daughter of a blacksmith or a griot, will bring into the
783 world impure children who will never have a right to their father's
barama (1).

1. Such a child is said to be a sofali (literally, horse donkey), that is, a bastard.

552 We must add that the prerogative of having a device is not limited
782 to humans. All animate beings, many /80/ inanimate ones, the elements of nature, places, villages, plants, animals, and all the supernatural powers have theirs which men address during prayers.

The Taboo

784 One or several eating taboos, tne or tana, are attached to the
[551] family name and are observed by all who bear the name. According to certain initiates, the taboos were decreed by Faro when he determined the food proper to each species (2) after having classified the beings of creation. For the common man, the origin of the taboo is always the subject of a tale or legend and justifies the bonds between an ancestor of the family and the animal or plant designated. Most frequently, the animal has helped the man, has saved his life, or the other way around; or else, following some serious events, the ancestor was transformed into an animal or plant. Numerous versions of the origins of such bonds are given.

2. See p. 52.

776 It is also at the crossroads that the elders place the child whose
778 legitimacy is in doubt. If the diviner who is then consulted declares
823 that the child is a bastard, he is deprived of the protection of the spirits
848 and is supposedly unable to survive the nyama which he has acquired
787 at the place. In this same spot are buried abnormal children, in par-
[766] ticular hydrocephalics who are considered undesirable. The spindle
of a dead woman is placed here along with the broom she habitually
used.

776 But the ritual most characteristic of the crossroads is the one re-
778 sorted to by the village when it is in trouble: the primitive wooden
823 mallet, gosilande is planted in the ground; it is then struck with a
783 stalk of millet to chase away evil and to induce new techniques of
reparation to come out of the instrument (1).

1. See p. 145.

C. Stone Altars

778 In the villages, at the intersections of lanes, and in the squares,
211 the founding ancestors are represented by stones under which various
objects are buried (see Pl. V, b).

At Sama, four large stones, encased in a clay platform, symbolize both the cardinal points and the ancestors. They are in touch with the dasiri and receive the same offerings. At Banankoroni, the fara ba is partly buried. Under its point is an albino skull which represents those of the first ancestors and their bones. Two hoes, one placed near the right ear and the other near the left ear, convey the idea that "the man who cultivates the earth will never hear a humiliating word." Under the chin, another hoe recalls that the villagers who are faithful to agriculture will never know famine. Under the hoe, a siriku (2) protects them against those who try to harm them, and brings them

2. See p. 179, n. 1.

"the hyena's luck"; it also means that some of their ancestors were transformed into hyenas in former times. A circumcision knife recalls that all males are circumcised, and all women excised (Fig. 15). Finally, three albino bones and a small pile of copper are a testimony to /142/ Faro's presence and power. Drawings are made on these

The Patriarchal Community

428 When the fa is dead, all his property remains jointly among his legal heirs, thus constituting a patriarchal community whose investigation has two parts: the community of persons and the community of property. [173]

I. The Community of Persons

596 614 Members of the community. The patriarchal community is made up solely of the legitimate descendants of the deceased fa: immediate descendants (sons and daughters), or his descendants exclusively in the male line (descendants of his sons and grandsons).

The descendants of the fa through his daughters are outside the community since they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.

428 596 614 If, at his death, the fa leaves no male heirs, there can be no patriarchal community; his property is divided among his daughters or, if there are none, among his brothers. If only a father or mother or some other ascendant were left, his property would go to them, or if he leaves only daughters, his property goes to them, but in either case there will no longer be a community.

848 596 614 578 Legitimacy is the necessary and sufficient condition for inclusion as a member of the community. A legitimate child is one born of a marriage, that is, of a union between two free individuals that conforms to custom. When slavery introduced concubinage into the household, however, the rule was relaxed because a free man was unwilling to have his sons slaves. In practice, therefore, maternity resulting from intercourse with a free man frees his concubine from slavery, and the children of the union become members of the community. This dangerous privilege is often contested by agnate brothers born of free mothers.

Given the diversity of conjugal bonds, ranging from marriage to free union, it is easy to imagine the discussions that

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596 arise on the subject of legitimacy. During the fa's lifetime,
614 his authority imposes whatever solution pleases him, but when
578 he is gone, the disputes involving status are all the more violent
for having been suppressed or evaded for so long.

These disputes gain strength also from the difference in
614 rank which the members have within the community. The
596 totality of prerogatives of all kinds which raise the fa above
all others constitutes a kind of superior dignity whose essence
is the omnipotence covered by the word faya, from which
came the title fa [174] (master, lord). It is in reference to
the faya that the members of the community are ranked.

Only male members can advance claims to the faya,
[562] and because they can do this, they can all call themselves fa.
On the other hand, women can never hold this authority; they
are fantan'-u, "powerless."

Among the fa-u there are distinctions based on degree of
596 kinship and on age; those most closely related to the fa will be
614 the first to receive the honors about to be described. Male
601 descendants in the first degree form a sort of senate of which
561 the eldest is a kind of president-by-birth; he is truly the fa,
the actual representative of the deceased. The one immediately following him by rank in terms of age is his syere (follower), his heir presumptive at the head of the community. The other senators, usually brothers of the fa, are uncles (bina-u) to the descendants of the second degree and their children. By reason of the authority associated with the position of bina-u in the community, this kinship term has come to be a title of respect which is bestowed on men toward whom one wishes to show particular esteem (1). Because of their age, all the senators of the community are commonly called koro-u, "the elders," and the fa is first among them.

1. It is worthy of note that in Uncle Tom's Cabin, Miss Stowe explains that among the slaves in America the word "uncle" had precisely this meaning as a title of respect and honor.

596 deprived of his rights, he and subsequently those who would
614 represent him; the branch of the family of which he is head
is henceforth dead so far as the family is concerned.

In the second place, no member of the community
[848] attains the faya unless he fulfills certain conditions, of which
the first are legitimacy and primogeniture.

The fact that the claimant is a member of the com-
[578] munity implies that he is legitimate. Since it does happen,
however, that the question may not have actually been investigated or, by the wish of the fa, not even been raised, the legal heirs who would be injured and intriguers who seek any pretext -- and there are always some of these persons -- raise the question, and infinite complications often follow.

Primogeniture is equally subject to challenge, and the opposition everywhere finds it a convenient motive for their
[595] machinations. It is, indeed, understandable that in polygamous
households, with the wives sometimes residing in various places apart from the husband, simultaneous or at least close births give rise to disagreements as to which son was in fact the first-born.

Finally, even though he may actually be the eldest legitimate son, the claimant may find himself passed over because of measures taken [176] against him by the late fa. It appears that although custom favors the eldest legitimate son, it yields to the expressed wishes of the fa if the senate agrees to his rejecting the candidate. This is a grave step and one which may lead to the most violent reactions.

This raises the question of whether special talents or aptitudes should be required of the claimant, over and above those of legitimacy and primogeniture. For example, can he be required to be healthy, active, and a good administrator? It appears that the senate may choose to eliminate a person it deems unworthy. This applies particularly to a free man who has voluntarily fallen from that state by living like a caste member or a slave. By this behavior he has already excluded himself from the community, but it sometimes happens that his actual exclusion has not been noted or announced before the question of accession to the faya arises.

562 581 595 Between the omnipotence of the first and the humble lot of the second there is every possible gradation. This is all the more true in that, thanks to polygamy, lawful households may be found in association with the free unions and concubinage desired by the husband, in such a way that the position of each person in the family, already affected by all these contingencies, is, in the last analysis, dominated by the absolute authority of the fa. We shall see this clearly in connection with filiation, and it is no less apparent regarding wives, except for those already described who have sufficient influence and the means to live virtually independent of the rest of the family. Although in fact a wife who was not paid for has no regular position and her children legally do not belong to either of their parents, although a concubine does not even count as a person, according to custom, and her children are their genitor's slaves, merely by the will of the fa either of them may have an enviable pre-eminence in the family, especially envied by the lawful wives.

593 562 Under these circumstances, it may be admitted that conjugal duties, obedience, fidelity, and their counterparts, the rights to help and assistance, have nuances that vary from one situation to another. It is true that a wife must obey her husband and that he is allowed to resort to [208] corporal punishment to control her, which he does not fail to use. She is not completely at his mercy, however. For instance, he can require her to live in a given place; nevertheless, if it has been agreed that she is not to leave the tribal territory, and this usually tacitly understood, he may not take her away. He can force her to do household chores, but if she is free, he cannot require her to do servile tasks. In the same way, he cannot rent out her services, put her up as security, or sell her.

837 The duty of reciprocal fidelity is most often very vague. Admittedly, this is not expected of the husband, and indeed, the wife often encourages his lapses from virtue on the theory that this indulgence will attach him to her. As far as a wife's misbehavior is concerned, a husband does not always give it much importance and is sometimes not at all averse to profiting from it. If children result from her indiscretions, he is not distressed in the least about accepting or denying them. [848]

596 The *fa*. -- The whole of this family obeys the same head:
the *fa*. The *fa* is designated by a council of elders when he fulfills
the following conditions: first, not to refuse the *faya* and to be a
[567] member of the community, that is, actually to live within the community; next, he must never have been a slave, and he must not
have settled abroad without hoping to return home. In addition, he
[848] must be a legitimate child, that is to say, born in wedlock, and the
firstborn. In principle, the *faya* passes from older to younger brother (in the classificatory sense of the term). Thus, the *fa* is always the member of each generation closest to the ancestor. Finally, the *fa* must be able, that is, healthy, active, and a good administrator. Often the *fa* designates his successor before his death. The successor may assume power only 40 days after the death of the last *fa*, and after being recognized as head of the family by the assembly of elders. From that moment on, he exercises his functions, come what may.

The *fa* has charge of, and the moral and physical responsibility for, the whole community. He directs and protects all the members of the family. These latter can escape his authority only by leaving the village for good; they are then considered to be dead members. (The descendants of the *fa* by his daughters are outside of the community; they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.)

The *fa*, head of the family, lives under the administrative dependence of the head of the village.

2. From Family to Community

621 The true social unit is the community. Ties of kinship and marriage unite groups without racial or ethnic unity.

a. *Patriarchal Organization of the "Ton."* -- All the family
622 heads obey a village head: it is on him that the responsibility falls for the organization of the community territory, as well as the responsibility for administering justice when contention arises between followers of different *faya*. The village chief is generally master of the land: *dugu-kolo-tigi*; sometimes [54] he cedes his rights to a village administrative chief younger than himself, but in matters of religion he remains all-powerful, and each year he receives gifts from the different family heads for the needs of the common cult. He also

684 however, because the Negroes say that although the betrothed girl
836 does not belong entirely to herself, neither does she belong entirely
to her fiancé; she still retains certain rights to her own person, "à ma
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848 mother, and it quite often happens that it does not cry twice in this
567 world; to use the Bambara expression: "N'a kasira, a t'na foula ké, if
he has cried, he will not do it a second time." I am speaking here
of a free girl, for the child of an unmarried slave girl is welcome;
it is a gain for the house, and no attention is paid to the guilty man.
This is easy to understand, for is there a Negro who does not abuse his
slave?

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1. It is almost always a Komo, a Nama, or a Kono.

[583] 2. The rule is that the culprit should pay the fiancé the entire bride price, or some 30 francs.

774 is the object of constant concern during agrarian rituals. The role of
the soul of plants is particularly noticeable in their medicinal uses.
Drawing a remedy from a plant may cause its death, liberating its
spiritual principles for the benefit of the sick man. Because of this,
such an act is equated with a blood sacrifice.

With the exception of the ngovo tomato, plants have no dya. The shadow (suma) of a plant is not independent like that of a man or an animal. It exists only through light effects and its movements are caused by the air and the wind moving its leaves and branches. This is what the Bambara means when he says that the dya has a life of its own and depends on Faro, whereas the plant's suma depends on the spirit Téliko, master of the air.

774 An individual's dya can be known and his temperament and life
possibilities assessed by measuring his shadow on the earth at noon.
787 The unit employed is the little finger, which is a corporeal symbol
804 of the person. If a pregnant woman is thus measured, the sex of the
843 child may be predicted.

When a boy or a girl gets married, it is said of them: a ye a dya
774 furu: "he (or she) has married his dya." For it is impolite to say that
[579] a person married anyone but his spiritual double. Besides, the union
of the couple is repeated by the union of their dya which like them-
[595 selves are of opposite sex. In olden times, male twins married the
851] same woman and the latter's dya was taken over by Faro in the Niger.
The child she conceived was the son of both husbands.

Some men do not marry. This is true of the Soma, the religious
589 diviner attached to the major Bambara societies. Initiated in the
791 course of a solitary sojourn in the bush, he left his dya with the in-
visible spirits. This is a prerequisite to the gift of double sight with
which he is endowed as well as a protection against possible dangers
to the dya when it remains in contact with the earth, or when it
approaches other humans. The true spouse of the Soma is his dya:
he may mate only with it on a fixed date when the spirits return it
to him for this purpose. /61/

The tere

774 The tere was inflicted by Pemba on Mousso Koroni in order to
diminish her power at the time he was pursuing her. This explains
its complexity: it is at once the character of a man, his strength,

845 Everyone visits the parents' home and takes to them what gifts one can
[431] give for to give to twins is equivalent to giving to Faro.

The name-giving ceremony is carried out on the river bank if the
845 village is situated close to the Niger, or otherwise on the edge of a
553 pond. The children are brought by their parents who, between them,
●851 represent the number seven. They are bathed, their hair shaved off
and thrown into the river, while the father says: "Mother Faro, your
sons are born, here is their hair." (1) He then gives the cotton band,

1. *Ba faro i wolo dew kunsi ye nin ye.*

dyala, which was worn by the mother to the officiant who encircles the child's forehead with it while saying: "These two people are older than I am; let the nyama of the name which is to be given them leave with the *dyala*." (2) Then he gives them a special name. (3)

2. *Nin ma fla ka koro u ma, u čua dali nyama ka ta fini disa fe͡w dyala fę.*

[177] 3. Séni and Sinè for boys; Bintou and Wasa for girls. Among the Islamized Bambara this custom is also respected; the names given are always Alassan and Fouséni. This is most likely a distortion of the Arab names given to twins in Morocco.

845 The next day, carrying one of the children and accompanied
851 by a woman in charge of the other, the mother goes begging for
millet or cotton in the village. She holds two identical spoon gourds in her hands. The gifts, equal in weight and quality, symbolize the twins; they are placed on the spoons. Then crossing her hands, the woman pours them into the basket in which she carries the gifts (4).

4. All the symbolism of gifts made to twins, like that of the double pot (see below), confirms observations made in the Sudan on the relationships between gifts and trade. On this subject, see M. Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, pp. 234 ff. It is interesting to note here that

845 each twin is the dya of the other and that
851 this term means "shadow of the body, "
"spiritual double, " as well as "balance."
To trade is dyago.

845 Three or four days after the name-giving ceremony, depending on
301 their sex, the twins are given bracelets of white metal representing
[531] their dya, Geometrical symbols of the universe, the sky and the earth,
are engraved on each of these (1). The opening of the bracelet represents that of the incomplete terrestrial world. When the twins die
[766] they will be buried with the bracelets closed over their arms or their
ankles to signify that they have penetrated a complete and closed
world. Formerly the sacrifices to Faro were carried out with ornaments
845 borrowed from a twin. The person making the sacrifice presented
301 them to the /87/ river while saying: "The iron of the twins is witness
782 to the sacrifice offered to Faro." (2) After the ceremony, everyone
gave white kola nuts to the twin; the interested party then went to
the village square and waved in the air his arms bedecked with
ornaments to spread to the four cardinal points Faro's beneficial
nyama acquired in the course of the sacrifice. In certain areas twins
wear a pendant in the shape of double slave fetters, called dyõ neke,
"irons of the captive, " or an amulet called sinzin, "support, " composed of a little piece of wood carved in the shape of a double cup
and preferably made by a Bozo. A man who has had twins three times
[778] must acquire a double pot which is always kept full of water and
which becomes the object of an annual sacrifice (3).

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1. This figure is formed by a rectangle divided into two equal superposed squares, including a multiplication sign in the lower square to represent the earth, and an open v in the upper square to represent the sky.

2. Flani neke ye ma šere ye faro sõni la.

3. See p. 124, n. 1.

844 contact with water which symbolizes "the victory of Faro over Mousso
273 Koroni in the matter of family names" is a prefiguration of name-
271 giving.

851 As soon as the patriarch hears of the birth, he comes and shakes the family pembele over the child's head, three or four times according to the sex, in order to pass on to him the nyama and the qualities of the deceased person from whom he has inherited the ni and the dya. Then, he brings the family altar kere la boli ni into the house of the woman who has just given birth and places it before him. Crouching upon the ground, with fingers spread over the object, he pronounces the following prayer: "You, boli, make me a chief, so that my family prospers, a child is /178/ born, his soul is entrusted to you; I invoke you, boli, night and day" (1).

(1) Boli tigi i ka masaya kanu ñe, de wolo la, a ni kalifa be i la, ngo boli šu ani kle.

Holding the child on his knees, he places the object on its chest for three consecutive times. Repeating the prayer, he next cuts the throat of a red rooster over the open sac, dips the right index into the blood, and, depending upon whether it is a boy or a girl, makes three or four crosses on the forehead of the newborn who thus becomes the "son of the boli," boli dẽ.

A white sea shell, krokrodya (2), is placed before the newborn and gently moved about to "condense his dya within him." Then it is tied to the child's foot for three or four days according to its sex.
846 At the same time, the mother who is entrusted with the child's dya
until the name-giving ritual, adorns herself during the eight days
824 following the birth with a collar (madya, "dya of the person") made
751 from the odoriferous root of the tree bearing the same name. She
will wear it until the child takes its first steps so as to protect it and
to recall that she herself carried the soul of the newborn.

(2) Cardita vingens.

553 The name is given on the eighth day by the chief of the Komo.
852 Under the dubale, a tree which shelters the village meetings, the
elders assemble around the Komo altars which have been carried to the spot (3). If it is a first son, the father gives one hundred kola nuts,

562 778 [754] This suspicion readily degenerates into disrespect, scorn and hatred when a woman [123] is weak -- this being the usual state of affairs. On the contrary, the feeling changes to superstitious fear if she resorts to occult practices and shows herself an adept at sorcery. Many old women are held to be very expert at such practices.

851 In the same connection, it should be noted that a newborn child is also subject to scrutiny. For seven days after birth it is not officially taken into the family, because it is thought that during this period the infant may undergo metamorphosis unless closely watched over by its mother.

We shall see, through a study of their institutions, how the Bambara conceive of life and organize it.

Funeral practices will show us how the Bambara regard the idea of death.

And after death?

775 769 The Romans distinguished among spirits: the manes or good gods (dii[1] manes) and the lemurs or evil spirits, both of whom take an interest in the family.

The Bambara have analogous concepts.

Once it has left the body, the soul of a patriarch goes to join the souls of his ancestors, where it finds a spiritual family which protects the earthly family.

The manes (fa su-u) always like to frequent the places where their bodies lived, and that is why one keeps the things that belong to the deceased, why he is buried near his house or sometimes even under the floor, and why some families piously keep the skull of the departed to do it honor.

[778] The entrance-hut (blon') is usually the site of the altar of the ancestors and of the family gods. The ancestral altar may be a small board with a human mask, called kara, or a mound of earth shaped vaguely like a human being. The manes are thought to enter into these objects to receive the offerings and sacrifices made to them.

It is sometimes thought that the world of the manes may be without light and heat but that otherwise they each continue the existence it had in life with the same passions, the same

[1] [dei ? —Analyst]

582 It is not unusual for an old man to marry a very young girl; indeed, it is common. Although a young man rarely marries a very old woman, a woman may marry a man much younger than she is as a result of the customs involved with inheritance.

Kinship in the direct line is an obstacle, *in infinitum*. Certain collateral relatives may not marry each other: uncle and niece, aunt and nephew. Marriage is also an obstacle in
587 some cases: a man may not be the husband of two sisters simultaneously, although he may marry them successively; the same restriction applies to a mother and daughter and an aunt and niece.

A man may not marry the wife of his son, nephew, or younger brother.

No marriage can take place between free persons in good standing and people of caste or, still less, slaves.

584 *Impediments*. From the opening of negotiations to the moment when the woman is handed over, there is a very long interval [196] of time during which impediments may arise.

First marriages, with which we are here concerned, are community affairs. A young man who would undertake the matter on his own would be most imprudent for he is no more his own master than is the girl, and their wishes are not of the least importance; this is an occasion for the *fa* to bring off a profitable deal. The *fa*, therefore, opposes any match which does not suit his plans and, indeed, forces the young man to share his views. If the latter rebels, the refusal of the *fa* to recognize the marriage will deprive the wife and children of any claim to legitimacy in the eyes of the community which he heads. There is no legal recourse possible against such a decision, because each community is answerable only to itself for matters concerning it.

The girl is even more completely under the control of
562 the community than the young man. Destined to be given in usufruct, she is entirely at the mercy of those holding this right over her. If she rebels, she runs the risk of being brutally brought to task through every means of coercion and, if in such circum-
851 stances she has children, they can be taken from her by the community, to which they will then belong. Custom gives her no rights over them whatsoever.

595 A husband owes his wife food, clothing, and lodging within his means, and unless he has imprudently acquired too many wives, everything will be kept within the proper limits. In any event, he must be impartial toward all his wives on one particular point if he wants domestic tranquillity: he must honor each of them in turn with his favors.

In theory, a husband is supposed to treat his wives alike in all things, although it is apparent from the foregoing that this is practically impossible. Besides, it is usually agreed that the first wife, no matter who she is, whether slave or free, has certain prerogatives. She acts as a kind of mother to her co-wives, supervises their work and their pursuits, and issues all the supplies. With reference to her husband, she acts as confidante and adviser.

851 Filiation. This is to be regarded as the totality of facts which, for the sake of clarity, we shall divide into two groups: birth, and giving a name. [209]

Birth. A pregnant woman, by virtue of her condition,
843 is subject to a kind of special regime whose special features are the following.

In principle, she must forego sexual relations from the moment she feels the child move until two or three months after its birth. This is not done for reasons of hygiene, but rather because the child is thought to require it as a kind of deference, without which it will die.

From the standstandpoint of diet, the expectant mother should
be well and even abundantly fed. When possible she is given the
262 heart and liver of slaughtered wild animals; these are centers of
life which, if eaten, will strengthen the child's soul and make the
child a courageous individual. A pregnant woman often wants some
261 of the yellow or red clay which is sold in the markets, which
443 for some unknown reason she will eat as if it were chocolate.

She must refrain from visiting dying people, attending funerals, going into mourning, or mingling with crowds, all this in order to avoid any contact that might injure the fragile soul she is carrying.

844 good taste. The placenta is buried outdoors near the hut or sometimes in the floor of the hut itself. The mother is washed and often given an infusion to drink which is alleged to stop bleeding.

The baby is washed several times and then anointed with vegetable fat (1) (se tlu) or butter made from cow's milk. Its head is massaged to give it a nice shape, and then the baby is wrapped in a white cloth.

The child is usually not fed for the first 24 hours, although it is sometimes given a few drops of goat's milk, a beverage with mystical qualities. It is then given the breast.

● 851 At the earliest possible moment the father must be informed of the birth and sex of the child. Indeed, he is brought in by the woman who cut the cord, and the mother shows him the baby, pointing out any body characteristic which seems to her a manifest sign that the child is a reincarnation [211] of a deceased member of the family or other evidence that there has been some influence from the invisible world.

[203] The same woman informs the local authorities (dugu-tigi, nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc.) and the people in the vicinity; the news spreads rapidly.

846 The mother resumes her normal activities as soon as possible and is often on her feet within 24 hours. In any event, she never remains in bed for more than a week, unless it is absolutely impossible for her to get up. For seven or eight days, however, she remains in seclusion. Furthermore, particularly in Kaarta, her food is prepared exclusively by girl friends of her choice.

[751] The detachment of the umbilical cord marks the end of this period of seclusion. In Kaarta the cord is preserved and placed in a small bag which is tied around the baby's neck; later on it will be made into a precious talisman. It is only after the detachment of the cord that the child is considered to be definitely

1. Known to Europeans as karite, originally a Soninké word.

846 born. In this we see another of the interim periods which accompany any change of status (death, marriage, circumcision, etc.). The real entry of the child into social life is marked by giving it a name.

553 Giving the name. Naming the child is the prerogative of the father, and he must take into consideration the various
851 circumstances or incidents which marked the birth; through this act the child is received into the family.

At Ségou, family heads, relatives, neighbors, and friends are all invited to this ceremony, especially the dugu-tigi or, more exactly, the nyana-n-son-na-ba. In order of rank and seniority they arrive on the day set and squat in front of the entry to the courtyard which gives access to the mother's hut. The religious leader (nyana-n-son-na-ba) enters the mother's hut and shaves the head of the child whom the mother holds on her knees.

While this is going on, the women, relatives, neighbors, and friends approach in single file, singing, clapping their hands, and at intervals shouting: "Kuyo! Kuyo!" They give millet and cotton to the mother.

After shaving the baby's head, the leader puts his hands on the child, strokes its back and chest, and spits in its face to ward off evil spirits. Then he emerges and sits outside among his people. [212] The father then gives him eleven kola nuts, and the family heads in turn give him 40 to 50 cowries; all this is placed on a woven tray.

At this point, the leader asks the father what name he has selected for the child. Before answering, the father requests that the kola nuts and cowries be divided, they constitute the tua sara "price of the name." Two kola nuts and half of the cowries are given to the mother; the rest is divided among the family heads present. These are the ni wuru, "kola of life," and the tua kolo, "cowrie of the naming." Then the father makes known the name and the reasons for his choice. What are these reasons? It may be some obvious sign that the child is a reincarnation of someone deceased, some incident marking the child's birth, etc. Everyone congratulates the father on the happy event and expresses good wishes for the baby and blessings on the parents.

553 Women are not admitted to the men's circle. Gathered
●851 near the mother's hut, they know that a name has been given,
but do not know what it is. The woman who tied the cord then
[562] washes the baby three times in warm, soapy water and, taking
water into her mouth, sprinkles the tiny body from neck to lower
back three times. She then expresses her good wishes. Carrying
the child, she goes to the door of the hut, where the father
and family heads are waiting, and asks the name. Then she returns
to the women and places the child on the lap of an old
woman who blows into the baby's ears three times and then shouts
in each ear: "Kuyo! Kuyo! i tua dara, "that is, "Kuyo! Kuyo!
[854] your name is ...." The child is then wrapped in the narrow
swaddling band which the mother will henceforth use to carry
him on her back, and if it is a boy, the baby is rolled three
times over the blade of an ax, or if a girl, over an iron implement
for picking cotton. While this is going on, everyone is expressing
best wishes.

[184] In Kaarta the ceremony is somewhat different. A beef or
a sheep killed in front of the mother's hut, and dege [Ed.,
coarsely ground millet in water] is also prepared. The baby's
[564] head is shaved, and the hair is placed on the dege. Each guest
puts his right hand on the edge of the gourd and a griot expresses
good wishes for the newborn child. Then the guests dance around
the dish of dege; the hair is removed from it and given to the
mother to keep. [213] Then if the occasion warrants it, the
[304] three lines of tattooing peculiar to the Kouloubali are made on
the baby's face with a dagger. Finally the griot takes the child,
carries it around the crowd, and returns it to the father, who must
then make known the chosen name. When the father has pronounced
the name, the griot again takes the child and, making
a trumpet of his hands, cries out to him three times: "your
name is...."

551 In principle, the name (tua) recalls some circumstance
surrounding the birth. A posthumous child is usually given his
father's name, as though he were the reincarnation of the father,
or more commonly, he is called Fa-n-ko, "posthumous" (literally,
"the one who came after the fa"). If the baby shows some resemblance
to a deceased person, he is named for the person or,

428 3. and 4. as above for the head of the family; 5. oldest full brother; 6. oldest half-brother on father's side; 7. the family; 8. the village; 9. the Fama ... Married women may transmit personal property in the following order: 1. her oldest son; 2. her husband's oldest son by another wife; 3. the husband; 4. the woman's family ... [587] At the death of her [73] husband, a woman is not required to marry his heir." (1)

1. Ortoli, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bamako) [Bambara Customs (Bamako Circle)].

851 We should explain here the notion of seniority which is not always easy to distinguish in a polygamous society. As a matter of fact, when two wives of the same husband bear children at roughly the same time, an intermediary announces the births to the fa, and the first baby to be announced is considered to be the oldest. It may even happen that the first one to be announced is in fact the last-born; he nevertheless remains the senior. [845] In the case of twins, the senior is the one brought forth last, for it is thought that twins are not conceived at the same time, and that the last-born is the one first conceived. [551] Certain special names are used for the oldest children: N'tyi for boys, Nya or Nyélé for girls.

643 At the Fama's death, several lines of succession are involved: that of his own family, that of the family community, and that of the patriarchy.

As far as election to the title of Fama is concerned, we have seen how the new Fama was the senior male of the same generation and same family as the deceased Fama, or the eldest of the following generation. It is noteworthy that in the case of no male heir, the succession passes to the Fama's daughter whose husband governs in her name; but that is an exceptional case.

643 644 When the new Fama is designated by the notables, he occupies the fortified residence of the previous Fama, where the founding ancestor is buried; the women and children of the deceased Fama must leave these premises. While his father lived, the Fama's eldest son led a luxurious and independent life; he often commanded an important dugu, sometimes founded by himself. At his father's death, he is a very important person for the new Fama.

844 ●851 In the end comes a word of encouragement from the midwives and the father: "A gnéna, that is good." The woman who tied·/sic/ the umbilical cord runs to tell the head of the village, the dougoutigi, or /169/ gnéna-n-sonnaba, and the sotigi (if the civil and religious powers do not rest in one and the same head), and the members of his council, the gouatigi (or heads of families), that the village has one more inhabitant. To each and every one she tells the news of the newborn in a flood of words, she declares her fears or her hopes, and everyone greets her, thanks her, and makes her one of those wishes that go straight to the heart. She deserves these praises and can desire them, for she has done her duty. Besides, these are her only fees. A Bambara midwife does not get paid; she receives a present or is given a tip, so let us leave her her glory and not call her mercenary.

846 The child receives a name; his head is shaved. -- Two or three days after her delivery before she has recovered, a Bambara woman begins to tend to her household duties. But she does not leave her hut at all; she sits on a mat, spins cotton, and smiles at her child or fondles it in her arms. And why does she not get a breath of air at least in her court? Could it be false modesty on her part? Not at all; she is proud to be a mother, but can she leave her darling for even a moment? It has no swaddling clothes or cradle; it can only cry, demand the breast, struggle and get into a position that is harmful to his frail body, and to go outdoors and visit the men friends who seem to ignore her since she became a mother (1), she would have to leave it there alone, all by itself. [854] Until the infant's navel dries, she cannot put the infant astride on her back, which is the only way she knows to carry him, and if she were to go out without her child, her milk would dry up and become full of substances harmful to the nursing infant.

1. Men do not enter the hut of a woman in confinement until after the tonsure and naming of the infant. The husband himself does not go in except when necessary.

the culprit and deprives the villagers of their protector.

The spirit of the dasiri sometimes has as its compansion an animal
794 which seems to represent the group's ancestor. At Ségou, it is a
776 crocodile; at Ouélenguena, a she-ass; at Koulikoro, a monkey; in
825 other places it is a male goat which is replaced when it dies. At
Konodimini there are a series of deep intercommunicating wells which would have served as homes for the ancestors. These holes are at present occupied by hyenas which are considered to be incarnations of the blacksmiths of former times and which are the dasiri of the place.

The dasiri's animal is free to enter homes and to eat what it finds. It is often fed by the inhabitants. No one may attack it and whoever breaks this taboo, set on by a vengeful nyama of which he cannot
[582 rid himself, risks being forbidden to marry, even being no longer
626] tolerated in his native village (1).

As its name indicates, the function of the dasiri is to maintain
794 the stability and integrity of the village. It is the "support of the
776 inhabitants' lives"; the numerous rituals (individual or collective),
782 of which it is the object, reveal the importance of its role as well
as the diversity of the beings invoked. To Faro are addressed prayers for rain; to the ancestors prayers for questions /139/ concerning the family; and to the spirit of the tree when it is a matter of stopping an epidemic. But directly or indirectly, any sacrifice offered to the dasiri is offered to Faro. The victims (sheep or fowl) and the offerings (cotton bands, kola nuts) are always white (see Pl. 3, b).

When children reach the age of six or seven, they are led to the
794 tree; they sit on its roots upon which kola nut juice is spat, and are,
778 by this fact, introduced into the village cult. They are then presented
852 to all the allies senãnku and especially to the blacksmiths with whom
they proceed to joke.

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794 In some villages, the sacrificer never
776 consumes butter or milk, foods which
778 the Peul furnish the Bambara.
[563]

1. This was, at Soroba, the case of Dji Diara, who, after killing a hyena, could not marry as no woman was willing to link her destiny to his.

794 because of the offerings made by other men. Keep the flute and
534 since you are Soma and chief of the Komo, let all the Komo flutes
773 be blessed because of this one." By this he meant that the Komo
539 flute, like the other ritual objects, would hereafter contain his strength, nyama. He added that, when men wished to call him or to talk to him, they would have to do it through the intermediary of this instrument.

794 Before each occasion when the mask is brought out, a sacrifice is
534 performed upon the flutes "to improve their sound." Faro's flute is used in the rituals performed at the river bank, to pray to him or to thank him. To play the flute is equivalent to reciting his device; he is forced to hear. The Komo flute is used only during the masked ceremonies; it makes those who hear it say that the Komo is "a thing with a soft throat" (1).

1. Fẽ kã duma.

In former times the chief alone was allowed to play the flute, whatever its type; death was sanctioned for infraction of this rule. Ordinary flutes /154/ of a style different from those belonging to the cult are used by children.

E. Initiation to the Komo

794 Three days after the birth of a boy, his father presents him with
852 the elements which he has contributed to the making of the Komo boli and recites the komo kumã: "You, Komo boli, these things are inside; society of the Komo, these things are inside; customs of the Komo, these things are inside; you are a child, you are going to approach the age of the elders; Komo boli, here is my child, watch over him" (2).

2. Komo boli la, nin waliw ba kono;
Komo dyẽ la, nin fẽw ba la; komo sira
la, nin kunko ba kono; i ye demisẽ ye
i bi ta makorobaya ye; komo boli nde fle,
tyę do, i dyã to a la.

He then returns the child to its mother with these words: "The son has been introduced to the secret of masculinity; he has received

794 852 the Komo's blessings, the Komo's blessing is with him; let him join the men, let his light be with us" (1). The child is then presented in the same way to its grandmother.

794 These acts anticipate the initiation which later will make the newborn an adolescent member of the Komo society.

794 561 [564] In each village this society is composed of all initiated men, divided into age grades, which are themselves composed, theoretically, of the men circumcised in the same year. Only the griot are not admitted. It is permissible for an individual who has not been initiated immediately after his circumcision to be admitted later if the society agrees. He will belong, regardless of his age, to the age grade with which he will have been initiated.

One age grade has precedence over the other which follows. This hierarchical order is followed strictly in daily life as well as during councils and ceremonies. To break these rules of seniority would mean to disturb the order even in the hereafter, since the Komo gathers together the sum total of both living and dead members.

794 [735] The recruitment of members varies from one region to another because of the expenses involved in the admission ceremony and in participation in the ritual. Some villagers refrain from joining because of poverty, and it also happens that some conversions to Islam are brought about by this fact.

/155/ The initiation is performed at night. The kotigi (2) presents to the future members, one by one, the ancestors' tools. He explains to them their origin, their history, their role, and their spiritual value. He teaches them the respect they owe the ancestors for their courage, their labors, and the technological inventions of which they were either initiators or guardians. The mask is removed from its shelter and dressed by a member; in front of the children the man who wears it unmasks himself and reveals to them the meaning of the different parts of the costume.

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1. De dyira la tyę gundo la; ani komo ye dukaw mine nuofe, komo ka barka bi a fe; ka fara tyew ka, ka yele kę an ta ye.

2. See p. 156.

844 273 271 contact with water which symbolizes "the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni in the matter of family names" is a prefiguration of name-giving.

851 As soon as the patriarch hears of the birth, he comes and shakes the family *pembele* over the child's head, three or four times according to the sex, in order to pass on to him the *nyama* and the qualities of the deceased person from whom he has inherited the *ni* and the *dya*. Then, he brings the family altar *kere la boli ni* into the house of the woman who has just given birth and places it before him. Crouching upon the ground, with fingers spread over the object, he pronounces the following prayer: "You, *boli*, make me a chief, so that my family prospers, a child is /178/ born, his soul is entrusted to you; I invoke you, *boli*, night and day" (1).

Holding the child on his knees, he places the object on its chest for three consecutive times. Repeating the prayer, he next cuts the throat of a red rooster over the open sac, dips the right index into the blood, and, depending upon whether it is a boy or a girl, makes three or four crosses on the forehead of the newborn who thus becomes the "son of the *boli*," *boli dẽ*.

A white sea shell, krokrodya (2), is placed before the newborn and gently moved about to "condense his *dya* within him." Then it is tied to the child's foot for three or four days according to its sex. 846 824 751 At the same time, the mother who is entrusted with the child's *dya* until the name-giving ritual, adorns herself during the eight days following the birth with a collar (*madya*, "*dya* of the person") made from the odoriferous root of the tree bearing the same name. She will wear it until the child takes its first steps so as to protect it and to recall that she herself carried the soul of the newborn.

553 852 The name is given on the eighth day by the chief of the Komo. Under the *dubale*, a tree which shelters the village meetings, the elders assemble around the Komo altars which have been carried to the spot (3). If it is a first son, the father gives one hundred kola nuts,

1. *Boli tigi i ka masaya kanu ñe, de wolo la, a ni kalifa be i la, ngo boli šu ani kle.*

2. *Cardita vingens.*

two jars of millet beer, a ram which will be sacrificed, and money to the griot who will sing during the ceremony.

[789 826] A lock of the newborn's hair is shaved off and kept in a case (sebe) which, before being carried away, will be hidden in an oil container for the following reasons: to protect the person from magical practices; to prevent a donkey from eating it, an occurrence which would cause the child's death; to permit him to seek for himself health and a long life in the image of his hair which will have remained in good condition.

The rest of the hair is carried by a female relative to the river, into which it is thrown in honor of Faro. Next a band of white cotton called faro fini (literally, Faro's clothing), on which someone has "spat" kola nut juice, is bound around the forehead of the newly baptized baby to indicate his subjugation to the spirit.

The senior elder then examines with attention the hairline and the meeting point of the eyebrows on the forehead before announcing in a loud voice the signs determining the child's character (tere). Then he grasps the child and swings it /179/ seven times from east to west, eight times from south to north above the altar while giving it the forename (toko) which he has inherited from a dead person along with the spiritual principles (1). The griot recite the father's genealogy (burudyu); the senanku comes to joke with the newborn and gently pulls his nose and ears.

852 304 On the same day the blacksmith draws on the child's face the wolo ti, consisting of seven vertical frontal scars and two horizontal scars under each eye. The first scars represent the complete man (ni and dya); the second, representing the number two, symbol of

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553 ●852 3. If the village has no Komo, the name may be given above the paternal Ɣuafebla.

1. According to another source of information, the eldest son receives the forename of his paternal grandfather, the second son that of his father, and the following sons those of the mother's fathers and grandfathers.

852 304 "the unknown in creation" (see pp 23 and 24), recall man's existence in this state. Consequently he is conscious of the unknown and has the possibility of apprehending it. These scars act upon the tere of the child and give him at the same time strength, courage, virtue, as well as the strength to penetrate the knowledge of the invisible (1).

[842] 1. They may be redrawn at the root of the nose of an adult who has despaired of having any children, or on the thigh of a woman who wishes to be fertile. These scars, drawn at birth, are not the only ones which the Bambara wear. See S. de Ganay, "On a Form of Cicatrization among the Bambara."

852 553 326 In a blacksmith's family, the name is given near the paternal forge. In the presence of all the village artisans, the kotigi shaves the head of the newborn while an elder prepares seven small sticks, over each one of which he pronounces the name of an ancestor. The kotigi, whose eyes are blindfolded, pulls out in succession three sticks from the group; the third determines the name which he immediately proclaims. While the women chant, the father removes from his altar the kongobwona axe as well as the other ritual objects. The throat of a sheep is cut over all these objects while a prayer is recited. The newborn's head is rubbed first with the axe, then with shaved off hair saturated with sacrificial blood. This gesture introduces the child into the family group. Next he receives the scars of the blacksmiths.

Circumcision

304 561 Whereas in former times circumcision was mandatory and performed upon young men (about twenty years), it is now practiced at an early age if the parents are wealthy enough to afford the expenses involved. /180/ Because of this fact, a child of eight years may be circumcised with an adolescent of sixteen to eighteen years, whose parents are poor and have only slowly accumulated the articles necessary for the ceremony. These two boys will belong to the same age grade (flã), and will be comrades (flani) all their lives, having the same rights and duties. Age thus has a restricted role in social relations.

576 that she may speak to him freely. When the day of union comes, the
593 wife herself prepares her husband's food; then she lies on the left side
833 (the feminine side) and her husband on the right side, and she cannot
[842] be impregnated except by a union twice repeated.

771 These corporal techniques[1] are dictated and ordered by the religious imperatives which pervade the life of the Bambara from before his birth until after his death.

761 What we have said of the Bambara's religion and of his conception of the world enables us to understand that there cannot be for him a complete break between life and death: birth is a reincarnation; death is not destruction. This is why a man's life does not present one substantial unity but is divided into a certain number of distinct periods, each of which is inaugurated by a rite of transition that marks the death of an anterior state and the rebirth to a new life.

a. Before Birth

843 From the first month after his conception, the infant consti-
761 tutes a person who receives a series of spiritual forces emanating
from his father's side of the family and especially from the recently
858 deceased ancestor whose name he will receive. At the same time, he inherits all of the paternal taboos, which the mother must respect during her pregnancy. It is only after his birth, at the time he receives his name, that the infant receives the spiritual forces coming from his mother's side. These forces are transmitted through the medium of the priest and the ancestors of the priest.

761 From then on, the infant is required to observe all the taboos
of the beings who have had a part in the composition of his personality;
858 he thus finds himself tightly bound to the society in which he will live.

b. Birth Rites

852 At birth the baby is washed with millet beer (1) (to purify him)

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1. For all these rites, see G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

[1] [i.e., sexual reproduction and childrearing] see pp. 117-119. -Analyst]

852 with water added (to recall the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni).
The patriarch shakes the family pembélé three or four times over the
infant's head to give him the *nyama* of the recently deceased whose
ni and *dya* he has inherited. Then he places the altar (*kere la boli
ni*) on the infant's chest three times, after having recited a prayer.
He cuts the throat of a red cock, dips his index finger in the blood,
and traces three or four crosses on the newborn's forehead, who be-
553 comes *boli din.* The name is given the eighth day by the *Komo* chief
under the doubalé, where the old people assemble. The father offers
[431] 100 kola nuts, two jars of millet beer, plus a ram whose throat is cut,
and money for the griot. Part of the baby's hair is shaved off and
kept in [90] a case (*sebe*); another part of the hair is thrown in the
river as a sacrifice to Faro. The eldest of the old men examines the
roots of the infant's hair and the conjunction of the eyebrows, thus
determining its character (*téré*). Then he swings the baby seven
times in an east-west direction and eight times north-south, giving
him the first name of the deceased ancestor and, at the same time,
his spiritual principles. The *griot* recite the father's mottoes, the
sénanku come to joke with the baby, and the blacksmith traces the
scarifications.

845 *Twins.* We have seen the belief that in the beginning twins
were always born, and Faro subsequently punished man by abolishing
double births which he no longer accords except to certain privileged
persons. For the Bambara, twins are new beings who inherit neither
the *ni* nor the *dya* of any ancestor. Special rites are observed at their
birth which is announced by showing the raised right and left index
[201] fingers, without saying anything, for the proclamation would be so
powerful that it would be harmful to the newborn twins (see G.
Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion].
553 The rite of name-giving is carried out on the bank of the river. The
following day, accompanied by another woman, the mother goes in
search of millet and cotton which she gathers in identical calabash
ladles. Equal gifts are put in the ladles, which the mother presents
in crossed hands. Later, the twins are fitted with metal bracelets
[301] representing their *dya*, and, in certain regions, with a pendant in the
form of double slave irons. The twins always stay together; they
856 wear identical clothes. If one dies in early infancy, the mother
places on the mat beside the surviving infant a small doll made by

Chapter 6

Worship, Celebrations, Saraka, Sacrifices, and Dances in Honor of the Gnéna

1. The First Two Groups of Gnéna

781 The fundamental bases of all Bambara devotions are first, and
776 above all, fear and secondly, the desire to have everything without
effort or work. The Bambara respect a strong, powerful being because
it can punish and reward, and since their fetishes are not equal in
power, they take care not to honor all equally.

776 The genii of the first two groups have no priest or official
minister, and public, solemn sacrifices are offered them very rarely.
782 In the dry season, however, some festivals are held in their honor.
●852 The chief participants are children, who on these days stuff themselves
with /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, and with
sorghum cakes. When they are full they take the leftovers outside the
village to a place where paths cross, and many hens, dogs, and other
animals come for the booty. The poor and unfortunate also come, for
[735] they, too, may take their share; every saraka (1) belongs to them.

1. Tax, tribute, alms.

776 Little girls and boys take part in these festivals, but there is a
852 special one for unexcised girls, and those who are soon to be excised
and are getting ready for this great event in Bambara life bear /106/
all the expenses. It is the celebration of soli basi k'li (1), of which
I will speak at greater length in my chapter on circumcision.

1. Soli, "young firls who will soon be excised"; basi, a kind of couscous with very small grains which distantly resembles semolina; k'li, "obtained by singing and clapping hands."

776 village and in our families; grant us plenty and wealth, give us many
782 wives, healthy and vigorous children, and a long and hearty old age."
796 If the occasion is semipublic /109/ or public, a general sacrifice is
always offered in the name of the family, the quarter, or the village,
and then individual sacrifices follow. On the days when they are held,
there are always dances and drinking bouts, for the favors of a fetish
cannot be obtained except by leaping to the sound of drums and by
getting drunk.

At the risk of repeating myself, I cannot resist giving the fascinating side of the Negroes' attachment to their fetishism and describing the festivals and celebrations in honor of the principal fetishes -- in order that the reader may gain a greater understanding and feeling for their worship.

The N'tomo, the Special Children's Fetish

●852 The harvest is over, and the yield of the field cultivated by the
796 children during the winter, together with the small donations received
from the people of the village, allows the *n'tomigi* (head of the
confraternity) and his *siéré* (aide, deputy) to furnish its initiates and
the old men -- the latter are never forgotten -- with a plentiful feast
of kola nuts, millet beer, or *d'lo*, and /millet/ flour mixed with
honey water and milk, or *dégé*. The day of the celebration is set by
the head of the village and by the elders, and everyone prepares for
it two weeks in advance. In the *blon*, or entrance huts, and in the
852 shade of trees, one sees nothing but old men cutting and sewing *dloki*,
796 *bougi*, *bogo*, and *yaba* (1), which will be worn for the first time on
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1. *Dloki*, a large blouse. *Bougi*, near Ségou, a kind of pants without legs; in Bani country, a strip of cloth three to four fingers wide which goes around the waist, passes between the thighs, and drops in back, forming flaps over the heavy part of the thighs.

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The end of this strip is tucked up.
Bogo, garment worn by girls until their marriage, consisting of a strip of cloth tied at the waist and falling in back to make a train.
Yaba, boys' jacket, especially common in Bani country.

that day. A swarm of children patch the yellow or white blouses that will be worn during the dance, and grease and re-grease the mask of the n'tomo. They pay special attention to the horns, which are often hidden under little thongs of red leather decorated from end to end with well-polished cowrie shells as white as snow.

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But now we come to the longed-for day! All the little rebels go single file to the fetish tree, and each carries the hen, its feet tied, which he intends for the sacrifice. They /110/ all take off their blouses -- the little undergarment allows freer movement and is less hampering -- and, after some whispering they finally end up squatting, fixing their big, black eyes on the leader, the n'tomotigi, who begins the sacrifice with the assistance of his aide, the siéré.

This little fellow is really funny, as with the solemnity of an old man he pours the dégé, sprinkles the blood of the hens, and noisily spits the remains of a piece of chewed kola nut onto the sacred tree, the dwelling of his genie. I do not doubt that he is convinced, and thoroughly convinced, that he is not addressing a tree trunk that has no consciousness; he believes that he is in the presence of who watches him, waits for him, and asks only to grant his wishes. Since he is addressing a powerful being, fear and emotion at first make him tremble; but gradually his voice grows firmer, and very clearly he pronounces his formula: "N'tomo ye, see this hen, a beautiful hen, isn't it? It is fat! n'tomo, on behalf of all of us I offer you this hen as a sacrifice. Favor us, defend us against the fury of the genii of the bush and against the malicious. Make us strong and vigorous, give us plenty to eat and drink, drive sickness from us. Give us water and a good harvest, n'tomo, and give wealth to our families."

● 852 796 782 After this special sacrifice come the individual sacrifices, and the very young boys who are henceforth to belong to the n'tomo prostrate themselves before the fetish tree and take an oath to reveal nothing to the uninitiated, and especially not to little girls. This oath is not at all trivial: "If you talk, if you reveal your oath," says the leader showing each one some black powder, "you will die." And they all reply without trembling: "May I die!"

852 796 When the rite of admission is over, each initiate plucks his hen and draws it, and while the victims simmer over the fire in an earthen conari, the youngsters beat drums and abandon themselves to the dance, and so into a frenzy which continues under the eye of the fetish, in the shade of its preferred tree until the time of the feast. Each child in turn dances the dance of the fetish, which consists of leaps and capers and a graceful twirling of a flexible switch. To dance he dons [292] the white or yellow blouse of the fetish (n'tomo ka dloki, "the blouse of the n'tomo"), which is white (dje) or black, yellow (fign, as I said in the preceding chapter) /sic/ /111/, and takes the horned mask, the n'tomo kongolo ("head of the n'tomo") by means of which he externalizes in a concrete form his concept of the genie.

Victims abound, and the feast is plentiful. There is enough for everybody, and there is not one on that day who does not lick his fingers and say with a smile: "Ne ne fara de! (1), How full I am!"

1. Né, "me," "I"; fara, "am full"; dé, "surely."

The little boys' families contribute much, for Bambara mothers and little sisters have good hearts. Thanks to them, every initiate can offer from 10 to 20 liters of dégé, the same amount of d'lo; and his gourd of to (gruel) holds enough to tire six to eight big eaters. In addition to the dessert, which is kola nut, each boy receives a new garment for himself and a light bogo and sometimes a tafé (2) for

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2. Tafé, rectangular piece of cloth which the women wear around their hips.

852 796 his "sister of the heart." In fact, on the day of his admission to the n'tomo every small Bambara chooses a n'golo mouso to whom he gives a small gift each year. The dreadful part of this custom is that in Bambara country the n'golo mouso is less prudish than the girl friend or sweetheart of a little French boy and is often a little maid-of-all-work who lends herself without qualms to unhealthy and indecent play.

After the feast, which takes about three hours, the n'tomo déou (sons of the n'tomo) leave the place of sacrifice and return to the village in Indian file, preceded by drums. D'lo, or millet beer, awaits them, but before touching the divine liqueur they must perform a bloody rite. It is hideous, and yet, it is the high point and chief attraction of the celebration!

On the public square, in front of drums that give the measure 852 and beat the rhythm, the young n'tomo déou flagellate themselves, 796 usually until they bleed. The old men run up, dragging their mats 185 after them; the women, squatting on their tiny stools, clap their hands and sing; and mothers wrap the loins of their children in long white scarves to protect their lower abdomens from misdirected blows. The n'tomigi and his siéré -- honor to whom honor is due -- go into the arena, and while the little leader holds his switch above his head with both hands, /112/ the siéré beats him hard with his own switch on the back chest, calves, soles of his feet, and everywhere. When he is tired of beating or his switch breaks, he stops and the leader in his turn gives a round to his aide. In this way, two by two, according to age and size, the children flagellate (1) each other. The flick, flack of whip lashes, which cause blood to spurt, bruise the flesh, and always leave a furrow as wide as a thumb, may often be heard for hours. Little boys of six or seven years often stop at the second blow to scratch their backs and open their mouths to cry, but I have seen some stay unmoved just like their elders of ten to twelve years, without a

1. In Bani country each child flagellates himself. Although that is not the usual custom, it may be encountered in many villages.

852 796 785 tear, a complaint, or a cry of pain, and they are so imperious that one might think they were of bronze.

The N'golo, the Special Fetish of the Circumcised

852 794 The children of this fetish, whose function I explained in the preceding chapter, grant themselves many days of celebration in its honor in the course of the year. The main festival, however, is annual and in addition to the dégé, a hen, and two kola nuts offered by each initiate, a goat is sacrificed on behalf of all.

Since it is from this fetish that the fla-n-to organization derives its existence, its members, the to-n-déou, offer drink and food to the whole village for two or three days. The women, too, contribute their share to this horrible drinking bout, and their queen (fama, massa) -- humbling herself before the to-n-tigi, head of the fla-n-to and priest of the n'golo, who thoughtlessly wastes the produce of the field worked by his subjects in the winter -- distributes many kola nuts and adds still more to the d'lo, which already flows in streams.

The beer is drunk out of doors on the public square, and everyone -- men, women, and children -- is there, shouting, dancing, and getting drunk. Seated under a goua, a shed covered with coarse mats, /113/ and surrounded by his acolytes (the siéré, the djéli, and the djalatiké), the to-n-tigi sits in the place of honor, and it is he who directs the drinking and the dances. [346] He is really king on these days, and all obey him at the slightest sign, gesture, or word. When he gets up to romp or take a turn before the drums, he is honored; all the initiates call "you you," shake their caps (ban fla), and compete as to who will take his gun, spear, stick, or ax and beat the time for the dance. But he wants to speak; he must speak; he feels the need to issue an order, to give thanks, or to impose a light fine on his band; and his spokesman runs to his side. He repeats the speech of his chief word for word and sentence by sentence, and sometimes even adds a comment of his own, for some Bambara have a sharp wit and very easily find a saying to bring a laugh.

852 194 Every time one of the three principal members of the staff, wants to dance, respects are paid to them or to their leader, and all day and all night nothing is heard but frightful "you you" and atrocious cries. There is a protocol for everyone to follow, and before each to-n-dé begins to prance in front of the drums, he goes and bows to his leader to show his devotion and respect for him. He holds himself like a spring, brandishes the gun, ax, or stick that he will use in the dance, and in one jump strikes his feet together under the nose of the one to whom he is paying his respects. The women are quieter and show their respect by a genuflection before the master.

In addition to his staff the master of a n'golo, the to-n-tigi, has pages, a standard bearer, trumpeters, and soldiers, and to vary the program he goes here and there with his frenzied band to greet an elder and give him a serenade. In some villages custom decrees that the youths put on the best they have in the way of clothing; in others, on the contrary, they must get themselves up in horrible, dirty rags so that, on seeing them thus clad, one asks where they could have dug up all these horrors. They must amuse themselves and be [522] amused, laugh and cause laughter, and this last aim is always accomplished as they have such priceless mimics. /114/

The Mouso ka djiri, the Women's Special

776 796 831 It is impossible to know all the genii responsible for watching over women, for they are legion. Every month, at the new moon, the women organize a dance in their honor, and every year they make a public, solemn sacrifice to them. The most widespread is the mouso ka djiri, and its worship flourishes especially in Bani country.

When its festival comes, all the excised women offer it a little /millet/ flour mixed with water, a hen, and two kola nuts, and the head of the village, or, in his absence, an elder, goes and reddens the bark of the fetish tree (1). There is no need for me to go into

[782] 1. Some people assert that they have seen women sacrificing. I have seen women perform saraka involving bloodshed, but never a sacrifice.

776 796 831 this sacrifice at length, for in the preceding chapter I stated the function of the fetish; it may be imagined that the ladies and maidens ask for whatever makes a woman strong and beautiful. Moreover, the indecent dances to which they abandon themselves under the sacred tree sufficiently reveal their inner thoughts. They have only one -- to show their breasts to the fetish and scratch their navels on its bark; in some villages custom demands this, and it is required of all. Young girls do it to develop their breasts, married women to become fertile, and all of them to be protected from the unpleasant accidents peculiar to their sex.

796 There is no festival without a feast and none without drinking, and the women offer the whole village sorghum gruel and beer for a drinking bout. They also offer kola nuts to all the elders and heads of families, and they know better than to withhold this treat from fathers, husbands, grown sons, older brothers, and those they love.

The *Sinsin*, the Special Twin's Fetish

782 845 778 852 The sacrifice to a *sinsin* is made on the umbilical cord which is hung in the center of plates of woven grass that constitute the fetish. Each plate belongs to one of the twins and even bears his name. The sacrifices in honor of this fetish are always double; for each child separately, the family offers /millet/ flour /115/ mixed with water, millet beer, a kola nut, and a hen.

845 778 852 This is strictly a family fetish; the father of the family is its priest, and only the children and their parents are present at the sacrifices. Everything is done in a quiet and happy intimacy, and although there may be a few drunkards here and there, there is never an orgy. Sacrifices to a *sinsin* are made very frequently to bring its blessing to the mother and children; they are also performed on all occasions of the slightest importance in the lives of the twins: when their hair is cut eight days after birth, at the tattooing festival, at circumcision, at marriage, etc. Once a year a more formal sacrifice is made; the women cook *d'lo*, the millet beer, and the

845 778 old men and important people of the village, as well as friends, are 852 invited to squat before the jugs and partake of the liquid refreshment.

The Dasiri Fetish, Protector of Villages

776 621 The dasiri is the chief of all the gnena, or djine. In order that its worship may be better understood and that the reader may have an idea of the power of its priest, I must go into a few details which cannot help but throw some light on Bambara organization. Let us, for example, take a village that is being founded: we are present at the election of the priest of the dasiri, the gnéna-n-sonnaba; at the choice of the fetish tree and of the sacred animal, the genie's mount; at the enthroning of the sacrificer; and finally at the sacrifices.

Election of the priest

776 621 793 [482] The population has grown, the surrounding land is exhausted, and a group of families must move out. The old men who are still lively and the youths full of strength and life take up their arms and fasten a dirty goatskin, a foroko of provisions, on their shoulders and scatter in the bush in search of less ungrateful soil. When they have found it they go back to their homes, and the council of family heads meets to choose a leader. This leader is really a priest, for his chief function is to sacrifice in a public and formal manner to the blonda ba sou (1), the shades of the great entry hut /116/, that is, to leaders and priests who, just like him, held the reins of power, and to the gnéna, genii, spirits, and fetishes, whence come his names of gnéna-n-sonna ("he who sacrifices to the gnéna fetishes") and gnéna-n-sonnaba ("great sacrificer of the gnéna fetishes"). He alone has the authority to sacrifice to all /these spirits/ in the name of all /the people/.

1. Blon, "entry hut"; da, "door," "doorsill"; ba, "great"; sou, "corpses," "shades."

[846] 852 553 The navel dries between the sixth and eighth day. The headman and elders are told of the event, and all the heads of families (the *gouatigou*) come and sit in order of age and rank at the entrance door of the hut which opens into the court of the confined woman. The religious head, the *gnéna-sonnaba* (2), goes alone into the hut

[793] 2. Usually it is the religious head, priest of the *dasiri*, who shaves the child, but there are exceptions to this rule. In some villages it is the civil head who performs the tonsure; in others this task is the prerogative of a family. Sometimes the shaving is done by the father or the grandfather. The families in which this custom is followed are not pure Bambara but are mixed with Marka blood.

and /170/ shaves the head of the infant on its mother's knees. Long [201 431] lines of women push into the inner court, clap their hands, let out shrill cries of "*kouyo kouyo*" as signs of joy, and give their friend a small present of millet and cotton (1).

1. The women give a handful of cotton and about a pound of millet.

When the head of the child has been shaved and well cleaned, the headman lays his hands on him to drive away evil spirits that might wish to harm his life; he gently strokes his back and chest and, spitting lightly, recites a short formula which he alone knows and can understand. Then he goes and sits among his people, and the father presents him with eleven kola nuts on a platter of braided grass. The heads of families, in order of age, place their offering of 40 to 80 cowrie shells (2) on this same platter, and the *gnéna-sonnaba* asks

2. The men give 40 cowrie shells. The generous ones go as high as 80.

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the father or the grandfather (3) the name of the child. Instead of answering the question, he points to the kola nuts and the cowrie shells and says to the headman: "Let us divide the kola nuts and give to each the price of the name." Two kola nuts are set aside, and the cowrie shells are divided into two equal parts, one of which the headman takes to the mother with two kola nuts one red and one white.

The nine remaining kola nuts are divided among those present, and each family head receives at least one piece, which is the ni woro (ni, "life"; woro, "kola"). Each one also receives 4 or 5 cowrie shells (4), and the head of the family announces the name of his son and gives the reason for his choice. Everybody shouts: "A toua dara, he has received a name, may God preserve him, may he be strong and vigorous, may he be a help and support to his parents!"

The women do not know the name that has been given, but they know it has been announced, and the woman who bound the navel takes the child from the arms of the mother and washes it three times with warm water and soap. When she has done this, three times she takes a mouthful of cool water and spits it on the nape of his neck, his back, and his thighs, saying: "May God /171/ preserve you, do not go away, stay with us, be strong and always well, may your descendants be many!"

With the child in her arms, she goes to the door of the entry hut where the father is and asks him the name. When she knows it, she goes back to the women and lays the infant on the knees of an old woman. The latter blows into his ears three times and then six times -- three times for each ear -- and shouts to him at the top of her lungs: "Kouyo kouyo, i toua dara (here she says the name),

3. It is the head of the family who names the child.

4. Toua da kola: (toua, "name"; da, "to give," "to impose"; kolo, "cowrie shells").

852 Alla m'i balola, kouyo kouyo, you are called (. . .), may God make
533 you live!" Two women take up the corners of the rectangular cloth
which will hold the child cradled on its mother's back, and the little
one is rolled three times on an ax head if it is a boy or on the iron
stick used to clean cotton if it is a girl, as if to say: "Be strong and
vigorous, be a help and a support to your family!"

The child is placed astride on the back of a young girl and knotted into the rectangular piece of cloth, its mother's tafé, or loincloth. An old woman sticks a pinch of chewed kola nut on its forehead, on each side of its cranium above the ears, and on top of its head, and she knots a white cloth band a finger wide around its forehead. The girl receives a handful of millet, goes to the public square to pound it, and, with the child still on her back, prepares dégé (millet flour mixed with water). When she has prepared the gruel, she goes and offers it to the mother, who puts a pinch of it into the little one's moth, and the ceremony is finished. Not entirely, however, for a few old women run around the village with a gourd of dégé in their hands. They look for sterile women, who shut themselves in their huts and hide. Some are always caught, and they are covered with dégé; the more they cry out and the more they struggle, the more they get whitewashed.

846 After her child is shaved, a Bambara woman goes about the
village and attends to her work. But she does not braid her hair for
852 three months if she has given birth to a boy and for four months if
302 she has had a girl (1), /172/ nor does she go to neighboring villages.

1. Women who braid their hair are not of pure stock.

When this period is over, she braids her hair, covers herself with beads,
with bits of amber and bracelets, dresses in her best, makes herself
beautiful, and goes to present her baby, all running with butter, to
the headman and elders. Her husband grants her several days' leave
[514] (1), and she immediately goes to her family.

1. About 8 to 15 days.

•853 A child is nursed for two or even three years, and theoretically, a woman should abstain from sexual intercourse throughout this period. In practice, however, the period of three months mentioned above is the limit of such abstention.

854 Childhood. While he is small, the child remains with his mother, whether she cares for him herself, has him cared for by a slave especially designated for the duty, or turns him over to one of her daughters.

During the nursing period of two or even three years, he is carried astraddle by his mother or some other person entrusted with his care until his legs are strong enough for him to run about the house and its vicinity.

857 At about six or eight years old, he is drawn into the juvenile organization known as n-tomo, and he never fails to join it as soon as he is welcome. Little girls are less free; they are kept at home and put to work at household duties, such as bringing water and wood and watching the fire.

881 Puberty. As we shall see, the n-tomo prepares the child for the soli, a ceremony which marks the most important event of his life, civil puberty. The essential but not the only rite involved in this ceremony is circumcision. In principle, the soli is limited to pubescent boys and this implies that all who go through the ceremony have physically reached puberty. Aside from the fact, however, that this condition is reached at differing ages, the boys who undergo the ceremony differ in age because the soli does not take place every year, owing to the considerable expense involved.

882 When the soli is behind him, a boy is no longer a child; he is not exactly a man either, but rather is a "young master," a kamalen'. Since he is admitted to the brotherhoods, apparently his discretion can be counted on, and he is considered competent to take an oath so he can be called upon to testify in a dispute. Also, if he is enterprising enough to attract attention to himself, he is given trifling missions which inspire him to persevere. Fur-
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836 thermore, since by now he has been made sophisticated by his companions in the n-tomo, his relations with his female companion

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When the labor pains come, the woman retires to her hut with several
matrons (men are not allowed access). If the child is poorly presented,
the priest is called. He performs outside the hut, simulating the delivery
and chanting the formulas that ease labor. To deliver the
infant, the woman kneels with her hands thrown behind her, while
the midwife supports the small of her back. At birth the infant's
shoulders must touch the ground; this is the moment when he receives
his spiritual principles. The infant is washed several times and
smeared with karite butter.

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853 birth; she must devote herself entirely to the new-born. She massages
854 his head daily in order to give it a more rounded form, and she
pinches his nose. She nurses the infant for the first two years, then
the weaned child passes directly to the communal calabash. Until
the child can walk, the mother carries it astraddle on her back with
the aid of a loincloth knotted at her chest. In this manner the infant
accompanies the mother everywhere, to work as well as to the dance.
868 It is during these intimate contacts that the mother teaches her child
to talk. Later, the little girls stay with their mothers who teach them
all the domestic arts, while the boys are educated in outside work.
[867] During their childhook they are taught the usages and rules of deportment:
a woman knows she must never shake the hand of a man to
201 greet him, and, if he extends his hand, she flings up her arm "as a
576 sign of not being interested." A man will salute his superior by extending
his hand palm upwards, and the superior will put his over it;
inversely, when a man greets an inferior he extends his hand with the
palm down, while for an equal his hand will be perpendicular to the
ground. If a man must ask someone's pardon, he puts his hands behind
his back to simulate the tail of an animal (for he has acted like
an animal). Crossing the hands in front of or upon the head is a sign
of sadness. To mark his submission to a king, a man puts his right
elbow to the ground. To pray to God, the two hands are extended
with the palms turned [89] outward. A woman learns that it is impudent
576 to question her husband during the day, and when she speaks
593 of him, she says koke, that is, big brother, for she cannot pronounce
833 his name or in any way recall the bonds which exist between them.
It is only during the two consecutive nights that she couples with him

626 Every seducer who has paid the fine demanded by the fiancé can walk with head held high, for he has satisfied justice, cleansed his honor, and his shield is unstained. But let him not be careless enough to go to the village of the injured fiancé, for he will be /164/ beaten hard by the young people; his exclusion often lasts for years.

010 Now, there is no reason to be surprised at the Bambara attitude toward adultery and fornication. If it can all be reduced to a violated principle of justice and nothing more, that is because they have fallen so low that they believe they were created and put in the world by God in order to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh as much as possible.

Abortion

562 Monsieur Louis Barbier wrote in the "Quinzaine" (January 16, 1906) /"Étude sur les populations Bambaras de la Vallée du Niger (A Study of the Bambara Peoples of the Niger Valley)"/: "The Bambara woman is a machine to produce children and do heavy work." In this statement he expresses, I am sure, the belief of all Europeans who have stayed among the Negroes without mingling with them or living their life. If the Bambara woman "is a machine to produce children," [163] it is a slow machine. I know families where there are seven and eight children by the same wife, but that is unusual; the average remains two or three children per woman.

•853 837 It is not through frequent childbearing or because they are prolific that Bambara women lose their charms and wither. They do not, and cannot, conceive but every two or three years; they cannot bear a child more than once every three or four years, since every mother nurses her child for at least two whole years, and quite often three, and during all that time she may not conceive. Does she remain continent during that time? What is to be thought of these utterances on the part of a husband:

> A ye den soro a ti son toun.
> She has had a child, she wants no more relations with me.
> Né t'a don toun, ne tigouéré a la toun.
> I do not know her any more, I no longer go near her.

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a) Tree of the Ndomo, at the center of the uncultivated square (Soroba).

Plate V

b) Stone altar (Banankoroni).

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854

553 851 [562] Women are not admitted to the men's circle. Gathered near the mother's hut, they know that a name has been given, but do not know what it is. The woman who tied the cord then washes the baby three times in warm, soapy water and, taking water into her mouth, sprinkles the tiny body from neck to lower back three times. She then expresses her good wishes. Carrying the child, she goes to the door of the hut, where the father and family heads are waiting, and asks the name. Then she returns to the women and places the child on the lap of an old woman who blows into the baby's ears three times and then shouts in each ear: "Kuyo! Kuyo! i tua dara, "that is, "Kuyo! Kuyo! your name is ...." The child is then wrapped in the narrow [354] swaddling band which the mother will henceforth use to carry him on her back, and if it is a boy, the baby is rolled three times over the blade of an ax, or if a girl, over an iron implement for picking cotton. While this is going on, everyone is expressing best wishes.

[184] In Kaarta the ceremony is somewhat different. A beef or a sheep killed in front of the mother's hut, and dege [Ed., coarsely ground millet in water] is also prepared. The baby's head is shaved, and the hair is placed on the dege. Each guest [564] puts his right hand on the edge of the gourd and a griot expresses good wishes for the newborn child. Then the guests dance around the dish of dege; the hair is removed from it and given to the mother to keep. [213] Then if the occasion warrants it, the [304] three lines of tattooing peculiar to the Kouloubali are made on the baby's face with a dagger. Finally the griot takes the child, carries it around the crowd, and returns it to the father, who must then make known the chosen name. When the father has pronounced the name, the griot again takes the child and, making a trumpet of his hands, cries out to him three times: "your name is...."

551 In principle, the name (tua) recalls some circumstance surrounding the birth. A posthumous child is usually given his father's name, as though he were the reincarnation of the father, or more commonly, he is called Fa-n-ko, "posthumous" (literally, "the one who came after the fa"). If the baby shows some resemblance to a deceased person, he is named for the person or,

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881 *Puberty*. As we shall see, the *n-tomo* prepares the child for the *soli*, a ceremony which marks the most important event of his life, civil puberty. The essential but not the only rite involved in this ceremony is circumcision. In principle, the *soli* is limited to pubescent boys and this implies that all who go through the ceremony have physically reached puberty. Aside from the fact, however, that this condition is reached at differing ages, the boys who undergo the ceremony differ in age because the *soli* does not take place every year, owing to the considerable expense involved.

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882 thermore, since by now he has been made sophisticated by his
836 companions in the *n-tomo*, his relations with his female companion

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[854]

Plate 3

[304]

[End Plate 3]

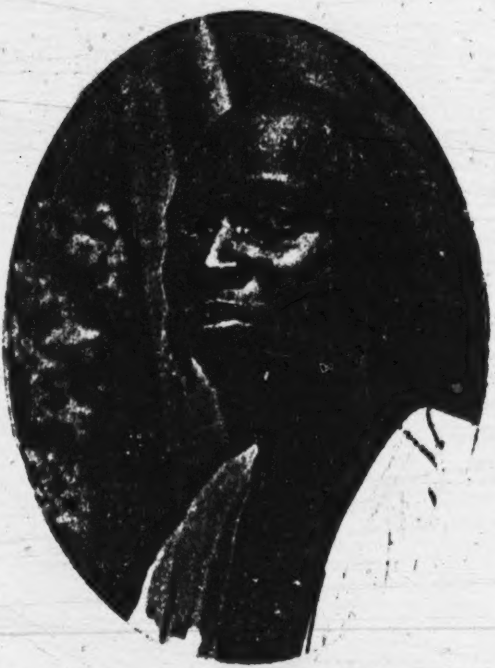

Fig. 5. Bambara with his cheeks slashed in imitation of the tattooing characteristic of the slaves of the Kouloubali, Djenné region.

Fig. 6. Woman and child, Djenné Region.

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593 of him, she says koke, that is, big brother, for she cannot pronounce
833 his name or in any way recall the bonds which exist between them.
It is only during the two consecutive nights that she couples with him

822 in the rites. "Red is the color of the middle regions of the world.
It characterizes dry heat; it is the color of anger and of justice,
that of the king, center of the kingdom." Black or indigo (2) is
identified with the North and the [98] rainy season. It evokes
impurity, obscurity. It denotes sadness and the end of labor. The
South accords with the ancestors and the color white which represents
light and purity; it is the color of Faro. The whole system
286 of bands woven from different colored threads according to various
822 designs translates the different conditions of the wearer, for each
band has its own history, its definite use, and its cosmogonic correspondences.
The study of this was begun by G. Dieterlen in *Essai
sur la religion bambara* [Essay on Bambara Religion] and is being
291 pursued at the present time. Today the form of clothing varies according
to the age and sex of the wearer. Young children are nude,
with the loins girt with a cotton string or with a belt of blue beads or
cowry shells. Sometimes, two small copper bells attract the protection
of Faro by their sound. Up until their marriage, the young
girls wear a loincloth passed between their legs and held in place
by eight bead belts. When they are married, women wear the loincloth
open, attached at the waist, and a cotton handkerchief covers
[854] their hair. When a child is born, another cloth knotted at the chest
holds the infant astraddle on the mother's back. A chief's wife
[554] wore a piece of material made of seven bands which she threw over
her shoulder. Very young boys wear short drawers whose form varies
with the age classes. Later they are dressed in a short tunic with a
neck opening cut out and fitted sleeves, and in ample short breeches
[801] formed of three bands (the masculine number), passing between the
legs and three bands on each side covering the thighs. The waist is
also encircled by four times three bands, numbers of femininity and of
masculinity. Over their clothes, men and women wear a large cloak
with an opening cut out in the middle for the head and whose ends
are sown together, leaving large openings on each side. These
cloaks have a large pocket in front and are embroidered with symbolic

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2. Zahan, *Les couleurs chez les Bambara du Soudan français* [Colors Among the Bambara of the French Sudan], *Notes Africaines*, 1951.

844 851 In the end comes a word of encouragement from the midwives and the father: "A gnéna, that is good." The woman who tied /sic/ the umbilical cord runs to tell the head of the village, the dougoutigi, or /169/ gnéna-n-sonnaba, and the sotigi (if the civil and religious powers do not rest in one and the same head), and the members of his council, the gouatigi (or heads of families), that the village has one more inhabitant. To each and every one she tells the news of the newborn in a flood of words, she declares her fears or her hopes, and everyone greets her, thanks her, and makes her one of those wishes that go straight to the heart. She deserves these praises and can desire them, for she has done her duty. Besides, these are her only fees. A Bambara midwife does not get paid; she receives a present or is given a tip, so let us leave her her glory and not call her mercenary.

The child receives a name; his head is shaved. -- Two or 846 three days after her delivery before she has recovered, a Bambara woman begins to tend to her household duties. But she does not leave her hut at all; she sits on a mat, spins cotton, and smiles at her child or fondles it in her arms. And why does she not get a breath of air at least in her court? Could it be false modesty on her part? Not at all; she is proud to be a mother, but can she leave her darling for even a moment? It has no swaddling clothes or cradle; it can only cry, demand the breast, struggle and get into a position that is harmful to his frail body, and to go outdoors and visit the men friends who seem to ignore her since she became a mother (1), she would have to leave it there alone, all by itself. Until the [854] infant's navel dries, she cannot put the infant astride on her back, which is the only way she knows to carry him, and if she were to go out without her child, her milk would dry up and become full of substances harmful to the nursing infant.

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1. Men do not enter the hut of a woman in confinement until after the tonsure and naming of the infant. The husband himself does not go in except when necessary.

*173 When he had been freed, Déni-ba Bo left at once to rejoin his brother Séba Mana. The latter was still shaken by an encounter that very morning with the Khassonké [Kasonke] who had had a column composed of 60 "foot." Mounting his horse, Séba Mana wanted to show his brother the scene of the battle. When they reached a small stream, the horses easily crossed over, but Séba Mana, who was very corpulent, hurt himself against the pommel of his saddle. With Déni-ba Bo's help he was able to reach home, but he fell gravely ill and died three months later (1).

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1. Séba Mana had established a special system of physical training for the young Massa-si boys. From the time they were weaned up to the age of twelve or thereabouts, they were brought up away from their families and were provided with a copious diet, consisting especially of meat which they ate almost raw. They were trained in boxing. Slaves bathed them morning and evening. When they reached the age of twelve, each received from the fama a complete set of clothes, a thoroughbred horse with harness and groom. They then returned to their father's house and were thus ready to swell the ranks of the army if need arose.

*173 Déni-ba Bo (1760-1780). The army of the Massa-si was still very weak since it had at that time only two "foot" instead of four. Nevertheless, Déni-ba Bo was determined to regain the land of his forefathers and said: "I intend to free myself from the n ti de and the n kho le (2)." He had cowries pulverized,

2. n ti de means "I say" in Soninké and n kho le means the same thing in Khassonké. Thus, Déni-ba Bo meant that he intended to free himself from both peoples.

852 with water added (to recall the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni).
The patriarch shakes the family pembélé three or four times over the
infant's head to give him the nyama of the recently deceased whose
ni and dya he has inherited. Then he places the altar (kere la boli
ni) on the infant's chest three times, after having recited a prayer.
He cuts the throat of a red cock, dips his index finger in the blood,
and traces three or four crosses on the newborn's forehead, who be-
553 comes boli din. The name is given the eighth day by the Komo chief
[431] under the doubalé, where the old people assemble. The father offers
100 kola nuts, two jars of millet beer, plus a ram whose throat is cut,
and money for the griot. Part of the baby's hair is shaved off and
kept in [90] a case (sebe); another part of the hair is thrown in the
river as a sacrifice to Faro. The eldest of the old men examines the
roots of the infant's hair and the conjunction of the eyebrows, thus
determining its character (téré). Then he swings the baby seven
times in an east-west direction and eight times north-south, giving
him the first name of the deceased ancestor and, at the same time,
his spiritual principles. The griot recite the father's mottoes, the
sénanku come to joke with the baby, and the blacksmith traces the
scarifications.

845 Twins. We have seen the belief that in the beginning twins
were always born, and Faro subsequently punished man by abolishing
double births which he no longer accords except to certain privileged
persons. For the Bambara, twins are new beings who inherit neither
the ni nor the dya of any ancestor. Special rites are observed at their
[201] birth which is announced by showing the raised right and left index
fingers, without saying anything, for the proclamation would be so
powerful that it would be harmful to the newborn twins (see G.
Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].
553 The rite of name-giving is carried out on the bank of the river. The
following day, accompanied by another woman, the mother goes in
search of millet and cotton which she gathers in identical calabash
ladles. Equal gifts are put in the ladles, which the mother presents
[301] in crossed hands. Later, the twins are fitted with metal bracelets
representing their dya, and, in certain regions, with a pendant in the
form of double slave irons. The twins always stay together; they
856 wear identical clothes. If one dies in early infancy, the mother
places on the mat beside the surviving infant a small doll made by

● 856

the blacksmith. The doll is given the name of the dead infant, the
[304 child[1] carries it with him to the circumcision, and, when he marries,
589] he buries the doll with a piece of wood representing the wife of the
deceased.

845 Twins are replicas of Faro, their presence is beneficial, and they are considered invulnerable.

826 The albino is supposed to be the issue of sexual relations held
833 in sunlight, a breach of taboo. He, too, is a new being. His wanzo
904 is so active that the circumciser must take great precautions before operating on it.

826 He is considered to be endowed with special powers which
782 make him a choice victim for the sacrifices offered to the spirit of the water.

553 To the children of blacksmiths, the name is given near the paternal forge in the presence of all the artisans. An old man pre-
326 pares seven little sticks, giving each the name of an ancestor. Three of these are drawn at random from the group, and the third gives the name of the baby. The head of the baby is rubbed with the axe Kongobwona, and his shaved hair is soaked in sacrificial blood.

553 In the Bamako region two chickens or a sheep are sacrificed
782 to celebrate the name-giving. The distribution of the meat is made according to established custom. If it is a chicken, the patriarch receives the head and the gizzard, while the wing and white meat go to the old woman who washed the baby during the first eight days. If it is a sheep, the patriarch receives [91] the ribs (because they are a bulwark, and the patriarch is the defender of the village) and the heart; the blacksmith receives the shoulder; the infant's family gets the head (so that the infant will go ahead), the back (symbol of prosperity), and the limbs (supports one wishes the new-born to have); the blood which runs on the ground is destined for the infant's protective ancestors. Then the family divides the raw meat with the heads of family, and the old woman thus receives her part indirectly.

c. Circumcision

881 A male infant is born, but he still keeps (because of the
304 primordial twinship) the prepuce as the physical support of the female
831 sex. He will only be freed of this by circumcision. It is this operation that definitively determines his sexual qualification and renders him fit to contract marriage.

[1] [ie., the surviving child of twins. -Analyst]

776 241 is represented as making her nocturnal visitation at the time the grain is threshed. An old woman, dressed in rags, wearing old unmatched sandals, and carrying broken gourds, runs about the countryside simulating madness. She follows the mythological itinerary from west to south and from east to north, and then returns and sits down near the granaries (1).

[171] 1. However, the very first agricultural techniques known as fyɛ̃ ti (literally, cultivation of the wind) are recalled, particularly among the Bozo, by random sowings of a certain number of wild grasses, then cereals, in the fields where the harvest is offered to Faro. Similar rituals are celebrated in certain Bambara villages. The techniques taught by Mousso Koroni came after those "of the wind," and precede that of millet cultivation.

For information on some agricultural rituals of the Bozo, see G. Dieterlen, "L'Agriculture rituelle des Bozo /Ritual Agriculture of the Bozo/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 20 (1950).

776 857 Mousso Koroni's agricultural work and her unhappy wanderings are also represented in a children's ritual, carried out at night during the cultivation period. One of the players, the yukuri or dantoni (literally, little hunchback), wears sandals for ears, a hump at the small of his back, a cloth tail tied low about his waist. He goes begging from /40/ door to door, followed by all the uncircumcised of his neighborhood. He pretends to cultivate and to thresh grain while his companions intone chants recalling Mousso Koroni's mythical actions. After his round is finished and the presents of millet are gathered, the player, pursued by all the others, runs off and disappears amid catcalls.

776 241 783 But while this parody of cultivation, with its rituals and chants, recalls the phases of Mousso Koroni's disorderly life, the agricultural techniques she initiated earlier are in themselves an important expression of the reparation made to the confusions she had caused. Every hoeing by the farmer is a wound inflicted on the impure earth,

776 latter animal which is imitated by the vukuri during the children's
825 nocturnal ritual described on page 65.

This new information confirms the observations noted on page 47, footnote 1, concerning the identity of the Bambara and Dogon representations. Moreover, the warableni, like the yurugu (Vulpes pallida) of the Dogon, intervenes in divination, particularly in geomancy. The investigations permit the extension of these representations to Sudanese tribes coming from Mandé (see p. 2), particularly, to the Bozo and the Peul.

Chapter 3

826 All Sudanese peoples originating in Mandé are characterized by the
773 seeds (or fish) contained in their collarbone, these varying from one
tribe to another. On the other hand, within a tribe, the theoretical
824 content of the eight seeds, though roughly similar in terminology, differs in arrangement from family to family. Also the positions of the first and last seeds are reversed for men and women. Example: the blacksmiths have as their first seed the keninge and as their last the tikaninkuru, whereas the potters have as their first seed the tikaninkuru which they cultivate in the sacred fields (see p. 170) and as their last the keninge.

Moreover, after Mousso Koroni had stolen from Pemba the seeds he was entrusted to give on earth, Faro, through the intermediary of the /232/ animals who ate them at his order, reclaimed them from her; thus purified, he distributed them to men. The animal, which brought back to Faro the essential seed of each family, becomes the taboo, tne, of the family concerned, and the breaking of this taboo has the basic effect of removing the content of the culprit's collarbone. Analogous representations are noted among the Dogon.

Totemism, the so called "joking relationship" (senankuya of the Bambara), the caste system, and the exogamous laws of the Sudanese are based on the elements and classification of the contents of the collarbone.

Chapter 6

794 All the great adult institutions (dyo) are in contact with the
857 children's society of the Ndomo which reflects the universal organization
772

194 (space, elements). Each of the six dyo to which men are initiated
857 after their circumcision corresponds to a ritual object in the Ndomo:
● the Komo (west and air) is represented by the dyara (rhombus); the
772 Kworè (east and water) by the tori; the Nama (south and fire) by the wulu; the Kono (north and earth) by the instrument of the same name. The J̌ineble corresponds to the Nya (nadir) and Nago (zenith). These last two institutions are linked with the whirlwind movement of the creative seed, symbolized by the fonio seed. That is to say, membership in the children's Ndomo society constitutes a pre-initiation to the adult societies which are essentially cosmogonic. The sanctuaries and the sacred fields of the first four dyo are theoretically situated at the corresponding cardinal point. The operation of the societies according to a strict system confirms the observations and hypotheses presented on page 10.

Moreover, the mask of the Ndomo represents both Mousso Koroni and the eight seeds stolen from Pemba. All the ceremonies concerning the coming out of Bambara masks (those of the dyo as well as those of the Čiwara and the sogo) recall the theft and cultivation of nourishing seeds by Mousso Koroni and their recapture by the animals on Faro's behalf. Similar representations are observed among the Dogon concerning the yurugu, yasigi, and Nommo.

764 The provisional master takes his place at the door or inside the blon', the vestibule of the house, and receives the condolences. [166]

Several days elapse between death and burial in order to give distant or absent relatives time to arrive. During this period the funeral songs become more and more elaborate and [533] are left to professional singers who are accompanied by various instruments: tom-toms, xylophones (bala), guitars. The singers, dancers, and mourners exert themselves all the more if they think there will be substantial rewards.

The children of the house (den'-u, de-u) are allowed a good deal of freedom during this period, as though the authority which had curbed them had ended with the life of the deceased. They are allowed to take hens and goats, to eat lavishly, sing, dance, and generally rejoice.

On the night preceding the burial, the deceased is placed outside under a shelter (gwa); the songs and dances ●[857] continue. It is customary for the children (de-u) of the house, led by the professional members of the funeral orchestra, to take part in the singing and dancing.

Relatives, friends, neighbors, and persons obligated to the family are expected to bring offerings in proportion to their rank or indebtedness so as to contribute to the meals and to [689] the funeral alms. This is a very strict obligation; any failure to comply not only shows a lack of respect for the dead, but is also an offense which the family must avenge. The chronicle of Ségou bears witness to this fact.

763 764 Along with the religious ceremonies, events of an entirely different nature take place. If the death should seem in any way suspicious, it is the duty of the family to investigate the matter without delay. It is particularly the heir presumptive, if he is present, who is required to take steps at once to clarify the matter; he questions the ancestors and consults seers and magicians. The funeral ceremonies are sometimes dominated and even conditioned by the results of these investigations and consultations. At the very least, it would be essential to obtain the lifting of the interdict imposed on the

853 A child is nursed for two or even three years, and theoretically, a woman should abstain from sexual intercourse throughout this period. In practice, however, the period of three months mentioned above is the limit of such abstention.

854 Childhood. While he is small, the child remains with his mother, whether she cares for him herself, has him cared for by a slave especially designated for the duty, or turns him over to one of her daughters.

During the nursing period of two or even three years, he is carried astraddle by his mother or some other person entrusted with his care until his legs are strong enough for him to run about the house and its vicinity.

● 857 At about six or eight years old, he is drawn into the juvenile organization known as n-tomo, and he never fails to join it as soon as he is welcome. Little girls are less free; they are kept at home and put to work at household duties, such as bringing water and wood and watching the fire.

881 Puberty. As we shall see, the n-tomo prepares the child for the soli, a ceremony which marks the most important event of his life, civil puberty. The essential but not the only rite involved in this ceremony is circumcision, In principle, the soli is limited to pubescent boys and this implies that all who go through the ceremony have physically reached puberty. Aside from the fact, however, that this condition is reached at differing ages, the boys who undergo the ceremony differ in age because the soli does not take place every year, owing to the considerable expense involved.

882 When the soli is behind him, a boy is no longer a child; he is not exactly a man either, but rather is a "young master," a kamalen'. Since he is admitted to the brotherhoods, apparently his discretion can be counted on, and he is considered competent to take an oath so he can be called upon to testify in a dispute. Also, if he is enterprising enough to attract attention to himself, he is given trifling missions which inspire him to persevere. Fur-
882 thermore, since by now he has been made sophisticated by his
836 companions in the n-tomo, his relations with his female companion

794 being born; *bolo-ko* literally means
881 "affair involving birth."

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etymologically mean "birth."

Having entered the family through physical birth, a child enters a new phase of his life through the spiritual birth represented by the *soli*. Through this rite, a child in fact ceases to belong to sexless childhood and becomes: the boy, a man; the girl, a woman. Let us look at the stages of this change of status which is truly the principal event of a native's life.

● 857 Until he is about seven years old, a small boy lives in daily contact with his mother, only slipping away, as time goes on, to play nearby with his friends.

During this period, one can already observe the influence [235] of the native milieu on the development of his young soul. He has watched cult and magic practices, and he too plays at being a magician to kill or capture rats, lizards, and other small animals for his little feasts. He collects roots with simulated rites and attaches them to his toy bow so as to ensure the success of his hunting, believing that he has attracted a spirit by promising an offering of the blood of his victims. He is already a little hunter, seeking mysterious procedures through which game can be and ought to be put at his mercy without danger to himself.

881 Around the age of seven, he is thinking about the crucial act of his life, the *soli*, one of whose rites is that of circumcision.

794 Observance of the *soli*, complete with public circumcision and preceded and followed by membership in a brotherhood, is not absolutely indispensable. When, by reason of circumstances, a child lives in an isolated situation, he undergoes the *soli* within the family circle, without fuss, and this in no way lessens the validity of the act.

881 794 561 571 There is no doubt, however, that nothing but absolute necessity will make a Bambara do this; he loathes such wretched economy, which in any case seems inappropriate to such an important occasion (1). On the contrary, he loves to take part in

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1. Besides, since no exact age limit is

881 imposed and since there may be as
561 much as six or seven years' difference
571 in age between the oldest and youngest
794 children participating in the same *soli*, it is obviously possible for a candidate to arrange to be included at some point within this range of ages so as not to be an isolated case.

881 a noisy demonstration and to share in all of the rejoicing the
571 brotherhoods provide for their members. This is by no means the
794 least of the reasons for the spread of these brotherhoods, to which the n-Tomo (2) is really the front door, since no one is admitted to a brotherhood unless he is *soli-ma*, and the specific final object of the n-Tomo is the *soli*.

2. n-Tomo is the term used in the Ségou area; in Kaarta the term n-Tori is used.

n-Tomo

561 The n-Tomo is an association which, in preparation for
● 857 the *soli*, bands together boys (3) of about seven to fourteen years

881

Each [236] n-Tomo normally includes all the boys due to be circumcised, without distinction by race or rank. Each member is called *n-Tomo-den'*; the eldest is the leader or *n-Tomo-tigi*, and he is assisted by a *syere* or "follower." New members are received every year at the time of the annual festival, and they must pay an entrance fee (a chicken) and a few cowries

3. Little girls have no organized society to prepare them for the *soli*, but they have agreements among themselves and, in addition, are chosen as *n-golo-moso-u* by the *n-Tomo-den'-u*.

561 and take an oath of secrecy. The boy leaves the n-Tomo
● 857 after the soli. Girls are not admitted.

The n-Tomo-tigi and his syere organize the association
881 so as to assure it some property which in principle is collective property. Through common abuse, however, they are the primary if not the sole beneficiaries of it. They persuade their comrades to cultivate a field whose produce will provide the food for their club feasts. The entrance fee is augmented by force, spontaneously or at the order of the n-Tomo-tigi: gifts, collections, theft, hunting, fishing, etc.; in short, anything may be collected by individual or collective effort to form a kind of common treasury.

857 There is no collectivity, however, without its spiritual
patron. The n-Tomo meets out-of-doors, at the foot of a
793 tree (1) believed to be the chosen home of a genie-protector.

> 1. The name "n-Tomo" comes from this. It has been thought that the term was simply the name of the tree where the genie-protector lives and that it was the tree which the Bambara call "n-Tomo." If this were true, why should people in Kaarta use the term "n-Tori" when the tree called n-Tomo does not change its name? It has been suggested that n-Tori is another word meaning "toad" and came from the peculiar "cry" characteristic of the society.
>
> It is my belief that the two terms, "n-Tomo" and "n-Tori" designate the same grouping in different regions and have one and the same meaning: meeting, assembly.

The n-Tomo-tigi is the high priest of this genie; as such he receives the oaths of the neophytes and has a certain degree of authority over the whole band, which ~~enables him to punish~~ any misdeed committed by a n-Tomo-den'. He does not hesitate to use corporal punishment.

● 857 use corporal punishment.

From this early age, therefore, a Bambara is subject to the corporate discipline which will henceforth dominate his whole life, for the same sort of discipline prevails in the adult brotherhoods.

The genie-protector is honored by offerings, [237] sacri-
857 fices, and ritual dances. When they perform these dances, the
292 *n-Tomo-den'* take turns wearing the ceremonial mask and cos-
[782] tume. The mask has the form of a human face surmounted by
a number of vertical horns (five to eight of these) and decorated with a few cowries. The costume consists of a *dloki* (a kind of blouse with wide sleeves) and a pair of long trousers, which completely cover the body. If the costume is yellowish-brown (*basa*) or white (*dye*), the association is called "n-Tomo-fin' (black n-Tomo)" or "n-Tomo-dye (white n-Tomo)," respectively. Is this costume supposed to represent the adepts' conception of their protector's appearance? No. As in all sects, it is intended to differentiate the officiant from the profane world (1).

[536] 1. Some of these associations give a kind of public performance from which they derive profit. Notably, they exhibit a kind of puppet called *peremperen'* (dancers) which members of the n-Tomo manipulate in a more or less comical manner; often one of the puppets rep-
[831] resents a man and the other a woman, and their movements abound in the obscenities which are so popular with the onlookers.

831 A wooden phallus (or a small board) is commonly used to
857 summon the *n-Tomo-den'* to meetings. This is tied to the end
[534] of a rope and whirled like a sling, producing a noise which the
operator can vary and which carries a considerable distance. This apparatus is called *n-Tomo-ulu*, translated as "dog of the
[195] n-Tomo." It should be noted that the words used in the brother-
hoods usually have a double meaning, with a special sense under a vulgar form. For instance, the word *ulu* means both

857 "dog" and "the sexual parts of a man," and it seems evident
831 that the expression n-Tomo-ulu should be taken in the latter
195 sense. This is all the more likely since in the similar organization among the Khassonké the same apparatus is called khefengo, literally, "thing of a man," that is, "sexual parts of a man."

857 The great festival of the association takes place every year after the harvest and does not differ essentially from the
796 one celebrated at the same time by all the brotherhoods. It involves offerings and sacrifices to the genie-protector, communion by the n-Tomo-den' at a corporate banquet, and the admission of new members. The following is a detailed description. [238]

At the instigation of the n-Tomo-tigi, the brotherhood's field has been harvested and to the grain collected has been added whatever the boys could obtain from their families or friends by any means, even theft. From this millet the n-Tomo-
[273] tigi has had dlo (beer) prepared, which is drunk in great quantities on such occasions. The "elders" (koro-u), relatives, and friends can be counted on to send their contributions in kind.

Each n-Tomo-den' is given a little outfit appropriate to the occasion. The ceremonial costume is put in order; the dloki and trousers are washed and ironed, if need be, and the mask is rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu) to give it gloss.

On the day set, everything is in readiness. Many gourds of dege (1) and to (2), numerous jars of beer (dlo), and also some kola nuts have been assembled, along with sacrificial victims.

857 The n-Tomo-den', each leading a chicken on a string,
796 go to the meeting place in single file, with the n-Tomo-tigi
782

[252] 1. Dege is made by putting coarsely ground millet into a small quantity of water.

2. A native mush.

● 857 and his syere at the head. There, the n-Tomo-den' squat at
796 a little distance from the n-Tomo-tigi, who takes his place in
782 front of them, facing the tree where the guardian genie dwells,
in order to perform the libations and sacrifices. First he takes a small gourd and pours the dege it contains against the trunk of the tree; he cuts the throat of a chicken and dribbles its blood on the tree in the same way; next, in a jet of saliva, he spits on it the juice and particles of kola nuts which he has chewed for the purpose; finally, he fastens a few of the chicken's feathers in the smear of blood. As he makes each of these offerings, he says to the genie: "Look here, I offer you this chicken, protect us, defend us against the wicked and against evil genii. Give us enough to live well. Save us from illness. Give us rain to make our fields fruitful and be propitious to our families."

He speaks thus for everybody, after which each one comes in turn to offer his sacrifice and to make personal requests through him as intermediary.

The admission of new members follows. Each of them
857 pays his entrance fee and then, prostrate before the genie,
796 swears never to reveal anything to the uninitiated, [239] above
all to the women." If you betray your brothers," says the n-Tomo-tigi, "may the genie kill you!" The new member repeats: "May he kill me!"

At this point the victims are cooked, and while they are
[535] being prepared, the n-Tomo-den' dance in turn, dressed in the
ceremonial regalia. Their steps are accompanied by the beating of drums, and they twirl a flexible stick as they dance. When the victims are cooked, the banquet begins. Everyone eats and drinks as much as he can; a special treat of kola nuts brings the banquet to a close.

857 On this day each n-Tomo-den' is expected to take one of
796 his gifts or some other personal possession and make a present of
572 it to his n-golo-moso (1). This is how one names the young
[431]

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1. N-golo-moso, literally, "woman of the birth," is the companion associated with the rite which he is to undergo.

857 companion whom each n-Tomo-den' is required to choose upon
796 his admission into the sect; she is his special girl friend and
[572] his relations with her are not merely platonic.

The meal is over by mid-afternoon, and the band re-
857 turns to the village for a public performance during which the
796 members beat one another. First, the n-Tomo-tigi and his
785 syere advance to the middle of a circle of onlookers, relatives, friends, and others; the mothers wrap cloths or scarves around their hips and stomachs to protect them from serious injury. Onlookers sing and clap their hands. The n-Tomo-tigi holds his whip aloft with his arms outstretched, and the syere immediately flogs his head and shoulders, front and back, his thighs, legs, and feet; he keeps this up, the victim uttering not a single cry of pain, until he can strike no longer, either because he is exhausted or because his whip is broken.

Then it is the turn of the syere to be flogged in the same way. Following this, the n-Tomo-den' in pairs flog each other until it is the turn of the very youngest who, being less hardened, weep and scream and run away at the first blow. This naturally gives rise to laughter and mockery among the onlookers, who had greatly admired the stamina of the others.

In some places each n-Tomo-den' flagellates himself.

What is the meaning of this practice? It seems likely that originally its purpose was to emphasize the secrecy required of the n-Tomo-den' by giving them a chance to show that they would not violate [240] their oaths even under blows. It should be recalled that flogging was the common method of obtaining confessions, always considered the best proof of guilt. Thus, the practice of flagellation would to some extent enable the adepts not to confess under blows (1). The practice is also a means of preparing the boys to undergo circumcision without flinching, since it is a signal disgrace to show or expose pain at that time.

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1. Flagellation is also practiced in certain brotherhoods for no apparent reason except that of hardening one against pain. See "The Koré" below.

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considered as being in the same category as their grandparents; they are said to belong to the same age class.

561 857 [57] The relations between boys and girls before the ceremonies of circumcision and excision are governed by a sort of non-consummated marriage uniting the children of the different ton.

The little girl (ton-musso) must take care of the clothes and household of her infant husband (tontié); later she must decorate his house with designs he tells her to make. In return, her husband will give her gifts and will help cultivate her parents' field. When the girl marries in earnest, her tontié must himself give her to her husband. Throughout this false marriage, the young girl's virginity must be respected, and her tontié is held responsible for it.

561 Before their circumcision, all the children are affiliated according to their age classes to the brotherhood of the n'Tomo (see the chapter on religion). The oldest of the group will be the head of his class; all the little chiefs are subjects of the chief of the oldest group: the n'tomo-tigi and to his deputy, the n'tomo-tigi-syere. The brotherhood prepares the children for the circumcision initiation; it regulates the common work, the religious ceremonies, and the celebrations. It settles disputes that may arise between members.

561 796 The different ceremonies of the n'Tomo, which take place each year after the harvest, have been described by Monteil (1) and by Tauxier (2). They include offerings, sacrifices to the guardian spirit, a communion, and masked dances followed by a lash from the ritual whip, which marks the definitive acceptance of the neophytes.

561 Later, those who have belonged to the same n'tomoya and who have undergone the soli together are united for life. They are fulani, that is to say, twins (they are born the same day to the sexual, social,

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1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

2. Tauxier, La religion bambara [The Bambara Religion].

463 326 make tools, farming implements in current use, furnishings, ornamental objects, bracelets, different kinds of rings. They also work gold and silver to make jewelry in filigree.

462 286 285 Weaving and basket-making are not done by the people of caste, but by all men, or, formerly, by their house captives. Primitive looms, worked by treadles, are set up outside of the houses in the shade of the trees. The men weave long bands of cotton for making clothes, loin-cloths, and blankets. These bands, several meters long, are sometimes made into rolls weighing as much as 30 kilograms and are carried off to market by the diula [531] (itinerant merchants). The Bambara practice dyeing, batik, and [illegible] embroidery (done by the men).

433 All this industry remains of strictly local interest and is directed solely toward meeting the immediate needs of the community.

c. Division of Labor

462 857 The Bambara are essentially an agricultural people. Nevertheless, as all members of the society must contribute a certain amount of work to the community, the nature of this work varies according to the social classes and according to whether a man, a woman, or a child is involved. The following tables indicate how the work is divided.

1. Distribution of tasks according to A. Aubert.

Men	Women	Children	All
	Foodstuffs		
	Preparation of food and dolo (beer)		
	Sale of dolo		
Preparation of hives, setting them, gathering the honey	Bottling and sale of honey	Helping	

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857

Men	Women	Children	All
Smoking of the meat	Harvest of karite and its preparation	Harvest	
Slaughtering the animals (work reserved for smiths)			
	Construction of the hut		
Masonry	Drawing and carrying necessary water	Carrying water (girls)	
Cutting and carrying straw and bamboo		Carrying straw (boys)	
Roofing			
Plastering exterior	Plastering interior	Pounding the threshing floor	
[65]	**Hunting**		
Preparation of the powder		Beating for game with dogs (boys)	
Hunting			
Training dogs			
	Fishing		
Preparation of fish traps and nets	Spinning	Fishing in ponds with bell-shaped traps	In case of draining a pond

462
857

Men	Women	Children	All
	Care of the animals		
	Care and milking of cows	Helping (girls)	
	Farming		
Removing stumps			
Sowing	Sowing sometimes	Sowing sometimes	Generally speaking, all cooperate in working the land, which is the only noble work, for the Bambara is above all a farmer and maker of sacrifices.
Weeding	Weeding sometimes	Weeding sometimes	
Threshing the millet (fla-ké)			
Harvest of millet and fonio	Weeding of fonio	Helping	
Threshing millet			
Grubbing the peanuts	Gathering and husking		
Harvesting maize	Picking ears	Helping	
Threshing rice	Harvesting rice	Helping	
Planting sweet potatoes	Transplanting and harvesting	Helping	
Planting kidney beans	Harvesting kidney beans and peas	Helping	

462
857

Men	Women	Children	All
Planting and harvesting manioc			
Profits from okra, da, and indigo go to the men	Okra; cultivation and harvesting	Helping	
	Da: id.	Helping	
	Indigo: id.	Helping	
Preparation of cotton lougan	Harvesting, picking out, spinning cotton	Helping	
Weaving, sewing, putting together	Sale, dyeing	Helping	
Preparation of tobacco lougan, preparation and sale	Watering, powdering, and retail sale of snuff	Helping	
Preparation of calabash lougan, harvesting, emtying, sale, and decoration		Gathering burgu for horses	

Wells

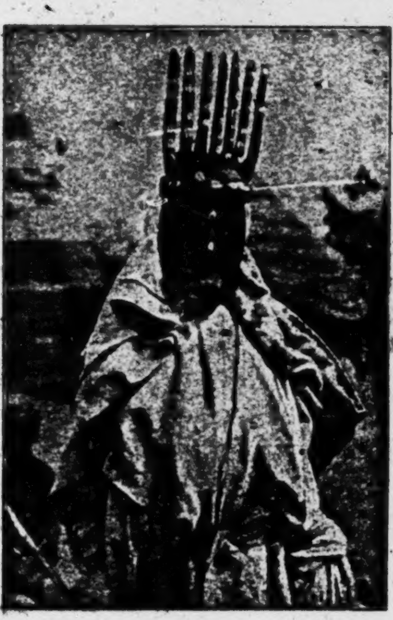
463 Drilling by male smiths only	Drawing water	Helping (girls)	

Men	Women	Children	All
462 463	**Circumcision and excision**		
Male smiths for the boys	Females of smiths' caste for the girls		
	Midwifery		
	All women past menopause		
	Religion		
Koma and Dio reserved to men	?		
	Coiffure		
[302] Men's heads are shaved by men	Women braid the men's hair where this mode of hairdressing survives		
	All the women's coiffures		
	Ropes		
Preparation of fiber, drying, cording			
	Tanning		
Male shoemakers			
[67]	**Rubber**		
● [857] Sale		Gathering and preparation	

869 of the n'tomotigi. /93/

794 561 These two children prepare the hunts for rats and lizards, organize the games and supervise them, and if an offence is committed by the band, it is up to them to discover the culprit. When quarrels, arguments, and fights arise among the children, they intervene, judge each case, and, if the matter is worth the trouble, the mischief-maker, or the one who is declared responsible, is severely beaten. All this produces unity within the various groups and prevents them from coming to blows at every moment.

[778]



Mask of the n'tomo, the children's fetish.

The little girls also have an organization into groups; but it lacks cohesion; it would have to be religious in nature, since religion is the basis of all unity in the Bambara country. Only at the time of excision does all this change, and then there is real cohesion among them.

796 ● 851 Every year children sacrifice to the n'tomo genie through the mediation of their head, the n'tomotigi. The day of the sacrifice is a day of great rejoicing which ends in flagellation. The material for

796 ● 857 the sacrifice is furnished by the children themselves; all of them together work a small field for this purpose during the winter, and if the harvest is not sufficient, they go begging from door to door so that nothing will be lacking at the feast -- neither d'lo, the millet beer, nor kola nuts. On the evening of this great day, each new initiate chooses his n'golo mouso, as they call the little girl each one takes as his "sister of the heart, " his bonne amie as one would say in France /his girlfriend/. But she is more; she is a little maid of all work, and the gift which he gives her every year at the celebration is more a payment than a gift of friendship, "pure and simple." /94/

7. The Genie Protector of Circumcised Youths

794 776 778 At circumcision the Bambara leave the association of the n'tomo and place themselves under the protection of more powerful genii. These genii are all of the same nature, only the name differs with each region, and all the confraternities are copied after one and the same model. The most widespread is that of the n'golo (1).

1. In Bani it is the n'goso rather than the n'golo.

The n'golo is nothing but two forked branches fastened together and hung on a light dloma (2). One can meet it quite often in a corner of the village, out of doors, but usually it is under a small shed or hut. This genie gives the youths not only strength, vigor, and health, but also the talent, if not of pleasing women, at least of attracting them and thus being able to obtain some crude satisfactions. It helps the unmarried to meet the girl of the moment, and thanks to it,

[342] 2. Dloma are forked sticks on which rest the crossbars or beams that hold up the flat terrace roofs. The name dloma is given to all forked sticks, small and large.

782 851 There are many kinds of saraka, and they are offered for just about all purposes. Besides those given by order of sorcerers, there are some established by custom itself, and uncircumcised children are required to carry them out. They often hunt turtles, /108/ palm rats, guinea fowl, and partridges, so they plant a strong dry branch either outside the village or even inside it, and on its branches hang the heads of captured animals and the shells of eggs they have sucked. This is their way of thanking the genii, of ensuring other successful hunts, and of protecting themselves from the gnâma of their many victims.

782 The Bambara also give the name of saraka to some practices that are purely and simply superstitious and do not, strictly speaking, have the character of religious worship. In these instances the word saraka must be given a broader meaning than that which I have attributed to it. The old shoes, caps, fruit rinds, rags, etc., hung here and there on branches of trees are not so much a rendering of homage by the Black to a genie, to an external agent, as they are a tribute paid their own inner, personal, and unreasoned fear. In this respect they are like some Europeans, foster brothers of these idiots, who believe in the salt cellar, crossed knives, thirteen at the table, Friday, etc., who turn over the salad bowl before undertaking a serious matter, or slide a four-leaf clover into their vest pockets. And why? It brings good luck, causes success. And how? They cannot tell you, for with them it is not reasoned -- nor is it with the Bambara.

2. Gnéna of the Third Group;
The Eight /sic/ Categories of Powerful Gnéna

776 782 796 The third group of genii have their priests and ministers; saraka are not enough for them, and they receive sacrifices. The public sacrifices are annual, and the whole population -- men, women, and children -- participate. Dégé (/millet/ flour mixed with water), white hens, and white kola nuts are the usual material of the sacrifice, and the formula recited can always be reduced to the following: "Give us water; cause peace to reign among us, in the

881 304 defended their gods with spear in hand, and I can find in their circumcision nothing which resembles the religion of the Prophet in the slightest. For the Bambara, circumcision is not only the seal of the tribe, it is also a second birth, the entrance into civil and religious life.

It is the occasion for four great festivals. On the second day of the festival which corresponds to the Moslem festival of the كبش (sheep), those about to be circumcised, who are given the special name of soli, offer to the to-n-déou, or members of the mutual aid society, fla-n-ton, a very fine couscous called basi. To obtain it, they have had to go begging and singing from door to door (kili), whence the name soli kili basi, which is given to this festival. Before going under the knife, all the soli make a vigil of arms. The soli kili basi is followed by the soli si (1), and six days later the da woro is held. When the circumcised boys and excised girls are healed, the drums roll again, /176/ more drinking bouts are organized, and the boloko déou don bo, the coming out of the circumcised, takes place (1).

1. Si, "spend the night."

1. From boli, "hand," "arm" (veiled terms designating the sex organs); ko, "wash"; deou, plural of de, "child," "son"; don, "day"; bo, "to come out."

881 857 During the days between the festival of Ramadan (2) and the

2. Under Moslem domination, the Bambara had to observe the festivals of Ramadan and of the كبش, (sheep). They have become national festivals with sacrifices to the shades of ancestors and to the good fetishes. The observances do not include a single Moslem rite . . . .

881 festival of the sheep كَبشن , the little soli girls, those chosen
857 for the next circumcision, go with their still unmarried older sisters
to thank the elders for the honor which has been done them. In the
[533] evening, at nightfall, they visit the families and in a nasal song
recall the glories of their ancestors. They also have the most flattering words for those still living, and it all ends with this plea: "We are soli and haven't a penny! On the tenth day of the next moon we must offer you a fine "couscous" with very small grains, the basi, and we want a good sauce. Help us in this, I beg you, we are soli without a penny."

881 The songs of the soli remind the old men and women of their
857 younger days, the days of their youth, and they run to the granary,
481 search the gourds that they use as cupboards, unlace the long roll of close-packed straw where the cowrie shells are piled, and the young people leave triumphantly, rich in cowrie shells, millet, and decayed fish. The proceeds of the quest are entrusted to the oldest of the soli, and, on the second day of the festival of the sheep, our belles gather, grind furiously, and provide the whole village with its ration, basi kili, which is the name of the festival.

881 On the stroke of noon and even before, everybody is fed and is eagerly tasting the sorghum /sic/ beer, d'lo, and the soli girls run from one house to another to gather the leftovers from the feast. They do it hurriedly, eagerly, and feverishly, for they are impatient to perform their great religious, public, and solemn act, and at the soli kili basi they are the cooks and servants of the spirits.

The latter /spirits/ stay at the outskirts of villages, invisible, and drag the soles of their feet along the paths of yawn as they crouch /177/ at the crossroads. The songs of happiness, the cries of joy, the hiccups of the drinkers, and the deafening noise of the bass drums split their eardrums, the scent of decayed fish swells their nostrils, and no doubt, between two sighs, as they lick their lips with their tongues, they say to themselves in a murmur which the wind carries away: "Oh! the gluttons, they are forgetting us!"

But not at all -- they are remembered! A little soli girl smears her face, breasts, and back with milk, ashes, also and with other things whose names I do not know; she makes herself hideous to behold,

642
565 3. the free men;

4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);

5. slaves.

567 e. Slavery. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by violence, by obligation, or by birth.

567 727 554 1. By violence. If a war captive is important, he may be killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration. A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama; [608] if he is a sênanku of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious [561] Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

567 681 426 858 2. By obligation. A free individual became a slave in punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the profit of the Fama. A fa could sell one of his children to meet his debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was freed of his obligations.

567 3. By birth. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a wolo-so. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

567 644 As the number of slaves grew, their organization became complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Sĕgou were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the dyon-kuru or dyon-futu (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Sĕgou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him, the submission of all the slaves.

D. Position of Women

562 [191] Women's society has remained much more impenetrable to European civilization. Women very rarely go to French schools, and unlike the men, who, during their military service and otherwise, are partly immersed in our system of civilization, they have few contacts with the Whites and appear to be even more attached to custom than their husbands. Very few speak French, and for all these reasons their society has remained closed and very imperfectly known to the Whites.

562 858 Reasoning from what is known of their juridicial situation, we have deduced their inferior position. Perhaps a better knowledge of their role and of their importance in the society will lead us to very different conclusions. From the legal point of view, a woman is always a minor; she belongs first to her own community, to which she owes obedience, then to her husband's community. When the marriage is legal, that is to say, when the husband has paid the matrimonial settlement, the children belong to the husband; if not, in the case of concubinage, the woman's family can claim the child, because it belongs to the family, as does everything of the mother's.

562 582 583 Her marriage is decided on by the fa; although in practice the woman is often consulted indirectly beforehand, and she has a certain liberty in her choice. Even a slave can refuse to marry her master, despite gifts and promises. But a woman is forbidden to marry someone she considers a relative, that is, someone who belongs to her paternal line and who bears the same name she does. Exogamy is the rule.

562 593 [586] Yet, when a woman marries, she keeps her paternal name and her personal taboos; sometimes she adds her name to that of her son, who normally bears the dyamu of his father. The woman remains very attached [75] to her family and goes to stay with them often. Among them she will find support in case of a difference of opinion with her husband. In case of divorce through the fault of the husband, he loses all rights over the wife as well as the settlement he had paid.

595 [431] In the system of polygamy, the first wife is mistress of the house; the other wives gather at her place for meals. She distributes the husband's presents, but aside from these privileges, the rights of the wives are equal as are those of their children.

576 that she may speak to him freely. When the day of union comes, the
593 wife herself prepares her husband's food; then she lies on the left side
833 (the feminine side) and her husband on the right side, and she cannot
[842] be impregnated except by a union twice repeated.

771 These corporal techniques[1] are dictated and ordered by the
religious imperatives which pervade the life of the Bambara from
before his birth until after his death.

761 What we have said of the Bambara's religion and of his conception of the world enables us to understand that there cannot be for him a complete break between life and death: birth is a reincarnation; death is not destruction. This is why a man's life does not present one substantial unity but is divided into a certain number of distinct periods, each of which is inaugurated by a rite of transition that marks the death of an anterior state and the rebirth to a new life.

a. Before Birth

843 From the first month after his conception, the infant consti-
761 tutes a person who receives a series of spiritual forces emanating
from his father's side of the family and especially from the recently
858 deceased ancestor whose name he will receive. At the same time,
he inherits all of the paternal taboos, which the mother must respect
during her pregnancy. It is only after his birth, at the time he receives his name, that the infant receives the spiritual forces coming from his mother's side. These forces are transmitted through the medium of the priest and the ancestors of the priest.

761 From then on, the infant is required to observe all the taboos
of the beings who have had a part in the composition of his personality;
858 he thus finds himself tightly bound to the society in which he will
live.

b. Birth Rites

852 At birth the baby is washed with millet beer (1) (to purify him)

1. For all these rites, see G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

[1] [i.e., sexual reproduction and childrearing, see pp. 117-119. -Analyst]

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1. A bonded person works for his food, just like a slave. His condition is worse than that of the slave, for in addition to his food, the latter receives a bit of cloth to cover himself, but the bonded person does not. A slave can ransom himself for a sum varying between 100 and 200 francs, and at present he can escape without fear of being pursued and without paying anything at all. A bonded person must pay the amount of his bond to the last cowrie shell, whether he escapes or not. There are Negroes who, for a certain amount, will give you one of their children for one or two years. These children are not paid since the amount has already been paid, but besides food they get clothing and some gratuities beyond the payment for their work. Lacking the proper words, the Bambara call this also, "bonding" even though it is basically a real "domestic service." When the agreed time has passed, these young people go back to their homes without any payment being made. Even though the Negroes call this bonding, they make a distinction: a) slavery is a stigma which always remains; b) true bonding is a stigma that does not disappear unless the bonded person himself pays the price of his bonding; c) the bonding which is called "domestic service" does not involve any stigma; they are workers and not menial laborers.

181 that she is a girl, that one day she will be a man's plaything, an
831 object for his pleasure. The child would leave smiling and replace
her three fingers of rag even as she walked away. At dinner time a
[482] big girl would come carrying the gourd of tô, or sorghum gruel, on
her head, and on the palm of her right hand, at shoulder height, the
platter of dried fish sauce. She would be greeted from as far away
as she could be seen and asked for a report on her whole body, and
indeed there would be no stopping at "how are your feet" nor even at
"how are your breasts." And the girl would answer all these vile questions
without getting excited, and when a well-washed hand, ready to
be used as a spoon, embraced her or lifted her breasts, she was not
shocked; only the opposite would surprise her.

887 Here and there in the village a giant tree stretches its branches
538 afar, and the old men, lovers of endless palaver, enjoy themselves
521 under its shade. They go there from the early morning to weave cloth,
make mats, tan hides, scour goats' horns intended for powerful
amulets, etc., and often even /159/ just for the purpose of spending
the hours dozing. And in the midst of all these gray, or at least
graying, beards, swarms a world of children. Among the old men
there are good storytellers /conteur/, who excel in stories of hunting
and war that throb with interest -- but why, alas, must they always
graft on some salacious incident? Their mouths are full chiefly with
[831] stories of adultery and fornication. They will not spare you a single
detail, and they will readily go back to the very beginning so as to
lack no precision whatever. And the moral of these stories can be
reduced to this: "There is nothing in this world comparable to the
pleasures of the flesh; let us enjoy marriage and never pass up a chance
to obtain this satisfaction."

524 If the old men are this lewd, is it surprising to hear the young
831 men describe the ugliness of their bestial evenings while they make
● 864 mats, stretch the hides of drums, or sew a blouse, a cap, or trousers
for themselves in the b'lon, or entry hut? They talk constantly of their
soungourou, and this term, which should simply mean an unmarried
girl, means any woman, married or not, who gives herself to the
first comer.

Without any shame they talk and chat about all these vile acts
before their little brothers, before children ten and twelve years old,

521 831 864 and before little girls, and it is not unusual to see a big girl leaning against the door of the hut with ears wide open so as not to miss a word, and finding cause to burst into gales of laughter. Are all these people capable of being shocked? I doubt it, even as far as the young girls are concerned, for all or almost all of them have their favorite nooks in the bush. Moreover, they can tell each other vulgar stories, and one should hear them as they clean and spin cotton, or when in the evening, shut in a communal hut (1), they play, laugh, and chatter before going to sleep. Could it be otherwise? Since all the men have soungourou, they know that their fathers and brothers each have one, and they are not unaware that their mothers see no /160/ wrong in giving themselves to their men friends. The great crime is allowing oneself to be caught.

521 831 You may think I exaggerate, yet when two women, each with a nursing infant in her arms, are crouched in the court by their pots in which tô (gruel) is simmering, it is very unusual for them not to be gossiping about the marital infidelities of their neighbors and sometimes even their own. I am saying nothing about the old women with turned-up chins and toothless jaws; they are experienced midwives and talk mainly about abortions.

They are all the same, and more than one mother has made me blush as she gave the breast to her last born and smiled sweetly at the rest of the brood frolicking near her. In wishing health and prosperity to a child that a woman is nursing, one sometimes makes a mistake about its sex, and without respect for one's ears nor pity for

[591 882] 1. In the evening all young girls are shut in a communal hut or dormitory under the supervision of an old woman. The woman's duty is to prevent young men from coming in and to see that the girls do not go out and seek a boy friend's hospitality. There is a dormitory in each quarter.

847 And is abortion such a great crime in the eyes of the Bambara?
Less serious, surely, than one might imagine. It is very common,
and when a woman passes, one may overhear from the lips of the
Negroes, even those of children: "a y'i kono tigné, she has destroyed
the fruit of her womb." There is nothing to teach Bambara children;
● [864] at eight and ten years they know everything! When one listens to
their conversations and lends an ear to their songs, they always revolve
around the vilest subjects.

3. The Birth of a Child

842 Before birth. -- Not only is it impossible for the Bambara to accept the idea that a man could live without a wife or a woman without a husband, they likewise cannot conceive of a home without children. They desire the pleasures of fatherhood, and a couple who are healthy or, to put it better, capable of consummating the conjugal act, /166/ quickly appeal to a diviner's knowledge, however short a time they have waited to have children. They believe that sterility is the result of sorcery or an evil spell.

When the husband is impotent or afflicted with an illness
833 which prevents all marital relations, his wife readily becomes unfaith-
847 ful and commits adultery in order to avoid the shame of sterility.
Moreover, in order not to have to face a winking eye that speaks volumes or a disdainful smile which reveals everything, the husband is indulgent and even approves her crime, at least for the first times. Let us admit quickly that he can do nothing about it, for if she cannot be unfaithful, the wife will abandon herself to loud cries, demand a divorce, and reject the man, who would himself leave her if she were in a similar situation. Without approving of such indulgence, one can understand it on the part of an unfortunate who needs to keep his cook and safeguard his honor before a people that scorns an impotent man and sees nothing amiss in adultery since it is a crime that can be redeemed.

[164] If a woman who conceives is in a syphilitic condition, which
843 is often the case, the fruit of her womb seldom comes to full term

575 323 [561] the society during a public consecration which she receives with several others, the group forming an age grade.

After an apprenticeship of seven days, the potters decide upon the date of the ceremony which is celebrated at the firing spot near the altars. Each member provides a hairpin (bandigi), which represents her on this occasion, and the skin of a hedgehog. Disrobed in front of the assembled villages, each girl is seated in turn on the altar as an aged woman examines her genitals to verify her virginity and the proper execution of the excision.

/126/ If the young girl is no longer a virgin, she is publicly [831] declared dangadè (literally, bastard) and finds herself automatically excluded from the society; she will never be able to receive the potter's title. Otherwise, a proclamation is made immediately to the great joy of the public. If the excision has not been judged [304] sufficient, the patient is given the title of potter after having submitted to a new operation performed in such a way that the blood runs over the pottery (1).

1. If excision is not possible, the operation takes the form of a wound inflicted with the hedgehog's skin (see p. 243).

575 323 867 An old woman then appears seated before members of the age grade and instructs them. She tells of the origin and history of pottery, apprising them of the difficulties of the craft such as fatigue, burns, etc. She teaches them patience towards the client and enumerates the rules which will have to be observed during their lifetime; to be pure in heart and to hate no one; not to undertake work shortly after having had sexual relations; to work in silence; to respect all taboos in general.

575 323 782 431 She then makes a libation of karite oil on the altar and rubs it on the bodies of the initiates who must run their tongues over the pottery, thus making an oath. Sheep, brought by the initiates' parents, are then killed by having their throat cut over the hearth in the name of the potters while the elders of the society present to the initiates gifts consisting of several pots which they will sell for profit while waiting for their first work. This gift is moreover a sign of adoption.

323 317 784 The utensils are made with clay, mbogo pasa, taken from the bottom of the watercourse or along the river's edge; they belong to

794 The candidates next swear an oath the text of which is recited by the chief:

"If I reveal (the secrets of) the boli, may it kill me; if I disclose the institutions, may they kill me; until my death, if I speak, may my father die, may my mother die, may the boli break my heart" (1).

> 1. Ni nye korobo, boli ka fa, ni nye korobo, dyow ka fa, fo kata n sa ni nya fo n fa ka sa m ba ka sa, boli dyugu ka sõ ta.

Each in his turn, the children next lick the head and the hooks of the mask three times, thus assuring it their allegiance: "Until my death, I shall not reveal the koli. Faro has not been revealed! Let the koli not be revealed!" (1)

> 1. Fo ka ta n sa nte korobo koli, faro ma korobo, koli kana korobo.

After the altars, including the pembele, have been presented to [782] them, the postulants drink the blood of a goat offered in sacrifice; thus they assimilate the forces of the Komo and by this communion consecrate their oath.

Finally, the mechanism of the society in all its details is explained to them: the necessity of hierarchy in age grades, of respect for taboos, and of the secrecy in which all that concerns the organization must be held. A moral lesson is also taught them; in particular they [867] are advised to set themselves a line of conduct in private life as well as in public life, to be righteous, to avoid duplicity and bad faith, ● flãvlãña (literally, double action), never to serve two masters, and not to entertain conflicting desires among themselves.

794 As an illustration, the adventures of the first members who broke these laws are told.

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539 One of Makanta Djigui's companions, Garou Keita, was afflicted with this serious fault. He had become friendly with Moridje Sidibé, son of the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé, who had the same character. At this period three great Komo were already functioning in the region: that of Koulikouro called selo (literally, grave); that of Nyamina called dyibi (literally, dark); and that of Kankan.

Garou went to one of the ceremonies of the Komo of Kankan /156/ and by telling lies, incited the members to revolt against the local

212 by numbers, and notably by ten, which may be obtained, among
801 other ways and if it's a question of representing the Creator, by
adding the first four numbers, or by adding the number five to
[776] itself." Ten is the numerical symbol of Faro (god of water); it
symbolizes what is just, true, perfect, and complete.

The symbolism of numbers is used in divination: a first
[787] group of eight signs, called the secret count, reproduces the seven
first numbers which, according to a Bambara myth, were engraved
in space at the instant that the Creator by his word formed the universe.
They contain the whole universe.

These numerical signs were ritually traced on the most varied occasions.

Finally, we must note the existence of the sign for "nothing,"
[802] fu gundo, zero, which stands at the beginning of a series of 196
numerical signs used by those who practice arithomancy.

The word Mandé, of central significance for 44 peoples, may be interpreted, according to some, as manin (the secret name for ten), number of unity and of the cultural community.

F. Writing

For everyday use, the Bambara have adopted arabic characters,
212 called by them "writing of the Blacks." In fact, only those
who have studied in the Marabouts' schools know how to read or
write them. No written literature, properly speaking, exists. A
538 large store of traditions, epics, tales, legends, songs, and proverbs
is transmitted orally from generation to [17] generation by professional
storytellers, the griot. Moreover, the whole sum of scientific,
867 juridical, ethical, and practical knowledge is taught orally
868 in the course of daily life or during long years of initiation. Certain
old masters renowned for their learning are consulted from far
distances when a chief is in doubt on a point of tradition.

Nevertheless, signs do exist for a secret writing that the
212 priests, the heads of families, or blacksmiths draw on the sanctuaries,
on masks, furniture, clothing, cabin walls, or in the sand.

For the Bambara, things exist by signs. These signs have attached
212 themselves to things, calling them to consciousness and to
812 the attention of man.

844 Before delivery of her child, a woman is advised to pound grain.
When the labor pains come, the woman retires to her hut with several
matrons (men are not allowed access). If the child is poorly presented,
the priest is called. He performs outside the hut, simulating the delivery
and chanting the formulas that ease labor. To deliver the
infant, the woman kneels with her hands thrown behind her, while
the midwife supports the small of her back. At birth the infant's
shoulders must touch the ground; this is the moment when he receives
his spiritual principles. The infant is washed several times and
smeared with karite butter.

846 The mother must not go out during the first eight days after the
853 birth; she must devote herself entirely to the new-born. She massages
854 his head daily in order to give it a more rounded form, and she
pinches his nose. She nurses the infant for the first two years, then
the weaned child passes directly to the communal calabash. Until
the child can walk, the mother carries it astraddle on her back with
the aid of a loincloth knotted at her chest. In this manner the infant
accompanies the mother everywhere, to work as well as to the dance.
868 It is during these intimate contacts that the mother teaches her child
to talk. Later, the little girls stay with their mothers who teach them
all the domestic arts, while the boys are educated in outside work.
● [867] During their childhook they are taught the usages and rules of deportment:
a woman knows she must never shake the hand of a man to
201 greet him, and, if he extends his hand, she flings up her arm "as a
576 sign of not being interested." A man will salute his superior by extending
his hand palm upwards, and the superior will put his over it;
inversely, when a man greets an inferior he extends his hand with the
palm down, while for an equal his hand will be perpendicular to the
ground. If a man must ask someone's pardon, he puts his hands behind
his back to simulate the tail of an animal (for he has acted like
an animal). Crossing the hands in front of or upon the head is a sign
of sadness. To mark his submission to a king, a man puts his right
elbow to the ground. To pray to God, the two hands are extended
with the palms turned [89] outward. A woman learns that it is impudent
576 to question her husband during the day, and when she speaks
593 of him, she says koke, that is, big brother, for she cannot pronounce
833 his name or in any way recall the bonds which exist between them.
It is only during the two consecutive nights that she couples with him

*173 When he had been freed, Déni-ba Bo left at once to rejoin his brother Séba Mana. The latter was still shaken by an encounter that very morning with the Khassonké [Kasonke] who had had a column composed of 60 "foot." Mounting his horse, Séba Mana wanted to show his brother the scene of the battle. When they reached a small stream, the horses easily crossed over, but Séba Mana, who was very corpulent, hurt himself against the pommel of his saddle. With Déni-ba Bo's help he was able to reach home, but he fell gravely ill and died three months later (1).

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> 1. Séba Mana had established a special system of physical training for the young Massa-si boys. From the time they were weaned up to the age of twelve or thereabouts, they were brought up away from their families and were provided with a copious diet, consisting especially of meat which they ate almost raw. They were trained in boxing. Slaves bathed them morning and evening. When they reached the age of twelve, each received from the *fama* a complete set of clothes, a thoroughbred horse with harness and groom. They then returned to their father's house and were thus ready to swell the ranks of the army if need arose.

*173 *Déni-ba Bo* (1760-1780). The army of the Massa-si was still very weak since it had at that time only two "foot" instead of four. Nevertheless, Déni-ba Bo was determined to regain the land of his forefathers and said: "I intend to free myself from the *n ti de* and the *n kho le* (2)." He had cowries pulverized,

> 2. *n ti de* means "I say" in Soninké and *n kho le* means the same thing in Khassonké. Thus, Déni-ba Bo meant that he intended to free himself from both peoples.

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pinches his nose. She nurses the infant for the first two years, then
the weaned child passes directly to the communal calabash. Until
the child can walk, the mother carries it astraddle on her back with
the aid of a loincloth knotted at her chest. In this manner the infant
accompanies the mother everywhere, to work as well as to the dance.
868 It is during these intimate contacts that the mother teaches her child
to talk. Later, the little girls stay with their mothers who teach them
all the domestic arts, while the boys are educated in outside work.
[867] During their childhook they are taught the usages and rules of deportment:
a woman knows she must never shake the hand of a man to
201 greet him, and, if he extends his hand, she flings up her arm "as a
576 sign of not being interested." A man will salute his superior by extending
his hand palm upwards, and the superior will put his over it;
inversely, when a man greets an inferior he extends his hand with the
palm down, while for an equal his hand will be perpendicular to the
ground. If a man must ask someone's pardon, he puts his hands behind
his back to simulate the tail of an animal (for he has acted like
an animal). Crossing the hands in front of or upon the head is a sign
of sadness. To mark his submission to a king, a man puts his right
elbow to the ground. To pray to God, the two hands are extended
with the palms turned [89] outward. A woman learns that it is impudent
576 to question her husband during the day, and when she speaks
593 of him, she says koke, that is, big brother, for she cannot pronounce
833 his name or in any way recall the bonds which exist between them.
It is only during the two consecutive nights that she couples with him

194 chiefs, which they did. They interrupted the dances and refused to
113 recognize the Komo which was dissolved, leaving the chief alone.
539 But Garou, who had lied, died shortly after that.

The chief of Kankan carried away the altars and put them under the protection of the Komo chief of Koulikoro, and the members participated in the ceremonies of this locality. Moridje went to Nyamina and, in the same way as Garou, incited the members to engage in a kind of rivalry with the Komo of Koulikoro. In the course of a ceremony celebrated in this latter village, he called forth the Komo of Nyamina, using the authority attached to his father's name, and offerred a male goat to both groups. The two chiefs refused, arguing with reason that one victim could not satisfy two Komo. Moridje paid no attention and brought the two maskers face to face with the goat between them. A fight took place with the animal as a pawn, each masker using his magical powers to win it, and the members gathered behind their respective masks shouting: "the goat is ours." Later, the mask wearer also died prematurely.

194 To avoid the possibility that members will give their allegiance to two Komo, they are made to lick the mask once again, while the following prayer is recited: "If you lick the mask, may you not make the *flã̆vlã̆ña*, may you not perpetrate a betrayal" (1). If, after swearing this oath, the party betrays it, he becomes "a rotten person" (*matolilo*) and loses the esteem and confidence of his companions.

194 As the young men grow with years and increase in knowledge, the
869 instruction they are given is increasingly comprehensive. The head of the Komo, accompanied by men of his age grade, takes the
532 postulant into the bush and questions him about his intentions and aims. Before indicating to him the group to which he is to be attached and introducing its members to him, he teaches him by drawing on the ground the combination of signs representing the arrangement in the universe of the Komo society, a combination which is usually reproduced before each ceremony and which permits the participants to recognize their place (see Fig. 12).

This drawing, called *wolo ti*, "sign of the generation," is composed of two long lines cutting each other at right angles and oriented

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1. *Nye komo kun no, i kana seka flã̆vlã̆ña kę, nye komo kun no, i kana seka dyã̆fa kę*.

794 according to the cardinal points. The point of juncture is placed in the
869 center of a square called bara kęnę, "rhythm of space," the internal angles of which are armed with hooks. The two crossed lines are /157/
532 the symbol of the multiplication and extension of beings and things in the universe which is represented by the central square. The four angle hooks express the creation rotating upon itself (1). It is therefore, a schematic representation of the order and movement of the universe.

Along the extension of the diagonal lines outside the central square are drawn five signs which are each the symbol of a category of initiates or of a ritual object; these signs also indicate the place of the participants during the ceremonies.

On the eastern and western branches are placed the signs of the older initiates:

1. dyę, "union." Sign of the Komo Society in its entirety, the body of its members.
2. doniya, "knowledge." The point of the angle is "the point of knowledge" and its opening "the collective voice of the society." We are dealing here with the science which the initiates possess.
3. bako, "link." This closed sign expresses the ties which bind the initiates one to another and to the Komo, as well as the group spirit of which they must give proof.
4. sõni, "good will, consent." The point of departure of the stroke from the line indicates that the initiate is free to enter the society, to climb the steps of the successive grades indicated by the broken line, but not to leave it, and that he must have the will to follow the rules of the organization.
5. tyɛ̃, "truth." The members must be sincere. The two symmetrical hooks indicate that one must begin with truth and end with it.
6. tyɛ̃ šere, "evidence of truth." This drawing, testimony to the preceding, is sometimes attributed to strangers who come to attend the ceremony and recognize the conventional signs (2).

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1. See p. 20. We have here a special representation of the swastika whose branches are turned toward the center.

2. See p. 211.

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7. bẽni so, "house of agreement." Evidence of the sign 1, it represents a sickle, symbol of the house and of the union of the members. In serious cases, to stop a quarrel or to settle a difference, the Komo chief presents an ancient sickle and says: "It is the proof of the agreement, it is the evidence of the union" (1).

8. ǰigi so, "house of support." The dot symbolizes the komo so and the whole recalls the support which the chief offers the members. Orphans sit in the spot where this sign is drawn.

/158/ 9. so ba, "big house." The drawing represents "the egg of the world" and marks the spot where the oldest geomancer in the village stands alone.

10. komba, "big door." Sign and place of the person who performs the sacrifice, for the sacrifice "opens the doors" and puts man into contact with the invisible.

On the northern branch are placed the signs which concern the young initiates.

11. timidẽ, "circumcised." This refers to those circumcised in the next to the last age grade. The sign is that of the completed person (2).

12. timidẽ kle, "circumcised of the last age grade." The drawing shows the incomplete person.

13. tyi dẽ, "son of work." These are the sons of the kworę duga (3). The sign, drawn inverse to that of the person, expresses the /159/ necessary disturbances and the pleasantries brought by these dignitaries to the Kworè and Komo ceremonies.

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1. Beni so yeta do, dye šere do.

2. See G. Dieterlen, "Les signes des Kéita du Mandé /Signs of the Kéita among the Mande/," *l'Homme. Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie, de linguistique* (in press).

3. See p. 220.

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14. soni dẽ, "son of the sacrifice." Drawn on the place for the sacrificer's son, the sign includes a horizontal line representing the knife, for the son may be called upon to replace his father in performing his duty during the ceremonies.

15. yeleka tigela, "the laughing man who cuts." This is the individual in charge of proclaiming the good or bad position of the victims which have been sacrificed.

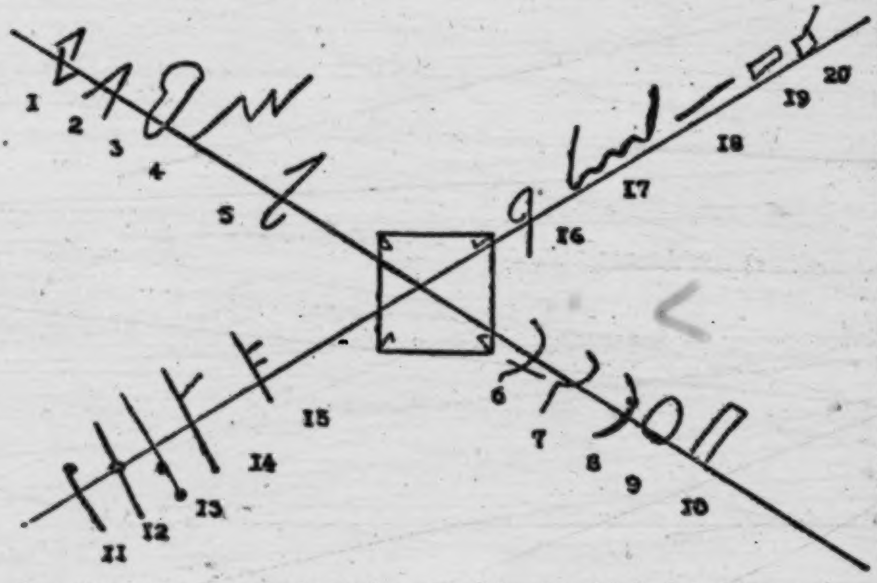

Fig. 12 — Drawing made on the ground by the chief of the Komo to mark, by their signs, the places of the participants during the ceremonies. This drawing, observed in the village of Dougoutiguibougou, is complete. When the branches forming an x are missing, the central square is always represented. (Drawing by an informant)

On the southern branch are placed the signs representing the blacksmiths; they relate to the institution of circumcision and to the functioning of the Komo of which these artisans are the dignitaries.

16. boñema, "honored person." Place of the aged blacksmiths.

17. wara da dyuru, "string from the mouth of the man armed with hooks." This is the small string of the flute, called "voice" of the Komo.

18. wara da, "mouth of the man armed with hooks." The flute of the Komo.

794 19. pembele. This sign represents both the society's pembele and the board of the same name used for circumcision.

● 869 20. gosilãnde. The sign designates the primitive club and the small mallet used in circumcising. 532

The ensemble of these figures, representing a summary of the universe in its arrangement and its movement, forms the scene upon which the actors in the ceremony take their places. The latter are in a way the living embodiment of these drawings as well as the movements which change the order of presentation and must be executed with special precautions. In effect, any change made in the arrangement of the actors in the scene is felt to have repercussions in the universal organization. This is why the movements of each one give rise to rituals of forgiveness and purification concerning the sign corresponding to him (1).

1. See below.

F. Ceremonies of the Komo

794 796 The ceremonies in which the mask participates take place several times a year according to the decision of the members. Their purpose is to discuss the interests of the society, to make joint decisions assuring the prosperity of its members, to promote harvesting, and to commemorate the organization of the Komo.

Three principal ceremonies are celebrated: the first, called /160/ "anniversary of the Komo" (komo sanyelema), at the end of the dry season; the second after the harvest, for offering of the first produce, as the mask is never taken into the fields at the time of cultivation; the third during the cold season at the time of circumcision. They involve sacrifices offered in the cemetery in honor of the dead as well as divining rites. Occasional ceremonies may also take place inbetween upon the membership's decision; the mask is taken out for purifications. The neighboring societies are generally invited to [574] attend the reunions and the drinking which follow (2).

2. The important Komo chiefs are thus consulted by strangers in the village, who sometimes travel considerable distances.

776 risk of spoiling the crop -- o be gno soun tigné ("it destroys the vitality
241 of the seed of the millet grain").

782 These genii do not have special festivals in the course of the year. Their priests, the heads of families, offer them saraka and sacrifices at planting time, and some of them sacrifice a hen in the corner of the field while the crop is sprouting and growing, but that is all.

6. Genii Protectors of Children

● 889 It is not until circumcision that Bambara children take part in
the mysteries of pagan worship, but they are early prepared for it so
794 that they may be introduced to the law of secrecy which they must
776 strictly adhere to later when they are initiates of an occult sect. At
about the age of seven or eight years, they become affiliated with an
association worshipping the genii responsible for protecting them.
All these sects are alike, differing only in name. On the banks of the
825 Bani and the Niger, the object of worship is the tauri (toad or frog),
and the croaking of this animal is imitated in their festivals; some
villages have the djara (lion) and imitate its roar by whirling their
534 slingshots, small boards four fingers wide and one to two centimeters
long, attached to the end of a string. The most widespread /children's
824 genie/ is n'tomo, which undoubtedly gets its name from the tree in
which it lives (the /92/ jujube tree, n'tomo). It makes children hale
and hearty, preserves them from sickness, defends them against the
invisible little creatures of the bush, against spells and sorcery, and
makes them strong, steadfast, and impervious to suffering.

The confraternity of the n'tomo is modeled after that of the boli. (This is true of both kinds -- for there are two; a white costume is worn to the dance for n'tomo djé and a black costume for n'tomo fign). In order to be admitted one must offer a hen to the child who is head of the n'tomo (the n'tomotigi), prostrate oneself before the tree of the genie, and swear to keep the secret and never to speak of the n'tomo to the uninitiated, especially not to little girls.

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In addition to wearing the costume, which is white (n'tomo djé) or yellow, black, etc. (n'tomo fign), the boy who dances the dance of the genie hides his face in a frightful wooden mask on top of which are five, seven, and sometimes eight horns.

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The n'tomo injects a whole organization into the world of children. They quite naturally divide themselves into small groups, each corresponding to a circumcision that is to take place, and are thus all of the same age, born in the same year, or very nearly so. The member of each group who is the oldest -- be it by only one day -- becomes its head, and all the younger heads obey the head of the oldest group, the n'tomotigi, and his aide, the n'tomotigi siéré (1), who is drawn from the group which will be circumcised after that

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Child wearing the loincloth called yaba.

1. Siéré, "aide," "deputy."

869 of the n'tomotigi. /93/

794 These two children prepare the hunts for rats and lizards, organize the games and supervise them, and if an offence is committed 561 by the band, it is up to them to discover the culprit. When quarrels, arguments, and fights arise among the children, they intervene, judge each case, and, if the matter is worth the trouble, the mischief-maker, or the one who is declared responsible, is severely beaten. All this produces unity within the various groups and prevents them from coming to blows at every moment.

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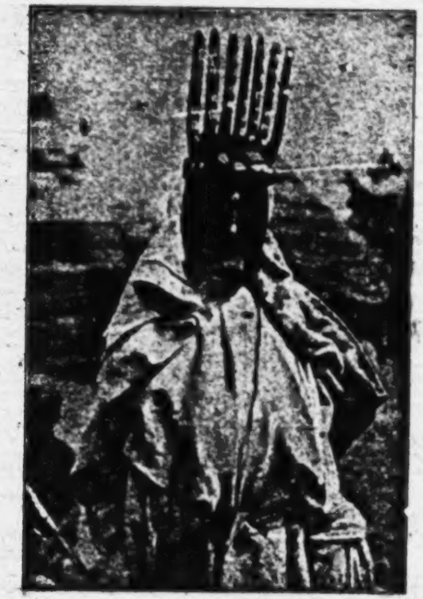

Mask of the n'tomo, the children's fetish.

The little girls also have an organization into groups, but it lacks cohesion; it would have to be religious in nature, since religion is the basis of all unity in the Bambara country. Only at the time of excision does all this change, and then there is real cohesion among them.

796 Every year children sacrifice to the n'tomo genie through the mediation of their head, the n'tomotigi. The day of the sacrifice is 859 a day of great rejoicing which ends in flagellation. The material for

304 784 561 which would be a dangerous one (1). The same rule applies to the enclosure, consisting of several huts, where the newly circumcised boys remain under the surveillance of the sema. The enclosure is situated at a distance of several tens of meters from the village in order to isolate the age grade. For all that touches them, such as clothing, sticks, sistrums, dishes, and refuse, with the exception of the cap, is impregnated with their wanzo.

561 304 [431] The newly circumcised boys receive from their parents gifts of cowrie shells and food called wanzo sababu yala, "in honor of the wanzo," to speed their recovery.

[794] On the night which precedes the sixth day after the operation, a day called daworo, the children are initiated to the Komo (2).

The following day, the sema leads them to the edge of the river, where they wash their wounds for the first time. This act, which brings about direct intervention of the element in which Faro lives, has moreover a social meaning: it consecrates the age grade and from this moment on, the children belong for the rest of their lives to the same flã, exchanging jokes and insults which are suitable between senãnku (3). It must be noted that this very simple act of communal ablution constitutes the inauguration of an age grade of circumcised boys and sets off from that moment all the rights and obligations its members will have toward each other.

A meal, eaten in common and accompanied by songs and dances, ends the ceremonies of the daworo. Hereafter the ablutions are repeated daily until the wounds are healed.

304 561 881 /187/ On the last day, all that has been in contact with the newly circumcised boys is gathered together at a crossroad near the enclosure.

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1. The approach of the virulent wanzo of the uncircumcised boy acts upon those of the boys undergoing the operations and afflicts them in the genital organs.

2. See p. 203.

3. See p. 119.

304 561 881 Sistrums, sticks, mats, as well as the wood from the huts and the refuse that has been carefully swept up, are put in a pile which is ignited. Each circumcised boy jumps over the fire three times and then runs to his home without looking back. In this way he finally loses the rest of the wanzo which he has kept after the operation. Only his cap is brought back and given his mother who keeps it until her death. On the next day, after putting on new clothes the boy is taught what he himself is in the following words: "the person is yo and yo is the person (1)" and in the circumstances of creation. He is then admitted completely into the society of the male adults of his village.

Circumcision has a profound effect upon the person. At this moment, the child loses the physical support of the female sex which is the foreskin; he becomes a man (vir) ready to fulfill his role of a male capable of reproducing. Moreover, he "throws off his wanzo" which escapes from the body at the moment of the operation (2). In his leap above the fire this force joins, in the altars and the mask of the ndomo, the forces of both the uncircumcised and the circumcised of the preceding years (3).

At the same time the circumcised boy improves his tere, for this latter force, diminished by the bloody operation, increases at the moment when the child dons his new clothing. Until his circumcision, the child only performed minor tasks; after circumcision he is considered a male adult and officially admitted to the rituals and labors of the community.

1. Ma ye yo ye, yo ye ma ye.
On yo see pp. 18-26.

[171] 2. Wanzo file la. The wearing of clothing and ornaments assumes great importance in the loss of the wanzo. Among the Bozo, where the children are circumcised very young, they are not considered to have lost their wanzo until the moment these clothes are given to them.

3. See p. 227.

853 A child is nursed for two or even three years, and theoretically, a woman should abstain from sexual intercourse throughout this period. In practice, however, the period of three months mentioned above is the limit of such abstention.

854 *Childhood*. While he is small, the child remains with his mother, whether she cares for him herself, has him cared for by a slave especially designated for the duty, or turns him over to one of her daughters.

During the nursing period of two or even three years, he is carried astraddle by his mother or some other person entrusted with his care until his legs are strong enough for him to run about the house and its vicinity.

857 At about six or eight years old, he is drawn into the juvenile organization known as *n-tomo*, and he never fails to join it as soon as he is welcome. Little girls are less free; they are kept at home and put to work at household duties, such as bringing water and wood and watching the fire.

881 *Puberty*. As we shall see, the *n-tomo* prepares the child for the *soli*, a ceremony which marks the most important event of his life, civil puberty. The essential but not the only rite involved in this ceremony is circumcision. In principle, the *soli* is limited to pubescent boys and this implies that all who go through the ceremony have physically reached puberty. Aside from the fact, however, that this condition is reached at differing ages, the boys who undergo the ceremony differ in age because the *soli* does not take place every year, owing to the considerable expense involved.

882 When the *soli* is behind him, a boy is no longer a child; he is not exactly a man either, but rather is a "young master," a *kamalen'*. Since he is admitted to the brotherhoods, apparently his discretion can be counted on, and he is considered competent to take an oath so he can be called upon to testify in a dispute. Also, if he is enterprising enough to attract attention to himself, he is given trifling missions which inspire him to persevere. Fur-
882 thermore, since by now he has been made sophisticated by his
836 companions in the *n-tomo*, his relations with his female companion

621 These are the principal resources of the community
622 treasury, which is held and administered by the dugu-tigi with
651 the help and under the control of the fa. The dugu-tigi may
use the treasury to help him perform his duties honorably, to
652 assist unfortunate or indigent members of the community, to
receive the guests of the community in a suitable manner, and
to meet emergencies.

Under no circumstances does this treasury constitute any
[661] part of the personal fortune of the dugu-tigi. Only usurpation,
which is fairly common under various guises, alters this state
of affairs. In the same way, it is not uncommon for this wealth to be divided in some measure among the members of the council, who in one way or another appropriate it. Such abuses, no matter how common, do not in the least alter the principle that legally such wealth is and remains exclusively the property of the community. [234]

Chapter 4

Brotherhoods

1. The End of Childhood

794 General considerations. The cult of the ancestors and of
● 881 the nyana dugu-da-siri are not enough for the Bambara in his efforts to make sure of the protection, help, and services of the invisible world. The magician has created for him some renowned protectors or servitors which are powerful and formidable: the nyana of the boli.

The cult of these gods gives rise to spiritual families whose members are so closely linked by the bonds of fraternity that we may safely say that these groupings are brotherhoods. All these brotherhoods share the common characteristic that no one can be received into them before having submitted to a certain rite called soli (1) or bolo-ko (1), terms which

1. Soli is the word for the action of piercing, emerging, laying an egg, or

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881 being born; bolo-ko literally means "affair involving birth."

etymologically mean "birth."

Having entered the family through physical birth, a child enters a new phase of his life through the spiritual birth represented by the soli. Through this rite, a child in fact ceases to belong to sexless childhood and becomes: the boy, a man; the girl, a woman. Let us look at the stages of this change of status which is truly the principal event of a native's life.

857 Until he is about seven years old, a small boy lives in daily contact with his mother, only slipping away, as time goes on, to play nearby with his friends.

During this period, one can already observe the influence [235] of the native milieu on the development of his young soul. He has watched cult and magic practices, and he too plays at being a magician to kill or capture rats, lizards, and other small animals for his little feasts. He collects roots with simulated rites and attaches them to his toy bow so as to ensure the success of his hunting, believing that he has attracted a spirit by promising an offering of the blood of his victims. He is already a little hunter, seeking mysterious procedures through which game can be and ought to be put at his mercy without danger to himself.

881 Around the age of seven, he is thinking about the crucial act of his life, the soli, one of whose rites is that of circumcision.

794 Observance of the soli, complete with public circumcision and preceded and followed by membership in a brotherhood, is not absolutely indispensable. When, by reason of circumstances, a child lives in an isolated situation, he undergoes the soli within the family circle, without fuss, and this in no way lessens the validity of the act.

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571 There is no doubt, however, that nothing but absolute necessity will make a Bambara do this; he loathes such wretched economy, which in any case seems inappropriate to such an important occasion (1). On the contrary, he loves to take part in

1. Besides, since no exact age limit is

881 a noisy demonstration and to share in all of the rejoicing the
571 brotherhoods provide for their members. This is by no means the
794 least of the reasons for the spread of these brotherhoods, to
which the n-Tomo (2) is really the front door, since no one is admitted to a brotherhood unless he is soli-ma, and the specific final object of the n-Tomo is the soli.

n-Tomo

561 The n-Tomo is an association which, in preparation for
857 the soli, bands together boys (3) of about seven to fourteen years
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Each [236] n-Tomo normally includes all the boys due to be circumcised, without distinction by race or rank. Each member is called n-Tomo-den': the eldest is the leader or n-Tomo-tigi, and he is assisted by a syere or "follower." New members are received every year at the time of the annual festival, and they must pay an entrance fee (a chicken) and a few cowries

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imposed and since there may be as much as six or seven years' difference in age between the oldest and youngest children participating in the same soli, it is obviously possible for a candidate to arrange to be included at some point within this range of ages so as not to be an isolated case.

2. n-Tomo is the term used in the Ségou area; in Kaarta the term n-Tori is used.

3. Little girls have no organized society to prepare them for the soli, but they have agreements among themselves and, in addition, are chosen as n-golo-moso-u by the n-Tomo-den'-u.

561 857 and take an oath of secrecy. The boy leaves the n-Tomo after the soli. Girls are not admitted.

●881 The n-Tomo-tigi and his syere organize the association so as to assure it some property which in principle is collective property. Through common abuse, however, they are the primary if not the sole beneficiaries of it. They persuade their comrades to cultivate a field whose produce will provide the food for their club feasts. The entrance fee is augmented by force, spontaneously or at the order of the n-Tomo-tigi: gifts, collections, theft, hunting, fishing, etc.; in short, anything may be collected by individual or collective effort to form a kind of common treasury.

857 793 There is no collectivity, however, without its spiritual patron. The n-Tomo meets out-of-doors, at the foot of a tree (1) believed to be the chosen home of a genie-protector. The n-Tomo-tigi is the high priest of this genie; as such he receives the oaths of the neophytes and has a certain degree of authority over the whole band, which enables him to punish any misdeed committed by a n-Tomo-den'. He does not hesitate to use corporal punishment.

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1. The name "n-Tomo" comes from this. It has been thought that the term was simply the name of the tree where the genie-protector lives and that it was the tree which the Bambara call "n-Tomo." If this were true, why should people in Kaarta use the term "n-Tori" when the tree called n-Tomo does not change its name? It has been suggested that n-Tori is another word meaning "toad" and came from the peculiar "cry" characteristic of the society.

It is my belief that the two terms, "n-Tomo" and "n-Tori" designate the same grouping in different regions and have one and the same meaning: meeting, assembly.

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Soli (2)

2. The word soli is used in Kaarta; at Ségou the term is boloko or ngolo-ko, literally, "affair of birth."

The single word soli is used for what we call circumcision and excision. This is because a Bambara has in mind not this or that surgical operation, accessory in nature, but rather the ceremony which for boys and girls alike marks the passage or, more accurately in line with the etymology of the word soli, the fact of being born to a new status.

881 The soli does not take place every year, because it involves considerable expense for the families, which they cannot always meet. At the instigation of the boys who must undergo the soli and who, therefore are called soli-ma-u (people of the soli), the family heads assemble at the call of the nyana-n-son-na-ba to decide whether or not the soli will be held. If the decision is affirmative, the boys and girls then take steps to make sure that the festival (nyara, "orgy, wedding") will be as elaborate as possible. In principle, the date coincides with the third day of the festival of the sheep.

Guided by their elders, the young girls (soli-ma-moso-u) go from door to door to solicit millet for the banquet (3) which [262] they are expected to give the elders (koro-u) on the second day of the feast of the sheep. The period of the ceremonies of the soli actually begins with this meal. [241]

In the afternoon of this day, the boys make the customary sacrifice to their genie-protector, dancing in his honor in ceremonial costume but without flagellation.

3. The menu includes couscous (basi), and it is called soli-kili-basi, "basi of the solicitation for the soli," on account of the source of the millet used to prepare it, solicited by the children.

● 881 On the same day the young girls in certain localities
302 have a characteristic ceremony. One of them whitens her face,
breast, and back with a mixture of milk and ashes. Thus
daubed, she dashes out of the village brandishing the spatula
(to-n-galama) which is used to stir mush (to) in the pot; her
companions follow her, shouting. The band goes around the
village four times in this fashion, each time stopping at the
crossroads. At these points the girl who is bedaubed throws
handfuls of food (1), provided by her companions, to the spirits,

[262] 1. Usually basi (couscous) made with fish.

crying: "Dege dule (2)." Her companions reply: "Naloma (3)."

2. Literally, "thick mush."

3. That is, "fool."

881 The eve of the soli (soli-si). During the evening pre-
ceding the soli, the families concerned enjoy an ample meal,
527 accompanied by innumerable jugs of beer (dlo) as is the custom
[273] at all festivals among the Bambara. This is a time of special
[576] merriment, of shining faces and greasy hands, and it is good
form for the men and boys to belch noisily, saying repeatedly:
"ne ne fa," literally, "I am full," that is, "I am replete." The
[301] women wander about the lanes, wrapped in their best skirts,
with balls of amber in their hair and small silver or even gold
rings in their ears and nostrils and rather heavy bracelets on their
[482] arms and ankles. Some carry jars of dlo on their heads, while
others carry gourds full of couscous, dege, or hot sauces which
are often nauseous with smoked or spoiled fish. After the meal
everyone gathers on the public square, forming a wide circle
whose center is reserved for the dancers; piles of dried millet
[373] stalks are used to make bright fires which illuminate the scene
and warm the audience.

881 The "boys of the soli" (soli-ma-tye-u), their heads
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881 [302] freshly shaved (4), their bodies rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu), [242] arrive in single file. Greeted by the onlookers, they take their places in the front row. Shouts, noisy conversation, and songs are intermingled and make a racket which is interrupted by the arrival of the "girls of the soli" (soli-ma-moso-u). With their hair in a tangle and dressed in short skirts (1) reaching from the navel to the knee, they enter one behind the other, walk around the assemblage, and finally take their places in a group near their mothers and friends.

The assembled men drink around the fires.

881 533 534 All the drums are there, and as soon as the girls appear, the drummers rush to their instruments. There are big drums resting on three legs (denu-ba), others which hang from the shoulder, and still others carried under the arm. Young women shake bits of iron (kinge) as one shakes castanets, and there are other iron instruments provided with rings. Old women pound on gourds turned upside down in pots filled with water.

The noise is deafening, and it is dominated by songs in honor of the ancestors shouted by the whole assemblage as loudly as possible. Then the whole crowd, where the tipsy are in the majority and where everyone is at the highest possible pitch of excitement, starts a frenzied dance accompanied by songs usually improvised.

881 781 While all this is going on, the adepts of the major brotherhood (2) are outside the village, noisily driving out the

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4. Just as their heads were shaved at birth.

1. Blue for Moslems and yellowish-brown (basa) for the purely pagan Bambara.

2. The Komo around Ségou; the Nama in the Kaarta area.

881 evil genii in order to preserve the "people of the soli" (soli-ma-u)
789 from their bewitchments.

881 The soli. The soli, this make-believe birth, is marked
by a bloody operation, circumcision for the boys and excision
304 for the girls. The fact that the ceremony does not get its name
from this operation demonstrates that it is merely show; it is merely a rite of separation between the previous state and the new one (3). The operation takes place at dawn.

[171] 3. That is why among other peoples the operation does not exist or represented by a mere slash on the thigh (among the Koniagui).

Boys. The blacksmith who is to circumcise the boys waits outside the village under a tree. Assisted by members [243] of the sects and especially by the Komo-tigi, he performs the operation behind a loincloth hung up as a screen. The boy stands erect, and the blacksmith draws out the prepuce and cuts it off, after having determined approximately the proper place to cut. The patient is expected to show no weakness; on the contrary, he exerts himself to say a few words to show his courage.

As soon as the operation is finished, a gunshot announces the news to the elders crouched about the village fires, and a female griot proclaims it to the bystanders. The Komo-tigi takes a few nyanka leaves, burns them, and goes to place the ashes on the boy's familial kara. The boy runs off to rejoin his companions under the tree especially chosen for this reassembly. All the boys will spend their days there, on the fringe of society with which they are forbidden to mingle. They return to the village only at night, to sleep in a hut reserved for them.

881 A man reputed to know how to care for circumcised
boys lives with them, takes care of them, and closely supervises
304 them; this is the sema-tye. Every day abundant food is brought
292 to him for his patients. The latter wear a dloki (blouse) and
kursi (trousers) made of cotton cloth, blue or yellow-brown (basa) depending on their affiliations (1), and their headgear is usually

1. The basa color is much in demand

● 881 among the Bambara, while the Marka
304 use cloth dyed indigo-blue.
292

a high cap with strings extending from the earlaps. They can only leave the place where they are assembled, even for the needs of nature, under the leadership of the sema-tye and shaking a stick of wood to which are attached bits of broken pottery. This rattle is called n-koso-m-bara.

881 304 They pass the time plaiting mats, gossiping, laughing, and pestering passers-by. On market days they are permitted to block the paths leading to the village and to collect a tithe from the traders.

The officials of the sects often visit them in their retreat.

Girls. The blacksmiths' wives who are to remove part of the clitoris await the girls outside the village under the trees. Some matrons assist them. Each child in turn runs up to the operator and squeezes herself between [244] the legs of the matron who exposes the clitoris. The excised clitoris is laid [789] in a little woven basket and is carefully preserved for making talismans.

The completion of the operation is announced in the same way as for the boys, and the Komo-tigi likewise puts the ashes from nyanka leaves on the familial kara.

The girl then rejoins her companions in the hut reserved for them in each section of the settlement. There they are under the surveillance of an old woman, the sema-moso, who knows how to take care of them and who sees to it that they behave properly. They are very well fed.

881 Wrapped in skirts, they lean on canes of dried millet stalks when they walk and shake a gourd pierced with holes and [514] filled with pebbles. They go out only for the needs of nature and then all in a body. They warn the passers-by by shaking their rattles and singing improvised songs. As they near paths outside the village, they intone a refrain.

Soli da woro (1). The seclusion of the soli-ma ceases

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1. Literally, "sixth day of the soli."

881 on the sixth day. Just as a baby is admitted to the family on the seventh day after its birth, so on the sixth day after the surgical operation which has, as it were, marked the end of childhood, one attains a new status.

881 786 The sixth day, da woro, is the most important festival of the soli. All the relatives and friends are invited and even the most distant make great efforts to be present. Each one sends or brings his contribution to the orgy-like meals which go on and on, that day and the days following. The fiancés of the girls must be represented and send gifts. Married brothers and sisters must come, bringing their respective wives and husbands. It is an occasion for feasting and drinking, and it goes on as long as the provisions last, i.e., for several days.

881 The essential part of the ceremony, for which everyone has come, takes place on the evening of the sixth day. The onlookers gather in the public square where there will be [245] dancing, but usually only the women and girls remain there; the men and boys go outside for the admittance of the soli-ma-tye to the leading brotherhood of the village (Komoya, Namaya) (1).

1. We shall describe this admittance when we discuss the brotherhoods.

Sometimes, however, there is no separation of the sexes, either because there is no active brotherhood or because the high priest has set a later date for the admittance ceremony.

In any case, the performance within the village is particularly for the girls, soli-ma-moso. Wrapped in a cotton coverlet with blue and white stripes, called dampe, each girl lies between her mother's legs (2) on a white cloth laid upon a

2. Or those of a relative or friend of her mother.

mat.

[534] While the boys, soli-ma-tye, are noisily shaking their rattles, n-koso-m-bara, the girls, soli-ma-moso, flourish their pebble-filled gourds.

● 881 535 In a compact group, the women and girls of all ages and stations shuffle slowly around the orchestra, while the men drink and sing around small fires of dry millet stalks.

From time to time, upon being invited to do so, one of the girls, soli-ma-moso, gets up, rattles her gourd, and joins the dance with slow, deliberate steps.

At dawn, when they are about to return to their huts, the girls, soli-ma-moso, make one last circuit, and then each one, with her heels together and her hands crossed above her head, makes three leaps into the air. She does this three times.

881 201 The Bambara themselves interpret these various details concerning girls, the soli-ma-moso, as symbolic. The girl's position between her mother's legs recalls physical birth. The white cloth represents the one that at her mother's marriage bore witness to virginity and reminds the girl that she will have to give similar proof to her husband. The dance done with slow, measured steps is the symbol of a child learning to walk, and the nine leaps that close the ceremony attest to the fact that the girl is now an adult. A final rite shows the parallelism between the soli and [246] birth: on the sixth day, the nyana-n-son-na-ba shaves the head of the soli-ma-moso (1). [302]

1. In place of the braided coiffure, young girls wear the magic cord with nine knots, called tafo, on the crown of the head, and this is connected to a similar one, called dyo, at the nape of the neck.

881 End of the soli. On the seventh day, before noon, all the soli-ma-moso go to the well or to the river to wash the soiled clothes and to scour the pots and gourds used for the festival. Then all return to the discipline of the soli: the boys under their tree, and the girls in their huts. The sema watch over the youngsters, who by now are bored with the discipline. About three weeks must pass after the operation before all the soli-ma completely recover.

● 881 At the end of this time, the nyana-n-son-na-ba and his council having come to an agreement with the sema to end the period of seclusion, each leader performs certain magic passes, under the boys' tree and near the girls' huts, to dispel any evil. The Bambara are convinced that so long as the period of convalescence is not officially closed the circumcised boys or excised girls are as much a danger to society as society is to them; that is why they must spend this period in seclusion. Furthermore, anything used by them during their seclusion is impregnated with this evil and may spread it. 881 783

Therefore, as soon as the interdict is lifted, everything is collected to be burned at sunset (2). Near the trees outside the village the mats, the n-koso-m-bara, the gourds, millet stalks, rags, etc., are all piled up, and the nyana-n-son-na-ba sets them afire. The boys and girls jump over the fire three times; they are then free to return to the village. They run home promptly to adorn themselves for the festival celebrating their return.

881 Once more there are lavish meals and interminable drinking bouts, followed by a general gathering in the public square. People come from all directions, among them appallingly decrepit old women who try to manage everything. [247]

[291] On this occasion, the boys, soli-ma-tye, appear for the first time in true man's attire, full trousers, cap with earlaps, and an ample new shirt. With lance in hand, they swagger about and simulate the behavior of warriors; they are now tye-kura, "new men."

881 301 The girls also are decked out to excess in women's attire. Wearing several skirts and adorned with all the jewelry relatives

[789] 2. However, personal effects (the boys' kursi, dloki, and baufla, and the girls' tafe) are not burned; along with their stains, these are impregnated with virtues which make them particularly valuable for talismans, amulets, and other magic weapons.

881 301 and friends have kindly lent for the occasion, they advance shyly. In some areas, notably in the Bani region, they wear bundles of cowries, from the bride price already paid for them, around the hips and hanging on each side of the head (1).

[302 171] 1. Bambara girls who have gone through the soli have their heads shaved. Among other peoples, on the contrary, girls have their hair braided like women for the first time, but to the braid is added a tuft of the hair shaved off seven days after birth; this hair has usually been lost, but a small tuft is made to simulate it.

881 [535] Boys and girls, following the old women who lead them,
dance around the orchestra, and then all sit down in a circle.
The nyana-n-son-na-ba takes the floor. He speaks in a low
voice, and, as is proper, his words are repeated in a loud voice
by a herald. He proclaims the end of the soli, recalls its principal
events, and indicates clearly which children have participated
in the rite; each boy and girl is specifically named. He
will also be sure to point out that the soli is an immemorial custom
[578] among the Bambara and that there is no worse insult than to
treat a Bambara as uncircumcised. He closes by inviting everyone
to eat, drink, and celebrate in the joy and harmony appropriate
to such a festival.

[535] Dancing is resumed, and the boys and girls of the soli take part. The festivities continue as long as the refreshments last, usually several days.

To end it all, no one leaves without giving at least a few kola nuts to the heroes of the festival, the boys and girls.

The last phase is the thanks given by the soli-ma to those who assisted at the da-woro. In noisy bands, boys and girls dash about the village in two distinct groups. The girls' group is headed by the soma-moso who is called masa (queen), followed by the masa-ma-kono (vice-queen) and the masa-ma-kono-segere [248] (follower of the vice-queen); the last girl in the

881 group is called kule. In the same way, the boys go about in a group headed by the sema-tye, called masa (king), followed by the masa-ma-kono, the masa-ma-kono-segere, etc.

In this way, the whole country learns which boys and girls have completed the soli.

The Fla-n-ton'

561 Those who have belonged to the same n-Tomo-ya and
572 have gone through the soli together remain bound together for
575 life; they are fula-ni ("peers," "twins") because they were born on the same day to sexual and social life. Wherever they may be and whatever their respective rank, two fula-ni consider themselves equals even if one of them is a chief and the other a slave; the latter in particular has the right to speak his mind without fear (1). Theoretically, therefore, the fula-ni is the friend on whom one may safely rely, and he is usually a member of the council, small but very powerful, which every fa likes to have around. It is to him that the fa confides his troubles, his joys, his plans, and his personal affairs. He is present at all the celebrations and mourning of the family. On serious or important occasions, he represents his friend who often entrusts him with the supervision of his household during an absence and appoints him guardian or trustee of his children after his death. He is a brother who may be loved more than agnate or uterine brothers. At the same time the fulani-ya does not necessarily produce a type of brotherhood analogous to that brought about by the blood pact. Rather, it engenders a kind of mutual assistance which is strengthened by the organization called fla-n-ton', "assemblage of people of the same age," i.e., those "born" at the same soli.

The young people from the same soli form a fla-m-bolo, literally, a band of persons of the same age.

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1. See in Chapter 7, "The Man with Three Braids." [Not translated.]

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the blacksmith. The doll is given the name of the dead infant, the
[304 child[1] carries it with him to the circumcision, and, when he marries,
589] he buries the doll with a piece of wood representing the wife of the
deceased.

845 Twins are replicas of Faro, their presence is beneficial, and they are considered invulnerable.

826 The albino is supposed to be the issue of sexual relations held
833 in sunlight, a breach of taboo. He, too, is a new being. His wanzo
904 is so active that the circumciser must take great precautions before operating on it.

826 He is considered to be endowed with special powers which
782 make him a choice victim for the sacrifices offered to the spirit of the water.

553 To the children of blacksmiths, the name is given near the
326 paternal forge in the presence of all the artisans. An old man prepares seven little sticks, giving each the name of an ancestor. Three of these are drawn at random from the group, and the third gives the name of the baby. The head of the baby is rubbed with the axe Kongobwona, and his shaved hair is soaked in sacrificial blood.

553 In the Bamako region two chickens or a sheep are sacrificed
782 to celebrate the name-giving. The distribution of the meat is made according to established custom. If it is a chicken, the patriarch receives the head and the gizzard, while the wing and white meat go to the old woman who washed the baby during the first eight days. If it is a sheep, the patriarch receives [91] the ribs (because they are a bulwark, and the patriarch is the defender of the village) and the heart; the blacksmith receives the shoulder; the infant's family gets the head (so that the infant will go ahead), the back (symbol of prosperity), and the limbs (supports one wishes the new-born to have); the blood which runs on the ground is destined for the infant's protective ancestors. Then the family divides the raw meat with the heads of family, and the old woman thus receives her part indirectly.

c. Circumcision

● 881 A male infant is born, but he still keeps (because of the
304 primordial twinship) the prepuce as the physical support of the female
831 sex. He will only be freed of this by circumcision. It is this operation that definitively determines his sexual qualification and renders him fit to contract marriage.

[1] [ie., the surviving child of twins. -Analyst]

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881 The society of n'Domo has the task of preparing children for
794 circumcision; the wanzo of the child liberated by the operation goes
in the mask of the n'Domo.

881 Formerly, circumcision took place between 18 and 20 years
304 of age, and the circumcised had to bear arms the following year.
At present, the children are circumcised between 8 and 16 years of
[561] age, but all those of the same promotion are considered to belong to
the same age class and are flani [sic] (twins) all their lives.

The ritual of circumcision has been described many times, in particular by Tauxier and G. Dieterlen. Therefore we will only report the essential phases.

The ceremony takes place during the dry season, in bountiful years after the harvest. The appearance of the constellation "Sigi-lolo" is watched for at a certain point in the sky, and when it is very brilliant, the date is fixed. The operation cannot take place except every three years.

The parents prepare for the ceremony long in advance: they make the child a bonnet of white cloth which they present to the Niger, and they make the signs representing the person of the child with earth from the river. Some days before the operation, the child enters into a period of seclusion; he is placed under the protection of the purifying light of Faro and receives gifts (cowries, food ....).

When the day arrives, his hair is shaved off. His mother washes his shaft with water in which an iron axe has been soaked, then has him eat a plate of rice.

The blacksmith prepares his knife, boloko kumba moru, which is enclosed in an iron sheath, this knife represents the circumcised and the prepuce which will be taken from him. The priest washes the handle and, symbolically, the penis. Then with coal or with millet paste he traces the blade with ritual designs symbolizing the three first circumcised men, the four first excised women, and the bird which is the avatar of the eight ancestral blacksmiths. Next, he ties the prepuce with a small cord (drawn on the middle of the blade) and places it on the pembelé. The cutting knife is hit with a small block of wood, and the blacksmith then traces the scarifications on the shaft. The circumcised bleed in a circle on the ground, in individual holes [92] dug between their legs. They thus deliver the wanzo to the impure earth, while the circumciser recites the prayers. Then they apply a dressing of bloody earth to the wound,

881 and the member is held up by a split millet stalk. The prepuces are
304 buried, and their white bonnets are put on the circumcised. The place of the operation is forbidden to women and to the non-circumcised who could take the liberated wanzo.

In the Bamako region the blood of the oldest is gathered in
[534] two new calabashes, which are later broken and the pieces used to make sistrums, sinzin.

881 After the ceremony, the children retire for three months under the direction of a priest of the Komo. During this period, when they receive a religious and technical education, they enter the village only to sleep in a special house and to repair the roofs of their teachers' huts.

[794] The night before the sixth day after the operation, they are initiated in the Komo. The next day they are led to the river where they wash their wound. Meals are taken together, followed by songs and dances, until they are healed. The last day, the sistrums, sticks, mats, and everything that has been in contact with the circumcised are put in a pile and burned. Each child jumps over the fire three times and runs home, without turning around, to lose his wanzo definitively. In the Bamako region the sistrums are preserved in the cabin of the village chief and will be used for the children of the following years. The bonnet is returned to the mother and will be preserved until death. The next day the child puts on his new clothes.

881 Let us note that for the circumcision of twins all the offerings
304 for the ceremony and the sacrifices must be doubled, and each child
826 will possess two sistrums. Finally, the albinos today are sent to the dispensary, because the blacksmiths are afraid to operate on them, their wanzo being particularly dangerous.

304 Circumcision may take place posthumously. The circumciser
766 then cuts the left ear of the body, since the wanzo freed by death would be dangerous to the living.

794 Generally, a sort of ceremony of confirmation of membership in the Komo takes place in the year following the circumcision.

d. Excision

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[831] The excision of the girls has a meaning equivalent to that of the circumcision of the boys. The operation frees them of the physical male factor residing in the clitoris.

881 304 physical male factor residing in the clitoris. The operation takes place, moreover, during the same period as the circumcision. It is carried out by the potteress, wife of the blacksmith, in full daylight before the assembled kin. During their seclusion the girls wear a white veil which plays the same role as the bonnet of the circumcised. 534 Instead of the sistrum, the girls shake a gourd which contains eight millet seeds and cotton fibers which their fiancés have given them. A goat is sacrificed for the ceremony. The collected blood is given to the fiancé in honor of his ancestors who become those of the girl.

[93] On the last day of the ceremony the girls definitively rid themselves of their wanzo by jumping over a pyre composed of the clothes and scraps of the excised.

e. Marriage

582 584 It is only after having been circumcised or excised that young people may marry. The institution of marriage is regulated by a ritual which has often been described, particularly by Amar, Monteil, Tauxier, Aubert . . .

The marriage arrangements are made by the respective fa of the two betrothed, after the young people have been consulted. The request is officially made to the parents by an intermediary, a man of caste or a sénanku. It is accompanied by ritual gifts offered to the fa of the girl. In the Bougouni region the request is accompanied by ten kola nuts, because ten is a complete number that 801 designates good events and future births. (Nine kola nuts are offered 576 to present condolences, four as a sign of greeting. To send three 431 nuts would be insulting, and 19 nuts, marking incompleteness, would be a sign of lack of confidence.) The first kola nuts to be offered 824 are always wrapped in one or two karite leaves, symbol of life and of fecundity. If the ten kola nuts are accepted, it means that the father has opened the way to the marriage. The intermediary then make a second trip the following week, bringing a cock for sacrifice to the ancestors and ten more kola nuts; during a third trip he offers another cock and ten more kola nuts before the entire assembled family of the young girl, witnessing that the girl may meet her fiancé. In the course of the fourth trip, the intermediary leads the girl to the fiancé's family, where she will be confided to the wife of the head of the family who will undertake her education.

545 Example:
794 *Tiekoroba kolili* (the old man who has nothing)
522 *Ita rokina momindi* (what you say is not liked)
Ida konieti aie (you are right)
N'ka idia dopina marmandi (but one doesn't like what you say)
Or again:
Demise fentili (the rich young man)
Ida dokma kakadi (one likes what you say)
Ida konie tinaie (what you say is not true)
N'ka idia dokma makadi (but one likes what you say)

545 534 794 The *Kworeduga* have the *su* (Moor) as taboo, and they accompany themselves in singing with a sacred gourd, *yaraba*, which contains seeds of *Lufa cilindrica*.

535 ● 881 Finally, during the circumcision initiation period for example, the child learns the sacred dances which often mime exploits of the mythical ancestors.

177 517 A certain evolution characterizes the native art which has been transformed in a curious fashion by contact with Europeans. In European centers, prolonged contact with the Whites has confused the beliefs that inspired the art, but the artists have lost neither their taste nor their gifts. At the request of the Whites themselves, they have undertaken a controlled art, with the aim of pleasing the Europeans. Needless to say, even if it conserves some charm in its form, all this new art, which evolves with the same swift rhythm as our modes, remains terribly dead, for the true source of inspiration has dried up. This art no longer seeks to be true, but to be pretty; by this it signs its own death warrant.

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CONCLUSION

I. Traditional Interpretation of Mental Characteristics

181 In the introduction to *Religion Bambara*, Tauxier insists on the mental characteristics: "The Bambara has remained rather openly fetishist"; he possesses "two dominant traits, which are absolutely undisputed and indisputable:

"1. He is a very good farmer.

304 grown up they are allowed complete freedom as to whether they undergo the operation or not. For fear of the pain and of letting a sigh or tears escape them and becoming the laughing stock of the whole village, many children of ten to fifteen years refuse (1).

> 1. Male children that are not tattooed usually have their ears pierced.

Bambara tattoos are simple and not at all ugly when well done. Although it disfigures some, leaving lumps as big as a thumb on their cheeks and chest, such an accident is /174/ extremely unusual, considering the number of those tattooed. They use no unclean substances to dry their wounds and make them swell, charcoal powder being the only medicine used in tattooing.

304 178 Although this practice is being lost around Ségou, and many families no longer want it for their children, it is nevertheless not on the verge of disappearing entirely and completely. To remove a religious practice from an entire people takes years, centuries, and if a famous sorcerer came and ordered it for those who dispense with it, they would undergo it at once.

Chapter 9

Circumcision in Bambara Country

1. The Importance of Circumcision

881 304 The important act in the life of the Bambara man and woman -- both sexes are mutilated -- is unquestionably circumcision. And whence did they get this custom? Some people settle the question with one word: "It is of Mohammedan origin." I refrain from being so categorical, for the Bambara have always rejected Islam, they have

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defended their gods with spear in hand, and I can find in their circumcision nothing which resembles the religion of the Prophet in the slightest. For the Bambara, circumcision is not only the seal of the tribe, it is also a second birth; the entrance into civil and religious life.

It is the occasion for four great festivals. On the second day of the festival which corresponds to the Moslem festival of the كبش (sheep), those about to be circumcised, who are given the special name of soli, offer to the to-n-déou, or members of the mutual aid society, fla-n-ton, a very fine couscous called basi. To obtain it, they have had to go begging and singing from door to door (kili), whence the name soli kili basi, which is given to this festival. Before going under the knife, all the soli make a vigil of arms. The soli kili basi is followed by the soli si (1), and six days later the da woro is held. When the circumcised boys and excised girls are healed, the drums roll again, /176/ more drinking bouts are organized, and the boloko déou don bo, the coming out of the circumcised, takes place (1).

1. Si, "spend the night."

1. From boli, "hand," "arm" (veiled terms designating the sex organs); ko, "wash"; deou, plural of de, "child," "son"; don, "day"; bo, "to come out."

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During the days between the festival of Ramadan (2) and the

2. Under Moslem domination, the Bambara had to observe the festivals of Ramadan and of the كبش, (sheep). They have become national festivals with sacrifices to the shades of ancestors and to the good fetishes. The observances do not include a single Moslem rite . . . .

881 festival of the sheep كَبش , the little soli girls, those chosen
857 for the next circumcision, go with their still unmarried older sisters to thank the elders for the honor which has been done them. In the
[533] evening, at nightfall, they visit the families and in a nasal song recall the glories of their ancestors. They also have the most flattering words for those still living, and it all ends with this plea: "We are soli and haven't a penny! On the tenth day of the next moon we must offer you a fine "couscous" with very small grains, the basi, and we want a good sauce. Help us in this, I beg you, we are soli without a penny."

881 857 481 The songs of the soli remind the old men and women of their younger days, the days of their youth, and they run to the granary, search the gourds that they use as cupboards, unlace the long roll of close-packed straw where the cowrie shells are piled, and the young people leave triumphantly, rich in cowrie shells, millet, and decayed fish. The proceeds of the quest are entrusted to the oldest of the soli, and, on the second day of the festival of the sheep, our belles gather, grind furiously, and provide the whole village with its ration, basi kili, which is the name of the festival.

881 On the stroke of noon and even before, everybody is fed and is eagerly tasting the sorghum /sic/ beer, d'lo, and the soli girls run from one house to another to gather the leftovers from the feast. They do it hurriedly, eagerly, and feverishly, for they are impatient to perform their great religious, public, and solemn act, and at the soli kili basi they are the cooks and servants of the spirits.

The latter /spirits/ stay at the outskirts of villages, invisible, and drag the soles of their feet along the paths of yawn as they crouch /177/ at the crossroads. The songs of happiness, the cries of joy, the hiccups of the drinkers, and the deafening noise of the bass drums split their eardrums, the scent of decayed fish swells their nostrils, and no doubt, between two sighs, as they lick their lips with their tongues, they say to themselves in a murmur which the wind carries away: "Oh! the gluttons, they are forgetting us!"

But not at all -- they are remembered! A little soli girl smears her face, breasts, and back with milk, ashes, also and with other things whose names I do not know; she makes herself hideous to behold,

881 as ugly as possible, and plays the fool. Armed with a long stick -- the stick which is used to stir the gruel that is simmering on the fire (1) -- she darts out of the village, agile as a gazelle. Her companions all chase her at a full run, giving many shouts; they circle around the walls four times. At every fork in the path they form a circle, dance with frenzy, and throw large handfuls of basi and smoked fish sauce to the spirits without keeping count. "Dégé dounlé, idiots," shouts the smeared girl, and all her retinue repeats with ever increasing enthusiasm: "Nalouma, big fool. . . . " And this day, which is not very edifying, is full of delights for the little Bambara girls who are to be excised.

The little soli boys are satisfied with sacrificing to n'tomo, a good fetish which is their protector, but although they dance wearing masks with six, seven, and sometimes eight horns, they do not [785] flagellate themselves, or at least flagellation is not required on this day.

2. The Soli Si Festival, or the Vigil of the Circumcised

Here we are on the eve of the circumcision! It is black night, d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer, hums and foams in the earthenware bowls, and a thin mist comes out of all the huts and envelops them. Here karité grease sputters as it melts in the pot and browns the skin of a chicken or the leg of a goat; there one hears the loud laughter of people with full stomachs, the hiccups of a glutton, the dry and decisive sound of two heavy lips releasing five great /178/ sticky fingers glued to each other by a remainder of gruel. Their foreheads [301 291] decorated with beads in a kind of crown of white, red, and yellow, the colors of the rainbow, and their bodies draped in blankets, Roman style, groups of women glide silently like shadows along the alleys, carrying on their heads huge gourds full of dégé, millet flour mixed with honey water and milk,

[415] 1. To-n-galama: a stick with a large, flattened end, used to stir gruel in the pot.

●881 with honey water and milk. They go to the public square, the only ballroom known in Bambara country. The big boys, their heads freshly shaved and their bodies thoroughly greased and all shining, also arrive in a long line, and in the square there is nothing but indescribable bedlam, for all these people at once greet each other, talk and shout, and not a voice is in harmony.

[821] Young and old consult the canopy of stars, for although they are not astronomers they know that around midnight a certain star of the firmament is at such and such an angle, and they are impatient. Then the hour has come, and the male soli are crouched in the place of honor, and the young lady soli arrive in single file, their hair in disorder and their hips girded with paltry loincloths that reach from the knees up to the navel. The loincloths are gifts from the fiancé
[292] of each one, and must be worn. Their colors vary, indicating the tribe and caste of each girl, so one can see that they are of some importance (1).

[186] A Bambara woman is proud of her blood and proud of her tribe, and, wearing her loincloth in the national colors, a narrow cloth band of black stripes on a yellow background, she almost thinks she is a queen, if not a goddess, at the soli si. The girls' gait reflects this feeling: with heads high, eyes 15 paces ahead, chests stuck out like Prussians (they puff themselves up a little to bring out their charms), they admire themselves and are enraptured, each knowing that she is the focus of more than one shining eye full of desire. They advance slowly, raising a cloud of dust, and in her hands each one shakes a bag of goatskin and an iron box filled with little pebbles; her torso bends to the left and bends to the right. In the dark of the night as the little fires /179/ cast their gleams here and there, one might say that they are frail shells lost in the waves and tossed by the winds, struck by the swell and always ready to capsize.

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1. The Moslems have blue. The pure Bambara wants a yellow background with black rose shapes and lines.

881 534 Shouting -- and that is an understatement, the young people throw themselves onto their instruments, which are drums of every shape and size. Some, the bass drums, are carried on the abdomen and fastened to the waist by a bark cord; others, smaller but longer, are slid between the legs or under the arms, and tambourines, hung from the neck, swing at the level of the navel as a new kind of pendant. The old women with toothless jaws join in; they scrape two iron rods together or create syncopation by furiously beating on an inverted gourd floating in a *conari* full of water with a piece of wood or a pumpkin stem.

881 Virgins, married women, widows, prostitutes (all mingling) slowly circle again and again around the orchestra behind the *soli*, shaking in their hands the bags of goatskin or boxes of white iron, and until morning every boy that is to be circumcised and every girl to be excised hears the glories and feats of his lineage. There is nothing very lofty about these songs containing thousands and thousands of wishes; although there is a feeling of passion in them, there is no love; beauty of the heart is lacking, and all is badly told. The men also from time to time leave the jug and mingle in the dance, but the night belongs to the women. And it belongs to the gods. If, tired of the bedlam, you leave the ball and go outside the village to breathe a little fresh air, you hear the piercing cries of the herald of the gods, you even see him in the darkness, running from one tree [292] to another; with horns on his head and a coat decorated with feathers of hens, guinea fowl, egrets (1), etc., he looks like those story demons which grandmothers depict so well in the late evenings.

[789] And this herald of the gods, with his retinue, is performing a curious rite: he is chasing out the evil spirits and clearing a place for the favorite god of the village so as to drive away sorcery from the circumcised and the excised. /180/ In Bambara this is called *kéné sâlo* (1) and can be translated into French as "exorcising the place."

1. This is the costume worn by Negroes when they dance the dance of the *Komo* fetish.

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1. Kéné, "public place, " "court";
salo, "to stroke gently with the hand, "
"to make gestures. "

One after the other the stars of the firmament go out, and only the morning star (sigi dolo) still shines, seeming to defy the dawn. Many "kouyô kouyô, " shouted from a hundred throats, rise from the village, and the square is emptied. Everybody (I mean the women, for the squatting men keep on drinking and stirring the fire) rushes out of the village and forms a circle around the sacred karité tree. With
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his back against the tree, separated from the crowd by a white cloth, a blacksmith is kneeling rather than sitting and, razor in hand, awaiting the victims. He is calm, sure of himself, and not afraid; after all, it is quickly done. He grasps the foreskin, recites his formula as he spits, and the iron is raised, throws a gleam, and falls. A gunshot announces to the drinkers on the square that there is one more Bambara in the village, and while a woman storyteller /griotte/ applauds him, the owner of the god burns a few nayanka (2) leaves

2. A tree whose name in French
I do not know.

between two brands, and feverishly and eagerly goes to place the ashes on the kara, the altar dedicated to the shades of the ancestors (3), in the court of the one who was circumcised or excised.

3. This is the procedure wherever
the Komo fetish is found. In the
circle of Ségou a Komo is almost
always the one appealed to, and
if none is owned in the village, it
is brought from a neighboring
village for the occasion.

881 Limping, the circumcised go under the sacred trees where the dances in honor of the fetish are held, and that is where they stay

● 881 until they are completely healed; for it is not until evening, when
the setting sun reddens the horizon and takes on its bloody hue that
[292] they re-enter the village. From this day on they wear a costume (all
yellow if they are Bambara) of trousers, a blouse, and on their heads
a kind of handkerchief tied under the chin (4). They pass the time in
making mats, singing, striking together gourd disks strung on a stick,
and especially in eating, "for they are being stuffed," and in sleeping. /181/

881 But in speaking of the boys, I forgot the little girls! They
undress under the tree nearest to the sacred karité. Naked as a worm,
304 each one when her turn comes runs at top speed with her abdomen
to the ground and throws herself into the arms of a woman, also of the
blacksmith caste, who immediately cuts her. On a braided platter,
[285 made of fine, pliable grass, the mother or her substitute receives the
415 bloody fragment which will be a grigri, a talisman or good-luck
189] charm for the house, and while the gunpowder speaks, the disabled
girl, pretending not to be suffering at all from the loss of her clitoris,
goes back to her place, and another replaces her.

881 The session ends with the last girl, and the crowd breaks out
in a song of joy and triumph. The mother, the eldest sister, or a
[482] serving woman wraps the excised girl in a big white cloth and carries
her astride her back to the village to the hut which has been prepared
for her (1). This carrying, so laughable in itself (they can walk, even

4. In some villages, instead of the yellow handkerchief the circumcised have a cap with two points. In Bani country the circumcised wear the blouse and handkerchief, or cap, and nothing more.

[621
346] 1. Each village is divided into quarters. The excised girls of each quarter have their hut in that quarter.

881 run, as they have demonstrated under the karité tree), is the part of whole festival which is most reminiscent of a child, and of the function of the circumcision. It is the second birth, and just as the infant appears in public for the first time on the back of her mother, so she again enters the civil and religious life on the back of her mother or of the woman who takes her place.

The excised girls do very little in their huts, and like the boys, they yawn, sleep, and eat. However, they spin a little cotton and very often sing in a low voice while they practice gracefully shaking a gourd the size of a fist, pierced with little holes and filled with small pebbles. They lead a very easy life, and one might think they were happy, but a toothless old woman who is always grumbling watches over them. This is a great nuisance! It is impossible to move, impossible to wiggle a toe; one must have permission for everything, and it is never granted gracefully. The wants of nature [514 must be satisfied in a group and at stated hours.... When the girls go 293] through the village, they lean, in accordance with custom, on a millet stalk at the end of which is hung the perforated gourd in which little pebbles rattle. /182/

881 533 On the way out as they go into the bush, they sing to the *gnâma* to protect themselves from them:

Bo n'yé, gnâma, ô gnâma,
Go away from me, *gnâma, ô gnâma,*
Dankoun ba la,
Of the great corner of land (1),

1. The corner of land formed by two paths that cross, the place where the *gnâma* dwell. /The slight discrepancy between the translations of the song given here and in Chapter 1, Section 3, is present in the original French. Ed./

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Gnâma fambali, bo n'yé!
Murderer gnâma (who kills), go away from me!

And coming back they sing songs and even improvise some to greet the old and influential men of the village. Back in their huts they kneel on the mat to stretch out or sit down, and there is silence, the silence of schoolgirls which is not broken except in secret, with trembling and in a low voice.

3. The Da Woro Festival, or the Sixth Day Festival

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Boys and girls have paid the tribute of blood to the tribe, five days have already elapsed, and this is the evening before the sixth. Far over there in the west the sun has disappeared behind the heavy baobab trees that border the horizon, myriads of stars twinkle in the sky, and the moon, followed by Venus (Kolo mouso, Nièlé, "Nièlé, wife of the moon"), traces on a blue background its silver crescent singed with a gold border.

All the paths that lead to the village are full of people walking, seeming like an endless ribbon or a snake that folds back on itself only to stretch out suddenly. Behind the band of young girls walk the women, each with a black cherub on her back that always wakes up to cry and demand the breast; and to them the girls have entrusted their little loincloths, the cloth slings with which they gird themselves for the dance. The girls walk quickly, for although they carry on [482] their heads tall pyramids of gourds held in nets of large mesh, although they carry the fiancé's present to the queen of his heart -- salt; dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water and milk; d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer; millet and dried fish in which worms crawl; they are confortable in their clothing; /183/ nothing hinders their movements except a narrow cloth band three fingers wide which passes between the legs, is fastened at the waist in front, and waves in back in a limp and soft train. And in the night there is the rustling of dry grass trodden under foot; /there are/ long peals of laughter, light jibes that are well aimed and to the point, and witticisms, for the maiden's tongues have been loosened, and they do not lack wit.

796 881 The youths follow, dressed in blouses knotted at the abdomen like towels and trousers into which three pairs of legs and three abdomens could fit without any trouble, dragging drums and bass drums. To keep up the march and cause it to be forgotten (they often come from far away) they shout a loud "you you" and make coarse jokes, which are here addressed to the fair sex more than elsewhere. Sometimes also, between two laughs, two great silly laughs, something like the crack of a whip is heard. This sound is made by five stubby fingers as they are applied to the cheeks of dear little angels, warming them. In fact, a band of little boys and girls trot among the youths in their birthday suits, passing to the right and to the left and winding between their legs, and patience wears out and quickly comes to an end.

After the young people come the old men; they are bent double, leaning on spears, and even while talking of future projects they recall the days of the past. It is quite apparent that there are no more like them, their equal cannot be found. Into the foroko, the goatskins they slip over their arms and fasten on their shoulders, they have slipped some good handfuls of cowrie shells for the mothers of the circumcised [276 431] and excised, a box of the snuff that every self-respecting stranger gives as a gift to the men of the village, and finally the kola nuts that the sacrificer will chew before spitting the remains onto the front side of the god and some that, as educated, well-bred men, they keep for close friends. They also carry the hens or roosters for the sacrifice; these are attached by the feet to the straps of the foroko and hung head down their wings flapping horribly.

881 796 301 The human flood arrives at the gates of the village, stops a moment under the big trees, and tidies itself. The pointed caps /184/ are put a little to one side of the head, the blouses are unfolded, and nakedness is concealed. On the women's side there is indescribable hubbub, like the sound of the distant ocean at rising tide; they polish and adorn themselves and beautify themselves. On their feet they put little chains, on their arms heavy bracelets that knock together with the sound of old iron, and on their hips the young girls at least hang belts of beads sprinkled with little bells that tinkle at the slightest movement. In their noses they put crescents of gold or copper, in

881 each ear ten to twelve rings of soft iron, tin, or silver, and those that
796 they put on their fingers and toes number more than twenty.

301 On the braids of their hair, all running with grease, they hang
bits of amber and rings of polished pottery as white as snow, and
around all their necks are bead necklaces from which dangle bits of
amber, grigris, and here and there, held by leather strips, pottery
rings that fall back between the shoulders and in front on their bosoms.
They also bind their foreheads with narrow crowns of rainbow-colored
beads or diadems of coral. Such are the Negro girls in their most
beautiful array.

796 At the homes of the circumcised and excised, the huts and
881 courts are crowded with people, for in addition to friends and story-
tellers /griots/ -- the poor troubadours of the country -- there may
be in each home older married daughters who have come with their
husbands, children, and parents-in-law, and the fiancé's delegation
to his betrothed seem to be in every corner. This is really the festival
of the tribe, and everybody is present; only the fiancés are excluded
and cannot appear on this day. And how very Bambara it is! In one
[264] spot people quench their thirst with great drinks of d'lo, or millet
beer, while nearby, squatted around steaming gourds, others stuff
themselves with to, or gruel. The hands held out to you are running
with sauce; the children who surround you are covered with leftovers
from the feast and brandish under your nose bones that they gnaw
clean with their bare teeth, and while they call to you Sogo ("some
meat"), the satiated people next to you exclaim: "Abarka, thank
you Né fara san, I am full for the moment." And everywhere there
is an infernal bedlam! Old women beat furiously on inverted pumpkins
in conari full of water /185/; youths beat drums, women and young
girls clap their hands in rhythm, and everybody shouts the glories of
the family. The families of the circumcised and excised are beside
[431] themselves, so great is their joy, and if you are one of their close
friends you will be shown all the gifts received, in plain sight in the
court. You are made to taste of everything, to touch and feel every-
thing, and, just as on the day when the child is given its name, you
receive, on leaving, the kola nut of life (le ni woro).

● 881 796 794 It is after midnight. The circumcised boys are seated in the place of honor where their older brothers sat before, and they furiously shake their gourd disks strung on sticks. Leaning on their millet stalks, the regulation sticks, the excised girls in their turn arrive at the public square, singing and shaking their pierced gourds, and the dances begin as at the soli si and continue until morning. Outside, under the sacred trees, the bell of the fetish tinkles and summons the initiates, and the Komo god roars through the mouth of its herald. At a sign from the priest the circumcised boys get up, leave the village, and go under the big trees to swear loyalty and to dedicate themselves, body and soul, to the prince of darkness (1). How can this scene be described! The circumcised boys sit under the god's favorite tree, and the crowd of initiates, grouped by villages, gather around the gourds full of d'lo that froths and bubbles. Little fires are lighted and cast a strange light into the night, and a circle of crouching human beings appears and takes shape. The master of the idol (Komo tigi); the sacrificer (mourou kala tigi); the beadle (darotigi), who rings for the sacrifice and gathers the initiates; the fetish's storytellers /griots/ (Komo djeli maou), who sing the praises of the god, fall into catalepsy at the sacrifices and then give out oracles; [778 534] the Komo warada, who wear a coat covered with the feather of guinea hens, hens, egrets, etc., and a long horned mask, and who carry the fetish to the place of sacrifice and blow into an iron tube that ends in two horns /186/ and is at once idol and trumpet, and draw from it frightful "fouin fouin" that freeze you with fear: in short, all the staff of the Komo appear on the scene, and there is a lascivious dance, the dance of the god, the sacred dance. Then there is the

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1. The scene which I describe sometimes takes place the evening before. Sometimes, by order of a sorcerer and for a reason considered serious, the entrance into the sect of a fetish is postponed until later.

●881 796 794 rallying cry, bellowed by a hundred throats, "kou kou kou, ke ke ke"; drums roll, and drunken voices shout:

T'an ta bara ladjé.
Stop, let us go and see the gourd (of beer).
Bara ma dja an na,
When the beer has made us joyful (1).

1. Dja, "to make happy," "to please," "to be agreeable," "to make joyful."

An na youyouba yougouba.
We will dance and dance (2).

2. Yougouba, "to dance with a shaking of the whole body."

Gnâ tigi, né ka nougouni-n-ko min yé?
Master of the gnâ, what has happened to my (hen's) entrails? (3)

[782] 3. This line recalls a peculiarity of the sacrifice of the newly initiated. With one twist of the finger the sacrificer takes the entrails out of the hen, and when the young initiate wants to draw it, he is quite surprised to find that none of the viscera are in it any more.

Gnâ tigi do nougou na bo gnouan yé.
A master of the gnâ (kodit) the entrails will come out together.

Excited, or rather irritated, by the wait, the circumcised boys get up, move forward in a line, and prostrate themselves before the god's escort, the one who shakes without any rest under his cloak of feathers and brings resounding blasts from his horned tube (4), and

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4. While the trumpet is blowing, the initiates accompany it with pipes.

grows and shrinks by raising and lowering his jointed mask. The hour of the initiation has rung, and they will be born into the religious life.

The master of the idol, the *Komo tigi*, places the horned iron tube on each initiates shoulder, and in a slow, solemn, hollow voice, he says these words of the initiation ceremony (5):

5. During this ceremony the initiates are prostrate.

For the *Komo*

Q. *Moun bé i koun?* What have you on your head?
A. *A kala be n'koun.* His handle is on my head (repeated three times). /187/
Q. *I y'a yé wa?* Have you seen him?
A. *Né m'a yé.* I have not seen him.
Q. *Nin be ma fa. I y a fo ma min yé, a k'i fo!* He kills a man. If you speak of him to anyone, may he kill you!
A. *Ni ne y'a fo ma min yé, a k'a né fa!* If I speak of him, may he kill me!
Q. *I si sirila gnâma-n-fou, djala la.* Your life is fastened onto the cedar with *gnâma-n-fou*!
A. *Né si sirila à la.* My life is bound to it.
Q. *Ni se ma fo ma si yé, Komo k'i kisi!* If you do not speak of him to anyone, may the *Komo* be your protector!
A. *A ka né kisi!* May he be my protector!
Q. *I y'a fo ma min ye, i kono ka founou, a k'i fa!* If you speak of if, may your abdomen swell, may he kill you!
A. *A ka né fa!* May he kill me!
Q. *Komo k'i son ni bien* (1) *ta, ki koun ti, né kana bo djoli kana bo.*

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1. Bien, a woman's sexual organs. Bien, "horn"; this is a veiled term sometimes meaning a man's organs. They also say k'i bien ta, "may he tear out the organs."

May the Komo take away your heart and your organs, may he crush your head without your brains coming out, without your blood coming out.

A. O k'a ké. May it be so.

For the Nama

Q. I y'a fo ma min ye, Boli k'i so ta, k'i bien ta (1), ka doun i

/1. Same as preceding footnote 1/

djoufé ka bo i da fé. If you speak of him, may the boli cause your house and your wives to perish, may he enter you by the anus and leave you by the mouth.

A. O k'a ké! May it be so!

Q. K'i Kono gni bri, ka gni bri, gna bara.

A. O k'a ké.

Q. Ni e ma fo ma yé, k'i disi soubaou ma. K'i son sila, k'i son kénéyala! If you keep the secret may he save you from the souba, may he give you descendants and health!

"Tell me, what have you on your head? Yourlife is henceforth bound with gnâma-n-fou (bark of Bauhinia reticulata): if you talk, /188/ if you reveal our mysteries, may your abdomen swell, may the Komo kill you, may he tear out your organs, may he tear out your heart, may he break your head without your brain coming out, without blood flowing."

This ceremony in the night, in the light of the little fires that distort the shadows and lengthen them, impresses, pierces, and grips the youths, and they are heard to answer all atremble in these words that at every moment break through the nasal tone of the pipes and

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the trumpet blasts: "I have the kala (1) on my head, my life is hence-

1. Kala, "handle of a tool,"
"a pestle," "an oblong object";
Komo kala, iron tube ending in
two horns.

forth bound with gnâma-n-fou; if I reveal the secrets of the sect, may my abdomen swell and may the Komo kill me." Then they get up, and the crowd of initiates sing hymns to the Komo at the tops of their voices:

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Da Woro la nana, Boloko déou da Worola.
To the festival of Da Woro he (the fetish) has come, to
Da Woro of the circumcised (he has come).
Toro ma na kola gnini.
Toro (2) has not come to cause evil.

2. Toro, the name of a Komo.

Sira bo nin ye, ko dougoulé dén.
To him we give an (open) road because (he is) a child of the
village.
Sira bo nin yé, ko dougoulen sira.
Give him an (open) road to know the road of the children of
the village (He is one of us, let us make room for him)
(3).

3. Songs of Nama:
A djigina so Nama fambali, a djigina
so, tjon k'a'é.
The Nama that kills has paid us a
visit, he has visited us*, let us not be

[566]

*The Nama protects against the
souba, initiates of siri, reputed
to be cannibals.

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796 neglectful toward him (let us welcome
794 the Nama who comes to visit us).
539 A fiéréla ka den, boli fiéréla ka den.
He has blossomed to have fruits, the
boli has blossomed to have fruits
(the Nama has had a child).
Souba yo nin kéra ma lo ko yé.
Souba yo. This is done because of shame.
Souyaya kéra dabali bé an koyé.
The practice of the souba has been done
(among us), we have a means of protecting ourselves from it. /189/

881 796 794 While these hymns are being sung, the circumcised boys dance with the idol -- this is the standard expression to signify that for the first time they are executing the lascivious motions of the sacred dance.

And when they get back to their places, they are transformed, they are no longer the plain, good children who, even the day before, approached you nicely with a frank smile on their lips. They have become Bambara, and we, we are white men and strangers, masters and conquerors, and between them and us an abyss has been opened. And this abyss is opened further every day, for every time the god Komo comes out of its temple and out of the dirty foroko (goatskin) that serves as its tabernacle, they will go under the sacred trees, and will strengthen their faith and harden their hearts (1). Henceforth they will be at home in every part of the Sudan; they need not fear

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1. The initiates of powerful boli's sect make a sort of "renewal of vows" a year after their admission. Those of the Komo, who are given the name of timini deou, hold a festival to break all records; there is meat and gruel to spare, and the divine liqueur, d'lo, or millet beer, is plentiful.

881 the poison that kills the inquisitive and the traitors, and wherever they
796 are asked the question, "Are you of the Komo?", they can give the
794 password, draw two crossed lines in the sand, and then, holding the thumb, the middle finger, and fourth finger in the hand, extend the forefinger and the little finger over this mark, saying to the questioner, "I am one of you."

I have noted here the verbal text of these questions and the answers to give them.

For the Komo

Q. E b'a la Wa? Are you of the Komo?

A. Ne b'a la. I am.

Q. N'i b'a la, tjoko djira anna? If you are, show us the sign.

A. Ka'l ta Drahamé.

In saying these words bend the thumb, the middle finger, and the fourth finger while extending the forefinger and the little finger. /190/

II.

Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Komo?

A. Né b'a la. I am.

Q. Tjoko djira anna wé? Show us the sign.

A. Da sigi da da la.

Place a container on the mouth of a container. While saying these words, place the feet one in front of the other, and immediately add: Djan kéné ouala djan djala. Make two parallel lines in the dust.

III.

Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Komo?

A. Né b'a la. I am.

Q. E n'i so mâou benna mi ni? And where did you and your people meet?

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A. An benna dlaba da la, ou bi gouélé foura bosi. We met at the door of dlaba; they pick the leaves of the gouélé (false ebony) (1).

1. For the Nama.

Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Nama?

A. Né b'a la. I am.

Q. Féré tjon k'an.
Two straws are laid in a cross of
St. Andrew and shown to you.

A. Nin yé sira gné bo la yé. This is the road that guides, lights.

Q. A perpendicular straw is laid down.

A. Nin yé wara sé n-yé. Wara ti tama sén kó. This is the foot of a wild animal*.

* The boli are often given the epithet of wara, "wild animal," meaning "strong," "powerful."

A wild animal does not walk without legs.

Sirima-n-fign: this word is the family name, the diamou of Nama. End of the questions: Dja e b'a la koï ! Dja (exclamation) you surely are [of the Nama].

Through the whole night there are howls of wild animals, songs and lascivious dances, bellowings of trumpets freezing one with fear, and the nasal and piercing sounds of the pipes.

At dawn a warada, speaking into the horned tube, thanks those present in the name of the god Komo; a second repeats his words into a pipe, and a djélima (storyteller /griot/ of the Komo) repeats the words of the god in plainer terms to those present. And the /191/ crowd gives thanks, utters cries, makes its requests. Everyone retires exhausted, worn out, with his throat on fire and foam on his lips,

881 796 794 reeling on his legs -- in these festivals one must get drunk to please the god.

While all these things are happening outside, the women and little girls on the public square abandon themselves to their hearts' content. They perform none of the leaps and capers customary at ordinary festivals: shaking in their hands the goatskin bag or the white iron box full of little stones, they circle slowly, with short steps, around the orchestra, and only their buttocks move. These roll to the right and roll to the left, dip forward and quickly draw back -- a movement which is definitely not graceful. The excised girls spend the night sitting on mats covered with white cloths, between the legs of their mothers or serving women, and their heads, loosely thrown back, rest on the breasts whence they drew their life. They are wrapped in covers that have blue stripes on white background, only their heads showing, and one might say this was a display of new, shiny dolls with big black eyes, happy and all sparkling with joy. From time to time at the invitation of the dancers who sing of their grace and beauty, they shake their pierced gourds, make them rattle in their hands, and take part in the dance; then at dawn, in the morning, in a final round, they put their heels together and three times make three leaps in the air with their hands crossed on top of their heads.

And, if one believes the Negroes, this custom is not without meaning. The whitecloth on an excised girl's mat reminds the mother of one of the beautiful days of her life, the one when she gave herself to her husband in the bonds of marriage, and reminds the child hidden in her arms, wrapped in the cover like an infant in its cloths, that since she has now become a grown girl and has left childhood, she must guard her virginity. This large white cloth will testify for her on the day of her marriage as it testified for her mother, and it will be inexorable. The circle around the orchestra in short steps is the infant practicing its first steps; but now she has reached her full development, /192/ she can be sufficient to herself, and for that reason she makes these nine leaps with her hands crossed on top of her head.

881 796 As soon as the sabbath of the sons of the Komo is terminated outside, the excised girls are led back to their huts with great pomp, with music in the lead, and the festival still goes on, for a Bambara

881 festival lasts as long as there is *d'lo*. After a few hours of sleep, before
196 the noon meal, the excised girls come back, and around the well there is an endless babel punctuated by joyous laughter as they wash their loincloths, the cloths soiled by the dust of the night, and as they mend gourds, the dishes of this country. The pure Bambara girls, those who are not of the blacksmith caste nor of the "Marka" people of more or less mixed stock, have lost their grace and beauty and seem quite comical with their shaved heads. Just as at six to eight days
[302] after birth the head of the village, the *gnéna-n-sonnaba*, priest of the *dasiri* fetish, made motions over their heads and cut their hair, since the "hair of the womb" is not allowed to be seen in public, so at the *da woro*, six days after circumcision, they lose it again, since they cannot enter life with the hair of childhood; a dirty handkerchief replaces the locks of which they were so proud, they are without bead or jewel, and on their foreheads, in place of the multicolored crown,
[751] is the string with nine knots called the *tafo*, and it is fastened in back at the nape of the neck to the string called the *djo*, which is intended to protect them from sore throat, mumps, headache, and just about all illnesses.

4. The Festival of the *Boloko Déou Don Bo*, The Coming Out of the Circumcised and the Excised, The Real Entry into Civil and Religious Life

881 After the *da woro*, the festival of the sixth day, the circumcised
883 boys go back under the sacred tree outside the village, and the excised girls return to their huts. They take up again their life of "sweet idleness," and their little excursions in a group, at specified hours, to satisfy the wants of nature. They also have their days of big excursions. When the markets take place, they go to cut thorns at some 100 meters from the village. They bar the paths, set up /193/ a barricade, and ask every passer-by for a *doua-mo*, a share of the market. From habit, and especially from fear of the cuffings that are readily given out and of the spirits that watch over and protect the young people, everybody obeys and pays the toll. In addition to fish tails they also take in enough cowrie shells to buy a bit of meat and make themselves a treat.

●881 This quiet life, this life of retreat, wearies the young boys and girls. At the end of four to five weeks they get hotheaded, they become insubordinate, and want to go home, for they are healed. Since the Negro man and woman appointed to watch them no longer insist, the council of elders meets and declares their task finished. In the afternoon when the sun, still high above the horizon, gathers all its rays to cast them furiously for one last time before going out in a purple disk, under the sacred trees and in the courts in front of the huts of the girls, the heads of the quarters make their gestures and simultaneously, without taking breath, recite their formulas and spit and then proceed to the exorcisms. "Bissimillahi (a phrase which in the mouth of a Bambara has not at all the meaning "in the name of God," but rather signifies "everything goes as desired"), our children are healed and they are going home, under the paternal roof; spirits that watch over them, spirits that protect them, let them go!"

881 184 There is a reason for this exorcism. Since the day when the blacksmith's razor, all shining, was lifted to cut, the little Negroes have been under the tutelage of fiercely jealous spirits. That is even one of the chief reasons why they are set apart and live far from the world, its ceremony and its work. No circumcised or excised child can set foot in a village hut, not even in that of their parents; their invisible protectors draw after them a whole series of evils, and wherever they are forced to enter they bring ruin and desolation (1).

1. O be n'wanso bla mala, "this causes misfortune to fall on a man."

To let one of these boys or girls enter one's home is to invite, if not death, at least sickness, bad luck, or the most dreadful poverty. To guard against such misfortunes, /194/ the Bambara must drive away these spirits, and since their assistance is considered useless, they are thanked with arm gestures and spitting.

881 When the exorcisms are over, the young brood scatters and runs everywhere into the huts; in the public square and in the alleys one hears interminable greetings and endless chatter. But the Bambara are too fond of drinking and eating, and they must celebrate the

881 healing of their children and their return home. The next morning
around the wells one sees only women and young girls with naked
torsos washing up in millet in plenty of water; it is to be fermented
for the coming drinking bout.

And on that day, a little before the sun sets and when it is only
881 a bloody disk, the circumcised and excised young people bring their
183 mats, the gourd disks strung on sticks, the pierced gourds the size of a
fist and filled with small pebbles, the millet stalks carried for so long
as sticks, and the dirty handkerchiefs that wrapped their heads under the
sacred trees, and the gnéna-n-sonnaba, the one who sacrifices to the
genii protectors of the village, sets them afire. A black, thick, acrid
and loathsome smoke fouls the air, and an uncertain flame of greenish
red tries in vain to rise, so choked is it by old dirt and sweat. Boys
and girls dart forward and jump three times over this fire of joy. At
once they are purified of all their pollution; they have left behind
and abandoned the old selves, smoked them out. Agile as deer or
881 gazelles they run to their huts to masiri don ("to make themselves
beautiful"). Everywhere there is an indescribable bustle! Lids of
gourds, which are the Negroes' cupboards, roll on the ground, split,
break, and fall to pieces, and in the midst of laughter of delirious
joy there are the lamentations of an old woman who screams and
grumbles. This haste and fever is the cause of delays, and the girls
especially cannot yet done with arraying themselves. A piece of
amber hangs too low or not low enough, the necklaces are too loose
and have to be shortened, worn threads break, and beads by handfuls
are lost in the dust.

At last, to the great relief of all, the cry of joy "Kouyo ê,
Kouyo ê!" rings out from the four corners of the village. Preceded
[533] by the /195/ chorus of singers (a group of women and girls who clap
their hands and sing a most barbaric tune in falsetto, without ever
being in harmony), the drums slowly head toward the great trees of
the square that is the ballroom. In all the alleys that intersect the
village and make it a labyrinth, a crowd of women, men, and
children rush, jostle elbows, and shout, and in a moment the square
is full.

881 [887] Moment by moment the old women come closer and the word "Kouyo ê, Kouyo ê" resounds louder and louder. But now they come out, and their bodies move as if they were made of rings, so closely do they imitate a worm surprised by a ray of sunshine who is hastily returning to its nest in the ground. With their pointed chins, wrinkled skins, and toothless jaws, they look like real savages as they furiously scrape two iron rods; on their bald heads they wear dirty towels, the filthy appurtenances of sorceresses, wound without skill or taste. With spear in hand the young citizens appear in full trousers; they wear caps with double points or loud-colored turbans with long fringes, and their bodies disappear under loose blouses still all perfumed with the musty smell of the bottom of a storage bin, all stiff and shiny under a paste of starch. They leap and shout, they brandish their arms, assume the look of warriors, and especially assume such a look of conceit that one's laughter is unloosed.

[415] After the boys come the girls, fanning their "alms purses" all decorated with cowrie shells; these are platters braided of fine, pliable grass, doubtless those onto which the bloody remnants were placed on the morning of the soli si, or arms' vigil. They come forward stiffly, [301] and glide rather than walk over the ground, for their feet are weighed down by small chains and iron rings, and can hardly be lifted. Gold or copper crescents pull down the septum of their noses, a handful of striped periwinkle shells hangs from the lobe of each ear, several coral necklaces encircle their heads, and everywhere, chiefly around their necks, are pieces of amber interspersed by grigris and beads of every size and shade. 881 302 Bambara of the noumou, or blacksmith caste, the Marka turned Bambara, and every Bambara girl /196/ of more or less mixed stock whose head was not shaved at the da woro, or festival of the sixth day, has their hair braided, and on top of the crest which ends in two small braids along each ear, there is an odd little bundle, a handful of hair. This is in memory of the eighth day after the girl's birth, the day when she was given her name, and what she is wearing is nothing less than what the Bambara call "the hair of the womb" (1). If this has been lost, as is usually the case, the

881
292 mother provides some of hers. The dress-up outfit of our excised girls
is a regular harness; two or three loincloths in layers encircle their
waists, and of the actual costume, the band of cloth which shakes
behind in limp and loose trains, the big pompom is all that shows.
At least one can look at them and see them, as for once pretty white
blouses clothe them; the long cloth slings required in the dances are
thrown over their shoulders and brought to the front and create quite a
881 pretty effect. In Bani country the girls wear a wide belt of cowrie
301 shells around the hips and over the loincloths, and on each side two
583 bundles of cowrie shells hang from leather thongs that pass over the
shoulders and are crossed on the chest. This dousou ko (2), as it is
called, is the remaining portion of the bride price given by the fiancé,
and is worth 5, 000 to 6, 000 cowrie shells.

881 Around the drums that rage in the square, behind the old women who scrape their pieces of scrap iron, and behind the female storytellers /*griottes*/ who sing of their charms, their strength and their beauty, the circumcised boys and excised girls circle for a few moments and go and sit on the mats that have been prepared for them.

Kola nuts are distributed to the new citizens; gourds of *dégé*, millet flour mixed with honey water and milk, are placed at the feet of the girls, queens of the day, and the head of the village makes the speech that is required at the beginning of every festival. His herald, standing beside him, repeats it word by word, sentence by

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881
302 1. Newborn infants have their heads shaved six to eight days after birth; they cannot go out of their homes before being shorn of the hair of the womb (*ou ba*, "their mothers"; *kono*, "womb"; *si*, hair).

2. *Dousou*, "soul, " "heart, " "seat of love"; *ko*, "affair, " "pledge of love. "

881 sentence, for the headman only talks in a low voice, as is in good taste. /197/ The speech is short; he calls by name each circumcised boy and excised girl and reminds everybody that among them circumcision is as old as the world, that is to say, as old as the Bambara people. "Yes," he exclaims, "our circumcised children are on the path of their fathers; they are Bambara. Youths, young girls, men and women, old men and old women, our circumcised ones can henceforth take part in palavers, sit with their elder brothers around the gourds of d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer, and take part in our games, our merry-making, and our rites. May everyone know it and no one forget, or ever treat them as if they were uncircumcised (1) -- that is the deepest insult! Everyone will know how to avenge an insult to his child, and I will know how to avenge an insult to mine." He ends by saying: "Truce to disputes; let us eat, drink, dance, and enjoy ourselves, and /leave/ serious matters (2) /until/ after the festival."

From then on, d'lo flows in streams and throats are cleansed. Everybody, young and old, men and women, dances in honor of the young "citizens," and as long as the sparkling, foaming liquor lasts, there are songs, dances, cries and shouts without end on the public square, day and night. And when the beer reaches its end, each circumcised boy and excised girl, in order of age, stretches his or her muscles before the public, accompanied by father, mother, and all his family and that of his fiancée or her finacé. This is the climax of the festival. At this point the cries and shouts redouble,
881 and the drinkers, jug in hand, foam on their lips, gazing into space
431 and wavering on their legs, place beads, cowrie shells, and a kola nut in the large pockets of the blouses of the circumcised youths and

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[578] 1. To call someone blakoro ("uncircumcised") is the insult of insults.

2. All disputes, all litigation, everything that disunites.

881 431 onto the platters of the excised girls. With the last kola nut all leaping stops, and the festival ends. Slowly the crowd withdraws and goes home, for it has only too much need of a little rest.

881 574 On the days following this "coming out of the circumcised" (the name given to this occasion by the Bambara), the youths and maids run around the country dressed up, and go to thank those who were at the da woro, or festival of the sixth day. Boys and girls, in two groups, under the /198/ direction of their old woman guardian, walk along the paths one after another, Indian file. At the head of the column is the massa, or queen; the massa ma Kono, her deputy, comes next, and she is followed by the massa ma Kono ségére, who again is the deputy of the one in front of her. All the others are girls that are healed, and the last, the youngest of all, is called koulé. The boys march in the same order and bear the same titles. This way of thanking people is very Bambara; although they insist on showing themselves so that people will know that they are circumcised,
[431] they want especially that alms be given them, and they go to ask a gift and hold out both hands. The Bambara people are a beggar people!

Chapter 10

Bambara Marriage

584 Little Bambara girls are betrothed when they are very young, generally between the ages of four to ten, and girls of twelve, fourteen, and sixteen years who still await a suitor are very unusual. Yet age matters little, for there are three stages in marriage: the proposal, the betrothal, and the wedding, and whoever wants to take a wife, whether he is young, mature, or an old man, married, widower, or unmarried, must obey this law.

853 A child is nursed for two or even three years, and theoretically, a woman should abstain from sexual intercourse throughout this period. In practice, however, the period of three months mentioned above is the limit of such abstention.

854 Childhood. While he is small, the child remains with his mother, whether she cares for him herself, has him cared for by a slave especially designated for the duty, or turns him over to one of her daughters.

During the nursing period of two or even three years, he is carried astraddle by his mother or some other person entrusted with his care until his legs are strong enough for him to run about the house and its vicinity.

857 At about six or eight years old, he is drawn into the juvenile organization known as n-tomo, and he never fails to join it as soon as he is welcome. Little girls are less free; they are kept at home and put to work at household duties, such as bringing water and wood and watching the fire.

881 Puberty. As we shall see, the n-tomo prepares the child for the soli, a ceremony which marks the most important event of his life, civil puberty. The essential but not the only rite involved in this ceremony is circumcision. In principle, the soli is limited to pubescent boys and this implies that all who go through the ceremony have physically reached puberty. Aside from the fact, however, that this condition is reached at differing ages, the boys who undergo the ceremony differ in age because the soli does not take place every year, owing to the considerable expense involved.

882 When the soli is behind him, a boy is no longer a child;
he is not exactly a man either, but rather is a "young master,"
a kamalen'. Since he is admitted to the brotherhoods, apparently
his discretion can be counted on, and he is considered competent
to take an oath so he can be called upon to testify in a dispute.
Also, if he is enterprising enough to attract attention to himself,
he is given trifling missions which inspire him to persevere. Fur-
882 thermore, since by now he has been made sophisticated by his
836 companions in the n-tomo, his relations with his female companion

882 [836] in the [216] soli, the n-golo-moso, and with other girl friends are not merely platonic; indeed, sexual licentiousness is common.

As in everything else, a girl's life is more restricted. For her, the soli is merely a way of being presented to society, as we would say, that is, a means of attracting a prospective husband.

884 Coming-of-age, guardianship, deprivation of civil rights. It is obvious from the above that a Bambara has no way of knowing his age with any certainty. At best, he can estimate it by referring to some important event known to have occurred at about the time of his birth.

Since this is the case, we can see that coming-of-age has no correlation with chronological age. The individual's physical development and, still more, his intellectual maturity are signs that lead his family to grant a kamalen' the rights that distinguish a man from a boy. The most important of these rights is assuredly that of taking a wife and founding a family.

As a matter of fact, the soli marks the point after which the young people of both sexes are deemed competent to contract [582] marriages. Indeed, girls of 16 or 18 years of age and boys over 25 are rarely unmarried. It should further be understood that a girl may be betrothed at birth or even when she is being carried in the womb, as has been explained above.

429 562 Guardianship is intended to protect the individual from the follies of inexperience and the natural weakness of the female sex, a weakness to be understood here to include not only actual lack of physical strength but also incompetence imposed by custom which forbids a woman any power whatever over community rights or property. This is why young men are subject to guardianship until the fa, in council, recognizes their right to exercise the prerogatives of man's estate. In principle, women are subject to guardianship throughout their lives.

429 During his married life, the father is the legal administrator of any properties coming to his minor children, and he usually employs such property with discretion since he is legally bound to render an account when the children reach their majority.

521 831 864 and before little girls, and it is not unusual to see a big girl leaning against the door of the hut with ears wide open so as not to miss a word, and finding cause to burst into gales of laughter. Are all these people capable of being shocked? I doubt it, even as far as the young girls are concerned, for all or almost all of them have their favorite nooks in the bush. Moreover, they can tell each other vulgar stories, and one should hear them as they clean and spin cotton, or when in the evening, shut in a communal hut (1), they play, laugh, and chatter before going to sleep. Could it be otherwise? Since all the men have soungourou, they know that their fathers and brothers each have one, and they are not unaware that their mothers see no /160/ wrong in giving themselves to their men friends. The great crime is allowing oneself to be caught.

521 831 You may think I exaggerate, yet when two women, each with a nursing infant in her arms, are crouched in the court by their pots in which tô (gruel) is simmering, it is very unusual for them not to be gossiping about the marital infidelities of their neighbors and sometimes even their own. I am saying nothing about the old women with turned-up chins and toothless jaws; they are experienced midwives and talk mainly about abortions.

They are all the same, and more than one mother has made me blush as she gave the breast to her last born and smiled sweetly at the rest of the brood frolicking near her. In wishing health and prosperity to a child that a woman is nursing, one sometimes makes a mistake about its sex, and without respect for one's ears nor pity for

[591 882] 1. In the evening all young girls are shut in a communal hut or dormitory under the supervision of an old woman. The woman's duty is to prevent young men from coming in and to see that the girls do not go out and seek a boy friend's hospitality. There is a dormitory in each quarter.

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796 the noon meal, the excised girls come back, and around the well
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431 596 614 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

466 596 614 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself, [186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them never return, either because they have managed to create an independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More often, however, the young man, having founded an independent family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and watches developments there in case he may one day be able to profit from them.

578 561 885 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue which is forever at war with the _fa_ and the senate. Their opposition weakens, however, as they approach the age at which they too will participate in the _faya_ to which they aspire. Gradually, as one changes from _kamalen'_ to _bina_, he acquires the same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity of the new _kamalen'-u_.

562 583 In concluding this study of the members of the community, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys, they belong completely to the community, which, as a result, has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So, since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

181 that she is a girl, that one day she will be a man's plaything, an
831 object for his pleasure. The child would leave smiling and replace
her three fingers of rag even as she walked away. At dinner time a
[482] big girl would come carrying the gourd of tô, or sorghum gruel, on
her head; and on the palm of her right hand, at shoulder height, the
platter of dried fish sauce. She would be greeted from as far away
as she could be seen and asked for a report on her whole body, and
indeed there would be no stopping at "how are your feet" nor even at
"how are your breasts." And the girl would answer all these vile questions
without getting excited, and when a well-washed hand, ready to
be used as a spoon, embraced her or lifted her breasts, she was not
shocked; only the opposite would surprise her.

887 Here and there in the village a giant tree stretches its branches
538 afar, and the old men, lovers of endless palaver, enjoy themselves
521 under its shade. They go there from the early morning to weave cloth,
make mats, tan hides, scour goats' horns intended for powerful
amulets, etc., and often even /159/ just for the purpose of spending
the hours dozing. And in the midst of all these gray, or at least
graying beards, swarms a world of children. Among the old men
there are good storytellers /conteur/, who excel in stories of hunting
and war that throb with interest -- but why, alas, must they always
graft on some salacious incident? Their mouths are full chiefly with
[831] stories of adultery and fornication. They will not spare you a single
detail, and they will readily go back to the very beginning so as to
lack no precision whatever. And the moral of these stories can be
reduced to this: "There is nothing in this world comparable to the
pleasures of the flesh; let us enjoy marriage and never pass up a chance
to obtain this satisfaction."

521 If the old men are this lewd, is it surprising to hear the young
831 men describe the ugliness of their bestial evenings while they make
864 mats, stretch the hides of drums, or sew a blouse, a cap, or trousers
for themselves in the b'lon, or entry hut? They talk constantly of their
soungourou, and this term, which should simply mean an unmarried
girl, means any woman, married or not, who gives herself to the
first comer.

Without any shame they talk and chat about all these vile acts
before their little brothers, before children ten and twelve years old,

881 Moment by moment the old women come closer and the word
887 "*Kouyo ê*, *Kouyo ê*" resounds louder and louder. But now they come
out, and their bodies move as if they were made of rings, so closely
do they imitate a worm surprised by a ray of sunshine who is hastily
returning to its nest in the ground. With their pointed chins, wrinkled
skins, and toothless jaws, they look like real savages as they furiously
scrape two iron rods; on their bald heads they wear dirty towels, the
filthy appurtenances of sorceresses, wound without skill or taste. With
spear in hand the young citizens appear in full trousers; they wear
caps with double points or loud-colored turbans with long fringes, and
their bodies disappear under loose blouses still all perfumed with the
musty smell of the bottom of a storage bin, all stiff and shiny under
a paste of starch. They leap and shout, they brandish their arms,
assume the look of warriors, and especially assume such a look of
conceit that one's laughter is unloosed.

After the boys come the girls, fanning their "alms purses" all
445 decorated with cowrie shells; these are platters braided of fine, pliable
grass, doubtless those onto which the bloody remnants were placed on
the morning of the *soli si*, or arms' vigil. They come forward stiffly,
and glide rather than walk over the ground, for their feet are weighed
301 down by small chains and iron rings, and can hardly be lifted. Gold
or copper crescents pull down the septum of their noses, a handful
of striped periwinkle shells hangs from the lobe of each ear, several
coral necklaces encircle their heads, and everywhere, chiefly around
their necks, are pieces of amber interspersed by grigris and beads of
881 every size and shade. Bambara of the *nourhou*, or blacksmith caste,
the Marka turned Bambara, and every Bambara girl /196/ of more or
302 less mixed stock whose head was not shaved at the *da woro*, or
festival of the sixth day, has their hair braided, and on top of the
crest which ends in two small braids along each ear, there is an odd
little bundle, a handful of hair. This is in memory of the eighth day
after the girl's birth, the day when she was given her name, and what
she is wearing is nothing less than what the Bambara call "the hair
of the womb" (1). If this has been lost, as is usually the case, the

564 erroneous, for the Bambara despises this breed and would never entrust one with such a delicate mission. The Bambara dreads the storyteller in his private festivals. How many times they say as they invite us: "We came ourselves to invite you so that the news may not reach the ears of the storytellers." The *to-n-tigi*, head of the association of the *fla*-n-to, plays no important role in the marriage of a *to-n-dé*, or member. The *to-n-déou*, members of the association of the *fla-n-to*, are invited and enjoy themselves at the wedding of a fellow *te-n-de*, and that is all. Mr. Barbier Louis /sic/ makes a mistake; see page 527, Dec. 16, 1907, of the review *La Quinzaine*.

584 latter receives four kola nuts wrapped in green leaves and tied again and again so that they will not wither, and, spear in hand and his inseparable goatskin, or *foroko*, well fastened to his shoulder, he starts on his way, proud to be assigned such a pleasant mission and happy and pleased to be the *fourouboloma tigi*, guardian of the wedding gifts (2).

2. *Fourouboloma*, "engagement gift"; *tigi*, "master."

584 887 576 At the end of his journey, on the public square, he extends a very friendly greeting to the old men who there devote themselves to laziness in the shade of a great tree with the apathy of lizards; he gives them all generously of the snuff that every stranger must offer, and if he has no friend or acquaintance in the village, he chooses from among them a man of good will who will introduce him to the family and smooth the way for him. When this man is found, he goes

584 there without further delay and makes his request, which the man who
887 introduced him repeats word by word and sentence by sentence.

584 The father of the girl ponders a moment, and if the suit pleases him he answers in a word: "A gnéna, that's good." The little package of four kola nuts is then offered him, he summons his daughter and her mother, and the fourouboloma tigi again explains the reason for his /201/ coming. Everything is settled with the following words: "Give my greetings to the one who sent you and all his family, tell him that I am happy he is asking for my daughter. A diara an ye hali (1), it is a great joy for us, but this, you know, needs reflection! I will speak to my friends soon, and in a few days you will know my decision." The emissary has not been refused and, satisfied with himself and the good prospects of the matter, he leaves to carry to the suitor the words of the girl's father, which should open the door of hope to his heart.

1. A, "that"; diara, "is happy"; an ye, "for us"; hali, "much."

2. The Diviners and Fetishes Accept or Reject the Suitor

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593 To marry their daughter and marry her well is a nightmare to every father and mother, and both remain anxious when a suitor presents himself. The Bambara know anguish! A daughter may not be beautiful; often she is even ugly, with a large navel, an umbilical hernia, or blood blister due to the clumsiness of the midwife, but her father lives in her large, white eyes marked with a black spot that is full of life and shining, in her broadly slit mouth and puffy lips; he recognizes his own, and his whole inner being cries to him: "This is your daughter, this is your blood."

Frightful thoughts come to torment him: "If the suitor should have the character of a villain and the brutality of a beast, will he not beat my child mercilessly? Might he have one of those shameful diseases that people hide and do not name, so that my daughter will commit adultery in order to avoid the embarrassment of being

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in this respect they are far superior to any of the Arabs of Algeria, for example. Family life is more open and cordial among them.

children do not speak the name of their father, especially if he is a gouatigi, or family head, and when a swarm of children are enjoying themselves around their old daddy, only one word is on all the little lips to awaken his attention, avoid his reprimand, call for his caress, and bring forth his smile: Koké-yo -- koké-wé! (2)

2. I use the word Koké-yo -- (Né koké) koké we (koké, "I beg you, Koké") -- because it is the most common; there are obviously other similar terms. Favorite wives also like to call their husbands by this name. For everyone it is a term of respect and at the same time it is tender, affectionate, and coaxing.

[888] 576 551 Old men are given borrowed names, bougna toua, out of respect and veneration, and the reason for this practice is to avoid having to speak their names in vain and unsuitably. The practice is current, and it is even carried to an extreme, for although a child is given a respect name within his family, he is never called by that name. How many people there are whose real name is not known except by close relatives and friends! [553] All the Dougoutigi, To-n-tigi, Ba-koroba, and Moké-touama received a name on the eighth day after their birth, and the names used to designate them are borrowed names. /80/

888 793 576 551 In the environs of Ségou, where Islam is widespread and spreads farther every day, the sacrificers to the protecting genii of the villages, the gnéna-n-sonna ba, or dougoutigi, have lost some of their prestige, but anyone who respects them, even if he be a Moslem, never speaks their names. At the present time in Bani country, where the old customs and traditions are preserved with jealous care, there is not a

888 child, woman, or young man that can tell you the name of the great
793 sacrificer of the village if the latter is in the least old. Out of respect
576 and veneration his name is never spoken; he is the head, and if they
551 are questioned all will answer: "Toua si t'a la dougoutigi ko, he has
no other name than that of dougoutigi, head of the village." And, in
fact, most of the people know no other name for him.

551 This need to avoid speaking the name of whosoever is respected,
576 venerated, or feared goes so far as to bring about the abbreviation of
778 phrases customarily used in salutations (1), so it can easily be imagined
that the name of the fetishes is not known except by their masters and their initiates. Of course, a Moslem, a woman, an uncircumcised man, or an unexcised woman can tell you the number of the gnéna and gnâ owned by the village, and they also know whether the gnéna (djiné) include a Dasiri, Ngolo, Koté, Ntomo, Tauri, etc., and whether the gnâ (boli, sétané) include a Komo, Nia, Douga, Kono, Nama, Bala, etc. But except for the initiates, who could tell you that a certain boli is called Sélé, Magné, Toroba, Dono, or Nono, or that the Magna is also called Tjarofign and the Nama, Sirima-n-fign? Only the generic name is known, and it is in good taste not to pronounce even that when extending an invitation to a festival in its honor. The Nama is enclosed in a beehive in the shade of a tamarind tree, which in turn are enclosed in coarse mats, and when an invitation is given to the sacrifice, the most stylish formula is: "Come and see us, an bi djasé (2) son, we are sacrificing to the /81/ palisade." The trumpet

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1. See what I said in this connection in the preceding chapter, /section on/ "Reincarnation of Souls," pertaining to Ouentja.

2. Djasé, name of a palisade composed of large mats. Children born at the time of the sacrifices to the Nama, who are dedicated to the fetish, are frequently given the name

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4. Burials of the Circumcised, Old People, Heads of Families, Married and Unmarried Persons, Pregnant Women

Burials of the First Category, Those of Old People

● [388] When I speak of old people I mean every Bambara (man or woman) who has grandchildren and so is a grandfather or grandmother. [224 575] When such an old person dies, gunpowder speaks and the shooting is even quite heavy if the deceased belongs to the association of hunters or there is an initiate of that sect (2) among his children. The chief

764 202 slave or, if there is none, a trusted man runs to notify the headman and his council, and all these dignitaries, spear in hand, come to verify the death and offer the /218/ first condolences to the family. Couriers at once go off in all directions to notify members of the family and friends. The person sent to married children is usually the one who was best man and sometimes the fourouboloma tigi (guardian of the wedding gifts) -- at the marriage. He carries out his mission with tact and delicacy. He first notifies the husband /of a daughter/ who summons his legal wife and orders her to go and take care of her father, who is seriously ill. So she leaves her house knowing nothing, and at least keeping a remnant of hope in her heart. It is only when she is on the way that she learns the sad news.

764 [814] While everyone is running right and left, the women wash the body with an aromatic plant called sou kola (1). They dress it in

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2. Hunters (douzo) all belong to a special sect. In order to enter it, a man must have passed his tests and killed a deer. The hunter has a special costume. See pp. 140 ff.

1. Basil, a labiata, ocymum album and febrifugum.